

GOLD DIGGER NO. 17

FRED PERRY



# GOLD DIGGER



THIS IS JADE-REALM...  
A WORLD APART FROM  
EARTH...

THIS IS THE  
HEALER'S CLINIC OF  
THE GREAT  
COLOSSIUM...

IF YOU'RE LUCKY  
ENOUGH TO SURVIVE  
A BATTLE AGAINST  
G'NOLGA AND HER  
COHORTS... THIS  
IS MOST LIKELY  
THE PLACE YOU'D  
WAKE UP IN...

I'LL CLOSE  
THE CURTAIN AFTER  
I'VE GOTTEN MY  
GEAR.

I'LL BE OUT OF  
YOUR HAIR IN A  
MINUTE...

SO THAT'S WHAT HIS  
"HUMAN FORM" LOOKS  
LIKE...

GAR?  
I THOUGHT  
WERE-CATS  
HEAL  
FAST!

BUT YOU LOOK  
WORSE THAN I  
DO!...

G'NOLGA'S OAKEN STAVES  
HAD DWARVEN COLD-IRON TIPS.  
EVERY BLOW SHE DELIVERED  
DISRUPTED MY MAGIC ABILITY TO  
HEAL THE DAMAGE...

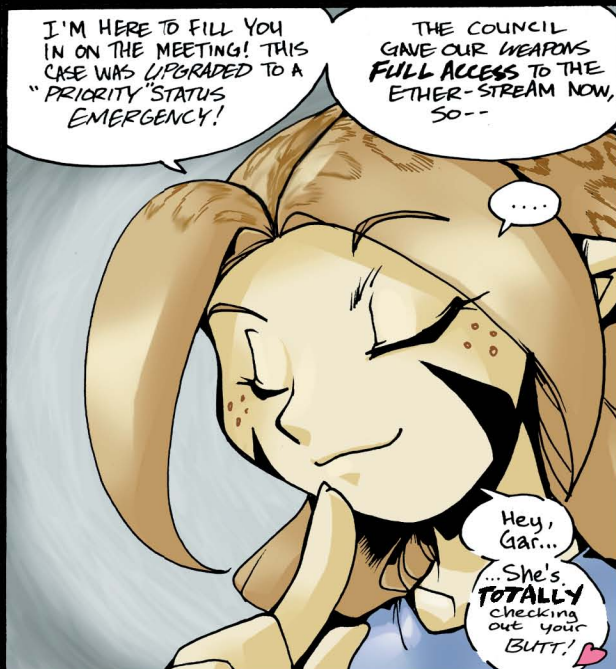


SOME OF US ARE  
TRYING TO **HEAL**  
IN HERE GAR...

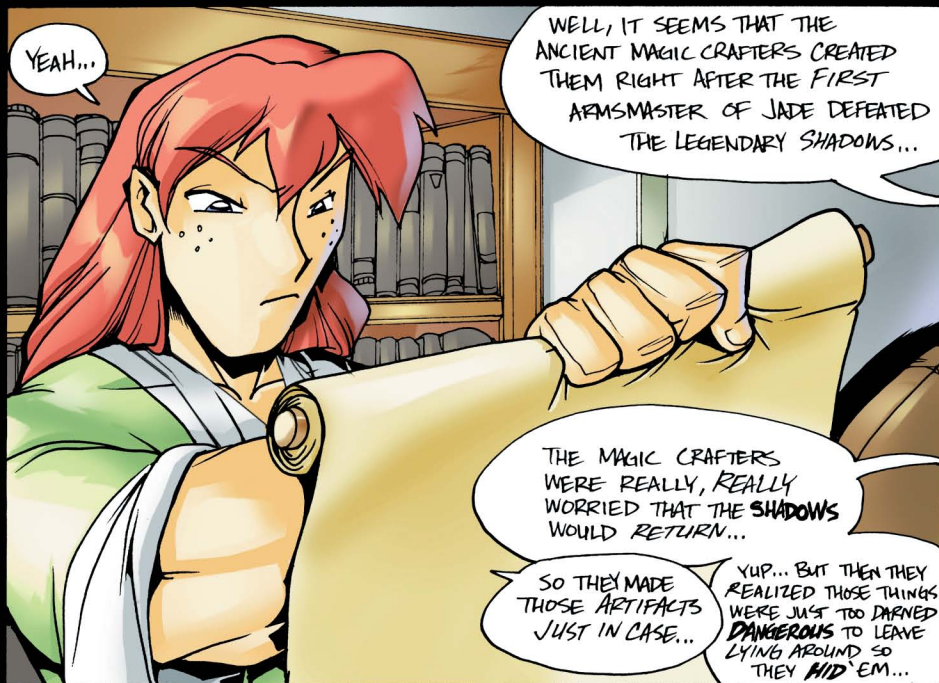
SORRY, ROOMMATE...

