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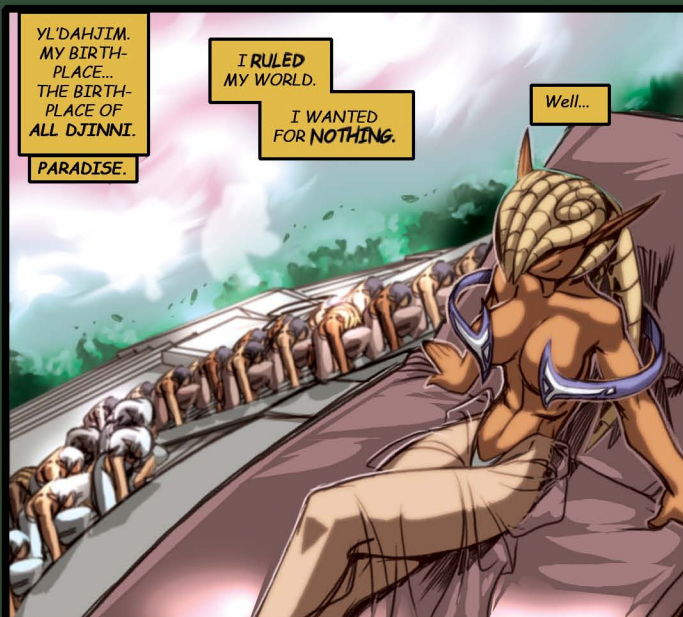
# GOLD DIGGER



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20 YEARS



## GD TANGENT: "Madrid..."



YL'DAHJIM.  
MY BIRTH-  
PLACE...  
THE BIRTH-  
PLACE OF  
ALL DJINNI.  
PARADISE.

I RULED  
MY WORLD.

I WANTED  
FOR NOTHING.

Well...

...ALMOST  
NOTHING.

I REACHED  
FOR THE  
ULTIMATE  
POWER...

...THE  
MAGIC  
SUN...

...AND MY  
PARADISE  
WAS  
LOST.



PHYROGOTH'S  
LAIR.

MY PRISON.

PHYROGOTH, THE  
PLANES-CRAWLER,  
RECOVERED ME AND  
OTHER DJINNI  
ESCAPING FROM  
THE CALAMITY  
I... I... c-CAUSED...  
ON...

...ON YL' DAHJIM

I BECAME  
HIS **SLAVE**.

BUT ONLY  
TEMPORARILY.

ONLY A  
FEW THOUSAND  
YEARS...



I RETURNED TO  
YL' DAHJIM, THANKS  
TO A YOUNG HUMAN  
EXPLORER NAMED  
GINA DIGGERS.

THE DJINNI ELDER  
HAD SURVIVED THE  
GREAT CALAMITY AND  
WAS GOING TO LET  
THAT BRAT EXAMINE  
THE MAGIC SUN!

I SAW MY  
CHANCE!

I TOOK GINA'S  
FORM TO TRICK  
THE ELDER AND  
CHALLENGED MY  
**NEW RIVAL** FOR  
THE PRIZE!

AND... *lost*...

GINA BANISHED ME HERE. SHE TRICKED ME HERE...TO THIS LITTLE "PUZZLE BOX ON THE MOON."

I...USED TO **HATE** PUZZLES.

I USED TO BELIEVE THAT... IF I HAD TO "FIGURE IT OUT"... REALLY USE MY HEAD TO GET A RESULT...

...IT JUST WASN'T WORTH THE EFFORT.

BUT **NOT** GINA.

SHE **LOVES** PUZZLES!

SHE **ENJOYED** MAKING **THIS** "RIDDLE"... SHE EXPECTS I **WON'T** BE ABLE TO LEAVE MY PRISON AND TRAVERSE THE VOID TO EARTH!

THE "OLD ME" WOULD HAVE BEEN **HELPLESS!**

**STUCK HERE FOREVER!**

BUT THE OLD ME IS **GONE**.

REPLACED BY A PERFECT DUPLICATE OF GINA'S MEMORIES, BODY AND TALENTS FROM WHEN I TRIED TO MIMIC HER IN ORDER TO REACH THE "MAGIC SUN."

...I'M STILL "ME", HOWEVER.

I'M STILL MADRID!

