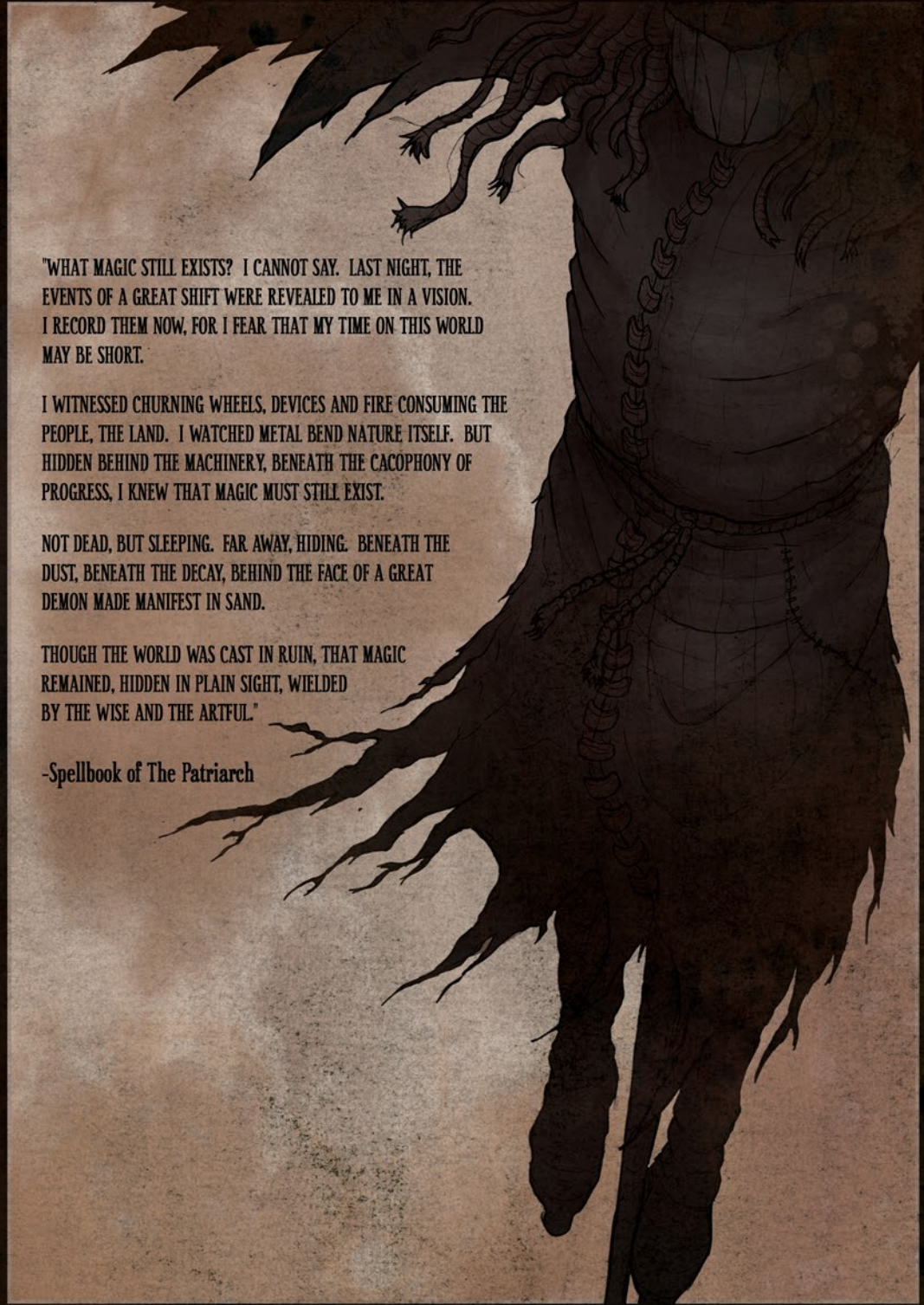




THE REVIVAL

CHAPTER 2
THE FORBIDDEN LANDS



"WHAT MAGIC STILL EXISTS? I CANNOT SAY. LAST NIGHT, THE EVENTS OF A GREAT SHIFT WERE REVEALED TO ME IN A VISION. I RECORD THEM NOW, FOR I FEAR THAT MY TIME ON THIS WORLD MAY BE SHORT.

