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PERRY

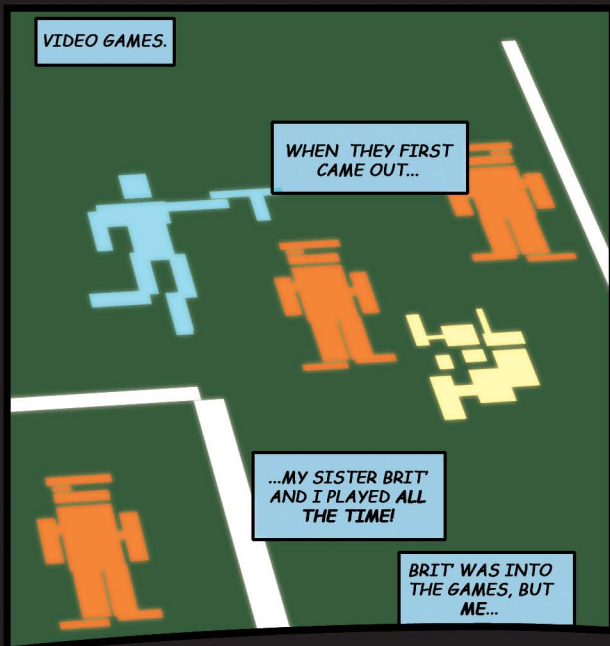
GOLD DIGGER



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JANUARY 2007





BUT THEN,
THE FRONT
DOOR LATCH
UNLOCKED...



...AND DADDY APPEARED
CARRYING A BRAND NEW
COLEKO-K VIDEO GAME
SYSTEM AND A BAG
FULL OF THE LATEST
GAMES...



DAD RETURNED
THE GAMES THAT
SAME DAY... BUT
THAT'S NOT WHAT
MADE ME FEEL
THE SORRIEST.



IT WAS WHEN I
SAW DAD'S FACE...
AND REALIZED
HOW WRONG I
WAS.



I really
disappointed
him... I really
hurt him.



I should have
listened to that
itch.





MY CONTEMPORARY AND COLLEAGUE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TAD ROGUEISH WHEN IT COMES TO SCIENCE AND ARCHAEOLOGY.

WHEN WE WERE RIVALS, I USED TO HEAR STORIES ABOUT HER ALTERNATE, THIRD-WORLD COUNTRYSIDE LABORATORIES...

...WHERE SHE ALLEGEDLY CONDUCTED RESEARCH THAT WORKED SLIGHTLY OUTSIDE THE SAFETY STANDARDS IN THE STATES.

BUT, SINCE WE'VE BECOME FRIENDS, I'VE NEVER SEEN HER CONDUCT RESEARCH ANYWHERE ELSE BESIDES VIRGINIA, FLORIDA AND GEORGIA.

I GUESS SHE WANTED TO KEEP HER "DARK SIDE" HIDDEN FROM ME...

...until now.

Surveillance detection alarms are green.
You weren't followed.

Welcome to lab four's "front."



DR. PINCER, I WOULD DEARLY APPRECIATE AN EXPLANATION FOR ALL OF THIS!

CALLING ME WAY OUT HERE ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE...

...I'M DELAYING MY PROGRESS IN THE SUBMERGED FORTRESS OF JADE-REALM!

That can wait. I've got some real answers for you now.

Take a look at this...

...and keep a low conversational tone.

My white-noise scramblers may be detected if they're strong enough to cover your current volume level.



Oh my...



J-j---

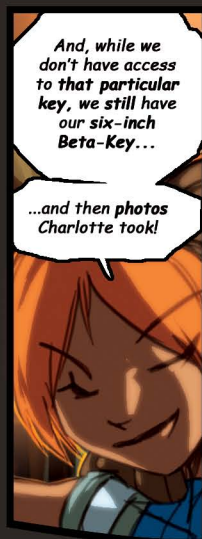
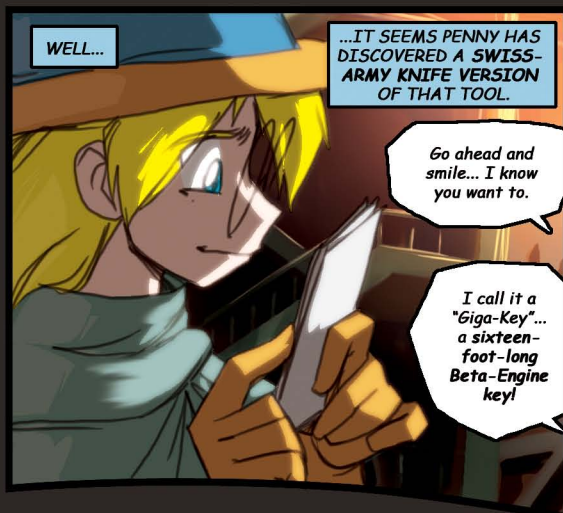
Jinkies?

