

The Martyrs

PAGE ONE (one panel)

INSERT PANEL ONE

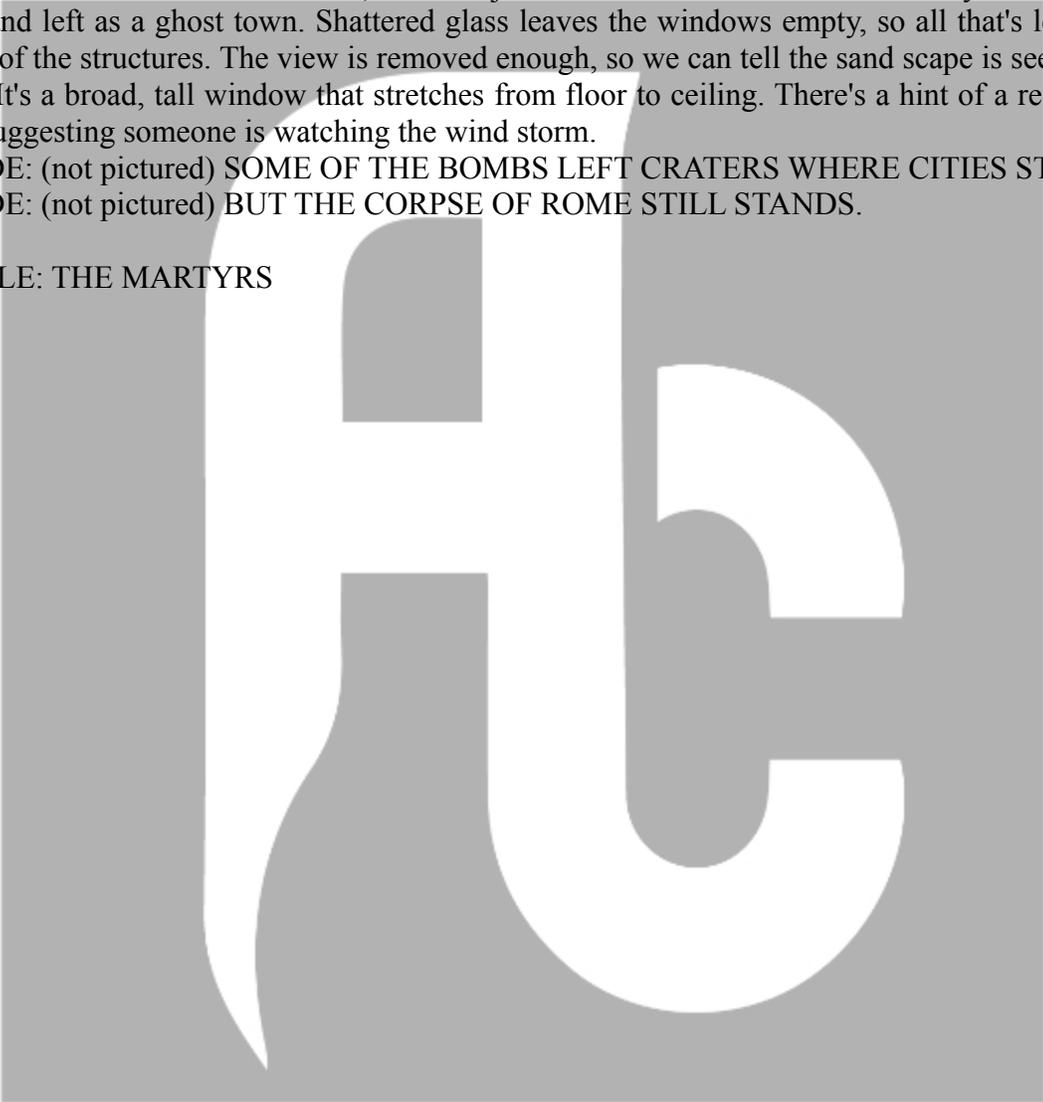
SPLASH

The scene, at first glance, is a desolate wasteland. There's a sand dune that curves into the force of uncontrolled winds. In the distance, we can just make out the skeleton of a city that had been destroyed and left as a ghost town. Shattered glass leaves the windows empty, so all that's left are the bare bones of the structures. The view is removed enough, so we can tell the sand scape is seen through a window. It's a broad, tall window that stretches from floor to ceiling. There's a hint of a reflection in the glass, suggesting someone is watching the wind storm.