I WITNESSED CHURNING WHEELS, DEVICES AND FIRE CONSUMING THE PEOPLE, THE LAND. I WATCHED METAL BEND NATURE ITSELF. BUT HIDDEN BEHIND THE MACHINERY, BENEATH THE CACOPHONY OF PROGRESS, I KNEW THAT MAGIC MUST STILL EXIST.

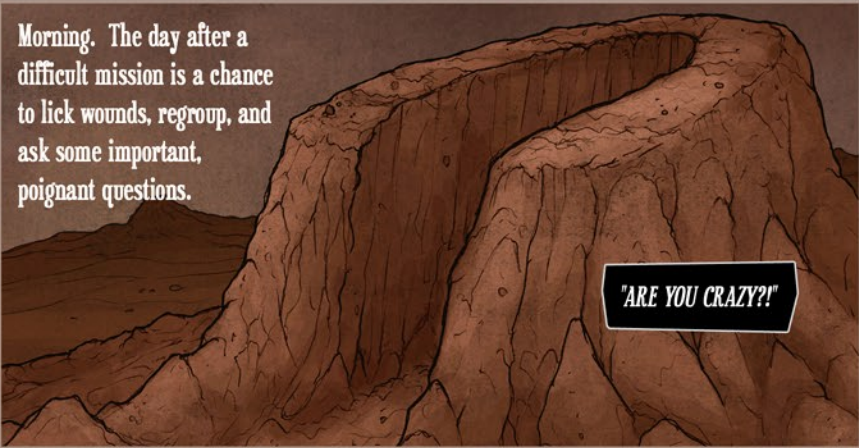
NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPING. FAR AWAY, HIDING. BENEATH THE DUST, BENEATH THE DECAY, BEHIND THE FACE OF A GREAT DEMON MADE MANIFEST IN SAND.

THOUGH THE WORLD WAS CAST IN RUIN, THAT MAGIC REMAINED, HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT, WIELDED BY THE WISE AND THE ARTFUL."

-Spellbook of The Patriarch

CHAPTER TWO THE FORBIDDEN LANDS

Morning. The day after a difficult mission is a chance to lick wounds, regroup, and ask some important, poignant questions.



"ARE YOU CRAZY?!"

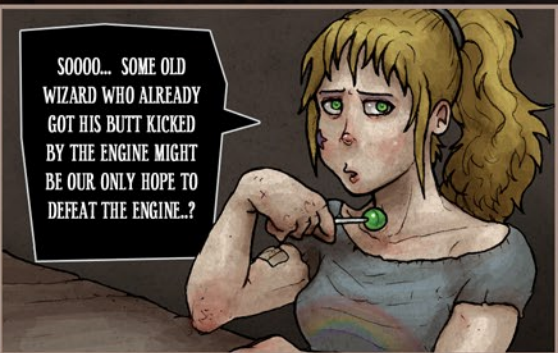
THAT'S NO WAY TO ADDRESS A SUPERIOR, RAINBOW.



JUST LET ME READ. "EVEN THE POWERFUL NECROMANCER HAS SUPPOSEDLY FLED AND GONE INTO HIDING. THE BASTARD. HOW CAN HE HIDE WHEN WE NEED HIM? THEY SAY HE'S LEFT TO THE FORBIDDEN LANDS. LET THE DESERTER ENJOY THE REWARD FOR HIS COWARDICE--TO LIVE OUT HIS DAYS IN A BARREN, ACCURSED DESERT."



IF WE CAN FIND THIS "NECROMANCER", HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP US.



SOOOO... SOME OLD WIZARD WHO ALREADY GOT HIS BUTT KICKED BY THE ENGINE MIGHT BE OUR ONLY HOPE TO DEFEAT THE ENGINE..?



ACCORDING TO THE JOURNAL HE WAS THE MOST POWERFUL MAGICIAN IN THE KINGDOM, SO LET'S HOPE SO.



WE HAVE MORE BULLETS THAN HOPE, AND WE SHOULD SAVE THEM FOR PROTECTING OURSELVES, NOT RUNNING AROUND ON A WHIM.



