

ENDLESS
SPACE™ 2
—STORIES—

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#6



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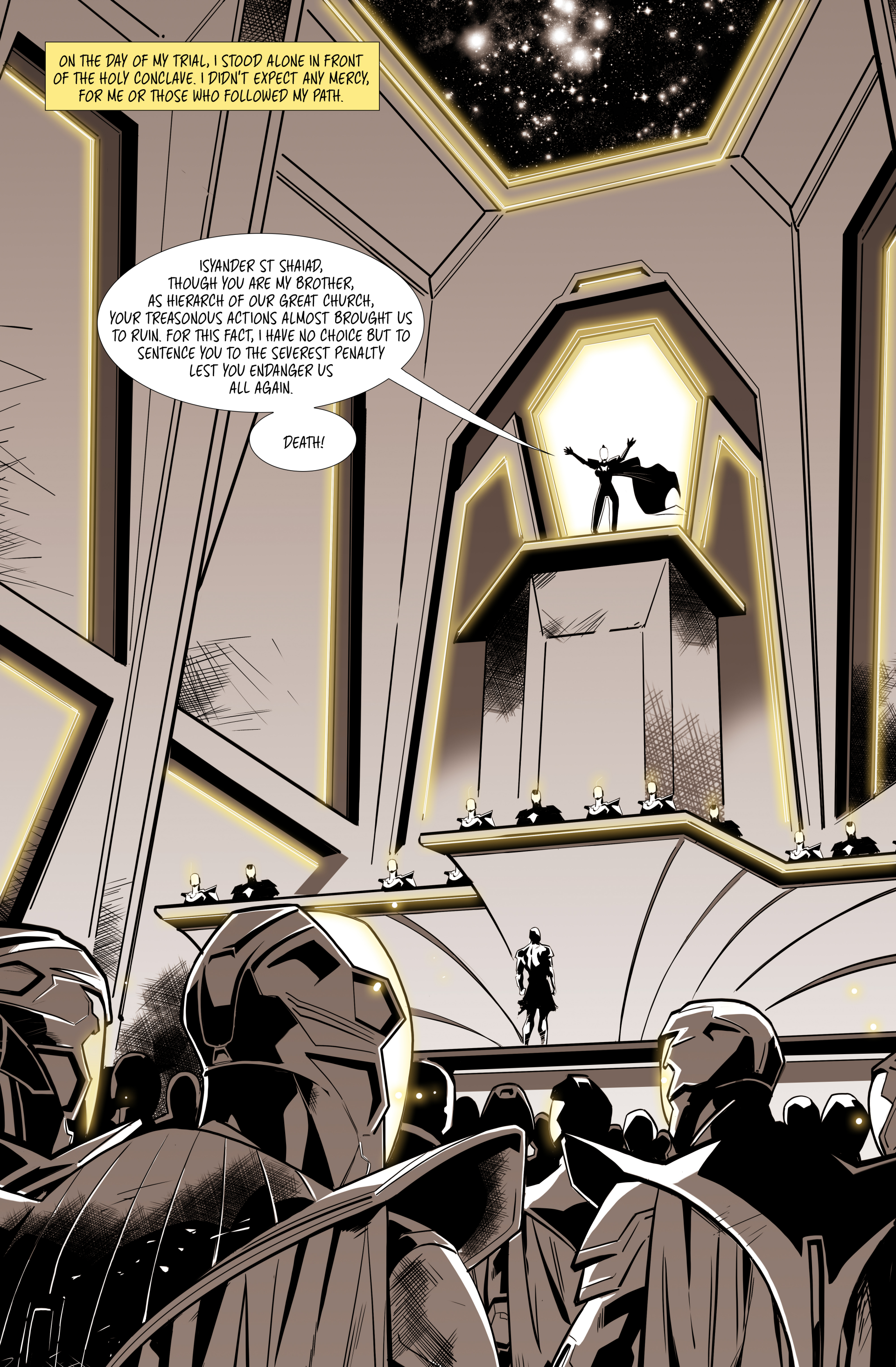
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ON THE DAY OF MY TRIAL, I STOOD ALONE IN FRONT OF THE HOLY CONCLAVE. I DIDN'T EXPECT ANY MERCY, FOR ME OR THOSE WHO FOLLOWED MY PATH.

ISYANDER ST SHAIAD,
THOUGH YOU ARE MY BROTHER,
AS HIERARCH OF OUR GREAT CHURCH,
YOUR TREASONOUS ACTIONS ALMOST BROUGHT US
TO RUIN. FOR THIS FACT, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO
SENTENCE YOU TO THE SEVEREST PENALTY
LEST YOU ENDANGER US
ALL AGAIN.

DEATH!



AS I WAS LED AWAY TO A CACOPHONY OF JEERS, I FELT NOT FEAR BUT FAILURE.



