

PIERCE BROWN'S

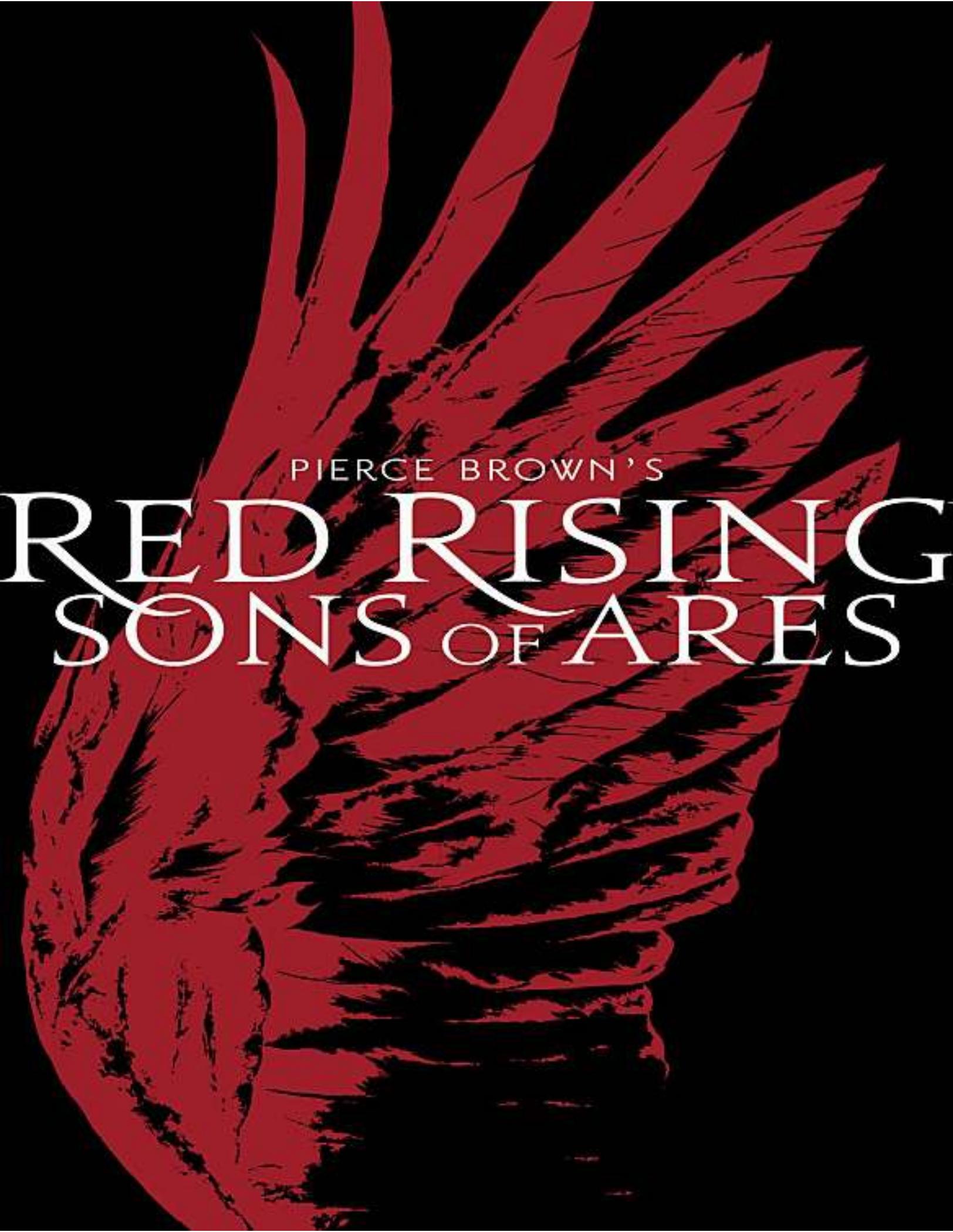
# RED RISING SONS OF ARES

A PREQUEL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING SERIES



BROWN • HOSKIN • POWELL





PIERCE BROWN'S

# RED RISING

## SONS OF ARES



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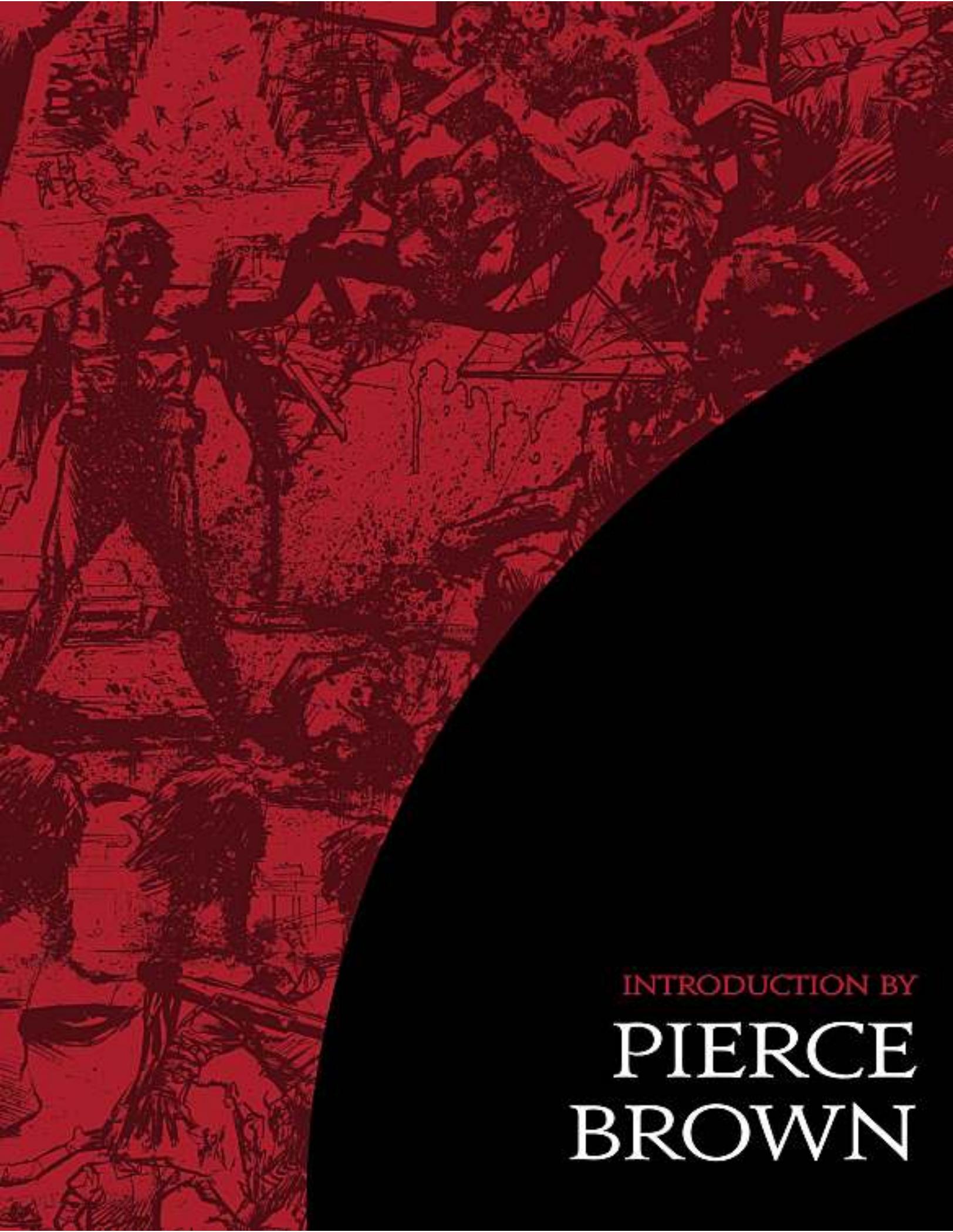
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INTRODUCTION BY  
**PIERCE  
BROWN**



**REVOLUTION. UPHEAVAL.  
THAT IS THE STORY OF THE RED RISING.**

Each generation has their version. One witnessed the rebirth of that Athenian experiment, democracy, in a far-flung colony of the British Empire. Another watched in horror as a no-name Austrian rose from a beer-hall lectern to the heights of German power. Another saw international communism creep across the globe before collapsing in on itself. And our own has seen the Arab Spring upturn tyrants, Wall Street upturn Main Street, and a shifting of financial power from West to East.

In writing the Red Rising novels, I wanted to hold a grim mirror up to our reality and show revolution on a cosmic scale through the eyes of a young man, Darrow of Lykos.

A slave to a corrupt interplanetary regime, Darrow rises from the dirt of his birth to be the sword of his people. But Darrow's story, which is many books and many coffee pots now in the telling, did not begin with him. It began before he was ever born.

In telling Darrow's story it became more and more apparent that I would be doing a disservice to the overall tale if I didn't trace it back to its roots. Combine that with an entirely vain wish to see razors, pulseFists, Golds, and torchShips in all their illustrated glory, and you see why I jumped at the chance to have the world of Red Rising continue in comics under the stewardship of Rik Hoskin's pen and Eli Powell's art.

If you were a political science major like I was, or if you're a student of history or simply paying attention (as all good stewards of democracy ought), you might have noticed that Hollywood got it wrong. Rebellions don't happen in a flash. Revolutions aren't overnight spectacles instigated because of some onerous tax or mishandled execution. No, rebellions are slow. Glacially slow, and often generations in the making. But nearly all can be traced to one seismic moment. One catalyst that ignites that slow burn of discontent into a raging madhouse wildfire that brings regimes to their knees.

The Sons of Ares is about that catalyst. How simmering discontent can spread, intensify, then erupt—not by accident, but through the careful shepherding of a single man and his lieutenants.

Fitchner au Barca is rustic castoff in the upper echelons of his caste-based society. Fitchner's life is not pleasant, but it is privileged compared to those of the masses beneath him. He's blind to their plight because of his own troubles. And only when he falls in love with a woman beneath his station does he begin to see the cracks and cruelty in the world around him. When that cruelty touches him, he faces a choice: suffer it, or become a terrorist and break an empire.

I can't wait for you to see what choice he makes.



T. Cypress

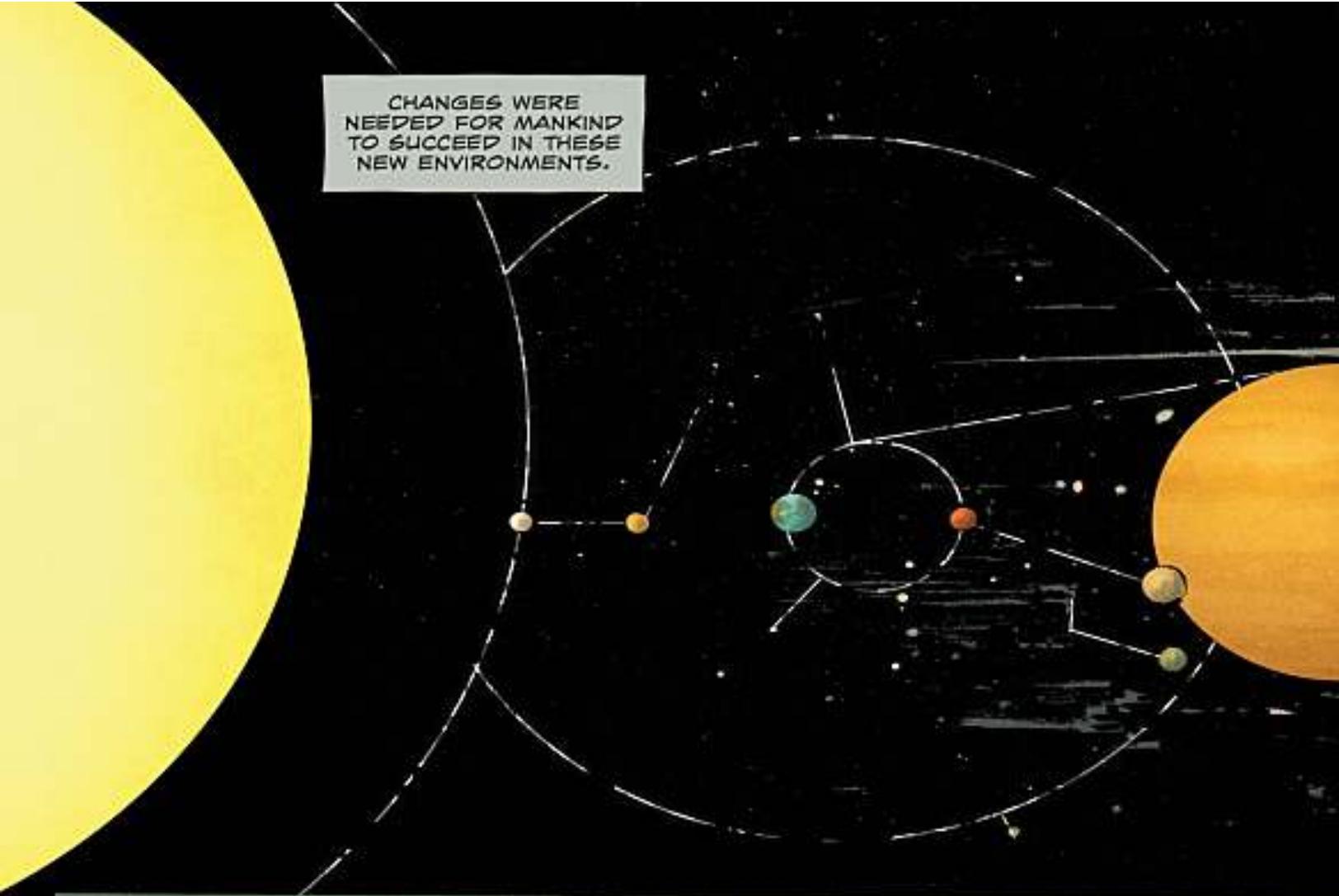
ISSUE ONE | COVER ART BY TOBY CYPRESS

A stylized illustration of the solar system. At the top left is a large blue planet with a smaller moon. Below it is a smaller grey planet. In the center is a large reddish-brown planet. Below that is a yellowish planet with a ring system. At the bottom right is Earth, with a probe or satellite orbiting it. The background is a dark space filled with stars. A bright light source is visible at the bottom right corner.

THEY SAY THAT THE  
COLONIZATION OF  
THE SOLAR SYSTEM  
BEGAN *EIGHT*  
CENTURIES AGO.

MANKIND LUNGED FOR  
EVERY WORLD IT COULD  
REACH, DETERMINED  
TO MAKE EACH ONE  
*HABITABLE.*

CHANGES WERE NEEDED FOR MANKIND TO SUCCEED IN THESE NEW ENVIRONMENTS.

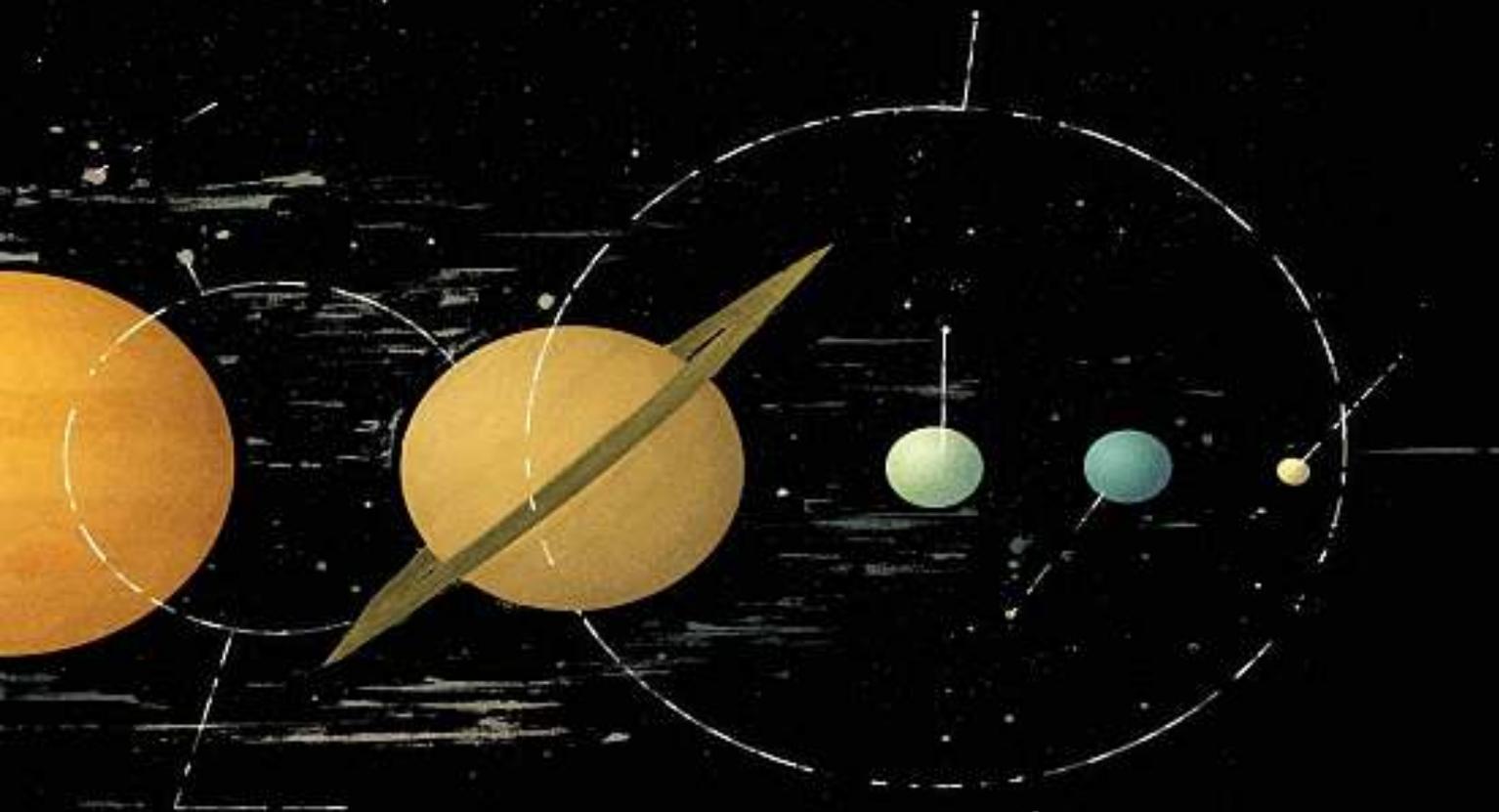


PEOPLE WERE ALTERED BEYOND RECOGNITION. DECADES OF GENETIC MODIFICATIONS AND SPECIALIZED BREEDING PROGRAMS CREATED THE PERFECT ADAPTATIONS.

