



CELEBRATING 20 GOLDEN YEARS!

GOLD DIGGER

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FRED PERRY



FEBRUARY 2011

YOU'RE MAKING
A MISTAKE COMING
HERE, DREADWING.

THE ENIGMA
DEVICES OF THIS
ANCIENT TEMPLE
WERE NEVER MEANT
FOR THE LIKES
OF YOU.

YOUR GREED
WILL BRING THE
VERY WALLS OF
REALITY CRASHING
DOWN AROUND
YOU...

...AND ALL
WILL FOLLOW
INTO YOUR
DOOM.

YOU HAVE
NO IDEA OF
WHAT YOU'RE
DOING!

WRONG,
LUXOR...
O' SENTINEL
OF LEGIONS...
O' ENIGMA
OF WARDS!

I KNOW
EXACTLY
WHAT I'M
DOING!

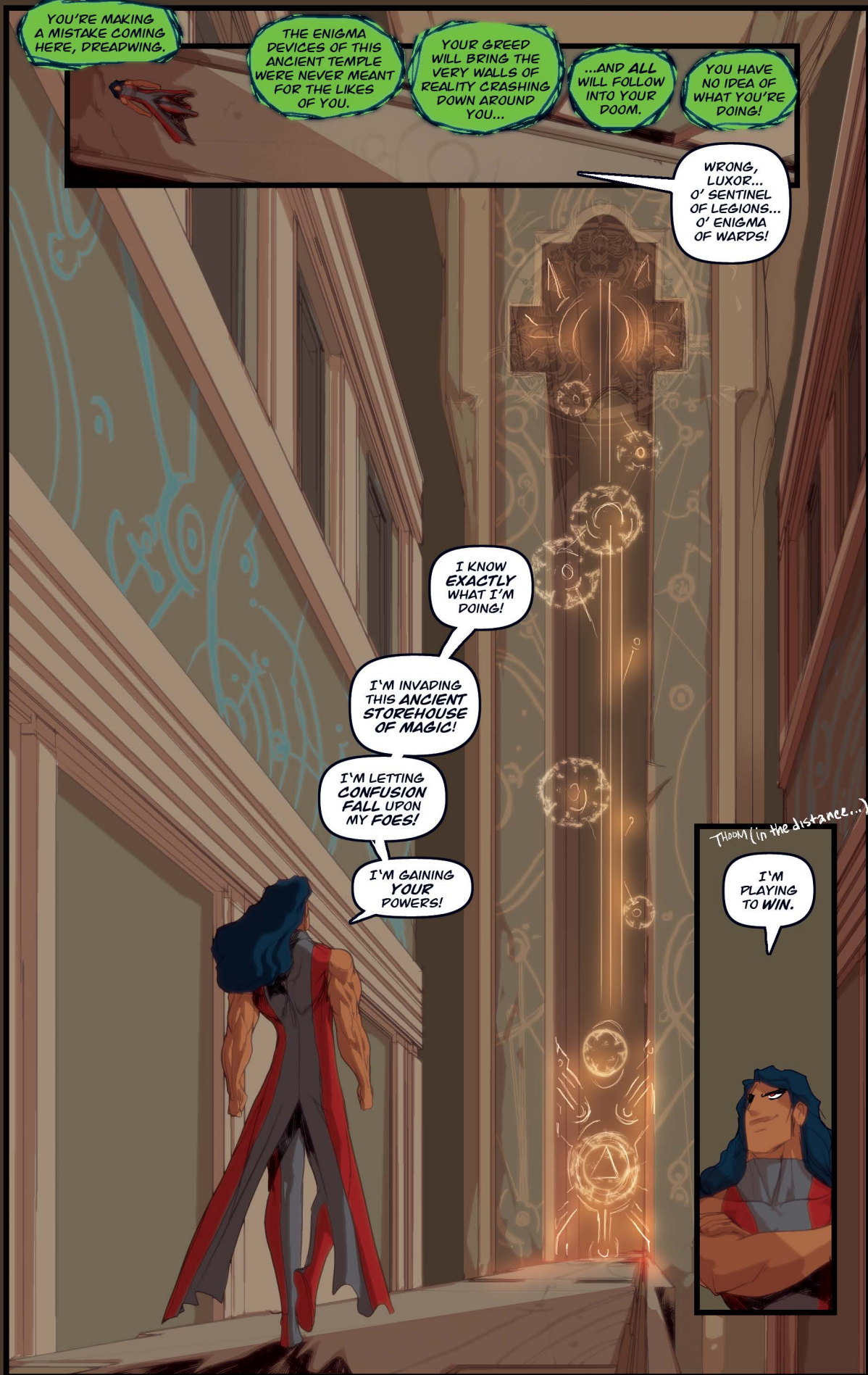
I'M INVADING
THIS ANCIENT
STOREHOUSE
OF MAGIC!

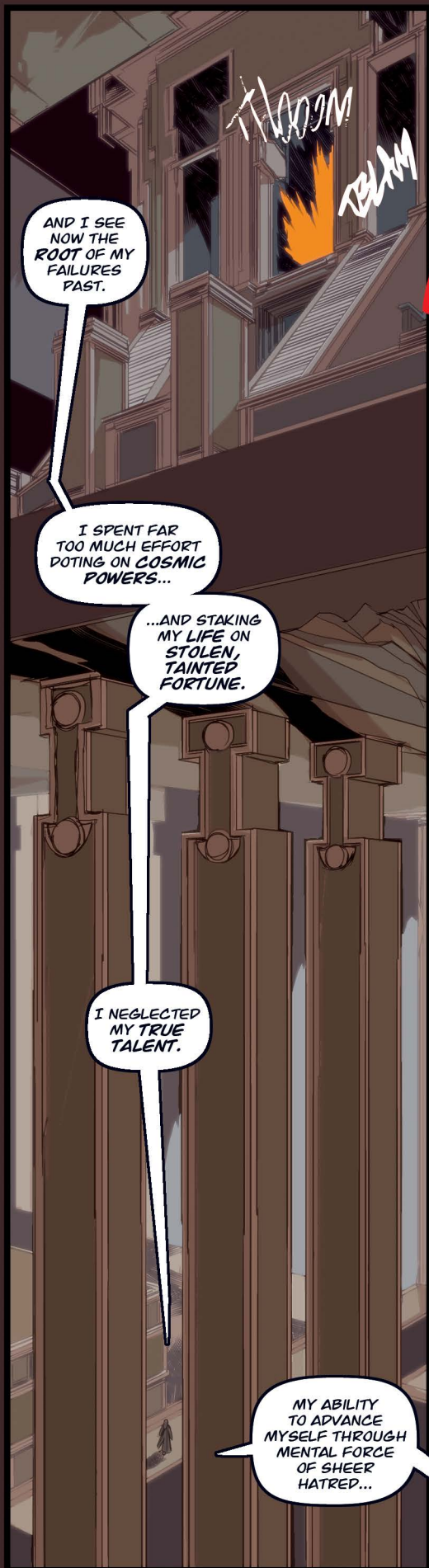
I'M LETTING
CONFUSION
FALL UPON
MY FOES!

I'M GAINING
YOUR
POWERS!

Thoom (in the distance...)

I'M
PLAYING
TO WIN.





AND I SEE
NOW THE
ROOT OF MY
FAILURES
PAST.

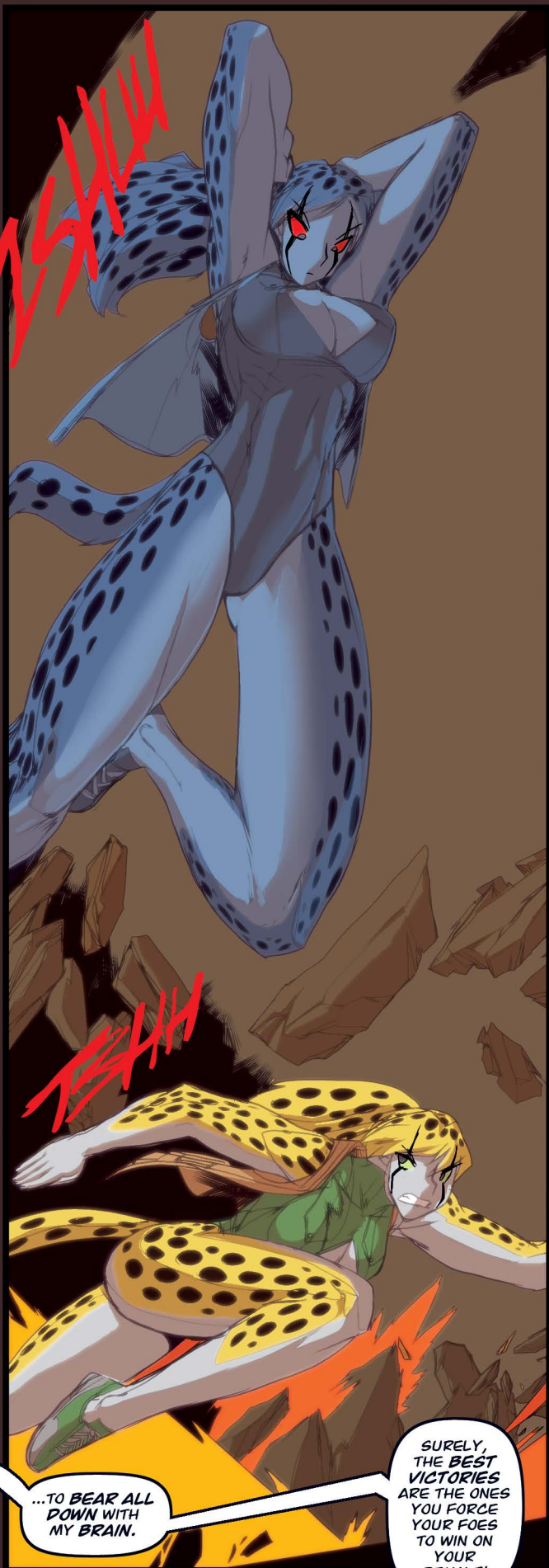
I SPENT FAR
TOO MUCH EFFORT
DOTING ON COSMIC
POWERS...

