



JAMES FLAMESTAR

and the Stargazers

By Tim Irving
& Shane W Smith

JAMES FLAMESTAR AND THE STARGAZERS

THE DYSTOPIAN STARGAZERS UNIVERSE IS SPLIT INTO MANY FACTIONS AND NATIONS. IN THIS WORLD, MUSIC IS REGULATED AND KEPT UNDER FIRM CONTROL BY MANY GOVERNMENTS AND CORPORATIONS, SOME GOING SO FAR AS TO BAN IT ENTIRELY. TO THIS WORLD, THE PASSION AND EMOTION THAT THIS MEDIUM BREEDS IS DANGEROUS. MUSIC CAN CREATE REBELLIONS. IT CAN CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO. IT CAN BE A DRUG THAT CHANGES AN ORDINARY MAN INTO SOMETHING GREATER.

ENTER THE STARGAZERS.

THE STARGAZERS, LED BY JAMES FLAMESTAR, ARE A BAND. A BOHEMIAN GROUP OF REBELS, UNITED BY THEIR LOVE FOR MUSIC AND FORCED TO LIVE A NOMADIC LIFE AS THEY ARE SYSTEMATICALLY PURSUED BY THOSE WHO SEEK TO BRING THEM TO JUSTICE FOR THE REBELLIONS THEY SOW WITH THEIR MUSIC. SO THEY FIGHT. THEY PLAY. THEY MOVE FROM ONE CITY TO ANOTHER, THEIR MUSIC A RALLYING CALL TO THE DOWNTRODDEN AND OPPRESSED.

ON THE RUN FROM THE SILVER EMPIRE, THE STARGAZERS ARRIVE AT A CITY, UNAWARE OF THE LORE AND UNAWARE OF THE PEOPLE WITHIN. TO THEM, THE CITY IS ANOTHER TEMPORARY SAFE HAVEN – SOMEWHERE TO REST AND SOMEWHERE TO RECOVER BEFORE THEY ARE ON THEIR WAY ONCE AGAIN.

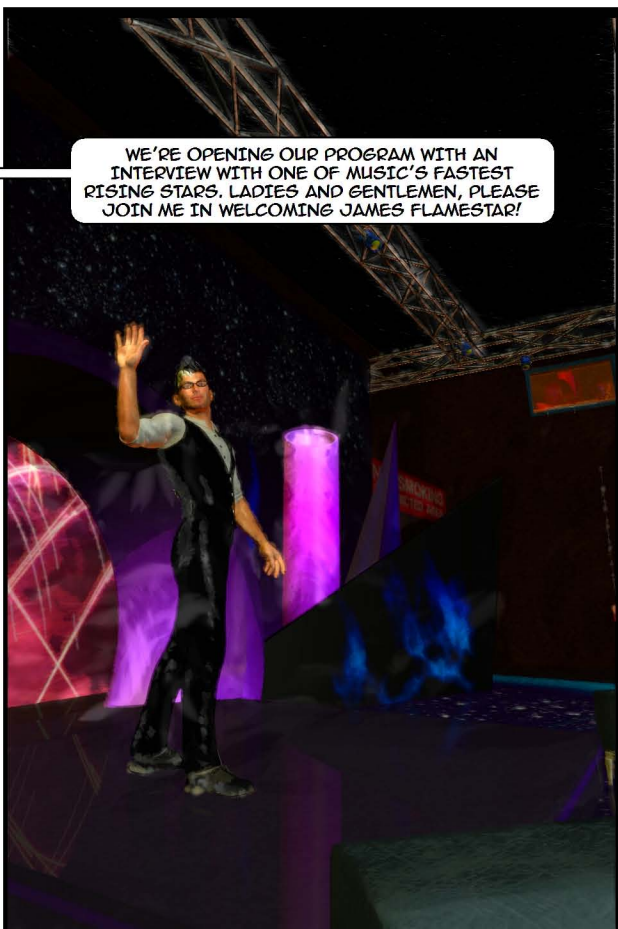
THEY KEEP THEIR WEAPONS CLOSE, AND STEEL THEMSELVES AS THEY ENTER THE GATES...

THE JAMES FLAMESTAR MINISERIES

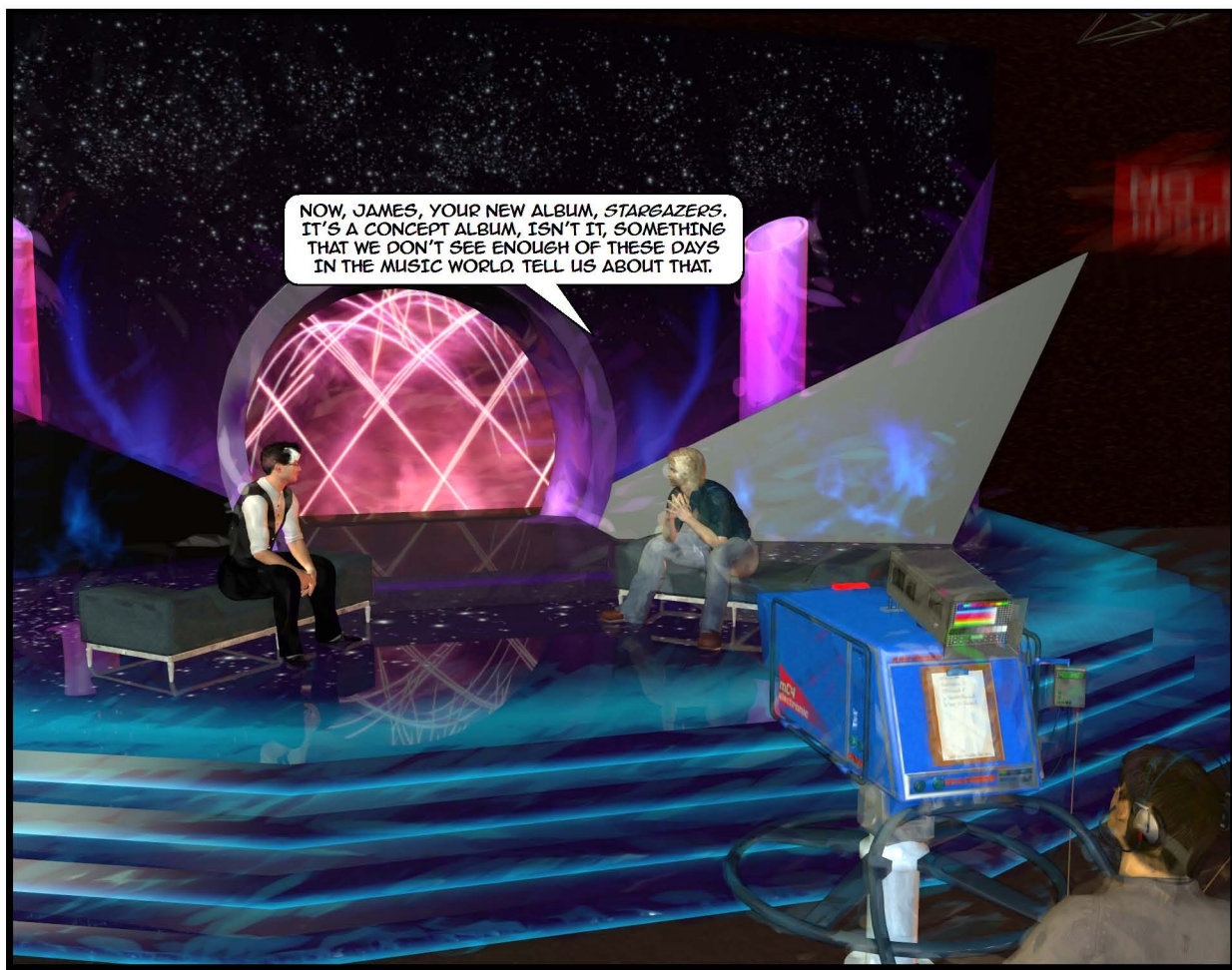
BASED ON A CONCEPT AND STORY BY TIM IRVING
SCRIPT AND ARTWORK BY SHANE W SMITH
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GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO ANOTHER EPISODE OF FUTURE BEATS. I'M YOUR HOST, LARRY LEADFRET, AND TONIGHT, AS ALWAYS, WE'LL BE TAKING A LOOK AT SOME OF THE MORE INTERESTING MUSICAL OFFERINGS OF TODAY.



WE'RE OPENING OUR PROGRAM WITH AN INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF MUSIC'S FASTEST RISING STARS. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE JOIN ME IN WELCOMING JAMES FLAMESTAR!



NOW, JAMES, YOUR NEW ALBUM, *STARSazers*. IT'S A CONCEPT ALBUM, ISN'T IT, SOMETHING THAT WE DON'T SEE ENOUGH OF THESE DAYS IN THE MUSIC WORLD. TELL US ABOUT THAT.

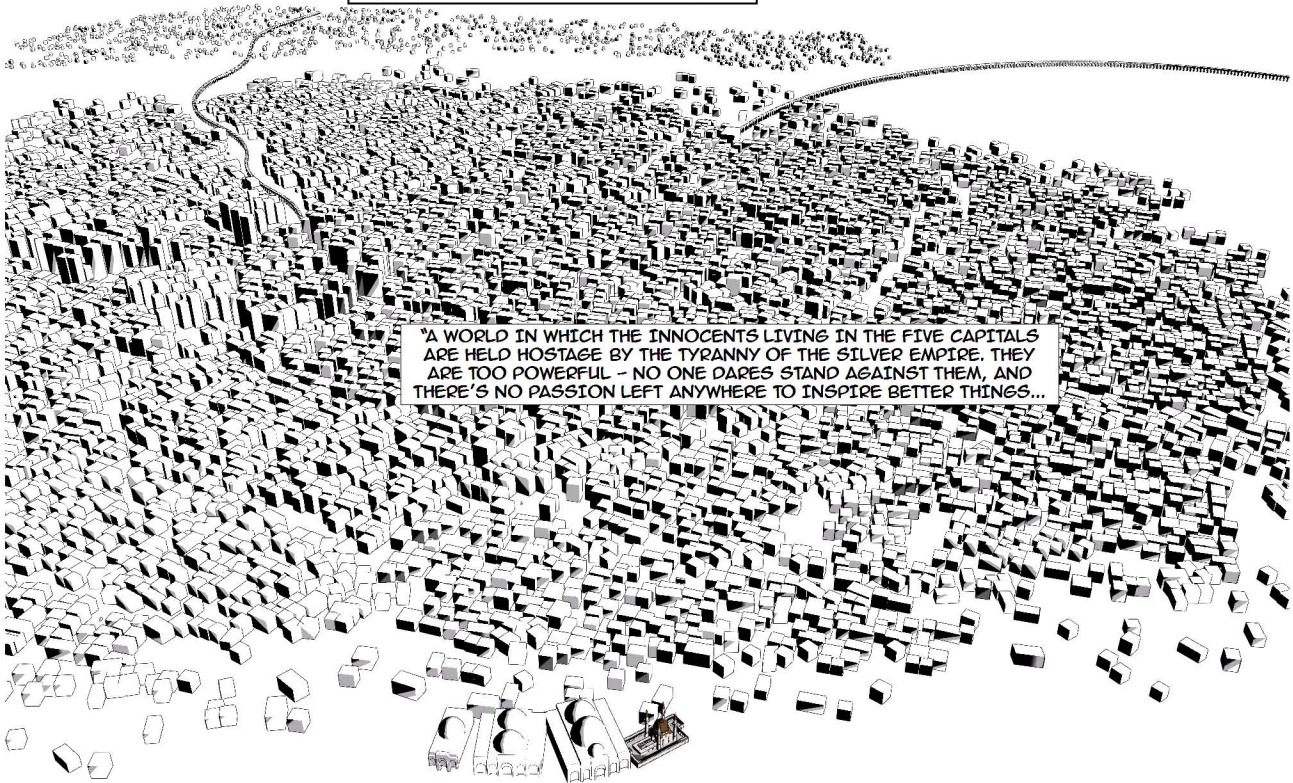


WELL, AS YOU KNOW, MOST OF MY WORK UNTIL NOW HAS BEEN ON SOUNDTRACKS. I WORK BEST WHEN I HAVE A STORY TO TELL WITH MY MUSIC.



WORKING IN SOMEONE ELSE'S WORLD IS ALWAYS REWARDING, BUT FINALLY, FINALLY, I HAVE MY OWN STORY TO TELL.

IMAGINE, IF YOU WILL, A WORLD IN WHICH MUSIC IS OUTLAWED, AND MUSICIANS ARE HUNTED AND EXECUTED...



"A WORLD IN WHICH THE INNOCENTS LIVING IN THE FIVE CAPITALS ARE HELD HOSTAGE BY THE TYRANNY OF THE SILVER EMPIRE. THEY ARE TOO POWERFUL - NO ONE DARES STAND AGAINST THEM, AND THERE'S NO PASSION LEFT ANYWHERE TO INSPIRE BETTER THINGS..."