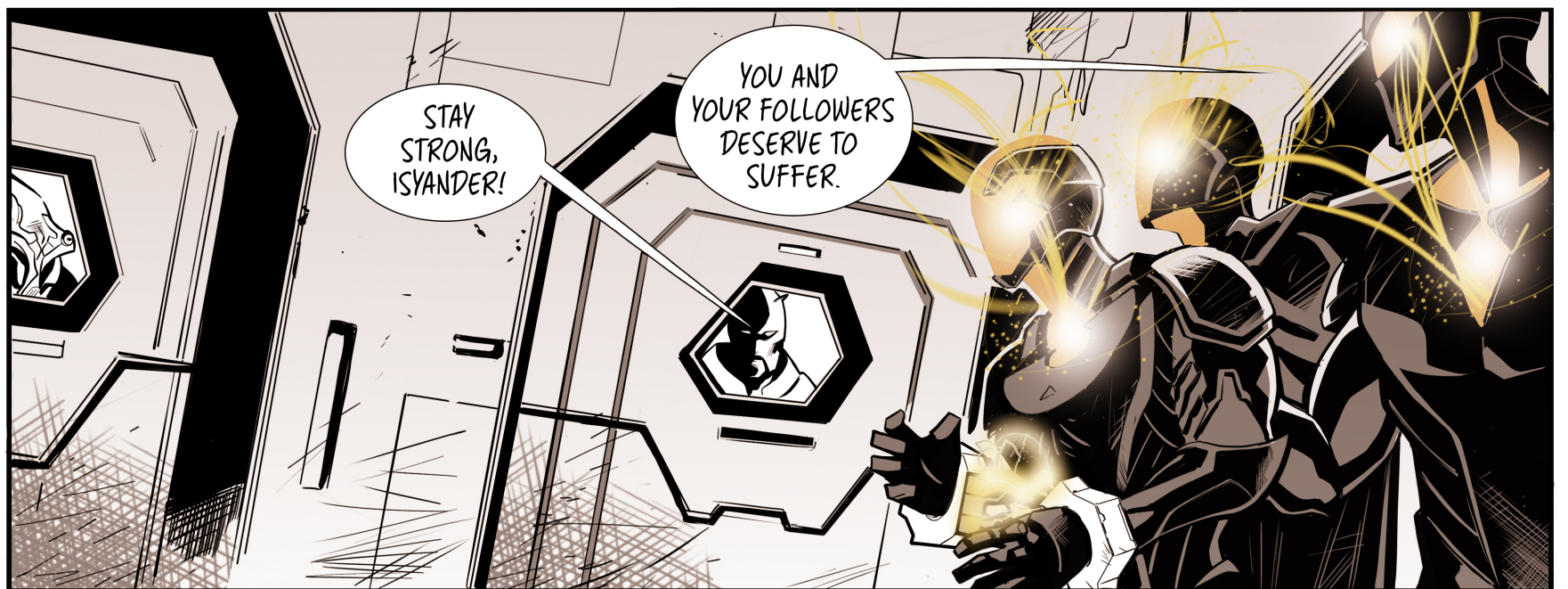
YOUR
SISTER IS TOO
LENIENT.

CONSPIRING WITH SLAVES
TO TAKE ARMS AGAINST YOUR KIN!
YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO US ALL.



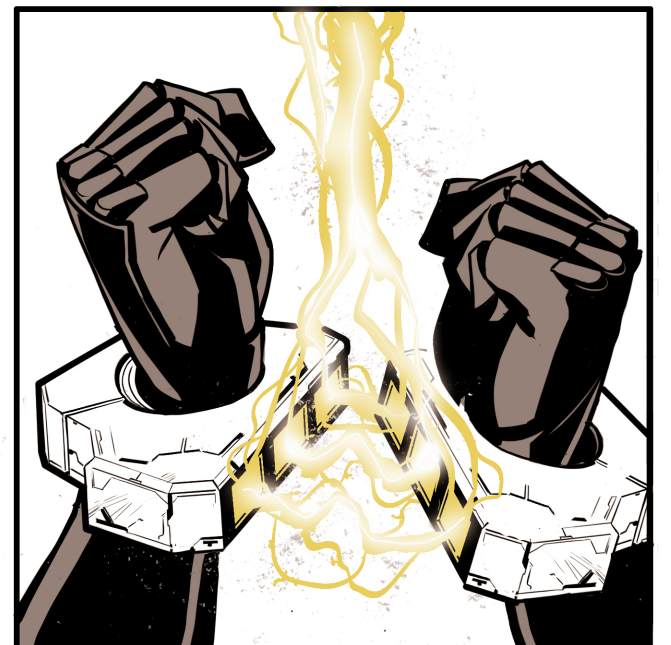
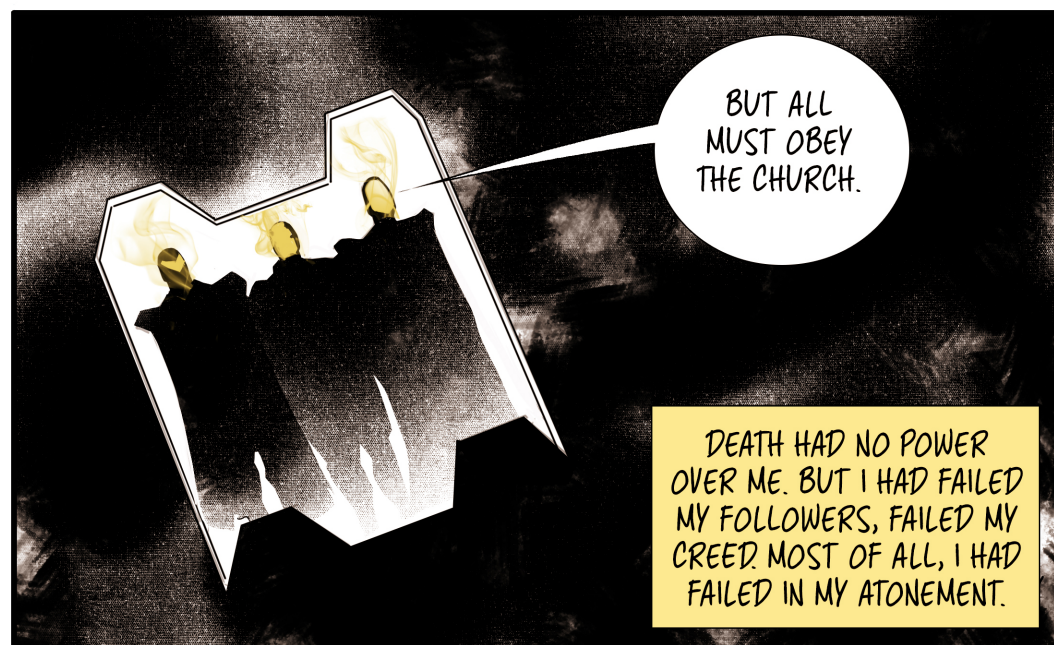
STAY
STRONG,
ISYANDER!

YOU AND
YOUR FOLLOWERS
DESERVE TO
SUFFER.



