



MAR 12 #138
\$3.99 U.S. & Can.
WWW.APMANGA.COM

FRED PERRY

GOLD DIGGER



MARCH 2012



YOU HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE
FINAL GATES SURROUNDING MY
ENEMY'S TERRITORY, RANIS.
WHAT CAN YOU SEE?

IT IS ANOTHER
COSMIC
MACHINE, MY
LORD.

VAST.
ANCIENT.
IDLE.

IT WAITS.

THERE IS AIR AND
WARMTH HERE
AS WELL...

...LIKE A RECENTLY
ABANDONED HEARTH.

YET, I CAN FEEL NO
OTHER LIFE FORCE
IN THIS UNIVERSE
BESIDES MY OWN.

YOUR ATTUNEMENT TO LIFE
ENERGY IS OF LITTLE
CONCERN TO ME, RANIS!

YOU'RE A MAGEND...
A SUMMONED LIVING
SPELL!



AS A MAGEND, YOU
SHOULD HAVE A NOSE
FOR TREASURES OF
MAGIC!!!

THERE IS
MAGIC HERE,
MY LORD...

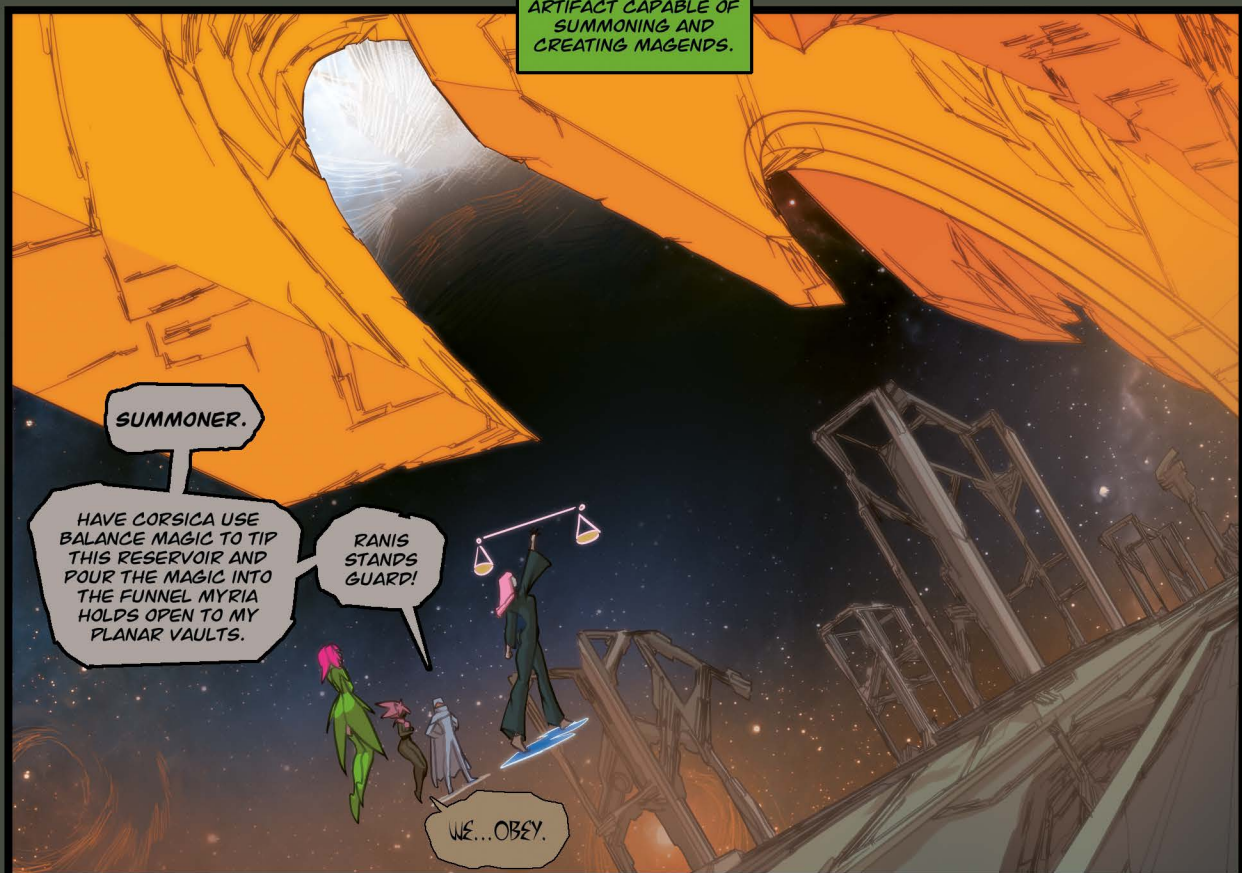
...STORED IN
TITANIC STRIPS
OF CURVED
CRYSTAL!

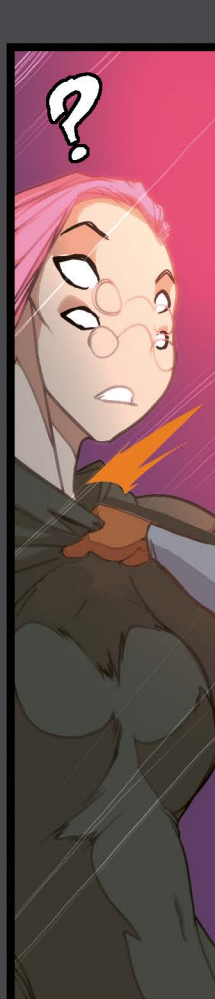


ABANDONED MANA
BATTERIES!

WE'LL
STEAL
THEM!!!

THE ANCIENT
ONE WILL
NEVER
KNOW!!!









THAT SOUND...

WAS THE SOUND OF
MY NEW MYMIOR
SHATTERING...

...WASN'T IT?

Y--
YES, MY
LORD.



ALL OF THE TIME, ENERGY AND
EFFORT I POURED INTO CRAFTING
A MYMIOR CAPABLE OF STORING
VAST AMOUNTS OF MANA...
WERE WASTED.



AND YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO
GATHER A MOTE OF THE
ANCIENT ONE'S TREASURE,
WERE YOU, MYRIA?

ALL OF THE RESOURCES I
SPENT CRAWLING THROUGH
THE PLANES TO REACH THE
ANCIENT ONE'S VAULT...
WERE ALSO WASTED.

