

U.S.S. CURTIS LEMAY

NEAR **MARS**



IN JOHN IT SAYS, 'THE LIGHT SHINES
IN THE DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS
HAS NOT OVERCOME IT.' NOT SOMEDAY.
NOW. EVEN OUT HERE.



JUDGMENT WILL COME TO THE
WICKED ONES. BUT JUDGMENT IS NOT
OURS TO WIELD, AND NOT OURS TO RUSH.
UNTIL THEN, WE DO NOT LET THE SERVANTS
OF DARKNESS TELL US WHO OR WHAT WE
ARE.

SOME OF US... INDEED,
ALL OF US CARRY SINS WE BELIEVE
WOULD CONDEMN US IF THEY WERE
KNOWN. BUT THE TRUTH IS THEY ARE
ALREADY KNOWN. THEY ARE KNOWN
TO GOD.

AS SUCH,
JUDGMENT BELONGS TO GOD
ALONE. AND THROUGH FAITH IN HIM AND
JESUS CHRIST, WE SEE THAT GOD'S
JUDGMENT IS NOT ONLY JUST... IT
IS MERCIFUL.



ONLY WITH FAITH IN GOD, AND
IN EACH OTHER. WILL WE TRULY
PREVAIL.



DISSENT

WATCHER STRONGHOLD

RHEA

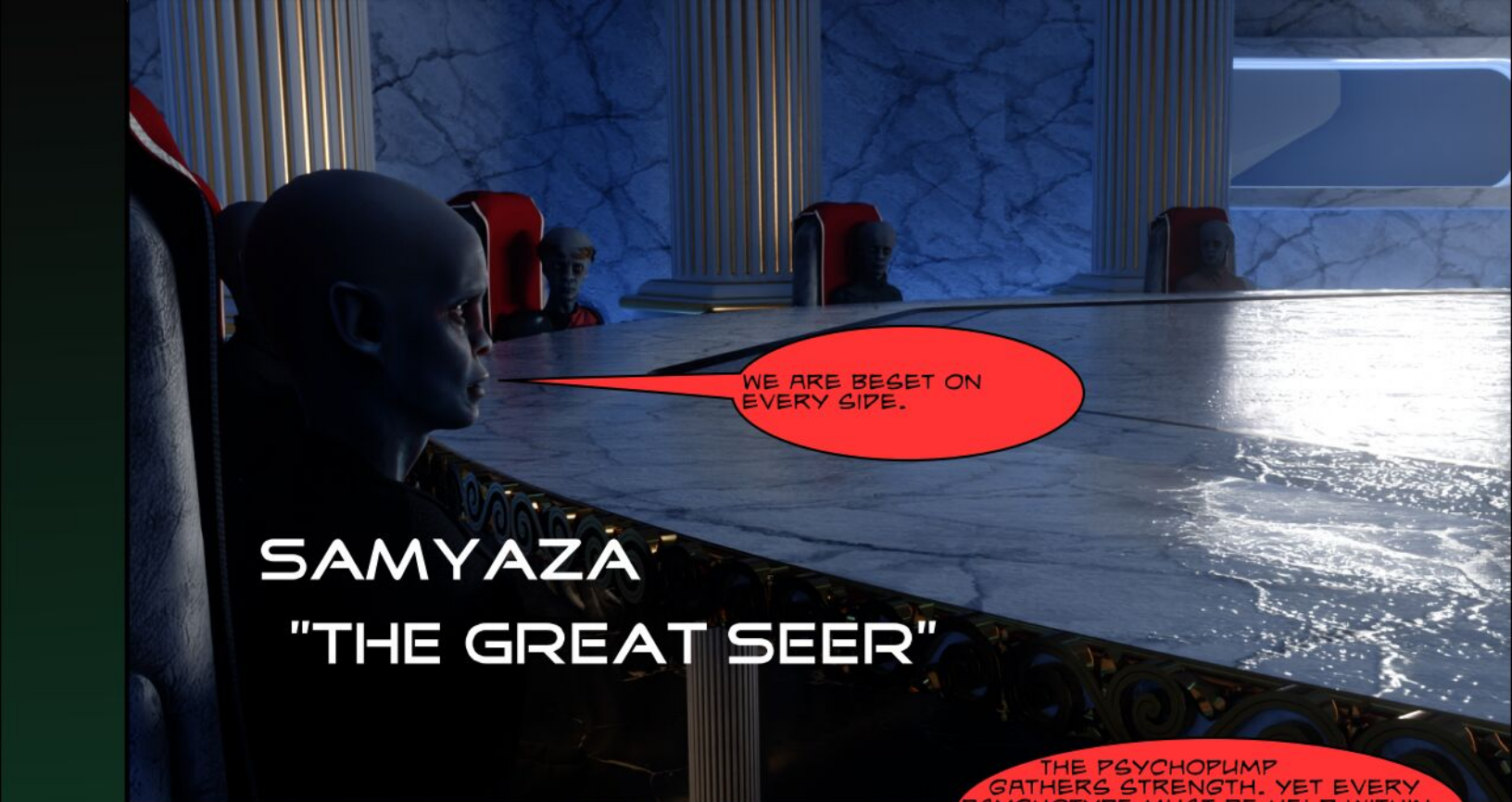
2ND LARGEST MOON OF

SATURN



MY BROTHERS. THE
HOUR OF THE OTHERS'
RETURN DRAWS NEAR.

AND STILL... MANKIND
ADVANCES AT A PACE WE HAVE
NEVER WITNESSED.



WE ARE BESET ON EVERY SIDE.

SAMYAZA "THE GREAT SEER"

THE PSYCHOPUMP GATHERS STRENGTH. YET EVERY PSYCHOTYPE MUST BE HELD WITHIN ITS BUFFER. WITHOUT THEM ALL, IT SHALL FAIL, AND WE SHALL BE DEFEATED.

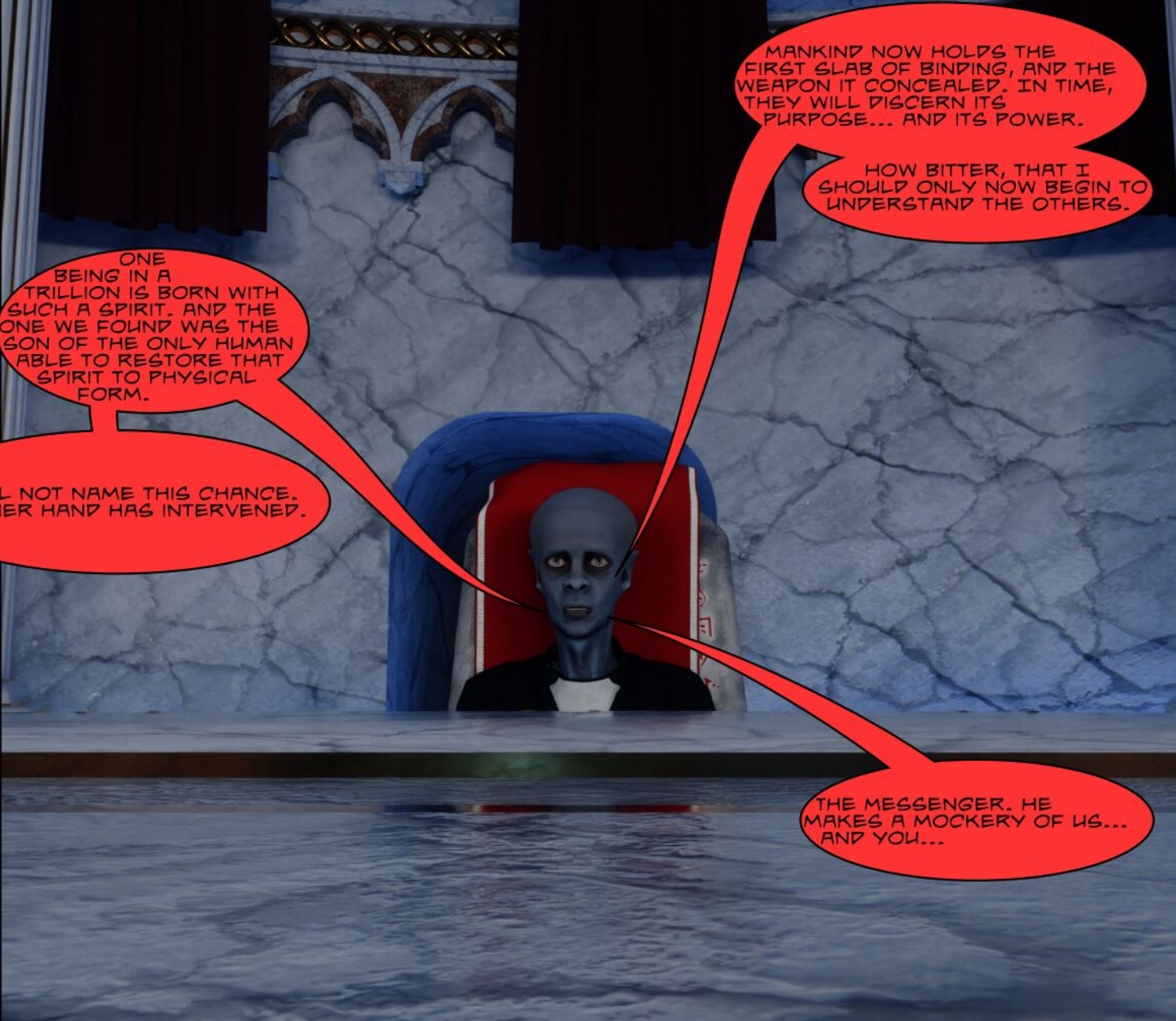
MANKIND SHALL FALL WITH US.

ADMIRAL KOK'ABIEL

SEER, MOST OF THE REQUIRED PATTERNS ARE OURS. THEY WILL SUFFICE. EVEN WITH THE GREAT PRINCE BESIDE THEM, THE OTHERS SHALL NOT PREVAIL.

THE PRINCE DOES NOT TROUBLE ME, ADMIRAL. WITHOUT HIS LEGIONS, HE CAN BE OVERCOME.

IT IS MANKIND THAT TROUBLES ME NOW.



MANKIND NOW HOLDS THE FIRST SLAB OF BINDING, AND THE WEAPON IT CONCEALED. IN TIME, THEY WILL DISCERN ITS PURPOSE... AND ITS POWER.

HOW BITTER, THAT I SHOULD ONLY NOW BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHERS.

ONE BEING IN A TRILLION IS BORN WITH SUCH A SPIRIT. AND THE ONE WE FOUND WAS THE SON OF THE ONLY HUMAN ABLE TO RESTORE THAT SPIRIT TO PHYSICAL FORM.

I WILL NOT NAME THIS CHANCE. ANOTHER HAND HAS INTERVENED.

THE MESSENGER. HE MAKES A MOCKERY OF US... AND YOU...

..YOUR VERY EXISTENCE IS A MOCKERY!

ITHIN OUR GRASP, AND IT WAS TORN FROM US!





SEER. YOU SUMMONED ME?

IF THE OTHERS
FORSAKE THE TERMS
THEY THEMSELVES
DECREED, THEN SO
SHALL WE.



I DID.

FOR ALL OUR
EFFORTS, THE FINAL
PSYCHOTYPE HAS
ESCAPED US.

I CHARGE YOU TO RECLAIM
IT. LET OUR EXILE END, AND
THE TYRANNY OF THE
OTHERS WITH IT.



HIS DEATH WAS ORDAINED.
WE SAW IT DONE.

HE CAN BE MADE TO KNOW
DEATH AGAIN, SEER.

THIS TIME,
SUBVERTING ONE OF
THEIR DELIVERY VEHICLES
WILL NOT SUFFICE.

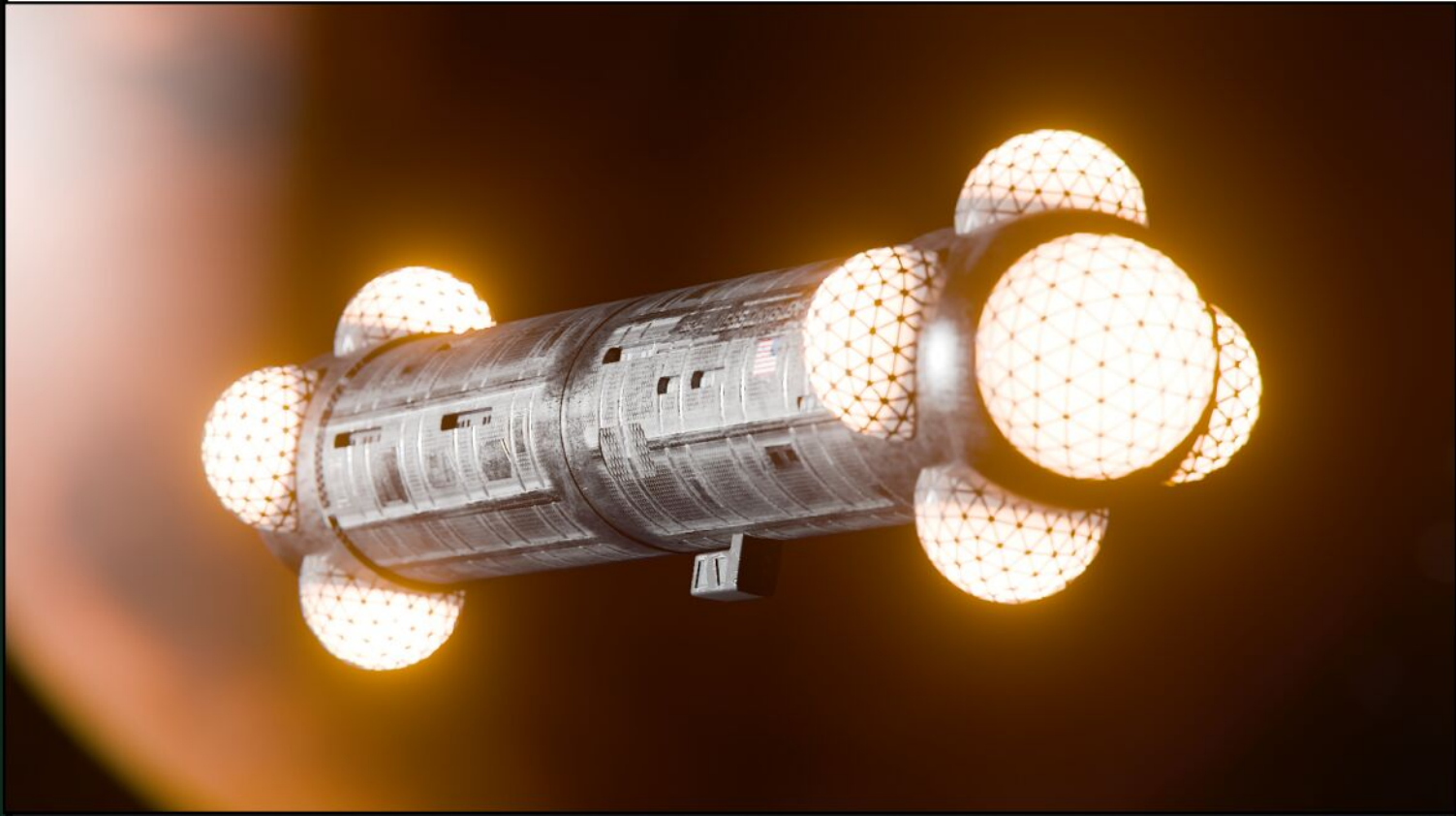


LONG HAVE I AWAITED THIS
DAY, SEER.

GRANT ME LEAVE TO ACT AS I
SEE FIT, AND HE SHALL BURN.

IT SHALL BE DONE,
SEER.

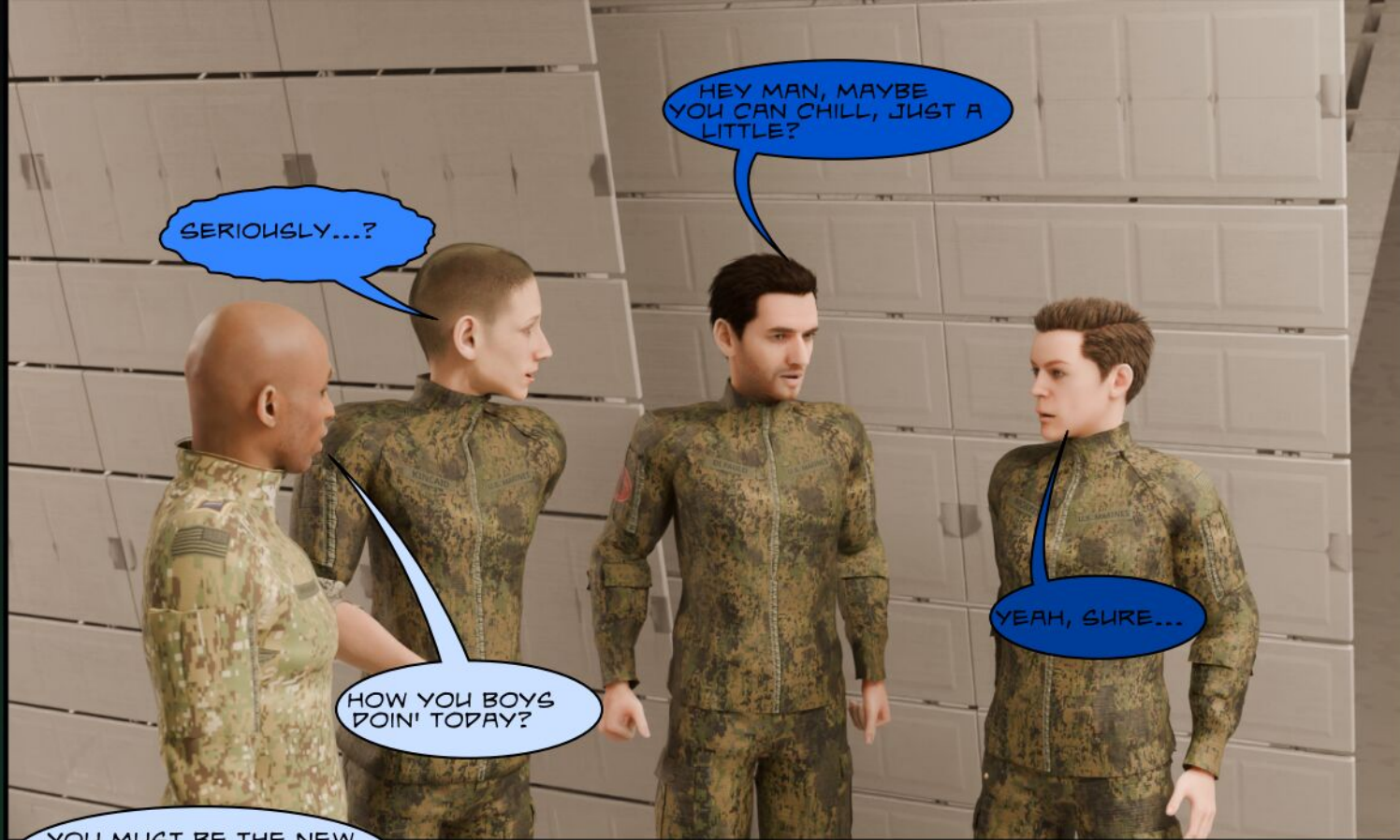
DO WHAT YOU
MUST. GO FORTH WITH
HASTE. OUR TIME GROWS
SHORT.



SO JIMMY, I DIDN'T
BURST INTO FLAMES!

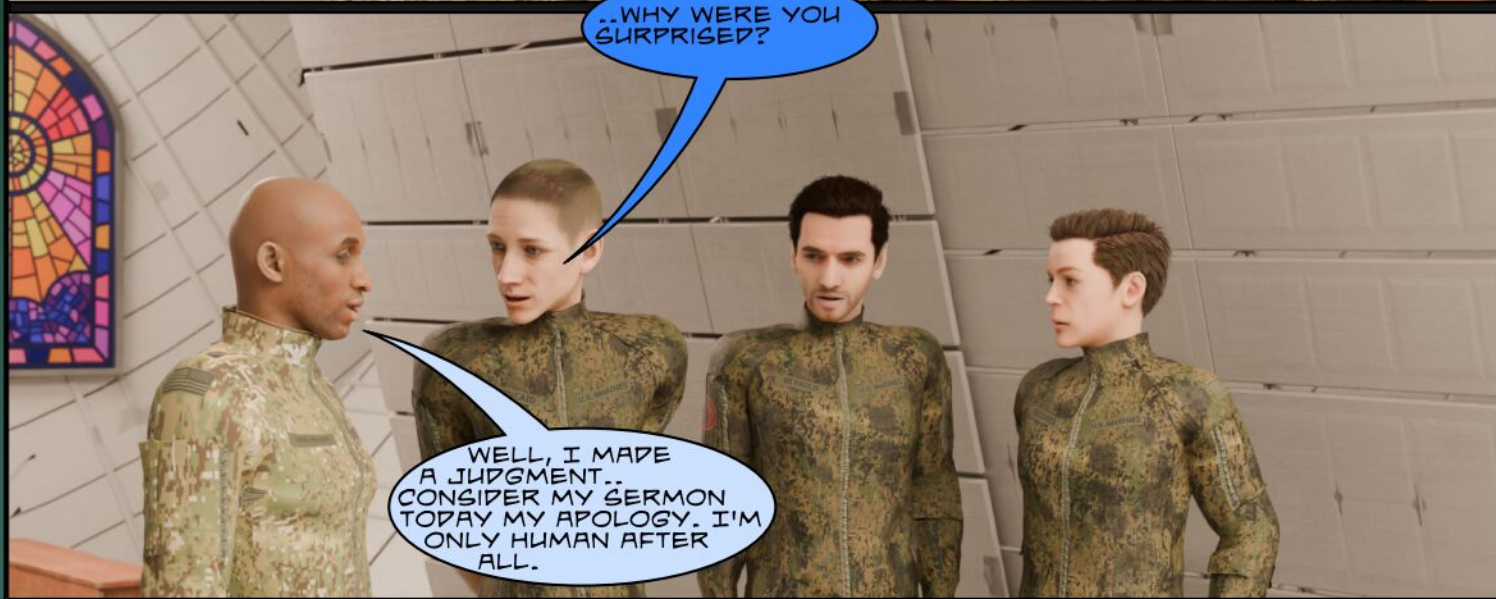
I KEPT MY WORD,
AND... WELL... ARE WE
GOOD?

YOU DID, AND
HONESTLY... THAT
SCARES ME EVEN
MORE..

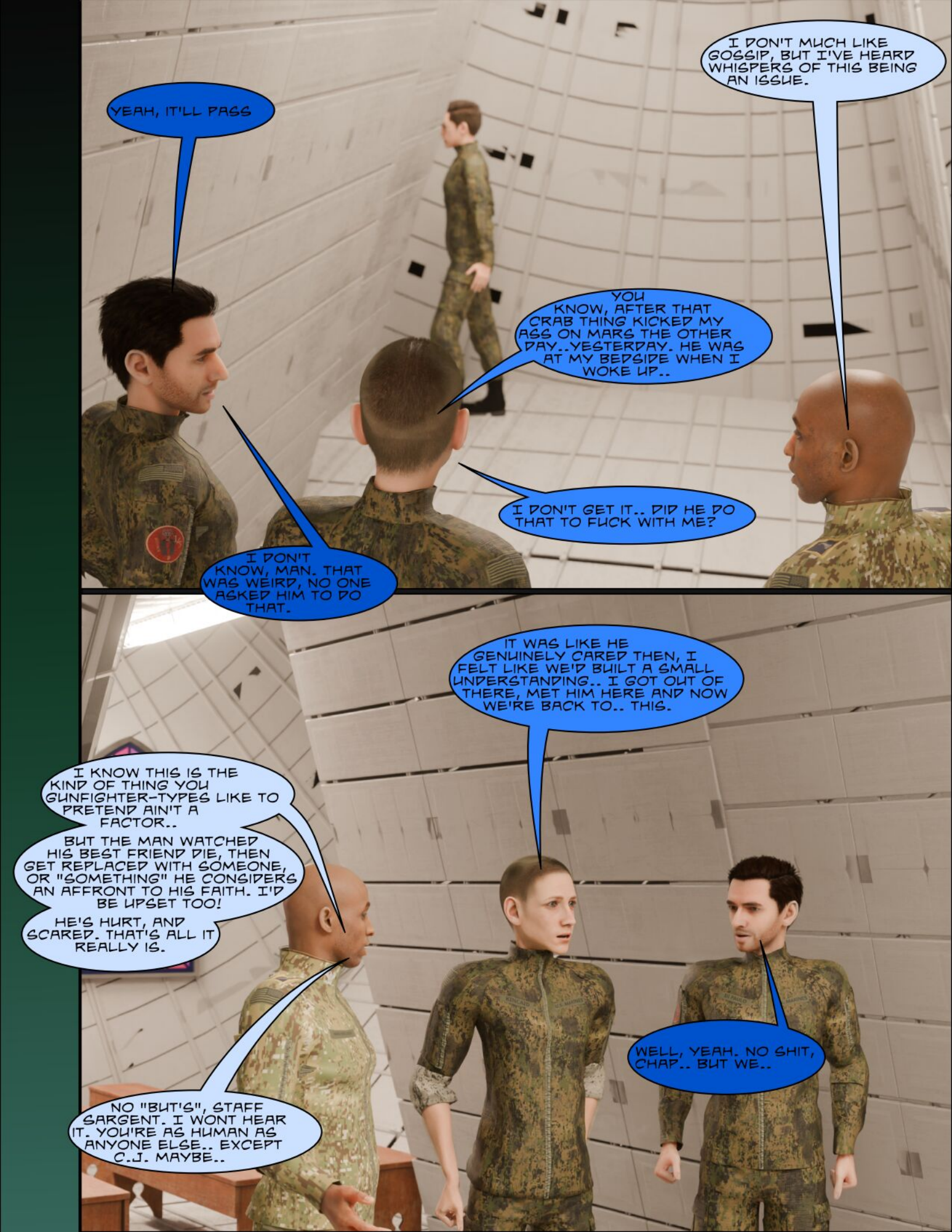


YOU MUST BE THE NEW ROBO-MARINE WE GOT! C.J. RIGHT?

GOTTA' BE HONEST. I WAS A LITTLE SURPRISED TO SEE YOU HERE, BUT IT WAS A WELCOME SURPRISE!







YEAH, IT'LL PASS

I DON'T MUCH LIKE GOSSIP, BUT I'VE HEARD WHISPERS OF THIS BEING AN ISSUE.

YOU KNOW, AFTER THAT CRAB THING KICKED MY ASS ON MARS THE OTHER DAY..YESTERDAY. HE WAS AT MY BEDSIDE WHEN I WOKE UP..

I DON'T GET IT.. DID HE DO THAT TO FUCK WITH ME?

I DON'T KNOW, MAN. THAT WAS WEIRD, NO ONE ASKED HIM TO DO THAT.

IT WAS LIKE HE GENUINELY CARED THEN, I FELT LIKE WE'D BUILT A SMALL UNDERSTANDING.. I GOT OUT OF THERE, MET HIM HERE AND NOW WE'RE BACK TO.. THIS.

I KNOW THIS IS THE KIND OF THING YOU GUNFIGHTER-TYPES LIKE TO PRETEND AIN'T A FACTOR..

BUT THE MAN WATCHED HIS BEST FRIEND DIE, THEN GET REPLACED WITH SOMEONE, OR "SOMETHING" HE CONSIDERS AN AFFRONT TO HIS FAITH. I'D BE UPSET TOO!

HE'S HURT, AND SCARED. THAT'S ALL IT REALLY IS.

WELL, YEAH. NO SHIT, CHAP.. BUT WE..

NO "BUT'S", STAFF SARGENT. I WON'T HEAR IT. YOU'RE AS HUMAN AS ANYONE ELSE.. EXCEPT C.J. MAYBE..



NO INSULT
INTENDED, SON!
YOU'RE NOT
ACTUALLY "HUMAN",
RIGHT?

I'D JUST LEAVE HIM
ALONE, AND DON'T
INSTIGATE HIM. I KNOW
YOU HAVE BEEN.

I'VE BEEN
AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO
KNOW HOW YOU GUYS ARE..
TRY TO PUT YOURSELF IN HIS
SHOES. MAYBE JUST SHUT UP.
THAT HELPS TOO,
SOMETIMES!

OHH, THANKS!

YEAH.. FAIR
ENOUGH.

YEAH, I'LL DO
THAT. THANKS,
CHAP.

