

BOOM!
STUDIOS

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#2

SEVEN SECRETS



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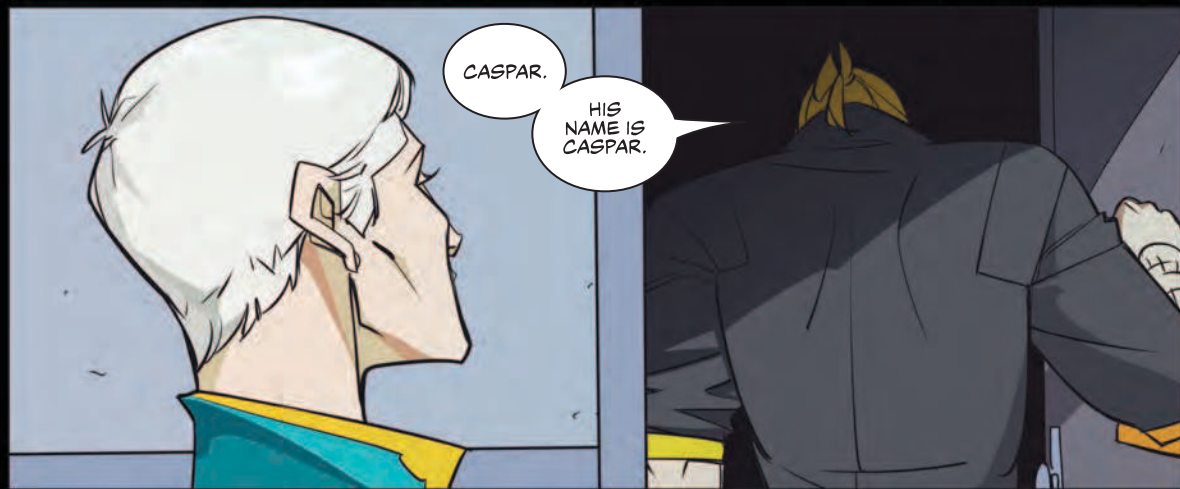


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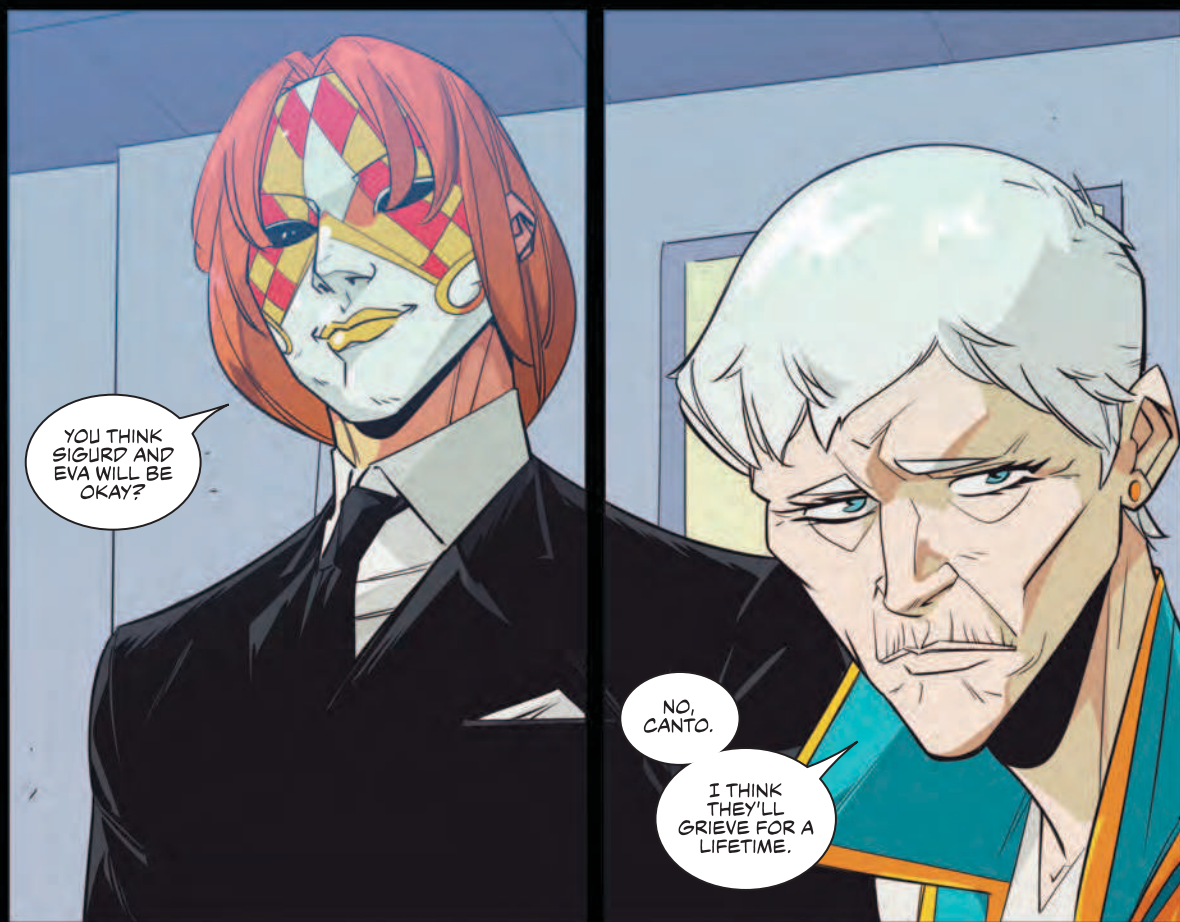
I DON'T REMEMBER
WHAT HAPPENED
AFTER I WAS BORN.

