

**BOOM!**  
STUDIOS

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#2

# SEVEN SECRETS



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# **SEVEN SECRETS**

TM

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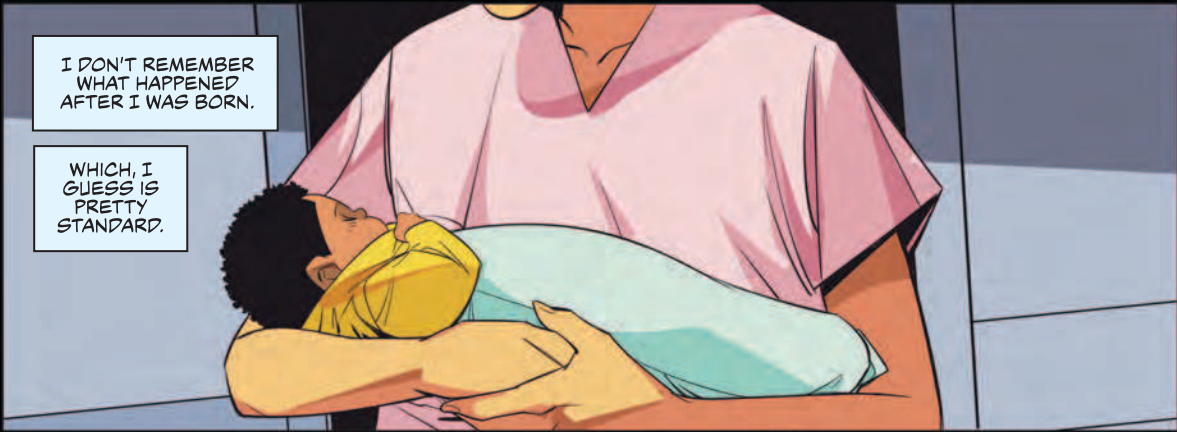
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S T U D I O S

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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?



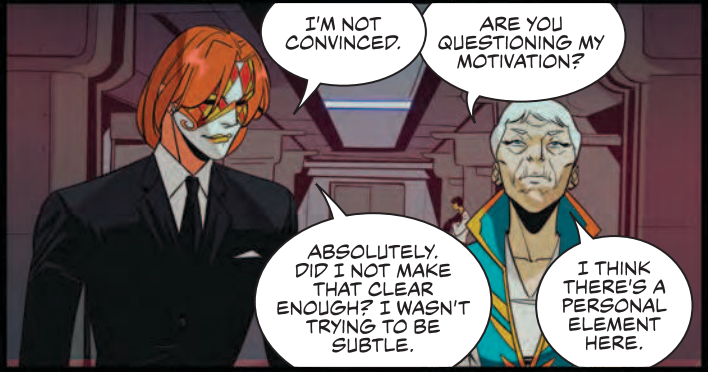
NO,  
CANTO.

I THINK  
THEY'LL  
GRIEVE FOR A  
LIFETIME.



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.



THE CHILD CAN'T STAY WITH THE ORDER.

IT WOULD CAUSE TOO MANY PROBLEMS.



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.





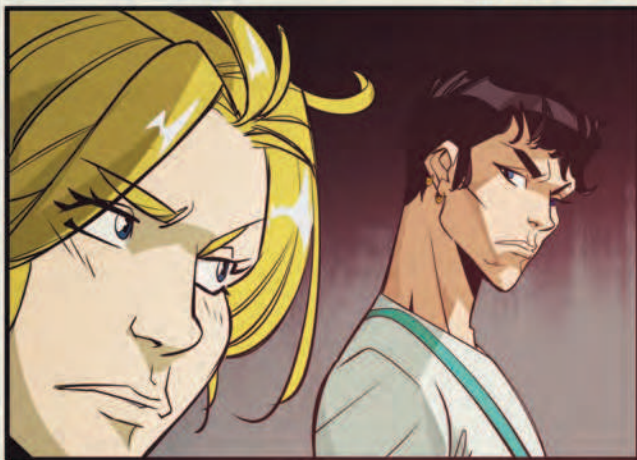
WHAT YOU'RE ASKING IS DANGEROUS.

I DON'T BELIEVE THE THIRD WILL HARM A CHILD.