I TOLD BRIANNA LAST WEEK... THAT TO RESCUE OUR SISTER BRITANNY FROM THE DIMENSIONAL MORTAR KNOWN AS QUASI-SPACE...

This can't be real!

It's REAL, Dr. Gina Diggers.

...WE'D NEED A LEVER THE SIZE OF THE GALAXY TO PRY THE HOLE OPEN.



And unfortunately, Gina...

...the only way we're going to reacquire the necessary materials...

...is with a five-finger discount.

WE'VE ALMOST ACQUIRED THE LAST OF THE NECESSARY MATERIALS, AGENT M.

BUT I MUST ADMIT...

...I'M WAY OUT OF MY FIELD OF EXPERTISE HERE.

WE'VE NEVER HAD TO WORK WITH S.D.P.* IN ANY KIND OF EMERGENCY SCENARIO BEFORE.

ARIZONA DESERT.

*SUPER-DIMENSIONAL PHYSICS.

I'M ONLY MAKING WILD GUESSES FOR THE SUPPLY LISTS!

IT'S A START, DORTON.

IT'S A START.

WE'LL HAVE AN EXPERT OR TWO WITH US SOON EN--

AH, AGENT 'GIA.

WELCOME TO "THE ATTIC"...

...OUR PRIMARY "OUT-OF-PLACE" MATERIALS STORAGE FACILITY.

Should have been named "The Cellar" if you ask me, Agent M...

YOU SIGNALLED FOR ME.

WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY?

SORRY TO TAKE YOU OFF EXTENDED LEAVE, AGENT 'GIA...

...BUT THIS IS A TOP PRIORITY RESCUE MISSION!

WE'RE PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS FOR THIS ONE.

EVERY RESOURCE! EVERY AGENT! NOTHING SPARED!

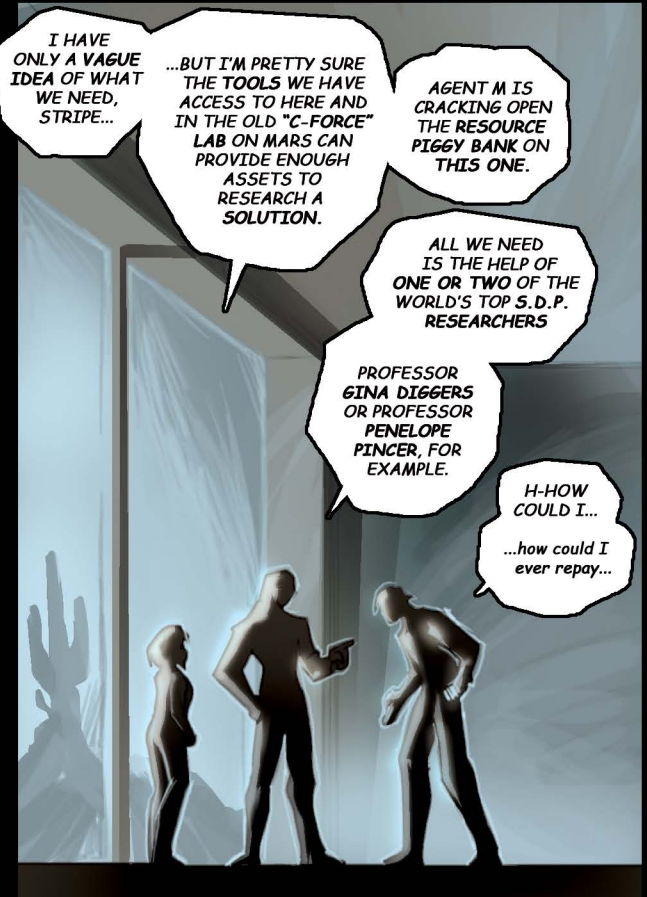
YOU SEE...

...WE'RE GOING TO RESCUE BRITTANNY 'GIA.



Are--
ARE YOU
SERIOUS,
AGENT
M?

AGENT DORTON
HERE IS IN CHARGE
OF ASSEMBLING
THE NECESSARY
EQUIPMENT FOR
THE MISSION...



I HAVE
ONLY A VAGUE
IDEA OF WHAT
WE NEED,
STRYPE...

...BUT I'M PRETTY SURE
THE TOOLS WE HAVE
ACCESS TO HERE AND
IN THE OLD "C-FORCE"
LAB ON MARS CAN
PROVIDE ENOUGH
ASSETS TO
RESEARCH A
SOLUTION.

AGENT M IS
CRACKING OPEN
THE RESOURCE
PIGGY BANK ON
THIS ONE.

ALL WE NEED
IS THE HELP OF
ONE OR TWO OF THE
WORLD'S TOP S.D.P.
RESEARCHERS

PROFESSOR
GINA DIGGERS
OR PROFESSOR
PENELOPE
PINCER, FOR
EXAMPLE.

H-HOW
COULD I...

