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2

BATTLE MASTERS



MAD!
MCW!
LIQUID!

MADUREIRA • SHARRIEFF • MCWEENEY

Sirene Valley. Three hours past first light.

THIS IS A **BAD** IDEA, CLAVIUS.

MAN... IF THE CAPTAIN FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS...

I KNOW, I KNOW. WE'LL CATCH UP WITH THE REST OF THE UNIT LATER. IF WE **HURRY**, THEY WON'T EVEN NOTICE WE'RE GONE.

TRUST ME... THIS IS IMPORTANT.

BUT **WHY?** YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHO THIS SO-CALLED "**FRIEND**" OF YOURS IS! WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE HE CAN HELP US?

HE WAS A SOLDIER, JARREN. MAYBE THE **BEST**. HE TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I KNOW.

IF ANY-ONE CAN HELP US, IT'S HIM.

LOOK, YOU WAIT HERE. HE'S NOT TOO KEEN ON HAVING VISITORS. IT'LL BE EASIER IF I GO ALONE.

WHATEVER. JUST MAKE IT QUICK.





I KNOW YOU AND ARAMUS WERE CLOSE. THAT'S WHY I CAME, SIR.

YOU ARE NOT POWERLESS IN THIS. RIDE BACK WITH ME...

HELP US FIND THE ONES RESPONSIBLE...



...AND BRING THEM TO JUSTICE.



SIR?

I'M SORRY... I CAN'T HELP YOU. PLEASE GO...

SIR, WAIT!

GO, CLAVIUS.

AND NEVER COME BACK.



YOU HEARD THE DRUNK! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE. HMPH... SOME FRIEND.

JARREN...

WHOA, WHAT A DUMP...

JARREN, PLEASE!



THIS HOUSE WAS TO BE A GIFT FOR HIS WIFE ON THEIR WEDDING DAY...

"BUT... THERE ISN'T THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF A WOMAN LIVING HERE. WHAT'D SHE DO?... LEAVE HIM?"

"NO. SHE NEVER GOT TO SEE THE HOUSE -- SHE WAS KILLED ON THEIR WEDDING DAY.

"AFTER THAT, HE SAW NO REASON TO FINISH IT.

"WOULD YOU?"

"YOU SAID HE WAS A SOLDIER..."

