

# ARCADIA™

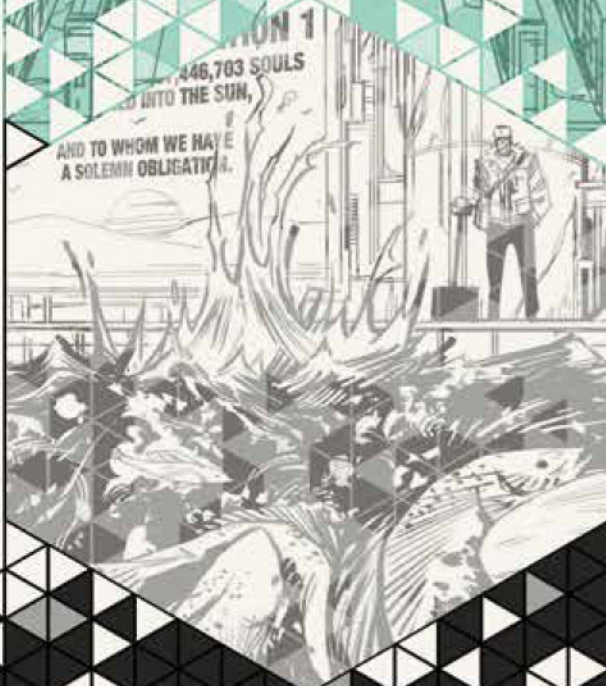


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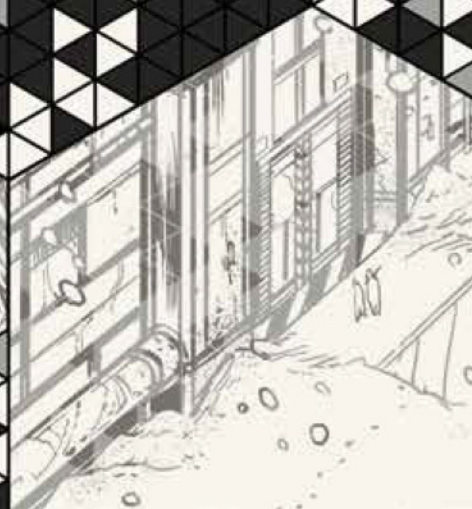
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**BOOM!**  
STUDIOS  
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PROLOGUE



...  
I'M SO SORRY, DARLING.

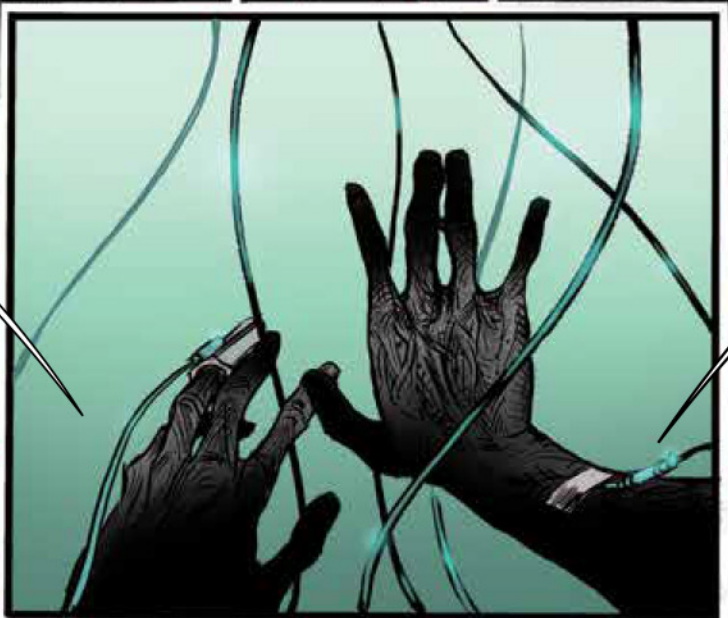


MA'AM...  
I'M HERE TO HELP YOU.  
PLEASE TRY TO RELAX.



OH GOD, WHERE'D I GO THIS TIME?