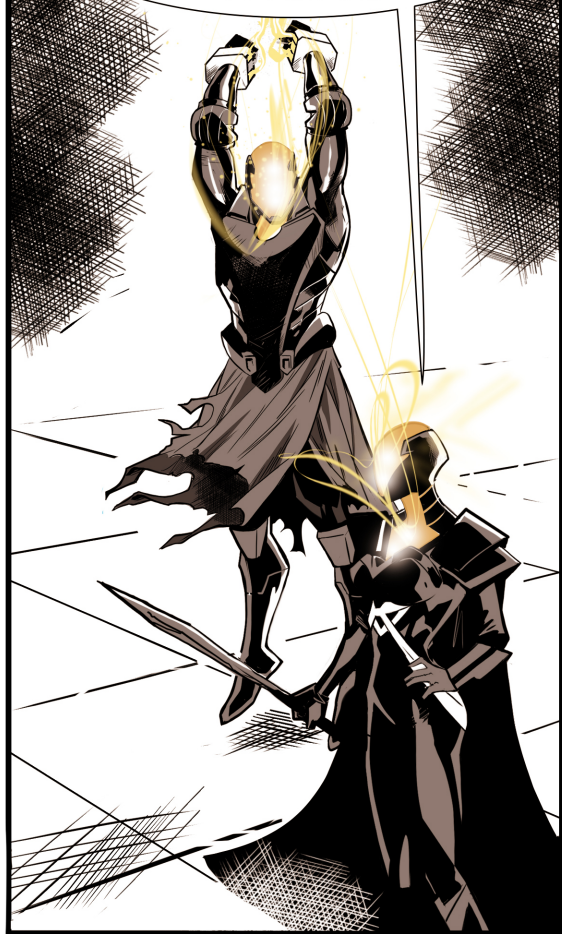
BUT ALL
MUST OBEY
THE CHURCH.

DEATH HAD NO POWER
OVER ME. BUT I HAD FAILED
MY FOLLOWERS, FAILED MY
CREED. MOST OF ALL, I HAD
FAILED IN MY ATONEMENT.

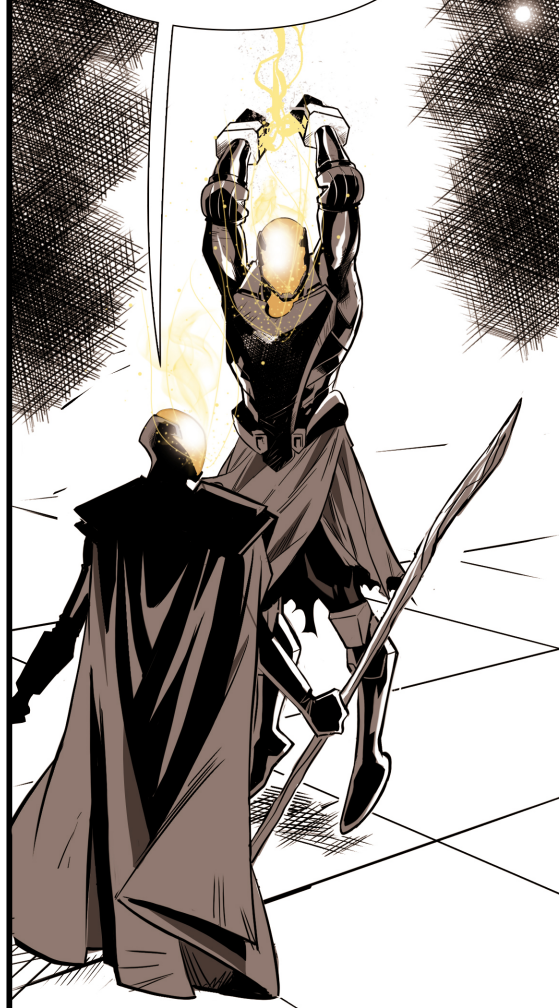


OVER THE NEXT DAYS, ISYARA CAME TO ME EVERY DAY, DEMANDING THAT I REPENT.

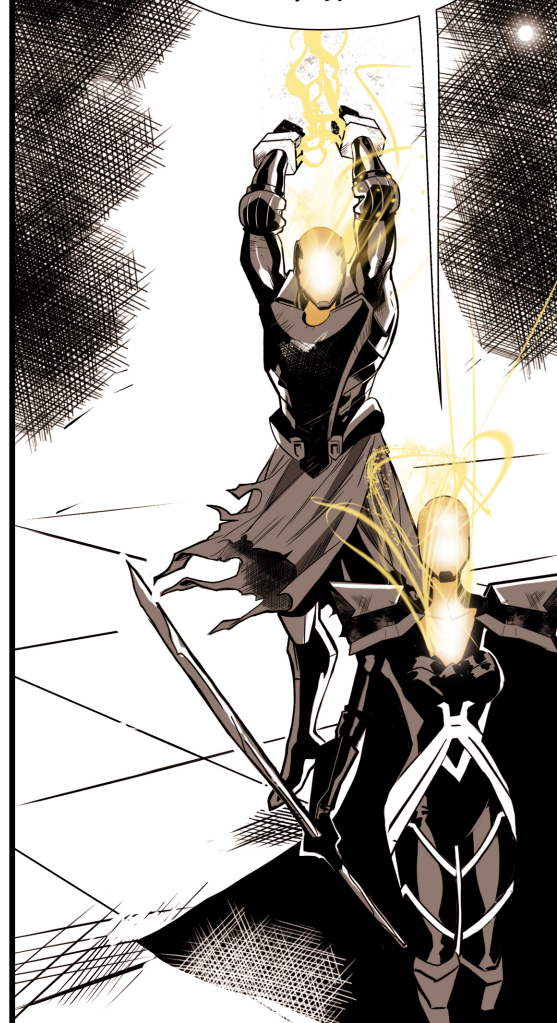
WE DID WHAT WE NEEDED TO, BROTHER. WITHOUT THE VIRTUAL ENDLESS, WE'D BE A DEAD CIVILIZATION.



OFFER PENANCE. ADMIT YOUR BLASPHEMIES. FORGIVENESS WILL COME. IN TIME.

