

FIONA STAPLES

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN



Saga™

VOLUME
FIVE

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Saga



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FIONA STAPLES

A R T I S T

BRIAN K. VAUGHAN

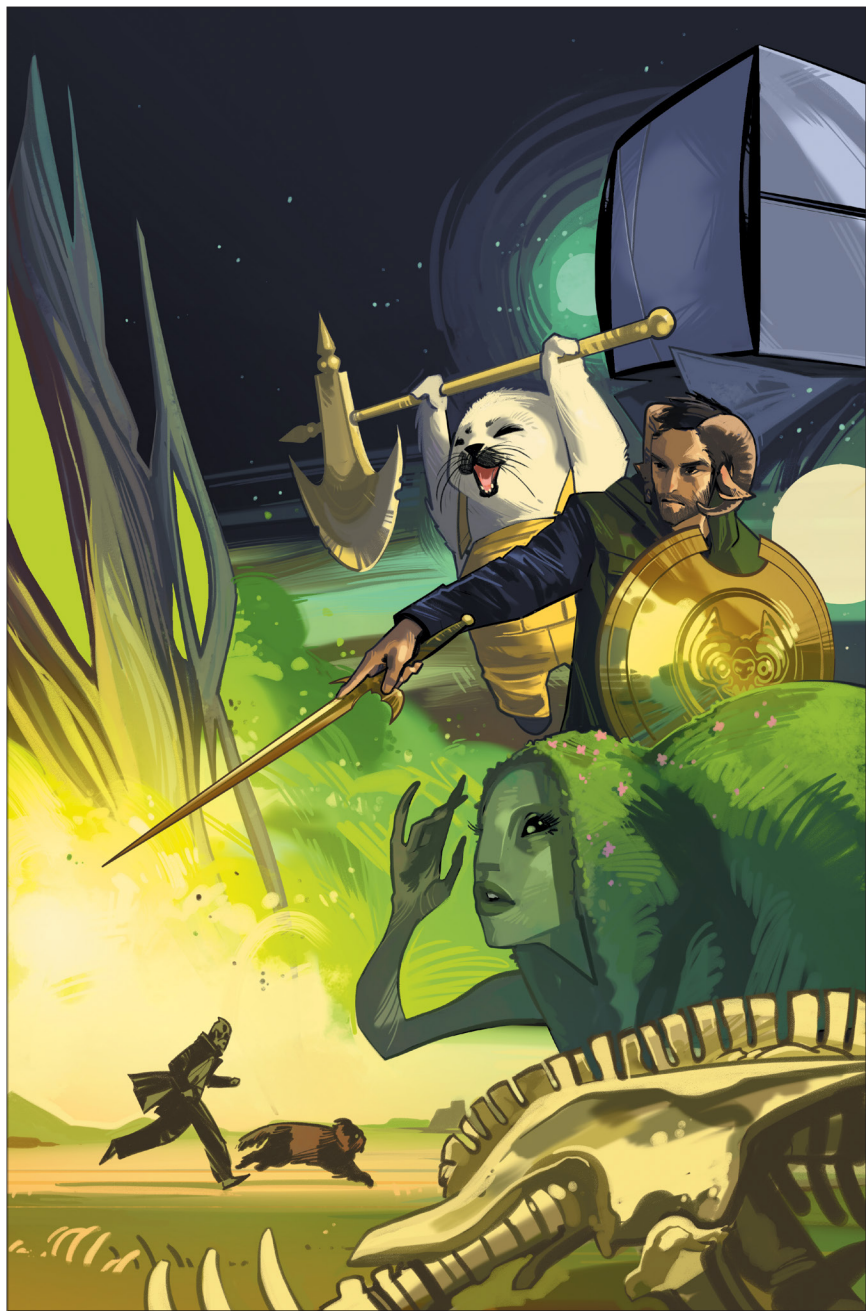
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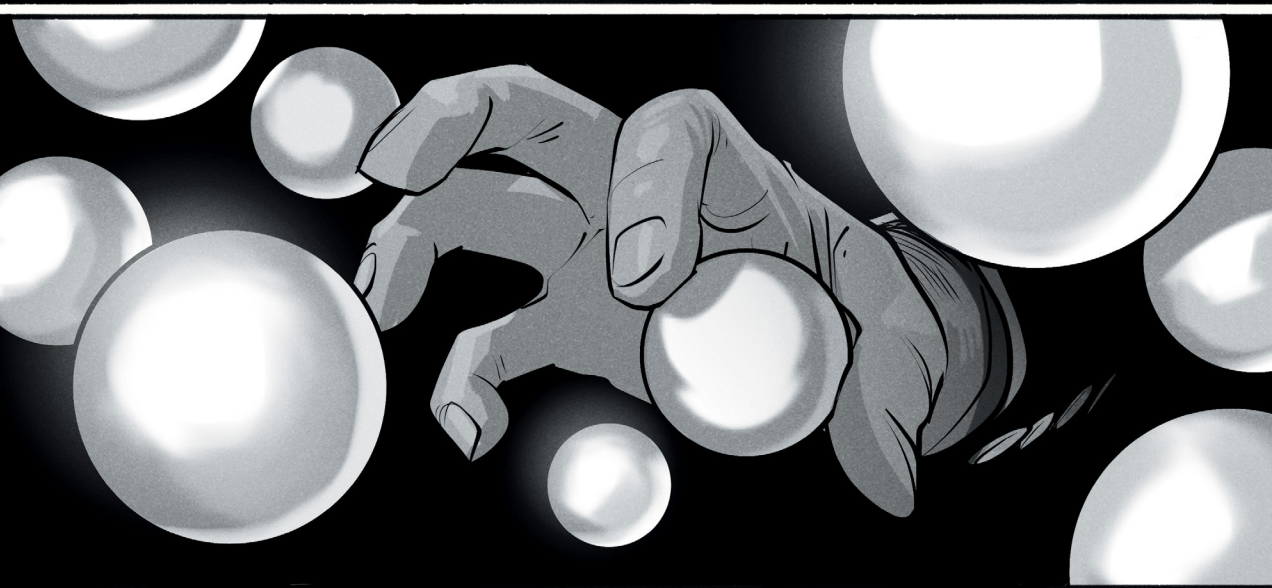
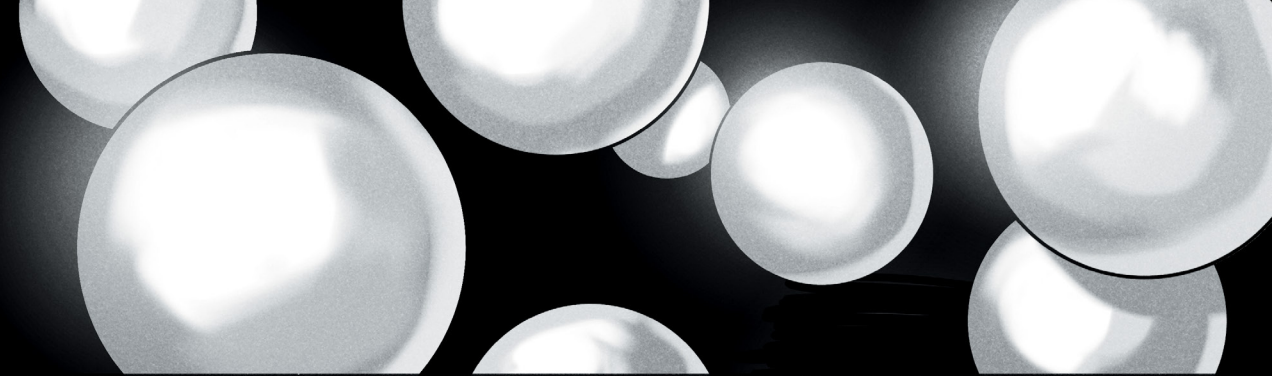
L E T T E R I N G + D E S I G N

ERIC STEPHENSON

C O O R D I N A T O R

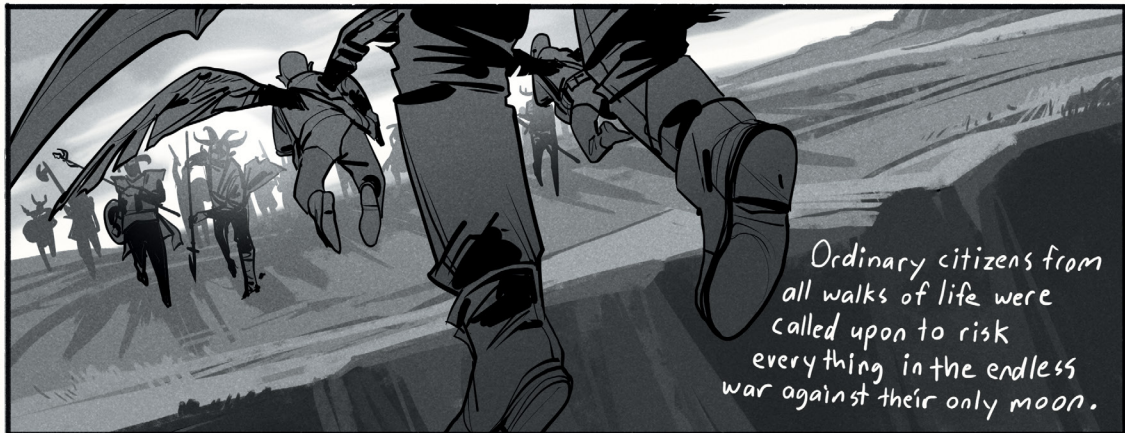


CHAPTER
TWENTY-FIVE

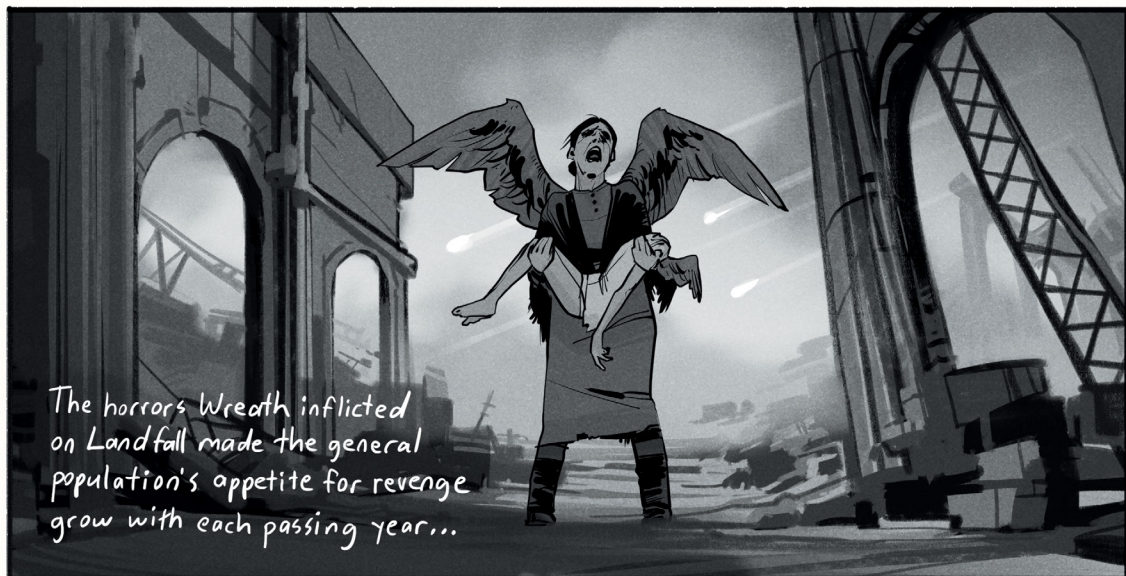




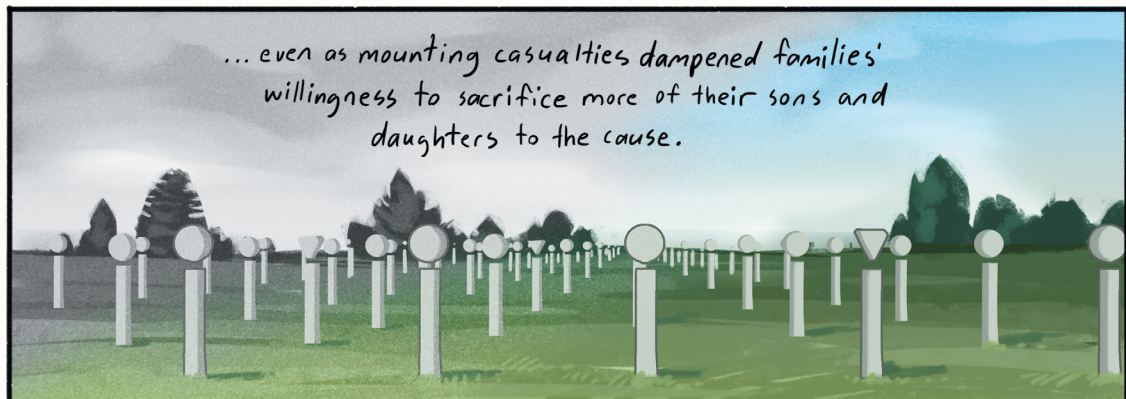
For centuries, my mom's planet had relied on a random selection of young people to wage its battles.



Ordinary citizens from all walks of life were called upon to risk everything in the endless war against their only moon.



The horrors Wreath inflicted on Landfall made the general population's appetite for revenge grow with each passing year...



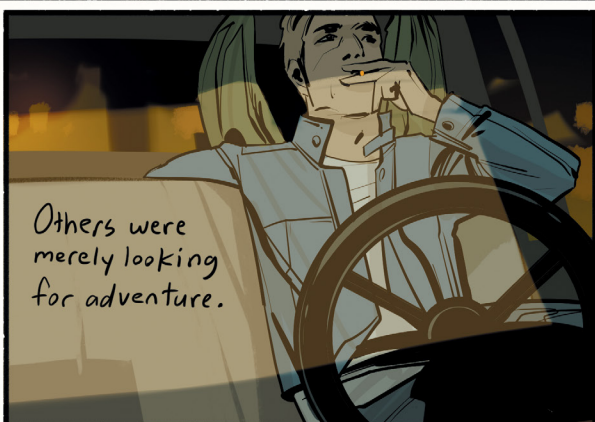
... even as mounting casualties dampened families' willingness to sacrifice more of their sons and daughters to the cause.



In time, the draft was replaced
by an all-volunteer force.



Many of
those who
answered this
call did so out
of a genuine
sense of duty.



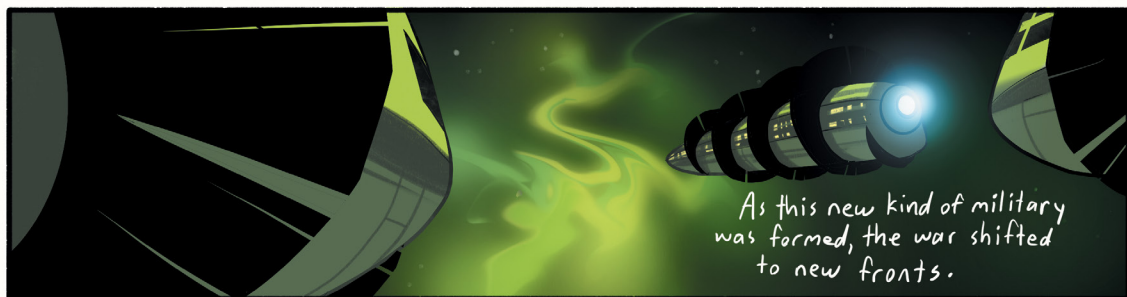
Others were
merely looking
for adventure.



Some were trying
to escape a bad
situation.



Almost all of them
were poor
as shit.



As this new kind of military was formed, the war shifted to new fronts.



Landfall and Wreath began clashing over strategic interests far away from their own solar system.



To augment dwindling armies, the two sides each enlisted (or outright press-ganged) foreign fighters to join their ranks.



Before long, almost everyone in the universe had skin in the game.



But as the conflict moved further into the cosmos, an unfamiliar quiet fell over the two worlds that had given birth to this bloodshed.



Civilians finally had the luxury to concern themselves with matters beyond life or death.



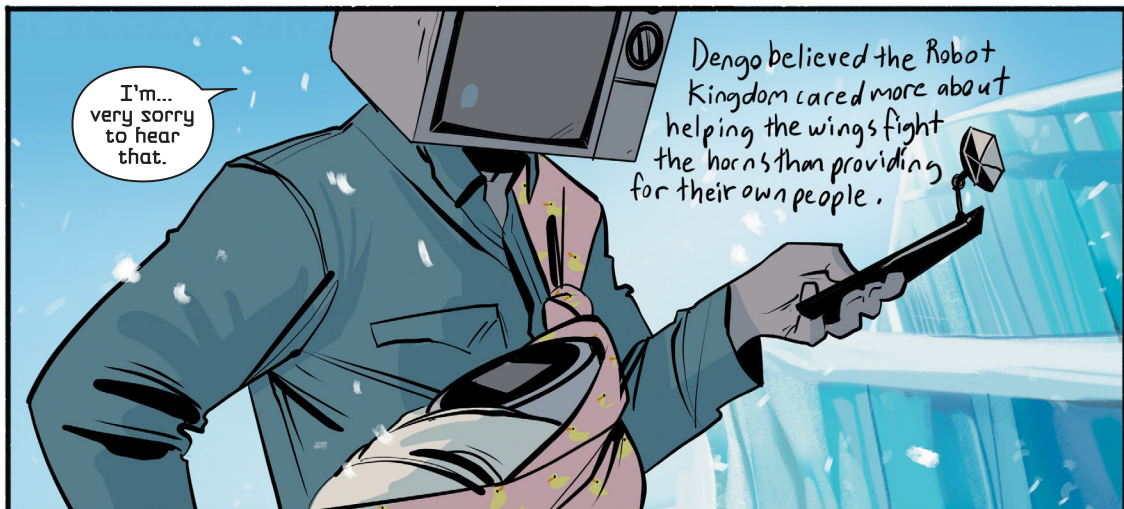
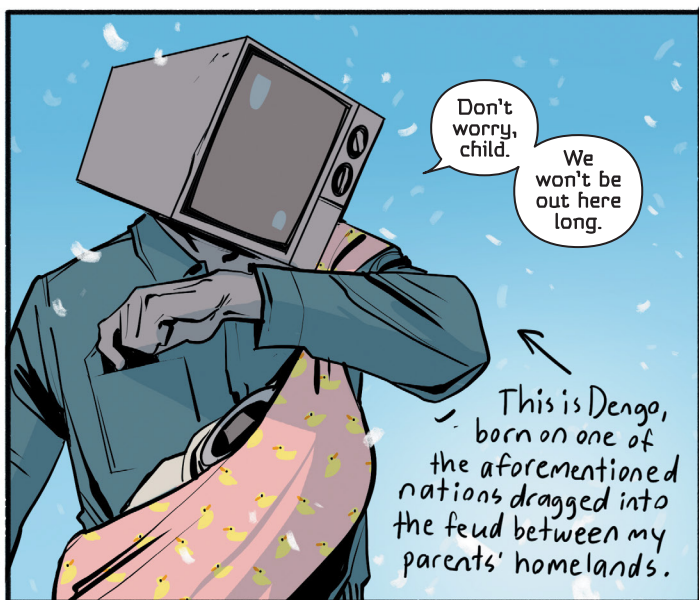
Everyone still supported the troops, of course, but in a more... abstract way than times past.



For most folks back on Landfall, war was something that would never directly impact their lives.

Lucky them.



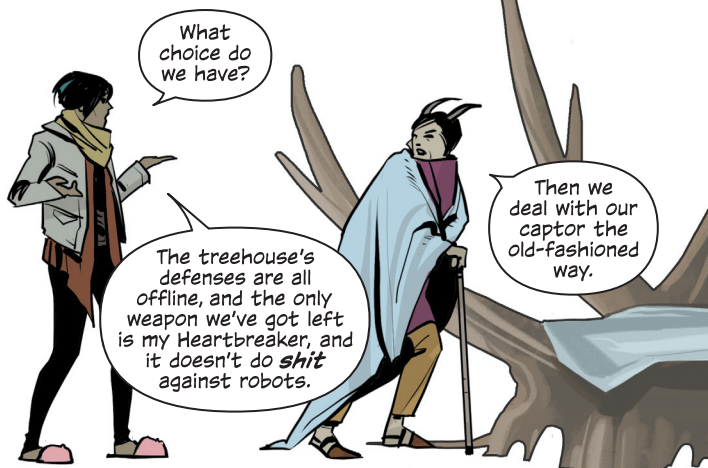






Alana, we are **soldiers**, not fucking damsels in distress.

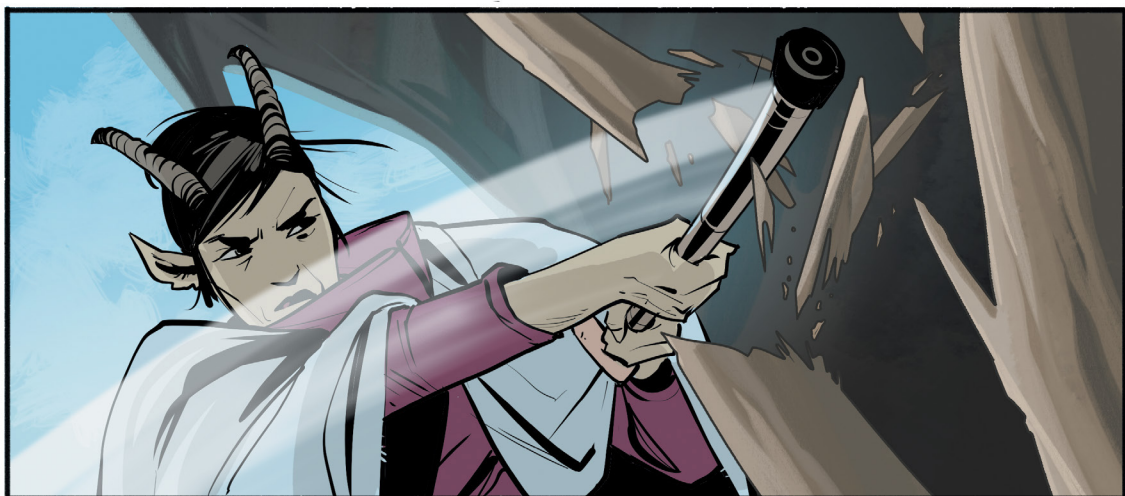
I'm done waiting for my son or anyone else to rescue us.



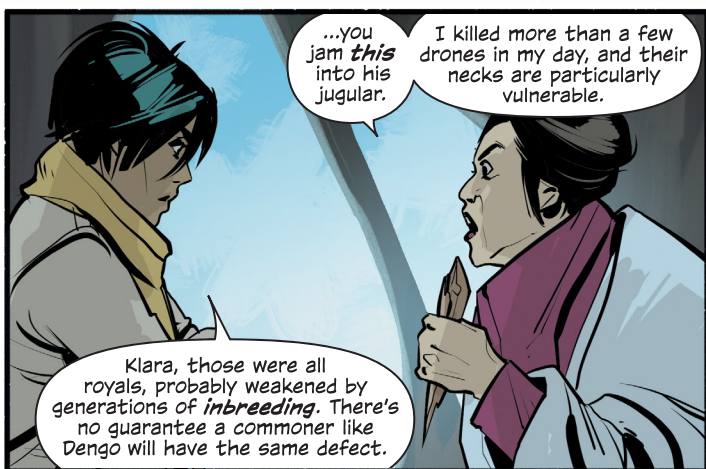
What choice do we have?

The treehouse's defenses are all offline, and the only weapon we've got left is my Heartbreaker, and it doesn't do **shit** against robots.

Then we deal with our captor the old-fashioned way.



The next time that lunatic opens our door...



...you jam **this** into his jugular.

I killed more than a few drones in my day, and their necks are particularly vulnerable.

Klara, those were all royals, probably weakened by generations of **inbreeding**. There's no guarantee a commoner like Dengo will have the same defect.



Besides, he never lets Hazel out of his sight.

If I make your play and fail, he'll **definitely** kill her.



So that's it then?

We just continue to cower in here, milking your beast for sustenance until that asshole decides to reveal our fate?

MURRR



I don't know.

I... I...



HUUH



Good lord, are you --

Fine.

It's... just the stress.



Bullshit. You're obviously still in *withdrawal* from that poison those degenerates hooked you on.

They weren't degenerates, they were actors.

And I was one, too.

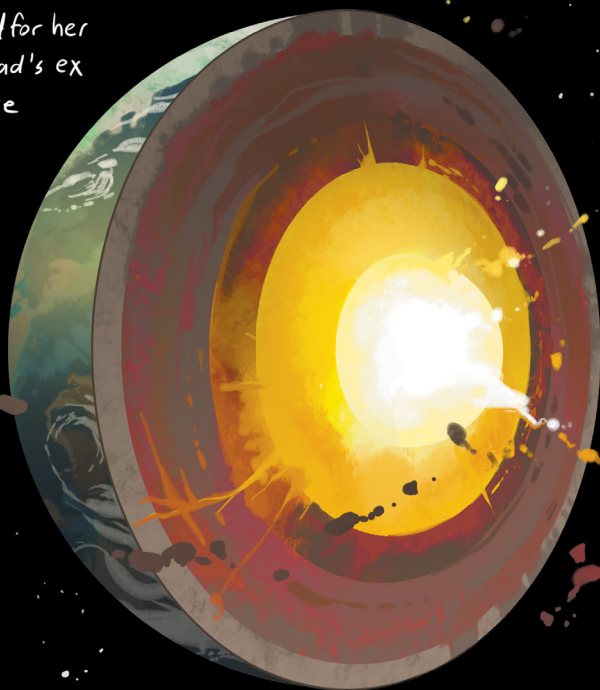


So maybe it's time to act.

While Mom prepared for her next big role, my Dad's ex explored the remote planet of

DEMONONDE

in search of a cure for a no-good contract killer named The Will.



Spoiler alert: she and her pals eventually find what they're looking for... but at a much higher cost than they'd expected.

Seriously, can't we just **buy** a bottle of dragon spunk somewhere?

Sure, 'cause life is always that simple.

LY!

Oh, hush.

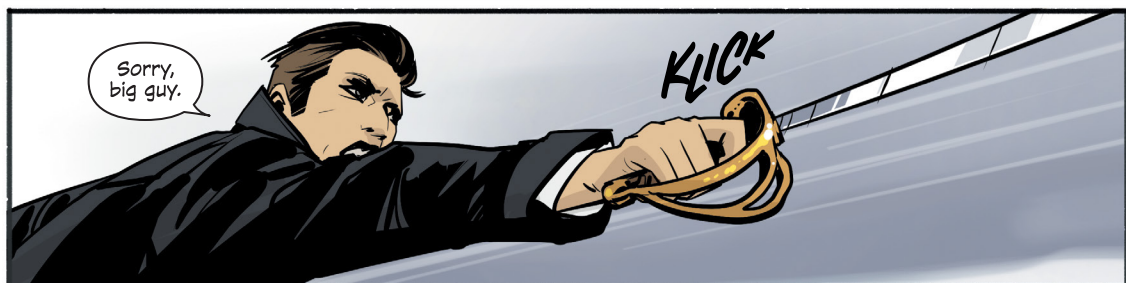


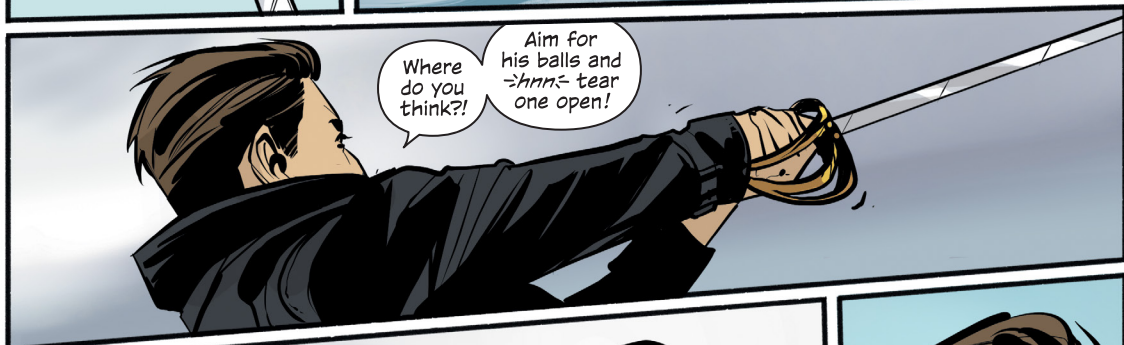
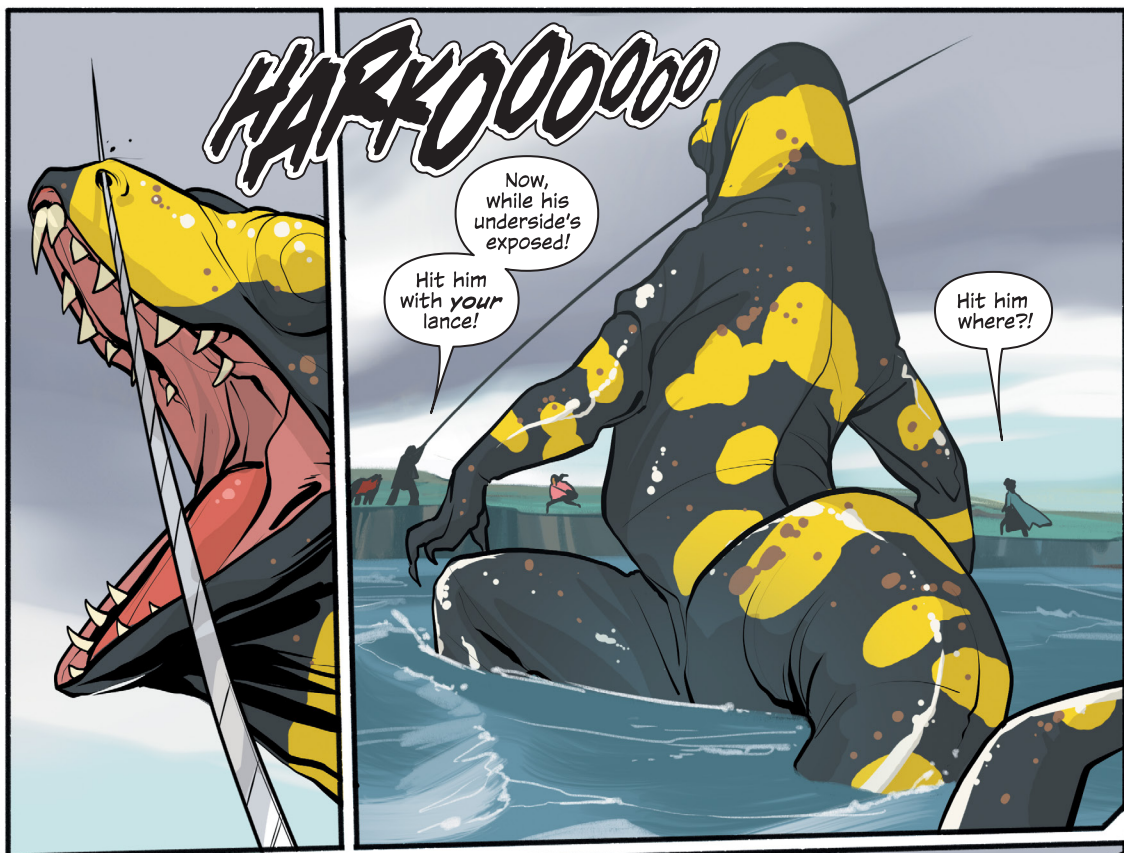
Look, I've got nothing but enemies on this dome, so I want to move on as bad as you, but it's gonna take time.