WITH THESE CHANGES, SOCIETY BECAME STRATIFIED, EACH TASK STRICTLY ASSIGNED TO A SPECIFIC GROUP.

THE REDS WERE AT THE VERY BASE OF SOCIETY, MANUAL LABORERS WHO TOILED TO CARVE THE PLANETS INTO SHAPE AND CREATE THE PLACES WHERE THE OTHER COLORS COULD LIVE AND THRIVE.





ABOVE THEM, THE PINKS, THE BLUES, THE YELLOWS, THE GREENS; OTHER COLORS, EACH LOCKED WITHIN THEIR SEPARATE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE, EACH FEEDING ON THE FRUITS OF THOSE BENEATH THEM.

AT THE TOP, THE WHITES, THE SILVERS AND, ABOVE ALL OTHERS, THE GOLDS, WHO RULED THE RICH NEW COLONIES OF MARS AND VENUS, AND THE MOONS OF JUPITER AND NEPTUNE.





UNTIL THE DAY CAME  
WHEN THOSE COLONISTS,  
WEARY OF EARTH'S DOMINION,  
RETURNED TO THE CRADLE  
OF MAN NOT TO HELP, BUT  
TO CONQUER. LED BY  
THE GOLDS, THEY FELL  
IN AN IRON RAIN.

THE  
CHILD  
ON THE  
ROCK

THE OUTLYING PLANETS HAD BEEN COLONIZED OVER CENTURIES.

MARS ITSELF TOOK AN EON TO MAKE STABLE.



ITS ATMOSPHERE STILL WRITHED WHEN THE FIRST BUILDINGS WENT UP.



BUT THE CONQUERORS SHAPED THE WORLDS INTO THEIR PLAYGROUNDS. THEIR RESOURCES LIMITLESS.

THEIR LOW-COLOR SLAVES ENDLESS...



IN TIME THE GOLDS RULED EACH OF THE WORLDS, AND MARS, LIKE THE OTHER PLANETS IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM...

...LEARNED WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO HAVE MAN BURROWING BENEATH ITS SKIN AND DANCING ON ITS SURFACE.

## AGE OF MARS.



DON'T LEAVE SO SOON, BRIGHT STAR OF THE HEAVENS--LET US DANCE TO YOUR RHYTHM AGAIN!

I'LL BE BACK SOON, SWEET CHILDREN.



HE'S  
WAKE.

YOU  
SURE? HE  
LOOKS LIKE HE'S  
STILL OUT OF IT  
TO ME, AND I HIT  
HIM PRETTY  
HARD.

NO, HE'S  
AWAKE ALL  
RIGHT--

--AREN'T  
YOU,  
DOMINUS?

PRIME  
MASK.

HIDES  
YOUR  
FEATURES  
WELL.

BUT I  
CAN SMELL  
THE *SACCHARINE*  
*REEK* OF CAFFEINE  
STICKS, AND THE *OIL*  
FOR YOUR NERVE  
IMPLANTS. YOU'RE  
A *GREEN*.

A  
SCARED,  
GORYDAMN  
*GREEN*.

==GASP==

HAH-HAH-  
HAH-HAH-  
HAH!

IF YOUR  
STENCH WASN'T  
SO OBVIOUS I'D  
HAVE PEGGED YOU  
FOR *VIOLETS*, WITH  
SUCH A DRAMATIC  
PERFORMANCE!  
HAH-HAH-  
HAH!



HAH-  
HAH-  
HAH!



AND  
WHAT  
ABOUT  
ME?



WHAT  
DO I  
SMELL  
LIKE?



YOU?  
=SNIFF=



ENOUGH  
OF THIS. JUST  
GET THE  
BLOODYDAMN  
PASSCODE,  
ALREADY!

"BLOODYDAMN",  
IS IT? THAT'S A RUSTER  
CURSE. SO WE'VE GOT  
A RED TOO.



...BUT YOU SEEM  
BETTER THAN  
THAT, MY MASKED  
FRIEND.

INDULGE  
ME--ARE YOU  
FRATERNIZING WITH  
LOWCOLORS? ARE  
YOU A COPPER  
PERHAPS? A  
SILVER--?

I'LL  
REQUIRE THE  
PASSCODE FOR  
YOUR DATAPAD,  
VARUS. THAT'S  
ALL WE NEED TO  
DISCUSS.



YOU'RE NOT A GOLD, SURELY.

THE PASSCODE, IF YOU PLEASE.



...  
ARE YOU A GOLD?

I SEE THAT I AM NOT MAKING MYSELF CLEAR.



I REQUIRE THE PASSCODE. A LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.

HEH-HAH-HAH! A LIFE DEPENDS ON IT? REALLY? HEH-HEH! WHOSE?



YOURS!



THUNK

WEEEEEE!



HE'S FAINTED.

FITCHNER, YOU BLOODYDAMN BASTARD! WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO?!! WHAT DID HE--?

NOT NOW, DORAN.

BUT, RY--

LET HIM WORK THROUGH IT; HE DOESN'T NEED US RIGHT NOW.

"LET HIM WORK THROUGH IT."

"NO DOUBT, THAT'S WHAT THE BOARD OF QUALITY CONTROL SAID WHEN THEY CHOSE TO LEAVE ME ON THAT ROCK THIRTY YEARS AGO."

THE CHILD'S FRIGHTENED.

HOW UNSEEMLY. FEAR DOES NOT BECOME A GOLD.

WAH-WAH-WAH!

PROOF THEN THAT HE IS NOT A TRUE GOLD. JUST AN ABERRATION, AS SUSPECTED. A WEAK ABERRATION.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY SON NEXT?

WAH-WAH-WAH!

HE WILL DIE. UNLESS FATE SPARES HIM.

FATE IS A FICTION. THE CHILD ALONE DECIDES. THREE DAYS. THREE NIGHTS.

WAH-WAH-WAH!

WAAAAAH!

DOES IT WANT LIFE ENOUGH TO LIVE?

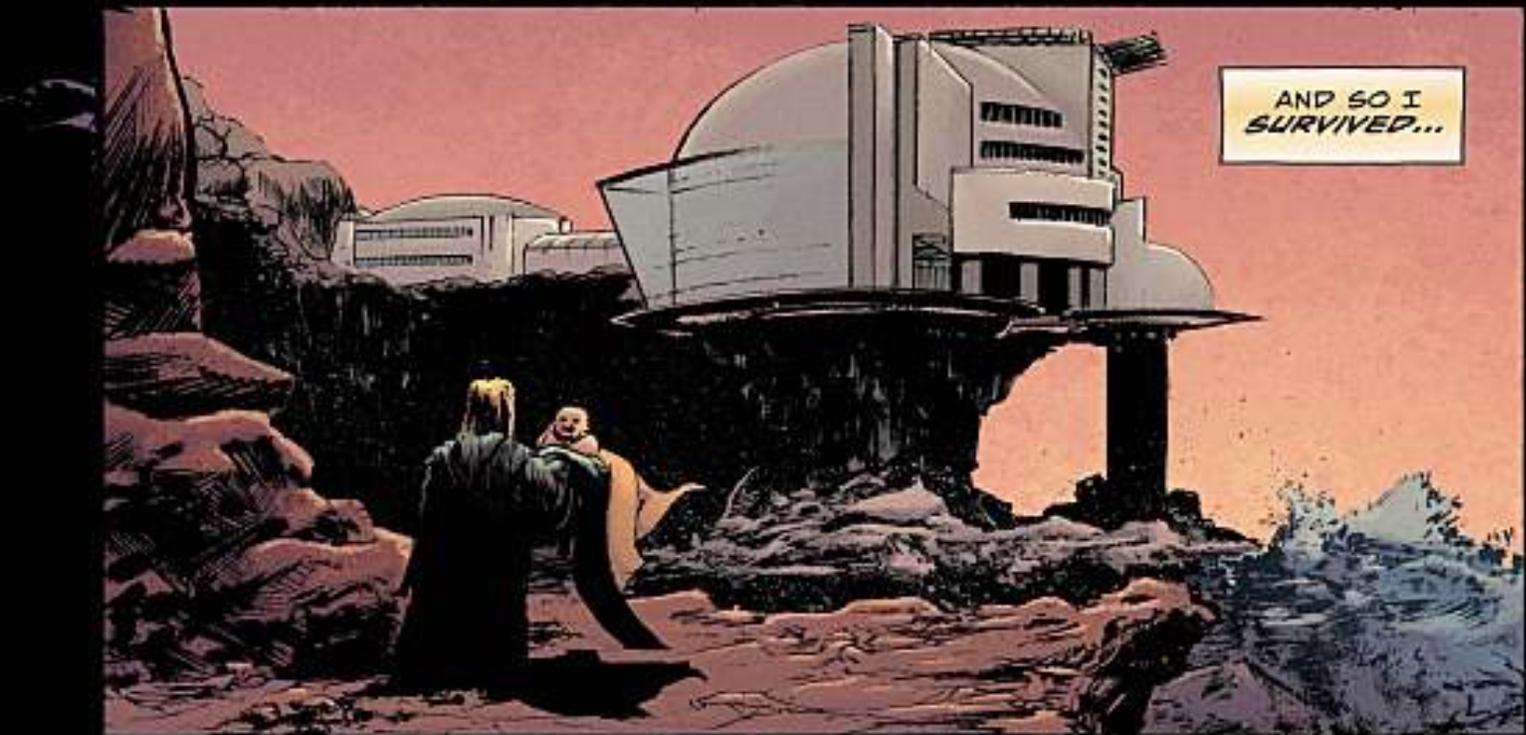


TO A PERFECT RACE, I WAS BORN IMPERFECT. FOR THIS, THE BOARD WILLED ME TO DIE.



HOWEVER, THEY WERE TO BE DISAPPOINTED.

FATE, IT SEEMS, IS NOT ENTIRELY FICTION.



AND SO I SURVIVED...



...I SURVIVED TO SPITE THEM ALL.

THE ABERRATION LIVES.

THEN HE IS LUCKY.

LET US SEE HOW WELL HIS LUCK SERVES HIM.

WAAHH-WAH!

WAAHH-WAH!

I WAS RAISED IN A SOCIETY THAT JUDGED ME BY MY WEAKNESSES.

ALL MEN ARE *NOT* CREATED EQUAL.

THE WEAK HAVE *DECEIVED* YOU. THEY WOULD SAY THE MEEK SHOULD INHERIT THE EARTH--

--THIS IS THE *NOBLE LIE OF DEMOCRACY*, THE *CANCER* THAT *POISONED* MANKIND. YOU AND I ARE *GOLD*. WE TOWER ABOVE THE FLESH HEAP OF MAN.

BUT POWER IS NOT FREE. IT MUST BE CLAIMED. WON. RULE, DOMINION, AND EMPIRE PURCHASED WITH *BLOOD!*

HERE WE WILL TEACH YOU WHY *GOLD* RULES MANKIND. AND I PROMISE: ONLY THOSE *FIT FOR POWER* WILL SURVIVE.

I'M READY!

MY CONTEMPORARIES, AS ALWAYS, NOTICED MY *FLAWS* AT FIRST SIGHT.

HEY, BRONZIE-- WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

*FITCHNER AU BARCA.*

BY JOVE, YOU'RE SCRAWNY AS A RAT. HOW'D THEY LET A *LITTLE CREATURE* LIKE YOU IN HERE?

HE'S JUST A *LITTLE WHELP*, ISN'T HE?

IF YOU'RE QUITE CERTAIN HE'S EVEN A *GOLD*.

I'M AS *GOLD* AS YOU ARE...







THE  
PASSAGE.



CORRECT FIRST  
TIME! THE TESTS  
SAID YOU WERE  
SMART.

SO--



THERE'S  
A SPOT LEFT  
IN MY HOUSE.  
ONLY ONE.

WELL,  
WELL, IF IT  
ISN'T DIRTY  
BRONZIE!

YOU HEAR  
ABOUT IT IN  
WHISPERS--

--A  
NIGHTMARE  
NO ONE CAN  
EXPLAIN.



IT WAS  
THEN THAT I  
LEARNED WHY.

JUST  
BE A GOOD  
LITTLE BOY AND  
DIE, IF YOU  
PLEASE.



YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A **HALF-BREED!** A WEAKLING NOTHING!

A **SACRIFICIAL LAMB!**



WE ARE TAUGHT THAT CIVILIZATION BREEDS WEAKNESS. IT STRIPS AWAY NATURAL SELECTION. THE PASSAGE IS DARWIN'S **ARTIFICIAL SCYTHE.** OUR ODE TO NATURE.



THE MATCHES WERE **NEVER** FAIR. THE WEAK WERE BLOODED FOR THE STRONG.



I WAS TO BE HIS LESSON. HIS FIRST KILL.



A LAMB TO SLAUGHTER...

BUT I'M NO  
FUCKING LAMB.

RRRRR!



WHAT--?!



LINGH!

WHAM

GRRRR!





AAAAA



AU  
BARCA--?  
Y-YOU'VE  
WON!



NOT  
YET.



THERE.



IT'S  
DONE.



ANYONE WHO SURVIVED  
THE PASSAGE WAS  
ASSIGNED TO A HOUSE.

FOR ME THEY CHOSE  
HOUSE MARS--THE  
SO-CALLED "HOUSE  
OF MADMEN". THE  
HOUSE OF RAGE. IT  
FIT.

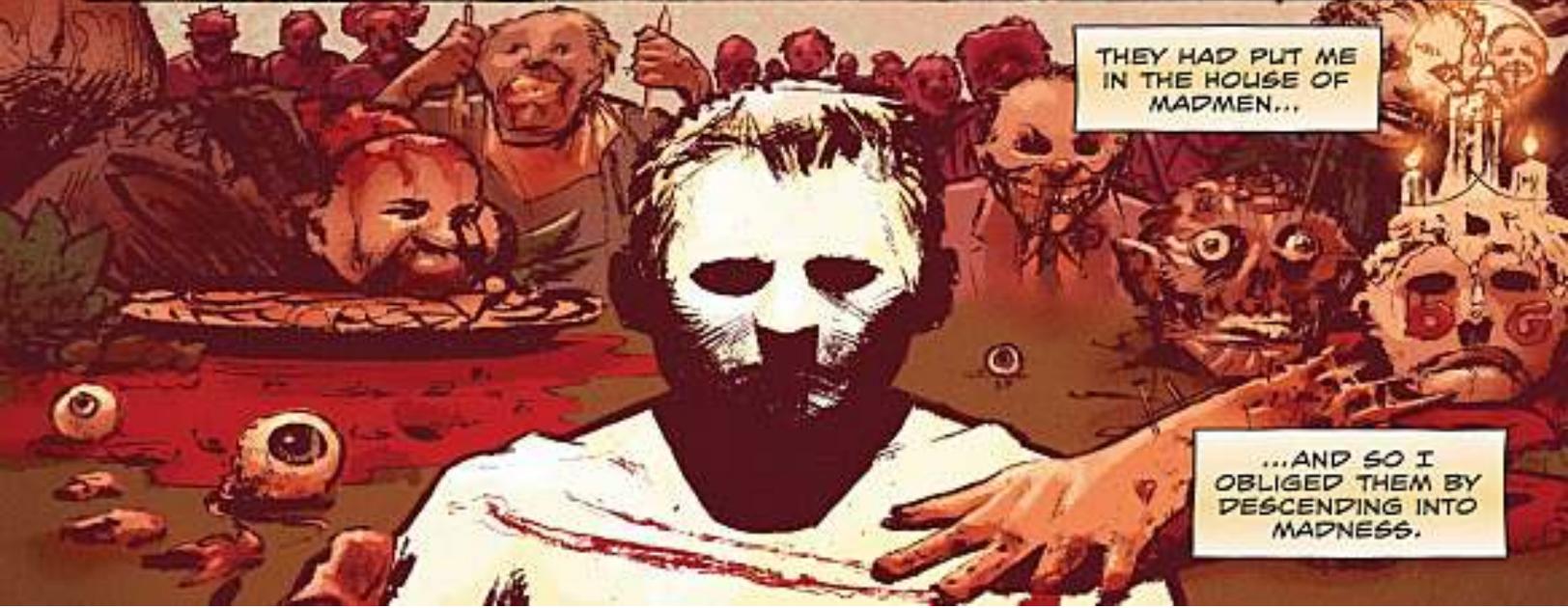


THE RULES  
REMAINED THE  
SAME--SURVIVE  
AS SCYTHE...



...OR DIE  
AS LAMB.

MAKE SLAVES,  
THEY SAID. MAKE  
AN ARMY AND  
CONQUER YOUR  
FELLOWS.



THEY HAD PUT ME  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
MADMEN...

...AND SO I  
OBLIGED THEM BY  
DESCENDING INTO  
MADNESS.

AROOO AROOO

EVENTUALLY, I FLED.  
SURVIVAL, AS EVER,  
PARAMOUNT, BENEATH  
MARTIAN MOONS NAMED  
FOR FEAR AND PANIC.

IF MY  
BODY ENDURED,  
PERHAPS MY MIND  
WOULD, TOO.

BUT SURVIVAL  
FAVORED NOT JUST  
THE FITTEST BUT  
THE CRUELEST, IT  
SEEMED.

