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THE STARCASTER CHRONICLES





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CALL.

YOU SURE ABOUT THAT, BIG GUY? THERE'S NO SHAME IN--



CHAUG CALLS.

OK, OK...



DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YA...

STRAIGHT, NOVA HIGH.



SORRY, BUD. THAT'S ROUGH. HOPE WE CAN STILL BE FRIEND--

NOT SO FAST. IMPERIAL FLUSH.



CHAUG THANKS YOU FOR HIS NEW STARSHIP.

NEVERMIND ABOUT THAT FRIEND THING...



...FINE THIS TIME, BUT WE SHOULD PLAN TO HAVE THE LANDING THRUSTERS SERVICED BEFORE THE NEXT RUN.

HEY, FUNNY STORY, ABOUT THE THRUSTERS...

AND THE SHIP THEY'RE ATTACHED TO...



YOU GAMBLED AWAY THE SHIP?!

I THOUGHT YOU LIKED THAT SHIP!

NOT AS MUCH AS I LIKED THE CREDITS I WAS SUPPOSED TO WIN.

THE GUY WAS TOTALLY CHEATING.



BECAUSE HE KNEW I WAS CHEATING... IT WOULD HAVE TURNED INTO THIS WHOLE THING...

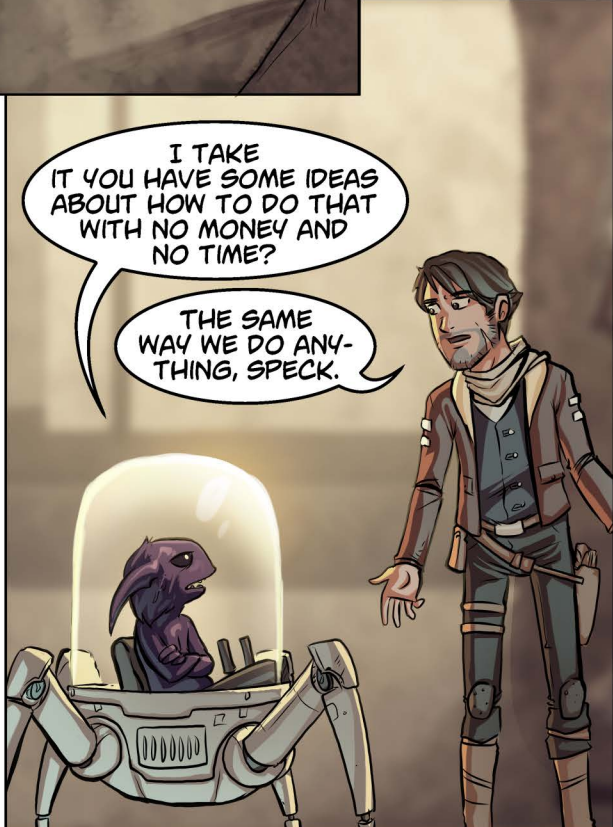
IF YOU KNEW HE WAS CHEATING, WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL HIM OUT?



CORT, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO TAKE DELIVERY OF CARGO IN SIX HOURS. WE'VE ALREADY BEEN PAID.

CREDITS, I MIGHT ADD, WE SUNK INTO THE BOAT YOU JUST LOST.

SO WE GET ANOTHER SHIP.



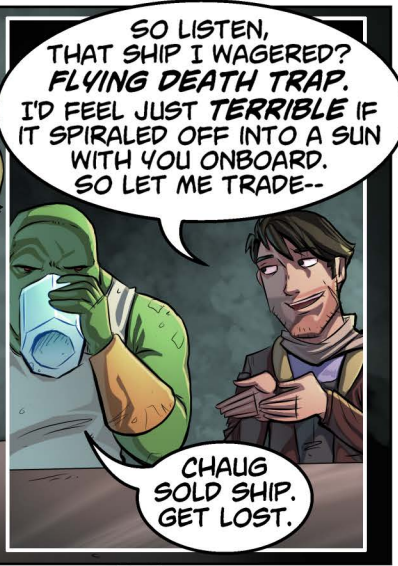
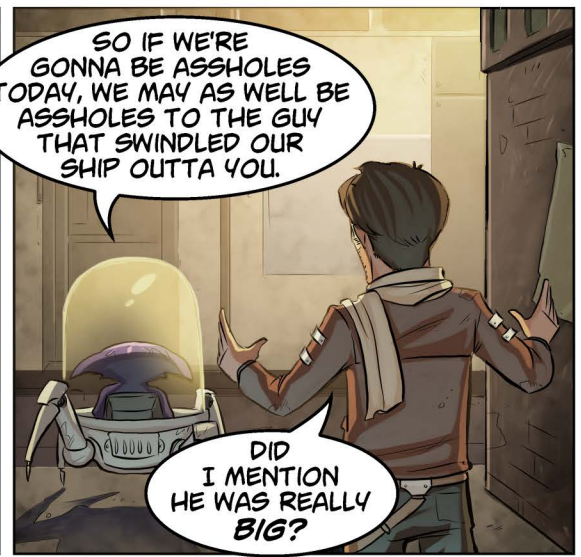
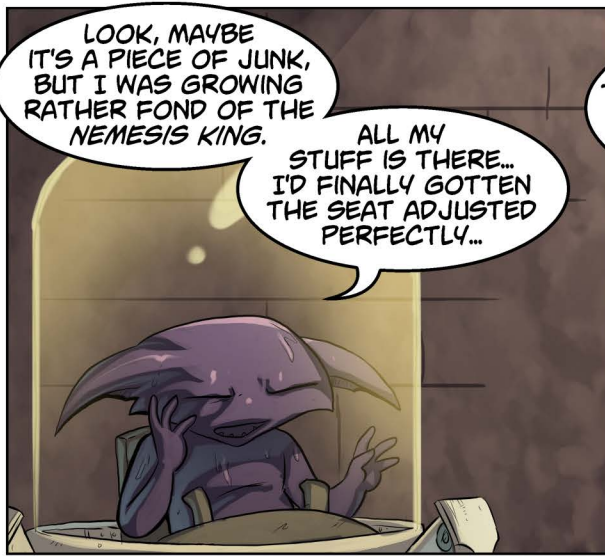
I TAKE IT YOU HAVE SOME IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO DO THAT WITH NO MONEY AND NO TIME?

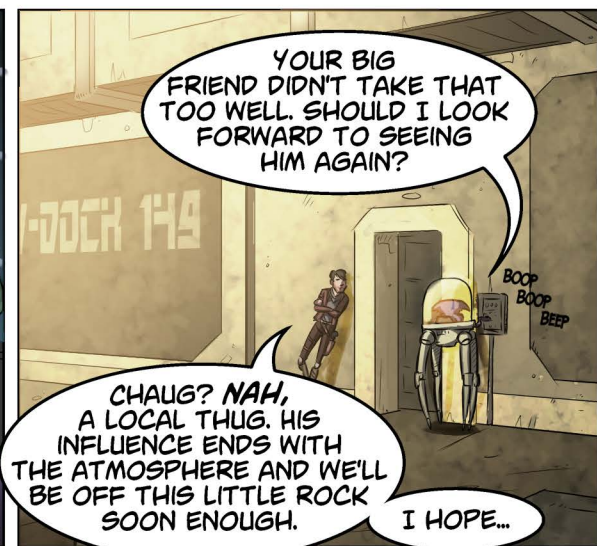
THE SAME WAY WE DO ANYTHING, SPECK.