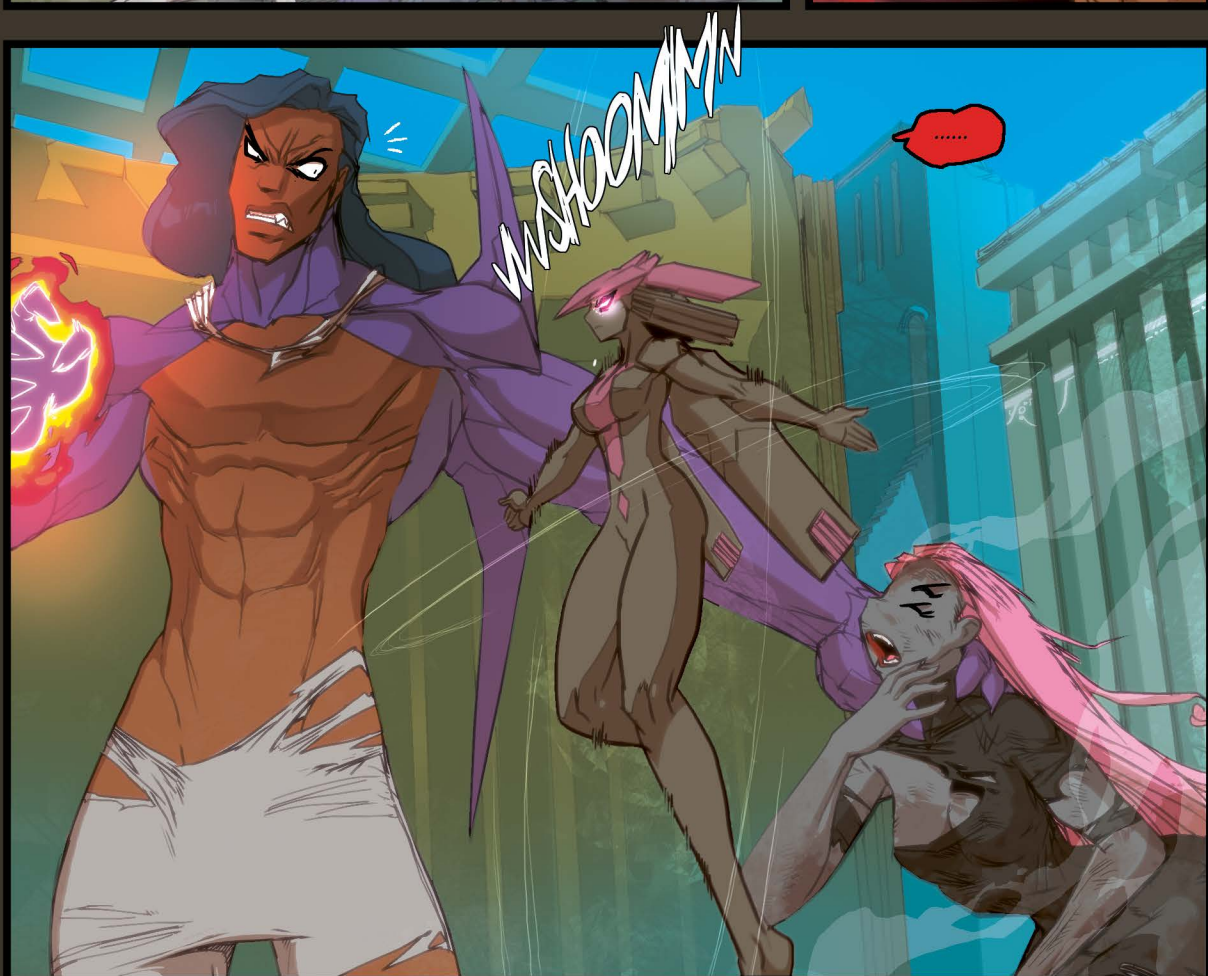
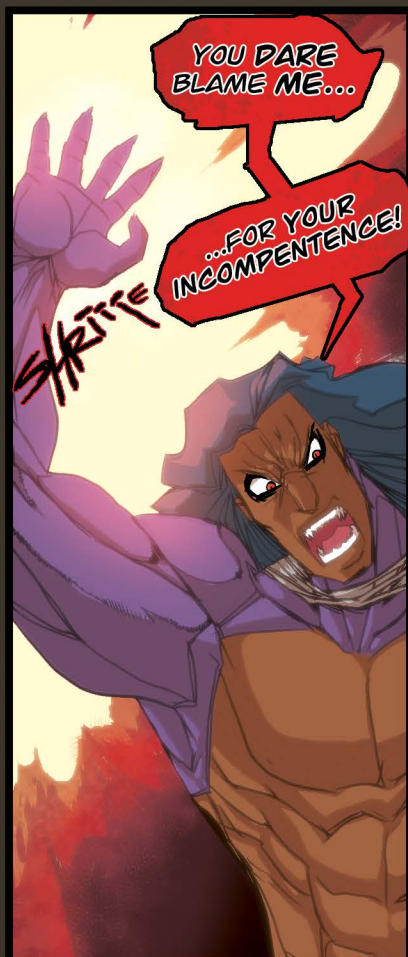
WEREN'T THEY?



I SUPPOSE THE ONLY WAY TO
GATHER THAT TREASURE NOW IS
TO PRETEND I'M AS POWERFUL
AS THE ANCIENT ONE...

...AND SIMPLY POUR THE
MANA OF A STAR BACK
INTO ITS BOTTLE!

RIGHT?





HMPH.

I'VE WASTED
ENOUGH
RESOURCES
TODAY.

PROPERLY
PUTTING YOU
IN YOUR PLACE
WOULD SET ME
BACK HALF A
CENTURY.

I'LL NEED ALL
OF MY ENERGY
TO DEFEAT THE
ANCIENT ONE
ONCE MY
MOMENT
ARRIVES.



SO, IF YOU
DISAPPROVE OF
MY LEADERSHIP
METHODS,
SUMMONER...

...I CAN RELEASE
YOU FROM OUR
COVENANT.



OUR PACT WHERE
YOU SERVE ME
UNCONDITIONALLY,
AND, IN RETURN...

...I USE "FISSION"
TO CREATE AN
INERT SPIRIT
PATCH TO HEAL
THE SHATTERED
SOUL OF YOUR
BELOVED!



HE WAS FELLED
BY DRACONIC
MAGIC, WAS
HE NOT?

THEN ONLY
DRACONIC MAGIC
CAN RESTORE
HIM TO YOU.



AND SO, I WISH YOU
LUCK FINDING ANOTHER WHO
POSSESSES THE KNOWLEDGE AND
SKILL OF A DRACONIC MAGE WHO
HAS ACTUALLY LIVED LONGER THAN
DRAGON MAGIC'S EXISTENCE.

I SUPPOSE YOU
COULD ASK THE
ANCIENT ONE OR ONE
OF HER NOBLE
FOLLOWERS...



BUT HOW OFTEN
HAVE NOBLE HEROES
TURNED THEIR
BACKS ON YOU,
SUMMONER?

DO YOU THINK FOR
ONE MOMENT ANY OF
THEM WOULD SAVE A
NOTORIOUS CRIMINAL
THE LIKES OF YOUR
"TIRANT"?







YOU SHOULD
"UNSUMMON"
CORSICA'S
BODY.

GIVE HER A
WEEK TO
RECOVER.

MANA DISRUPTIONS
LIKE THE ONE
DREADWING USED
ARE QUITE PAINFUL
TO SPELL-
WEAVERS...



I IMAGINE SUCH
AN ATTACK WOULD
BE AGONIZING TO
A MAGEND.



Sherista...



YOU DARE STAND
BEFORE US WITHOUT
DREADWING TO
PROTECT YOU?

WE SHOULD KILL
YOU HERE AND
NOW!!!

THEN NONE OF US
WILL BE FREE OF
OUR COMMON
ENEMY!



THE ENEMY...
OF MY ENEMY...
IS NOT MY
FRIEND!!

NO, I'M **NOT**
YOUR FRIEND
OR YOUR ALLY,
SUMMONER.

I'M A SLAVE,
LIKE YOU.

EVER SINCE
DREADWING
DISCOVERED MY
TALENT FOR
ESPIONAGE, HE'S
BEEN SENDING ME
TO SPY ON REALMS
HE PLANS TO
EXPLOIT!

AND THERE'S THE
LEASH I WEAR.

ITS ENCHANTMENT
PREVENTS ME FROM
BEARING **FALSE**
WITNESS HERE IN
XANADU.

MY BEING A SLAVE WHO
GATHERS INFORMATION FROM
ACROSS THE PLANES AND CAN
UTTER NOTHING BUT THE
TRUTH WITHIN THIS REALM...

...IS WHY YOU
SHOULD LISTEN.

I COME TO YOU WITH A
WAY THAT MAY SET US
ALL FREE!

THEN SPEAK,
SHERISHA.
QUICKLY...

THE ANCIENT ONE IS
MISSING.

THERE IS NO SIGN OF
HER IN ANY OF THE
KNOWN PLANES.

THOUGH **WHY** SHE HAS
ABANDONED TIME AND SPACE
AS WE KNOW IT IS BEYOND ME.

PERHAPS SHE
BELIEVED HER
WORK IS DONE?



WHEN DREADWING RECIEVES MY REPORT, HE WILL RUSH TO SIEZE CONTROL OF THE ANCIENT ONE'S SANCTUARY!

