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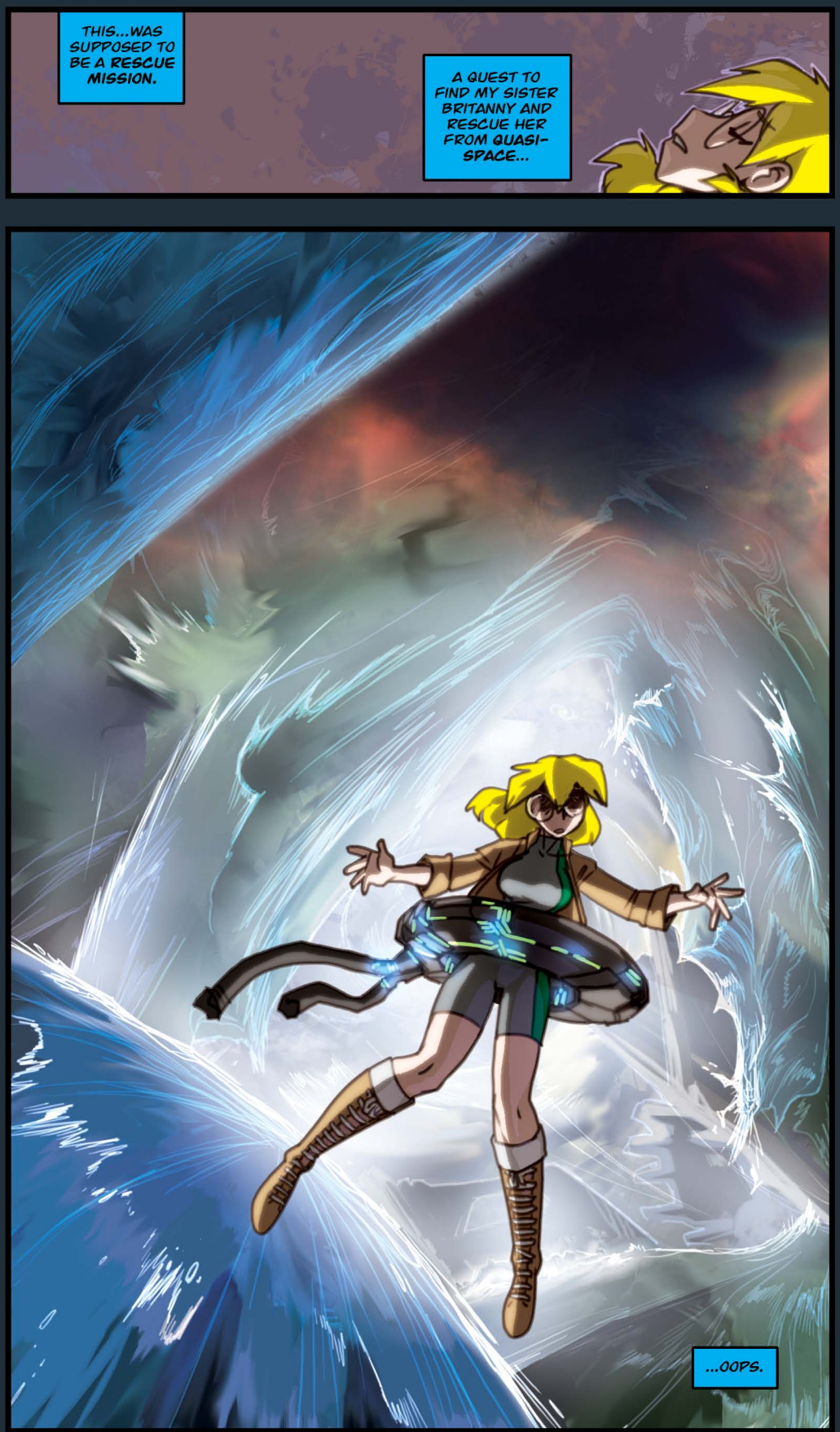

THIS...WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A RESCUE MISSION.
A QUEST TO FIND MY SISTER BRITANNY AND RESCUE HER FROM QUASI-SPACE...
...OOPS.

THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION!

IT RIPPED ME OUT OF REALSPACE JUST AS WE WERE ABOUT TO BEGIN LOOKING FOR BRITANNY IN HERE!

KRACK!

BUT THERE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN AN EXPLOSION!!!

GHn...

EEK!

