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BRASS SUN

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BRASS SUN

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'HEED MY WORDS! BOW
YOUR HEADS, PRESS YOUR
PALMS, AND GIVE THANKS
TO THE POWER ABOVE!



'PRAISE BE TO THE
COG! THE TEETH THAT
BITE AND BIND!



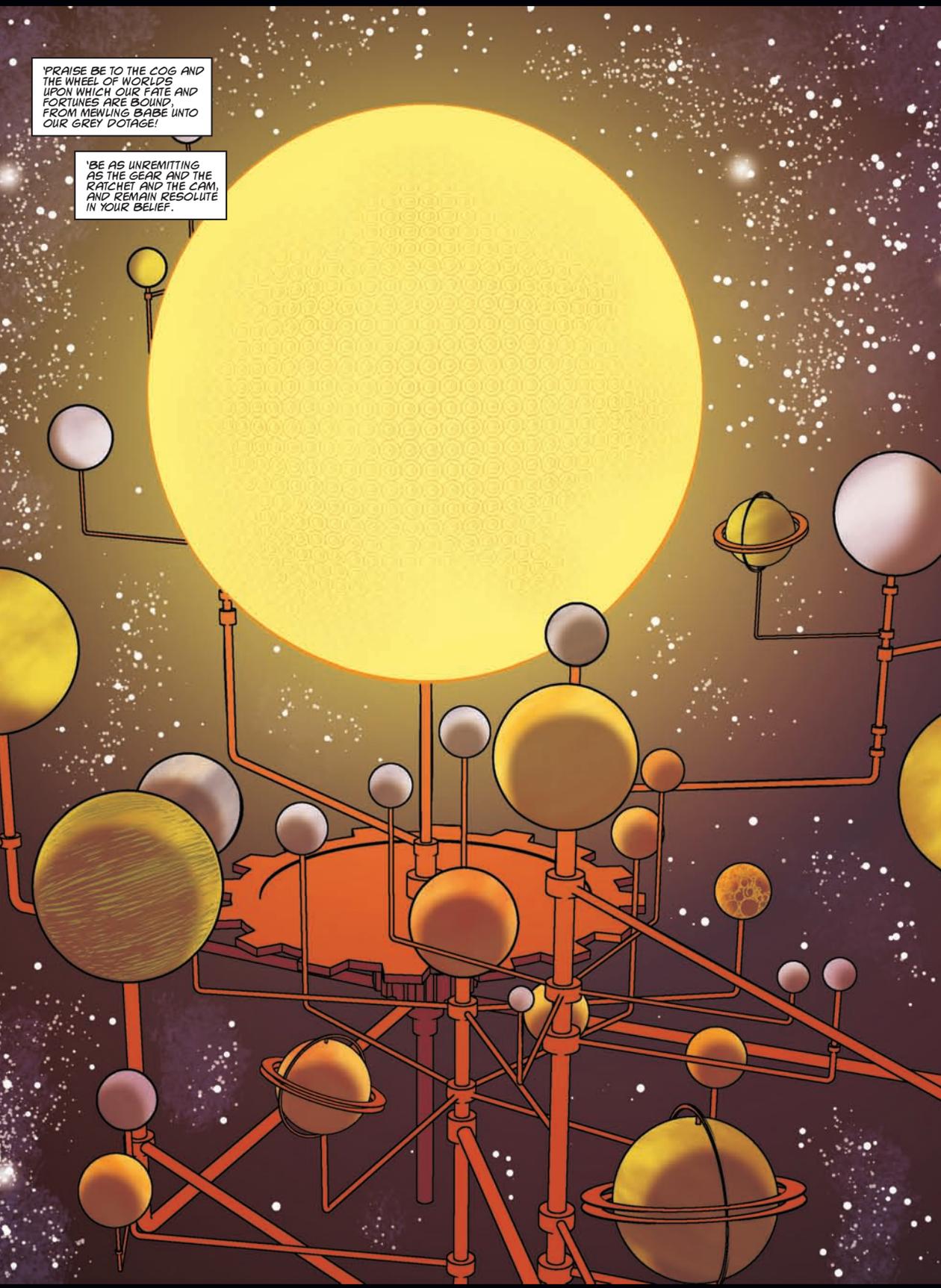
'PRAISE BE TO THE
COG! THAT BONDS US IN AMITY
AND RETRIBUTION!



'PRAISE BE TO THE
COG! RELENTLESS
AND REMORSELESS
IN ITS ACTION!

'PRAISE BE TO THE COG AND
THE WHEEL OF WORLDS
UPON WHICH OUR FATE AND
FORTUNES ARE BOUND,
FROM MEWLING BABE UNTO
OUR GREY DOTAGE!

'BE AS UNREMITTING
AS THE GEAR AND THE
RATCHET AND THE CAM,
AND REMAIN RESOLUTE
IN YOUR BELIEF.





'HEED NOT THE DISSENTER!
BE NOT LURED FROM THE
WINDING WAY BY THEIR
WILD ABSTRACTIONS!

'STAY CONSTANT!'

'STAY STEADFAST!'



PRAISE TO THE COG!