ONE NIGHT'S REST AND  
RECOUPARATION IS ALL  
I CAN AFFORD RIGHT  
NOW...















"AND JUST WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO, LITTLE SISTER?..."

"JULIA'S SEMI-FINAL MATCH IS ABOUT TO BEGIN! EVERYBODY'S THERE TO WATCH IT AND I'M ALREADY LATE!!!"

HEY, GINA?!  
WHERE'S SHIELA??  
SHE'S GONNA MISS THE WHOLE THING!

PERHAPS SHE'S UP IN THE CHEAP SEATS WITH THE REST OF THE EDGE GUARD, BRIANNA. AFTER ALL, MOM ONLY HAD THREE FREE PASSES--

WAIT--

WHAT'S THE MATTER?  
ISN'T IT IN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY THAT MOM MIGHT WIN?

WELL, RHAOTON VISITED MASTER LEEP, JULIA'S OLD TEACHER, JUST LAST SPRING... AND MASTER LEEP... **BOWED FIRST** WHEN THEY MET...

W-WHAT DOES THAT MEAN.

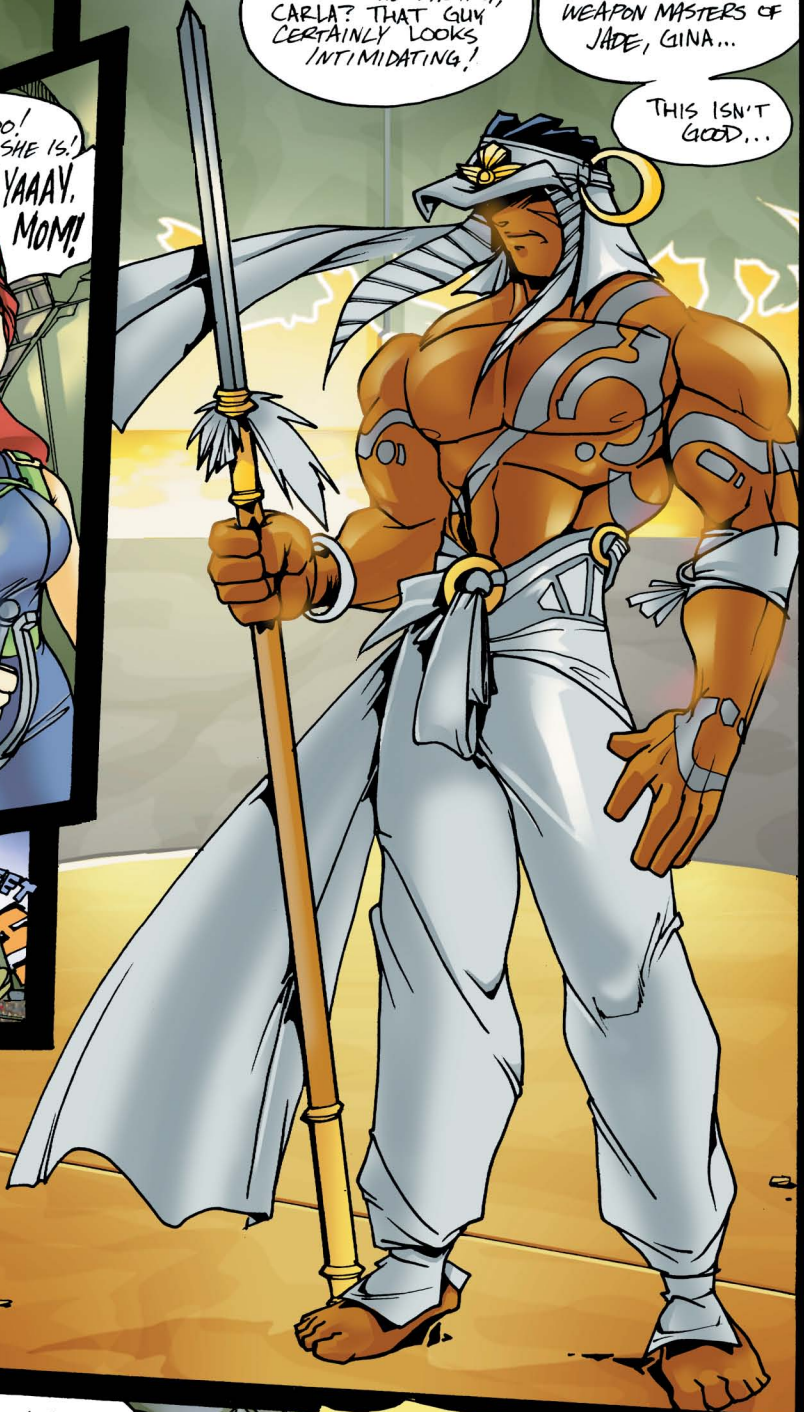
TO BOW FIRST IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANOTHER AS YOUR **SUPERIOR!**

