

## "UNBURDENED"



[22 Pages One-Shot]

Written

by

Nicolas "Nico" Izambard

Nicolas Izambard  
PO Box 1466  
Scappoose, OR 97056  
(503)-680-0177  
Nizambard@yahoo.fr

**PAGE 1 (1 PANEL)**

**SPLASH PAGE**

Nighttime. JI XI is running through the crowded streets of downtown Tokyo in the Shibuya special ward and across the famous Shibuya scrambled crossing. He is making his way through a crowd of tourists, businessmen, and nightlife enthusiasts.

He is being pursued by a Private Military Company. The PMCs are ex-military, ex-cops, and French foreign legion. They are heavily armed professionals. They carry [M16A4 rifles](#), [HK MP5 9mm submachine guns](#), and [Beretta M9](#) handguns along with M67 grenades, knives, and whatnot. The crowd is a bit freaked out as JI XI and the PMCs make their way across the street.

Our villain for the story, MARCUS (we will meet him soon), owns the PMCs and is the CEO of a Tech company. Therefore, it would make sense for the PMCs to be a bit high tech, maybe with night-vision goggles, laser sights, etc... You know, because it looks cool.

I will refer to the PMCs who work for MARCUS as Henchmen as well.

PMC LEADER (LARGE)

Get him!

JI XI CAPTION

I'm running so that I don't KILL.

(cont)

I can feel the Artifact PULSING in the back of my throat, like a revved up engine begging to be UNLEASHED.

(cont)

I cannot let it. There are too many bystanders.

(cont)

Those mercenaries are only a few steps behind me. How did they find me?

(cont)

I have been keeping a low profile, living on the streets and eating from trash cans. Unknown. Anonymous. Hidden in the dirt of the city.

**(MORE)**

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(cont)

Still, they found me. Do they want to kill me? Are they after the Artifact?

(cont)

I could easily unleash the evil inside of me and destroy them...

(cont)

...but how many casualties would there be? How many dead in the wake of the Artifact's blind fury?

(cont)

I want no more lives on my conscience...

(cont)

...so I RUN.

**PAGE 2 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

JI XI runs down a dark alley. It is a dead end. The PMCs are right behind him.

JI XI CAPTION

They want to trap me.

(cont)

I have to get to higher grounds.

PANEL 2

JI XI is going up towards the rooftops. Using his superior strength and agility, he bounces off the walls of the dark alley from one side to the other and towards the top. The PMCs are down in the alley below, looking for a way up. The leader of the group is getting a radio transmission from MARCUS. The leader is a bit embarrassed he has not captured JI XI yet.

RADIO (JAGGED)

How are we doing, boys?

PMC LEADER

We are in pursuit, sir. We'll get him. He's very... AGILE. We... um... we just need to find a way up.

RADIO (OFF)

Are you SERIOUS? What EXACTLY am I paying you for?!

PANEL 3

Pull back to show JI XI jumping from rooftops to rooftops with ease, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon"-style. He is getting higher and higher towards a very tall building.

RADIO (JAGGED) (OFF)

Stop him by any means necessary, understood? I'll be right there.

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 4

JI XI is in mid jump from one rooftop to another. The PMCs have caught up to him and are shooting in his direction. The bullets graze him and shoot holes in his robe.

SFX

BRATATATATAT

JI XI CAPTION

I need to get out of here.

PANEL 5

On JI XI as he reaches the edge of a tall building's rooftop. There is nowhere else to go.

He stops dead in his track as he comes face to face with a heavily armed helicopter off panel (to be revealed next page). JI XI's robe is lifted by gusts of wind produced by the helicopter.

JI XI CAPTION

Is this for real?

**PAGE 3 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

SPLASH panel.

JI XI is facing a helicopter that is hovering by the edge of the rooftop. It is the Chinese Z-10 military black model. Its 30 mm canon mounted on its chin is pointed directly at JI XI. I chose the Z-10 model for one simple reason: it looks awesome. I think it would look even more awesome with some more rocket launchers under the wings as well, like [this](#). Again, feel free to customize it. It needs to look dangerous.

As you can see, the Z-10 has a double cockpit. MARCUS is inside the bottom cockpit, handling the canon (but we don't see him yet). The pilot is in the top cockpit.

