



*There.
The White
Tower.*

*The seat
of the
collapsing
Union.*

*Tell me
what you
know of
it.*



She burns.

The people have risen up and pulled down their leaders, and now -- without any semblance of order or societal structure -- chaos has gripped the city.

As ordered, we have completed a cursory drone reconnaissance.

There are power outages. Shortages of food. And what little hold the rebels have on the city, they are losing quickly.



If you wish it, the Union is ours.

They cannot stand against us. They will fall.

Will they now?

You know what they say about cornered animals, don't you?



Yes.

They die the same as any other.



Chief of Chiefs... you're forgetting something.

It's not surprising, really. Your family has a long history of forgetting our ways...

I suppose your youth makes you ignorant of them as well.

That place is bones and bonded. Did you even know what that means?



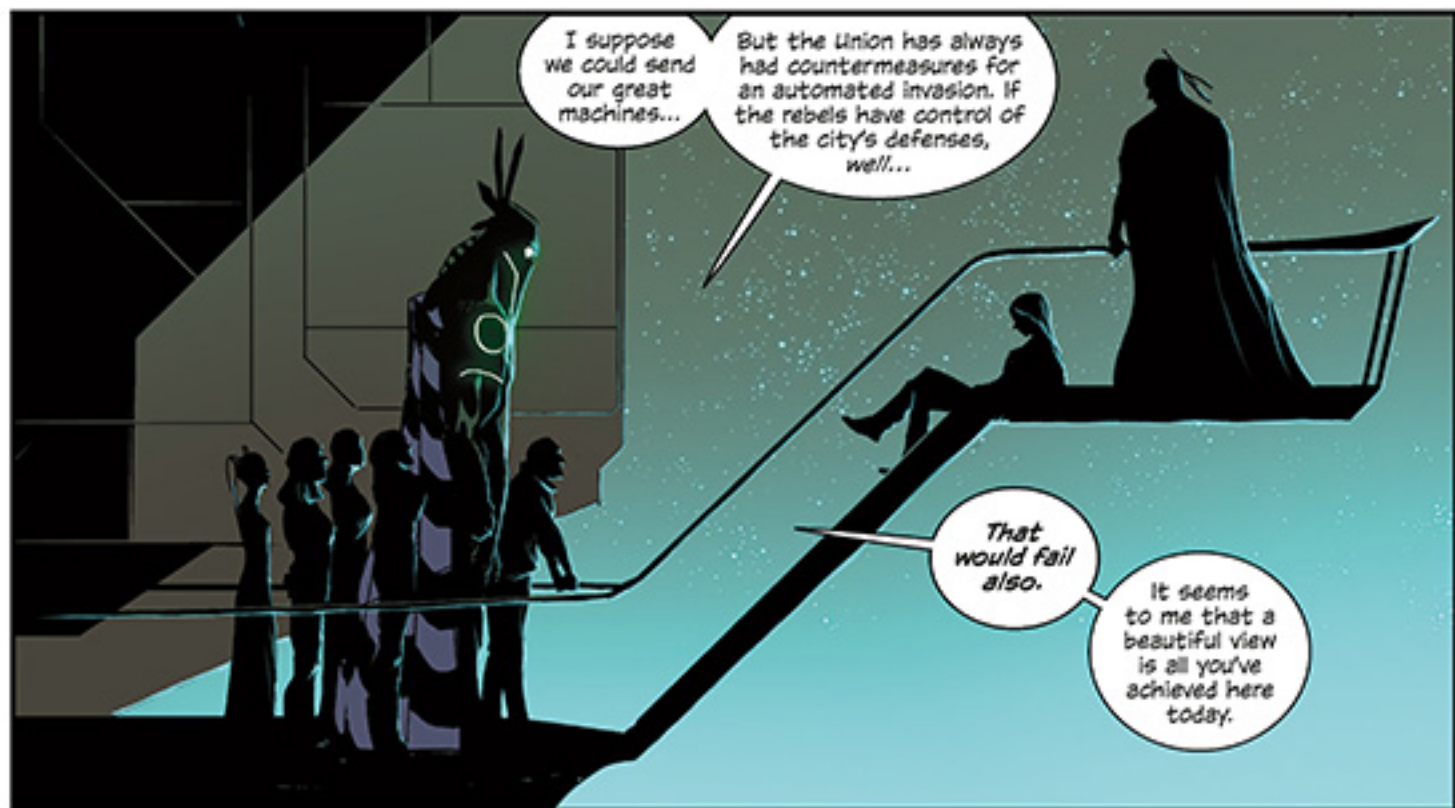
Why don't you tell me, Bodaway?



It means no pureblood member of the Nation can enter the city.

Yes, you could send in your army of Pilgrims...

But I -- or any true son or daughter of the Nation -- would call that victory.




I suppose we could send our great machines...

But the Union has always had countermeasures for an automated invasion. If the rebels have control of the city's defenses, well...

That would fail also.

It seems to me that a beautiful view is all you've achieved here today.



When I was a boy, I marveled at the things my father could do.

The forgotten ways of our people...

The hidden arts...

The lost magic...

Of course, because I was a child -- and because they were so wondrous -- I also marveled at the things our people had dreamed and built...

What I could not understand was why our people *rejected* one and *embraced* the other...

So he explained it to me: