

3

TOP



GARRAHL COLE II



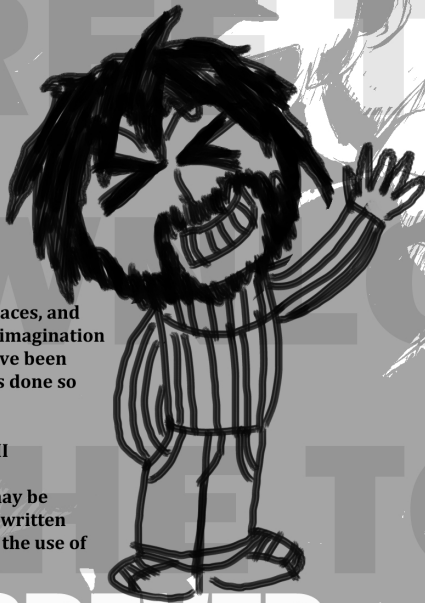
FOREVER
SILENCED



CARDELL S COLE II

STORY AND ART BY CARDPELL S COLE II

JERRY MOORE
MARTINA COLE
JEREMY WILLIS



This is a work of fiction. Name, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Some characters have been created based off real individuals, which was done so with their knowledge and consent.

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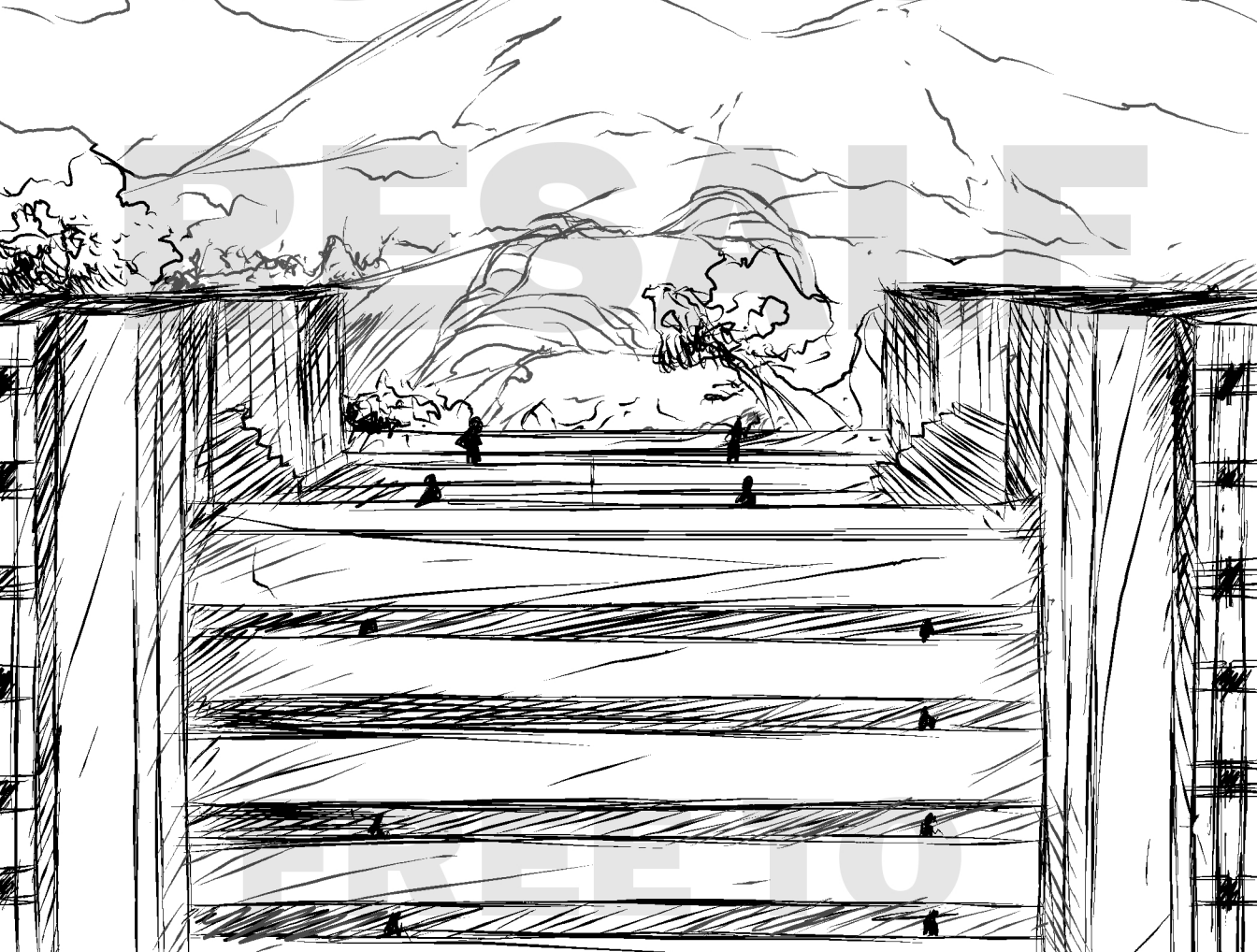
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THANK YOU SO MUCH!

ORTHROS BRANCH MAIN, LITHIVEOS PROVINCE

VERNA 20, 1298



*Spirits...
what are they
precisely? Some
would say that
they always were,
that they were born
at the Universe's
inception.*

*Still, others
would say that
spirits are the
remnants of men.
Following death.*

*Whatever
their origin,
one thing is for
certain, they govern
the Cosmos, and
all things
within it.*

They are a most valuable presence, and yet, they cannot be seen or heard.

Despite this their existence was confirmed 300 years ago, thanks to one man.

And thanks to this magnificent individual we were able to establish Inheritance...which is?

Oh... Field Agent Yuu.

HA! Yes indeed, Yuu! And until one has mastered incorporeal meditation, one will not be able to fully explore one's options. Your level of mastery determines what skills become available to you at any given moment. A true master can explore all options. ... Next question, who discovered Inheritance?

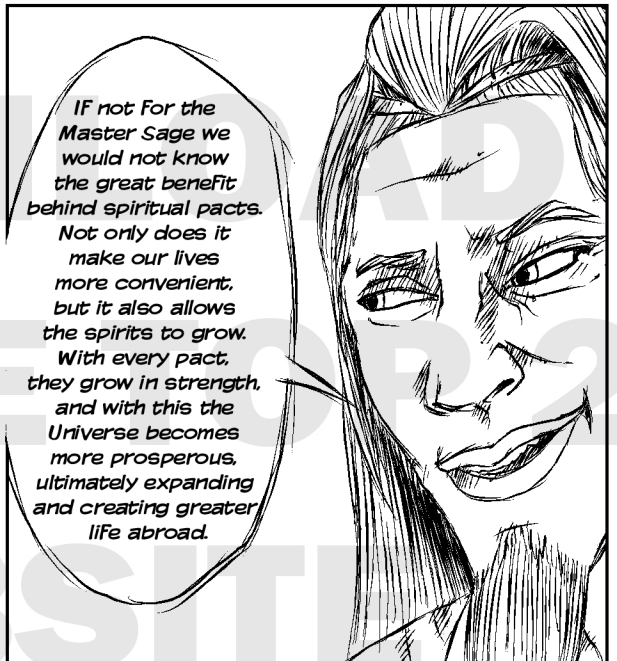
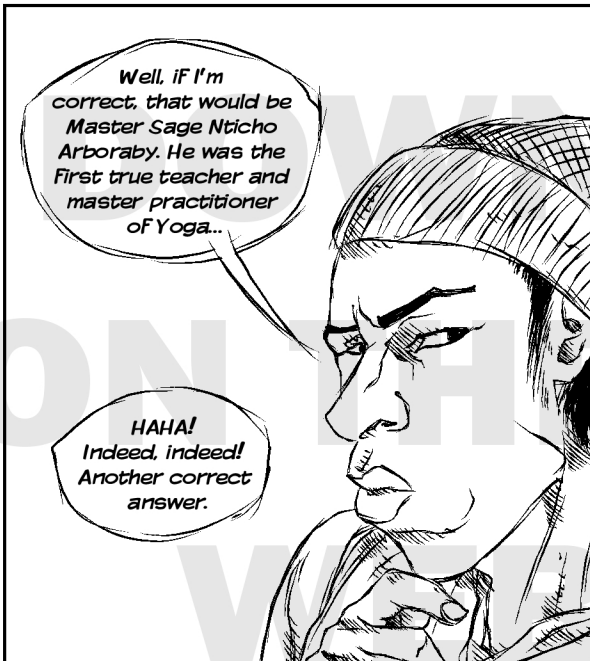
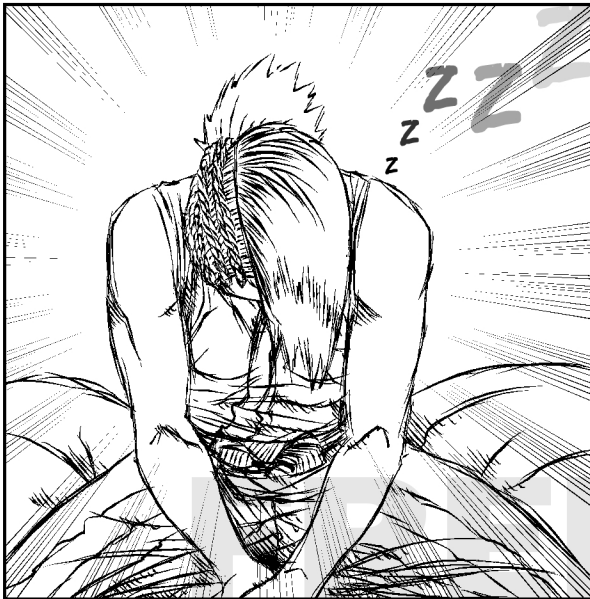
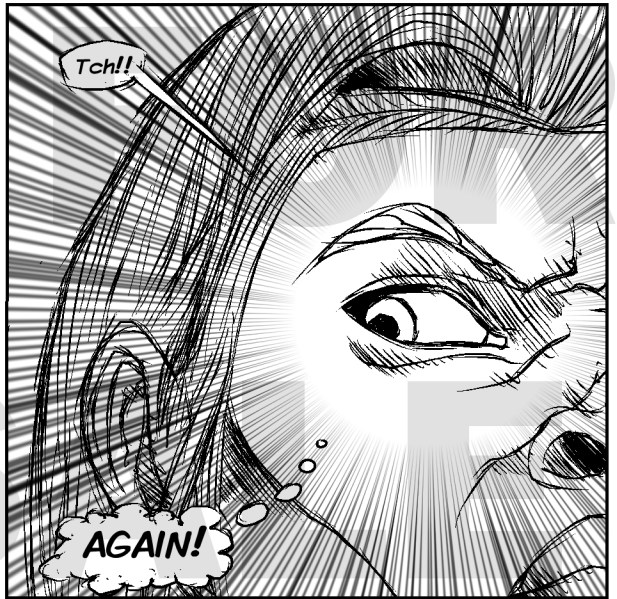
Aaagh, come on Instructor! You gotta give us a lil credit! To easy, that one...

