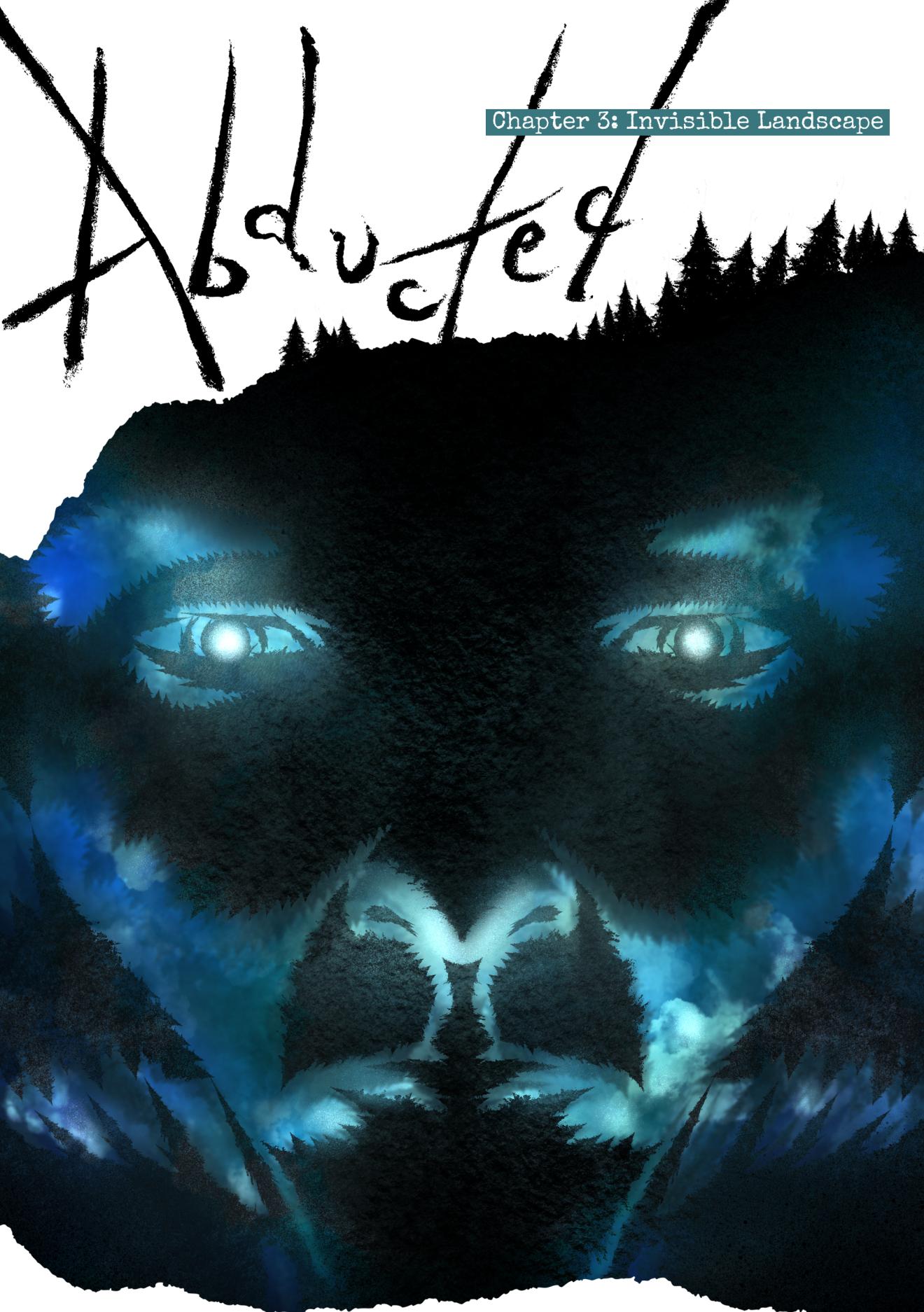


Chapter 3: Invisible Landscape





Chapter 3
INVISIBLE LANDSCAPE

Story by ZACH HERRING

Art by JAY RED

Colors by MAJA OPACIC

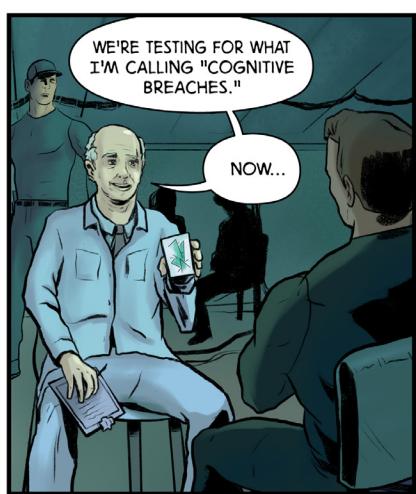
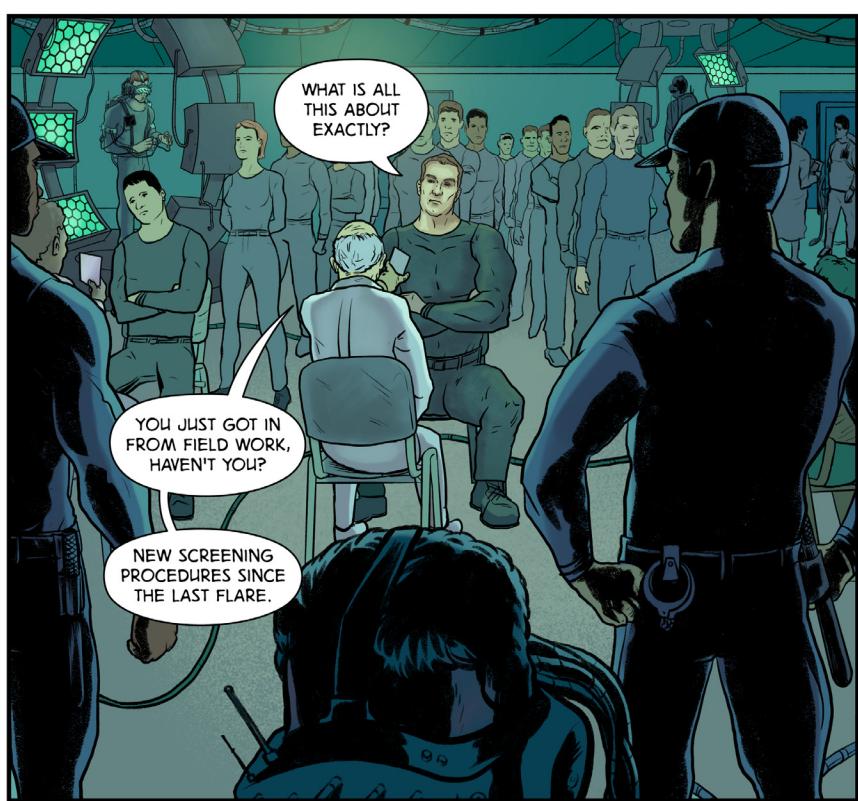
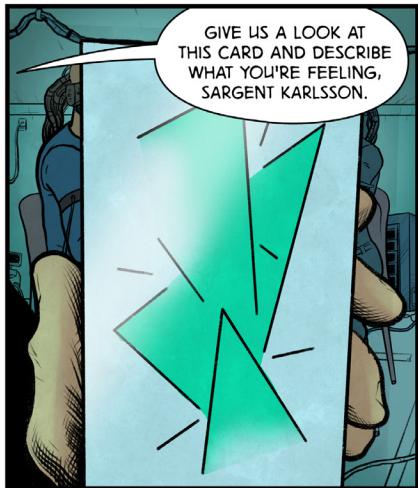
Story Edits by HASSAN OTSMANE-ELHAOU