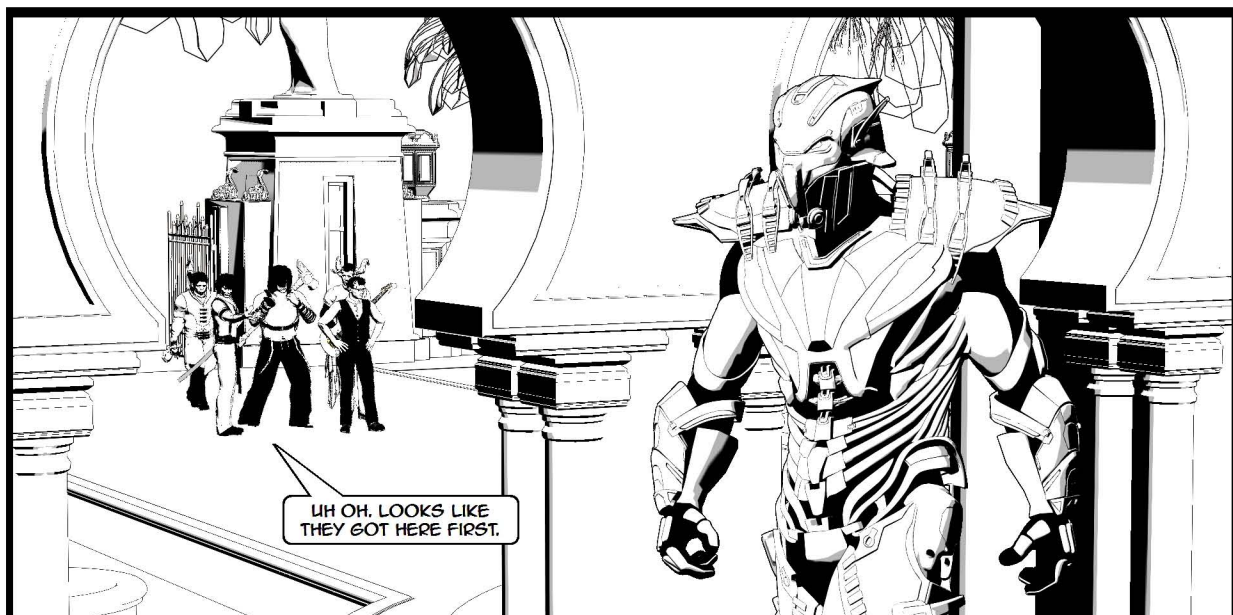
JAMES FLAMESTAR

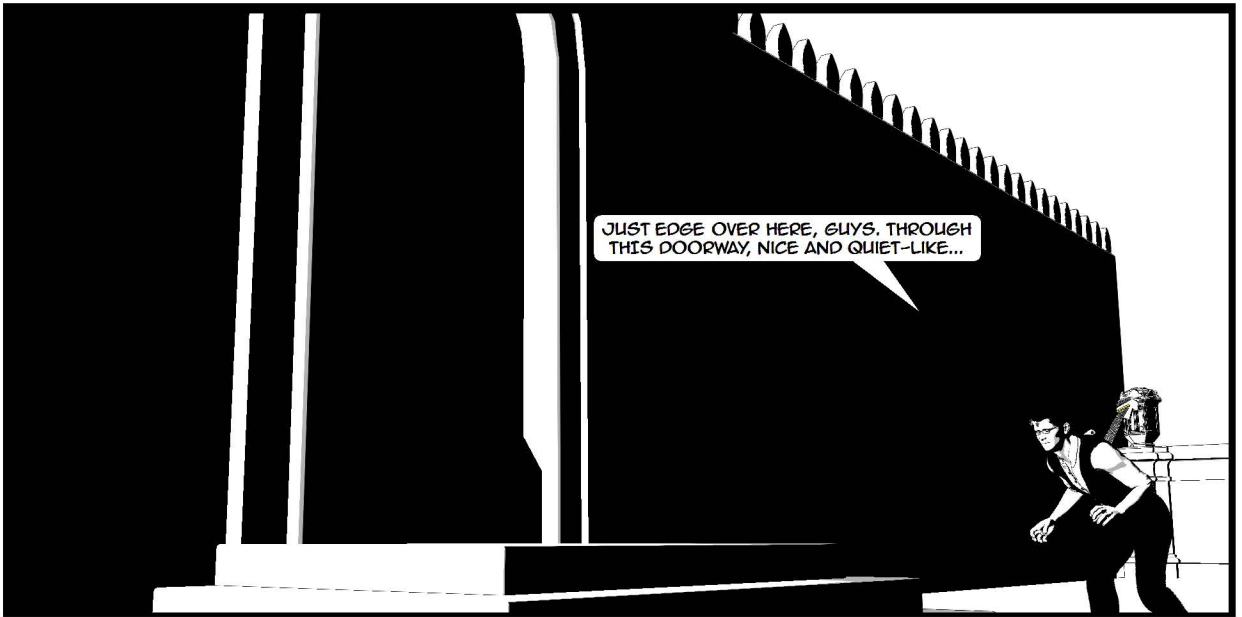
and the Stargazers



STORY BY TIM IRVING
SCRIPT AND ARTWORK BY SHANE W SMITH









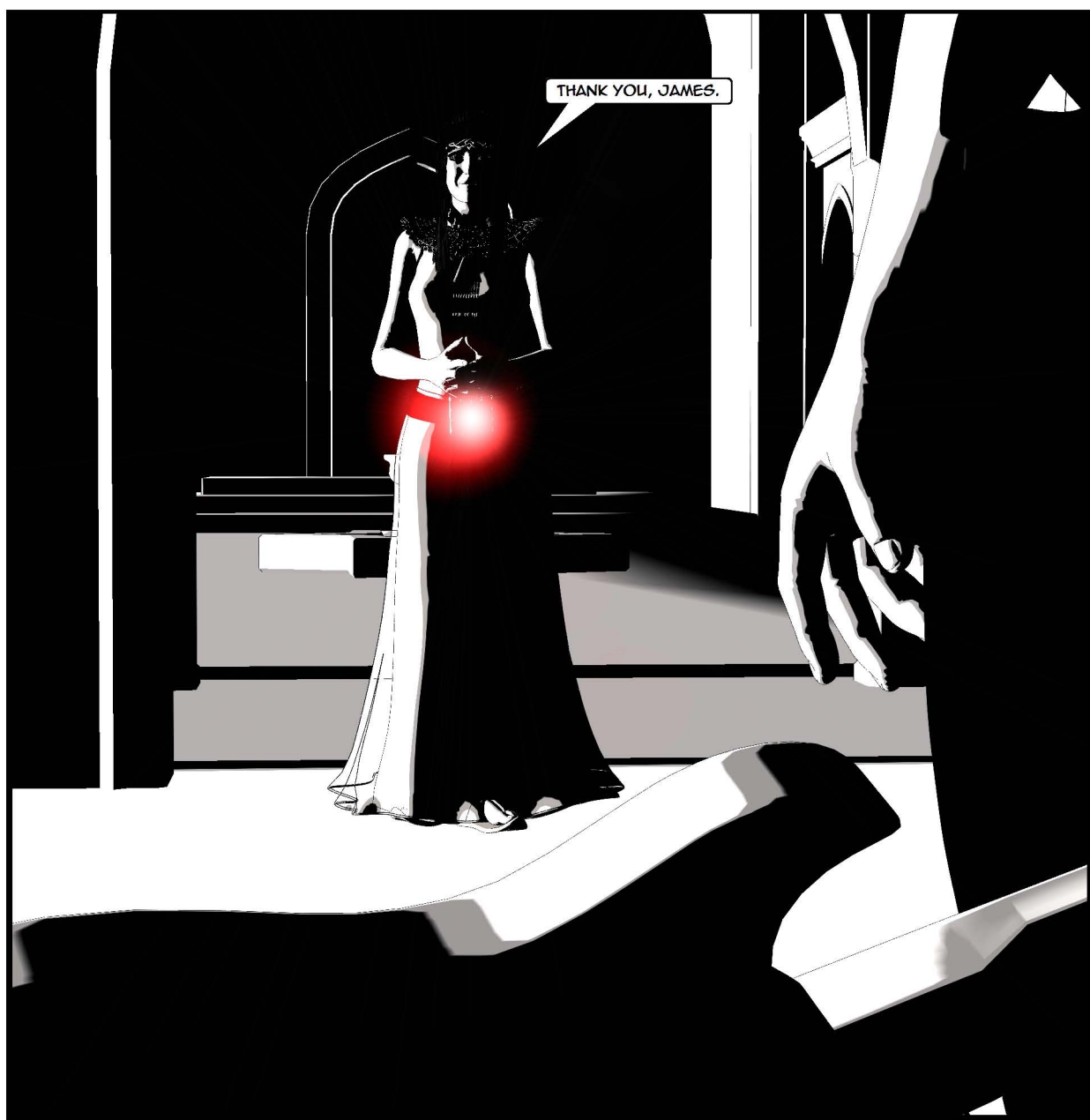


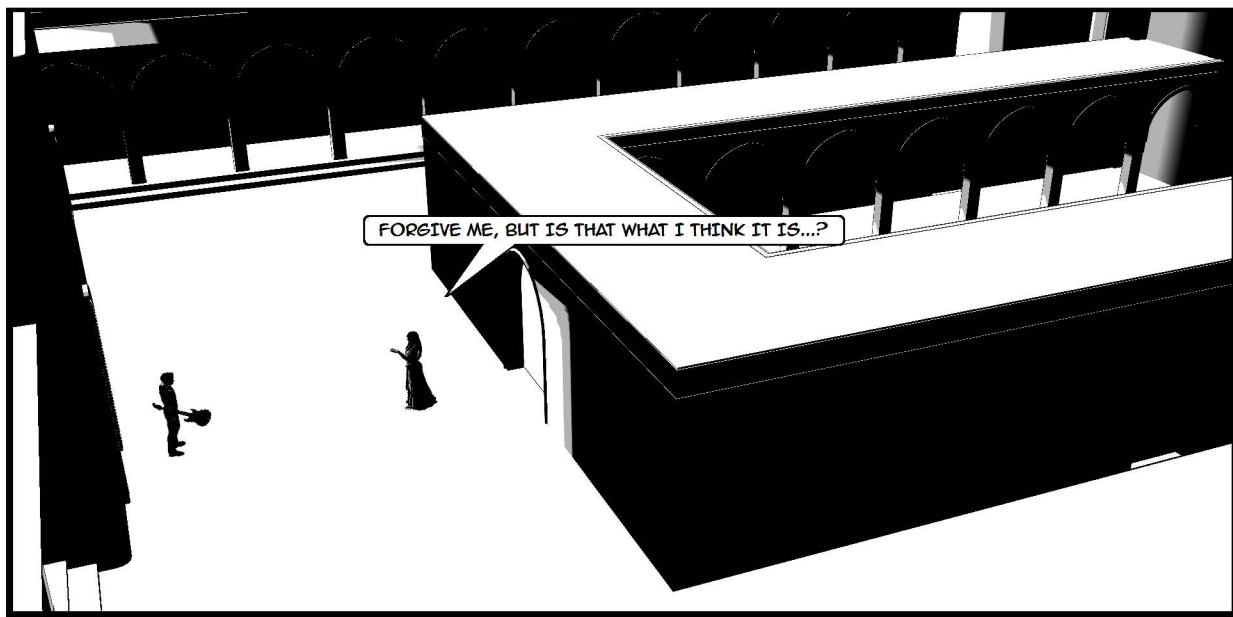
DON'T WORRY...

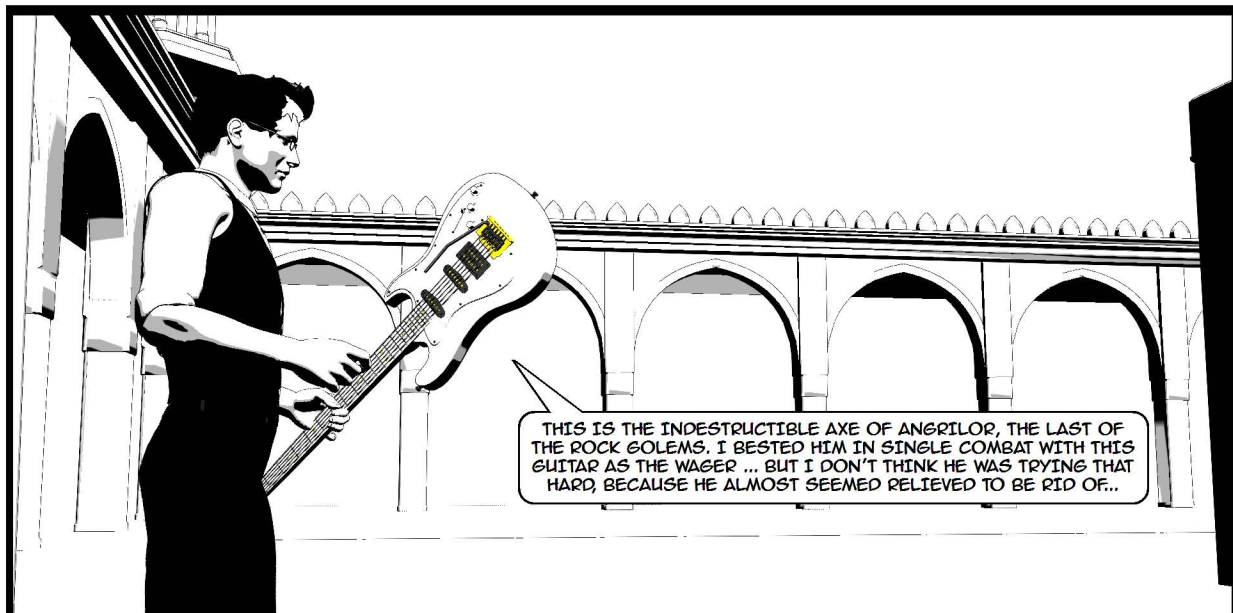


OH, REALLY? AND JUST WHO ARE Y...







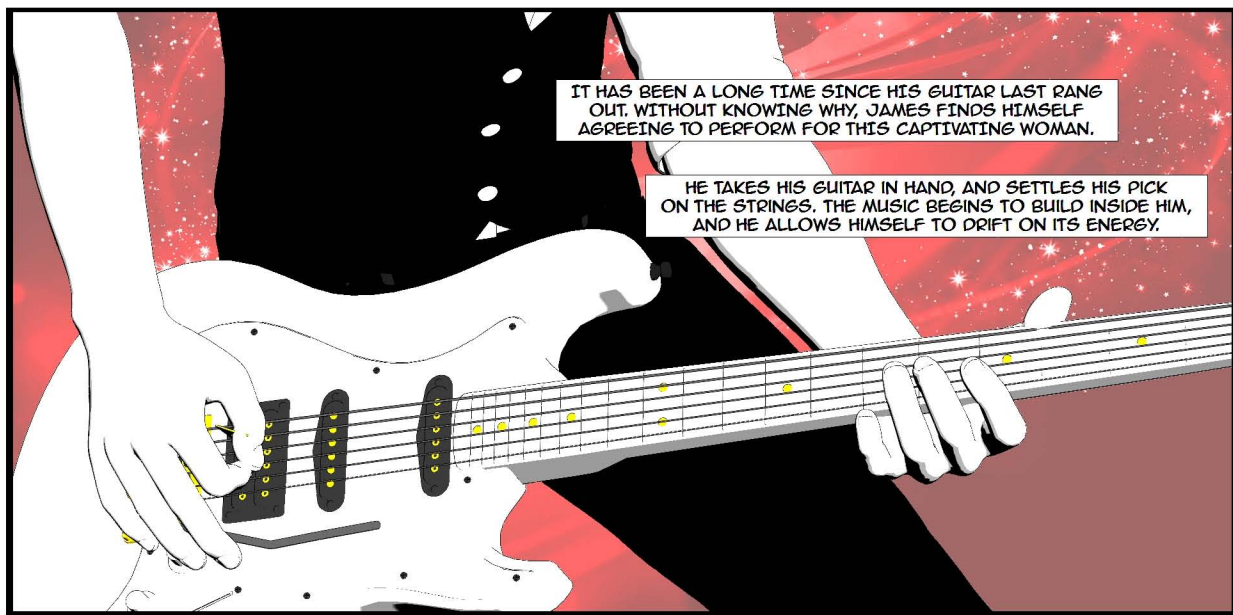


THIS IS THE INDESTRUCTIBLE AXE OF ANGRILOR, THE LAST OF THE ROCK GOLEMS. I BESTED HIM IN SINGLE COMBAT WITH THIS GUITAR AS THE WAGER ... BUT I DON'T THINK HE WAS TRYING THAT HARD, BECAUSE HE ALMOST SEEMED RELIEVED TO BE RID OF...



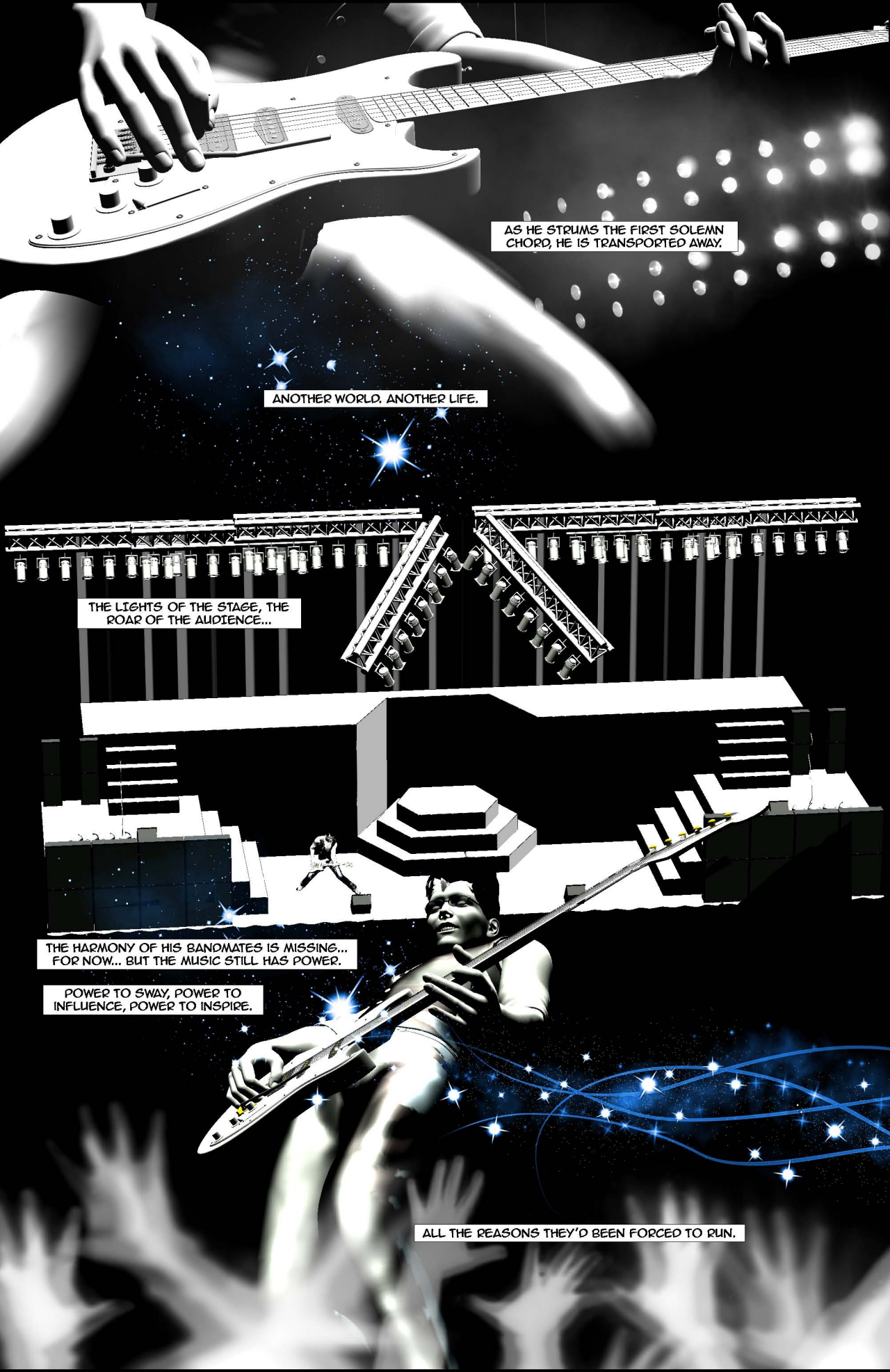
I... JUST MEANT, IS THAT A GUITAR? I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE SO CLOSE BEFORE.

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I HEARD MUSIC, OF ANY KIND. PLEASE, JAMES, WILL YOU PLAY ME SOMETHING?



IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE HIS GUITAR LAST RANG OUT. WITHOUT KNOWING WHY, JAMES FINDS HIMSELF AGREEING TO PERFORM FOR THIS CAPTIVATING WOMAN.

HE TAKES HIS GUITAR IN HAND, AND SETTLES HIS PICK ON THE STRINGS. THE MUSIC BEGINS TO BUILD INSIDE HIM, AND HE ALLOWS HIMSELF TO DRIFT ON ITS ENERGY.



AS HE STRUMS THE FIRST SOLEMN CHORD, HE IS TRANSPORTED AWAY.

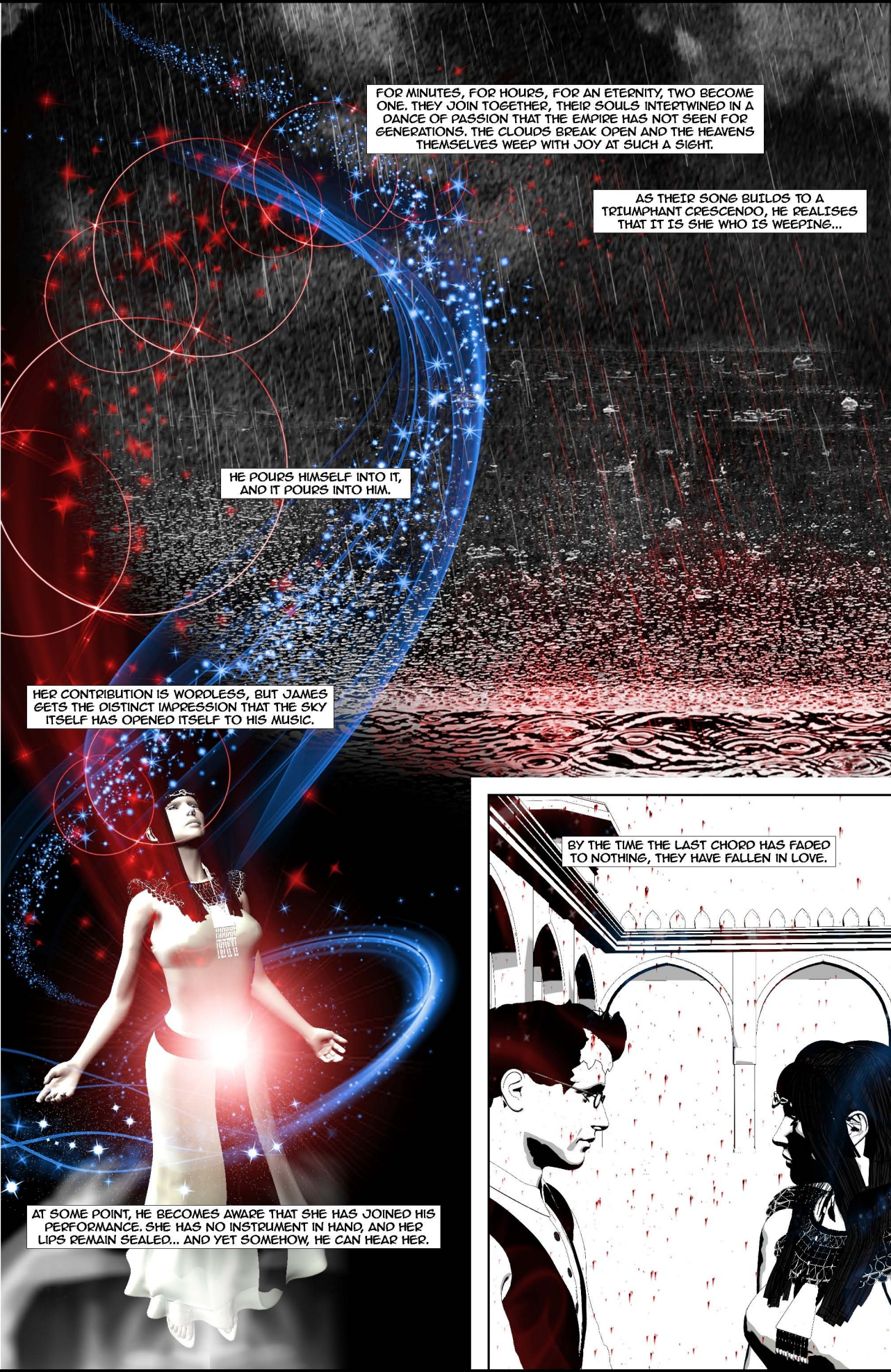
ANOTHER WORLD. ANOTHER LIFE.

THE LIGHTS OF THE STAGE, THE ROAR OF THE AUDIENCE...

THE HARMONY OF HIS BANDMATES IS MISSING... FOR NOW... BUT THE MUSIC STILL HAS POWER.

