

#4

FRONTIER



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ELITE'S HISTORY

BOTH ELITE & ELITE II FRONTIER COMPUTER GAMES MADE HISTORY WHEN THEY WERE DEVELOPED BY DAVID BRABEN & IAN BELL. EVEN TODAY 25 YEARS AFTER ELITE HIT THE SHELVES FOR THE BBC MICRO COMPUTER, THE ELITE SERIES IS STILL A BIG HIT WITH MILLIONS OF GAMERS ALL OVER THE WORLD. THERE IS A HUGE FOLLOWING ON THE INTERNET WITH COUNTLESS WEBSITES, FORUMS AND PROGRAMMERS THAT CONTINUE TO TWEAK THE GRAPHICS AND GAME PLAY TO BRING BACK THE APPEAL. ELITE HAS ALSO INSPIRED MANY OTHER GAMES USING THE SAME OR SIMILAR GAME STYLE, SUCH AS EVE ONLINE, X3 TERRAN CONFLICT AND EVEN A COMMUNITY BASED GAME IN DEVELOPMENT CALLED PIONEER. THERE IS ON AND OFF TALK OF A 4TH INSTALMENT OF THE SERIES. PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE PLEADING WITH DEVELOPER BRABEN TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE GAME AS IT HAS BEEN A LONG AWAITED SEQUEL THAT COULD BRING NEWER AND YOUNGER PEOPLE INTO THE FRANCHISE. I PERSONALLY HOPE THAT BRABEN AND HIS TEAM DO FINALLY START WORKING ON ELITE 4 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...

THE COMIC

THIS COMIC IS FOR NON PROFIT REASONS & IS MEANT PURELY AS FICTIONAL ENTERTAINMENT FOR THE FANS AND GAMERS OF THE 90'S THAT SPENT MANY MONTHS EVEN YEARS PLAYING FRONTIER: ELITE 2. THE STORY FOLLOWS JOHN JAMESON THE GRANDCHILD OF NOTORIOUS SPACE ADVENTURER PETER JAMESON, WHO IS KILLED BY PIRATES AND SUBSEQUENTLY THROWS JOHN INTO THE WORLD OF SPACE EXPLORATION. IT WILL COVER AS MUCH FROM FRONTIER AS POSSIBLE, KEEPING THE STORY ORIGINAL AND AS CLOSE TO THE GAME AS POSSIBLE, WITH AN IN DEPTH STORYLINE AND ILLUSTRATED WITH STATE OF THE ART COMPUTER GRAPHICS. ALL RIGHTFUL COPYRIGHTS BELONG TO DAVID BRABEN AND HIS TEAM, HOWEVER THIS COMIC IS DEDICATED TO BRABEN AND ALL THE FANS OF THIS TRULY AMAZING GAME.

STORY, ARTWORK & TEXT

DAVE JONES

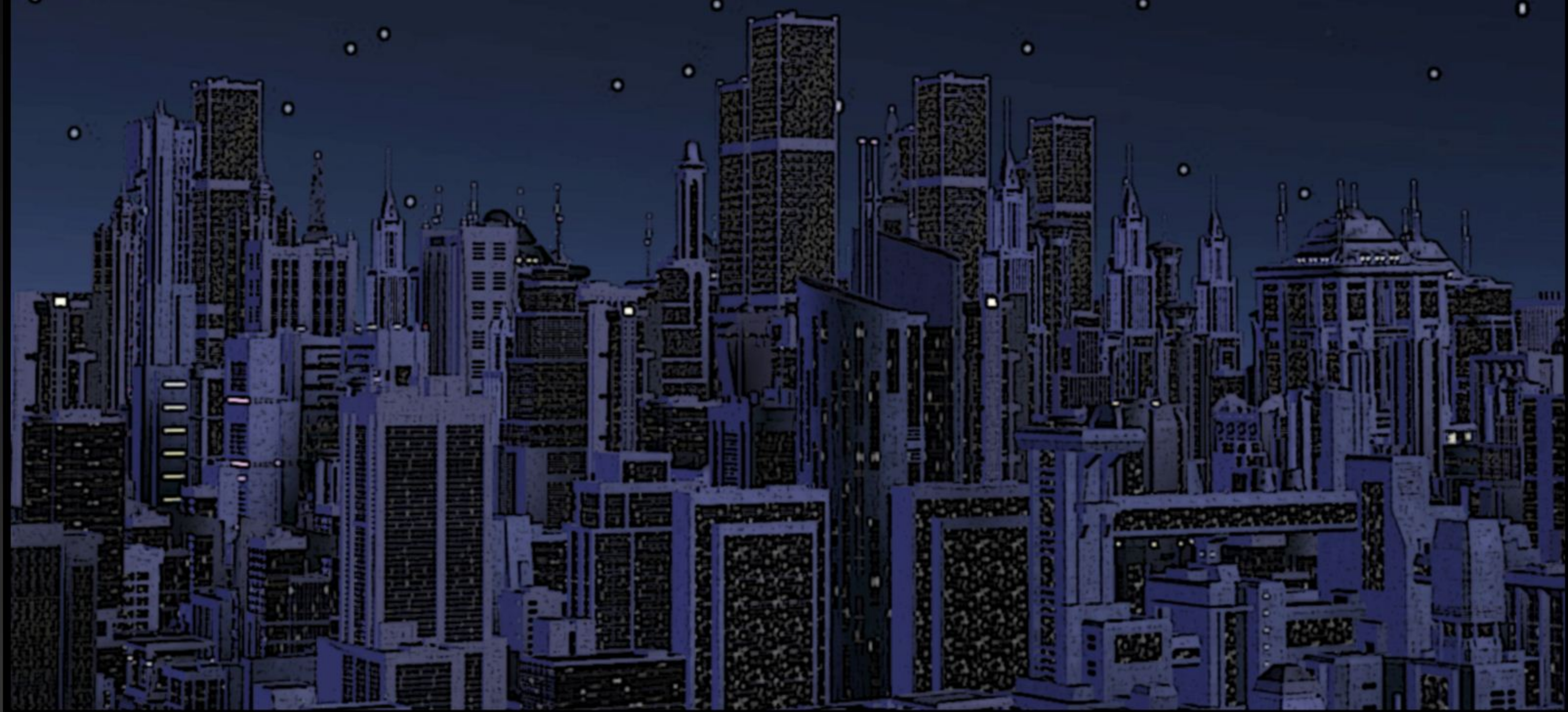
ORIGINAL STORY

DAVID BRABEN
IAN BELL

TIMELINE

- 1950S - FIRST MAN IN SPACE, CONTROLLED NUCLEAR FISSION, TRANSISTOR, START OF THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE.
- 1960S - FIRST MAN ON MOON, COMMERCIAL FISSION POWER, INTEGRATED CIRCUITS, COMPUTERS.
- 1970S - PROBES IN SOLAR STSTEM.
- 1980S - END OF FIRST NUCLEAR ARMS RACE.
- 1990S - FIRST PROBE LANDED ON MARS
- 2000S - FIRST SIGNS OF GLOBAL WARMING, GOVERNMENTS LOOK AT GREEN ENERGY SOLUTIONS.
- 2010S - FIRST SERIOUS POPULATION PROBLEMS ON EARTH.
- 2020S - FIRST INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, FIRST COMMERCIAL SPACE STATION.
- 2030S - MAJOR ENERGY CRISIS, FOSSIL FUEL RESTRICTIONS, RELIGIOUS UNREST, FIRST BABY BORN OFF EARTH.
- 2040S - WORLD WAR III. HUGE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS, HUGE LOSS OF LIFE, DREADFUL ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE.
- 2050S - WAR GRADUALLY ABANDONED DUE TO POPULAR REBELLIONS. COMMERCIAL FUSION POWER.
- 2060S - REBUILDING. DOMINANCE OF CORPORATIONS INCREASED.
- 2070S - FIRST MAN ON MARS, FIRST PERMANENT MOON BASE.
- 2080S - MANNED EXPLORATION OF SOLAR SYSTEM, ORBITAL CITIES AROUND EARTH, FIRST INTERSTELLAR PROBES LAUNCHED.
- 2090S - FIRST PERMANENT MARS BASE, HEAVY INDUSTRY ON MOON.
- 2100S - DISCOVERY OF FOSSILS ON MARS BASE, "HYPERSPACE" DISCOVERED, HUMANS THROUGHOUT SOLAR SYSTEM.
- 2110S - ARRIVAL OF MESSAGE FROM FIRST INTERSTELLAR PROBE TO ALPHA CENTAURI SYSTEM. FIRST PICTURES TAKEN OF AN EXTRA-SOLAR PLANET IN THE LAGRANGE POINT ON THE TWO MAIN STARS.
- 2120S - PRESENCE OF LIFE ON TAU CETI 3 DETECTED, FIRST ARMED CONFLICT IN SPACE OVER RIGHTS IN THE ASTEROID BELT.
- 2130S - HYPERSPACE CAPABLE PROBES SENT TO ALL NEARBY SYSTEMS.
- 2140S - MANNED SPACE CRAFT SENT TO TAU CETI.
- 2150S - COLONY ESTABLISHED ON TAU CETI 3. MAJOR CORPORATIONS SENDING FIRST PRIVATE COLONY SHIPS.
- 2160S - THE RACE FOR THE STARS. ENOURMOUS PRODUCTION EFFORT TO PRODUCE SHIPS, AND MASS EXODUS STARTED.
- 2170S - FIRST ATTEMPT TO TERRA-FORM MARS STARTED.
- 2180S - LIFE ON DELTA PARVONIS DISCOVERED AND MADE EXTINCT IN SAME YEAR FROM BACTERIOLOGICAL INFECTION.
- 2190S - DISCOVERY OF LIFE ON BETA HYDRI 4, ALTAIR 5. HUMAN COLONIALS SPREADING OUT OF CONTROL.
- 2200S - EARTH ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY PROGRAM STARTED, TERRAFORMING OF MARS ABANDONED.
- 2220S - EXTINCTIONS ON TAU CETI 3 INCREASING. EARTH THREATENS TO SEND A POLICE FORCE IF NOTHING IS DONE ABOUT IT.
- 2230S - ULTIMATUM SENT TO TAU CETI IGNORED.
- 2240S - FIRST INTERSTELLAR BATTLE, FORMATION OF THE FEDERATION, FOUNDER MEMBERS: EARTH, TAU CETI, DELTA PAVONIS, ALTAIR, BETA HYDRI.
- 2260S - SPREAD OF FEDERATION INFLUENCE.
- 2270S - SECOND ATTEMPT TO TERRA-FORM MARS STARTED.
- 2280S - DISCOVERY OF FIRST NON-HUMAN RELIC IN SPACE. ORIGIN STILL UNKNOWN IN 3200.
- 2290S - FIRST MAN "OUTSIDE" ON MARS (IE BREATHING UNAIDED) ON COMPLETION OF TERRAFORMING.
- 2300S - REMAINING INDIGENOUS LIFE ON TAU CETI 3 PRESERVED IN SPECIAL ENCLOSURES.
- 2310S - NEWS OF ELIMINATION OF A REPUTEDLY SENTIENT RACE ON ACHENAR 6D BY PRIVATE COLONISTS CAUSES OUTRAGE IN THE FEDERATION. ACHENAR REFUSES TO JOIN FEDERATION, MANY TERRA-FORMING PROJECTS STARTED.
- 2320S - FEDERATION SENDS WAR FLEET TO ACHENAR. RESULTING ENORMOUS SPACE BATTLE WON BY ACHENAR.
- 2330S - SPREAD OF EMPIRE FROM ACHENAR TO SURROUNDING WORLDS. WAR BETWEEN EMPIRE AND FEDERATION.
- 2340S - CONTINUING BATTLES BETWEEN FEDERATION AND EMPIRE.
- 2350S - SIRUS CORPORATION FOUNDED, AND GREW RICH SUPPLYING THE WAR FLEETS.
- 2380S - TREATY SIGNED BETWEEN EMPIRE AND FEDERATION. THE COLD WAR BEGINS....

...FEDERATION HEADQUARTERS, NEW WASHINGTON, EARTH. THE SURVIVING CREW OF PANTHER ONE ARE ENJOYING SOME DOWNTIME. THE FUTURE OF EARTH & ALL FEDERAL SYSTEMS ARE DARKENED BY UNCERTAINTY...

