



EAST OF WEST

HICKMAN • DRAGOTTA • MARTIN

45

DECEMBER 2019

This is the world. It's not the one we were supposed to have, but it's the one we made.

We did this. We did it with open eyes and willing hands. We broke it, and there is no putting it back together.





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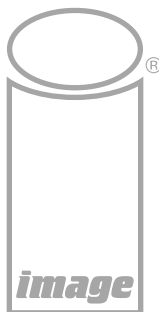
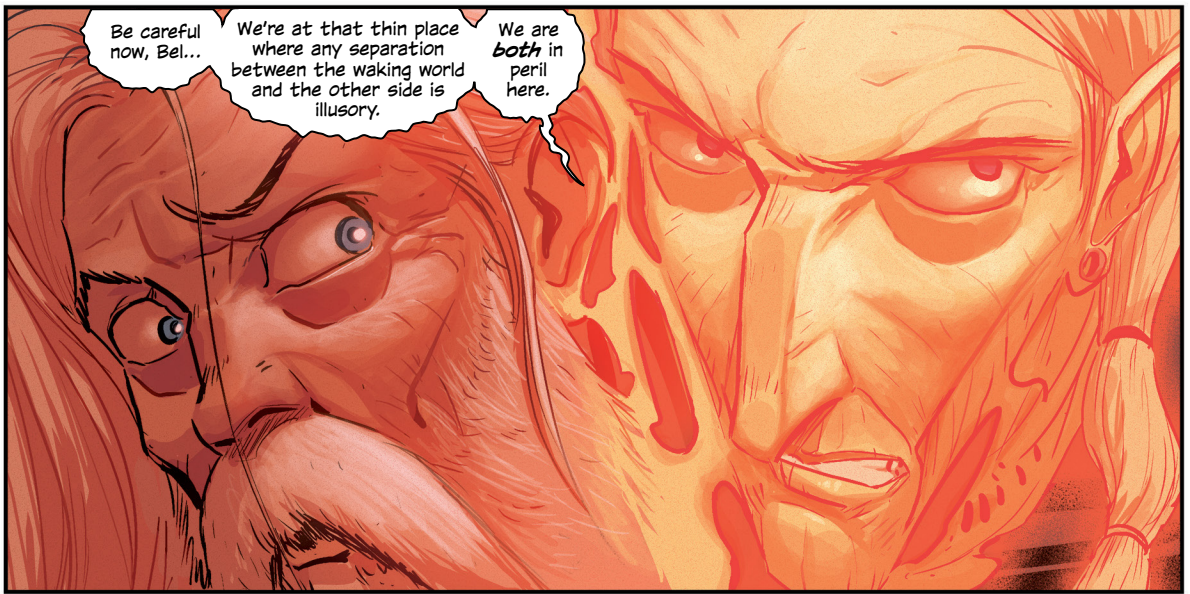


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WE **LIVE** LIKE WE WILL
NEVER DIE.

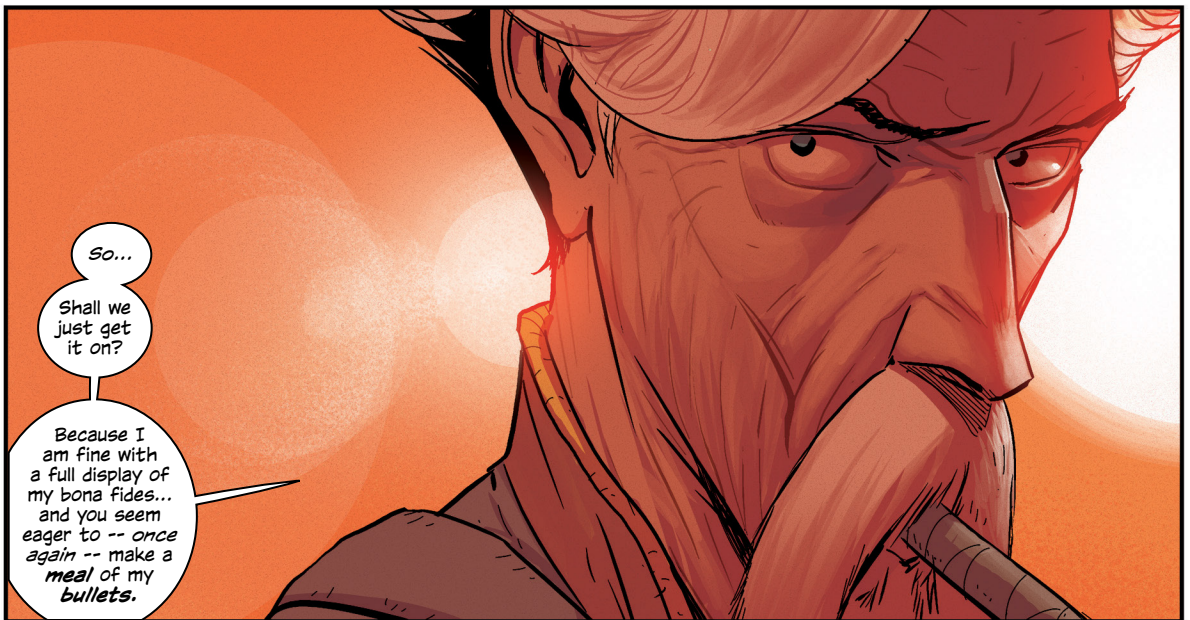




Be careful now, Bel...

We're at that thin place where any separation between the waking world and the other side is illusory.

We are *both* in peril here.



So...

Shall we just get it on?

Because I am fine with a full display of my bona fides... and you seem eager to -- *once again* -- make a *meal* of my bullets.



I'm here to *eat*.

So wherever you're ready...

Draw.





I have to say, Bel. Beyond myself, you seem to have no small fondness for men with limited faculties.

It speaks to **character**, I'm afraid, and you've made some **bad choices** over the years.



This man killed me once -- I want you to **return the favor** and then **eat his heart**.

I don't... I...

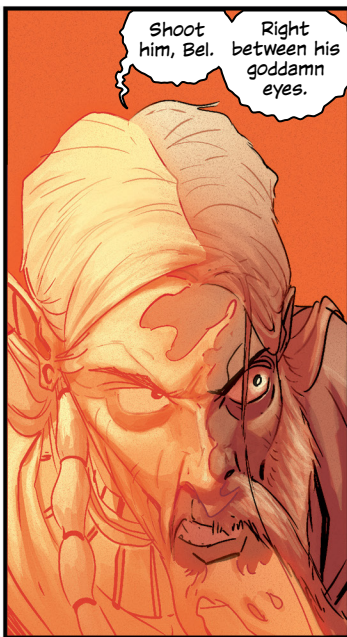


So what's it going to be, Bel? I'm giving you **one last chance** to make things right between us.

Shall we, **together**, dispatch this relic and put the past behind us?



Or you could just talk me to death.

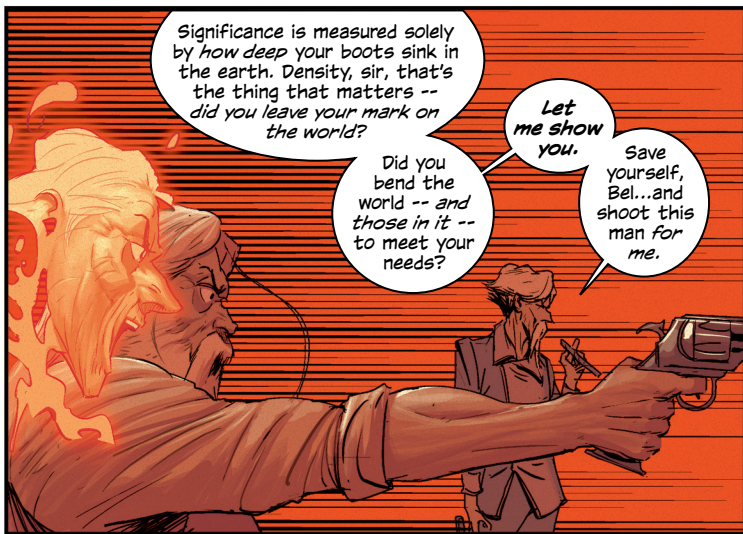


Shoot him, Bel. Right between his goddamn eyes.



You think being a man of few words marks you as significant?

Well, it does not.



Significance is measured solely by **how deep** your boots sink in the earth. Density, sir, that's the thing that matters -- **did you leave your mark on the world?**

Did you bend the world -- and those in it -- to meet your needs?

Let me show you.

Save yourself, Bel... and shoot this man for me.

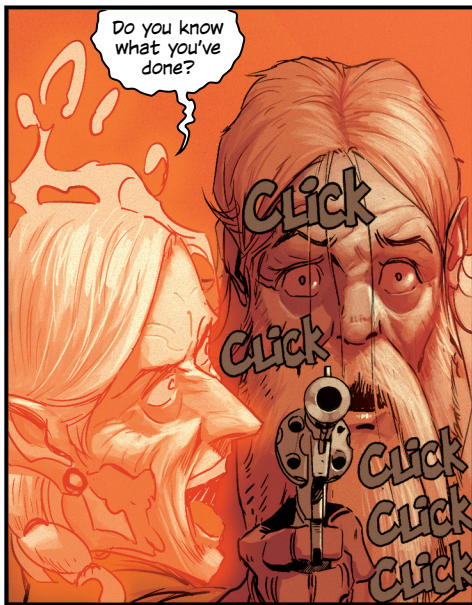


No. No. No.

No!



I won't lie.
You wound me, friend.



Do you know what you've done?

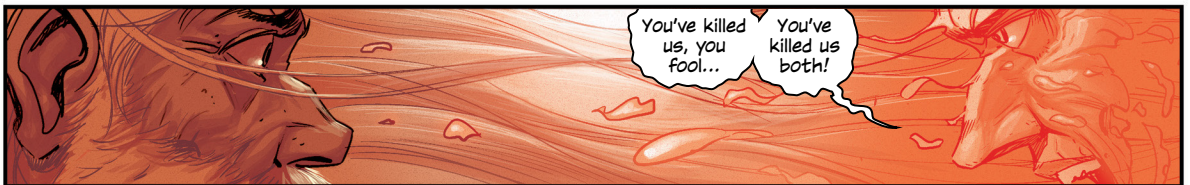
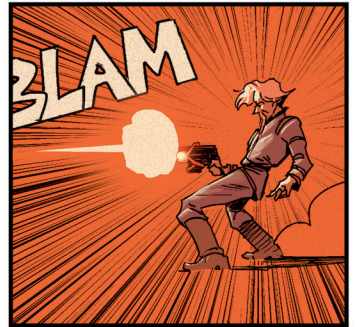
Click
Click
Click
Click
Click



Couldn't risk giving you a loaded gun -- the man who does that deserves what he gets...

But you coulda been a bit better bait, Bel.

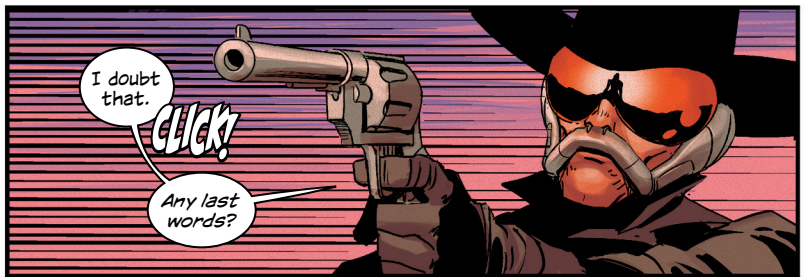
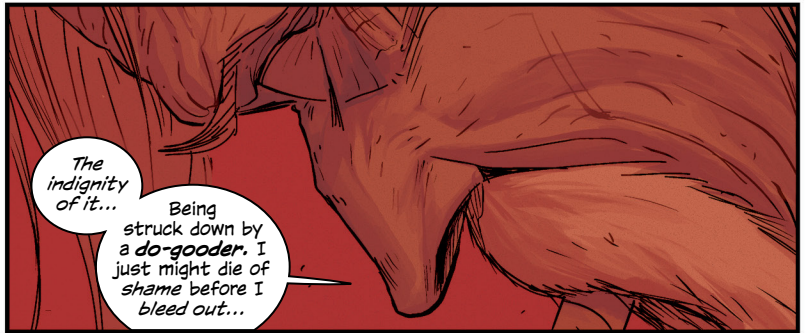
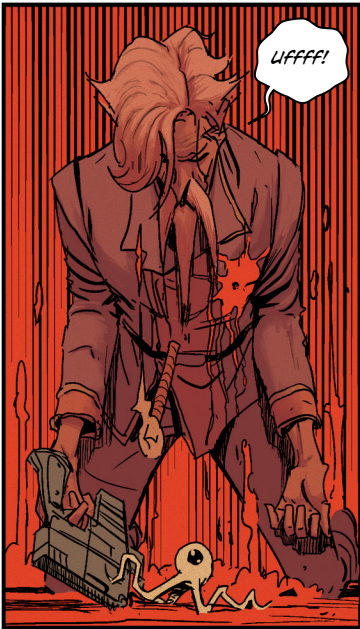
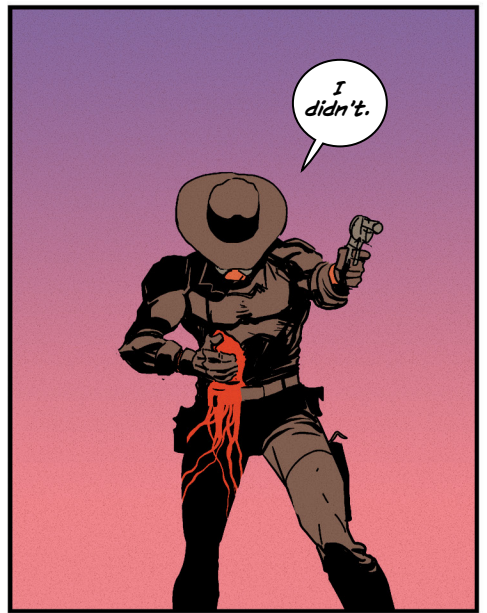
This is just ingratitude. And I will suffer that from you no longer.