JI XI CAPTION  
This is more serious than I thought.

PANEL 2

Closer on the helicopter. Inside the bottom cockpit, MARCUS smiles. He is wearing a Bluetooth headset for communication with his soldiers on the ground.

MARCUS is a Chinese businessman dressed in an expensive black suit with a white shirt. No tie. He is in his early 30s and in great shape. If possible, I would like to keep an air of mystery around MARCUS until he faces off with JI XI on page 5. Perhaps, we do an extreme close up or something of the like here.

MARCUS  
Hello Ji.

PANEL 3

MARCUS fires towards JI XI, using the canon mounted on the front of the helicopter.

SFX  
KA-BLAM KA-BLAM KA-BLAM

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 4

JI XI jumps out of the way, avoiding the salvo that destroys the edge of the rooftop.

SFX (BULLETS LANDING IN THE WALL)  
SPLAT SPLAT SPLAT

PANEL 5

Close on JI XI as he stands back up and activates the Artifact. His tattoos glow purple and smoke comes out of his mouth and nose.

JI XI CAPTION  
No civilians around. Now I can be...

**PAGE 4 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

SPLASH PANEL.

JI XI unleashes the power of the Thirteenth Artifact and tears down the helicopter to pieces using the destructive black smoke. It cuts the helicopter through the middle. Neither MARCUS nor the pilot is being harmed.

JI XI CAPTION  
...UNLEASHED.

SFX  
SKREEEEEEEECHT

PANEL 2

On the PMC LEADER and the henchmen that were pursuing JI XI. They have caught up to him on the rooftop. The destructive black smoke attacks them, cutting them. They drop their guns because of the pain they endure.

I imagine the destructive smoke manifests itself in the same way it did in Artifacts#6. I enjoyed the fact that the smoke also had skull-shaped manifestations in that issue. Maybe we can have that here too.

PMC LEADER  
AAAAARGH!

PANEL 3

As the helicopter spins out of control, MARCUS jumps out of the cockpit and towards the building's facade.

He is carrying a rocket launcher strapped to his back (similar to the cool-looking [M202A1 FLASH](#)). Feel free to modernize or make the M202A1 a little more high-tech as well. Again, as CEO of a Tech company, MARCUS has access to special weapons and technology.

NO DIALOGUE

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 4

The helicopter's pieces (including the pilot) are falling towards the crowd below. People on the streets are running in horror.

CROWD SFX

AAAAAAGH!

PANEL 5

On JI XI. He realizes that the helicopter is about to crash on the people below.

JI XI

No!

PANEL 6

MARCUS is scaling the facade of the building towards the top. The shadows of the helicopter pieces that are being lifted back up by the power of the Artifact cover his face. He is very surprised by this. He still has the rocket launcher strapped to his shoulder.

MARCUS

How?

**PAGE 5 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

Using the smoke, JI XI is lifting the helicopter pieces towards the rooftop, including its pilot. It takes a lot out of him.

I imagine the smoke to manifest itself in the shape of black tendrils here, a bit like tentacles that wrap themselves around the helicopter pieces and lift them back up towards the rooftop.

JI XI CAPTION

It's a lot trickier to use the smoke this way. It takes control and RESTRAINT.

PANEL 2

The helicopter pieces land onto the rooftop behind JI XI. He is still standing near the edge. The pilot is lying on the rooftop, disoriented, his helmet is half broken. That was a close call for him.

Smaller chunks of helicopter rain onto the rooftop.

PILOT

What the hell was that?

PANEL 3

On MARCUS's hand as it reaches the top of the building. JI XI is on the opposite side of the rooftop.

NO DIALOGUE

**(MORE)**

PANEL 4

Large panel from JI XI's POV. We finally see MARCUS as he walks towards JI XI and through the smoking remains of the helicopter that are scattered all over the rooftop. He is cool as a cucumber and holds his rocket launcher on one shoulder.

MARCUS

Impressive. I didn't know you could do that.

JI XI CAPTION

WHO is that?

PANEL 5

MARCUS is on one knee and fires a rocket towards JI XI.

MARCUS

Sorry about that but I don't have time to explain.

