

  
VALIANT®

# THE VALIANT



RIVERA

JEFF LEMIRE  
MATT KINDT  
PAOLO RIVERA  
JOE RIVERA

# BOOK ONE



IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.



A GREAT CIVILIZATION IN ITS INFANCY.



IT WAS LIKE A DREAM. YOU DON'T REMEMBER WHEN IT STARTS...

...JUST WHEN IT ENDS.

IT'S JUST YOU, GILAD?!



I'LL BE ENOUGH, GEOMANCER.

I WAS STILL A LITTLE VAGUE ABOUT MY ROLE IN THINGS.



I HAVE EXISTED ALWAYS WITH THIS URGE TO PROTECT. NO MATTER WHAT I FACED.

STAY BACK.

NO MATTER  
HOW GREAT  
THE FEAR.

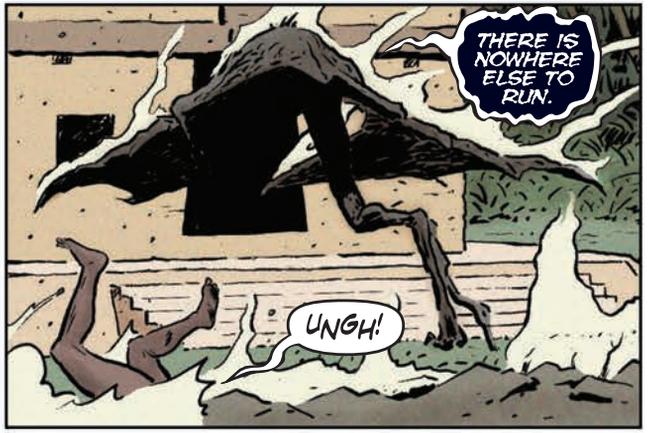
BUT I CANNOT DIE.  
SO FEAR HAS  
BECOME MORE OF  
A CONCEPT THAN  
SOMETHING REAL.

EHO SCEADUGENGA...  
EHO BALABANA...

MOVE ASIDE,  
GILAD ANNI-PADDA.  
YOU ARE A DEATHLESS  
ABOMINATION AND YOU STAND  
IN THE WAY OF THE NATURE  
OF THINGS. ENTROPY AND  
DECAY ARE THE LAWS THAT  
CANNOT BE BROKEN.

AS LONG  
AS YOU ARE  
FLESH AND BONE,  
FOUL BEAST...