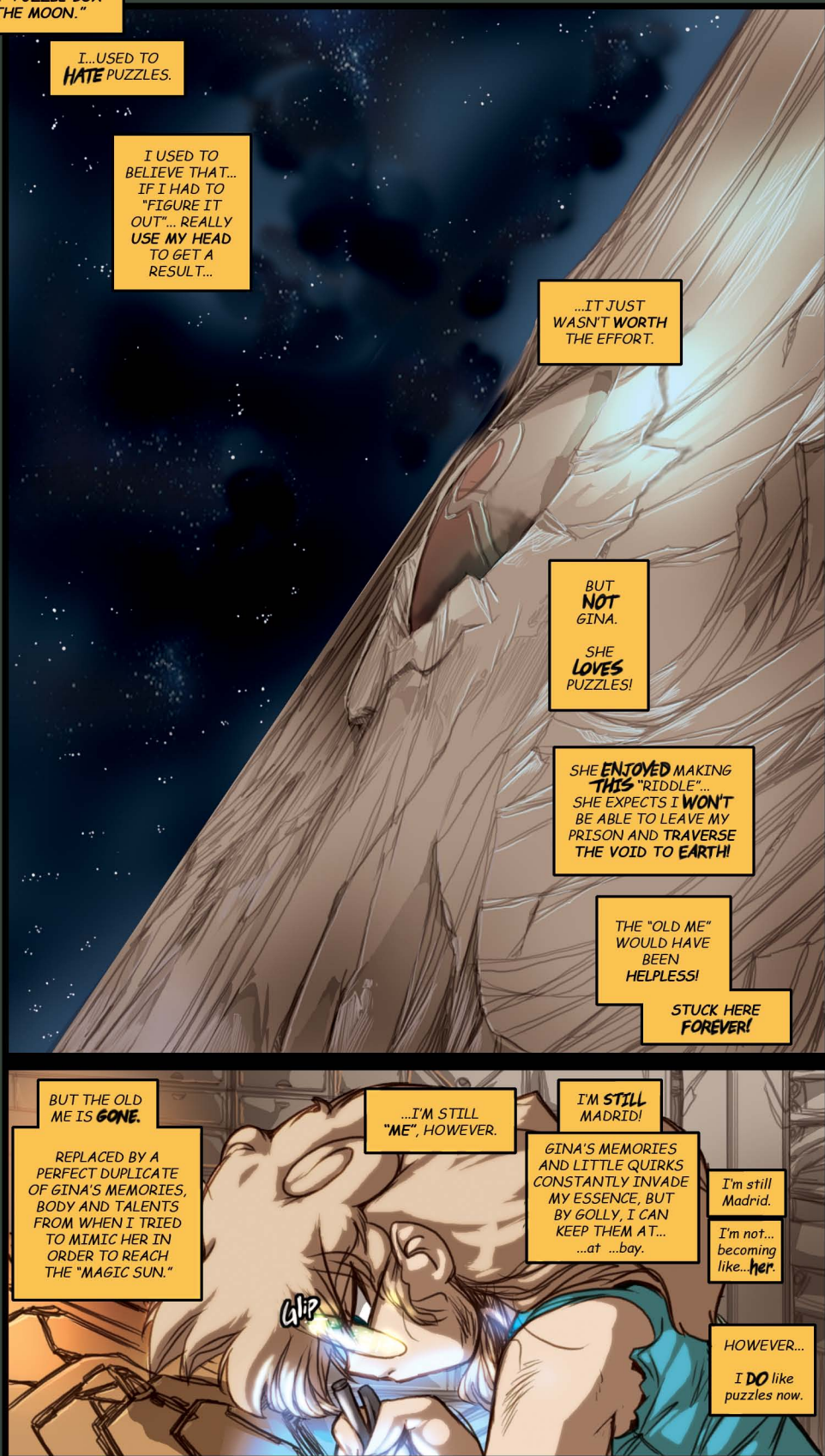
GINA'S MEMORIES AND LITTLE QUIRKS CONSTANTLY INVADGE MY ESSENCE, BUT BY GOLLY, I CAN KEEP THEM AT...  
...at ...bay.

I'm still Madrid.

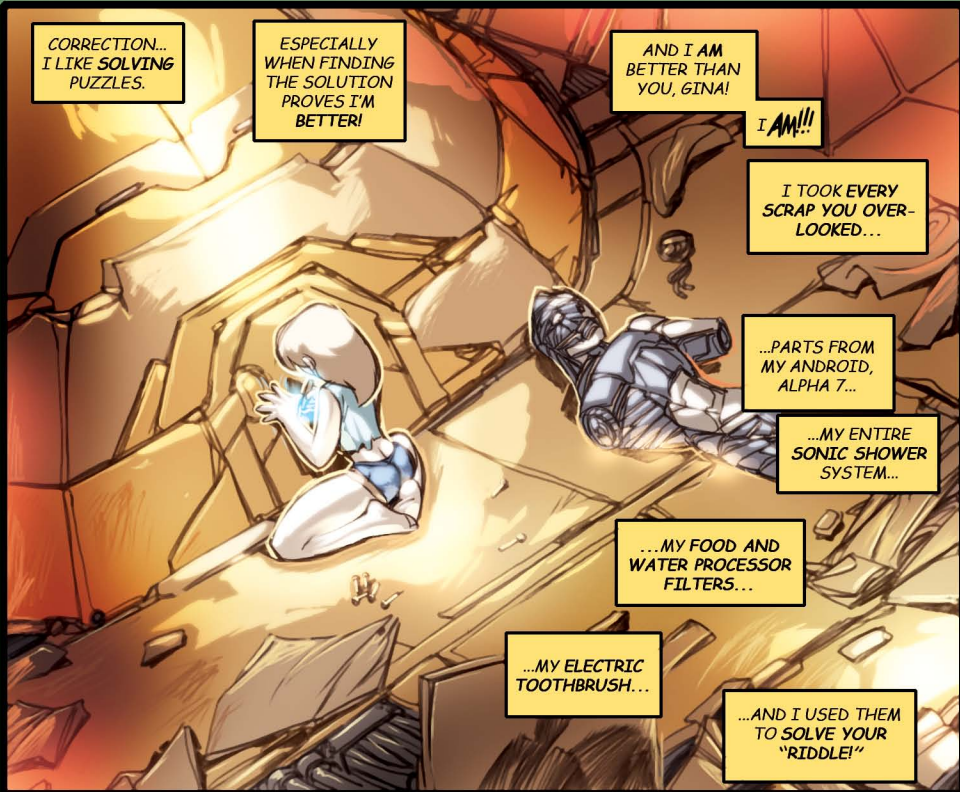
I'm not... becoming like...**her**.

HOWEVER...

I **DO** like puzzles now.







CORRECTION...  
I LIKE SOLVING  
PUZZLES.

ESPECIALLY  
WHEN FINDING  
THE SOLUTION  
PROVES I'M  
BETTER!

AND I AM  
BETTER THAN  
YOU, GINA!

I AM!!!

I TOOK EVERY  
SCRAP YOU OVER-  
LOOKED...

...PARTS FROM  
MY ANDROID,  
ALPHA 7...

...MY ENTIRE  
SONIC SHOWER  
SYSTEM...

...MY FOOD AND  
WATER PROCESSOR  
FILTERS...

...MY ELECTRIC  
TOOTHBRUSH...

...AND I USED THEM  
TO SOLVE YOUR  
"RIDDLE!"



THERE. FINISHED.

MY "ESCAPE  
POD" IS  
COMPLETE!

And not  
a moment too  
soon.