SFX

FWOOOP

**PAGE 6 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

About to hit JI XI, the rocket opens up and a wide steel cable net unfolds out of it. This is a mean to capture JI XI who is standing at the edge. Again, some high tech stuff (kind of like [this](#)). JI XI is in disbelief.

SFX

POP

JI XI

Huh?

PANEL 2

The net wraps itself around JI XI and electricity runs through it. It shocks JI XI and incapacitates him that way. JI XI is losing his balance and is about to fall off the edge of the roof.

Have you seen the movie "Jumper"? In the movie, the bad guys use electric nets to prevent the protagonist from teleporting. We are doing something similar here.

JI XI CAPTION

... can't... move...

PANEL 3

JI XI falls off the tall building and down towards the busy streets of Shibuya below. He is wrapped up inside the electric net.

JI XI CAPTION

... can't... think...

PANEL 4

JI XI hits the pavement as the crowd scatter.

SFX

THUD

**(MORE)**

PANEL 5

On JI XI. Wrapped up in the electrifying net, he is frothing at the mouth as about 10,000 volts of electricity runs through his body. He is convulsing with pain on the ground. He is no longer in Artifact form.

JI XI  
AAAAARRRRRGHHH!

JI XI CAPTION  
... can't... fight...

**PAGE 7 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

More PMCs show up and surround JI XI, pointing their guns in his direction. There are also plenty of regular people around.

MARCUS (OFF)  
Turn that thing off.

PANEL 2

On JI XI. The electric current is off and some henchmen are pulling the net off of him while others are keeping their weapons pointed at him. JI XI is still in shock from being electrocuted and can barely sit up.

JI XI CAPTION  
There are way too many bystanders here for me to use the Artifact. Though, even if I wanted to, I'm not sure that I COULD right now.

PANEL 3

MARCUS signals his men to lower their weapons in a very nonchalant fashion as he approaches JI XI.

MARCUS  
Relax boys. He's had enough, hasn't he?

PANEL 4

On JI XI. He is barely sitting up as MARCUS gets closer to him. JI XI is surprised that MARCUS knows his name.

MARCUS (OFF)  
Why are you making us run, Ji?  
(cont)  
We're on the same team.

JI XI CAPTION  
How does he know my name?

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 5

On MARCUS from JI XI's POV. He extends his hand towards JI XI to help him get up. He smiles a friendly smile.

MARCUS  
Would you PLEASE come with us?

**PAGE 8 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

Large panel. A limousine is driving South West towards Mount Ashitaka and away from Tokyo. MARCUS and JI XI are inside.

JI XI CAPTION

He tells me that his name is MARCUS. He is the CEO of an Advanced Technology Company called TIGRA.

(cont)

When I ask him how he found me, he says that he used satellites surveillance to pinpoint my location, that he has eyes in the sky.

PANEL 2

We put our attention on a flat TV screen inside the limo. There is a news report talking about the incident that just took place in Tokyo.

REPORTER (JAGGED)

Thankfully, the terrorist attack that struck downtown Tokyo this evening did not make any casualties...

JI XI CAPTION

He seems to have an answer for everything.

**(MORE)**

PANEL 3

Inside the limo and opposite the screen, MARCUS is drinking scotch in a crystal glass. It is all very posh and luxurious.

Marcus uses the remote to turn off the TV. JI XI sits awkwardly next to him, not knowing what to think.

MARCUS  
You want a drink?

JI XI  
No, thank you. I don't drink.

JI XI CAPTION  
Everything else he says is way too hard to believe but I listen anyway.

PANEL 4

On MARCUS from JI XI's POV. He sits confidently across from JI XI, the demeanor of an assured businessman who is making an easy sell.

JI XI CAPTION  
He explains that his ancestor founded the monastery with our Grand Master in order to protect the world from the Artifact.  
(cont)  
He swears that he serves the same purpose as I do.

PANEL 5

On JI XI. He is skeptical.

JI XI CAPTION  
According to him, his ancestor disagreed with our Grand Master. He believed a human host was too fragile a vessel for the overwhelming power of the Artifact.  
(cont)  
He believed, and so does Marcus, that there are better ways to protect the world from the Artifact.