POWER TO SWAY, POWER TO INFLUENCE, POWER TO INSPIRE.

ALL THE REASONS THEY'D BEEN FORCED TO RUN.



FOR MINUTES, FOR HOURS, FOR AN ETERNITY, TWO BECOME ONE. THEY JOIN TOGETHER, THEIR SOULS INTERTWINED IN A DANCE OF PASSION THAT THE EMPIRE HAS NOT SEEN FOR GENERATIONS. THE CLOUDS BREAK OPEN AND THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES WEEP WITH JOY AT SUCH A SIGHT.

AS THEIR SONG BUILDS TO A TRIUMPHANT CRESCENDO, HE REALISES THAT IT IS SHE WHO IS WEEPING...

HE POURS HIMSELF INTO IT, AND IT POURS INTO HIM.

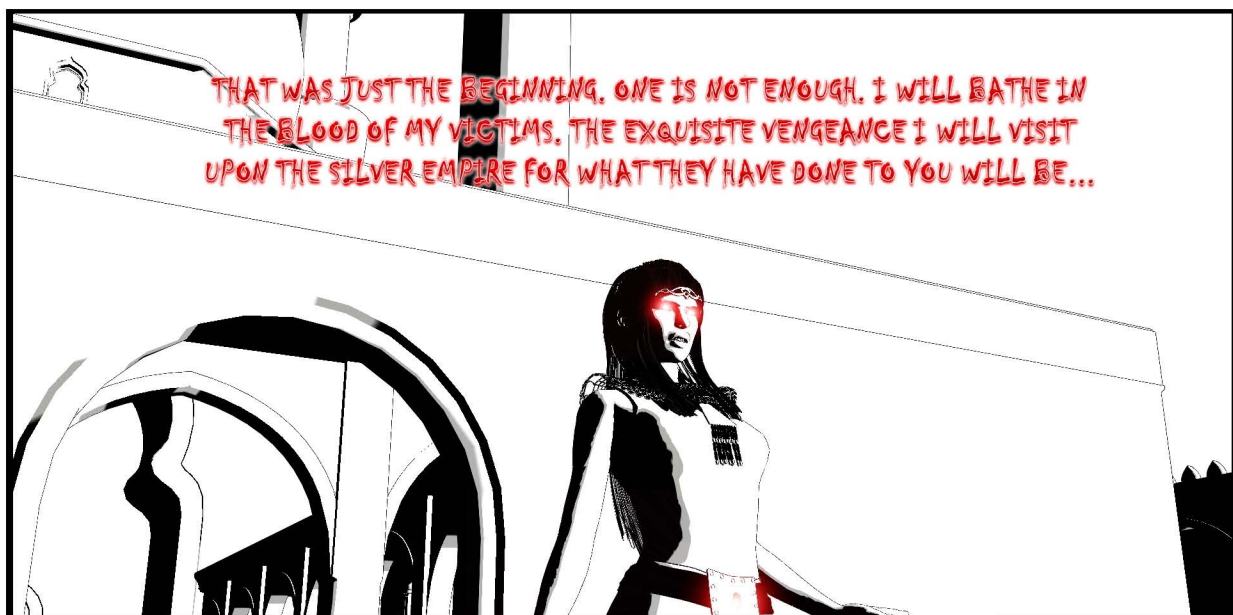
HER CONTRIBUTION IS WORDLESS, BUT JAMES GETS THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT THE SKY ITSELF HAS OPENED ITSELF TO HIS MUSIC.

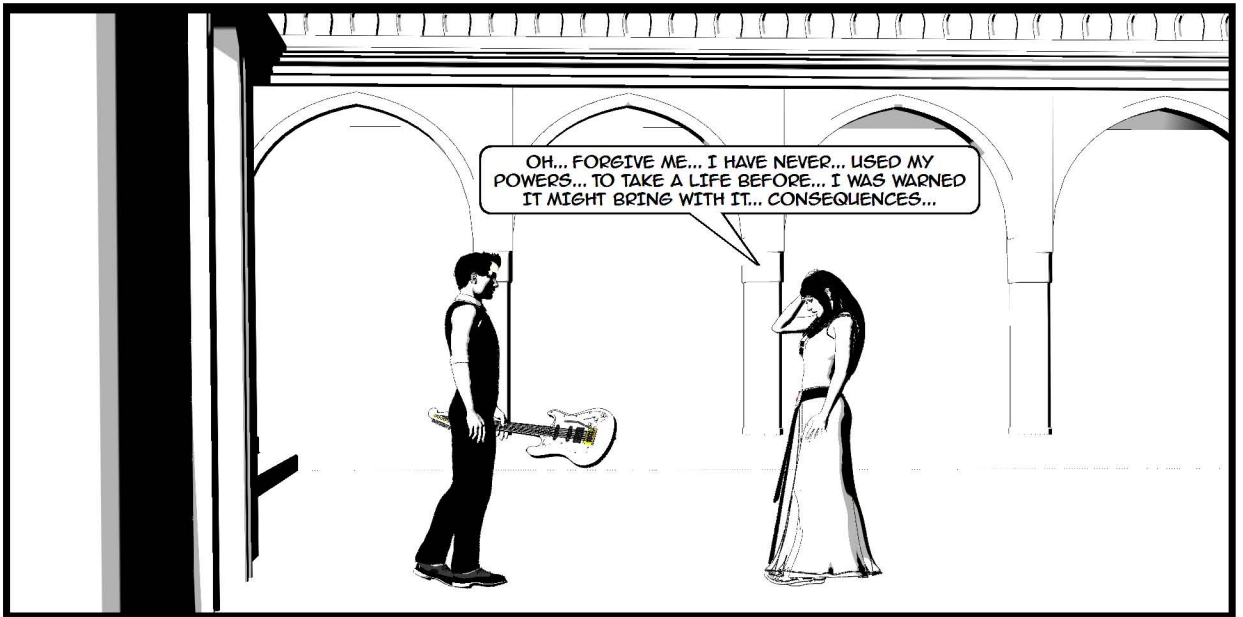
AT SOME POINT, HE BECOMES AWARE THAT SHE HAS JOINED HIS PERFORMANCE. SHE HAS NO INSTRUMENT IN HAND, AND HER LIPS REMAIN SEALED... AND YET SOMEHOW, HE CAN HEAR HER.



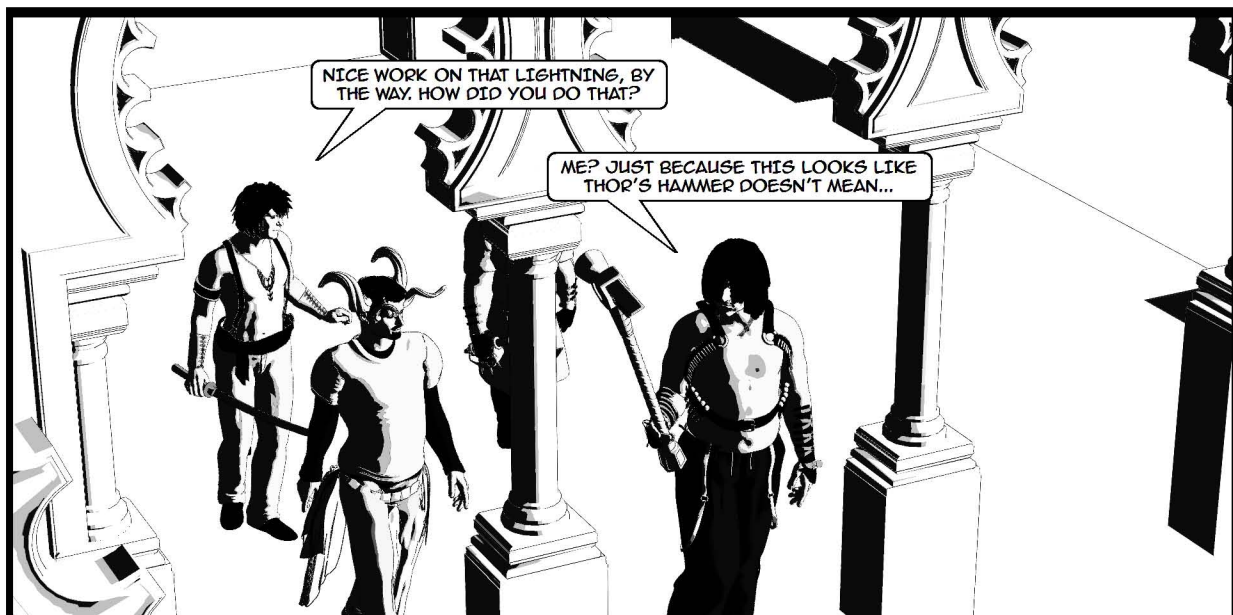
BY THE TIME THE LAST CHORD HAS FADED TO NOTHING, THEY HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE.

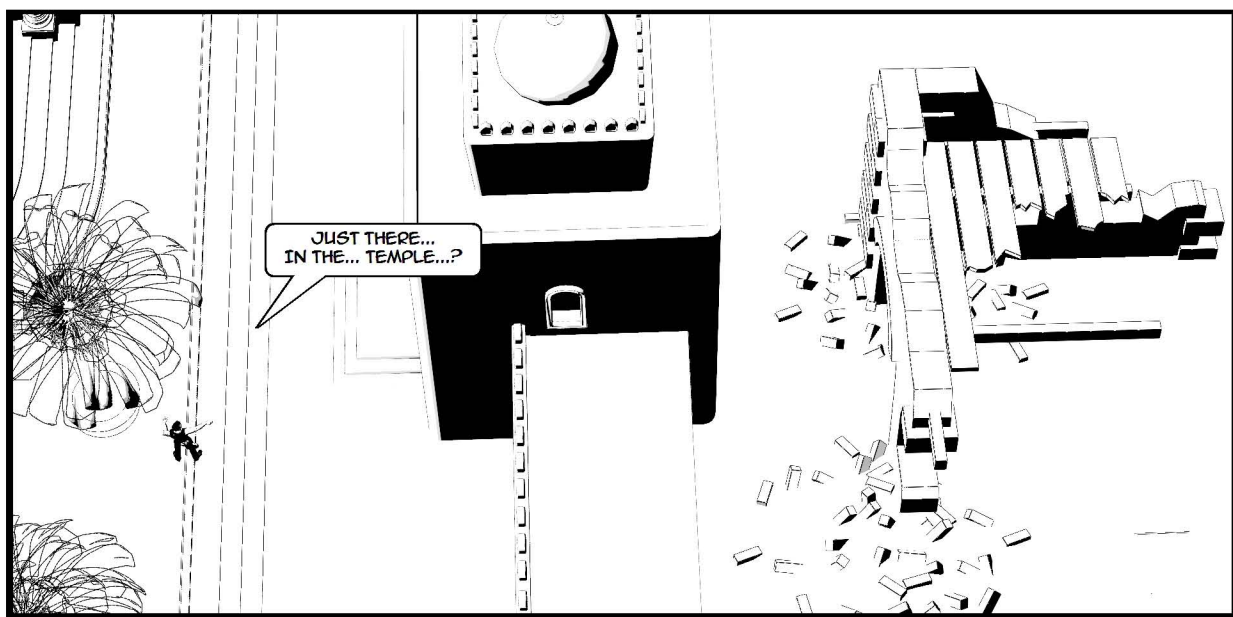


















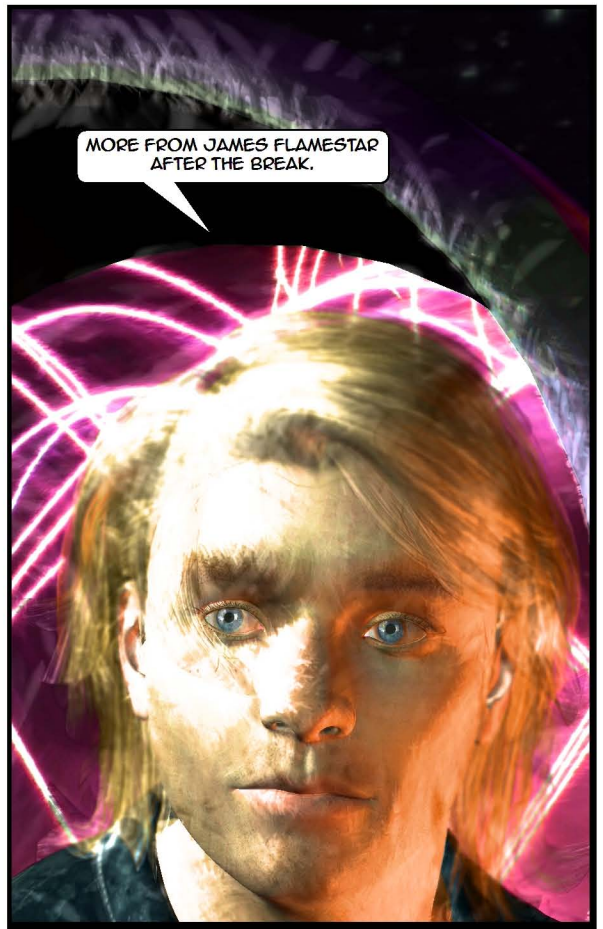
THAT'S NOT THE END OF THE STORY, IS IT, JAMES?

NO - THAT WAS REALLY JUST THE FIRST CHAPTER.

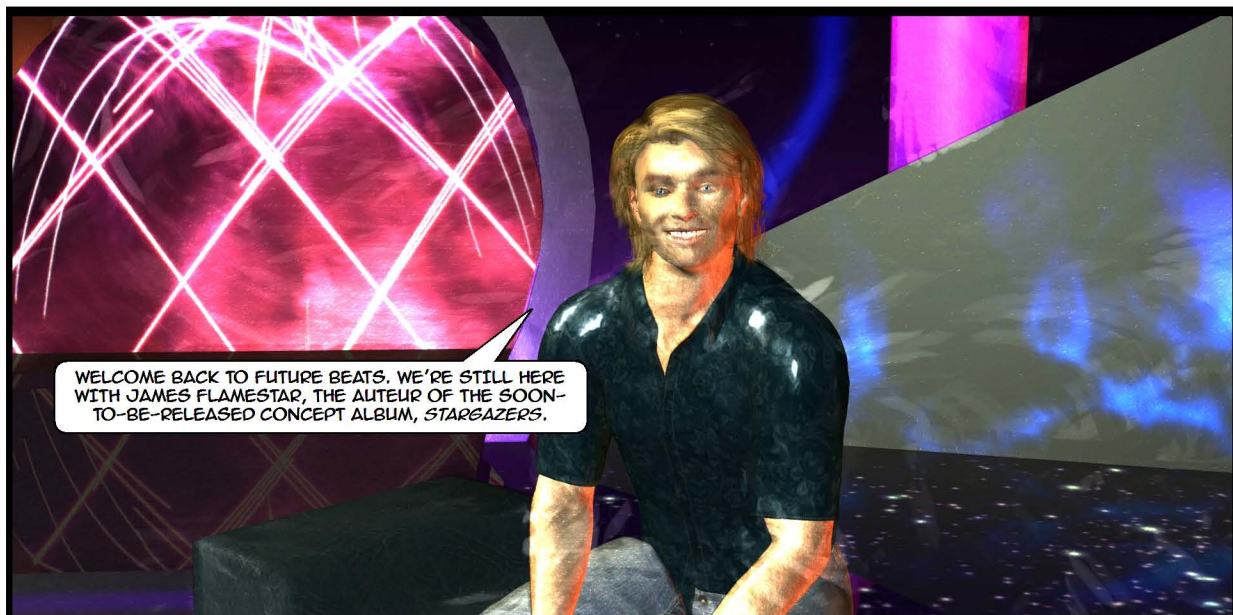
I THOUGHT AS MUCH.



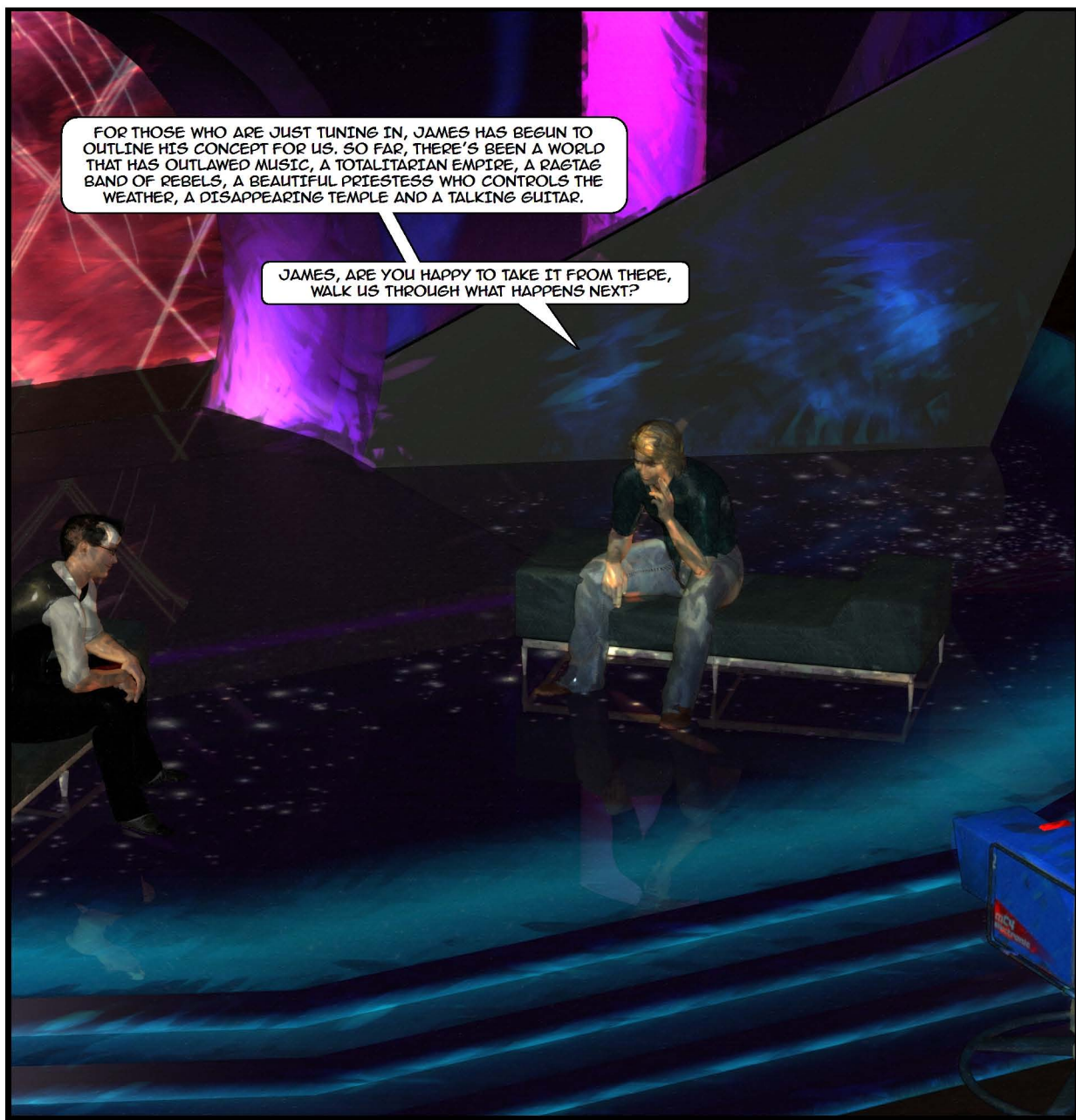
WE'VE GOT BONO WAITING BACKSTAGE, BUT HE CAN KEEP UNTIL NEXT WEEK.



