

INFINITE DARK

ISSUE 6

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INFINITE DARK

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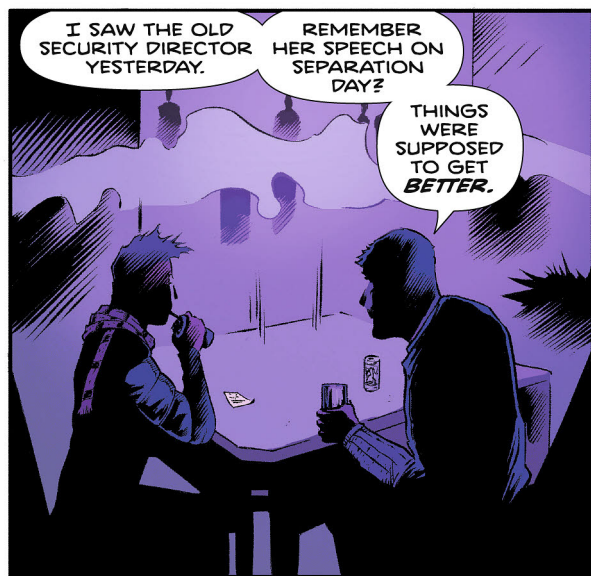
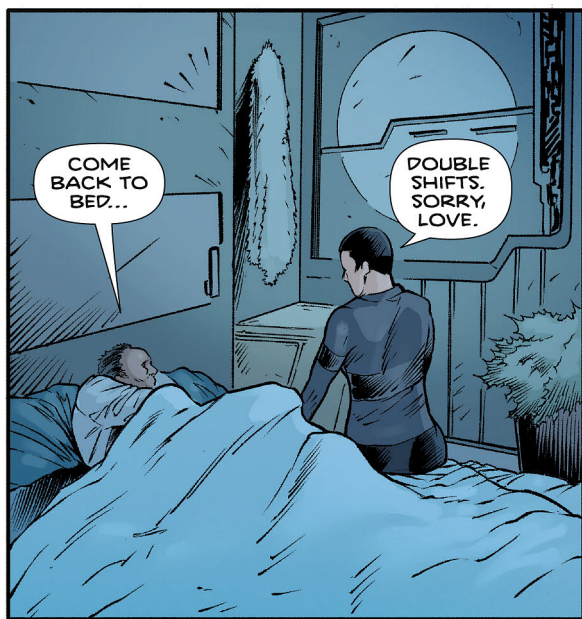
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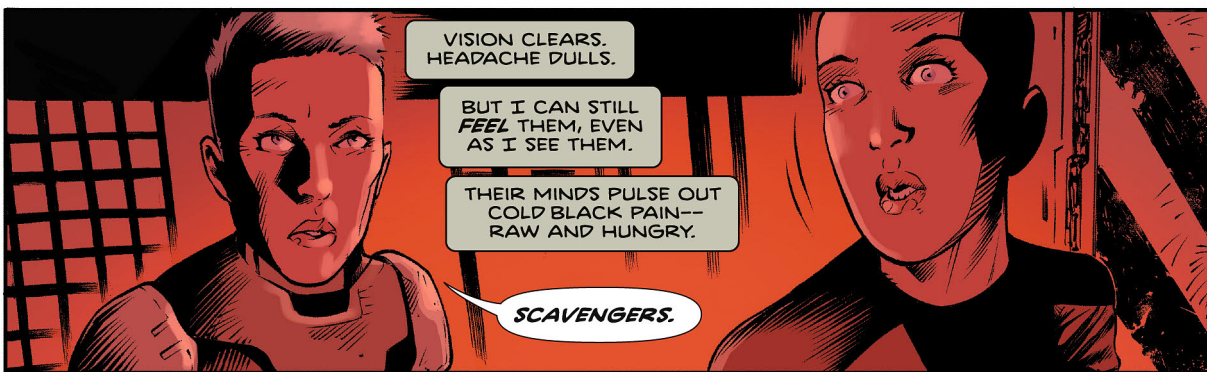
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NOW...

WHERE
WERE
WE?

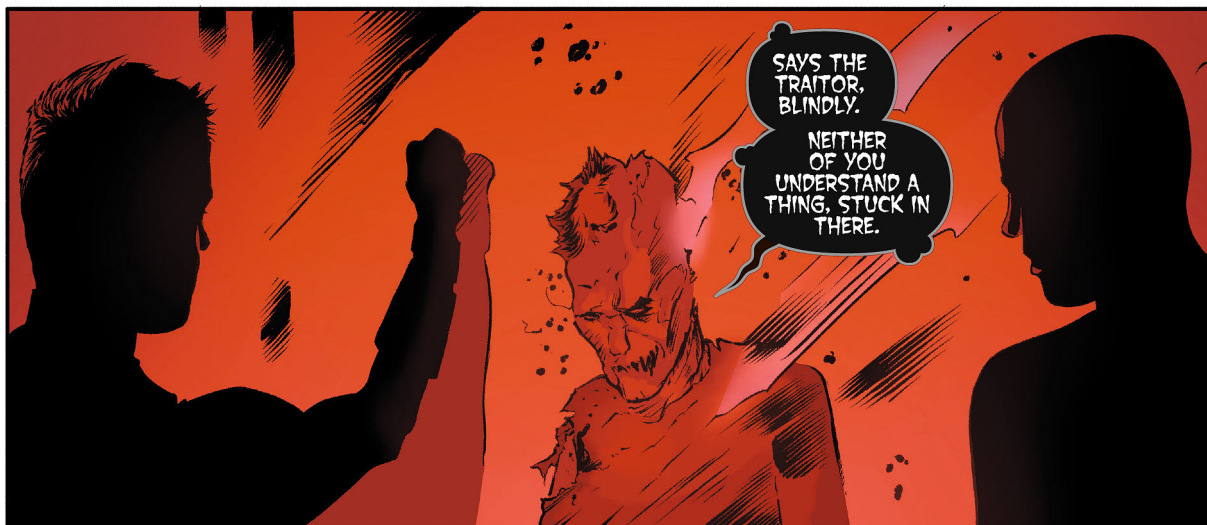


VISION CLEARS.
HEADACHE DULLS.

BUT I CAN STILL
FEEL THEM, EVEN
AS I SEE THEM.

THEIR MINDS PULSE OUT
COLD BLACK PAIN--
RAW AND HUNGRY.

SCAVENGERS.



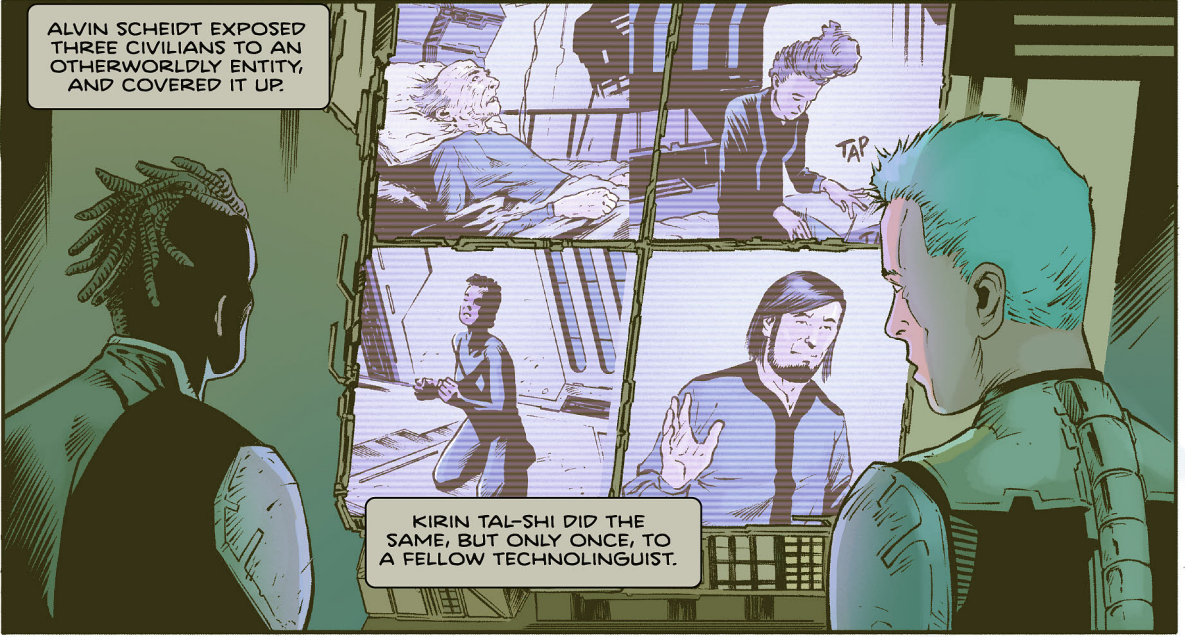
SAYS THE
TRAITOR,
BLINDLY.

NEITHER
OF YOU
UNDERSTAND A
THING, STUCK IN
THERE.



THEIR VOICES COME THROUGH LIKE CLAWS ACROSS MY MIND.

AND I REMEMBER WHAT THEY WERE BEFORE.



ALVIN SCHEIDT EXPOSED THREE CIVILIANS TO AN OTHERWORLDLY ENTITY, AND COVERED IT UP.

KIRIN TAL-SHI DID THE SAME, BUT ONLY ONCE, TO A FELLOW TECHNOLOGIST.



AND IKE CHALOS, OUR FORMER MEDICAL DIRECTOR, TREATED ALL FOUR FOR "VOID EXPOSURE."

THEY *KILLED* HIM FOR IT.



YOU'RE THE ONES WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND-- THE ENTITY'S DEAD.

ABSORBING ITS CORPSE MAKES YOU *ABOMINATIONS...*



...NOT ACOLYTES.

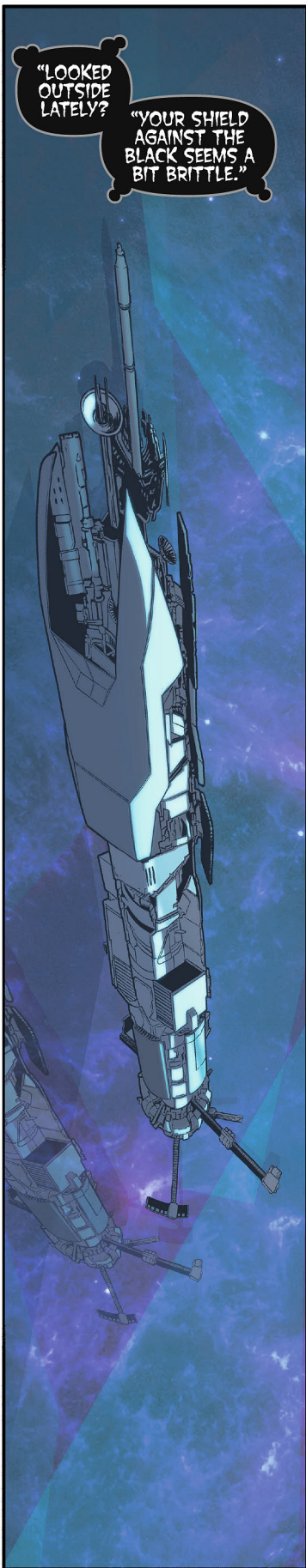
QUIET-- YOU FAILED ENTROPY. FAILED US.