'T WOULD SEEM THAT WE'RE DISCOVERING MORE OF THESE HERETICS WITH EVERY PASSING DAY.'



THEY'RE AS INSIDIOUS AND INVASIVE AS IRONWEED. NO SOONER DO WE SEAR ONE SHOOT THAN ANOTHER SPROUTS FORTH.



YOUR POINT BEING, SPEAKER BUSABILIUS? ARE YOU IMPLYING THAT WE ARE LOSING THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE PEOPLE?



NO, NOT AT ALL! FORGIVE ME, MY LORD ARCHIMANDRITE. MY CONCERN WAS OF A MORE... PRACTICAL NOTE.

THE TINDER AND OIL USED TO FIRE THE STAKES IS BY NO MEANS PLENTIFUL NOR CHEAP. WOULD IT NOT BE MORE PRUDENT TO COMMIT THESE BLASPHEMIES TO THE GALLOWES AND THE GIBBET?



NO, AND PRECISELY FOR THAT SELF-SAME REASON.

THESE WAYWARD WRETCHES BELIEVE THAT THE POWER OF THE COG IS DIMINISHING, THAT IT FALTERS AND STUTTERS IN ITS ACTION.

THEY SAY THAT THE ICE IS UPON US BECAUSE THE WHEEL OF WORLDS IS SLOWING.

SHOULD WE THEREFORE FEED THEIR FANTASY BY HOARDING FUEL LIKE A MISER HUNCHED OVER A FEW EMBERS?

OR RATHER USE IT IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE OPENLY DENOUNCE THE HOLLOWNESS OF THEIR APOCALYPTIC HETERODOXY?



BUT, MY LORD, IT... IT IS TRUE THAT FOR DECADES PAST THE SUMMERS HAVE GROWN SHORTER AND WINTERS LONGER.

HARVESTS FAIL. LIVESTOCK PERISH IN THE FIELD. VILLAGES EMPTY. WHY, THERE ARE COUNTRIES WHERE THE LAND IS NO LONGER HABITABLE AND GREAT WALLS OF ICE ENCRUACH UPON WHAT WAS ONCE FERTILE PASTURE.



IS IT LITTLE WONDER THAT THE HEATHEN PREACHINGS OF THESE NULLIFIDIAN VERMIN FINDS PURCHASE IN TROUBLED MINDS?



YOU SPEAK WITH SOME UNEASE YOURSELF, FRIEND EUSABIUS. IS THIS SO?

NO, MY LORD. I AM AS COMMITTED TO MY FAITH AS I WAS ON THE DAY OF MY ORDINATION.

I SPEAK PLAINLY FOR THESE ARE THE THOUGHTS THAT LAY HEAVY ON THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE — THAT CAUSE THEM TO TURN FROM THE COG TO THE WAY OF THE WATCHMAKER.



SPEAK NOT THAT NAME IN THESE HALLS! THE COG IS, WAS AND ALWAYS SHALL BE! THE COG WAS NOT CREATED BY A CHARLATAN PROPHET! THE COG IS CREATION!



THE HOLY CANTOS TELL OF TIMES OF ENDLESS, SCORCHING SUMMERS, STORMS, TEMPESTS AND THE QUAKING AND CRACKING OF THE GROUND. THESE THINGS PASSE? AND SO SHALL THIS.

THE WHEEL TURNS. IT IS ONLY THROUGH FAITH AND CONSTANT VIGILANCE THAT WE SHALL ENDURE.



AND AS FOR THESE RECALCITRANT RECIDIVISTS, AS ANY GOOD GARDENER KNOWS, YOU MUST DO MORE THAN SIMPLY EXCISE THE SHOOT...





I KNOW.

BUT IT'S PAST DAWN! THEY'LL SEE! THE DAYWATCH WILL COME!

YES, I KNOW, I WANT THEM TO.



YOU WHAT? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'LL DO TO US?

TO ME, NOT YOU.

I'VE PACKED YOU PLENTY OF PROVISIONS AND SOME EQUIPMENT YOU MIGHT NEED. THERE'S FOOD FOR IDRIS OUTSIDE. DON'T FEED HIM TOO MUCH OF THE PADUAH GRAIN; HE LIKES IT BUT IT GIVES HIM WIND.



WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE —

HERE, MY JOURNAL. THERE'RE INSTRUCTIONS IN IT FOR YOU BUT DON'T READ THEM UNTIL YOU'RE SAFELY AWAY FROM HERE.

HEAD FOR THE GLADES. YOU'VE HUNTED THERE, YOU KNOW THE TERRAIN AND IT'S NEAR ENOUGH TO THE CITY FOR WHAT'S TO BE DONE.



WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? YOU'RE SCARING ME!



OH, MY GIRL, I'M SO SORRY! I WISH THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY BUT THERE'S NO TIME.

IT'S NOT FAIR THAT YOU SHOULD BEAR THIS BURDEN BUT IF YOU STAY HERE YOU'LL SURELY DIE.

THERE'S NO LIFE HERE FOR ANY OF US.



WE'VE WATCHED THE STARS IN THEIR TRACKS EVER SINCE YOU WERE KNEE-HIGH TO A GRASSHOPPER. I'VE WORKED THE CALCULATIONS OVER AND OVER. THERE'S NO ESCAPING THE TRUTH...

