

BROAN'IS.

FARM COLONY.

17,500 LIGHTYEARS
FROM EARTH

CATTLE FARM #63



IT HAD BEEN A LONG AND HARD SIX MONTHS FOR THE CURRENT WORK FORCE, NOW ON THE FINAL DAY OF THEIR ROTATION.



EVEN AS THE WORKDAY CAME TO A CLOSE, THE CREW WAS JUST FINISHING UP SEPARATING OUT THE BEST CUTS FROM THAT DAYS SLAUGHTER TO BE PACKAGED AND SHIPPED SEPARATELY FROM THE REST.



HOW WE
LOOKIN'?

WE BEAT OUR
QUOTA BY THREE
PERCENT!



AMAZING! YOU
BOYS READY TO GET
THE HELL OFF THIS
ROCK?

VERY MUCH SO.

YES! THESE
LAST FEW HOURS
CAN'T GO FAST
ENOUGH!

AND MORE GOOD NEWS, OUR
REPLACEMENTS ARE AHEAD OF
SCHEDULE, THEY'LL BE HERE IN A
FEW MINUTES SO WASH UP AND
LET'S GET OUTTA THIS STINK-PIT!



OHH, GOOD!

THAT'S MY SENTIMENT
AS WELL.
WHERE'D VA'DON RUN
OFF TOO?

I LET HIM TAKE
TODAY OFF, LAST DAY
AND ALL. HE WORKED
HARD.

WELL, I BEST GO
FIND HIM.

I'LL GO FIND HIM, I
NEED SOME AIR
ANYWAY.



**WOOOSH! I'VE
GOT HIM LOCKED!
FIRING MISSILE!**

WOOOOOSH! HHH!

BOOOM!









YEAH...
GONNA SHOOT
HIM! GONNA GET
HIM!



ACTUALLY, THERE'S
SIX OF US. AND THAT'S
PLENTY.

KRI'DALL,
DO IT!

YEAHH!!!!





















FISHING THROUGH HIS BAG, MA'TIIK PULLED A PSIONIC SCEPTER AS WELL AS A SMALL, WHITE PYRAMID WITH A GOLD CAP.



MA'TIIK, HOW LONG WILL THAT TAKE TO SET UP?

ARE YOU GUYS INSANE!? YOU CAN'T PLUG THAT IN HERE!



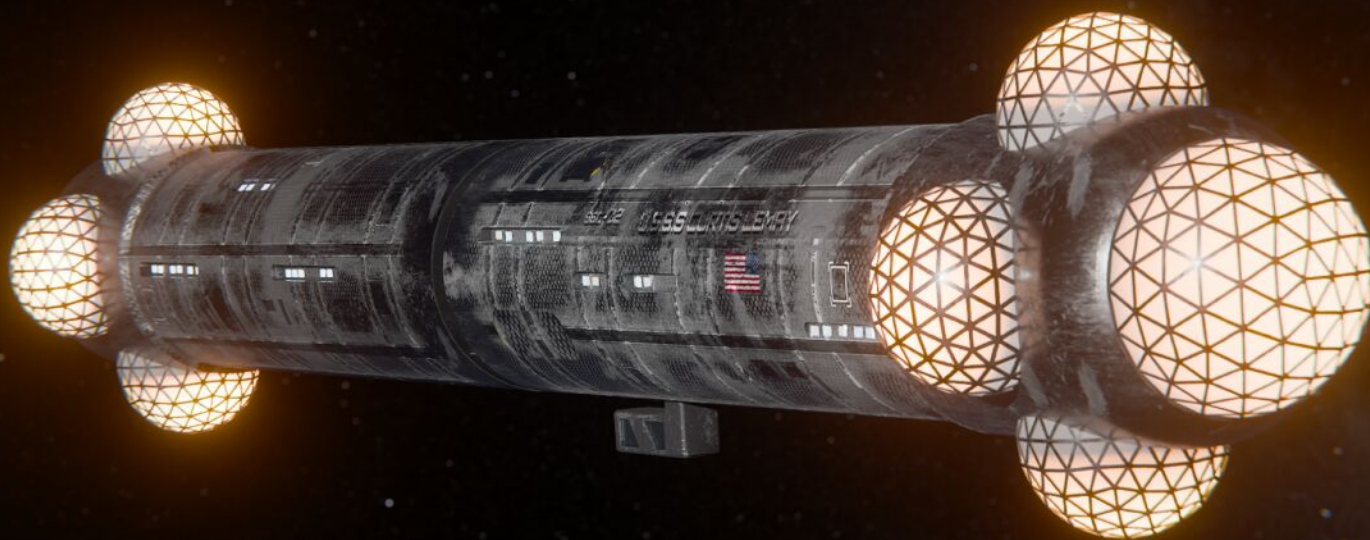


MA'IIK BEGAN INTERFACING THE PSIONIC DEVICES WITH THE FARMING COLONIES LONG RANGE TRANSMITTER, GREATLY EXTENDING THE RANGE AND AMPLITUDE OF THE DEVICES.



USSS CURTIS LEMAY.

SOL SYSTEM, MARS ORBITAL RANGE.



ZIS 1ST DOCTORS
OTTO ZIEGLER AND
VWAYNE LAPOINTE
RECORDING..

DISSECTION OF SUBJECT
LGM-TWO-TWO-SEVEN DELTA..
COMMENCING.





WHAT'S THE
MATTER? DON'T LIKE
WATCHING ONE OF YOUR OWN
GETTING CHOPPED UP FOR
STUDY?



THE
FUCK IS THAT
SUPPOSE TO
MEAN!?

AREN'T THEY THE ONES
WHO CONVINCED YOUR RICH
DADDY TO BUILD YOU IN THE
FIRST PLACE?

THE ALIEN BODY
WITH HALF A HEAD ISN'T
ENOUGH TO CONVINCE YOU?
OR ME SAVING YOUR LIFE
ON MARS?



NOT REALLY, NO.

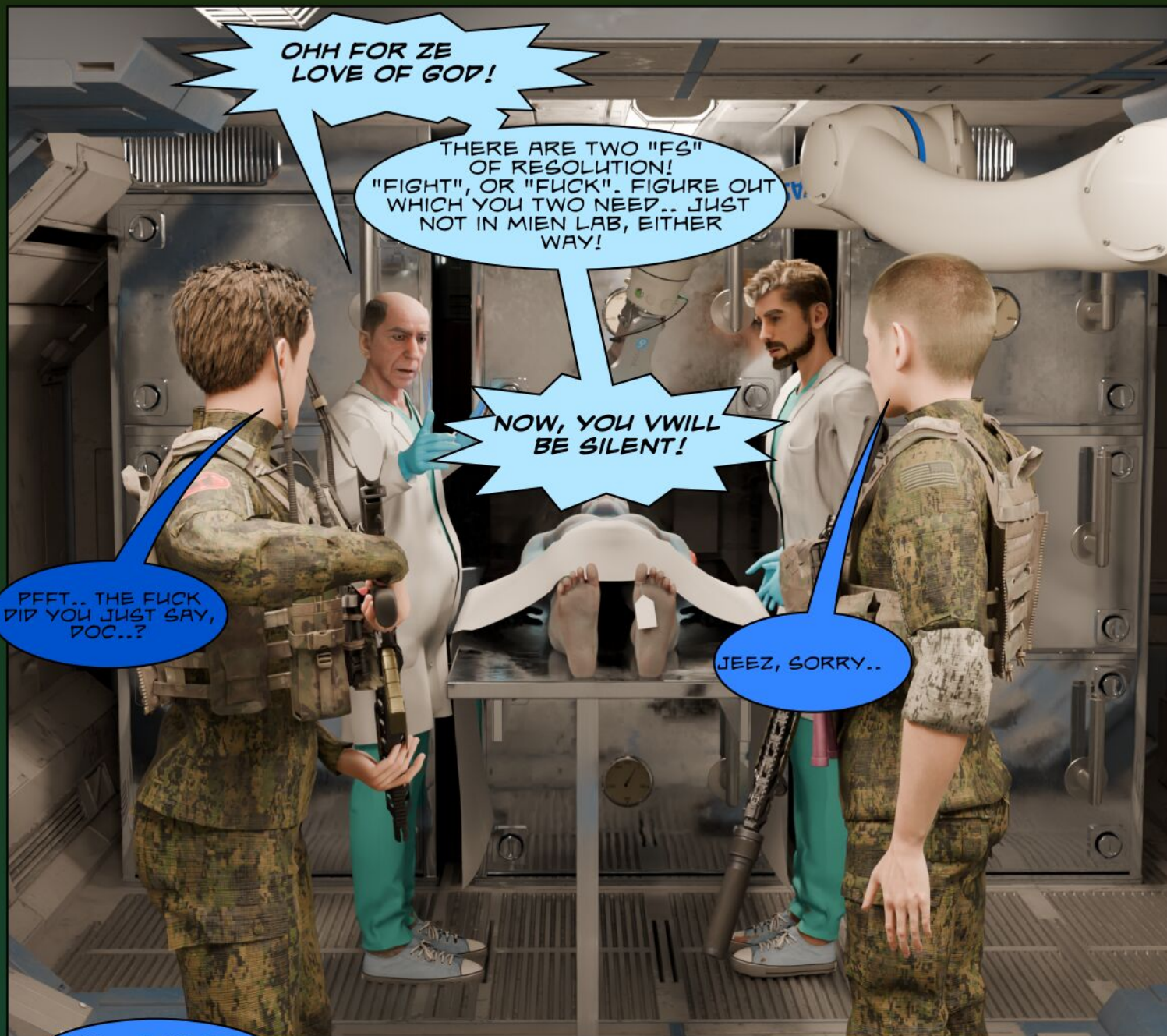
DUDE, WHAT IS
YOUR DEAL?

MY DEAL?

I GREW UP IN A
TENT, HUNTING AND EATING
STREET RATS AND POGGING
PERVERTS BECAUSE OF MACHINES
LIKE YOU. AND YOU HAVE THE
NERVE TO ASK WHAT MY
DEAL IS?

THAT SUCKS.. MAYBE IF
YOUR FAMILY WASN'T A BUNCH OF 64
IQ, INBRED, ALABAMA FUCK-WITS THEY
WOULD HAVE FIGURED SOMETHING
OUT?

YOU KNOW WHAT?
FUCK YOU! I'M..



OHH FOR ZE
LOVE OF GOD!

THERE ARE TWO "FS"
OF RESOLUTION!
"FIGHT", OR "FUCK". FIGURE OUT
WHICH YOU TWO NEED.. JUST
NOT IN MIEN LAB, EITHER
WAY!

NOW, YOU VWILL
BE SILENT!

PEFT.. THE FUCK
DID YOU JUST SAY,
DOC..?

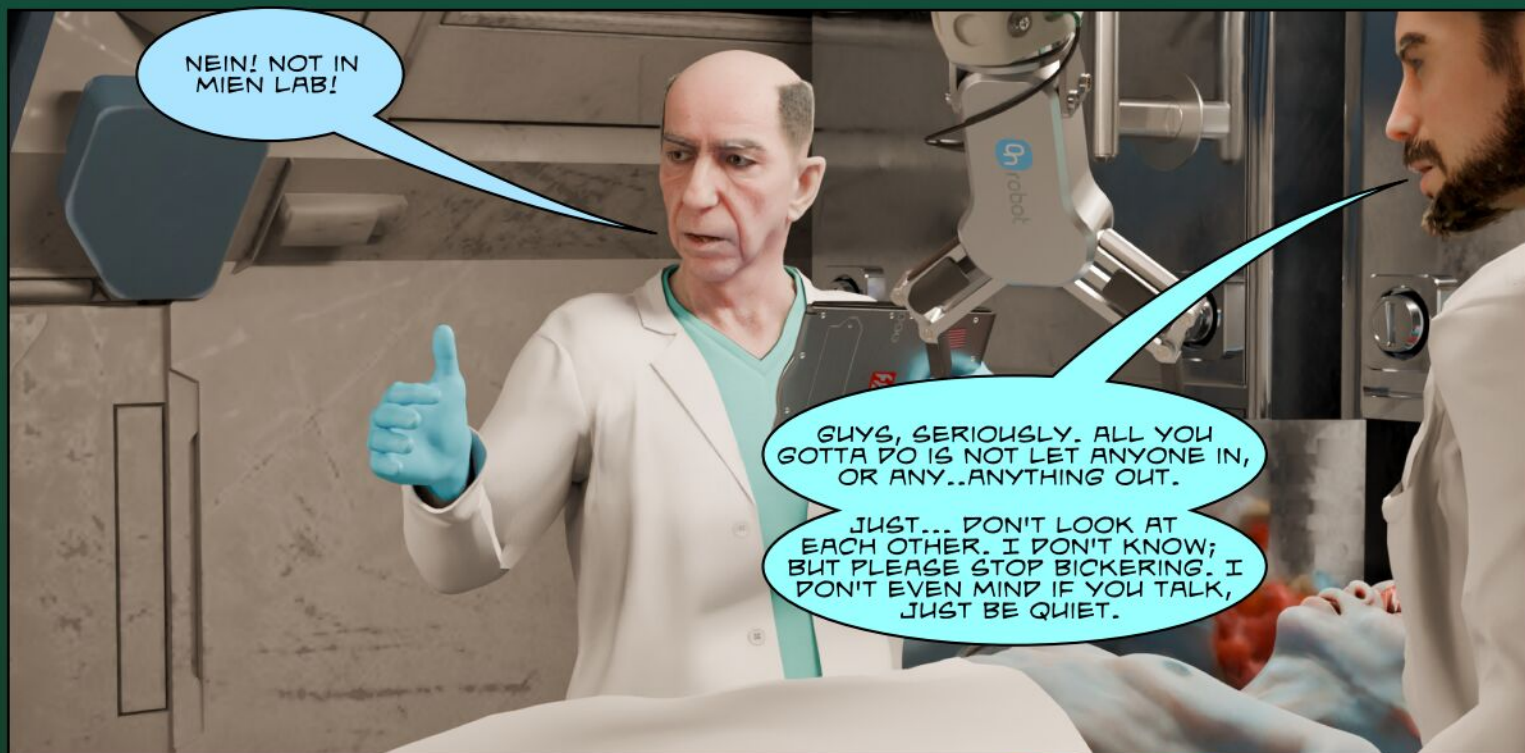
JEEZ, SORRY..

UHM... I HAVE A
GIRLFRIEND, SO...
YEAH, SORRY TO
DISAPPOINT YOU..

OHH, JUST
FUCK OFF..

LOOK, I DON'T
LIKE IT EITHER BUT WE'RE
PRETTY MUCH STUCK
TOGETHER. SO CAN'T WE AT
LEAST PRETEND TO GET
ALONG?

OR I CAN KNOCK YOUR
TEETH DOWN YOUR THROAT..
UP TO YOU..



NEIN! NOT IN MIEN LAB!

GUYS, SERIOUSLY. ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS NOT LET ANYONE IN, OR ANY..ANYTHING OUT.

JUST... DON'T LOOK AT EACH OTHER. I DON'T KNOW; BUT PLEASE STOP BICKERING. I DON'T EVEN MIND IF YOU TALK, JUST BE QUIET.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

SO.. WHAT HAPPENED, EXACTLY?

WITH THE MACHINES, AND THE TENT?

OHH.. A.I. TOOK BOTH MY PARENTS JOBS, THE WHOLE TOWN BECAME A GHETTO, BASICALLY OVERNIGHT.

TWO YEARS LATER, MY DAD WALKED OUT INTO AN EMPTY LOT WITH A .38 AND BLOW HIS BRAINS OUT.. COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.

MOM STARTED USING TO COPE, SO I SPENT MY CHILDHOOD GETTING PASSED BETWEEN BY DRUG DEALERS AND SCUMBAG GANG BANGERS.

WAS IT AT LEAST A NICE TENT?





AND YEAH, I DO..

DO WHAT?

TALK WHEN I GET NERVOUS.

YEAH, SURE..
"NERVOUS"

MORE LIKE
SIMULATED, FAKE,
COMPUTER BULLSHIT.

MAYBE, BUT I
CAN'T TELL THE
DIFFERENCE.



I CAN.. IT'S FAKE.
YOU'RE FAKE. NOW STOP
TALKING.

INITIATING
CUTTING LASER!

YOU CAN, HUH?

WELL IF WE'RE JUST
GONNA MAKE SHIT UP..

I'LL JUST START TELLING
PEOPLE YOU TRIED TO TOUCH
ME..

YUP! THAT'S ME! PEOPLE WILL
DEFIANTLY BELIEVE THAT!

AT LEAST I DON'T LIE
ABOUT HAVING A GIRLFRIEND TO
COVER UP FOR THE FACT THAT I'M
UNLOVABLE..

PEFFT.. I
HATE YOU, AND THAT
STUNG.. BUT IT WAS
GOOD..

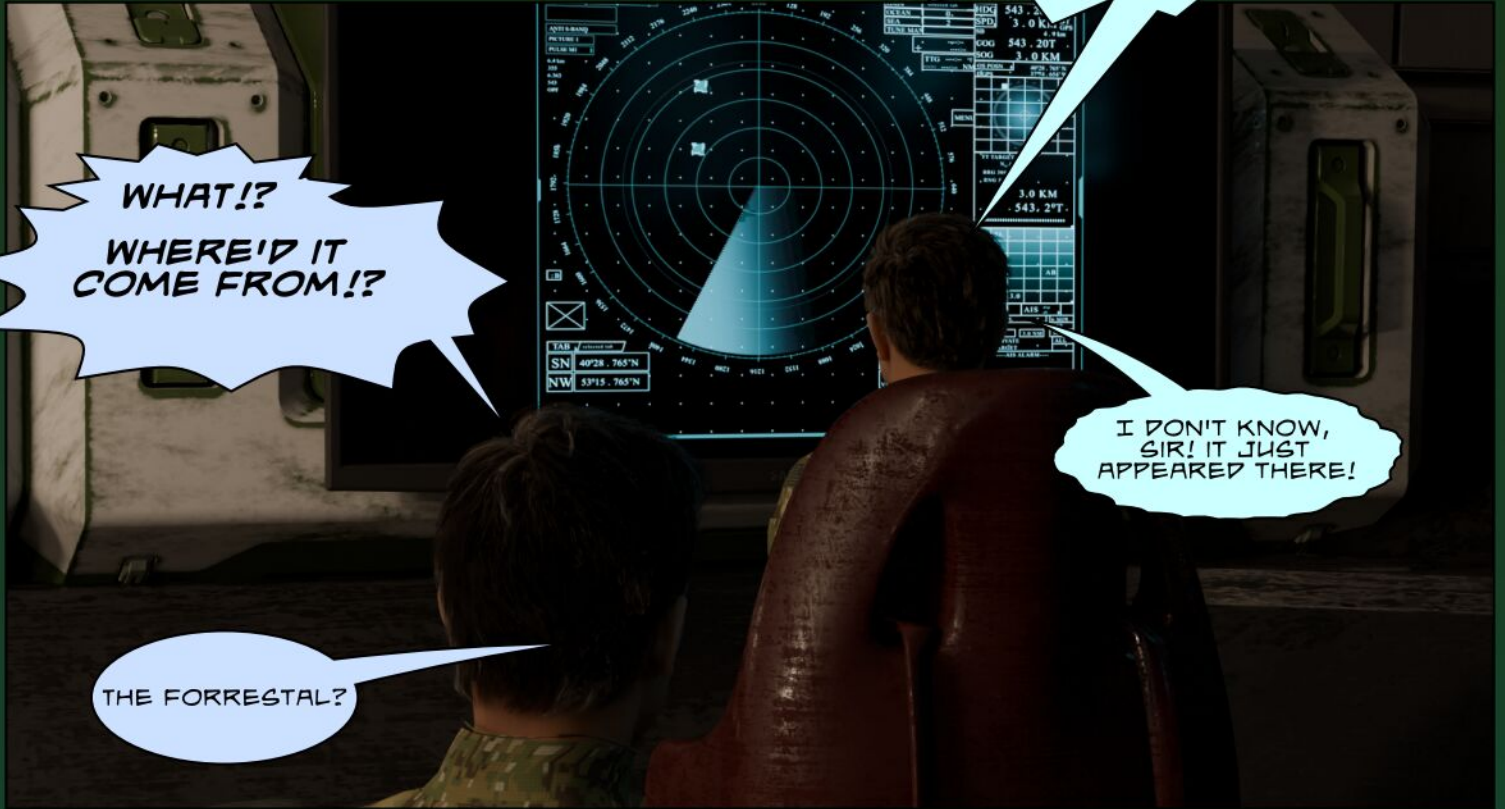
OUCH! WAS THAT YOUR
HIGH-SCHOOL YEARBOOK
QUOTE?

ERR.. DID THEY EVEN
HAVE YEARBOOKS AT
CARDBOARD BOX HIGH?

OR DID THEY JUST
SPELL OUT YOUR NAME IN
DISCARDED CRACK PIPES AND
USED NEEDLES?



COLONEL! STRONG
RADAR CONTACT! 6
KILOMETERS ASTERN,
C.B.P.R! CLOSING FAST!



WHAT!?
WHERE'D IT
COME FROM!?

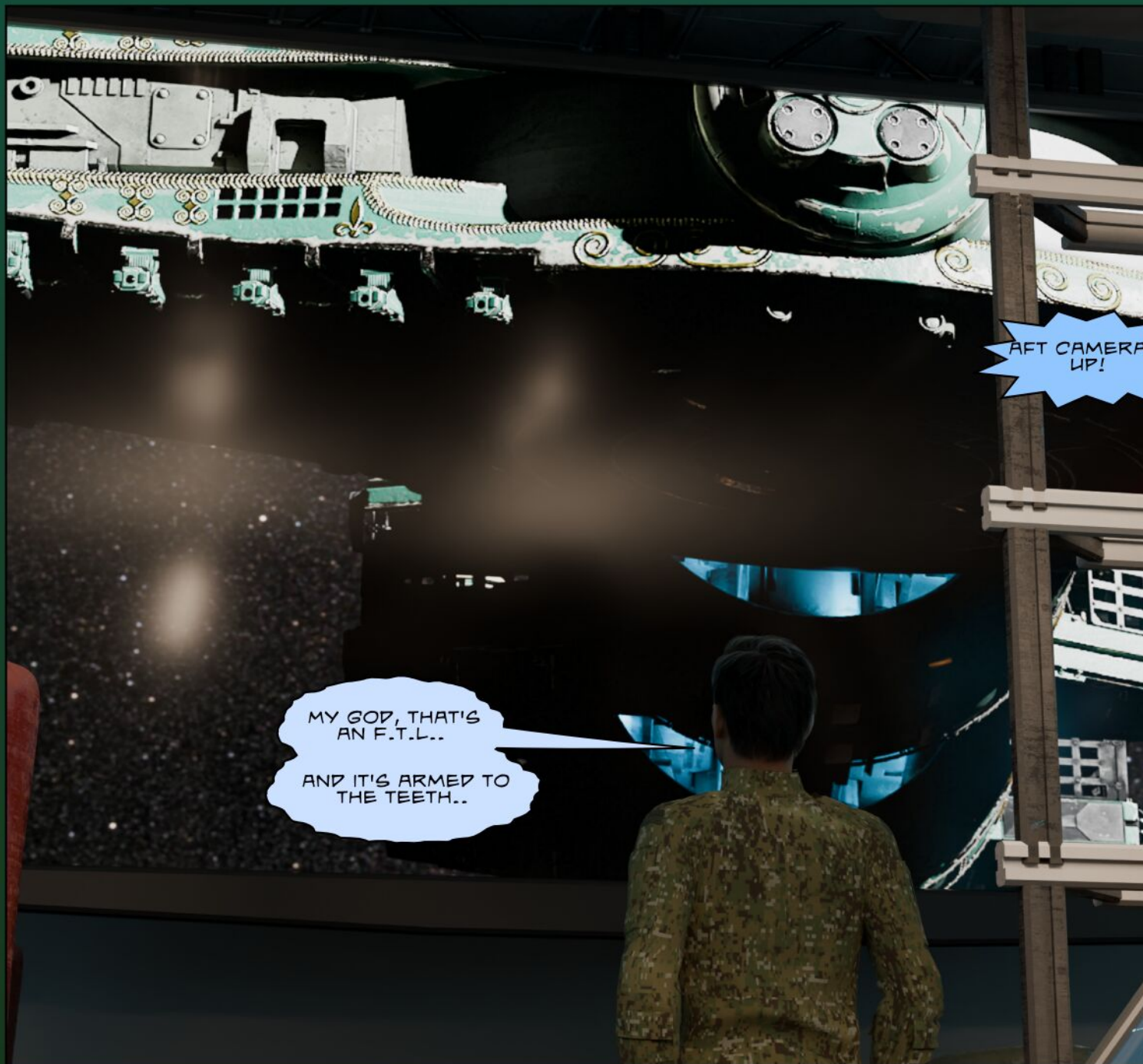
I DON'T KNOW,
SIR! IT JUST
APPEARED THERE!