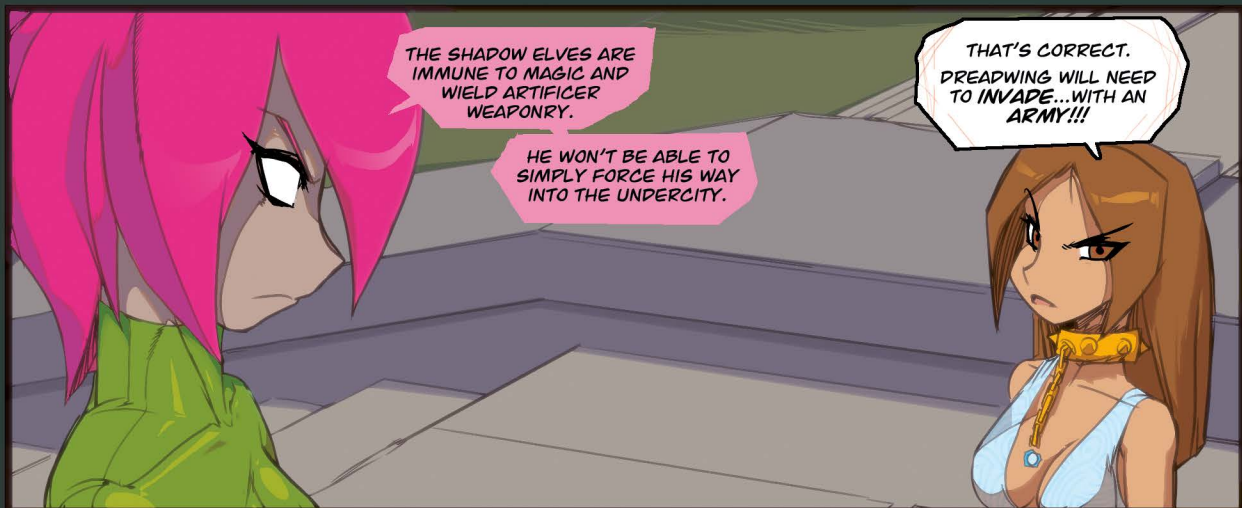
JADE-REALM!

HIS GOAL WILL BE THE ARTIFICER ARCHIVE COCOON HIDDEN FAR BELOW JADE'S SURFACE...

IT'S PROTECTED BY A SHADOW-ELF UNDERCITY!

ONCE DREADWING TAKES POSSESSION OF THAT REPOSITORY, HE WILL POSSESS ALL OF THE ANCIENT ONE'S SECRETS!

HIS POWER WILL RIVAL HERS!



THE SHADOW ELVES ARE IMMUNE TO MAGIC AND WIELD ARTIFICER WEAPONRY.

HE WON'T BE ABLE TO SIMPLY FORCE HIS WAY INTO THE UNDERCITY.

THAT'S CORRECT. DREADWING WILL NEED TO INVADE...WITH AN ARMY!!!



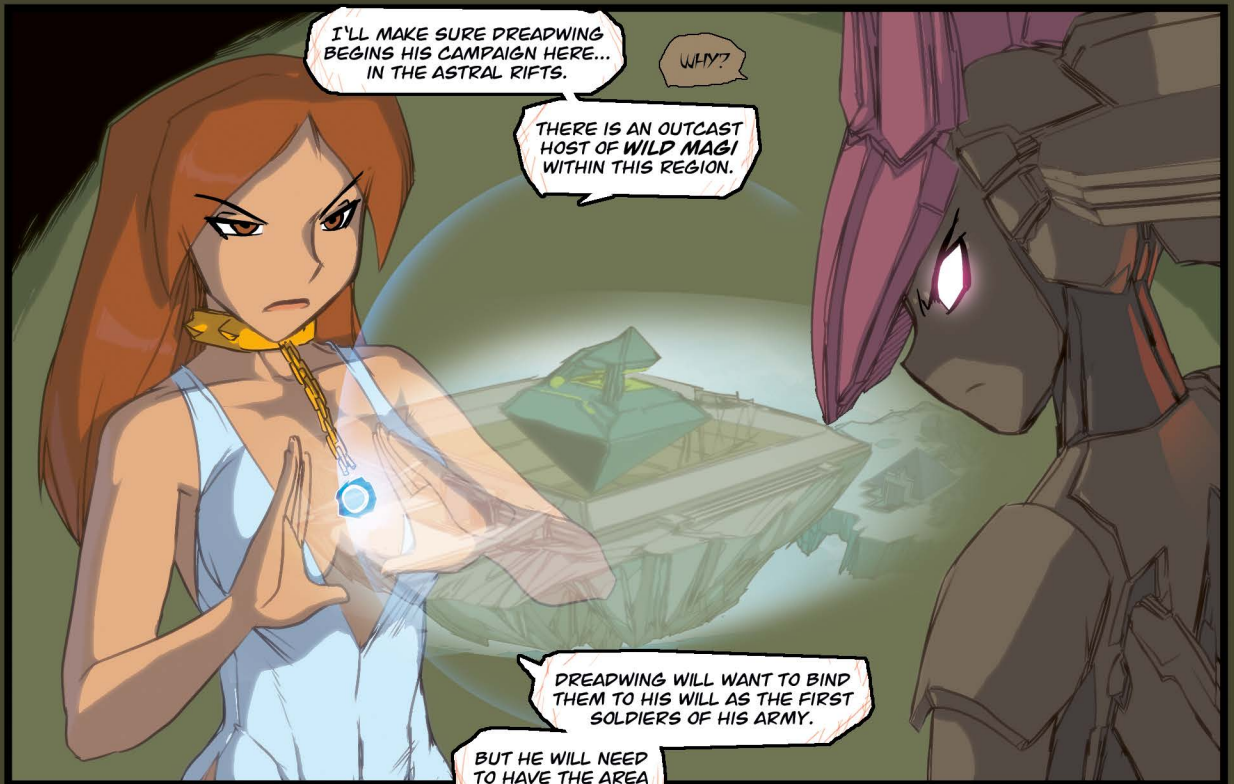
AND WHAT'S MORE...

THE SHADOW ELVES HAVE SURROUNDED THEMSELVES WITH POWERFUL ALLIES... FRIENDS!

ALL THE CLANS AND TRIBES OF JADE COULD RALLY TO THE DEFENSE!

AND SO, TO GAIN THE POWER OF THE ANCIENT ONE...

...DREADWING MUST CONQUER JADE!



I'LL MAKE SURE DREADWING BEGINS HIS CAMPAIGN HERE... IN THE ASTRAL RIFTS.

WHY?

THERE IS AN OUTCAST HOST OF WILD MAGI WITHIN THIS REGION.

DREADWING WILL WANT TO BIND THEM TO HIS WILL AS THE FIRST SOLDIERS OF HIS ARMY.

BUT HE WILL NEED TO HAVE THE AREA SCOUTED AND CHARTED.



"THEREFORE, OUR MASTER WON'T NOTICE WHEN MYRIA OPENS PORTALS TO THIS REGION DURING THE CAMPAIGN."

"HERE YOU WILL FIND A VISITOR TO THE ASTRAL RIFTS."

"SHE COMES FROM BOTH OF OUR PASTS..."

"...AND I NEVER EVEN DREAMED SHE WOULD GROW TO BE AS STRONG AND AS TALENTED AS SHE HAS BECOME!"



"FIND HER, SUMMONER... SHE WILL DELIVER YOU FROM YOUR BONDAGE WITH DREADWING...AND THUS, SAVE US ALL!"

OKAY, WE'RE GOING IN.

GINA SAYS THIS ONE COUNTS FOR A QUARTER OF YOUR MIDTERM GRADE.
READY?



PROFESSOR MADRID?

I HAVE A QUESTION.

NO NEED FOR THE "PROFESSOR".
JUST MADRID WILL DO.

WHAT TYPE OF MONSTERS CAN WE EXPECT TO ENCOUNTER WITHIN THESE RUINS?

WILL THERE BE ZOMBIES ON THE TEST?

HONESTLY, ELROY.



ACTUALLY...I HAVE ENCOUNTERED A FEW NEGATIVE ENERGY ENTITIES DURING MY EXPLORATIONS HERE.