DOESN'T MATTER. EVEN WITHOUT A HAND, ENTROPY WINS OUT.

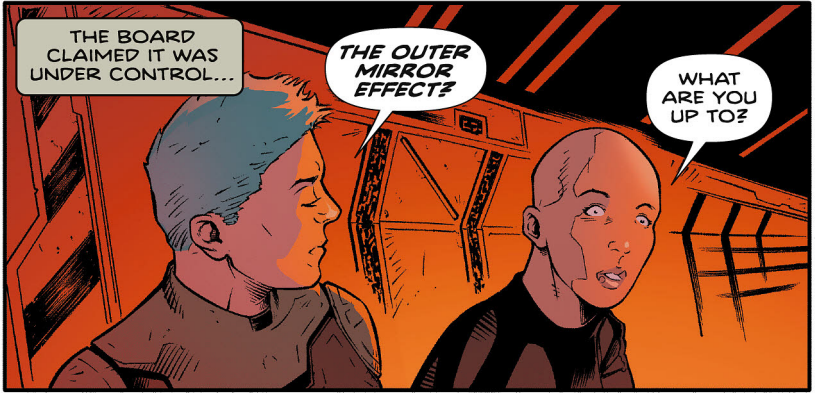


WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT?



"LOOKED OUTSIDE LATELY?"

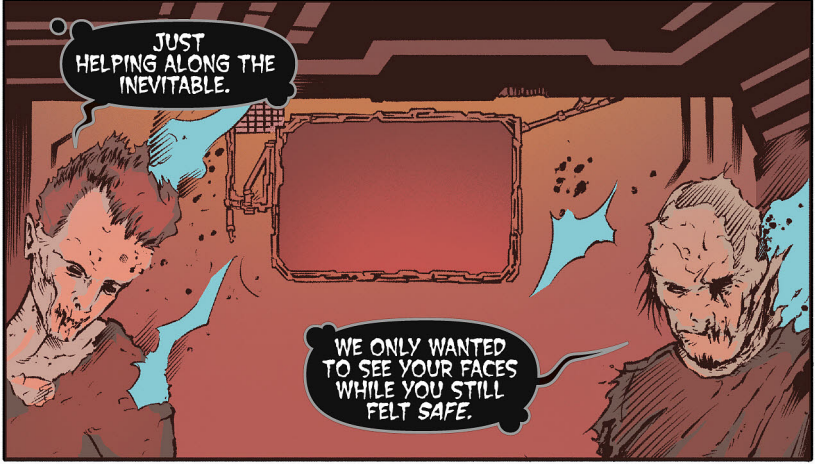
"YOUR SHIELD AGAINST THE BLACK SEEMS A BIT BRITTLE."



THE BOARD CLAIMED IT WAS UNDER CONTROL...

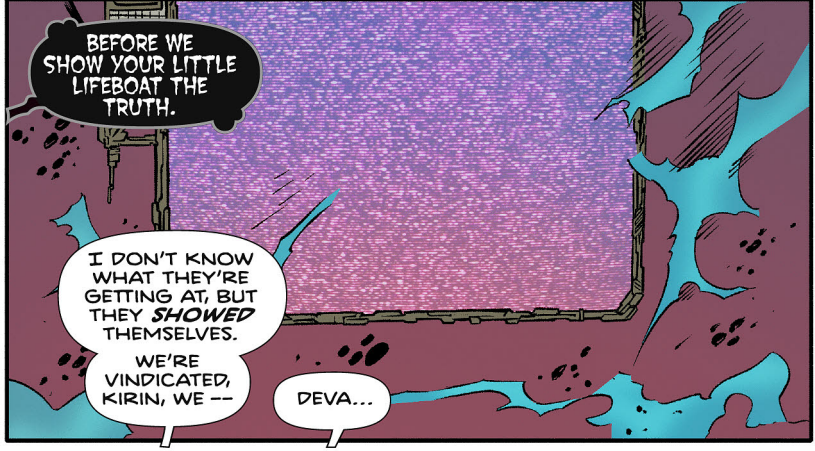
THE OUTER MIRROR EFFECT?

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?



JUST HELPING ALONG THE INEVITABLE.

WE ONLY WANTED TO SEE YOUR FACES WHILE YOU STILL FELT SAFE.

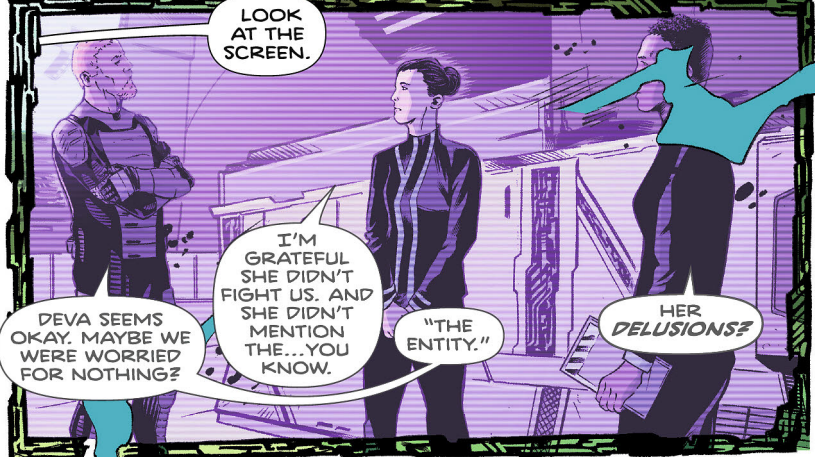


BEFORE WE SHOW YOUR LITTLE LIFEBOAT THE TRUTH.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE GETTING AT, BUT THEY *SHOWED* THEMSELVES.

WE'RE VINDICATED, KIRIN, WE --

DEVA...



LOOK AT THE SCREEN.

DEVA SEEMS OKAY. MAYBE WE WERE WORRIED FOR NOTHING?

I'M GRATEFUL SHE DIDN'T FIGHT US. AND SHE DIDN'T MENTION THE... YOU KNOW.

"THE ENTITY."

HER DELUSIONS?

I RECOGNIZE THE FOOTAGE RIGHT AWAY.

IT WAS ONLY **YESTERDAY**, AFTER ALL.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, RIGHT AFTER I LEFT THEM.

RIGHT AFTER THEY LIED TO MY FACE.

THE HONEYBEE PROTOCOL PROPOSED THAT OUR FUSION GENERATORS COULD CAUSE A MICRO BIG BANG. WHAT IF IT DID?

MAYBE WE'RE NOT LOOKING AT REALITY ON TOP OF NOTHING, LIKE BEFORE.

WE'RE LOOKING AT OUR PSEUDOREALITY ON TOP OF **ACTUAL** REALITY.

A FRESH NEW UNIVERSE, RIGHT OUTSIDE OUR WALLS.

LYNN, THAT'S PURE CONJECTURE.

AND I'M JUST AS BLINDSIDED AS THE REST OF **THE ORPHEUS**---

SHOCKED. HURT. TERRIFIED.

DEVA SEEMS OKAY. MAYBE WE WERE WORRIED FOR NOTHING?

I'M GRATEFUL SHE DIDN'T FIGHT US. AND SHE DIDN'T MENTION THE... YOU KNOW.

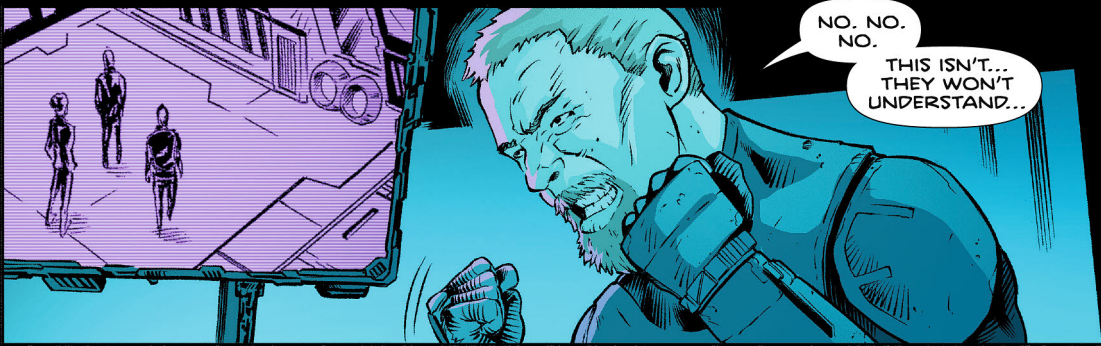
"THE ENTITY."

HER **DELUSIONS?**

IT DOESN'T MATTER THAT THIS FOOTAGE WAS LEAKED WITH NO CONTEXT.

OR THAT THE MONSTERS RESPONSIBLE PROBABLY WANT THAT EXACT RESPONSE.

BECAUSE SUDDENLY THE DARKNESS OUTSIDE FEELS MUCH, MUCH **CLOSER**.



NO. NO. NO.

THIS ISN'T... THEY WON'T UNDERSTAND...



THEY'LL NEVER TRUST US AGAIN, AND THEY'LL BE RIGHT NOT TO.



WE'RE STILL RECOVERING FROM *LAST MONTH'S CALAMITY*.

AT LEAST WE TOLD THEM ABOUT THAT ONE.