The locals have nearly hunted this species to extinction, so --

WHURF
WHURF





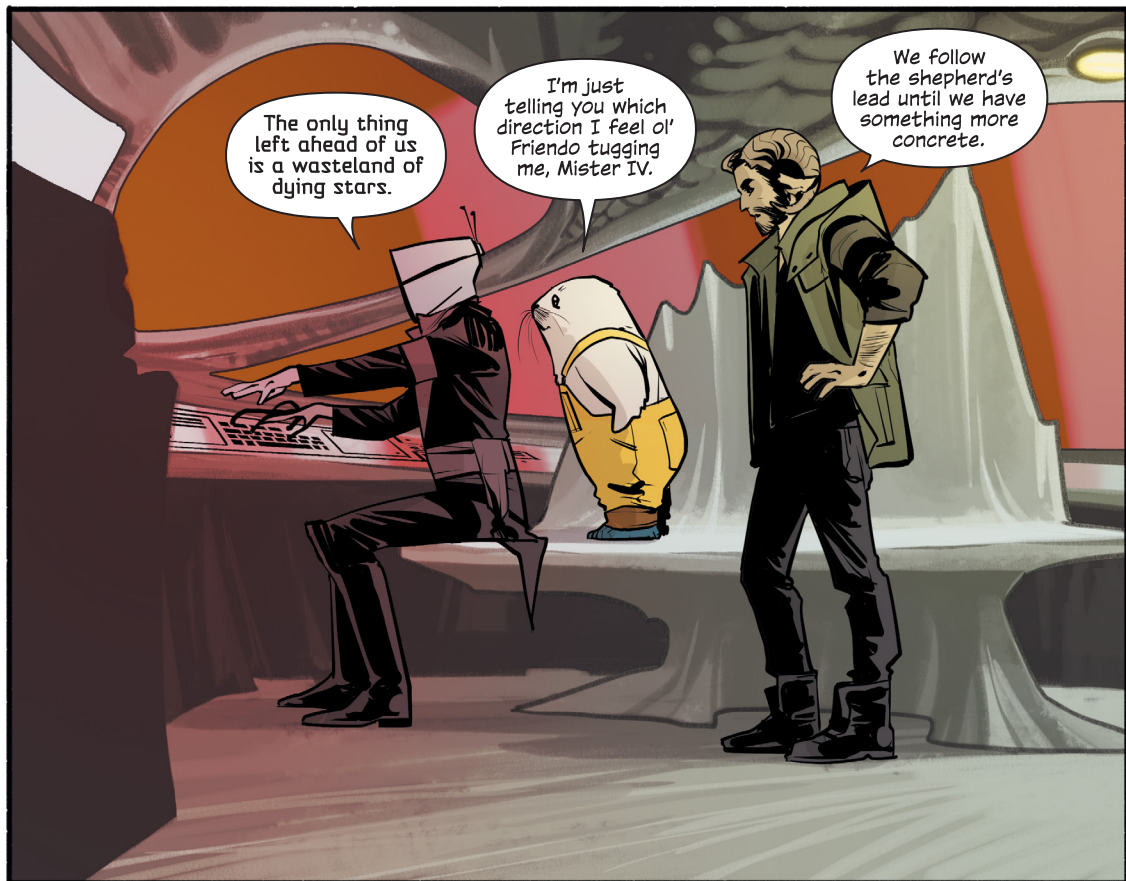








This can't be right.



The only thing left ahead of us is a wasteland of dying stars.

I'm just telling you which direction I feel ol' Friendo tugging me, Mister IV.

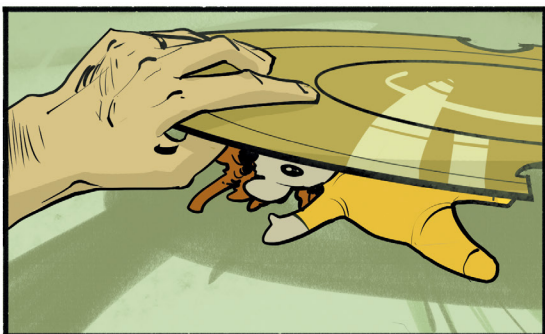
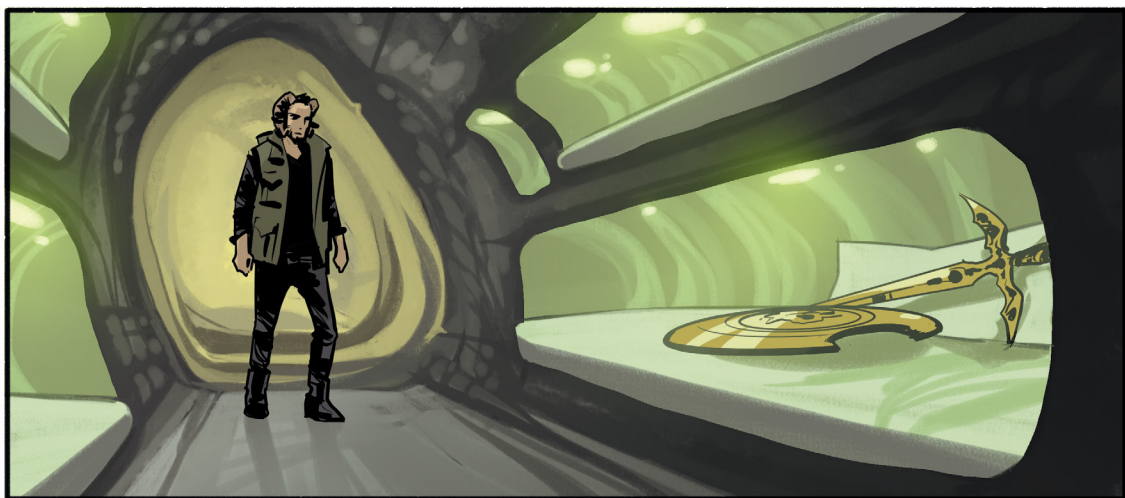
We follow the shepherd's lead until we have something more concrete.

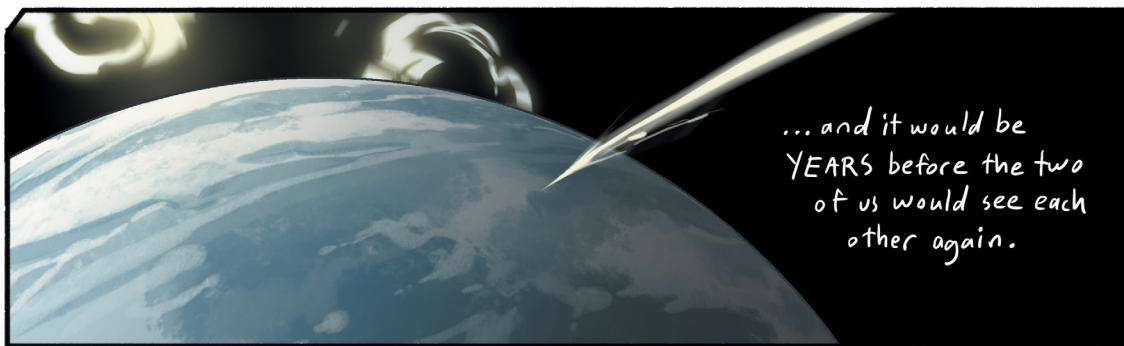


Ghüs, kindly remind the horned animal back there that he is forbidden from addressing me directly.

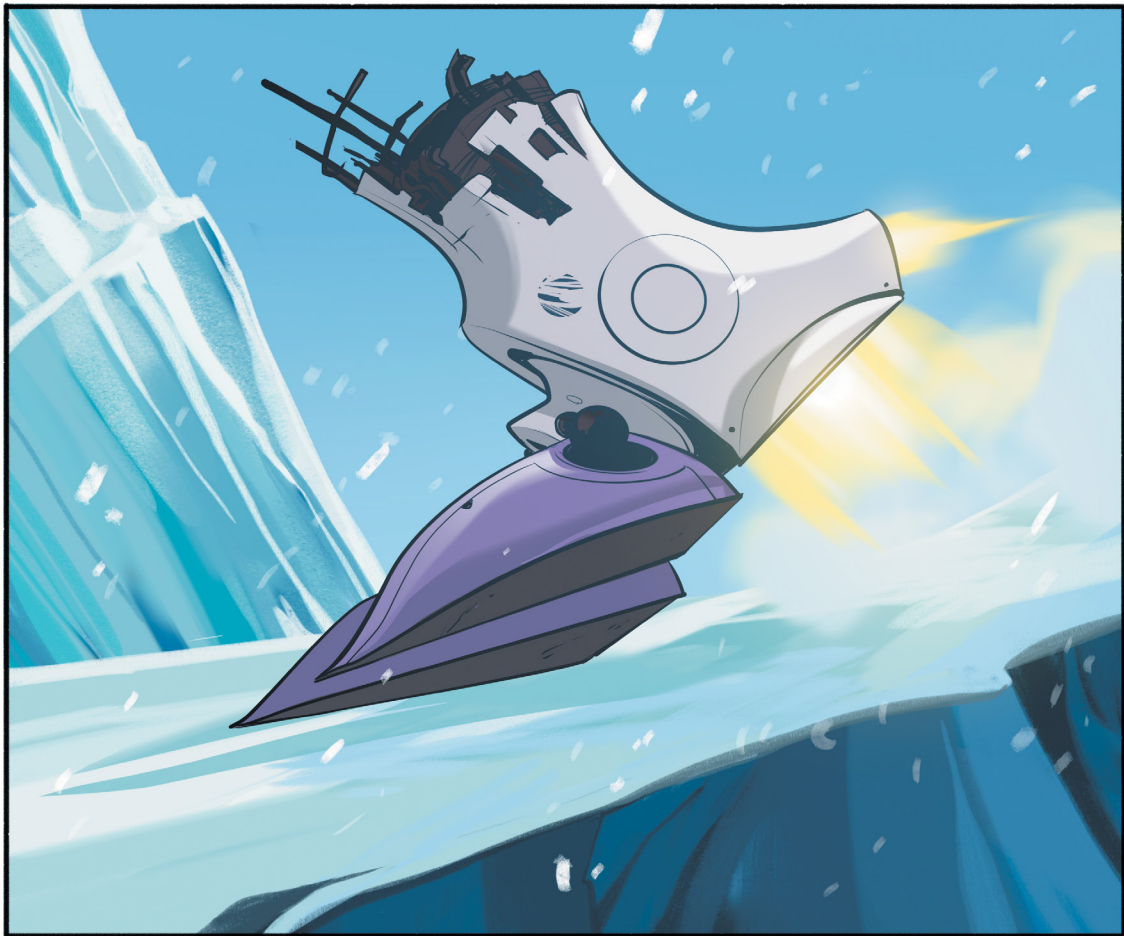








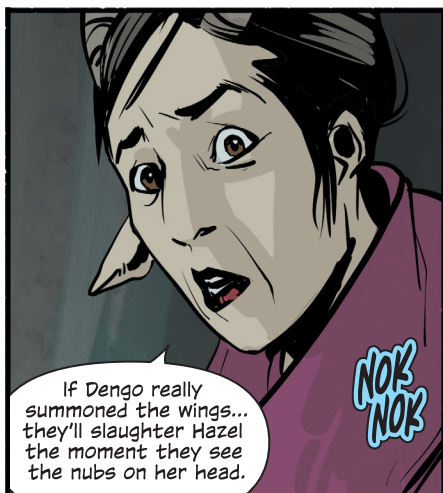
...and it would be
YEARS before the two
of us would see each
other again.



What *is*
that?

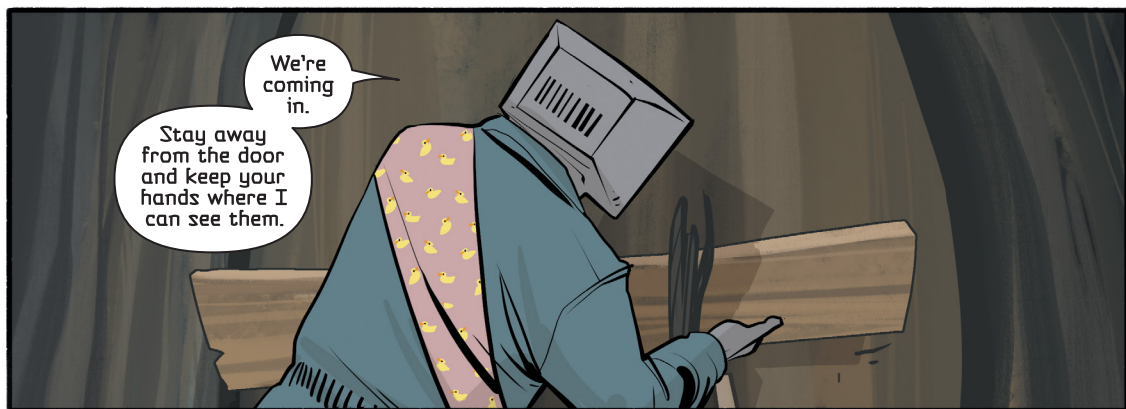
Looks like the hoof of
an old *Astronomical*.

But Landfall
decommissioned
those things
years ago.



If Dengo really
summoned the wings...
they'll slaughter Hazel
the moment they see
the nubs on her head.

NOK
NOK



I called the
Revolution.

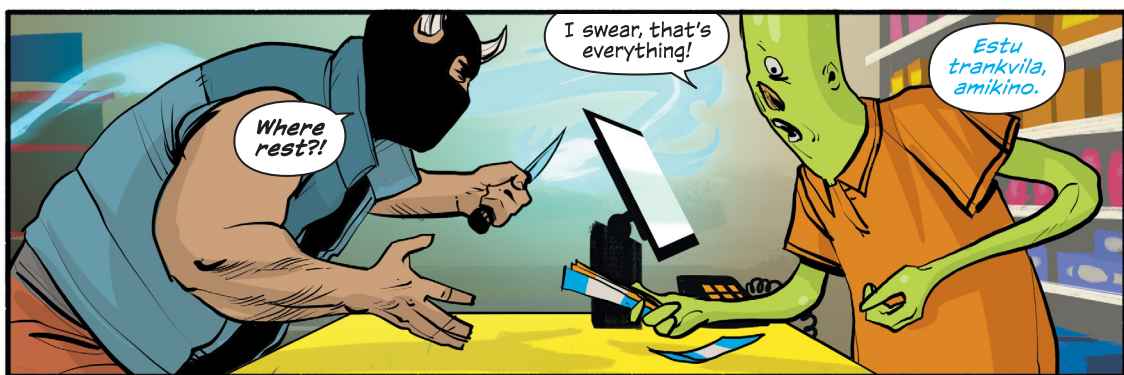


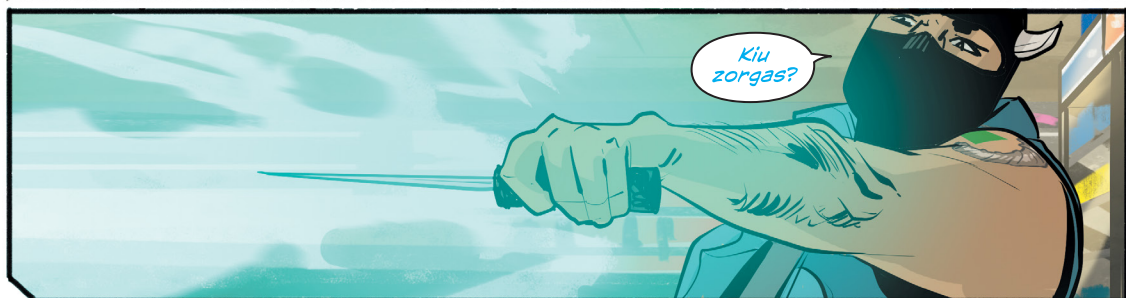
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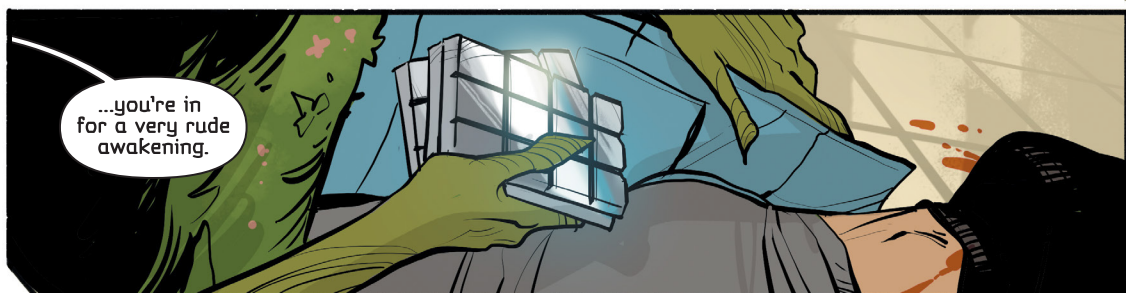
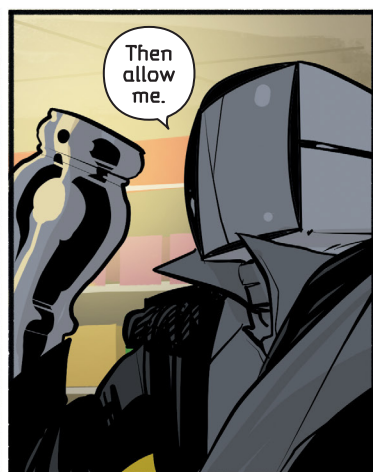
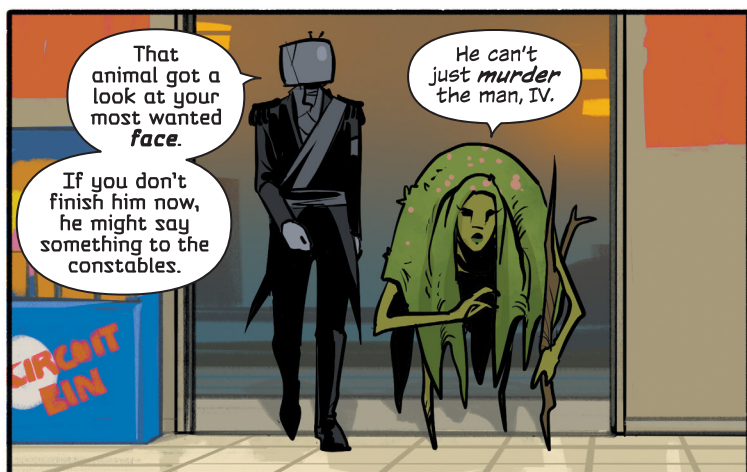
CHAPTER
TWENTY-SIX





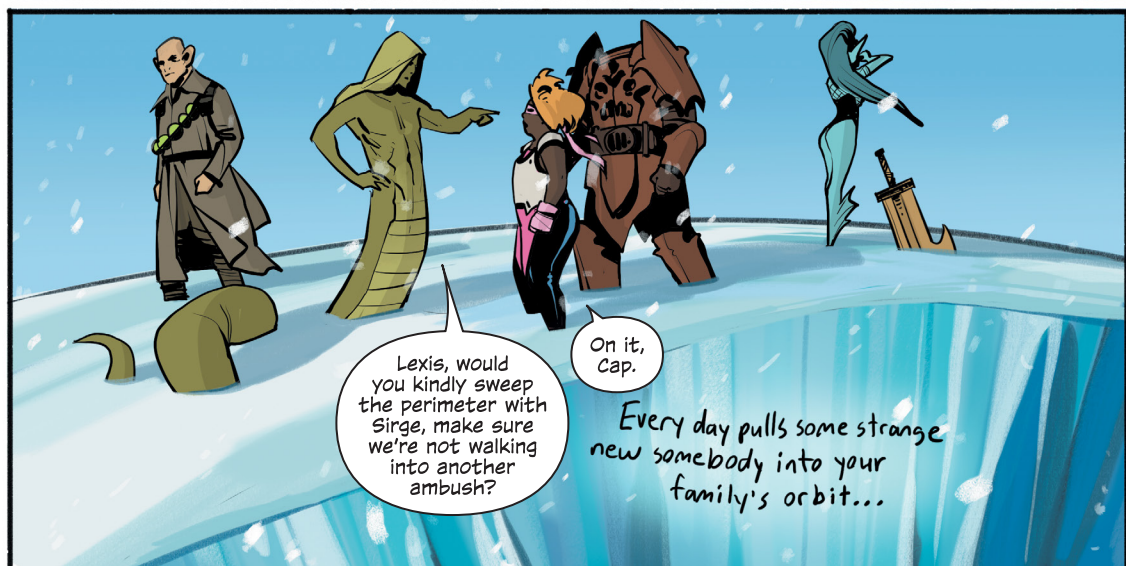








Mom always said that having a kid means a rapid expansion of your social circle, whether you like it or not.



Lexis, would you kindly sweep the perimeter with Sirge, make sure we're not walking into another ambush?

On it, Cap.

Every day pulls some strange new somebody into your family's orbit...



... and you just hope they end up doing more good than bad.

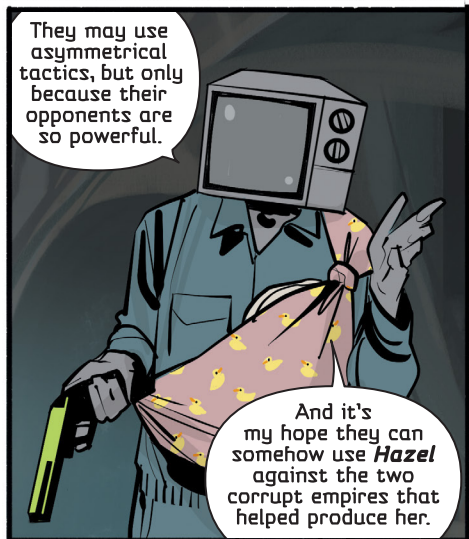
Now we won't be lonely!

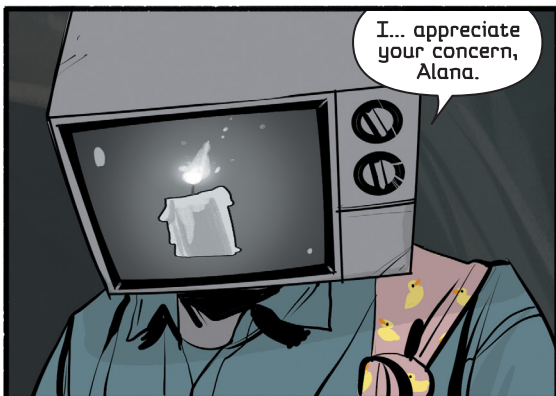
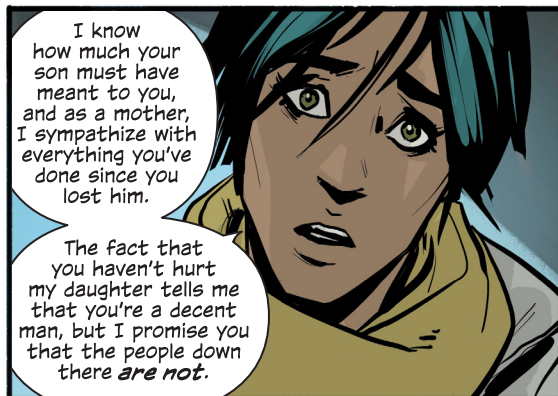
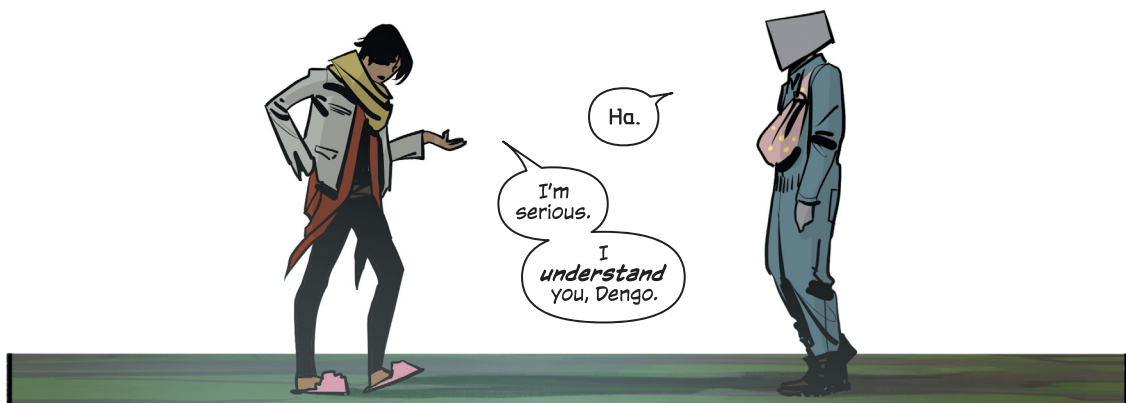


You brought **terrorists** to our doorstep?

The Last Revolution **aren't** terrorists.

They're resistance fighters dedicated to ending your war, which has brought nothing but misery to planets like mine.







Sounds like a
nightmare, right?

Will someone...
please... *do*
something?



This is
an extremely
shitty place
to die!



What do you want me to do, Brand?!

I can't cast lightning at this thing without frying us!



Then use ~~my~~ my brother's belt!

He used to keep ~~my~~ **gunpowder** in one of the pouches!



There's nothing in here but condoms and old receipts!

The rest of you, just save yourselves!



Negative, ma'am!

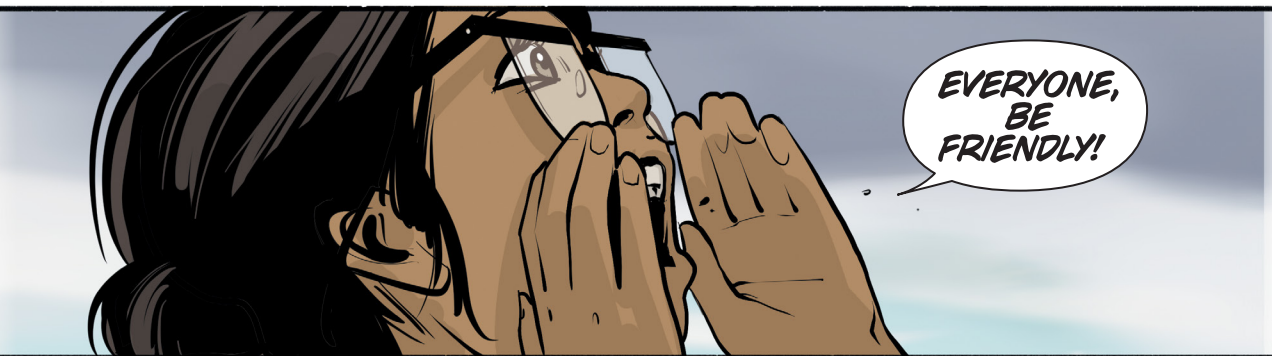
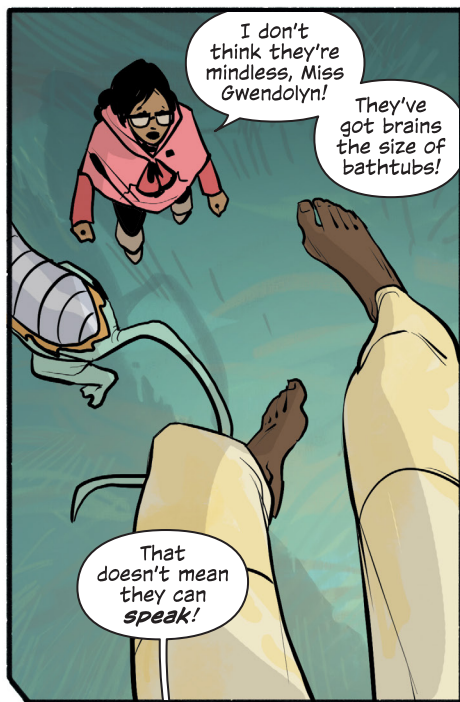
I've got an idea!



