



SAMURAI'S BLOOD™

2 of 6

WISEMAN
KIM
DALTON
YUWONO



SAMURAI'S BLOOD

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The Sanjo Clan has been betrayed, all dead except three young samurai from the mountain village of Eiwa. They have seen their families killed and their homes burned. And they have sworn to seek their vengeance against the men responsible, the upstart Lord Gakushi and his evil retainer, Araku.



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CASTLE SANNO.
ONE WEEK AFTER THE MASSACRE
OF THE VILLAGE OF ENNA.



DIFFICULT,
BUT NOT
IMPOSSIBLE. TONIGHT,
WHEN THE GUARDS ARE
TIRED. A FEW HOURS
BEFORE DAWN.
WE CAN-

ALL THINGS CHANGE. EVEN
THE STALWART SAMURAI
CANNOT RESIST THIS.

BUT THERE ARE SOME MOMENTS WHEN
SOME SAMURAI OF HIGH AND LAUDABLE
CHARACTER CAN, THROUGH THEIR OWN
INDOMITABLE SPIRITS, RESIST SOME SMALL
PIECE OF THE WORLD'S WANTON DESTRUCTION.

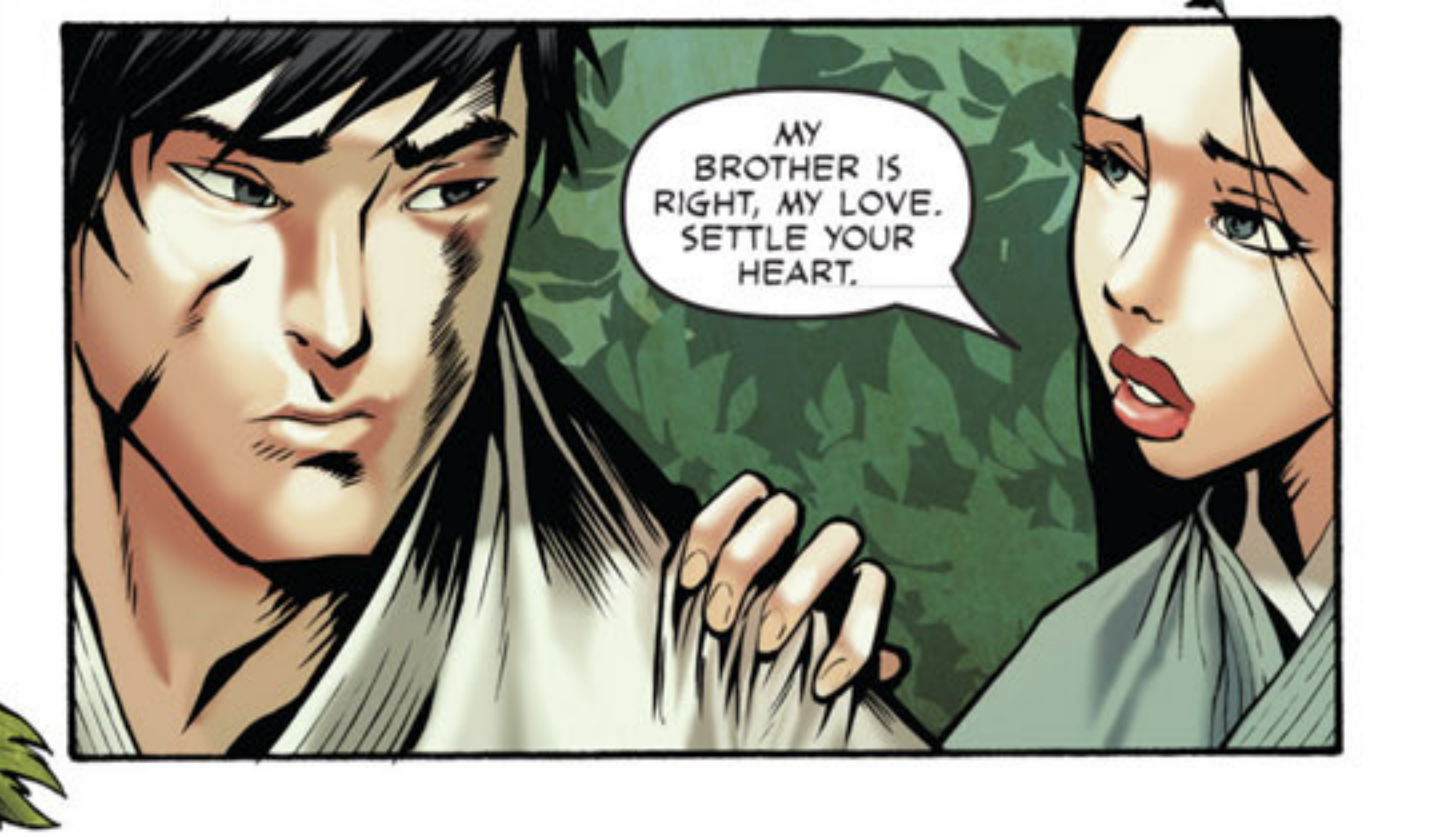


NO. A
HEADLONG RUSH
IS NEVER TOWARDS
JUSTICE. WE WILL RETREAT
TO THE CITY AND WAIT
FOR OUR PATH TO
OPEN.

I WOULD
RATHER DIE THAN
RETREAT A
SINGLE STEP.



THERE WE
ARE LUCKY YOU
SERVE ME
INSTEAD OF THE
REVERSE.



MY
BROTHER IS
RIGHT, MY LOVE.
SETTLE YOUR
HEART.



IN THE NEARBY CITY OF YAMAGATA

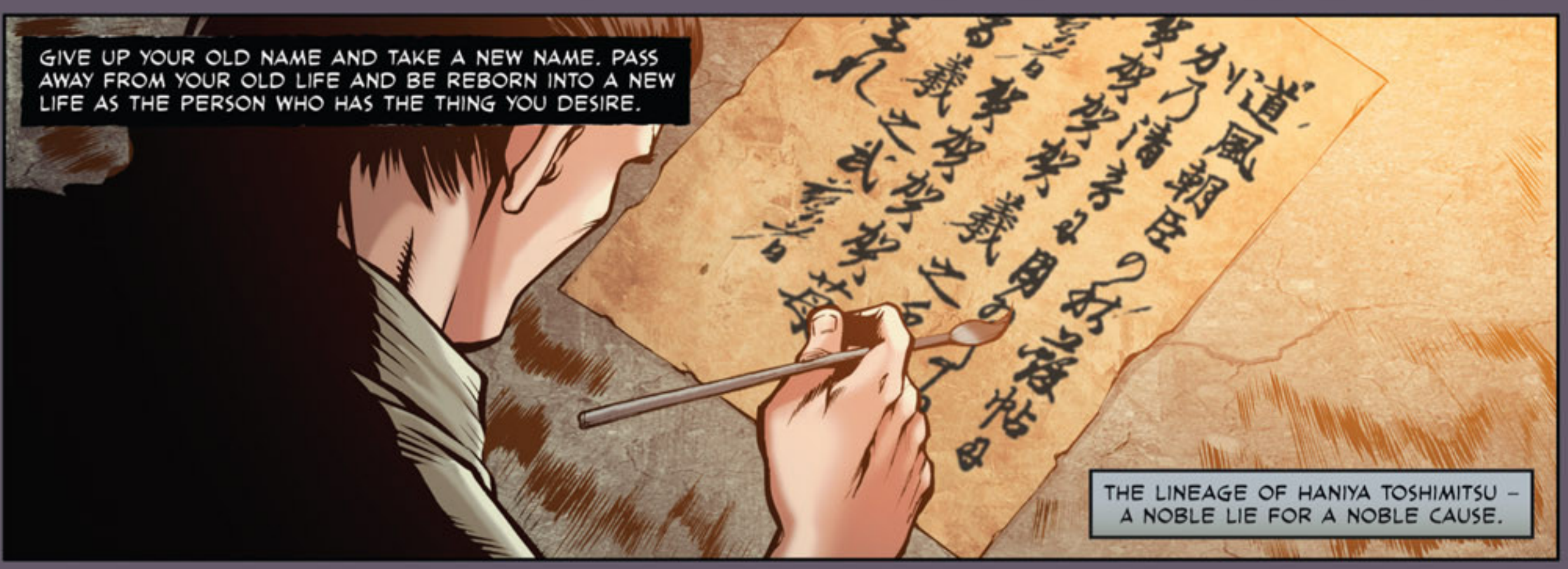
COMMITMENT IS THE FIRST VIRTUE OF THE SAMURAI. THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE WHAT ANOTHER CANNOT ENDURE WILL ACHIEVE ALL GREAT THINGS.

THE REMNANT OF THE SANJO CLAN - A GLOWING EMBER TO SPARK A PYRE OF VENGEANCE.



GIVE UP YOUR OLD MIND AND TRAIN A NEW MIND. GIVE UP YOUR OLD SOUL AND FORGE A NEW SOUL.

THE SIGIL OF KAJIRO KATASHI - A LOST SECRET FOR A LOST SOUL.



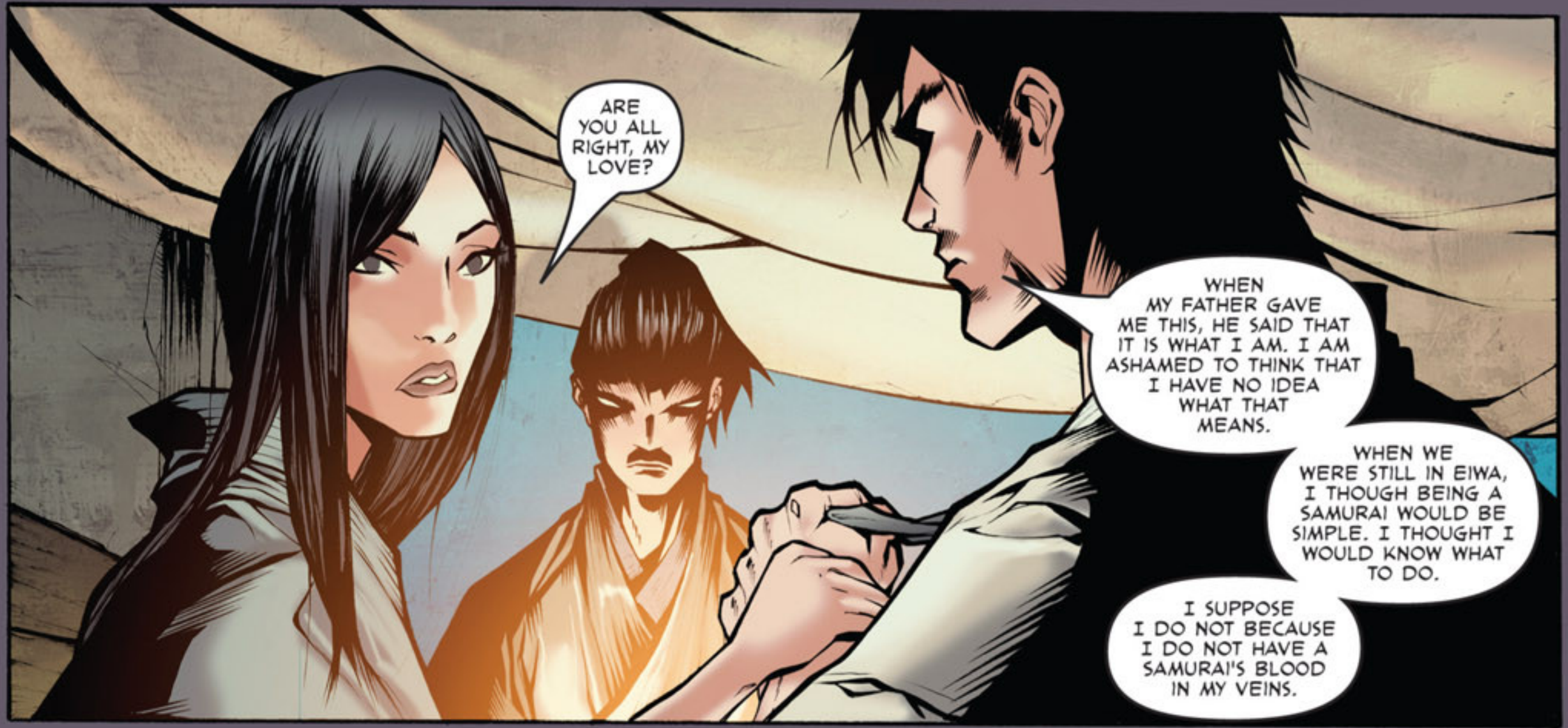
GIVE UP YOUR OLD NAME AND TAKE A NEW NAME. PASS AWAY FROM YOUR OLD LIFE AND BE REBORN INTO A NEW LIFE AS THE PERSON WHO HAS THE THING YOU DESIRE.