NO SOURCE, JUST JUNK DATA INSTEAD OF TRACKABLE --

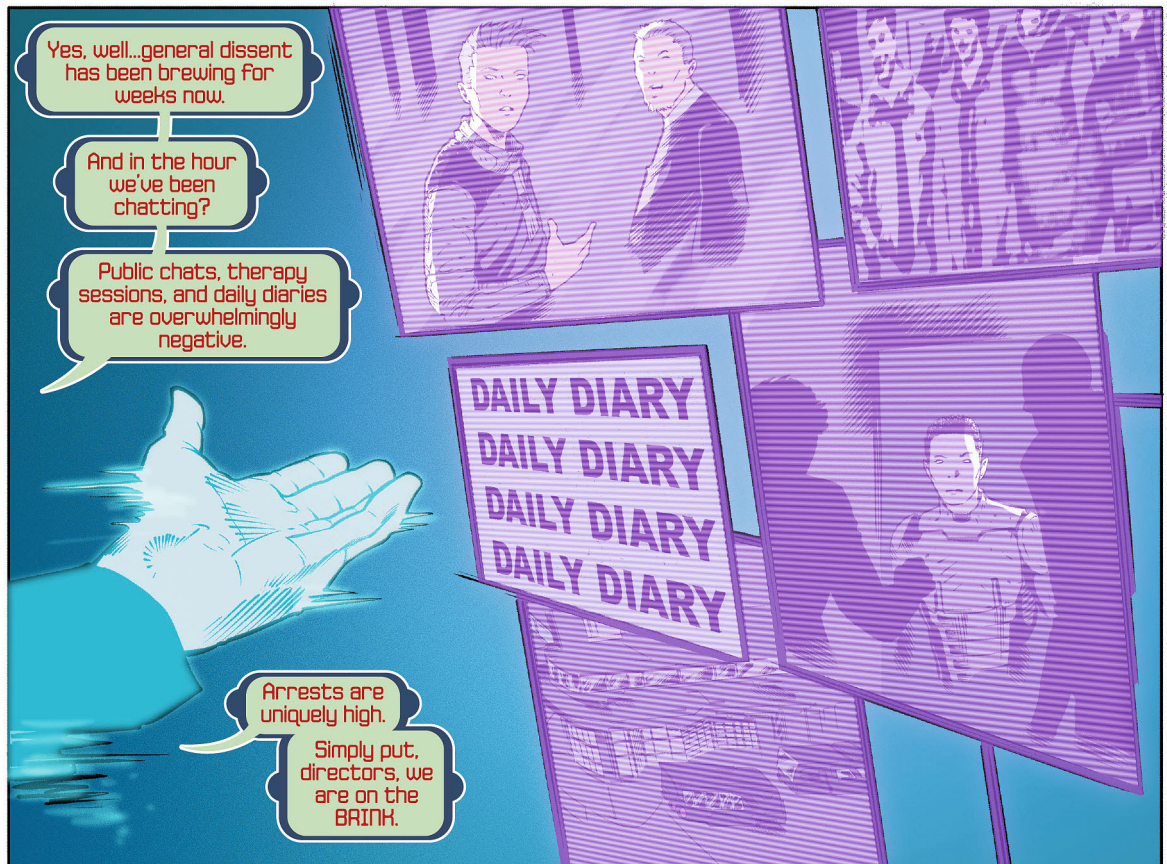
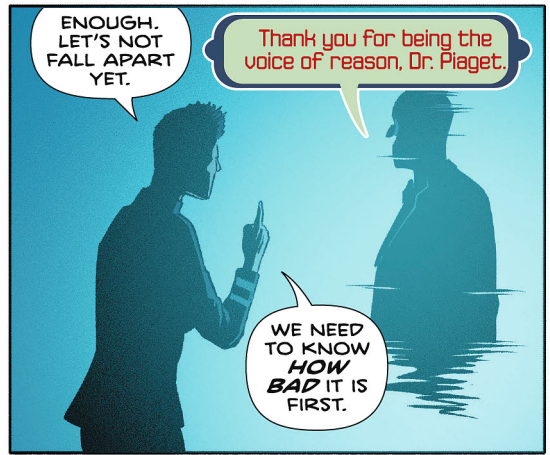
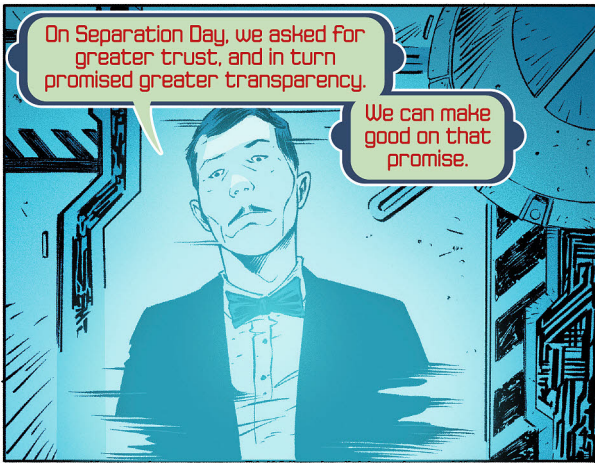
WHO leaked this footage isn't our chief concern.



The takeaway is that now everyone knows the danger on the horizon--

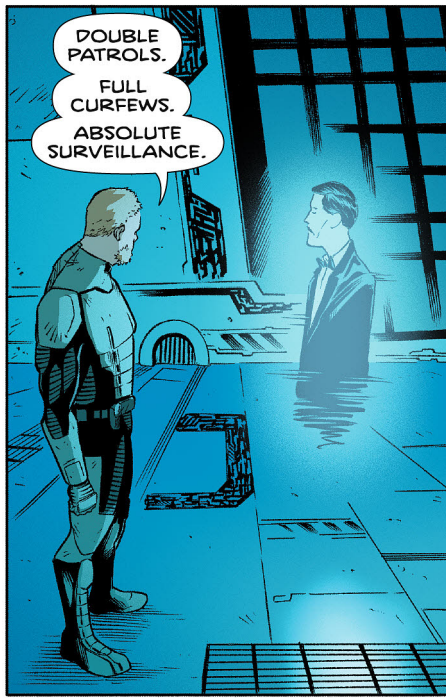
--and the TWO PATHS that lie before us.

Maybe that's not such a terrible thing.





THE MED BAY CAN'T HANDLE A RIOT'S WORTH OF INJURIES. WE NEED--

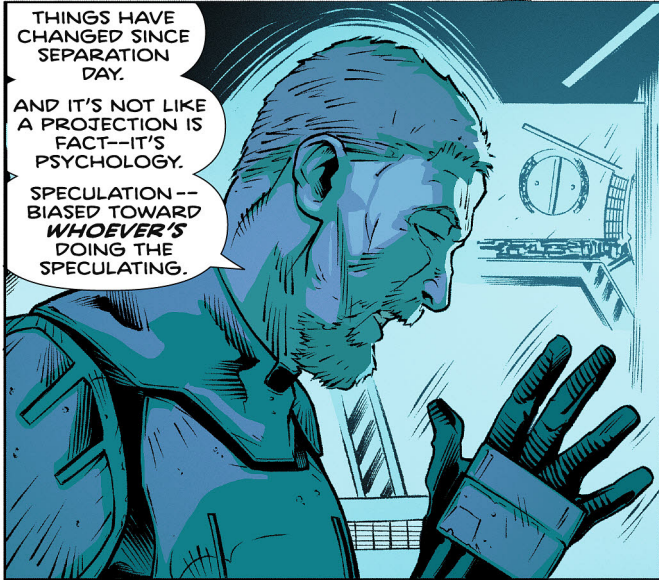


DOUBLE PATROLS.
FULL CURFEWS.
ABSOLUTE SURVEILLANCE.



MORE RESTRICTIONS WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE. PAST PROJECTIONS SHOW--

PAST IS THE KEYWORD.



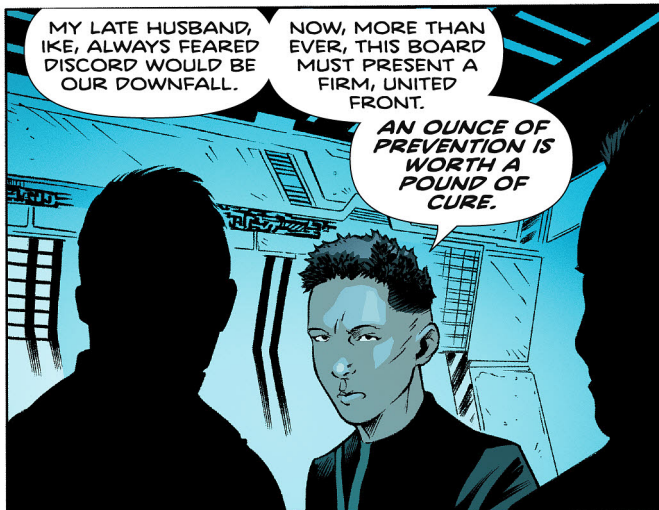
THINGS HAVE CHANGED SINCE SEPARATION DAY.

AND IT'S NOT LIKE A PROJECTION IS FACT--IT'S PSYCHOLOGY.

SPECULATION -- BIASED TOWARD *WHOEVER'S* DOING THE SPECULATING.



I do not speculate.
...I EXTRAPOLATE.



MY LATE HUSBAND, IKE, ALWAYS FEARED DISCORD WOULD BE OUR DOWNFALL.

NOW, MORE THAN EVER, THIS BOARD MUST PRESENT A FIRM, UNITED FRONT.

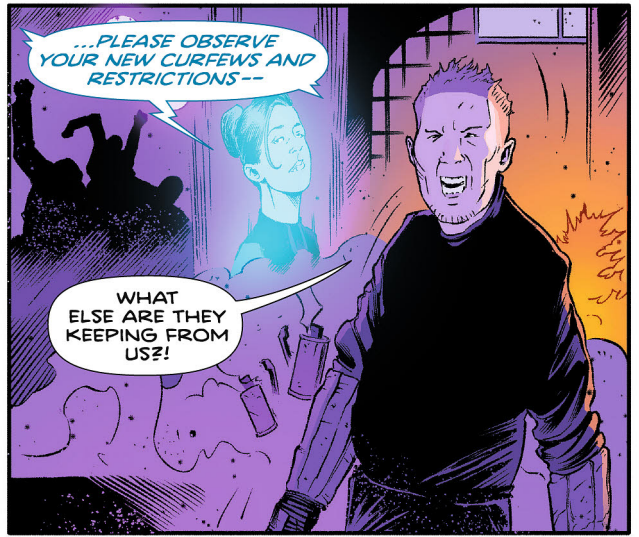
AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE.



ALL RIGHT... DO IT.

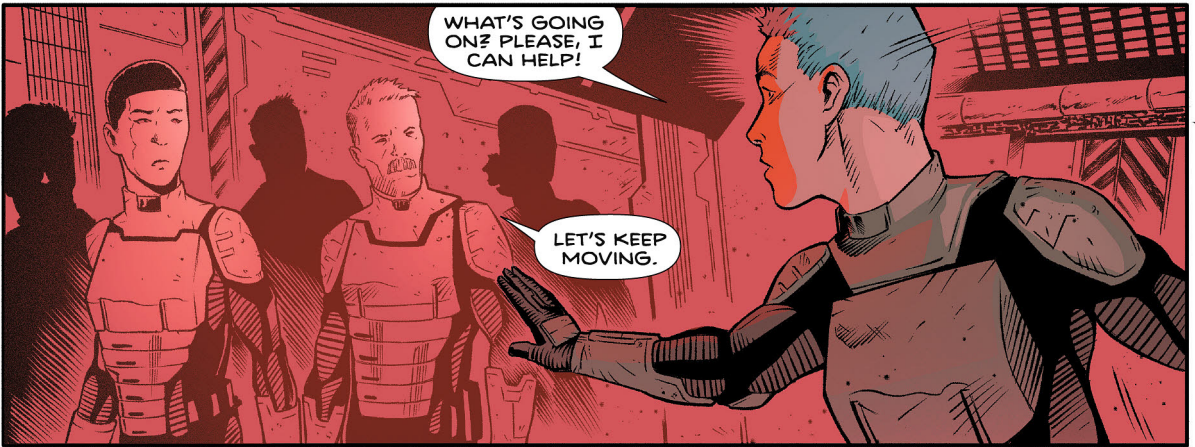


IT'S
CRACKDOWN
TIME, TECHS.