**PAGE 9 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

The limousine arrives at a military base. It is heavily guarded and built inside Mount Ashitaka. We only see the big steel alloy reinforced doors that are set in the rock.

JI XI CAPTION

A couple hours later, we arrive at one of Marcus' secret facility.

PANEL 2

MARCUS walks into the facility corridor, passed the big doors, and towards a large service elevator. JI XI walks behind him, keeping his distance. This is a simple corridor dug directly into the rock. There are half a dozen PMCs guarding the entrance and the elevator.

MARCUS

Come down this way, I'll show you exactly what I'm talking about.

PANEL 3

The large elevator goes down with JI XI and MARCUS as passengers. MARCUS looks excited to show JI XI his invention.

MARCUS

You're gonna LOVE this.

**(MORE)**

PANEL 4

Pull back to show the very large room MARCUS and JI XI just entered.

The room is a very large circle at the center of the extinct volcano. At its center, there is the machine we call the CONTAINER. Rows after rows of computer stations are set up around it. Dozens of engineers and scientists are monitoring it. There is also a large TV screen that we will use later. It is all very bright and sterile like a big laboratory. MARCUS' henchmen are here for security as well. There is a fire sprinkler system on the ceiling that we will use later.

The CONTAINER is a big and impressive piece of technology designed to contain the Thirteenth Artifact. It starts on the ground and goes all the way up, passed the ceiling, and up the volcano's chimney. It is a giant gun pointed to the sky but that should not be obvious.

At its center, there is a glass tube that is meant to house the Artifact. Clear tubes and cables run from the glass tube and up into the machine towards the top. It is all very high-tech of course.

MARCUS

Lo and Behold... the CONTAINER!

PANEL 5

MARCUS stands next to the glass tube at the heart of the machine. He is showing it to JI XI.

MARCUS

With the technology we have today, there is no need for anyone to sacrifice their entire life in order to contain the Artifact.

**PAGE 10 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

MARCUS puts his hand on JI XI's shoulder.

MARCUS

Listen, Ji. I know how hard it has been for you and you probably think this is too good to be true.

(cont)

But the truth is I PERSONALLY designed the container so that it fulfills its mission.

(cont)

OUR mission.

PANEL 2

JI XI politely pushes MARCUS' hand off of his shoulder.

JI XI

I made a promise to contain the Artifact and to keep it from unleashing its evil onto the world. I won't let it fall into the wrong hands.

PANEL 3

MARCUS puts his hands together as if listening to JI XI intently.

MARCUS

I hear you, Ji. I really do. And I am SO glad to hear you say that.

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 4

MARCUS walks away from JI XI, gesturing to the technology surrounding them.

MARCUS

Look around you. I designed this place to endure earthquakes, floods, even a nuclear blast. It is safer than any other places on earth.

JI XI

Is this not a volcano?

PANEL 5

Back on MARCUS, smiling.

MARCUS

EXTINCT volcano.

(cont)

Like I said, safest place on earth.

PANEL 6

Close up on MARCUS. He is making a valid a point and he knows it.

MARCUS

Safer than YOU.

**PAGE 11 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

Now standing next to JI XI and with an arm on his shoulder, MARCUS appeals to his feeling. JI XI seems deeply affected by MARCUS's speech.

MARCUS

Now that the monastery is gone, this is the logical continuation of our brotherhood's mission. This is what our brothers wanted.

(cont)

No offense Ji, but you were never technically CHOSEN to carry the Artifact. How long can you last? Who will take over when you can't carry it anymore?

PANEL 2

On JI XI. He is humbled by MARCUS's argument.

MARCUS (OFF)

What will happen when you DIE?

(cont)

Are you willing to risk humanity's survival because of your pride?

JI XI

I... I never thought of that.

PANEL 3

The CONTAINER glass cylinder between MARCUS and JI XI opens up.

MARCUS

Don't you want to live a NORMAL life?

(cont)

THINK about it. This is the SAFEST choice for you and for all of humanity.

(cont)

Give it a chance.

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 4

On MARCUS, sincere.

MARCUS  
Give ME a chance.

JI XI CAPTION  
This is what I always wanted. What if it  
works? What if I can be FREE?

