

2015 C.E.

ATLANTA,
GEORGIA.

HERE'S THE THING ABOUT
KILLING SOMEONE.

IT'S SO MUCH EASIER
THAN YOU THINK.

ALL YOU NEED
IS A REASON.

DEFENDING MY PEOPLE,
MY LAND, MY WAY OF LIFE.

I'D PICK OFF A DOZEN
MEN WITHOUT BLINKING.

SELF-PRESERVATION, JUST
A FEW MINUTES MORE OF
LIVING INSTEAD OF LETTING
THEM CUT ME DOWN.

EVEN IF I THREW IT AWAY
AFTERWARDS, CHASING
MY WHITE RABBIT DOWN
THE HOLE.

HOPING FOR SOME
KIND OF CONCLUSION.

IT'S NOT ADDICTIVE. IT'S
SCARIER. IT BECOMES
CASUAL.

AND, OKAY, MAYBE A
LITTLE COMPULSIVE.

HOW COULDN'T
IT BE?

ALL THIS DEATH,
ALL THE TIME.

EXCEPT...





THAT'S NOT ME.

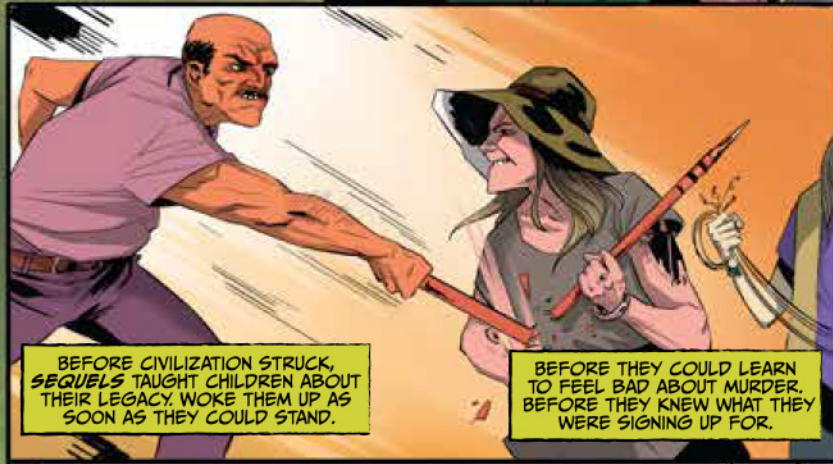
I MEAN, IT IS. *ALL* THESE OLD LIVES ARE.

BUT I'M ALLOWED TO CHANGE MY MIND.



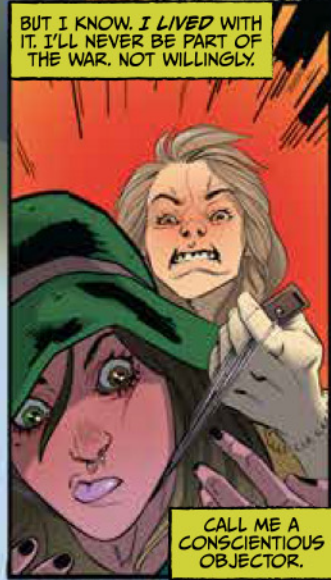
I HAD ENOUGH TIME TO PUT TWO BULLETS IN HER STERNUM AND BLOW HIS ANKLE INTO A WET COUGH.

BUT I STICK THAT KNOWLEDGE IN AN UNLABELED FOLDER AND HIDE IT DEEP.



BEFORE CIVILIZATION STRUCK, *SEQUELS* TAUGHT CHILDREN ABOUT THEIR LEGACY. WOKE THEM UP AS SOON AS THEY COULD STAND.

BEFORE THEY COULD LEARN TO FEEL BAD ABOUT MURDER. BEFORE THEY KNEW WHAT THEY WERE SIGNING UP FOR.



BUT I KNOW. I LIVED WITH IT. I'LL NEVER BE PART OF THE WAR. NOT WILLINGLY.

CALL ME A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.



THE KIND WHO STILL THINKS BREAKING A DUDE'S JAW IS REALLY CATHARTIC SOMETIMES.



THERE'S NOTHING SAYING I CAN'T PLAY WITH MY ENEMIES A BIT.



THIS IS THE FUN PART. THE CHAOS, THE LACK OF OVERSIGHT.



YOU CAN SAY "SCREW YOUR ORDERS, SCREW THE RULES OF CONFLICT."



I DON'T WANT TO DO THAT. IT'S NOT A REASON.



"JUST BECAUSE WE ALWAYS HAVE."



I WANT TO WIN WITHOUT LOSING MY SOUL. THOUGH I'D SETTLE FOR MY LIFE.

MAYBE THE REASON WE KEEP COMING BACK IS THAT WE NEVER GET TO FINISH OUR LIVES.

