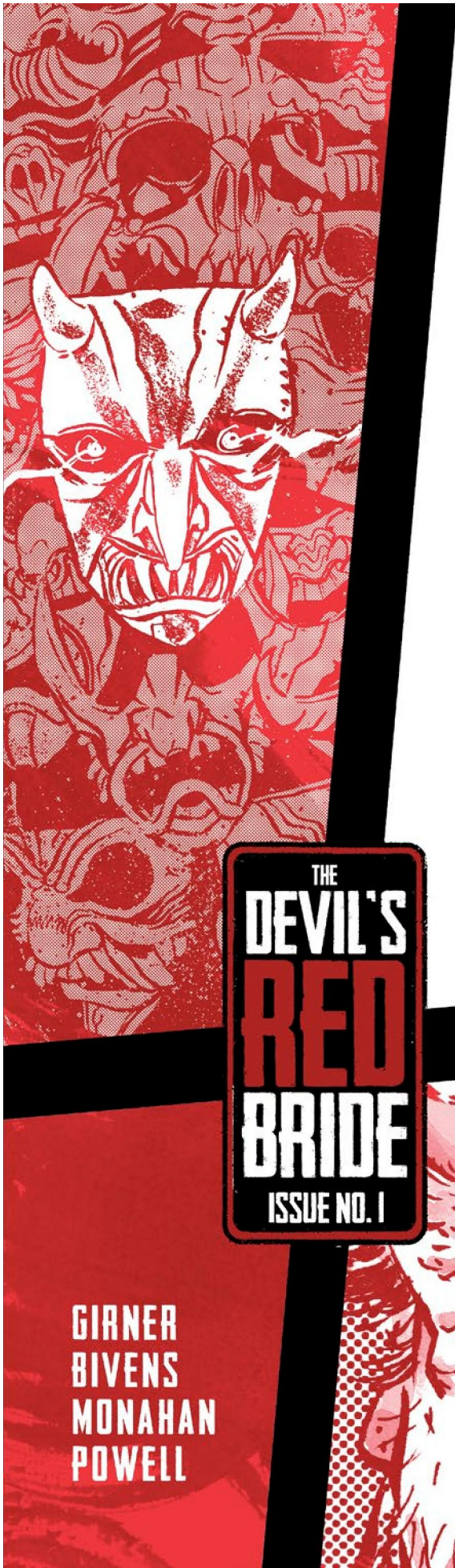


**VAULT
COMICS**



**THE
DEVIL'S
RED
BRIDE**
ISSUE NO. 1

**GIARNER
BIVENS
MONAHAN
POWELL**





ONLY THIS DOG'S TAKIN' ORDERS FROM A LITTLE MOUSE! **HAW HAW!**

A THOUSAND APOLOGIES AGAIN!

FUGGIN' COME ON, WOMAN!



≠HIC≠ KEEP ME FROM SHOWIN' THEM SOME RE ≠HIC≠ SPECT.

M-MY LORD, I--I THOUGHT ONLY OF OUR MISSION.



PFF. "MISSION". GUIDE SOME FLEA-BAGS WITH A DEATH WISH ACROSS A MOUNTAIN...

I-IT'S GOOD MONEY THEY PAID US. HONOR DEMANDS WE--



YOU TALK TO ME OF HONOR NOW? YOU CAME SCURRYIN' TO ME FOR PROTECTION.

CARRY MY PACK. SERVE MY MEALS. WARM MY BED.



THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE. WITHOUT ME YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER CORPSE STINKIN' UP THE FIELDS.

PLEASE, I--

SO UNLESS THAT'S HOW YOU WANT TO END UP, YOU WILL TREAT ME WITH--

YOU THERE.



A SAMURAI'S CHARGE IS TO PROTECT THE WEAK.

NOT TAKE OUT HIS **IMPOTENCE** ON THEM.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, TALKIN' TO ME IN SUCH A TONE?



NO ONE. SIMPLY PASSING BY.

THEN WHAT'S IT TO YOU HOW I SPEAK TO MY DAMN **SERVANT**?

MY LORDS... LADY. PLEASE, DO NOT EXCITE YOURSELVES.



GUESS I JUST DON'T LIKE IT WHEN I SEE **PIGS** PLAY AT BEING MEN.





YOU MAY WANT TO LOOK AWAY.

OH... OH



BLOOD. SO MUCH BLOOD.

WH-WHAT DID YOU DO, WOMAN? I CAN'T--

FUBEL... HELP... P-PLEASE, NOT LIKE THIS, NOT LIKE THIS...!!

AHHH AAAAAAAH!



SHH. SHH. IT'S OK. IT'S OK.

AH. AH. AH.

IT'S OVER.



DRINK THIS. CALM YOUR NERVES. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

I-I AM CALLED FUBEI, MISTRESS.

I APOLOGIZE YOU HAD TO SEE THAT. BUT THERE'S NO REASONING WITH SUCH A MAN.