WHICH, I
GUESS IS
PRETTY
STANDARD.



CASPAR.

HIS
NAME IS
CASPAR.



YOU THINK
SIGURD AND
EVA WILL BE
OKAY?

NO,
CANTO.

I THINK
THEY'LL
GRIEVE FOR A
LIFETIME.



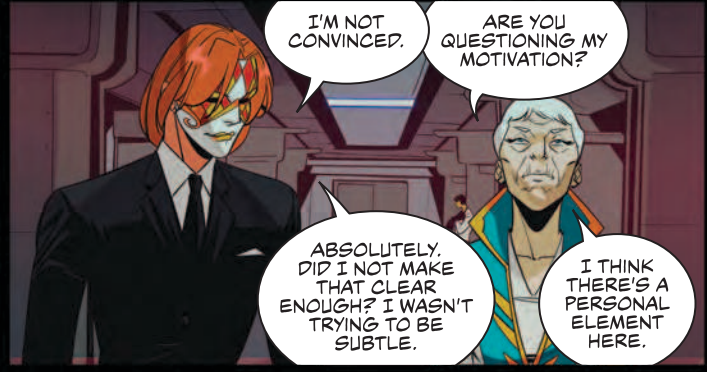
THE CHILD CAN'T STAY WITH THE ORDER.

IT WOULD CAUSE TOO MANY PROBLEMS.



PROBLEMS FOR WHO? FOR THE ORDER? FOR EVA AND SIGURD? OR FOR THE CHILD?

ALL OF THE ABOVE.



I'M NOT CONVINCED.

ARE YOU QUESTIONING MY MOTIVATION?

ABSOLUTELY. DID I NOT MAKE THAT CLEAR ENOUGH? I WASN'T TRYING TO BE SUBTLE.

I THINK THERE'S A PERSONAL ELEMENT HERE.



YOU KNOW, BEING A LEADER, I REALLY EXPECTED MY DECISIONS TO BE UNDERMINED **LESS**.

REALLY? THAT'S CUTE.



WHY DO I KEEP YOU AROUND?

MAINLY TO HOLD THIS. I SUSPECT YOU HAVE UNUSUALLY WEAK ARMS.



CALL THEM IN, CANTO...

"...CALL IN THE
HOLDER AND THE
KEEPER OF THE
THIRD SECRET."



THERE
ARE THREE
SECRETS IN ONE
PLACE TODAY.
THAT ISN'T
WISE.



I KNOW.
AND I'M NOT
ASKING YOU TO
STAY LONG,
FAOLAN.

WHAT
ARE YOU
ASKING?



THIS IS EVA AND
SIGURD'S CHILD.
HIS NAME IS
CASPAR.

THERE
IS NO ONE IN THE
ORDER WHO CAN
ADOPT THIS BABY. WE
CAN'T RISK THAT KIND
OF ATTACHMENT. BUT
HE BELONGS WITH
THE SEVEN.

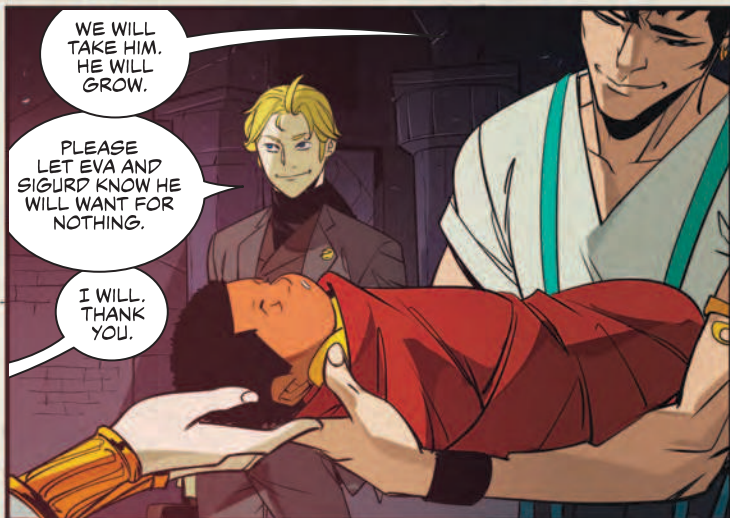
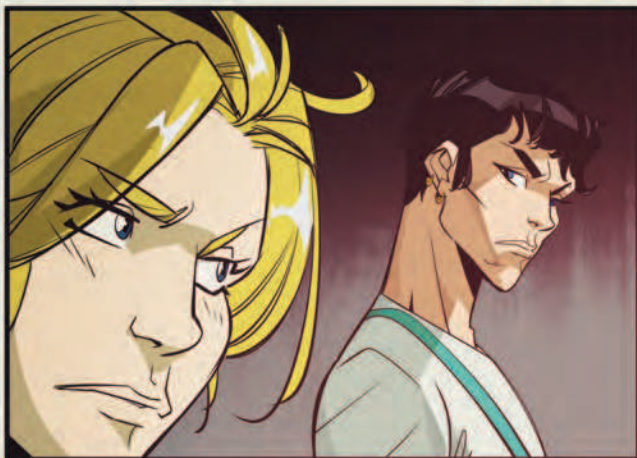
UNTIL
HE'S OLD
ENOUGH TO
REJOIN US, WE
NEED YOU TO
TAKE HIM.



