

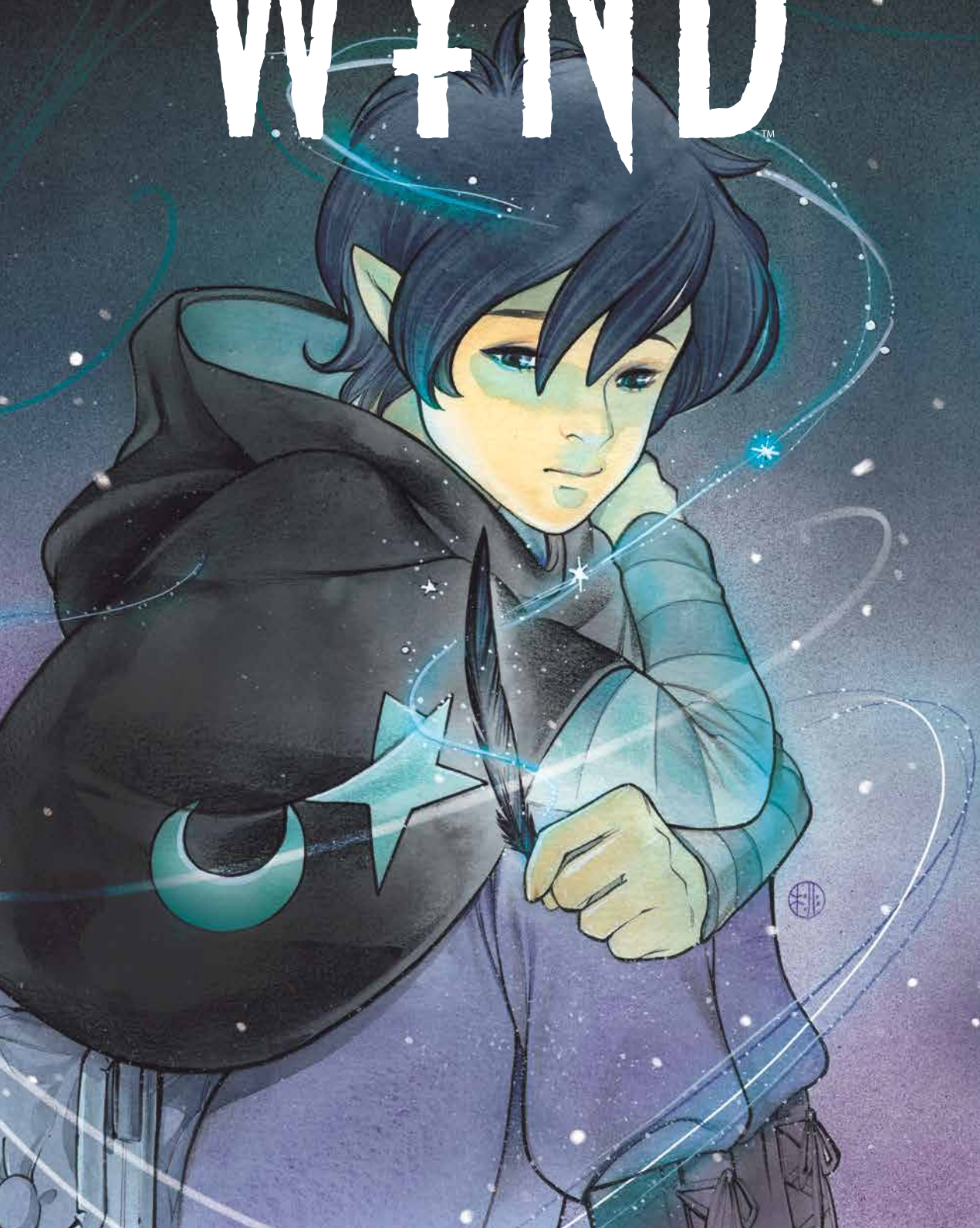
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No.
I don't
think
so?



Wh-what?
What is this
place...?

Am I
stepping in
poop?

Oakley,
I *swear*, if
I'm stepping
in poop...



Oh, sorry.
I'm kinda *used*
to the dark.

There.
Is that
better?



I mean,
maybe? What's
going on,
Oakley?

I overheard
one of the other
workers whispering
at lunch. About the
catacombs under
the *Old Temple
to the Four
Winds*.



