

THE BRIDE & RIDERS

BILL MCCORMICK

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTERS RULE THE EARTH

THE BRITTLE RIDERS IS SET IN THE DISTANT FUTURE. HUMANITY
CREATED SUBSPECIES OF SLAVES DESIGNED TO PERFORM MANUAL
LABOR, SEXUAL FAVORS, ENGAGE IN DANGEROUS TASKS, AND MORE.

INSTEAD OF DYING EVERY TEN YEARS, AS PROMISED IN THE COMPANY
BROCHURE, THEY GOT SICK AND HID. EVENTUALLY, TIRED OF THE ABUSE,
THEY ROSE UP AND KILLED EVERY MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD ON THE
PLANET.

THIS IS NOT THAT STORY. THIS IS THE STORY OF
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

APOCALYPSES ARE FUNNY THAT WAY.



SYNOPSIS



FROM A PARTY TO THE APOCALYPSE
-FROM THE APOCALYPSE TO HOPE

HUMANITY'S TRUE FUTURE
INVOLVES NO HUMANS AT ALL

HUMANITY HAD LEARNED THEY WOULD BE DENIED THE STARS WHEN AN ALIEN RACE VISITED AND CONFIRMED THAT FASTER-THAN-LIGHT TRAVEL WAS IMPOSSIBLE. A THOUSAND YEARS LATER, EDWARD Q. ROHTA, A BRILLIANT GENETICIST AND AVOWED HEDONIST, HAD NON-STELLAR DESIRES. HE AVOIDED ANTI-AI LAWS AND GAVE HUMANS SOMETHING NEW TO FOCUS ON AND ENJOY. HE CREATED MULTIPLE SPECIES OF CHIMERAS TO FILL THE SWIRLING VOIDS OF ENNUI AND REKINDLE HUMANITY'S DREAMS. HIS COMPANY, ROHTA INDUSTRIES, LLC, CREATED THOUSANDS OF CHIMERAS EVERY DAY. SINCE THE CHIMERA HAD BEEN WEAPONS AND FODDER, THEY WERE WELL-VERSED IN THE ARTS OF WAR THAT HUMANS HAD LONG FORGOTTEN. THEY USE THIS KNOWLEDGE TO FORM AN ARMY WITH A SINGULAR PURPOSE.

AFTER THE CHIMERA KILLED ALL THE PEOPLE ON THE PLANET, THINGS GOT A LITTLE WEIRD.



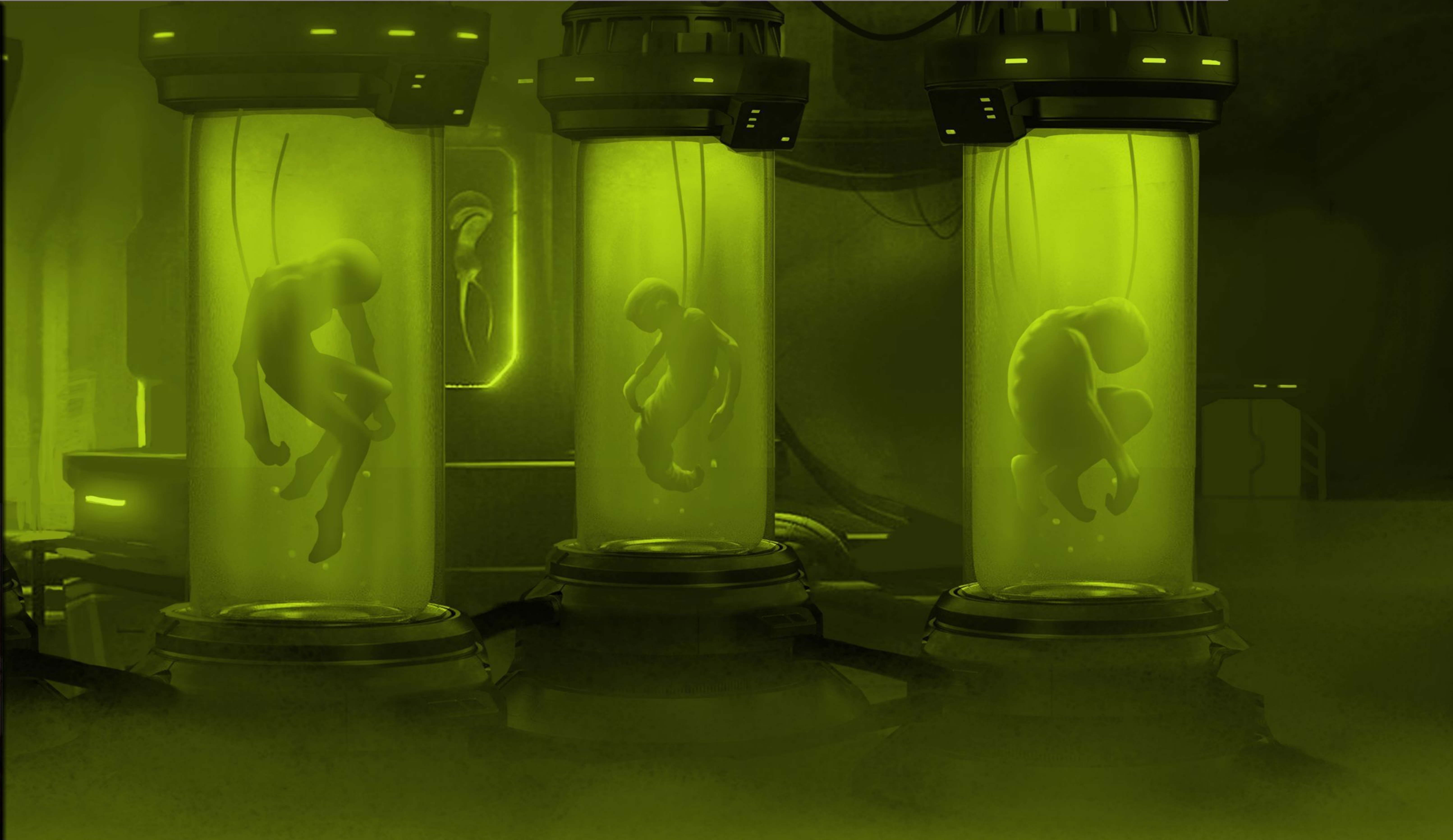
FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE FALL OF HUMANITY, A WARLORD NAMED XHAKNAR ATTACKED THE PLAINS AND CREATED A DESOLATE HELLSCAPE. XHAKNAR AND HIS KIND ARE EIGHT FOOT TALL SUPER SOLDIERS CREATED BY ROHTA'S RIVALS. FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THEY GUTTED THE PLAINS, FOUR FRINGE DWELLERS, A WOLFEN, A SUCCUBUS, A LLAMIA, AND A BADGEBETH, ARE SUMMONED TO A BAR BY A POWERFUL SKELETAL BEING, WHOSE BODY ENCOMPASSES LIVING FLAME, NAMED GELDISH. ONCE THEY ARE ALL TOGETHER, HE OUTLINES HIS THREE-PART PLAN:

- (1) TO OVERTHROW XHAKNAR AND RETURN FREEDOM TO THE LANDS
- (2) MAKE A TON OF MONEY DOING IT
- (3) BRING WATER BACK TO THE MIDWESTERN DESERT



XHAKNAR'S REALM, KNOWN AS ANAPSIDA, IS A WALLED-IN CITY HIGHLIGHTED BY ITS BLOOD FOUNTAIN, AN INSTALLATION FEATURING ENEMIES OF THE STATE HUNG ON MEATHOOKS UNTIL THEY BLEED OUT OR XHAKNAR TIRES OF THEM.

XHAKNAR HAD LAKE MICHIGAN DRAINED AND TURNED INTO A DESERT. THE SURROUNDING LANDS ARE NOW DRY AND DESOLATE. THE ONLY WAY FOR THE CITIZENS TO GET WATER IS TO IMPORT IT FROM XHAKNAR.



THE UNLIKELY ALLIES BEGIN THEIR QUEST BY ROBBING THE LARGEST FINANCIAL REPOSITORY ON THE PLANET. THEY PLAN ON USING THE LOOT TO FUND AN ARMY. INSTEAD OF USING DIPLOMATIC MEANS, THEY LET THE REST OF THE DENIZENS KNOW OF THEIR DEED BY LEAVING A TRAIL OF DEAD GUARDS AND EMPTY VAULTS. ALSO, TO ENSURE THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING, GELDISH BURNS HIS INITIALS INTO THE WALL OF THE REPOSITORY FOR ALL TO SEE.



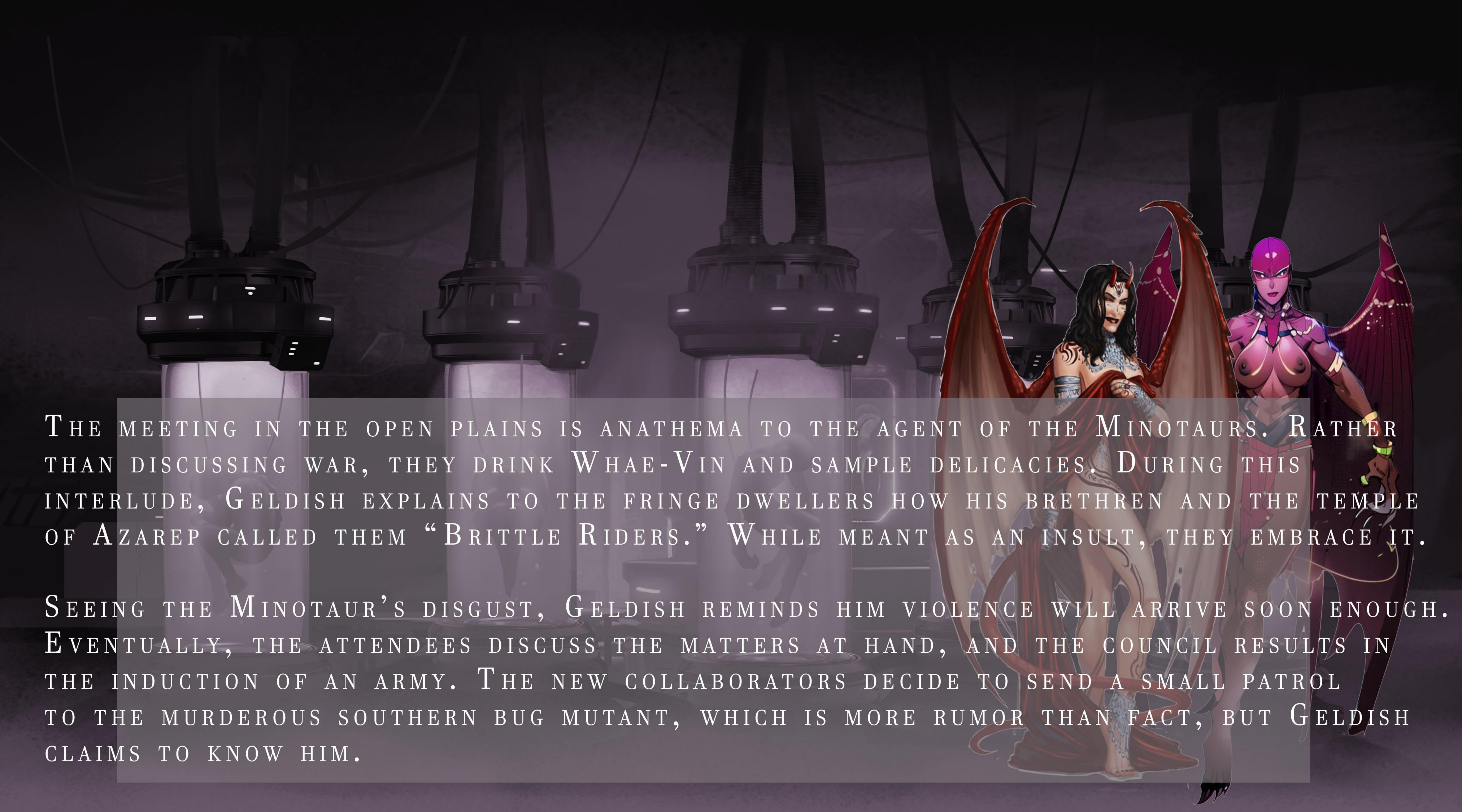


AS THE UNLIKELY ALLIES LIE LOW AND PLAN THEIR NEXT MOVE THEY RECEIVE A BOON FROM AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE, THE HERETOFORE MYTHICAL TEMPLE OF AZAREP. THE GIFT, GENETICALLY MODIFIED STEEDS WITH SPACE BLACK HAIR AND EYES OF FLAME, GIVES THEM A POWERFUL NEW MODE OF TRANSPORTATION THAT CAN ALSO SERVE AS A DEADLY WEAPON WHEN THREATENED.