AROOO AROOO

WHAT  
HAVE WE  
HERE? WHAT  
HAVE WE  
HERE?

SILLY  
LITTLE MADMAN  
OUT ON HIS  
OWN!

TEACH  
HIM THE  
ERROR OF HIS  
WAYS, HOUSE  
DIANA!

THUD

LINGH!

THUD  
THUD  
THUD

IN THAT MOMENT, I  
WAS THE BABY ON THE  
ROCK ALL OVER AGAIN.  
HELPLESS, ALONE...

...UNTIL FATE  
INTERVENED  
ONCE AGAIN.



WELL, DON'T YOU LOOK LIKE HELL ITSELF!

COME, MY GOODMAN. YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU CAN STAND ON YOUR OWN...

WH-- WHO...?

BUT MAYBE I'M STILL ON THAT ROCK AFTER ALL.

...Y-YOU'LL...N-N-NEED TO... TO USE NEED...CIPHER EPSILON 12 WITH...WITH TH-THAT PASSCODE TO... TO-TO ACCESS WH-WH-WHITEHOLD.

P-PLEASE, THAT'S... ALL I KNOW. CAN'T... YOU S-S-SEE...



...THAT I...REQUIRE M-N-MEDICAL... ATTENTION...?

DOES IT WORK?

JUST ACCESSING NOW, BOSS--



--OKAY. CIPHER CHANGES EVERY FOUR HOURS, SO WE'LL NEED TO MOVE IN QUICKLY.

YOU KNOW WHAT THE STAKES ARE, I WON'T BE DRAGGING MY GORYDAMN HEELS.

BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR GUEST HERE?



HE'S SERVED HIS PURPOSE.

I'M AS WORRIED ABOUT HER AS YOU ARE, BUT WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM TO BLEED OUT.

I SAY LEAVE HIM! HE'S A GOLD--

--LIKE PITVIPERS, THEY SLITHER OUT OF ANYTHING...EVEN CERTAIN DEATH!



WHATEVER WE'RE DOING, LET'S DO IT NOW. SAND'S RUNNING.

YOUR... T-T-TIME... IS ALREADY... UP.

YOU'LL... ALL BE... KILLED FOR THIS...



UH... GUYS...?

...WE'VE GOT COMPANY!





ISSUE TWO | COVER ART BY TOBY CYPRESS



CHAPTER 2:

# NOW THEN



OBSIDIANS!



THEY'VE SENT ~~THE~~ **OBSEDIANS!**

WE DON'T HAVE THE GEAR TO FIGHT CROWS.

I KNOW.

HOW THE **BLOODYDAMN** DID THEY FIND US?



IT'S HIS DOING!

WELL, ISN'T IT?!



**REDS**. ALL OF YOU... SO VERY EASY TO MANIPULATE. SO HOT WITH... **RAW EMOTION**.

DID YOU REALLY THINK... I WOULDN'T HAVE... **BODYGUARDS?**



HE'S BEING **TRACKED**. **NANOCHIPS**.

AND YOU DIDN'T THINK TO **CHECK** FOR THESE, **CY--?**

**NO NAMES.**



I CHECKED! HE MUST HAVE ACTIVATED **AFTER** HE GOT HERE, **SOMEHOW**.

LATENT RADIATION SIGNATURE. IT'S MY FAULT.

**NO**





JUST KEEP  
RUNNING.

THAT'S WHAT  
ARTURIUS  
TAUGHT ME.

IF YOU KEEP RUNNING,  
FAR ENOUGH AND FAST  
ENOUGH, THEN *NOTHING*  
CAN EVER STOP YOU.

THEY'RE  
GOING TO  
*KILL* US,  
ANICETUS!

NO, THEY  
WON'T--



--IF THEY CATCH US THEY'LL DO SOMETHING FAR WORSE.

DAMN THEM!



LOOK--  
FLAGS! ONE  
FOR EVERY  
HOUSE.

WHY  
ARE THEY  
HERE?



THEY'RE  
TROPHIES,  
GAIANNA. AND  
IF WE DON'T  
HURRY--



--WE'LL BE  
TROPHIES,  
TOO!

AAAAHH!



YOU CAN ALWAYS  
OUTRUN THINGS  
IF YOU'RE FAST  
ENOUGH...



...AND YOU  
TURN AROUND  
ONLY WHEN YOU  
CAN DESTROY  
THEM.

I  
LEARNED--



--AND I  
FOUGHT--



--AND THE  
LESSON WAS  
DRUMMED  
INTO ME--



HKKK!

--OVER--



--AND  
OVER--



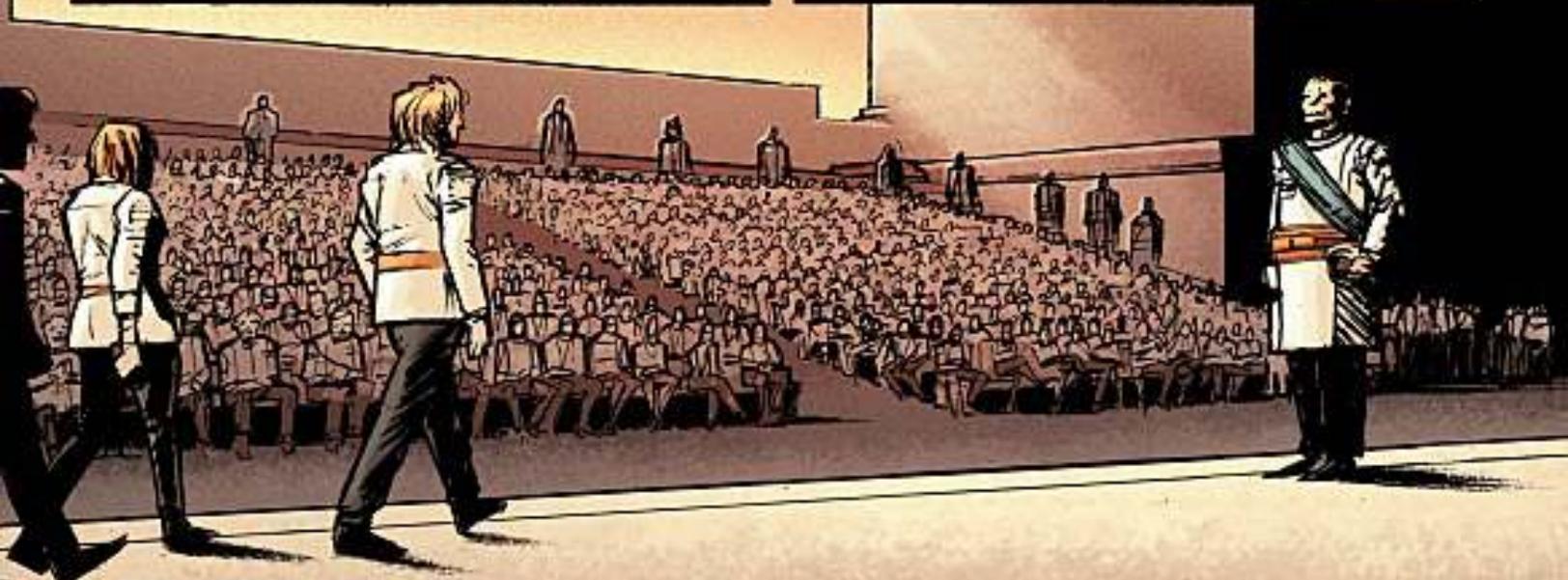


A MOTHER? A FATHER? IN THOSE DAYS, I HAD NO ONE WHO CARED FOR ME, AND NO ONE I CARED FOR.

PER ASPERA AD ASTRA.

EXCEPT ARTURIUS, PRIMUS OF HOUSE JUPITER.







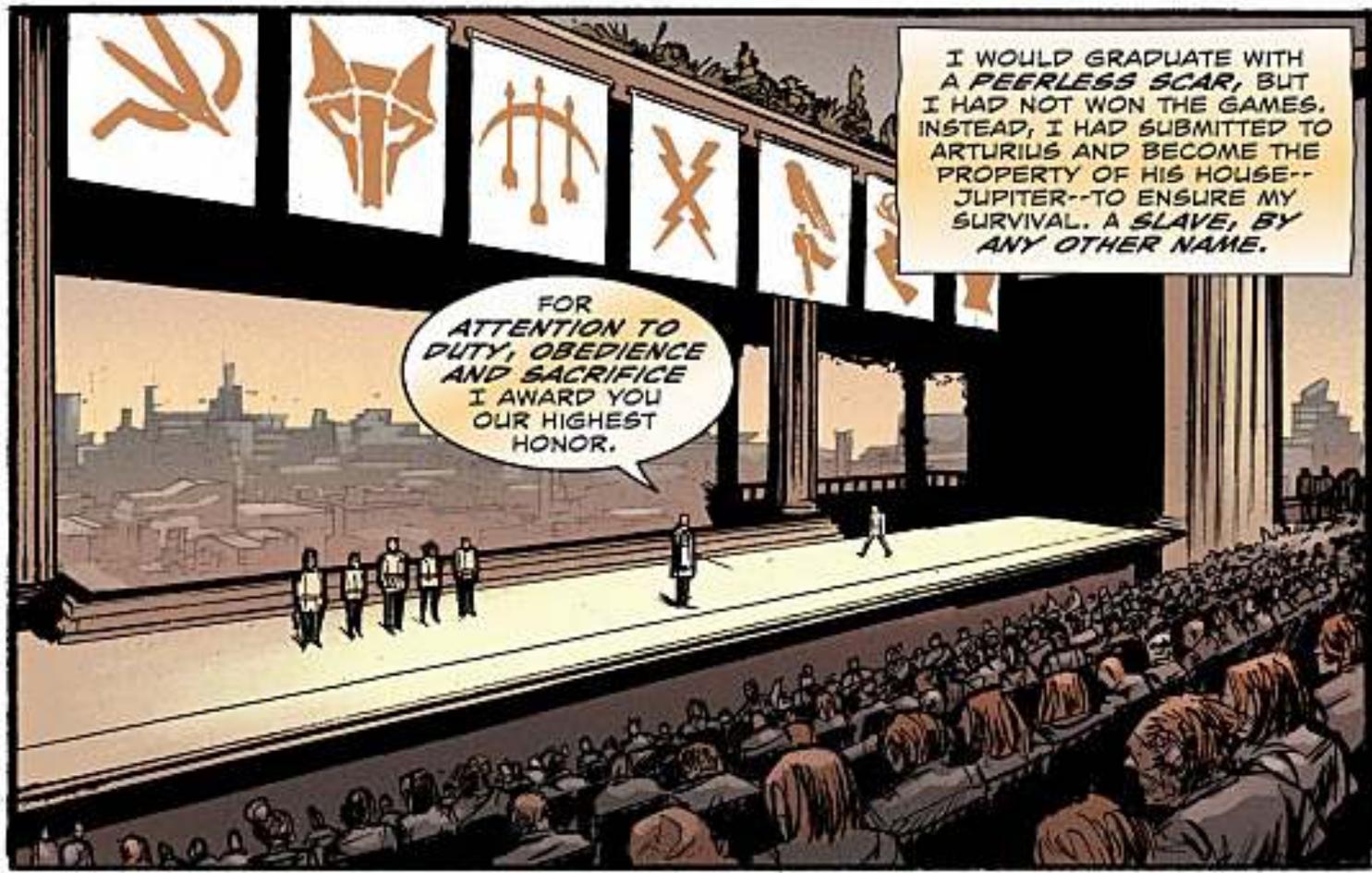


FINALLY--

STEP FORWARD, FITCHNER AU BARCA.

TAP-TAP-TAP

--IT WAS MY TURN.



I WOULD GRADUATE WITH A PEERLESS SCAR, BUT I HAD NOT WON THE GAMES. INSTEAD, I HAD SUBMITTED TO ARTURIUS AND BECOME THE PROPERTY OF HIS HOUSE-- JUPITER--TO ENSURE MY SURVIVAL. A SLAVE, BY ANY OTHER NAME.

FOR ATTENTION TO DUTY, OBEDIENCE AND SACRIFICE I AWARD YOU OUR HIGHEST HONOR.



BE PROUD, FOR YOU TOWER ABOVE YOUR FELLOWS.

SWIISK

UNLIKE ARTURIUS, I COULD NOT AFFORD TO FLINCH.



WE WERE DIFFERENT AND ALWAYS WOULD BE. THIS I KNEW.



AFTER THE CEREMONY,  
ARTURIUS ASKED ME TO JOIN  
HIM AT HIS MOTHER'S ESTATE  
BUT I TOLD HIM I HAD MY  
OWN CELEBRATION TO ATTEND.

MY PARENTS  
EXPECTED ME TO  
LIFT THEM FROM  
THE DIRT...



HAH! YOU WOULDN'T  
BELIEVE HOW THESE  
PINKS CONTORT, FITCH!  
WHAT THOSE GIRLS WON'T  
DO! BUT YOU KNOW  
ALL ABOUT THAT,  
BOYO.

A  
PEERLESS  
IN THE FAMILY.  
HOW WE'LL  
RISE!

SO WHEN  
ARTURIUS  
CALLED  
AGAIN--



FITCH, YOU  
MUST BE HERE,  
BROTHER! I CAN'T  
STAND ANOTHER  
MINUTE SOBER WITH  
THESE WRETCHED  
BORES!



--I CHANGED  
MY MIND.



I'M  
SORRY,  
WHO ARE  
YOU?

FITCHNER  
AU BARCA.  
I'M A FRIEND  
OF--



YOU CALLED ME, ARTIE. YOU SENT A CAR.

FITCH, YOU OLD DOG! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



I DID? WELL, GORYDAMN GOOD FOR ME! WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?

I DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD BE A FORMAL AFFAIR...



IT'S ALWAYS A FORMAL AFFAIR WHEN MOTHER'S CONCERNED.

HAVE YOU BEEN DRINKING LONG?

DEFINE "LONG"?



OUR STEWARD CALLED DINNER AN HOUR AGO SO IT'S PROBABLY TIME WE JOINED THEM.

AH... OKAY.



SO, ARTIE--YOU'VE CRAWLED OUT OF YOUR GLASS TO JOIN US AT LAST. AND WHAT'S THIS THAT CRAWLED OUT WITH YOU?

MOTHER, THIS IS THAT MANGY LEGEND I TOLD YOU ABOUT-- FITCHNER AU BARCA.



AU BARCA, YES. I RESERVED HIM A SEAT THERE.

THERE?!

IT'S PRIME...



PRIME? AT THE GORYDAMN END OF THE ~~TABLE~~ TABLE?! I THINK NOT.

ARTIE, PLEASE DON'T BE BASE.



YOU, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE. BEGONE, PIXIE. A TRUE HEART MUST SIT AT MY SIDE.

WHU--?!



THERE. HEAD OF THE TABLE. EVERYONE ELSE TREATS YOU LIKE YOU JUST CRAWLED OUT OF A CLAWDRILL. IT'S NOT RIGHT.

IT'S FINE, ARTIE, YOU DIDN'T NEED TO DO THIS.

AFTER ARTURIUS' DISPLAY--ONE WORTHY OF A PINK--THE MEAL WAS AS UNCOMFORTABLE AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT.



IRENIA--YOUR MOTHER--SEEMS... PLEASANT.

SHE HATES YOU. ALL ABOUT BLOOD, THAT ONE. SCOFFS AT THE NOTION OF MERIT--

"DAMN THE MAN, WHAT'S HIS NAME, WHERE'S HE FROM, WHO'RE HIS ANCESTORS?"

IT'S NOTHING NEW.



SLAG HER. YOU'RE A *PEERLESS SCARRED* NOW. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE? ANYTHING?

YOU GAVE ME A PLACE BEFORE... I WANT TO SERVE AT YOUR SIDE.

SO, YOU HAVE MY BACK, FITCHNER.

ALWAYS.



I'LL SPEAK TO HER THEN. MAKE HER UNDERSTAND. IT'LL BE OKAY, FITCH-- I PROMISE.

I COULDN'T MAKE  
OUT EVERYTHING FROM  
WHERE I WAITED...

MOTHER,

FITCH



ERSTAND  
HE'S BENEATH US? A  
VIOLENT, WORTHLESS  
LITTLE

SENSE!



I DON'T  
NEED YOUR  
PERMISSION!

WRONG!  
YOUR  
BROTHER

DISINHERIT

WOULDN'T



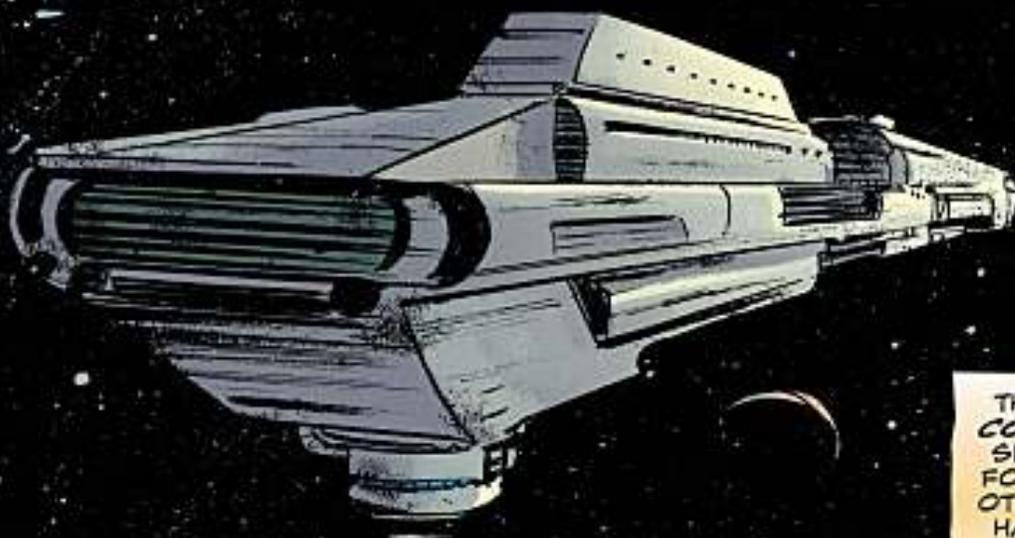
...BUT I MADE  
OUT ENOUGH.

