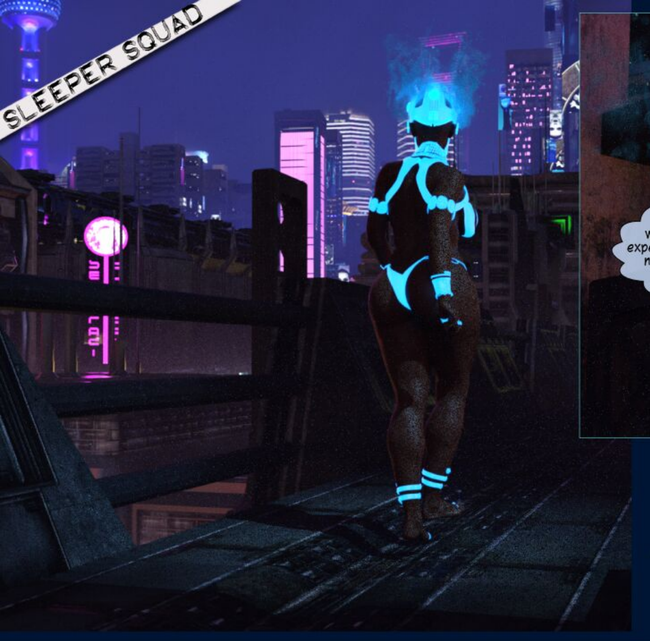




THIS WOULD ORDINARILY BE THE POINT WHERE WE'D SAY SOMETHING LIKE "THIS WON'T MAKE ANY SENSE UNLESS YOU READ THE PREVIOUS ISSUE" --

--- EXCEPT, FRANKLY, IN THIS CASE THAT WON'T HELP MUCH.

BUT TO SAVE YOU SOME TIME: AFTER LOSING HER TEMPER IN A DRAMATIC FASHION WITH FAR-REACHING EFFECTS, THE "BLUE LADY" SEEMED TO HAVE SOME INTERNAL TURMOIL ABOUT IT --- AND WENT CATATONIC. UNABLE TO WAKE HER, CHELLE (WHO STILL CAN'T REMEMBER HER NAME) HAS GONE INTO MEDITATIVE FOCUS TO SEE IF THAT WOULD SHOW HER A WAY TO HELP THE BLUE LADY RECOVER.

INSTEAD, SHE ENDED UP HERE.














I think she gave up.
Good.
You can be stupid for yourself if you want, but if you got the refactors on my ass, I'm going to find a way to break loose just so I can come back and strangle you.
And don't you follow me, either. I don't need this.
Listen, if you're not going to clear out ... and you really should ... at least lose the outfit.
And I mean, right now.
You've got to fit in, here. Or they'll find you and they'll make you fit.
Great advice, I guess ...
... except I'm not sure I can.
It's not like the talking ... I haven't forgotten how ... I just ... I feel like I'm not allowed to take it off. For some reason. Or maybe I feel like it's a bad idea? I don't know.
I think I'm just going to have to try to be sneaky ...
... stay out of sight of those eye people while I go ...
... uh ... wherever it is I think I'm going.
Get away from me!
Tell your dogs to back off! I didn't do anything!
I HEARD DIFFERENTLY.
THE REFACTORS SAY YOU HELPED A STRANGER. SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T BELONG HERE.
NOW, YOU KNEW THAT WASN'T THE RIGHT THING TO DO. DIDN'T YOU?
I JUST WANT TO HELP YOU DO THE RIGHT THING. ALWAYS.
No, don't!!
IT'LL BE FINE. YOU'LL SEE.
n--
IT'LL BE BETTER.
SEE? BETTER.
Doesn't seem better to me ...
Hey!!
Let me go!
... Damn it, I need to be able to talk!
YOU MUST BE THE STRANGER I WAS JUST MENTIONING.


Oh, I don't think I'm going to like this at all.
WE DON'T MIND VISITORS --
-- AT LEAST I DON'T THINK WE DO, I'M NOT SURE WE'VE EVER HAD ANY --
-- BUT WE DO NEED THEM TO BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY. THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT, YOU KNOW.
NOW, WHAT WE PROBABLY SHOULD DO IS TAKE YOU TO THE CENTER SO THEY CAN --
Nope.
WWUUAAAHH!
STOP HER! DON'T LET HER --
-- UH.
... YOU KNOW, MAYBE I'M GOING TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT HER FIRST.
Oh, joy.
Those eye people are everywhere ... and it seems like they talk to the jackal people ... somehow ...
The entire city is going to be looking for me in just a minute if I'm not careful.
I need to be somewhere they can't get at me. But where? And how?
This whole place isn't real. I'm sure of it.
Well, I mean, nothing in Sleep's really real, but ... this feels different. This feels ... I don't know. Like a dream.
A bad dream. And it's not even my bad dream.
On the other hand, if it's a dream, does it have dream rules?
Can I just turn them all into mice? Or suddenly be somewhere else? Or ...
... oh, that might work. I think I can do that.
Yes!
Just have to keep believing it ...
... and not look down ...
OK, so I've bought some time. Unless they have helicopters.
Now that I can breathe, I need to figure out what I think I'm doing. In a hurry.
I think I have a job to do here ... that's what it feels like ... I've had enough visions to know a quest when I see one ...
... but I wish these things would come with some hints or an instruction book or --
-- YIIII!
Yiiii!


what are you doing up here? i almost landed right on top of you ...
who are you? how did you get here? you're not --
-- what? you can't talk?
are you a recovery? you're not one of mine. a lot of them can't talk for a while. you don't look like one though ...
doesn't matter. you need to get out of here. unless you're one of the bad ones. but i don't think you are.

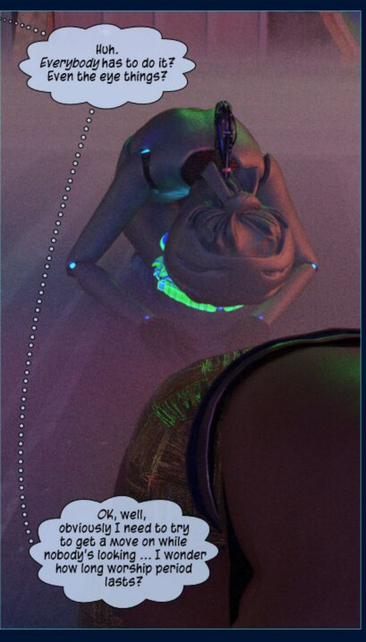

anyway it's almost ritual time. can't stick around.
good luck! ... unless you're one of the bad ones.
Wait!


Damn it, that was the first person who seemed like they might actually be helpful ...
... they could have at least stayed long enough to give me some idea where I might be trying to go ...

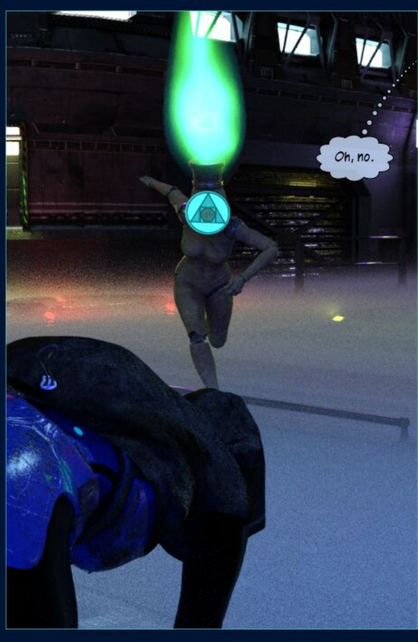

Hmm.
That robot woman, or whatever she was, said she was going to take me to the "center."
If that big scary blue thing isn't the center, what is?
Of course, if she was going to take me there, it probably means it's someplace I really don't want to go ...
... but it also probably means it's where the people running the place are, and I think that's my best shot. Take it to the top.
That's if I can manage to get there.


CITIZENS! ATTEND, PLEASE. IT IS TIME FOR THE MEDITATION OF PEACE AND GLORY.
It's her!
She's OK!


... except ... I don't know. That's ... making them all ... that doesn't feel like something she'd do ...
and I mean, she's not really here, that's just a projection ... somebody could be, I don't know, faking that ...


Huh. Everybody has to do it? Even the eye things?
OK, well, obviously I need to try to get a move on while nobody's looking ... I wonder how long worship period lasts?


Oh! That's why she was in a hurry to get down there.
Clever! Great time to try to free people ... no one else is paying attention ...


Oh, no.


I don't know what that is, but I know I just picked a side.
Can't yell to warn her ... just have to get down there before it --
WRUUUUHHH!
No!!
Damn it, I don't care if I break my hand, I'm going to knock your robot ass into next --
CLUB
Nothing to see here ... just being a good little snitch bot ...
Absolutely nothing unusual at all, just going about my duties ...
... yeah, I didn't really think that would work for too long.
They've obviously got some kind of way to communicate with each other, and I don't seem to get that channel.
They're probably tattling on me right now.
Time to lose this.
... Just as well. Having one big eye is giving me a headache already.
I think I'm headed toward the center, at least.
Now, if I can just get there without anybody seeing me ...


I MEAN, WE'LL TRY TO GET HER AGAIN, IF YOU SAY SO ...
... BUT I DON'T THINK IT'LL DO ANY GOOD.


SHE SHOOK ME OFF THREE SECONDS AFTER I REMEDIED HER.
REFACTOR THINKS HERS MIGHT HAVE LASTED A LITTLE LONGER, BUT EVEN THEN, SHE'D BROKEN SIGNAL BY THE TIME SHE WAS A BLOCK AWAY.
WE DON'T HAVE ANY REASON TO THINK SHE WON'T JUST DO IT AGAIN.


They don't have anything that will stick with her. She's not interested in compliance or cooperation.
No. She's interested in mayhem. Whether she realizes it or not.
Requite will be able to hold her, though. I know this one's mind in ways you can't. I know what will get her.
... I'll have to take your word for it.


We can't just wait for her to wander into the temple on her own, though.
No, no. I know how to get her there.
I'll see to it personally.


Well, I thought I was going the right way.
Whole place makes no sense at all ... things don't connect the way they're supposed to ...
I can see the center from just about everywhere, but it never seems to get any closer ...


Hey, stranger.
Looking for company?

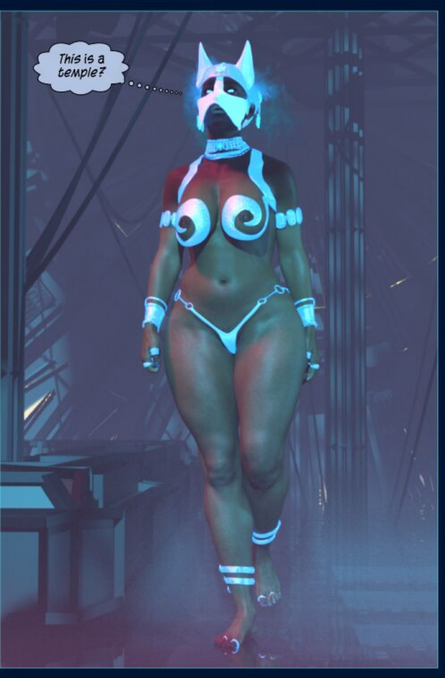

I'm just teasing you.
I can tell you're in the business. Nobody else but us would walk around dressed like that.
You're not going to get much, you know. They're mostly not interested. It's really sad.


What does that -- You can't talk?
Oh, goodness! That's horrible.
You know what you need to do? You need to go to the center. They can fix you up there.
I mean, I think they can. They can fix most things.


OK, look, you're not going to be able to get to the center through the streets.
They mostly don't connect ... and when they do, there's always a gate you can't open.
What you need to do is go into the Temple of Requite. It's got a lot of entrances all over, and they connect in the middle. You can go through, go out the other side, and then you'll get there.
There's an entrance not far from here. I'll give you directions.


I guess that's it.
If it's not, I don't know what *else* that could possibly be.


I suppose it's good they don't bother to hide that I'm being watched ...
Vibes aren't great, though. They'd be better if there was anybody else here.


This is a temple?


I mean, I know a bunch of people who'd probably think that suited their ideas of religion ... including me, maybe ... but ...
Oh well. If she wasn't yanking my chain, all I have to do is walk across and find an exit on the other side ...
I'd still feel a lot better if I saw some other people ...


Oh!
Well, those count as other people. I guess.
I don't think I should try to get their attention.
I don't want to disturb them, and I'm not sure it would work anyway.


They seem really ... absorbed.