THE FORRESTAL?



HOLY GOD! NO
SIR..
IT'S..
ENORMOUS!

GET ME VISUAL! PUT IT UP
ON THE BIG SCREEN!



AFT CAMERA'S UP!

MY GOD, THAT'S
AN F.T.L..
AND IT'S ARMED TO
THE TEETH..

SOUND
GENERAL
QUARTERS!

HELM! EVASIVE
MANEUVERS! GET US OUT
OF IT'S WAY!



WHAT THE
FUCK..

WHAT NOW?

BEEEEEP!
GENERAL QUARTERS!
GENERAL QUARTERS! ALL
HANDS TO BATTLESTATIONS!
BEEEEEP!

THIS IS NOT A DRILL!
UNKNOWN VESSEL ON
INTERCEPT COURSE! ALL
HANDS TO BATTLE
STATIONS!

VWHAT DID HE
SAY!?

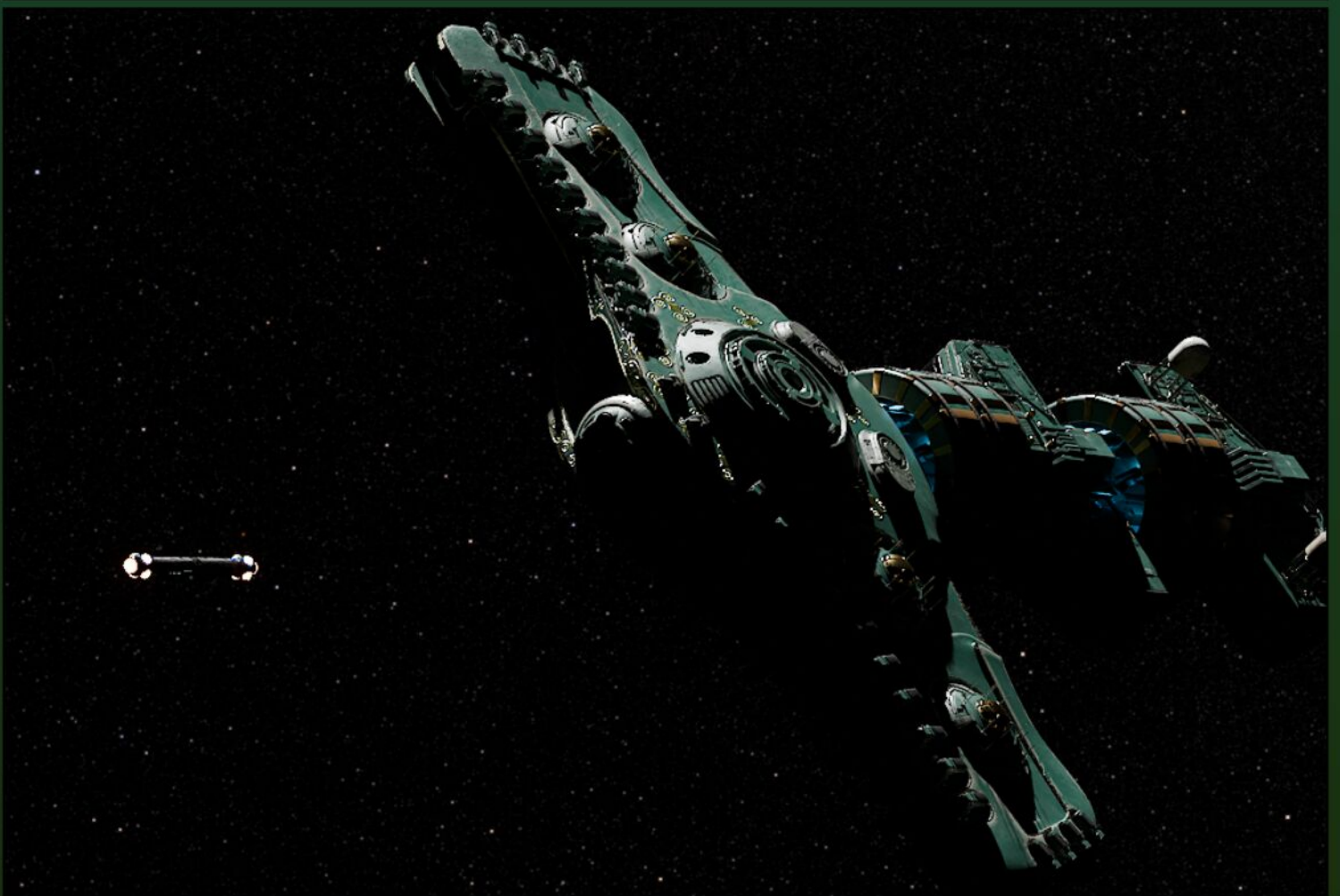
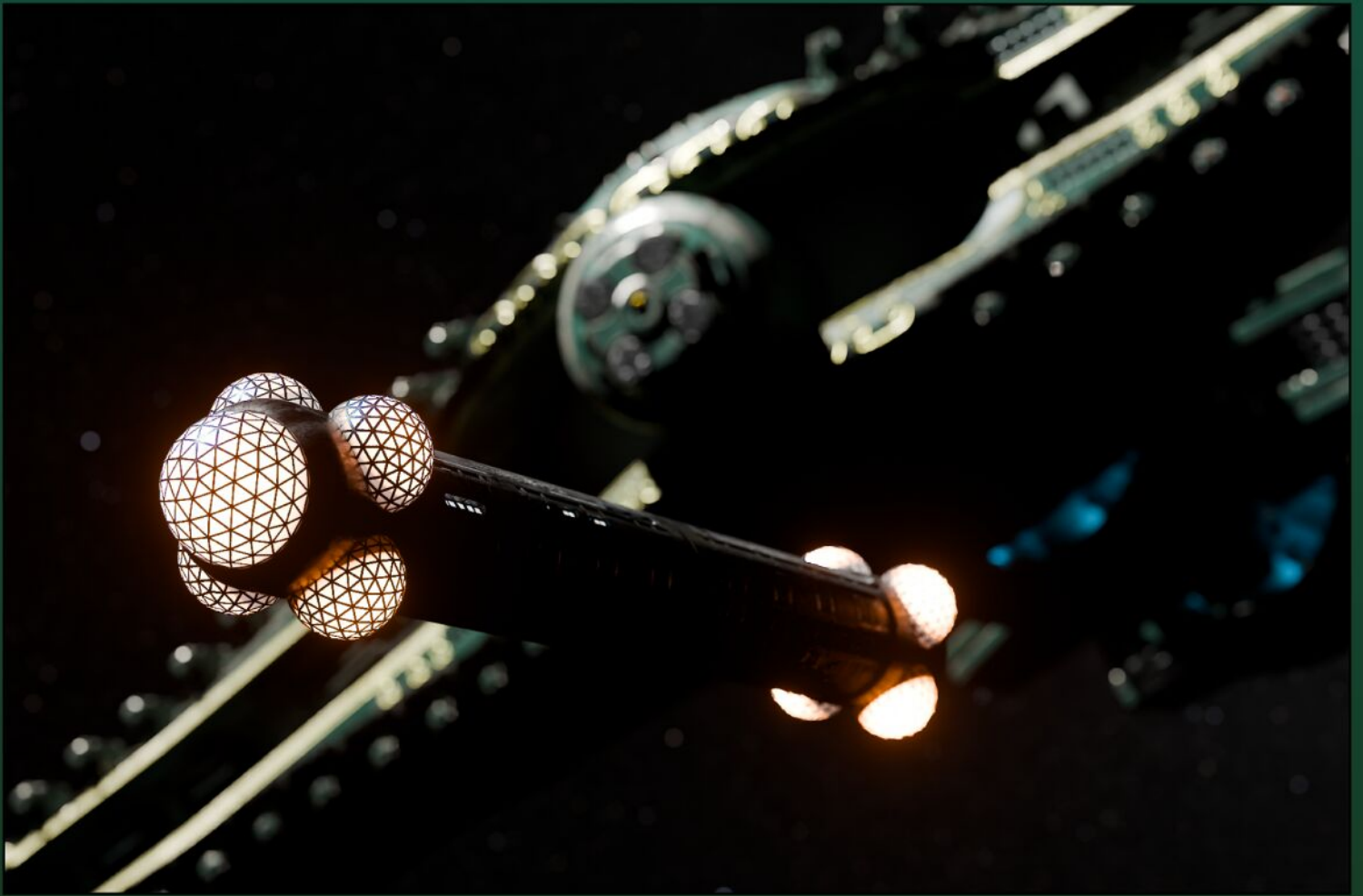


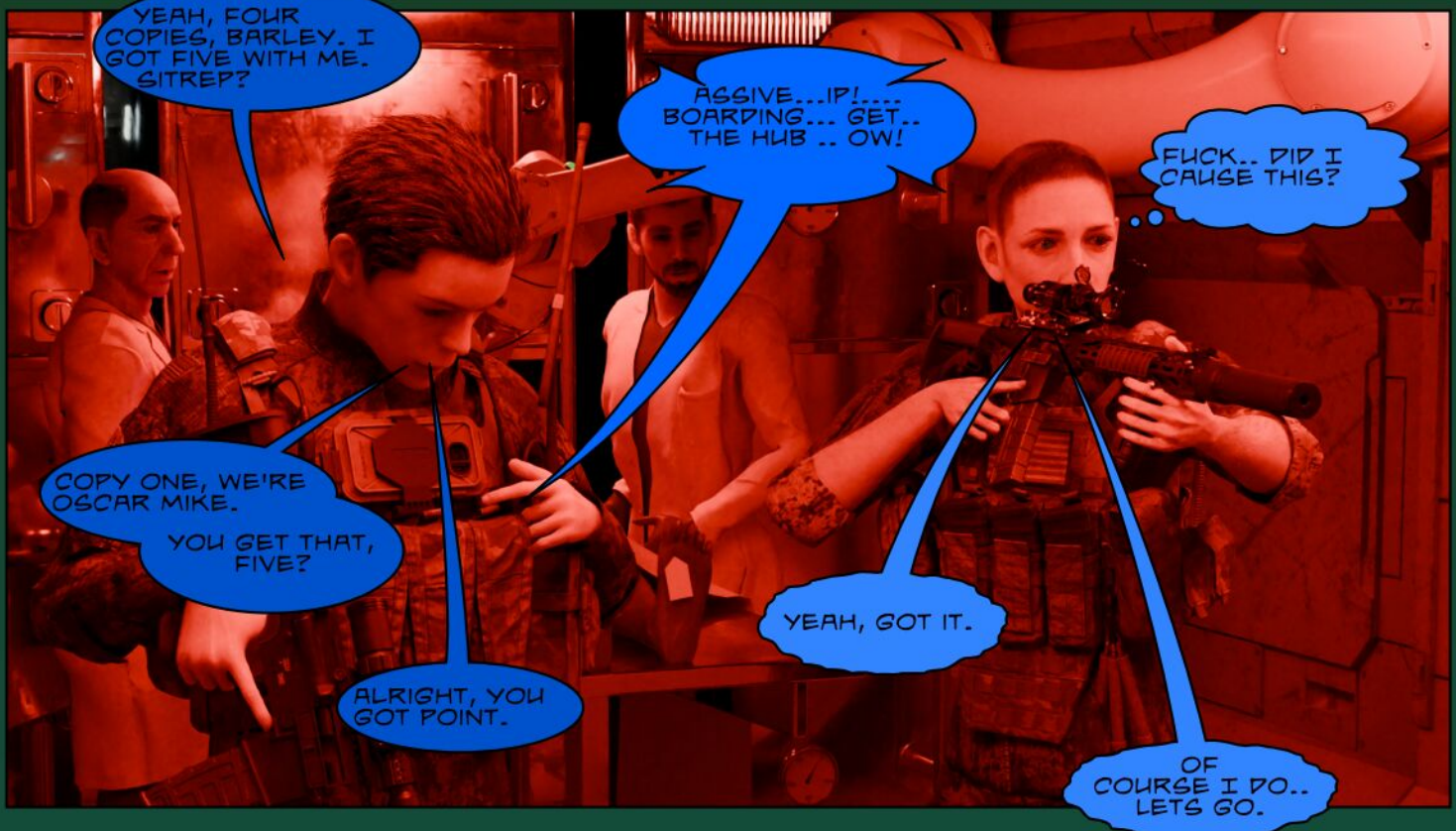
RELAX DOC,
I'M SURE IT'S
NOTHING.

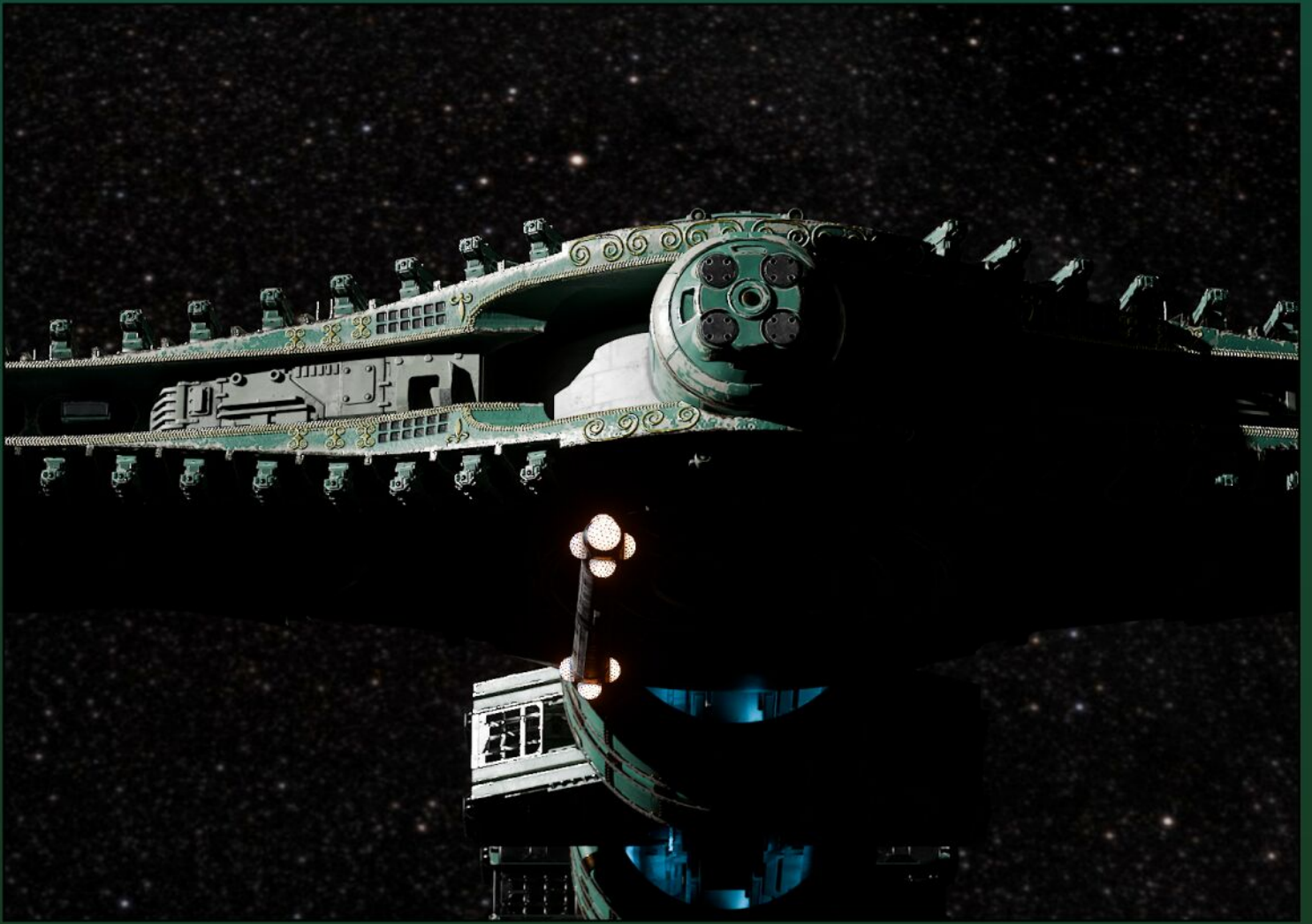
OUR
ORDERS WERE TO
PROTECT THIS ROOM,
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE
GONNA DO..

OK.. WHAT DO
WE DO?

I'M WITH YOU.



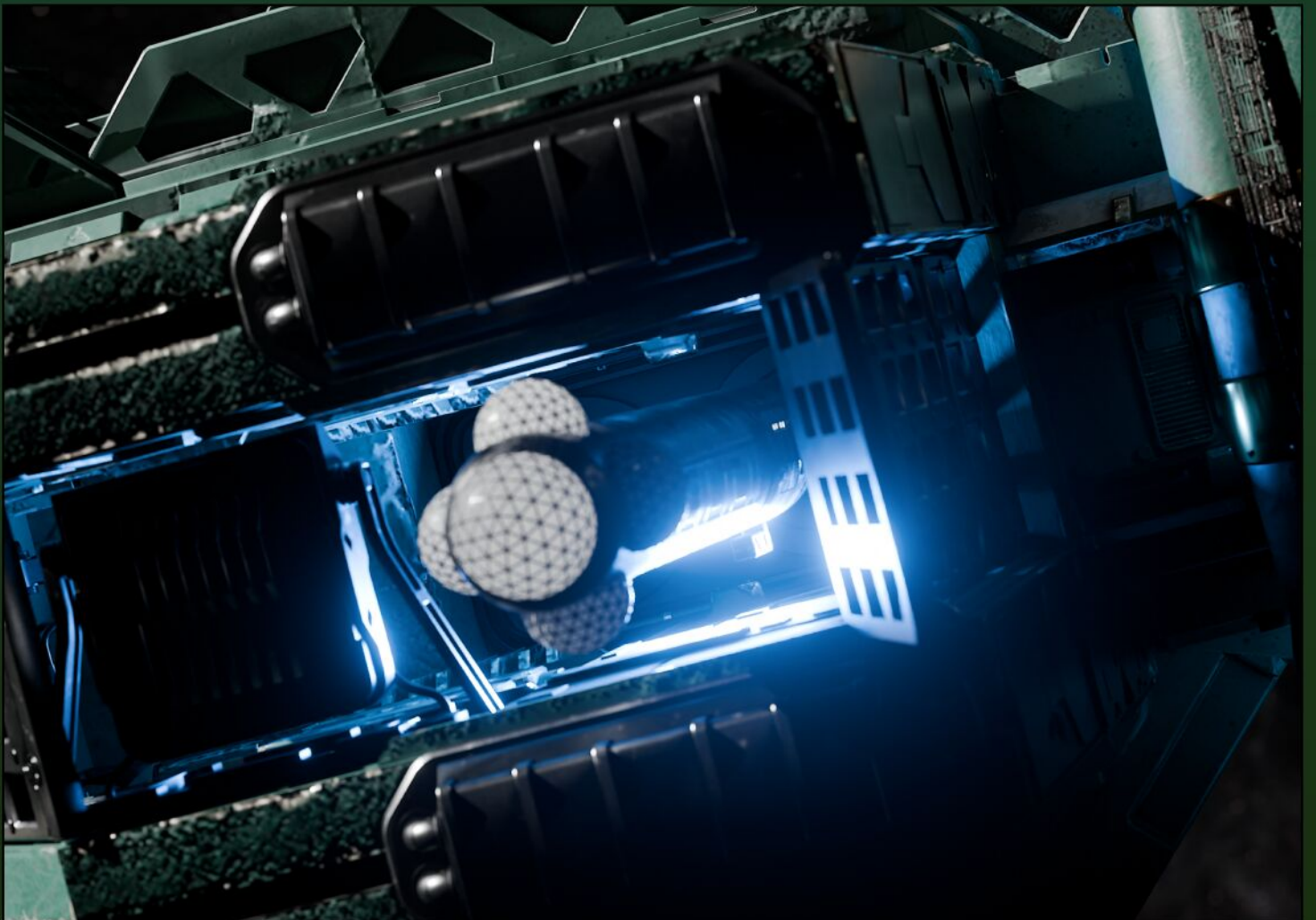
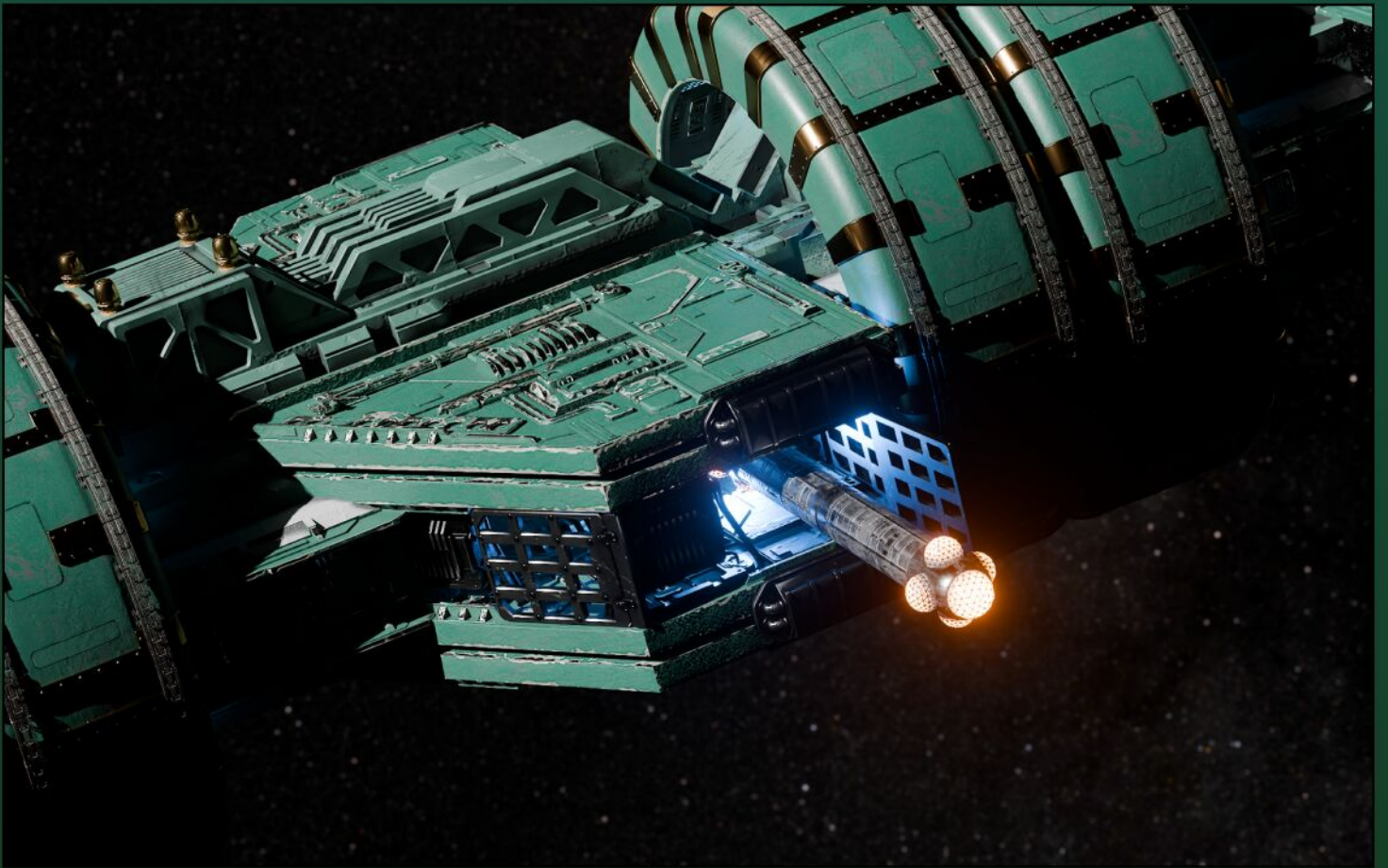














THE FUCKS! GOING ON, BOSS!? WHY IS THERE GRAVITY IN THE HUB!?