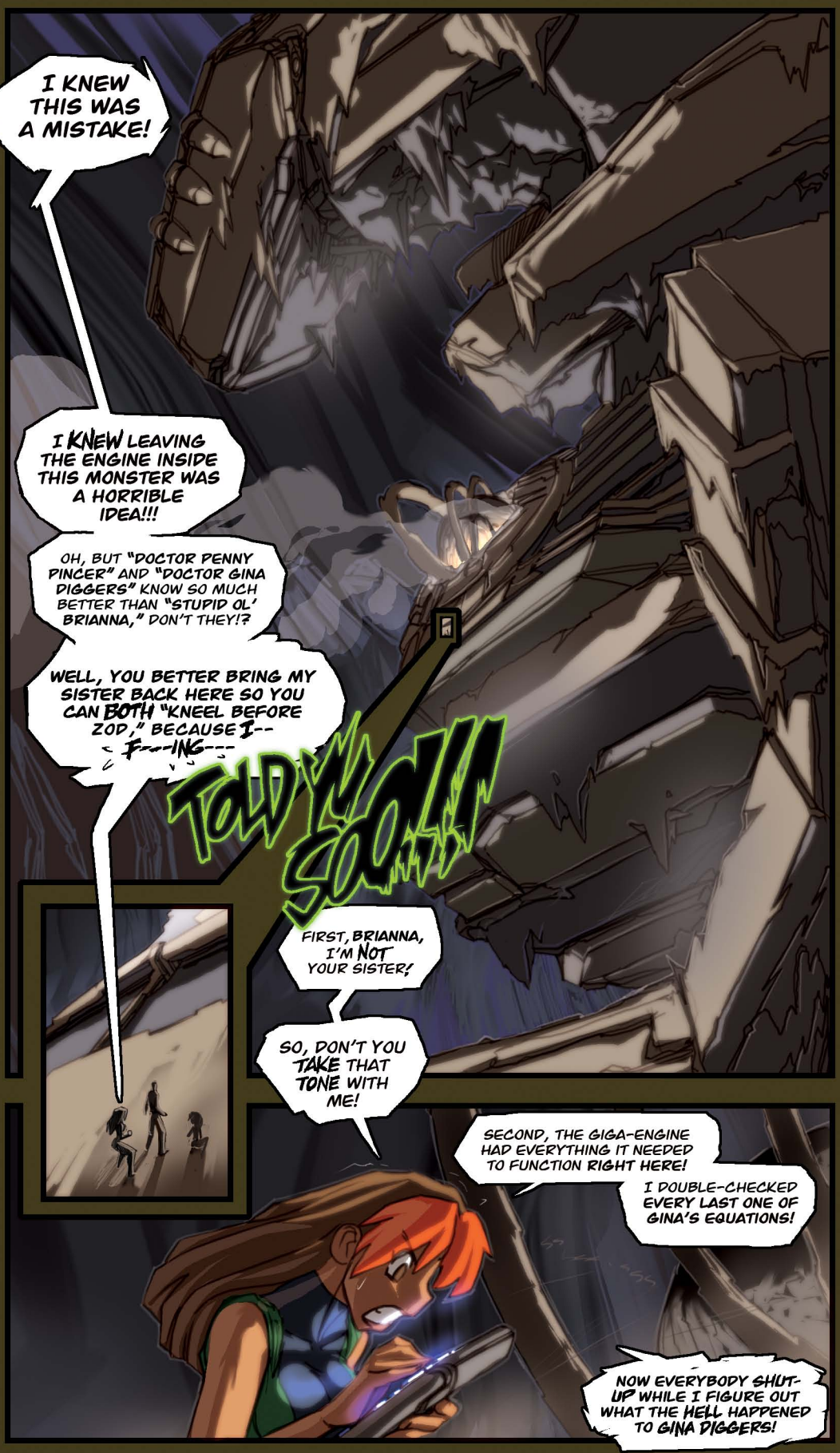
VOOSH!

SSSSH

WH--WHAT WENT WRONG?

WHAT WENT WRONG?
WHERE'S GINA!? DAD! WHERE'S GINA!?
I COULDN'T CATCH HOLD!

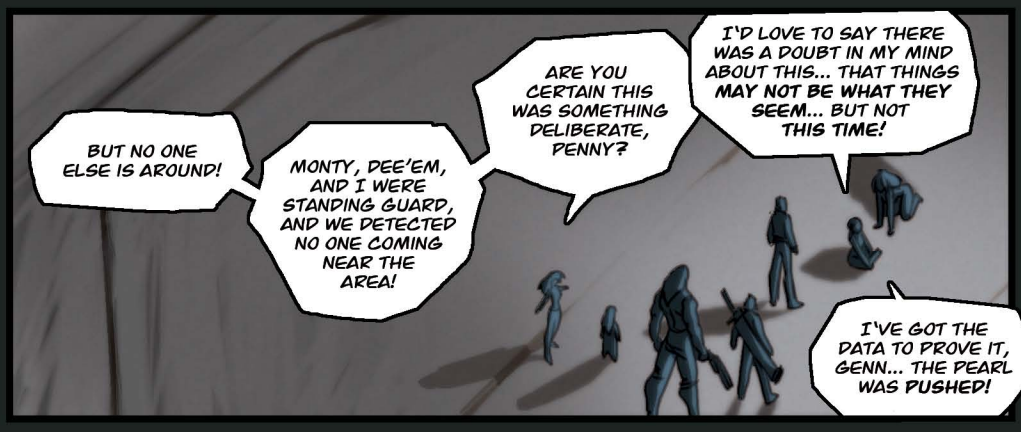
SHE'S GONE!
GONE BEFORE THE EXPLOSION!
BEFORE MY ESCAPE SPELL!
NO FIX! NO TRACKING SIGNAL! NO NOTHING!


I KNEW THIS WAS A MISTAKE!
I KNEW LEAVING THE ENGINE INSIDE THIS MONSTER WAS A HORRIBLE IDEA!!!
OH, BUT "DOCTOR PENNY PINCER" AND "DOCTOR GINA DIGGERS" KNOW SO MUCH BETTER THAN "STUPID OL' BRIANNA," DON'T THEY!?
WELL, YOU BETTER BRING MY SISTER BACK HERE SO YOU CAN BOTH "KNEEL BEFORE ZOD," BECAUSE I-- F---ING---
TOLD YA SO!!!
FIRST, BRIANNA, I'M NOT YOUR SISTER!
SO, DON'T YOU TAKE THAT TONE WITH ME!
SECOND, THE GIGA-ENGINE HAD EVERYTHING IT NEEDED TO FUNCTION RIGHT HERE!
I DOUBLE-CHECKED EVERY LAST ONE OF GINA'S EQUATIONS!
NOW EVERYBODY SHUT-UP WHILE I FIGURE OUT WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO GINA DIGGERS!