JUDE: (not pictured) SOME OF THE BOMBS LEFT CRATERS WHERE CITIES STOOD.

JUDE: (not pictured) BUT THE CORPSE OF ROME STILL STANDS.

TITLE: THE MARTYRS



ARLEDGE COMICS

PAGE TWO (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Flashback. Scene is a missile control room. There's a nondescript man – possible of middle eastern heritage – sitting at the control panel. He's wearing a military uniform; his hands are hovering over the various buttons and levers on his control panel. There's a screen in front of him. We cannot see what's on the screen, but the glow of it lights up his face.

Man: READY? LAUNCH!

Jude: (voice over) THE WORLD HAD BEEN WARNED TO NOT INVADE RUSSIA IN THE WINTER.

Jude: (v/o) SOME DIDN'T HEED THAT WARNING.

INSERT PANEL TWO

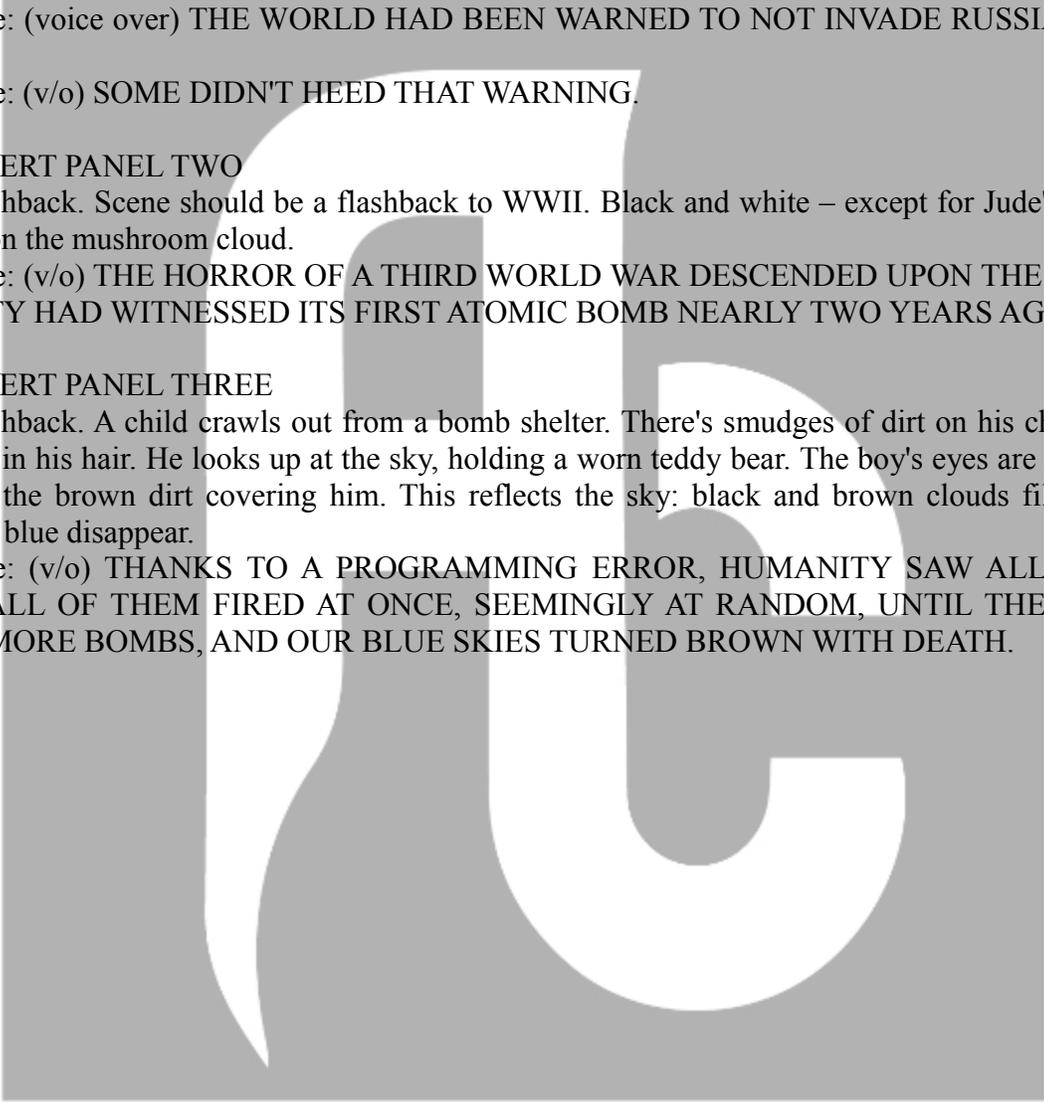
Flashback. Scene should be a flashback to WWII. Black and white – except for Jude's v/o box. Emphasis on the mushroom cloud.