I COULDN'T POSSIBLY  
TAKE ANOTHER DAY  
OF MY OWN...  
"STALENESS."

NOW TO  
START THE  
INTERNAL  
LIFE SUPP-



wh-WHAT???

LOW POWER!???



A BROWN-OUT!!!

I BLEED OFF  
TOO MUCH P-POWER!

LIFE SUPPORT  
IS FAILING!

MY AIR!

IT'S GOING TO  
RUN OUT BEFORE  
I... I CAN...  
huff RE-  
START...



I... PLAYED  
TOO CLOSE...  
TO THE  
"EDGE"...

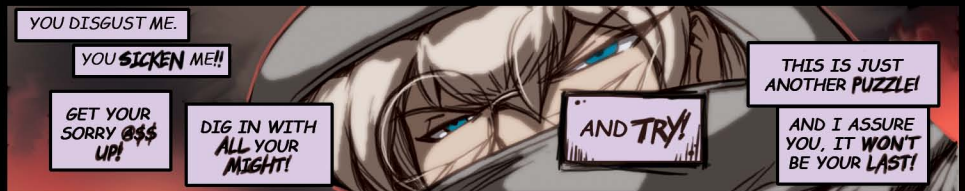
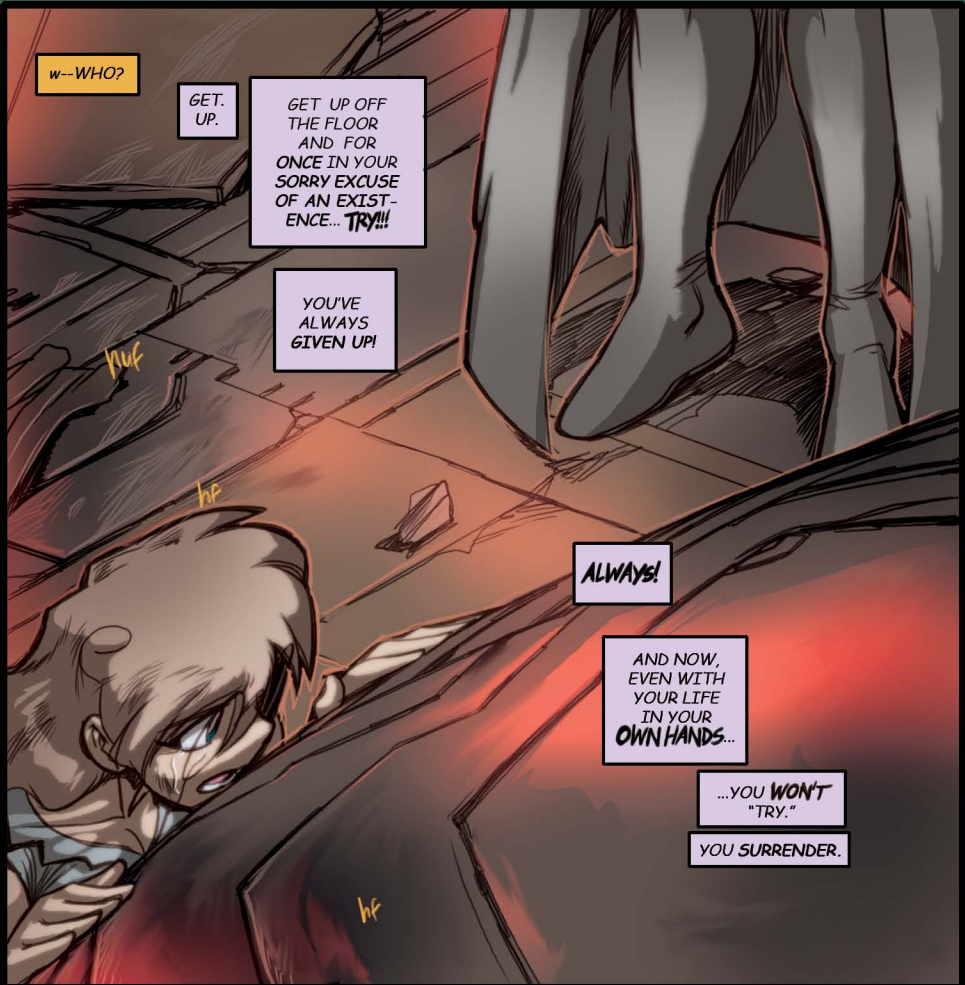
...it's...  
over!

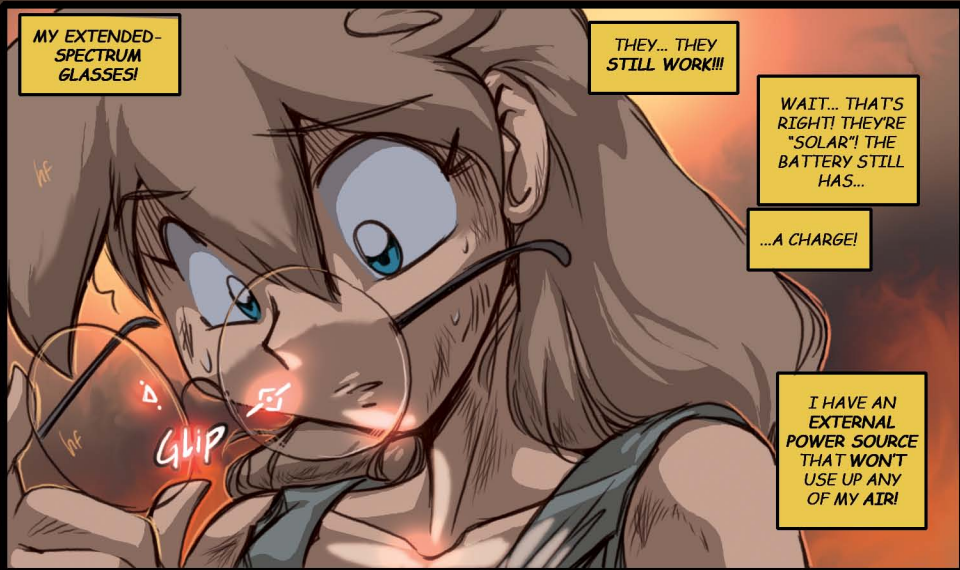
oh no...