They said
that that's where
the *weirdbloods*
were hiding.

Weirdbloods...
Why would I
want...?









"The North Men ruled over the frosty forests of the Borean Waste, by the grace of the **North Wind** and all its cold, powerful tempests.



"The West Men ruled over the Sunset Peaks, by the grace of the **West Wind** and its warm, calming breezes.



"The East Men ruled over the Skydrenched Isles, by the grace of the *East Wind* and its cooling, life-bringing rains.

"And the South Men ruled over the scorching deserts of the Notunlands, by the grace of the *South Wind* and its sandstorms..."

"Once a **generation**, the Winds would call their children together from the **four corners** of the world, to meet on the island they called their home.

"Esseriel.

"They were **proud** of what their respective empires had built, and so they shared the **fruits** of their kingdoms, and their latest **discoveries** of the world...

"These meetings brought a **great peace**, and a dream of a united world, where all races of man would come **together** on Esseriel and rule it.

"They say the Winds promised to give their children the **gift of flight**, and mastery over the air, should they come home to them."



"But the *Empires of Man* had more to explore, more to discover, and so, time after time, they set off back to their corners of the world.

"And so the *Winds* let their children go forth into a world, not knowing the *danger* that awaited them.

"Because there was *another* force in this world. A darker, *stranger* force...

"A god of the *wild wood*, who envied the freedom of man to go from place to place...

"And envied the *Winds* most of all. For their power, and for the *devotion* man had bestowed upon them."



"And so the God of the Wild Wood
unleashed his *wrath* upon the world.

"He corrupted all growing
things so that they would
spawn its monstrous children.



"The terrible *Sprytles*, who with
a single touch could twist a man's
blood into something strange...
Something *weird*. Marking them
of the earth and not of the air.



"And so new
races were born...



"The *Faerie* of the
deep forest, with
their monstrous claws
and terrible wings...



"And the *Vampyre*
of the rock-strewn
deserts, with their pale
skin and razor teeth.



"The human kingdoms
began to *fall*, one by
one, across the world.



"In time, the Men of
the East and the West
stopped coming to the
meetings on Esseriel."



"The Four Winds implored the
Empires of the North and South
to **retreat** to their embrace.
To **fortify** with their power.
To become their **children**
as they had long promised.

"But the men were proud.
They had built great wealth
and power and wanted to
keep it. They decided to fight.

"But the God
of the Wild
Wood was
too strong...

"And in time, the
last cities fell..."



"One last ship from the **Northern Empire** and one last ship from the **Southern Empire** set forth for Esseriel.



"They **prayed** to their Winds, hoping to be gifted with the **power** they had long been promised. But there came no answer...



"And when they reached the island, they found it infested with the **Spytles** of the nature god, with encampments of **Faerie** in the great woods and **Vampyre** in the great deserts.



"The great city on the **Windshorn Peak** was abandoned. The Four Winds were nowhere in sight. They had **fallen** to their rival."



"The remnants of the two empires built a great walled city to **protect** them from the corrupting wild nature of the world.

"What we now call *Pipetown*, but is known formally as the *Last Empire of Man*.

"The children of the two dynasties wed and created the **bloodline** that sits on the throne to this day, with the great *King Yossar* and his son, *Yorik*.

"And those of magic blood were **banned** from the city to protect the last **true humans** in this world."



Is that...
Is that all
real?

So they
say. That is why
the King holds the
Blood Laws so
dearly. That is why
I have come here
tonight.



Do you have...
Are your *ears*
pointy, too?



Yes, child...
My ears are
pointed...





We're here.





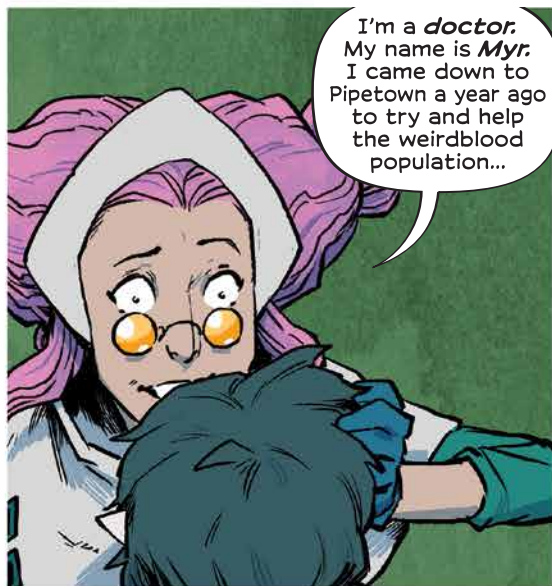














Here, I can **test** you.

