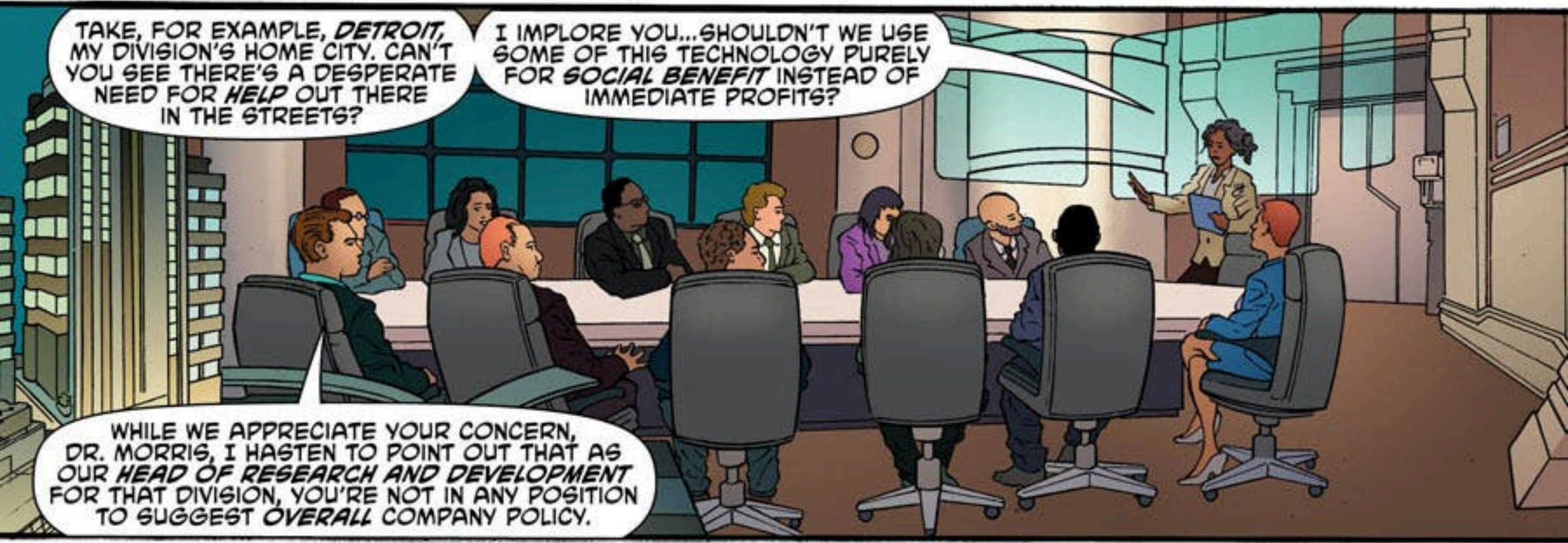


LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I QUESTION THE WISDOM OF HOW WE'RE UTILIZING OUR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY HERE AT HOLT INDUSTRIES.

WE'VE DEVELOPED SOME OF THE MOST INCREDIBLE INVENTIONS KNOWN TO MANKIND...

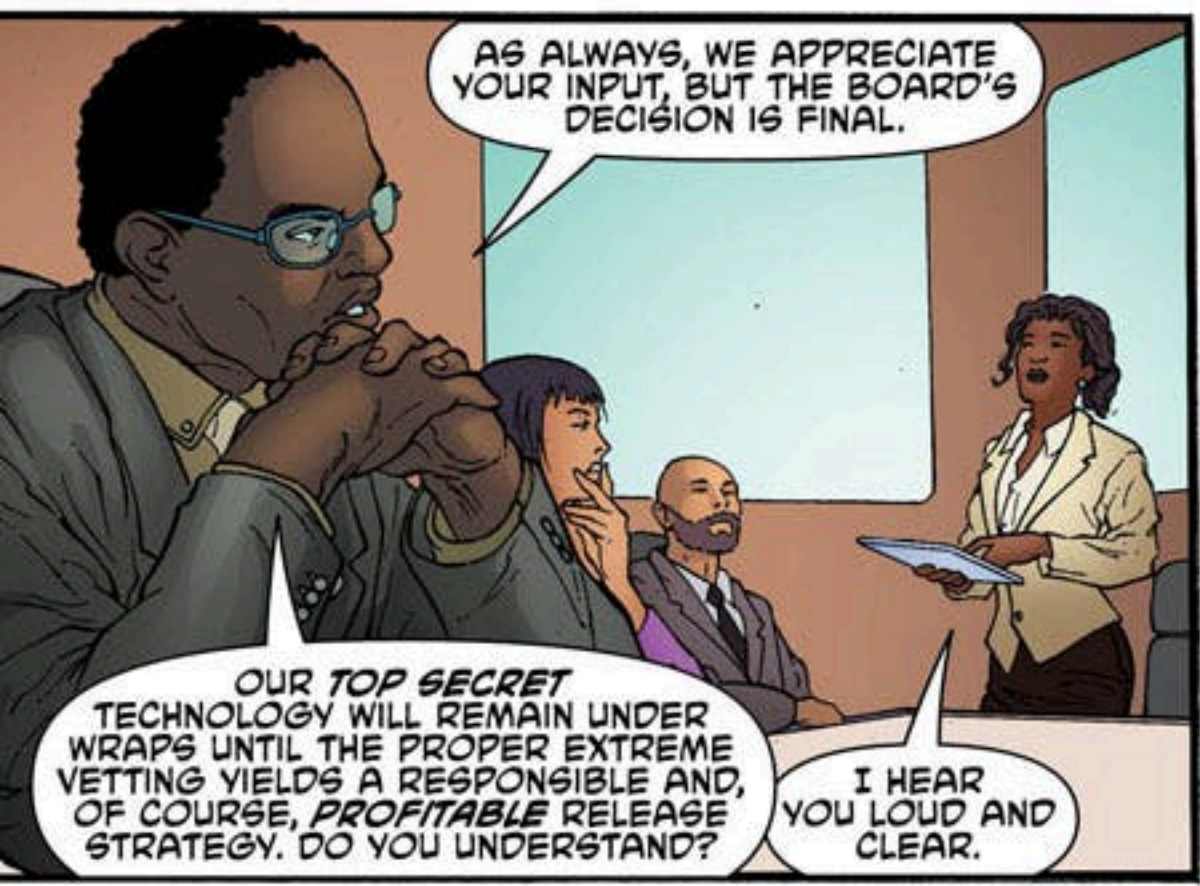
...TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS WHICH COULD BE DOING GREAT THINGS FOR HUMANITY, YET WE CHOOSE TO KEEP THEM CLASSIFIED AND HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD.



TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, *DETROIT*, MY DIVISION'S HOME CITY. CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S A DESPERATE NEED FOR *HELP* OUT THERE IN THE STREETS?

I IMPORE YOU...SHOULDN'T WE USE SOME OF THIS TECHNOLOGY PURELY FOR *SOCIAL BENEFIT* INSTEAD OF IMMEDIATE PROFITS?

WHILE WE APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, DR. MORRIS, I HASTEN TO POINT OUT THAT AS OUR *HEAD OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT* FOR THAT DIVISION, YOU'RE NOT IN ANY POSITION TO SUGGEST *OVERALL COMPANY POLICY*.



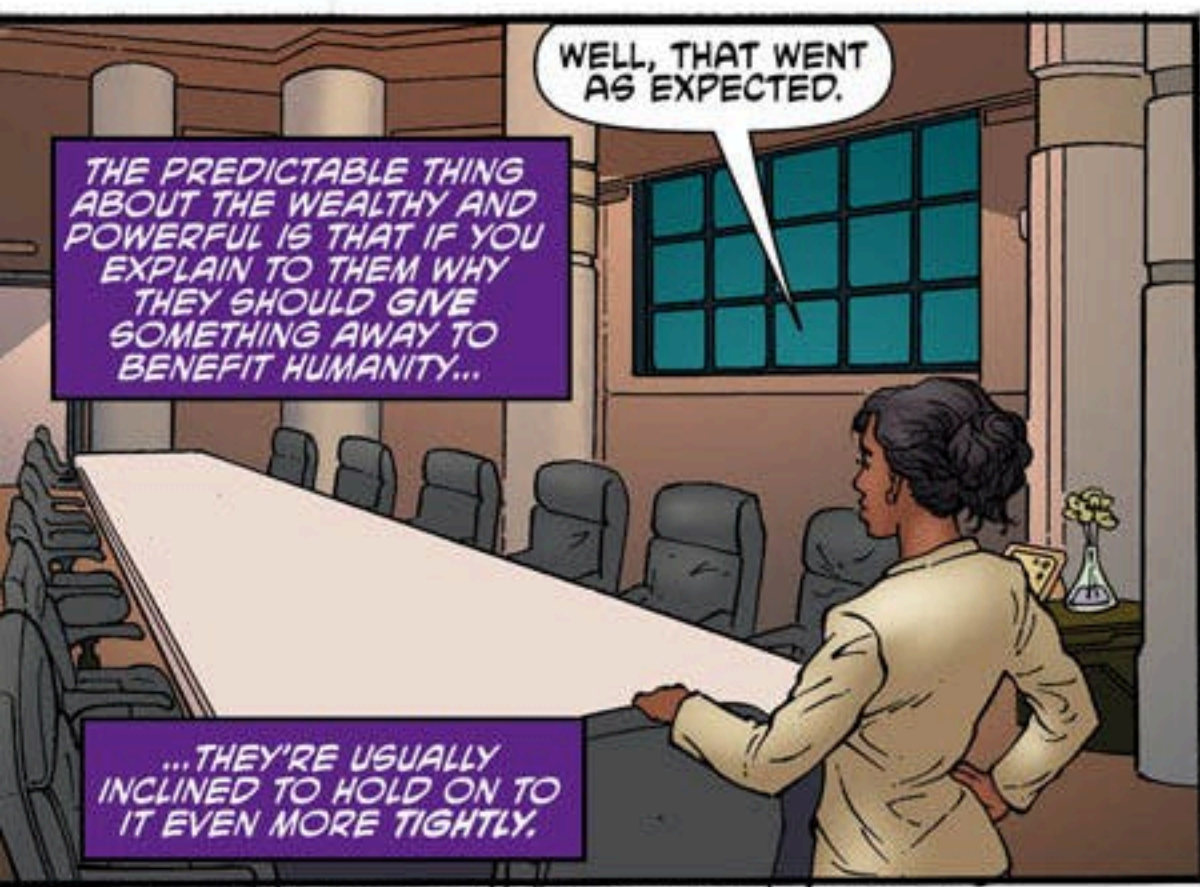
AS ALWAYS, WE APPRECIATE YOUR INPUT, BUT THE BOARD'S DECISION IS FINAL.

OUR *TOP SECRET* TECHNOLOGY WILL REMAIN UNDER WRAPS UNTIL THE PROPER EXTREME VETTING YIELDS A RESPONSIBLE AND, OF COURSE, *PROFITABLE* RELEASE STRATEGY. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

I HEAR YOU LOUD AND CLEAR.