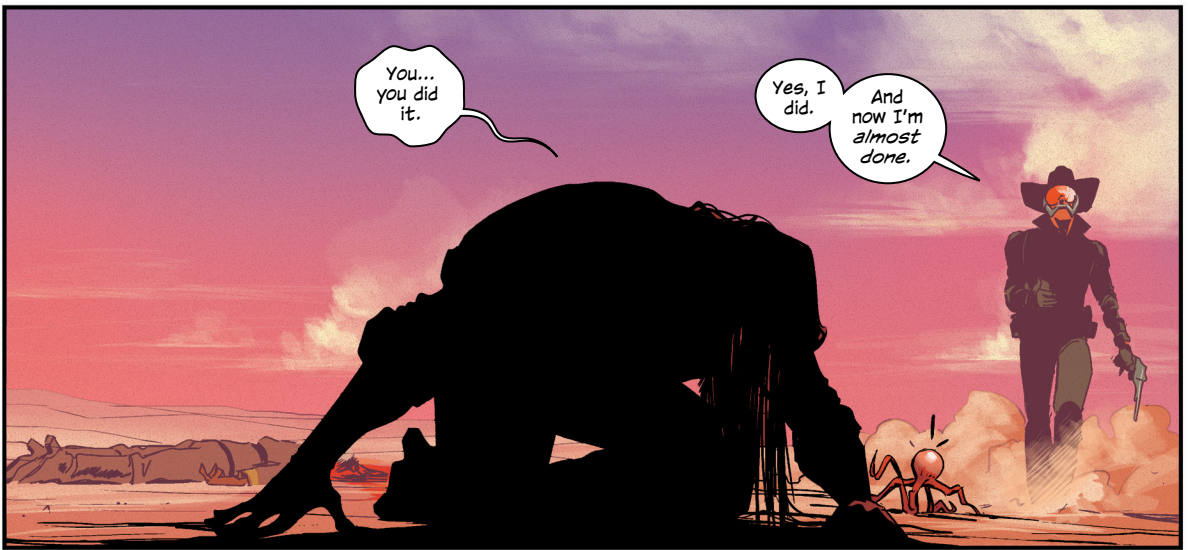


You've killed us, you fool...

You've killed us both!







You... you did it.

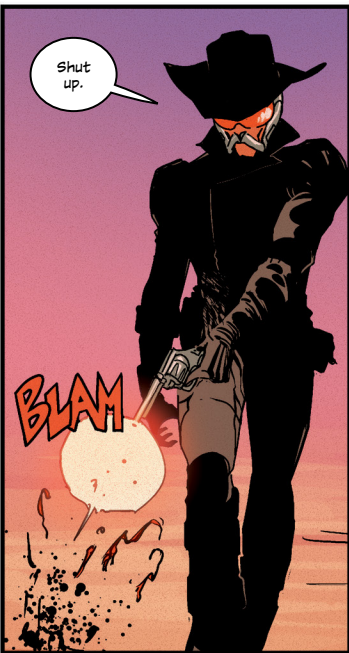
Yes, I did. And now I'm almost done.



Before you act, do you think? Do you ever doubt? Do you ever blink?

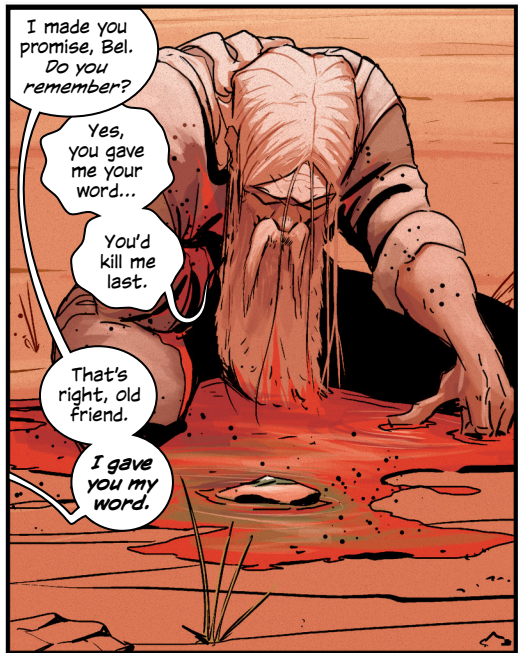
Have you considered your actions' cost?

Rethink what you're doing before all is --



Shut up.

BLAM



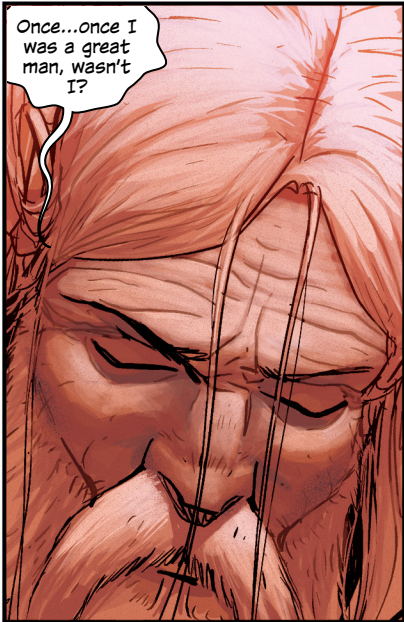
I made you promise, Bel. Do you remember?

Yes, you gave me your word...

You'd kill me last.

That's right, old friend.

I gave you my word.



Once...once I was a great man, wasn't I?



Yes, Bel, you were...

I remember.



Once great...and now what am I?

Chosen.



WE **DIE** EXACTLY LIKE
WE **LIVED**.



EAS

www

ST OF ES

FORTY-FIVE: APOCALYPSE



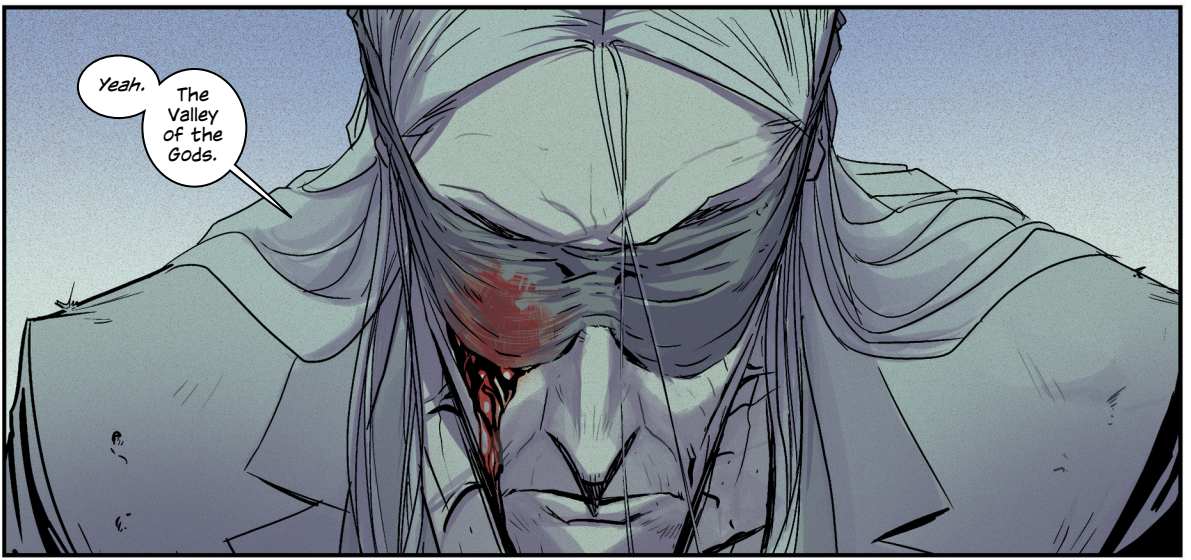
IT HAS **ALWAYS** BEEN
THIS WAY.



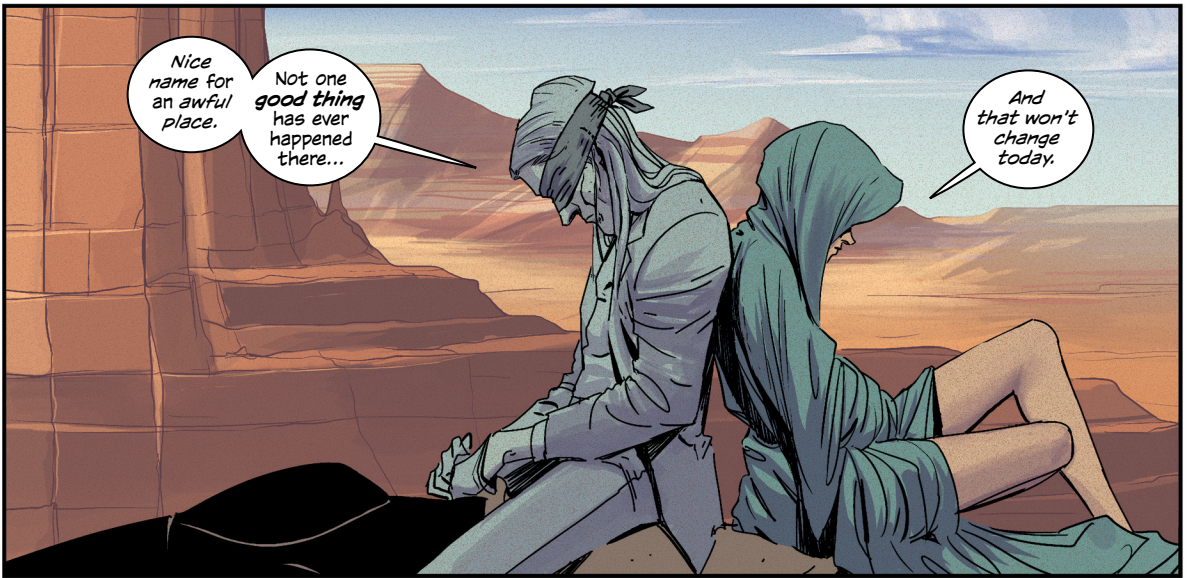


We're at the edge of it -- we're almost there.

You can *feel* it, can't you?



Yeah. The Valley of the Gods.



Nice name for an awful place.

Not one good thing has ever happened there...

And that won't change today.



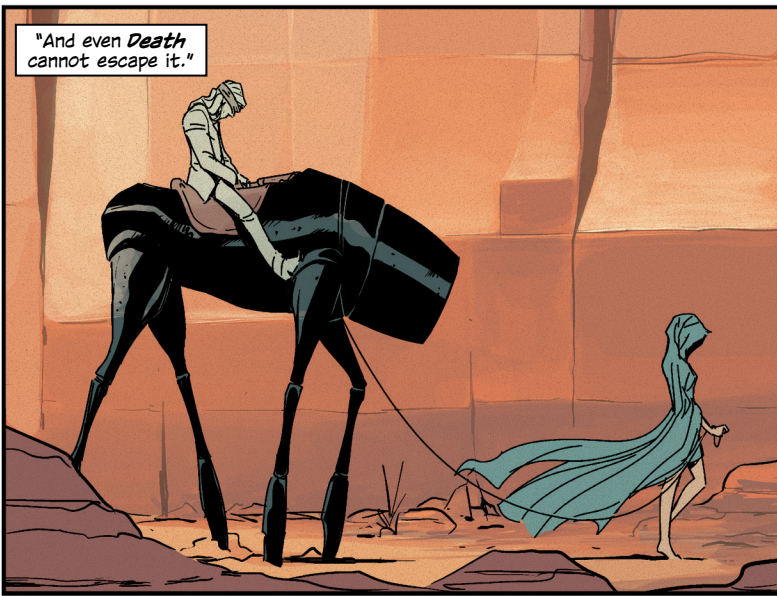
You take my eyes and wanna play games with what you see?

If you got somethin' to say, witch... say it.



Very well.

There's nothing but **death** in that valley..

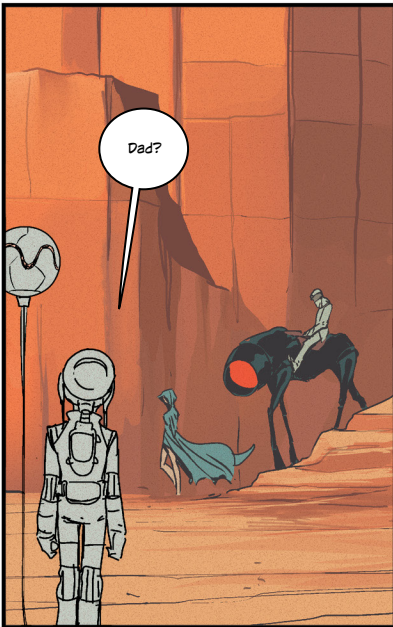


"And even *Death* cannot escape it."

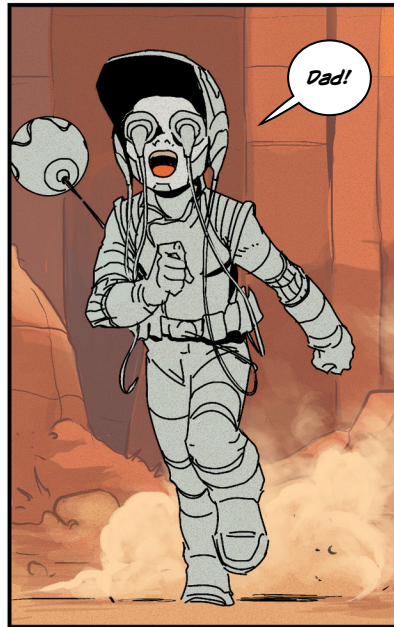


We've arrived.

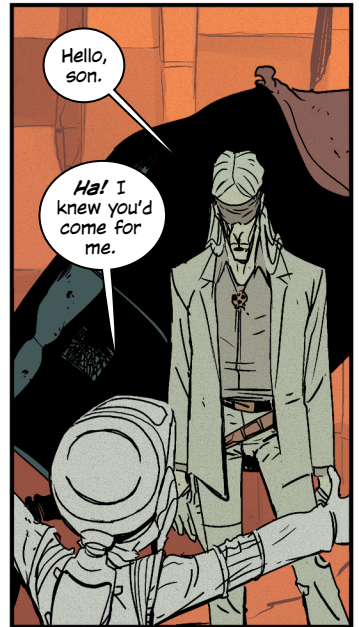
And your arrival has not gone unnoticed.



Dad?

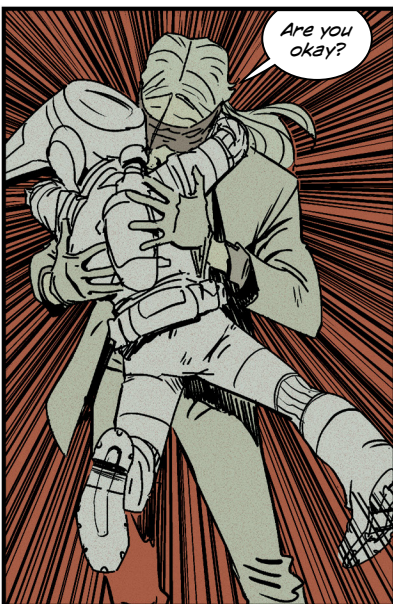


Dad!