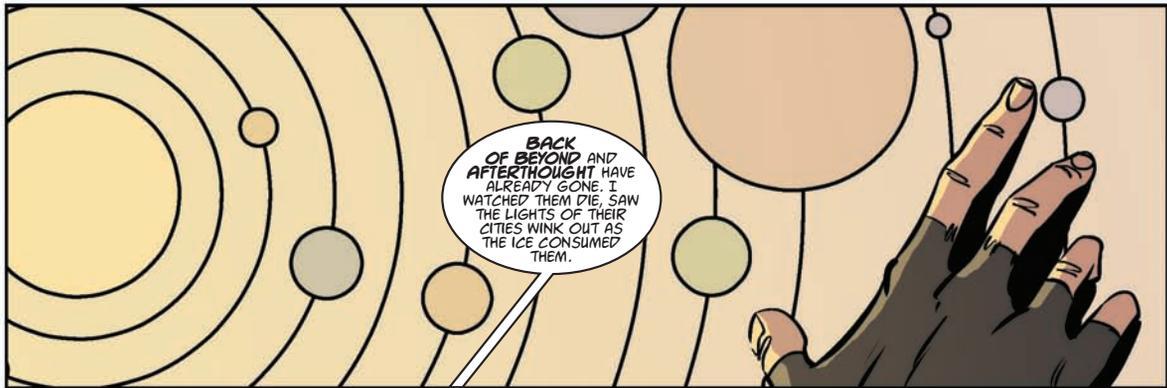
HIND LEG IS DYING.



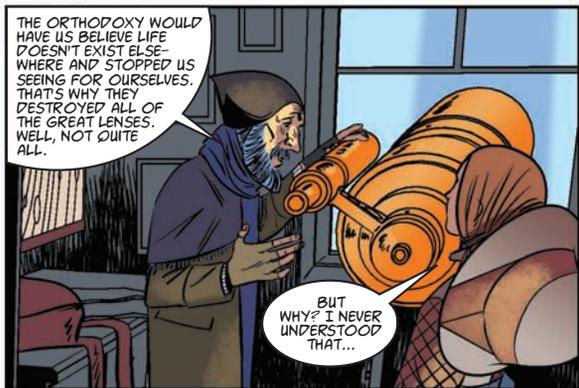
AH, YOU'RE TOO BRIGHT FOR ONE SO YOUNG. WOULD THAT YOU WERE A DOLLY-HEADED MOPPET, IGNORANT OF ALL THIS DOOM.

IS THAT WHAT YOU'D WANT?

NOT A CHANCE! A BRIGHT SPARK CAN LIGHT UP THE WORLD, REMEMBER THAT!



BACK OF BEYOND AND AFTERTHOUGHT HAVE ALREADY GONE. I WATCHED THEM DIE, SAW THE LIGHTS OF THEIR CITIES WINK OUT AS THE ICE CONSUMED THEM.



THE ORTHODOXY WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE LIFE DOESN'T EXIST ELSEWHERE AND STOPPED US SEEING FOR OURSELVES. THAT'S WHY THEY DESTROYED ALL OF THE GREAT LENSES. WELL, NOT QUITE ALL.

BUT WHY? I NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT...



BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID...

... AFRAID OF WHAT MEN WITH POWER FEAR THE MOST, OF LOSING IT.



THAT'S WHY MOTHER AND FATHER DIED... FOR SPEAKING OUT?

YES.



TAKE THIS. KEEP IT SAFE ABOVE ALL THINGS. IT'S ALL IN MY NOTES. YOU'LL KNOW WHEN TO USE IT.



COME WITH ME! WE'LL GO TOGETHER!

I CAN'T. I HAVE MY PART TO PLAY, AS YOU HAVE YOURS.



I LOVE YOU, WREN. ALWAYS.

I LOVE YOU TOO.

'NOW, GO BE STRONG AND LIVE!'





TAKE HIM.



NHH...



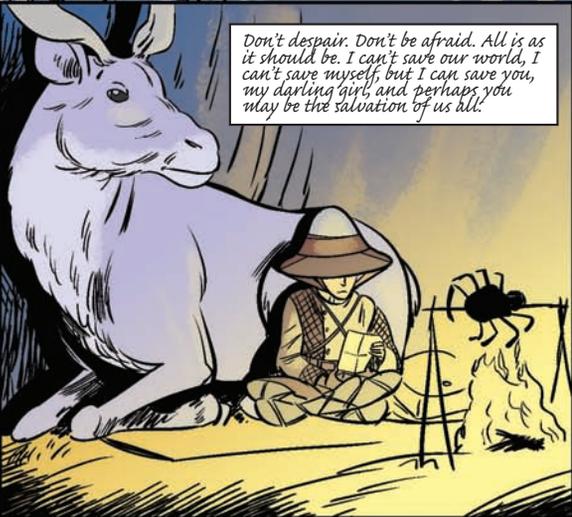
WELL, HERE'S A FACE I'VE NEVER THOUGHT TO SEE AGAIN, ESPECIALLY IN THESE RARIFIED HALLS.