...how could I
ever repay...



YOU
CAN'T REPAY,
STRYP.

YOU COULDN'T
DO IT IN A
MILLION YEARS!

BECAUSE YOU
DON'T OWE A
THING!

WE--

--HOLD ON.
THAT'S MY
CELL.

tsk...T.B.-3 NEEDS
A LAUNCH
AUTHORIZATION,
AGENT M...



WHAT?
AGAIN??

OLD COMPUTER
SUPER-A.I. OLD
PROTOCOL.

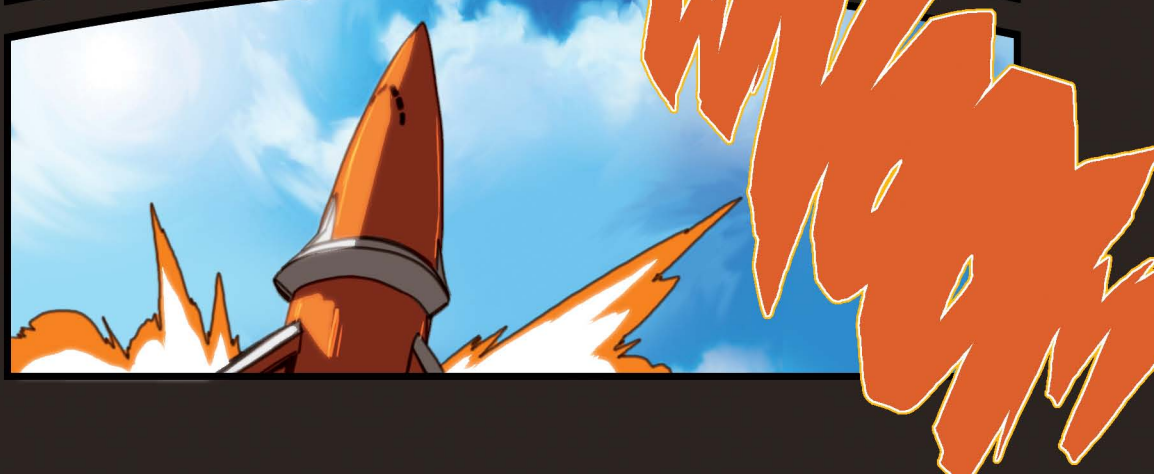
IT CARRIES
THE HEAVY
GEAR, AND NO
CRAFT GETS
ANY PAYLOAD
TO MARS
FASTER, SO...

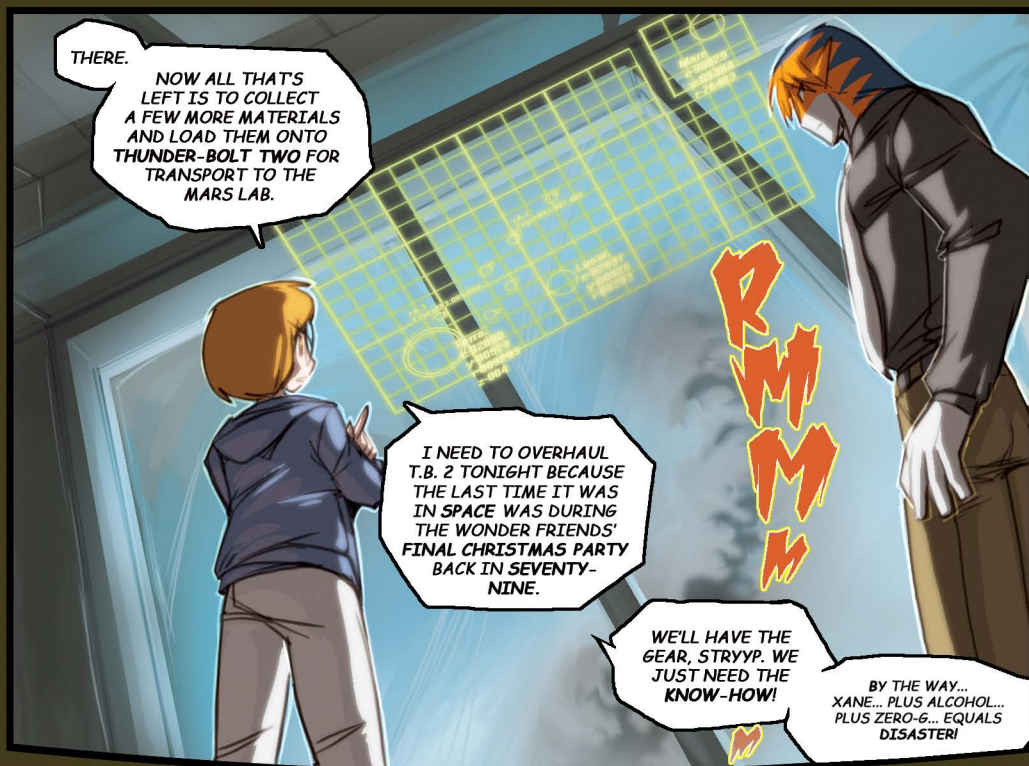
FINE. I'LL
DO IT.