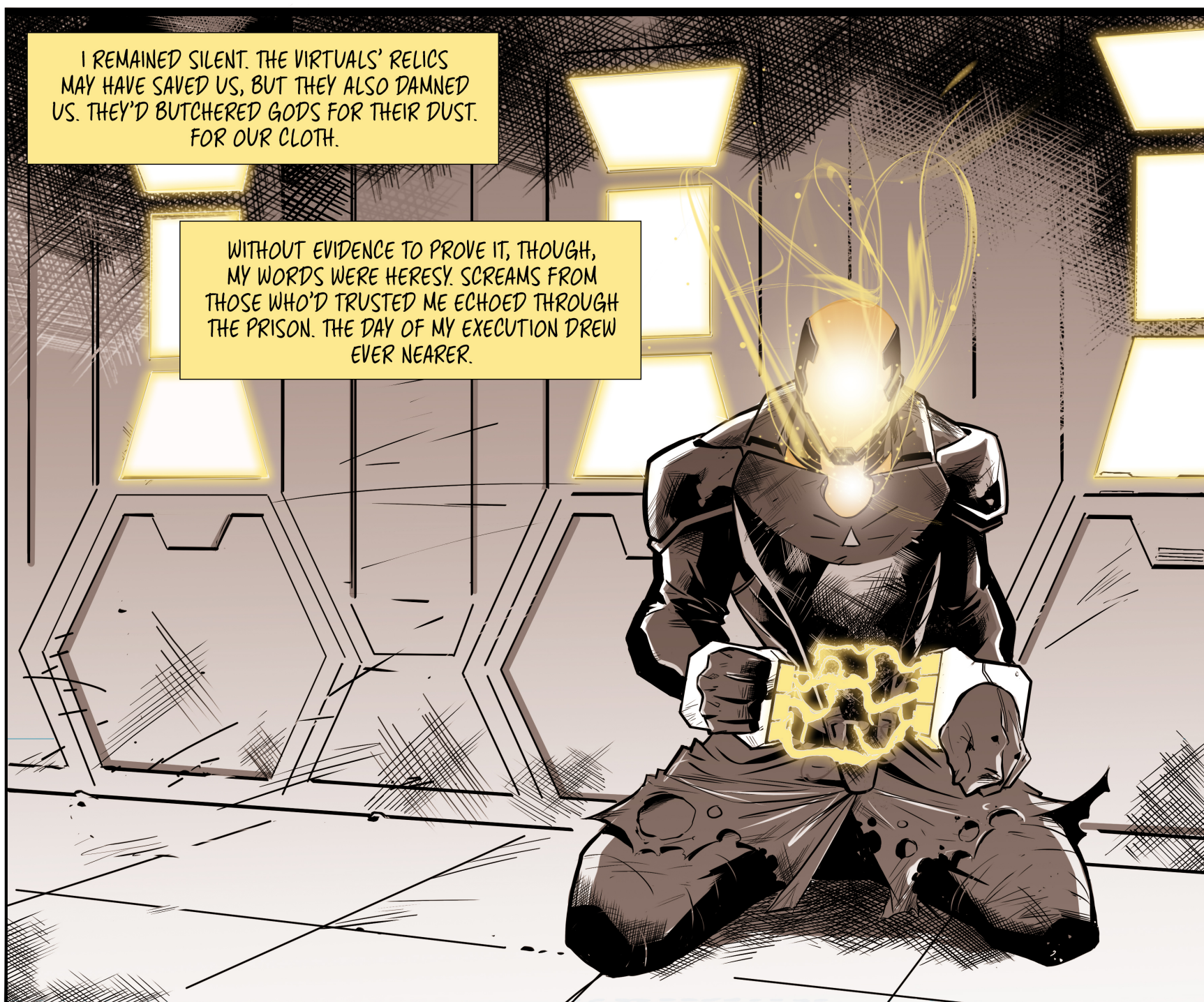


CONFESS, AND YOU NEEDN'T DIE.



I REMAINED SILENT. THE VIRTUALS' RELICS MAY HAVE SAVED US, BUT THEY ALSO DAMNED US. THEY'D BUTCHERED GODS FOR THEIR DUST. FOR OUR CLOTH.

WITHOUT EVIDENCE TO PROVE IT, THOUGH, MY WORDS WERE HERESY. SCREAMS FROM THOSE WHO'D TRUSTED ME ECHOED THROUGH THE PRISON. THE DAY OF MY EXECUTION DREW EVER NEARER.

