

Dark Eden

Issue #1

A Mutant Chronicles Graphic Novel in Four Parts

By

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General Notes

Each page is broken into nine equal panels forming a three by three grid. The space in between these panels is black.

This was originally written in 1996, as the first issue of a four-part series for Valiant Comics. The script is for the artist, not a general reader, and it assumes that they're familiar with *Mutant Chronicles* and the various elements of that setting.

PAGE 1

PANEL 1

This panel is very dark. Out of the darkness, pokes the darkened face of a man in a close-up. He is bald, and his face (what little can be seen of it) is scarred. The face is in stark relief, the light source off to our left (chiaroscuro). This is Sebastian Crenshaw, a Brotherhood Mortificator, and it's important that we don't actually show his face. We're saving that until the last issue. In Golgotha, Crenshaw was always in costume, and in the course of this page, he puts it on, gearing up for this latest adventure. Crenshaw is kneeling in his monk's cell. It is mostly unlit, except for a dim candle flickering off to one side.

STANDARD BOX

Somewhere deep in the Cathedral at
Luna.

CRENSHAW BOX

I am a **lamb** that has lost its
shepherd...

PANEL 2

Same shot, except Crenshaw is now putting on his armored gauntlets. Studs glitter darkly on the knuckles, shining more brightly than the pearls of sweat on Crenshaw's forehead and (just possibly -- only hint at this) the tears on his cheeks.

CRENSHAW BOX

...a **student** without a teacher, a
disciple without a master...

PANEL 3

Same shot, except Crenshaw's Mortis sword is raised in front of him, bisecting his face. The razor-sharp edge gleams menacingly.

CRENSHAW BOX

...a **Son** without a Father.

PANEL 4

A long shot of a landscape with everything silhouetted against a dying sun. The place is a diseased and filthy Earth. A powerful man walks to the top of the hill, followed by a crowd bearing standards with the Brotherhood's cross. The man is Nikodemus, and he is on a mission to convert the heathens of Earth to the Cardinal's word.

STANDARD BOX

Dark Eden

CRENSHAW BOX

My master Nikodemus traveled to our former home -- **Earth** -- long since desecrated by humanity's tragic folly.

PANEL 5

The same shot as before. Nikodemus has turned to preach to those gathered toward his feet.

STANDARD BOX

Hope

CRENSHAW BOX

As a milestone of his office as Arch-Inquisitor, my master brought the Cardinal's word to the long-lost paradise.

PANEL 6

The same shot again. Nikodemus has been crucified on a rough-hewn version of the Cardinal's cross. In the background, standards of the Dark Legion are being raised.

STANDARD BOX

Betrayal

CRENSHAW BOX

The heathens scorned the **Light**, preferring instead to wallow in the evil of the **Dark Soul**.

PANEL 7

This panel takes up two standard panels. We are back in Crenshaw's cell. This is an establishing shot from directly above. We see that the cell is small and cramped. Crenshaw is on his knees (we finally learn), facing to the right. His helmet is in his hands, facing toward him so that he is looking into its vacant eyes. The Book of Law lays open before him. His weapons are to his right.

CRENSHAW BOX

Excellency, your Light was snuffed out by the Darkness, leaving me **alone** in the void between the stars.

CRENSHAW BOX

But also with a **fire** burning as
fiercely as one of those distant suns.
My soul will be cleansed in the flames
of **revenge**.

PANEL 8

A close-up of Crenshaw putting on his helmet. This looks like
the first three panels. Flames from the candle dance in the
helmet's eyes.

CRENSHAW BOX

Master, you came to them as the lamb,
bringing **hope** to humanity.

CRENSHAW BOX

Given the chance, I will follow as the
lion, wielding righteous **fire**!

PAGE 2

PANEL 1

Cut to a street scene. A reporter is talking into a camera. She is a pretty, African-American woman in a sharp dress, oozing attitude. She stands in front of a huge building. On the steps, we can see many people milling about: reporters, camera operators, photographers, rubberneckers, and even an occasional Capitol security guard. The Capitol eagle is emblazoned over the vaulted entrance. Rowena (Harding's lover) is visible behind the reporter.

STANDARD BOX
Outside Capitol's Hall of Justice.

LONDE
I'm Wanda Londe, bringing you this
special report from Capitol's highest
court, where the trial of the **century**
is coming to an end.

PANEL 2

A black-and-white photograph of a good-looking man in a Capitol uniform. This is Harding. The photo was taken for Capitol's military archives, and it bears these words:

Name: Harding, Randall

Rank: Colonel

Service: Free Marines

DOB: [a black bar censors this]

Serial Number: [a black bar censors this]

LONDE BOX
Colonel Randall Harding, one of
Capitol's most **decorated** officers,
stands accused of crimes so **heinous** as
to beg belief.

PANEL 3

An image of a burning Capitol icon.

LONDE BOX
His alleged atrocities include **high**
treason against his megacorp...

PANEL 4

A blurred picture of Harding in full battle gear, gunning down innocent civilians.

LONDE BOX
...drug trafficking, slavery, gun-
running, mass murder...

PANEL 5

An image of a Dark Legion icon, dripping with blood.

LONDE BOX
...and even **heresy**.

PANEL 6

Cut back to the reporter. This is a close-up on her. She glares directly into the camera (panel), looking almost ill.

LONDE
One thing is certain. If Colonel
Harding is found guilty on even a **tenth**
of the charges, he will surely face the
stiffest of penalties.

PANEL 7

Cut to the interior of the Hall of Justice. A low shot from the floor up to a judges sitting behind his bench. The judge looks down on Harding with contempt. Harding's back is to us. He is in chains.

STANDARD BOX
Inside.

JUDGE
Colonel Harding, you have been found
guilty on all counts and are hereby
sentenced to **immediate** execution.
However, due to the charges of heresy,
your sentence is commuted until the
Inquisition has had its chance to
interrogate you **personally**.

PANEL 8

A close-up of the judge. He is a hard, determined man with steely eyes. There is little mercy here.

JUDGE

After that, death should be a most
welcome escape.

PANEL 9

A close-up of Harding in profile, facing right. He is looking up at the judge, a relaxed and slightly amused expression on his face.

HARDING

I'm **confident** that I'll escape soon
enough, Your Honor.

PAGE 3

PANEL 1

This is one of the rare full-page splashes. It's a view from the steps of Capitol's Hall of Justice on Luna, staring up the steps and toward the sky at a dizzying angle. This establishing shot shows just how large everything in Luna is and how insignificant people seem next to the buildings. High above it all, Dark Eden (the despoiled Earth) shines down, hanging large and ominously in the sky. Mitch Hunter and his pal Ben Adams are walking up the steps. They are made obvious by their bright blue Capitol armor which stands out starkly against the other people on the steps, wearing mostly grays and blacks. The reporter is visible at the bottom of the steps in her red suit, speaking to a camera crew.

INTRO BOX

The human worlds are ruled by the five **megacorporations**, which war among themselves over the dwindling resources left to them. The **Dark Legion** -- composed of undead creatures beyond our ken -- has invaded the solar system, bent on grinding us into the dust from whence we came. These are the worlds of the

LOGO

Mutant Chronicles

INTRO BOX

Millennia ago, Mother Earth -- our home planet -- was despoiled in a catastrophe of our own doing. Now only the forgotten peoples scuttle about that land, striking bargains with the minions of the **Dark Soul** as they struggle to scratch a living out of the dead soil of

LOGO

Dark Eden

HUNTER

This **sucks!**

PAGE 4

PANEL 1

A mid-shot of Hunter and Adams walking up the stairs. The reporter and her camera crew are visible behind them.