GOOD  
BOY.



WHEN ARTURIUS TOLD ME  
WHAT HAD BEEN DECIDED,  
I DIDN'T EVEN HEAR HIS  
WORDS. I JUST *KNEW*.

I WASN'T ONE OF  
THEM, I DIDN'T BELONG.  
I NEVER HAD. OUR TIES  
WERE TO BE SEVERED.



THE NEXT DAY I SOLD MY  
CONTRACT TO AN UPSTART  
SILVER WHO WAS LOOKING  
FOR GOLDS TO TERRAFORM  
OTHER PLANETS. MY FRIEND  
HAD TURNED HIS BACK ON  
ME, A LESSON I WOULD  
REMEMBER...





NO!

DO IT N--



WHA--?!



SWIASK



BRATATATATA





BOSS? BOSS!  
SOMEONE WILL HAVE  
HEARD THIS--WE  
NEED TO KEEP  
MOVING.



BOSS? DID  
YOU HEAR  
ME?



...HM.

IRENIA  
CALLED ME  
A MONSTER.

PERHAPS  
I AM ONE.



THROUGH PAIN AND  
LOSS, THEY MADE  
ME THIS WAY.



BUT IN  
DARKNESS,  
FAR FROM  
LIGHT--



--EVEN  
MONSTERS CAN  
FALL IN LOVE.



EW POWELL  
17



ISSUE THREE | COVER ART BY TOBY CYPRESS



ARE WE  
IN OR NOT,  
CYLAX?

WORKING  
ON IT, DON'T  
RUSH ME!

CAN  
SOMEONE  
REMAND HIM THAT  
WE'RE ON A  
TIMETABLE  
HERE?

RUSH  
NOW OR WE'LL  
SPEND THE REST OF  
OUR LIVES GETTING  
ACQUAINTED WITH  
THE CROWS!

YOUR  
[REDACTED]  
BABBLING ISN'T  
HELPING, YOU  
KNOW THAT?!

RYANNA,  
JUST BACK  
DOWN! HE'LL GET  
US IN. CYLAX  
IS THE BEST,  
RIGHT?

BEST  
WE GOT  
ANYWAY.

ALL  
RIGHT,  
WE'RE  
IN!

STAY  
ALERT--

click

CHAPTER 3: **DROWNING ON  
TRITON**



--WE'RE  
ENTERING  
THE BELLY  
OF THE  
BEAST.



SOME  
BELLY, WHAT  
IS ALL THIS  
STUFF?

ELECTRICITY  
SUPPLY, NOW  
SHUT UP, LET  
FITCHNER  
THINK.



I HAD BECOME  
*BROKEN INSIDE*  
AND I KNEW IT.



BROKEN BY THE  
CHOICES THAT HAD  
BEEN FORCED  
UPON ME. BROKEN  
BY WHAT I HAD  
SEEN AND DONE.





I WAS  
DROWNING IN  
MEMORY.

AND WHERE  
BETTER TO  
DROWN...



...THAN  
*TRITON?* A  
MOON NAMED  
AFTER A  
WATER GOD...



...AND AS  
FAR FROM  
MARS--



--AS FAR FROM MY  
LIFE WITH ARTURIUS  
AND ALL THE  
BACK-BITING THAT  
*GOLD SOCIETY*  
REPRESENTED--



--AS I  
COULD  
GET.

THEY WERE *TERRAFORMING* TRITON, PIECE BY PIECE. IT WAS A *NEVER-ENDING* OPERATION, THE MOON NEEDED CONSTANT ENCOURAGEMENT TO ENDURE PEOPLE SETTLING THERE.





EVERY TIME WE TURNED OUR  
BACKS, THE MOON WOULD  
TRY TO REJECT US AGAIN.



WHERE BETTER TO  
TAKE MY *BROKEN*  
*SOUL* THAN TO A  
PLANET THAT COULD  
NEVER BE *FIXED*?



QUITE  
THE BEAUTY,  
ISN'T SHE?



THE *LOVELOCK*  
*ENGINE*.  
HAVE YOU SEEN  
ONE IN ACTION  
BEFORE?

I'M  
*LICENUS CU*  
*CORIBA*, YOUR  
ADMINISTRATOR,  
DOMINUS. I WORK  
FOR *JANIS AU*  
*GERARD*.



YOU MUST BE  
*FITCHNER AU*  
*BARCA*. I WAS  
TOLD YOU'D  
BE ARRIVING  
TODAY.

INDEED.



SURELY  
YOU ALREADY  
KNOW ABOUT THE  
*CRYOVOLCANIC*  
ACTIVITY  
WE GET HERE,  
DOMINUS?

THE WHOLE  
*FORSAKEN PLACE* IS A  
*GORYDAMN PATCHWORK OF*  
*TECTONIC TERRAINS* WITH ALL  
THE STABILITY OF A PINK DIVA  
WHO'S DISCOVERED SHE'S GOT  
ROSES WHEN SHE ASKED  
FOR LILIES.

THERE ARE  
TWO *LOVELOCKS*,  
ONE EMBEDDED  
IN EACH POLE, TO  
*STABILIZE* THE  
ENVIRONMENT.



THIS IS  
YOUR TEAM  
CHARGED WITH  
THE NORTH POLE  
LOVELOCK  
ENGINE.





I HOPE WE WILL MEET YOUR SATISFACTION.

THIS IS ANTHOUSA CU BARDA, WHO HANDLES OUR REQUISITION ORDERS.

I FELT LIKE I KNEW THE WOMAN. SHE REMINDED ME OF SOMEONE I HAD KNOWN AT THE INSTITUTE.



DOCTOR CROISSY HERE OVERSEES ALL VACCINATIONS. YOU COULD SAY HE CALLS THE SHOTS, EH?

ANOTHER INSTITUTE FACE CAME TO MIND; I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HIS NAME.



CYLAX NEXITI HERE'S OUR GO-TO IF THERE ARE ANY TECH GLITCHES.

IT'S AN HONOR, DOMINUS.

I COULD BARELY LOOK AT ANY OF THEM. EACH ONE REMINDED ME OF SOMEONE I'D HURT OR SEEN HURT.



AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN. PEOPLE WERE ALL THE SAME TO ME NOW.



I FELT NO MORE FOR THEM THAN I WOULD FOR THE COGS OR LEVERS OR OIL THAT RAN THE LOVELOCK.

IT TAKES 30,000 PEOPLE TO MAN THE ENGINE. THAT'S A CREW, MOSTLY REDS, WHO TEND TO THE MACHINE.

COLD AND DANGEROUS WORK, EVEN FOR REDS.



WELL, REDS ARE CHEAPER THAN NEW PARTS, AREN'T THEY?

INDEED.



IT WOULD BE WORSE IF WE LOST MIDCOLORS WITH TECHNICAL EXPERTISE IN AN ACCIDENT, AFTER ALL.

AH, OUR LOCAL SAVAGES.

\*OBSIDIANS. THE CLANS WORSHIP THE ENGINE--AND OF COURSE YOU, DOMINUS.



\*YOUR PREDECESSOR WAS FOND OF MAKING AN APPEARANCE IN THEIR VILLAGES. DESCENDING IN ARMOR, LIKE A GOD. SUPERSTITIOUS OGRES.



\*JUST AS THE REDS, OBSIDIANS ARE TOOLS.

\*KEPT IN FRACTURED, PRIMITIVE CLANS, RAISED TO BELIEVE GOLDS ARE GODS, AND HARVESTED FOR OUR ARMIES.\*

I THOUGHT I ESCAPED THE INSTITUTE, ITS SYSTEMS OF DOMINATION AND HIERARCHY...

...BUT IT HAD FOLLOWED ME HERE, TO THIS MOON OF PURGATORY.

I COULD NOT ESCAPE THE WORLD, AND LIKE THE REDS, LIKE THE OBSIDIAN, BY VIRTUE OF EXISTING...

...I HAD BECOME YET ANOTHER COG IN THE MACHINE OF THE SOCIETY.

DID YOU FEEL THAT, DOMINUS?

WHAT? WHAT WAS IT?

A QUAKE, A BIG ONE.

A COG FEELS NOTHING.







HE'S MY BROTHER!  
SOMEONE HELP HIM!  
PLEASE!

I ONLY SAW  
MEN FIGHTING  
AGAINST  
DARKNESS.



I  
DOVE.

WHATEVER *SURVIVAL*  
INSTINCT THE INSTITUTE  
HAD DRUMMED INTO  
ME MORPHED INTO  
SOMETHING ELSE.



I WANTED  
TO FIGHT  
WITH THEM.

I HAVE HIM, I  
HAVE HIM! THANK  
YOU, DOMINUS,  
THANK YOU!

PLEASE,  
DOMINUS, THERE  
ARE OTHERS!  
CAN YOU...?



I WANTED TO  
KEEP THE COLD  
OF THE WORLD  
FROM CLAIMING  
THEM.



WHAT HAD THE  
ARCHGOVERNOR  
SAID AT MY  
GRADUATION?  
"BE PROUD..."



"...FOR YOU  
TOWER ABOVE  
YOUR FELLOWS."



"BE PROUD."



ON THREE!



"...TOWER..."



GET HIM AWAY FROM THE WATER. THIS WAY, THIS WAY!

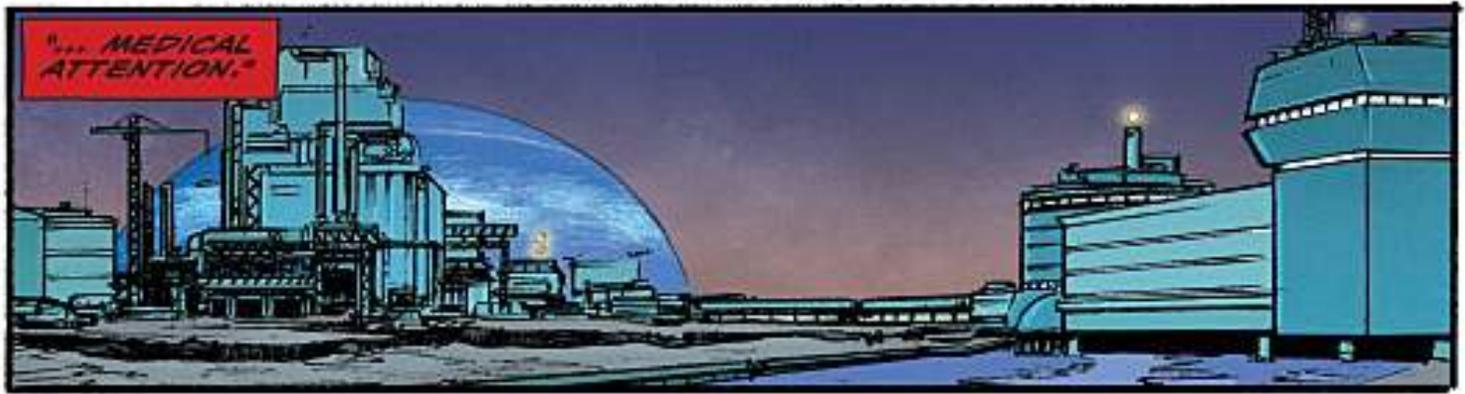


IS HE...A GOLD?

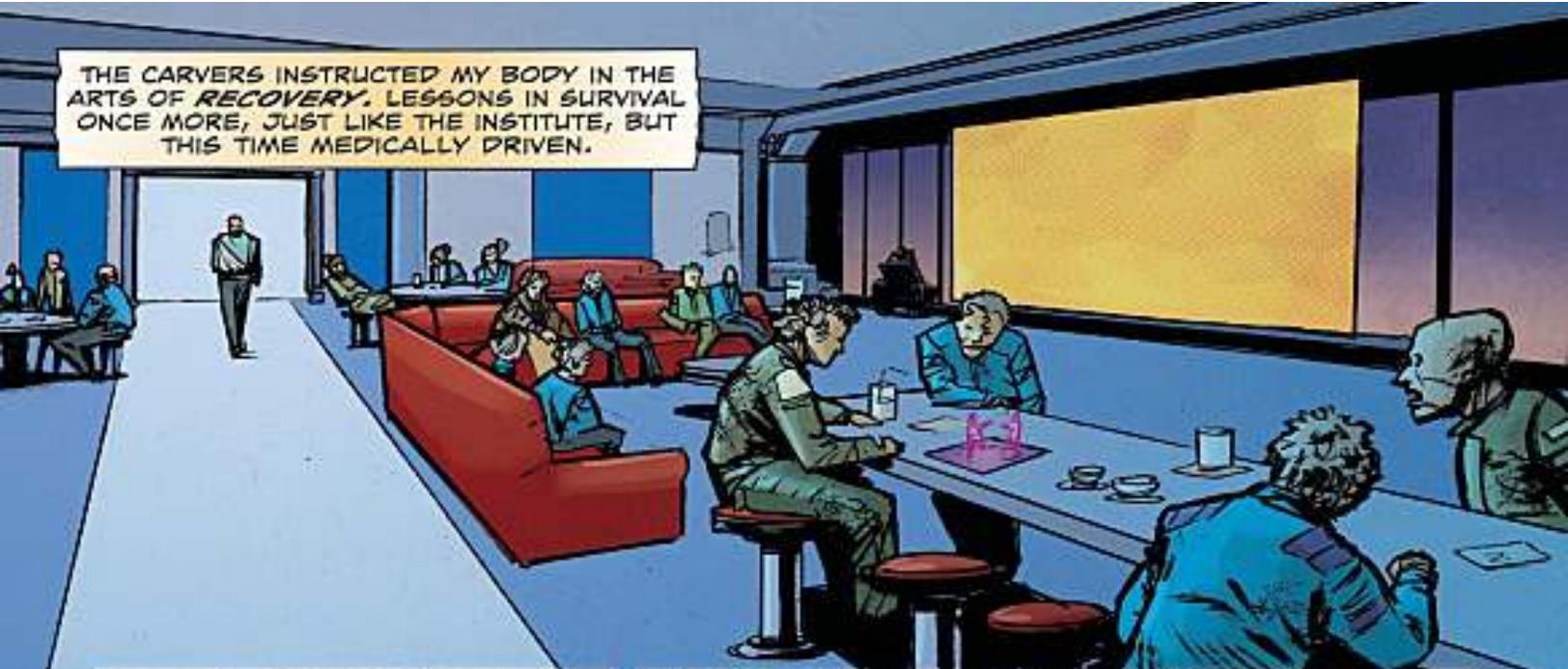
YES, THE NEW MAGISTRATE-- JUST A BOY REALLY!

HE WAS HELPING US?!

HE'S LOSING BLOOD, WE NEED TO GET HIM...



THE CARVERS INSTRUCTED MY BODY IN THE ARTS OF RECOVERY. LESSONS IN SURVIVAL ONCE MORE, JUST LIKE THE INSTITUTE, BUT THIS TIME MEDICALLY DRIVEN.



A GOLD, HERE! AMONG US.

AND LOOK...HE IS A PEERLESS SCARRED.



DOMINUS AU BARCA, WE ARE SO HONORED THAT YOU CHOSE TO JOIN US. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU ON YOUR FEET.

WE'RE A SMALL FACILITY, I'M AFRAID, AND WE DON'T HAVE MUCH IN THE WAY OF ENTERTAINMENT, NOT LIKE ON MARS, BUT YOU ARE WELCOME TO ANYTHING YOU SEE HERE.



I KNOW. THANK YOU.

IT'S AN HONOR, DOMINUS. AN HONOR.



I REMEMBERED HER...

...OR MAYBE I WAS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR HER.



HELLO, I AM FITCHNER AU BARCA. I THINK PERHAPS YOU SAVED MY LIFE.

I THINK PERHAPS THAT I DID, DOMINUS. BUT I HAD HELP.

I'M BRYN OF CRYSSOS, I AM... WAS CREW LEADER ON THAT SHIFT.

WHAT YOU DID OUT THERE, WHEN THE ENGINE COLLAPSED, IT WAS VERY BRAVE. YOU'D SAVED TEN PEOPLE BEFORE...

BEFORE--?

YOUR ARM. THE TRAUMA SENT YOU INTO SHOCK.

AND YOUR CREW SAVED ME. BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? YOUR LEG?



"I GOT... SPLASHED. THEY'RE FITTING ME FOR A PROSTHETIC."



TELL ME, BRYN-- WAS IT BECAUSE I'M A GOLD? WOULD YOU HAVE SACRIFICED SO MUCH TO SAVE ONE OF THESE COLORS?

YOU DID.



AFTER WATCHING THAT, HOW COULD WE LET YOU DROWN?



ARTURIUS DIDN'T EVEN DEFEND ME AGAINST HIS MOTHER.

I SPENT MUCH OF MY RECOVERY WITH BRYN. I STILL HATED WHAT MY LIFE HAD BECOME, BUT IN THE COLD OF TRITON, I'D FOUND WARMTH.

SHE SAW THE JOY IN ALL THINGS, AND IN ALL PEOPLE. I CAN'T PRETEND TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD.

BUT I TRIED TO LEARN. WHEN THE REDS BURIED THEIR FALLEN AT THE MID-SUMMER EQUINOX, I ATTENDED THE CEREMONY WITH BRYN.

I WAS THE ONLY OTHER COLOR THERE. I FELT LIKE AN ALIEN. BUT FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, THEY TREATED ME AS IF I WERE FAMILY.

EVEN TO MY PARENTS, I'D ALWAYS FELT LIKE A STRANGER. TO ARTURIUS, I WAS AN ADOPTED HOUND.

IT'S OKAY, FRIEND, I GOT YOU.

STILL GETTING USED TO THIS GORYDAMN NEW HAND!