Jude: (v/o) THE HORROR OF A THIRD WORLD WAR DESCENDED UPON THE WORLD. HUMANITY HAD WITNESSED ITS FIRST ATOMIC BOMB NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Flashback. A child crawls out from a bomb shelter. There's smudges of dirt on his cheeks, and dirt matted in his hair. He looks up at the sky, holding a worn teddy bear. The boy's eyes are a speck of blue in all the brown dirt covering him. This reflects the sky: black and brown clouds fill the sky, making the blue disappear.

Jude: (v/o) THANKS TO A PROGRAMMING ERROR, HUMANITY SAW ALL OF THE BOMBS. ALL OF THEM FIRED AT ONCE, SEEMINGLY AT RANDOM, UNTIL THE WORLD HAD NO MORE BOMBS, AND OUR BLUE SKIES TURNED BROWN WITH DEATH.



ARLEDGE COMICS

PAGE THREE (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Present day. Jude is still looking out over the broken city. His hand is resting on the glass of the window. His knuckles are scarred, showing they've been busted open before. One of his fingers appears crooked – perhaps it was broken previously and didn't heal properly. (We haven't seen Jude yet at this point, so this offers some insight into who is speaking.)

Jude: (v/o) THE EXPLOSIONS BLEW CITIES APART, LEAVING DUST AND RUBBLE WHERE NATIONS ONCE STOOD.

Jude: (v/o) DAMAGED CITIES WERE NOTHING COMPARED TO THE AFTERMATH.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Flashback. The same cityscape that Jude is looking out at – except the carnage of the bombing is fresh. Skeletons are lying in the streets where people had been walking home from work or school. Looking out at the death scene, a man is huddled against a crumbling building. He's crouched, cradling an arm to his chest. Something has hit him in the head, as he's bleeding from his ear.

Jude: (v/o) THE FALLOUT FROM THE NUCLEAR BOMBS DEVASTATED THE LIVING – FORESTS, ANIMALS AND HUMANS ALIKE.

Jude: (v/o) THE FALLOUT KILLED MOST, SPARED SOME AND CHANGED A FEW.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Flashback. Scene shows a city street after the attacks. View is looking down at the street from the top of a building. We can see Raj clutching a fixture of the building, having climbed up and out of view of most people. Below, on the street, Rei has an arm around a boy eight years her junior. His hair is a shocking blue color, but he otherwise seems normal. Both Rei and her brother are keeping their heads down, hurrying down the street away from someone or something. Raj watches them, as if he's acting as a lookout for trouble.

Jude: (v/o) THOSE FEW ADAPTED TO THE NEW WORLD BY DEVELOPING MUTATIONS, SOME INVISIBLE AND OTHERS QUITE OBVIOUS. THOSE PEOPLE WERE DUBBED “THE FALLEN.”

ARLEDGE COMICS

PAGE FOUR (two panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Fiery orange backdrop. There's a black silhouette of the warlord. Her body is androgynous enough to suggest either male or female. Trailing behind them is something that might be a cape or long hair. Below, there are dozens of smaller silhouettes looking up at that warlord.