PANEL 5

JI XI reaches deep into his mouth for the Artifact. MARCUS and his  
team of scientists back up.

JI XI CAPTION  
I have to try.

MARCUS  
Watch out everyone.

PANEL 6

JI XI puts the Artifact in the machine. MARCUS can barely contain  
his glee.

MARCUS  
Good. Very good.

**PAGE 12 (5 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

MARCUS closely watches the Artifact in the glass tube at the heart of the container. He is elated and talks to the lead scientist behind him.

MARCUS  
Is it working?

LEAD SCIENTIST  
Yes, sir. We are ready to proceed.

PANEL 2

On the CONTAINER. MARCUS and JI XI watch as the Artifact turns on. It glows and produces black smoke that is being sucked up into the machine through the clear tubes and towards the top.

LEAD SCIENTIST (OFF)  
Energy absorption at one hundred percent.  
The container is working as intended. It is ready to operate, sir.

PANEL 3

On MARCUS as he talks to JI XI. The glow of the Artifact lights up his face. He is elated. His life-long dream is becoming reality.

MARCUS  
You see? It's working.

PANEL 4

On JI XI. The glow of the artifact lights up his face as well. He is both elated and relieved.

JI XI  
I can't believe it.

PANEL 5

On MARCUS. He walks towards the big TV screen.

MARCUS  
Put the U.N. Security Council on the line.

**PAGE 13 (6 PANELS)**

**PANEL 1**

On the big TV screen across from MARCUS and JI XI, United States Ambassador to the United Nations and current President of the U.N. Security Council, Samantha Miller, is looking at MARCUS. She looks alarmed.

I like the look of former real-life ambassador Susan Rice because she's fierce but that's up to you. I just think it might be more interesting to have an African American woman in that position if, at least, for the sake of diversity. Regardless, she is not to be messed with.

There are two signs on her desk, facing outward. The first one reads: **UNITED STATES**

and the second one reads: **PRESIDENT**

SAMANTHA MILLER

Did YOU call this emergency meeting? Do you truly think you can keep on sending us your PATHETIC empty threats?

**PANEL 2**

At the United Nations, the representatives from all the countries are watching MARCUS on a big screen across from their big round table. His image and voice are scrambled so that they cannot tell who he is.

MARCUS (JAGGED)

I have more than empty threats, Miss Miller. I have a demonstration.

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 3

From the U.N. POV, the screen displays a small Caribbean island seen from helicopter called ADROVA. This is a made up location by the way.

MARCUS (OFF)(JAGGED)

This is the Island Nation of Adrova. But I'm sure you are familiar with it as some of you own vacation homes on that very island.

(cont)

Pay close attention.

PANEL 4

Back at the base, MARCUS is giving orders and wearing protective goggles. He is handing a pair to JI XI who is right next to him, wondering what is going on.

MARCUS

Show them what we got.

JI XI

What are you doing?

MARCUS

Here, you should wear that.

PANEL 5

Pull back. The CONTAINER surges with light. Even more black smoke is being pumped up towards the ceiling. In the glass container, the Artifact shines a blinding light that floods the entire room. We see the silhouettes of everyone in the room, including the LEAD SCIENTIST.

LEAD SCIENTIST

All readings are stable.

**(MORE)**

PANEL 6

Outside, it is still night-time.

A long shot of Mount Ashitaka which houses the secret base. A black destructive smoke energy beam is being projected out of the volcano crater and straight up towards the sky. The energy beam vertically tears through the horizon.

LEAD SCIENTIST (OFF)  
Satellites are in position.

**PAGE 14 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

Up in space, a satellite receives the black smoke beam from earth and redirects it. The energy beam bounces off the satellite's mirror towards another satellite's mirror and back down towards the earth.

LEAD SCIENTIST (OFF)  
Mirrors are performing as expected.

PANEL 2

On the Island Nation of ADROVA. The black smoke beam is about to hit it from the sky.

LEAD SCIENTIST (OFF)  
It should strike any second, sir.

PANEL 3

Long shot of the island. The energy beam hits hard. A black smoke mushroom cloud rises towards the sky as the island drowns in black destructive smoke. The ocean waves backwards and away from the island as a reaction to the impact.