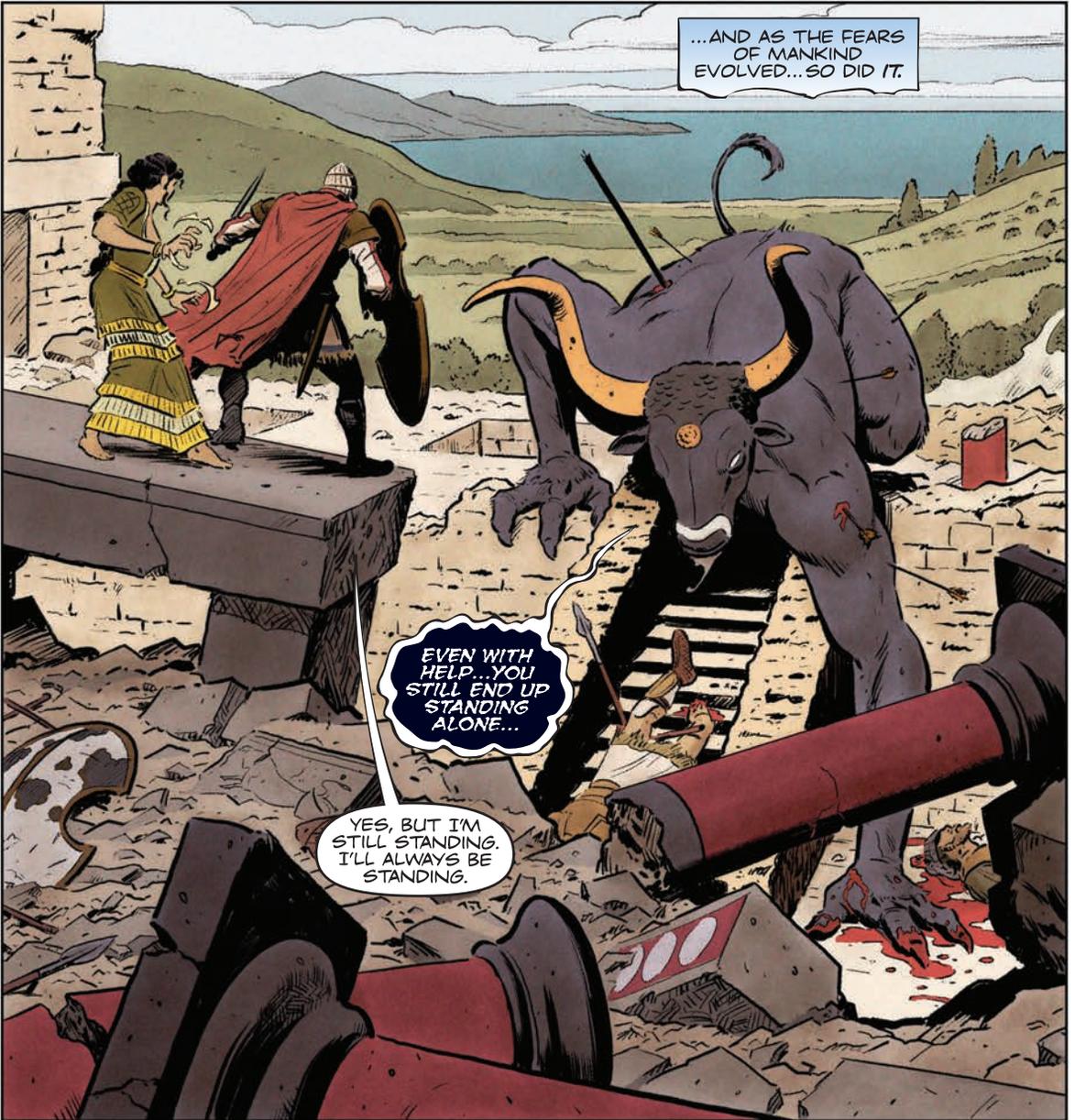






THE YEARS FLOWED OVER ME LIKE WAVES.

LANGUAGES AND CULTURES CHANGED...



...AND AS THE FEARS OF MANKIND EVOLVED... SO DID IT.

EVEN WITH HELP... YOU STILL END UP STANDING ALONE...

YES, BUT I'M STILL STANDING. I'LL ALWAYS BE STANDING.



YOU HAVE NO CHOICE. THIS IS THE WAY OF THINGS.



NO!

SHRAK



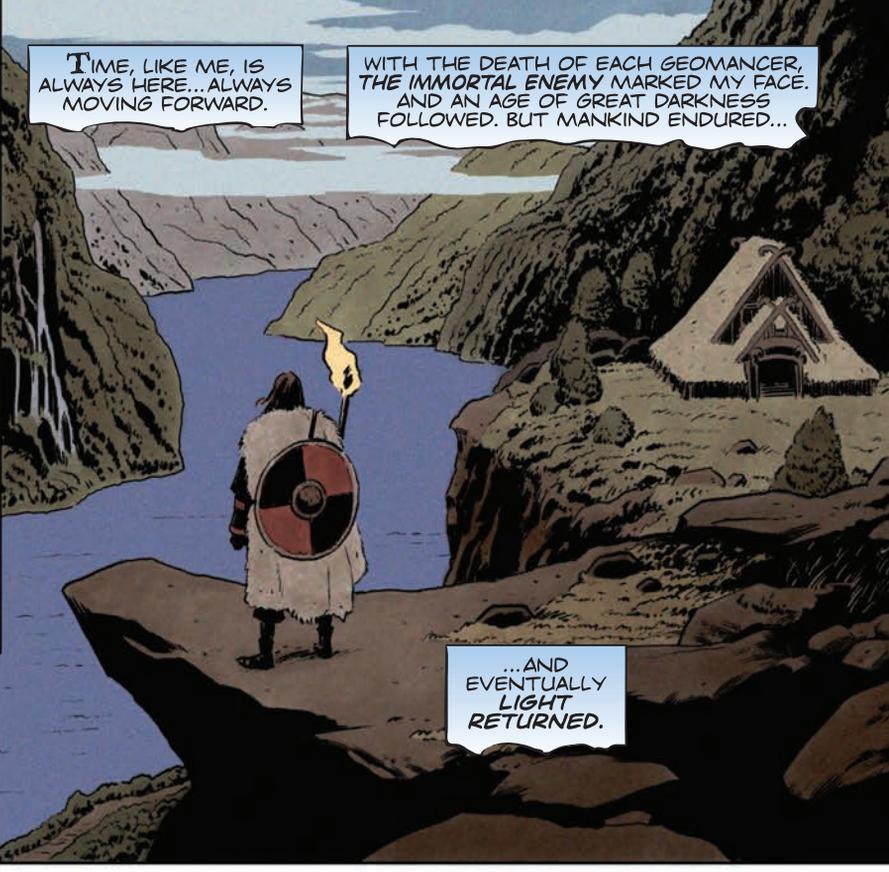
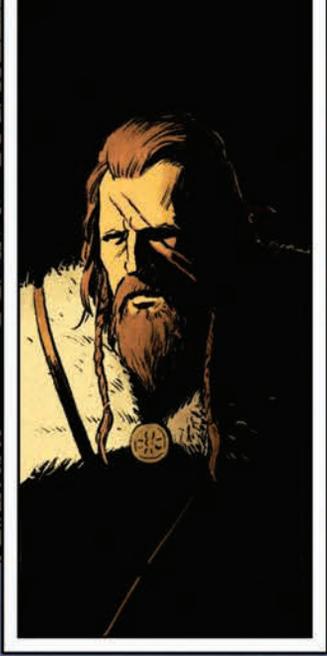
...PLEASE... MERCY...



THIS IS MERCY, GEOMANCER...

TIME, LIKE ME, IS ALWAYS HERE... ALWAYS MOVING FORWARD.

WITH THE DEATH OF EACH GEOMANCER, THE IMMORTAL ENEMY MARKED MY FACE. AND AN AGE OF GREAT DARKNESS FOLLOWED. BUT MANKIND ENDURED...



...AND EVENTUALLY LIGHT RETURNED.

**Krkt**



WHO GOES?! SHOW YOURSELF!