And yet, I still expect an answer.

Inheritance is a pact between man and spirit that is accomplished through deep incorporeal meditation...

which, unless studied at a young age, could take years to master.

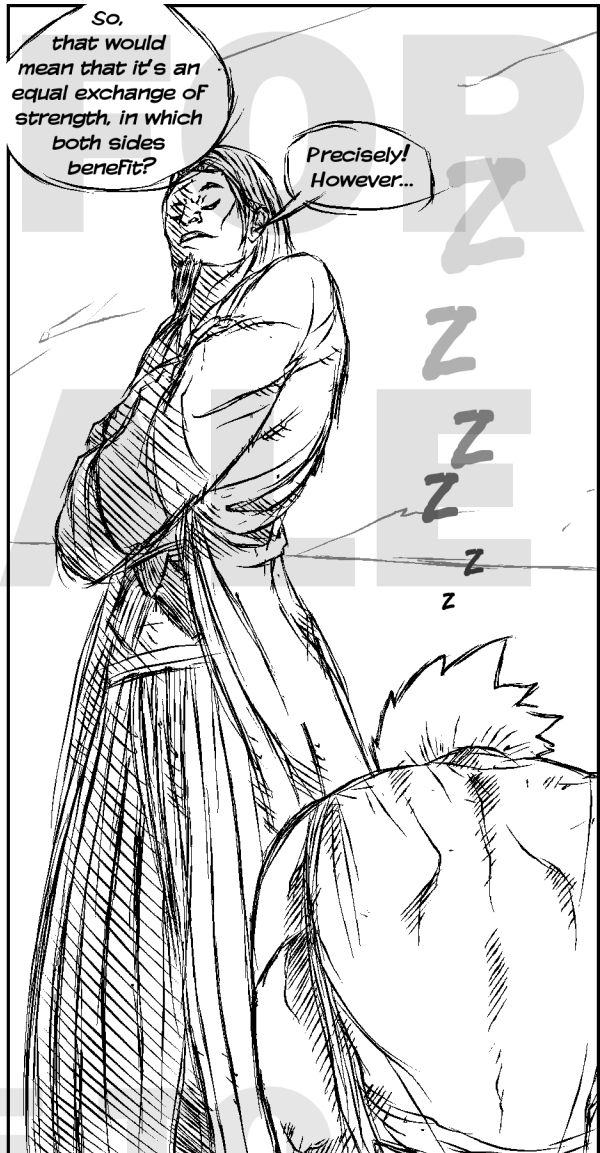






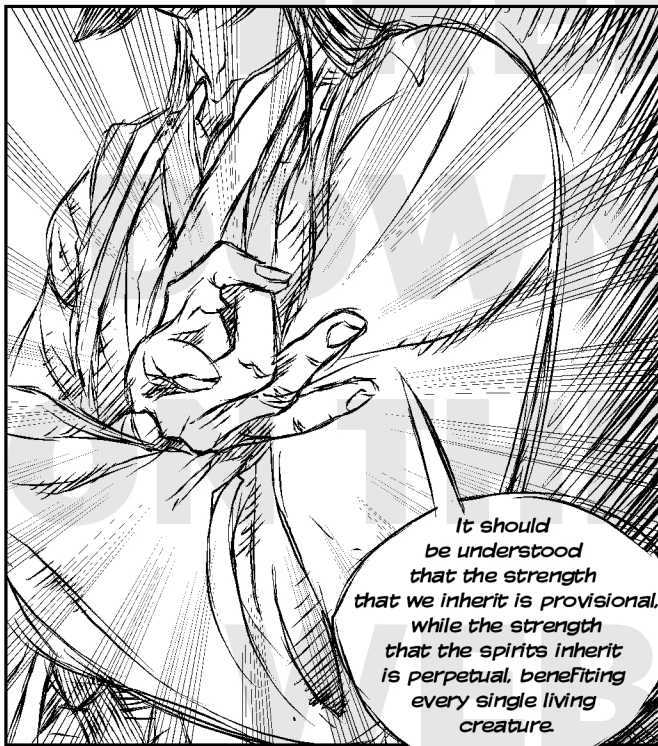
Instructor?

Yes, David.



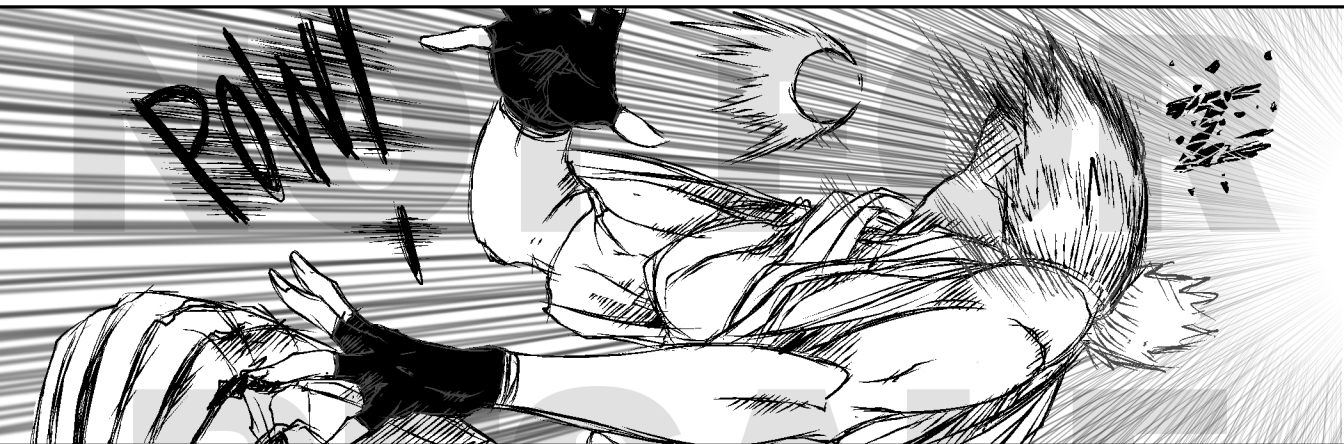
So, that would mean that it's an equal exchange of strength, in which both sides benefit?

Precisely! However...



It should be understood that the strength that we inherit is provisional, while the strength that the spirits inherit is perpetual, benefiting every single living creature.





WHO THE HELL DID THAT? STEP FORWARD AND ACCEPT YOUR UNHOLY ASS KICKIN!



hehe.. I see you're finally awake, Field Agent Silvera. How was your nap?