POORLY?

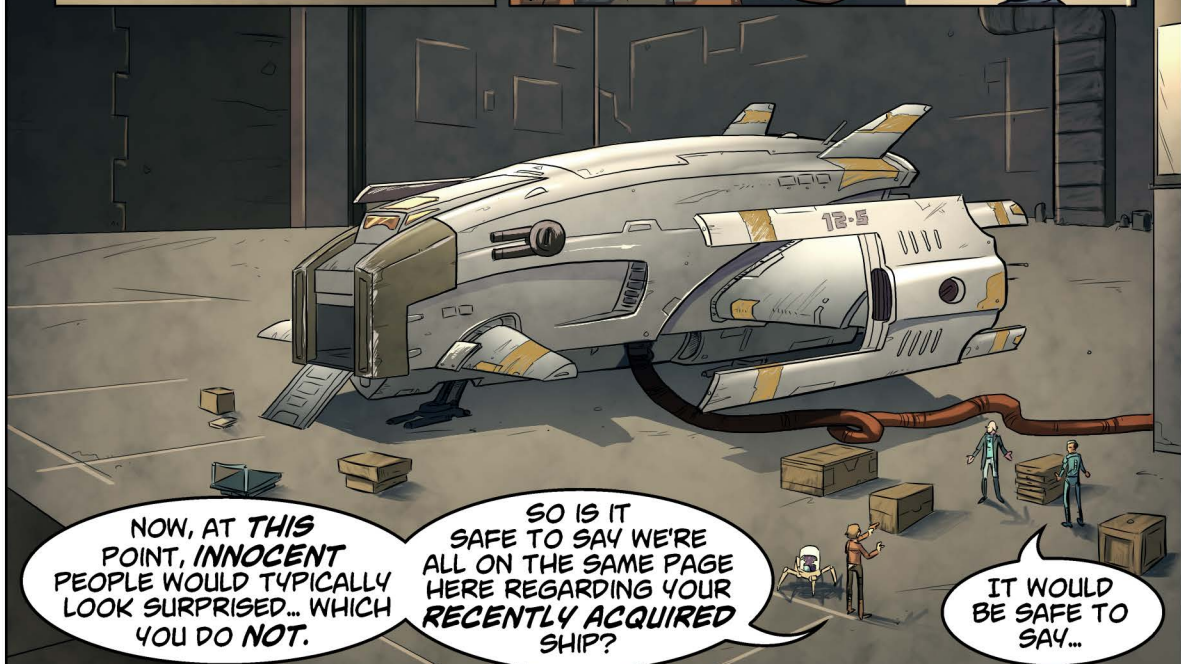
ILLEGALLY.





GENTLEMEN.

DEPUTY
U.F. MARSHAL. I'M
GOING TO NEED YOU TO
KEEP YOUR HANDS
WHERE I CAN
SEE 'EM.



NOW, AT **THIS**
POINT, **INNOCENT**
PEOPLE WOULD TYPICALLY
LOOK SURPRISED... WHICH
YOU DO **NOT**.

SO IS IT
SAFE TO SAY WE'RE
ALL ON THE SAME PAGE
HERE REGARDING YOUR
RECENTLY ACQUIRED
SHIP?

IT WOULD
BE SAFE TO
SAY...

...BADGE OR
NO, OUR EMPLOYER WILL
MAKE SURE THIS JUST
BECAME A DAY YOU'RE
GOING TO REGRET.

FELLAS...
IF I LET A SILLY
THING LIKE **REGRET** STOP
ME, I'D NEVER DO OR
SAY **ANYTHING**.



WE'LL BE
OUT OF YOUR HAIR
SOON ENOUGH.

YOUR CARGO
WILL STILL BE HERE.
WE AREN'T TAKING ANYTHING
THAT BELONGS TO YOU OR
YOUR **BOSS**, ARE WE
CLEAR?

≡MMPHMM!≡

YEAH, IT
WAS A PLEASURE
MEETING YOU
TOO.

I KNOW A GUY
HERE THAT CAN COOK
UP A FRESH REGISTRATION
FOR THE SHIP. NEW NAME,
TOO. IN CASE ANYONE HERE
DECIDES TO HOLD
A **GRUDGE**.

THUMP
THUMP

LET THE
MOXXU KNOW
WHERE THE SHIP IS
NOW. I WANT TO GET
OUR PAYLOAD AND BE
ON OUR WAY--

CORT...

IMPERSONATING
A FED... YOU KNOW THAT
COULD BRING A LOT OF
UNWANTED ATTENTION
OUR WAY...

HEY NOW,
I'M NOT **EXACTLY**
"IMPERSONATING--"

BUT YOU
AREN'T A MARSHAL
ANYMORE, EITHER...

I JUST...

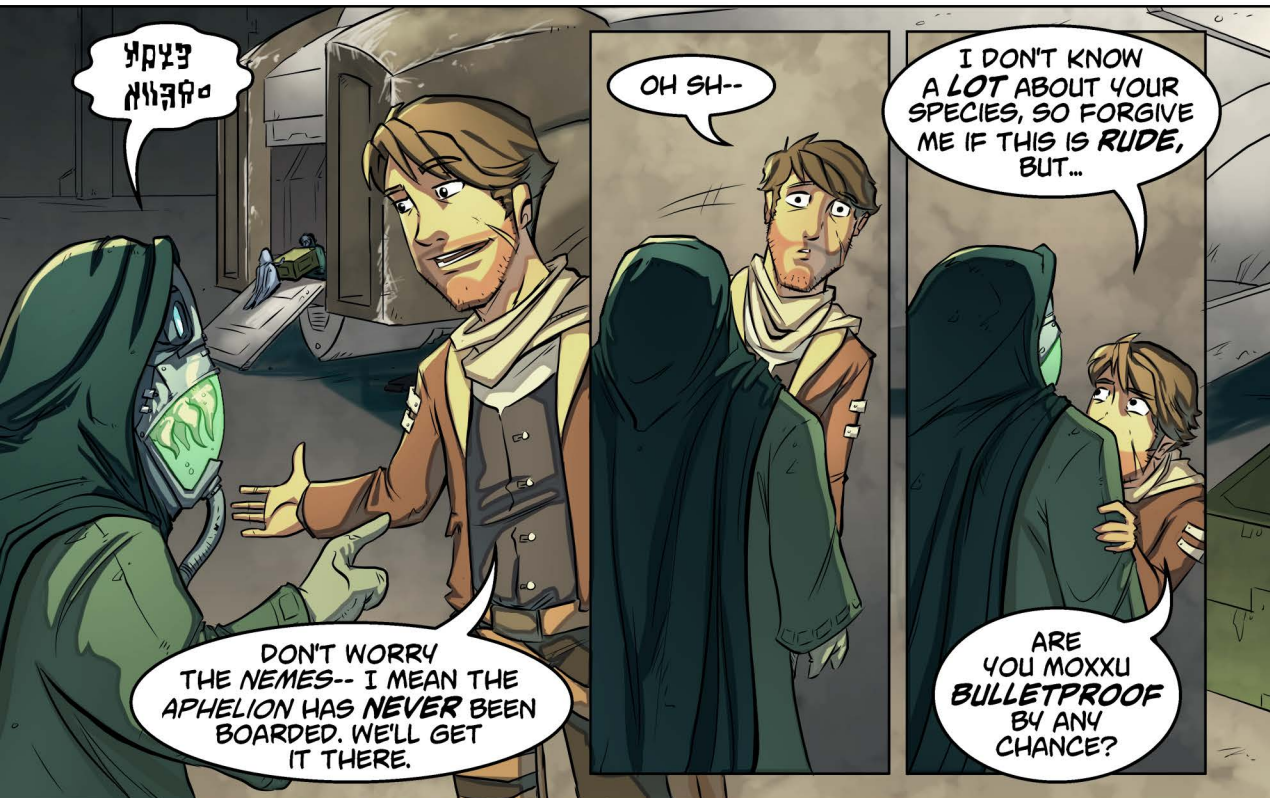
HEY,
BULLETS AREN'T
FREE, RIGHT? JUST
FIGURED I COULD SAVE
US A FEW CRED.



