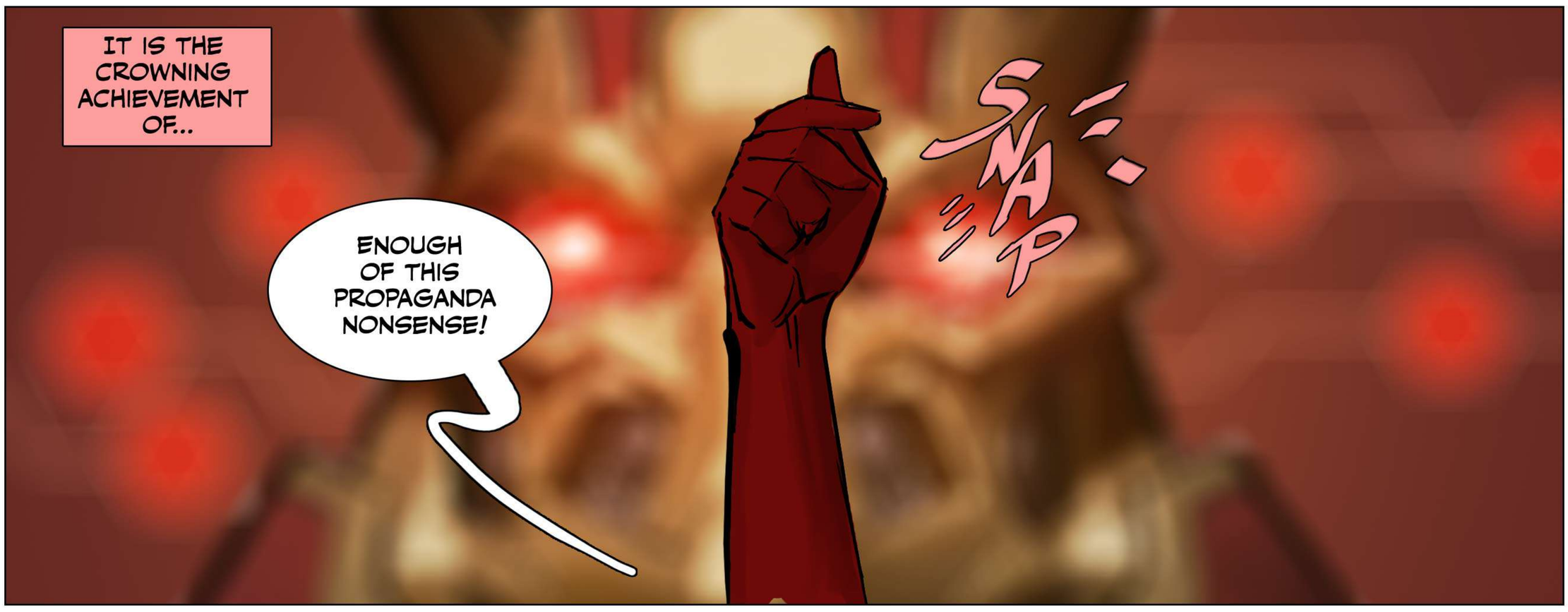
ACHILLES
SHIELDMAIDENS

FOR DECADES WE AT ICHARUS TECH HAVE BEEN THE VANGUARD OF MILITARY DEFENSE DEVELOPMENT TODAY WE TAKE OUR CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT OF ACHILLES MECHAS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

POWERFUL, ELEGANT. A FUSION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND STYLE

DIABLO RED MARK 4


IT IS THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT OF...
ENOUGH OF THIS PROPAGANDA NONSENSE!
SNAP

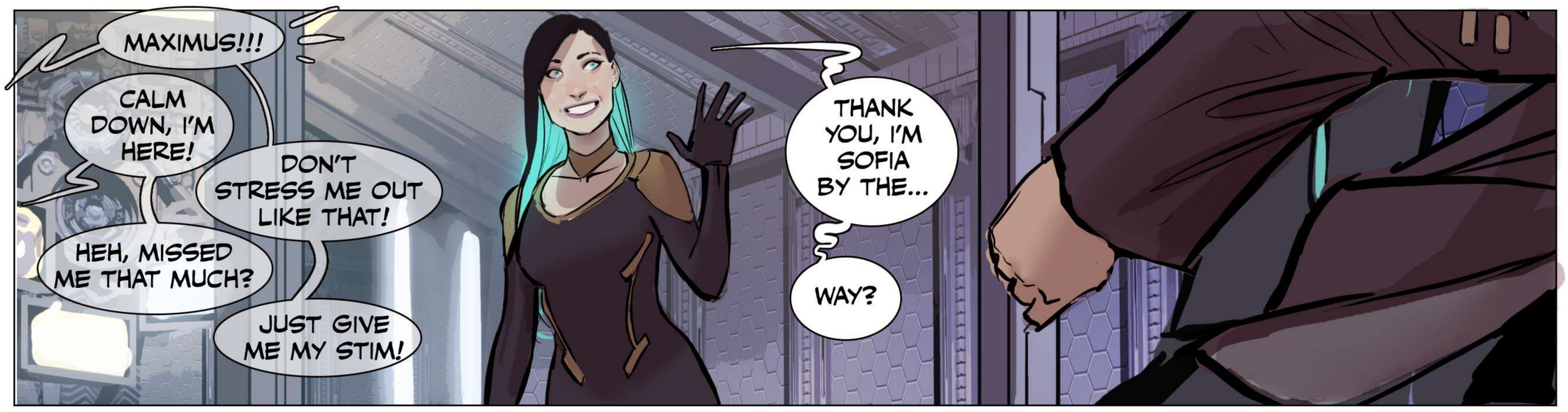
EMILY THE PISTOL DOYLE HERE AND YOU CAN SEE ME AND DIABLO RED ON DECEMBER THIRTYFIRST AT THE GRAND NEO MANHATTAN ARENA. THE SHIELDMAIDENS ARE BACK IN TOWN, AND YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT.
ALSO WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, GET YOURSELF TESTED. YOU TOO MAY BE THE NEXT PILOT SEE YOU AT THE ARENA, AND COME EARLY CAUSE IT'S GONNA BE...

ABSOLUTELY PACKED!!!
EVERYONE, THIS IS NOT A DRILL! I THINK WE JUST FILLED EVERY SINGLE POSSIBLE SEAT AT THE ARENA!
THERE'S LIKE A MILLION PEOPLE THERE!
SO IN EMILY LANGUAGE THAT'S ABOUT HALF?
NO, I'M SERIOUS THE WHOLE THING!
AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN EMILY LANGUAGE, I DON'T EXAGGERATE THIS STUFF!
EMILY, YOU JUST SAID THERE'S A MILLION PEOPLE IN A 300 000 SEATS AREN---
WOW!
ALRIGHT, EVERYONE, WE REALLY ARE COMPLETELY FULL!
STILL NOT A MILLION THO!
FUCK OFF!

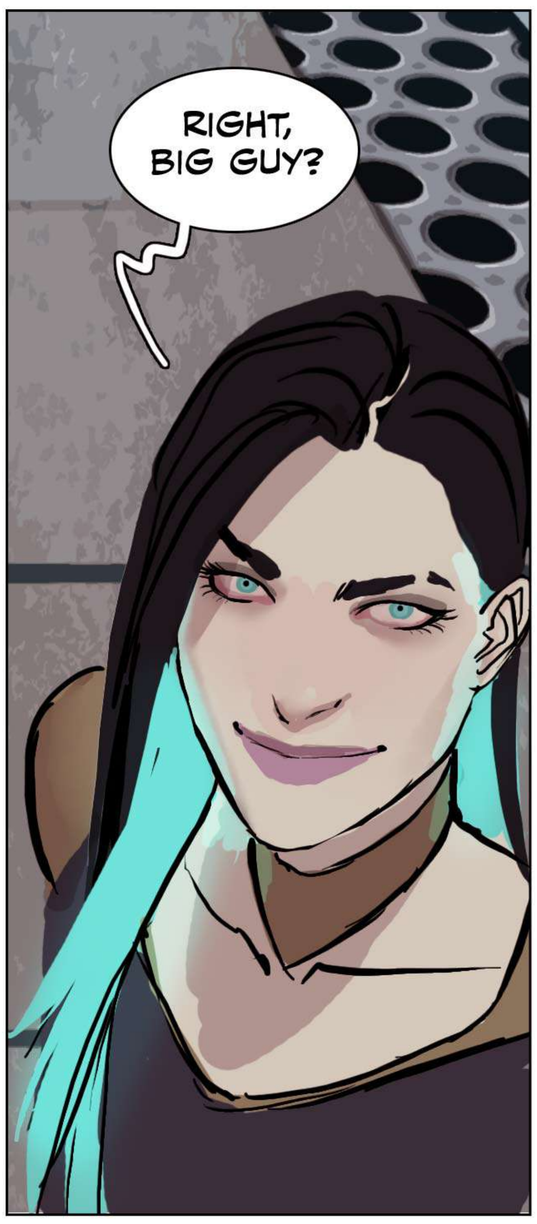
LADIES! FIFTEEN MINUTES!

OH CRAP WHERE'S MAXIMUS? HE'S BRINGING MY NEUROSTIM
HEY, UH CAN YOU HELP ME? THE ZIPPER IS STUCK
USE MINE!
I CAN'T! UH... ALLERGIES!

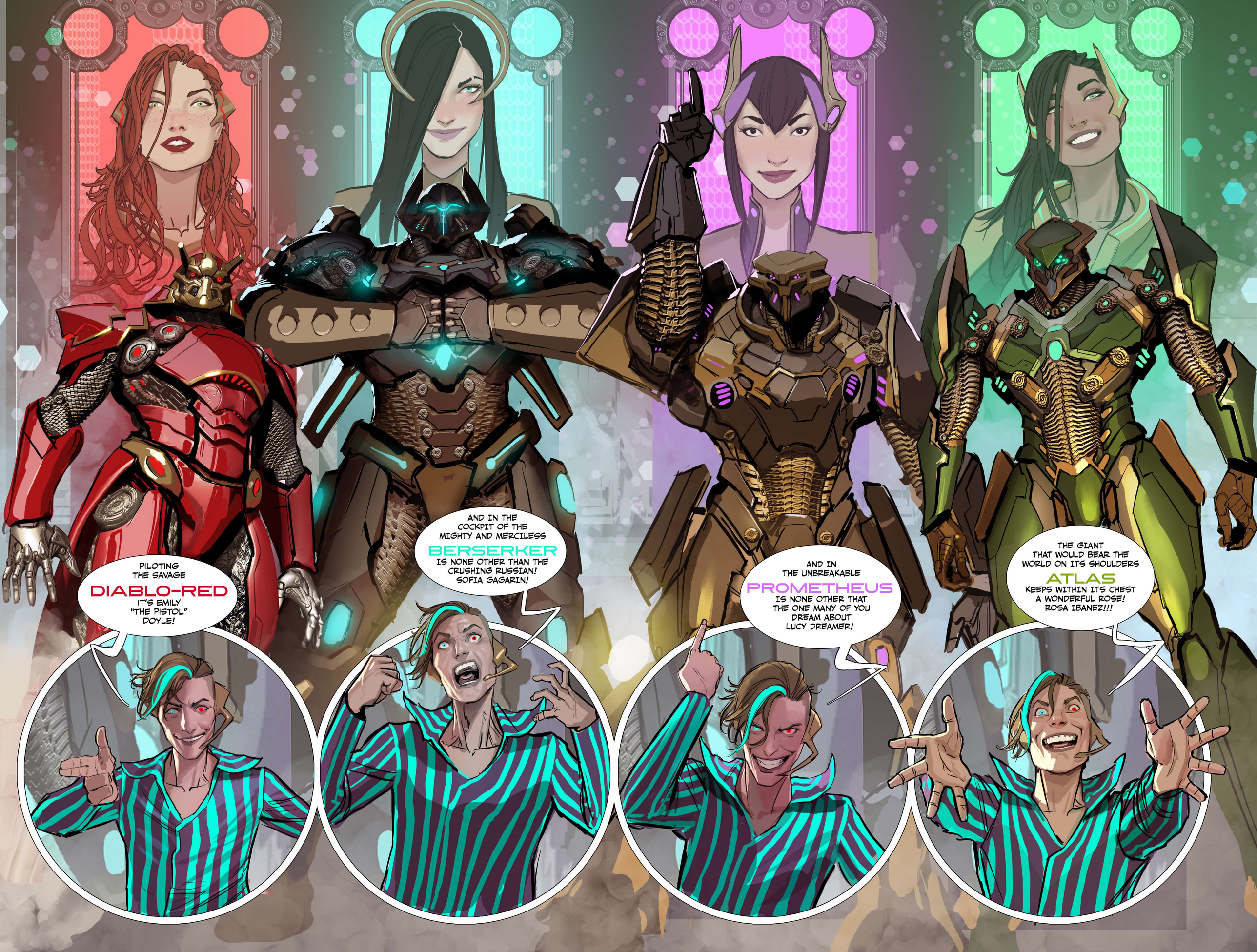
JANE, IT'S THE 24TH CENTURY! WHO'S GOT ALLERGIES ANYMORE?
I DO DAMN IT!
KINDA FUNNY, HUH? WE GOT GIANT MECHAS BUT STILL CAN'T INVENT A RELIABLE ZIPPER!
UH--- YEAH.

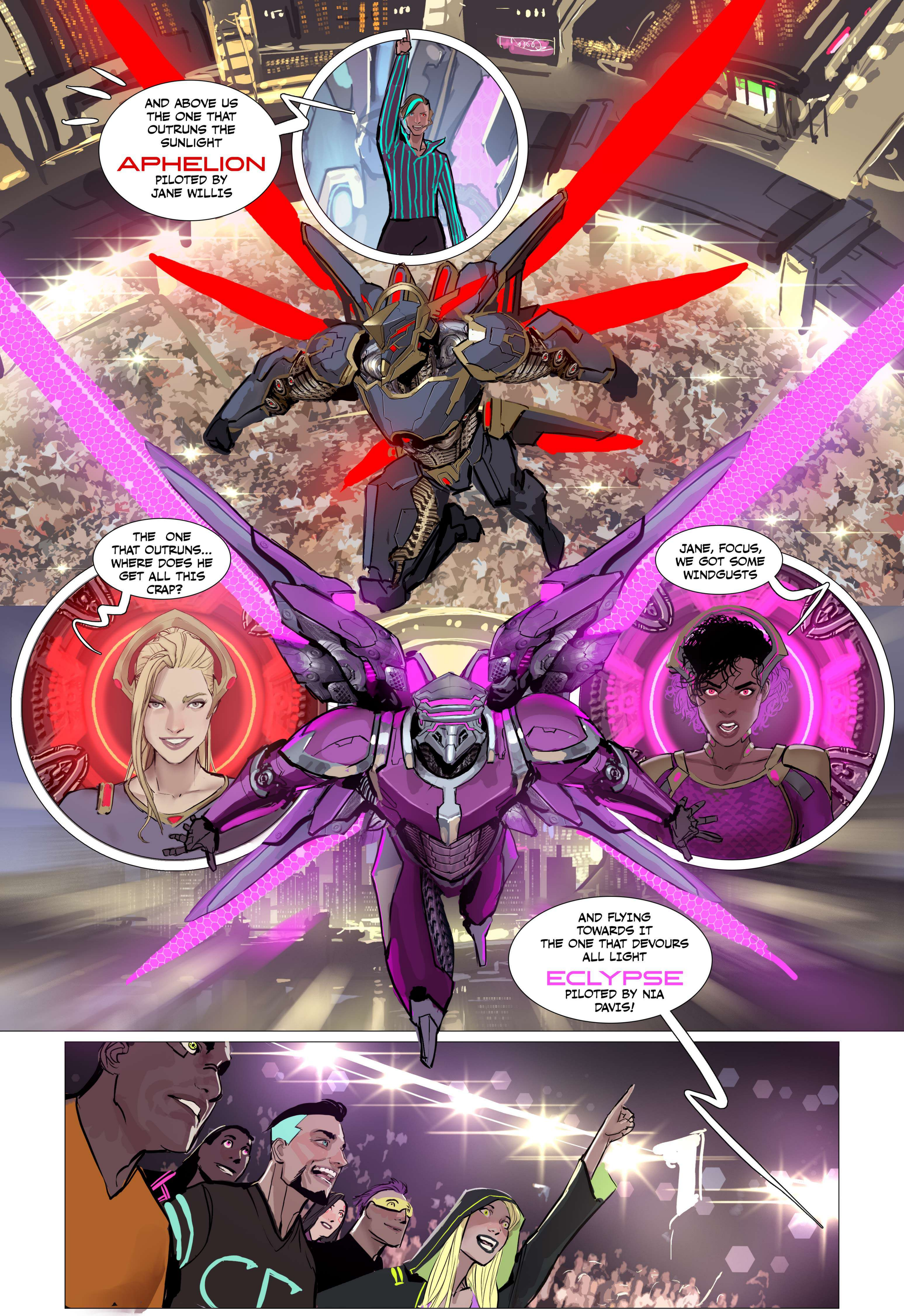

MAXIMUS!!!
CALM DOWN, I'M HERE!
DON'T STRESS ME OUT LIKE THAT!
HEH, MISSED ME THAT MUCH?
JUST GIVE ME MY STIM!
THANK YOU, I'M SOFIA BY THE...
WAY?

