

FOR THEIR OWN GOOD

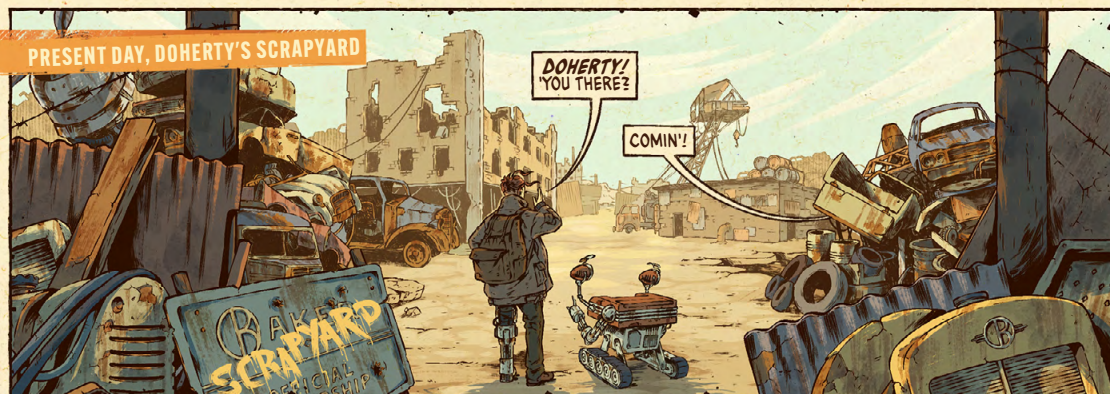
CHAPTER II: SCRAPS



KATERYNA KOSHELEVA

11 YEARS AGO
DOHERTY'S SCRAPYARD





DOHERTY!
YOU THERE?

COMIN'!



LOOK WHO'S HERE. AMAZING GRACE!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, I ALMOST THOUGHT
YOU'D FORGOTTEN AN OLD MAN.



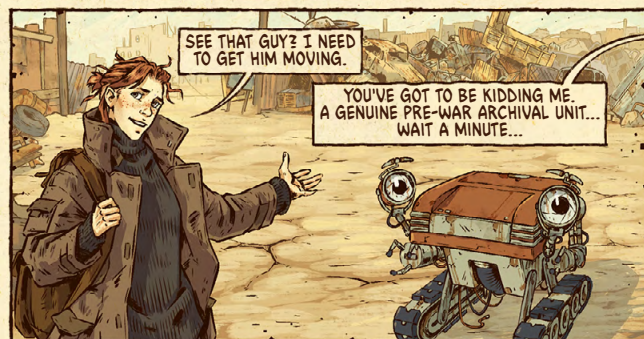
NO WAY! I'VE
GOT A BUSINESS.

AH, IT'S ALWAYS SOME BUSINESS WITH
YOU. GOOD TO KNOW THERE ARE STILL
THINGS THAT DON'T CHANGE. SO, WHAT
CAN I HELP YOU WITH?



TWO THINGS, ACTUALLY. FIRST, IF YOU HAPPEN
TO HAVE SOME DURABLE CHASSIS LAYING
AROUND I'D TRADE FOR IT. SECOND -- I MIGHT
NEED SOME OF YOUR SPECIAL EQUIPMENT.

WANNA SHARE WHAT YOU
NEED ALL THAT STUFF FOR?

