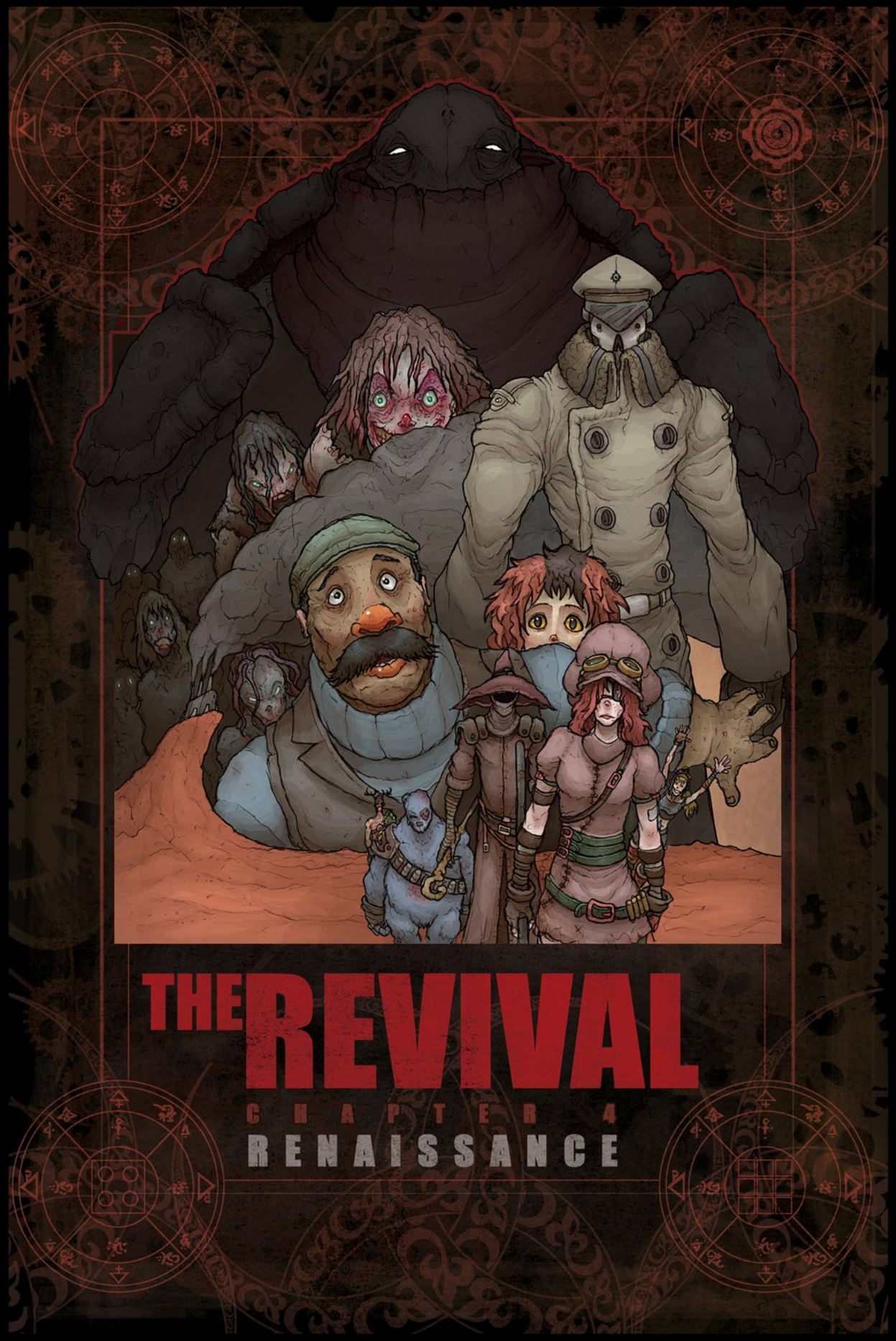
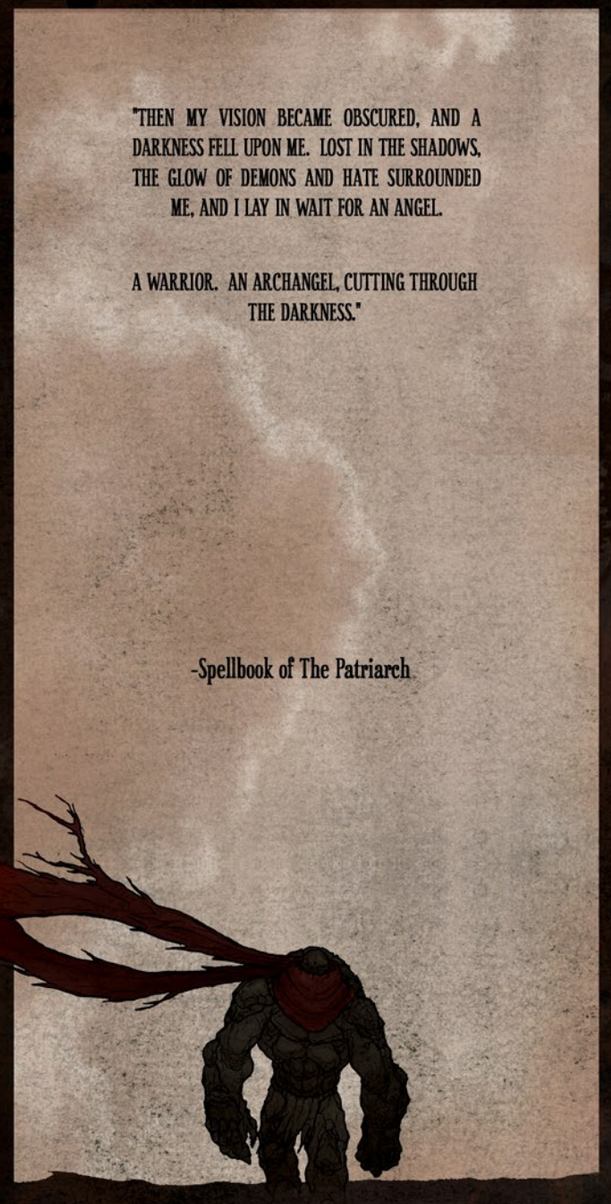