BUT THESE PEOPLE BEAT WITH A LIFE, A LOVE, AN ENCOMPASSING KINDNESS I HAD NEVER SEEN.

THEY WOKE SOMETHING INSIDE ME.



I WASN'T LOOKING WHERE--

NO HARM DONE. JUST A LITTLE SPILT WINE.

THEN YOU SHALL HAVE MINE, DOMINUS. AFTER ALL, IT WAS MY MISTAKE.



HER MISTAKE?



AS IF HER TOUCH COULD EVER BE A MISTAKE.

I'M SCARED, DOMI--

FITCHNER, YOU CALL ME FITCHNER.



FITCHNER

OUR AFFAIR COULD NEVER BE PUBLIC, OF COURSE.



JANIS AU GERARD HAD DIED IN THE ACCIDENT, AND I HAD BEEN PROMOTED TO GOVERNOR OF THE NORTH LOVELOCK ENGINE IN HIS PLACE.

IF ANYONE HAD KNOWN I WAS INVOLVED WITH A RED I WOULD HAVE BEEN BRANDED A TRAITOR.

IMPRISONED, OR WORSE.



ON THE DAY I TOLD BRYN I WAS LEAVING TRITON--

MY CONTRACT IS COMPLETED, MY LOVE. MY EMPLOYER HAS ASKED ME TO RETURN TO THE CORE.

--SHE CRIED.



AND I REALIZED THEN THAT I COULD NEVER LEAVE HER. TO DO SO WOULD BE TO LEAVE MY HUMANITY BEHIND.

...AND DO YOU, FITCHNER AU BARCA, AGREE TO BIND YOURSELF WITH BRYN OF CRYSSOS, YOUR HEARTS AND YOUR SOULS ENTWINED, FOR NOW AND FOREVER?

I DO.



THE FOURTH OPTION SCRAMBLERS WILL HAVE TO DO WITHOUT TWO OF MY DAUGHTERS BECAUSE OF YOU, FITCHNER. BRYN WON'T LEAVE WITHOUT HER SISTER.



THEN I SHALL TAKE CARE OF THEM BOTH, I PROMISE. BRYN MEANS MORE TO ME THAN MY OWN LIFE, AND HER FAMILY IS MY FAMILY.

RYANNA SHALL BE MY LITTLE SISTER AS MUCH AS IF SHE WERE MY OWN KIN.

WHEN WE LEFT--

--IT WAS TOGETHER.

FITCHNER--?

YOU OKAY?

YEAH, I WAS JUST... THINKING ABOUT YOUR SISTER.

CLEAR YOUR HEADSPACE--

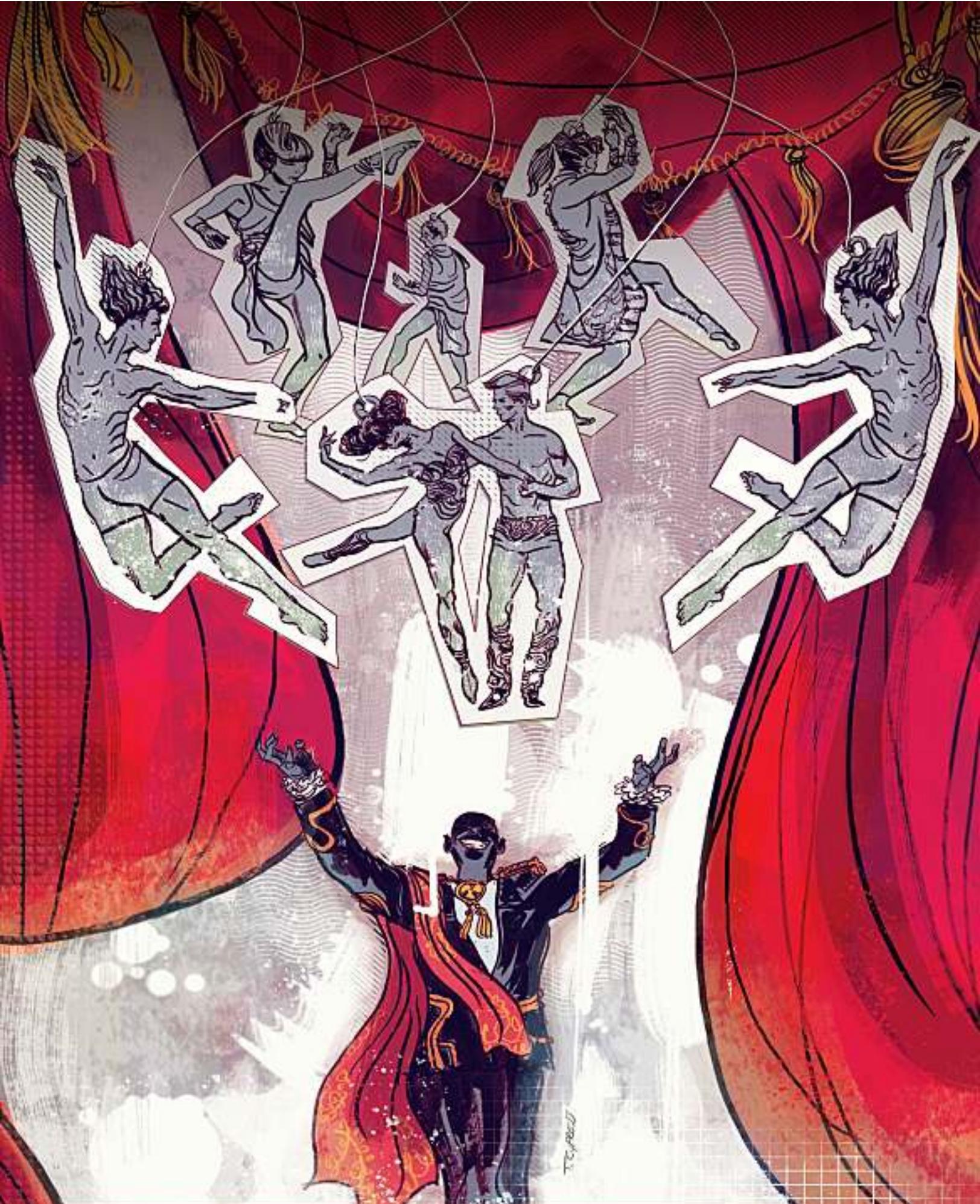
--I  
CAN FEEL  
WE'RE CLOSE  
TO HER  
NOW!

...SIX...  
SEVEN...  
EIGHT...

CYLAX,  
WHAT ARE YOU  
MUTTERING ABOUT,  
YOU BLOODYDAMN  
TECH-HEAD?

SOMETHING'S  
NOT RIGHT. I'M  
PICKING UP *TOO*  
*MANY* LIFE  
READINGS--

--WE'RE  
NOT HERE  
ALONE!



ISSUE FOUR | COVER ART BY TOBY CYPRESS



JUST WHEN YOU GET THE MOVING SMOOTH.

DEVOURERS! RUN!



DORAN...

NO!

THUD



AAAAAHHH!



RYANNA? NO!

I PROMISED BRYN THAT I WOULD PROTECT YOU, PROMISED YOUR MOTHER THAT I WOULD PROTECT YOU BOTH...

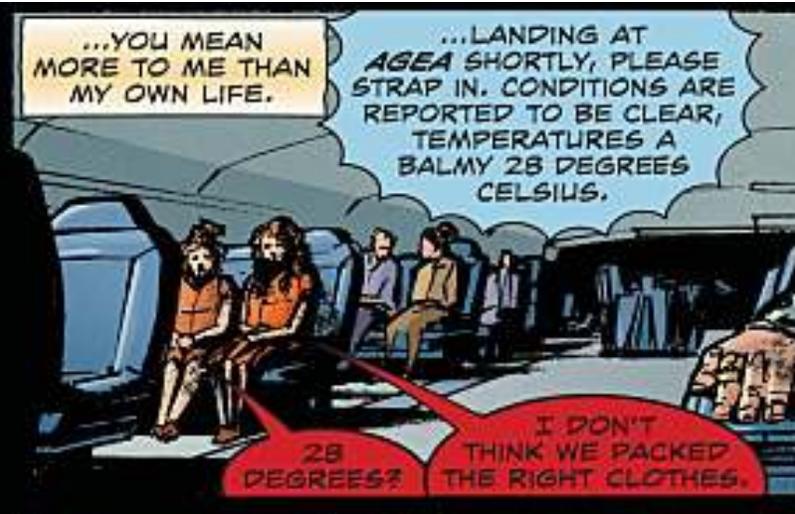




...BECAUSE...

WAS EVERYTHING TO YOUR LIKING, DOMINUS?

HMM? SNAILS WERE A LITTLE GRISLY.



...YOU MEAN MORE TO ME THAN MY OWN LIFE.

...LANDING AT AGEA SHORTLY, PLEASE STRAP IN. CONDITIONS ARE REPORTED TO BE CLEAR, TEMPERATURES A BALMY 28 DEGREES CELSIUS.

28 DEGREES?

I DON'T THINK WE PACKED THE RIGHT CLOTHES.



ARCHGOVERNOR AUGUSTUS, WELCOMES YOU TO MARS, HOME OF THE OLYMPUS MONS AND ENERGY CAPITOL OF THE SOCIETY.



PLEASE MAINTAIN PACE SO THAT YOU AND YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS MAY ENJOY EVERYTHING THE FOURTH PLANET HAS TO OFFER.

EVERYTHING IS SO BLOODY TALL...

AND CLEAN. WE'RE GOING TO BE HAPPY HERE, RYANNA--YOU, ME AND FITCHNER. I KNOW WE WILL.

SO THE HOLOS SAY...



WELCOME HOME, DOMINUS.



OKAY, RUSTERS, LET'S SEE SOME IDENTIFICATION. WHO IS YOUR EMPLOYER?

AS IF WE NEED MORE REDS FOR THE ANTHILL.



I'M SORRY I COULDN'T SEE MORE OF YOU ON THE JOURNEY. THERE WERE TOO MANY EYES...

YOU FORGET I'M USED TO IT.

THIS IS TO BE OUR HOME, BRYN. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU DESERVE, BUT MY EMPLOYER SUPPLIED THE ACCOMMODATIONS...



MOTHER ALWAYS SAID IT'S NOT ABOUT THE HOUSE, IT'S ABOUT WHAT FILLS IT.

DID YOU LOVEBIRDS SEE THE VIEW? IT'S MANIC. THE CITY... MORE PEOPLE HERE THAN ON ALL OF TRITON.

QUICKSILVER TOWER,  
SUN INDUSTRIES.

YOU  
WANTED TO  
SEE ME,  
SIR?

PLEASE! A  
PEERLESS SCARRED  
IS HARDLY A SERF, NO  
MATTER HIS FINANCIAL  
POVERTY. CALL ME  
*QUICKSILVER*.

THOUGHT  
THAT WAS THE  
NAME OF THE  
TOWER.

ALWAYS  
GOOD TO BRAND  
YOURSELF.

DID YOU  
ENJOY YOUR  
TIME ON TRITON?  
PERISHING PLACE,  
OF COURSE, BUT  
FULL OF PROMISE.  
IN A WORLD OF  
BEAUTY--

CHAPTER 4:  
**DOUBLE LIFE  
ON  
MARS**

--ONE MUST LOOK  
PAST THE FAÇADE  
OF UGLINESS TO  
SEE UNTAPPED  
POTENTIAL.

I  
SEE IT IN YOU,  
YOU SALVAGED A  
DISASTROUS SITUATION  
WHICH CLAIMED THE  
LIFE OF YOUR INEPT  
SUPERIOR.





I WONDER, CAN YOUR GIFTS TRANSLATE TO OTHER MATTERS...?

A GOLD, NAME OF THERON AU AKTLER. HE'S... WELL...



HE'S INFLUENTIAL IN CERTAIN *COMMODITIES MARKETS* THAT I HAVE AN INTEREST IN.

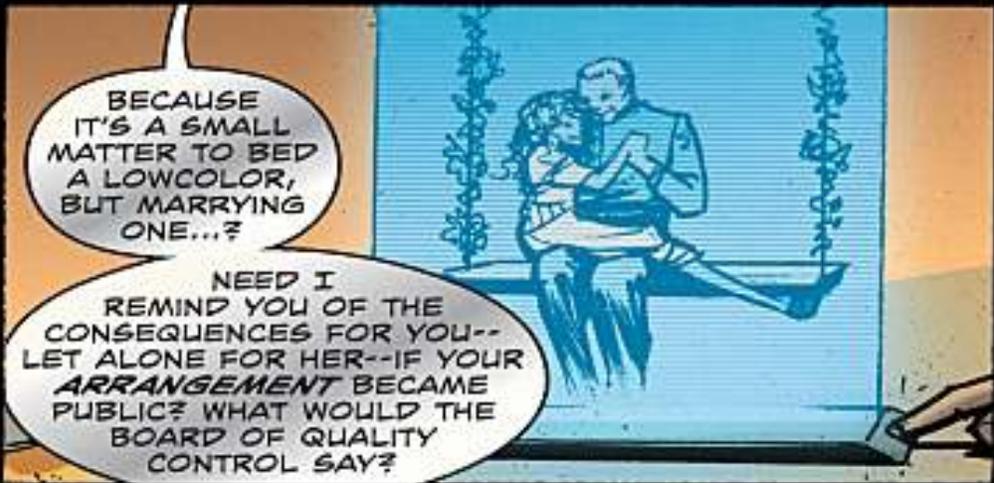
I NEED FOR HIS INFLUENCE TO BE... *REDUCED*, ENTIRELY.



ARE YOU ASKING ME TO KILL HIM?

DECAPITATE, ACTUALLY. YOU ARE A PEERLESS SCARRED...

I AM. BUT TELL ME: WHY WOULD I Demean MYSELF TO BECOME YOUR PERSONAL ASSASSIN? I'M POOR, NOT A WHORE.



BECAUSE IT'S A SMALL MATTER TO BED A LOWCOLOR, BUT MARRYING ONE...?

NEED I REMIND YOU OF THE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOU-- LET ALONE FOR HER--IF YOUR *ARRANGEMENT* BECAME PUBLIC? WHAT WOULD THE BOARD OF QUALITY CONTROL SAY?



HOW *DARE* YOU THREATEN ME, MERCHANT!



LET ME SHOW YOU HOW GOOD A KILLER I MAKE!

HKKK!



LET HIM GO, DOMINUS!



DON'T SHOOT HIM.



YOU OVERPLAYED YOUR HAND, QUICKSILVER! DO YOU KNOW HOW SOFT YOUR NECK IS TO ME? YOUR CARTILAGE AS HARD AS STALE TISSUE PAPER.

HICK... LISTEN... LISTEN...



COUGH-COUGH. LISTEN...

...NO ONE KNOWS THIS INFORMATION OUTSIDE OF THIS OFFICE...AND IT CAN REMAIN THAT WAY.



IF YOU KILLED ME, WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN TO HER, IDIOT?

THIS IS THE STRANGE BED YOU MADE!



"THERON WILL BE AT THE OPERA THIS EVENING."



WELCOME, DOMINUS.



"I KNOW HOW HONORABLE YOU GOLDS ARE..."



"...I'M SURE YOU CAN FIND A REASON TO TAKE OFFENSE AND KILL HIM WITHOUT MENTIONING MY NAME."



HE'S A GOLD. WHAT'S TO WORRY ABOUT?

ON TRITON, HE WAS BIG.



HERE, HE'S ALMOST AS SMALL AS US.





DOMINAS,  
DOMINI--PLEASE  
TAKE YOUR SEATS!  
TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE  
IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!



THEY SAY IT'S AN  
ESPECIALLY GOOD  
CAST THIS YEAR,  
MY DEAR.

I HEARD  
THAT TOO,  
THERON.

BUT  
IF IT'S NOT THEN  
WE'LL JUST LAUGH AT  
THE *GROTESQUERIE*  
OF PORTLY PINKS!



FITCH,  
IS THAT  
YOU--?

GORYDAMN,  
IT IS YOU!

WHERE  
HAVE YOU BEEN,  
FELLOW? YOU  
LOOK DAMN  
SMART.

ARTURIUS,  
I SHOULD  
GET TO MY  
SEAT.



BEEN, WHAT, A YEAR?  
I'M A *PREFECT* FOR  
THE *BOARD OF*  
*QUALITY CONTROL*  
NOW, CAN YOU  
BELIEVE IT?

HOW  
ABOUT YOU?  
YOU DISAPPEARED  
THAT NIGHT...

DIDN'T  
HAVE TIME TO  
WASTE, BOYO.  
MADE MY OWN  
OPPORTUNITIES.



CLEAR  
THAT CHATTER,  
LOVE--APART YOU  
MIGHT BE SMALL,  
BUT TOGETHER YOU  
MAKE SOMETHING  
RATHER GRAND.



I KNOW,  
AND I KNOW HE  
CARES ABOUT ME.  
BUT THERE'S  
SOMETHING INSIDE  
HIM, EATING  
AT HIM...

ALL RIGHT, THE  
PAIR OF YOU.  
LET'S TAKE A  
LOOK AT WHAT  
YOU HAVE.

THIS WAY,  
PIONEERS!





DORT DEN HELDEN, DER MEINEM BLICK...

HEY!



WHAT THE HADES DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?



WHAT? WHAT, YOU SLOP-MOUTHED HARLOT?!

YOU JUST URINATED ALL OVER MY GORYDAMN SHOE, YOU...BESOTTEN BASTARD! THESE ARE ASP LEATHER.



HERE YOU ARE THEN, GOODMAN.

NOW YOUR TROUSERS MATCH.

PSSSSSS



YOU VILE...ILL-MANNERED... GORYDAMN...MONGREL!!! A CHALLENGE.

YOU AND I WILL MEET TOMORROW. DAWN. HADRIAN PARK.

HAH-HAH-HAH!



WHAT... THE HELL IS GOING ON IN HERE?

APPARENTLY I'M TO HAVE A DUEL WITH THIS... FIEND WHO SMELLS OF PISS. I DIDN'T CATCH HIS NAME.