ADAMS

I know what you mean, Mitch. You'd think a couple of hot shots like us wouldn't get stuck with guarding some **schmuck** -- even if he is a colonel!

ADAMS

Hey, I hear this guy ran the 666th. Wasn't that **your** old unit?

PANEL 2

A close-up on Hunter. His eyes are cold, and he is frowning.

HUNTER

I've been in a **lot** of units, Ben.

PANEL 3

A long shot. Hunter and Adams walk to the right, onto the landing in front of the Hall of Justice's doors while Rowena passes them walking to the left and down the stairs. Adams looks back at her appraisingly. Hunter's too angry right now to even notice.

ADAMS

Whoa!

ADAMS

Yeah, well, I figured you'd remember a guy like **this**. After all, it's not every unit in which you get to work under a **psychopath**.

HUNTER

Kid, you've got a **lot** to learn.

PANEL 4

A long shot. Hunter and Adams stride down a long, dark hallway. At the end of it, in a pool of light, Harding awaits. He is surrounded by Capitolian soldiers.

HARDING

Ah, Captain **Hunter**. It's been a long time. Who's your young friend?

PANEL 5

A medium shot showing Harding (to the right) facing off against Adams and Hunter (to the left). Adams is speaking to Harding respectfully. Hunter is stonily mute. Harding is malevolently amused.

ADAMS

Lieutenant Ben Adams, Colonel.

HARDING

Yes, **Lieutenant**. I remember your Intelligence file.

HARDING

How's your lovely sister? Still **whoring** on the streets?

PANEL 6

A medium shot. Adams launches himself at Harding, but Hunter holds the younger man back. Harding doesn't even flinch. His grin only grows wider.

ADAMS

You leave Betty out of this, you son of a **bitch**!

HUNTER

Stand down, soldier! That's Harding's MO. Don't let him into your head!

PANEL 7

A medium shot over Hunter's right side. Hunter stands between Harding and Adams. Adams is still in a rage, struggling to maintain control over himself. To the right, almost facing us, we see Harding standing in a pool of light, flanked by two Capitol guards.

HARDING

Very good, Hunter. I'm glad to see you've **learned** from our last encounter. No hard feelings?

PANEL 8

A reverse of the last shot. Over Harding's left side. Hunter is still holding Adams back, but he's obviously mad as hell himself. Adams is spitting (literally) at Harding.

HUNTER

The system's safe from you now,
butcher!

SFX

(From Adams)
P'too!

SFX

(On Harding's face)
Splish

PANEL 9

A close up on Harding. Adam's spittle runs down his cheek. Suddenly the pleasant demeanor is gone, replaced by the coldness of a shark. The man's pale blue eyes glitter with barely repressed anger.

HARDING

Yes. Well. **That** remains to be seen.

PAGE 5

PANEL 1

A long shot from above as the three men walk out of the Hall of Justice. Harding is flanked by Adams on his left and Hunter on his right. They are mobbed by reporters and rubberneckers. Capitol guards struggle to push the people back. Harding is wiping the spittle off his cheek.

HUNTER

It's a **risk** having to move you to the Cathedral, Harding.

HUNTER

But knowing how much you'll **suffer** makes up for it.

RANDOM REPORTER

Sir!

RANDOM REPORTER

Hunter and Harding!

RANDOM REPORTER

A question!

PANEL 2

Another long shot. In the background to the left, Capitol helicopter is landing at the foot of the stairs. The side is open to us, and we can see Capitol troopers inside. These are Harding's soldiers, although this shouldn't be apparent yet. In the foreground to the right, we see Hunter and Adams leading Harding through the crowd to the waiting helicopter.

HARDING

I have nothing to fear from the Cardinal's children.

ADAMS

You damned **heretic**!

HARDING

Ha! I suppose so.

RANDOM REPORTER

Colonel Harding! *The Lunar Voice* wants to know --

PANEL 3

A medium shot. Londe (to the left) steps in front of Harding (to the right), blocking his path. He stops, much to Hunter and Adams's dismay. A stiff wind from the chopper blows through them all, ruffling their hair and stirring the litter in the streets.

LONDE

Colonel! Wanda Londe, InfiniNet News Service.

HARDING

I recognize you, of course, Wanda. How may I help you?

PANEL 4

A medium shot of Harding, from over Londe's shoulder. She's to the right. He is to the left. He is speaking directly into the camera (panel). Hunter and Adams are looking impatient.

LONDE

Why did you **do** it, Colonel?

HARDING

Our society is in one in **decline**, my lady, something I'm sure your viewers can understand.

PANEL 5

A closer shot of Harding. He's looking imperious, confident yet concerned.

HARDING

The megacorps war among themselves while the Dark Legion raps at our door. The Cardinal, weakened by his so-called **compassion**, no longer has the vision to see what must be done.

PANEL 6

An extreme close-up of Harding. Madness dances in his eyes.

HARDING

Only **I** know what needs to be done and have the **balls** to do it. Once I take **ultimate** control, the human worlds will be safe for us all!

PANEL 7

A medium shot of Londe, from over Harding's side (he's to the right). Her eyes are wide and incredulous. Her face is filled with horror and disgust.

LONDE

Are you **insane**?!

PANEL 8

Harding head-butts Londe into next week. Harding and Adams are in shock. There's a lot of blood, and he's in a rage.

HARDING

I always **hated** your program, bitch!
Nothing but opium for the masses.

PANEL 9

A medium shot of Harding. Hunter and Adams recover from their shock. Adams is reaching for Harding's throat. Harding's got blood spattered on his face. He turns toward the camera (panel), with a winning smile on his face. The man has no shame.

HARDING

Don't worry about **me**, folks. It's not
my blood!

PAGE 6

PANEL 1

A medium shot. Adams (to the right) is on top of Harding (to the left) and trying to strangle him. Harding is angry, but not looking too concerned about this attempt on his life.

ADAMS

You **bastard**! The Inquisition's never going to get its hands on you!

PANEL 2

Adams is blasted off of Harding by a large-caliber bullet that slams through his armor and into his chest.

SFX

BLAM!

HARDING

No thanks to **you**, son. Some things you've got to take care of yourself.

PANEL 3

Adams falls backward into Hunter's arms (to the right). He is obviously dying. Hunter glares over and snarls at Harding. Behind him, the crowd is starting to scatter in abject terror. Londe lies unconscious nearby.

HUNTER

You'll **pay** for this, Harding!

PANEL 4

Rowena steps in and grabs Harding by the arm, hustling him off toward the waiting helicopter. In the background, we can see that one of the soldier's guns is smoking. Harding grins broadly at Hunter.

ROWENA

Come, Colonel. It's time to **go**.

PANEL 5

A close-up on Hunter. He's fighting mad, snarling his lines.

HUNTER

Game **over**, Harding. Those soldiers will cut you down before you reach the street.

PANEL 6

Rowena leads Harding off toward the helicopter. Harding turns to yell a parting shot at Hunter. Madness dances in his eyes. The soldier with the smoking gun is highlighted in the background.

HARDING

You fool! These are **my** people!

PANEL 7

This is three panels wide. The helicopter takes off into the air, still sideways to us. The soldiers in the helicopter's side doors open fire on the crowd. Bullets are flying everywhere. Hunter dives and rolls for cover as Harding and Rowena duck beneath the fire. Civilians (mostly reporters) scatter everywhere, some being cut down by the soldiers' fire.