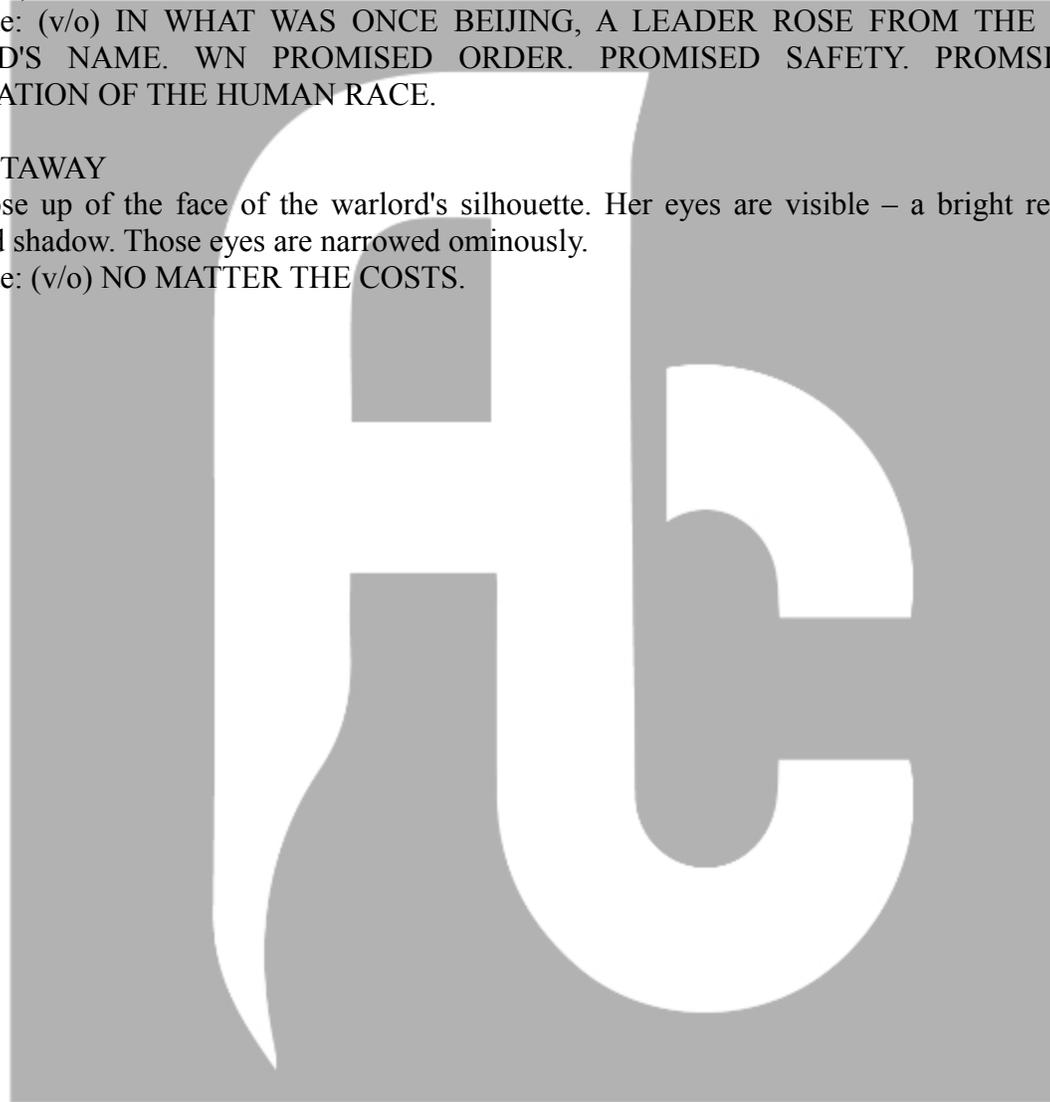
Jude: (v/o) IT WAS A TIME OF COMPLETE AND UTTER CHAOS. THOSE WHO SURVIVED, BEGGED FOR A LEADER.