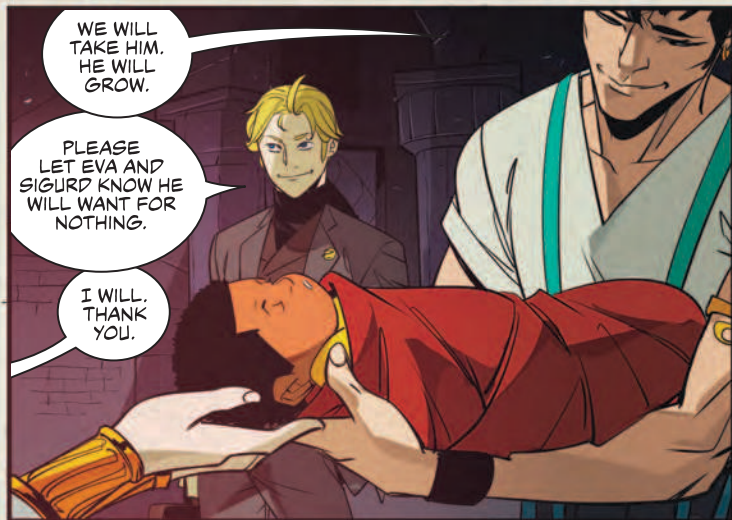


YOU DON'T KNOW THIS AS WE DO.

I DON'T. SO, ADVISE ME.



HE WILL COME TO NO HARM.



WE WILL TAKE HIM. HE WILL GROW.

PLEASE LET EVA AND SIGURD KNOW HE WILL WANT FOR NOTHING.

I WILL THANK YOU.



GOODBYE, CASPAR.

I HOPE YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING.

TIME WILL TELL.

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



HE'S SAFE? HE'S HEALTHY? HE'S NORMAL?

NORMAL IS HARD TO GAUGE.

YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

HE'S FINE, TAJANA.

HE SEEMS TO BE QUITE BRIGHT, AND A LITTLE TOO WITTY FOR ONE HIS AGE, WHICH IS HARDLY SURPRISING GIVEN WHERE HE'S BEEN.

HELLO, CASPAR. MY NAME IS TAJANA. I WAS THERE WHEN YOU WERE BORN.

I HOPE THAT WASN'T TOO TRAUMATIC FOR YOU.

I KNOW THIS IS HARD AND NEW. I'M GOING TO HELP YOU AS MUCH AS I CAN. AND I WON'T BE ALONE.

I WAS NEVER ALONE FROM THAT MOMENT.

THEY SAY IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD...



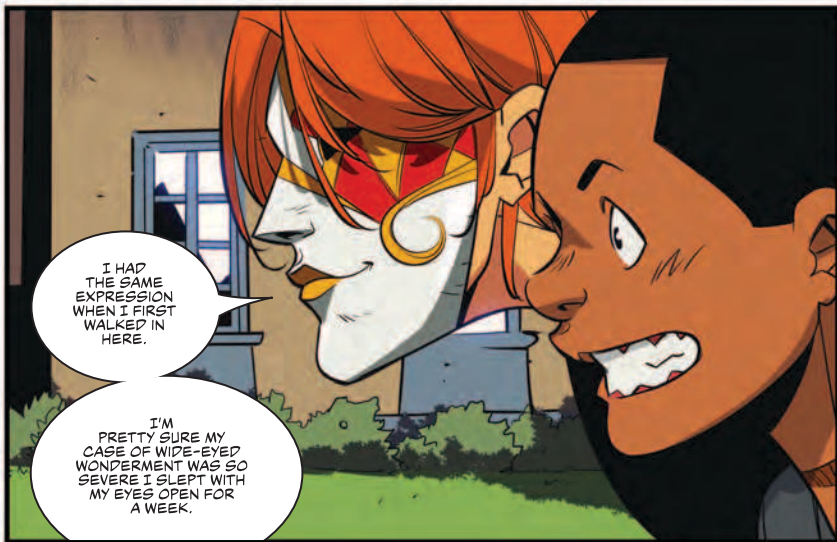
...MY VILLAGE WAS A SECRET ORDER OF AWESOME WARRIORS.



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.