SIGH... AH WELL, NOT LIKE WE'RE HERE TO FLIRT...


RIGHT, BIG GUY?

WE ALL KNOW WHY WE'RE HERE TONIGHT!
DIABLO RED- SINGULARITY ANCHOR ENGAGED
BERSERKER- SINGULARITY ANCHOR ENGAGED
PROMETHEUS- LUCID DREAM PROTOCOL ENGAGED
ATLAS- SINGULARITY ANCHOR ENGAGED
ARE WE HERE BECAUSE IT'S THE NEW YEAR
NOOOOOOO!!!
NOOOOOOO!!!
OF COURSE NOT! WE DID ANOTHER CIRCLE AROUND THE SUN, BIG WHOOP!
NO! WE ARE HERE FOR THEM!
AND THEY ARE HERE FOR ALL OF YOU!!!
WOOOOOOO
WOOOOHOOOOOO!!!!
YEAAAH!!!!


PILOTING THE SAVAGE DIABLO-RED IT'S EMILY "THE PISTOL" DOYLE!
AND IN THE COCKPIT OF THE MIGHTY AND MERCILESS BERSERKER IS NONE OTHER THAN THE CRUSHING RUSSIAN! SOFIA GAGARIN!
AND IN THE UNBREAKABLE PROMETHEUS IS NONE OTHER THAT THE ONE MANY OF YOU DREAM ABOUT LUCY DREAMER!
THE GIANT THAT WOULD BEAR THE WORLD ON ITS SHOULDERS ATLAS KEEPS WITHIN ITS CHEST A WONDERFUL ROSE! ROSA IBANEZ!!!


AND ABOVE US THE ONE THAT OUTRUNS THE SUNLIGHT
APHELION
PILOTED BY JANE WILLIS
THE ONE THAT OUTRUNS... WHERE DOES HE GET ALL THIS CRAP?
JANE, FOCUS, WE GOT SOME WINDGUSTS
AND FLYING TOWARDS IT THE ONE THAT DEVOURS ALL LIGHT
ECLYPSE
PILOTED BY NIA DAVIS!

WHOA! YOU'RE NOT KIDDING ABOUT THE GUSTS!
IT'S ALRIGHT I GOT YOU, NOW, LET'S GIVE THEM A SHOW!
YOU GOT IT! MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE THEN?
I MEAN SINCE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE AROUND
NIA, I'M THE BEST ONE AROUND!
A DISTINCTION WITHOUT DIFFERENCE!
HELLYEAH! WAIT!
HAHAHAHAH!

NEO MANHATTAN! EARTH!!! HAPPY 2327!!!
WOOOOOO
YEAAAH!!!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!
AND NOW!
LET'S START THIS YEAR RIGHT, WITH...

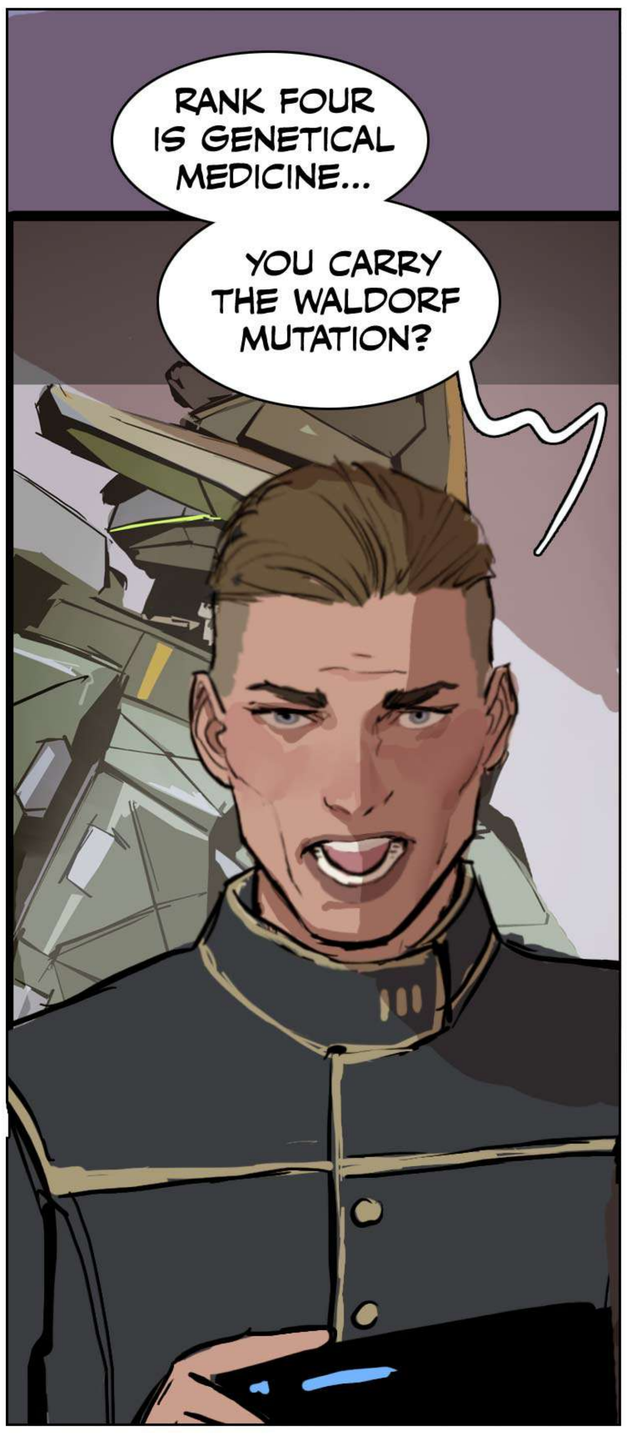
ACHILLES
SHIELDMAIDENS

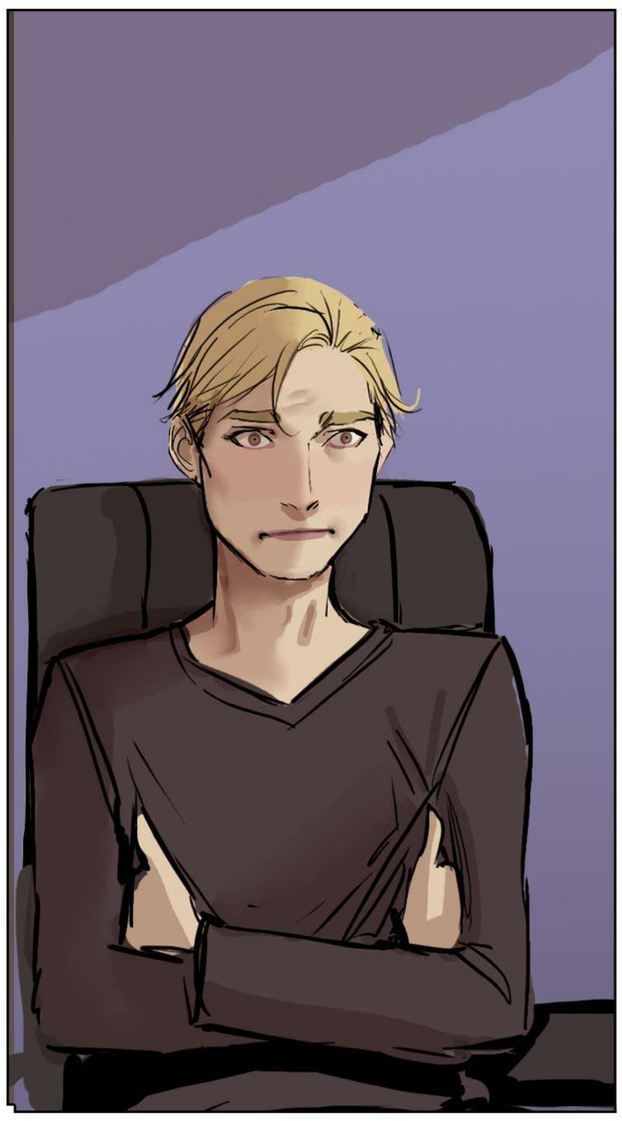
THOSE WERE THE DAYS...
THE GLITZ, THE GLAMOUR...
AND OF COURSE THE BULLSHIT.
IT WAS AFTER ALL A LIE. ALL OF IT. A LIE STARTED SIX YEARS EARLIER AT THE ACADEMY WHEN A BUNCH OF US REGISTERED FOR A STRANGE AND VERY APPEALING OPPORTUNITY.

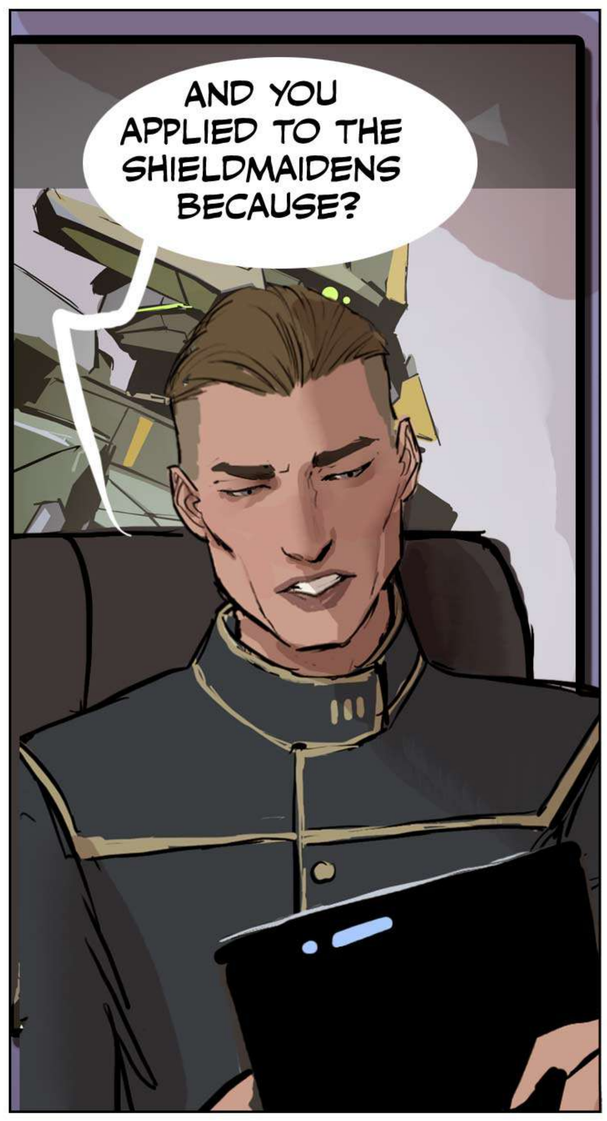
5 YEARS EARLIER

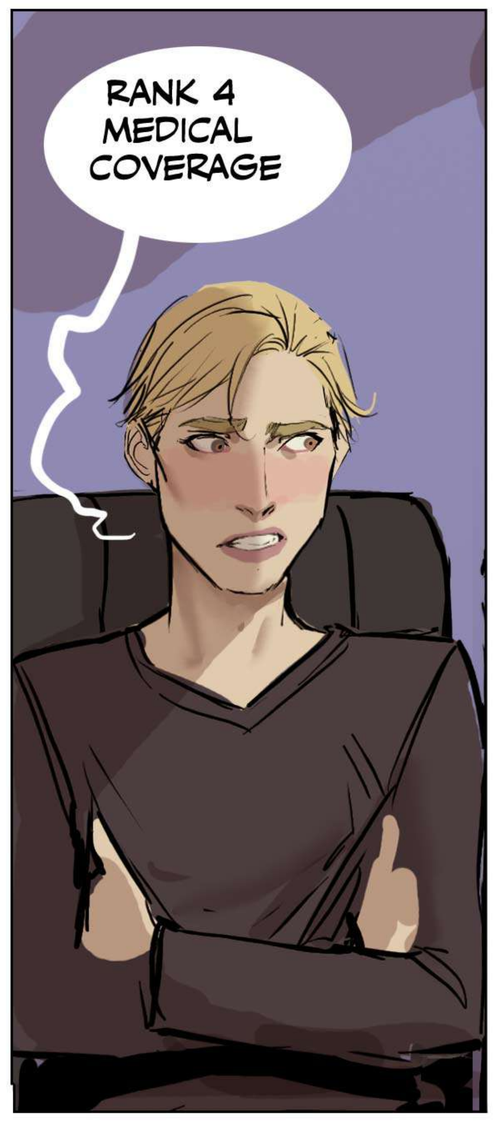
I'M A-STRIKE COLONEL MAX NICHOLS AND I'M HERE TO SELECT THE FUTURE MEMBERS OF THE SHIELDMAIDENS PROJECT

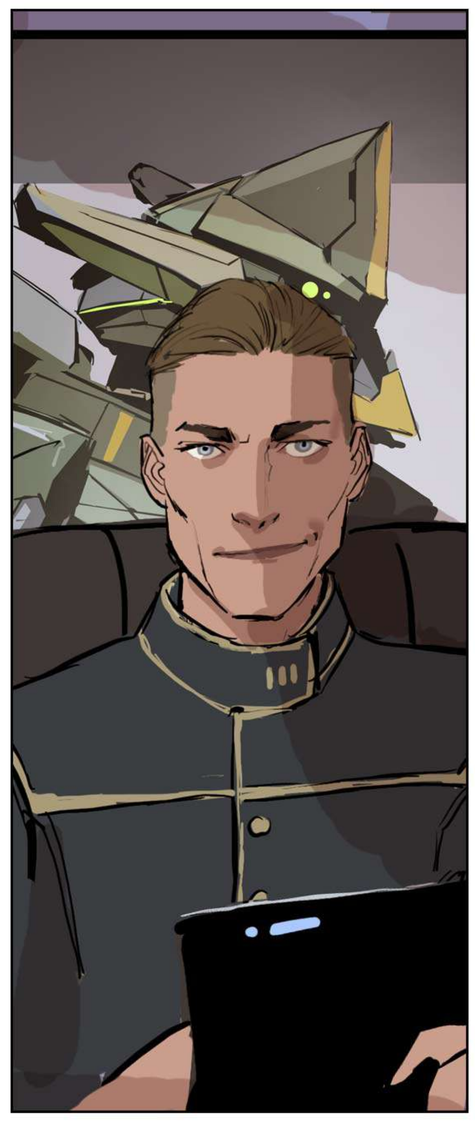
THEY PICKED US UP FROM THE ACADEMY AT 18 UNDER THE INITIATIVE OF ICHARUS CORPORATION AND THIS MILITARY OFFICER MAX NICHOLS

