

THE

ARCADE



MC '13 CREWM

POISSON • JACOBS • RANSFORD • BADILLA





"*The Arcs* delivers the war of the spiritual realm, depicted as a gritty, blood-and-guts reality, full of hard-hitting action and a refreshing sense of goodness and heroism. Angels truly are watching over us."

- **Daniel Corey**, *Moriarty*, *DangerKatt's Prophet*

"A unique glimpse across the veil of Heaven and Earth, into the dark and gritty realm of humankind's holy protectors."

- **Neo Edmund**, *Red Riding: Rise of the Werewolf Huntress*

"Take the blood, guts, and brimstone of Old Testament angels, mix in some Frankenstein tech, fire it over a world gone to Hell . . . and you've got a pretty good idea of *The Arcs*."

- **Ken Kristensen**, *Todd*, *The Ugliest Kid on Earth*

THE AACS



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Visit us online at www.fanboycomics.net and www.thearcscomic.com.

You've never felt more alone in your life.



PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T DO THIS!



In that dark moment, your soul offers up a frantic prayer. For safety. For guidance...



NO!!

...even for a painless end, if it comes to that.

You pray to God, but you are wrong.



You should be praying to us...



Because even though you can't see us...



...we are always around you.



Pushing you from harm's path.



But, most importantly, we are the **ONLY** ones left on your side.



PULL BACK!
DEMON RANKS ARE
RETREATING!

>SOB<



I'LL PROTECT THE
GIRL FROM HERE.



And even though
we keep fighting
for you...



...through the pain...



...through the defeat...



NOO!

...one thought inevitably crosses every angel's mind...

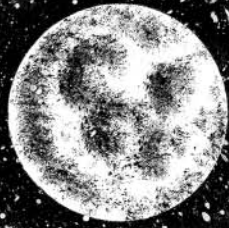


Who the fuck is fighting for us?



WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?

See, in the beginning God made the Earth, and the trees, and the water, and the sun, et cetera, et cetera.



But, most importantly, He created you.



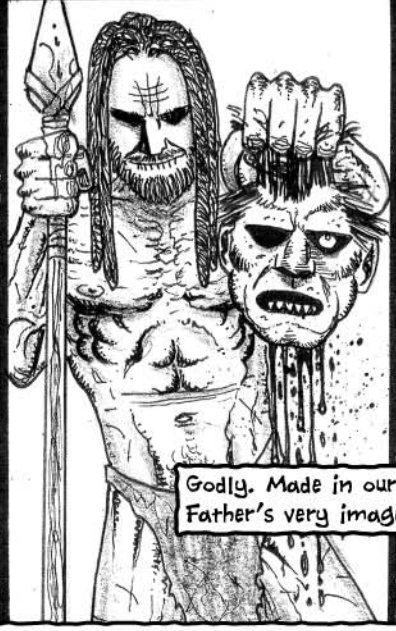
Caring and friendly.



Magnanimous and compassionate.



Forgiving.



Godly. Made in our Father's very image.

Until one day, God realized that He might need help keeping an eye on all these paradigms of grace. And, ~~we~~ were created...

Our job was to look after you. We were created for you...



THE AFTERLIFE: ANGEL'S DOMAIN



HE'S GONE.

So, we do our jobs in your world.



The Miracle Angels, led by RAPHAEL.



H-H-HEAVEN?

Gifting humanity with the impossible.



AHH!



NO.

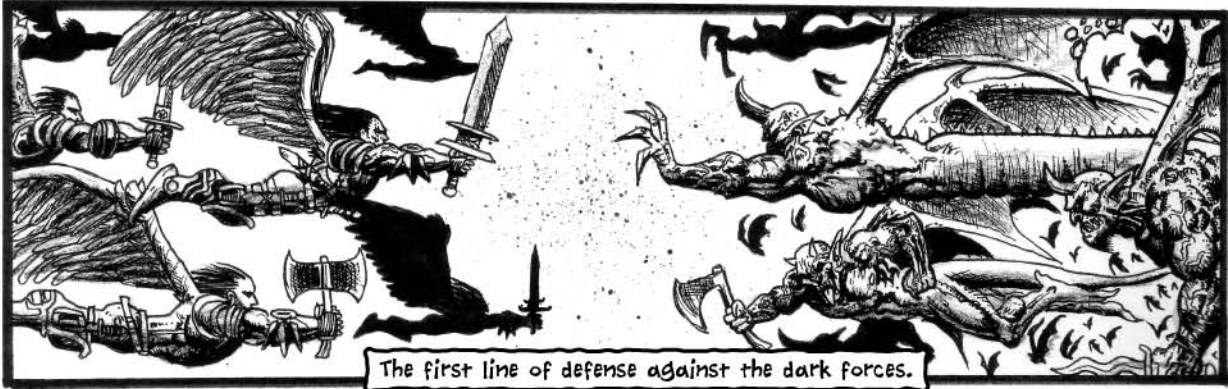


HOLY SHIT!

IT'S A MIRACLE!



The Warrior Angels, led by GABRIEL.



The first line of defense against the dark forces.



METATRON, God's herald who announced the Almighty's approach.



*Bow and rejoice
for our King!*



The Guardians. Angels who look after humanity, fighting the legions of demons who look to attack, possess, and corrupt virtuous souls.



SHH! IT'S ALL RIGHT.
YOU'RE SAFE NOW. IT'S OVER.
JUST CALM DOWN...

The Head Guardian Angel, AZRAEL.



Invisible to you, they protect against the hidden demonic forces constantly rising from Hell.



MMM...



BUT BELIEVE IN HIS LOVE, AND HE WILL DELIVER YOU BACK TO YOUR WIFE...

...WHERE YOUR HEART AND PROMISES LIE.



URIEL and the Messenger Angels.

CHILD OF THE ALMIGHTY, THINK BEFORE YOU PROCEED!

THE DEVIL'S COVETOUS NATURE HAS TAKEN HOLD OF YOU.



BELIEVE IN HIM, SCOTT, AS HE BELIEVES IN YOU.

To remind humanity of God's word.



WHAT'S WRONG, BABY?

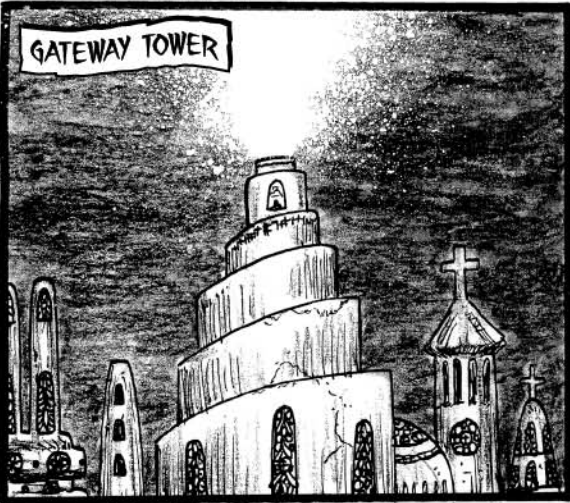


UH...NOTHING.



COME ON, BEFORE MY WIFE GETS BACK. GRAB ONTO ME!

GATEWAY TOWER



STAND,
CHILD OF
GOD.



And, of course, MICHAEL. The head of all angels.



FOR HE HAS
SEEN FIT TO WELCOME
YOU INTO EVERLASTING
HEAVEN.



Keeper of the Gateway to Heaven.



SO
BEAUTIFUL...



We did our Father's bidding.
Protecting.

Fighting.

Following His every command...

...until His abdication.

When God left, He left you in our care.

THE COMMUNION: IN THE RUINS OF GOD'S PALACE

He anointed us the **SEVEN ARCHANGELS** and granted each of us a point from His crown.



We were to watch over the Earth and humanity. Generals over each of our races until He comes back to usher us all into everlasting Heaven. Angels cannot ascend through the Gateway like human souls can. We must wait for His return, and keep the Earth from falling to evil.



We have kept Lucifer at bay over the years...

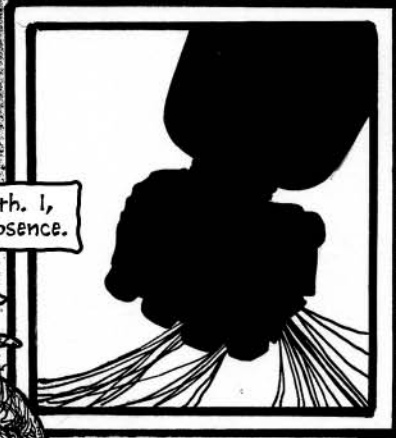
...then the decades...

...then the centuries. And, through that time, I have recorded it all.

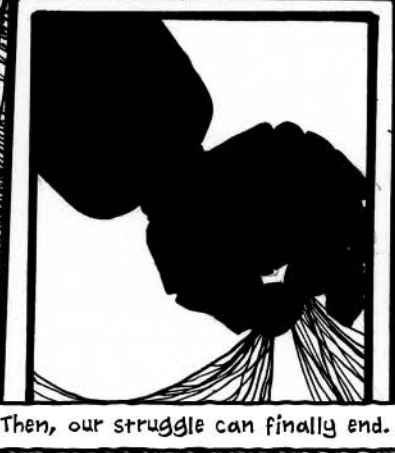
BARACHIEL'S TAPESTRY

Trapped in an infinity of threads, forever weaving the history of the Earth. I, BARACHIEL, record so that He may see what has come to pass in His absence.

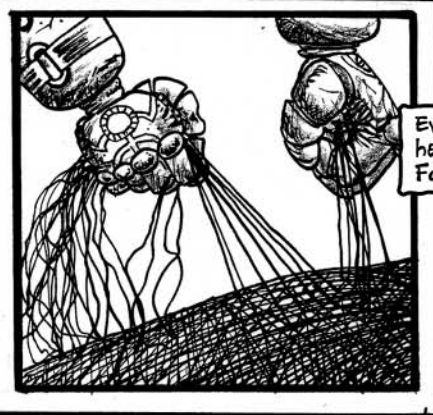
I see all. A gift granted by the Almighty. A gift of knowledge that no other being can have.