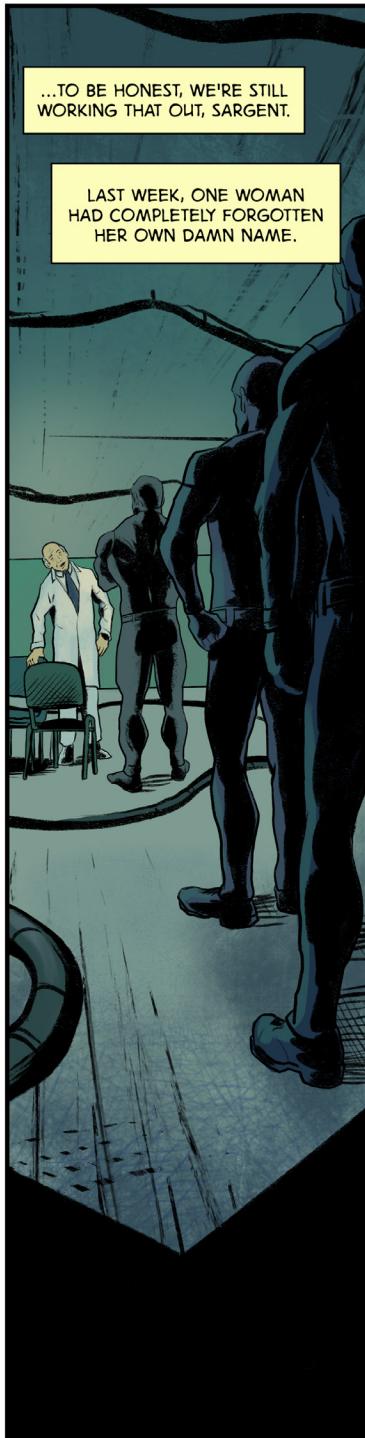
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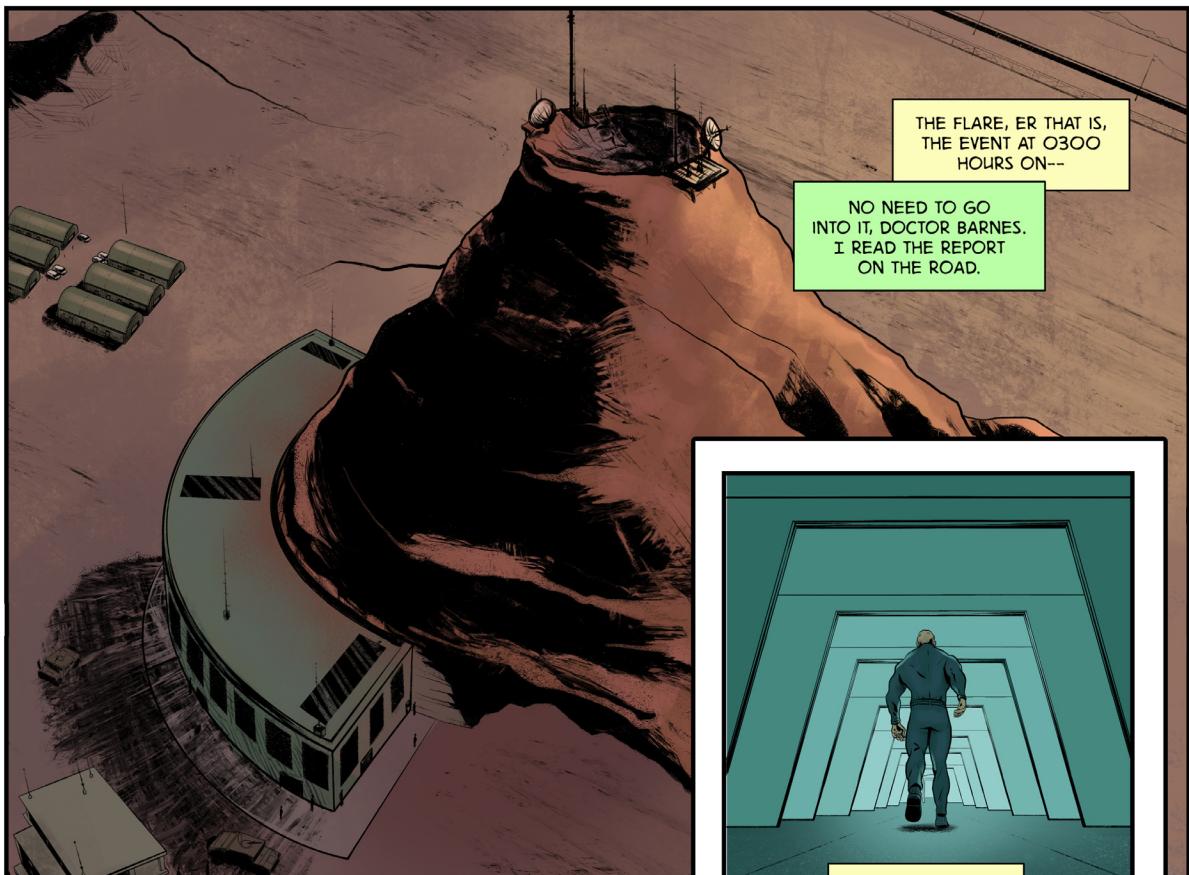
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RED HERRING