Jude: (v/o) IN WHAT WAS ONCE BEIJING, A LEADER ROSE FROM THE MASSES: WARLORD'S NAME. WN PROMISED ORDER. PROMISED SAFETY. PROMSIED THE PRESERVATION OF THE HUMAN RACE.

CUTAWAY

Close up of the face of the warlord's silhouette. Her eyes are visible – a bright red – like a personified shadow. Those eyes are narrowed ominously.

Jude: (v/o) NO MATTER THE COSTS.



ARLEDGE COMICS

PAGE FIVE (two panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

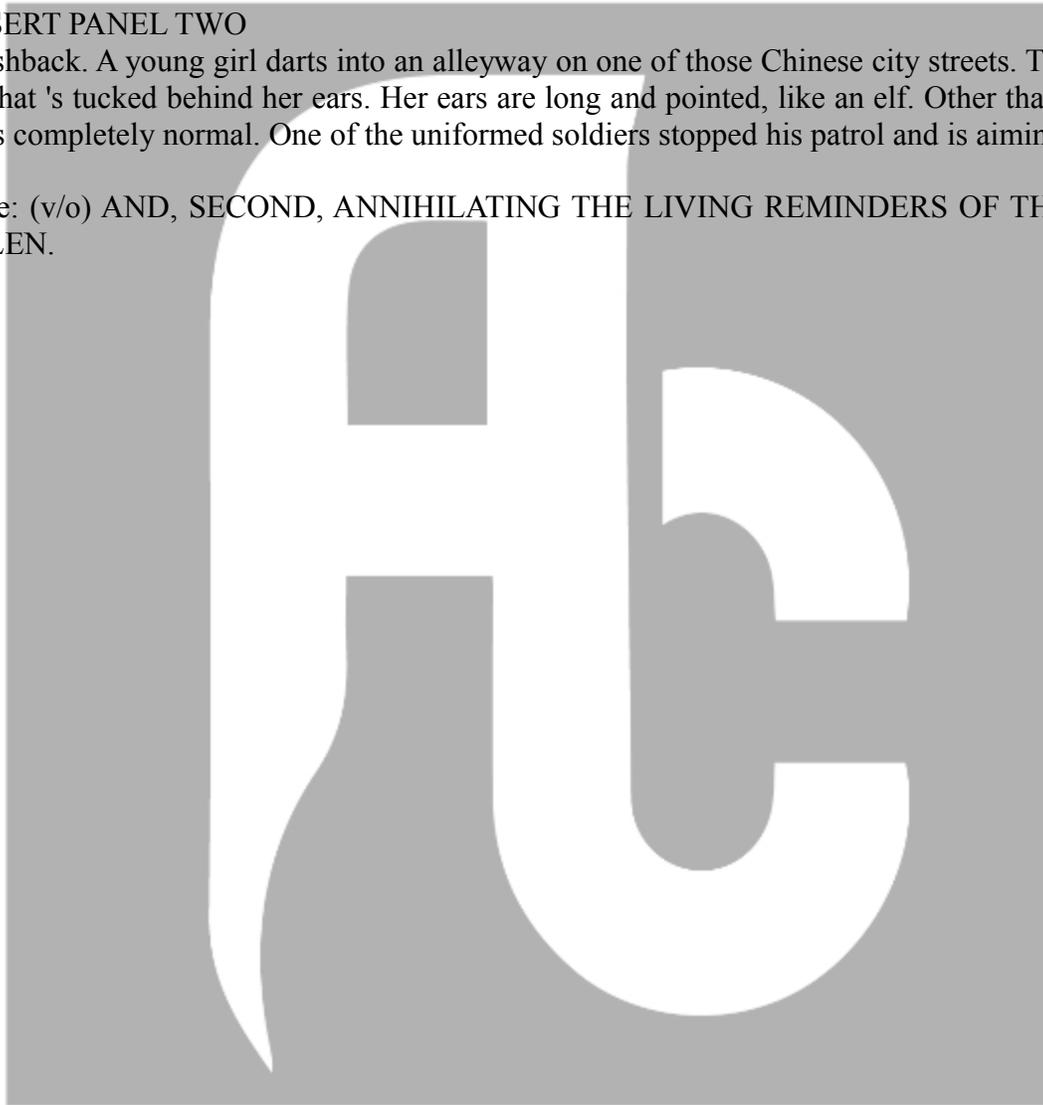
Flashback. Chinese city streets. People are repairing the buildings; bringing the city back to life. There are a number of uniformed soldiers patrolling the streets.