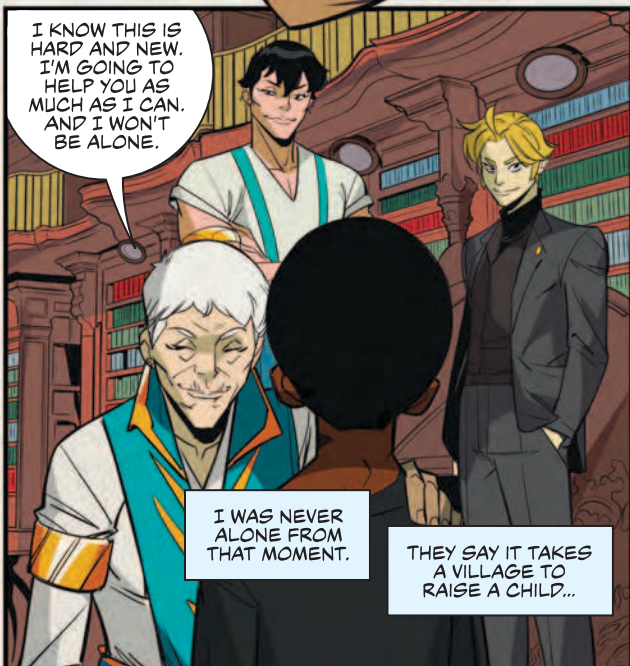
TAKE HIM
WHERE?

YOU
KNOW
WHERE.





I RETURNED TO THE ORDER WHEN I WAS NINE YEARS OLD, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE FROM.





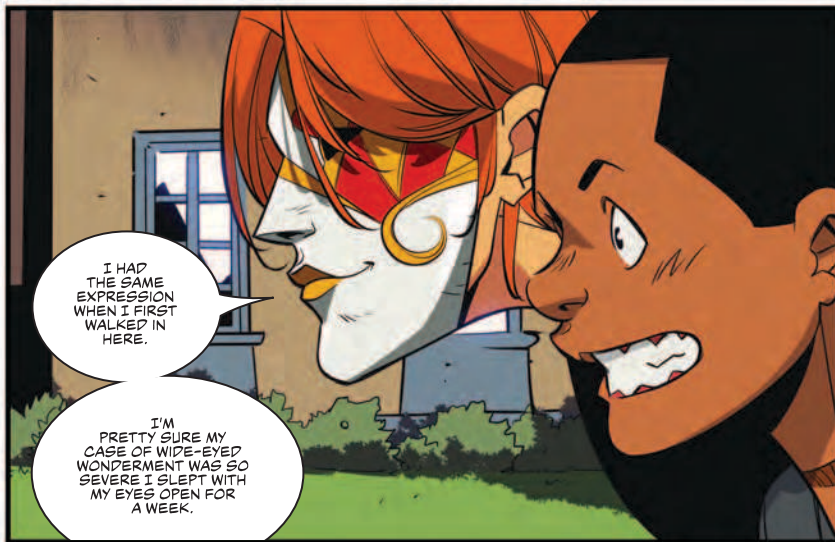
...MY VILLAGE WAS A SECRET ORDER OF AWESOME WARRIORS.



CASPAR. FROM THIS MOMENT ON, YOU ARE ONE OF US, ONE OF THE ORDER OF THE SEVEN SECRETS.

YOU ARE THE YOUNGEST, BUT YOU ARE NOT THE LEAST.

THIS IS YOUR HOME. THESE ARE YOUR PEOPLE.



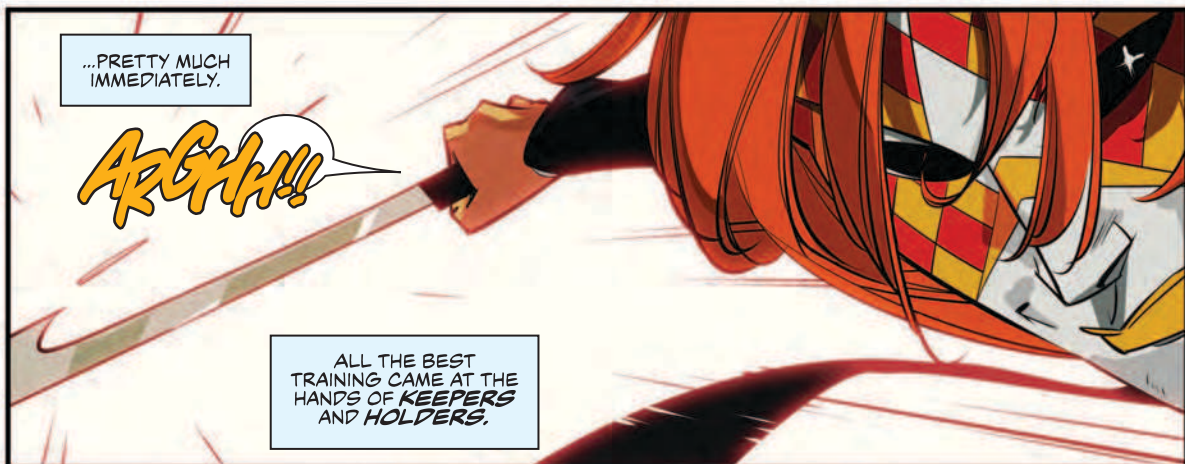
I HAD THE SAME EXPRESSION WHEN I FIRST WALKED IN HERE.

I'M PRETTY SURE MY CASE OF WIDE-EYED WONDERMENT WAS SO SEVERE I SLEPT WITH MY EYES OPEN FOR A WEEK.



WELCOME TO THE FAMILY, KID.

MY TRAINING BEGAN...