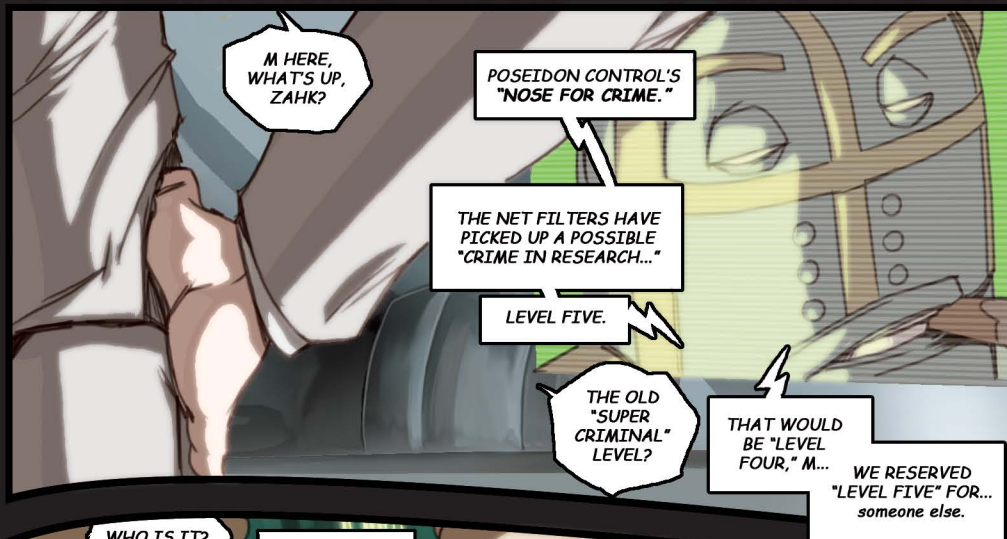


PERMISSION...

**HAS BEEN
GRANTED!**







M HERE,
WHAT'S UP,
ZAHK?

POSEIDON CONTROL'S
"NOSE FOR CRIME."

THE NET FILTERS HAVE
PICKED UP A POSSIBLE
"CRIME IN RESEARCH..."

LEVEL FIVE.

THE OLD
"SUPER
CRIMINAL"
LEVEL?

THAT WOULD
BE "LEVEL
FOUR," M...

WE RESERVED
"LEVEL FIVE" FOR...
someone else.



WHO IS IT?
Is it "him?"

THAT'S WHAT
WORRIES ME.

EVEN POSEIDON
CAN'T IDENTIFY.

AND WE'RE
TALKING ABOUT
THE SUPER COMPUTER
THAT ROUTINELY
OUT-GUESSED EVERY
MASTER CRIMINAL
THE OLD TEAM
EVER FACED!

...EXCEPT "YOU-
KNOW-WHO,"
THAT IS.



OR, IT COULD BE
A KID RESEARCHING
A PAPER ON CRACKING
THE CODES FOR "C-GRID,"
"RIDDLE-OMEGA" AND
"DOVE-TAIL II"
SECURITY SYSTEMS...

...ALL WHILE REMAINING
COMPLETELY "ANON" TO
THE WORLDS MOST
POWERFUL COMPUTER-
SLEUTH.

GOT A LIST OF SIX
POSSIBLE TARGETS
TO COVER, AND TIME
FRAME FOR EXECUTION
COULD BE A FEW
SECONDS INSIDE
THE NEXT TWO
DAYS.



AGENT DORTON.
CONTINUE THE SUPPLY
ACQUISITION FOR
MRS. 'GIA'S
RESCUE.

