



GOLD DIGGER

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AUGUST 2008

MY NAME IS DR. GINA BABETTE DIGGERS,
ARCHEOLOGIST OF MYTH AND LEGEND.

AND, AT THIS VERY MOMENT,
I'M ON ANOTHER WORLD...

...WITHIN A COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT REALM OF
EXISTENCE...

MA'AM,
CONTROLLED-
POINT HEAT-
SHIELD BREACH
ESTABLISHED.

SETTING MAGNETIC
BOTTLE FACTOR TO
TEN POINT SIX...

ARE THESE
NEW SETTINGS
ADEQUATE?

...SWIMMING THROUGH
AN OCEAN OF MOLTEN
ROCK...

EWWW! A LITTLE
TOO HIGH... GIMME
POINT ZERO TWO
LESS.

THERE!
GOOD JOB,
GESPIE.

...EATIN'
S'MORES!

NEW
INGREDIENTS
CONJURED.

THANKS,
CRESCENS!

SHOOT!
TOO CRISPY ON
THE EDGES.

LIKE MINE
"RARE."

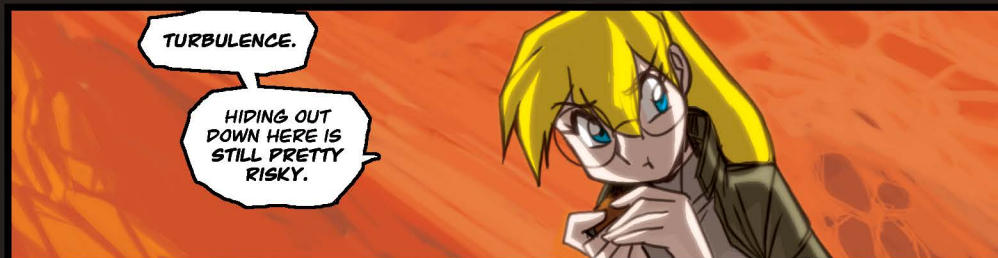


Now Now...
BUT THE
REAL
QUESTION
BRIT' AND
I WONDERED
REMAINS,
CRESCENS...

...HOW GOOD
ARE YOU AT
WHIPPIN' UP
A BOWL OF
CAP'N
CRUN--

EEK!

S-SORRY
MA'AM...
SUDDEN
MAGMA
CURRENT
CHANGE.



TURBULENCE.

HIDING OUT
DOWN HERE IS
STILL PRETTY
RISKY.



IF ONLY THOSE
DYNASTY OR
ABYSSALISK
BULLIES IN ORBIT
WOULD HURRY
UP AND FINISH
THEIR BATTLE.

YEAH,
YEAH.

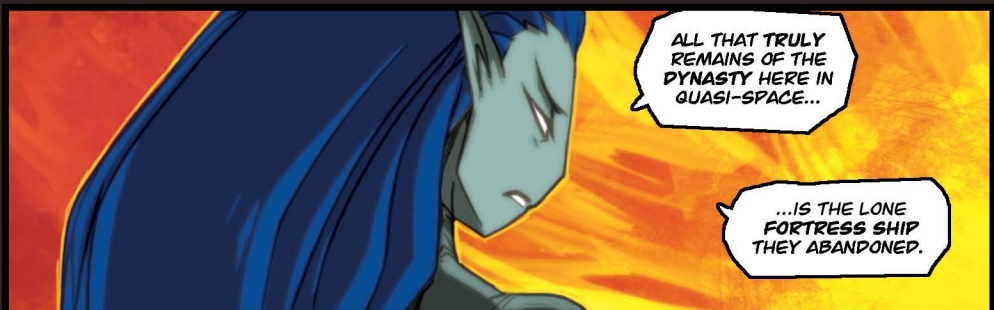
BUT, GETTING
BACK TO THE
IMPORTANT
TOPIC...

