

I HAD AMBLED INTO A DUSTY LITTLE TOWN.
IF A SINGLE ROW OF RICKETY BUILDINGS COULD
BE CONSIDERED A TOWN.

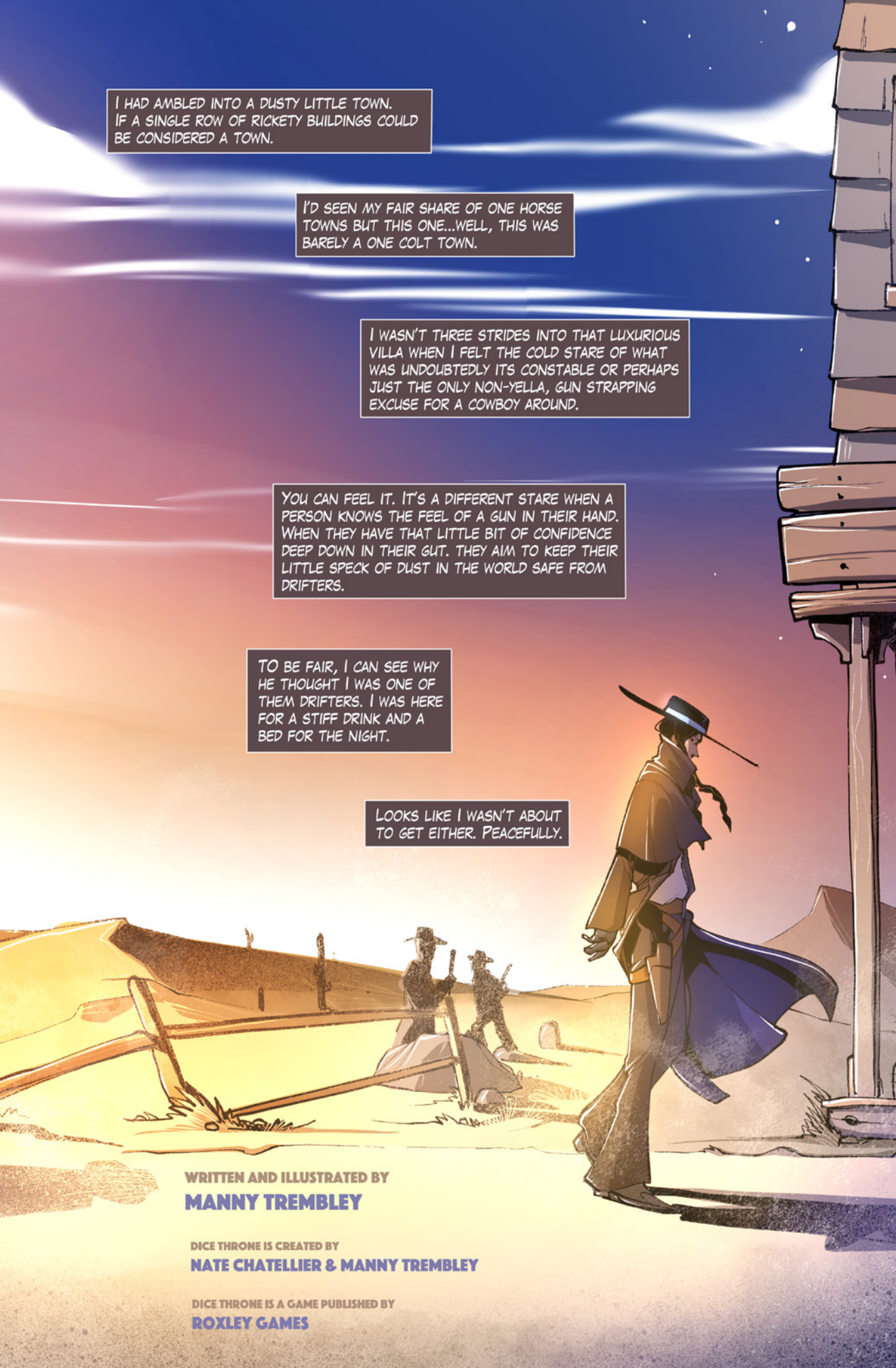
I'D SEEN MY FAIR SHARE OF ONE HORSE
TOWNS BUT THIS ONE...WELL, THIS WAS
BARELY A ONE COLT TOWN.

I WASN'T THREE STRIDES INTO THAT LUXURIOUS
VILLA WHEN I FELT THE COLD STARE OF WHAT
WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ITS CONSTABLE OR PERHAPS
JUST THE ONLY NON-YELLA, GUN STRAPPING
EXCUSE FOR A COWBOY AROUND.

YOU CAN FEEL IT. IT'S A DIFFERENT STARE WHEN A
PERSON KNOWS THE FEEL OF A GUN IN THEIR HAND.
WHEN THEY HAVE THAT LITTLE BIT OF CONFIDENCE
DEEP DOWN IN THEIR GUT. THEY AIM TO KEEP THEIR
LITTLE SPECK OF DUST IN THE WORLD SAFE FROM
DRIFTERS.

TO BE FAIR, I CAN SEE WHY
HE THOUGHT I WAS ONE OF
THEM DRIFTERS. I WAS HERE
FOR A STIFF DRINK AND A
BED FOR THE NIGHT.

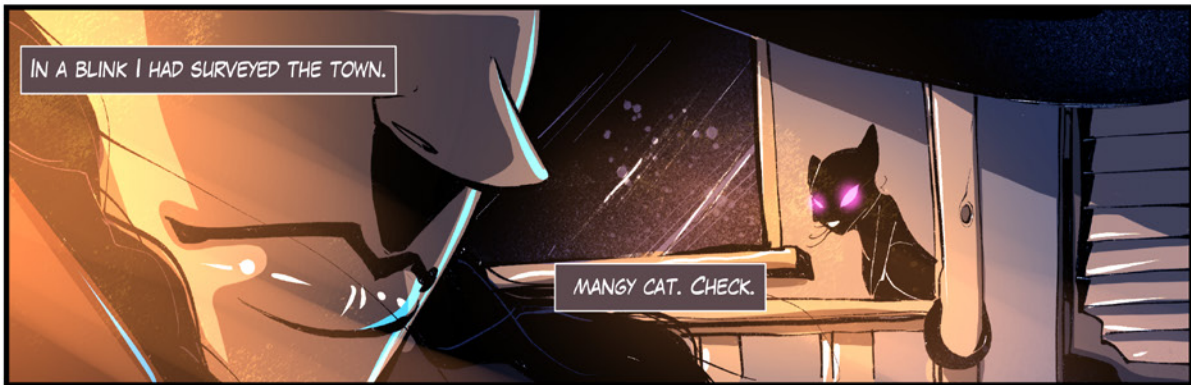
LOOKS LIKE I WASN'T ABOUT
TO GET EITHER. PEACEFULLY.