We all have burdens. But, we wait, hoping that today might be the day that God returns to us.



Then, our struggle can finally end.



Even as the images in the Tapestry grow more sinister, I have always held faith that He hasn't abandoned us. Faith that He will return. Faith that we can protect and survive until then.

I have managed to hold onto that hope...

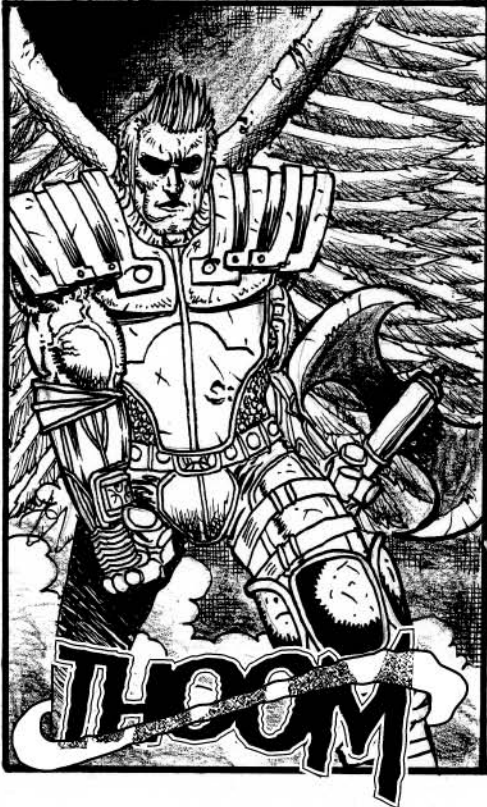
...until today.



GASP!

END OF PROLOGUE

CHAPTER 1







GENERAL!

GOOD MORNING, HAEI. HOW GOES THE WAR?



I'VE GOT A POSSESSED KID IN OAK PARK STABBING FAMILY MEMBERS WITH A LETTER OPENER AND DEMANDING KITTEN SACRIFICES IN HER NAME. YOU?

ALREADY BEHIND. THE DARK THOUGHTS WON'T LEAVE THIS POOR WOMAN ALONE.

THE SAME WOMAN?

THAT SHEEP'S GOT 'SUICIDE-HELL' WRITTEN ALL OVER HER.



DO NOT CALL THEM SHEEP!

WE ARE GUARDIANS. WE LOOK OUT FOR THEM. CARE FOR THEM.

YEAH, WELL, I STOPPED CARING A FEW CENTURIES AGO.



HAEL!

I'M JUST KIDDING, Z. I'LL GO DEAL WITH THE KITTEN KILLER.

I JUST CAME TO LET YOU KNOW THAT URIEL IS LOOKING FOR YOU.

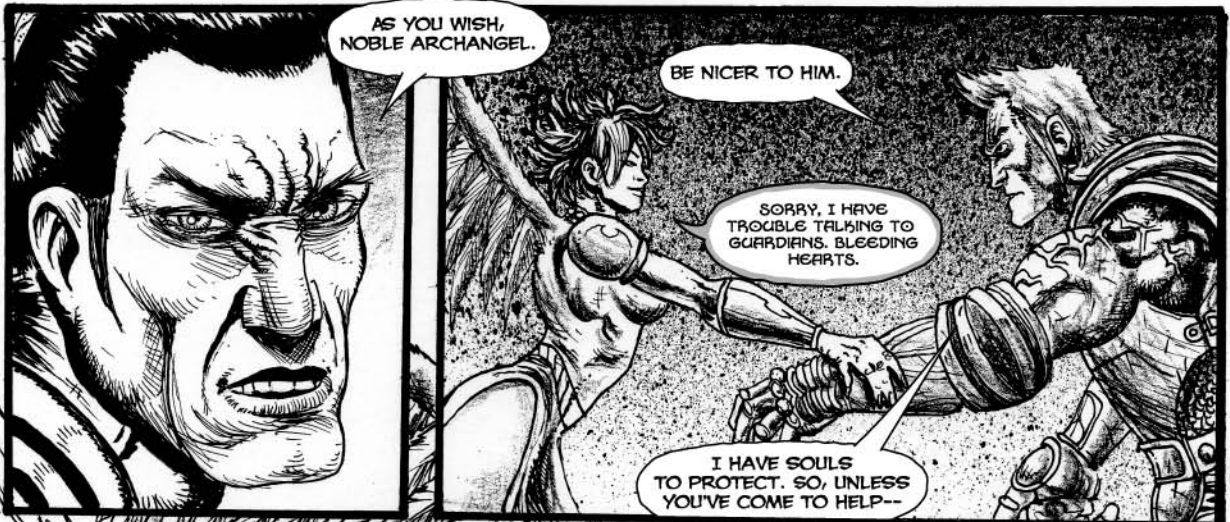




FOUND YOU, ACTUALLY.

URIEL, ALWAYS AN HONOR TO--

GET OUT OF HERE, HAEI. THE BIG BOYS NEED TO TALK.



AS YOU WISH, NOBLE ARCHANGEL.

BE NICER TO HIM.

SORRY, I HAVE TROUBLE TALKING TO GUARDIANS. BLEEDING HEARTS.

I HAVE SOULS TO PROTECT. SO, UNLESS YOU'VE COME TO HELP--



I'VE COME TO FETCH YOU. THE GRAND ONE IS CALLING A COMMUNION OF THE ARCS.

MICHAEL? WHY? I HAVE SO MUCH TO DO.

COME ON. THE SHEEP WILL BE IN JUST AS MUCH TROUBLE WHEN WE'RE DONE.

THE AFTERLIFE

THE AFTERLIFE: GATEWAY TOWER

NO LINE OF SOULS
WAITING TO BE USHERED
INTO HEAVEN TODAY?

THERE HASN'T BEEN
A LINE IN A WHILE.

WELL THEN, TELL
ME SOME GOOD NEWS
TO PASS ON TO MY
TROOPS.

MORALE'S
GETTING LOW.

HERE'S ALL THE
GOOD NEWS I HAVE:
WE'RE DOING WORSE
THAN YESTERDAY...

...BUT
BETTER THAN
WE'LL BE DOING
TOMORROW.

YOU HAVE A
NICE WAY OF PUTTING
THINGS, OLD FRIEND.

I'M THE
GUARDIAN OF
HEAVEN.

HOW COULD
I NOT BE SO
OPTIMISTIC?

I NEED A STATUS
REPORT ON YOUR
GROUND FORCES.

BARACHIEL SENT
WORD THAT THE TAPESTRY
IS DARKENING.

Protected Lands

HOW ARE
OUR BORDERS IN THE
PROTECTED LANDS
HOLDING UP?

THERE WAS
A LOSS TODAY...



HUMAN WORLD: MUMBAI

दामनस

THEIR ATTACKS ARE BECOMING MORE PRECISE.



DEMONS! CALL FOR REINFORCEMENTS!



THEY KNOW OUR FORCES ARE STRETCHED TOO THIN TO KEEP THE PROTECTED LANDS UNDER OUR CONTROL.



HOLD FORMATION! WE HAVE TO KEEP THEM FROM INFILTRATING MUMBAI!



THEY FOCUS ALL OF THEIR FORCES ON ONE AREA, THROWING LITERALLY EVERYTHING THEY HAVE AT OUR WARRIORS.



THE WARRIORS COULDN'T HOLD THEM. THERE WERE JUST TOO MANY.

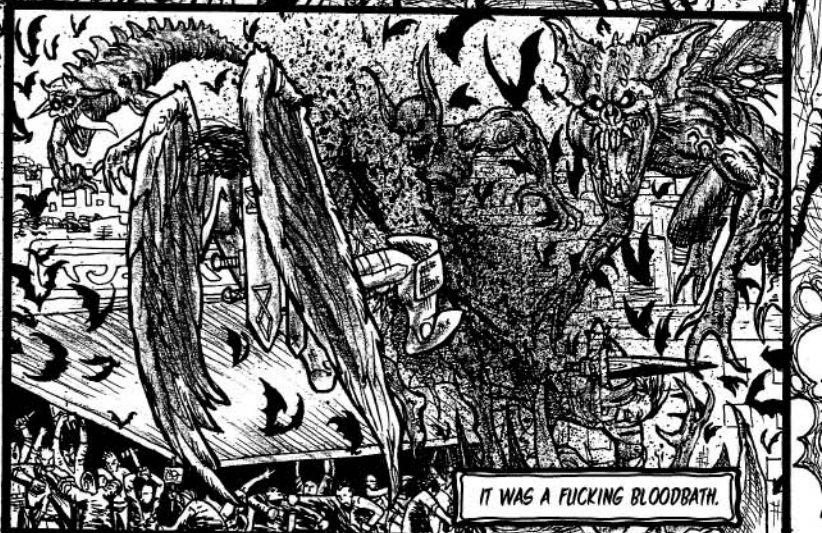


THE DEMONS SUCCESSFULLY PENETRATED MUMBAI.

THEY POSSESSED HUMANS.



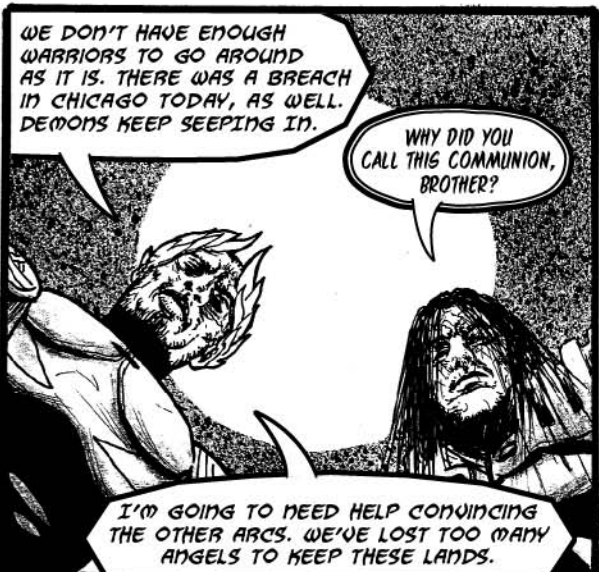
AND THEY DESTROYED THE WARRIORS STATIONED THERE BEFORE MY REINFORCEMENTS AND I COULD ARRIVE.