GILAD, IT-- IT'S ONLY ME.



NAS!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?! YOU NEED TO BE INSIDE WITH YOUR FATHER AND HIS MEN! IT IS NOT SAFE!



IT--THE GRENDEL, IT'S COMING SOON ISN'T IT? COMING FOR ME?



HE IS NOT GRENDEL. THAT IS JUST A STORY.. BUT YES, SOMETHING BAD IS COMING. SOMETHING WORSE THAN ANY STORY. BUT WE ARE READY THIS TIME. I AM READY.

I HAVE LIVED AMONG YOUR PEOPLE FOR YEARS, WAITING AND PLANNING. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, LITTLE GEOMANCER.



THIS TIME, I HAVE GATHERED THE BEST MEN FROM SIX VILLAGES. WHEN IT COMES, THE IMMORTAL ENEMY WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ALL OF THEM.



ALL THE WHILE, YOU WILL BE FORTIFIED HERE IN THE HALL WITH YOUR FATHER AND HIS BEST MEN. AND IF IT WERE TO MAKE IT THIS FAR, IT WOULD STILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME.



I-I DON'T WANT TO DIE, GILAD. PROMISE ME... PROMISE ME YOU WON'T LET IT HURT ME.



I PROMISE, BOY. IT WON'T HURT YOU... NO MATTER WHAT.



COME NOW... LETS GET YOU INSIDE WHERE IT'S SAFE.





F-FATHER!



GET BACK!



AH, GILAD...  
YOUR RESISTANCE  
IS PART OF THE WAY  
OF THINGS. LIKE  
THE RISING  
SUN...



NOT THIS  
TIME.



I, TOO, AM  
IMMORTAL,  
BEAST.

BUT I  
LEARN  
FROM MY  
MISTAKES.



GILAD!

DO YOU, GILAD? OR DO YOU SIMPLY DELAY THE INEVITABLE?



NO!!

--GGK!



I AM THE ONE WHO WALKS IN SHADOWS. I AM THE BALANCE. I AM THE IMMORTAL ENEMY.

NO NO NO...



AND AGAIN I KNEW FAILURE.

AND AGAIN...



...DARKNESS FOLLOWED.

NOT JUST FOR  
THE AGE OF MY  
FAILURE. BUT FOR  
MANY AGES TO  
FOLLOW.

A REMINDER...

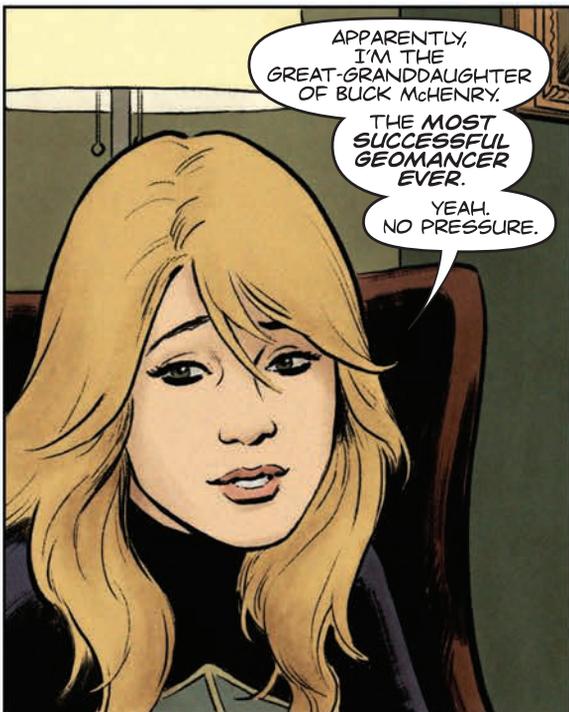
...OF MY  
ETERNAL  
FAILURE.

# THE VALLIANT

JEFF LEMIRE - MATT KINDT - PAOLO RIVERA  
JOE RIVERA DAVE LANPHEAR KYLE ANDRUKIEWICZ WARREN SIMONS



I'M LOST.



APPARENTLY, I'M THE GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER OF BUCK MCHENRY.

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL GEOMANCER EVER.

YEAH. NO PRESSURE.



ALTHOUGH, HOW DO YOU GRADE GEOMANCERS? I FEEL STUPID EVEN SAYING "GEOMANCER." TRUST ME, I'M THE QUEEN OF MADE-UP TERMS BUT THAT ONE... YEEESH.



I WAS A PUBLICIST. MY JOB WAS TO LOOK PRETTY ENOUGH THAT YOU'D LOOK AT ME... AND THEN JUST SMART ENOUGH THAT YOU'D LISTEN TO WHAT I SAID.

AFTER THE T.V. CAMERAS AND MICROPHONES TURNED OFF?



MY LIFE WAS... IS... A MESS. I'VE HAD, LIKE... FIVE BOYFRIENDS IN THE LAST FIVE MONTHS. BUT YOU KNOW HOW MANY RELATIONSHIPS I'VE HAD? EVER?



YEAH. DEPRESSING. I TAKE A PILL TO WAKE UP AND ANOTHER COUPLE TO STAY AWAKE AND THEN A HANDFUL MORE TO GET A FEW HOURS' SLEEP BEFORE I START ALL OVER AGAIN.