Jude: (v/o) WN BUILT AN EMPIRE ON THE RUINS OF THE CHINESE CAPITOL WITH ONLY TWO GOALS IN MIND. FIRST, PROVIDING ORDER.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Flashback. A young girl darts into an alleyway on one of those Chinese city streets. The girl has short hair that 's tucked behind her ears. Her ears are long and pointed, like an elf. Other than her ears, she appears completely normal. One of the uniformed soldiers stopped his patrol and is aiming a rifle at the girl.

Jude: (v/o) AND, SECOND, ANNIHILATING THE LIVING REMINDERS OF THE WAR – THE FALLEN.



ARLEDGE COMICS

PAGE SIX (five panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Flashback. A line of Fallen are on their knees before a firing squad of uniformed soldiers. Some of the Fallen are crying. Others have their hands clasped behind their heads, as if trying to protect themselves. Others have their hands clasped before them, as if praying. Each of them have at least one weapon pointed at them. The last Fallen in line – in the far back of the panel is a woman. She's holding a young child to her chest.

Jude: (v/o) THOSE WHO COULDN'T ESCAPE THE REACH OF THE WN, WERE SUBJECT TO THE NEW ORDER.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Flashback. Continuation from previous panel. The soldiers move toward their victims. Some of the soldiers brandish pistols, placing them at the back of the Fallens' heads. The mother and her child can still be seen in the background.

Jude: (v/o) INNOCENTS WERE SLAUGHTERED.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Flashback. Scene moves to the mother and child. The mother's eyes are wide in terror, as she's watching the horror of so many deaths. Her knuckles are white – fingers splayed – as she grips her child close to her chest. A soldier has a firm grip on the girl's arm. The child's eyes are closed, as tears stream down her cheeks. Another soldier has a hand on the mother's shoulder, as the two soldiers pull mother and child apart.

Jude: (v/o) CHILDREN WERE RIPPED FROM THEIR PARENTS.

INSERT PANEL FOUR

Flashback. The child's eyes are finally open. They glow a bright blue, looking other worldly. The child's face is one of anguish as she's pulled away by the soldier.

Child: MAMA!!

SFX: (soldier's gun) BANG

INSERT PANEL FIVE

Blank black panel.

Jude: (v/o) ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO PRESERVE – NAY, PURIFY – THE HUMAN RACE.

ARLEDGE COMICS

PAGE SEVEN (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Flashback. Panel is mostly black, echoing the previous page. The source of light in the panel is an oil lantern held by a middle aged father with his children huddled around him. There's dirt falling from above – we can see they're underground and the falling debris indicates fighting above ground.

Jude: (v/o) DURING THE WAR, THE TUNNELS UNDER ROME PROVIDED SHELTER FROM THE BOMBINGS.