WE LOST SIX WARRIORS. TWO MORE BEING TREATED BY METATRON.
SIX... THAT'S TOO MANY.

IT WILL TAKE WEEKS TO TRACK DOWN THE DEMONG THAT MADE IT INTO THE CITY.



WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH WARRIORS TO GO AROUND AS IT IS. THERE WAS A BREACH IN CHICAGO TODAY, AS WELL. DEMONS KEEP SEEPING IN.

WHY DID YOU CALL THIS COMMUNION, BROTHER?

I'M GOING TO NEED HELP CONVINCING THE OTHER ARCS. WE'VE LOST TOO MANY ANGELS TO KEEP THESE LANDS.



HAS IT COME TO THAT AGAIN?



IT'S THE ONLY WAY. WE MUST FOCUS OUR PROTECTION OVER THE LANDS WE CAN CONTROL.

THAT NO LONGER INCLUDES MUMBAI OR CHICAGO.



YOU HAVE MY SUPPORT.

WE HAD BETTER BE OFF THEN.



FATHER. GIVE US STRENGTH FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO DO... WHEREVER YOU ARE.



THE ARCS' COMMUNION

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU ALL.

IT'S NICE TO BE UP HERE.

I LIKE WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THE RUINS.

WHY HAVE YOU CALLED THIS COMMUNION?

I HAVE SOULS IN NEED OF MY HELP.



COOL YOUR HEELS, GUARDIAN. THE SHEEP CAN LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES FOR A WHILE.



URIEL, SOME RESPECT!

I'M SORRY, SIR.



WE ARE HERE TO DISCUSS THE INFILTRATION OF MUMBAI BY A SWARM OF POSSESSION DEMONS.

WE WILL WAIT ON RAPHAEL BEFORE WE BEGIN.



GASP!
PAPH!



CHAPTER 2



ANOTHER ABDUCTION?!

THAT'S THE THIRD IN TWO MONTHS.

WE HAVE TO GET YOU TO METATRON.

THE COMMUNION



YOU HAVE TO PREPARE THE TROOPS IN CASE SHE STRIKES AGAIN.

IN CASE WHO STRIKES?



I WAS ON A MISSION WITH SIMON, SAVING A GIRL AND HER BABY WHO WERE TRAPPED IN A BURNING BUILDING.

HUMAN WORLD: SERGIPE, BRAZIL

SHE'S TOO SCARED TO MOVE. THIS PLACE IS GONNA COME DOWN!

WE HAVE TO REVEAL OURSELVES TO HER AND GET THEM OUT OF HERE!



MIRACLES RELY ON FAITH. GOD'S LAWS SAY THAT WE CAN'T MAKE OUR PRESENCE KNOWN. KEEP DEFLECTING THE DEBRIS!

THERION!

SIMON, KEEP THEM SAFE!



RAPH!



SUSH!



KAH HA
HAH HA
HA HA
HA HA

LUGH!



NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO TO US, YOU CAN'T HAVE THEM!



I DIDN'T COME FOR THEM. LOVEY.



AAAGH!!

RAMP



I CAME FOR YOU.

LET'S TAKE A LITTLE TRIP DOWN. SHALL WE?



RAPH!

PREPARE YOURSELF. RAPHAEL. THE GAME'S ABOUT TO CHANGE.



SIMON?

CRACK

AHHH!!



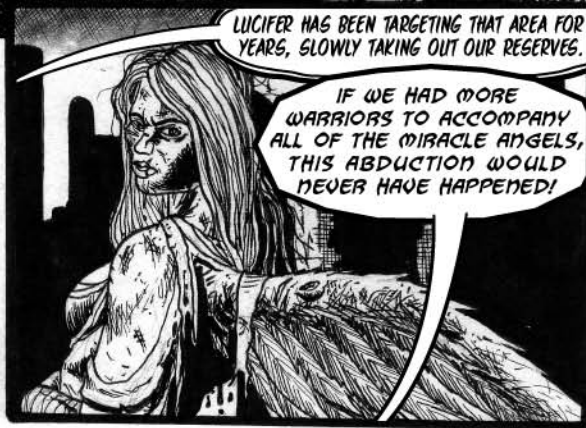
THE COMMUNION: PRESENT

THEY HAVE NEVER FOCUSED ON TAKING ANGELS BEFORE. WHAT IS THEIR PLAN?

THIS SHOULD HAVE NEVER HAPPENED.

The Tapestry grows darker. Who is to judge how dark gray is before we can call it black?

OUR TROOPS KEEP GETTING TORN APART. WE CAN'T CREATE NEW ANGELS, ONLY GOD CAN. WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?





IT'S SETTLED. FOUR VOTES CARRY IT THROUGH.



WE'RE THROWING HIS KINGDOM AWAY!

WE HAVE NO CHOICE.



IF WE TRY TO PROTECT EVERYTHING, WE WILL LOSE IT ALL.

REASSIGNMENTS WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY. PASS ALONG THE INFORMATION TO YOUR TROOPS.

IT'S DONE. WE WILL END WITH HIS PRAYER.

God, look down upon your servants and help guide us to your will. Help us carry out your miracles, protect your creations, deliver your word to your people, and defend against the darkness. Let us work in your name as we await your return.

AMEN.



...AMEN.




RAPHAEL,
I'M BRINGING YOU
TO METATRON.


Z, WAIT UP!

I SAW THERION
TAKE SIMON RIGHT DOWN.
COULDN'T STOP HER...

WHAT WAS
THAT BACK THERE?!



WE'VE HAD
HEAVY LOSSES LATELY.
NOTHING DIFFERENT.




HOW COULD YOU VOTE
WITH THEM? YOU DOOMED
THOSE PEOPLE!

BEING TAKEN IS DIFFERENT.
WHEN OUR KIND ARE CUT UP AND
DECIMATED...WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENS
TO THEM. BUT, TAKEN IS DIFFERENT.
SCARIER.

I'M TRYING TO KEEP
MY TROOPS IN ONE PIECE!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?


WE'VE
WITHDRAWN FORCES
FROM THE PROTECTED
LANDS BEFORE.

WE DON'T HAVE
ENOUGH ANGELS LEFT
TO COVER THE ENTIRE
WORLD!




THIS IS THE THIRD ANGEL
ABDUCTION. FIRST OF YOUR MIRACLE
ANGELS TO BE TAKEN.

BEFORE THAT WAS A
MESSENGER. BEFORE
THAT, A WARRIOR...



I'VE BEEN GUARDING
THOSE HUMANS DOWN THERE
FOR YEARS. NOW, I SHOULD
JUST LEAVE THEM TO
THE DEMONS?

I CAN'T
KEEP LOSING
SOULS, URIE.



I JUST FEAR WE'RE
MAKING THE WRONG CHOICES...
THAT MICHAEL IS MAKING THE
WRONG CHOICES.

YOU THINK THEY'RE
ABDUCTING ONE OF EACH
ANGEL RACE? WHY?

SHH. SAVE YOUR
STRENGTH.

LOOK, WE KEEP A STRONGHOLD
ON AS MUCH OF THE EARTH AS WE CAN.
LET HUMANITY FIGURE ITSELF OUT.

I KNOW YOU CARE ABOUT THEM, BUT
JUST REMEMBER: ONCE HE RETURNS,
WE'LL BE DONE WITH THIS HELL.

AND DON'T BE SO
BRAVE NEXT TIME.

AND WE'LL FINALLY
BE ABLE TO ASCEND WITH
HIM INTO HEAVEN.

I WORRY
ABOUT YOU.

MICHAEL,
THE RULES...

THAT'S RIGHT. WE CAN FINALLY
HAVE OUR OWN TIME TOGETHER.

YOU AND ME...

I'M SORRY. I
SHOULDN'T HAVE...

A MOMENT OF WEAKNESS.
FUCKING FREE WILL. GOOD THING WE'RE
TOO SMART FOR THAT...

...GOOD THING.

THE AFTERLIFE: THE GRAVEYARD



METATRON!

UUNNNH...

GUUHHH...

UUNNNH...

GHAAGH...



METATRON?



Michael?



Michael! It's good to see--
Oh dear, is that Raphael?



WHAT DO YOU THINK, DOC?

Oh, not to fret. I can stitch this up.

You'll feel like a rag doll for a few weeks, but it's better than ending up in this scrap heap.



What did I miss?

WE'RE REVOKING OUR PROTECTION OVER CHICAGO AND MUMBAI.



My word, Raphael. Somebody ran off with half your ear. But I've got a good, clean one right here.



DID YOU HEAR WHAT MICHAEL SAID?

I heard. Was everyone in agreement?



FOUR OF THE SIX. AZRAEL WAS AGAINST IT. BARACHIEL WAS... BARACHIEL. WE WOULD HAVE COME TO YOU IF THERE WAS A TIE...



...METATRON?



You, there. You're too far gone for me to fix. Will you lend an Archangel your wing scapulars?

I WOULD BE HONORED.



There you are. Good as new.

YOU ARE AN ARTIST, MY BROTHER!



No, my love, just a simple Herald who no longer has anything to proclaim. Now, be off with you.



YOU'RE GREAT AT PATCHING UP OUR TROOPS.

Those who have enough of themselves left to be patched. The demons are getting smarter. They know that if they cut up the angels enough, I can't repair them.



WE NEED A NEW ARMY.

I agree, but God didn't give us the power to create new angels.

THEN WE'LL HAVE TO LOOK TO THE OLD ONES.

HUMAN WORLD: MUMBAI

RELOCATE ALL OF OUR MUMBAI GUARDIANS TO SHANGHAI. WE WANT TO MAKE THIS TRANSITION AS QUICK AS POSSIBLE.