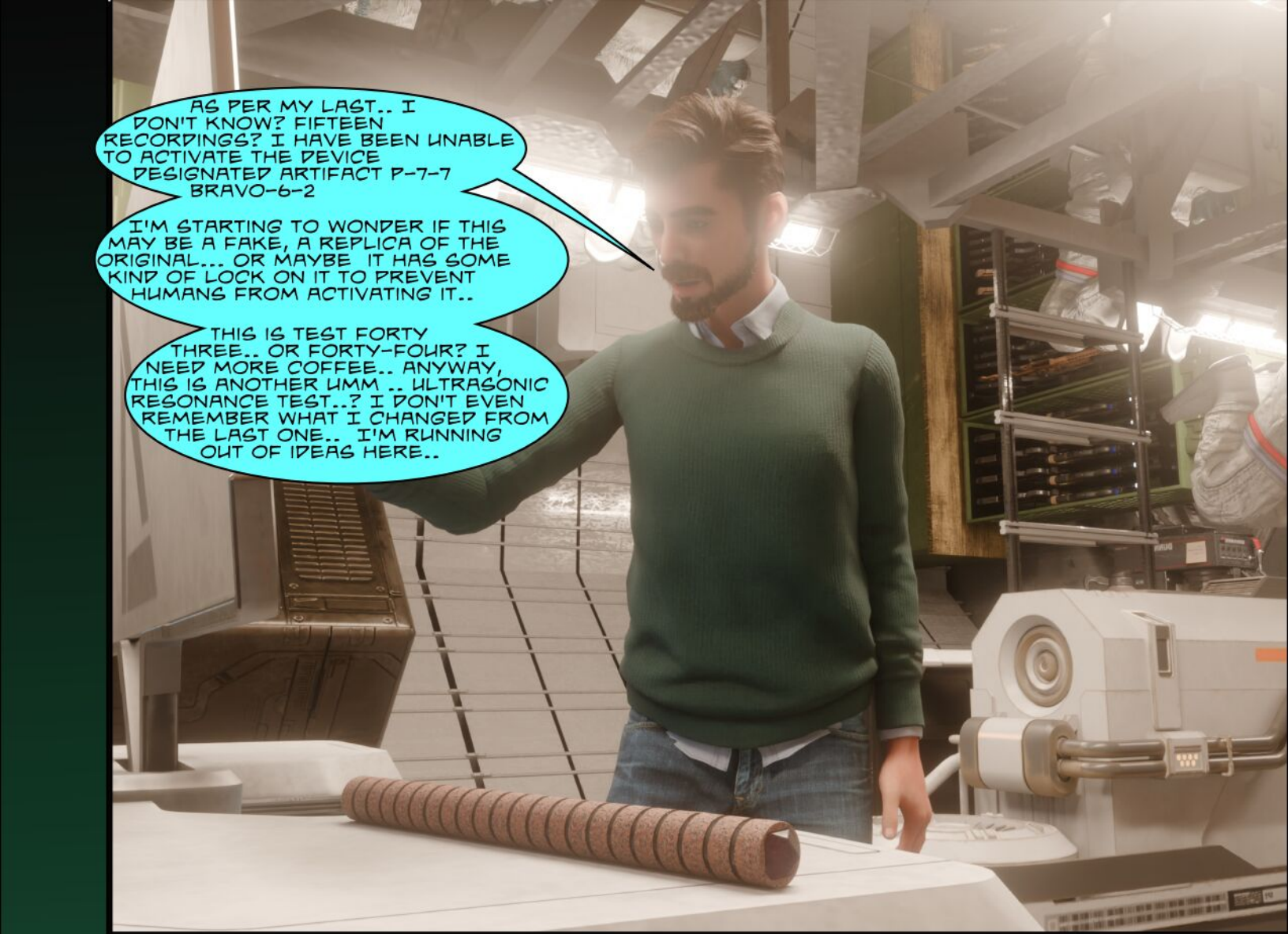
OHH! RIGHT! THE LAST
TWO DAYS HAVE BEEN
INSANE. I COMPLETELY
FORGOT.

IS IT COOL IF I GO LIE
DOWN? I'M PRETTY TIRED.

HEY, BEFORE I FORGET.
THE COLONEL WANTED ME TO
REMIND YOU TO STOP BY THE LAB AND
WATCH THAT TRAINING VIDEO. PALE WILL
PROBABLY JUST GIVE YOU A
TABLET.

YOU
DON'T NEED MY PERMISSION
TO SLEEP! WE'RE NOT REALLY ON A
SCHEDULE HERE. WE SORTA' JUST GET
CALLED WHEN WE'RE NEEDED.. WHICH
IS A LOT TO BE FAIR. SO SLEEP
WHEN YOU CAN!

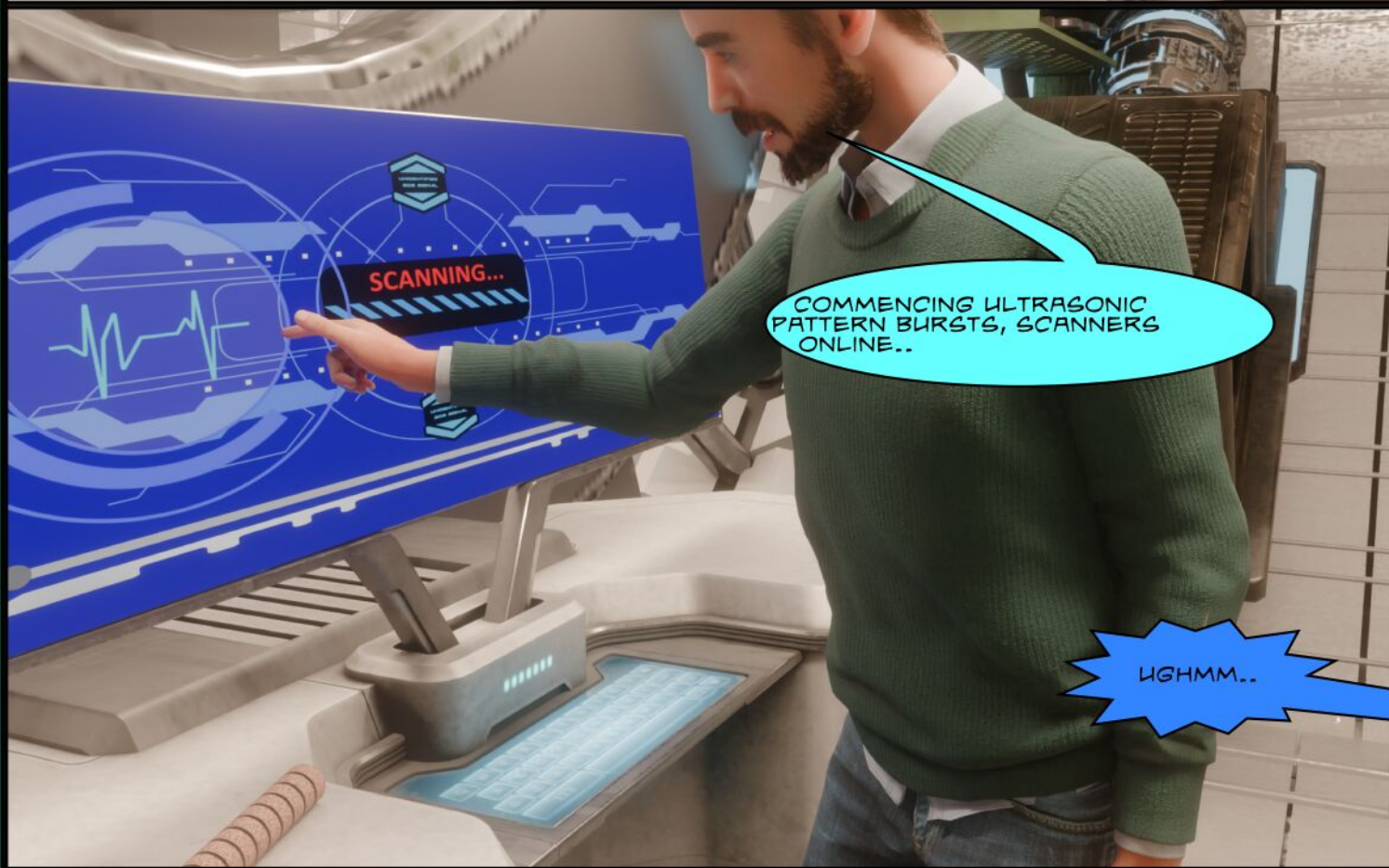
...JUST MAKE SURE TO STOP BY AND
GET A TABLET FROM OL' PALE THERE.
HE'LL BE HAPPY TO HELP!



AS PER MY LAST.. I
DON'T KNOW? FIFTEEN
RECORDINGS? I HAVE BEEN UNABLE
TO ACTIVATE THE DEVICE
DESIGNATED ARTIFACT P-7-7
BRAVO-6-2

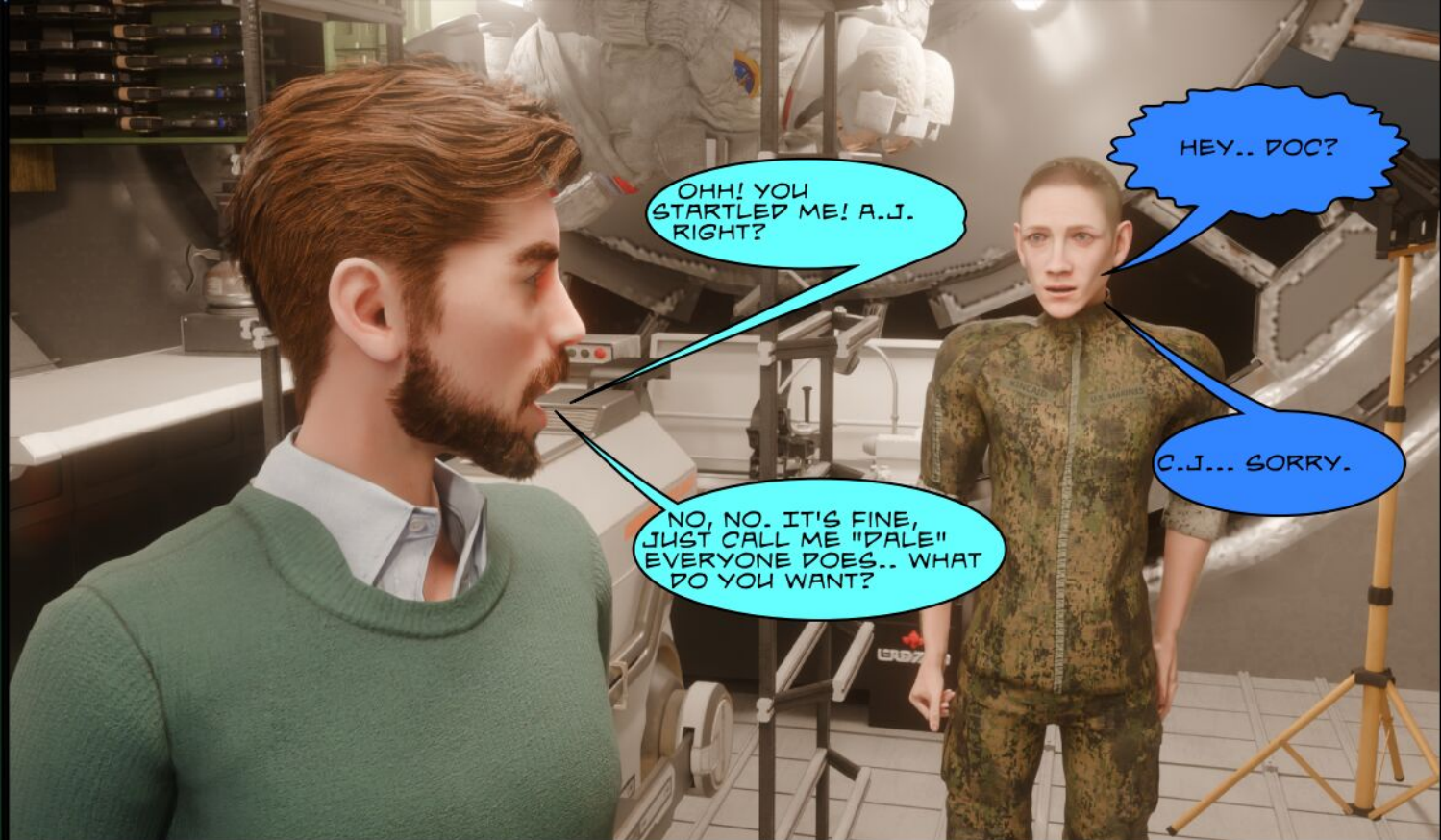
I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF THIS
MAY BE A FAKE, A REPLICA OF THE
ORIGINAL... OR MAYBE IT HAS SOME
KIND OF LOCK ON IT TO PREVENT
HUMANS FROM ACTIVATING IT..

THIS IS TEST FORTY
THREE.. OR FORTY-FOUR? I
NEED MORE COFFEE.. ANYWAY,
THIS IS ANOTHER UMM .. ULTRASONIC
RESONANCE TEST..? I DON'T EVEN
REMEMBER WHAT I CHANGED FROM
THE LAST ONE.. I'M RUNNING
OUT OF IDEAS HERE..



COMMENCING ULTRASONIC
PATTERN BURSTS, SCANNERS
ONLINE..

UGHMM..



OHH! YOU
STARTLED ME! A.J.
RIGHT?

HEY.. DOC?

C.J... SORRY.

NO, NO. IT'S FINE,
JUST CALL ME "DALE"
EVERYONE DOES.. WHAT
DO YOU WANT?



OK, COOL. THE
COLONEL WANTS ME
TO WATCH SOME
TRAINING VIDEO,
APPARENTLY YOU
HAVE IT?

NO, I
MADE IT BUT I
DON'T HAVE IT. DID
YOU NOT GET ISSUED
A TABLET? IT'S
PRE-INSTALLED ON
THEM ALL.

I DON'T
THINK SO, I HAVE
NO IDEA WHAT'S
GOING ON.

DID PAUL TELL YOU
TO DO THIS?

YEAH? HE SAID YOU
HAD IT?

FUCKING ASSHOLE, GREASY
ITALIAN PRICK... YELL AT ME
FOR NOT GETTING THINGS DONE
FAST ENOUGH, THEN
CONSTANTLY INTERRUPT ME!

NO, IT'S NOT YOUR
FAULT. HANG ON...
FRANK!! YOU HERE!?

JEEZ, SORRY...
I'LL JUST GO.

HEY DON'T
TOUCH THAT!

HEY, WHAT'S THIS
THING?

DIGITAL
HEART



OH MY GOD...

WHOA!!!

AS SOON AS HE PICKED UP THE DEVICE, C.J. FELT AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF PRESENCE, LIKE HE HAD JUST CONNECTED TO THE MINDS OF EVERYONE ON BOARD THE CURTIS LEMAY.

HE COULD FEEL WHAT THEY FELT, HEAR WHAT THEY HEARD, SEE WHAT THEY SAW, ALL AT ONCE.

HE ALSO FELT AN INCREDIBLY STRONG CONNECTION TO THE SHIP ITSELF. ONE THAT WENT BEYOND SIMPLE CONTROL. HE COULD ACTUALLY FEEL THE TEMPERATURE VARIATIONS IN THE HULL, THE COSMIC RADIATION BOUNCING OFF THE SHIP'S MAGNETIC SHIELDS.

WITH A SUDDEN FLASH ACCOMPANIED BY A LOW, HARMONIC HUM. THE CRYSTAL ATTACHED TO THE END OF THE DEVICE BEGAN TO FLOW MORE BRILLIANTLY.

AS IT DID, THE LIGHTS FLASHED OUT AND THE CONSTANT, LOW HUM OF THE SHIP'S EQUIPMENT CEASED. LEAVING ONLY THE GLOW OF THE CRYSTAL AND THE HUM OF THE DEVICE TO FILL THE ROOM.

C.J..
PUT THAT
BACK DOWN,
PLEASE...

C.J. COULD HEAR DALES WORDS, BUT HE HEARD THEM BEFORE THEY WERE SPOKEN. HE COULD ALSO FEEL THE FEAR BUILDING WITHIN HIM.

IT WAS THEN C.J. BEGAN TO REALIZE THE SCALE OF POWER HE WAS WIELDING.

IT WAS ULTIMATE. NEARLY UNLIMITED IN HIS HANDS. HE COULD KILL EVERYONE ON BOARD WITH A SINGLE THOUGHT WHILE HOLDING THIS DEVICE, AND HE KNEW IT.

IF HE WANTED TO. HE COULD TAKE OVER THE SHIP, END THE CONFLICT, AND BECOME THE IMMORTAL, GOD-RULER OF EARTH.

AS THE POWER OF THE ALIEN DEVICE ENVELOPED HIM, AND HIS CONTROL OVER HIS SURROUNDINGS GREW EXPONENTIALLY. HE FELT TRULY UNSTOPPABLE, AND RIGHTEOUSLY SO.

THE DEVICE SPOKE TO HIM. NOT DIRECTLY WITH WORDS, BUT WITH FEELING. IT WAS, IN SOME WAY TRYING TO TEMPT HIM, TO CONVINCE TO ACT ON THESE DESIRES.

C.J.. PLEASE STOP..

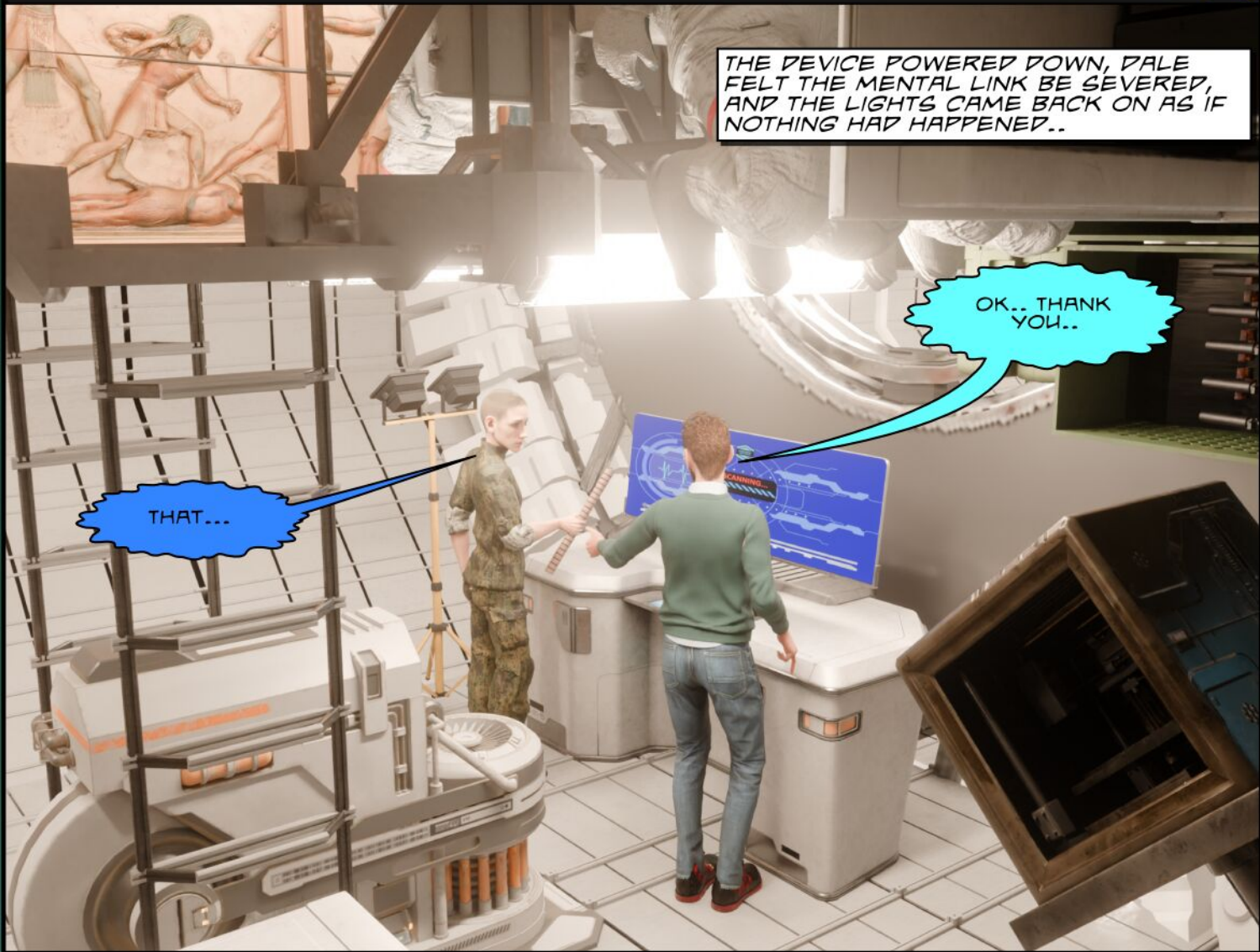
AS PALE REACHED OUT TO TAKE THE DEVICE, C.J. PULLED IT AWAY AND STARED BACK, HIS EYES STILL GLOWING A BRILLIANT BLUE..

DALE FROZE UPON THE REALIZATION THAT C.J. WAS SHARING HIS MIND WITH HIM IN THAT MOMENT..

IN FACT, FOR A MOMENT IT FELT TO DALE AS THOUGH HE WAS SHARING EVERYONE'S MIND ON BOARD. THOUGH HE HAD NO SENSE THEY WERE AWARE OF IT.

EXCEPT C.J. WHO'S PRESENCE HE COULD SENSE. IT WAS TERRIFYING, AND INVASIVE, YET, EVEN SO. EVEN WITH THE FEAR AND INTENSE APPREHENSION HE WAS FEELING, HE FELT TO MALICE, NO ANGER, OR ILL INTENT FROM C.J.

FOR AN INTENSE FEW SECONDS, C.J. STARED INTO DALE'S SOUL. AN EVIL SMIRK ON HIS FACE.



THE DEVICE POWERED DOWN, DALE FELT THE MENTAL LINK BE SEVERED, AND THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON AS IF NOTHING HAD HAPPENED..

OK.. THANK YOU..

THAT...

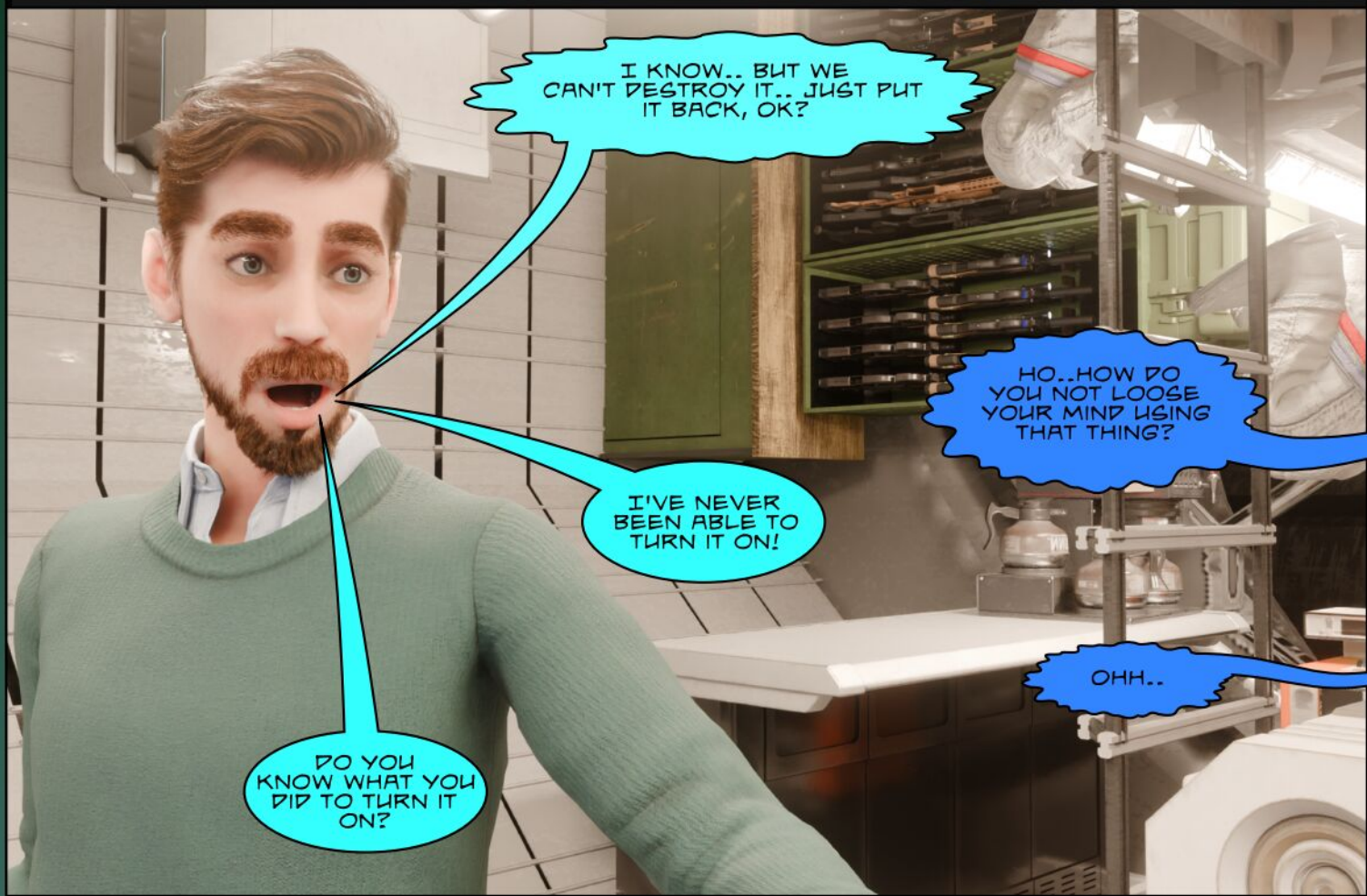


THAT... THIS
SHOULD BE
DESTROYED...

...RIGHT NOW.

DO... DO YOU
HAVE ANY
IDEA...?

WHAT THIS
THING IS? WHY
DOES THIS EVEN
EXIST!?



I KNOW... BUT WE
CAN'T DESTROY IT... JUST PUT
IT BACK, OK?

HO...HOW DO
YOU NOT LOOSE
YOUR MIND USING
THAT THING?

I'VE NEVER
BEEN ABLE TO
TURN IT ON!

DO YOU
KNOW WHAT YOU
DID TO TURN IT
ON?

OHH...

A man with brown hair and a beard, wearing a green sweater and blue jeans, stands on the left. A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a green and brown camouflage military uniform, stands on the right. They are in a futuristic laboratory with various machines and equipment. The man is gesturing towards a large screen on the left.

EITHER WAY,
LOOK AT THIS! THIS
IS THE DATA I'VE BEEN
LOOKING FOR! FOR
YEARS!

HOW DO YOU
MEAN?

IF THE ALIENS
ARE WALKING AROUND
WITH THOSE..THEY MUST
HAVE GONE CRAZY A
LONG TIME AGO.

NO...? I'M
FAIRLY SURE I
DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.
IT DID..

I DIDN'T
LIKE THAT...

UMMM... YOU
EVER TRY
COCAINE?

NO...?

WHY?

AHH, I SMOKED A
JOINT ONCE IN HIGH
SCHOOL.. THAT'S MY
EXPERIENCE WITH
DRUGS.

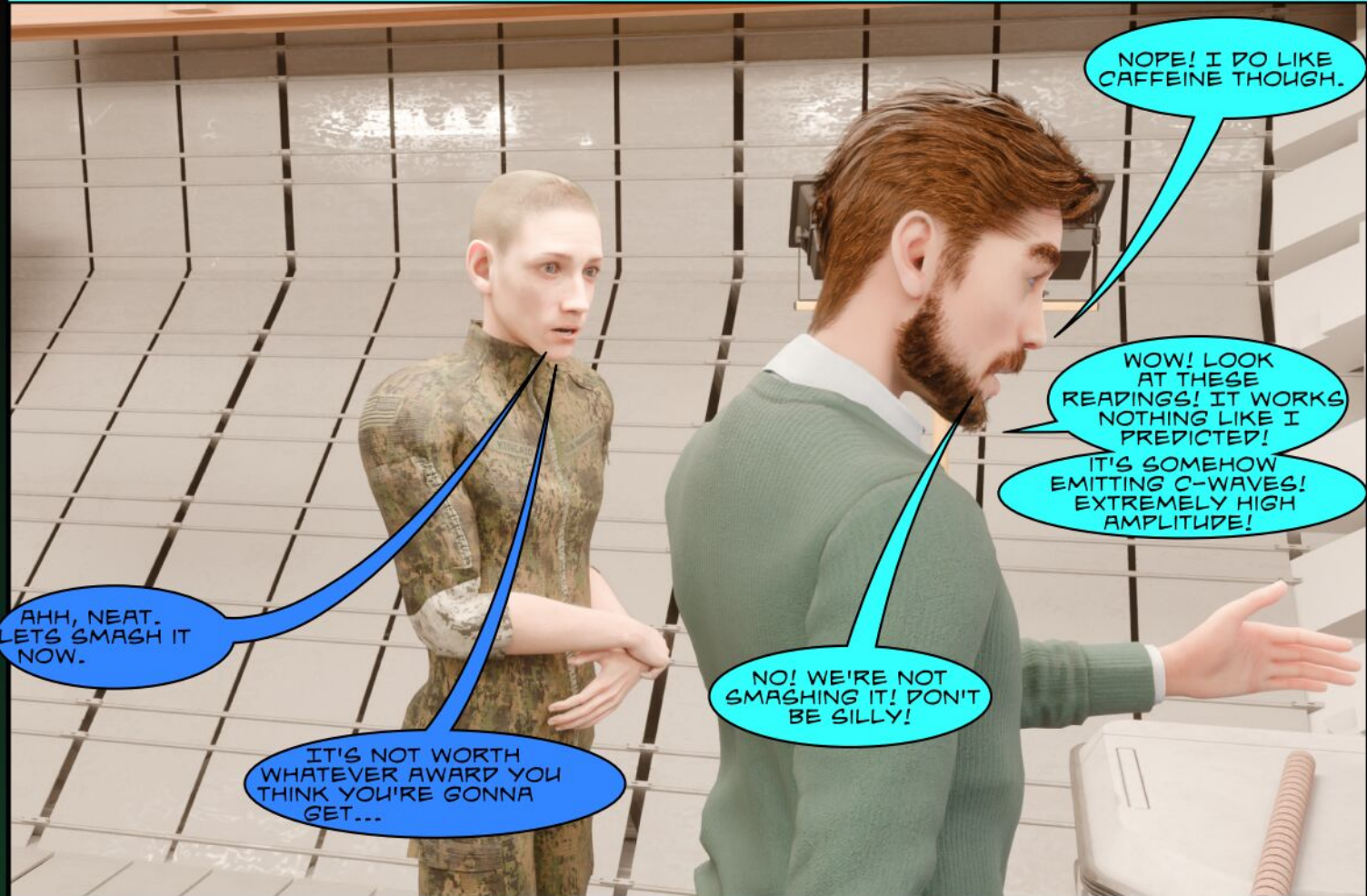
YEAH, NO.. ME
NEITHER.. OBVIOUSLY.
THAT'D BE VERY
IRRESPONSIBLE.. NOT
ONCE..