...PRETTY MUCH IMMEDIATELY.

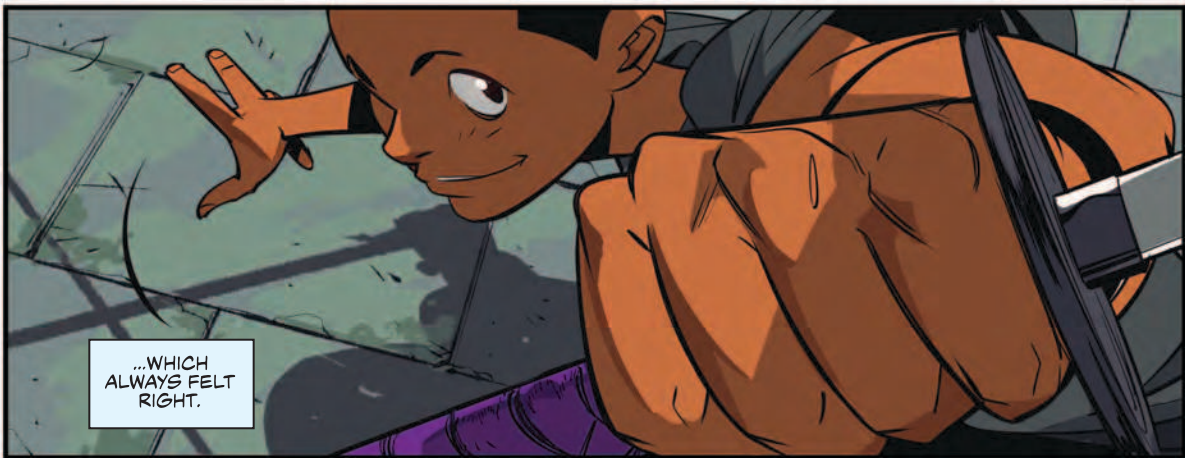
ARGHH!!

ALL THE BEST TRAINING CAME AT THE HANDS OF *KEEPERS* AND *HOLDERS*.

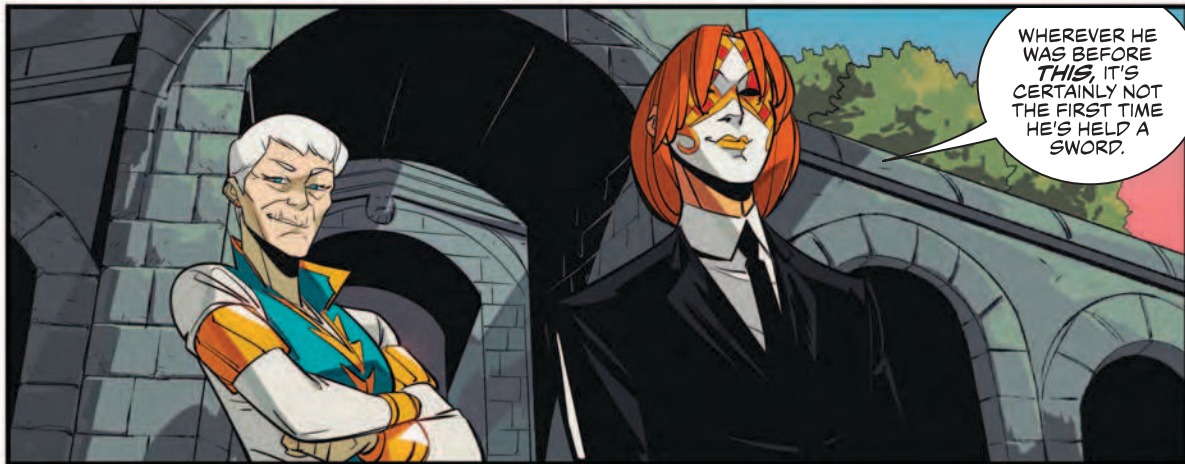


TING

CANTO TAUGHT ME FENCING...



...WHICH ALWAYS FELT RIGHT.



WHEREVER HE WAS BEFORE *THIS*, IT'S CERTAINLY NOT THE FIRST TIME HE'S HELD A SWORD.

AND OTHER SECRET PROTECTORS VISITED OFTEN.

CHING WAS THE **KEEPER** OF THE SECOND SECRET.

ALEX WAS THE **HOLDER** OF THE CASE.



ALEX TAUGHT ME TACTICS. HE ALSO TAUGHT ME PHILOSOPHY, WHICH USUALLY CAME FROM OLD, DEAD PEOPLE WHO WERE **WRONG**.

ARISTOTLE WAS ONE OF THE FINEST THINKERS IN HISTORY, CASPAR. HE WAS NOT 'A BIT OF AN IDIOT'.

HE WAS WRONG ABOUT EELS.

OKAY, HE WAS WRONG ABOUT EELS.

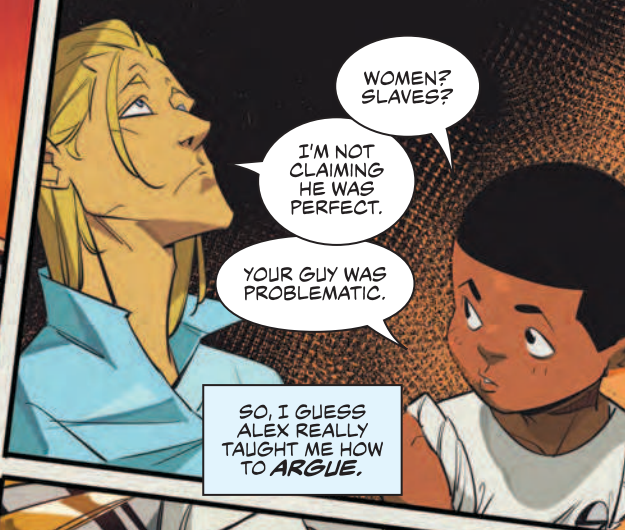


WOMEN? SLAVES?

