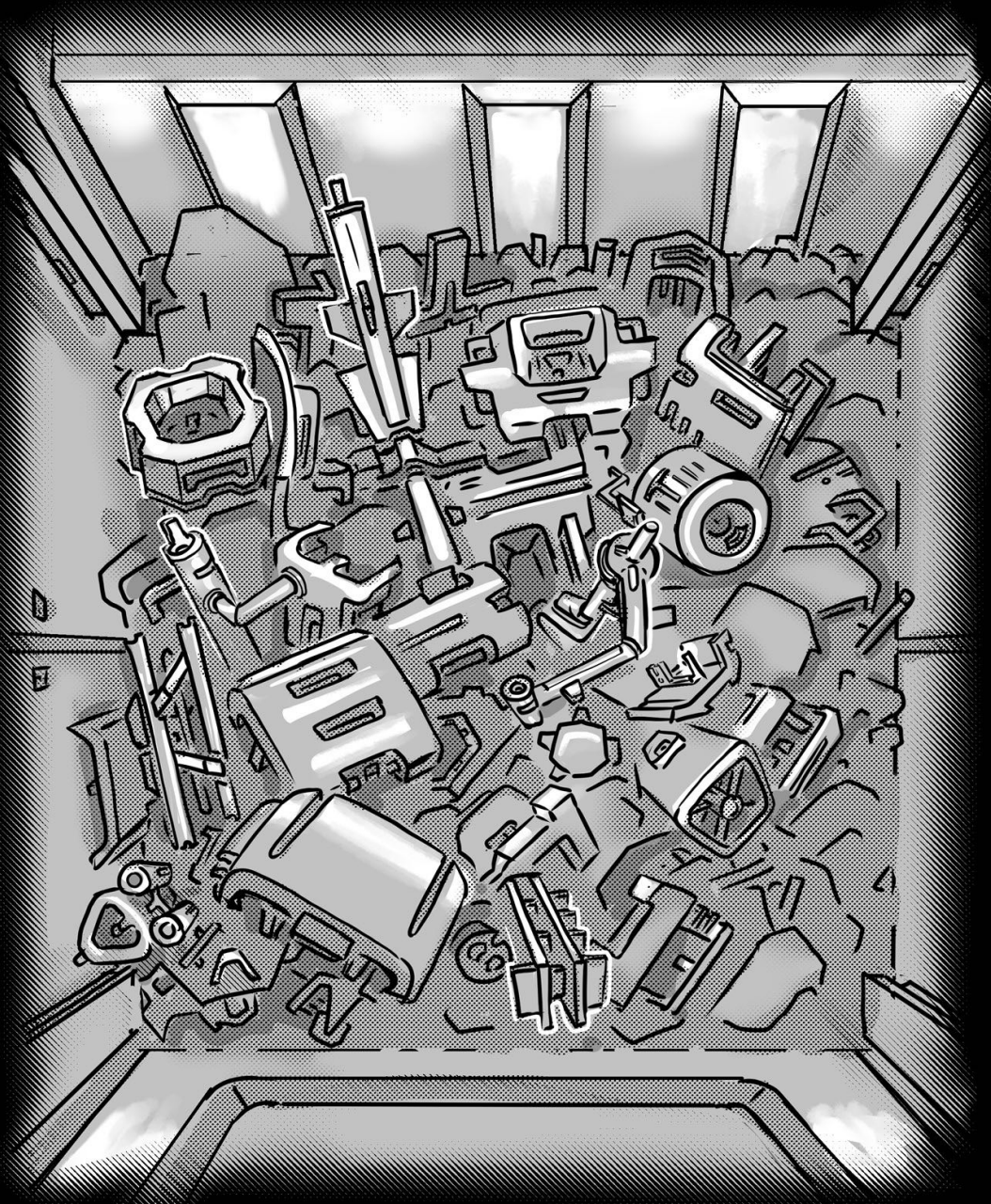


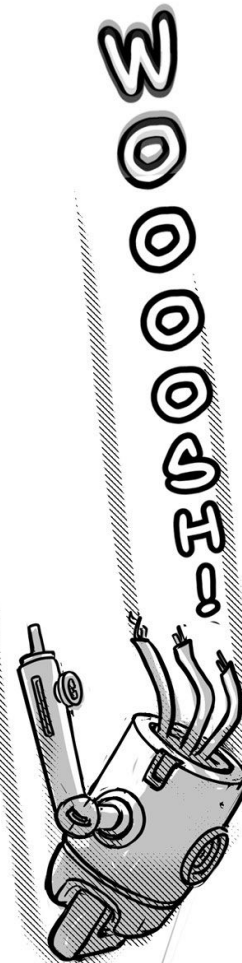


STORY & ART BY | JEREMY ANDROSCHUK

THEY CALL US  
**JUNKIES...**



TASKED TO SCAVENGE THE FAILED COLONIES ACROSS  
THE UNIVERSE TO HARVEST SCARCE PRECIOUS MATERIALS  
FOR THE LAST REFUGE OF THE HUMAN RACE -- THE **CORE**.



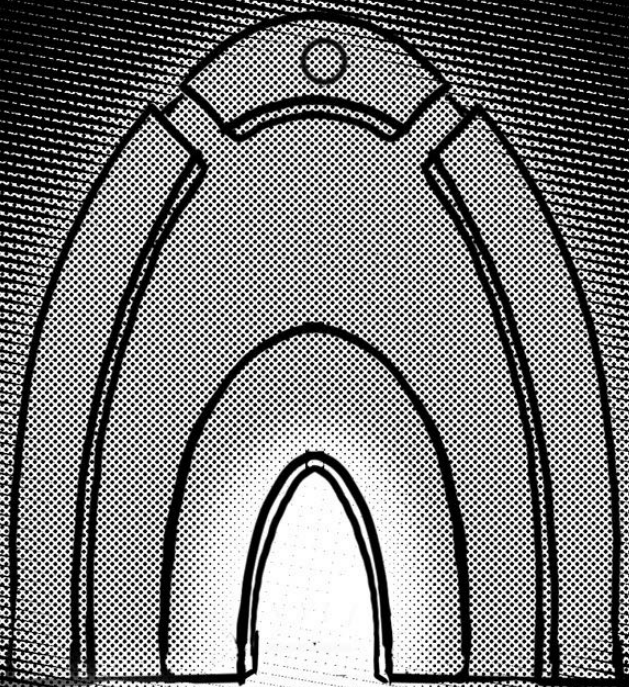
FOR AS LONG  
AS I CAN  
REMEMBER  
WE HAVE BEEN  
AN INTREGAL  
PART OF THE  
CORE'S  
SURVIVAL.



TRADING IN  
THE MISTAKES  
OF THE PAST  
FOR HOPE OF  
A FUTURE.  
IT WAS A NOBLE  
MISSION WITH  
A GREAT PURPOSE.



BUT THEN EVERYTHING  
CHANGED...  
NOW THERE IS ONLY  
DESPAIR.

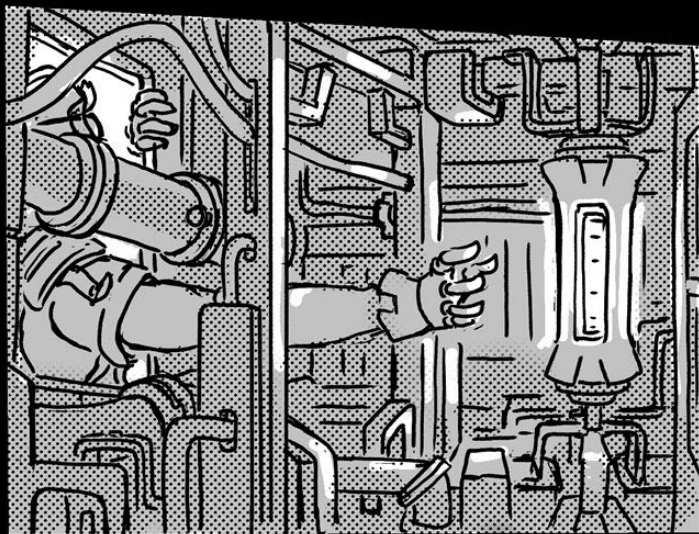
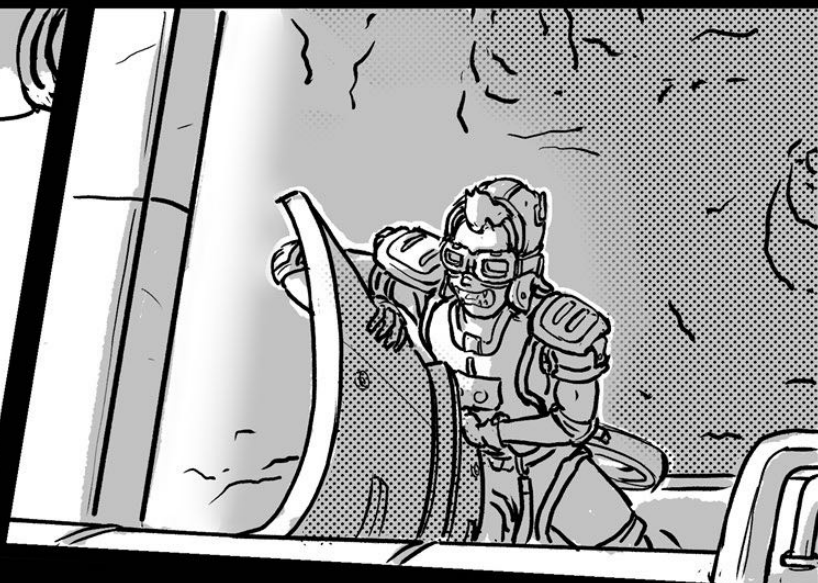
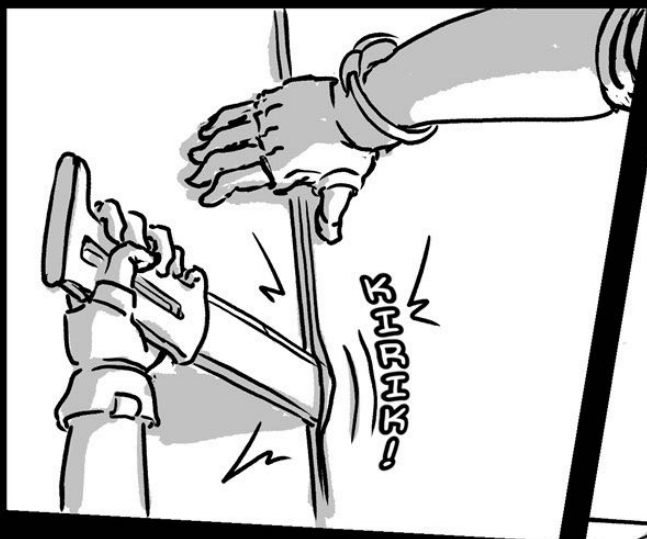


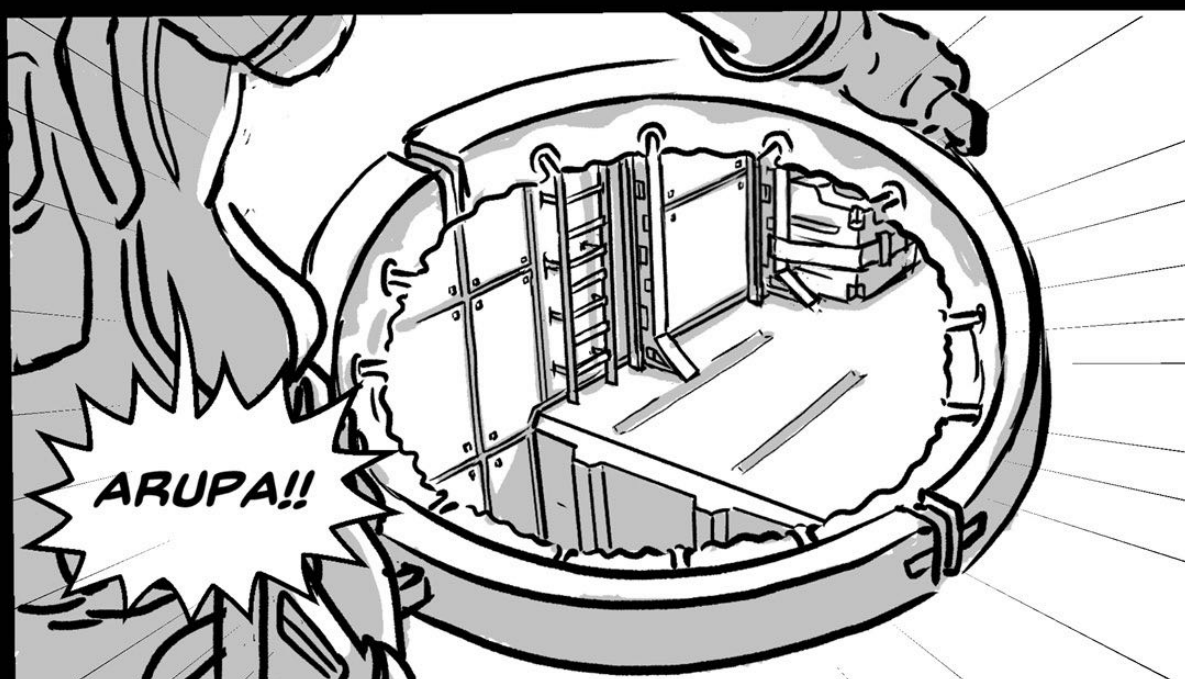
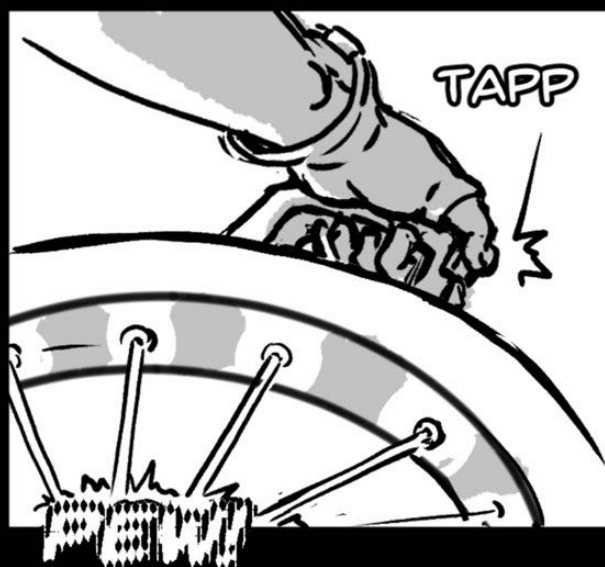
AND THE  
*DOORS...*

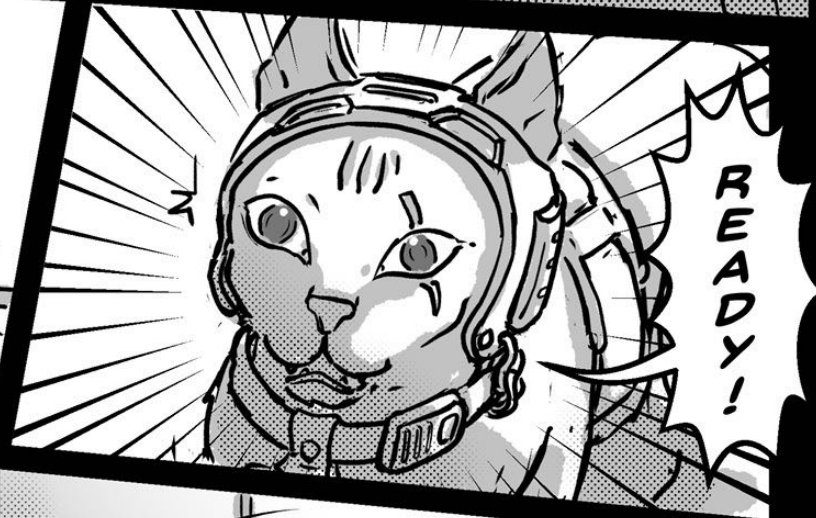


WHEN THE BEATEN  
PATH IS BLOCKED...

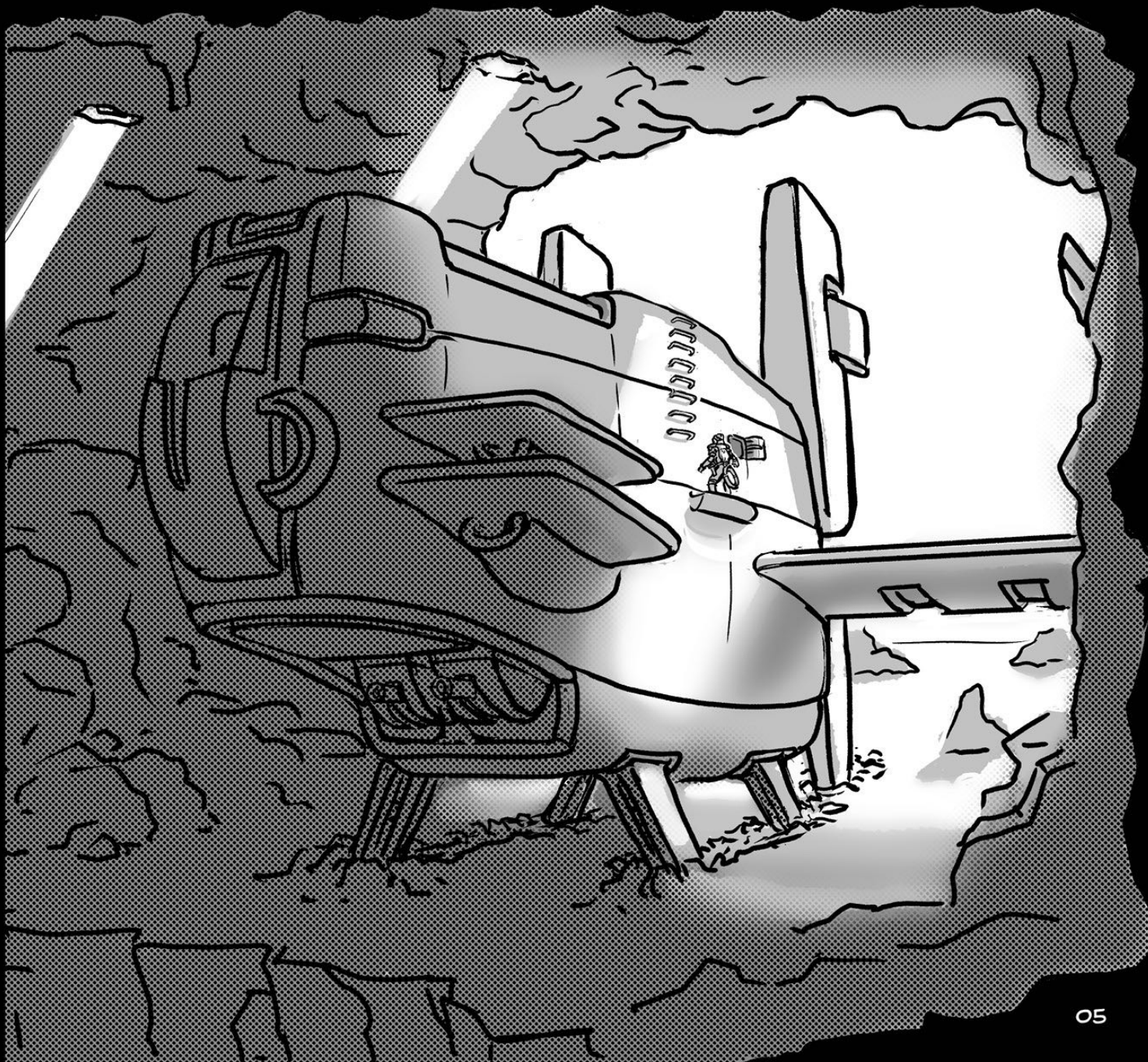
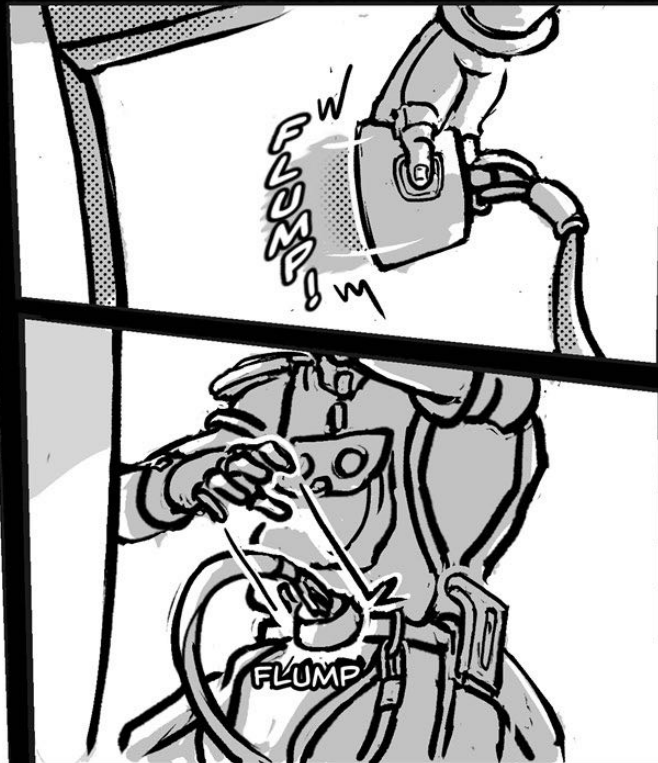