UMMM...

WELL, IT'S LIKE A
DRUG.. BUT WORSE.

AHH.. SO YOU'VE
NEVER DONE DRUGS.
THAT'S SURPRISING.

I DON'T KNOW. YOU JUST
SEEM LIKE THE KIND OF GUY WHO'D
BE INTO PSYCHEDELICS OR
SOMETHING.



NOPE! I DO LIKE
CAFFEINE THOUGH.

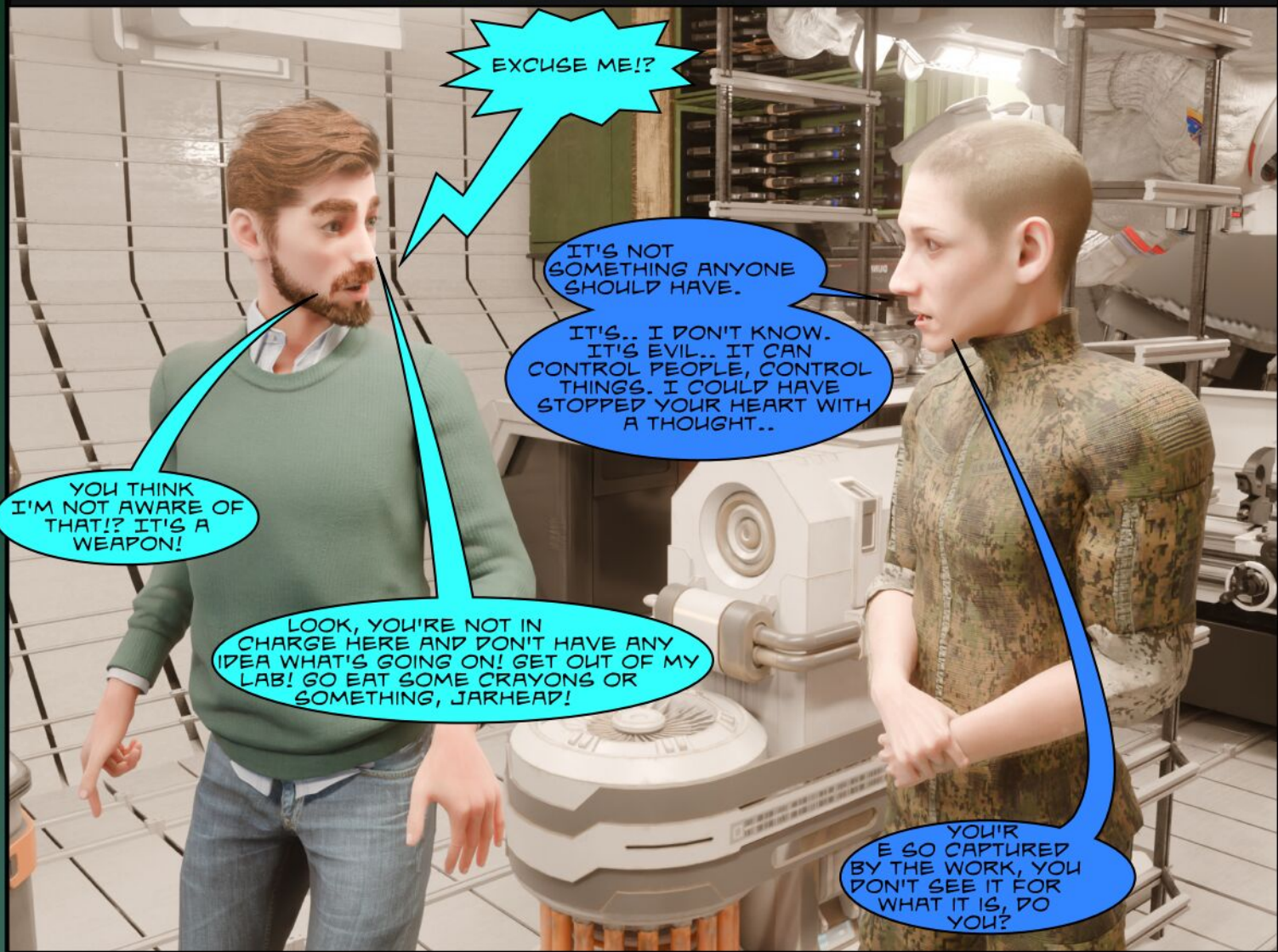
WOW! LOOK
AT THESE
READINGS! IT WORKS
NOTHING LIKE I
PREDICTED!

IT'S SOMEHOW
EMITTING C-WAVES!
EXTREMELY HIGH
AMPLITUDE!

AHH, NEAT.
LET'S SMASH IT
NOW.

IT'S NOT WORTH
WHATEVER AWARD YOU
THINK YOU'RE GONNA
GET...

NO! WE'RE NOT
SMASHING IT! DON'T
BE SILLY!



EXCUSE ME!?

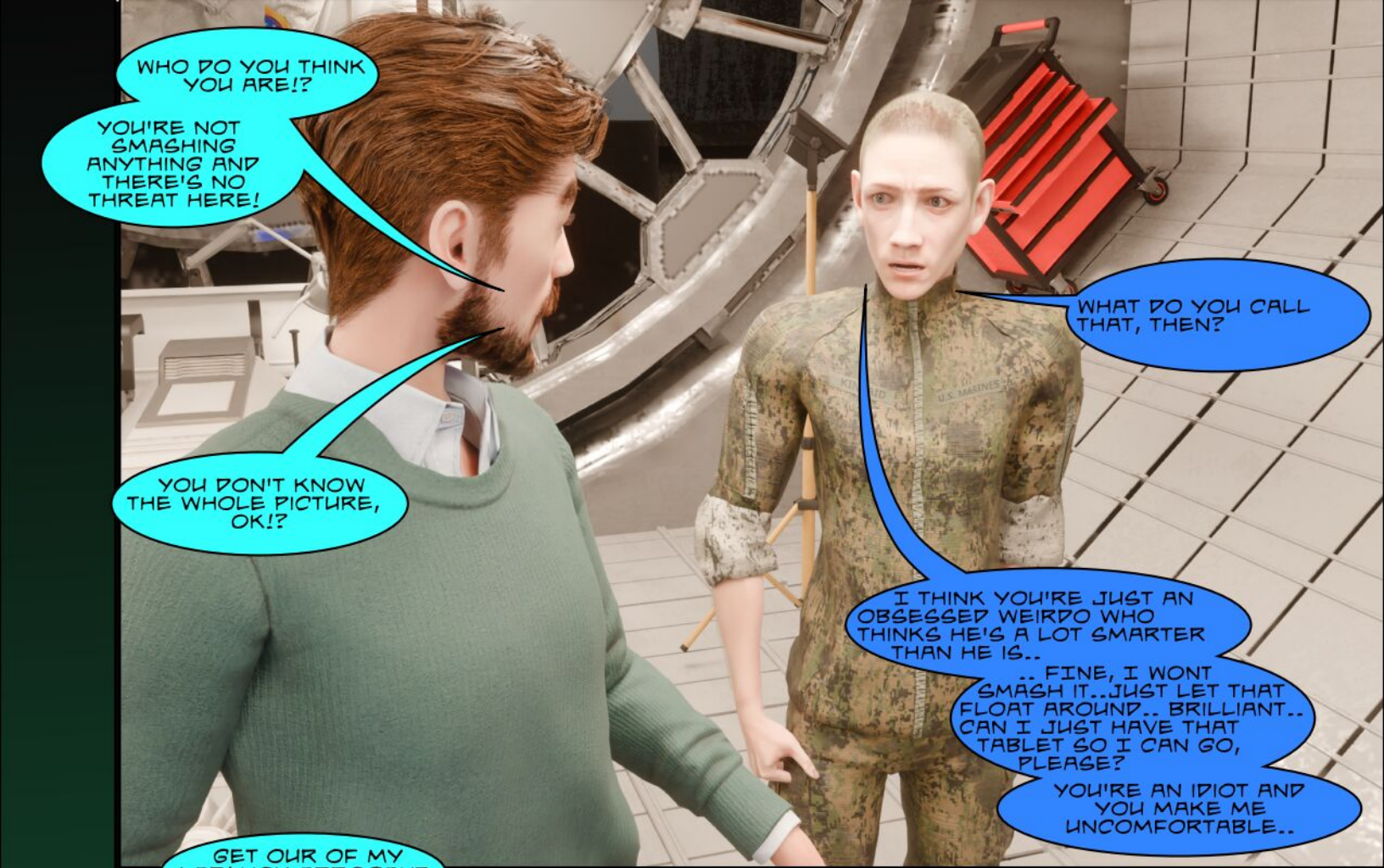
IT'S NOT
SOMETHING ANYONE
SHOULD HAVE.

IT'S... I DON'T KNOW.
IT'S EVIL.. IT CAN
CONTROL PEOPLE, CONTROL
THINGS. I COULD HAVE
STOPPED YOUR HEART WITH
A THOUGHT...

YOU THINK
I'M NOT AWARE OF
THAT!? IT'S A
WEAPON!

LOOK, YOU'RE NOT IN
CHARGE HERE AND DON'T HAVE ANY
IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON! GET OUT OF MY
LAB! GO EAT SOME CRAYONS OR
SOMETHING, JARHEAD!

YOU'RE
SO CAPTURED
BY THE WORK, YOU
DON'T SEE IT FOR
WHAT IT IS, DO
YOU?



WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!?

YOU'RE NOT SMASHING ANYTHING AND THERE'S NO THREAT HERE!

YOU DON'T KNOW THE WHOLE PICTURE, OK!?

WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT, THEN?

I THINK YOU'RE JUST AN OBSESSED WEIRDO WHO THINKS HE'S A LOT SMARTER THAN HE IS..

.. FINE, I WON'T SMASH IT..JUST LET THAT FLOAT AROUND.. BRILLIANT.. CAN I JUST HAVE THAT TABLET SO I CAN GO, PLEASE?

YOU'RE AN IDIOT AND YOU MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE..

GET OUT OF MY LAB! YOU ARROGANT PRICK!

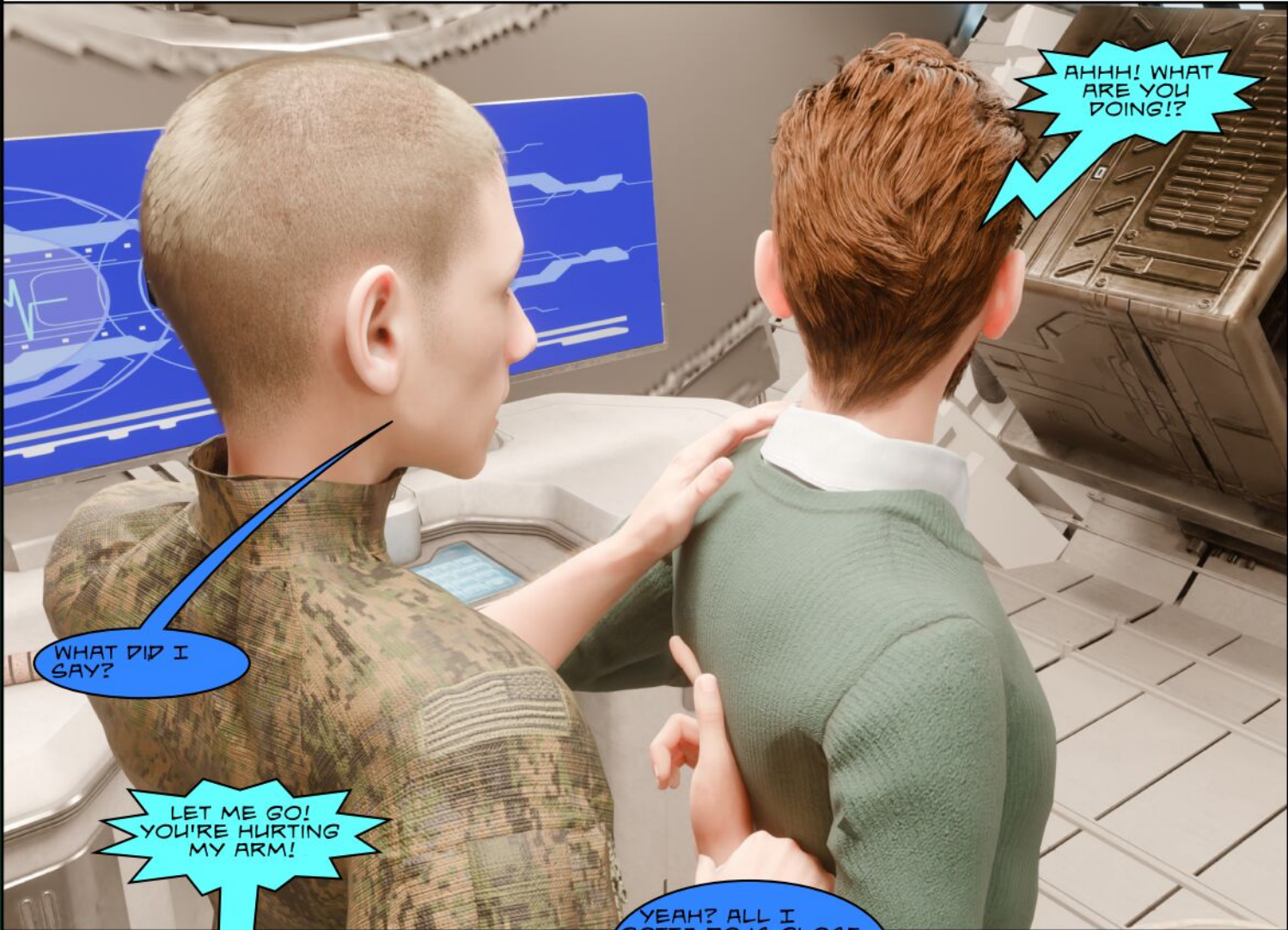
HOW DARE YOU! YOU DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ME!

MY WORK IS IMPORTANT AND I'M ACTUALLY VERY, VERY GOOD AT IT!

THIS IS **MY** LAB, BUDDY! WHY DON'T YOU MAKE ME?!

GET YOUR HAND OUT OF MY FACE.. RIGHT NOW.

OK.

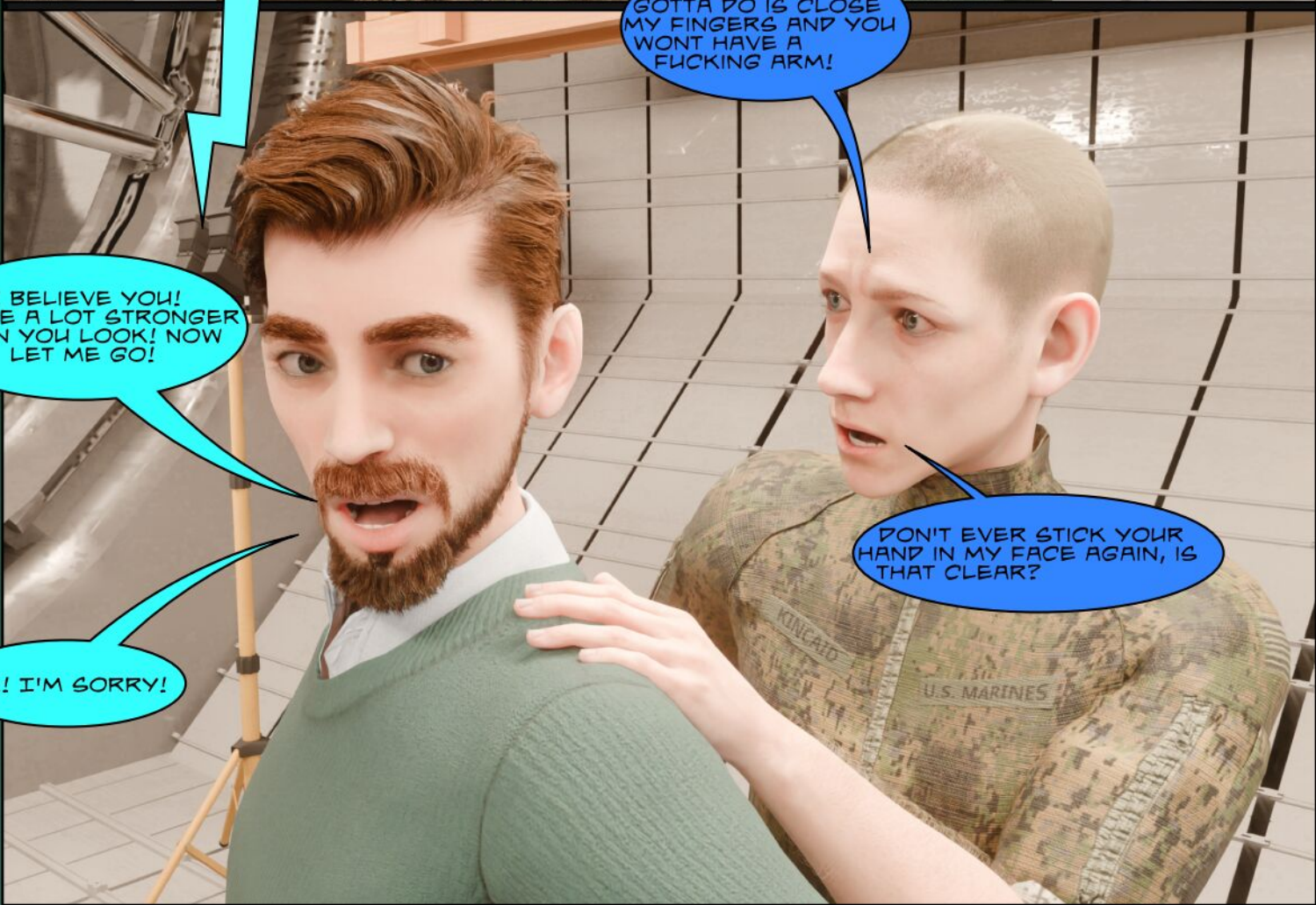


AAAAH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

WHAT DID I SAY?

LET ME GO!
YOU'RE HURTING MY ARM!

YEAH? ALL I GOTTA DO IS CLOSE MY FINGERS AND YOU WONT HAVE A FUCKING ARM!



I BELIEVE YOU!
YOU'RE A LOT STRONGER THAN YOU LOOK! NOW LET ME GO!

OK! I'M SORRY!

DON'T EVER STICK YOUR HAND IN MY FACE AGAIN, IS THAT CLEAR?



HEY... ARE YOU
ALRIGHT? YOU DON'T
LOOK GOOD...

IT'S A WEAPON OF SORTS.
ACTUALLY IT CAN DO A LOT! IT'S
WHAT THEY USE TO KEEP US FROM
JUST DROPPING A FEW HUNDRED
NUKES ON DISSSENT.

"NUKES ON
DISSSENT"?

I DON'T KNOW! I FEEL
LIKE I'M... COMING BACK
TO NROMAL.. I ALSO
HAVEN'T SLEPT IN LIKE 3
DAYS..
..WHAT THE
FUCK IS THAT
THING!?

YOU HAVN'T SEEN
THE VIDEO.. THAT'S
WHY YOU CAME DOWN
HERE.. RIGHT..

DECENT.. IT'S THEIR
STRONGHOLD. IT'S JUST A
BIG MOON BASE, BASICALLY. ON
RHEA, ONE OF SATURN'S
MOONS.

THE 2ND LARGEST,
ACTUALLY. OHH! A REALLY
INTERESTING FACT ABOUT THE
GEOLOGY OF RHEA! DID
YOU KNOW...

OK! I'M
SURE IT'S
FASCINATING.. I
DON'T CARE..
"DECENT"?

RIGHT!

THAT'S ABOUT IT. IT'S
A MOON BASE. IT'S WHERE
THEY LIVE.. WE'D LIKE TO DROP
A FEW THOUSAND MEGATONS
ON IT, BUT WE CAN'T GET
CLOSE.

AND... TO GET
CLOSE YOU NEED TO
LEARN HOW THIS THING
WORKS..

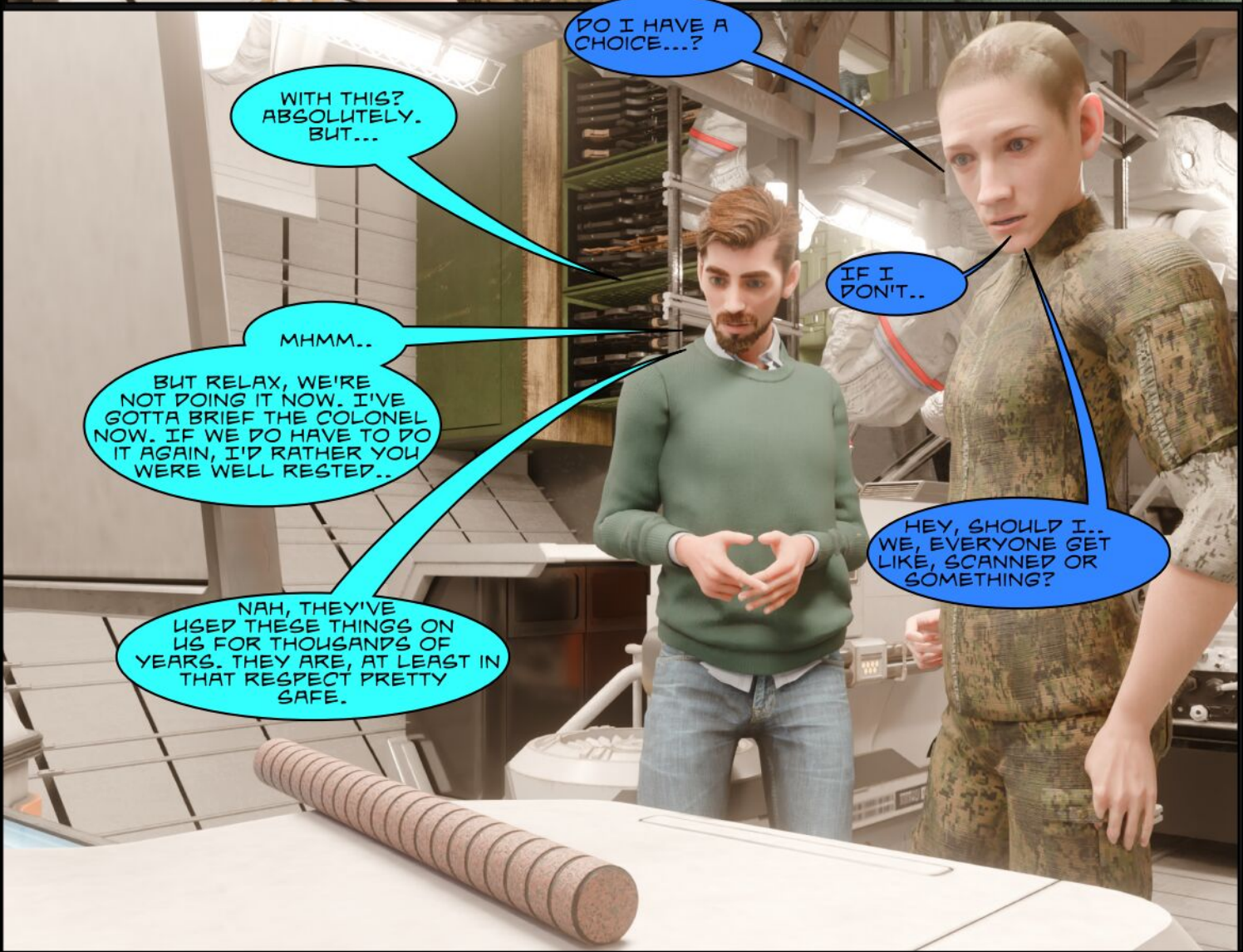
..AND I'M
WILLING TO BET IT HAS
TO BE ON TO BE
STUDIED..



I GOTTA DO IT AGAIN..?

MORE OR LESS, YES. WHICH MEANS...

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN HANDLE IT?



DO I HAVE A CHOICE...?

WITH THIS? ABSOLUTELY. BUT...

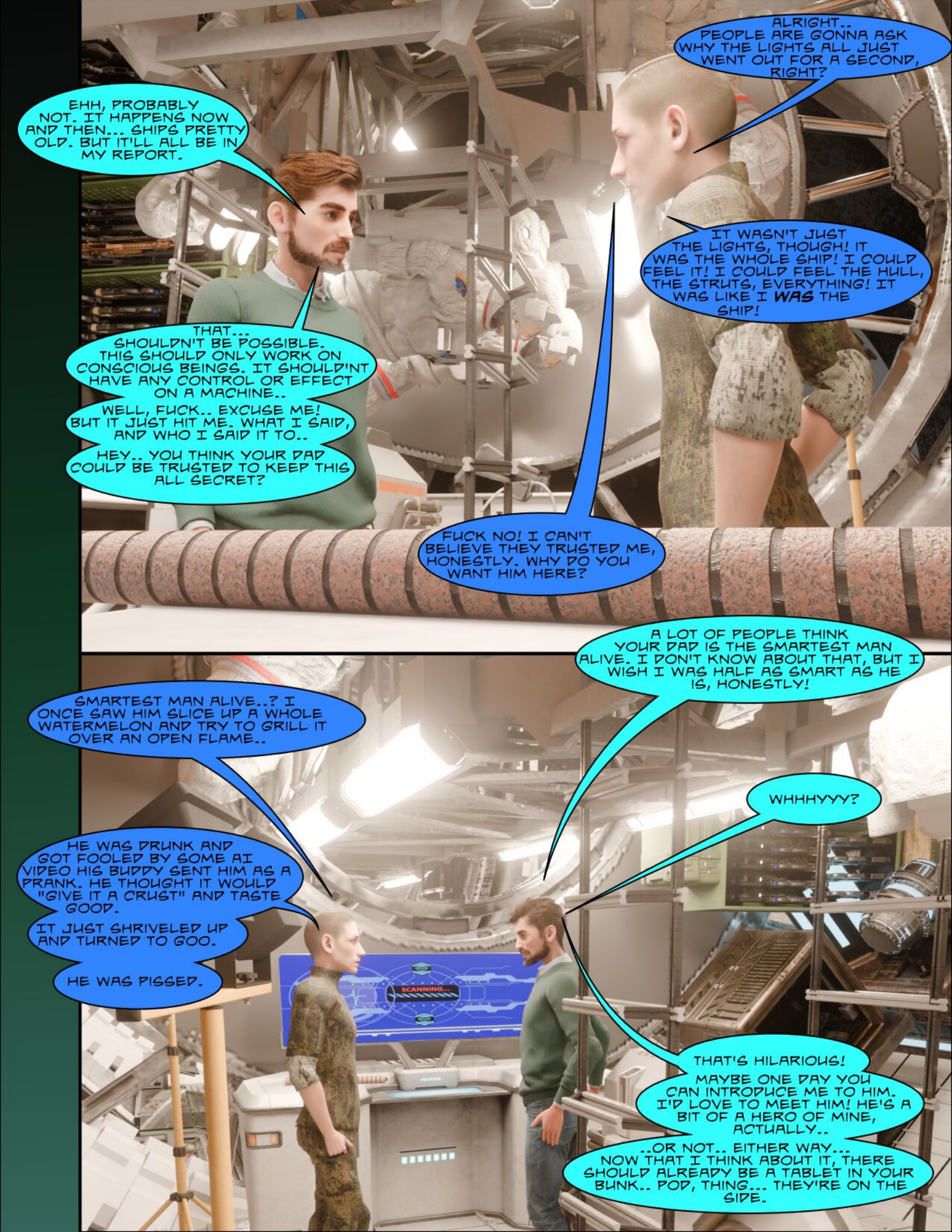
MHMM..

BUT RELAX, WE'RE NOT DOING IT NOW. I'VE GOTTA BRIEF THE COLONEL NOW. IF WE DO HAVE TO DO IT AGAIN, I'D RATHER YOU WERE WELL RESTED..

NAH, THEY'VE USED THESE THINGS ON US FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. THEY ARE, AT LEAST IN THAT RESPECT PRETTY SAFE.

IF I DON'T..

HEY, SHOULD I.. WE, EVERYONE GET LIKE, SCANNED OR SOMETHING?



EHH, PROBABLY NOT. IT HAPPENS NOW AND THEN... SHIPS PRETTY OLD. BUT IT'LL ALL BE IN MY REPORT.

ALRIGHT.. PEOPLE ARE GONNA ASK WHY THE LIGHTS ALL JUST WENT OUT FOR A SECOND, RIGHT?

IT WASN'T JUST THE LIGHTS, THOUGH! IT WAS THE WHOLE SHIP! I COULD FEEL IT! I COULD FEEL THE HULL, THE STRUTS, EVERYTHING! IT WAS LIKE I **WAS** THE SHIP!