SFX

(To the left)

DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA!!!

SFX

(To the right)

DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA!!!

HARDING

Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha!

HUNTER

Shit!

PAGE 7

PANEL 1

A medium shot of Harding and Rowena. She has picked up Adams by his hair with one hand, and she is holding him so that Harding can look into his eyes. Her other hand holds a large knife under his chin. Adams is obviously near death, but he's determined not to look weak in Harding's eyes. He wants to go out like a soldier.

HARDING
So, Lieutenant Adams, we find our
positions **reversed**.

HARDING
If you could find it in yourself to beg
for mercy, I **might** be persuaded to give
a fellow soldier a merciful death.

PANEL 2

Another medium shot with the same characters, concentrating on Adams this time. He puts everything he's got into his answer.

ADAMS
Never! **Darkness** take your soul!

HARDING
Ha, ha, ha! My **soul**?!

PANEL 3

A close-up on Harding. He is laughing menacingly.

HARDING
Boy, **what** makes you think I have one to
lose?

HARDING
Rowena, darling, **you** may have the
honors.

PANEL 4

Maintain the close-up on Harding. Blood spatters his uniform as Adams is decapitated off panel by Rowena. Harding's smile grows wider.

HARDING

Excellent work, as always. **Keep** your
souvenir. We **may** have a use for it.

ADAMS

(Off-panel)
Guahkkk...!!

PANEL 5

Harding stands up and holds his arm out to Rowena (still off panel). As he does, a cable suddenly snakes down out of the sky. Harding looks up it as it comes down.

HARDING

Ah, I see our **ride** is here.

PANEL 6

A long shot from behind Hunter. There are too many people between him and Harding for him to get a clear shot at the traitor. In the background, Harding is winched into the helicopter. One arm is wrapped in the cable. The other holds Rowena to him. Rowena has one arm around Harding's waist. Adams's head is in her other hand. Hunter is trying to push his way through the crowd, shoving people out of the way as he goes, so he can fire at Harding. The soldiers in the chopper are spraying the crowd.

SFX

(From the helicopter)
DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA!!!

HUNTER

Get **down**!

SFX

(From Hunter's gun)
Blam! Blam! Blam!

SFX

(From bullets on Hunter's armor)
Pting! Ptang!

PANEL 7

Long shot of Harding and Rowena framed in the helicopter's side hatch. Hunter continues to fire at the chopper. Harding's soldiers have ceased firing to allow him to speak. Harding looks down at Hunter and the destruction his men have caused (dead and wounded civilians, Adams's headless body and the like).

HARDING

I'm off to conquer the human worlds,
Hunter! And who's going to **stop** me?

HARDING

You?

PANEL 8

Long shot. In the foreground to the left, Hunter watches as
Harding's helicopter races off into the distance.

HARDING

(As a sound effect, not a balloon)
Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha!

PAGE 8

PANEL 1

This is an establishing shot of the area, and it's two panels wide. This area really is the pits. The buildings are all low, mean, squat places which are falling into disrepair. Most of them have likely been condemned. Still, people walk the streets, scurrying from work to home to work again. Perhaps a neon sign highlights a seedy bar called "The Freelancer".

The skyscrapers can be seen towering off in the distance. Particularly notable is the Cathedral. The setting sun reflects brightly off the Brotherhood cross stabbing out of the top of it.

In the foreground is the building we're concerned with. It's a ramshackle brownstone with little going for it. Silhouetted in one window, near a stairway, we can see three people. They appear to be partying. In the lower foreground, we can see Indigo's form, almost invisible in the twilight.

STANDARD BOX

Later, in the Perimeters of Luna.

CRENSHAW

(Disembodied radio)

There are three heretics in the main room, near the stairwell.

CRENSHAW

(Disembodied radio)

Do you **see** them, Sister Indigo?

PANEL 2

Long shot of Indigo. She is kneeling over a gargoyle on the cornice of a building. She holds a Mephisto sniper rifle, and she is aiming it at the three men in the window. She is looking through the rifle's scope, rocky steady.

INDIGO

Just give the word, Brother Crenshaw.

PANEL 3

A shot of Crenshaw in full armor. He is in the hallway outside the second-floor apartment in which the heretics are. It is a dark place with all sorts of graffiti on the walls. This particular material is mostly anti-Capitol. There's a Capitol eagle with a circle-and-bar symbol on it. Phrases like "Capitol sucks!", "The only good bureaucrat is a dead bureaucrat!", etc.

CRENSHAW

Remember, these blasphemers helped Colonel Harding in his escape earlier today. We need **one** of them alive for inquisition.

CRENSHAW

The word is **yours**, Sister Indigo.

PANEL 4

A medium shot from inside the apartment. The three men near the window go down, each from a shot to the head. These men are off to the left of the panel. There are several others who turn and look at their dead friends in disbelief.

SFX

(From window)
Tink! Tink! Tink!

SFX

(From heads)
Thunk! Thunk! Thunk!

HERETIC #1

What the -- ?

PANEL 5

Medium shot. Crenshaw bursts into the room, rolling, his Mortis blades slicing madly. Several heretics go down. Others run for it.

SFX

(From swords)
Slish! Slace! Slack!

HERETIC #2

By the **Light** -- ackk!

CRENSHAW

Your repentance comes too **late**, fool!

PANEL 6

Five heretics run away toward the right, fleeing for their lives. One notable man brings up the rear. It's he who we saw holding the smoking gun on page 6. He's got a Piranha in his right hand now. The group is running for a rear door.

CRENSHAW

(Disembodied radio)

Brother Grinder, five heretics are
coming your way.

PANEL 7

Medium shot. The heretics open the door to reveal Grinder, his four Punisher handguns at the ready. He towers over them and barely fits within the door frame. They stare up at him in abject terror.

GRINDER

Oh, I've got **five** visitors?

GRINDER

And we only need **one** alive?

PANEL 8

Slightly longer shot. Grinder's four guns mow down the heretics, all except for the one bringing up the rear (Heretic #3). He turns and runs.

GRINDER

Well, I've got **four** answers!

SFX

(One from each gun)

Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam!

HERETIC #3

Yaaaahhhh!!!!

PANEL 9

Long shot. Heretic #3 dashes for a nearby window and dives at it.

GRINDER

Brother **Crenshaw**, we've got a rabbit on
the run!

PAGE 9

PANEL 1

Medium shot of Heretic #3 crashing through the window, his elbows thrust out before him (a gun in his right hand), glass cutting his arms and face.

CRENSHAW
(Disembodied radio)
Hold your fire, brethren. We need him
alive.

SFX
(Breaking glass)
Krash!

PANEL 2

A shot from over Crenshaw's shoulder as he looks out the shattered window and down at Heretic #3. The heretic is struggling to his feet. His leg is broken, but he struggles on. Further down the street, we see a woman with a child in her arms. She's standing in a pool of light under a streetlamp and staring at the heretic in disbelief.

HERETIC #3
Aaaahhh!!!

HERETIC #3
ahuh, ahuh, ahuh...

PANEL 3

A reverse angle shot from down low on the street. In the left background, Crenshaw leaps to the ground, his Mortis blades flashing. Grinder is close behind him. Heretic #3 grabs the child from the woman who is screaming.

HERETIC #3
That's my ticket out of here!

MOTHER
No! My **baby!**

PANEL 4

A close-up of Heretic #3. He has a gun to the baby's head. Sweat and blood stream down his face. This is a desperate man pushed to the edge, but still trying to act tough. The baby is crying.

HERETIC #3

Back off, Mortificator, or the **baby**
gets it!