...AND STAKING
MY LIFE ON
STOLEN,
TAINTED
FORTUNE.

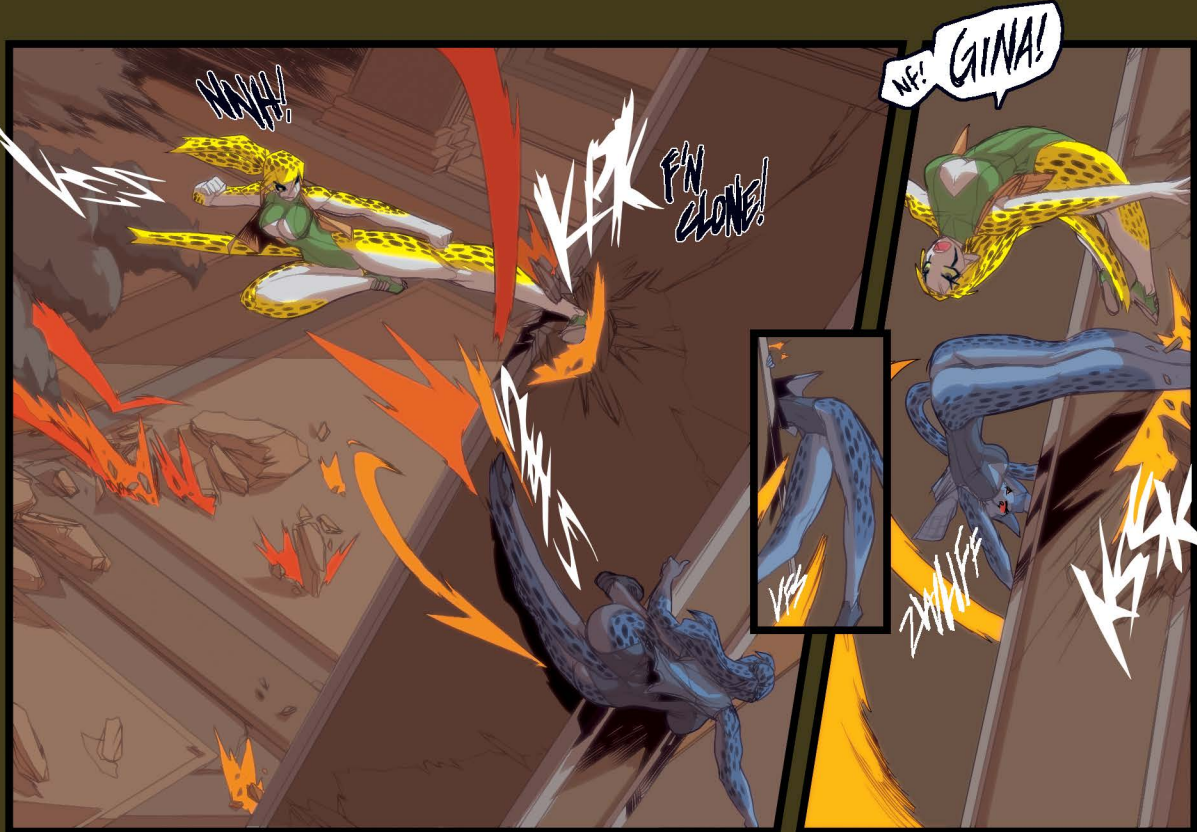
I NEGLECTED
MY TRUE
TALENT.

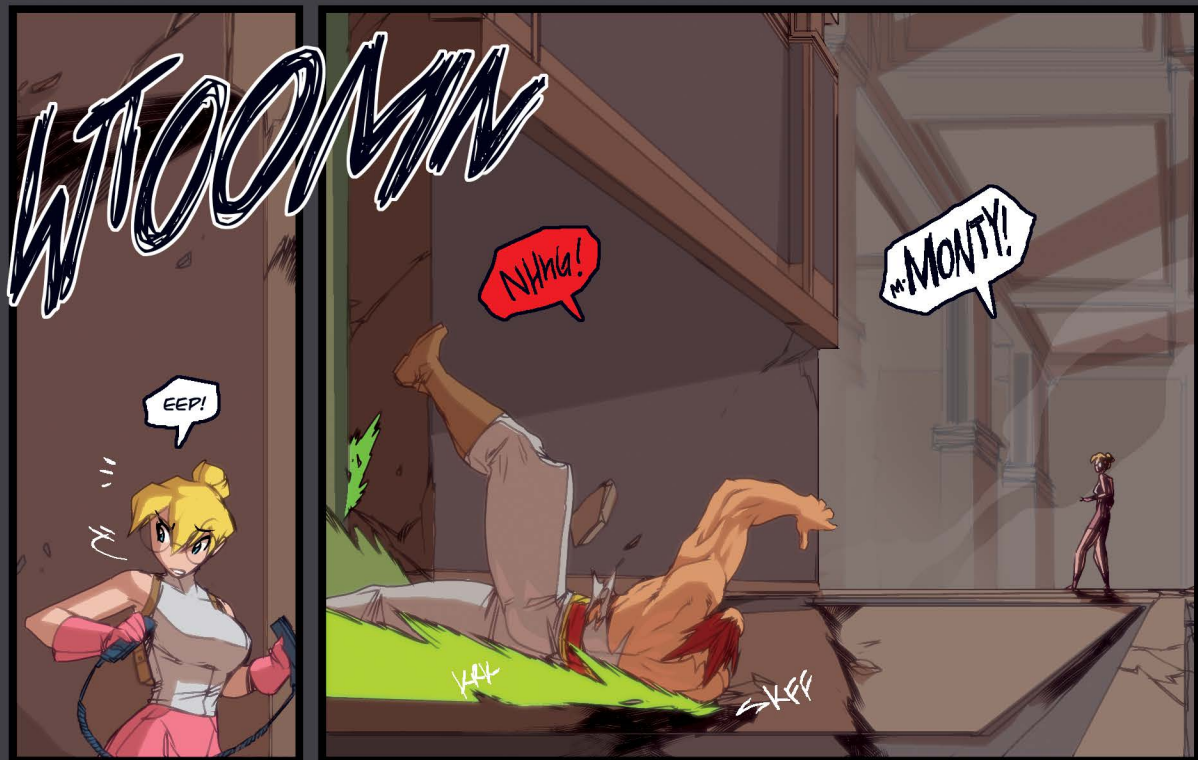
MY ABILITY
TO ADVANCE
MYSELF THROUGH
MENTAL FORCE
OF SHEER
HATRED...

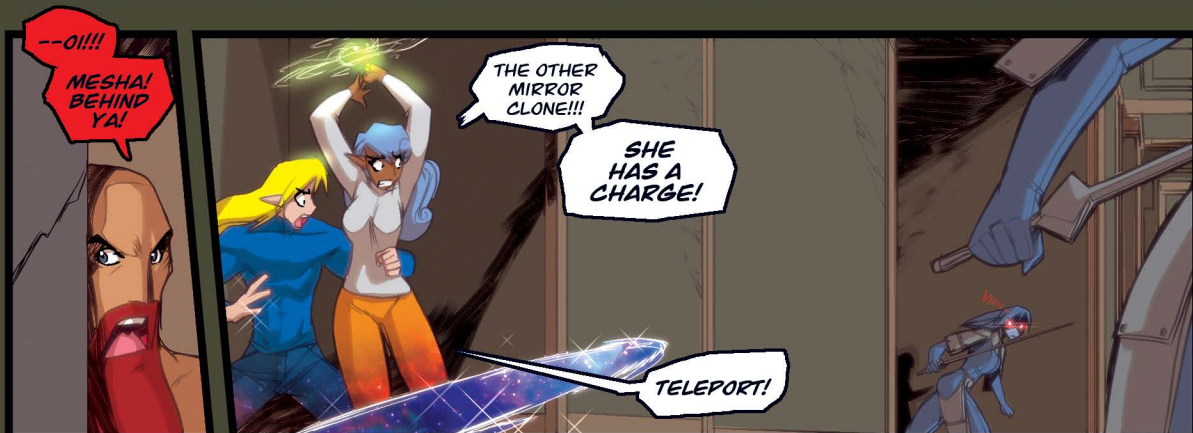
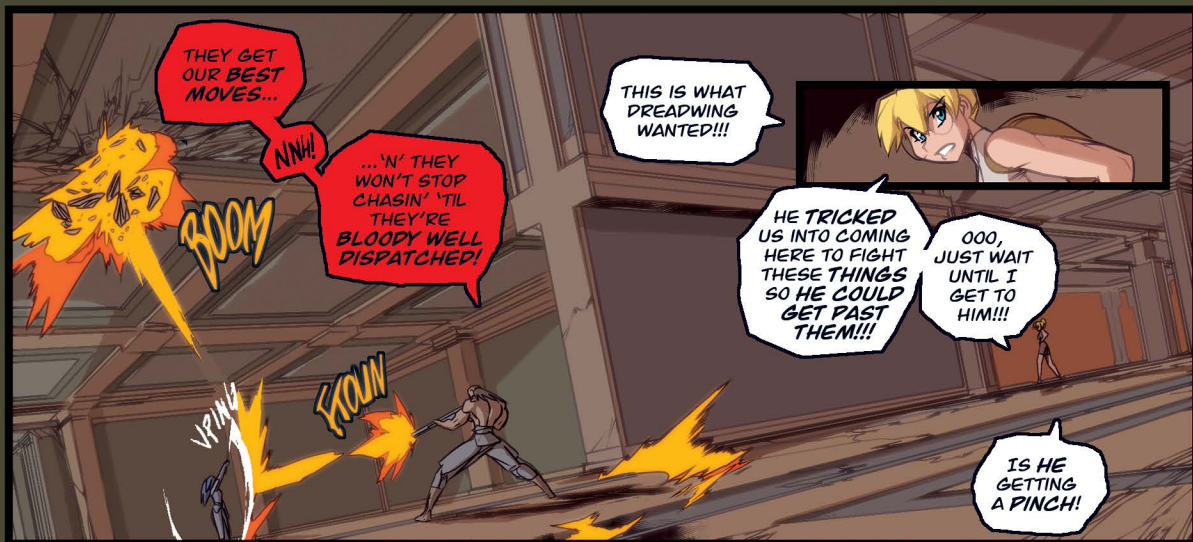
...TO BEAR ALL
DOWN WITH
MY BRAIN.