TELL ME: HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE HOME, MY LORD BISHOP?



Wren, if you are reading this then I am a prisoner of the Orthodoxy and awaiting execution.



Don't despair. Don't be afraid. All is as it should be. I can't save our world, I can't save myself, but I can save you, my darling girl, and perhaps you may be the salvation of us all!



In this journal I've laid down all I know regarding the nature of the Wheel of Worlds, the legend of the Blind Watchmaker, the War of the Key and much more besides.



This knowledge is vital, to be sure, but it is nothing without the QUAYCARD. Keep it safe above all things!



I've detailed how to use it. As to when, watch the causeway - the Bridge of Sighs - you'll know.

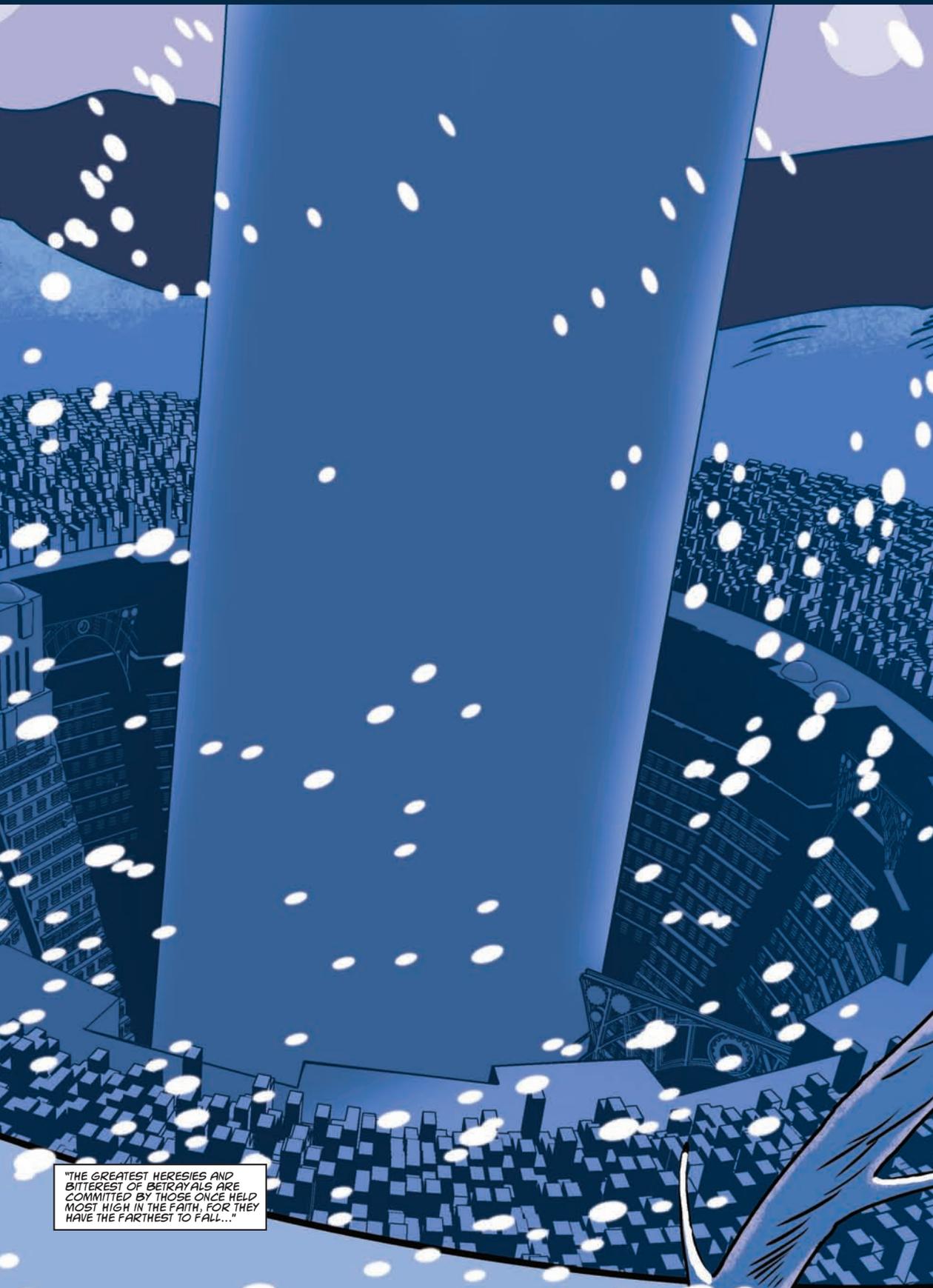


If fate is kind, we'll see each other for one last time.



Be bold. Be brave. I love you with all my heart. Never forget that. C.





"THE GREATEST HERESIES AND BITTEREST OF BETRAYALS ARE COMMITTED BY THOSE ONCE HELD MOST HIGH IN THE FAITH, FOR THEY HAVE THE FARTHEST TO FALL..."



... AND YOU FELL FARTEST OF ALL, MY LORD BISHOP.

I GAVE UP THE CLOTH AND ITS LIES A LONG TIME AGO.

