



GOLD DIGGER

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FRED PERRY





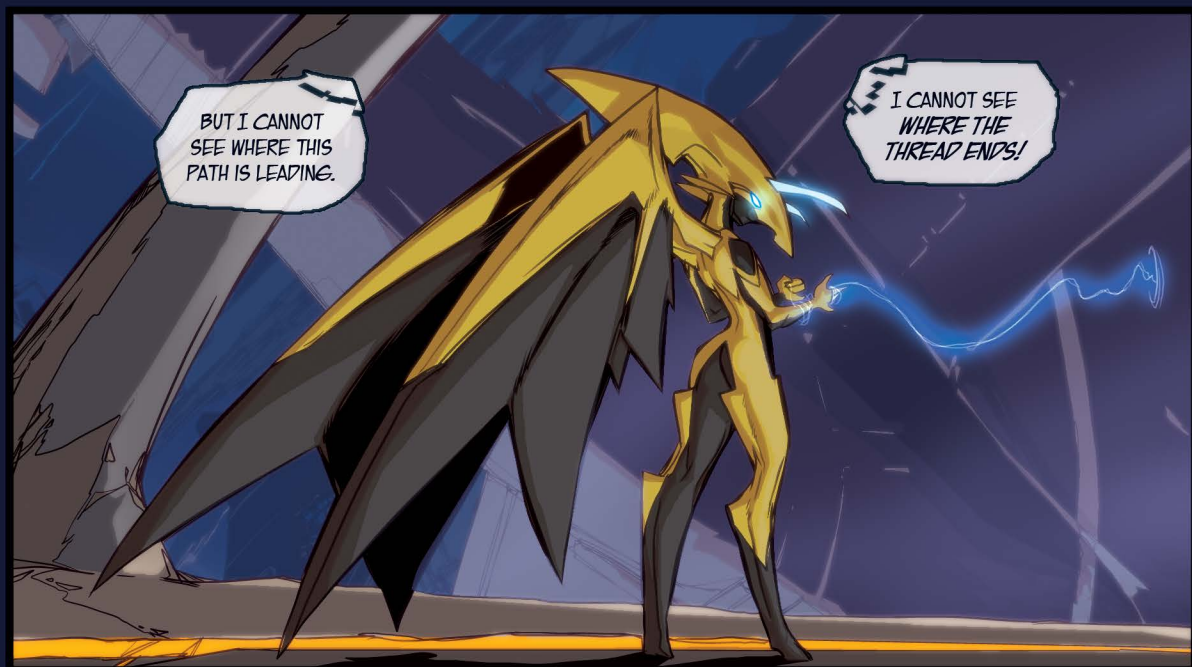
WHERE
ARE WE?

WHY HAVE
YOU BROUGHT
US TO THIS
MORASS?

THIS DESOLATION
OF HYPERSPACE?

DEAR QUEEN...

...WHY HAVE WE
SAILED INTO THIS
SEA OF DEAD
SHIPS?





YOUR FEARS.
INCLUDE.
OUR FATE.

UNDERSTOOD.

IF SO.

YOUR PREROGATIVE.
EQUALS.
TRAIN APPOINT
NEW PSI-KOBOLD
QUEEN.

NO.

NO, I HAVE
CONFIDENCE
IN YOU, QUEEN
IBIS.

YOUR DOUBTS.
INCLUDE.
MY JUDGMENT?

QUERY?

BUT YOUR MIND
HAS BEEN FOCUSED
SOLELY ON REACHING
THE END OF THAT
MYSTERIOUS
THREAD.

WON'T YOU OPEN
TO MY HEARING
THE THOUGHTS
THAT LEAD US
TO OUR GOAL?



MY PRIVATE
RECOLLECTIONS.
PERHAPS.
DISTURBING...
ENRAGING TO
YOU.

HOWEVER.

YOUR CAREFUL
PERUSAL.
EQUALS.
RELUCTANTLY
ALLOWED.

IF...IF
YOUR RAGE.
EQUALS.
KEPT UNDER
CONTROL.

N-NO
MORE!

!?!

PL-PLEASE?!

YOU WERE...
TORTURED!?

NO--
MORE--

AH, BUT THIS IS
MERELY THE PRICE
FOR FAILURE, O'
QUEEN OF KOBOLDS.

YOUR ESSENCE...
YOUR SOUL...
WAS TORTURED!!!

ASTRAL PAIN IS
INESCAPABLE.

THERE'S
NO SWEET
RELEASE OF
DEATH FOR
YOU!

AN OUTRAGE!

WHO IS THIS
VILLAIN?!!



I-IF ONLY...

IF ONLY I
COULD *CONTROL*
MY RAGE...

QUEEN IBIS?

WAS IT THOSE
INTRUDERS?

DID *THEY* HARM YOU
AFTER MY OWN MAGIC
RENDERED ME
SENSELESS?

NO...
NO, *THESE*
THOUGHTS...
THE THOUGHTS
OF *THOSE*
INTRUDERS...
RING *CRYSTAL*
CLEAR.