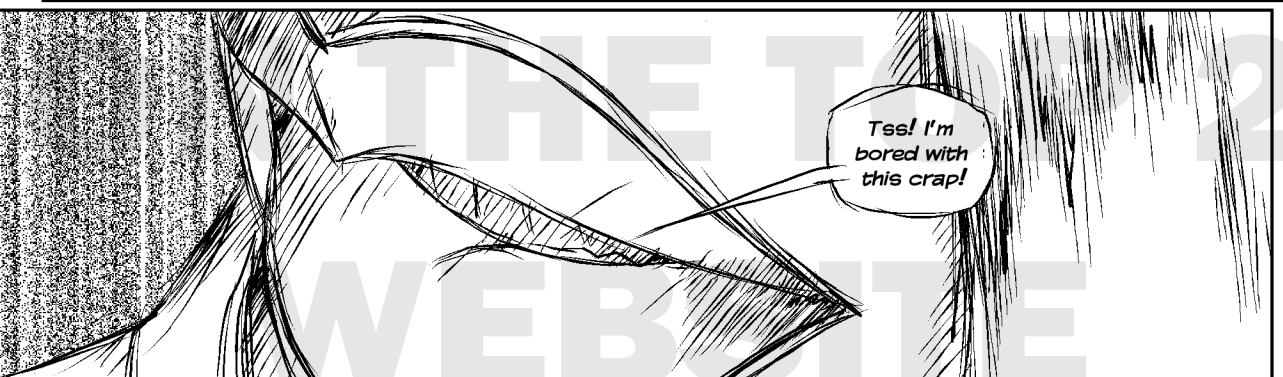
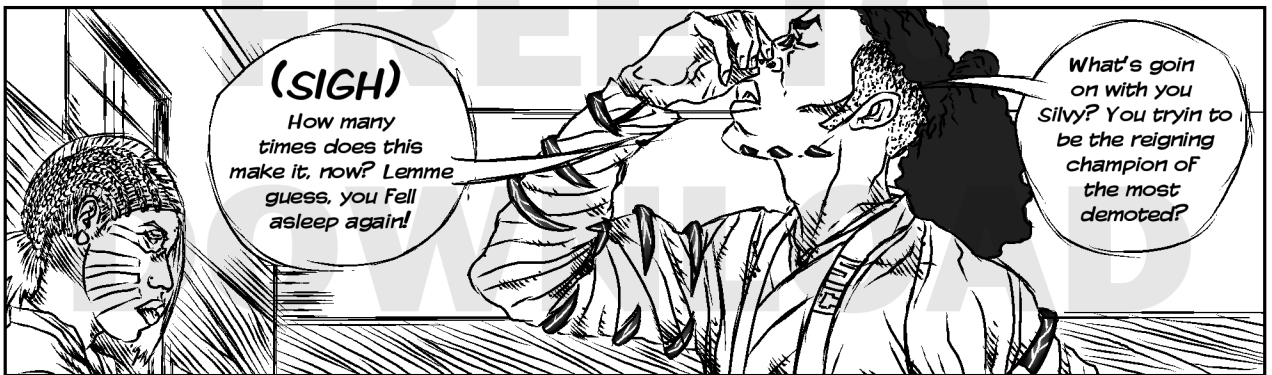
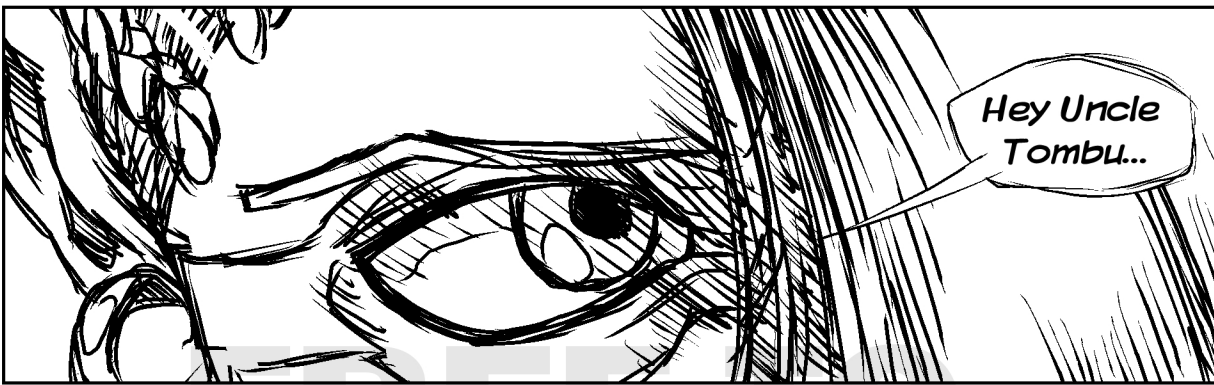
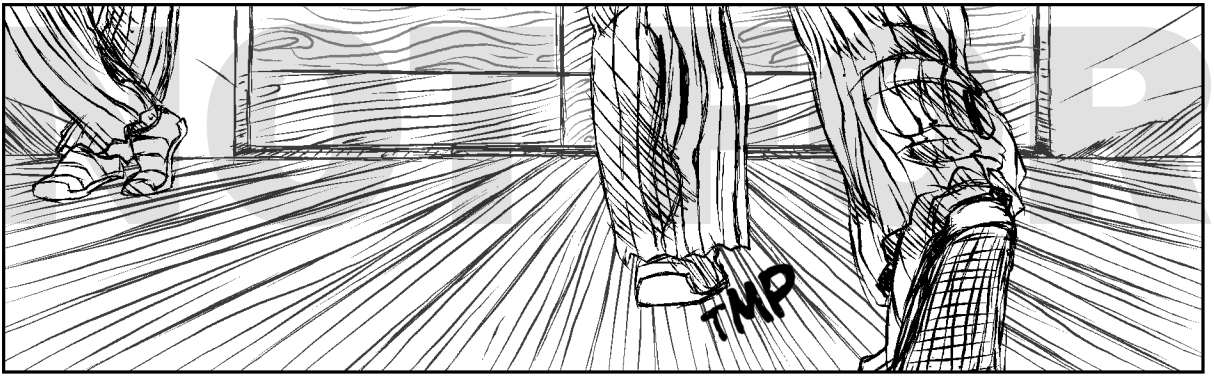
WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH YOU! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AN INSTRUCTOR. NOT A BULLY! NOW I'M GONNA BE FORCED TO KICK YOUR ASS!

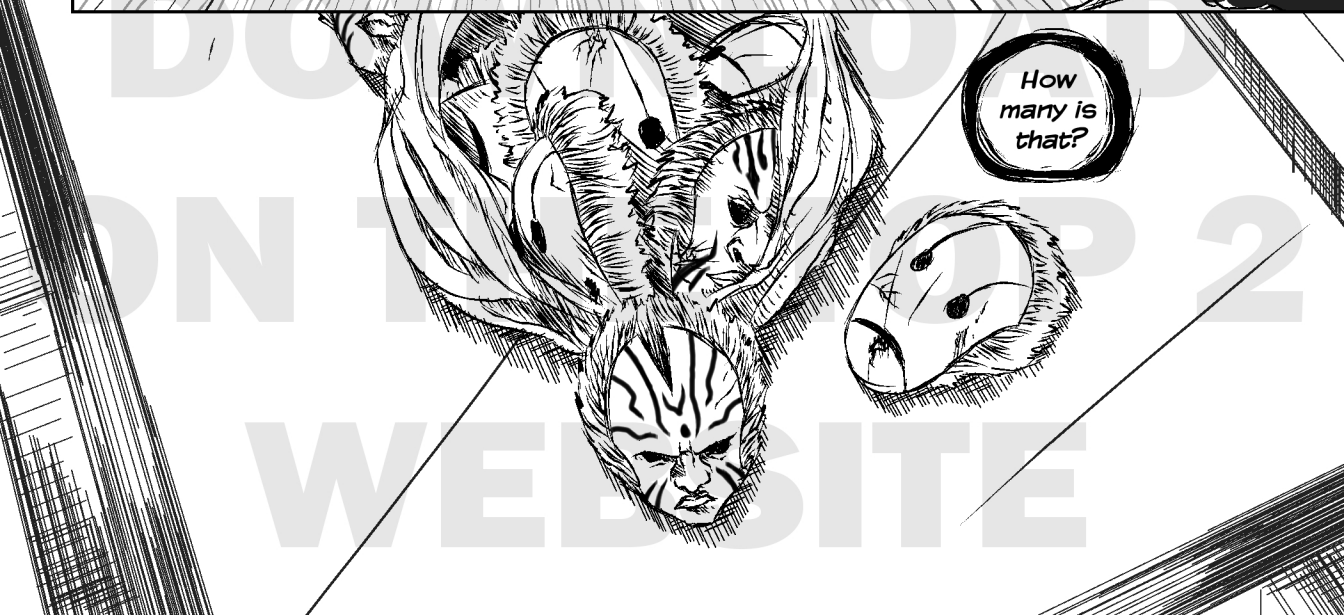
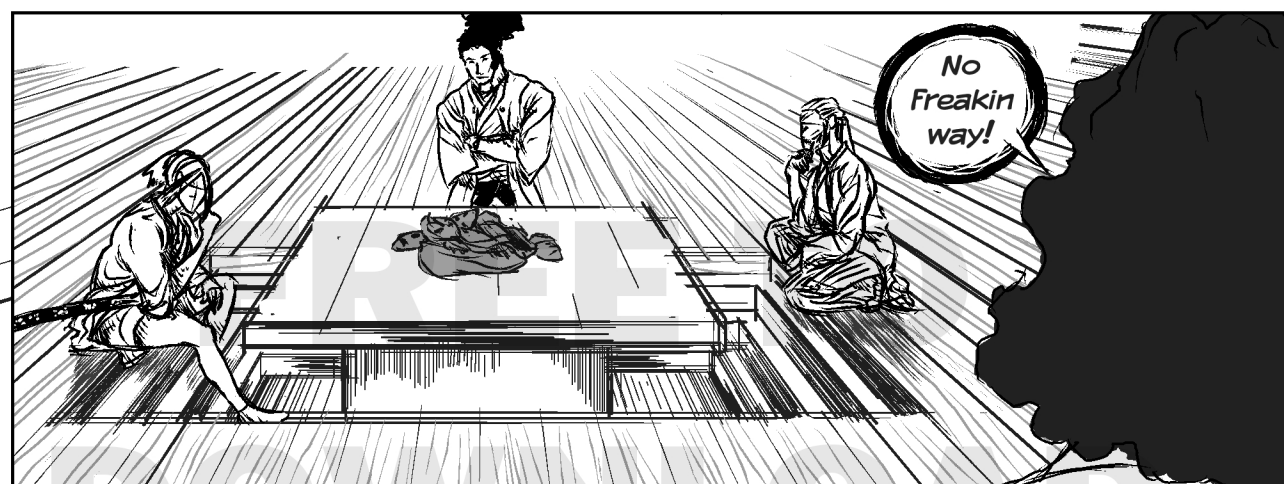


Is that so? Well, I would be more than pleased to meet you on the training field at any time.

As For now, do be a dear and report to the Grand Master immediately. IF you wish, I'd be more than pleased to escort you...

rrrr rrrrr!!!





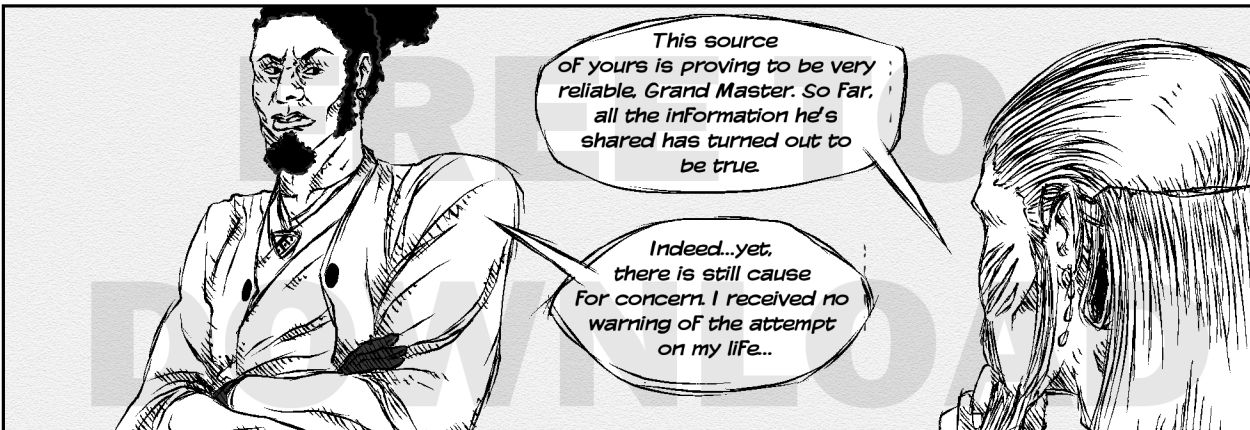


Using Katrina's sensory abilities, we were able to identify more than twenty-five sleepers.