LATER...

THAT'S THE LAST OF IT.

WE'LL HAVE IT THERE IN FOUR DAYS, AS AGREED.



ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨᠢ ᠶᠢᠨᠠᠨᠢ

OH SH--

I DON'T KNOW A LOT ABOUT YOUR SPECIES, SO FORGIVE ME IF THIS IS RUDE, BUT...

DON'T WORRY THE NEMES-- I MEAN THE APHELION HAS NEVER BEEN BOARDED. WE'LL GET IT THERE.

ARE YOU MOXXU BULLETPROOF BY ANY CHANCE?



CORT IS MINE.

BUT KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR THAT MIMION. DON'T LET IT GET CLOSE.





RIGHT. GOOD TALK, GUYS! GOTTA RUN!

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!



SPECK!
WE NEED TO LEA--!



GNNHGAA!



HEH.

HUMANS MAKE THE FUNNIEST SOUNDS WHEN THEY DIE.





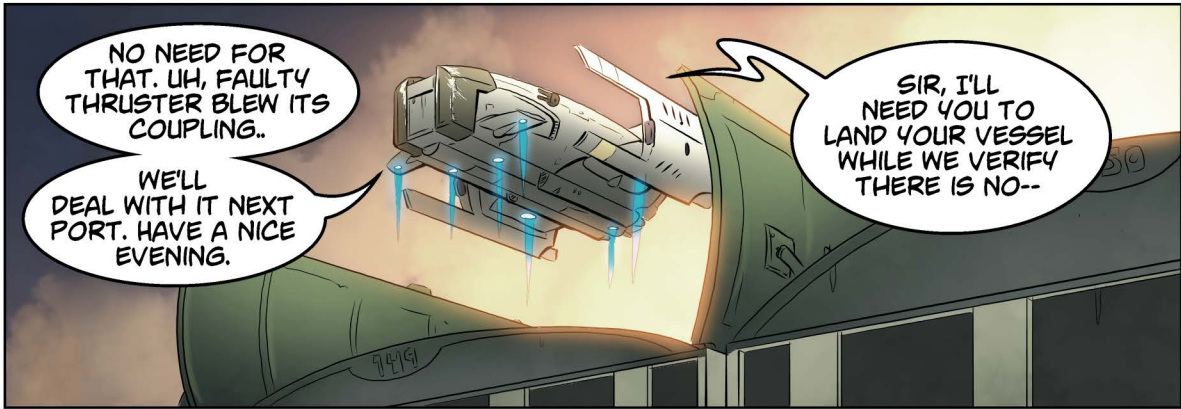
DOOR'S SEALED. LET'S-- ~~UHG!~~ LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

PORT SECURITY IS ON THE LINE. THEY SOUND LESS THAN HAPPY.

PUT 'EM THROUGH..



THIS IS DOCKSEC... WE HAVE REPORTS OF AN **EXPLOSION** IN THE VICINITY OF YOUR HANGAR. PLEASE HOLD YOUR POSITION, RESCUE UNITS ARE EN ROUTE.



NO NEED FOR THAT. UH, FAULTY THRUSTER BLEW ITS COUPLING..
WE'LL DEAL WITH IT NEXT PORT. HAVE A NICE EVENING.

SIR, I'LL NEED YOU TO LAND YOUR VESSEL WHILE WE VERIFY THERE IS NO--



SORRY, REPEA-- **KSH!** CALLED AWAY ON EMERGENC-- **KSH!** CAN'T ST-- **KSH!**

COMM SYS-- **KSH!** CUTTING OUT-- **KSH!** WILL--

SIR...
WE'RE ON VIDCOMM...



UGH. SORRY. WHAT I MEANT TO SAY WAS...



DID YOU RUN A MED SCAN?

LATER. I'M SURE I'M FINE. IT ONLY HURTS WHEN I MOVE. AND BREATHE.



ADD IT TO THE LIST.

OH COME ON, IT WASN'T THAT BAD.

TELL THAT TO THE ORBIT SECURITY DRONES I JUST DODGED.