I've been **classifying** the different **breeds**... Hold out your finger.

My **finger**?



Gotcha.



Now let's see what kind of **weirdblood** you've got.



This is all so **gross** I can't even handle it.

I can deal with gross if it means I can stay here. In Pipetown. Live **openly** with you and Miss Molly.



This is everything I ever **dreamed** of.

Thank you, Oakley. Thank you **so much** for finding this place. I don't know what I would do without you.





When the King alerted me that the Prince had been **kidnapped** from the castle, I suspected we'd find some secret **encampment**.

I promised him I would **find** it. And I am a man of my **word**.

I knew there was a **stink** coming up through the **cracks**...

You should have tried to **leave**. I likely would have caught you, but a few of you might have gotten over the walls.

Some of you may have even been able to **dodge** my riflemen. But thankfully you rounded yourselves up, nice and easy.

Orders, sir?

Kill them. All the weirdbloods and their foul handlers. We cannot risk **contamination** spreading.



Wynd,
take my
hand...



But Myr...

No buts.
We have to
GO!



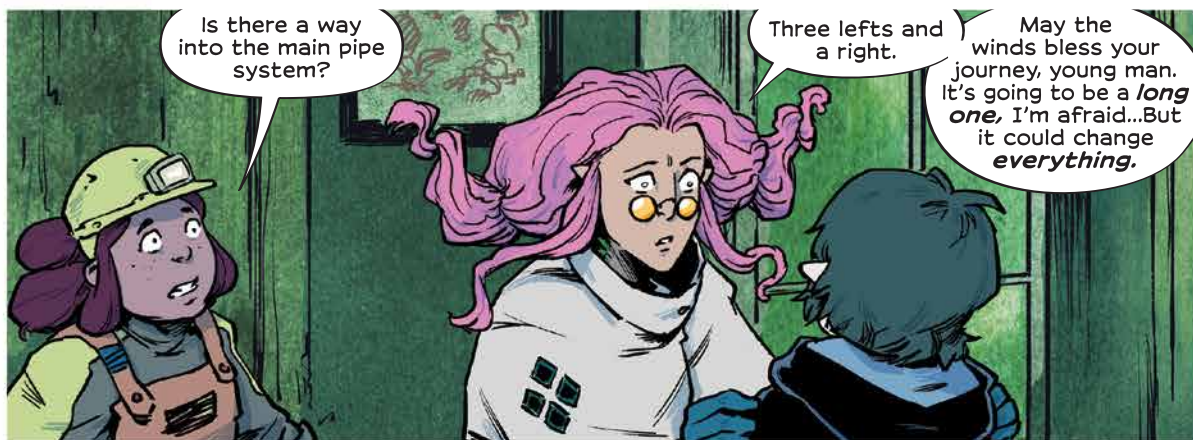
She's right.
You need to
go, **now**.

And we
need to get as
many people
out of here as
we can...



We need to **collapse**
the tunnels. **Lock** them
away from us.

Yes,
Myr. At
once.