Jinkies...

--WAIT A MINUTE... WHO IS SHE FACING, CARLA? THAT GUY CERTAINLY LOOKS INTIMIDATING!

ITS RHAOTON... ONE OF THE TEN WEAPON MASTERS OF JADE, GINA...

THIS ISN'T GOOD...



**WIN ONE FOR THE OOOLE PEEBOCHU, MOM!**

\* BRIANNA'S BELOVED A.I.-PET WAS "KILLED" IN ACTION LAST ISSUE... - F.













HEY! THAT GUY  
HIT MY MOM!  
I'M GONNA--

GINA?

FIRST OF ALL, THIS  
IS AN ARENA OF COMBAT...  
SECOND, ANYONE WHO'S  
ACTUALLY GOOD ENOUGH  
TO SMACK MOM--  
YOU PROBABLY DON'T  
WANNA MESS WITH!



I JUST WISH  
MOM COULD TAKE  
A HEALING POTION  
OR SOMETHING FOR  
THAT SMACK!  
  
BUT MAGIC  
DOESN'T WORK  
IN THE ARENA.

en garde.

SHNNL

TS SH  
TS SH



SWWR

CHUNK



RHAOTON HAS  
NEVER TRULY BEEN  
DEFEATED IN  
THE ARENA!

IT IS SAID THAT  
THE ONLY REASON  
HE WAS **NOT** IN  
THE SEMI-FINALS  
DURING THE LAST  
TOURNAMENT--

-IS THAT SOME  
URGENT MATTER  
CALLED HIM  
AWAY.

BUT NOW  
HE'S  
BACK TO  
TRY AND  
WIN?

"THAT'S RIGHT,  
GINA...I JUST  
HOPE TEACHER  
HAS A PLAN!"

"I DOUBT SHE  
WILL WIN  
WITH SKILL  
ALONE ---"





MEANWHILE...



....

*Sigh*

WHAT'S THAT?



HMM?

ITS---

ITS CALLED A PHOTO... A SMALL BUT REALLY DETAILED "PAINTING"...

YOU GET THEM FROM DEVICES CALLED "CAMERAS"...

OH... "TECHNOLOGY" HUH.

MAY I SEE?



WELL UH...  
OKAY...

OH MY...  
THAT IS DETAILED!

SHE'S...  
pretty...

WHO IS SHE?

HER NAME'S  
BRITANNY...

SHE'S  
TEACHER'S DAUGHTER.

ADOPTED...



UM... IS SHE?...  
YOU KNOW...  
Y-YOUR GIRLFRIEND?!



NAW...  
...SHE'S...