PLANETS TO STAY AWAY FROM

RAXXIA

OAM III + IV

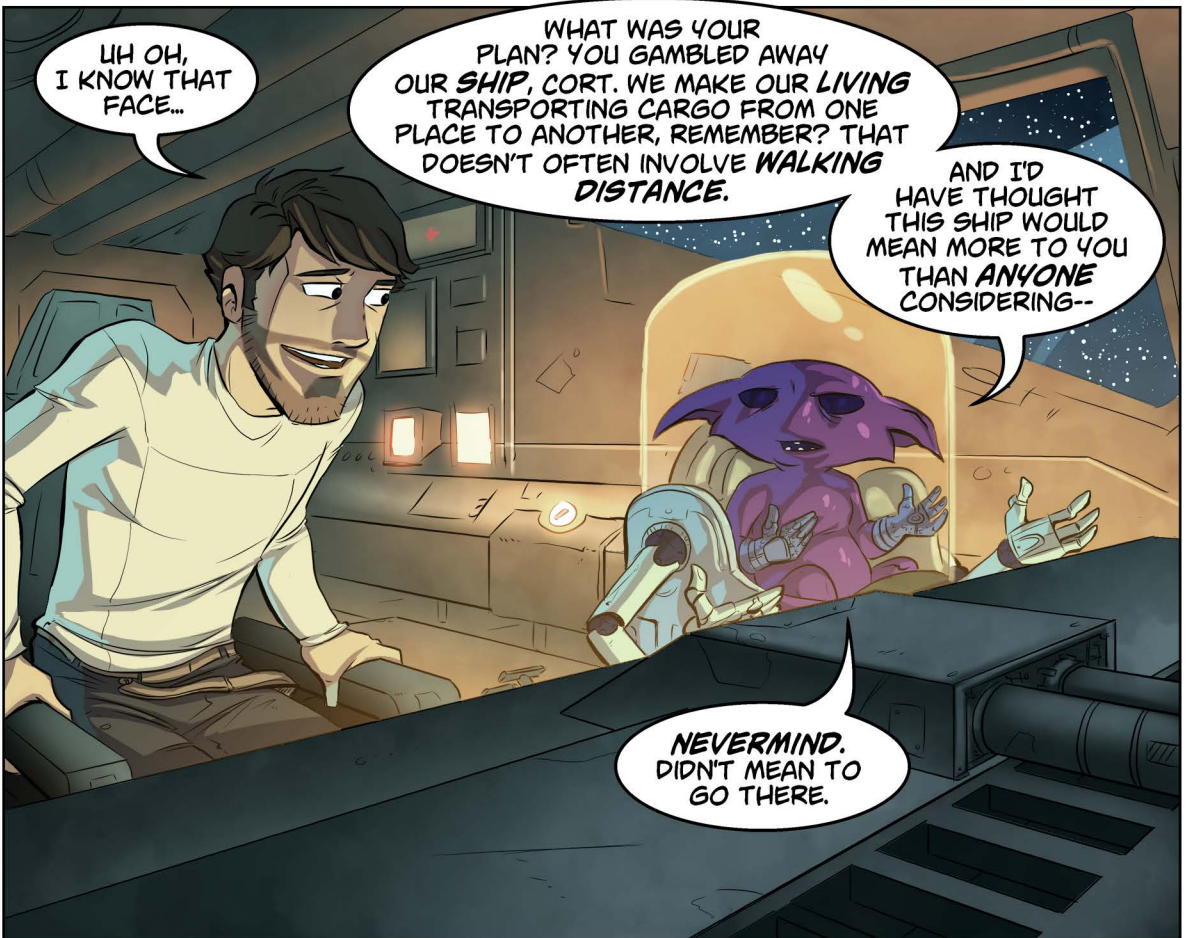
NOVORIS PRIME

THOLE

XUNIS

F.M

FINE.



UH OH, I KNOW THAT FACE...

WHAT WAS YOUR PLAN? YOU GAMBLER AWAY OUR SHIP, CORT. WE MAKE OUR LIVING TRANSPORTING CARGO FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER, REMEMBER? THAT DOESN'T OFTEN INVOLVE WALKING DISTANCE.

AND I'D HAVE THOUGHT THIS SHIP WOULD MEAN MORE TO YOU THAN ANYONE CONSIDERING--

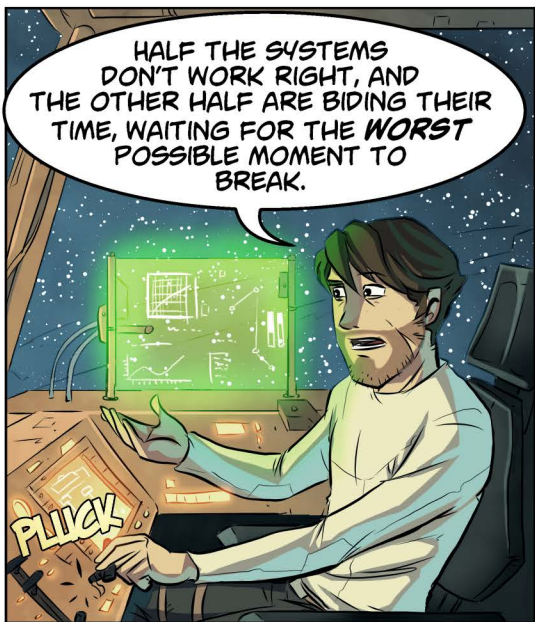
NEVERMIND. DIDN'T MEAN TO GO THERE.



NO, IT'S FINE... THE SHIP'S GOT CHARM, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT IN IT, SENTIMENTAL VALUE, BLAH BLAH BLAH.

BUT LET'S CALL A SPADE A SPADE, SHALL WE? THIS BOAT IS A PIECE OF SHIT.

EVEN JACK KNEW THAT.



HALF THE SYSTEMS DON'T WORK RIGHT, AND THE OTHER HALF ARE BIDDING THEIR TIME, WAITING FOR THE **WORST** POSSIBLE MOMENT TO BREAK.



I MAY NOT REMEMBER WHAT THIS LEVER IS FOR, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE IT SHOULDN'T BE HELD IN PLACE WITH TAPE.

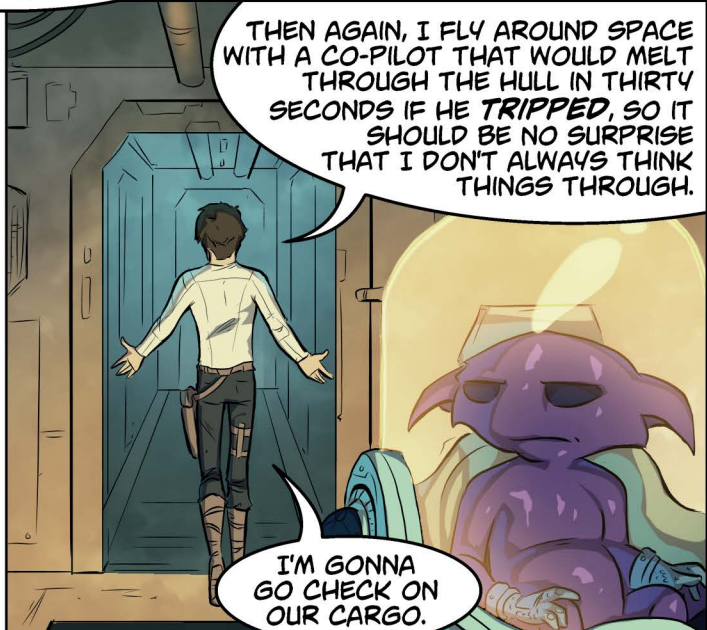
AFT FUSELAGE PRESSURE VENT CONTROL...

I'M TIRED OF LIVING ONE PARSEC AWAY FROM COMPLETE RUIN. I JUST WANTED TO GET AHEAD A BIT.



THESE MILK RUNS BARELY KEEP US AFLOAT.

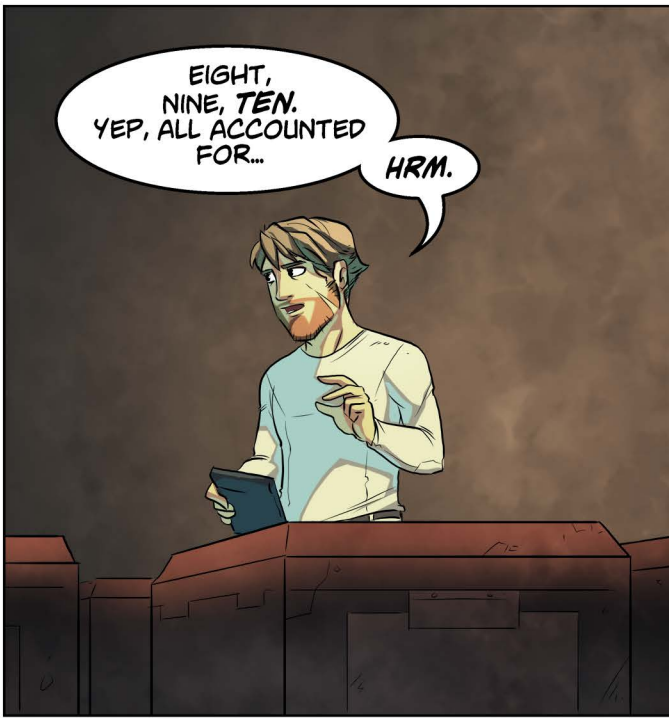
I SAW A CHANCE FOR A BIG SCORE, I TOOK IT. THAT'S AS FAR AS MY PLAN WENT.