THE LINEAGE OF HANIYA TOSHIMITSU - A NOBLE LIE FOR A NOBLE CAUSE.



AND AS THE OLD THINGS FALL AWAY, DO NOT DARE TO QUESTION THE COST. KNOW ONLY THAT IT WAITS TO BE PAID.

THE WORLD ITSELF STARTED FROM SUCH HUMBLE THINGS AS THESE.



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MY LOVE?

WHEN MY FATHER GAVE ME THIS, HE SAID THAT IT IS WHAT I AM. I AM ASHAMED TO THINK THAT I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THAT MEANS.

WHEN WE WERE STILL IN EIWA, I THOUGHT BEING A SAMURAI WOULD BE SIMPLE. I THOUGHT I WOULD KNOW WHAT TO DO.

I SUPPOSE I DO NOT BECAUSE I DO NOT HAVE A SAMURAI'S BLOOD IN MY VEINS.



I HAVE GENERATIONS OF SAMURAI BLOOD, AND I ALSO DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. AND NEITHER DOES MY BROTHER, AS MUCH AS HE TRIES TO PRETEND OTHERWISE.

IF YOU ARE A SAMURAI, THEN TELL ME. TELL ME WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A SAMURAI.



MY FATHER ONCE TOLD ME A SAMURAI IS SOMEONE WHO CAN LISTEN TO HIS HEART.



I WANT YOU TO KEEP THIS FOR ME. I WOULD BE LOST WITHOUT YOU.



AND THE SOURCE OF ALL COSTS IS LOVE. LOVE OF ANOTHER, LOVE OF SELF, LOVE OF FAMILY. ALL THE VERY THINGS WHICH MAKE THE SUN SHINE AND THE RAIN FALL, ALSO OPEN OUR HEARTS TO THE COSTS WHICH WAIT TO BE PAID.



EVEN A NEW-FORGED SAMURAI, WITH A NEW MIND, A NEW SOUL, AND A NEW NAME, MUST EMERGE FROM CHRYSALIS INTO THE SAME CRUEL WORLD.

LATER. AFTER THE BLOOD HAD COOLED.

BUT THE TRUE STALWARTS, THOSE CAPABLE OF GREAT DEEDS FACE THAT CRUEL WORLD WITHOUT HESITATION. THEY TURN THEIR FACES TOWARDS A HOWLING WIND AND DARE THE STORM TO COME AGAINST THEM. FROM SUCH FOOLISH COURAGE, GREATNESS IS BORN.

PARDON ME. MAY I ASK WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO HERE?



THE FOLLOWING EVENING.

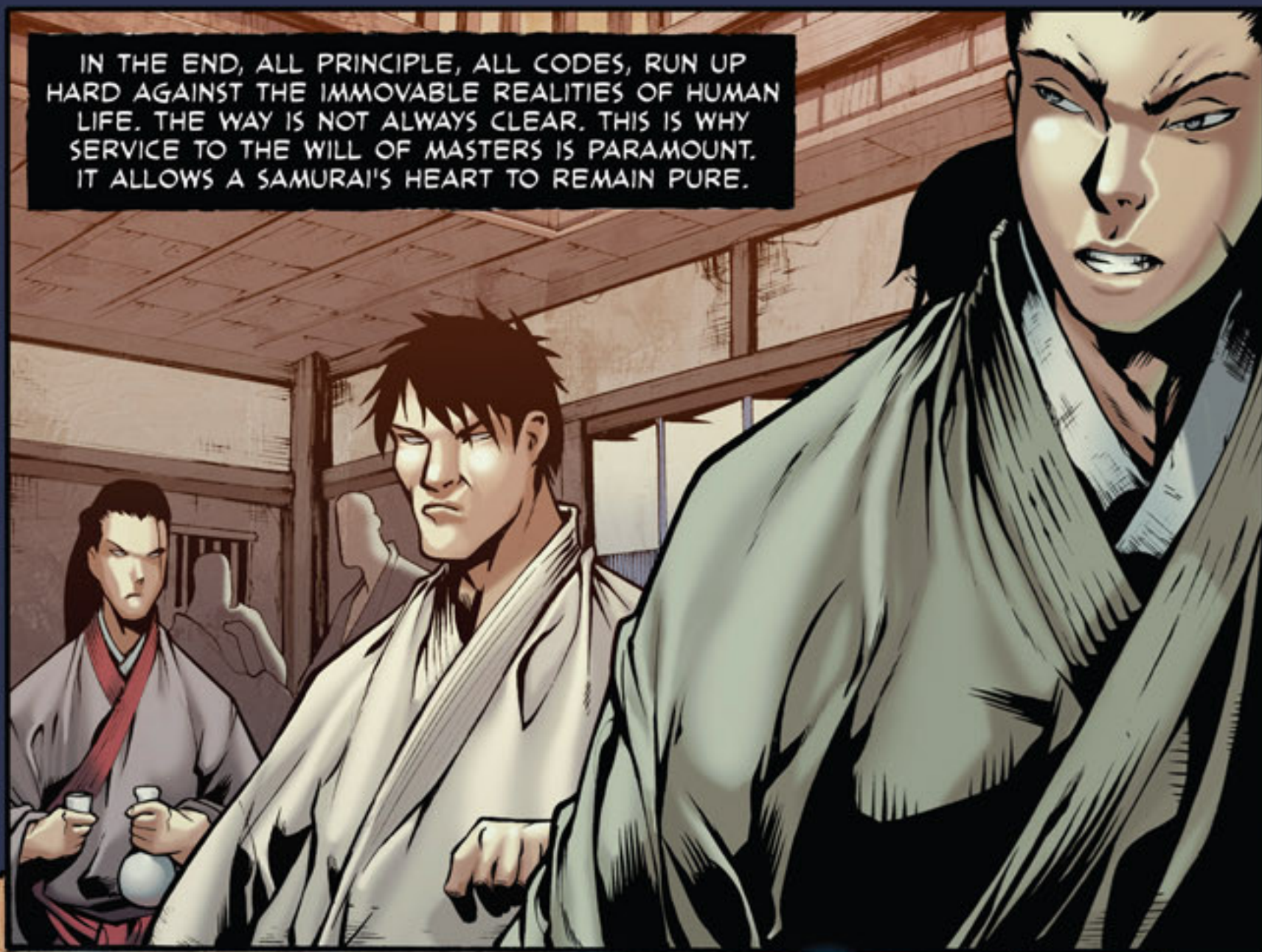
THIS IS RIDICULOUS. I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST ANY OF THESE MEN. I'VE NEVER FELT SO ASHAMED IN MY LIFE.

YOU WILL KILL ONE OF THESE WRETCHED FOOLS BECAUSE I TOLD YOU TO KILL ONE. YOUR HONOR WILL NOT FEED US. IT WILL NOT KEEP US ALIVE ONCE WINTER COMES.

WE NEED HARD COIN, OR WE MIGHT AS WELL ALL OPEN OUR STOMACHS. ALSO, START WINNING DUELS, AND I CAN BUILD YOUR REPUTATION.

WIN ENOUGH, AND GAKUSHI WILL COME TO US.

IN THE END, ALL PRINCIPLE, ALL CODES, RUN UP HARD AGAINST THE IMMOVABLE REALITIES OF HUMAN LIFE. THE WAY IS NOT ALWAYS CLEAR. THIS IS WHY SERVICE TO THE WILL OF MASTERS IS PARAMOUNT. IT ALLOWS A SAMURAI'S HEART TO REMAIN PURE.



WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, IDIOT!

WATCH YOUR TONGUE WHEN YOU SPEAK TO YOUR BETTERS, SAMURAI.



MOMENTS LATER. OUTSIDE.

AND YET, AS A SAMURAI MOVES THROUGH THE WORLD, SEEKING ONLY TO SERVE HIS MASTER, THE WORLD THRUSTS ITS DARKNESS UPON HIS HEART.



THREE AGAINST ONE? HOW DOES THIS RESTORE YOUR HONOR?





THIS DARKNESS, THIS UNCERTAINTY, IS POISON TO A SAMURAI.



SUBMIT NOW AND YOU CAN LIVE.



BEFORE A BATTLE, A SAMURAI MUST SEARCH HIS HEART, AND SCOUR HIS MIND, TO CLEAR AWAY ALL DOUBT.



BUT SOMETIMES A SAMURAI TRIES TO SEARCH HIS HEART WHILE HIS SWORD IS IN HIS HAND.



THIS IS NOT VIRTUE.



A SAMURAI MUST NEVER FORGET THAT THE PURPOSE OF LIVING IS THE SERVICE OF HIS MASTER. WHEN IN DOUBT, THE MASTER'S WILL. WHEN AFRAID, THE MASTER'S WILL. THE MASTER'S WILL AT DAWN, AND THE MASTER'S WILL AT DUSK.



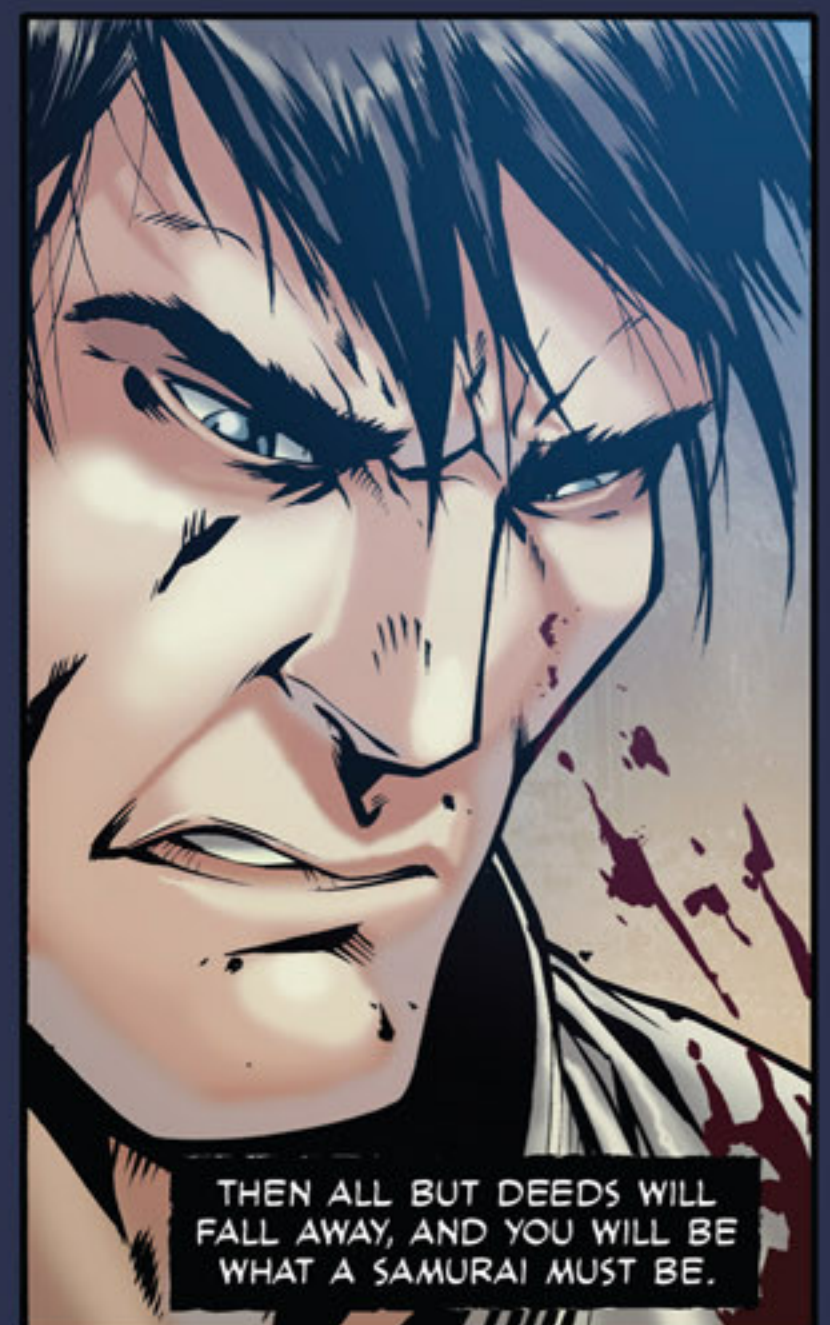
FORGET YOUR FEAR. FORGET YOUR DOUBT. FORGET YOUR SELF.