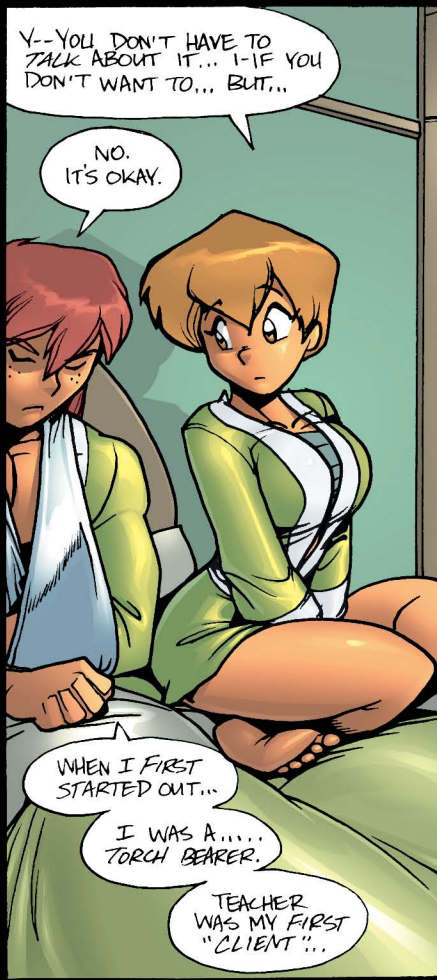
...taken...

**WHEW!**

BUT FOR  
A WHILE...  
I THOUGHT...

...I HOPED...





Y--YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT IT... I-IF YOU DON'T WANT TO... BUT...

NO.  
IT'S OKAY.

WHEN I FIRST STARTED OUT...

I WAS A.....  
TORCH BEARER.

TEACHER  
WAS MY FIRST  
"CLIENT"...



ONLY SHE WASN'T  
MY TEACHER BACK  
THEN.

SHE WAS AN ADVENTURER.

SOMEHOW, SHE WAS CURSED TO  
REMAIN ON JADE... PERMANENTLY  
SEPERATED FROM HER FAMILY  
ON EARTH... SHE WAS QUESTING  
TO FIND A WAY TO REMOVE THAT  
CURSE...

I WAS HIRED FOR  
HER SEARCH THROUGH  
BLACK MOIR SWAMP...  
AND NATURALLY THAT  
DAMNED SWAMP SCARED  
ME OUT OF MY MIND!



IT DIDN'T TAKE  
LONG FOR MY WORST  
FEARS TO BE  
REALIZED.

A BOG  
THRESHER  
ATTACKED!

I WAS  
PARALYSED  
WITH  
FRIGHT...

BUT JULIA...



WELL, SUFFICE TO SAY...  
THE THRESHER DIDN'T STAND  
A CHANCE. WE DECIDED TO  
SET CAMP IN THE THRESHER'S  
TERRITORY... AS IT WAS SURE TO  
BE CLEARED OF OTHER BEASTS..  
THRESHERS LIKE PRIVACY.

GAR? COULD YOU  
CUT A FEW STEAKS  
FROM THE RIBS?

GOOOD  
EATIN' THOSE  
BOG THRESHERS!

....



THAT NIGHT, WE  
ATE PRETTY DAMN  
GOOD!!

WE BEGAN  
TALKING AND  
TELLING  
STORIES  
AFTER  
DINNER...



SHE LOVED TO TALK ABOUT HER FAMILY... SHE MISSED THEM A **LOT**, AND TELLING ME ABOUT THEM SEEMED TO EASE HER MIND A LITTLE.

BUT MOST OF ALL, SHE LIKED TO TALK ABOUT HER **DAUGHTERS**.

ESPECIALLY HER YOUNGER DAUGHTER, **BRITANNY**...

SOMEHOW, JULIA THOUGHT BRIT' WAS "**PERFECT**" FOR ME ...

SHE ALWAYS HAD PHOTOS TO SHOW ME.

FROM JULIA'S STORIES ABOUT BRIT' ...

AND THE PHOTOS ...

I--  
I FELL IN LOVE.

IN LOVE WITH A GIRL I'VE NEVER MET... BUT **KNEW** VERY WELL...

JULIA ONCE TRIED TO GET ME TOGETHER WITH BRITANNY...

THE CURSE THAT KEPT HER SEPERATE FROM HER FAMILY LIFTED **ONCE A YEAR** ... AND DURING THAT TIME, SHE AND HER FAMILY CAME TOGETHER TO ENJOY THAT SPECIAL DAY...

JULIA PLANNED FOR ME TO "HAPPEN BY" AND MEET BRITANNY.

BUT...

I STAYED HIDDEN... I WAS TOO SHY... AFRAID.