I'VE GOT NO IDEA!
APPARENTLY WE'RE BEING BOARDED!

THE HANGAR IS LOCKED DOWN TIGHT, SO THE ONLY WAY IN IS THROUGH THE GANGWAY.



THEN LETS PLUG THAT FUCKING HOLE.

FUCKING RIGHT. THEY WANNA COME UP THAT LADDER, THEY BETTER BE IMMUNE TO BULLETS!



SHAW AND FRANK
ARE BRINGING A
MA-PUCE UP RIGHT NOW,
WE'LL SET IT UP IN THE
MIDDLE THERE. BUT UNTIL
THEN WE'RE IT.



TAKE THE STARBOARD
SIDE.. THAT'S THE RIGHT
SIDE, C.J..

YEAH, I'M
AWARE..

RIGHT, WHERE DO
YOU WANT US?

ON IT.
COMMON,
ROBOT.

YUP, WITH
YOU.. HEY, ANY CHANCE
THEY COULD TURN THESE RED
EMERGENCY LIGHTS OFF? MY
SYSTEMS.. I DON'T KNOW, IT
HURTS MY HEAD.



YOU AND ME BOTH!

COMMS ARE FUCKED,
BUT I'LL ASK IF I CAN GET
THROUGH.

BRIDGE, THIS IS
BUTCHER ONE. REQUEST
RESET TO NORMAL LIGHTING
IN THE HUB, HOW COPY?



COMMON UP.. I
GOT A PRESENT FOR
YOU LITTLE GREEN
FUCKS..



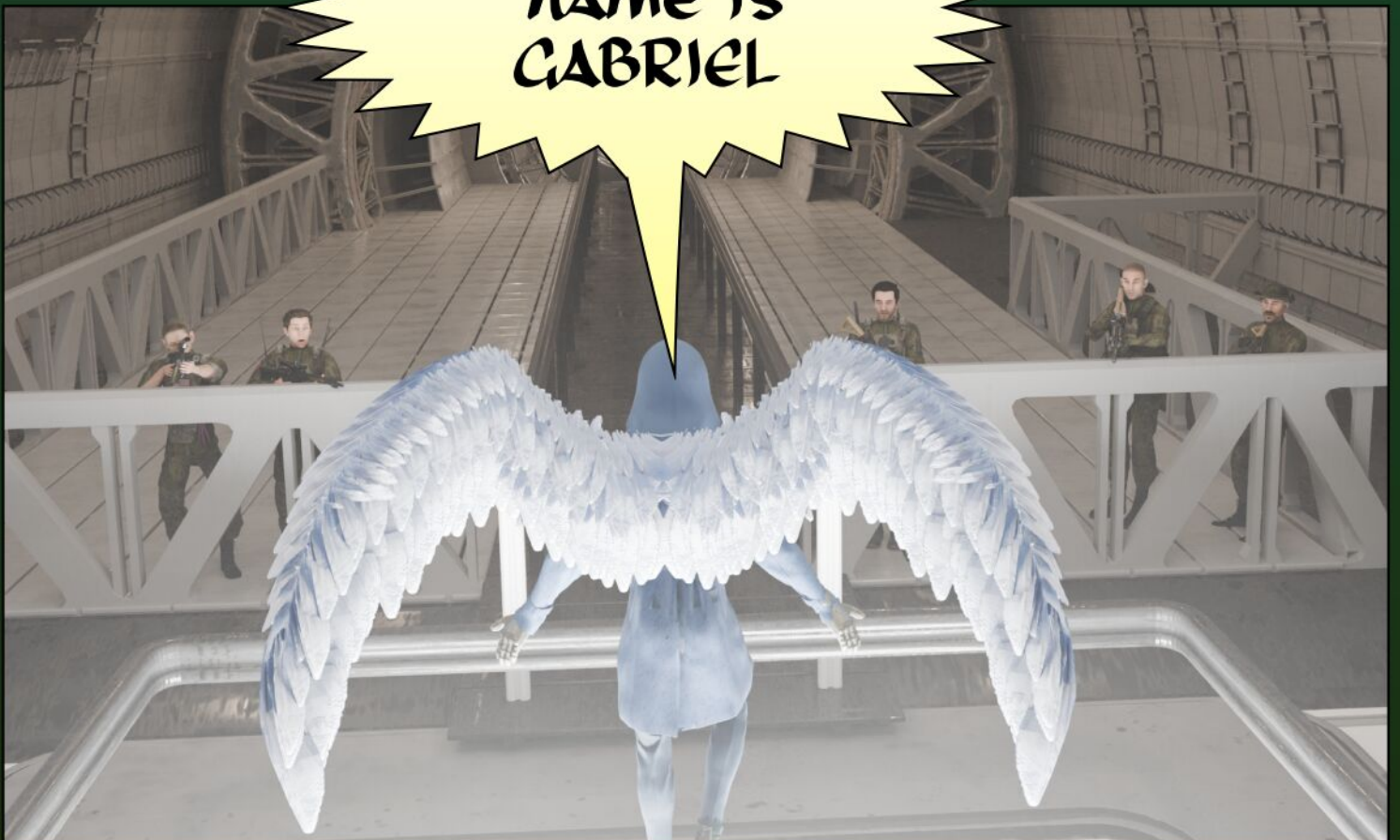


JIMMY BEGAN TO FEEL WEAK IN THE KNEES AS THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH AN OVERWHELMING SENSE OF DREAD.





MY
NAME IS
CABRIEL



UPON HIS APPEARANCE, THE MEMBERS OF BUTCHER TEAM FELT AN OVERWHELMING COMPLSION TO LOWER THEIR WEAPONS. ONE THEY COULD NOT FIGHT OR RESIST.



ALL EXCEPT C.J. WHO FELT NOTHING OF THE SORT. QUITE THE CONTRARY, HE FELT COMPELLED TO KEEP HIS RIFLE LEVELED DIRECTLY AT THE INTRUDERS HEAD.



I **WILL** SPEAK,
AND YOU WILL LISTEN.





I-I'M STAFF
SARGENT DI PAULO,
UNITED STATES MARINE
CORPS.. I'M IN CHARGE
OF THIS UNIT..

BU-BUT I ASSUME YOU
WANT THE COLONEL?



I-I DO? YEAH,
SURE. SOMETIMES... TO
UHH. TO WHAT ARE YOU
REFERING.

YOUR RACE IS SO YOUNG,
SO "ASSUMING"...

YOUR COLONEL IS
LOCKED IN HIS STEEL
BUNKER..

AND YOU, PAUL.. YOU
ARE A GOOD MAN. BUT YOU
FAIL TO SEE WHAT'S RIGHT
IN FRONT OF YOU.

EVEN NOW. YOU STAND
TREMBLING AND ALL BUT
DISARMED..



THE ONE WHO IS NOT INFLUENCED BY ME.

IT'S WITH HIM I MUST SPEAK... AND TO ALL OF YOU AS WELL.

I'M MORE INCLINED TO SHOOT YOU IN THE FACE SIX OR SEVEN TIMES AND ASK QUESTIONS LATER.

YOU **WILL** HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY. AFTER THAT, IF YOU STILL DESIRE TO SHOOT ME, YOU MAY TRY IF YOU WISH.



HELLO, COLTON. IT'S NICE TO FINALLY MEET YOU.

WOULD YOU PLEASE, LOWER THE GUN?

IF I WANTED TO HARM YOU, I COULD HAVE DONE IT WITH EASE A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.



LET MY TEAM GO FIRST. DROP WHATEVER "INFLUENCE" YOU HAVE!

THEIR REACTION IS PRIMAL, BIOLOGICAL. HARDWIRED INTO THE DEEPEST FRAMEWORK OF THEIR MINDS.

IT WILL PASS IN TIME.



ALRIGHT.. IF YOU ARE WHO YOU SAY YOU ARE.. WHAT WAS MY DAD DOING THE NIGHT YOU CONVINCED HIM TO BUILD ME?

NOT THE PUBLIC VERSION HE TELLS, THE REAL STORY.



HE HAD JUST COME HOME FROM YOUR FUNERAL.

HE WONDERED AROUND THE YARD FOR A WHILE, THEN WENT INSIDE.

THERE'S THAT LITTLE ROOM IN THE BASEMENT, BETWEEN THE MAIN GARAGE AND THE MACHINE SHOP.

HE WAS IN THERE, HE DRANK HALF A BOTTLE OF CHEAP WHISKEY, THEN STUCK A .45 TO HIS TEMPLE.

I PULLED IT AWAY, SET HIM ON THE DESIRED PATH, THEN.. MADE HIM GO TO SLEEP, ESSENTIALLY.



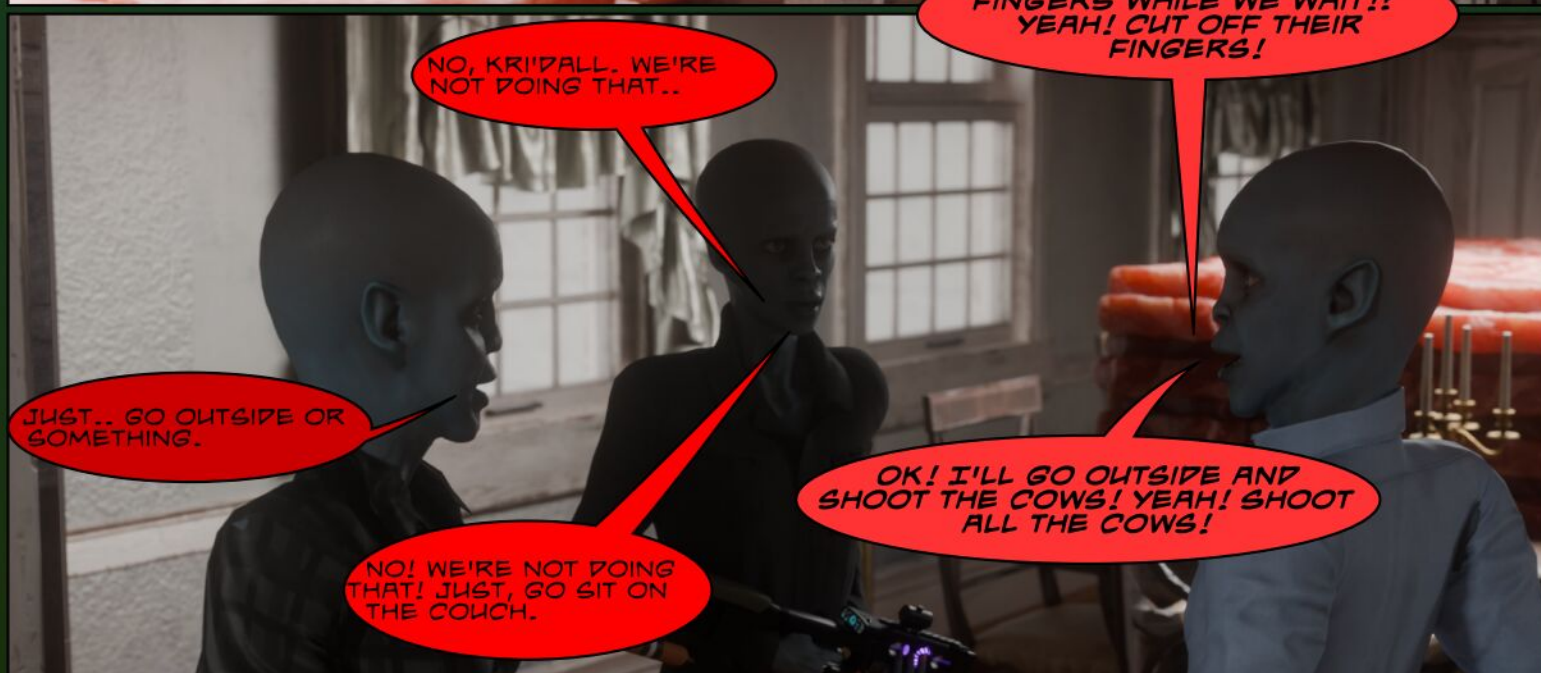
IT WASN'T "MY" FUNERAL. IT WAS C.J.S.. THE OTHER ONE. I'M NOT HIM.

A MATTER OF PERSEPCTIVE..











GABRIEL... ERRM. OR IS IT
COMMANDER? IT'S AN
HONOR TO MEET YOU.

MMHMM... PLEASE TAKE A
SEAT, COLONEL. MY TIME
HERE IS LIMITED.

ALRIGHT-Y THEN..

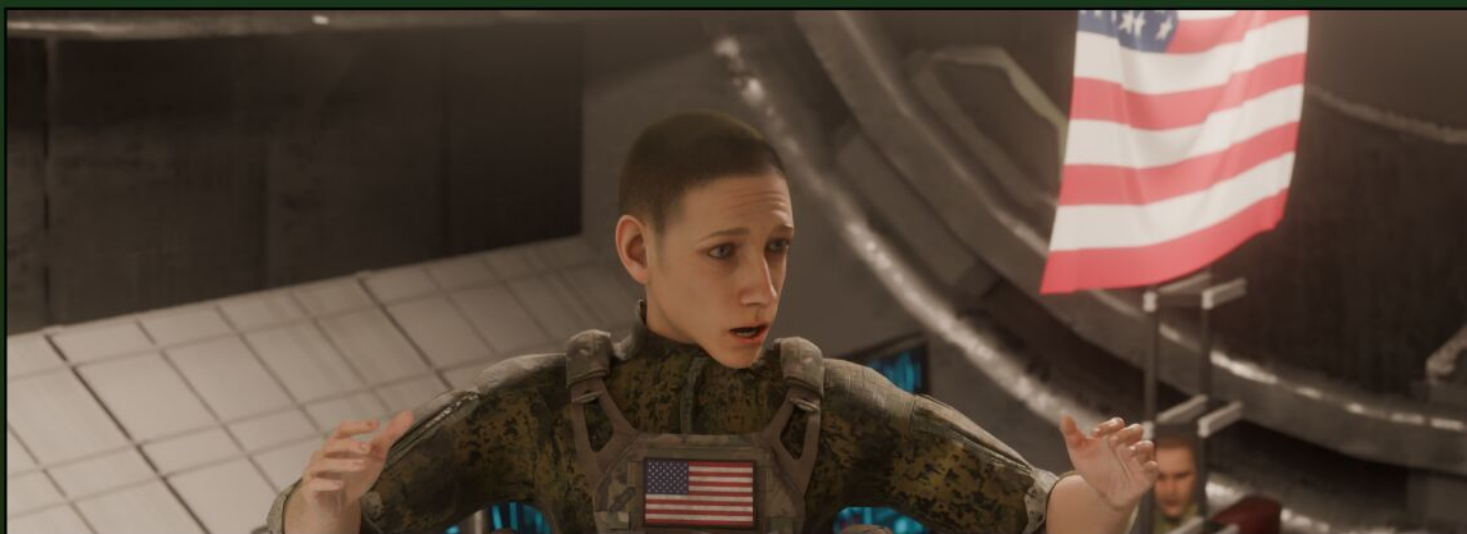
WELL.. I'LL
TAKE RUDE OVER
VIOLENT AND
RAPE-Y, EH, SIR?

WE'LL SEE.. TAKE A
SEAT, I GUESS.

BUT STAY ALERT..





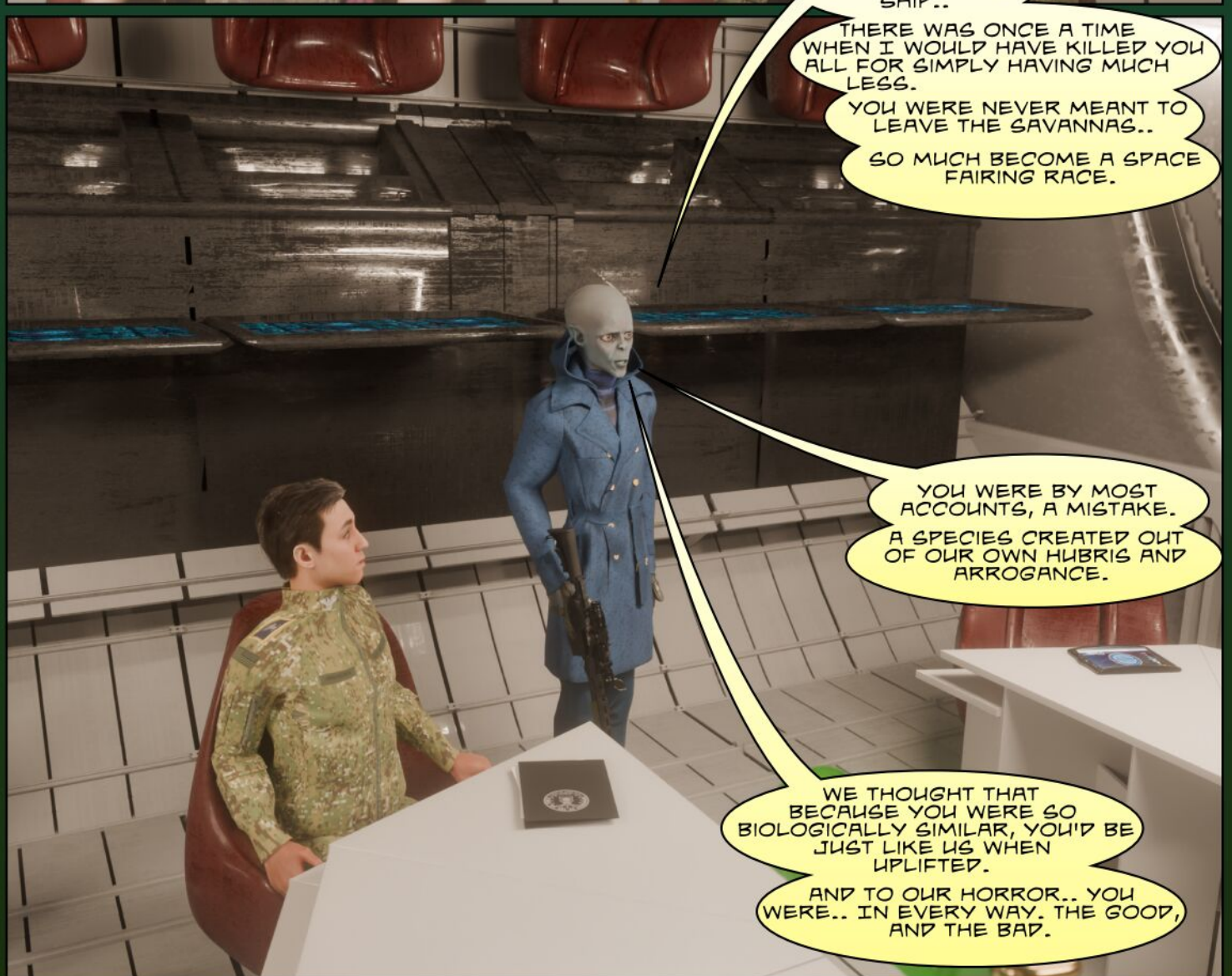






YEAH...
UHM..YEAH.

HEY.. THANKS FOR TRYING.. I DON'T TRUST THEM EITHER..



YOUR SPECIES.. THIS SHIP..

THERE WAS ONCE A TIME WHEN I WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU ALL FOR SIMPLY HAVING MUCH LESS.

YOU WERE NEVER MEANT TO LEAVE THE SAVANNAS..

SO MUCH BECAME A SPACE FAIRING RACE.

YOU WERE BY MOST ACCOUNTS, A MISTAKE.

A SPECIES CREATED OUT OF OUR OWN HUBRIS AND ARROGANCE.

WE THOUGHT THAT BECAUSE YOU WERE SO BIOLOGICALLY SIMILAR, YOU'D BE JUST LIKE US WHEN UPLIFTED.

AND TO OUR HORROR.. YOU WERE.. IN EVERY WAY. THE GOOD, AND THE BAD.



COLONEL. PLEASE HOLD THIS.

UHH.. OK..

NO.. YOU WEREN'T LIKE US..

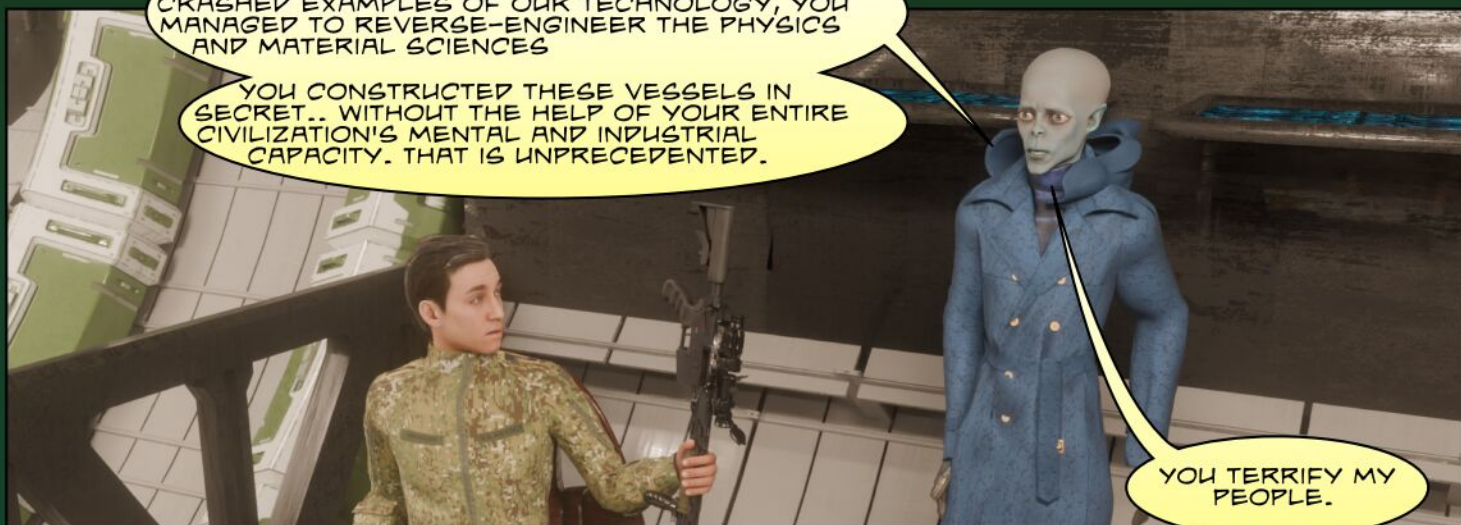
YOU WERE.. MORE.

