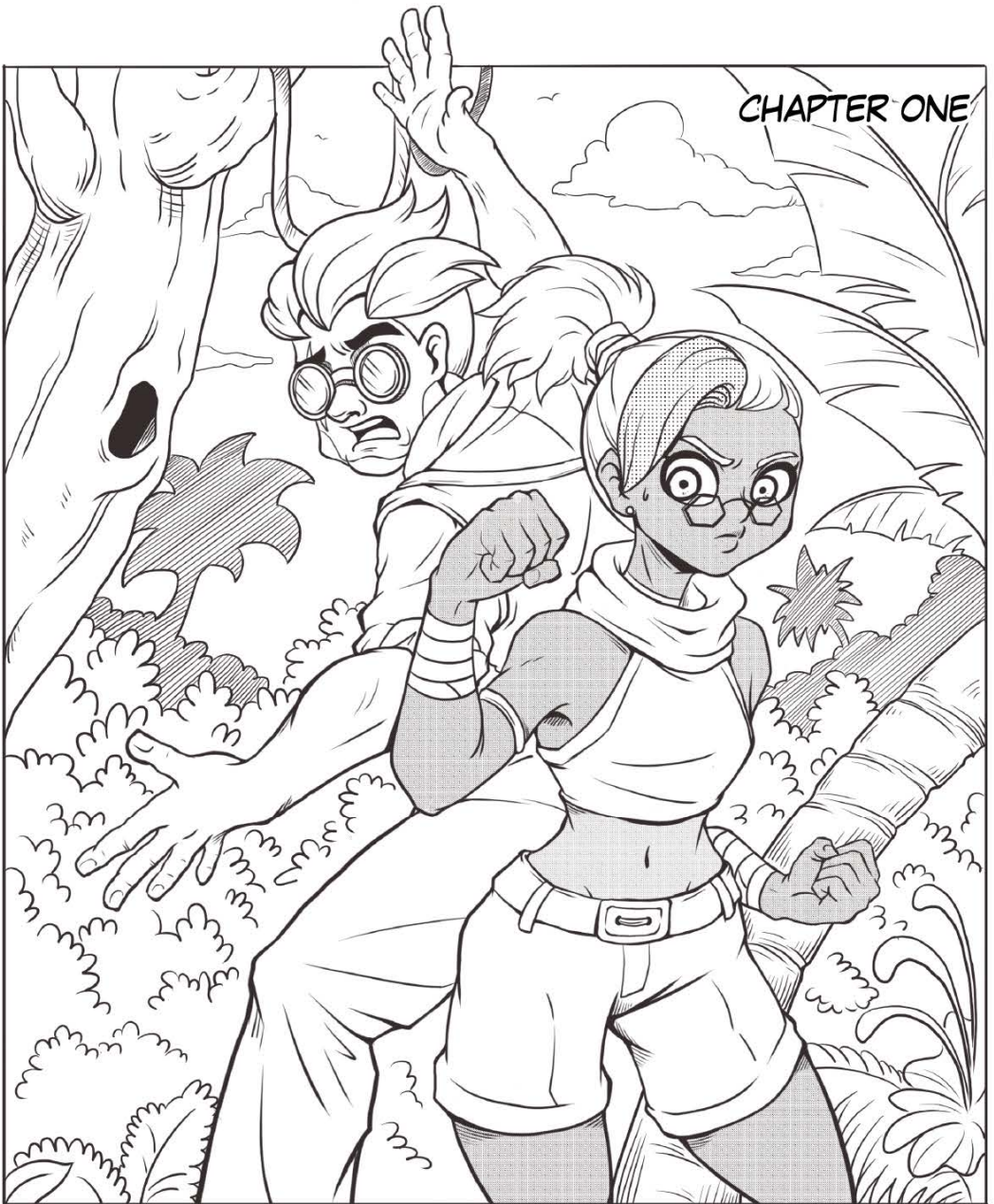


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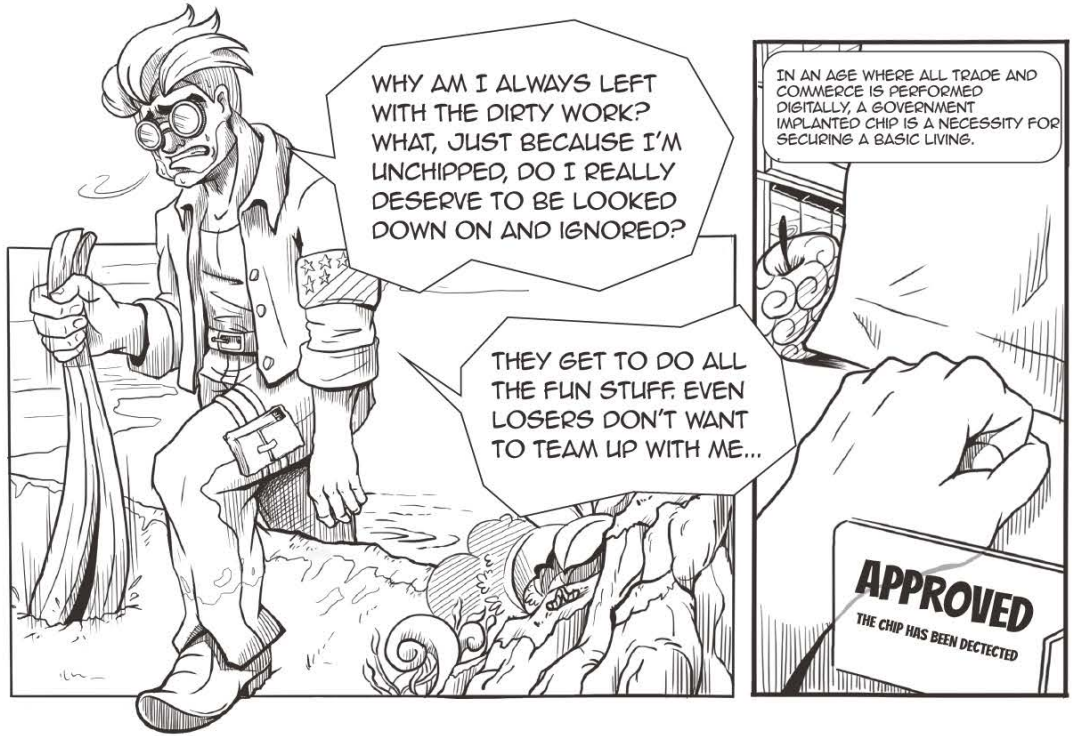


STORY & ART BY KEVIN CHENG
STORY CONSULTANT CHJANGO LINCAINED



I... WHERE AM I?
THIS PLACE...
IS UNBEARABLE.

AMIDST THE
RAINFOREST
MARSLANDS

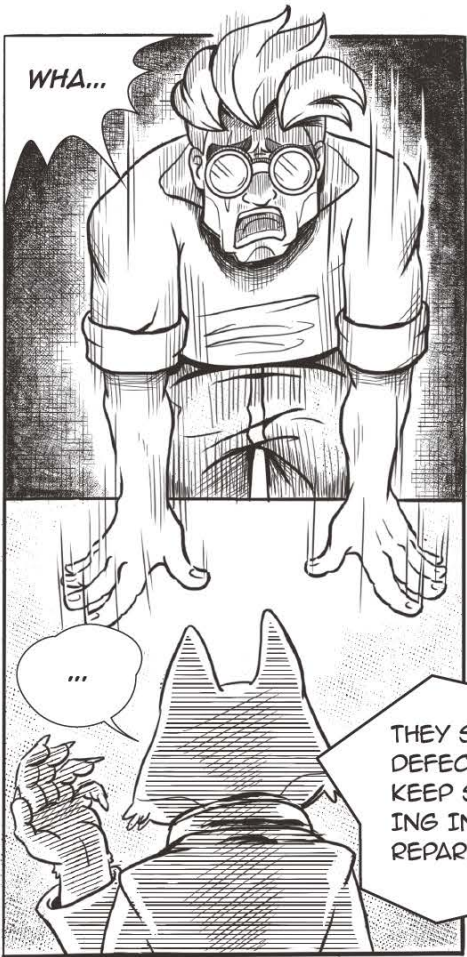


WHY AM I ALWAYS LEFT WITH THE DIRTY WORK? WHAT, JUST BECAUSE I'M UNCHIPPED, DO I REALLY DESERVE TO BE LOOKED DOWN ON AND IGNORED?

IN AN AGE WHERE ALL TRADE AND COMMERCE IS PERFORMED DIGITALLY, A GOVERNMENT IMPLANTED CHIP IS A NECESSITY FOR SECURING A BASIC LIVING.

THEY GET TO DO ALL THE FUN STUFF. EVEN LOSERS DON'T WANT TO TEAM UP WITH ME...

APPROVED
THE CHIP HAS BEEN DETECTED



WHA...

...



I HATE THIS GOVERNMENT!!

EVERY DAY THEY SAY WAIT PATIENTLY THEN NEVER GET BACK TO ME! FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN YEARS! IT'S ABSOLUTELY INFURIATING

THEY SAY I HAVE A RARE DEFECT WITH NO FIX. THEY KEEP SAYING THEY'RE LOOKING INTO IT, BUT OFFER NO REPARATIONS!



HERE I AM, FORCED TO MAKE MY WAY IN THE WILDS CATCHING THESE FUCKING PANTARAYS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS TURNED ME INTO A LOW LIFE POACHER!

PA!

WORKING GRAY MARKET OFF-CHAIN JOBS, RISKING MY LIFE JUST TO SCRAPE BY EVERY SINGLE DAY. WHAT AM I DOING HERE?



I WISH I WERE HOME...

WANDER AIMLESSLY...





WOW, THERE ARE ACTUALLY SOME PANTARAYS HERE! NOT MANY, BUT I SHOULD BE SET FOR THE REST OF THE MONTH!



THANK GOD!!



WAIT, WHAT'S GOD? WHY DID MY MIND MAKE ME SAY THAT?