I REMEMBER JUST **STANDING** THERE... COWERING IN THE BRUSH. WATCHING HER... ALL THE WHILE, THE WORD "PERFECT" ECHOING OVER AND OVER IN MY HEAD...

I HAD NEVER SEEN A WERE-CHEETAH BEFORE.

EVERYONE THOUGHT THEY HAD **DIED** OUT...

BUT THERE SHE WAS... THE LAST OF HER KIND. BEAUTIFUL. EXOTIC.

EVERY WORD JULIA USED TO DESCRIBE HER WAS **TRUE**... AND **MORE**...

I COULDN'T MOVE! I JUST COULDN'T **MOVE**

JULIA VOLUNTEERED TO TEACH ME AFTER THAT... I GUESS SHE WANTED TO HELP BUILD MY CONFIDENCE.

EVENTUALLY, I WORKED UP THE BRAVERY TO MEET BRITTANY... BUT... BY THAT TIME, SHE FOUND HER OWN LOVE... I WAS TOO LATE...

IF ONLY...

I--

I GUESS SOME THINGS WEREN'T MEANT TO BE...

...

THANKS FOR LISTENING LUAN.

I KINDA FEEL BETTER NOW.

I'M--- GLAD.

IT COULD BE...

POSSIBLY...

THE ONE FOR YOU ISN'T A ONE-OF-A-KIND, EXOTIC BEAUTY...

MAYBE THE ONE FOR YOU...

IS JUST.... NORMAL...

MAYBE?..

G--

GAR?