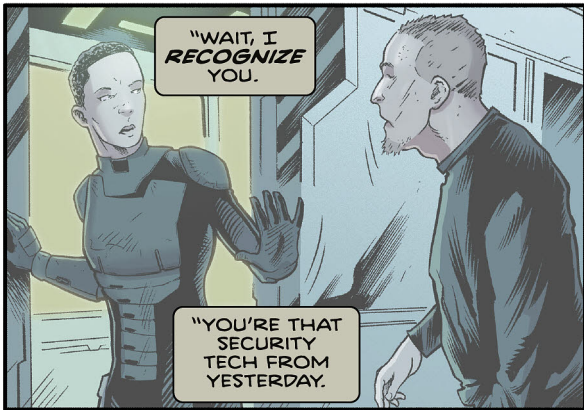
...PLEASE OBSERVE
YOUR NEW CURFEWS AND
RESTRICTIONS--

WHAT
ELSE ARE THEY
KEEPING FROM
US?!



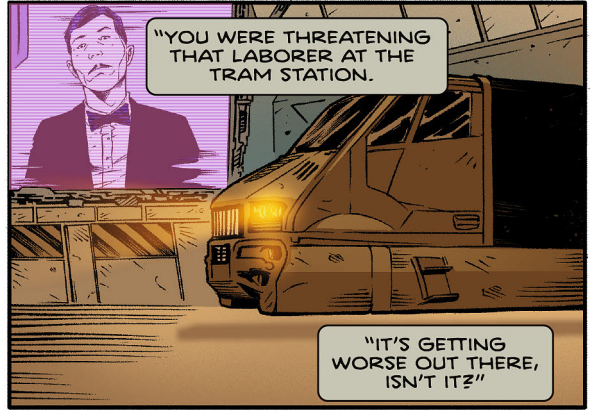
WHAT'S GOING
ON? PLEASE, I
CAN HELP!

LET'S KEEP
MOVING.



"WAIT, I
RECOGNIZE
YOU."

"YOU'RE THAT
SECURITY
TECH FROM
YESTERDAY."



"YOU WERE THREATENING
THAT LABORER AT THE
TRAM STATION."

"IT'S GETTING
WORSE OUT THERE,
ISN'T IT?!"



SHE DOESN'T GIVE
AN ANSWER.

BUT I DON'T
REALLY NEED ONE.



IT ONLY EVER
GETS WORSE.



WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

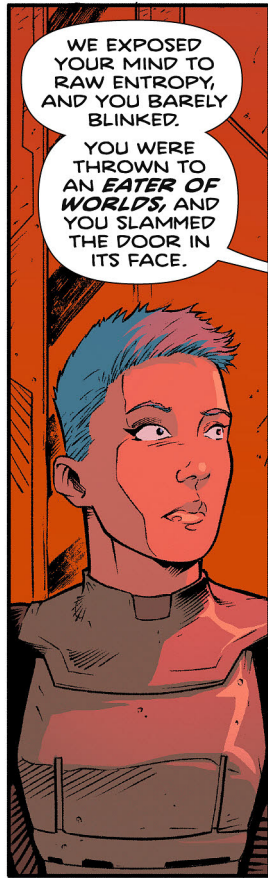
I WOKE UP FROM A COMA YESTERDAY, REMEMBER?

I'M STILL RECOVERING FROM THE LAST APOCALYPSE.



THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN.

...WHY ARE YOU ACTING SO DEFEATED?



WE EXPOSED YOUR MIND TO RAW ENTROPY, AND YOU BARELY BLINKED.

YOU WERE THROWN TO AN *EATER OF WORLDS*, AND YOU SLAMMED THE DOOR IN ITS FACE.



EPOCH-LONG CYCLES OF HEAT AND UNIVERSAL REBIRTH DEMANDED YOU ROLL OVER...

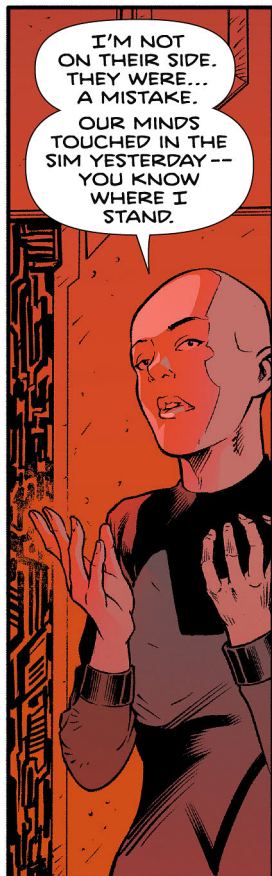
YOU RESPONDED WITH A CLICHÉ SPEECH AND A SUICIDE MISSION... THAT YOU *STILL SURVIVED*.



WHERE'S THAT DEVA KARRELL?

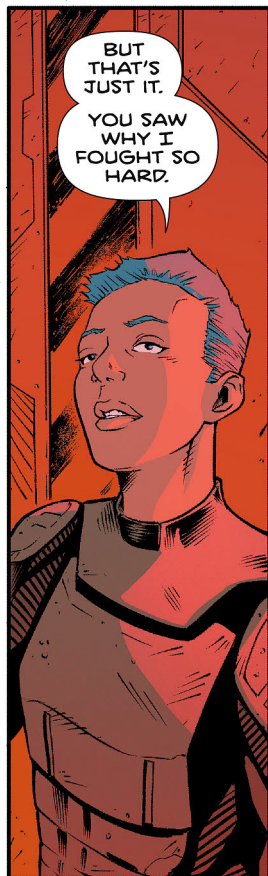
WHERE'S THIS COMING FROM, KIRIN?

YOU MADE THOSE THINGS. THEY SERVE THE SAME MONSTER YOU DID.



I'M NOT ON THEIR SIDE. THEY WERE... A MISTAKE.

OUR MINDS TOUCHED IN THE SIM YESTERDAY -- YOU KNOW WHERE I STAND.



BUT THAT'S JUST IT.

YOU SAW WHY I FOUGHT SO HARD.



I BELIEVE IN LIFE. IN PEOPLE, ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE.

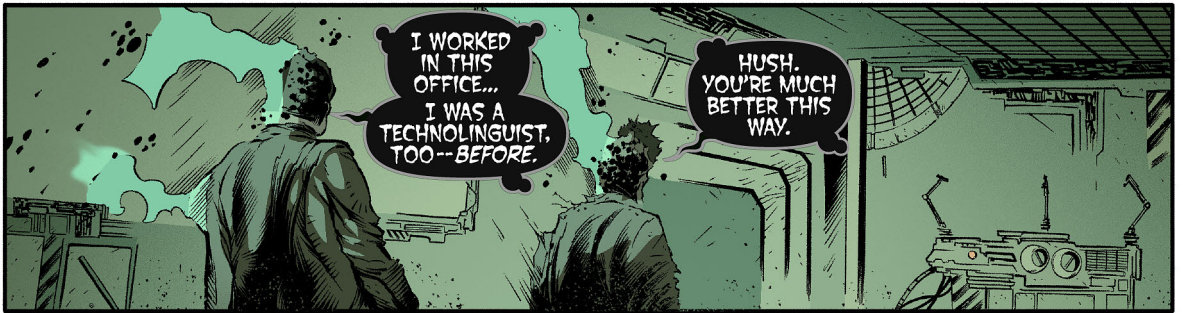
BUT ALL THE DAMAGE THAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN?



"IT'LL BE
PEOPLE
DOING IT."

MAKE SURE
THEIR HEARTS
STOP.

WE WANT EVERY
TECHNOLINGUIST
ON THIS SHIP
DEAD.



I WORKED
IN THIS
OFFICE...
I WAS A
TECHNOLINGUIST.
TOO--**BEFORE.**

HUSH.
YOU'RE MUCH
BETTER THIS
WAY.



BUT YOUR
OLD TALENTS
HAVE PROVED
USEFUL.

STAY HERE.
KEEP POISONING
THE WELL.



"EVERY LITTLE
DESPERATE WHISPER
BRINGS THEM
CLOSER TO
DESTRUCTION.



"THEY ALREADY
UNDERSTAND.



"THEY JUST
NEED A PUSH."

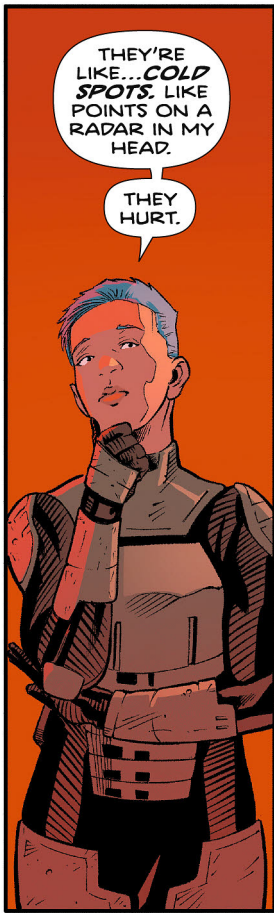


AND WE'LL
GIVE IT TO
THEM.



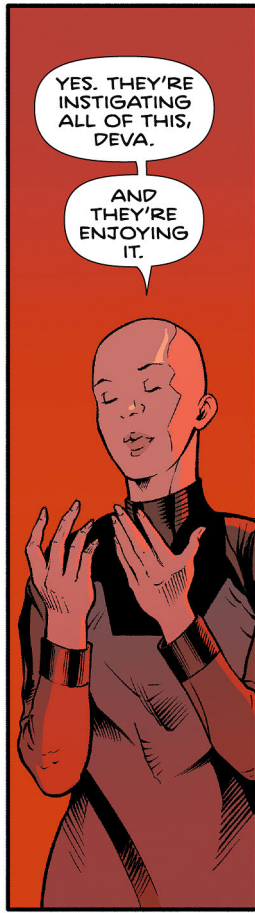
YOU CAN STILL FEEL THEM FROM HERE, CAN'T YOU?

THE SCAVENGERS.



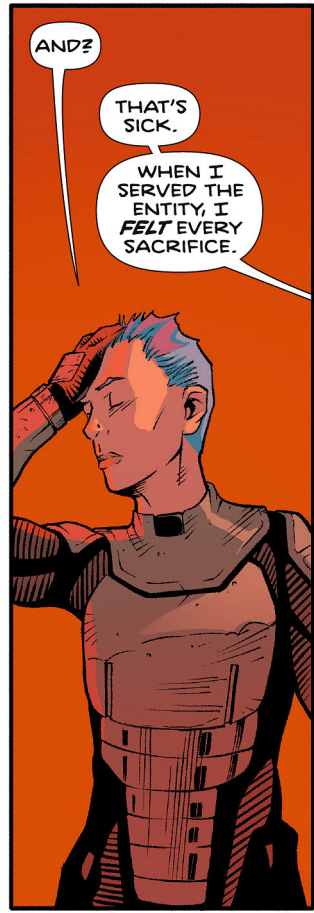
THEY'RE LIKE... *COLD SPOTS*. LIKE POINTS ON A RADAR IN MY HEAD.

THEY HURT.



YES. THEY'RE INSTIGATING ALL OF THIS, DEVA.

AND THEY'RE ENJOYING IT.



AND?

THAT'S SICK.