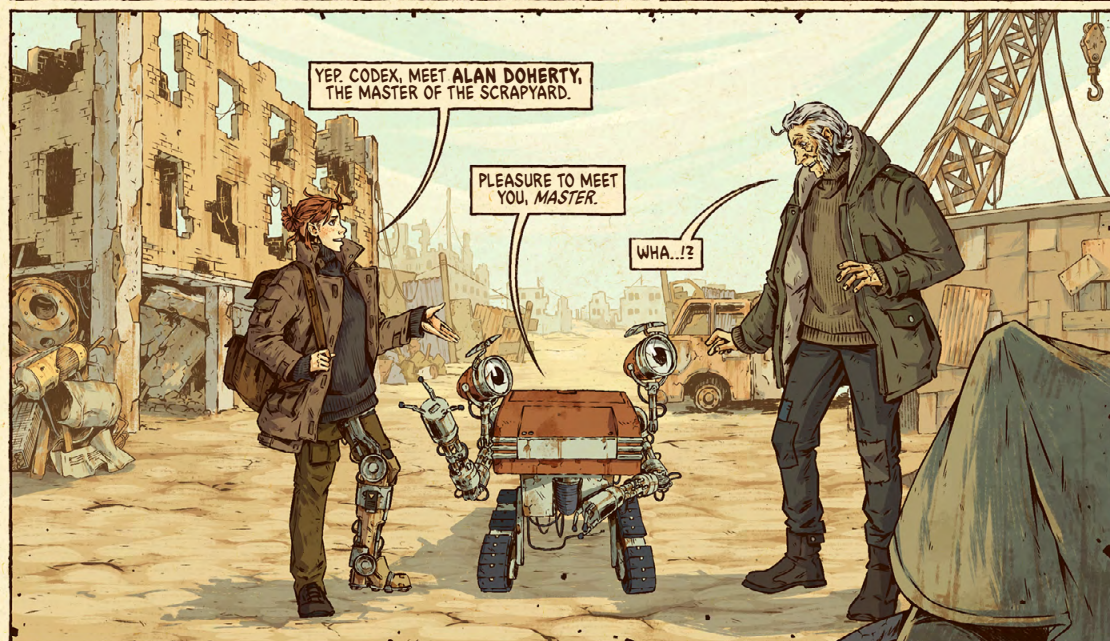


SEE THAT GUY? I NEED
TO GET HIM MOVING.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
A GENUINE PRE-WAR ARCHIVAL UNIT...
WAIT A MINUTE...



ARE YOU SAYING
IT'S OPERATIONAL?



YEP. CODEX, MEET ALAN DOHERTY,
THE MASTER OF THE SCRAPYARD.

PLEASURE TO MEET
YOU, MASTER.

WHA...!?



YEP.

SO... ABOUT
THAT CHASSIS.

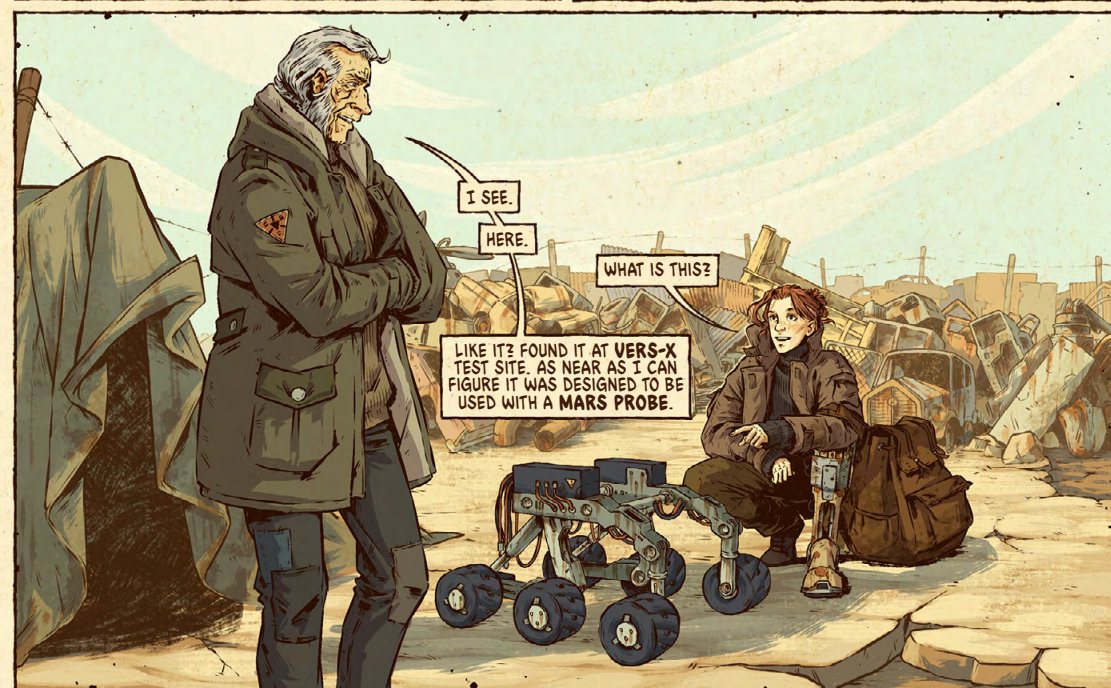
WHAT?



OH, RIGHT.
RIGHT...

MY GODS. NEVER THOUGHT I'D
LIVE TO SEE A WORKING ROBOT
EVER AGAIN. WHERE DID YOU
FIND HIM?

OH, YOU KNOW...
PLACES.



I SEE.
HERE.

WHAT IS THIS?

LIKE ITZ FOUND IT AT VERS-X
TEST SITE. AS NEAR AS I CAN
FIGURE IT WAS DESIGNED TO BE
USED WITH A MARS PROBE.