ONE OF YOUR CHICAGO SOULS? MINE HAVE BEEN CRYING OUT TO ME ALL DAY. ARE WE JUST ABANDONING THEM?

GOD, HELP ME!

IT WAS DECIDED BY THE COMMUNION.

WHAT HAPPENED TO CARING ABOUT THE SOULS WE LOOK AFTER?

JUST BEGIN MOVING THE GUARDIANS.

AZRAEL, I'VE HEARD SOME OF THE TROOPS TALKING. THEY'RE STARTING TO QUESTION THE DECISIONS OF THE ARCS. THEY'RE STARTING TO QUESTION YOUR LEADERSHIP.

I'VE BEEN YOUR SECOND-IN-COMMAND FOR A LONG TIME, Z. LOOK ME IN THE EYES AND TELL ME THAT YOU BELIEVE THIS WITHDRAWAL IS THE RIGHT DECISION.

RALLY THE GUARDIANS IN SHANGHAI. I WILL BE THERE SHORTLY.

I MUST TAKE CARE OF SOMETHING FIRST.

THOSE ARE THE ORDERS.

WHOSE ORDERS?



HUMAN WORLD: CHICAGO

STAY BACK!
DON'T COME ANY
CLOSER!



YOU CAN
SEE ME?!

NO ONE SEES YOU,
ARCHANGEL. ME, ON THE
OTHER HAND...



ASMODEUS!



GRAB



LET
HER GO!

WHY?
THIS IS OUR
LAND NOW.

HER LITTLE SOUL
HAS BEEN SOMETHING
YOU'VE BEEN SAVING
FOR TOO LONG.



YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME.

MAYBE NOT,
MY FAIR FRIEND.

BUT, THEN AGAIN,
MAYBE THIS WORTH-
LESS BITCH ISN'T
WHAT BROUGHT ME
UP FROM THE PIT.



YOU'RE ON
OUR TURF NOW.



THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE ANY CAVALRY COMING TO SAVE YOU IN THIS FORSAKEN LAND...



HUMAN WORLD: SHANGHAI

OLD MUMBAI WARRIORS WILL JOIN THE SHANGHAI TROOPS ON PERIMETER PATROL OF THE CITY--

GABRIEL!



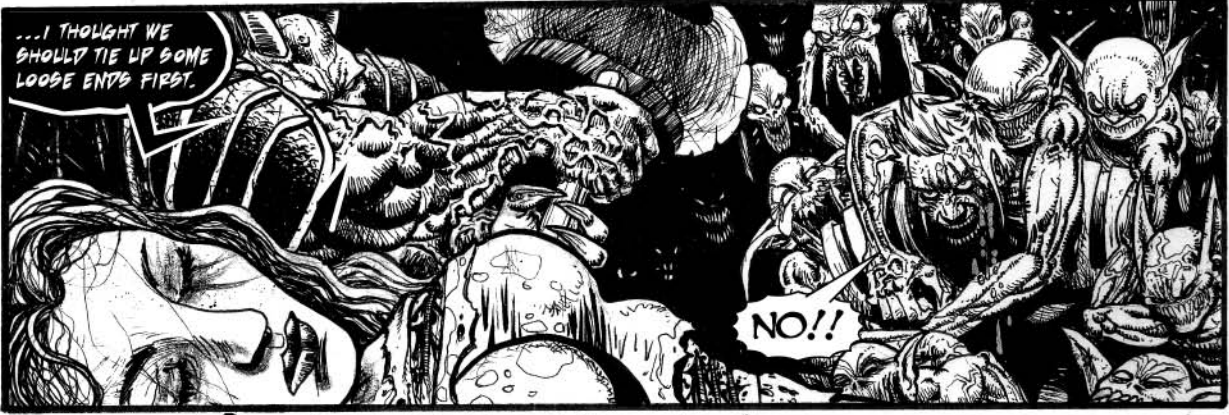
THERE'S BEEN AN ATTACK ON THE SHANGHAI GUARDIANS. AZRAEL CAN'T BE FOUND!

HE'S BEEN ABDUCTED?!

HE NEVER REPORTED IN TO ASSEMBLE THE GUARDIANS. WE WENT TO SEARCH FOR HIM BUT WERE AMBUSHED!!



TAKE ME TO THE BATTLE, THEN SEND ALL AVAILABLE FORCES TO SEARCH FOR AZRAEL!



CHAPTER 3

GOD IS FINALLY COMING BACK TO US?!

I have been sent to help prepare Earth for His return.

Stand, my brother. I know you have been awaiting this news for centuries.

WE MUST CALL A COMMUNION TO TELL THE OTHER ARCS!



By God's command, no other being can know of this. Do you understand?

BUT--

The Almighty has chosen only you to help in His return, Azrael.



For you alone sought to protect His people with such love and compassion.



Your tireless guard over humanity has not gone unnoticed.

I must report back, but I am here to ask for your help.



The final point from God's crown must be delivered to me before His return.

THE POINT?



God needs it to anoint another Archangel. One who will help to bring about the angels' entry into Heaven.

WE WILL FINALLY JOIN HUMANITY'S SOULS IN HEAVEN?



Have a little faith, Azrael. He has faith in you.

I WILL DO IT!! I WON'T LET FATHER DOWN!

Your wait is almost over...

THE AFTERLIFE: GATEWAY TOWER

THE ATTACK ON THE SHANGHAI GUARDIANS IS FINALLY UNDER CONTROL.



WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING DOWN THERE?

AZRAEL CANNOT BE FOUND.

HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND, HAE, IS ALSO MISSING.

WHILE THE GUARDIANS WHO WERE PULLED FROM CHICAGO AND MUMBAI WAITED TO RECEIVE THEIR NEW ORDERS, THEY WERE AMBUSHED BY A SWARM OF DEMONS.

THERE WAS CONFUSION. NO LEADERSHIP. TROOPS WERE RIPPED APART.

WHAT ABOUT AZRAEL AND HAE?



WE'RE AMASSING A SEARCH PARTY. ONE OF HIS GUARDIANS WAS ABDUCTED DURING THE BATTLE. WE'RE NOT SURE IF AZRAEL HAS BEEN CAPTURED AS WELL.

AARGH!



AZRAEL!

DAMN IT. THIS IS MY FAULT. IF I HADN'T BEEN SO QUICK TO REASSIGN OUR GROUND TROOPS, OUR FORCES WOULDN'T BE SO SCATTERED--



THE COMMUNION



AZRAEL!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

I...CAME
TO SPEAK
WITH YOU.

WHAT HAPPENED? YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO
BE RALLYING THE GUARDIANS IN SHANGHAI.



I HAD TO HELP A
SOUL IN CHICAGO ONE
FINAL TIME.

BUT, WE
HAVE TO
TALK.

I DON'T AGREE WITH
THE ARCS' DECISION TO
WITHDRAW FROM THE
PROTECTED LANDS.

WE MUST CONSIDER
HOW GOD WILL FEEL ABOUT
IT WHEN HE RETURNS--



YOU DISOBEYED
DIRECT ORDERS!

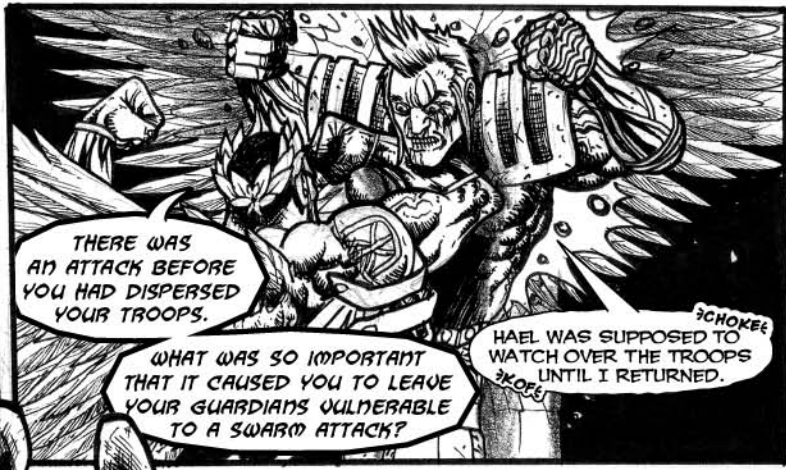
YOU WERE SUPPOSED
TO LEAD YOUR GUARDIANS
OVER SHANGHAI!!



CRASH



WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



THERE WAS AN ATTACK BEFORE YOU HAD DISPERSED YOUR TROOPS.

WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT CAUSED YOU TO LEAVE YOUR GUARDIANS VULNERABLE TO A SWARM ATTACK?

HAEL WAS SUPPOSED TO WATCH OVER THE TROOPS UNTIL I RETURNED.



HAEL NEVER MADE IT TO SHANGHAI.

WE MANAGED TO KEEP THE PERIMETER, BUT MANY WARRIORS AND GUARDIANS WERE DECIMATED.



WE DON'T KNOW IF HAEI WAS TAKEN, BUT WE DO KNOW THAT ONE OF YOUR GUARDIANS WAS ABDUCTED DURING THE BATTLE.

THE DEMONS HAVE NOW TAKEN ONE OF EACH OF THE ANGEL RACES.

THIS IS ON YOUR HEAD, BROTHER.

LEARN TO CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS. YOUR CONCERN FOR THAT ONE SOUL HAS COST US ALL!





YOU ARE A
POOR EXCUSE FOR
AN ARCHANGEL.



DO NOT SPEAK
TO ME THAT WAY,
MICHAEL.



BE
CAREFUL, Z.



YOU SIT IN YOUR HEAVENLY
TOWER, NEVER DIRTYING YOURSELF
BY FIGHTING THE EVIL FORCES
ON THE GROUND.

YOU MAKE WAR PLANS WHILE MY
TROOPS ARE SLASHED TO PIECES. WHILE
MY CHARGES ARE DRAGGED TO HELL.
YOU TELL US TO WORK HARDER,
FLY FASTER, AND WE DO!