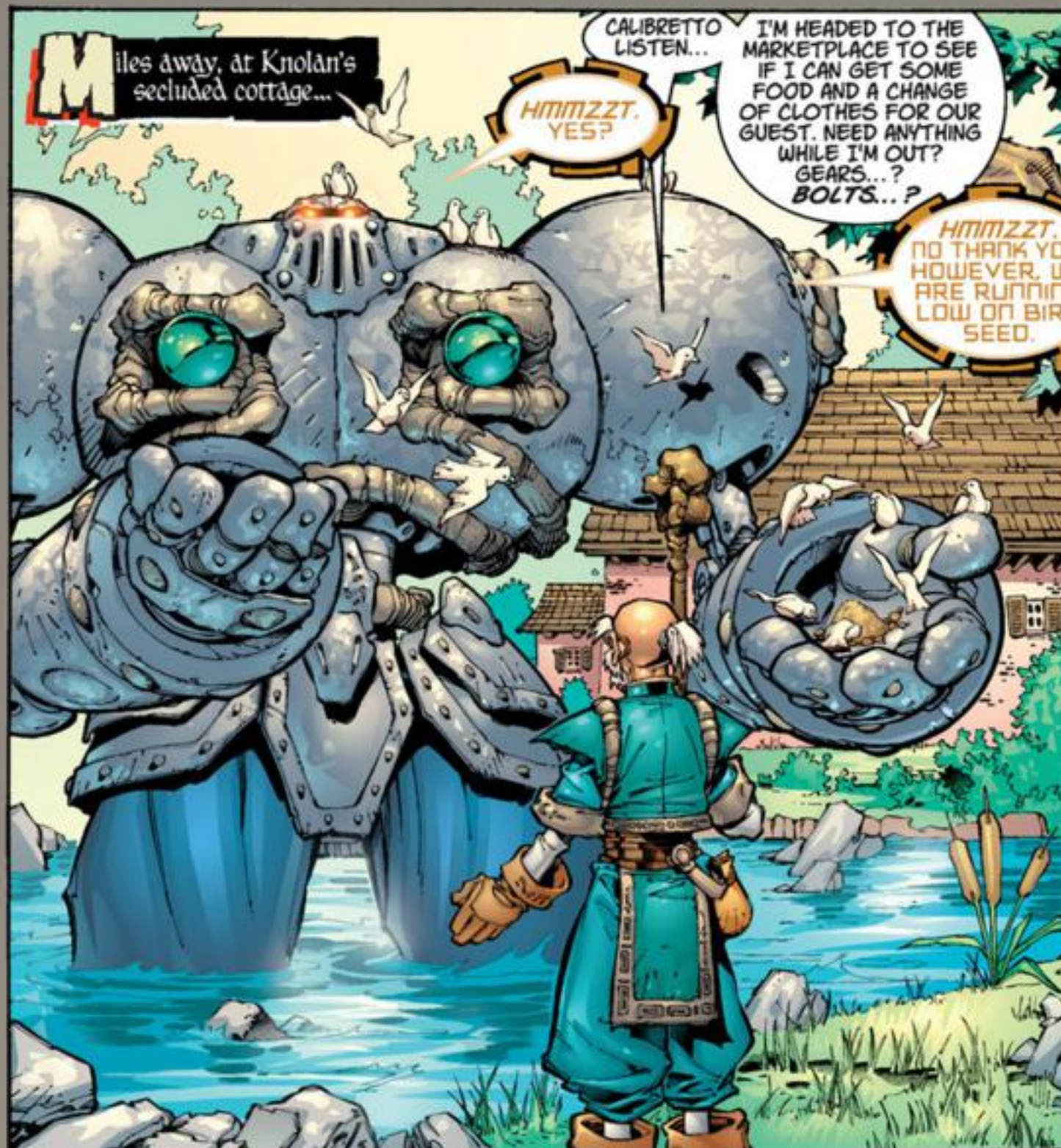
"YES. GARRISON. PERHAPS THE GREATEST SWORDSMAN THAT EVER LIVED."

"GARRISON?! YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT GUY WAS **THE** GARRISON?"

"IN MANY WAYS, JARREN..."

"WHOAH. I THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD..."

"...HE IS."



Miles away, at Knolan's secluded cottage...

CALIBRETTO LISTEN...

HMMZZT. YES?

I'M HEADED TO THE MARKETPLACE TO SEE IF I CAN GET SOME FOOD AND A CHANGE OF CLOTHES FOR OUR GUEST. NEED ANYTHING WHILE I'M OUT? GEARS...? BOLTS...?

HMMZZT. NO THANK YOU. HOWEVER, WE ARE RUNNING LOW ON BIRD SEED.

HMMZZT. QUITE PEACEFULLY.

HEH, HEH. YOU AND YOUR LITTLE STRAYS... IS THE CHILD STILL ASLEEP?



GOOD! HELLUVA ROUGH NIGHT THAT KID HAD... NOW LISTEN UP. THOSE GLOVES AIN'T SOME SENTIMENTAL HEIRLOOM LEFT BY DEAR OLD DAD... THEY'RE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.