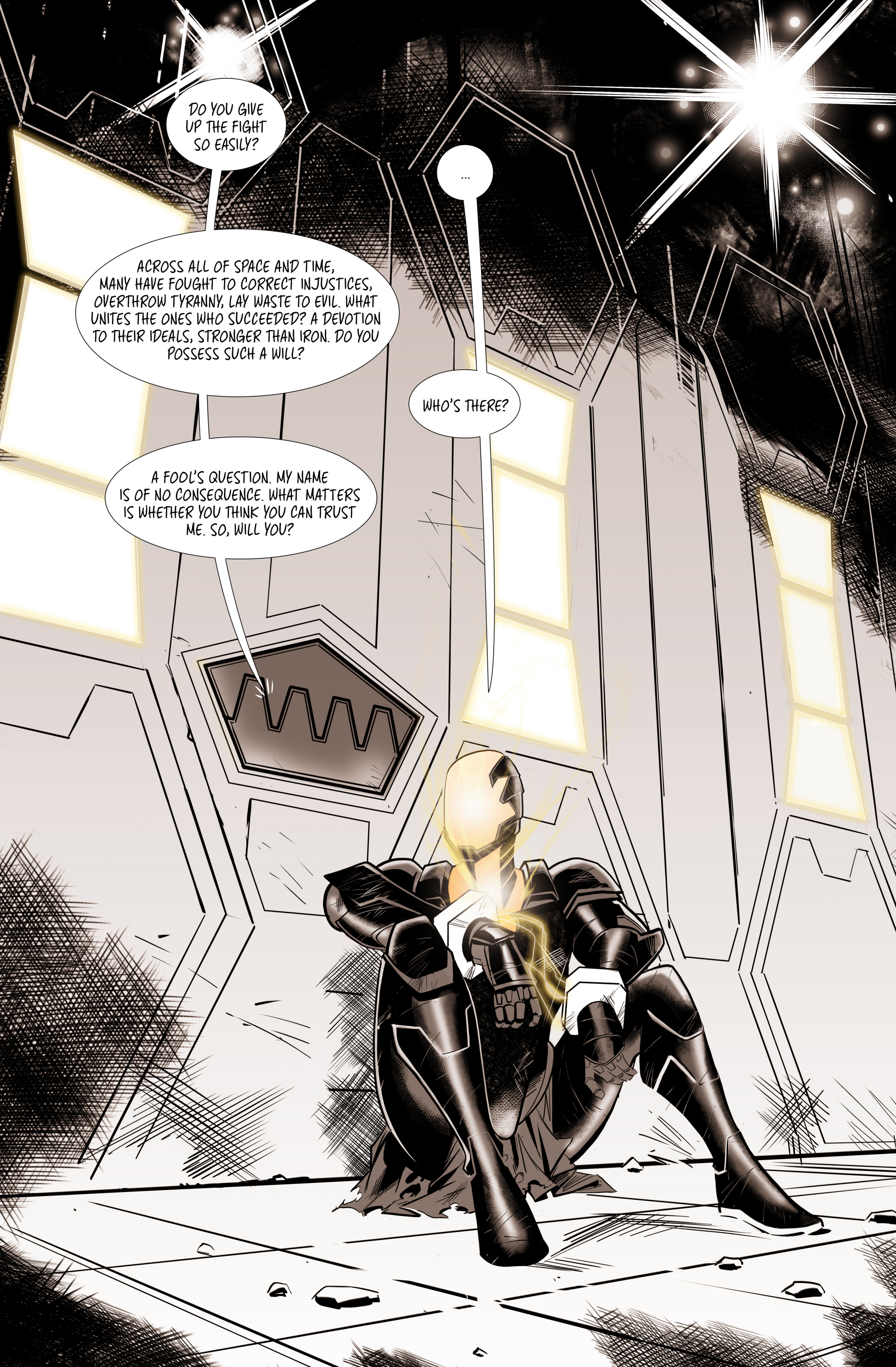


SOON ENOUGH, ISYARA SHOWED HER TRUE HAND.

ENOUGH!
TELL ME WHERE YOU LEARNT THESE
BLASPHEMIES! MANY WILL SUFFER
YOUR FATE SHOULD YOU
STAY SILENT!

SISTER,
I HAVE ALREADY LAID
DOWN MY LIFE IN ATONEMENT
FOR THE VIRTUALS' SINS.
I WILL TELL YOU
NOTHING.

AS HER FOOTFALLS FADED TO SILENCE I WAS LEFT ALONE IN THE DARKNESS. WITH MY LIFEFORCE WANING,
MY EXECUTION ONLY DAYS AWAY, I WONDERED IF THE TRUTH WOULD EVER EMERGE.



DO YOU GIVE
UP THE FIGHT
SO EASILY?

ACROSS ALL OF SPACE AND TIME,
MANY HAVE FOUGHT TO CORRECT INJUSTICES,
OVERTHROW TYRANNY, LAY WASTE TO EVIL. WHAT
UNITES THE ONES WHO SUCCEEDED? A DEVOTION
TO THEIR IDEALS, STRONGER THAN IRON. DO YOU
POSSESS SUCH A WILL?

A FOOL'S QUESTION. MY NAME
IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE. WHAT MATTERS
IS WHETHER YOU THINK YOU CAN TRUST
ME. SO, WILL YOU?

...

WHO'S THERE?

OVER THE NEXT DAYS, I NEVER ASKED HIS NAME AGAIN. ROTTING IN THESE DEEPEST DUNGEONS, HE MUST'VE BEEN A DANGEROUS ENEMY OF THE CHURCH-- OR ONE OF THEIR AGENTS. I WAS CAREFUL TO REVEAL NOTHING.

EVERY CIVILIZATION, IF IT WISHES TO ENDURE, MUST FORGE A STRONG IDENTITY. ITS CITIZENS MUST FEEL THEY BELONG. THEY MUST BELIEVE IN ITS VALUES, ITS METHODS, SO COMPLETELY, THAT THEY WOULD LAY DOWN THEIR LIVES IN ITS DEFENCE. ANY THREAT MUST BE ELIMINATED. RUTHLESSLY.

LIKE ME.

YES, LIKE YOU. YOUR TRUTHS COULD SHATTER THIS SOCIETY.

ATONEMENT COMES WITH A HEAVY PRICE--BUT A PRICE WE MUST PAY NONETHELESS.

COURAGEOUS WORDS. BUT YOU NEED MORE THAN WORDS. YOU NEED ALLIES. STRONG ALLIES. AND YOU HAVE THEM.