I'M... I WAS... A PROFESSIONAL B.S.-ER. AND, WHILE I WAS A TRAIN WRECK, THAT WAS THE THING I WAS GOOD AT.



LISTEN. I COULDN'T KEEP A **HOUSEPLANT** ALIVE. FOR REAL. AND NOW I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE **GUARDIAN OF THE EARTH** SOMEHOW?



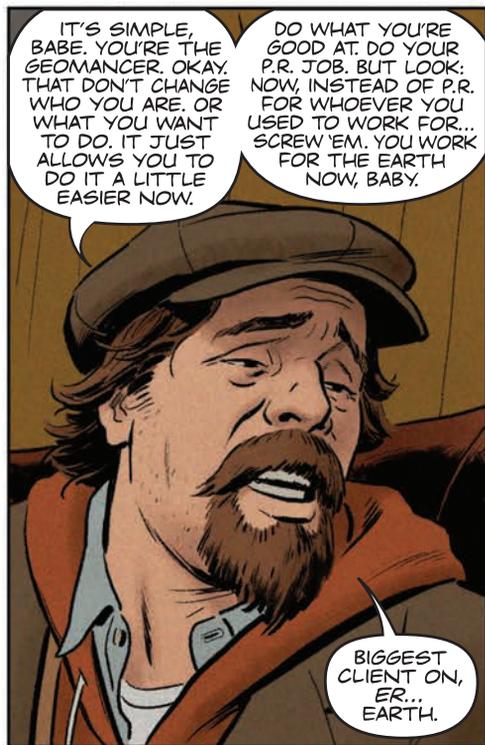
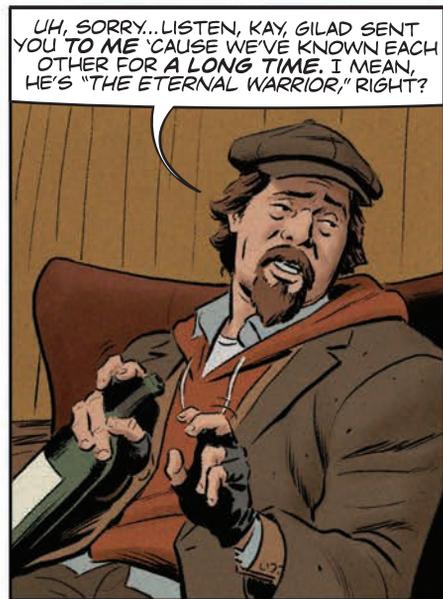
DON'T GET ME WRONG. I LOVE THE IDEA. TRUST ME WHEN I TELL YOU, THE COMPANY I WAS RUNNING PR. FOR? **DISGUSTING**. THEY LITERALLY FIND NEW WAYS TO TEAR THE EARTH APART AND TURN A PROFIT FROM IT.



I JUST... I JUST... HOW OFTEN DO YOU ACTUALLY REALIZE YOU'RE AT A **CROSSROADS** IN YOUR LIFE? I MEAN, I AM **SUPER** CONSCIOUS OF IT. AND THAT'S WHAT SCARES ME. I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...



WELL...? DON'T YOU HAVE **ANYTHING** TO SAY?



"... YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOOD AT WHAT THEY DO."



TELL ME AGAIN WHY I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JUNGLE, NEVILLE?

**BLAM BLAM**

AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION IN THE PACIFIC RIM.



**BLAM ATATITTA**

UNGH!

BECAUSE, BLOODSHOT, THOSE INCREDIBLE NANITES IN YOUR BLOOD ALLOW YOU TO TAKE A BEATING-- OR A BULLET-- LIKE NO OTHER MI-6 AGENT.



**BLAM**



YEAH, I KNOW WHY I'M HERE... BUT WHY AM I HERE.



THESE MERCENARIES WORK FOR PROJECT RISING SPIRIT... YOUR OLD PUPPET MASTERS.

YOU KNOW, THE SAME LOVELIES WHO ROBBED YOUR MEMORIES AND EXPLOITED YOU TO KILL FOR THEM ALL THOSE YEARS.

I THOUGHT YOU'D RELISH THE CHANCE TO EXACT YOUR PARTICULARLY BLOODY FLAVOR OF REVENGE ON A FEW OF THEM, WHILE STILL SECURING THE PACKAGE FOR MI-6.

IT TOOK ME YEARS TO GET AWAY FROM PROJECT RISING SPIRIT, NEVILLE. THE LAST THING I WANT IS TO LAND BACK IN THEIR--

TARGET SIGHTED. PEACE MACHINE ONE AND TWO ENGAGING NOW!

**THOOM THOOM**

WAIT-- WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

HMM... MI-6 SATELLITES ARE PICKING UP TWO RATHER LARGE DRONES HEADING YOUR WAY, BLOODSHOT.

YEAH, THANKS FOR THE TIP, NEVILLE.

YOU NEED TO GET TO THE PACKAGE BEFORE THEY DO. I SUGGEST YOU RUN!

**DAT-DAT-DAT-DAT-DAT-DAT**





I FOUND THE PACKAGE--IT WAS RIGHT WHERE YOU SAID IT WOULD BE--BUT I'M STUCK HERE. I NEED EVAC, NOW!



MI-6 PILOTS ARE ON THEIR WAY, BLOODSHOT, BUT THEY ARE AT LEAST TWENTY MINUTES OUT. PROJECT RISING SPIRIT CANNOT GET THEIR HANDS ON THE PACKAGE!