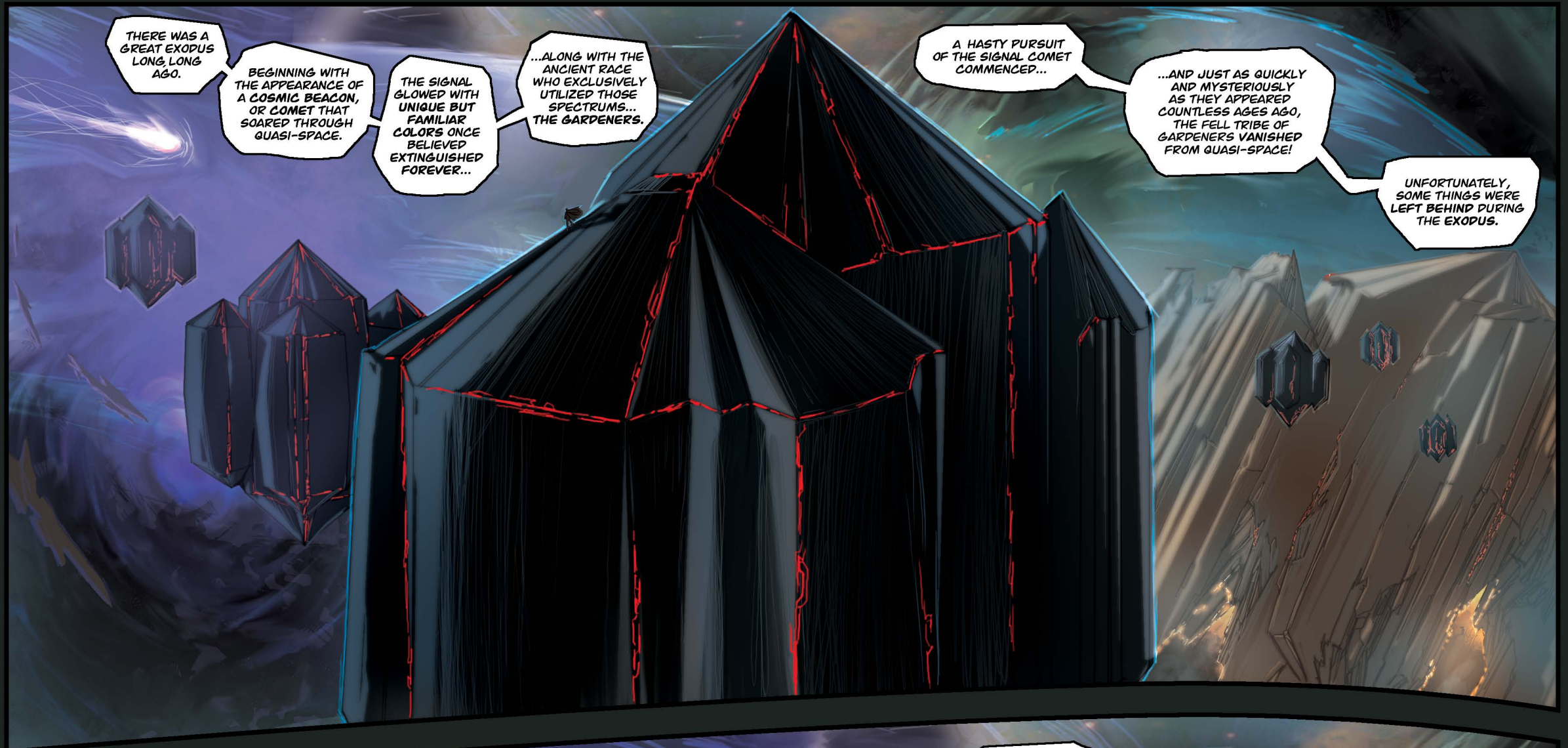
...CRESCENS, YOU
WEREN'T THAT MUCH
BETTER THAN ME AT
CONVERTING ETHER INTO
EDIBLE "SPELL-MANA
RICE CAKE PATTIES"
THE LAST TIME
I SAW YOU.



WHEN DID YOU
LEARN HOW TO
"KICK IT UP A
NOTCH?"







THERE WAS A GREAT EXOPUS LONG, LONG AGO.

BEGINNING WITH THE APPEARANCE OF A COSMIC BEACON, OR COMET THAT SOARED THROUGH QUASI-SPACE.

THE SIGNAL GLOWED WITH UNIQUE BUT FAMILIAR COLORS ONCE BELIEVED EXTINGUISHED FOREVER...

...ALONG WITH THE ANCIENT RACE WHO EXCLUSIVELY UTILIZED THOSE SPECTRUMS... THE GARDENERS.

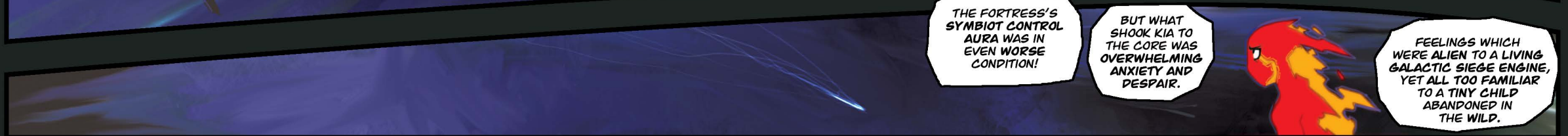
A HASTY PURSUIT OF THE SIGNAL COMET COMMENCED...

...AND JUST AS QUICKLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY AS THEY APPEARED COUNTLESS AGES AGO, THE FELL TRIBE OF GARDENERS VANISHED FROM QUASI-SPACE!