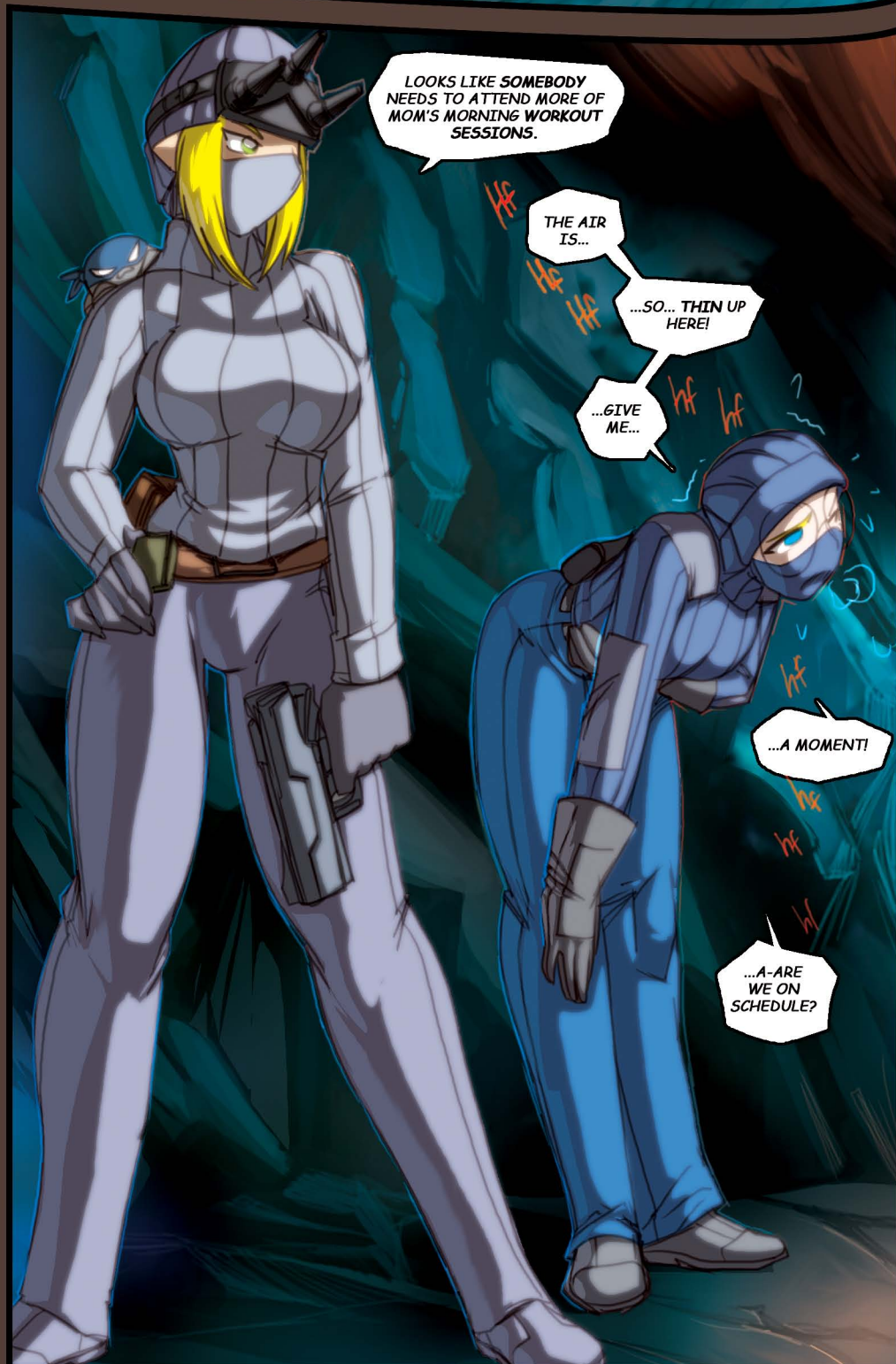
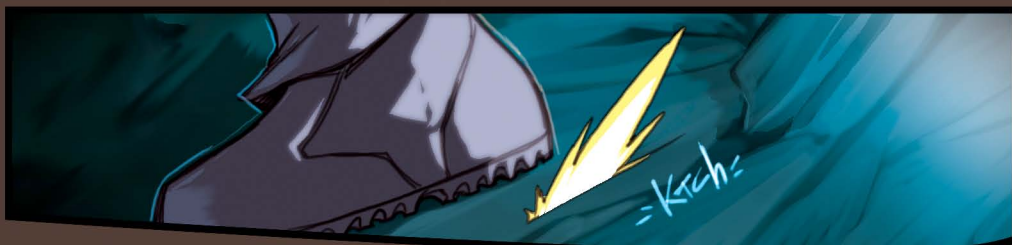
THIS LOOKS
LIKE A JOB FOR
AGENT M.

And a bit
of "back-up"!

Just in case
"You-know-who"...
is BACK.



SAN LUIS VALLEY, COLORADO





DAWN IN
TWENTY
MINUTES.

WE'RE STILL
ON TIME.

Gina...

...I still think
we should ask
first.

At least
TRY...

HE'LL NEVER
AGREE, BRIANNA.
YOU WEREN'T
THERE WHEN
I TRADED IT
AWAY.

HE'D JUST
ENHANCE HIS
SECURITY IF
HE KNEW I
NEEDED IT.