YOU MUST DO ANYTHING IT TAKES TO PROTECT IT. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!

SIGH SCREW THIS...



COMMAND-- THE ROGUE AGENT BLOODSHOT IS NO LONGER RUNNING-- HE IS--UH...HE'S COMING AT US!

AARRGGHH!!!

GETTING SHOT--UNGH--HURTS!!

--KT!



RISING SPIRIT, COME IN--THIS IS PEACE MACHINE TWO REPORTING. I HAVE THE PACKAGE. INITIATING EXTRACTION PROTOCOL.

GODDAMMIT.



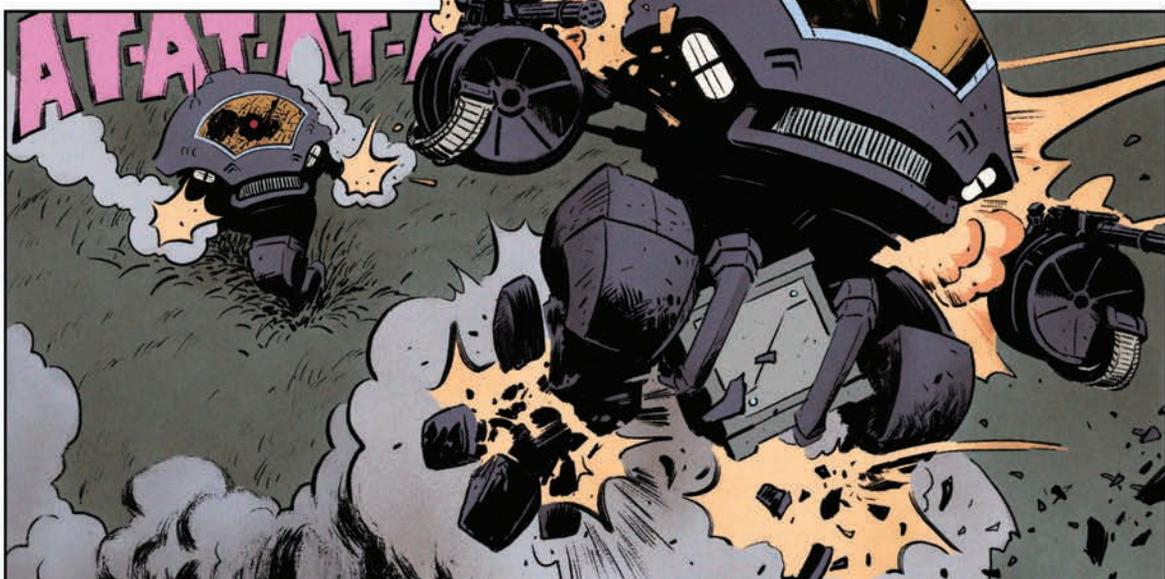
BLOODSHOT, SITUATION REPORT!

SHUT UP, NEVILLE-- I'M TRYING TO CONCENTRATE!

OKAY, LITTLE NANITES-- FIGURE OUT HOW TO WORK THIS DAMN THING-- TALK MACHINE TO ME...



THAT'S IT...



AT-TAT-TAT-TAT



ENEMY DOWN,  
NEVILLE.



WHAT IS  
THIS DAMN THING,  
ANYWAY?



SOMETHING  
MI-6 HAS BEEN  
TRACKING FOR A  
LONG TIME.

YEAH,  
WELL IT BETTER  
BE WORTH IT.

I THOUGHT THIS  
WOULD BE A REFRESHING  
CHANGE FROM THE THINGS  
PROJECT RISING SPIRIT  
MADE YOU DO.



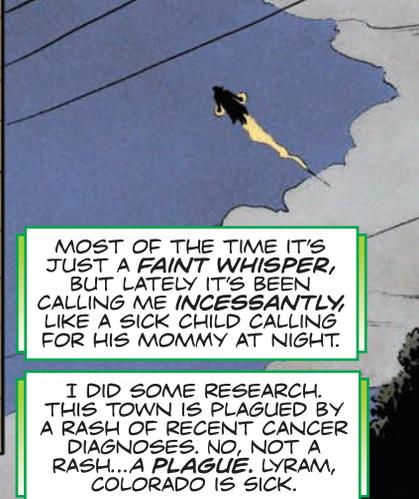
YOU ARE NO  
LONGER AN ASSASSIN  
OR A MINDLESS KILLER--  
YOU'RE ONE OF THE  
GOOD GUYS NOW,  
BLOODSHOT.

...COULD HAVE  
FOOLED ME.

LYRAM,  
COLORADO.



THE FIRST THING I  
LEARNED WHEN I  
STARTED USING THE  
GEOMANCER POWERS IS  
THAT EVERY PLACE ON  
EARTH HAS A "VOICE."



MOST OF THE TIME IT'S  
JUST A *Faint whisper*,  
BUT LATELY IT'S BEEN  
CALLING ME *Incessantly*,  
LIKE A SICK CHILD CALLING  
FOR HIS MOMMY AT NIGHT.

I DID SOME RESEARCH.  
THIS TOWN IS PLAGUED BY  
A RASH OF RECENT CANCER  
DIAGNOSES. NO, NOT A  
RASH... A *plague*. LYRAM,  
COLORADO IS SICK.