UNFORTUNATELY, SOME THINGS WERE LEFT BEHIND DURING THE EXOPUS.



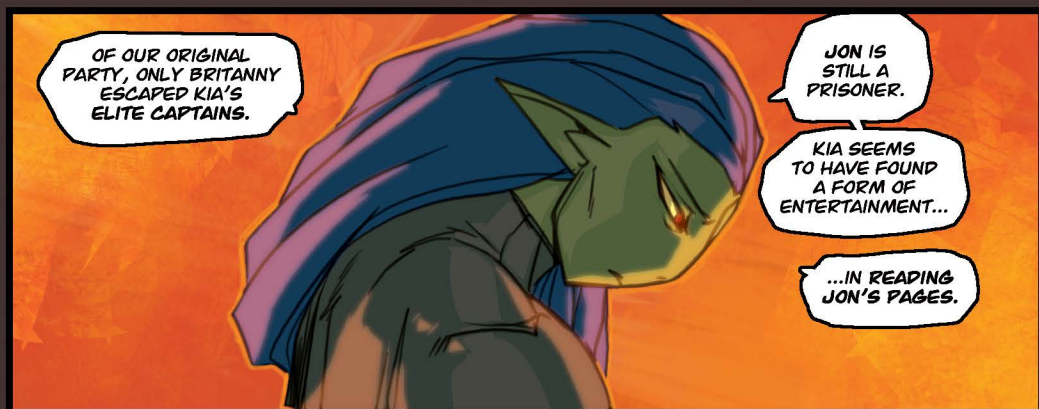
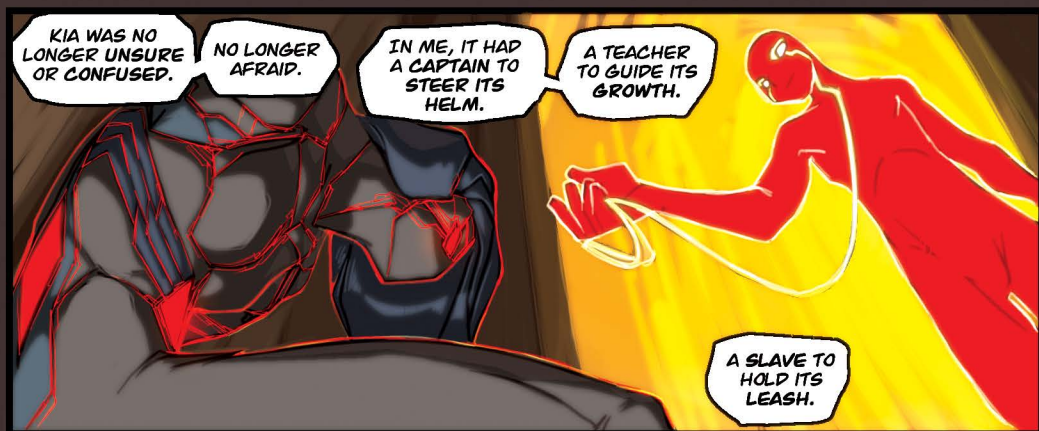
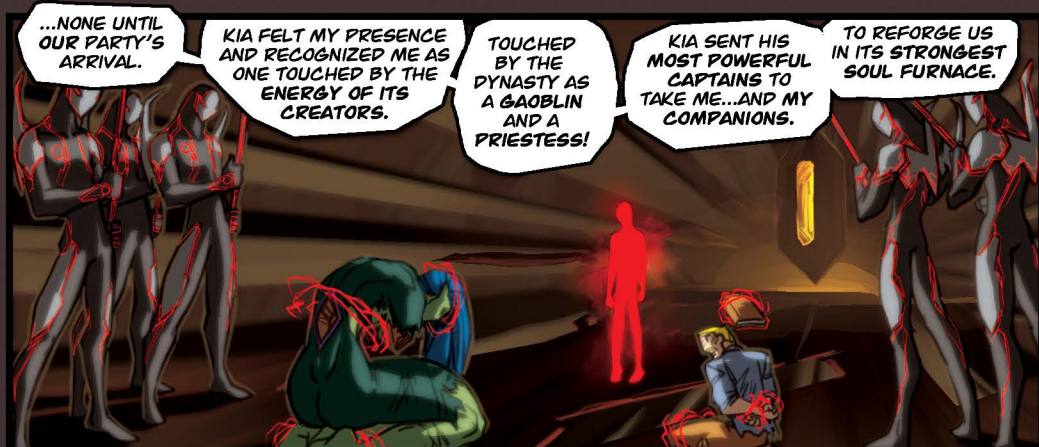
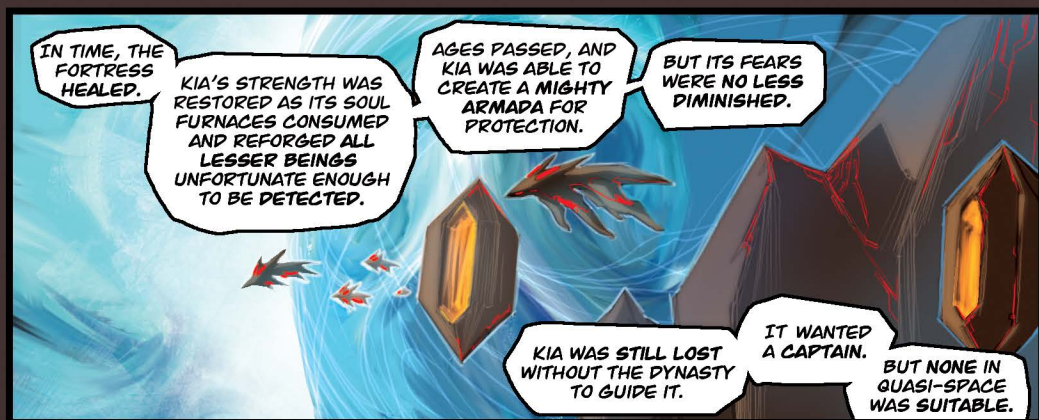
BATTERED AND CRIPPLED FROM AN EARLIER BATTLE AGAINST A MULTITUDE OF ABYSSALISK BROOD FAMILIES... KIA'S HUSK-FRAME WAS TOO WEAK TO HEAL IN TIME FOR SUCH A DIFFICULT JOURNEY.