FITCH, YOU'RE DRUNK. JUST APOLOGIZE. WHATEVER YOU DID, IT DOESN'T NEED TO END IN BLOOD.



NO, PISSFACE HERE WANTS A DUEL. I MUSTN'T DISAPPOINT SUCH A NOBLE MAN.

TOMORROW.  
ANIMAL.

I RECOGNIZE HIM, HE'S *Theron Au Aktler*--BIG IN COMMODITIES. EXPERT WITH A RAZOR.



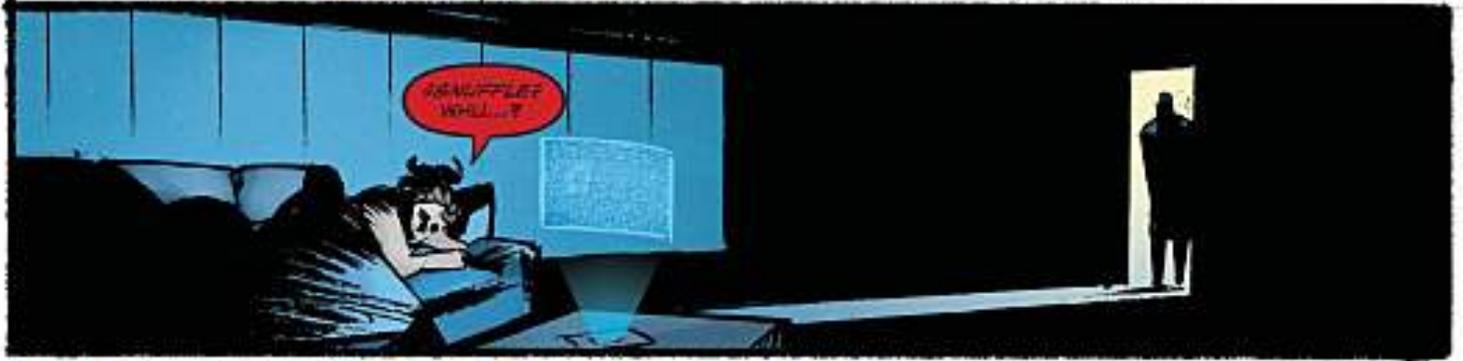
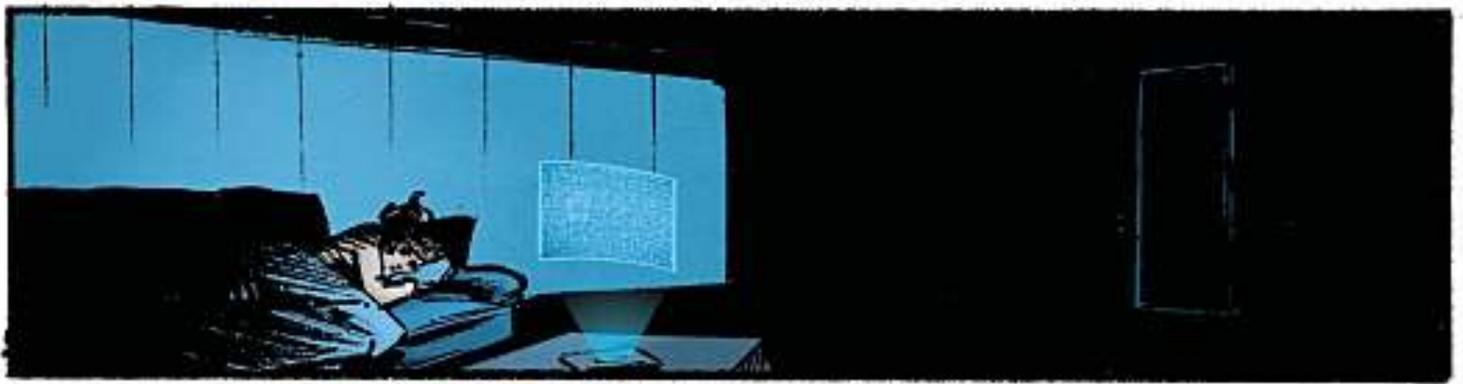
JUST APOLOGIZE TO HIM! FOR GORYDAMN SAKE, FITCH. YOU'LL BE KILLED.

YOU KNOW ME, ARTIE. I DON'T FLINCH FROM A LITTLE SCRAP...



...I'M NOT LIKE YOU.





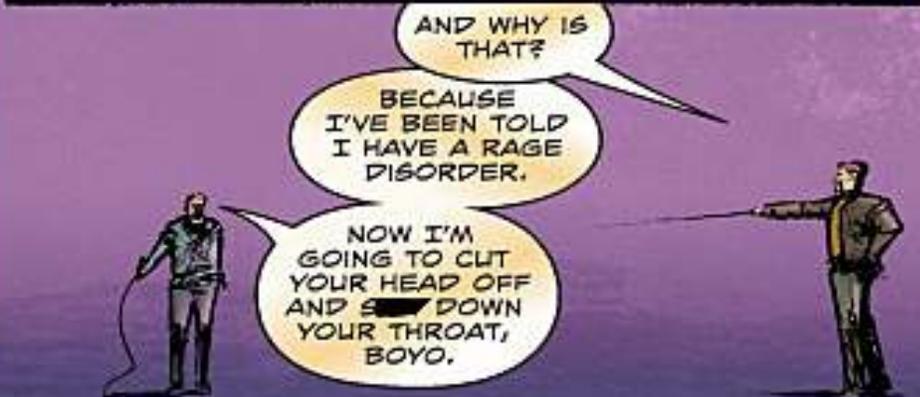
YOU'RE HOME LATE.

I'M SORRY, DARLING. MY DUTIES HAVE BECOME MORE... EXPANSIVE.

I MISSED YOU.



DAWN,  
HADRIAN  
PARK.











CARVERS ARE MASTERS OF HUMAN GENETICS, THE BEST OF THEM CAN TRANSMUTE DREAMS TO FLESH.

BRYN'S DREAM WAS FOR US TO BRING A CHILD INTO OUR WORLD. IT TOOK ME MONTHS TO FIND HIM.

HALF MY WORTH TO BUY HIS SERVICES. HE COULD MAKE BRYN A MOTHER TO MY CHILD...

...OUR CHILD.

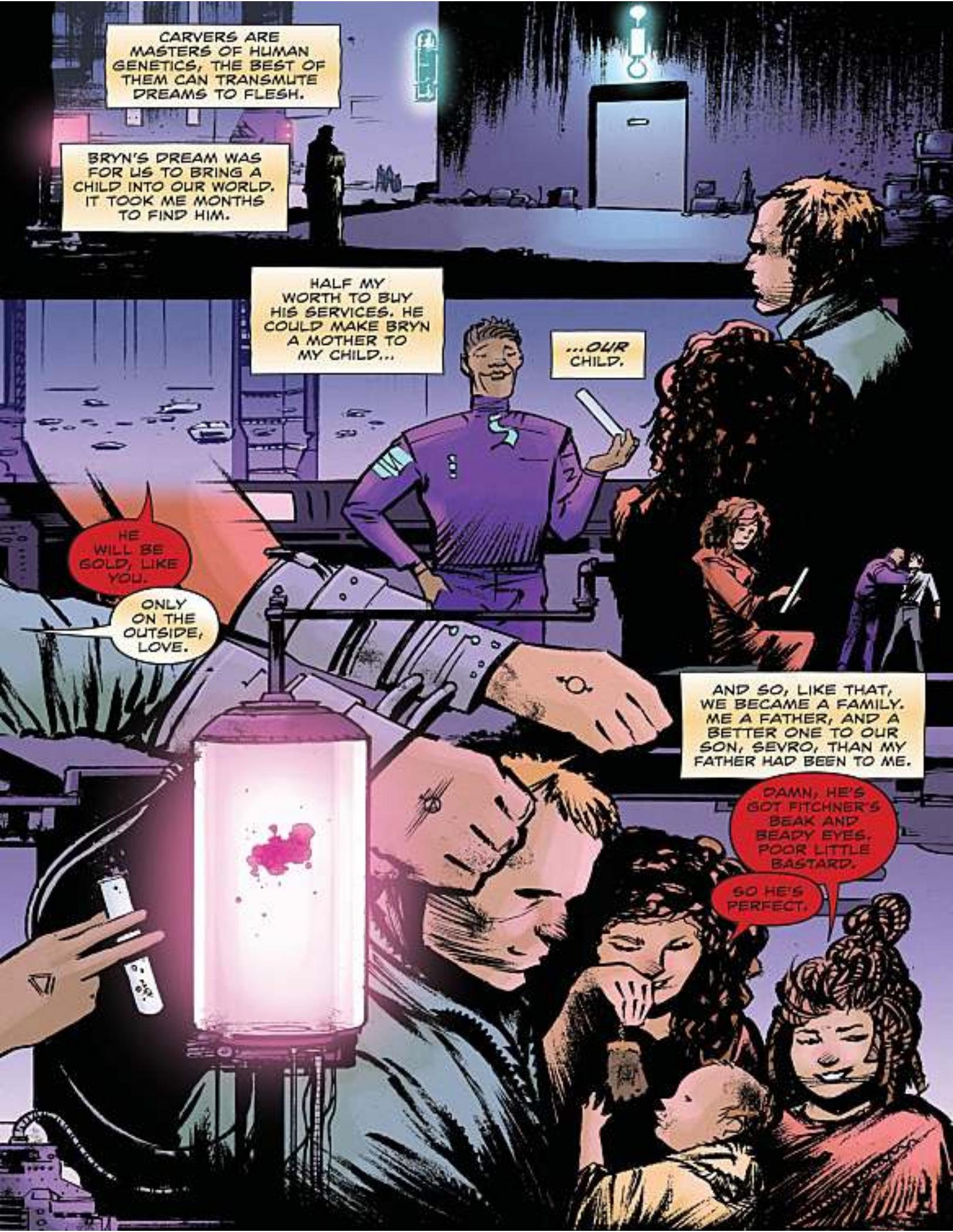
HE WILL BE GOLD, LIKE YOU.

ONLY ON THE OUTSIDE, LOVE.

AND SO, LIKE THAT, WE BECAME A FAMILY. ME A FATHER, AND A BETTER ONE TO OUR SON, SEVRO, THAN MY FATHER HAD BEEN TO ME.

DAMN, HE'S GOT FITCHNER'S BEAK AND BEADY EYES. POOR LITTLE BASTARD.

SO HE'S PERFECT.



I THOUGHT THE DREAM WOULD LAST FOREVER. BUT NOTHING DOES.

BAM







...  
...BLOODYHELL,  
REMINDE ME NEVER  
TO F--- WITH A  
PEERLESS  
SCARRED.



DID THEY  
HURT YOU,  
RYANNA?

I CAN  
WALK. SNAFF  
I'LL BE  
FINE.

BUT  
DON'T WORRY  
ABOUT ME,  
WORRY ABOUT  
THEM--



--BECAUSE  
THEY'RE HERE,  
FITCHNER--

--MY  
SISTER  
AND YOUR  
SON...



...AND THESE  
QUALITY CONTROL  
BASTARDS HAVE  
THEM."

HE'S  
OBVIOUSLY NOT  
A RED, BRYN, SO  
YOU REALLY SHOULD  
TELL ME WHO YOUR  
BABY'S FATHER  
IS...



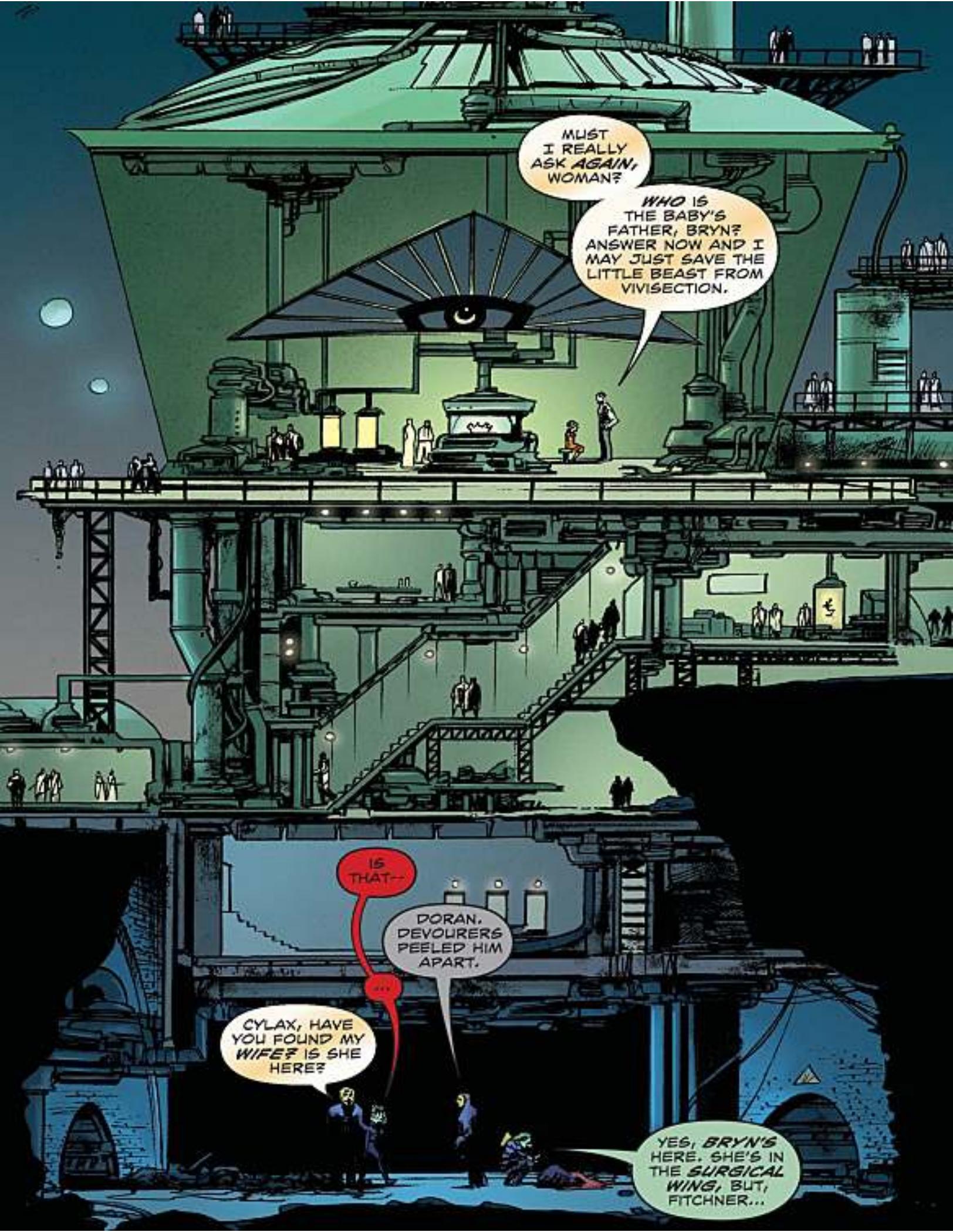
...OR WE'LL  
GO AHEAD  
AND CARVE THAT  
INFORMATION  
OUT OF HIS  
DNA!





ISSUE FIVE | COVER ART BY TOBY CYPRESS





MUST I REALLY ASK AGAIN, WOMAN?

WHO IS THE BABY'S FATHER, BRYN? ANSWER NOW AND I MAY JUST SAVE THE LITTLE BEAST FROM VIVISECTION.

IS THAT--

DORAN. DEVOURERS PEELED HIM APART.

CYLAX, HAVE YOU FOUND MY WIFE? IS SHE HERE?

YES, BRYN'S HERE. SHE'S IN THE SURGICAL WING, BUT, FITCHNER...



...IT'S IN THE **HIGH SECURITY** LEVEL. ACTIVE INTERROGATION WING.

THEN THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING, BOYO. I'LL GO ALONE IF YOU'RE GETTING ALL **WOBBLY**.

KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. IN FOR A BLOOD DROP, IN FOR A GALLON.



WHILE...

WELL?



CARVER GOT YOUR TONGUE?

LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE SECRET, RUSTER--



--I ALREADY **KNOW** WHO HIS FATHER IS. YOUR PASSAGE FROM TRITON IS IN THE SYSTEM. I MERELY NEED YOU TO **CONFIRM** IT.



THEATER'S READY, DOMINUS ARTURIUS. WE'LL PREP THE CORRUPTION FOR VIVISECTION.



YOU HEAR THAT?

THEY'RE ABOUT TO CARVE YOUR PRECIOUS LITTLE HYBRID TO PIECES, BECAUSE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO ANSWER A SIMPLE QUESTION.

SOME MOTHERS ARE SO SELFISH.

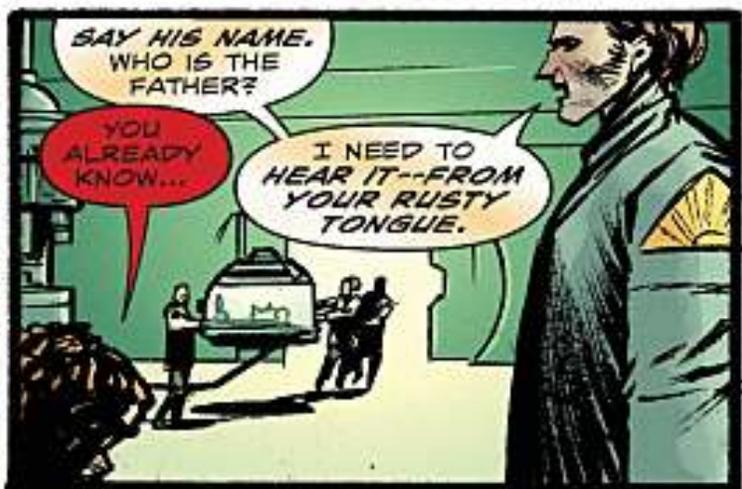


PLEASE. SHOW MERCY...