THEY WERE
EXPLORERS LED BY
A HUMAN NAMED
GINA DIGGERS.

AND SHE MEANT
NO OFFENSE IN
HER TRESPASS.

THE ENTITY WHO
HURT YOU WAS
HER ENEMY...

...A POWERFUL
BEING IN HUMAN
GUISE...KNOWN
AS *DREADWING.*

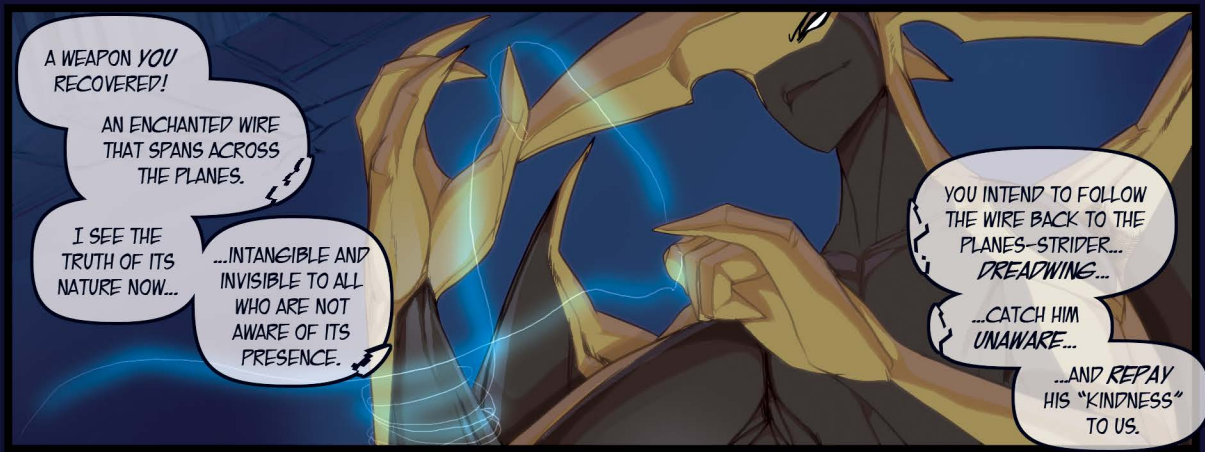
WHILE I WAS
UNCONSCIOUS, HE
USED YOU AND YOUR
CHILDREN IN HIS
BATTLE AGAINST
THE EXPLORER,
THEN *TORTURED*
YOU *IN TURN!*

AND ABOVE ALL,
DREADWING
PREVAILED!

HE CAPTURED
THE ANCIENT
WEAPON HIDDEN
AT THE CORE
OF OUR OLD
LABYRINTH.

BUT IN HIS
VICTORY, HE WAS
CARELESS.

A WEAPON
OF ONE OF
HIS MANY
VANQUISHED
ENEMIES...
PERSISTED.



A WEAPON *YOU* RECOVERED!

AN ENCHANTED WIRE THAT SPANS ACROSS THE PLANES.

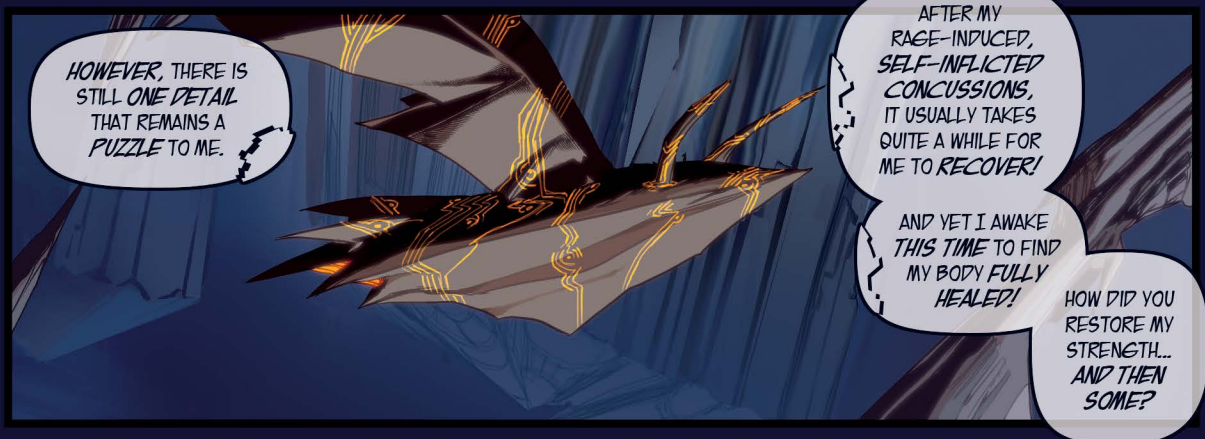
I SEE THE TRUTH OF ITS NATURE NOW...

...INTANGIBLE AND INVISIBLE TO ALL WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF ITS PRESENCE.

YOU INTEND TO FOLLOW THE WIRE BACK TO THE PLANES--STRIDER... DREADWING...