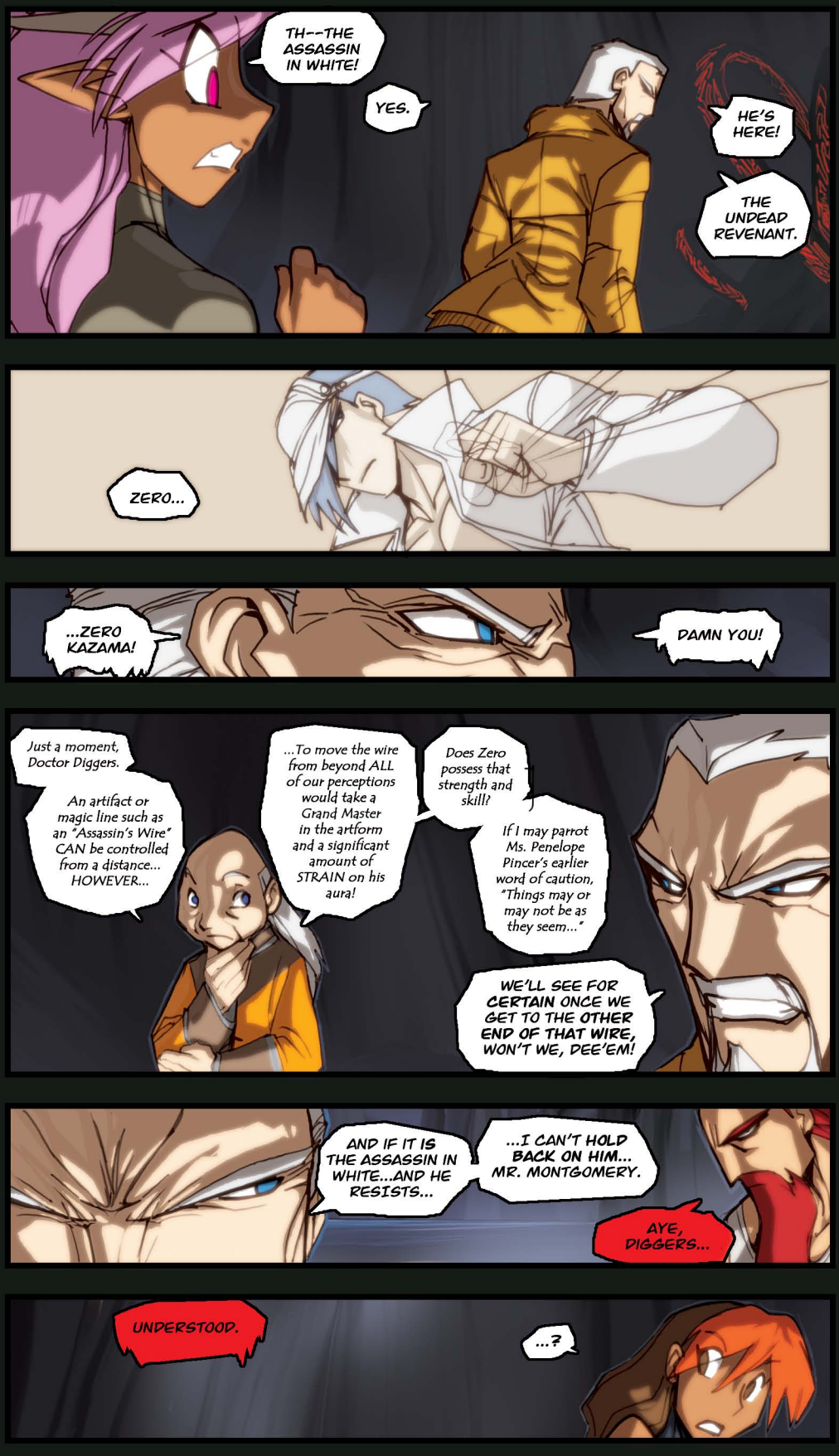
PENNY IS DOING ALL SHE CAN, BRIANNA!
OKAY! OKAY!!! S-SORRY!!!
JUST-- JUST FIND GINA!
A-A CLUE TO WHAT HAPPENED! ANYTHING!!!
CHECKING THE VITAL SIGN RECORDS AND COMPUTER STATUS LOGS.
HERE!
GINA'S STATISTICS WERE NORMAL THE ENTIRE TIME!
ALL THE WAY UNTIL SHE DISAPPEARED!
THAT SPIKE IS THE EXPLOSION, WHICH DETONATED AFTER GINA VANISHED!
THAT COULD MEAN SHE WAS PULLED INTO QUASI-SPACE, RIGHT?
SHE MIGHT STILL BE OKAY?!
I HOPE SO, BRIANNA.
FOR NOW, LET'S START WITH THE FIRST CLUE I COULD FIND ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED...
...THE INFINITY PEARL!
GINA AND I INSTALLED IT INTO THE ENGINE'S IGNITION FURNACE!
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH IT NOW!
SALVAGE CAMP TO ONE OF YOU BLIGHTAHS ON THE SALVAGE SITE! PICK UP, BLAST IT!!!

WOT'S GOIN' ON OVER THERE, 'EY!?
BLOODY EXPLOSION SHOOK TH' WHOLE LABYRINTH, IT DID!
ANYONE 'URT?
WHERE'S GINA!!?
PLEASE, FIND HER, PENNY! PLEASE!
MONTY! GET OVER HERE! HURRY!!!
I'LL-- I'LL CLEAN YOUR WHOLE HOUSE FOR A YEAR! EVEN WINDOWS!
OH, BLOODY 'ELL...
WHAT 'APPENED!!!
I'M LOOKING!
EVERYONE PLEASE SHUT UP WHILE I FOCUS!
...I'LL DO YOUR DISHES TOO! EVERY DAY!!!
BRIANNA!

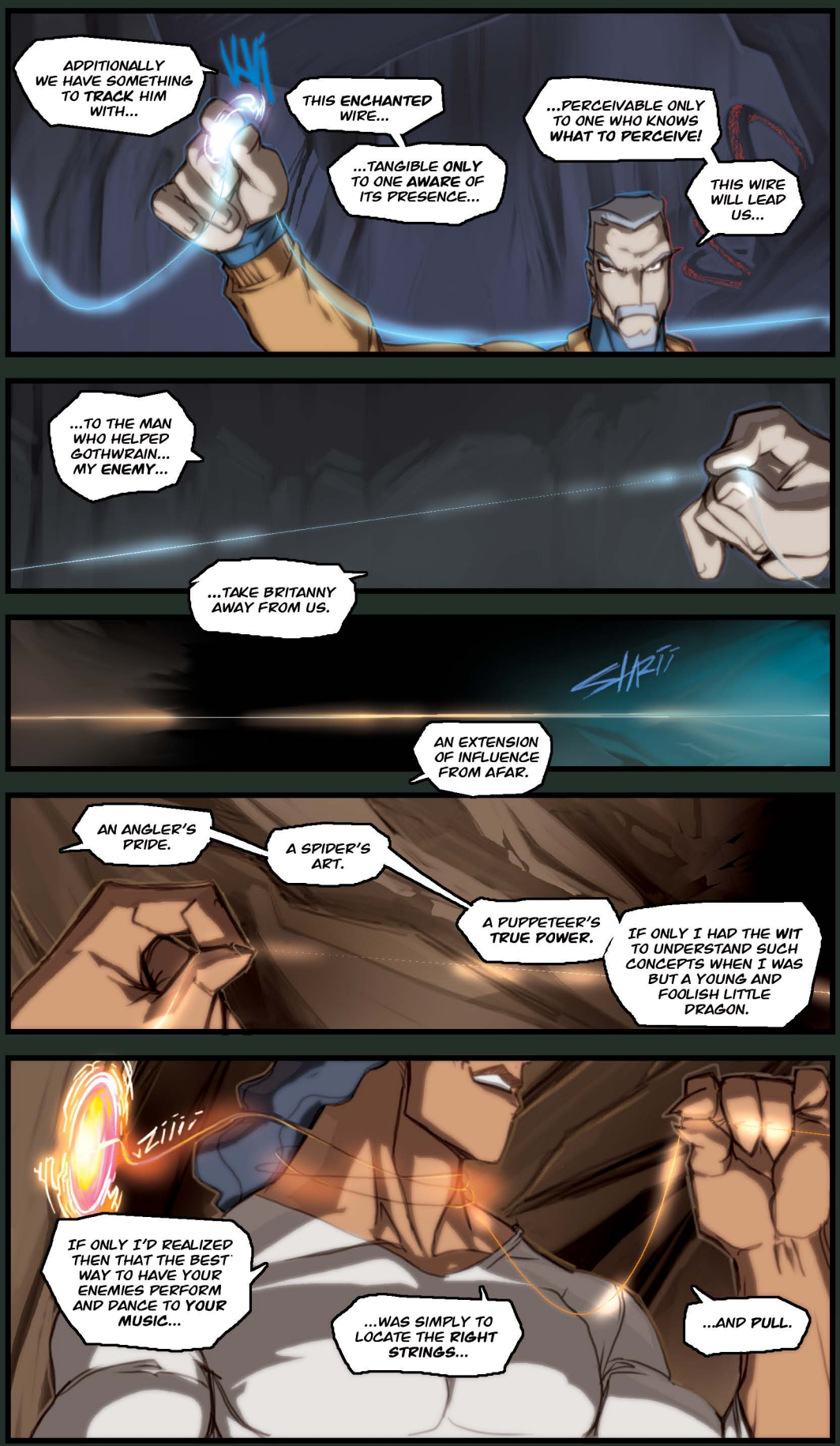
HERE. EVERYONE, LOOK AT THIS...
SENSOR READING PLAYBACK: INITIATED...
VWWWW
SOMETHING DELIBERATELY DISTURBED THE PEARL.
SHIFTED IT RIGHT OFF OF THE IGNITION FURNACE!
SABOTAGE!


BUT NO ONE ELSE IS AROUND!
MONTY, DEE'EM, AND I WERE STANDING GUARD, AND WE DETECTED NO ONE COMING NEAR THE AREA!
ARE YOU CERTAIN THIS WAS SOMETHING DELIBERATE, PENNY?
I'D LOVE TO SAY THERE WAS A DOUBT IN MY MIND ABOUT THIS... THAT THINGS MAY NOT BE WHAT THEY SEEM... BUT NOT THIS TIME!
I'VE GOT THE DATA TO PROVE IT, GENN... THE PEARL WAS PUSHED!