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
MANNY TREMBLEY

DICE THRONE IS CREATED BY
NATE CHATELLIER & MANNY TREMBLEY

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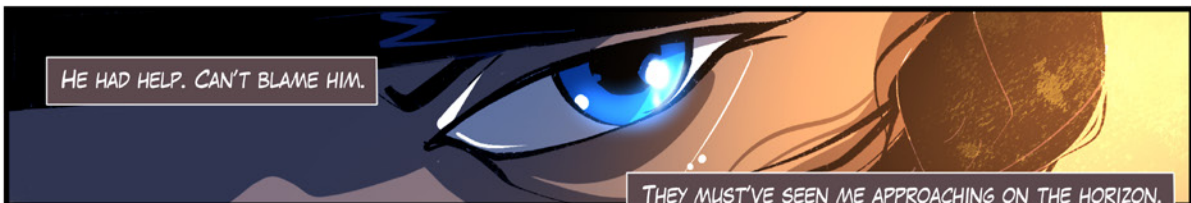


IN A BLINK I HAD SURVEYED THE TOWN.

MANGY CAT. CHECK.



OLDER CHAP TAILING ME WITH A SHUFFLE IN HIS GAIT. CHECK.



HE HAD HELP. CAN'T BLAME HIM.

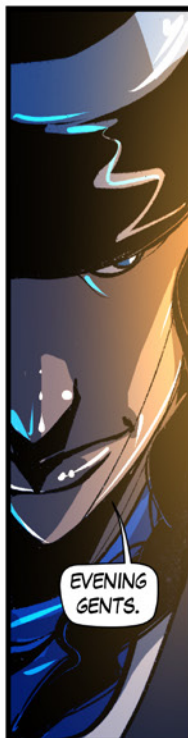
THEY MUST'VE SEEN ME APPROACHING ON THE HORIZON.



PROBABLY A BANKER
AND A BARTENDER.



THERE WENT MY DRINK.



EVENING
GENTS.




JUST KEEP
WALKING, LADY.



I DON'T
MEAN NO ONE
ANY HARM.

HE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME.




I DON'T BELIEVE THAT.
A SEEMINGLY LONE 'SLINGER, PACKING
TWO DEATH STICKS. YOU SEEM LIKE THE
TYPE THAT ALWAYS MEANS HARM.

HE WASN'T WRONG. HARM
AND ME HAVE A TUMULTUOUS
RELATIONSHIP. BUT THAT DAY,
I WAS SERIOUSLY JUST LOOKING
FOR A DRINK.

I WAS JUST LOOKING FOR A DRINK.
BUT YOU GOT ME THINKING THAT PERHAPS
TODAY...I MIGHT WANT TO LOOK
INTO CAUSING SOME HARM.




I DON'T THINK HE GOT MY SARCASM.
HIS HAND FLUTTERED REAL TIGHT TO
HIS SANDALWOOD.



THINK REAL
HARD BEFORE YOU
DRAW THAT PISTOL.

I'M ALONE.
I'M TIRED. I NEED
A DRINK.



LISTEN LADY, I
DON'T WANNA SHOOT YA.
YOU'RE OUTMANNED. YOU'RE
SURROUNDED.

I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE
PROVOKED HIM. BUT THE DRY
DUST IN MY MOUTH WAS MAKING
ME ORNERY. I GET SHORT WHEN
I GET THIRSTY.

HOW 'BOUT YOU GO
GET SOME MEN AND THEN
WE TALK ABOUT YOU
"OUTMANNING" ME.

I INHALED. THEN EXHALED.
AS I DO RIGHT BEFORE
I SMELL GUNPLAY ABOUT TO
HAPPEN. MAKES THE HANDS
FLY TRUE.

SOMEONE SHOULD'VE TAUGHT
THAT TO THE TRIGGER HAPPY
TOWN GUY. HIS HAND MOVED
SLOW TO HIS GUN BUT HE WAS
HYPERVENTILATING.



3 BULLETS. I TOOK IT EASY ON THE THREE FELLA'S.

SURE, I COULD'VE SENT ALL THREE TO AN EARLY GRAVE. BUT I CAN'T FAULT FOLKS FOR TRYING TO KEEP SAFE WHAT'S THEIRS.

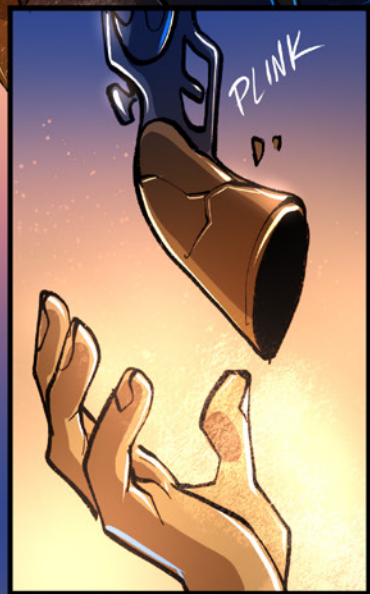
THAT'S ALL I'VE BEEN TRYING TO DO FOR NEARLY TWELVE YEARS. THE ONE PERSON I WISH I COULD'VE KEPT SAFE IS GONE. NOW IT'S LIKE I'M CHASING HIS GHOST TRYING TO BRING HIM BACK.



THESE TOWNSFOLK DIDN'T DESERVE DEATH FOR TRYING TO DO WHAT I'D BE DOING IF THIS WAS MY SPIT OF LAND.



THUD



BUT THERE AIN'T NOTHING WRONG WITH TAGGIN' EACH OF THEM TO REMIND THEM TO PROTECT THEIR HOMES A LITTLE BETTER NEXT TIME.



YOU BEST BE GONE BEFORE I GET BACK!

THE MARSHALL WON'T TAKE KINDLY TO STRANGERS SHOOTING UP OUR TOWN! YOU HEAR ME WOMAN? GET OUT OF OUR TOWN, OR YOU'LL BE SORRY!

I WAS SORRY. SORRY I'D HAVE TO POUR MY OWN DRINK.



I'M SORRY...

I COULDN'T HEAR YOU ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR COMPADRES HOOFIN' OUT OF TOWN WITH THEIR LIVES.

MAKE SURE TO TELL THEM YOU GOT SHOT DOWN BY A WOMAN.



YOU AIN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS! WE'LL BE BACK!

GET OUTTA HERE!

HE WAS MOST DEFINITELY GOING TO BE BACK. THEY ALWAYS COME BACK. ON HORSEBACK AND TYPICALLY WITH A MUCH STRONGER, STEADIER HAND. AND GUNS. THEY ALWAYS BRING MORE GUNS.