Hello, son.

Ha! I knew you'd come for me.



Are you okay?

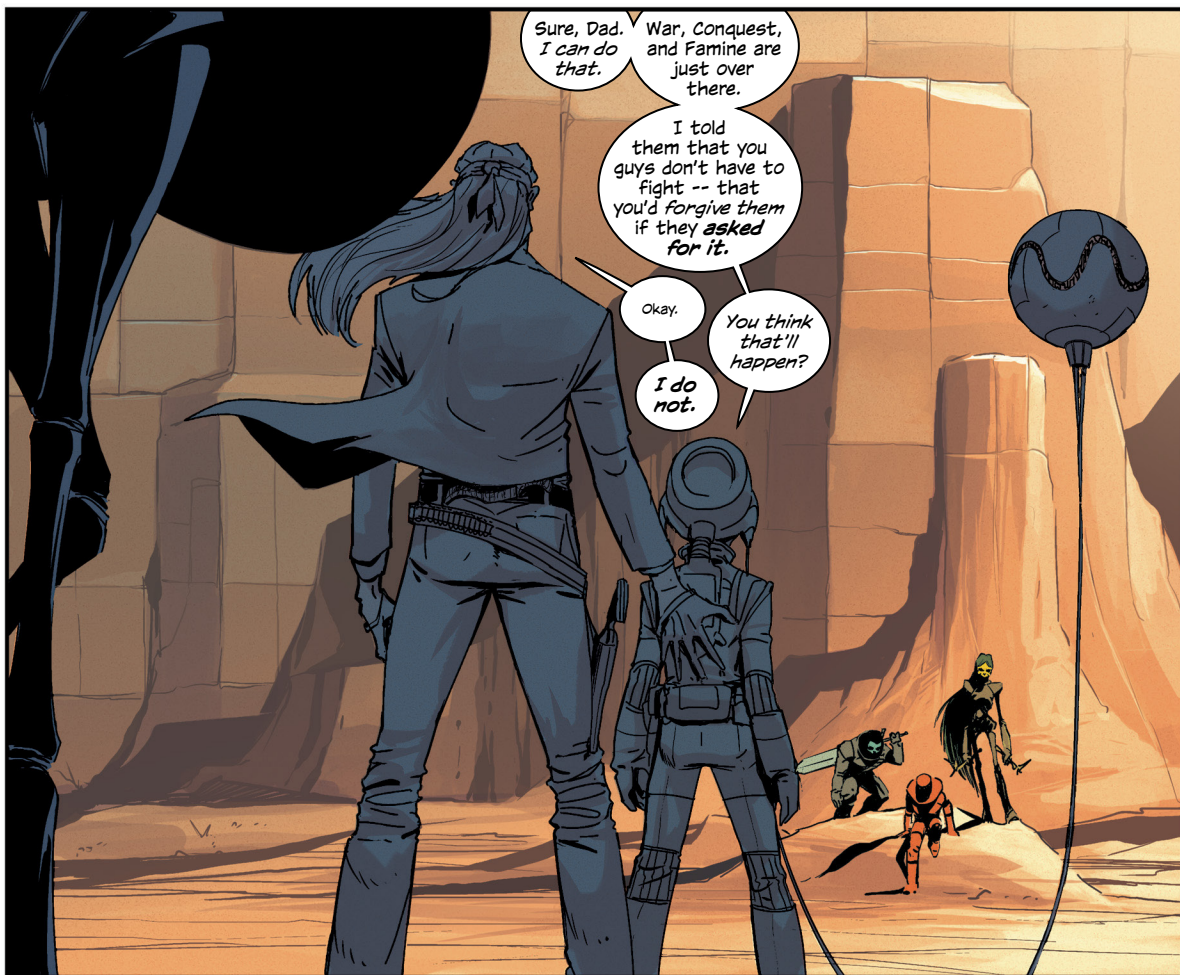


I'm fine... it's been fun actually...

What happened to your eyes?



Oh, it's just a scratch or two. Might need you to help me find my way for a bit.



Sure, Dad. I can do that.

War, Conquest, and Famine are just over there.

I told them that you guys don't have to fight -- that you'd forgive them if they asked for it.

Okay.

You think that'll happen?

I do not.



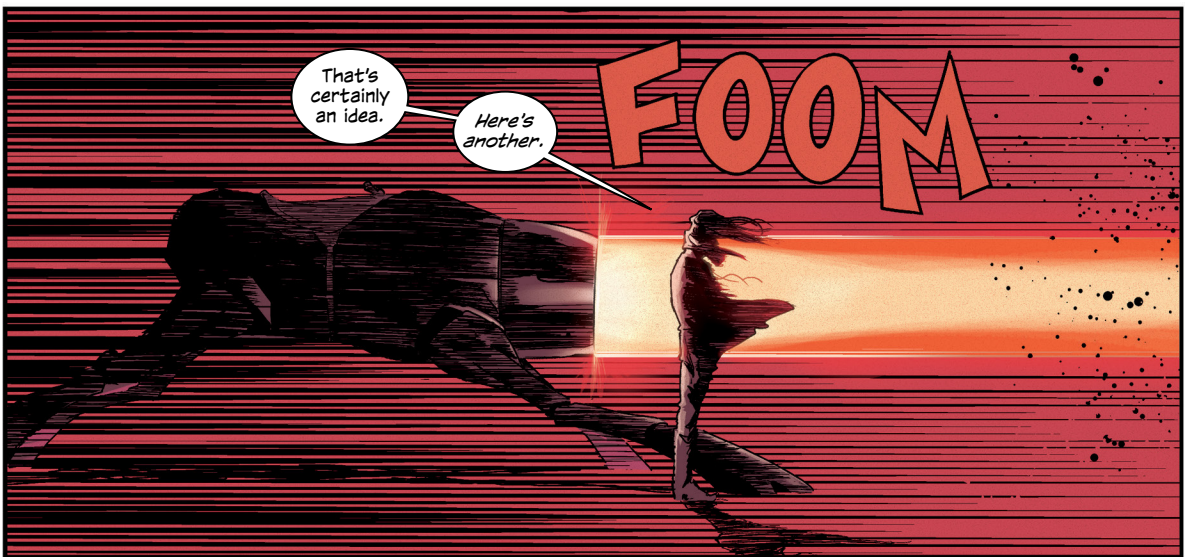
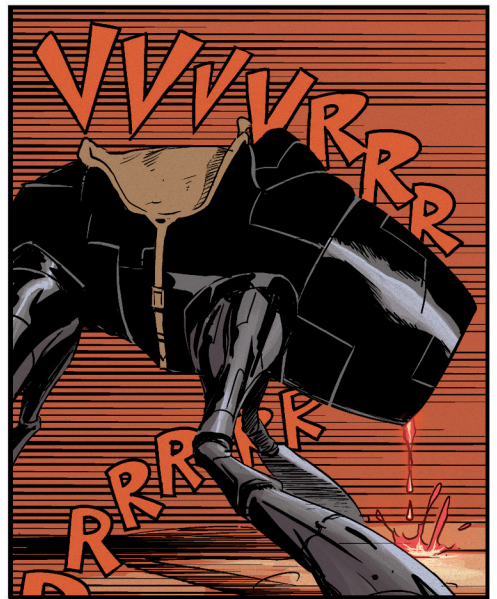
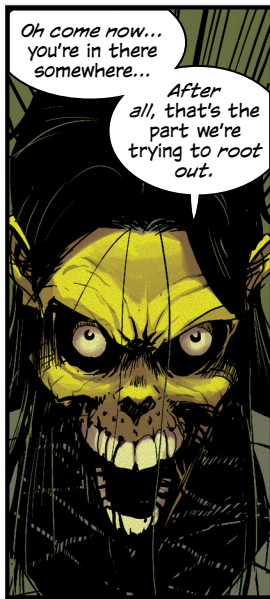
"You'll learn this as you get older, but sometimes people just don't have it in them to move past somethin'."

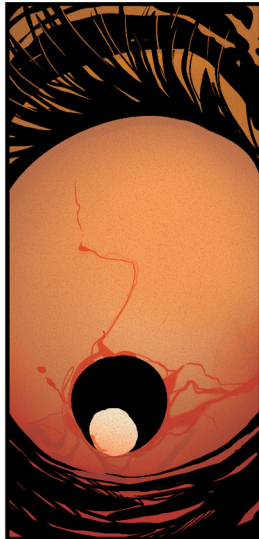
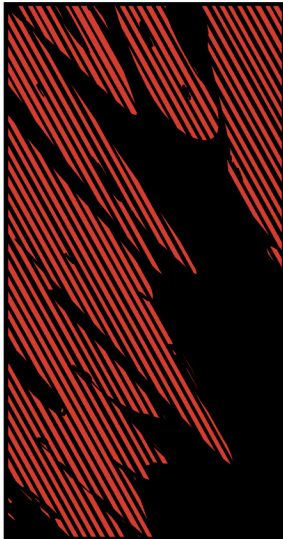
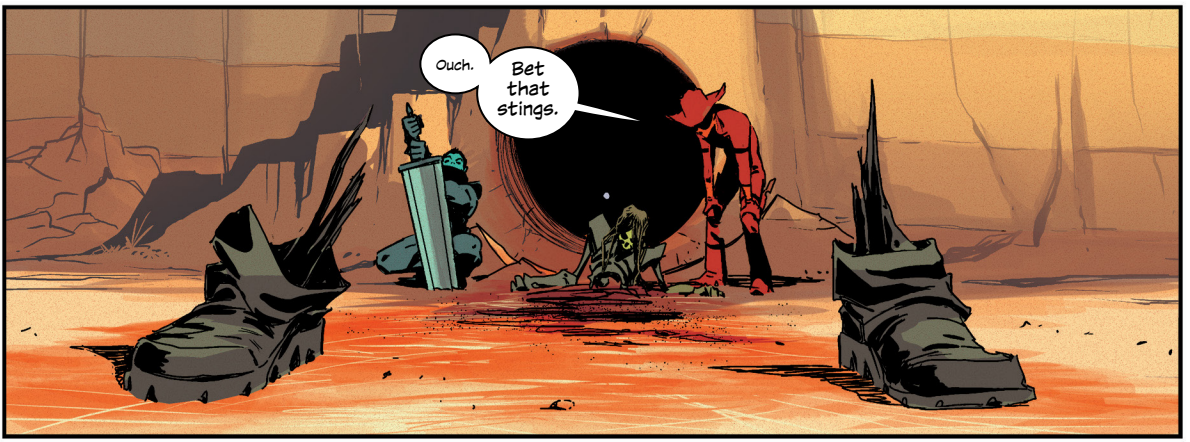
"The pain -- that anger that comes with it -- well, that's all they have."

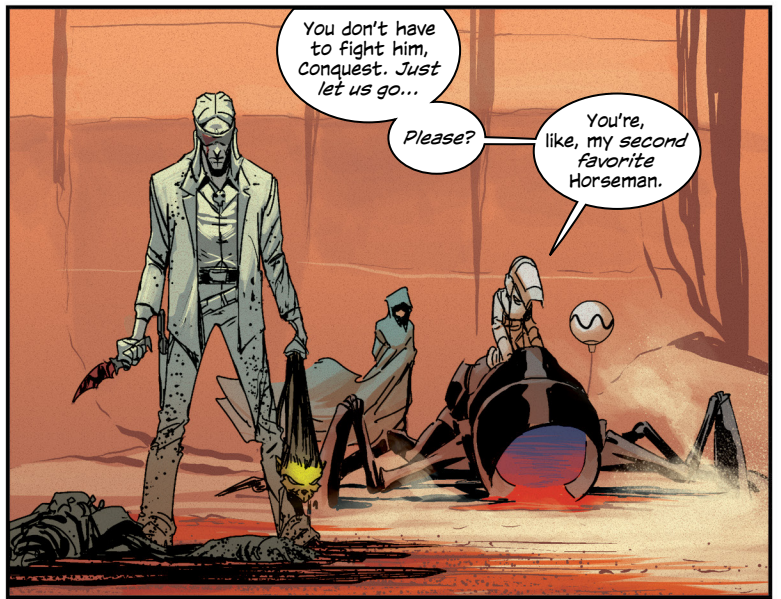
"And then they learn to love it."

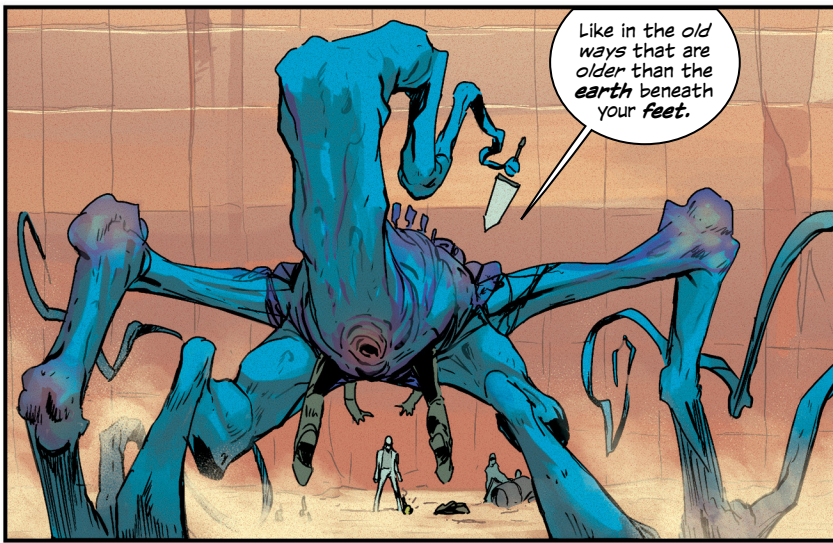
"Now step aside... your dad's got some work to do."