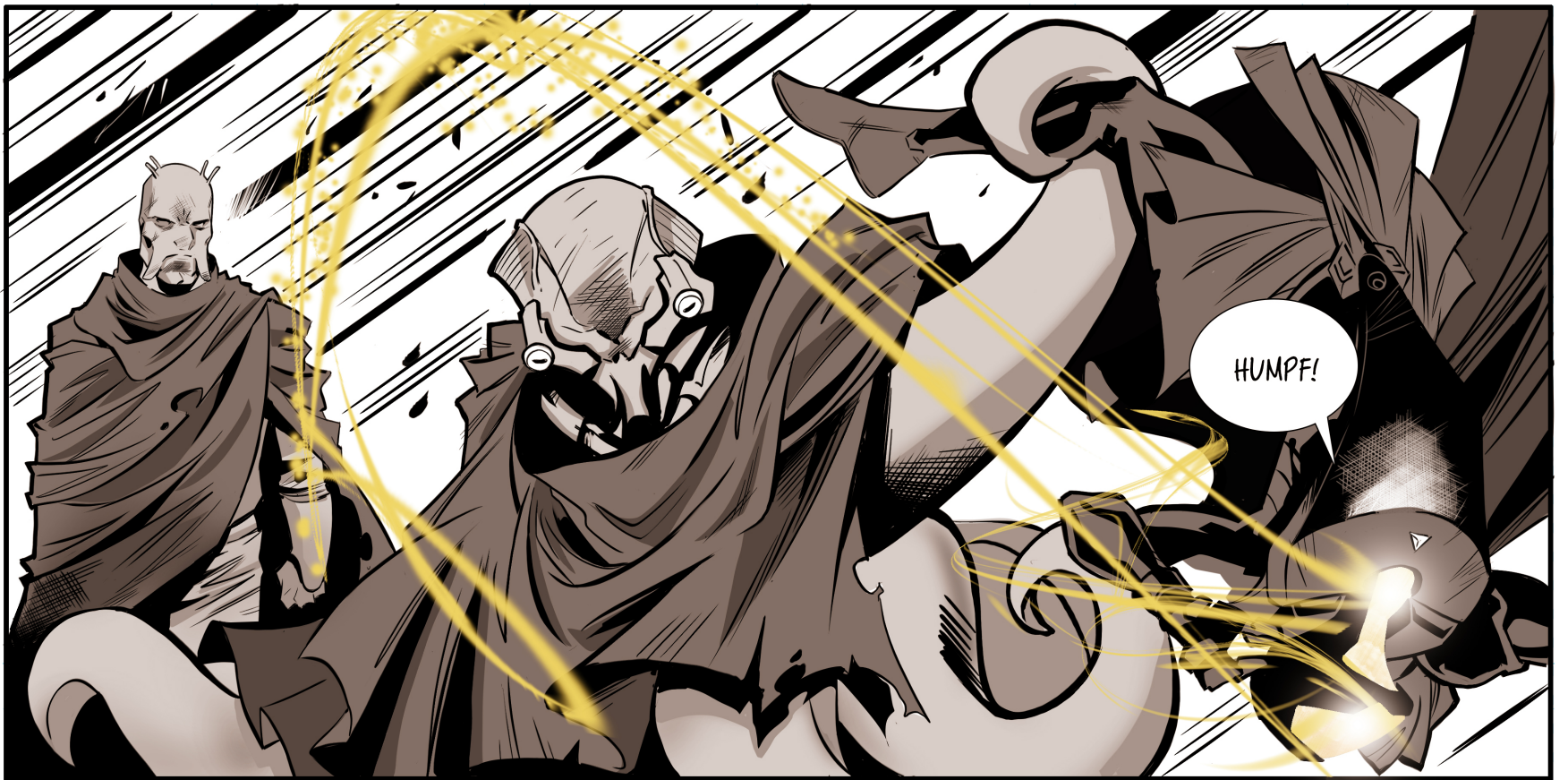
WHO?!

WHO YOU TALKING TO, CRAZY?

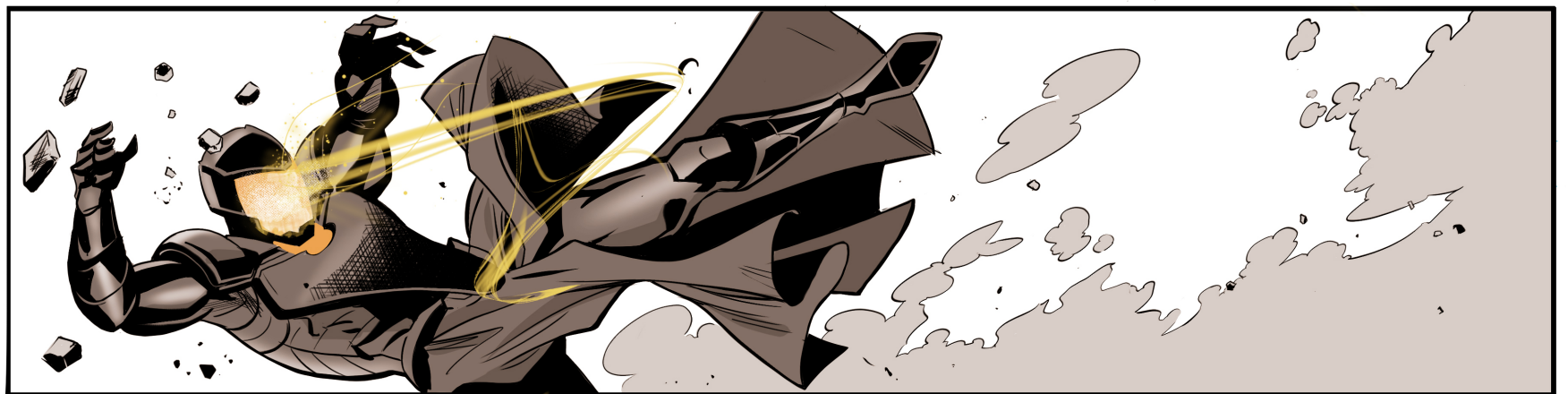
CLICK

ONE DAY HIERARCH, THE NEXT MADMAN

...