OWEN, GET A MOVE ON!

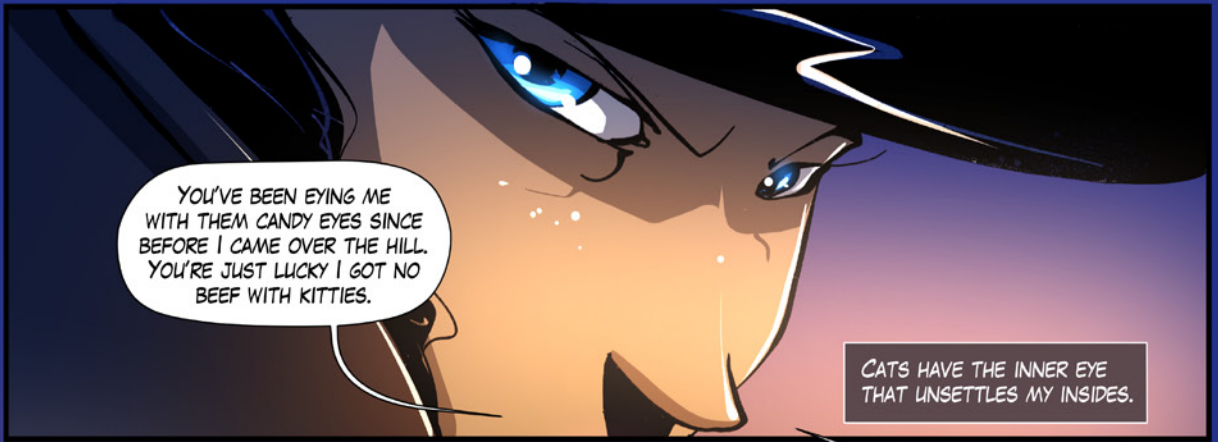


I'LL BE WAITING RIGHT HERE BUDDY.

I WOULDN'T BE.

ME, MY TWIN PISTOLS, AND HOPEFULLY A STIFF DRINK. OR TWO.

NOW, I GOTTA SEE A CAT ABOUT A STARING PROBLEM.



YOU'VE BEEN EYING ME WITH THEM CANDY EYES SINCE BEFORE I CAME OVER THE HILL. YOU'RE JUST LUCKY I GOT NO BEEF WITH KITTIES.

CATS HAVE THE INNER EYE THAT UNSETTLES MY INSIDES.



WHAT SAY YOU PUSSY CAT?

BLACK CATS KINDA WEIRD ME OUT BUT THOSE PINK EYES GOT ME CURIOUS.



YOU WANNA BOWL OF MILK?

A GOOD SCRUFFING?

FIGURES.



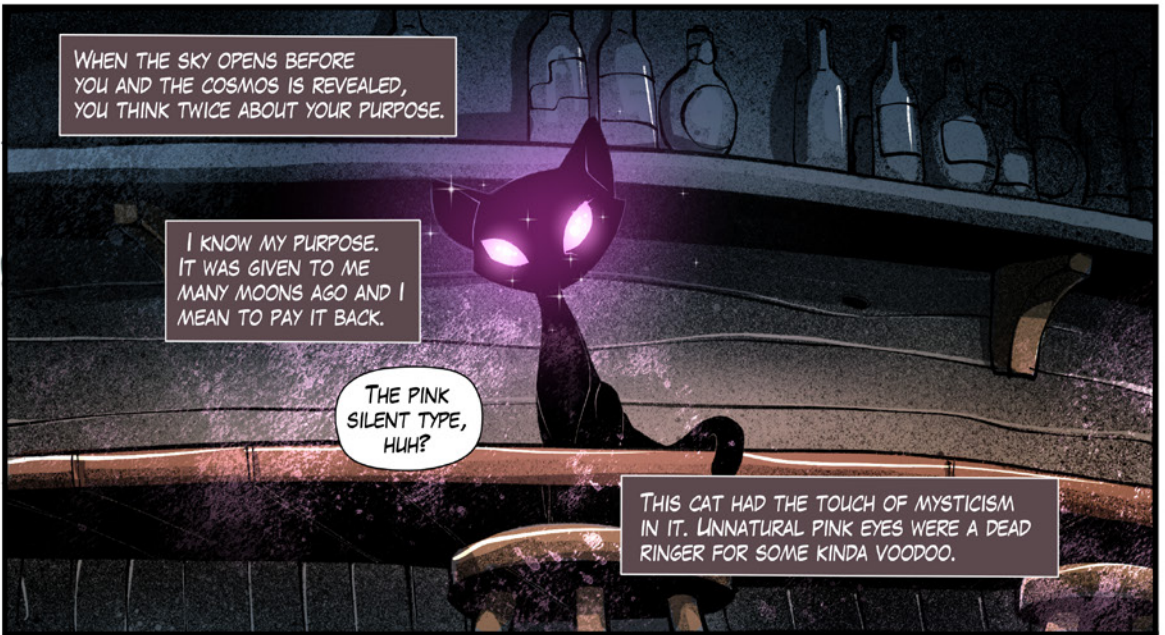
FIND ME WHEN YOU CAN TALK AND MAYBE WE'LL GRAB A SAUCER OF MILK.



SIGH.

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU TEND BAR?

I'M GENERALLY NOT A FAN OF THE SUPERNATURAL. I'VE SEEN THINGS IN THE SIERRA'S THAT'D MAKE GROWN MEN WEEP WITH EMOTIONS UNKNOWN ON THIS EARTH.



WHEN THE SKY OPENS BEFORE YOU AND THE COSMOS IS REVEALED, YOU THINK TWICE ABOUT YOUR PURPOSE.

I KNOW MY PURPOSE. IT WAS GIVEN TO ME MANY MOONS AGO AND I MEAN TO PAY IT BACK.

THE PINK SILENT TYPE, HUH?

THIS CAT HAD THE TOUCH OF MYSTICISM IN IT. UNNATURAL PINK EYES WERE A DEAD RINGER FOR SOME KINDA VOODOO.



COME ON KITTY, COME ON OUT.



I HAD TO CONFESS, I FIGURED SOMETHING WAS AMISS BUT WHAT HAPPENED ON THAT DIRTY SALOON BAR WAS A BIT BEYOND MY SCOPE.



I'D NEVER SEEN A CAT TURN INTO A PERSON...




OR, CAT PERSON.

IT IS AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, CHARLOTTE JONES.


WE HAVE BEEN WATCHING YOU WITH GREAT ADMIRATION FROM ACROSS BOTH TIME AND SPACE.