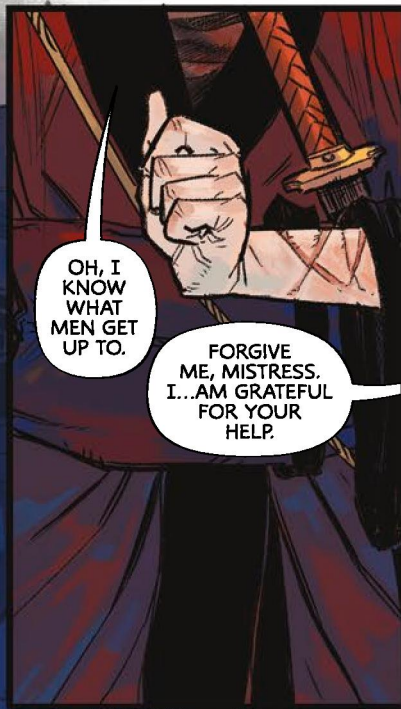
IT IS ENTIRELY MY FAULT. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CONSIDERATE OF HIS FEELINGS.

YOU DON'T THINK HE DESERVED IT?



HE WAS DRUNK AND ANGRY.

MEN GET DRUNK AND ANGRY SOMETIMES...



OH, I KNOW WHAT MEN GET UP TO.

FORGIVE ME, MISTRESS. I...AM GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP.



STILL, I WILL SAY A PRAYER FOR HIS POOR SOUL.

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU. NAMU AMIDA BUTSU.



NAMU AMIDA BU--

SHHH. SOMEONE'S HERE.



GOOD EVENING. I AM CALLED MATSUTAKA SANJUMON.

AND I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO DISCUSS WITH YOU.

I DON'T KNOW YOU--NOR OF ANY BUSINESS. LEAVE US BE.

I'M AFRAID I MUST INSIST.



YOU SEE, I HAD DEALINGS WITH THIS RONIN YOU...SAW FIT TO DISPATCH.

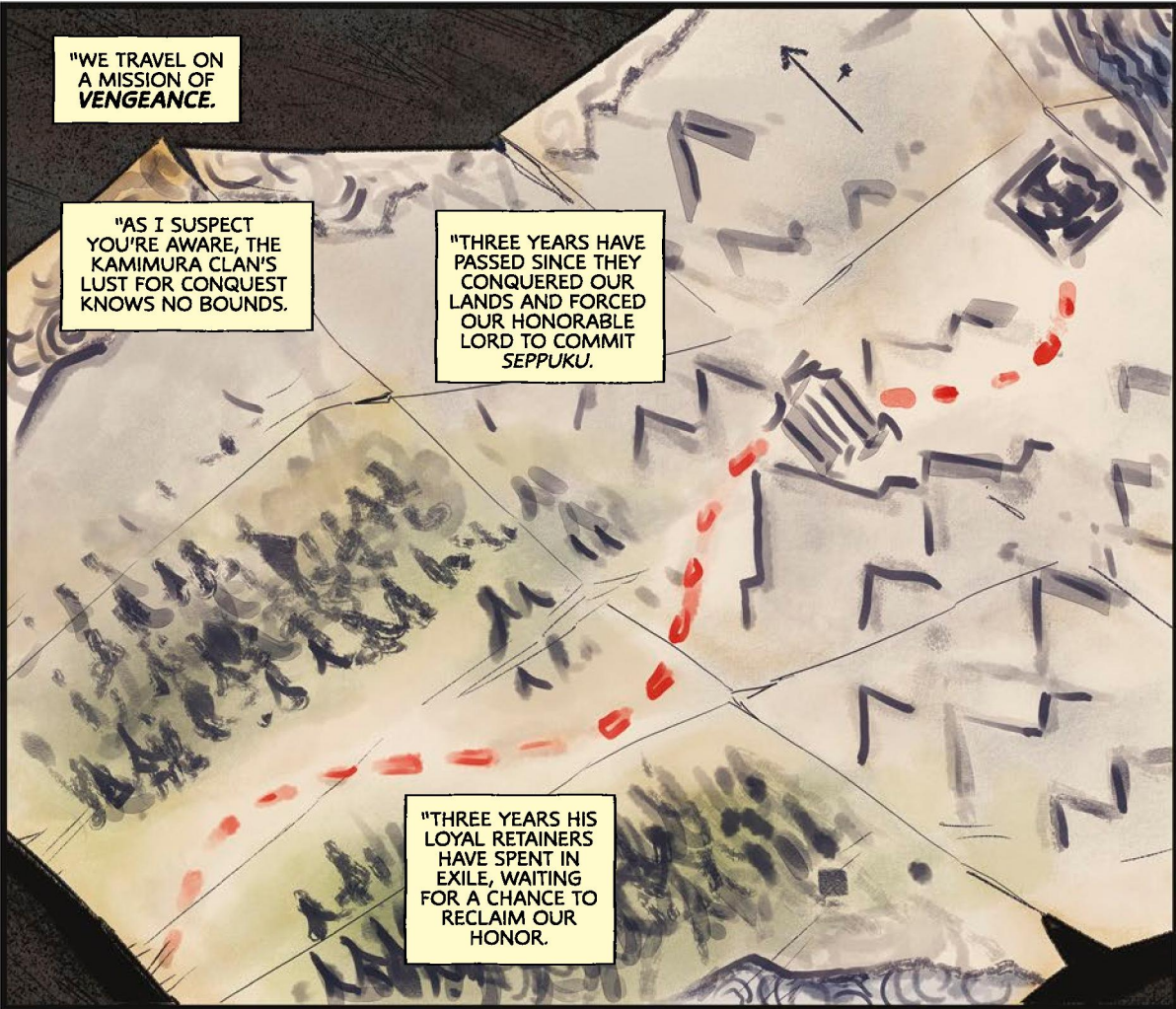
PAID HIM IN ADVANCE TO MEET US HERE. IT WOULD SEEM HE WASTED NO TIME TURNING HIS FORTUNE TO DRINK...