I'm... going  
to... to...

GET UP.







MY EXTENDED-  
SPECTRUM  
GLASSES!

THEY... THEY  
STILL WORK!!!

WAIT... THAT'S  
RIGHT! THEY'RE  
"SOLAR"! THE  
BATTERY STILL  
HAS...

...A CHARGE!

I HAVE AN  
EXTERNAL  
POWER SOURCE  
THAT WON'T  
USE UP ANY  
OF MY AIR!



IF I CAN  
FIGURE OUT  
HOW TO  
REWIRE THE  
AIR FAN POWER  
COUPLING IN  
TIME...

...I CAN POWER  
THE FAN ON LOW  
AND RUN THE  
CARBON RECYCLER  
WITH THIS  
BATTERY!!!

IT SHOULD RUN  
FOR A FEW MINUTES...  
WHILE THE MAIN  
SYSTEM RESTARTS!

SO INSTEAD OF  
TWENTY MINUTES...



...I'LL  
HAVE...

...F-FOUR  
MINUTES  
WITHOUT  
AIR!

NEVER...  
HELD MY  
BREATH...

...that  
long.

I--

huh?



SHE'S...  
GONE!

Or... was  
I... imagining...

N--NEVER  
MIND!

I...

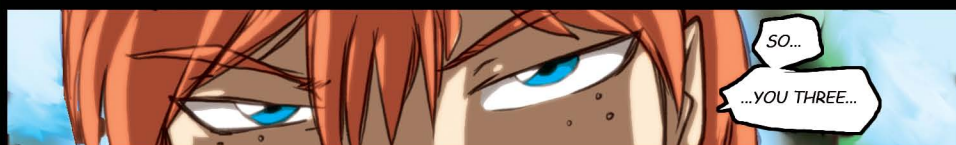
...I HAVE  
TO CON-  
CENTRATE...

...I HAVE...

...A puzzle  
to solve.

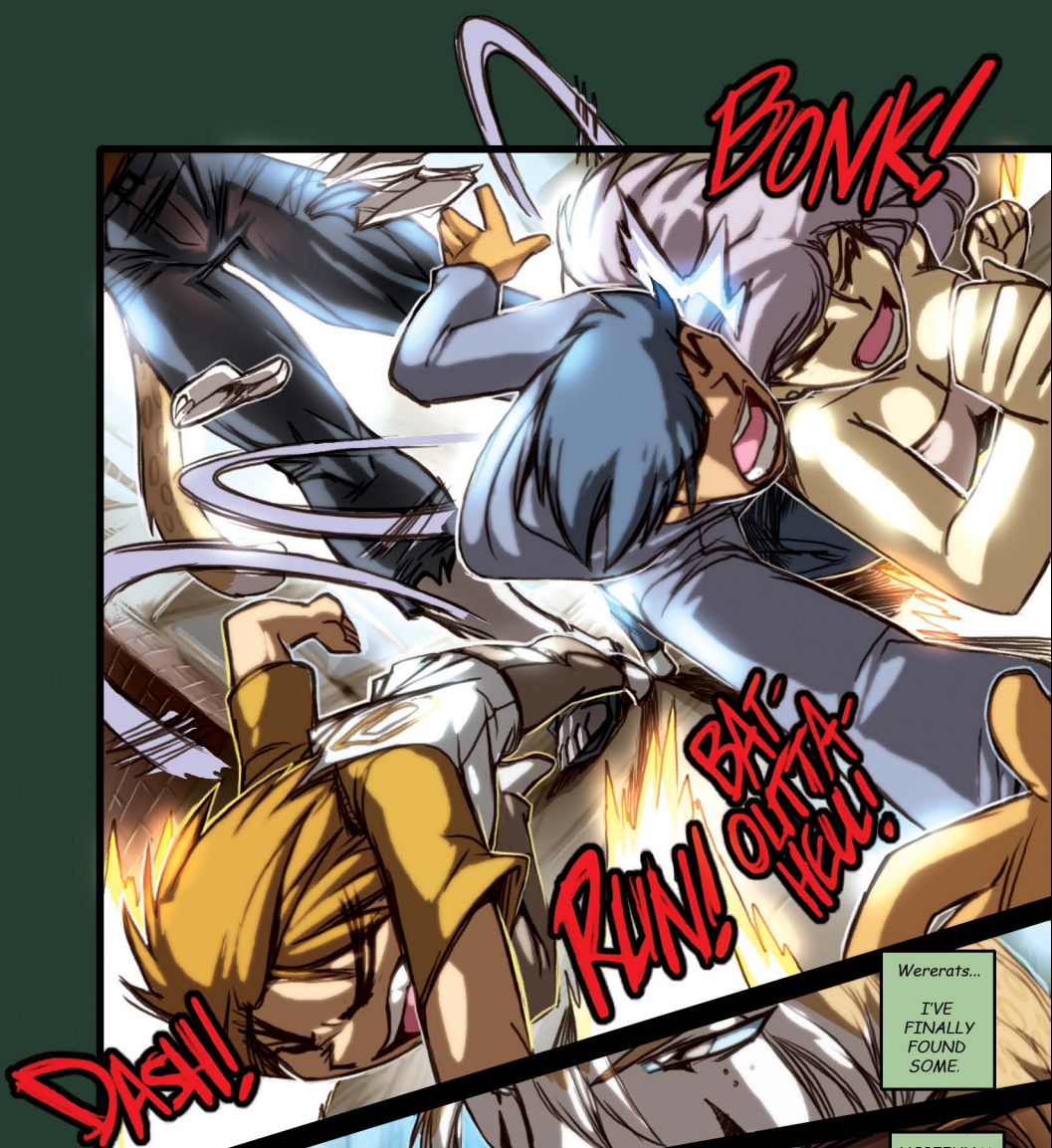


AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND...