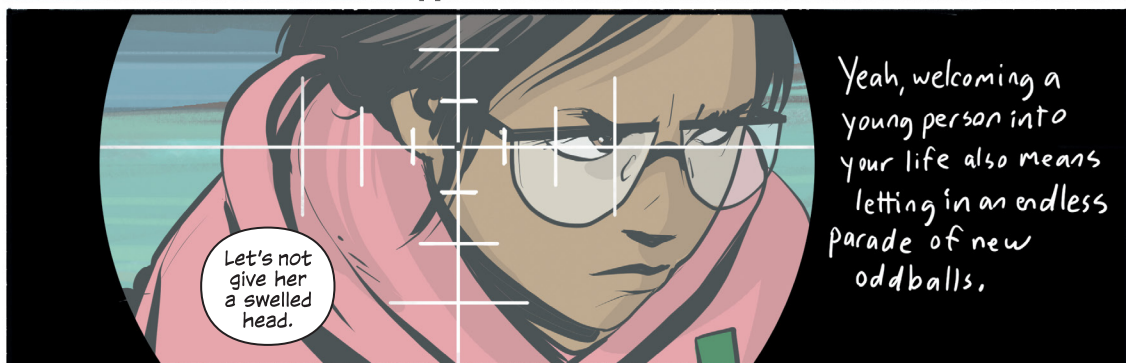
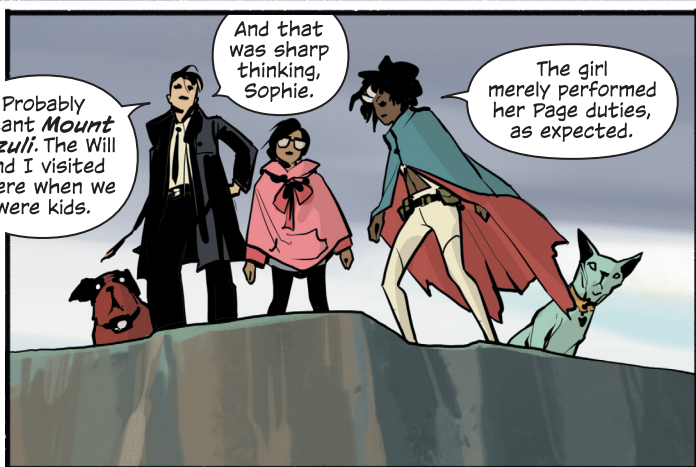
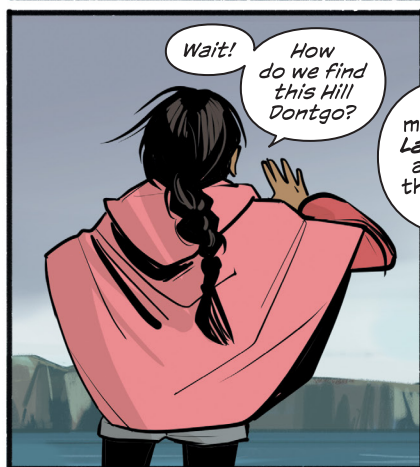
Your translation pendant!

Try **pairing** it with one of these dragons!

That's not how this works! I can understand other languages, not mindless beasts!













Don't hurt me!

Where the hell did you get more drugs?!



From, from the thief you stopped.

Why would a veteran of the Wreath army be carrying Fadeaway?

Because he's a **veteran**? Honestly, you're probably one of the only vets who's **not** using.



Is that the line you used to push that garbage on Alana?

I swear, I never pushed that girl to do anything.

She leapt with open arms.

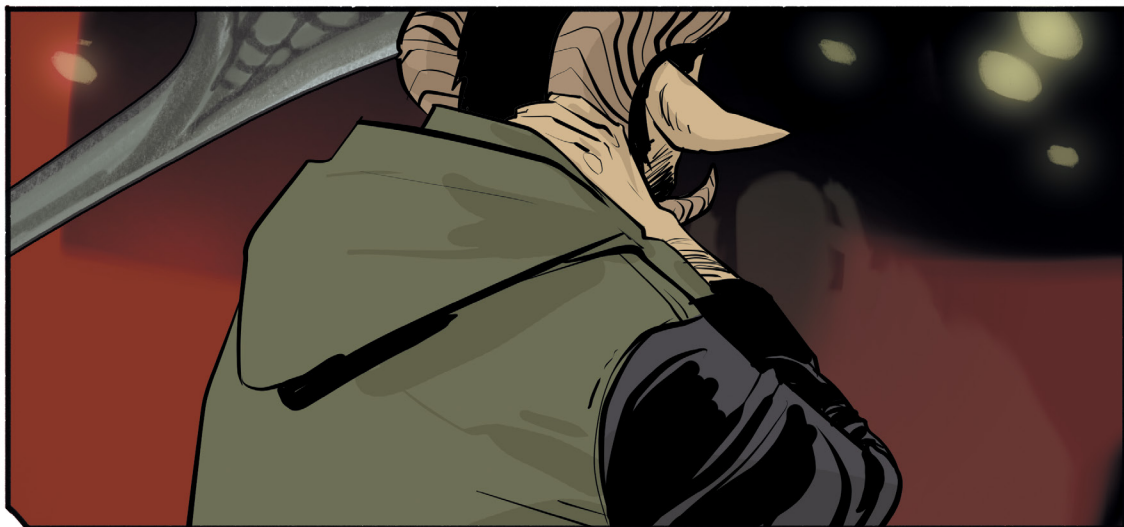


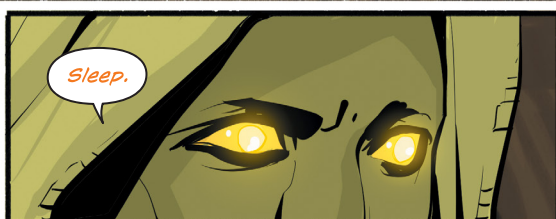
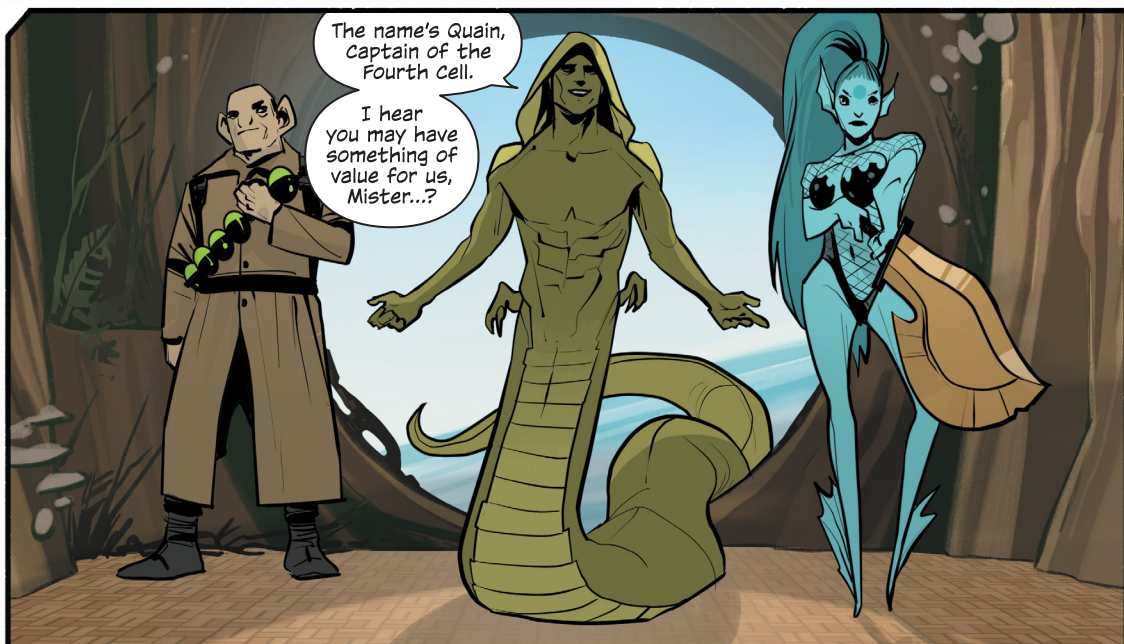
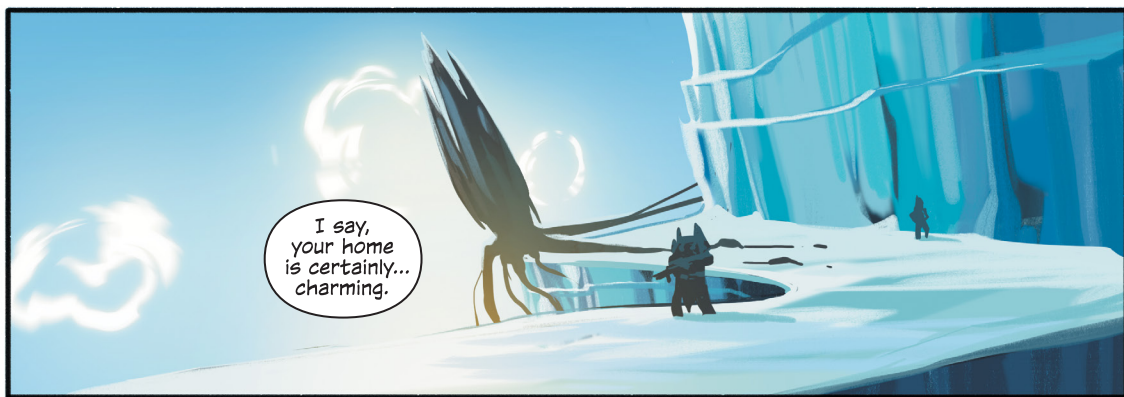
Why?

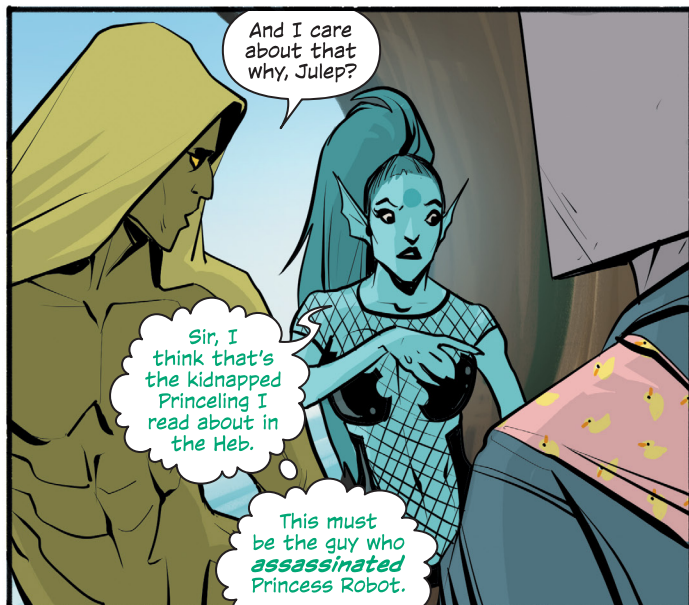
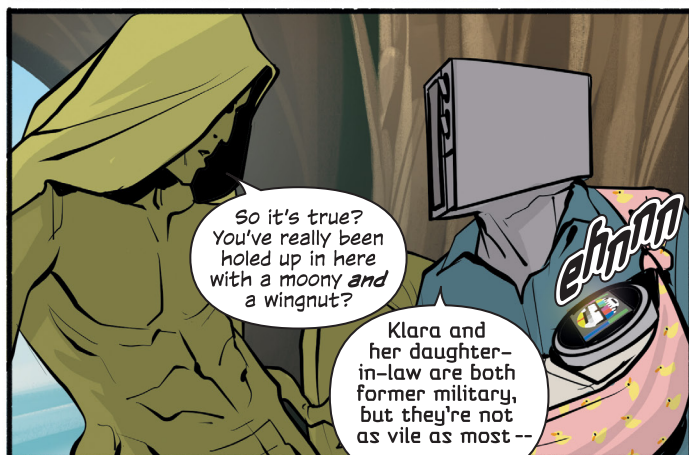
What is it that she wanted to feel so badly...?

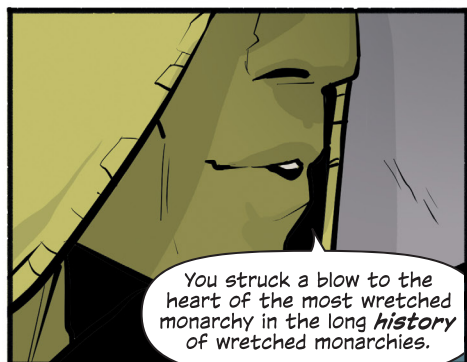
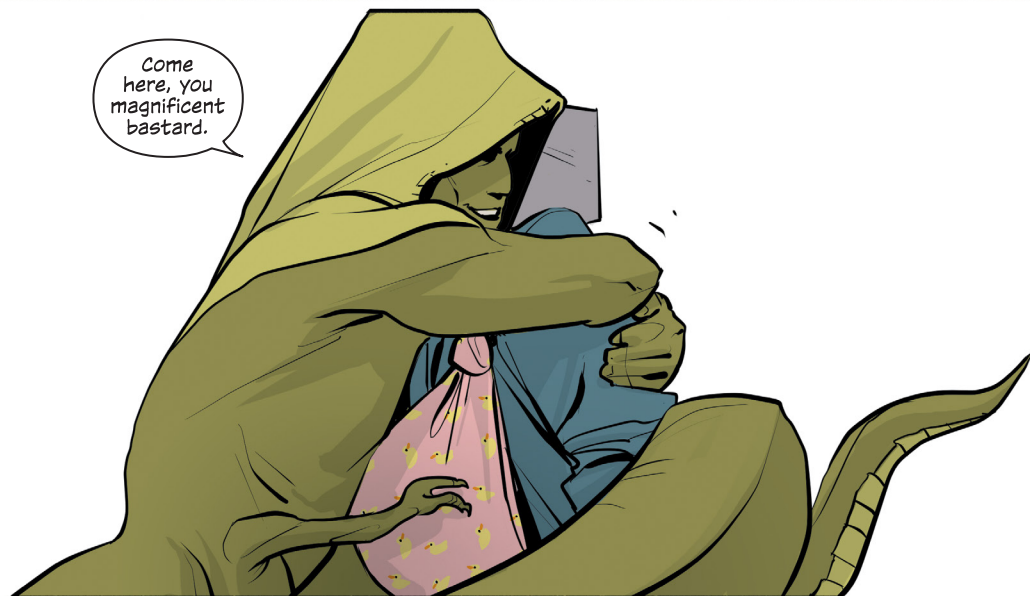


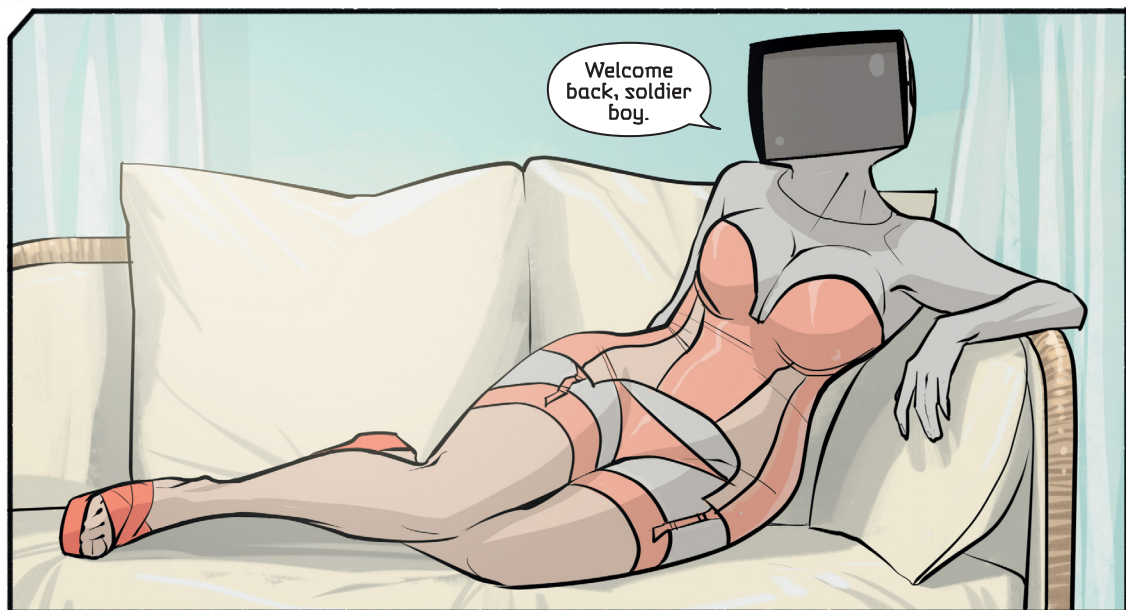
Peace.













Bigger
fucking
all.

end chapter twenty-six



CHAPTER

TWENTY-SEVEN



Come
on, pull
my hair.



Spank
that fat
ass.



My love,
I... I
can't.





It was the worst day of my life.

Was... was it on the battlefield?

Because you and I **both** did terrible things while we were soldiers.



No. I mean, yes, obviously, I hurt **countless** people during our time at war, but this was different.

I was seven years old.



Seven?

You were just a kid!

That doesn't excuse what I did.



Growing up, our neighbors had a daughter a bit younger than I.

One day, I caught her in our backyard practicing **fire spells** on my family's dog. She'd badly burned his tail, and he was making these... these terrible yelps of pain.



Watching this person casually hurt another living thing, especially a smaller, defenseless animal...

...something inside of me just **snapped**.





Because this can't be right.

Why, because you hit me with a bag of cans instead of your fist?

You're wrong.



When we had our fight, I... I was angry at you because I was worried about our daughter.

But Hazel isn't even alive yet.



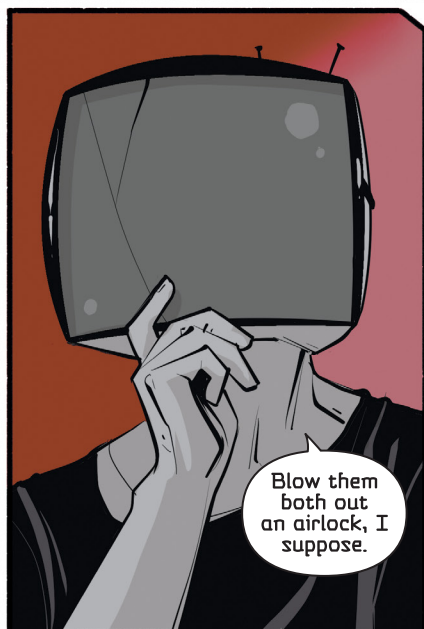
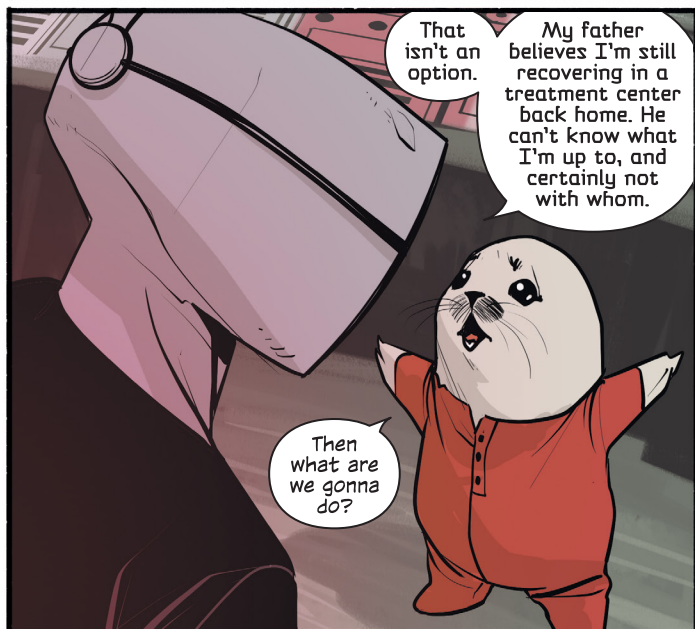
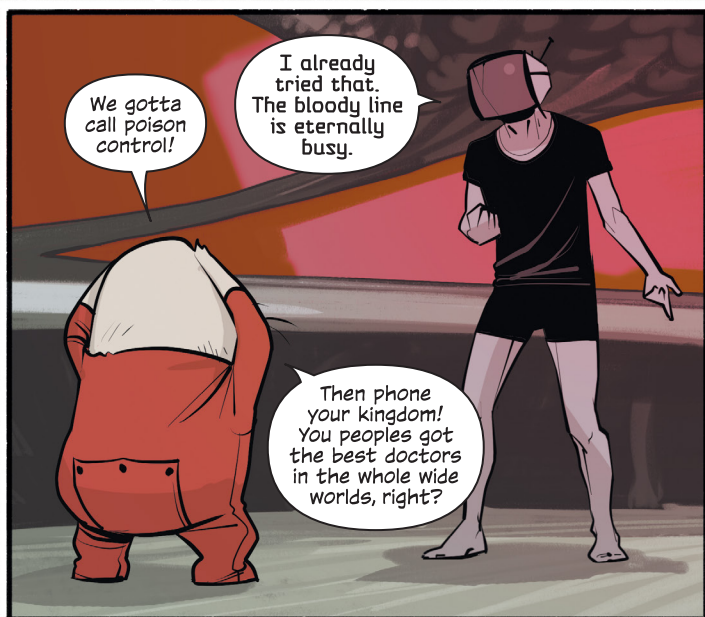
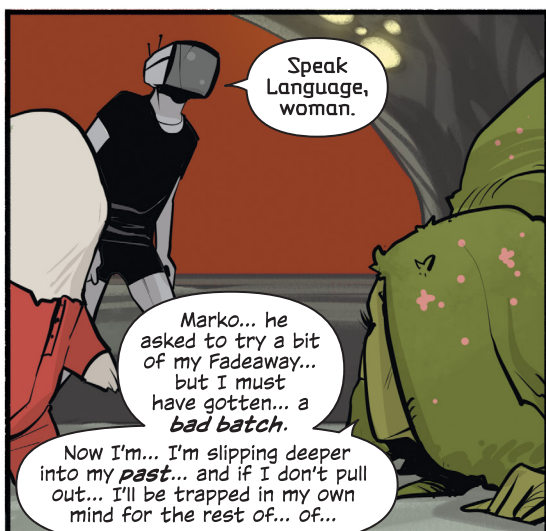
Hell, she probably isn't alive *anymore* either.

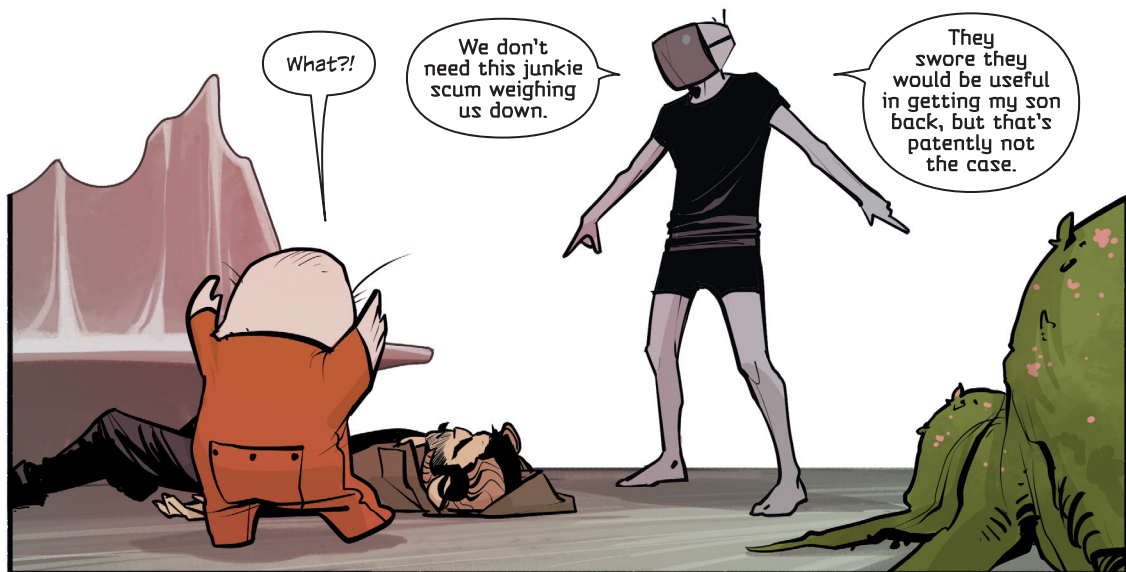
You drove your family away...



...and they're never coming back.

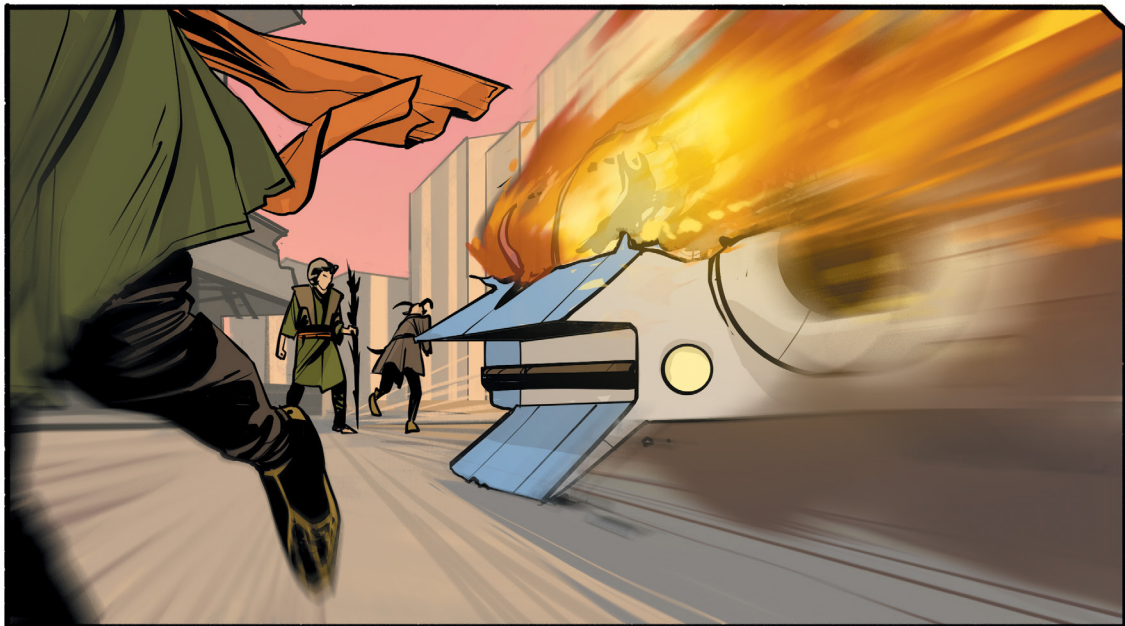








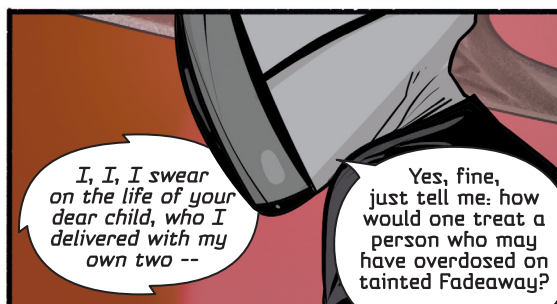
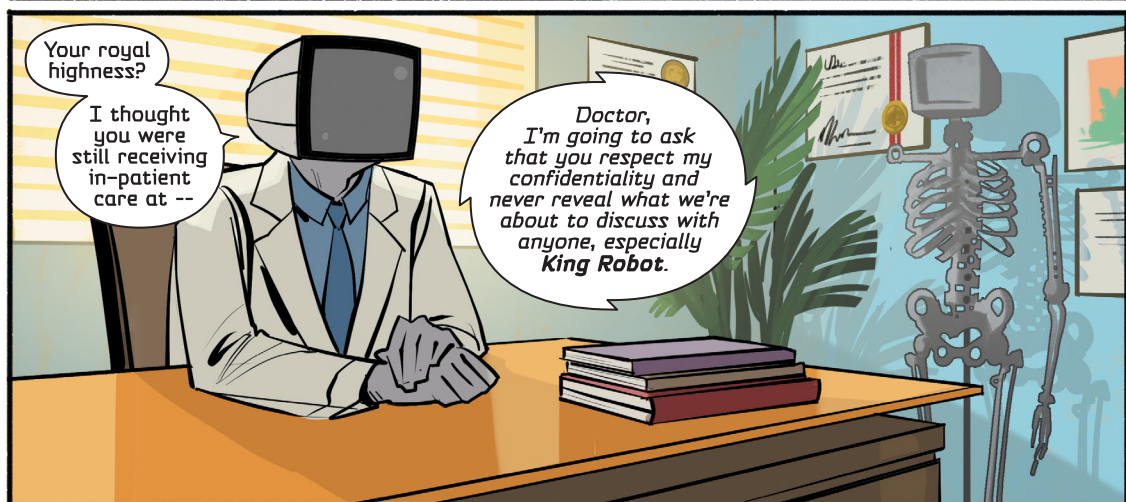






PAPA!