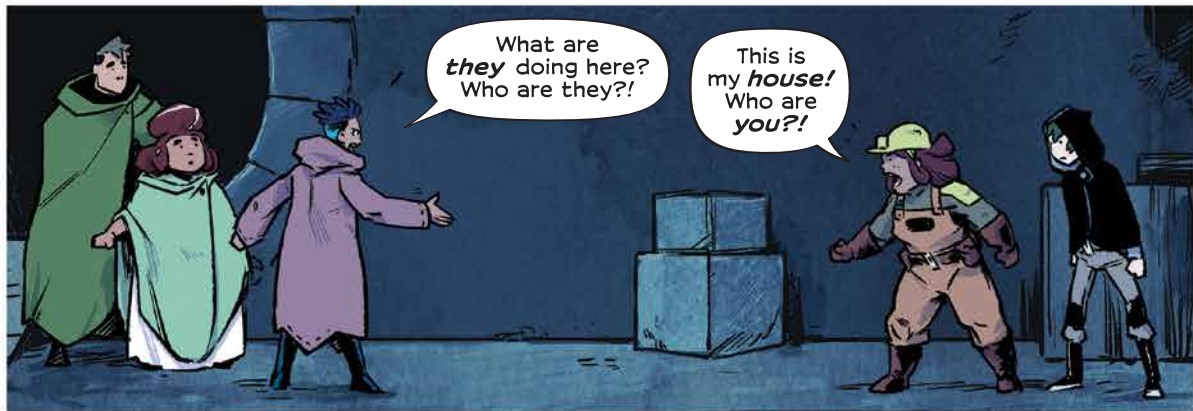
















Let's not go there, love. We need to make *quick strides* if we're going to make it to Southport by *sunrise*. I've packed the boat already.

The Duke's Men will take them out to sea. Our *contact* should be waiting at the mouth of the tunnel.



You've been with the *Duke's Men* all this time.



Not as long as I *should* have been.

We'll have a nice long chat about it when I'm back, and then you can *apologize* to me for being so cruel.



Wynd, I packed a few things for you. I'm *sorry*. There's no time to swap them out. We need to leave now.



Oakley, you'll have to make your *goodbye* quick...





Yes.
Someone
is.

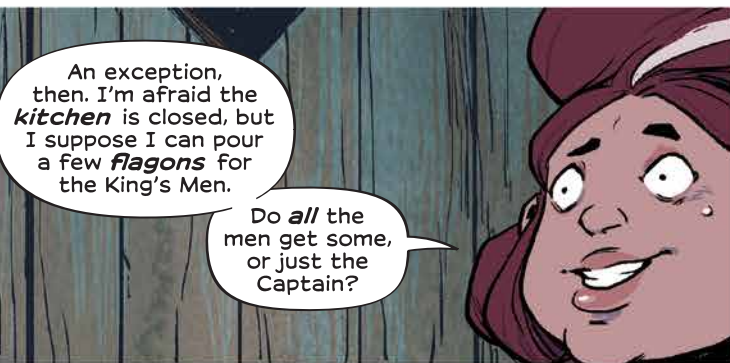


I'm...I'm
afraid we're
closed for the
evening.



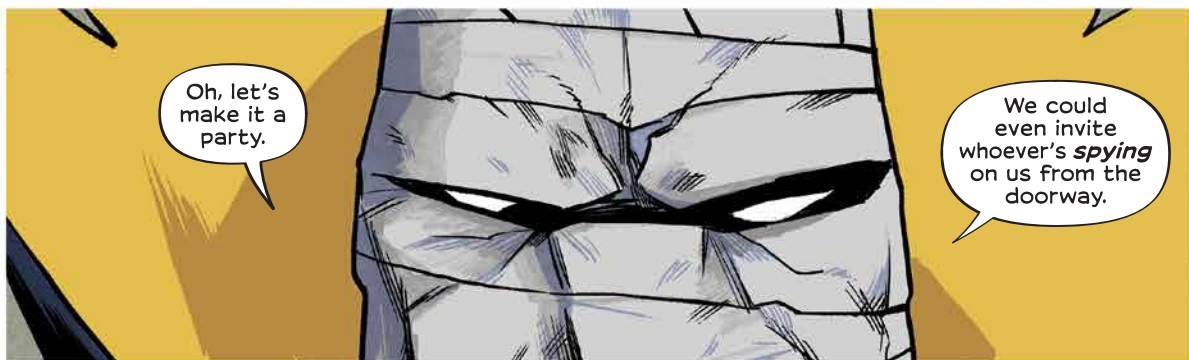
Oh, I'm sure
we could make an
exception, couldn't
we?

We've been
at it *all night*,
and I'm rather
parched.



An exception,
then. I'm afraid the
kitchen is closed, but
I suppose I can pour
a few *flagons* for
the King's Men.

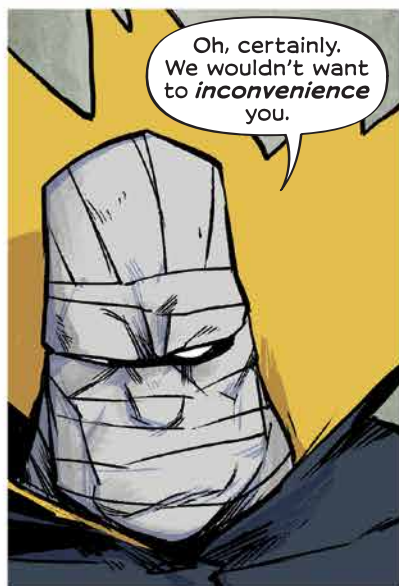
Do *all* the
men get some,
or just the
Captain?



