



ARCADIA™



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PREVIOUSLY:

In the Meat, Lee Pepper traveled to Roger Lanchester's mansion and discovered that Arcadia was designed for just one inhabitant: Sybil, Roger's Alzheimer's-afflicted wife. The recent murders were perpetrated by supervisor programs designed to remove impurities from Sybil's remaining memories, and they will not stop until Arcadia's four billion inhabitants are destroyed. Lee warned Valentin back at the Alaska data center before being knocked unconscious by persons unknown. In Arcadia, meanwhile, Giacomo returned from a direct encounter with Sybil only to find the Homesteader camp apparently under attack. However, when Fisk found Jaime she insisted she just wanted to talk.

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WHEN YOU'RE A KID,
YOU'RE ENCOURAGED TO THINK
OF HUMAN LIVES AS STORIES.
YOU KNOW THE DRILL:
BE GOOD, STUDY HARD, AND YOU
MIGHT ENJOY TEN WHOLE MINUTES
OF HAPPILY EVER AFTER
BEFORE THEY FIND A LUMP
IN YOUR PROSTATE.



NOW, THIS IS WHERE
THE THIRD ACT HAIL MARY
PASS ACTUALLY LANDS YOU:
BEATEN TO DEATH IN A
CIRCUS TRAILER WITH HELL'S
OWN LAUGH TRACK RINGING
IN YOUR EARS.



I WONDER
HOW THE OTHER GUY
WOULD DEAL WITH THIS--
YOU KNOW WHO I MEAN.

GARNER.



HE'D KNOW THERE'D BE NO SCARS.
THAT HIS TEETH WOULD GROW BACK.
THAT HIS LUNG WOULD RE-INFLATE IF IT
GOT PUNCTURED BY A FRACTURED RIB.

NNN!



WHUDD

UGH!

SO I DECIDE THERE AND
THEN THAT I'M IN ARCADIA.
THAT THE PAIN'S NOT REAL.

WHICH MEANS
NEITHER AM I.

THE MEAT
NILAND, CALIFORNIA





THAT'S ENOUGH FOR NOW, ESAU.

YOU >HHH!< SURE 'BOUT THAT, UNCLE C.?

LOOKS TO ME LIKE >HHH!< OUR BOY HERE AIN'T EVEN MEDIUM RARE YET.



>PTUI!<

I HAD PEOPLE. ARE THEY ALIVE?

YOU TALKIN' ABOUT THEM LAWS YOU CAME WITH?

YEAH, I RECKON SO.



YOU SURE 'BOUT THAT NOW, ESAU?

AW, DAMMIT! IF DUMB WAS DIRT, I'D COVER AN ACRE!

NO, I GOT IT ASS-BACKWARDS. THEY'RE DEFINITELY ALL DEAD.



Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
ARPA
Arcadia
Base Station One
Lee Pepper - Chief Of Operations

YOU MAY HATE US, LEE, BUT YOU SHOULDN'T.

SEEMS TO ME WE'RE IN THE SAME LINE O' WORK.



HAI HOW >NN!< YOU FIGURE?

WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE, ANYWAY? WHY AM I ALIVE?



FIRST OF ALL, I'M UNCLE COSMAS.

YEAH? WHOSE UNCLE?

ESAU'S HERE. YOURS.

HELL, I'LL BE UNCLE TO THE WHOLE DAMN HUMAN RACE IF I HAVE TO.



AS TO WHY YOU'RE ALIVE, LET'S SAY WE'RE FIXIN' TO "COPY YOUR HOMEWORK," SO TO SPEAK.



SEE... WE SEND PEOPLE TO ARCADIA, TOO.

YOU HAVE YOUR WAY AND WE HAVE OURS.



SHANNI! THAT'S A BUNCHA B-BULL AND YOU KNOW IT.

WHO CAN FATHOM THE MYSTERIES OF PROVIDENCE, LEE?



"NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN."



YOU LACK FAITH, BROTHER.

SO IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO SEE.

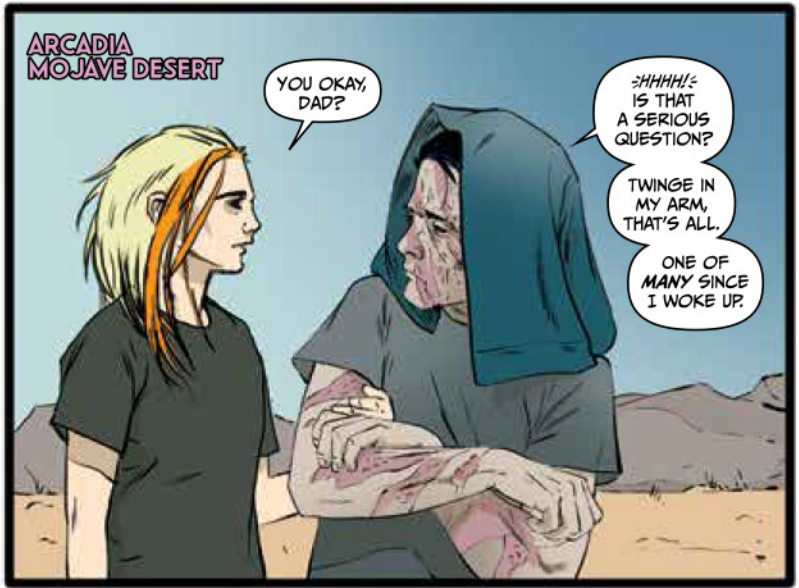


NOW... SAY UNCLE.



UGH!

OH.



YOU OKAY, DAD?

SHHH!! IS THAT A SERIOUS QUESTION?

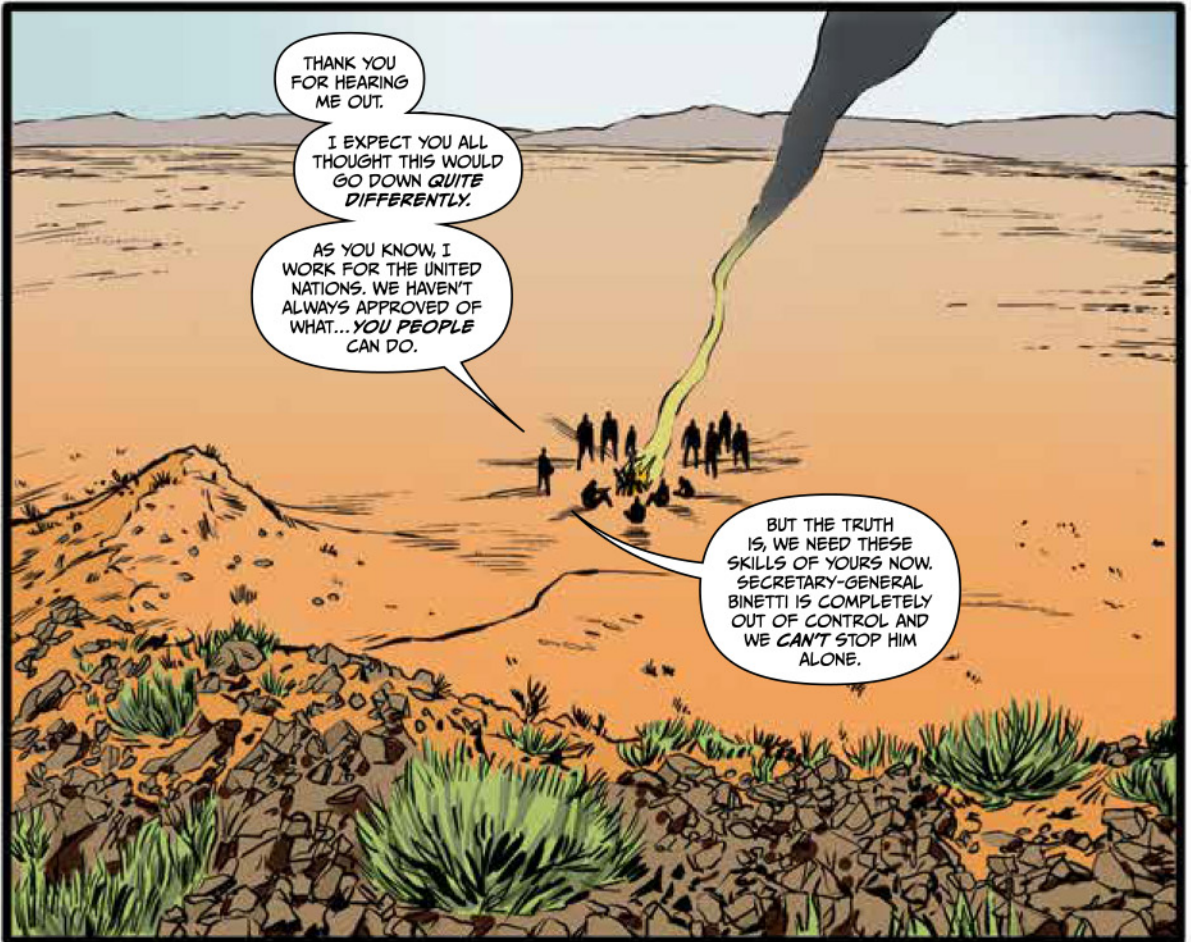
TWINGE IN MY ARM, THAT'S ALL.