I'M NOT CLAIMING HE WAS PERFECT.

YOUR GUY WAS PROBLEMATIC.

SO, I GUESS ALEX REALLY TAUGHT ME HOW TO **ARGUE**.



CHING TAUGHT ME HOW TO **STEAL**.



I WAS **NOT** A NATURAL.





FAOLAN AND
RADHA TAUGHT
ME HOW TO MOVE
THROUGH A CITY
WITHOUT USING
STREETS.

I LEARNED
SILENCE AND
FOCUS WITH THE
SPEECHLESS
LAQUETA AND
DIMAH.



THEY
CALLED
IT...



...ADVANCED...



...BOREDOM.



THE **NAMELESS ONES** EVEN TRIED TO TEACH ME THINGS.

BUT I'VE NEVER TAKEN TO PEOPLE IN MASKS.



THE ONLY VISITING KEEPERS AND HOLDERS WHO NEVER TRAINED ME WERE **SIGURD** AND **EVA**.

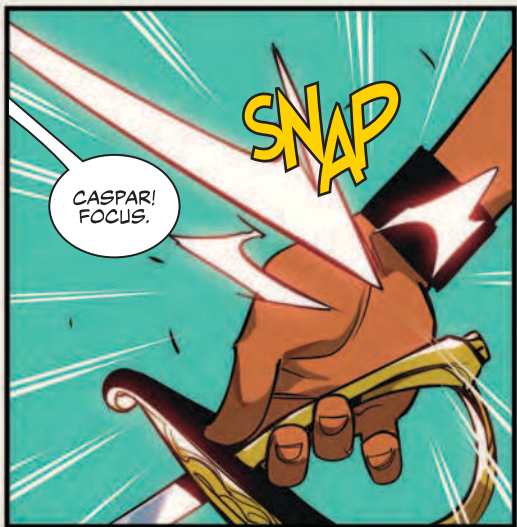


AT THE TIME, I JUST ASSUMED IT WAS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T LIKE ME.



CASPAR! FOCUS.

SNAP



COME ON, MAN. HEAD IN THE GAME.

I DON'T WANT TO ACCIDENTALLY STAB SOMETHING YOU MIGHT **NEED** LATER.

OF COURSE. IT WASN'T ALL TRAINING WITH BADASSES...





...I ALSO
HAD TO GO
TO SCHOOL.

WHERE I WAS AT
LEAST TWO YEARS
YOUNGER THAN
EVERYONE ELSE.

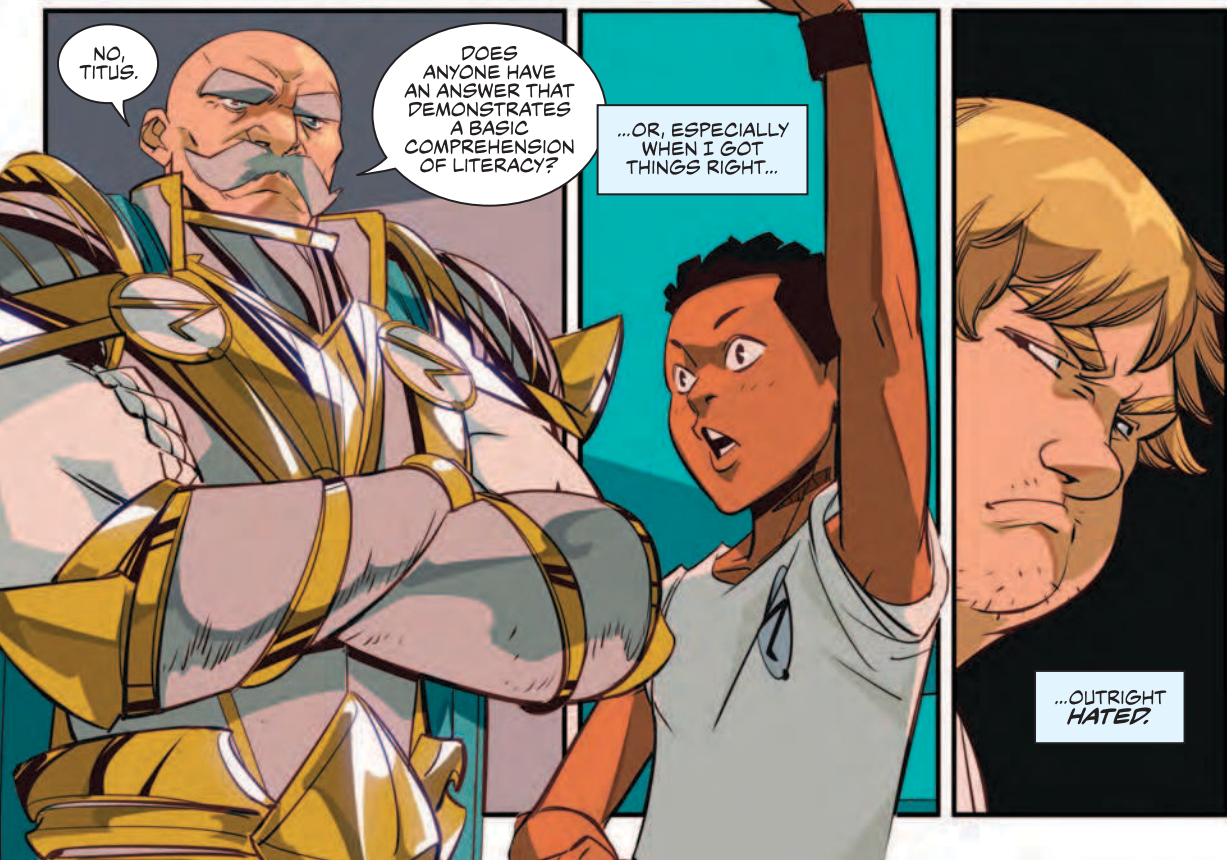
THE SCHOOL WAS FULL OF
TEENAGERS THE ORDER
HAD COLLECTED AROUND
THE WORLD. ORPHANS. THE
HOMELESS. PEOPLE WHO
NEEDED SOMEONE OR
SOMEWHERE.