THE FORTRESS'S SYMBIOT CONTROL AURA WAS IN EVEN WORSE CONDITION!

BUT WHAT SHOOK KIA TO THE CORE WAS OVERWHELMING ANXIETY AND DESPAIR.

FEELINGS WHICH WERE ALIEN TO A LIVING GALACTIC SIEGE ENGINE, YET ALL TOO FAMILIAR TO A TINY CHILD ABANDONED IN THE WILD.



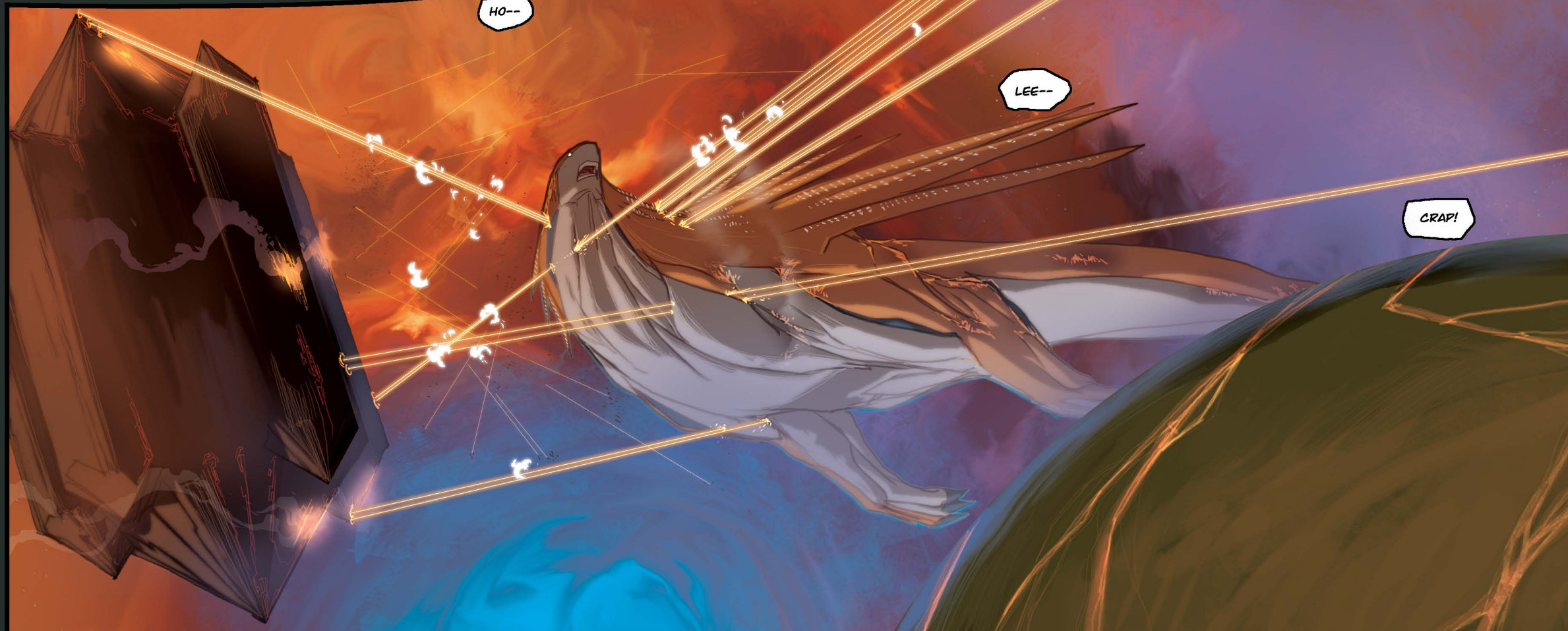


WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?