SHUJG

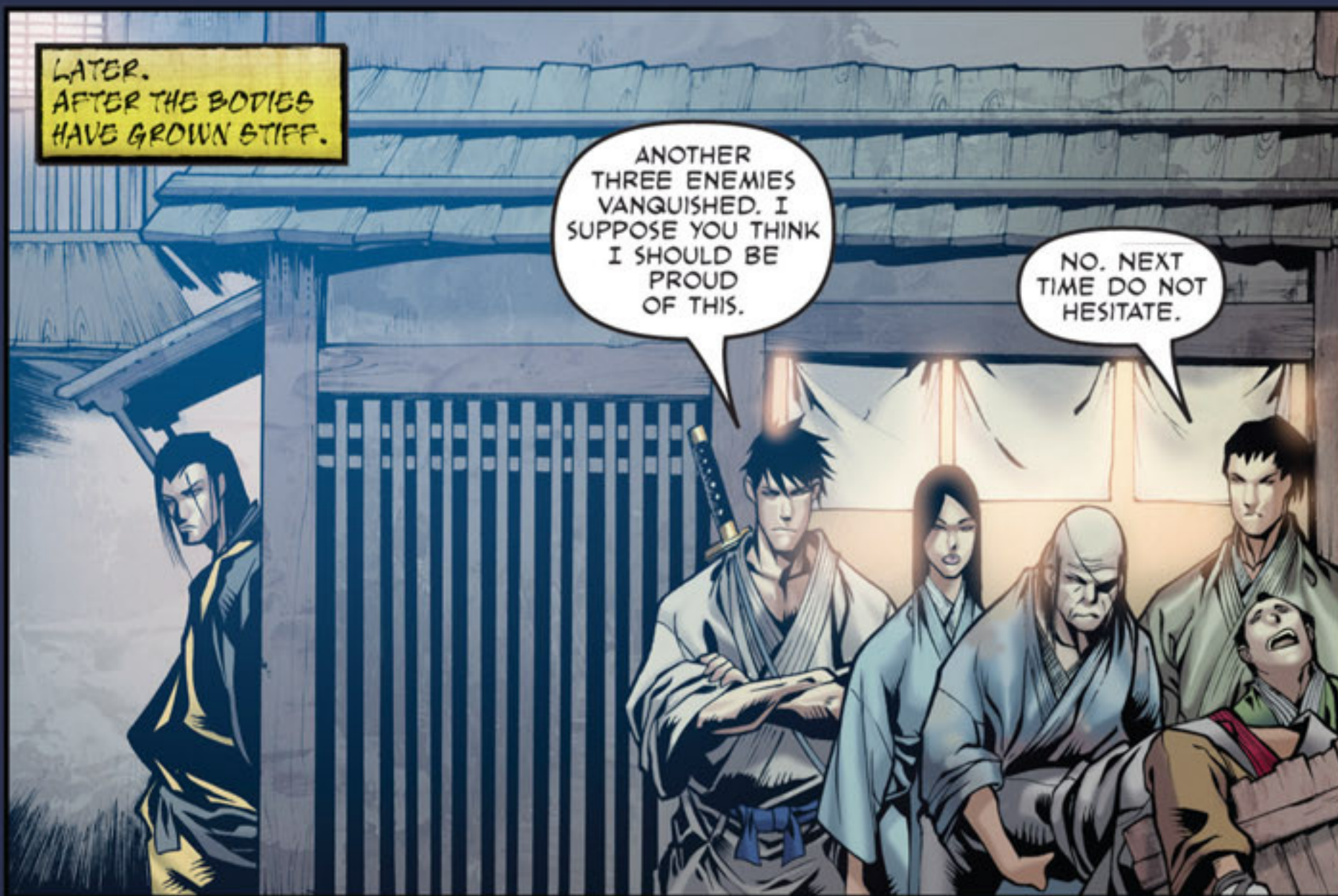
SHUJG



BECOME AN EXTENSION OF YOUR MASTER'S WILL, AND THE WAY WILL OPEN BEFORE YOU.



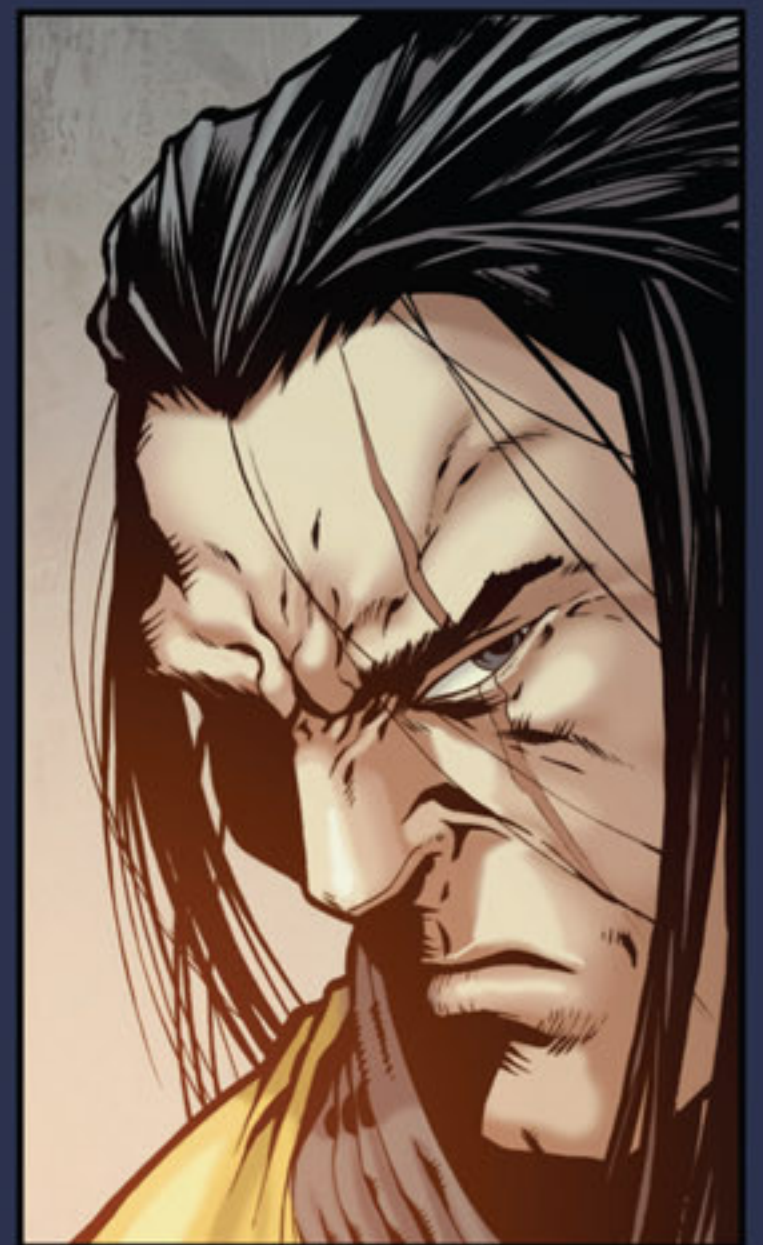
THEN ALL BUT DEEDS WILL FALL AWAY, AND YOU WILL BE WHAT A SAMURAI MUST BE.



LATER.
AFTER THE BODIES
HAVE GROWN STIFF.

ANOTHER
THREE ENEMIES
VANQUISHED. I
SUPPOSE YOU THINK
I SHOULD BE
PROUD
OF THIS.

NO. NEXT
TIME DO NOT
HESITATE.

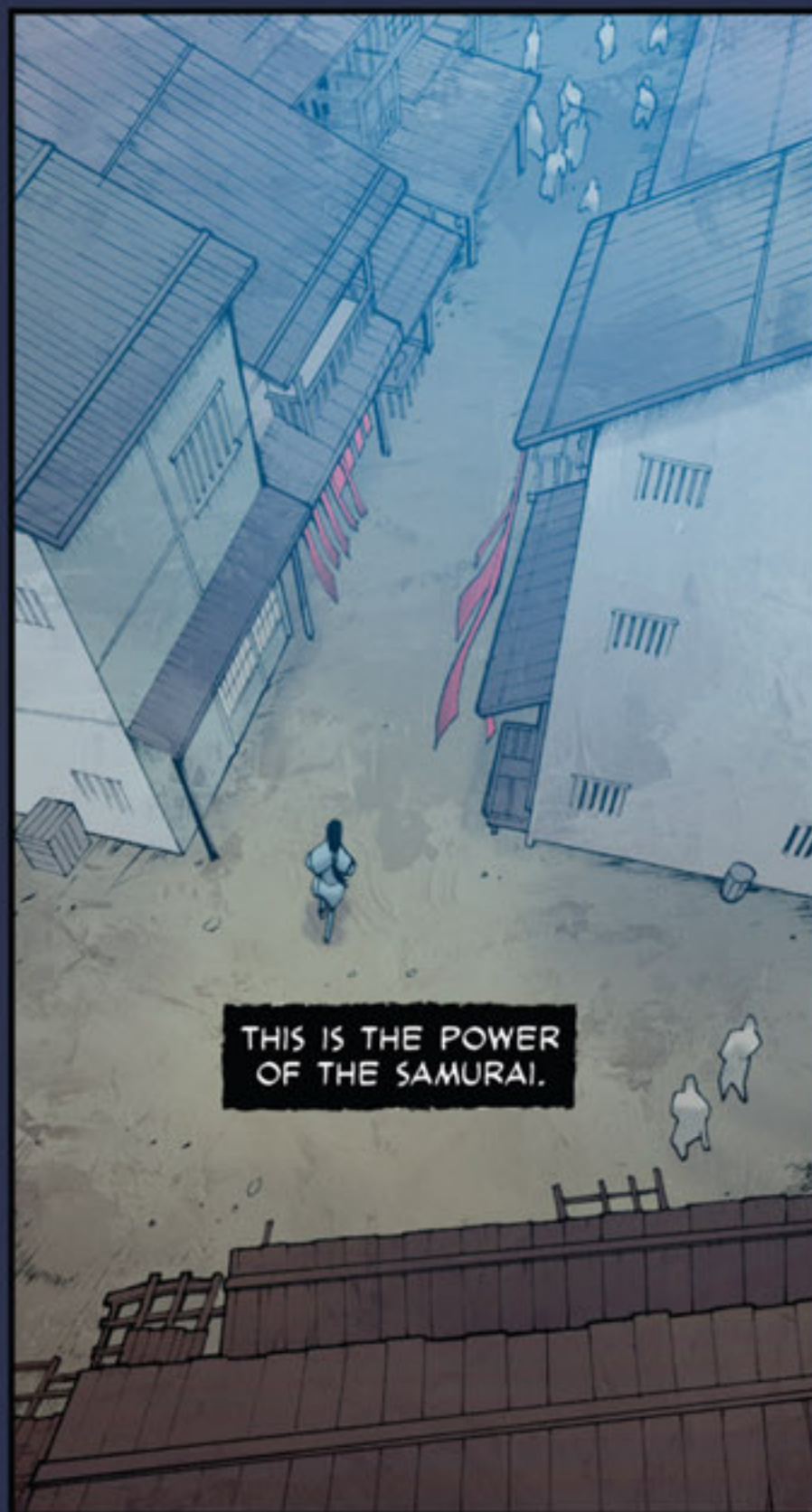


MY
NEPHEW'S
BLOOD DEMANDS
VENGEANCE!
PREPARE
TO DIE!

RUN!



THIS GIVING OVER OF YOURSELF
IS THE VIRTUE OF COMMITMENT.



THIS IS THE POWER
OF THE SAMURAI.