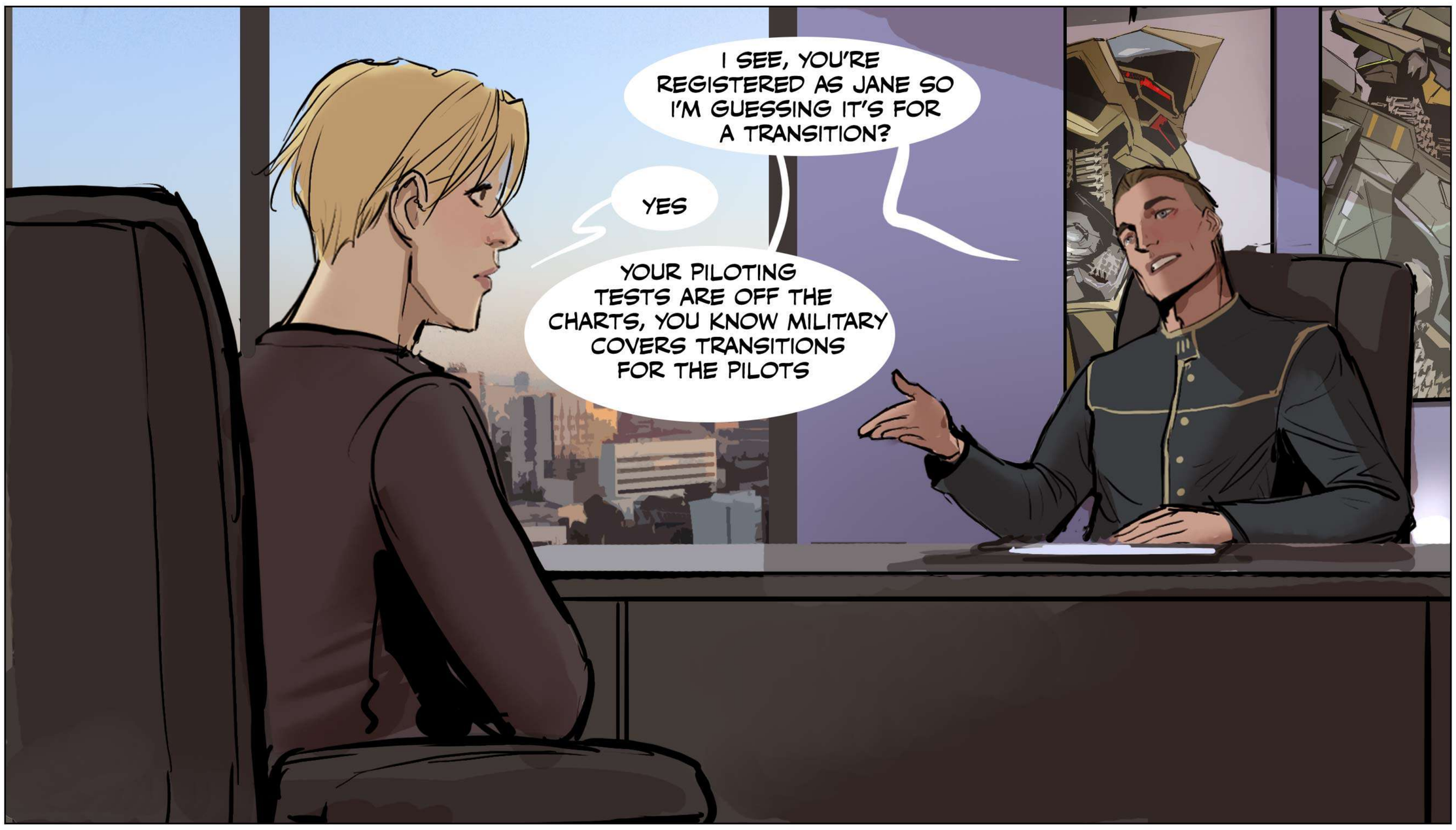





AND YOU APPLIED TO THE SHIELDMAIDENS BECAUSE?


RANK 4 MEDICAL COVERAGE




I SEE, YOU'RE REGISTERED AS JANE SO I'M GUESSING IT'S FOR A TRANSITION?
YES
YOUR PILOTING TESTS ARE OFF THE CHARTS, YOU KNOW MILITARY COVERS TRANSITIONS FOR THE PILOTS

UP TO RANK 3 I... I WANT THE FULL PROCESS.

WELCOME TO THE SHIELDMAIDENS, JANE WILLIS!

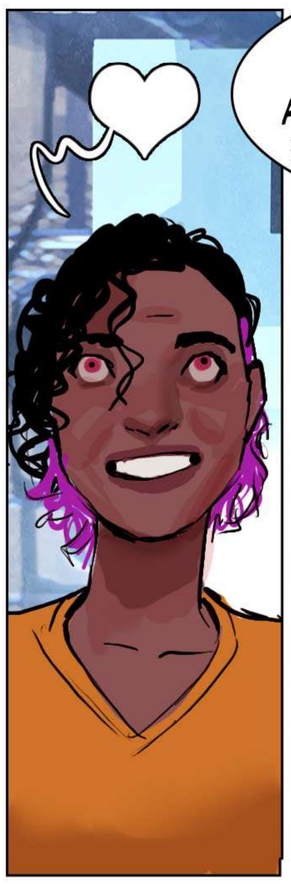
I WAS SENT HERE BY MY AUNT, HINAKO
AH, SHE'S FROM THE LUCID DREAM PROJECT.
SHE IS ONE OF YOURS?
A PARTNER RESEARCH FACILITY EXPERIMENTING IN A DIFFERENT MIND MACHINE INTERFACE.I THINK YOU'LL FINDHER SCORES MORE THAN SATISFYING
I WANT TO DRIVE A PROTOTYPE ACHILLES. MY DAD WAS A TEST PILOT FOR THEM AND I GUESS I CAUGHT THE BUG, BUT SINCE NOW THE TEST DRIVES ARE SIMULATED, THIS IS THE NEXT BEST THING
OH... AND THE MONEY IS GOOD!
SOFIA GAGARINA
GAGARIN.
I KNOW A LITTLE BIT OF OLD RUSSIAN, ISN'T THAT THE MALE FORM OF THE LAST NAME?
LONG STORY. PERSONAL STORY. I GO BY GAGARIN NOW.
AND YOU WANT TO BECOME A SHIELDMAIDEN BECAUSE...
REVENGE!
SO, WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?
HEH, WELL IN SHORT... WE'RE GONNA TRY AND SAVE THE WORLD

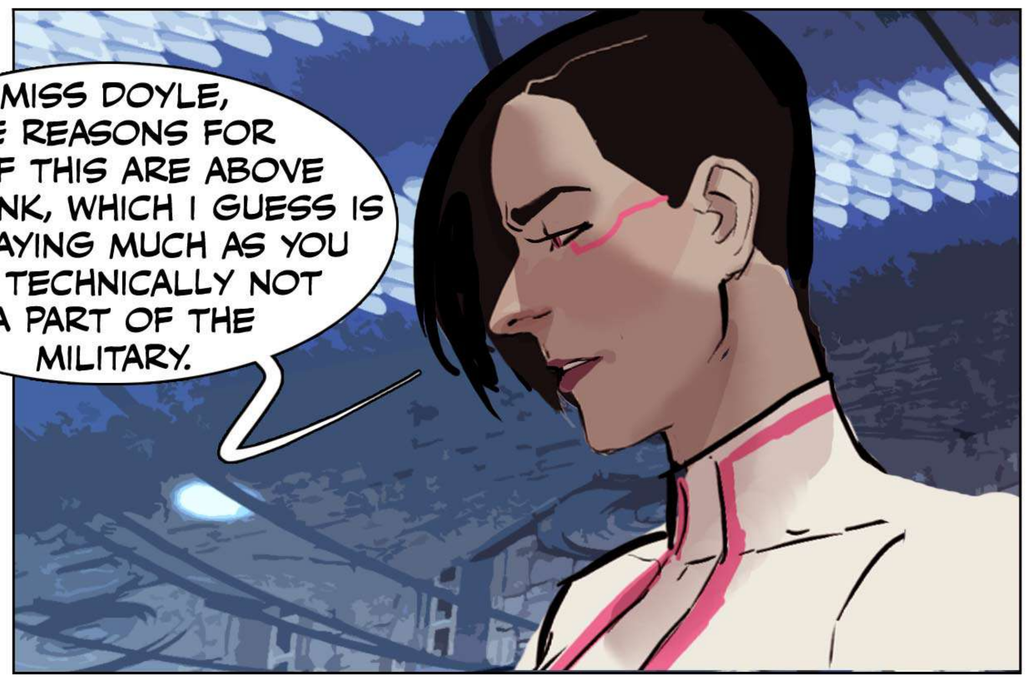
REGARDLESS OF WHAT MAXIMUS MIGHT HAVE TOLD YOU, YOU ARE MOST CERTAINLY NOT HERE TO SAVE THE WORLD!

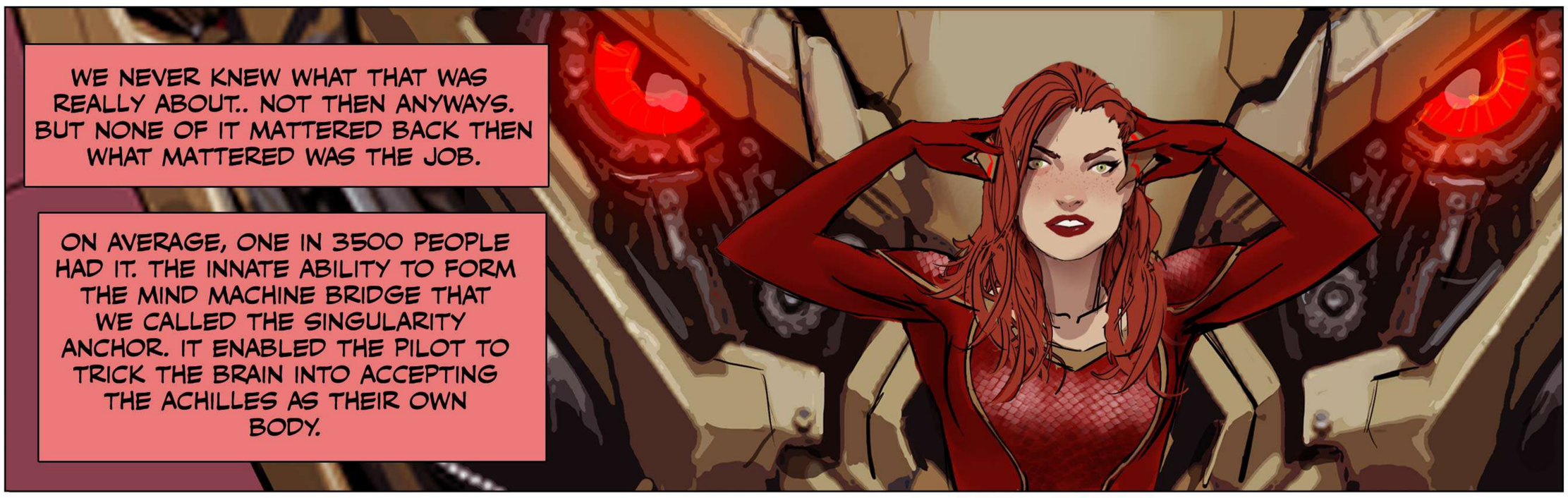
MY NAME IS IRINA WINTERS I WILL BE YOUR SUPERVISOR, AND YOU...

YOU ARE HERE FOR THIS!

EARTH DEFENSE FORCE COMBAT MECHA, ACHILLES! UNTIL NOW YOU HAVE ONLY EVER ENGAGED WITH ITS INTERFACE TRAINING TO STRENGTHEN YOUR MIND-MACHINE BOND







THEN AGAIN... ON THAT DAY THE WHOLE WORLD YOULD KNOW WHY.

AFTER ALL. THAT WAS THE DAY WE LOST OUR PLANET TO THEM

IT WAS KNOWN AS THE *UR* DAY

ANY ATTEMPTS OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE ALIEN VESSEL HAS BEEN IGNORED AND AT THIS POINT IN TIME WE HAVE ELEVATED OUR DEFENSE FORCES TO THE LELVEL OF FULL COMBAT READINESS AND ARE SET TO DEPLOY.

THIS IS A PREEMPTIVE DEFENSE MEASURE ONLY FOR NOW. WE WILL NOT OPEN FIRE OR DIRECTLY ENGAGE THE VISITORS BUT IT IS OUR FULL INTENTION TO DEMONSTRATE A VERY SIMPLE FACT

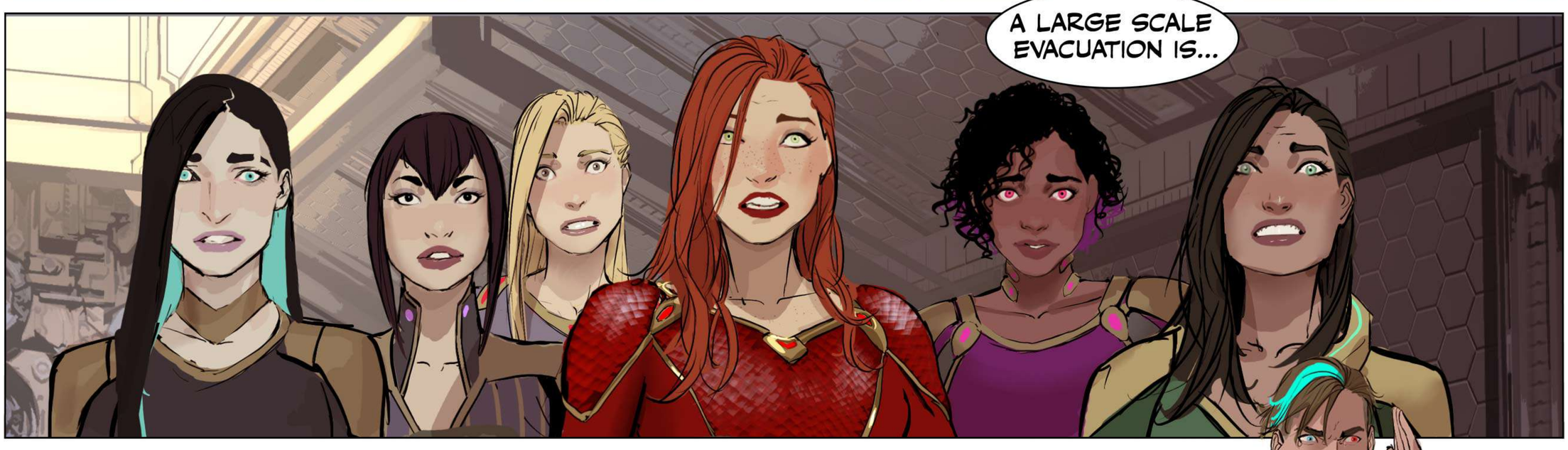
EARTH IS DEFENDED!