THE CAT LADY HAD RUBBED ME WRONG FROM THE GET GO. HER BARE FEET ON THE BAR. AND SHE CALLED ME CHARLOTTE.


NO ONE BUT MY DADDY CALLS ME CHARLOTTE. AND LAST I CHECKED, YOU AIN'T MY PA.



LET'S SAY YOU AND I SKIP THE FORMALITIES AND GET WITH THE BUSINESS OF WHY YOU'RE HERE.



I FORGET THAT YOU WESTERNERS OFTEN SHOOT FIRST, SEEK KNOWLEDGE SECOND.



YOU ARE TENACIOUS AND MIGHTY INDEED, GUNSLINGER, BUT YOUR WEAPON IS NOT NEEDED HERE.




I AM NEN,
THE MESSENGER.

I DON'T MUCH
CARE FOR MESSENGERS.
THEY TEND TO WIND UP NEVER
MAKING IT BACK.

IDLE THREATS
MEAN NOTHING TO ME
NOR HE WHO HAS
SENT ME.


YOU HAVE BEEN
CAREFULLY SELECTED TO
REPRESENT YOUR KIND IN
THE GREATEST TOURNAMENT
THAT HAS EVER EXISTED.

I DON'T PLAY IN
NO RODEO. I HAVE BUSINESS
TO TEND TO AND SEEING
WHERE I RANK IS LAST
ON MY LIST.




YOUR BUSINESS IS ADMIRABLE,
YOUNG CHARLOTTE, BUT, IN THE END,
IS FUTILE. VENGEANCE SEEMS WORTHY
UNTIL YOU GRASP IT. AND THEN IT
EVAPORATES, LEAVING ONLY A SHELL
NOW ABSENT OF PURPOSE.

SHE WASN'T WRONG.



YOU CALL ME CHARLOTTE
ONCE MORE AND WE'RE GONNA
HAVE STEELY WORDS AND I
DON'T CARE HOW HARD YOU
DON'T WANT IT.

YOU DON'T KNOW ME. YOU
DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M GOING
AND I DON'T MUCH CARE FOR
YOUR KNOW-IT-ALL TONE.



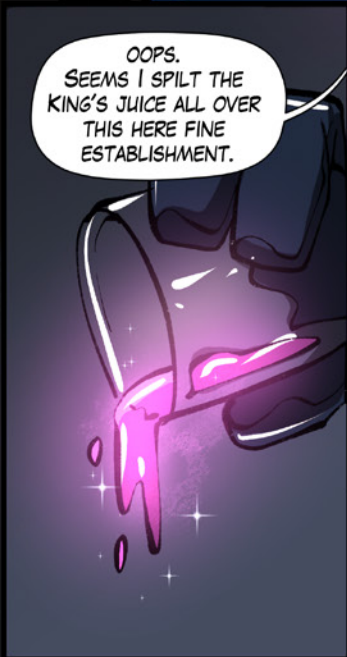
I WILL AWAIT YOUR
ANSWER. PLEASE, ACCEPT
THIS GIFT, THE KING'S
ELIXIR.

IT IS SAID TO BE
SWEETER THAN A THOUSAND
PLUMS AND MORE INTOXICATING
THAN ANY OF YOUR PRIMITIVE
DISTILLERIES.



OH, THIS IS THE "KING'S" ELIXIR? WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO.

WHY DON'T I SLAM THIS DOWN SO WE CAN MOSEY ON OVER TO THE KING'S BREWERY AND HAVE US A LITTLE SOIRÉE. WE CAN TOAST TO MY IMPENDING VICTORY IN THIS "TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS".



OOPS. SEEMS I SPILT THE KING'S JUICE ALL OVER THIS HERE FINE ESTABLISHMENT.



PITY. YOU MASK YOUR INSECURITIES WITH SUCH BRAVADO.



THAT DRINK WAS WORTH MORE THAN YOUR COUNTRY'S GOLD RESERVES. ONLY THE KING HIMSELF AND THOSE HE INVITES TO HIS TOURNAMENT ARE ALLOWED TO TASTE IT.

IN HINDSIGHT, IT KINDA SUCKED THAT I WASTED THAT DRINK. BUT I HAD A POINT TO PROVE.

I WILL AWAIT YOUR RESPONSE. AFTER THE SUN HAS SET ON THIS DAY YOUR CHANCE FOR GLORY WILL HAVE PASSED. SAD TO SEE SOMEONE WASTE THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME.

THE FAME AND RICHES THAT AWAITED YOU IN THE LAND OF THE CRIMSON SANDS WOULD HAVE EASILY PAID FOR YOUR JOURNEY.

YOU ARE TRYING TO GET TO THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN, ARE YOU NOT? YOU HAVE NO GOLD FOR SAID TRAVELS, DO YOU NOT? PRIDE IS A ROADBLOCK THAT NEED NOT STAND. BREAK IT AND TAKE WHAT IS YOURS.





LISTEN LADY...CAT, THING.
MY APOLOGIES FOR POURING THAT
VALUABLE HOOCH OUT.

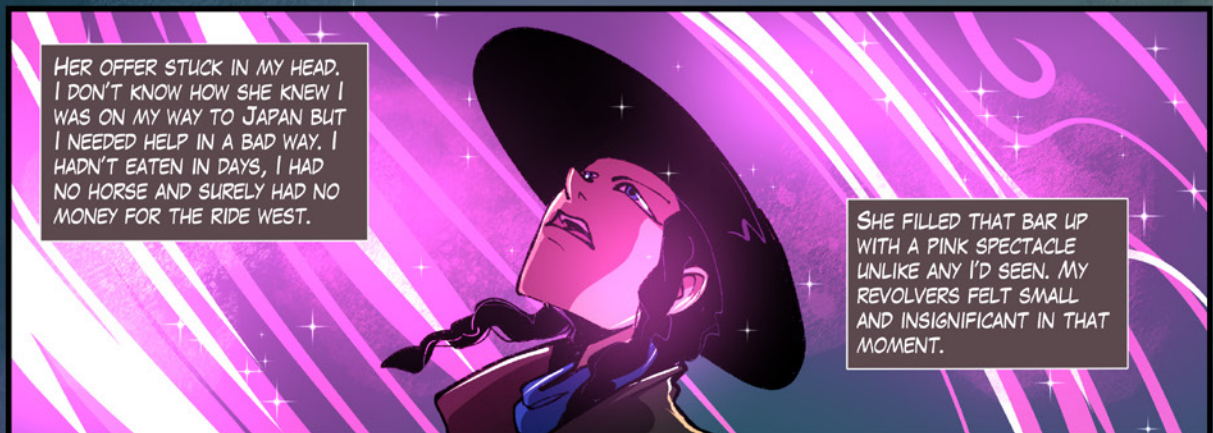
AND YOU NEVER
SAID ANYTHING EARLIER
ABOUT GOLD. I JUST
NEED TO WIN THIS
TOURNAMENT?