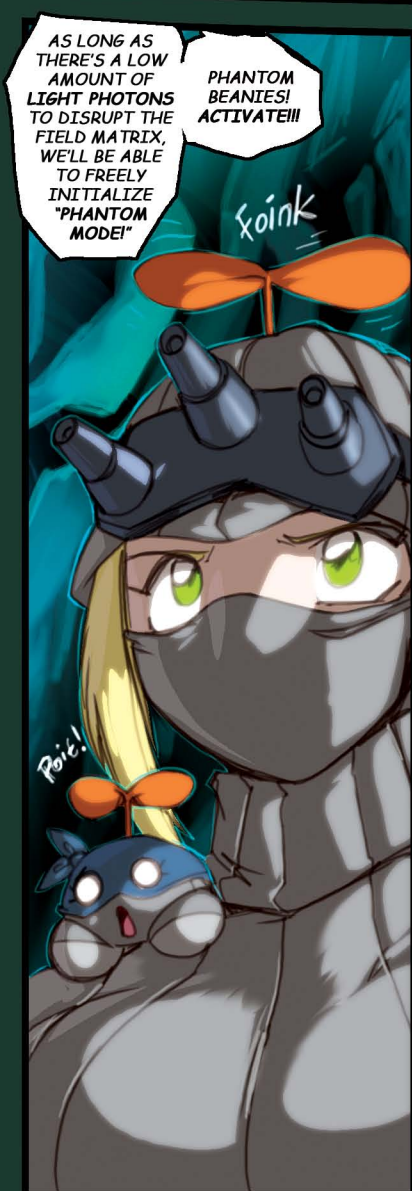
NO.

This way is
much more...
efficient.



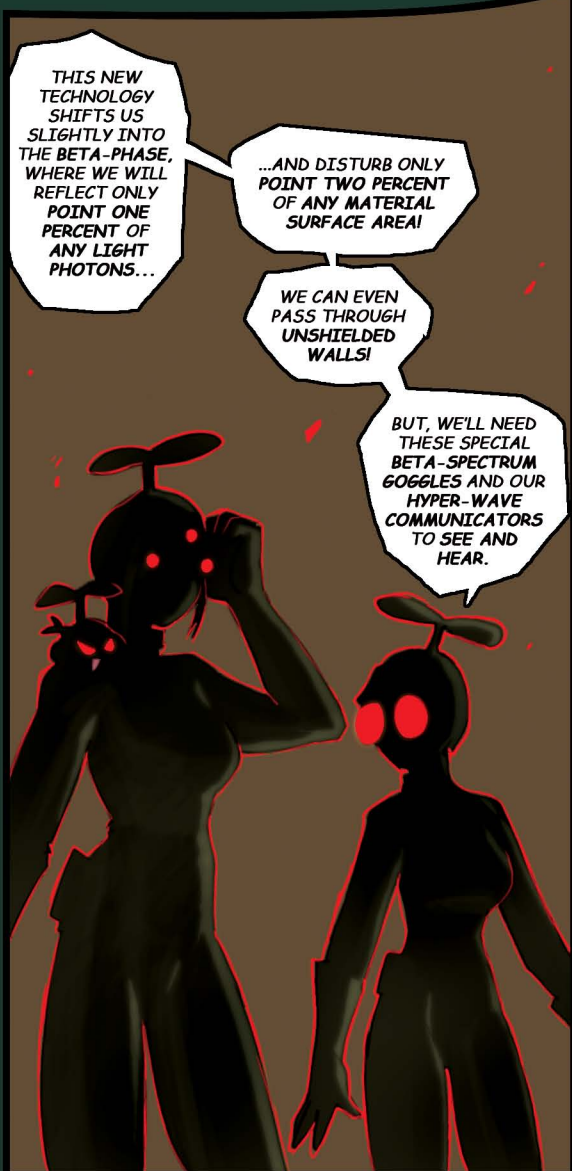
MY LATEST INVENTION
IS ALL WE NEED TO
BYPASS ALL OF
THE ALARMS...

...PLUS ANY
ACTIVE SECURITY
SEARCH CAMERAS
OR PERSONNEL!



AS LONG AS
THERE'S A LOW
AMOUNT OF
LIGHT PHOTONS
TO DISRUPT THE
FIELD MATRIX,
WE'LL BE ABLE
TO FREELY
INITIALIZE
"PHANTOM
MODE!"

PHANTOM
BEANIES!
ACTIVATE!!!