...FOR YOUR FRIEND.

!GASP!



SAY HIS NAME. WHO IS THE FATHER?

YOU ALREADY KNOW...

I NEED TO HEAR IT--FROM YOUR RUSTY TONGUE.



DOCTORS--WAIT! LEAVE THE CHILD, I'M NOT DONE YET.

BUT, DOMINUS, THE THEATER IS--

JUST GO! LEAVE US! LEAVE THE CHILD.



ALL VARDAN SHOULD LET US INSPECT THE CHILD.

WE'VE MUCH TO LEARN FROM THE HYBRID. JUST AS WITH THE OTHERS...



WHAT IS HE CALLED, DID YOU SAY? SEVRO-- WAS THAT IT?

AND WOULD YOU SAY BABY SEVRO LOOKS LIKE HIS FATHER?



TELL ME.

YES.

AND HOW DID YOU ENSNARE POOR FITCHNER?

ENSNARE HIM? WE FELL IN LOVE. I WANTED TO CARRY HIS CHILD BUT...

IT'S FORBIDDEN MORALLY AND PREVENTED GENETICALLY. BUT YOU FOUND A WAY.

"AYE, WE FOUND A WAY."

HALF OF YOU, HALF OF ME. I KNEW IT WAS NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

DO THEY ALWAYS LOOK LIKE GOBLINS AT THIS AGE?

WATCH YOUR BLOODY MOUTH. HE'S LISTENING. AND HE'S AN ANGEL. SEE...

CHAPTER 5:

**RAW**

**WAR**

WAAH-WAAH!!



I'VE HEARD QUIETER ENGINE TURBINES.

HE'S A GOLD, RYANNA. YOU EXPECT HIM NOT TO WANT TO BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION? HOWL ON, LITTLE ONE.

GURGLE



WELL DAMN MY BONES. LITTLE GOBLIN DOES LIKE WOLVES. FINALLY QUIETING DOWN.



HE'S SAFE HERE. YOU ALL ARE.

YOU SOUND MORE CERTAIN THAN BEFORE.



I'VE TAKEN STEPS TO ENSURE IT WITH MY EMPLOYER. WE HAVE HIS PATRONAGE.

AND OUR SECRET...



YOU KNOW I CAN'T BE SEEN WITH YOU, NOT IN PUBLIC. IT WOULD BE THE END OF ALL OF THIS.

THAT MAKES US PRISONERS HERE. YOUR PRISONERS.

AND WHAT WOULD YOU PREFER, RYANNA? WANT TO WALK HAND IN HAND WITH ME TO THE OPERA? DANCE IN THE PAVILION?

YOU'LL SEE THE GRAYS COMING, THEN WAKE UP IN A CELL WITH HALF YOUR TEETH MISSING!

FITCHNER, KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN. YOU'VE UPSET SEVRO.

WAAAAAH-HUNNNEE!

I'M SORRY...

JUST TRY TO UNDERSTAND. IF THE BOARD OF QUALITY CONTROL LEARNED WE'D HAD A CHILD, THEY'D RIP OUT YOUR WOMB AND CASTRATE ME--

"--ALL THIS WOULD BE BROKEN."

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. HE'S GOT A BARK, SISTER, BUT HE'S A GOOD MAN. ALWAYS HAS BEEN. REMEMBER HOW HE DOVE INTO THE WATER.

A GOOD MAN WOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT US HERE. IN THE END, HE'S JUST AS SELFISH AS THE REST OF THEM.

HE'S MY HUSBAND...

"... ACCEPT IT,  
OR GO BACK  
TO TRITON."

SHE'S  
LIKE AS NOT  
ALREADY  
DEAD.



HER  
CORPSE  
ALREADY ASHES  
FLUSHED  
THROUGH A  
DRAIN?

SHE'S NOT  
DEAD.

AND  
GOLD'S KNOW  
EVERYTHING,  
DON'T  
THEY?



WE'RE  
WASTING  
TIME.



HE  
LOVED  
ME.

WHO? THE  
KID?

YES, AND  
NOW HE'S  
DEAD.





YOU DIDN'T LOVE HIM BACK, RYANNA. IT'S NOT YOUR BURDEN.

BUT HE DIED THINKING...

--THAT HE WAS AMONG FRIENDS. AND HE WAS. WE ARE.



THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS. IN THIS WORLD, IT'S ALL THEY'VE LEFT US.

WELL, BYTEBRAIN, DOES THE CIPHER VARUS GAVE US WORK OR NOT?



IT'S...BEEN ACCEPTED. PHEWE



FINALLY, SOME GORYDAMN LUCK.

WE'RE IN.

THE BACKDOOR WAS ALWAYS MY STYLE ANYHOW.

CLASSY.



OKAY, I'VE DISABLED THE ELEVATOR, LIKE YOU ASKED.

YOU SURE? DON'T FANCY BEING CRUSHED TO DEATH BY A TWO-TON ANVIL.

80% SURE.

HA. HA.



LIKE DANCING UNDER A DAMN GUILLOTINE...



OKAY, GOT IT.

WHAT'S THAT--?



GRIND



BLAM

YEARRRGHHH!



THEN.

STOP YOUR GIBBERING, PLEB! MY SOURCES TELL ME THAT YOU DID SOME WORK FOR A FRIEND OF MINE...

...A GOLD.

PLEASE... I A'READY TOLD YOUR GUARDS EV'THING I KNOW.

I NEVER GOT THE *DOMINUS'S* NAME. I DON'T ASK THINGS LIKE THAT IN MY TRADE.



I WOULD BELIEVE YOU; BUT SADLY, BROKEN BONE AND PEELED FLESH TELL DEEPER TRUTHS THAN A VIOLET'S TONGUE.



I DON'T REMEMBER! I DON'T...





THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN OFFER, MY GOODMAN.

CONDITIONALLY. YOU HAVE SOME... RATHER GRAND LIABILITIES THAT MUST BE SORTED.

"...AND AS YOUR *OLDEST FRIEND*, I'VE TAKEN IT UPON MYSELF TO SORT THEM. *BOTH OF THEM.*"



BOTH--?

WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES, BROTHER. I'VE WASHED YOURS CLEAN. THAT SLAVE OF YOURS AND THE...SPAWN ARE BEING DISPOSED OF.



IT'S ALL IN MY PURVIEW AS  
PREFECT FOR THE BOARD OF  
QUALITY CONTROL. I COULDN'T  
PROTECT YOU FROM MOTHER.  
BUT I CAN PROTECT YOU  
AGAINST YOURSELF. YOU  
WERE ALWAYS TOO  
LOYAL.

NOW,  
WHAT SAY WE  
MAKE THIS ALL  
SMOOTH-LIKE  
AGAIN...?



YOU EVIL,  
SLITHERING  
LITTLE  
SHIT...



WHAT HAVE YOU  
DONE, ARTIE? TELL  
ME OR I'LL SORT IT  
FROM YOUR BRAIN  
SPATTER.



YOU UPPITY BLAGGARD.  
I'M NOT SOME RUSTIC  
YOU CAN SLAP AROUND.  
I'M TRYING TO HELP  
YOU, FOOL!

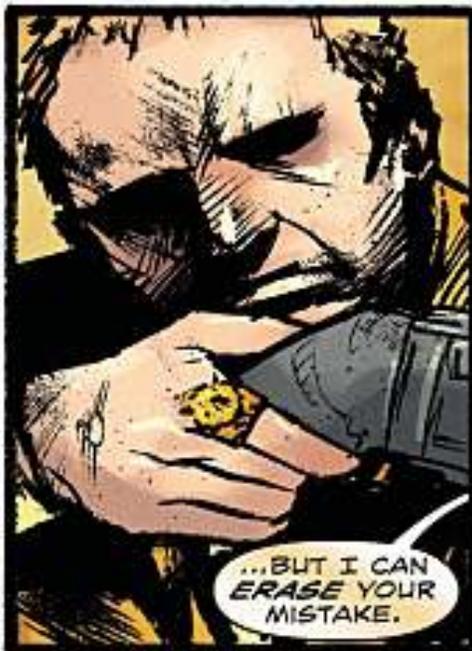
I  
SEALED THE  
FILE. I SAVED  
YOUR LIFE. AND  
YOU THREATEN  
ME?



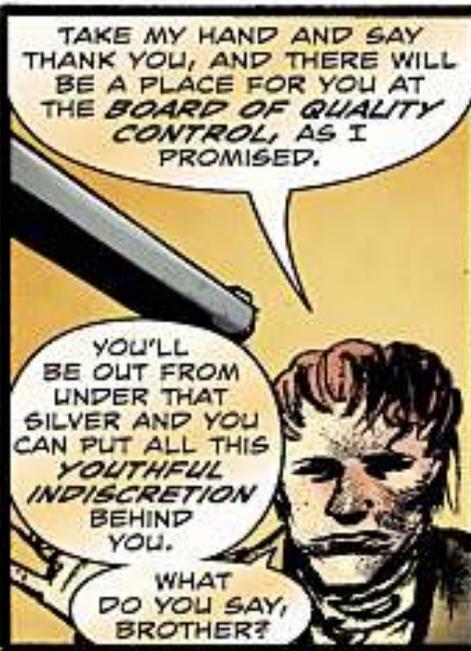
WE'RE LIKE  
BROTHERS, YOU  
AND I. EVEN  
BROTHERS  
FIGHT.



I CAN'T FIX WHAT  
YOU DID, SLAGGING A  
SLIP OF A RED LIKE THAT,  
PRODUCING SOME HYBRID  
ABOMINATION...



...BUT I CAN  
ERASE YOUR  
MISTAKE.



TAKE MY HAND AND SAY  
THANK YOU, AND THERE WILL  
BE A PLACE FOR YOU AT  
THE *BOARD OF QUALITY*  
CONTROL, AS I  
PROMISED.

YOU'LL  
BE OUT FROM  
UNDER THAT  
SILVER AND YOU  
CAN PUT ALL THIS  
*YOUTHFUL*  
*INDISCRETION*  
BEHIND  
YOU.

WHAT  
DO YOU SAY,  
BROTHER?



WE  
WERE NEVER  
BROTHERS.

YOU  
CHOOSE HER!  
A RED WHORE  
OVER ME!?



SHE'S  
IN THE *SYSTEM*  
NOW, YOU *PEASANT*.  
THERE'S NOTHING  
YOU CAN DO.

"...LET  
HER GO..."

THIS  
PLACE SMELLS  
LIKE DEATH.  
ARTIFICIAL  
DEATH.





WHY? YOU'RE JUST A SLAVE, AN INTEGER FOR LABOR. WHY DOES HE LOVE YOU?

BECAUSE I NEVER TRIED TO OWN HIM.

...  
...WHAT WAS THAT?

BLAM

COME ON, MAN--HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE YOU?

IT'S A TEN DIGIT CIPHER, DOMINUS--I'M WORKING ON IT...

THOUGHT I HEARD A NOISE. SOUNDED LIKE A...A GUN GOING OFF MAYBE...? BUT WHO WOULD FIRE SHOTS HERE...? THIS IS A *SECURE FACILITY*.

THEN.

SHE'S GONE, FITCHNER.

THEY TOOK BOTH OF THEM--

--BRYN...

"...AND SEVRO."

I NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE, QUICKSILVER...

...TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE BOARD OF QUALITY CONTROL. NO ONE MUST KNOW.

HMMM, THAT'S ONE GORYDAMN **SECURE** HOLE, MY FRIEND. PUN INTENDED. NO ONE GOES IN OR OUT WITHOUT BEING CHECKED OVER. QUITE AN ASK.

BUT YOU'RE A  
GOLD, YOU GO  
WHERE YOU  
PLEASE.

SO,  
TELL ME--WHY  
WOULD YOU WANT  
TO GAIN ENTRY  
WITHOUT ANYONE  
KNOWING? UP TO  
MISCHIEF?



THEY TOOK...  
SOMETHING FROM  
ME. I THINK  
YOU KNOW  
WHAT.

YES,  
INDEED.

THERE IS  
A WAY...



NAME  
YOUR  
PRICE.

YOUR  
SERVICES,  
INDEFINITELY.

DONE.

THIS  
MAN--

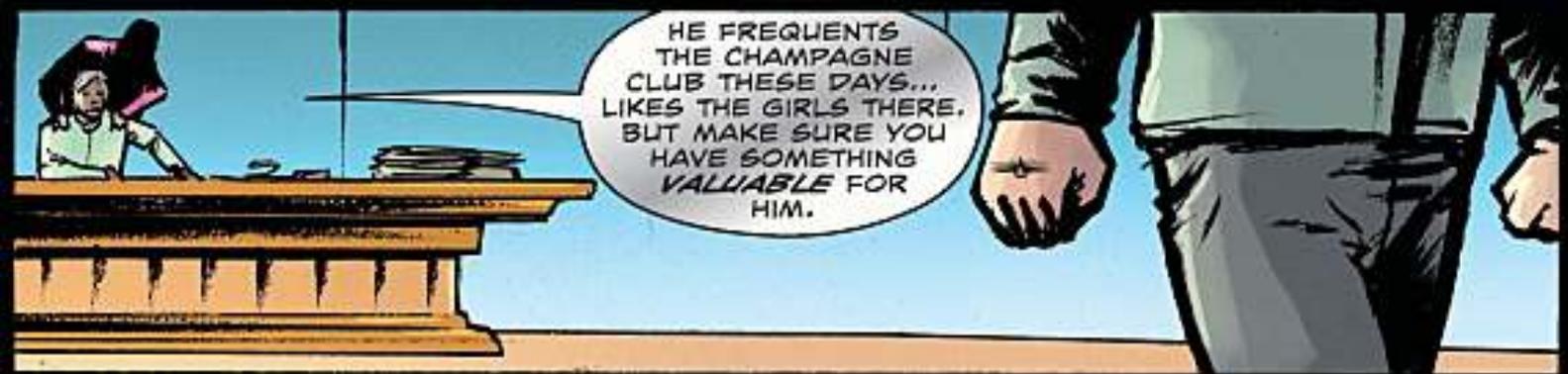


--VARUS AU CELINIUS,  
HE ORGANIZES *DISPOSAL*  
*SERVICES* FOR CERTAIN  
PUBLIC BUILDINGS. HE  
WOULD HAVE *ACCESS*  
*CODES* AS A MATTER  
OF COURSE.

HE *MAY*  
GET YOU IN,  
IF YOU OFFERED  
HIM SOMETHING  
WORTHWHILE  
IN RETURN.



HE FREQUENTS  
THE CHAMPAGNE  
CLUB THESE DAYS...  
LIKES THE GIRLS THERE.  
BUT MAKE SURE YOU  
HAVE SOMETHING  
*VALUABLE* FOR  
HIM.



OH, I  
WILL.



THE  
CHAMPAGNE  
CLUB.

P  
I  
S  
S  
K  
S

HOT!!

OH, TO  
DANCE TO  
DANCE!

I  
COULD HAVE  
DANCED--

--ALL NI-  
YEARGH!

WHAT  
IS THIS...?  
WHO ARE  
YOU?

WHO  
ARE YOU?  
ARE YOU VARUS  
AU CELINIUS?

...CIPHER  
EPSILON 12 WITH...  
WITH TH-THAT PASSCODE  
TO...TO-TO ACCESS WH-  
WH-WHITEHOLD.

I-PLEASE,  
THAT'S...ALL I KNOW.  
CAN'T...YOU S-S-SEE...THAT I...  
REQUIRE M-M-MEDICAL...  
ATTENTION...?

CRUNK

DOES IT  
WORK?

JUST  
ACCESSING NOW,  
BOSS...OKAY. CIPHER  
CHANGES EVERY FOUR  
HOURS, SO WE'LL  
NEED TO MOVE  
IN QUICKLY.

YOU  
KNOW WHAT  
THE STAKES ARE,  
I WON'T BE  
DRAGGING...

"...MY GORYDAMN HEELS."

SECURITY BREACH!  
SECURITY BREACH!

UNCLE!





ALL SECURITY PERSONNEL TO LEVEL 4!

YEAHGH!



BIAM

GUYS, I'M IN BUT...



...BAD NEWS!

WE HAVE MORE GUARDS COMING! THE WHOLE AREA'S IN LOCKDOWN!



THERE'S NO GORYDAMN WAY THROUGH!

ALL PERSONNEL ARE TO STAY IN SECURE AREAS. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.

IT'S HIM. IT'S FITCHNER. HE'S COME FOR ME.

YOU'RE DELUSIONAL. HE WOULDN'T. HE COULDN'T...



YOU KNOW MY HUSBAND. REMEMBER WHAT HE DID FOR YOU. NOW IMAGINE WHAT HE'D DO FOR HIS WIFE. HIS CHILD.

MOTHER WAS RIGHT. HE'S A MAD DOG.

HE MUST BE PUT DOWN. FOR HIS OWN SAKE.



FOR YOU--

MY RAZ--  
LHKK!



--MY HUSBAND'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN BITE.



WAAA-WAAA!  
WAAAHH!





ISSUE SIX | COVER ART BY TOBY CYPRESS





ALL PERSONNEL ARE TO STAY IN SECURE AREAS. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.

YOU HEAR THAT? SOUNDS LIKE MY HUSBAND IS COMING...

...EITHER TO COLLECT ME...



...OR TO KILL YOU!



YOU'D BETTER DECIDE FAST LIKE WHICH, BEFORE HE DECIDES FOR YOU!

WHERE WILL YOU GO, BRYN? THERE'S NOWHERE YOU CAN RUN.



ANYWHERE BUT HERE.



THE...STUD WORKS THE DOORS.

IT'S KEYED TO MY SECURITY PROTOCOLS, SO IT WILL LET YOU GO ANYWHERE.

TAKE IT AND LEAVE.



BUT UNDERSTAND THAT THE SOCIETY WILL HUNT YOU. FIND YOU. AND KILL YOU BOTH.



WHACK

I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES.



UNGKI!