GOLD THE LIKES OF WHICH
CAN TRAVEL YOU ACROSS THE
GREAT OCEAN MANY TIMES TO
ADMINISTER YOUR REVENGE.



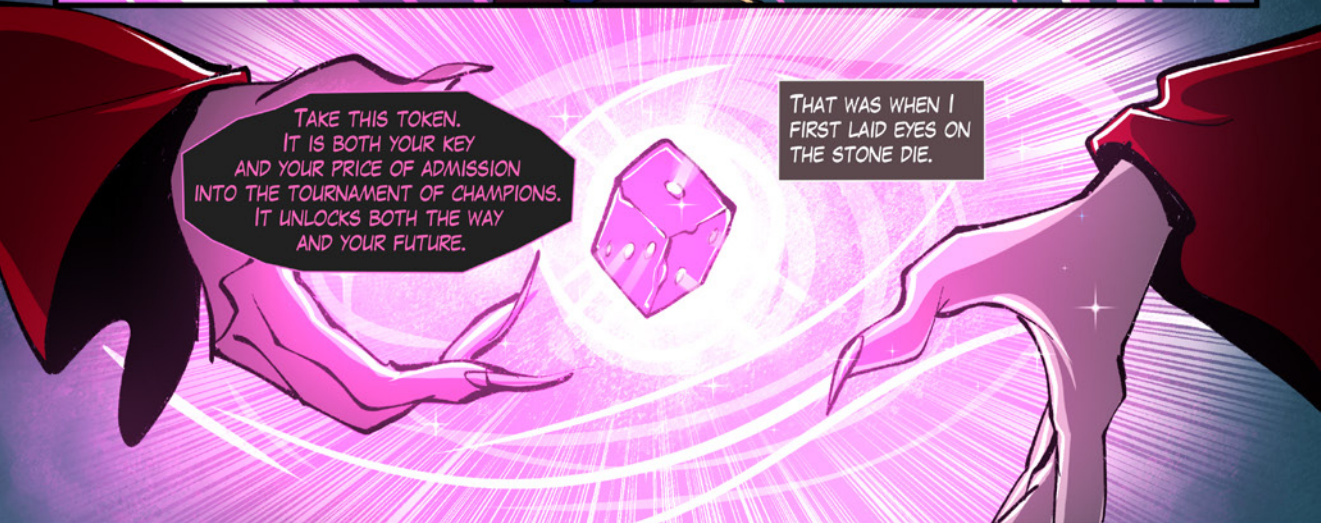
YOU HAVE UNTIL THE SUN
DESCENDS BELOW THE HORIZON
TO ACCEPT PASSAGE...

...WHERE YOU WILL BE
TESTED BEYOND WHAT
MORTAL FLESH
CAN ENDURE.



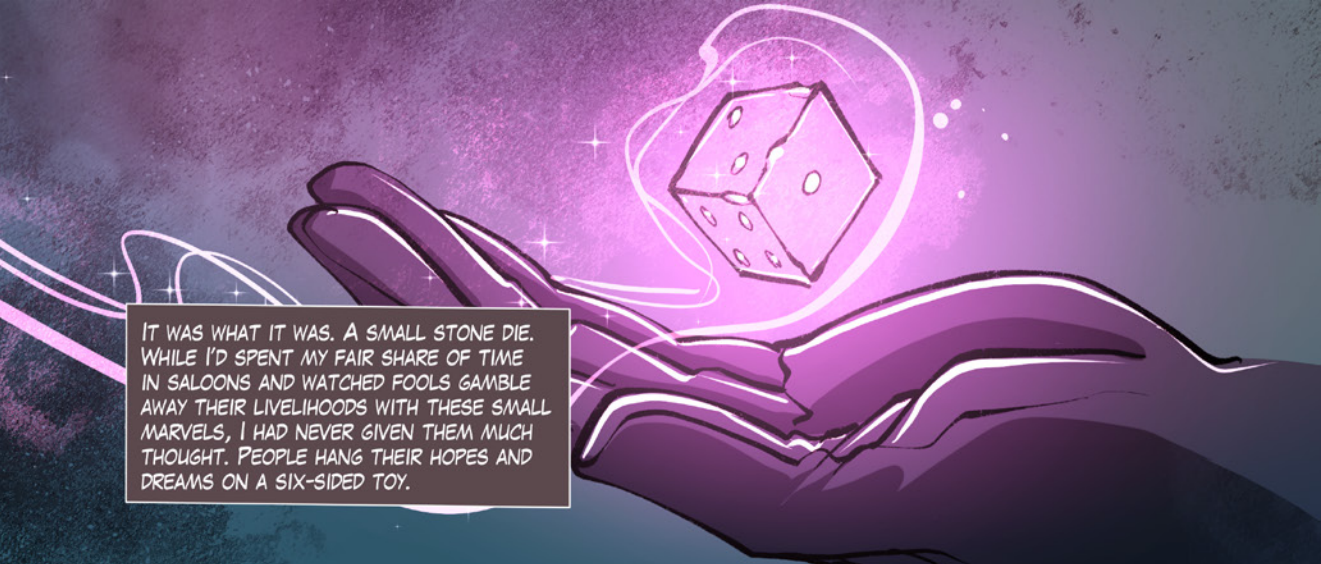
HER OFFER STUCK IN MY HEAD.
I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE KNEW I
WAS ON MY WAY TO JAPAN BUT
I NEEDED HELP IN A BAD WAY. I
HADN'T EATEN IN DAYS, I HAD
NO HORSE AND SURELY HAD NO
MONEY FOR THE RIDE WEST.

SHE FILLED THAT BAR UP
WITH A PINK SPECTACLE
UNLIKE ANY I'D SEEN. MY
REVOLVERS FELT SMALL
AND INSIGNIFICANT IN THAT
MOMENT.



TAKE THIS TOKEN.
IT IS BOTH YOUR KEY
AND YOUR PRICE OF ADMISSION
INTO THE TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS.
IT UNLOCKS BOTH THE WAY
AND YOUR FUTURE.


THAT WAS WHEN I
FIRST LAID EYES ON
THE STONE DIE.



IT WAS WHAT IT WAS. A SMALL STONE DIE. WHILE I'D SPENT MY FAIR SHARE OF TIME IN SALOONS AND WATCHED FOOLS GAMBLE AWAY THEIR LIVELIHOODS WITH THESE SMALL MARVELS, I HAD NEVER GIVEN THEM MUCH THOUGHT. PEOPLE HANG THEIR HOPES AND DREAMS ON A SIX-SIDED TOY.