WE LEARN TO FIGHT
LIKE WARRIORS, TO FLY AS
FAST AS MESSENGERS.

WE GIVE OUR VERY
BODIES TO PROTECT THE
HUMANS WE GROW TO CARE
FOR, AND THEN YOU TELL US
TO ABANDON THEM?!

I'LL TAKE YOUR ORDERS,
MICHAEL, BUT ONE DAY GOD WILL
RETURN, AND WE WILL ALL HAVE TO
ANSWER FOR WHAT WE HAVE
DONE IN HIS ABSENCE...



...EVEN YOU.



I'M GOING
TO FIND HAEI.

IF HE IS
A DESERTER, YOU
KNOW WHAT MUST
BE DONE!



TOO LONG ON THE GROUND,
AND THEY START TO CONFUSE
GUARDING WITH AFFECTION.
HE'LL COOL OFF.

PERHAPS I HAVE
BEEN TOO PASSIVE, TOO
DISTANT IN THIS WAR.

THAT'S ABOUT
TO CHANGE...

HUMAN WORLD: ST. PETERSBURG



YOU WERE TO RALLY OUR TROOPS. WHERE WERE YOU?

I AM SPENT. I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE TO HUMANITY.



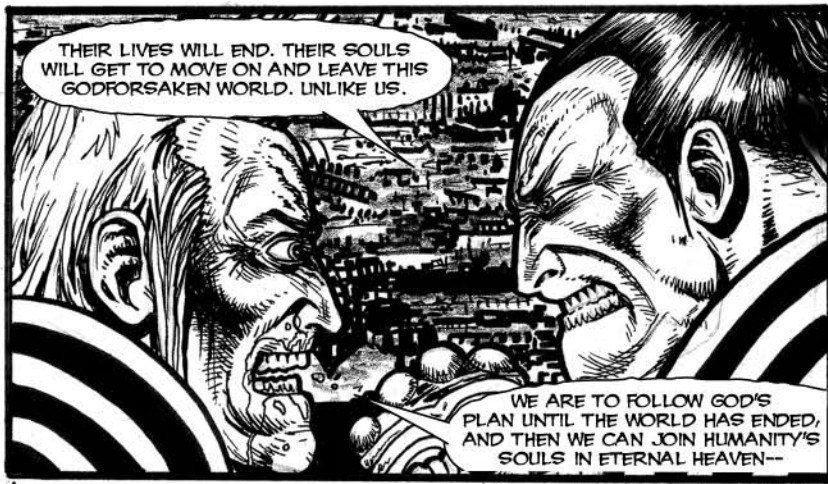
THEN IT'S TRUE? A DESERTER?! I WILL **NOT** HAVE ONE OF MY MEN WANDERING THE MORTAL WORLD, ABANDONING THE SOULS HE IS MEANT TO PROTECT.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR BEHAVIOR HAS COST US?

DEMONS SWARMED THE TROOPS WHO WERE WAITING FOR OUR ORDERS! GUARDIANS AND WARRIORS WERE RIPPED APART. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY HUMAN SOULS YOU'VE PUT IN DANGER?!



WHO THE FUCK CARES?!



THEIR LIVES WILL END. THEIR SOULS WILL GET TO MOVE ON AND LEAVE THIS GODFORSAKEN WORLD. UNLIKE US.

WE ARE TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN UNTIL THE WORLD HAS ENDED, AND THEN WE CAN JOIN HUMANITY'S SOULS IN ETERNAL HEAVEN--



BULLSHIT! WE ARE NOTHING BUT SLAVES TO HUMANITY. WHAT'S GOD GOT IN STORE FOR US?

NOTHING!



NO... BROTHER, PLEASE DON'T DO THIS. I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT HE IS RETURNING!



EACH DAY OUR FORCES SHRINK WHILE LUCIFER'S GROW.



THIS FIGHT HAS BEEN TOO LONG, AND I AM TIRED.



GOD IS NOT COMING BACK.



IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE LUCIFER'S FORCES OVERRUN THE EARTH...

...AND THEN THE AFTERLIFE.

WE HAVE BEEN ABANDONED...

...LEFT TO OUR OWN DESTRUCTION.



HE'S COMING
BACK! HE'S COMING BACK
FOR US!!

AND IF HE
DOESN'T? THEN,
YOU'RE A FOOL.

FIGHTING UNTIL YOUR REMAINS
ARE THROWN INTO THE GRAVEYARD
AND THE DARK PRINCE FINALLY
CLAIMS CONTROL.

BROTHER, YOU HAVE
LOST YOUR GRACE.

I'M NOT THE FIRST
TO LOSE THE FAITH, AND
I WON'T BE THE LAST.

WE ARE THE MOST
POWERFUL BEINGS LEFT
IN THIS WORLD. WE ARE
THE GODS NOW!

WE'RE ALL SLIPPING.

EVEN YOU, I IMAGINE.

JOIN ME. WE NEED
NOT WAIT FOR FATHER'S
RETURN ANY LONGER!



I'M SORRY, HAEI.

YOU HAVE
FALLEN, MY BROTHER.
YOU KNOW WHAT
I MUST DO.







YOU HAVE TO KEEP TRYING.

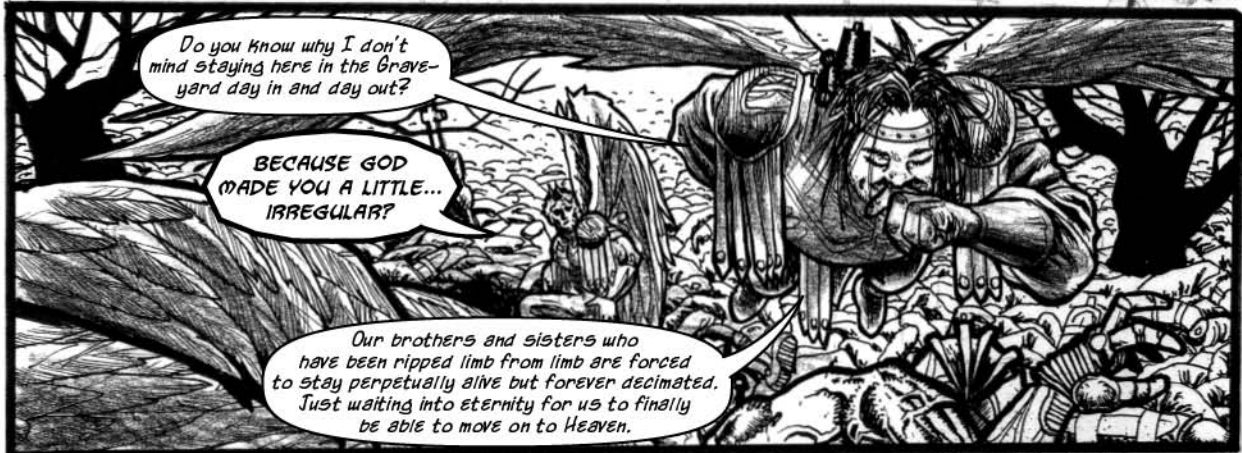
Why are you so desperate for this to work?

BECAUSE WE NEED HELP.

Have you consulted the other Arcs about this... project?



IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THIS, YOU SHOULD SAY SO PLAINLY.



Do you know why I don't mind staying here in the Graveyard day in and day out?

BECAUSE GOD MADE YOU A LITTLE... IRREGULAR?

Our brothers and sisters who have been ripped limb from limb are forced to stay perpetually alive but forever decimated. Just waiting into eternity for us to finally be able to move on to Heaven.



But they still jump at the chance to give up a piece of themselves to make one of their flying brethren complete again..

May I?



We are still good to each other for no other reason than it is in our hearts.

It gives me hope that whatever happens, there is enough good in our world to keep evil at bay.



..EVIL AT BAY..

DID IT JUST TALK?!



It's walking!
It's responding as
a unified being!

WHAT CAN
IT DO?

I'm
not sure.

ONLY ONE WAY
TO FIND OUT...

...PPHFIND OWWT...

END OF CHAPTER 3



HAEL HAD FALLEN. I HAD TO DESTROY HIM.



I'M SO SORRY.



WE CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE. WE NEVER SHOULD HAVE STARTED.

I KNOW THAT YOU'RE UPSET--

THERE ARE RULES, URIEL.

HIS RULES.

I KNOW THAT, BUT WHAT DOES IT MATTER IF I CAN COMFORT YOU RIGHT NOW?



IT MATTERS BECAUSE THEY ARE GOD'S WISHES, AND WE LIVE TO SERVE THEM.



WELL, I DON'T SEE GOD AROUND HERE. DO YOU?



NO!



STOP IT!

THESE ARE DARK THOUGHTS. HUMANS ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO FIGHT THEM OFF WITHOUT OUR HELP.

IF YOU DON'T STOP SHELTERING HER, SHE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF HERSELF.



SHE CAN'T DO IT ON HER OWN. IT IS MY JOB TO PROTECT HER. EVERY SINGLE SOUL IS IMPORTANT.

WHAT ABOUT THE TWELVE SOULS THAT WERE LOST DURING THE DEMONS' ATTACK ON SHANGHAI BECAUSE OF YOU?

OR THE FIVE OF YOUR GUARDIAN ANGELS WHO NOW LIVE AT THE GRAVEYARD, ALL BECAUSE YOU WERE PROTECTING THIS ONE HUMAN?

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO REALIZE THAT WE HAVE TO START LOOKING OUT FOR OURSELVES?



WE DESERVE A LIFE JUST AS MUCH AS THEY DO...



URIEL, I HAVE TO TELL YOU--



I CAN'T STOP NOW. WE'RE SO CLOSE.



GOD WILL RETURN SOON.

SHUIP

HE MUST SEE THAT WE ARE FOLLOWING HIS PLAN.



I AM GOD'S CHOSEN GUARDIAN.

PLUKK

SHUIP

I CANNOT DISAPPOINT HIM!



HAEL HAD TO UNDERSTAND...