BABY

Waaaaaaaaaaa!

PANEL 5

A medium shot. Crenshaw lowers his blades and tries to talk to the man. Heretic #3 looks crazed enough to do it. The baby continues to wail.

CRENSHAW

There is no escape, my son.

CRENSHAW

Put the infant **down**.

HERETIC #3

No way!

BABY

Waaaaaaaaaaa!

PANEL 6

A close-up of Heretic #3 and the child. The baby's head disappears in a red puff. Heretic #3 is spattered with blood as he involuntarily winces, closing his eyes reflexively against the carnage.

SFX

(Bullet hitting baby)
Thunk!

PANEL 7

Medium shot including Crenshaw, Grinder and the heretic. The heretic has fallen to his knees and dropped the baby's body to the ground. His eyes are wide open with fear, and he has soiled himself.

HERETIC #3

Please, **no**! I give up!

PANEL 8

Crenshaw backhands the heretic to the ground, knocking him out. Grinder rages at Indigo over the comm.

GRINDER

By the **Light**, Indigo! That was an
innocent child!

PANEL 9

A high shot looking down at Crenshaw and Grinder in a circle of light from the streetlamp. The heretic is unconscious at his feet. The mother cradles her child's bleeding corpse in her arms as the puddle of crimson grows larger.

INDIGO

(Disembodied radio)

Book of Law 3:7, Brother Grinder:

"There are no innocents."

PAGE 10

PANEL 1

This is an establishing shot of the Cathedral at Luna. Once again, this is done from a low angle so that we can see Dark Eden (the despoiled Earth) hanging over the Brotherhood cross at the top of the Cathedral. Readers should remember the structure from the establishing shot in 8/1. This panel is one standard frame wide and three high (it runs the length of the left side of the page. Panels 2 through 4 are each two frames wide.

STANDARD BOX
The Cathedral at Luna.

GRINDER
(Inside the Cathedral)
But Inquisitor **Benedictus!**

PANEL 2

A medium shot. This panel and the next two are each one frame tall and two wide. Crenshaw, Indigo and Grinder are in a medium-sized room with Inquisitor Benedictus (this is his office). The stone walls are covered with Brotherhood carvings and other works of art. The place is lit by a brazier hanging in one corner, though the heat it gives off does little to warm the place. The trio stands before Benedictus, who is sitting in a high-backed wooden chair behind his ancient desk. The top of the chair is carved to look like the top of the Cathedral. Benedictus is sneering at Crenshaw's humanity.

BENEDICTUS
No **butts**, Brother Grinder. Sister Indigo **did** the right thing. Despite the fact that Brother Crenshaw was senior Inquisitor, **she** was the ranking officer. The call was **hers**.

GRINDER
Your Excellency!

PANEL 3

Close-up on Benedictus. This man exudes slime, right down to his greasy hair and his bureaucrat's flabby body.

BENEDICTUS
Enough! You call yourself **ISLAND:**
Independent Specialists in Long-range
Assassination and Near-total

Destruction. Stop acting **independent**,
and start acting like a **team**!

PANEL 4

Medium shot of the team. They are in shock at Benedictus's revelations. Of them, only Indigo is helmetless, so her surprise should be the most evident.

BENEDICTUS

To the point: The heretic you captured
confessed to us his sins and told us of
Colonel Harding's **blasphemous** plans.

BENEDICTUS

He and his remaining heretics are
headed for the planet **Earth**.

BENEDICTUS

To Dark Eden **herself**!

PAGE 11

PANEL 1

Three-wide. Benedictus is in the center of the shot. Behind his head, we can see Dark Eden, looming as it has in other pages in this book. Four skulls (two to each side) hover meaningfully near him as he speaks. They are each bleached white with bar codes burned into their foreheads.

BENEDICTUS

In ancient times when humanity **first** set foot of the planet of our birth, the people of Earth worried that those who had left them behind would someday return as **conquerors**.

BENEDICTUS

To prevent this from happening, the four leaders of the Earth secretly planted a **doomsday device** deep within Luna's core. This device could only be activated by the mutual consent of **each** of the four leaders.

BENEDICTUS

Each leader's code was burned into his **skull** so that it could never be lost. All copies were then destroyed. When the leaders died, they hoped that their **secret** died with them.

BENEDICTUS

Colonel Harding learned of the doomsday device, and he has gone to Earth to **recover** the skulls. With these keys, he will be able to hold the heart of our civilization -- our **Brotherhood** -- hostage. Ultimate power will be **his**.

PANEL 2

Another medium shot of the ISLAND team. There are even more in shock than before.

GRINDER

By the **Light**!

INDIGO

Dear **Cardinal**!

BENEDICTUS

(Off panel)

It is, of course, **your** job to stop him.

PANEL 3

A medium shot of Benedictus. He is seriously, but he almost seems to be relishing handing out this vital assignment.

BENEDICTUS

You are to follow Harding to **Earth** and, if at all possible, gather the skulls before he reaches them.

BENEDICTUS

Since Harding is a **Capitol** man, Capitol has requested that Captain Mitch Hunter be permitted to accompany you.

PANEL 4

Tight medium shot of the team, focused on Crenshaw. He is in the center of the trio.

BENEDICTUS

We have acquiesced.

CRENSHAW

I have worked with Hunter before. He is a **good** man.

PANEL 5

Close-up on Benedictus.

BENEDICTUS

I'll remind you, Brother Crenshaw, your personal feelings do **not** matter. If Hunter jeopardizes your mission, you are to terminate him with **extreme** prejudice.

PANEL 6

Close-up on Crenshaw.

CRENSHAW

I am sworn to the Cardinal's cause. I have dedicated my life to rooting out threats to the Light. I have **never** failed to carry out my orders in all my years of service.

PANEL 7

Extreme close-up on Benedictus. He is in the throes of an impotent rage. He would like to reprimand Crenshaw further, but he fears him too much.

CRENSHAW

(Off panel)

If I valued **my** judgment over that of the **Cardinal**, I would not wear this helmet...Your Excellency.

PAGE 12

PANEL 1

This panel stretches across the top three frames on the page. Harding's ship lands on Earth on its VTOL (vertical take off and landing) jets. The ship comes from the left background. In the right foreground, we see people from the local Capitolian outpost waving the ship down. The land is dry and dusty. The locale is in Arizona, near the Grand Canyon (although it's never referred to as such). The Canyon is not visible in this scene.

STANDARD BOX

Dark Eden. Somewhere in North America,
days later.

SFX

(Harding's ship)
Fffwwssshhhh

PANEL 2

A long shot. Harding walks down out of the craft via a ramp that folds down out of the ship's belly. Rowena is right behind him. The local leader (Jerry Dedston) is there to greet them with an open hand. Dedston is a chubby but jolly man with a nervous smile.

HARDING

Mr. **Dedston**, I presume?

JERRY

Colonel Harding! So good to finally
meet you. I trust you had a fine trip?

PANEL 3

A medium shot. Dedston hands Harding a folded-up map. Harding is to the left, and Dedston is to the right. Harding is smiling cunningly, while Dedston looks even more nervous.

HARDING

Yes. Is everything in **order**?

JERRY

Yes, sir. All of your supplies are
here, as per your request.

JERRY

This **map** should show you the way to the
Capitolium Mausoleum.

PANEL 4

A medium shot of Harding (with Rowena at his side). Behind him, his armed and armored men are streaming out of the ship. His grin is turning evil.

HARDING

Fantastic. Is anyone **else** aware of your presence here?