BUT NOBODY I KNOW HAD EVER ROLLED A STONE DIE. IT'D TEAR UP THE TABLES AND PROBABLY GET A ROLLER KICKED OUT.




SO MANY LIVES WRECKED WITH A ROLL OF YOU, LITTLE FELLA. I'M GUESSING YOU BRING WITH YOU A CHANCE AT GREATNESS OR ABSOLUTE FAILURE.



SO, LET ME GUESS, I NEED TO "ROLL THE DICE" ON WHETHER I GO ON YOUR LITTLE ADVENTURE?

I NEED TO ROLL A SIX OR SOMETHING?



AND...SHE'S GONE. BAD KITTY.

SO I JUST KEEP THIS?



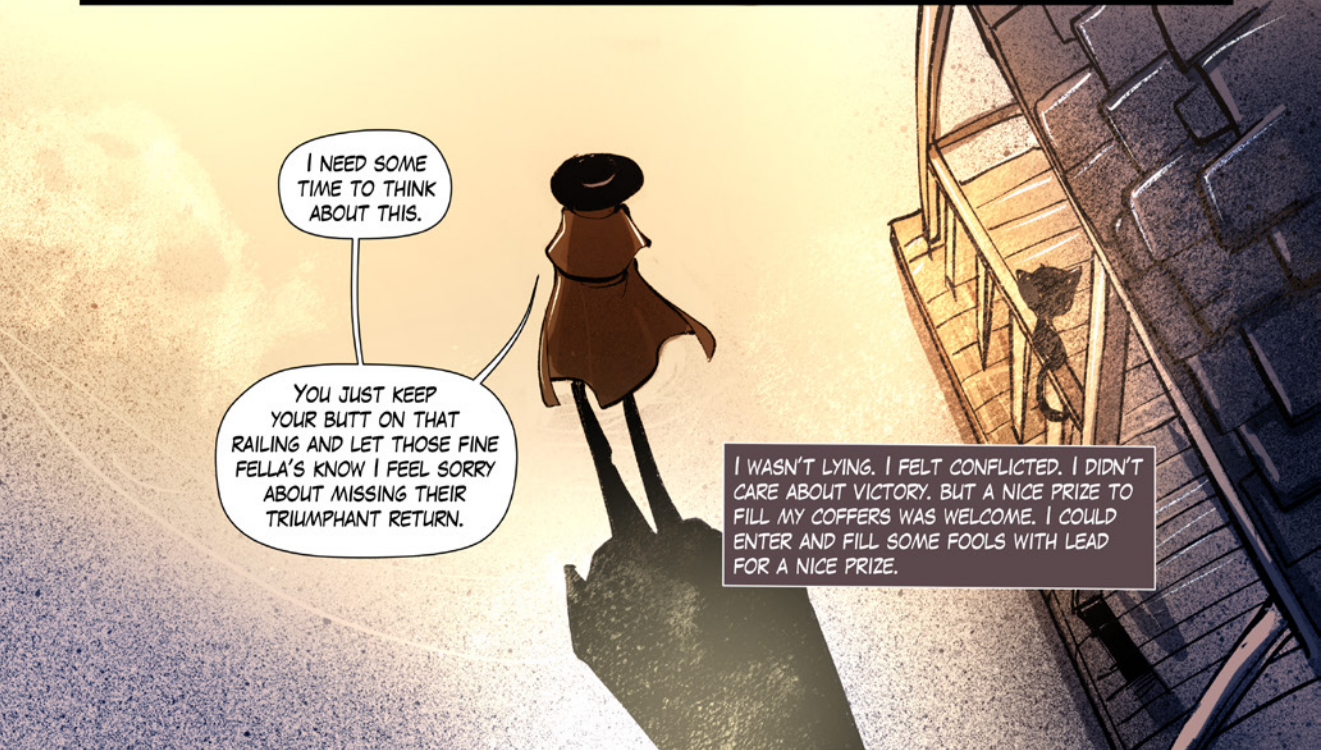
STUPID CAT.
I AIN'T GOT TIME FOR
YOUR SHENANIGANS.

BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING GNAWING
AT ME. I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE GOT
THAT INFO ON MY SITUATION. BUT SHE
WAS SPOT ON. I NEEDED SOME MONEY.
I'D BEEN UP AND DOWN THIS WESTERN
UNITED STATES FOR MONTHS AND I
HAD BEEN FEELING DESPERATE.



BACK IN
CAT FORM,
HUH?


THAT WON'T SAVE
YOU. I'D SHOOT A CAT.
I AIN'T AFRAID OF SEVEN
YEARS BAD LUCK.



I NEED SOME
TIME TO THINK
ABOUT THIS.

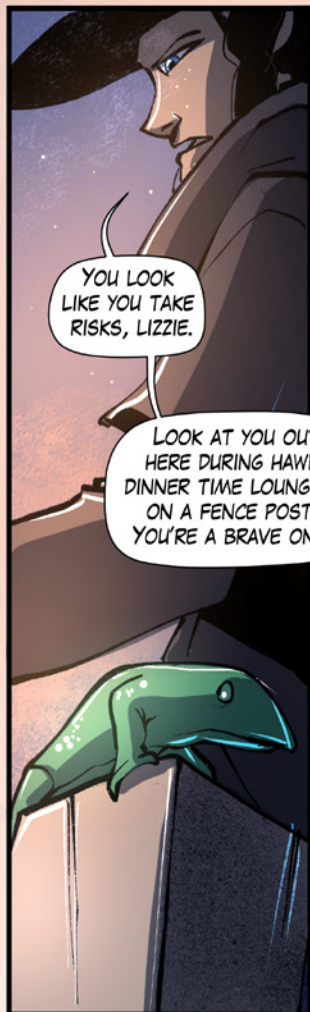
YOU JUST KEEP
YOUR BUTT ON THAT
RAILING AND LET THOSE FINE
FELLA'S KNOW I FEEL SORRY
ABOUT MISSING THEIR
TRIUMPHANT RETURN.

I WASN'T LYING. I FELT CONFLICTED. I DIDN'T
CARE ABOUT VICTORY. BUT A NICE PRIZE TO
FILL MY COFFERS WAS WELCOME. I COULD
ENTER AND FILL SOME FOOLS WITH LEAD
FOR A NICE PRIZE.



WHAT DO YOU
THINK, LIZZIE. HOW 'BOUT
I JUST ROLL THE DIE
AND IF I ROLL THAT
SIX, I GO.

SEEMS FOOLISH TO
LEAVE MY FATE TO A DIE
ROLL. MY PA WOULD NOT TAKE
KINDLY TO ME WAGERING MY
FUTURE ON A DEMON DIE.