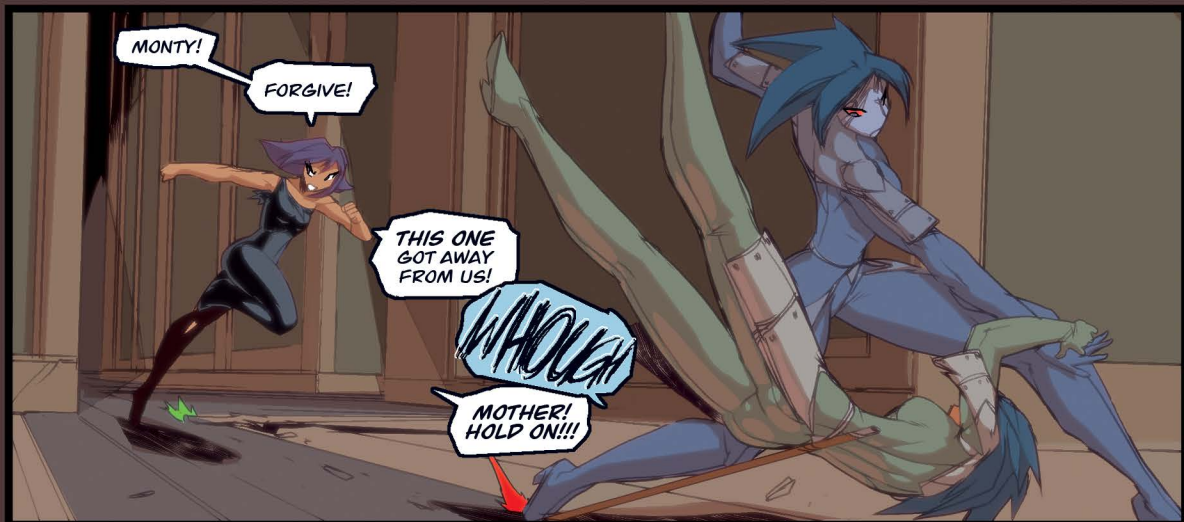


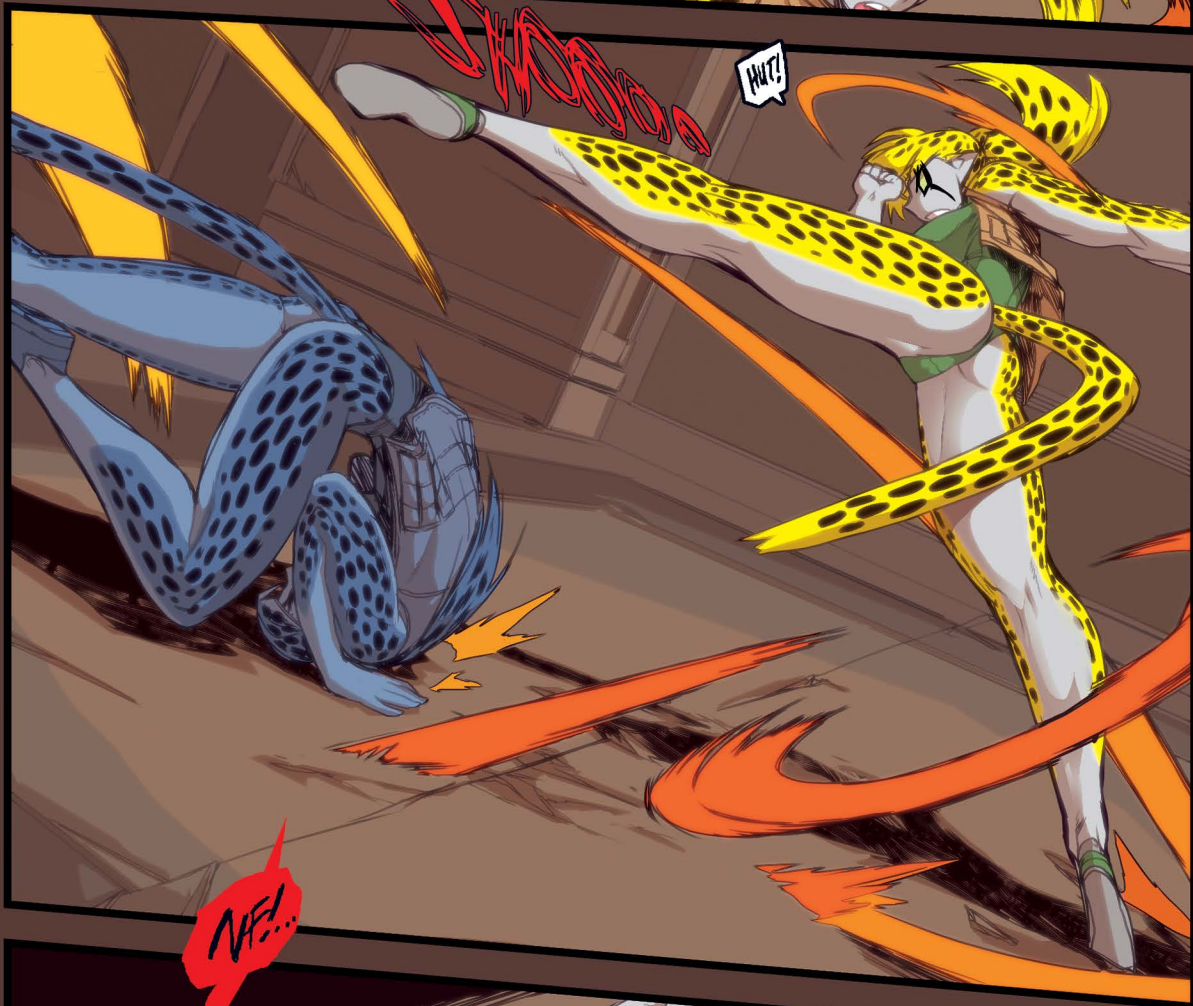
SURELY,
THE BEST
VICTORIES
ARE THE ONES
YOU FORCE
YOUR FOES
TO WIN ON
YOUR
BEHALF!