SET ME AFLAME IF YOU MUST. JUST GIVE ME RELEASE FROM YOUR PIOUS PRATTLE!



HOW DID THIS COME TO BE?

YOU WERE A PARAGON! YOU GAVE UP YOUR OWN DAUGHTER AND HER HUSBAND TO THE FIRES OF HOLY JUSTICE.

NOW LOOK AT YOU! A WRETCHED, GREY RAG OF A MAN BROUGHT LOW BY THE SAME BLASPHEMY THAT CONDEMNED YOUR CHILD!



NO, BY THE TRUTH! IF I'D ONLY HAD THE WIT TO SEE IT FOR WHAT IT WAS, SHE MIGHT BE WITH ME STILL.

ONLY TO TAKE HER PLACE NEXT TO YOU UPON THE PYRE, OLD FRIEND.



SABIN, FOR PITY'S SAKE! HOW LONG CAN YOU CLING TO THIS DELUSION?

I WAS LIKE YOU — I DIED AS THE COG COMMANDED — BUT THE ICE STILL CAME. OUR PEOPLE FREEZE AND STARVE BY THE MILLION.

PRAYERS AND PERSECUTION CANNOT HOLD THE INEVITABLE AT BAY. THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY!



FAITH! FAITH IS THE ONLY WAY!

YOU FORGET, I'VE READ THE SCROLLS IN THE DEEP ARCHIVE. OUR FOREBEARS CHARTED THE SLOWING OF THE SUN CENTURIES AGO.

THEN WAS THE TIME TO HAVE DONE SOMETHING. BUT THE ORTHODOXY IGNORED THE EVIDENCE, DESTROYED ALL THE LENSES, SO NO ONE ELSE COULD DISCOVER THE TRUTH FOR THEMSELVES.



BLASPHEMY!



YOU CAN **SAVE** OUR PEOPLE INSTEAD OF PROWNING THEM IN DOGMA —



I AM **SAVING** THEM! THEY WORSHIP ME!



SO, HONESTY AT LAST.

YOU'RE FEEDING YOUR **EGO** WITH THEIR FEAR. THEY'RE LOOKING TO YOU FOR SALVATION BUT THERE'S NOTHING AWAITING THEM EXCEPT A SLOW, COLD DEATH.

YOU'RE NO FOOL, CADINALLADER. YOU **LET** YOURSELF BE CAPTURED, I KNOW THAT. THERE'S METHOD IN YOUR MADNESS, BUT TO WHAT END...

WHERE IS THE OBJECT YOU STOLE FROM THE RELIQUARY? WHERE IS YOUR GRAND-DAUGHTER?



PTUHH!



KEEP YOUR OWN COUNSEL. THEN, IT'S OF LITTLE MATTER. FOR BY THE END OF THE DAY, I GUARANTEE SHE **WILL** HAVE COME TO ME!



THERE'S QUITE A CROWD. PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE SOLD TICKETS?!



NOT SO MERCENARY SPEAKER EUSABIUS. THE FIRE FUELS THE FAITH. ESPECIALLY WHEN WE HAVE SO AUSPICIOUS A VILLAIN TO FEED THE FLAMES.

HOW IS IT HE'S EVAPEZ? SUCH A FATE UNTIL NOW? SURELY RENOUNCING THE CLOTH WOULD HAVE BEEN SUSPICIOUS IN ITSELF?



FOR ANY OTHER, YES, BUT CADWALLADER... THE BISHOP WAS A NEAR LEGEND WHEN HE CHOSE TO STEP DOWN TO RAISE HIS INFANT GRAND-DAUGHTER.

THERE WAS MUCH LAMENTATION — HE WAS DESTINED TO BE THE NEXT ARCHIMANDRITE — BUT I CONVINCED THE QUORUM HE'D RIGHTLY EARNED SUCH A DISPENSATION.



LITTLE DID WE REALISE HE WAS HAVING DOUBTS OR THAT HE'D STOLEN HOLY RELICS AND REPLACED THEM WITH COPIES.

HE HAS BEEN PLAYING A LONG GAME. EVEN THIS, HIS DEATH IS SOMEHOW BY HIS OWN DESIGN.

HE PLANNED FOR THIS... BUT THE QUESTION IS, TO WHAT END?



YES?

ALL IS READY, MY LORD.

YOUR MEN ARE WATCHING THE CROWD FOR THE GIRL?



YES, SIR. BUT WITH RESPECT, HOW CAN YOU BE SURE SHE'S HERE?

BURN THE HERETIC...



'... GET A FIRE TO HIS FLESH AND SHE WILL SURELY SHOW HERSELF.'

MUCH OBLIGED SON, I WAS STARTING TO GET A BIT NIPPY.



MAKE LIGHT WHILE YOU CAN, OLD MAN. YOUR SCREAMS WILL COME SOON ENOUGH.



I RECOGNISE YOU! YOU CAME TO MY HOME. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO PUNCHES LIKE A PAINTED EUNUCH.

I OFFERED YOU A DRINK, REMEMBER?



ENOUGH OF THIS!



SCREAM NOW.





RHUNN...
OHRRLL...
RU...



HHH...
UHH...