SFX (LARGE)  
KRAKA-BOOM

PANEL 4

Closer on a small village on the island. It is drowned in black destructive smoke. Villagers, buildings, and vegetation are disintegrating into dust, leaving only skeletons and ashes behind.

LEAD SCIENTIST (OFF)  
The strike is successful, sir.

(MORE)

PANEL 5

Back at the U.N., the representatives are watching what is left of the island on the screen. Everything on the island has disintegrated, leaving only the bare rock covered in ashes.

At the bottom of the screen, a bank account number is displayed.

It reads: **XD7 0006077054836899966607CHX**

MARCUS (JAGGED)

All the member countries of the United Nations will surrender their authority to ME.

(cont)

As a sign of good will, you will transfer a total of fifty trillion dollars to the account below.

(cont)

If you fail to do so, New York City is the next target.

(cont)

And I will damn make sure it is being TELEVISED.

PANEL 6

On the UN members to show their saddened and frustrated reactions. Samantha Miller is fuming.

MARCUS (JAGGED)(OFF)

You have twenty-four hours.

**PAGE 15 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

On MARCUS, smiling. Behind him, two of his henchmen are holding JI XI back.

JI XI  
What are you doing? You LIED to me!

PANEL 2

MARCUS turns to JI XI, showing his real self. He talks to him with disdain.

MARCUS  
You miserable idiot.  
(cont)  
My ancestors never wanted to contain the Artifact. For generations, we have been trying to put our hands on it in order to use it for its one TRUE purpose...

PANEL 3

MARCUS is face to face with JI XI as the two henchmen hold JI XI back. He grabs JI XI by the jaw, squeezing his face.

MARCUS  
...as a weapon of mass destruction. And now, thanks to you, it has finally happened. With the power of the Artifact in my possession, I will OWN this world.

PANEL 4

The two henchmen take JI XI towards the CONTAINER room exit. We can still see MARCUS behind.

MARCUS  
Take him outside and put him out of his misery like the pathetic dog that he is.

**(MORE)**

PANEL 5

Outside the volcano's large steel alloy doors, the henchmen are forcing JI XI down to his knees.

HENCHMAN

Get down.

JI XI CAPTION

I have made a terrible mistake. As if failing my brothers and watching them die was not enough, I now have to live with the death of THOUSANDS on my conscience.

PANEL 6

Close on JI XI. He is closing his eyes, kneeling on the ground. One of the two henchmen has his gun (Beretta M9) to JI XI's head. He is about to pull the trigger.

JI XI CAPTION

Just for a second, I actually WANT to die so that I can rid myself of all the guilt.

HENCHMAN

Any last words, baldy?

JI XI CAPTION

Then I realize that if I don't stop him, MILLIONS more may die. There is only one thing I can do.

**PAGE 16 (4 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

On this page, we want to show how skilled JI XI is at Martial Arts. Even without the Artifact, he is still a badass.

Pushing himself off the ground with one hand, JI XI double kicks the henchman in the face and chest with both his feet. The kick in the face breaks the henchman's nose and makes him drop his gun.

JI XI CAPTION

I must fight.

SFX

CRACK

PANEL 2

As the second henchman reaches for his gun, JI XI performs a jumping crescent kick right in his face. Teeth go flying.

SFX

POW

JI XI CAPTION

My training kicks in. I have not used the Deadly Arts in a while but my body remembers it.

PANEL 3

JI XI grabs the henchmen handguns.

JI XI

On the other hand, I have never used guns before.

**(MORE)**

PANEL 4

SPLASH PANEL

JI XI bursts through the large doors of the facility, one Beretta M9 in each hand. He performs a flying side kick on a henchman who is standing right by the doors while simultaneously shooting the other henchmen around. He kicks the henchman right in the face. This is a John Woo movie moment.

Repeat SFX (GUNS) as many times as needed.

SFX (KICK)

BASH

SFX (GUNS)

BLAM

(cont)

BLAM

JI XI CAPTION

But I'm a fast learner.

**PAGE 17 (7 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

JI XI performs a push kick on a henchman and sends him flying through the CONTAINER room door. He smashes the door opened that way.

JI XI  
Knock-knock!