DOESN'T MATTER NOW, WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES, ANOTHER DOOR OPENS

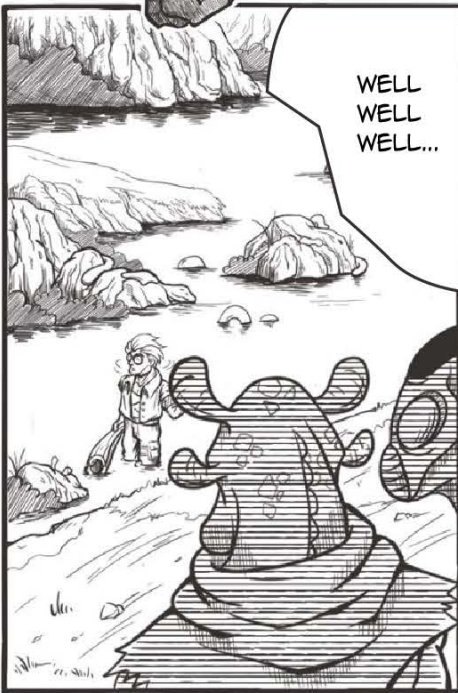


DID YOU HEAR THAT??



CHECK OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING OVER THERE!

MIHAHA



WELL
WELL
WELL...



LOOKY WHAT
WE HAVE HERE!!!

!!!



UH-OH, THEY LOOK LIKE
HIRED HUNTERS!!
I'VE RUN OUT OF RESOURCES
OUT HERE IN THE WILD!!!



WE HAPPEN TO BE HUNGRY, AND YOU'RE NOT A COMMON SIGHT...

MAYBE YOU TASTE RATHER UNIQUE...