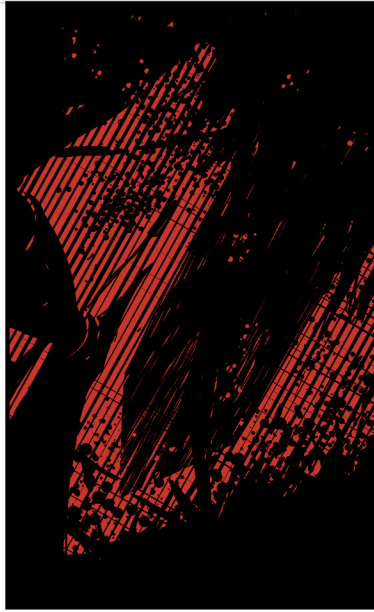
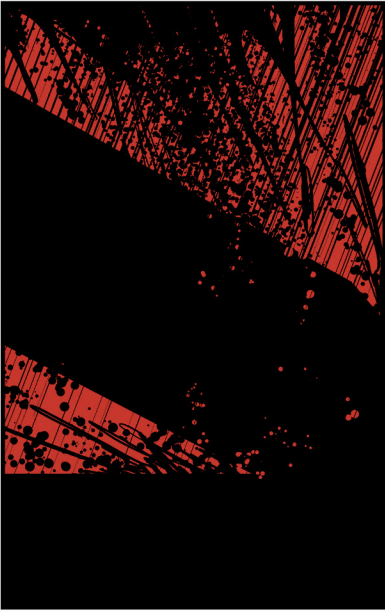
Nice kid.





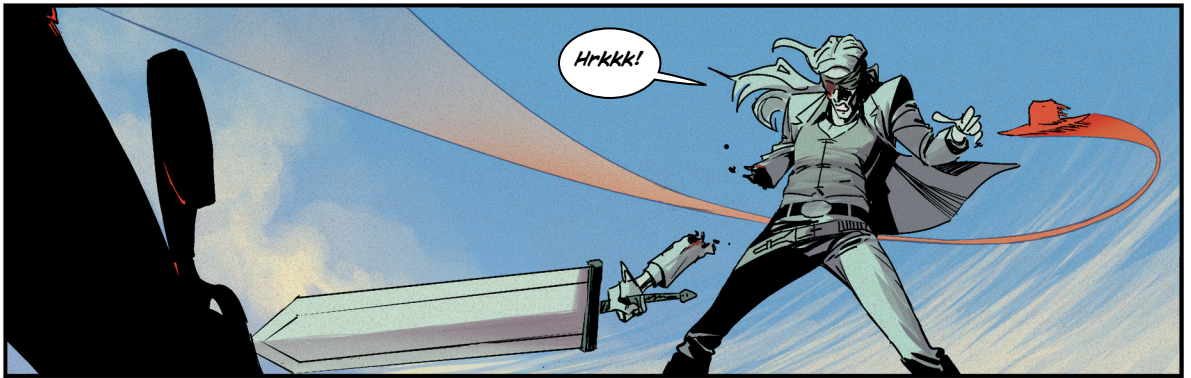








But you have never really appreciated mine.



Hrkkk!



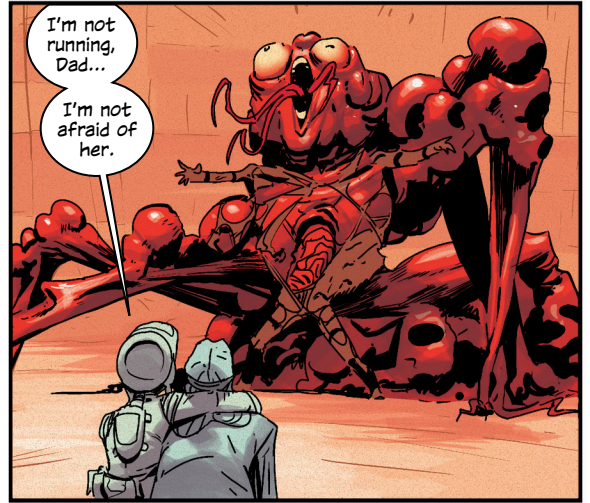
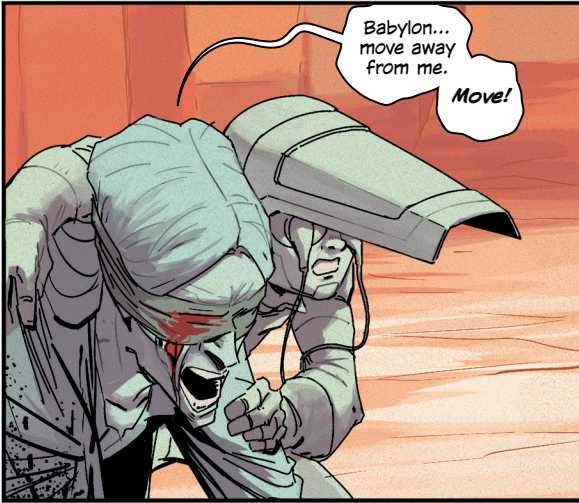
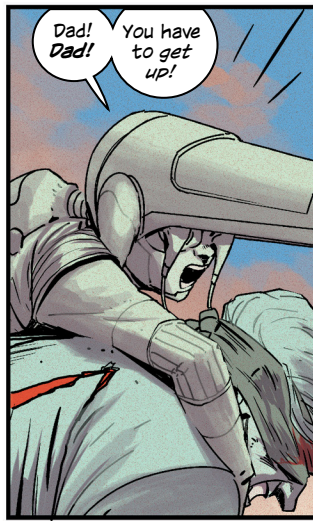
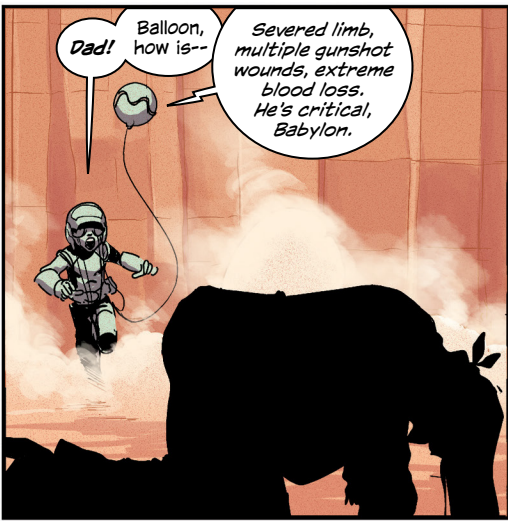
I'm a true artist, after all...

And I'm gonna paint this valley black with your blood, Death.



I'm gonna make you my masterpiece.

HRRRKKK!!





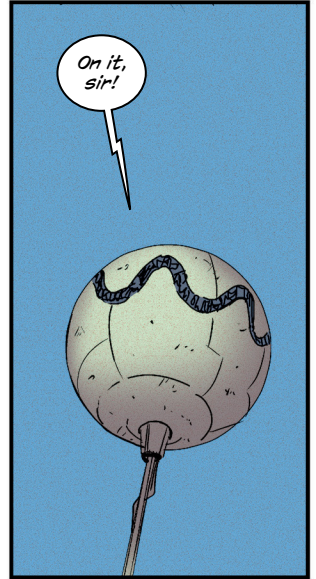
I'm going to teach you a *lesson*, Babylon...

One your father taught me.



Balloon...

Take him up, *now!*



On it, sir!



Pay attention, Babylon, because you're going to want to remember *this...*

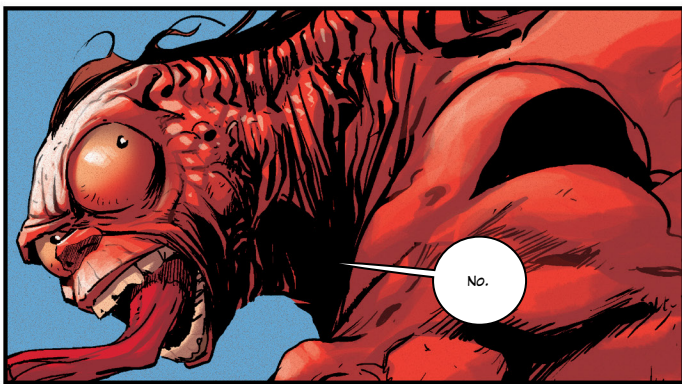
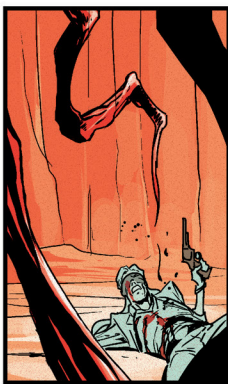
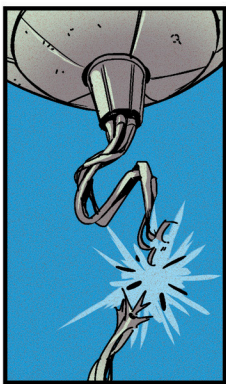
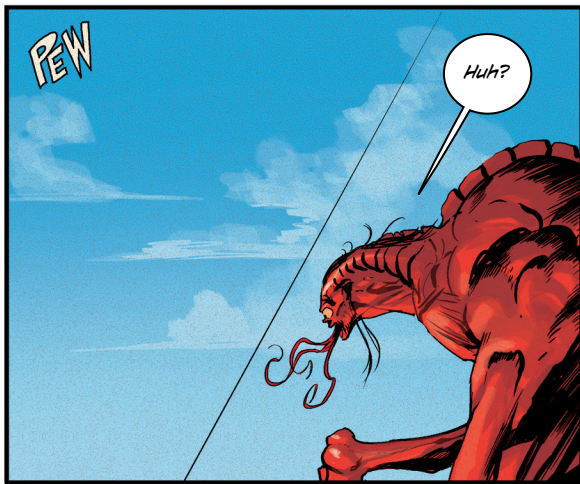
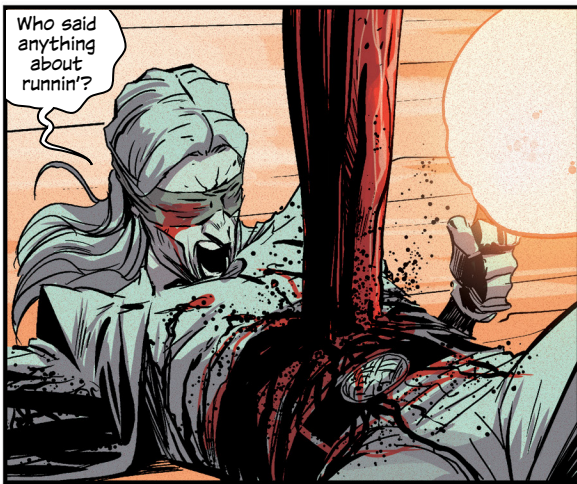
It doesn't matter how much you love someone -- because love won't keep them from being taken from you.

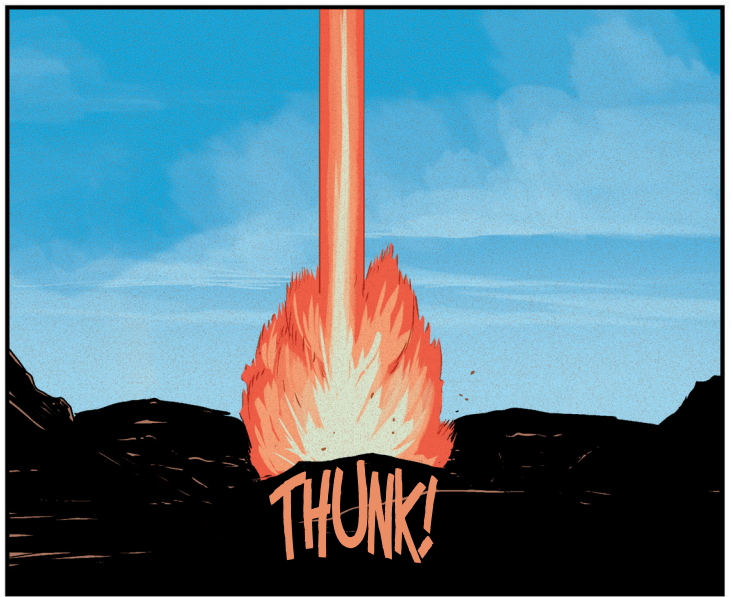
The only thing that matters is can you *protect* them -- can you *save* them if they need saving?

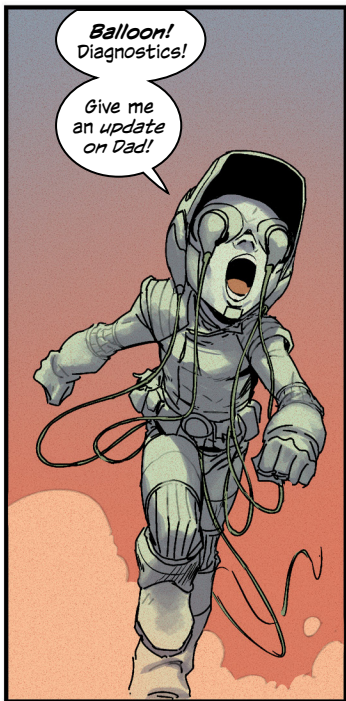
THUNK!

AAIEEEEE!!!

See, Babylon... running -- *hiding* -- is never really an option. You're just *prolonging the inevitable.*

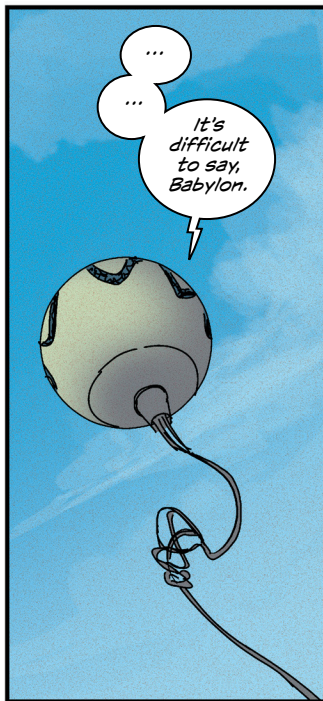






*Balloon!
Diagnostics!*

*Give me
an update
on Dad!*



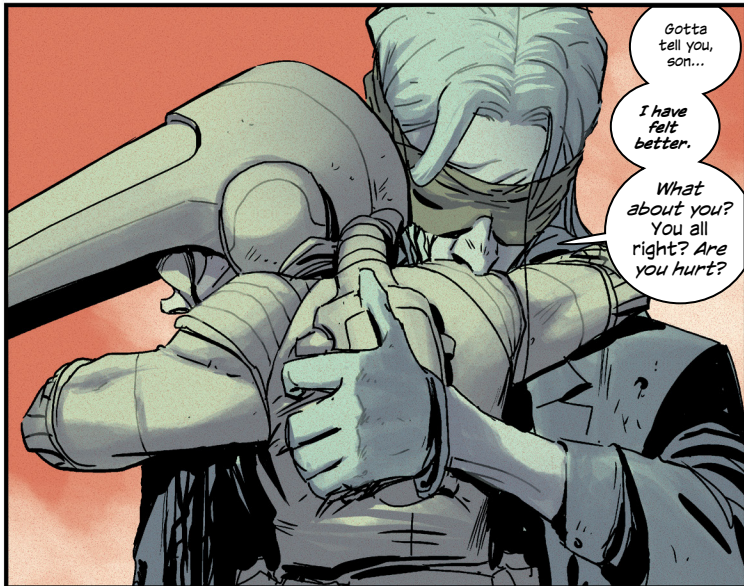
...
...