CAN'T YOU GET ME A LINK TO AN ARTIFICER NODE, GESPIE?

THERE'S A VIEWER NEAR THE CONFLICT, MA'AM!

LINK ESTABLISHED!



HO--

LEE--

CRAP!



S-SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO "NAG"!

Holy pieces of cow!

IT'S JUST AS BIG AS THE FIRST MEGA-ABYSSALISK!

HOW IN THE WORLD DID THAT GET CONVERTED!?

KIA HAD ME LEAD ITS FORCES IN SURPRISING AND SUBDUING THE GREAT ABYSSALISK PATRIARCH.

OUR VICTIM WAS BUTCHERED AND EACH PIECE REFORGED.

I SUPERVISED THE RE-ASSEMBLY OF THOSE PIECES INTO THAT WEAPON.

WHEN MY PEOPLE SERVED THE DYNASTY, OUR TASKS INCLUDED CAPTURING LARGE TARGETS.

ESPECIALLY ONES PRIDEFUL AND CARELESS OF AMBUSH.

THE ABYSSALISK PATRIARCH CRUELLY USED AGAINST THE MATRIARCH...

...IT SEEMS KIA HAS AN OLD VENDETTA TO SETTLE.

J-JINKIES, CRESCENS...

...I MEAN-- THAT'S JUST EXTRA-DOUBLE-GRINCH MALICIOUS!!!

TRUE, THOSE ABYSSALISKS WERE ON US LIKE RAPID ALIENS ON A SIGOURNEY WEAVER-FLAVORED SNAUSAGE JUST AN HOUR AGO...

...BUT STILL...

MA'AM... I THINK... I THINK I'VE DETECTED A "GIGA-ENGINE" IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA.

SA--SAY WHAT?

SOURCE PIN-POINTED.

SOURCE!??

THE CRAFT DESIGNATED DYNASTY FORTRESS KIA SEEMS TO HAVE A NETWORK OF THEM AS PART OF IT'S INFRASTRUCTURE.

BRIT'!!! GET A LOAD OF THAT!

A COMPLETE BETA-ENGINE WARP DRIVE TRAIN!

ONCE WE GET THE PROPER COORDINATES FROM THE ARTIFICER NODES, WE'RE HITCHIN' US A RIDE HOME!

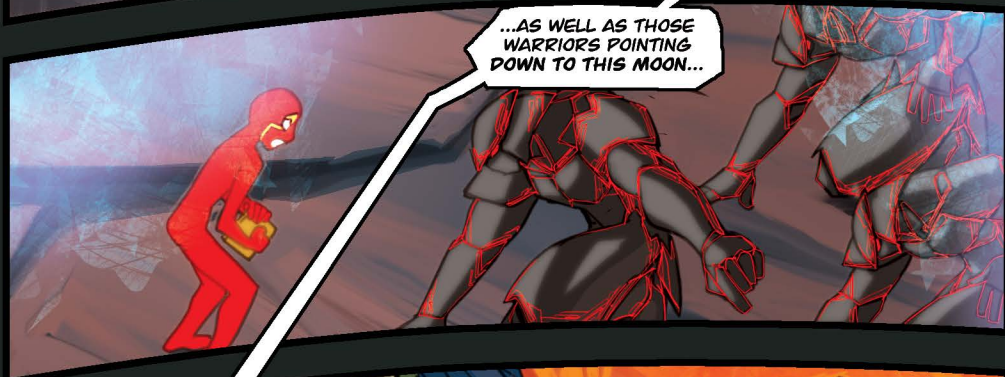
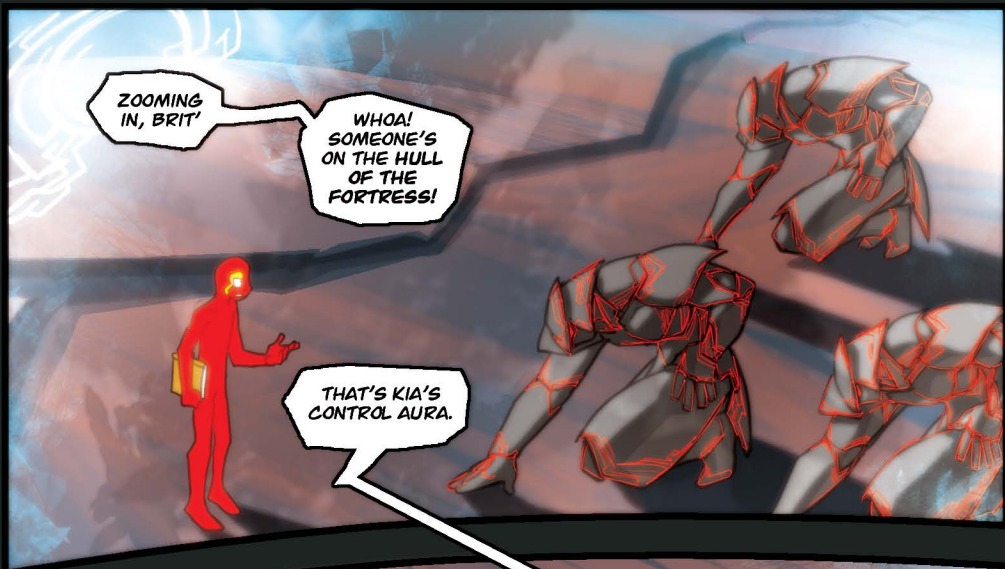
NOW... HOW DO YOU CARJACK A DEATH STAR...