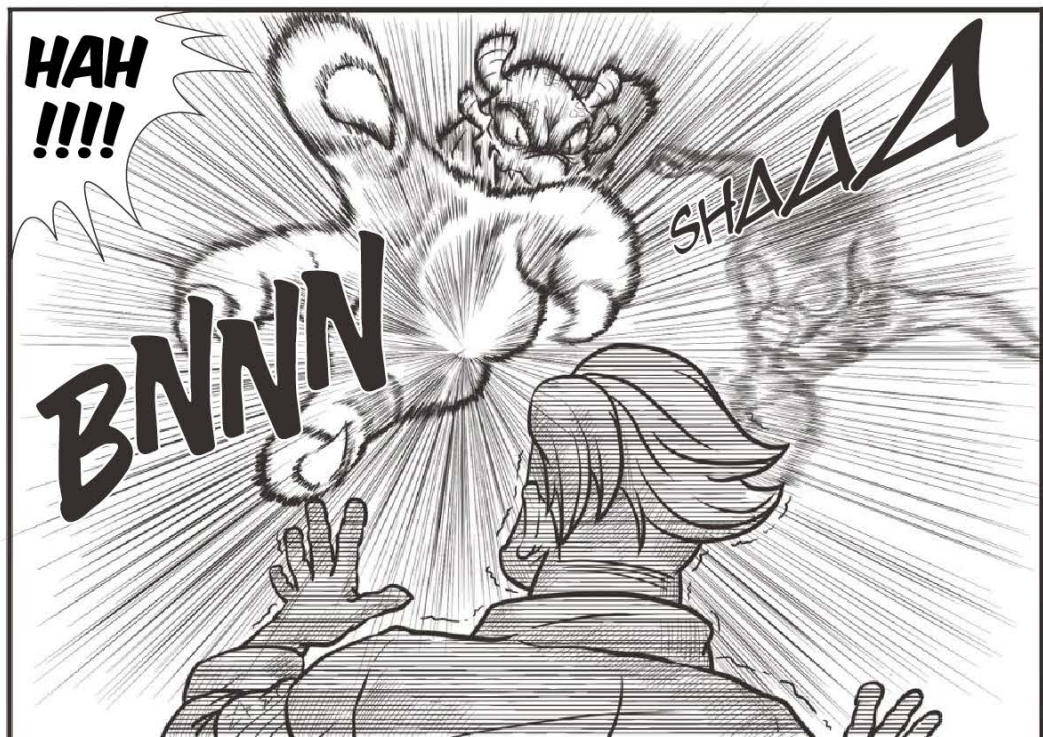


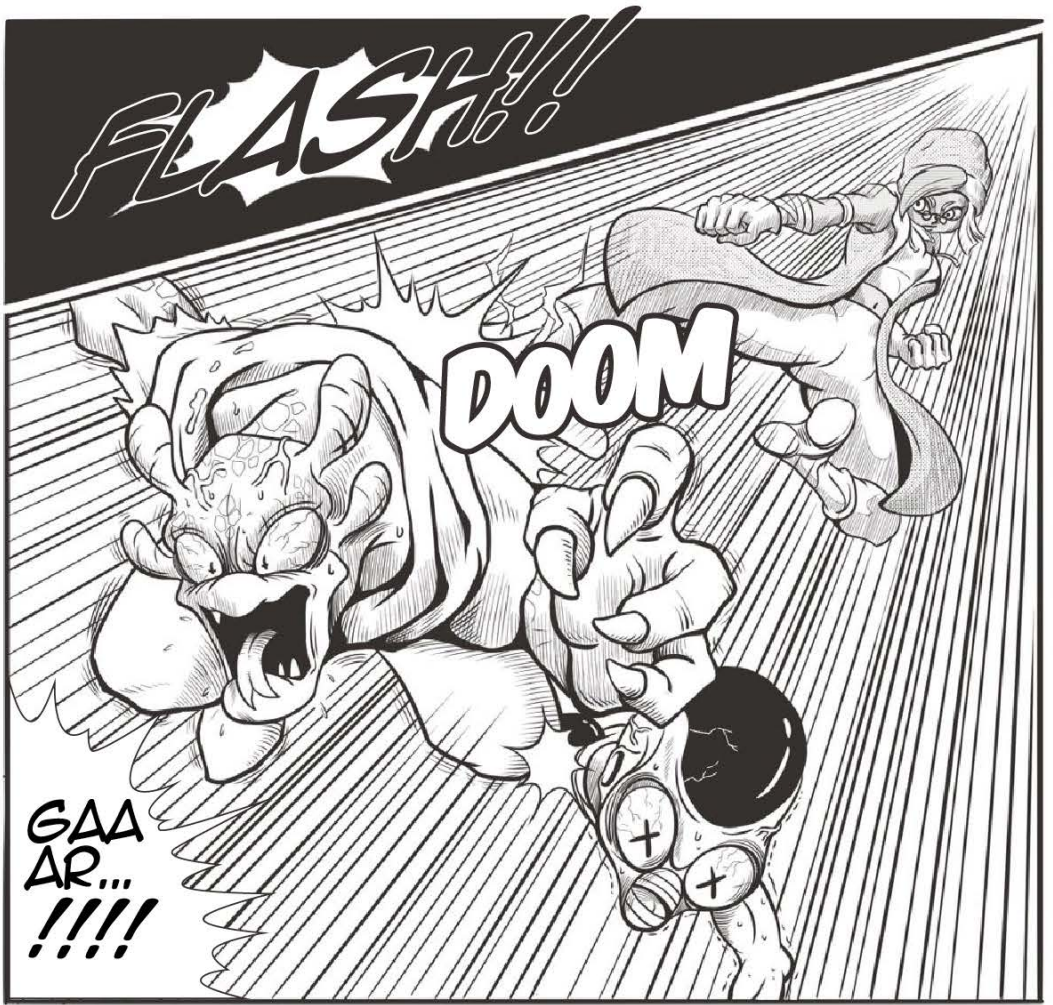
I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP TO! BUT IT'S NOT JUST THAT...



MY WAND CAN'T SHOOT ANYMORE!

I'M SCREWED!!









WHAT THE FUCK?!



SORRY BOYS, I WAS GONNA SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE SHOW, BUT A FAIR FIGHT IS MORE FUN. WHAT DO YOU SAY WE MAKE THIS A BIT MORE... EVEN.



DID YOU HEAR WHAT SHE SAID?!

YOU'RE SO FUNNY!!

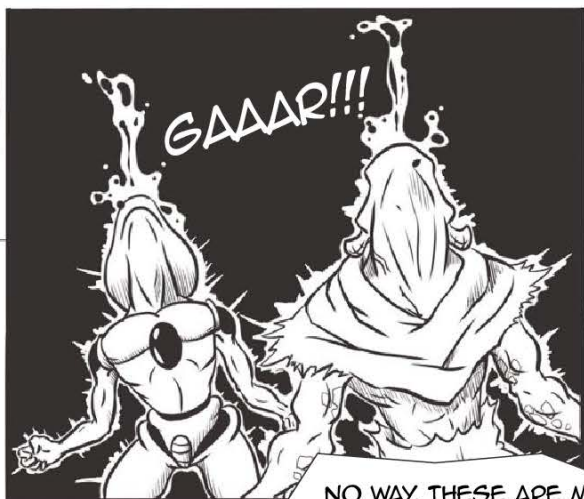
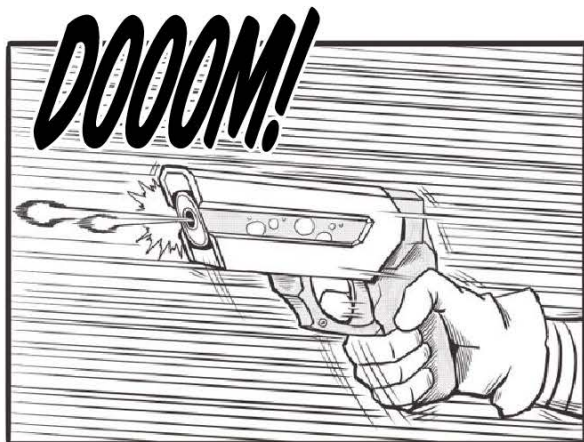
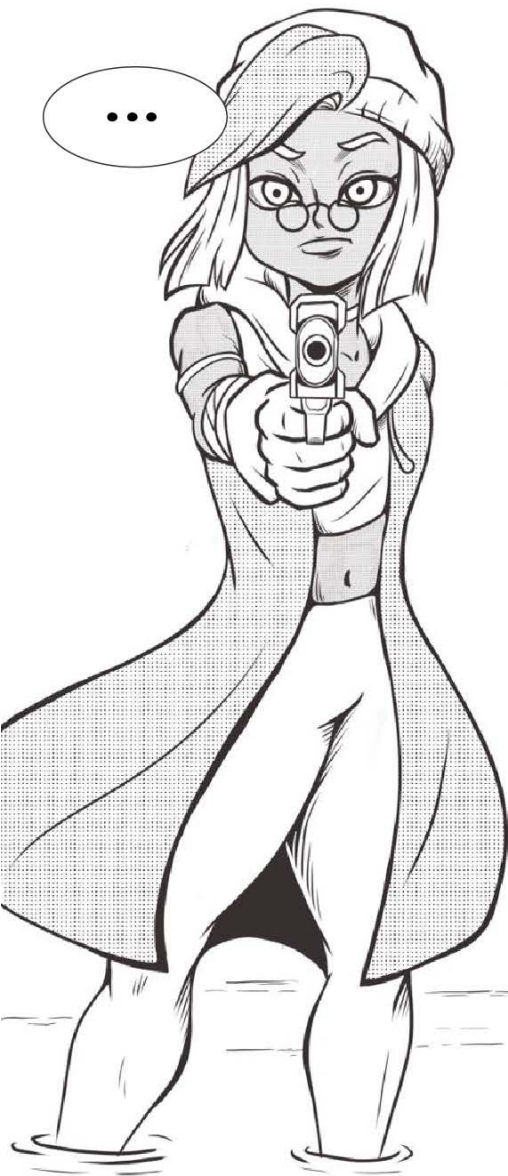