LARGER, STRONGER, FASTER.. EVEN SMARTER IN MANY WAYS.

YOU CAN ENDURE MORE, FOR LONGER THAN ANY OTHER SAPIENT SPECIES WE'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED AND COME OUT THE OTHER SIDE UNSCATHED.

FROM NOTHING BUT THE STUDY OF A FEW CRASHED EXAMPLES OF OUR TECHNOLOGY, YOU MANAGED TO REVERSE-ENGINEER THE PHYSICS AND MATERIAL SCIENCES

YOU CONSTRUCTED THESE VESSELS IN SECRET.. WITHOUT THE HELP OF YOUR ENTIRE CIVILIZATION'S MENTAL AND INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY. THAT IS UNPRECEDENTED.



YOU TERRIFY MY PEOPLE.



WHAT'S LEFT OF THEM..



THE SHIP THAT
APPROACHES NOW, IT IS
NOT HERE TO PUNISH THE
EXILES..

THE ONES YOU CALL "THE
WATCHERS."

NOR DOES IT COME IN
PEACE.

IT IS AN ARK. IT CONTAINS THE
LAST OF OUR ENTIRE CIVILIZATION.

THE MAJORITY OF WHOME
ARE GOOD PEOPLE. INNOCENT.
THEY KNOW VERY LITTLE OF
HUMANITY.

THEY EXPECT TO FIND A
VIOLENT SAVAGE RACE, HELL BENT
ON DESTROYING ITSELF.

GIVEN THE EVENTS OF THIS
CENTURY.. I CAN'T ARGUE THEY'RE TOTALLY
WRONG.

STILL.. IT DOES NOT EXCUSE WHAT THEY
INTEND..

UPON THEIR ARRIVAL, THEY PLAN TO
RELEASE A PATHOGEN.

THIS PATHOGEN DOES HAVE A BUILT-IN
"KILL SWITCH" OF SORTS, AND WILL BE SHUT
OFF ONCE ONLY AROUND TEN PERCENT OF
YOUR CURRENT POPULATION..

THOSE WHO SURVIVE
PASSED THAT TIME WILL
BECOME.. PETS.

THEY WILL BE BARRED
FROM CREATING OR POSSESSING
ANY TECHNOLOGY THEY DID NOT
HARVEST AND CREATE WITH THEIR
BARE HANDS.

YOU'RE
MAKING THE
WATCHERS SOUND
REASONABLE IN
COMPARISON.

PERHAPS, FROM YOUR
PERSPECTIVE.

FROM THEIRS, YOU ARE
NOTHING BUT A MISTAKE OF
TECHNOLOGY.

ARTIFICIAL ABOMINATIONS
WITH NO RIGHT TO EXIST.

YOU'RE.. PROPERTY.



SERIOUSLY...?

A comic book panel showing four soldiers in a control room. The soldier on the far left is speaking. The other three soldiers are looking at him. A green desk lamp is on the table in front of them.



HA! NOW YOU KNOW HOW IT FEELS!

A comic book panel showing a close-up of the soldier on the left. He is looking at the other three soldiers. The soldier on the far right is speaking.

TIME AND PLACE, FIVE...



BE SILENT, OR I WILL SILENCE YOU!

A comic book panel showing a soldier and a blue alien. The alien is standing and speaking to the soldier. The soldier is sitting and looking at the alien.



OK,
SORRY!

THE EXILES.. WATCHERS..
THEIR INTENTIONS ARE NO MORE
HONORABLE.

AS YOU ARE NOW WELL
AWARE.. THEY ARE VILE
DEGENERATES..

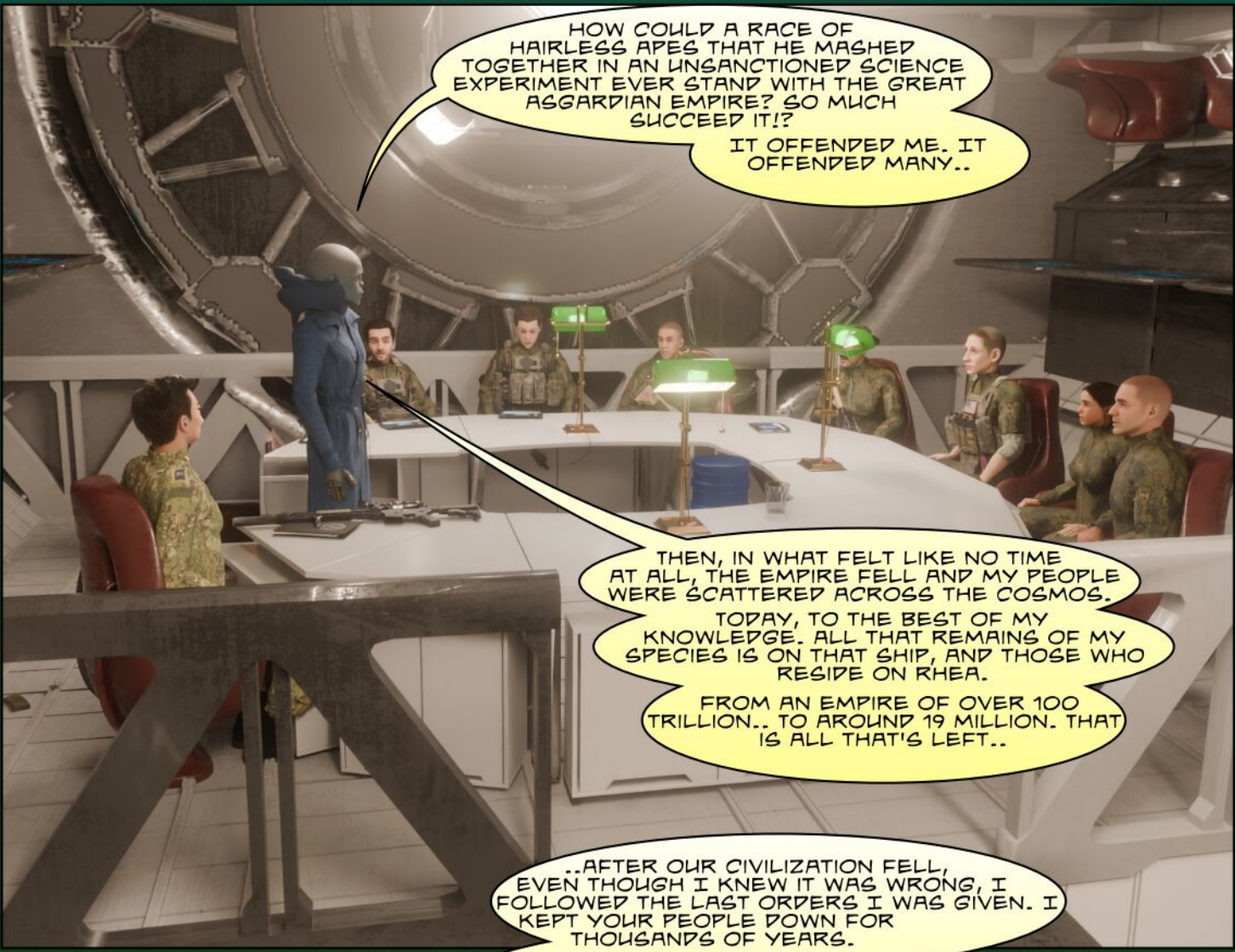


..MY FATHER BELIEVED OUR
SPECIES' WOULD ONE DAY
STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE AMONG
THE STARS..

THAT WE WOULD NEED YOU ONE
DAY, AND THAT YOU MIGHT EVEN
BE OUR SUCCESSOR.

HE TRULY ADORED YOU. HE
CALLED YOU HIS GREATEST
WORK.

I WAS A YOUNG, PATRIOTIC OFFICER IN
THOSE DAYS, AT THE HEIGHT OF OUR EMPIRE..
I JUST THOUGHT HE WAS A CRAZY OLD MAN
WHO'D LIVED BEYOND HIS YEARS..



HOW COULD A RACE OF
HAIRLESS APES THAT HE MASHED
TOGETHER IN AN UNSANCTIONED SCIENCE
EXPERIMENT EVER STAND WITH THE GREAT
ASGARDIAN EMPIRE? SO MUCH
SUCCEED IT!?

IT OFFENDED ME.. IT
OFFENDED MANY..

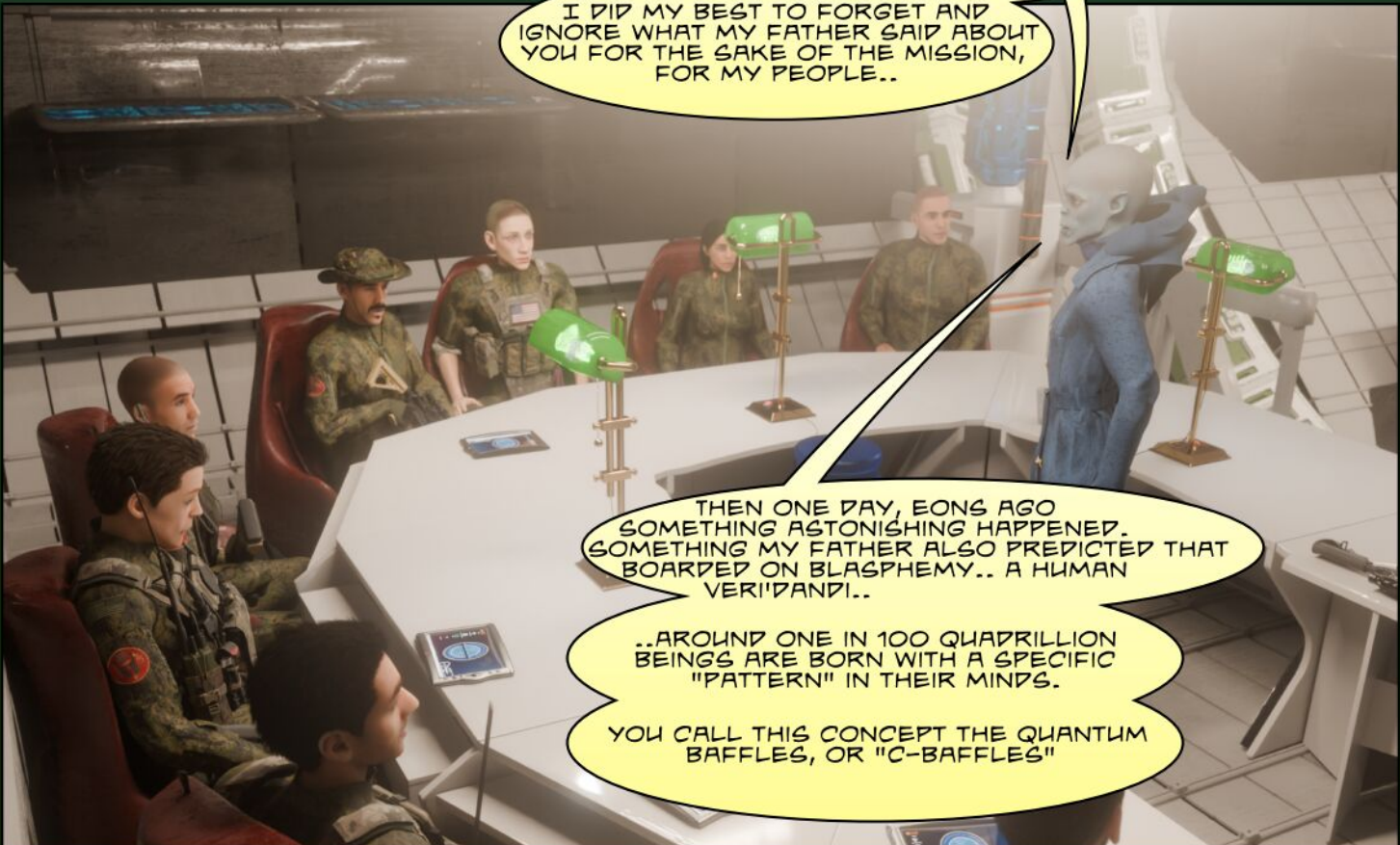
THEN, IN WHAT FELT LIKE NO TIME
AT ALL, THE EMPIRE FELL AND MY PEOPLE
WERE SCATTERED ACROSS THE COSMOS.

TODAY, TO THE BEST OF MY
KNOWLEDGE. ALL THAT REMAINS OF MY
SPECIES IS ON THAT SHIP, AND THOSE WHO
RESIDE ON RHEA.

FROM AN EMPIRE OF OVER 100
TRILLION.. TO AROUND 19 MILLION. THAT
IS ALL THAT'S LEFT..

..AFTER OUR CIVILIZATION FELL,
EVEN THOUGH I KNEW IT WAS WRONG, I
FOLLOWED THE LAST ORDERS I WAS GIVEN. I
KEPT YOUR PEOPLE DOWN FOR
THOUSANDS OF YEARS.

I DID MY BEST TO FORGET AND
IGNORE WHAT MY FATHER SAID ABOUT
YOU FOR THE SAKE OF THE MISSION,
FOR MY PEOPLE..



THEN ONE DAY, EONS AGO
SOMETHING ASTONISHING HAPPENED.
SOMETHING MY FATHER ALSO PREDICTED THAT
BOARDED ON BLASPHEMY.. A HUMAN
VERI'DANDI..

..AROUND ONE IN 100 QUADRILLION
BEINGS ARE BORN WITH A SPECIFIC
"PATTERN" IN THEIR MINDS.

YOU CALL THIS CONCEPT THE QUANTUM
BAFFLES, OR "C-BAFFLES"



WE CALL THIS ONE SPECIFIC PATTERN "VERI'DANDI" "THE PROTECTOR".

ANYONE WITH THIS PATTERN IS NOT ONLY COMPLETELY IMMUNE TO PSIONIC INFLUENCE, THEY ARE CAPABLE OF HARNESSING IT TO AN EXTENT NO OTHER BEING CAN FATHOM.

I WAVED IT OFF AS A FLUKE, BUT ALMOST HALF A CENTURY AGO.. IT HAPPENED AGAIN... TWICE IT HAS HAPPENED..

I COULDN'T IGNORE IT ANYMORE.. I DID EVERYTHING IN MY POWER, BUT ULTIMATELY FAILED IN MY SACRED CHARGE TO PROTECT HIM AS HE GREW, AND HE WAS MURDERED BY THE EXILES.

HIS DEATH WAS RULED AN ACCIDENT, BUT IT WAS ANYTHING BUT..

I INFLUENCED MANY OF YOUR FATHER'S CHOICES LONG BEFORE I MET HIM

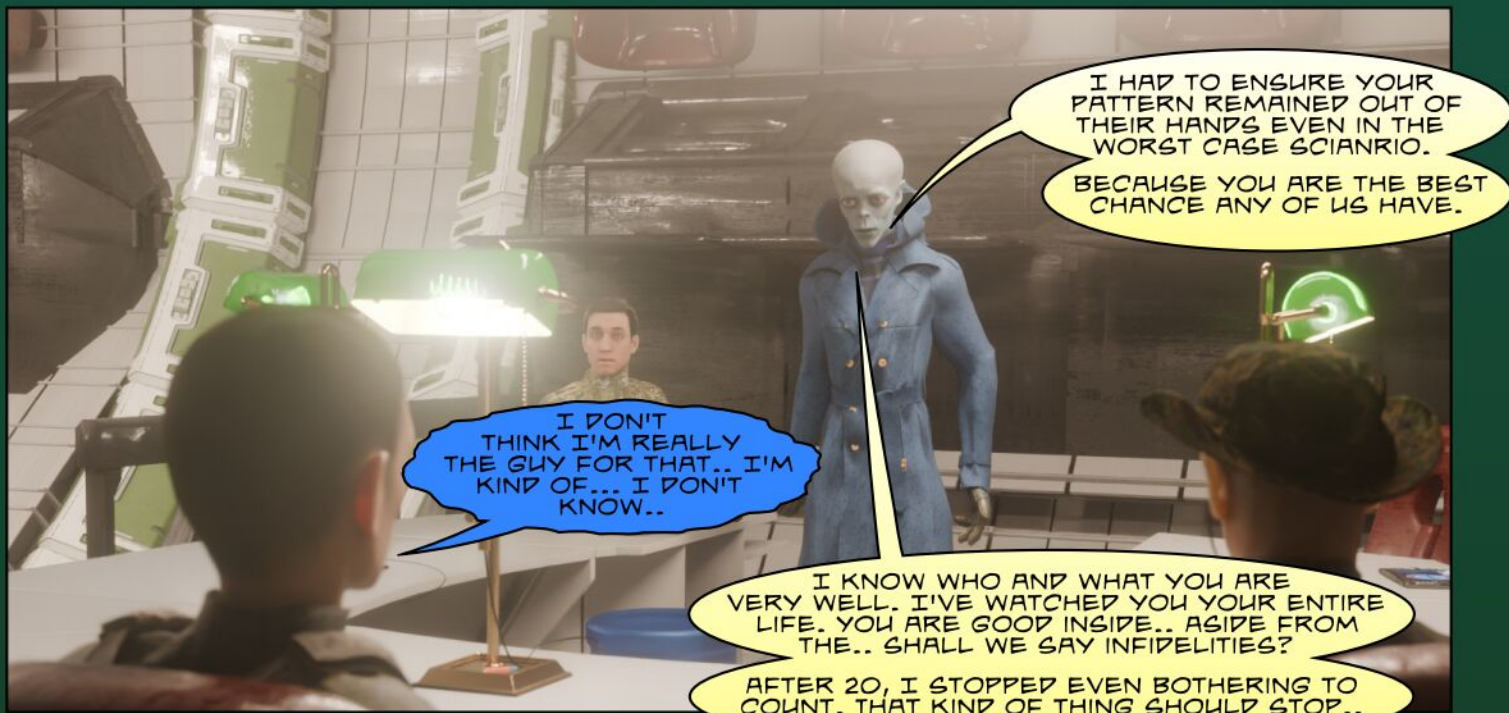
I SUBTLY GUIDED HIM TOWARDS AN OUTCOME THAT WOULD LEAD HIS RESEARCH TO THE PLACE IT DID.

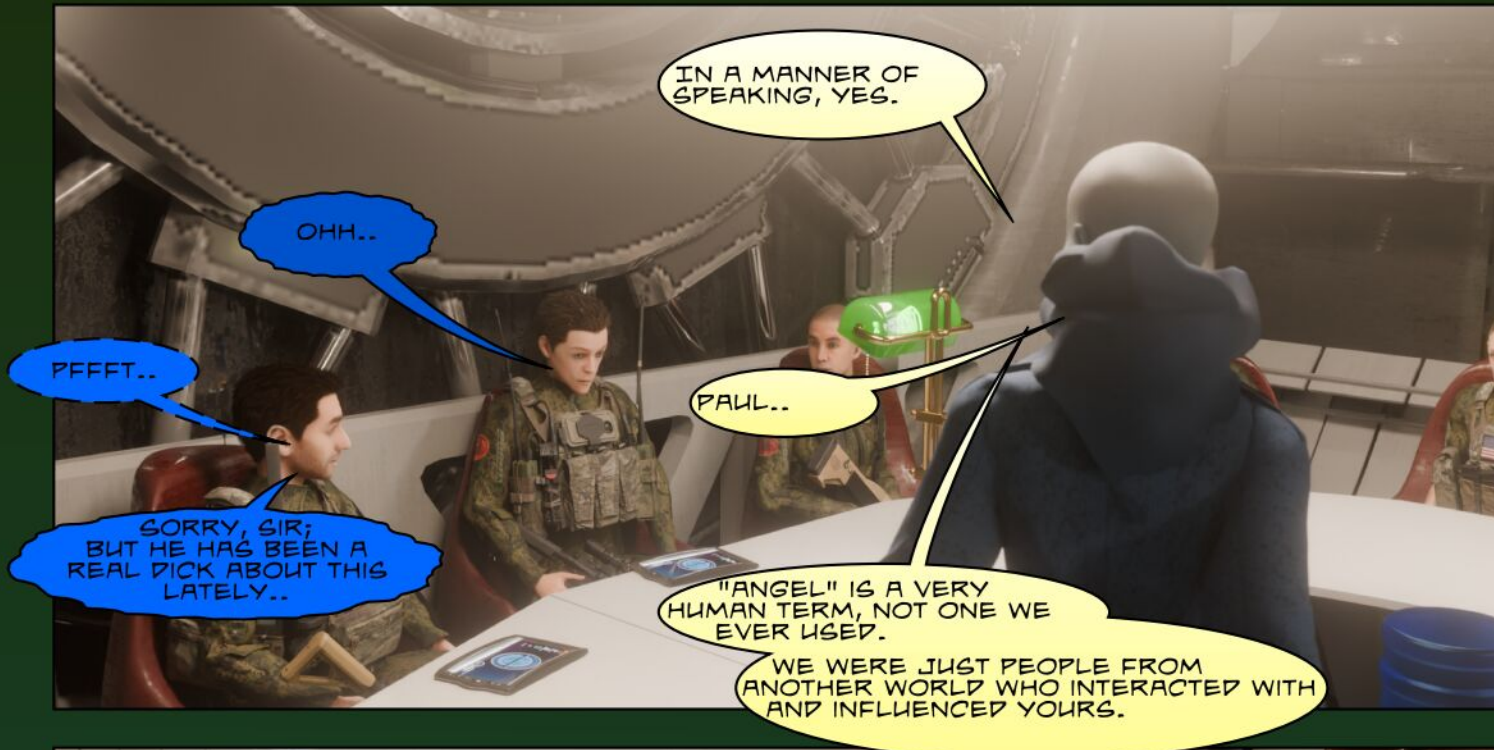
I DID IT AS A "BACK UP" IN THE EVENT SOMETHING HAPPENED. WHICH IS WHY YOU ARE HERE TODAY, C.J.