THEN AGAIN, I FLY AROUND SPACE WITH A CO-PILOT THAT WOULD MELT THROUGH THE HULL IN THIRTY SECONDS IF HE **TRIPPED**, SO IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE THAT I DON'T ALWAYS THINK THINGS THROUGH.

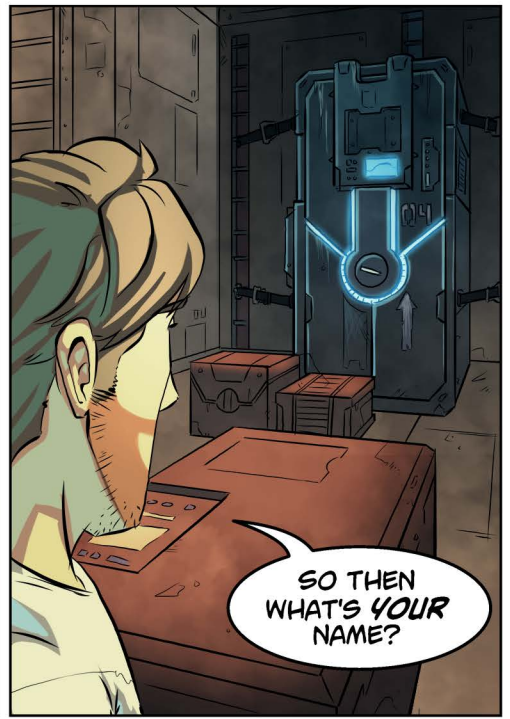
I'M GONNA GO CHECK ON OUR CARGO.





EIGHT,
NINE, TEN.
YEP, ALL ACCOUNTED
FOR...

HRM.



SO THEN
WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?



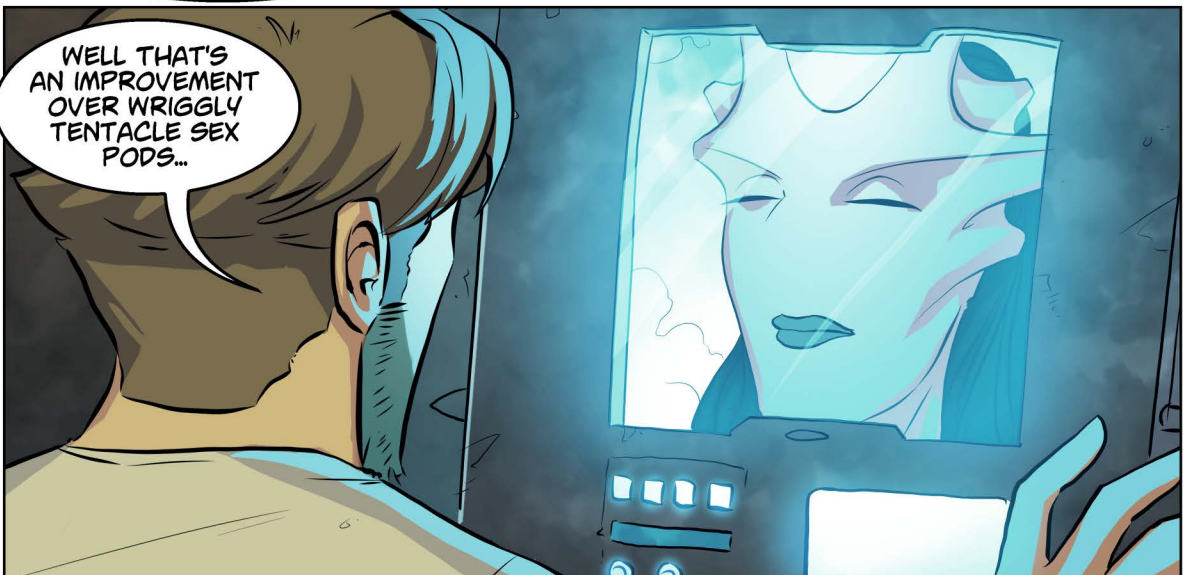
IT'S NOT *OURS*...
LETTERING ISN'T
MOXXUAN... OH.

DAMMIT. THAT'S
THE *SECOND* TIME TODAY
SOMEONE'S MADE A LIAR
OUT OF ME.

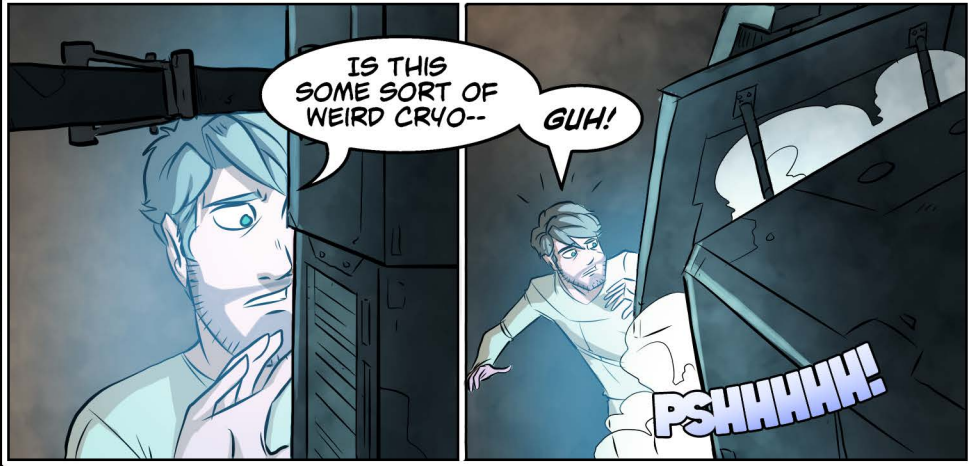


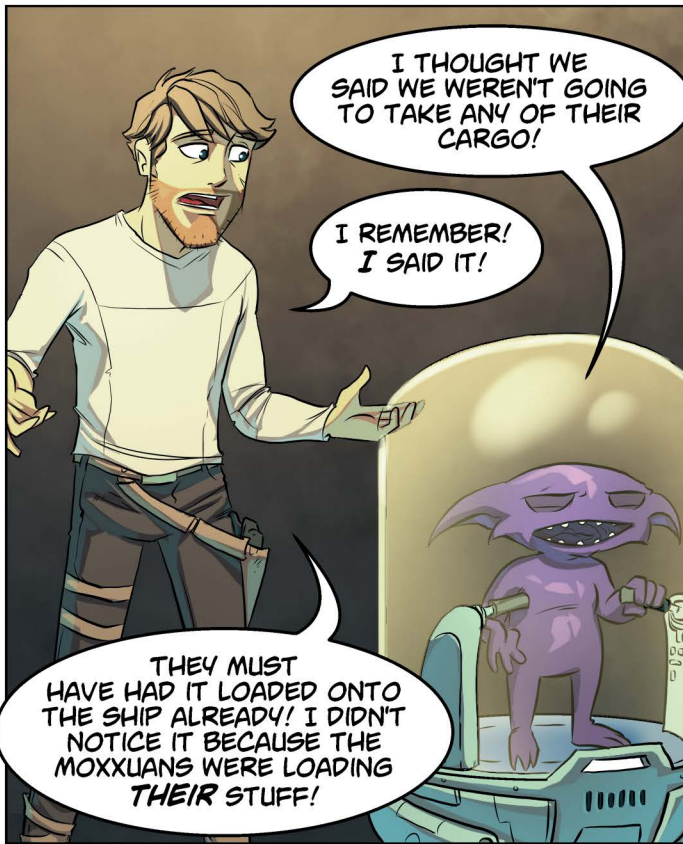
WHOA..
HELLO.