SHU NNY

...THAT I COULD NOT STOP.



URIEL HAS TO UNDERSTAND THAT I CANNOT STOP.

SHHHHHHHHHHH



I CANNOT--

ROOARR

--STOP??



WHAT ARE YOU?!



HE'S THE ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS.

Hello, Azrael!

THE COMMUNION

HOW COULD YOU DO THIS WITHOUT CONSULTING US?

IT WAS AN EXPERIMENT TO SEE IF IT WAS EVEN POSSIBLE.

IT'S SICK. THIS ISN'T ONE OF GOD'S CREATIONS!

HE IS POWERFUL AND CAN BE DUPLICATED.

DON'T YOU SEE?

THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO REINFORCE OUR NUMBERS AND RECLAIM GOD'S LAND!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TABLE?

..BLLERHH..

NO, IT'S AN ABOMINATION!

THIS IS THE RESULT OF AN ARCHANGEL PLAYING GOD.

THIS ISN'T CREATING LIFE.

THIS IS TAKING HIS CREATIONS AND USING THEM FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

MICHAEL, THIS DOES SEEM LIKE A DANGEROUS STEP TO TAKE. THIS BEING DOESN'T SEEM INTELLIGENT. IT SEEMS TO BE...A MESS.

WE HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN WHAT IT IS CAPABLE OF. DOES IT LISTEN TO COMMANDS? CAN IT RESPOND?

It carries out commands. It also duplicates sounds that it hears but has not gone further than that.

IT'S NOT REAL LIFE.

REAL ENOUGH TO KICK SOME DEMON ASS!

ENOUGH! OUR
JOB HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO
PROTECT HUMANITY.

UNTIL RECENTLY, WE HAVE DONE
IT. BUT, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, IT IS
STARTING TO SLIP AWAY FROM US.

WE
ARE LOSING
SOULS.

WE
ARE LOSING
LAND.

WE ARE
LOSING EACH
OTHER.

THAT
CHANGES
NOW.

I'M NOT GOING
TO SURRENDER ANY
MORE LAND.

NO MATTER
WHAT.

THIS IS A NEW ERA,
AND I AM ASKING YOU TO
JOIN ME IN PRESERVING THIS
WORLD FOR AS LONG AS WE
CAN. NO MATTER WHAT.

To doing all
that we can.



HUMAN WORLD: ST. PETERSBURG

...BUT I DON'T THINK DRIVING THE SEVEN OF US APART IS THE WAY TO DO IT.

HERALD ANGEL! MESSENGER FROM THE ALMIGHTY!!



Azrael, you are not to call on me. I will appear when the time is right--

I MUST TELL THE OTHERS THAT GOD IS RETURNING. MICHAEL HAS BEGUN SOMETHING THAT CANNOT CONTINUE.

What has he done?

HE IS HAVING METATRON SEW TOGETHER PIECES FROM THE DESTROYED GRAVEYARD ANGELS TO MAKE NEW TROOPS.

THEY ARE CREATING UNGODLY CREATURES. IF THEY KNEW THAT GOD IS RETURNING, THEY WOULD STOP THIS MADNESS.

God chose you for a reason above the other Arcs. As long as you stay pure and continue on with His will, you will be rewarded.



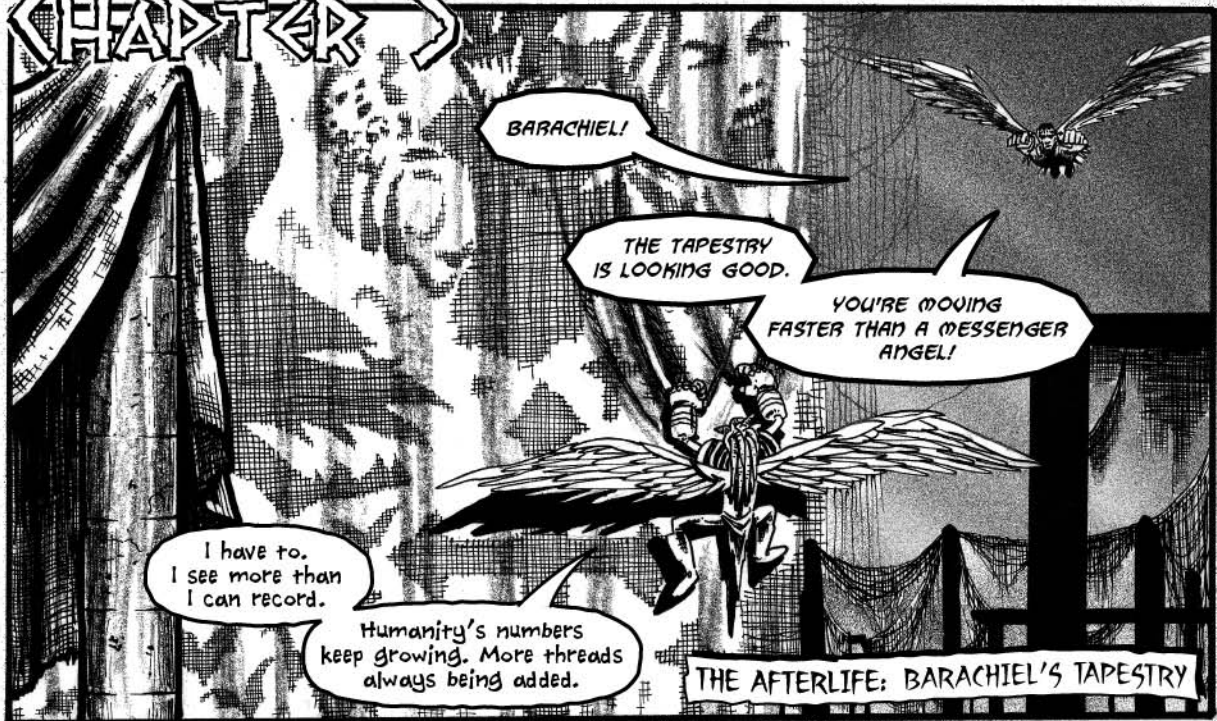
THE OTHERS WANT TO DO HIS WILL. THEY ARE JUST SCARED. BUT, IF I COULD EXPLAIN--

Patience, my dear. Just a few days more and all will be explained.



Did you retrieve the final crown point?

CHAPTER 5



BARACHIEL!

THE TAPESTRY IS LOOKING GOOD.

YOU'RE MOVING FASTER THAN A MESSENGER ANGEL!

I have to. I see more than I can record.

Humanity's numbers keep growing. More threads always being added.

THE AFTERLIFE: BARACHIEL'S TAPESTRY



YOU DIDN'T VOTE WITH US ON CREATING THE PIECED ARMY. I CAME TO ASK WHY...

I had other things on my mind.

Difficult to dissect pros and cons when you are witnessing the actions of every being on Earth.



SNAP



SINCE YOU SEE SO MUCH, I FIGURED YOU WOULD KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE WHAT WE SHOULD DO.

Let that go!

Yes, and I am not allowed to share what I see.

You know that.

This is not your job, Michael. Leave me to it!

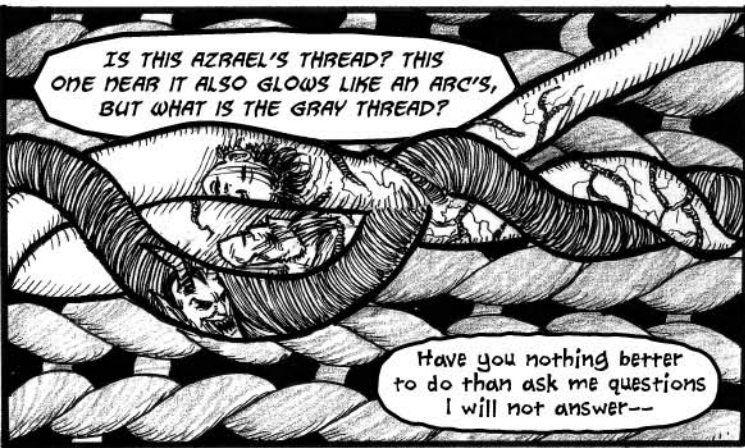
JUST TRYING TO HELP.



SUCH A BEAUTIFUL COLOR.

The Arcs always have the brightest.

WHO?



IS THIS AZRAEL'S THREAD? THIS ONE NEAR IT ALSO GLOWS LIKE AN ARC'S, BUT WHAT IS THE GRAY THREAD?

Have you nothing better to do than ask me questions I will not answer--



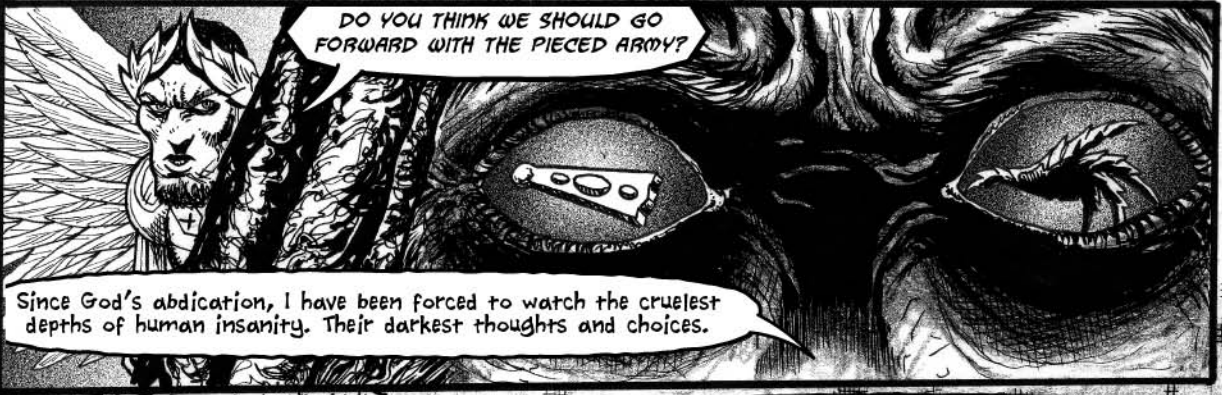
Argh! These threads are so fine!