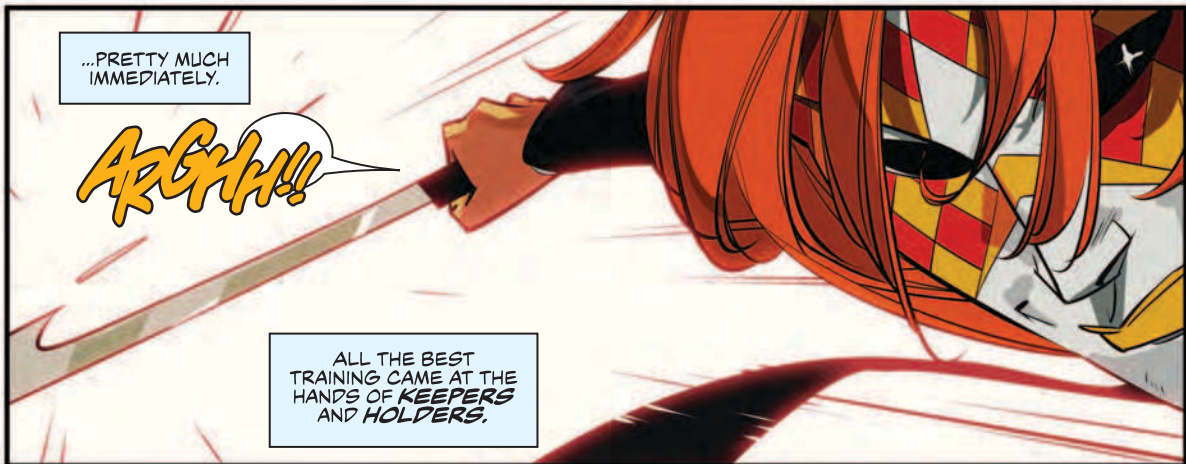
I HAD THE SAME EXPRESSION WHEN I FIRST WALKED IN HERE.

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.

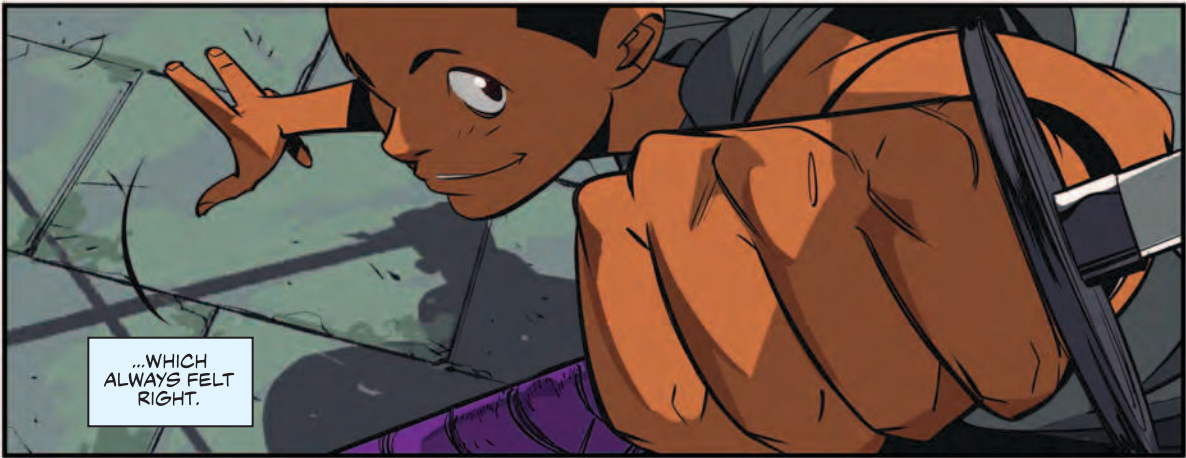
ARGHH!!

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

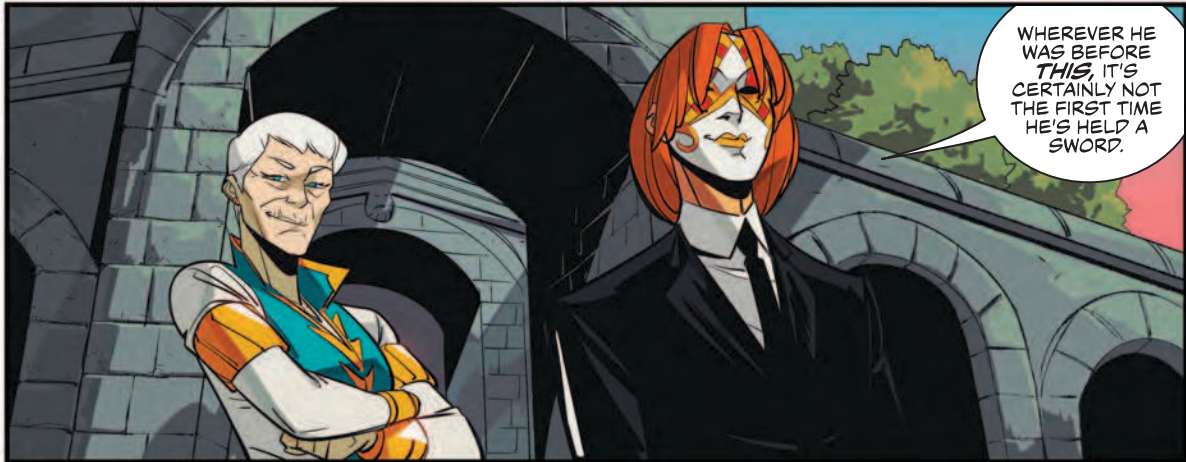


TING

CANTO TAUGHT ME FENCING...