AFTER DISCOVERING THE MINOTAURS, SE-JEANTS, AND FIERSTANS WERE SENDING PATROLS TO ASSESS THE POSSIBILITIES AND THREATS PRESENTED BY GELDISH'S MAD PLAN, THE ALLIES MOUNTED THEIR NEW STEEDS TO MEET THE PATROLS IN A NEUTRAL LOCATION.

WHEN THEY SEE THE PATROLS ARE ALL MILITARY, THEY BRIGHTEN. THERE WOULD BE NO DEALING WITH DILETTANTES. THIS WOULD BE A COUNCIL OF WAR.

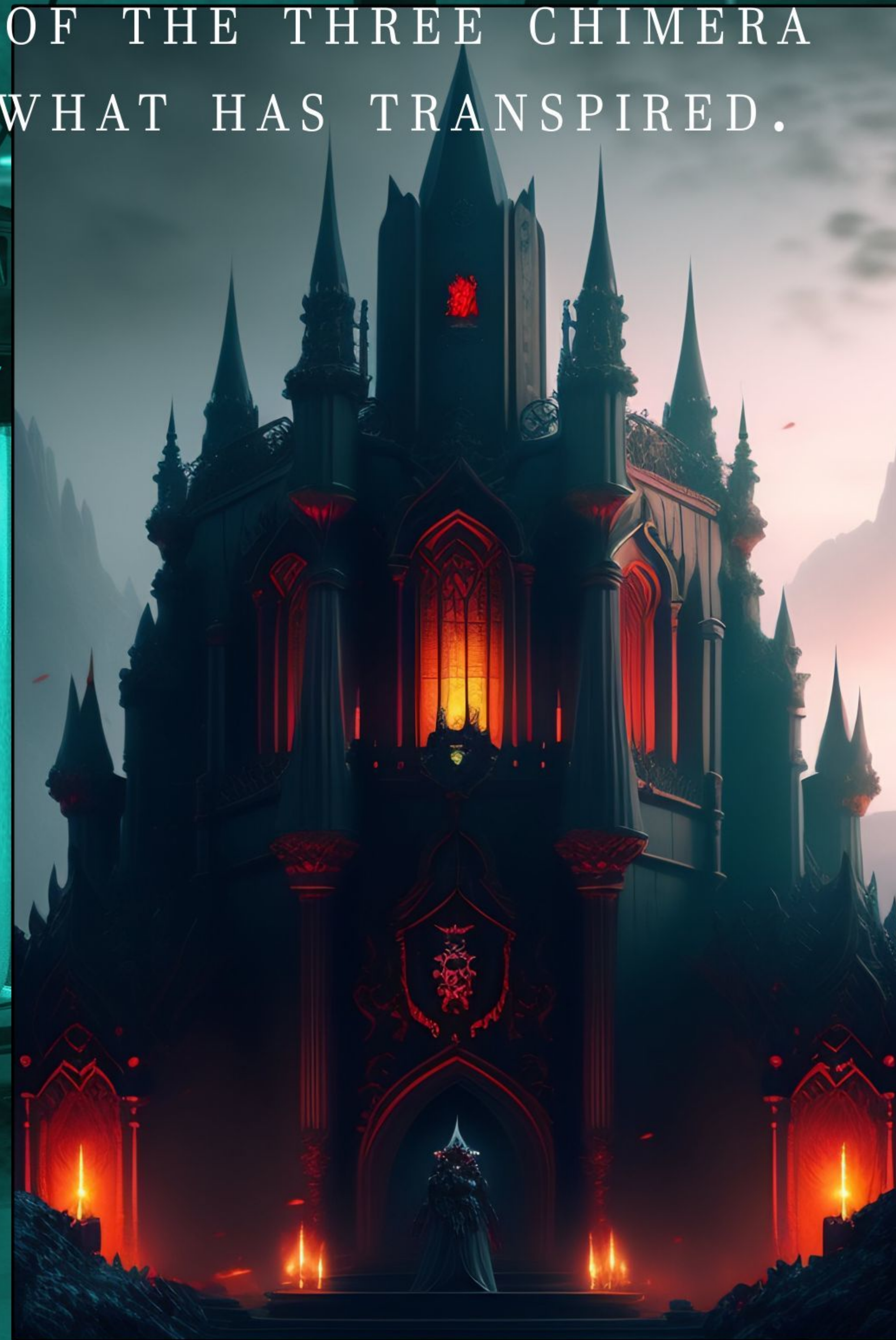
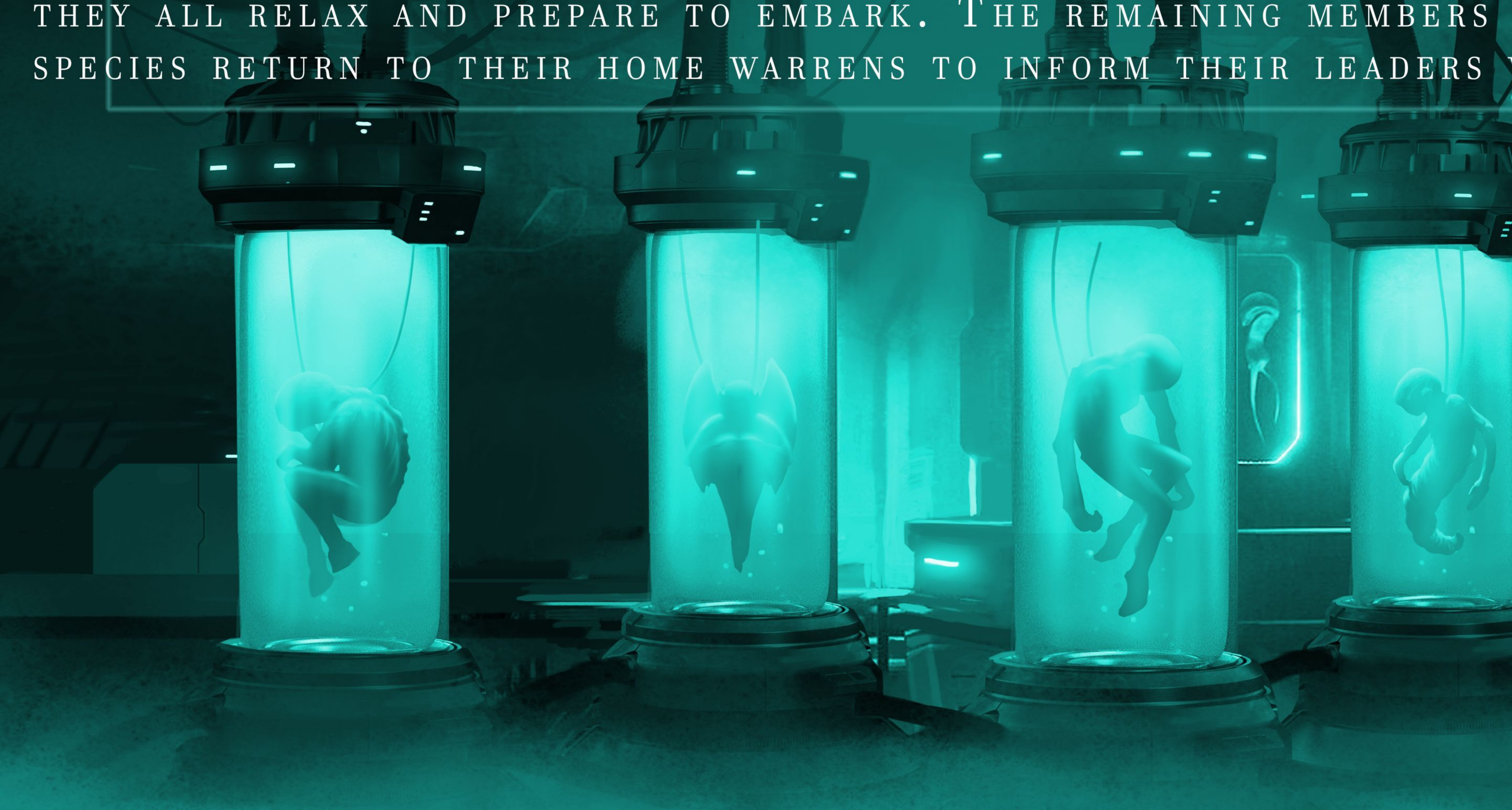