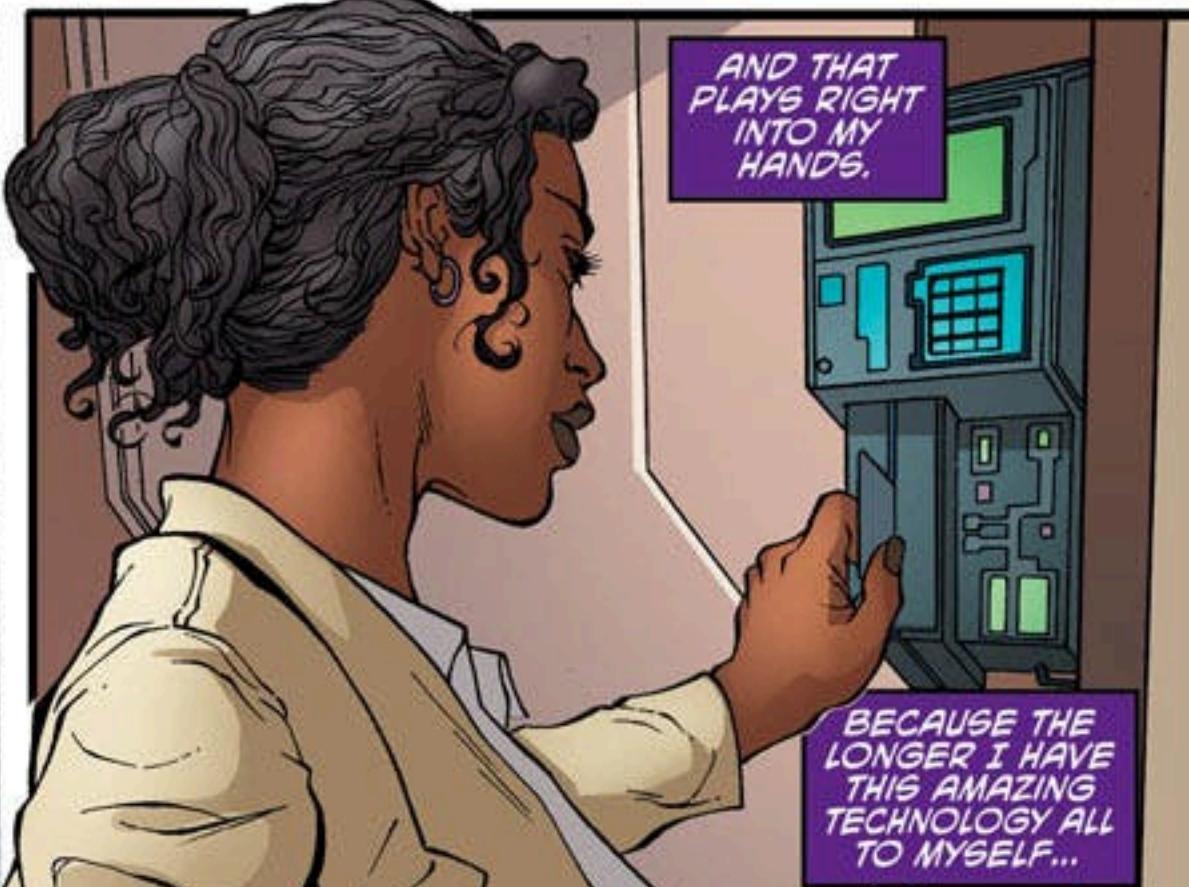
GOOD. THEN I HEREBY DECLARE THIS *HOLOGRAPHIC* BOARD MEETING *ADJOURNED!*



WELL, THAT WENT AS EXPECTED.

THE PREDICTABLE THING ABOUT THE WEALTHY AND POWERFUL IS THAT IF YOU EXPLAIN TO THEM WHY THEY SHOULD GIVE SOMETHING AWAY TO BENEFIT HUMANITY...

...THEY'RE USUALLY INCLINED TO HOLD ON TO IT EVEN MORE TIGHTLY.



AND THAT PLAYS RIGHT INTO MY HANDS.

BECAUSE THE LONGER I HAVE THIS AMAZING TECHNOLOGY ALL TO MYSELF...

...THE LONGER I HAVE AN ADVANTAGE OVER MY OPPONENTS.