SO, NOW IT APPEARS WE MUST BEND A KNEE TO THE WHIMS OF FATE.

"WE"?





"WE TRAVEL ON A MISSION OF VENGEANCE."

"AS I SUSPECT YOU'RE AWARE, THE KAMIMURA CLAN'S LUST FOR CONQUEST KNOWS NO BOUNDS."

"THREE YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THEY CONQUERED OUR LANDS AND FORCED OUR HONORABLE LORD TO COMMIT SEPPUKU."

"THREE YEARS HIS LOYAL RETAINERS HAVE SPENT IN EXILE, WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO RECLAIM OUR HONOR."



"AND FINALLY, THAT DAY HAS COME. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT LORD KAMIMURA RIDES OUT IN SECRET TO BROKER A PEACE WITH THE ONIGAWA CLAN."

"THIS WOULD SECURE THE KAMIMURA'S EASTERN BORDERS AND ALLOW THEM TO SOLIDIFY THEIR RULE OVER HALF OF JAPAN."



"THIS IS OUR ONE, OUR **ONLY**, CHANCE TO DECAPITATE THE SERPENT AND AVENGE THE DEATHS OF OUR LORD AND BROTHERS IN ARMS."

"HOWEVER... WE REQUIRE A GUIDE TO TAKE US OVER THE MOUNTAIN IN TIME TO STRIKE."



AND AS THE ONE WE HIRED IS NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO DO SO, **THIS** WOMAN WILL TAKE HIS PLACE.

OH, DEAR.



YOU WERE PRESENT WHEN WE STRUCK A DEAL WITH YOUR MAN. IT WAS CLEAR HE WOULD RELY ON **YOUR** GUIDANCE AS MUCH AS WE HIS.

YES, BUT--

SAY SHE REFUSES...



THEN, I AM AFRAID, YOUR ROADS WOULD END HERE.

OUR ENEMY HAS SPIES EVERYWHERE... IT'S SIMPLY A RISK WE CANNOT TAKE.



YOU'VE CLEARLY SOME SKILL WITH THAT BLADE...

BUT I THINK YOU'LL FIND US MORE OF A MATCH THAN A DRUNKEN LOU.

LET.

ME--

PLEASE.

STOP.