FOOSH!



WELL THAT'S
AN IMPROVEMENT
OVER WRIGGLY
TENTACLE SEX
PODS...

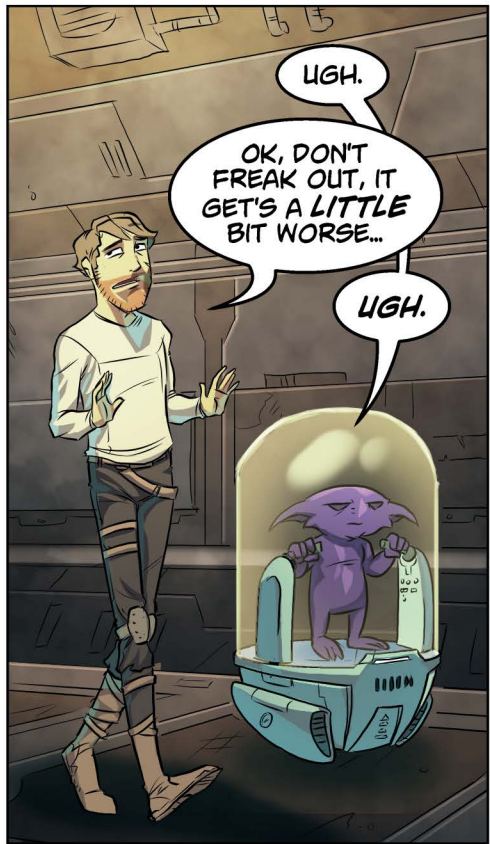




I THOUGHT WE SAID WE WEREN'T GOING TO TAKE ANY OF THEIR CARGO!

I REMEMBER! I SAID IT!

THEY MUST HAVE HAD IT LOADED ONTO THE SHIP ALREADY! I DIDN'T NOTICE IT BECAUSE THE MOXXUANS WERE LOADING THEIR STUFF!



UGH.

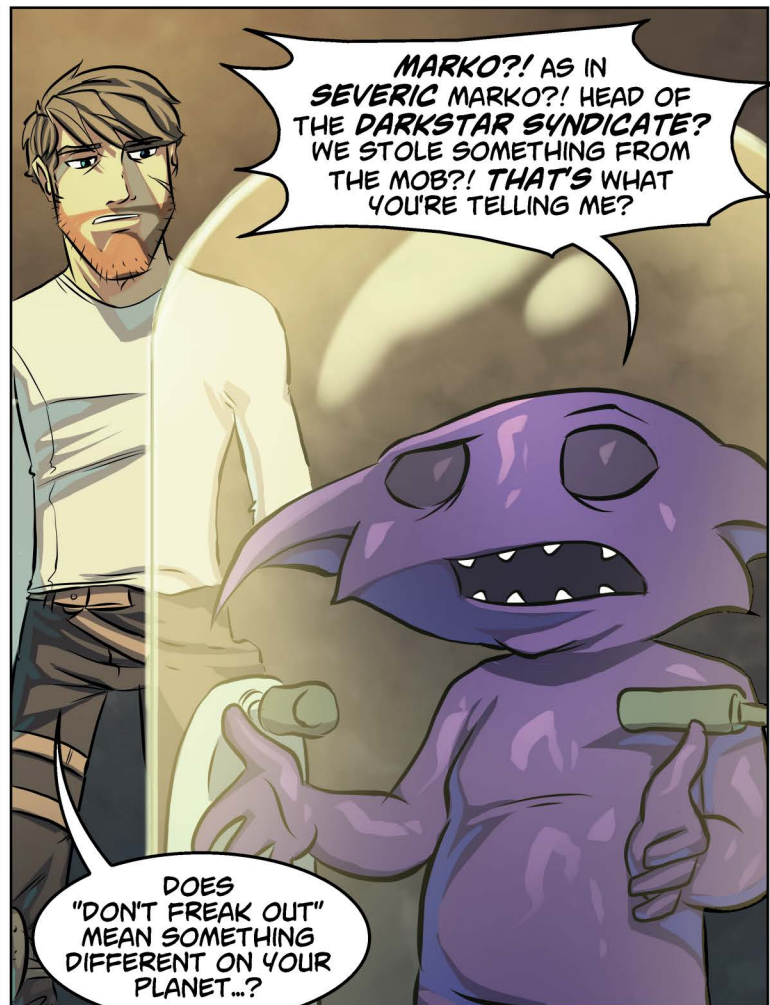
OK, DON'T FREAK OUT, IT GET'S A LITTLE BIT WORSE...

UGH.



IN WHAT WAY?

UM, I KIND OF OVERHEARD CHAUG REFER TO THOSE TWO AS "MARKO'S MEN."



MARKO?! AS IN SEVERIC MARKO?! HEAD OF THE DARKSTAR SYNDICATE? WE STOLE SOMETHING FROM THE MOB?! THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME?

DOES "DON'T FREAK OUT" MEAN SOMETHING DIFFERENT ON YOUR PLANET...?



FIERY
NEBULA,
CORT.

THIS...
THIS IS AN
ODROSSIAN.

WAIT, ARE YOU
SURE? I THOUGHT
THEY WERE
EXTINCT.



FOR OVER
A **HUNDRED YEARS**
NOW. WIPED OUT BY
THE DRANGLAEX
EMPIRE.

THE GENOCIDE
WAS THE CATALYST
FOR THIS COLD
WAR.



WELL, SINCE
IT SEEMS **YOU** WERE
PAYING ATTENTION
IN GAL-HISTORY 101,
TELL ME...

IS IT **NORMAL**
THAT I CAN SEE ALL
OF HER GUTS AND
SQUIGGLY
BITS?

NO... HER BODY
HAS BEEN REPLACED BY
SOME SORT OF... **MEDICAL**
VESSEL... KEEPING HER
ALIVE?