THE REVIVAL
CHAPTER 4
RENAISSANCE

"THEN MY VISION BECAME OBSCURED, AND A DARKNESS FELL UPON ME. LOST IN THE SHADOWS, THE GLOW OF DEMONS AND HATE SURROUNDED ME, AND I LAY IN WAIT FOR AN ANGEL.

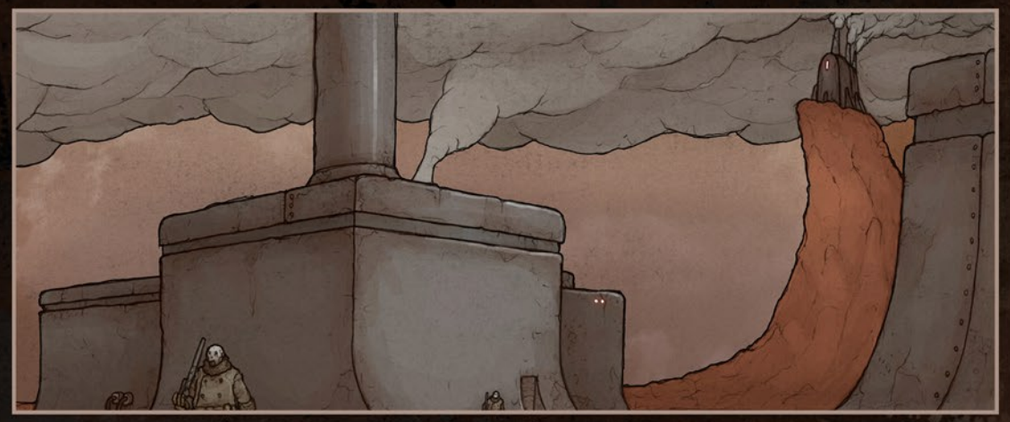
A WARRIOR. AN ARCHANGEL, CUTTING THROUGH THE DARKNESS."