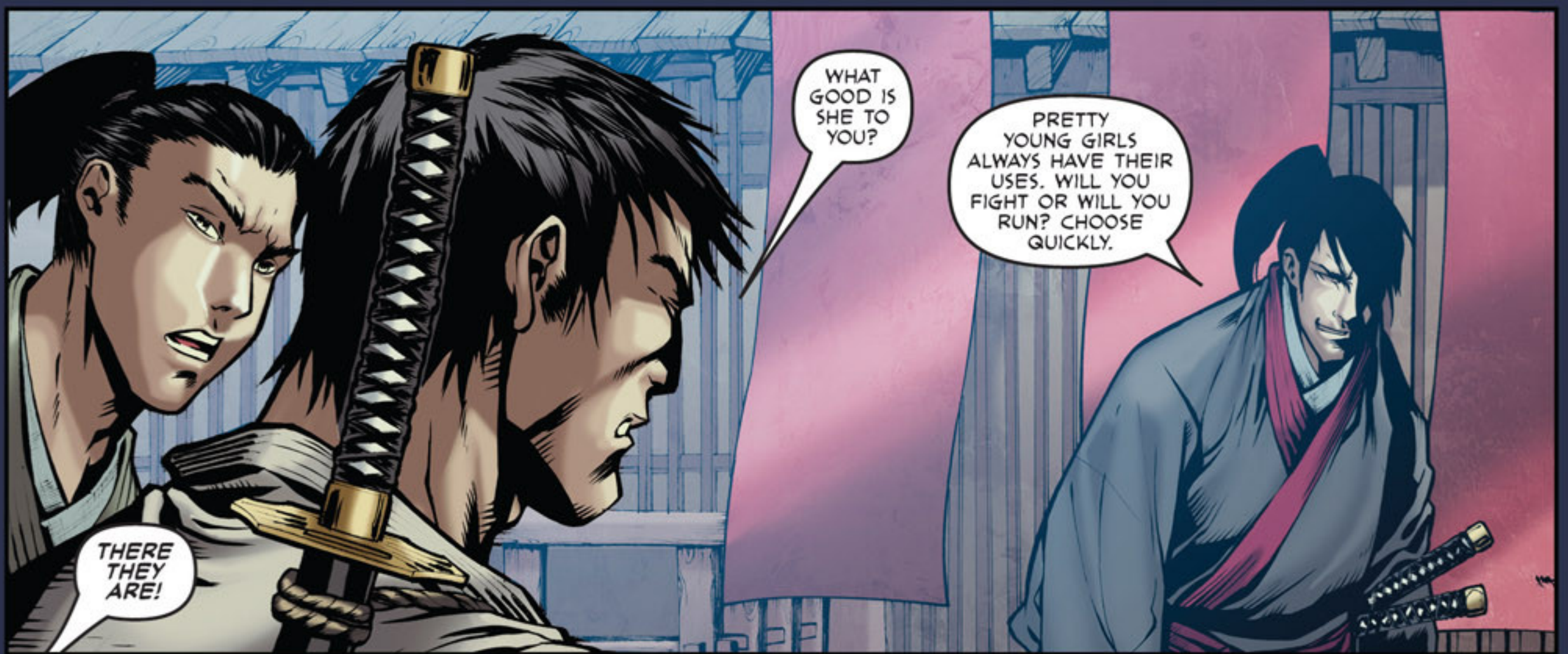
YET THIS POWER
WILL NOT HOLD THE
WORLD AT BAY.



FOR EVEN AS YOU SERVE YOUR MASTER, YOUR ENEMY IS SERVING HIS. THUS ARE THINGS TAKEN. THUS ARE ENEMIES MADE. THUS IS VENGEANCE REQUIRED.

HEY!
LEAVE HER ALONE!

KRAK



THERE THEY ARE!

WHAT GOOD IS SHE TO YOU?

PRETTY YOUNG GIRLS ALWAYS HAVE THEIR USES. WILL YOU FIGHT OR WILL YOU RUN? CHOOSE QUICKLY.



NO!
IF WE DIE, SHE DIES TOO!
COME ON!

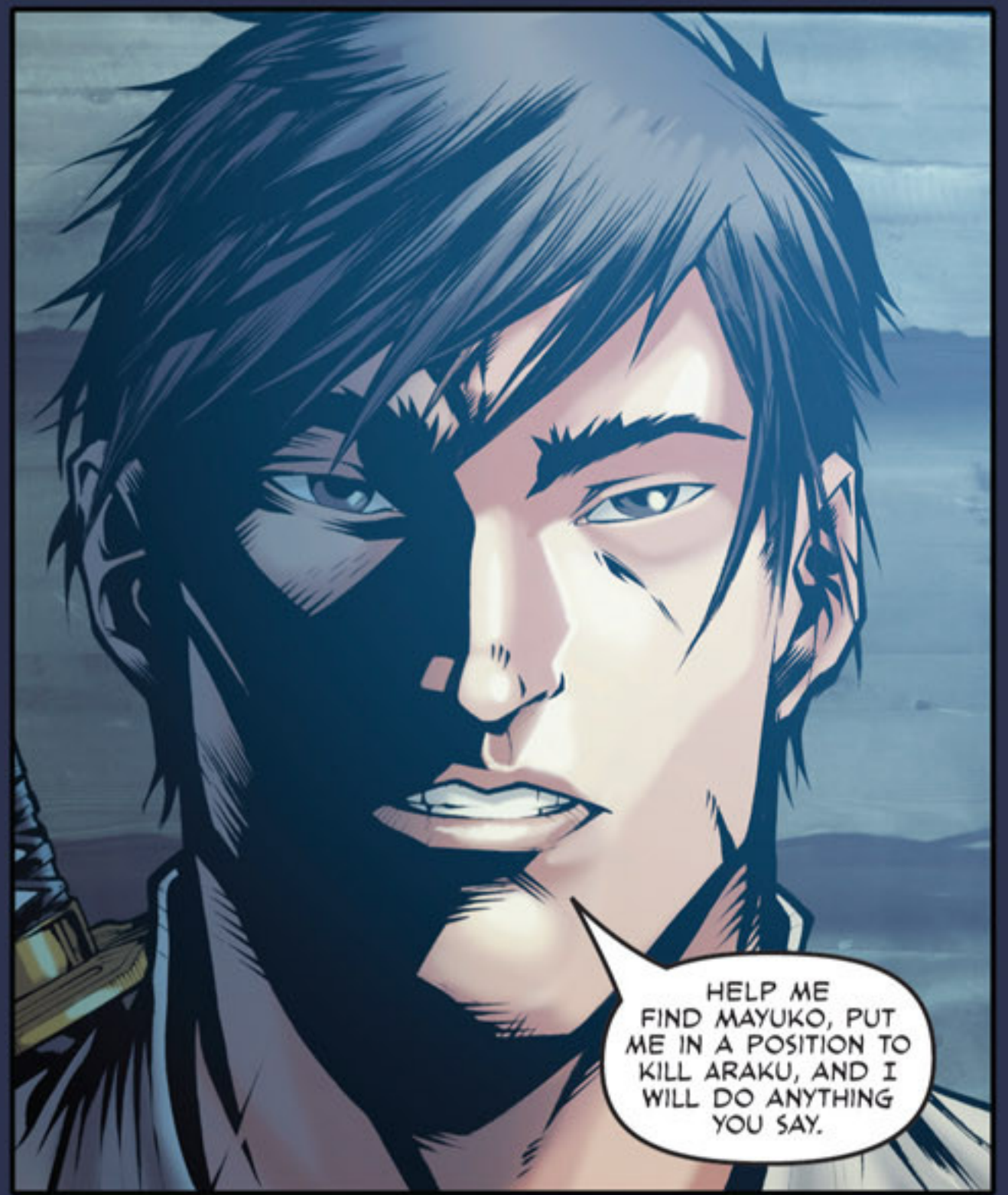
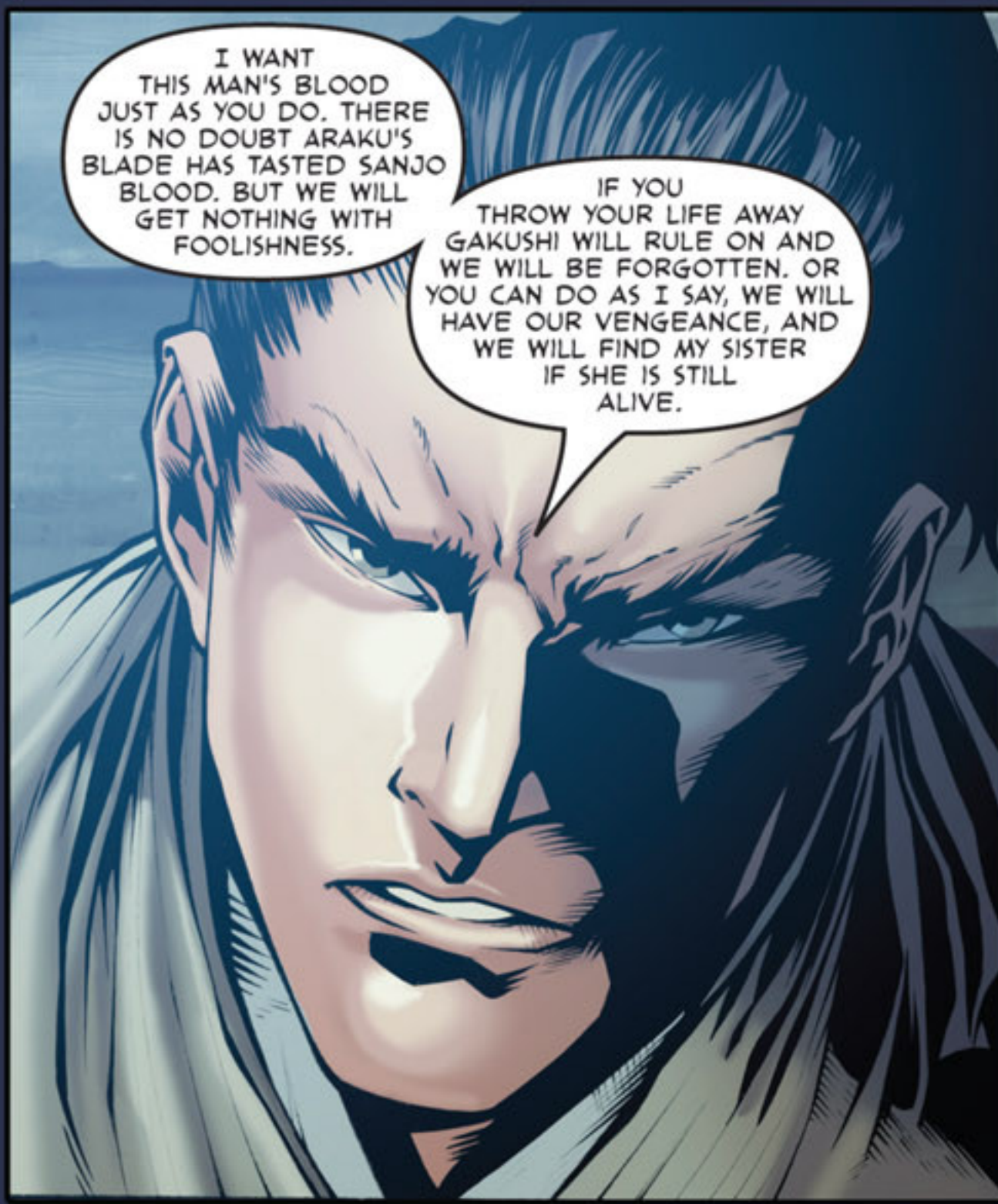


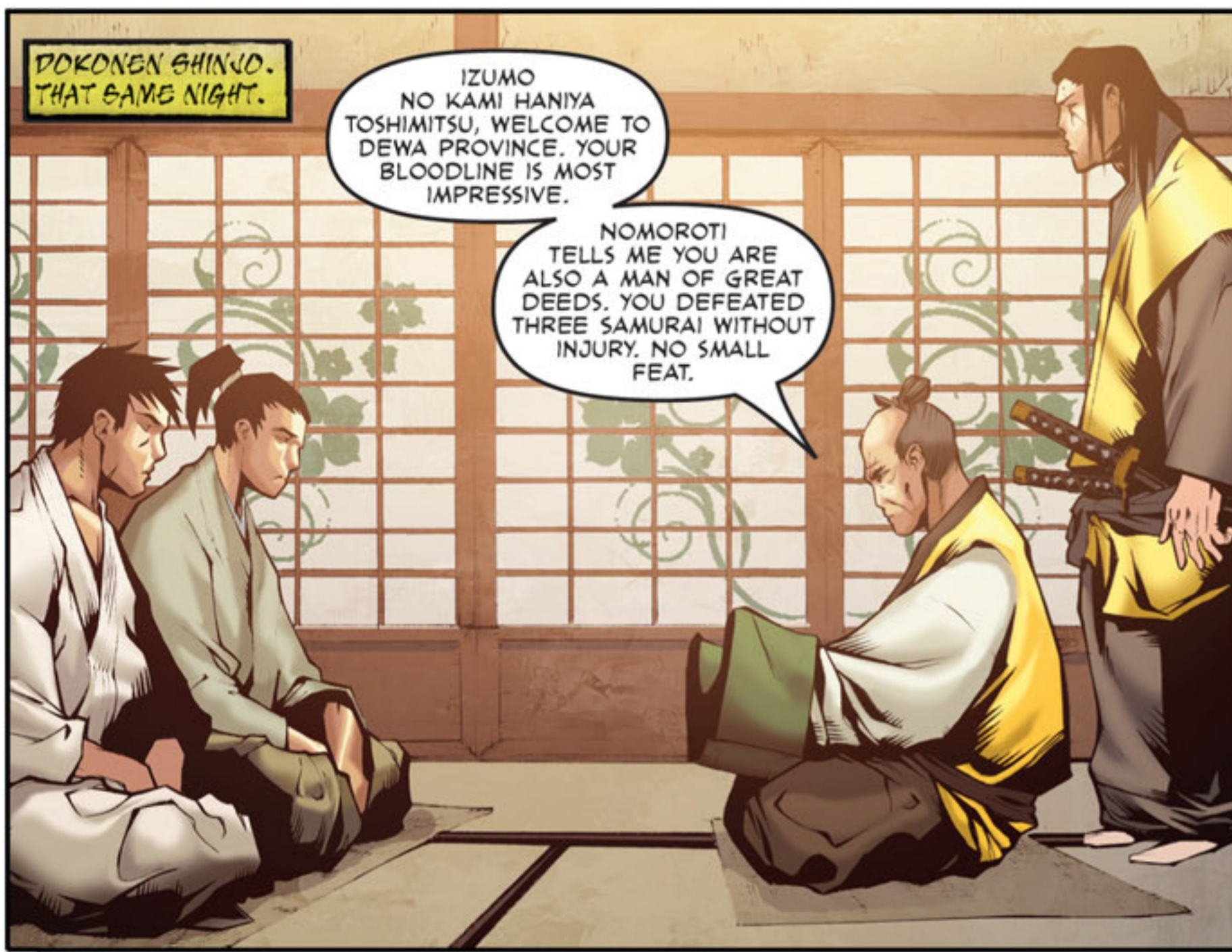
GOODBYE, YOUNG SAMURAI!
A PLEASURE TO TRADE WITH YOU!