## "THE BLACK GATE" PART I





Wererats...

I'VE  
FINALLY  
FOUND  
SOME.

HOPEFULLY,  
THEY'LL BE  
ABLE TO  
LEAD ME  
TO THEIR  
SECRET  
CITY...

... "DARK  
HOME" ...



HUH?  
What are  
those kids  
running  
from?

Whist

...AND TO  
GOTHWRAIN...

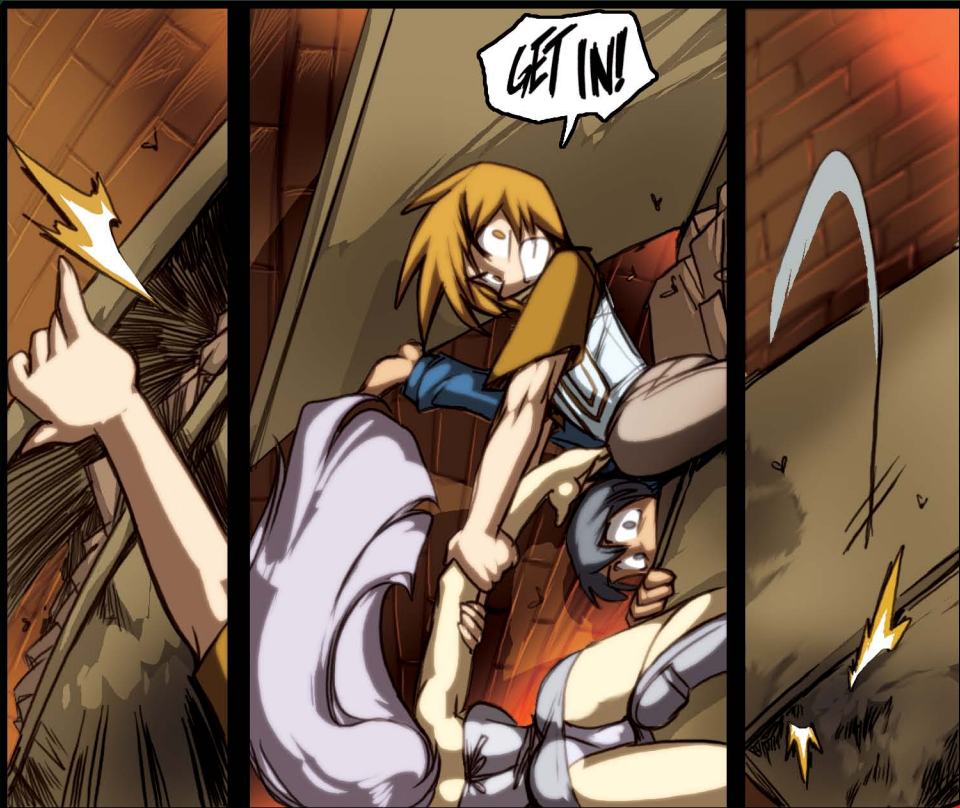
...THE ONLY PERSON ON  
EARTH WHO KNOWS  
WHERE BRITANNY IS.

FOR HER  
SAKE...

...I SHALL  
NOT FAIL!