I RESPECT YOUR WORK, MY BROTHER.

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU SEE.

I JUST WANT YOUR COUNSEL.



DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD GO FORWARD WITH THE PIECED ARMY?

Since God's abdication, I have been forced to watch the cruelest depths of human insanity. Their darkest thoughts and choices.



I have seen the world getting worse and worse, but I would never have voted with you in the creation of this beast.

So, understand that it means something when I say I am WITH YOU now.

Make all the damned angels that you can...

HELL

...because we're going to need them.

THEY NEED TO BE INTACT, ASMODEUS!

THEY'RE STILL IN ONE PIECE.

FOR NOW.

LUCIFER'S PIT

THE ABDUCTED ANGELS





LISTEN TO ME. THEY ARE CREATING NEW ANGELS.

OUR PRINCE WON'T LIKE THAT.



IT SHOULDN'T MATTER. AZRAEL DELIVERED TO US.



WHERE IS THE GAUNTLET?



WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE TO WIELD THIS OVER THE ANGELS' WORLD!

THEY WOULD DESTROY YOU IN SECONDS.



WE HAVE A SPECIAL PLAN IN MIND FOR THIS POINT...



...DON'T WE?

YOU'LL NEVER WIN.

THIS WORLD WASN'T CREATED FOR EVIL TO OVERTAKE IT.

WHERE FREE WILL IS GIVEN, IT CAN BE EXPLOITED.

OUR DARK PRINCE DID IT TO THE CHILDREN OF EDEN, AND NOW HE'S HATCHED A PLAN TO TOPPLE YOU ALL FROM YOUR PERCH IN THE AFTERLIFE.

THE HIDDEN APOCALYPTIC TEXTS OF THE BIBLE TELL OF THE POWER IN GOD'S CROWN.

WHEN HE ANOINTED YOUR ARCHANGELS WITH THE POINTS, HE WAS GIVING THEM PIECES OF HIS POWER.

THEY WERE TOO FOOLISH TO REALIZE THAT.

WE ARE NOT.

WE USED BLOOD FROM THE ARCHANGELS TO CAST A SPELL AND CREATE MY DISGUISE.

CONSTANT ATTACKS TO KEEP THE ARS OFF BALANCE AND PUT PRESSURE ON THE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR TROOPS.

EXPLOITING AN ARS'S PRIDE TO MANIPULATE HIM INTO HANDING OVER THE FINAL CROWN POINT.



THIS GAUNTLET WAS FORGED IN THE LAKE OF FIRE AND HOLDS THE POWER OF HELL'S FLAMES INSIDE IT.

ADD THAT WITH GOD'S CROWN POINT, AND WE WILL FINALLY HAVE THE POWER TO OVERTAKE THE ANGELS. . . AND THE WORLD.

AND WHAT POWER IS THAT?



AARRGGH
ZZZZZZZZ



THE POWER TO KILL ANGELS.

GUARDIANS, THERE'S A SHOOTOUT IN PROGRESS! NEW WAVE OF DEMONS COMING IN FROM THE WEST.

ENCIRCLE THE SOULS TO PREVENT POSSESSIONS. KEEP THEM SAFE FROM THE BULLETS!!

IF WE DESTROY THAT STREETLIGHT, THEIR AIM WILL BE COMPROMISED!

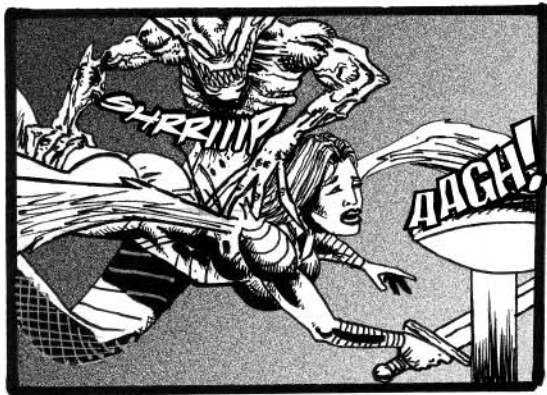
I'VE GOT IT!

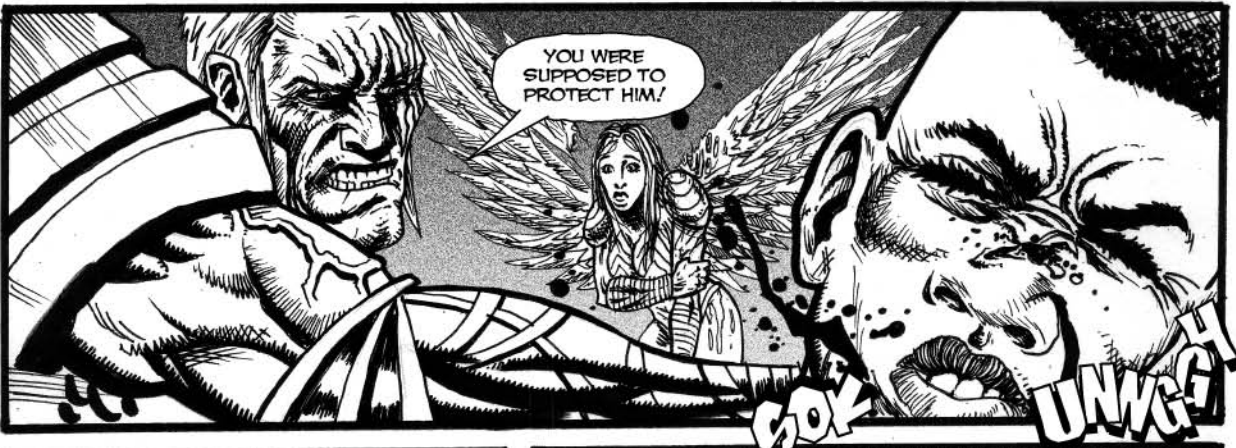
BLAM

BLAM!

FNK







YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO PROTECT HIM!

GOX UNKGH



HE'S DEAD BECAUSE OF YOU!

AND, WE'VE LOST WHATEVER SOUL FIRED THAT BULLET! THEY ARE DAMNED NOW--

AZRAEL!



URIEL? WHAT ARE YOU--

COME WITH ME.



HUMAN WORLD: CHICAGO

HOW DID THIS...

I FAILED HER...



THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO DO HERE.

SHE HAS MADE HER CHOICE.

Z, I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARED FOR HER. JUST TAKE A MOMENT.



WE DON'T HAVE A MOMENT!

THERE ARE A THOUSAND MORE PEOPLE OUT THERE WITH RAZORS TO THEIR WRISTS RIGHT NOW.

I HAVE TO STOP EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM!



WHAT MADE HER SO SPECIAL TO YOU?

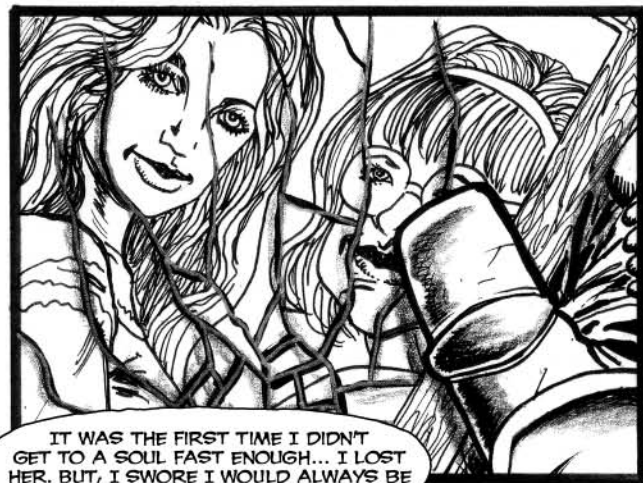


HER MOTHER WAS THE FIRST SOUL I EVER LOST.

IT WAS THE START OF ALL THIS, WHEN THE WORLD BEGAN TO HAVE TOO MANY SOULS TO PROTECT.

THERE WEREN'T ENOUGH ANGELS TO HANDLE IT ANY MORE.

WE TRIED AS BEST WE COULD, RUNNING OURSELVES RAGGED, BUT SHE--



IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I DIDN'T GET TO A SOUL FAST ENOUGH... I LOST HER. BUT, I SWORE I WOULD ALWAYS BE THERE FOR HER DAUGHTER...



YOU CAN'T PROTECT THEM ALL, AZRAEL.

I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE PROTECTOR. THE GUARDIAN...

HELL: LUCIFER'S PIT



THE GAUNTLET WORKS ON ALL OF THE ANGEL FACES!

WHAT NOW? GO UP INTO THEIR WORLD AND START CHASING DOWN SOME ANGELS?



DON'T BE A FOOL!

YOU'D BE LUCKY TO KILL TWO ANGELS BEFORE THEY SLICE THE GLOVE CLEAN OFF YOUR ARM.

THEN WHAT DO WE USE IT FOR?



TO DESTROY THEM FROM THE INSIDE. THERE IS A DIVISION WITHIN THE ARCS. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE IT STAYS THAT WAY.

SEND SWARM DEMONS TO ATTACK THE PROTECTED LANDS. WE NEED THE ANGELS SCATTERED AND OFF BALANCE FOR OUR PLAN TO WORK.

SHOULD WE ASK LUCIFER TO RALLY HIS MOST POWERFUL?



I THINK HE ALREADY HAS.

HUMAN WORLD: CHICAGO



URIEL, GIVE US A MOMENT. I MUST SPEAK WITH AZRAEL.