SO...UHM...

MAYBE?



THERE'S A LARGE-SCALE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION INTO THE ASTRAL RIFTS GOING ON RIGHT NOW!

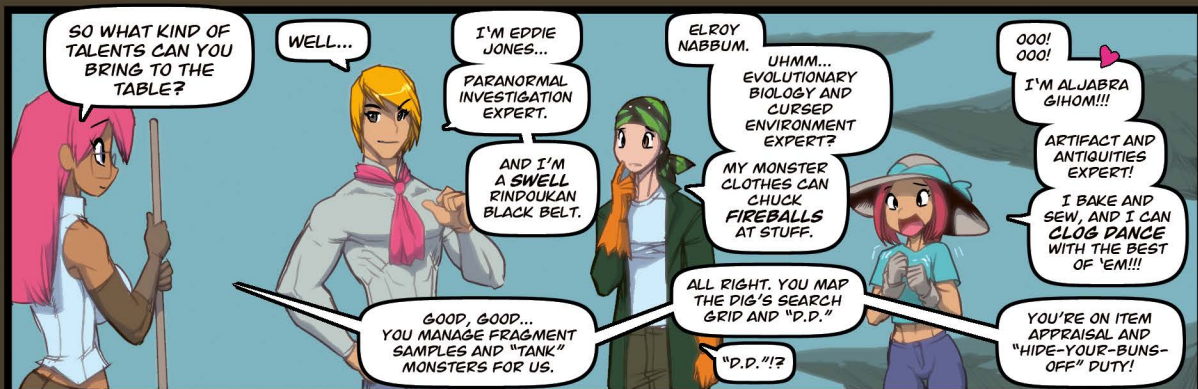
THE DRAGONS OF JADE-REALM ARE CONDUCTING THE SEARCH, AND THEY ASKED YOUR PROFESSOR TO BRING IN SOME HELP.

THAT HELP INCLUDES YOU GUYS...GINA'S ADVANCED ARCHAEOLOGY STUDENTS...

...AND THAT HELP INCLUDES ME, SINCE I WAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

THAT MEANS THIS IS A REAL, LIVE EXERCISE!

YOU'RE OFFICIALLY MEMBERS OF MY EXPLORER TEAM!



SO WHAT KIND OF TALENTS CAN YOU BRING TO THE TABLE?

WELL...

I'M EDDIE JONES...

PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION EXPERT.

AND I'M A SWELL RINDOUKAN BLACK BELT.

ELROY NABBUM.

UHHM... EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY AND CURSED ENVIRONMENT EXPERT?

MY MONSTER CLOTHES CAN CHUCK FIREBALLS AT STUFF.

ALL RIGHT. YOU MAP THE DIG'S SEARCH GRID AND "D.D."

"D.D."!?

OOO! OOO!

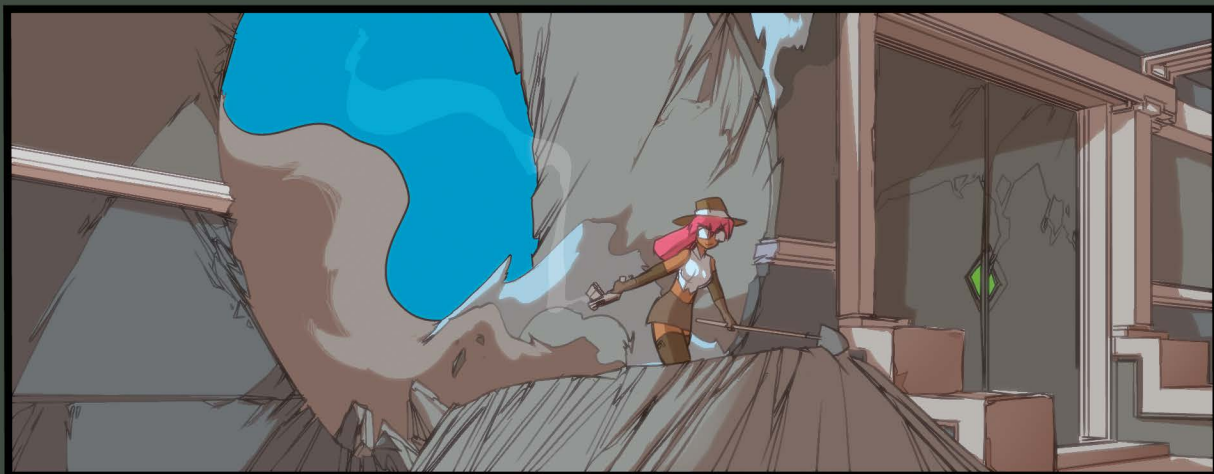
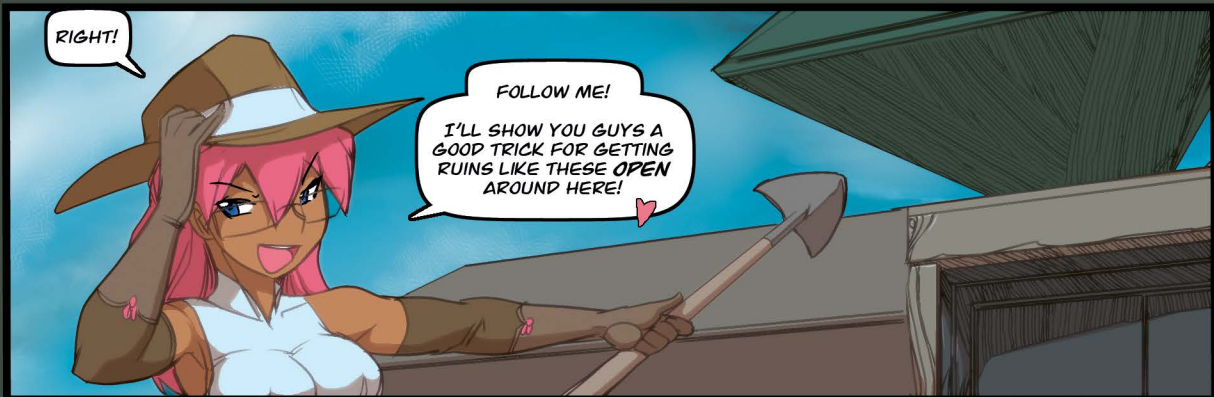
I'M ALJABRA GIHOM!!!

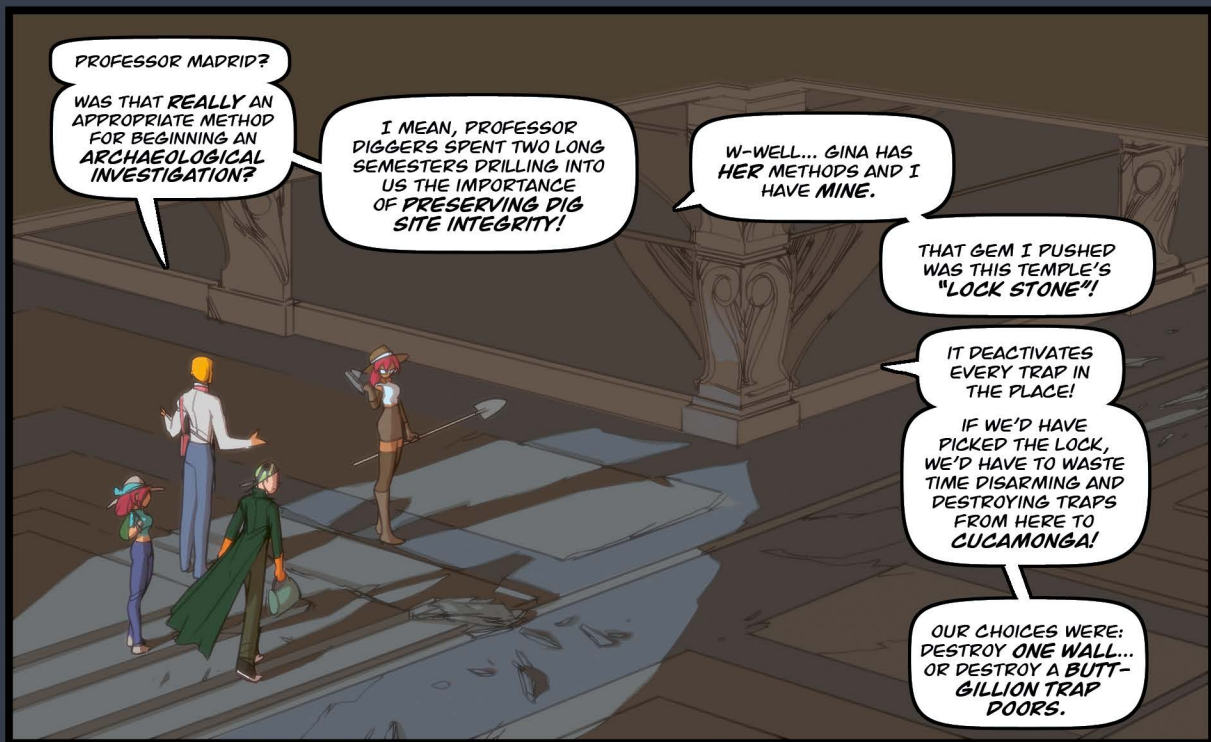
ARTIFACT AND ANTIQUITIES EXPERT!