...WHICH ALWAYS FELT RIGHT.

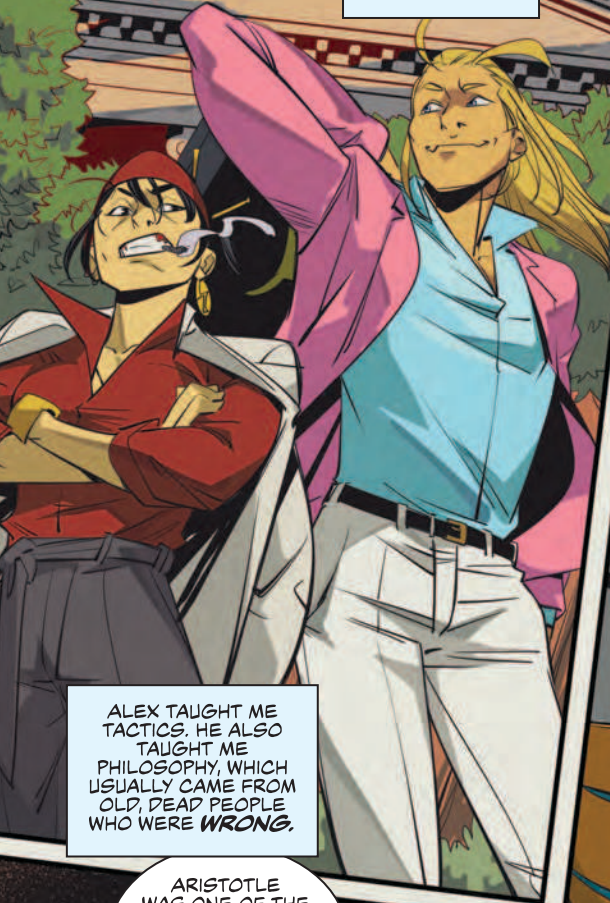


WHEREVER HE WAS BEFORE *THIS*, IT'S CERTAINLY NOT THE FIRST TIME HE'S HELD A SWORD.

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*.

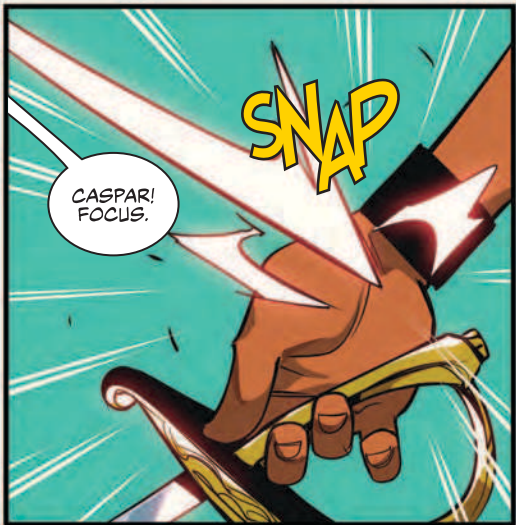


AT THE TIME, I JUST ASSUMED IT WAS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T LIKE ME.



CASPARI! FOCUS.