Despite our best efforts to take them alive, they had means of ensuring we did not...

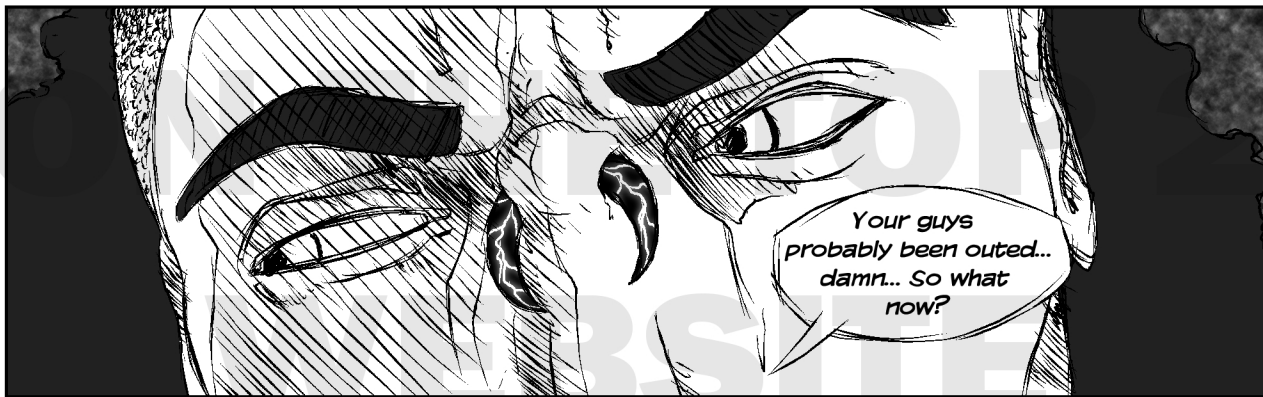


Unfortunate, to say the least. An interrogation could have been very beneficial. We are left with no choice but to assume that other branches are also compromised!

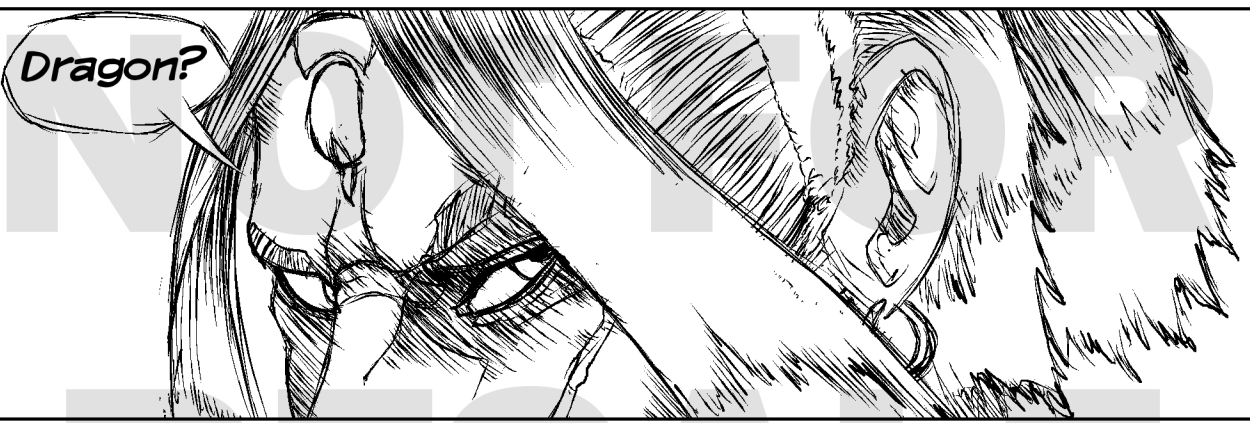


This source of yours is proving to be very reliable, Grand Master. So far, all the information he's shared has turned out to be true.

Indeed...yet, there is still cause for concern. I received no warning of the attempt on my life...



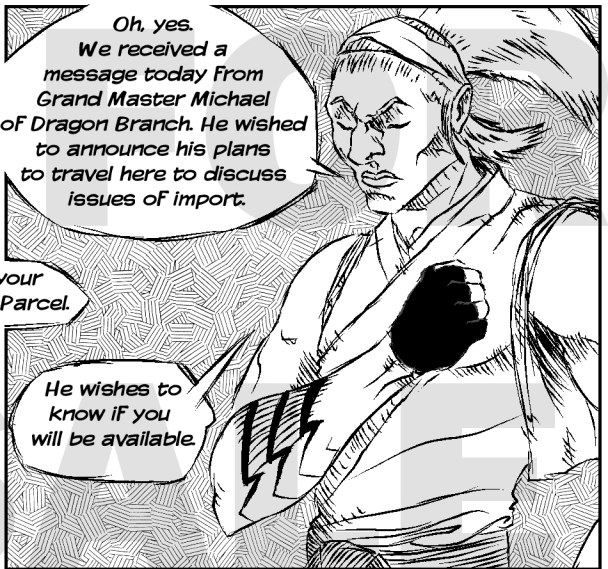
Your guys probably been outed... damn... So what now?





Oh...
Pardon my
interruption,
Masters!

Give your
report Parcel.

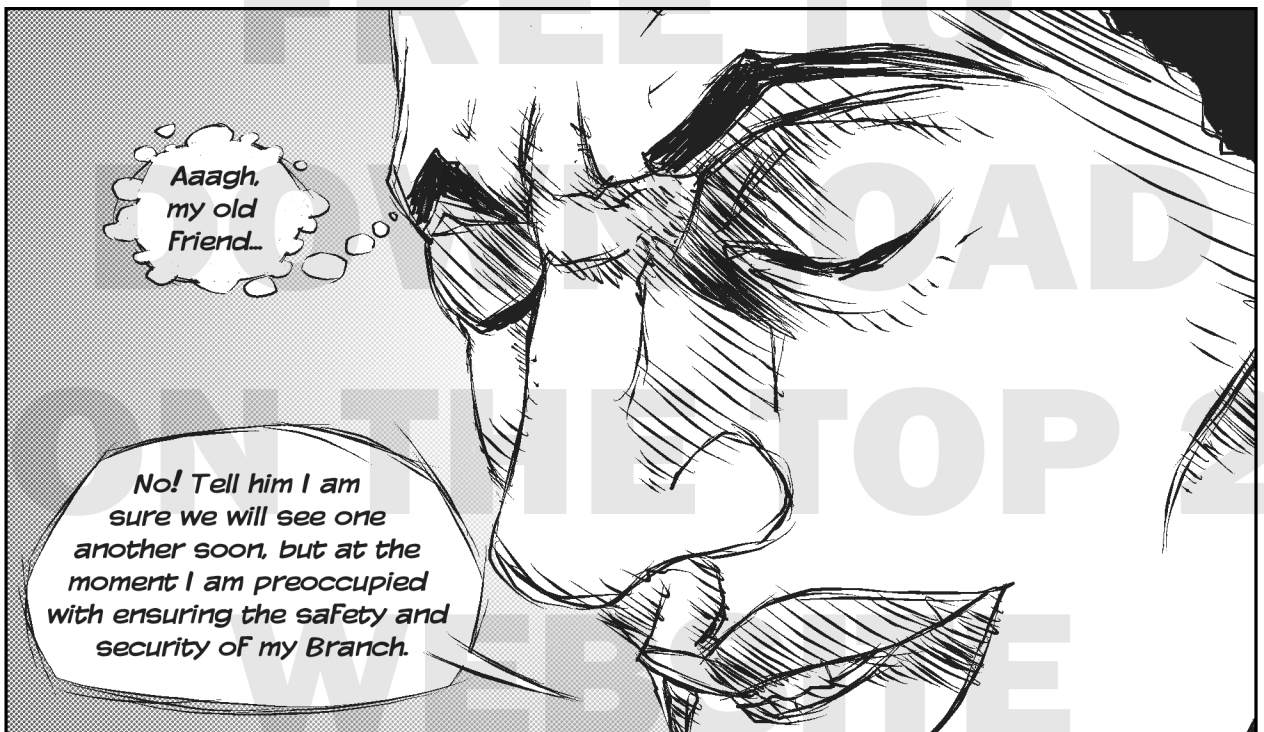


Oh, yes.
We received a
message today from
Grand Master Michael
of Dragon Branch. He wished
to announce his plans
to travel here to discuss
issues of import.

He wishes to
know if you
will be available.



Speak of
the devil...



Aaagh,
my old
Friend...

No! Tell him I am
sure we will see one
another soon, but at the
moment I am preoccupied
with ensuring the safety and
security of my Branch.

TOP 2 CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS #3

NAME: TOMBU STONE

RANK: COMBAT MASTER

BRANCH: ORTHROS

AGE: 42

BIRTHDATE: HIEMAL 55, 1255

SPIRIT INHERITANCE: FIRE

ADVANTAGE: DEFENCE (FORTITUDE)

COMBAT LEVEL: MASTER

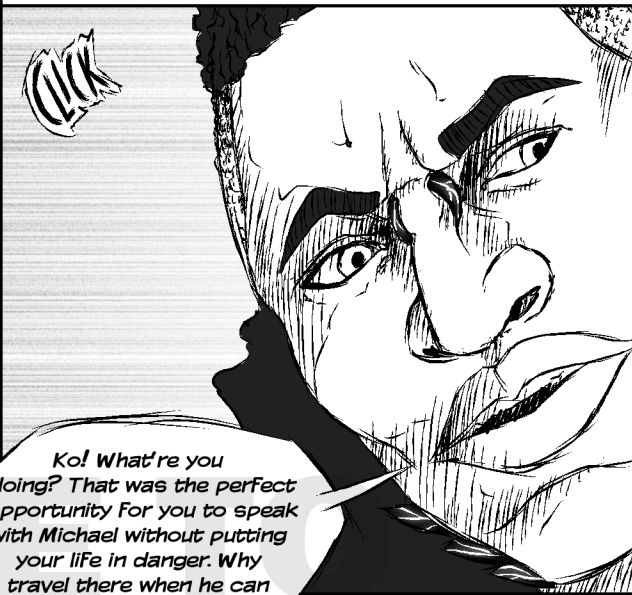




You are dismissed.