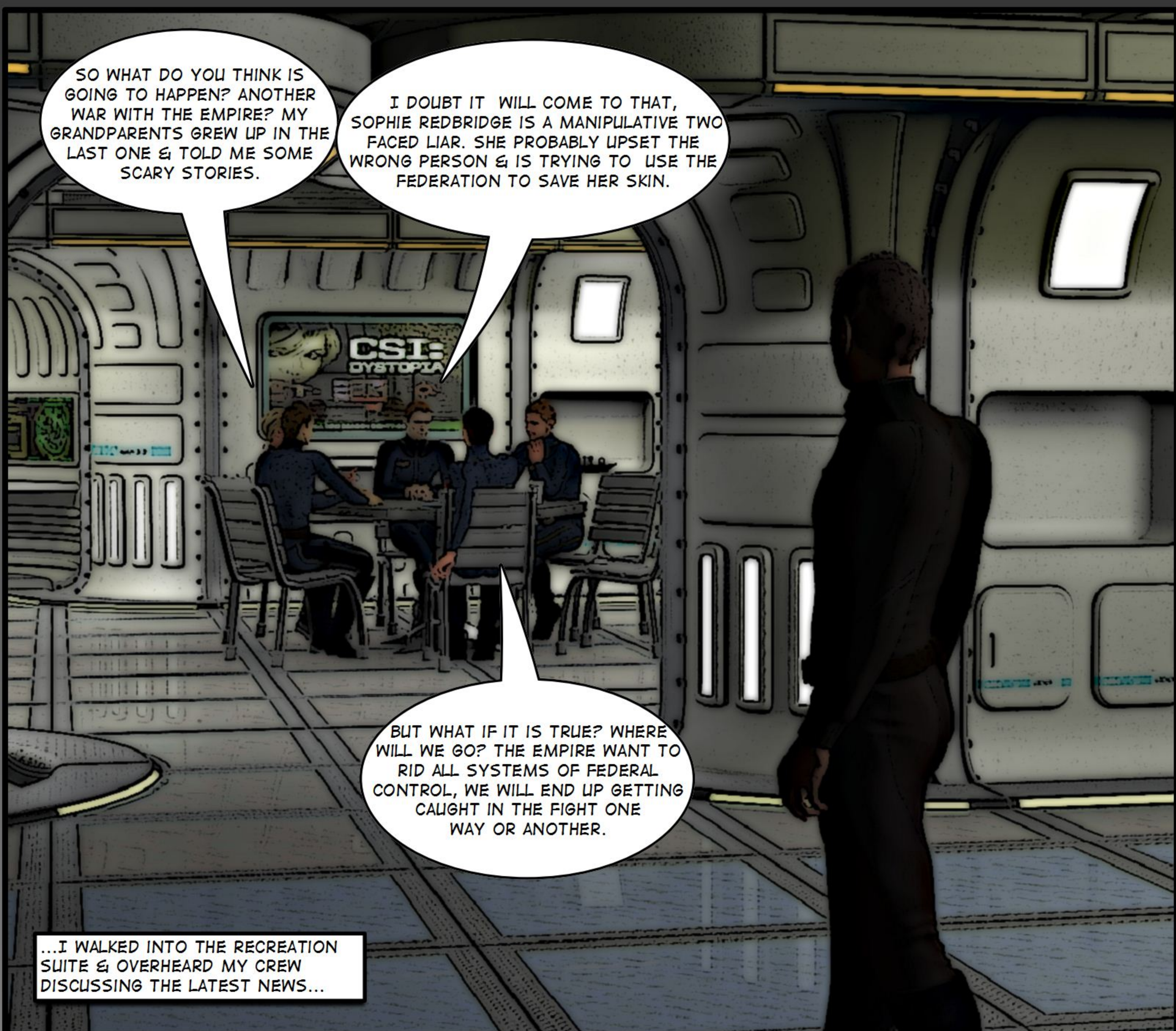


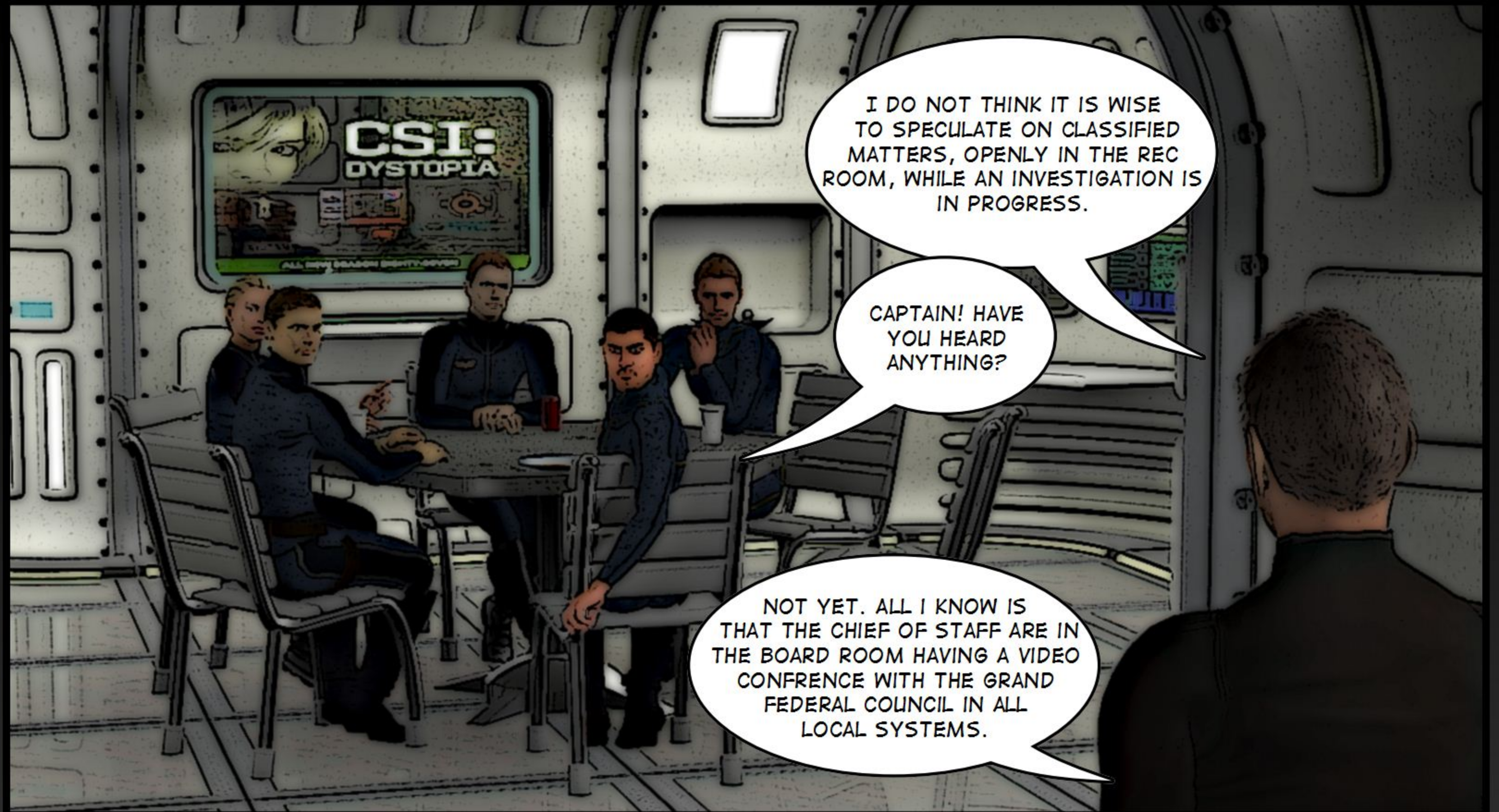
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO HAPPEN? ANOTHER WAR WITH THE EMPIRE? MY GRANDPARENTS GREW UP IN THE LAST ONE & TOLD ME SOME SCARY STORIES.

I DOUBT IT WILL COME TO THAT, SOPHIE REDBRIDGE IS A MANIPULATIVE TWO FACED LIAR. SHE PROBABLY UPSET THE WRONG PERSON & IS TRYING TO USE THE FEDERATION TO SAVE HER SKIN.

BUT WHAT IF IT IS TRUE? WHERE WILL WE GO? THE EMPIRE WANT TO RID ALL SYSTEMS OF FEDERAL CONTROL, WE WILL END UP GETTING CAUGHT IN THE FIGHT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

...I WALKED INTO THE RECREATION SUITE & OVERHEARD MY CREW DISCUSSING THE LATEST NEWS...





I DO NOT THINK IT IS WISE TO SPECULATE ON CLASSIFIED MATTERS, OPENLY IN THE REC ROOM, WHILE AN INVESTIGATION IS IN PROGRESS.

CAPTAIN! HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING?

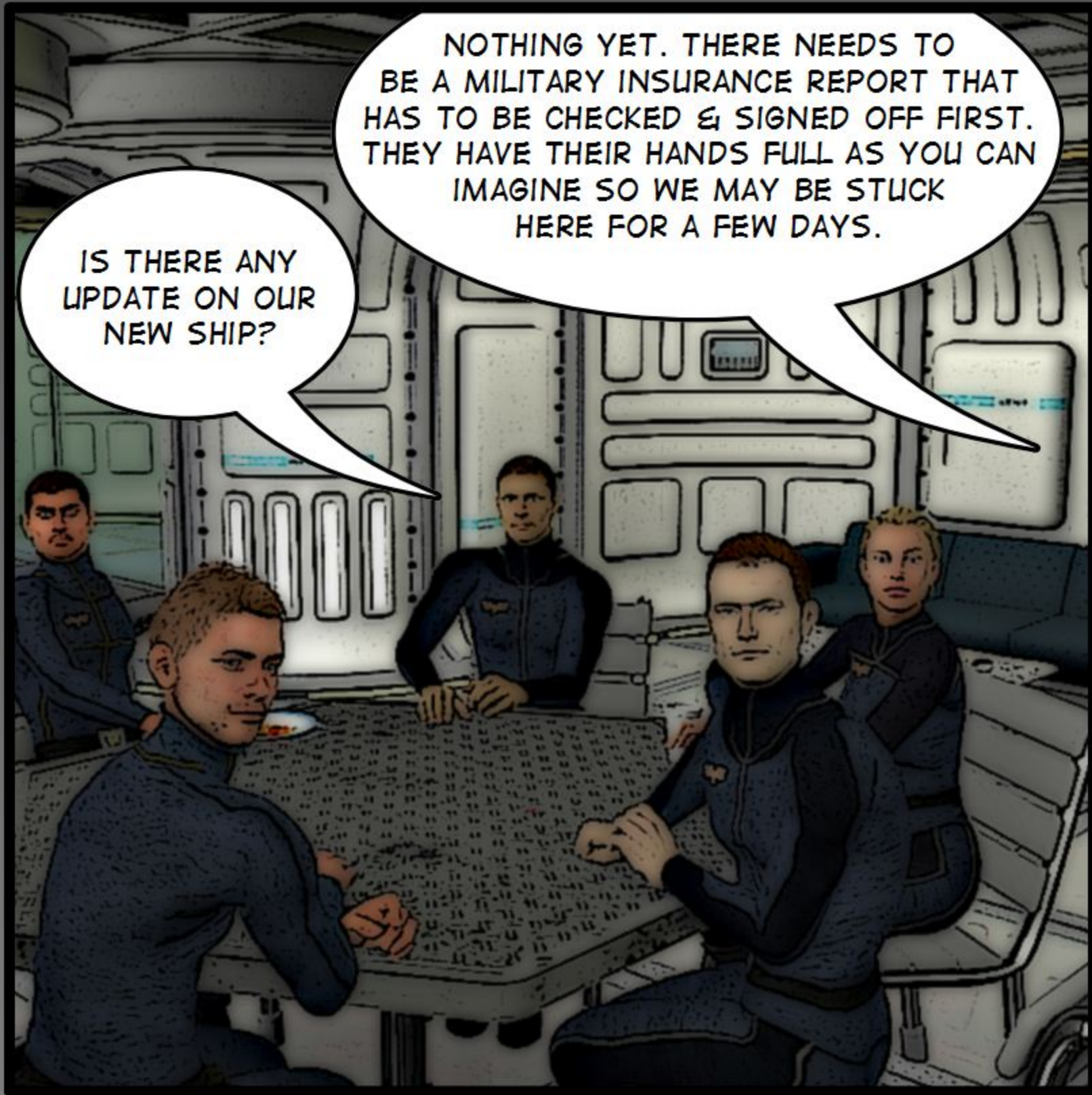
NOT YET. ALL I KNOW IS THAT THE CHIEF OF STAFF ARE IN THE BOARD ROOM HAVING A VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH THE GRAND FEDERAL COUNCIL IN ALL LOCAL SYSTEMS.



I DO NOT HAVE THE SECURITY CLEARANCE TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE, BUT I WOULD SAY THEY MUST BE TAKING MISS REDBRIDGE SERIOUSLY ENOUGH TO TAKE THESE STEPS.

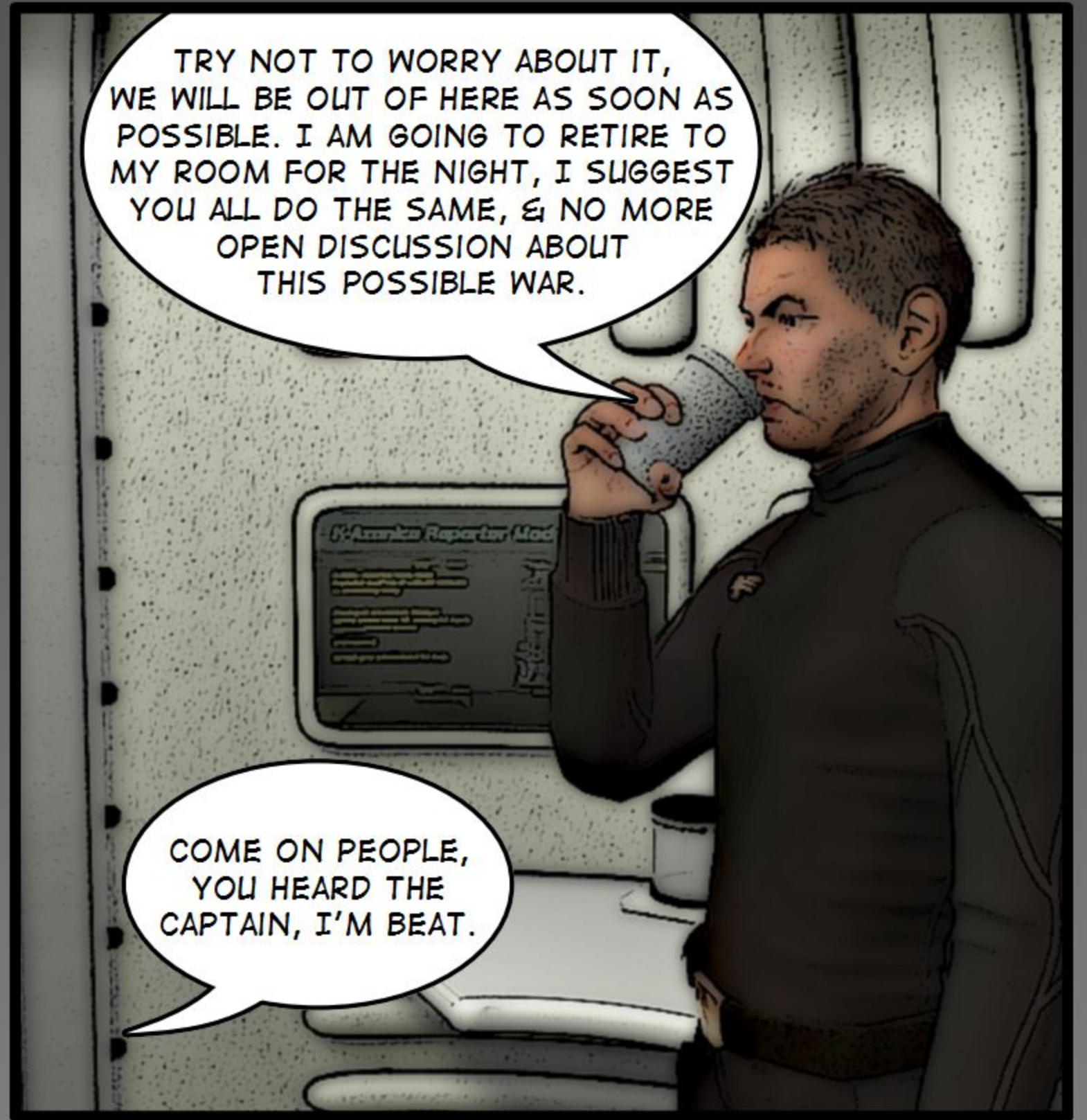


LETS NOT FORGET THE EFFORT THE EMPIRE MADE TO STOP US FROM GETTING HERE. I DOUBT THAT WAS DUE TO SOME DISAGREEMENT OR ARREST BOUNTY.



NOTHING YET. THERE NEEDS TO BE A MILITARY INSURANCE REPORT THAT HAS TO BE CHECKED & SIGNED OFF FIRST. THEY HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL AS YOU CAN IMAGINE SO WE MAY BE STUCK HERE FOR A FEW DAYS.