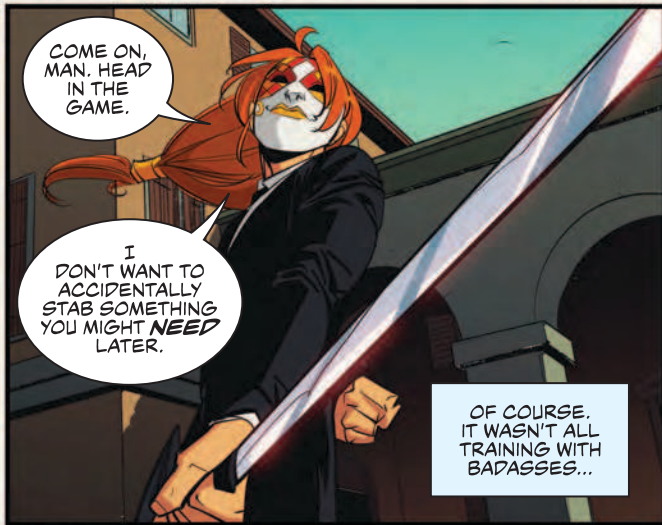
**SNAP**

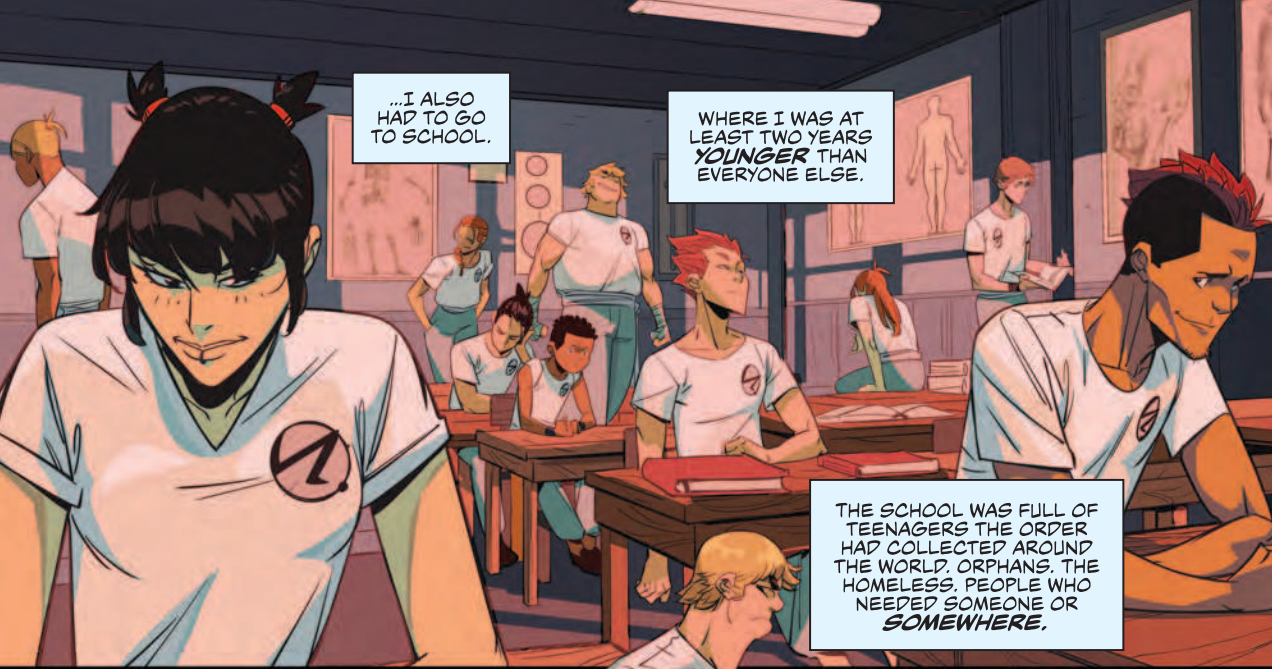


COME ON, MAN. HEAD IN THE GAME.

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.