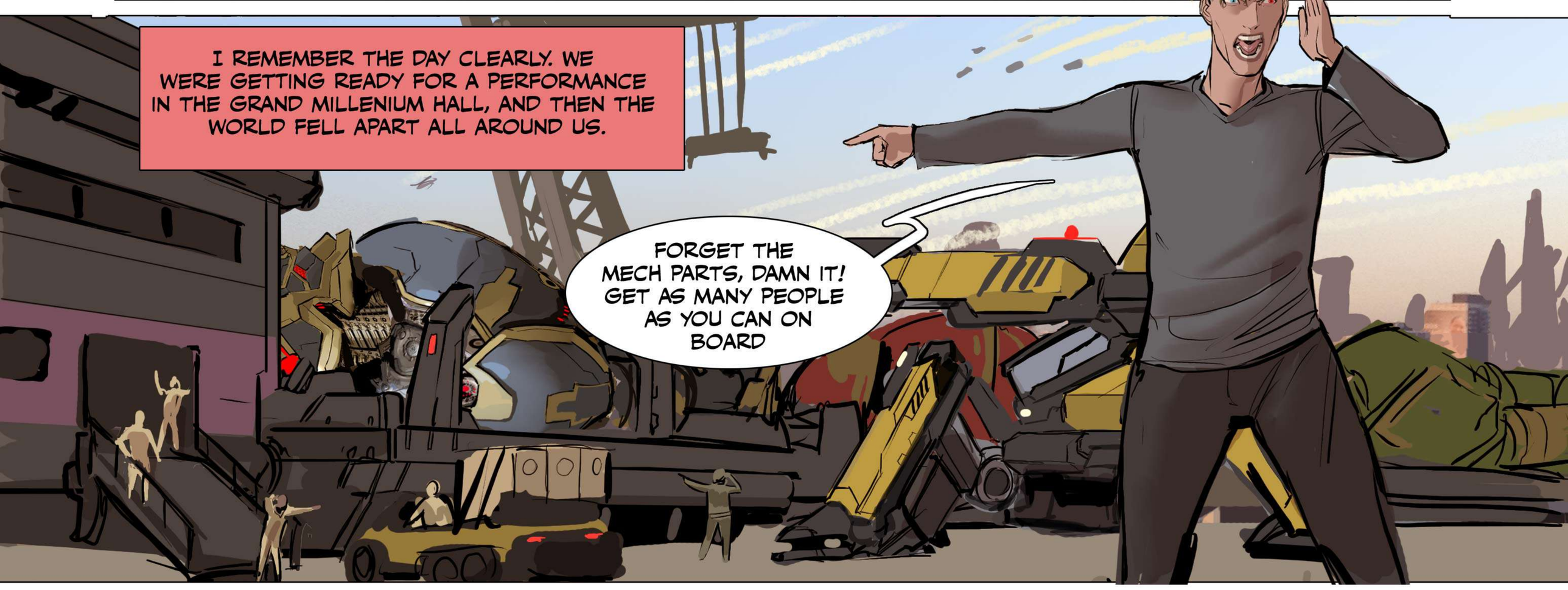
DEFENDED BY THE BRAVE PEOPLE OF OUR PLANETARY DEFENSE FORCES...

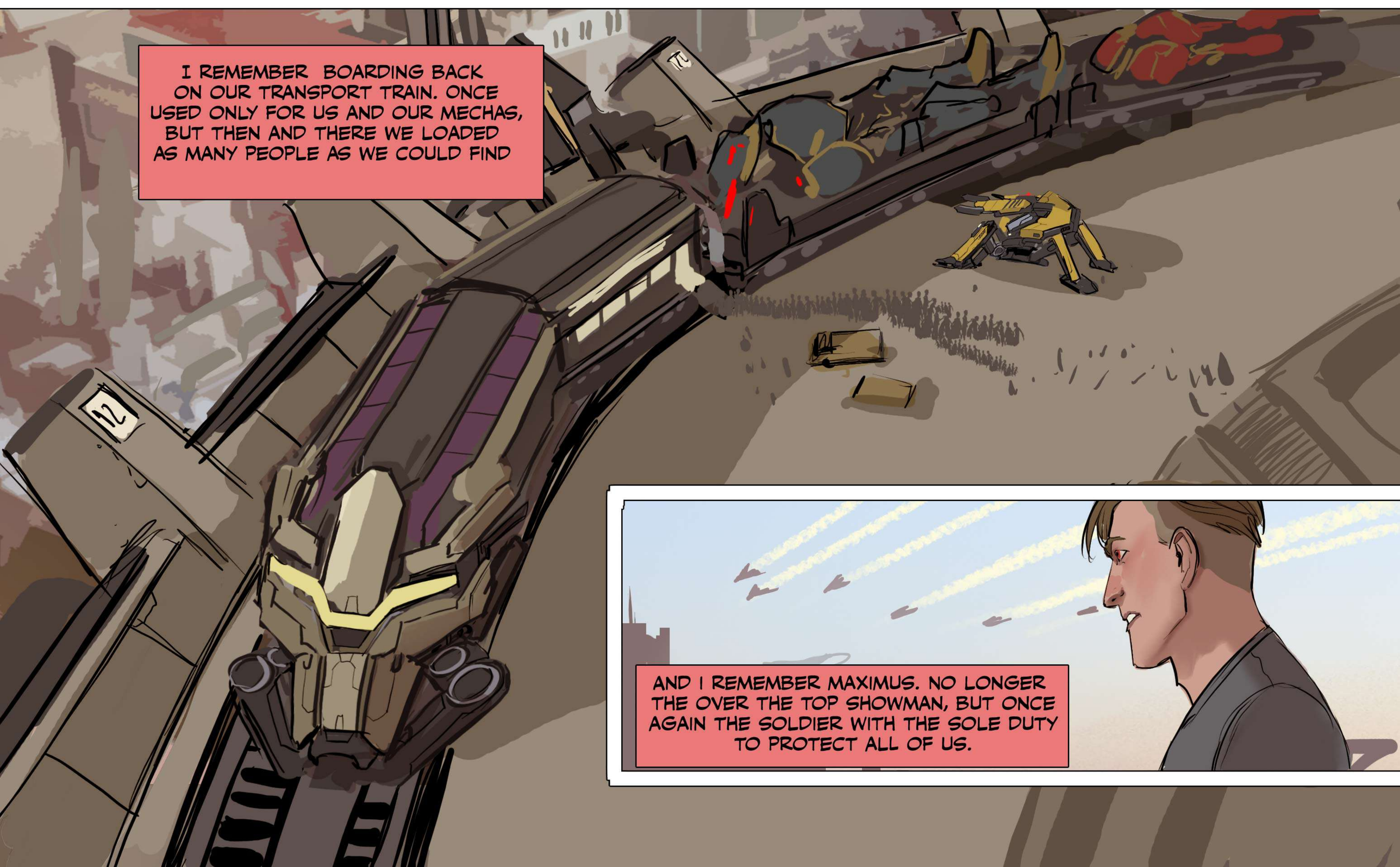
AND DEFENDED BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS THAT ARE THE ACHILLES MECHAS
TODAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE IT WAS FORMED AND WITH THE AUTHORITY OF THE GLOBAL DEFENSE INITIATIVE

WE SEND FORWARD THE GREAT PHALANX
IT WAS THE STRANGEST THING...
FOR YEARS THERE WERE MANY WHO QUESTIONED THE SANITY OF INVESTING SO INTENSELY IN THIS GLOBAL DEFENSE SYSTEM, THE ACHILLES PROGRAM... AND YET, ON THAT DAY, WHEN THE ENEMY ARRIVED WE REALIZED...

IT WASN'T ENOUGH.
WITH GREAT SORROW, I MUST INFORM YOU THAT THE PHALANX WAS BROKEN. THE VISITORS ARE HOSTILE AND WITH THAT IN MIND , WE MUST ENSURE THE SAFETY OF AS MANY OF YOU AS POSSIBLE


A LARGE SCALE EVACUATION IS...


I REMEMBER THE DAY CLEARLY. WE WERE GETTING READY FOR A PERFORMANCE IN THE GRAND MILLENIUM HALL, AND THEN THE WORLD FELL APART ALL AROUND US.
FORGET THE MECH PARTS, DAMN IT! GET AS MANY PEOPLE AS YOU CAN ON BOARD


I REMEMBER BOARDING BACK ON OUR TRANSPORT TRAIN. ONCE USED ONLY FOR US AND OUR MECHAS, BUT THEN AND THERE WE LOADED AS MANY PEOPLE AS WE COULD FIND
12
AND I REMEMBER MAXIMUS. NO LONGER THE OVER THE TOP SHOWMAN, BUT ONCE AGAIN THE SOLDIER WITH THE SOLE DUTY TO PROTECT ALL OF US.

EVERYBODY OKAY?

MAX, WHAT HAPPENNED? THEYRE EXAGGERATING, RIGHT?

YEAH, HOW THE HELL WERE OUR FORCES TAKEN OUT SO FAST?

YEAH, COME ON, YOU'RE MILITARY WHAT HAPPENED?

I DON'T KNOW...

WE JUST LOST THE ENTIRE PHALANX IN A SINGLE MOMENT....

IT WASN'T EVEN A FUCKING BATTLE

THEY... ARGH... NO!

NO TIME FOR THIS!

BUCKLE DOWN, NOW. WE'RE HEADING TO THE NEW MANHATTAN AEGIS ZONE, HOPEFULLY AT LEAST THAT WILL HOLD

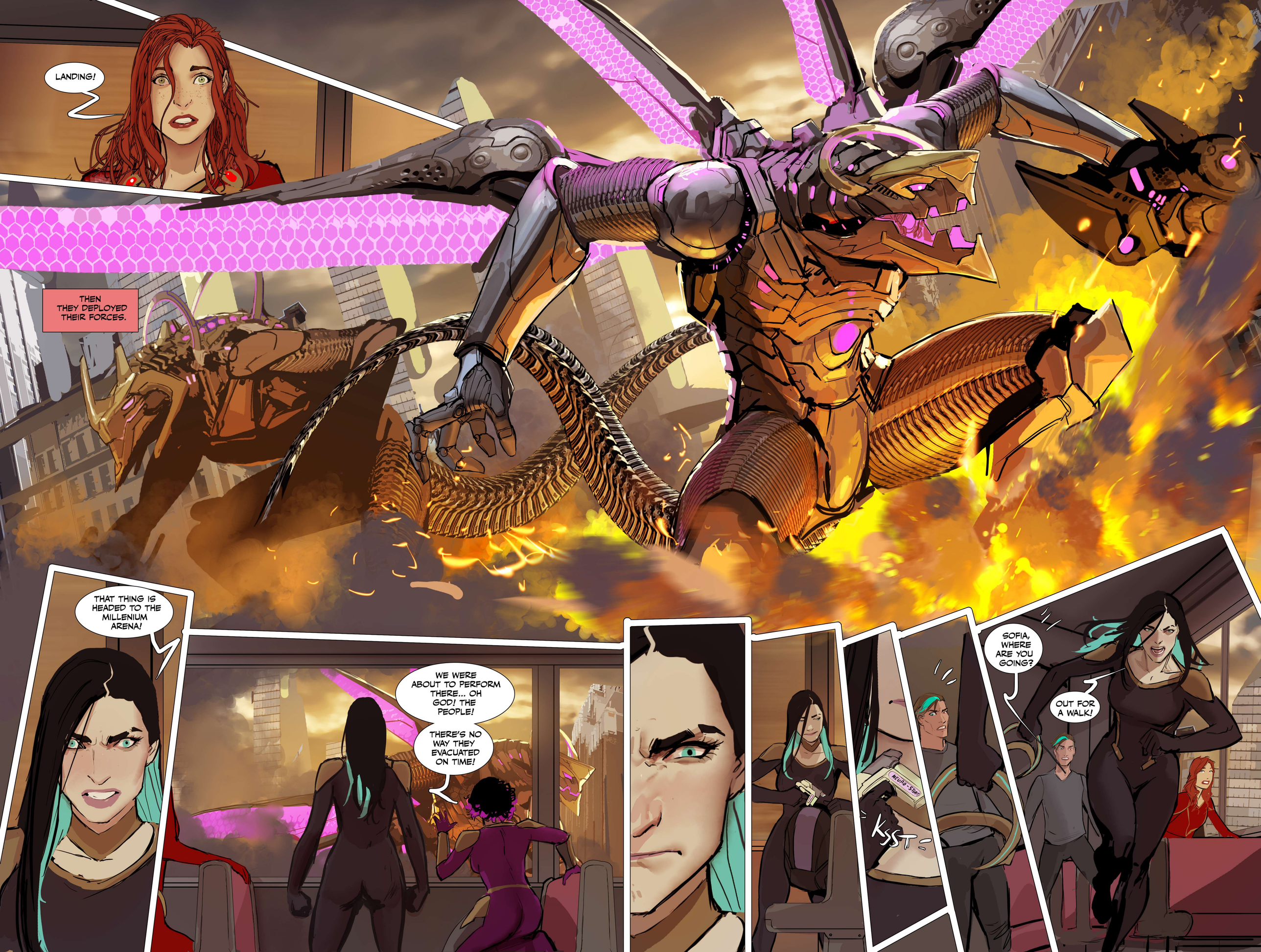
NEVER IN MY LIFE BEFORE HAD I TRULY FELT THE COLD SHUDDER OF HOPELESNESS AS I DID THAT DAY. AS WE ALL DID WHEN WE STARED UP AT OUR ENEMY AND REALIZED OUR ONE HOPE IS TO RUN TO HIDE, TO SHIELD UP...

BUT THEN IT GOT WORSE.

HEY, LOOK OVER THERE!

SOMETHING IS FALLING FROM THAT SHIP!

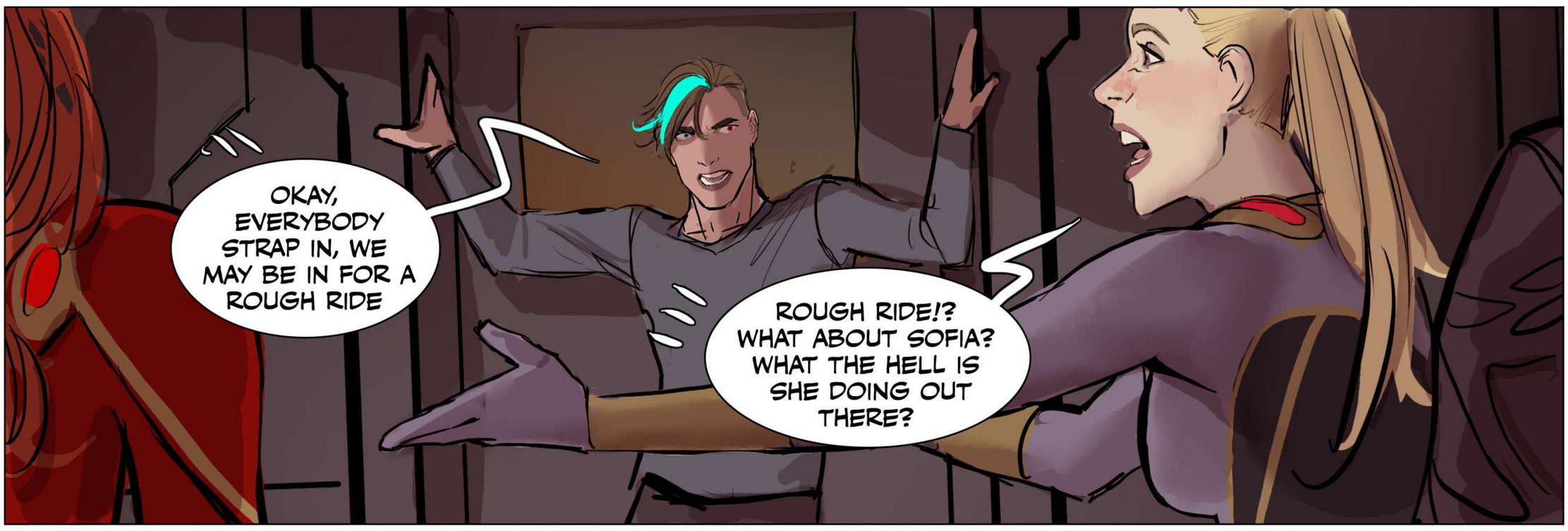
NO, NOT FALLING...