JERRY

Only my brother Tom -- a-as per your orders, s-sir.

PANEL 5

A medium shot of Harding as he turns to the smirking Rowena, already hefting her gun.

HARDING

No witnesses.

PANEL 6

A two-frame panel. A long shot of Rowena and the other soldiers mowing down Dedston and his men. Harding steps back and watches it all with a grin.

SFX

DakkaDakkaDakkaDakkaDakka!!!!

PAGE 13

PANEL 1

Cut to the Brotherhood's spaceport in Luna (Is there a specific name for this place? I can't seem to find it.) This is a two-frame-wide panel. A long shot. In it, we see the *Cardinal's Edge* hanging low beneath its carrier ship. Mitch Hunter is walking up the boarding ramp (similar to the one on Harding's ship).

STANDARD BOX

Days earlier. The Cardinal's Spaceport
at Luna.

HUNTER

This **really** sucks!

PANEL 2

A medium shot from inside the *Edge's* passenger area. Hunter arrives. Crenshaw and Grinder rise to greet him, but Indigo does not. Hunter shakes hands with Grinder. He uses two hands, confused as to which hand to shake.

CRENSHAW

Welcome to the ***Cardinal's Edge***, Captain
Hunter. This is Brother Grinder.

PANEL 3

A medium shot. Crenshaw motions to Indigo, but she still refuses to rise. Hunter is to the left, Indigo is seated to the right, and Crenshaw is caught in between. Hunter senses Indigo's coldness to him right away. He's not really happy about being there, either, but it's the only way he's got to get at Harding. He has his hand stuck out, but she ignores it.

CRENSHAW

And Sister Indigo.

HUNTER

Charmed, I'm sure.

PANEL 4

A shot nearly identical to the last, except Hunter's hand is lowered now.

INDIGO

Most believers carry a **cross** on their
armor somewhere, Hunter.

INDIGO

Where's **yours**?

HUNTER

Shut up.

PANEL 5

Close-up on Indigo. She's leaning forward in her seat now, almost like she's ready to pounce on Hunter already. She's sneering widely.

INDIGO

Before we go **anywhere** with you, marine, we need to know where you stand.

INDIGO

You did your stint in the Doughpits on Mars.

INDIGO

Where's your **cross**, Hunter?

PANEL 6

Close-up on Hunter as he snaps. He's right in Indigo's face, forcing her back into her seat by the ferocity of his response. He knows all about how she killed that infant in the Cardinal's name, and it's making him sick.

HUNTER

Back **off**, Inquisitor! I'm **not** one of your Cardinal's children!

PANEL 7

Medium shot. Crenshaw intervenes between the two. He has a hand on each of their shoulders, shoving them apart. Indigo's eyes are flaring, but Hunter returns her glare two-fold.

CRENSHAW

Enough!

CRENSHAW

Strap yourselves in. We're about to take off!

PANEL 8

A medium shot of Indigo seen over Hunter's shoulder as he straps himself in. They're facing each other across a small table (much like in many European trains). She's practically spitting at him as she straps herself in.

INDIGO

This conversation is **not** over, marine!

PAGE 14

PANEL 1

A medium shot of Grinder and Crenshaw sitting across from each other. Hunter and Indigo are across the aisle from them. Grinder's lower arms are folded across his chest, but his upper ones gesture as he talks.

STANDARD BOX

Later.

GRINDER

I must confess, Brother Crenshaw, that
I am still troubled by the death of the
child at Sister Indigo's hands.

PANEL 2

A close-up of Grinder. His hands are held outstretched, looking for a solution to fill them.

GRINDER

I know that the Book of Law teaches
that what she did was **right**, so why
does this tragedy **bother** me so?

PANEL 3

Close-up of Crenshaw. He looks out the window at the emptiness of space as he answers.

CRENSHAW

Death, my son, is when the Darkness
wins its battle with the Light. The
death of **anyone** unclaimed by the Dark
Soul diminishes **all** of those who follow
the Cardinal's teachings.

PANEL 4

Medium shot. Indigo leans over Crenshaw's shoulder and starts to say something to Grinder before she's interrupted.

INDIGO

Look, boy, I did the **right** --

PANEL 5

Medium shot of all four passengers. They all look to the ceiling (as if to God) as the alert comes through.

PILOT

(Via intercom)

Attention crew of *The Edge*. We are approaching Dark Eden. Prepare for separation.

HUNTER

Finally!

PANEL 6

Medium shot. Indigo leaves for the cockpit (which is behind Crenshaw and her open seat). As she leaves, she glares at Crenshaw and Grinder over her shoulder.

INDIGO

This conversation is **not** over!

PANEL 7

Long establishing shot. This panel is three frames wide. The Edge drops out of its carrier ship and zooms off toward the despoiled Earth looming large in the distance.

HUNTER

Does she say that a lot?

INDIGO

I **heard** that, Hunter!

PAGE 15

PANEL 1

This is a three-frame panel. The Mayor of Last Chance (the Capitol outpost), a.k.a. Tom Dedston, is showing the heroes around town. The town seems pretty dead. People are lying in their windows and doorway, crimson flowing freely from the sores on their bodies. This outpost has long since fallen into disrepair. The Red Plague has killed most people, and the survivors are sick of living all their lives with death. Off to the other side of the panel, we can see Pride approaching the heroes. Dedston is a short, chubby man who wears dark sunglasses with side-guards on them, making his eyes entirely invisible.

STANDARD BOX

Dark Eden.

CRENSHAW

Mr. **Mayor**, Brotherhood intelligence tells us that Harding's ship arrived in this vicinity only yesterday. Have you seen **any** traces of it?

TOM

Name's **Dedston**, sir, but you can call me Tom.

TOM

We **did** see a ship land over that way sometime yesterday. Sent my brother out to check on it, but he never came back.

TOM

We don't get too many visitors around these parts what with the **Red Plague**: this retrovirus that causes sores that never heal.

TOM

As you can **see**.

PANEL 2

Pride comes up to the group and introduces himself. He jumps up on Hunter and starts licking his face. Hunter grabs the dog in a friendly way.

PRIDE

(The voice comes from a box on his throat)

Duh-huh! Duh-huh! Hello! Hello! Hello!

HUNTER

Hey, fella, take it **easy**! Down, boy!

PANEL 3

Pride sits on the ground in front of Hunter, who scratches the creature behind the ears. The mayor looks on in obvious disgust, as does Indigo.

TOM

Pride! What in tarnation are you **doing** here still? **Git**!

TOM

Forgive me, folks. **Pride** here was an experiment the local crackpot scientist cobbled together before the plague got him.

PRIDE

Yuh-huh! Dat's right!

PRIDE

I's his pride 'n' joy, and I's here ta help ya out!

PANEL 4

Focus on Pride again, but this time with Indigo in his face. She's really mad with the creature for even existing. Pride looks really hurt by what she's saying to him.

INDIGO

You're **mad**, creature! You're lucky I don't kill you right now, you insult to nature!

PANEL 5

Cut to Crenshaw talking to Tom. Indigo turns to watch them, putting her back to Pride.

CRENSHAW

Mr. Mayor -- **Tom** -- I understand the Capitolium Mausoleum is nearby. Could you direct us to it?

PANEL 6

Medium shot of Hunter. He leans his head back and laughs out loud.

HUNTER
Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha!

PANEL 7

Medium shot of Hunter, still laughing. Tears are streaming down his cheeks. Grinder leans over toward him, just a bit confused. Hunter is pointing down and over at Indigo's leg (off panel).