THIS IS AWESOME! AND
FITS PERFECTLY. WHAT DO
I OWE YOU?

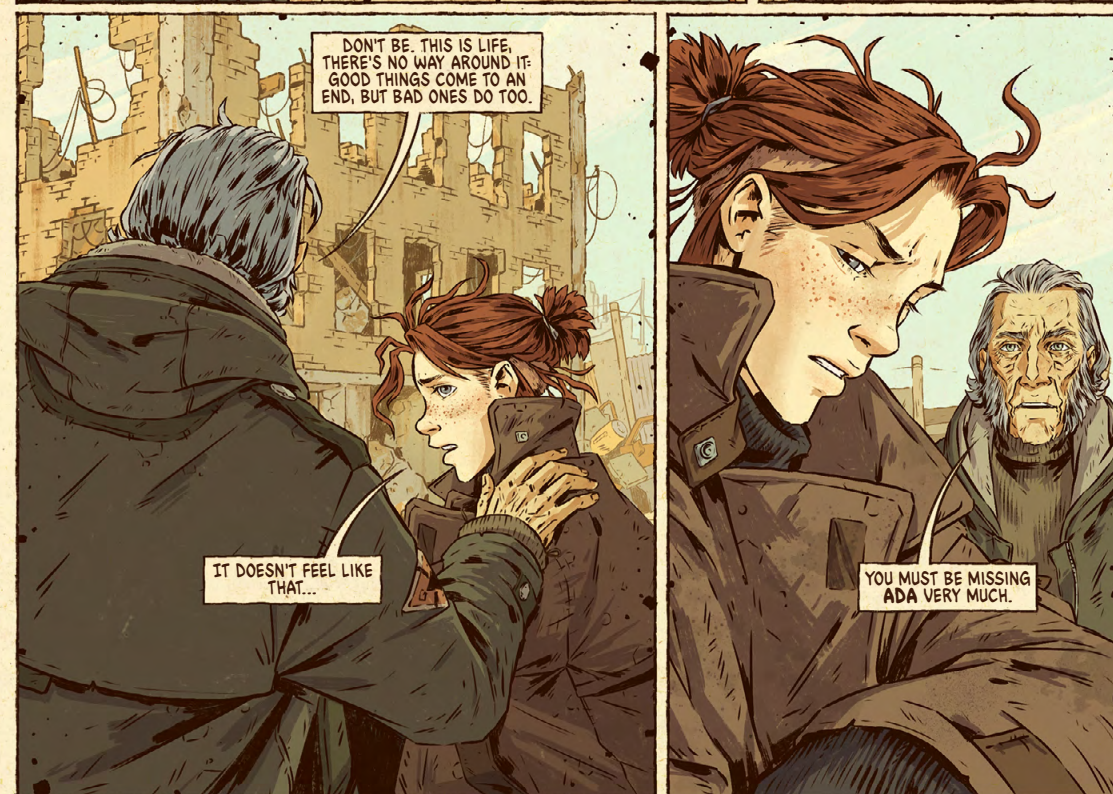
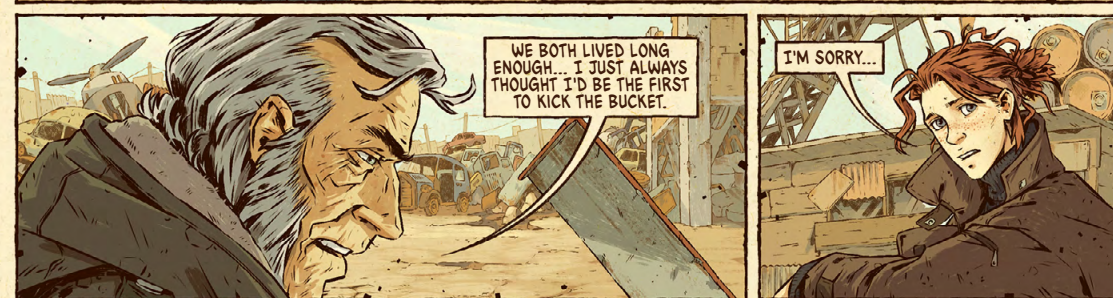
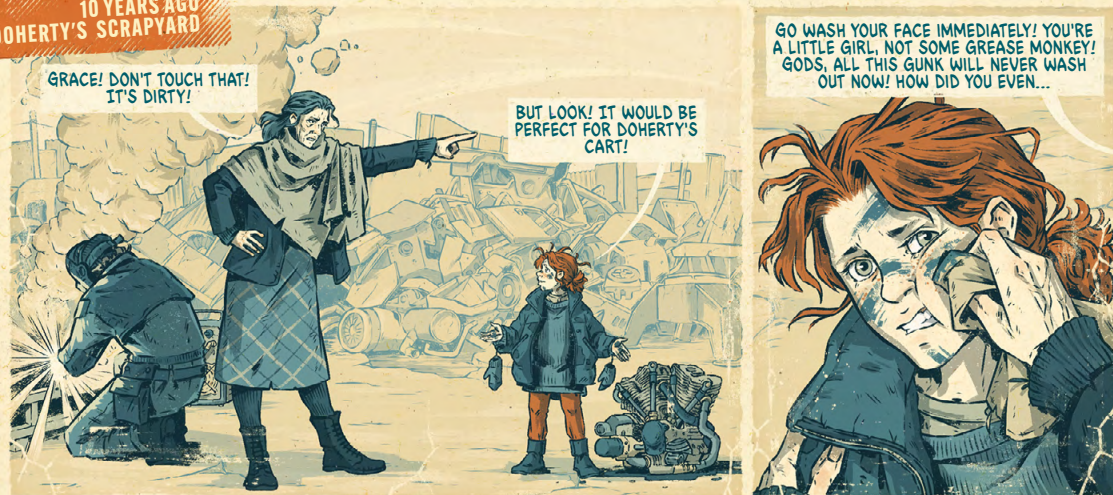
WELL, IF YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST --
LET'S MAKE IT A FAVOR.