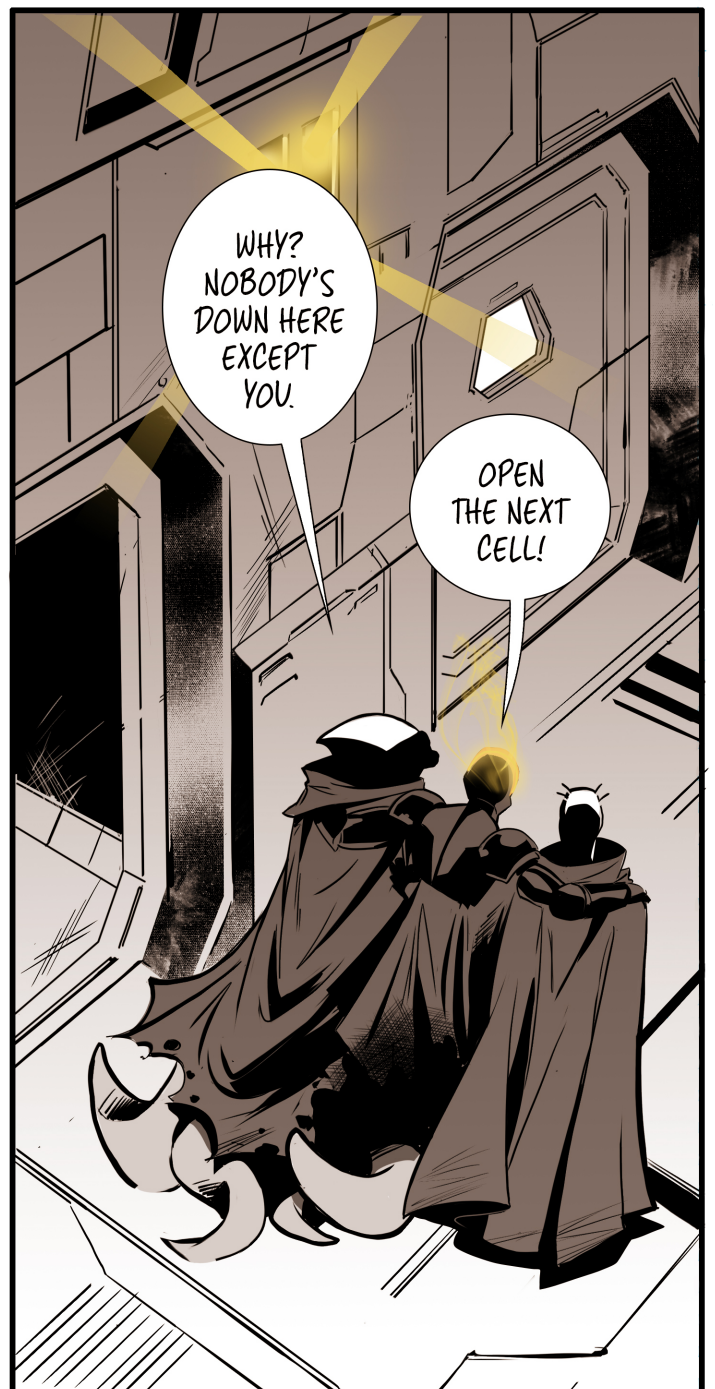


HUMPF!



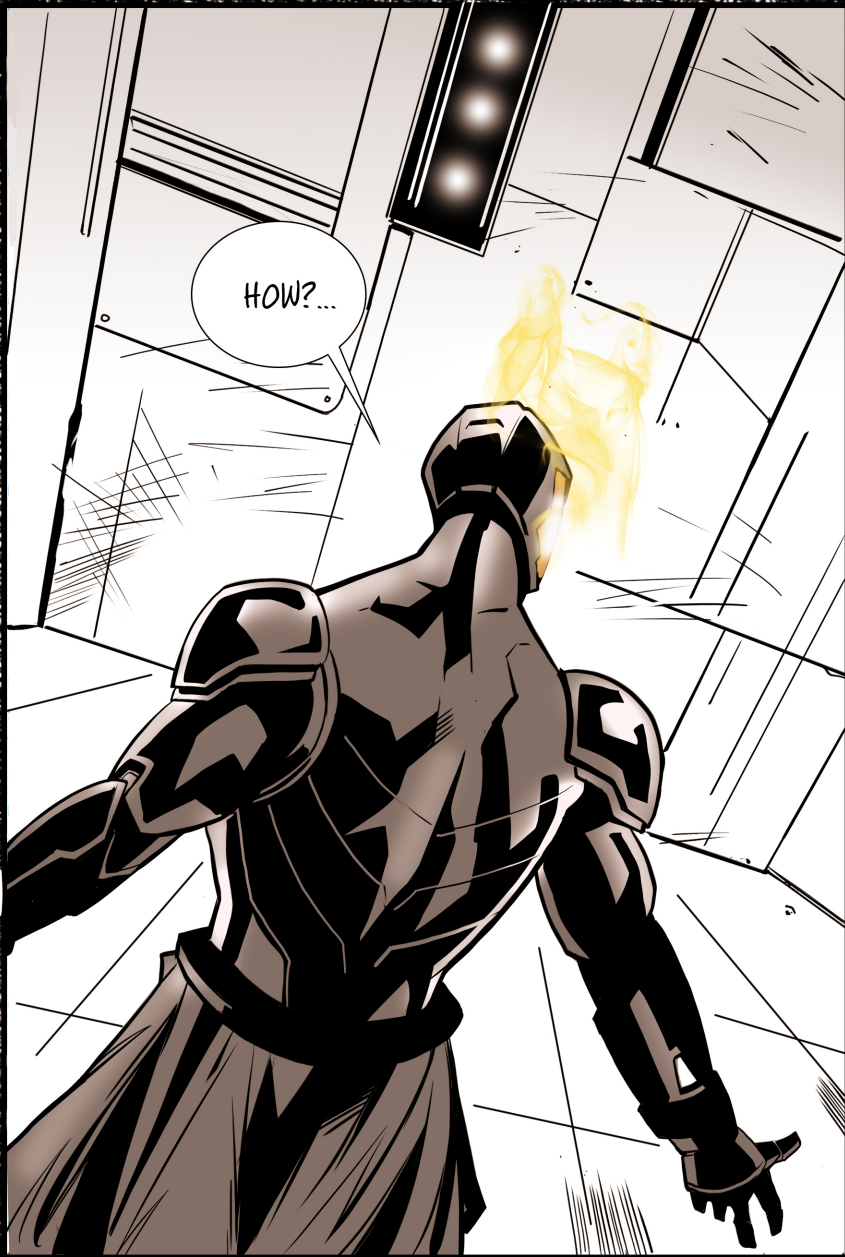
COME ON, THE SLAVES ARE RIOTING, BUT IT WON'T LAST LONG.

WE NEED TO VISIT THE NEXT CELL FIRST.