THE
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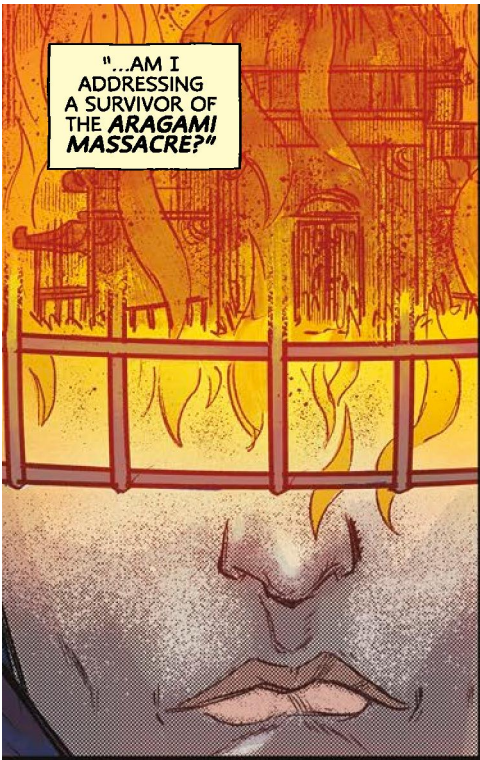
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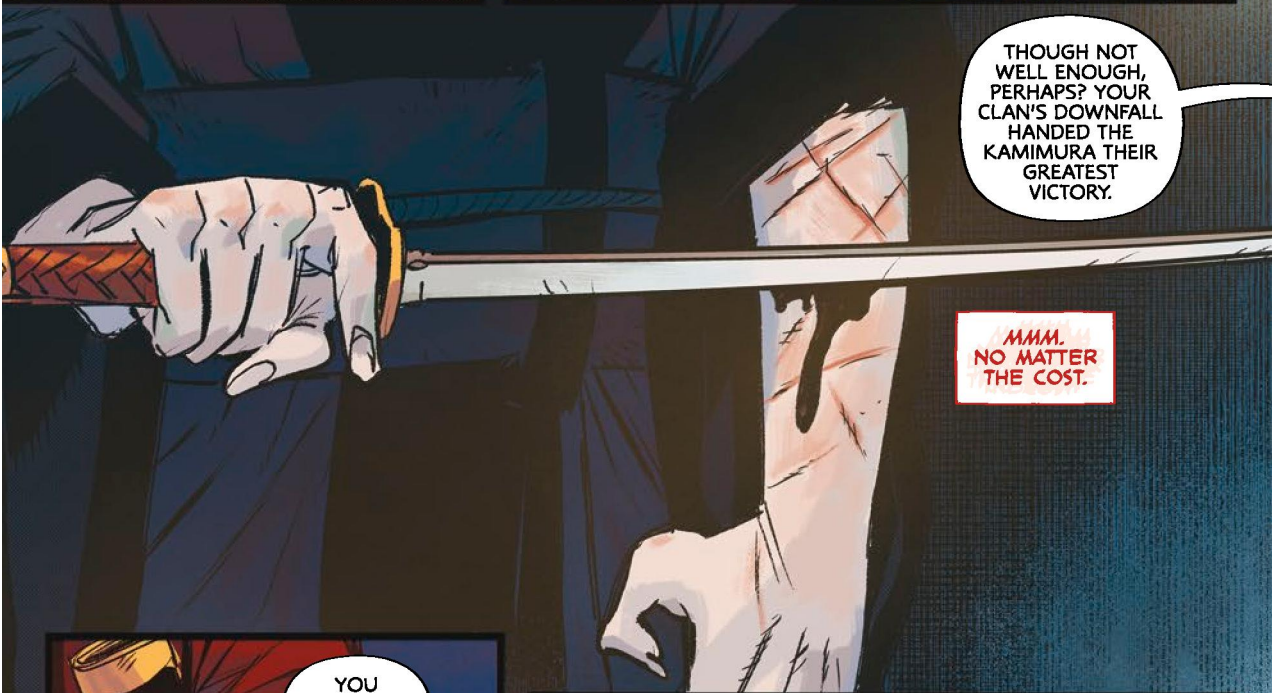
"...AM I ADDRESSING A SURVIVOR OF THE ARAGAMI MASSACRE?"



MY...FATHER AND BROTHER SERVED LORD ARAGAMI. UNTIL THE END...



AH, I WAS NOT MISTAKEN THEN. YOUR MEN TAUGHT YOU WELL.



THOUGH NOT WELL ENOUGH, PERHAPS? YOUR CLAN'S DOWNFALL HANDED THE KAMIMURA THEIR GREATEST VICTORY.

MMM. NO MATTER THE COST.



YOU SHOULD THANK YOUR ANCESTORS TO HAVE MET US.



BY FATE'S GRACE YOU'VE STUMBLED UPON A CHANCE TO HELP AVENGE THEM.

OH... DEAR...



"AND WHAT MORE COULD ANY SAMURAI DESIRE OF THIS WEeping WORLD?"

**HURRAH!
ALL HAIL LORD ISANOSUKE!
THE RED DEVIL OF ARAGAMI!**

MY LORD, A MASTERFUL TACTIC, THE KAMIMURA ARE ROUTED.



TODAY'S VICTORY WILL MAKE THEM THINK TWICE ABOUT SPLITTING THEIR FORCES.

WHAT OF OUR CASUALTIES?



YOUR GAMBIT PAID OFF, MY LORD, BUT IT CAME AT NO SMALL COST.

AS LONG AS A SINGLE SHIFUNE MAN STANDS WE FIGHT ALONGSIDE YOU, MY LORD.



YOU'LL NOT LACK OPPORTUNITIES. THIS WAR IS JUST BEGINNING.

I'LL RIDE AHEAD TO CAMP AND PREPARE.





IS IT...
IS IT
OVER?

DID WE
WIN?

INDEED,
WE DID,
BROTHER.

YOU WERE
A SIGHT TO
BEHOLD.



WE NEED TO MOVE FAST. THE GENERALS WILL BE HERE SOON.

I'M GOING AS FAST AS I CAN. THIS IS **HARD**.



DO I HAVE TO WEAR THE MASK? IT'S SO... UNCOMFORTABLE.

NO. LEAVE IT BEHIND. LET THE MEN SEE YOUR FACE. YOU MAKE QUITE THE DASHING FIGURE.



GO AND INSPIRE THEM. TODAY WAS HARD WON.

I...I WILL. I'VE PREPARED SOME WORDS.

SISTER, I...



I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD'VE DONE WITHOUT YOUR... WITHOUT **YOU**.



I KNOW, BROTHER. I KNOW.

WE'LL BOTH DO WHAT WE MUST TO PROTECT OUR HOME, AND OUR PEOPLE.



MY LORD! WHAT A GLORIOUS VICTORY!