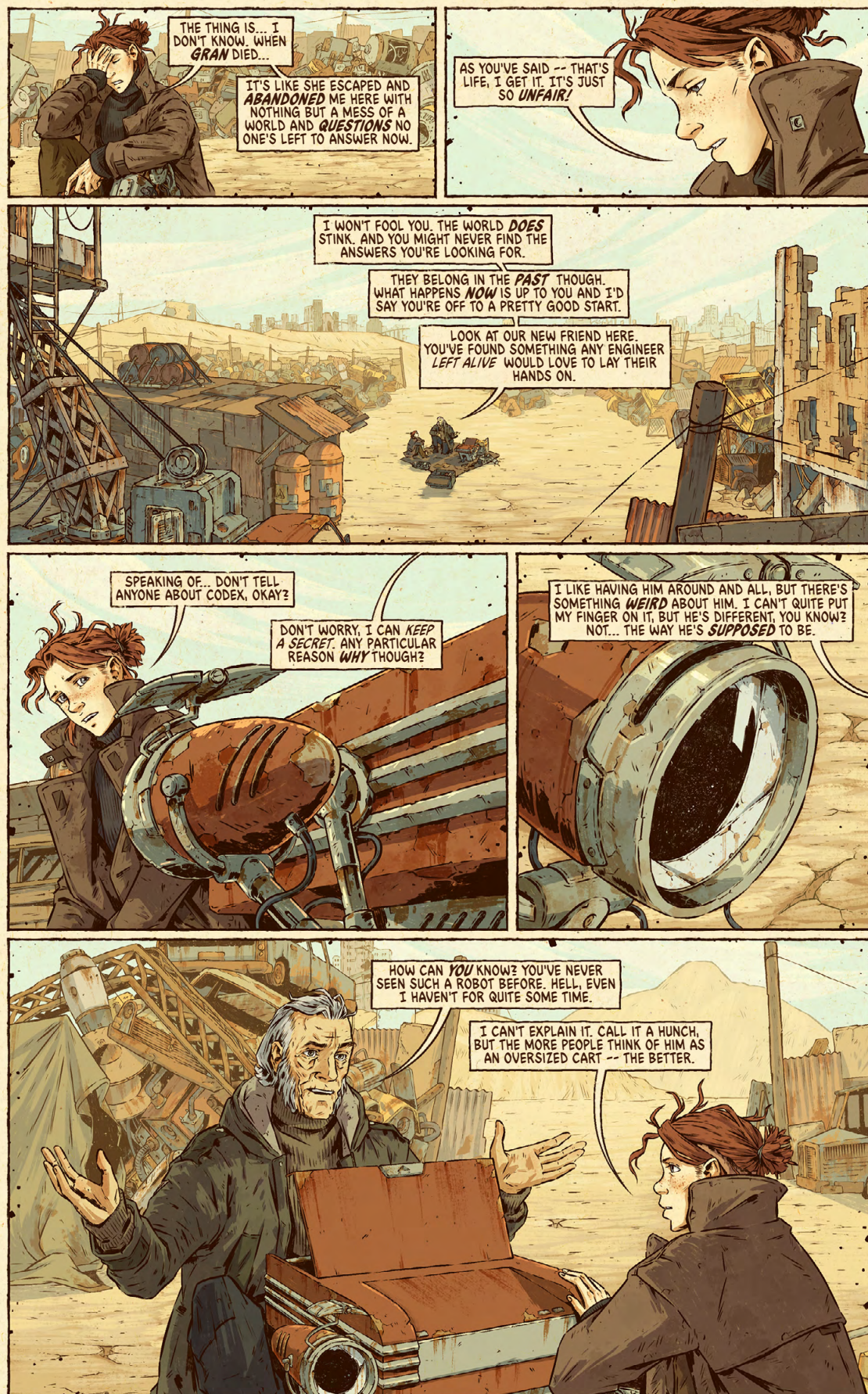
I NEED SOME BUSINESS TAKEN CARE OF AT VISTO
ASAP, BUT I CAN'T LEAVE THE SCRAPYARD UNATTENDED.
IT'S ABOUT THE MEDS, REAL EXPENSIVE AND I DON'T
TRUST THE COURIERS MUCH.