I BAKE AND SEW, AND I CAN CLOG DANCE WITH THE BEST OF 'EM!!!

YOU'RE ON ITEM APPRAISAL AND "HIDE-YOUR-BUNS-OFF" DUTY!

GOOD, GOOD... YOU MANAGE FRAGMENT SAMPLES AND "TANK" MONSTERS FOR US.





PROFESSOR MADRID?

WAS THAT **REALLY** AN APPROPRIATE METHOD FOR BEGINNING AN **ARCHAEOLOGICAL** INVESTIGATION?

I MEAN, PROFESSOR **DIGGERS** SPENT TWO LONG SEMESTERS DRILLING INTO US THE IMPORTANCE OF **PRESERVING DIG** SITE INTEGRITY!

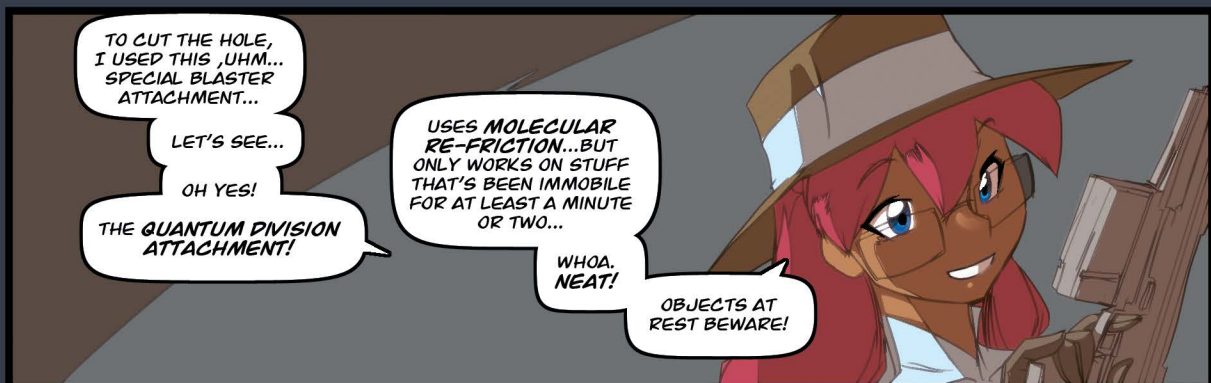
W-WELL... GINA HAS **HER** METHODS AND I HAVE **MINE**.

THAT GEM I PUSHED WAS THIS TEMPLE'S "**LOCK STONE**"!

IT DEACTIVATES EVERY TRAP IN THE PLACE!

IF WE'D HAVE PICKED THE **LOCK**, WE'D HAVE TO WASTE TIME DISARMING AND DESTROYING TRAPS FROM HERE TO **CUCAMONGA**!

OUR CHOICES WERE: DESTROY ONE WALL... OR DESTROY A **BUTT-GILLION** TRAP DOORS.



TO CUT THE HOLE, I USED THIS ,UHM... SPECIAL **BLASTER** ATTACHMENT...

LET'S SEE...

OH YES!

THE **QUANTUM DIVISION** ATTACHMENT!

USES **MOLECULAR RE-FRICTION**...BUT ONLY WORKS ON STUFF THAT'S BEEN IMMOBILE FOR AT LEAST A MINUTE OR TWO...

WHOA. **NEAT!**

OBJECTS AT REST BEWARE!



UHM... PROFESSOR **MADRID**?

I TOLD YOU. JUST CALL ME **MADRID**.

MADRID?

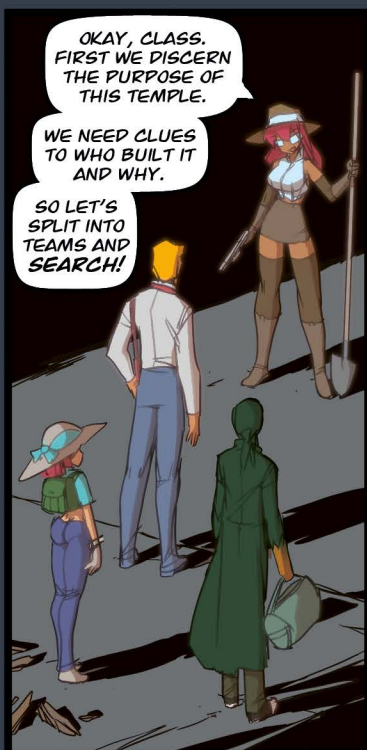
ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING?

YOU DON'T SEEM AS EXPERIENCED AS OUR PROFESSOR.

W-WELL, I'M NOT.

I TOLD YOU, I'M NEW TO THIS TEACHING STUFF.

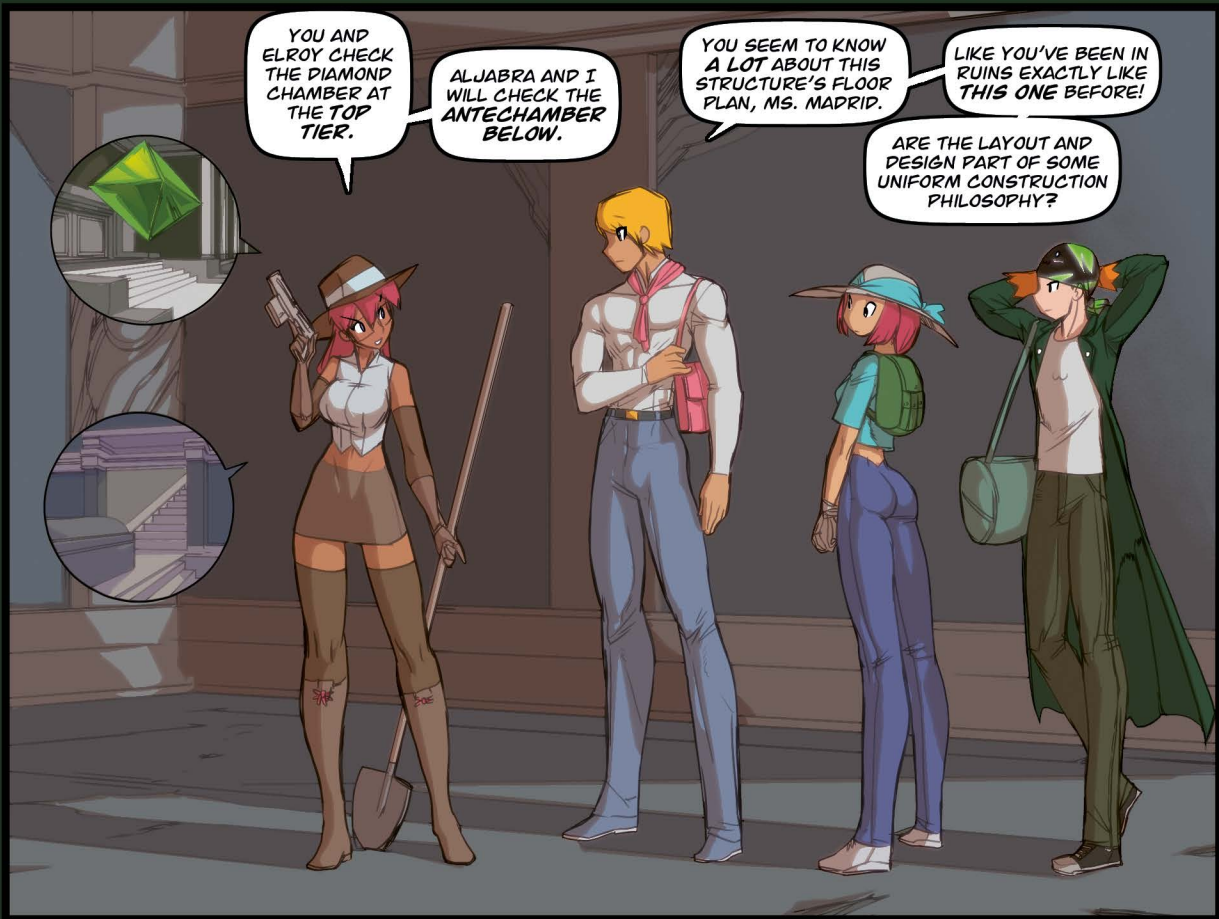
I'M USED TO CONDUCTING MY INVESTIGATIONS **SOLO**.