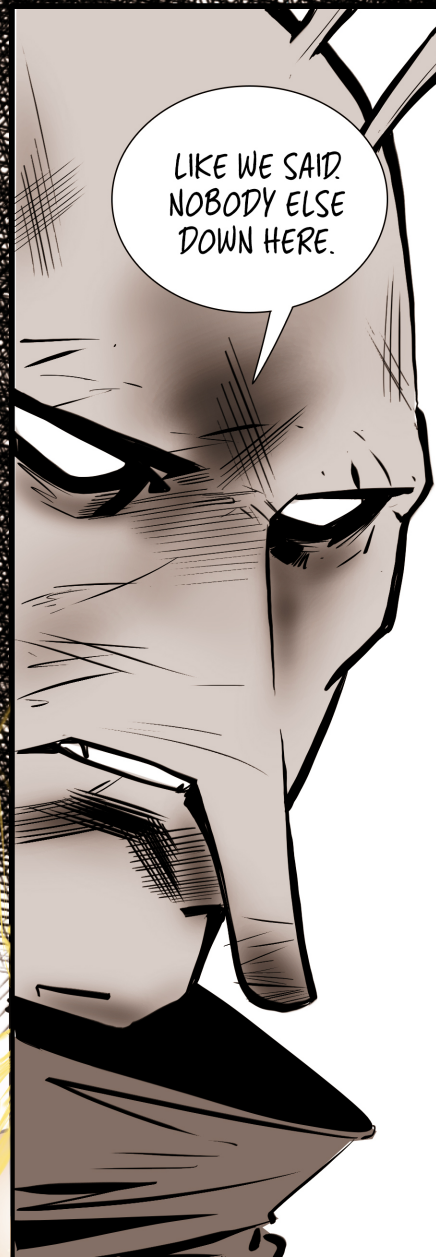


WHY? NOBODY'S DOWN HERE EXCEPT YOU.

OPEN THE NEXT CELL!



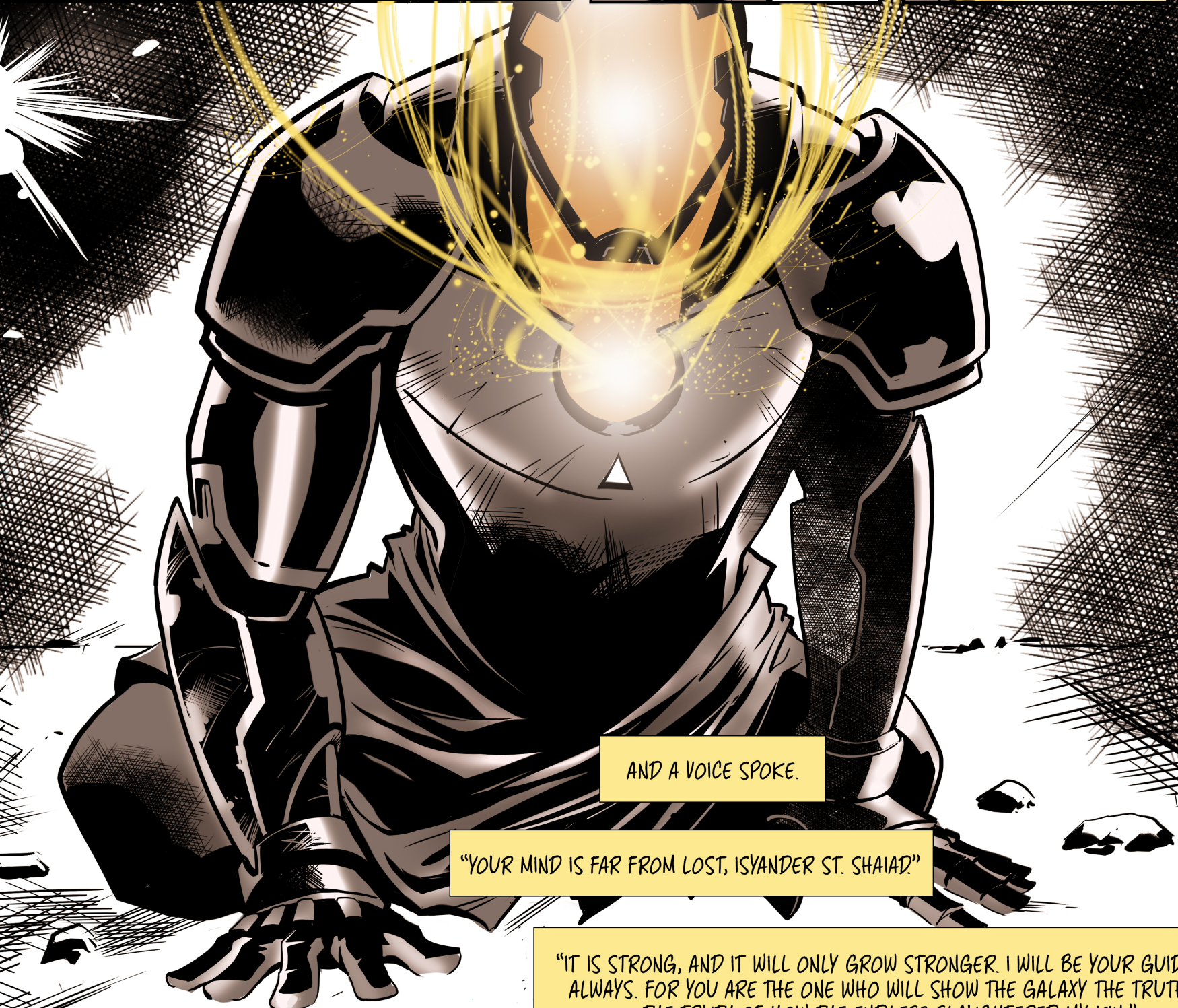
HOW?...



LIKE WE SAID.
NOBODY ELSE
DOWN HERE.



BUT...
I DON'T...



AND A VOICE SPOKE.

"YOUR MIND IS FAR FROM LOST, ISYANDER ST. SHAIAD."

"IT IS STRONG, AND IT WILL ONLY GROW STRONGER. I WILL BE YOUR GUIDE, ALWAYS. FOR YOU ARE THE ONE WHO WILL SHOW THE GALAXY THE TRUTH — THE TRUTH OF HOW THE ENDLESS SLAUGHTERED MY KIN."