LOOKS LIKE OUR DESSERT JUST KICKED ME

NOD
NOD



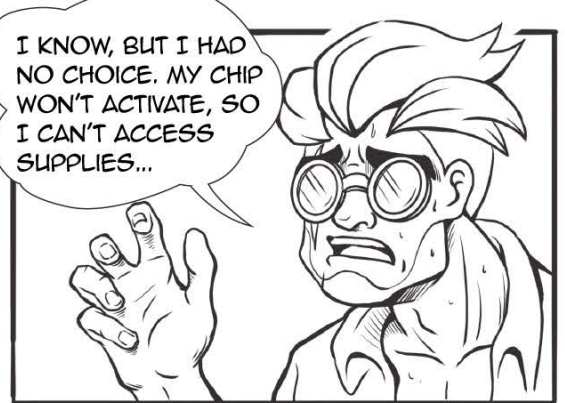
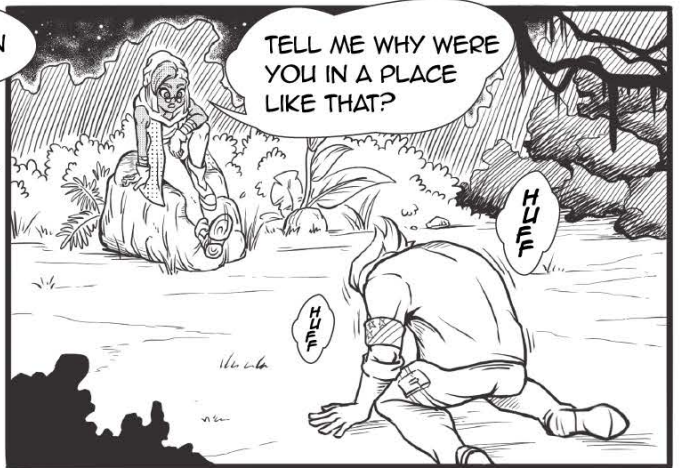
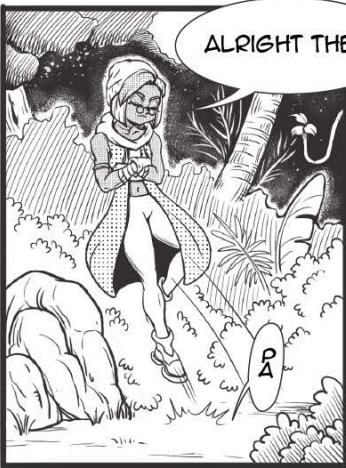
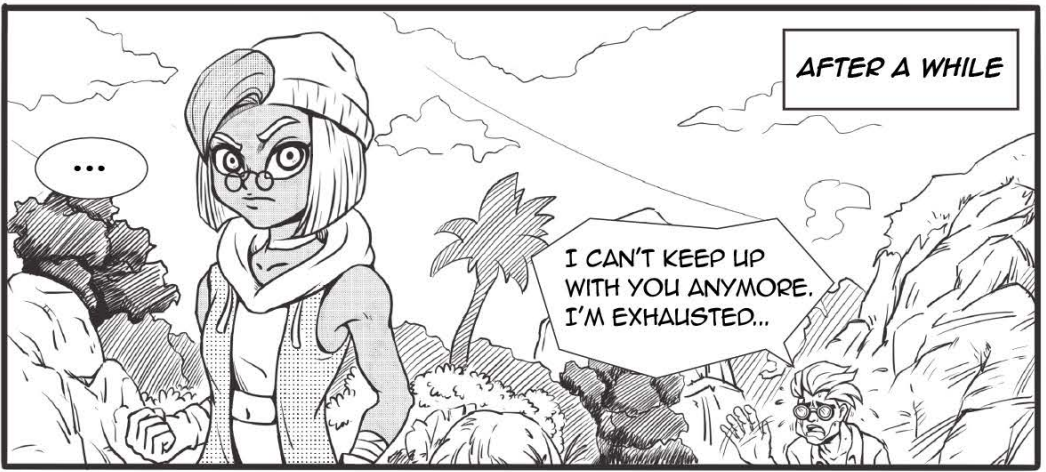
PULL OUT...