LOOK... WE'VE SURVIVED THIS LONG, BUT THINGS ARE GETTING WORSE. WE LIVE LIKE RATS, SCURRYING AND HIDING IN FEAR. IF WE HAD A SLIM CHANCE TO CHANGE IT, SHOULDN'T WE TAKE IT?



IT'S CALLED THE FORBIDDEN LANDS FOR A REASON, RED. I DOUBT WE'D FIND THIS GUY IF WE TRIED. AND EVEN IF WE DID, THEN WHAT? DECLARE WAR ON THE ENGINE? THAT'S INSANE. WE'RE NOT AN ARMY OR A RESISTANCE ANYMORE. WE'RE JUST TRYING TO SURVIVE.



IF WE DO NOTHING, WE'RE DOOMED ANYWAY.



YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE MILTON AND BRADLEY, AND THAT KIND OF THINKING GOT THEM KILLED. THEY COULDN'T LET THE WAR GO. THEY DIDN'T WANT TO SURVIVE, THEY WANTED TO WIN.



THEY WERE OUR FRIENDS. GOOD MEN. SOLDIERS.



YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. THEY WERE SOLDIERS. AND WE ARE SURVIVORS.



...WE'RE NOT SURVIVING. WE'RE JUST DYING A SLOWER DEATH THAN THEY DID.



...I THINK WHAT PESSIMISTIC MEANT'S THAT HE'S WORRIED F'OUR SAFETY. IDN'T THAT WHAT Y' MEANT?



NO, HE'S RIGHT. IT'S A LONG SHOT, AND IT'S PROBABLY FOOLISH. BUT I'M TIRED OF HIDING. I'M TIRED OF SCAVENGING.



...BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO RISK EVERYTHING. IT'S MY JOB TO KEEP YOU ALL SAFE, SO I'LL GO MYSELF.



PACK TWO LUNCHES, CHIEF. I'M COMING, TOO.



M'COO! YOU BOTH'LL NEED A SCOUT.



WELL, LA-DEE-SNARFIN' DAH! LOOKS LIKE I HAVE TO GO NOW. THANKS A LOT.



Red doesn't like to put her troops in dangerous situations, but it's the ones staying behind that she's most worried about.

YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT?

WE'LL BE FINE, LIKE WE ALWAYS ARE. YOU ALL BE SAFE, NOW.



KITTY, YOU'RE UP EARLY.



I HAVE TO LEAVE AGAIN, BUT I'LL BE BACK SOON.



I'LL BE OKAY.



I'M GETTING REALLY TIRED OF THESE BORING LANDSCAPES. WHY DOES THE POST-APOCALYPSE ALWAYS HAVE TO BE SO DRAB AND BROWN?

HOW MANY COLORS WOULD Y'EXPECT T'SEE AFTER THE END O'THA WORLD?

I DON'T KNOW. BUT THIS ALL JUST SEEMS SO CLICHÉ.

CLICHÉ? EXACTLY 'OW MANY POST-APOCALYPSES HAVE YA LIVED THROUGH?

SEVEN. AT LEAST.

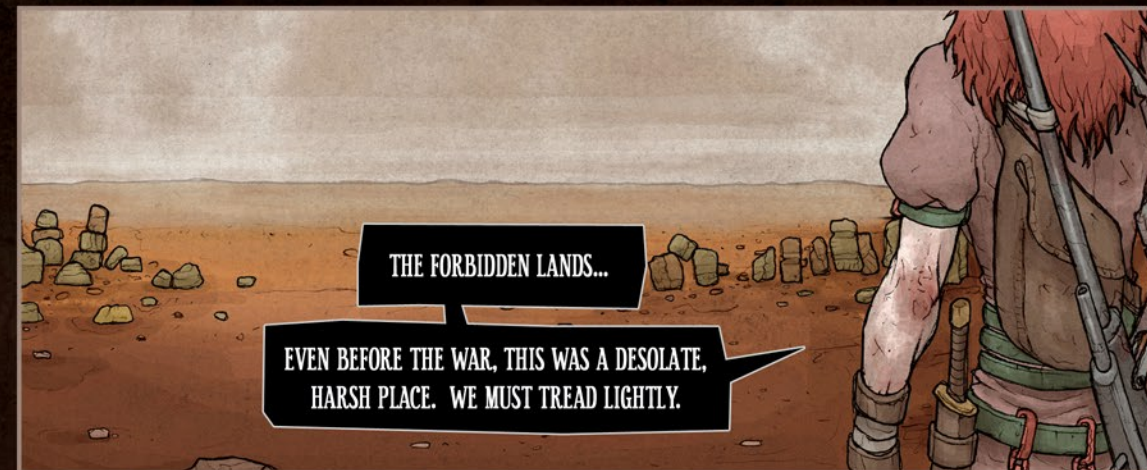


WOULD YOU TWO SHUT UP?! THIS IS A MISSION, NOT A DAMN PICNIC.