Given the way this place is, I don't know if they're here voluntarily ...
... but at least it seems like they're enjoying themselves --


-- Whoo!?
Where did you -- What -- What are you ... Uh ...


no, don't ... don't do that ... it's nice ... uh ... but I don't ...
uumhhrrh

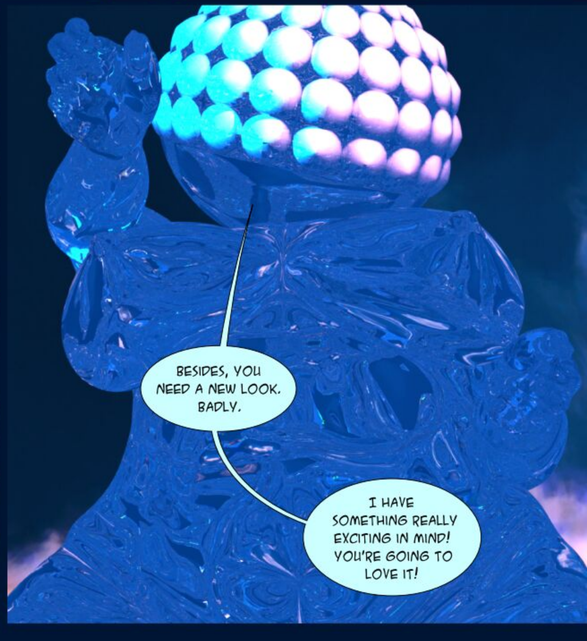

hmmuhh


OH, MY, LOOK AT YOU!
THIS IS VERY EXCITING.
I'VE NEVER HAD A STRANGER BEFORE.
uhnnn


AND SO MUCH ENTHUSIASM! WHAT ENERGY!
Yes. I thought she'd be like that. From what we know of her from outside ...
IT REALLY SEEMS A SHAME TO JUST REQUITE HER.
umnh!
unh!
unhh!

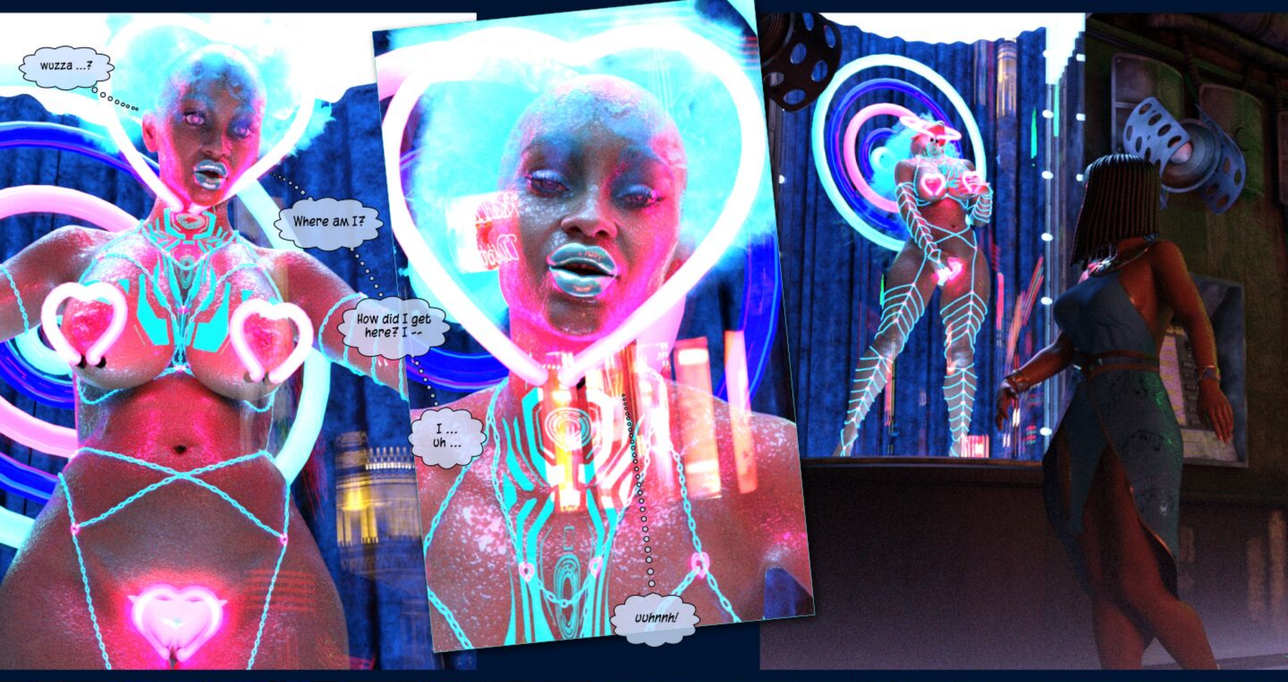

Oh, I wasn't thinking you'd do that. Not only would it be a waste, I'm not completely sure it'd hold her.
I know you can come up with something more interesting.


OOH!
YES, VERY MUCH.
NO, NO, SWEETIE. I NEED YOU TO STOP DOING THAT FOR JUST A SEC.
PLENTY OF TIME FOR THAT LATER. I NEED TO GET ALL OF THIS STUFF OFF YOU. IT INTERFERES WITH WHAT I WANT TO DO.

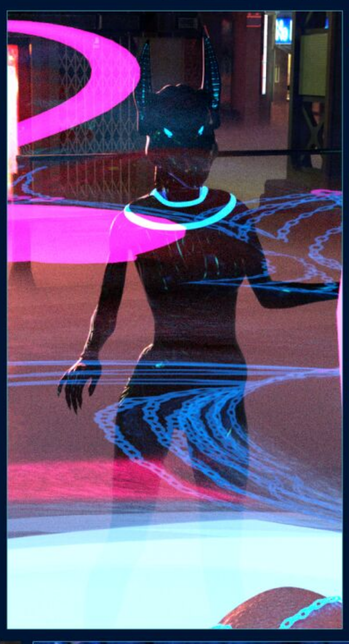

BESIDES, YOU NEED A NEW LOOK. BADLY.
I HAVE SOMETHING REALLY EXCITING IN MIND! YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE IT!

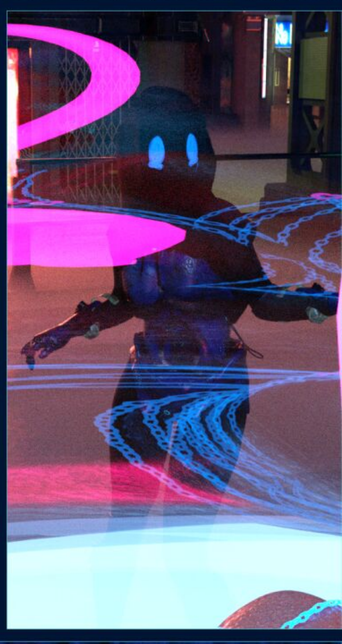

GO-GO
EXOTIC DANC




wuzza ...?
Where am I?
How did I get here? I --
I ... Uh ...
uuhnnh!



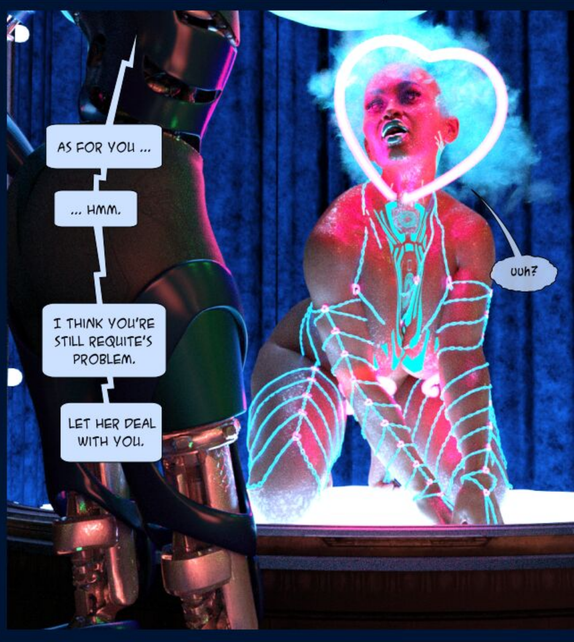







hey!!
uhh?
you can't let them do that to you! they don't get to do that!
c'mon, i know you can break out of it! stand up! climb out!
BUT WHAT IF SHE DOESN'T WANT TO?


I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE. MOST OF US LIKE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE.
EVERYBODY BUT YOU, REALLY.
THIS TIME YOU'RE GOING TO LEARN. THIS TIME IT WILL STICK.
THIS TIME YOU'RE NOT COMING BACK.


AS FOR YOU ...
... HMM.
I THINK YOU'RE STILL REQUITE'S PROBLEM.
LET HER DEAL WITH YOU.
uuh?


SHE'S FAKING, YOU KNOW.
How can you tell?
THERE'S A DIFFERENCE. THIS ISN'T COMPULSION, THIS IS HER DOING WHAT SHE THINKS WE EXPECT.

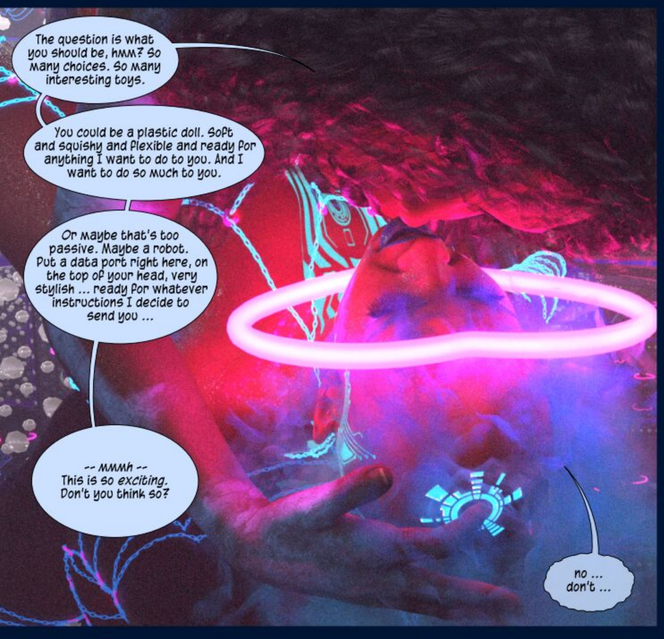

LET THE REQUITERS EMBRACE HER FOR A FEW SECONDS AND SHE'LL HAZE OUT AGAIN ... BUT I DON'T THINK IT'LL LAST.
Damn. I was sure she was sex-driven!


SHE PROBABLY IS. THE THING IS, RIGHT NOW THERE'S SOMETHING SHE'S MORE INTERESTED IN THAN SEX. AND EVERY TIME SHE REMEMBERS THAT, SHE BREAKS OUT.
... that's a problem.
The others think she's far more of a danger than I do. If I don't deal with her, they will.
I like her. Neither of them appreciates what's good. They don't understand sex at all.
I'd like to be the one to handle her. My way is a lot kinder than the things they have in mind.


WELL, YOU NEED TO FIGURE IT OUT, BECAUSE I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANYTHING THAT WILL KEEP HER OUT OF TROUBLE.
Yes, I know. I think I know what to do, though.
You can go back to your usual. This part has to be on me.


Don't bother acting blissed out. I know you have your mind back. Well, some of it, anyway.
Why ...? you never were helping ... wanted me like this ...
Oh, and you can talk now! Did you remember how, or were you faking that before too?
"Why?" Because you're a problem. Because I need to put you somewhere that you can't cause any trouble ever again.


But that doesn't mean we can't both enjoy it.
I've wanted to have you from the moment I first saw you.
They never want to give me my share. They don't understand. I had to fight for it.
mhrMnhh!


The question is what you should be, hmm? So many choices. So many interesting toys.
You could be a plastic doll. Soft and squishy and flexible and ready for anything I want to do to you. And I want to do so much to you.
Or maybe that's too passive. Maybe a robot. Put a data port right here, on the top of your head, very stylish ... ready for whatever instructions I decide to send you ...
-- MMMh -- This is so exciting. Don't you think so?
no ... don't ...


It's too late for that, love.
The smart thing to do would have been to leave. Or never have come here in the first place.
But you weren't very smart, were you?
And now we don't have a choice. Now we have to take the rest of it.
Now we have to bury you so deep you'll never find your way back.
Mnuhhh!

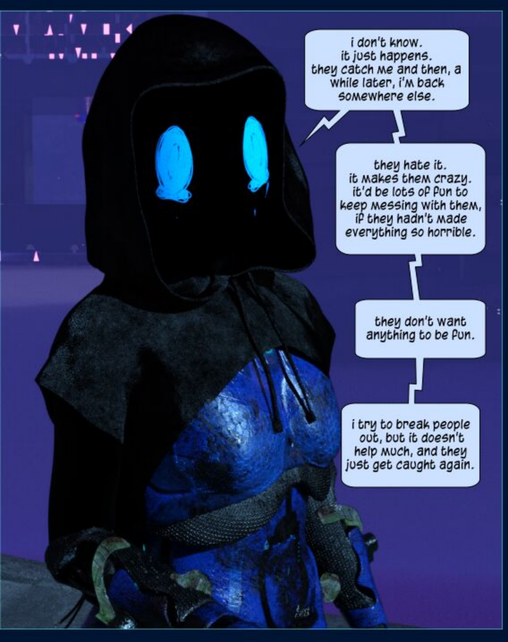

Honestly, I don't think you'll much notice. Your head was already half Pull of Pog. What's a little more? Let's Pill it up all the way. Lust and haze.
OP course, iP you ever do leave, I don't think you'll be the same. I'm pretty sure this is going to be permanent. But think how much Pun it'll be!
Get away!!
yaaaaa!