Oh, let's
make it a
party.

We could
even invite
whoever's *spying*
on us from the
doorway.



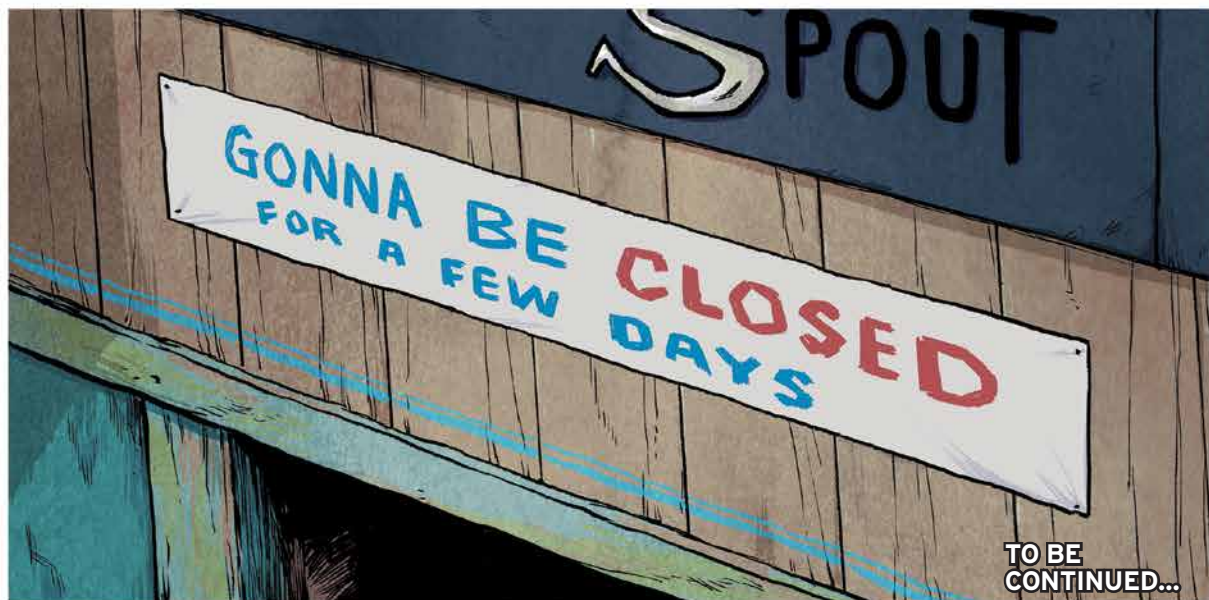












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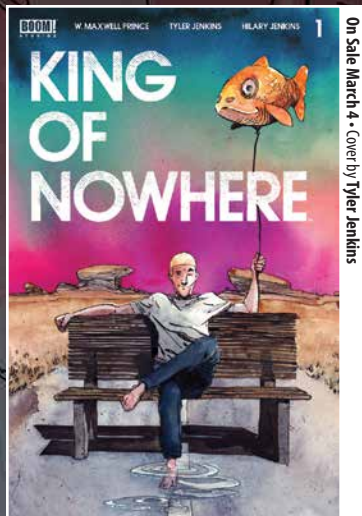
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**SIMON
SPURRIER**

(JOHN CONSTANTINE:
HELLBLAZER, CODA)

MAKING FRIENDS WITH AN
ALIEN WAS THEIR FIRST MISTAKE...

AND ARTIST
**CHRIS
WILDGOOSE**

(BATGIRL, BATMAN:
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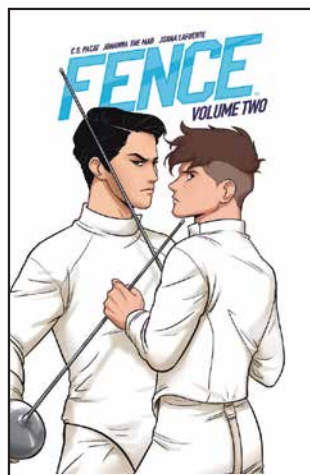
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