FOURTH OF JULY. OUR APARTMENT IN SOUTHIE, REMEMBER?



MY HEAD FEELS HEAVY. DID I TAKE SOMETHING?

NO, DARLING...

YOU LOST SOMETHING.

*"We become what we behold.  
We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us."  
- Father John Culkin*



TODAY'S GOING TO BE A GOOD DAY, MA'AM. YOU'LL SEE...



...I'M GOING TO TURN YOU INTO LIGHT.



SEVEN YEARS LATER

"HELL IS NOT OTHER PEOPLE."

SEVEN BILLION WRECKED AND REEKING MOUTHS WHISPER THAT TO ME EVERY DAY.



THESE DAYS I THINK HELL'S JUST THE STRANGER YOU SEE WHEN YOU GAZE INTO STILL WATER.



THAT STRANGER'S THE FIRST LIE YOU EVER TOLD YOURSELF.

**ARCADIA BASE STATION 1**  
DEDICATED TO THE 6,997,446,703 SOULS WHO STARED INTO THE SUN,  
AND TO WHOM WE HAVE A SOLEMN OBLIGATION.

IF YOU'RE LUCKY, THOUGH, ONE DAY SOMEONE CALLS TO YOU ACROSS THE DUNES.

"COME AWAY FROM THERE," THEY SAY. "FIND A BETTER LIE IN MY EYES."





IF YOU'RE LUCKIER STILL, THEY ACTUALLY MEAN IT.



WRRRIIT



RRRR...



TK

TK

TK



... HELLO?



OH, IT'S YOU.



FINE. I'M REPLACEABLE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE.

JUST DON'T WUSS OUT ON ME THIS TIME, OKAY?

RROOOWWRRRI!





WELL?  
STOP WASTING MY TIME!

**RRROWWRRR!**



**KRAKK**



WE HAVE  
GATION.



I HAD THAT UNDER CONTROL.



CLEARLY.

GUNS NOW OUTNUMBER PEOPLE TWO THOUSAND TO ONE, PEPPER. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU INSIST ON NOT CARRYING ONE.



VALENTIN PAPIN, OUR NEW TECHNICAL LEAD FROM BASE STATION 5 IN MURMANSK.

CLEANING OUT THE FISH FILTER, I SEE.

ON YOUR OWN. AT NIGHT.

WE ALL KNOW HE'S AN FSB MOLE, AND HE KNOWS WE KNOW. WE HAVE CIA IN MURMANSK, TOO.



PRESIDENT'S GETTING HERE IN JUST UNDER SEVEN HOURS, VALENTIN.

I WAS CLEANING THE FILTER 'CAUSE SHE'LL HAVE A HARD TIME DEFENDING OUR BUDGET IF WE EXPLODE.

"DEFENDING OUR BUDGET?"

HA!

HOW DO YOU GET ANYTHING DONE UNDER LIBERAL DEMOCRACY?



ESPIONAGE REALLY AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE.

DID WE GET ANY BLOOD ON THE PLAQUE BACK THERE?

I DO NOT BELIEVE SO, NO. I WAS MEANING TO ASK, WHY IS YOUR PLAQUE SO SMALL?

...IT WOULD'VE BEEN TOO SMALL AT ANY SIZE, I GUESS.

ARCADIA BASE STATION I  
DENALI NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA - AKA "THE MEAT"  
POPULATION: 3,246  
CAPACITY: 996,345,017 VP (VIRTUAL PERSONS)

I UNDERSTAND. WE WENT ANOTHER WAY.

OUR PLAQUE IN MURMANSK IS FLAT ON THE GROUND AND BIG AS A FOOTBALL FIELD. THAT WAY WHENEVER GOD LOOKS DOWN ON US HE WILL FEEL ASHAMED.

MAYBE SHAME'S WHAT INSPIRED HIM TO SCRUB SO MANY OF US OUT IN THE FIRST PLACE. YOU EVER THINK OF THAT?

YOU ARE HAVING FUN WITH ME, I THINK.

I'M REALLY NOT, VALENTIN.

TRUST ME.