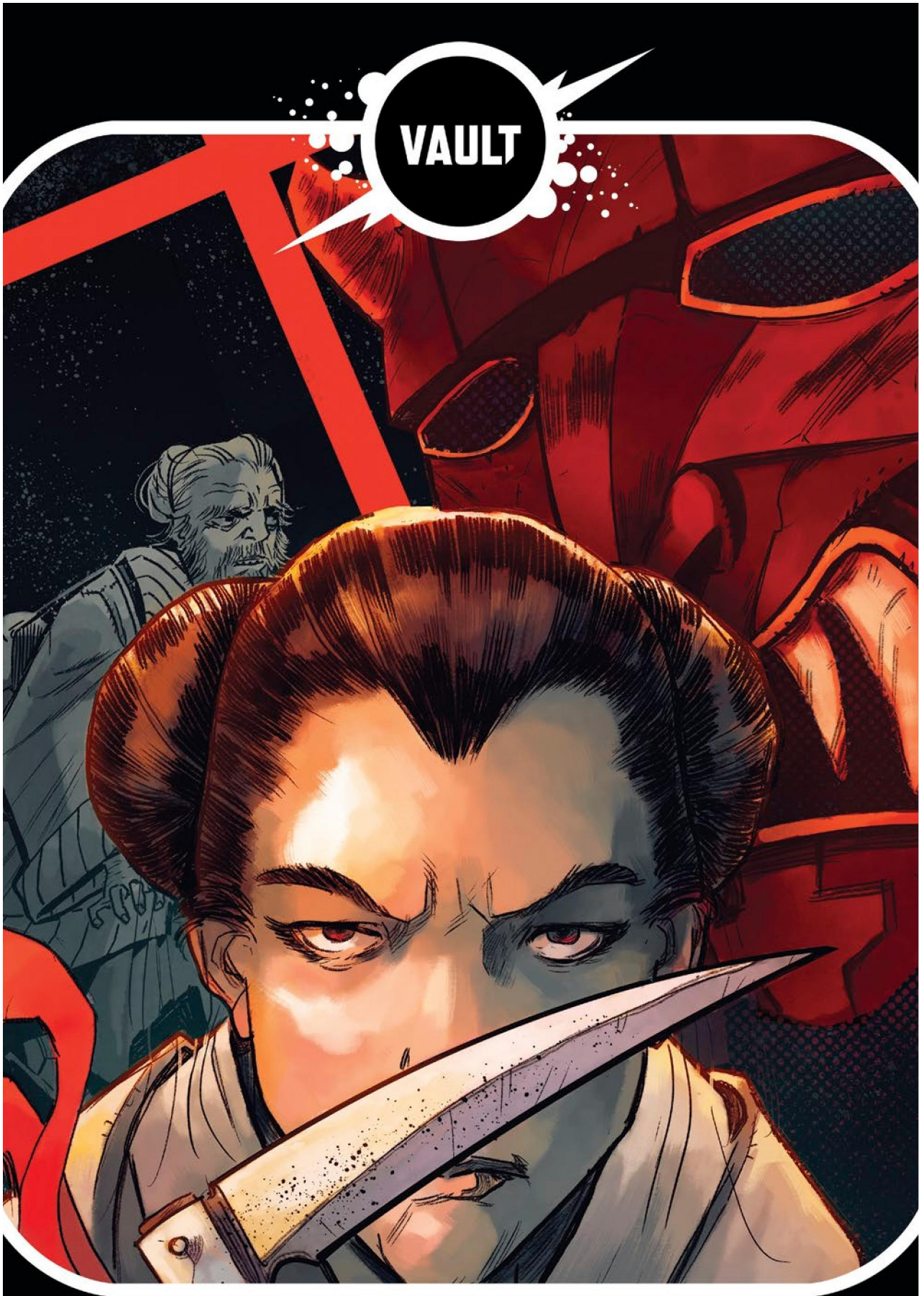
YOU IN YOUR WAY, AND ME IN MINE...



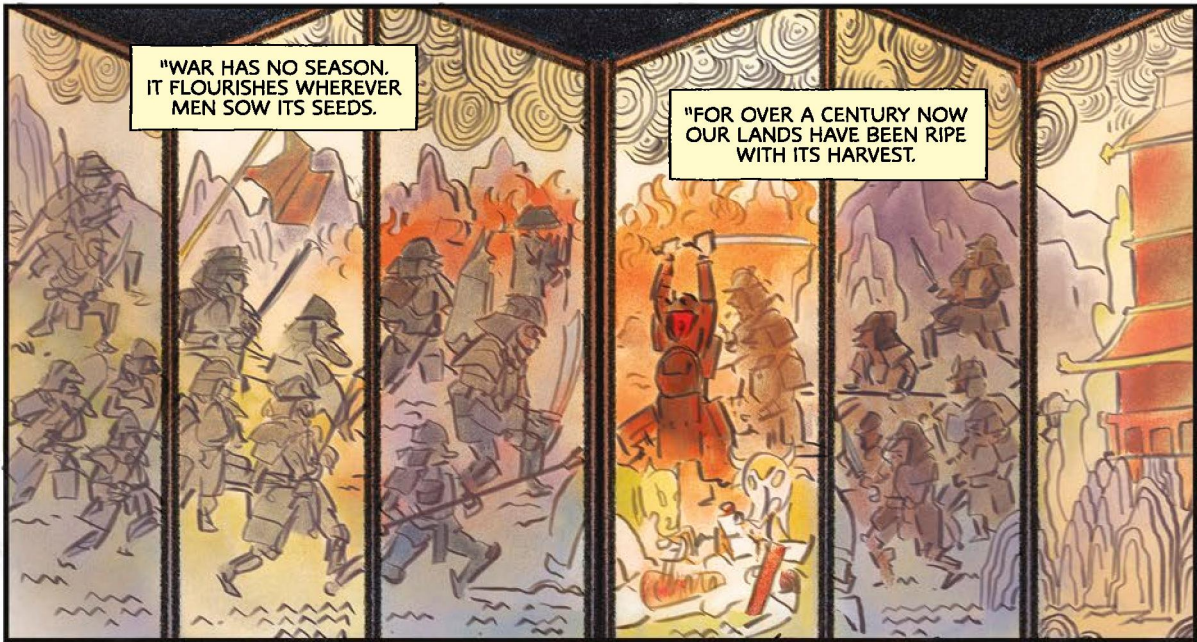
NO
MATTER THE
COST.