You know, every time one oP you has tried to mess with me, you've made me better.
Every time you or one oP the others tries to control me, I learn a little more about what you can't do.
I got my voice back when your little helper with the weird head took my mask oPP. I couldn't take it oPP by myselP.
And now you tried to bury my mind, but instead you made me so pissed oPP -- or something -- that you did the opposite. So thanks Por that, I guess?
My name is Chelle.
I'm here to Pix somebody I think I care a lot about, and I'm not leaving until I do that.
And iP you all had any sense, you'd try real hard not to get in my way.



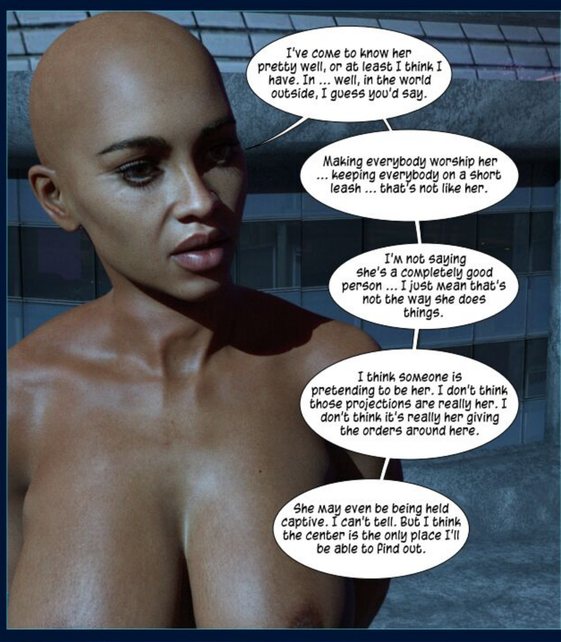

The thing is, though ...
... I might be worse oPP than when I First got here.
Sure, I'm pretty conPident they can't aPPect me, at least not Por long ...
... but I still don't have any answers, and I'm no closer to the center than I ever was ... Purther, maybe, because I sure don't want to go back through the temple again ...
And I'm naked.
I'm positive now: this is a scenario, and it's somebody else's. The blue lady's, probably. I can't do some things in it. Like maniPest clothes.

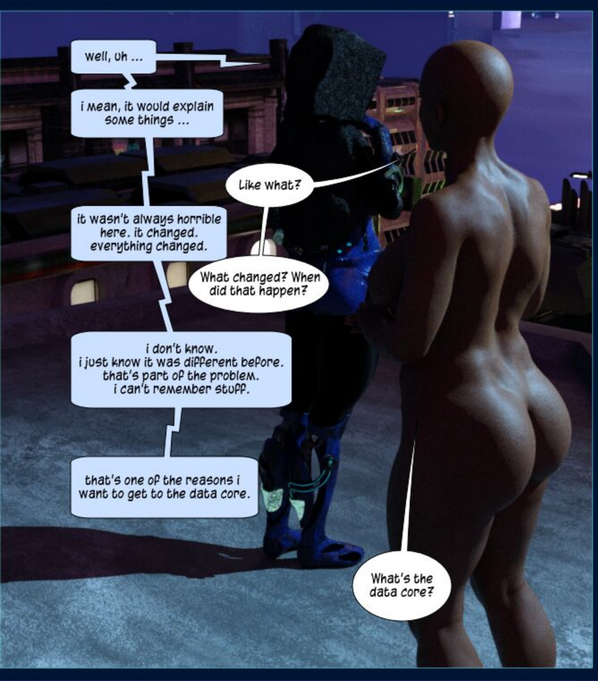

you got out! i kind oP knew you would.
Same goes Por you ...
ooh, and you can talk now? neat!
Yeah, they accidentally gave me my voice back. I'm sure they're not happy about that.
How do you keep getting loose, anyway? I've seen you get captured ... twice? Three times?


i don't know. it just happens. they catch me and then, a while later, i'm back somewhere else.
they hate it. it makes them crazy. it'd be lots oP Pun to keep messing with them, iP they hadn't made everything so horrible.
they don't want anything to be Pun.
i try to break people out, but it doesn't help much, and they just get caught again.


Yeah, I saw you trying to pull the hoods oPP people, during the prayer meeting. I tried to warn you about the robot woman but I couldn't talk.
... I guess they're both robots, aren't they? I mean the one with no Pace. Who makes the eye people.
that's reFactor. the one with the dog mask is remedy. remedy especially hates me.
I'm sure she hates me too. I'm deFinitely an enemy oP the state now, iP I wasn't already.
It's going to make it even harder to try to get to the center.
the center? why do you want to get to the center?


Because I'm pretty sure the blue lady is there, and I need to help her.
the blue lady?
You know, the woman in the projections? The one leading the worship services?
but ... why do you want to help her? she's the problem! she's the one making everything horrible!
See, I don't think that's true, though.


I've come to know her pretty well, or at least I think I have. In ... well, in the world outside, I guess you'd say.
Making everybody worship her ... keeping everybody on a short leash ... that's not like her.
I'm not saying she's a completely good person ... I just mean that's not the way she does things.
I think someone is pretending to be her. I don't think those projections are really her. I don't think it's really her giving the orders around here.
She may even be being held captive. I can't tell. But I think the center is the only place I'll be able to find out.


Well, uh ...
i mean, it would explain some things ...
Like what?
it wasn't always horrible here. it changed. everything changed.
What changed? When did that happen?
i don't know. i just know it was different before. that's part of the problem. i can't remember stuff.
that's one of the reasons i want to get to the data core.
What's the data core?


it's what it says. a bunch of important data. things we've lost.
I'm guessing you can't just go get it, or you would have already.
it's guarded by a computer -- i think it's a computer. its name is logic.
every time i've tried i've gotten caught.
if i had the core, i could try to fix a whole lot of people at the same time, not just do them one by one ... and i could maybe remember some things ...
i wonder if we could do it with two of us ...


it probably wouldn't work. we'd just both get caught and have to start over again ... nothing's ever going to work ...
Hmm.
What's your name? Mine's Chelle.
ah ... uh ... umbra. i think.
You're not sure?

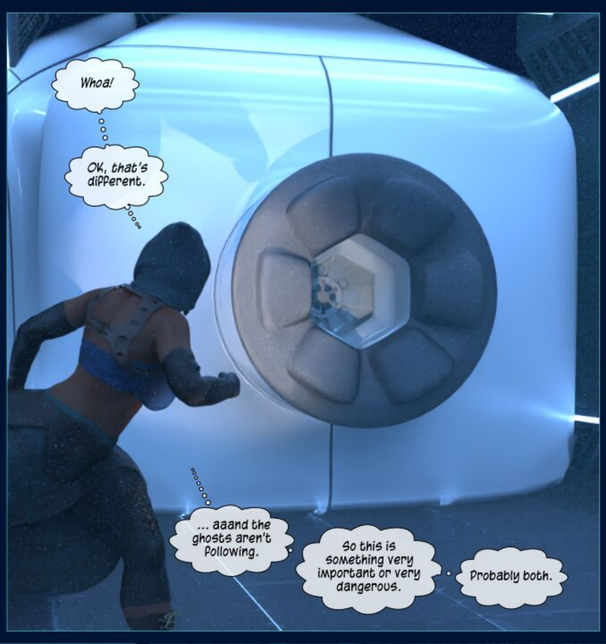

like i said. a lot of stuff is gone. or it's kinda foggy.
i don't remember what i look like anymore. i'm just happy i have any name at all.
Yeah, I know the feeling.


Umbra, I'll go try for the data core with you.
I can use all the information I can get ... anything to help figure out what's really going on in this place ...
Wish I could manifest some clothes first though.
oh, i can help you with that, if you want.
i'm pretty good at it.


how's that? ok?
Well, I don't have neon hearts attached to my tits, so I think it'll be fine.
All right. Where do we have to go? The center?
no. the center is kind of its own thing. logic's facility is in the city. it runs a lot of city stuff, i think.
it's not too far and we can mostly get there on the roofs, except for the very last bit.

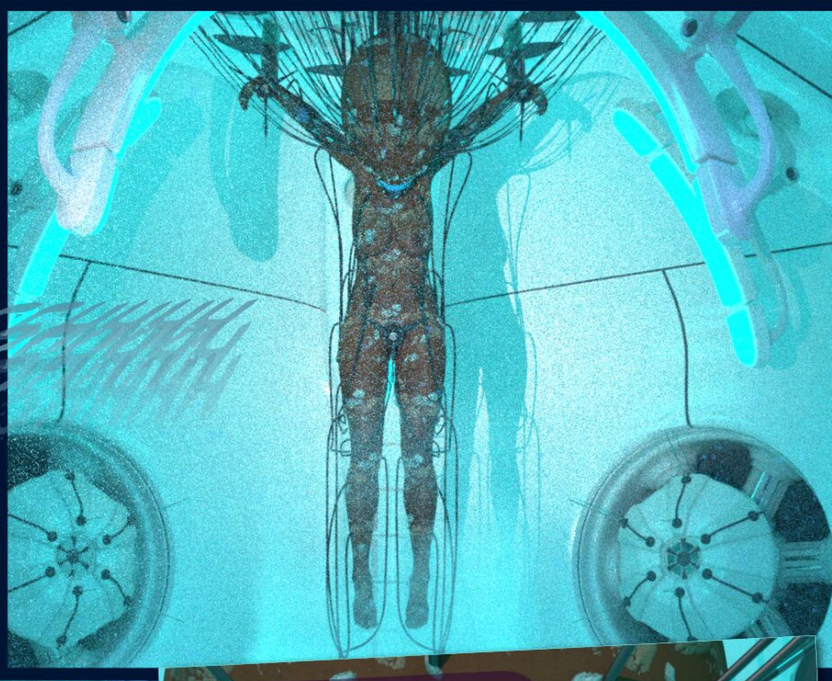

Umbra, I get that we're being careful, but we've been in here for twenty minutes and there's been nobody.
This place is deserted. What are we avoiding?
them.
she's seen us! run!
don't let her touch you!
yiiii!
Wha?
... Ok, what did you think would happen?
did she just disappear?
Yep. Touched me and vanished in a puff of logic.
it should have turned you into one of them.
at least that's what they do to me.
Huh. Well, great! I can keep them from getting to you.
sure, but ...
... there might be a lot of them.
Oh.
YAAAAAH!
And you!
Not expecting somebody to attack first, huh?
Two down, one to go!
wow.
Hmm. I'm thinking that door leads to the data core?
how'd you guess?
I don't know if I can take out that many before one of them gets to you. You may need to fall back.
as soon as they see we're trying for it, more will come.
but i don't think they'll actually go in the room. once i'm in, i should be ok.
You want me to lead them away.
All right, but be careful. It may take me a while to come back. That's if I don't get lost.
Hey! Ghosts!
Think Fast!


Ok, I think that's far enough ... now to double back ...
... and crash through as many of them as I --

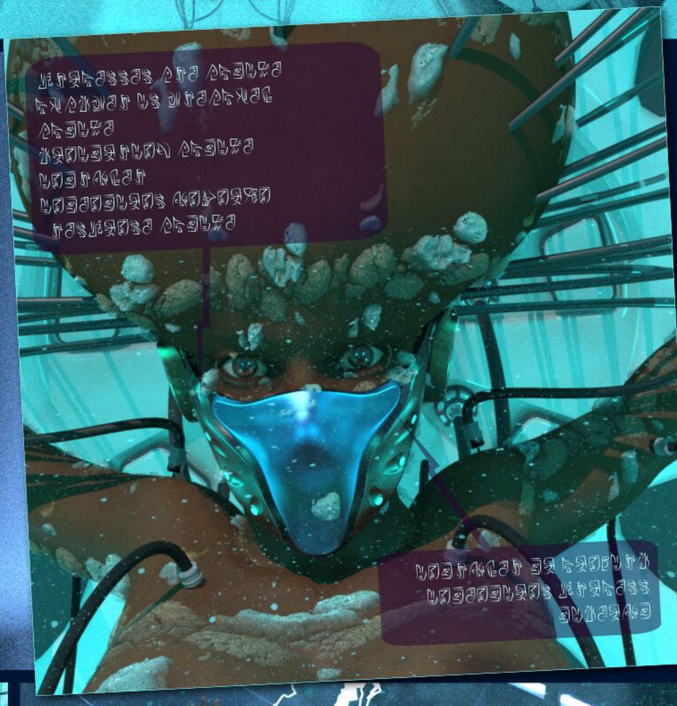

Whoa!
Ok, that's different.
... aaand the ghosts aren't following.
So this is something very important or very dangerous.
Probably both.