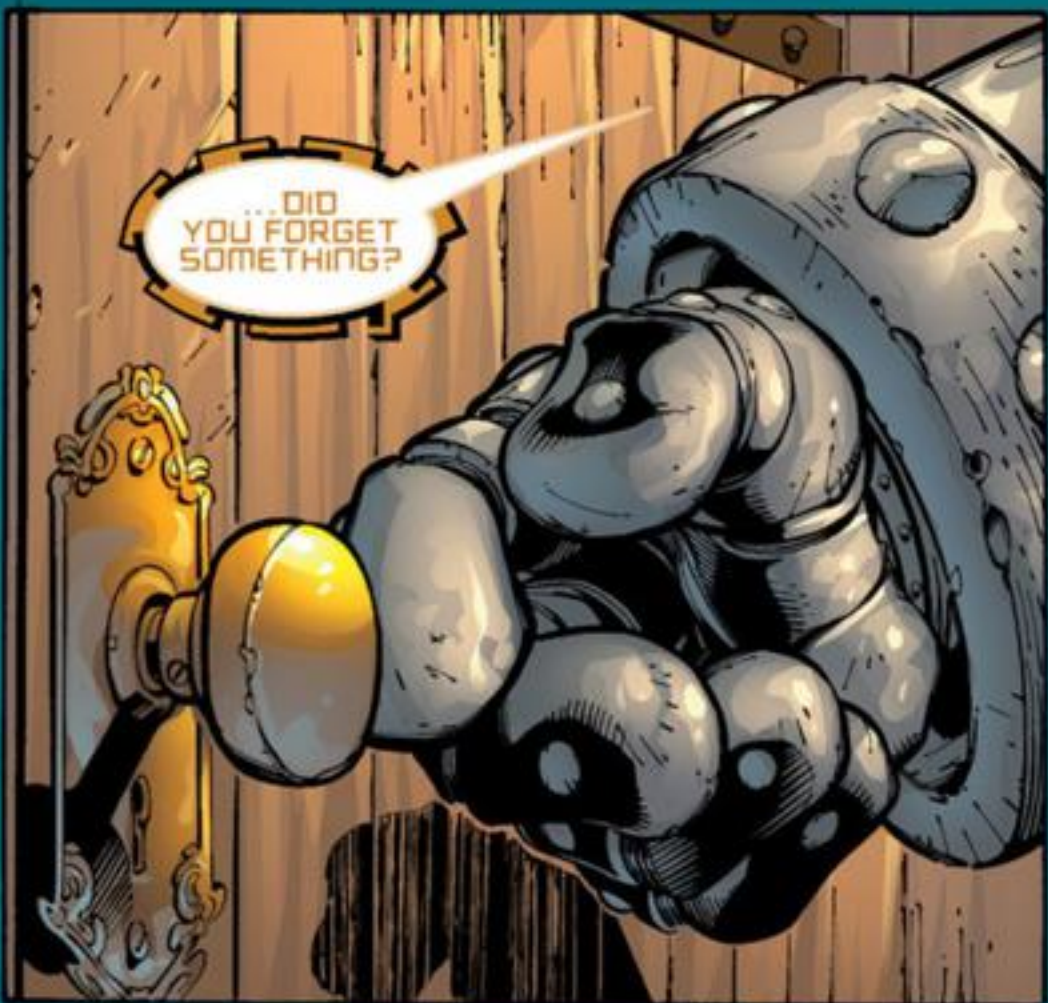
DON'T LET HER NEAR THEM UNTIL I GET BACK. IF I'D KNOWN THEY WERE IN THAT DAMN BOX, I NEVER WOULD'VE OPENED IT!



HMMZZT. THE CHILD... SHE WILL HAVE MANY QUESTIONS. WHAT SHALL I SAY?

NOTHING. WE'LL LET KING VANEER HANDLE THIS. IF THIS ATTACK HAD ANY CONNECTION TO ARAMUS' DISAPPEARANCE, THEN HE NEEDS TO KNOW. JUST REMEMBER... UNTIL I GET BACK... NO GLOVES! GOT IT?!

HMMZZT. UNDERSTOOD.



TO!

KIAANG

CUH...
CALIBRETTO?



OUTSIDE
WITH HIM...
HURRY!
ONLY STUNNED
IS HE!

HEAVY
HE IS.

PARTS
HEHE...
GOOD
PARTS.

EXPENSIVE
PARTS.
HEHEHE.

GASP!





I WAS FOOLISH IN TOYING WITH YOU... IT COST ME DEARLY. I WON'T BE SO NICE THIS TIME AROUND.



SPREAD OUT. SHE'S HERE.