# MANGA EX



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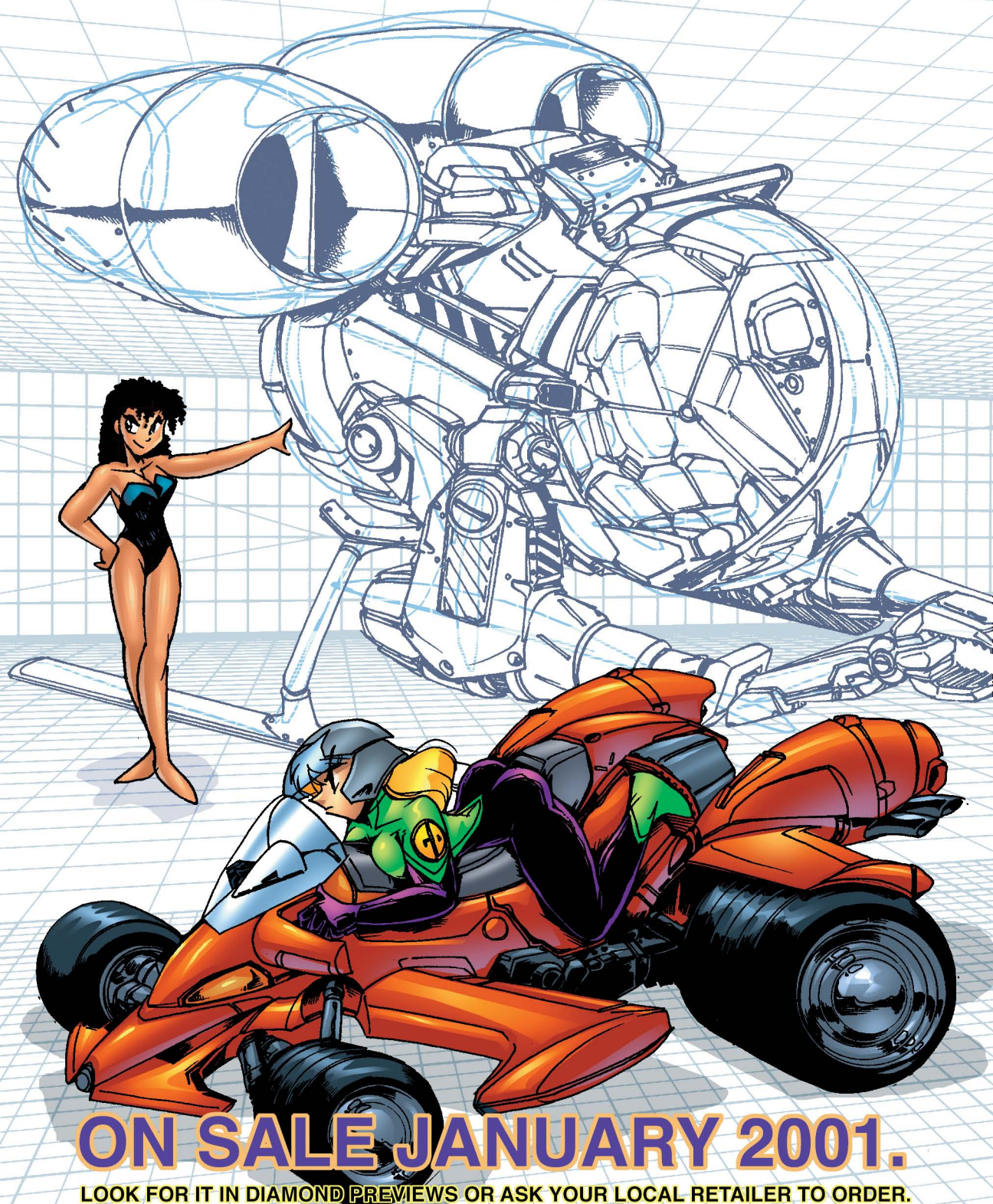
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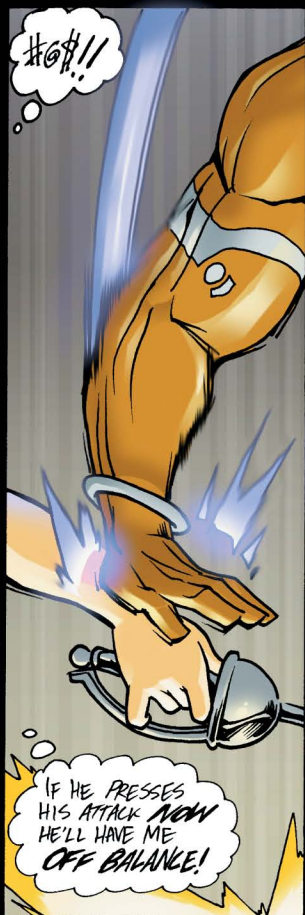