AND *this* IS THE  
INFECTION. A ZORN  
OIL EXTRACTION  
SITE JUST OUTSIDE  
OF TOWN. ZORN...  
*My former*  
EMPLOYER.

ARMSTRONG WAS  
RIGHT--AS FAR AS  
GEOMANCERS GO,  
I'VE BEEN A TOTAL  
BUST. I'VE SPENT  
MORE TIME WORRY-  
ING ABOUT WHAT  
I'M GOING TO DO  
ABOUT THESE  
POWERS THAN  
ACTUALLY *doing*  
ANYTHING.



I NEED TO STOP THINKING  
OF THE GEOMANCER  
POWERS AS A CURSE. AS  
HARD AS IT MAY HAVE BEEN  
FOR ME TO ACCEPT, I'VE  
BEEN GIVEN A GIFT, AND I  
KNOW JUST *where* TO  
START USING IT...



KAY MCHENRY MAY HAVE BEEN  
ABLE TO LIVE WITH HERSELF...  
BUT THE GEOMANCER CAN'T.  
NOT ANYMORE...



WAIT A MINUTE--

WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPENING?



S-STOP!!

JESUS!



IT'S NOT ME--  
--UNGH!



NO NO NO!  
IT WASN'T SUPPOSED  
TO HAPPEN LIKE THIS!



KATHOOM



I JUST WANTED TO HELP



I'VE LOST SO MANY GEOMANCERS OVER THE AGES, ARIC. I CAN'T LET THIS KEEP HAPPENING.

WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME THIS NOW, GILAD?

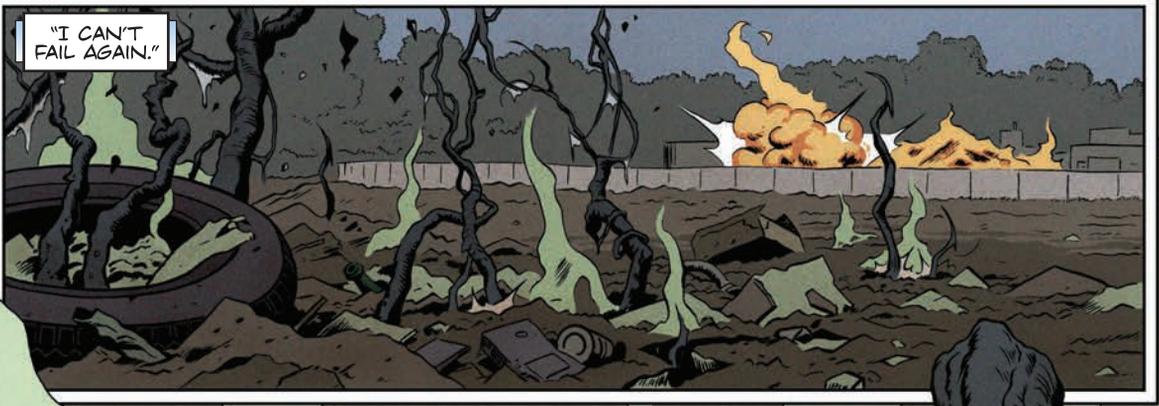
I FEEL LIKE IT WILL HAPPEN SOON, ARIC. I CAN'T FAIL THIS TIME.



"I'M GOING TO NEED HELP...A LOT OF HELP."



"I CAN'T  
FAIL AGAIN."



**TO BE CONTINUED...**

# THE VALLANT



## ETERNAL WARRIOR

For ten thousand years, the Eternal Warrior has walked the face of the Earth. A master of ancient and modern weaponry, he's sworn his life to defend the Geomancers, the long line of oracles born with the power to speak for the Earth itself.



## GEOMANCER

The latest in a line of enigmatic mystics guided by the Earth, Kay McHenry struggles in her new role as the Geomancer.



## BLOODSHOT

A nanite-infused soldier, Bloodshot was once used—against his will—as a weapon by Project Rising Spirit. While the rest of his past remains a mystery, he now fights on behalf of the U.S. and British governments.



## ARMSTRONG

The Eternal Warrior's brother, Armstrong has walked the face of the Earth for more than ten millennia. He's been sober for at least four of them. Well-traveled and a fan of poetry, he's a surprisingly wise and loyal confidant.



## NEVILLE ALCOTT

The MI-6 liaison for the world's elite superteam Unity, little is known about the man who pulls the strings of the most powerful beings on Earth.



## X-O MANOWAR

Aric of Dacia was a fifth-century Visigoth warrior and heir to the throne before he was stranded in our time with a sentient suit of powerful alien armor. After a difficult period of adjustment, Aric became an unlikely hero and Earth's greatest champion.

# THE VALIANT #1 ARTIST'S COMMENTARY BY PAOLO RIVERA

LAYOUTS

PENCILS

INKS

COLORS



I split up the first panel into two separate ones because I had a tough time conveying all the information necessary. Bloodshot has just parachuted into the jungle (I looked at pics of Vietnam for inspiration) and is now attacking two mercenaries. I was afraid the parachute would get lost in the background, and so I added a quick and easy silhouette panel to highlight it.