GIGLIATHON IS HAUNTED BY STRANGE GHOSTS.
SPIRITS OF THOSE GIGLIATHON HAD SLAIN MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO!
DID THEY DO THIS?
THAT'S A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY--
--WAIT!
SON OF A BI--
A WIRE!

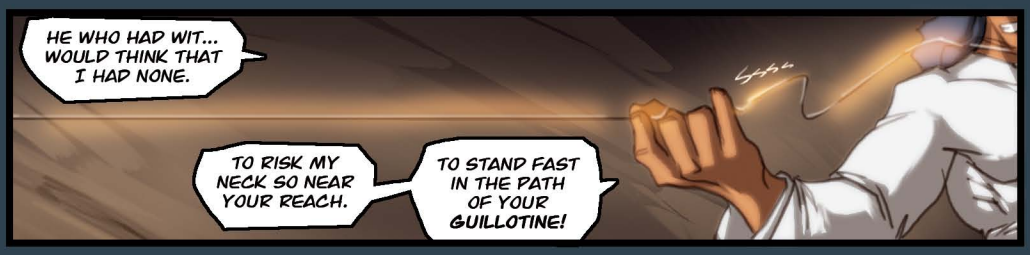

TH--THE ASSASSIN IN WHITE!
YES.
HE'S HERE!
THE UNDEAD REVENANT.
ZERO...
...ZERO KAZAMA!
DAMN YOU!
Just a moment, Doctor Diggers.
An artifact or magic line such as an "Assassin's Wire" CAN be controlled from a distance... HOWEVER...
...To move the wire from beyond ALL of our perceptions would take a Grand Master in the artform and a significant amount of STRAIN on his aura!
Does Zero possess that strength and skill?
If I may parrot Ms. Penelope Pincer's earlier word of caution, "Things may or may not be as they seem..."
WE'LL SEE FOR CERTAIN ONCE WE GET TO THE OTHER END OF THAT WIRE, WON'T WE, DEE'EM!
AND IF IT IS THE ASSASSIN IN WHITE...AND HE RESISTS...
...I CAN'T HOLD BACK ON HIM... MR. MONTGOMERY.
AYE, DIGGERS...
UNDERSTOOD.
...?

MR. MONTGOMERY, MR. SHINRYUKEN AND I ARE PUTTING AN END TO ZERO'S INTERFERENCE ONCE AND FOR ALL.
PENELOPE, WE NEED YOU TO FIND WHERE IN QUASI-SPACE GINA'S PATH MAY HAVE LED...
...AND PREPARE ANOTHER PORTAL THROUGH!
THIS TIME, WE'LL ALL GO IN TOGETHER!
ON IT.
ROIGHT THEN.
LETS DO THIS.
WAIT A MINUTE!
I'M COMIN' TOO, DAD!
JUST GIMME TWO MINUTES TO GET INTO MY BUTT-WAXIMUS-MAXIMUS ARMOR!!!
YOU'RE STAYING HERE, BRIANNA!
PROTECT PENELOPE AND THE GIGA-ENGINE!
BUT-- BUT I--
NO BUTS!
AND THIS WON'T TAKE LONG. I PLACED WARP PORTALS ALONG OUR PATH ON THE WAY IN.
IN CASE ONE OF US BECAME LOST IN THE TUNNELS AGAIN.
Warp portals! Excellent idea, Theodore!
USING THEM AS MAGIC "SONAR BUOYS," WE CAN DETECT OUR HIDDEN FOE. WE JUST NEED TO VISIT EACH ONE AND "PING" THE SURROUNDING AREA.


ADDITIONALLY WE HAVE SOMETHING TO TRACK HIM WITH...
THIS ENCHANTED WIRE...
...TANGIBLE ONLY TO ONE AWARE OF ITS PRESENCE...
...PERCEIVABLE ONLY TO ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT TO PERCEIVE!
THIS WIRE WILL LEAD US...
...TO THE MAN WHO HELPED GOTHWRAIN... MY ENEMY...
...TAKE BRITANNY AWAY FROM US.
SHRIT
AN EXTENSION OF INFLUENCE FROM AFAR.
AN ANGLER'S PRIDE.
A SPIDER'S ART.
A PUPPETEER'S TRUE POWER.
IF ONLY I HAD THE WIT TO UNDERSTAND SUCH CONCEPTS WHEN I WAS BUT A YOUNG AND FOOLISH LITTLE DRAGON.
ZIIII
IF ONLY I'D REALIZED THEN THAT THE BEST WAY TO HAVE YOUR ENEMIES PERFORM AND DANCE TO YOUR MUSIC...
...WAS SIMPLY TO LOCATE THE RIGHT STRINGS...
...AND PULL.

YOU ARE LATE... LITTLE ASSASSIN.
I WAS AFRAID I HAD LOST YOU!
YOU KNOW BETTER THAN THAT... DREADWING.
MY KI WIRE IS FIXED AROUND YOUR VERY SOUL!
EVEN PUSHING THROUGH A DRAGON PORTAL...
...AND PULLING ME THROUGH ITS TORRENT AND FLAMES...
...ONLY DELAYED THE INEVITABLE!