HOLD ON! ZOOM INTO THE CORNER OVER HERE... THE RED GLOW!

HUH?

WHAT IS THAT?

IT'S TICKLIN' MY "CHESTAH SENSE!"





SEVERAL GROUPS
HAVE SPLIT OFF
FROM THE
APPROACHING
WAVE...

...SPLINTERED INTO
ARCS TWENTY DEGREES
FROM DESCENT PATH
IN MULTIPLE HEADINGS.

A SEARCH
PATTERN.

KIA... ISN'T
LETTING ME
GO?!

THIS SHOULD
NOT BE.



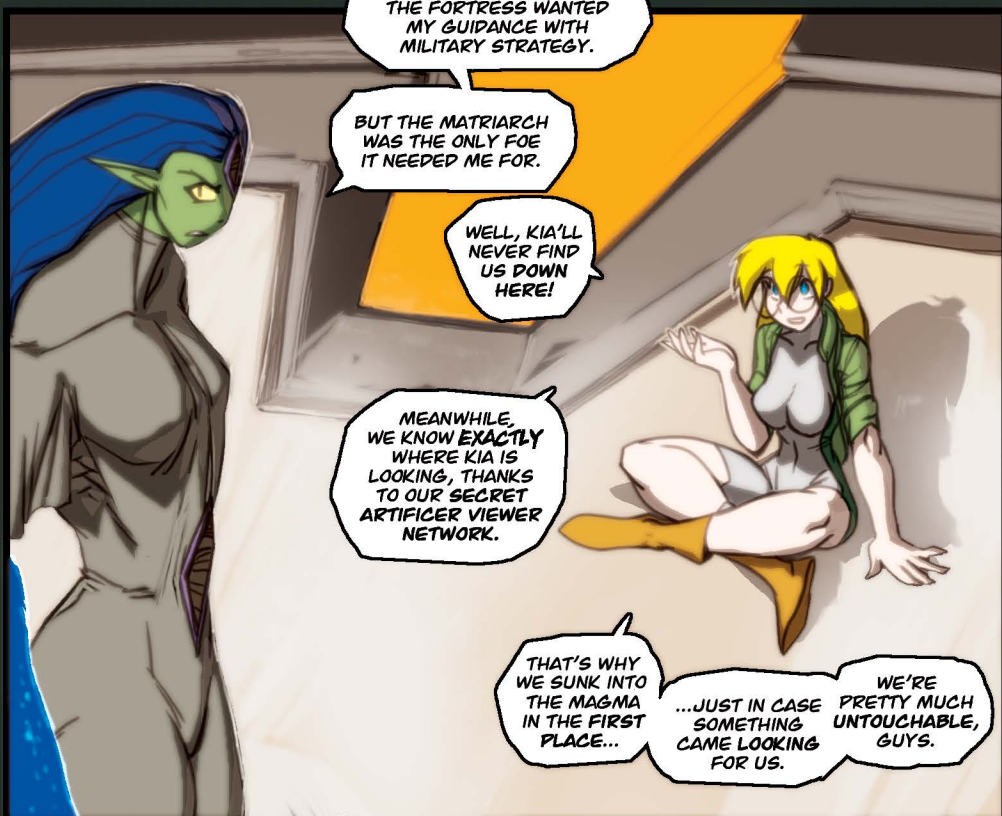
INSTEAD OF SEIZING
AN IMPORTANT
STRATEGIC
OPPORTUNITY...