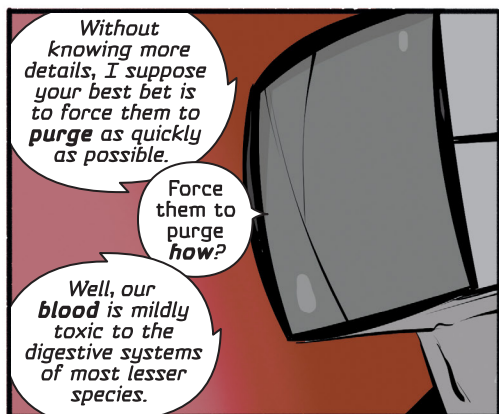
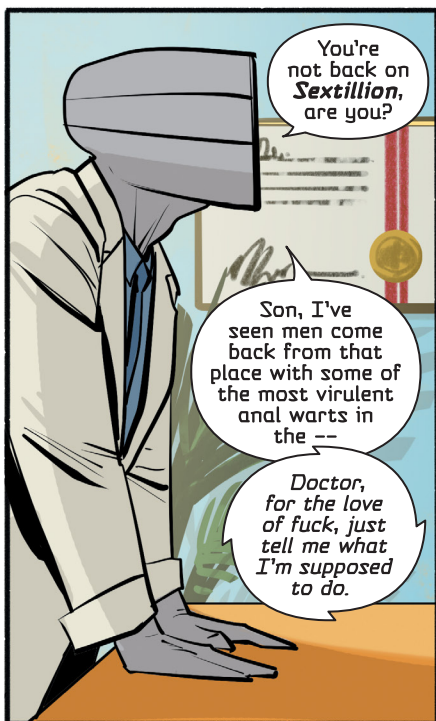


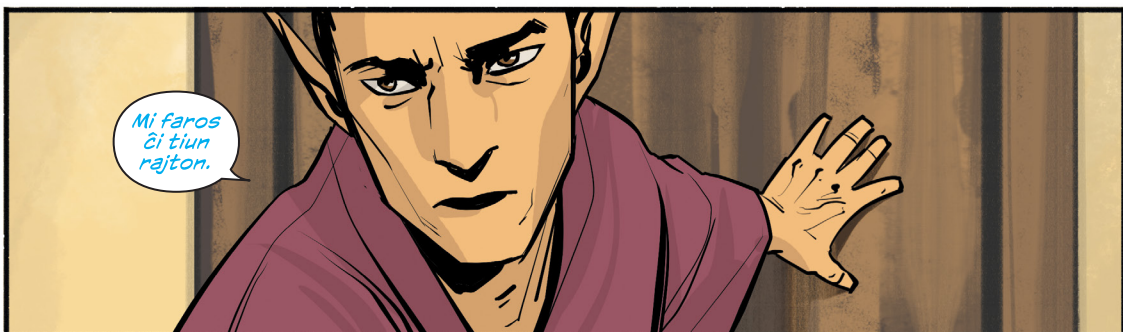
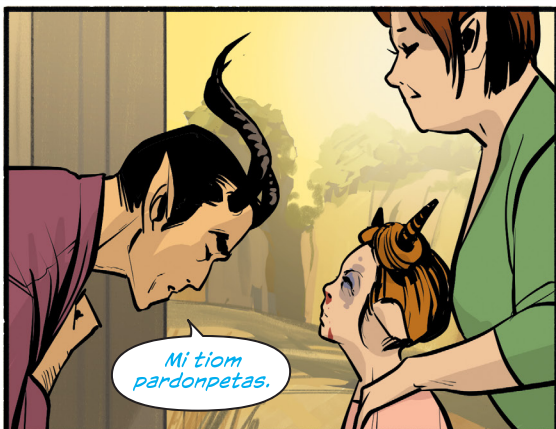
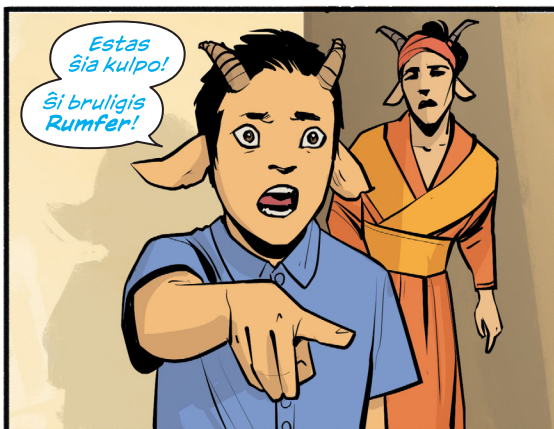
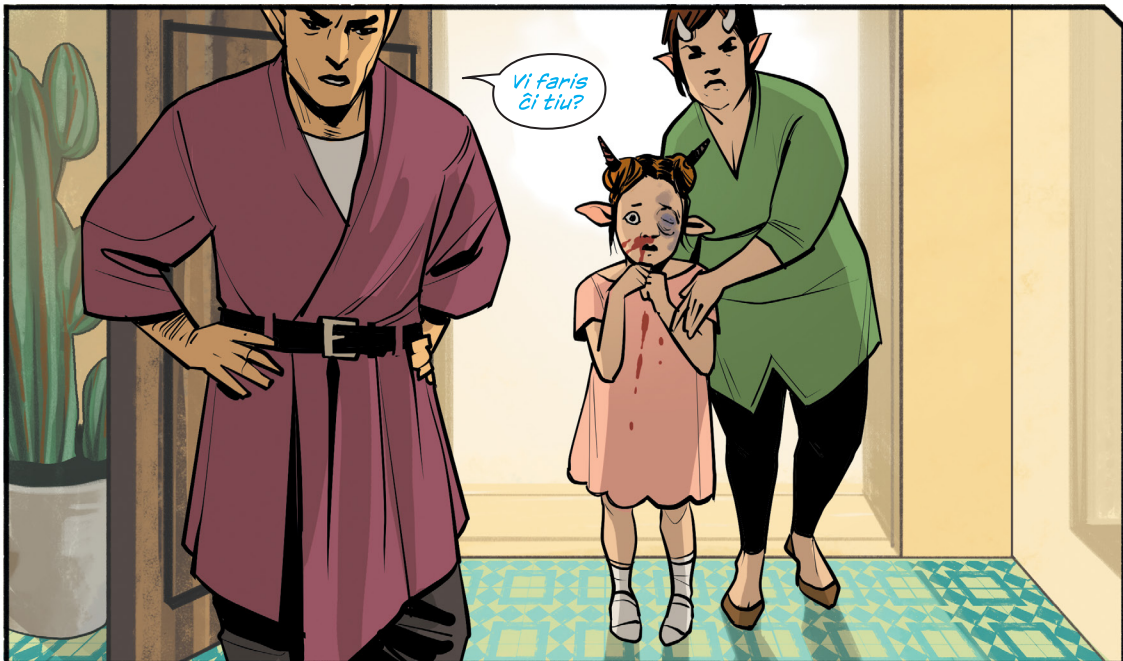


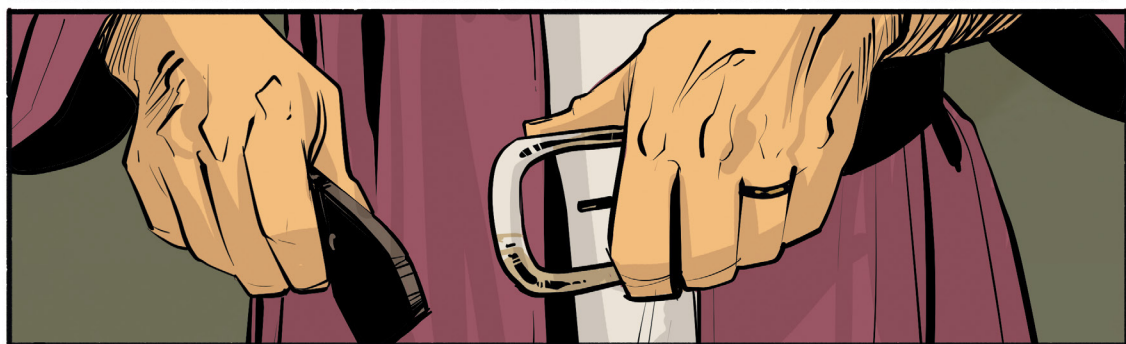
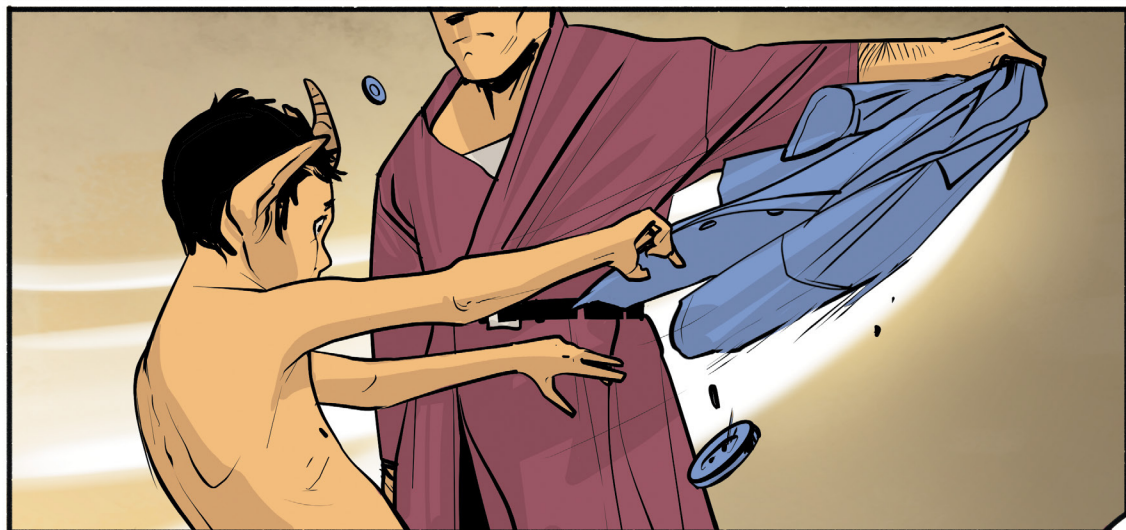
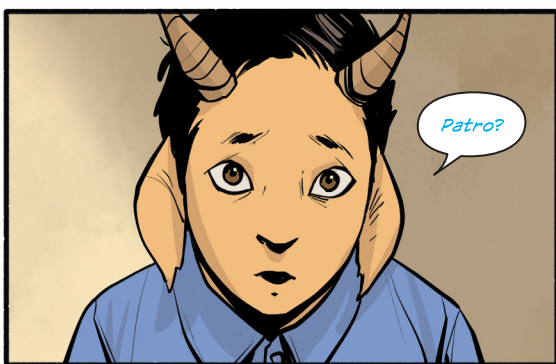
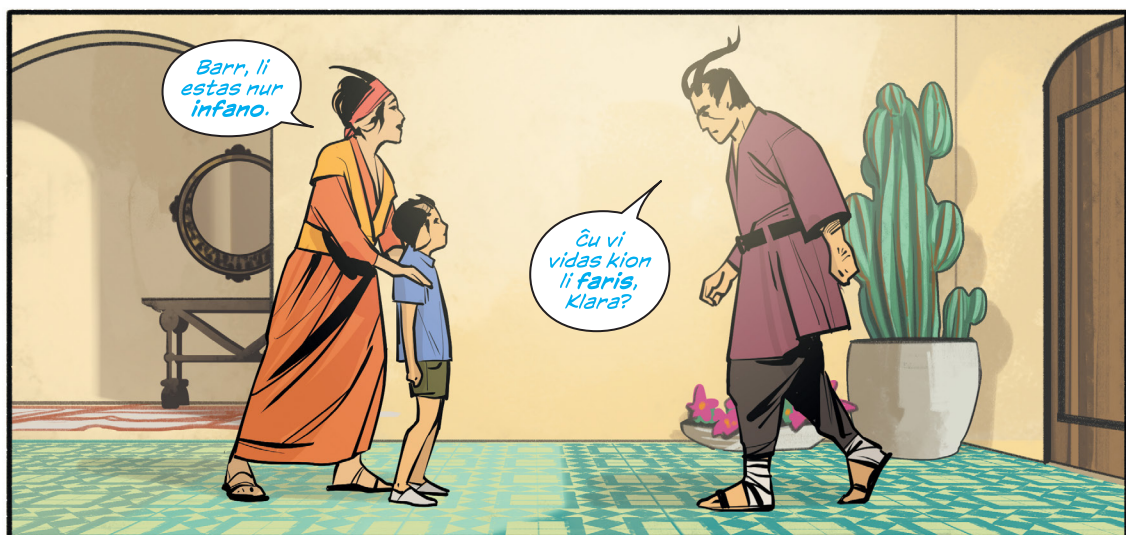


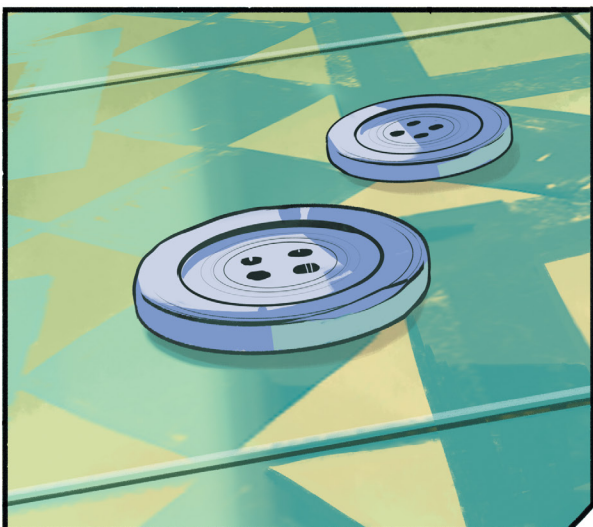
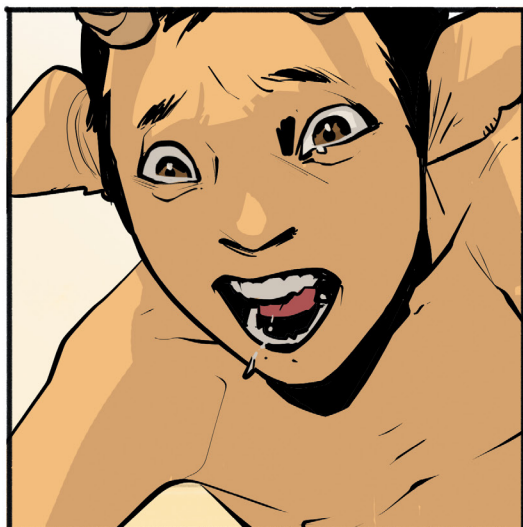
Fellow robots?

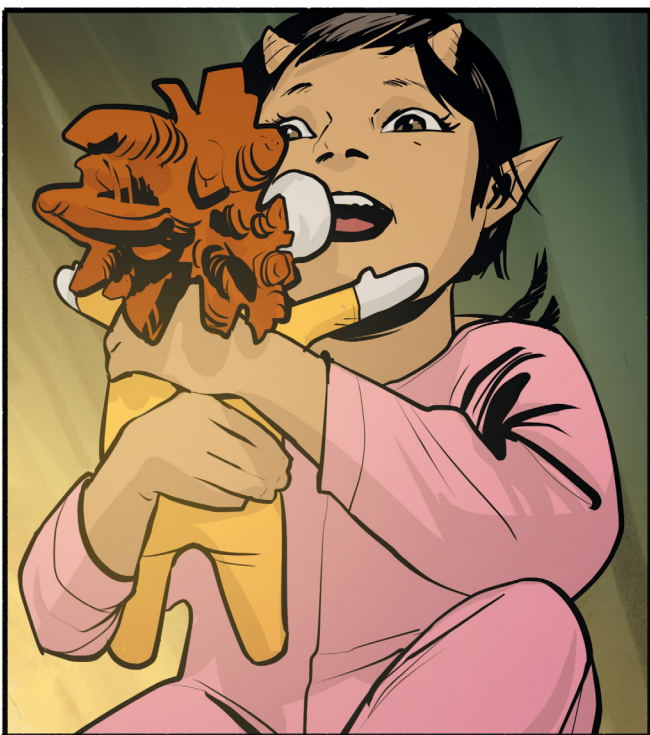
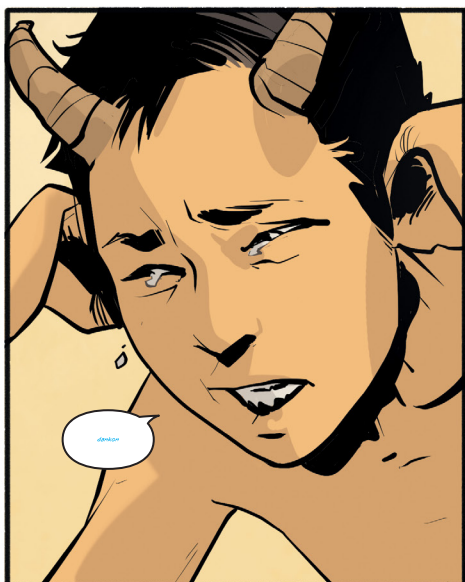
Quite the opposite, I would say.

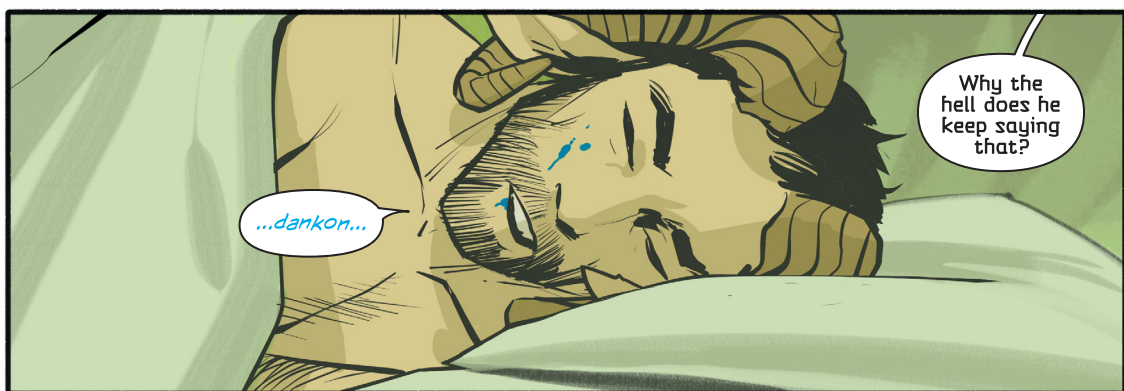


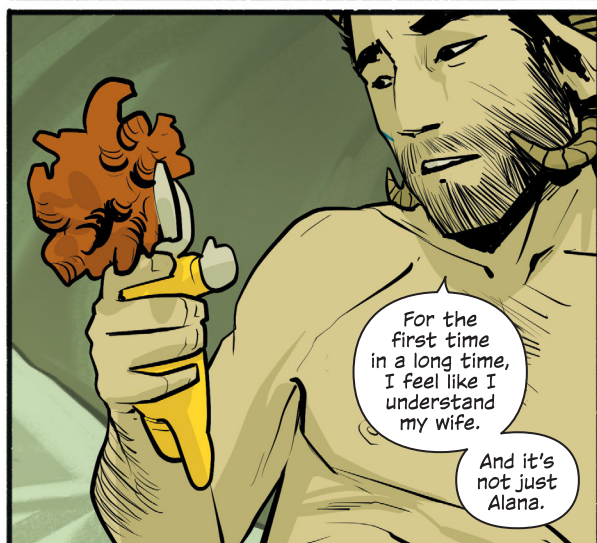














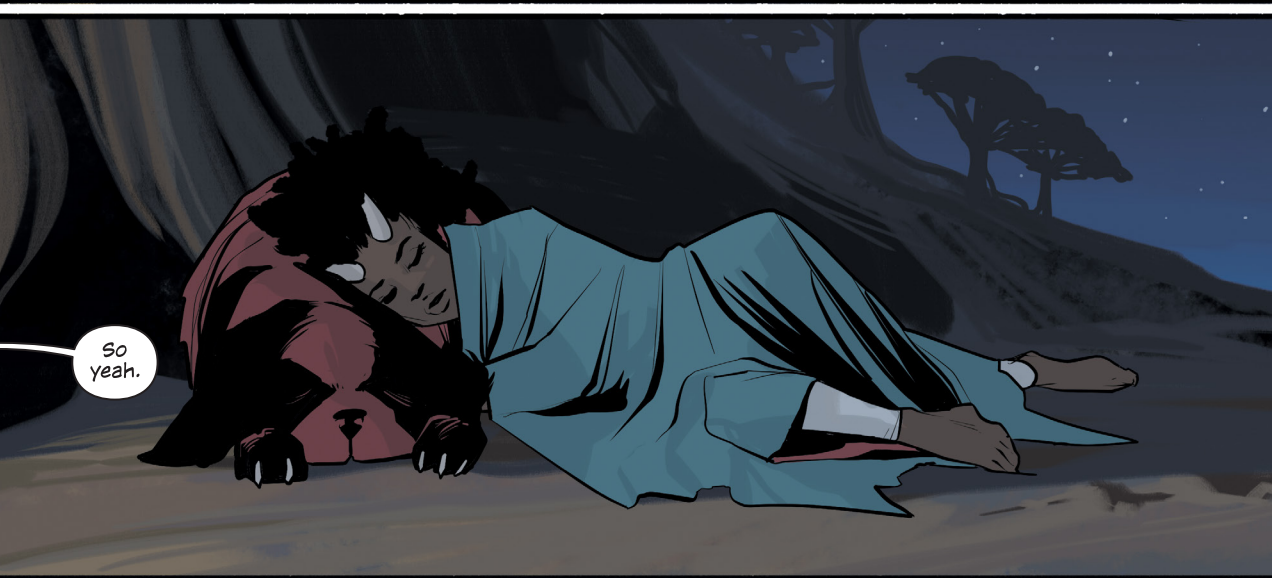
And I'm
going to cut
his fucking
head off.

end chapter twenty-seven

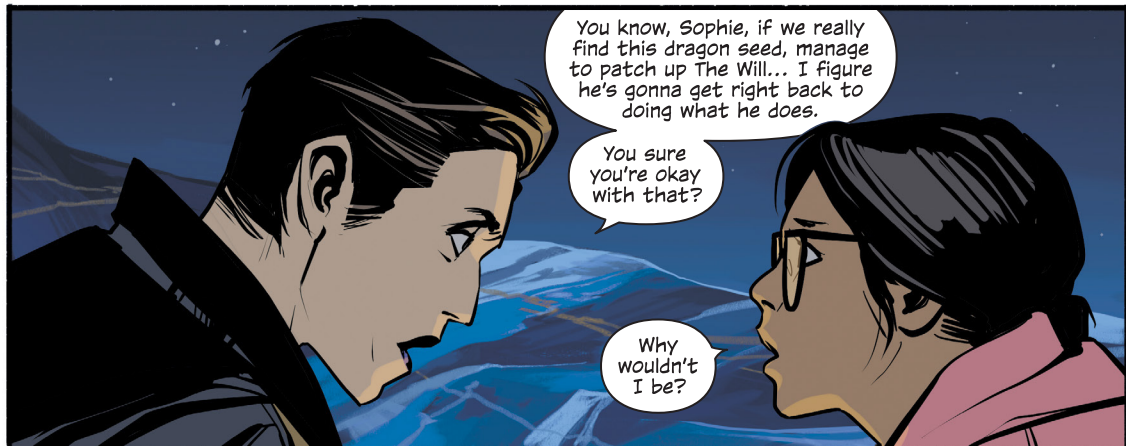
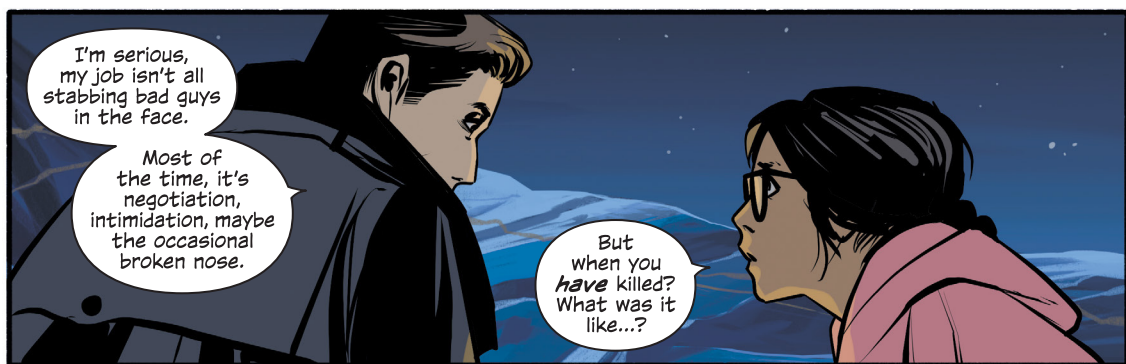


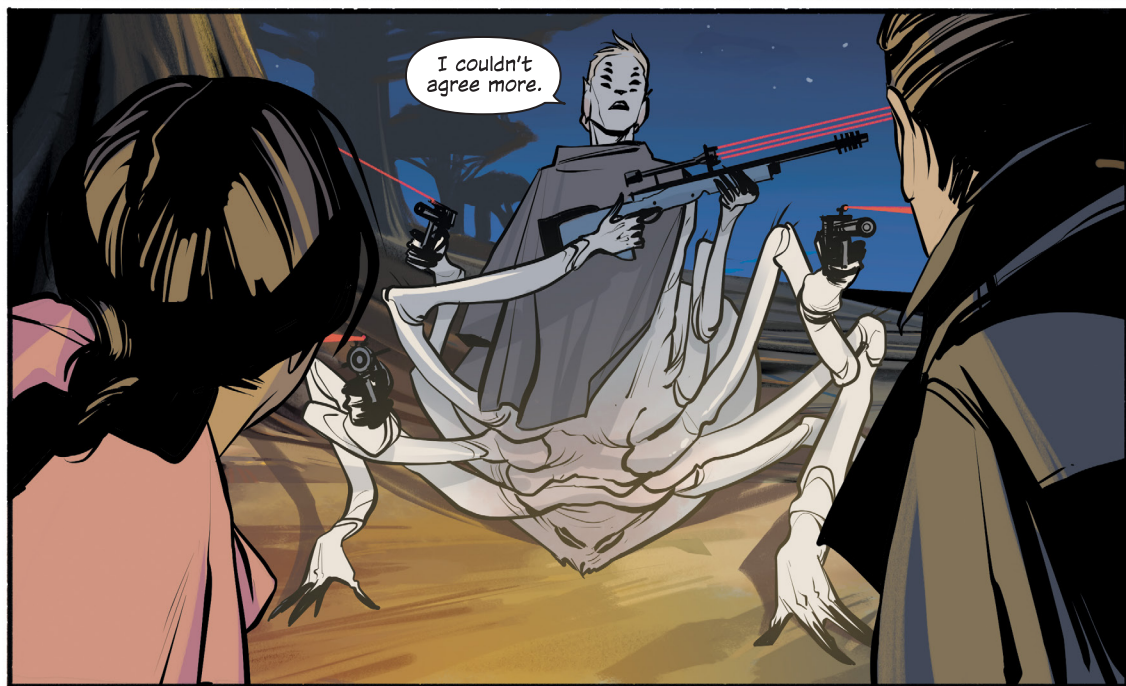
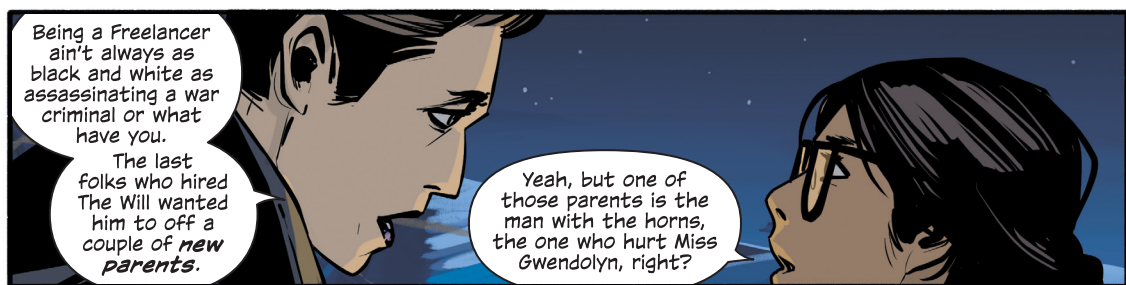
CHAPTER

TWENTY-EIGHT











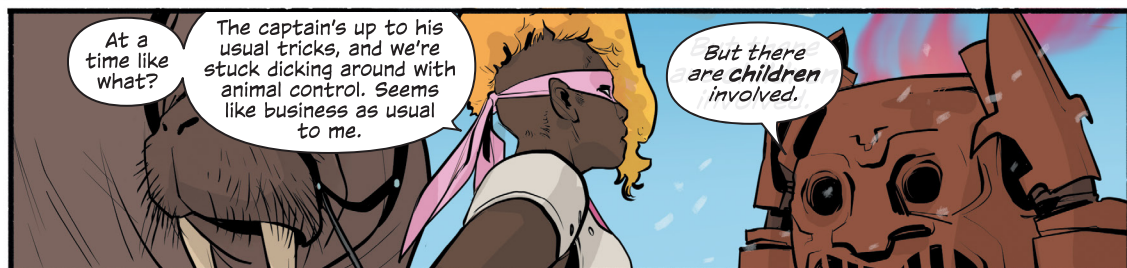
Even when we're not fighting the battles ourselves, we somehow always end up with a lion's share of the suffering.



No picnic for the guys, of course, but still...

Hey, you catch the show last night?

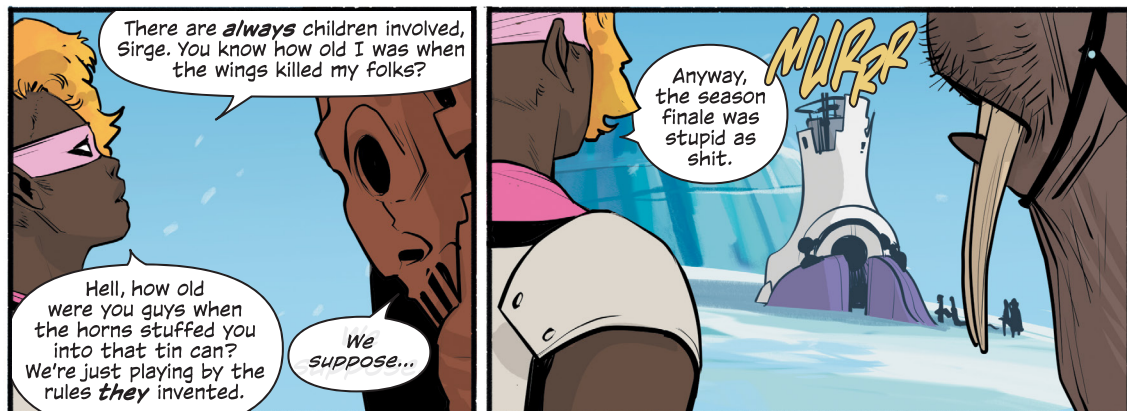
Lexis, how can you be thinking about the fucking Circuit at a time like this?