AH...
...THE ANCIENT WEAPON OF THE DRAGON SAVIOR... WITHIN A HAIR'S-BREADTH OF MY THROAT.
IN YOUR HANDS, THAT BLADE IS CERTAIN DEATH, O SLAVE OF SLAVES.
THEN YOU REALIZE THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR YOU NOW, DREADWING.
YOUR MAGIC IS USELESS AGAINST ME.
MY WIRE LINKS OUR AURAS.
I AM IMMUNE!
INDEED.


HE WHO HAD WIT... WOULD THINK THAT I HAD NONE.
TO RISK MY NECK SO NEAR YOUR REACH.
TO STAND FAST IN THE PATH OF YOUR GUILLOTINE!

BUT GREAT RISK BEGETS GREAT REWARD!
KRZZMZ
AND... SOMETIMES...

...A VERY EXCELLENT PIECE OF VILLAINY!!!
SKOO
WATCH!

WHSSSH
...AND LEARN!!!
HSSkuu

WE'RE CLOSING.

AS WE MOVE FORWARD, I CAN FEEL THE GRASP AT THE OTHER END GROW NEARER.

THERE IS NO ATTEMPT TO FLEE.

'E'S EXPECTIN' US, THEN?

JOLLY GOOD.

I WANT A FEW ANSWERS FROM 'IM.

ZERO WAS A STUDENT, DIGGERS.

I TOOK 'IM IN... AWAY FROM THAT BLOODY CLAN O' 'IS.

I TAUGHT HIM BETTER!

BUT 'E FELL IN WITH TH' WRONG CROWD.

GOT IN WAY OVER 'IS HEAD 'N TOOK 'IS FRIENDS DOWN WITH 'IM.

'ES A DISAPPOINTMENT 'E IS... JUST LIKE THAT ARTHUR BOY...

WELL, HE MAY HAVE DISAPPOINTED YOU BEFORE, MR. MONTGOMERY...

...BUT HE'S SURELY MEETING MY EXPECTATIONS TODAY!

BLIMEY!!!

SHA

MANA SPIKE!!

INDEED!

HE'S TRYING TO BURN THE WIRE OUT OF EXISTENCE!

KABOOM

HE'S ORDERED HIS MAGIC ARTIFACT TO SELF-DESTRUCT!

AS I PREDICTED HE WOULD!!!

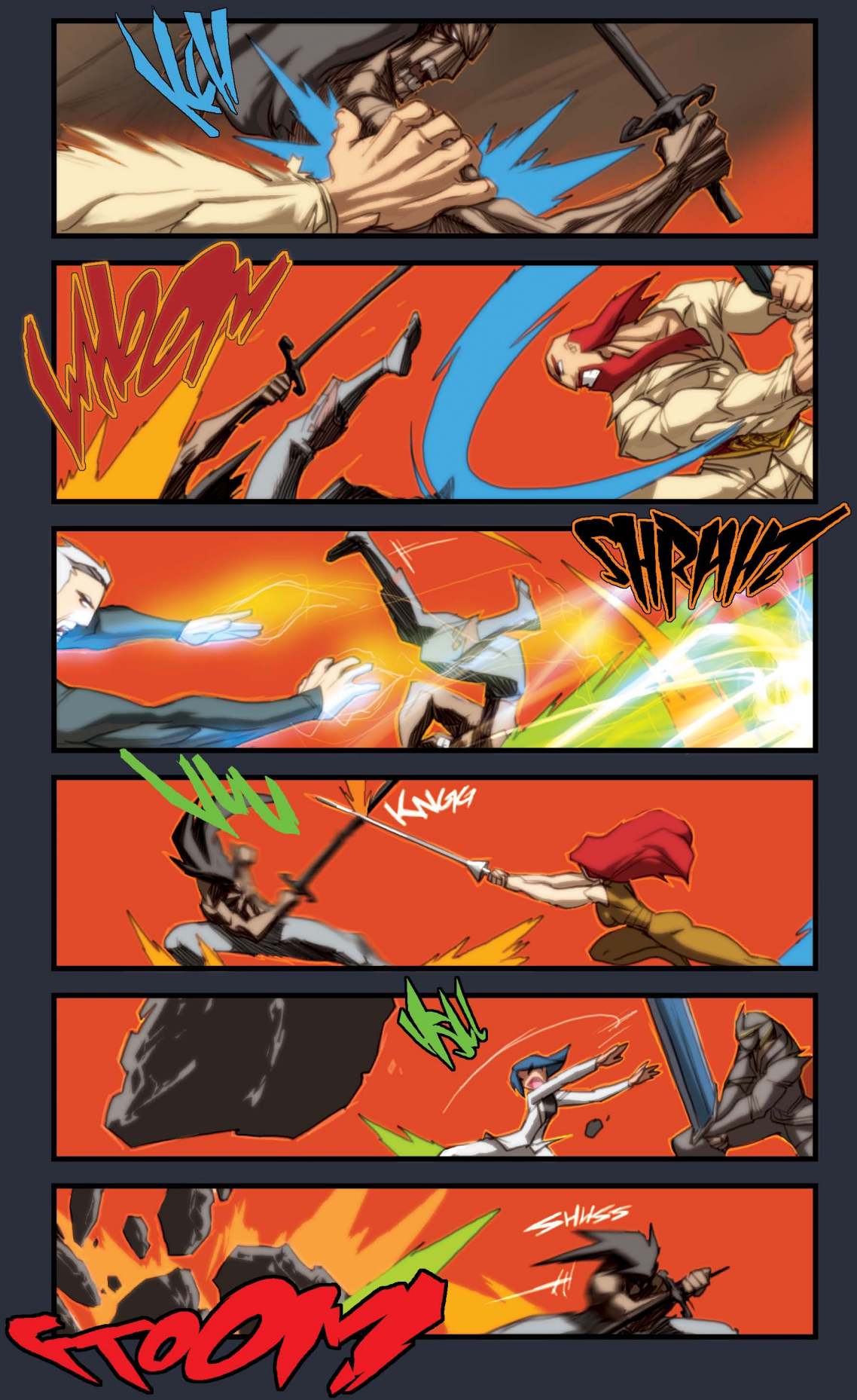
VASH!
IT IS DONE.
WITH YOUR DEATH...
...MY LORD AND MASTER... GOTHWRAIN...
...IS FREE!!!
ALL OF MY OATHS ARE FULFILLED!
IT IS DONE.
VASH
KFFF...
KAHH-- HAHA...