-Spellbook of The Patriarch

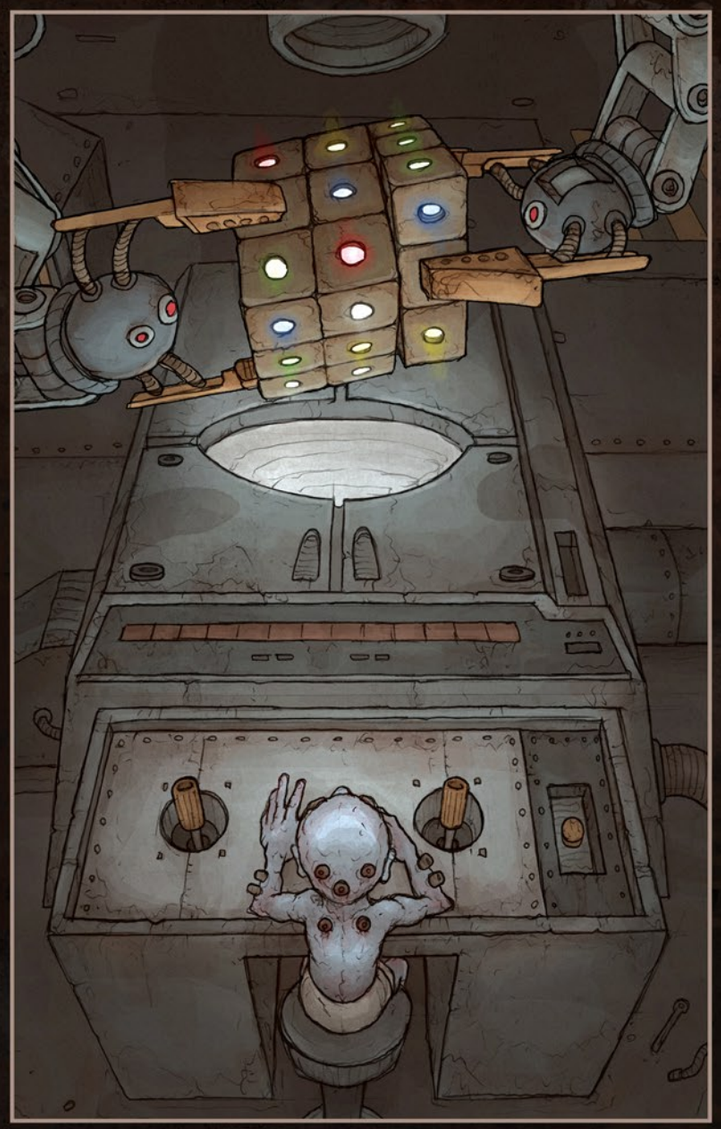


CHAPTER FOUR
RENAISSANCE

Another dawn. The promise of a new day doesn't diminish the gloom of The Engine.



...Particularly in its highest tower, where little notice is given to night and day.



SURELY WITH YOUR INTELLECT, THE SOLUTION CANNOT BE FAR FROM YOUR GRASP.

DON'T PATRONIZE ME, PRINCESS.

WITH ALL DUE REVERENCE, SIRE, I AM NO LONGER A PRINCESS. I AM A COMMANDER.

SURE. WHATEVER. JUST SEND OUT ANOTHER EXCAVATION UNIT TO THE DESERT. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING OUT THERE THAT'S OF USE TO ME. SOMETHING ELSE THE ARCHITECTS LEFT BEHIND. SOME SORT OF CLUE...

AT ONCE. ALSO, INSPECTOR IS PREPARING TO LEAVE. HE SHALL INVESTIGATE THE ALTERCATION THAT TOOK PLACE IN SECTOR 7G... IT APPEARS MUTANTS HAVE AMBUSHED OUR UNIT NEAR THE SEALED STRUCTURE.

FINE. JUST GO. I NEED TO THINK. I NEED TO FIGURE THIS OUT...

AS YOU WISH.

Elsewhere, a new day brings more promise, but still no shortage of uncertainty.

THIS ISN'T RIGHT. I DON'T TRUST HIM. HE'S UP TO SOMETHING.

WHEN 'AS RED LED US WRONG B'FORE?

HELL IF I'M LEAVING WITHOUT A SOUVENIR...

I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT THIS MEANS TO US.

THE TIME HAS COME, AND I CANNOT SPIN MY WHEELS HERE ANY LONGER. IF THERE IS ANY CHANCE OF STOPPING EGO, THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.

THERE MUST BE SOME HOPE.

I WOULD NOT DARE TO HOPE, BUT THIS MAGICIAN MAY YET HAVE A FEW TRICKS UP HIS SLEEVE.

MY FRIENDS, THE TIME FOR HIDING HAS CEASED. WE RETURN TO OUR LANDS TO FACE OUR OPPRESSOR--TO VICTORY OR TO RUIN.