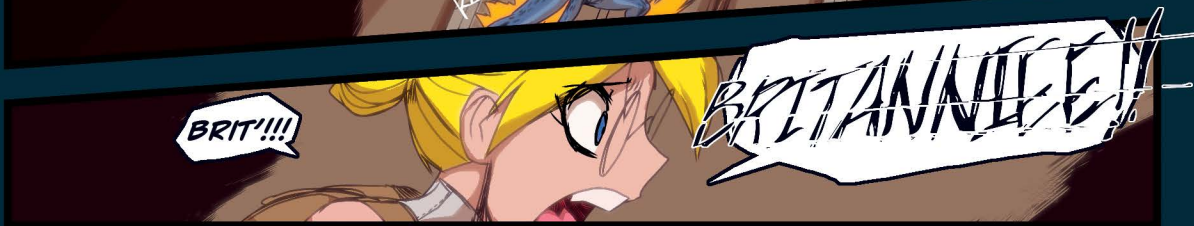
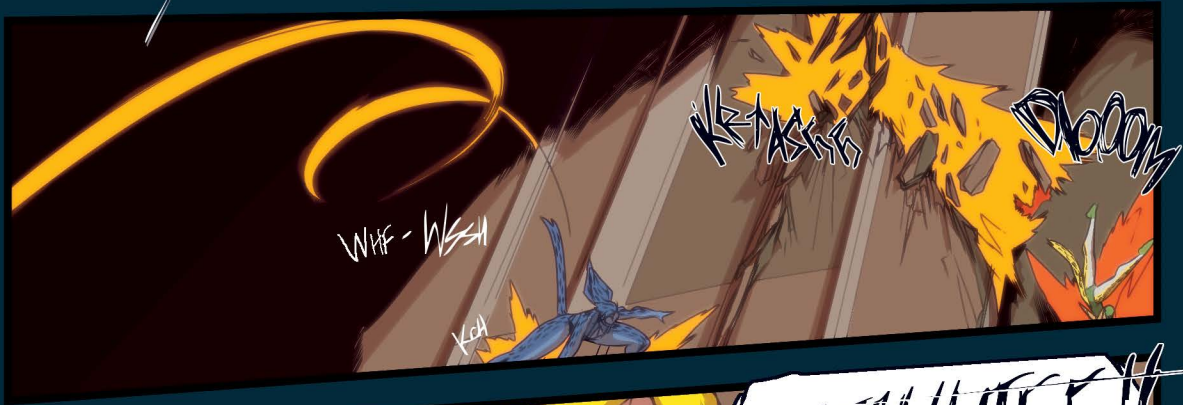
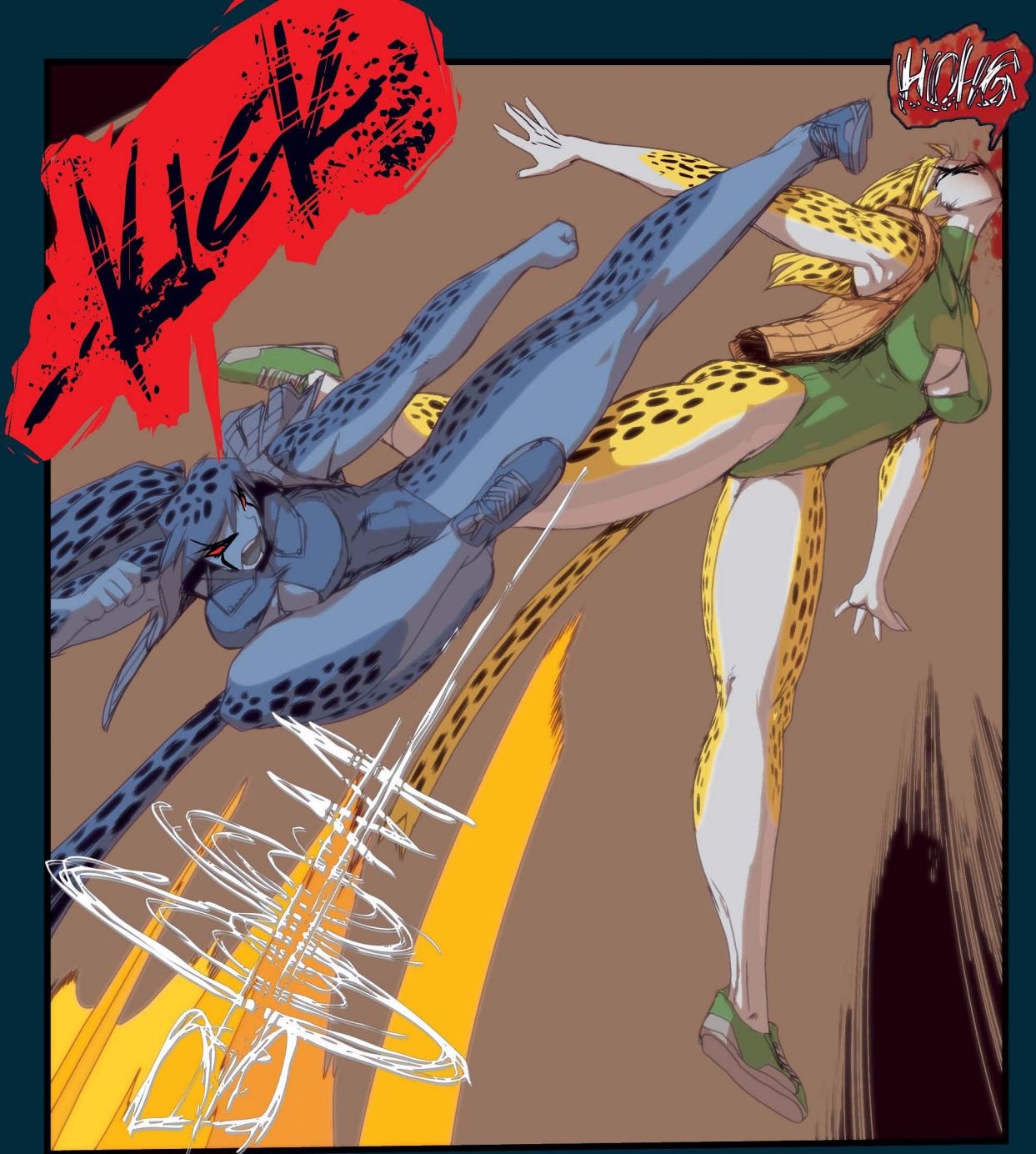