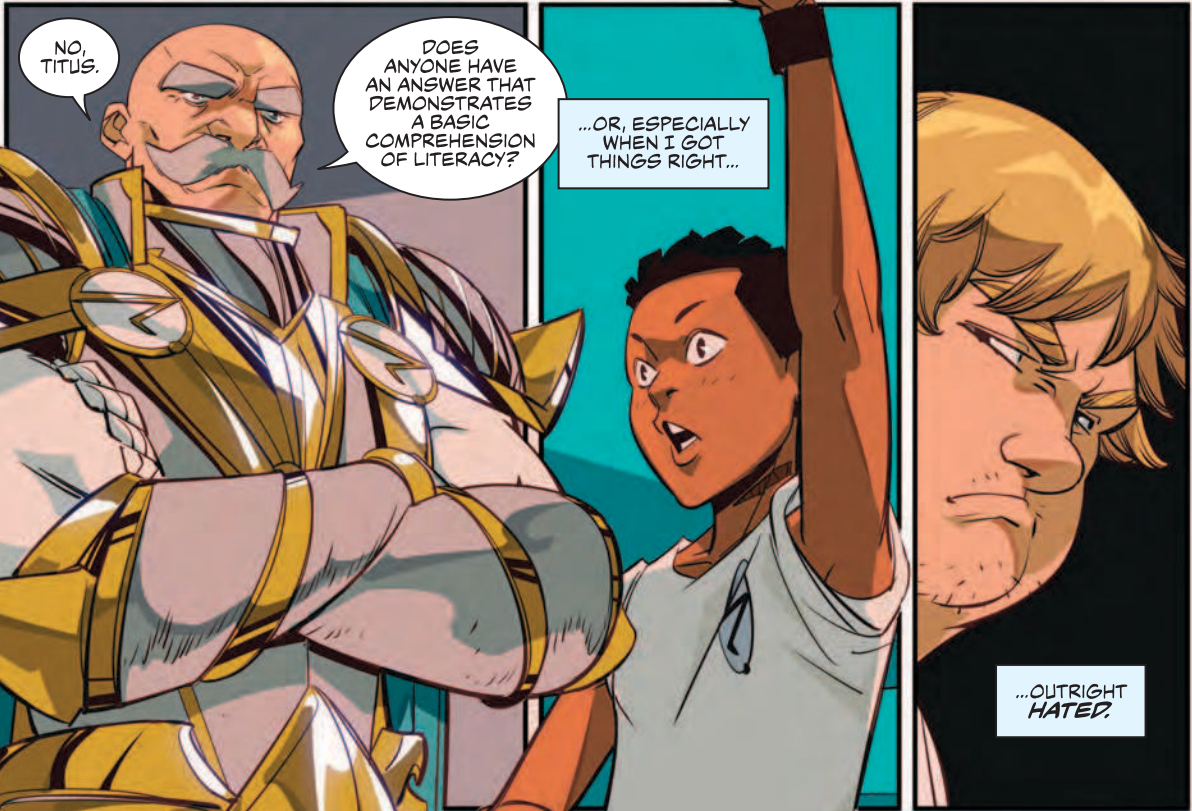
THE SCHOOL WAS FULL OF TEENAGERS THE ORDER HAD COLLECTED AROUND THE WORLD. ORPHANS. THE HOMELESS. PEOPLE WHO NEEDED SOMEONE OR **SOMEWHERE**.



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...

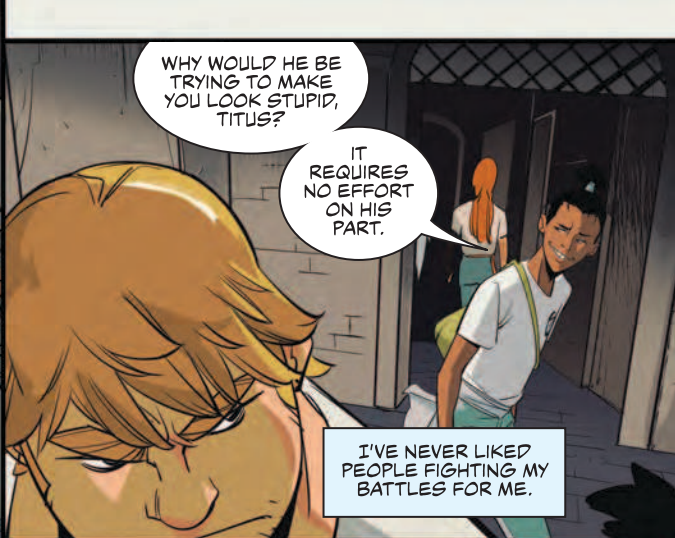
...OUTRIGHT **HATED**.



YOU THINK YOU'RE CLEVER, KID?

NO, I JUST PAY ATTENTION.

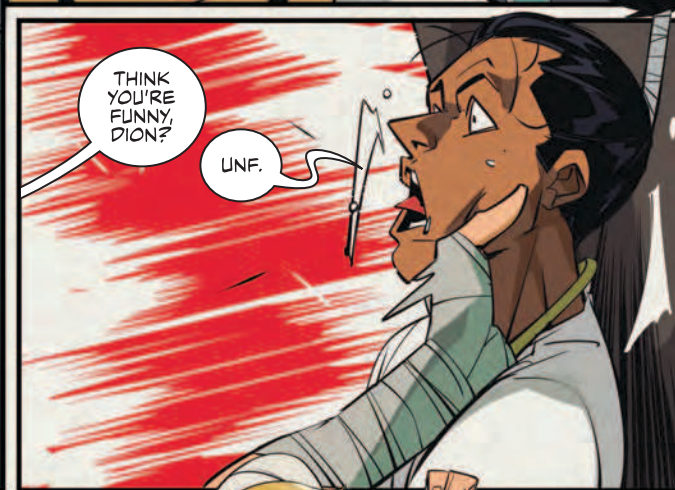
YOU TRYING TO MAKE ME LOOK STUPID?



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.