...BUT IT SURE
WASN'T THAT.

WITH LESS OF THE
FUNNEL OPERATIONAL,
WE'RE PACKING IT TOP TO
BOTTOM LIKE A CAN OF
SARDINES.

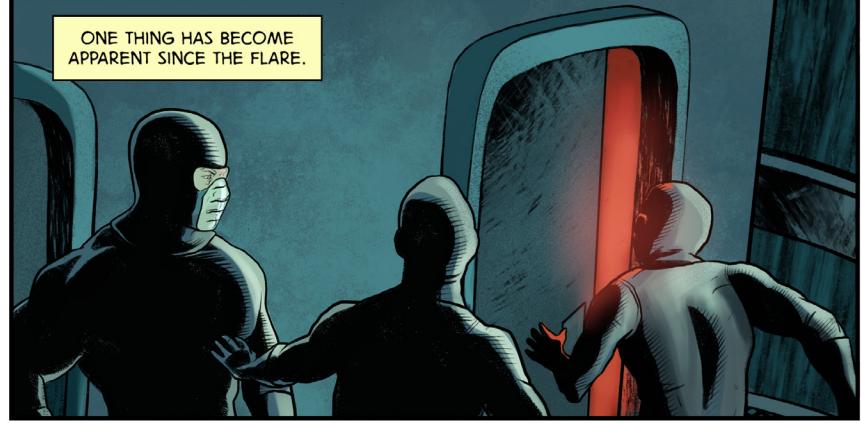
WE ARE SO, SO CLOSE
NOW. JUST A FEW MORE
SUBJECTS. JUST A LITTLE
MORE TIME...



WE'VE STARTED TO
REALLY GET A SENSE FOR
HOW THEIR BRAINS WORK.



ONE THING HAS BECOME
APPARENT SINCE THE FLARE.

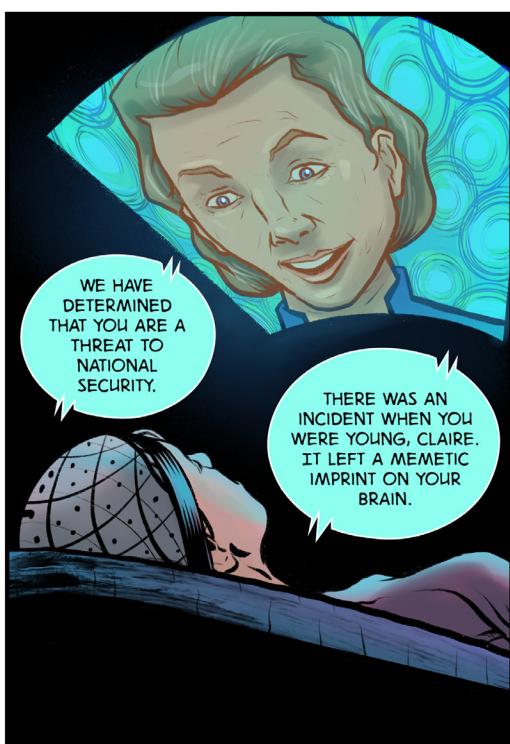


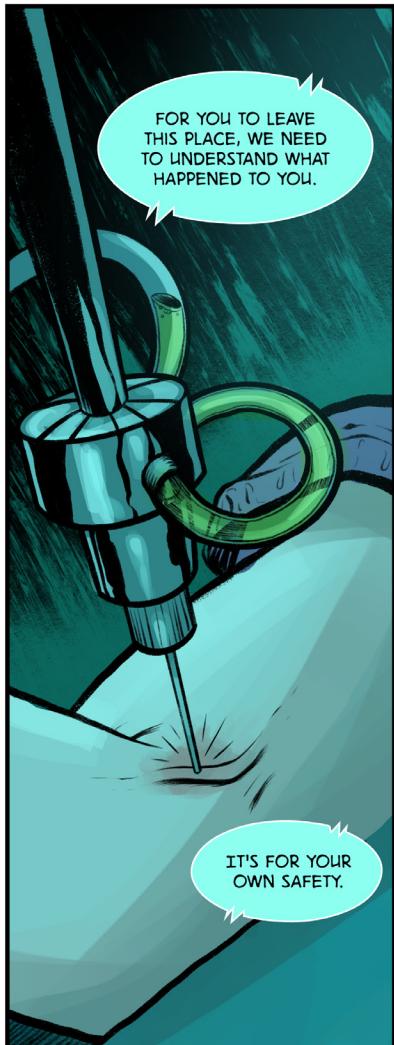
THE MORE STRESSED THEY GET,
THE FASTER THE NEW SUBJECTS
"CONNECT" WITH EACH OTHER.