SPLAT
!?
N-NO!
YES!
BLIMEY!
BLOODY GOOD MOVE, DIGGERS!
BOOM!
THAT WAS MY PERSONAL CALLING CARD TO ZERO.
I INVERTED THE NATURE OF MY PORTION OF THE WIRE, MR. MONTGOMERY.
RE-WROTE ITS ENCHANTMENT, SO TO SPEAK.
THE NEGATIVE "SELF-DESTRUCTIVE" ENERGY WAS REFOCUSED THROUGH MY AURA AND REFLECTED RIGHT BACK...
...AS AN EXPLOSION OF SELF-PRESERVING POSITIVE ENERGY!
ANY INJURIES HE'S SUSTAINED SHOULD BE FULLY HEALED...
...WHICH IS QUITE UNFORTUNATE FOR AN UNDEAD REVENANT LIKE HIM!

'OLD THAT THOUGHT, DIGGERS...
SKHIIII
...SEEMS SOMEONE COULD USE JUST A LI'L BIT MORE "TLC"!
O-OUT--
OF MY--- MY---
WAY!
SHHZZ
VZZZ
H-HEALED...
ESC-PED!
KSSS
--OUT OF M---Y WAY!!!
WWFUL
KING

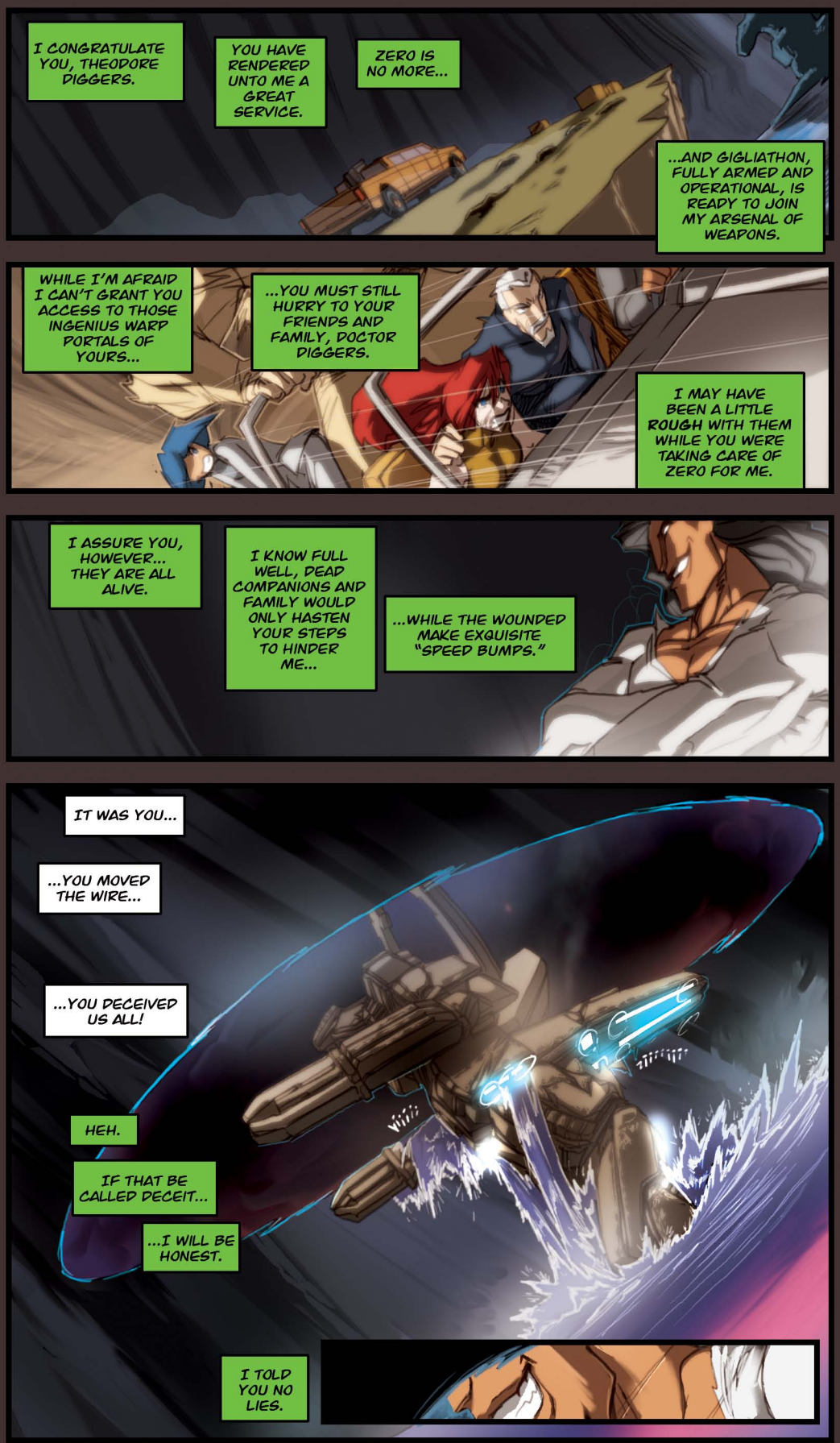
Kping
FTK
FOOM
GAH!
SHZZH
SHOO
ZHUIZ
NH!
GAH!