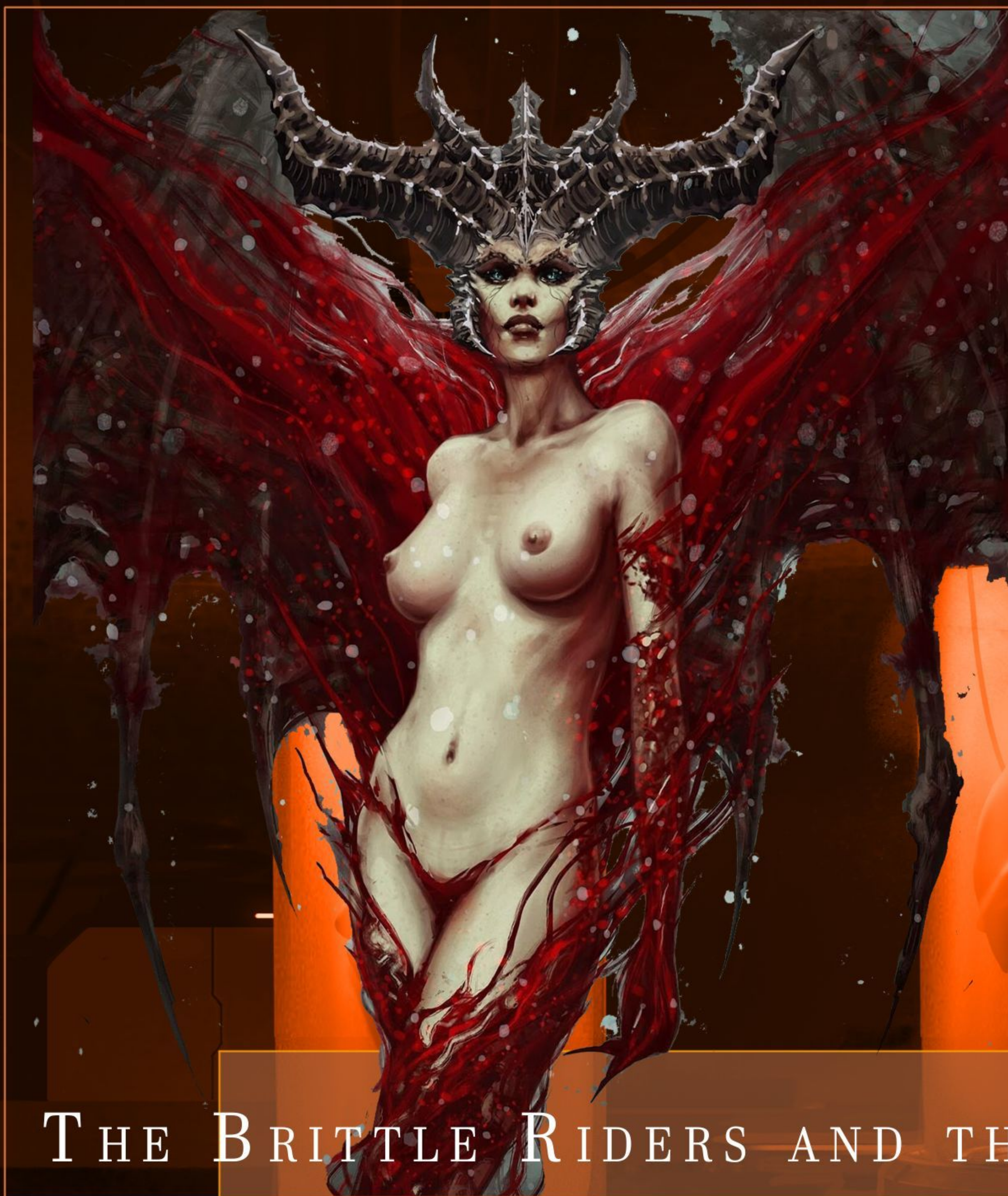
The background of the image is a dark, industrial interior with several large, black, cylindrical mechanical components. Two winged figures are positioned on the right side. The figure on the left has long black hair, small red horns, and wears a red and black outfit with a long red cape. The figure on the right has a purple and pink armored suit with a matching cape and a helmet with a visor. Both figures have large, dark, bat-like wings. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent grey rectangle in the lower-left and center of the image.