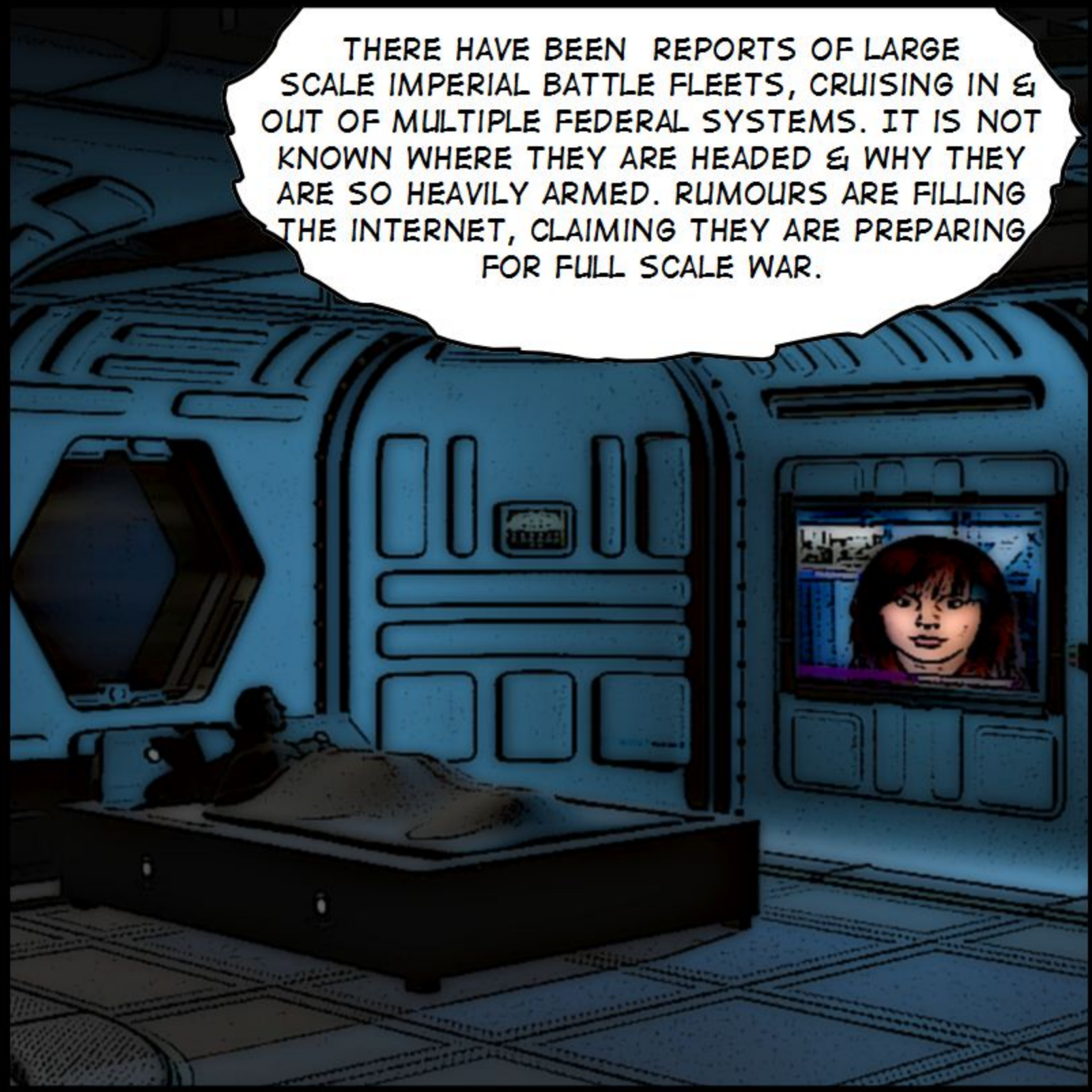
IS THERE ANY UPDATE ON OUR NEW SHIP?



TRY NOT TO WORRY ABOUT IT, WE WILL BE OUT OF HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I AM GOING TO RETIRE TO MY ROOM FOR THE NIGHT, I SUGGEST YOU ALL DO THE SAME, & NO MORE OPEN DISCUSSION ABOUT THIS POSSIBLE WAR.

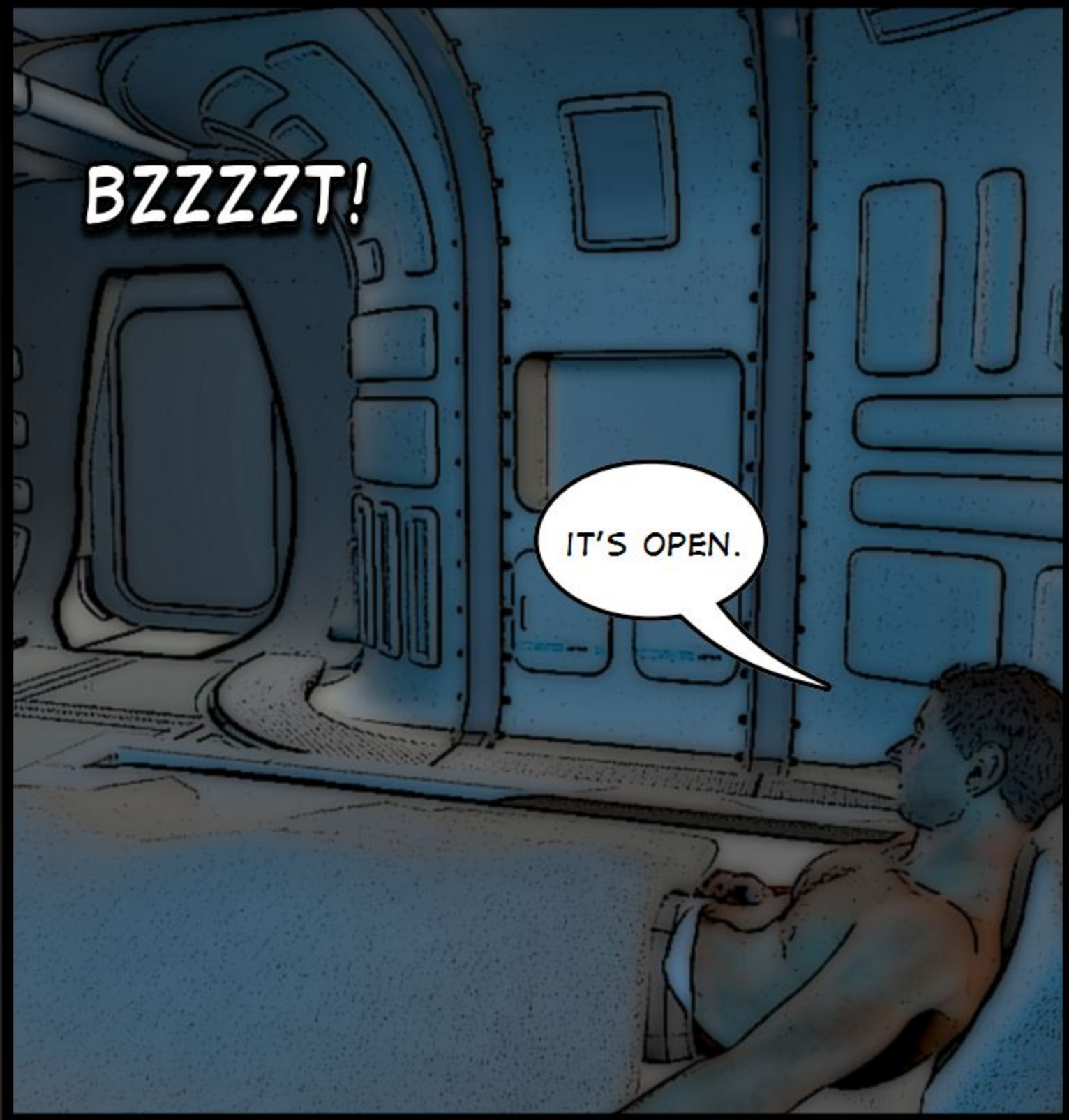
COME ON PEOPLE, YOU HEARD THE CAPTAIN, I'M BEAT.

THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF LARGE SCALE IMPERIAL BATTLE FLEETS, CRUISING IN & OUT OF MULTIPLE FEDERAL SYSTEMS. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHERE THEY ARE HEADED & WHY THEY ARE SO HEAVILY ARMED. RUMOURS ARE FILLING THE INTERNET, CLAIMING THEY ARE PREPARING FOR FULL SCALE WAR.



BZZZZT!

IT'S OPEN.



JOHN... HELLO, CAN I COME IN?

SADIE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT OF THE INFIRMARY? PLEASE, COME IN. IS EVERYTHING OKAY?



I'M FINE, THANK YOU. I COULDN'T SLEEP, I HAD TO COME & SEE YOU.

OKAY. YOU LOOK MUCH BETTER, THE MEDICAL TEAM REALLY ARE FIRST CLASS.



SHHHHH!

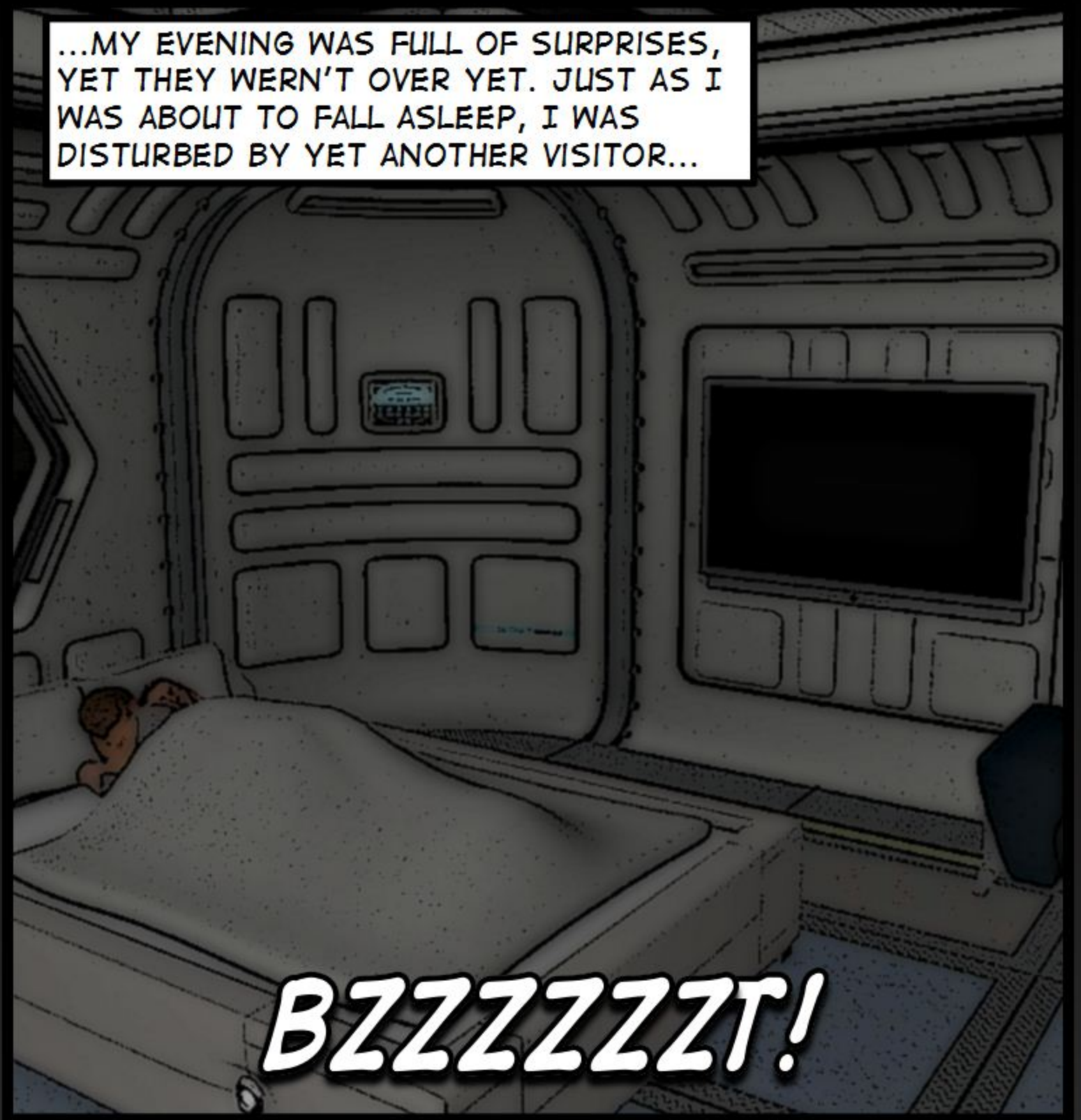
I WANT TO SHOW YOU MY APPRECIATION FOR SAVING MY LIFE.

SADIE... I ... UH.





...MY EVENING WAS FULL OF SURPRISES, YET THEY WERN'T OVER YET. JUST AS I WAS ABOUT TO FALL ASLEEP, I WAS DISTURBED BY YET ANOTHER VISITOR...



BZZZZZZT!



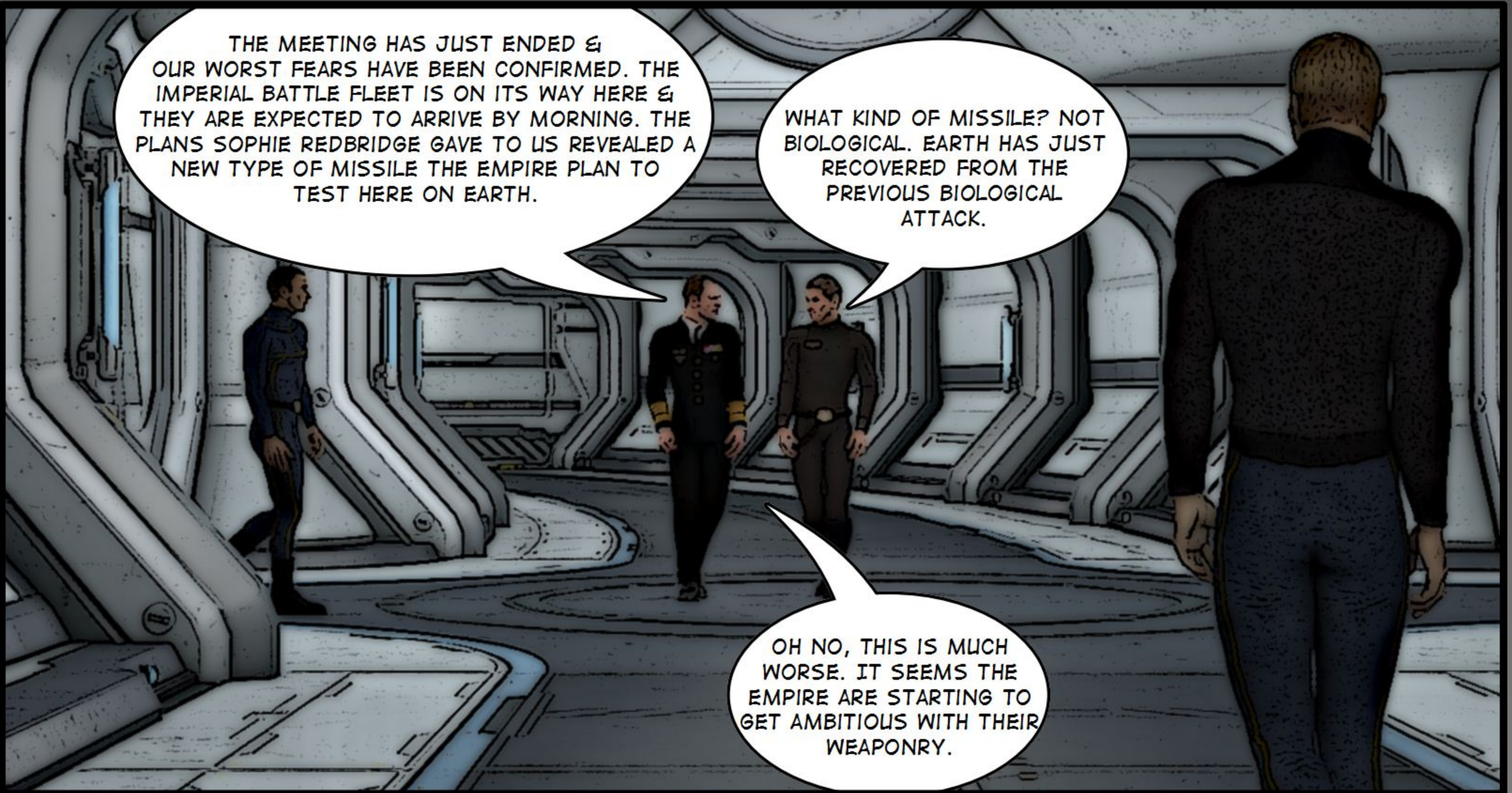
CAPTAIN JAMESON, IT'S ADMIRAL ALEXANDER. I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU, IT'S VERY IMPORTANT.