*It's
difficult
to say,
Babylon.*



*Dad, are
you...*

*Are you...
okay?*



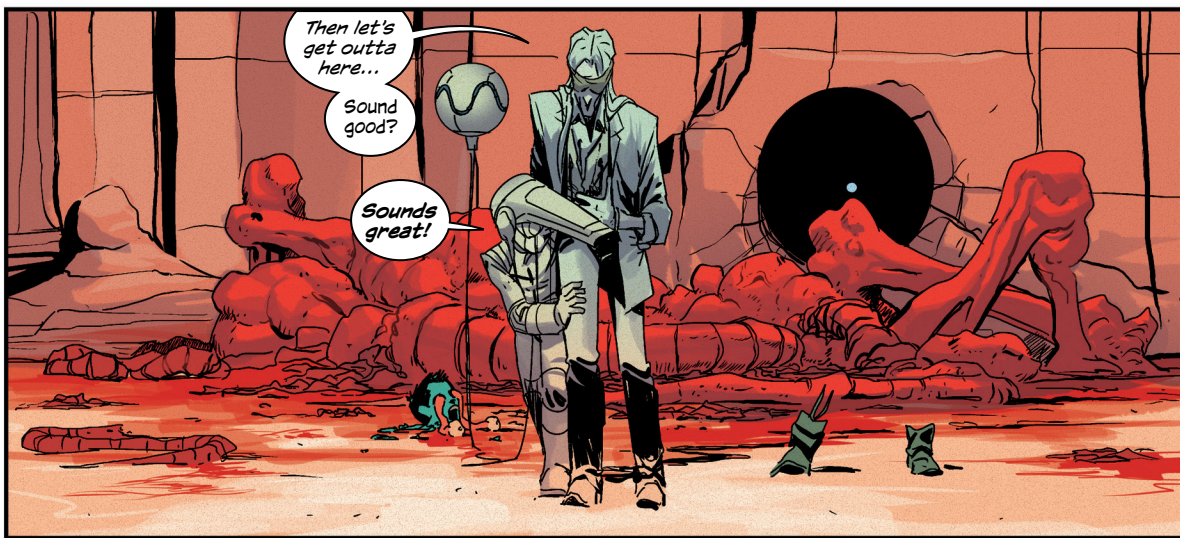
*Gotta
tell you,
son...*

*I have
felt
better.*

*What
about you?
You all
right? Are
you hurt?*



*No. Just a
little grossed
out by all the
Horsemen
muck.*



*Then let's
get outta
here...*

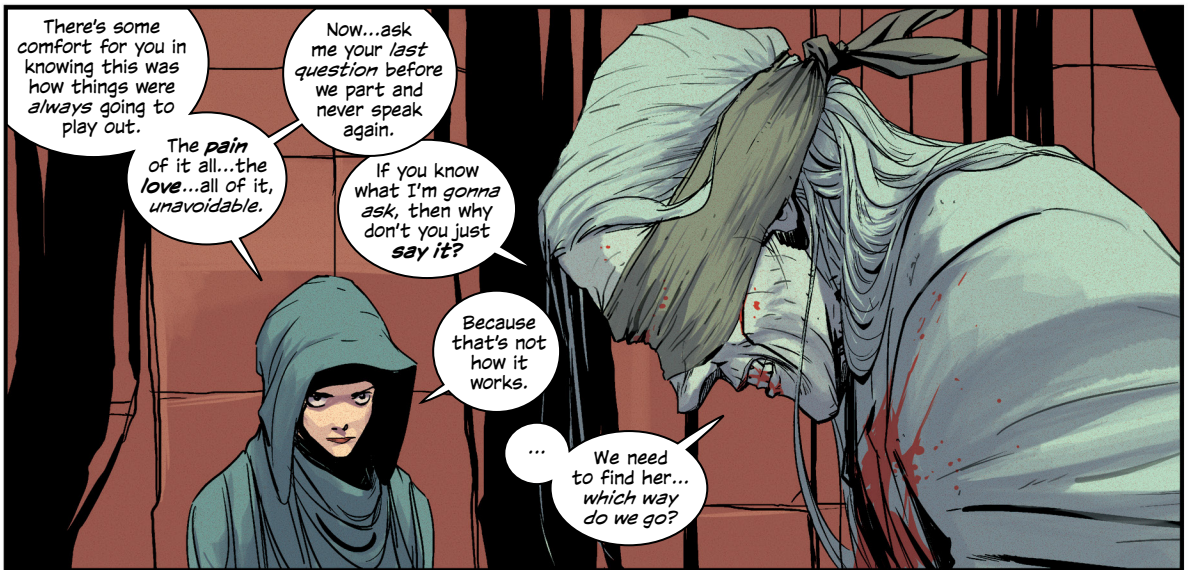
*Sound
good?*

*Sounds
great!*



So... Are we done, witch?

We were done the first day we met.



There's some comfort for you in knowing this was always going to play out.

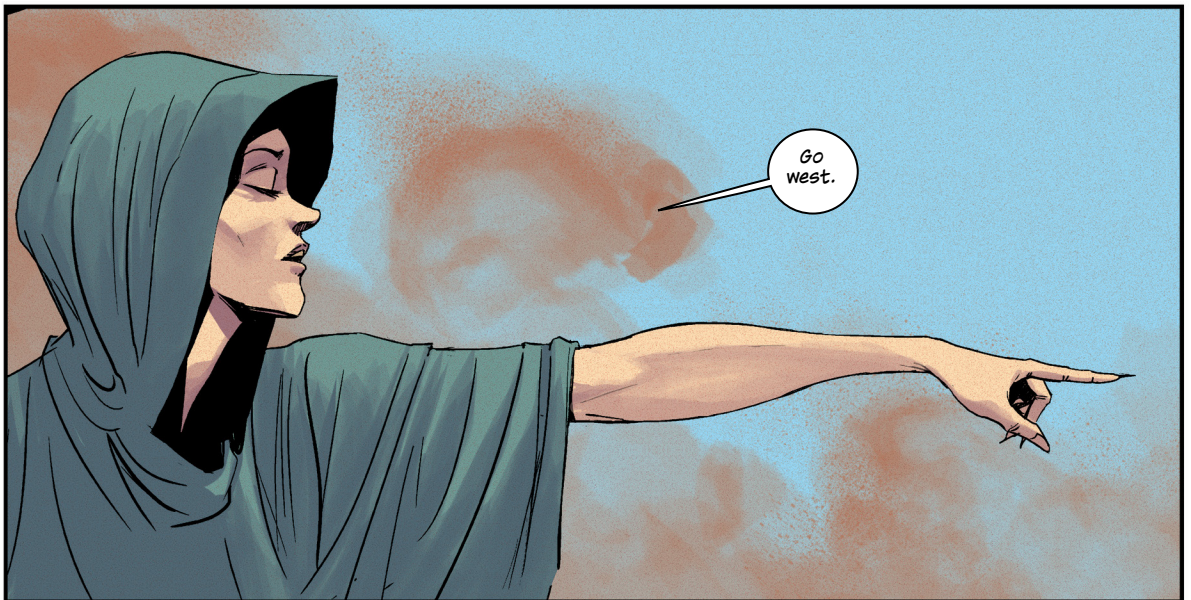
The pain of it all...the love...all of it, unavoidable.

Now...ask me your last question before we part and never speak again.

If you know what I'm gonna ask, then why don't you just say it?

Because that's not how it works.

... We need to find her... which way do we go?

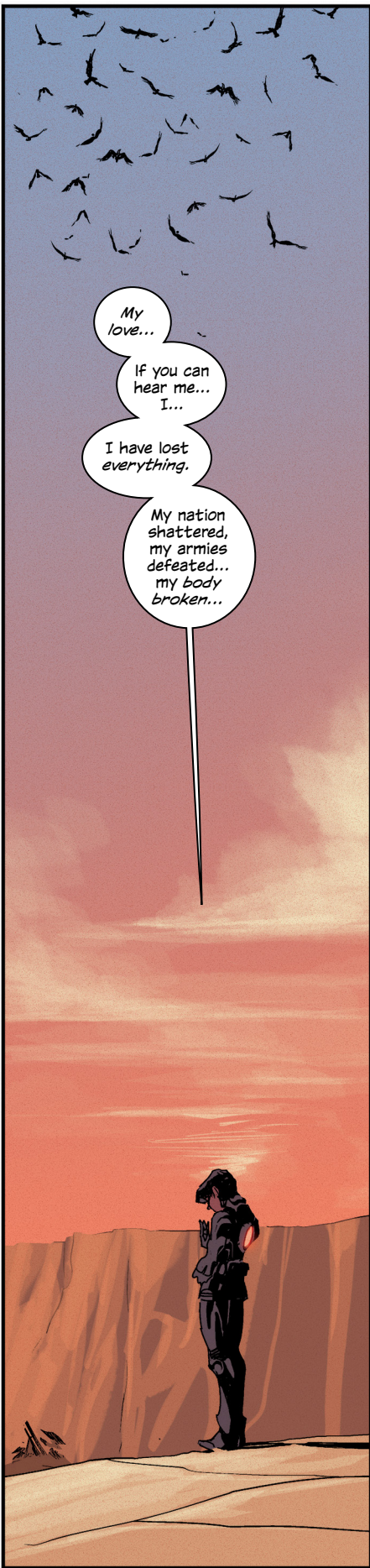


Go west.

"West, toward the setting of the sun... and the death of light."



"West, to the very end."



My love...

If you can hear me... I...

I have lost everything.

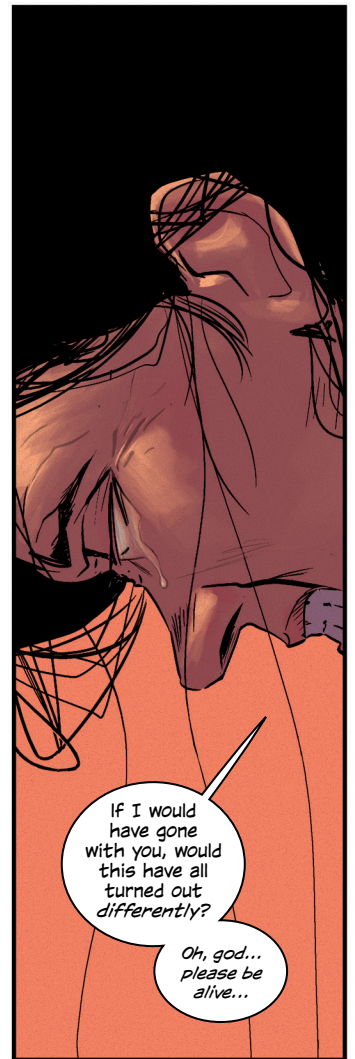
My nation shattered, my armies defeated... my body broken...



So much loss, yet all I can think back to is me deciding to play ruler -- because I knew what was best for my people -- instead of going with you to find our son.

I wonder if you have **succeeded** where I have **failed**?

I wonder if you have **fallen** and now I have **lost everything**...



If I would have gone with you, would this have all turned out differently?

Oh, god... please be alive...



Please have him with y--

We are ready, Mao.



Time to begin.

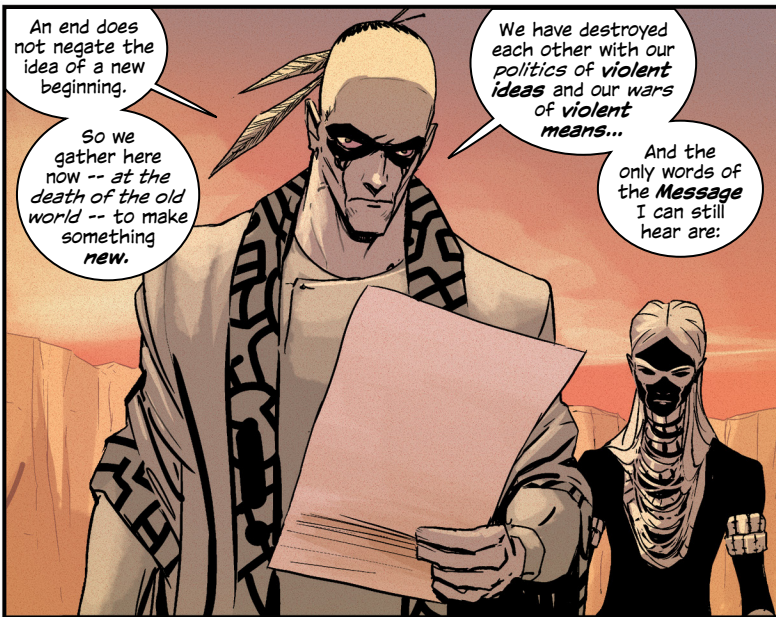
John?



Some of you have never been here before...

There once was a tower, assembled around that rock -- a monument to power built on the idea of a message of the end times.

Well, these are the **end times** -- listen to its **prophet**.



An end does not negate the idea of a new beginning.

So we gather here now -- at the death of the old world -- to make something **new**.