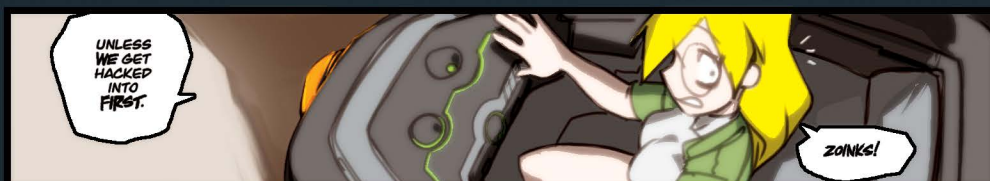
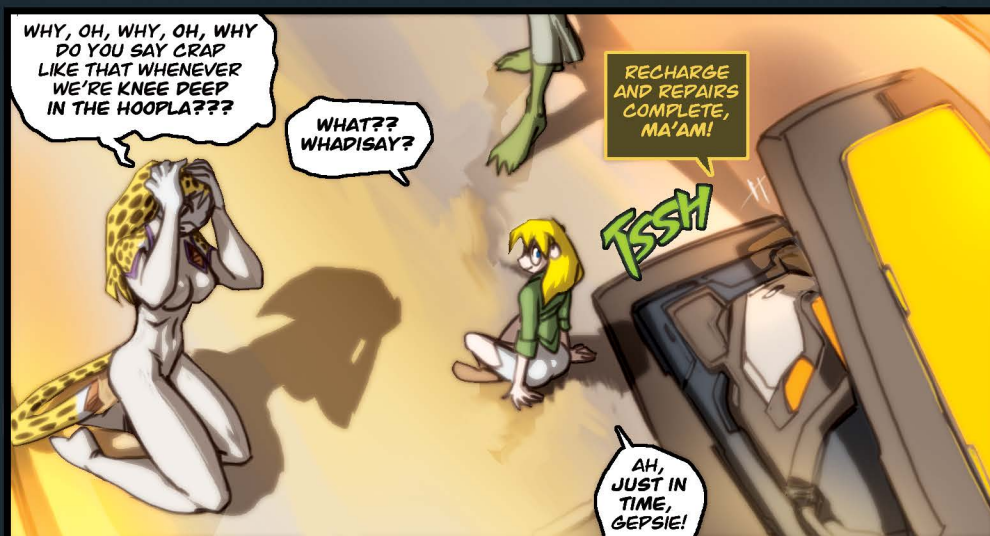
...INSTEAD OF
VANQUISHING
AN ARCH FOE...

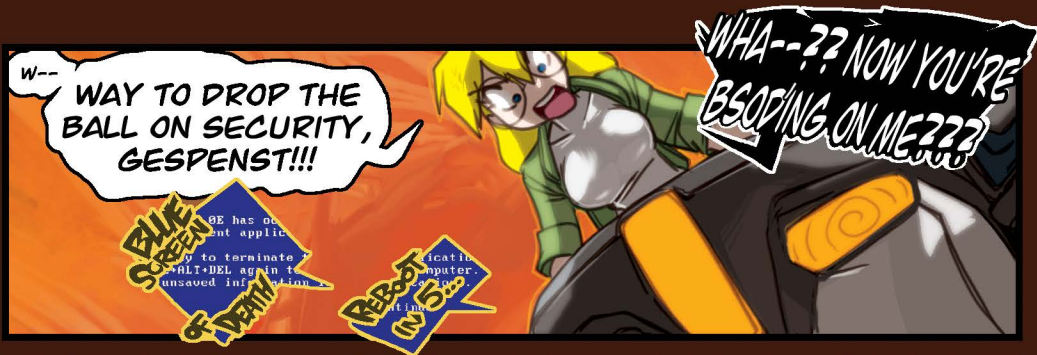
...KIA IS
DISENGAGING!

IGNORING THE
BATTLE AND
COMING AFTER
ME!

BUT SURELY,
I'M NOT THAT
IMPORTANT!













KSHING

OH...!!

KKHOOM

OKAY,
"PLAN B"...



FIGHT OUR WAY
THE HECK OUTTA
HERE!

GINA IS
CORRECT.