At a time like what?

The captain's up to his usual tricks, and we're stuck dickin' around with animal control. Seems like business as usual to me.

But there are **children** involved.



There are *always* children involved, Sirge. You know how old I was when the wings killed my folks?

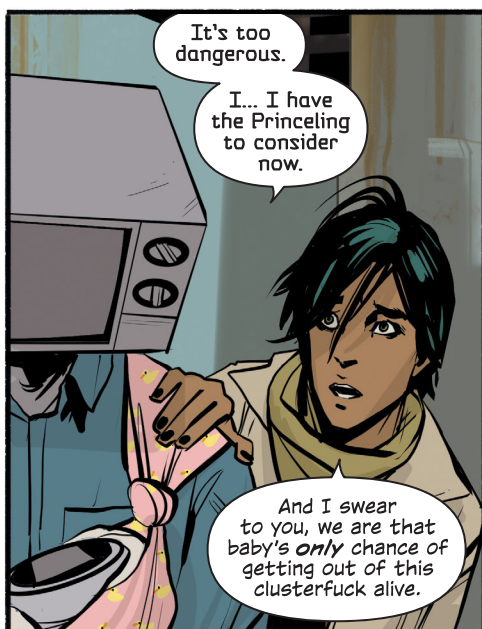
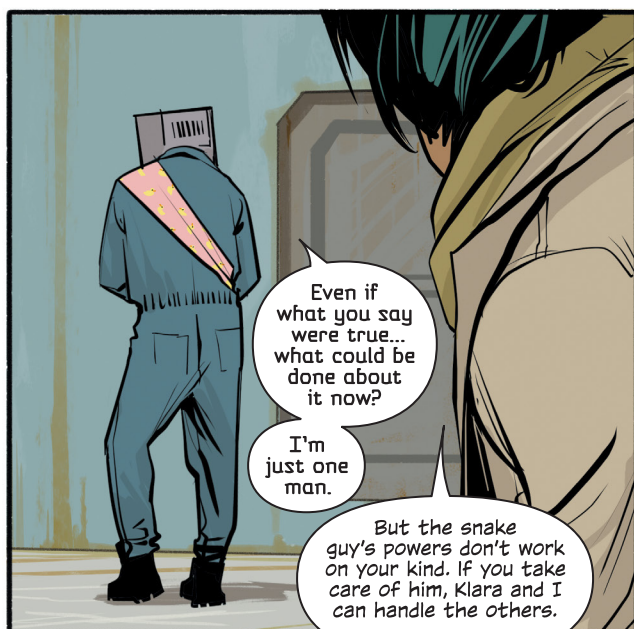
Hell, how old were you guys when the horns stuffed you into that tin can? We're just playing by the rules **they** invented.

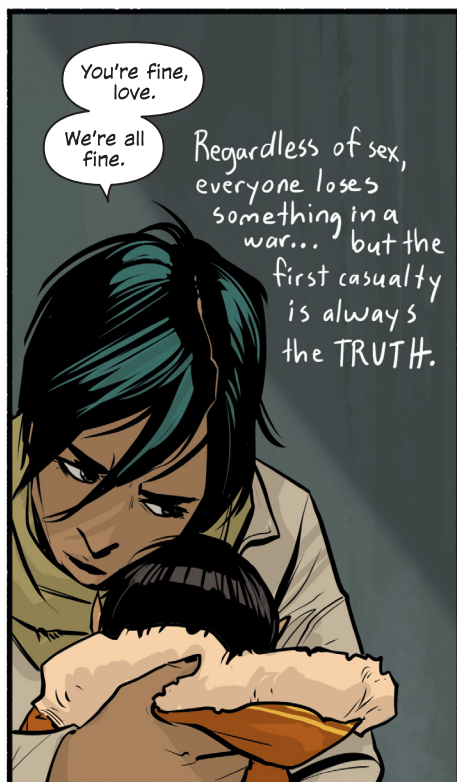
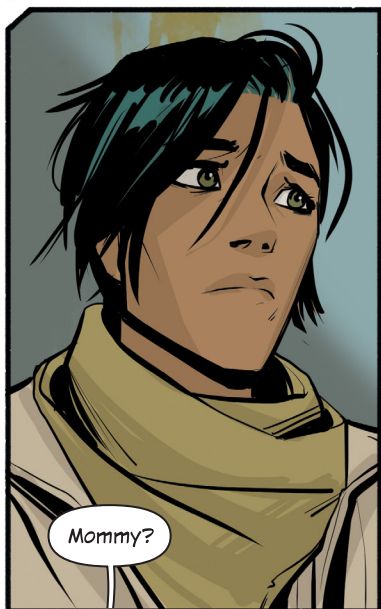
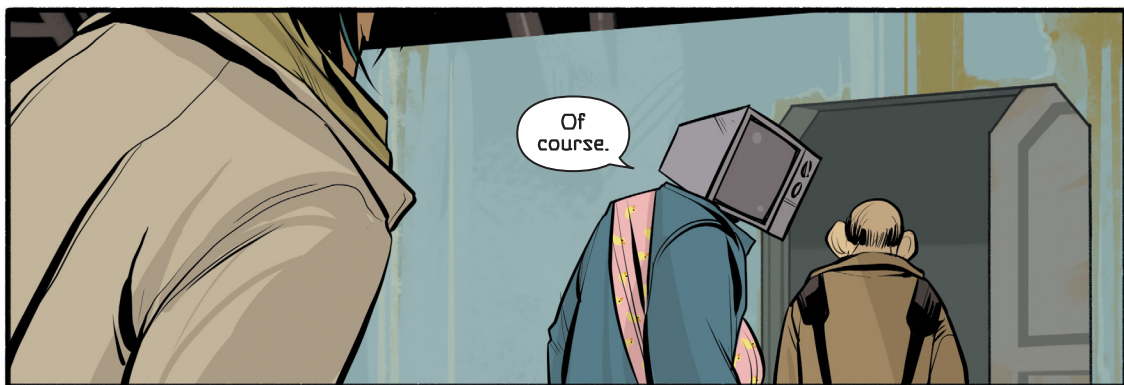
We suppose...

Anyway, the season finale was stupid as shit.







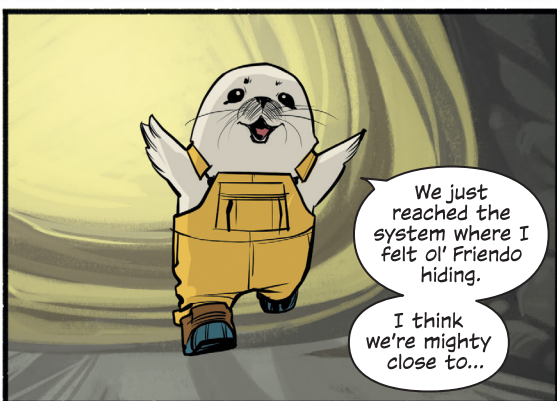




Mom once told me she
coined that phrase, but now that
I think about it, that was
probably a lie.

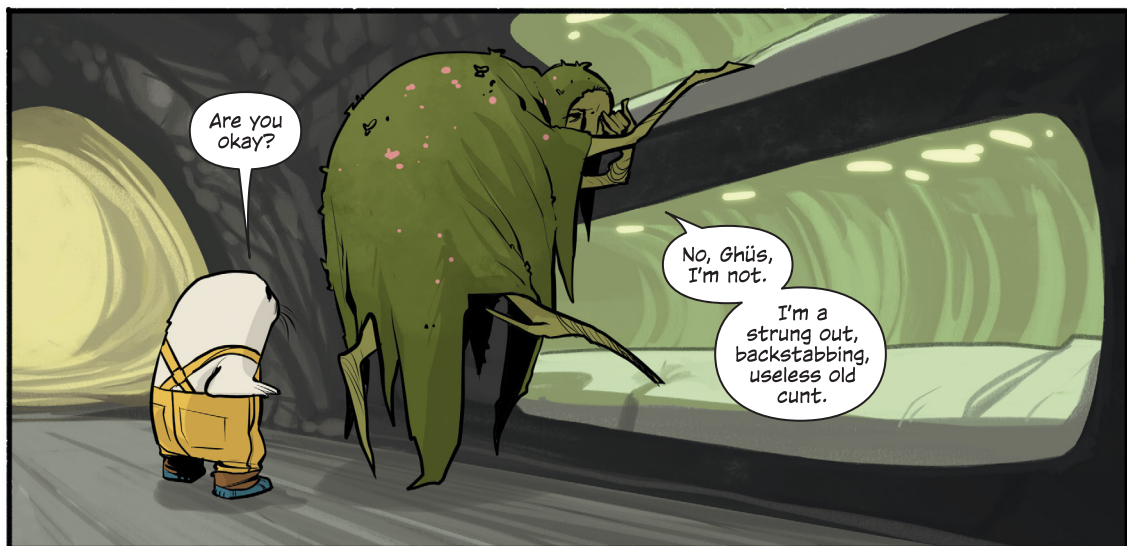


Yuma!



We just
reached the
system where I
felt ol' Friendo
hiding.

I think
we're mighty
close to...



Are you
okay?

No, Ghüs,
I'm not.

I'm a
strung out,
backstabbing,
useless old
cunt.



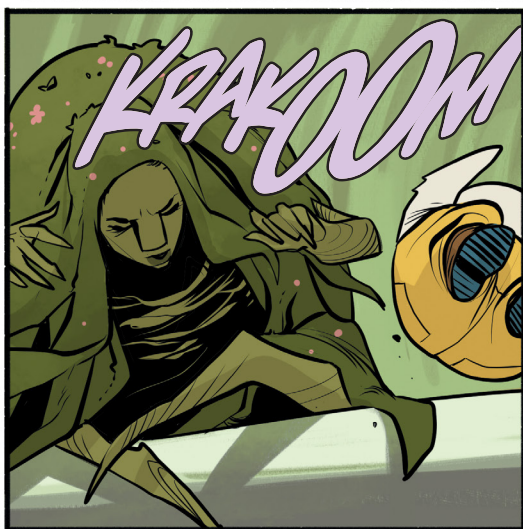
You're not
useless!

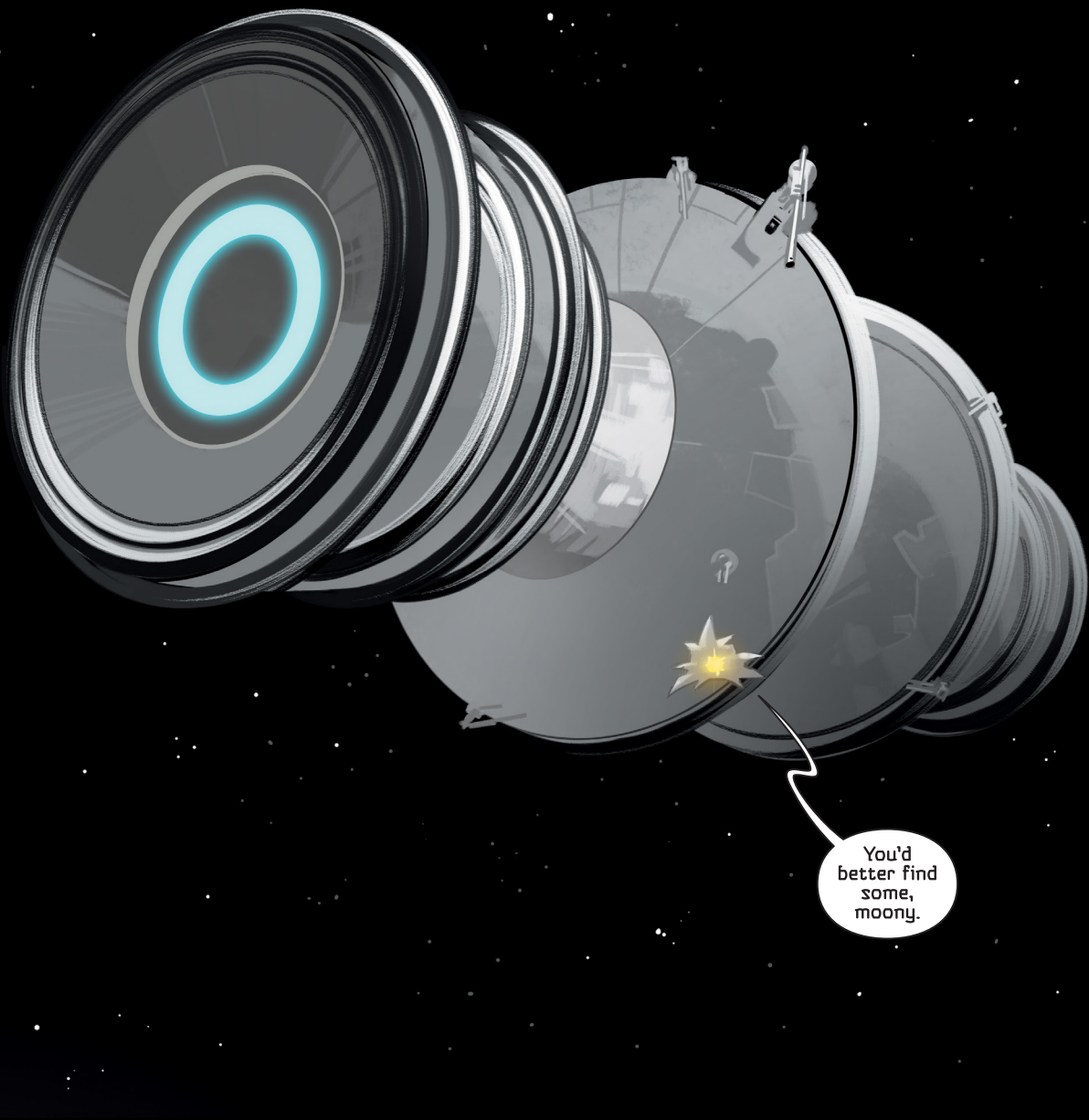
You make
the ship smell
a lot nicer with
your flowers and
whatnot!

You're sweet, which
is why you wouldn't
understand.



Ghüs has been a lot of things in his day...
but sweet is not one of those things.





You'd better find some, moony.

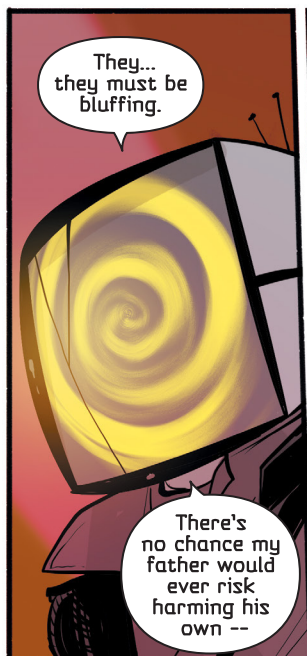
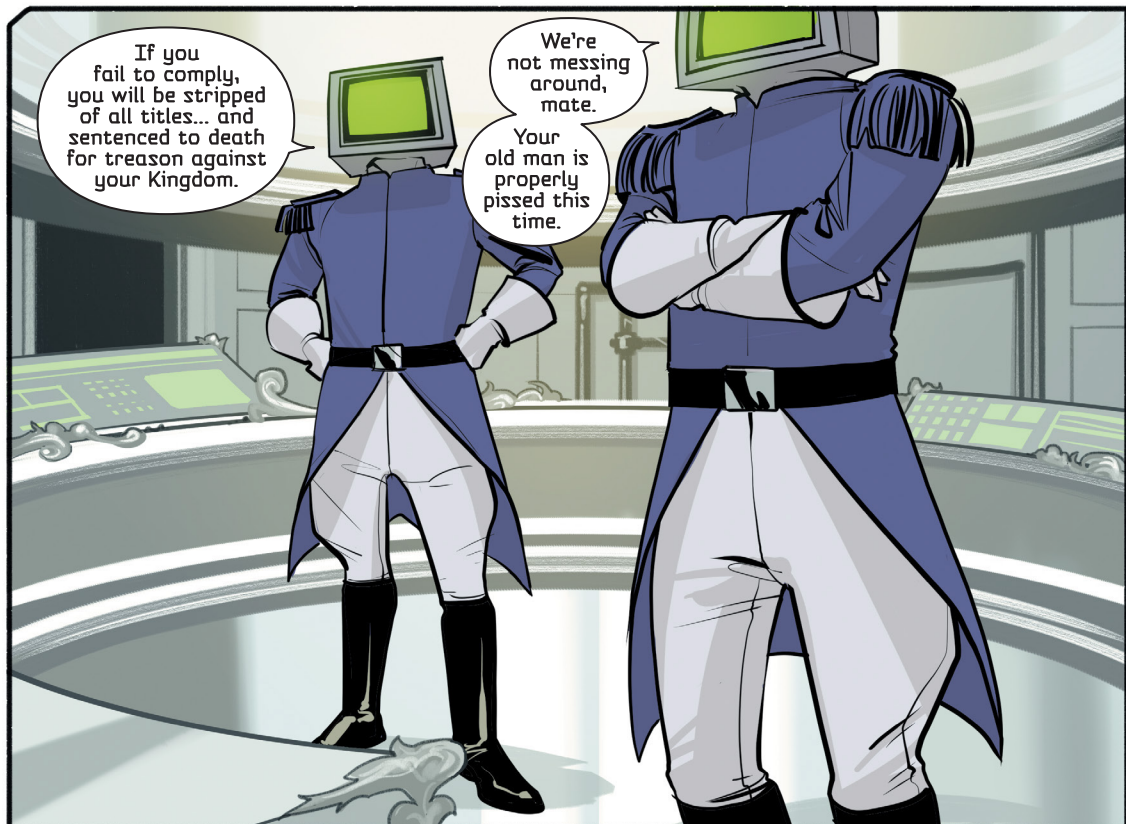


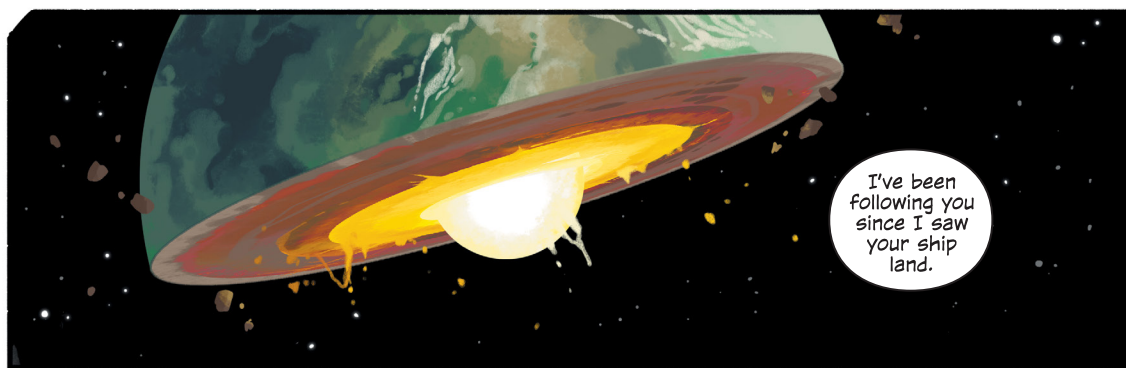
Ah, geez.

The hell kind of ship is that?

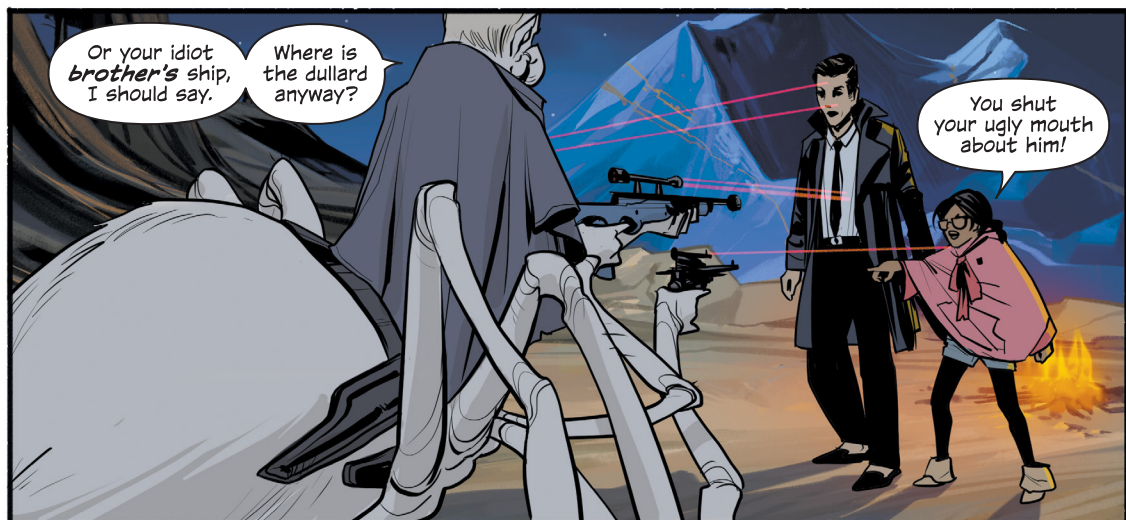
One of *mine*, unfortunately.

Prince IV, by order of His Majesty King Robot, this is the **Royal Guard** commanding you to surrender at once.





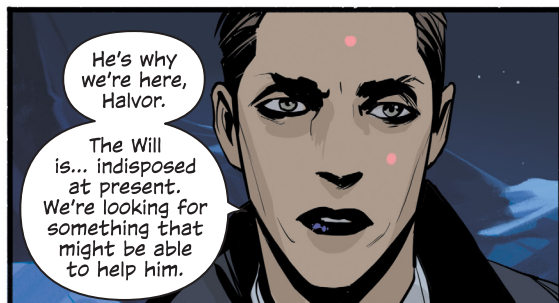
I've been following you since I saw your ship land.



Or your idiot *brother's* ship, I should say.

Where is the dullard anyway?

You shut your ugly mouth about him!



He's why we're here, Halvor.

The Will is... indisposed at present. We're looking for something that might be able to help him.



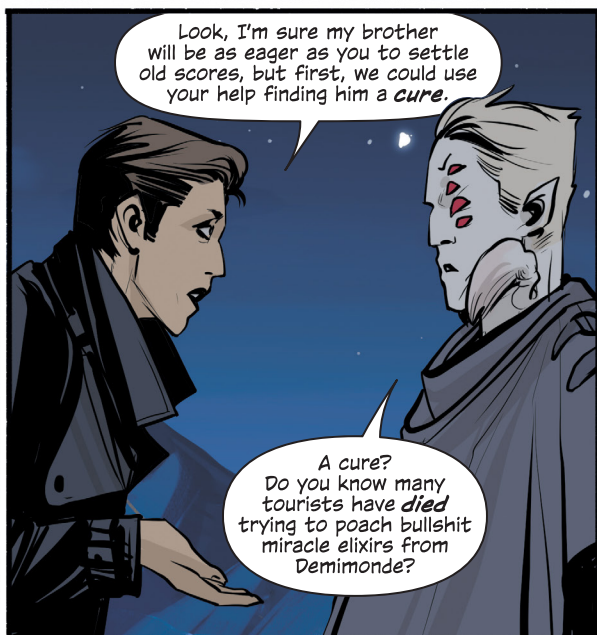
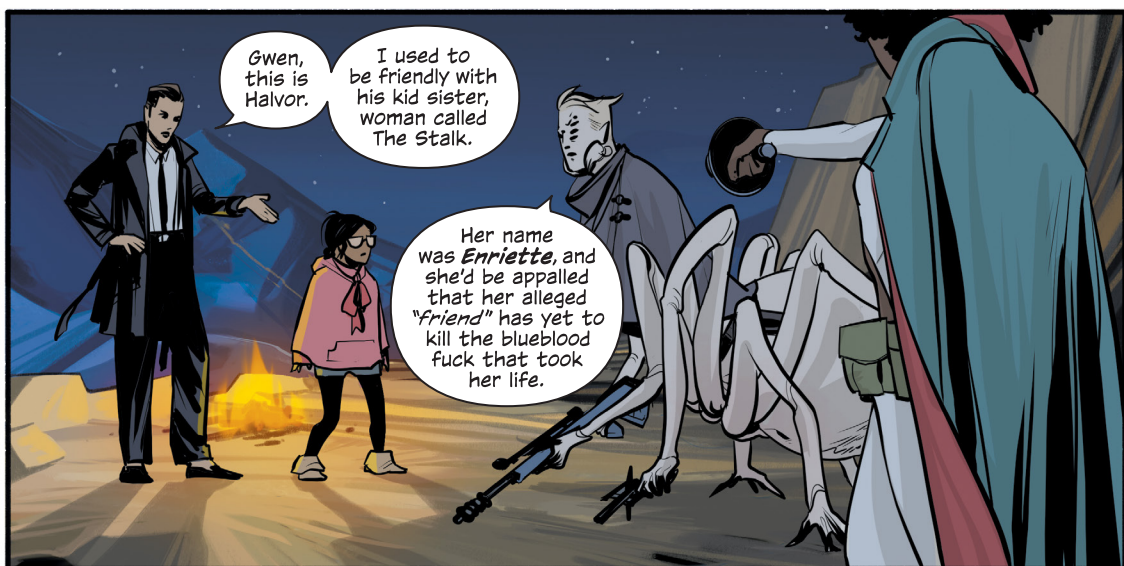
To help him?

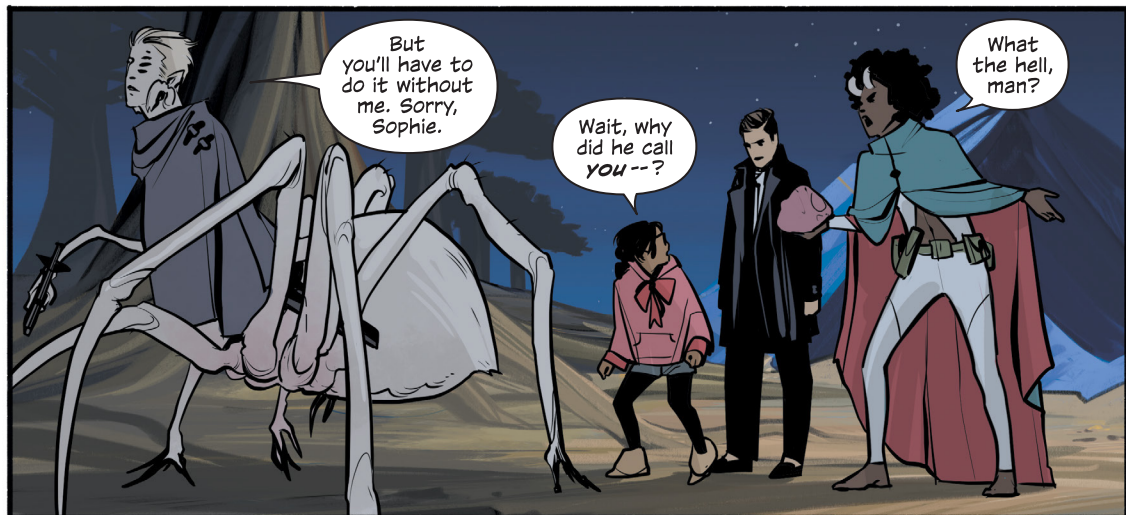
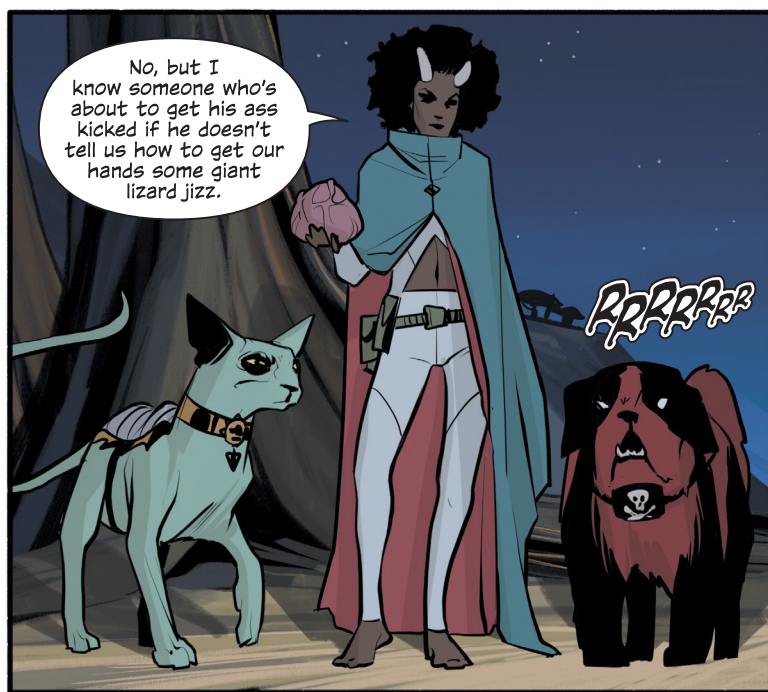
What about what you owe my *family*?