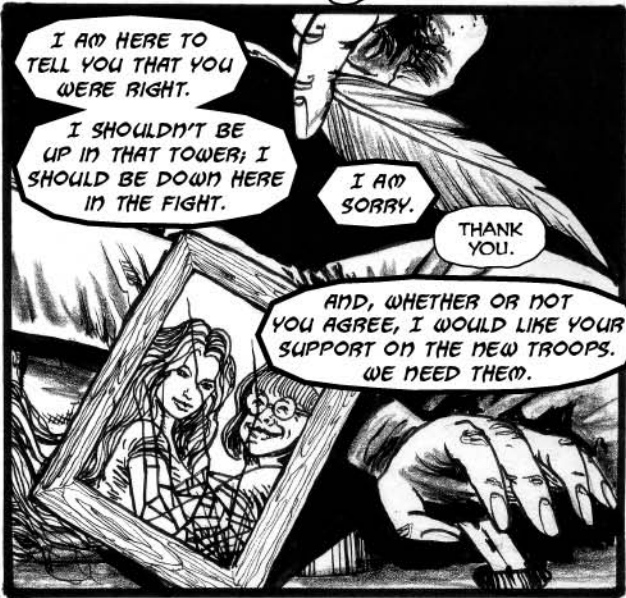
OF COURSE, MICHAEL.

THOOM



AZRAEL, THESE ARE DARK TIMES. DIFFICULT DECISIONS MUST BE MADE.

WE WILL NOT ALWAYS AGREE, BUT WE MUST OFFER EACH OTHER RESPECT.



I AM HERE TO TELL YOU THAT YOU WERE RIGHT.

I SHOULDN'T BE UP IN THAT TOWER; I SHOULD BE DOWN HERE IN THE FIGHT.

I AM SORRY.

THANK YOU.

AND, WHETHER OR NOT YOU AGREE, I WOULD LIKE YOUR SUPPORT ON THE NEW TROOPS. WE NEED THEM.



I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU WERE WITH GOD WHEN HE LEFT. HE CONFIDED IN YOU ABOUT HIS RETURN.

DON'T YOU WANT TO SHOW HIM THAT WE CAN HOLD HIS KINGDOM TOGETHER ON OUR OWN?

WE HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO MAINTAIN CONTROL FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. NO ONE KNOWS WHEN HE WILL RETURN.

YOU'RE RIGHT. NO ONE KNOWS...



WE HAVE TO STAND TOGETHER. WE ARE ALL EACH OTHER HAS RIGHT NOW.

I WISH I COULD HAVE BEEN WITH YOU WHEN FATHER LEFT...



GOD'S PALACE: BEFORE THE ABDICATION

FATHER, I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

There is nothing for you to understand, my child. You and the Ares shall oversee humanity.

BUT, WHY? WHY ARE YOU LEAVING US?

Michael, it is not your place to question. I love my creations.

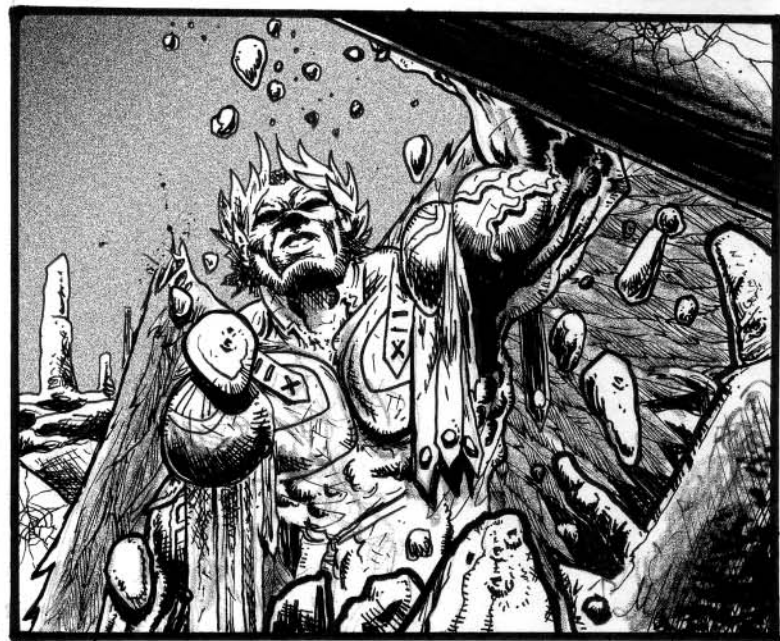
WHAT ARE WE TO DO? WILL YOU RETURN TO US?!

You must make your own choices now, my son. You are old enough.

BUT, WILL YOU RETURN?!

FATHER!! WILL YOU RETURN TO US?!?!

You must make your own choices now, my son. You are old enough.





MICHAEL?



OUR FATHER
WILL RETURN. WE WILL
ALL BE WELCOMED
INTO HEAVEN.



HE PROMISED
ME THAT WHEN
HE LEFT.



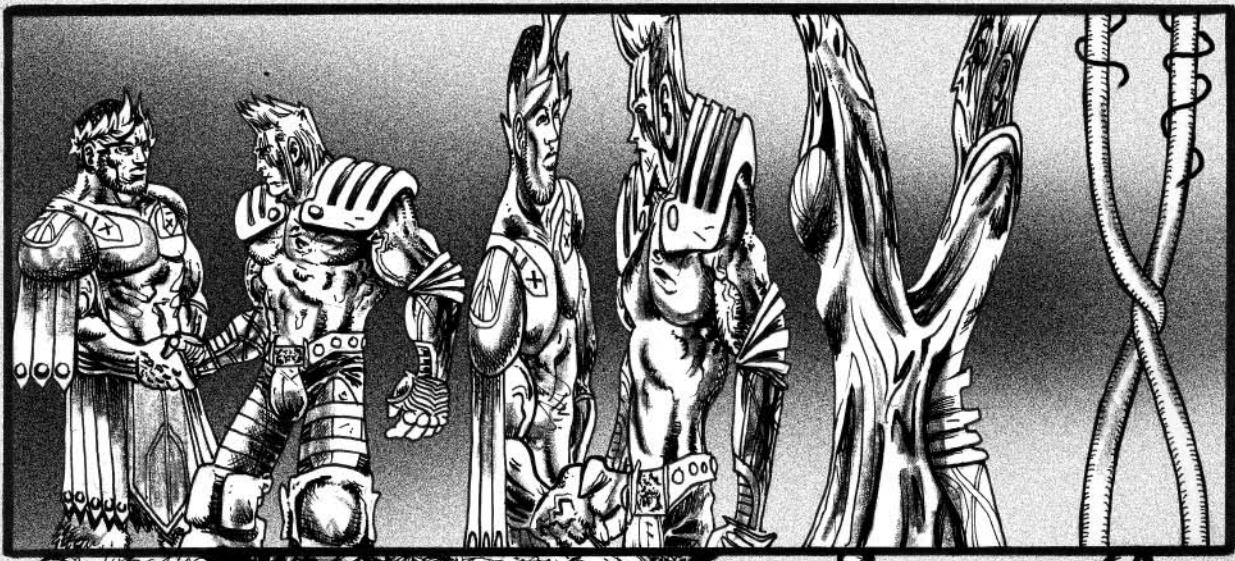
IF ONLY WE
KNEW WHEN HE
WILL RETURN.



HOWEVER LONG IT TAKES,
WE'LL GET THERE TOGETHER.

AGREED,
MY BROTHER.

TOGETHER.



END OF BOOK 1

MICHAEL D. POISSON is a Los Angeles-based writer working toward a career in television. He grew up on a healthy diet of *X-Men*, *Buffy*, and the *Scream* franchise, which should explain all of the angst. Mike counts himself ridiculously lucky to have assembled such an amazing and talented group of collaborators who have brought *The Arcs* to life. He is forever in their debt for helping him to live his dream of creating comics! Mike's newest play, *A Whore and a Fag*, will be produced in Los Angeles in the Fall of 2013.

MATT JACOBS is an illustrator and production artist living in Los Angeles, CA. Having attended The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art, Matt now makes his living as an artist in the comic book and film industries. Matt has worked for such companies as Image Comics, Arcana Studios, DC Comics, Dynamite Entertainment, Bandito Brothers, and 4kids Entertainment, and continues to draw comics, design, and storyboard for an ever expanding list of clients.

OCEANO RANSFORD is currently a letterer and graphic designer for the entertainment industry. He has designed background prop graphics for such films as *Fight Club* and *Black Dablia*, as well as for network television's *Bones* and *How I Met Your Mother*. As a letterer, his previous work can be seen in the pages of the graphic novel *The Molting*. Any other credits are strictly hearsay and cannot be proven in a court of law.

CARLOS BADILLA rocketed from a doomed hospital in Santiago, Chile, 31 years ago to the tiny country town of Melipilla. He was raised by a kind couple who never quite understood their son's fascination with comics and superheroes. After years of training in his arctic fortress, he became a comic book writer, penciller, and colorist for several self-published books in his country and eventually found his way to the US market, where he has colored books like *DC Retroactive: Batman and Justice League*, *Hack/Slash*, *Ex Sanguine*, *The Adventures of Augusta Wind*, *Dead Walker*, *Graveslinger*, *Gutwrencher*, *X-Files*, *Wildcats*, and a good amount of covers. He carries on a neverending battle to get a monthly book and pay the bills.





"*The Arcs* is like *They Live* with angels and demons. Like much from Fanboy Comics, this book isn't for the faint of heart, but if you want something with some gravitas and an interesting take on religious mythology, definitely give this book a shot."

- Matt Hawkins, *Think Tank*, President/COO of Top Cow Productions, Inc.

"*The Arcs* is wicked and atmospheric. The art of Matt Jacobs delivers on every level; it's emotive, cruel, and brimming with detail and intensity."

- Joey Esposito, *Captain Ultimate*, Senior Editor at IGN

HOW STRONG IS YOUR FAITH?

Centuries after God's abdication from Earth, the seven Archangels are trapped in a losing war against Lucifer and his demonic forces. Unable to ascend into Heaven, unable to even die, the Arcs were tasked by the Almighty to keep humanity safe from Lucifer until His return. But, as time ticks on, as more and more angels are clawed to shreds by the demons, as angels begin to lose faith and join the hellions, the Arcs must face the real question: what if God isn't coming back to save them?



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