THE MEETING IN THE OPEN PLAINS IS ANATHEMA TO THE AGENT OF THE MINOTAURS. RATHER THAN DISCUSSING WAR, THEY DRINK WHAE-VIN AND SAMPLE DELICACIES. DURING THIS INTERLUDE, GELDISH EXPLAINS TO THE FRINGE DWELLERS HOW HIS BRETHREN AND THE TEMPLE OF AZAREP CALLED THEM “BRITTLE RIDERS.” WHILE MEANT AS AN INSULT, THEY EMBRACE IT.

SEEING THE MINOTAUR’S DISGUST, GELDISH REMINDS HIM VIOLENCE WILL ARRIVE SOON ENOUGH. EVENTUALLY, THE ATTENDEES DISCUSS THE MATTERS AT HAND, AND THE COUNCIL RESULTS IN THE INDUCTION OF AN ARMY. THE NEW COLLABORATORS DECIDE TO SEND A SMALL PATROL TO THE MURDEROUS SOUTHERN BUG MUTANT, WHICH IS MORE RUMOR THAN FACT, BUT GELDISH CLAIMS TO KNOW HIM.

AFTER THE FIRST GROUP LEAVES, A SECOND GROUP IS ASSEMBLED TO BEGIN RAIDS ON OUTPOSTS AND TROOPS TRAVERSING BETWEEN THEM. AT FIRST THE WARRIORS THINK THEY ARE GOING TO ATTACK ANAPSIDA, XHAKNAR'S KINGDOM AND ITS BLOOD FOUNTAIN. ASSURED THEY ARE NOT DOING ANYTHING INSANE, JUST ASSAULTING HEAVILY ARMED PATROLS THAT WILL OUTNUMBER THEM, THEY ALL RELAX AND PREPARE TO EMBARK. THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE THREE CHIMERA SPECIES RETURN TO THEIR HOME WARRENS TO INFORM THEIR LEADERS WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED.





THE BRITTLE RIDERS AND THEIR NEW COMPANIONS KILL ENEMY PATROLS, DISRUPT SUPPLY LINES, AND CREATE GENERAL CHAOS. FINALLY, AN INFORMER LETS THEM KNOW THAT XHAKNAR HAS SENT AN ELITE SQUAD OF KILLERS, AND THEY ARE NEAR AND LOOKING FOR THEM. AFTER A BRIEF DISCUSSION, THEY INSTRUCT THE INFORMER TO RETURN AND GIVE THEIR EXACT LOCATION TO XHAKNAR'S SQUAD.

NOT EXPECTING ANY LEGITIMATE RESISTANCE, THE SQUAD IS AMBUSHED AND MASSACRED BY THE BRITTLE RIDERS AND THEIR ALLIES ALMOST IMMEDIATELY UPON ARRIVAL. MOST OF THE ALLIED PATROL HAD BEEN HIDING BENEATH THE SANDS AND ERUPTED UNSEEN BEHIND THE ENEMY SQUAD.

THEY SAVE ONE SQUAD MEMBER'S LIFE. HIM THEY STRIP NAKED, GIVE HIM A CANTEEN FULL OF WATER, AND SEND HIM BACK TO HIS MASTER WITH A CLEAR MESSAGE.

THE BRITTLE RIDERS ARE REAL, AND THEY ARE DANGEROUS.



ONCE THE HUMILIATED SOLDIER DISAPPEARS FROM VIEW, THE NEW ALLIES GATHER TO PLAN THEIR NEXT STEP. BUT GELDISH HAS ALREADY FIGURED IT OUT. NO LONGER WILL THE CITIZENS OF THE PLAINS NEED TO COWER IN FEAR. A NEW DAWN, FULL OF HOPE AND PROMISE, IS BREAKING. EVEN IF IT WILL BE PAINTED IN BLOOD.

“RETURN TO YOUR WARRENS AND TELL THEM ONE ZANUBI OF A WAR IS COMING, AND THE BRITTLE RIDERS ARE BRINGING IT!”



GENRE



SCIENCE FICTION

DYSTOPIAN

ACTION

HUMOR

ADVENTURE

SOCIAL COMMENTARY

WHY NOW?



SCI-FI IS HOT

THERE ARE VIABLE OPTIONS

FOR ORIGINAL CONTENT

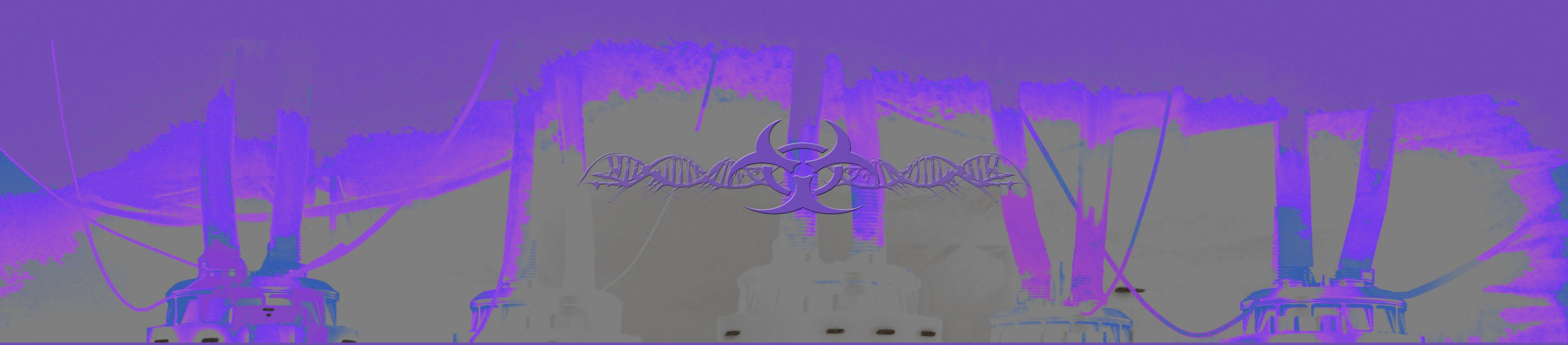
THIS IS A DENSE IP FULL

OF OPPORTUNITIES

SOURCES



THEORETICAL GENETICISTS
MILITARY STRATEGISTS
ACTIVE MILITARY OFFICERS
COMBAT NURSES
NUNS AND IMAMS
UPLIFT WARS BY DAVID BRIN



CHARACTERS AND ARCS



G E L D I S H

NOW A WALKING SKELETON WITH FLAMING EYES, GELDISH WAS BORN AFTER THE GEN-O-POD[™] WAR WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF ALL HUMANITY.