THIS WAS ALWAYS
THE WAY IT HAD BEEN.
HONESTLY, IT WAS
ALL VERY **CULTY**,
BUT IT WAS TO
PROTECT THE WORLD.

UM...
W...I...E...
R...D.

AT SCHOOL, I WAS
EITHER IGNORED,
EXCLUDED...



NO,
TITUS.

DOES
ANYONE HAVE
AN ANSWER THAT
DEMONSTRATES
A BASIC
COMPREHENSION
OF LITERACY?

...OR, ESPECIALLY
WHEN I GOT
THINGS RIGHT...

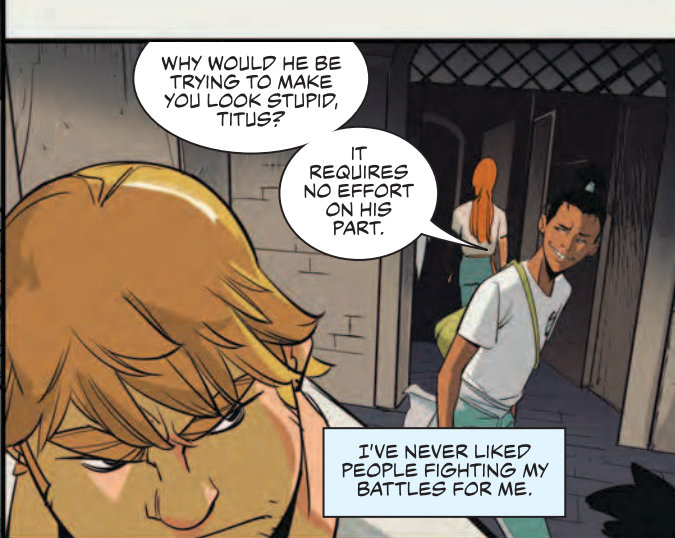
...OUTRIGHT
HATED.



YOU THINK YOU'RE CLEVER, KID?

NO. I JUST PAY ATTENTION.

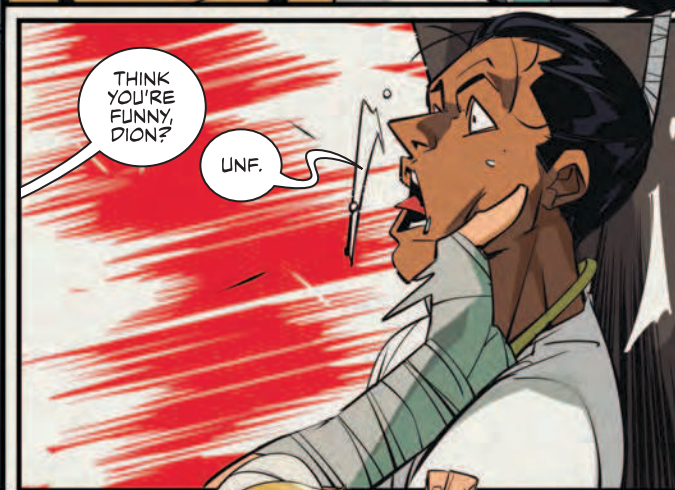
YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME LOOK STUPID?



WHY WOULD HE BE TRYING TO MAKE YOU LOOK STUPID, TITUS?

IT REQUIRES NO EFFORT ON HIS PART.

I'VE NEVER LIKED PEOPLE FIGHTING MY BATTLES FOR ME.

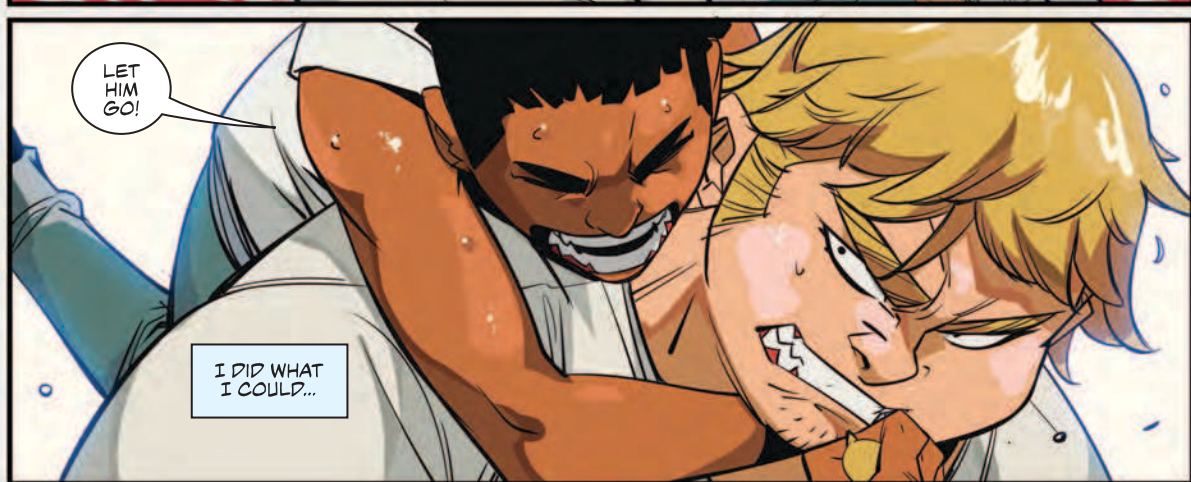


THINK YOU'RE FUNNY, DION?