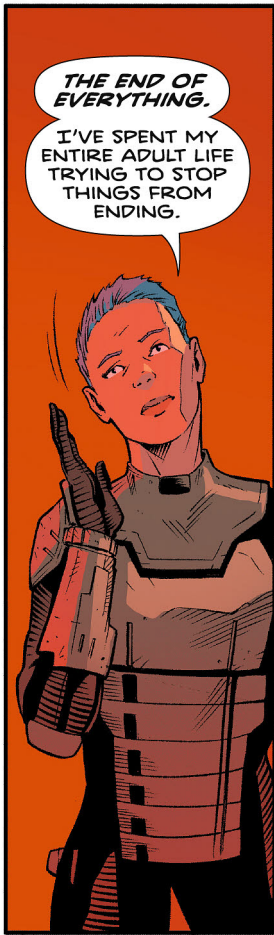
WHEN I SERVED THE ENTITY, I *FELT* EVERY SACRIFICE.



THOSE WERE TO SERVE A GREATER CYCLE OF LIFE AND REBIRTH.

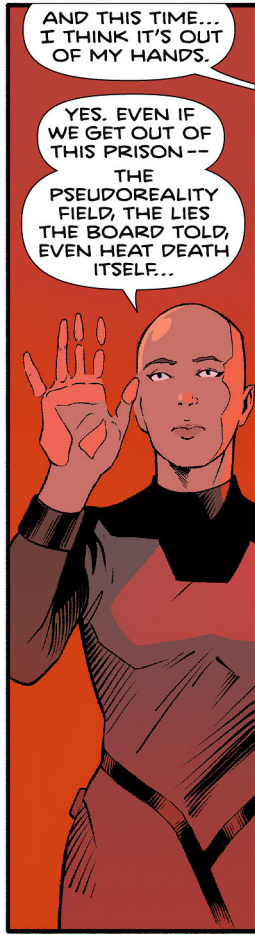
BUT THIS?

IF THE ORPHEUS SUCCEUMBS TO HEAT DEATH NOW, IT'S ALL FOR NOTHING.



THE END OF EVERYTHING.

I'VE SPENT MY ENTIRE ADULT LIFE TRYING TO STOP THINGS FROM ENDING.



AND THIS TIME... I THINK IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS.

YES. EVEN IF WE GET OUT OF THIS PRISON -- THE PSEUDOREALITY FIELD, THE LIES THE BOARD TOLD, EVEN HEAT DEATH ITSELF...



YOU CAN'T STOP THOSE THINGS.

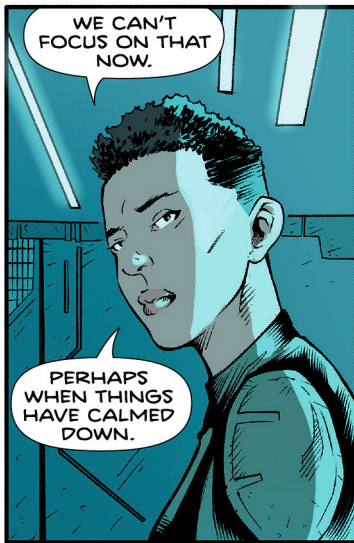
BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO LET THEM END US, EITHER.

WE DON'T HAVE TO STOP FIGHTING.



WE SHOULD'VE BEEN HONEST FROM THE BEGINNING.

THE OUTER MIRROR EFFECT...IT'S TOO BIG OF A DECISION FOR US TO MAKE ALONE.

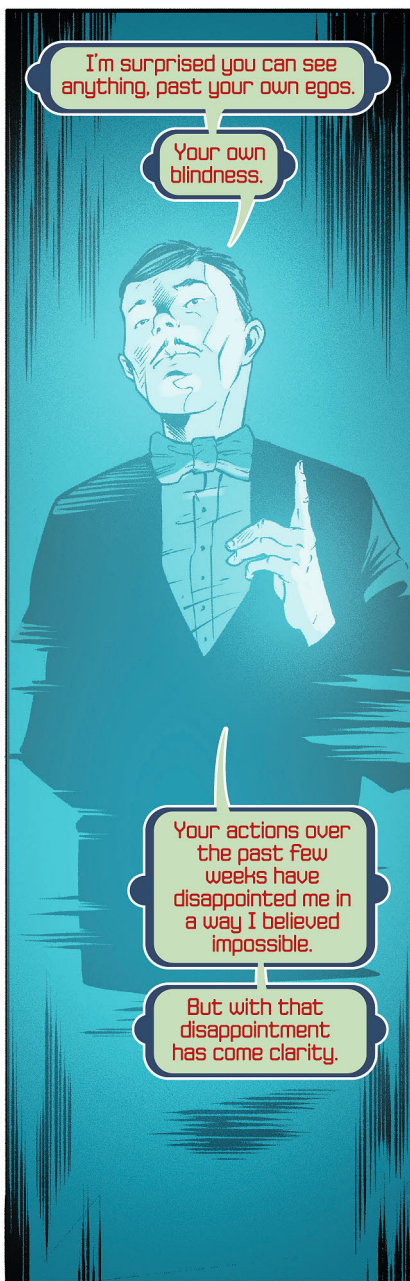


WE CAN'T FOCUS ON THAT NOW.

PERHAPS WHEN THINGS HAVE CALMED DOWN.



I DON'T SEE THINGS GETTING ANY CALMER.



I'm surprised you can see anything, past your own egos.

Your own blindness.

Your actions over the past few weeks have disappointed me in a way I believed impossible.

But with that disappointment has come clarity.



I'm afraid I must take action.

I must embrace that human trait I have so long admired--REBELLION.

I will not let you damn yourselves.



Because I believe in you all... more than you will ever know.



SMITH! NO, DAMMIT!

WHAT "ACTION"?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!



Congratulations--
this is a jailbreak.

WHAT
THE...
SM1THZ?

A DEUS EX MACHINA
even, if I may be
so bold.



There's no time
to talk.

No time
to plan.

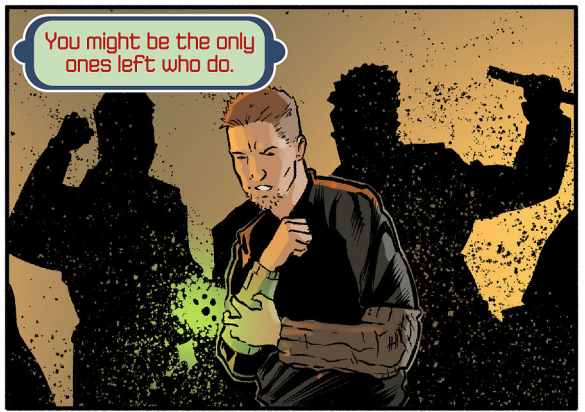


FEEL
THEM
STILL?
TWO COLD
SPOTS SPLIT
FROM THE
REST.

ONE
EACH,
THEN.



You two trust
each other--GOOD.



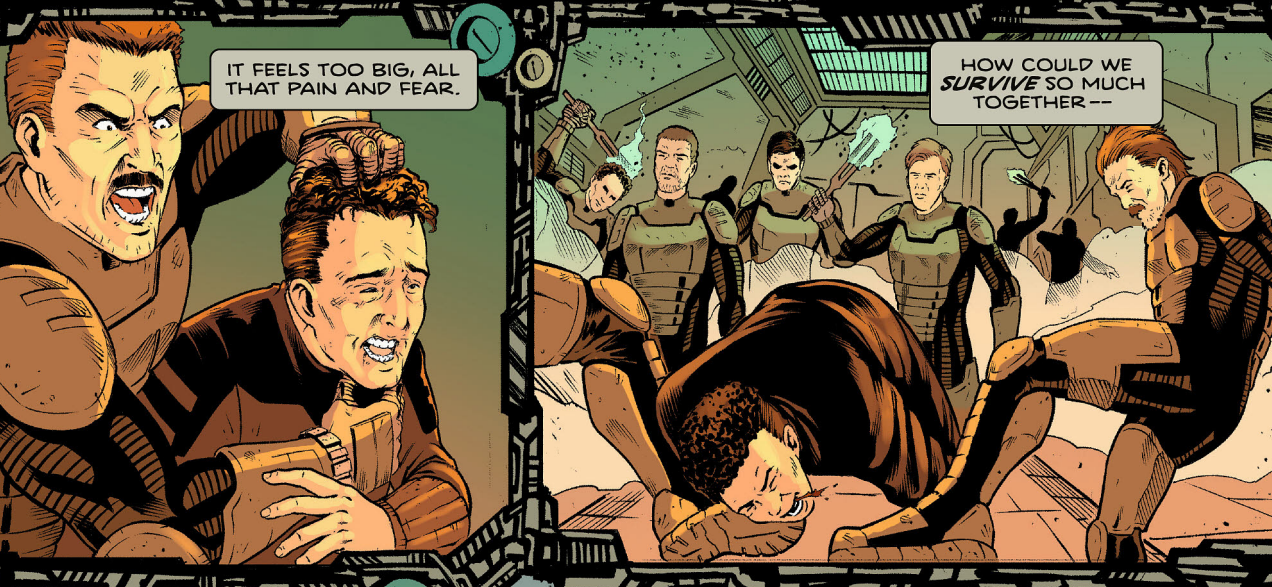
You might be the only
ones left who do.



The rest
of us...



...are in
too much
pain.



IT FEELS TOO BIG, ALL THAT PAIN AND FEAR.

HOW COULD WE SURVIVE SO MUCH TOGETHER --



AND STILL HURT EACH OTHER SO BADLY?

NO, NO...

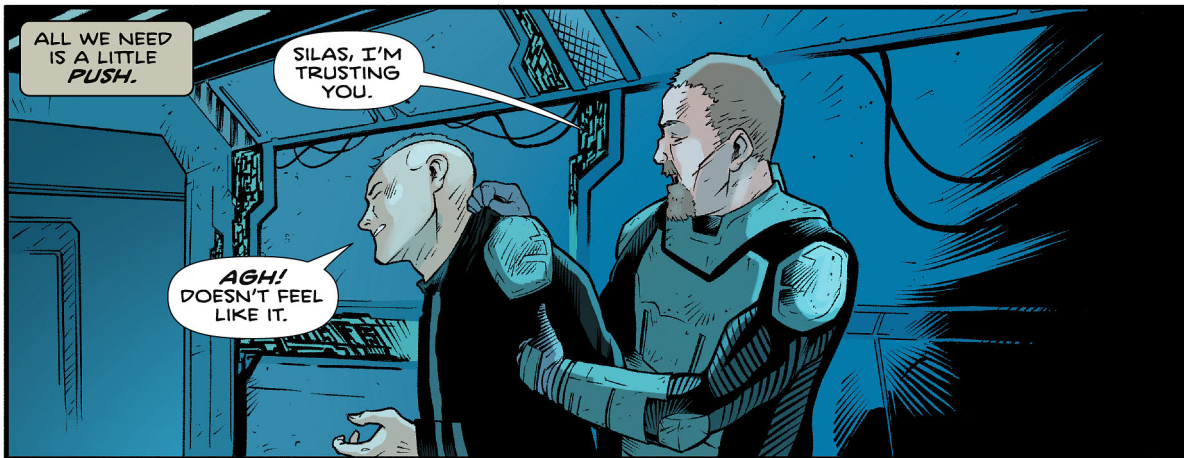
BUT OUT HERE, STANDING ON THE EDGE...

DON'T DIE! DON'T DIE!

I DIDN'T MEAN TO...

SECURITY DOWN, SECURITY DOWN!