TO BE CONTINUED...

VAULT



NEXT ISSUE



"WAR HAS NO SEASON.
IT FLOURISHES WHEREVER
MEN SOW ITS SEEDS.

"FOR OVER A CENTURY NOW
OUR LANDS HAVE BEEN RIPE
WITH ITS HARVEST.



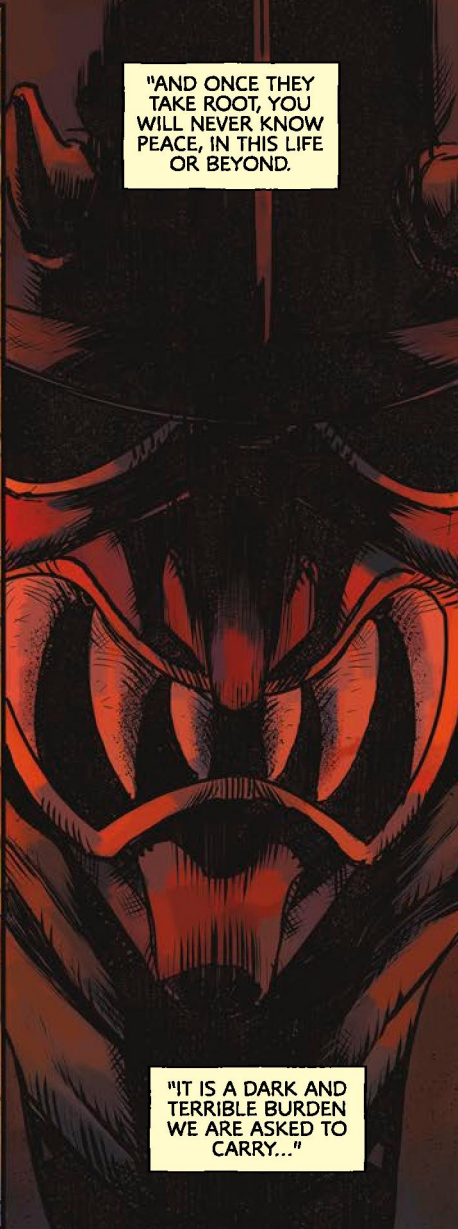
"AS SAMURAI, THE
DUTY FALLS TO US
TO TEND THIS
CROP. NO MATTER
THE COST.

"YOU MUST **NEVER**
HESITATE TO AVERT A
GLORIOUS DEATH.

"BUT KNOW
THIS AS WELL,
MY SON..."



"WAR CAN MAKE
MONSTERS OF MEN.
WHEN THE RED
THRUST BECOMES
UNQUENCHABLE,
YOU INVITE DEVILS
INTO YOUR HEART.



"AND ONCE THEY
TAKE ROOT, YOU
WILL NEVER KNOW
PEACE, IN THIS LIFE
OR BEYOND.

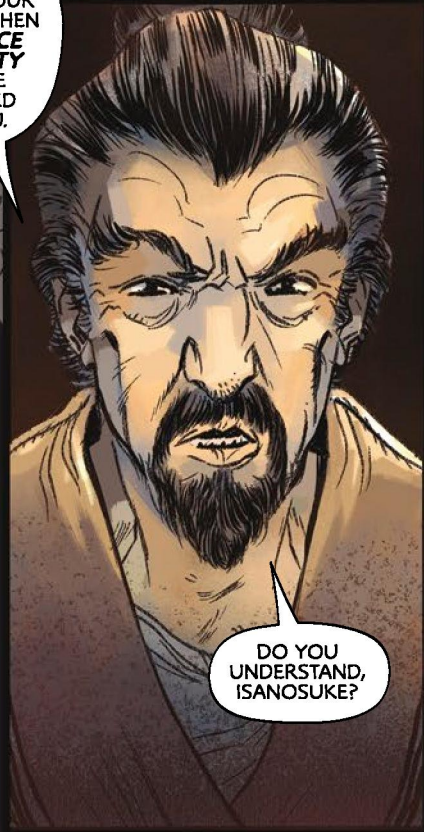
"IT IS A DARK AND
TERRIBLE BURDEN
WE ARE ASKED TO
CARRY..."