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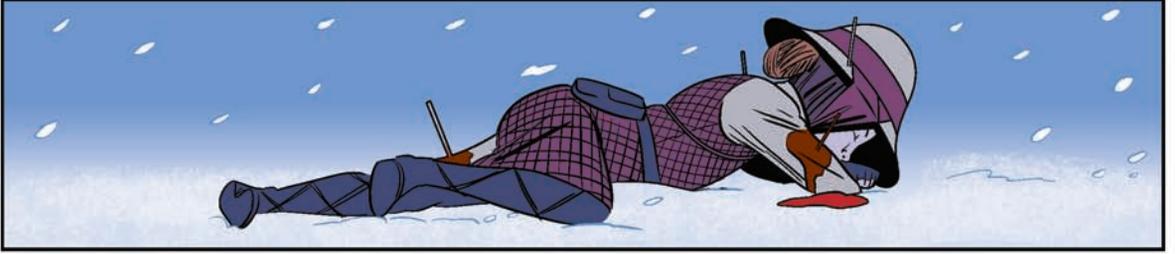
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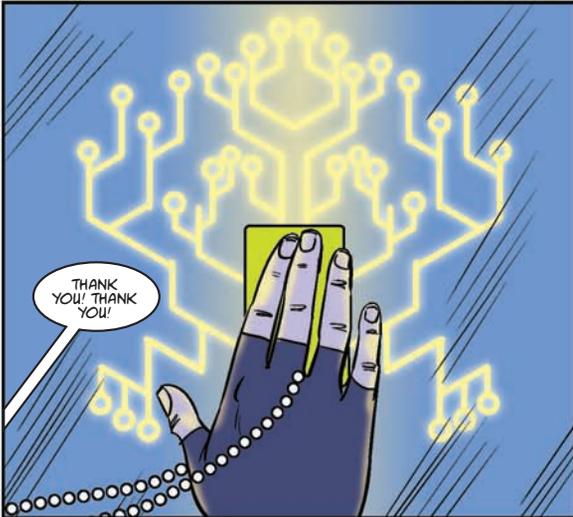
THE ONLY WAY IS THE LAW

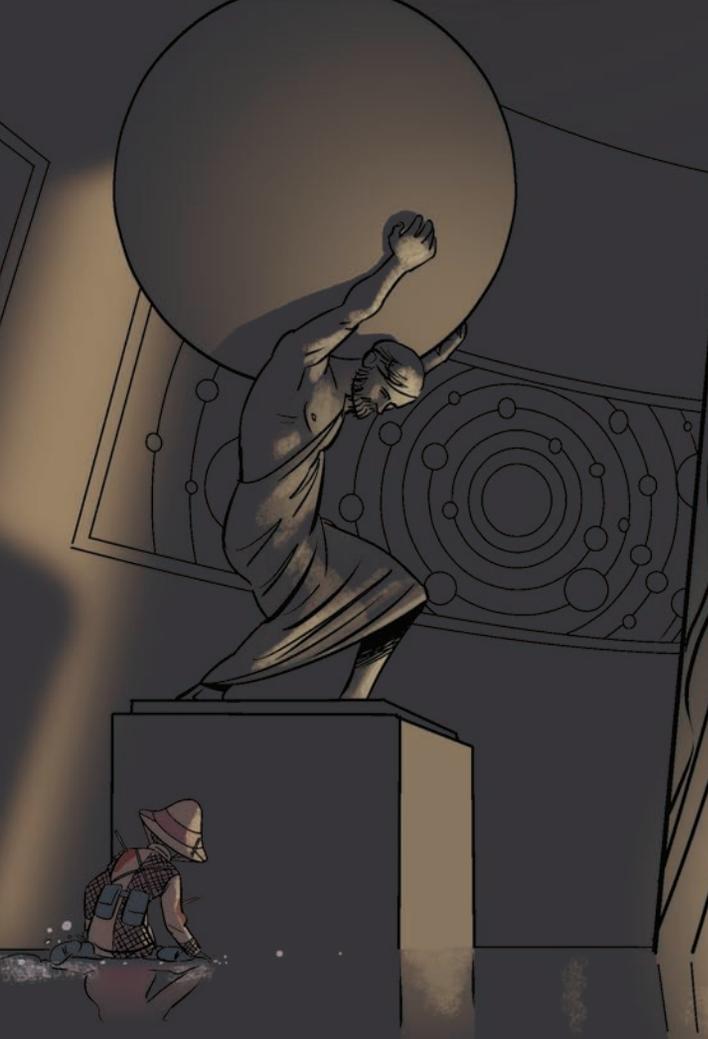












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PLEASE, IT'S OKAY! I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU. I'VE BEEN WATCHING OVER YOU WHILE YOU RECOVERED.

RECOVERED?



I REMEMBER... BEING SHOT, BUT...

WE FOUND YOU IN THE ATRIUM, YOU'D LOST A LOT OF BLOOD, THERE WAS DEEP TISSUE TRAUMA BUT NO ORGAN DAMAGE, EVEN SO, IT WAS TOUCH AND GO FOR A WHILE.

YOU'VE BEEN COMATOSE FOR OVER A MONTH.