OH!
S--STOP HIM!!!
HE'S-- HE'S HEADING FOR THE SALVAGE CAMP!!!
OH, NO, HE ISN'T.
SHK
HE'S NOT GETTING AWAY THIS TIME.
A WARP PORTAL NETWORK IS A WONDERFUL THING...
...WOULDN'T YOU AGREE, ZERO?

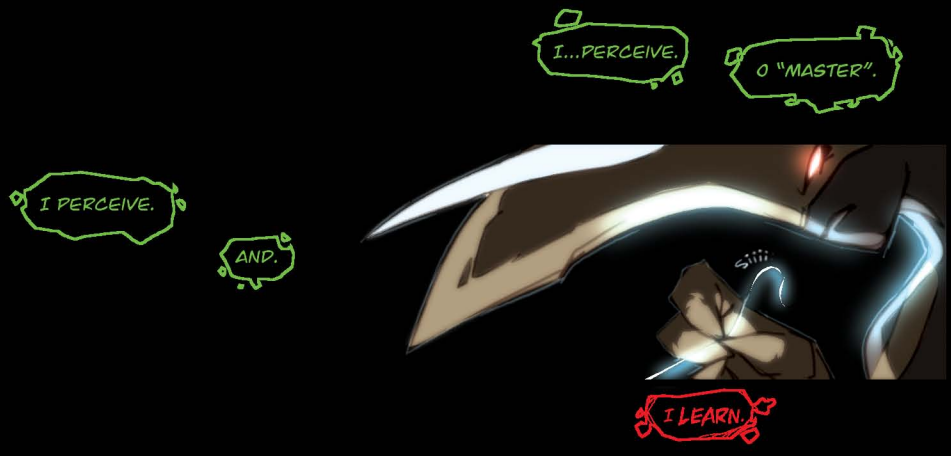

SHRAHZ
KNGG
SHUSS
TOOM

FWK
TCHOOM
KTM

CR--CRIKEY...
ZERO.
HIS AURA IS... EXHAUSTED.
IT'S OVER.
REST IN PEACE.
ANYONE 'URT?
ANCIENT PROVERB SAY...
"...I AIN'T GOT TIME TO BLEED."
J-JULIA.
HOW DID YOU GET HERE SO QUICKLY?
OW...
YOUR WARP PORTALS, DEAREST!
BUT... THEY WERE ALL DISABLED!
IT'S ONLY SAFE TO HAVE ONE ON AT A TIME!
I'D SAY THAT WAS AN EMERGENCY!
FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE EMERGENCIES!
WHEN DEBRA FELT THEM ALL ACTIVATE, WE KNEW IT WAS OUR CHANCE TO CATCH UP TO YOU.
BUT I DIDN'T ACTIVATE THEM!
ALL PORTALS WERE LOCKED!
WHAT IF A MONSTER... OR WORSE... USED THEM TO REACH--
TH--THE SALVAGE CAMP!!!
ZERO WAS A DISTRACTION!!!
DREADWING IS AT THE SALVAGE CAMP!!!


I CONGRATULATE YOU, THEODORE DIGGERS.
YOU HAVE RENDERED UNTO ME A GREAT SERVICE.
ZERO IS NO MORE...
...AND GIGLIATHON, FULLY ARMED AND OPERATIONAL, IS READY TO JOIN MY ARSENAL OF WEAPONS.
WHILE I'M AFRAID I CAN'T GRANT YOU ACCESS TO THOSE INGENIUS WARP PORTALS OF YOURS...
...YOU MUST STILL HURRY TO YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, DOCTOR DIGGERS.
I MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE ROUGH WITH THEM WHILE YOU WERE TAKING CARE OF ZERO FOR ME.
I ASSURE YOU, HOWEVER... THEY ARE ALL ALIVE.
I KNOW FULL WELL, DEAD COMPANIONS AND FAMILY WOULD ONLY HASTEN YOUR STEPS TO HINDER ME...
...WHILE THE WOUNDED MAKE EXQUISITE "SPEED BUMPS."
IT WAS YOU...
...YOU MOVED THE WIRE...
...YOU DECEIVED US ALL!
HEH.
IF THAT BE CALLED DECEIT...
...I WILL BE HONEST.
I TOLD YOU NO LIES.

I MADE YOU NO PROMISES.
IN THIS LIES THE TRUEST VILLAINY.
THE PUREST OF FOUL INTENTIONS.
YOUNG GINA SWEPT HERSELF AWAY... BEFORE MY EXPLOSION!
KNOW THAT TRUE VILLAINY... IS ONLY LEARNED... ONLY PERCEIVED... WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE!
HAHAHAHA
MUAHAHA


I...PERCEIVE.
O "MASTER".
I PERCEIVE.
AND.
SIIII
I LEARN.