YET THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A SAMURAI OF THE ARAGAMI CLAN.

THESE ARE THE REALITIES YOU WILL HAVE TO CONTENT WITH THE DAY YOU DON OUR FAMILY'S ARMOR.

ONE DAY IT WILL FALL TO YOU TO LEAD OUR NATION. WHEN **SACRIFICE** AND **DUTY** WILL BE REQUIRED OF YOU.



DO YOU UNDERSTAND, ISANOSUKE?



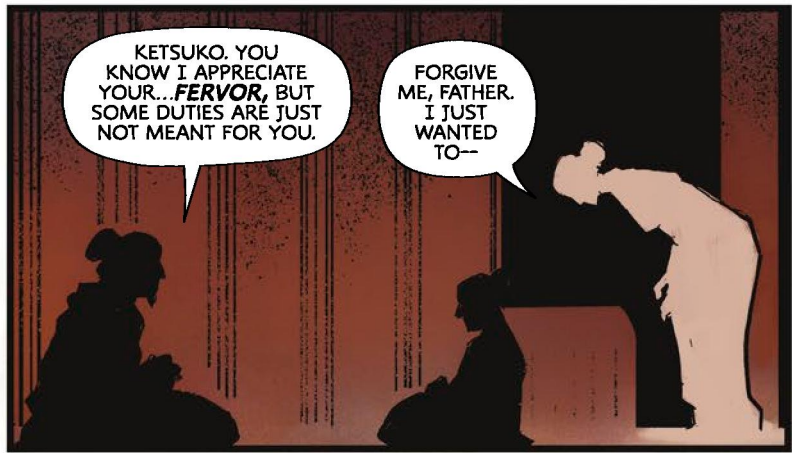
I-I'M NOT S--

FATHER, ARE YOU IN HERE?



LORD ARAGAMI... FATHER.

PLEASE, ALLOW ME TO BE PART OF THIS CONVERSATION. WHATEVER DUTY BEFALLS ISANOSUKE--



KETSUKO. YOU KNOW I APPRECIATE YOUR... *FERVOR*, BUT SOME DUTIES ARE JUST NOT MEANT FOR YOU.

FORGIVE ME, FATHER. I JUST WANTED TO--



THERE YOU ARE, STEPDAUGHTER!

FORGIVE US, MY LORD! YOU'LL NOT BE DISTURBED AGAIN.



YOU LITTLE VIPER, MAKING ME LOOK WEAK IN FRONT OF MY HUSBAND.

KNOW YOUR *PLACE*, CHILD!



WE ALL HAVE OUR PARTS TO PLAY IN THIS WORLD.



NEVER FORGET WHAT YOURS IS...

"BECAUSE THE WORLD MOST CERTAINLY WILL NOT."



A FRONTAL ASSAULT WAS UTTER MADNESS! THE KAMIMURA HAVE US COMPLETELY SURROUNDED.

THIS WAS THE PLAN OF YOUR YOUNG LORD ARAGAMI? WE'LL NOT SURVIVE THIS.



IT IS THE LORD'S FIRST BATTLE. I PRAY HIS STRATEGY IS SOUND.

LOVELY! I HOPE HIS FIRST BATTLE DOESN'T MEAN OUR LAST.



CUT THESE DOGS DOWN! TAKE AIM...

FIRE!



GAAH!

AHHH!

GET DOWN!