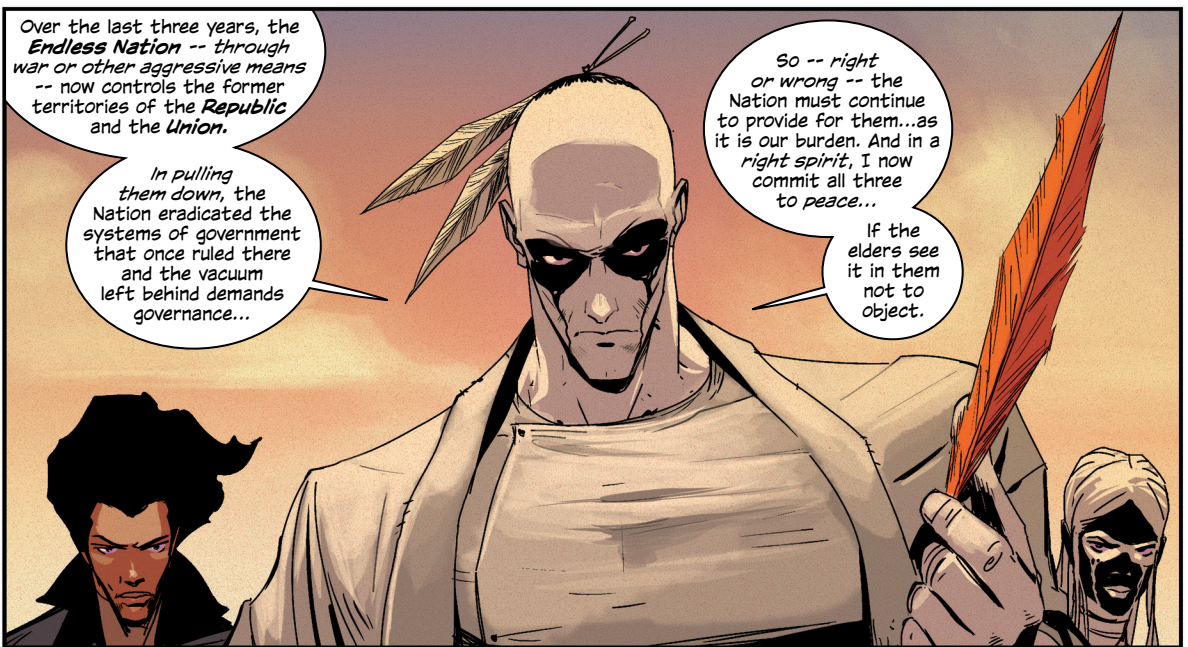
We have destroyed each other with our politics of **violent ideas** and our wars of **violent means**...

And the only words of the **Message** I can still hear are:



"Begin again."

And it's my hope that we shall.

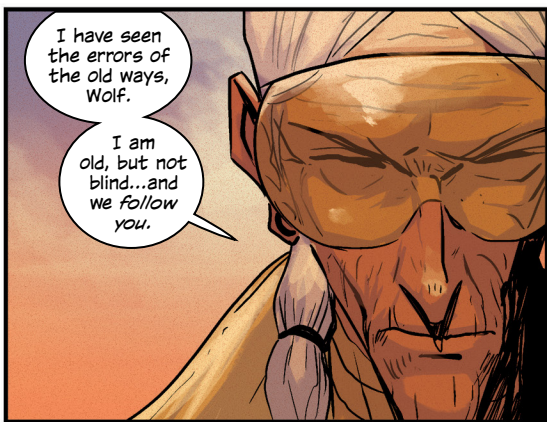


Over the last three years, the **Endless Nation** -- through war or other aggressive means -- now controls the former territories of the **Republic** and the **Union**.

In pulling them down, the Nation eradicated the systems of government that once ruled there and the vacuum left behind demands governance...

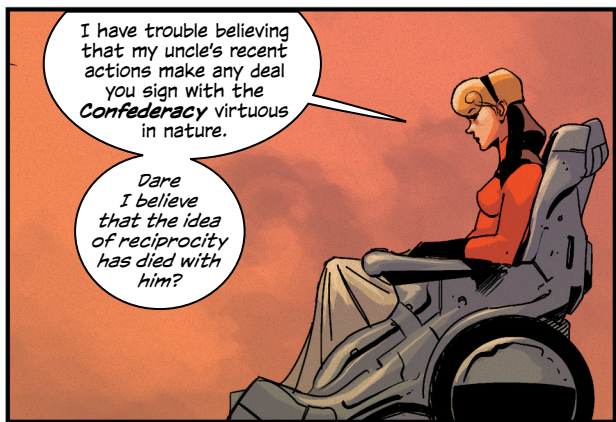
So -- right or wrong -- the Nation must continue to provide for them...as it is our burden. And in a right spirit, I now commit all three to peace...

If the elders see it in them not to object.



I have seen the errors of the old ways, Wolf.

I am old, but not blind...and we follow you.



I have trouble believing that my uncle's recent actions make any deal you sign with the *Confederacy* virtuous in nature.

Dare I believe that the idea of reciprocity has died with him?

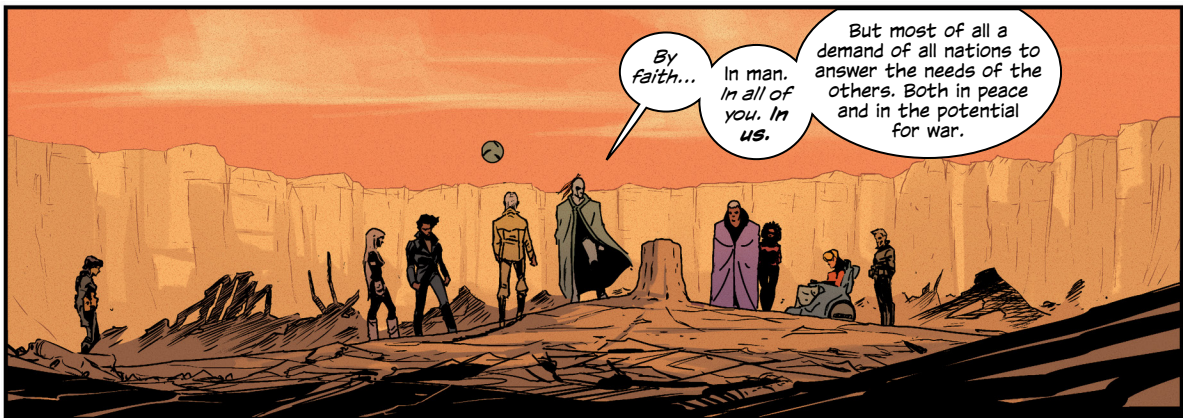


And I'm an old king for a reason. The *Kingdom* has paid -- I have the receipts.



Who here hasn't paid?

The question is...how do you plan on holding such an accord together?



By faith...

In man. In all of you. In us.

But most of all a demand of all nations to answer the needs of the others. Both in peace and in the potential for war.



We agree.



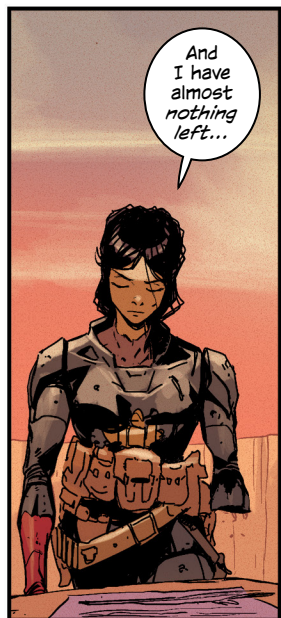
First the carrot... then the stick...

Why not, we are human after all.



I have much to protect and few years left to do so...

I would have them be ones of peace. For my people...and for my children -- the living and the dead.



And I have almost nothing left...



Which makes the few who remain precious and rare.



And in need of my guidance... poor as it is.



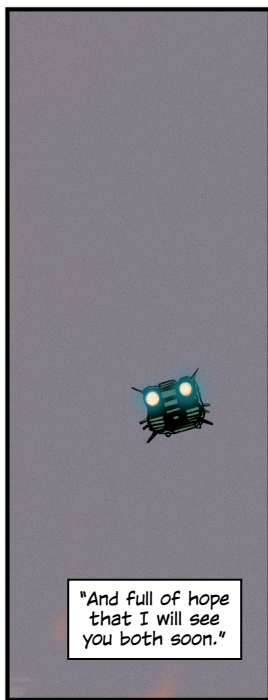
"Hear me, my love..."

"I am coming home."

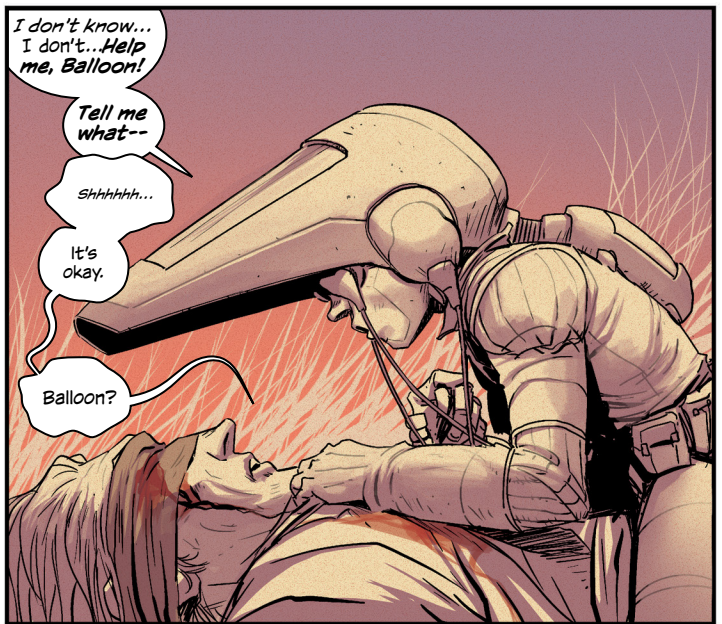
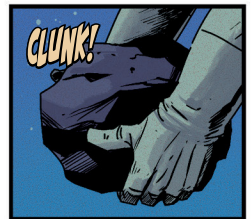
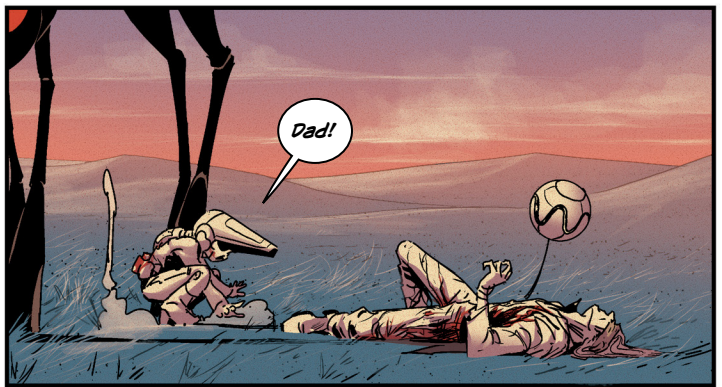
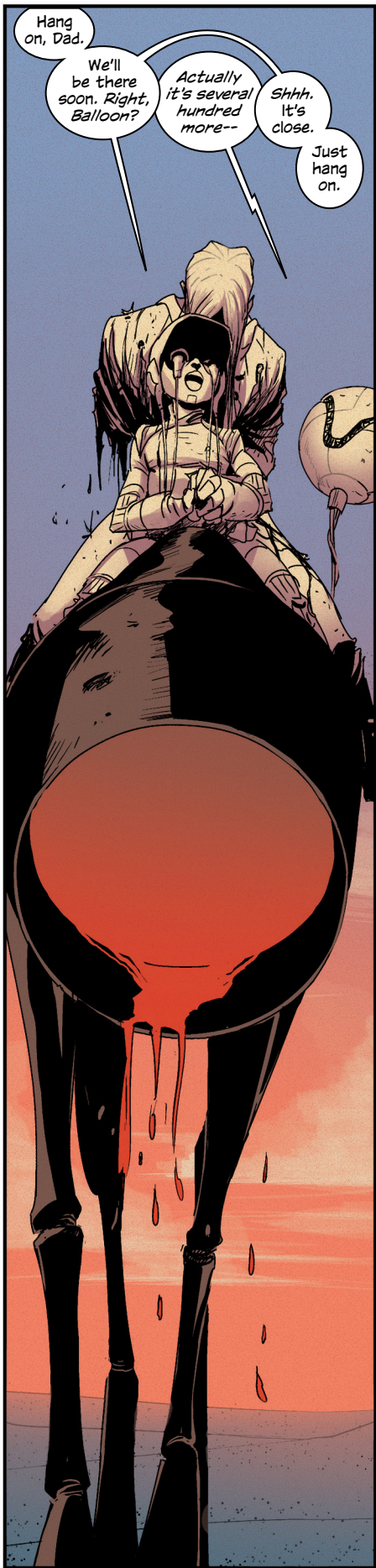