DANGER IN DETROIT

part four: **FWREWYRE**

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THE BOARD WOULD BE APOPLECTIC IF THEY KNEW THAT DONNA MORRIS, THEIR HEAD OF R&D FOR THE DETROIT DIVISION, USES THEIR PRECIOUS TOP-SECRET TECH TO FIGHT CRIME IN THE CITY STREETS...

...AS THE

BLACK NARCISUS

SARAH, YOU TOOK A BIG RISK HELPING ME DEFEAT RATATTACK BY SENDING THE CODE TO UNLOCK HIS CELLULAR STRUCTURE AND REPROGRAM IT.*

I HAD TO DO WHAT I COULD, VIC.

WHEN DID YOU REALIZE THAT THE INSANE CREATURE, ANOMALY, WHO'S POSING AS MY FATHER, ISN'T WHO HE SAYS HE IS?

*SEE LAST ISSUE!
--HARV

IT WAS VARIANT WHO TOLD ME. SHE BRIEFLY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND WARNED ME WHO HE WAS AND HOW HE WAS TRYING TO HURT YOU. EVER SINCE THEN, OVER THESE LAST SIX MONTHS, I'VE BEEN SECRETLY WATCHING HIM LIKE A HAWK.

VARIANT!
IS SHE--?

SHE'S OKAY, BUT I DON'T KNOW FOR HOW LONG. ANOMALY'S BEEN BUILDING SOMETHING **BIG** IN THE RED ROOM--WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO GO NEAR IT. I THINK IT INVOLVES HER.

YOU'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO SNEAK ME BACK INTO **S.T.A.R. LABS** TO STOP ANOMALY.

I HATE TO PUT YOU ON THE SPOT. BUT WITH YOU ON THE INSIDE, YOU'RE MY BEST HOPE OF CATCHING HIM OFF GUARD.

YOU CAN COUNT ON ME. I'LL GET YOU BACK IN. BUT I'M SURE EVEN NOW HE'S HATCHING SOME **NEW** PLOT TO CAPTURE YOU. SO YOU MUST BE CAREFUL.

I PROMISE I WILL.

SOMEBODY'S COMING! DETACH YOUR A.I. SPHERE AND GET OUT OF HERE. HURRY!