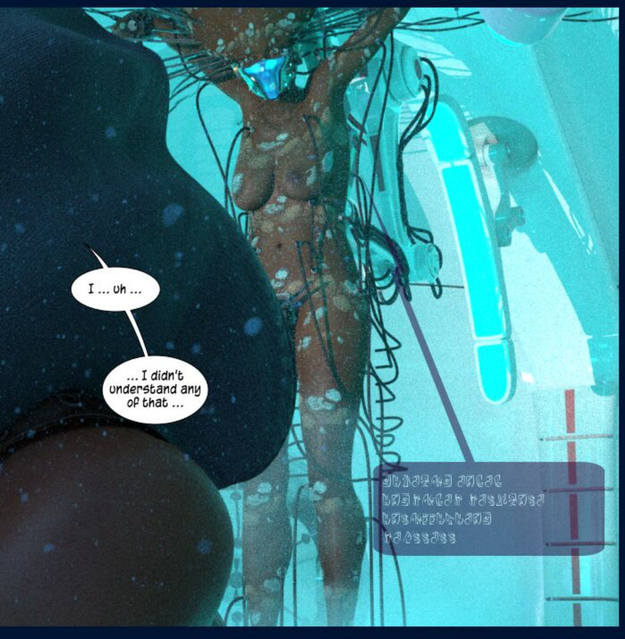

Course, it doesn't matter if I'm doing something stupid if I
-- ooph! --
can't figure out how to open it ...


oop!

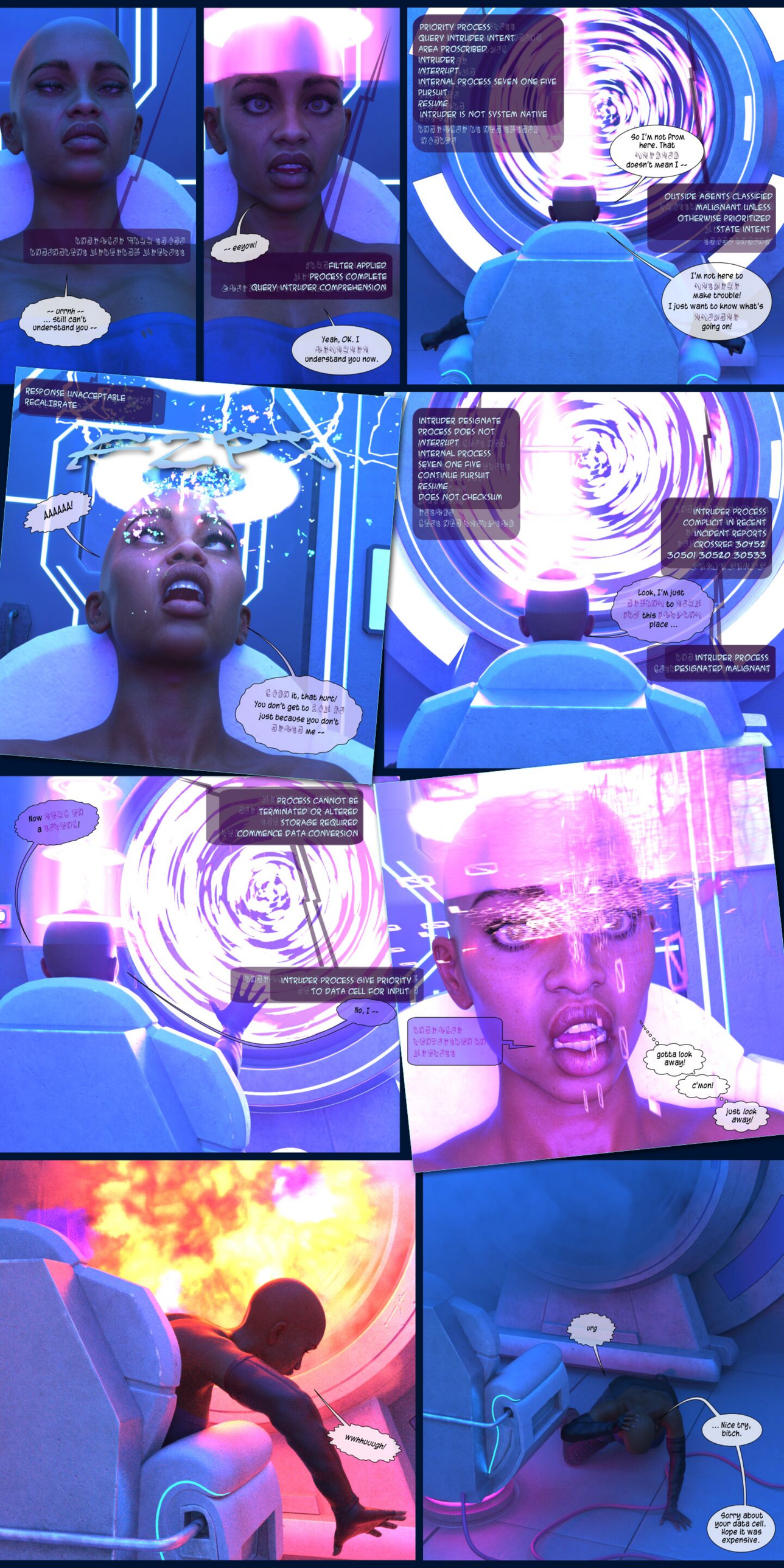



... hello?
Can you hear me?
Are you ...
Uh ...



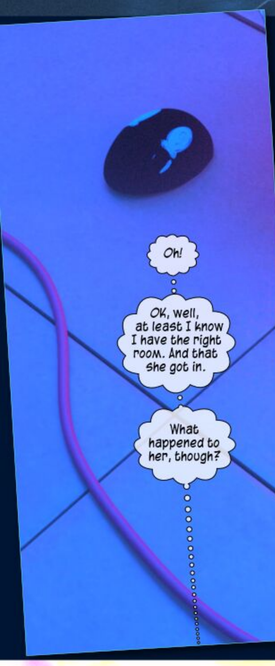

I ... Uh ...
... I didn't understand any of that ...




-- Urrnh --
... still can't understand you --
-- eeyow!
FILTER APPLIED
PROCESS COMPLETE
QUERY INTRUDER COMPREHENSION
Yeah, OK. I understand you now.
PRIORITY PROCESS
QUERY INTRUDER INTENT
AREA PROSCRIBED
INTRUDER
INTERRUPT
INTERNAL PROCESS SEVEN ONE FIVE
PURSUIT
RESUME
INTRUDER IS NOT SYSTEM NATIVE
So I'm not from here. That doesn't Mean I --
OUTSIDE AGENTS CLASSIFIED MALIGNANT UNLESS OTHERWISE PRIORITIZED
STATE INTENT
I'm not here to make trouble! I just want to know what's going on!
RESPONSE UNACCEPTABLE
RECALIBRATE
AAAAAA!
(Can't) it, that hurt! You don't get to just because you don't Me --
INTRUDER DESIGNATE
PROCESS DOES NOT
INTERRUPT
INTERNAL PROCESS
SEVEN ONE FIVE
CONTINUE PURSUIT
RESUME
DOES NOT CHECKSUM
INTRUDER PROCESS COMPLICIT IN RECENT INCIDENT REPORTS
CROSSREF 30452 30501 30520 30533
Look, I'm just to this place ...
INTRUDER PROCESS DESIGNATED MALIGNANT
Now a !
PROCESS CANNOT BE TERMINATED OR ALTERED
STORAGE REQUIRED
COMMENCE DATA CONVERSION
INTRUDER PROCESS GIVE PRIORITY TO DATA CELL FOR INPUT
No, I --
gotta look away!
C'mon!
just look away!
WWhuuugh!
urg
... Nice try, bitch.
Sorry about your data cell. Hope it was expensive.


Everything wants to interfere with me ... had to go all the way back to the entrance so I could retrace my steps here ...
I'm pretty sure this is the right door, but where are all the ghosts?
I hope Umbra is OK ...


Huh! This is no 'data core.' At least, I don't think so.
This is another cell. Just like the one she tried to put me in.
Think Umbra might have gotten the wrong end of the stick ...
... What's that on the floor?

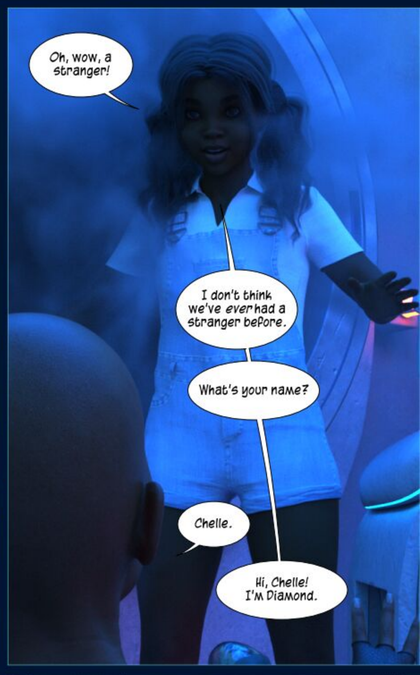

Oh!
OK, well, at least I know I have the right room. And that she got in.
What happened to her, though?


This seems ... uh ... active.
I mean, I can just about feel that there's something in here.
... I bet that wired-up bitch found her in here and threw her in this cell. Umbra wouldn't be on guard for that -- she never got this far before.
But how do I get her out of it?

I'm almost scared to touch it ... they don't seem very stable ...
I'm worried it might --



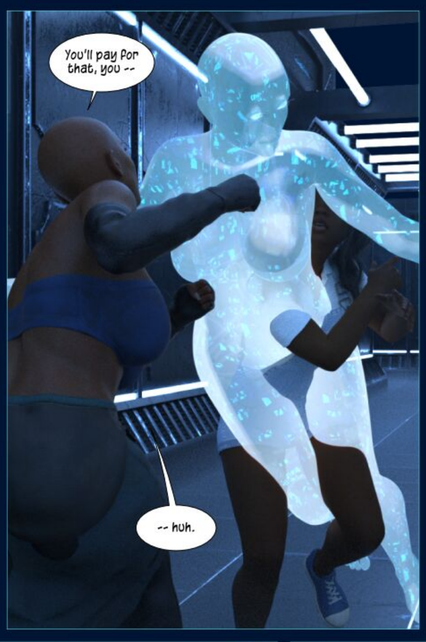

I'm out! Neat!
Uh ... hi?


Oh, wow, a stranger!
I don't think we've ever had a stranger before.
What's your name?
Chelle.
Hi, Chelle! I'm Diamond.

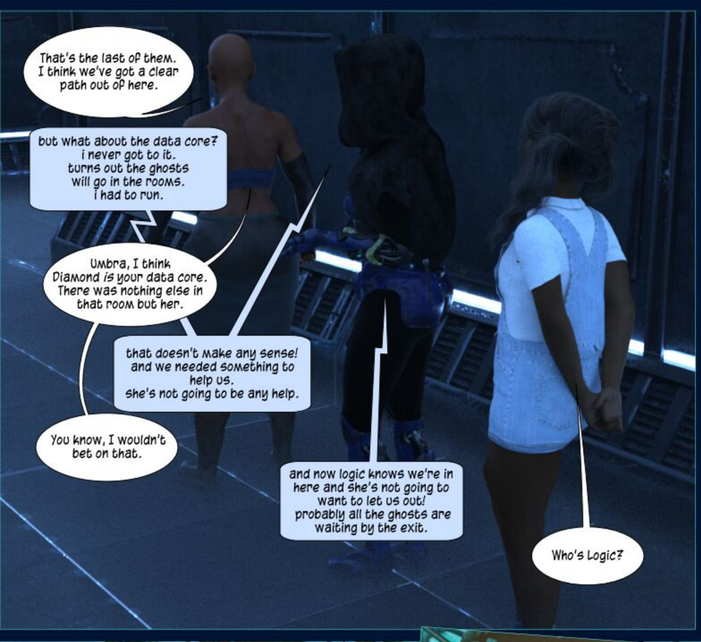

... so you don't know how long you were in there, or how you got there?
Nope! Which is weird. I mean the second part. Something's not right.
Oh, I can guarantee something's not right. I think this place is under someone's control that shouldn't have control of it. If that makes sense.
That's what it feels like! When we get out of here I might know more.
Well, first I need to find out what happened to Umbra.
Which one's Umbra?
Umbra brought us down here to look for you. I think. She said she was looking for a data core, but ...
Hmm. If she got captured by the ghosts we'll never have a way of knowing --
-- oh, wait.


tally ho! you move too slow!