WELL, CHILD... WHERE'S YOUR IRON SAVIOR NOW?



?!



HMMM?







WE'LL
LOOK AT
THIS... THE
DAUGHTER
OF ARAMUS.
TOO SCARED
TO EVEN
MOVE!

I HATE
KILLING PREY
THAT WON'T
RUN!

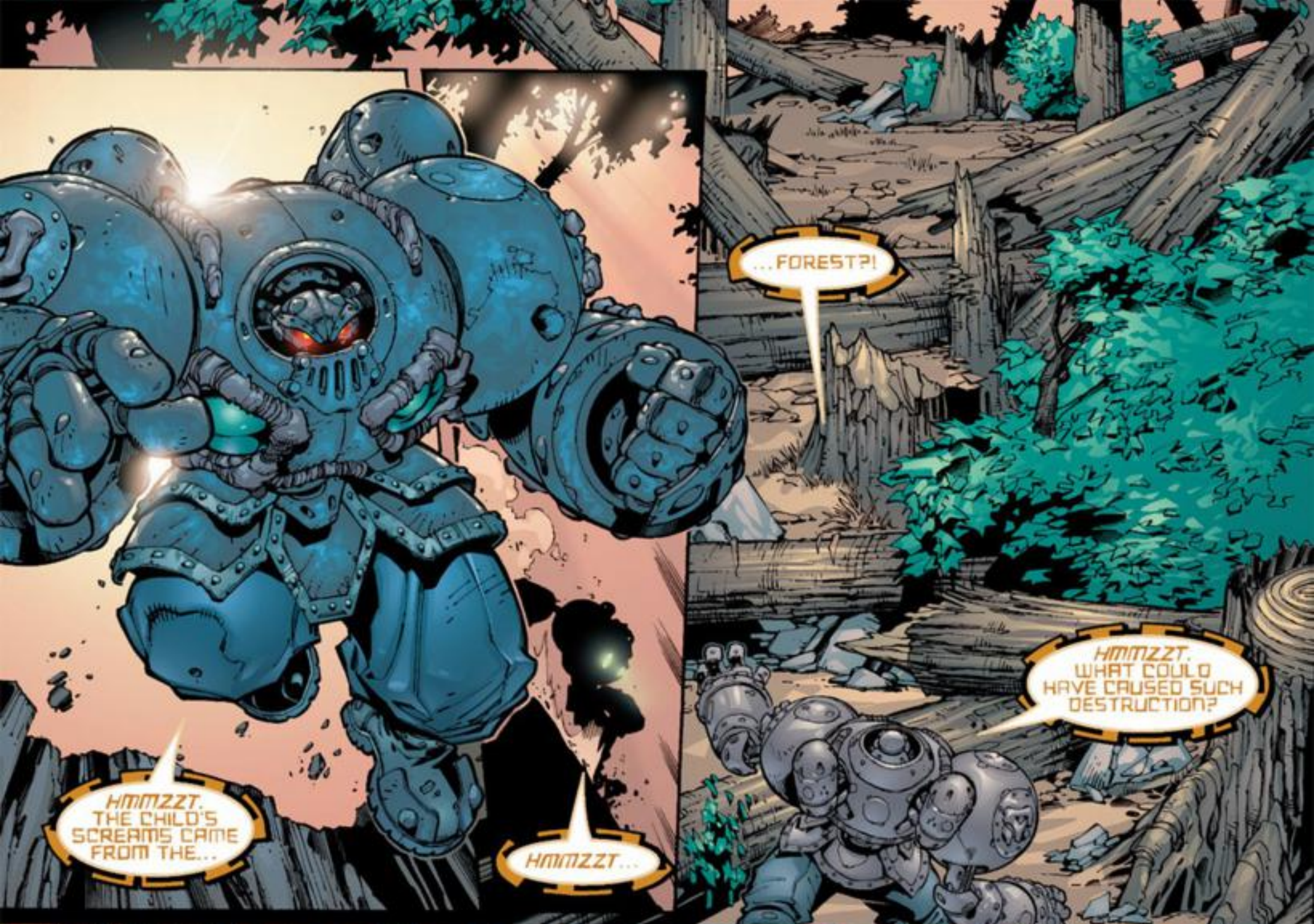
UHH...