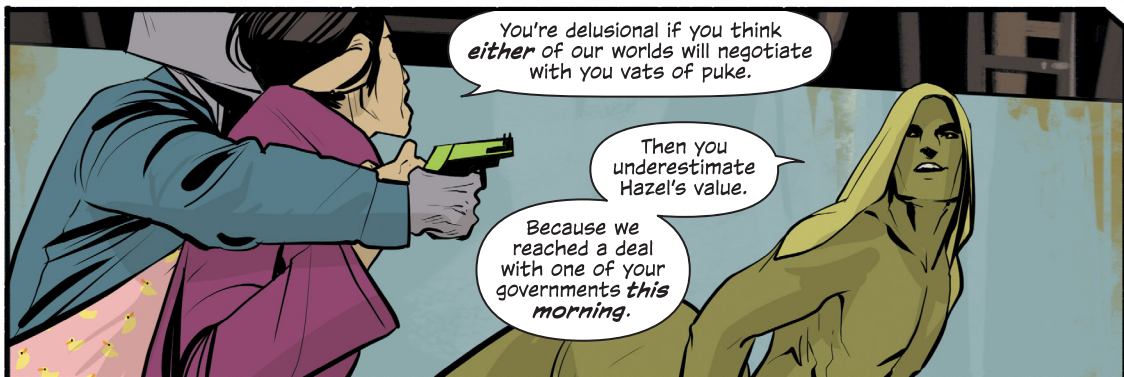
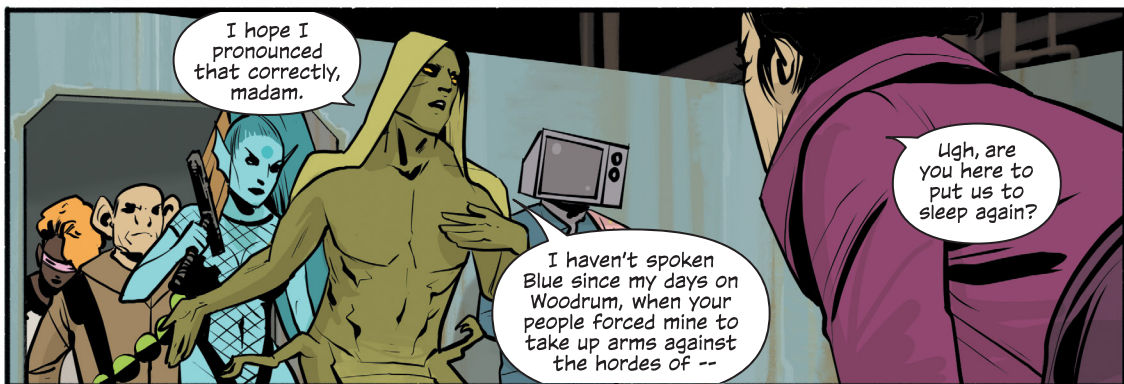
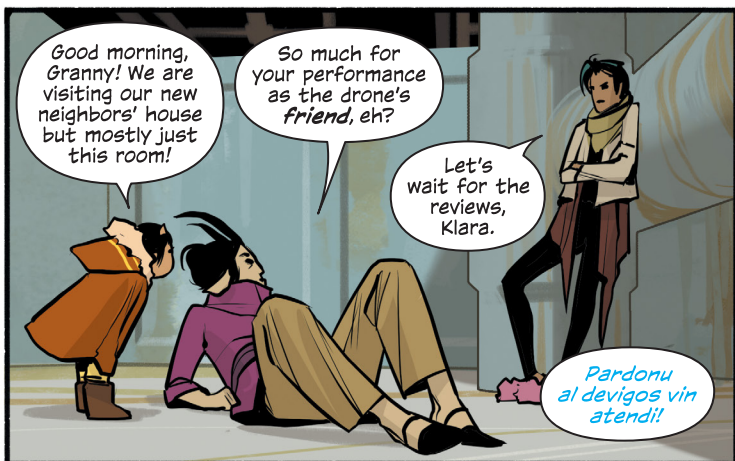
Drop the lightshow, chief.

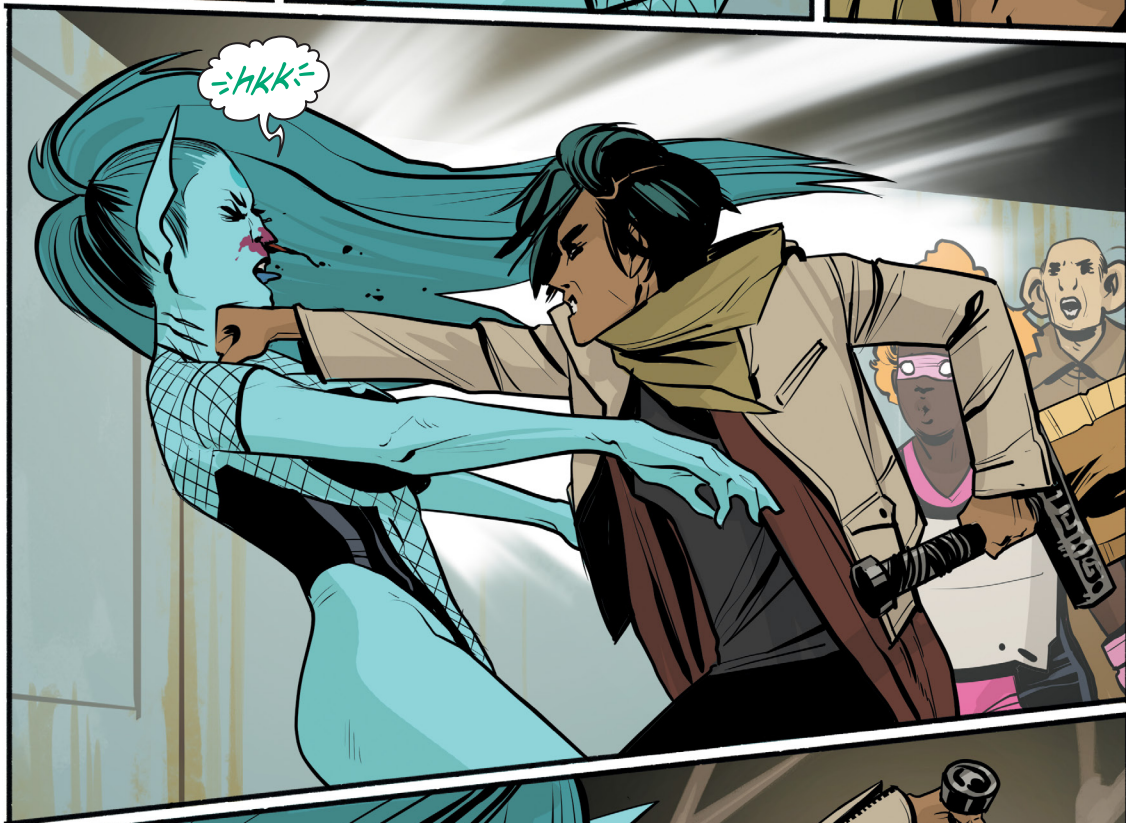


Or I lance you like a boil.











Be still.



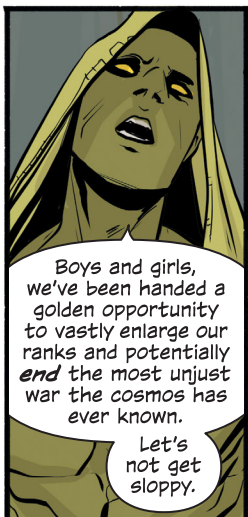
Mama!

She'll snap out of it soon, precious.

Lexis and Zizz, when she does, please try to do a better job of containing her. Our "customer" asked to deal with Alana separately.

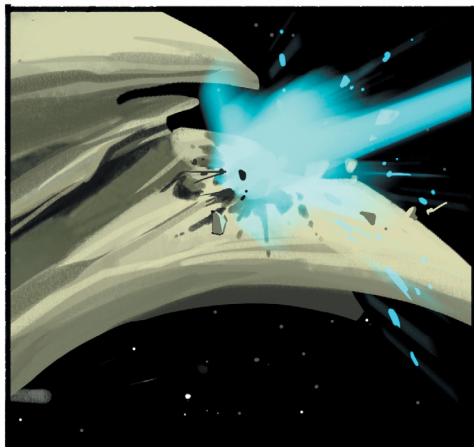


Julep, help Dengo escort Klara and her grandchild to the bridge... if you're feeling up to it?



Boys and girls, we've been handed a golden opportunity to vastly enlarge our ranks and potentially *end* the most unjust war the cosmos has ever known. Let's not get sloppy.









She always thought
it was way too easy
to convince young
people to forfeit
their lives
playing hero.



After her childhood
sweetheart was killed
in combat, a grieving
Yuma eventually declared
herself a "sensualist."



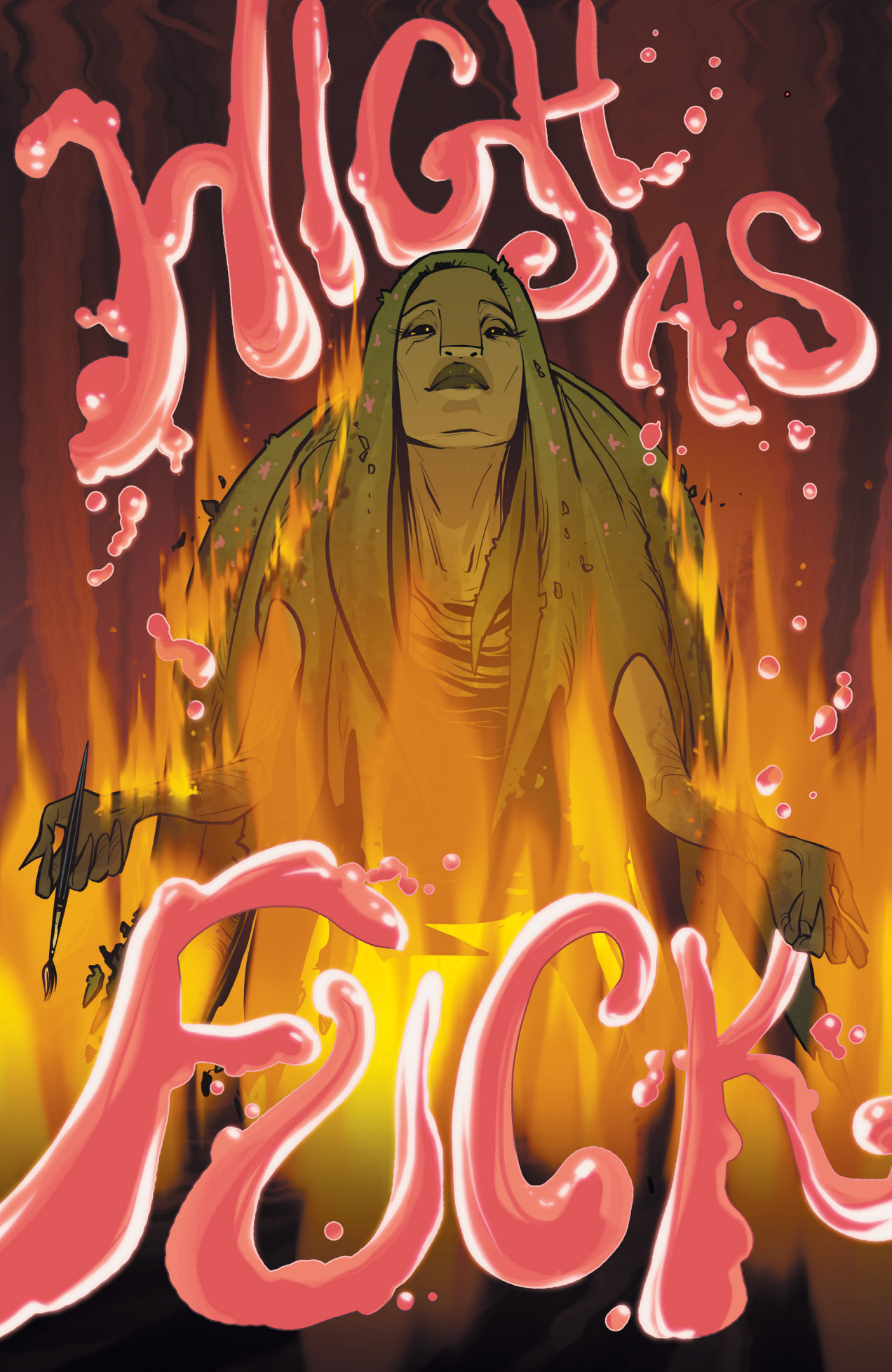
Amidst a galaxy
of misery, the artist
dedicated her life to chasing
pleasure, avoiding pain, and
helping others do the same.



Yeah, she wasn't
always perfect...
but who the hell is?



So here's to another
victim of this goddamn
war, a woman who at
least managed to die
exactly as she lived.



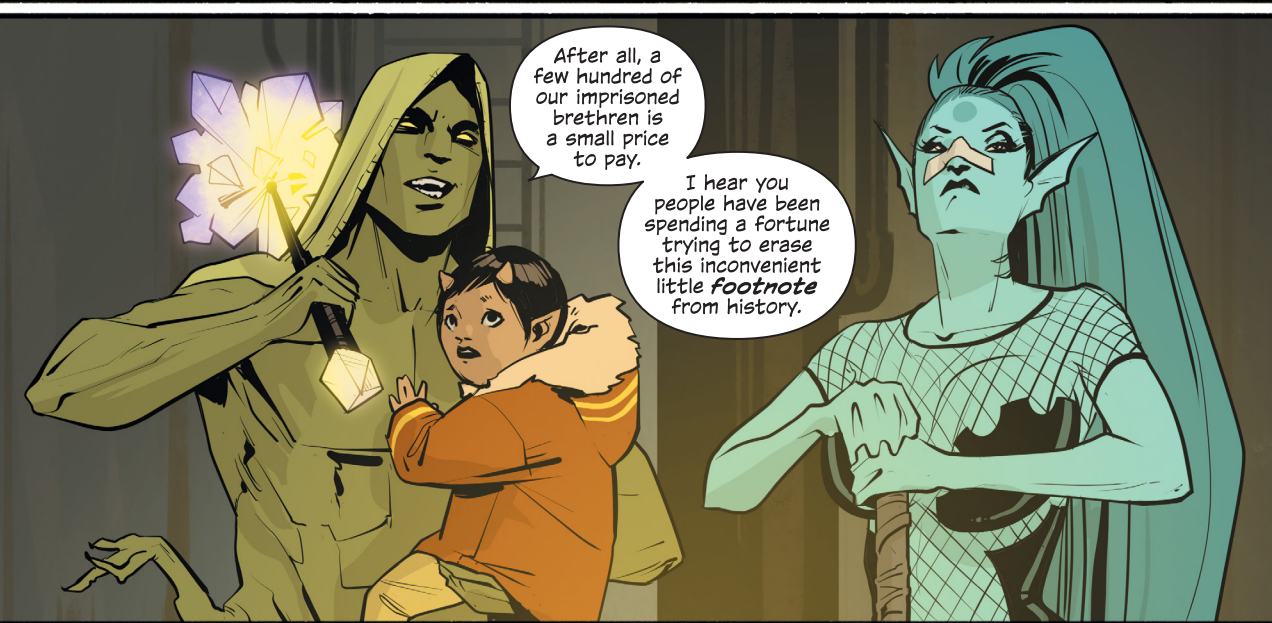
end chapter twenty-eight



CHAPTER
TWENTY-NINE

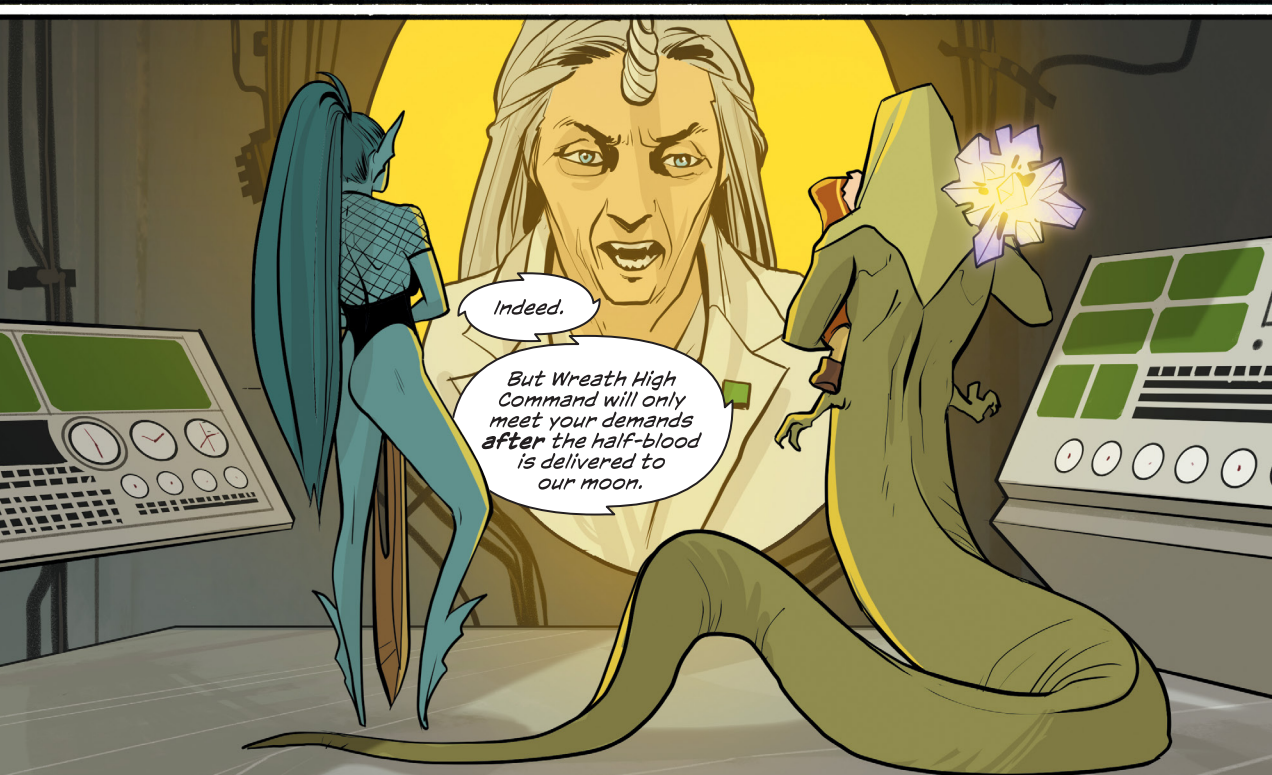


Cutting to the chase: do we have a deal or not?



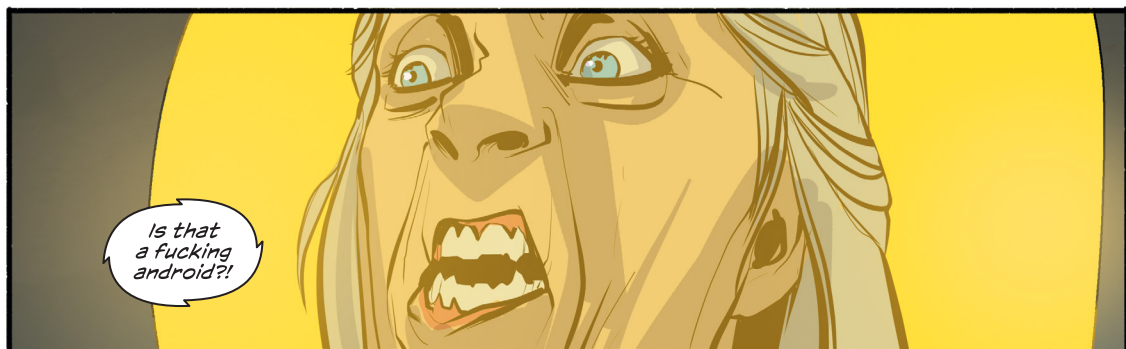
After all, a few hundred of our imprisoned brethren is a small price to pay.

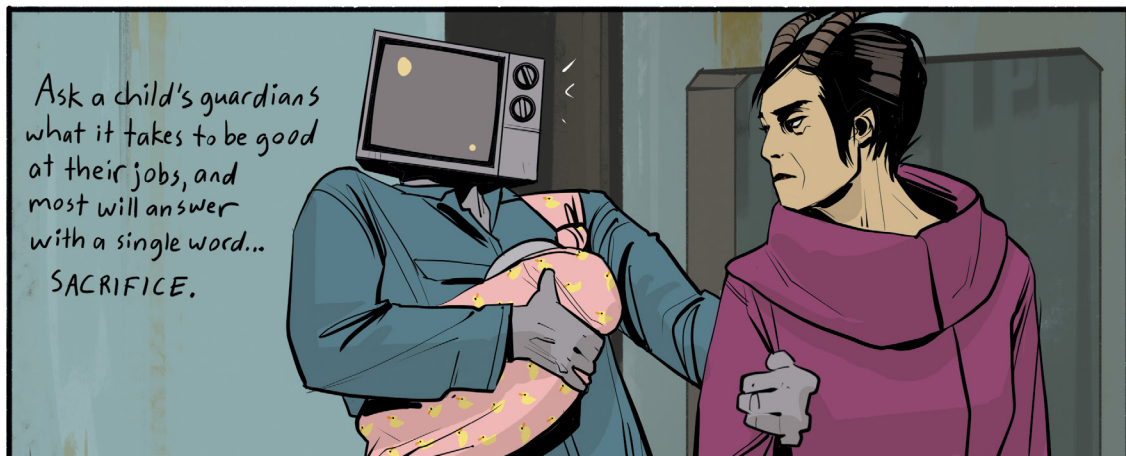
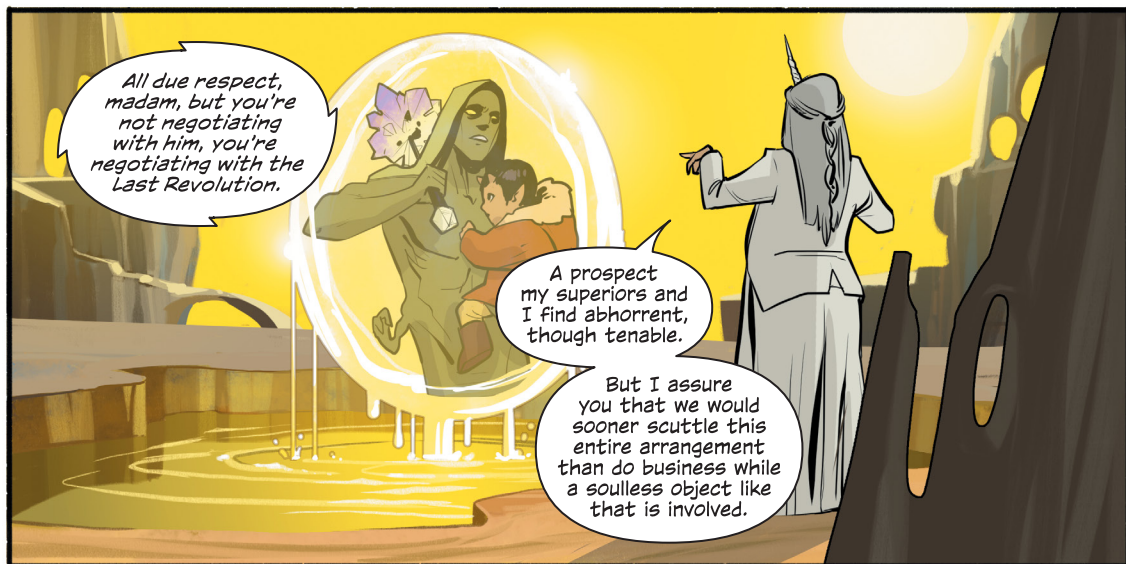
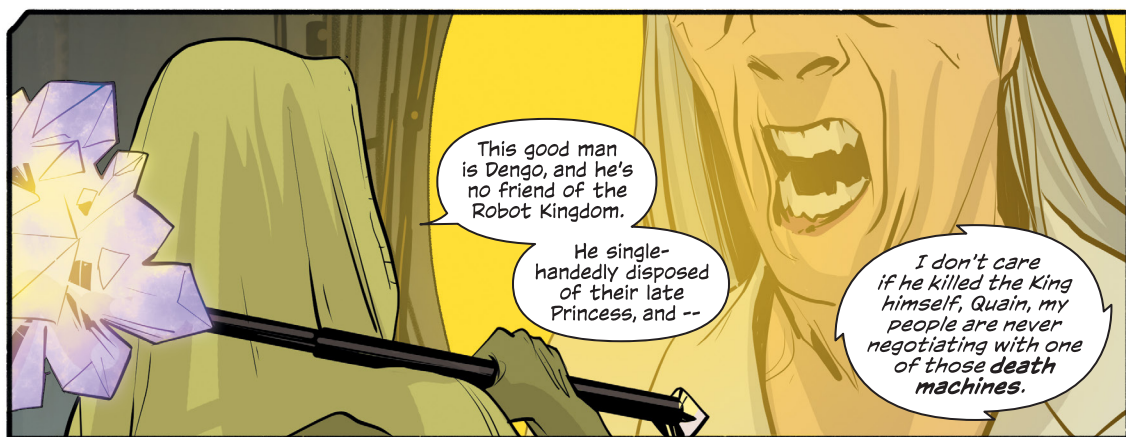
I hear you people have been spending a fortune trying to erase this inconvenient little *footnote* from history.



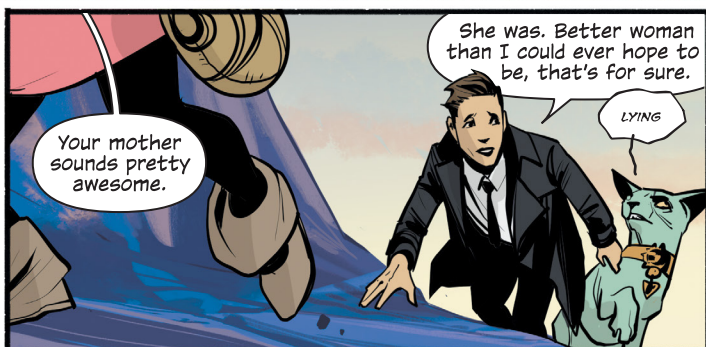
Indeed.

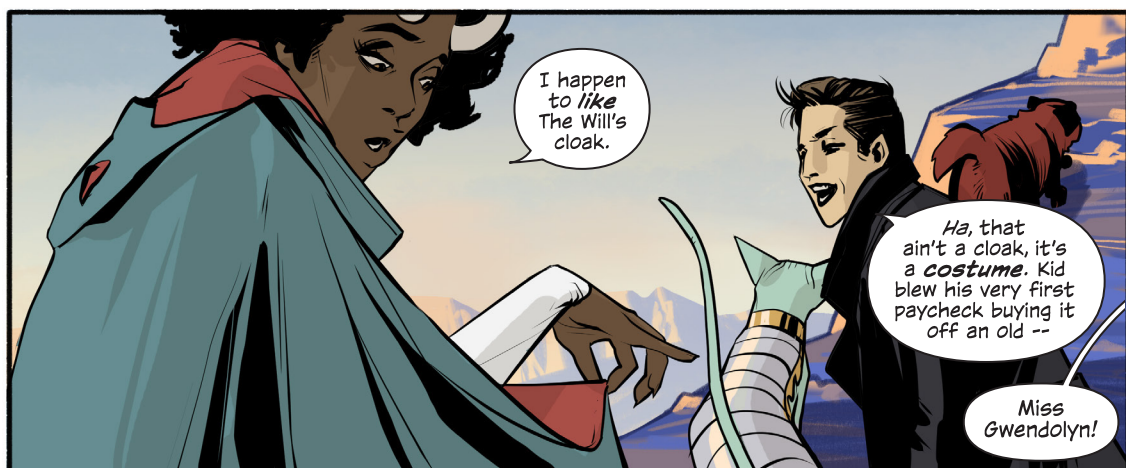
But Wreath High Command will only meet your demands *after* the half-blood is delivered to our moon.