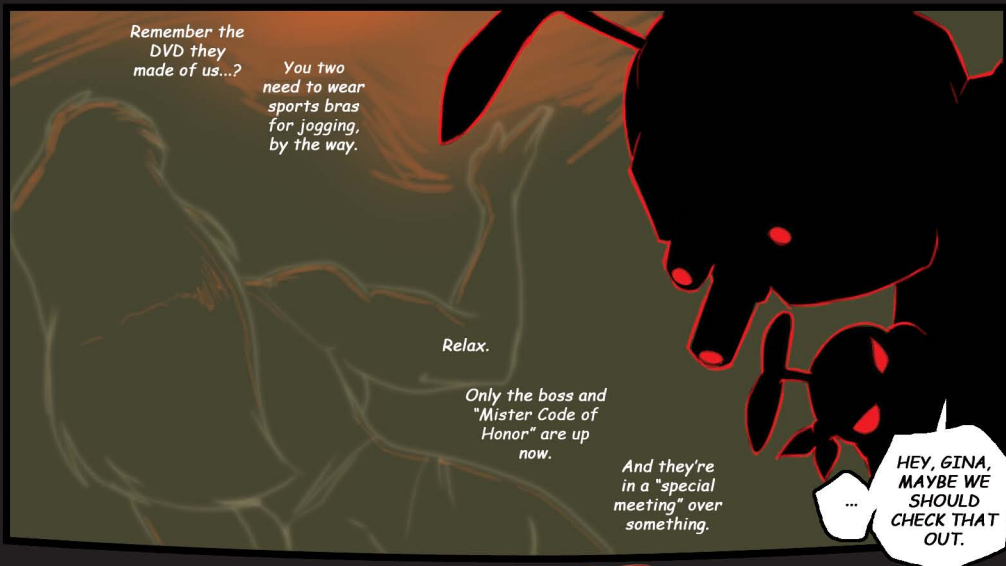
THIS NEW
TECHNOLOGY
SHIFTS US
SLIGHTLY INTO
THE BETA-PHASE,
WHERE WE WILL
REFLECT ONLY
POINT ONE
PERCENT OF
ANY LIGHT
PHOTONS...

...AND DISTURB ONLY
POINT TWO PERCENT
OF ANY MATERIAL
SURFACE AREA!

WE CAN EVEN
PASS THROUGH
UNSHIELDED
WALLS!

BUT, WE'LL NEED
THESE SPECIAL
BETA-SPECTRUM
GOGGLES AND OUR
HYPER-WAVE
COMMUNICATORS
TO SEE AND
HEAR.





There's got to be
some way out of
this, Daishi.

I would advise
against directly
betraying your
mother's wishes,
Talon-Sama...

I will not
be able to
shield you
from her
wrath.

We recorded the
conversation last
night, Daishi...

Play it back....

BRIANNA?
ARE YOU
COMING?

There may be
a "loophole"
we can
use.

PEEBOSPY!
DOWNLOAD
THAT RECORDING
FOR US!

I'VE GOT A
HUNCH SOME-
THING'S UP...

hums theme
from "Tommy
Gun"!

BRIANNA!
HURRY!

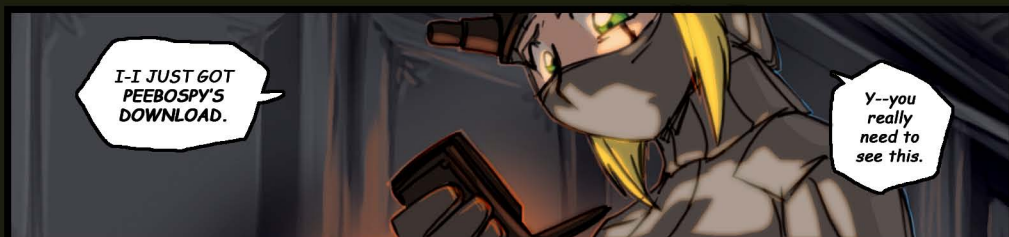
I'VE FOUND
THE SECURITY
GRID!

AND SITTING RIGHT
ON TOP ARE THE
LOCK BOXES!

THIS IS GOING TO BE
EASIER THAN I
THOUGHT!

BUT I'LL STILL NEED
SOMEONE TO MAN
THE OSCILLATION
OVER-THRUSTER
TO DIMENSION-
SEAL THE MAIN
CIRCUIT!

HEHEH... IF
THE CPU IS
STUCK IN NULL-
TIME... IT
CAN'T SENSE
AN ANOMALY!



"PEEBOSPY!
RESEND THE
FILE!"

I HOPE YOU DON'T
MIND US ASKING,
MA'AM.

AGENT DORTON HERE
SAYS THAT YOU AND
YOUR HUSBAND HAVE
BEEN INVALUABLE
IN THE PAST WITH...

...PROVIDING UNUSUALLY
RARE MATERIALS AND
ADVICE FOR RESCUES.

OH, IT'S
NO BOTHER
AT ALL.

ESPECIALLY
FOR AN OLD
FRIEND OF THE
FAMILY,
AGENT 'GIA.

IT'S OUR DUTY
AS CITIZENS OF
TERRA TO HELP
WHenever WE
CAN!

WE NEED TO RESCUE
SOMEONE FROM
QUASI-SPACE,
MRS. TALON.

OH? HAVE
YOU RECRUITED
RESEARCHERS
TO FIND OUT
HOW TO
PHASE IN?

I HEAR
THAT DR. GINA
DIGGERS IS
PRETTY
SHARP.

WE ARE STILL
GATHERING RESOURCES
AND, AS OF THIS
MOMENT, WE ARE
OUT OF CONTACT
WITH DR. GINA
DIG--

"Old friend
of the family?"
Me?

HMMM.

LET'S SEE IF
THERE'S ANYTHING
YOU MIGHT NEED
LYING AROUND
THE HOUSE.

AAAH.

THAT WILL
DO NICELY!