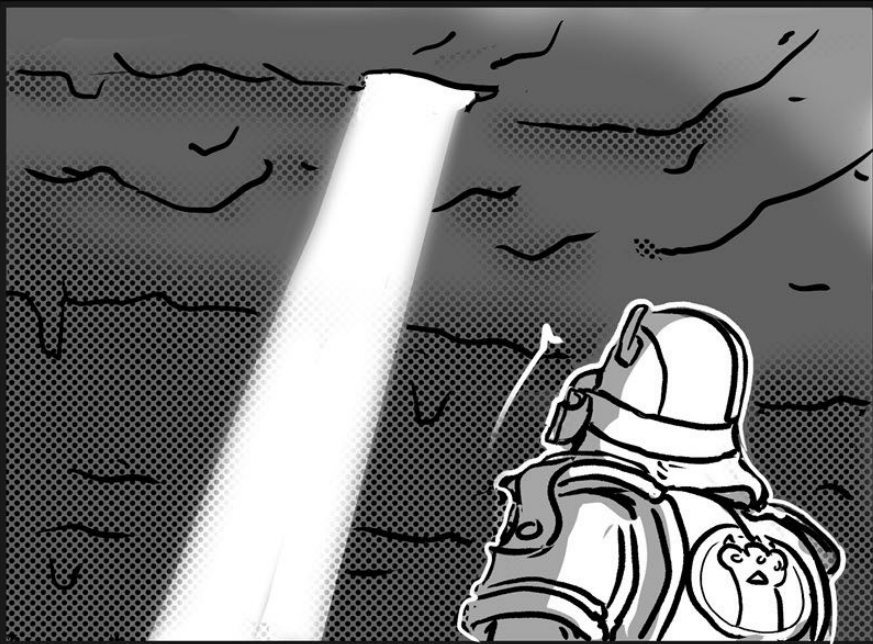
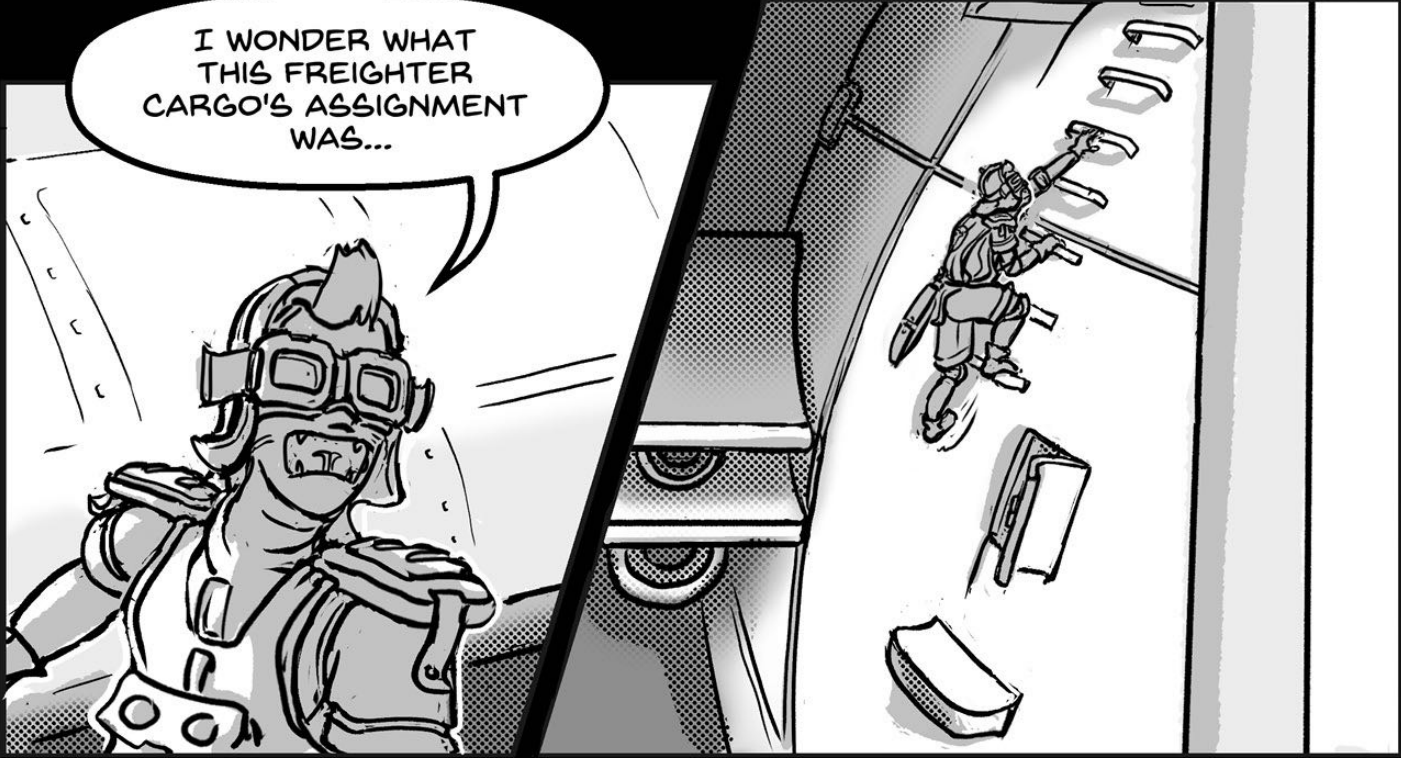


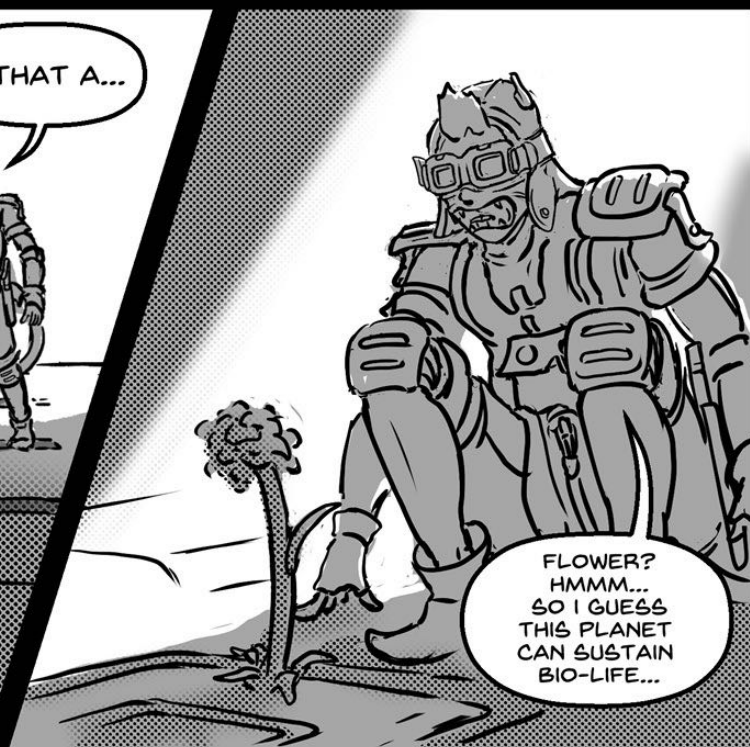












HOW DID  
YOU GET UP  
HERE BUDDY?

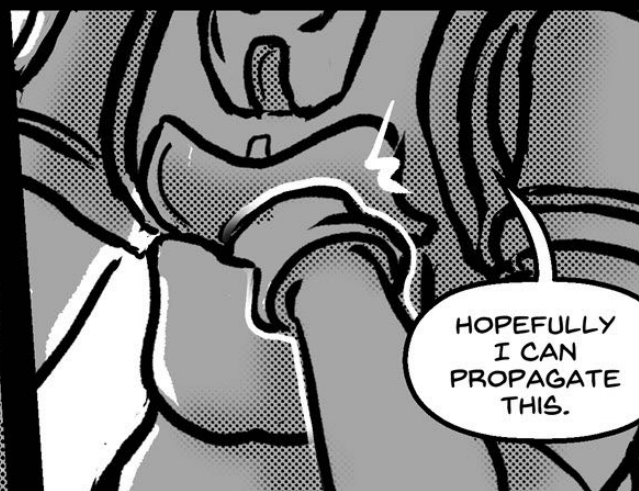
WOAAAH...!  
I SEE

THERE IS  
SO MUCH I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND...



SNIFF

MMMMM  
IT SMELLS  
SWEET.



HOPEFULLY  
I CAN  
PROPAGATE  
THIS.



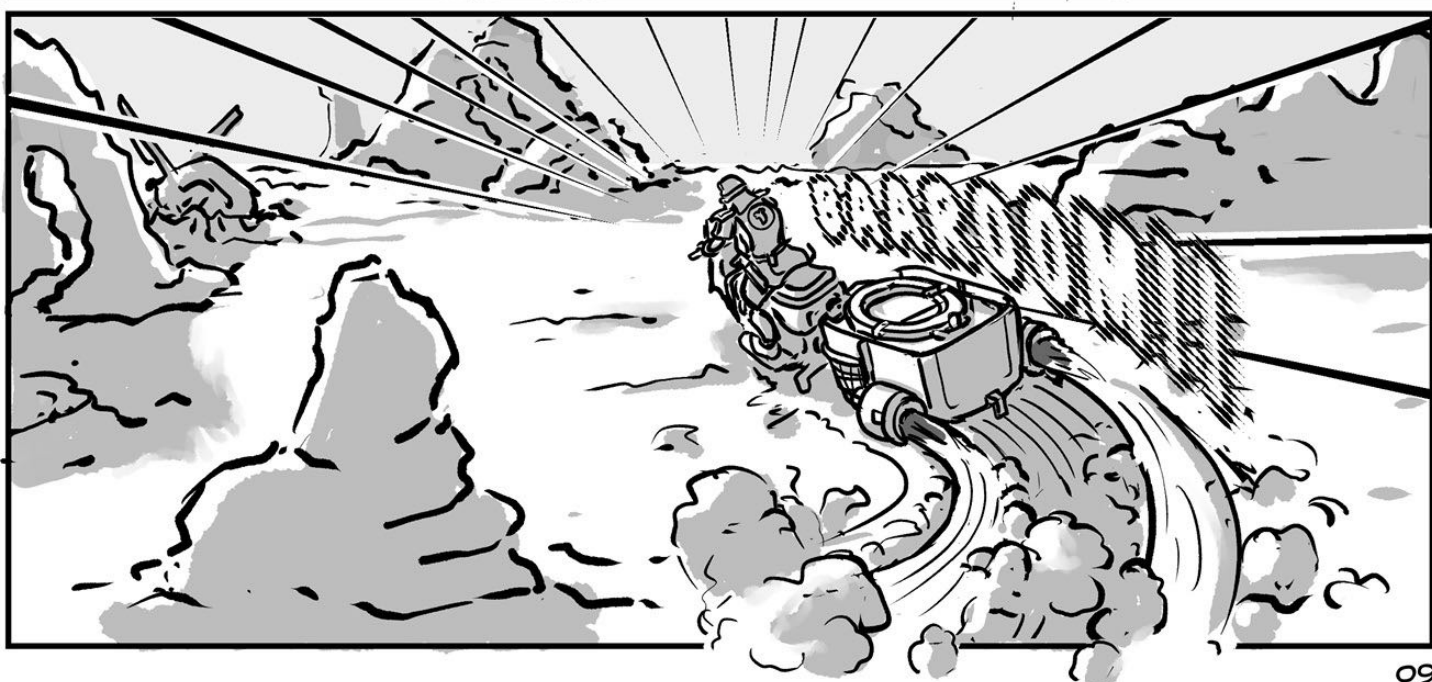
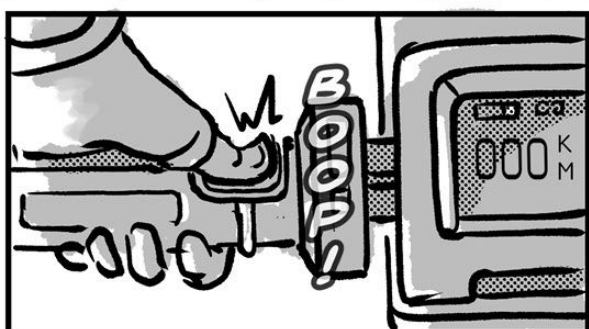
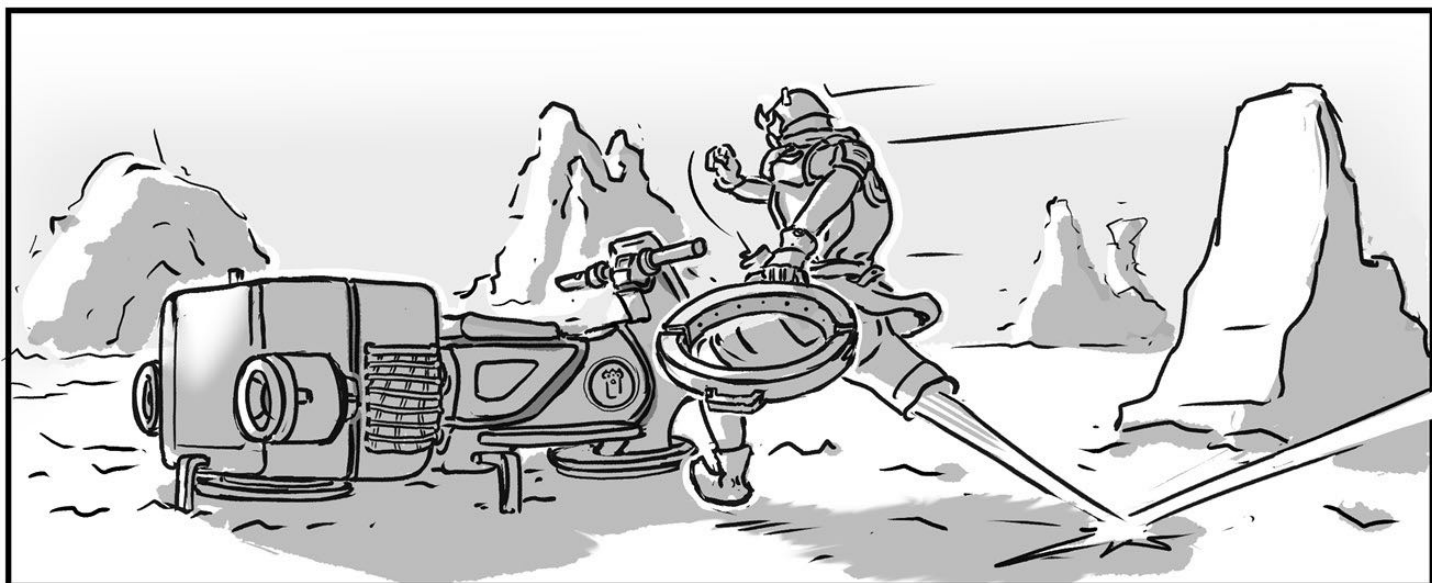


IT'S BEEN 100  
YEARS SINCE  
THE HUMANS WERE  
FORCED TO LEAVE  
THE BLUE PLANET.

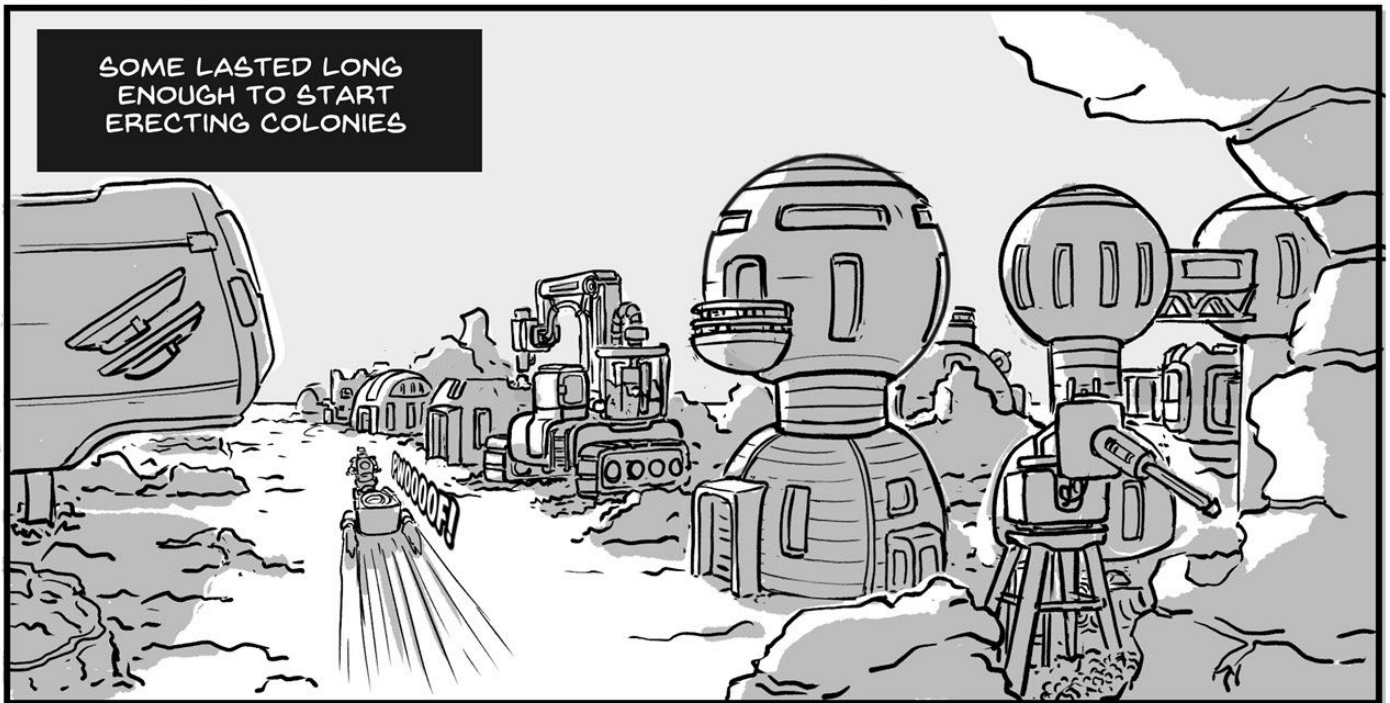
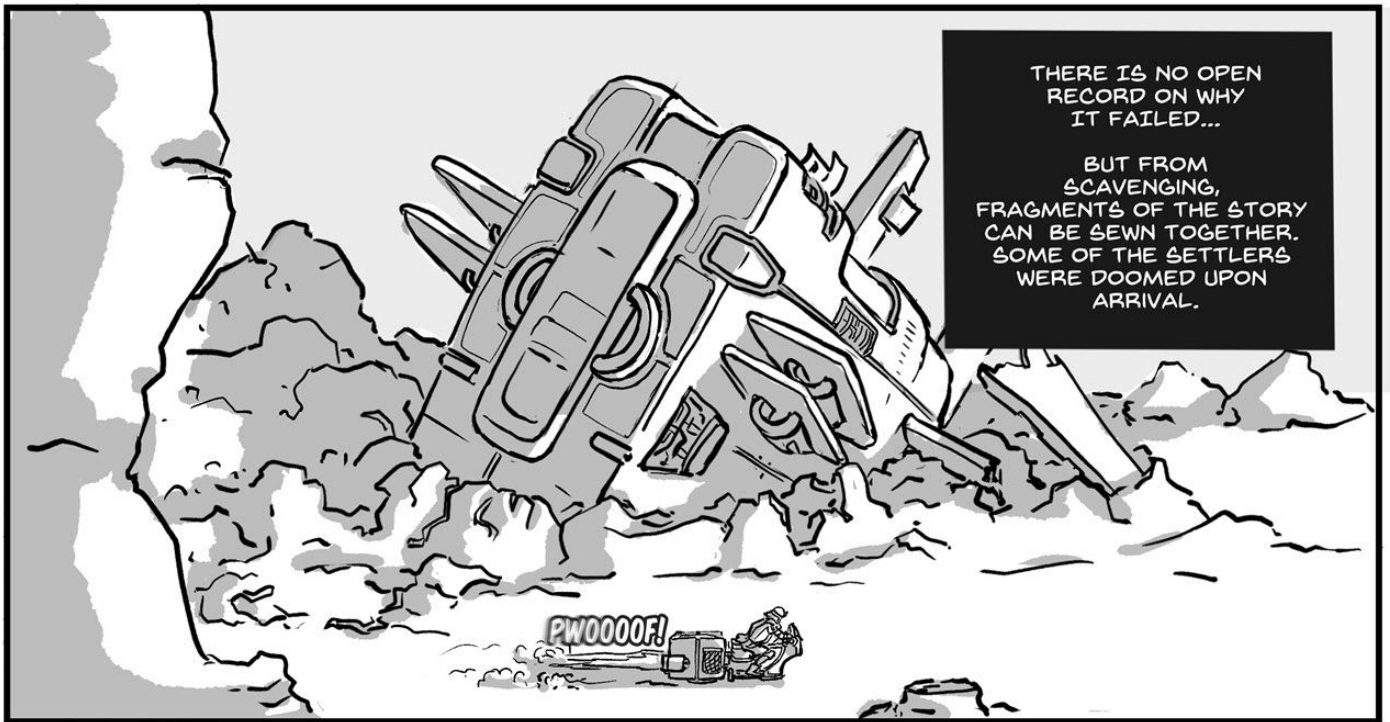
ADRIFT IN SPACE,  
WE HAVE YET TO  
FIND A NEW HOME.  
TODAY I'M SCAVENGING  
PLANET 1--THE CORE'S  
FIRST FAILED PLANETARY  
COLONY.

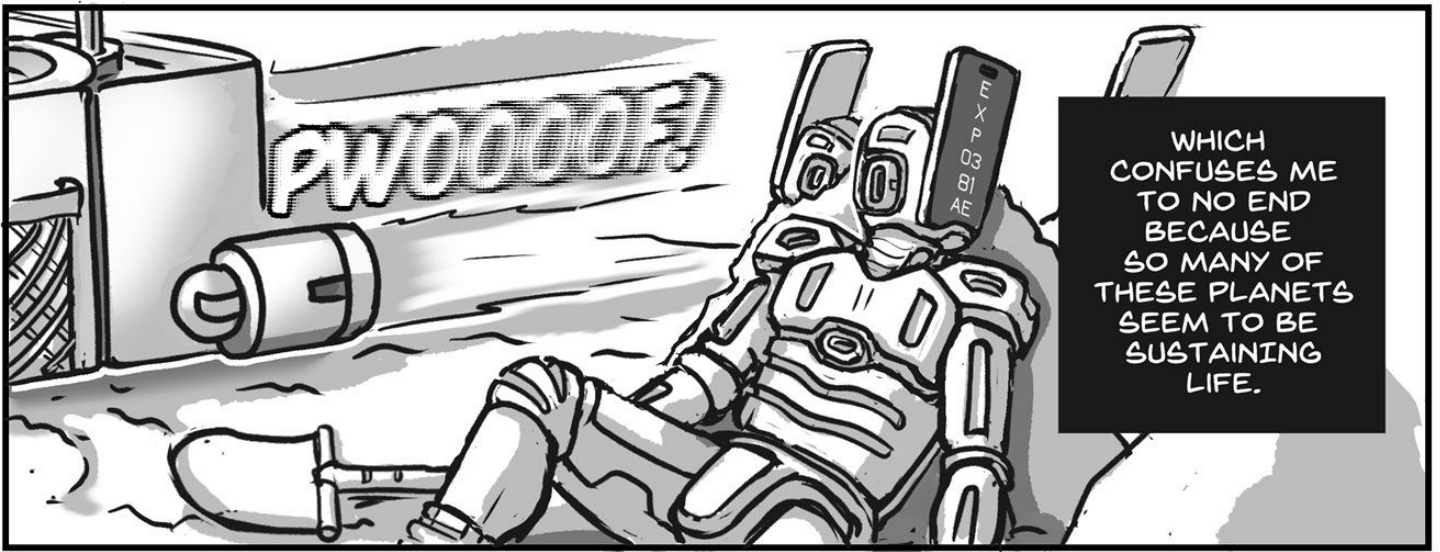
THUD!