I also split up the third-tier panel, with the "BLAM" sound effect taking place between the two. Since we needed to establish his healing abilities, I had him get shot in the eye, something that is both disconcerting and easy to see growing back. In retrospect, I wish I had played this up a tad more (maybe adding another panel), but it's clear enough that he'll survive.

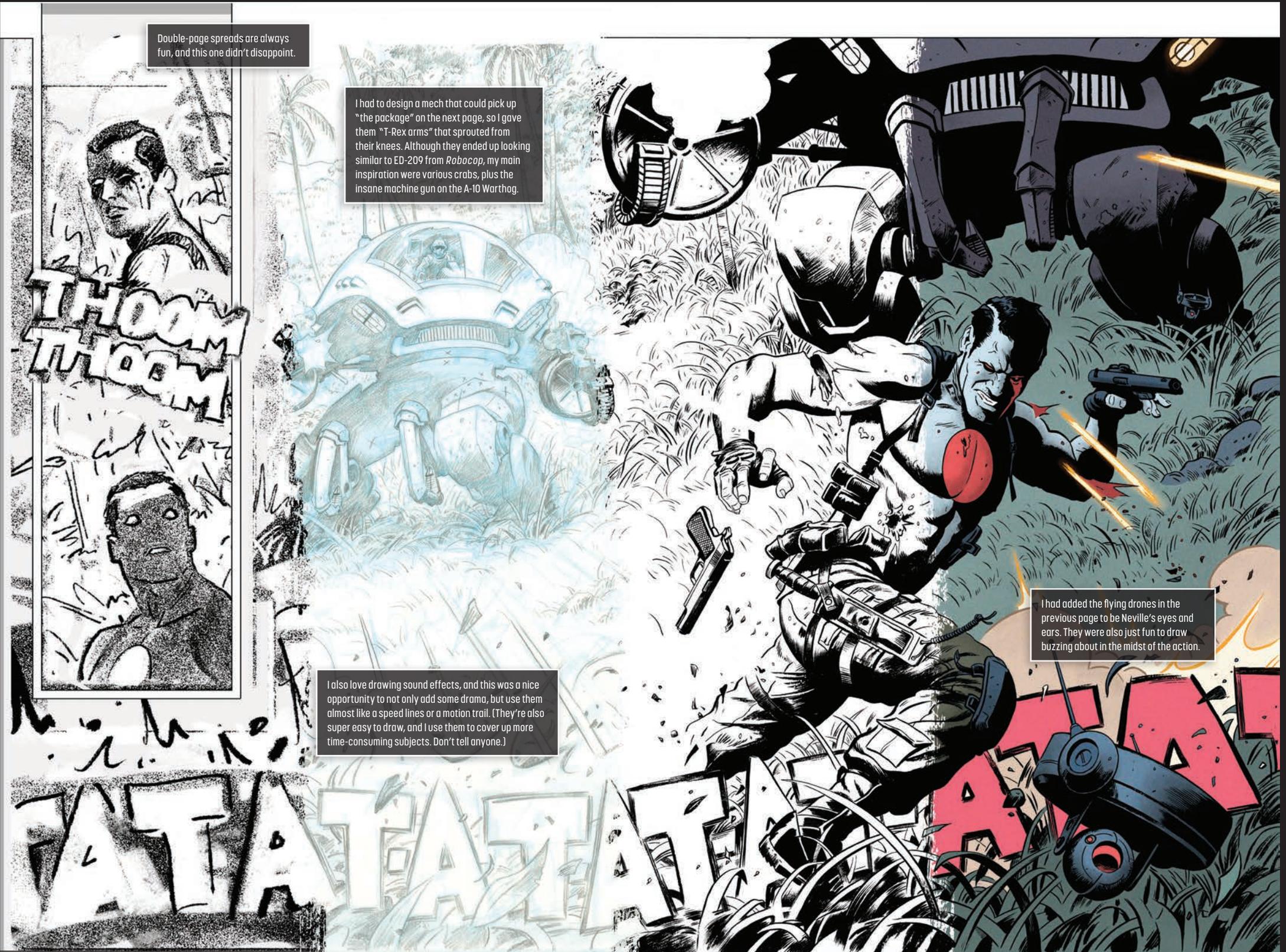


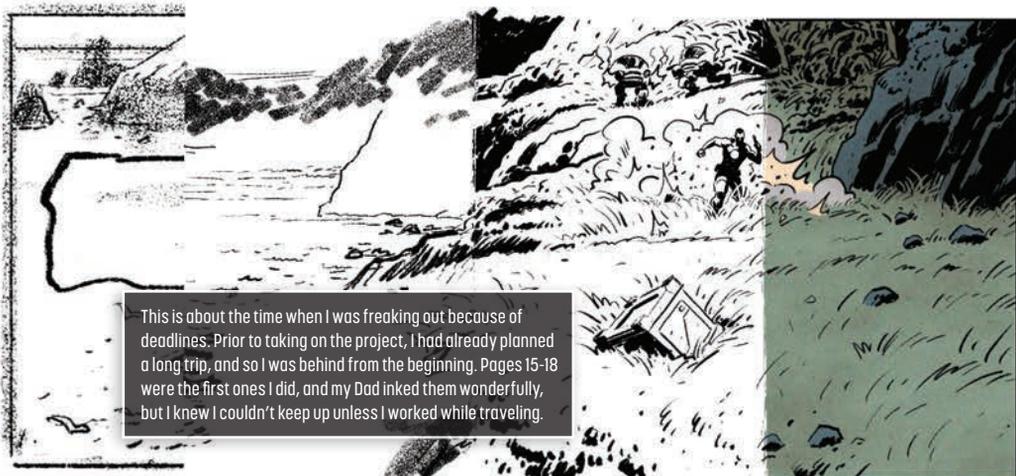
Double-page spreads are always fun, and this one didn't disappoint.