WE ARE OFF!

WHAT'S WITH THE CART? ONE OF YOUR PUPPETS GONNA PULL THAT THING?

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING.

WALKED RIGHT INTO THAT ONE, RAINBOW.

WHAT'D YOU PUT IN THIS THING? YOUR ROCK COLLECTION?

ONE MUST BEAR THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY TO BETTER APPRECIATE THE PAST.

NOW, KEEP PACE! WE MUST NOT TARRY. DAYLIGHT IS A PRIZED COMMODITY IN THIS DARK WORLD.

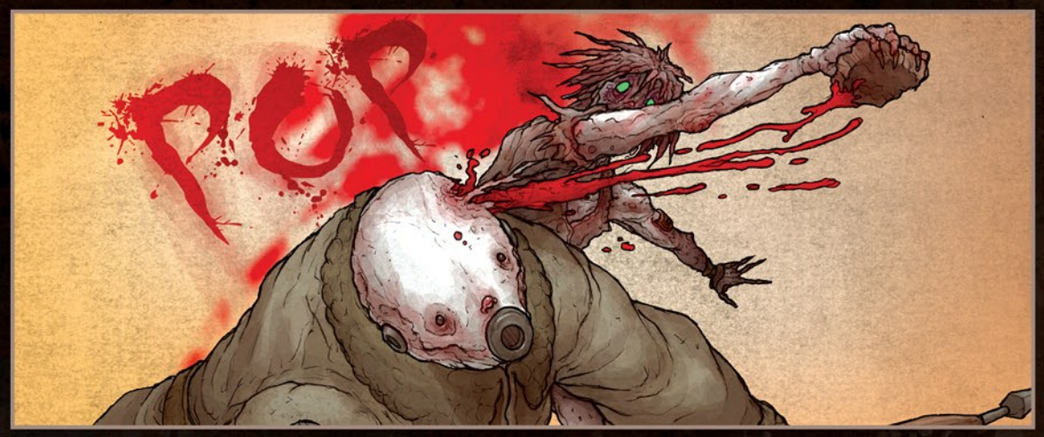
AGREED.

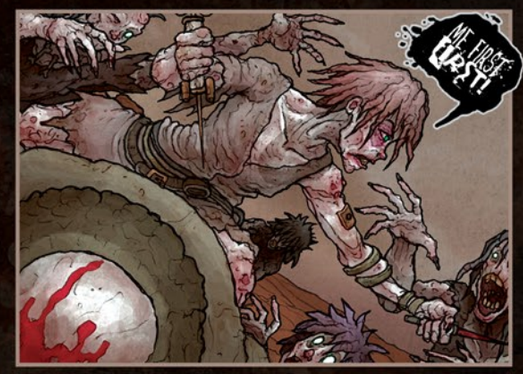
Daylight is valuable, but after their skirmish in the abandoned bunker, they know that it's no longer a guaranteed guard against The Holos. Their enemies have become as desperate as they, making every step in this desolate world a risk. Danger lurks around every corner.

...A lesson patrolling Cabbage Heads are not nearly wise enough to. Even under the shadow of their leader's grand factories, soldiers have still become the victims of The Holos' manic attempts to sate their cravings.

SNAP

KRACKLE





When The Holos escaped from The Engine, they became the bane of The Cabbage Heads.
Injected with Ego's various serums during their experiments, their bodies developed a dependence to the chemicals.

And the only way to get their fix...

...is to inject themselves with the clone's spinal fluid.

WHO'S NEXT?

next?

SLURCH

KLANG

KREEEEK

The Holos might be insane, but they're not stupid. Even in their madness, they have learned to fear the man in the mask.

DEAD FACE HERE HERE!

WE GO! TAKE KILL TO TUNNELS. TO DARKNESS WHERE WE SAFE. WE, SAFE!

BRING MY MARX AROUND.

yes, sir.

He is known as The Inspector.

The pitiless right hand of Ego.

He carried out much of Ego's atrocities during the war, and hunted down any surviving rebels afterward. He doesn't take prisoners, unless ordered to.

sir

your vehicle is ready, sir.

VERY GOOD. SCAN THIS SECTOR AND REPORT BACK TO ME WHEN I RETURN.