MORE FROM JAMES FLAMESTAR AFTER THE BREAK.



WELCOME BACK TO FUTURE BEATS. WE'RE STILL HERE WITH JAMES FLAMESTAR, THE AUTEUR OF THE SOON-TO-BE-RELEASED CONCEPT ALBUM, *STARGAZERS*.



FOR THOSE WHO ARE JUST TUNING IN, JAMES HAS BEGUN TO OUTLINE HIS CONCEPT FOR US. SO FAR, THERE'S BEEN A WORLD THAT HAS OUTLAWED MUSIC, A TOTALITARIAN EMPIRE, A RASTA BAND OF REBELS, A BEAUTIFUL PRIESTESS WHO CONTROLS THE WEATHER, A DISAPPEARING TEMPLE AND A TALKING GUITAR.

JAMES, ARE YOU HAPPY TO TAKE IT FROM THERE, WALK US THROUGH WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

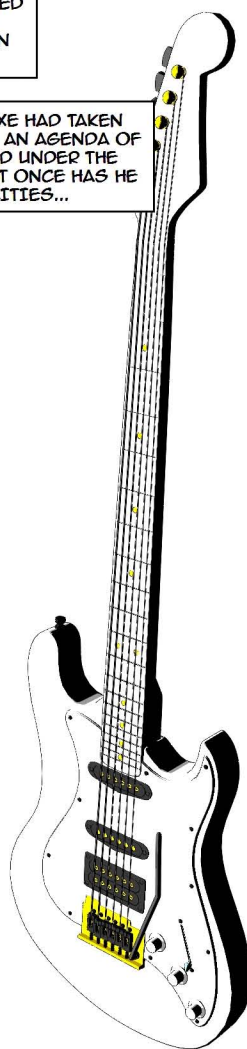
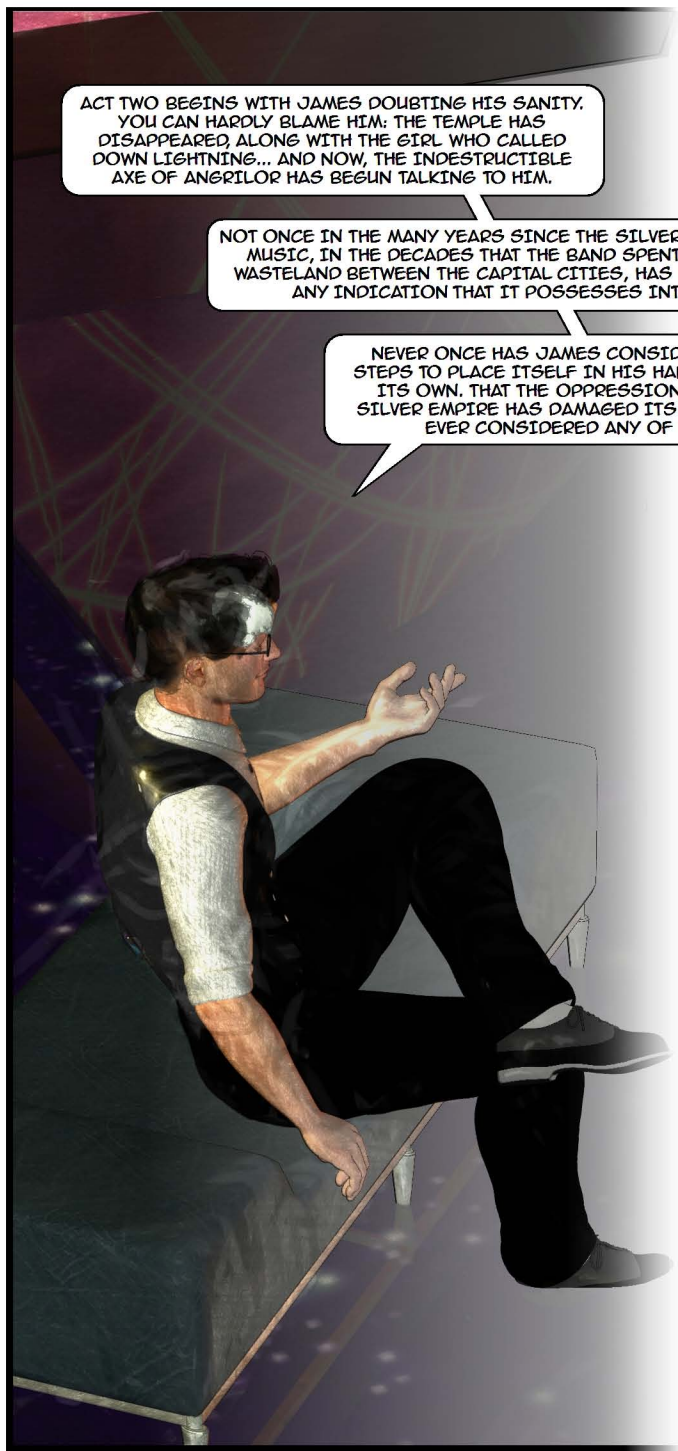


THANKS, LARRY.

ACT TWO BEGINS WITH JAMES DOUBTING HIS SANITY. YOU CAN HARDLY BLAME HIM: THE TEMPLE HAS DISAPPEARED, ALONG WITH THE GIRL WHO CALLED DOWN LIGHTNING... AND NOW, THE INDESTRUCTIBLE AXE OF ANERILOR HAS BEGUN TALKING TO HIM.

NOT ONCE IN THE MANY YEARS SINCE THE SILVER EMPIRE OUTLAWED MUSIC, IN THE DECADES THAT THE BAND SPENT WANDERING THE WASTELAND BETWEEN THE CAPITAL CITIES, HAS THE GUITAR GIVEN ANY INDICATION THAT IT POSSESSES INTELLIGENCE.

NEVER ONCE HAS JAMES CONSIDERED THAT THE AXE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO PLACE ITSELF IN HIS HANDS. THAT IT HAS AN AGENDA OF ITS OWN. THAT THE OPPRESSION IT HAS SUFFERED UNDER THE SILVER EMPIRE HAS DAMAGED ITS OWN SANITY. NOT ONCE HAS HE EVER CONSIDERED ANY OF THESE POSSIBILITIES...



"UNTIL NOW."

JAMES FLAMESTAR

and the indestructible Axe of Angrilor



STORY BY TIM IRVING
SCRIPT AND ARTWORK BY SHANE W SMITH





IN CASE YOU DON'T REMEMBER, YOU SPENT THE LAST FEW DECADES WANDERING THE DESERT. IT WAS PRETTY DAMN BORING. WHAT'S TO TALK ABOUT?



BUT NOW, WE'RE HERE. WHERE WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

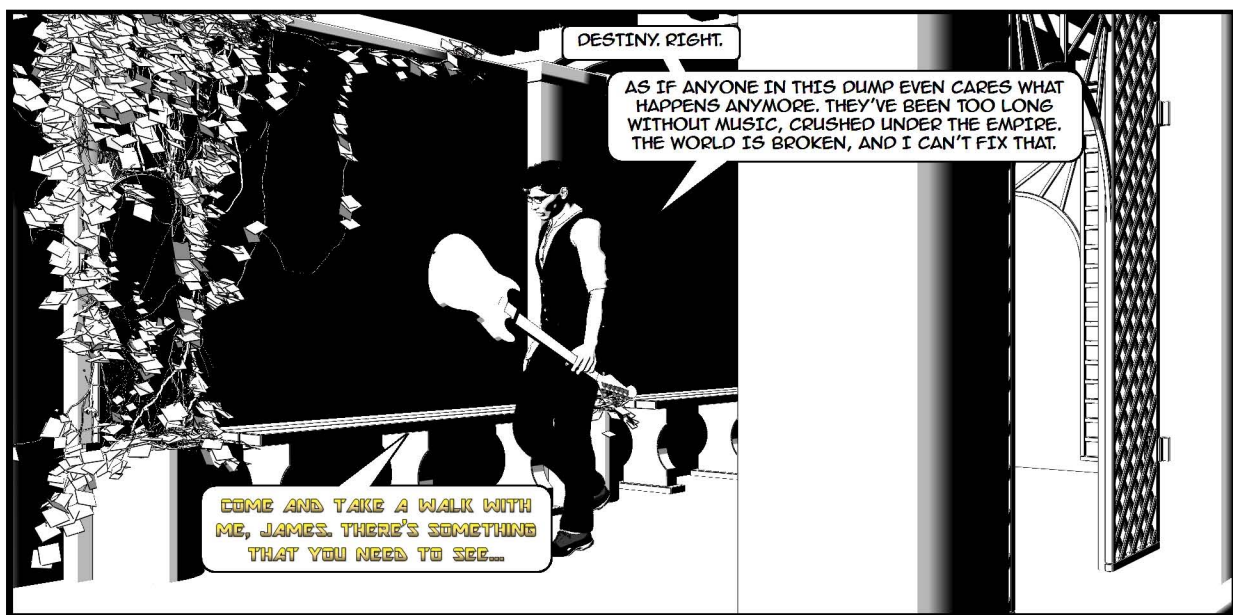
DIFFERENCE TO WHAT?



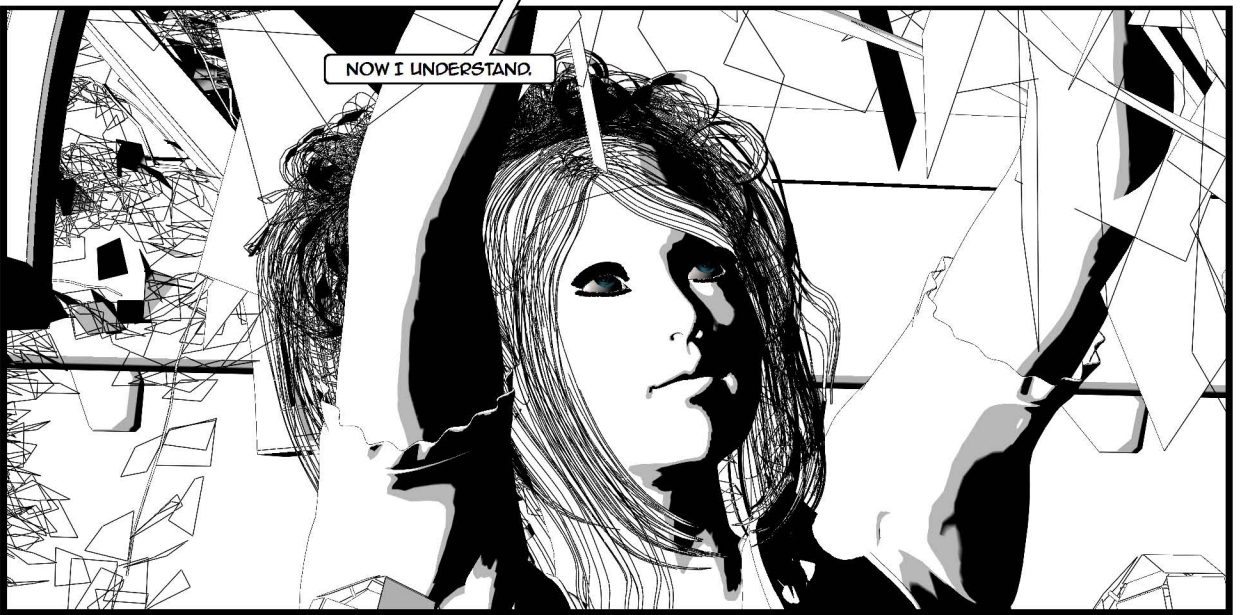
YOU'RE THE ONE. YOU CAN BRING THEM DOWN.

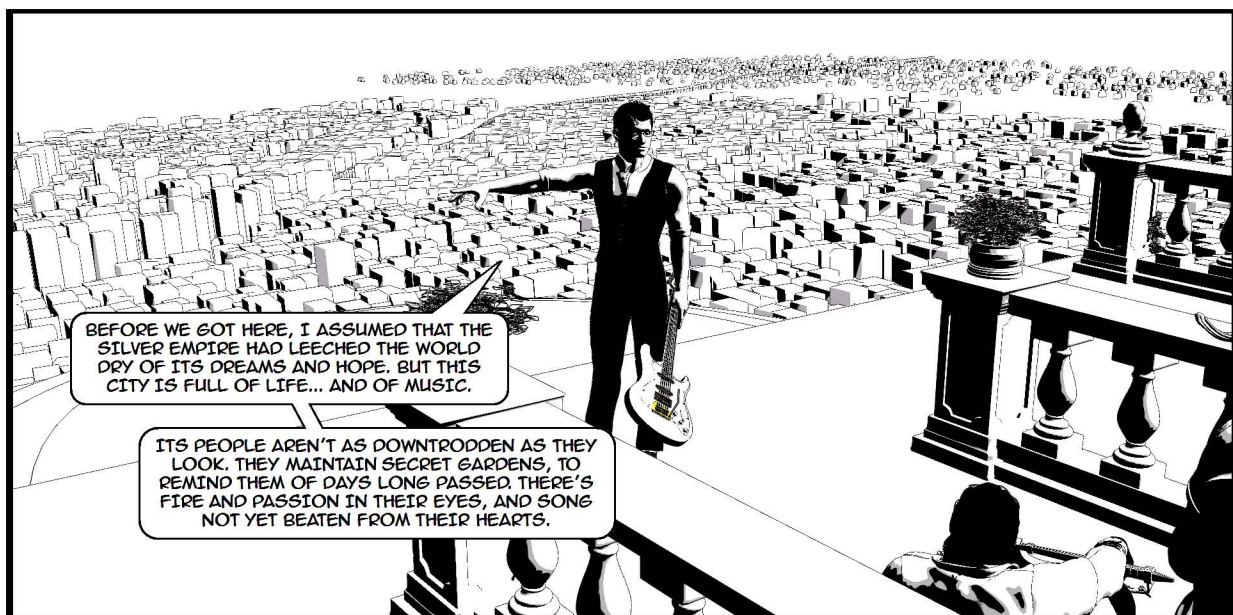
WHO?

YOU KNOW WHO.

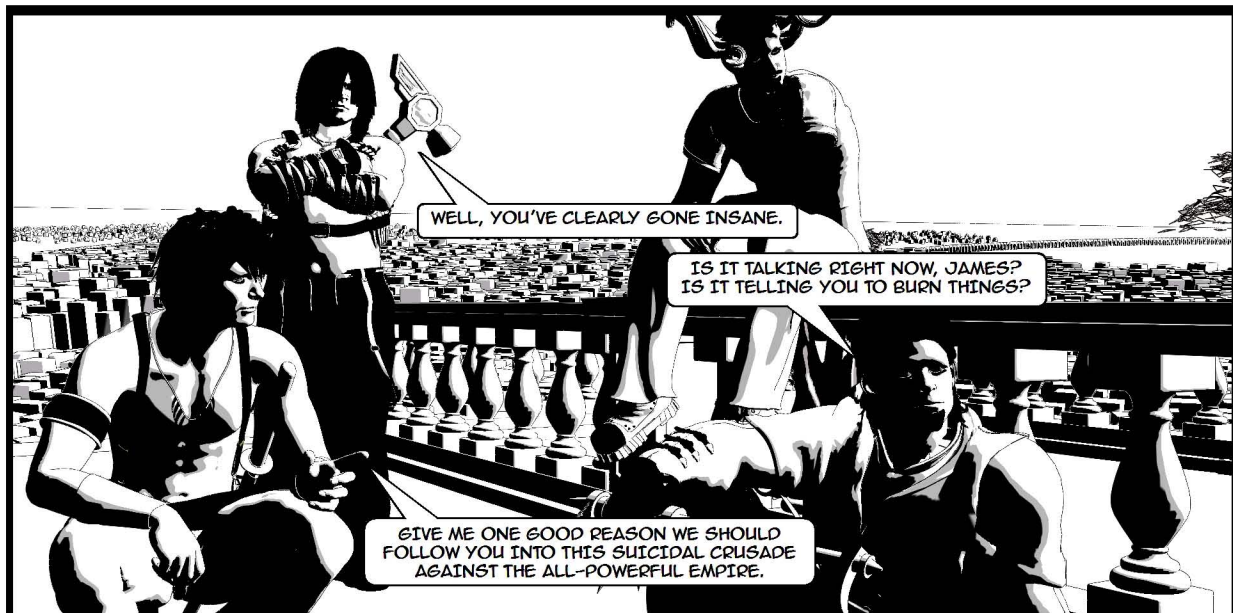










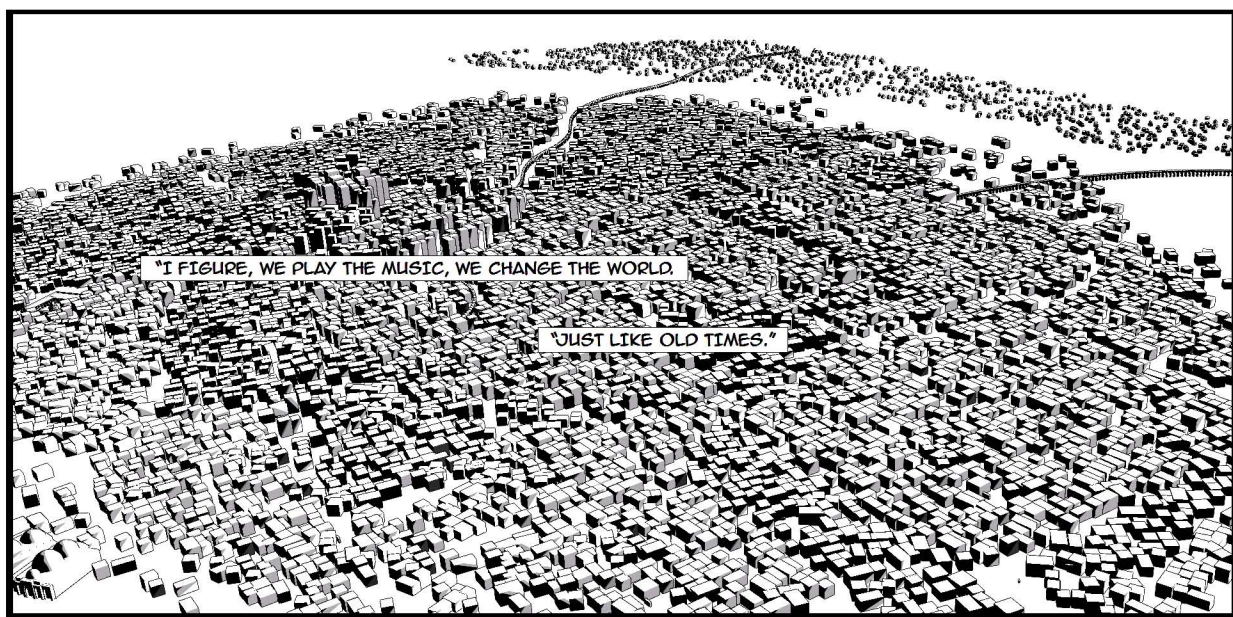




SO WHAT'S YOUR PLAN, JAMES?