OKAY, CLASS. FIRST WE DISCERN THE PURPOSE OF THIS TEMPLE.

WE NEED CLUES TO WHO BUILT IT AND WHY.

SO LET'S SPLIT INTO TEAMS AND **SEARCH!**



YOU AND
ELROY CHECK
THE DIAMOND
CHAMBER AT
THE TOP
TIER.

ALJABRA AND I
WILL CHECK THE
ANTECHAMBER
BELOW.

YOU SEEM TO KNOW
A LOT ABOUT THIS
STRUCTURE'S FLOOR
PLAN, MS. MADRID.

LIKE YOU'VE BEEN IN
RUINS EXACTLY LIKE
THIS ONE BEFORE!

ARE THE LAYOUT AND
DESIGN PART OF SOME
UNIFORM CONSTRUCTION
PHILOSOPHY?



GOOD GUESS, EDDIE...
THESE SUCKERS ARE LIKE
THE "STARBUCKS" OF
THE ASTRAL RIFTS!

NOW DON'T FORGET TO
SCREAM REAL LOUD IF YOU
RUN INTO A MONSTER...THE
STONES HERE TEND TO
DISRUPT OUR COMM
SYSTEMS.

OH, AND LOOK
AROUND FOR A
CAPUCCINO
MACHINE...I'M
DYIN' FOR A
CUP OF JOE!

R-RIGHT.

SEEEYA.

...



THERE IS A
PRESENCE AT
THIS SOUL
SPENCE.



INTRUDERS...

MORE INVADERS FROM
JADE-REALM.

THEY'VE GROWN BRAZEN
IN THEIR PLUNDERING!



BUT NOT FOR
LONG.



SPOOKY...

YEAH, WE COULD
USE SOME LIGHT...

I THINK I
HAVE SOME
LANTERNISH
GIZMO ON ME
SOMEWHERE!



NO NEED.

I GOT ONE OF MY
SUPER-DUPER
"ANCIENT HERO
ARTIFACTS"!

COME ON OUT,
SIR "MYSTIC
ARCHERY"!!!

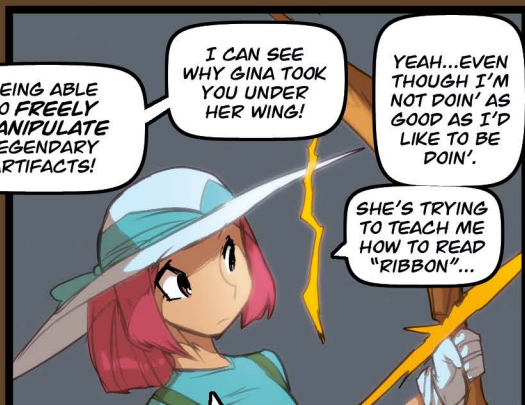


GOOD BOY!

WOW!!!

SOME GIFT
YOU GOT
THERE,
ALJABRA.

BEING ABLE
TO FREELY
MANIPULATE
LEGENDARY
ARTIFACTS!



I CAN SEE
WHY GINA TOOK
YOU UNDER
HER WING!

YEAH...EVEN
THOUGH I'M
NOT DOIN' AS
GOOD AS I'D
LIKE TO BE
DOIN'.

SHE'S TRYING
TO TEACH ME
HOW TO READ
"RIBBON"...



"THE CIRCUITRY
OF MAGIC".

WELL, THAT'S A
TOUGH SUBJECT...
EVEN DRAGONS DON'T
KNOW HOW THEY'RE
ABLE TO READ RIBBON...
THEY JUST DO!

BUT YOU'VE GOT AN AFFINITY
FOR ARTIFACTS.... IF YOU
LEARNED THAT, PERHAPS
YOU CAN GRASP RIBBON?

I-I DON'T KNOW
ABOUT THAT, MS.
MADRID...



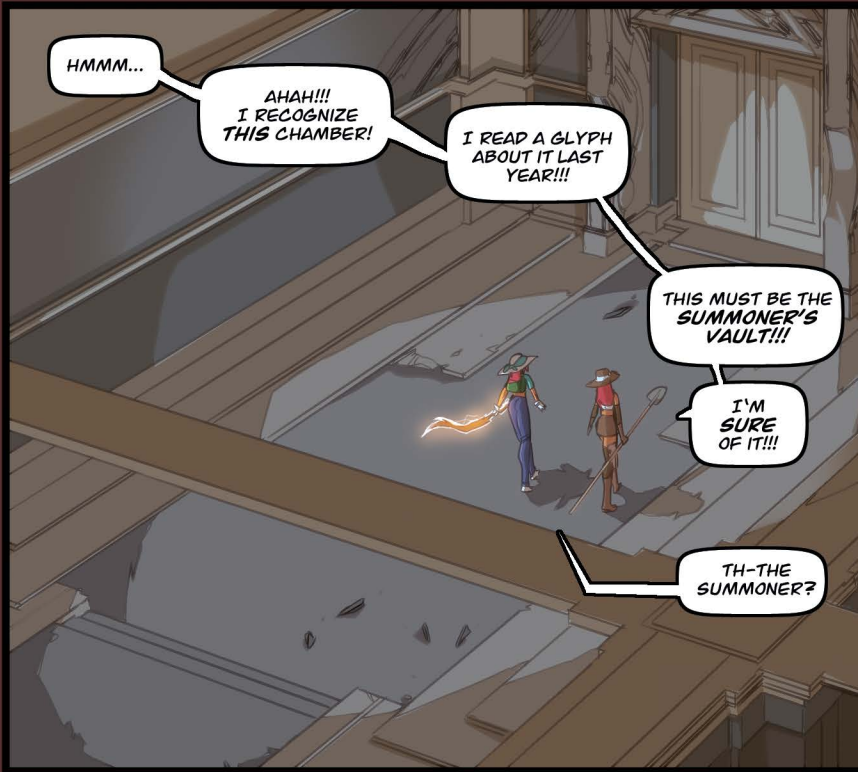
I'VE BEEN AROUND
ARTIFACTS FOR AS LONG
AS I CAN RECALL, IS ALL!

THE FIRST THING
I REMEMBER IS
WAKING UP IN AN
ABANDONED
STOREHOUSE IN THE
MIDDLE OF NOWHERE,
SURROUNDED BY A
BUNCHA "JUNKY"
ARTIFACTS AND
ANTIQUES.