YOU KILLED THEM!



NO WAY, THESE ARE MY HOMEMADE BULLETS. THEY JUST PASSED OUT. THEY'LL WAKE UP IN A WHILE. LET'S GO, QUICKLY





WHY ARE YOU
HERE? YOU LOOK
LIKE A STUDENT



YOU DON'T WORK
FOR GOV DO YOU

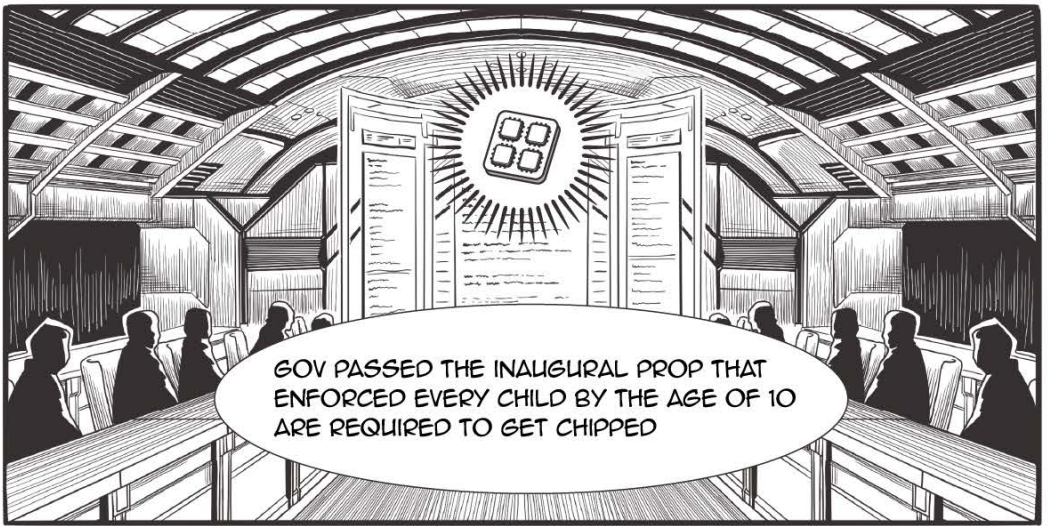


I DON'T HAVE A CHIP EITHER.
LIKE AT ALL

JUST GOOD OLD FASHIONED,
HOME GROWN, MICROCHIP
FREE RANGE CHICKEN.



FIVE YEARS AGO
WHEN I WAS 10...



GOV PASSED THE INAUGURAL PROP THAT ENFORCED EVERY CHILD BY THE AGE OF 10 ARE REQUIRED TO GET CHIPPED



THE CHIP MEANT WE WERE FREE TO BE ADULTS

GIVING OUR LICENSES TO DRIVE AND OFFER SERVICES

AND OUR FIRST CURRENCY ACCOUNT, NATIONAL ID, VOTING POWER...

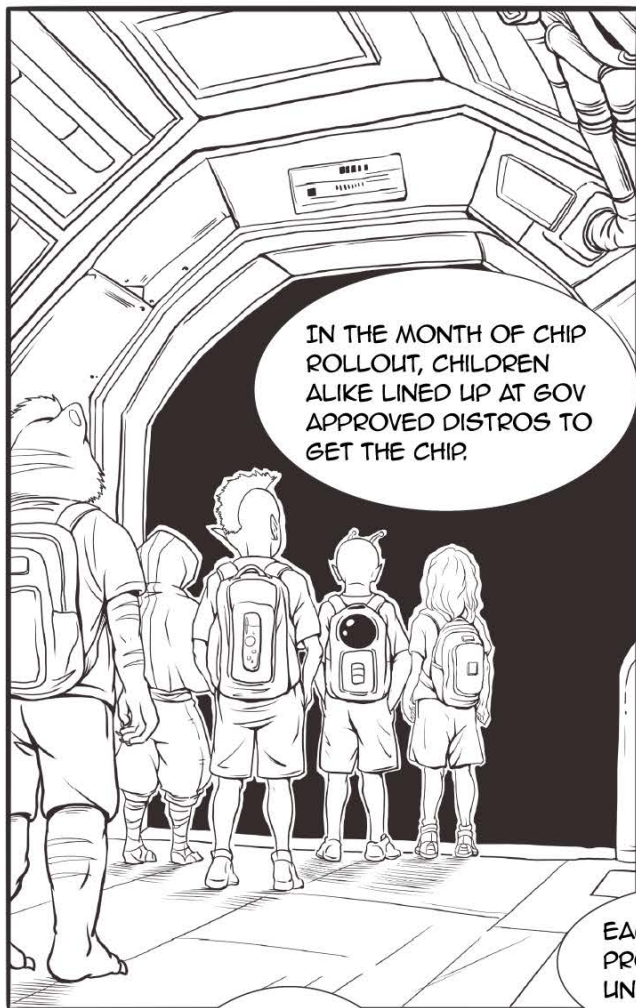
ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE ROLLOUT, IT WAS CELEBRATED AS OUR SOCIETY ACHIEVING THE NEXT PHASE OF PLANETARY EVOLUTION.