...CATCH HIM UNAWARE...

...AND REPAY HIS "KINDNESS" TO US.



HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL ONE DETAIL THAT REMAINS A PUZZLE TO ME.

AFTER MY RAGE-INDUCED, SELF-INFLICTED CONCUSSIONS, IT USUALLY TAKES QUITE A WHILE FOR ME TO RECOVER!

AND YET I AWAKE THIS TIME TO FIND MY BODY FULLY HEALED!

HOW DID YOU RESTORE MY STRENGTH... AND THEN SOME?



OUR FATE. EQUALED. SEALED... UNTIL, UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY.

FIRST TREASURE OF MANA. SUDDENLY. FOUND NEAR YOUR DYING BODY.

MYSTERIOUS. BUT. WE WERE DESPERATE.

DISCOVERIES OF NEW TREASURES. CONTINUALLY. ENCOUNTERED ALONG OUR JOURNEY'S PATH.

CAREFULLY EXAMINED. AND. THOROUGHLY TESTED.

WE USED FOUND TREASURES OF MANA TO HEAL YOUR WOUNDS. AND. RESTORE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS.



THEN I MUST ADMIT TO THIS MYSTERIOUS BOON'S POTENCY.

NORMALLY, SLIPPING FROM PLANE TO PLANE IS EXHAUSTING... EVEN FOR ONE SUCH AS ME... BORN IN *THE TRAVERSE*!

AND YET, I NOW FEEL *STRONGER* THAN I HAVE EVER-- WAIT...

LOOK!

THERE!

ANOTHER FOUNT OF MANA!

DIRECTLY IN OUR PATH!



SMELL OF THIS MANA. EQUALS. SMELL OF PREVIOUS MANA.

FEED.



J-JUST A MOMENT.

SUPPOSE THIS ENERGY IS...IS A TRAP OF SOME SORT?

DREADWING'S SCENT. DOES NOT EQUAL. THIS MANA'S. OR. PREVIOUS MANA'S SCENT.

PREVIOUS COUNT. EQUALS. ELEVEN.



SO...THIS IS NUMBER TWELVE?!

I SEE.

THE FIRST OR SECOND... OR FIFTH MIGHT HAVE BEEN TRAPPED...BUT NOT THE TWELFTH.

THEN PERHAPS THIS TREASURE WAS LEFT UNINTENTIONALLY?

OR...

...PERHAPS SOMEONE HAS LEARNED OF OUR VENDETTA, AND IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST TO INVEST IN OUR STRENGTH.

IN EITHER INSTANCE... I SHALL ACCEPT THIS ENERGY...

...AS IT BRINGS CLOSER TO THE JAWS OF MY WRATH THE NECK OF OUR HATED ENEMY!



"DREADWING...
I SHALL NOT
KEEP YOU
WAITING!"

WAIT!!!

WAIT!
LISTEN
TO ME!

W-WE
COULD WORK...
TOGETHER!

CONQUER THE
GALAXY AS ONE...
UNSTOPPABLE
FORCE...



J-JUST
SPARE MY
SHIPS, A-AND
WE WILL
SERVE
YOU!!!

GNNH!!!

SPARE MY
FLEET!!!





ALAS, I CANNOT
GRANT YOUR
LAST REQUEST,
O' ADMIRAL.

YOU SEE...

...THE UNIVERSE
IS A DANGEROUS
WILDERNESS, FILLED
WITH HAZARDS...
SUCH AS THIS
"ANNIHILUS"!

A MURDEROUS
PIT OF TIME-
SPACE CHAOS!

AN UNCHARTED
POND OF QUICKSAND
IN HYPERSPACE!

SUCH A PLACE
HAS CLAIMED STAR-
FARING SHIPS AND
INTERDIMENSIONAL
PLANES-CRAWLERS
SINCE THE FIRST
YEARS OF THIS
UNIVERSE.

CAPTURING IN ITS RENDING
TORRENT LOST SCOUT SHIPS,
SLINKING SPY-CRAFT OR
RAGTAG FUGITIVE FLEETS
FLEEING THE OPPRESSIVE
NAVIES OF LIVING
MACHINES...

...LIKE YOURS,
ADMIRAL ANADA!

ONLY SMALL,
ENIGMATIC
ISLANDS, SUCH
AS THE ONE
WE NOW SHARE,
CAN PROVIDE
SANCTUARY!

THOUGH
ACTUALLY
NAVIGATING
TO SUCH A
PERCH IS
NO MEAN
FEAT!



GIGLIATHON.
COME FORTH.

CLAIM THE
FUEL OF THIS
DYING FLEET
FOR YOUR
OWN.

A-- A ROBOT!?!

GIGLIATHON...
AN ANCIENT
"SUPER"
ROBOT...
MY "RIPE."

AND PARKING HIM
HERE WAS NO MEAN
FEAT EITHER, LET
ME TELL YOU!

IT TOOK QUITE
A BIT OF...LUCK...
FINDING THE EYE
OF THIS STORM
AND A LITTLE
CHAOS STONE
FOR IT TO
PERCH ON!