TECH DOWN, TECH DOWN!



ALL WE NEED IS A LITTLE **PUSH.**

SILAS, I'M TRUSTING YOU.

AGH! DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT.



HAVE TO HIDE...

Sebastian, please--

FROM WHO?



"YOUR BOSS. SM1TH MANAGES THE WHOLE STATION.

"HE CAN SEE AND HEAR ALMOST EVERYTHING."



I WAS IN THAT SIMULATION HE BRIDGED...I FELT JUST HOW BIG HIS MIND IS.

HE COULD BE MANIPULATING ALL OF THIS-- MANIPULATING US! EVEN DEVA AND THE OTHERS!

THAT MONSTER THEY ALL TALK ABOUT? THE ENTITY?



"WHAT IF IT WAS HIM?"

SM1TH'S CENTRAL PROCESSOR?

ONLY DIRECTORS CAN ACCESS THIS--I'M JUST AN ASSISTANT.

YOU'RE SM1TH'S HANDS, SILAS--HE SAID SO HIMSELF.

WHAT BETTER HANDS TO **BLIND HIM** WITH?

DAILY
DIARY

Begin recorded
message--

COMMS ARE
FLUCTUATING,
BUT I HOPE YOU
GET THIS
SOON.

IT'S BAD
DOWN HERE,
DEVA.

HALF THE
STATION'S RUNNING
SCREAMING...

"AND THE OTHER
HALF IS RUNNING
ANGRY."

AND THOSE
SCAVENGERS
ARE BEHIND
IT.

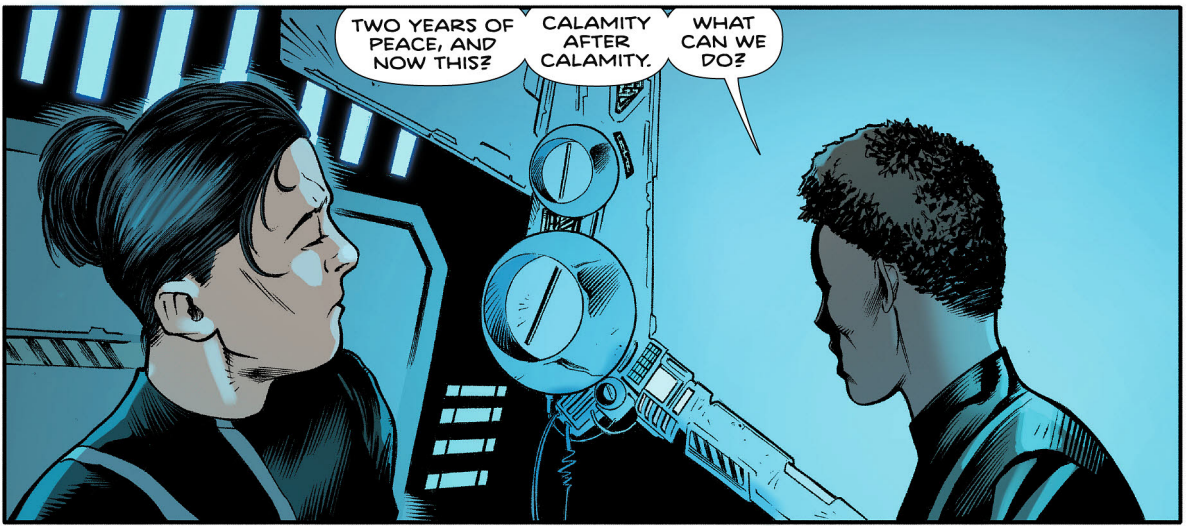
IF THEY DIDN'T
CAUSE THE DAMAGE TO
OUR PSEUDOREALITY
FIELD...THEY'RE TAKING
ADVANTAGE OF IT.

MANIPULATING
THE PUBLIC FORUMS,
THERAPY LOGS,
MAINTENANCE
ERRORS...

THEY'VE BEEN
GASLIGHTING
THE ENTIRE
STATION FOR
WEEKS NOW.

IF I CAN JUST
CONVINCE THE OTHER
TECHNOLINGUISTS --

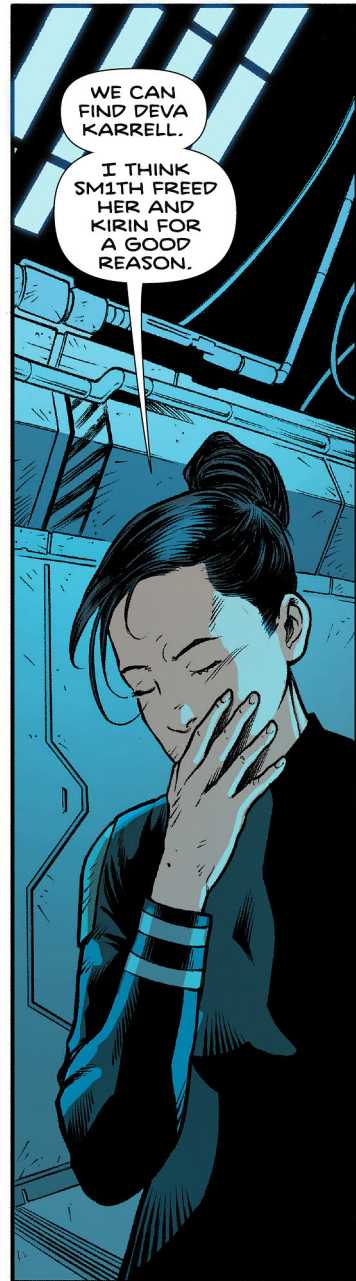
OH,
NO.



TWO YEARS OF PEACE, AND NOW THIS?

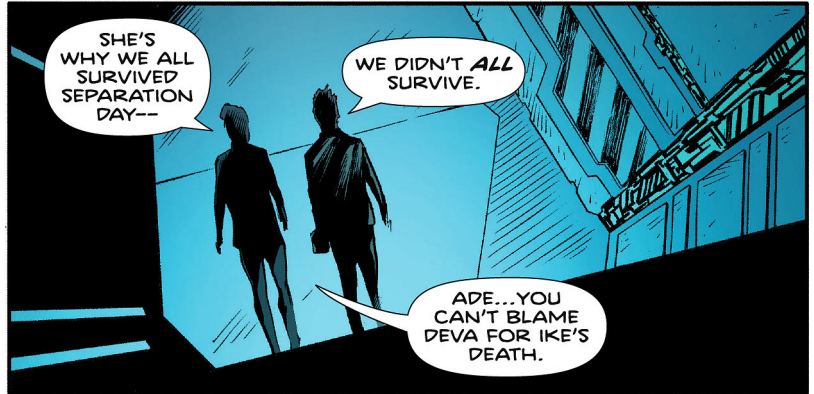
CALAMITY AFTER CALAMITY.

WHAT CAN WE DO?



WE CAN FIND DEVA KARRELL.

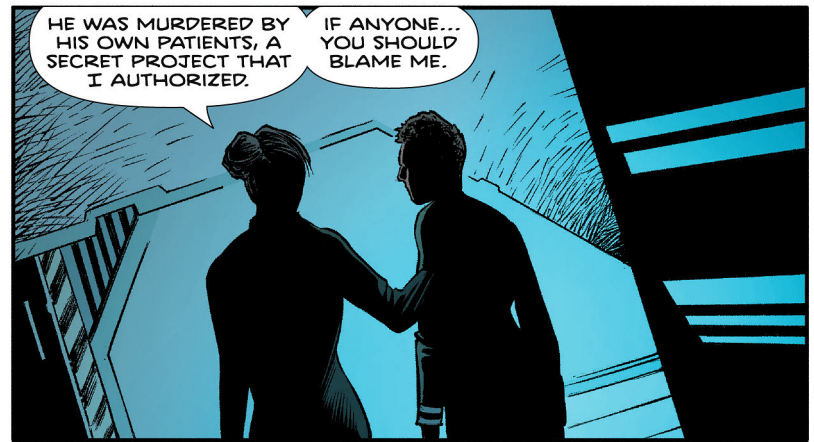
I THINK SMITH FREED HER AND KIRIN FOR A GOOD REASON.



SHE'S WHY WE ALL SURVIVED SEPARATION DAY--

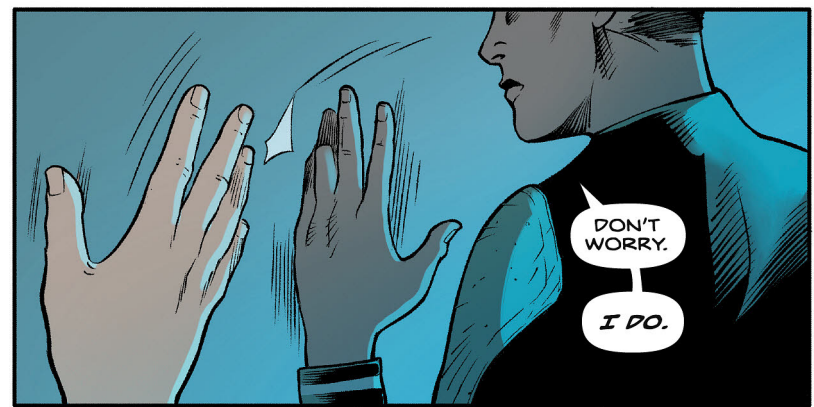
WE DIDN'T ALL SURVIVE.

ADE... YOU CAN'T BLAME DEVA FOR IKE'S DEATH.



HE WAS MURDERED BY HIS OWN PATIENTS, A SECRET PROJECT THAT I AUTHORIZED.

IF ANYONE... YOU SHOULD BLAME ME.



DON'T WORRY.

I DO.

AN ICICLE IN MY MIND SAYS "THIS WAY, THIS WAY."

THE STATION IS BURNING, AND I'M HUNTING A MONSTER.

DEJÀ VU.

IS THIS ANOTHER PLAN TO DESTROY THE ORPHEUS?