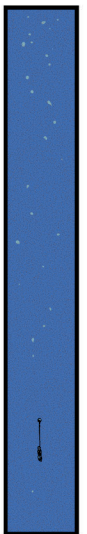
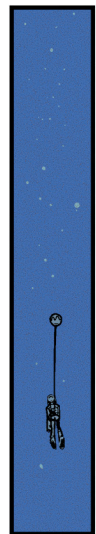
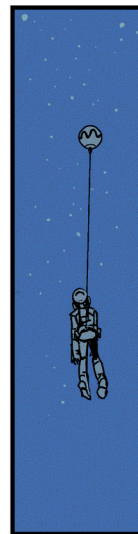
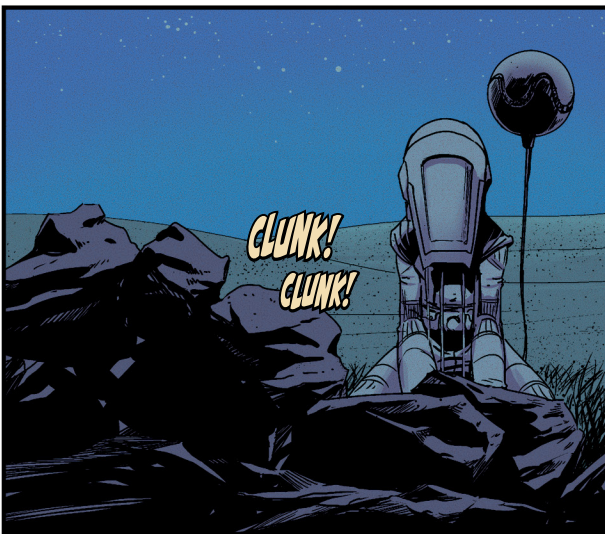
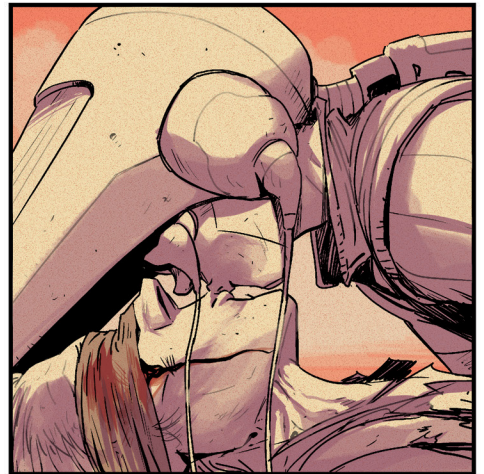
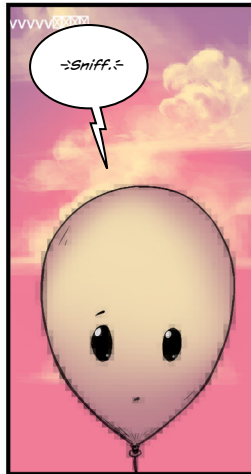
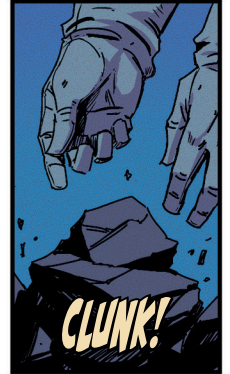
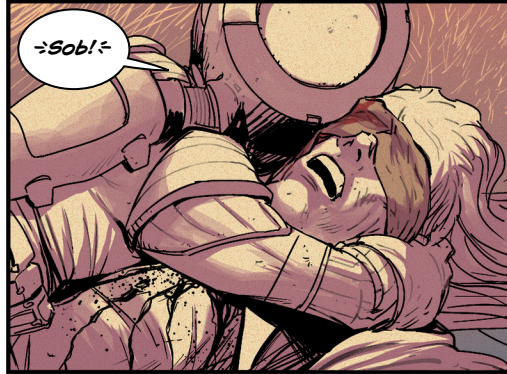
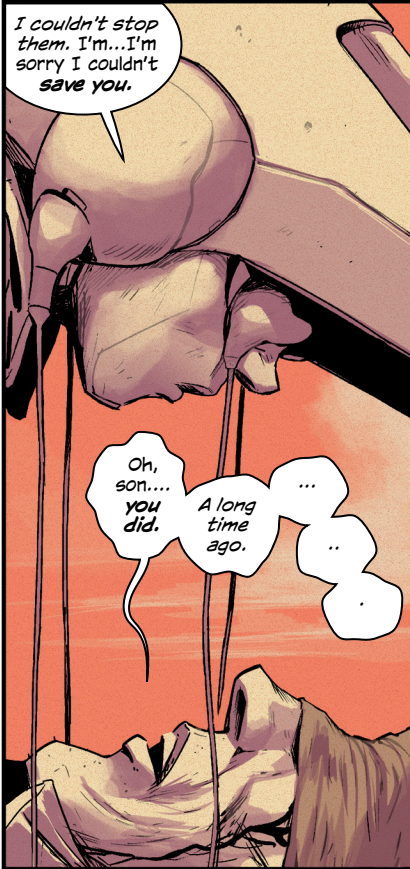
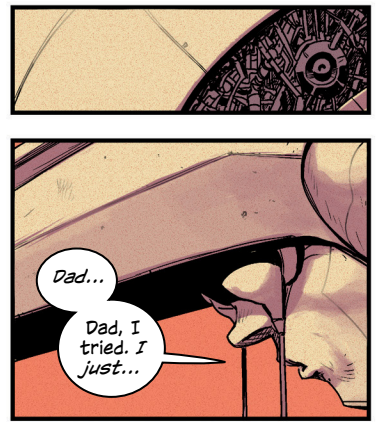
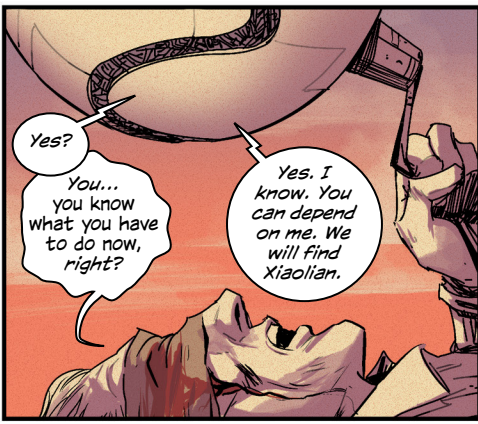
"Broken."

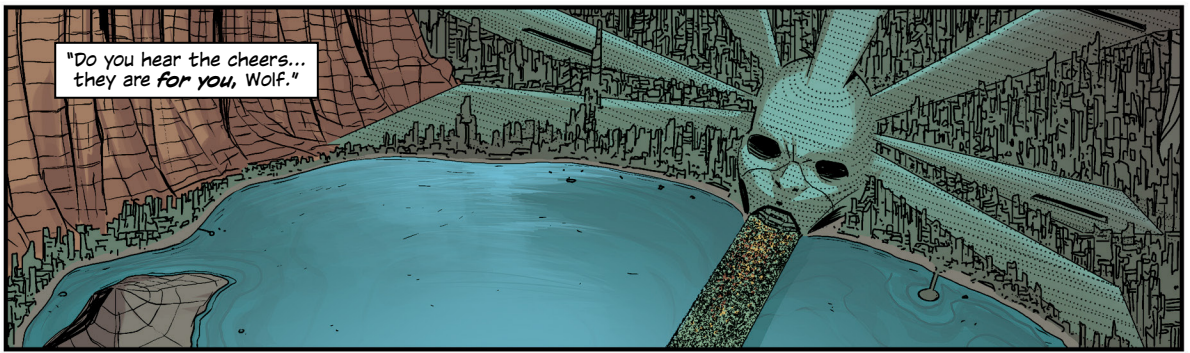
"Beaten."



"And full of hope that I will see you both soon."







"Do you hear the cheers...
they are *for you*, Wolf."



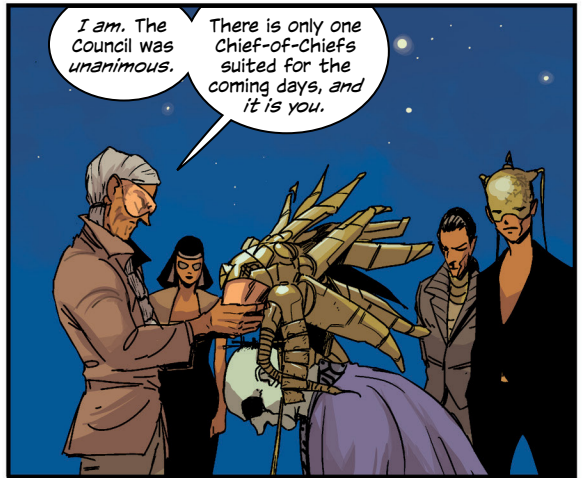
And they are *well*
earned.

Yeah...

It's getting
pretty loud out
there.



Are you sure
about this,
Bodayway?



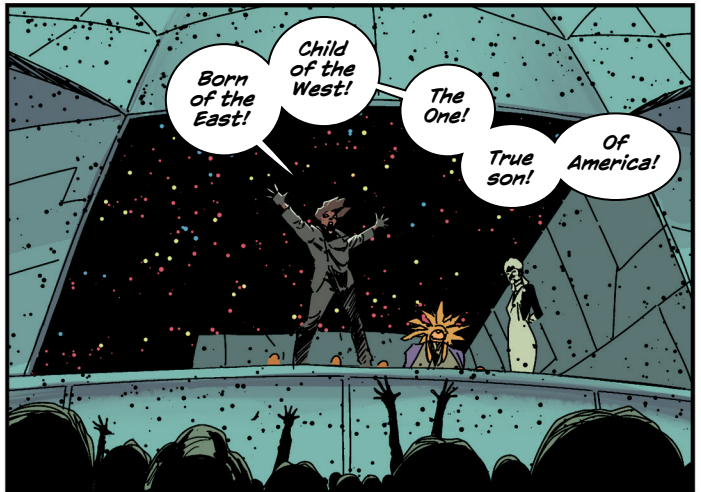
I am. The
Council was
unanimous.

There is only one
Chief-of-Chiefs
suited for the
coming days, and
it is you.



Let's go,
brother...

They're
waiting.



Born of the
East!

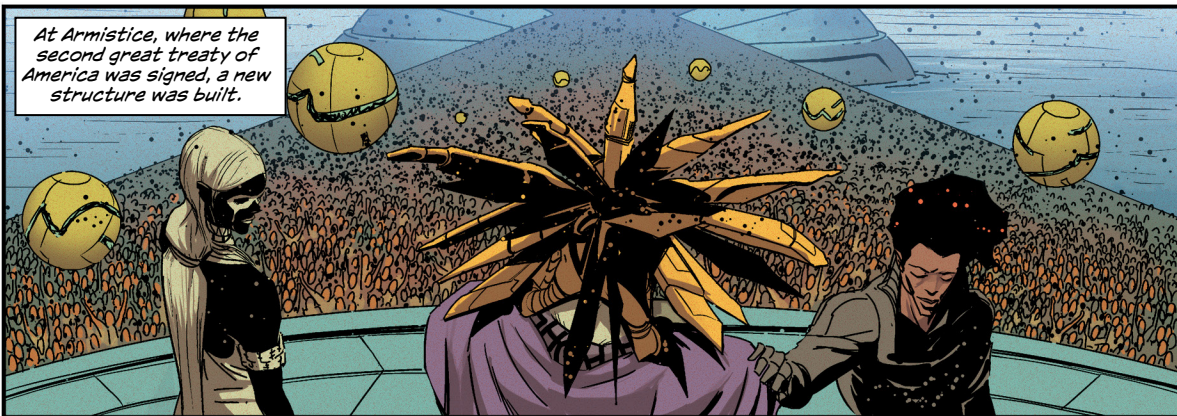
Child of the
West!

The One!

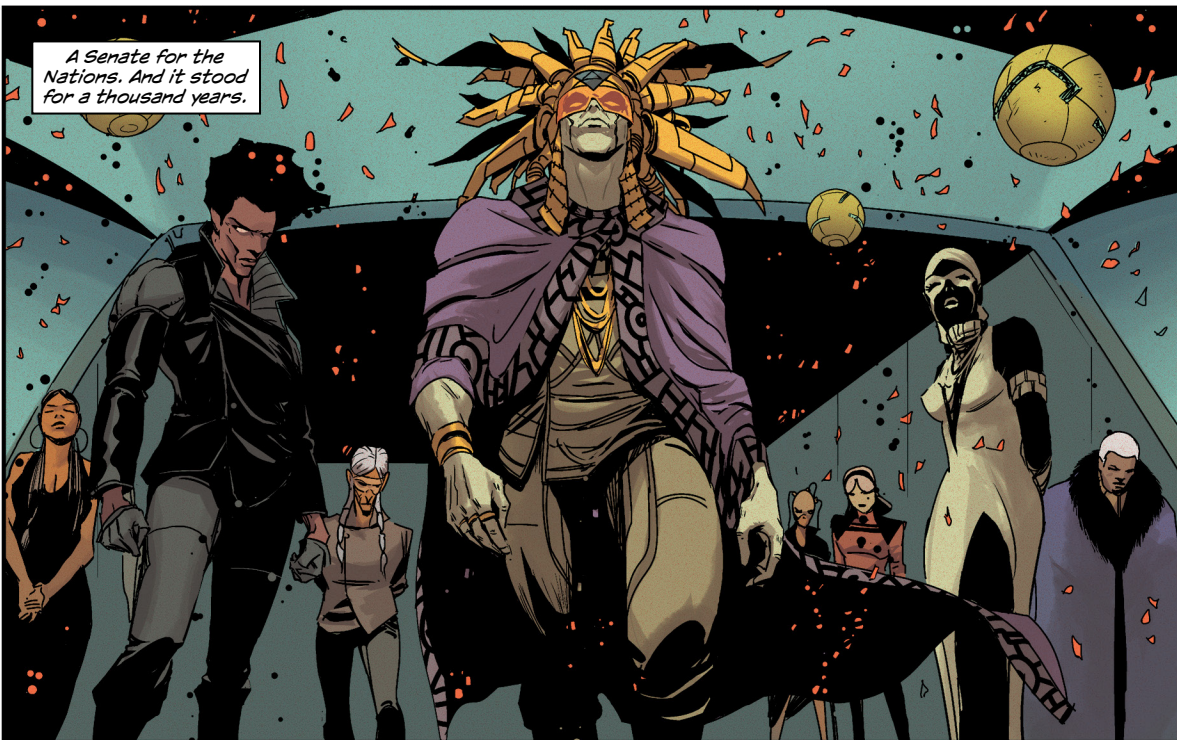
True son!

Of America!

At Armistice, where the second great treaty of America was signed, a new structure was built.




A Senate for the Nations. And it stood for a thousand years.



It was good and a thing to be celebrated.





*But when its
time had passed, it
fell...just as all
things of man do.*

*Every building.
Every institution.
Every nation.*

It all fades...except one.

*The ruins of
New Shanghai.*

Whoa.

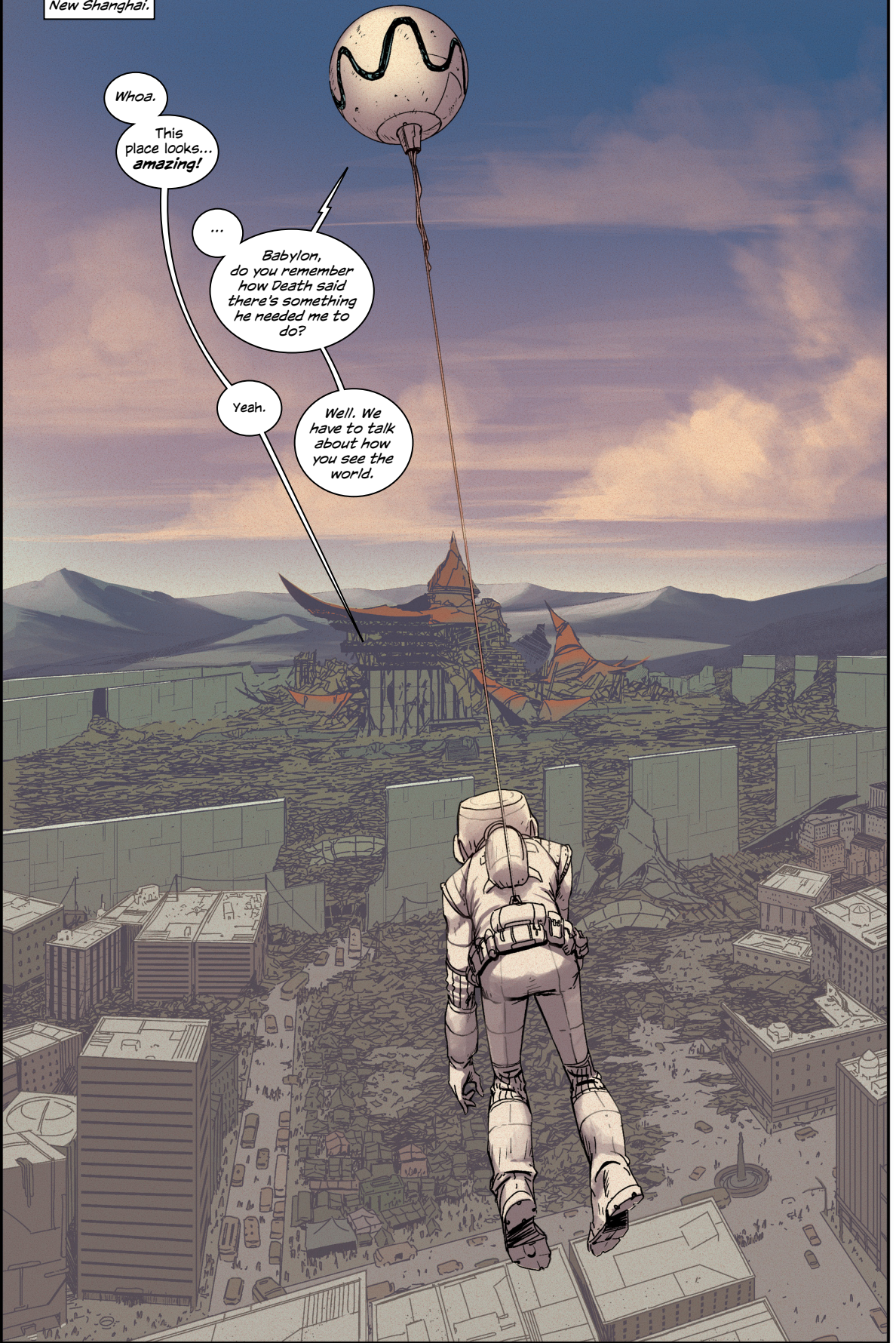
This
place looks...
amazing!