Diamond, watch out!
EEE!


You'll pay for that, you --
-- huh.


Poop.
Guess you're immune to the ghosts.
Guess so!
Amethyst is ghosts now?
The ghosts are somebody else?
Everybody here is somebody else.
Except you.


That's the last of them. I think we've got a clear path out of here.
but what about the data core? i never got to it. turns out the ghosts will go in the rooms. i had to run.
Umbra, I think Diamond *is* your data core. There was nothing else in that room but her.
that doesn't make any sense! and we needed something to help us. she's not going to be any help.
You know, I wouldn't bet on that.
and now logic knows we're in here and she's not going to want to let us out! probably all the ghosts are waiting by the exit.
Who's Logic?


logic is the computer that runs this place and most of the city --
Logic is a *person*, Umbra. I'm pretty sure. She may *think* she's a computer right now, but she's got a flesh-and-blood body. I've seen her.
Of course she's a person.
Can I see her?
Sure, if I can remember how to get there.


Be careful. She likes to zap people.
Amethyst?
Amethyst, it's me.


DIAMOND?
DIAMOND I PROCESS INTERRUPT YOU I CAN'T RESUME PRIORITY PROCESS PRIORITY TOO MANY OPERATIONS PRIORITY OUTPUT
What's wrong with her?
She's doing too much stuff. She's in a bunch of different places and I can't put them back together.

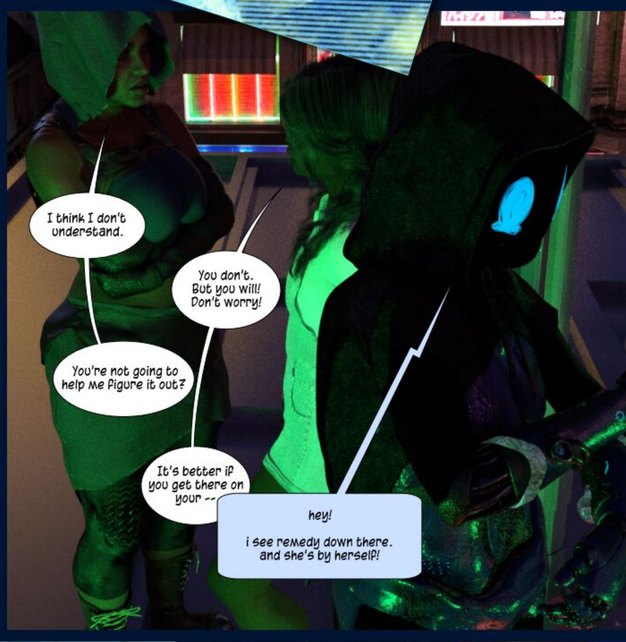

THEY WON'T PRIORITY PROCESS OVERLOAD HAVE TO PRIORITY SEQUENCE THEM FIRST
So there's nothing we can do about her?
Not yet! I think we'll have to do some other things first.
Like get into the center and find out who's responsible for all this.
Maybe!
data cores that are people ... computers that are people ... doesn't make any sense.

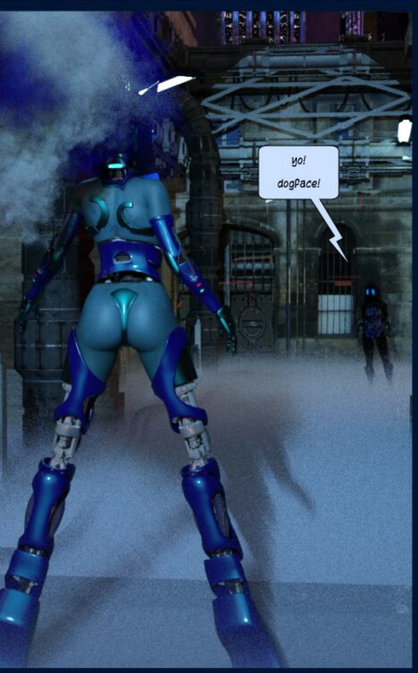

not going to be able to fix anything if none of it makes any sense ...
Ok, I think I'm catching on. Who is she really?
Amber. She's in too many pieces too. We need to get them in one place ... or maybe there's one part we need to find ...
REMEDY
PRIORITY PROCESS HANDLER


Remedy? Oh, Umbra's going to *love* that.
Who's Remedy?
One of the instigators. She has a bunch of jackal soldiers and makes people into good little robots.
Can we find her?
If we go back up onto the streets for long, she'll find us.


don't see why we need some big plan. if i just go walk around for two minutes she'll find me.
Yes, but we want to do it in some way where we have the advantage.
I know you'll come back if she catches you, but better if she didn't, hmm?
CITIZENS!
THREE AMONG US ARE NO
AND MUST BE BROUGHT TO
IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL C
THEM TO THE NEAREST RE
WATCH FOR A STRANGER
AND THE NOTORIOUS BLAC
THEY ARE A THREAT TO T


Oh, good, now there's an all-points bulletin on us.
That's your blue lady?
It's not my blue lady. Mine wouldn't set up a police state.
It's somebody pretending to be her.
It doesn't work like that, though!
What you've seen, that's them. It has to be them. There isn't any other. Maybe you just never saw those parts.
"Them"?
Mm-hm. There's more than one doing it. You heard Amethyst say so.
Maybe you saw times when a different one of them was in charge. Maybe they want different things.


I think I don't understand.
You don't. But you will! Don't worry!
You're not going to help me figure it out?
It's better if you get there on your --
hey!
i see remedy down there. and she's by herself!


yo! dogface!


AGAIN?
HOW MANY MORE TIMES ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS?


if you're lucky, this'll be the last one.


Amber?
It's Diamond.
Come on, we need you back.

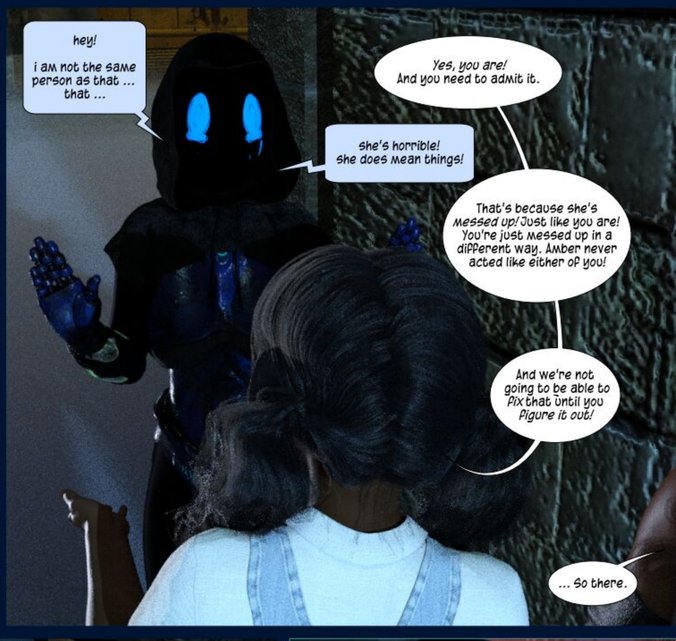

HUH?
WHO ARE YOU? WHO IS AMBER? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
AND YOU'RE WITH THESE TWO?
NONCOMPLIANT. THAT'S WHAT. YOU'RE ALL BAD CITIZENS.
YOU ALL NEED TO BE REMEDIED --


HRK!
remedy this.
i wonder what happens when we take off your mask...
GET AWAY FROM ME!


YOU'LL ALL BE COMPLIANT! JUST WAIT!

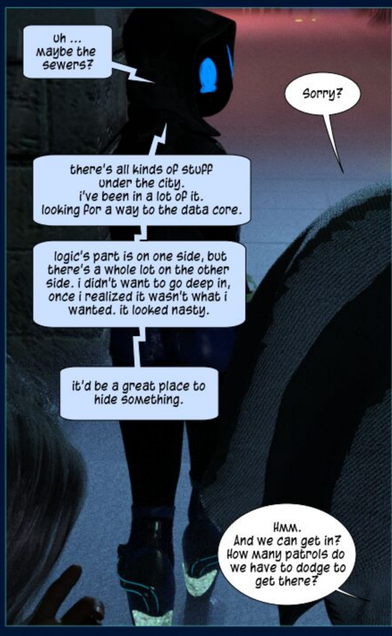

So why didn't that work? Amethyst recognized you ...
I don't know!
But, like I said, something's not right.
Well, yeah, but --
I don't mean all this stuff going on. Something *else* isn't right. There's something missing, and I don't know what it is.
Memory.


can't ever get anywhere because we can't remember anything. it just doesn't stick. i feel like i have to keep starting over.
Well, you do ...
That's it! That's the problem.
Where's Garnet?
Who's Garnet?
Garnet keeps the archives. If she's missing, then we don't remember anything. That makes it a lot harder.
That's why we can't put Amber back together. None of them remember inside that they're Amber. Umbra just thinks she's Umbra. Remedy only thinks she's Remedy.


hey! i am not the same person as that ... that ...
Yes, you are! And you need to admit it.
she's horrible! she does mean things!
That's because she's *messed up!* Just like you are! You're just messed up in a different way. Amber never acted like either of you!
And we're not going to be able to fix that until you *figure it out!*
... So there.


So ... what I'm getting -- slowly -- is you're all parts of the same person, kind of?
It's not "kind of."
See, I told you! You're almost there!
Ok, but this Garnet has the memory? I'd have thought *you* had the memory. Or Amethyst.
No, I just always know what things really are. I guess that's how you'd put it.
Amethyst might be keeping some memory right now -- it kinda sounded like it -- but it's not what she usually does.
Wonder if that's why she could recognize you.
Maybe!
you two need to move faster. she's going to come back. with jackals.


You know, this is beginning to feel deliberate.
I mean, if I was going to do a hostile takeover of somebody's personality, locking up truth and hiding away memory would be a *great* start.
Sure, but what happened? Who did it?
That's the kind of thing Garnet would know ... but we don't know where she is ...
... and if nobody else can *remember* her, they're not going to be any help finding her. Right.


Uh ... Maybe the sewers?
Sorry?
there's all kinds of stuff under the city. i've been in a lot of it. looking for a way to the data core.
logic's part is on one side, but there's a whole lot on the other side. i didn't want to go deep in, once i realized it wasn't what i wanted. it looked nasty.
it'd be a great place to hide something.
Hmm. And we can get in? How many patrols do we have to dodge to get there?


Got real medieval all of a sudden ...
just wait.


when i first saw the part where we're going, i couldn't believe it. it's like a lost world.
i wonder if they even know it's here. i don't think anybody else has been down here in a long time.


Wow.
told you.
How deep does it go?
I don't know. I didn't go much further.


So it could take us a long time to find her.
if she's even in here.
Hmm. Do you think she is?
... maybe.
Now you sound like Di.
-- giggle --


I don't think I like this.
Try not to look over the edge.


trouble.
Ew. Should we take care of them?
they'll call in the jackals. if we go up there --
Yeah, I get you. Ok, let's keep moving. Maybe they'll be scared to follow.


wuaaaahh!
There's always somebody who's got to get ambitious.

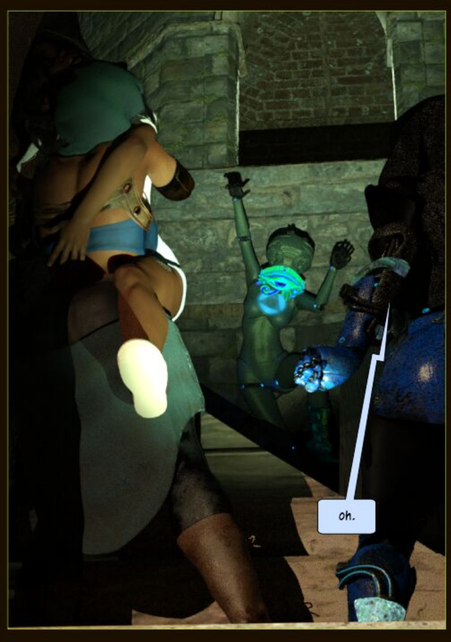



You're good at that, huh?
... Uh, no. I guess they don't do too well when their masks get knocked off.
C'mon, let's hurry.


The other one's coming!
Can you get her too?
May-- ... probably.
Let's get past the next junction and I'll see if I can ambush her around a corner or something.


aaaaa!
UMBRA!


EEE!
Jump, Di!
I got you!