KNOCK!



I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, PUT SOMETHING ON, WE NEED TO TALK.

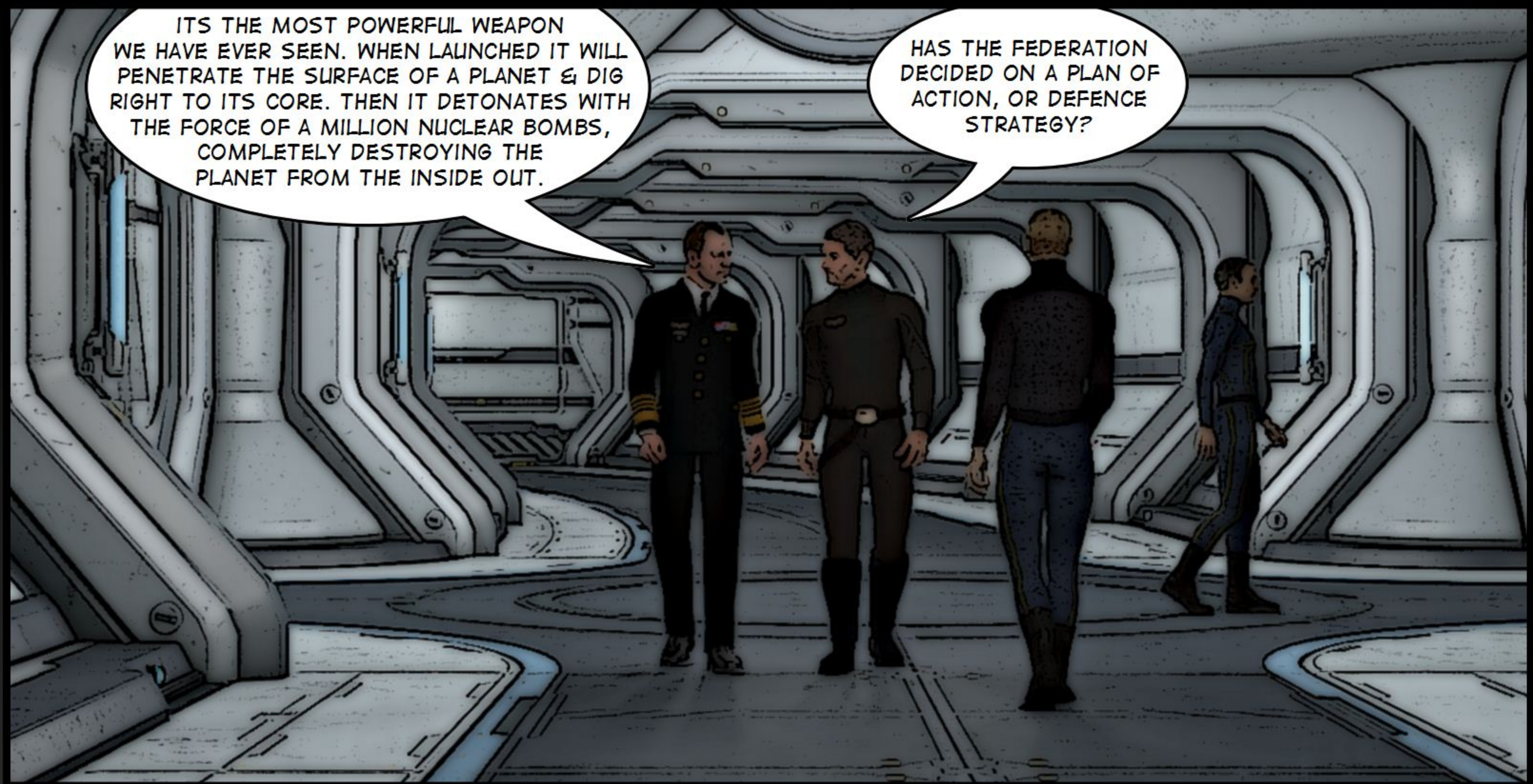
< YAWN! >



THE MEETING HAS JUST ENDED & OUR WORST FEARS HAVE BEEN CONFIRMED. THE IMPERIAL BATTLE FLEET IS ON ITS WAY HERE & THEY ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE BY MORNING. THE PLANS SOPHIE REDBRIDGE GAVE TO US REVEALED A NEW TYPE OF MISSILE THE EMPIRE PLAN TO TEST HERE ON EARTH.

WHAT KIND OF MISSILE? NOT BIOLOGICAL. EARTH HAS JUST RECOVERED FROM THE PREVIOUS BIOLOGICAL ATTACK.

OH NO, THIS IS MUCH WORSE. IT SEEMS THE EMPIRE ARE STARTING TO GET AMBITIOUS WITH THEIR WEAPONRY.



ITS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WE HAVE EVER SEEN. WHEN LAUNCHED IT WILL PENETRATE THE SURFACE OF A PLANET & DIG RIGHT TO ITS CORE. THEN IT DETONATES WITH THE FORCE OF A MILLION NUCLEAR BOMBS, COMPLETELY DESTROYING THE PLANET FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

HAS THE FEDERATION DECIDED ON A PLAN OF ACTION, OR DEFENCE STRATEGY?



WE HAVE ONLY A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME TO ORGANIZE A MIRACLE. MOST OF OUR COMBAT FLEETS ARE SPREAD THROUGHOUT NEIGHBOURING SYSTEMS. WE HAVE ARRANGED TO BRING BACK AS MANY SHIPS AS POSSIBLE, BUT DUE TO THEIR LOCATIONS WE CANNOT BE SURE IF SOME OF THEM WILL MAKE IT BACK BEFORE THE EMPIRE ARRIVES.

ITS PROBABLY BETTER THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF THE IMPENDING ATTACK & YOU'RE ABLE TO DEPLOY WHAT RESOURCES YOU HAVE. AFTER ALL, IT COULD BE A LOT WORSE IF THE EMPIRE JUST ARRIVED OUT OF NOWHERE & CAUGHT YOU WITH YOUR GUARD DOWN.

YES, THAT IS VERY TRUE. WE NEED EVERYONE READY FOR BATTLE. THE MORE PEOPLE WE HAVE, THE BETTER CHANCE WE HAVE OF BEATING THEM.



THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN. YOU ARE A CAPTAIN WITHOUT A SHIP & HAVE A REMARKABLE CREW SERVING UNDER YOU. I WANT YOU TO COMMAND ONE OF OUR DESTROYER CLASS BATTLESHIPS.

WAIT! WHAT?

YOU WANT ME TO LEAD A CAPITAL SHIP & FIGHT? I AM JUST A TRADER, I DO A FEW SIDE JOBS TO KEEP AFLOAT. I HAVE NEVER COMMANDED ANYTHING THAT BIG BEFORE.



NEITHER DID YOUR GRANDFATHER & WHAT HE ACCOMPLISHED EARNT HIM THE TITLE OF ELITE. HE SAVED MANY LIVES & DESTROYED THOUSANDS OF ENEMY SHIPS IN THAT WAR.

ALL MY LIFE, PEOPLE HAVE HAD HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF ME, BECAUSE OF HIM, BUT I AM NOT MY GRANDFATHER.



YOU ARE & YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON WHO DOESN'T SEE IT. YOU MANAGED TO BEAT AN ARMED FLEET OF IMPERIAL TRADERS, & SURVIVE A SECONDARY ATTACK FROM A SQUADRON OF FIGHTERS JUST TO TRANSPORT SOMEONE YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW.



WE NEED YOUR HELP, ARE YOU JUST GOING TO SIT DOWN HERE & WAIT TO DIE, OR ARE YOU GOING TO STAND UP & FIGHT FOR EVERYTHING WE STAND FOR UP THERE?

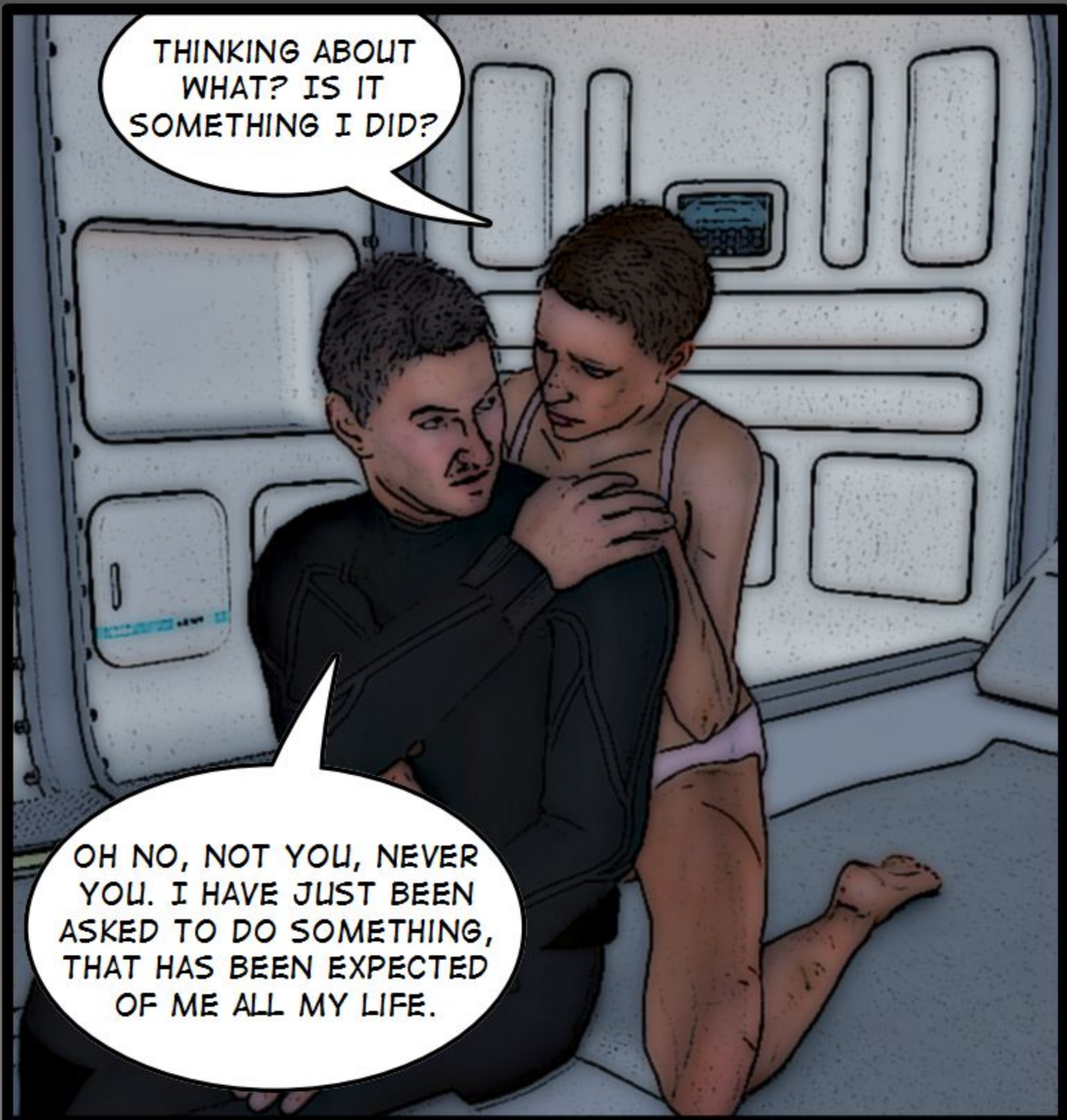


SOMETIMES ALL IT TAKES IS ONE MAN TO CHANGE EVERYTHING. THINK ABOUT IT, BUT DON'T TAKE TOO LONG. IT'S LATE, I NEED TO GET SOME SLEEP AS I HAVE A BIG DAY TOMORROW. SEE YOU LATER, JOHN.



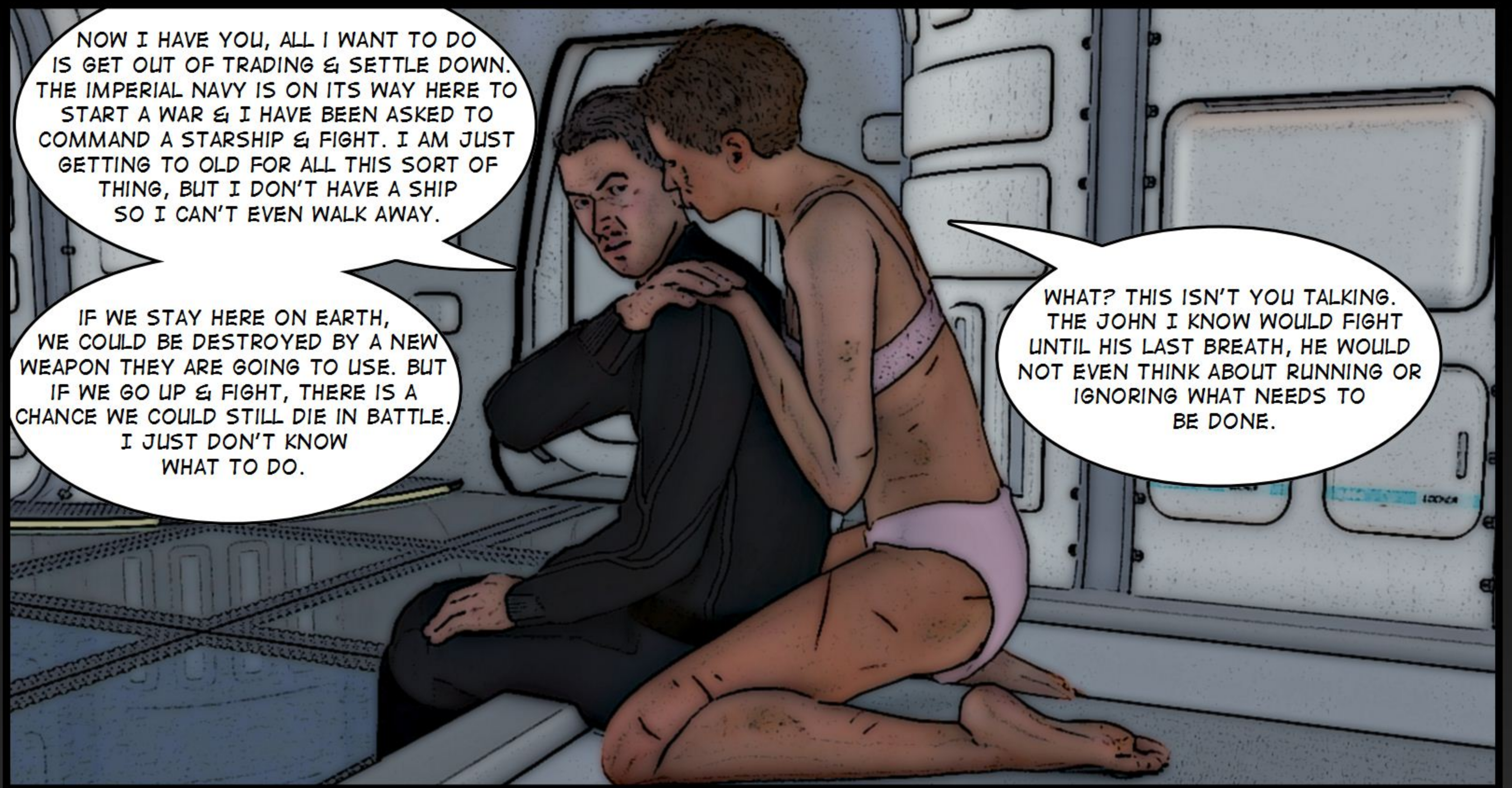
JOHN?... ITS SIX IN THE MORNING, IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

I CAN'T SLEEP, I HAVE BEEN THINKING...