GRINDER
What's so **funny**, Captain?

HUNTER
Ha-ha-ha-ha!

HUNTER
Oh, I can barely breathe!

PANEL 8

A medium shot. Pride is humping Indigo's leg, and she is not happy about it. She is standing there, absolutely fuming, and Pride looks over at Hunter (and the panel) as innocently as he can, given the circumstances.

PRIDE
Whut?

PAGE 16

PANEL 1

This panel is three frames wide. Indigo boots Pride as far down the street as she can. He describes a beautiful arc as he sails toward a mound of garbage. Indigo is mad as hell, and more than a little bit embarrassed. Pride is frightened out of his mind because he's got a good idea of what's coming next.

SFX
(From Indigo's boot)
Bam!

PRIDE
Yaaaahhhhh!!!!

PANEL 2

A medium shot of Indigo. She's pulled down one of her rifles, and she's pointing in at Pride. She's not even bothering to look through the sight. She's just going to fire.

INDIGO
You're **dead**, mutt!

PANEL 3

A full-length shot of Hunter. He steps in front of Pride, holding his Punisher on Indigo. Behind him, Indigo cowers, huddled into a frightened ball, peering out from behind Hunter's legs with dinner-plate eyes.

HUNTER
Try it, Sister, and **you're** dead.

PRIDE
Yi! Yi! Yi! Yi!

INDIGO
(Off panel)
Are you **insane**? Out of the way, Hunter!

PANEL 4

Medium shot as Indigo lowers her rifle and Hunter does the same. They are glaring at each other angrily. Meanwhile, Pride slinks off, happy to be alive.

HUNTER
Poor taste in women isn't a capital offense. I should know.

INDIGO

You'll **regret** this, Hunter.

HUNTER

Maybe.

PANEL 5

Cut back to Tom and Crenshaw, medium shot. Tom seems pretty happy himself considering the rather tense situation. He's still laughing, tears rolling down his chubby cheeks. In the background, Pride is sniffing around the buildings.

CRENSHAW

I apologize for my ... associates. You were about to tell us where the **Mausoleum** is.

PANEL 6

A medium shot focusing on Tom as he wipes his eyes. He's taken off his sunglasses, and we can see that his eyes are glowing red.

TOM

Yeah, sure. It's about 20 klicks due west of here.

TOM

I **don't** think that's gonna help you a whole lot though.

PANEL 7

Medium shot on Hunter. There's no humor in him anymore. He's dead serious and suddenly quite suspicious. He looks at Tom meaningfully. Again, in the background to the right, you can see Pride sniffing around. This time he looks like he's found something big.

HUNTER

Why?

PAGE 17

PANEL 1

This is a three-frame-wide panel. To the left of it, Pride is jumping in the air and screaming at the top of his lungs. All around him, Necromutants and Centurions are crawling out of the nearby buildings.

PRIDE
Aamm-buuuusshh!!!!

SFX
(From the Legionnaires' guns)
Krak! Krak! Krak! Krak! Krak!

PANEL 2

This is a three-frame-wide panel. Tom's face transforms into a mask of hate. Terrible beams of crimson hellfire lance out of his eyes directly at Crenshaw, missing him by inches. Crenshaw ducks low and has drawn his Mortis blades. Tom is to the right, and Crenshaw is to the left.

TOM
Lie down and **die**, Morty. We've got you surrounded and outnumbered.

SFX
(From Tom's eyes)
Ffrrroosshhh!!!

CRENSHAW
Never, foul beast! It will take more than **numbers** for the Darkness to extinguish the Light!

PANEL 3

This is a three-frame-wide panel. In the center we can see Indigo, Pride, Hunter and Grinder. Indigo is using her Mephisto rifle to kill some Necromutants. Each of her shots blows off a single creature's head. Pride roots her on. Hunter's Punisher handgun is taking care of a Centurion. Grinder has out his Punisher blade, and he's slicing up a few Necromutants of his own.

SFX
(From Indigo's gun)
Blam! Blam!

PRIDE
Yeeee-haaaaahhh!!

SFX
(From Hunter's gun)
BlamBlamBlam!!!

SFX
(From Grinder's blades)
SlishSlashSlish!

PAGE 18

PANEL 1

Medium shot. Tom attacks Crenshaw again with the eye-beams. Crenshaw is off panel to the right.

TOM

Face it, Brother. You're outmatched.

SFX

(From Tom's eyes)

Ffrrroossshhh!!!

PANEL 2

Medium shot that links up the last panel. Crenshaw deflects the eye-beams with his Mortis blades as he launches himself at Tom. He is to the right, facing left.

CRENSHAW

The forces of Darkness are **never** a match for the Light.

PANEL 3

Medium shot. A flash of blades, and Tom's head is separated from his shoulders. Crenshaw's barely in this shot. It focuses mostly on the crumpling body and the surprised look on Tom's face as the fire dies in his eyes.

SFX

(From Crenshaw's blades)

Slish!

CRENSHAW

In Nomine Cardinalis!

PANEL 4

A tight medium shot. In each of the panels on this line (4, 5, and 6), we get tighter and tighter on Indigo's face, allowing more to show in the background. She moves to the lower left, while the action start to take place in the upper right. Indigo fights alone against the oncoming hordes. She kills two Necromutants, each with a single shot to the head.

INDIGO

Generally, I prefer to kill from a **distance**, cleanly.

SFX
(From Indigo's gun)
Blam! Blam!

PANEL 5

A looser medium shot. Indigo kills two more Necromutants, but we can see a Centurion with a Skalak coming up behind her.

INDIGO
But for **you**, I'm willing to make an
exception!

SFX
(From Indigo's gun)
Blam! Blam!

PANEL 6

A medium shot. Indigo is turning her head to see what's happening behind her. We see Pride savaging the Centurion that was about to stab Indigo in the back.

PRIDE
Look **out**, princess!

INDIGO
What?

CENTURION #1
Gurgle...

PANEL 7

A medium shot of a Centurion with a Kratach aimed directly at Grinder. Grinder is in shock. He's just realized the mistake he's made by pulling his blades instead of his guns.

GRINDER
By the **Book**!

CENTURION #2
Your mistake, Light boy, bringing
knives to a gunfight.

PANEL 8

A close-up of the Centurion. A large hole suddenly appears in his forehead, blowing out from behind. The creature bears a very surprised look on its face.

CENTURION #2
Hahaha -- urk!

SFX

(From Hunter's gun, off panel)
Blam!

PANEL 9

A close-up of Hunter, still holding the smoking gun. Perhaps we can see the Centurion's body (or just the top of what's left of its head) falling away in the foreground.

HUNTER

Remember, kid, a loaded gun's a lot
more useful than that **Book** on your hip.

PAGE 19

PANEL 1

A three-frame-wide panel. A long shot of the heroes mowing down the remaining Legionnaires. Indigo is to the right again, still firing her rifle. Pride is right behind her. Crenshaw is in the middle, standing over Tom's remains. Grinder is sheathing his blades. Hunter is next to him, but walking over toward Indigo. In the foreground, a single Necromutant's head is blown off by Indigo. The carnage around them is unbelievable, bodies strewn everywhere.

SFX
(From Indigo's gun)
Blam!

HUNTER
They're all **dead**, Sister. Knock it off!

PANEL 2

Medium shot of Indigo as she blasts away one last Necromutant that was hiding under some other bodies.

SFX
(From Indigo's gun)
Blam!

INDIGO
They are **now**.

INDIGO
We must leave for the Mausoleum
instantly. If Harding's only a bit
ahead of us, we still have a chance to
reach that skull first.