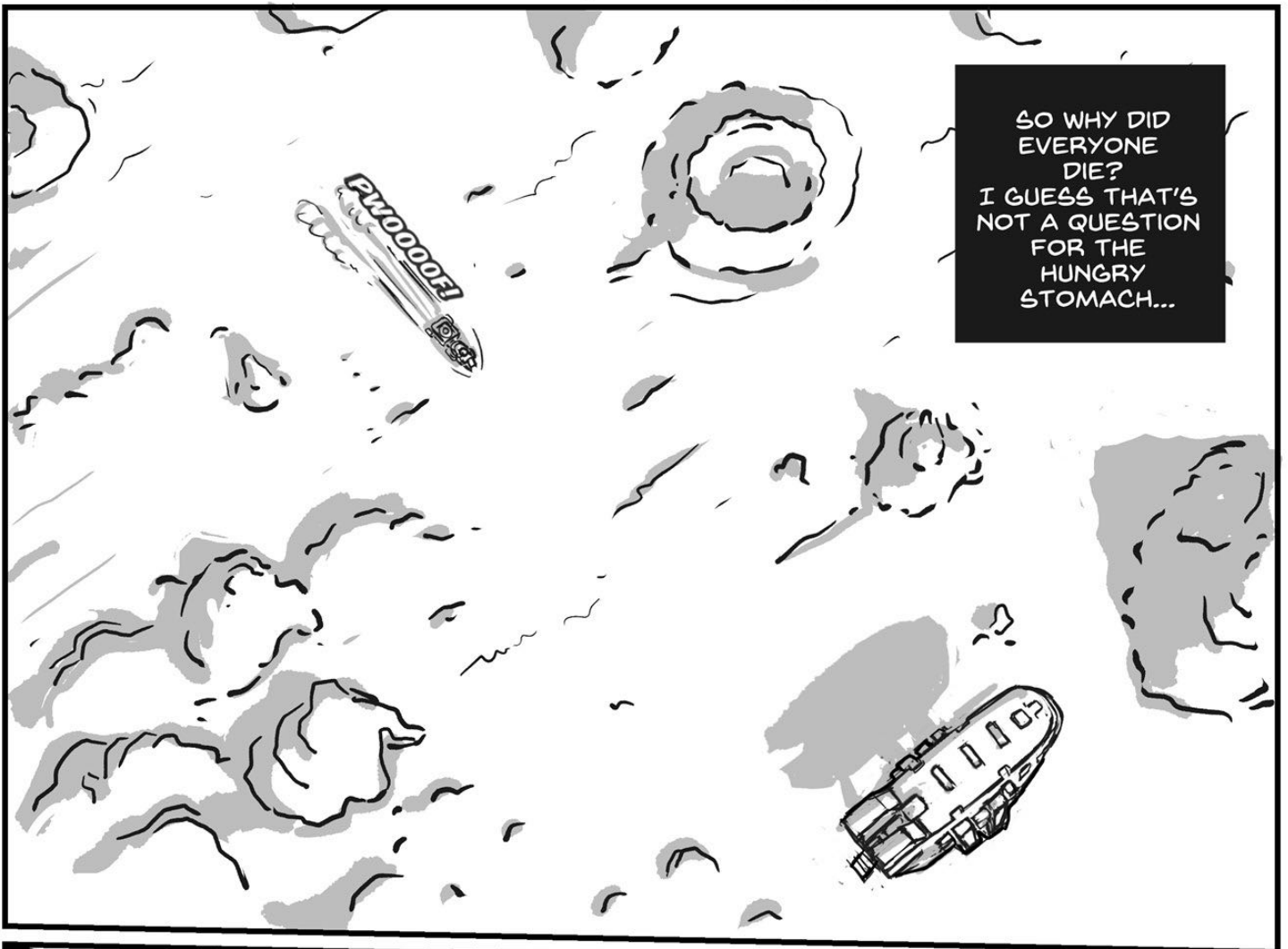




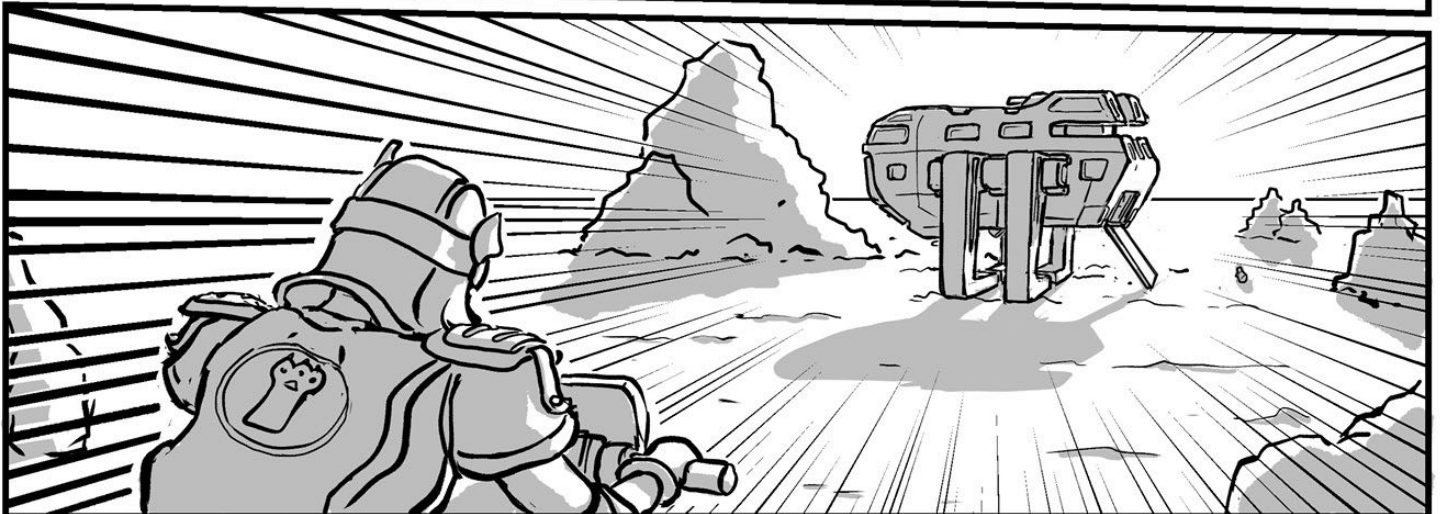


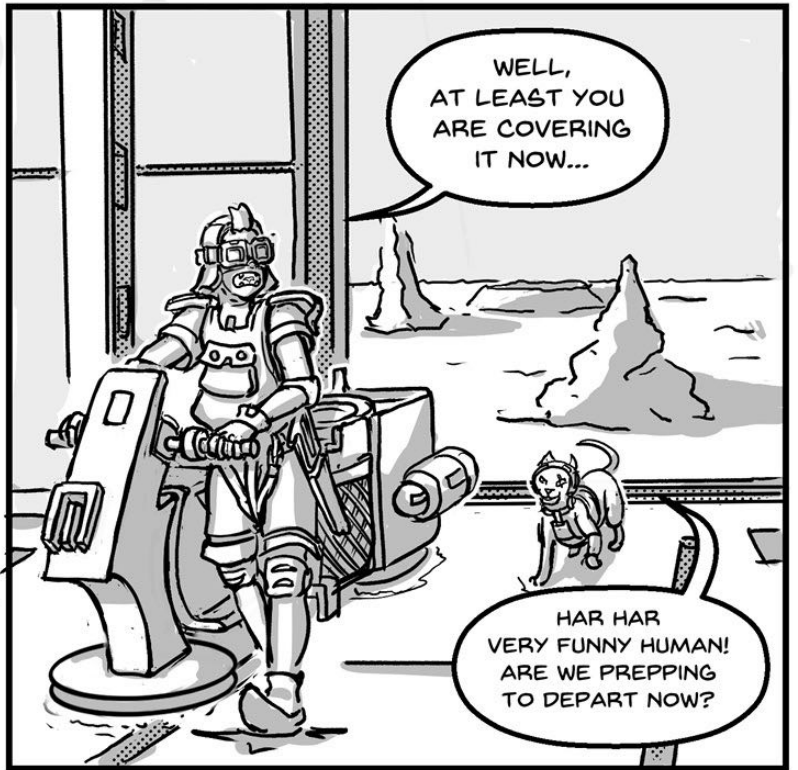
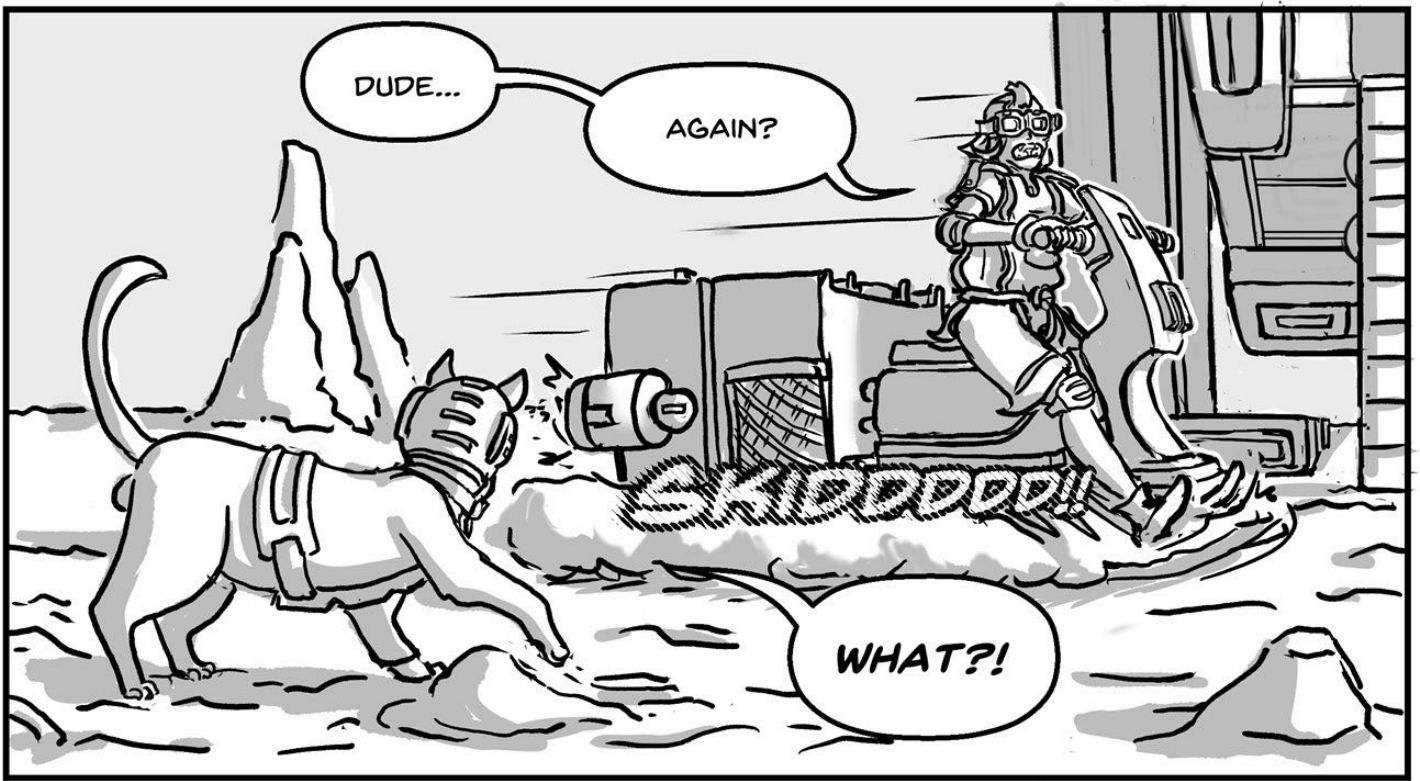


WHICH  
CONFUSES ME  
TO NO END  
BECAUSE  
SO MANY OF  
THESE PLANETS  
SEEM TO BE  
SUSTAINING  
LIFE.

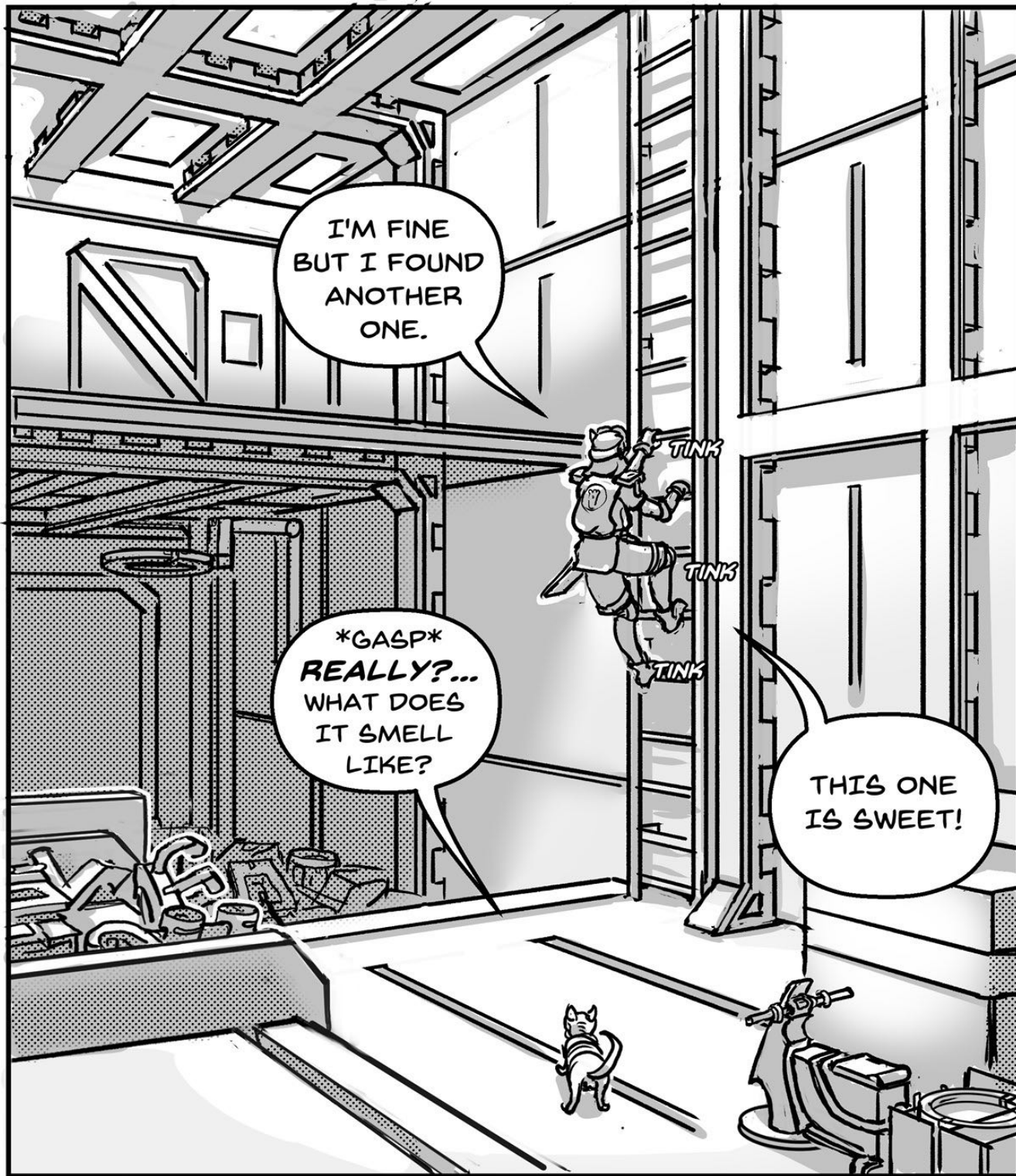


SO WHY DID  
EVERYONE  
DIE?  
I GUESS THAT'S  
NOT A QUESTION  
FOR THE  
HUNGRY  
STOMACH...

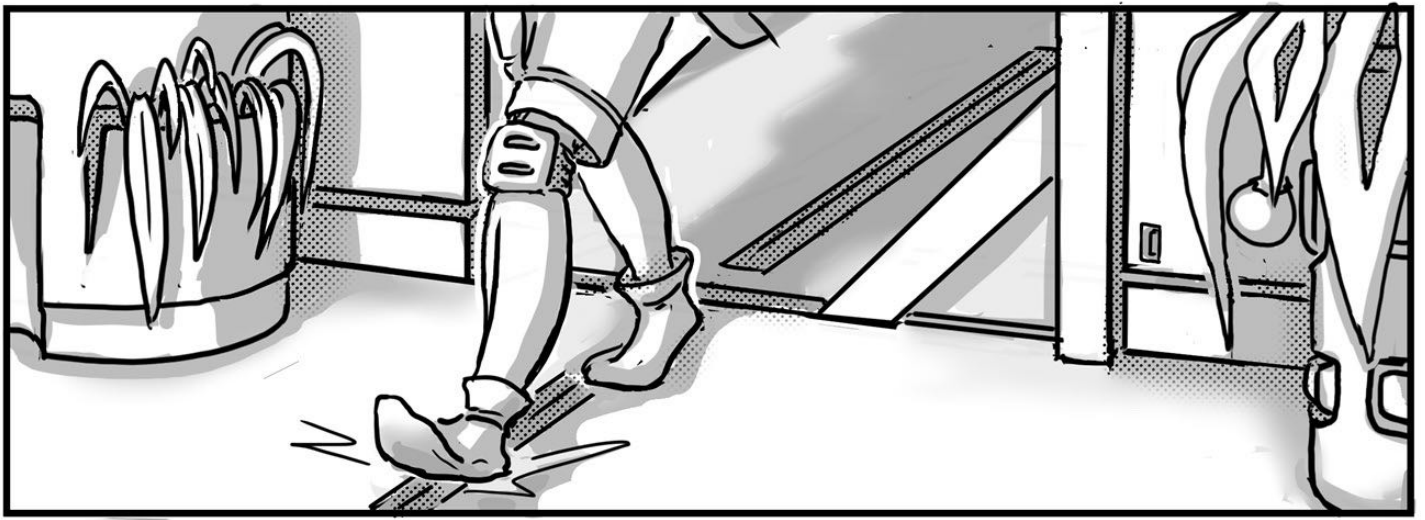




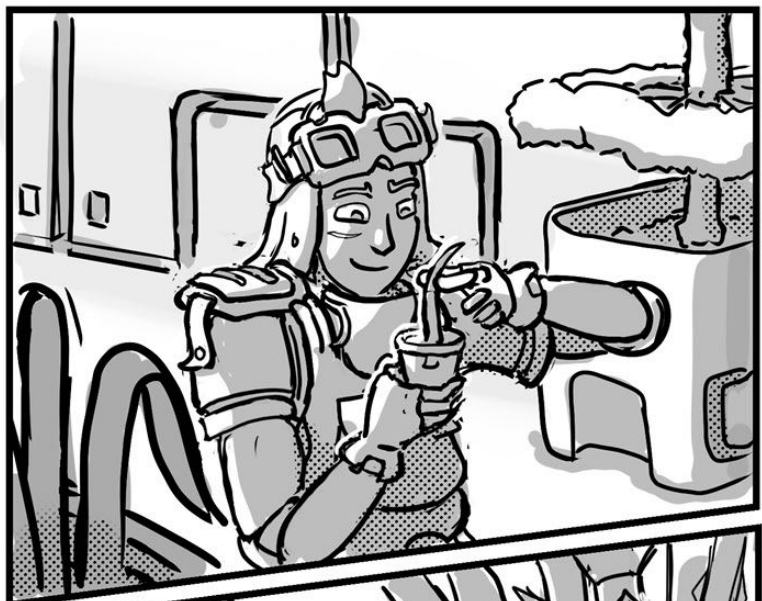
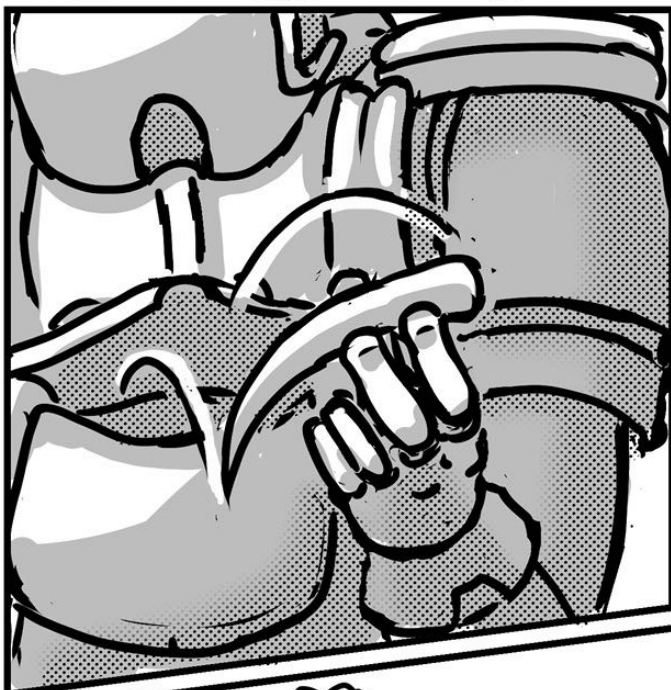
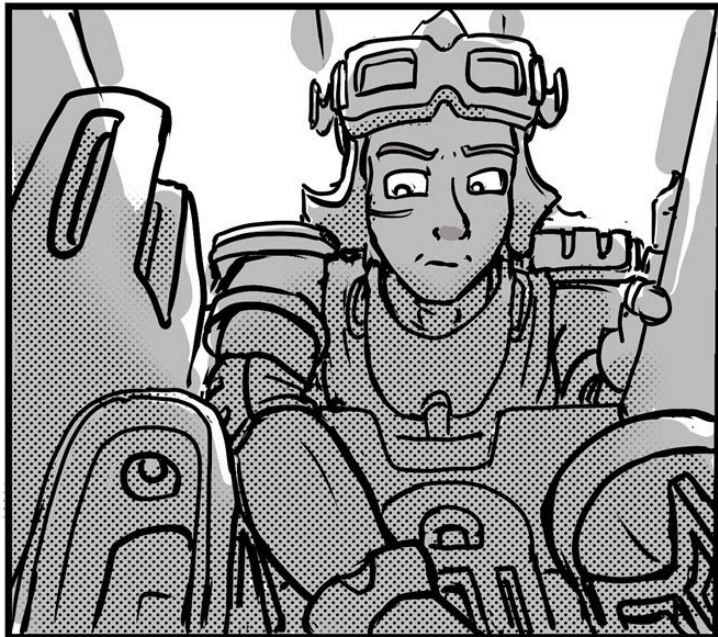