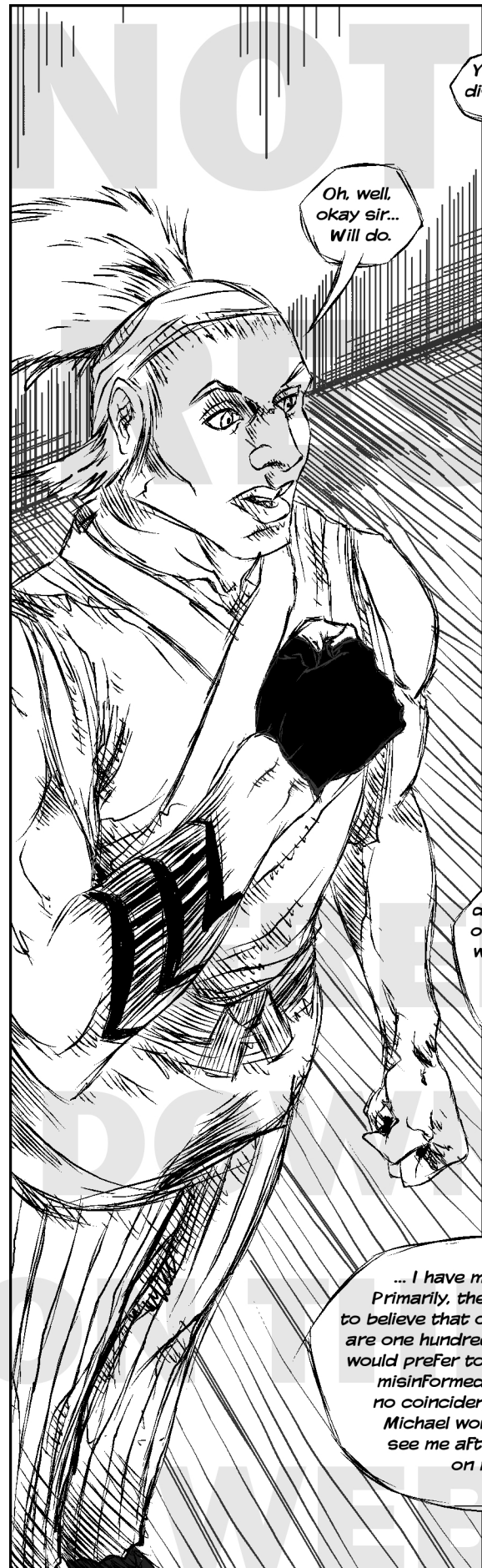
Oh, well, okay sir... Will do.

Yes, sir!



Click

Ko! What're you doing? That was the perfect opportunity for you to speak with Michael without putting your life in danger. Why travel there when he can come here...?



... I have my suspicions. Primarily, there is no reason to believe that our communications are one hundred percent secure. I would prefer to leave our enemies misinformed... Besides, it is no coincidence that Master Michael would attempt to see me after an attempt on my life...





Surely you don't believe...!

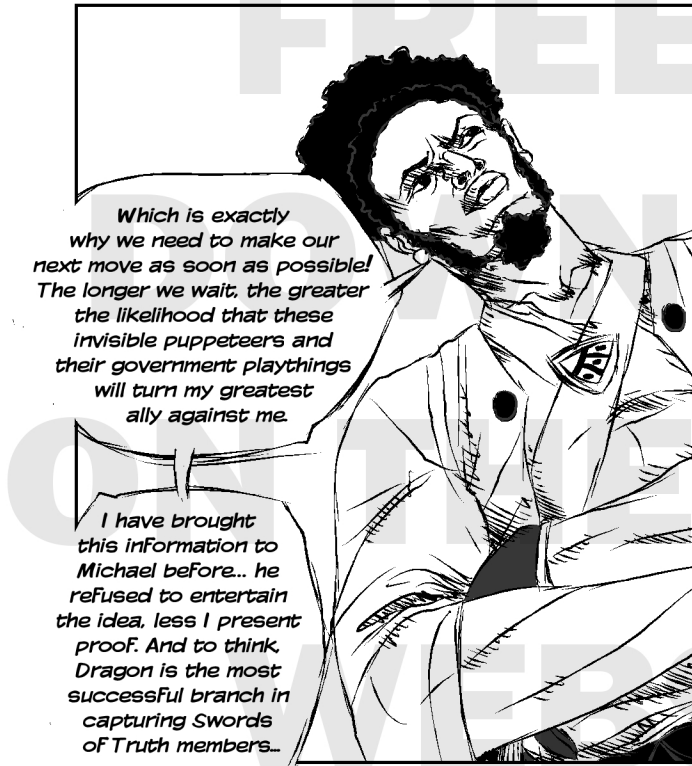
No, no! Michael would never condone an action as cowardly as assassination. Besides, our Friendship is deep.



Hmm, wouldn't it be convenient if those who wish you dead could also cause a Fracture in the bond you and Master Michael share...?

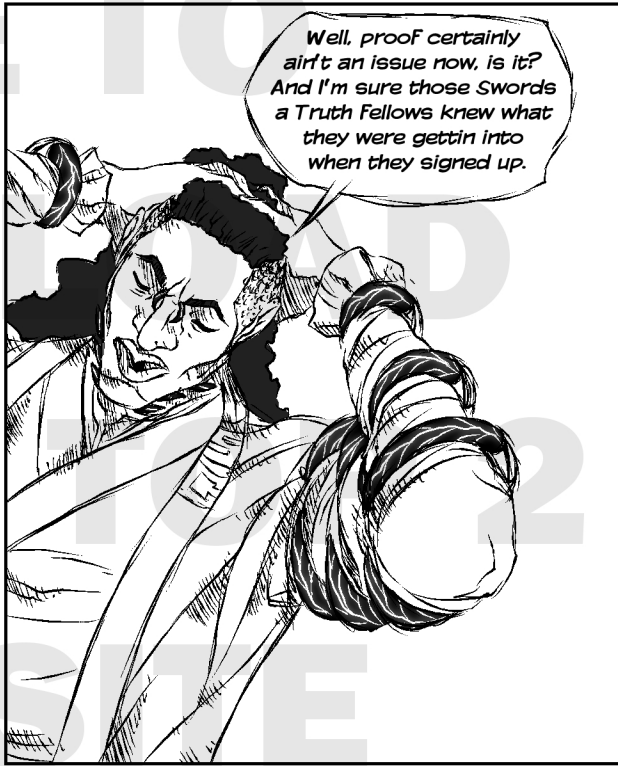
Oh, come on!

Thus, destroying an alliance before its inception...



Which is exactly why we need to make our next move as soon as possible! The longer we wait, the greater the likelihood that these invisible puppeteers and their government playthings will turn my greatest ally against me.

I have brought this information to Michael before... he refused to entertain the idea, less I present proof. And to think, Dragon is the most successful branch in capturing Swords of Truth members...



Well, proof certainly ain't an issue now, is it? And I'm sure those Swords a Truth Fellows knew what they were gettin into when they signed up.

We might as well consider OURSELVES Swords of Truth now!

Seems, Master Ko, as your curiosity has activated a ticking time bomb...

What the hell's so Funny!!

HA!

HA!

HA!

HA!

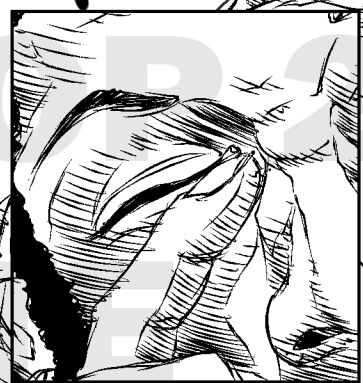
HA!

HA!

HA!

HA!

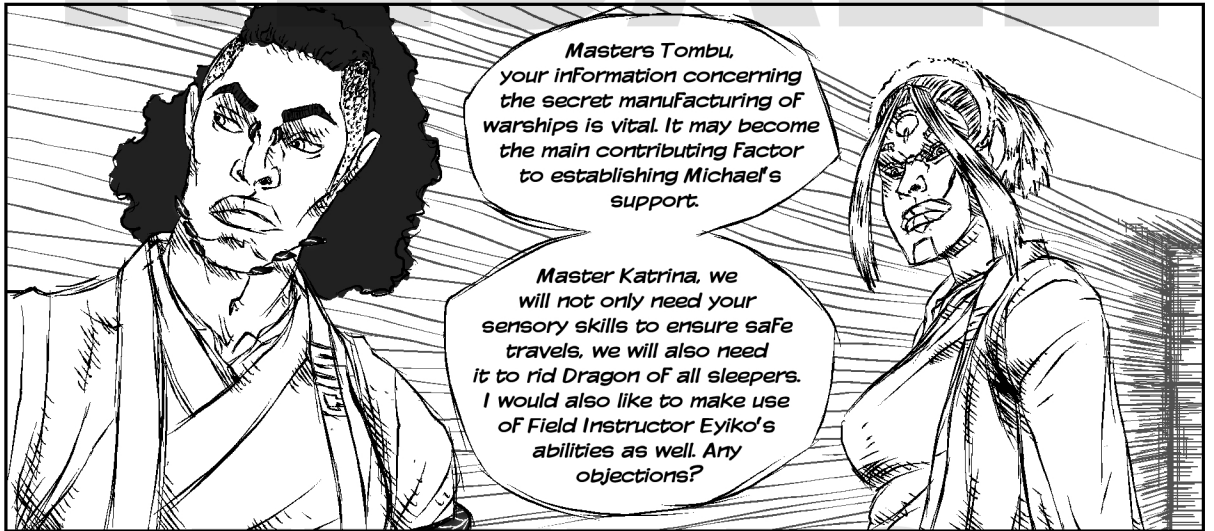
Okay you two... it's time to get down to business...