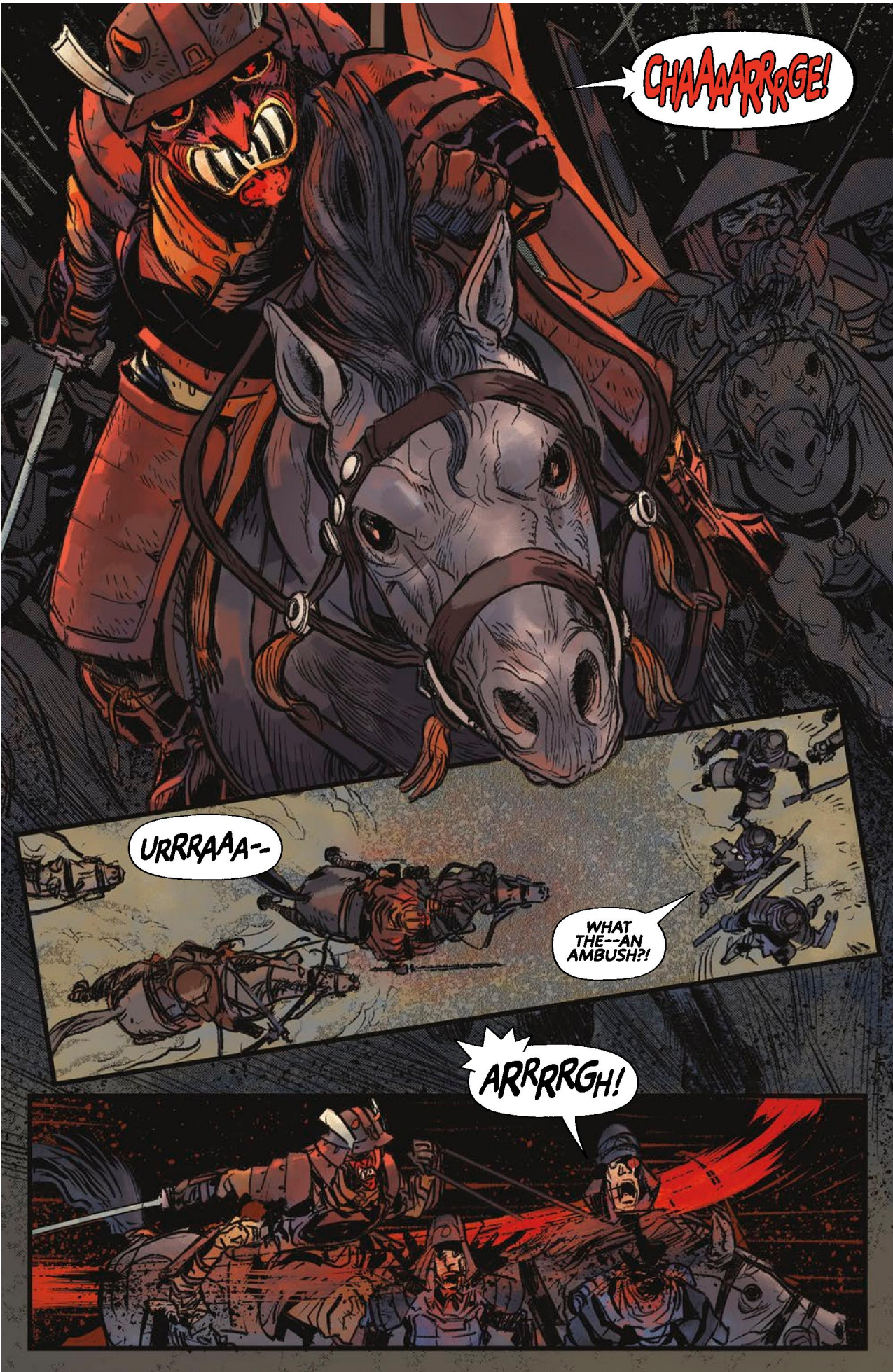
URGH!



I BELIEVE OUR LORD HAS SHAT HIS FAMOUS RED ARMOR AND LEFT US TO DIE--

NOT JUST YET, MY FRIEND...

LOOK!

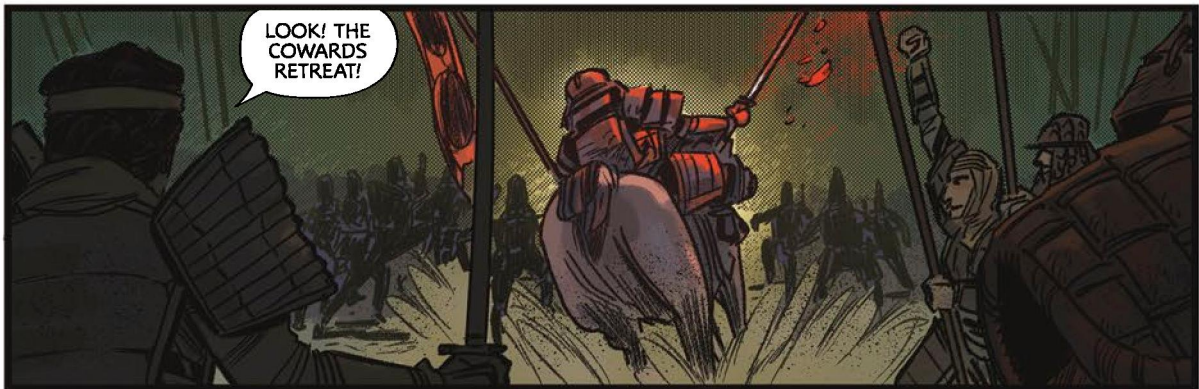


CHAAAARRRGE!

URRRRAA--

WHAT THE--AN AMBUSH?!

ARRRRGH!



THREE YEARS LATER



HEH. WHERE YOU THINK I GOT THIS BATCH?

ENJOY THAT SAKE WHILE IT LASTS. GETTIN' HARDER TO COME BY THESE DAYS.

SHOULD TRY SEARCHIN' THE BATTLEFIELDS, SEE IF SOME HIGH'N MIGHTY SAMURAI DIED WITH A DROP ON 'IM.



HA! GLAD TO KNOW THOSE BASTARDS ARE GOOD FOR **SOME-THING** BESIDES DYIN'!

GRRR.



GOTTA LOTTA NERVE, YOU PEASANT TRASH!

'EY, YOU ROTTEN SCUM. WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?



I'LL SHOW YOU...**SCUM** HOW A SAMURAI FIGHTS **SHIC-D-DAMMIT!**

MY LORD, PLEASE DON'T!



W-WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY. PLEASE EXCUSE US.

MANGY DOG **RONIN**. ROADS'RE LOUSY WITH 'EM NOW.