BUT NOW,
GIGLIATHON
CAN WRING THE
REMAINING ENERGY
FROM ANY DOOMED
STARSHIPS THAT FALL
INTO THIS HYPER-
SPACE PIT.

A FEW MORE
VICTIMS SUCH
AS YOUR PITIFUL
LITTLE VAGRANT
FLEET, AND IT
SHOULD BE AT
MAXIMUM
POWER!

W-WHAT KIND
OF MONSTER
ARE YOU!?!

WHAT DO YOU
WANT FROM
US!?!

WH--
WHY DID YOU
JUST STEAL
MY WALLET!?!





WELL...

HMMM.

PERFECTLY...

...REASONABLE...

...EXPLANATION
FOR THAT.

WER-
ROCKET!!

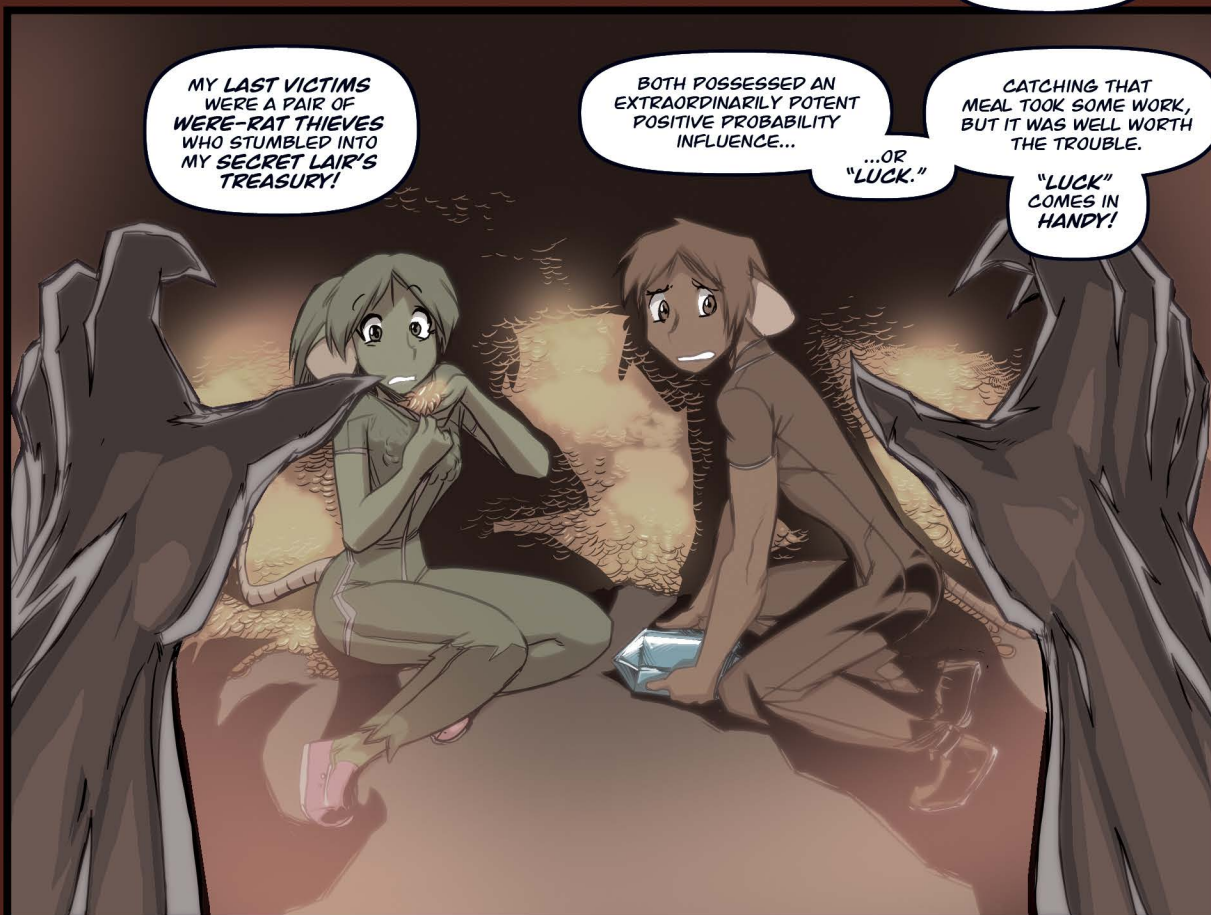


MY ABILITIES
ARE AUGMENTED
BY THE BEINGS
I DIGEST WITH
A SPELL
CALLED
"FUSION"!

WITH IT,
I ACCEPT
ANY POSITIVE
ATTRIBUTES
MY ALREADY
IMPRESSIVE
BUILD LACKS.

INDEED, "FUSION"
HAS ELEVATED ME
FAR ABOVE MY
HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
AS A MERE IRON
DRAGON...

...TO CONTENDER
FOR CONTROL OF
THIS REALITY!