DON'T BE SUCH A GRUMPY BEAR.



WE'RE HERE.



THE FORBIDDEN LANDS...

EVEN BEFORE THE WAR, THIS WAS A DESOLATE, HARSH PLACE. WE MUST TREAD LIGHTLY.

WE ALWAYS DO SUCH FUN THINGS TOGETHER! I LOVE YOU GUYS.



STAY CLOSE AND BE QUIET. WE'RE NOT WELCOME HERE.



WHAT EXACTLY MAKES THIS PLACE SO "FORBIDDEN"? IT'S JUST ANOTHER BORING DESERT. WITH MIST.

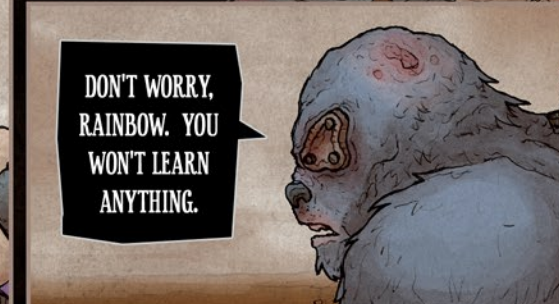
HAVEN'T Y'HEARD THE LEGENDS? THEY SAY THINGS ARE BURIED 'ERE. ANCIENT THINGS, FROM CULTURES LONG DEAD.



OOOOH! A BUNCH OF BURIED JUNK. SOUNDS AS SCARY AS A MUSEUM.



DON'T WORRY, RAINBOW. YOU WON'T LEARN ANYTHING.





DON'T FORGET TOO THAT EGO USED'T TEST STRANGE WEAPONS 'ERE. TOXIC STUFF. RADIOACTIVE STUFF. WHO KNOWS WUT' ELSE.

SO? WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH US?



...WAIT! FORGET I SAID THAT.



DANG. TOO LATE.



¡ohhhhh! WHAT IS THAT THING?!

Bio-luminescent worms. The radioactivity corrupted an already inhospitable desert, twisting its few native inhabitants into abominable beasts.



I DON'T CARE WHAT IT IS, I JUST WANT IT DEAD!



IT'S GOING BACK UNDER--WE NEED TO FIND SOME HIGH GROUND!



DOUBLE TIME! IT'S GAINING ON US!



NO, WAIT...

I THINK IT'S HERDING US!



HELL YEAH, BOSS! WHIP IT, AND WHIP IT GOOD!

NOW, FOR A LITTLE SPARKLE OF MY OWN...