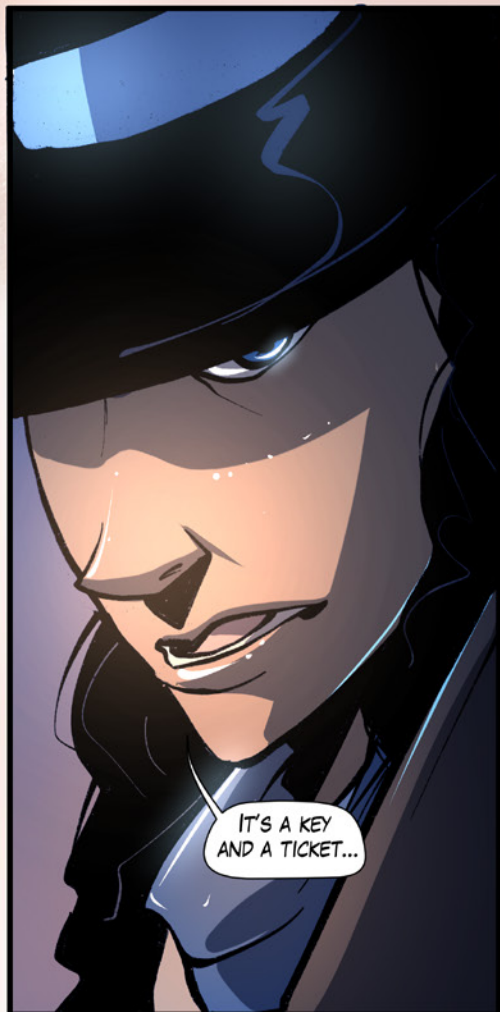


YOU LOOK
LIKE YOU TAKE
RISKS, LIZZIE.

LOOK AT YOU OUT
HERE DURING HAWK
DINNER TIME LOUNGING
ON A FENCE POST.
YOU'RE A BRAVE ONE.



SHE DIDN'T EVEN
TELL ME WHAT TO DO WITH
THIS STUPID THING.



IT'S A KEY
AND A TICKET...

SHE TALKED ABOUT A DIFFERENT TIME AND PLACE. EVERY NIGHT I DREAMT OF A DIFFERENT TIME AND DIFFERENT PLACE.

A TIME WHERE DADDY WAS STILL HERE. WHERE I WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO FIGHT BACK. TO FIGHT OFF THOSE WHO TOOK HIM. A DIFFERENT TIME WHERE I NEVER TOOK UP THE SHORT LIFE EXPECTANCY OF GUNSLINGING.

I WOULDN'T HAVE MET OL' RAYLEN. THAT STEELY COWBOY.

MAYBE I'D HAVE BECOME A FINE WOMAN OF STATURE. INSTEAD, I SAT AT THE CROSSROADS OF A JOURNEY THAT WOULD LEAD ME LITERALLY THROUGH TIME AND SPACE.

I SAY WE GO FOR IT. WE'RE STUCK HERE AREN'T WE BUD?

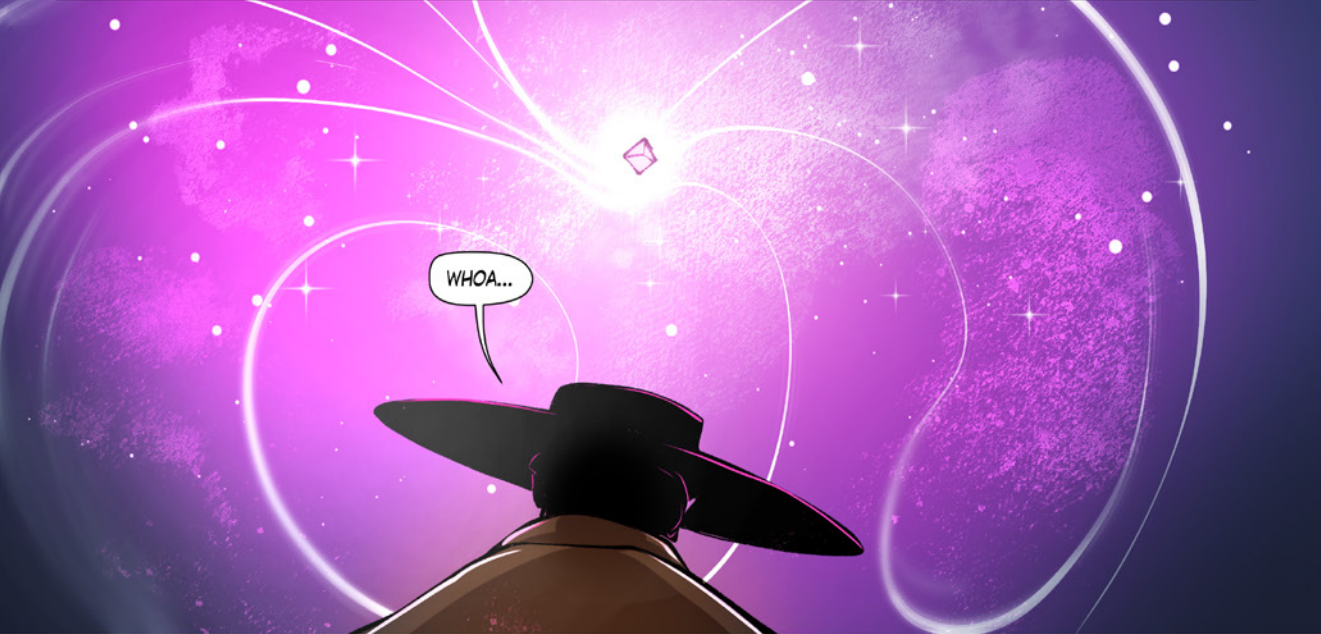
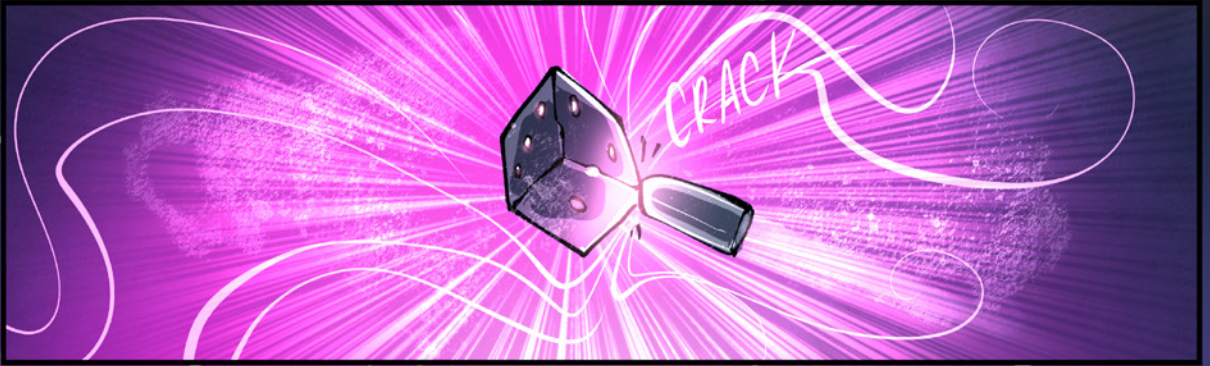
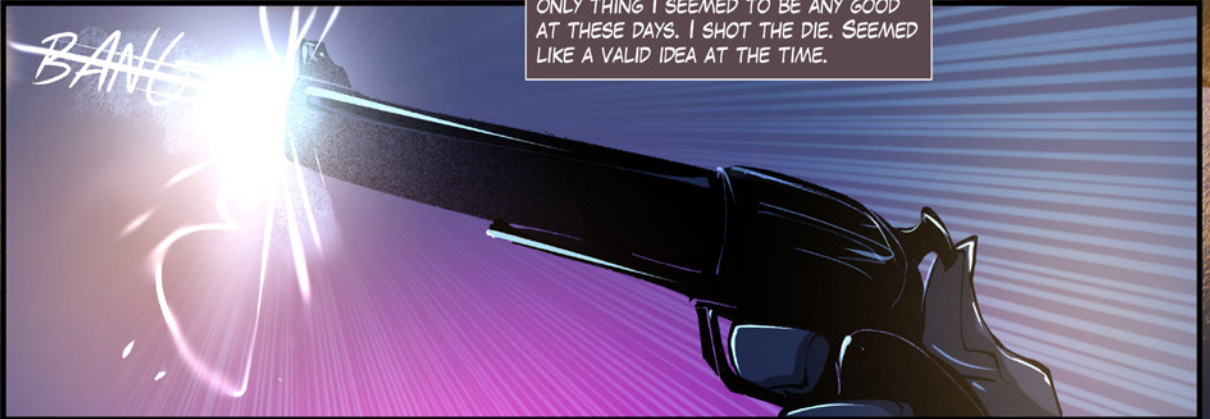
ALRIGHT. NEN, I'M READY.