MY LAST VICTIMS
WERE A PAIR OF
WERE-RAT THIEVES
WHO STUMBLED INTO
MY SECRET LAIR'S
TREASURY!

BOTH POSSESSED AN
EXTRAORDINARILY POTENT
POSITIVE PROBABILITY
INFLUENCE...

...OR
"LUCK."

CATCHING THAT
MEAL TOOK SOME WORK,
BUT IT WAS WELL WORTH
THE TROUBLE.

"LUCK"
COMES IN
HANDY!



ALTHOUGH...

...IT NOW
SEEMS THAT
"WERE-RAT
THIEF
FEAST"...

...CAME WITH A
SIDE ORDER OF
"KLEPTOMANIA".

HMMM.

TH-THAT'S WHY!

THAT'S WHY YOU
PULLED ME OUT
OF MY FLAGSHIP!
YOU INTEND TO
KILL ME WITH
"FUSION"!

HM?

HARDLY!

I'M SAVING
YOU FOR MY
HYBRID FORM.

BECAUSE
I SIMPLY LOVE
A GOOD LOBSTER
THERMIDOR!

EVEN A DEMI-
DRAGON MUST
EAT, AFTER
ALL.

OH, AND YOU'LL
HAVE TO ENDURE
FOR A BIT, I'M
AFRAID.

LORD DREADWING?

I'VE GROWN QUITE
FOND OF YOUR
RACE'S SLOW-
ROASTED TASTE!

NO!!!
NO! PLEASE!!!

LORD DREADWING!

≡SIGHHH≡

WHAT
IS IT NOW,
GOTHWRAIN?

LORD DREADWING...
SHE'S ABOUT TO
MAKE HER NEXT
MOVE.

OH0!

GIGLIATHON!
TAKE US BACK
TO MY LAIR!

GNH!!!

TO XANAPU!!!

OHR...

THIS...
THIS IS GOOD
NEWS INDEED!!!

A WORTHY
INTERUPTION,
SERVANT.

YOU HAVE
DONE WELL TO
BRING THIS
EVENT TO MY
ATTENTION!

OH, YES...

...SCAVENGING FUEL
FOR MY WAR MACHINE
AND LOBSTER PECORINO
FRITTATAS TAKE A
BACK SEAT TO
"THE GAME!"

MY LORD?...
WHO IS...

OH, HOW ILL-
MANNERED
OF ME.

GOThWRain?
THIS IS MY NOON
LUNCHEON.

ADMIRAL
AMADA?
THIS IS MY
TORTURED
SLAVE.

NOW,
GOThWRain.

PREPARE
A VISION
PORTAL AND
FOCUS IT
ON MY
ADVERSARY!

YES, MY
LORD.



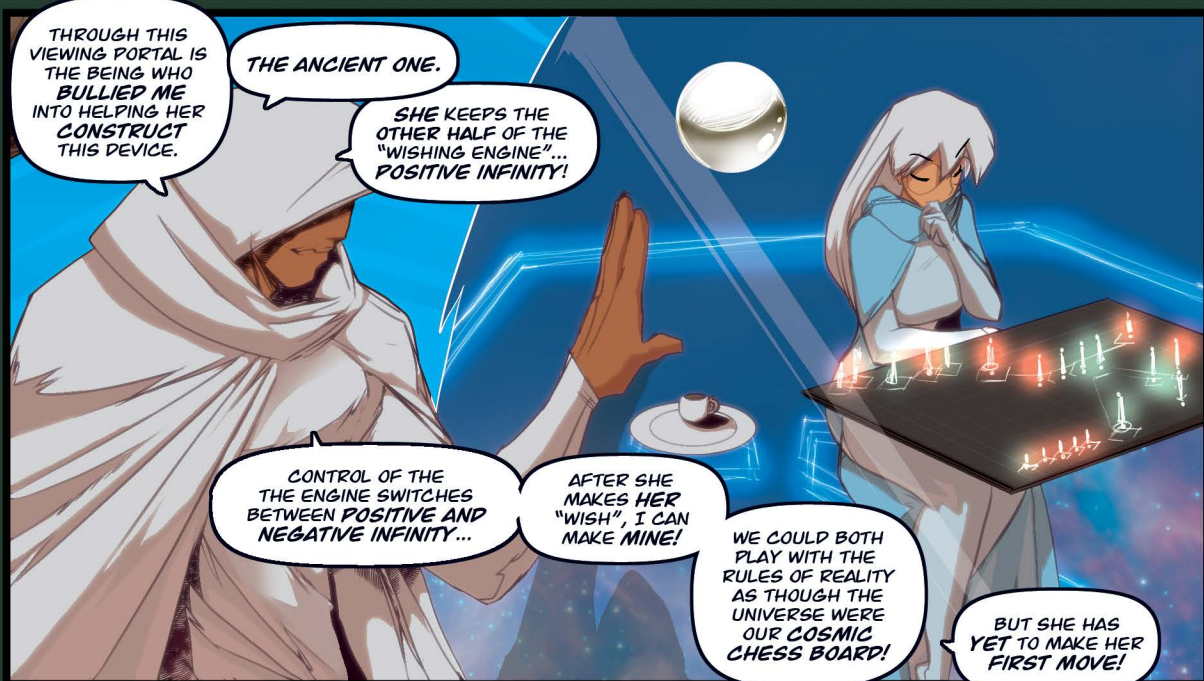
OH, I THINK YOU'LL FIND THIS INTERESTING, ADMIRAL.