HE, AND HIS BRIGHT BLUE BODY, HAD KNOWN NOTHING BUT FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS UNTIL XHAKNAR AND HIS ARMY INVADED AND TURNED THE PLAINS INTO A DYSTOPIAN NIGHTMARE.

DURING A REBELLION LED BY GELDISH'S RACE, XHAKNAR'S GENERAL SPRAYED THEM WITH A TOXIN WHICH REMOVED ALL FLESH FROM THEIR BODIES. BUT, INSTEAD OF KILLING THEM, IT GAVE THEM HEIGHTENED SENSES AND ABILITIES.

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS LATER, WITH HIS STRENGTH RESTORED, GELDISH WANTS REVENGE.

IF, ALONG THE WAY, HE CAN DRINK SOME SKANK AND EAT A BOWL OF MEAT, SO MUCH THE BETTER.



B R A A R B

BORN INTO A GENTLE HERD THAT ONLY WISHED FOR PEACEFUL PASTURES, HER LIFE WAS FOREVER CHANGED WHEN ONE OF XHAKNAR'S PATROLS AMBUSHED THE LLAMIA AND TRIED TO ERADICATE THEM.

BRAARB ESCAPED BY GRACEFULLY FALLING OFF A CLIFF AND LYING UNCONSCIOUS FOR THREE DAYS.

AFTER SCAVENGING FOR FOOD AND SHELTER FOR A SEASON SHE WAS FOUND BY THE QUEEN'S HERD AND TAKEN IN. BRAARB TURNED OUT TO HAVE AN APTITUDE FOR BOTH DIPLOMACY AND VIOLENCE. THE QUEEN'S HERD TRAINED HER IN BOTH AND SHE BECAME AN AIDE TO THE QUEEN.

WHEN RUMORS OF GELDISH'S DEEDS HIT THE COURT BRAARB WAS SENT TO ASCERTAIN THEIR VERACITY AND SEE IF GELDISH WAS A FRIEND OR FOE.

BRAARB WISHES FOR PEACE AND WILL KILL ANYONE WHO TRIES TO PREVENT THAT FROM HAPPENING.