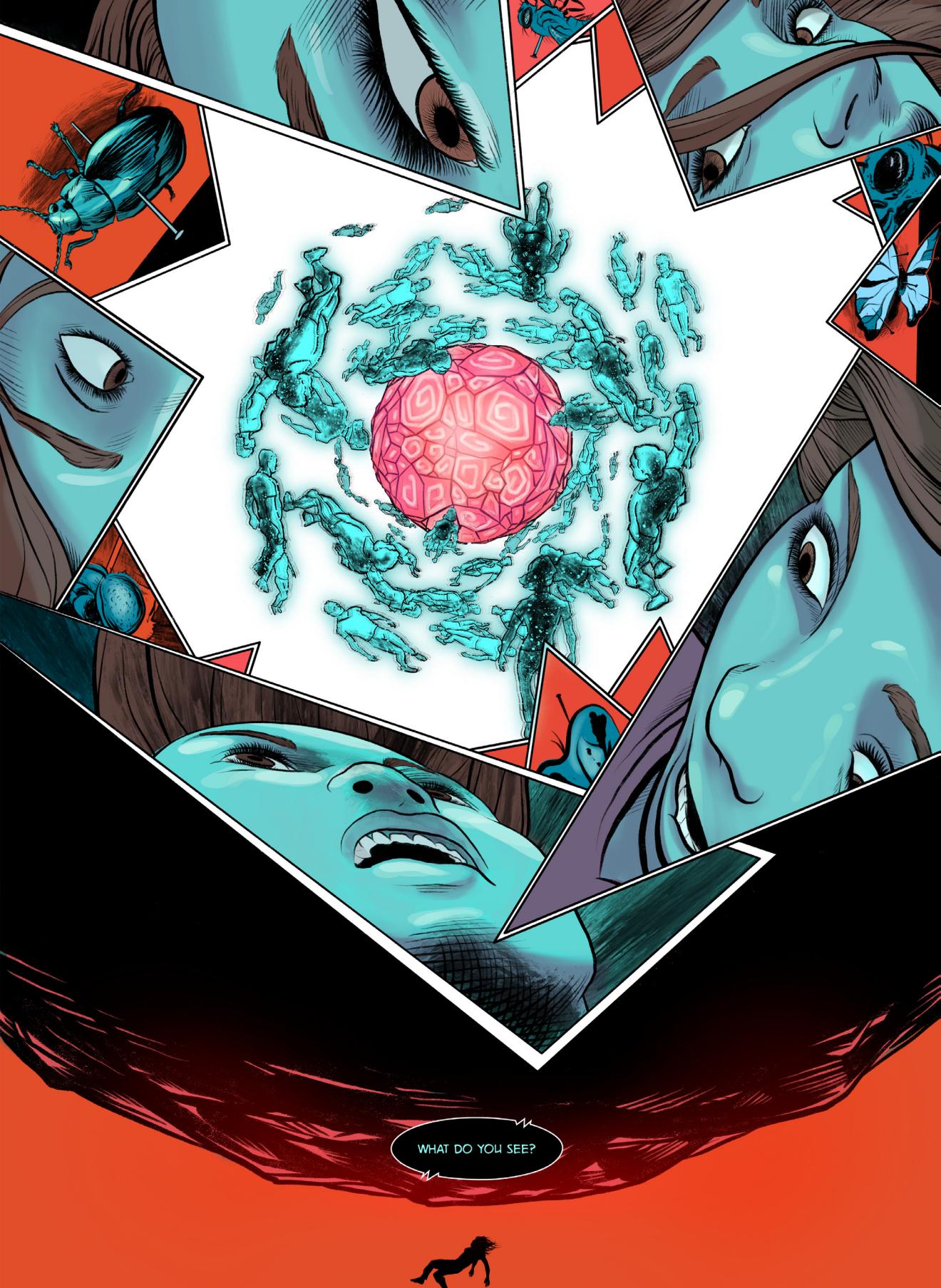


WE'VE ALTERED
THE INTAKE PROTOCOLS
ACCORDINGLY.









WHAT DO YOU SEE?



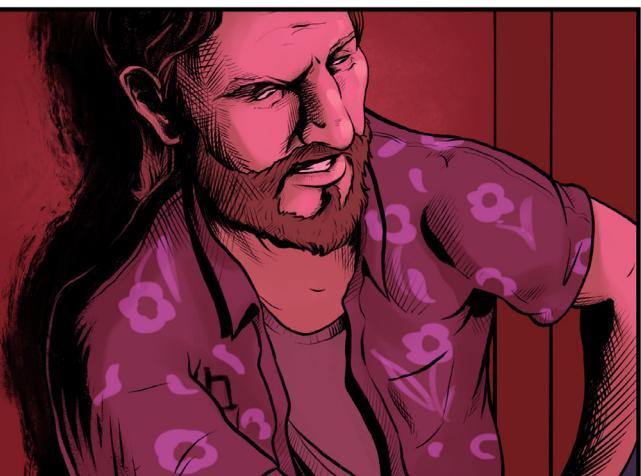
CRAWL AWAY,
LITTLE BUG...



...AND BRING
ME BACK WHAT
YOU FIND.