Nobody knows who he was before the war, or how he came to be in Ego's employ...

...but his presence has left its mark.

FORGIVE ME FOR ASKING, PESSIMIST, BUT YOUR SCARS...

WHAT ABOUT THEM?

OH, HERE WE GO... I *NEVER* GET TIRED OF *THIS* STORY. WHO NEEDS FIGHT SCENES WHEN WE CAN HAVE MORE FLASHBACKS?

WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED TO YOUR PEOPLE? WHAT DID THE ENGINE WANT WITH YOU?

CRIPES.

THEY DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING FROM *US*. IT WAS OUR MOUNTAIN THEY WANTED. THE MINERALS INSIDE IT. WE JUST HAPPENED TO BE IN THE WAY.

MINERALS? YOU MEAN *CARBODIOXY-EFFERVESCENITE?* WE KNEW THE CLOUD MOUNTAIN WAS RICH WITH IT. I DO NOT HAVE THE HEART TO IMAGINE HOW EGO MADE USE OF IT.

WHA 'CIS IT?

IT IS CALLED "SPARK STONE" IN COMMON SPEECH--A MOLECULAR CRYSTALINE MINERAL RICH WITH VOLATILE ENERGY. IT WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT POWER SOURCE FOR ANYONE WILLING TO TAME IT.

...AND WILLING TO *TAKE* IT. EGO ENSLAVED US AND FORCED US TO MINE OUR OWN MOUTNAIN.

I SEE IT EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYE...

"THEY CAME AFTER THE WAR AND PUT US IN CHAINS. WE WERE PACIFISTS. PEACEFUL. WE DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE WAR AND WE DIDN'T WANT TO, BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER. WE BECAME ANOTHER ONE OF THEIR MACHINES."

"THE MINES CHANGED US. THE FUMES, THE DUST... IT DYED OUR FUR, POISONED OUR LUNGS, BURNED AND CRACKLED ON OUR TONGUES... AND IF WE STOPPED WORKING, *HE* FOUND US."

"THE INSPECTOR. THAT MONSTER. HE OVERSAW THE ENTIRE OPERATION. HE BRANDED US, TORTURED US, WHIPPED US. HE BEAT US IF WE TALKED, AND KILLED ANYONE HE THOUGHT WASN'T WORKING HARD ENOUGH."

HOW DID YOU ESCAPE?

"I WASN'T LIKE THEM, WIZARD. MY PEOPLE. I WAS DIFFERENT. I WAS NEVER REALLY A PACIFIST. MY BROTHERS CONVINCED THEMSELVES WE COULD STOP THE GENOCIDE THROUGH PEACEFUL MEANS... THAT IF WE STARED DOWN OUR ENEMIES WITH CARING EYES, WE WOULD... *SWAY THEIR HEARTS*. I KNEW BETTER. OUR ENEMIES HAD NO HEARTS. I JUST WANTED TO EVISCERATE THEM. MAKE THEM PAY... DO TO THEM WHAT THEY'D DONE TO US."

"FINALLY I'D HAD ENOUGH. ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE INSPECTOR WAS REPORTING TO EGO, I BROKE MY CHAINS AND STORMED THE GUARDS. THEN I RAN, INTO THE MINING TUNNELS BELOW THE MOUNTAIN.

I WAS SURE THE OTHER BEARS WOULD FOLLOW ME ONCE I MADE A STAND, BUT THEY STAYED. DAMMIT, THEY *STAYED!* STAYED TO DIE IN THE ROCKS. I WANTED TO GO BACK FOR THEM, BUT THEY MADE THEIR CHOICE."

"WHEN I CAME OUT INTO THE LIGHT, MY WORLD HAD CHANGED. I WAS ABSORBED INTO THE WAR MY PEOPLE TRIED TO AVOID. BUT I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO. I HAD TO AVENGE MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS. I WILL MAKE THE INSPECTOR SUFFER. I WILL *KILL* HIM. AND WHEN HE BEGS ME FOR MERCY, I'LL SHOW HIM THE SAME COMPASSION HE SHOWED US."

INDEED.

THERE ARE MANY THINGS EGO HAS DONE SINCE MY FLIGHT. I LAMENT THE FATE OF YOUR PEOPLE.