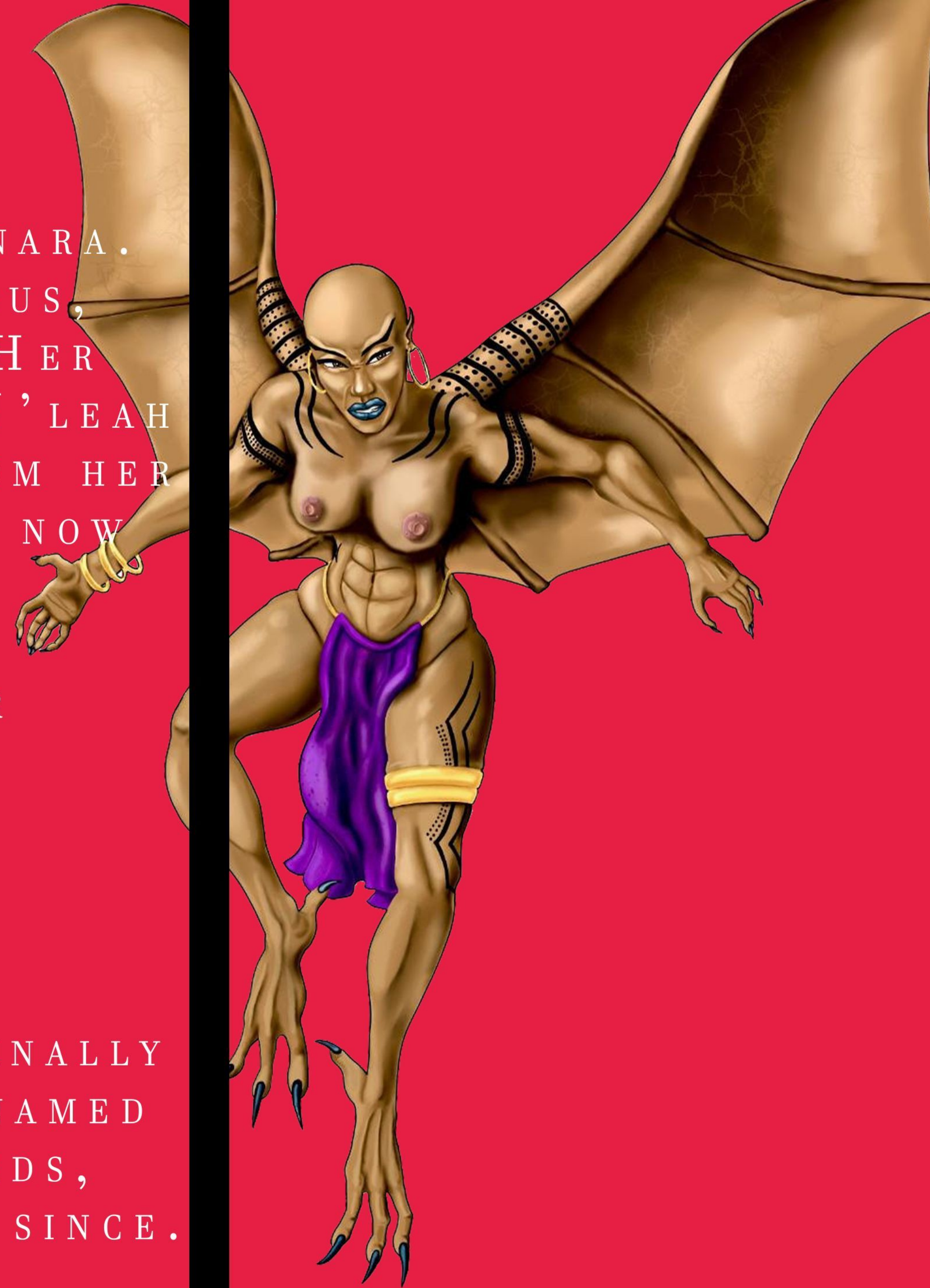


N'LEAH

N'LEAH WAS BORN IN A SMALL VILLAGE NAMED ANARA. SHE STOLE HER FIRST KISS WITH ANOTHER SUCCUBUS, BEHIND A BARN, WHEN SHE WAS BARELY A TEEN. HER SWEETHEART LEFT TO WORK AT THE PALACE AND N'LEAH WAS CRUSHED. WHEN SHE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM HER PARAMOUR LETTING HER KNOW SHE LOVED N'LEAH NOW AND FOREVER, SHE FINALLY GOT BACK TO LIVING.

LATER, ONE OF XHAKNAR'S GENERALS RAIDED HER VILLAGE LOOKING FOR SEX SLAVES. N'LEAH WAS CAPTURED AND SPENT THE NEXT FORTY YEARS IN CAPTIVITY.

NEVER ABLE TO CONTROL HER MOUTH, SHE WAS FINALLY SCHEDULED TO BE EXECUTED. A LOCAL WOLFEN, NAMED R'YUNE, LEARNED OF THIS, KILLED SEVERAL GUARDS, AND FREED HER. THEY HAVE BEEN TOGETHER EVER SINCE.



R'YUNE

R'YUNE WAS BORN WITH A DEFORMED TONGUE AND IS A MUTE. WHILE HE DID WELL IN ALL HIS CLASSES THE OTHER WOLFENS LOOKED AT HIM IN PITY AND NOT AS AN EQUAL.

FRUSTRATED AT THE LACK OF RESPECT HE LEFT HIS PACK AND TOOK JOBS AS A HUNTER FOR THE LANDED GENTRY WHO LOVED THE VIOLENCE BUT WERE TOO COWARDLY TO DO IT THEMSELVES.

HE LEARNED SIGN LANGUAGE, BECAME A WEAPONS MASTER, AND WAS BUILDING A TIDY SAVINGS ACCOUNT UNTIL HE THREW IT ALL AWAY TO SAVE A SUCCUBUS.

R'YUNE IS A FAN OF ALL THINGS ALCOHOLIC, ODD JOKES, AND HIS NEW LIFE WITH N'LEAH.



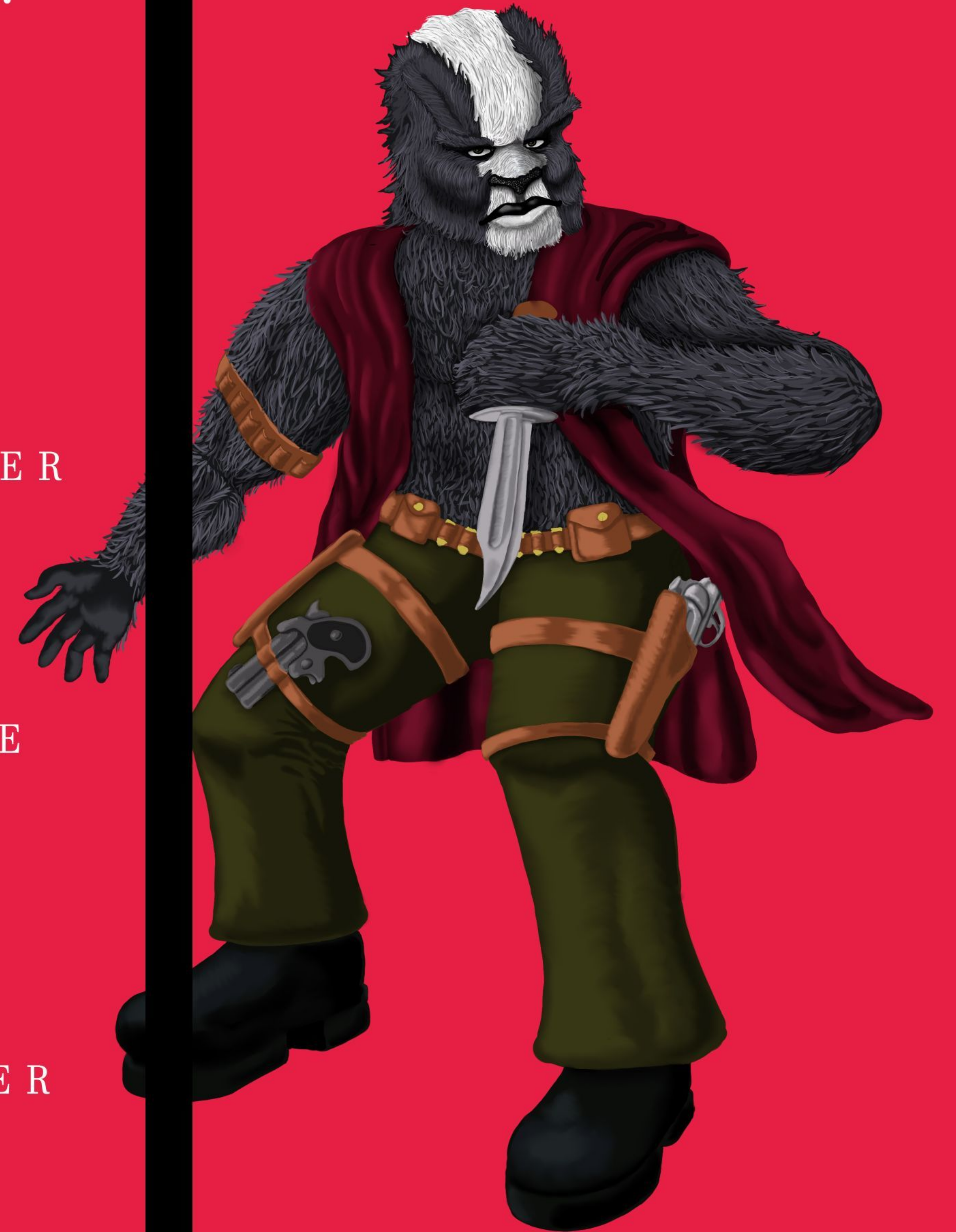
S L A N D

S L A N D WAS THE SON OF A B A D G E B E T H CLAN LEADER. NOT AS SMART, OR TRAINED, AS HIS BROTHER, HE WAS OFTEN LEFT BEHIND. HOPING TO PROVE HIS WORTH HE TOOK A JOB SAVING A VILLAGE FROM A PREDATOR.