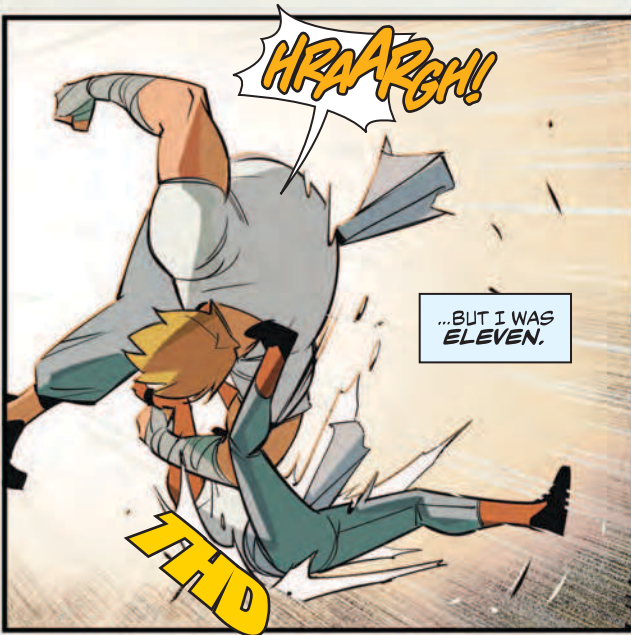
CRUNCH

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...?

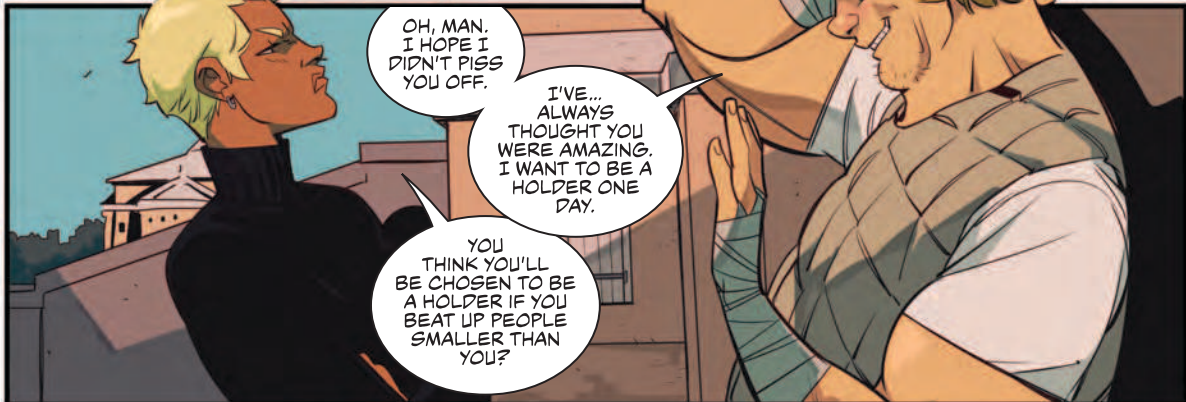
YOU JUST LOOK SAD.





YOU.

EVA!



OH, MAN. I HOPE I DIDN'T PISS YOU OFF.

I'VE... ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE AMAZING. I WANT TO BE A HOLDER ONE DAY.

YOU THINK YOU'LL BE CHOSEN TO BE A HOLDER IF YOU BEAT UP PEOPLE SMALLER THAN YOU?



I...

FORTUNATELY, YOU'RE A LOT **BIGGER** THAN I AM.

HUH?



CRUNCH



YOUR TESTICLES WILL HEAL. BUT IF CASPAR IS BULLIED AGAIN--AND I MEAN, BY ANYONE IN YOUR CLASS-- I WILL REMOVE THEM. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

HNG.

GOOD.



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

YOU  
WERE  
HURT.

I'M  
OKAY.

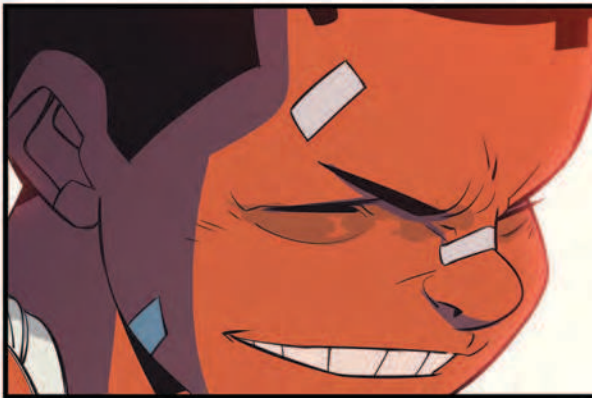
NO.  
YOU'RE NOT. I  
WILL TEACH YOU  
TO DEFEND  
YOURSELF.