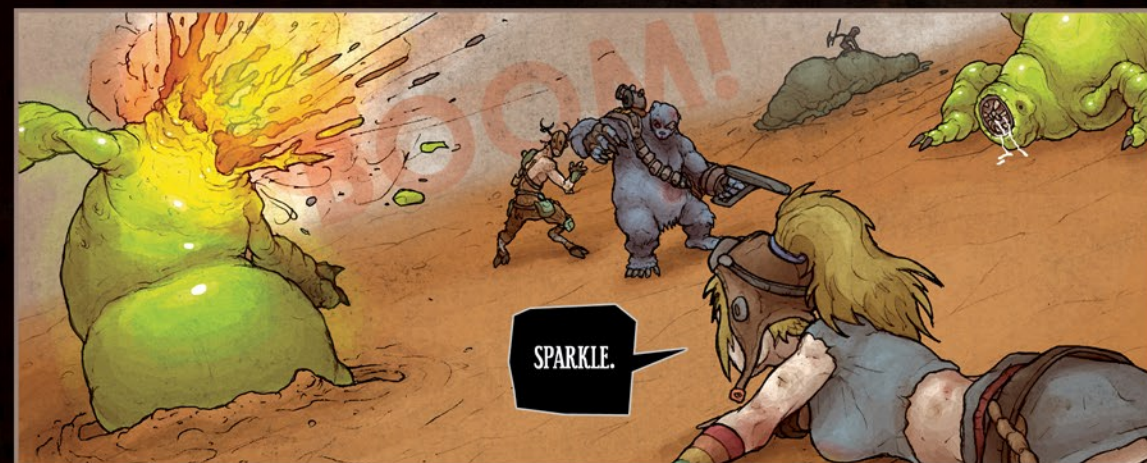
RUMBLE
RUMBLE



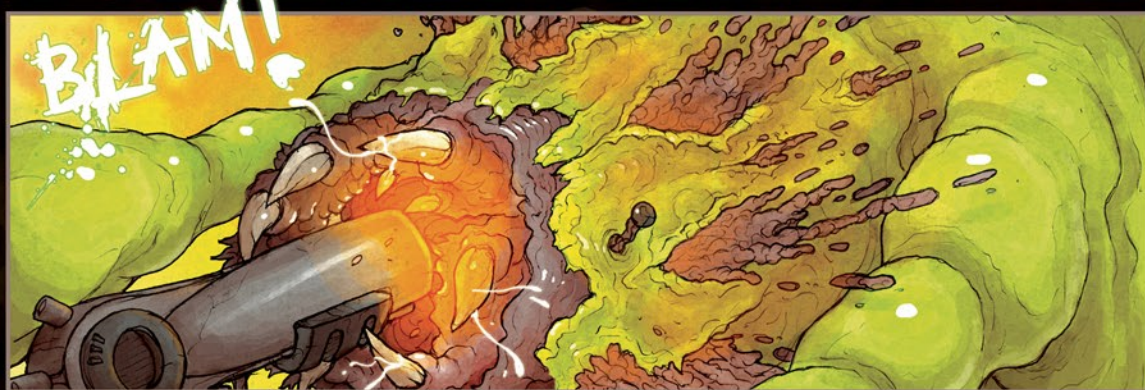
GAH!
YOU AGAIN!