First and Foremost, Master Kleave, in my absence you are to be acting Grand Master. Any objections?

No sir!



Masters Tombu, your information concerning the secret manufacturing of warships is vital. It may become the main contributing Factor to establishing Michael's support.

Master Katrina, we will not only need your sensory skills to ensure safe travels, we will also need it to rid Dragon of all sleepers. I would also like to make use of Field Instructor Eyiko's abilities as well. Any objections?



Gotta admit, I do feel a lil more secure with Eyiko coming along... (sigh) Guess I'm all in...

You have my Full support, sir!

Excellent! We will be departing at midnight, but before we do, I would like to address the entire branch. Master Katrina, I would like For you to do one more scan before I do. Afterwards, you are all Free to rest up before we commence this operation. If you have anything left to add, say it now.



Well, alright then. I will make my way to the Communications room momentarily. That should give you ample time to scan. Report to me there as to your results. Dismissed.



Aye.

Will do.



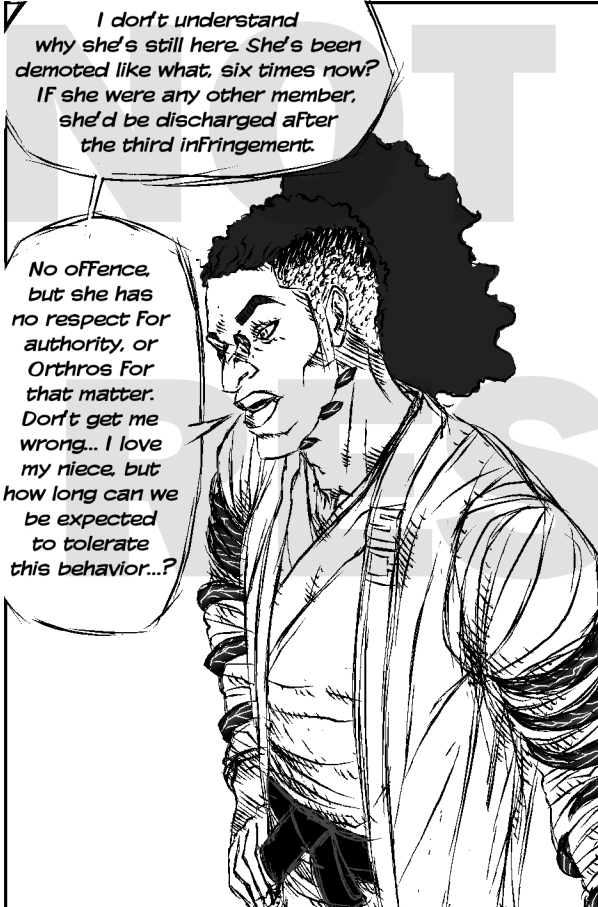
Bro...?

Tombu...

What are you gonna do about Silvera...?

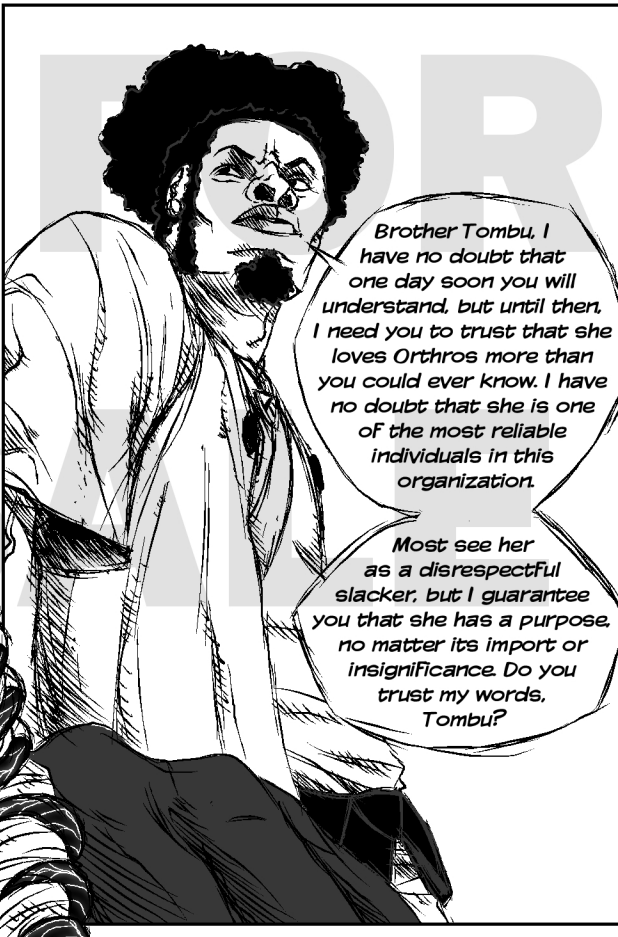


...I have not yet decided... Why do you ask?



I don't understand why she's still here. She's been demoted like what, six times now? If she were any other member, she'd be discharged after the third infringement.

No offence, but she has no respect for authority, or Orthros for that matter. Don't get me wrong... I love my niece, but how long can we be expected to tolerate this behavior...?



Brother Tombu, I have no doubt that one day soon you will understand, but until then, I need you to trust that she loves Orthros more than you could ever know. I have no doubt that she is one of the most reliable individuals in this organization.

Most see her as a disrespectful slacker, but I guarantee you that she has a purpose, no matter its import or insignificance. Do you trust my words, Tombu?



(sigh)

Yeah, I do, and always will...

Thank you, Tombu. Send her in, please.

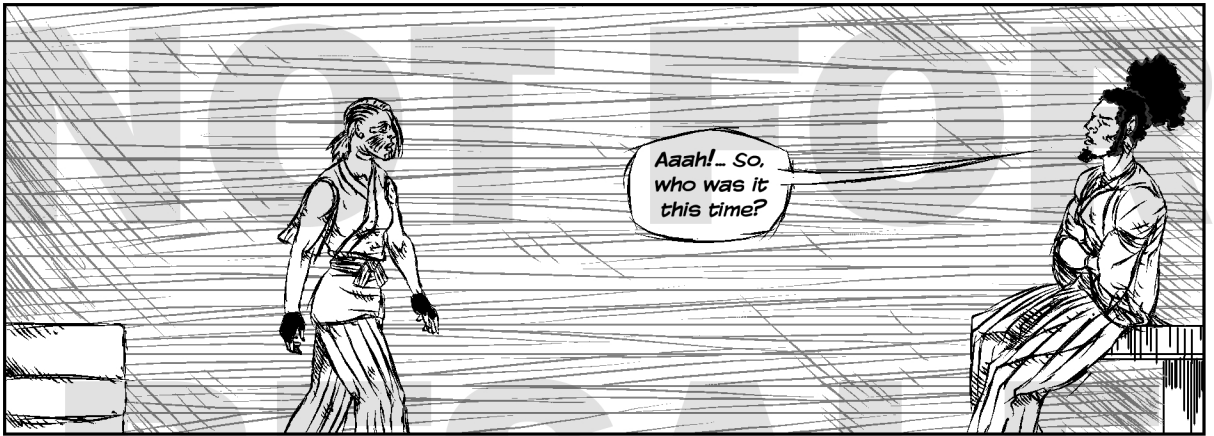
Aye, aye, Captain!



sigh

This will be the greatest challenge we have ever faced... Are we ready?

Pops...



Aaah!.. So, who was it this time?



Field Instructor Thompson... kinda feel bad about it...



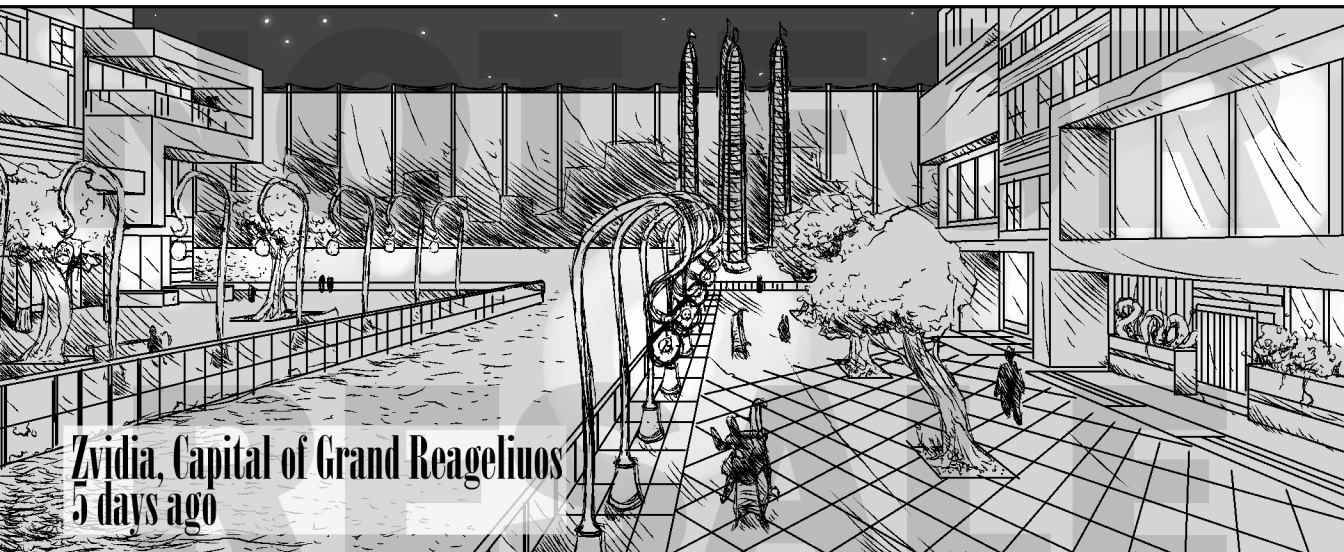
Hehe, you're really giving that one a hard time, eh?