INSERT PANEL TWO

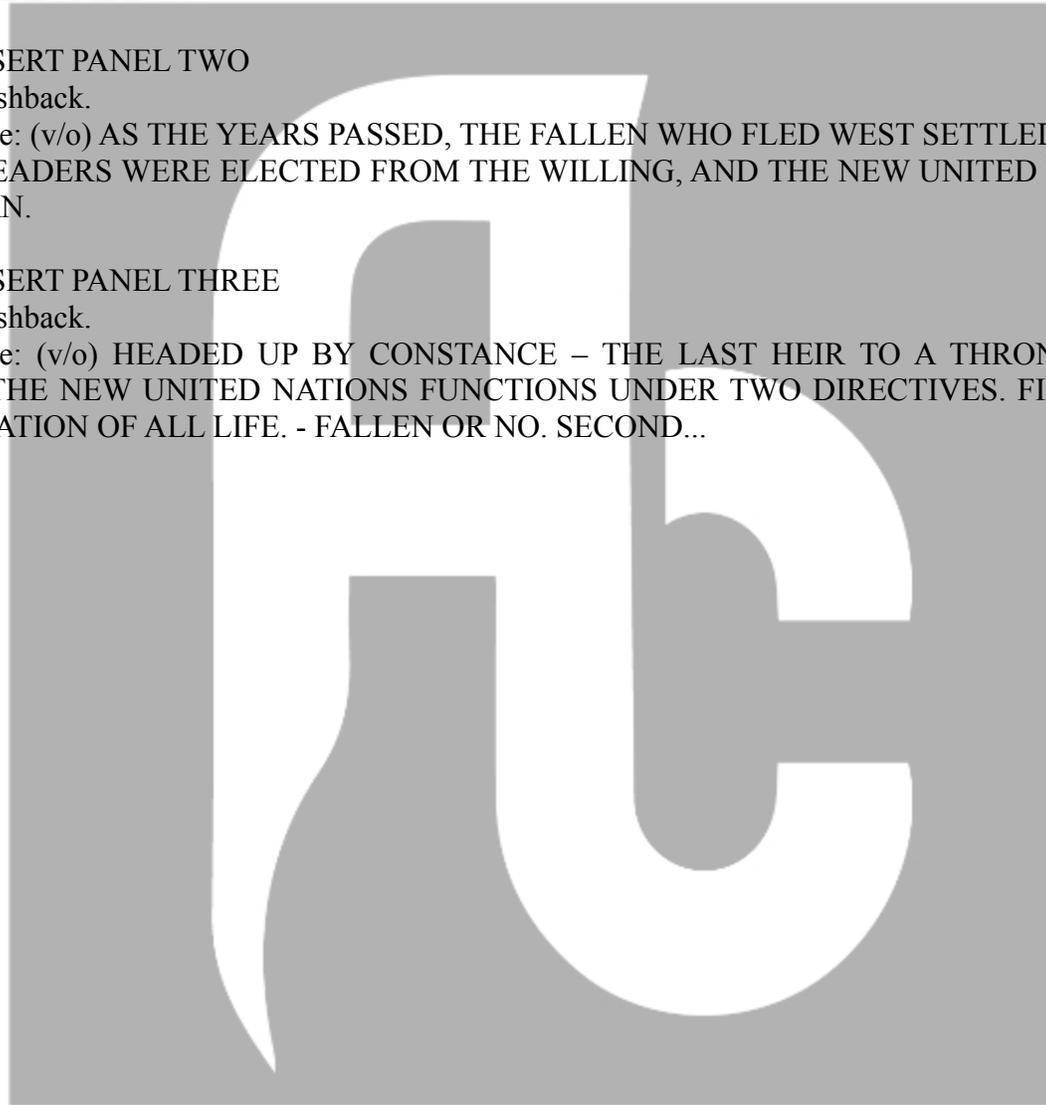
Flashback.

Jude: (v/o) AS THE YEARS PASSED, THE FALLEN WHO FLED WEST SETTLED IN NEW ROME. LEADERS WERE ELECTED FROM THE WILLING, AND THE NEW UNITED NATIONS WAS BORN.

INSERT PANEL THREE

Flashback.

Jude: (v/o) HEADED UP BY CONSTANCE – THE LAST HEIR TO A THRONE LONG GONE – THE NEW UNITED NATIONS FUNCTIONS UNDER TWO DIRECTIVES. FIRST, THE PRESERVATION OF ALL LIFE. - FALLEN OR NO. SECOND...



ARLEDGE COMICS

PAGE EIGHT (three panels)

INSERT PANEL ONE

Jude is standing by that same window. His hands clasp one another at the small of his back. He stands with his feet shoulder width apart. His military background is evident in his stance. He watches the landscape as if he's standing guard over everything he sees.

Jude: (v/o) ...THE ELIMINATION FO THE NEW ORDER.

INSERT PANEL TWO

Cassandra stands in a doorway. Light spills into Jude's room from behind her.