I MENTIONED BEFORE HOW I AM IN CONTEST FOR CONTROL OVER TIME AND SPACE?

WELL, THIS IS MY HALF OF THE GAME BOARD!

A HUMBLE DEVICE CALLED **NEGATIVE INFINITY!**

PART OF A MACHINE THAT EDITS REALITY... **THE INFINITY ENGINE!**



THROUGH THIS VIEWING PORTAL IS THE BEING WHO **BULLIED ME** INTO HELPING HER **CONSTRUCT** THIS DEVICE.

THE ANCIENT ONE.

SHE KEEPS THE OTHER HALF OF THE "WISHING ENGINE"... **POSITIVE INFINITY!**

CONTROL OF THE ENGINE SWITCHES BETWEEN **POSITIVE** AND **NEGATIVE INFINITY...**

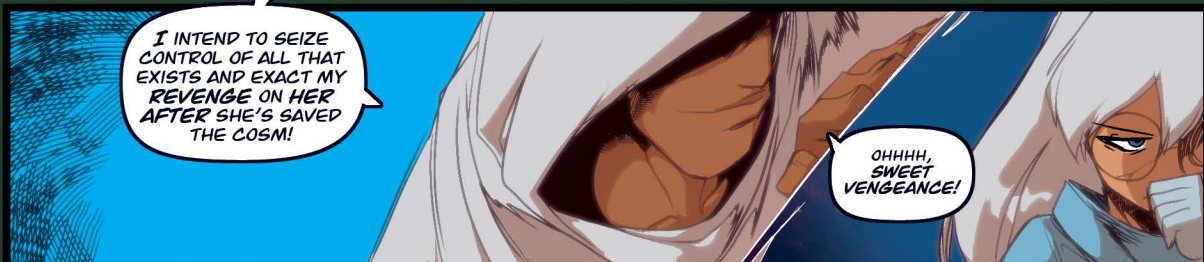
AFTER SHE MAKES HER "WISH", I CAN MAKE **MINE!**

WE COULD BOTH PLAY WITH THE RULES OF REALITY AS THOUGH THE UNIVERSE WERE OUR **COSMIC CHESS BOARD!**

BUT SHE HAS YET TO MAKE HER **FIRST MOVE!**

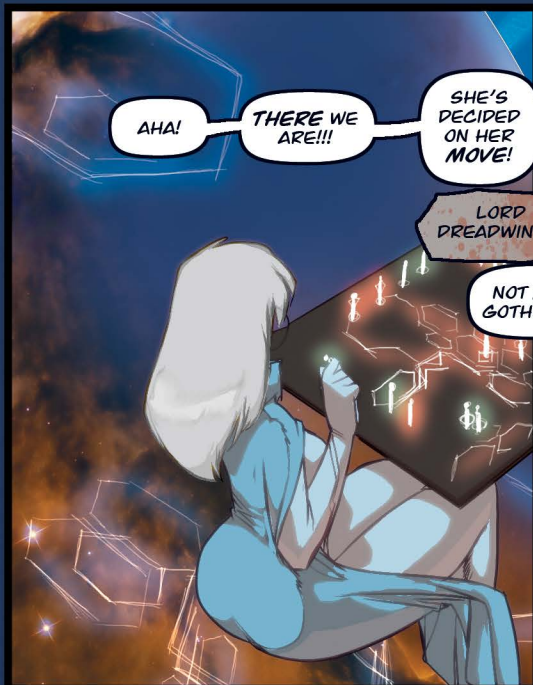


THE ANCIENT ONE INTENDS TO USE THE INFINITY ENGINE TO SAVE REALITY FROM **IMPENDING DOOM.**



I INTEND TO SEIZE CONTROL OF ALL THAT EXISTS AND EXACT MY **REVENGE** ON HER AFTER SHE'S SAVED THE COSM!

OHhhh, **SWEET VENGEANCE!**



AHA!

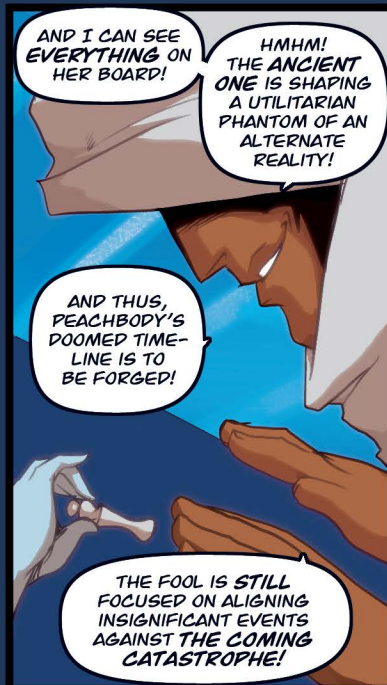
THERE WE ARE!!!