DEAL!

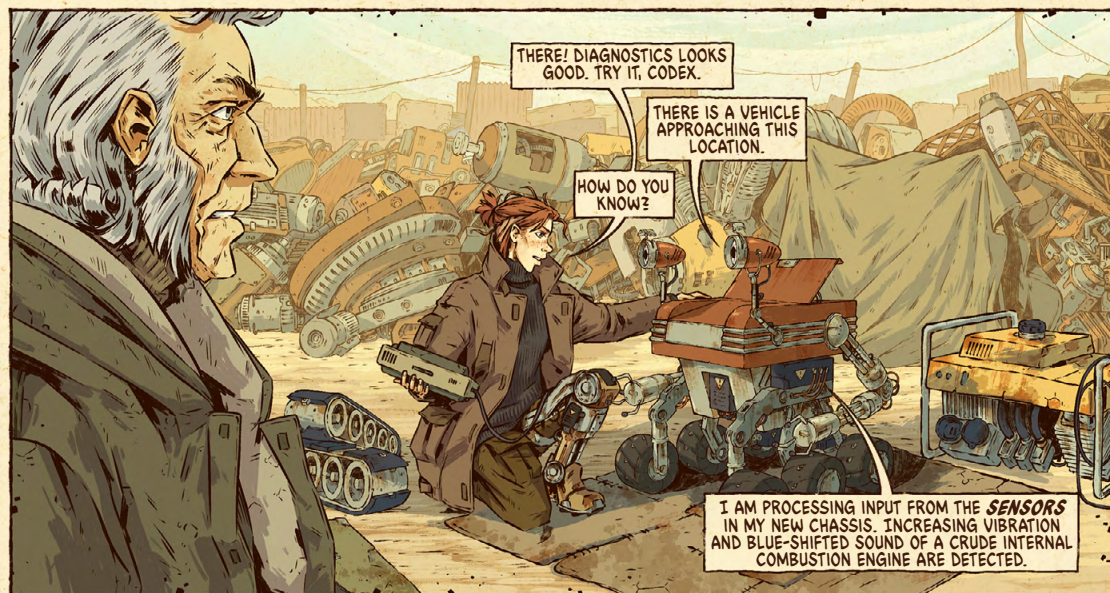
I'LL HELP
YOU WITH
THIS THING.





9 YEARS AGO DOHERTY'S SCRAPYARD





THERE! DIAGNOSTICS LOOKS GOOD. TRY IT, CODEX.

THERE IS A VEHICLE APPROACHING THIS LOCATION.

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I AM PROCESSING INPUT FROM THE *SENSORS* IN MY NEW CHASSIS. INCREASING VIBRATION AND BLUE-SHIFTED SOUND OF A CRUDE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE ARE DETECTED.



DAMN...



REDEEMERS. I THINK THEY'RE COMING HERE.

WHAT?! DAMMIT, JUST MY LUCK!

WE MUST *HIDE* ALL THIS STUFF. ESPECIALLY CODEX.



CODEX, WE ARE IN DANGER. EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY, BUT I *HAVE* TO POWER YOU DOWN.

UNDERSTOOD.

SAVING LEARNING DATA SET. PLEASE STAND BY.



LET'S HIDE THE REST OF THE GEAR. YOUR HARNESS HAS TO GO TOO.

WHERE THE HELL DID THEY COME FROM?