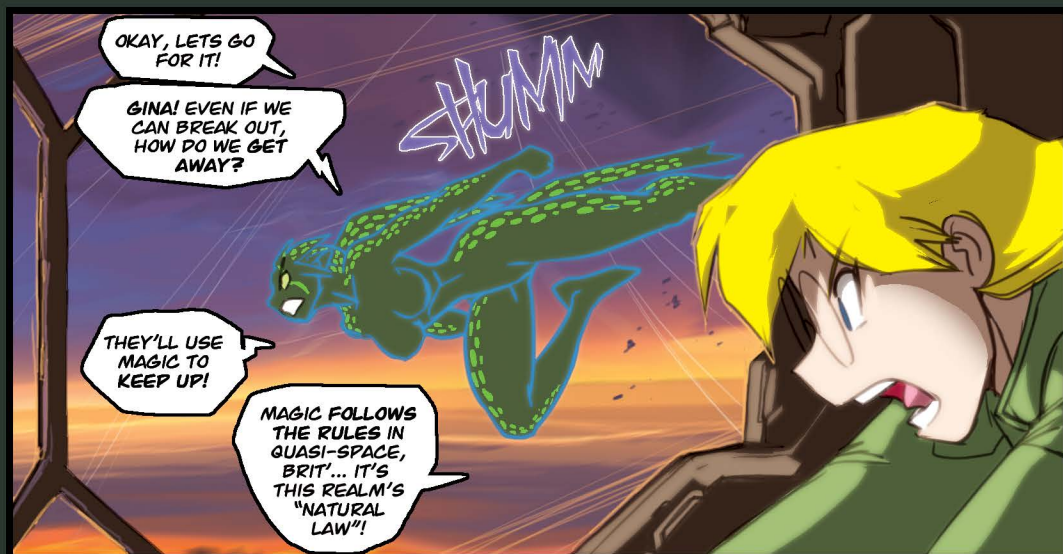
WE MUST
DEPART
IMMEDIATELY.

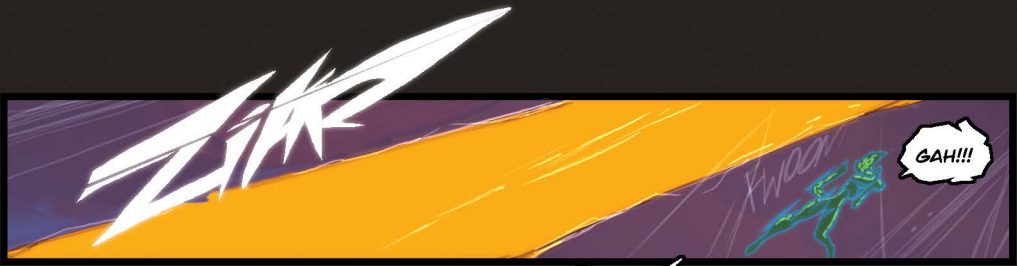
KHOING

KIA IS TOO
FURIOUS... TOO
PANICKED TO
REASON WITH
NOW.

ANY QUESTIONS
I HAD FOR KIA
WILL HOLD...

...SHOULD OUR
PATHS CROSS
AGAIN.





GAH!!!



AW HELL!

SPELL
CANNONS!

NO WAY
WE CAN
BLOCK THAT
CRAP!!!



GESPENST!!!

USE THE
TRACTOR BEAM
IN PHALANX
CONFIGURATION!

YANK UP
EVERYTHING IN
THE SECTORS I'M
DESIGNATING!

M-MA'AM!
THOSE SECTORS
ARE IMPOSS--

DO IT!!!



WHO'S
BAD!!!*

SHAHMOWN!

*YUP... GINA STILL THINKS
M.J. IS TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL.



WHAT IN THE WORLD?

OH WOW,
MA'AM!
COOLNESS!!!

JUST LIKE
YODA!

HEHEH!



GINA! HOW IS
YOUR ROBOT
DOIN' THAT?



THE NATURAL
MASS AROUND
HERE ACTS
NORMALLY...

...UNTIL I INFLUENCE
IT WITH MY "EVIL
NEWTONIAN-LAW
WITCHCRAFT"...

...FORCING ANY
AFFECTED MASS
TO DUPLICATE
THE MASS OF ME
AND MY GEAR!

SO EVERY PIECE
OF MATTER IN MY
TRACTOR BEAM...
NO MATTER HOW
BIG OR SMALL...
WEIGHS AS MUCH
AS MY GESPIE!

ONCE THE TRACTOR-
BEAM LETS GO, THE
MASS GOES BACK
TO "NORMAL"
BUT KEEPS ALL OF
IT'S MOMENTUM...

...AND KEEPS
ALL THE FUN
THAT GOES
WITH IT!



HEH. AS
I SAID...
PHYSICS
CHEATS
HERE!

BY HOW MUCH?
WHO KNOWS.

WHAT WE NEED IS
A BIG OL' PIECE OF
MASS TO PLAY
GUINEA PIG!

HEY,
FORTRESS
KIA...



...YOU WOULDN'T
MIND, WOULD
YOU!? ♡

...POWERFUL!

BUT NOT
WITHOUT
WEAKNESS.



NEXT... "GOODBYE CRUEL DIMENSION..."