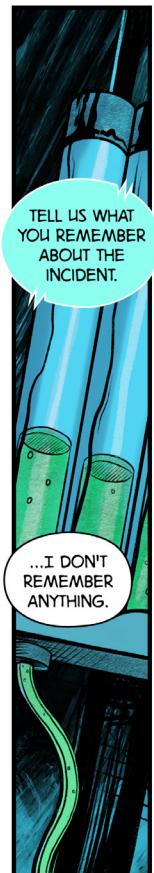






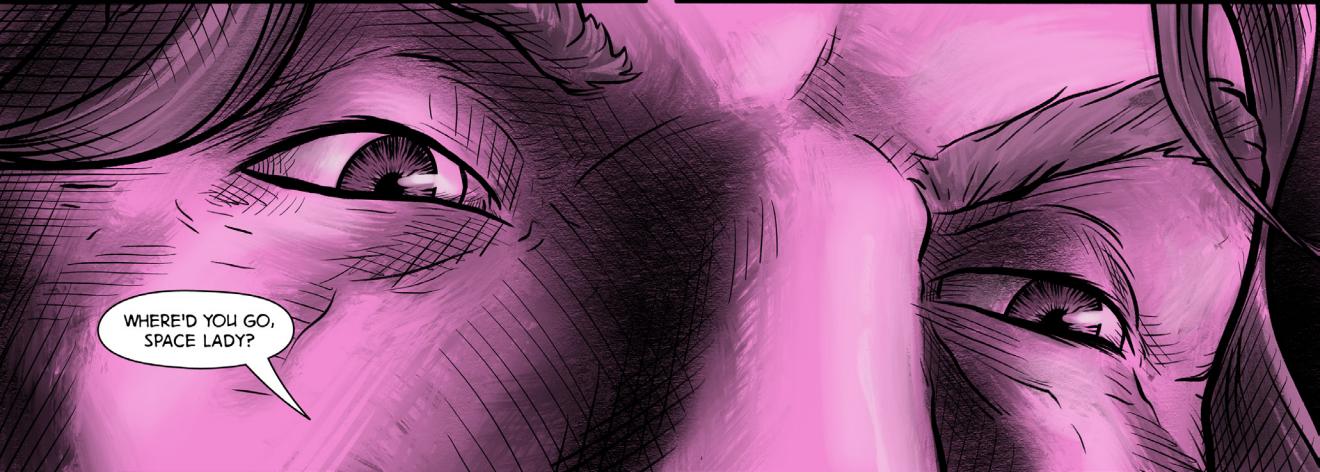
LET GO
OF ME!!





REC





WE'LL MAKE SOME
ADJUSTMENTS TO THE
OPTICAL STIMULATION.

HOW ABOUT NOW?

WH...TREES?
WHY TREES?

YOU'VE WRITTEN ABOUT
A CAMPING TRIP BEFORE.
WE THINK THIS MIGHT--

IT WAS...IN THE
MOUNTAINS. THERE WERE
SOME TREES BUT IT WASN'T.
HOW DID YOU--

THIS IS ONLY
EFFECTIVE IF YOU
COOPERATE, **CLAIRE**.
YOU GO HOME WHEN
WE'RE DONE. AND
WE'RE DONE WHEN
THIS IS EFFECTIVE.

WE NEED YOU TO
TRY, **CLAIRE**.

NOW, CLOSE YOUR
EYES AND LET YOUR MIND
WANDER. LET IT PASS OVER
MEMORIES. WHERE DOES
YOUR MIND GO?

YOU'RE NOT SENDING
ME HOME. THERE'S NO
'AFTER' THIS.

THINK HARDER.
WHAT DO YOU
REMEMBER?

I DON'T
REMEMBER
ANYTHING.

YOU WON'T,
EITHER.



THEY'RE TRYING TO REGRESS YOU. DIG UP OLD MEMORIES BASED OFF OF THINGS YOU'VE SAID IN PUBLIC. MAYBE EMAILS, OR ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS.

I HAVEN'T QUITE FIGURED OUT HOW THEY FIND US.

WHO...ARE YOU?

A PRISONER AND A SURVIVOR. LIKE YOURSELF.

THEY'VE BEEN ROOTING AROUND IN MY HEAD FOR YEARS...YEARS?

YEARS. MAYBE.

IT'S HARD TO TELL WITH ALL THE PSYCHOTROPICS WE'RE ON. IT'S ALL A GIANT, BLIND TRAUMA PROTOCOL DEPLOYED AT SCALE.

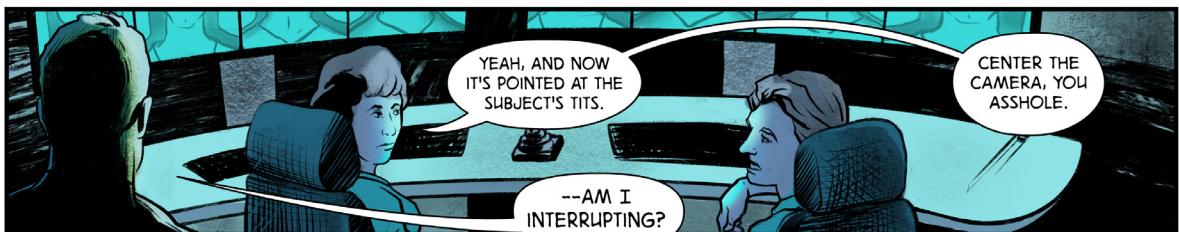
THEY FEED A NEURAL NETWORK OUR PROFILE AND IT SPITS OUT THE QUESTIONS AND THE VISUALS ACCORDING TO THE REGRESSION SYLLOGISM A SHRINK OUTLINED 30 YEARS AGO.

WHAT THEY'RE DOING IS JUST A MESS OF PSEUDOSCIENCE AND GUESSWORK. HONESTLY, I DON'T THINK THEY HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THEY'RE DOING.

THANKFULLY, PEOPLE LIKE US ARE OPERATING ON A MUCH WIDER BAND OF REALITY...

...IF WE CHOOSE TO.







THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE SHOWING YOU IN THE REAL WORLD, THE VIDEO SCREEN HOOKED UP TO YOUR POD. AND THE REST, ALL OF THIS...

WELL, THAT'S HARDER TO SAY.
THIS IS A PLACE WE CREATE AND SUSTAIN TOGETHER. OUR CONCIOUSNESS INTERMINGLING DOWN HERE AND...UP THERE, THEY WATCH OVER US.

THE HOURS WE SPEND IN HERE CAN FEEL LIKE WEEKS... MONTHS EVEN.



LESS TIME IN THEIR WORLD, MORE TIME IN OURS, HERE IN WHAT I CALL THE BEND.



OK. BUT WHERE IS THIS PLACE?