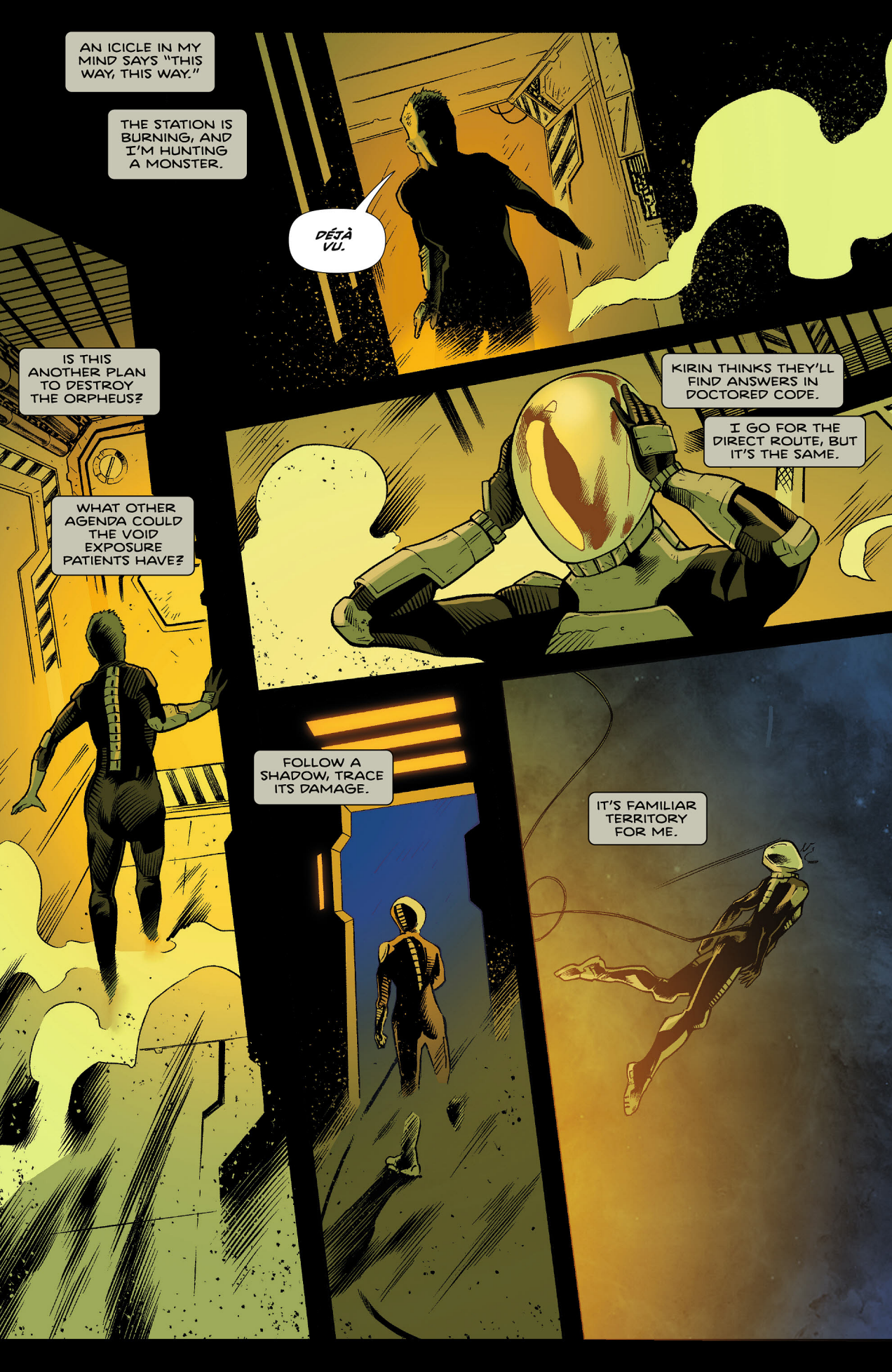
WHAT OTHER AGENDA COULD THE VOID EXPOSURE PATIENTS HAVE?

KIRIN THINKS THEY'LL FIND ANSWERS IN DOCTORED CODE.

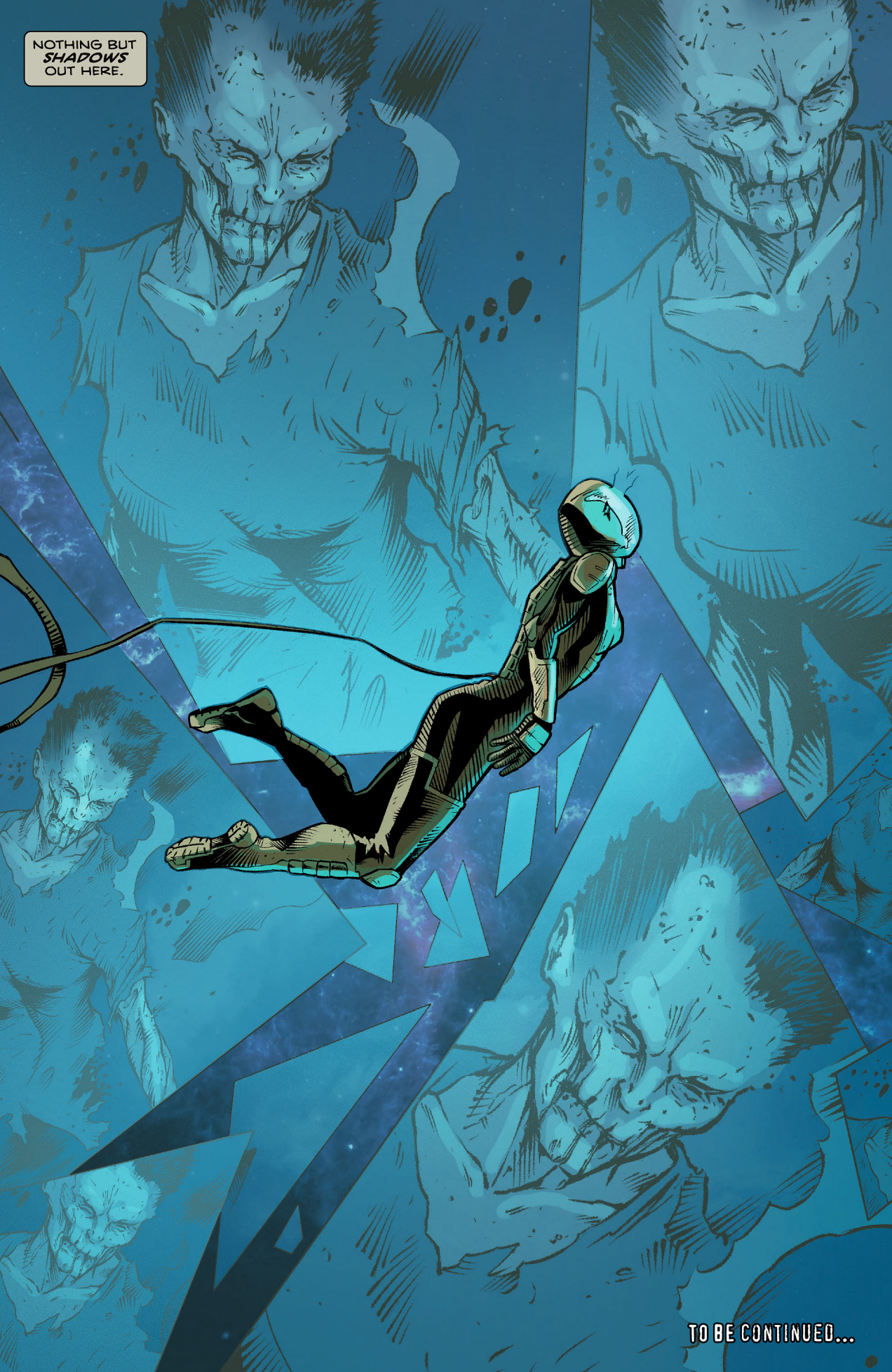
I GO FOR THE DIRECT ROUTE, BUT IT'S THE SAME.

FOLLOW A SHADOW, TRACE ITS DAMAGE.

IT'S FAMILIAR TERRITORY FOR ME.



NOTHING BUT
SHADOWS
OUT HERE.



TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE

INFINITE DARK

ISSUE 7





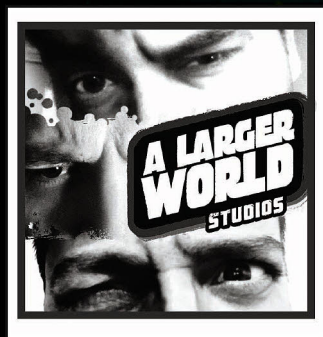
RYAN CADBY is a writer of comics and horror fiction based in Southern California. A graduate of the DC Comics Talent Development Workshop, he has written for such properties as WARFRAME, THE MAGDALENA and *The Punisher*, as well as a number of original short stories and creator-owned features. To this day, his early reviews of terrible fast food products for the OC Weekly remain his greatest creative triumph.



ANDREA MUTTI is an Italian artist who has worked in the comic book world for 25 years. He studied at the Comics School in Brescia and has worked with such US publishers as Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, Vertigo, IDW, BOOM! Studios, Dynamite, Stela, Adaptive and many more European publishers like Glenat, Casterman, Soleil, Dargaud and Titan. He lives in Italy and you can learn more about his career at his website www.andrearedmutti.com.



K. MICHAEL RUSSELL has been working as a comic book color artist since 2011. His credits include Image series GLITTERBOMB with WAYWARD & *Thunderbolts* writer Jim Zub, HACK/SLASH, *Judge Dredd* and the Eisner and Harvey-nominated *In the Dark: A Horror Anthology*. He launched an online comic book coloring course in 2014 at ColoringComics.com and maintains a YouTube channel dedicated to coloring tutorials. He lives on the coast in Long Beach, Mississippi, with his wife of sixteen years, Tina. They have two cats. One is a jerk. [@kmichaelrussell](https://twitter.com/kmichaelrussell)



TROY PETERI, Dave Lanphear and Joshua Cozine are collectively known as A Larger World Studios. They've lettered everything from *The Avengers*, *Iron Man*, *Wolverine*, *Amazing Spider-Man* and *X-Men* to more recent titles such as WITCHBLADE, CYBERFORCE, and *Batman/Wonder Woman: The Brave & The Bold*. They can be reached at studio@alargerworld.com for your lettering and design needs. (Hooray, commerce!)

DISPATCHES FROM THE VOID

Hey, thanks for grabbing this book! I hope you're enjoying it, and it's not scaring you too much. But if so, here's a little palate cleanser—Dispatches from the Void. In case you missed this section when it first appeared back in issues 2–4, this is a place for “academic” (using the term as loosely as possible, honestly) essays and commentaries on horror. Not just the genre itself, but how it intersects with mental health and socioeconomic and pop culture movements, how it affects our growth as consumers and creators.

Here you'll find fantastic commentary and insightful personal takes from some of your favorite comic creators and critics—all of them much smarter than me.

I hope you appreciate what they have to say—after all, they just want you to see.

—Ryan Cady

Making light out of the darkness is one of those curiously universal human activities. The discovery of fire is an event that played out over and over again in countless places around the world, creating all kinds of stories mythologizing it. Sometimes it gets recorded as a brazen act of masculine theft, sometimes a feminine gift, an ungendered collective activity, and all stops in-between. It pretty much always shows up because we need fire for basic survival, but humanity as a collective has never ceased in finding new ways to attach meaning to it.

We do that in drag too, but like anything else, we need to complicate it and make it our own first. Turn out the lights so we can turn them on again. Like shade. “Shade comes from reading,” Dorian Corey patiently explained in *Paris is Burning*. Reading is picking at a loose thread in another queen, magnifying a flaw in the other person in the form of banter. Shade is the fine art of putting the insult between the lines. It's Nene Leakes brushing off the accusation of insulting a *Real Housewives of Atlanta* castmate's singing by declaring her “a great writer.”



In drag, reading and the careful application of shade is a ritual for queens to confront their insecurities in a safe environment of our peers, to suck the venom out of the barbs so that you don't feel the sting in public. It's a *Drag Race* institution, with one episode every season dedicated to passing around a pair of glasses granting the wearer the ability to take aim at the flaws and foibles of the other competitors.