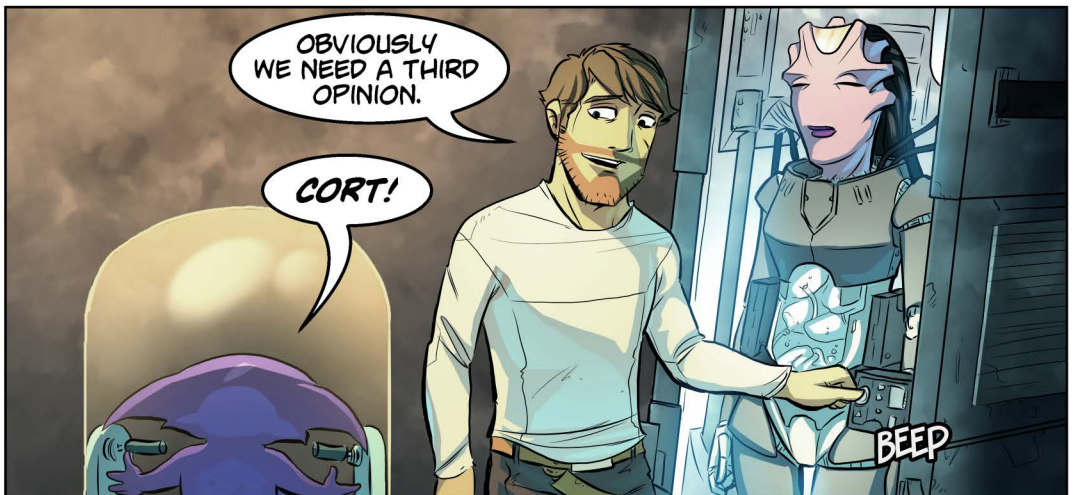
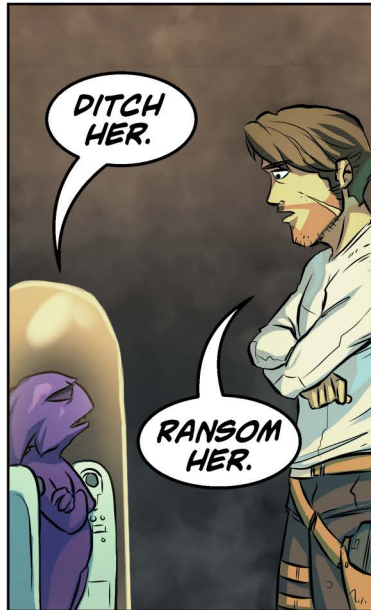
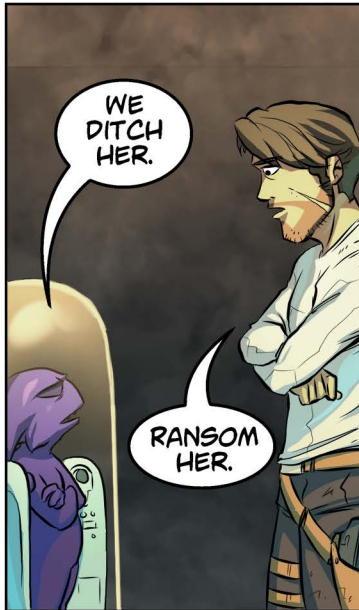
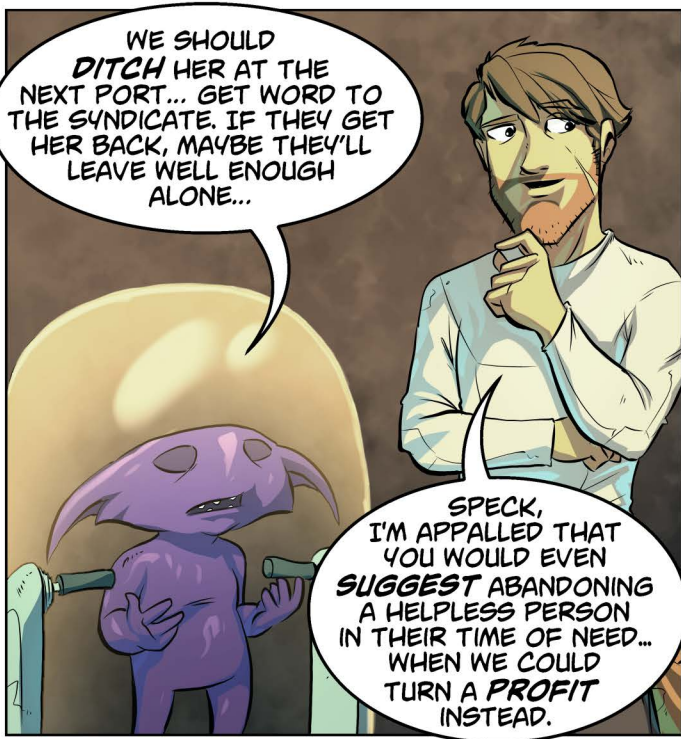
IF
YOU COULD
CALL IT
THAT...

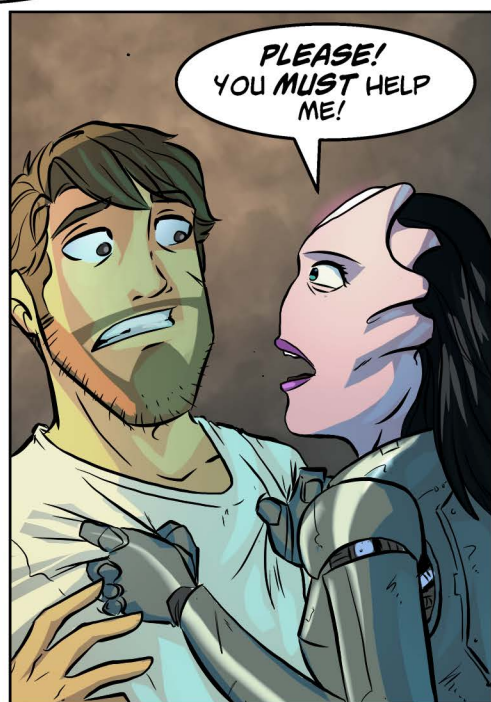


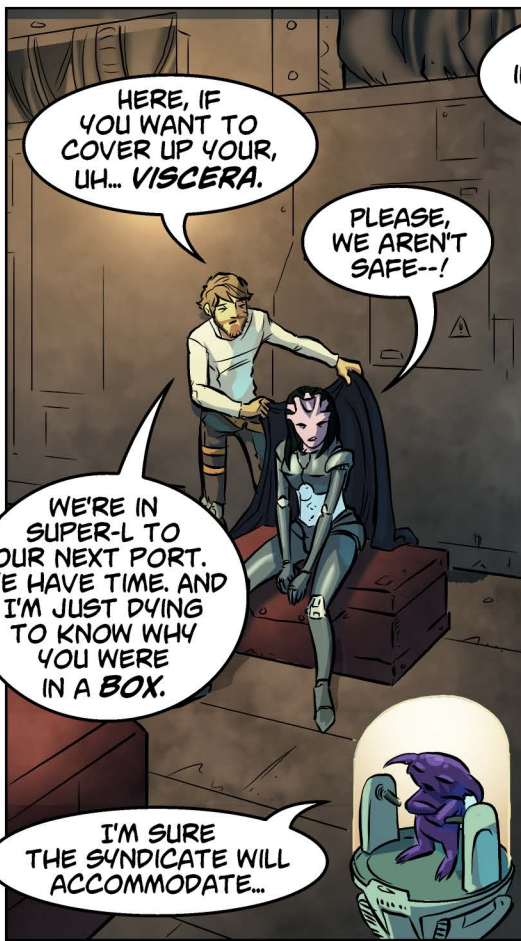
CORT... I DON'T KNOW
WHAT THE STORY HERE IS,
BUT IT'S NOT ONE WE WANT TO
BE A CHAPTER IN.

THIS ISN'T THE
SORT OF THING THE
SYNDICATE JUST **WRITES**
OFF.