OH, ♡
JUNIOR?

C-COMING,
MOTHER!

BE A GOOD
BOY...

...AND GIVE
THESE NICE FOLKS
THE ITEM IN
SAFE-BOX
SEVEN.

W-WHAT?

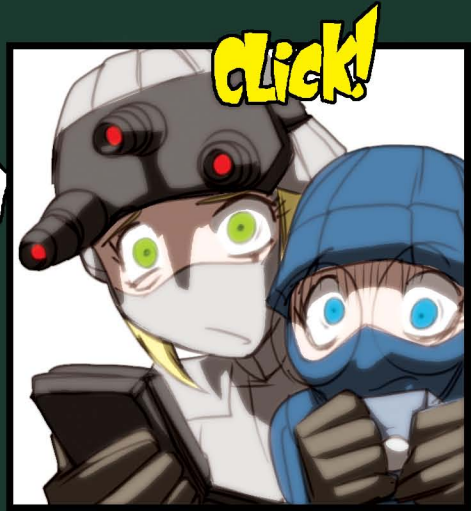
THEY NEED
IT TO RESCUE
SOMEONE
IN DISTRESS.

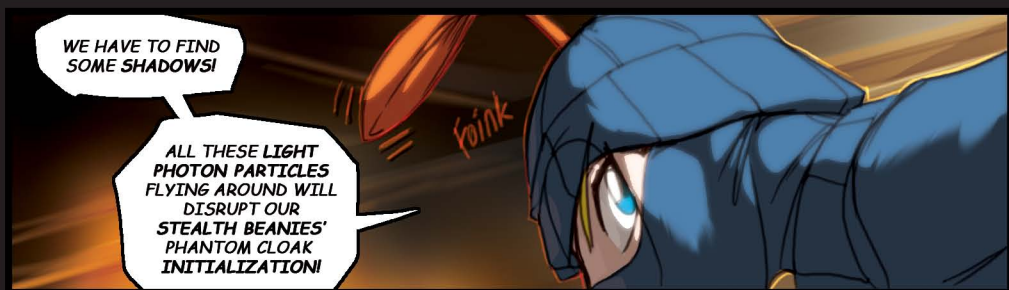
YOU'LL HAVE IT
BACK WHEN THEY
SUCCEED.

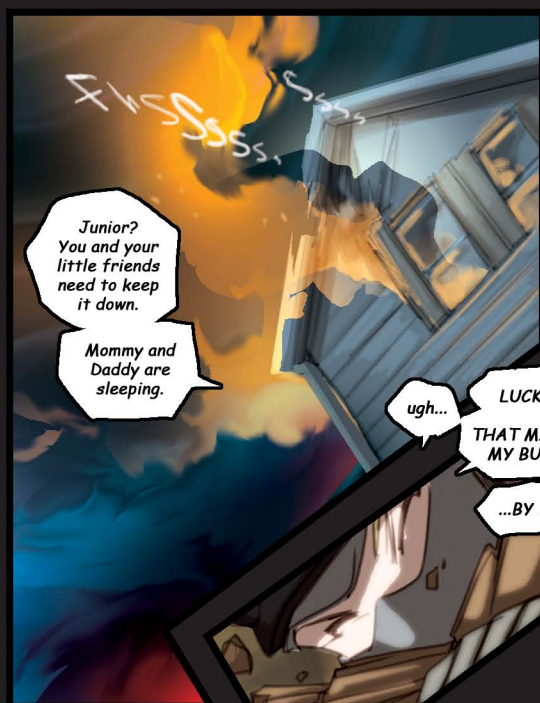
NO!! NO FREAKIN'
WAY I'D EVER--

--uhmmmm.
I-i mean...
What i meant
to say was...

...um...

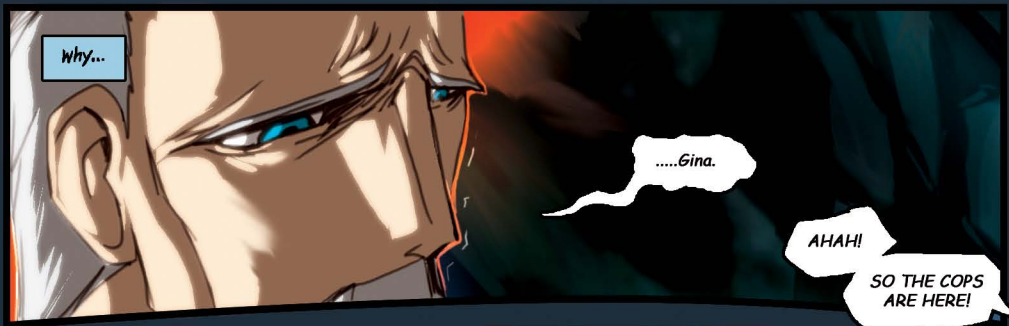












...oh, why...
didn't I listen
to that itch?

To Be Continued!