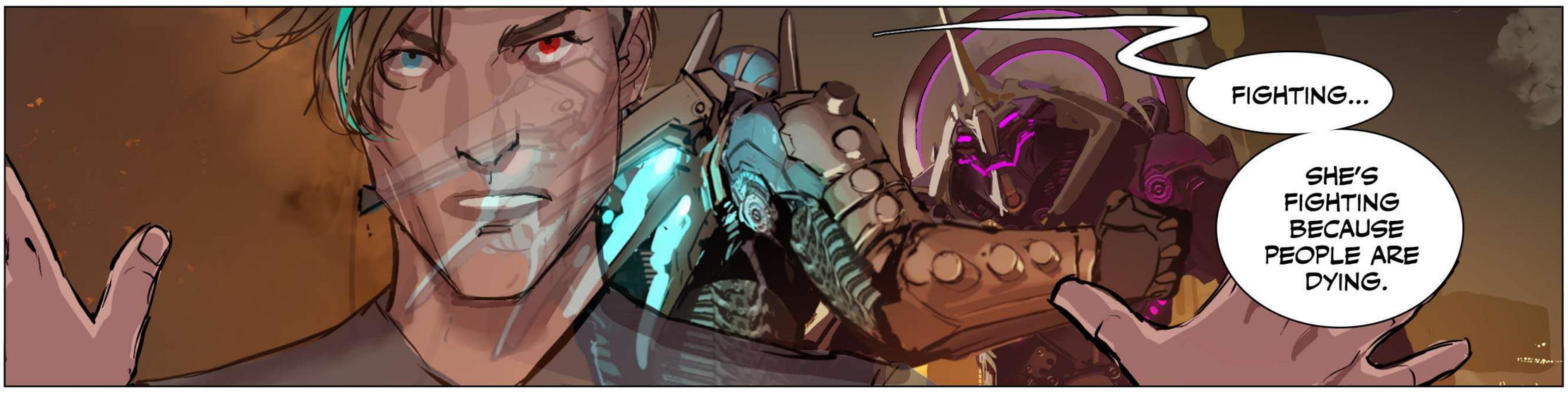

LANDING!
THEN THEY DEPLOYED THEIR FORCES.
THAT THING IS HEADED TO THE MILLENIUM ARENA!
WE WERE ABOUT TO PERFORM THERE... OH GOD! THE PEOPLE!
THERE'S NO WAY THEY EVACUATED ON TIME!
NEURO-STEM
KSST
SOFIA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
OUT FOR A WALK!

GAGARIN! STOP!
THOSE THINGS TOOK OUT OUR ENTIRE FULLY WEAPONIZED PHALANX! YOUR BERSERKER ISN'T EVEN ARMED!
YOU'LL DIE!
PEOPLE ARE ALREADY DYING, MAX! AT LEAST I GOT A MECHA! I'LL TAKE THAT CHANCE!
DROP THAT NEURALINK, GAGARIN,
THAT'S AN ORDER!
YEAH, FUNNY THING ABOUT THAT, TECHNICALLY, WE'RE NOT MILITARY, SO I DON'T HAVE TO TAKE THAT ORDER
SOFIA!!!
BERSERKER-SINGULARITY ANCHOR ENGAGED

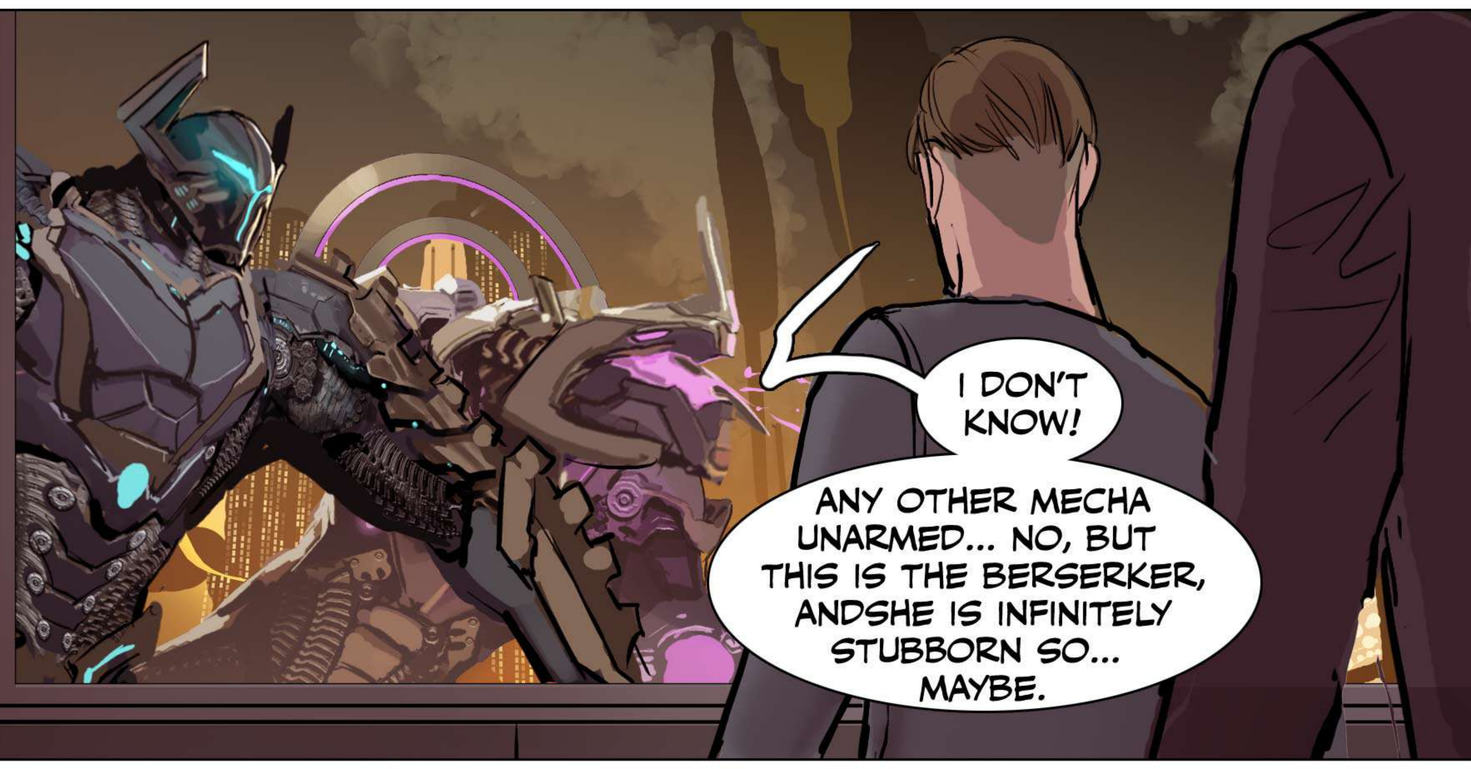
I'M SORRY, MAX!
YOU ALWAYS HAD OUR BACKS, BUT NOW IT'S MY TURN
SOFIA, PLEASE!!!
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING!
AND TAKE CARE OF THEM!

HEY!
THAT'S MY CONCERT HALL THERE...
SKREE
AND I DON'T THINK YOU ASSHOLES HAVE A TICKET!
NOW, USUALLY I JUST SING AND DANCE!
THOOP
BUT TODAY I'M THE FUCKING BOUNCER!
CLANNG


OKAY, EVERYBODY STRAP IN, WE MAY BE IN FOR A ROUGH RIDE
ROUGH RIDE!? WHAT ABOUT SOFIA? WHAT THE HELL IS SHE DOING OUT THERE?


FIGHTING...
SHE'S FIGHTING BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE DYING.

CAN SHE DO IT?


I DON'T KNOW!
ANY OTHER MECHA UNARMED... NO, BUT THIS IS THE BERSERKER, ANDSHE IS INFINITELY STUBBORN SO... MAYBE.

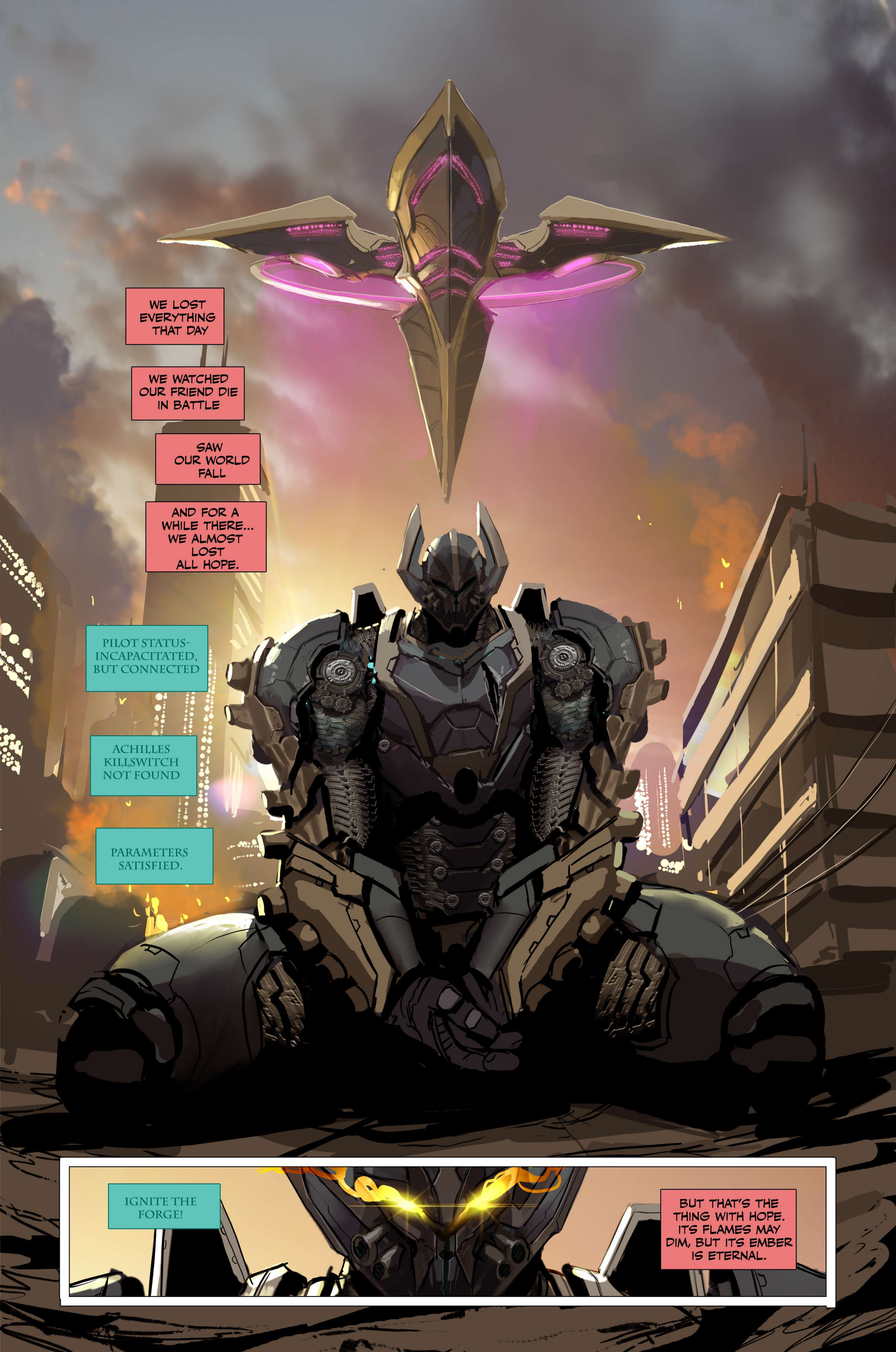
FUCK MAYBE!
THERE'S A FULLY ARMED SECURITY HARPY IN THE CARGO CART, I'M GOING OUT THERE SHE NEEDS SUPPORT!
VITALIS, STOP!

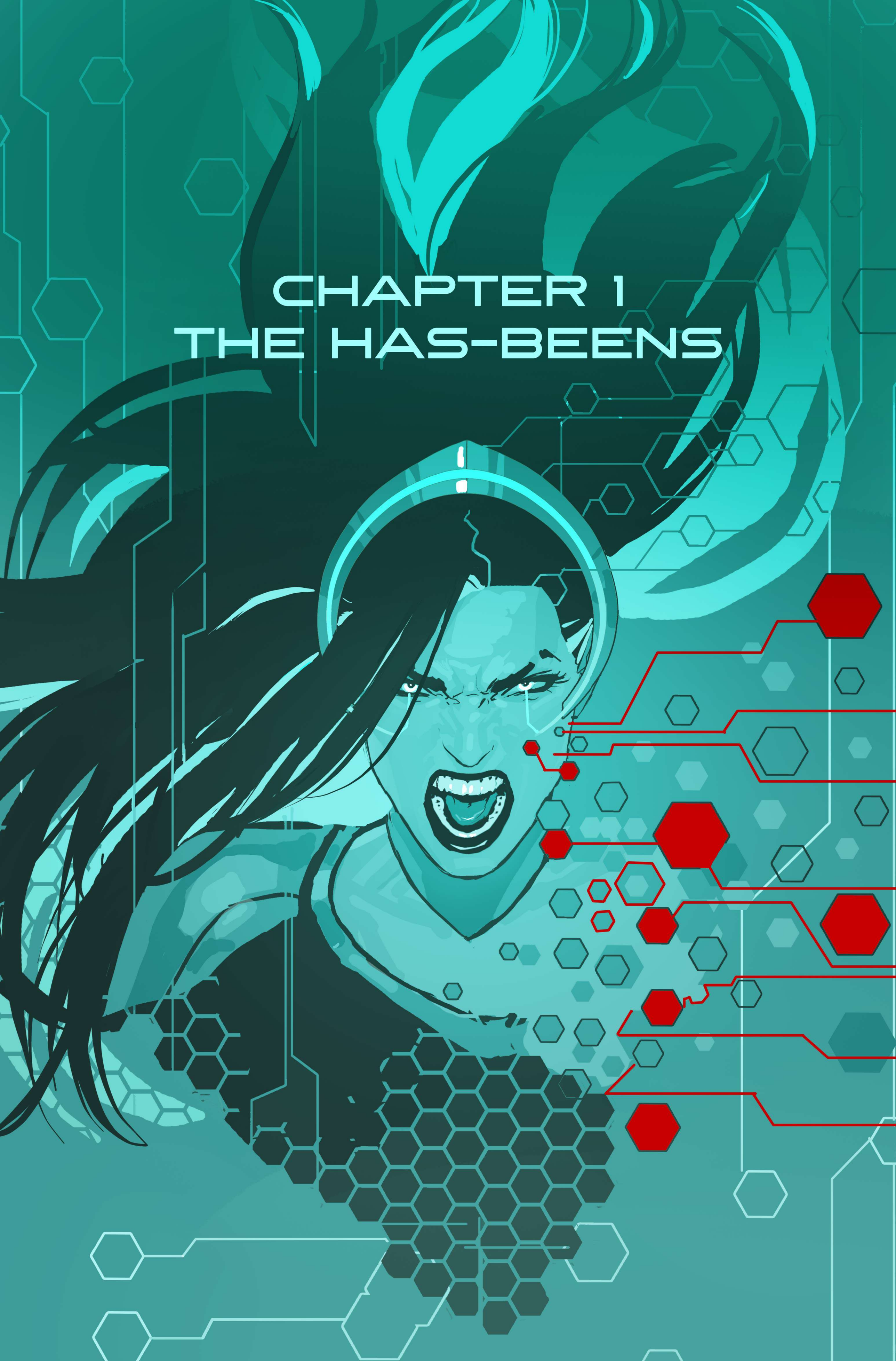
COURT MARSHALL ME!
NO, DAMN IT! TAKE MY MANTICORE! IT'S FASTER AND BETTER ARMED!!
OH!

OH NO! THE OTHER MECH!!!
BEHIND...

STRANGELY ENOUGH THO I REMEMBER THE IT WITH ABSOLUTE CLARITY, I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT ANY OF US SCREAMED AT THAT MOMENT
I REMEMBER IT AS A MOMENT OF SCREAMING SILENCE
OF PROFOUND SHOCK
SORROW
AND ENDLESS GUILT...
WE WERE USELESS COWARDS WATCHING THE BEST OF US DIE
AND IN A WAY... WE FELT A PART OF OURSELVES DIE THAT DAY...