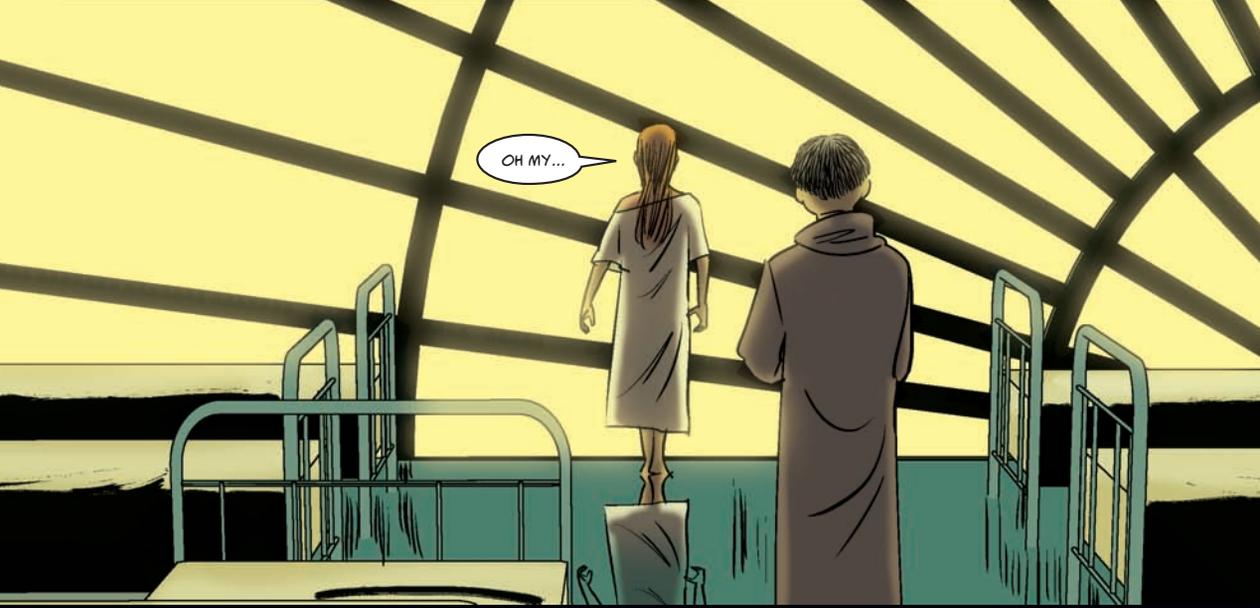
A MONTH! WAIT, WAIT! WHO ARE YOU? WHERE AM I?

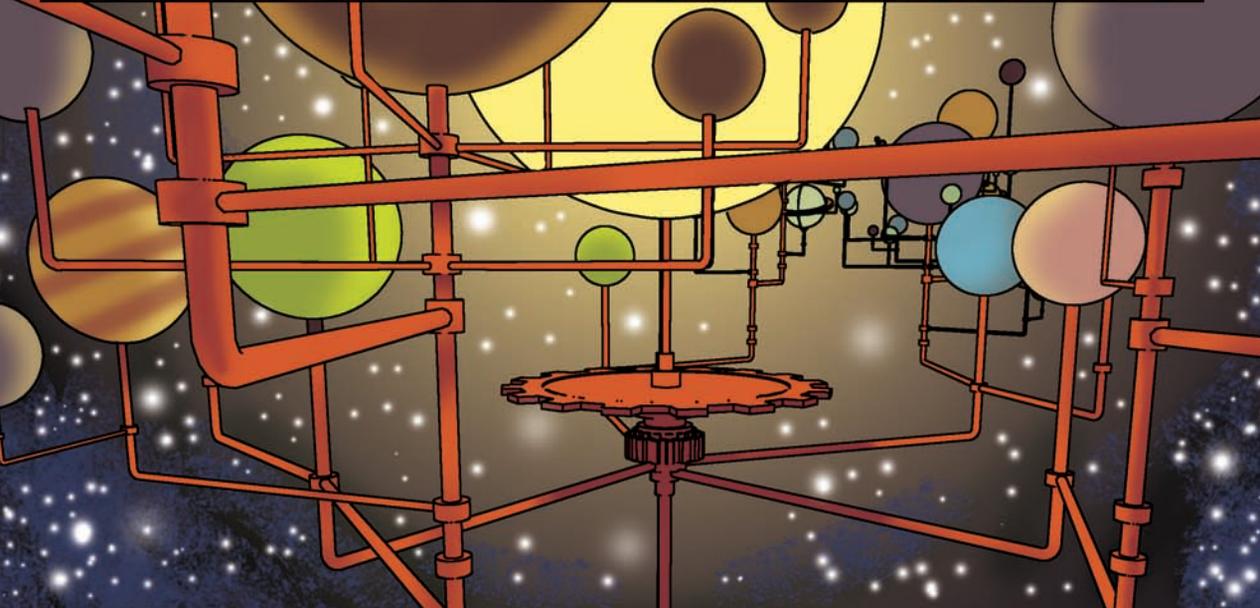
I'M CONDUCTOR SEVENTEEN, ALTHOUGH I'M STUDYING ORDERS TO BECOME AN ENGINEER. AND THIS, WELL... YOU'RE RIDING 'THE RAILS'.