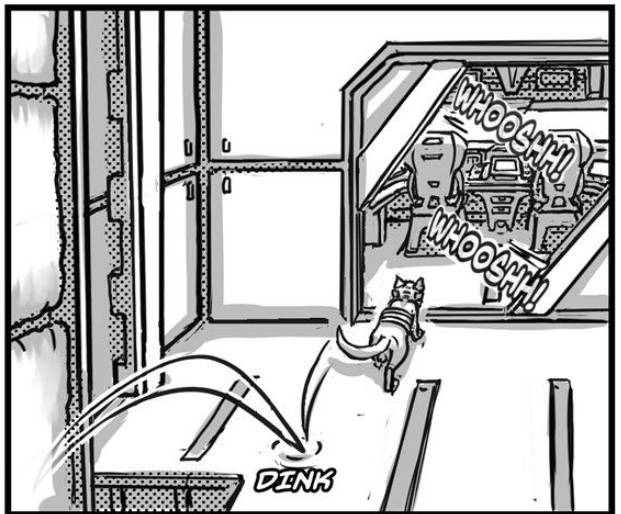
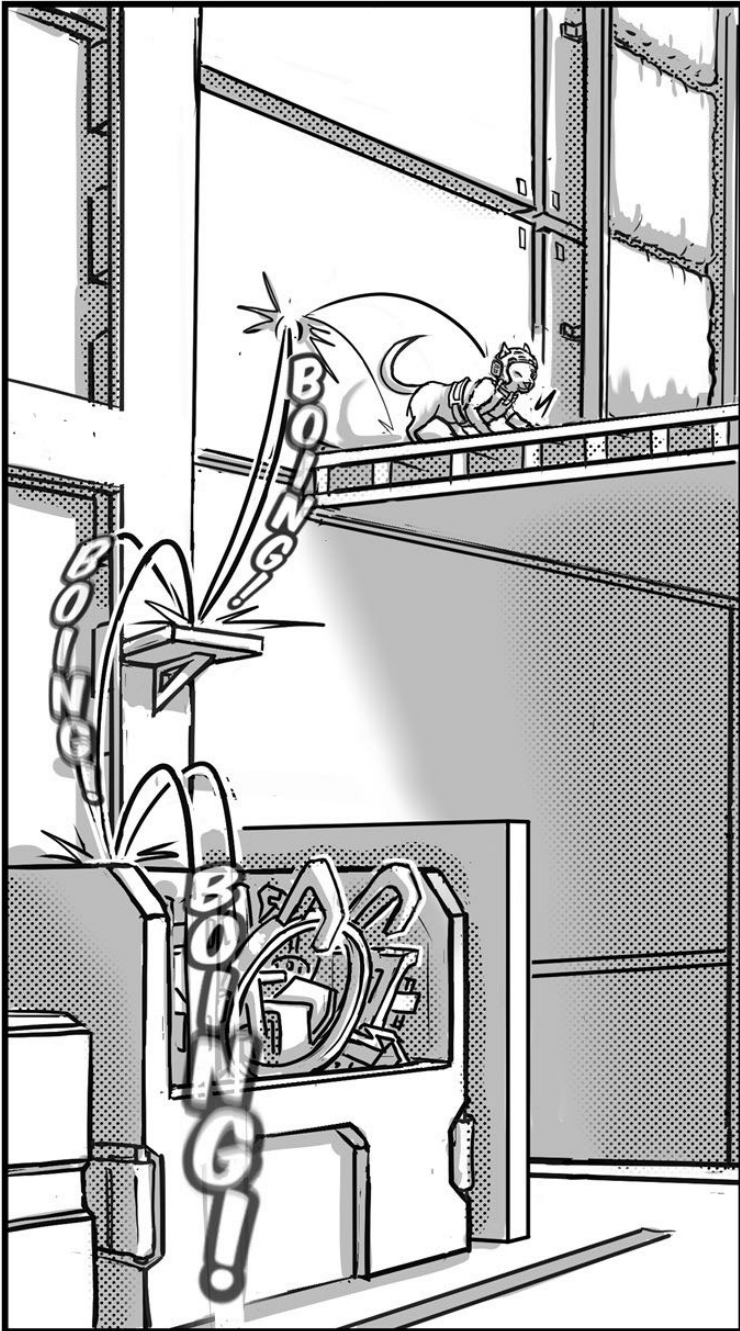
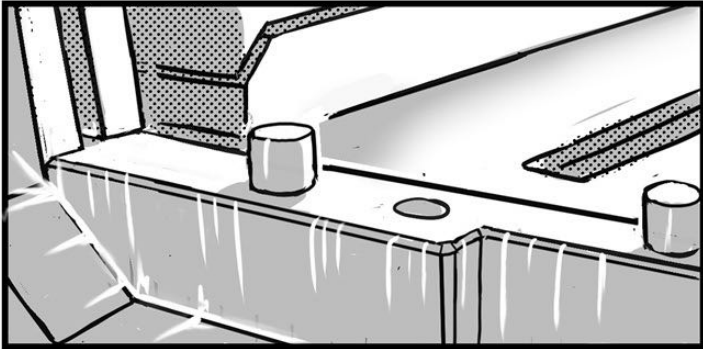
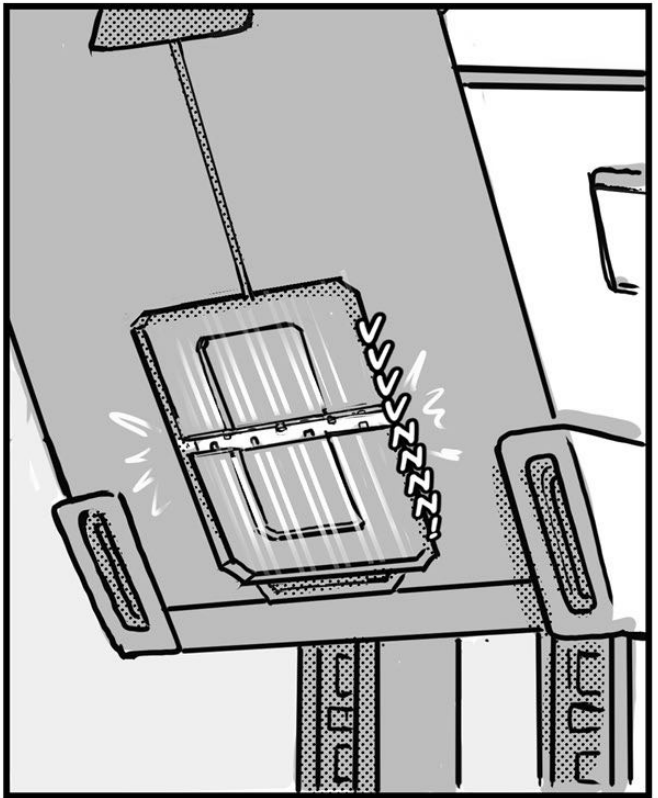
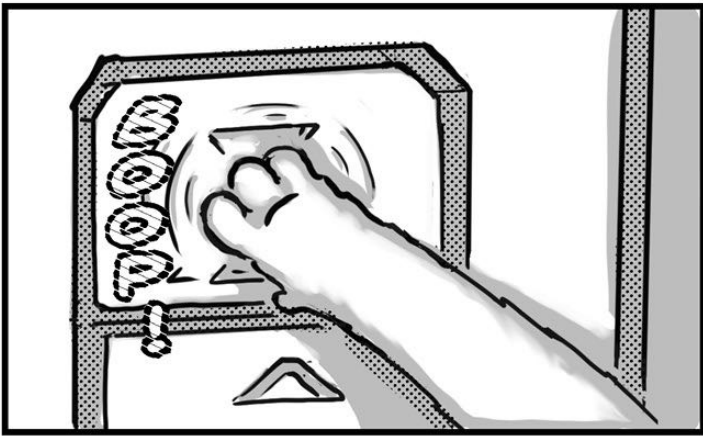




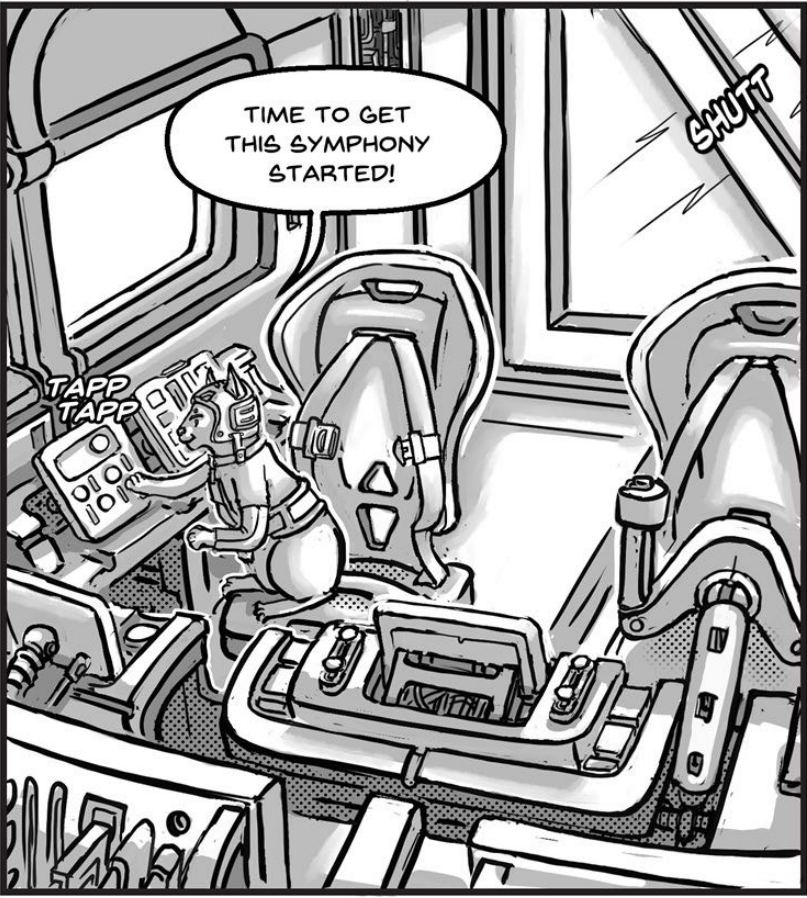




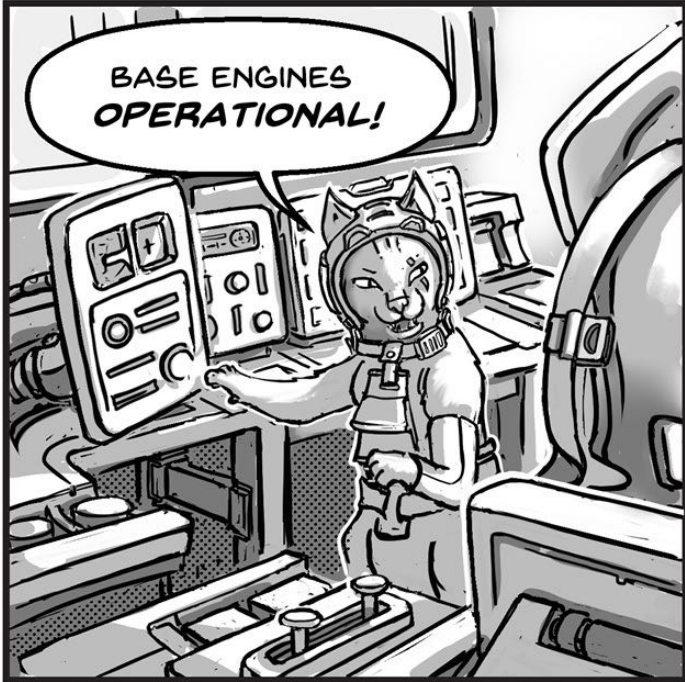
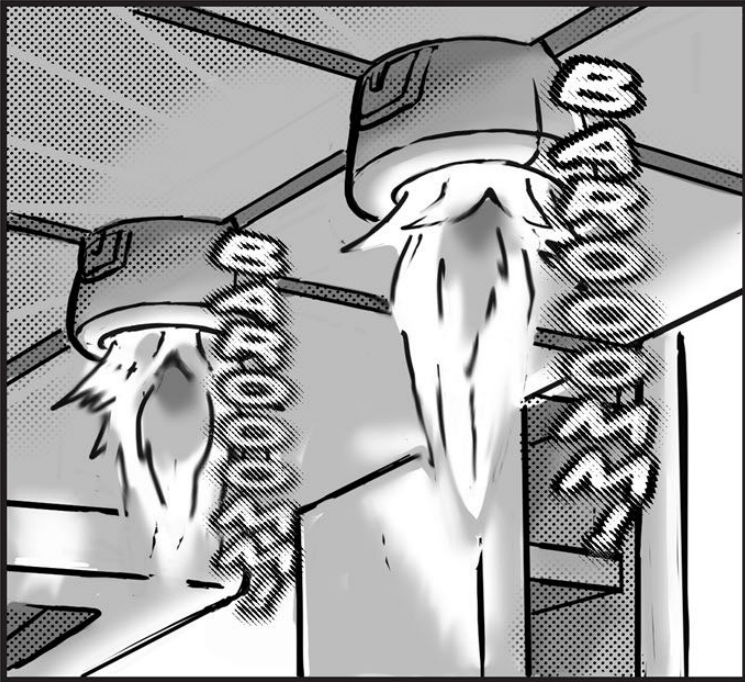
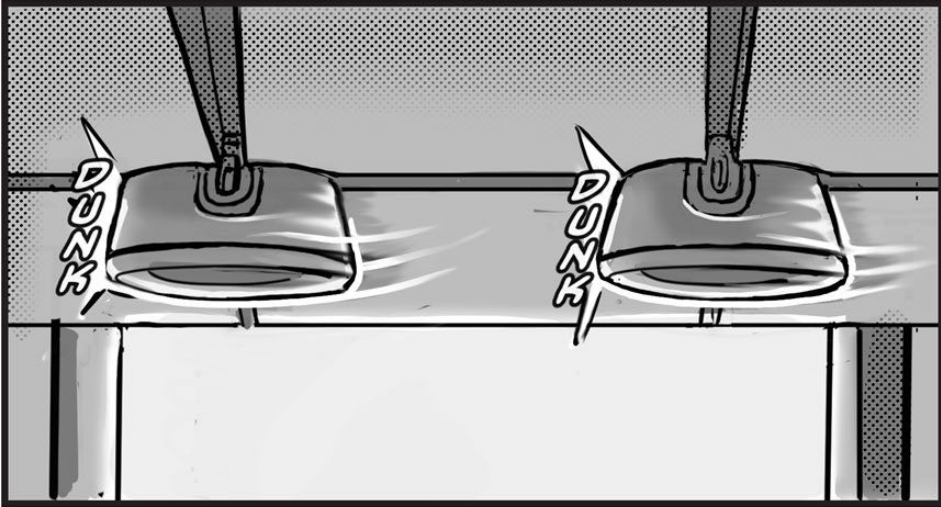






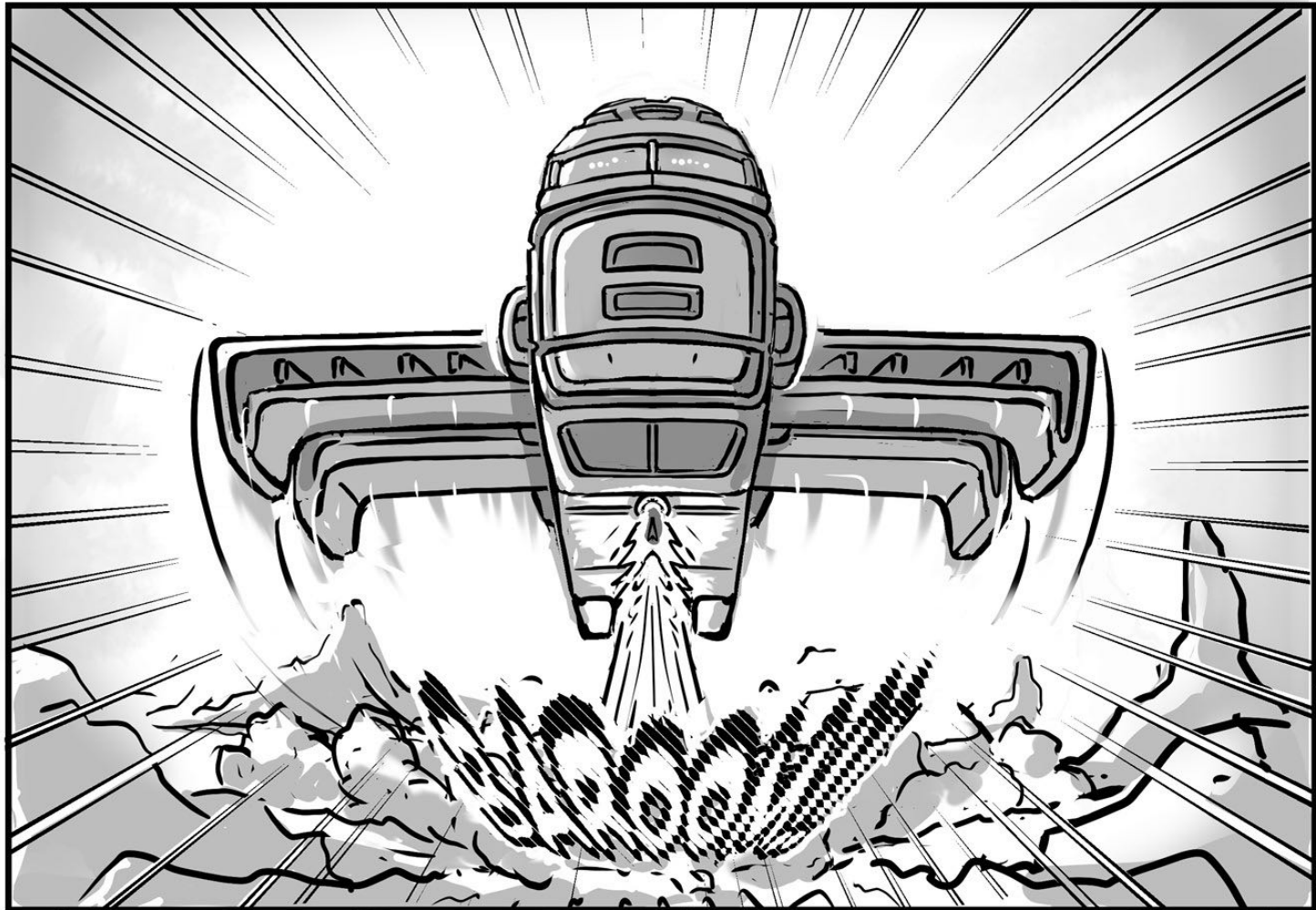
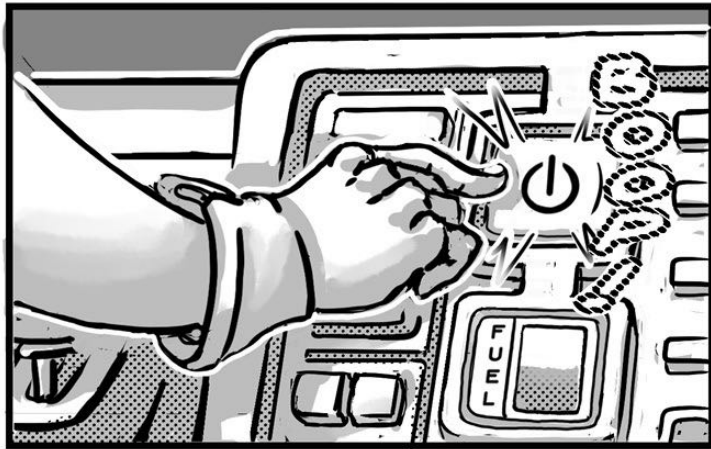


REAR ENGINES *OPERATIONAL!*

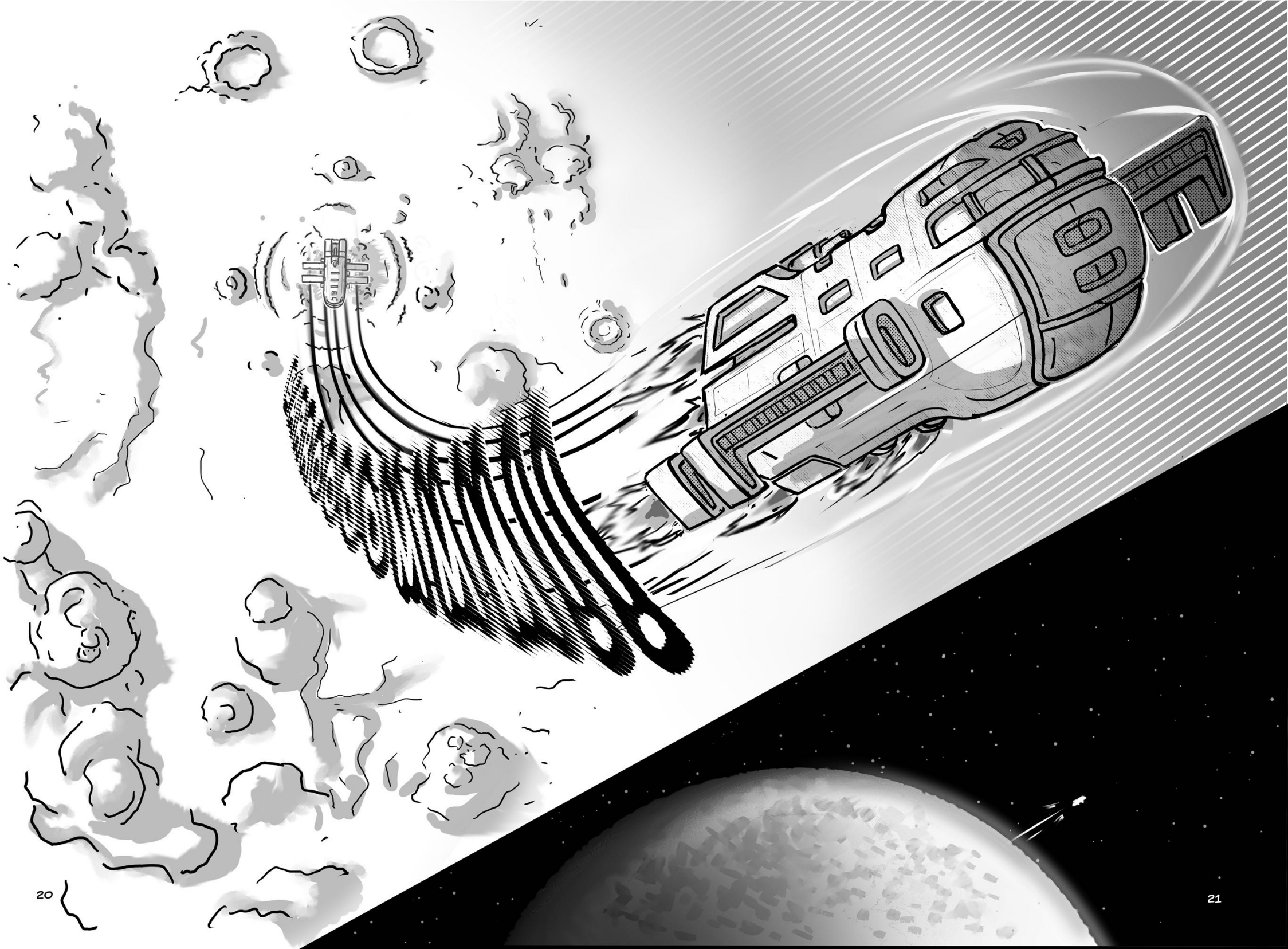












A FEW HOURS LATER...