BEATS ME, BUT UNLESS WE HURRY THIS MIGHT END UP BEING A VERY SHORT ENCOUNTER IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.



DOHERTY... WHY ARE REDEEMERS SO ANGRY WITH PEOPLE LIKE YOU?



I DON'T KNOW. GRIEF, RAGE, REVENGE FOR SOMETHING WE, THE SCIENTISTS SUPPOSEDLY HAD DONE TO OUR WORLD.

YOU SOUND LIKE YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT.



NO. I THINK THEY'RE JUST A HORDE OF BULLIES WHO'D FINALLY FOUND AN EXCUSE TO RAMPAGE WHAT LITTLE WAS LEFT.

THERE WERE NO PEOPLE LIKE THAT BEFORE THE WAR?



NOT THAT MANY OF THEM.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE? BEFORE THE BOMBS?

NO POINT IN REMINISCING REALLY. HERE, NOW -- IT'S ALL WE'VE GOT.



GRAN TOLD ME SOME OF IT, ABOUT ALL THE SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, ROBOTS AND SPACE TRAVEL. SO COOL! WE CAN STILL GET IT BACK, CAN'T WE?

WELL, IF YOU LEARN WE MIGHT DO JUST THAT ONE DAY.



NOW, LET'S TRY THIS THING ON...



IT'S GONNA BE OKAY. JUST... STAY CALM.



WHO ARE YOU? WHAT IS THIS PLACE?



I'M ALAN DOHERTY, REGISTERED WITH THE GUILD OF BENIGN CRAFTS. THIS IS MY SCRAPYARD.



WE REQUIRE FUEL. YOU WILL COOPERATE.

THE GUILD GUIDELINES DICTATE THAT I DO. THE TANK'S BEHIND THE HOUSE.



YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE PARDONED EGGHEADS, AREN'T YOU?



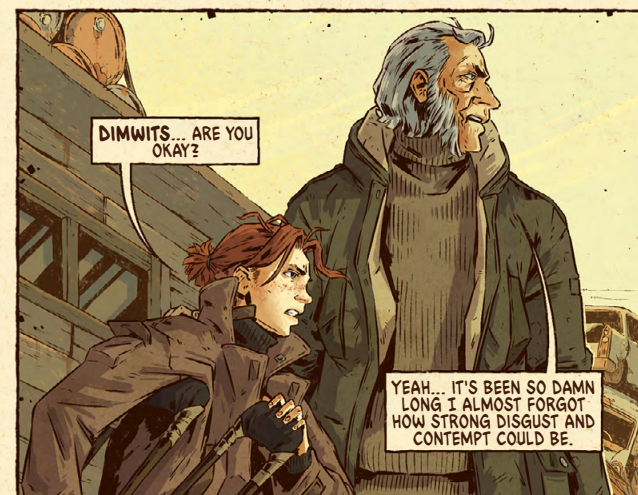
I SOMETIMES WONDER, IF IT WAS *MERCY*...



...OR PLAIN FOOLISHNESS THAT MADE US LET SOME OF YOU LIVE.

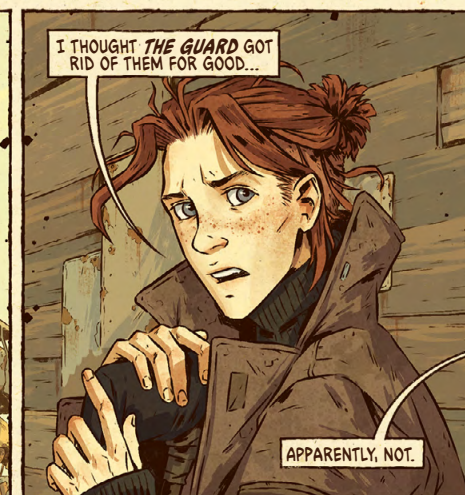


MAY THE GODS FORGIVE US FOR HARBORING SNAKES.



DIMWITS... ARE YOU OKAY?

YEAH... IT'S BEEN SO DAMN LONG I ALMOST FORGOT HOW STRONG DISGUST AND CONTEMPT COULD BE.



I THOUGHT *THE GUARD* GOT RID OF THEM FOR GOOD...

APPARENTLY, NOT.



AT TIMES LIKE THESE YOU MUST BE MISSING *THE OLD WORLD*. PEACE, ORDER, LIVING WITHOUT FEAR...

IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN AS BAD AS THIS.

YOU GIVE THE PRE-WAR WORLD TOO MUCH CREDIT. IT WASN'T ALL SUNSHINE AND ROSES, KID.



ALL OF THIS.