PANEL 2

MARCUS takes cover behind the computer stations as henchmen on either side of him get shot down. Behind, scientists are running for the exit in a panic.

SFX  
BLAM  
(cont)  
BLAM

MARCUS  
Why didn't I see THAT coming?

PANEL 3

Close on a scientist's hand as it triggers the fire alarm on a wall. The alarm goes off and the lights switch to a red hue, only the emergency lights are on in the room. The fire sprinklers also turn on. The emergency lights and sprinklers will be on until the end of the upcoming fight.

SFX (SWITCH)  
click

SFX (ALARM)  
DING DING DING DING

(MORE)

PANEL 4

Long shot so that we can see the CONTAINER room with the sprinklers and emergency lights on.

JI XI stands near the center of the room, a smoking gun in each hand. All the henchmen are dead and the scientists are gone. MARCUS is hiding behind a computer station and is stealthily making his way towards JI XI from behind.

JI XI  
Marcus! Where are you?

PANEL 5

MARCUS grabs JI XI from behind. He has one hand on JI XI's throat and the other on his wrist, twisting it so that JI XI drops that one gun.

MARCUS  
Right here.

PANEL 6

On JI XI. MARCUS throws him and he crashes on the computer stations, bouncing off of them. He loses his second gun in the process.

JI XI CAPTION  
Apparently, I am not the only one trained  
in the Deadly Arts.

PANEL 7

On MARCUS. With his back to us, he is taking his shirt off.

MARCUS  
This is gonna be fun.

**PAGE 18 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

SPLASH panel of a scary looking MARCUS with his shirt off. He is in great shape and insanely ripped. He has a huge tattoo of a white tiger on his chest. It is quite a sight. He is in [Tiger claw](#) stance with his hands in the shape of claws. The water from the fire sprinklers beat on his chest.

He is as fierce as Bruce Lee.

MARCUS  
Bring it.

PANEL 2

On JI XI. He is in a Shaolin Kung Fu [White Crane](#) stance or something similar. Whatever looks the coolest.

JI XI  
My pleasure.

PANEL 3

JI XI performs a direct kick towards MARCUS's face. MARCUS easily blocks it and grabs JI XI's shinbone with both hands.

MARCUS  
You're gonna have to do better than that.

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 4

MARCUS twists and breaks JI XI's shinbone. JI XI is flabbergasted. He did not expect MARCUS to be this good.

MARCUS  
A lot better.

SFX  
CRACK

JI XI  
ARRRGH!

PANEL 5

Close on JI XI as MARCUS performs a [Palm Heel](#) strike right to his face, breaking his nose.

SFX  
POW

JI XI CAPTION  
I am only an amateur to him.

PANEL 6

MARCUS overpowers JI XI.

He twists and breaks JI XI's arm while pushing on his back with one knee for leverage.

SFX  
CRACK

JI XI  
AARGH!

JI XI CAPTION  
He is taking me apart one piece at a time.

**PAGE 19 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

Holding him by the throat, MARCUS lifts JI XI off the ground. JI XI's body is limp.

MARCUS

You think you stand a chance? Look at you.

PANEL 2

Using the [Double Palm strike](#) technique, MARCUS hits JI XI in the solar plexus with both hands and sends him flying backwards.

MARCUS

Without the Artifact, you are NOTHING!

SFX

THUD

PANEL 3

On MARCUS, in a more relax stance. He is just warming up and barely breaking a sweat. He smiles and teases JI XI. We can see the CONTAINER and the glass tube that houses the Artifact far behind him.

MARCUS

Well, I'm done stretching. What about you?

PANEL 4

JI XI is on the ground. Punched to a bloody pulp, he is struggling to get back up. With his arm and leg broken, he looks like a broken puppet. There is blood coming out of his mouth and ears. Near him, there is the body of a henchman with a gun. JI XI notices the gun.

The floor is covered with water from the sprinklers.

JI XI CAPTION

I cannot beat him...

(cont)

...but I still have a chance.

**(MORE)**

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PANEL 5

Close on JI XI's hand as it grabs the nearby gun.

JI XI CAPTION  
If I'm fast enough.

PANEL 6

Close on JI XI as he fires a single shot.