I had to design a mech that could pick up "the package" on the next page, so I gave them "T-Rex arms" that sprouted from their knees. Although they ended up looking similar to ED-209 from *Robocop*, my main inspiration were various crabs, plus the insane machine gun on the A-10 Warthog.

I also love drawing sound effects, and this was a nice opportunity to not only add some drama, but use them almost like a speed lines or a motion trail. (They're also super easy to draw, and I use them to cover up more time-consuming subjects. Don't tell anyone.)

I had added the flying drones in the previous page to be Neville's eyes and ears. They were also just fun to draw buzzing about in the midst of the action.





This is about the time when I was freaking out because of deadlines. Prior to taking on the project, I had already planned a long trip, and so I was behind from the beginning. Pages 15-18 were the first ones I did, and my Dad inked them wonderfully, but I knew I couldn't keep up unless I worked while traveling.



The only way to do this was to work digitally, since I can take my entire studio—a MacBook Pro and Cintiq 13 HD—in a backpack. Luckily, I had recently been given a set of Photoshop brushes from Kyle T. Webster, and they made the transition seamless.



Pages 18-20 were my first all-digital pages.



It takes me about the same amount of time to pencil and ink digitally as it does to pencil traditionally, and so I did most of the first issue this way. I was still experimenting at this stage with the look I wanted, trying out things like gray tone and textures. I tend to like fairly flat color, and this was no exception. By issue #2, however, I had moved back to my two-tone style, which is my go-to approach.

With the "machine view" panel, I couldn't help thinking of Daredevil's radar view, but both scripts were asking for basically the same thing. Either that, or I'm a one-trick pony.



# THE VALIANT

## BOOK TWO

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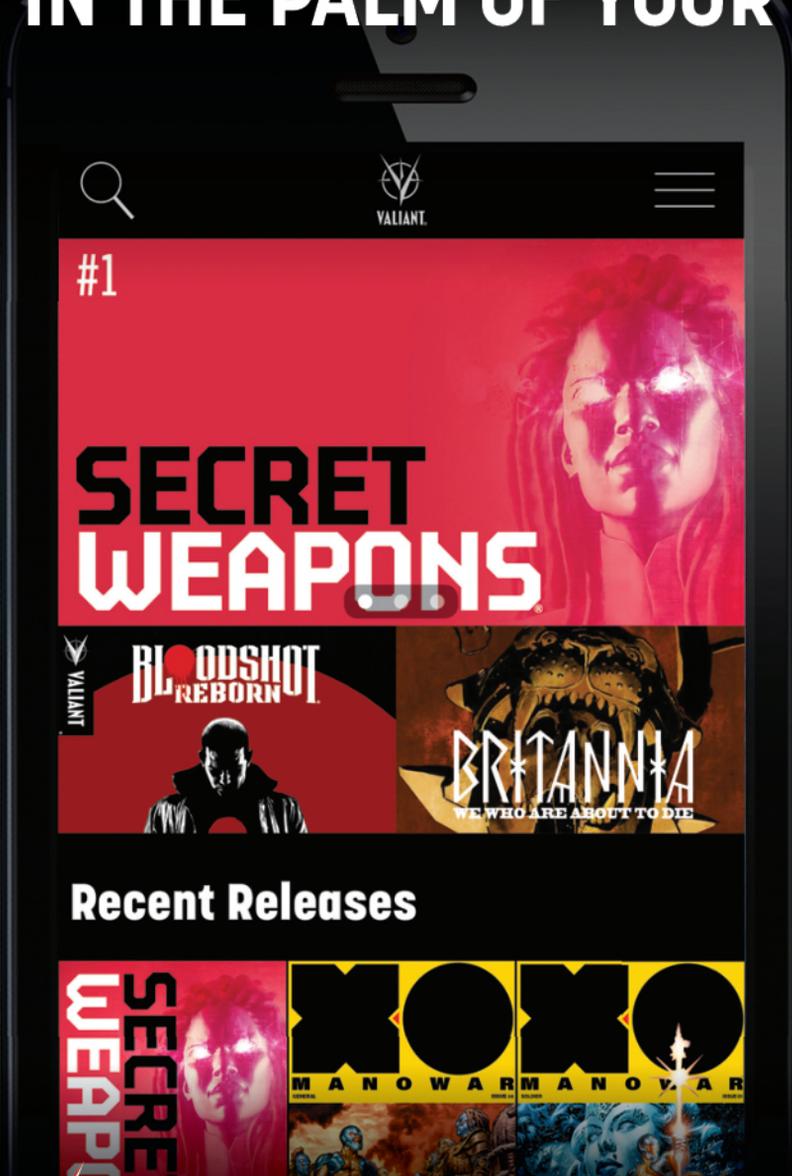
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Covers by **Paolo Rivera**, **Jeff Lemire** and **Matt Kindt**, and **Francesco Francavilla**

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