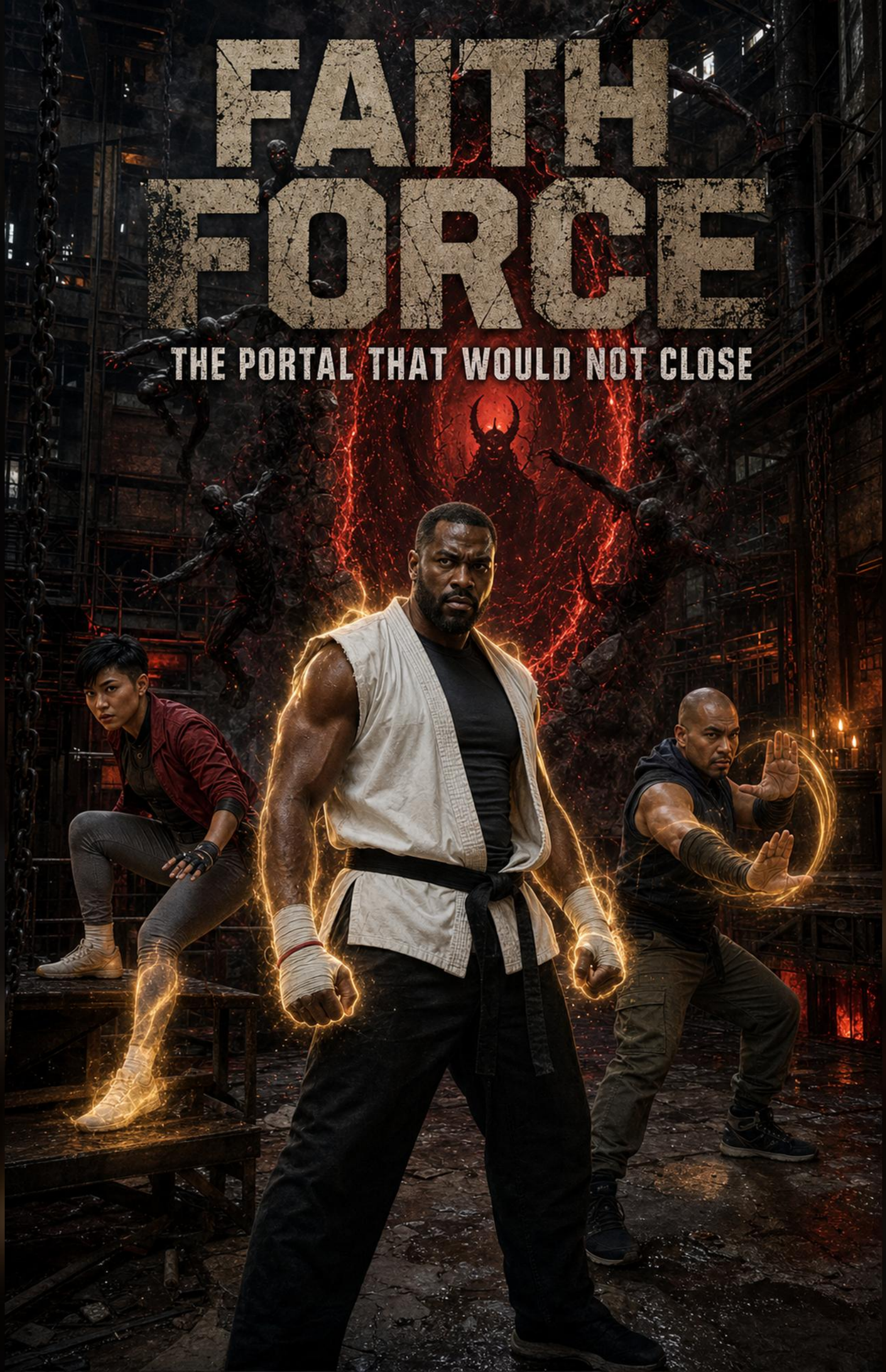


FAITH FORCE

THE PORTAL THAT WOULD NOT CLOSE



Before sunrise, the Hellgate Foundry started breathing red light through its broken windows.



Marcus Hale led us in because no army could arrive quietly enough to stop a ritual already this close.



Serena moved like a thrown blade. Darius counted guards, exits, and mistakes. I trusted both with my life.



Below the old furnaces, cultists were pulling a door to Hell open one prayer at a time.



The cult did not leave the gate unguarded.