SEE FOR YOURSELF.

OH MY...









'WHERE IS IT?'

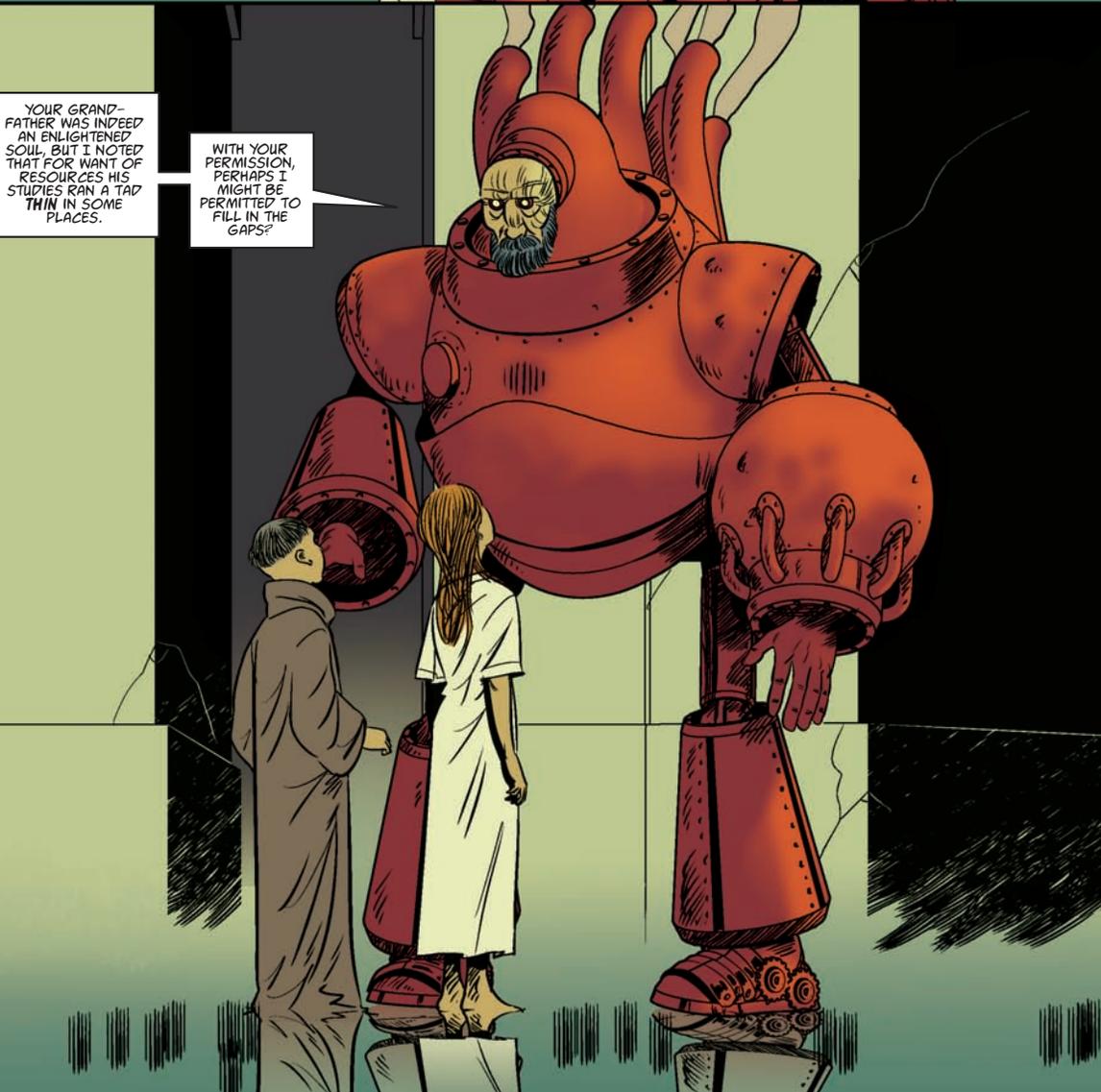
THIS BELONGS TO YOU, MISS WREN. I URGE YOU TO KEEP IT SAFE.



I HOPE YOU WILL FORGIVE ME BUT I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF READING IT WHILST YOU WERE SLEEPING.

I DO NOT MAKE LIGHT WHEN I SAY THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER'S THEORIES AND ANALYSES ARE WORKS OF GENIUS, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE PREJUDICES AND PRIVILEGES HE FOUND HIMSELF IN. I WISH HE'D BEEN ABLE TO COME WITH YOU.

SO DO I, SIR.



YOUR GRANDFATHER WAS INDEED AN ENLIGHTENED SOUL, BUT I NOTED THAT FOR WANT OF RESOURCES HIS STUDIES RAN A TAD THIN IN SOME PLACES.

WITH YOUR PERMISSION, PERHAPS I MIGHT BE PERMITTED TO FILL IN THE GAPS?

ISSUE 2 ON SALE JUNE 25TH

BRASS SUN





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