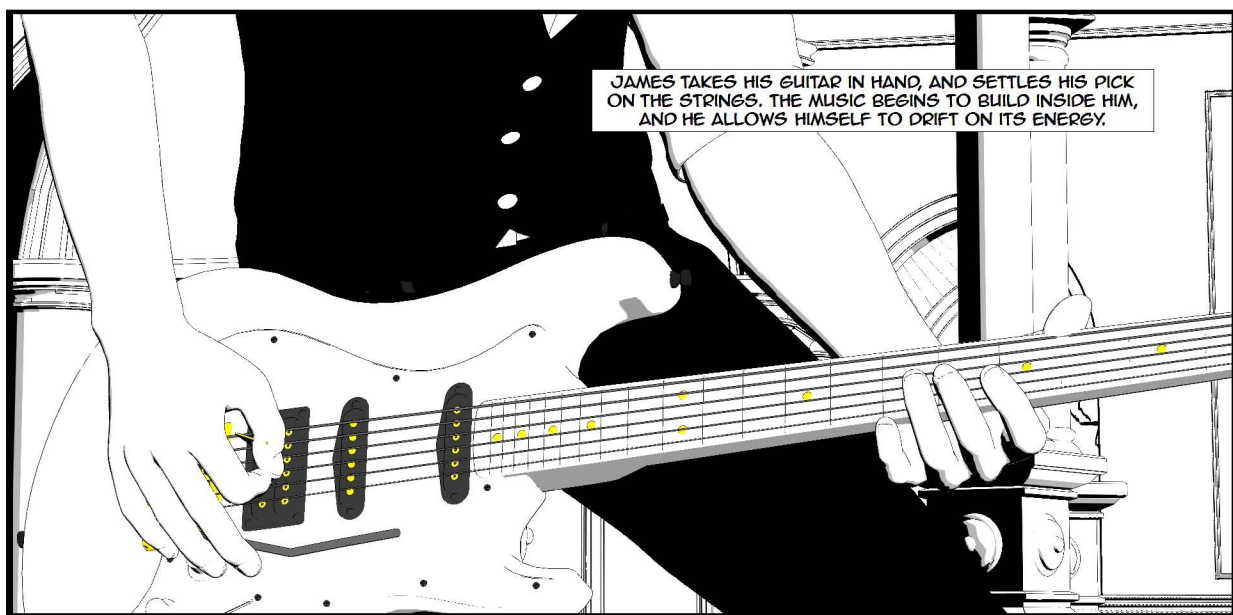


I... HAVEN'T REALLY THOUGHT
ABOUT IT TO BE HONEST.



"I FIGURE, WE PLAY THE MUSIC, WE CHANGE THE WORLD.

"JUST LIKE OLD TIMES."





EVEN THOUGH IT HAS BEEN YEARS SINCE THEY LAST PERFORMED IN PUBLIC TOGETHER, ONCE THE MUSIC BEGINS, IT FEELS LIKE NO TIME HAS PASSED.

PENT-UP PASSIONS POUR INTO THE MUSIC. MEANING BURSTS FORTH FROM EACH AND EVERY NOTE.

THEY ALL FEEL IT. SOMETHING SPECIAL IS HAPPENING.

THE SONG TAKES FORM AS THEY PLAY. IT IS LIKE NOTHING THEY HAVE REHEARSED OR PERFORMED BEFORE.

A SONG OF FRUSTRATION, AND OF HOPE.

THERE ARE NO LYRICS...

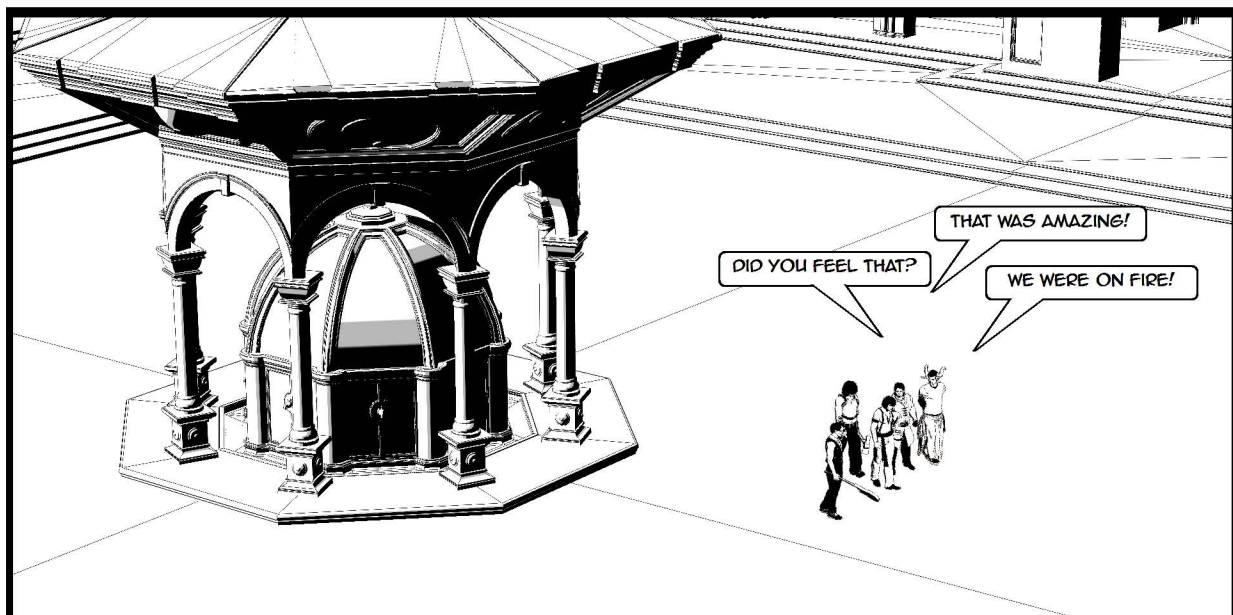
...BUT IT SPEAKS VOLUMES.

BY THE TIME THE LAST CHORD HAS FADED TO NOTHING, THE REVOLUTION HAS BEGUN.

JAMES WATCHES THE LIGHT RETURN TO THE CITY.

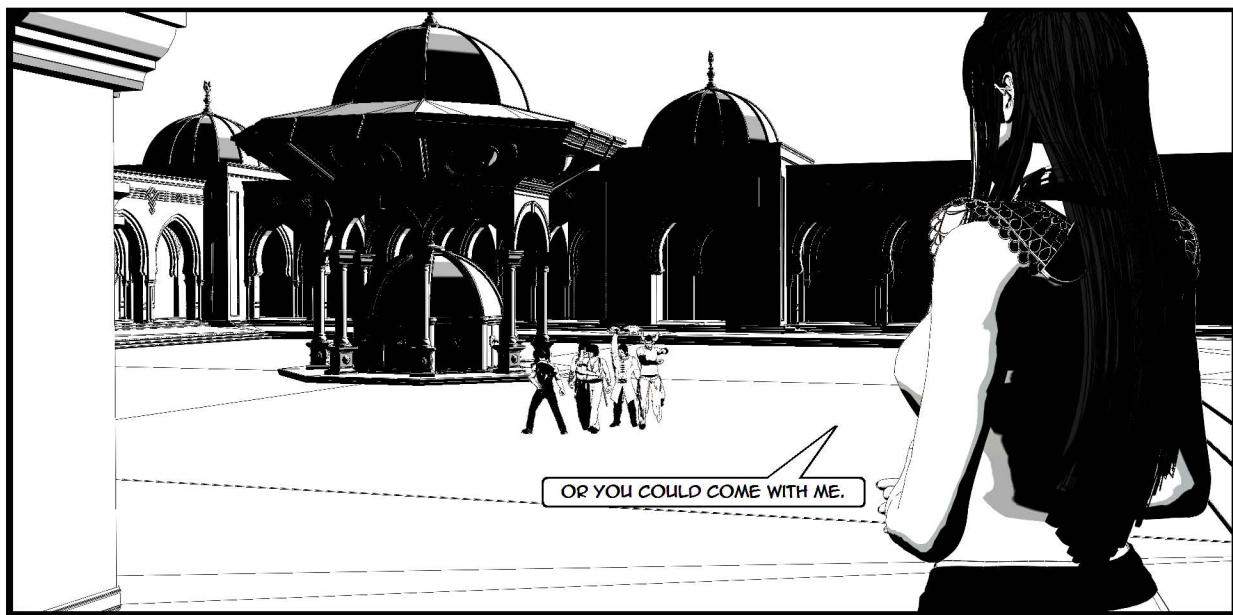
IT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

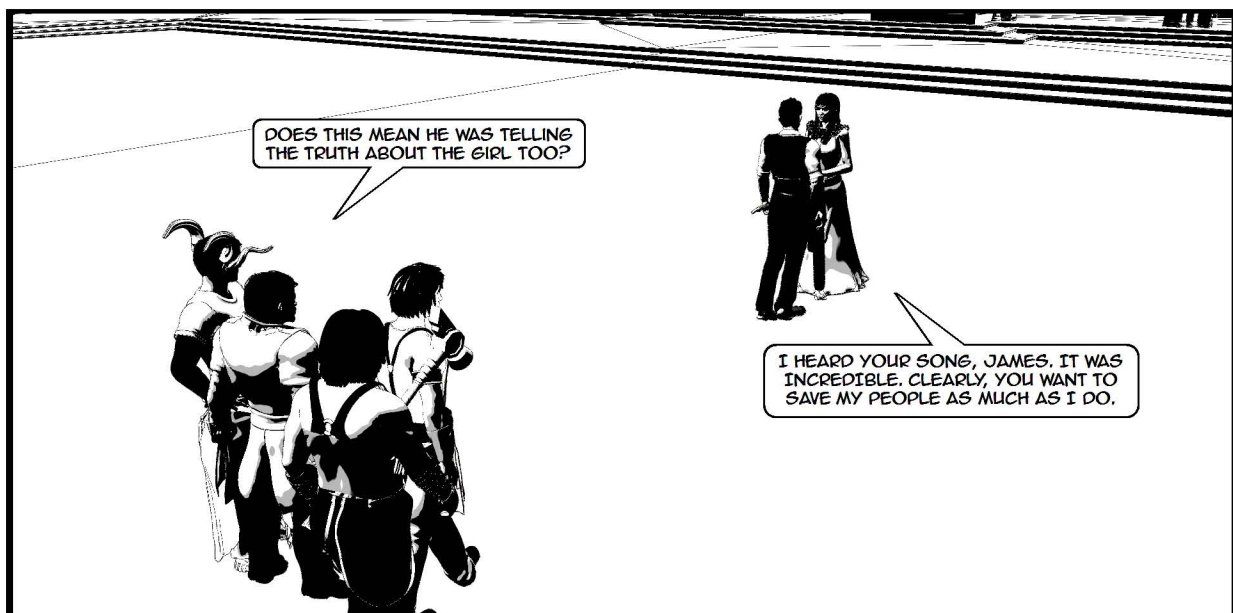
THE MUSIC CARRIES FAR BEYOND THE REACH OF THE SPEAKERS, FINDING ITS WAY INTO EVERY DOWNTRODDEN HEART IN THE CITY.















*SO THE BAND FOLLOWS THE MYSTERIOUS PRIESTESS, WHO LEADS THEM TO SAFETY IN HER TEMPLE, WHICH AS IT TURNS OUT, DOES EXIST UNDERNEATH A PROTECTIVE SPELL, AND...

JAMES, I'M GOING TO ASSUME THAT WE'RE NOT YET AT THE END OF THIS TALE, SO I'LL STOP YOU HERE. MY PRODUCER IS BEGGING ME TO GO TO COMMERCIAL.

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN WRAP THIS UP IN ONE MORE TEN-MINUTE SEGMENT?



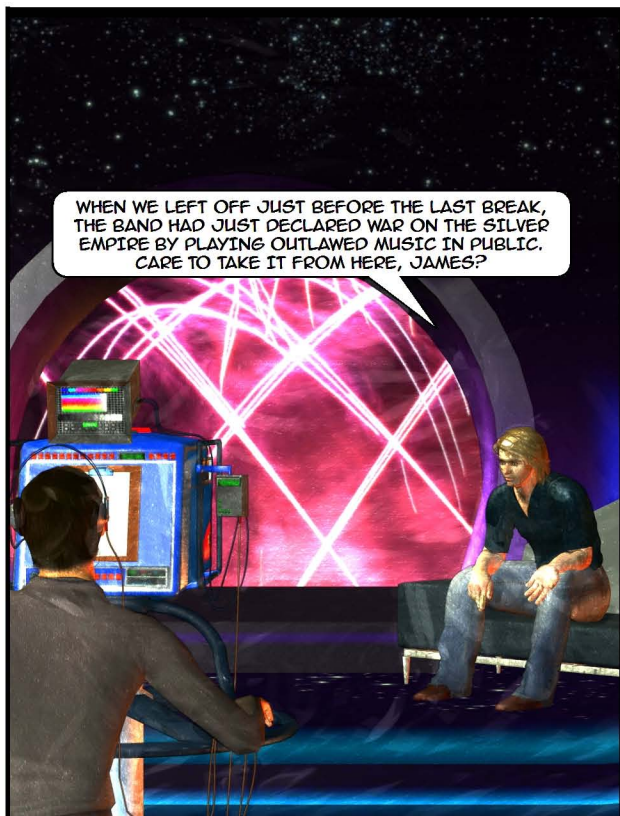
SURE, I GUESS... IF I TRUNCATE IT.



MORE FROM JAMES FLAMESTAR AFTER THE BREAK.



WELCOME BACK. I'M TALKING WITH JAMES FLAMESTAR HERE ON FUTURE BEATS, DISCUSSING THE DETAILED CONCEPT BEHIND HIS ALBUM *STARGAZERS*.



WHEN WE LEFT OFF JUST BEFORE THE LAST BREAK, THE BAND HAD JUST DECLARED WAR ON THE SILVER EMPIRE BY PLAYING OUTLAWED MUSIC IN PUBLIC. CARE TO TAKE IT FROM HERE, JAMES?



THANKS, LARRY. WELL, AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THINGS GO TO HELL PRETTY QUICKLY AFTER THAT. THE SILVER EMPIRE BEGINS TO TEAR THE CITY APART, TRYING TO FIND THE STARGAZERS.

AND THE BAND IS LAYING LOW FOR THE MOMENT, REELING FROM THEIR CLOSE CALL, AND TRYING TO DECIDE THEIR NEXT MOVE.

THEIR BEST PLAN, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, APPEARS TO BE LAYING LOW UNTIL THE HEAT DIES DOWN A BIT.

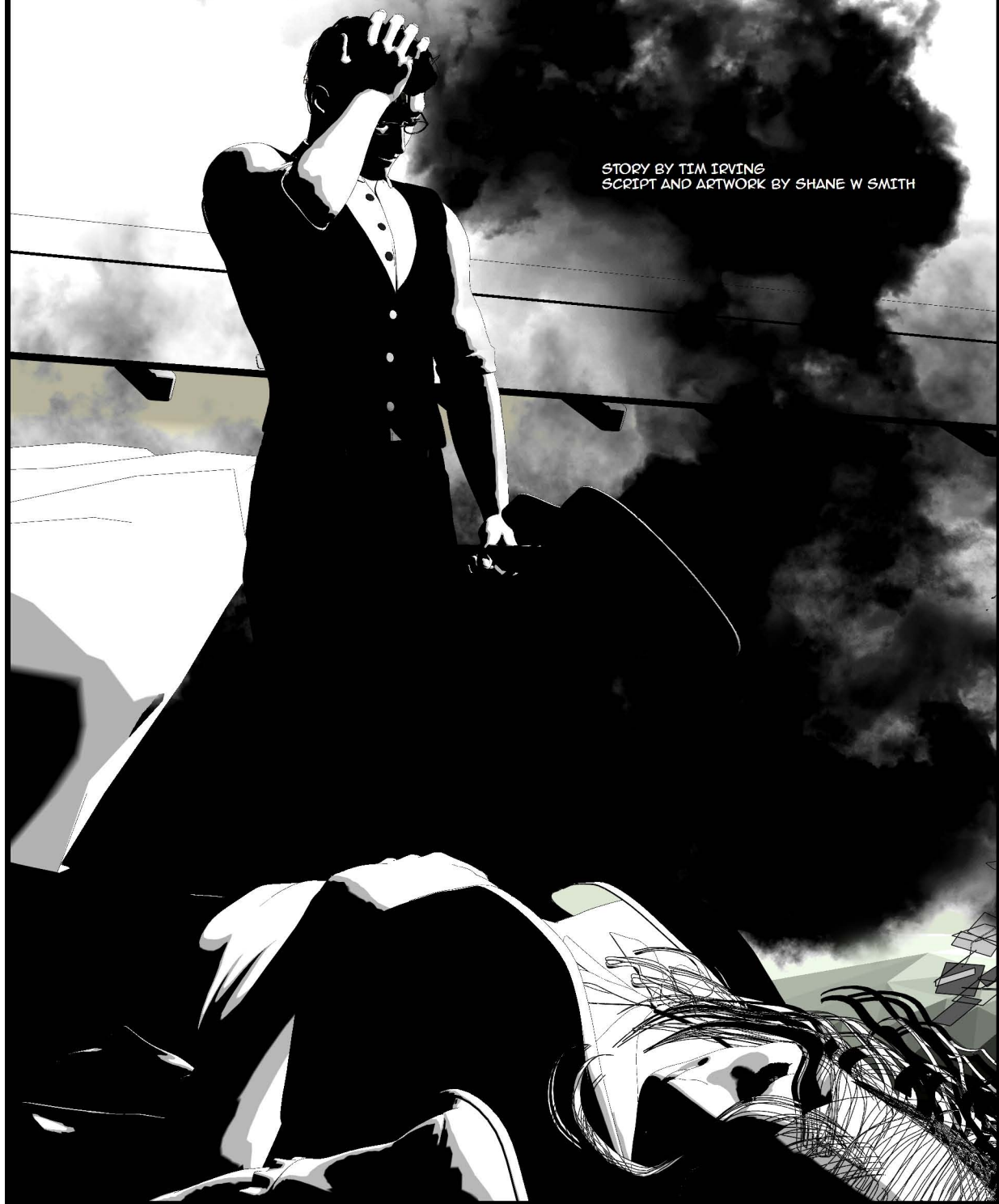
"UNTIL NOW."