THINKING ABOUT WHAT? IS IT SOMETHING I DID?

OH NO, NOT YOU, NEVER YOU. I HAVE JUST BEEN ASKED TO DO SOMETHING, THAT HAS BEEN EXPECTED OF ME ALL MY LIFE.



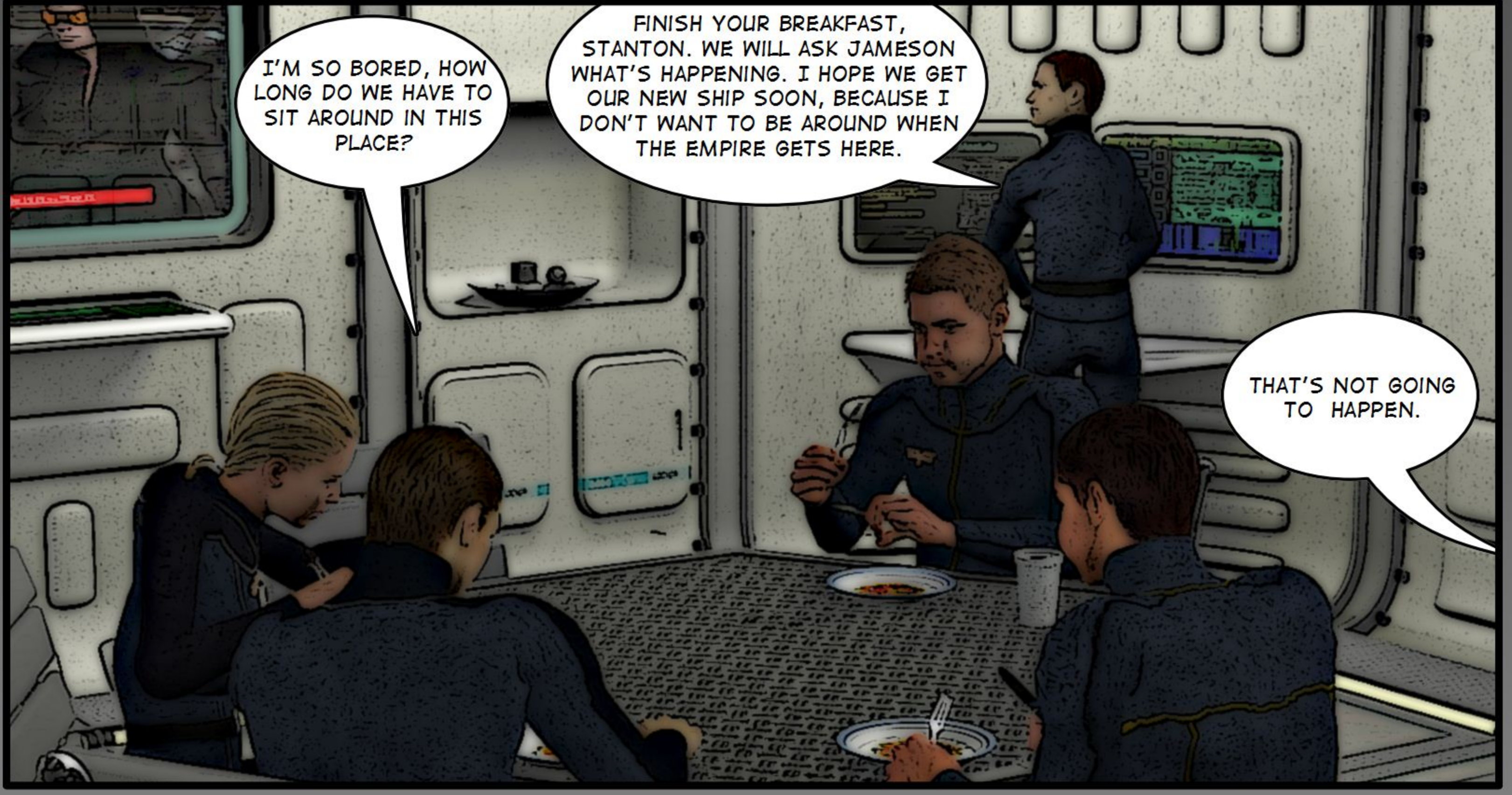
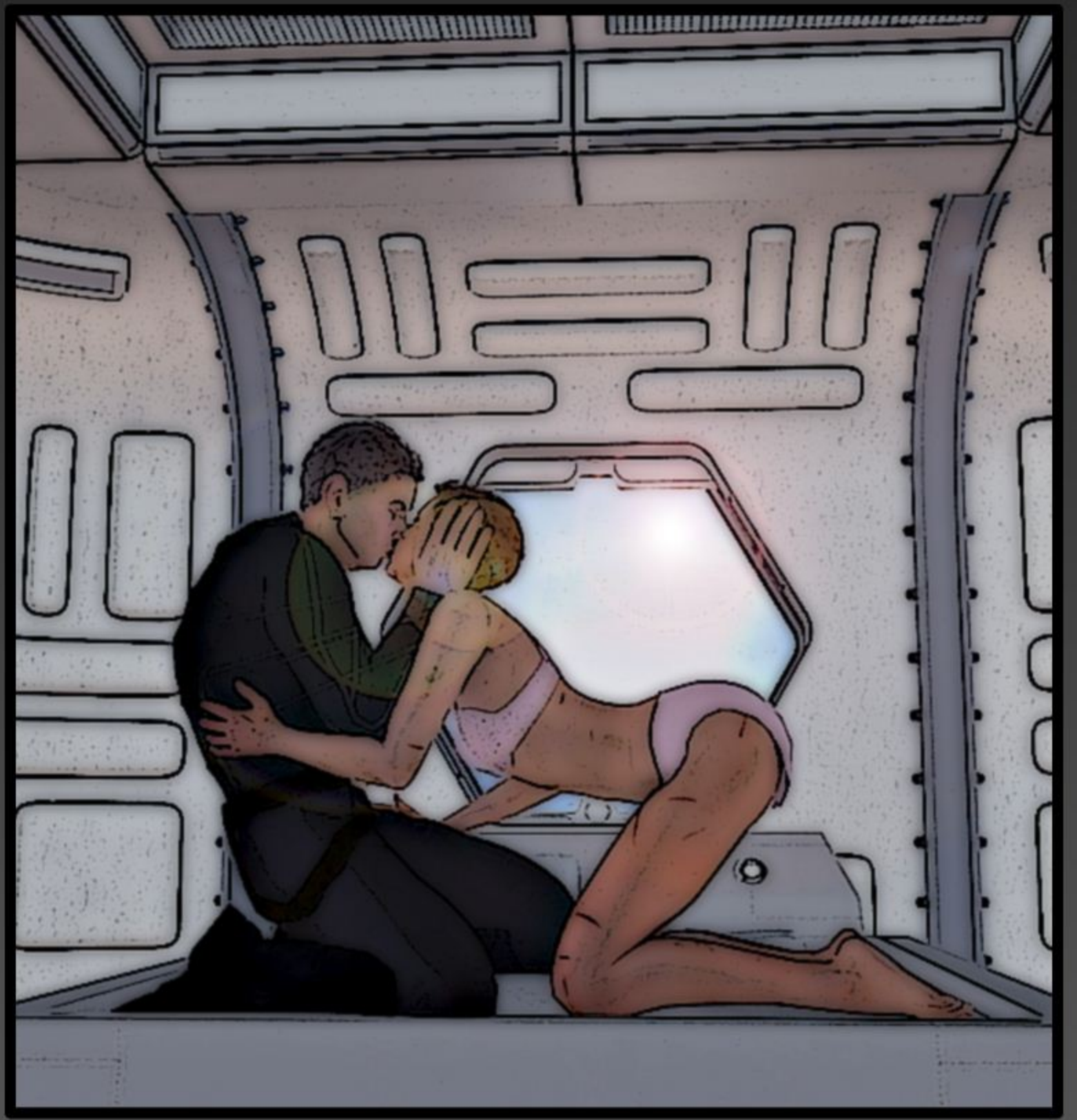
NOW I HAVE YOU, ALL I WANT TO DO IS GET OUT OF TRADING & SETTLE DOWN. THE IMPERIAL NAVY IS ON ITS WAY HERE TO START A WAR & I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO COMMAND A STARSHIP & FIGHT. I AM JUST GETTING TO OLD FOR ALL THIS SORT OF THING, BUT I DON'T HAVE A SHIP SO I CAN'T EVEN WALK AWAY.

IF WE STAY HERE ON EARTH, WE COULD BE DESTROYED BY A NEW WEAPON THEY ARE GOING TO USE. BUT IF WE GO UP & FIGHT, THERE IS A CHANCE WE COULD STILL DIE IN BATTLE. I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

WHAT? THIS ISN'T YOU TALKING. THE JOHN I KNOW WOULD FIGHT UNTIL HIS LAST BREATH, HE WOULD NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT RUNNING OR IGNORING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.



YOU NEED TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT, I HAVE A BIG SETTLE TO SCORE WITH THOSE IMPERIAL BASTARDS, THEY STOLE 15 YEARS OF MY LIFE SO I AM COMING WITH YOU. IF WE DIE, WE DIE TOGETHER.



I'M SO BORED, HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO SIT AROUND IN THIS PLACE?

FINISH YOUR BREAKFAST, STANTON. WE WILL ASK JAMESON WHAT'S HAPPENING. I HOPE WE GET OUR NEW SHIP SOON, BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND WHEN THE EMPIRE GETS HERE.

THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.



HEY, WHAT'S WITH THE FEDERATION MILITARY UNIFORM?

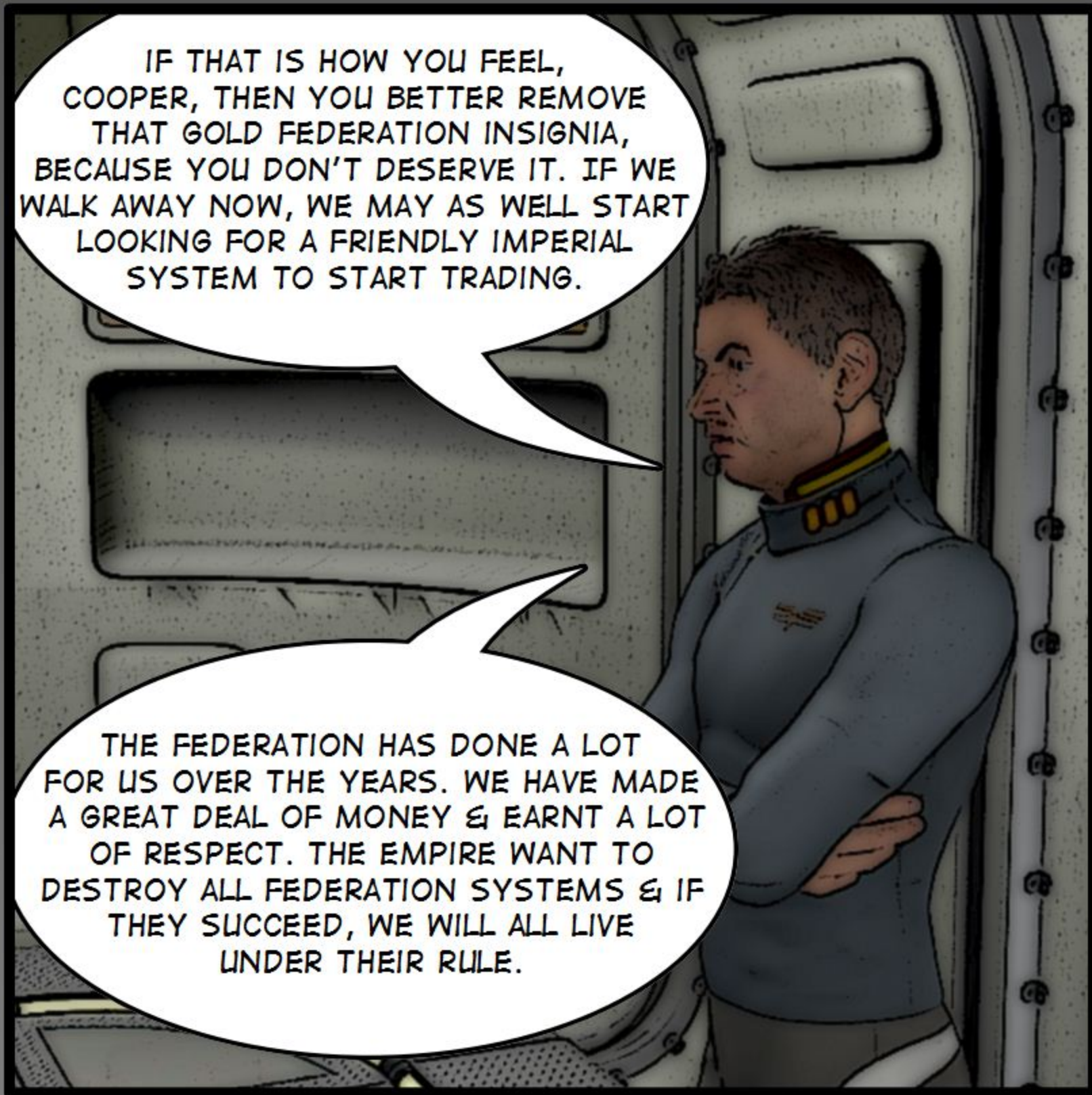
IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY HEARD, THE IMPERIAL FLEET WILL BE HERE WITHIN 5 HOURS. THEY HAVE BROUGHT ALONG A NEW WEAPON CAPABLE OF DESTROYING A PLANET & THEY PLAN ON USING EARTH AS A TEST SUBJECT. IF THAT WASN'T BAD ENOUGH, MOST ALLIED REINFORCEMENTS ARE TOO FAR AWAY TO GET HERE IN TIME. WE DON'T HAVE A REPLACEMENT SHIP BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO COMMAND A FEDERATION DESTROYER. I HAVE ACCEPTED THAT RESPONSIBILITY.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN? ARE THEY NOT PAYING OUT FOR A NEW SHIP?

THAT'S EVERYTHING IN A NUTSHELL, I APPRECIATE IT IS A LOT TO TAKE IN, BUT THEY ALSO WANT YOU TO SERVE UNDER MY COMMAND... ANY QUESTIONS?



THAT'S IT? YOU ARE JUST GOING TO UP & LEAVE TO FIGHT SOMEBODY ELSE'S WAR? THIS IS THE FEDERATIONS PROBLEM, NOT OURS, WE ARE TRADERS, THIS IS NOTHING TO DO WITH US.



IF THAT IS HOW YOU FEEL, COOPER, THEN YOU BETTER REMOVE THAT GOLD FEDERATION INSIGNIA, BECAUSE YOU DON'T DESERVE IT. IF WE WALK AWAY NOW, WE MAY AS WELL START LOOKING FOR A FRIENDLY IMPERIAL SYSTEM TO START TRADING.