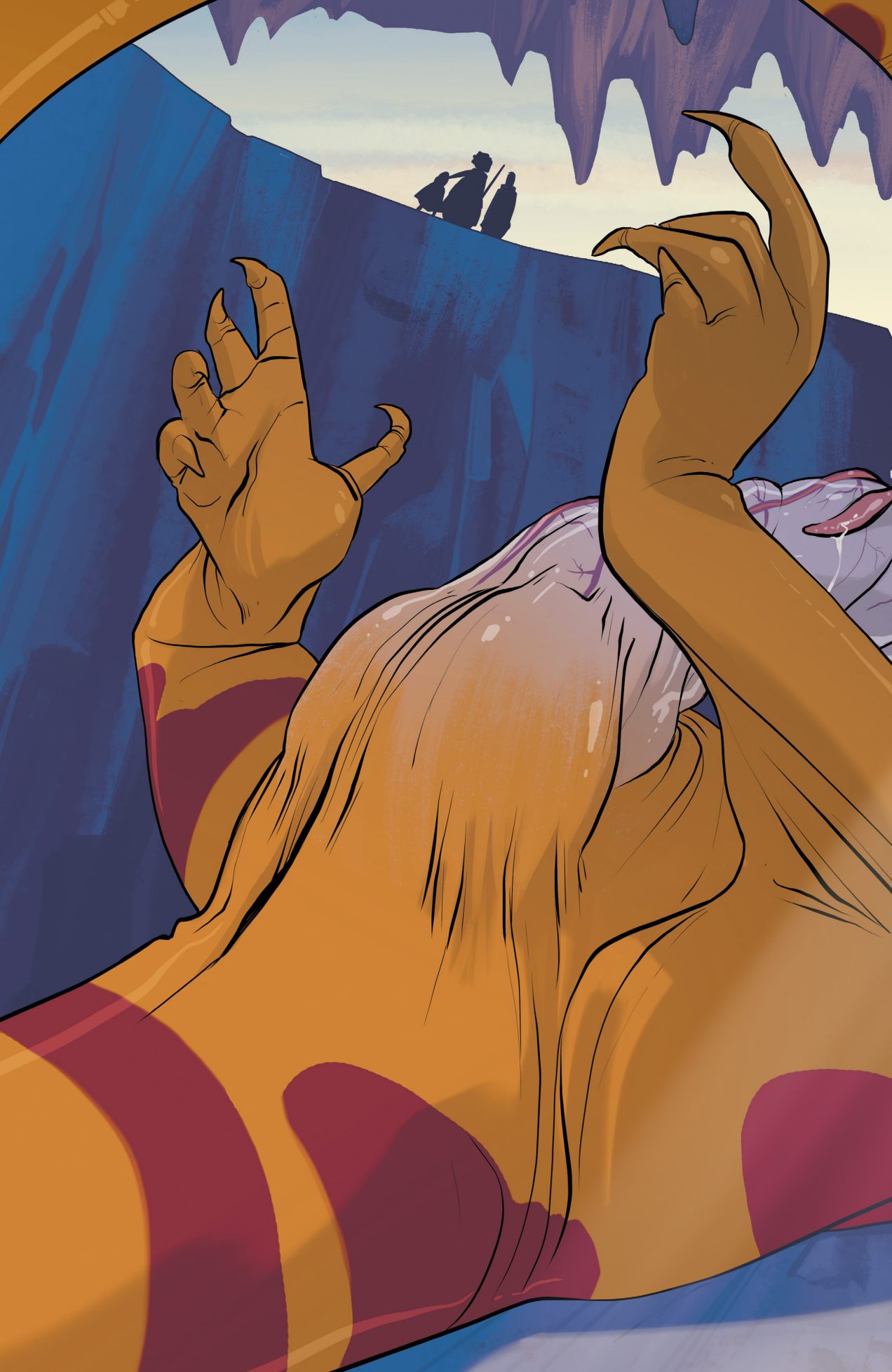


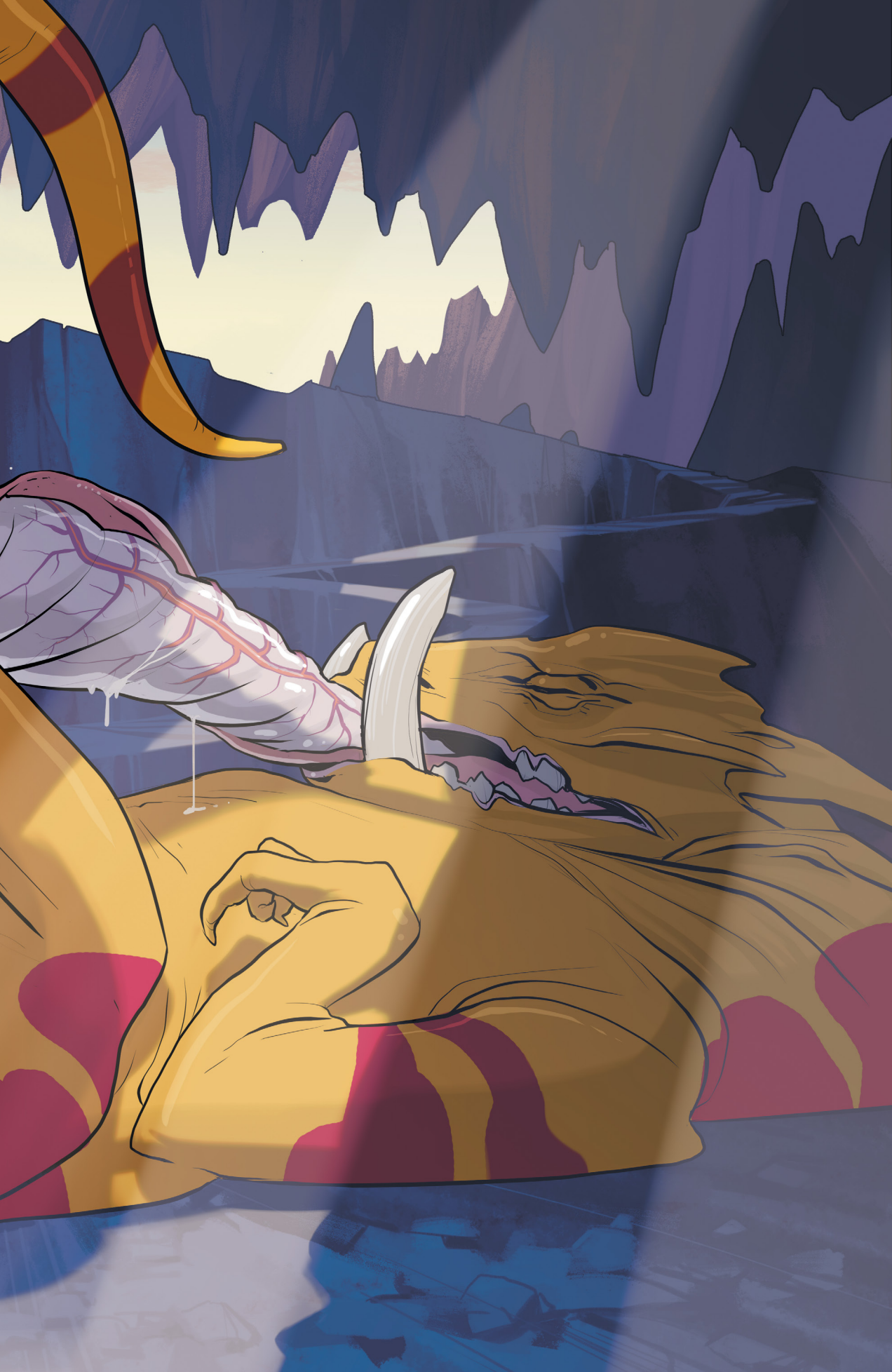


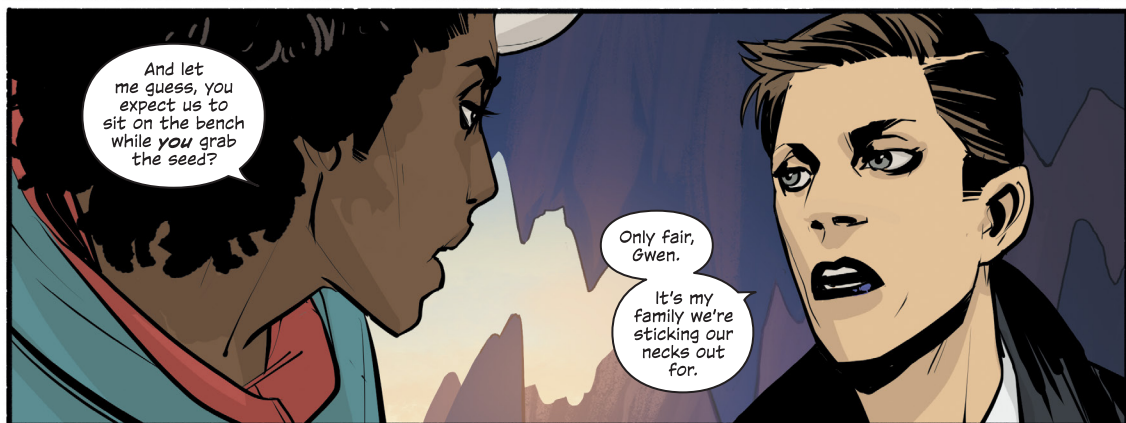
Parents give up so much: time, sleep,
freedom, money, intimacy...

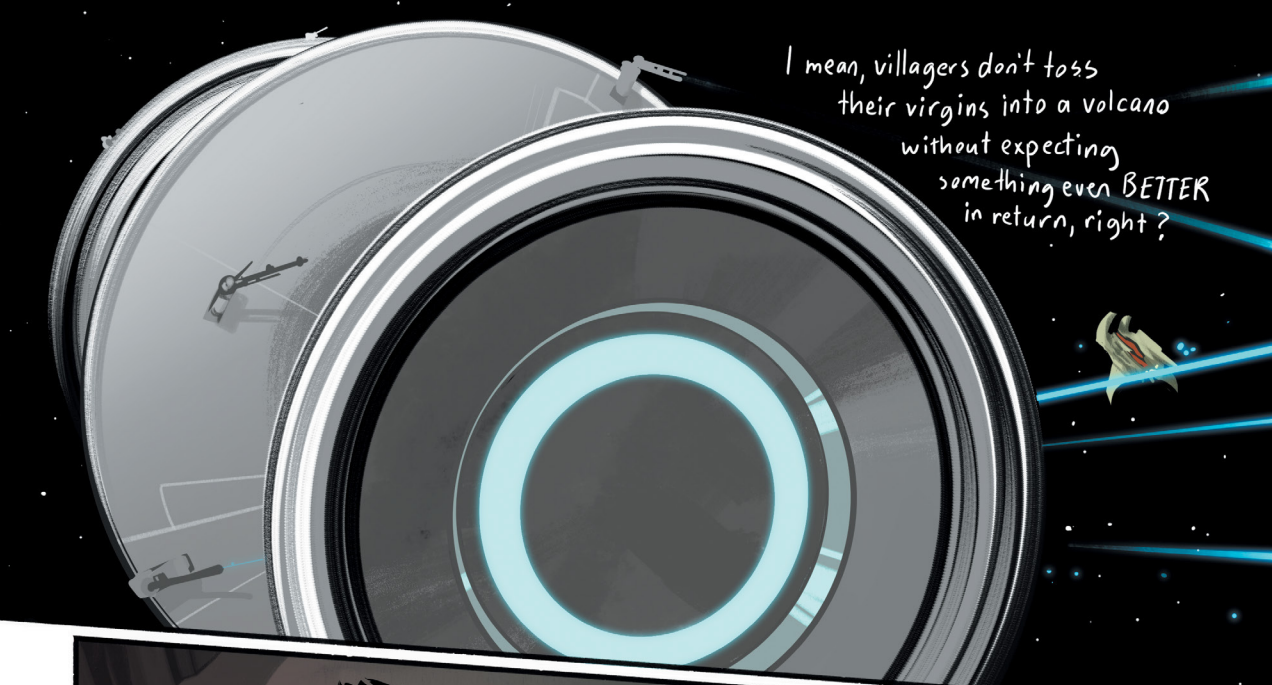












I mean, villagers don't toss
their virgins into a volcano
without expecting
something even **BETTER**
in return, right?



There goes
our magnetic
field! Another
hit and we're
dead!

No
cunting shit,
Marko!

But I can't
move this thing
without engines,
and the engines
are worthless
without...

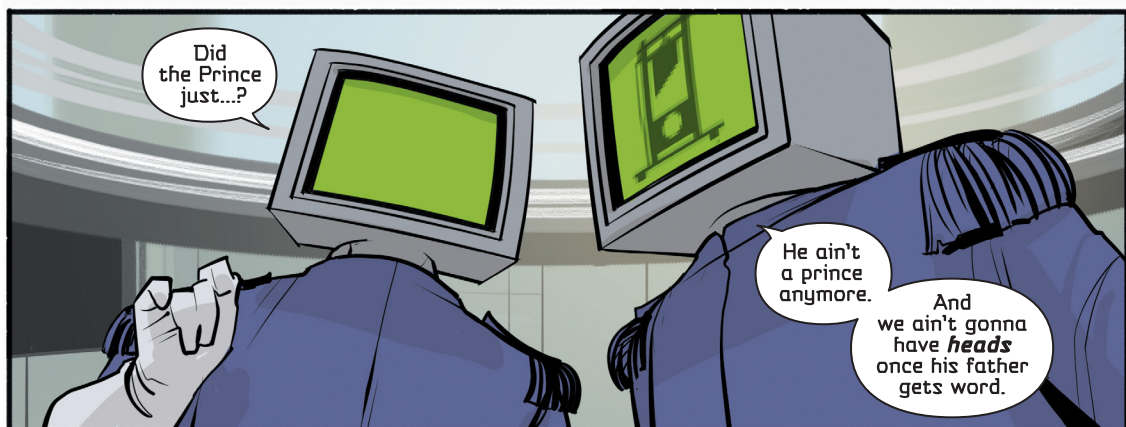
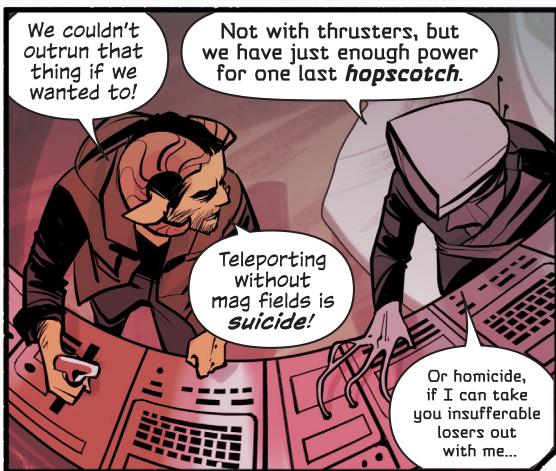
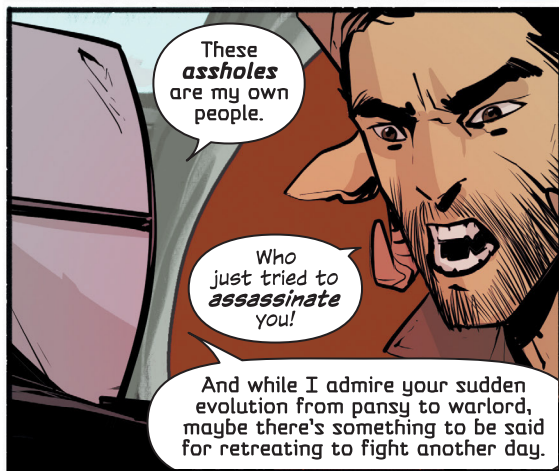
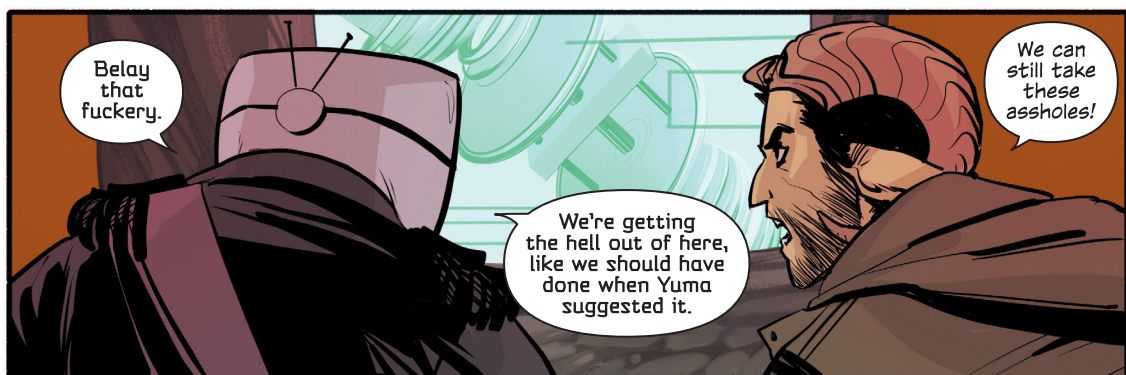


...fuel!

We're out of
the red! Those two
mouth-breathers
must have actually
repaired the line!



Then quit
celebrating and
move us back
into attack
position.





Perfect, you jumped us into a goddamn *ice storm*!

Blame that spastic Seal Boy! I just pointed us at the planet where he thought our *children* might --

She's gone!



She... she's all gone.



What are you talking about, Ghüs?

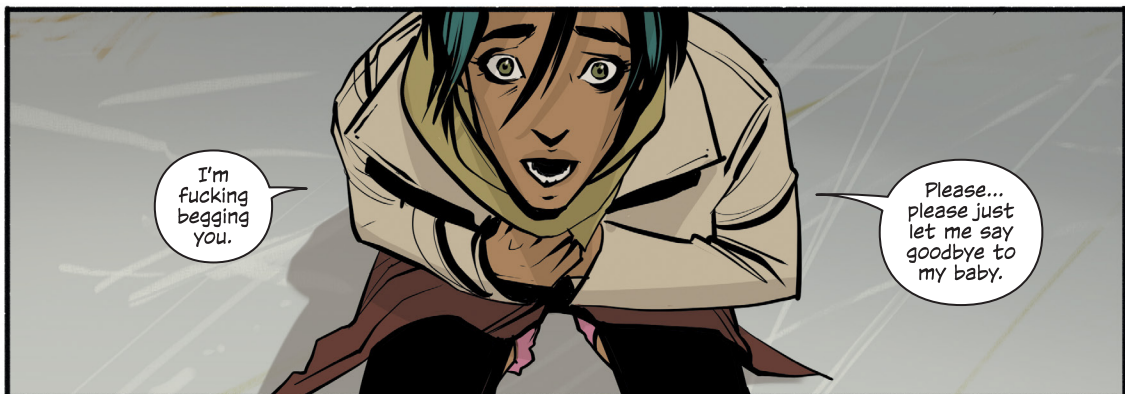
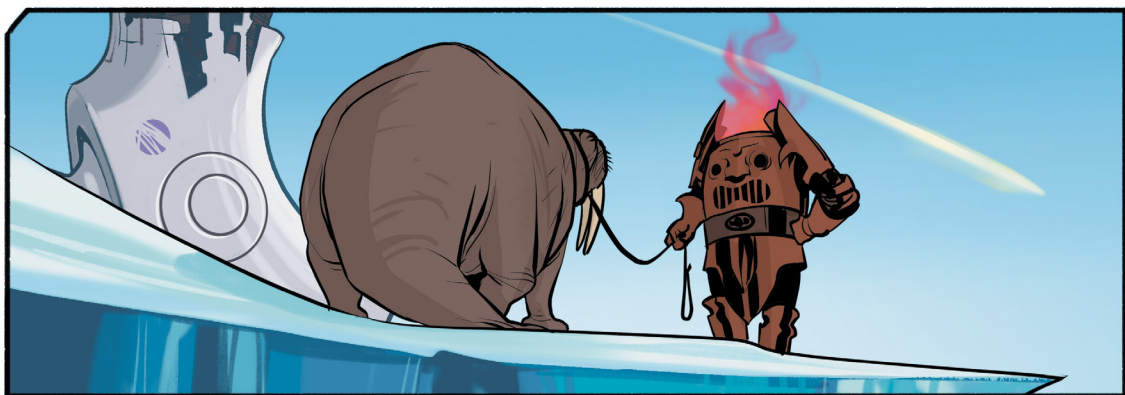
Miss Yuma.

I guess she managed to fix the ship, but all that hot stuff in there...



She's dead.





I'm
fucking
begging
you.

Please...
please just
let me say
goodbye to
my baby.



I told
you to shut
your mouth,
flygirl.

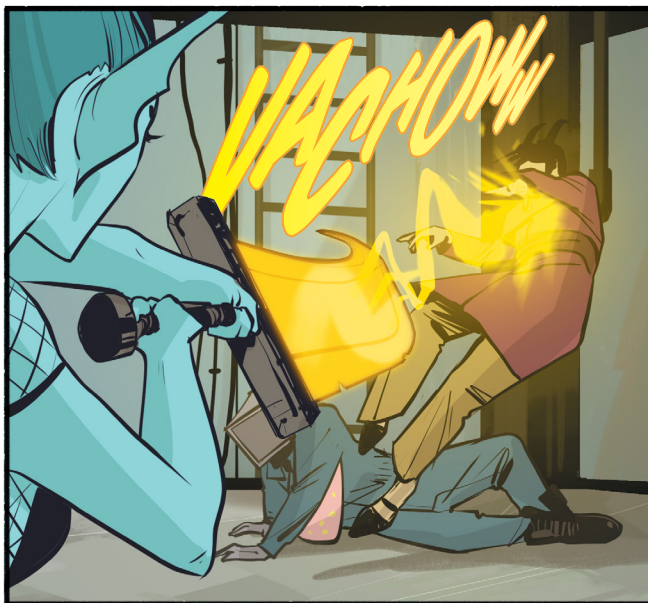
Ignore
her, Zizz.

Zizz...
you're from
Cleave, right?
That's where my
husband and I
first met!



Oh,
yeah?

'Cause one of
your armies was
nice enough to drop a
payload on my brother's
wedding, killed just
about everyone I
ever loved.







Dying is definitely
the **LAST** sacrifice
you can make...



...but sometimes, it's your
first one that sets the tone
for everything that
follows.

Fucking
finally.

I don't know
what's more
impressive, the
velocity or the
volume...



And just
like that, he's
down for the
count.



I'm gonna
try to collect a
sample before
it dries.

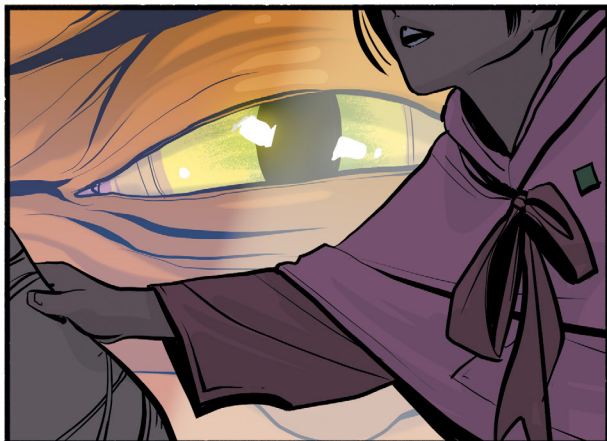
→ECCH←

Sophie,
hand me that
wineskin and...

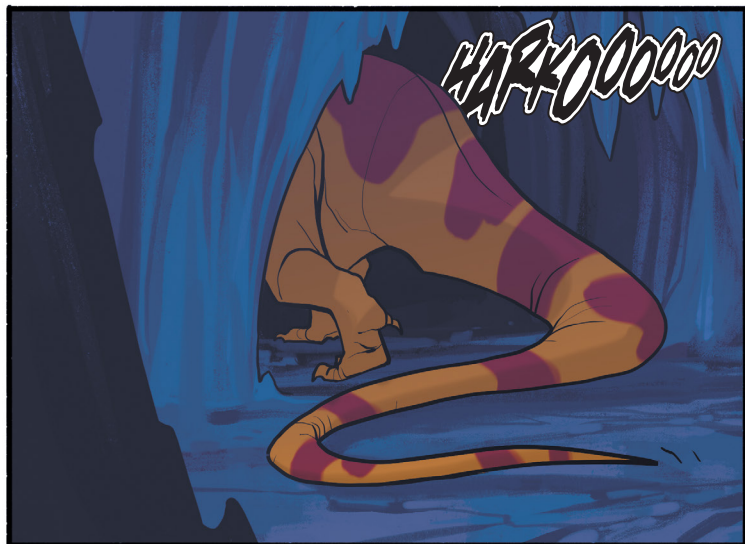
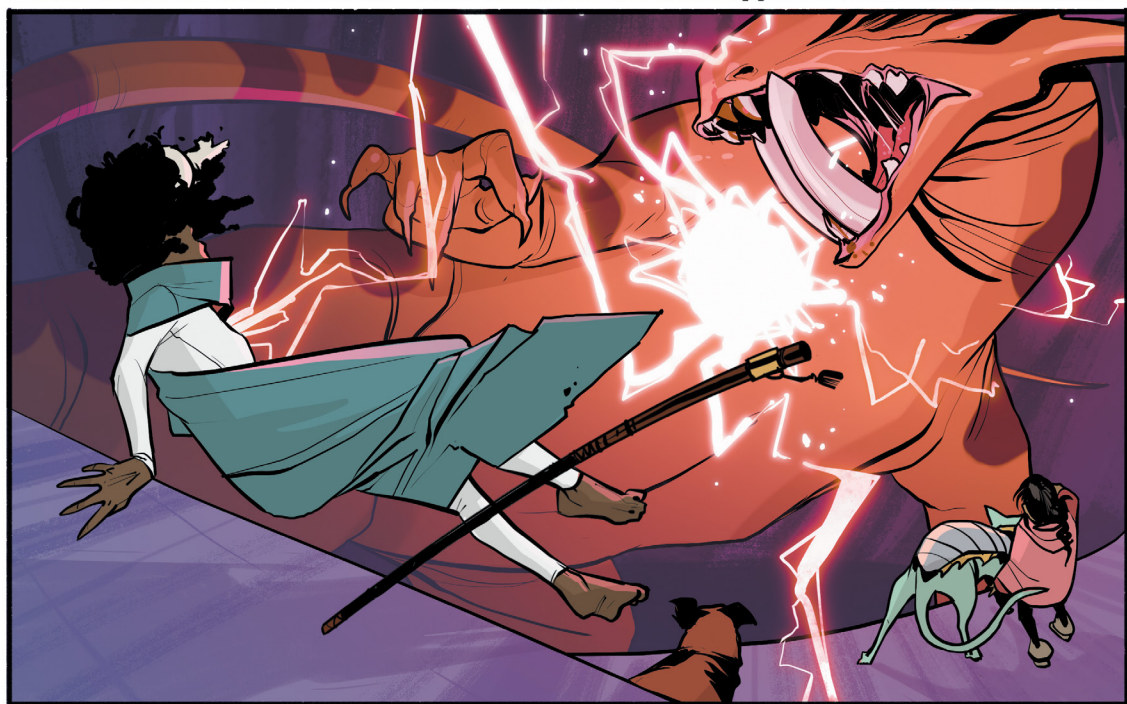


Soph?











I'm
sorry.

end chapter twenty-nine



CHAPTER
THIRTY

Every relationship is
an education.



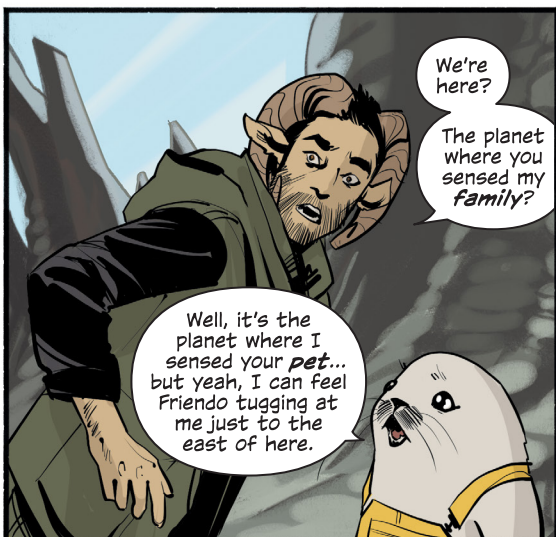
Each new person we
welcome into our hearts is
a chance to evolve into
something radically different
than we used to be.



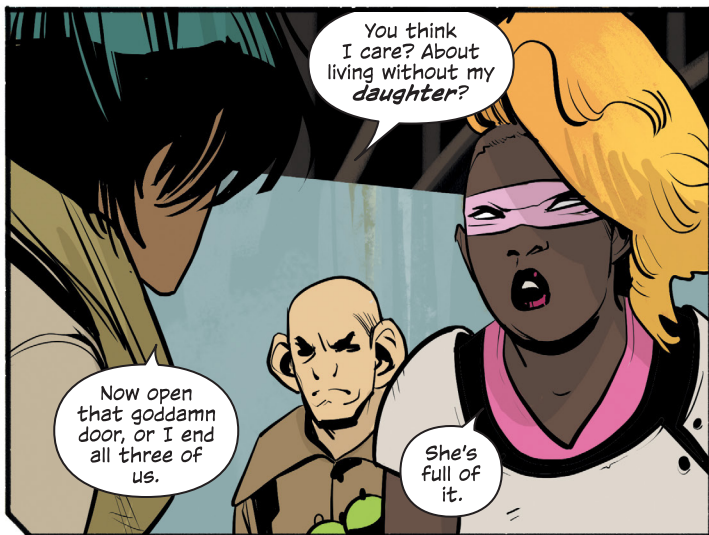
But what happens
when those people
disappear from our lives?

Marko!

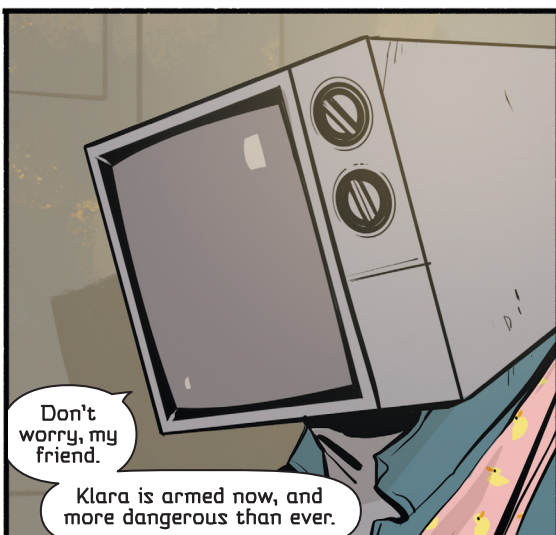
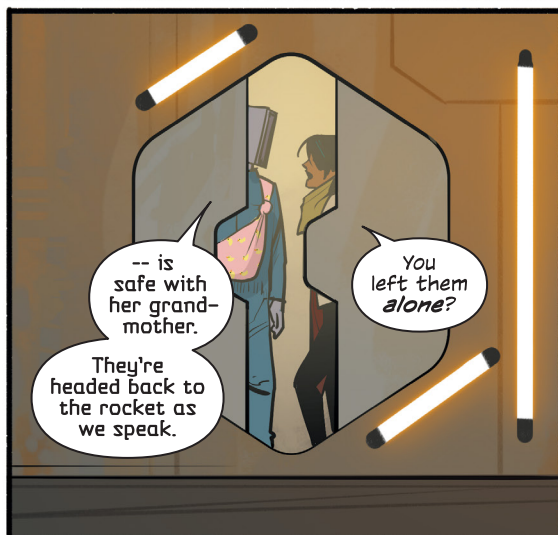
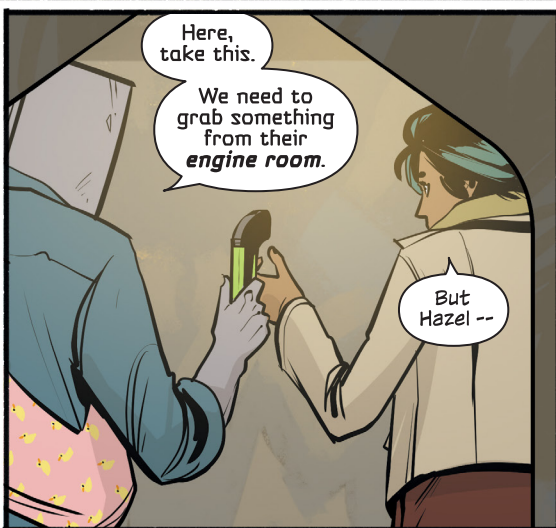
Are you
alive?