**TAKE
OFF!**

?!

I'M NOT
RUNNING
FROM YOU
ANY MORE--







-- HE CAN NO LONGER GIVE YOU THE ANSWERS WHICH YOU SEEK.





The Mana Region.

HAHAHA!!
THIS IS
WONDERFUL
NEWS! SIMPLY
WONDERFUL!



AH... SO YOU'VE *FINALLY* DECIDED TO RETIRE, LEAVING THE BULK OF YOUR CONSIDERABLE WEALTH TO YOUR MOST TRUSTED, MOST HONORED, MOST HUMBLE MANSERVANT.

NO...

...EVEN *BETTER!* IT'S BEEN CONFIRMED -- OUR LITTLE DWARVEN FRIENDS TO THE SOUTH HAVE LOCATED A NEW MANA POOL! ONE OF THE *LARGEST* YET.

OH... HOW *EXCITING*. WERE I NOT CARRYING YOUR LUNCH, I MIGHT HAVE BROKEN INTO A DANCE.

JUST SET IT DOWN! I MUST INFORM VANEER OF THE GREAT NEWS!

OH... I ALMOST FORGOT. THIS PARCEL ARRIVED FOR YOU EARLY THIS MORNING. THERE IS A NOTE ATTACHED, BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW WHO SENT IT.

THANK YOU.



OH, AND FILBIN... DO NOT MAKE *LIGHT* OF OUR CURRENT SITUATION. *MANA* CONTINUES TO GROW MORE AND MORE SCARCE. WITHOUT MANA TO POWER IT, ALL OF OUR TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE CRIPPLED. SO YOU SEE... HE WHO HOLDS THE MANA, HOLDS THE POWER.

AND POWER IS *EVERYTHING*. REMEMBER THAT.

I AM CONSTANTLY AWARE OF THAT FACT... 'SIR'. ENJOY YOUR MEAL.



YES... BUT FIRST...

"A BIT OF MANA IF YOU WILL, YOUR WILDEST DREAMS I SHALL FULFILL"

OH... *INTRIGUE*. I LOVE IT!



LET'S SEE, THEN...



AH...



EXQUISITE...



GHUH?!



STILL PLAYING WITH DOLLS, RAIMON?



THAT VOICE... NO... IT CAN'T BE!

WE BURIED YOU!

KRANG



FOOL



HUK



I AM POSSESSED OF A POWER FAR GREATER THAN YOU MIGHT EVER IMAGINE.



AND POWER, MY FLESHY FRIEND...