THAT... SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE. THIS SHOULD ONLY WORK ON CONSCIOUS BEINGS. IT SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY CONTROL OR EFFECT ON A MACHINE..

WELL, FUCK.. EXCUSE ME! BUT IT JUST HIT ME. WHAT I SAID, AND WHO I SAID IT TO..

HEY.. YOU THINK YOUR DAD COULD BE TRUSTED TO KEEP THIS ALL SECRET?

FUCK NO! I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY TRUSTED ME, HONESTLY. WHY DO YOU WANT HIM HERE?

A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK YOUR DAD IS THE SMARTEST MAN ALIVE. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, BUT I WISH I WAS HALF AS SMART AS HE IS, HONESTLY!

SMARTEST MAN ALIVE..? I ONCE SAW HIM SLICE UP A WHOLE WATERMELON AND TRY TO GRILL IT OVER AN OPEN FLAME..

HE WAS DRUNK AND GOT FOOLED BY SOME AT VIDEO HIS BUDDY SENT HIM AS A PRANK. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD "GIVE IT A CRUST" AND TASTE GOOD.

IT JUST SHRIVELED UP AND TURNED TO GOO.

HE WAS PISSED.

WHHHYYYY?

THAT'S HILARIOUS! MAYBE ONE DAY YOU CAN INTRODUCE ME TO HIM. I'D LOVE TO MEET HIM! HE'S A BIT OF A HERO OF MINE, ACTUALLY..

..OR NOT.. EITHER WAY... NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THERE SHOULD ALREADY BE A TABLET IN YOUR BUNK.. POD, THING... THEY'RE ON THE SIDE.



OHH, MAYBE.. I
ACTUALLY HAVEN'T BEEN
IN THERE YET..

UHM.. MAYBE WE CAN
NOT MENTION THAT WHOLE
THING WITH THE ARM IN
YOUR REPORT?

OK, COOL..
THANKS. ANOTHER
ASSAULT CHARGE IS THE
LAST THING I NEED.. I
MIGHT HAVE
OVER-REACTED.

OHH, WELL HEY.
WE'RE BOTH PRETTY
TIRED. I'M GOING ON 24
HOURS MYSELF, PLUS THE
WHOLE "ALIEN DEVICE"
ASPECT.. NO HARD
FEELINGS.

SCANNING...

HMM.. YEAH,
YOU KINDA DID..

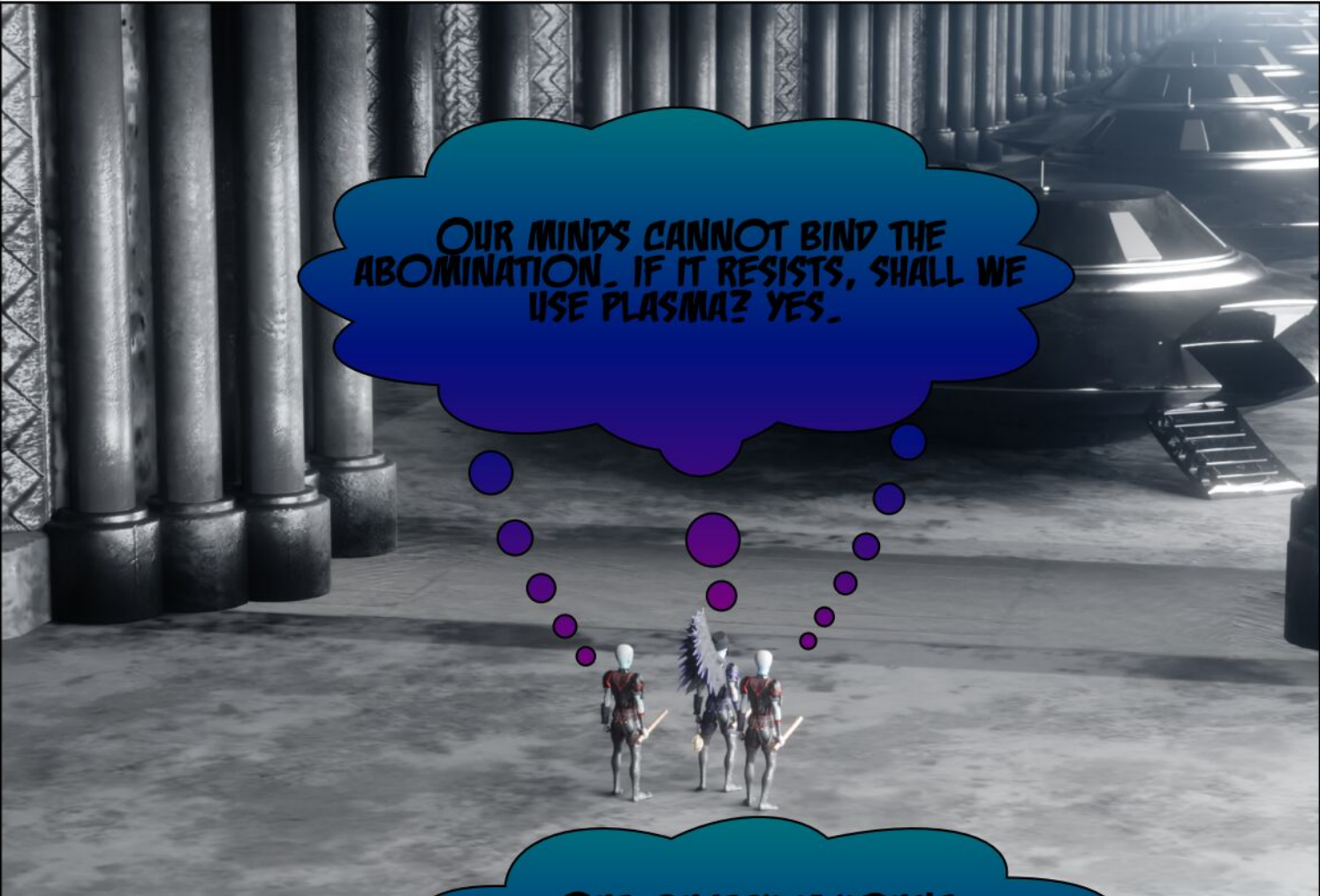
"ANOTHER"?... UHH,
YEAH, A LITTLE..

BUT IT'S OK. I
PROBABLY
DESERVED IT..

WELL, GO GET
SOME REST. I'VE
GOT A LOT OF DATA
TO GO OVER.

IF I NEED IT
TURNED ON AGAIN,
I'LL LET YOU
KNOW.

ALRIGHT, TRY
AND NOT TO NEED
THAT, YEAH? I REALLY
DON'T CARE TO DO
THAT AGAIN.

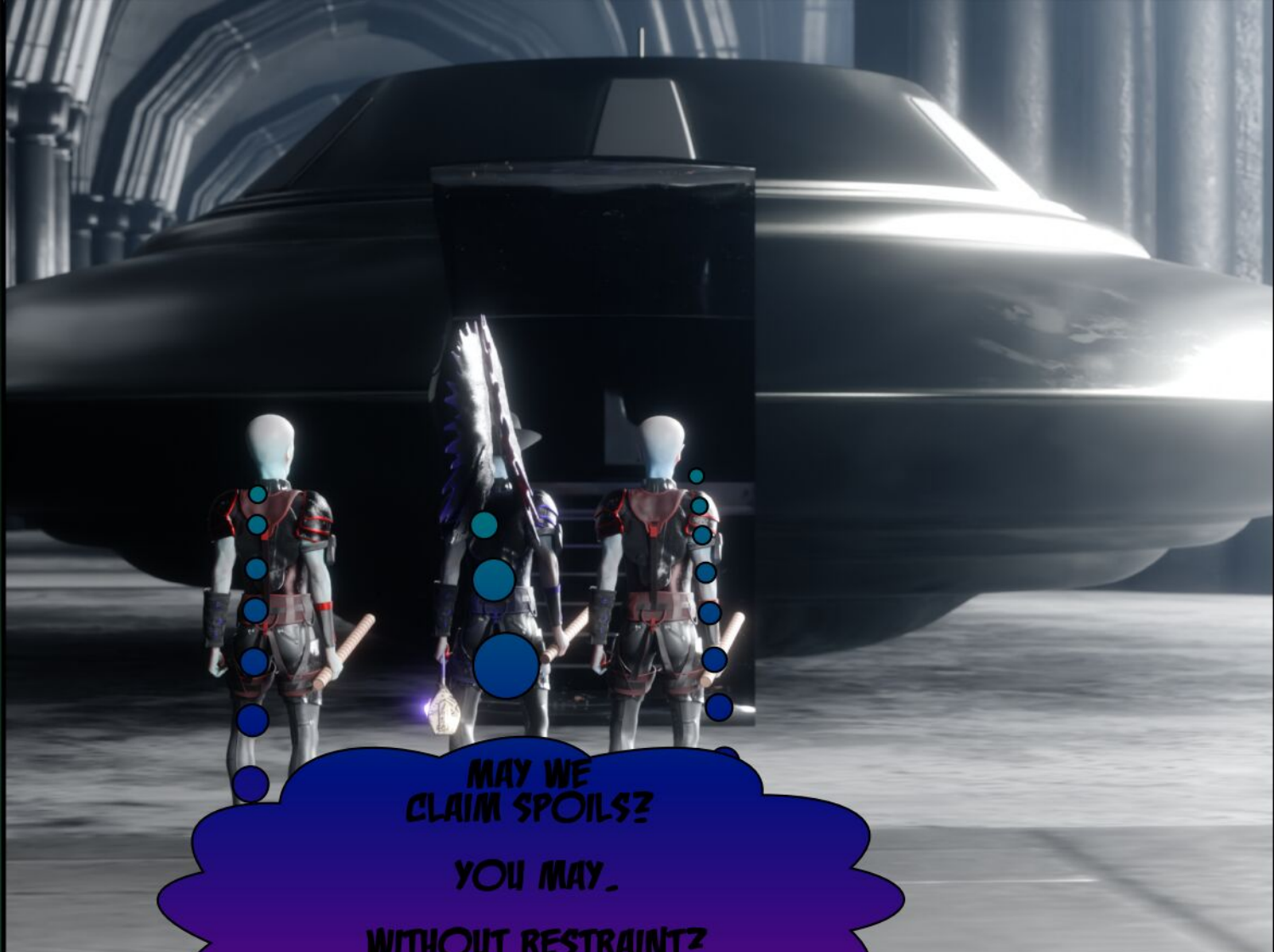


OUR MINDS CANNOT BIND THE
ABOMINATION. IF IT RESISTS, SHALL WE
USE PLASMA? YES.



OUR QUARRY IS YOUNG,
UNTRIED, AND WEAK. HE SHALL FALL
WITH LITTLE EFFORT.
AS YOU SAY, MASTER.





MAY WE
CLAIM SPOILS?

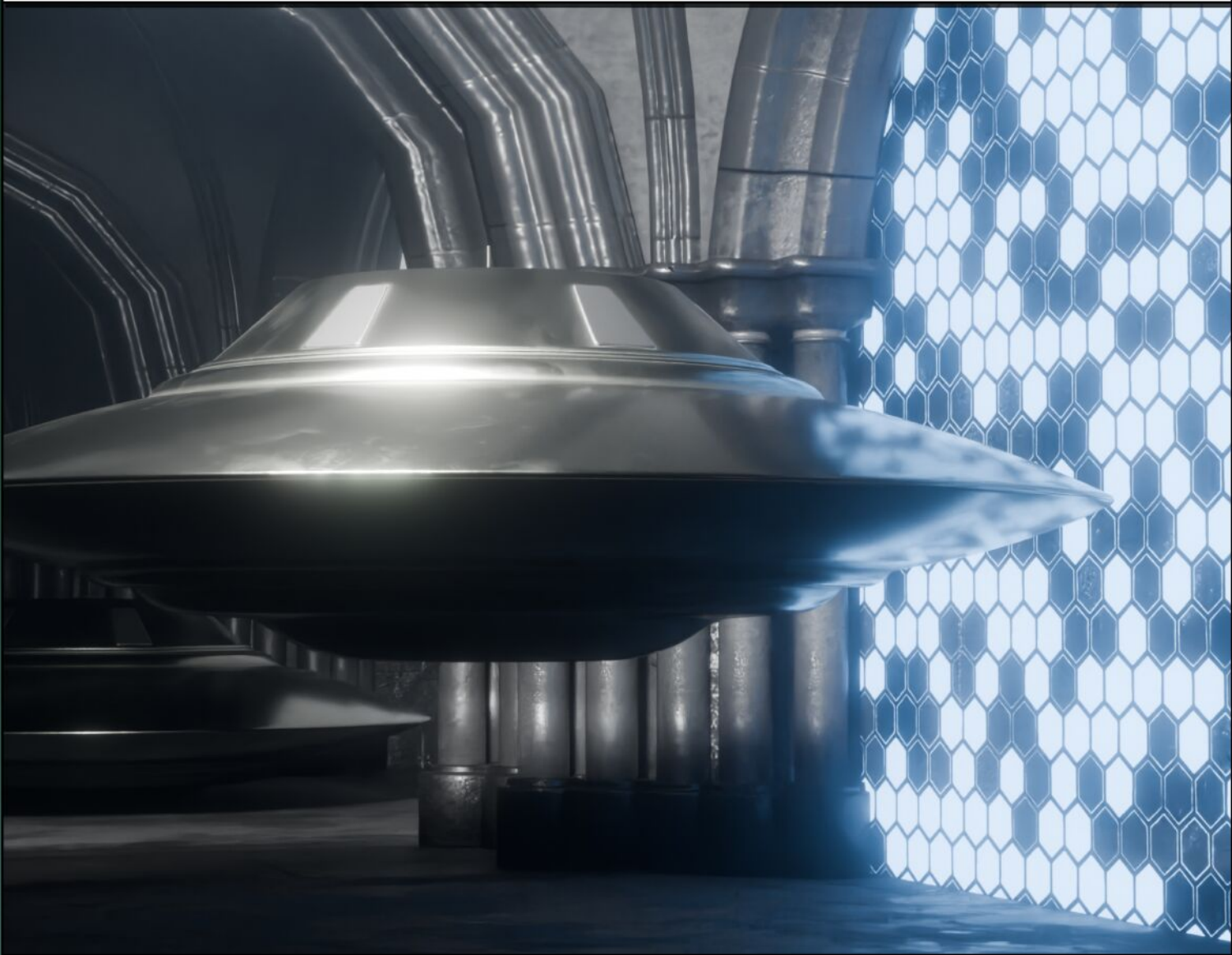
YOU MAY,
WITHOUT RESTRAINT?
WITHOUT RESTRAINT.



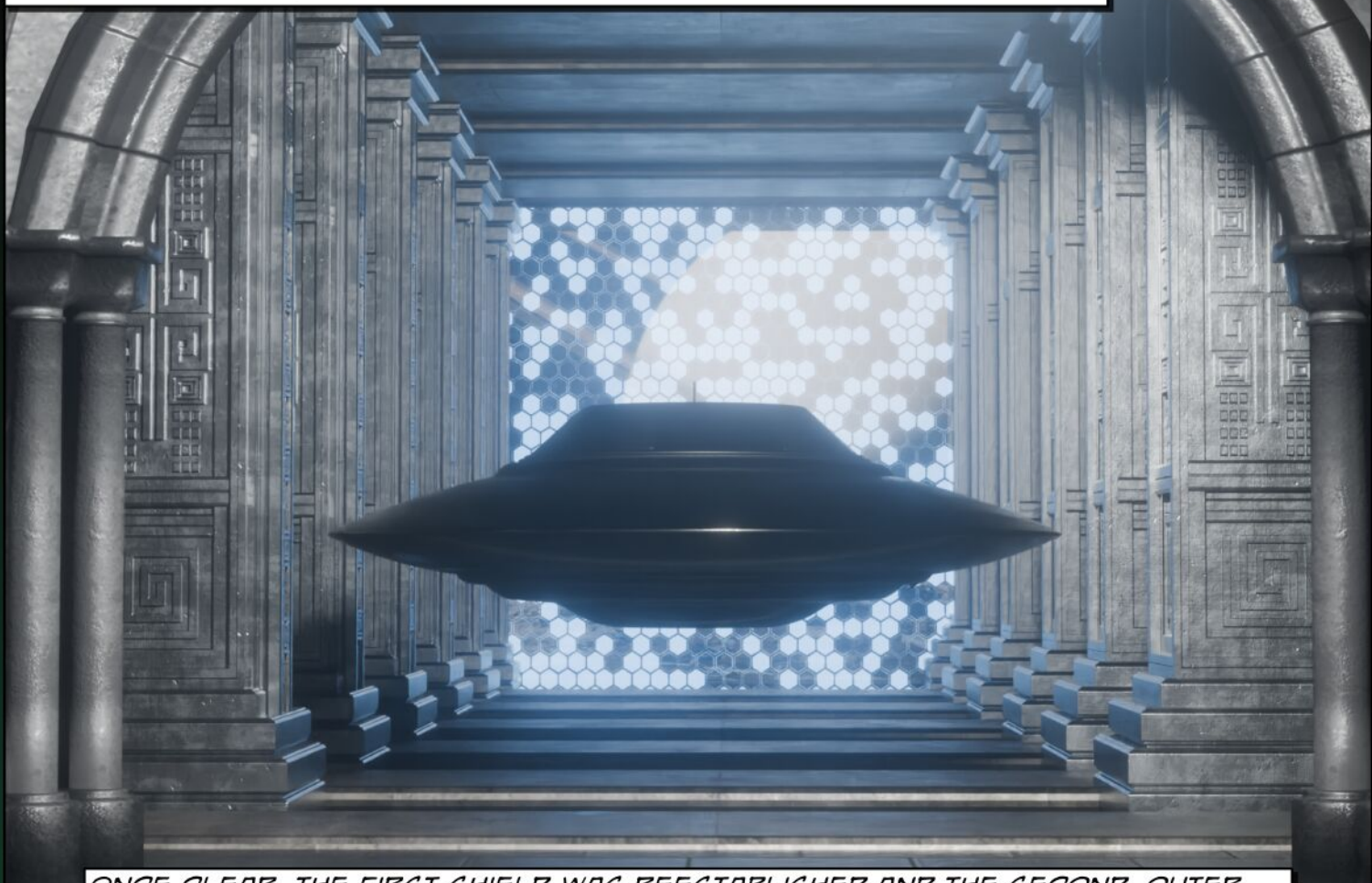
THE THREE ALIENS PILED INTO THEIR SHIP AND
SAT DOWN IN UNISON.



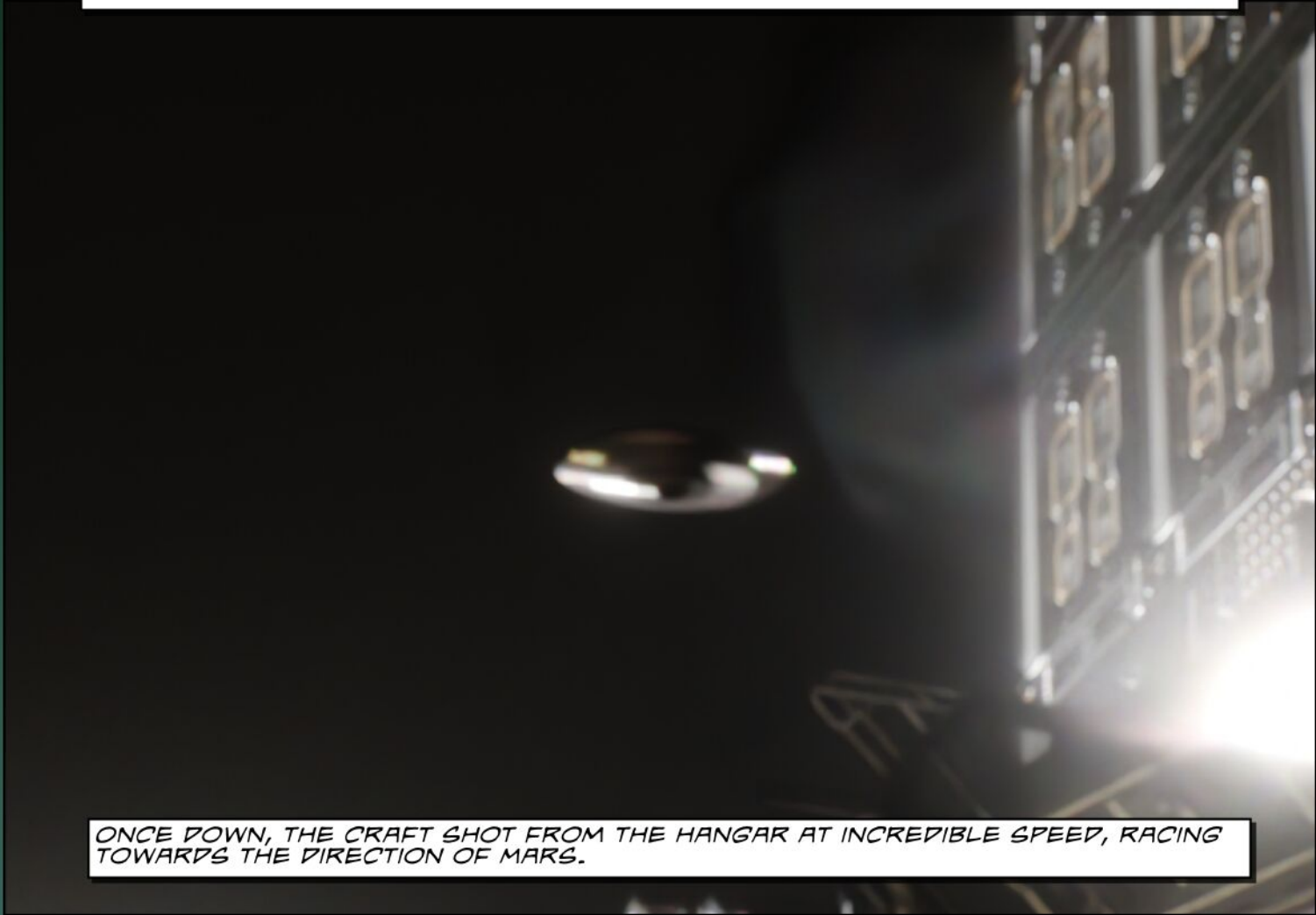
TAKING FLIGHT UNDER MENTAL COMMAND, THE FLYING SAUCER QUICKLY MOVE TOWARDS THE
SHIELDED EXIT TO DECENTS' MASSIVE HANGAR.



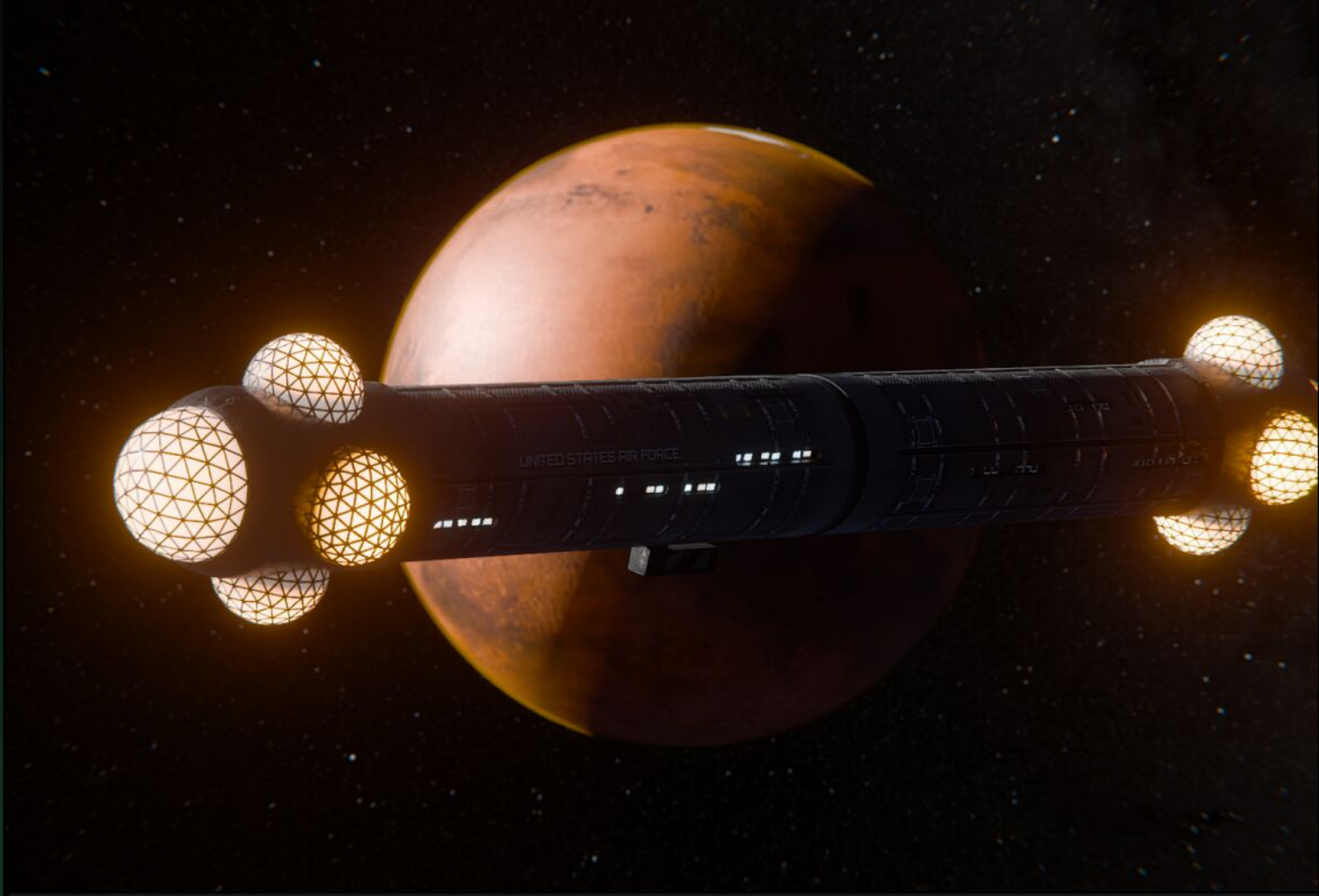
THE FIRST SHIELD DROPPED, AND THE CRAFT MOVED INTO THE AIRLOCK.



ONCE CLEAR, THE FIRST SHIELD WAS REESTABLISHED AND THE SECOND, OUTER



ONCE DOWN, THE CRAFT SHOT FROM THE HANGAR AT INCREDIBLE SPEED, RACING TOWARDS THE DIRECTION OF MARS.







PART ONE IS SEVENTEEN HOURS LONG?! AND THERE ARE NINE PARTS?!

FUUUUUUCK...

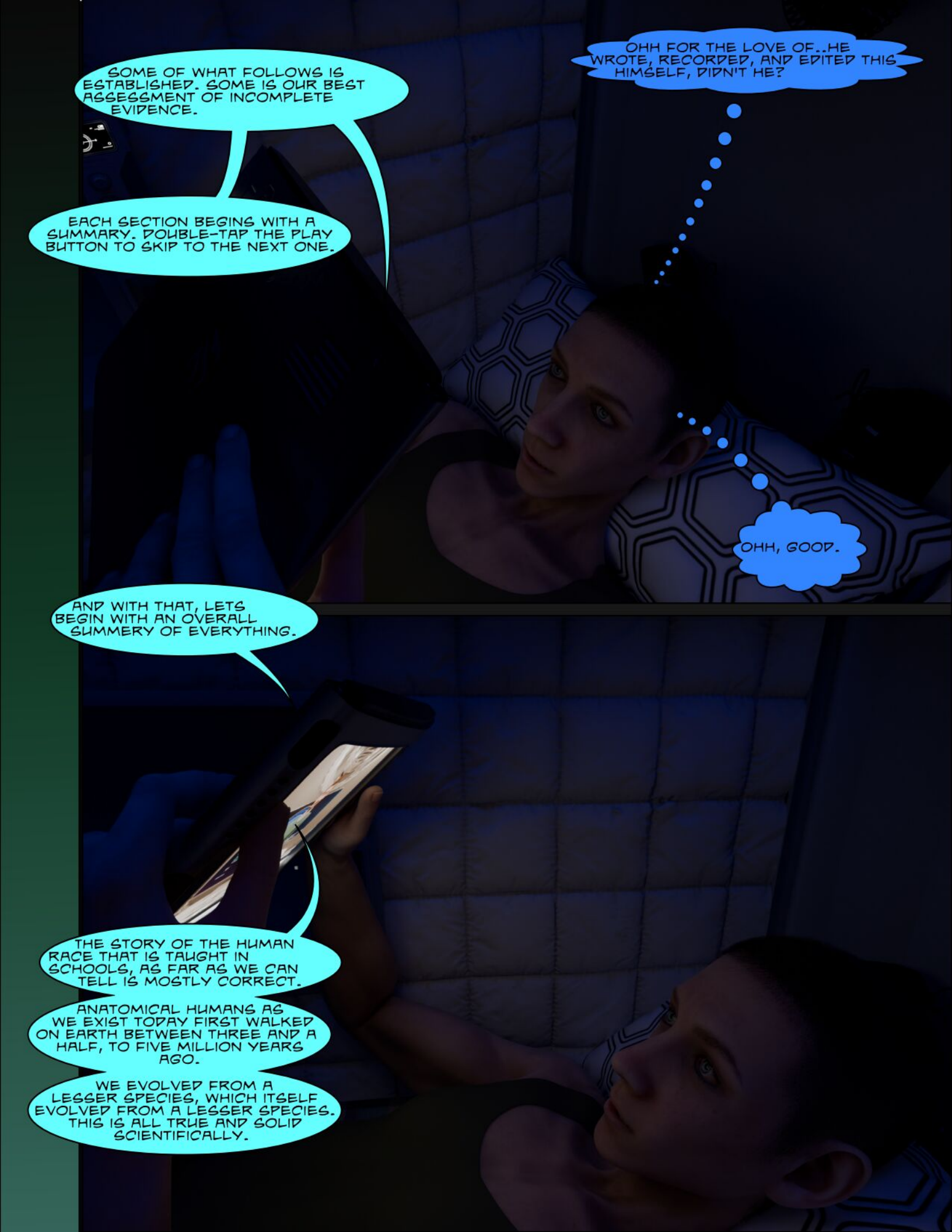
HELLO. I'M DOCTOR WAYNE LAPOINTE, ABOARD THE U.S.S. CURTIS LEMAY, FLAGSHIP OF THE EARTH DEFENSE FORCE.