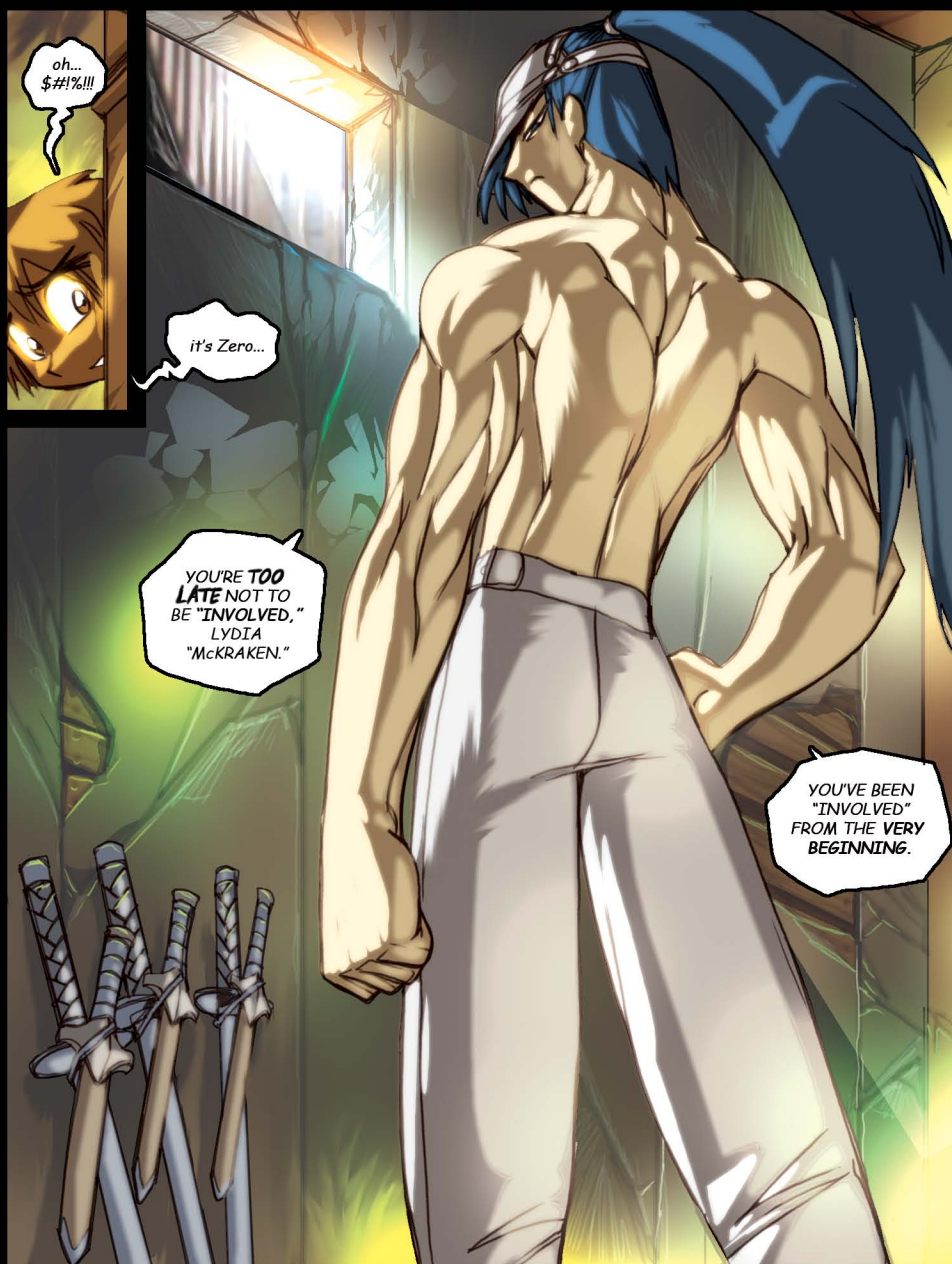


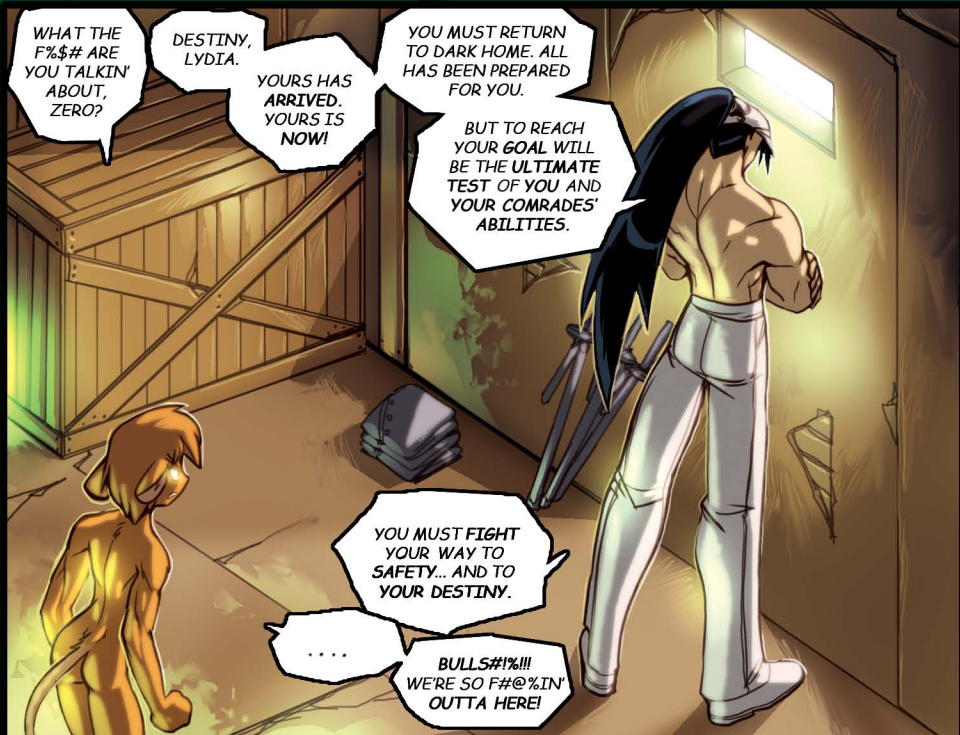




\*TRANSLATED FROM WERE-RAT-- F.







WHAT THE F%\$# ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, ZERO?

DESTINY, LYDIA.

YOURS HAS ARRIVED. YOURS IS NOW!

YOU MUST RETURN TO DARK HOME. ALL HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR YOU.

BUT TO REACH YOUR GOAL WILL BE THE ULTIMATE TEST OF YOU AND YOUR COMRADES' ABILITIES.

YOU MUST FIGHT YOUR WAY TO SAFETY... AND TO YOUR DESTINY.

....

BULLS#!%!!!  
WE'RE SO F#@%IN' OUTTA HERE!



AND TELL GOTHWRAIN HE CAN KILL HIS OWN F#@%IN' WERECATS!

WE'RE THROUGH WITH HIM! WITH YOU! WITH THE WHOLE F#@%IN' WERE-RAT CLAN!!!

IS THAT WHAT YOU BELIEVE? THAT GOTHWRAIN HAD ME TRAIN YOU SIMPLY TO KILL A SLOPPY, OVERWEIGHT WERE-CHEETAH?

SURVIVAL. STRATEGY. TACTICS. LEADERSHIP. ADAPTABILITY. YOUR LESSONS.

GOTHWRAIN MADE SURE YOUR EDUCATION WAS COMPLETE!

ROMEO. MOISHA. YOUR COMRADES.

GOTHWRAIN MADE SURE YOU WOULD ALWAYS POSSESS SOMETHING NO RULER SHOULD EVER BE WITHOUT...

FRIENDS YOU CAN TRUST.



RULER?

WITNESS??

LYDIA.

THE WERE-RAT CLAN LEADERS... YOUR PARENTS, SHERISHA AND GOTHWRAIN... HAVE SEALED THEIR FATES.

YOU WILL BE THEIR SUCCESSOR!





HERE.



ugff!

YOU'RE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH WERE-RAT "ASSASSIN LEATHER."

AND YOU ALL NOW HAVE PERMISSION TO USE "DUAL BLADE" STYLE.

L-LIKE WE EVER NEEDED YOUR "OK."

...wait...



...I...I know this dagger blade.

i-it's a different hilt... but it's the same blade...



"...t-the very same SILVER blade..."