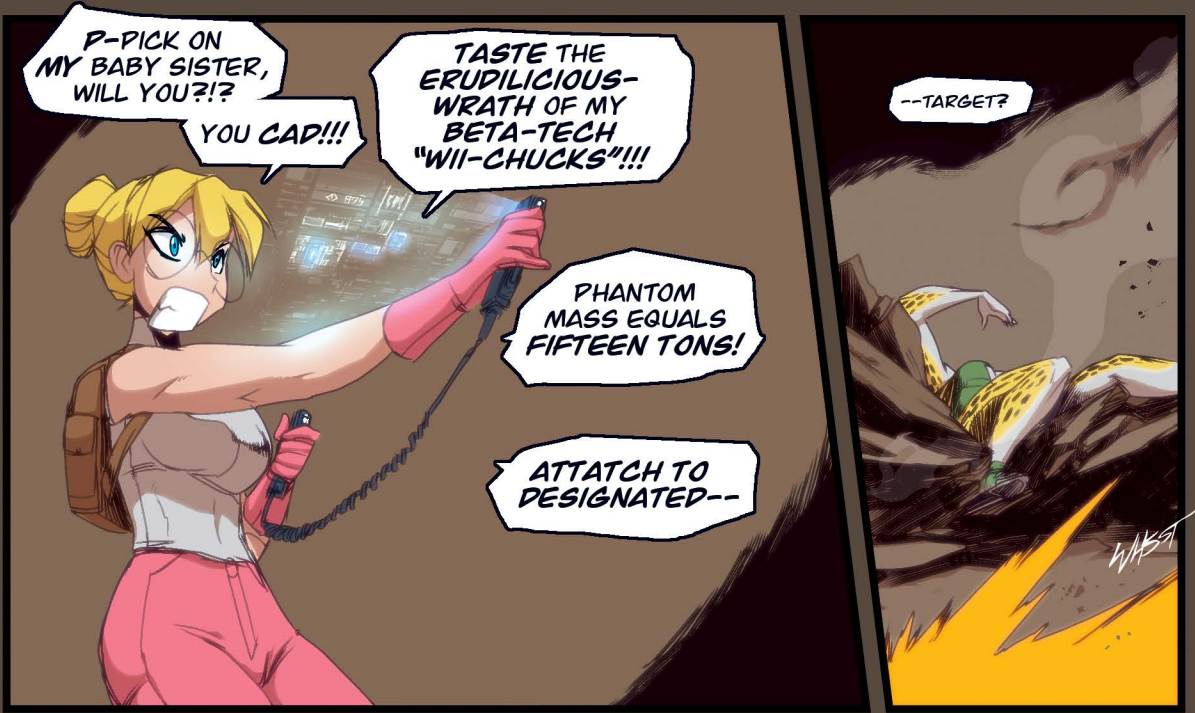


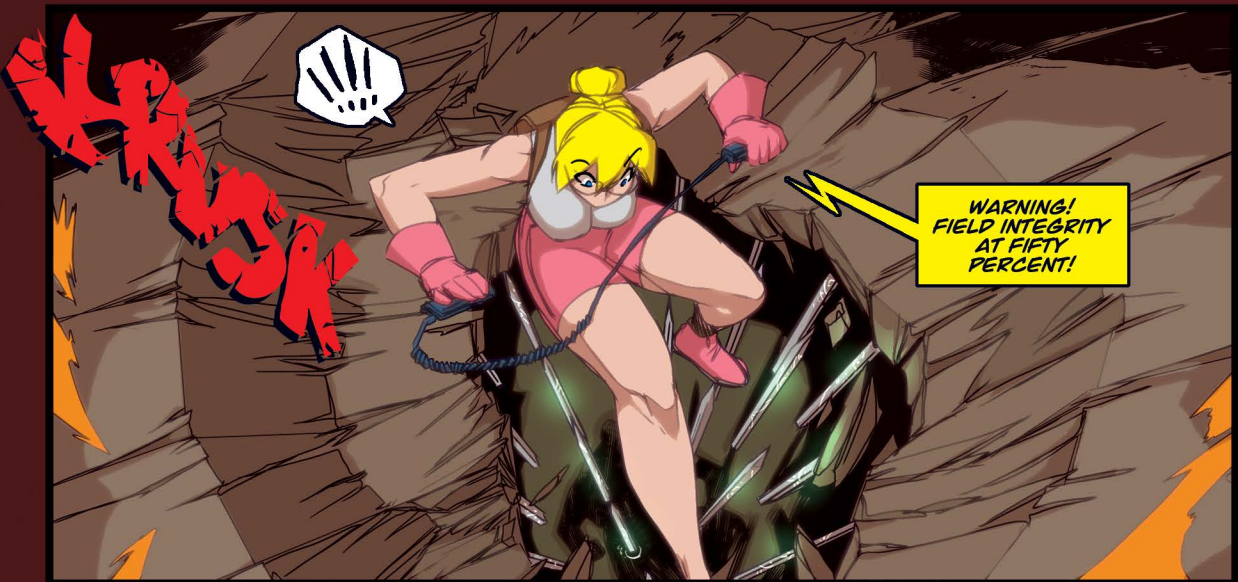


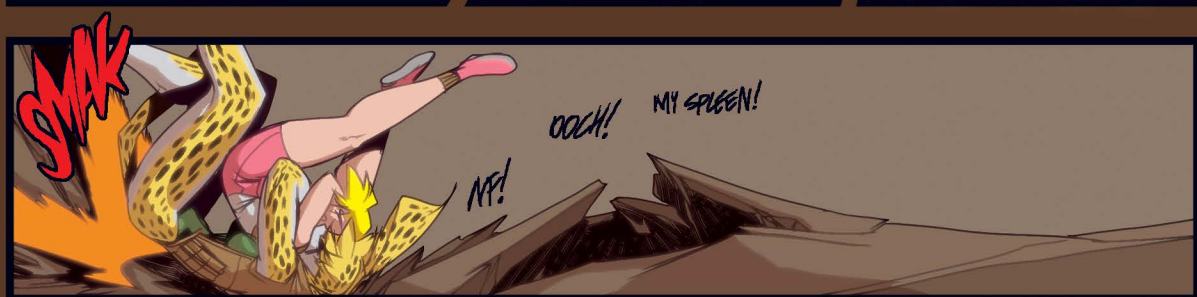
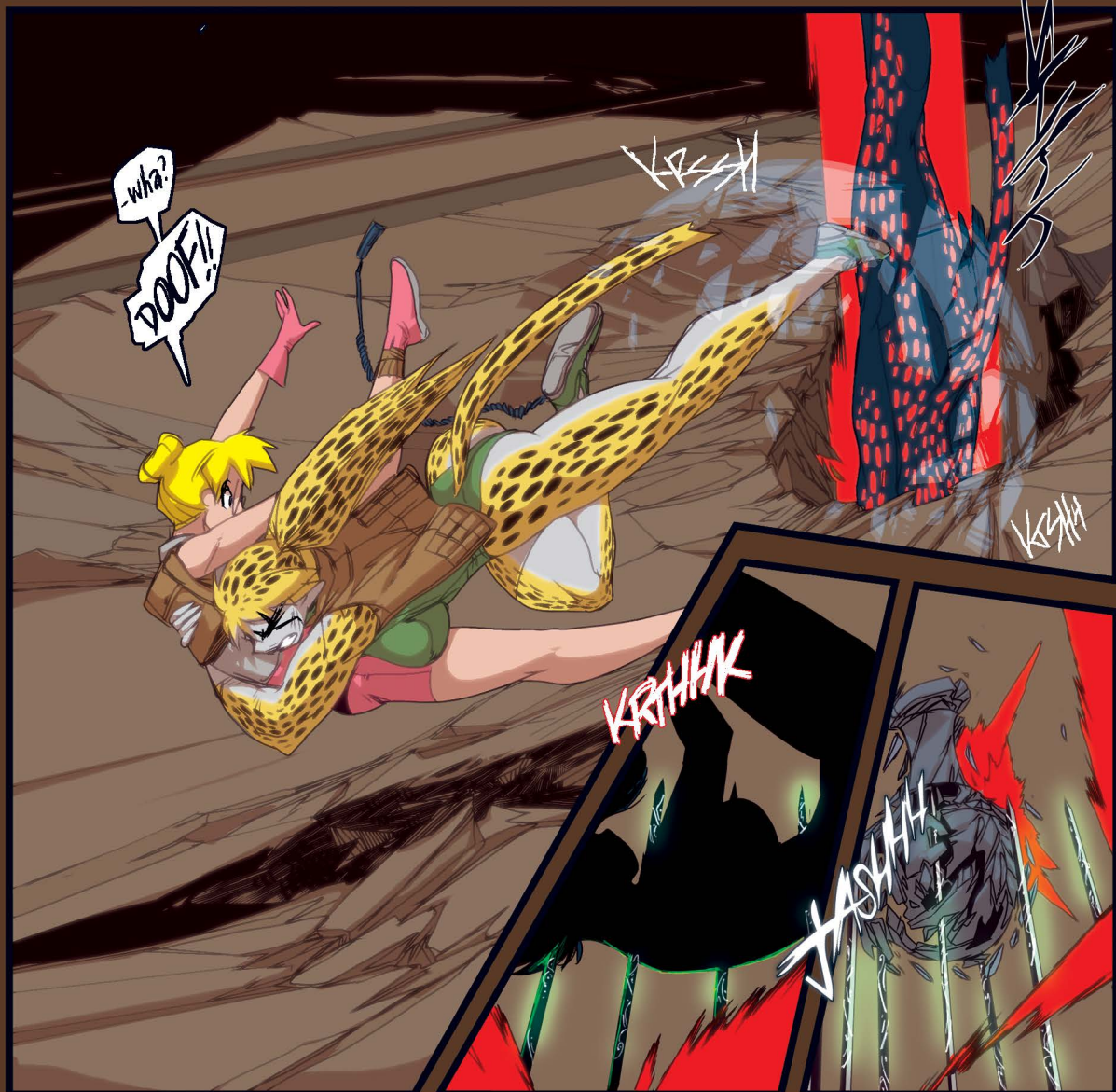




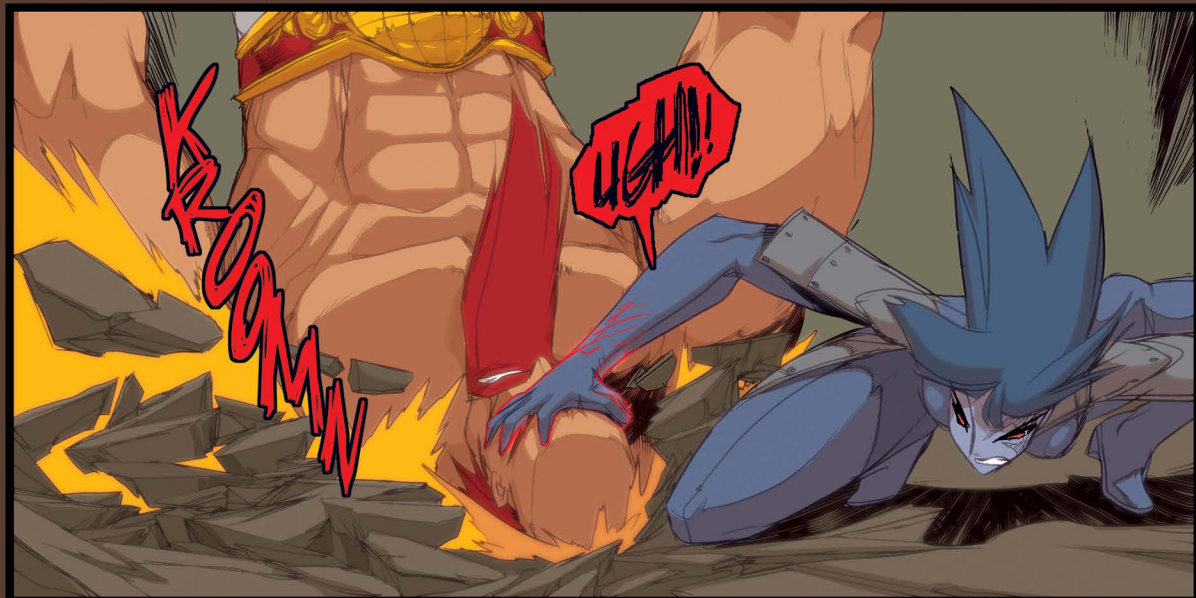


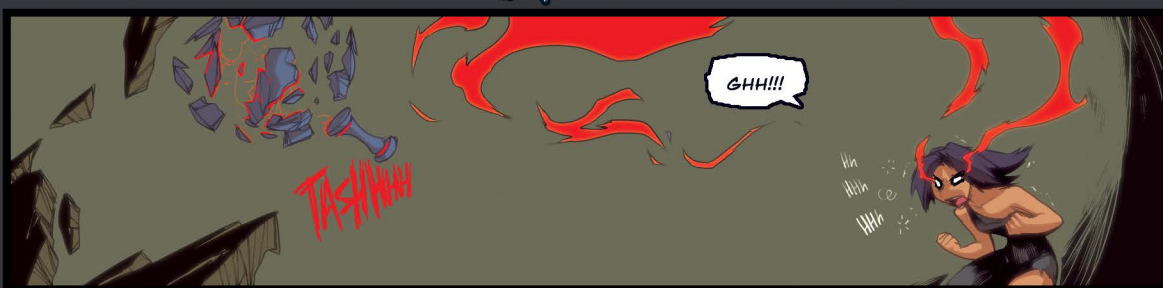
















WHAT THE HECK!?!

A-A
DRAGON'S
BODY...

...IS UNSTABLE...
VULNERABLE
WHEN SHIFTING
FORMS!

NFF!

WITHIN THIS
CONFINED SPACE,
MY ARTIFICIAL
DOPPELGANGER
SHATTERED HER
OWN SPINE...

...BEFORE HER
BONES HAD A
CHANCE TO
"STEEL"!

YOUR--

YOUR SPEED
SAVED ME FROM
ITS ATTEMPT TO
BREAK MY BODY
IN TURN!



SHEESH...

...FIGHTING
THOSE CLOWNS...
...THAT SUCKED!!!

ANYBODY
HURT?