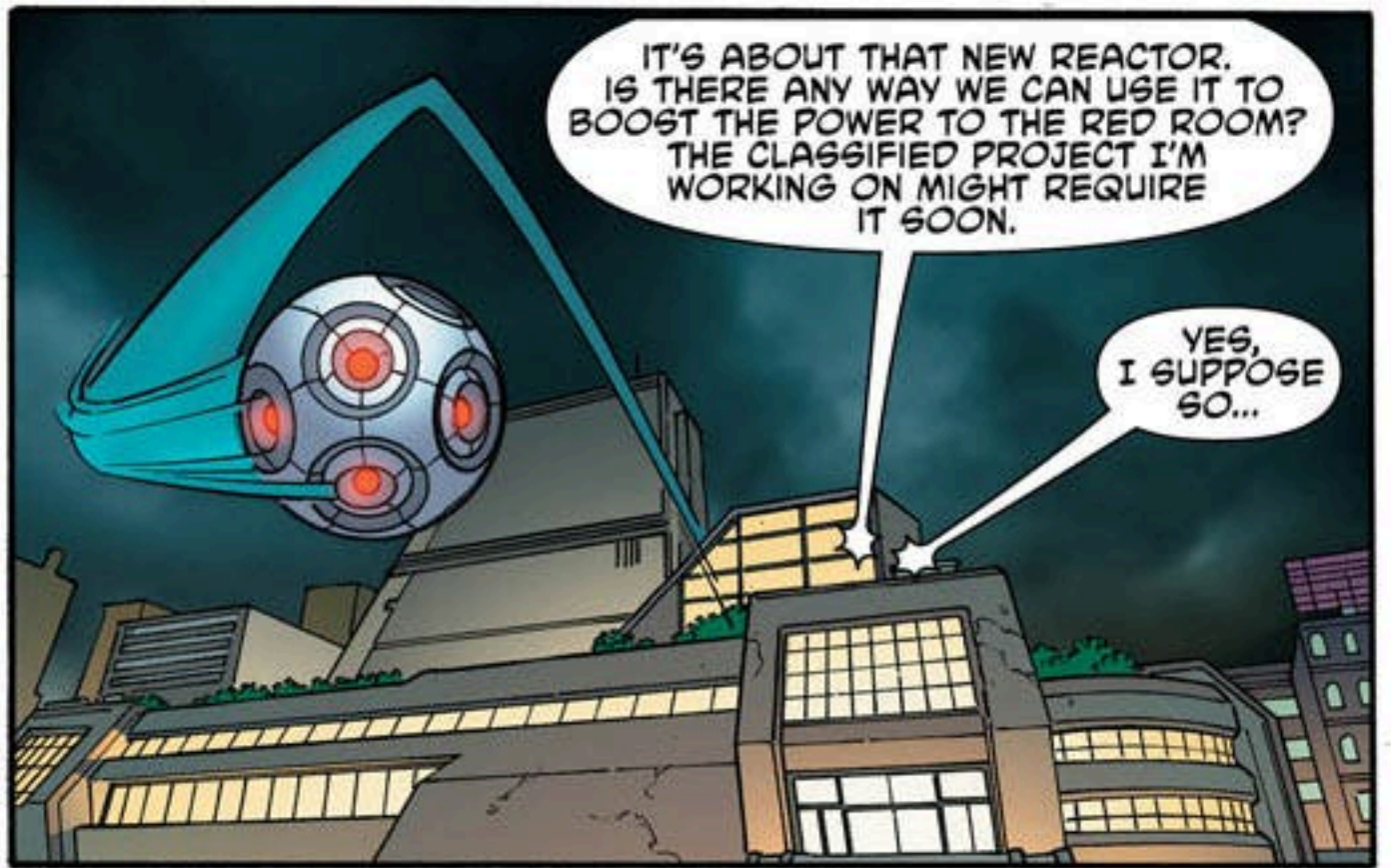
I'M ON MY WAY. BE SAFE!

YOU, TOO.



SARAH, AM I DISTURBING YOU?

NO, DR. STONE. I WAS JUST REVIEWING THE SCHEMATICS OF THE NEW REACTOR THROUGH MY V.R. VISOR. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?



IT'S ABOUT THAT NEW REACTOR. IS THERE ANY WAY WE CAN USE IT TO BOOST THE POWER TO THE RED ROOM? THE CLASSIFIED PROJECT I'M WORKING ON MIGHT REQUIRE IT SOON.

YES, I SUPPOSE SO...



I DON'T GET IT. WE'VE BEEN STANDIN' HERE FOR AN HOUR. WHAT ARE WE WAITIN' 'ROUND FOR?

TO YOU, IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE NOTHING'S HAPPENING, BUT I'VE BEEN BUSY.

DOIN' WHAT?

I'VE BEEN TALKING TO MY CONTACT INSIDE S.T.A.R. LABS.



OR AT LEAST A SMALL PART OF MY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE HAS.

SINCE IT WOULD BE TOO RISKY TO TRANSMIT A TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION WITH HER, I CHOSE A MORE DIRECT APPROACH.

HOLD ON FOR A MILLISECOND WHILE I DOWNLOAD THE CONVERSATION.



Ah, EXCELLENT.

MY CONTACT HAS AGREED TO HELP US. SHE ALSO WARNS THAT ANOMALY IS UP TO SOMETHING AND MOST PROBABLY WILL LAUNCH ANOTHER ATTACK ON ME SOON.

OH, GREAT. WONDERFUL. ANY IDEA WHEN?