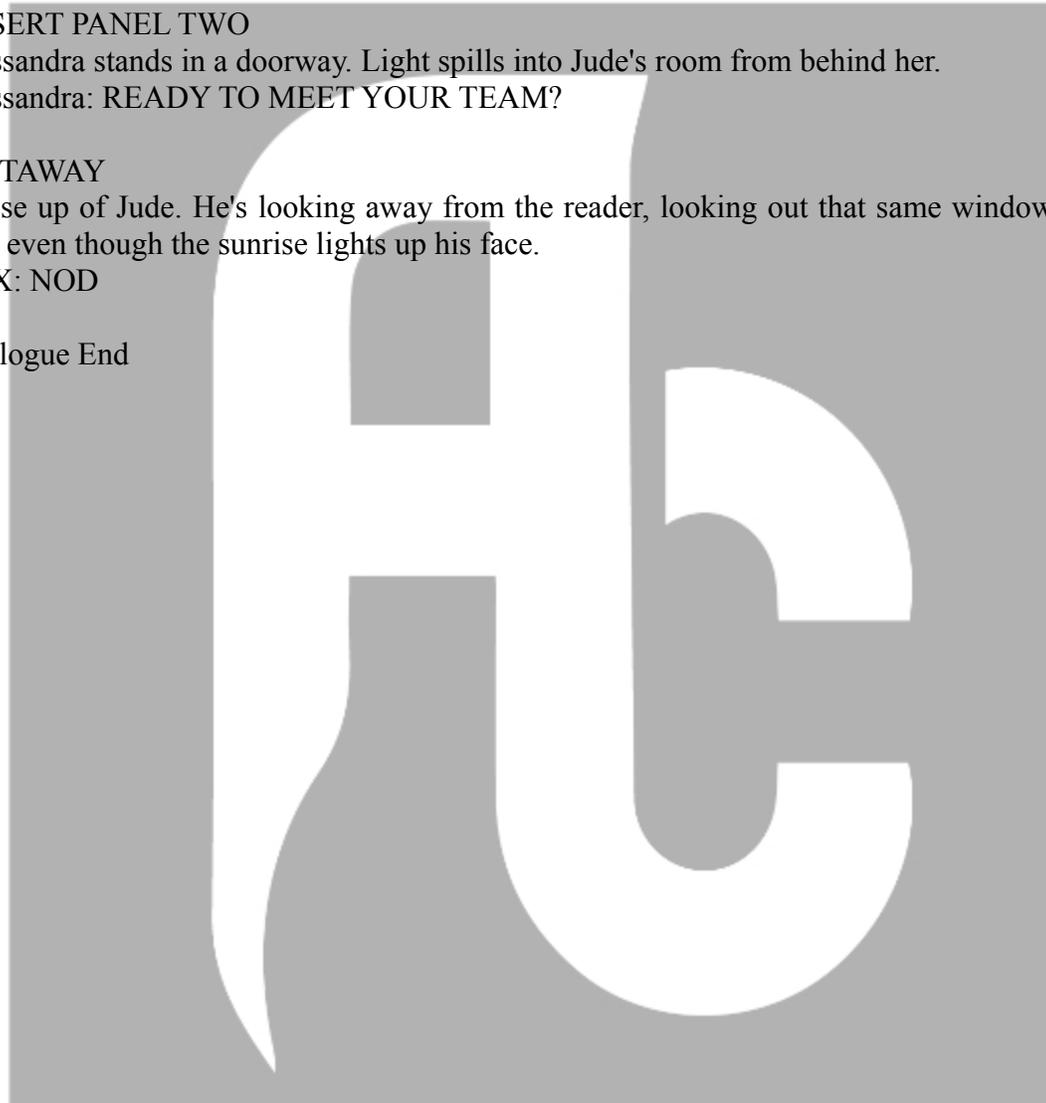
Cassandra: READY TO MEET YOUR TEAM?

CUTAWAY

Close up of Jude. He's looking away from the reader, looking out that same window. His eyes seem dark, even though the sunrise lights up his face.

SFX: NOD

Prologue End



ARLEDGE COMICS