U N F O R T U N A T E L Y, W H I L E H E W A S S U C C E S S F U L, H E V I O L A T E D T O M A I N R U L E O F T H E B A D G E B E T H; “ N E V E R T R E A T W I T H O T H E R S P E C I E S. ”

W H E T H E R H E L E F T O R W A S E X I L E D I S O P E N T O D I S C U S S I O N. W H A T ’ S N O T I S T H A T H I S A C T I O N S G A V E A W A Y T H E L O C A T I O N O F T H E B A D G E B E T H L A I R A N D X H A K N A R T R I E D T O K I L L T H E M A L L. S L A N D H E A R D A B O U T I T L A T E R A N D V O W E D R E V E N G E.

S L A N D H A S N O F I L T E R A N D W I L L D R I N K A R M I E S U N D E R T H E T A B L E.



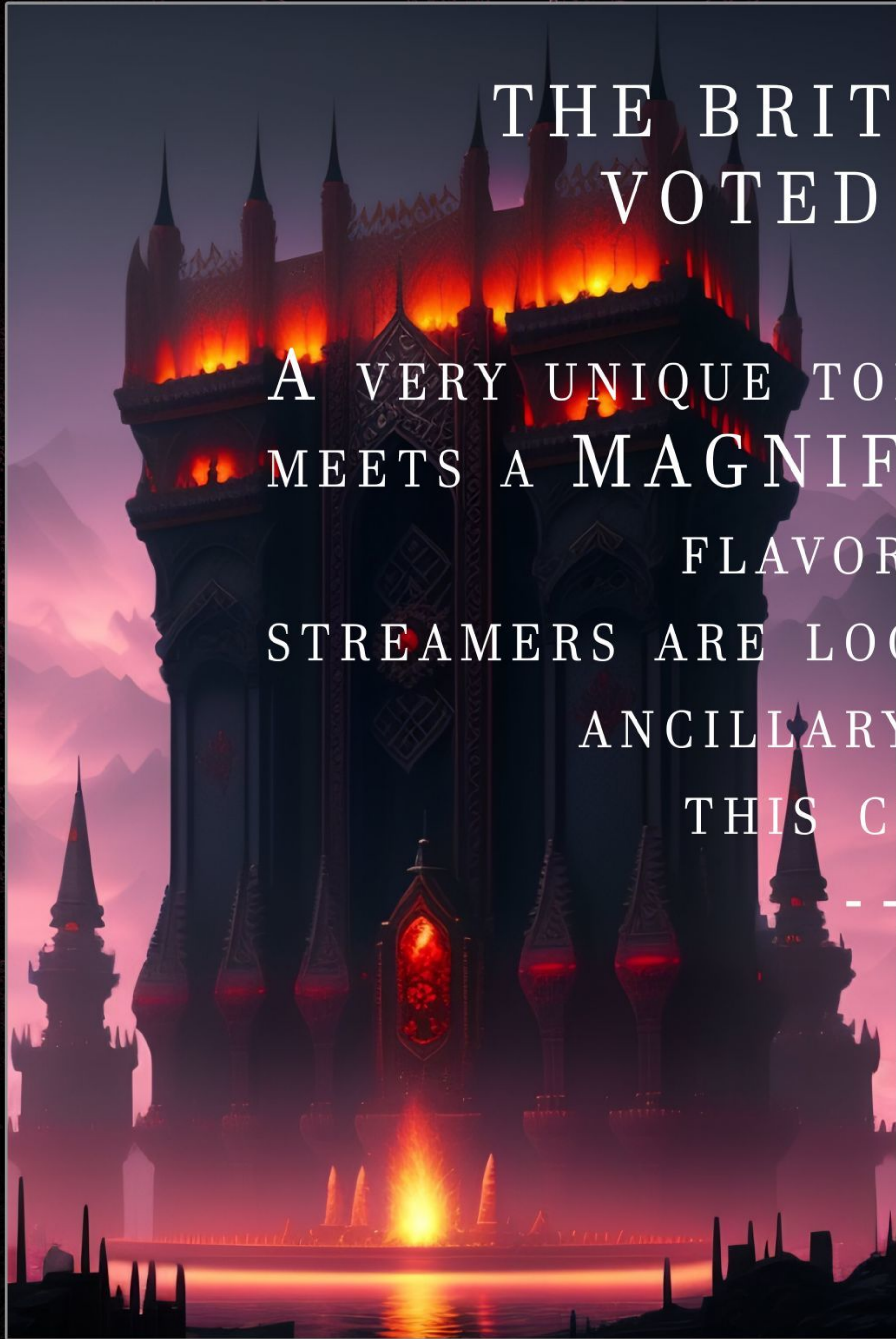
NOTEWORTHY



THE BRITTLE RIDERS: BOOK ONE (SECOND EDITION) WAS
VOTED BEST SCI-FI NOVEL 2022 (CRITTERS READERS POLL)

A VERY UNIQUE TONE AND WORLD, REMINISCENT OF GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
MEETS A MAGNIFICENT SEVEN/DIRTY DOZEN TYPE SET UP, BUT WITH A LOOK,
FLAVOR, LEXICON ALL ITS OWN. IN A WORLD WHERE STUDIOS AND
STREAMERS ARE LOOKING FOR IP THAT'S EXPANSIVE, BOTH NARRATIVELY AND IN TERMS OF
ANCILLARY POSSIBILITIES (PREQUELS, OFFSHOOTS, VIDEO GAMES, ETC.)
THIS CERTAINLY SEEMS TO OFFER UP A NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES.

-- *GARRICK DION* - PRODUCER (*JOKER, DRIVE, ETC.*)



THE AUTHOR



BILL MCCORMICK IS AN AWARD WINNING AND CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED AUTHOR OF SEVERAL NOVELS, COMIC BOOKS, GRAPHIC NOVELS, AND HAS APPEARED IN NUMEROUS ANTHOLOGIES.

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