THIS IS
THE SORT OF THING
PEOPLE **MURDER**
OTHER PEOPLE OVER.
PAINFULLY.





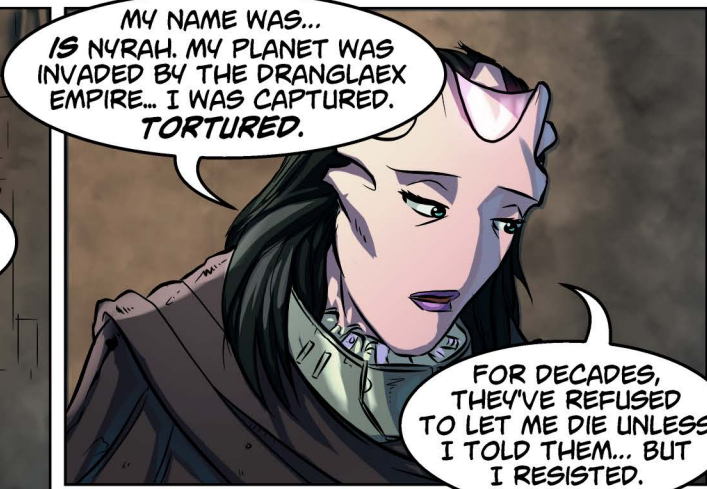


HERE, IF YOU WANT TO COVER UP YOUR, UH... **VISCERA**.

PLEASE, WE AREN'T SAFE--!

WE'RE IN SUPER-L TO OUR NEXT PORT. WE HAVE TIME. AND I'M JUST DYING TO KNOW WHY YOU WERE IN A **BOX**.

I'M SURE THE SYNDICATE WILL ACCOMMODATE...



MY NAME WAS... **IS NYRAH**. MY PLANET WAS INVADED BY THE DRANGLAEX EMPIRE... I WAS CAPTURED. **TORTURED**.

FOR DECADES, THEY'VE REFUSED TO LET ME DIE UNLESS I TOLD THEM... BUT I RESISTED.



EVEN WHEN THEY STARTED CUTTING, I RESISTED.

FOR **DRISTIM**.

WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT THEY COULD TAKE, AND I STILL HAD NOT TOLD THEM, THEY GOT DESPERATE. THEY HIRED THE SYNDICATE, WHO COULD OPERATE OUTSIDE THE DRANGLAEX BORDERS.

NOW THEY DRAG ME TO MEMORY SCRAPERS, PSYCHOMANCERS... ANYONE THEY THINK MIGHT BE ABLE TO **RIP** ITS LOCATION FROM MY MIND.



SOOO... I GUESS THIS IS WHERE I ASK--

OUR **STARCASTER**, HUMAN.

I AM THE **LAST ONE ALIVE** WHO CAN FIND IT.




OKAY, TIME OUT...
A **STARCASTER**? THODSHITE.
THERE ARE **SIX** STARCASTERS IN THE
UNIVERSE, AND IF ONE HAD GONE
MISSING, I'M PRETTY SURE IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN NEWS.

THE UNITED
FEDERATION CONTROLS
TWO, THE DRANGLAEX
HAVE TWO, THE--



THE
DRANGLAEX
LIE.



I WAS
VAHK RA...
ROYAL MILITARY.
DRISTIM, MY BROTHER,
WAS CAPTAIN...
BEARER OF OUR
PEOPLE'S
STARCASTER.



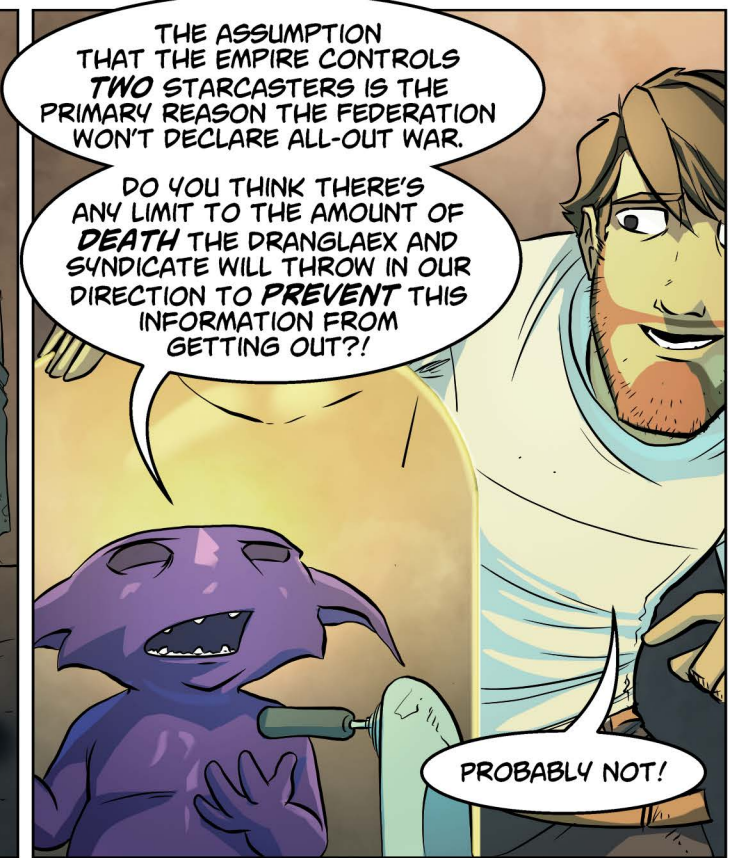
WHEN THE
DRANGLAEX INVADED, OUR
ORDERS WERE TO ENSURE THE
STARCASTER NEVER FELL INTO THE
EMPIRE'S GRASP. AND SO WE FLED,
TO A HIDDEN TEMPLE
OFFWORLD.

DRISTIM WAS TO STAY
AND GUARD THE STARCASTER WHILE
I PETITIONED THE UNITED FEDERATION FOR
HELP... BUT THE DRANGLAEX CAUGHT
ME BEFORE I COULD DO SO.



THEY'VE BEEN
PRETENDING THAT THEY
HAVE OUR STARCASTER
WHILE THEY CONTINUE TO
SEARCH FOR IT.

YOU HAVE
TO GET ME TO THE
FEDERATION. THEY
MUST HEAR MY
STORY.



THANITROSS III...

APPARENTLY VIC AND BIHOK HERE THINK THEY PICKED UP A TAIL SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE THE GILGONOS SECTOR. THE NINE SUNS CLAN, MAYBE... DOESN'T MATTER.

TO THROW OFF THEIR PURSUERS, THEY SOLD THEIR SHIP, BOUGHT A CHEAP FREIGHTER FROM SOME LOCAL THUG.



NOT A TERRIBLE PLAN, IN AND OF ITSELF... THOUGH ITS SUCCESS SOMEWHAT RELIES ON NOT LETTING THE SHIP'S PREVIOUS OWNERS STEAL THEIR PROPERTY BACK.

THEY LOST SOMETHING OF INCREDIBLE VALUE AS A RESULT...

I AM LESS THAN PLEASED.

I HOPE THE FACT THAT I CALLED YOU ILLUSTRATES HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS.

I WANT MY PROPERTY BACK.

CASUALTY RESTRICTIONS?

NONE.