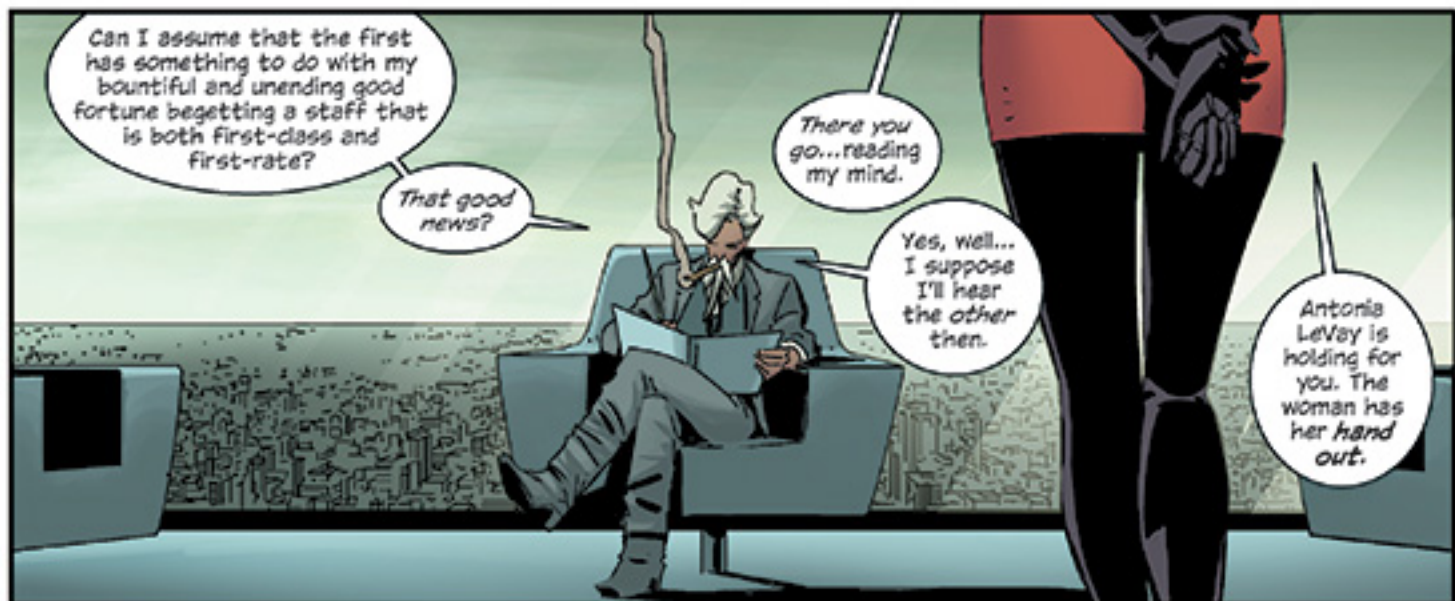


*The Black Towers.*





My dear?

Yes, uncle?

Would you think less of me if I indulged myself... wallowing in the misery of others?



Nope.

CLICK!



Now that is not the face of grace under pressure.

Do we know what she wants?



Not precisely, but I can make an educated guess.

There's currently open rebellion in the Union and our latest intelligence points to numerous reports of Nation hardliners overrunning Union outposts along the Grass Sea.

She's got a war at home, is surrounded by enemies, and worst of all, the Union is broke.

There were whispers of possible funding from the Kingdom, but that doesn't seem to have materialized.

So...are you going to help her?



Hrmp!

What else are friends for?



BE-DOOP!



Madame President... you look distraught, if I might ask...

Can I help you in some way? Let me assure you that if there is anything of mine you need, you only have to name it and it will be yours.

Thank you, Archibald. I...I find myself in a difficult position.

The Union needs money. There's no other way to say it.

Unrest has never been synonymous with financial bounty, and the world is certainly at a boil.

But I'm sorry, Antonia...coin is something I currently do not have to give.



There's something you need to remember -- we are part of a plan larger than ourselves. Larger even than our nations.

We were both tasked with maintaining political order. The Horsemen demand order. And while you are succeeding... I am failing.

Badly.

But we are both Chosen, and so...in my hour of need I have chosen you.



I'm not sure appealing to my religion is going to solve your current quandary, my dear...

I would never abandon my faith, but on occasion I have been known to misplace it.

Try again.



Please.

You have to do something.