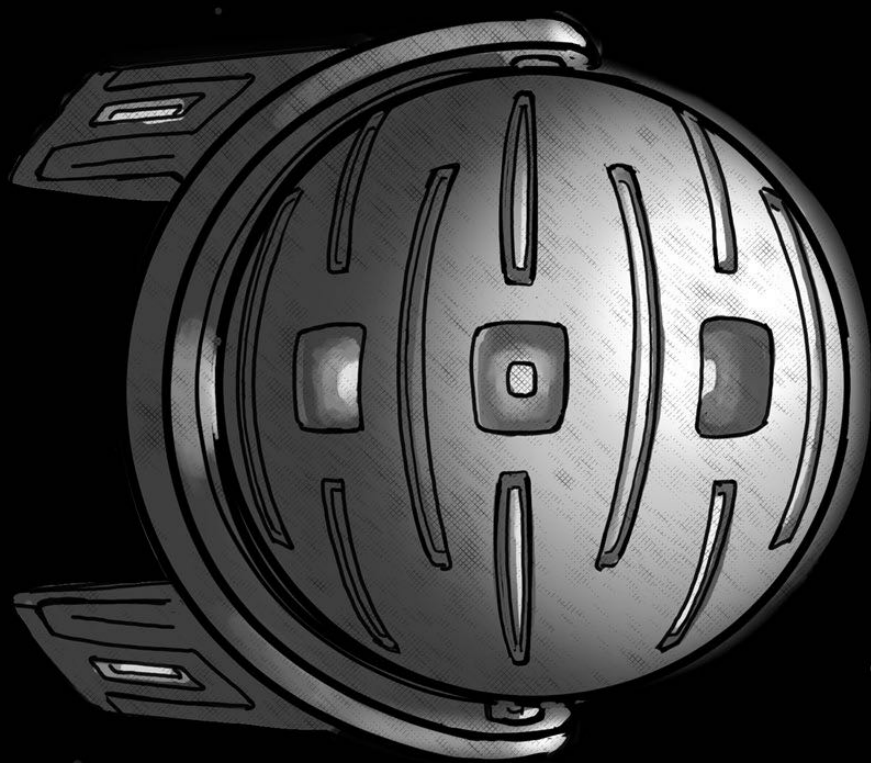
Just outside The Core,  
the last refuge for  
the human race.



ARUPA! WE ARE IN  
RANGE, OPEN A LINE  
WITH TAP TO GET  
TODAY'S  
BAY ASSIGNMENT

ON IT HUMAN!





INSIDE TAP'S  
HIDEOUT SOMEWHERE  
IN THE CORE.

INCOMING  
COM-LINE

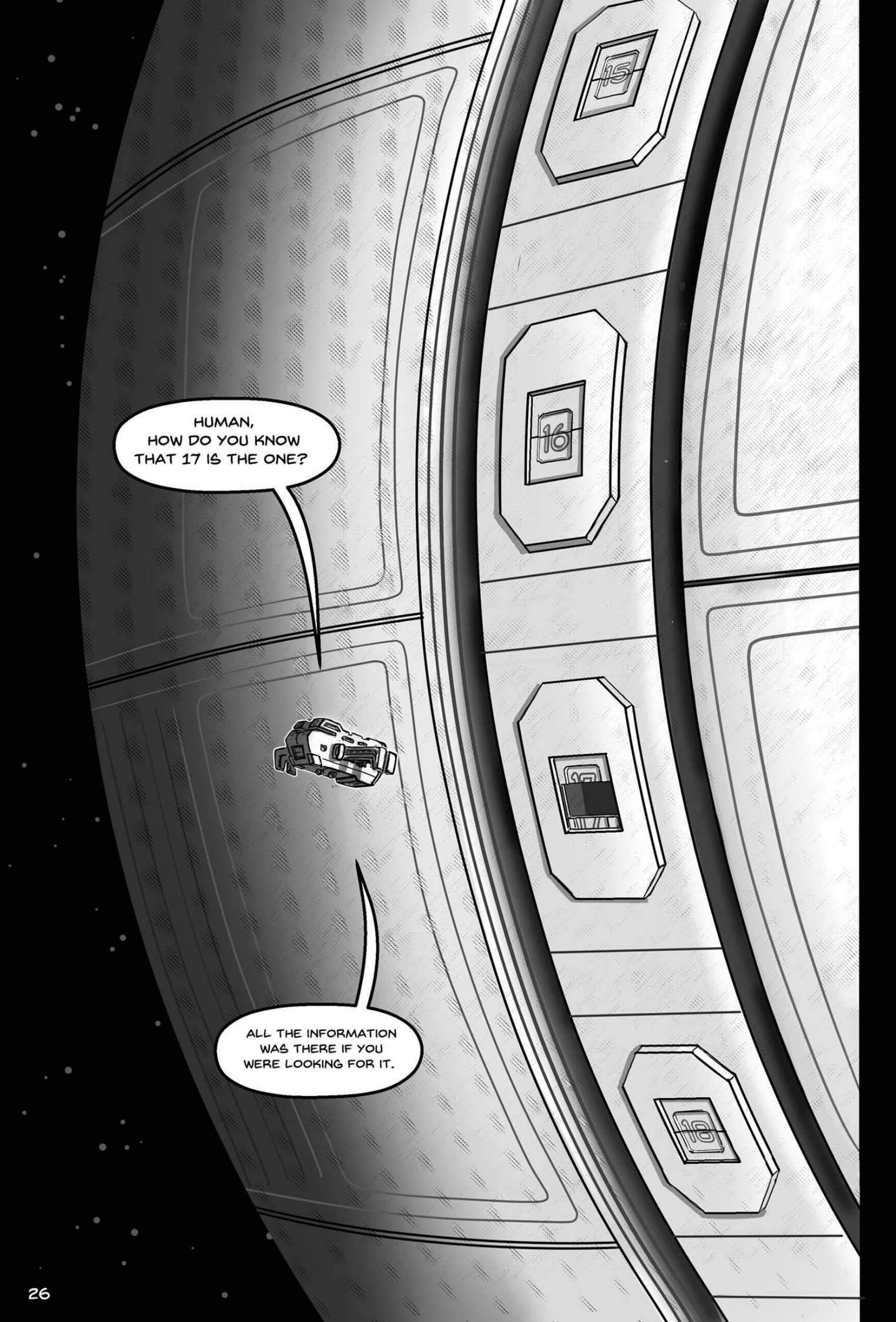
BEEP!  
BEEP!

BEEP!  
BEEP!

GB  
LU  
UB







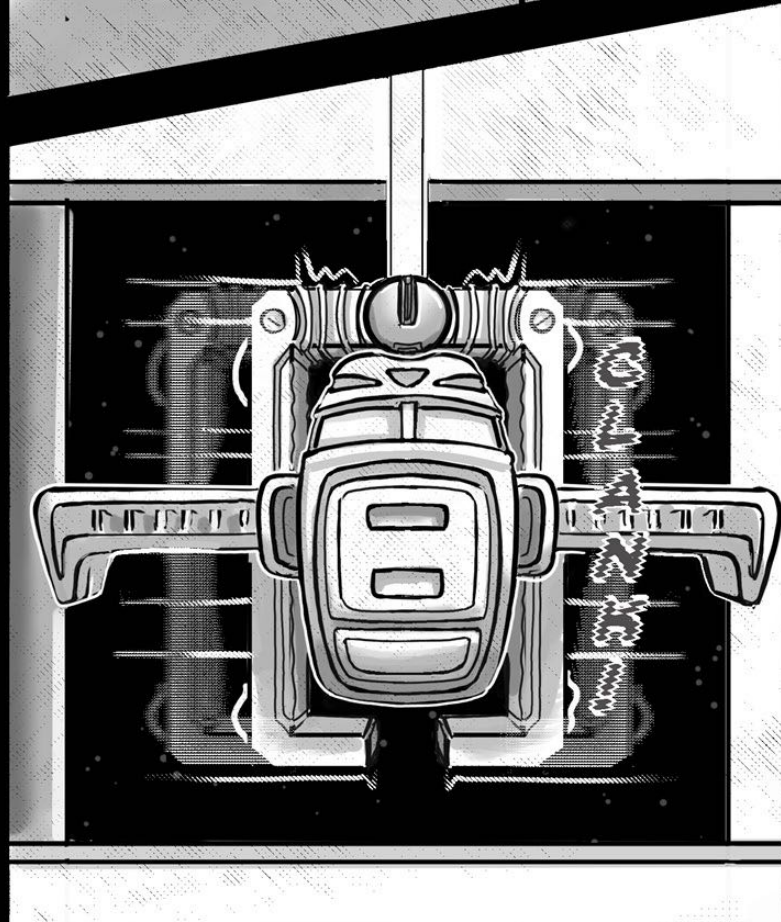
HUMAN,  
HOW DO YOU KNOW  
THAT 17 IS THE ONE?

ALL THE INFORMATION  
WAS THERE IF YOU  
WERE LOOKING FOR IT.

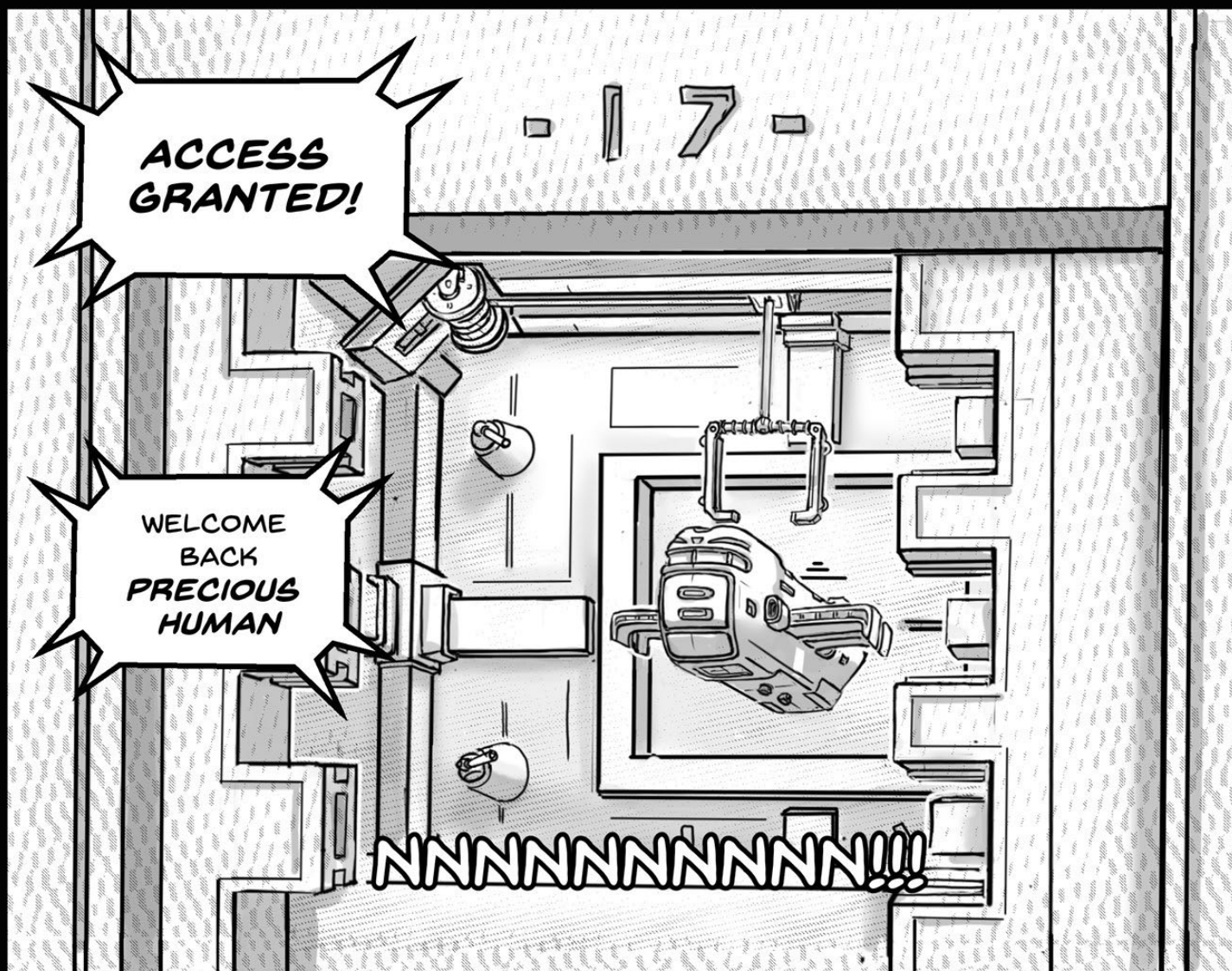
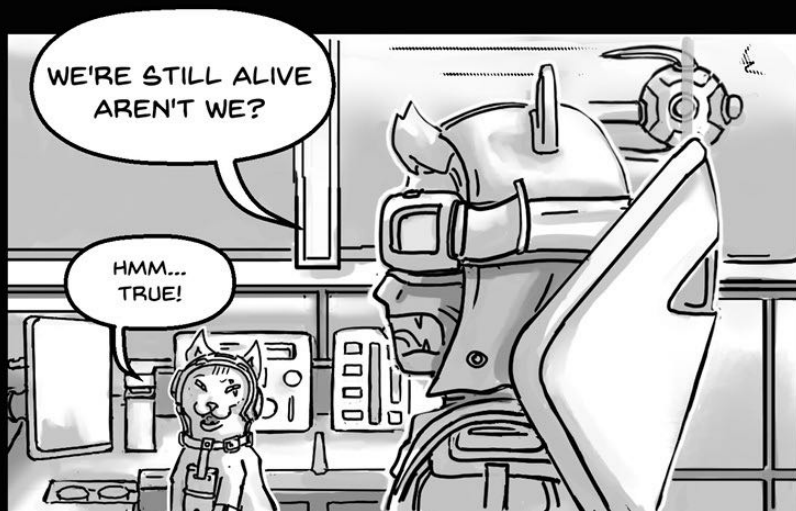
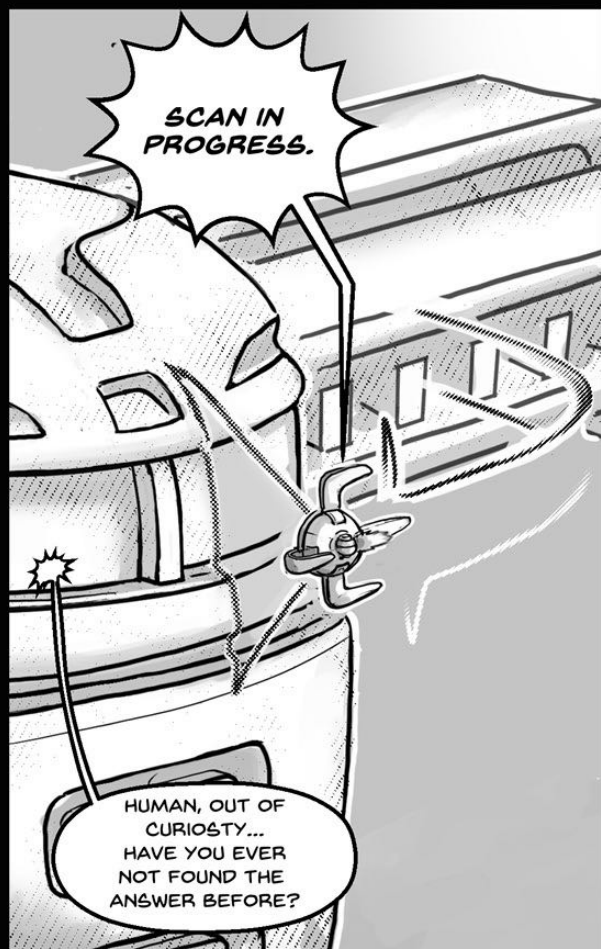




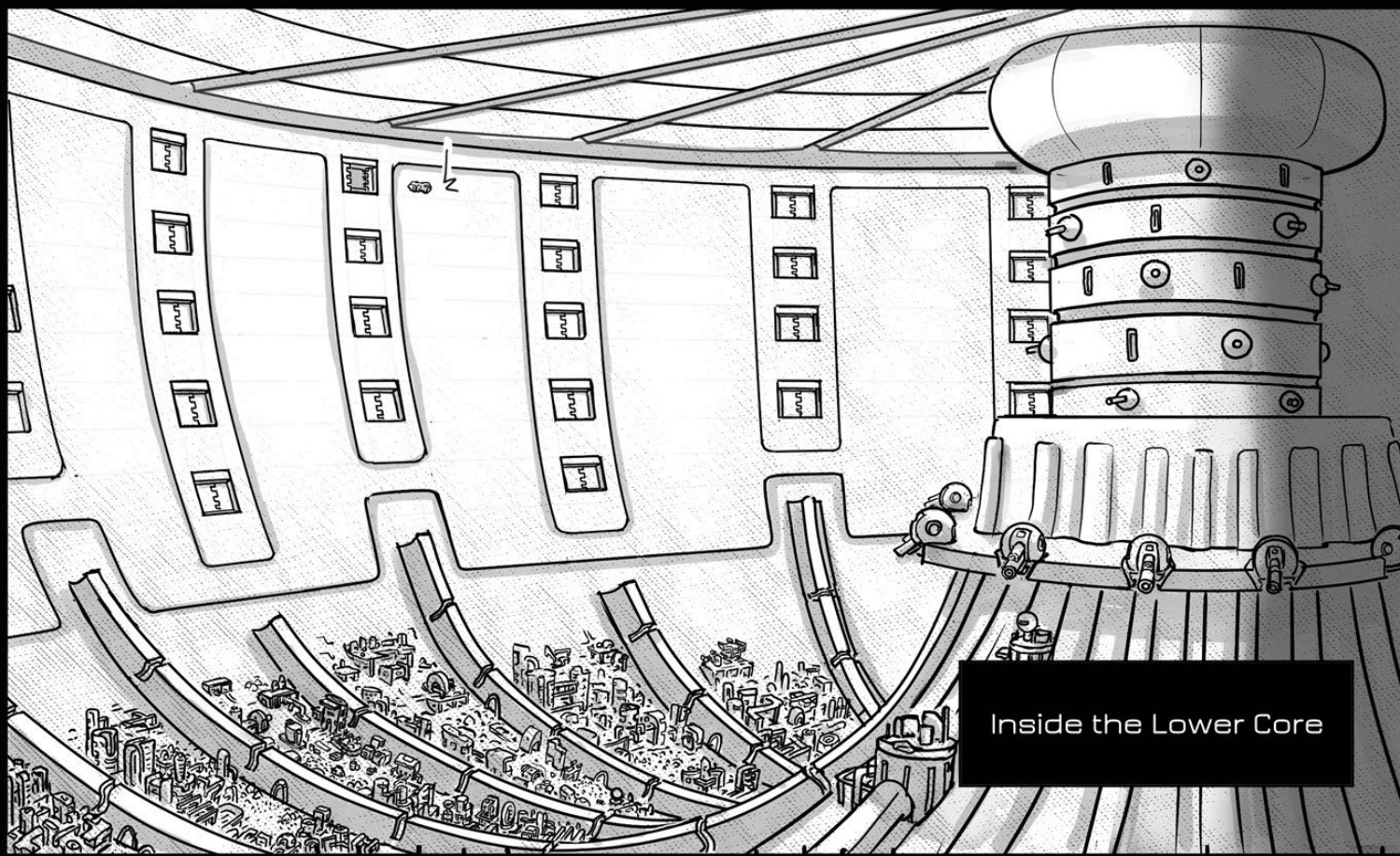
DISENGAGE  
ENGINES AND WEAPONS.  
INITIATING INSPECTION.  
FAILURE TO COMPLY  
WILL BE MET WITH SWIFT  
CATASTROPHIC  
JUDGEMENT.