THE SAD TRUTH IS THAT FEW FARED ANY BETTER THAN YOU OR YOUR BRETHREN. WE WOULD DO WELL TO LEAVE THE PAST BE, AND FOCUS INSTEAD ON THE *FUTURE* OF OUR LANDS. JUSTICE MUST RETURN.

SAVE IT. YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE TO HELP, AND YOU DIDN'T.

THIS *MIGHT* BE CHANGING THE SUBJECT, BUT IF A UNICORN HAS WINGS, IS IT STILL A UNICORN, OR DOES IT BECOME A PEGASUS?

HUH..?

THAT'S ENOUGH. WE SHOULD ALL BE QUIET OR WE'LL ATTRACT MORE WORMS.

NOW, LET'S PICK UP THE PACE. DUSK WILL CREEP IN BEFORE WE KNOW IT.

"...AND SOMEHOW I FEEL LIKE I'M NEEDED BACK HOME."

KITTY? SWEETIE? WHERE ARE YOU? PLEASE! WE SHOULDN'T BE IN THE TUNNELS!

Tater knows this well. They found out the hard way that The Holos sometimes traverse the tunnels during the day, to stay out of the light. One of the pitfalls of using these old passageways.

As the light goes out, cries of agony echo off the tunnel walls.

...But they don't come from the expected victims.

GLURRK!

Something else is in the tunnel.
A shadow among specters.

SKREEEE!!!

YAK!!

WHAT IS IT?!

WHA..?! KITTY, STAY BEHIND ME! W-WHERE'S THAT LIGHT..?!

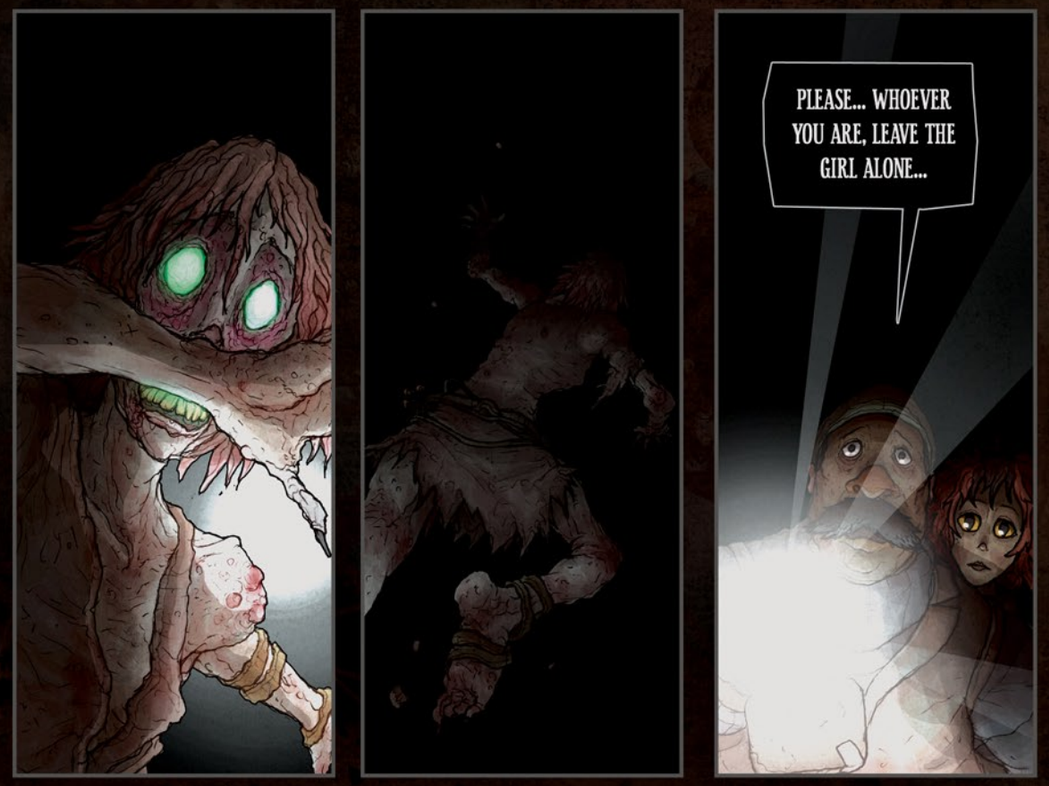
GROWL!

GOT IT!

HURK!

CLICK

BUMP



NEXT CHAPTER: HOMECOMING

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