UNF.

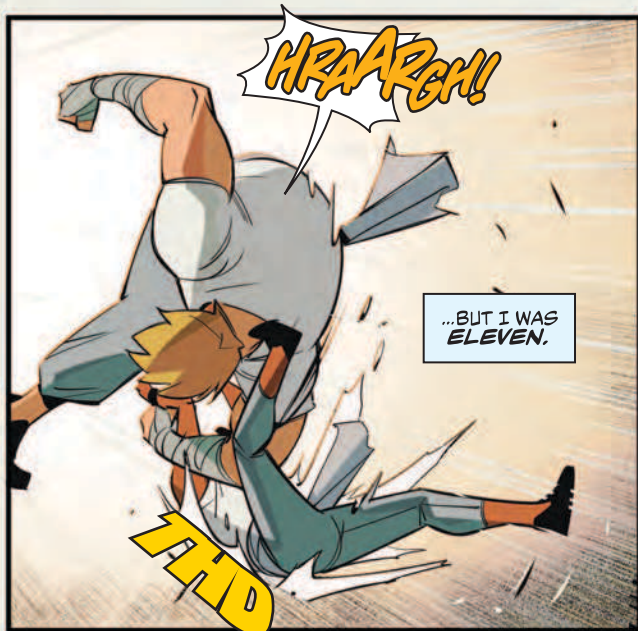


AND I'VE ALWAYS HATED BULLIES.



LET HIM GO!

I DID WHAT I COULD...





WEIRDLY, GETTING
MY ASS KICKED
WAS ABOUT THE
BEST THING THAT
COULD HAVE
HAPPENED TO ME.

HELLO,
CASPAR.



IT MEANT
I MET MY
MOTHER.

MY
NAME IS
EVA.



I KNOW
WHO YOU
ARE.

IT'S NICE
TO MEET
YOU.



ARE YOU
OKAY?

A FEW
THINGS ARE
BROKEN WHICH I
WISH WEREN'T, BUT
I'LL LIVE. I AM
VERY BORED. DO
YOU WANT TO
TALK?

I...
CAN'T.

I'M
SORRY.

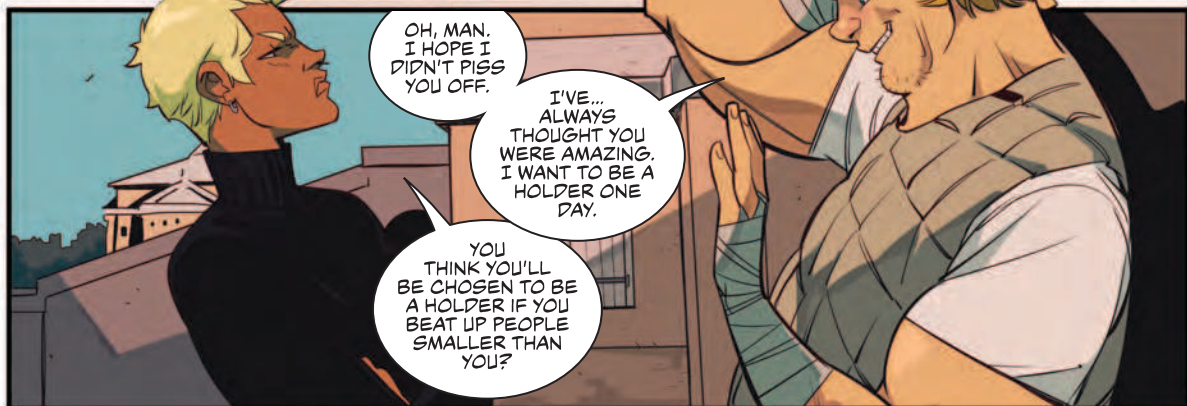


DID I DO
SOMETHING
WRONG?

WHAT? NO.
WHY WOULD
YOU...?

YOU
JUST LOOK
SAD.







IT TOOK SIGURD
A FEW DAYS TO
WORK UP TO
TALKING TO ME.

YOU
WERE
HURT.

I'M
OKAY.

NO.
YOU'RE NOT. I
WILL TEACH YOU
TO DEFEND
YOURSELF.



WHAT'S
THAT?

A
BIRD.

YOU...
AH...LIKE
BIRDS?



WHO
DOESN'T
LIKE
BIRDS?

YOU
KNOW
WHAT I
LIKE?

I LIKE WHEN YOU
CHASE THEM, AND
THEY JUST START
BOUNCING ALONG ON
THEIR LITTLE LEGS.
AND IT'S LIKE, JUST
FOR A MOMENT,
THEY'VE FORGOTTEN
THEY CAN FLY.