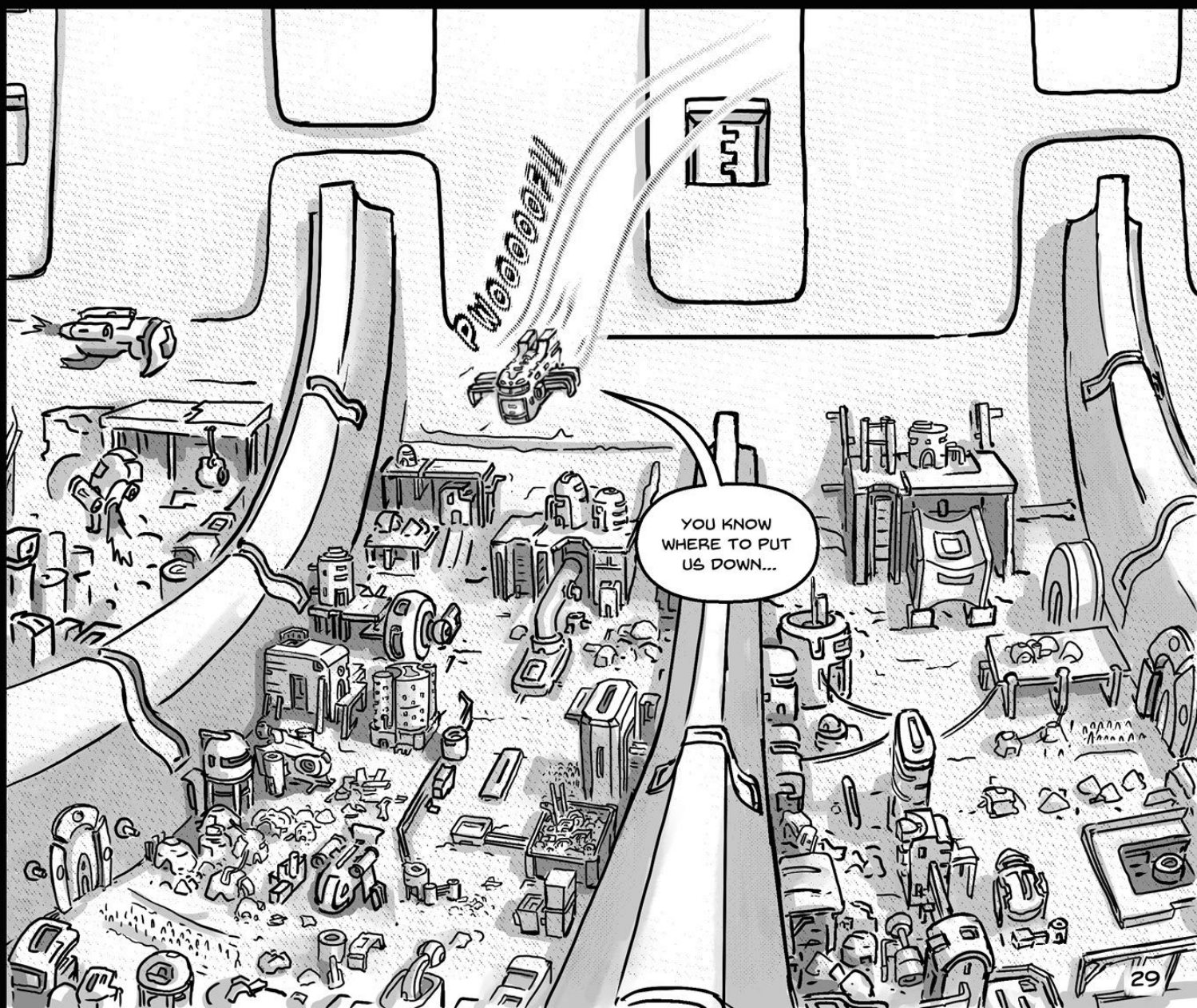






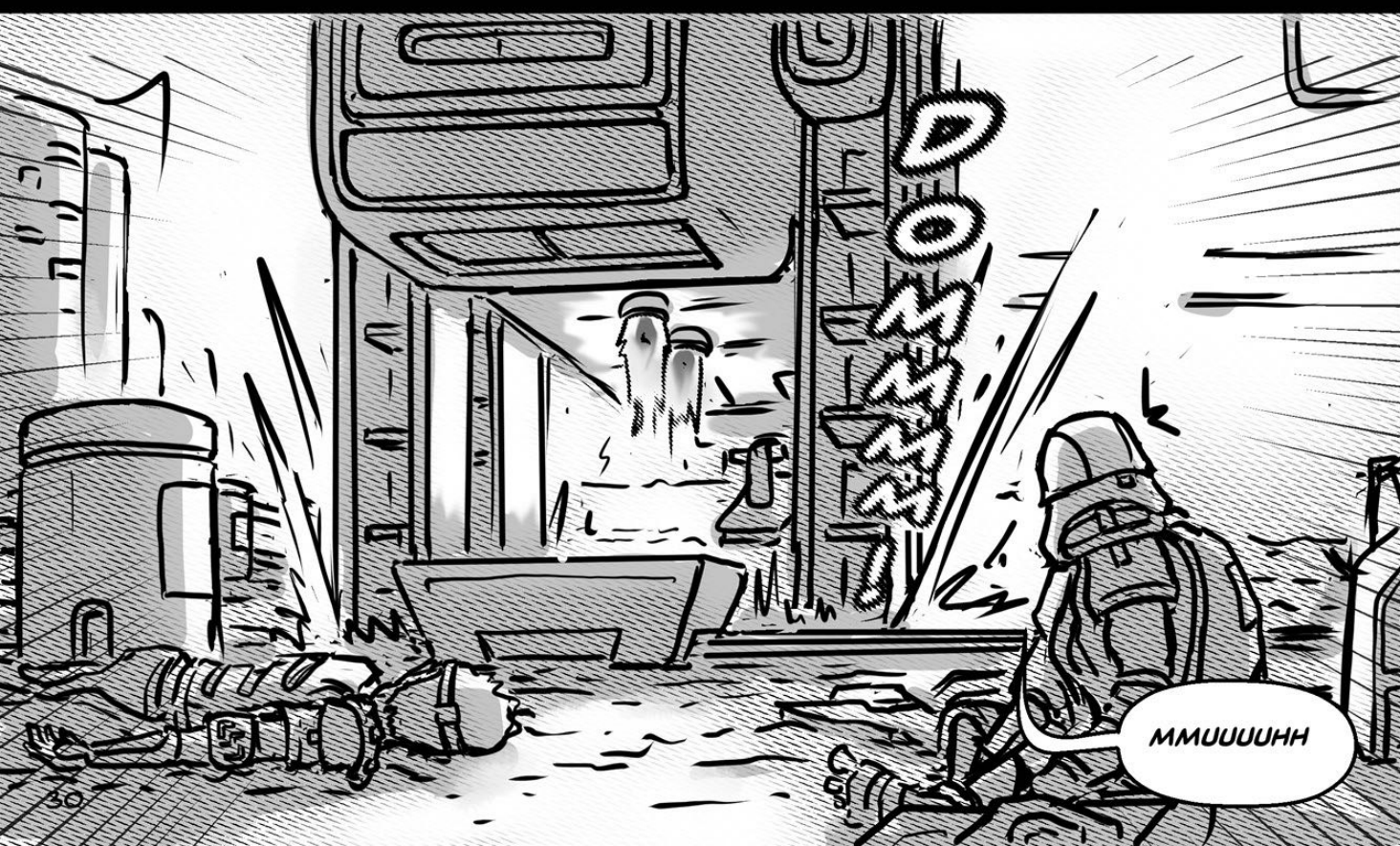
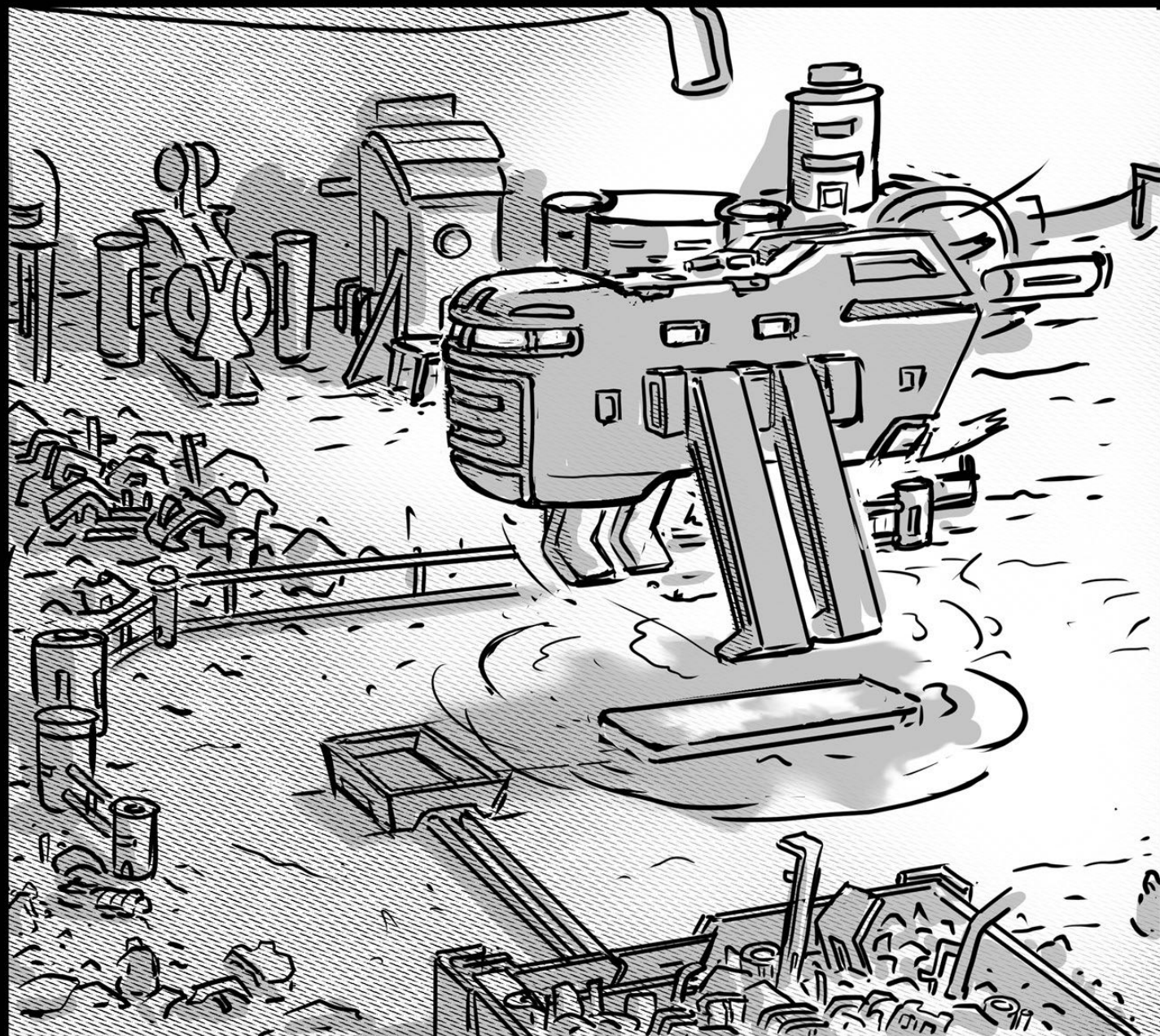


Inside the Lower Core

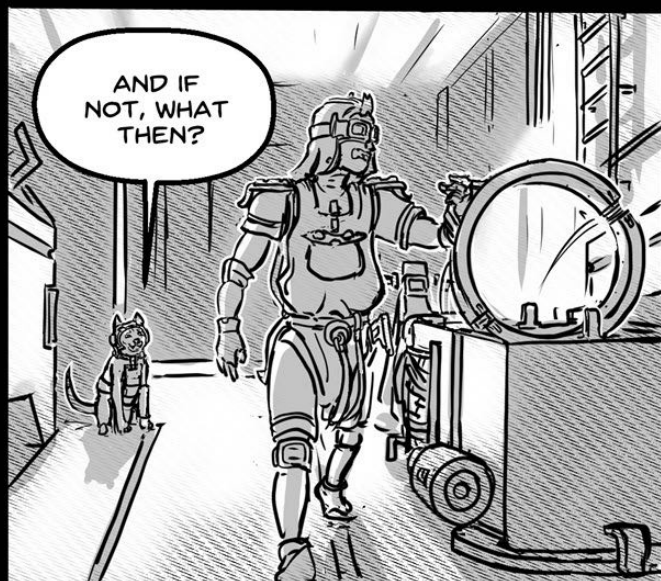


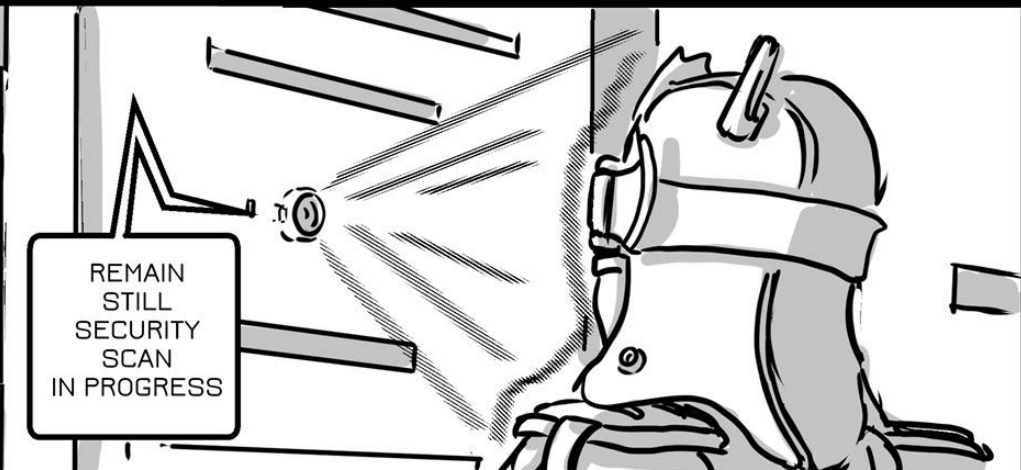
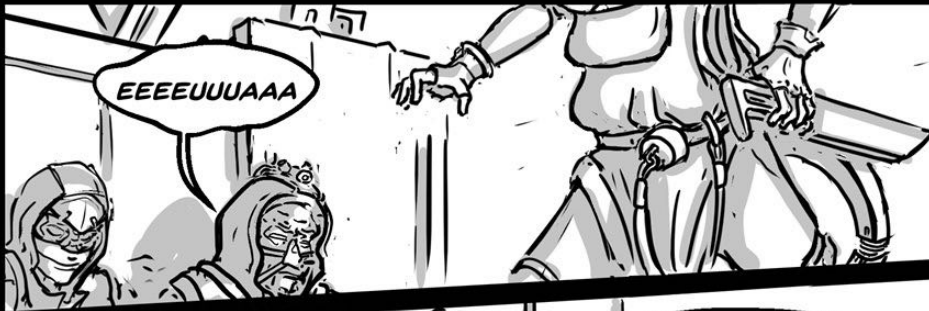
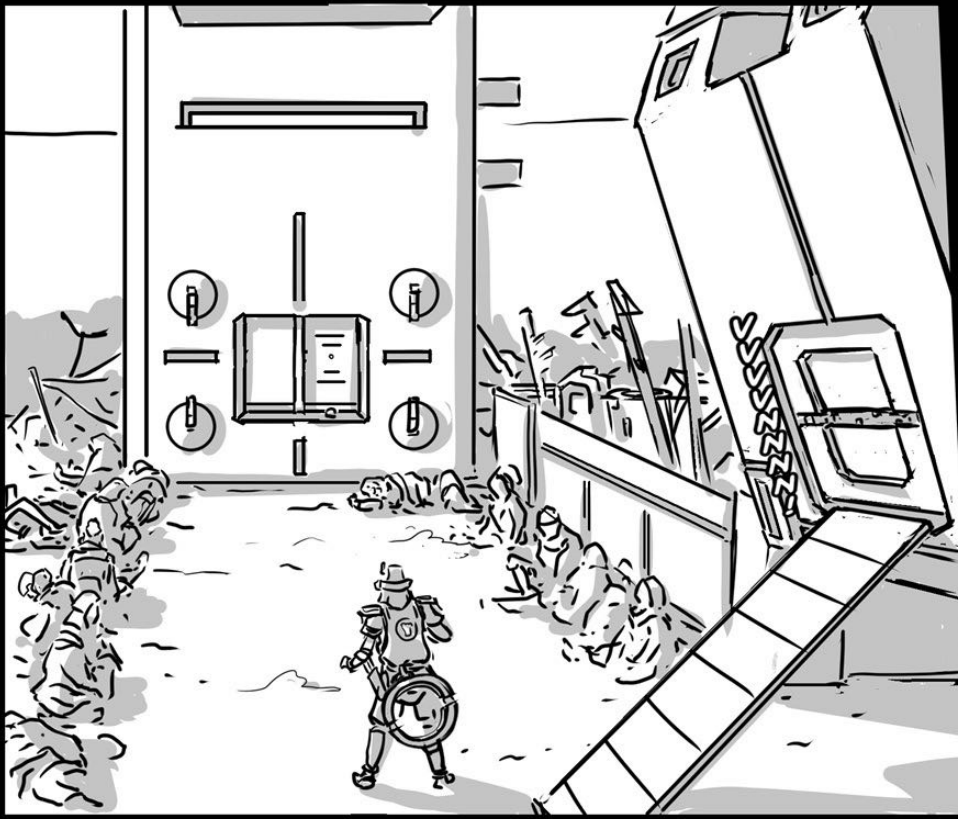
YOU KNOW  
WHERE TO PUT  
US DOWN...



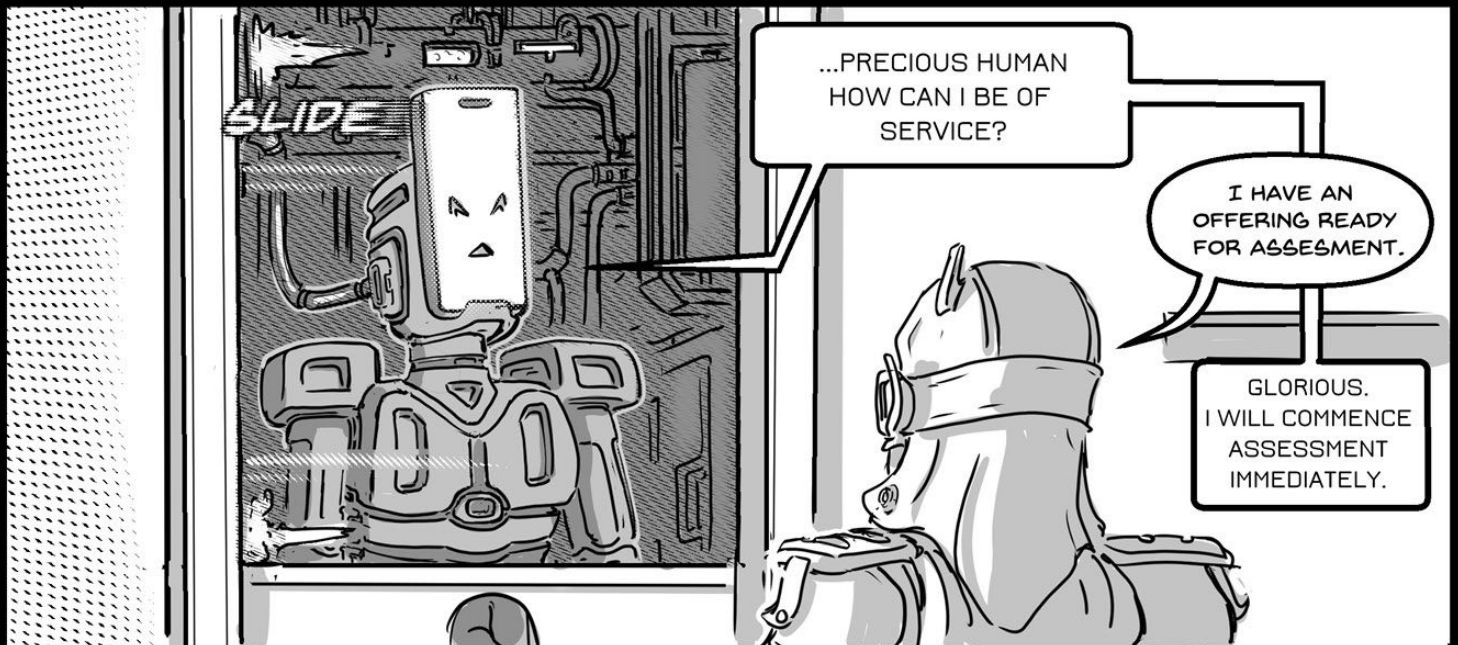












...PRECIOUS HUMAN  
HOW CAN I BE OF  
SERVICE?

I HAVE AN  
OFFERING READY  
FOR ASSESMENT.

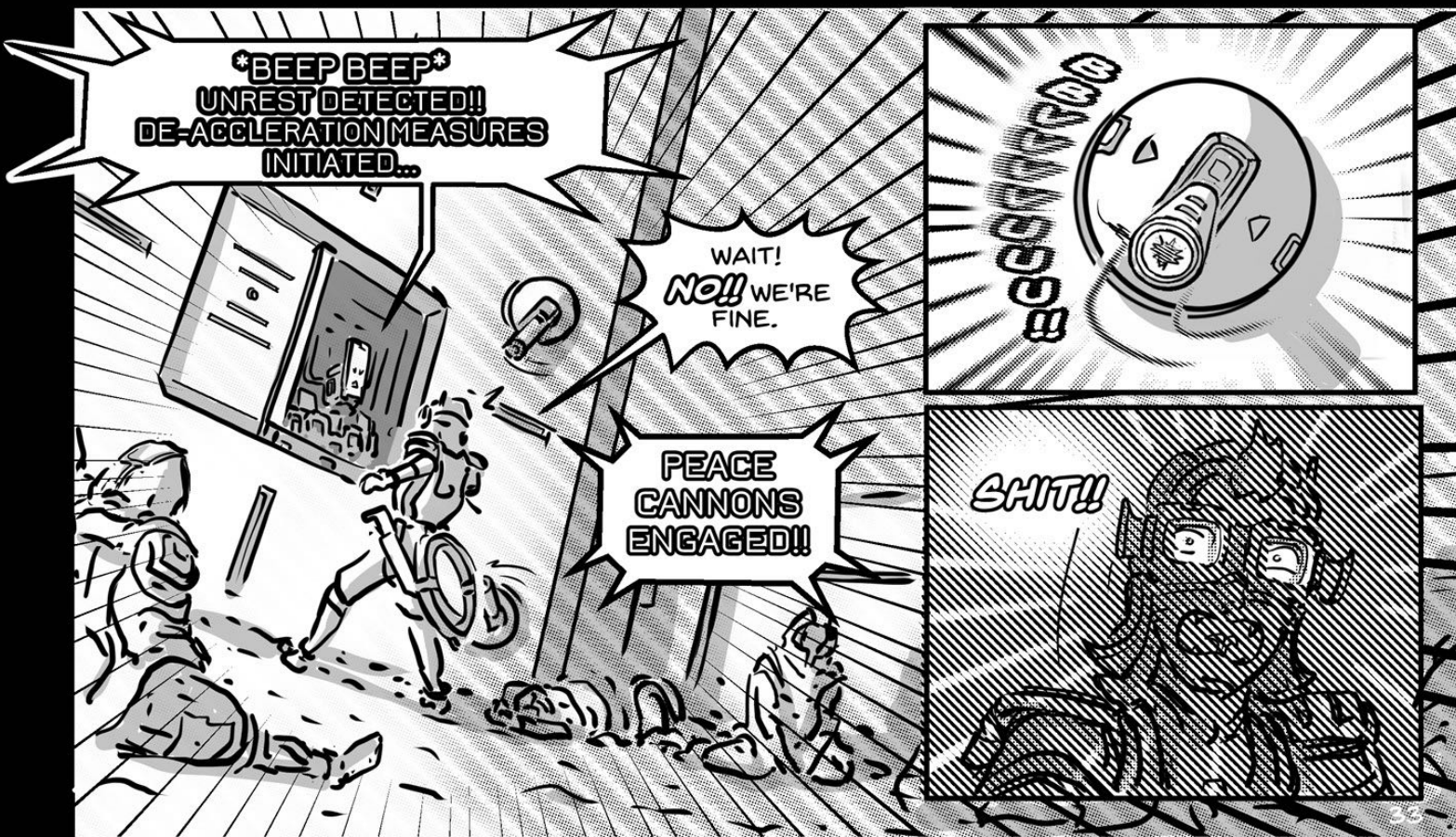
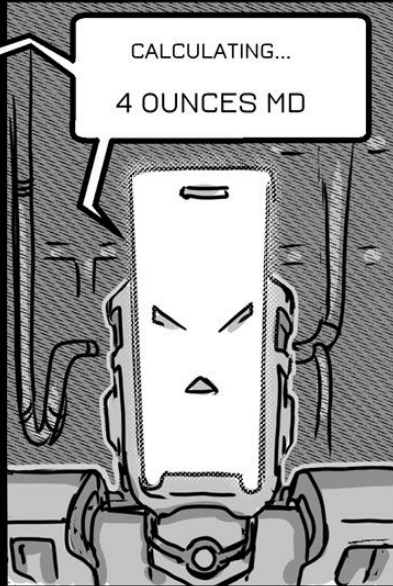
GLORIOUS.  
I WILL COMMENCE  
ASSESSMENT  
IMMEDIATELY.