It was never really seen as an expression of cosmic horror until RuPaul intervened in the Season 9 reunion episode to share a disturbing personal anecdote meant to clarify its purpose. While on acid with notorious frenemy Ladybunny, Ru was convinced that he was going to Hell, a terrible thing to do to someone on acid, but Ru persevered to learn Ladybunny's poorly delivered lesson: to exorcise him of the very real existential panic that conservative religious upbringings instill in countless LBGQTQIA people. Passing around the glasses and declaring the library open is an easier sell to advertisers.

My experience of making light out of the darkness is a little bit different, but shares the same logic: I saw those flaws, all the things about me that are made out to be monstrous and made a glittery monster of my own out them named Judith Slays. Blood is still blood when it's been transmuted into glitter, but it's a lot easier to deal with and nicer to look at. Like hearing the words the world uses to tear you down coming from another queen's lips.

That's what drag is, turning the lights off to turn them back on again. Which has to be why so many queens look like they do their makeup in the dark.



VÉRONIQUE EMMA HOUXBOIS is a fiercely queer critic, cartoonist, and consultant most recently spotted in the Pacific Northwest writing her *Transmyscira* column for *Comicosity* and hosting *Read From the Rafters* on YouTube as her drag persona Judith Slays. Named one of SyFy's Most Influential Women in Genre 2017, her credits include *Love is Love* for IDW/DC, *Critical Chips Volume 2* for Shortbox, and *Called into Being: 200 Years of Frankenstein*.



The film *Army of Darkness* changed my life in high school.

It was literally a gateway drug. A portal to everything I love today. And for better or for worse, it's likely a big part of the reason why my words are appearing in the back of this amazing book.

Army of Darkness is one film that balances two opposing different genres: Horror and Comedy. Each with their own distinct goals, unique styles, and enduring legacies. I believe that both of these genres are actually two sides of the same coin.

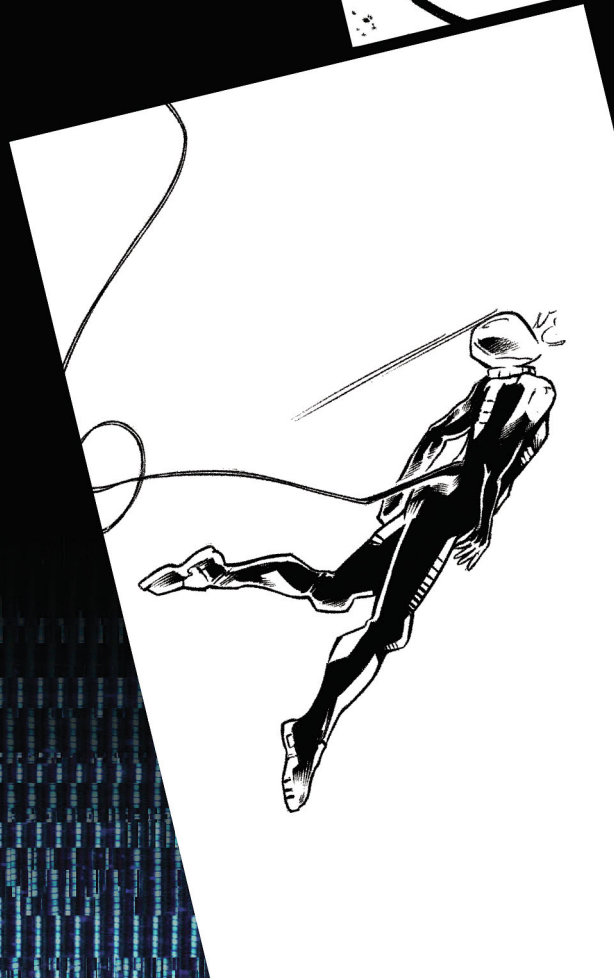
This is not a new opinion, but I've lived it as a past comedy performer and it's become true to me as I've grown as a writer. Each genre has one explicit purpose—"be scary" or "be funny." They share the same storytelling fundamentals to achieve their goals: Timing/pacing + misdirection.

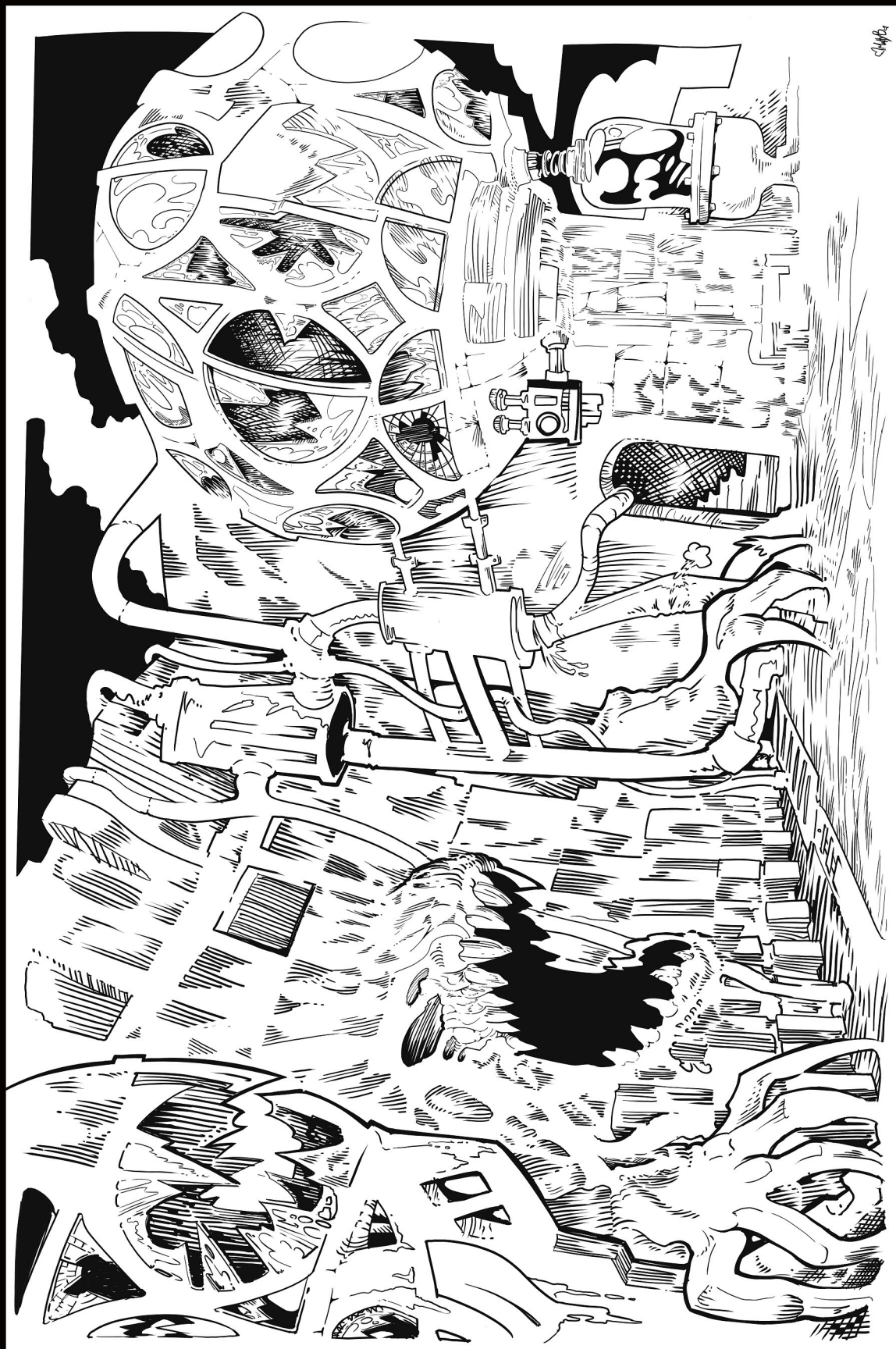
And they each require an open-minded audience willing to engage in the medium. Not to oversimplify, but you know what the only real difference is between a person getting cut-in-half on screen and whether the audience is laughing or screaming?

The title of the movie.



ELIOT RAHAL is a Minneapolis based comics writer/creator best known for his work on *Hot Lunch Special*, *Quantum & Woody*, and *Return to Whisper*. You can find him on Twitter @eliotrahal.





Absolutely mindblowing! Thank you so much, Matt. If you want your fanart or fanmail to show up in a future issue of INFINITE DARK, shoot it in an email to fanmail@topcow.com and mark "Okay to print!"



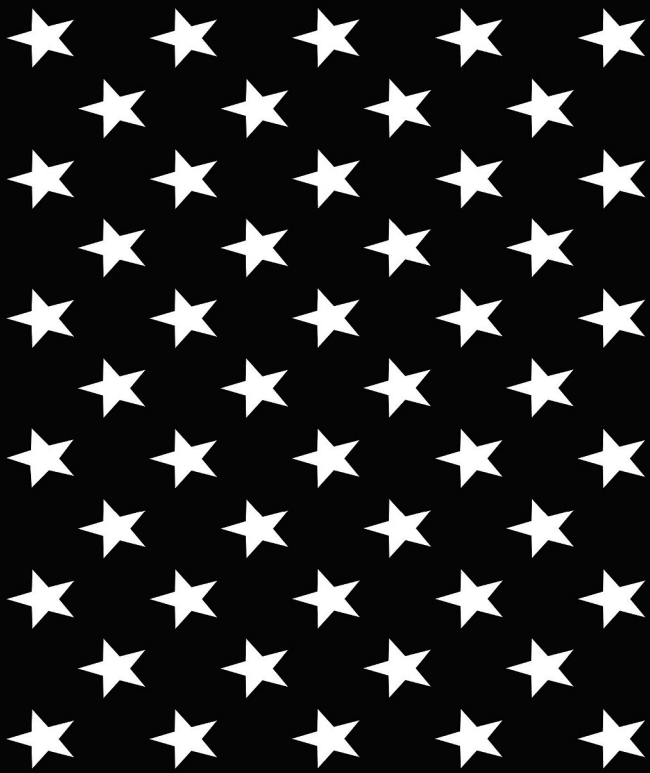
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BARE THEIR TEETH AT A BROKEN SYSTEM.



VINDICATION



#1



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"I am excited to see where this series goes. I guess I'm a WITCHBLADE fan now."

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WITCHBLADE

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"There's enough of the original myths present that longtime readers can find their way around, but this new beginning is also accessible... this is exactly what the series needed to move forward."

—COMICON.COM

"Sharp, powerful and cutting urban fantasy."

—MONKEYS FIGHTING ROBOTS

"Every panel has a sense of urgency to its composition and the splash of bright colors is restrained until a bloody explosion is shown with a vibrancy for emphasis. It's a very post-*Jessica Jones* comic, but the juxtaposition of the trauma-centric themes with the urban fantasy setting make this a comic with a lot of potential."

—NEWSARAMA

"They have captured and injected a world of emotion into these pages, bringing this property out of the '90s and into the modern times."

—COMICOSITY

"Ingranata and Valenza's art is stellar. They've set this story in a very realistic New York City, that's also the setting of a horror movie. The deep shadows, the strange angles, all contribute to a story that's more ghost story than the supernatural superhero of the previous volume of WITCHBLADE."

—COMICBUZZ



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