NOTHING A BIT
OF REST COULDN'T
REMEDY.

I'VE NEARLY
EXHAUSTED
MY AURA.

AS HAVE
I...



THE MIRROR CLONE
OF LITTLE YOU GAVE
GREAT BIG MR.
MONTGOMERY
A CONCUSSION,
MOTHER.

AND MY
HEAD ISN'T
MUCH
HEALTHIER.

GUH...

CHEERS T' HER
MAJESTY'S SUPERB
SNEAK-ATTACK
POTENTIAL!



I'M AFRAID WE CANNOT
AFFORD TO PAUSE AND
RECOVER FROM THAT
ASSAULT, MY FRIENDS.

THE ENEMY IS
MOVING TO HIS
GOAL.

WE MUST
STOP
PREYAS AT
ALL COSTS!

I DON'T NEED TO
REMIND ANYONE HERE
OF WHAT HAPPENED THE
LAST TIME HE WAS
ALLOWED TO CAPTURE
AN ENIGMA...

...DO I?





BUT THE ACCESS CHAMBER TO THAT AREA IS PATROLLED!

I COUNT TEN...NO...**TWELVE** MIRROR PAWNS GUARDING THE PORTAL!

WH--
FU--

TWELVE!?!

YUHP...

TWELVE!?!?!?

YERP!

FUUUUU--DGE!



THAT'S DREADWING'S GAME, THEN.

HE'S WAITING FOR US TO COME AND CREATE A DIVERSION FOR HIM!

RIGHT...THEN HE CAN SNEAK PAST AND CLAIM THE ENIGMA DEVICE OF THIS TEMPLE WHILE EVERYONE'S PREOCCUPIED!

NO DOUBT HE'S WORKED OUT A PLAN TO FORCE US TO AGGRAVATE ALL OF THOSE MIRROR PAWNS!

HE LET US SEE HIM COME HERE JUST FOR THIS!



HOLD UP!

NOW WE'VE GOT TO GO THROUGH...

...SIX DASHIN' CHEETAHS...
...THREE PUNCHIN' DEBRAS...
TWO SHOOTIN' MONTIES...
AND A FRIGGIN' PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE?!?

THAT'S **TWELVE** DAYS OF CRIT'MAS!!!

MONTY'S INJURED, I'M WORN OUT FROM RUNNIN' AND KICKIN' AND USING MY THUNDER AURA EARLIER...

HOW THE FRICK ARE WE SUPPOSE TO DEAL WITH THIS?!?

WE DON'T.

WITHOUT US, DREADWING'S STUCK.

HE NEEDS US TO HANDLE THE PAWNS BECAUSE HE CAN'T!



LET DREADWING FIGHT HIS OWN BATTLES THIS TIME!



THE MOST LOGICAL SOLUTION IS FOR US TO LEAVE BEFORE HE HAS A CHANCE TO TRICK THE SECURITY INTO COMING AFTER US.

IF WE'RE NOT HERE, HE CAN'T SUCCEED!



I--

WE CAN'T LEAVE.

SOMETHING'S WRONG. WE HAVE TO GET DOWN THERE.

WE CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT MAKING SURE DRE'YAS HAS FAILED!

MY INTUITION IS STRONG ON THIS.

AND THUS, MY DECISION IS MADE.

WE GO FORWARD!



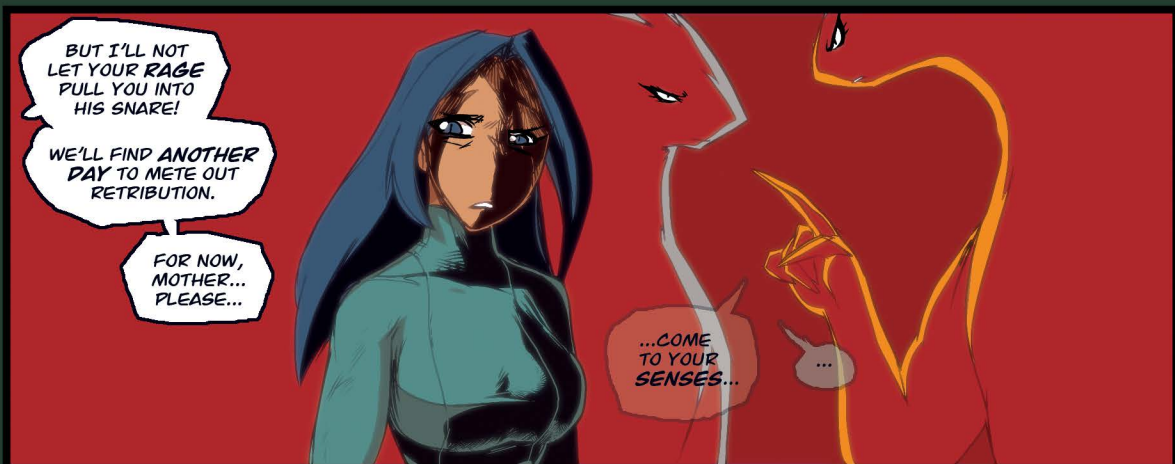
WHAT?

HAVE YOU GONE MAD?

WE'D BE PLAYING INTO HIS HANDS IF WE CONTINUE!

FULL WELL I WOT THE GROUND OF YOUR GRUDGE, MOTHER!

AND I AM AS ANXIOUS AS YOU TO SEE OUR JUSTICE FINALLY DONE!

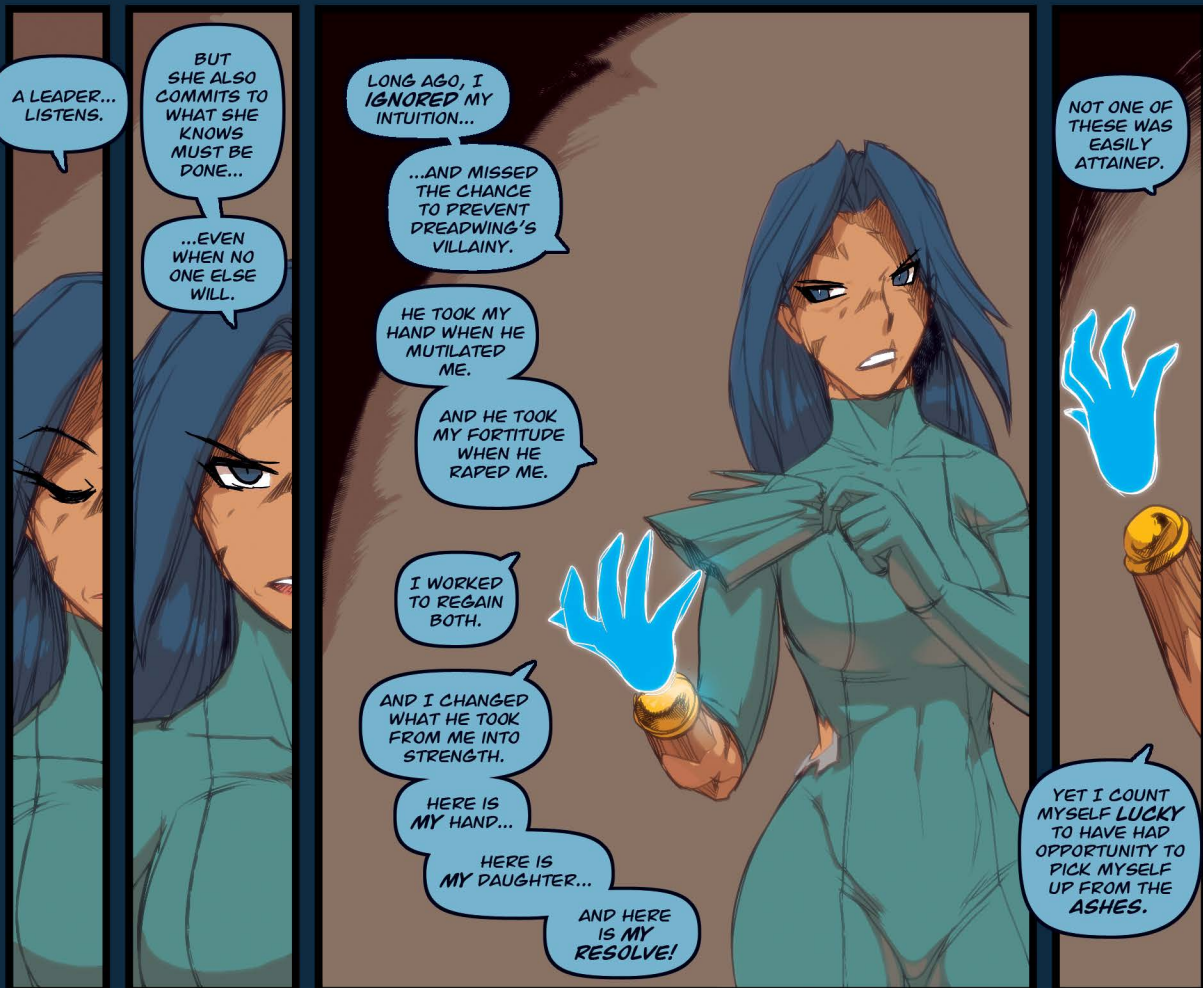


BUT I'LL NOT LET YOUR RAGE PULL YOU INTO HIS SNARE!

WE'LL FIND ANOTHER WAY TO METE OUT RETRIBUTION.

FOR NOW, MOTHER... PLEASE...

...COME TO YOUR SENSES...



A LEADER... LISTENS.