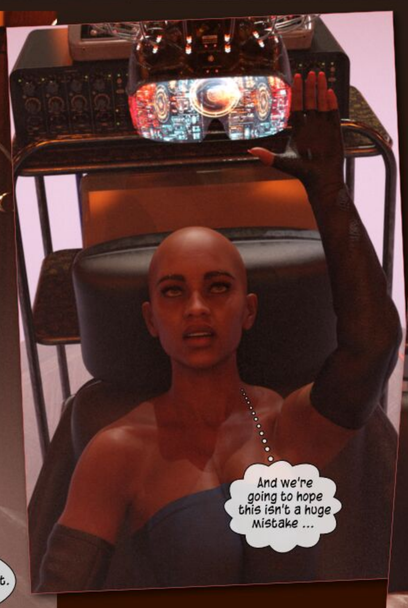

oh.


... Can someone die here, do you think?
We can't. You, I don't know.
That was Topaz. Part of her.
Ok. Then I'm not going to bother feeling guilty.
Let's go.

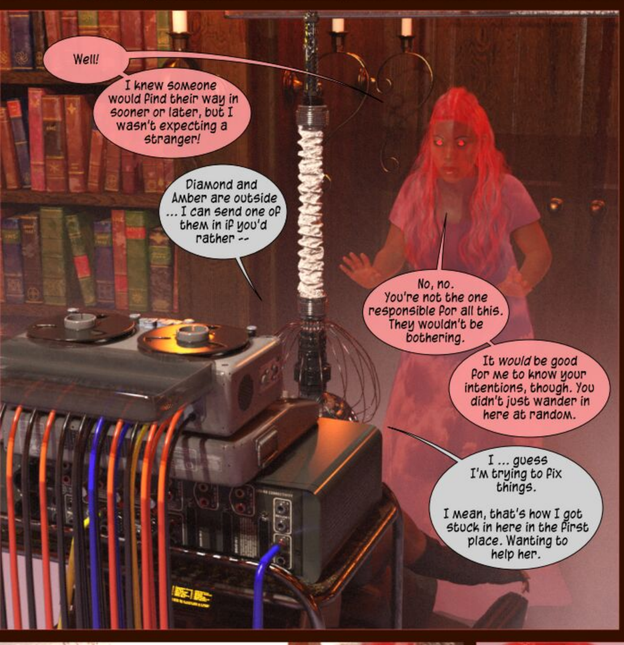

... A library.
What did you think it would be?
I hadn't stopped to consider it.
a waste of time, is what it is! she's not here. we came down here for nothing.
and the jackals will find us any second.
Umbra, I don't think the jackals are coming. We'd have seen them by now.
Maybe the eye robots couldn't signal them from down here or something. Maybe they don't want to come here. I don't know.


I do know this is the only other way out of this room.
So if she is down here, she's got to be somewhere behind these doors.
Which I'm a little scared to open.


Huh.
tell me you're not going to actually sit in that.
Well, I feel like somebody has to, or we'll never know. There's nothing else here to try.
I'll do it!
Appreciate the thought, Di, but I think I had better go first. You two keep watch.


And we're going to hope this isn't a huge mistake ...




Well!
I knew someone would find their way in sooner or later, but I wasn't expecting a stranger!
Diamond and Amber are outside ... I can send one of them in if you'd rather --
No, no. You're not the one responsible for all this. They wouldn't be bothering.
It would be good for me to know your intentions, though. You didn't just wander in here at random.
I ... guess I'm trying to fix things.
I mean, that's how I got stuck in here in the first place. Wanting to help her.


Hmm. Do I know you? I feel like I know you ... It's difficult right now ...
You think a stranger did all this? Changed this place?
Tricky verb. A stranger couldn't have "done" it in the way I think you mean. That kind of external influence doesn't have the ability. But if their suggestions fell on fertile ground ...
The last time we had anything like this sort of upheaval it was because one of us decided she wanted it. It was an internal coup, you might say.
This would have to be internal as well ... but I feel like there was an outside force pushing the buttons. Sowing the seeds.
I'm sorry. That may not be making a lot of sense. Like I said, it's difficult right now.


Because you've been cut off.
Yes. They can't disconnect me entirely, but they can make the channel very, very narrow. Hence that helmet you're wearing.
I retain everything up to the point where they cut me off ... then history stops for me. And the history I do have doesn't have anything you can use, I don't think. Apparently cutting me out was one of the first things they did.
Yes. That and locking Diamond away. We think.
You know, if an outsider couldn't have broken everything themself, then an outsider isn't going to be able to fix it themself ...
Well, no, of course not. You'll need to get enough of us on board to deal with whichever of us is behind it.
You're not making repairs. You're inciting a palace revolution.


Diamond and Amber, eh? I might have guessed. Diamond is immutable and Amber is impetuous. Things don't stick on her just because she gets bored with them.
That may not be as true as you think right now.
Umbra is only a fragment of Amber, and she refuses to believe it, mostly because another fragment of Amber is one of the big villains.
Diamond has already tried to put them back together once and it didn't work. She couldn't fix Amethyst either. I'm worried we're going to have that kind of trouble everywhere.
It's a real mess up there.

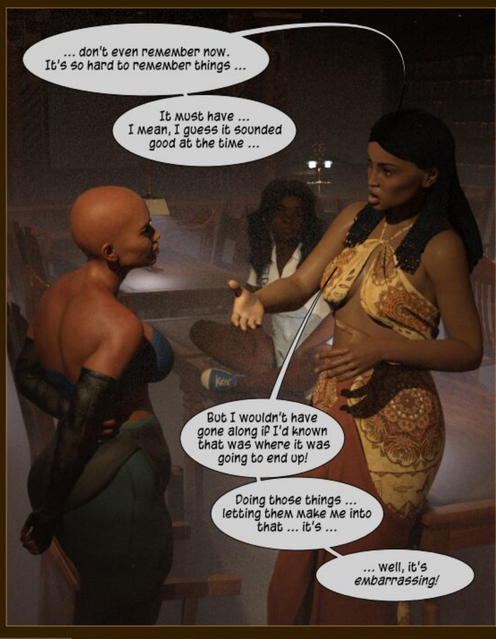

That, I believe, but I think you'll be able to --
-- well, you'll have to take my word for it. There's a problem outside you need to go deal with.
After you're done with that, send "Umbra" in to me. I can give her a push in the right direction.

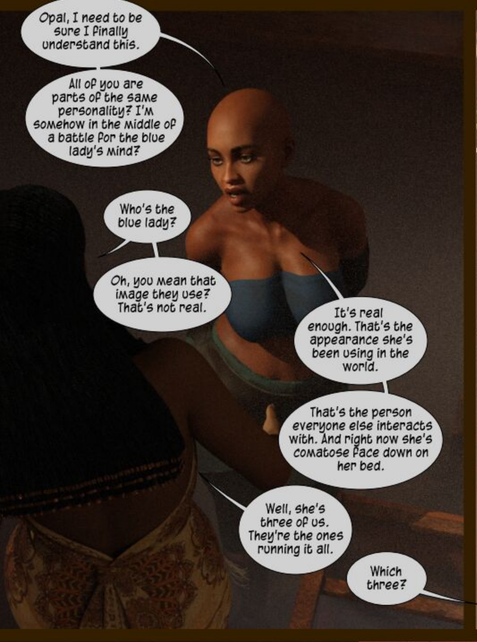

too slow! Pail harder!
HEY!!


No, I already saw your shoot-backward trick.
Not gonna work twice.


Opal!
Stop it!
Stop it right now!!


Diamond?
... oh, shit.


... don't even remember now. It's so hard to remember things ...
It must have ... I mean, I guess it sounded good at the time ...
But I wouldn't have gone along if I'd known that was where it was going to end up!
Doing those things ... letting them make me into that ... it's ...
... well, it's embarrassing!


Opal, I need to be sure I finally understand this.
All of you are parts of the same personality? I'm somehow in the middle of a battle for the blue lady's mind?
Who's the blue lady?
Oh, you mean that image they use? That's not real.
It's real enough. That's the appearance she's been using in the world.
That's the person everyone else interacts with. And right now she's comatose face down on her bed.
Well, she's three of us. They're the ones running it all.
Which three?


... I don't know. They always wear masks ...
You know, I'm just now seeing how much they were using us ... they only needed us to keep everybody else down ... they didn't actually let us in on anything ...
They said we'd be part of it, but they lied.
Maybe Requite and Remedy know more than I do. Remedy could actually talk to them. They didn't let me speak.
Amber. Remedy is Amber.
I don't know who Requite is. I haven't seen her yet.


But you have a guess, I bet. I'm getting the idea that you usually know a lot more than you're willing to say.
That's not true!
I just don't like making guesses. I don't want to say until I really know something for sure.
I don't know who Requite really is. Take me to see her, then I'll tell you.


Oh, you're done! What did she say?
i
don't want to talk about it.
C'mon. Is everything all right? Are you OK?
not really.


you know, if i'm part of amber then i'm part of what she's doing. i don't like that.
I know the feeling.
Sure, but if it's the same way with her, Opal, then she didn't expect that was what she was getting into, and doesn't have any control over it.
Let's go find out.


Huh. I'd have thought she'd recover now that Opal's herself ...
Oh, don't make me feel more guilty. Anyway, she's not part of me.
No, Di says she's Topaz.
Part of Topaz.
And you can't fix her, right?
Nope! Too many pieces.
We'll just have to come back to her. Once we get the rest of this sorted out.
If we do.


So the plan is going to be one of us trying to draw her out, right?
I don't know why they'd want the place to look like this ...
Maybe some people like it.
Unless you can come up with something better.
I can't.
We're wanted people anyway, so it shouldn't take much.
No.
I guess I should be the one who does it ... I mean, she's kind of my problem ...
I appreciate the thought, but it's not going to be you.
It's going to be Di.


Me?
Mmhm.
You're immutable. If they catch you, they can't do anything to you.
Except try to lock you up somewhere, and I won't let them do that.
Also, you can run really fast.


Hey, puppy people!
I'm a dangerous criminal!
k, bye!


You need help!
Better get more!


C'mon, keep up!
-- giggle --


Oops!
YOU THINK THIS IS ALL FUNNY, DO YOU?


I sure do!
It's super funny, especially 'cause you don't even know the joke!
OH? AND WHAT IS THIS BIG JOKE?


The joke is that you don't have a clue who you are.
WHA?
It's time to get off those stupid stilts and be yourself again.


C'mon, Amber ...
NO ... NO, I DON'T ...


... Ok, that was all really weird.


Did you pick out the costume or did they?
I think maybe I did?
I liked the high shoes!
Yeah, I guess I wanted to be tall ...
She bounces back fast.
Yes, that's typical Amber. She lives for adventure, fears nothing, and problems just roll right off her. Usually.
I'm glad she's herself again. It was strange seeing her depressed. Of the three kids, Sapphire is always the gloomy one. They pick on each other about it.


And since it turns out the jackals were all Amber too -- which I think Di knew from the beginning -- and all of your eye robots seem to be out of service -- we should be able to look for a way into the center without anybody giving us grief.
I know how to get into the center. So does Amber, if she remembers. That's how you want to go?
You don't?
I think we should look into Requite first.
Otherwise she might interfere with whatever we try to do.
Also, I want to find out who she is. I admit it.


There's something you're not telling me, isn't there?
I've already had one run-in with Requite, and she won for a while. It took me a lot to break out of it.
She uses sex as her tool, and apparently that's kind of a weak point for me.
Hmm. Must be Emerald or Jade. They have pretty much all the sexuality between them. Probably Jade. She has a mean streak.
The good news is, that works in our favor. I don't really have a sex drive, Di's a child and barely knows what sex is, and Amber ... Well, she's a tween, she knows, but I don't think it's really on her radar.
Remedy and Umbra both seemed older than that.
I think Umbra was forced to be more adult than she wanted. As for Remedy ... Maybe it was the shoes.
Anyway, my point is, I think between us we can keep you out of trouble.


I suppose so.
It's just that ... you and Amber aren't the only ones who don't like finding out certain things about yourselves. Let's put it that way.
It does seem to be the theme of the moment.
We've got your back.


I would almost like it if those creatures showed up ...
At least then they'd take me to her. This is a big place.


OH, MY! YOU'VE COME BACK!
There we go.


WHO PICKED THAT OUTFIT? IT'S HORRIBLE! YOU CAN DO SO MUCH BETTER!
I just need to talk to you ... I'm not here for fashion advice --


I CAN'T HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOU WHILE YOU'RE WEARING THAT. IT'S PAINFUL.
But I'm -- Uh ...
YOU'LL LET ME PUT YOU IN SOMETHING ELSE, WON'T YOU? SOMETHING MORE EXCITING.
Uuuhrh ...
OH, GOOD! NOW HOLD ON FOR JUST A SECOND. I'VE STILL GOT LOTS OF IDEAS FOR YOU ...