... IS
**EVERY-
THING!**

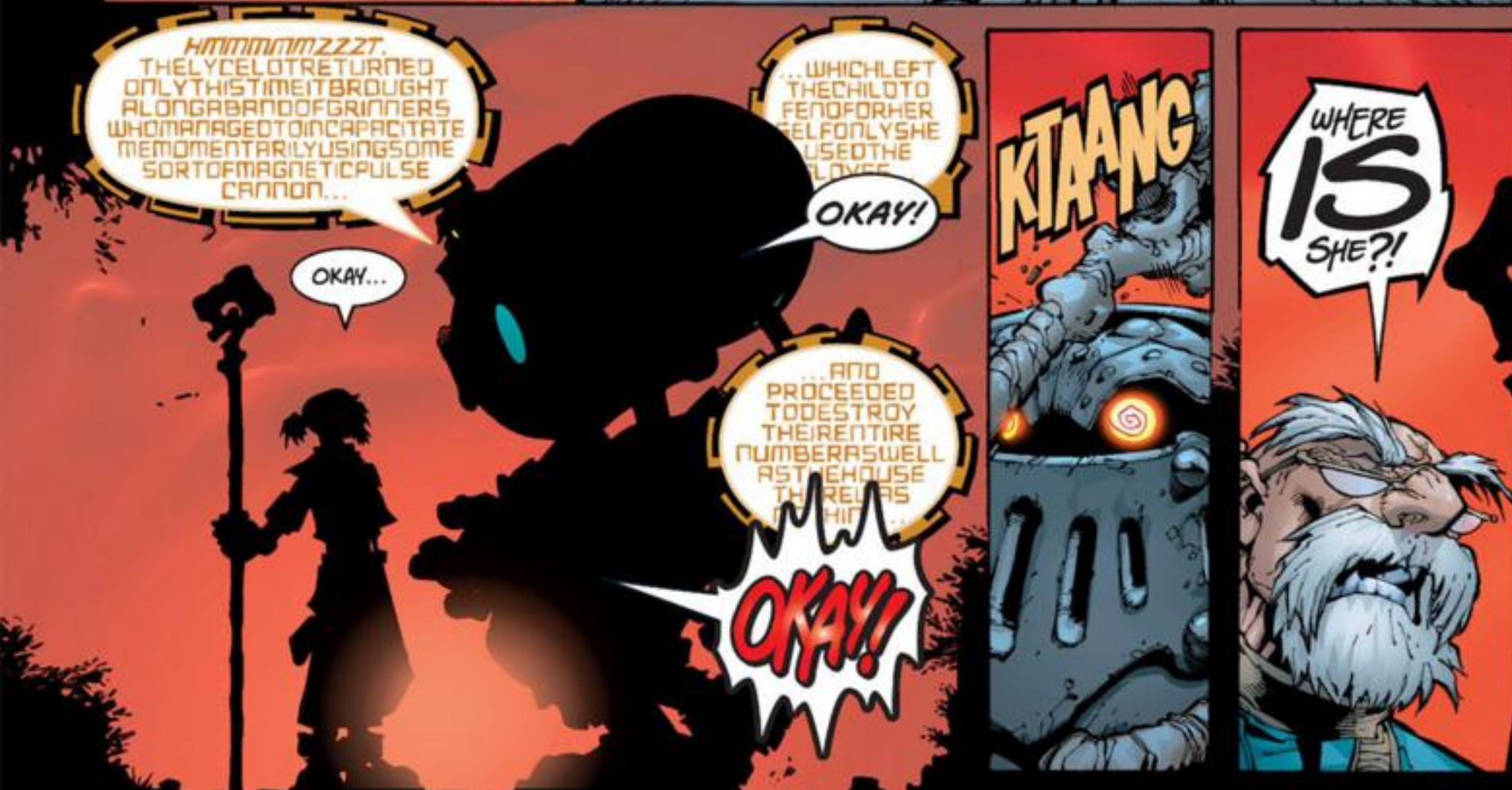
THAT
BLOATED
THIEF WAS ONLY
THE *FIRST* TO FALL.
THEY WILL *ALL* PAY
FOR THEIR BETRAYAL...
EACH IN THEIR
OWN SPECIAL
WAY!

BUT
YOU, OLD
MAN... YOU I'M
SAVING FOR
LAST...

I
WANT TO BE
THERE TO SEE THE
LOOK ON YOUR
FACE!

**WHAT
THE...?!**







"HMMZZT. SHE IS IN
WHAT'S LEFT OF
THE SUN ROOM."



A... ARE
YOU GOING TO
ASK ME TO
LEAVE?



NO.

I'M
GOING TO
ASK YOU TO
STAY.



THIS IS YER HOME
NOW, FOR AS LONG
AS YOU'D LIKE
IT TO BE.



THANKS,
MISTER
KNOLAN.