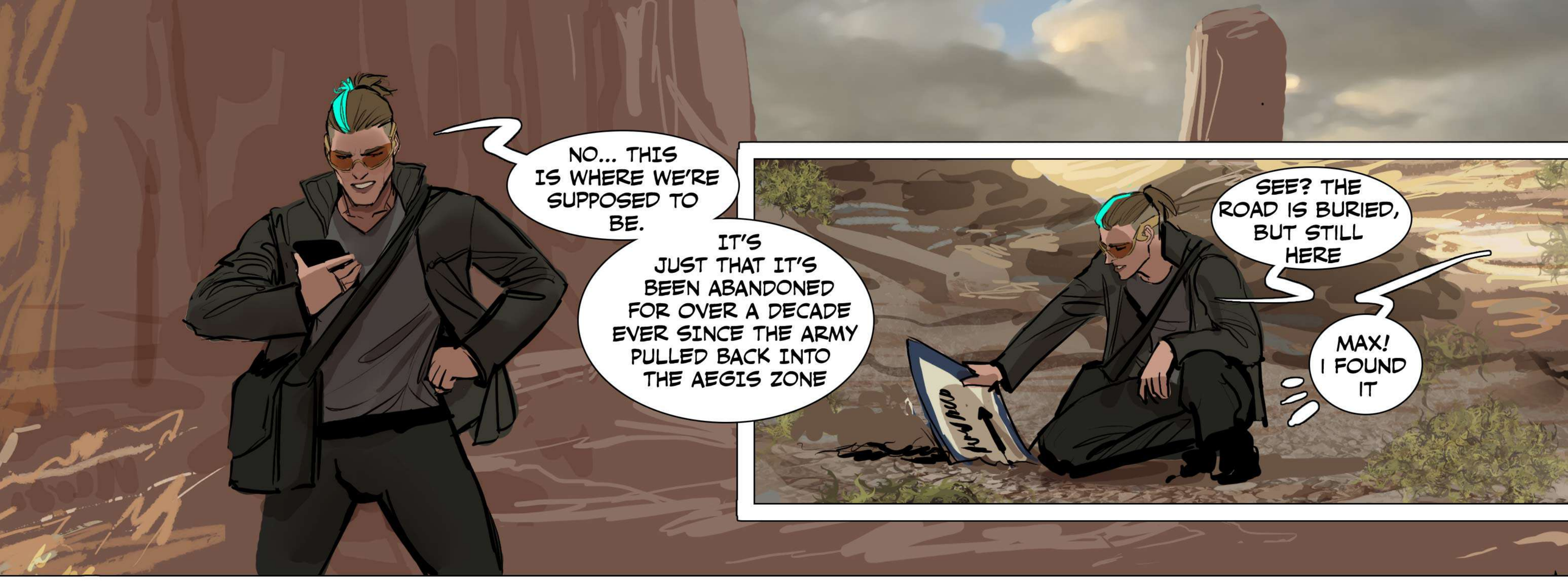
BUT UNLIKE US, SOFIA WASN'TGOING DOWN WITHOUT A FIGHT.
BERSERKER 003 CORE COMPROMISED
INITIATING ACHILLES KILLSWITCH PROTOCOL
PILOT EJECTION IN 5--4--
OVERRIDE AUTHORIZATION SOFIA GAGARIN 443
OVERRIDE ACCEPTED. DO YOU WISH TO ACTIVATE THE LAST STAND PROTOCOL?
YES, DAMN IT! NOW LET ME GET THIS FUCKER OFF OF MY BACK!
APPLYING DERMASYNTH TO STEM BLEEDING
BLOODLOSS CRITICAL
INCINERATING ARTERIAL EXIT
BLOODLOSS CRITTICAL
SINGULARITY THREAD BREAKING
SOFIAAAAA!!!
ENGAGING ACHILLES KILLSWITCH.

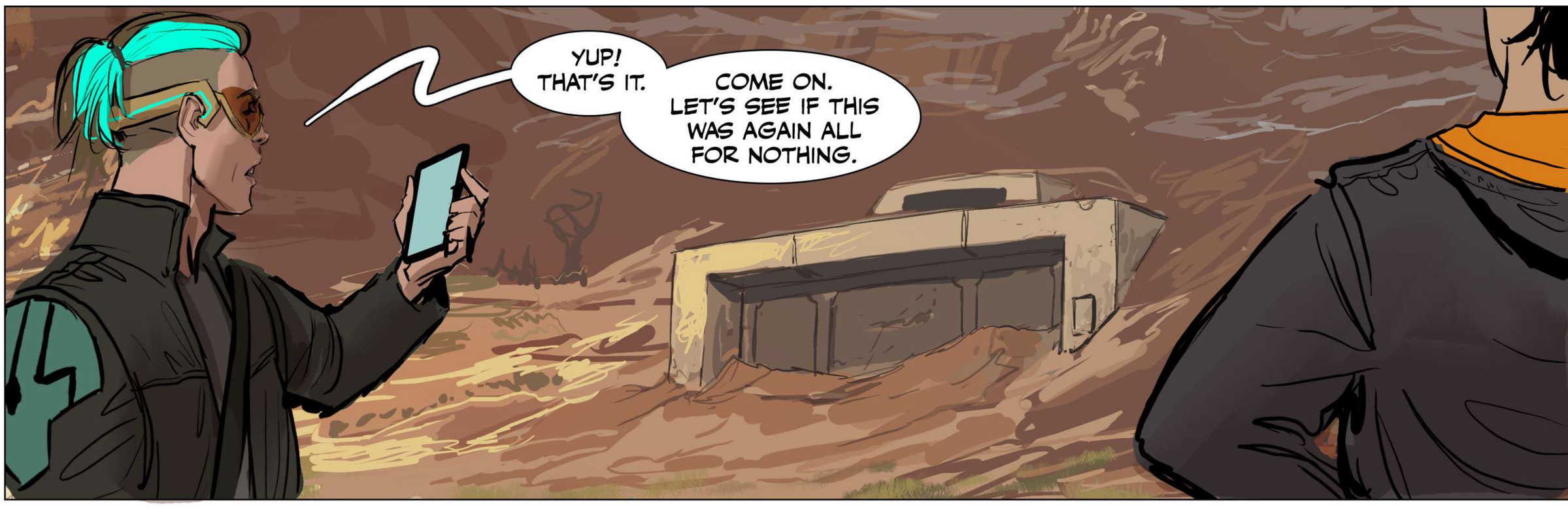

WE LOST EVERYTHING THAT DAY
WE WATCHED OUR FRIEND DIE IN BATTLE
SAW OUR WORLD FALL
AND FOR A WHILE THERE... WE ALMOST LOST ALL HOPE.
PILOT STATUS- INCAPACITATED, BUT CONNECTED
ACHILLES KILLSWITCH NOT FOUND
PARAMETERS SATISFIED.
IGNITE THE FORGE!
BUT THAT'S THE THING WITH HOPE. ITS FLAMES MAY DIM, BUT ITS EMBER IS ETERNAL.



CHAPTER 1
THE HAS-BEENS

ARIZONA DEADLANDS
FOURTEEN YEARS LATER
YOU KNOW... IN A WAY IT'S A STROKE OF GOOD LUCK THAT THE BOX IS HERE
HOW COME?
MECHAS DON'T DEAL WELL WITH SAND AND SMALL PEBBLES. NO ACTIVE PATROLS IN THIS REGION
I GUESS... THEN AGAIN NOT REALLY MUCH TO PATROL FOR AROUND HERE ANYWAYS.
IT'S CALLED THE DEADLANDS FOR A REASON.
OKAY. THIS IS THE SPOT.
ARE YOU SURE? CAUSE ALL OF THESE HILLS LOOK ALIKE TO ME.
CHAPTER 1
THE HAS-BEENS


NO... THIS IS WHERE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.
IT'S JUST THAT IT'S BEEN ABANDONED FOR OVER A DECADE EVER SINCE THE ARMY PULLED BACK INTO THE AEGIS ZONE
SEE? THE ROAD IS BURIED, BUT STILL HERE
MAX! I FOUND IT


YUP! THAT'S IT.
COME ON. LET'S SEE IF THIS WAS AGAIN ALL FOR NOTHING.

SEALED SHUT!
MAX! HERE'S A CODE READER.

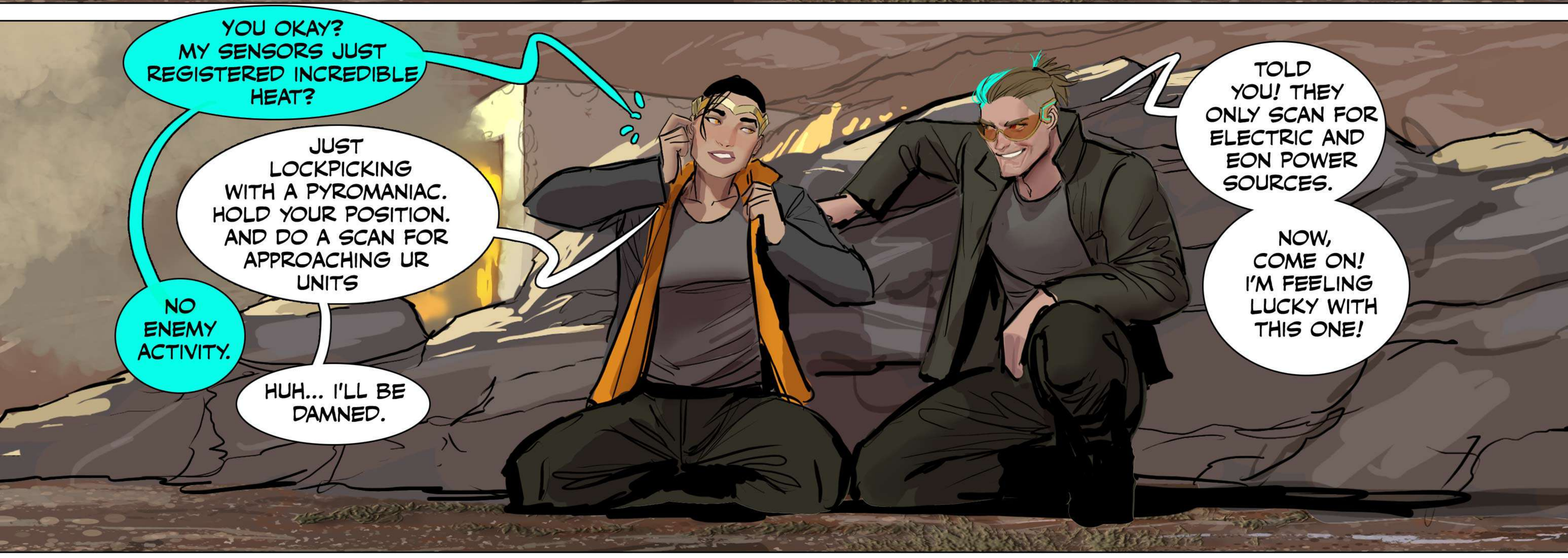
HM... NO POWER.

OKAY, STAND BACK I'LL SURGE THE DOORS

WHOA! STOP! NO ELECTRONICS! ALL OF THIS SHIT IS PRE-EARTHFALL TECH! IT HAS NO DAMPENERS! YOU SURGE IT AND WE MAY AS WELL SEND OFFICIAL INVITATIONS FOR THE UR SCOUT MECHS
THESE ARE ARMOR PLATED DOORS, MAX! HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO OPEN THEM WITHOUT ELECTRONICS?

GLAD YOU ASKED!
WAIT! TH-THAT'S AN ETNA CORD!? ARE YOU INSANE!?
YOU GOT A BETTER IDEA?

YOU KNOW THAT THE USE OF ETNA CORD IS CONSIDERED A WAR CRIME?
YEAH. BUT WHO'S GONNA PROSECUTE ME? THE UR?


YOU OKAY? MY SENSORS JUST REGISTERED INCREDIBLE HEAT?
JUST LOCKPICKING WITH A PYROMANIAC. HOLD YOUR POSITION. AND DO A SCAN FOR APPROACHING UR UNITS
NO ENEMY ACTIVITY.
HUH... I'LL BE DAMNED.
TOLD YOU! THEY ONLY SCAN FOR ELECTRIC AND EON POWER SOURCES.
NOW, COME ON! I'M FEELING LUCKY WITH THIS ONE!

HOLY CRAP YOU MELTED HALF THE LOBBY
COME ON! NOBODY KEEPS SENSITIVE DATA IN THEIR LOBBY
AND ANYWAYS AT LEAST WE'RE IN!
PROBLEMS WILL START IF WE ACTUALLY FIND THE BOX. I'LL HAVE TO START UP THE GRID TO EXTRACT IT.

NONE OF THIS PRE-*UR DAY* STUFF HAS CONCEALMENT DAMPENERS SO IT'LL LIGHT UP THEIR SCANS LIKE NEW YEARS FIREWORKS.
SIGH... I MISS THOSE! BACK WHEN EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY WERE A GOOD THING....
YEAH...

THE ONES WE HAD ON *THEIR* LAST SHOW SURE WERE SOMETHING, HUH?
UH... YEAH...

YOU KNOW HOW YOU SAID OUR PROBLEMS WILL START IF WE ACTUALLY FOUND THE BOX

YEAH... THIS WOULD BE THE TIME TO CALL FOR OUR BACKUP

SCOURGE! MOVE IN ON OUR POSITION! WE FOUND IT!

ACTIVATING POWERCELLS.

AAAND WE'RE LIVE BAIT NOW!

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE THEM TO ARRIVE?

PROBABLY FIVE MINUTES, UNLESS THEY USE A WARPSHIP.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE YOU TO GET THE BOX ECTRACTED?

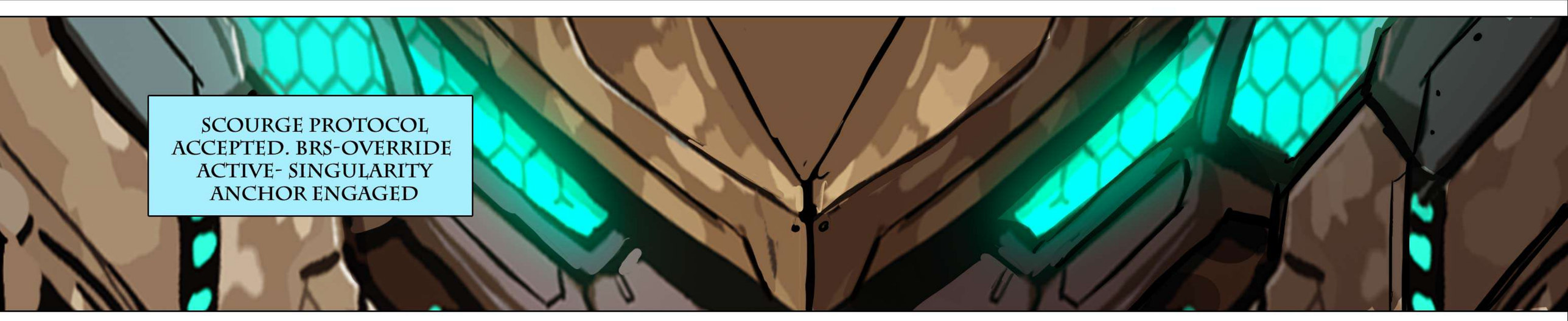
A FEW MINUTES

AH!