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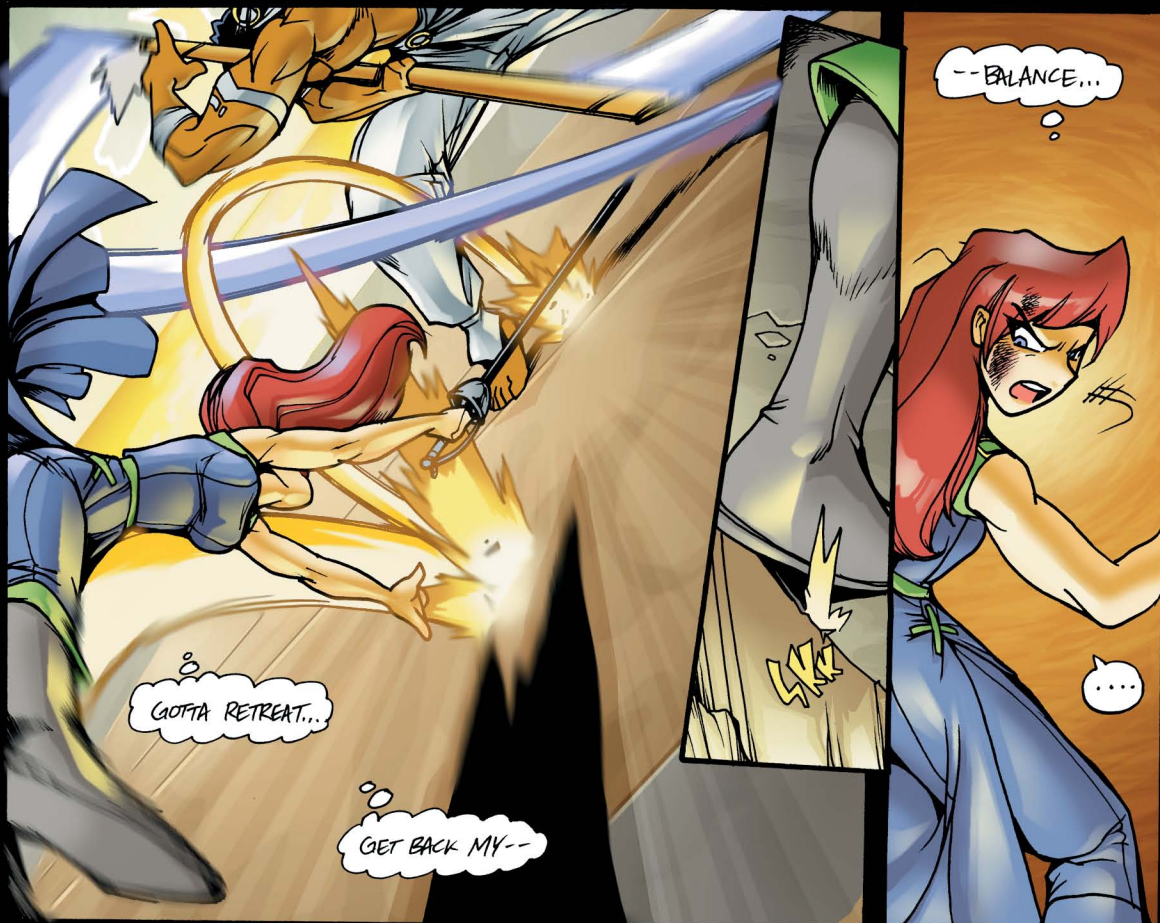
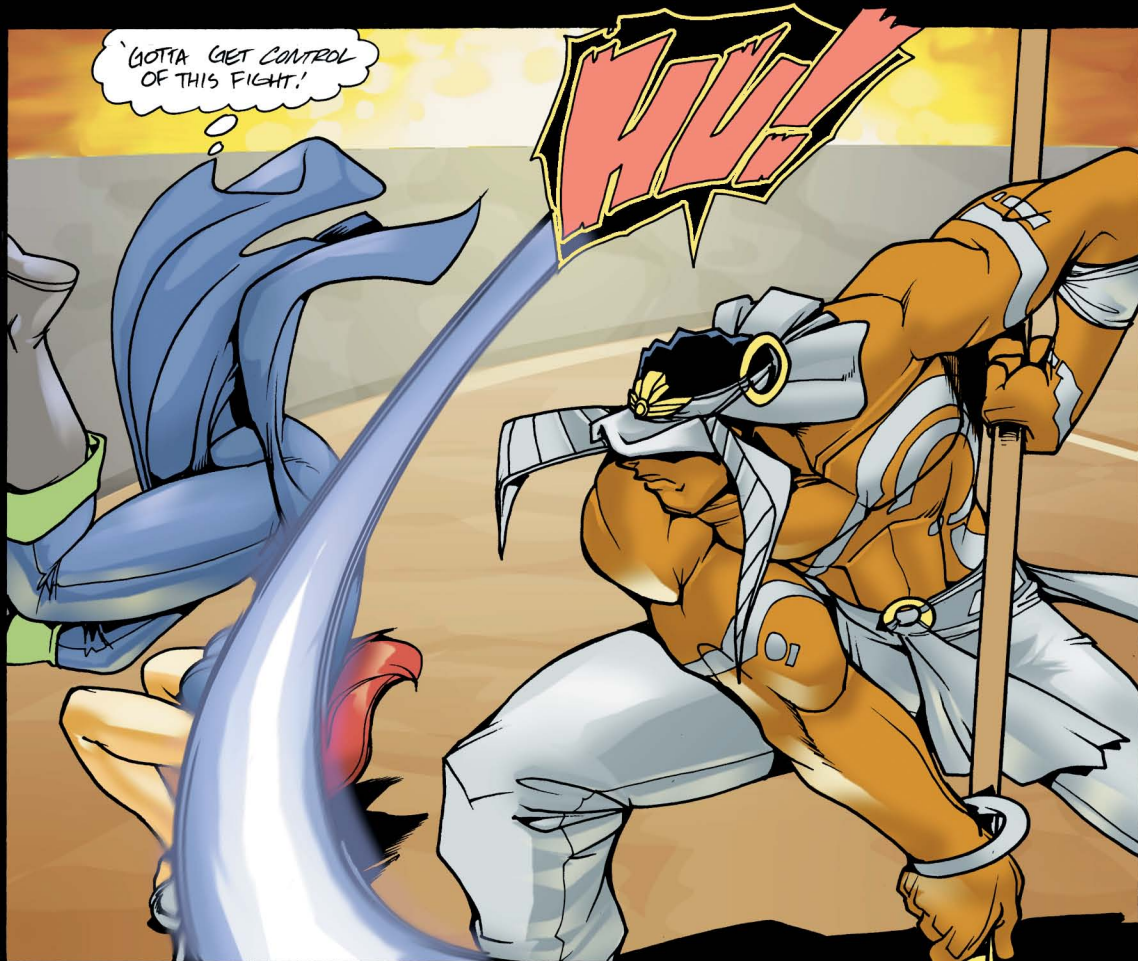
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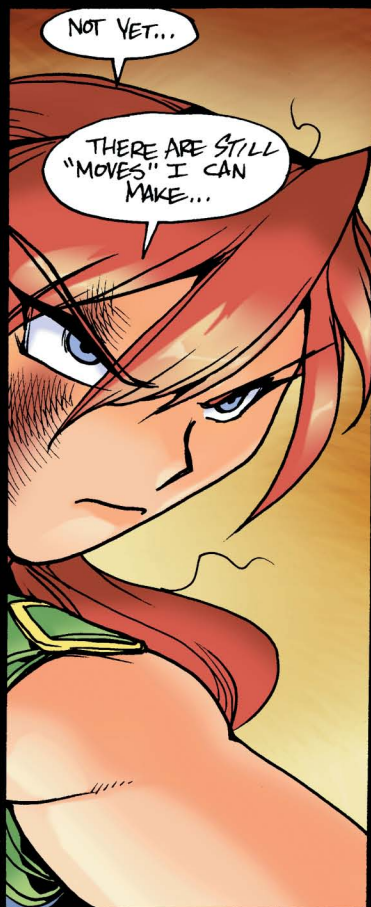