WHACK



BETTER ME AND SEVRO  
LEAVE HERE ALIVE,  
DOMINUS...

...THAN STAY  
HERE FOR OUR  
OWN BLOODYDAMN  
VIVISECTION!



GOODBYE,  
DOMINUS.

IF MY  
HUSBAND FINDS  
YOU BEFORE HE  
FINDS ME, TELL  
HIM I HAVE  
SEVRO...



...AND  
HE MAY  
LET YOU  
LIVE.

CHAPTER 6:

# BIRTH OF A MYTH.



NEARBY.

WE'RE GOING TO DIE HERE, BOSS!

FENIX, FITCHNER'S ASSISTANT, GRAY.

RYANNA, BRYN'S SISTER, RED.

FITCHNER, BRYN'S HUSBAND, GOLD.

NOT TODAY WE'RE NOT.

CYLAX, FITCHNER'S TECH EXPERT, GREEN.



CY, HAVE YOU FOUND US ANOTHER WAY IN?

I WILL IF YOU STOP TALKING.



CHIEF...?



FAKOOON



FIND ME A WAY IN!

NOW!





OKAY, THERE'S A WAY...

...I CAN TEMPORARILY DISABLE THE MAG SEALS ON THE AIR RECYCLERS.

IT'LL BE A TIGHT SQUEEZE BUT IT WILL GET YOU PAST THIS... ROADBLOCK.



WHAT ABOUT YOU? THIS ROADBLOCK, AS YOU CALL IT, IS GOING TO BE THE DEATH OF...



SHUT UP AND GO! SAVE MY SISTER!

SAVE BRYN!



BE PROUD, MY FRIENDS-- FOR YOU TOWER ABOVE YOUR FELLOWS!

THEY WERE THE SAME WORDS THAT THE ARCHGOVERNOR HAD SAID TO ME WHEN I GRADUATED.

BUT I HAD REALIZED THAT PRIDE AND BRAVERY WERE NOT THE EXCLUSIVE PROVINCE OF THE GOLDS. ALL THEY TOLD US OF THE LOWCOLORS, THE RABBLE, WAS A LIE...

...DESIGNED TO  
DIVIDE US, TO  
MANIPULATE US.

DID  
YOU EVER  
IMAGINE IT'D  
END UP LIKE  
THIS...



"... WHEN YOU  
FIRST MET THE  
BOSS?"



"NO."



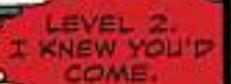
"BUT I NEVER  
THOUGHT I'D CALL  
A GOLD BROTHER  
EITHER."



"...MAN'S  
FULL OF  
SURPRISES."









UNGH!  
THAT RUSTER  
BITCH!



OH!...UM...  
DOMINUS?  
ARE YOU ALL  
RIGHT?

THE  
WOMAN?  
WHERE IS THE  
WOMAN?  
THE RED?



I-I  
DIDN'T SEE  
ANYONE...!

OUT  
OF MYWAY,  
CUPRUM.



YOUR  
ATTENTION. THIS  
IS PERFECT  
ARTURIUS AU  
VARDAN.

THERE IS A  
RED WOMAN  
LOOSE IN THIS  
FACILITY.



SHE IS TO BE  
APPREHENDED, ALONG  
WITH THE BABY SHE  
CARRIES! THE BABY  
IS TO BE TAKEN  
ALIVE.

BLOODYDAMN!

THE RED IS  
BEING ASSISTED  
BY...UNIDENTIFIED  
INTRUDERS.  
HEAVILY  
ARMED.



LURCHER  
SQUADS ARE  
TO BE  
DEPLOYED.

REPEAT--  
DEPLOY THE  
LURCHERS.





WHAT THE--?!



WAAH!



SLICK MOVE BUT IT WON'T STALL THEM FOR LONG.

THAT WON'T BUT THIS WILL-- I'M SHUTTING DOWN ALL ACCESS TO THIS FLOOR--



--AUTOMATIC DOORS, 'BOT ROUTES...

CHA-CHUNK

"...AND ALL ELEVATORS!"

EMERGENCY SHUT DOWN! PLEASE REMAIN CALM, HELP WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY!

WHAT NOW? WHY HAS IT STOPPED?!!

WAHH-WAHHH!



LET ME OUT.

DOORS OPENING, DOMINUS AU VARDAN--



--HAVE A NICE DAY!

WAHH-WAHHH!

SEVRO, HUSH, PLEASE...



...IT'S WELL, MY LOVE, IT'S WELL.

WAHH-WAHHH!



SHH, SEVRO, I'LL SING YOU A LULLABY...

MY LOVE, MY LOVE REMEMBER THE CRIES / WHEN WINTER FLED FOR SPRING SKIES...

WAHHH!



THEY ROARED AND ROARED BUT WE GRABBED OUR SEED / AND SOWED A SONG...

SNUFFLE!



...AGAINST  
THEIR  
GREED!

YOU  
THERE!  
RUSTER!  
HALT!



GOODBYE,  
SEVRO...



RUN.



AAAHHHHH!

ON  
THE GROUND,  
WOMAN. ON THE  
GROUND!









...OVER ME. OVER ME. OVER ME.

PER ASPERA AD ASTRA!

WHY?

KILL ME. NOT HER. PLEASE. SPARE HER. SPARE MY CHILD.

FOR THE LOVE I BEAR YOU, I WILL SPARE ONE OF THEM. WOMAN OR CHILD.

ARTURIUS, PLEASE...

THE CHOICE--

...IS YOURS.

I CAN'T LET YOU HAVE--

--HIM.

AS I THOUGHT.

THE CHILD IS YOURS.

THE RED IS MINE. AND THIS SECRET IS OURS.

"...REMEMBER I GAVE YOU THIS *MERCY*. EVEN WHEN YOU DID NOT DESERVE IT."



WHY DID HE LET US GO?



BECAUSE HE WANTS ME TO KNOW I AM THE *DOG*...



...AND HE IS THE *MASTER*.

MY *SISTER*...



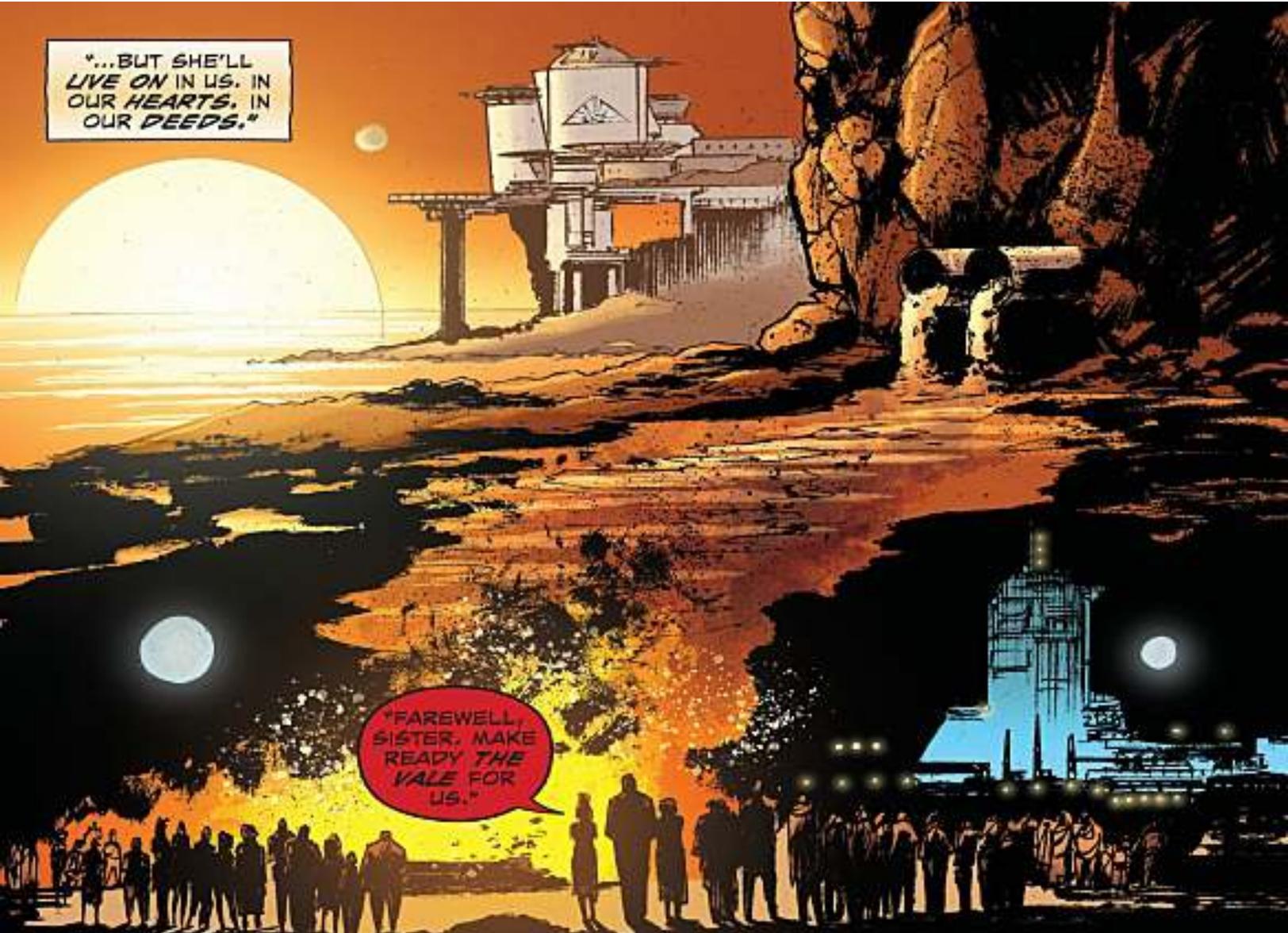
"...WE HAVE TO GO BACK, *FITCHNER*."



"SHE'S ALREADY DEAD, *RYANNA*."



"THERE'S NO GOING BACK..."



"...BUT SHE'LL  
LIVE ON IN US. IN  
OUR HEARTS. IN  
OUR DEEPS."

"FAREWELL,  
SISTER. MAKE  
READY THE  
VALE FOR  
US."

THANK  
YOU FOR  
COMING.

I WANTED YOU TO  
SEE SEVRO. HE'S  
YOUR GRANDSON  
BUT...WE WON'T  
BE COMING  
BACK TO  
TRITON.

WHERE  
WILL YOU  
GO?

MARS.  
I HAVE  
UNFINISHED  
BUSINESS  
THERE.

SHE WOULDN'T WANT YOU  
TO FIGHT, FITCHNER. THAT  
WASN'T HER WAY.

NO. IT  
WASN'T.  
BUT IT'S  
MINE.

# AGEA.



WHY SO GLUM, GOODMAN?



I'M CERTAIN WE CAN WIPE THOSE CARES AWAY WITHIN.

R-REALLY--?



OH YES! WE HAVE WAYS TO DELIGHT EVERY PALETTE HERE!



HELLO, ANTHOUSA CU BARDA. I HAVE QUESTIONS FOR YOU REGARDING YOUR EMPLOYER.

THE DOMINUS VARDAN? W-WHO ARE YOU?

MY  
NAME IS  
ARES.

E. F. O'NEILL  
'77.

THE  
BEGINNING.



ELI POWELL  
17

ISSUE ONE | COVER ART BY ELI POWELL



ISSUE TWO | COVER ART BY ELI POWELL



ISSUE THREE | COVER ART BY ELI POWELL

EPWELL  
17



ISSUE FOUR | COVER ART BY ELI POWELL



ELI POWELL  
17

ISSUE FIVE | COVER ART BY ELI POWELL



ISSUE SIX | COVER ART BY ELI POWELL



FITCHNER MASK

-CRACKED TO RESEMBLE SHARD OF PRO'S HELM



FENIX MASK

ARTURUS: House of Jupiter  
HOUSE OF JUSTICE  
(see location map)

FITCHNER - GOLD MYSFIT - WEATHERED UGLY

FENIX GRAY - EX-POLICE / MILL STRONGBMAN



PROCTOR MARS:  
(George C. Scott)





CYLAX MASK



GOLD BOY (FLASHBACK)

(with some skin on)

CYLAX 20's GREEN-GEEK, TECH SLENDER + SCRAPPY

JORAN RED-BONEY, CLANGY 19-SHORT, PANTS-SWING, NICE!

BLACK MESH TO COVER FACE?



← MASK WORN HERE

• CHARACTER UNIFORM •  
→ ADJUSTS TO FIT BODY-TYPE OF ALL'S MAIN CHARACTERS

Some kind of JEWEL TRIM Gold Decal



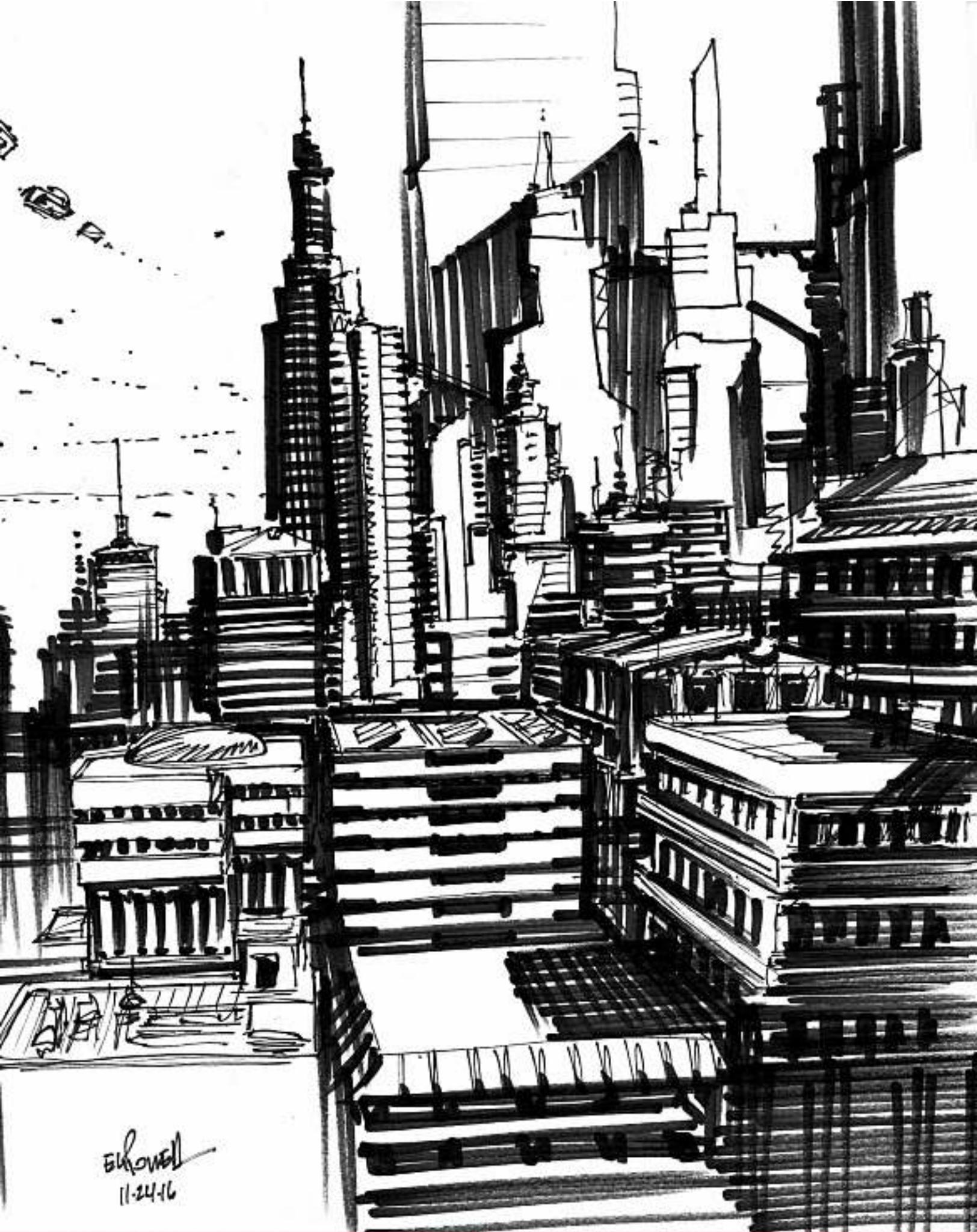
cracked Porcelain RYANNA MASK

GOLD PLATE DREADS

(Detail will be more hinted at in actual comic, except close-ups)

RYANNA





ELI POWELL  
11-24-16

MARS: INSTITUTE Building



HOUSE MARS (HOUSE OF RAGE)



INTERIOR MEETING HALL OF INSTITUTE



ROCKBANK SCENE: CLIFFS BY THE SEA



CEREMONY: Flat scene



BOARD OF QUALITY BUILDING, OVERLOOKS WHARF



INTERIOR DINING HALL



PRAISE FOR DYNAMITE'S

# RED RISING: SONS OF ARES

Pierce Brown gives us an incredibly immersive and creative story that Rik Hoskin perfectly pens in such a way that sequential art can tell its plot. Eli Powell's illustrations are heavily shadowed, dramatic, and damn near perfect for the eerie tone of this issue. - **ComicWOW**

[The art is] grungy and perfect for this story of a primal gritty future that is a possible outcome of humanity... This story definitely caught my attention. Four out of five stars. - **Comic Crusaders**

Powell captures both the bleakness of Brown's world and the pompousness of the Golds. - **Word of the Nerd**



This 160-page hardcover collects the six issue series written by author **PIERCE BROWN** (*The Red Rising Trilogy*) and **RIK HOSKIN** (*Heroes of Skyrealm*, *Brandon Sanderson's White Sand*), with art by **Eli Powell** (*Yakuza Demon Killers*, *The 13th Artifact*), plus a full cover gallery featuring the works of **Toby Cypress** and **Eli Powell**, and character and environment studies from **Eli Powell**.



# SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...  
THIS MONSTER!"