SCOURGE! NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR THAT BACKUP!
EN ROUTE!
YEAH? WE'RE NOT EXACTLY STATIC, THE ROUTE IS CHANGING!
I KNOW! I'M TRACKING YOU!
ARTEMIS, CHECK THEIR PROXIMITY!
S-AM
MR-2

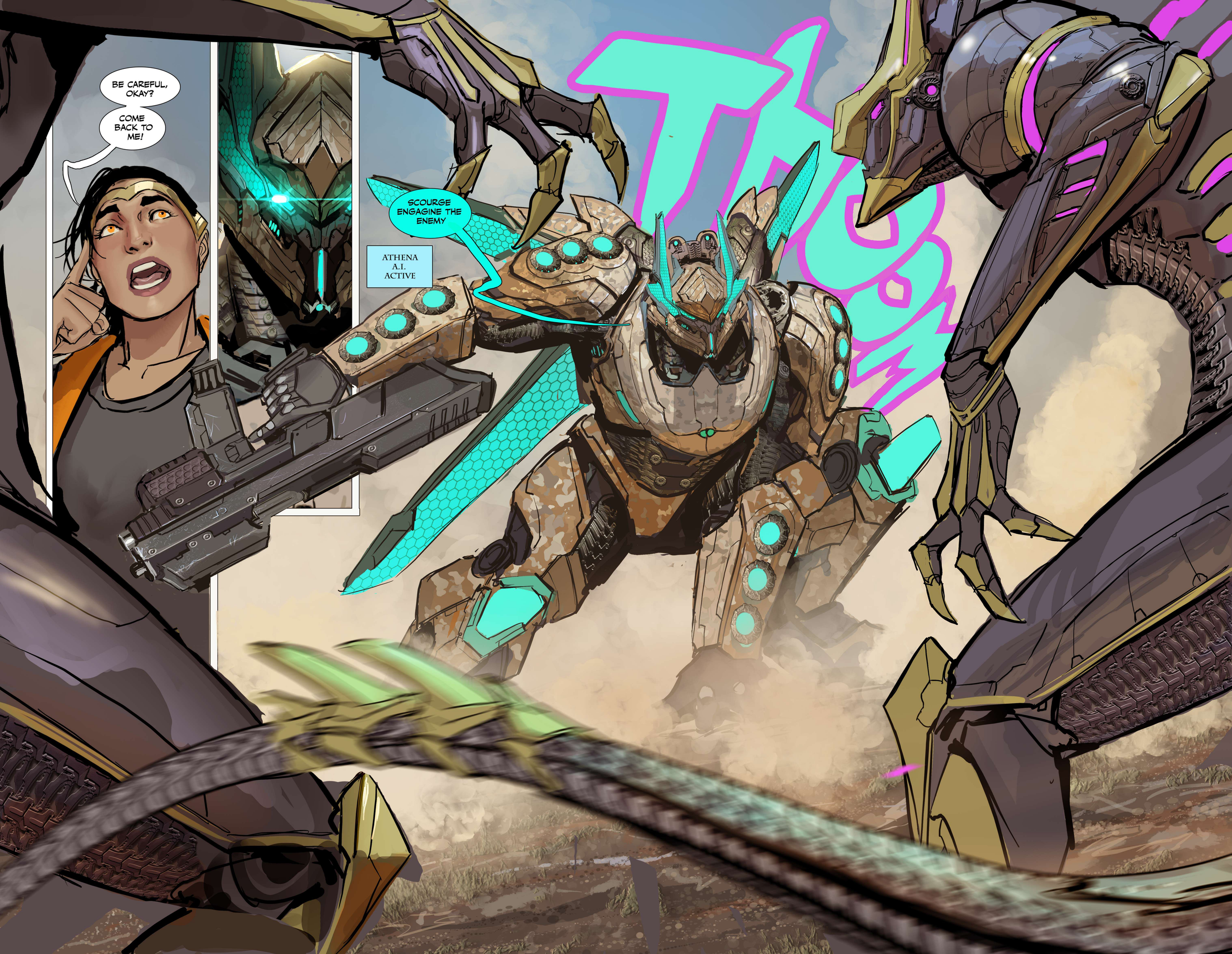
ALL THE WAY UP OUR ASSES! DOES THAT DESCRIBE THEIR PROXIMITY?
THAT'LL DO! THERE'S A SHOCK BREAKER IN THE SIDE SLOT! USE IT!
GOT IT!
TZWAAW
GZZZT
DID IT DO ANYTHING?
DOES PISSING IT OFF COUNT?

SCOURGE, IF YOU EVER WANT TO SEE ME NAKED AGAIN NOW WOULD BE THE TIME TO SHOW UP!!!


SCOURGE PROTOCOL ACCEPTED. BRS-OVERRIDE ACTIVE- SINGULARITY ANCHOR ENGAGED

LOOK UP IN THE SKY!
OH YOU ABSOLUTE...

SHOWOFF!
S-RM


BE CAREFUL, OKAY?
COME BACK TO ME!
SCOURGE ENGAGINE THE ENEMY
ATHENA A.I. ACTIVE
THUM

SCANNING ENEMY FORCES COUNTING TWO RAPTOR UNITS

AGILE

EQUIPPED FOR MELEE COMBAT

REGISTERING UNKNOWN MODIFICATIONS

SPEEDY PESTS PACKING SURPRISES...

WELL THEN! LET'S UNPACK THEM!

UNKNOWN MODIFICATION ACTIVATED! ANALYZING!

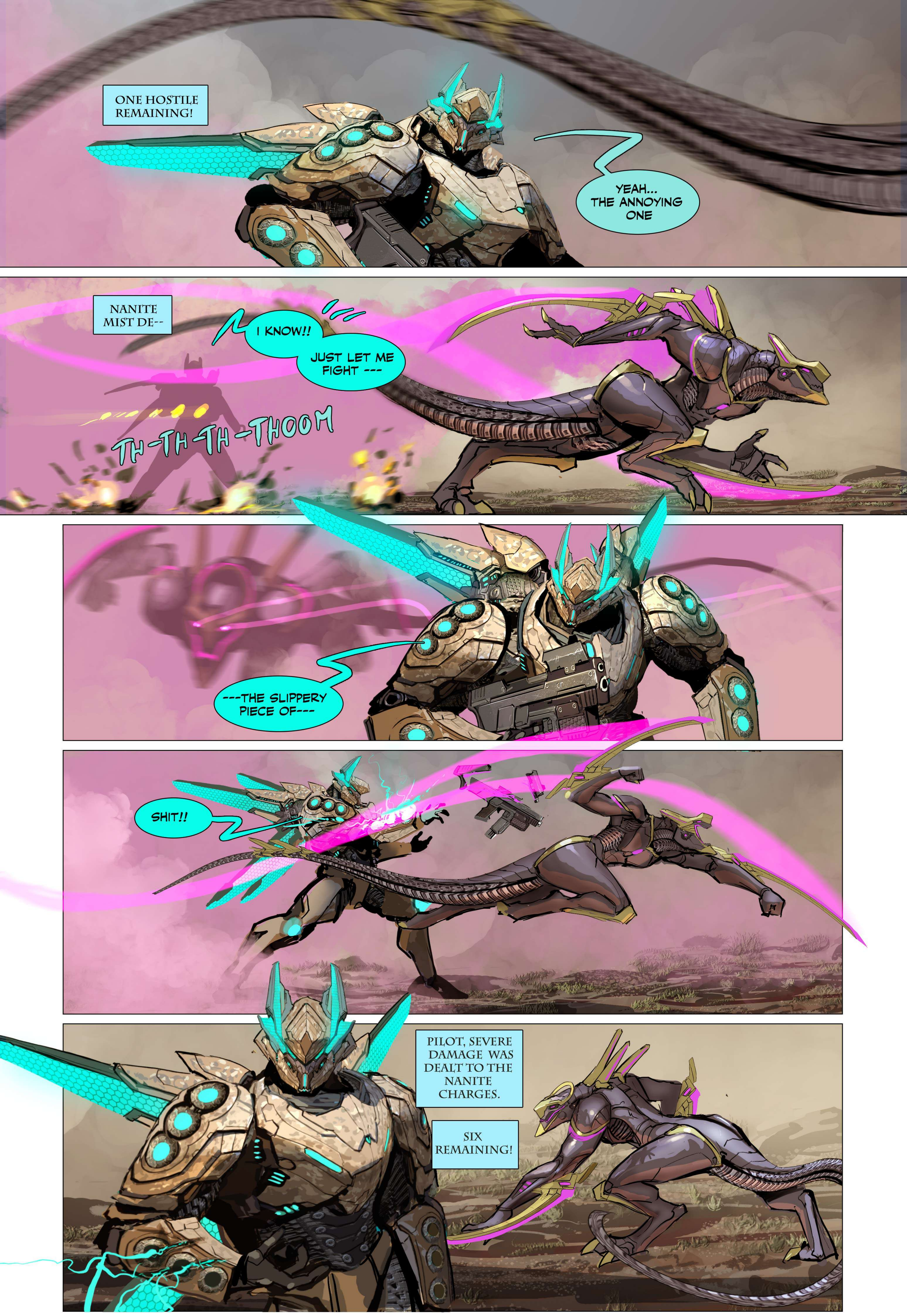
ACTIVATED NANITE DISPERSAL. MODIFICATION IS RENDERING MY AREA SCANS INEFFECTIVE

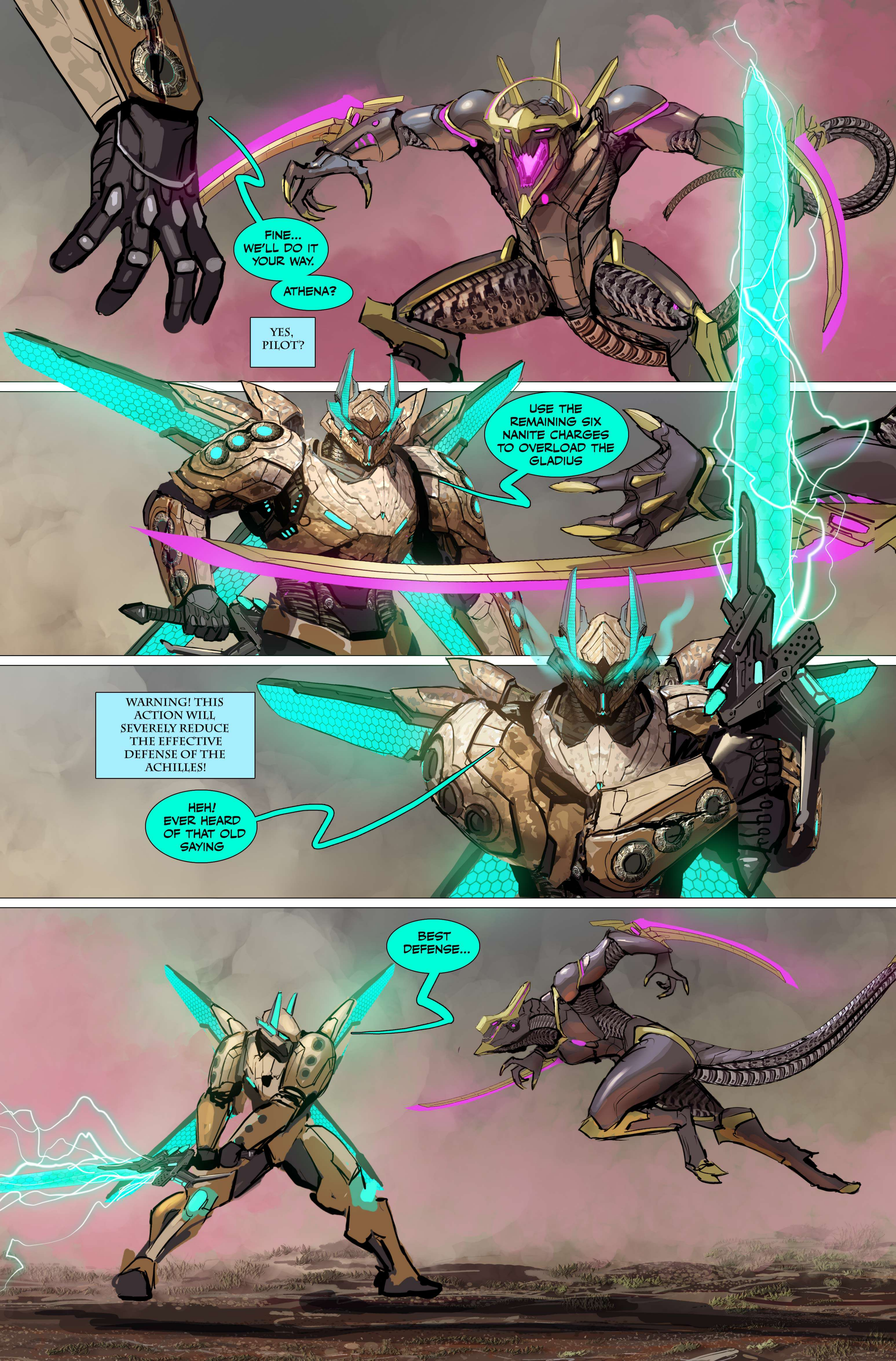
CRAP... THEY GOT A SMOKESCREEN.

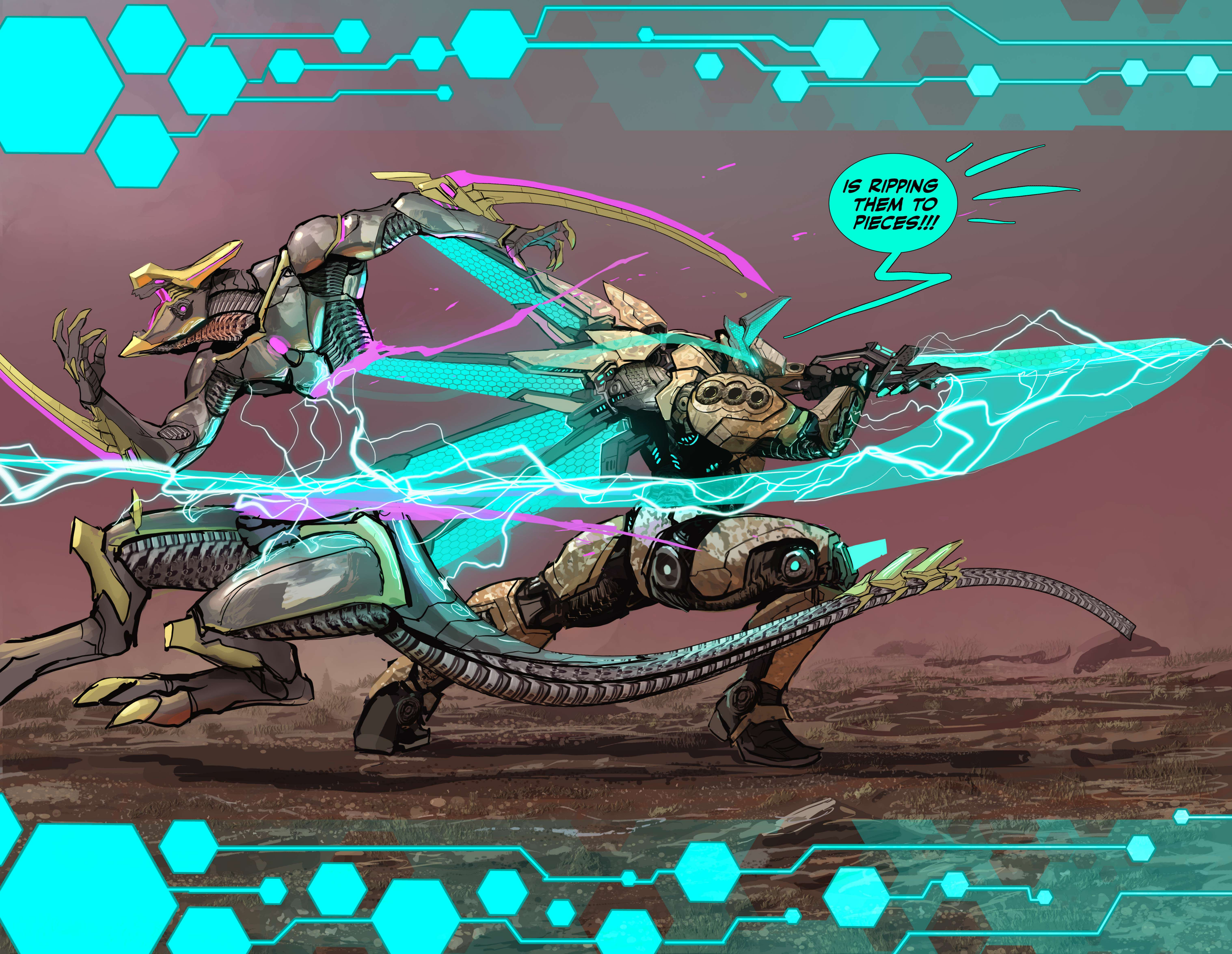
TEN O CLOCK!