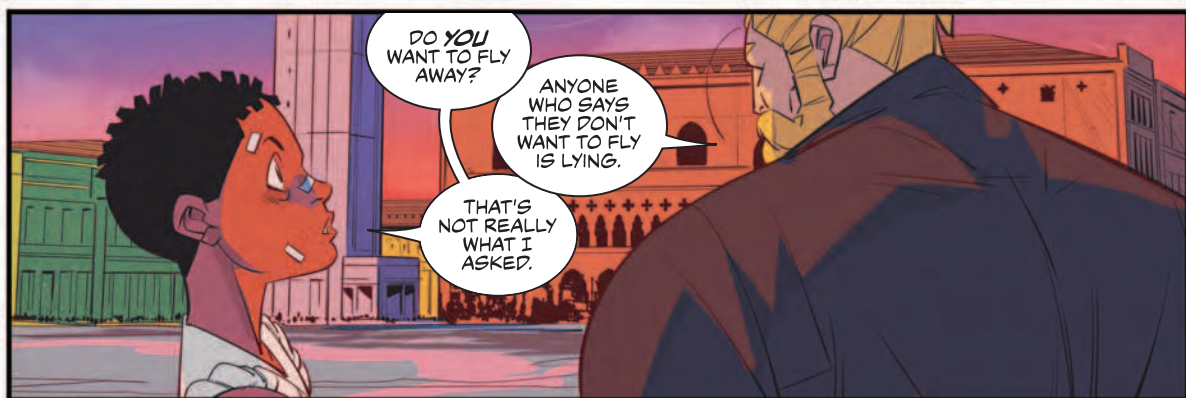
AND THEN
WOOSH.

THEY
TAKE
OFF.



DO YOU
WANT TO
FLY?

ANYONE
WHO SAYS
THEY DON'T
WANT TO FLY
IS *LYING.*





AFTER THAT, MY PARENTS WERE DISTANT. BUT THEY WERE *THERE*.

LIKE THE OTHER KEEPERS AND HOLDERS, THEY VISITED A LOT OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

SO, DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES? OR IS IT JUST SECRECY 24/7?

BUT THEY TRIED NOT TO SHOW TOO MUCH OF THEMSELVES.

LIFT YOUR SHOULDER.

FOCUS, CASPAR.

IT HURT...

...BEING SO CLOSE AND SO FAR AWAY AT THE SAME TIME.

I LIKE YOUR JACKET.

KEEP RUNNING.

I ADMIT, I RESENTED THEM BACK THEN.



...BUT I'M STILL GLAD WE HAD THAT TIME TOGETHER.

CASPAR?

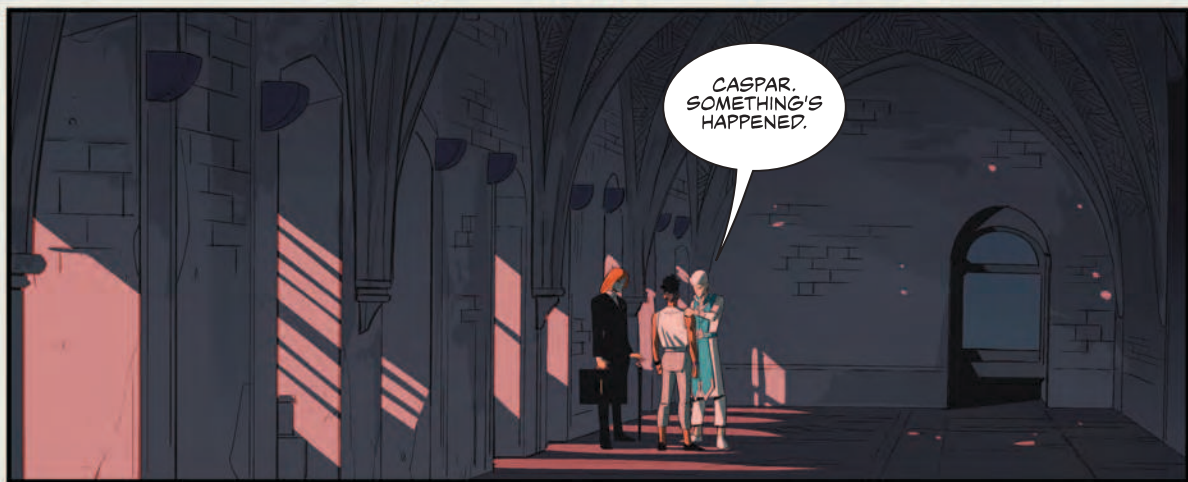


ESPECIALLY KNOWING WHAT I KNOW NOW.

COME WITH ME, PLEASE.

OOOH. CASPAR'S IN TROUBLE.

SHUT UP, MAN.



CASPAR. SOMETHING'S HAPPENED.



I'M SO GLAD I GOT TO SPEND TIME WITH MY FATHER...



...BEFORE HE
WAS TAKEN
AWAY.



I
SEE.

THAT WAS THE
END OF MY
CHILDHOOD.



CASPAR?

I'M JUST
GOING FOR A
WALK.

DO
YOU WANT
COMPANY?

NO.

THAT WAS
THE MOMENT
IT ALL
CHANGED.



BEFORE THE
TRIALS. BEFORE
THE BETRAYAL.
BEFORE THE
FALL.

BEFORE THE
FIRST SECRET
WAS UNLEASHED.
BEFORE THE
GREAT EVIL.



THERE
WAS NO
FLYING AWAY
AFTER THAT.



IT'S STRANGE
TO BE THE ONE
TO TELL THIS
STORY.



ESPECIALLY
BECAUSE I
DON'T MAKE IT
TO THE END.

NEXT:
THE TRIALS.