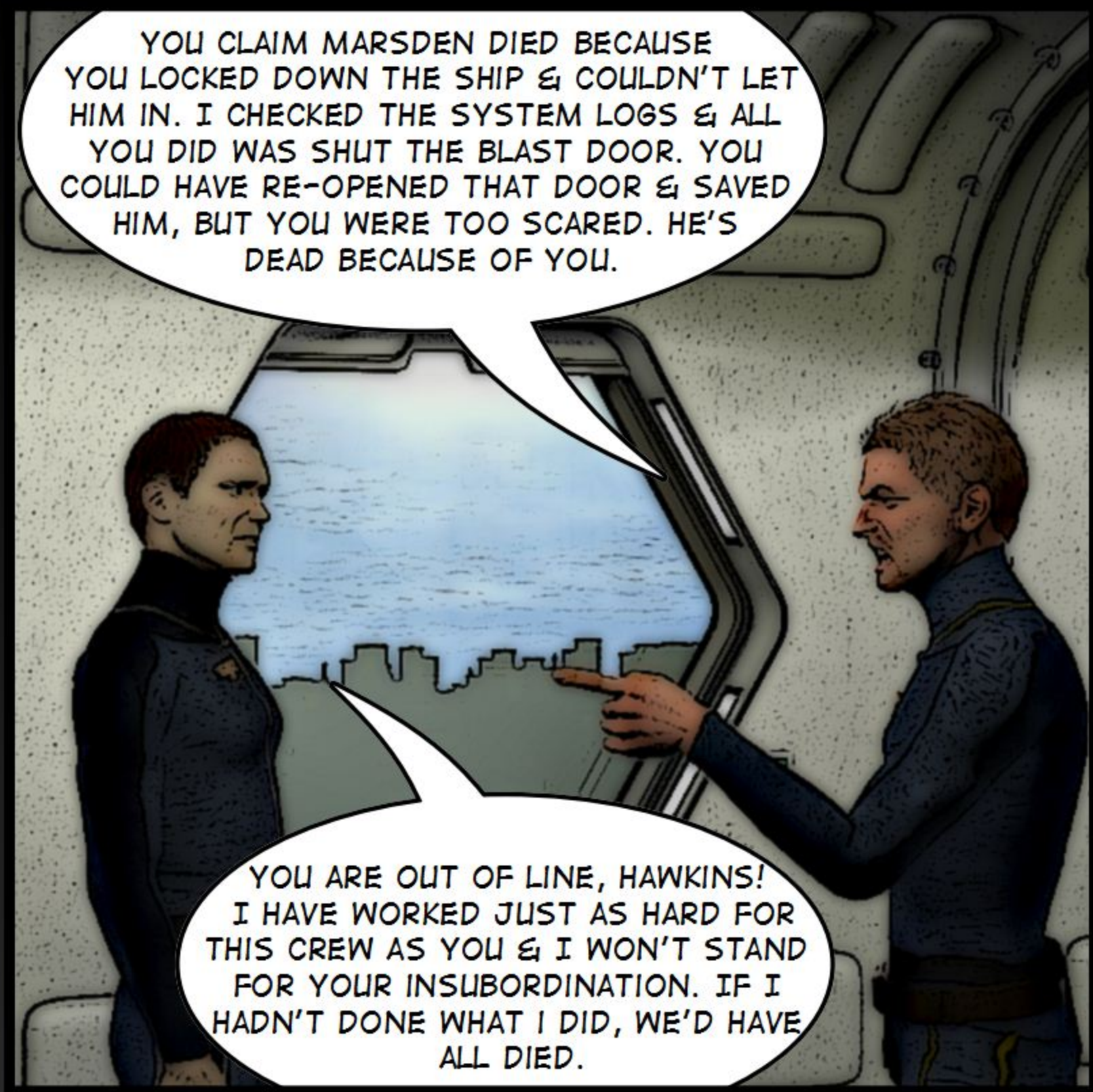
THE FEDERATION HAS DONE A LOT FOR US OVER THE YEARS. WE HAVE MADE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY & EARNED A LOT OF RESPECT. THE EMPIRE WANT TO DESTROY ALL FEDERATION SYSTEMS & IF THEY SUCCEED, WE WILL ALL LIVE UNDER THEIR RULE.



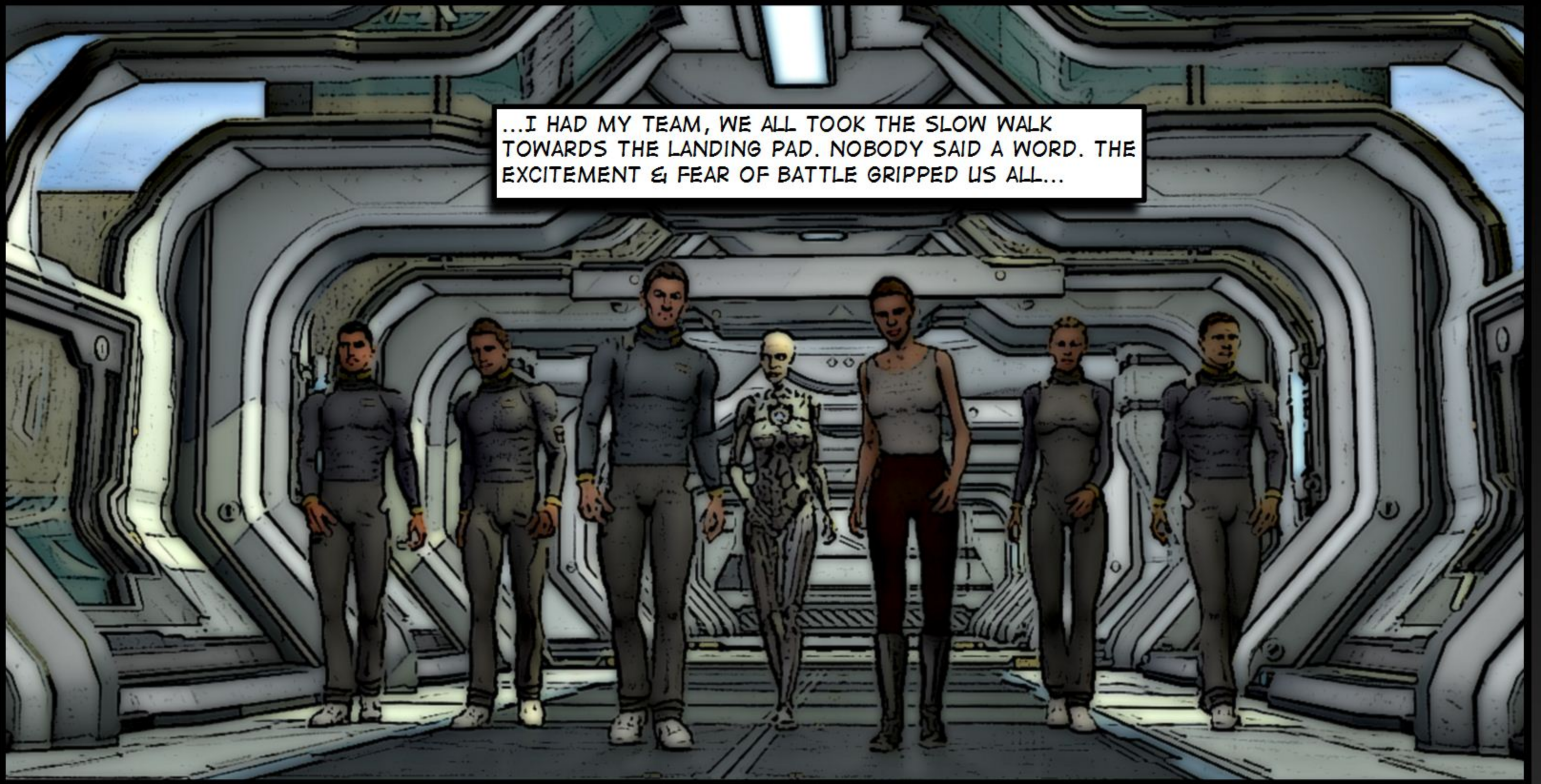
SCREW WHO IS IN CHARGE, WE'D STILL BE ALIVE.

GOD DAMN IT! FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE, COOPER, SHUT UP!

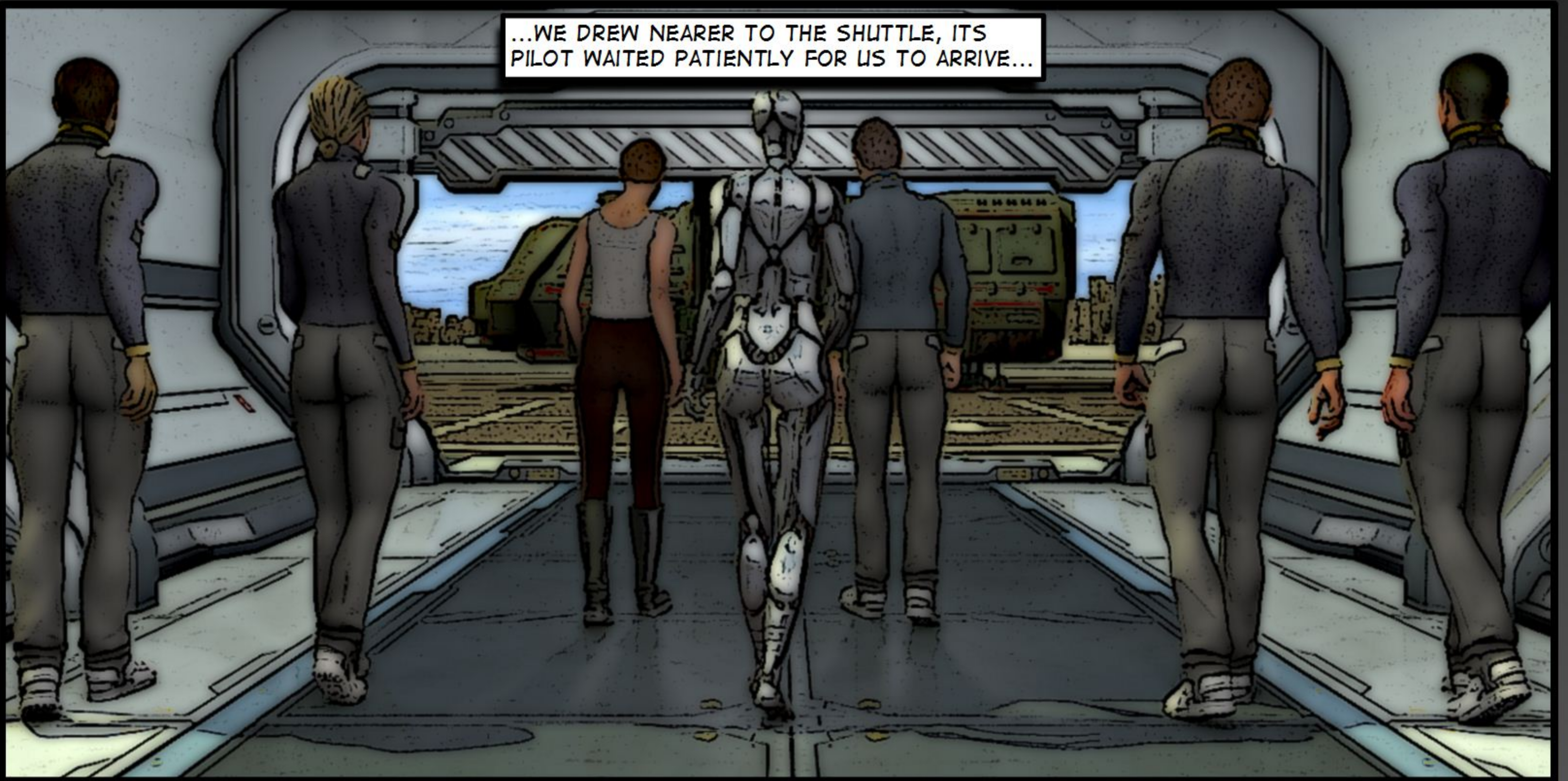
ALL YOU DO IS ORDER US AROUND & SUCK UP TO JAMESON LIKE A LAP DOG. EVERYONE IN HERE KNOWS YOU ARE A GUTLESS COWARD. YOU USE YOUR POSITION OF RANK TO HIDE YOUR FEAR & IT PISSES US ALL OFF..



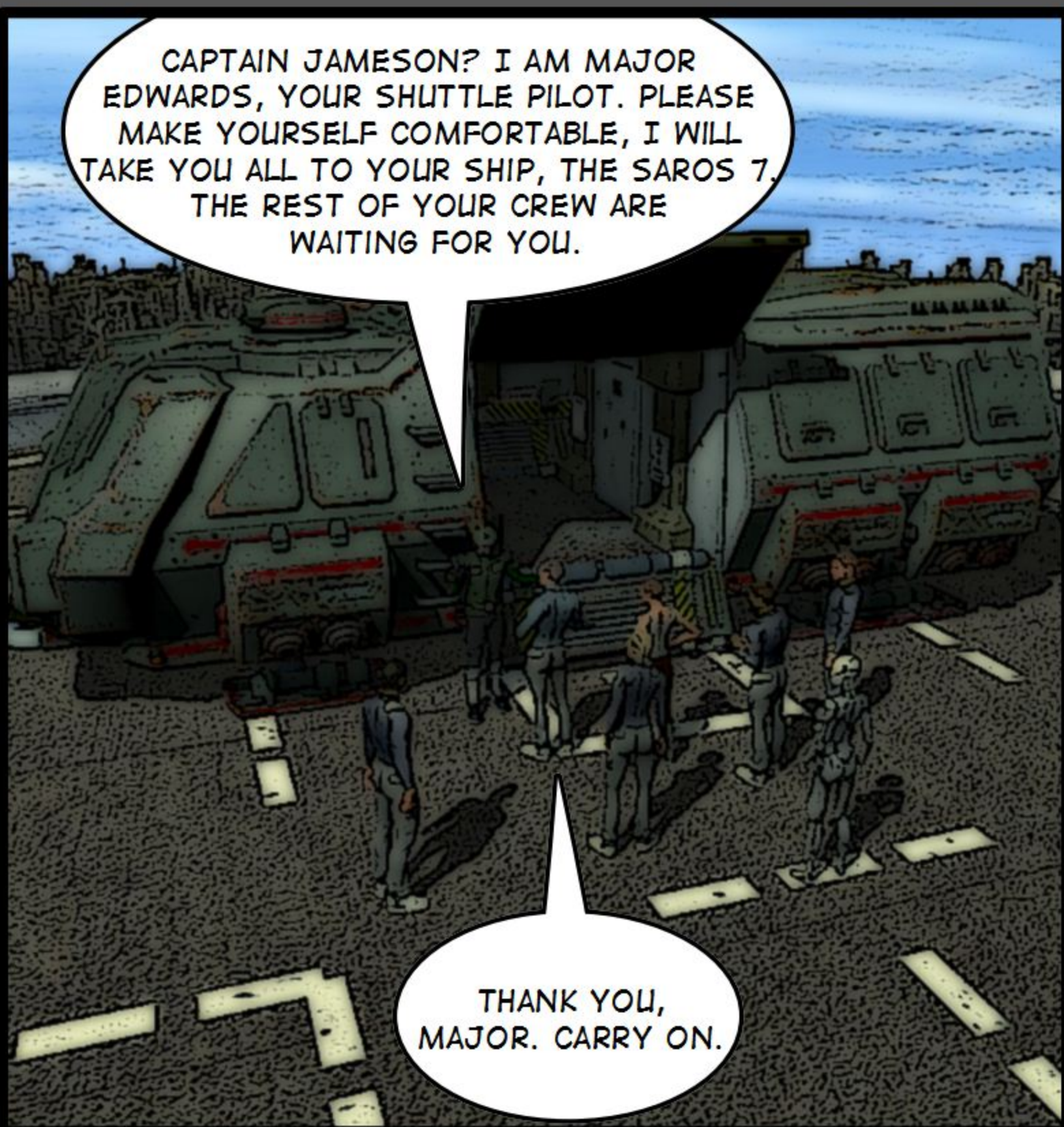
...I HAD MY TEAM, WE ALL TOOK THE SLOW WALK TOWARDS THE LANDING PAD. NOBODY SAID A WORD. THE EXCITEMENT & FEAR OF BATTLE GRIPPED US ALL...