Their warrior monks met us with discipline, iron beads, and bodies trained to break stone.



Against ordinary fighters, that would have been enough.



Against Serena, speed became a wall they could not read.



Against Marcus and Darius, every strike became proof that human mastery still mattered.



When the monks fell,
they did not yield.



They whispered names hidden
inside their own shadows,
and the shadows answered.



Demon familiars rose through
the glowing brands on their arms.



The monks stood again as imps,
smaller than men but burning
with magic no human training
had prepared us to touch.



Serena hit first, and her perfect kick passed through smoke that burned back.



Darius blocked claws that were not fully physical, and the spell broke through his guard.



I threw my strongest strike and felt the imp twist around the impact.



For the first time that night, being the best humans alive was not enough.



Fear asked us to scatter.
I looked at Serena and
Darius and found
something stronger.



I had faith in their
courage, their skill, and
the promise that none of
us would let the others fall.



That faith became heat,
then light, then a golden
force that answered every
hand reaching for mine.



The imps recoiled because
the power was not mine
alone. It belonged to
the team.



Faith Force did not
make our training vanish.
It made every lesson
burn brighter.



Serena's speed
became a golden arc.



Darius turned
defense into light.



I drove the center open,
and the imps burned
wherever our strikes
touched.



The furnace gate broke,
and the ritual chamber
finally saw us coming.



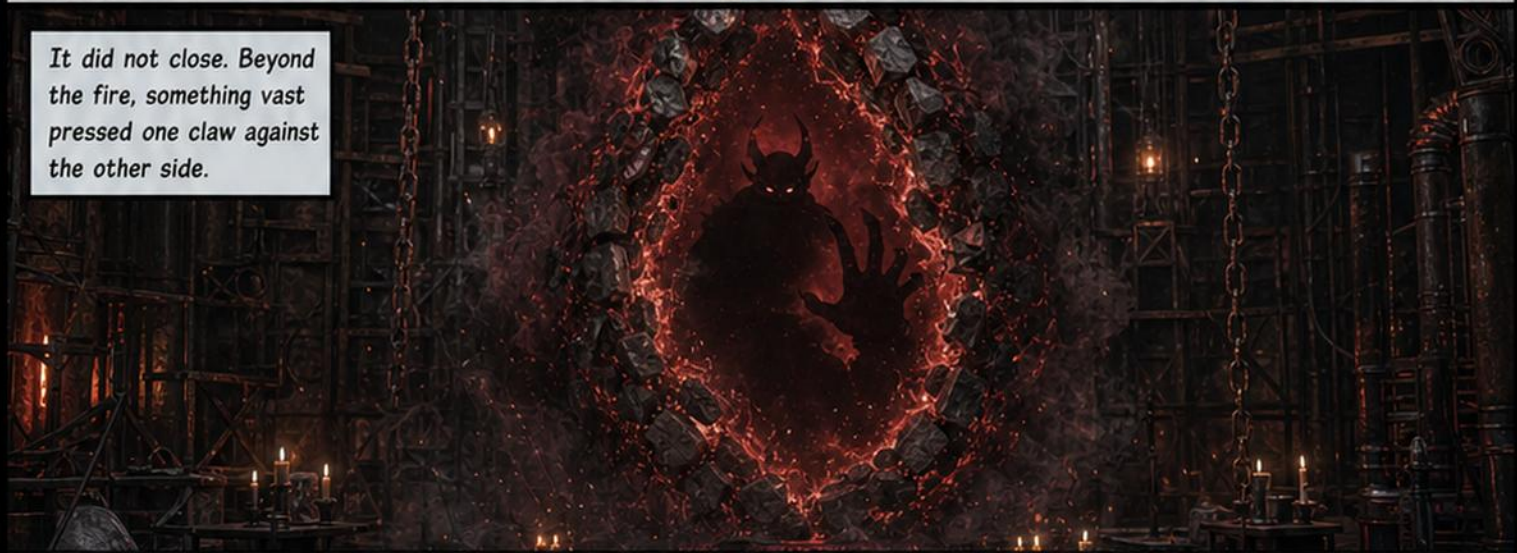
The cultists scattered when Faith Force hit the circle, but the portal had already learned the shape of our world.



We broke the symbols, shattered the anchors, and forced the red wound to shrink.



It did not close. Beyond the fire, something vast pressed one claw against the other side.



We had delayed the Demon King. Now we had to become strong enough to survive the day the delay ended.