IF YOU'RE WATCHING THIS, YOU'VE PROBABLY JUST JOINED US. YOU WILL HAVE QUESTIONS.

FORTUNATELY, YOU'VE COME TO THE WORLD'S FOREMOST AUTHORITY ON ANCIENT ALIEN HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY!

AND I'LL BE YOUR GUIDE TODAY AS WE UNWRAP THE SECRETS OF OUR STOLEN HISTORY!





SOME OF WHAT FOLLOWS IS ESTABLISHED. SOME IS OUR BEST ASSESSMENT OF INCOMPLETE EVIDENCE.

EACH SECTION BEGINS WITH A SUMMARY. DOUBLE-TAP THE PLAY BUTTON TO SKIP TO THE NEXT ONE.

OH FOR THE LOVE OF... HE WROTE, RECORDED, AND EDITED THIS HIMSELF, DIDN'T HE?

OH, GOOD.

AND WITH THAT, LET'S BEGIN WITH AN OVERALL SUMMARY OF EVERYTHING.

THE STORY OF THE HUMAN RACE THAT IS TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS, AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL IS MOSTLY CORRECT.

ANATOMICAL HUMANS AS WE EXIST TODAY FIRST WALKED ON EARTH BETWEEN THREE AND A HALF, TO FIVE MILLION YEARS AGO.

WE EVOLVED FROM A LESSER SPECIES, WHICH ITSELF EVOLVED FROM A LESSER SPECIES. THIS IS ALL TRUE AND SOLID SCIENTIFICALLY.

FOR AT LEAST THE LAST TWO MILLION YEARS, OUR DEVELOPMENT WAS SHAPED BY BEINGS WE BELIEVE CAME FROM A DISTANT GALAXY.

THEY ALTERED OUR ANCESTORS' DNA, MAKING US MORE LIKE THEMSELVES. WE STILL DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHY.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THEY CARED FOR EARLY HUMANITY AS THEIR OWN CHILDREN.



THEN A CATASTROPHE SCATTERED THEIR CIVILIZATION. ITS CAUSE AND EXTENT REMAIN UNKNOWN.

EARTH, FAR FROM THE DEVASTATION, BECAME A STOREHOUSE OF THEIR TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE. MUCH HAS SINCE

OF ALL THE RACES THEY KNEW, THEY APPARENTLY CHOSE HUMANITY TO GUARD THAT INHERITANCE.



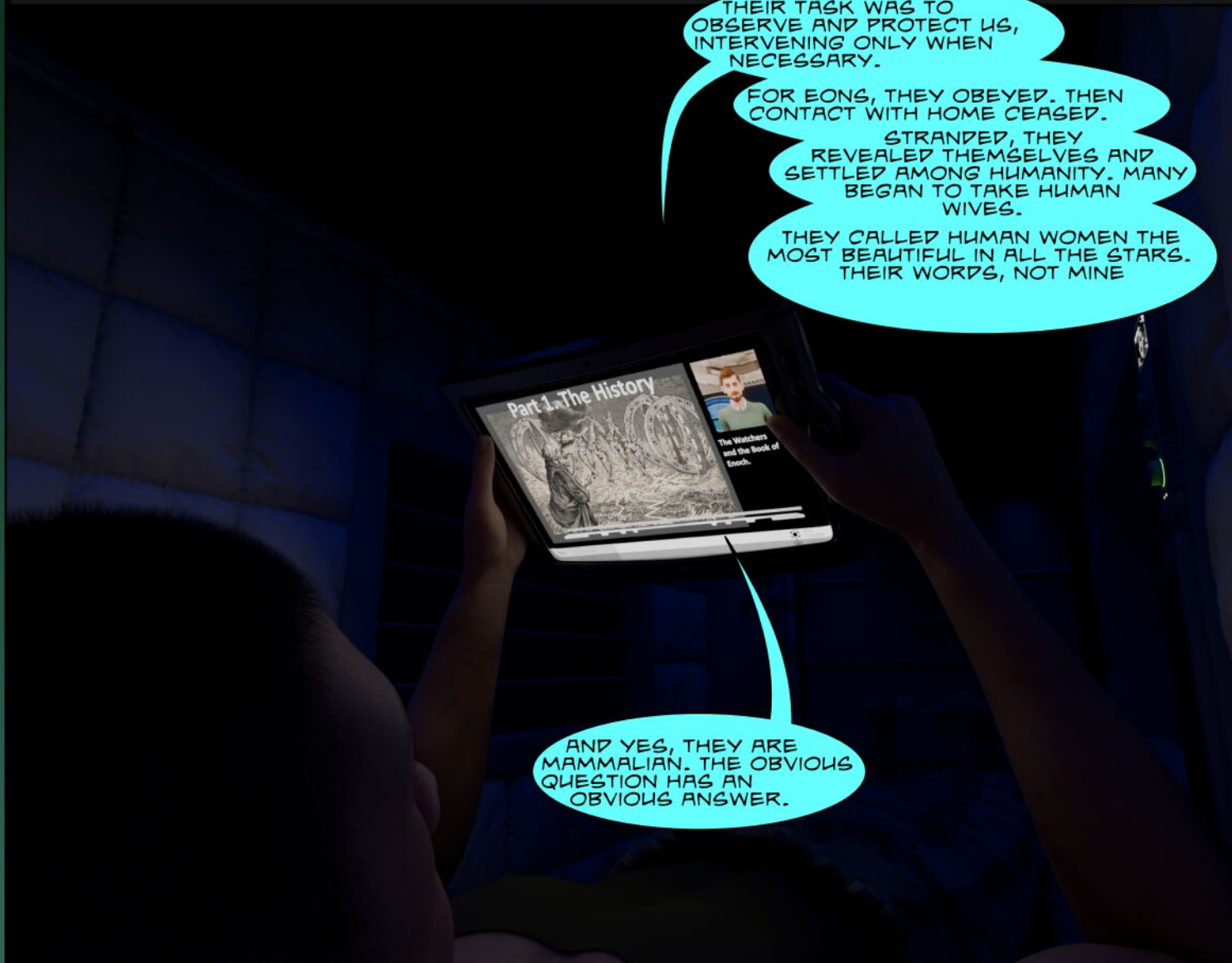
WELL THAT WAS PROBABLY STUPID.

IF YOU'RE THINKING THAT WAS AN ODD CHOICE, WE AGREE. WE DO NOT KNOW WHY THEY MADE IT.

WE DO KNOW THEY ARE DIVIDED.

WE CALL THE MAIN BODY THE OTHERS. SOME CALL THEM "THE GOOD ONES." THAT IS RATHER MORE CONFIDENCE THAN OUR EVIDENCE WARRANTS.

ANOTHER GROUP WAS ASSIGNED TO WATCH OVER EARTH: THE WATCHERS.



THEIR TASK WAS TO OBSERVE AND PROTECT US, INTERVENING ONLY WHEN NECESSARY.

FOR EONS, THEY OBEYED. THEN CONTACT WITH HOME CEASED.

STRANDED, THEY REVEALED THEMSELVES AND SETTLED AMONG HUMANITY. MANY BEGAN TO TAKE HUMAN WIVES.

THEY CALLED HUMAN WOMEN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL IN ALL THE STARS. THEIR WORDS, NOT MINE

AND YES, THEY ARE MAMMALIAN. THE OBVIOUS QUESTION HAS AN OBVIOUS ANSWER.

SOME UNIONS
PRODUCED NEPHILIM:
HYBRID CHILDREN FAR
LARGER THAN EITHER
PARENT.

> THEIR MINDS COULD EQUAL OR
SURPASS THEIR PARENTS'. BUT THE
SPECIES WERE ONLY PARTLY
COMPATIBLE, AND THE CHILDREN
OFTEN SUFFERED SEVERE
GENETIC DISORDERS.

ACCOUNTS DESCRIBE VIOLENT,
UNPREDICTABLE BEHAVIOR. THE
UNIONS WERE FORBIDDEN, BUT THEY
CONTINUED.



THOUSANDS OF YEARS
LATER, A SMALL CONTINGENT
OF THE OTHERS RETURNED.

THEY INITIALLY BLAMED
HUMANITY. AT THE FIRST COUNCIL
OF NINEVEH, HUMAN
REPRESENTATIVES PLEADED OUR
CASE.

THE RESULTING ACCORDS
GRANTED US IMMUNITY,
PROVIDED WE STAYED OUT OF
THEIR CONFLICTS.

THEN THE OTHERS BEGAN
EXTERMINATING THE
WATCHERS AND THEIR
NEPHILIM CHILDREN.

MANY HUMANS SAW
FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
BEING KILLED. THEY TOOK UP
ALIEN WEAPONS AND FOUGHT
BESIDE THE WATCHERS.



THIS ACTION VIOLATED THE ORIGINAL TERMS OF THE NINEVEH ACCORDS, AND MADE HUMANITY A VALID MILITARY TARGET.

HOWEVER, THE OTHERS DID NOT WANT TO ELIMINATE HUMANITY ENTIRELY. SO THEY GAVE AMPLE WARNING BEFORE THEY STRUCK.

MANY HUMANS AND ALIENS ALIKE SURVIVED. HOWEVER THE CIVILIZATION THEY'D BUILT DID NOT.

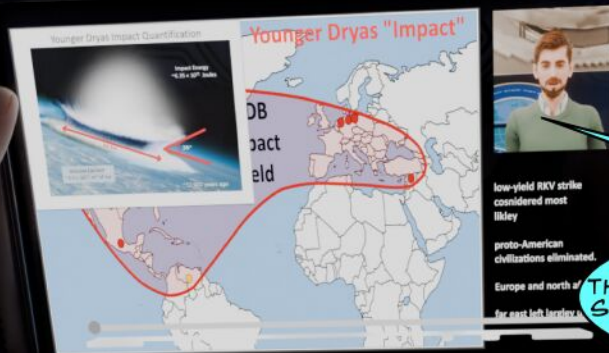
IN 2024, EVIDENCE WAS DISCOVERED DEEP UNDER THE HUDSON BAY OF ARTIFICIAL HEAVY ELEMENTS INCLUDING DEPLETED URANIUM AND AN ABNORMAL AMOUNT OF LEAD, ALL NEARLY 3 MILES UNDER THE SEA FLOOR.

WE'VE SINCE CONCLUDED THAT A VERY DENSE OBJECT STRUCK IN NORTHERN CANADA AT NEAR RELATIVISTIC SPEEDS, LIKELY FORMING THE BAY ITSELF AND SENDING MASSIVE TIDAL WAVES ACROSS THE ENTIRE PLANET.

TODAY, WE'D CALL THIS AN "RKKV" OR "RELATIVISTIC KINETIC KILL VEHICLE."

THE SINGLE IMPACTOR CAUSED AN APOCALYPTIC AMOUNT OF DAMAGE.

EJECTA RAINED DOWN OVER HALF THE GLOBE, AND SEA LEVELS ROSE HUNDREDS OF FEET.



ALL OF NORTH AFRICA WAS WASHED INTO THE SEA ON THE WEST COAST, SOMETHING WE CAN STILL SEE CLEAR EVIDENCE OF IN SATELLITE PHOTOS.

THE IMMENSE ENERGY OF THE IMPACT ALSO CAUSED NUMEROUS VOLCANOES TO ERUPT AT SEVERAL POINTS AS WELL, ALL COMBINING TOGETHER, TRIGGERING THE PERIOD WE KNOW AS THE LAST ICE AGE.

AS THE ICE RECEDED, NINEVEH WAS REBUILT. THE SURVIVORS ACCEPTED A SECOND SET OF ACCORDS.

NO CONTACT WITH THE WATCHERS. NO TECHNOLOGY BEYOND WHAT COULD BE MADE AND SOURCED BY HAND.

CLEARLY, THAT DID NOT LAST. YOU'RE PROBABLY WATCHING THIS ABOARD A SPACESHIP.

I DEFINITELY WASN'T BUILT OR SOURCED BY HAND.. NEITHER WAS THIS SHIP.

THEN, MOST OF THE OTHERS VANISHED AGAIN. NEITHER WE NOR THE WATCHERS KNOW WHY.

WITHIN GENERATIONS, THE WATCHERS WERE INTERFERING AGAIN. THE FEW OTHERS WHO REMAINED COULD ONLY DO SO MUCH.

THE WATCHERS HAVE GROWN DESPERATE IN EXILE. AT DISSSENT, THEIR STRONGHOLD ON RHEA, THEY ARE BUILDING A C-FIELD GENERATOR POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CONTROL EVERY CONSCIOUS BEING, EVERYWHERE.

EVEN THE OTHERS WILL BE AT THEIR MERCY.

IF THEY ARE ALLOWED TO FINISH IT, NO MIND WILL BE BEYOND THEIR REACH.

MEANWHILE, A VESSEL BELONGING TO THE OTHERS IS APPROACHING. WE HAVE TRACKED IT FOR ROUGHLY THIRTY YEARS.

WE STILL DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY INTEND.

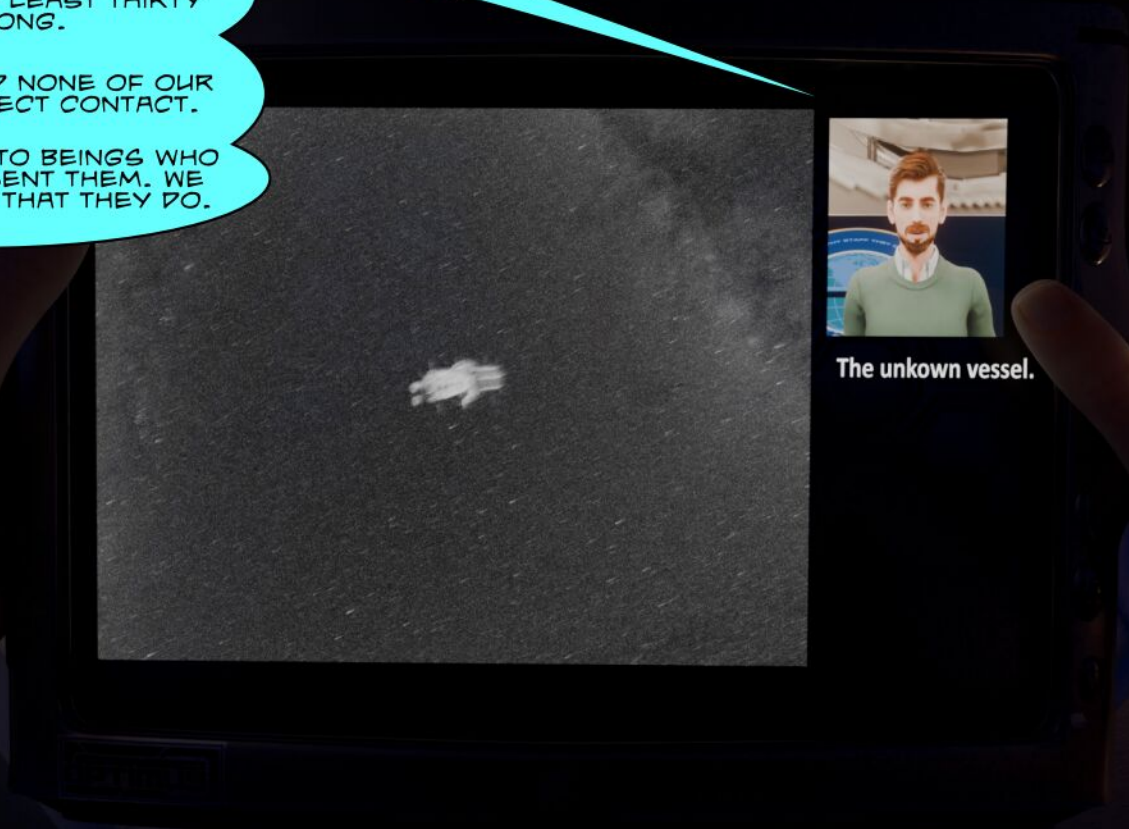


IN JUNE 2075, THE OSIRIS PROBE SWARM MADE A CLOSE PASS. ONE PROBE RETURNED THIS IMAGE.

THE VESSEL APPEARS TO ROTATE, LIKE AN O'NEILL CYLINDER. WE ESTIMATE IT IS AT LEAST THIRTY MILES LONG.

IT HAS ANSWERED NONE OF OUR ATTEMPTS AT DIRECT CONTACT.

WE HAVE SPOKEN TO BEINGS WHO CLAIM TO REPRESENT THEM. WE CANNOT CONFIRM THAT THEY DO.



ENOUGH ALIEN KNOWLEDGE SURVIVED FOR US TO BEGIN RECOVERING ITS PHYSICS DURING AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THE WORK REMAINED SECRET.

EVENTUALLY, WE REPRODUCED THEIR PROPULSION SYSTEMS AND THE FUEL THEY REQUIRED: MOSCOVIUM-295.

WE CALL THE SYSTEM ELECTROMAGNETIC-GRAVITIC PROPULSION.



WE BUILT EIGHT ROSCOE H. HILLENKOETTER-CLASS SHIPS. THEIR CREWS WERE PROMISED THAT THE TECHNOLOGY WOULD SOON BE MADE PUBLIC.

IT NEVER WAS.

THE OTHERS ALLOWED US TO KEEP THOSE SHIPS, BUT FORBADE FURTHER

AFTER THEY LEFT, THE WATCHERS OFFERED KNOWLEDGE AND POWER IN EXCHANGE FOR CERTAIN HUMAN CAPTIVES. MANY WORLD GOVERNMENTS AGREED TO THE BARGAIN.

FOR ROUGHLY THIRTY YEARS, THESE VESSELS SERVED AS SLAVE SHIPS.

WE STILL DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PEOPLE THEY CARRIED.



Earth's eight vessels.



THIS ONE? SHIT..

THE THIRD WORLD WAR SPLIT MAJESTIC, THE ORGANIZATION THAT PRECEDED THE E.P.F. THE DISPUTE DEVOLVED INTO A FIREFIGHT.

FOUR OF THE EIGHT SHIPS WERE DESTROYED IN THEIR HANGAR.

THE FACTION THAT BECAME THE E.P.F. ESCAPED WITH THE CURTIS LEMAY AND JAMES FORRESTAL.

MAJESTIC, OR MJ12, RETAINED THE HOYT VANDENBERG AND GORDON GRAY.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, THEY REMAIN ALIGNED WITH THE WATCHERS. THEY ARE AMONG OUR PRINCIPAL ADVERSARIES.

U.S.S.S Curtis Lemay

U.S.S.S James Forrestal

U.S.S.S Hoyt Vandenberg

U.S.S.S Gordon Gray



ONE DETAIL TENDS TO DISAPPOINT NEW ARRIVALS: THESE SHIPS ARE UNARMED.

NO TORPEDOES. NO RAILGUNS. THE TREATY FORBIDS ARMING VESSELS THAT USE WHAT THE OTHERS REGARD AS THEIR TECHNOLOGY.

CONVENTIONAL ROCKET CRAFT ARE EXEMPT. THOSE, WE CAN ARM.

AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THE PARTIES HAVE MOSTLY OBSERVED THAT RESTRICTION.

THAT CONCLUDES THE OVERVIEW.

NOW WE CAN EXAMINE THE HISTORY PROPERLY.

WE BEGIN IN THE
PLIOCENE. FIRST, A BRIEF
EXPLANATION OF HOW
GEOLOGICAL EPOCHS ARE
DEFINED...

OH, FUCK NO.

THAT WAS THE
SHORT VERSION?

GOOD, GOD,
MAN...

...WONDER IF
THIS THING CAN
GET NORMAL
INTERNET..



DOC! CALM DOWN, WHAT IS IT?

COLONEL! MY GOD! YOU'VE GOT TO SEE THIS! IT'S INCREDIBLE!



THAT NEW MARINE... A.J., I THINK? THE ROBOT! HE CAME BY THE LAB TODAY.

HE ACTIVATED THE ALIEN MIND-WEAPON WITHOUT EVEN TRYING!

HE TURNED IT ON! HE WASN'T EVEN TRYING!

HE BRIEFLY TOOK OVER THE WHOLE SHIP!

HE DID WHAT!? IS THAT WHY THE LIGHTS ALL WENT OUT!?

THAT DOESN'T MATTER! I DON'T THINK HE MEANT TO, IT WAS MORE OF A SIDE EFFECT!

ERIC! THIS GOES WAY BEYOND THAT



DALE... HOW MUCH COFFEE DID YOU DRINK TODAY?

I DON'T KNOW! A LOT! I HAVEN'T SLEPT SINCE YESTERDAY! I HAD TO STAY AWAKE! HAD TO KEEP WORKING!

I'M REVOKING YOUR WAIVER TO HAVE THAT COFFEE MACHINE IN THE LAB...



THEN I'LL RESIGN-LOOK!

EVERY SCANNER IN THE LAB WAS RUNNING WHEN HE ACTIVATED IT. I RECORDED THE WHOLE THING!

THESE RESULTS ARE ASTONISHING!



ALRIGHT. SLOW DOWN..
TAKE A DEEP BREATH..
WHAT'D YOU FIND?

THE DEVICE, IT GENERATES
AND FOCUSES HIGH-AMPLITUDE
C-FIELD EMISSIONS!

THERE SEEM TO BE
RESONANT MICROSTRUCTURES
ETCHED INTO THE CRYSTAL AND THE
HANDLE. THEY FUNCTION AS ONE
UNIT.

THIRTY SECONDS OF
HIGH-RESOLUTION DATA! I'VE
BARELY STARTED ON THE FIRST
BATCH.



A DEFENSE? NOT YET. BUT I
THINK I'VE WORKED OUT HOW IT
CONNECTS TO A MIND!

EVERY HUMAN BRAIN IS
DIFFERENT. MY EARLY
RESULTS SUGGEST THERE'S A
LIMITED SET OF BASIC PATTERNS
UNDERNEATH THOSE
DIFFERENCES.

DID YOU FIND A
DEFENSE!?

YOU HAVE MY ATTENTION. DOC.

HOW DOES IT USE THOSE PATTERNS?

```
01452.1112 0000x1  
45151.124 0000x1  
77241551.0 0000x3
```

```
<ul><a  
<sys><cb  
<exit>=0xFF & (val_>>0x00)  
<sys><#rgb [Y]=0xFF &  
<Gravity> $Hex2rgb =
```

```
.1112 0000x1  
.124 0000x1  
.551.0 0000x3
```

I'VE BEEN CALLING THEM "BRAIN PHENOTYPES." I'LL FIND A BETTER NAME.

THE DEVICE SEEMS TO USE THEM AS TEMPLATES FOR THE MINDS IT CONTACTS. THE OTHERS' OWN MINDS FILL IN THE GAPS.

A KIND OF DIGITAL TRANSCIVER FOR MINDS!

UH-HUH..

THERE'S MORE!

HERE. LOOK AT THIS.



AHH... YES, OF COURSE... WHAT AM I LOOKING AT HERE?

THE ARTIFACT'S USER INTERFACE!

AFTER A.J. ACTIVATED IT, I WORKED OUT HOW TO GET IN.

I'M STILL DECIPHERING IT, BUT THE USAGE LOGS ARE INCREDIBLY DETAILED!

IMPRESSIVE.. CAN IT BE USED AGAINST THEM?



I DON'T KNOW YET. BUT ACCORDING TO THESE LOGS, IT'S 26,579 YEARS OLD.

TWENTY-SIX MILLENNIA OF RECORDED USE!

INCREDIBLE... WHAT DO THE LOGS TELL US?

EVERY ACTIVATION IS IN HERE—EVEN HEAVY COMBAT.

THE EARLIER COMBAT ENTRIES NEVER EXCEED 5% POWER USAGE. TRANSLATOR MODE STAYS WELL BELOW 1%.

COULD WE DISRUPT THAT CONNECTION? BUILD A JAMMER?

POSSIBLY! BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE. WHEN THAT NEW MARINE... A.J.—

I THINK IT'S "C.J."

YES! THAT'S IT! I KEEP CALLING HIM A.J.. PICK MOVE, RIGHT? HE REMINDS ME OF AN "A.J." WHO WORKED CAMPUS SECURITY BACK AT...

PALE! FOCUS!

SORRY! WHAT WAS I SAYING? OHH!!

SORRY. I CHECKED THE ENTIRE HISTORY. NOTHING BEFORE TODAY EVEN APPROACHED TEN PERCENT.

WITH C.J., THE DEVICE PEAKED AT **80%** POWER USAGE!

OH..WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



HONESTLY? I HAVE NO IDEA.

BUT HERE'S THE THING. I READ SOME OF ALEX KINCAID'S NOTES. C.J.. NOT "A.J." IS, MORE OR LESS A HUMAN MIND NEAR-PERFECTLY REPLICATED.

IF THAT'S THE CASE, WHICH I HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT. THEN THERE'S SOMETHING UNIQUE ABOUT HIM.

WHAT MIGHT THAT BE?

NOT SURE. WHAT'S WEIRD IS, THE DEVICE SEEMS TO HAVE SPIT OUT SOME SORT OF ERROR WHEN HE USED IT.



WELL YEAH, IT'S NOT MADE FOR ROBOTS.

I THOUGHT THAT, TOO. BUT IT IDENTIFIES HIM AS "MECHA." IT KNOWS WHAT HE IS.

IT IDENTIFIES US AS HUMAN AND LOCKS US OUT. "LESSER BEINGS" —THAT'S THE LABEL.

C.J. WASN'T LOCKED OUT. I DON'T KNOW WHY.

LET'S NOT LET HIM KNOW THAT FOR THE TIME BEING, HE SEEMS FULL OF HIMSELF ENOUGH AS IT IS..

HEY, WHAT'D IT CALL THEM?

HA! UNDERSTOOD!

IT JUST SAID "US" OR "OURS"

BUT IT GETS
BETTER!

THE LEVEL OF
CONTROL HE SHOWED,
OVER US, OVER THE
SHIP..

HE TOLD ME HE COULD
FEEL THE HULL OF THE
SHIP!

IT DOESN'T!

OR AT LEAST WE
THOUGHT IT DIDN'T! WE
HAVN'T SEEN IT OPERATING AT
THIS POWER LEVEL
BEFORE..

WE'VE BOTH BEEN UNDER THEIR
CONTROL. REMEMBER FEELING THAT IF
YOU COULD JUST PUSH A LITTLE
HARDER, YOU MIGHT BREAK FREE?

MORE OR LESS..

WHAT ARE YOU
GETTING AT, DOC?

I DIDN'T THINK IT
WORKED LIKE THAT
WITH INANIMATE
OBJECTS?

SAMSUNG

<Gravity> \$Hex2rgb = 0xFF<there is a probability of collision



C.J. DID THE SAME THING TO ME.. HE WAS IN MY MIND.

LIKE WITH THE WHOLE TAKING OVER THE SHIP THING.. I DON'T THINK HE WAS EVEN TRYING.

THAT'S WHAT'S SO SCARY... IT ACTUALLY SEEMED TO SHAKE HIM UP TOO.

BUT WITH HIM, THERE WAS NO RESISTING..

HE JUST, MOVED AS HE PLEASED. IT WAS LIKE ANOTHER LEVEL OF POWER AND CONTROL. I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT.

BUT IT WASN'T BAD.. IT WAS SCARY, BUT IN RETROSPECT. I FELT NO MALICE FROM HIM AT ALL.

THAT'S ACTUALLY CONCERNING.. BUT, CAN HE DO IT AGAIN? USE THEIR WEAPON AGAINST THEM?

POSSIBLY, THOUGH I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S THE RIGHT MOVE OR NOT. I HAVE TO LEARN A LOT MORE ABOUT THIS THING FIRST.

ALSO I'D REALLY APPRECIATE IT IF WE COULD KEEP HIM HERE FOR THE TIME BEING. I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT'LL BE A PROBLEM?



I CAN KEEP HIM HERE IF YOU CAN FIND ANOTHER MARSOC SNIPER WHO FITS ALL THE CRITERIA AND IS HALF AS QUALIFIED AS HE IS TO TAKE HIS PLACE..



SNIPER? I THOUGHT HE WAS ON WINTERS'S MARINE TECH TEAM.

NO, YOU ABSOLUTE TOOL. HE'S RANDY'S REPLACEMENT.

RANDY DIED RETRIEVING THAT ARTIFACT FOR YOU THREE MONTHS AGO. YOU SPOKE AT HIS SERVICE.

DID YOU SERIOUSLY NOT KNOW THAT?

NO.. I MEAN, YES. I GUESS I DID KNOW THAT, BUT I.. I WASN'T REALLY PAYING ATTENTION. BUT IT MAKES SENSE NOW..