...WE DREW NEARER TO THE SHUTTLE, ITS PILOT WAITED PATIENTLY FOR US TO ARRIVE...



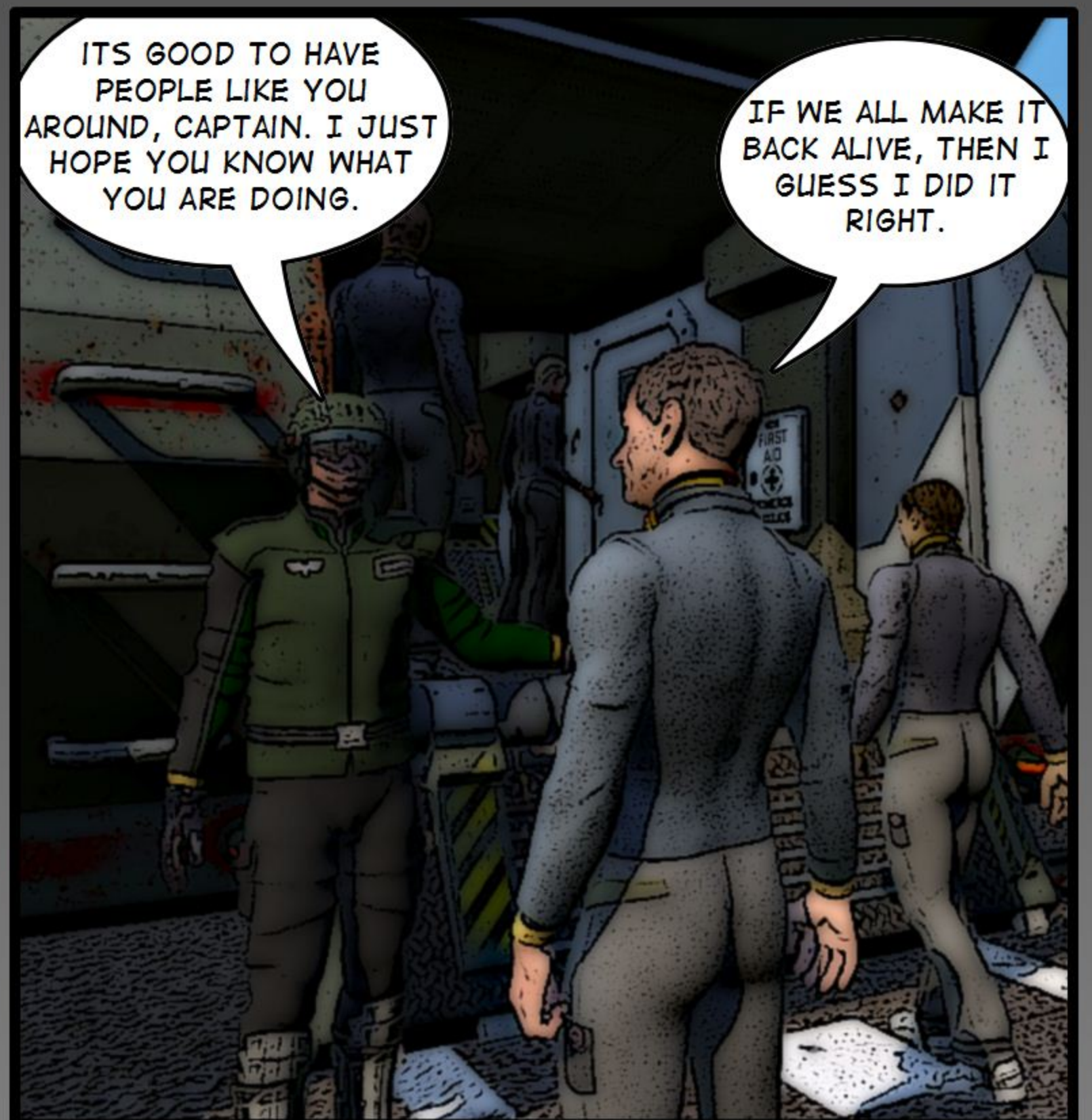
CAPTAIN JAMESON? I AM MAJOR EDWARDS, YOUR SHUTTLE PILOT. PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, I WILL TAKE YOU ALL TO YOUR SHIP, THE SAROS 7. THE REST OF YOUR CREW ARE WAITING FOR YOU.



THANK YOU, MAJOR. CARRY ON.

ITS GOOD TO HAVE PEOPLE LIKE YOU AROUND, CAPTAIN. I JUST HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

IF WE ALL MAKE IT BACK ALIVE, THEN I GUESS I DID IT RIGHT.





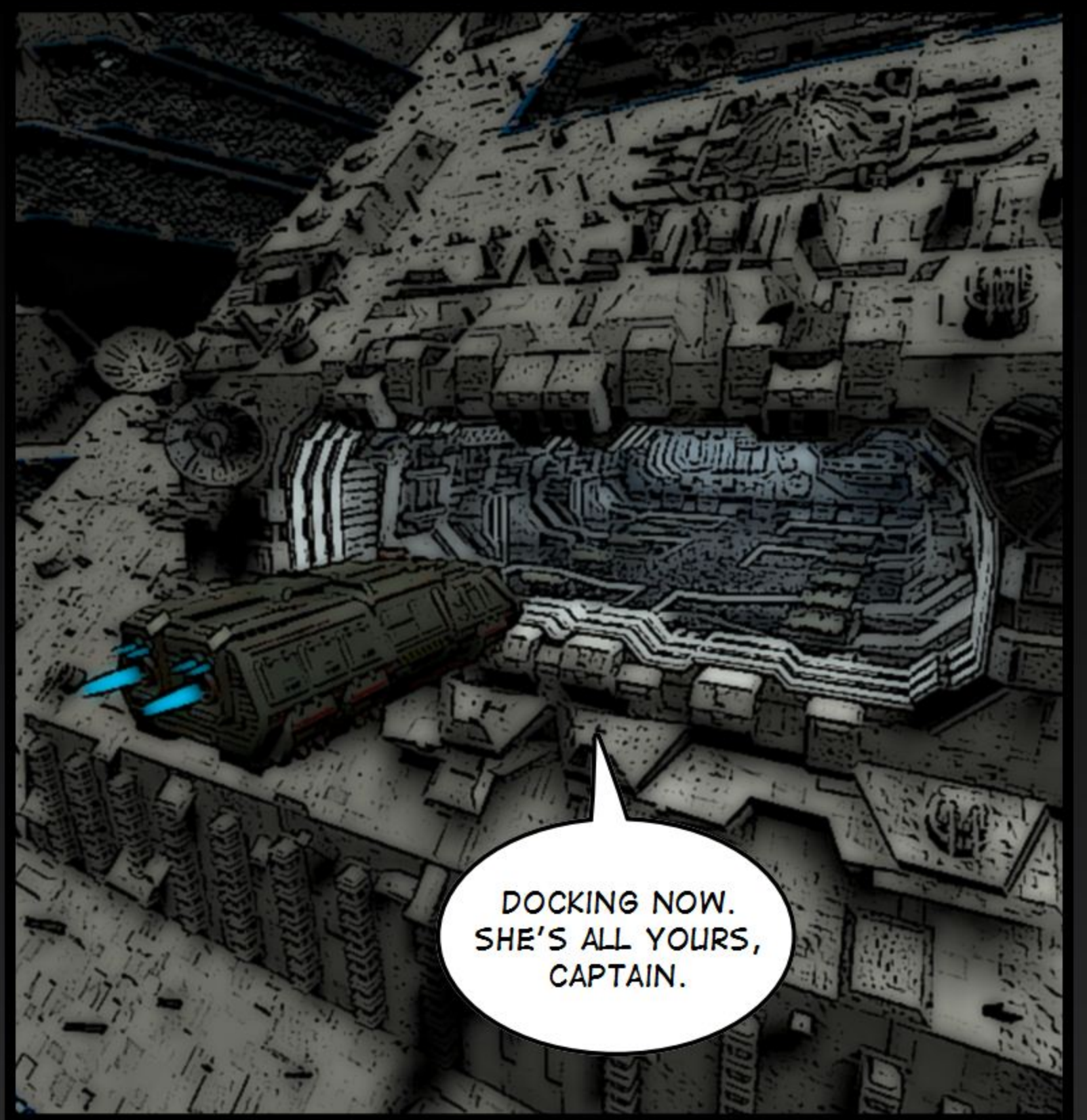


...THE SIZE OF EACH SHIP WAS INDESCRIBABLE. I HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO LARGE BEFORE IN MY LIFE. THE SKY WAS FILLED WITH THESE ENORMOUS BATTLE CRUISERS. EVERYWHERE YOU LOOKED, ALL YOU COULD SEE WAS METAL...





THERE SHE IS, FOLKS. THE SAROS 7. OVER THREE THOUSAND CREW MEMBERS & MORE WEAPONS THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT.



DOCKING NOW. SHE'S ALL YOURS, CAPTAIN.



YOU COULD GET LOST ON THIS SHIP.

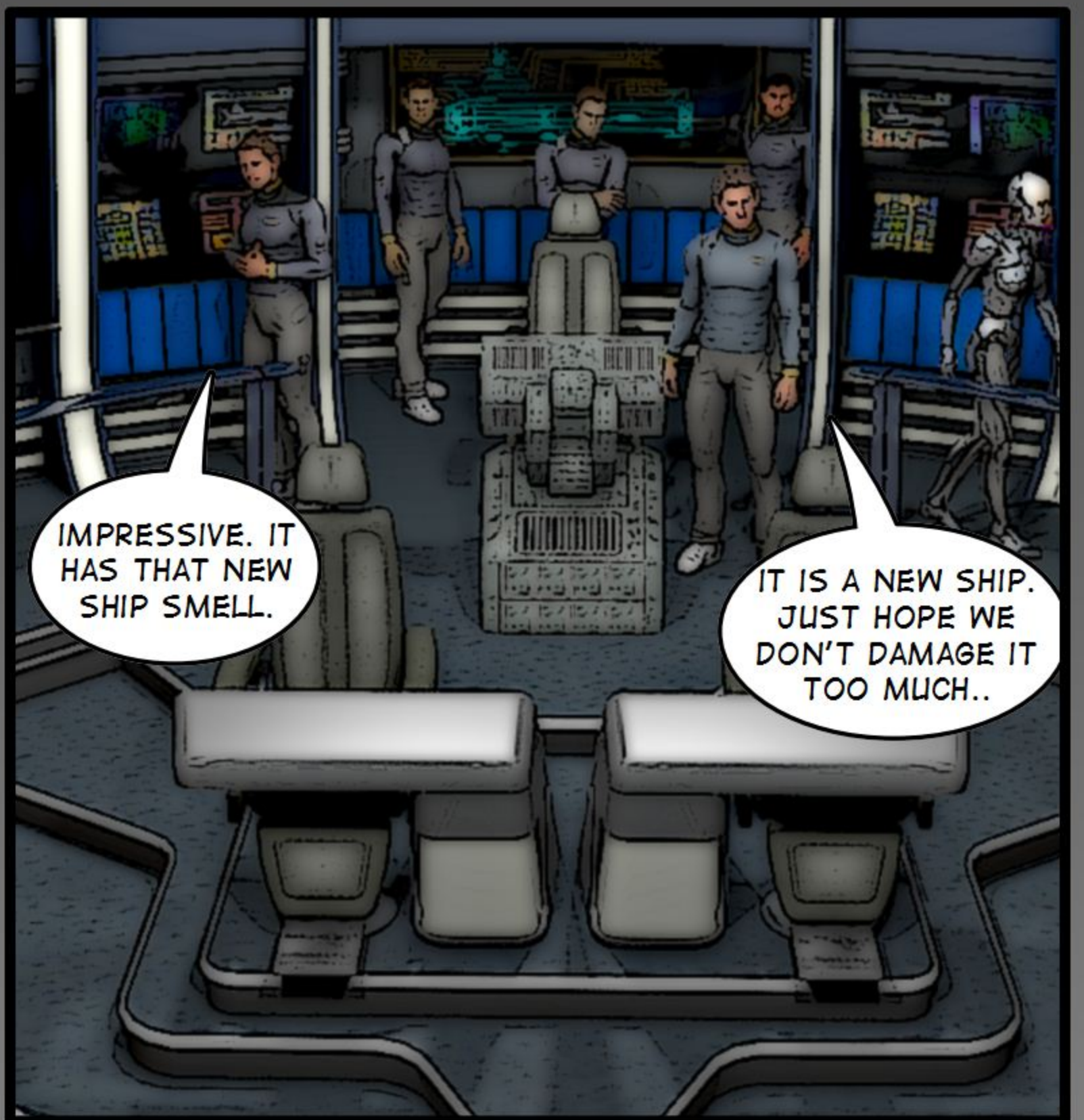
...IT TOOK OVER TEN MINUTES TO NAVIGATE THROUGH ALL THE CORRIDORS & SECTIONS OF THE MAMMOUTH SHIP...

I AGREE WITH THAT. THIS THING MAKES THE PANTHER CLIPPER LOOK LIKE A KESTREL FIGHTER.



YOU STAY IN THE REC ROOM, SADIE. I WILL SEND SOMEONE FOR YOU IF NEEDED.

SEE YOU ALL LATER, GOOD LUCK.