ONE OF MANY SINCE I WOKE UP.



GUYS, CAN YOU COME OVER HERE REAL QUICK?

FISK HERE'S GOT SOMETHING I THINK WE ALL NEED TO HEAR.



THANK YOU FOR HEARING ME OUT.

I EXPECT YOU ALL THOUGHT THIS WOULD GO DOWN QUITE DIFFERENTLY.

AS YOU KNOW, I WORK FOR THE UNITED NATIONS. WE HAVEN'T ALWAYS APPROVED OF WHAT... YOU PEOPLE CAN DO.

BUT THE TRUTH IS, WE NEED THESE SKILLS OF YOURS NOW. SECRETARY-GENERAL BINETTI IS COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL AND WE CAN'T STOP HIM ALONE.



HE'S BEEN BEHAVING ERRATICALLY FOR SOME TIME NOW. WE SHOULD HAVE SEEN THIS COMING.

YOU NEED STRONG GOVERNMENT WHEN COUNTRIES CAN DECIDE THEIR OWN LAWS OF PHYSICS, BUT LEANDRO...

"HE'S OBSESSED WITH OUR INDEPENDENCE, AND SINCE HE SEVERED COMMS WITH THE MEAT HE'S BEEN... BAITING THEM."

"THIS MORNING HE STRAIGHTENED THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY IN ETHIOPIA LIKE HE WAS IRONING A SHIRT."



HE'S PUSHING THE MEAT FURTHER AND FURTHER TOWARD DRASTIC ACTION.

WE NEED TO PUT HIM DOWN.



THE BAD NEWS DOESN'T END HERE EITHER, I'M AFRAID. IN FACT IT GETS MUCH, MUCH WORSE.

GIACOMO HERE HAS SOME NEW INFORMATION GLEANED FROM HIS, UH... FISHING TRIP.



HI, EVERYONE.



"I MET A LADY DOWN THERE. SYBIL. YOU HAVEN'T MET HER YET BUT YOU WILL."

"SHE DON'T WANNA HURT NOBODY, BUT WE'RE INSIDE OF HER MIND. IT'S LIKE... WE'RE BUGS AND HER IMMUNE SYSTEM'S TRYNNNA FLUSH US OUT."