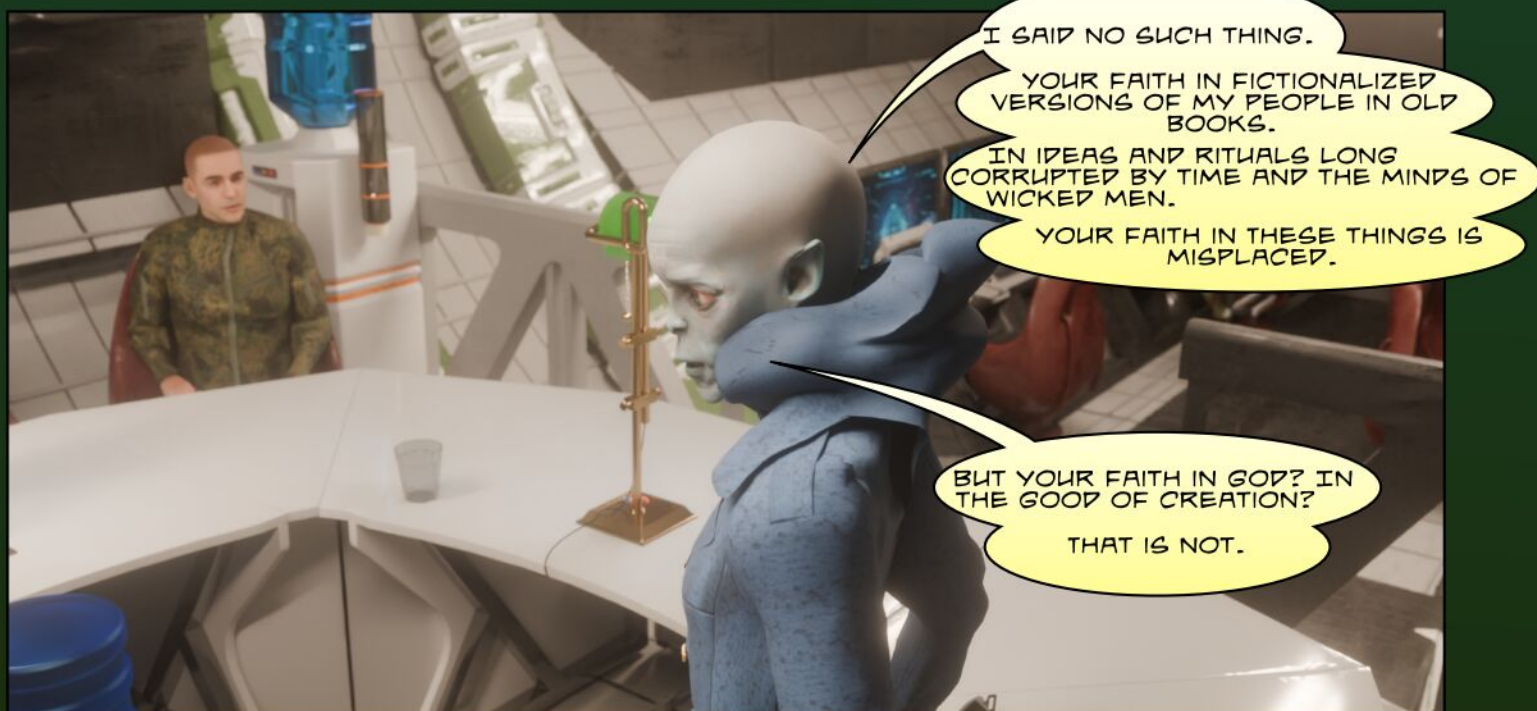
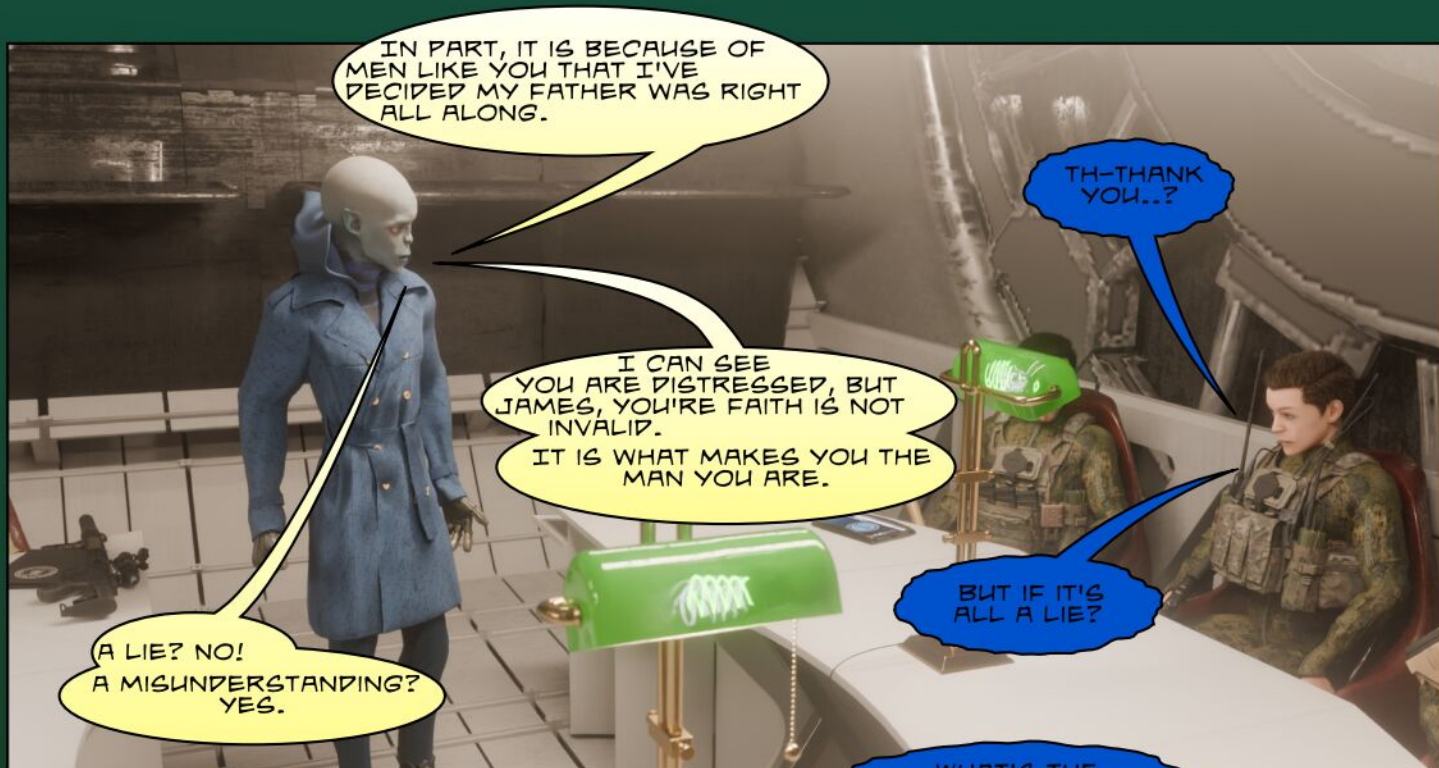
ME!?! BUT I'M NOT EVEN HUMAN.

NO, YOU ARE NOT.

THE DEVICE YOUR FATHER BUILT WAS NOT A SCANNER. NOT ENTIRELY.







...I CANNOT STOP THE OTHERS
FROM DESTROYING YOU... NOT
ALONE.
THE MAJORITY ARE CONVINCED
YOU ARE UNWORTHY.
BUT THE TRUTH IS, THEY'RE
AFRAID.. WE'RE AFRAID.

GABRI... COMMANDER.
WE'D BE HAPPY TO HELP IN
ANY WAY WE CAN.

I'M JUST NOT SURE WHAT WE
COULD POSSIBLY DO, OR WHY
YOU'RE TELLING US ANY OF THIS.

I'M TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, YOUR
ENTIRE CIVILIZATION IS ABOUT TO
CHANGE.

BUT WE HAVE MUCH TIME YET. IN
THE MEANTIME. I DO HAVE OTHER
BUSINESS HERE.

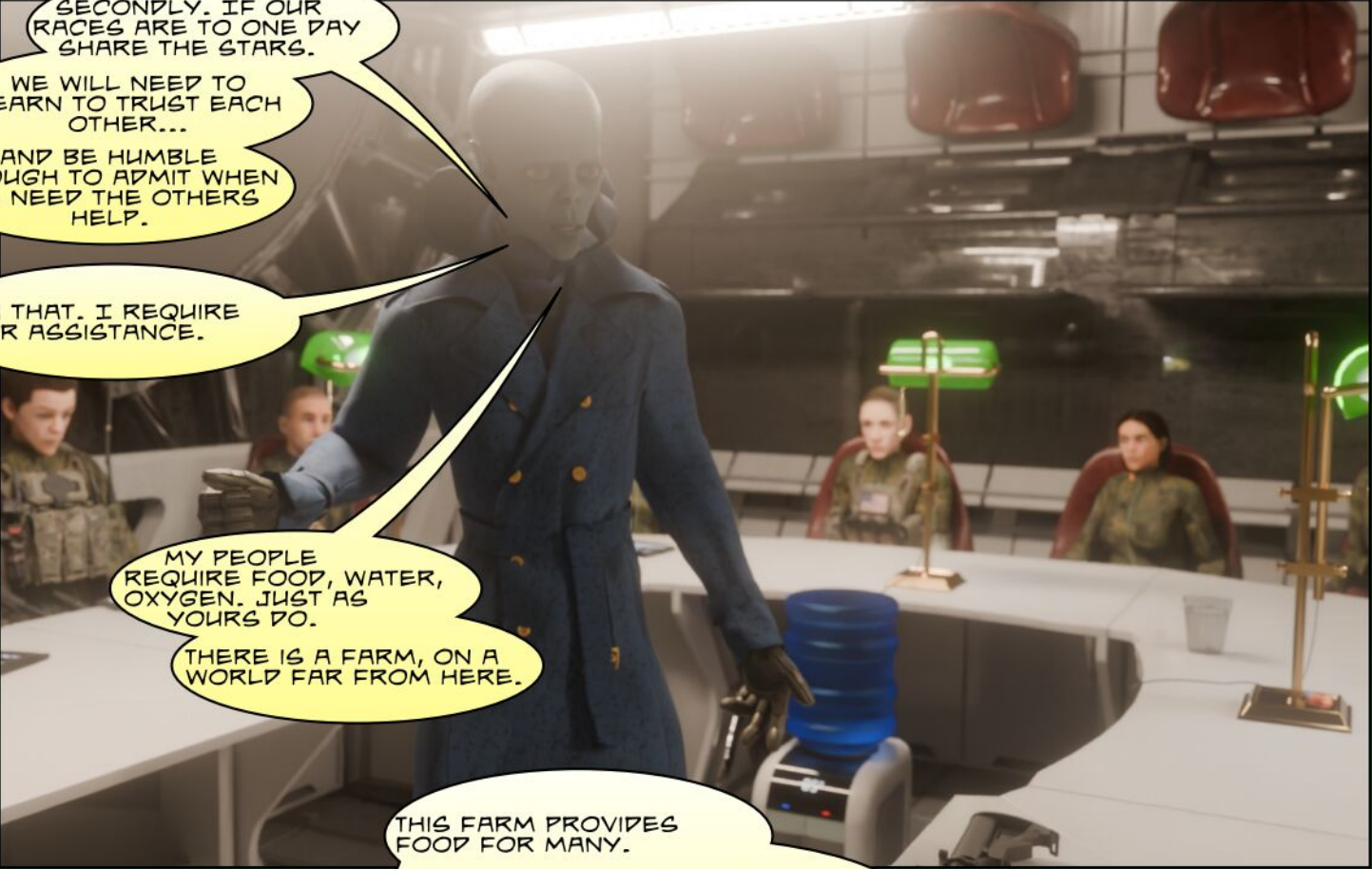
OK, WHAT
BUSINESS IS THAT?

FIRSTLY. THE BODY OF THE ONE
WHO FELL HERE. I WILL NEED IT.
IMMEDIATELY.

DALE AND OTTO
AREN'T GONNA BE HAPPY
ABOUT THAT, BUT IF IT'S
REQUIRED.. OF COURSE. WHAT OF
THEIR EQUIPMENT? WEAPONS,
GEAR?

CONSIDER IT MY
COMPENSATION FOR
FAILING TO STOP THEIR
INTRUSION.

UNDERSTOOD.



SECONDLY. IF OUR RACES ARE TO ONE DAY SHARE THE STARS.

WE WILL NEED TO LEARN TO TRUST EACH OTHER...

AND BE HUMBLE ENOUGH TO ADMIT WHEN WE NEED THE OTHERS HELP.

WITH THAT. I REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE.

MY PEOPLE REQUIRE FOOD, WATER, OXYGEN. JUST AS YOURS DO.

THERE IS A FARM, ON A WORLD FAR FROM HERE.

THIS FARM PROVIDES FOOD FOR MANY.

IT, AND IT'S SMALL, VOLUNTEER WORK FORCE HAVE BEEN TAKEN HOSTAGE.

AMONG THEIR DEMANDS, THEY WANT US DELIVER C.J. AND THE ONE NAMED "WINTERS" TO THEM ON RHEA, OR THEY WILL DESTROY THE FARM AND KILL THE HOSTAGES.

HE'S REALLY THAT IMPORTANT, HUH?

DON'T YOU GUYS HAVE YOUR OWN VERSION OF SPECIAL FORCES?

AT ONE TIME, WE DID. THE BEST THE VOID HAD EVER KNOWN.

SADLY.. NO LONGER.. I HAVE A FEW GOOD MEN, BUT THEY ARE NOT TRUE WARRIORS.

THIS IS WHY I REQUIRE YOUR MARINES.

AND YES, HE IS.



THAT'S A PRETTY BIG ASK,
COMMANDER..

LETS SAY I AGREE AND
LOAN YOU BUTCHER TEAM. WHAT
DO WE GET OUT OF THIS LITTLE
"ALLIANCE" YOU'RE
SUGGSESTING.

I SUPPOSE "ALLIANCE" IS A
FAIR ENOUGH TERM..

THE HOSTAGE TAKERS ARE USING
ADVANCED PLASMA WEAPONS. ANYTHING
YOU TAKE OFF THEM, YOU MAY KEEP.

AND THOUGH I AM NOT
WILLING TO SHARE ANYTHING WITH
YOU DIRECTLY AT THIS TIME. I WILL
NOT STOP YOUR PEOPLE
FROM..

"EXAMINING" MY VESSEL
AND IT'S SYSTEMS FOR THE
DURATION OF THIS VENTURE.



SAY YES, SIR!

WE HAVE TO!



SIR, IT'S NOT SECRET I CAN'T STAND HIM, BUT HE'S RIGHT.

WE HAVE TO.

I'M IN, LETS GET IT!



WOAH! HOLD ON GUYS. I ALREADY KNOW YOU'RE ALL ON BOARD.. ARE YOU TAKING THE WHOLE SHIP WITH YOU, OR JUST THEM?

FOR HOW LONG? WHERE EXACTLY?

I'LL ALSO NEED TO GET APPROVAL FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM COMMAND.

I WILL BRING YOUR ENTIRE VESSEL. IT WILL BE REQUIRED.

THE FARMING COLONY IS LESS THAN TWO DAYS AWAY.

IT IS A DAMP, COLD WORLD WE CALL BROAN'IS.

AND YOU WILL SAY NOTHING TO YOUR COMMAND UNTIL OUR RETURN.

IF OUR RANKS CAN BE INFILTRATED, SO CAN YOURS. THEY MUST NOT KNOW YOU ARE COMING.



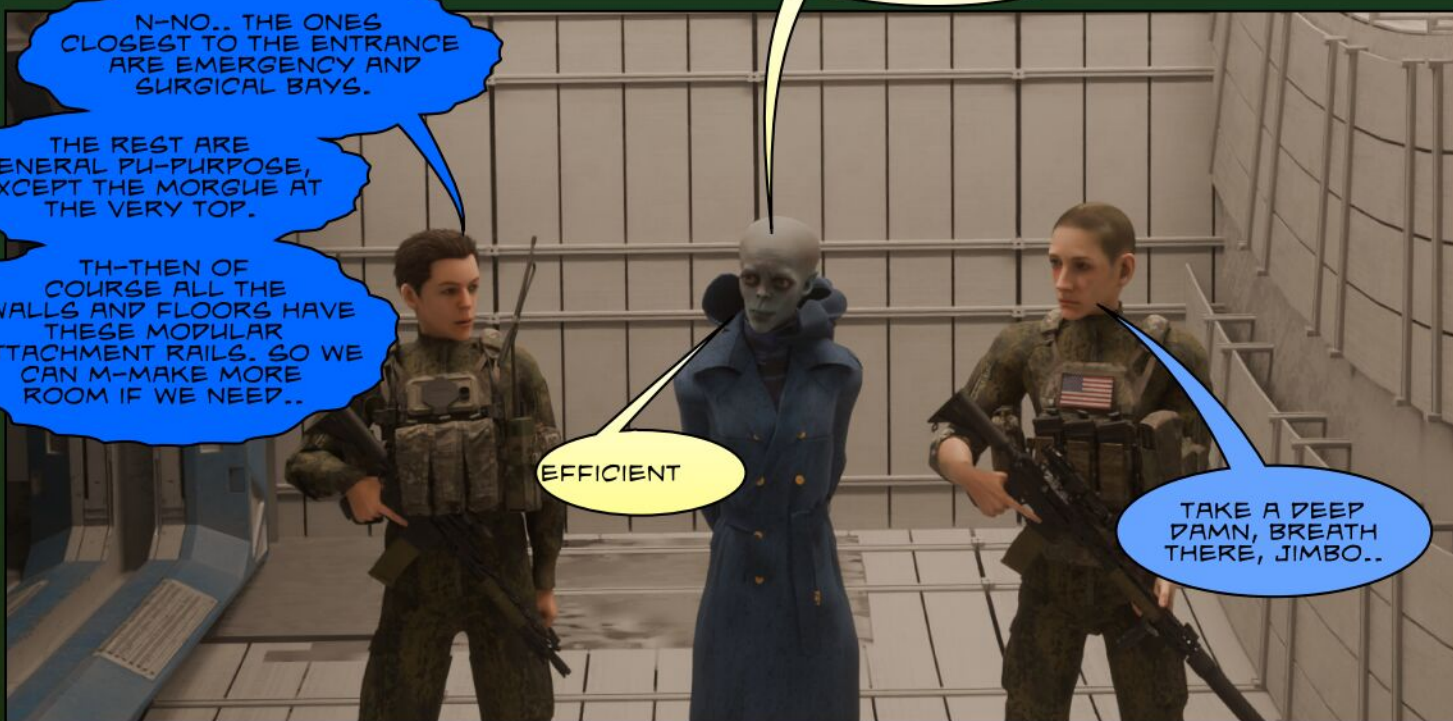
I SUPPOSE THAT MAKES SENSE.. ANOTHER STAR SYSTEM, HUH?.. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE AN ALIEN PLANET..

ALRIGHT, COMMANDER. LETS DO IT.

ALRIGHT, FOUR, FIVE, TAKE HIM DOWN THERE.

IF DALE GIVES YOU A HARD TIME, TAZE HIM.

VERY WELL. PLEASE TAKE ME TO WHERE YOU ARE KEEPING THE FALLEN EXILE. ONCE THE BODY IS ON-BOARD THE SI'RIZALL. WE SHALL DEPART.





SORRY.. I'VE NEVER MET AN ARCHANGEL BEFORE..

YOUR ANXIETY IS UNDERSTANDABLE, JAMES.

BUT YOUR COLLEAGUE IS CORRECT. TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND RELAX.

"ARCHANGEL" WE HAVE NO SUCH TITLE.

YOU REFER TO THE VERI'DANDI, THE PROTECTOR.



FORGIVE, PLEASE BUT...

BY THAT LOGIC. C.J. THAT.. ROBOT IS AN ARCHANGEL?

IF YOU WISH TO USE THAT TERM, I WOULD SAY HE IS A CANDIDATE FOR THE ROLE, YES.

I KNOW THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR, BUT I AM NOT HERE TO BRING YOU COMFORT, ONLY TRUTH.

HA! COOL!

AS SOON AS GABRIEL TURNED HIS BACK TO APPROACH THE MORUGE, C.J. STUCK OUT HIS TONGUE AND MADE A SARCASTIC FACE AT JIMMY, MOCKING HIM FOR HIS PAST BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDE IN LIGHT OF THE NEW INFORMATION THEY'D JUST LEARNED.



REALLY...?

THIS IS THE MORGUE?



ARE YOU SERIOUS?

IF YOU STOP ACTING LIKE A PETULANT CHILD, YOU WON'T NEED TO APOLOGIZE SO MUCH.

HMM.. MAYBE, STOP DOING THAT?

JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE THIS GIFT, DOES NOT MAKE YOU INHERENTLY WORTHY..

THANK YOU!

SORRY!

I KNOW.. SOMETIMES I JUST DO AND SAY THINGS WITHOUT THINKING.



DALE? DR. Z?
IT'S C.J. AND
JIMMY. WE'RE ALL
GOOD. OPEN UP.

OK!
COMING!

WHAT WAS
THAT!? WE WERE
FREAKING OUT
DOWN HERE!

WELL, YOU'RE
ABOUT TO FREAK OUT
EVEN MORE.

EEEEK!

TOLD YA'..

DR. WAYNE
LAPOINTE.. KNOWN AS
"DALE"



CHIEF MEDICAL
COFFEER.. CHEAP
FEDERAL, NEDICAL,
NEDRICAL MUFFICE...

SPARKLY LIGHTS!

OHH-OHHHHH!

?