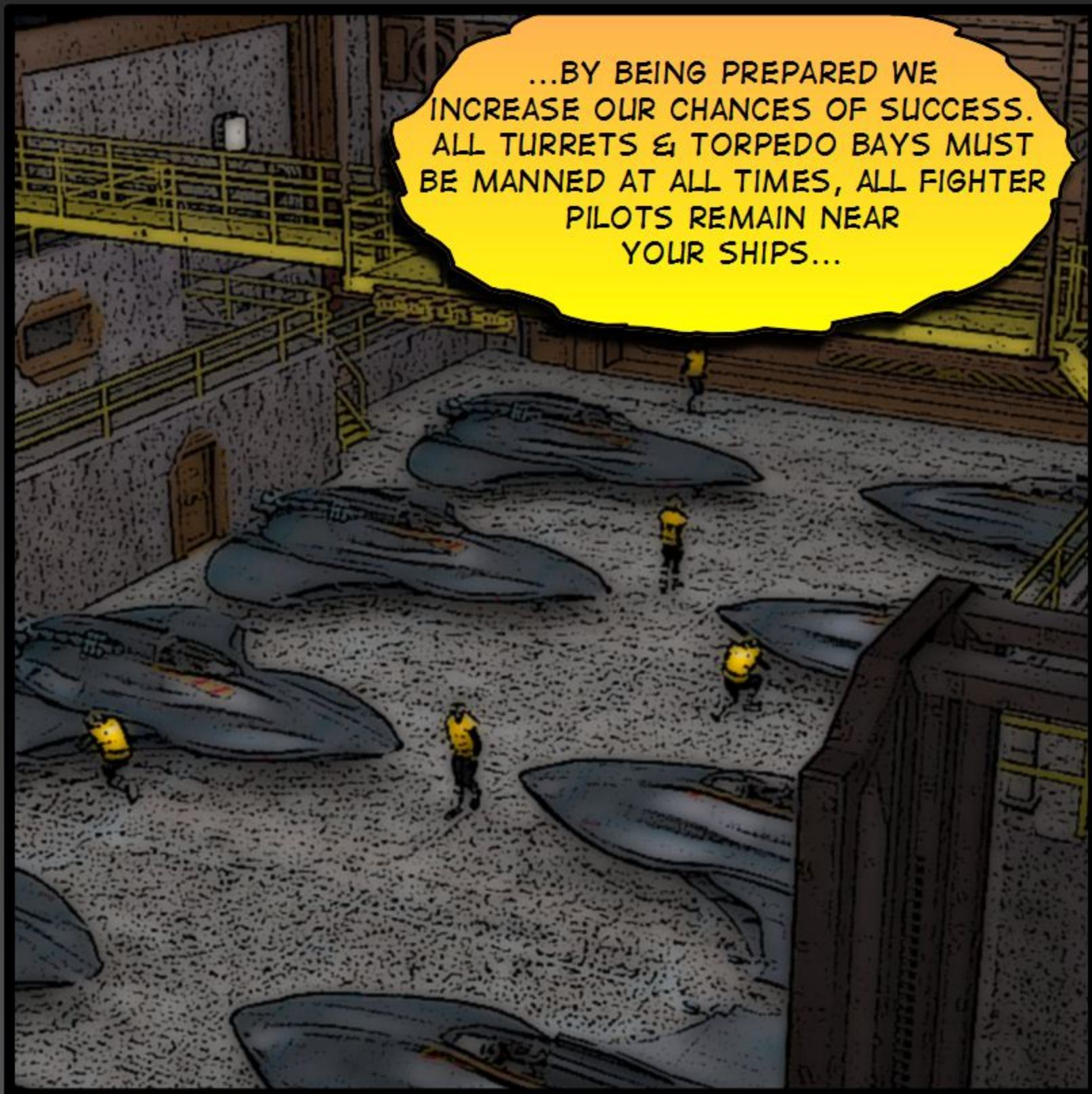
IMPRESSIVE. IT HAS THAT NEW SHIP SMELL.

IT IS A NEW SHIP. JUST HOPE WE DON'T DAMAGE IT TOO MUCH..



I BETTER WAKE UP THE REST OF THE SHIP.

ATTENTION ALL CREW MEMBERS. THIS IS CAPTAIN JOHN JAMESON, I AM IN COMMAND OF THIS VESSEL & I NEED EVERYONE AT THEIR POSTS READY FOR BATTLE.



...BY BEING PREPARED WE INCREASE OUR CHANCES OF SUCCESS. ALL TURRETS & TORPEDO BAYS MUST BE MANNED AT ALL TIMES, ALL FIGHTER PILOTS REMAIN NEAR YOUR SHIPS...



ALL FLIGHTDECK CREW, ENSURE THE FIGHTER SHIPS ARE ARMED & READY FOR COMBAT. IF YOU HAVE A GOD, NOW IS THE TIME TO PRAY. CAPTAIN JAMESON OUT.



GOOD AFTERNOON, JOHN. I MUST SAY, YOU REALLY SUIT THAT CHAIR. I WILL BE OBSERVING THE FLEET FROM THE COMMAND CENTRE HERE AT FEDERAL HEADQUARTERS. BEFORE YOU UNDOCK I JUST WANTED TO SAY GOOD LUCK TO YOU, I WILL HELP WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU ADMIRAL. ANY UPDATE ON THE IMPERIAL FLEET?



ALL WE KNOW IS THEY LEFT THE WOLF 359 SYSTEM TWENTY FOUR HOURS AGO, THEY SHOULD STILL BE IN HYPERSPACE. WE EXPECT THEM TO APPEAR SOMEWHERE IN SOL WITHIN THE HOUR.



WE JUST DO NOT KNOW WHERE THEY WILL ARRIVE. WE HOPE THE OTHER FEDERATION FLEETS GET HERE FIRST SO WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF DEFENCE.

WE WILL TRY TO HOLD THEM OFF FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.



I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE HEARING THIS, SON... BUT YOU ARE NOW YOUR GRANDFATHER. PETER MADE ONE HELL OF A CAPTAIN, I HAVE FAITH THAT YOU CAN DO BETTER.

I WILL DO MY BEST, ADMIRAL.



I KNOW YOU WILL, JOHN. GOOD LUCK, ALEXANDER OUT.

OKAY, PEOPLE, LETS GET THIS BEAST OUT OF THE DOCK.



MURRAY, DISCONNECT THE FUEL HOSE & DOCKING CLAMPS.

YES, SIR. DISCONNECTING NOW.



HAWKINS, REVERSE THE ENGINES, FIVE PERCENT THRUST. LETS TAKE HER OUT, NICE & SLOW.



WE HAVE CLEARED
THE DOCK, CAPTAIN.

ENGAGE FORWARD THRUST
FIFTEEN PERCENT. FOLLOW
THE NAVIGATION
WAYPOINTS.



CAREFUL, TRY NOT TO HIT
THE SHIPYARD, THIS CRUISER
IS MUCH BIGGER THAN THE
CLIPPER, LET'S NOT WRITE IT
OFF BEFORE WE SEE
COMBAT.



SIR, WE HAVE
REACHED OUR
DEFENCE POSITION.

CUT THE ENGINES &
PERFORM A FULL SYSTEM
CHECK, ALL POWER,
WEAPONS & SHIELDS.

SIR, ALL TURRETS ARE CHARGED & ARMED. THE MUNITIONS CREW HAVE LOADED ALL TORPEDO BAYS & ARE READY TO FIRE. OUR ARMOURY IS FULLY STOCKED & WE ARE NOW COMBAT READY.

CAPTAIN, THE RADAR HAS JUST PICKED UP MULTIPLE UNKNOWN SIGNATURES... WAIT... THEY ARE ARRIVAL CLOUDS!

**IT'S THE EMPIRE!
THEY'RE HERE!**

...I STARED OUT THE WINDOW & WATCHED AS SHIP, AFTER SHIP, AFTER SHIP, APPEARED IN FRONT OF US. I HAD NEVER SEEN ANYBODY MAKE A HYPERSPACE ARRIVAL THIS CLOSE TO THE CENTRE OF A SYSTEM BEFORE...



THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THEM.

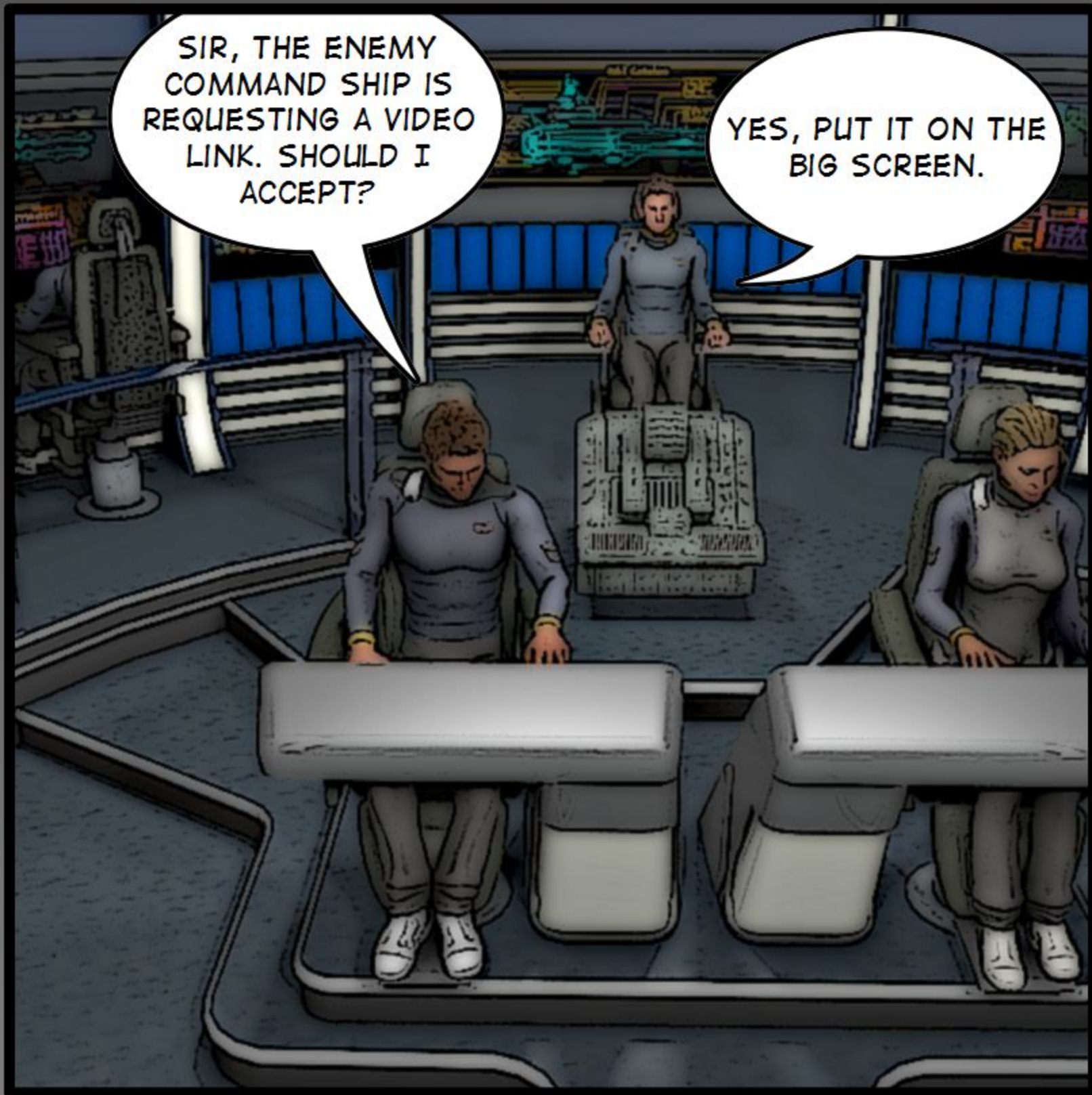


ALL SHIPS HOLD FIRE. DO NOT ENGAGE UNLESS ENGAGED UPON.



OPEN UP ALL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, I WANT TO SPEAK TO THE WHOLE FLEET.

YESSSSS, MY LIEGE.




SIR, THE ENEMY COMMAND SHIP IS REQUESTING A VIDEO LINK. SHOULD I ACCEPT?

YES, PUT IT ON THE BIG SCREEN.




GREETINGS. IT SURE LOOKS LIKE THAT TRAITOR OF OURS MANAGED TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ON OUR LITTLE OPERATION HERE.




PRINCE HENGIST DUVAL, IT IS A SURPRISE TO HAVE YOU HERE. DO YOU NOT USUALLY PREFER TO SIT ON YOUR THRONE IN ACHENAR & SEND YOUR SLAVES TO DIE FOR YOU?

AH, IF IT ISN'T THE INDESTRUCTIBLE, COLONEL ALEXANDER... NO, YOU ARE AN ADMIRAL NOW, CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PROMOTION TO DESK JOCKEY. IT SEEMS IRONIC THAT YOU INSULT ME, YET YOU SEND YOUR OWN FOOLISH MEN TO DIE FOR THE FEDERATIONS CAUSE. I ASSUME YOU AREN'T ON THE FRONT LINE WITH THE REST OF YOUR FLEET.




NOW THAT IS A FACE FROM THE PAST. YOU MUST BE THE DESCENDANT OF THE FAMOUS ELITE, KNOWN AS PETER JAMESON. I HOPE YOU AREN'T ABLE TO STAND UP TO HIS REPUTATION.



HENGIST, MUST WE CONTINUE TO GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN? WE ARGUE, WE GO TO WAR, WE BOTH SUFFER HUGE LOSS OF LIFE, WE GIVE UP & IT NEVER ACHIEVES ANYTHING. YET THE INDEPENDANT SYSTEMS FUND OUR WARS & GET RICH. THEY ARE THE ONLY WINNERS IN ALL THIS.

WHEN AT FIRST IF YOU DON'T SUCCEED, YOU TRY AGAIN & KEEP GOING UNTIL YOU WIN.



IT IS A VERY SIMPLE CONCEPT TO GRASP, ADMIRAL. SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME, THE FIRST LIVING BACTERIA, HAD TO FOLLOW THE LAWS OF NATURE, SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST. THAT LAW HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN OVER MILLIONS OF YEARS OF EVOLUTION.

YOU GIVE YOUR PEOPLE FREEDOM TO THINK FOR THEMSELVES, YOU ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FEELINGS OF YOUR PEOPLE RATHER THAN DOING THE RIGHT THING. YOUR KINDNESS IS YOUR WEAKNESS & MUST BE EXTERMINATED SO THE STRONG CAN RULE THE GALAXY.



DO YOU SERIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT CRAP YOU ARE SPEWING OUT?

THERE WERE MANY DICTATORS FROM THE 20TH CENTURY THAT THOUGHT THE SAME THING, IT NEVER ENDED WELL FOR THEM. WHY SHOULD IT BE ANY DIFFERENT TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS LATER FOR YOU?



THERE IS ENOUGH ROOM IN THIS UNIVERSE FOR US ALL TO CO-EXIST TOGETHER. WAR HAS NEVER PROVED ANYTHING, EXCEPT WHO CAN BEAT THEIR CHEST THE HARDEST.



YOU ARE SHOWING YOUR WEAKNESS TO YOUR PEOPLE, ADMIRAL. TRYING TO TALK YOUR WAY OUT OF A FIGHT LIKE A CORNERED RABBIT SURROUNDED BY FOXES.


I AGREE, THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES TO FIGHTING. SURRENDER TO US NOW & WE WILL SPARE YOUR PRECIOUS LITTLE PLANET. GIVE YOUR LIVES TO ME & I WILL ENSURE YOU ARE TREATED WELL. IN TIME YOU WILL AGREE THERE IS A REASON SLAVERY WORKS SO WELL.



WE WILL NEVER SURRENDER TO YOU, DUVAL.



THEN I'M AFRAID, YOU WILL ALL PERISH, TOGETHER. AFTER WE HAVE DESTROYED YOUR PITIFUL FLEET, WE WILL SHOW THE GALAXY THE STRENGTH OF THE EMPIRE. EARTH WILL CRUMBLE UNDER THE MIGHT OF OUR SUPERIOR FIREPOWER.



I THINK WE HAVE COME TO THE END OF OUR CONVERSATION, ADMIRAL.


ALL SHIPS, THE TIME HAS COME TO HONOUR YOUR NAMES & GIVE EVERYTHING YOU HAVE TO THE EMPIRE. DESTROY THOSE FEDERATION PIGS, SHOW NO MERCY, LEAVE NOBODY BEHIND.



**ENGAGE!
ENGAGE!
EVERYONE
ATTACK!**



**YOU HEARD HIM, FIRE
ALL TORPEDOS &
LAUNCH ALL
FIGHTERS!**



... THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK NOW.
WE HAD NOW ENGAGED IN BATTLE. THE
HISTORY BOOKS OF TIME PROVED THAT
ONLY THE BRAVE, ONLY THE LUCKY &
ONLY THE BEST WILL TRIUMPH...



NEXT: *WAR!*