THE BEND IS WHEREVER-



-YOU WANT IT--



-TO BE, BABE.



OK, THIS IS GETTING RIDICULOUS AND I'M GETTING A HEADACHE.

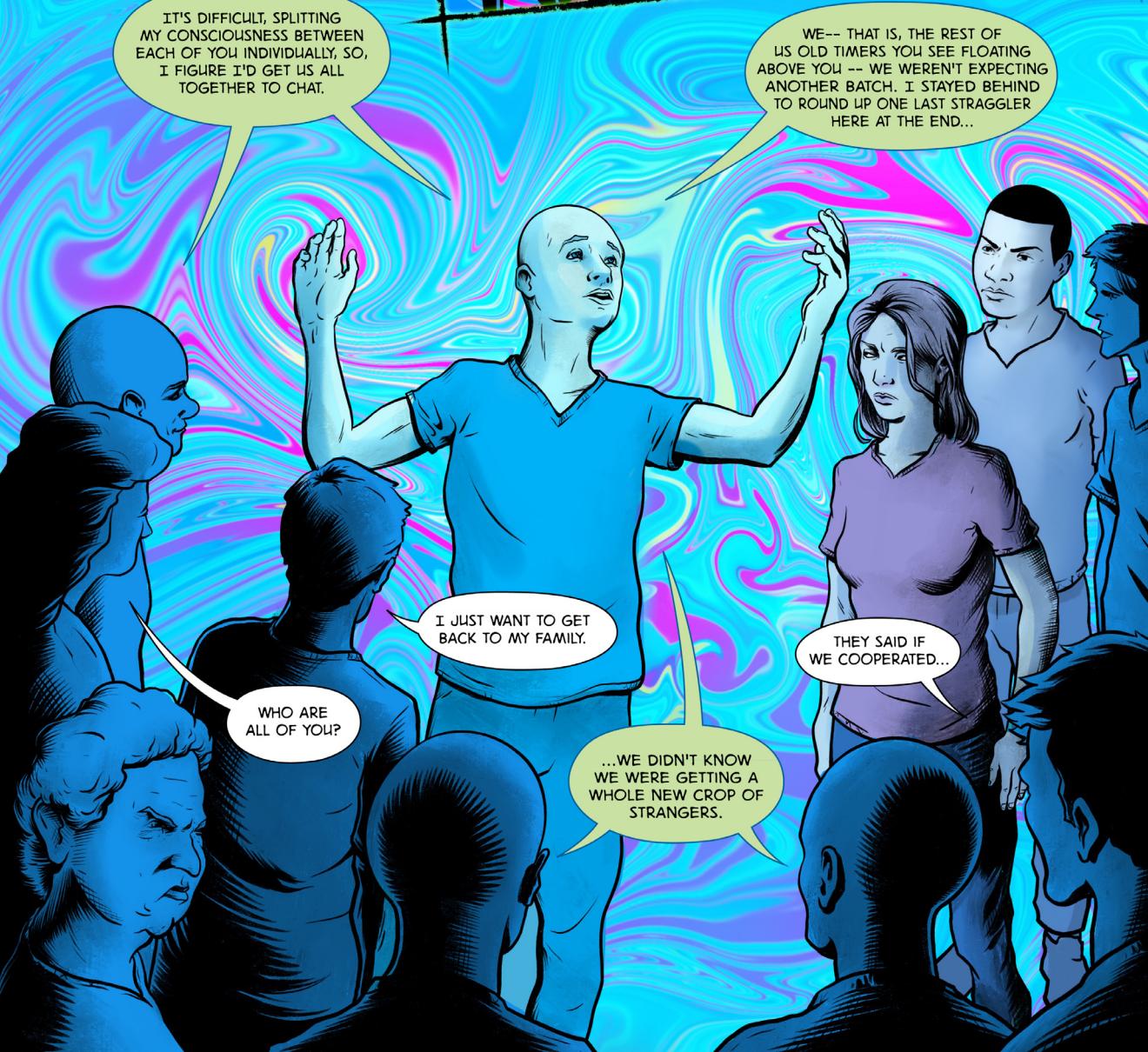
WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'M GOING TO STREAMLINE THIS.

APOLOGIES, ALL, FOR THE DISTRESS OF TRANSPORTING YOU ALL SO SUDDENLY.



IT'S DIFFICULT, SPLITTING MY CONSCIOUSNESS BETWEEN EACH OF YOU INDIVIDUALLY, SO, I FIGURE I'D GET US ALL TOGETHER TO CHAT.

WE-- THAT IS, THE REST OF US OLD TIMERS YOU SEE FLOATING ABOVE YOU -- WE WEREN'T EXPECTING ANOTHER BATCH. I STAYED BEHIND TO ROUND UP ONE LAST STRAGGLER HERE AT THE END...



THERE IS NO "OUT"
AND NO WAY BACK HOME.
THEY DUMPED A FAKE BODY
THAT YOUR LOVED ONES
MOURED AND BURIED
WEEKS AGO.

YOU AREN'T
HALUCINATING. THIS
PLACE IS AS REAL AS
THE STINKING EMR PODS
YOUR PHYSICAL BODIES
ARE STUFFED IN.

YOU'RE NOT GETTING
OUT THE WAY YOU CAME
IN. THE ONLY WAY IS
UP, WITH US.

THERE ARE THOUSANDS
OF US HERE, MERGING,
ONE TO ANOTHER, AND
EVENTUALLY WITH THE
CONCIOUSNESS WHO
CHANGED US IN THE
FIRST PLACE.

THE BEND CAN BE ANYTHING
YOU IMAGINE. YOU CAN EVEN
VISIT YOUR OLD LIFE, REMOTELY.

TOGETHER, WE
CAN EVEN *ALTER* THE
PHYSICAL PLANE.