I'M GOING TO HAVE  
TO USE A MASTER  
TECHNIQUE...

...AND PRAY HE  
DOESN'T KNOW  
HOW TO COUNTER...

RAAA

HZU

AEGIS CRASH!

FOOK

KNK GWKG GKKNG KKNK









WHAT!?

SHE'S LEFT HERSELF  
WIDE OPEN!

Fool!

TEACHER'S  
ATTACKING  
FROM ABOVE,  
B-BUT---

YAAH

AEGIS  
STO

KO

WHAT?

W--

SHRRP

VSH

!

RZ



A BATTLE WELL AND TRULY FOUGHT, RHAOTEN.

YOU HAVE MY **LITMIST** RESPECT FOR YOUR **SKILLS**.

I UNDERSTAND, NOW, WHY MY **FLIPPANT** AND **NONCHALANT** ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEM EARLIER ENRAGED YOU SO...

VHF

S-SHAK

JULIA--

?

VVH

GWAAHAAHAAHAAH

JULIA!! YOU ARE A MARVEL!

A MARVEL!

CHAAAAHAAHAAH

GHAAH

eheheh...

C- COULD YOU SET ME DOWN NOW? PLEASE?

HAHAH --OF COURSE! FORGIVE ME!!

ALL HAIL JULIA! THE VICTOR!

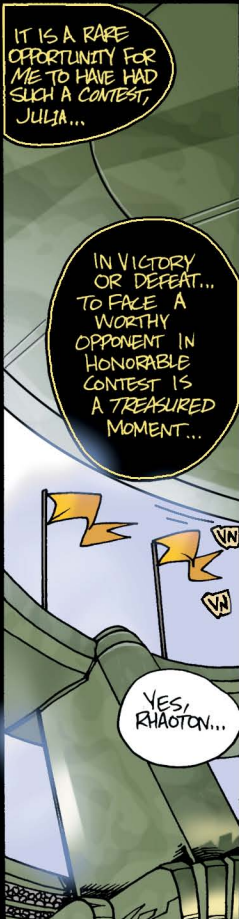
HO!!

WHEE!

HOA!

W-WELL... I MUST SAY... YOU ARE CERTAINLY A GOOD SPORT ABOUT THIS...





NEXT JULIA VS. G'NOLGA... NO! **THIS TIME, I MEAN IT!!**