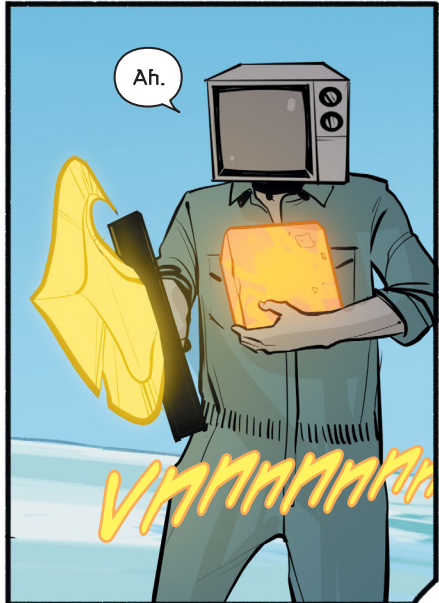
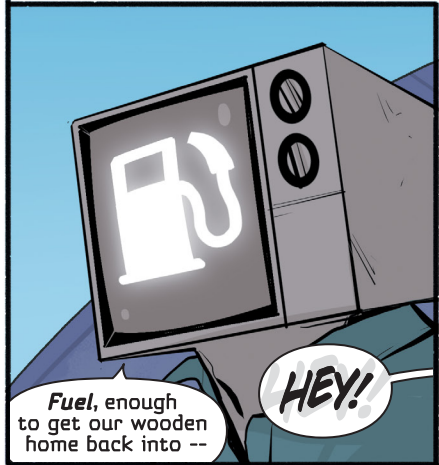
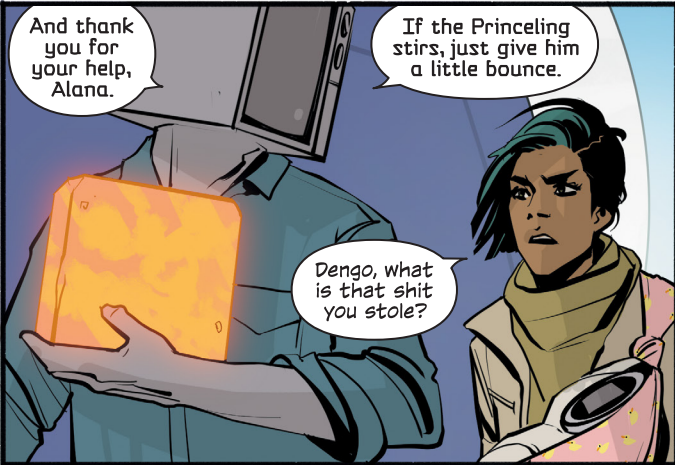
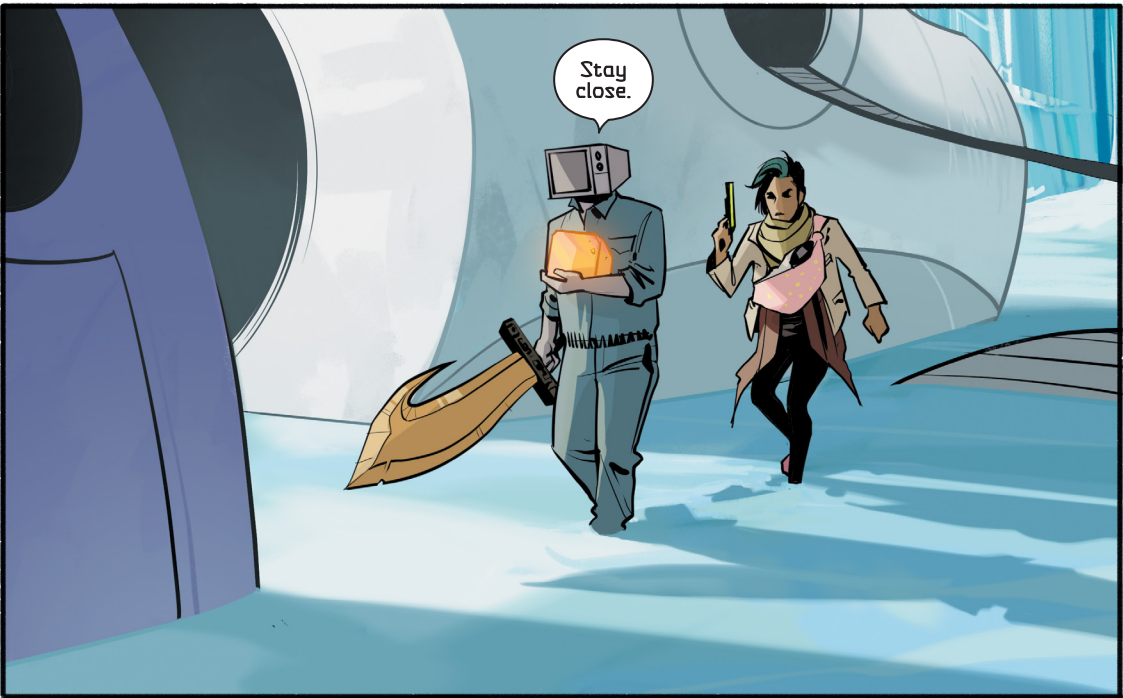


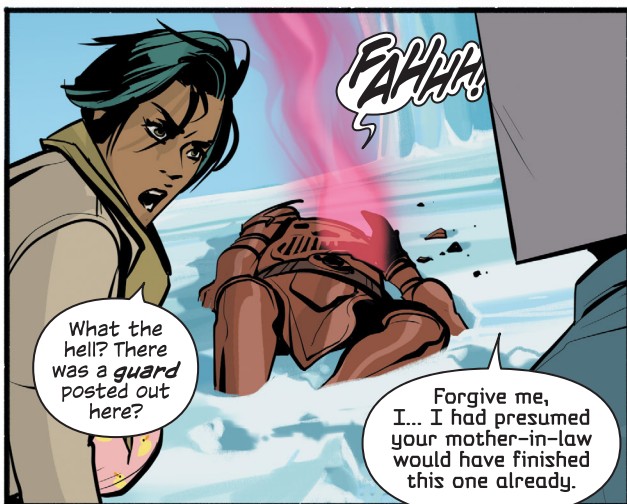
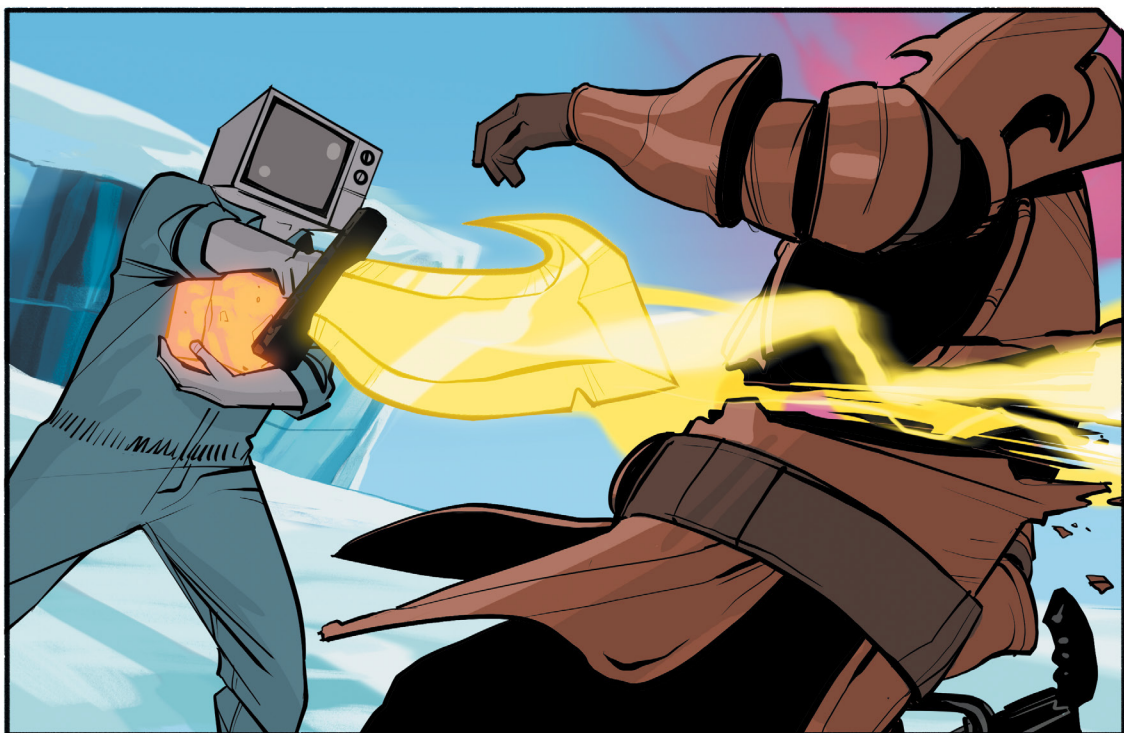


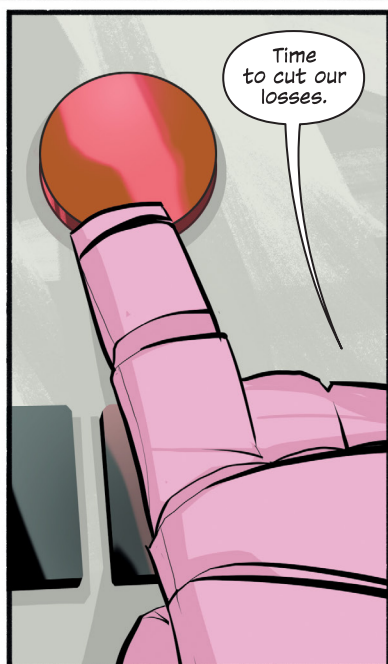


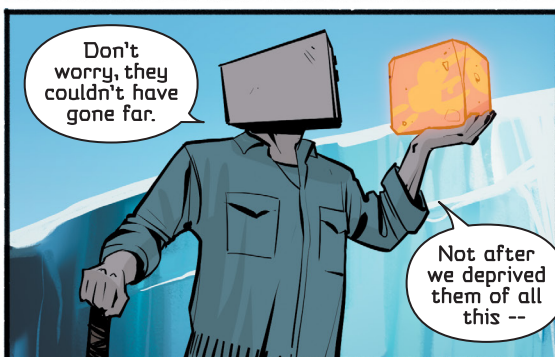


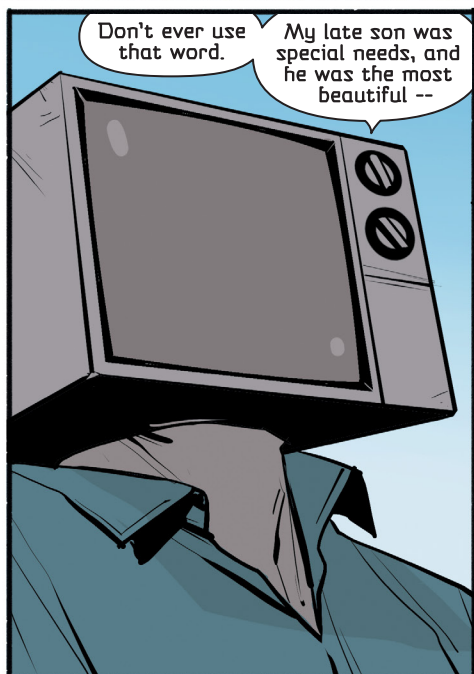


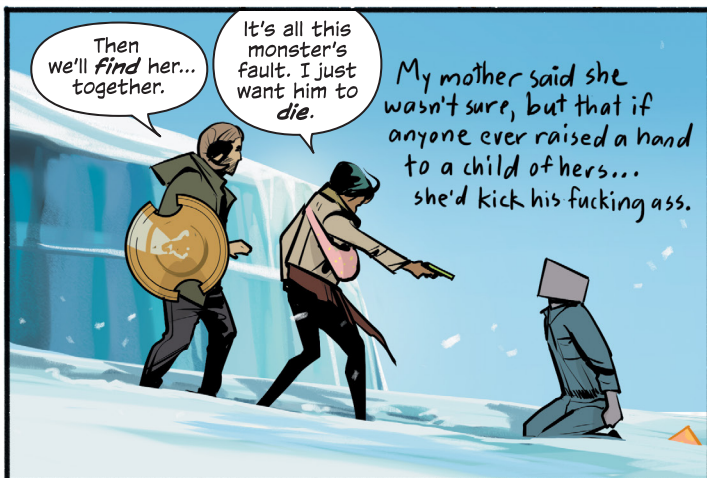






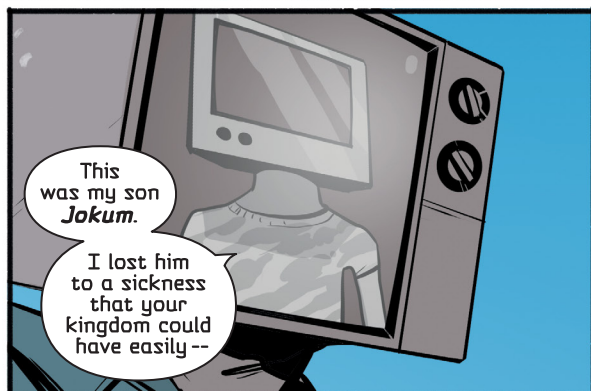
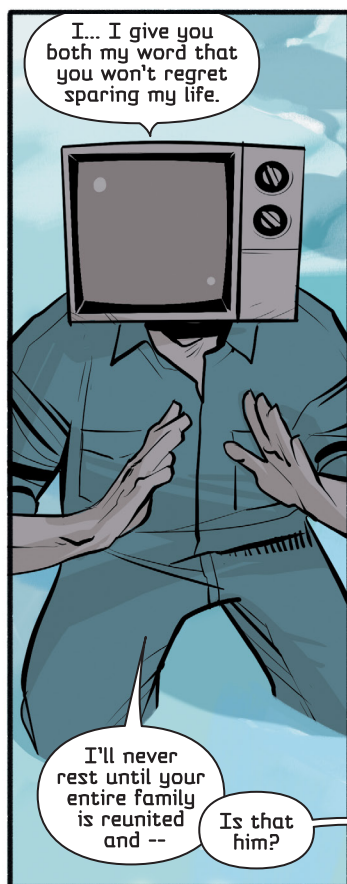




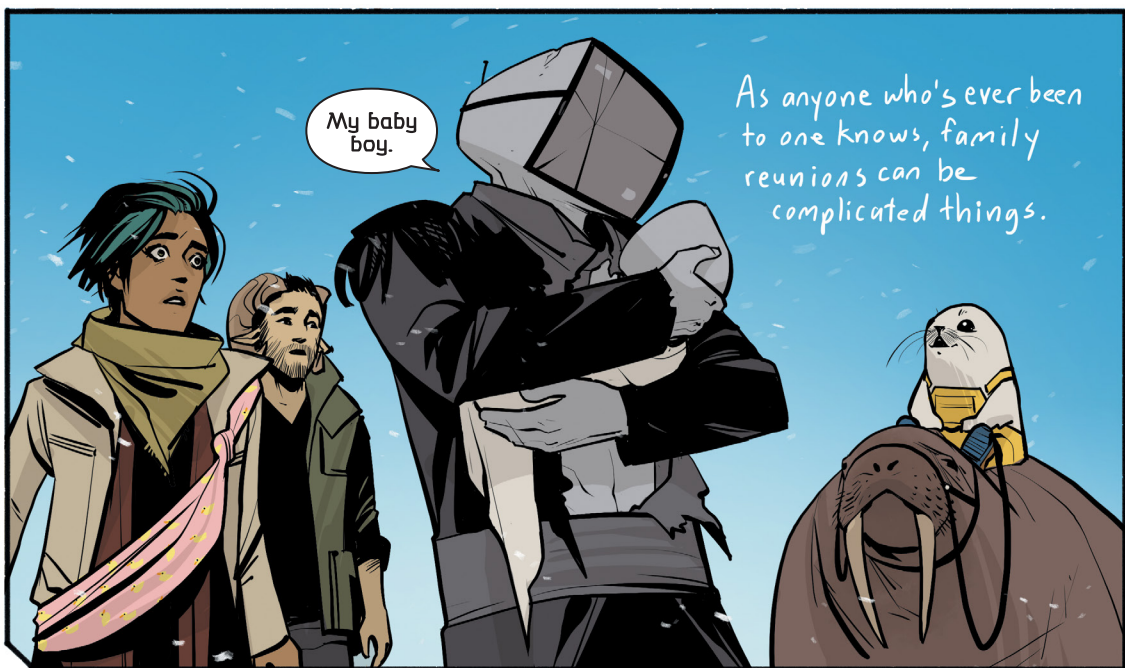
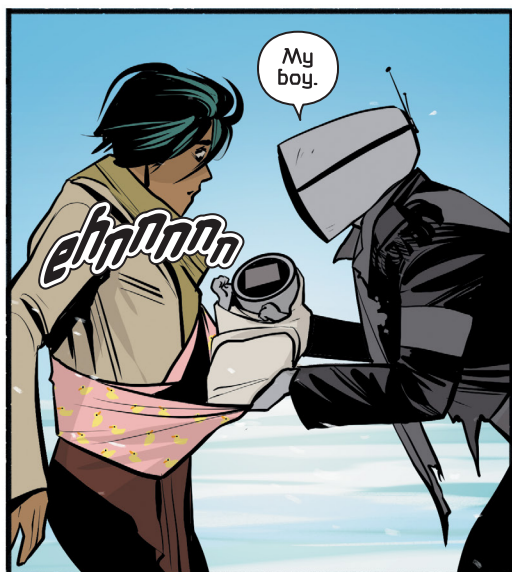
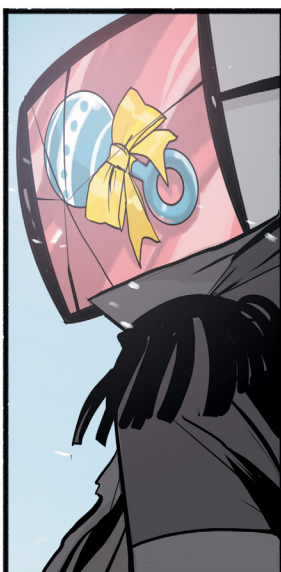


But that's
not who we
are.

There's no graduating from this kind of
education, couples just keep growing and
changing until they either break up or die.







It would be a long,
long time before I had
the pleasure of finding
that out for myself.



=HWWHHH=



It
worked.

It actually
worked.

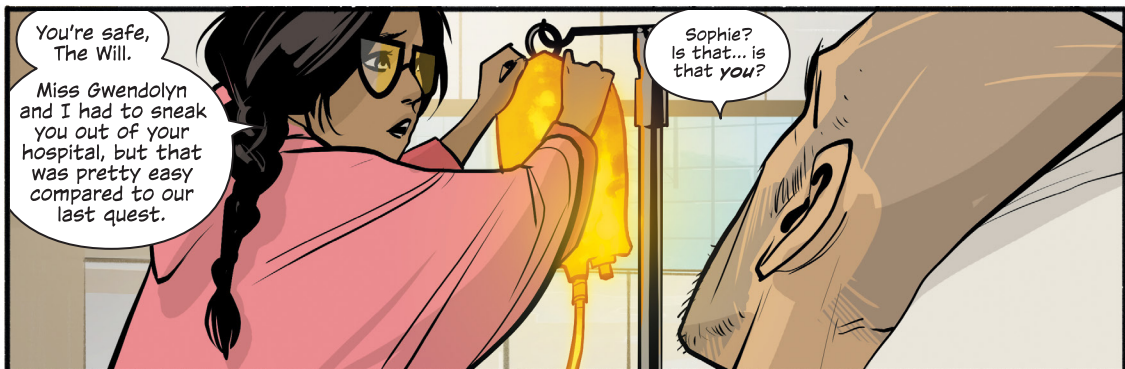
Where?



You're safe,
The Will.

Miss Gwendolyn
and I had to sneak
you out of your
hospital, but that
was pretty easy
compared to our
last quest.

Sophie?
Is that... is
that you?





It's been a rough few years.



What ->koff<- what do you have there?

A gift from your ex's family.

They were hoping you could use this piece of The Stalk's old ship to hunt down her killer and --



Hold up.

That's *The Brand's* dog, ain't it?



We wanted to wait until you were stronger to tell you...

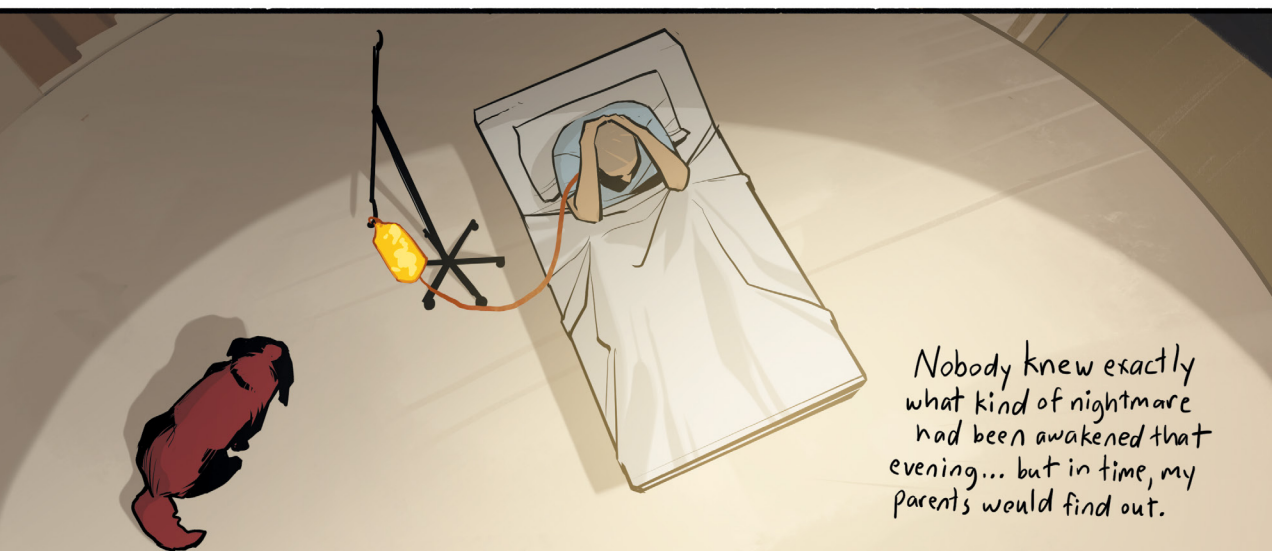
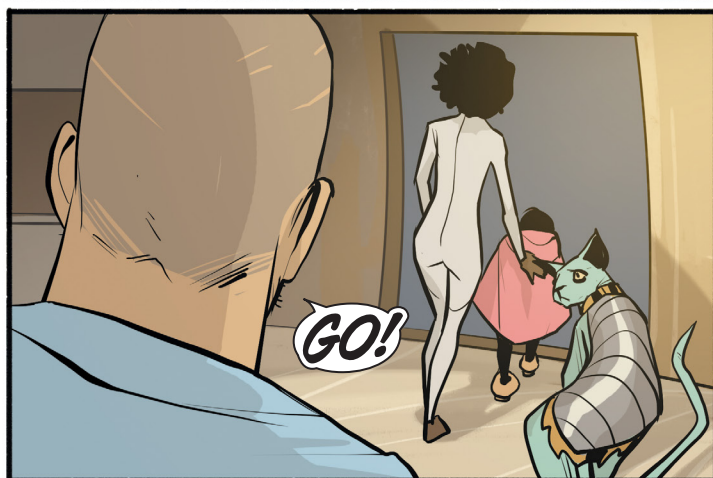
I'm so sorry, The Will.

It should have been *me*, not her.



What are you...?

My sister is *dead*?







*It was time I started
my own education.*

to be continued



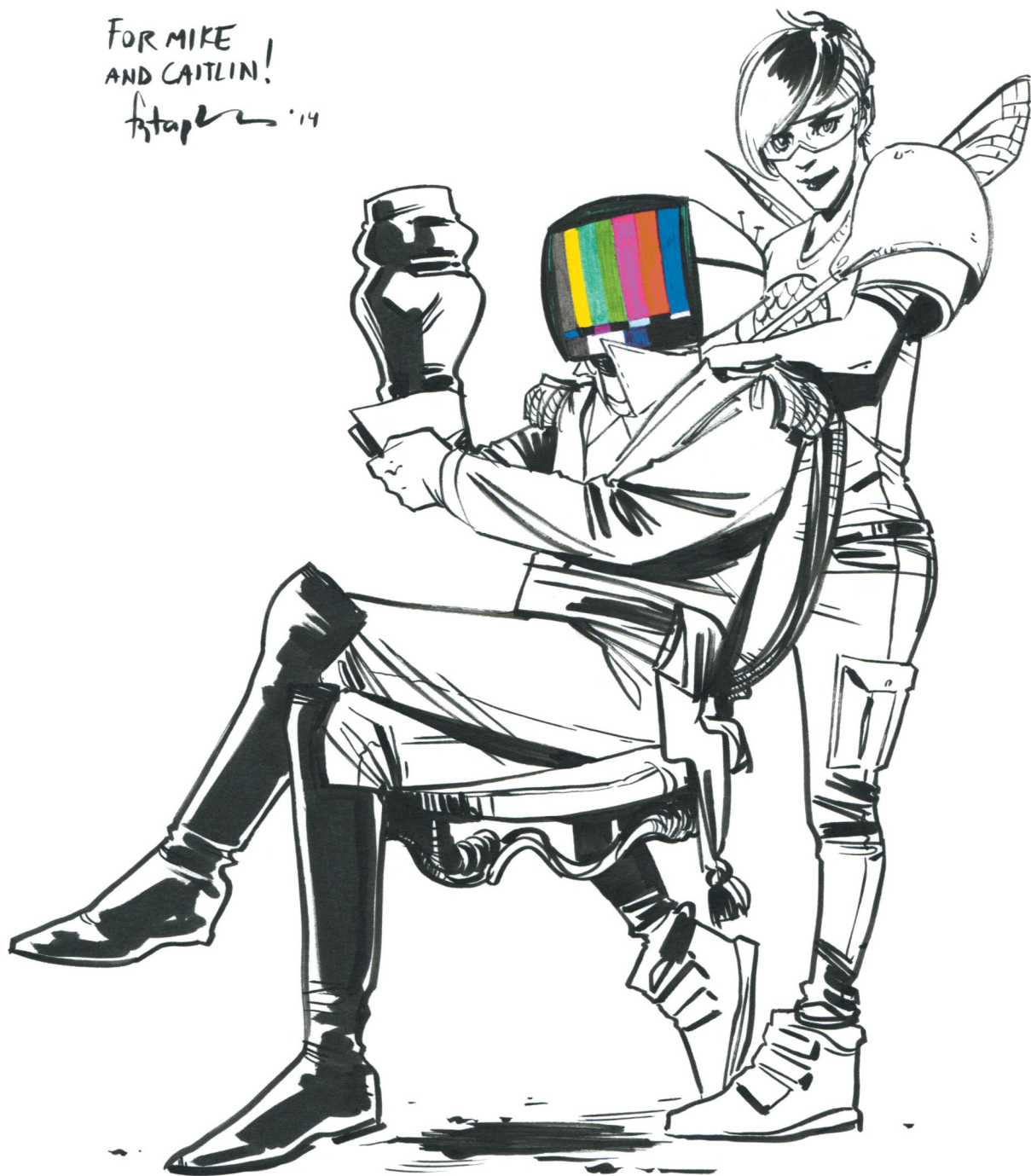
Fiona's full wraparound cover art...



...for the milestone Chapter Twenty-five.

FOR MIKE
AND CAITLIN!

fstaple '14



PAGE ONE

Page One, Panel One

A Landfallian PLATOON LEADER with majestic parrot wings shouts right in our fucking face.

1) Platoon Leader: SOLDIERS, FORM UP FOR INSPECTION!

Page Twenty-one, Panel Two

Pull out to the largest panel of the page to reveal that we're in MILITARY BARRACKS, where a DOZEN LANDFALLIAN SOLDIERS snap to attention in front of their modest bunks, as PRINCE ROBOT IV makes a dramatic entrance. This is obviously a flashback to IV's past.

No Text

Page Twenty-one, Panel Three

Push in on an impressed Prince Robot, as he starts walking down this long row of male and female troopers.

2) Prince Robot IV: Excellent work, Lieutenant.

3) Prince Robot IV: I commend you on running such a tight...

Page Twenty-one, Panel Four

But now Robot STOPS in front of a nervous REDHEADED FEMALE SOLDIER. He points at a small spot of RED on her armor.

4) Prince Robot IV: Private, what the hell is that?

5) Private: Um, blood, sir. Moony blood. From our battle on Whipp?

6) Private: I... I haven't had a chance to clean my costume yet.

Page Twenty-one, Panel Five

Push in on the Prince, as the image of a BILLOWING SMOKESTACK flashes across his face-screen.

7) Prince Robot IV: These are not fucking "costumes," these are **uniforms**, and they're what separate us from the **savages** that we're fighting.

8) Prince Robot IV: **Am I understood?**

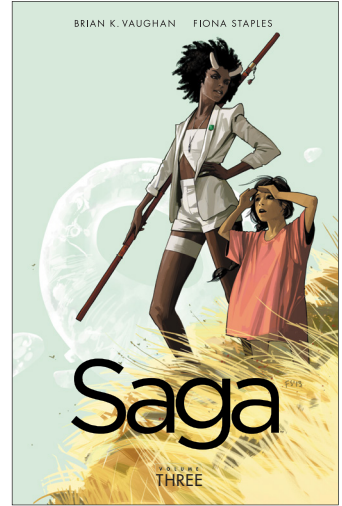
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