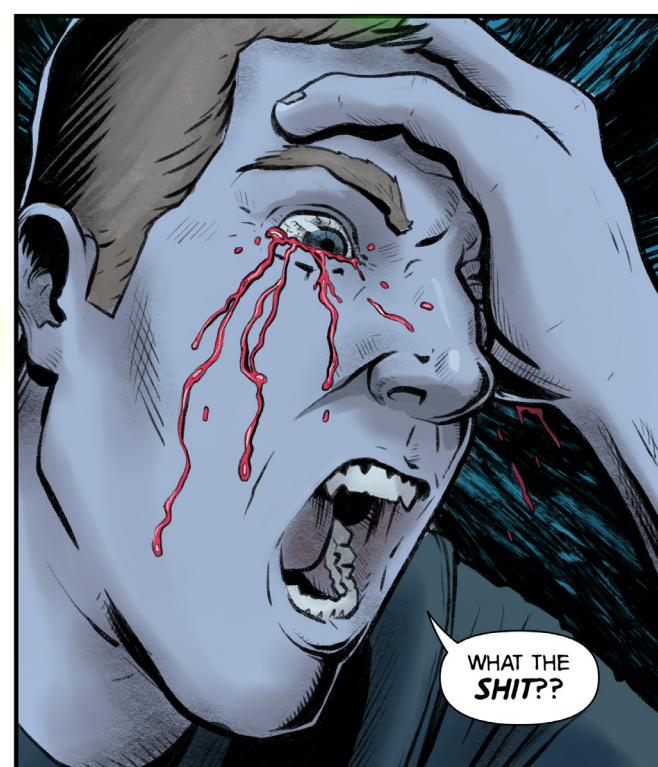
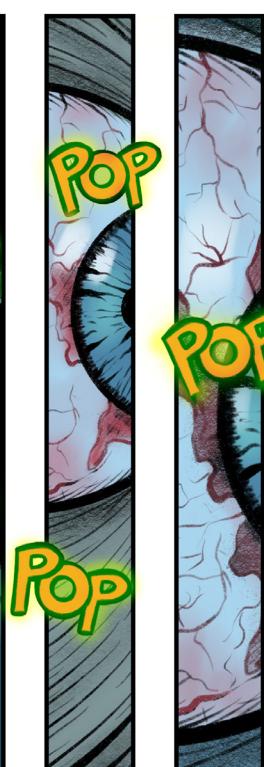
I CAN GUIDE YOU
TO WHATEVER YOU NEED
IF IT'S CLOSURE YOU NEED,
BUT IT HAS TO BE SOON.
WE'RE *SO* CLOSE
TO ASCENDING.

AND IF WE DON'T
"ASCEND" WITH YOU?

WHAT HAPPENS?

LADY, WHAT HAPPENS
IS WE WILL *LEAVE* AND
YOU WILL STAY HERE,
WITH THEM.





IT'S NOT
INTERFERENCE.
SHIT. WE'RE
LOSING THEM.

WE'RE LOSING
ALL OF THEM!

SERGEANT
KARRLSON! THEY'RE
ALL HITTING THE
DISSOCIATIVE STATE
EARLY. WE NEED TO
SCRAMBLE THE
FACTORY TO PULL
THEM OUT.

WE CAN'T LOSE
THIS BATCH ALREADY...
SERGEANT KARRLSON??

GODDAMNIT,
WE NEED TECHS
IN THE FUNNEL, STAT.
PULL EVERYONE IN
THE TOP RING OUT
OF THEIR RIGS NOW.

GET THEM ALL
OUT OF THEIR PODS
UNTIL WE CAN
STABALIZE THEM!

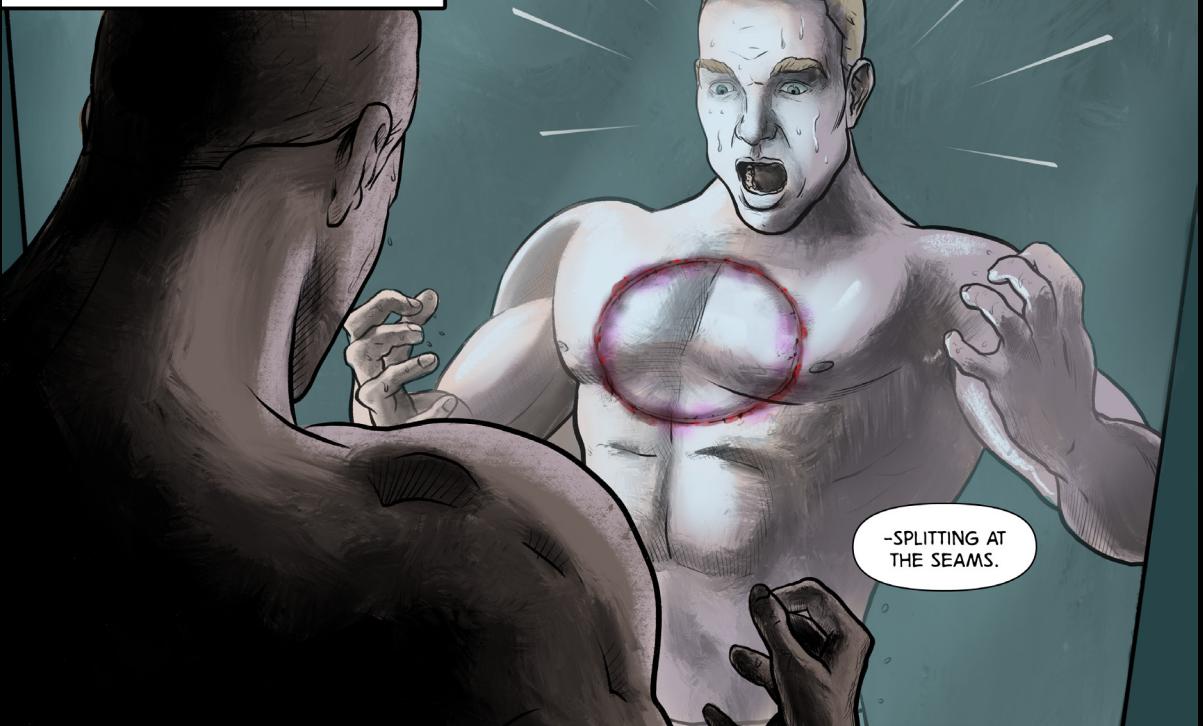
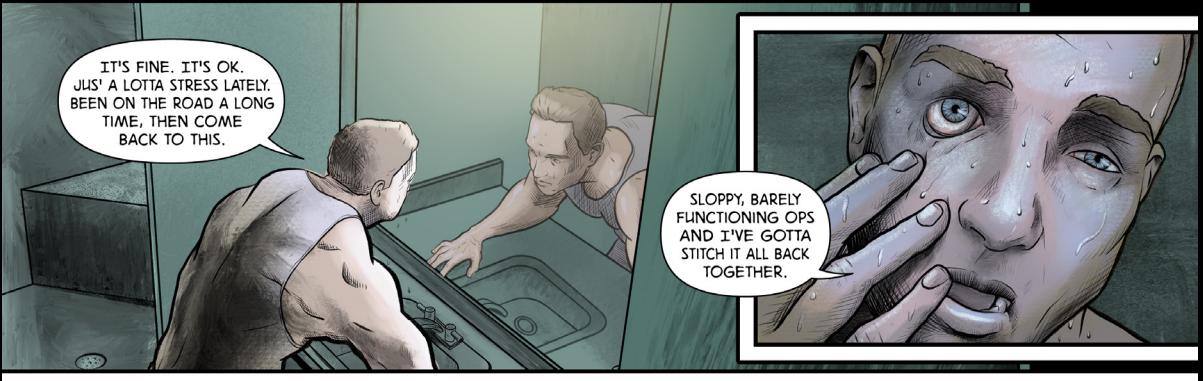
SCRAMBLE
THE BASE!