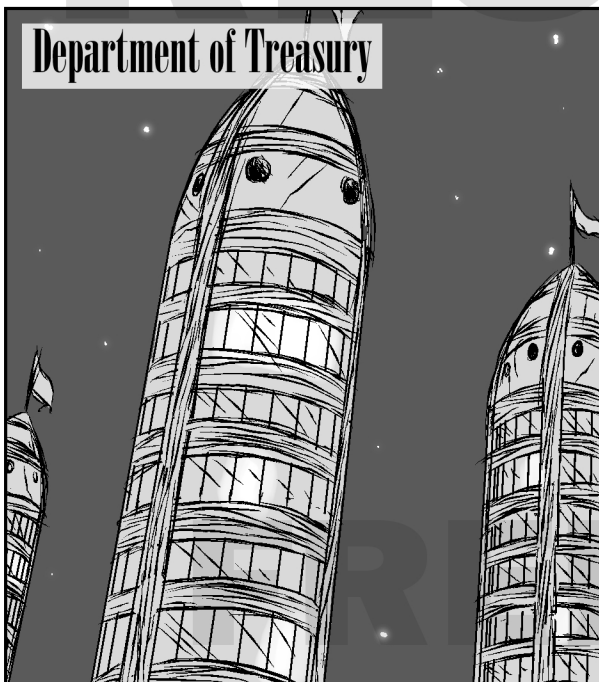
Well, he's the easiest to rouse...

Well, unfortunately, Tombu is starting to question your effectiveness. I'm afraid you're gonna have to dial down with the goofing off. Think you can manage?

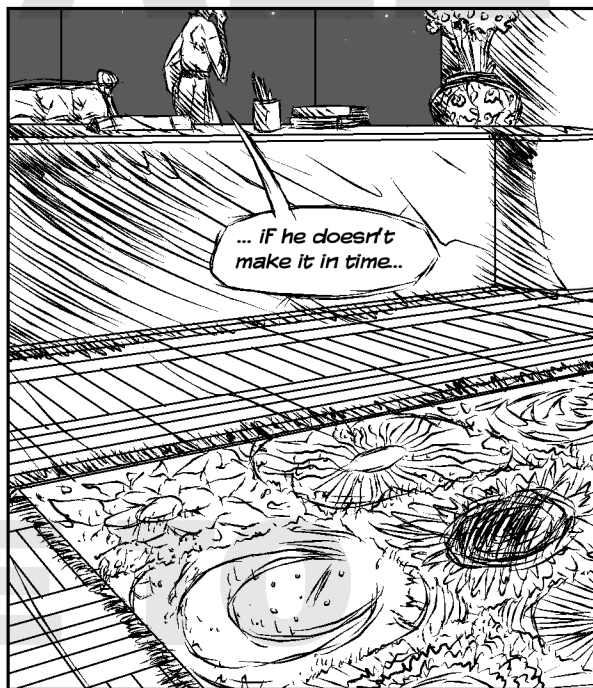




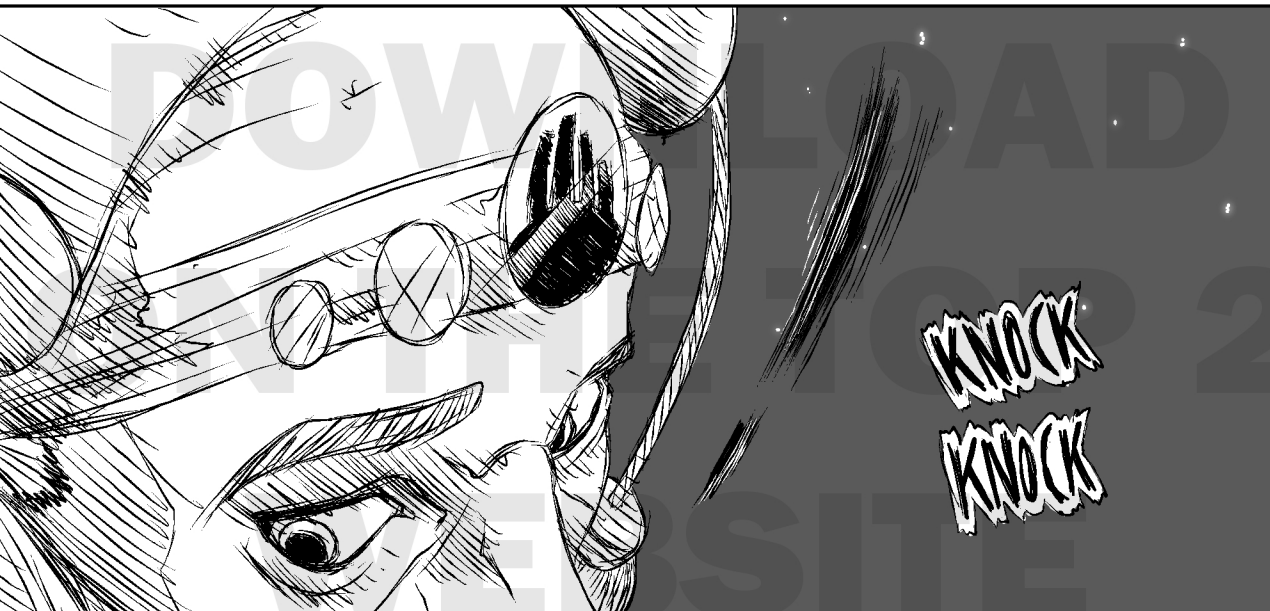
Zvidia, Capital of Grand Reageliuos
5 days ago



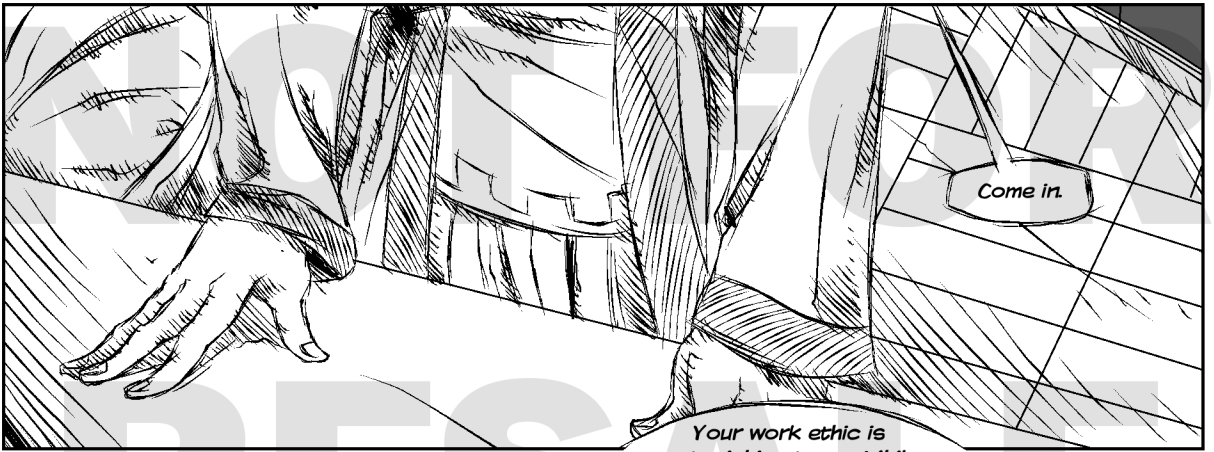
Department of Treasury



... if he doesn't
make it in time...



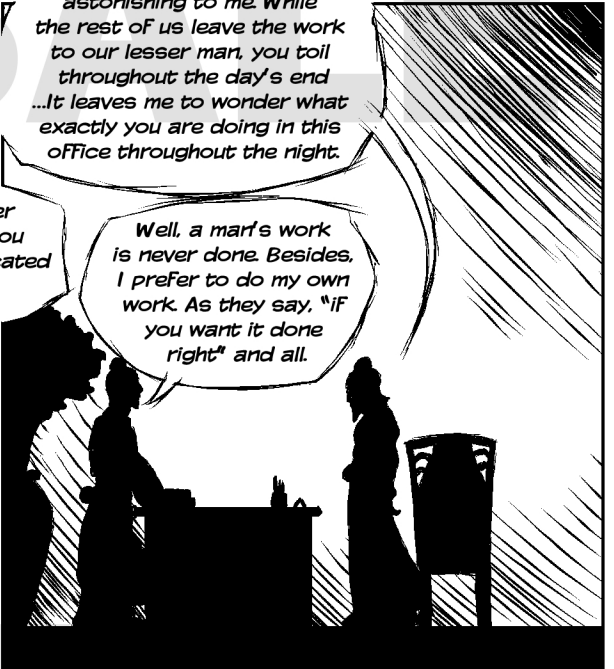
**KNOCK
KNOCK**



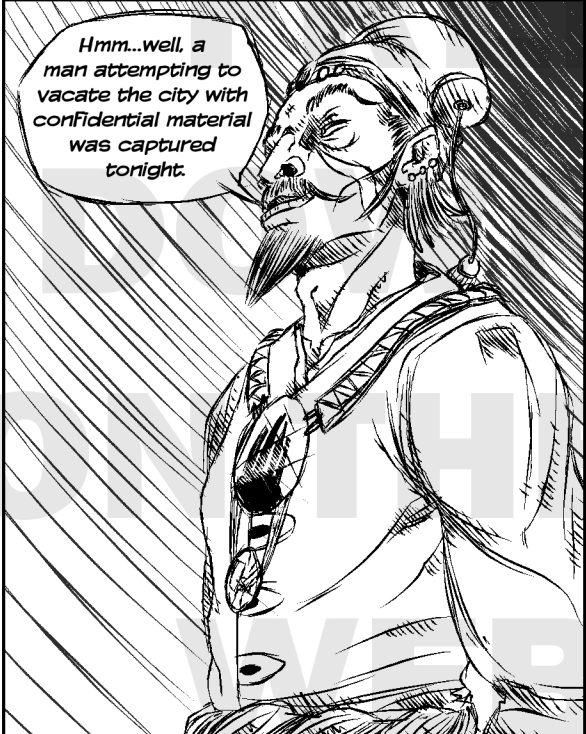
Your work ethic is astonishing to me. While the rest of us leave the work to our lesser man, you toil throughout the day's end...It leaves me to wonder what exactly you are doing in this office throughout the night.