BUT SHE ALSO COMMITS TO WHAT SHE KNOWS MUST BE DONE...

...EVEN WHEN NO ONE ELSE WILL.

LONG AGO, I IGNORED MY INTUITION...

...AND MISSED THE CHANCE TO PREVENT DREADWING'S VILLAINY.

HE TOOK MY HAND WHEN HE MUTILATED ME.

AND HE TOOK MY FORTITUDE WHEN HE RAPED ME.

I WORKED TO REGAIN BOTH.

AND I CHANGED WHAT HE TOOK FROM ME INTO STRENGTH.

HERE IS MY HAND...

HERE IS MY DAUGHTER...

AND HERE IS MY RESOLVE!

NOT ONE OF THESE WAS EASILY ATTAINED.

YET I COUNT MYSELF LUCKY TO HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO PICK MYSELF UP FROM THE ASHES.



FOR NONE OF MY FIRST COURT... NOR ANY OF THE INNOCENT VICTIMS DREY MASSACRED HAD THAT CHANCE.

I DO WANT VENGEANCE.

BUT MORE THAN THAT, I NEED TO FOIL HIS PLANS! I NEED TO PREVENT FURTHER SUFFERING!

I'VE KNOWN DREY'YAS LONGER THAN ANYONE HERE.

MY INTUITION SAYS THERE IS MORE TO THIS.



...

UHM.

SAY, GINA...

WOULD DREADWING HAVE KNOWN WE'D SEE THOSE TWELVE PAWNS?

IF THIS WAS THE "JAW" OF A TRAP...

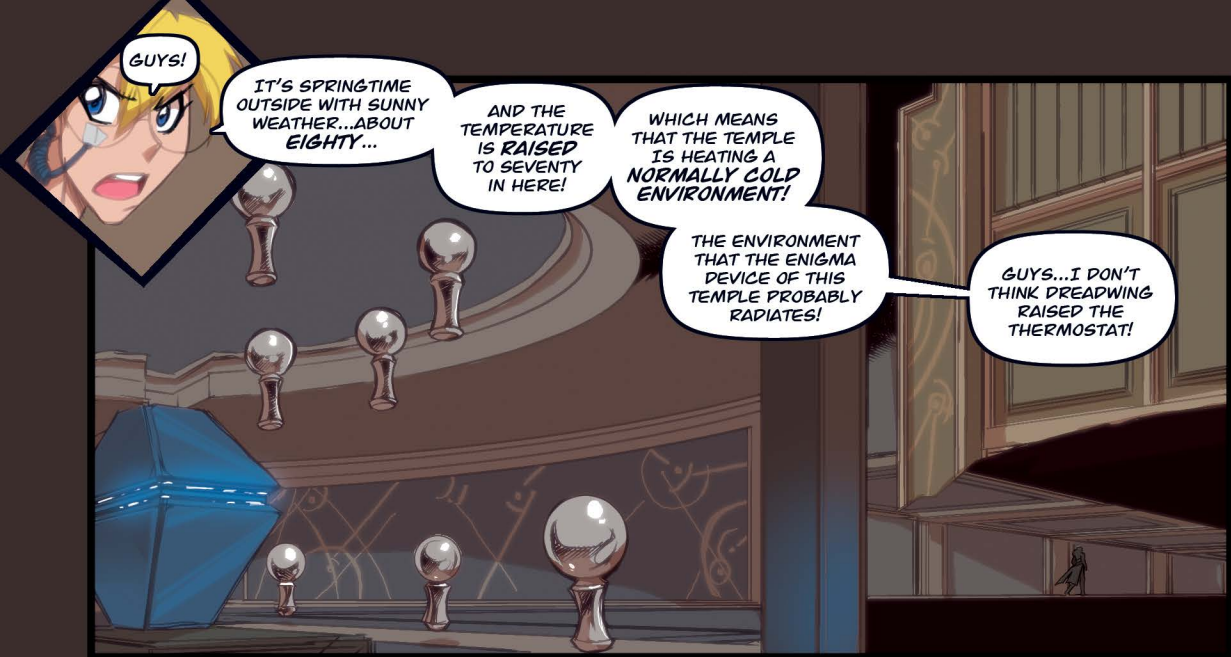
WOULDN'T HE HAVE HIDDEN THE "TEETH"?

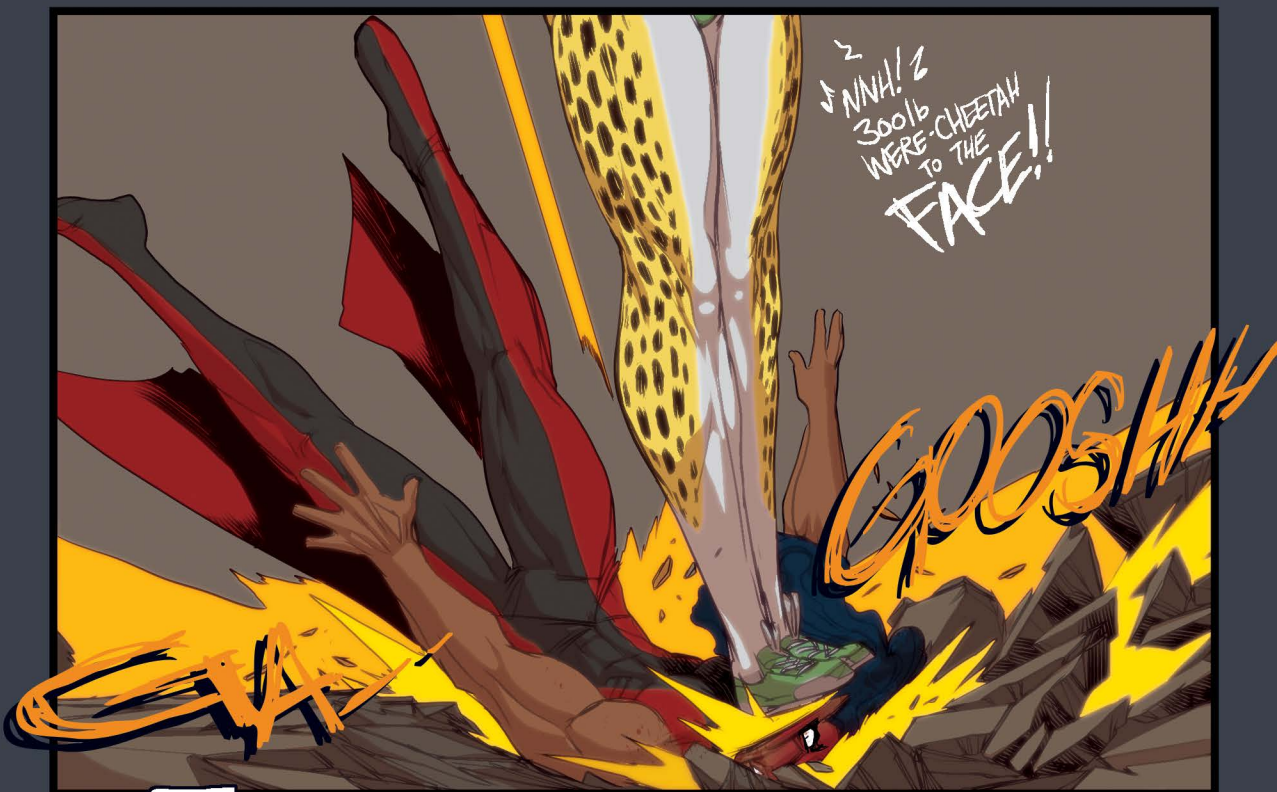
!?!?

>GASP!<

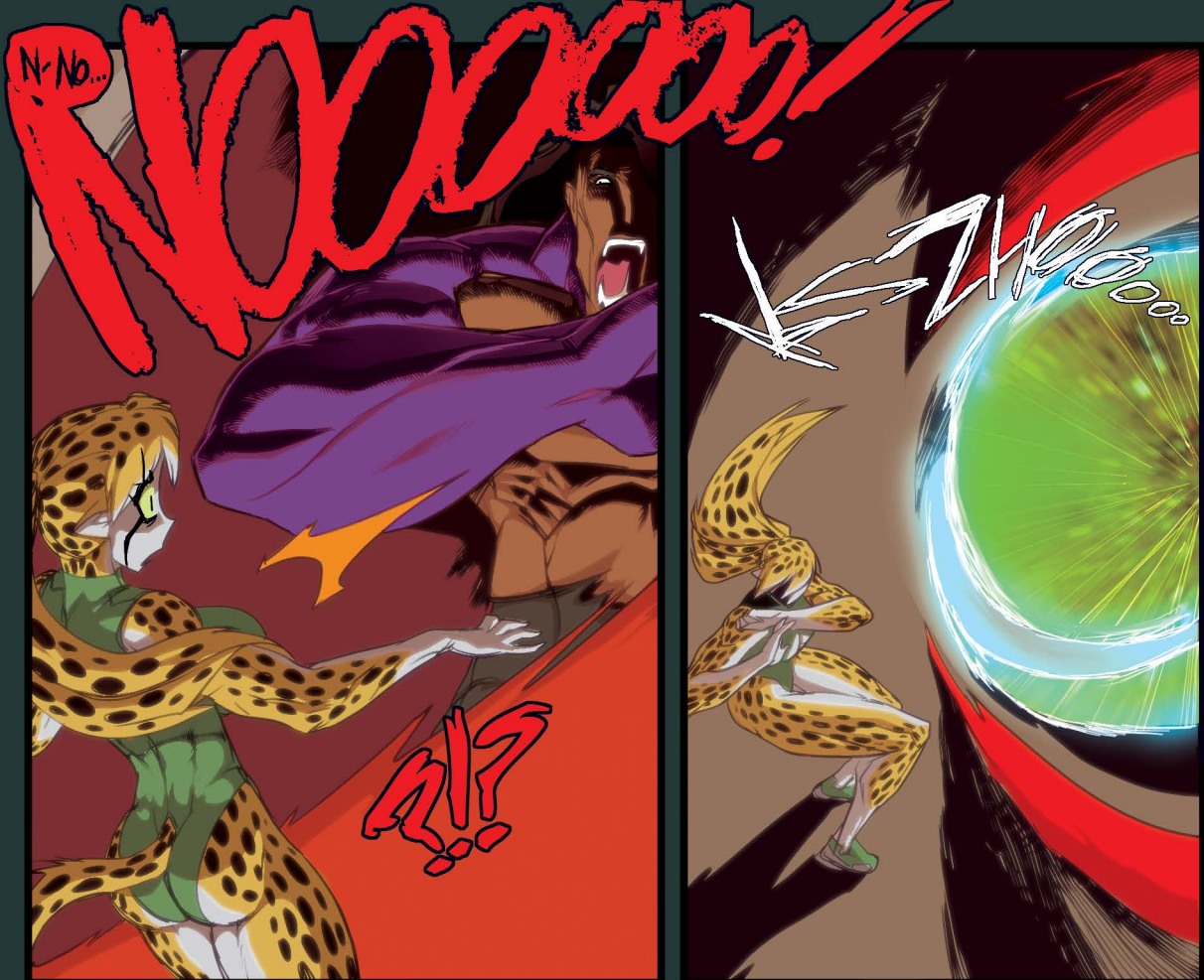
SNAP!