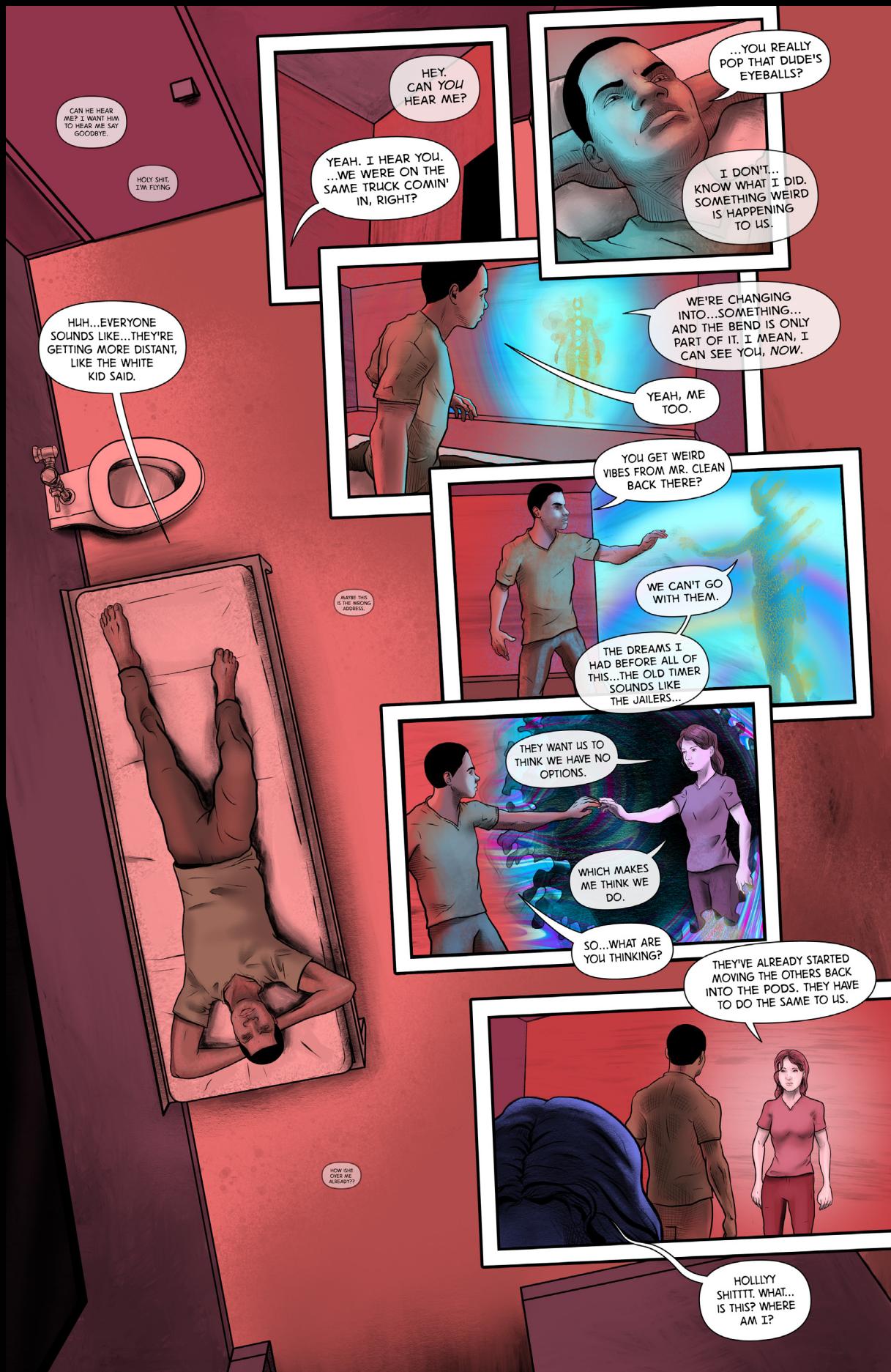
-NOT
RESPONDING-

-UNRESPONSIVE-

GET DOCTOR
BARNES. MULTIPLE
SUBJECTS, THE THREE
TOP RINGS!









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