EON DISCHARGE IMMINENT!

DEPLOYING AEGIS!
NINE CHARGES REMAINING!
GOT IT!
THOOOM
NANITE MIST DENSITY WEAKENING. SCANNERS OPERATIONAL
NANO BLADE ACTIVATION DETECTED
OH YOU THINK CLOSE COMBAT IS YOUR ADVANTAGE?
THINK AGAIN! SHOTGUN MODE
CHA-TCHK!
SHRAPNEL LAUNCHER READY
BRRAK


ONE HOSTILE REMAINING!
YEAH... THE ANNOYING ONE
NANITE MIST DE--
I KNOW!! JUST LET ME FIGHT ---
TH-TH-TH-THOOM
---THE SLIPPERY PIECE OF---
SHIT!!
PILOT, SEVERE DAMAGE WAS DEALT TO THE NANITE CHARGES.
SIX REMAINING!


FINE... WE'LL DO IT YOUR WAY.
ATHENA?
YES, PILOT?
USE THE REMAINING SIX NANITE CHARGES TO OVERLOAD THE GLADIUS
WARNING! THIS ACTION WILL SEVERELY REDUCE THE EFFECTIVE DEFENSE OF THE ACHILLES!
HEH! EVER HEARD OF THAT OLD SAYING
BEST DEFENSE...

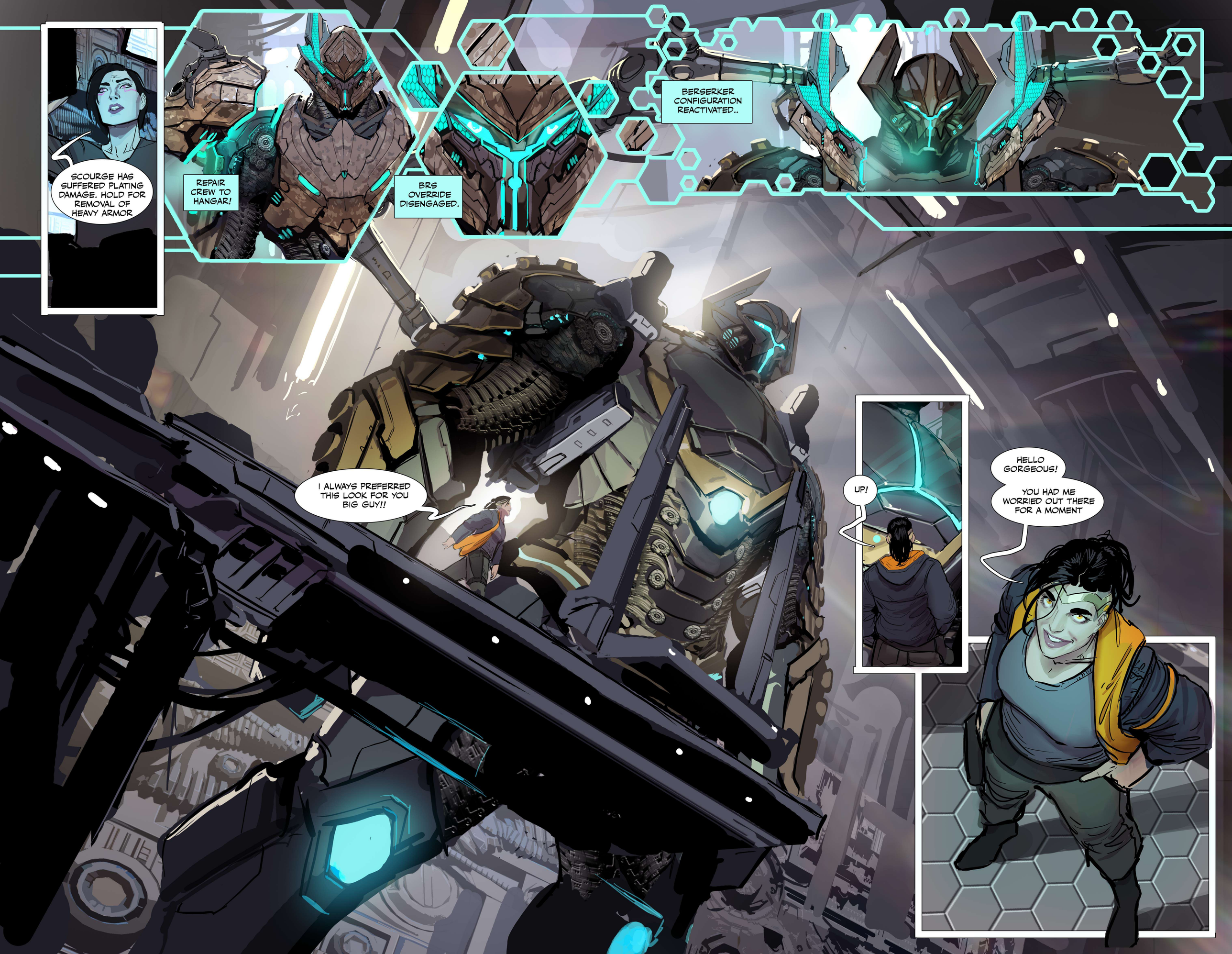

IS RIPPING THEM TO PIECES!!!

I BELIEVE THE PHRASE GOES, THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE.
CLOSE ENOUGH!
OH FOR CRYING OUT LOUD. ELYSIUM, COME IN.
ELYSIUM HERE
WE'RE CLEAR FOR EXTRACTION
ELYSIUM EN ROUTE. SHOULD BE THERE IN THREE MINUTES
GREAT!
THREE MORE MINUTES OF LOOKING AT OUR MIGHTY PROTECTOR SHOWING OFF
I HEARD THAT!
GOOD!
WELL... LET'S HOPE THE UR HAVEN'T CALLED FOR BACKUP
AND WHILE WE'RE HOPING, LET'S HOPE THAT THE YEARS OF SEARCHING FOR THIS BLOODY THING WERE WORTH IT!

WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

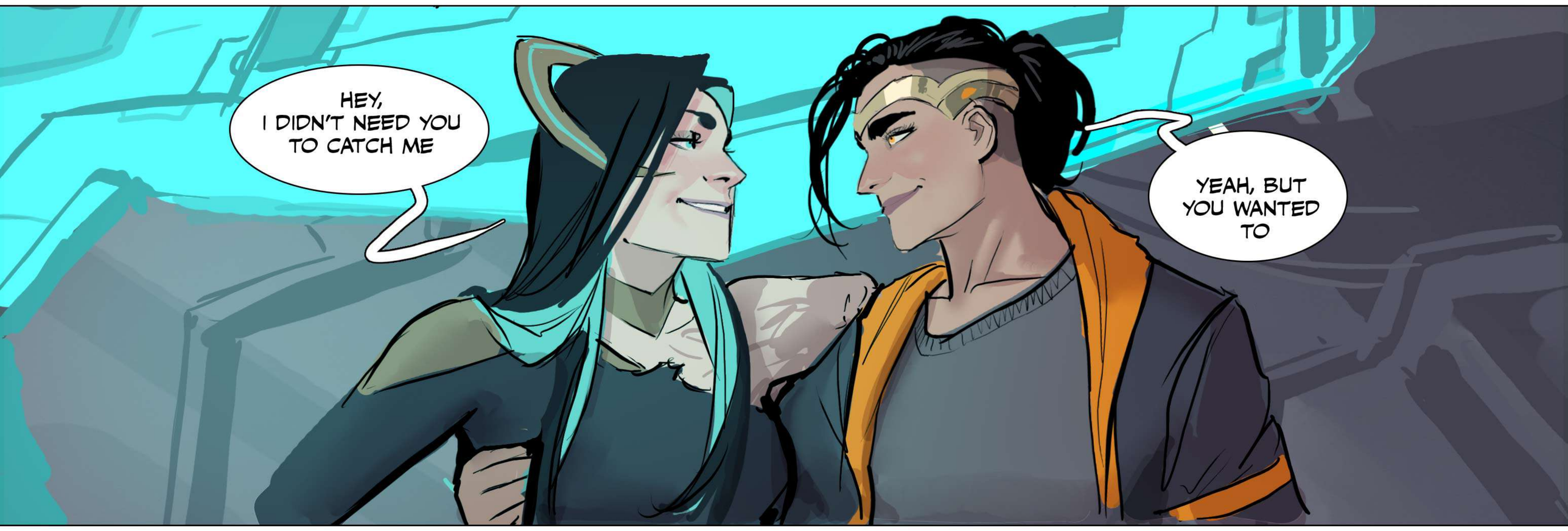
SHORT THREE MINUTES, ELYSIUM!

CHANGE OF PLANS. UR WARPSHIPS ARE CLOSING IN. WE'RE PUSHING THE PEDAL TO THE METAL, BOARD IMMEDIATELY!


SCOURGE HAS SUFFERED PLATING DAMAGE. HOLD FOR REMOVAL OF HEAVY ARMOR
REPAIR CREW TO HANGAR!
BRS OVERRIDE DISENGAGED.
BERSERKER CONFIGURATION REACTIVATED..
I ALWAYS PREFERRED THIS LOOK FOR YOU BIG GUY!!
UP!
HELLO GORGEOUS!
YOU HAD ME WORRIED OUT THERE FOR A MOMENT

OH, COME ON! YOU KNOW I DON'T DIE THAT EASILY!

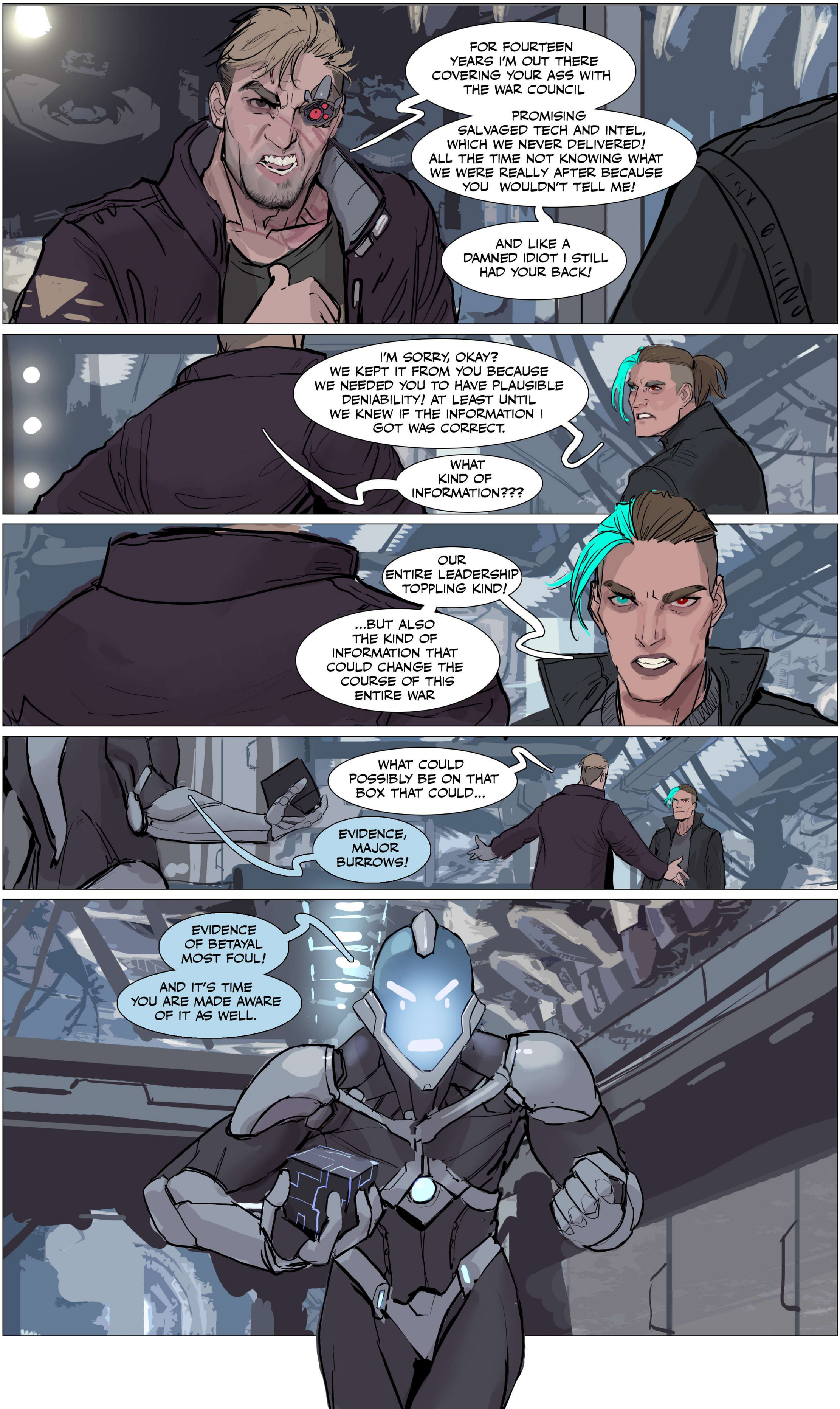
YOU?
HAH! I WAS WORRIED ABOUT ME!
NOW COME HERE!


HEY, I DIDN'T NEED YOU TO CATCH ME
YEAH, BUT YOU WANTED TO

HM, TOUCHE
THANKS FOR THE SAVE OUT THERE, BY THE WAY..
WELL, YOU DROVE A HARD BARGAIN.
HUH?
YOU SAID... IF I EVER WANTED TO SEE YOU NAKED AGAIN..

AND I DO...
WHAT THE HELL??

A BLACK BOX???
ALL THIS BLOODY TIME, RESOURCES! THE GODDAMNED SECRECY!!!
AND IT TURNS OUT THIS WAS ALL ABOUT AN OLD ASS MILITARY CODE RECORDER???
KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN!
KEEP MY--- I SHOULD REPORT YOUR ASS FOR MISUSE OF MILITARY RESOURCES AND ENDANGERMENT OF ONE OF OUR LAST FUNCTIONING ACHILLED UNITS


FOR FOURTEEN YEARS I'M OUT THERE COVERING YOUR ASS WITH THE WAR COUNCIL
PROMISING SALVAGED TECH AND INTEL, WHICH WE NEVER DELIVERED! ALL THE TIME NOT KNOWING WHAT WE WERE REALLY AFTER BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T TELL ME!
AND LIKE A DAMNED IDIOT I STILL HAD YOUR BACK!
I'M SORRY, OKAY? WE KEPT IT FROM YOU BECAUSE WE NEEDED YOU TO HAVE PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY! AT LEAST UNTIL WE KNEW IF THE INFORMATION I GOT WAS CORRECT.
WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION???
OUR ENTIRE LEADERSHIP TOPPLING KIND!
...BUT ALSO THE KIND OF INFORMATION THAT COULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF THIS ENTIRE WAR
WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE ON THAT BOX THAT COULD...
EVIDENCE, MAJOR BURROWS!
EVIDENCE OF BETAYAL MOST FOUL!
AND IT'S TIME YOU ARE MADE AWARE OF IT AS WELL.

MAX... I WILL BRING MAJOR BURROWS UP TO SPEED. YOU ARE FREE TO PROCEED AS PLANNED!
YOU GOT IT, OMAN!
SOFIA! GET READY!
GET READY FOR WHAT?
WE'RE GETTING THE BAND TOGETHER AGAIN!