BUT I KNEW WHAT
WAS IN EACH AND
EVERY CRATE,
EVEN THOUGH THEY
HADN'T BEEN
OPENED IN YEARS!

SO WHEN THE
AUTHORITIES COULDN'T
FIND THE OWNER, THE
JUDGE RULED THAT IT
BELONGED TO ME AND
THAT I MUSTA BUMPED
MY HEAD AND GOT
AMNESIA OR
SOMETHING!

...I SEE.



HMMM...

AHAH!!!
I RECOGNIZE
THIS CHAMBER!

I READ A GLYPH
ABOUT IT LAST
YEAR!!!

THIS MUST BE THE
SUMMONER'S
VAULT!!!

I'M
SURE
OF IT!!!

TH-THE
SUMMONER?



THE SUMMONER IS A
LIVING ARTIFACT...
SHE IS WHAT THE
ANCIENT MAGIC-
CRAFTERS CALLED...
AN "ENIGMA."

...

DO YOU
KNOW THE
STORY OF
THIS
VAULT?

WELL...



THE SUMMONER'S STORY
IS A SAD ONE, ALJABRA.

LONG AGO...OR
PERHAPS NOT SO
LONG AGO...



...THE SUMMONER
ENIGMA AWOKE TO
CONSCIOUS THOUGHT
AND MORTAL FORM...

...AND IN THE VERY
FIRST MOMENTS OF
HER AWARENESS,
SHE DESPAIRED!

BECAUSE, STARING
BACK WERE THE
COLD, MERCILESS
EYES OF THE ONE
WHO HELD HER
PRISONER...



...A CRIMINAL
OVERLORD
NAMED
SHERISHA.



DETERMINED TO
LEARN THE MYSTIC
NATURE OF THE
SUMMONER'S
ESSENCE...

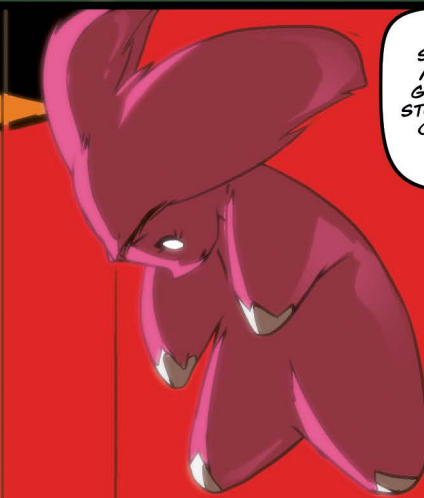


...SHERISHA
CONTINUOUSLY
CONDUCTED
TORTUROUS
EXPERIMENTS...

...PAUSING
ONLY TO GIVE
THE SUMMONER
ENOUGH TIME TO
REGENERATE HER
BROKEN BODY!

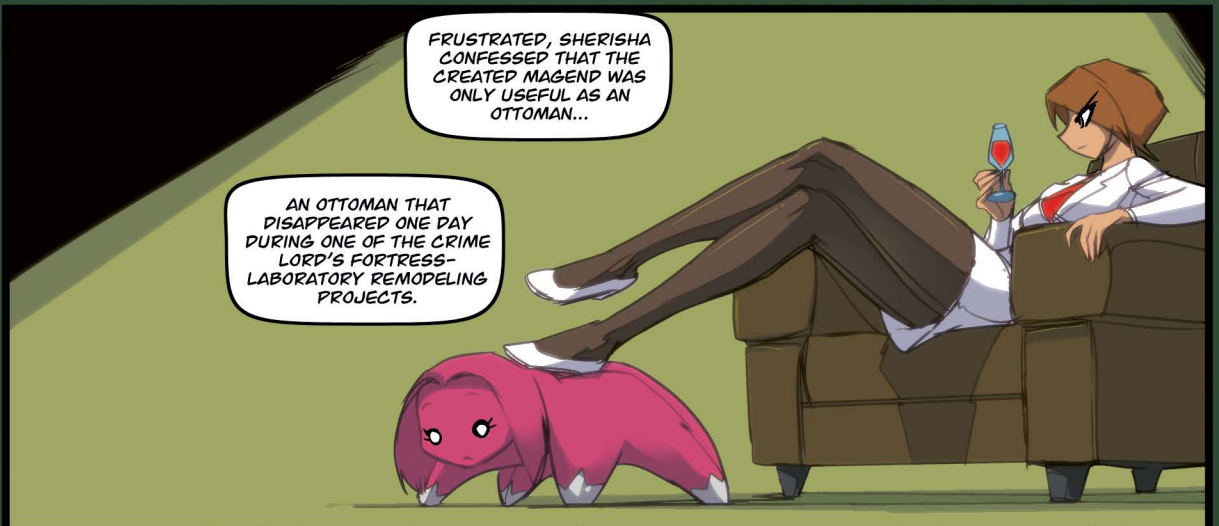


EVENTUALLY, SHERISHA'S
CRUELTY BORE FRUIT.



THE BODY AND
SPIRIT OF A NEW
MAGEND WERE
GROWN FROM THE
STOLEN FRAGMENTS
OF SUMMONER'S
AURA AND
FLESH!

BUT FOR ALL
SHERISHA'S
EFFORT, THE
MAGEND WAS
UNRESPONSIVE
AND UTTERLY
POWERLESS.



FRUSTRATED, SHERISHA
CONFERRED THAT THE
CREATED MAGEND WAS
ONLY USEFUL AS AN
OTTOMAN...

AN OTTOMAN THAT
DISAPPEARED ONE DAY
DURING ONE OF THE CRIME
LORD'S FORTRESS-
LABORATORY REMODELING
PROJECTS.



TH...THAT LITTLE MAGEND
M-MUST HAVE BEEN
FAKING IT!

I BET IT WENT TO GO
TELL A HERO ABOUT
THE SUMMONER!!!

THE "GOOD GUYS"
KNEW, ALJABRA!

THEY KNEW SHE
WAS HELD
PRISONER AND
WAS BEING
TORTURED!



BUT SHERISHA WAS
SOMEHOW ABOVE
THE LAW!

SHERISHA WAS
OUT OF THE
REACH OF ANY
HERO!

THE ONE WHO
RESCUED THE
SUMMONER...



WAS A
HANDSOME
THIEF...



THE SUMMONER FELL
IN LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT
OF HIM, ALJABRA...

...AND THOUGH EACH
MAGEND CREATED BY THE
SUMMONER HAS HER OWN
MIND AND SOUL...

...THEY ALL SHARE
THE SUMMONER'S
HEART...

...AND THEY ALL
FELL IN LOVE AT
FIRST SIGHT OF
HIM TOO!



WOW!



THIS...

THIS IS A
PHYLACTORY!!!
A SPECIAL
CRYSTAL MADE
TO HOLD A
SPIRIT!



THOUGH...IT'S NOT AS
STURDY AS SOME OF
THE EMPTY ONES IN
MY COLLECTION.

BUT...

...HEY! ALL
THIS NEEDS IS
A SPIRIT PATCH
REPAIR!

I BET...
I BET I COULD
REVIVE HIM IF...
YEAH!

...I-I THINK I
KNOW JUST THE
MATERIALS TO
LOOK FOR TOO!



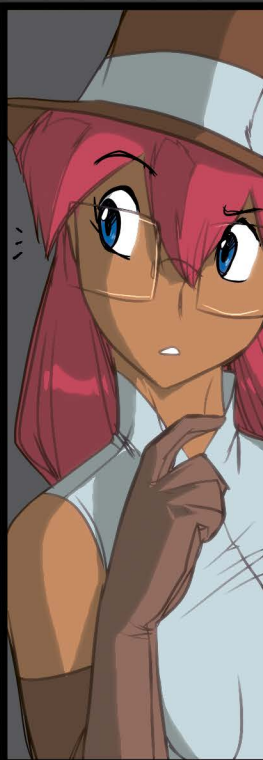
A-ACCORDING
TO LEGEND, THE
SUMMONER AND HER
HANDSOME THIEF
WENT ON MANY BRAVE
ADVENTURES AFTER
HE SAVED HER...