KILL THEM!

LATER.
AFTER THE FOOTSTEPS
BEHIND THEM HAVE FADED.







DOKONEN SHINJO.
THAT SAME NIGHT.

IZUMO
NO KAMI HANIYA
TOSHIMITSU, WELCOME TO
DEWA PROVINCE. YOUR
BLOODLINE IS MOST
IMPRESSIVE.

NOMOROTI
TELLS ME YOU ARE
ALSO A MAN OF GREAT
DEEDS. YOU DEFEATED
THREE SAMURAI WITHOUT
INJURY. NO SMALL
FEAT.



THEY WERE
DRUNK, AND
UNSKILLED.

IMPRESSIVE,
NONETHELESS. MAY
I ASK WHY YOU
HAVE COME TO
YAMAGATA?



AS A
SECOND SON,
I WAS UNSATISFIED
WITH MY PROSPECTS IN
IZUMO. I WILL TRAVEL
UNTIL I MAKE MY
REPUTATION AND
FORTUNE.



I AM
ALWAYS LOOKING
FOR ENTERPRISING
YOUNG MEN, ESPECIALLY
THOSE OF A MILITARY
DISPOSITION.

YOUR
TONGUE MAKES
'MILITARY' SOUND
LIKE
'CRIMINAL!'



DAIMYO
GAKUSHI HAS GIVEN
US PERMISSION FOR THE
FIGHTS. HE TAXES US HEAVILY,
BUT WE ARE FOLLOWING THE
LAW. THERE IS GOLD AND
GLORY TO BE WON FOR A
MAN WITH A QUICK
SWORD.



BETTER
THAN FIGHTING IN
THE STREETS. SOME
COWARDS CARRY
FIREARMS, EVEN
IN THIS BACKWARD
PROVINCE.



WHAT
IS THE
PURSE?

A FEW NIGHTS LATER IN THE DOKONEN SHINJO

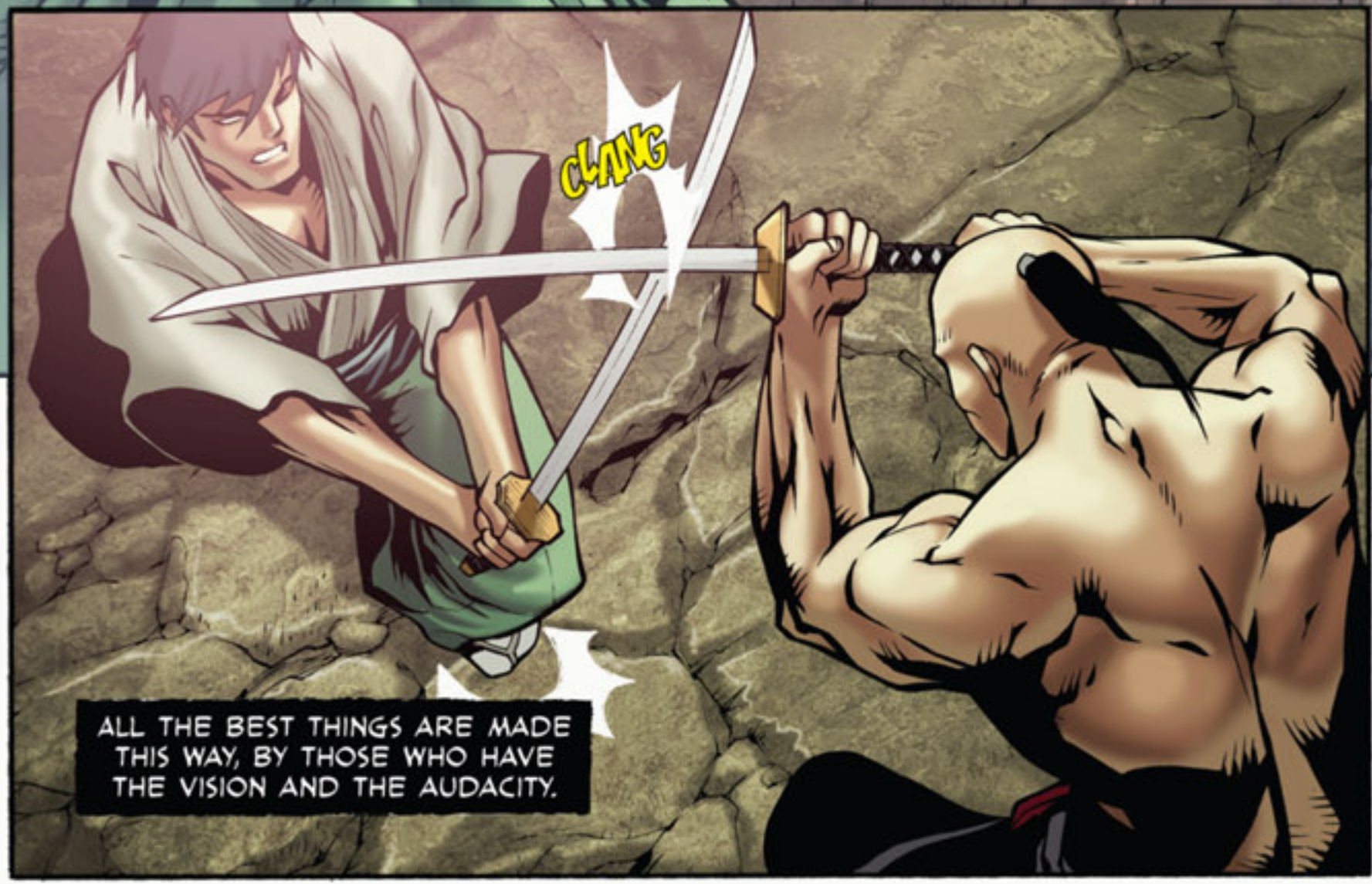
WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE, JUN? WE SHOULD BE OUT LOOKING FOR MAYUKO. WE SHOULD BE KILLING ARAKU!

ARAKU IS GONE. HE'S LEFT THE CITY. WHEN HE RETURNS YOU WILL BE THE FIRST TO KNOW. WIN THIS FIGHT AND WE GET GOLD.

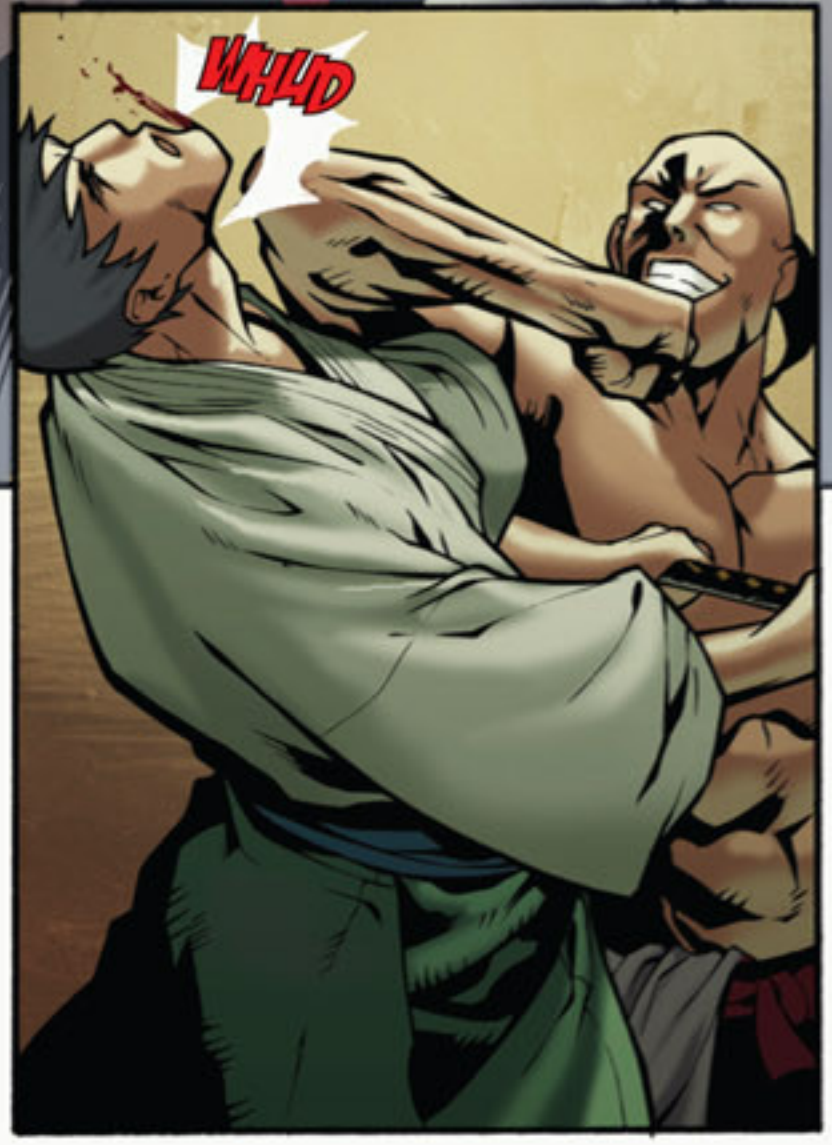
GOLD MEANS I CAN SEE FARTHER AND REACH FARTHER, AND THAT MEANS A BETTER CHANCE TO FIND HER. SO, WIN THIS FIGHT AND WE FIND MAYUKO. WIN THIS FIGHT AND WE KILL GAKUSHI.



IT IS GOOD TO BE THERE AT THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING. TO CREATE ITS ENTIRE FORM WITH ONE'S OWN SPIRIT.



ALL THE BEST THINGS ARE MADE THIS WAY, BY THOSE WHO HAVE THE VISION AND THE AUDACITY.



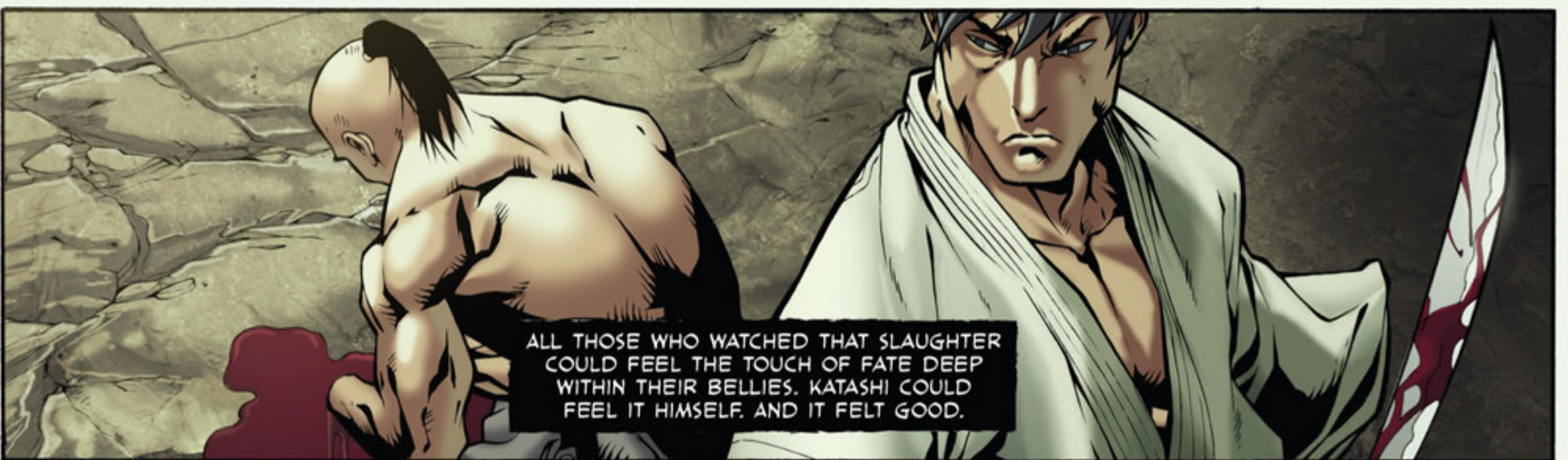
CREATION CAN BE SHARED.
VISION CAN BE SHARED.