#70618 HAS BEEN APPROVED

**WOO-
HOO**

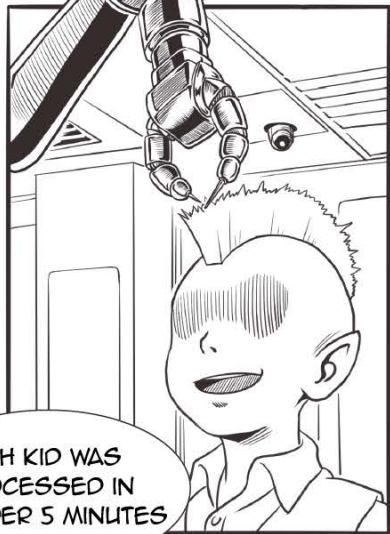
IT WAS CONSIDERED A TURNING POINT THAT MARKED OUR GRADUATION TO A TYPE 6 PLANET!



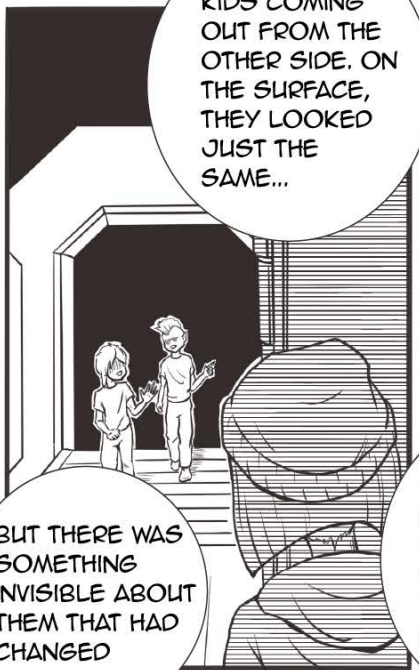


IN THE MONTH OF CHIP ROLLOUT, CHILDREN ALIKE LINED UP AT GOV APPROVED DISTROS TO GET THE CHIP.

IT WAS COLDLY EFFICIENT. ONE AFTER ANOTHER



EACH KID WAS PROCESSED IN UNDER 5 MINUTES



KIDS COMING OUT FROM THE OTHER SIDE. ON THE SURFACE, THEY LOOKED JUST THE SAME...

BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING INVISIBLE ABOUT THEM THAT HAD CHANGED

I CAN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON IT, BUT I FEEL THIS INSTINCTIVE FEAR...



THE IMPLANT WAS MANDATORY...

I DECIDED TO GIVE IT A SHOT...

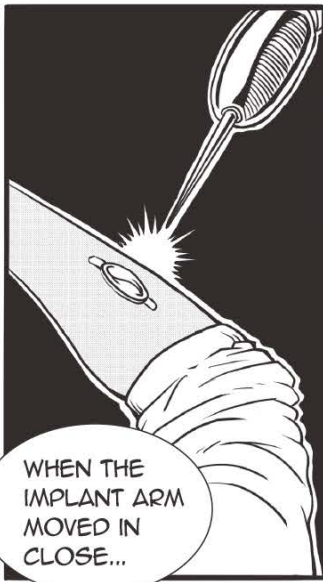
IF YOU TRIED TO RUN, THEY'D TRACK YOU DOWN EVENTUALLY

I SLAPPED MY 'SIGNAL JAMMING STICKER' ONTO MYSELF

IT WAS DESIGNED TO GET FREE SNACKS FROM VENDING MACHINES...

WHIRRR-CLICK!!

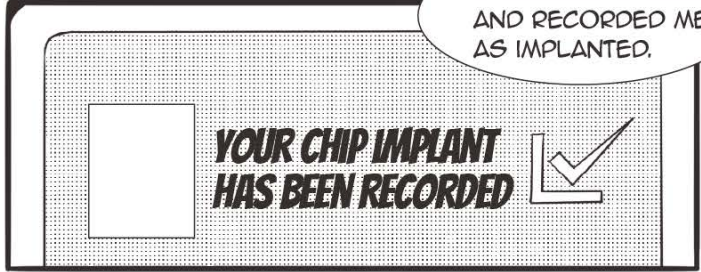
BUT THIS TIME...



WHEN THE IMPLANT ARM MOVED IN CLOSE...