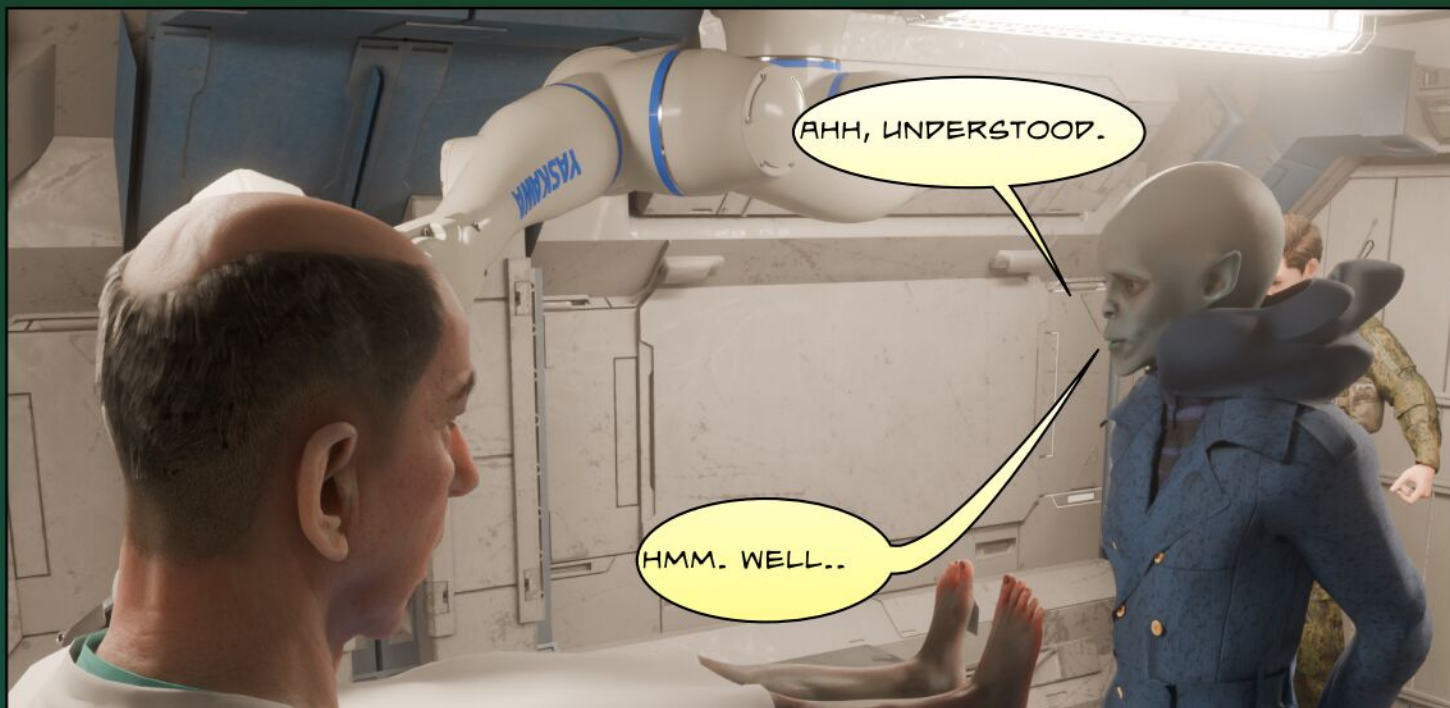
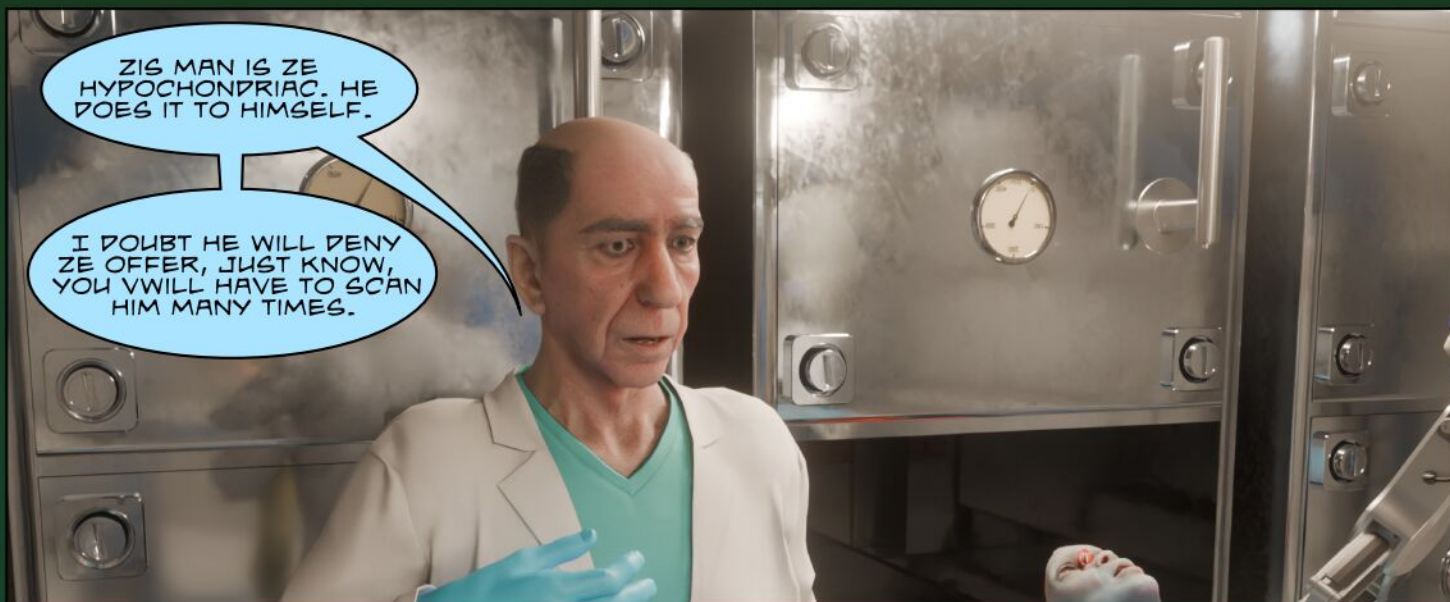
YUP! THERE HE
GOES!

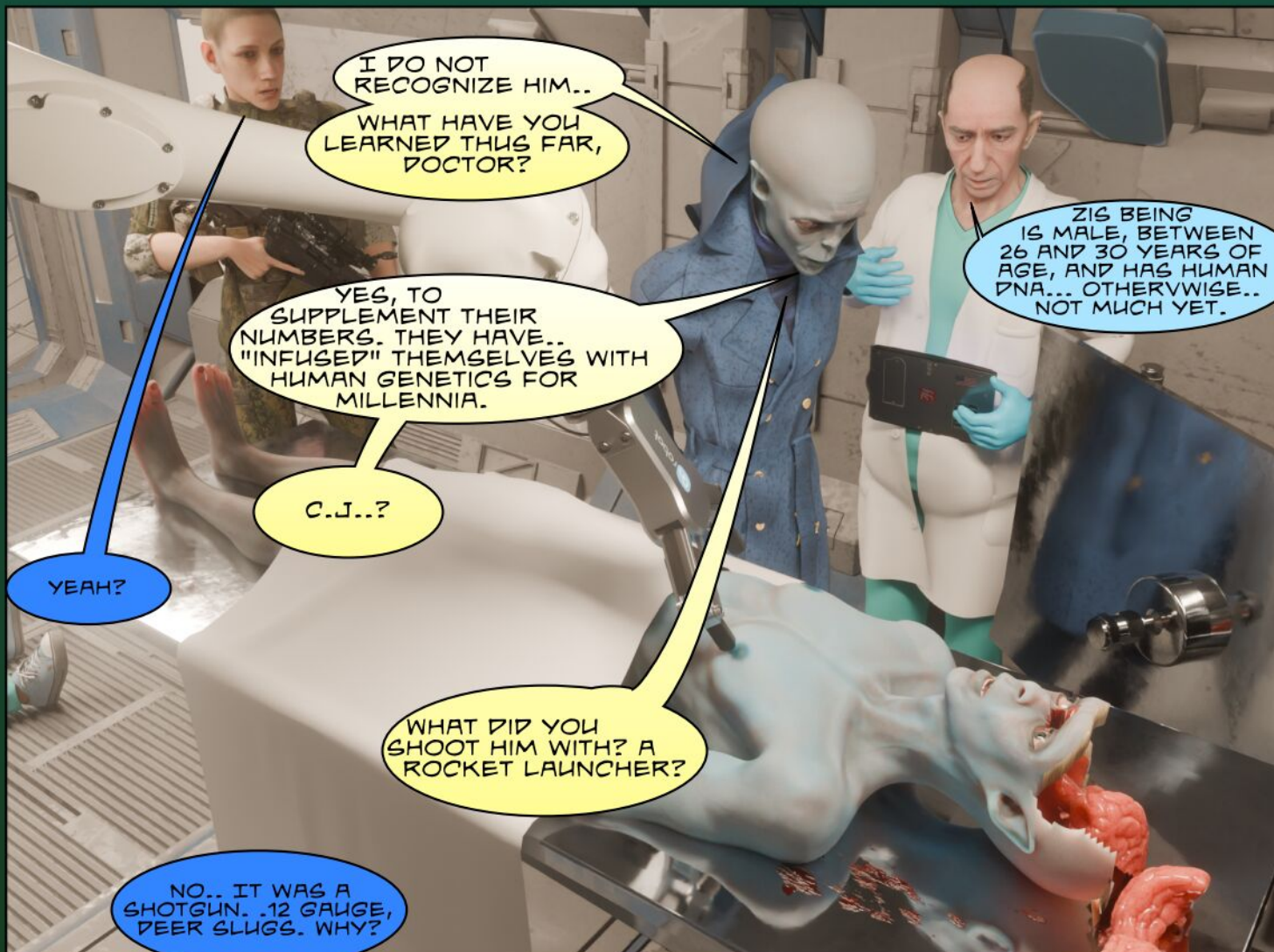
HE JUST FAINTED, IT
HAPPENS WHEN HE GETS
WORKED UP.. I SLOWED HIM
DOWN AT LEAST..

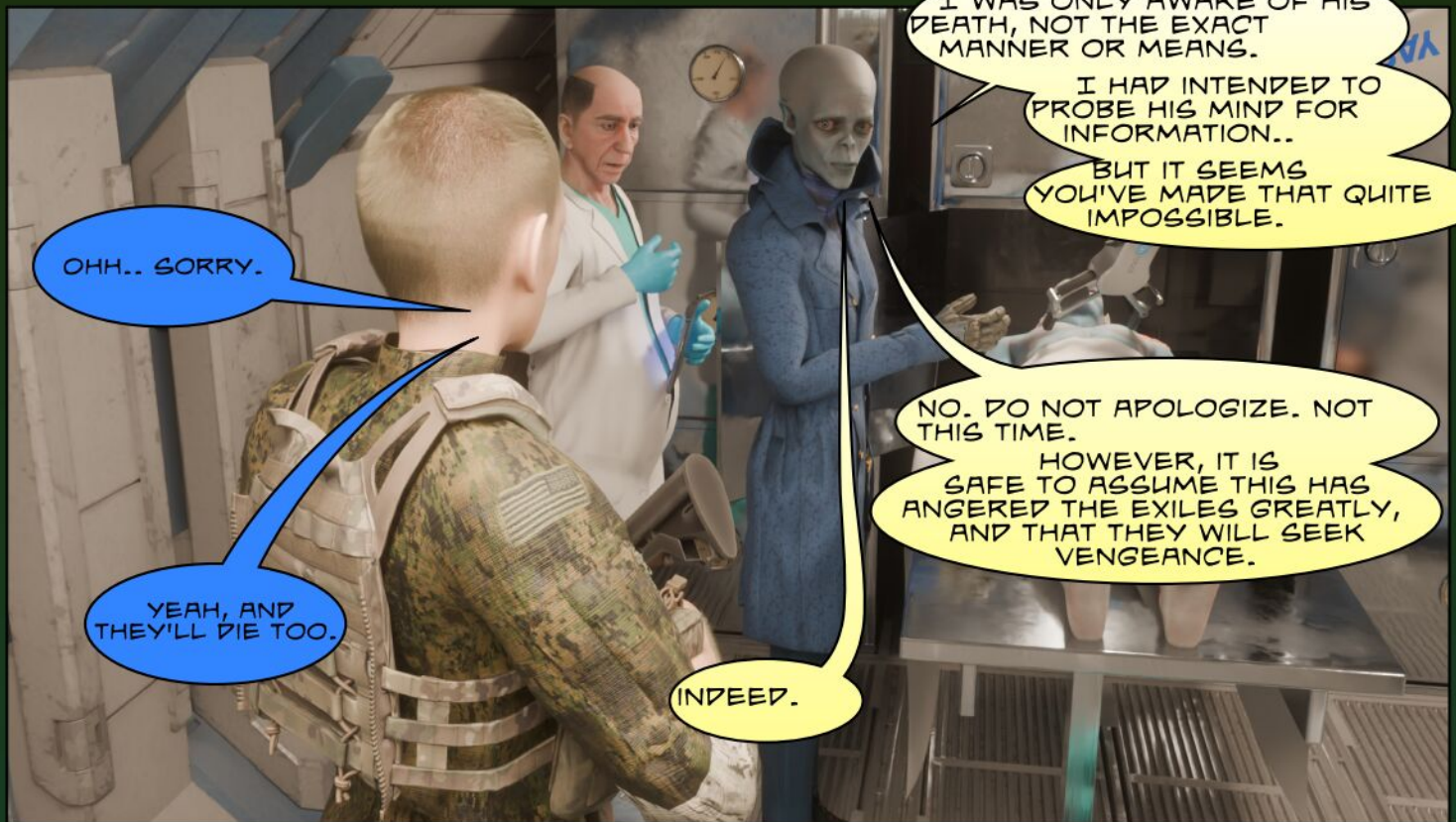
I SEE..

THE MEDICAL FACILITIES
ABOARD THE S'RIZALL ARE AT
YOUR DISPOSAL FOR THE DURATION
OF OUR TIME TOGETHER AS
WELL.

ZZZZZZZZ.....







OHH.. SORRY.

YEAH, AND
THEY'LL DIE TOO.

INDEED.

I WAS ONLY AWARE OF HIS
DEATH, NOT THE EXACT
MANNER OR MEANS.

I HAD INTENDED TO
PROBE HIS MIND FOR
INFORMATION..

BUT IT SEEMS
YOU'VE MADE THAT QUITE
IMPOSSIBLE.

NO. DO NOT APOLOGIZE. NOT
THIS TIME.

HOWEVER, IT IS
SAFE TO ASSUME THIS HAS
ANGERED THE EXILES GREATLY,
AND THAT THEY WILL SEEK
VENGEANCE.



YOU MAY CONTINUE YOUR STUDY
IF YOU WISH, DOCTOR. I HAVE NO
FURTHER USE OF THIS BODY.

NO.

ALL I ASK IS WHEN YOU
CONCLUDE YOUR RESEARCH. THE
BODY BE BURNED OR OTHERWISE
VAPORIZED.

DANKE!
YOU KNOW.. TO HAVE
SOME SCANS OF A LIVE
SPECIMEN...

VERY VELL...
FORGET I ASKED.

JA, OF COURSE..



AFTER HOURS OF RUNNING, NIGHT HAD FALLEN OVER BROAN'IS AND THE YOUNG VA'DON FOUND HIMSELF SLIPPING IN THE DARK AND SLIPING DOWN A ROCKY EMBANKMENT



WHEN HE STOPPED ONLY A FEW FEET DOWN, THOUGH SORE AND EXHAUSTED HE WAS OVERWHELMED WITH RELIEF TO SEE A GLOWING STRUCTURE IN THE VALLEY BELOW.



THIS WAS ONE OF SEVERAL MEDIUM-LIFT DEPOTS ACROSS THE PLANET THAT SERVED TO FERRY EQUIPMENT AND CARGO AMONGST THE VARIOUS OTHER FARMS AND OUTPOSTS ON BROAN'IS.

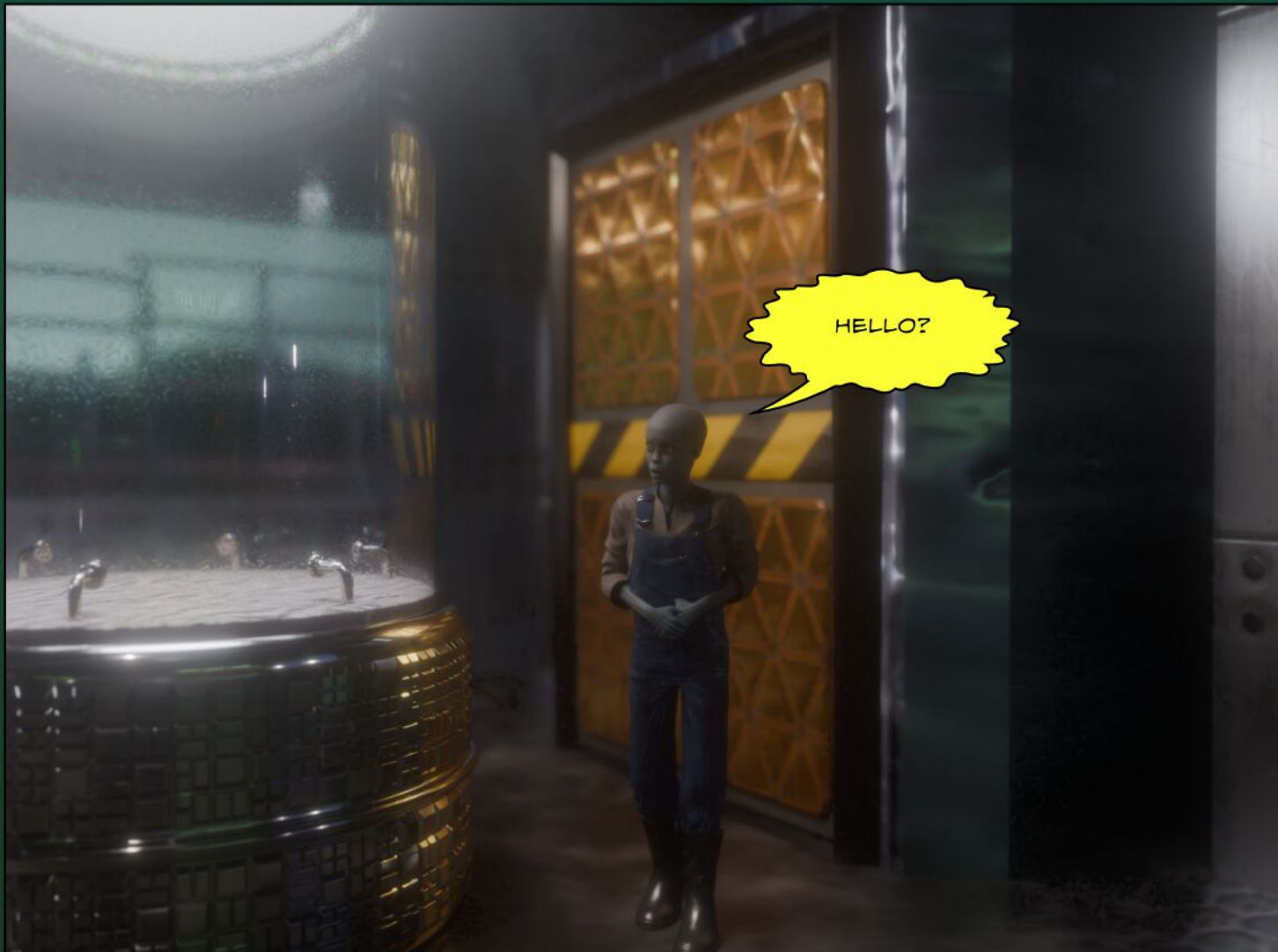
WITH WHAT LITTLE ENERGY HE HAD LEFT, VA'DON SPRINTED DOWN THE HILL AND INTO THE CLEARED VALLEY FLOOR. UNSURE IF HE WAS BEING PURSUED OR NOT THE ENTIRE TIME.



ALTHOUGH HE'D NEVER BEEN TO THIS DEPOT BEFORE, AND HAD NO REASON TO. VA'DON WAS HOPEFUL, BUT UNSURE IF THE BIOMETRIC LOCK WOULD RECOGNIZE HIM AND LET HIM IN.



TO HIS TREMENDOUS RELIEF, THE LOCK BEEPED, AS THE MECHANISM WITHIN WHIRRED AND CLICKED AND THE DOOR SLID OPEN.





INSIDE, VA'DON FOUND AN EMPTY BUILDING. ALONE AND AFRAID HE COLLAPSED INTO A NEARBY CORNER..AT LEAST HERE HE WAS WARM AND SAFE FROM THE HARSH, DAMP CLIMATE OF BROAN'IS







YOU MAKE ME ANGRY!
YEAH! VERY ANGRY!

AHH-HAHAHAHAHAHA!

THIS IS GETTING
OUT OF HAND, HE'S MAKING
MY HEAD HURT.. GO GET
SOMEONE FROM THE RADIO
ROOM AND HAVE THEM
COME HERE..

WHAT ARE YOU
LOOKING AT!?

THEN TAKE HIM OUT AND GO
LOOK FOR THE LAST COUPLE
RUNNERS. I CAN'T LISTEN TO IT
ANYMORE..

UGHHH.. YEAH, FINE.

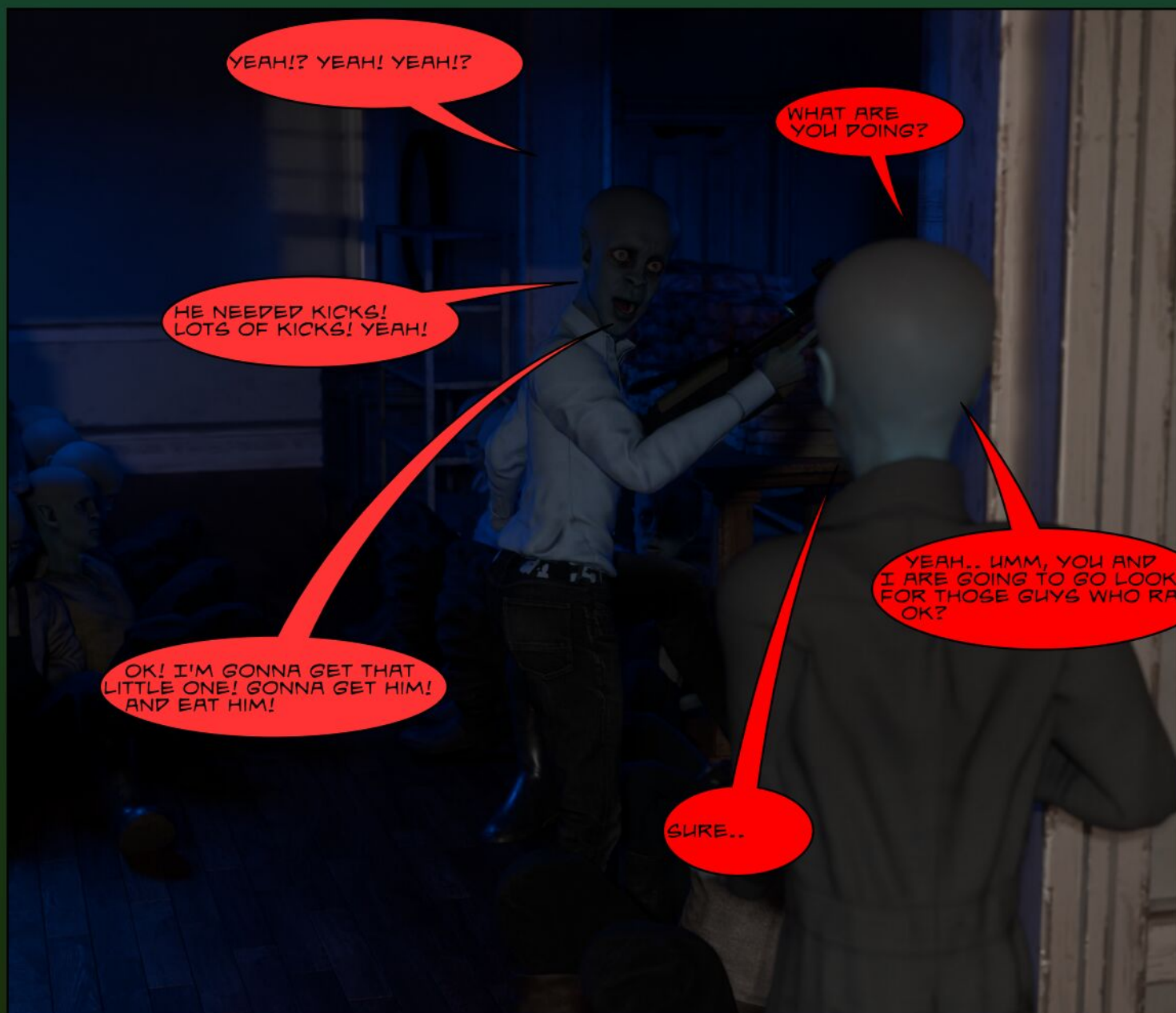
HEY KRIDDALL..



I'M, GONNA KICK YOU!

YEAH! KICK YOU
HAHAHAHAHA!

KRI'DALL!



YEAH!?! YEAH! YEAH!?!?

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?

HE NEEDED KICKS!
LOTS OF KICKS! YEAH!

OK! I'M GONNA GET THAT
LITTLE ONE! GONNA GET HIM!
AND EAT HIM!