"...Gothwrain once used to punish us."

"AS YOU CAN NOW SEE, LYDIA... GOTHWRAIN HAD AN ULTERIOR MOTIVE FOR THAT "PUNISHMENT."

"YOU ALL WERE HELPING HIM SAMPLE YOUR AURAS TO BE USED AS COMPONENTS."



COMPONENTS FOR MAKING HIS FINAL GIFT TO YOU AND YOUR COMRADES.

YOU NOW EACH HAVE AN "ELDRITCH SOUL EDGE!"

t-TCHA...RIGHT.  
THANKS FOR THE GEAR,  
BUT YOU, LIKE...TOTALLY  
GOT THE **WRONG** RAT!

LYDIA  
**AINT**  
"ROYALTY"!

H-HER PARENTS  
SOLD HER TO  
THE **ASSASSIN'S**  
GUILD WHEN SHE  
WAS LITTLE...

...JUST LIKE  
MOISHA'S AND  
MINE DID...

i-ISN'T THAT  
RIGHT, LYDIA?

...

Lydia?

...I DON'T...  
REMEMBER A  
THING ABOUT  
MY PARENTS.

"McKRAKEN"...

W-WAS THE NAME  
OF THE GUILD  
a-AGENT WHO  
SCOOPED ME  
OFF THE DOOR-  
STEP...

LYDIA...

THOSE PURSUING  
GOTHWRAIN INTEND  
TO USE YOU TO  
REACH HIM.

THEY WILL STOP  
AT NOTHING TO  
CAPTURE YOU...  
AND IF THEY  
DO, YOU ALL  
WILL BE MADE  
HELPLESS!

THERE WILL  
BE A BATTLE.

GOTHWRAIN,  
SHERISHA AND  
ALL INSIDE THE  
SANCTUM SHALL  
PERISH.

WITH THE LEADERS  
OF THE WERE-RAT CLAN  
GONE, THERE WILL BE  
A TREMENDOUS POWER  
VACUUM WITH NO  
TRUE WAY TO CLOSE  
IT EXCEPT THROUGH  
YOUR RULE... OR  
YOUR DEATH.

MOISHA AND  
ROMEO WILL SUFFER  
GREATLY IF YOU ATTEMPT  
TO SHIRK... EVERYONE  
SEEKING THAT POWER  
WILL CERTAINLY USE  
THEM TO GET TO  
YOU!

YOUR ONLY HOPE IS TO  
REACH DARK HOME WITHOUT  
BEING CAPTURED AND  
MADE VULNERABLE TO  
ASSASSINATION.

YOUR ONLY DEFENSE IS  
TO SEIZE YOUR DESTINY,  
LYDIA... GOTHWRAIN  
HAS SEEN TO THAT.

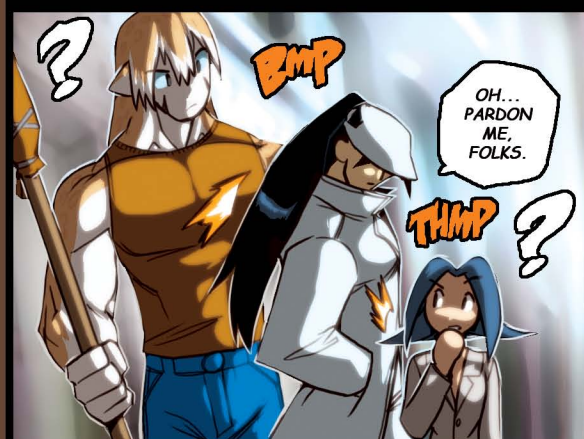
W-WHY?

Why is my  
father doing  
this?

FOR REVENGE.

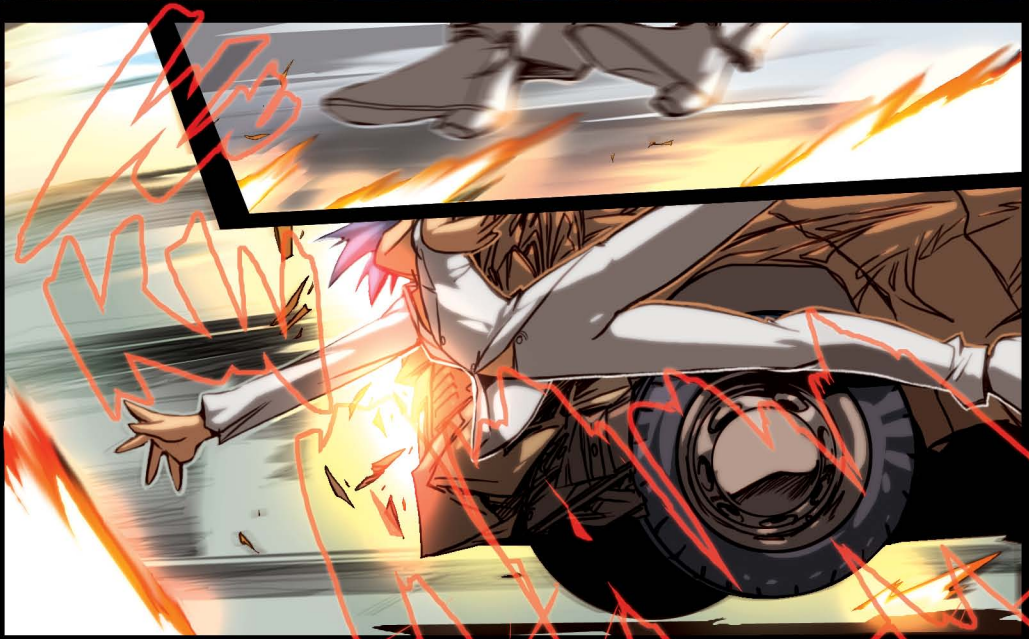
For love.