SHE'S DECIDED ON HER MOVE!

LORD DREADWING...

NOT NOW, GOTHWRAIN!

SHE'S MAKING HER WISH!!!



AND I CAN SEE EVERYTHING ON HER BOARD!

HMMH! THE ANCIENT ONE IS SHAPING A UTILITARIAN PHANTOM OF AN ALTERNATE REALITY!

AND THUS, PEACHBODY'S DOOMED TIME-LINE IS TO BE FORGED!

THE FOOL IS STILL FOCUSED ON ALIGNING INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS AGAINST THE COMING CATASTROPHE!



BUT ONCE THE ANCIENT ONE ENTERS THIS MOVE, SHE'LL BE COMPLETELY VULNERABLE TO MY WISH!

INDEED, MY ADVERSARY IS LEAVING NOTHING FOR DEFENSE! WIPE OPEN!!!

I'VE...I'VE WON!!!





PSI-KOBOLD
ASSASSINS!?!

THE PSI-SNAIL
FORTRESS!?!

HOW DID
THAT GET TO
XANADU!?!

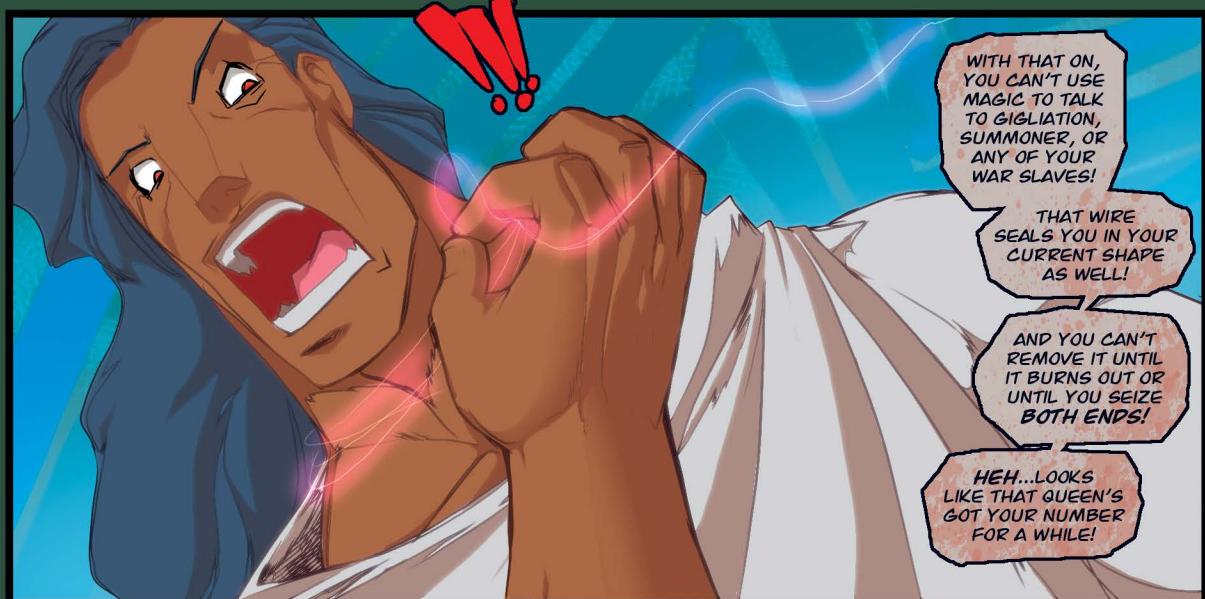
THE AMBUSH HAS
FAILED, HIGHNESS.
HE MOVED AT
THE VERY LAST
MOMENT!

DREADWING!!!

DO YOUR
MEMORIES?
INCLUDE?
ME?

IF NOT.
MARK THEM
NOW!

FOR THIS
MOMENT!
EQUALS!
THEIR
CONCLUSION!





GOTHWRAIN!

I BOUND YOUR SPIRIT TO XANADU WITH THOSE CHAINS!!!

YOU SHOULD HAVE FELT THEIR ARRIVAL!

WHY DIDN'T YOU WARN ME OF THIS INTRUSION!?!

I WAS TOLD, "NOT NOW, GOTHWRAIN!" WHEN I TRIED.

KHH!

TH-THEN DON'T JUST STAND THERE! GET RID OF THIS WIRE!!!

NHF...RIGHT AWAY, LORD. BE RIGHT WITH YOU... NFF! NFF!

WAIT... I SEEM TO BE STUCK.

DANNI!







NOW!!!
HIS GUARD HAS
DROPPED!

QUICKLY!!!
BEFORE THE WIRE'S
MAGIC BURNS
AWAY!!!

SLAY HIM!

HIS EVASION.
EQUALS.
IMPOSSIBLY
UNCANNY!

OUR WARRIOR'S
KILLING BLOWS.
CONTINUALLY.
DENIED!