SFX  
BLAM

**PAGE 20 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

On MARCUS. He examines his body. Not a single shot wound to be found.

MARCUS  
HA! You pathetic dog!  
(cont)  
You MISSED!

PANEL 2

On JI XI, still on the ground and in a pool of his own blood. He drops the gun and stumbles back down, physically beaten.

JI XI (SMALL)  
No, I didn't.

PANEL 3

MARCUS turns around swiftly as a thin trail of black smoke comes near him.

MARCUS  
What?

PANEL 4

On the CONTAINER. JI XI shot a hole through the glass tube and black smoke is coming out of it.

MARCUS (OFF)  
No...  
(cont)  
NOOOO!

**(MORE)**

PANEL 5

On JI XI, still on the ground, barely alive. He points his finger towards the faint trail of smoke, reaching for it.

JI XI CAPTION

In my head, I pray.

(cont)

I pray for that cursed Artifact that has been weighing my life down.

(cont)

I pray for that great source of evil and destruction.

PANEL 6

The smoke, as if with a conscience of its own, wraps itself around JI XI's finger.

JI XI CAPTION

I pray for the bane of my existence to come back to me.

**PAGE 21 (6 PANELS)**

PANEL 1

Large panel. The destructive black smoke lifts JI XI's broken body up in the air as if embracing him, cradling him, saving him.

JI XI CAPTION

I pray for it to save me.

PANEL 2

Now broken out of the CONTAINER, the Artifact hovers towards JI XI with a mind of its own. MARCUS is putting his arm on his face to protect himself from the black smoke that fills up the room. He extends his hand towards the Artifact but cannot reach it.

MARCUS

No...NO!

PANEL 3

Close up on the Artifact. It is entering JI XI's wide opened mouth and JI XI's tattoos start to glow.

JI XI CAPTION

My prayers have been answered.

PANEL 4

JI XI is back! With the Artifact activated and looking as scary as the Angel of Death himself, JI XI stands over MARCUS. His wounds are healed. MARCUS knows this is the end. He is kneeling on the floor, defeated.

MARCUS

You CHEATED!

(MORE)

PANEL 5

On MARCUS. JI XI holds him up by the throat as the smoke surrounds him and starts to cut his flesh.

MARCUS

Without the artifact, you would have lost!  
YOU SHOULD BE DEAD!!!

PANEL 6

Using the destructive black smoke, JI XI tears MARCUS into pieces. JI XI actually feels bad about killing MARCUS but he has to stop him. There is an air of sadness about JI XI in this moment because he is, in some twisted way, killing the only friend he ever had.

Perhaps we can add a close up of JI XI in insert. Up to you.

JI XI

I know.

**PAGE 22 (1 PANEL)**

SPLASH PAGE

We book-end the issue with another SPLASH PAGE.

Dawn.

JI XI is walking away from mount Ashitaka. It is kind of your typical action flick bad ass shot. As JI XI walks towards us, the base is exploding in the background. It looks as if Mount Ashitaka is erupting because of the explosion and smoke coming out of the top.

JI XI CAPTION

I destroyed the container and every data linked to me and the Artifact. I hope that's enough.

(cont)

To think that Marcus almost KILLED me. If it wasn't for the Artifact, I would be dead.

(cont)

He was STRONGER, FASTER and more CUNNING than I'll ever be. How could I have been so NAIVE? My stupidity almost cost the lives of MILLIONS.

(cont)

I thought that I could break away from the Artifact, that I could break free from the responsibility I took on the day I ripped it out of my Master's chest.

(cont)

Now I know I cannot reject my destiny. The Artifact came back to me like a pet to his master. And I KNEW. I somehow knew that it would happen.

(cont)

Though I cannot help but wonder... is the Artifact the Master and I, merely the pet?

(cont)

Now back on my leash, I was taught a lesson. I should never leave my Master's side.

(MORE)

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(cont)

Whether I like it or not, the Artifact is part of me, part of who I am, and I cannot run from that.

(cont)

I MUST protect the artifact. I must CONTAIN it. In the end, it CHOSE me.

(cont)

More like Marcus will come after me and they will try to put their hands on the Artifact. I will not let it happen. I will stop them. I will NOT run.

**(THE END)**