HE SEEMED TOO SMART TO BE A DOOR-KICKER. I ASSUMED HE WAS I.T.

DALE, YOU'RE BRILLIANT. YOU'RE ALSO MY FRIEND. HOW HAS NOBODY ON THIS SHIP PUNCHED YOU?



THAT'S HILARIOUS,
ERIC. YOU'RE A FUNNY
GUY..

I WASN'T
JOKING...

LOOK, THESE DEVICES MUST
GET OVER-THE-AIR UPDATES IN
SOME WAY. SEND IT A BAD UPDATE, WE
COULD TURN ALL THESE THINGS OFF,
EVERYWHERE!

IT COULD BE AS SIMPLE AS
DELETING THE BRAIN-TYPES ON THE
MAINFRAME! THE DEVICES WOULD
WORTHLESS!

AT LEAST UNTIL THE FIX IT.

CAN YOU SEND AN
UPDATE FROM HERE?

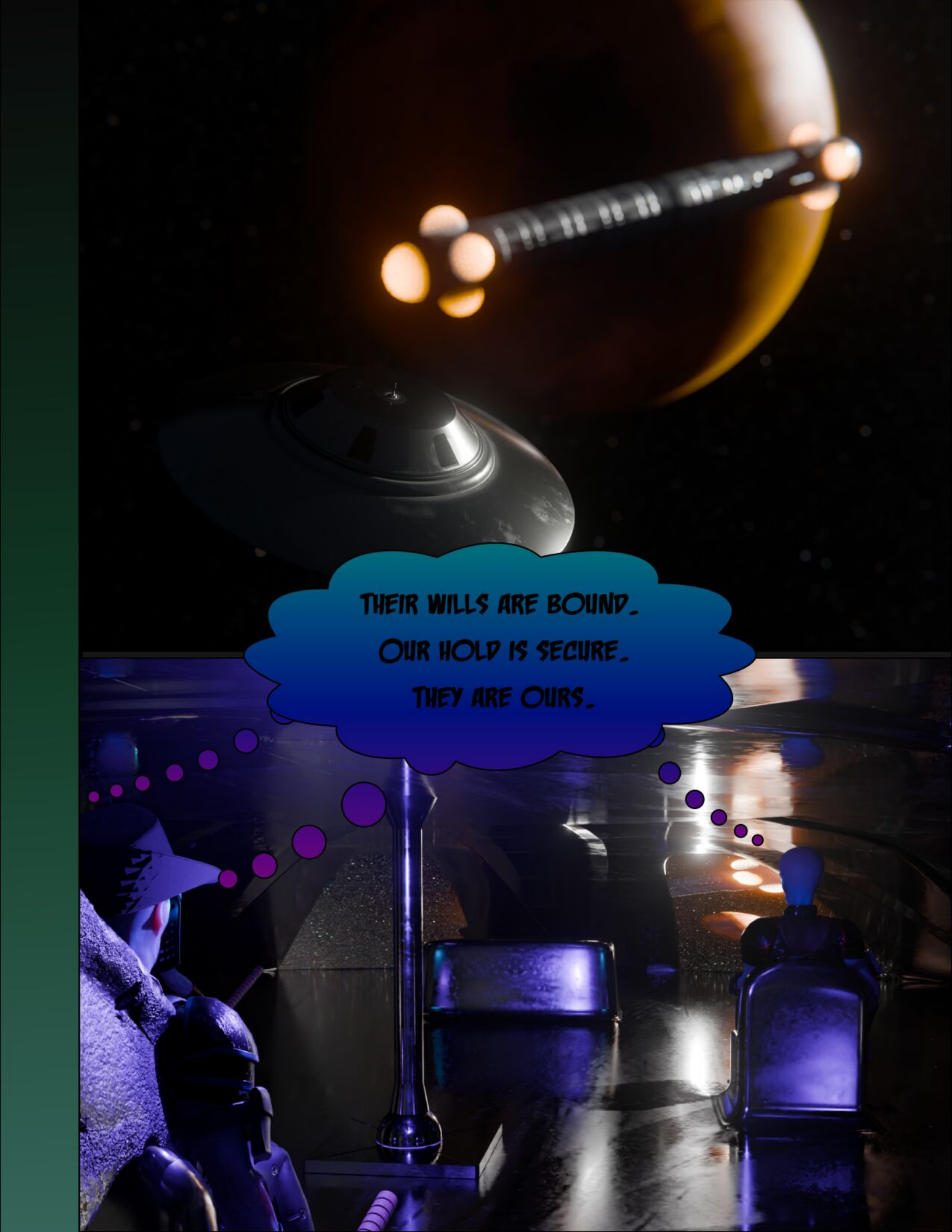
NO. WE'D HAVE TO FIND THE
MAINFRAME FIRST, THEN WORK OUT
HOW TO ACCESS IT. I'M CERTAIN IT'S
SOMEWHERE NEAR DISSSENT.

WELL, THEN THAT'S
NOT OF MUCH HELP.

NOT YET. BUT YOUR
JAMMER IDEA MIGHT.
POSSIBLY USING THE ARTIFACT
ITSELF.

IF I CAN ISOLATE OUR
MARINES' BRAIN PATTERNS, MAYBE WE
CAN PROTECT THEM FROM THE CONTROL
LONG ENOUGH TO GET A TEAM INTO
DISSSENT.

I LIKE THE
SOUND OF THAT!
NOW DOC, GO GET
SOME REST..



THEIR WILLS ARE BOUND.
OUR HOLD IS SECURE.
THEY ARE OURS.

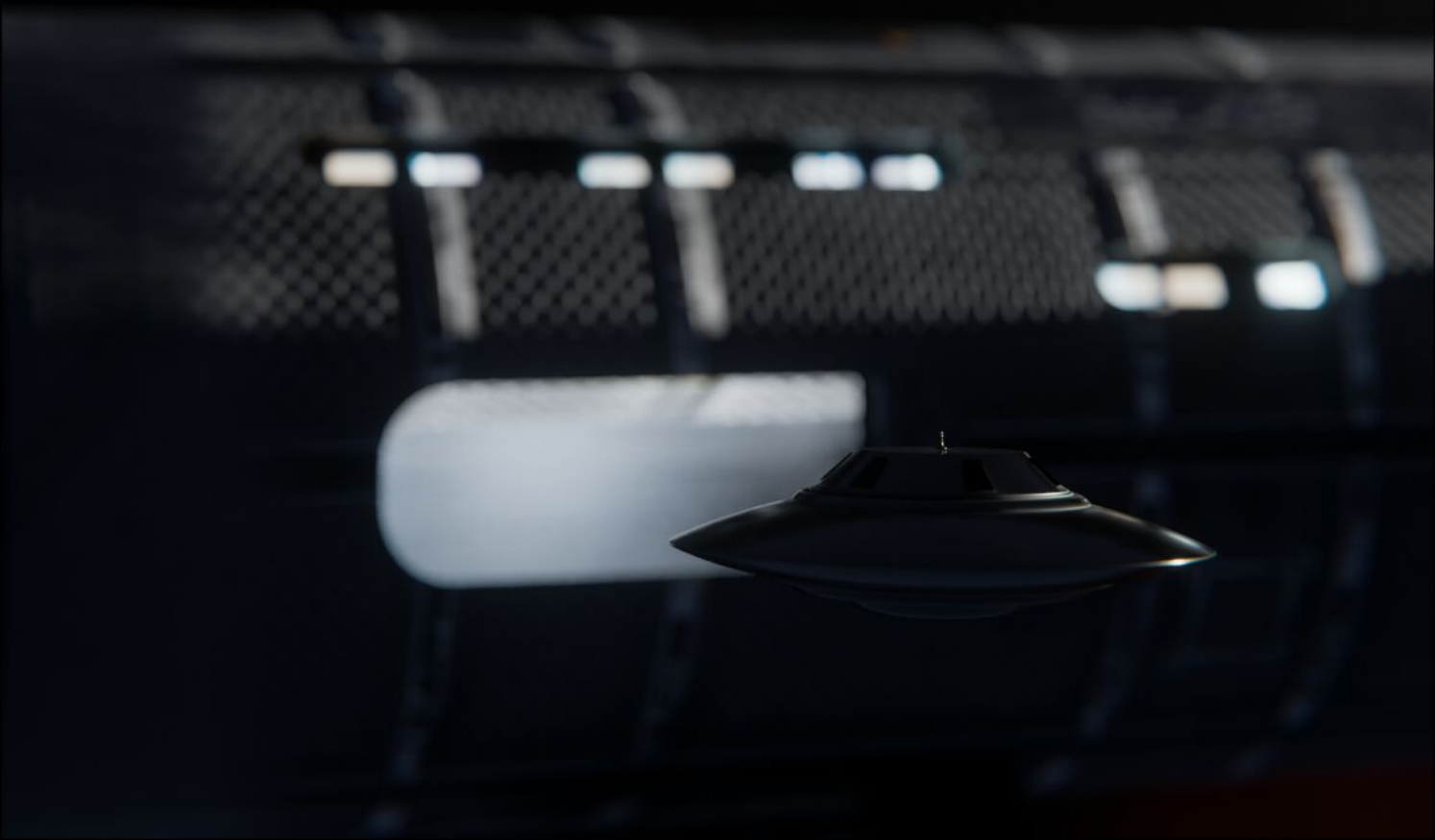


OPEN THE DOOR.
ADMIT US.





UNABLE TO RESIST THE INFLUENCE OF THE ALIENS, THE COLONEL ORDERED THE DOORS OPEN TO A CREW WHO WAS ALSO FULLY UNDER THE SAME ALIEN INFLUENCE.





THE HANGAR DOOR OF THE CURTIS LEMAY GROUND OPEN, AND AS IT DID THE ALIEN SHIP QUICKLY MADE IT'S WAY IN.





ALL ARE HELD SAVE
ONE.

A FEMALE, ABOVE US. A PRIZE?

PERHAPS. SHE COMES AT A
FORTUNATE HOUR.



THE
PROTECTOR'S MIND ELUDES
US.

AS WE FORESAW, THE FEMALE MAY
KNOW HIS WHEREABOUTS.

PERHAPS.



TO THE
CENTRAL HUB.

WE GO.

SHALL WE SEVER THEIR
COMMUNICATIONS AND DARKEN THE
SHIP?

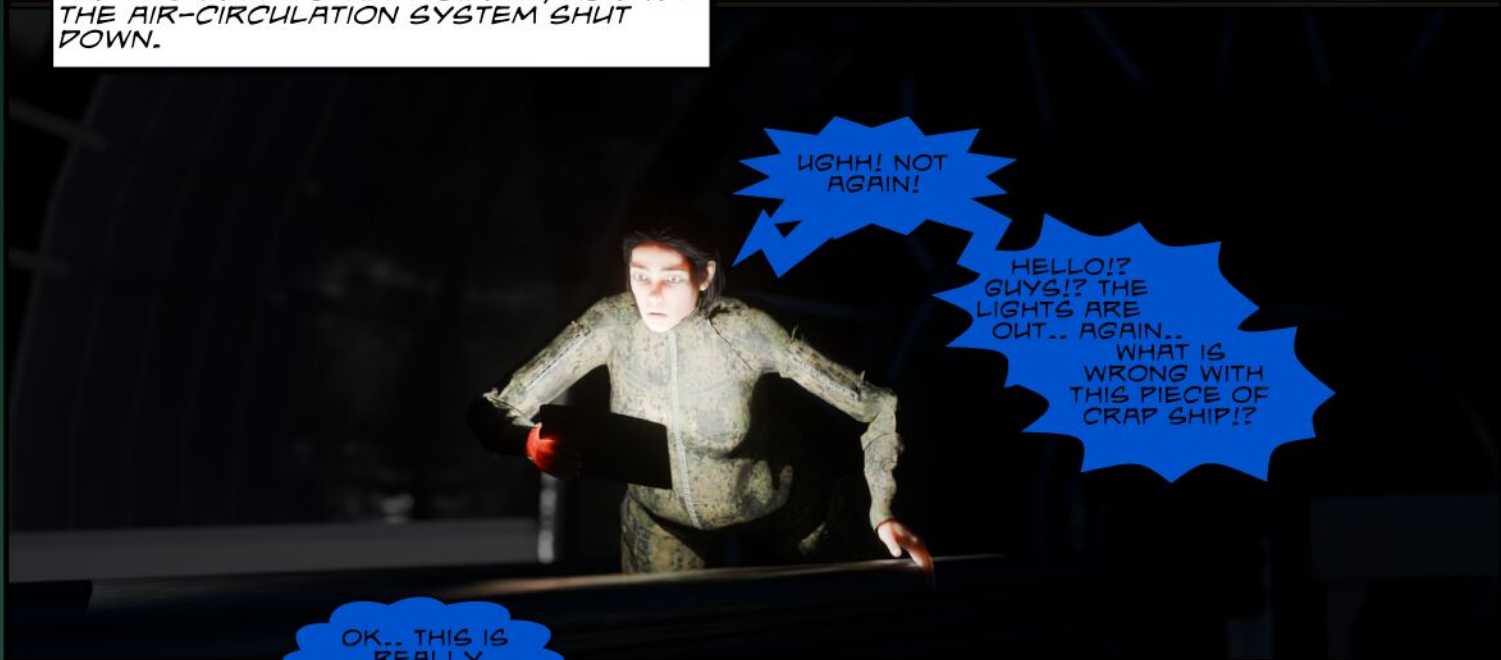
DO SO.





OH, WHAT THE HELL.
CONNECTION JUST
DROPPED AGAIN! THAT'S
THE THIRD TIME TODAY!

SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS WENT OUT AND
THE HUB FELL TOTALLY SILENT, AS EVEN
THE AIR-CIRCULATION SYSTEM SHUT
DOWN.



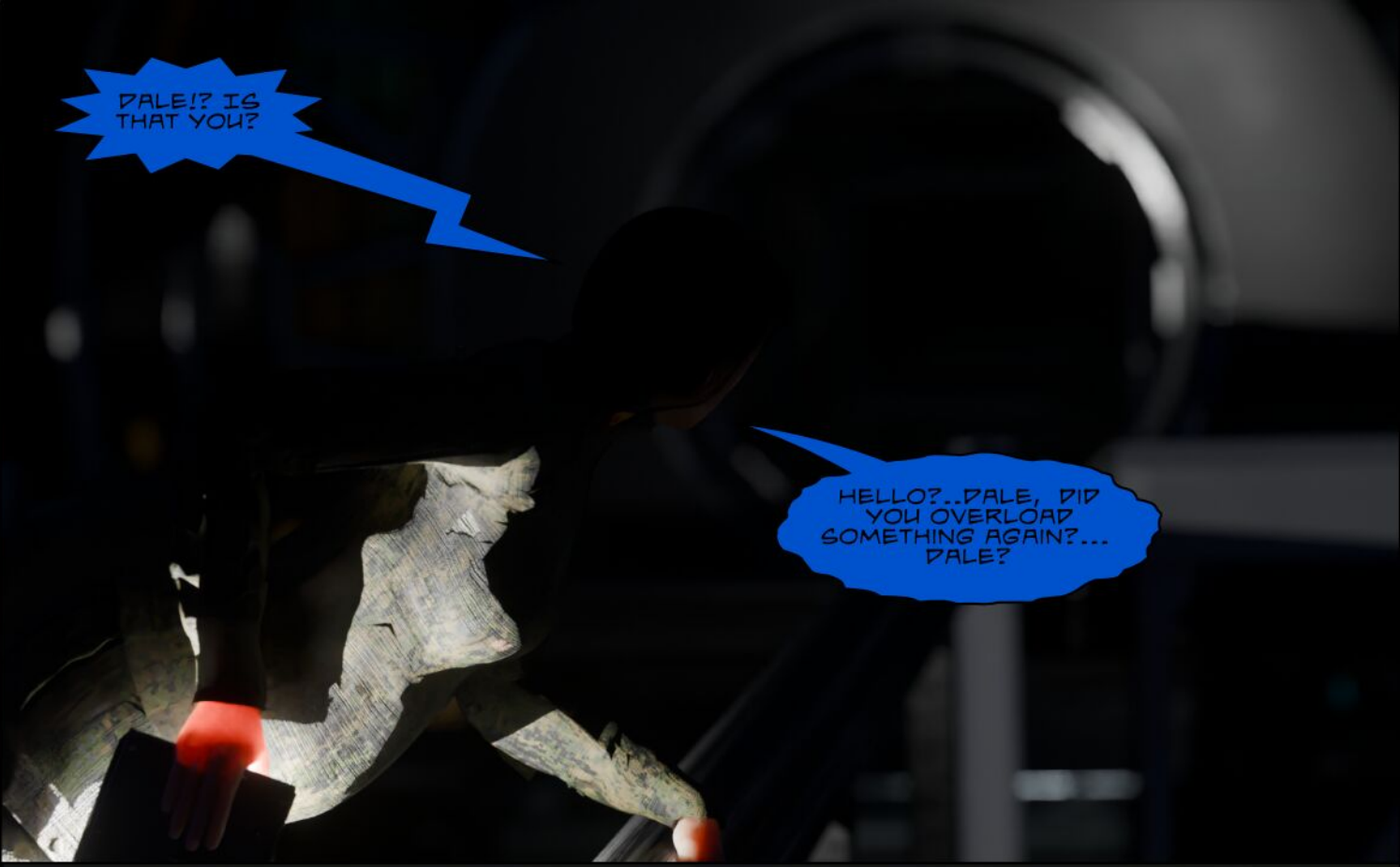
UGH! NOT
AGAIN!

HELLO!?
GUYS!? THE
LIGHTS ARE
OUT.. AGAIN..
WHAT IS
WRONG WITH
THIS PIECE OF
CRAP SHIP!?

OK.. THIS IS
REALLY
SPOOKY..

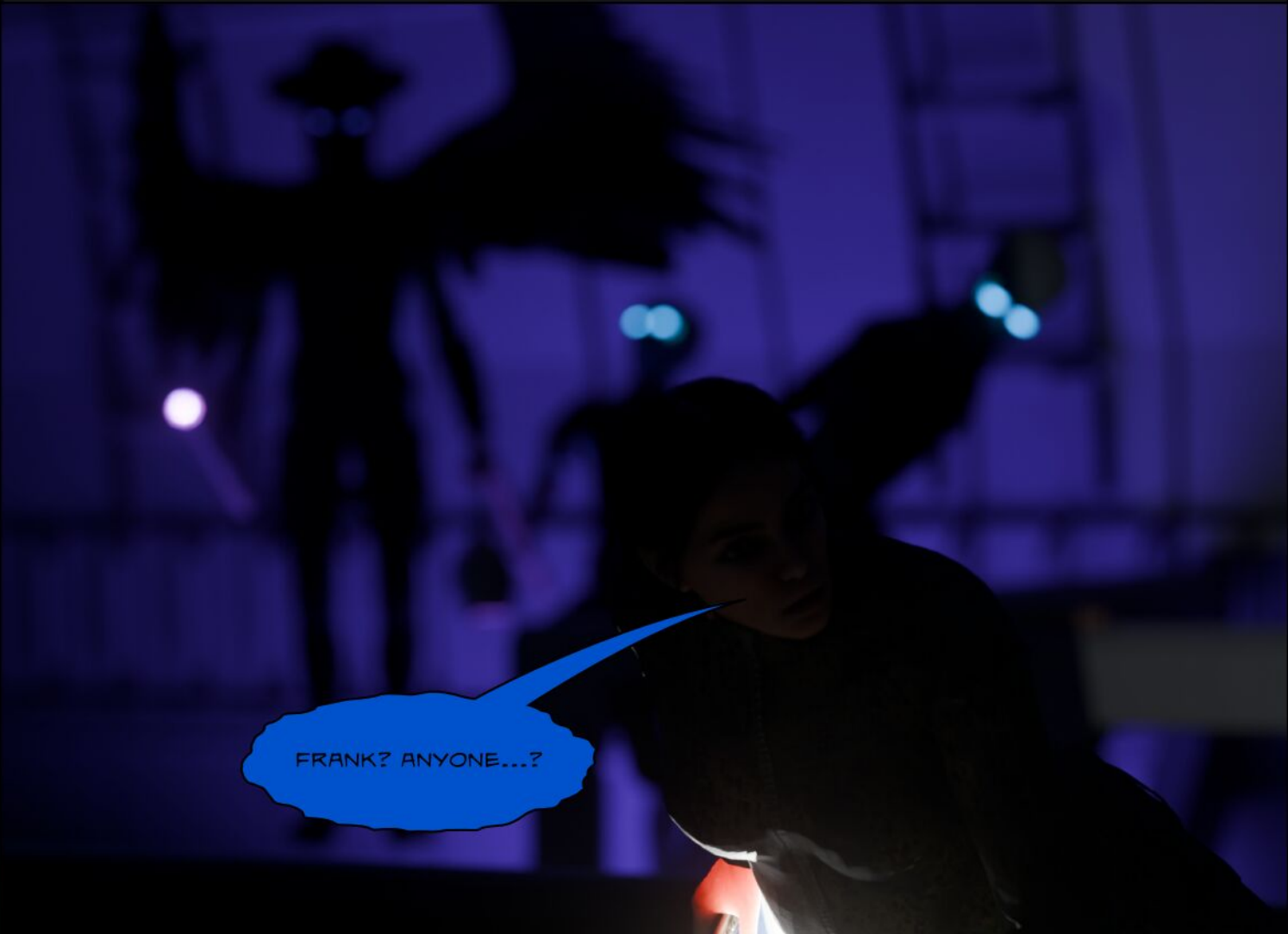


CLANG!



DALE!? IS
THAT YOU?

HELLO?...DALE, DID
YOU OVERLOAD
SOMETHING AGAIN?...
DALE?



FRANK? ANYONE...?

A FAINT PINK GLOW TOUCHED THE HANDRAILS. IN THE SILENCE, WINTERS
HEARD BREATHING. THEN CAME THE SMELL: SHARP, UNFAMILIAR. AMMONIA.

SOMETHING WAS APPROACHING
FROM BEHIND HER.

Ummm...

SLOWLY, SHE TURNED...

WELL
MET, FAIR
ONE.

АААААА!



HELP!!!





HMMM?

WHAT THE...?

> WINTERS COULD NOT MOVE, BUT SHE REMAINED FULLY AWARE. EVEN HER DRIFT HAD STOPPED. SOMETHING HELD HER IN PLACE IN THE HUB'S MICROGRAVITY.

NONE SHALL COME
TO YOUR AID. I AM
GADREEL. I SEEK THE
PROTECTOR, WHOSE MIND
IS HIDDEN FROM US.

P-P-PROTECTOR? I
DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT
IS! PLEASE DON'T HURT
ME!

YOUR THOUGHTS LIE
OPEN TO ME. YOU SPEAK
THE TRUTH, AS YOU KNOW
IT.

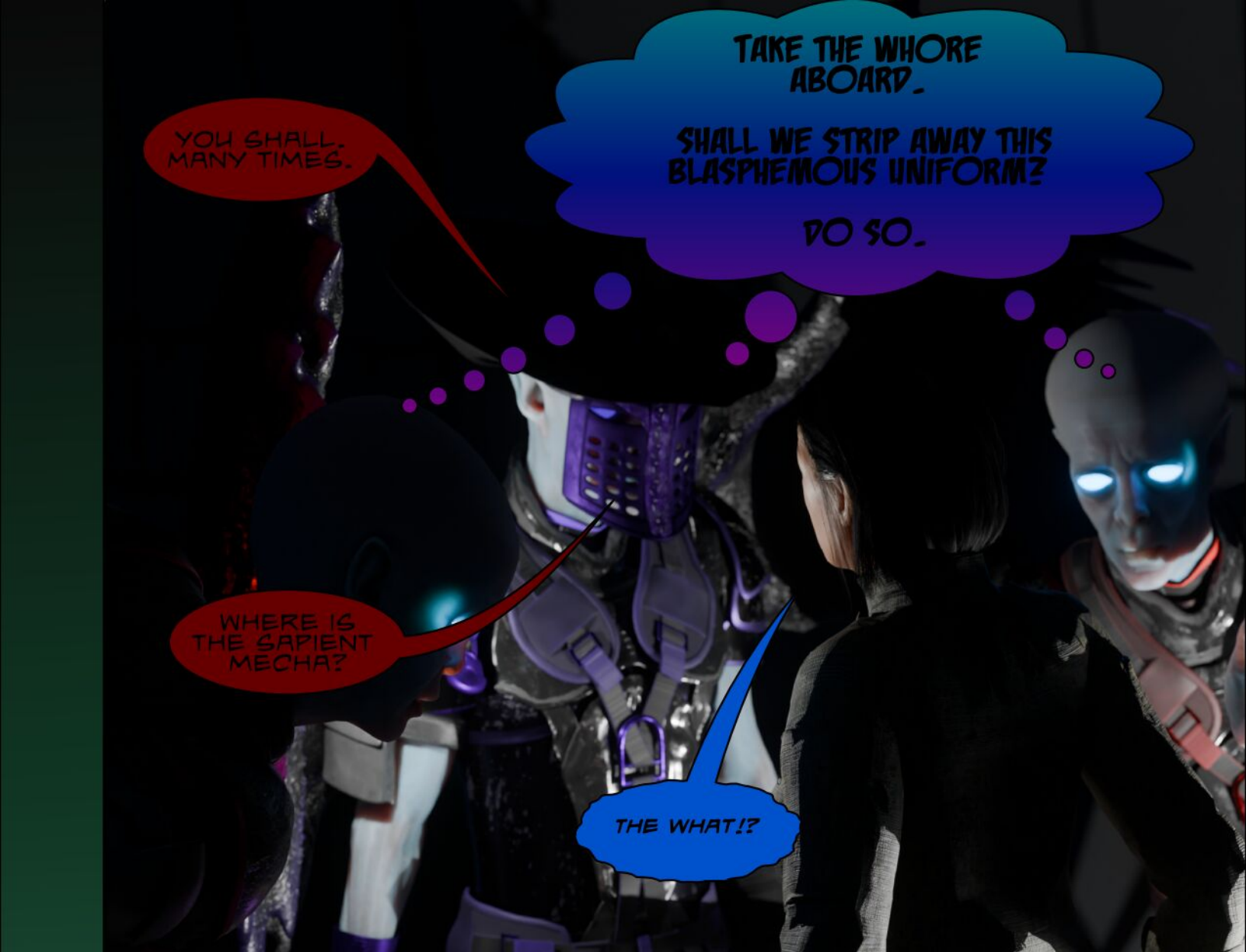
NO MATTER. YOU MAY YET
SERVE YOUR GODS.

YOU SHALL BE A GIFT FOR
OUR GREAT SEER. HE HAS EVER
FOUND THE WOMEN OF YOUR
KIND...

...EXCEPTIONAL.
AS DO I.

IN ALL OUR
TRAVELS, I CANNOT
RECALL ANOTHER MORE..
ENTICING..

FUCK YOU!



YOU SHALL...
MANY TIMES.

TAKE THE WHORE
ABOARD.

SHALL WE STRIP AWAY THIS
BLASPHEMOUS UNIFORM?

DO SO.

WHERE IS
THE SAPIENT
MECHA?

THE WHAT!?



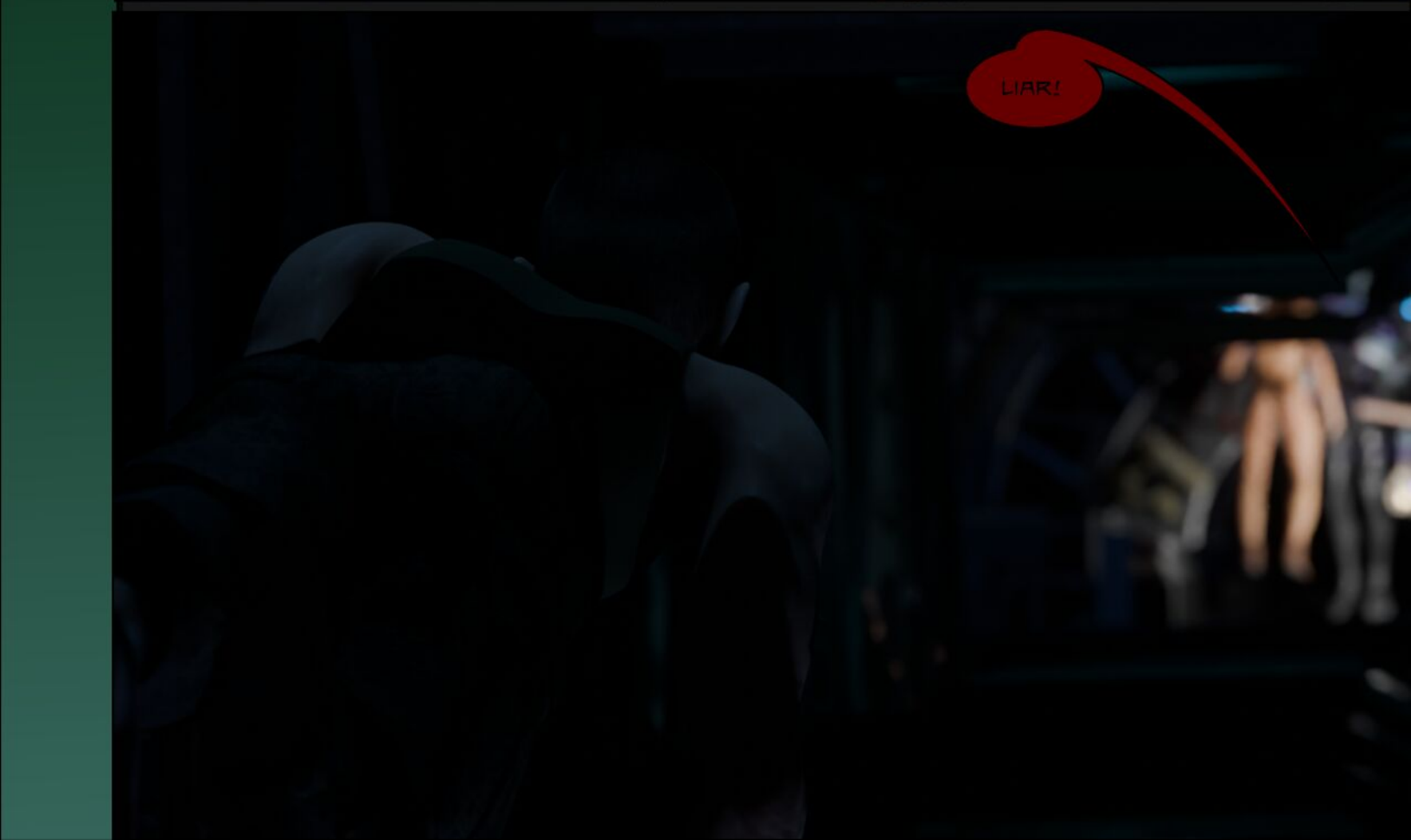
PLEASE! NO! I
DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU
WANT!