JAMES FLAMESTAR

vs. the Silver Empire

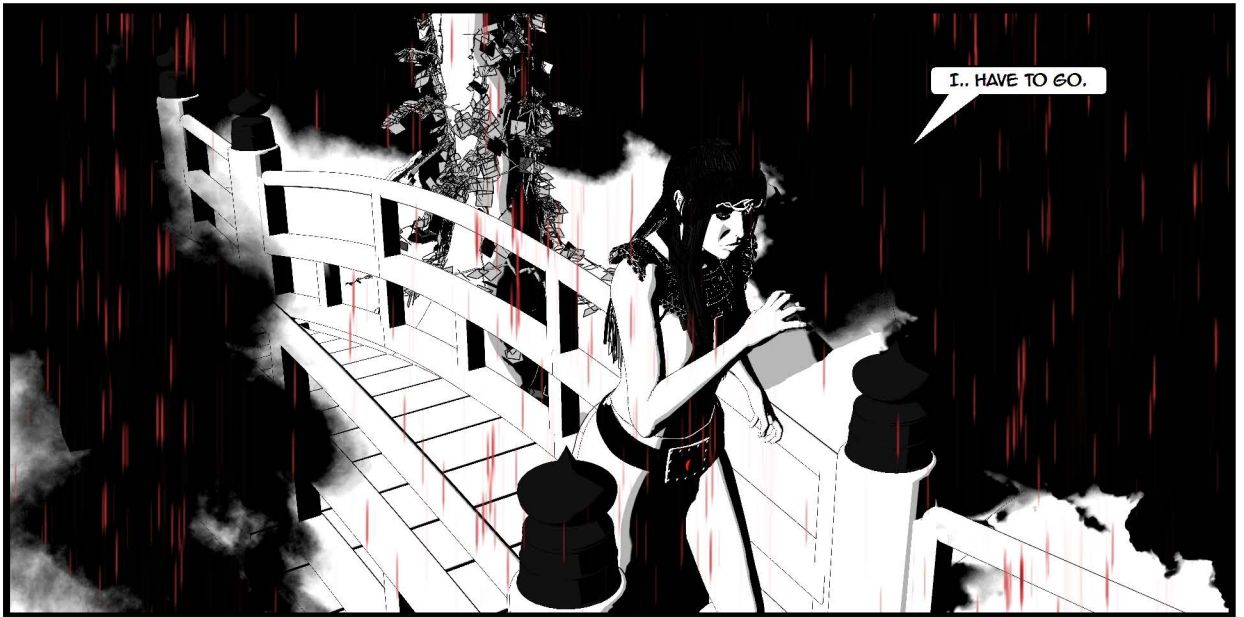
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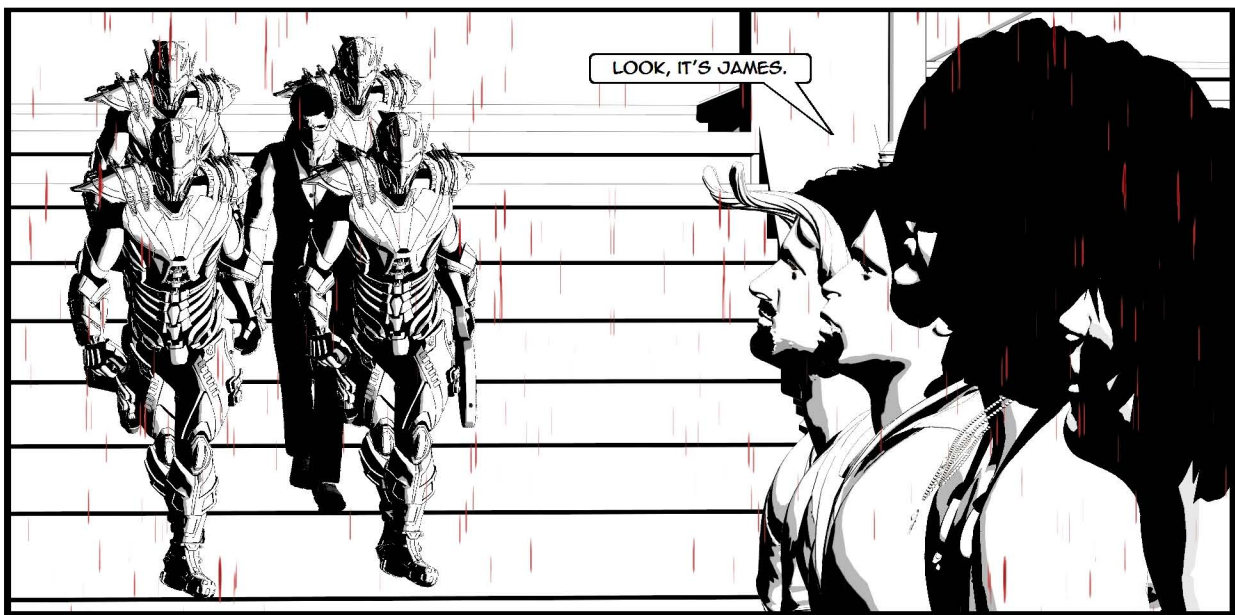
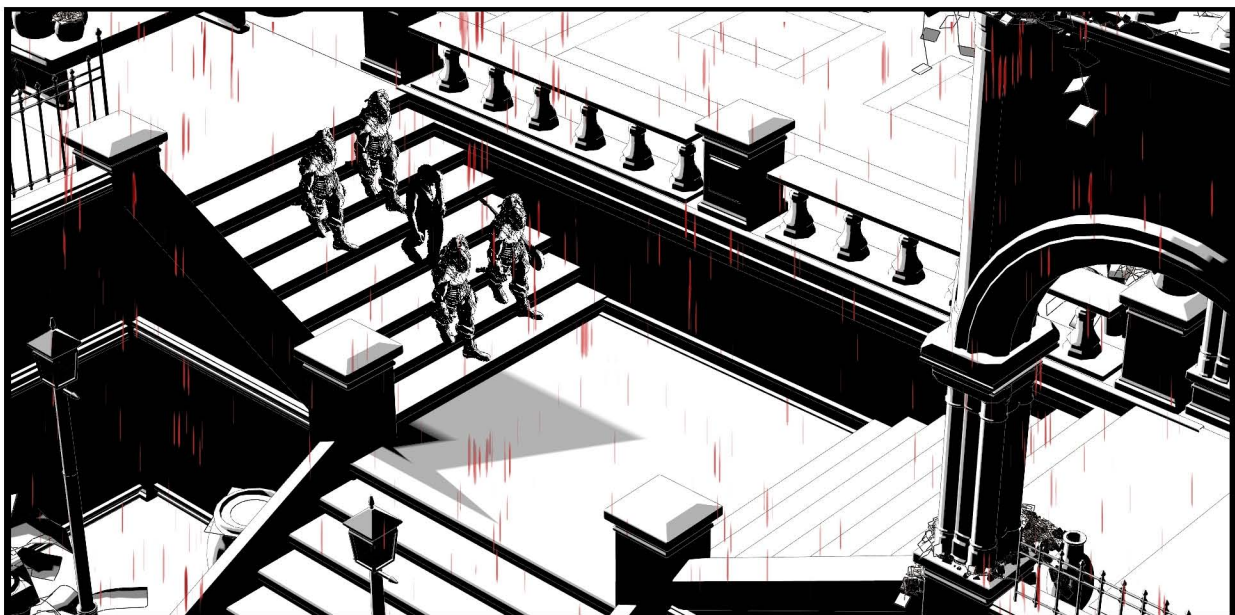


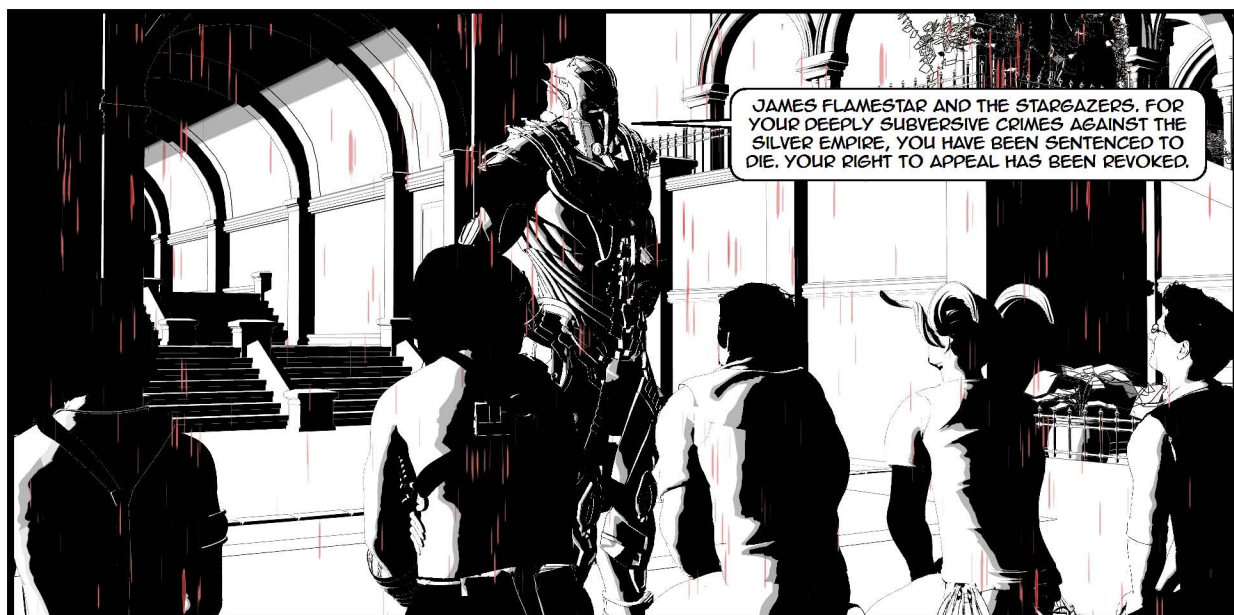






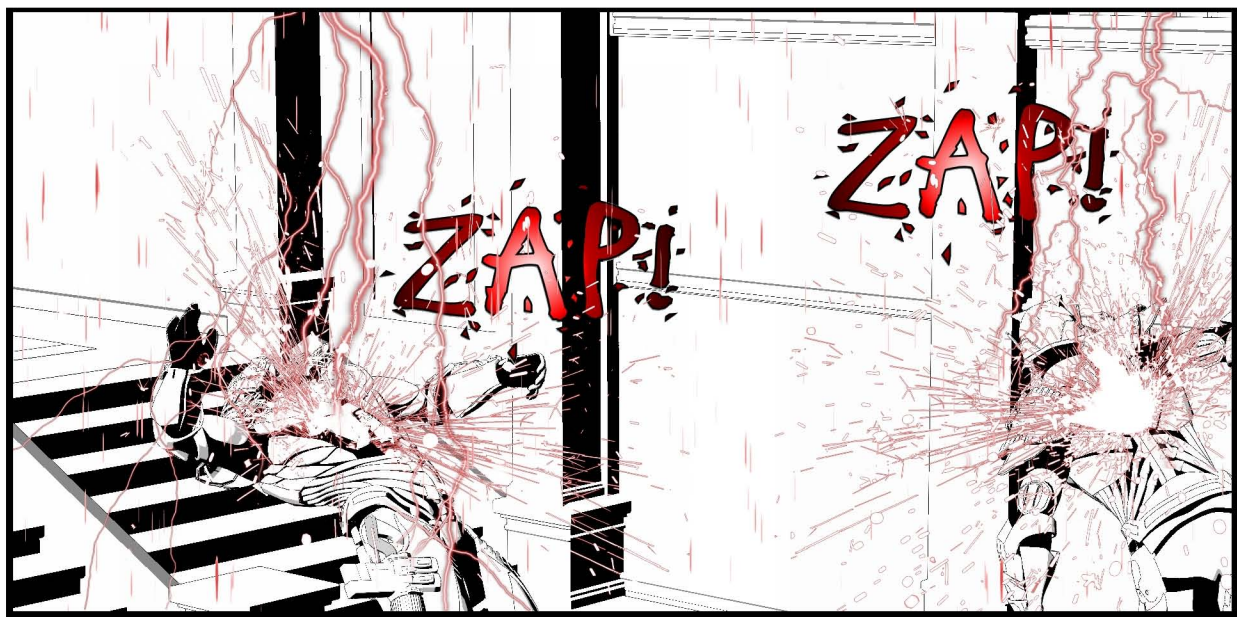
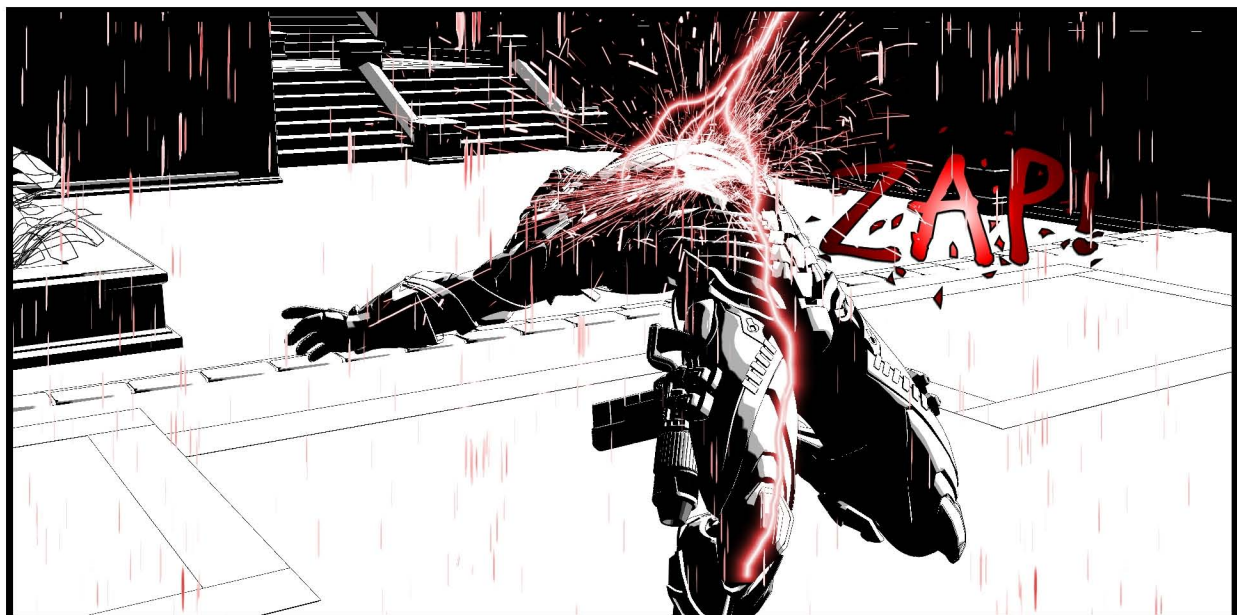