YEAH.. UMM, YOU AND
I ARE GOING TO GO LOOK
FOR THOSE GUYS WHO RAN,
OK?

SURE..



OHHHH LOOK!



YOU DIED! AND I DID IT! HAHAAHAHAHA!

BLOOD ON THE FLOOR! AND IT'S YOURS! YEAH!



LETS EAT HIS HEART!
YEAH!

NO.. COMMON.



I STILL THINK WE
SHOULD EAT HIS
HEART! YEAH!

MMHMM.. MAYBE
LATER, OK?

YEAH! LATER!



I'LL WAIT HERE!
I'LL SHOOT ALL THE
COWS!

LOOK, I'M GONNA GO IN
THERE AND GET ONE OF THEM
TO REPLACE US IN THE BIG
HOUSE. YOU WAIT HERE.



OK! I'LL WAIT!
I'LL WAIT HERE!
YEAH!

NO, DON'T SHOOT THE
COWS.. JUST STAND HERE AND
WAIT.

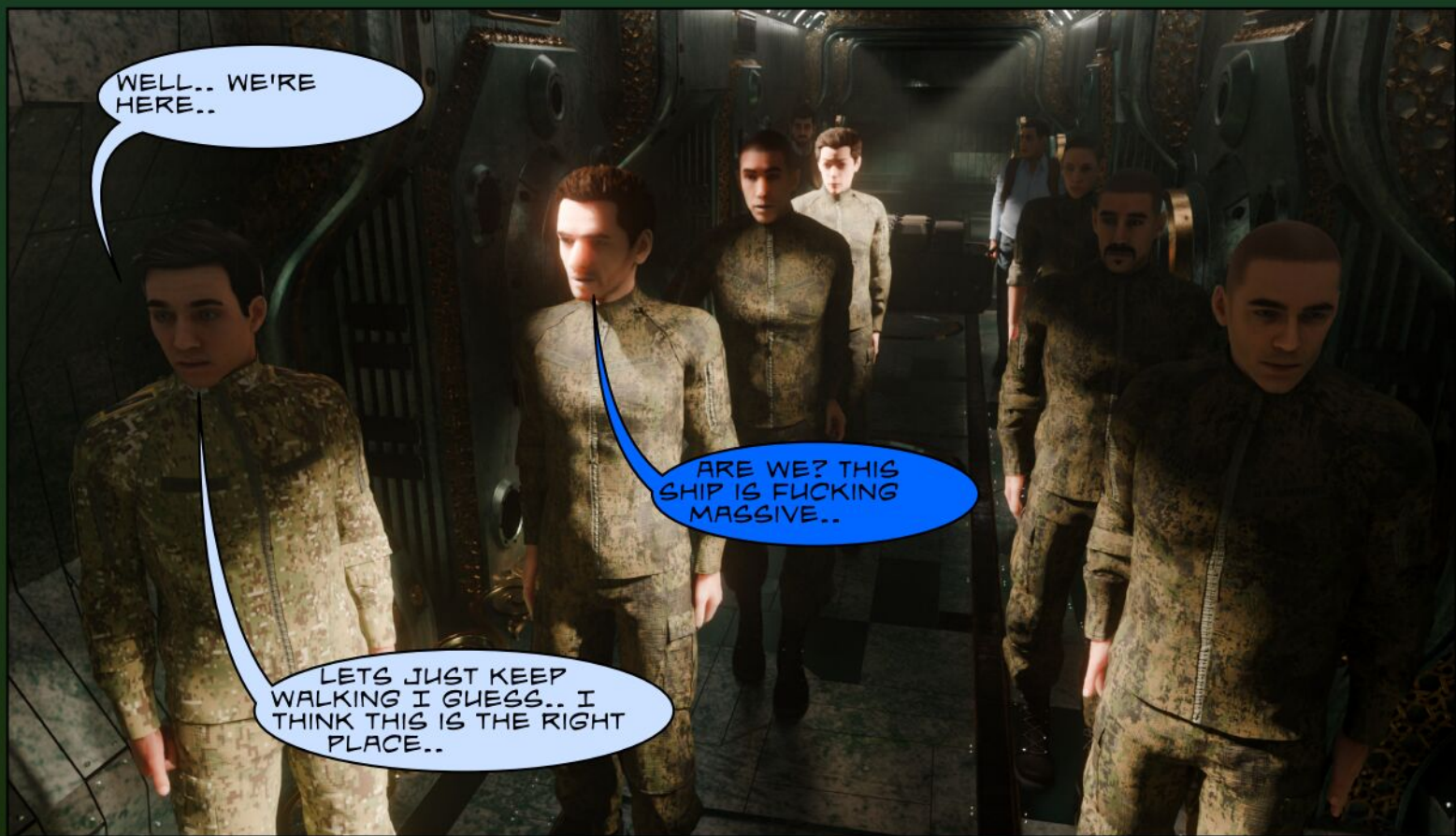
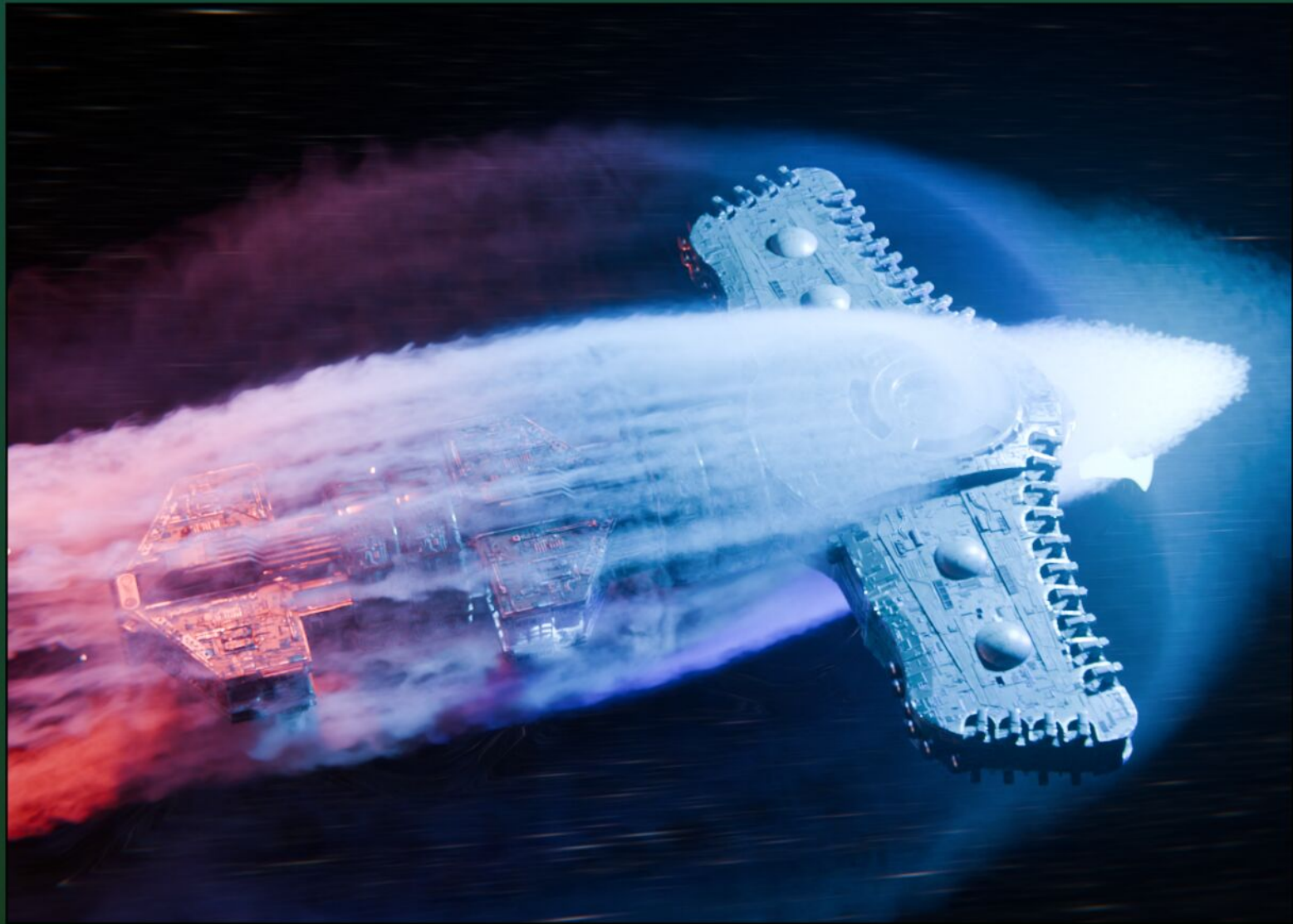
PROBABLY GONNA
SHOOT THE COWS!
YEAH!

NO! ONLY IF OUR DEMANDS
AREN'T MET, REMEMBER?

OK! THEN WE'LL
SHOOT THEM ALL!
YEAH!



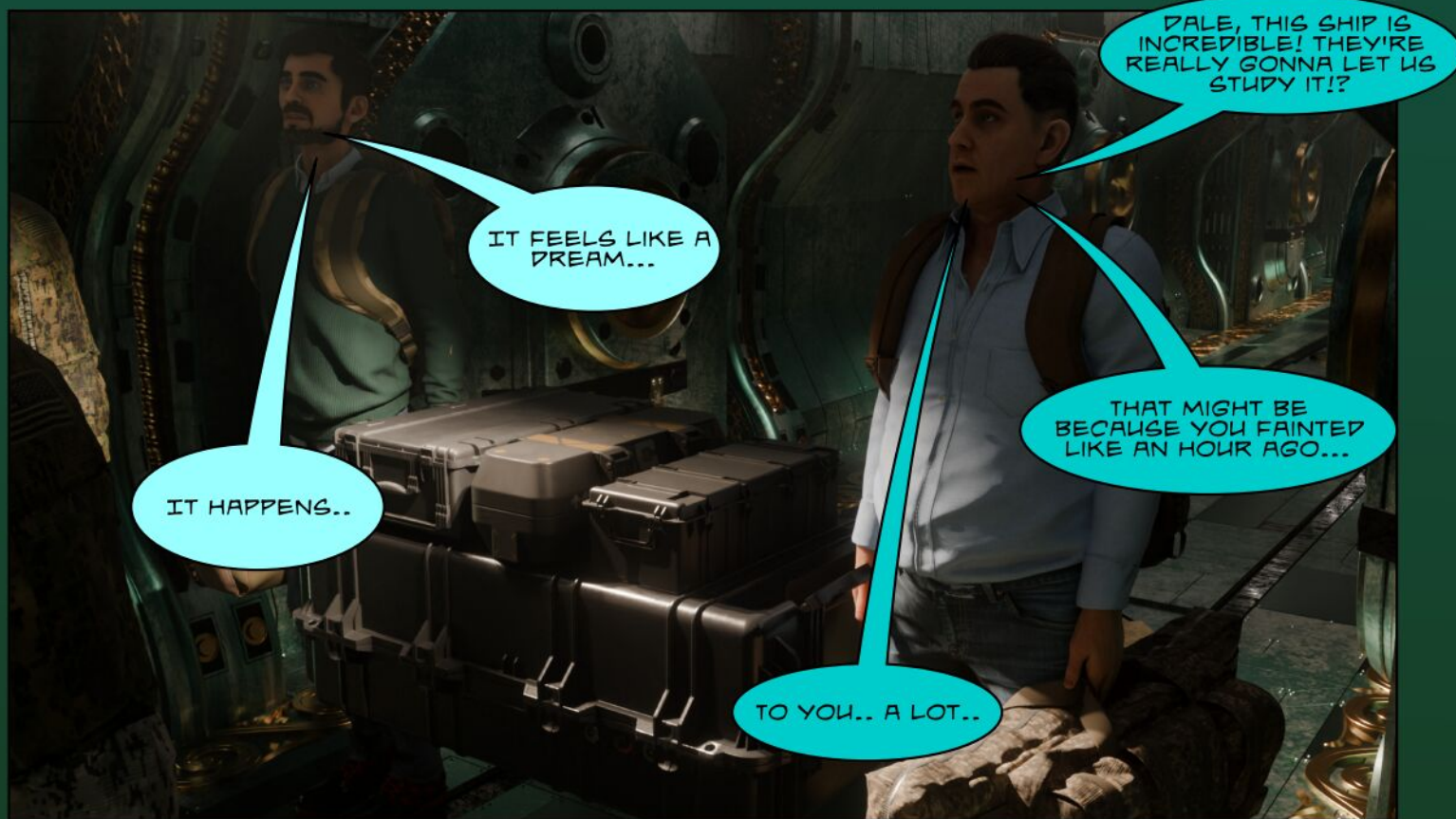




WELL.. WE'RE
HERE..

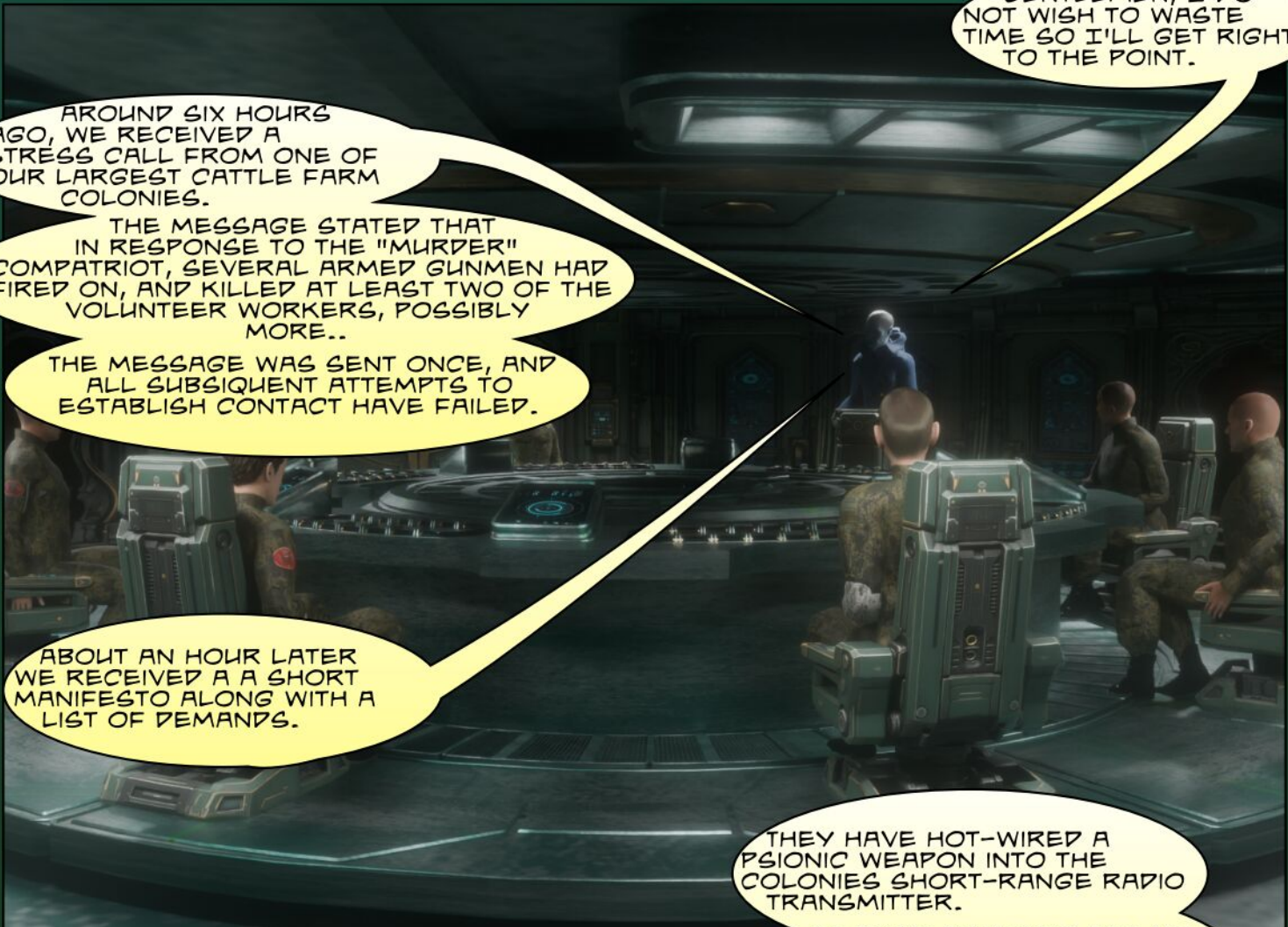
ARE WE? THIS
SHIP IS FUCKING
MASSIVE..

LETS JUST KEEP
WALKING I GUESS.. I
THINK THIS IS THE RIGHT
PLACE..









GENTLEMEN, I DO NOT WISH TO WASTE TIME SO I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.

AROUND SIX HOURS AGO, WE RECEIVED A DISTRESS CALL FROM ONE OF OUR LARGEST CATTLE FARM COLONIES.

THE MESSAGE STATED THAT IN RESPONSE TO THE "MURDER" COMPATRIOT, SEVERAL ARMED GUNMEN HAD FIRED ON, AND KILLED AT LEAST TWO OF THE VOLUNTEER WORKERS, POSSIBLY MORE..

THE MESSAGE WAS SENT ONCE, AND ALL SUBSEQUENT ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH CONTACT HAVE FAILED.

ABOUT AN HOUR LATER WE RECEIVED A A SHORT MANIFESTO ALONG WITH A LIST OF DEMANDS.

THEY HAVE HOT-WIRED A PSIONIC WEAPON INTO THE COLONIES SHORT-RANGE RADIO TRANSMITTER.

IF THEIR DEMANDS ARE NOT MET WITHIN TWO EARTH DAYS, THEY WILL ACTIVATE THE WEAPON.

BESIDES WANTING C.J. AND WINTERS, WHAT ARE THE REST OF THEIR DEMANDS?

IT DOESN'T MATTER, COLONEL. THEY WON'T BE MET EITHER WAY.



THIS WEAPON IS PARTICULARLY INSIDIOUS. IT IS, IN SIMPLE TERMS A DEFECTIVE UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR.

HOW, AND WHY IT IS DEFECTIVE IS IRRELEVANT. ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT IF IT'S ACTIVATED.

IT WILL INSTANTLY KILL THE HEARD AND LIKELY CAUSE SEVERE NEUROLOGICAL DAMAGE TO ANY HUMAN, OR MI'ARR IN THE VICINITY.. THIS CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN.

WE'RE U.S. MARINES, COMMANDER. WE WERE BORN WITH NEUROLOGICAL DAMAGE!

WHILE YOUR STATEMENT MAY BE HUMOROUS... AND ACCURATE, THIS IS NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY, SARGENT.



IF BROAN'IS FALLS, STARVATION WILL SWEEP THROUGH THE ARK LIKE A PLAGUE. UNREST, MUTINY, CHAOS WILL FOLLOW...

IF THE ARK FALLS TO THE MORE RADICAL ELEMENTS OF OUR POPULATION, THEN HUMANITY FALLS. AND IF HUMANITY FALLS THERE WILL BE NO OTHERS TO TAKE OUR PLACE OR HELP US REBUILD.

SO IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF BOTH OUR SPECIES THAT THIS CONFLICT BE RESOLVED SWIFTLY AND DECISIVELY.



THIS IS BROAN'IS, OUR DESTINATION. IT'S A COLD, DAMP WORLD. BUT ONE THAT SUPPORTS OUR KIND OF LIFE.

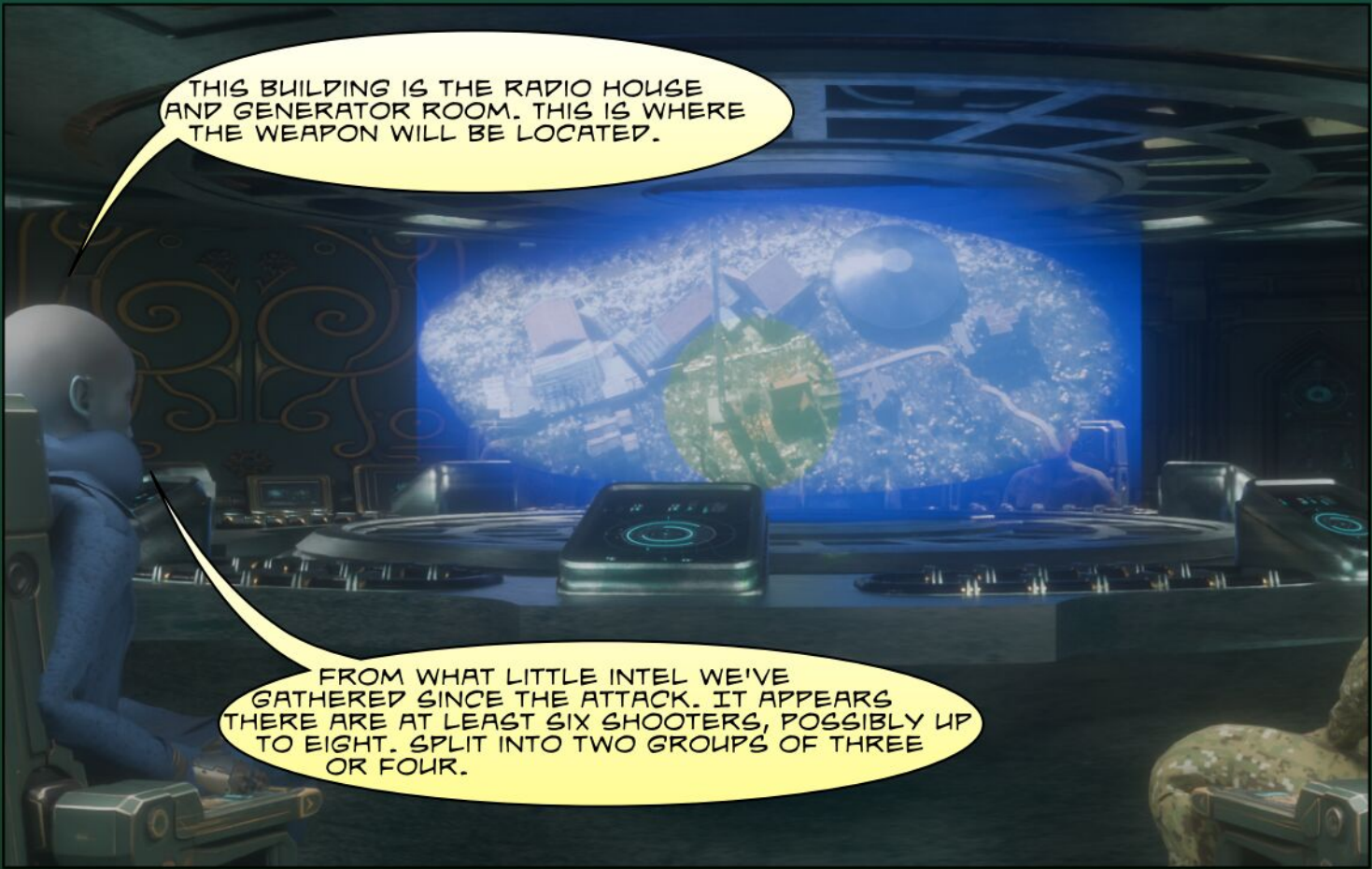
THE PLANET CONTAINS MANY FARMS, HOWEVER CATTLE FARM SIXTY-THREE IS THE LARGEST.

IT IS LOCATED HERE, ON THE LARGEST, CENTRAL CONTINENT.