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.



LISTEN CAREFULLY. YOU DON'T NEED TO STAY HERE. YOU CAN BE WHATEVER YOU WANT TO BE.

BUT I CAN'T BE YOUR SON, CAN I?



IT'S NOT THAT. IT'S...



I CAN'T BE YOUR FATHER.



WHY?

BECAUSE I HAVE TO BE SOMETHING ELSE.

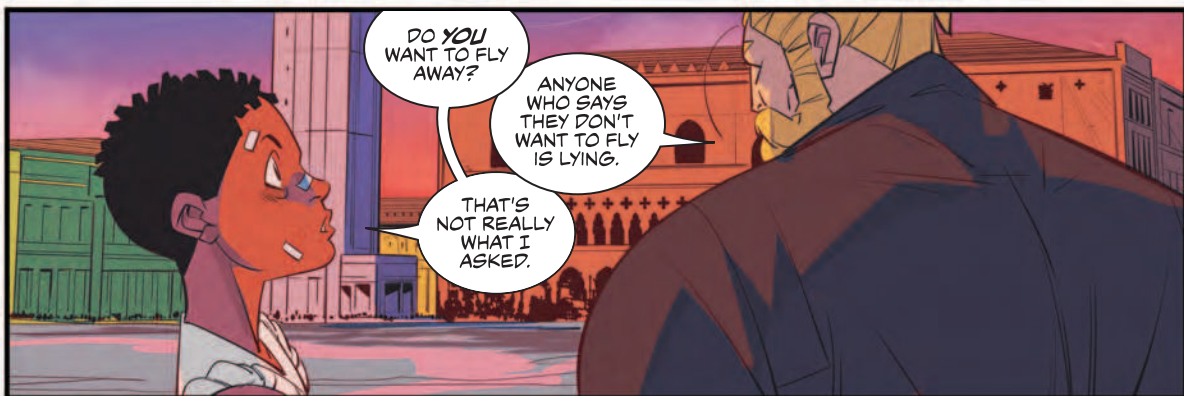
IS IT MORE IMPORTANT THAN ME?



**NO.** ABSOLUTELY NOT.



...IT WAS JUST FIRST.



DO YOU WANT TO FLY AWAY?

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

THAT'S NOT REALLY WHAT I ASKED.



HERE.

I CAN'T.

PLEASE.

I THINK YOU NEED IT MORE THAN ME.



THANK YOU.



CASPAR, SHOW ME YOUR HANDS.



NOW, YOUR FISTS.



I CAN'T BE YOUR FATHER. BUT I CAN BE YOUR TEACHER. I CAN MAKE YOU FIERCE. I CAN MAKE YOU FAST.

I DON'T REALLY WANT TO HURT PEOPLE. I DON'T LIKE FIGHTING.

GOOD. IN THIS, WE ARE ALIKE.

I WILL SHOW YOU HOW TO USE THESE TO END FIGHTS.

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.

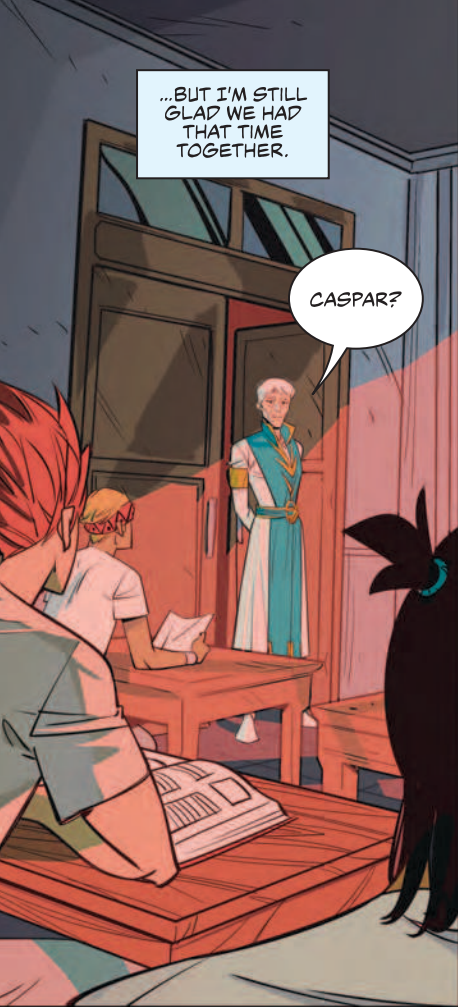
IT HURT...

...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.**