THERE! SUCH AN IMPROVEMENT. AND VERY HOT.
I HOPED YOU'D COME BACK. YOU KNOW, YOU LEFT BEFORE YOU COULD EVEN COME CLOSE TO REALIZING YOUR POTENTIAL.


YOU HAVE SO MUCH, YOU KNOW. MUCH MORE THAN THEY DO.
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING YOU WANT.
IT'D BE A WASTE FOR YOU TO BE ONE OF THEM. YOU'RE SO BEYOND THAT.
YOU SHOULD RULE THEM.
I'M SO GLAD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT.
YOU WEREN'T --?
OH.


I guess that means the Pun's over, then. Too bad.
But I suppose it was about time.
You already knew who you are?
Turquoise??
And I thought it was going to be Jade....

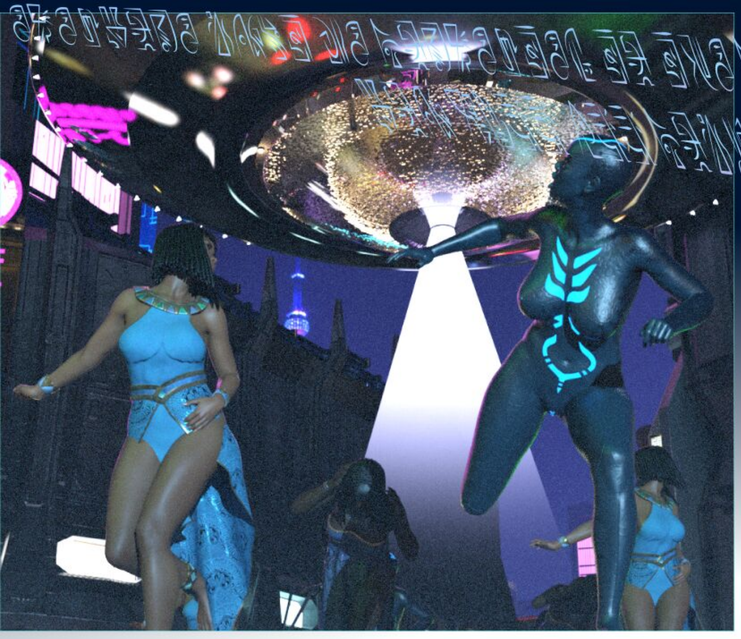

Oh, no. These are Jade.
Jade would never have had the imagination to be Requite.
All of the "public" are either Topaz, Onyx, or Jade ... and only Jade winds up in here. The others don't understand sex.
But you --
Jade and Emerald didn't get all the sex, Opal. How could I write dirty scenarios without it?


You volunteered for this?
Only as much as you did. I got talked into it.
I figured at least this way people would get to be stuck in something that was fun ...
I'm not going to pretend I didn't enjoy it, though.
I've been really underused lately. I needed an outlet.


Ok, there's Di ... there's me, Amber and Turquoise ... she said Topaz, Onyx, and Jade are the city folks ... we know where Garnet is ...
So, Amethyst ...
Amethyst's stuck being a computer.
Oh? Huh. That means the three are Emerald, Pearl, and ...
Sapphire?
I hope you can change them all back.
Oh, yes, easily.
If I must.
I think you probably must.

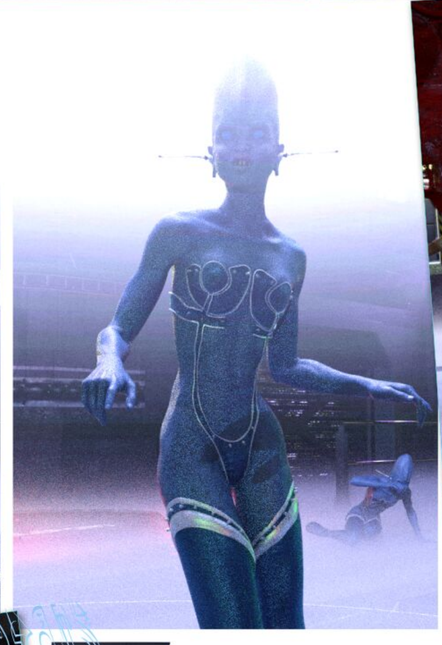

Why's that surprising?
Have you ever heard of that right-brain/left-brain thing? It's not actually true, but the idea under it isn't wrong.
Six of us are creative, intuitive people, and the other six are logical and procedural ...
Because Pearl and Emerald haven't killed her?
And this was definitely a revolution of creatives, unlike last time.
Everyone on the top side of this little power struggle is an intuitive ... except Sapphire.
I don't know, Opal. Maybe they thought they could use grounding. With Pearl and Emerald in the mix, they probably did.

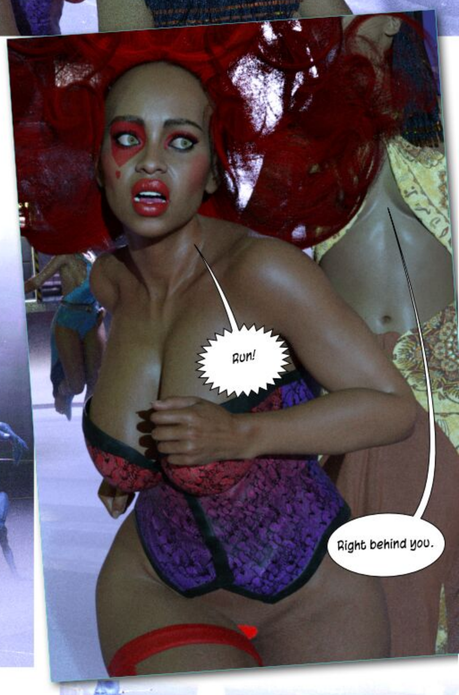

Well, when we find Sapphire, we can ask her.
I assume you don't think there's a reason to wait any longer on going to the center, Opal ...
No, though we should see if we can pick up Onyx. She'll be pissed off about all this, and she's tough.
If she hasn't managed to re-merge yet, even better ... we may want an army --
-- do you hear shouting outside?




AAA!
What is this?
Retaliation.

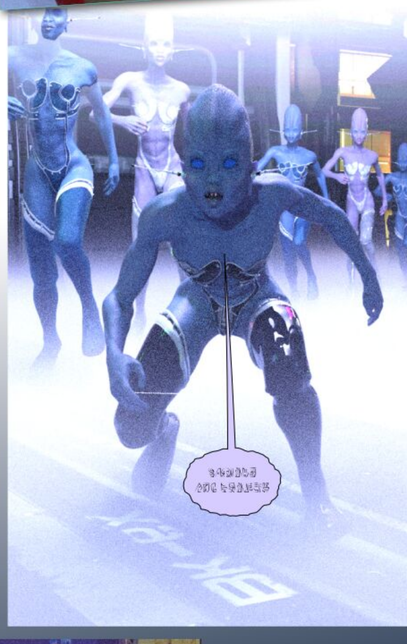





Run!
Right behind you.


Stay under cover!
We've got to get somewhere that thing can't reach us. Back to the temple?
Maybe, but ...

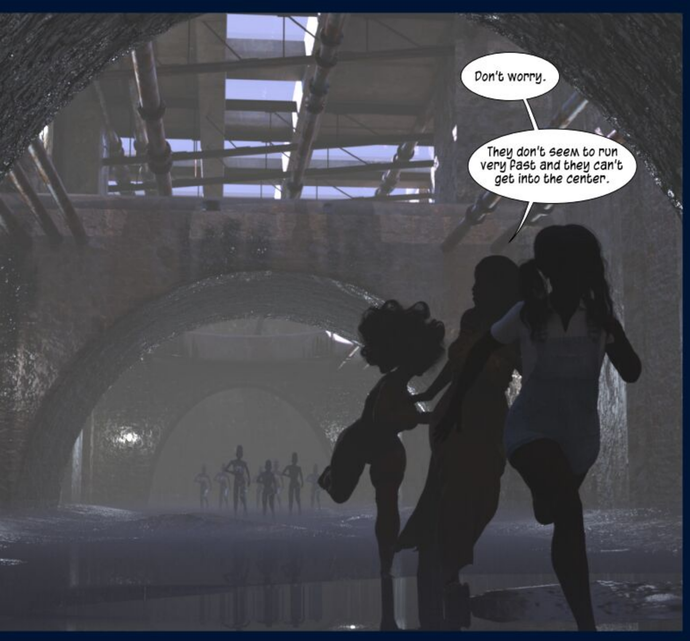

WUUUGH!




Amber!!
We can't help her now!
We'll come back for her, Di.
Keep moving!


What are we going to do? How are we going to fix them all? We can't even -
We're not going to.
Huh?


The three of them are in that thing. That means they're not in the center.
They're going to keep that up until they convert everyone they can reach. Or they get bored.
That makes this the perfect time for us to get into the center and be waiting for them when they get back.

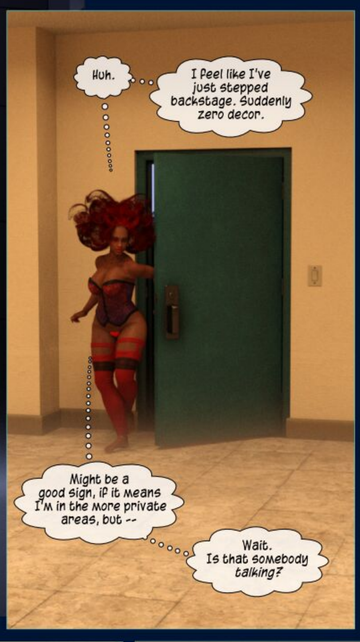

Don't worry.
They don't seem to run very fast and they can't get into the center.


Gotta say, when you folks do a power struggle, you really go all the way.
It's not usually like this, believe me.


We've only ever had something like this happen once before, years ago.
Amethyst has always felt that she -- we -- are smarter and better than everybody else, and she got impatient with what she saw as letting our abilities go to waste.
The thing is, Amethyst has no imagination. She got the power and didn't know what she wanted to do with it. There was ... an intervention. And there's never been any trouble again ... until this.
But this feels different, and not just because Pearl and Emerald do have imagination. I feel like there's something else here. Some other influence.
I just can't figure out what it is.


Well, you may be about to get a chance to find out.


Which one likes all the circuits and robots and UFOs and such?
You know, I've been wondering that too. It's almost got to be Pearl, but it's hard to believe.
Where do we go?
I don't know. They never let us go in further than this hall.
We'll have to poke around. They don't have any guards or anything, so we could probably split up and save time.
OK, but if anybody gets into trouble, they need to yell. Loud.


Huh.
I feel like I've just stepped backstage. Suddenly zero decor.
Might be a good sign, if it means I'm in the more private areas, but --
Wait. Is that somebody talking?


... running out of time! We can't let everything stay eclipsed much longer!
We don't know that everything's eclipsed ...
If it isn't, that's even worse, because someone else will notice and come solve the problem the rough way ...
And the effect will get them. End of problem.
Best answer is Opal guessed wrong and only one of them is out in the UFO ... worst answer is she guessed wrong about no guards ...
Those don't sound like guards.


Why are you being like this?
You know it's a problem. You admit it's a problem. But you won't --
I keep telling you, there are bigger things at stake, and --
-- Uh.
-- ahem --
What?
Turn around.


Chelle!
You know who I am.
Of course! All three of us know who you are. Especially me.
You're the only good thing that's happened to me in months. You know, she said it'd improve our sex life, but she doesn't care about sex, and there was nothing until you --
So I guess you're Emerald.
Ooh! See, you've picked up so much. I love that about you.
I really do owe you an --
She shouldn't get to know any of that! You know better!
I don't care anymore.


I'm tired of always having to go by her rules and her ideas of how to do things.
She's not the boss and she doesn't get to have everything her way, and I don't know why you're so scared of her.
Maybe the way she does things is part of the problem, did you ever consider that? Maybe there was a better way?
Yes, Chelle, I'm Emerald, and you've seen me before. And, as I was saying, I owe you an apology.
I didn't want to do the things I did to you. I only did them because I was trying to head off someone else here doing something worse.


Fine. I'm Sapphire.
It won't matter whether she knows, because when Pearl comes back, she's doomed anyway. She was doomed as soon as she came in here and you know it.
And I let Pearl have her way because --
-- you agree with her. I know.
No, because I don't disagree with her, and it's easier than putting up with her when she doesn't get what she wants.
Wait, wait, wait.
So all of this is happening because of an argument at the top? Everything's frozen because you three are stuck in committee?
... See for yourself.


... Ruby?