PANEL 3

Medium shot of Pride running up behind Hunter as he faces Indigo (who's holstering her rifle).

PRIDE
Let **me** come along! I know da way.

PRIDE
Besides, I can sniff out dose
Necromutants from a **mile** away!

PANEL 4

Close-up of Indigo. She's snarling down at Pride. She sees him as an abomination still.

INDIGO

If you know the way, I've a **better** idea.

INDIGO

The Inquisition has ways of making even creatures like **you** talk.

PANEL 5

Medium shot of Hunter. Pride is hiding behind him again, and Hunter is absently scratching him behind his ears as he talks to Indigo. Grinder and Crenshaw stand behind them in the background.

HUNTER

Come on, Sister. He just saved your hide.

HUNTER

Let's put it to a **vote**.

PRIDE

I'll be good, princess!

PANEL 6

Medium shot of Indigo. She stands alone in the carnage, and she's in a rage, shaking her finger at Hunter.

INDIGO

This is **not** a democracy!

INDIGO

If you want to him to come along, then he's **your** responsibility, Captain!

PANEL 7

Medium shot of Hunter looking down at Pride's face, slapping a hand to the side of his forehead. Pride's tongue hangs out as he looks up at Hunter as innocently and earnestly as he can, smiling since his life has been spared.

PRIDE

I'll be **good**, boss. Honest!

HUNTER

Groooaaannnn!

PAGE 20

PANEL 1

This three-frame-panel runs down the length of the left-hand side of the page. It shows the (relatively small) Citadel of Valpurgius. This is a foul place, jutting out of the Earth's skin like a broken bone.

STANDARD BOX

Not too far off, in the Citadel of the
Nepharite Magus Valpurgius.

PANEL 2

A medium shot of Valpurgius on his throne. He looks down over his tekrons performing horrible experiments on human subjects stolen from the surrounding countryside. He is surrounded by glowing braziers, the light from which makes him look even more demonic.

SFX

(From a victim)
Aaaiieeeeeee!!!!

VALPURGIUS

Ah, the children of the **Darkness**.

VALPURGIUS

What **sweet** music they make!

PANEL 3

A long shot of Valpurgius. Image of Alakhai's death forms in the smoke of one of the braziers. This should be made mysterious to help avoid any potential problems with the film. Maybe we should just show the Nepharite's body, obviously dead.

VALPURGIUS

With my "**master**" Alakhai dead at
Hunter's hand, I finally am free to
pursue my **own** plans.

PANEL 4

A shot over Valpurgius's shoulder. A Centurion enters and falls to one knee.

CENTURION #3

Lord, we have reports of a **massacre** at
Last Chance.

CENTURION #3
Every Legionnaire in the town was
destroyed by the Brotherhood's ISLAND
team.

PANEL 5

Close-up on Valpurgius. He's cackling and rubbing his clawed hands together. His red eyes are lit with amusement.

VALPURGIUS
Excellent. They are no doubt in pursuit
of our friend **Harding**.

VALPURGIUS
And so the race is **finally** on!

PANEL 6

A close-up of the Centurion again. He looks entirely evil and happy about his next bit of news.

CENTURION #3
Lord, the **Capitol** marine was with them.

PANEL 7

Medium shot of Valpurgius as he rises to his feet. His mouth is split in a grin that reveals his dripping blue tongue.

VALPURGIUS
Excellent! Fate has dealt me a winning
hand.

VALPURGIUS
Now I can **trick** Harding into getting me
the skulls.

VALPURGIUS
And I can have **Hunter's** head too!

PAGE 21

PANEL 1

Long shot of Valpurgius as he walks over to look down at an inner courtyard in his Citadel. The Centurion follows behind him.

VALPURGIUS

It is time to put the **Deathdealers** into action.

PANEL 2

A long-shot of the King and Jack of Carnage. Each of panels 2 through 5 are similar. They show two Pretorian Stalkers, one a bit larger than the other. The "King" Stalker's head is chromed. The "Jack" Stalker's head is simply black iron. This way we can tell them apart quickly and easily. Also, each team has its own symbol. The symbol of Carnage is a set of crossed blades. In this picture, the two Stalkers are slicing a human to shreds with their Scythes of Semai.

VALPURGIUS BOX

The King and Jack of **Carnage**.

SFX

(From victim)
KkkrishSplurt!

PANEL 3

A long shot of the King and Jack of Mayhem. They are blowing apart a victim with their Carcass Launchers. Their symbol is an explosion.

VALPURGIUS BOX

The King and Jack of **Mayhem**.

SFX

(From victim and guns)
Ka-BOOM! Ka-BOOM!

PANEL 4

A long shot of the King and Jack of Savagery. They are dismembering a victim with their bare hands. Their symbol is a spiked fist.

VALPURGIUS BOX

The King and Jack of **Savagery**.

SFX

(From victim)
Gaahhhhh!!!!

PANEL 5

A long shot of the King and Jack of Doom. They are flaming a victim with their Hindenburger Incinerators. Their symbol is hellfire.

VALPURGIUS BOX

The King and Jack of **Doom**.

SFX

(From weapons)
Fffrrrrroosssshhhh!!!!

PANEL 6

A long shot of the Ace of Doom. His head is polished gold. He is the largest of them all, and his symbol (like the King and Jack of Doom) is hellfire. He is shooting a victim with his Scythe of Semai on full auto.

VALPURGIUS BOX

And the **Ace** of Doom

VICTIM

Cardinal, help meeeeeeeee!!!

SFX

(From gun)
Bbbrrraaattt!!!

PANEL 7

This is a three-panel display. Valpurgius is to the left, looking down on all seven Stalkers. They are covered in gore, their victims bleeding or smoldering at their feet.

VALPURGIUS

These poor souls have learned what my **Deathdealers** shall soon teach Hunter and the ISLANDers he hopes to hide behind.

VALPURGIUS

The Cardinal isn't **listening**!

PAGE 22

PANEL 1

This is a three-frame-wide panel. It's an establishing shot. On the lip of the Grand Canyon (now bigger, deeper and wider than ever before), Harding's ship blasts its way back out of the area. Harding himself stands on the lip of the gorge and watches as his soldiers gun the local hang-gliding society out of the air. All around Harding, buildings in the settlement are burning, and people are being slaughtered. Some gliders fall burning into the gorge. The native draw a lot from Native American culture, and their hang-gliders are adorned with feathers and painted with pictures of thunderbirds.

STANDARD BOX

Above the Grand Canyon, in the walls of
which the Capitolium Mausoleum lies.

SFX

(From the soldiers' guns)
DakkaDakkaDakka!

SFX

(From the soldiers' guns)
DakkaDakkaDakka!

SFX

(From the soldiers' guns)
DakkaDakkaDakka!

HANG-GLIDER

Yaaahhh!!!

PANEL 2

Medium shot of Harding silhouetted against the burning structures of the village. In the background, we see the silhouette of Rowena approaching, she is carrying a hang-glider for herself and for him.

HARDING

It's a good day to be **alive**, eh,
Rowena?

PANEL 3

Medium shot of Rowena and Harding. She is handing a hang-glider to him. Blood stains its wings.

ROWENA

Yes, Colonel.

ROWENA

It's unfortunate for these people that we needed their wings to reach the Mausoleum. Anyhow, our ship will meet us on the other side when we're done.

PANEL 4

Medium shot focusing on Harding as he takes the hang-glider and starts to work his way into it. His face is deadly serious.