...TO COMMEMORATE THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF VISTO LIBERATION FROM THE REDEEMERS. WE REMEMBER THE FALLEN. WE CELEBRATE THE END OF FEAR AND OPPRESSION...

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE SOME *NUTTERS*. WHO USED TO BE NO MORE THAN AN *ANNOYANCE* BEFORE THE WAR, MANAGED TO DO SO MUCH DAMAGE.

IT'S GOOD YOU WEREN'T HERE FOR THE *WORST* OF IT. SO MANY GOOD PEOPLE DEAD, OR STILL MISSING.

I'M SORRY.



...LIVE FROM VISTO MARKET SQUARE THE ADDRESS FROM GENERAL EVE MASON, THE COMMANDER OF JOINT CONTINENTAL UNION GUARD FORCES.

STATIC

...OUR UNITY, OUR ONGOING EFFORT AT RESTORING THE CIVILIZATION WOULD BE THE MOST PROPER MEMORIAL TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT WITH US TODAY. I COMMEND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND PERSEVERANCE...



GOTTA GIVE HER THAT. SHE AND HER GUYS DID KICK THE DIMWITS OUT OF HERE.

YOU KNOW HER?

MASON? WE'VE MET. BACK WHEN SHE WAS STILL A COLONEL. SEEMED LIKE A DECENT, IF ANNOYING ONE.

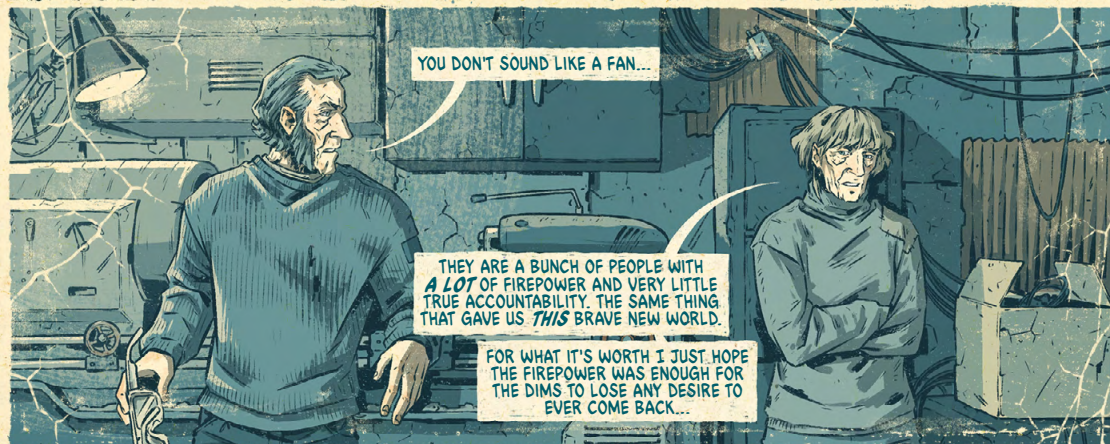


ANNOYING?



YOU KNOW THE TYPE. *IDEALISTS*. IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS AND EVEN I CAN SEE THAT THE GUARD'S GONNA BURN DOWN AND CRASH.

IF YOU SAY SO.



YOU DON'T SOUND LIKE A FAN...

THEY ARE A BUNCH OF PEOPLE WITH A LOT OF FIREPOWER AND VERY LITTLE TRUE ACCOUNTABILITY. THE SAME THING THAT GAVE US *THIS* BRAVE NEW WORLD.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH I JUST HOPE THE FIREPOWER WAS ENOUGH FOR THE DIMS TO LOSE ANY DESIRE TO EVER COME BACK...



YOU'RE STILL DOING THIS?

IT'S SERENE UP THERE. YOU KNOW, *GRAND SCHEME* OF THINGS AND ALL THAT...



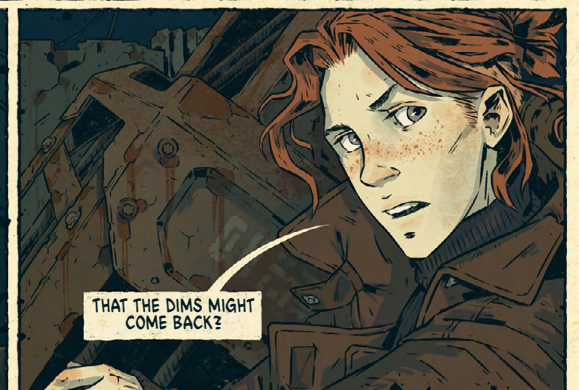
I'VE BEEN MEANING TO ASK YOU... THE DIMS HAVE BEEN GONE FOR A *DECADE*. I MEAN... TODAY WAS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN THEM.