...

Babylon,
do you remember
how *Death* said
there's something
he needed me to
do?

Yeah.

Well, *We*
have to talk
about how
you see the
world.

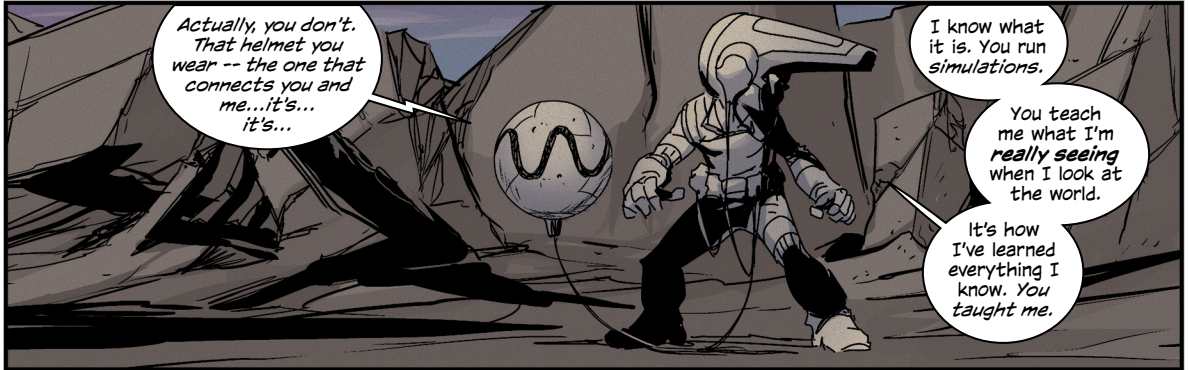




Uh, infrared. Nightvision. Thermal.

I see just fine.

Always have.

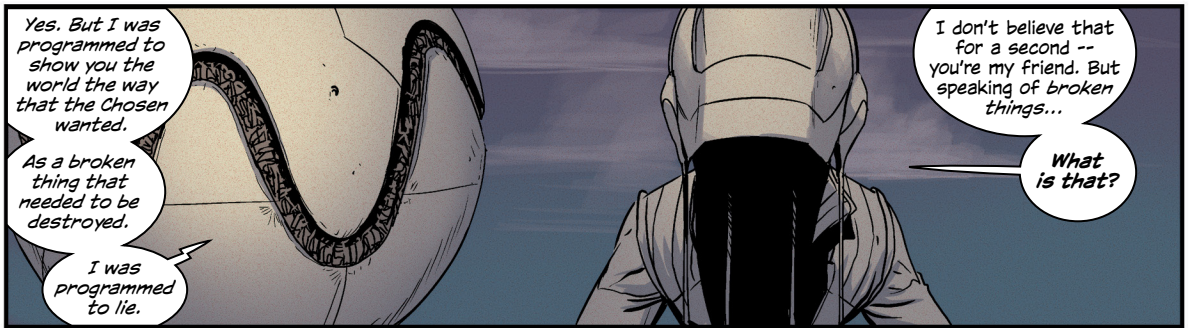


Actually, you don't. That helmet you wear -- the one that connects you and me...it's... it's...

I know what it is. You run simulations.

You teach me what I'm **really seeing** when I look at the world.

It's how I've learned everything I know. You taught me.



Yes. But I was programmed to show you the world the way that the Chosen wanted.

As a broken thing that needed to be destroyed.

I was programmed to lie.

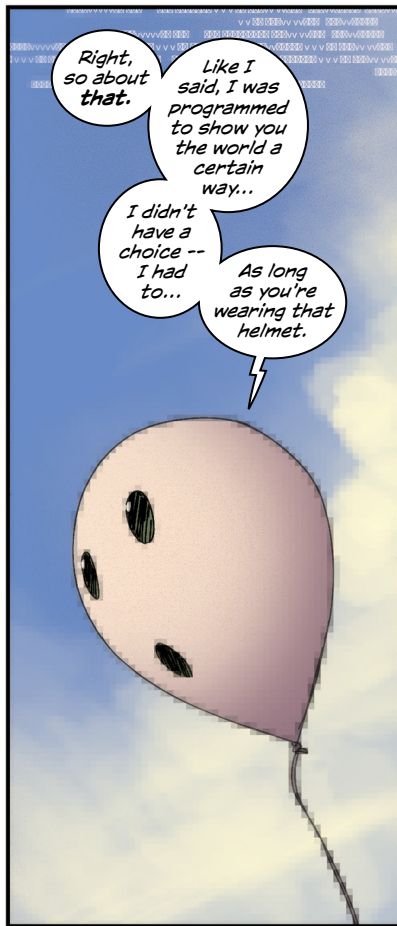
I don't believe that for a second -- you're my friend. But speaking of broken things...

What is that?



Babylon?

Babylon?



Right, so about that.

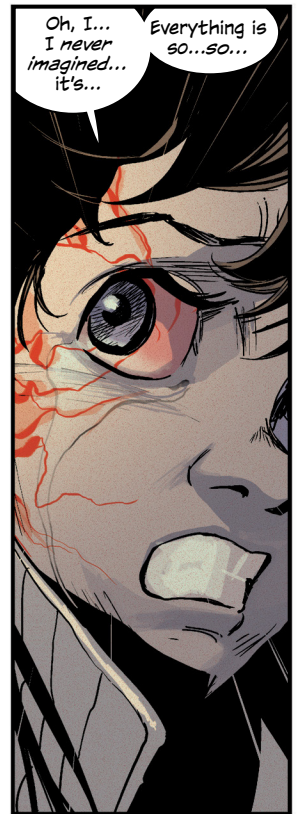
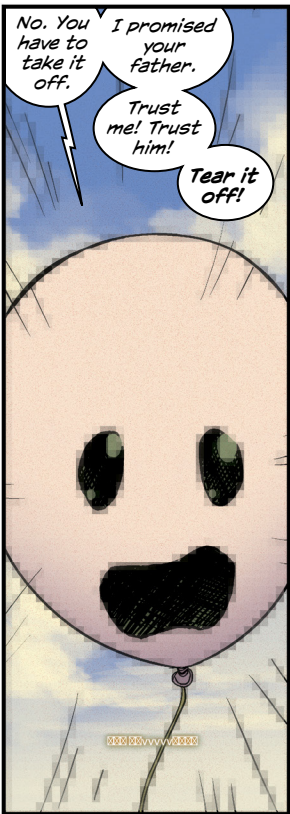
Like I said, I was programmed to show you the world a certain way..

I didn't have a choice -- I had to...

As long as you're wearing that helmet.

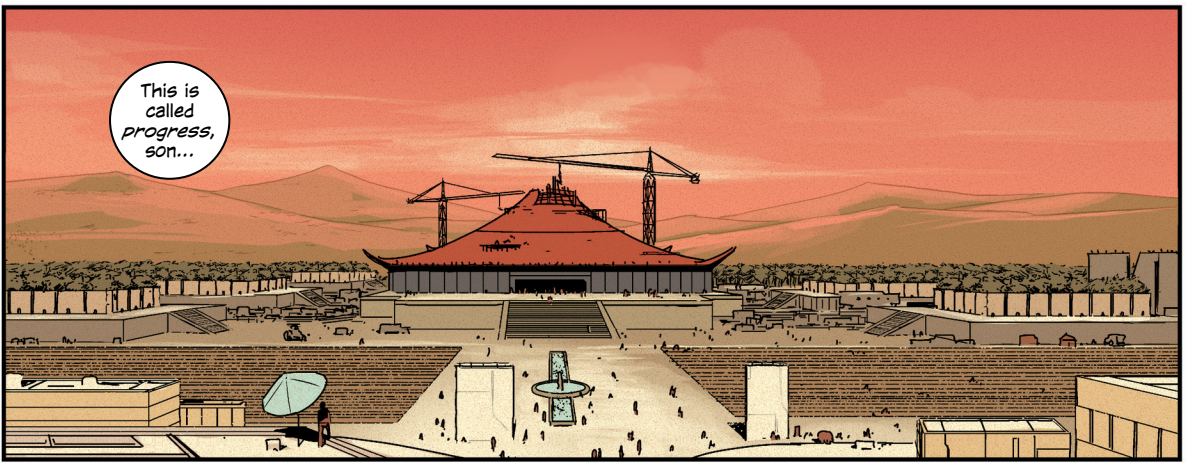


Babylon?

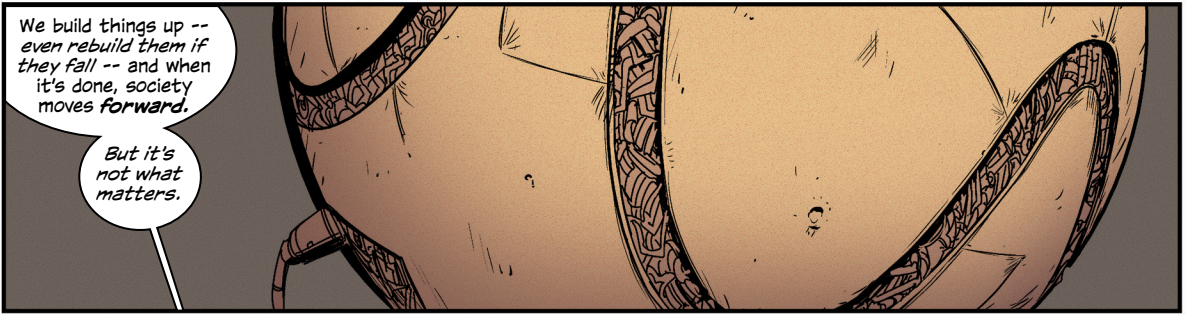


"Beautiful."



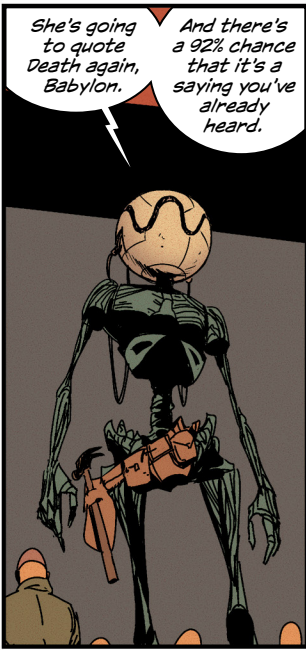


This is called progress, son...



We build things up -- even rebuild them if they fall -- and when it's done, society moves forward.

But it's not what matters.



She's going to quote Death again, Babylon.

And there's a 92% chance that it's a saying you've already heard.



Yeah. Probably higher.

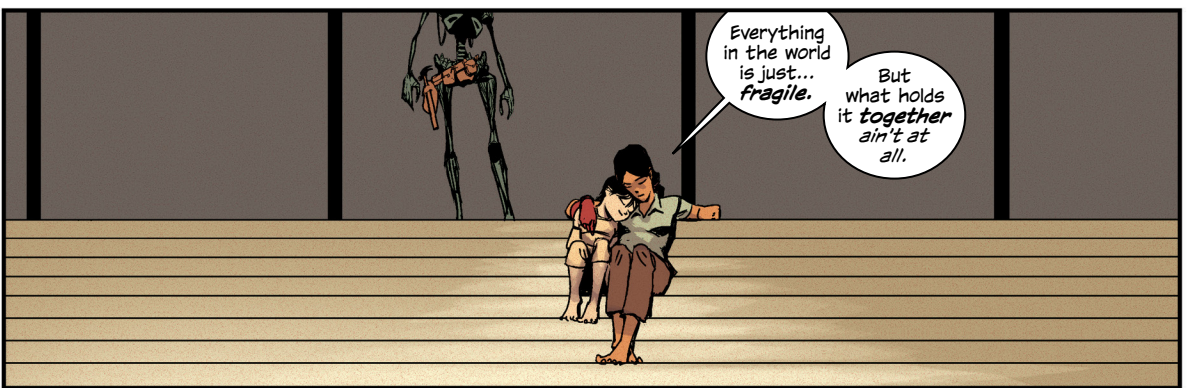
But I still want to hear her say it.



Here's what your father would've said:

It's easy to destroy things. To break them. To even kill them.

Nations. Buildings. People...



Everything in the world is just... fragile.

But what holds it together ain't at all.

Love.

It'll
outlast
everything
on this
planet.

It's what
formed the
Earth, it's
what shaped
it...


Love's
what makes
someone *give their
life for another*
-- makes them *do
it* without ever
*thinking
twice.*

It's what
makes
this world
home.

*And don't
you ever
forget it.*



TRAMP



EVERY CONTAINER
TELLS A STORY

NEW SERIES
2020
BY
DRAGOTTA.



WE WOULD TELL YOU TO
PRAY, BUT IT WOULDN'T
DO ANY GOOD.

YOU HAVE EARNED WHAT
IS COMING TO YOU.



RATED **T+** / TEEN PLUS