HARDING

That's where you're wrong, Rowena. This is hardly unfortunate. This is a chance for us to express our growing power.

HARDING

Of course, power isn't **everything**.

PANEL 5

This is a three-frame-wide panel. With the village burning in the background, Harding, Rowena and Harding's soldiers glide down into the canyon. They look like birds against the sky. The sun is lowering in the sky above them.

HARDING

It's the **only** thing.

PAGE 23

PANEL 1

This is a three-frame-wide panel. It's a bit later at the same scene as in 22/1, the top of the canyon. The place has been devastated. Blood and bodies are everywhere, but the fires have almost entirely gone out. The Edge sits on the edge of the canyon. Its ramp is down, and the heroes are surveying the damage. Pride is looking down over the canyon's lip.

STANDARD BOX

Later.

GRINDER

By the **Cardinal**! What happened here?

INDIGO

Not **what**, Grinder. **Who**.

HUNTER

Harding's been here, and recently.

PRIDE

Ba-roof!

PANEL 2

A medium shot of Pride looking over the canyon's lip, his tail in the air. Hunter's right behind him.

PRIDE

It's straight down **dere**, and dere ain't no udder way down.

HUNTER

You're sure.

PRIDE

As sure as my momma was a bitch!

PRIDE

Hur-hur-hur!

PANEL 3

A longer shot. The ISLANDers unfurl strange wing-gliders from beneath their shoulder pads. These pop out transformer-like.

SFX

(Crenshaw's wings)

Klik-klik-klik!

SFX
(Grinder's wings)
Klik-klik-klik!

SFX
(Indigo's wings)
Klik-klik-klik!

CRENSHAW
We must leave **immediately**. There is no
time to lose.

PANEL 4

Medium shot of Hunter. He shoulders his way into a jet-chute.
Pride looks up at him from a sitting position.

PRIDE
Whut's dat?

HUNTER
It's called a **jet-chute**. With it, I can
freefall until we're only 100 feet from
the ground.

PRIDE
We?

HUNTER
I don't think the holy rollers are
going to give you a lift.

PRIDE
Maybe I just stay **here**?

PANEL 5

This is a two-wide panel. It looks right down the gorge. In the
foreground we can see the ISLANDers gliding down. Hunter and
Pride zoom right past them in freefall.

HUNTER
Too late to back out **now**, pup.

PRIDE
Hey, I ain't no --

PRIDE
Yiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!!!

SFX
(Hunter and Pride)
Whooosshh!

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PANEL 1

A long shot. Hunter and Pride reach the balcony entrance of the Mausoleum (a flat, open, rock shelf). The ISLANDers are visible in the background, their white wings spread wide against the setting sun. The balcony is lit by floodlights that stab out into the darkening sky.

STANDARD BOX

Below.

PRIDE

Yiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!!!

HUNTER

You can shut up now. We're **here!**

PANEL 2

Long shot. Hunter lets Pride off, but he keeps his jet-chute on. The ISLANDers glide in behind him, their wings already collapsing. The balcony is literally littered with hang-gliders, some of which still have bodies in them, having fallen there from above.

SFX

(Crenshaw's wings)

Klik-klik-klik!

SFX

(Grinder's wings)

Klik-klik-klik!

SFX

(Indigo's wings)

Klik-klik-klik!

HUNTER

Let's **move** it! Red-hot situation here.
Harding's obviously got the generators
going already.

INDIGO

You are **not** in charge, marine!

PANEL 3

Hunter gets into Indigo's face as he makes his way toward the entrance of the Mausoleum. These are large doors set into an intricate facade carved out of the living rock. An ancient

version of the Capitol eagle soars down over the keystone of the massive arch into which the entire thing is set.

HUNTER

Look here, you flaming --

HARDING

(From a hidden speaker)

Hello, Hunter! So glad you could make it. I was afraid Capitol would send someone else after me, and where would the **poetry** be in that?

PANEL 4

Hunter takes off for the entrance, Indigo and the rest of the heroes right behind him.

INDIGO

This conversation isn't -- !

HUNTER

Yeah, yeah, I know! **Later!**

PANEL 5

The heroes dash into the main part of the Mausoleum. The centerpiece is a large stone coffin. Carved above it are the words "Here lies our greatest leader." Pride gets to the coffin first and reaches inside with his head.

HARDING

(From a hidden speaker)

Ah, I see you've found your way.

Excellent.

HARDING

(From a hidden speaker)

I'm afraid you might not like what you find, Hunter.

PANEL 6

A long shot. As the heroes get closer, they see that the coffin's lid lies to one side. Pride takes off with one of the leader's bones (an upper arm or leg bone).

CRENSHAW

They've already **been** here. Filthy grave robbers!

HARDING

(From a hidden speaker)

True, Mortificator. But it's not **really**
stealing. We left something fresh
behind for what we took.

PANEL 7

A medium shot of Crenshaw as he looks into the coffin. Hunter is coming up behind him. Despite the fact Crenshaw is wearing a helmet, his shock should be obvious.

CRENSHAW
By the Cardinal's Sacred Crutch!

PANEL 8

A close-up of the interior of the coffin. Inside, the skeleton of Capitol's greatest leader lies in decay. The flesh and the clothes have fallen off the bones, and the velvet lining is falling apart. The skeleton is mostly complete. The bone Pride took is missing. Also, the skull is missing. However, in its place is Lieutenant Ben Adams's rotting head.

PANEL 9

A medium shot of Hunter from above. He's fallen to his knees and is bellowing in anguish. The others stand away from him.

HUNTER
NOOOOOOO!!!!

HARDING
(From a hidden speaker)
Bwah-ha-ha-ha-ha!!!

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PANEL 1

A reverse of panel 5 on the previous page. Hunter leads the dash back down the hallway and toward the balcony at the front of the Mausoleum.

HARDING
(From a hidden speaker)
Be **seeing** you, Hunter!

HUNTER
NOOOOOOO!!!!!!

PANEL 2

A medium shot. Hunter reaches the balcony, his Punisher handgun blazing away. Harding and his people are already high in the sky, dwindling into specks in the darkness. Hunter is screaming mad.

SFX
(From Hunter's gun)
BlamBlamBlam!!!

HUNTER
You **bastard**!!!

PANEL 3

A medium shot. Indigo steps up behind hunter, her Mephisto in her hands. He stops firing to look at her. He's still angry as hell, but not at her.

INDIGO
Step back, marine. They're too far away
for that **toy**!

PANEL 4

A close-up on Indigo as she looks through her rifle's sight. She's in the foreground to the left. In the background to the right, we can see Harding and his people.

INDIGO
We'll never catch them now, but with
this **tracer** round on one of them, we'll
be able to keep track of them.

SFX
(From Indigo's rifle)

Blam!

PANEL 5

A close-up of the back of one of Harding's soldiers. The tracer round slaps him in the back, but he doesn't notice.

SFX
(From the tracer round)
Smack!

PANEL 6

A medium shot of the heroes. They're all looking out at Harding and his men, except for Pride and Grinder. Pride's gnawing on his bone. Grinder is looking straight up into the sky.

HUNTER
Let's get **after** them!

GRINDER
We may not be able to do that, sir.

CRENSHAW
Why not, son?

PANEL 7

This is a three-frame wide panel. A long shot from above. The Deathdealers are gliding down on steel wings. Below, the heroes look up at them in astonishment. Grinder is pointing up at them and delivering his line.

GRINDER
I think **they** might have something to say about it.

HUNTER
Damn!

STANDARD BOX
(Down low and to the right)
To be continued...