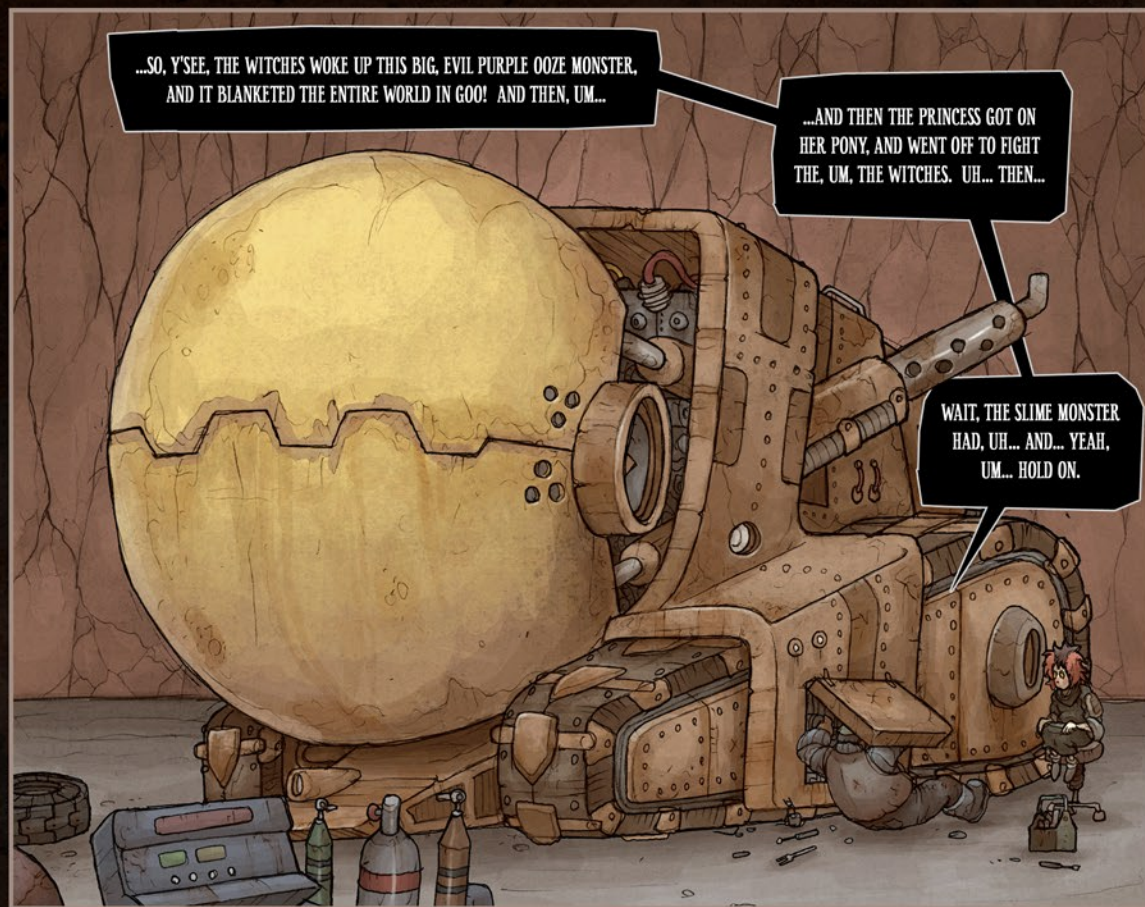


HOLD THIS FOR A SECOND!



SPARKLE.





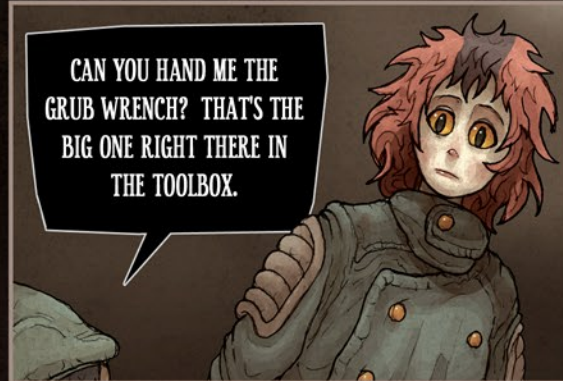
...SO, Y'SEE, THE WITCHES WOKE UP THIS BIG, EVIL PURPLE OOZE MONSTER, AND IT BLANKETED THE ENTIRE WORLD IN GOO! AND THEN, UM...

...AND THEN THE PRINCESS GOT ON HER PONY, AND WENT OFF TO FIGHT THE, UM, THE WITCHES. UH... THEN...

WAIT, THE SLIME MONSTER HAD, UH... AND... YEAH, UM... HOLD ON.



HEY, PUMPKIN, WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?



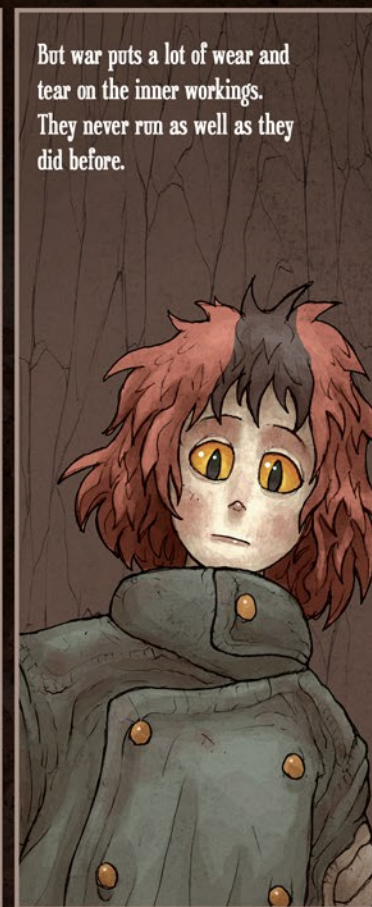
CAN YOU HAND ME THE GRUB WRENCH? THAT'S THE BIG ONE RIGHT THERE IN THE TOOLBOX.



THAT'S THE ONE! THANKS!



The machines in Tater's workshop were salvaged from the battlefields.



But war puts a lot of wear and tear on the inner workings. They never run as well as they did before.



And he doesn't always have the parts to fix them.



WELL, KIDDO, I THINK THAT'S ENOUGH WORK ON THE P.A.C. DIGGER FOR ONE DAY.