BUT ON THEIR VERY
LAST ADVENTURE,
SHE FAILED TO
SAVE HIM...
AND WAS LOST IN
DESPAIR EVER
AFTER.

I THINK...

I THINK SHE
WOULD HAVE
TRUSTED YOU TO
KEEP HIM SAFE,
ALJABRA.

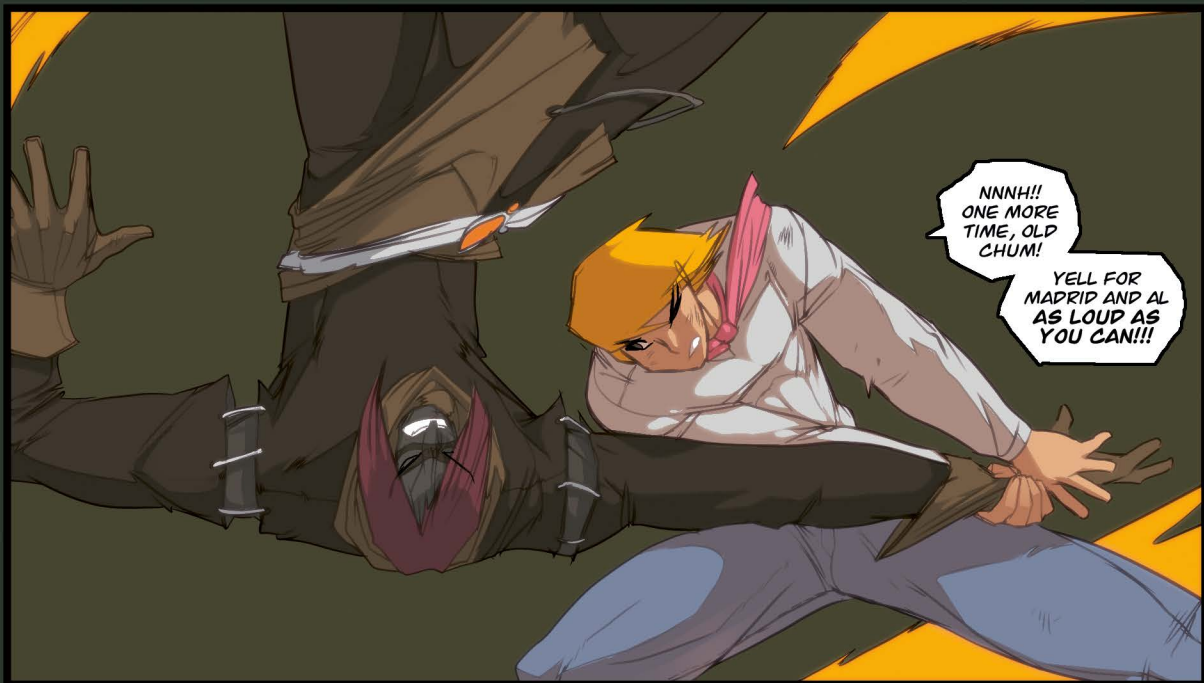
TO SUCCEED
WHERE SHE--



ALJABRA.

STAY HERE
WHERE IT'S
SAFE.

I'LL BE
RIGHT
BACK.





HELLO.

AND...
WELL...
GOODBYE.

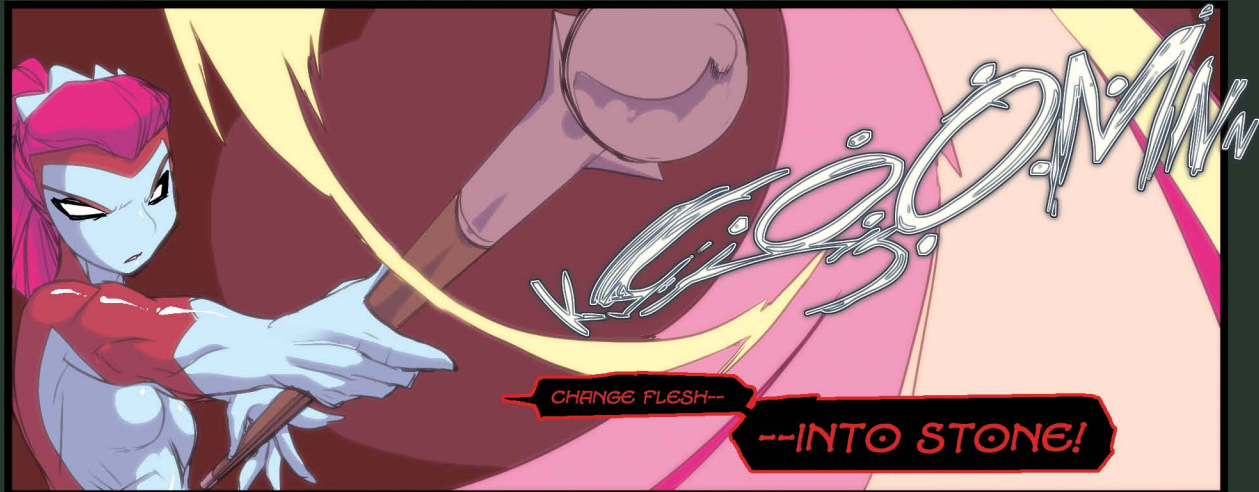
GOODBYE BECAUSE, QUITE
FRANKLY, YOU LOT COULD NOT
HAVE POSSIBLY PICKED A
WORSE MOMENT TO PATROL THIS
REGION OF YOUR TERRITORY.

I CAN'T LET YOU
ASSAULT THIS TEMPLE!

BUT DREADWING
WILL BE SEEKING AN
ALLIANCE WITH YOUR
LEADERS SOON...

...AND I DEFINITELY
CAN'T LET YOU REPORT
TO HIM THAT I WAS
HERE STOPPING YOU
FROM ASSAULTING
THIS TEMPLE.

SO...
THIS ISN'T
YOUR DAY.



YOU'RE SO LUCKY YOU DON'T
HAVE MY STUDENTS ON DAYS
LIKE THIS, MADRID...

I JUST KNOW I PICKED
UP A WHOLE SWATH OF
GREY HAIRS FROM
THEIR SHENANIGANS
THIS TIME!

WHAT COUNTS IS THAT
THEY'RE OKAY, AND
THAT WE WERE ABLE
TO TRACE THEIR
DISTRESS SIGNAL
STRAIGHT HERE!

BUT THEY MAY NOT
HAVE BEEN *WRONG*
ABOUT MY BEING WITH
THEM...EVEN THOUGH I
WAS WITH YOU ALL
DAY TODAY!!!

I'VE
ENCOUNTERED
TEMPORAL
DISTORTIONS
HERE *BEFORE!*

BUT STILL...

WHAT THE HECK
HAPPENED WAY
OUT HERE!?!?

ANY IDEAS,
DEBRA?

THE FACT THAT
GINA'S STUDENTS
ARE ALIVE AND
WELL...

...AND THAT NONE
OF THE PETRIFIED
VICTIMS WERE
BROKEN INTO PIECES
AND EATEN...

...RULE OUT THE
POSSIBILITY OF
THIS BEING AN
ABYSSALISK
ATTACK, MADRID.

I'LL NEED
MORE CLUES
TO SOLVE THIS
CASE...

THE **WILD
MAGES** OF
THE RIFTS ARE
WARY OF US.

TO THE POINT
WHERE THEY
ATTACK DRAGONS
LIKE ME WITHOUT
THE SLIGHTEST
PROVOCATION!

IF I CAN BRING
THE IDENTITY OF
THE ONE WHO
PETRIFIED THIS
PATROL TO THEIR
CHIEFTAN, I CAN
IMPROVE THEIR
DISPOSITION
TOWARD US!

WITH SUCH AN ACT
OF **GOOD FAITH**,
PERHAPS I CAN
CONVINCE THEM TO
JOIN OUR FIGHT
AGAINST MY
FATHER...

...DREADWING...



NEXT: "COMMUNICATION MELTDOWN..."