IF MINDS ARE IN HARMONIOUS
FORM, GREATNESS FLOWS.



SO IT WAS THAT NIGHT, AS KAJIRO
KATASHI BECAME HANIYA TOSHIMITSU,
AND A LEGEND WAS BORN.



ALL THOSE WHO WATCHED THAT SLAUGHTER
COULD FEEL THE TOUCH OF FATE DEEP
WITHIN THEIR BELLIES. KATASHI COULD
FEEL IT HIMSELF. AND IT FELT GOOD.



THE SECOND VIRTUE OF THE SAMURAI IS FOCUS. WHEN EXECUTING A TASK, THE FINAL EFFORT MUST BE AS FOCUSED AS THE FIRST. MAKE A STATEMENT. LEAVE NO DOUBT.

LATER, AFTER THE SNOW HAS STARTED TO FALL.



THIS IS THE MOST COIN I'VE EVER HAD AT ONE TIME.



DID YOU BET IT ALL? EVEN THE MONEY FROM SELLING THE HORSES?

IF YOU LOSE WE ARE FINISHED ANYWAY.



WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS WITH US, OLD MAN?

THE FIRST MAN TO SPEAK IN AN ENCOUNTER PUTS HIMSELF AT A DISADVANTAGE. SPEAKING IS LIKE FIGHTING. SHOW THE OPPONENT NOTHING.



I'M BETTER AT FIGHTING THAN SPEAKING.

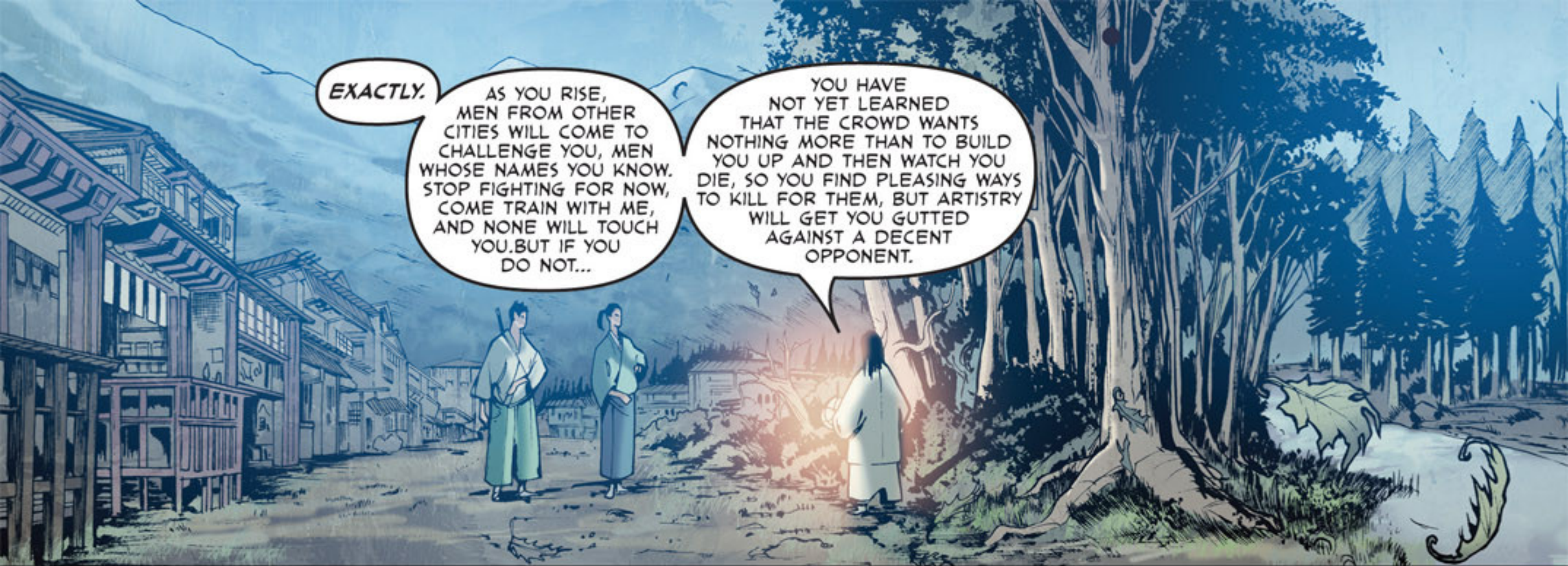


THE BLOOD ON YOUR FACE SAYS YOU WILL BENEFIT FROM INSTRUCTION IN BOTH.

WHO WERE THOSE MEN YOU DEFEATED TONIGHT?



NO ONE OF ANY GREAT MATTER.



EXACTLY.

AS YOU RISE, MEN FROM OTHER CITIES WILL COME TO CHALLENGE YOU, MEN WHOSE NAMES YOU KNOW. STOP FIGHTING FOR NOW, COME TRAIN WITH ME, AND NONE WILL TOUCH YOU. BUT IF YOU DO NOT...

YOU HAVE NOT YET LEARNED THAT THE CROWD WANTS NOTHING MORE THAN TO BUILD YOU UP AND THEN WATCH YOU DIE, SO YOU FIND PLEASING WAYS TO KILL FOR THEM, BUT ARTISTRY WILL GET YOU GUTTED AGAINST A DECENT OPPONENT.



YOUR LOOSE TONGUE WILL BUY YOU A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT, OLD MAN OR NOT.



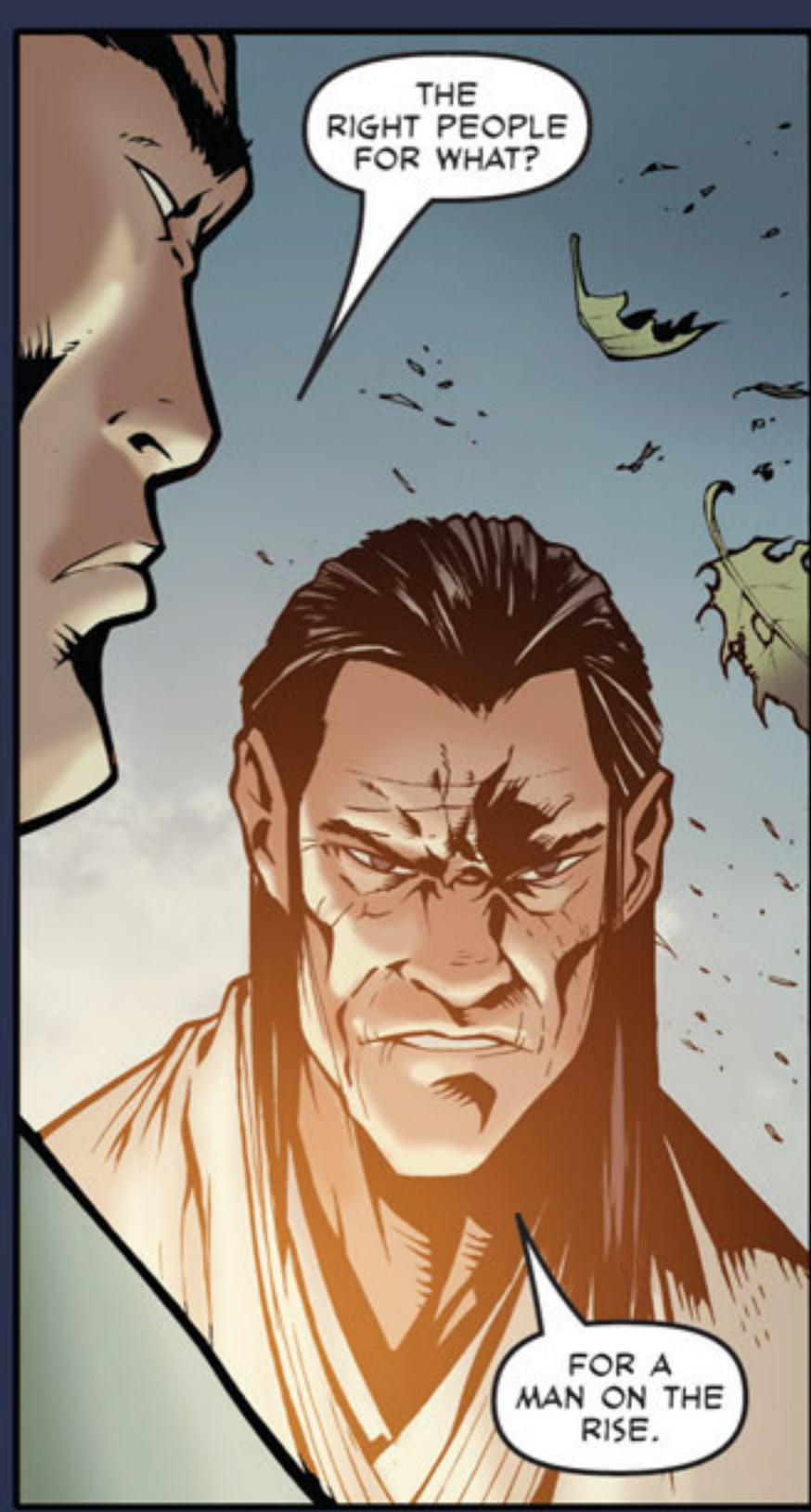
WHAT DO YOU GET FROM THIS ARRANGEMENT?

WHEN HANIYA TOSHIMITSU IS A MATCH FOR ANY LIVING SAMURAI, MUCH HONOR WILL COME TO MY NAME.



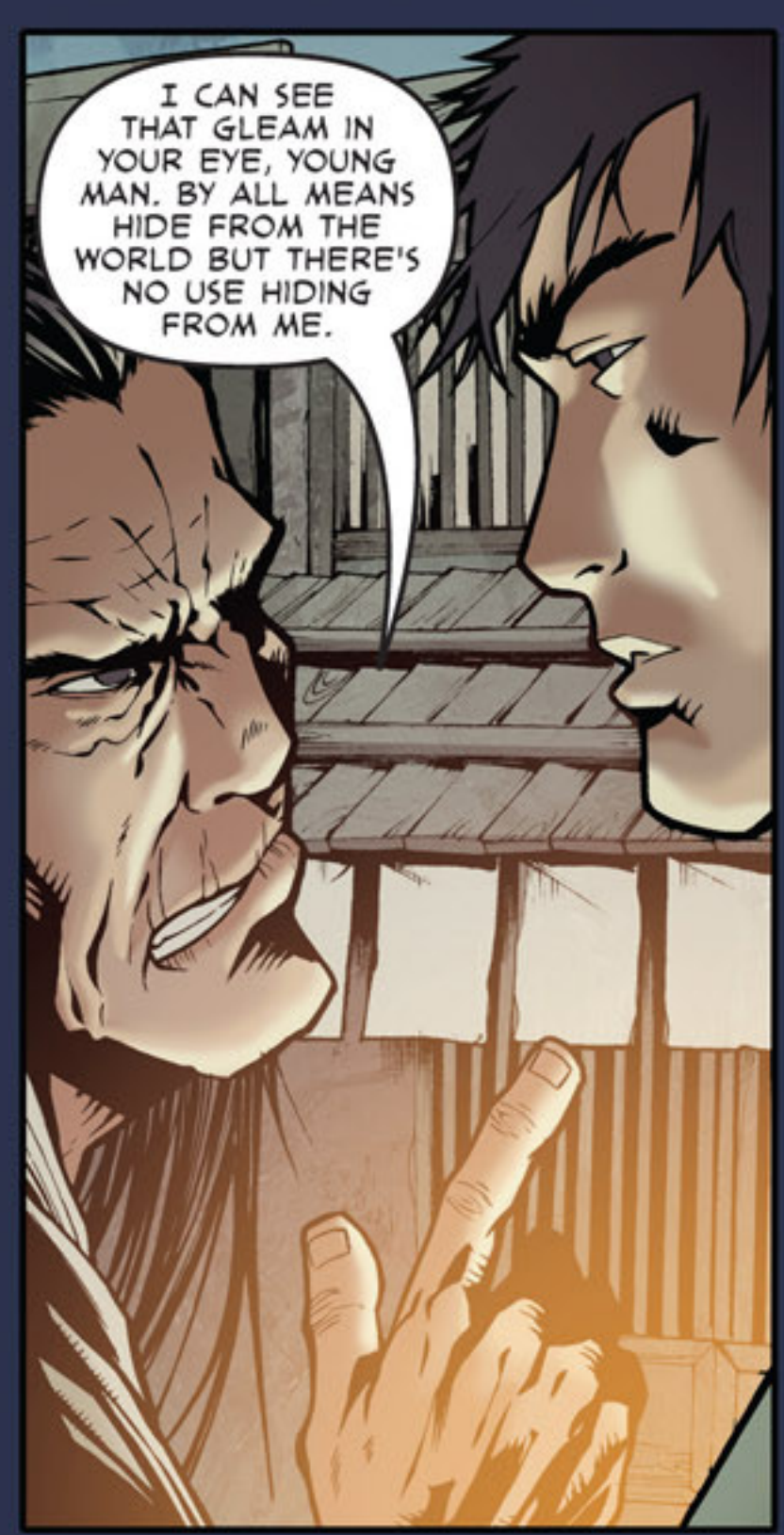
IS YOUR NAME ALREADY KNOWN?