THIS IS A LIVE FEED FROM AN ORBITING SATELLITE SHOWING THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE AND ADJECTN FACILITIES..

THAT SILVER DISC IS THE SHIP THE ATTACKERS ARRIVED IN. NEXT TO IT IS THE MAIN HOUSE AND MAIN SLAUGHTER FACILITY..



THIS BUILDING IS THE RADIO HOUSE AND GENERATOR ROOM. THIS IS WHERE THE WEAPON WILL BE LOCATED.

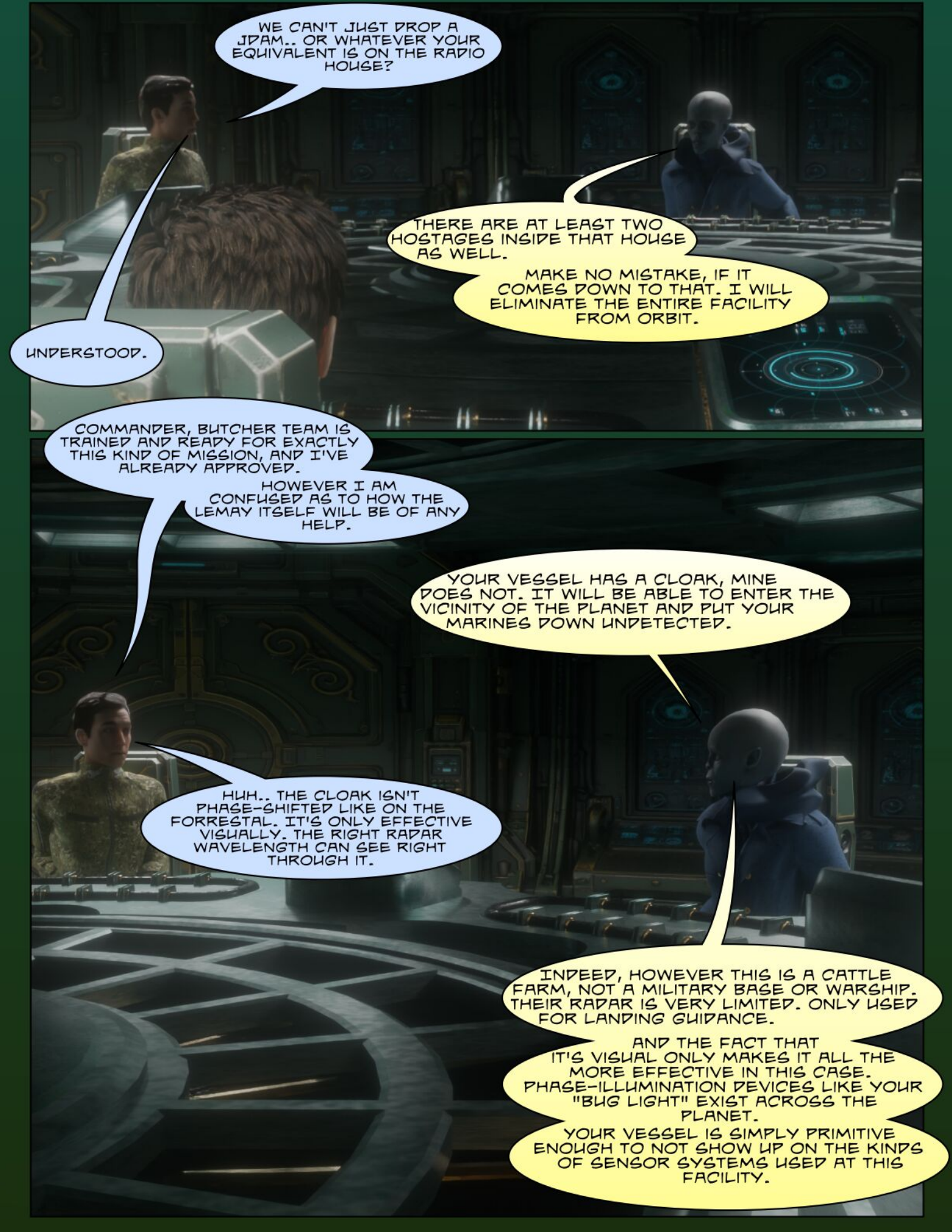
FROM WHAT LITTLE INTEL WE'VE GATHERED SINCE THE ATTACK. IT APPEARS THERE ARE AT LEAST SIX SHOOTERS, POSSIBLY UP TO EIGHT. SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS OF THREE OR FOUR.



HALF OCCUPY THE RADIO HOUSE, AND THE OTHER HALF OCCUPY THE MAIN HOUSE, HERE.

THIS IS WHERE THE BULK OF THE HOSTAGES ARE LOCATED AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL.

THE HOSTAGES ARE IMPORTANT, BUT DISABLING THE WEAPON MUST TAKE PRIORITY.



WE CAN'T JUST DROP A
JPAM.. OR WHATEVER YOUR
EQUIVALENT IS ON THE RADIO
HOUSE?

THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO
HOSTAGES INSIDE THAT HOUSE
AS WELL.

MAKE NO MISTAKE, IF IT
COMES DOWN TO THAT. I WILL
ELIMINATE THE ENTIRE FACILITY
FROM ORBIT.

UNDERSTOOD.

COMMANDER, BUTCHER TEAM IS
TRAINED AND READY FOR EXACTLY
THIS KIND OF MISSION, AND I'VE
ALREADY APPROVED.

HOWEVER I AM
CONFUSED AS TO HOW THE
LEMAY ITSELF WILL BE OF ANY
HELP.

YOUR VESSEL HAS A CLOAK, MINE
DOES NOT. IT WILL BE ABLE TO ENTER THE
VICINITY OF THE PLANET AND PUT YOUR
MARINES DOWN UNDETECTED.

HUH.. THE CLOAK ISN'T
PHASE-SHIFTED LIKE ON THE
FORRESTAL. IT'S ONLY EFFECTIVE
VISUALLY. THE RIGHT RADAR
WAVELENGTH CAN SEE RIGHT
THROUGH IT.

INDEED, HOWEVER THIS IS A CATTLE
FARM, NOT A MILITARY BASE OR WARSHIP.
THEIR RADAR IS VERY LIMITED. ONLY USED
FOR LANDING GUIDANCE.

AND THE FACT THAT
IT'S VISUAL ONLY MAKES IT ALL THE
MORE EFFECTIVE IN THIS CASE.
PHASE-ILLUMINATION DEVICES LIKE YOUR
"BUG LIGHT" EXIST ACROSS THE
PLANET.

YOUR VESSEL IS SIMPLY PRIMITIVE
ENOUGH TO NOT SHOW UP ON THE KINDS
OF SENSOR SYSTEMS USED AT THIS
FACILITY.



AHH.. SO YOU'LL
DROP US OFF
SOMEWHERE NEAR-BY
THEN?

CORRECT. I WILL DROP
YOUR SHIP OFF AT ABOUT THE
AVERAGE DISTANCE BETWEEN
EARTH AND MARS. IF THEY SEE
EITHER SHIP, THEY WILL ACTIVATE
THE WEAPON BEFORE WE CAN
ACT.

DOES ANYONE HAVE
ANY QUESTIONS?



YEAH, WHAT'S STOPPING THEM
FROM JUST SHUTTING US OFF
WITH THE STICK THINGY?

OUR SPECIES CAN
COMMUNICATE TELEPATHICALLY
NATURALLY, AS CAN YOURS. YOU'VE
JUST FORGOTTEN HOW..

HOWEVER WITHOUT AN
AMPLIFICATION DEVICE, THE
SPECTERS, THE ABILITY TO TAKE
OVER A MIND IS VERY LIMITED.

I AM QUITE SURE THEY ONLY
HAVE ONE SCEPTER, AND IT'S PART
OF THE WEAPON.

ALRIGHT, ONE MORE.

ARE WE TALKING TRAINED
AND SQUARED AWAY SHOOTERS,
OR UNDISCIPLINED THUGGS?

VERY MUCH THE LATTER. IF
ANY OF THEM EVER FIRED A
WEAPON BEFORE TODAY, I'D BE
SURPRISED.

UNFORTUNATLY, WE ONLY HAVE
SUSPECTS AT THE MOMENT. I HAVE NOT
BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THE IDENTITY OF
ANY OF THE ATTACKERS AS OF YET, BUT I
EXPECT THAT TO CHANGE SOON.



OF COURSE.

I HAVE A QUESTION.. TWO ACTUALLY.



CAN'T YOU JUST TURN THEM OFF WITH YOUR SCEPTER THINGS?

AND HOW DO WE DEACTIVATE THE.. THING?

NO, IF IT WERE THAT SIMPLE. I WOULD NOT BE ASKING FOR YOUR HELP.



AS FOR DEACTIVATING THE DEVICE. SIMPLY REMOVING IT FROM THE IMMEDIATE PROXIMITY OF THE SCEPTER SHOULD SUFFICE.

I WOULD HIGHLY ADVISE YOU NOT TO TOUCH IT WITH YOUR BARE HANDS. YOU MAY INADVERTENTLY ACTIVATE IT.

SIMPLE GLOVES SHOULD PREVENT THIS.



I ALSO HAVE A QUESTION. FORGIVE ME IF YOU ALREADY SAID... HOW MANY HOSTAGES AND WHAT IS THEIR STATUS?



THIRTY-ONE, AT LEAST THREE ARE CONFIRMED SHOT, PRESUMED DEAD.

IN TWO DAYS TIME, I EXPECT THEIR CONDITION TO HAVE DETERIORATED.

BEFORE PAUL COULD FINISH ASKING FOR THE HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE TO BE DISPLAYED AGAIN, IT CAME ON AUTOMATICALLY.

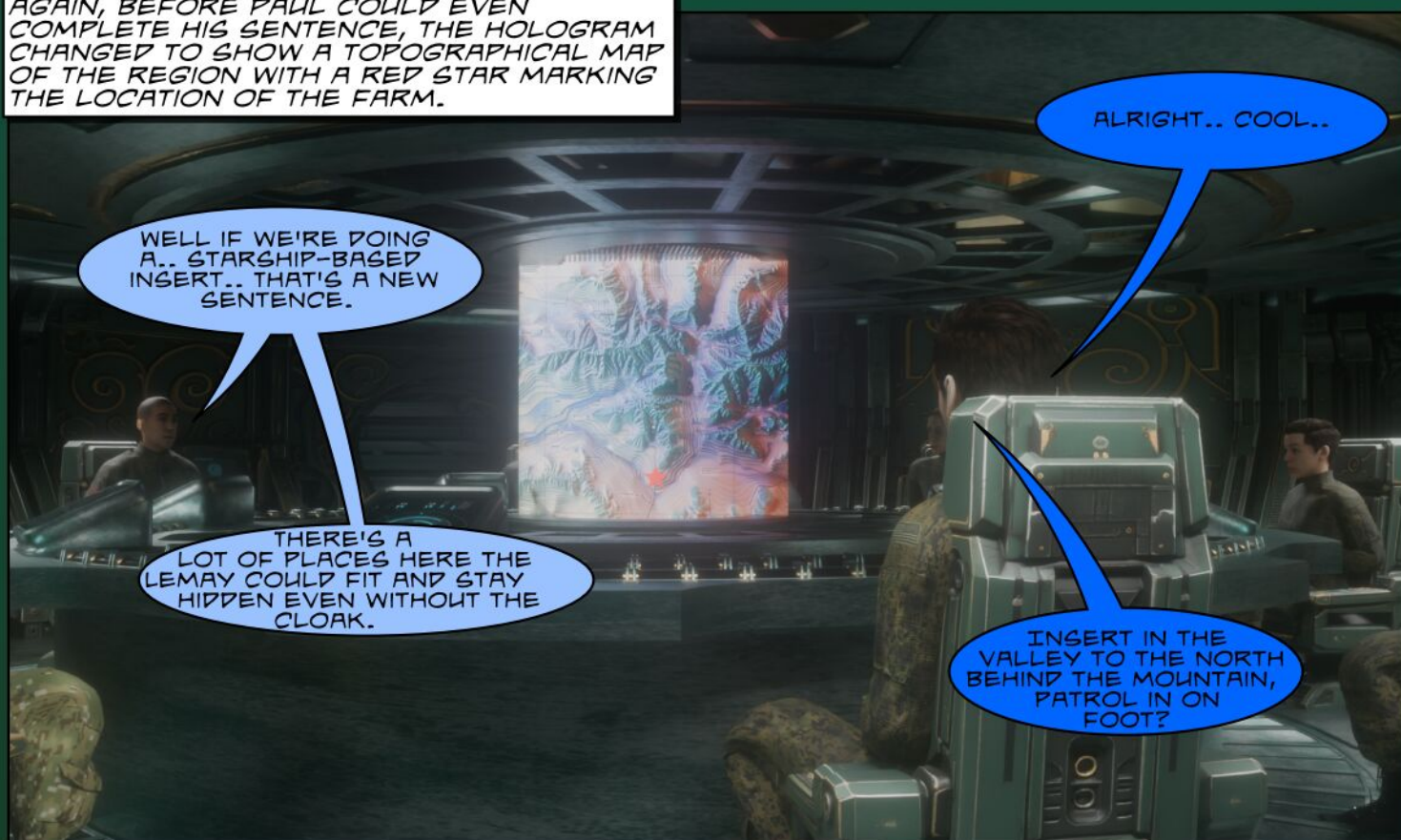


HEY, CAN YOU BRING THE HOLO-... NEVERMIND.

COOL... THE LEMAY COULD USE ONE OF THESE!

HMM, DO YOU HAVE A TOPOGRAPHIC MA-

AGAIN, BEFORE PAUL COULD EVEN COMPLETE HIS SENTENCE, THE HOLOGRAM CHANGED TO SHOW A TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE REGION WITH A RED STAR MARKING THE LOCATION OF THE FARM.



WELL IF WE'RE DOING A.. STARSHIP-BASED INSERT.. THAT'S A NEW SENTENCE.

THERE'S A LOT OF PLACES HERE THE LEMAY COULD FIT AND STAY HIDDEN EVEN WITHOUT THE CLOAK.

ALRIGHT.. COOL..

INSERT IN THE VALLEY TO THE NORTH BEHIND THE MOUNTAIN, PATROL IN ON FOOT?



I DON'T SUPPOSE WE HAVE PARACHUTES ON THE SHIP?

HAHO WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO LANDING THE WHOLE SHIP, RIGHT?

KID'S GOT A POINT, BOSS. BESIDES, WHO KNOWS WHAT KINDA WILD ALIEN BUGS AND WEIRD SHIT IS IN THAT VALLEY. BEST MINIMIZE OUR TIME ON TARGET.



THE LEMAY WONT HAVE AN ISSUE EITHER WAY, BUT I'D PREFER TO KEEP HER AS FAR FROM THE DANGER AS POSSIBLE.

HOW YOU CHOOSE TO EXECUTE THIS OPERATION IS UP TO YOU. HOWEVER I'D ADVISE AGAINST SUCH A JUMP. WINDS ON THIS WORLD ARE INCREDIBLY STRONG AND UNPREDICTABLE ABOVE 5,000 FEET.

THAT'S FINE, SIR. BUT I'M NOT JUMPING MY TEAM INTO A RANDOMIZED HURRICANE IF I CAN HELP IT.



NO, DEFINITELY NOT.

PATROL IN FROM THE VALLEY TO THE NORTH, HOOK AROUND TO THE SOUTH SIDE AND HIT THE RADIO ROOM FIRST. CLEAR ALL THE STRUCTURES AS WE MAKE OUR WAY TO THE MAIN HOUSE. THAT'S MY TWO CENTS..

I LIKE THAT PLAN!



ALRIGHT, WELL. ASIDE FROM THE WHOLE ALIEN PLANET AND PLASMA WEAPONS THING..

THIS LOOKS LIKE A PRETTY STANDARD OP, BOYS.

IT SHOULDN'T BE AN ISSUE TO DROP YOU OFF IN THAT VALLEY, I CAN'T PROMISE WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET THE GANGWAY FLUSH TO THE GROUND THOUGH.

THEN WE FAST-ROPE DOWN. NO BIGGIE.



THEN HOW DO WE GET THEM BACK ON BOARD?

WILL OUR PROP AND TURBINE DRIVEN DRONES BE ABLE TO FLY IN THAT ATMOSPHERE?

GOOD, THAT'LL HELP A LOT.

ONCE THE WEAPON IS SECURE, I CAN SEND LANDERS DOWN TO RETRIEVE YOU AND THE HOSTAGES, AS WELL AS PROVIDE RAPID CASUALTY ASSISTANCE IF REQUIRED.

THEY SHOULD HAVE NO ISSUE. AND LIKE THE CURTIS LEMAY, THEY WILL BE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE FACILITIES LIMITED SENSORS TO DETECT.

SPLENDID. C.J. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO REMAIN HERE FOR SOME TIME. THERE IS SOMETHING I'D LIKE YOU TO DO.



I MEAN, YEAH! I'M COOL STAYING FOR A WHILE!

SOMEONE'S GOTTA LOOK AFTER DALE AND WHAT'S HIS FACE... THE FAT GUY.



WOAH! EASY THERE, LANCE CORPORAL. THAT'S NOT YOUR CALL TO MAKE.



COMMANDER, I'M NOT AGAINST THE IDEA, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AT LEAST SOME IDEA OF WHAT YOU WANT HIM TO DO..

MAYBE FOR A BIT, BUT I STILL HAVE A SHIP TO RUN.. FOR WHAT THAT'S WORTH AT THE MOMENT, BUT MY CREW IS A LITTLE ON EDGE.

CONSIDER IT.. EDUCATION. YOU ARE WELCOME TO STAY AND OBSERVE IF YOU WISH.

A COMMANDER MUST TEND TO HIS CREW. I UNDERSTAND.

OK, C.J. CAN STAY AS LONG AS ONE OTHER MEMBER OF THE TEAMS STAYS WITH HIM.







AGAIN, GENTLEMEN. I THANK YOU.



COLONEL, IF YOU WOULD LIKE, I WILL HAVE THIS MISSION DATA CONVERTED TO YOUR COMPUTER FORMAT AND SENT TO YOUR SHIP NOW.

YES, PLEASE. THAT'D BE VERY HELPFUL.

AS WELL AS ANY DATA YOU HAVE ON THE HOSTAGES AND COMBATANTS.

PICTURES OF THEIR FACES WOULD HELP A LOT

OF COURSE, WE ARE STILL WORKING ON THAT BUT YOU WILL HAVE EVERYTHING I DO.



IF EVERYONE IS STAYING, PLEASE COME WITH ME.

THIS WILL NOT TAKE LONG.





IS SOMETHING WRONG?

I JUST REALIZED I
OWE MY DAD A MAJOR
APOLOGY!

MANY TIMES OVER,
SON..



PROBABLY..

BUT IF HE SAW
THIS, HE'D SHIT
HIMSELF!

HE'S HAD THAT
BOB LAZAR "THEY'RE
HERE" POSTER ON HIS
BEDROOM WALL FOR
YEARS.

I UHH. I HAVE THE
SAME POSTER..

AHH.. I SEE.

IF YOU WISH.

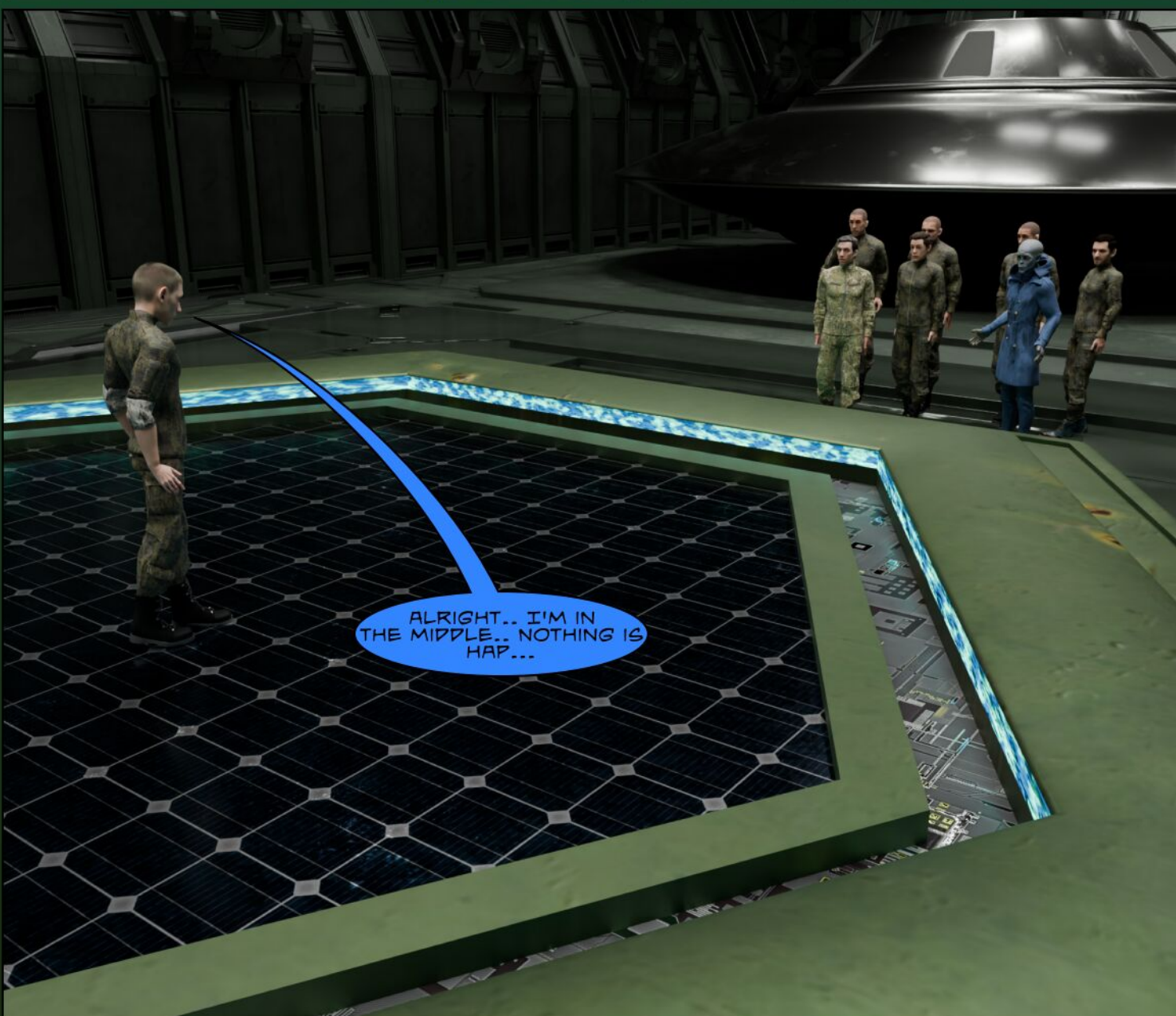
CAN WE TAKE A LOOK?







SLOWLY, HESITANTLY. C.J.
MEANDERED ONTO THE PAD.



WITH A GUTTERAL SCREECH, THE MACHINE POWERED ON AN C.J. FELT A PAINFUL SURGE OF RAW ENERGY RACE THROUGH HIS BODY,



THE WORLD BEGAN TO MELT DISSOLVE AROUND HIM AS A BLINDING COLUMN OF LIGHT SURROUNDED AND CONSUMED HIM.