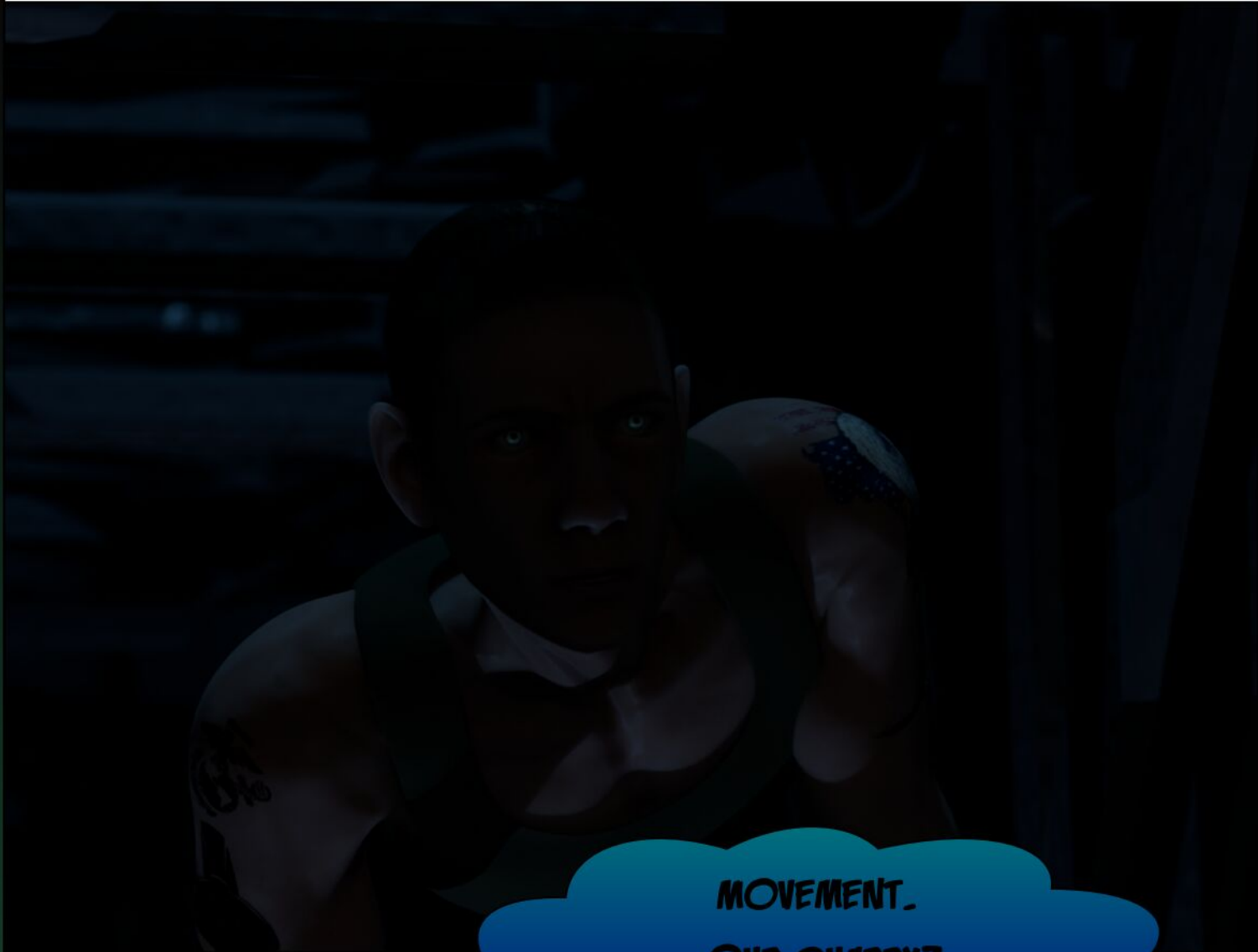
THE MECHA YOU
NAME C.J. WHERE IS
IT?

NO!! STOP!!

I DON'T KNOW A
"C.J."! FUCK YOU!



LIAR!

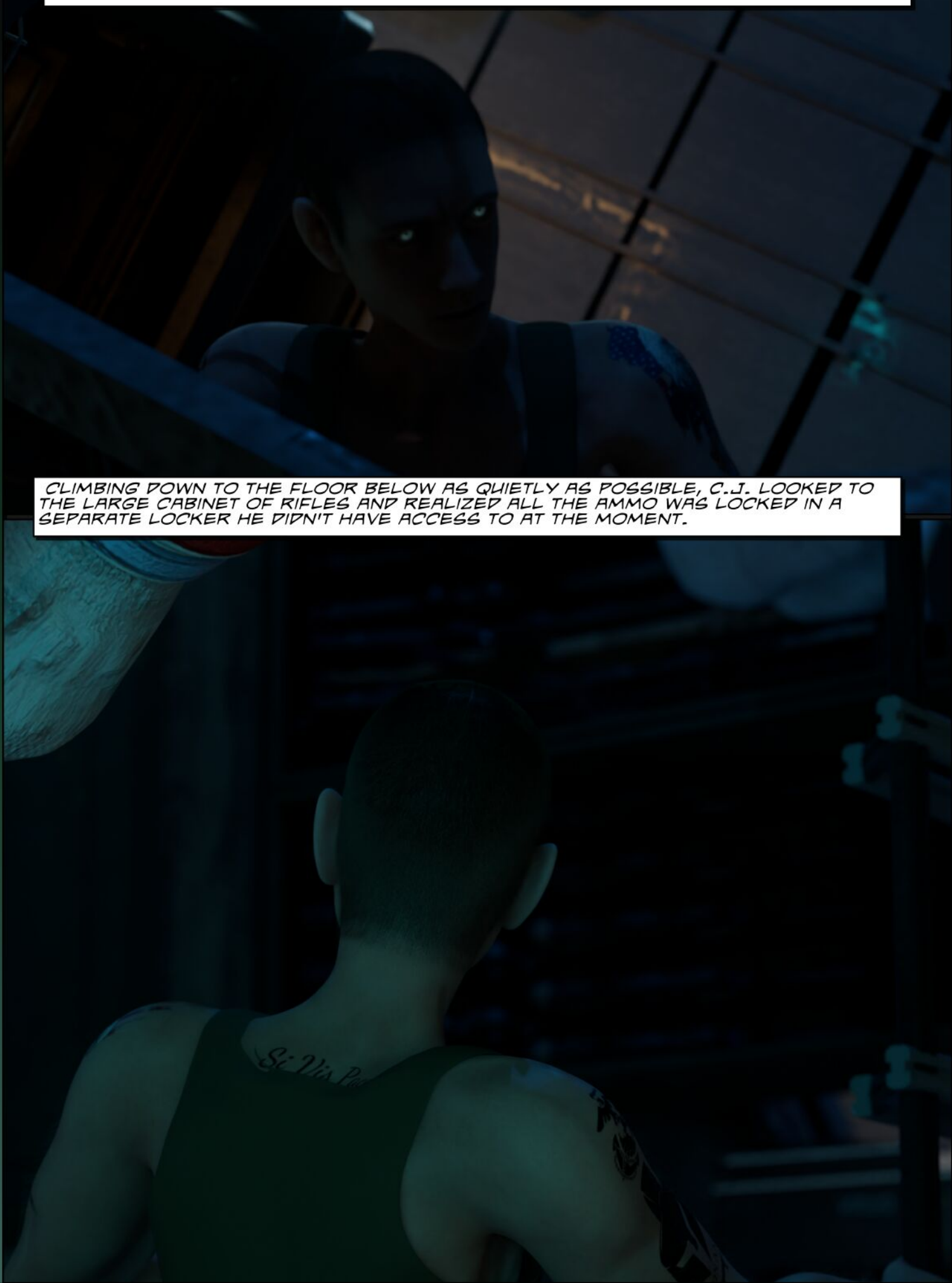


MOVEMENT.
OUR QUARRY?
YES.
THEN TAKE HIM.



> AS THE WATCHERS TURNED, C.J. PUSHED OUT OF THE CENTRAL HUB AND CAUGHT THE LADDER TO THE LAB AND ARMORY.

CLIMBING DOWN TO THE FLOOR BELOW AS QUIETLY AS POSSIBLE, C.J. LOOKED TO THE LARGE CABINET OF RIFLES AND REALIZED ALL THE AMMO WAS LOCKED IN A SEPARATE LOCKER HE DIDN'T HAVE ACCESS TO AT THE MOMENT.



> WHILE WAITING ON HIS RIFLE PAPERWORK, C.J. HAD NOTICED LOOSE SHOTGUN SHELLS IN A DESK DRAWER. THEY WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THERE.

HE SAID NOTHING AT THE TIME, BELIEVING THERE MIGHT BE A FUTURE NEED FOR THEM "BEING THERE"

C.J. GRABBED A .12 GAUGE SHOTGUN FROM THE RACK AND FLUNG THE DRAWER OPEN.

OH, PLEASE
STILL BE IN
HERE..

INSIDE, A WOODEN BOX HELD SEVEN LOOSE SHELLS AMONG A FEW GUN PARTS.



MECHA! YOUR
SOUL WAS MEANT FOR
US. WITH US IT SHALL
RETURN.



WILL YOU SKULK IN
DARKNESS, MECHA?

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a dark tank top, is shown in profile, aiming a pump-action shotgun upwards and to the right. She has a tattoo on her left shoulder featuring a Marine Corps emblem and a Spartan helmet. The background is a dark, industrial interior with vertical pipes and structural elements. Three red speech bubbles are overlaid on the image.

**SWIFT AS A
GHOST. AS ONE OF US
MIGHT MOVE. WE
GRANT YOU THAT.**

**YET THIS YOU
HAVE NOT
LEARNED...**

**DEMONS DO NOT
FEAR GHOSTS!**

The same woman is now lying on her back on a dark surface, holding the shotgun with both hands. She is looking up. In the background, a person in a white protective suit with red stripes on the sleeves is visible, standing near some equipment. A blue speech bubble is overlaid on the image.

BOO..



BOOM!

CLACK-CLACK!



THWACK!

**YATZAKEL!
NO!!**

C.J. MOVED AS SOON AS HE FIRED, SLIPPING QUIETLY TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COMPARTMENT.

HOLY SHIT! I
FUCKING GOT
HIM!

HIS
FUCKING BRAIN
CAME OUT!
FUCK!

THEY'RE NOT
INVINCIBLE. GOOD TO
KNOW!

WHAT DID THEY
MEAN WE CAN'T FIGHT
THEM!? THESE GUYS ARE
STUPID! WHERE IS
EVERYONE!?

NO!

OH MY
GOD! I HEARD
YOUR
THOUGHTS!

YOU
UNDERESTIMATED
HIM... "GREATLY"...

YOU'RE..
AFRAID!

FOR THIS,
YOU SHALL ALL
DIE!



YOU TOOK MY CLOTHES, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO FEELS NAKED!

C.J.! THEY'RE SCARED OF YOU! DON'T LISTEN TO ANYTHING THEY SAY!!



SILENCE, WHORE!

IT IS YOU WHO SHOULD FEAR!

I AM AFRAID! BUT YOU'RE TERRIFIED RIGHT NOW! YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T WIN!



AZAMITEL, ENOUGH. WE MUST
WITHDRAW.

NO! IF ONE OF US FALLS, ALL SHALL
FALL!

YOU
MURDERED MY
BROTHER!

COME FORTH,
AND I SHALL
GRANT YOU A SWIFT
DEATH.

REFUSE, AND
EVERY SOUL ABOARD
SHALL BURN!



COUNTEROFFER. GO FUCK
YOURSELF.. AND FUCK YOUR
BROTHER TOO!

GAHH!

DIE!!!!

BWAADAAAA!!!!

HOLY
FUCK!

HMMPFF

BOOM!

THWACK!

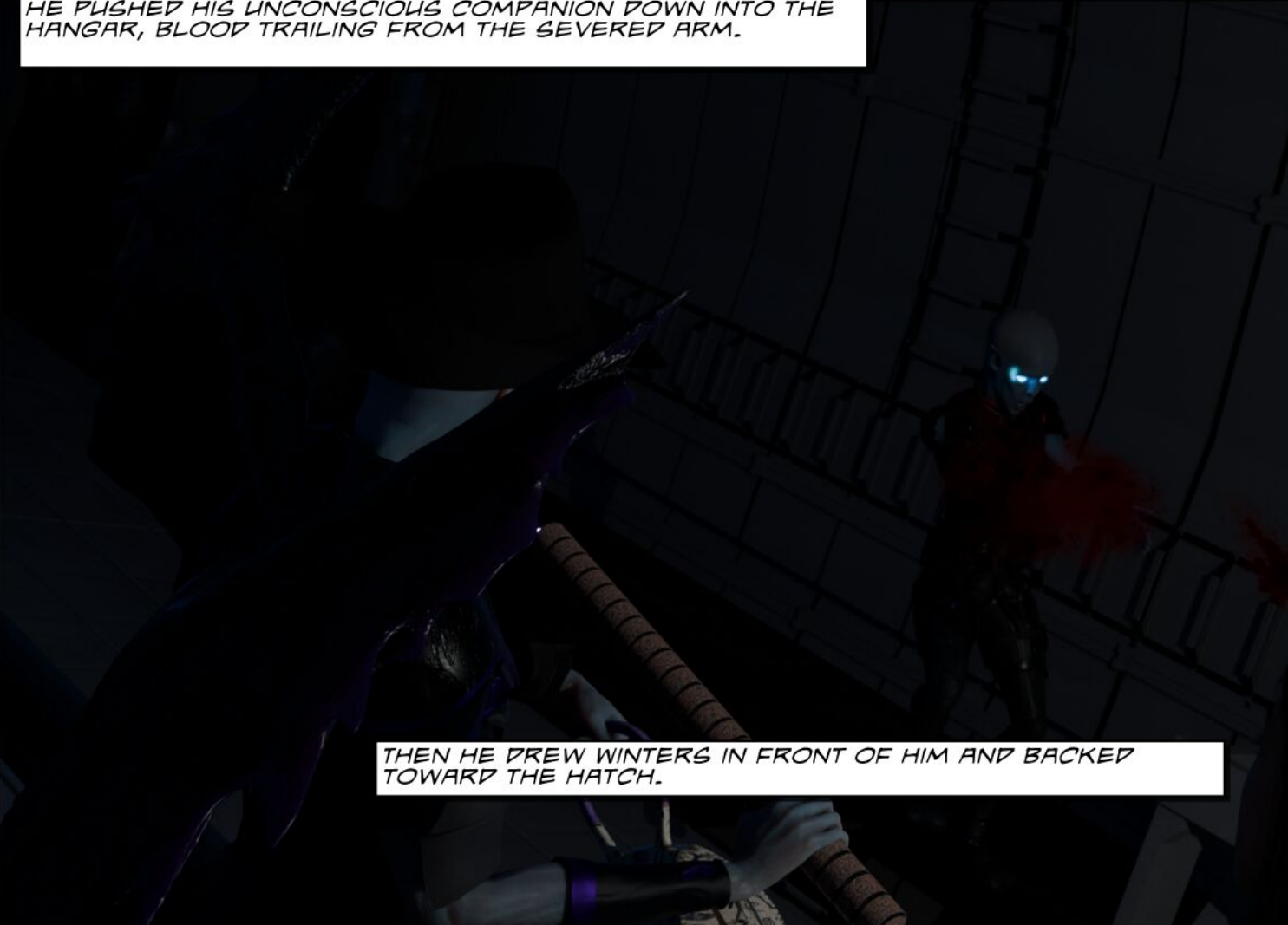
CLACK-CLACK!



GADREEL BROUGHT BOTH DEVICES TO BEAR. WITH THE SAME FORCE THAT HELP STAFF SERGEANT WINTERS, HE PULLED THE WOUNDED AZAMITEL OUT OF C.J.'S LINE OF FIRE.



HE PUSHED HIS UNCONSCIOUS COMPANION DOWN INTO THE HANGAR, BLOOD TRAILING FROM THE SEVERED ARM.



THEN HE DREW WINTERS IN FRONT OF HIM AND BACKED TOWARD THE HATCH.



C.J! DON'T
LET HIM TAKE
ME!

COME, WHORE.
YOU REMAIN
OURS.

**FOUL,
WRETCHED
MACHINE!**

**ALL MANKIND SHALL
SUFFER FOR THIS
TRANSGRESSION!**



LET HER
GO, TAKE YOUR
WOUNDED MAN AND
GET OFF THIS
SHIP!

FINAL OFFER!



THE FEMALE IS MINE.
SHE SHALL BE MY
RECOMPENSE.

HE'S
TAKING ME!
HELP!



THAT'S FAR
ENOUGH..

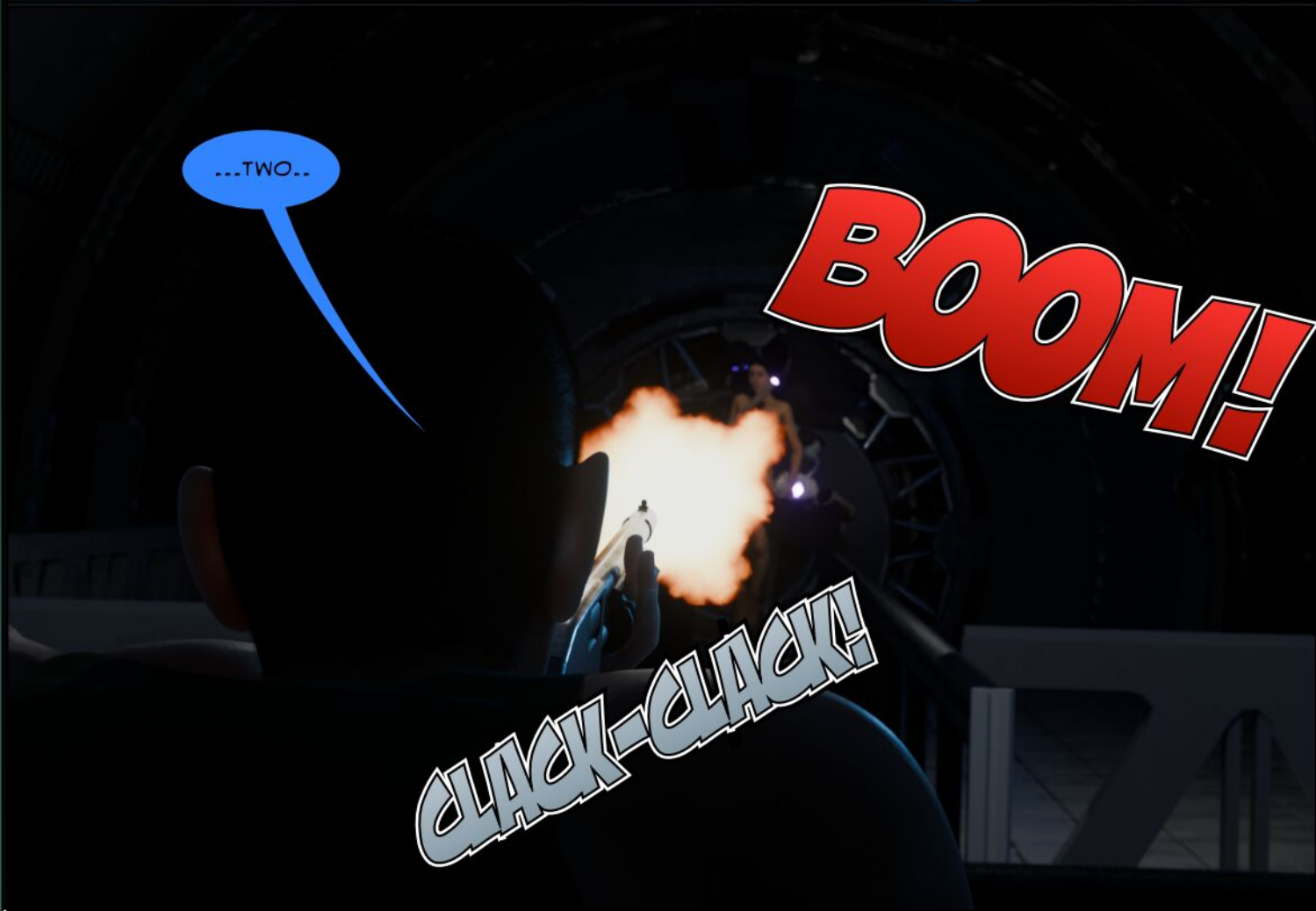
COME NO NEARER! I...
I SHALL STILL HER
HEART!



IT'LL BE THE
LAST THING YOU
EVER DO..

I'M GONNA COUNT TO
THREE..

ONE..



...TWO..

BOOM!!

CLACK-CLACK!

DING!

ACK!

AHH! OH
GOD!!!

> THE INSTANT THE SLUG STRUCK,
GADREEL'S HOLD ON WINTERS BROKE.



> UNCONSCIOUS, GADREEL RELEASED
HIS DEVICES AND TUMBLED END OVER
END.

CLANG!

A CLANG RANG THROUGH THE COMPARTMENT. THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON, AND THE SHIP'S AIR CIRCULATION RESUMED ITS LOW HUM.

OHH..

OHH! HEY!

I GOT HIS WEAPON!





WHAT...? I
CANNOT SEE...

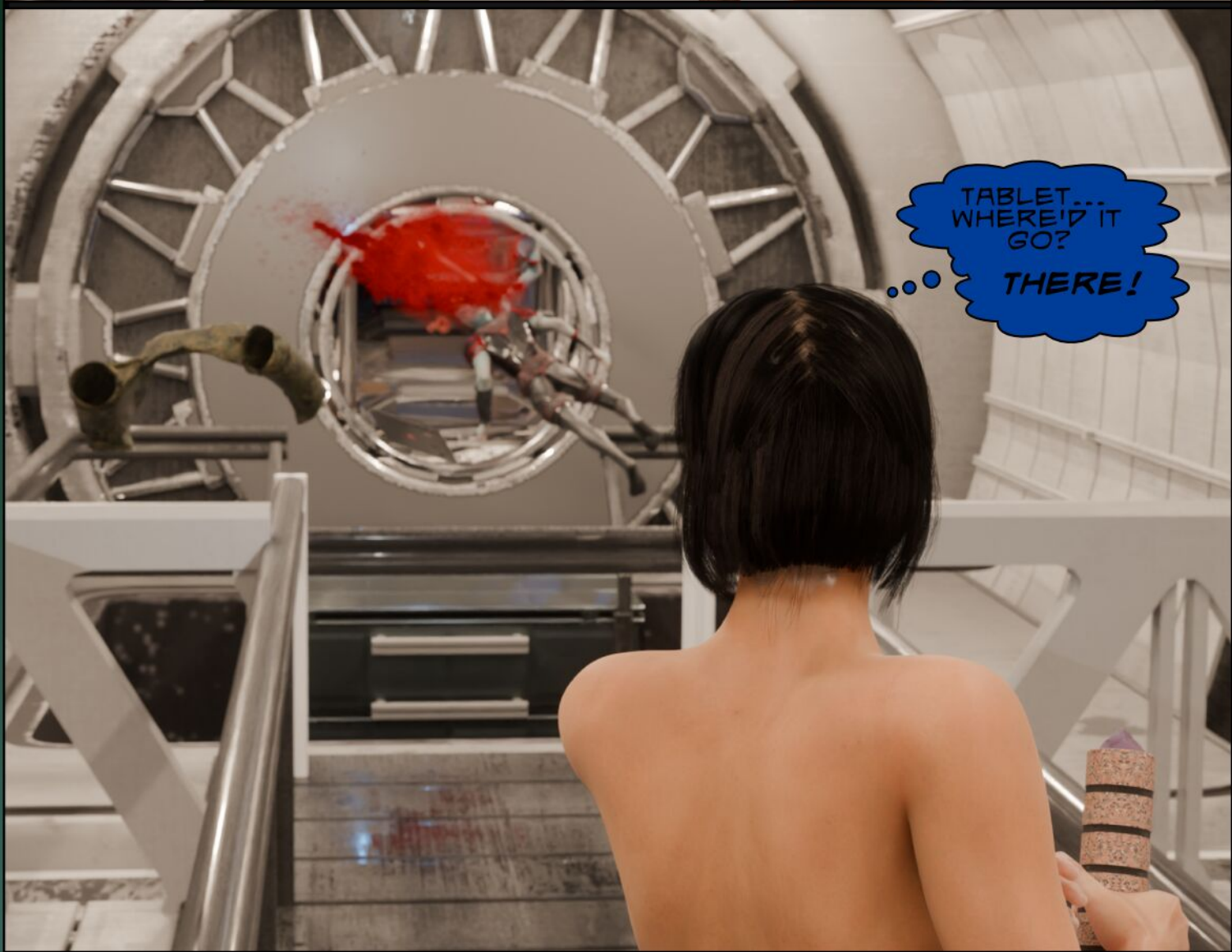
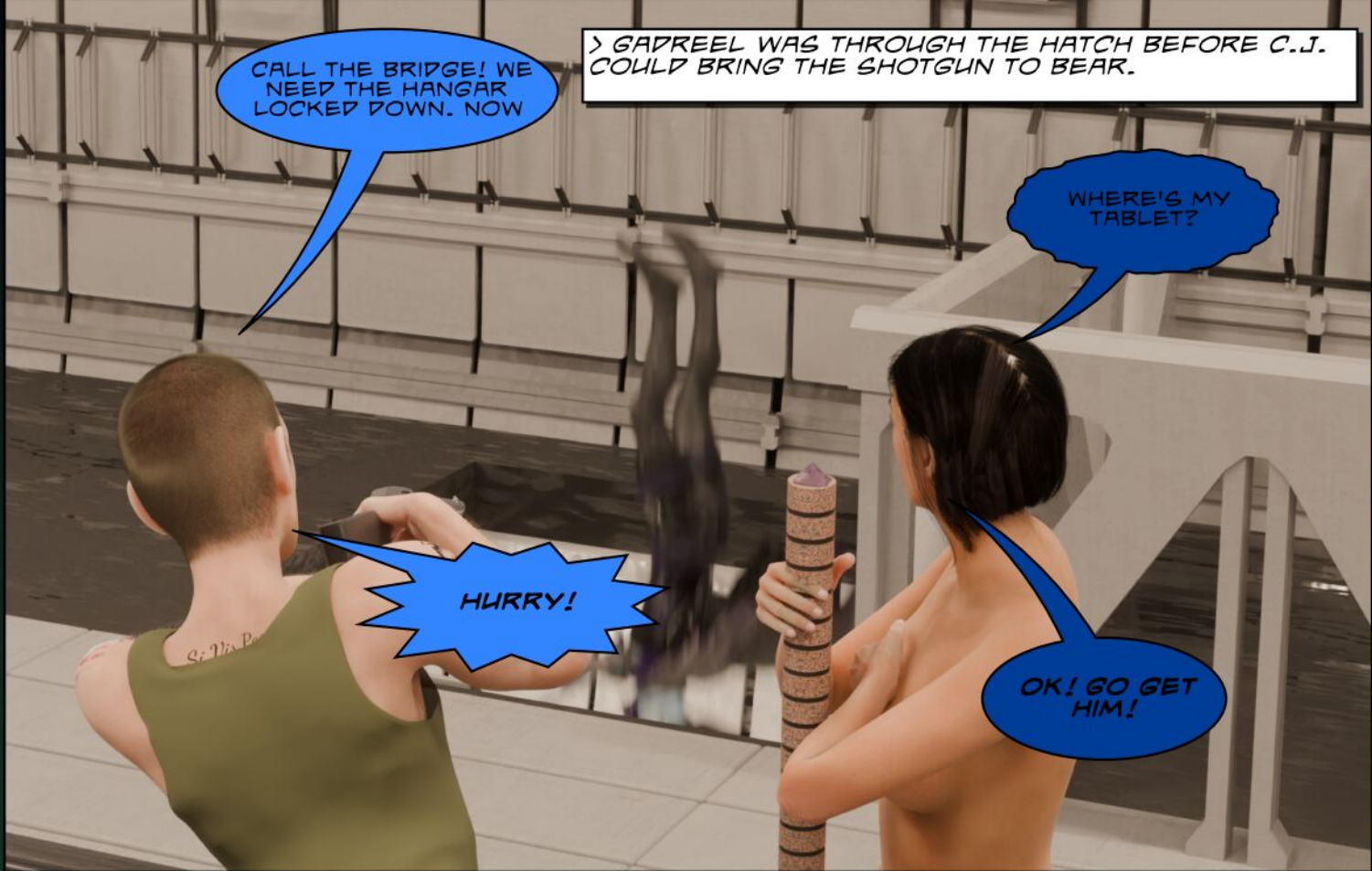