Aaaaah, Minister Joseph, I see you are ever so dedicated as always.



Well, a man's work is never done. Besides, I prefer to do my own work. As they say, "if you want it done right" and all.



Hmm...well, a man attempting to vacate the city with confidential material was captured tonight.



NO!

Haha! You see!
That expression right
there just confirmed
what we've suspected for
quite some time. Sure, it
took a little longer than
was satisfactory, but
the pieces are finally
in place.



What is this!
What exactly are you
accusing me--



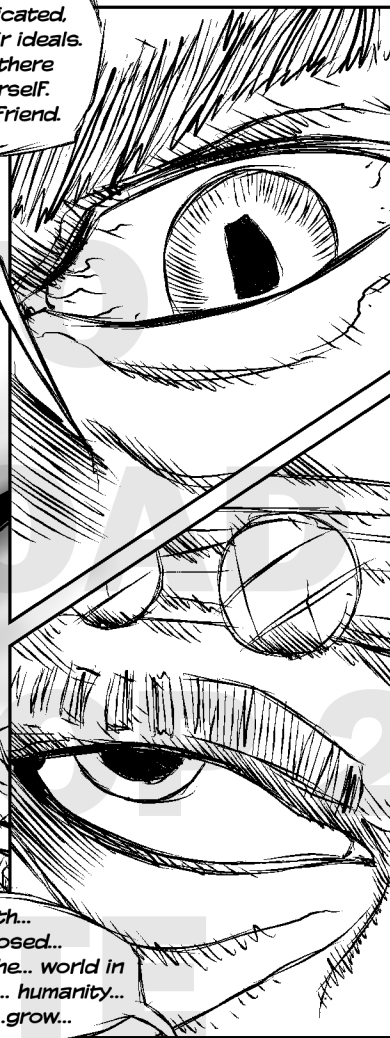
Huckhh!!



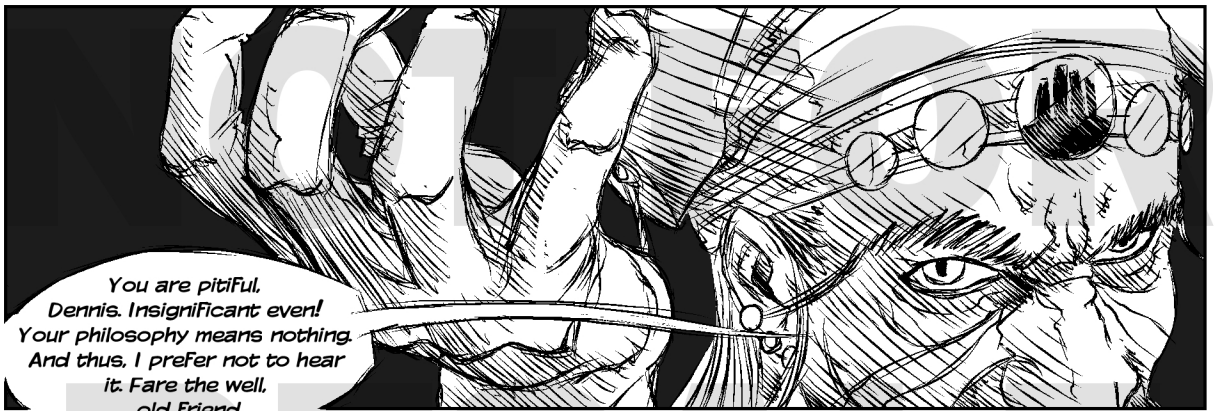
COUGH!

Those with such incredible
nerve as to call themselves the
Swords of Truth. There is no need
to worry. They will all be eradicated,
along with all who support their ideals.
Oh, and by the way, Dennis, there
was no need to defend yourself.
You were already guilty, my friend.

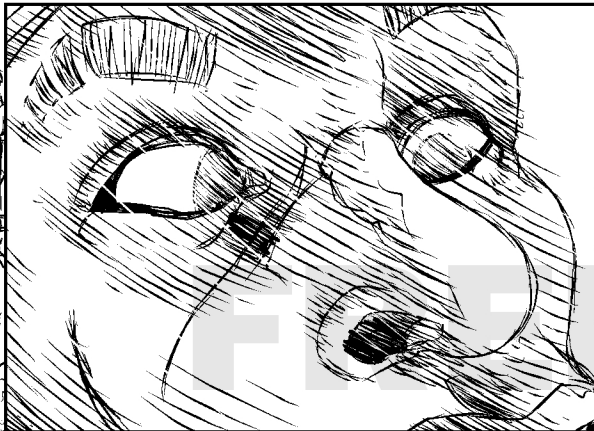
You disappoint me,
Dennis! I'm afraid you have
taken our gift lightly. I admire
your dedication to truth, but
unfortunately, you fail to realize
that truth is only gifted to the
powerful, the strong, the passionate
idealists, the builders of the new
world. And you have squandered
this truth, spreading it to
those not worthy.



...truth...
is supposed...
to benefit... the... world in
its... entirety... humanity...
cannot... grow...

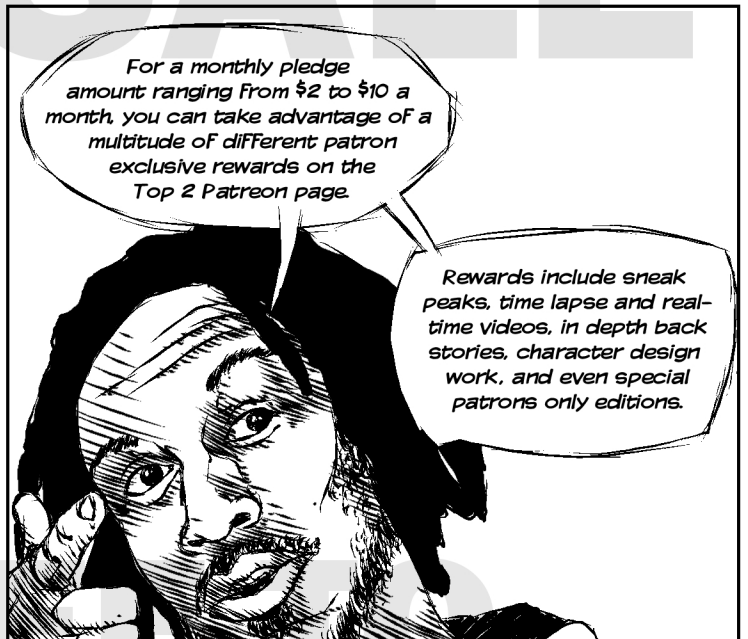
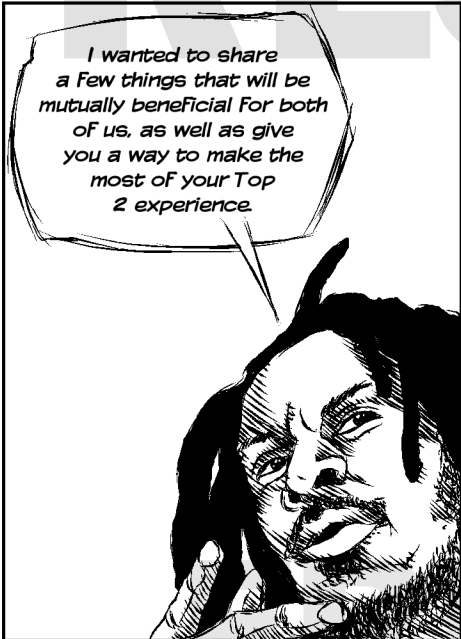
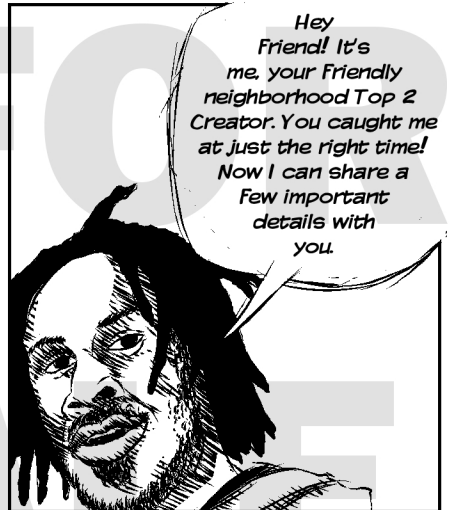
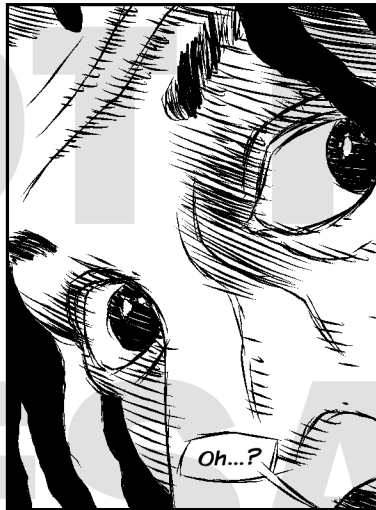


*You are pitiful,
Dennis. Insignificant even!
Your philosophy means nothing
And thus, I prefer not to hear
it. Fare the well,
old friend.*



*Have someone
clean this mess up,
won't you Guise?*

*With great
haste, sir.*



**TO BE CONTINUED...
NEXT ISSUE**

**BY FIRES
LIGHT**

CARDELL S COLE II



FOLLOW @ WWW.TOP2BYCSC2.COM

A failed attempt has been made on Grand Master Ko's life, which, along with his brother's return, has confirmed the validity of the information he has been given. Now he questions why he wasn't warned of the attempt, and fears for the life of his informant. What will be his next move? And what will he do to prepare his branch for the coming tide?