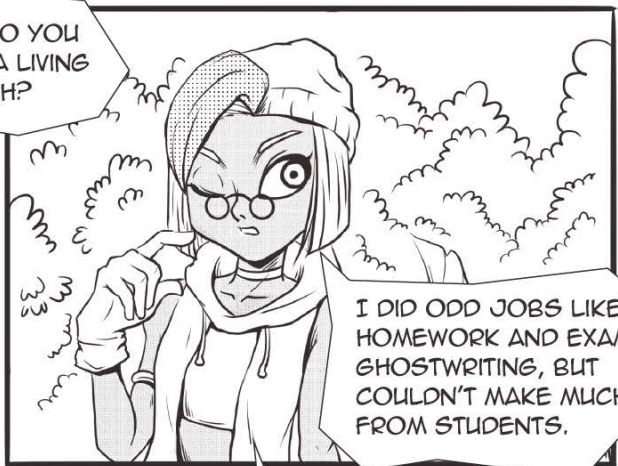
IT ACTUALLY WORKED!!



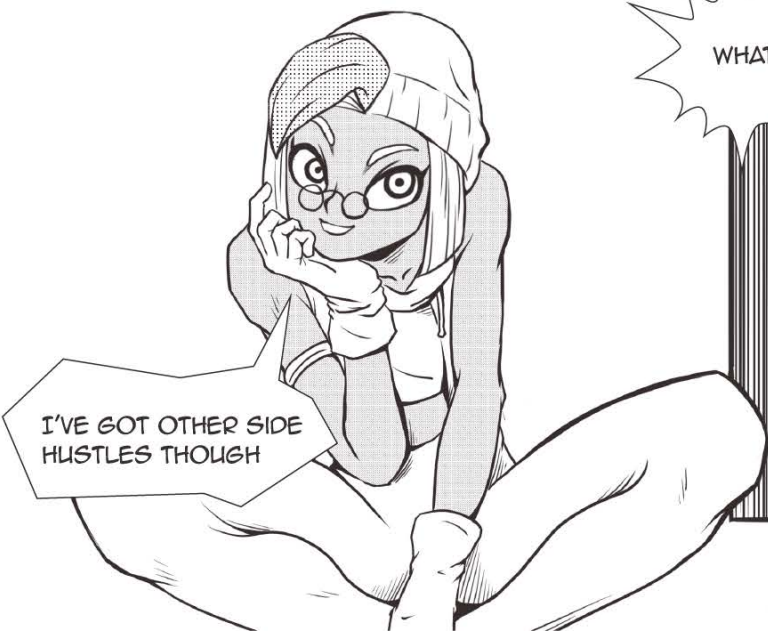
IT MALFUNCTIONED AND RECORDED ME AS IMPLANTED.



HOW DO YOU MAKE A LIVING THOUGH?



I DID ODD JOBS LIKE HOMEWORK AND EXAM GHOSTWRITING, BUT COULDN'T MAKE MUCH FROM STUDENTS.



I'VE GOT OTHER SIDE HUSTLES THOUGH



WHAT?



THERE'S A SECRET WORMHOLE
INSIDE ENTCHAN...

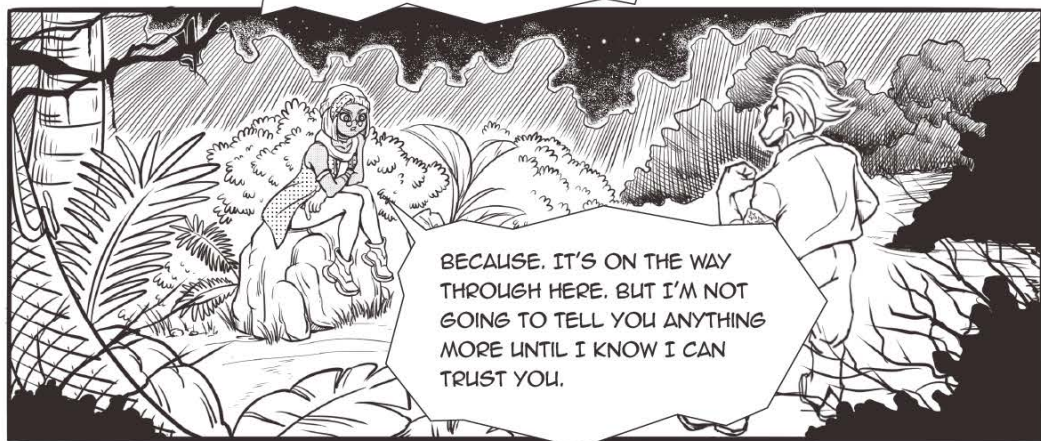
I USE IT TO NAVIGATE OFFCHAIN
TERRITORIES WHERE HERDS OF
PANTARAYS GRAZE.

THEN, I SMUGGLE THEM
THROUGH PIPELINE MIXERS.



THERE'S TOO MUCH COMPETITION HERE AND IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.

IF THERE REALLY IS SUCH A THING AS A WORMHOLE, WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE?



BECAUSE, IT'S ON THE WAY THROUGH HERE. BUT I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU ANYTHING MORE UNTIL I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU.



YOU SEEM LIKE YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR DEPTH IN THESE WILDS.



I DON'T MIND YOU TAGGING ALONG. WANNA COME WITH ME?