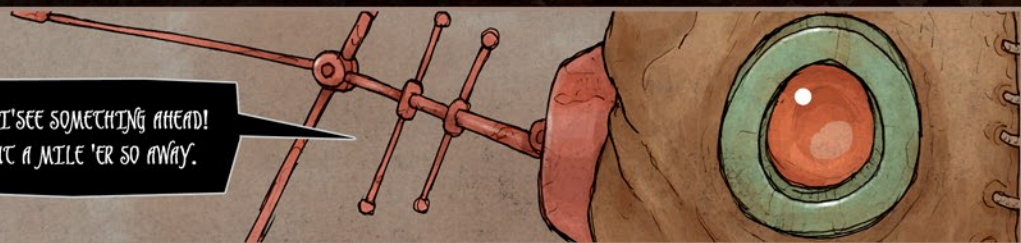
C'MON. LET'S GO MAKE SOME COCOA.

...OR WHAT PASSES FOR COCOA AROUND HERE.

Dusk. After hours of wandering, the group is unsure if they've gotten any closer to their goal. The Forbidden Lands are not well-documented.



RED, I'VE SEEN SOMETHING AHEAD!
'BOUT A MILE 'ER SO AWAY.



LOOKS LIKE... SCARECROWS.



SCARECROWS...
OUT HERE? FOR WHAT?



FOR SCARING US.

LET'S GO.



VERY STRANGE... WHAT'ER
THEY GUARDIN'?



THERE.



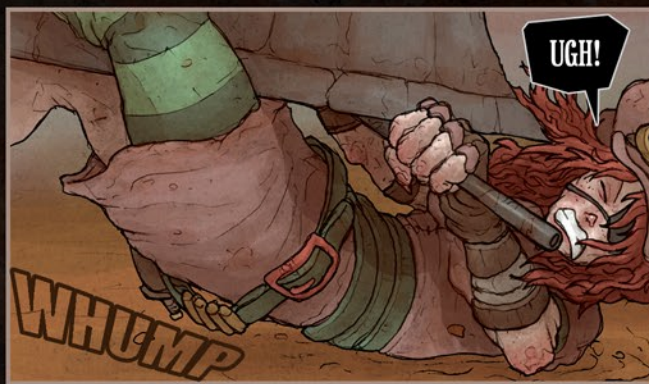
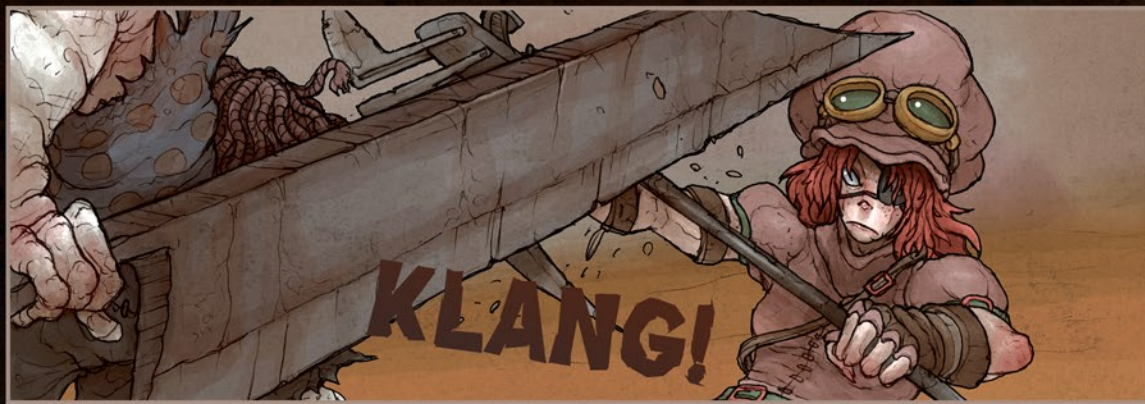
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE
FOUND YOUR WIZARD.

IF HE'S STILL
ALIVE, LET'S
HOPE DINNER'S
READY.

...IF HE'S NOT,
LET'S HOPE HE
TASTES GOOD.











ALLOW ME TO APOLOGIZE
THAT YOU WERE NOT MORE
CORDIALLY RECEIVED...

...BUT WHO ARE YOU, AND
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

NEXT CHAPTER: NECROMANCER'S LAIR