AS HE WOKE UP, GADREEL MADE THE SPLIT-SECOND
DECISION TO MAKE A BREAK FOR THE HANGAR



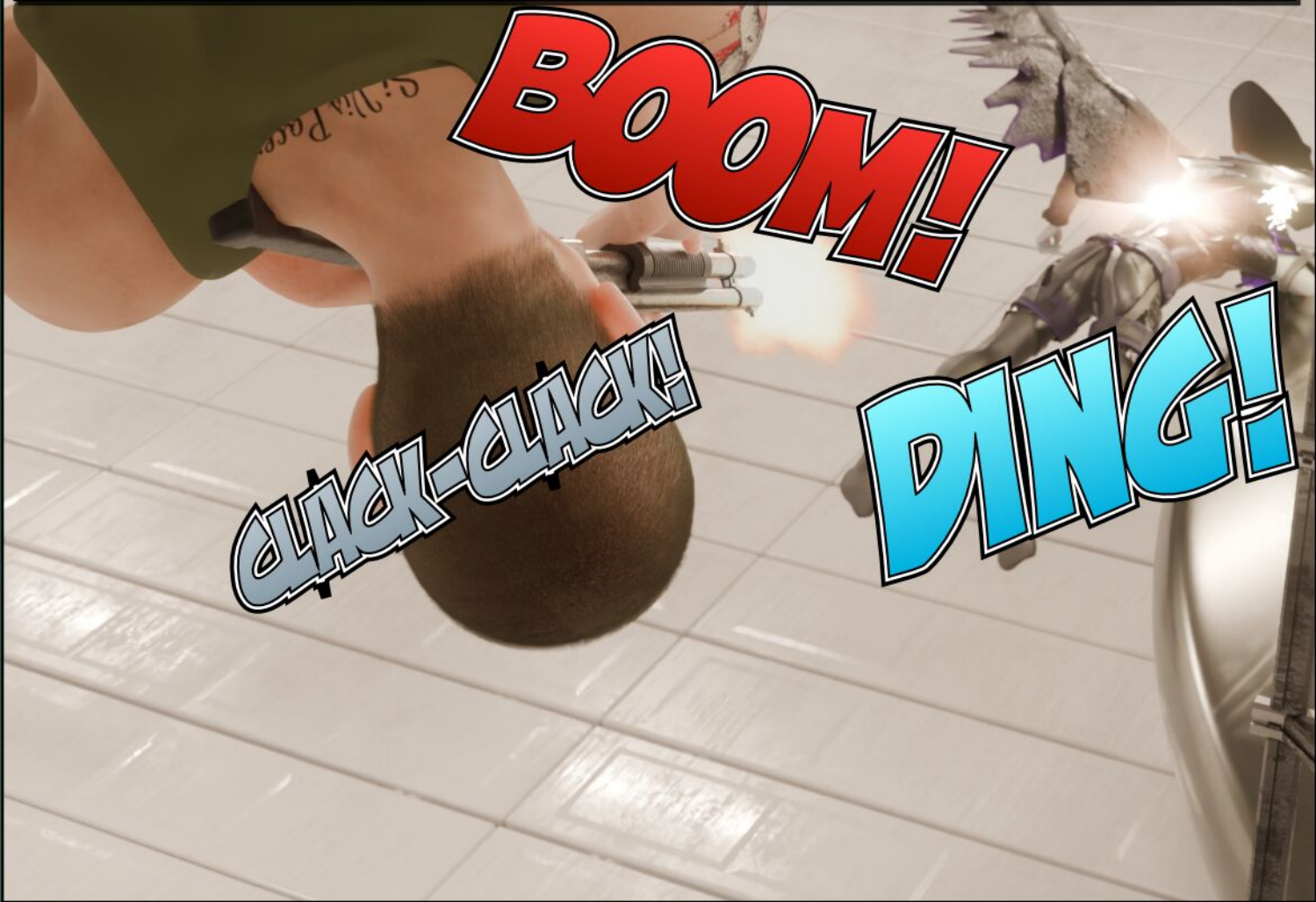
SHIT!

WHOA!





C.J. FLIPPED IN THE HUB'S MICROGRAVITY AND DOVE HEADFIRST THROUGH THE HANGAR HATCH. HE FIRED AS GADREEL HAULED THE WOUNDED AZAMITEL ABOARD. THE SLUG STRUCK GADREEL'S BACK WITH ANOTHER METALLIC CLANG.

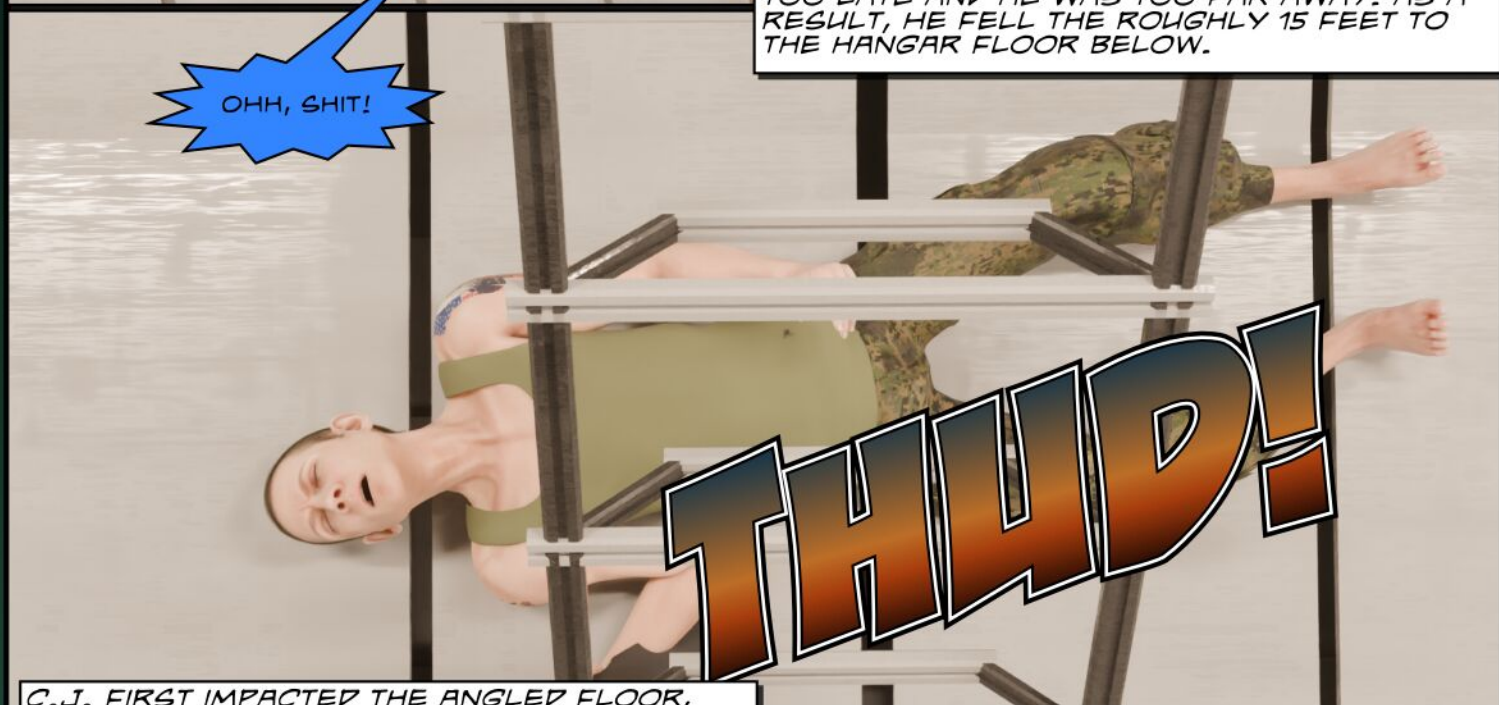


AS C.J. CHAMBERED ANOTHER SHELL, THE HANGAR'S GRAVITY CAUGHT HIM. INTENT ON THE FLEEING WATCHER, HE HAD FORGOTTEN PAUL'S WARNING ABOUT LEAVING THE CENTRAL AXIS.



HE REACHED FOR THE LADDER, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE AND HE WAS TOO FAR AWAY. AS A RESULT, HE FELL THE ROUGHLY 15 FEET TO THE HANGAR FLOOR BELOW.

OHH, SHIT!



THUD!

C.J. FIRST IMPACTED THE ANGLED FLOOR, WHICH HE BOUNCED OFF OF BEFORE SLAMMING INTO THE LADDER.



BANG!

OWWWW...

ALTHOUGH HIS ARMOR HAD STOPPED THE ROUNDS, GADREEL WAS STILL IN GREAT PAIN, AND SERIOUSLY INJURED.

AGHHH!

HE DRAGGED HIMSELF UP THE CRAFT'S STEPS, WHIMPERING AND LEAVING A THIN TRAIL OF BLOOD.

HMMMMPHHH.....

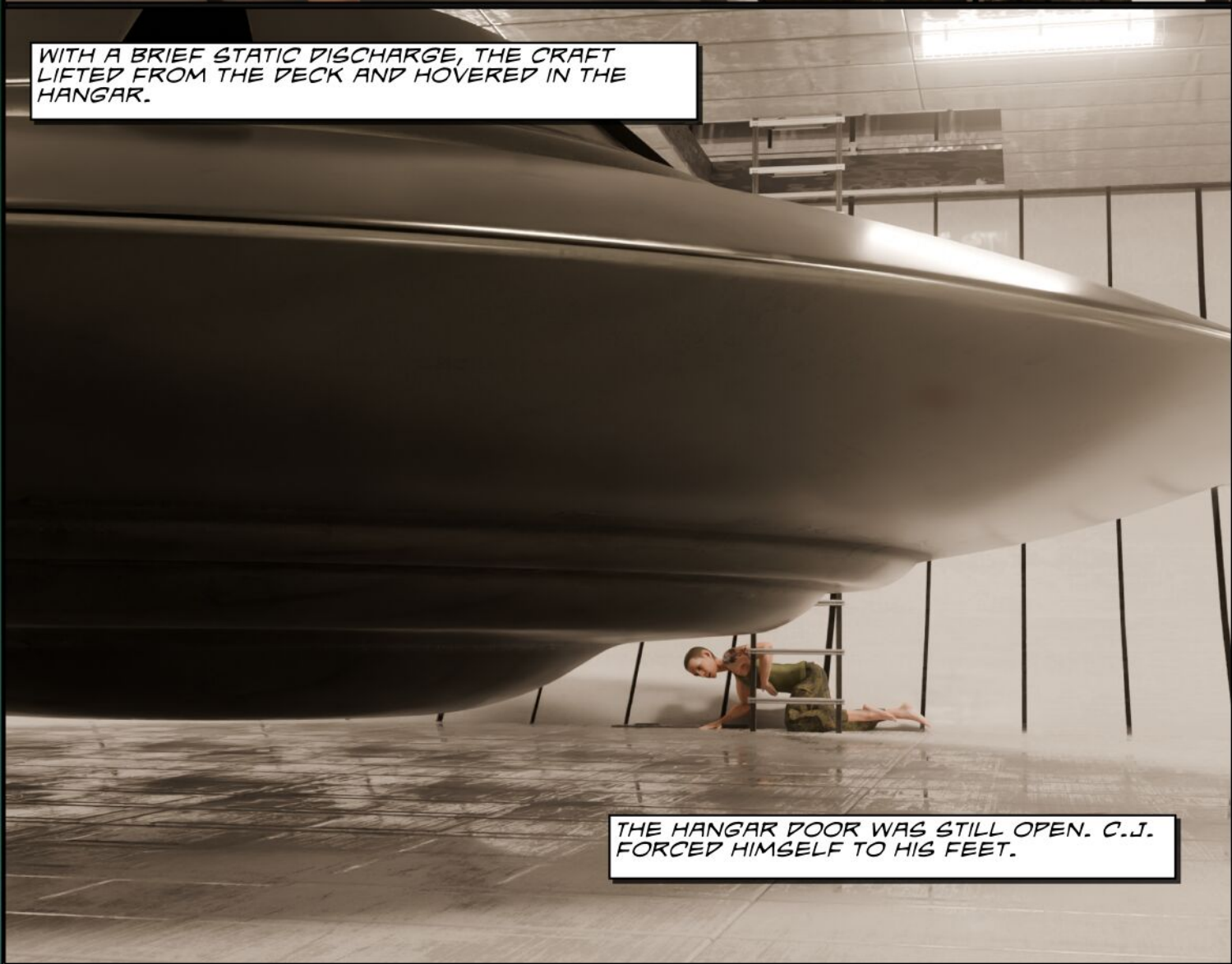
HEY... UGH!
OWW...

THE FALL AGGRAVATED C.J.'S INJURIES FROM MARS, LEAVING HIM DAZED ON THE HANGAR FLOOR.





WITH A BRIEF STATIC DISCHARGE, THE CRAFT
LIFTED FROM THE DECK AND HOVERED IN THE
HANGAR.



THE HANGAR DOOR WAS STILL OPEN. C.J.
FORCED HIMSELF TO HIS FEET.



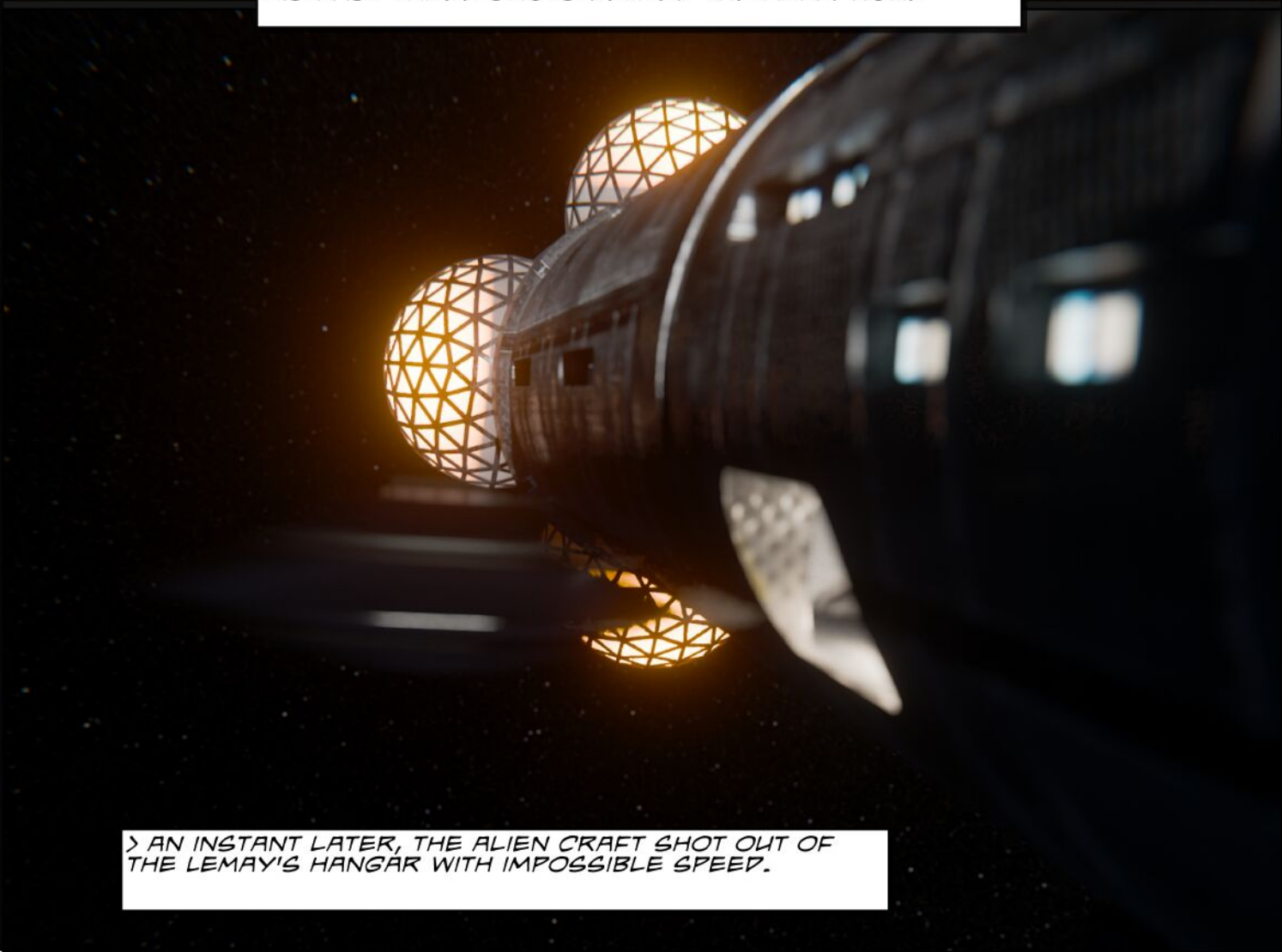




BOOM!

BWANG!

HIS LAST THREE SHOTS DENTED THE HULL. NONE



> AN INSTANT LATER, THE ALIEN CRAFT SHOT OUT OF THE LEMAY'S HANGAR WITH IMPOSSIBLE SPEED.

BEEEEEP!

GENERAL QUARTERS!
GENERAL QUARTERS! ALL
HANDS, MAN YOUR BATTLE
STATIONS!

BEEEEEP!

YEAH! THAT'S
HOW WE DO THINGS
IN TEXAS!

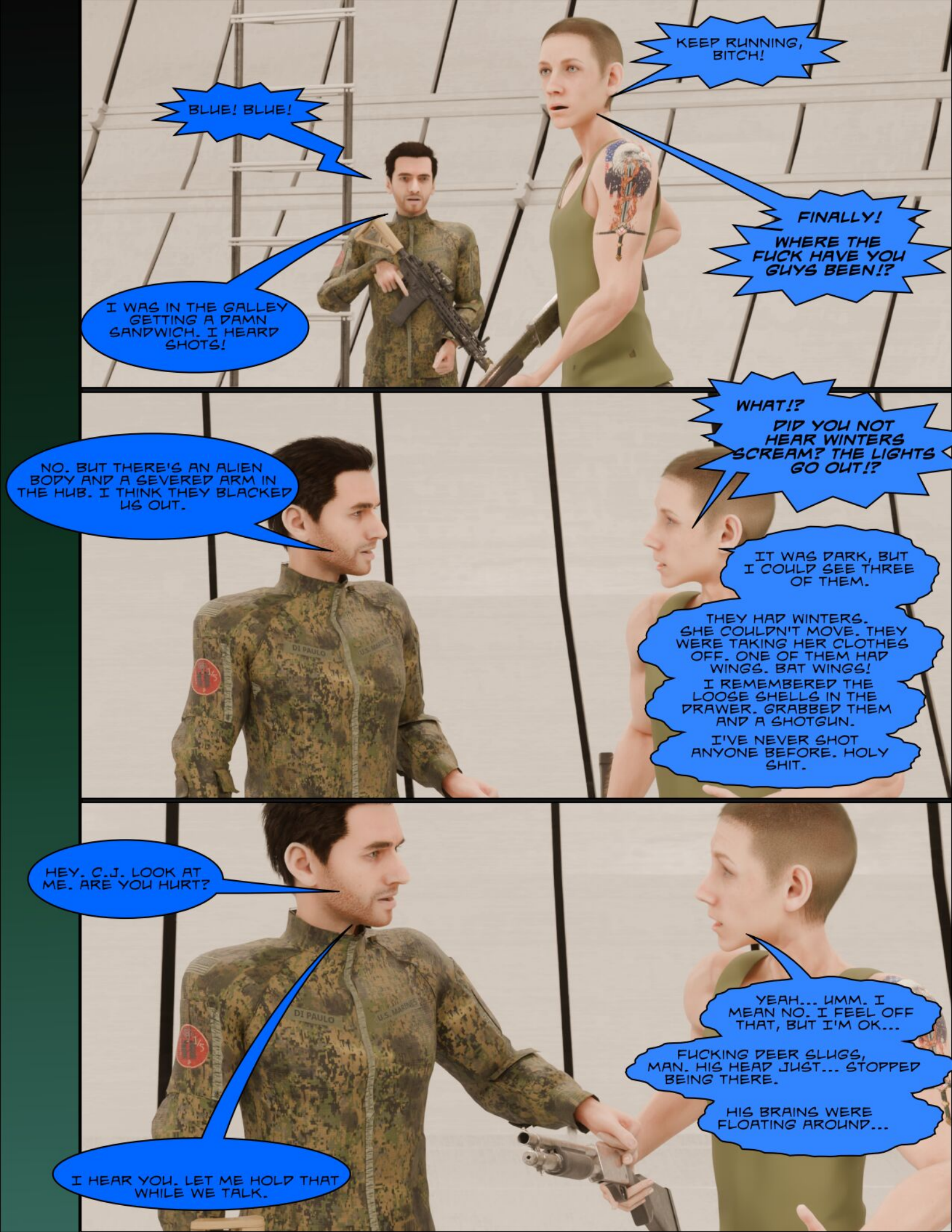


BEEEEEP!

INTRUDERS
REPORTED IN THE HANGAR.
SHOTS FIRED. MEDICAL AND
DAMAGE CONTROL TEAMS,
STAND BY.

BEEEEEP!



A comic book panel depicting a scene from the video game Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare. On the left, a male character in a green camouflage flight suit, identified by his name tag as 'DI PAULO', holds an assault rifle. On the right, a female character with a short haircut and a green tank top, identified by her name tag as 'TUCKSON', looks towards him. She has a tattoo on her left arm. The background shows the interior of a ship with metallic walls and structural beams.

BLUE! BLUE!

KEEP RUNNING,
BITCH!

I WAS IN THE GALLEY
GETTING A DAMN
SANDWICH. I HEARD
SHOTS!

FINALLY!
WHERE THE
FUCK HAVE YOU
GUYS BEEN!?

NO. BUT THERE'S AN ALIEN
BODY AND A SEVERED ARM IN
THE HUB. I THINK THEY BLACKED
US OUT.

WHAT!?
DID YOU NOT
HEAR WINTERS
SCREAM? THE LIGHTS
GO OUT!?

IT WAS DARK, BUT
I COULD SEE THREE
OF THEM.

THEY HAD WINTERS.
SHE COULDN'T MOVE. THEY
WERE TAKING HER CLOTHES
OFF. ONE OF THEM HAD
WINGS. BAT WINGS!
I REMEMBERED THE
LOOSE SHELLS IN THE
DRAWER. GRABBED THEM
AND A SHOTGUN.

I'VE NEVER SHOT
ANYONE BEFORE. HOLY
SHIT.

HEY. C.J. LOOK AT
ME. ARE YOU HURT?

YEAH... UMM. I
MEAN NO. I FEEL OFF
THAT, BUT I'M OK...

FUCKING DEER SLUGS,
MAN. HIS HEAD JUST... STOPPED
BEING THERE.

HIS BRAINS WERE
FLOATING AROUND...

I HEAR YOU. LET ME HOLD THAT
WHILE WE TALK.



ALL RIGHT. JUST BREATHE.
I'M RIGHT HERE.

YOU GOT HER OUT. WE'RE GOING
TO GET YOU CHECKED, TOO.

NO!

OK.. YEAH.



DON'T
APOLOGIZE. YOU
DIDN'T DO ANYTHING
WRONG.

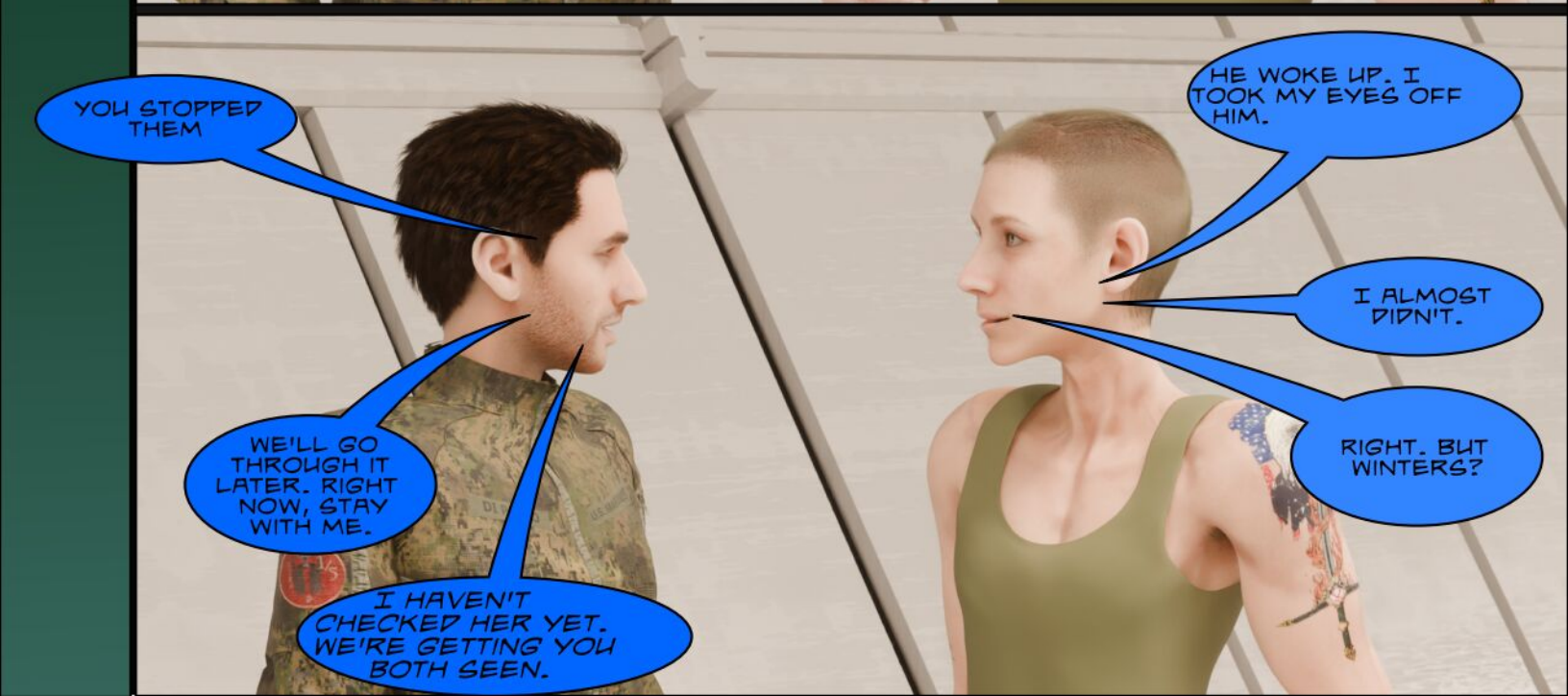
YOU DON'T HAVE TO
APOLOGIZE FOR BEING
SHAKEN.

SHE'S UP THERE, GETTING
DRESSED.

HERE. SORRY.
IT'S EMPTY
ANYWAY.

IS WINTERS
OK?

THEY WERE
GOING TO TAKE
HER.



YOU STOPPED
THEM

WE'LL GO
THROUGH IT
LATER. RIGHT
NOW, STAY
WITH ME.

I HAVEN'T
CHECKED HER YET.
WE'RE GETTING YOU
BOTH SEEN.

HE WOKE UP. I
TOOK MY EYES OFF
HIM.

I ALMOST
DIDN'T.

RIGHT. BUT
WINTERS?



BOSS! C.J.! THE
HELL IS GOING
ON!?

FUCKING RIGHT HE
DID! FUCKER'S HEAD IS
ALL OVER THE HUB!

GOOD WORK, MAN!
THIS IS HUGE! HOW'D
YOU DO IT!?

INTRUDERS. C.J. GOT
WINTERS AWAY FROM
THEM.

> BILL, GET THE
COLONEL ON COMMS.
WE NEED A FULL LOCKDOWN
AND A HEAD COUNT. THEN
GEAR UP. WE'RE SEARCHING
EVERY INCH OF THIS
BUCKET.

> RIFLED
DEER SLUGS. 'D
YOU DO IT?

I SAW THREE. HIT
ALL THREE. TWO GOT
AWAY IN A DAMN FLYING
SAUCER!

I DON'T KNOW IF
THERE ARE MORE. OR IF
THEY TOOK ANYONE
ELSE.

GRAB A BOX
OF THOSE SLUGS
WHILE YOU'RE AT
IT!

YEAH! ON IT!



YEAH. BUT YOU STAY WITH ME.

YOU WERE WOUND UP TIGHT. I DIDN'T WANT ANYONE GETTING SHOT BY ACCIDENT.

YOU'RE ALREADY HURT. THAT FALL COULD'VE MADE IT WORSE.

HEY, CAN I HAVE THAT BACK NOW? I'M CALM... ER.

I GET IT. STILL AM, A LITTLE. BUT I'M OKAY.

I'M A LITTLE SORE, BUT I'LL LIVE.

THEN LET'S GET YOU SOME AMMO AND CLEAR THIS SHIP. YOU'RE STILL GETTING CHECKED AFTERWARD.

LET'S DO IT!