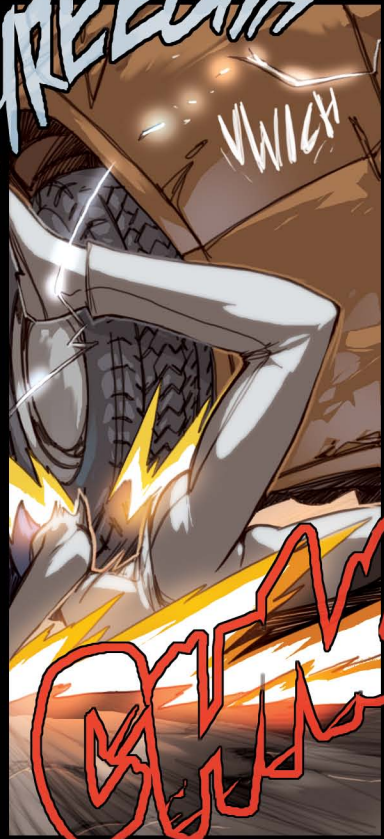
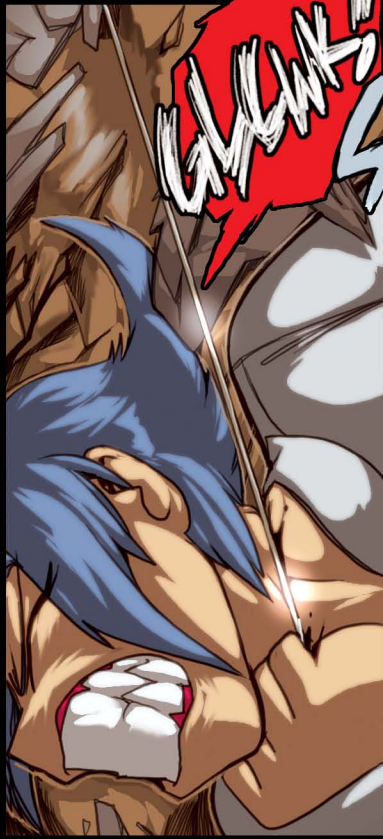
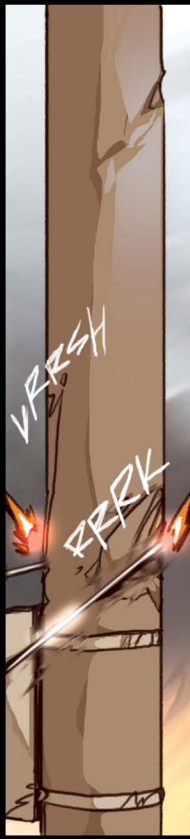




well...AT  
ANY RATE,  
IF WE  
CHECK  
AROU--











NOTHING  
PERSONAL...

...BUT...

...YOU ARE NOT  
ALLOWED TO  
DEFEND HER.

HER  
BATTLE  
IS OVER!

FEAR NOT.

I HAVE NO INTENTION  
OF KILLING THE PLATINUM  
DRAGON...

...BUT EVEN WITH THE  
ENCHANTED VENOM I PLACED  
ON MY RAZOR-LINE PREVENTING  
HER FROM USING HER MAGIC AND  
TRANSFORMING...

...SHE IS TOO DANGEROUS  
TO REMAIN ACTIVE!

I MUST COMPLETELY  
REMOVE HER FROM  
THIS CAMPAIGN!

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE  
ARE NO PAINLESS WAYS  
TO SLICE TENDONS AND  
DISLOCATE JOINTS.

AGAIN...  
NOTHING  
PERSONAL.

AGAIN... YOU ARE  
NOT ALLOWED TO  
DEFEND HER!



"NOTHING  
PERSONAL..."

BUT YOU CAN  
SUCK MY SPEAR!!!

4PT







AS I SAID... YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO DEFEND HER.

GO NOW.

TEST YOURSELF AGAINST MY STUDENTS.

BE WARNED... YOU HAVE ONLY BEEN TAUGHT HOW TO FIGHT... THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT HOW TO WIN!

GARI! HURRY! GO AFTER THEM!!!

D-DEBRA???

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!

IF YOU BELIEVE A LITTLE HIT LIKE THAT...  
...CAN HARM THE DAUGHTER OF THE DRAGON EMPRESS...  
...YOU'RE AS FOOLISH AS THIS HUMAN WHO'S ABOUT TO FEEL MY WRATH!!!

GO! BRITANNY'S LIFE IS AT STAKE!

D-Debra...

...BE CAREFUL!



....

FOR A DRAGON...  
...YOU ARE AN EXQUISITE ACTOR.

HOWEVER, WE BOTH ARE AWARE OF GOTHWRAIN'S CRAFTSMANSHIP.

WHILE A WEAK MAGE, GOTHWRAIN IS AN EXPERT MAGIC-CRAFTER AND A PEERLESS ENCHANTER! EVEN YOUR MOTHER WOULD BE UNABLE TO RESIST HIS "MAGIC BREAK VENOM."

YOUR HUMAN FORM SUFFERED THE FULL EFFECT OF THAT DAMAGE.

SIMPLY STAYING ON YOUR FEET CAUSES YOU TREMENDOUS AGONY.







\*\*"FERRAS-As" ARE WERE-RAT MESHES DESIGNED FOR FLEXIBILITY BUT USUALLY WORN BY FEMALES.







ASH



THEY ARE  
GOTHWRAIN'S  
PAWNS...JUST  
LIKE THE REST  
OF US.

BUT... BRITANNY'S  
LIFE IS AT STAKE.



GOTHWRAIN KNOWS  
WHERE SHE IS!  
I MUST  
REACH HIM!

BRITANNY... DON'T DIE...  
PLEASE DON'T DIE...

I WON'T  
FAIL YOU!

I'M COMING TO  
SAVE YOU... NO  
MATTER WHO  
I HAVE TO GO  
THROUGH...



...NO MATTER  
WHOSE BLOOD  
I HAVE TO  
SPILL.

*NEXT: "BLACK GATE" PART 2...*