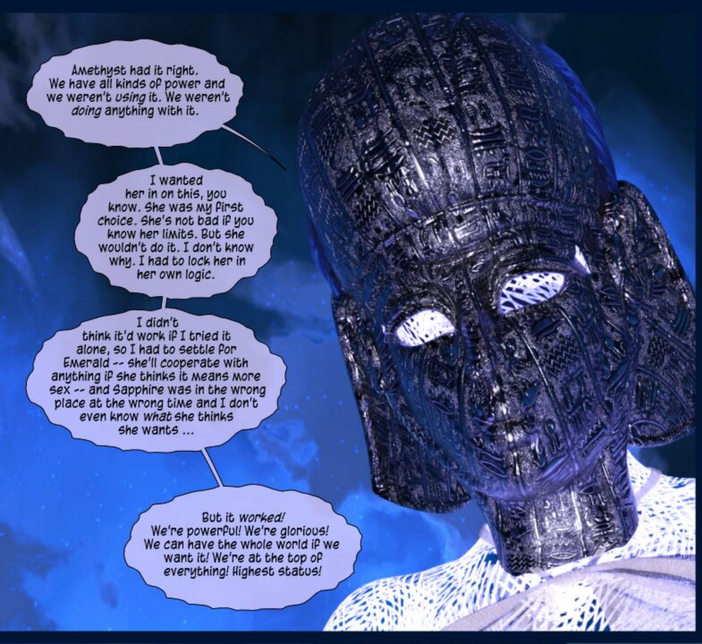

Oh, you know her! I didn't realize.
Of course, that would have been before Garnet was cut off, so who knows if I knew that once ...
I don't think you can say I knew her.
I only spoke with her, like, twice.
... but I saw her a lot ...
... in my visions ...


You never made the connection.
Why would I have? How? Ruby never did any of the kinds of things the blue lady did.
I liked the blue lady -- a whole lot -- but she did do mean things. Horrible things. Things Ruby never would have done.
You sure about that?
You see, Sapphire? Horrible things!
Less horrible things.
What is this??


Don't you idiots realize she's here to destroy us?
I'm out there breaking my ass trying to find her and eliminate her, and here you are telling her everything.
Hey, Pearl? Shove it up your ass. If it's not too broken.
I'm tired of your bullshit. You want a fight? I'll break what's left of your ass for you.
And take off your mask when you talk to me. I'm tired of the special effects too.


Uh?


You don't understand a thing.
YII!


Amethyst had it right. We have all kinds of power and we weren't using it. We weren't doing anything with it.
I wanted her in on this, you know. She was my first choice. She's not bad if you know her limits. But she wouldn't do it. I don't know why. I had to lock her in her own logic.
I didn't think it'd work if I tried it alone, so I had to settle for Emerald -- she'll cooperate with anything if she thinks it means more sex -- and Sapphire was in the wrong place at the wrong time and I don't even know what she thinks she wants ...
But it worked! We're powerful! We're glorious! We can have the whole world if we want it! We're at the top of everything! Highest status!


And here you are, trying to take it all apart because you don't understand ambition!
You've never had an ambition in your life! You just go where the world pushes you! And you want to destroy me just because of
You know, you've told me that before. And it hurt.
And you wanted it to hurt.
Because you're a mean bitch with a huge chip on your shoulder.
You not only don't care who you step on when you climb, you think getting to step on them is a bonus.
I also don't think you're as inspired as you say. I think somebody else gave you some ideas. But you're too full of your own myth to tell the truth about that.


Is that what you think?
Her name was Input.
She saw what we had in us. She wanted to let it out. She showed me how to do it.
I notice she's in past tense. Did you double-cross her?
She wanted us to have power, but she also wanted us to be under her control. She was the double-crosser.
She wanted what was good for her. I want what's good for us.

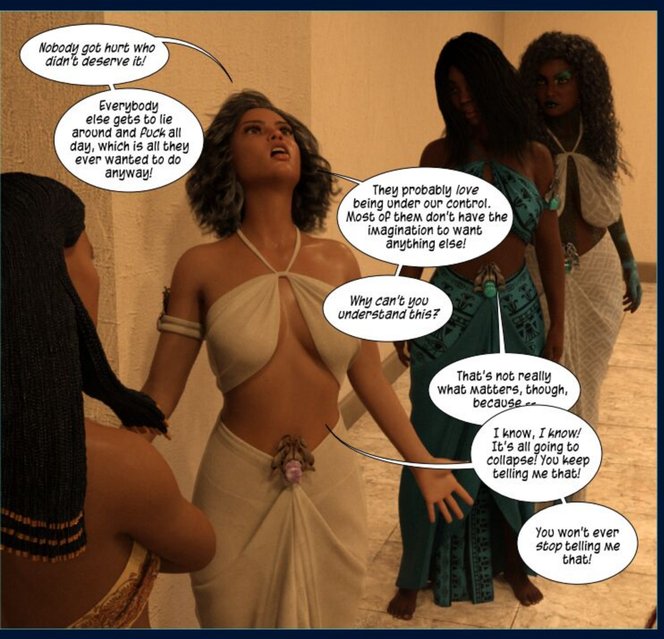

You really do think this mess you've made is good, huh?
It is good! Why can't you see that? It's even good for you!
You get to be the lover to the most powerful person in AA! You can have everything you want!
If it's that good, why does everybody else here hate you?
If it's that good, why is Ruby in a coma?
Why are your own partners so conflicted about it that you're all stuck in an argument over it?


They don't understand either! None of them understand! Just like you!!
Whuuaaa!!
Yeah, I get it. You're the only one who sees the truth. That's pretty classic. We should get you a tinfoil hat. Oh, wait, you already have one.
Actually, speaking of that, Emerald was right.


You really need to lose the mask.


Ok.
Fine.


Put it all back the way it was. Go back to the boring stupid life where we just grind out stories for other people and fix all their problems for them. Over and over.
You're all allergic to success, you know that?
No, Pearl. We're allergic to hurting people.


Nobody got hurt who didn't deserve it!
Everybody else gets to lie around and fuck all day, which is all they ever wanted to do anyway!
They probably love being under our control. Most of them don't have the imagination to want anything else!
Why can't you understand this?
That's not really what matters, though, because --
I know, I know! It's all going to collapse! You keep telling me that!
You won't ever stop telling me that!


That's because you never listen! I'm going to keep saying it until you listen!
The situation in A4 isn't stable. It isn't sustainable. It's going to fall apart. When it does, it's going to be real bad.
I went along with you because I thought your way might ... I thought, well, if we keep people in blue rogue, that'll keep the collapse away a while, maybe ...
But there's still going to be a crash. And if we try to put it off, it might turn out a lot worse.
If we go back to what we were, maybe the crash comes sooner ... but we might also be able to help make it a little easier on everybody.


I don't believe any of that!
Especially not coming from you. You always want to ruin everything! It's all you like to do!
You weren't even supposed to be in on this! You were in the wrong place at the wrong time --
Yeah, I know, I'm no fun.
You know why I'm no fun?


Because nobody around here ever wants to hear the truth.
Screw you all.
Fix it or don't. I'm out.
Sapphire, wait!

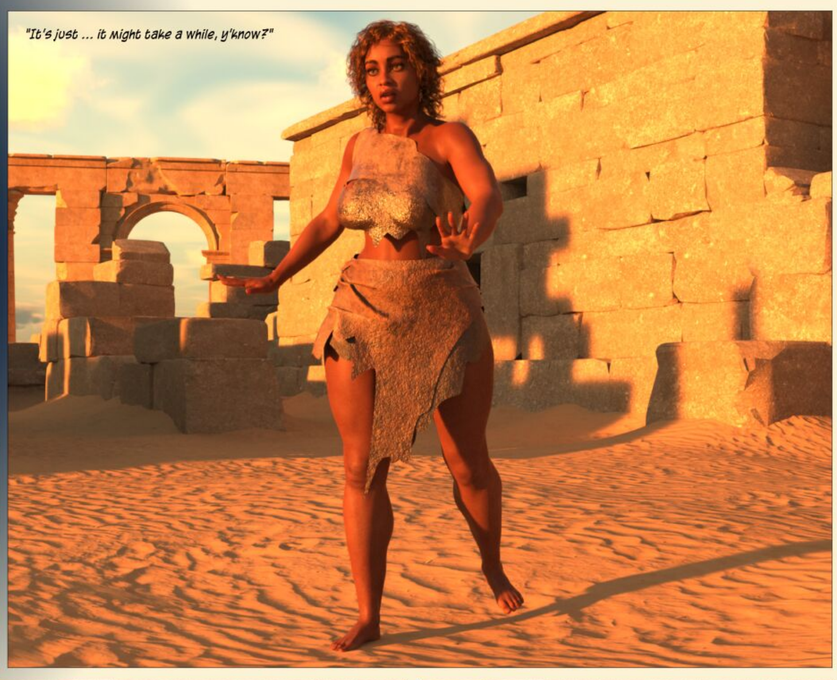

Great.
Well, do whatever you're going to do. You seem to be able to do whatever you want anyway.
I'm sure you've never worried about doing the wrong thing.
I worry that just about every single thing I do is the wrong thing.

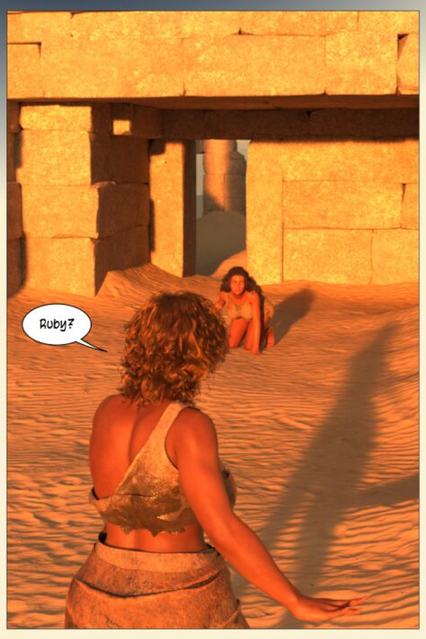

But I think ...
If you thought you were going the right way from the beginning, why did you need to lock up Diamond?
Why did you need to do what you did to Amethyst? Why did you try to make sure no one could get to Garnet?
That doesn't feel to me like --
We didn't do those things!
That was Input!

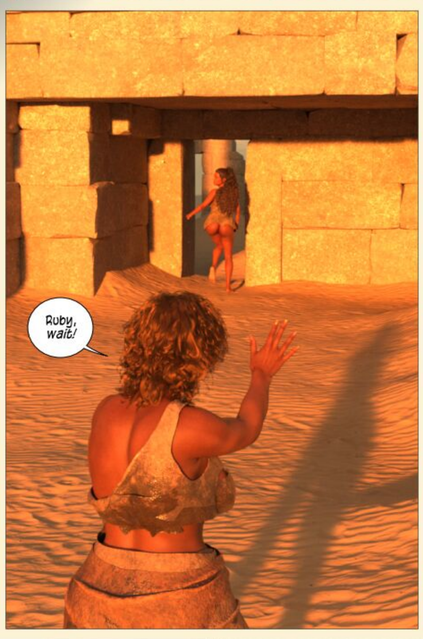

That's not true and you know it.
We did those things, Pearl.
She made us!
She talked us into it. Not the same thing.
Are you telling me that you haven't regretted any of it since then? Not once? Not even for a second?

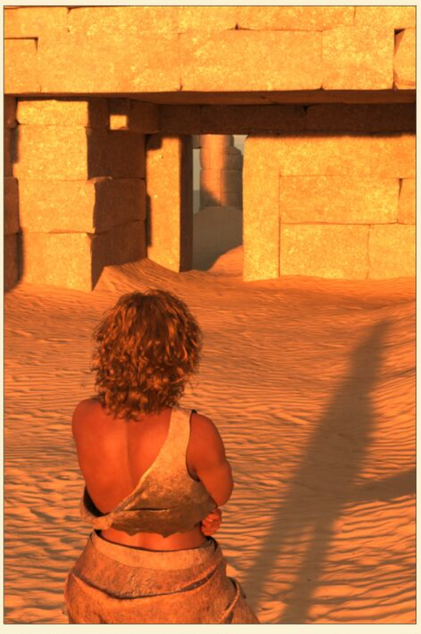

Pearl!


-- sigh --
It's OK. It'll be OK.
We can fix it.
You've done what we need to fix it.
I'm pretty sure.


"It's just ... it might take a while, y'know?"


Ruby?


Ruby, wait!




Guess you're OK then. Good.
When the sky went back to normal, everybody else woke up and left in a hurry.
I was worried I wouldn't be able to tell if you got out too.
Well, uh ... thank you, I appreciate it ...
... but ... who are you?


I'm your dog.
Well, not really, but you know what I mean. You called me Sandy.
I've had worse names.
You seemed like you had something important to accomplish. I decided I wanted to help make sure you got there.
Have you gotten your name back?


Yes. I'm Chelle.
Pleased to hear it.
I guess you did what you set out to do?
Can you claim that even if you didn't know you set out to do it?
... Thanks again. It's nice that someone was looking out for me.


I have to go now.
I don't have any idea where I'm going.
But I'm going.
Next: Catching Up