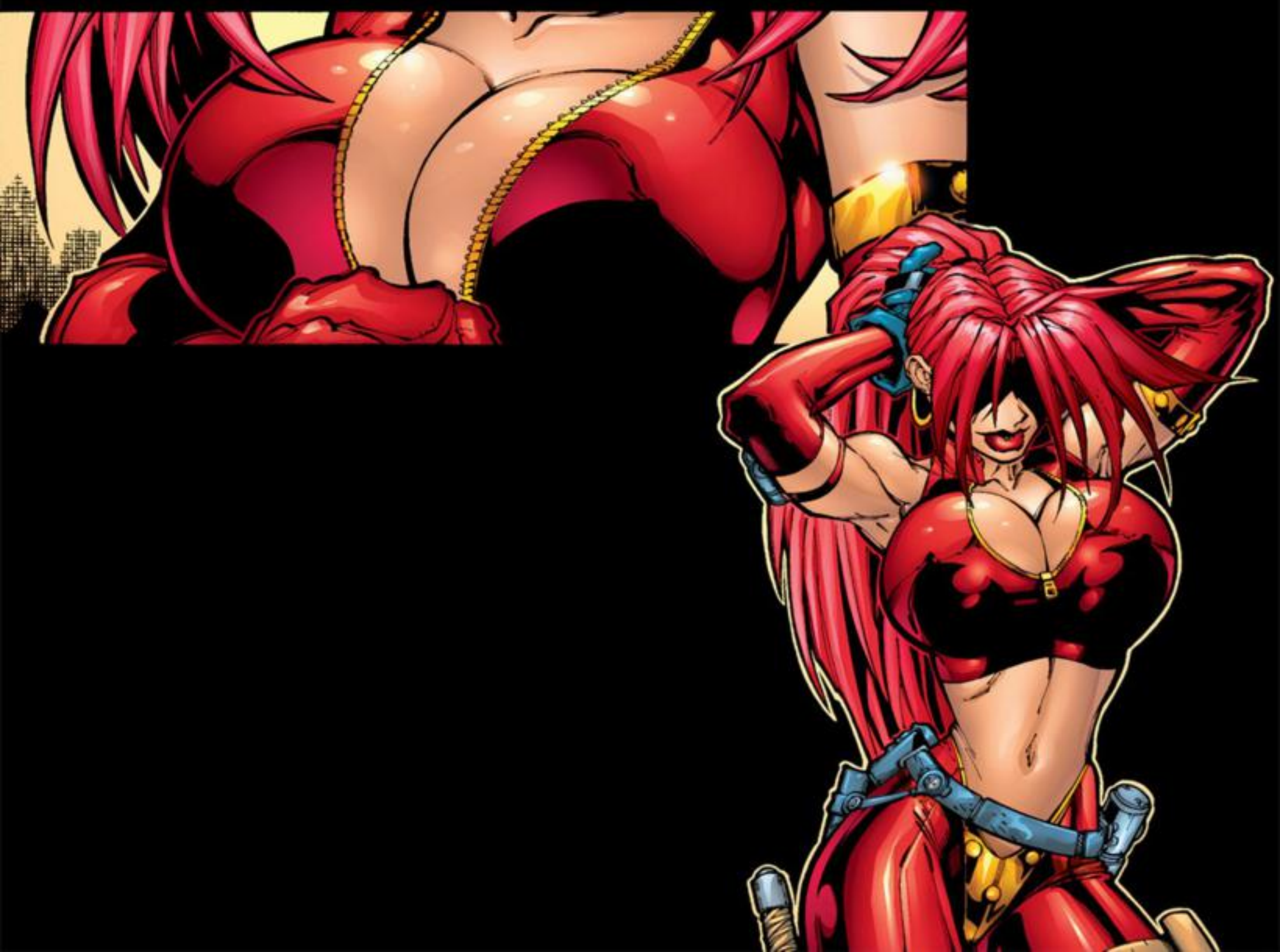


NOT A
PROBLEM, JUST
MAKE SURE YOU
GET PLENTY OF
REST...

YOU HAVE ONE
HECK OF A MESS TO
CLEAN UP IN THE MORNIN'!



ELSEWHERE...





IS
EVERYTHING
READY?



YES, YOUR
HOLINESS,
ALL ACCORDING
TO PLAN.



WELL THEN,
YOU'D BETTER
HOLD ON TO
SOMETHING...



...BECAUSE
THIS IS WHERE
THINGS GET
UGLY!



TO BE CONTINUED!