AMONG THE RIGHT PEOPLE.



THE RIGHT PEOPLE FOR WHAT?

FOR A MAN ON THE RISE.



I CAN SEE THAT GLEAM IN YOUR EYE, YOUNG MAN. BY ALL MEANS HIDE FROM THE WORLD BUT THERE'S NO USE HIDING FROM ME.



WE ACCEPT. MY NAME IS KAIO FUKUYAMA.

A FEW NIGHTS LATER.
THE WHITE ORCHID.

START
DIVIDING THE
PEOPLE YOU
KNOW INTO TWO
GROUPS.

ONE GROUP
IS THE PEOPLE WHO
CAN DO FAVORS THAT
MATTER. SOLDIERS, GUARDS,
BROTHEL OWNERS, SERVANTS
TO IMPORTANT PEOPLE. THOSE
PEOPLE CAN KNOW MY NAME,
BUT DO NOT TELL THEM
THAT TOSHIMITSU IS
MY FRIEND.

THE
OTHER GROUP IS
EVERYONE ELSE. ANYONE
WHO WIELDS NO POWER
SHOULD NOT KNOW THAT I
EXIST, AND CERTAINLY
NOT THAT YOU AND
I SPEAK.

WHEN
YOU MAKE YOUR
ROUNDS TOMORROW, TELL
FIVE PEOPLE FROM THE SECOND
GROUP THAT YOU SAW TOSHIMITSU- SAN
RESCUE TWO CHILDREN FROM IN
FRONT OF A WAGON. TELL FIVE OTHER
PEOPLE YOU SAW TWO OF GAKUSHI'S
MEN TRYING TO RUN DOWN
CHILDREN IN A
WAGON.





THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI IS IN IMMEDIACY.

FASTER!
THE RIBBON MUST NOT TOUCH THE GROUND!



HANGING BACK IS THE HALLMARK OF THE COWARD.



AND YET, TRAINING AND PRACTICE ARE THE FOUNDATION OF THE SAMURAI'S TEMPLE.



HE WHO PRACTICES HARDEST, AND BEST, WILL BE FASTEST WHEN THE MOMENT OF FATE ARRIVES.

YET HOW ARE WE TO KNOW THE MOMENT OF OUR FATE? TOO EASILY, PATIENCE CAN BECOME COWARDICE. CALMNESS CAN BECOME HESITATION. CAUTION CAN BECOME DOUBT.





MY SISTER WAS KIDNAPPED. I'VE BEEN TO EVERY LIKELY PLACE IN THE CITY BUT... CAN YOU HELP US FIND HER?



HOW LONG HAS SHE BEEN GONE?

A FORTNIGHT.



GIRLS ARE OFTEN MOVED BEFORE THEY ARE SOLD. SHE COULD BE ANYWHERE, I'M SORRY TO SAY.



HAVE YOU CHECKED THE PRIVATE CLUBS?

NO, HORITOMO-SENSEI.



THEY LIKE TO PLAY AT BEING REAL GEISHA HOUSES, BUT THEY'RE NOTHING COMPARED TO EDO. STILL, YOU NEED A PASS TO ENTER. IT WILL TAKE A FEW DAYS TO ARRANGE THINGS.



THANK YOU.

NEXT TIME TELL ME YOUR PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY.



WE WILL FIND HER, MY FRIEND.



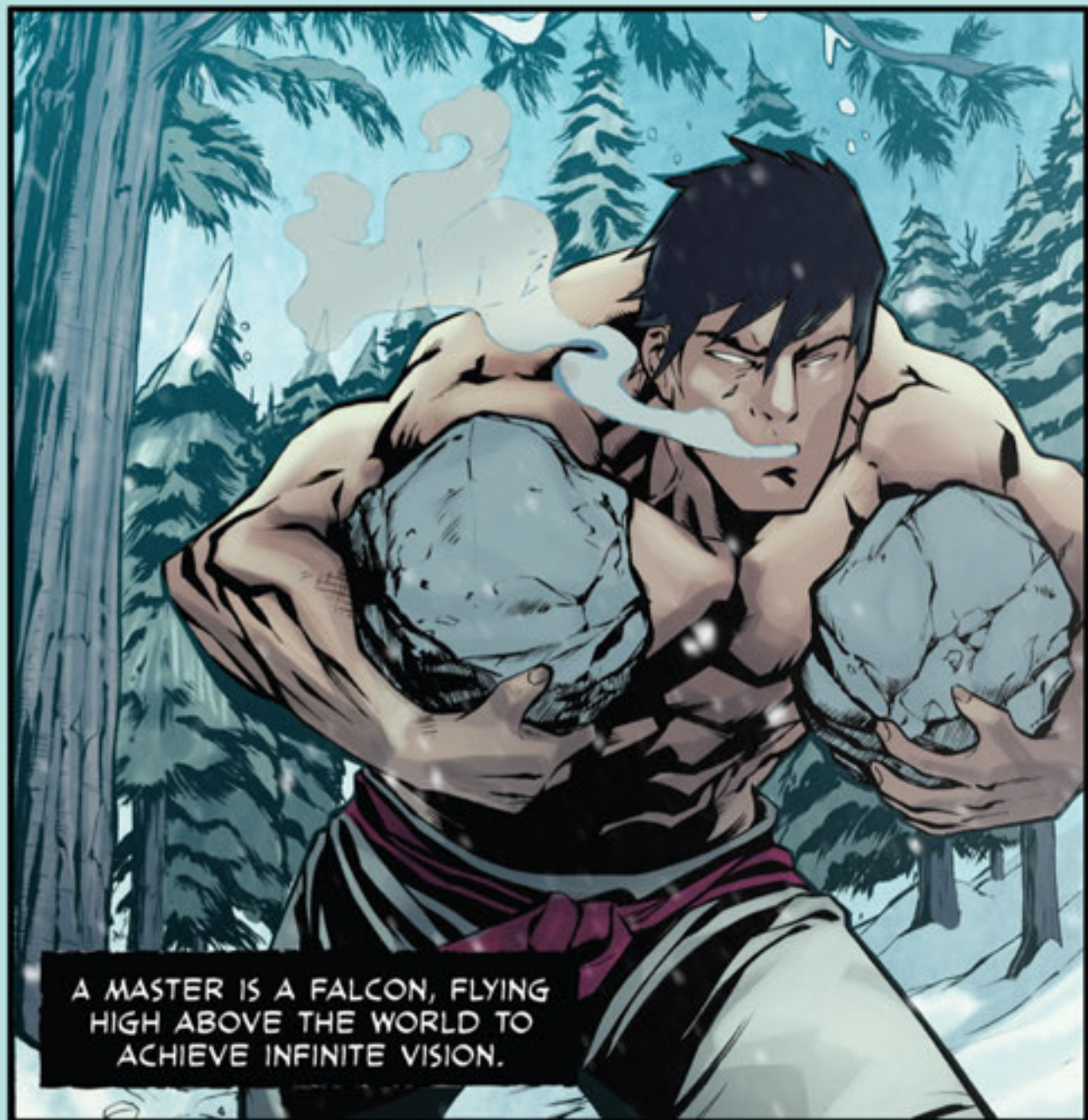
NO GREAT THING IS ACCOMPLISHED IN ONE STEP.



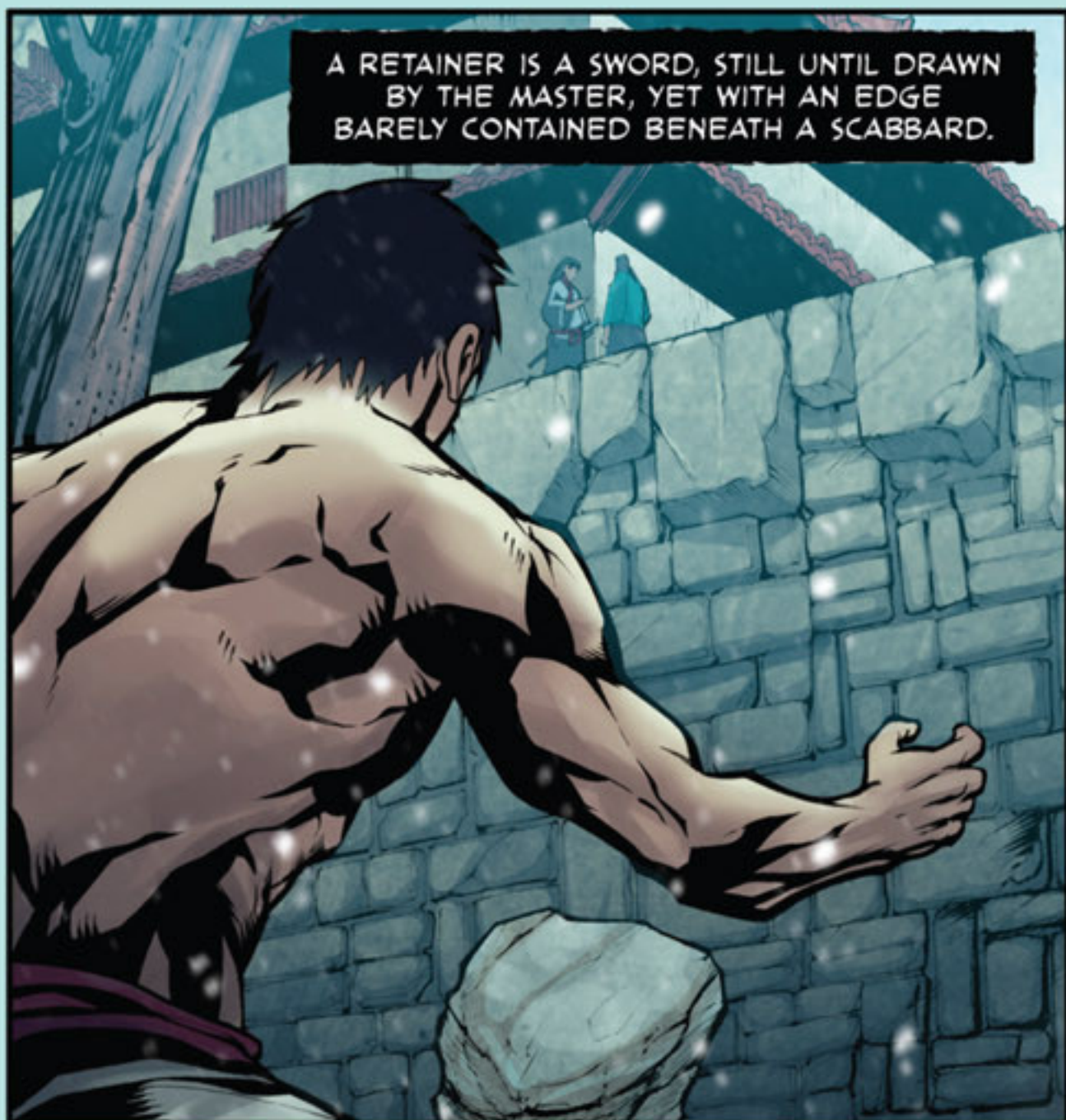
THAT IS WHY THERE ARE MASTERS, AND THERE ARE RETAINERS.



A MASTER MUST PLAN, AND A RETAINER MUST BE READY TO DIE. THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF EACH.



A MASTER IS A FALCON, FLYING HIGH ABOVE THE WORLD TO ACHIEVE INFINITE VISION.



A RETAINER IS A SWORD, STILL UNTIL DRAWN BY THE MASTER, YET WITH AN EDGE BARELY CONTAINED BENEATH A SCABBARD.



WHEN AN ENEMY PRESENTS HIMSELF, THERE IS NO MORE HESITATION. THAT IS THE MOMENT OF FATE. SEIZE SUCH A MOMENT, OR YOUR ENEMY WILL.



DAWN. AFTER THE TEA HAD BEEN POURED.

THE TIME IS NOT YET RIGHT. WE HAVE TO GET THEM ALL IN ONE STRIKE. IF YOU KILL ARAKU TOO SOON WE WILL NEVER GET NEAR GAKUSHI.

ARAKU HAS RETURNED. I SAW HIM WALKING ON THE WALLS OF THE CASTLE. HE LIMPS NOW.



I WILL COVER MY FACE.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR HONOR?



I WANT HIM DEAD.