MAYBE KILLING HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.



IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WANT TO KILL. I DO. IT'S IN MY BLOOD.

ALL I NEED IS A GOOD REASON.

GIVE ME A REASON NOT TO SHOOT YOU.

YOU KNOW WHO I AM, LITTLE ONE. THERE ARE RULES ABOUT THIS SORT OF THING.

LIKE WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO MAIZIE IF YOU KILL HER TARGET. SHE GOES ADRIPT. OPEN SEASON FOR EVERYONE.

YOU DON'T WANT HER TO MISS HER DATE WITH DESTINY, DO YOU?

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI.

BESIDES, YOU WON'T SHOOT ME. FANCY PLACE LIKE THIS? THE COPS WILL BE HERE BEFORE THE SHELLS HIT THE CARPET.

CAN I PUT MY HANDS DOWN?

I'M GOING TO ANYWAY.

I WAS GOING TO LEAVE YOU BE UNTIL YOU CAME INTO MY ROOM, STRAYED FROM YOUR DOTTED LINE. CAME AFTER MY FAMILY.

THEY'RE NOT YOUR PARENTS. MAIZIE ISN'T YOUR CHILD.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, TESSA? ARE THEY REALLY YOURS?

OH YES, AND THEY'RE EVEN WORSE THAN ME.

MOTHER IS A SEQUEL. NO ONE YOU'D KNOW. SHE WOKE ME UP WHEN I WAS FIVE. SHE WASN'T GENTLE ABOUT IT.

I WAS HOME-SCHOOLED. MOM TRAINING ME, TEACHING ME ABOUT THE WAR.

TO HIDE MYSELF, TO STAY OFF THE SEQUEL RADAR.

HOW?

MEDICATION. MEDITATION. HER FISTS. EVER HEAR OF EKG? LIKE I SAID, SHE WASN'T GENTLE.

BUT SHE WAS EFFECTIVE. SHE TAUGHT ME HOW TO WEAPONIZE MY HISTORY. TURN IT AGAINST OUR ENEMY.

I RESISTED A LITTLE.

BUT AFTER I KILLED MY FIRST CANVASSEER WHEN I WAS TEN, I WAS ONBOARD.



I CAN PUT TWO IN YOUR BRAIN BEFORE YOU GET THE BLADE UNFOLDED.

I'M FASTER THAN I USED TO BE, TESSA.

AND WHO ARE YOU, ANYHOW?



YOU OUGHT TO KNOW BY NOW.

YOU KILLED ME TWICE.

NO!



THAT'S HILARIOUS. WHO WERE YOU?

ISN'T IT FUNNY? HOW WE END UP HERE? LIKE THIS?

HYSTERICAL.

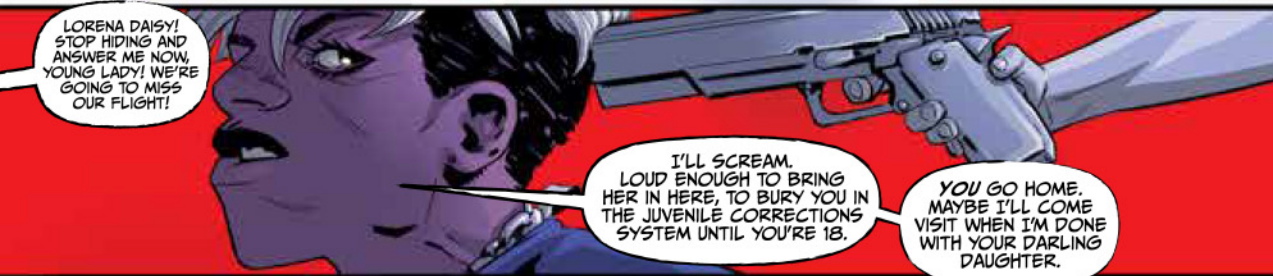
ON YOUR BELLY.



MALI'S GONE FAR AWAY. SHE'S NOT FIGHTING. NOT YOU. NOT ANYONE.

SHE CAN HIDE, TOO. GO BACK TO JO'BERG. TELL YOUR INSANE MOTHER YOU LOVE HER. FIND A NEW TARGET.

YOU HAVE FIVE SECONDS TO--



LORENA DAISY! STOP HIDING AND ANSWER ME NOW, YOUNG LADY! WE'RE GOING TO MISS OUR FLIGHT!

I'LL SCREAM. LOUD ENOUGH TO BRING HER IN HERE, TO BURY YOU IN THE JUVENILE CORRECTIONS SYSTEM UNTIL YOU'RE 18.

YOU GO HOME. MAYBE I'LL COME VISIT WHEN I'M DONE WITH YOUR DARLING DAUGHTER.



THIRD TIME'S A CHARM.