YOUR OFFERING  
CONTAINS 7 DIFFERENT  
PRECIOUS MATERIALS  
WEIGHING IN AT 2000KGS.

WITH TODAY'S  
EXCHANGE RATE  
THIS OFFERING CAN BE  
CONVERTED INTO....

CALCULATING...  
4 OUNCES MD

WHAT?!  
ONLY 4? BUT,  
WE DOUBLED OUR  
QUANTITY!!



\*BEEP BEEP\*  
UNREST DETECTED!!  
DE-ACCELERATION MEASURES  
INITIATED...

WAIT!  
No!! WE'RE  
FINE.

PEACE  
CANNONS  
ENGAGED!!

SHIT!!





DO YOU ACCEPT  
THE EXCHANGE?!!

YES! I ACCEPT...



GREAT!

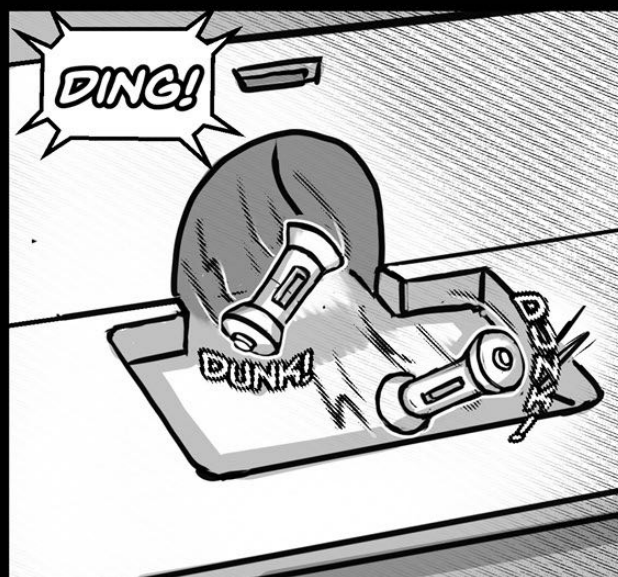
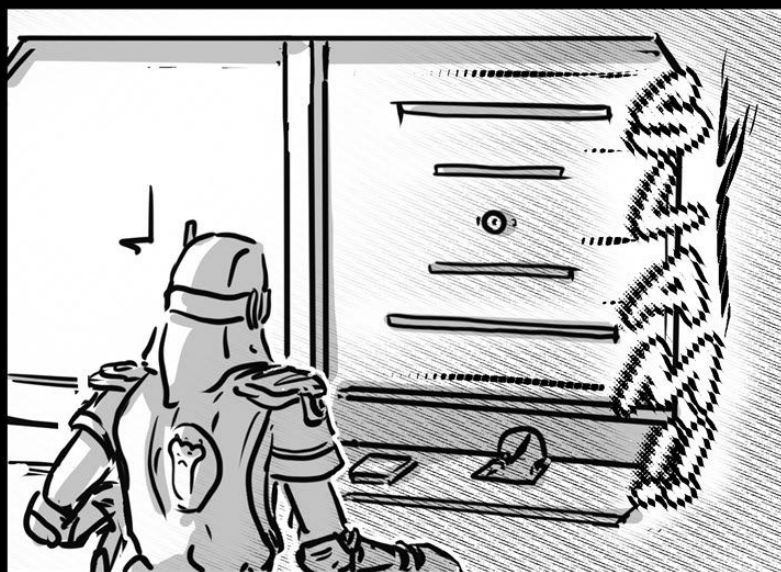
PEACE  
CANNONS  
DISENGAGED!!



CLUNK!

CLANK!!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE  
CORE. YOUR DETERMINATION  
IS THE FUEL THAT  
PROPELS US TOWARDS  
SALVATION...



DING!

DUNK!



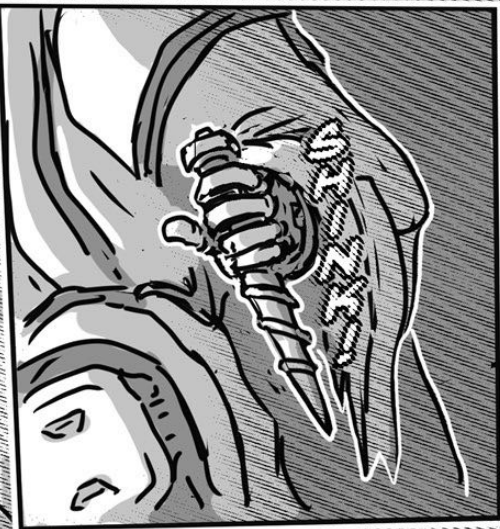
\*SIGH\*  
SALVATION FOR  
WHO...



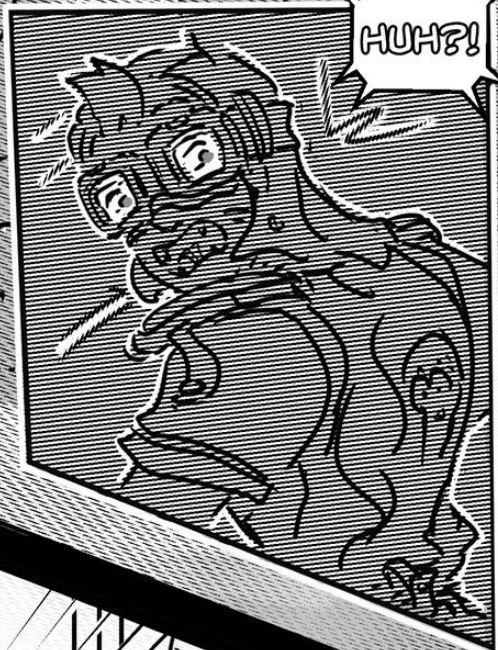
MMUUUUHH



DAMN IT!  
\*SIGH\*  
THIS WON'T EVEN  
GET US A PARTIAL  
PORTION...



HUH?!

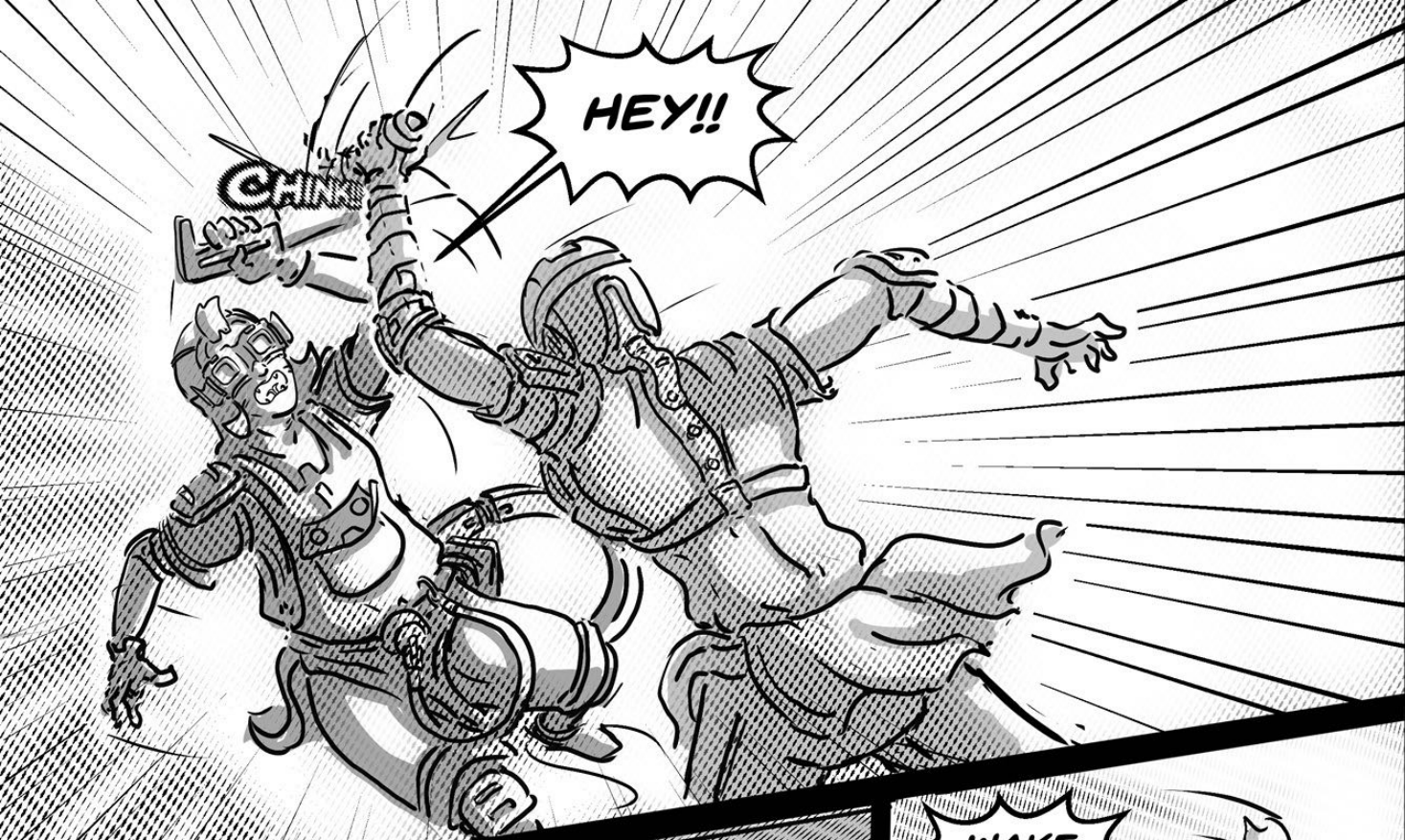


MMUUAAA!!!

SHIT!!







YOU'RE GOING TO TRIGGER THE CANNONS!!

MUAAEEUUU

\*BEEP BEEP\*  
UNREST DETECTED!!  
DE-ACCELERATION MEASURES INITIATED...





IT'S TOO LATE!



MAAEEHH!

PEACE CANNONS FIRING!!!!

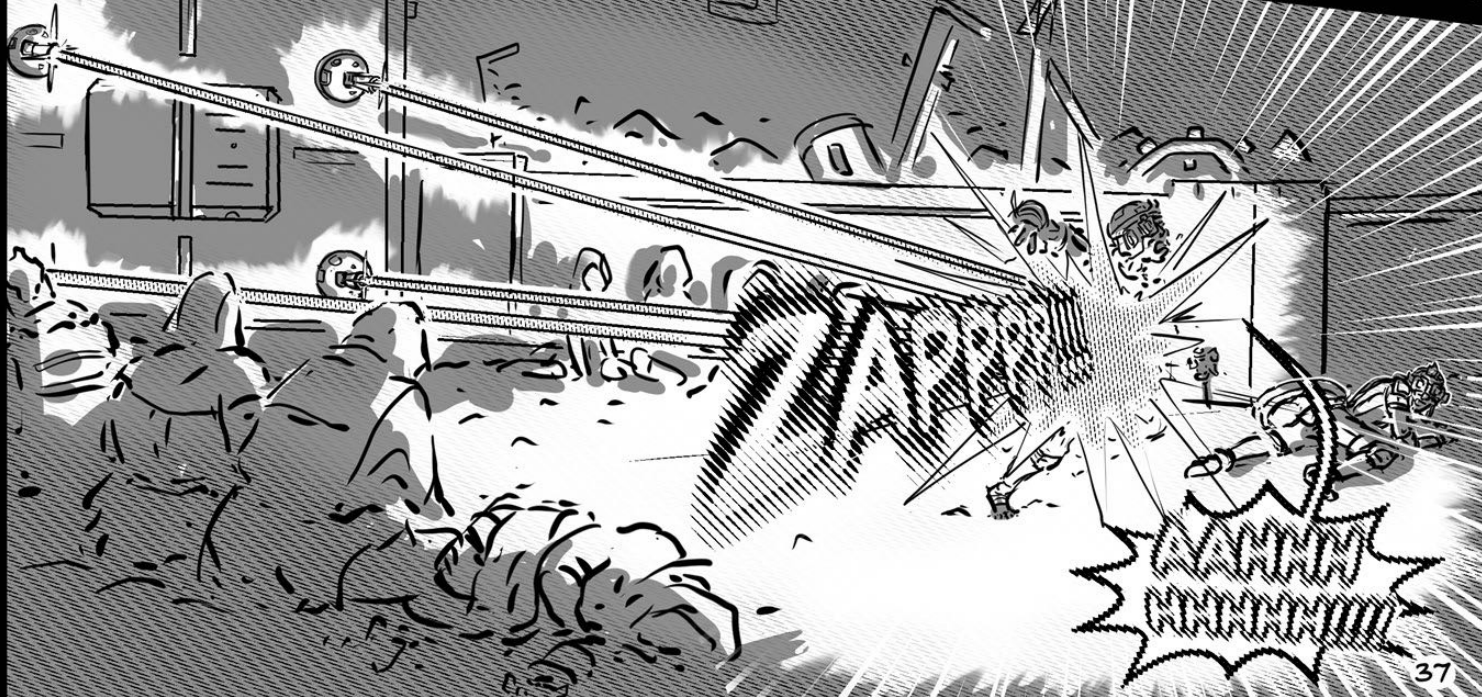


MUUHHH?

FIVE!!

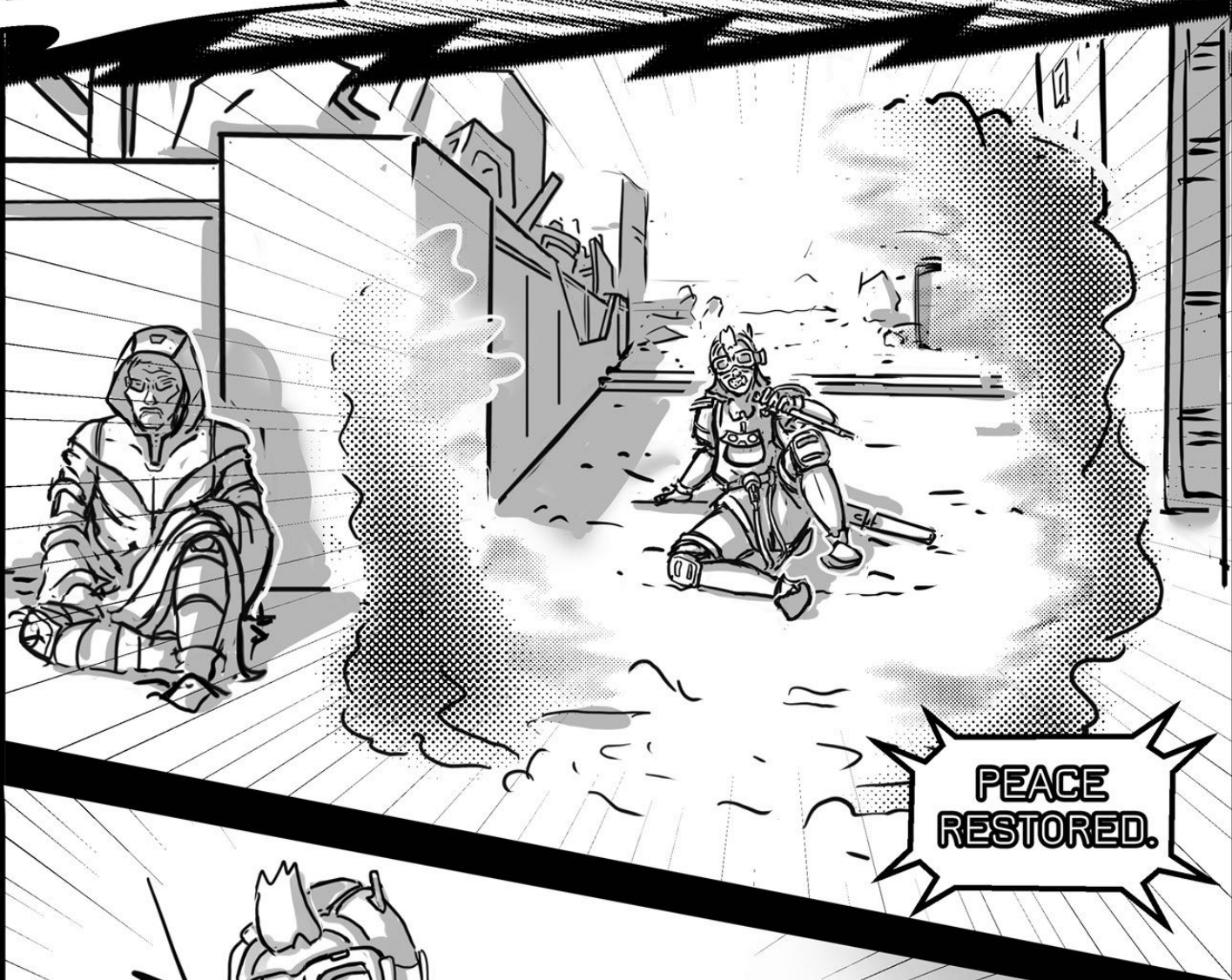


PEEEEEWWWWW!!!

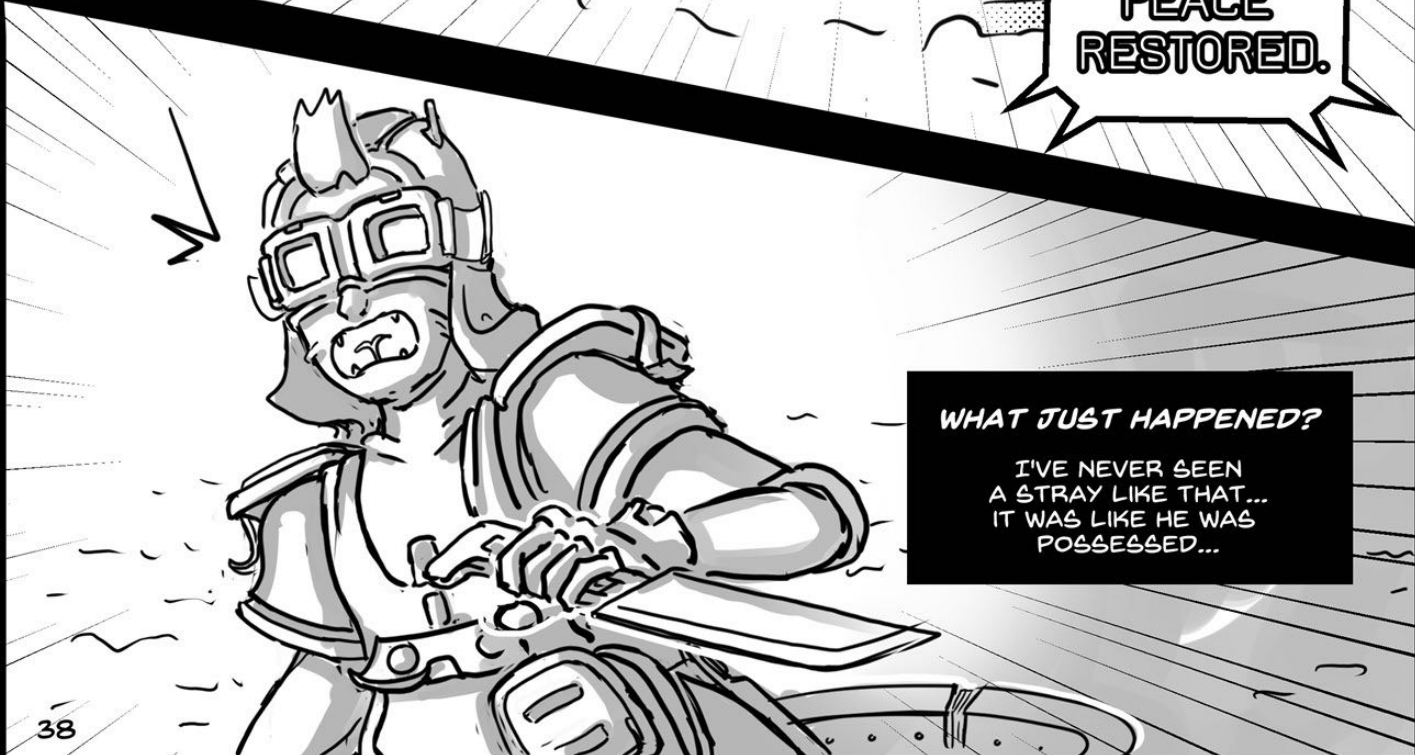


WAAAA  
WAAAA

AGGGGG  
GGGGGG  
GGGGGGGG



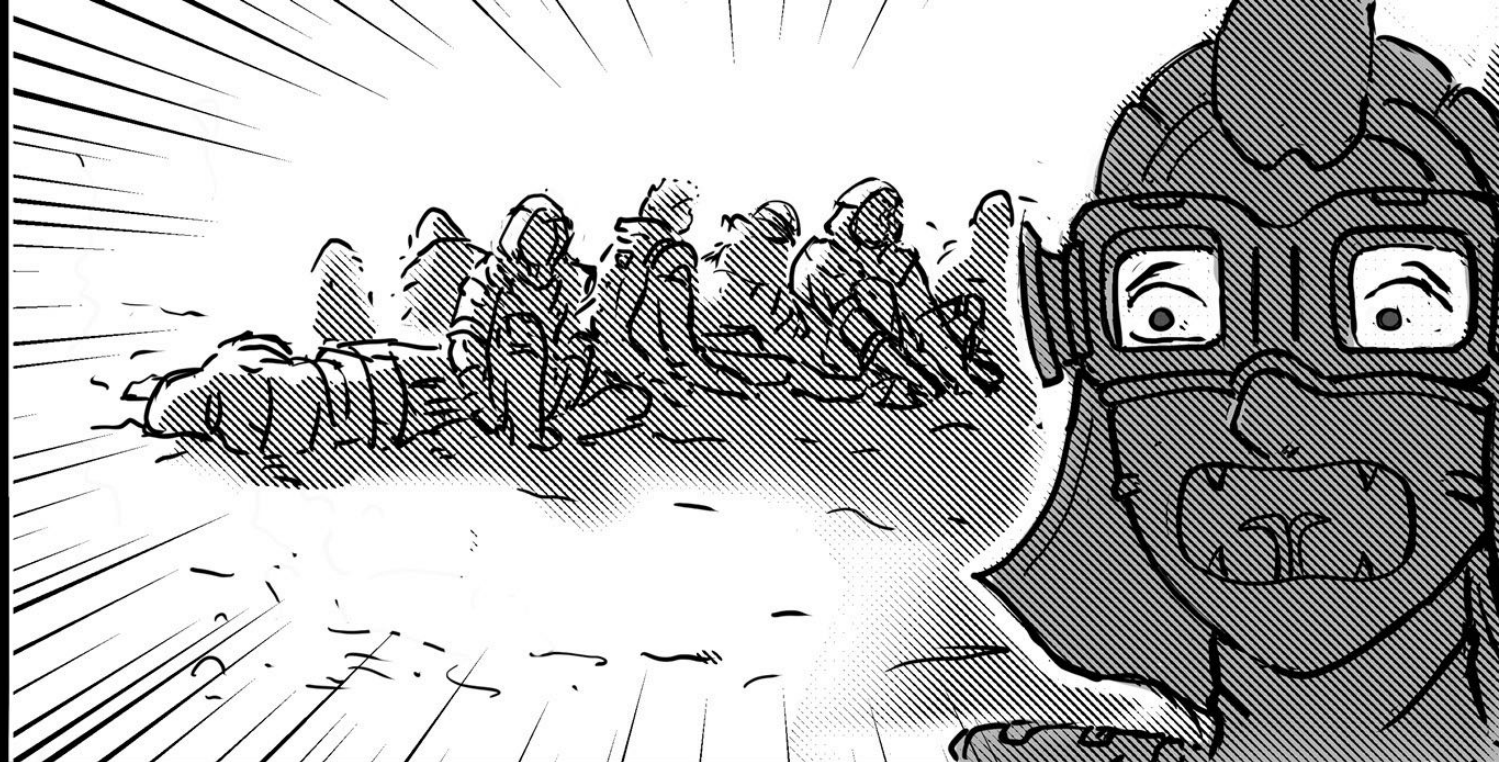
PEACE  
RESTORED.



WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

I'VE NEVER SEEN  
A STRAY LIKE THAT...  
IT WAS LIKE HE WAS  
POSSESSED...





**AND...EVEN AFTER THE CANNONS FIRED...**



**NOTHING...  
WHAT IS THE *CORE*  
DOING TO THEM?**

WHATEVER IT IS...  
IT CAN'T BE HELPED...  
AT LEAST, NOT  
BY ME.

I'M BARELY  
HOLDING ON AS  
IT IS...

BEEP  
BEEP!

HUMAN?  
DO YOU  
COPY?

LOUD AND CLEAR BUDDY!  
GOT AMBUSHED BY A STRAY.  
BUT I'M INTACT. CANNONS CLEARED  
THE DISTURBANCE.

BOOP!

THANK GOODNESS.  
DO WE PROCEED  
TO THE RATION  
MINISTRY NOW?

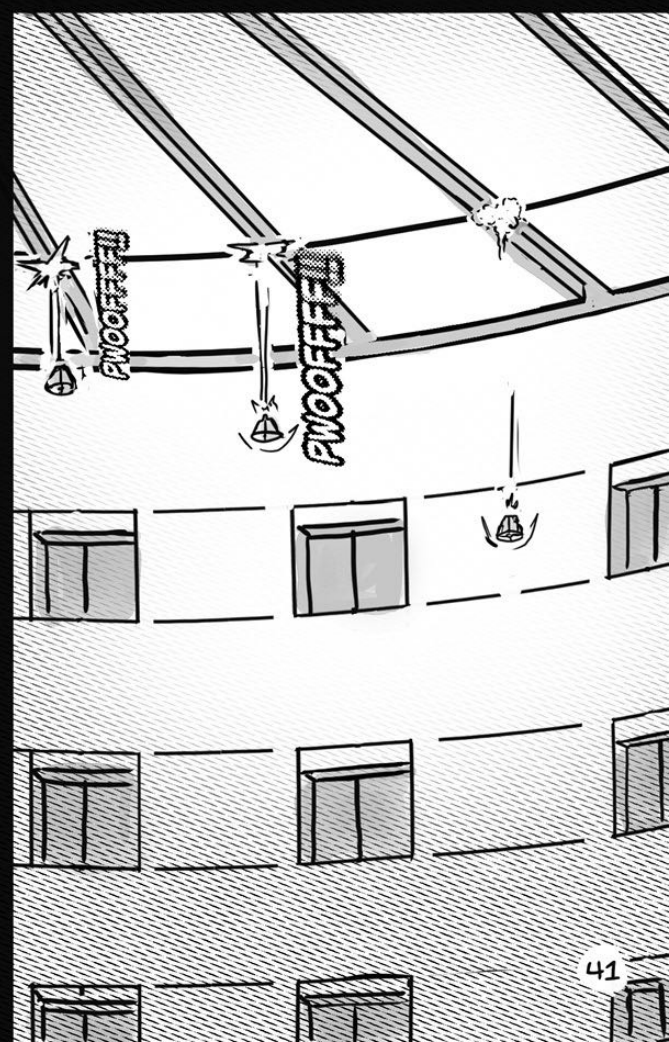
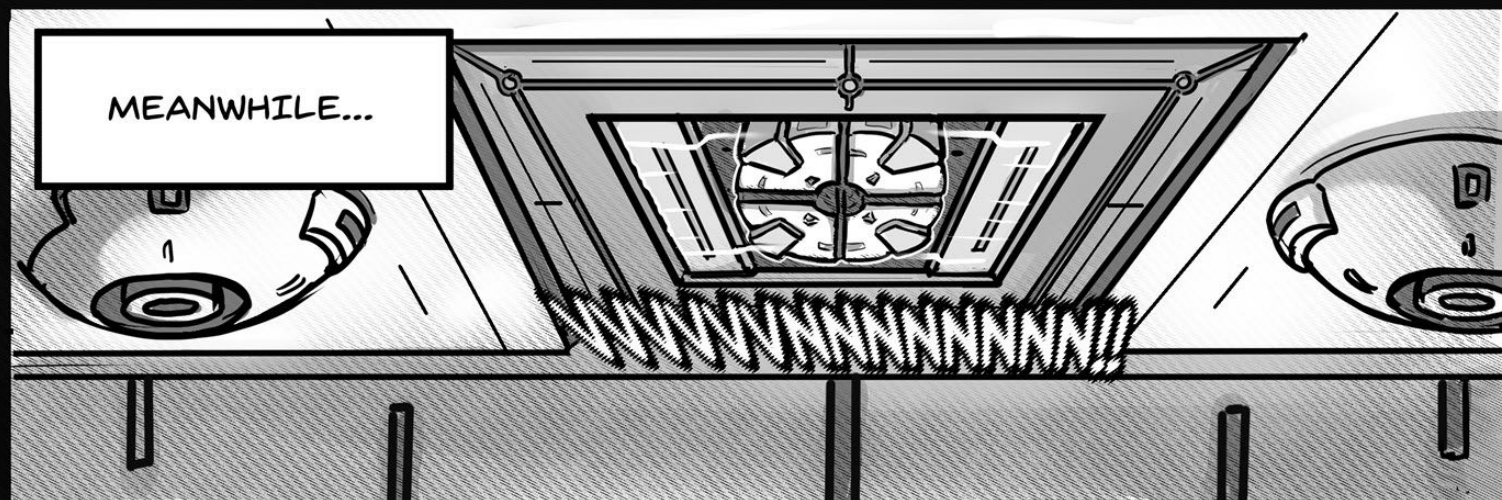
WE CAN'T...  
OUR OFFERING  
WASN'T ENOUGH...

WHAT?! HOW COULD  
THAT BE? DIDN'T WE  
DOUBLED  
THE QUANTITY..

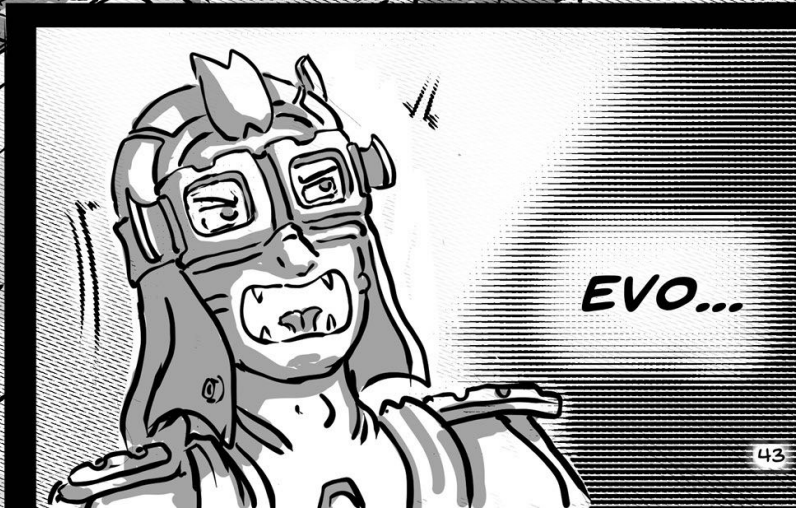
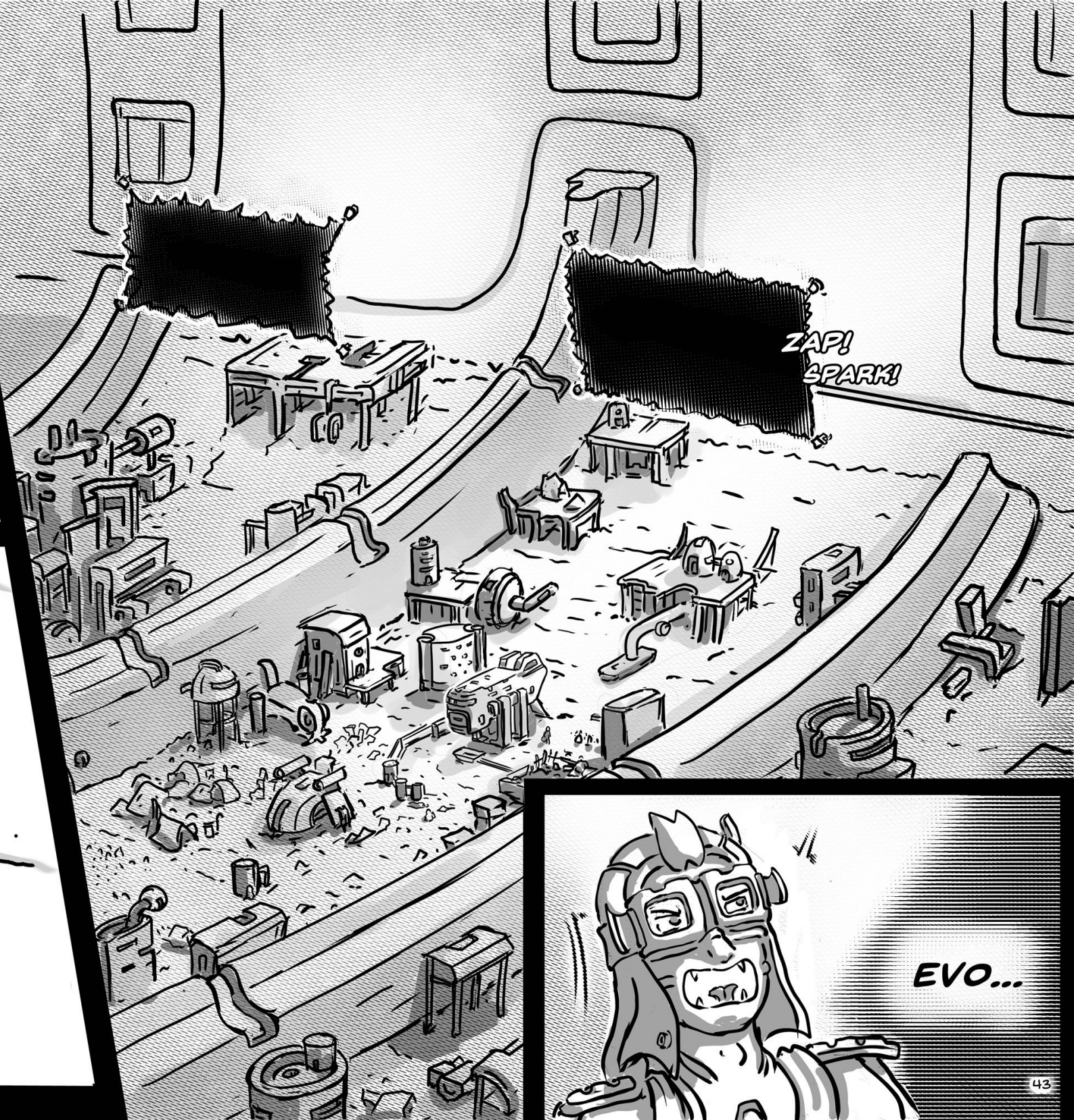
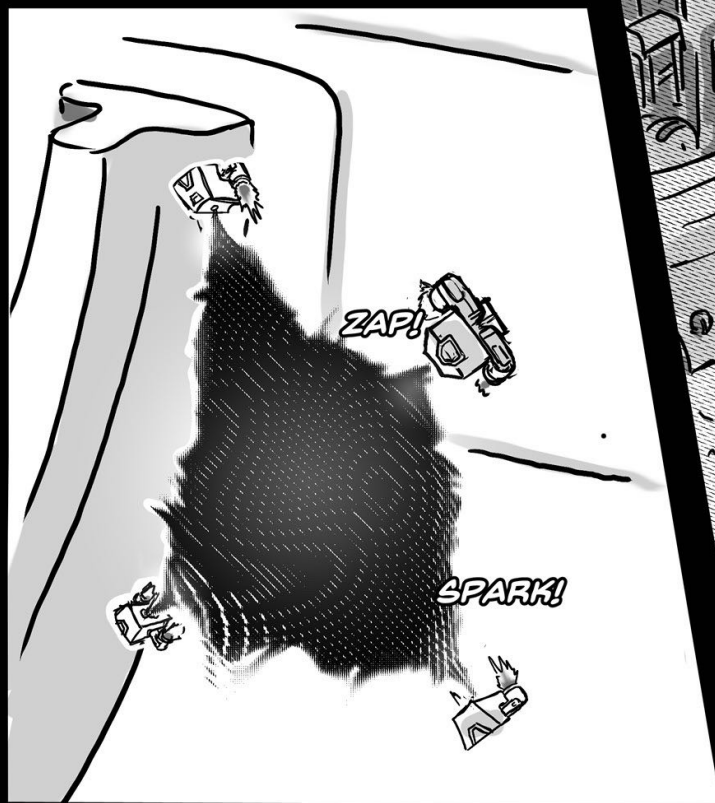
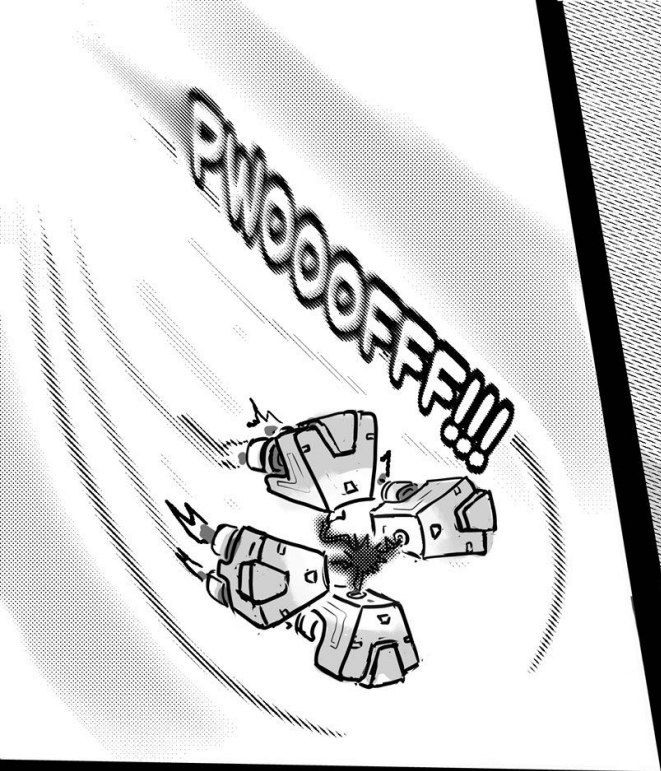
WE DID.  
BUT THEY MOVED THE  
TARGET AGAIN...

...WHY?













...BUT WE WON'T BE  
ABLE TO SUCCEED  
UNLESS EVERY LAST  
ONE OF US TETHERS  
OURSELVES  
TOGETHER IN UNITY.

MY CHILDREN  
THE DOOR  
LEADING  
TO OUR  
SALVATION IS  
OPENING AGAIN...

IT IS TIME TO  
**RISE!!!**

UHHUHH!

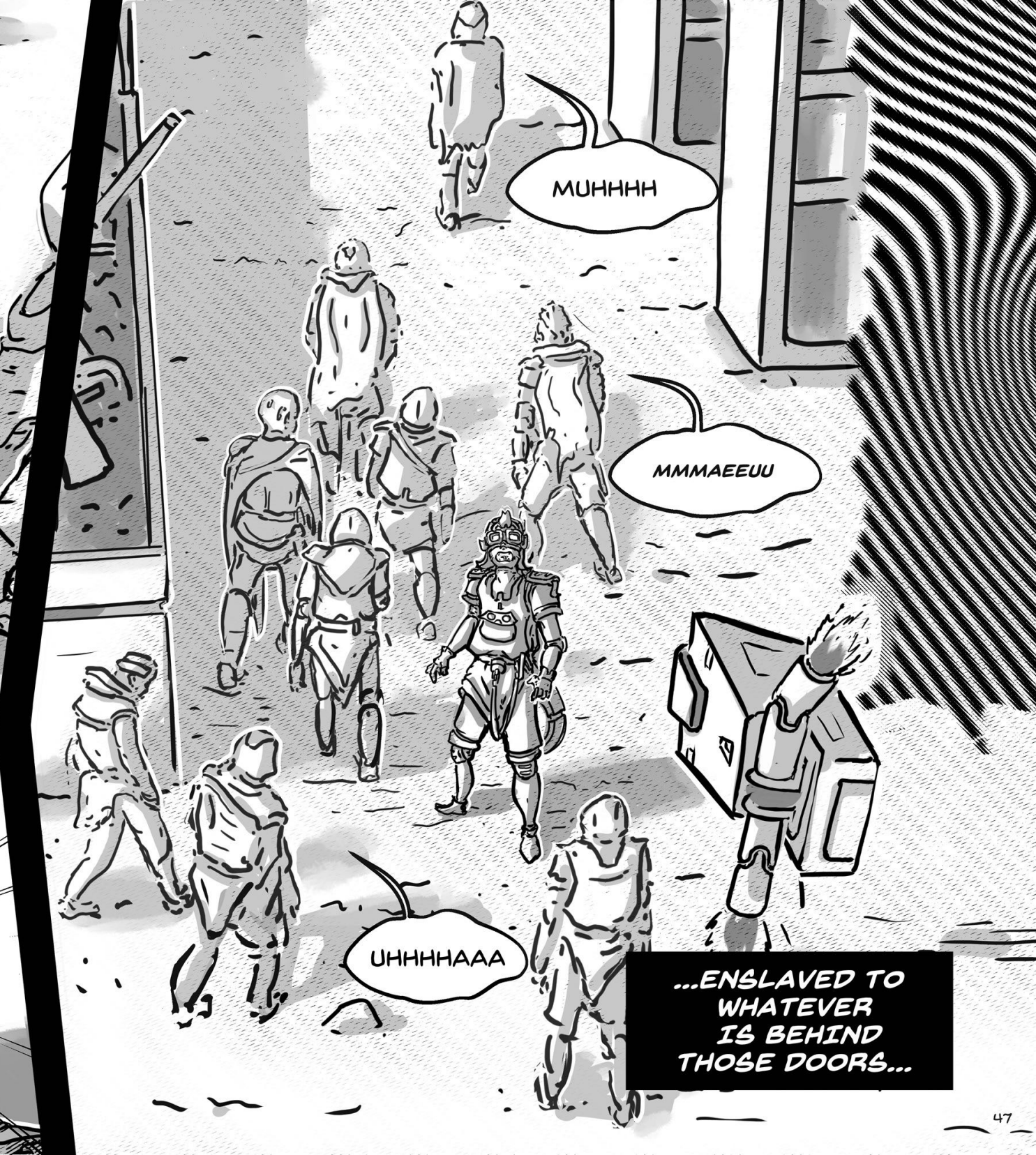
MUHHHH

UHHHH





MUAHHHHAHH



MUHHHH

MMMAEEUU

UHHHHAAA

THEY'RE  
LIKE  
SOULLESS  
CATTLE...

...ENSLAVED TO  
WHATEVER  
IS BEHIND  
THOSE DOORS...



IT IS TIME  
TO DO  
YOUR PART!  
THE CORE  
NEEDS YOU!



HURRY HUMANS!  
SALVATION  
AWAITS!

MUUUUUUHHHHHAAH







FREEDOM  
IS WITHIN  
**YOUR**  
REACH!



**BEEP!  
BEEP!  
INCOMING  
COM-LINE**

**BOOP!**

WHEN THE BEATEN  
PATH IS BLOCKED?

BLAZE A  
NEW PATH...



MUUUUUUHHH

DIRECTION?

AWAY FROM THE  
LIGHT...