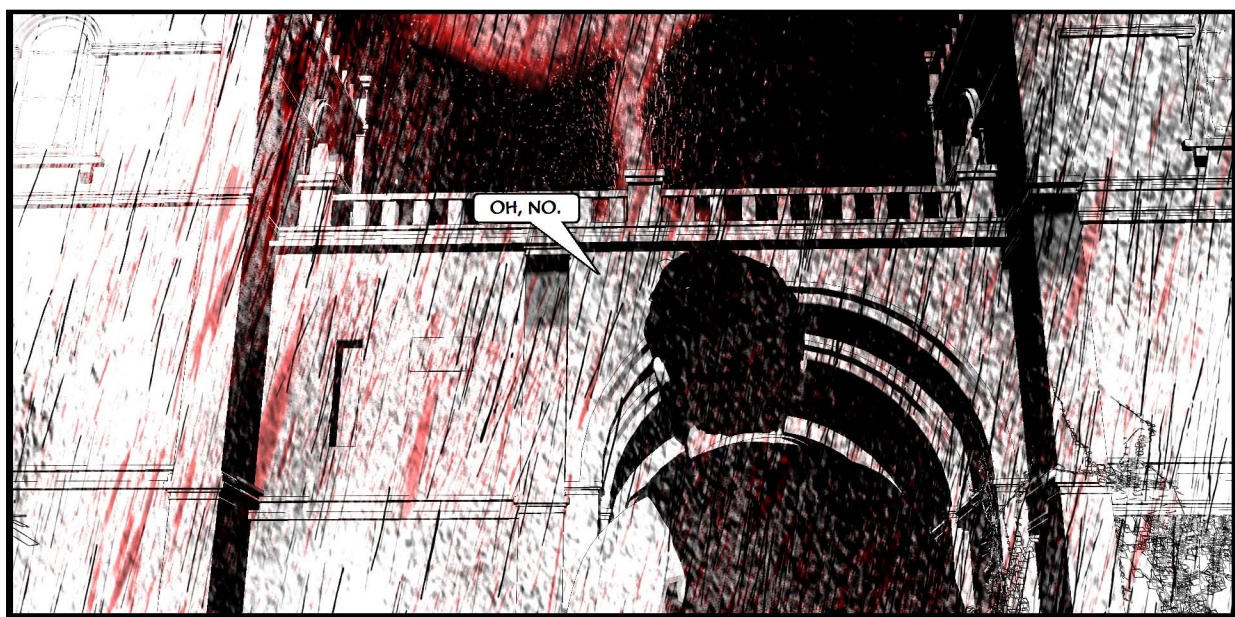


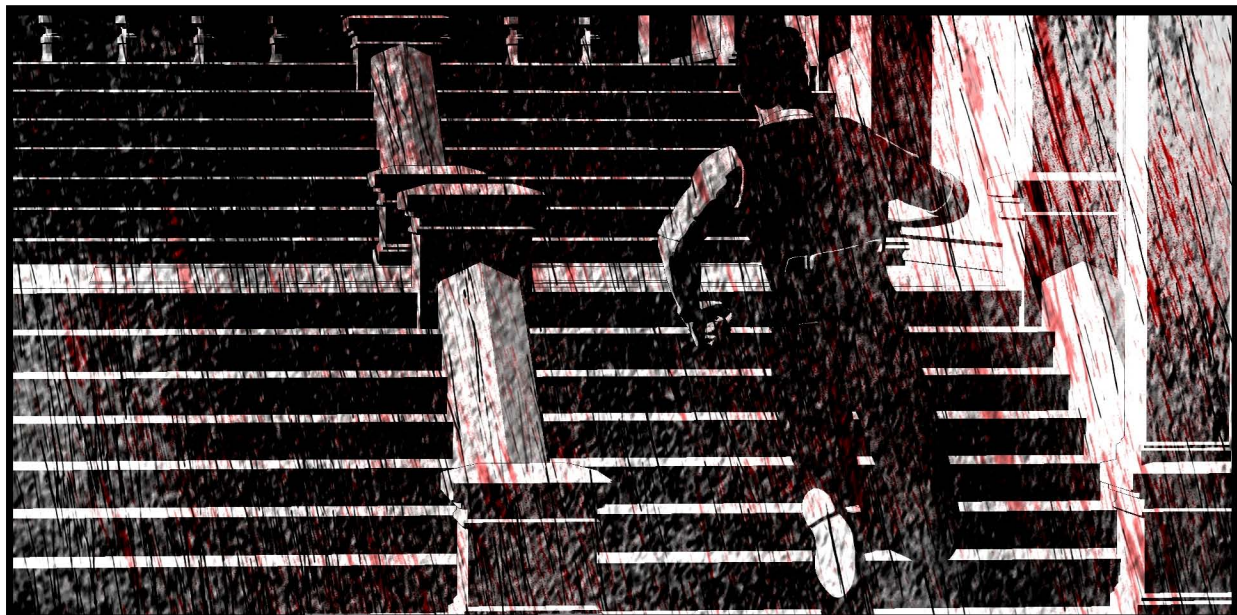










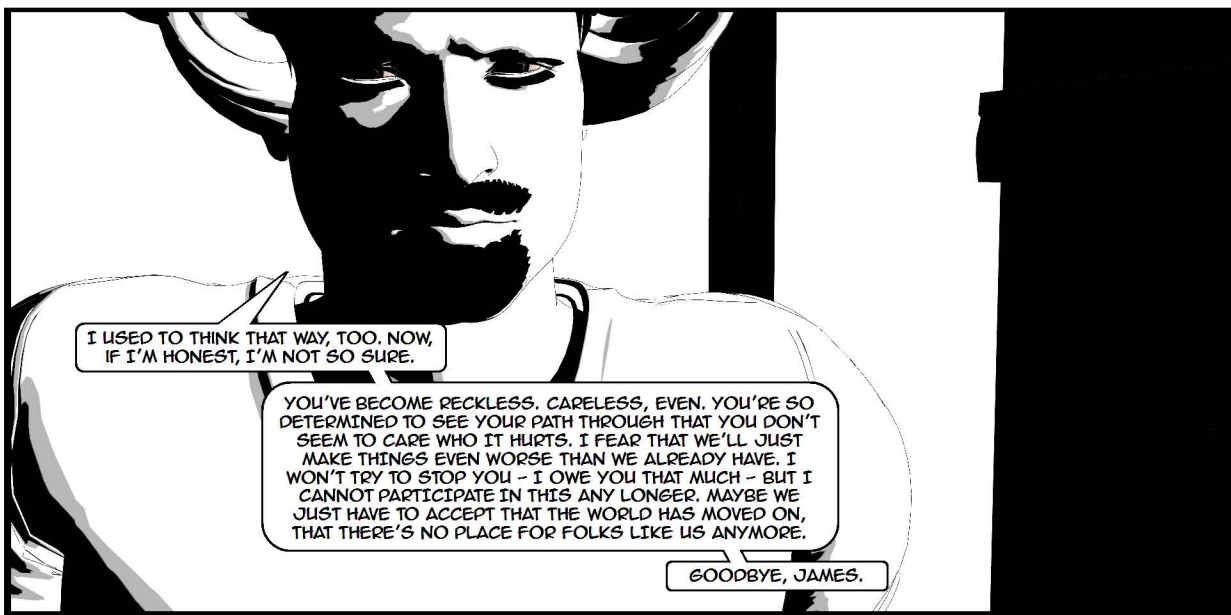


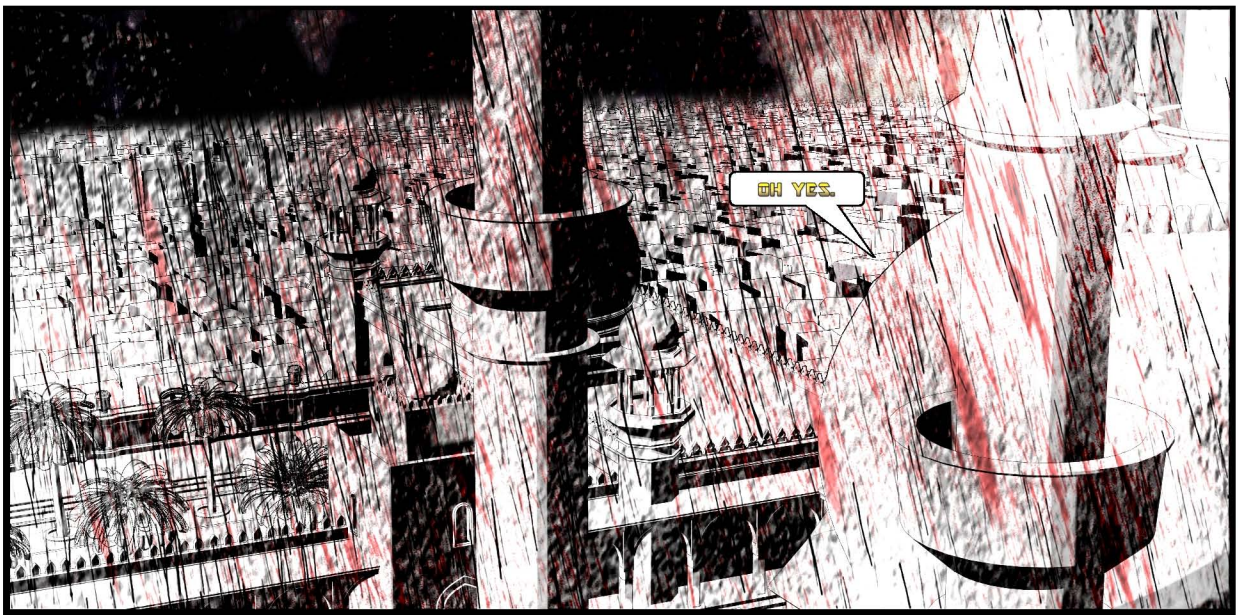


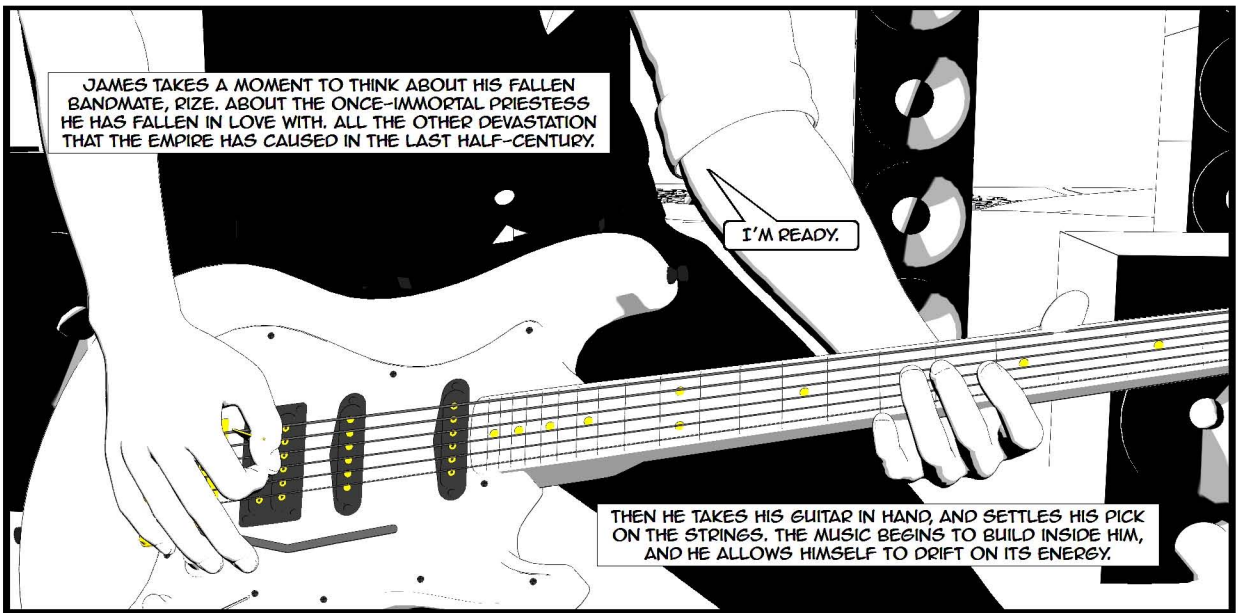














HE STRIKES THE FIRST CHORD AND LETS IT REVERBERATE IN THE AIR.

IT IS NOT A MUSICAL SOUND.

IT CONTAINS NO MESSAGE, NO INSPIRATION.

NO HOPE.

INSTEAD, HE HAS FED LIMITLESS RAGE AND AGONY INTO A SINGLE HORRIBLE, SHRIEKING NOTE.

AND THE WORLD BEFORE HIM STARTS TO CRUMBLE.

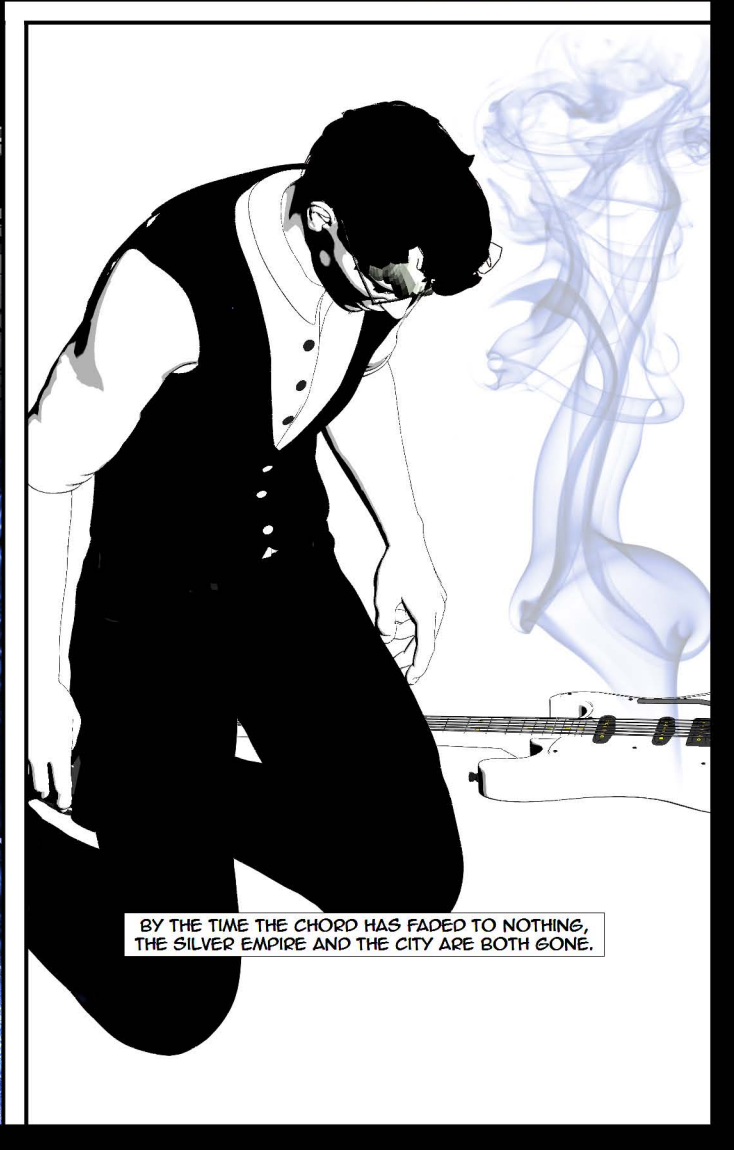


JAMES WHIRLS AROUND IN TERROR, BUT IT IS FAR TOO LATE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. HIS BANDMATES AND MILLIONS OF INNOCENT PEOPLE... THE DESPAIR OF HIS MUSIC HAS DESTROYED THEM ALL.

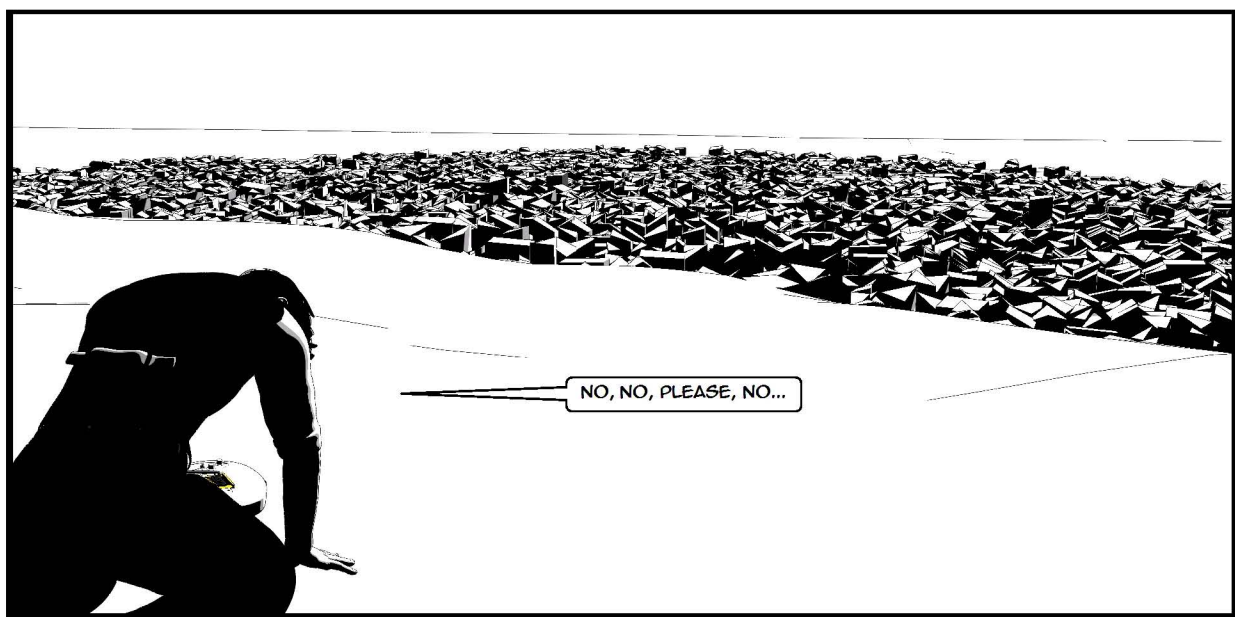
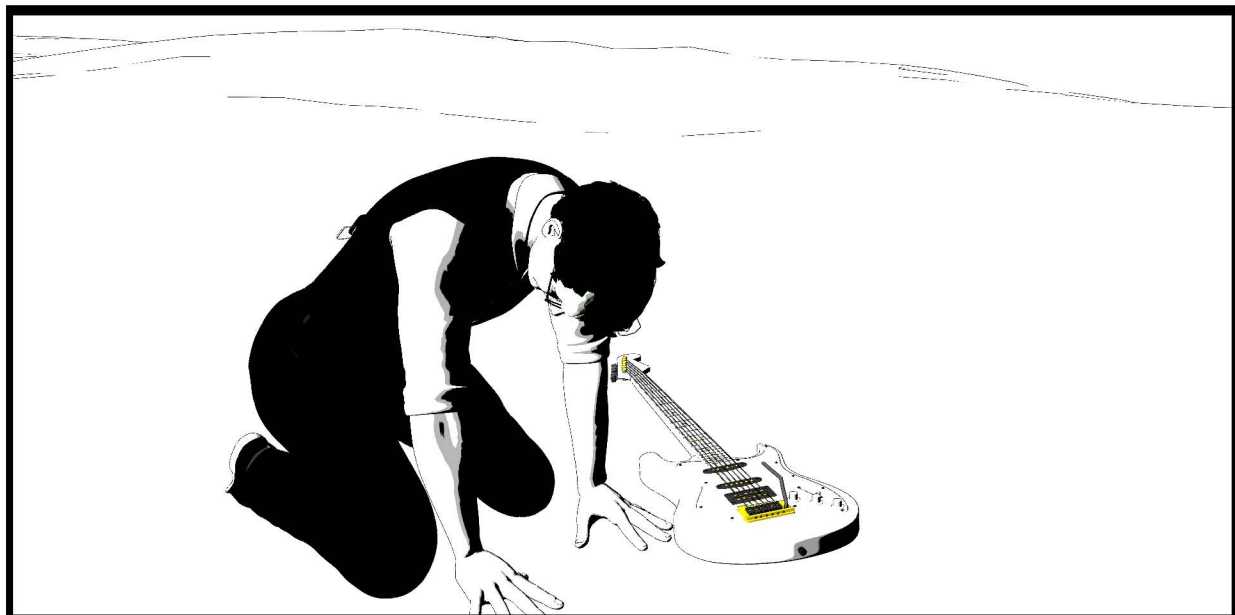
COUNTLESS INNOCENT PEOPLE ALSO FALL, AS THE CITY BEHIND HIM SHAKES ITSELF TO PIECES.

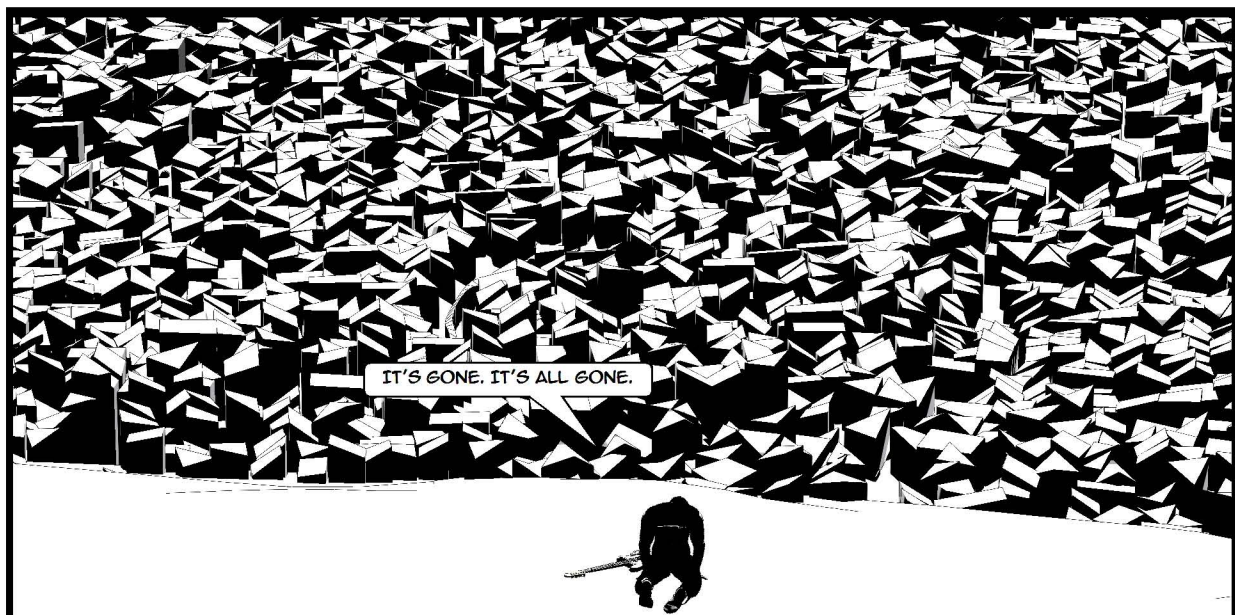
BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH POWER. IT ECHOES AND RICOCHETS IN ALL DIRECTIONS.