AND YET YOU'VE BEEN WEARING THIS PATCH FOR ALL THOSE YEARS. WHY?



AS A *REMINDER*, I SUPPOSE.



THAT THE DIMS MIGHT COME BACK?



THAT IT'S EASY TO LOSE EVERYTHING JUST BECAUSE *SOMEONE* DECIDED YOU SHOULD.

BE IT THE DIMS OR SOMEONE JUST AS BAD, IT ALWAYS SEEMS TO COME DOWN TO THIS.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

AH, I'M JUST RAMBLING, SWEETS. OLD AGE AND ALL...

IT'S GETTING COLD. LET'S GET INSIDE.



THANK YOU FOR KEEPING ALL THIS STUFF FOR ME. AS THEY USED TO SAY, THERE'S NO BETTER TEST OF FRIENDSHIP THAN HELP SOMEBODY MOVE. AGAIN...

I KNOW YOU HAVE YOUR REASONS, BUT THIS CAN'T BE GOOD FOR GRACE. WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE, FOR GOOD?



FOR ONE, CAROL MADE IT PRETTY CLEAR SHE BARELY TOLERATES ME AND GRACIE AROUND. NO.



WHERE ON EARTH DID YOU GET *THESE*?



BRANDT GAVE THEM TO ME.



NOW, THAT'S THE BLAST FROM THE PAST...

FUNDAMENTALS OF PHYSICS

R.T. HALL

XI EDITION
HUGHES

HALL WAS MY ACADEMIC ADVISOR.

HE WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL MAN.



REALLY?

OH YES, A TYPICAL MAN OF SCIENCE: CURIOUS, HONEST, HARDWORKING... WITH A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR. THOSE WERE VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE BACK IN THE DAYS.



GO NOW. GET THE REST OF YOUR THINGS.



YOU'RE MAKING IT SOUND LIKE PRE-WAR ACADEMIA WALKED ON WATER. AS IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO A SINGLE BUDGET MEETING.

I... TRY NOT TO DWELL ON THE BITTER SIDE OF IT.

RIGHT...



6 MONTHS AGO
LAKEHILLS CEMETERY





I'M LEAVING TOMORROW MORNING. I STILL OWE YOU THAT FAVOR, REMEMBER?

ABOUT THAT... I'M NOT SURE IT'S SUCH A GOOD IDEA AFTER ALL. THE DIMS JUST BARGING IN TODAY IS BAD ENOUGH.



MAYBE THEY JUST GOT LOST OR SOMETHING.



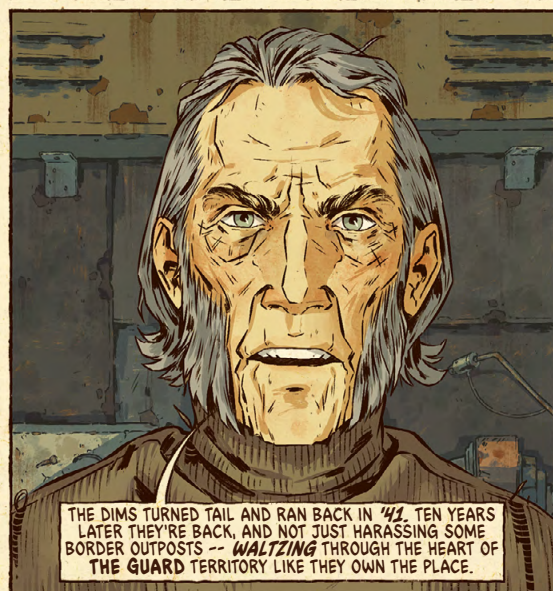
COME ON, IT'S *VISTO* WE'RE TALKING ABOUT. THE SAFEST CITY ON THE COAST.



WHAT CAN POSSIBLY HAPPEN TO ME THERE?



WHO KNOWS. BUT I DON'T LIKE ANY OF THIS ONE BIT.



THE DIMS TURNED TAIL AND RAN BACK IN '41. TEN YEARS LATER THEY'RE BACK, AND NOT JUST HARASSING SOME BORDER OUTPOSTS -- *WALTZING* THROUGH THE HEART OF THE GUARD TERRITORY LIKE THEY OWN THE PLACE.



WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT MEANS?

I DON'T KNOW, BUT I GET THIS NAGGING FEELING THE TIME OF PEACE, AS IT WAS, IS JUST ABOUT DONE.

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