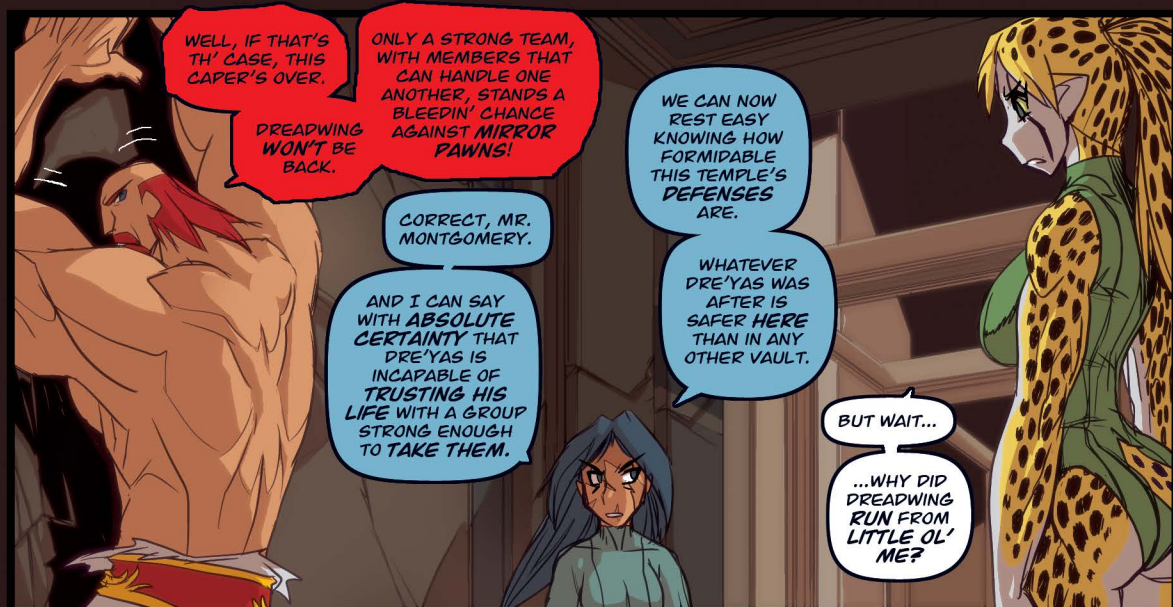
THE...THE... TEMPERATURE... WAS...RAISED!!!











WELL, IF THAT'S TH' CASE, THIS CAPER'S OVER.

DREADWING WON'T BE BACK.

ONLY A STRONG TEAM, WITH MEMBERS THAT CAN HANDLE ONE ANOTHER, STANDS A BLEEPIN' CHANCE AGAINST MIRROR PAWNS!

CORRECT, MR. MONTGOMERY.

AND I CAN SAY WITH ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT DRE'YAS IS INCAPABLE OF TRUSTING HIS LIFE WITH A GROUP STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE THEM.

WE CAN NOW REST EASY KNOWING HOW FORMIDABLE THIS TEMPLE'S DEFENSES ARE.

WHATEVER DRE'YAS WAS AFTER IS SAFER HERE THAN IN ANY OTHER VAULT.

BUT WAIT...

...WHY DID DREADWING RUN FROM LITTLE OL' ME?



HAVEN'T SEEN ANYONE THAT SCARED OF MY FACE SINCE I CAUGHT SOME WERE-RAT COLLEGE KIDS RAIDING MY PANTY DRAWER!

I ALWAYS THOUGHT THEY TOOK OFF JUST BECAUSE WERE-RATS ARE SCARED OF WERE-CATS...

...BUT MAYBE I LOOK ALL MEDUSA-UGLY WHEN I GET MAD!

... JUST A MOMENT...

DIDN'T GINA MENTION...

...SOMETHING ABOUT DRE'YAS HAVING THE TRAP-DISARMING TALENT OF A WERE-RAT THIEF?

I DUNNO.

HEY, GUYS! NEWS UPDATE....!



...THE SECURITY PAWNS ON THE UPPER LEVEL JUST REGENERATED!

THE TEMPLE'S SELF-REPAIR RELAYS ARE COMING ONLINE!

SOMEONE PLEASE TELL ME THEY CAN TELEPORT OR "ESCAPE" US OUT OF HERE... 'CAUSE WE'RE NOT LEAVING THE WAY WE CAME!

I CAN. I'VE ENOUGH MANA LEFT FOR THAT SPELL.

EVERYONE GATHER AROUND MR. MONTGOMERY.

I'M FOCUSING THE SPELL ON HIS LOCATION.

THEN LET'S GET OUR ARSES OUTTA HERE BEFORE THEY LOCK ONTO US AGAIN!

YOU KNOW...

COME TO THINK OF IT...

DREADWING DID SMELL KINDA...

...HMMM.



DRAGON PHARAOH'S
TOWER:

A SENTIENT ARTIFACT
PRISON CONTAINING SOME
OF THE MOST DEADLY
CRIMINALS OF EARTH'S
AGE OF WONDERS.

BY THE WAY, THE
"FANTASTIC" AGE
OF MAGIC WAS
PRETTY MUCH THE
AGE OF WONDERS'
POST-APOCALYPSE...
SO YEAH...
THIS IS PANDORA'S
BOX ON STEROIDS.
--F.

WHEW...

AHEM...

HELLO?

AHEM?

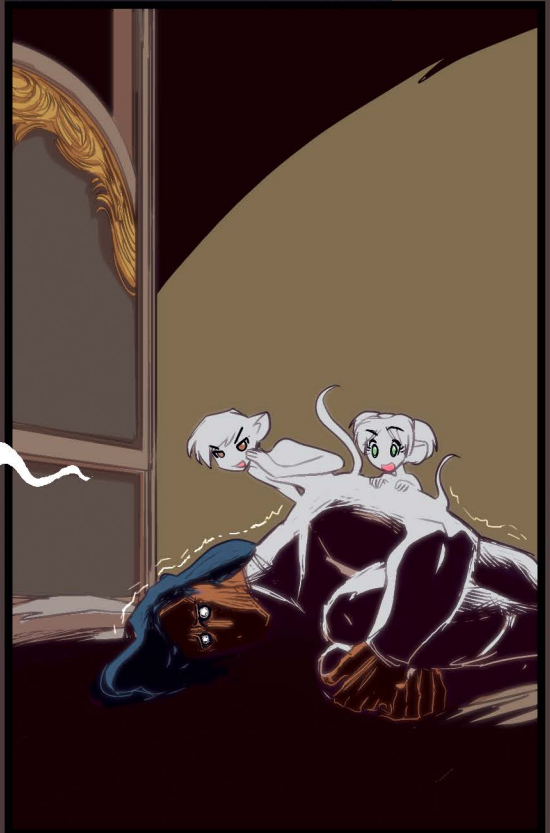
YOU ARE
NOW THINKING ABOUT
THE "WERE-CHEETAH
DOOM-GAZE..."

A SOUL'S TERROR
THAT STRIKES AT THE
HEART OF ALL
WERE-RATS...
OR, APPARENTLY...
THE HEARTS OF ALL
DEMI-DRAGONS WHO
HAVE ABSORBED THE
ESSENCES OF TWO
SWEET, INNOCENT
WERE-RAT THIEVES!

THE STARK, AGONIZING
FEAR EFFECT CAN LAST
ANYWHERE FROM TWO
MINUTES TO A
WHOOOLE WEEK!

HAVE FUN WITH THAT.

EPILOGUE: XANAPU, DREADWING'S
PARA-DIMENSIONAL LAIR...



P.S. TEAM 4-STAR ROX!--F.

END...