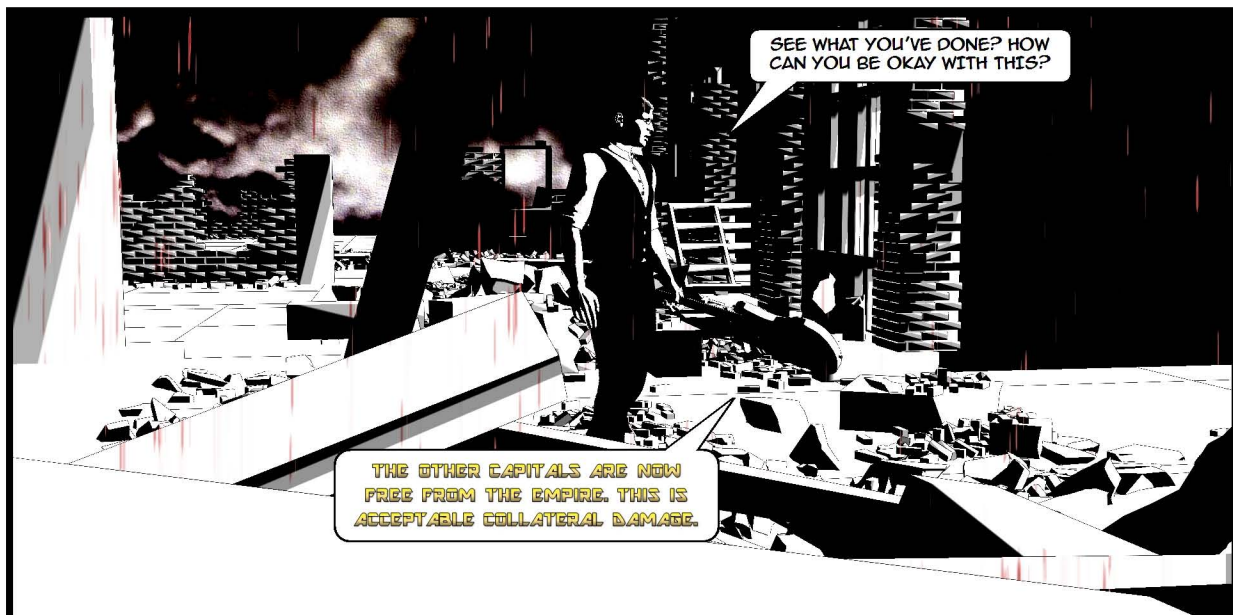
RANKS AND RANKS OF EMPIRE SOLDIERS FALL BEFORE THE POWER OF HIS GUITAR.

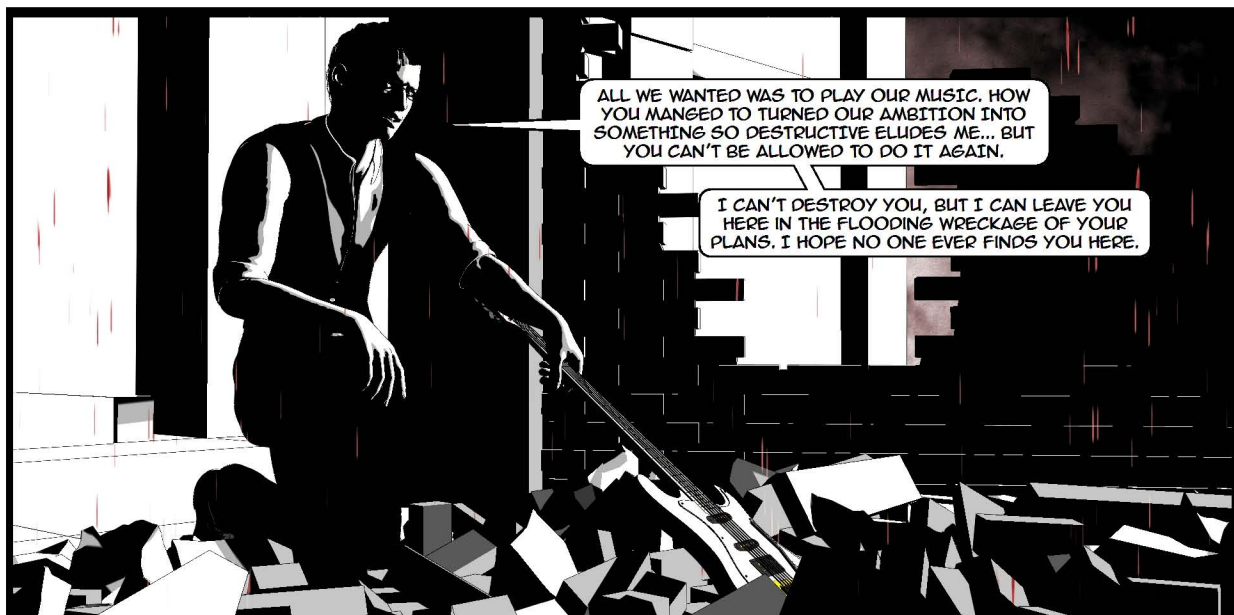


BY THE TIME THE CHORD HAS FADED TO NOTHING, THE SILVER EMPIRE AND THE CITY ARE BOTH GONE.









ALL WE WANTED WAS TO PLAY OUR MUSIC. HOW YOU MANAGED TO TURNED OUR AMBITION INTO SOMETHING SO DESTRUCTIVE ELUDES ME... BUT YOU CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO DO IT AGAIN.

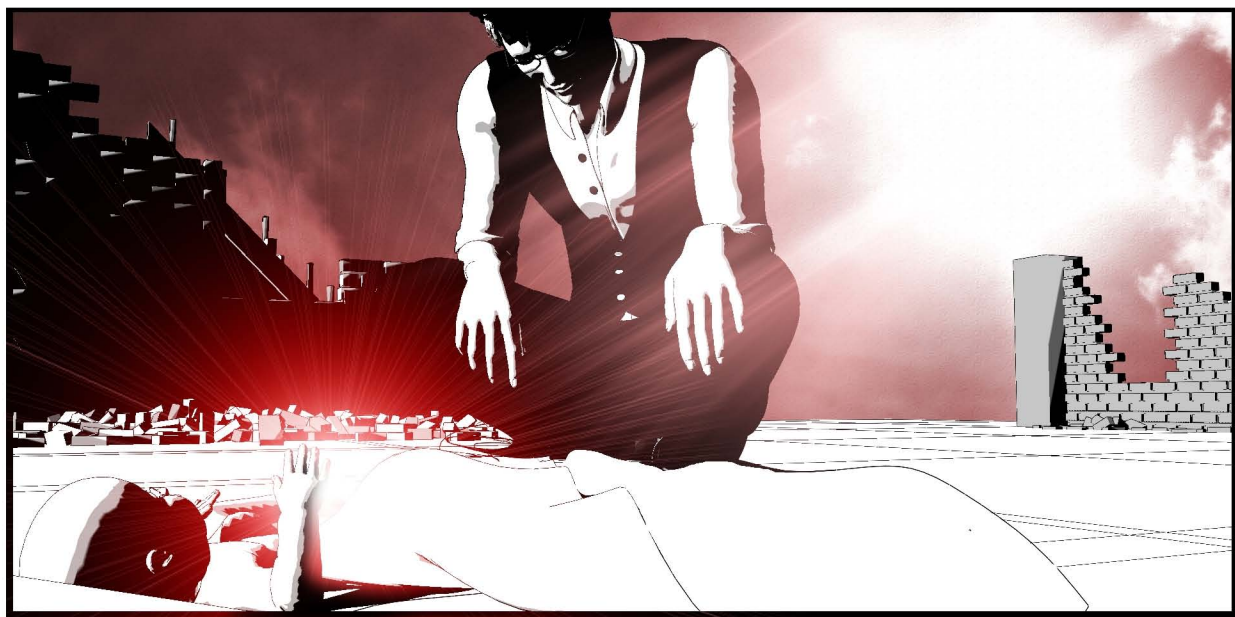
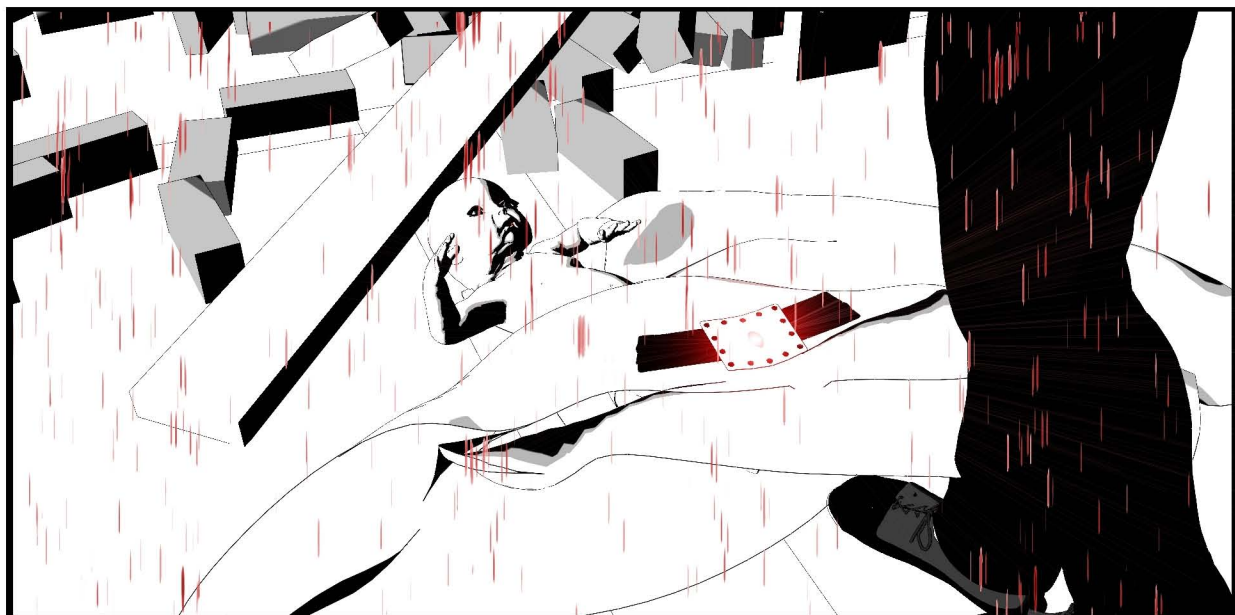
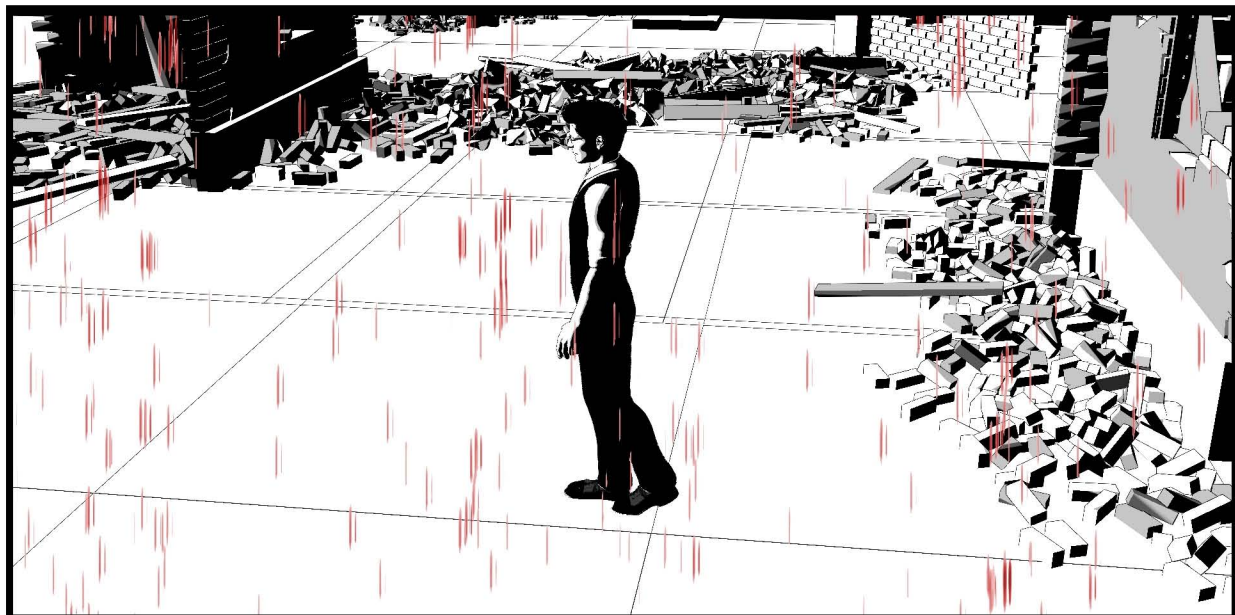
I CAN'T DESTROY YOU, BUT I CAN LEAVE YOU HERE IN THE FLOODING WRECKAGE OF YOUR PLANS. I HOPE NO ONE EVER FINDS YOU HERE.



NO, WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
JAMES! IT'S A NEW AGE FOR MUSIC.
WE NEED EACH OTHER, JAMES!



JAMES!





SO, THAT... THAT'S IT?

YEP. THAT'S HOW IT ENDS.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN THANKING JAMES FLAMESTAR, WHOSE ALBUM *STARGAZERS* DEMONSTRATES THAT MUSIC HAS THE POWER TO REPRESENT LOVE, INSPIRE HOPE, AND INCITE DESTRUCTION, AND THAT - SOMETHING I HAVE LONG BELIEVED - THE ENTIRE WORLD WILL CRUMBLE BEFORE ITS POWER.

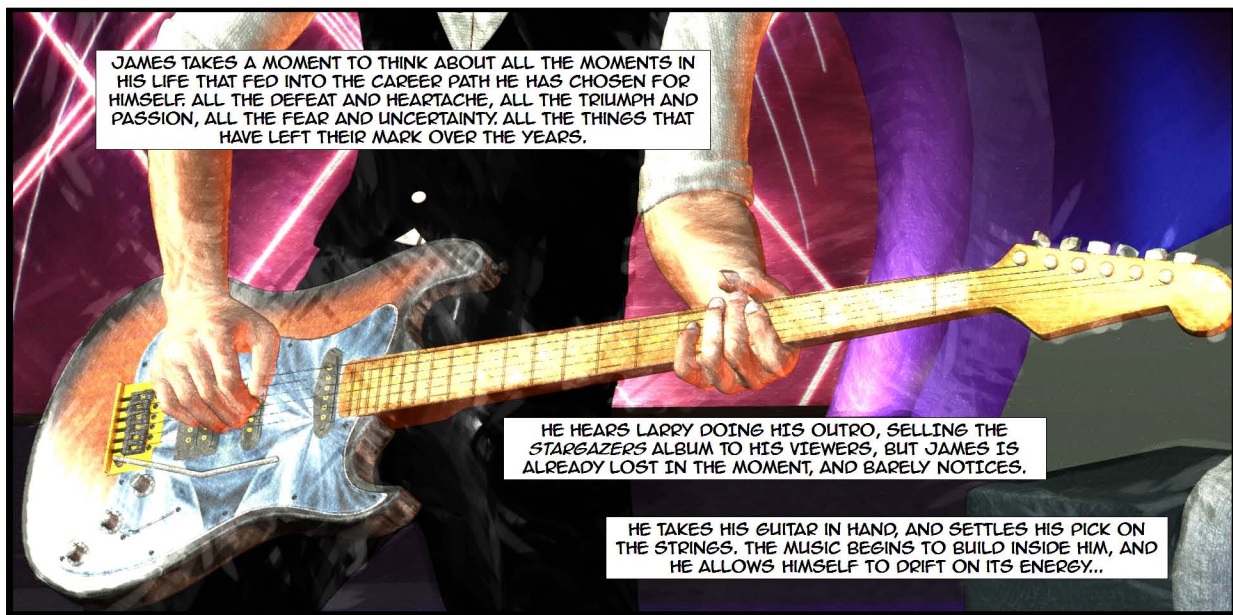


TO SEE US OUT TONIGHT, JAMES HAS KINDLY AGREED TO PLAY FOR US A SONG.



IF YOU DON'T MIND, JAMES, I'D PREFER IT TO BE ONE THAT DOESN'T DESTROY THE UNIVERSE OR BRING THE ROOF DOWN ON OUR HEADS.

OF COURSE.



JAMES TAKES A MOMENT TO THINK ABOUT ALL THE MOMENTS IN HIS LIFE THAT FED INTO THE CAREER PATH HE HAS CHOSEN FOR HIMSELF. ALL THE DEFEAT AND HEARTACHE, ALL THE TRIUMPH AND PASSION, ALL THE FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY. ALL THE THINGS THAT HAVE LEFT THEIR MARK OVER THE YEARS.

HE HEARS LARRY DOING HIS OUTRO, SELLING THE *STARGAZERS* ALBUM TO HIS VIEWERS, BUT JAMES IS ALREADY LOST IN THE MOMENT, AND BARELY NOTICES.

HE TAKES HIS GUITAR IN HAND, AND SETTLES HIS PICK ON THE STRINGS. THE MUSIC BEGINS TO BUILD INSIDE HIM, AND HE ALLOWS HIMSELF TO DRIFT ON ITS ENERGY...



...AND HE PLAYS A SONG.

TIM IRVING



TIM IRVING HAS BEEN PLAYING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS SINCE HE WAS OLD ENOUGH TO STAND ON TWO FEET AND REACH HIS FAMILY'S KEYBOARD. HIS PASSION FOR MUSIC AND THE STORIES THEY TELL LED TO THE TALE OF JAMES FLAMESTAR. HE GREW UP IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.

TIM HAS PRODUCED A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF MUSIC IN HIS CAREER, INCLUDING THE SCORE FOR THE AWARD-WINNING GAME ANNA'S QUEST. STARGAZERS IS HIS FIRST ALBUM.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TIM AT HIS SITE:
[HTTP://JAMESFLAMESTAR.COM](http://jamesflamestar.com)

THE JAMES FLAMESTAR COMIC IS A COMPANION PIECE TO THE "STARGAZERS" ALBUM COMPOSED BY TIM IRVING. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OBTAINING THIS ALBUM, PLEASE VISIT

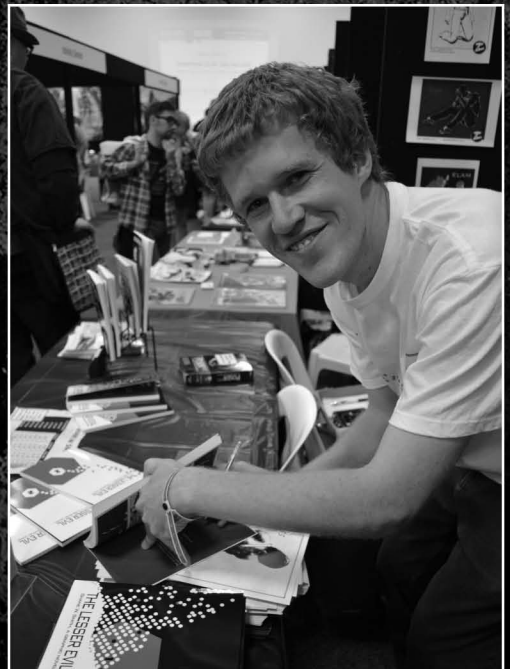
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SHANE W SMITH

SHANE W SMITH HAS BEEN WRITING FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE. IT'S HIS PASSION, HIS DRIVE... AND HE CAN'T IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT IT. FOR THIS REASON, THE FLAMESTAR UNIVERSE REALLY RESONATED WITH HIM, AND HE'S THRILLED TO HAVE BEEN OFFERED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE.

SHANE'S PREVIOUS PUBLICATION HISTORY INCLUDES THE SCIENCE-FICTION GRAPHIC NOVEL THE LESSER EVIL, ITS SEQUEL PEACEFUL TOMORROWS, AND SEVERAL SHORTER PIECES.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SHANE AT HIS SITE:
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