AND THOSE ARE
THE CONDITIONS
THAT PREVAIL,
I'M AFRAID.



YOU
CAN'T KILL
HIM.

HE'S TOO...
LUCKY!



DREADWING HAS FOUND
A WAY TO INFLUENCE
THE LIKELIHOOD OF HIS
SURVIVAL IN ANY LIFE-
THREATENING
SITUATION!!!

BUT HE'S DEDICATED
MUCH OF HIS ESSENCE
TO RAISING HIS LUCK'S
POTENCY WITHOUT FULL
KNOWLEDGE OF THE...
"CONSEQUENCES"!

"CONSEQUENCES"
HE'LL HAVE TO...
LIVE WITH.

HM-HM.

YOU SEE,
THE CURE
EXORCIZES
HIS LUCK
AS WELL!

NO.

YOU WON'T
BE ABLE TO
KILL HIM.

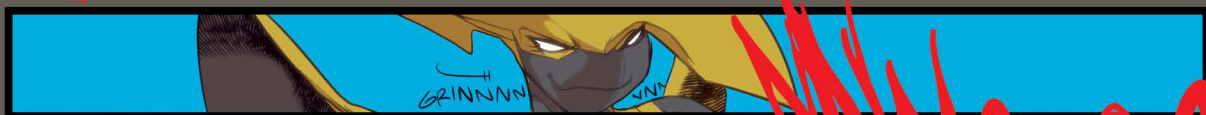
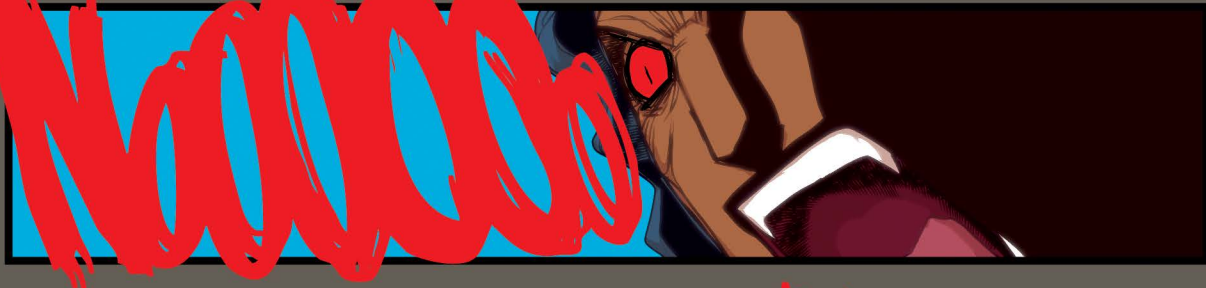
AND WHEN THAT
WIRE BURNS OUT,
HE'LL HAVE ALL
OF YOU.

HOWEVER...

HER...
SCENT...

HER SCENT...
EQUALS...
FAMILIAR...

YOU DIRTY
CHEATER





ADMIRAL.

I APOLOGIZE
FOR THE BEHAVIOR
OF MY UNDERLING.

I KNEW HE WAS
DISTRACTED BY
SOMETHING WHILE
I WAS COAXING THE
PSI-KOBOLD QUEEN
TO THIS AREA.

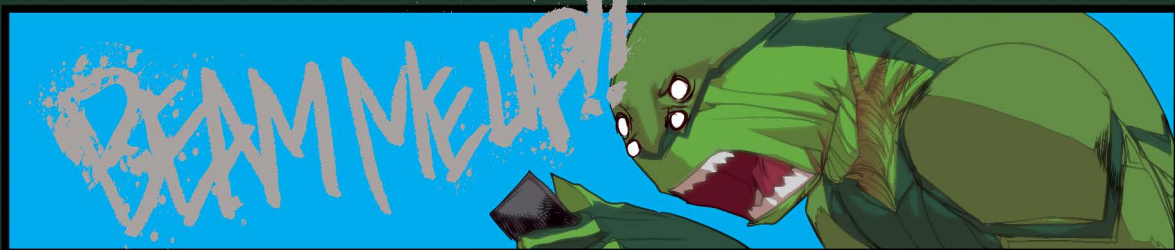
I DIDN'T KNOW HE
WAS **TERRORIZING**
YOU IN THE MIDDLE OF
YOUR **DISASTER**.

THE FEW SHIPS ABLE TO
NAVIGATE THROUGH THE
ANNIHILUS HAVE FINISHED
RESCUING ESCAPE PODS.

IF YOU WANT TO
CALL THEM FOR A
TRANSPORTER BEAM
FIX AND PICK-UP, YOU
CAN USE ONE OF
MY OLD OMNI-
PAGERS.

PLEASE TAKE CARE
THE NEXT TIME YOU
DECIDE TO MAKE A
HASTY **SINGULARITY**
ANTI-PULSE HYPER-
SPACE JUMP.

TH--THANK
YOU...



SEE THAT?

EVERY TIME YOU F#%K
WITH SOMEBODY...

...I'M GOING TO USE
IT AGAINST YOU.