ONCE SPRING APPROACHES, GAKUSHI WILL PUT OUT THE CALL FOR SOLDIERS TO FILL HIS RANKS. THEN IT WILL BE OUR TIME.



THE SNOW IS STILL THICKENING.



IF THE WAY WERE OPEN, WE WOULD TAKE IT. BUT THE WAY IS NOT OPEN. NOT YET. ALL RIGHT?



ALL RIGHT.



THE THIRD VIRTUE OF THE SAMURAI IS OBEDIENCE.

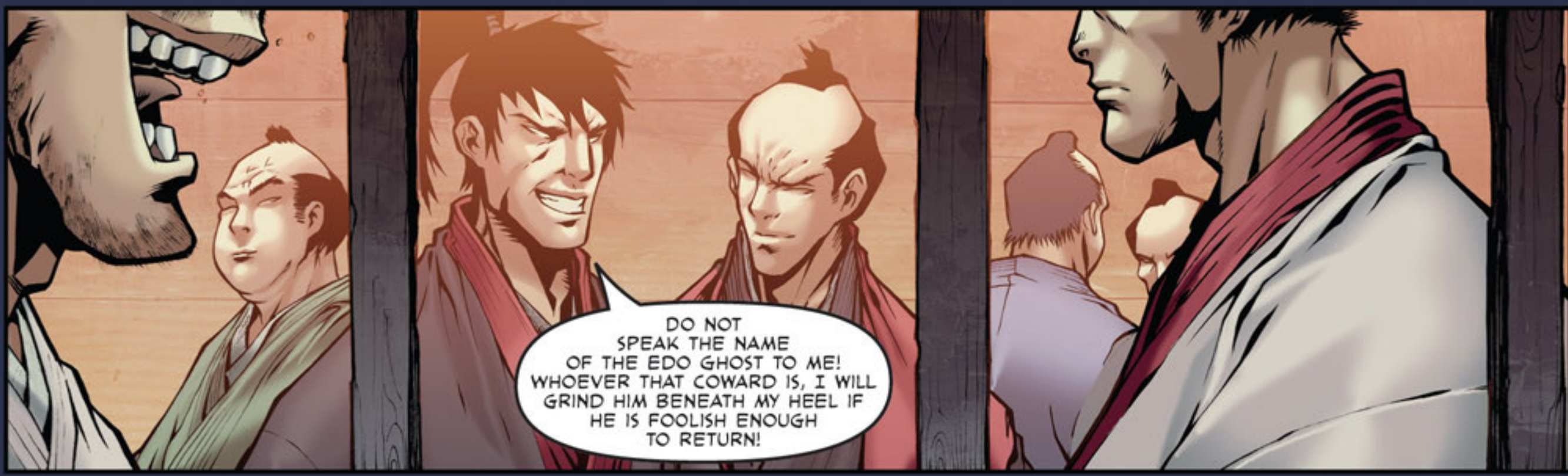


LATER. LONG AFTER DARKNESS HAS FALLEN.

SMALL DISOBEDIENCE IS THE FATHER OF GREAT REGRET.



IT DESTROYS THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN MASTER AND RETAINER.



DO NOT SPEAK THE NAME OF THE EDO GHOST TO ME! WHOEVER THAT COWARD IS, I WILL GRIND HIM BENEATH MY HEEL IF HE IS FOOLISH ENOUGH TO RETURN!



THE HAND OF A SAMURAI KNOWS WHEN HIS HEART IS TROUBLED. FROM SUCH HESITATION, EMPIRES CRUMBLE.

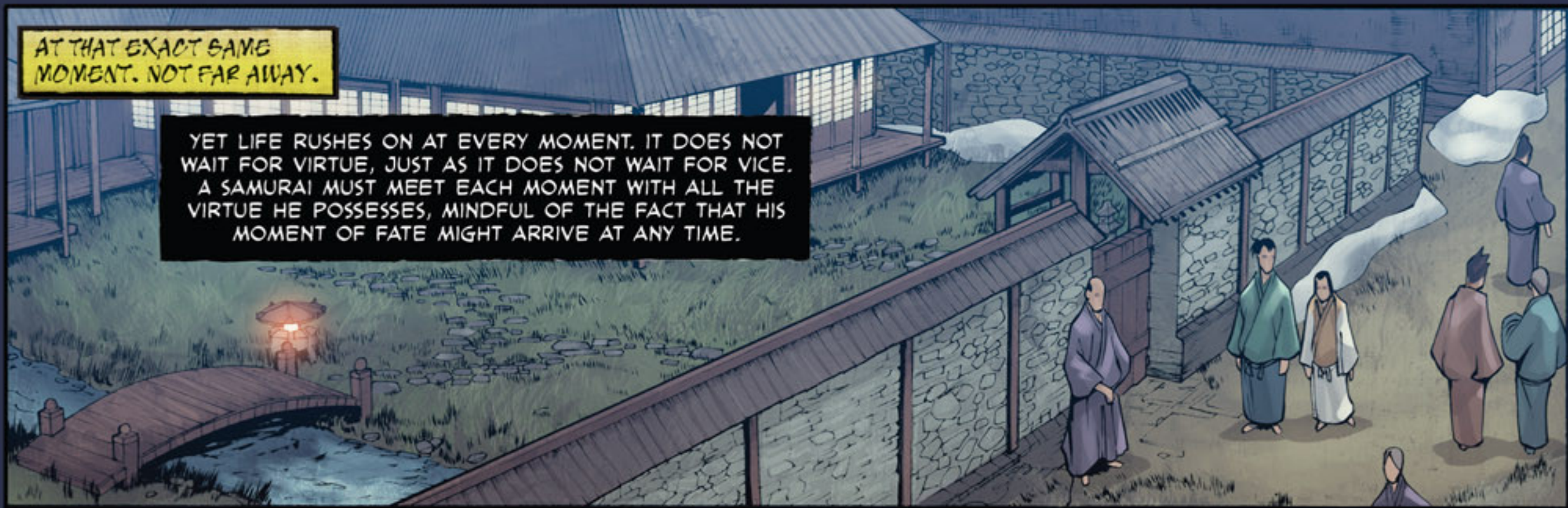


IT IS GOOD TO BE VIRTUOUS.
BUT NO COMBINATION OF
VIRTUES WILL ALLOW A
SAMURAI TO ESCAPE HIS FATE.



AT THAT EXACT SAME
MOMENT. NOT FAR AWAY.

YET LIFE RUSHES ON AT EVERY MOMENT. IT DOES NOT
WAIT FOR VIRTUE, JUST AS IT DOES NOT WAIT FOR VICE.
A SAMURAI MUST MEET EACH MOMENT WITH ALL THE
VIRTUE HE POSSESSES, MINDFUL OF THE FACT THAT HIS
MOMENT OF FATE MIGHT ARRIVE AT ANY TIME.



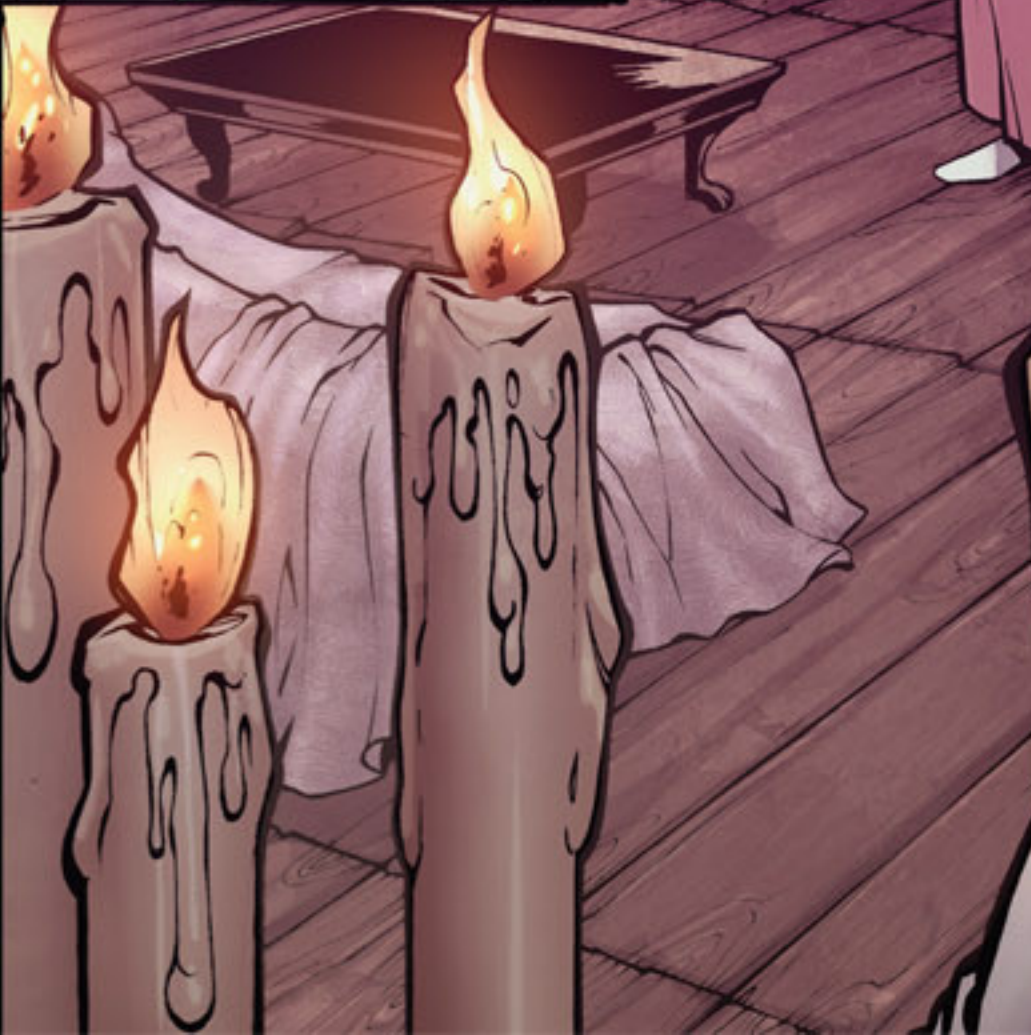
I CAN'T
BELIEVE YOU GOT
US A PASS TO THE KINJO
HOUSE! I HAVE DREAMED
OF COMING HERE
FOR YEARS!



WE ARE
EXPECTED, I
BELIEVE.



LOOK AT
THAT ONE OVER BY
THE CURTAIN!



MAYUKO.
WHAT HAS
HAPPENED TO
YOU, MY
SISTER?





JUN.
FINALLY YOU
RETURN, MY BROTHER.
AND NOT A MOMENT
TOO SOON.

THE WORLD IS A CONTRADICTION. IT EXISTS AS NOTHING MORE THAN THE TENSION BETWEEN THESE THINGS. BETWEEN VIRTUE AND DESIRE. BETWEEN VICTORY AND DEFEAT. BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH. ALL THAT WE ARE AND ALL THAT WE DO ARE WHAT CREATES THE WORLD, AND YET WE ARE AT THAT WORLD'S MERCY. SUCH IS THE NATURE OF FATE.

NEXT ISSUE:
*The Liberation
of Kimura-Chan*

DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE!



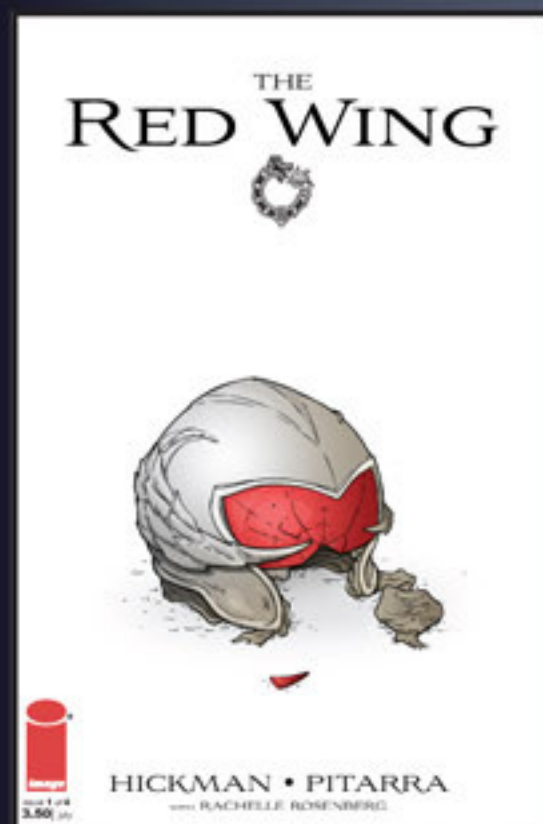
SAMURAI'S BLOOD #3
ON SALE AUGUST 2011



BLUE ESTATE #4
ON SALE NOW



SHINKU #2
ON SALE NOW



THE RED WING #1
ON SALE NOW