WHAT DO I DO? ARE YOU GONNA GIVE ME A RIDE?

NEN?



I GOT TIRED OF WAITING SO I DID THE ONLY THING I SEEMED TO BE ANY GOOD AT THESE DAYS. I SHOT THE DIE. SEEMED LIKE A VALID IDEA AT THE TIME.





IS THIS MY
RIDE KITTY CAT?

I DON'T RIDE
RAINBOWS. CAN WE
CALL A WAGON OR
A TRAIN?




THE DIE IS
THE KEY. THE KEY IS
THE DIE. COME
WITH ME.




THROUGH SPACE.

THROUGH TIME.



VICTORY IS ONLY
FOR THOSE WILLING
TO STRETCH OUT THEIR
HAND AND TAKE IT.



EVERYTHING WENT FROM
A CASCADE OF NOISE TO
THE CALM OF A CLOUDLESS
NIGHT IN THE DESERT.

I WAS MOVED THROUGH WHAT APPEARED TO
BE A DOOR, OR GATE OR SOMETHING. I FELT
AS IF I WAS UNDERWATER AND COMING UP FOR
AIR.



I WANTED TO SPEAK, BUT THE SILENCE WAS
DEAFENING AND I DARED NOT DISTURB IT.

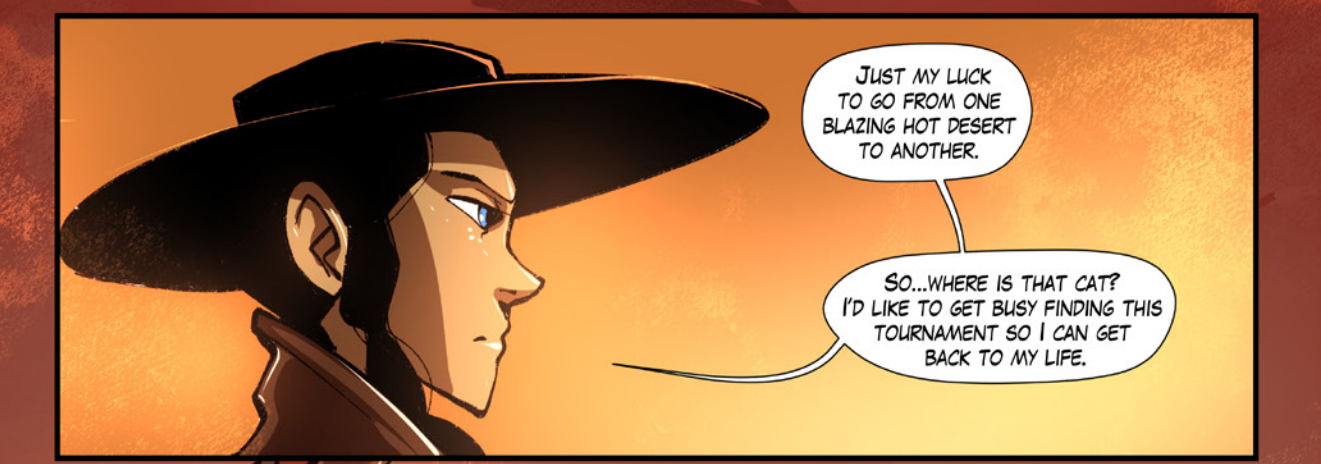


AND THEN I FELT THE CRIMSON
SANDS FOR THE FIRST TIME.



THE LAND WAS FAMILIAR
YET FOREIGN TO ME.

RIGHT.
THE CRIMSON SANDS
COULDN'T HAVE BEEN
A METAPHOR.



JUST MY LUCK
TO GO FROM ONE
BLAZING HOT DESERT
TO ANOTHER.

SO...WHERE IS THAT CAT?
I'D LIKE TO GET BUSY FINDING THIS
TOURNAMENT SO I CAN GET
BACK TO MY LIFE.



NEN WAS
BUT A MESSENGER.

WHAT THE
DEVIL?!

I AM
NO DEVIL....



I AM
THE EMISSARY.

WELCOME,
CHARLOTTE THE GUNSLINGER,
TO THE LAND OF A THOUSAND SUNS
AND THE SANDS DRENCHED WITH
THE BLOOD OF THE FALLEN.

THE MILLENIUM
KING AWAITS.

I KNEW AT THAT MOMENT, I HADN'T
BROUGHT ENOUGH BULLETS.