

THE THRONE ROOM OF HESPER'S PALACE...



HAHAHA!!

Oh, I ADORE THIS!



COSMO-- THE "MIGHTY" MARTIAN!

ALWAYS PRETENDING TO BE A **BIG HERO!** ALWAYS BARGING INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS!



AND NOW YOU'RE **POWERLESS,** ALL ALONE, AND **AT MY MERCY!**



OKAY, HESPER. YOU'VE WON.

BUT YOUR VENDETTA IS AGAINST ME. LET MY CREW GO. YOU DON'T WANT ANY OF THEM.



ESPECIALLY THE HUMAN.

I MEAN, HE GROWS ON YOU EVENTUALLY. BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BE REALLY PATIENT...



ENOUGH!



I HAVE BEEN PATIENT AND THAT PATIENCE HAS RUN OUT.

"MERCY" IS NOT THE MARTIAN WAY, SO WHY SHOULD I SHOW YOU ANY?





»Sighé

BUT I CAN'T STAY MAD AT YOU FOR LONG.

TRY AS I MIGHT, I CAN'T FORGET THE GOOD TIMES THAT WE HAD TOGETHER...



AND DESPITE HAVING MY ELITE BATTLE PRINCESSES DEPLOYED, YOU CAME UNSETTLINGLY CLOSE TO RUINING MY PLANS.



YOU ARE A RARE FIND, COSMO. UNIQUE ACROSS ALL THE WORLDS IN ALL THE SYSTEMS.

SO I WILL GIVE YOU THIS ONE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AMENDS.

PLEDGE YOURSELF TO ME-- MIND, BODY AND SOUL-- AND I WILL LET YOUR CREW GO...

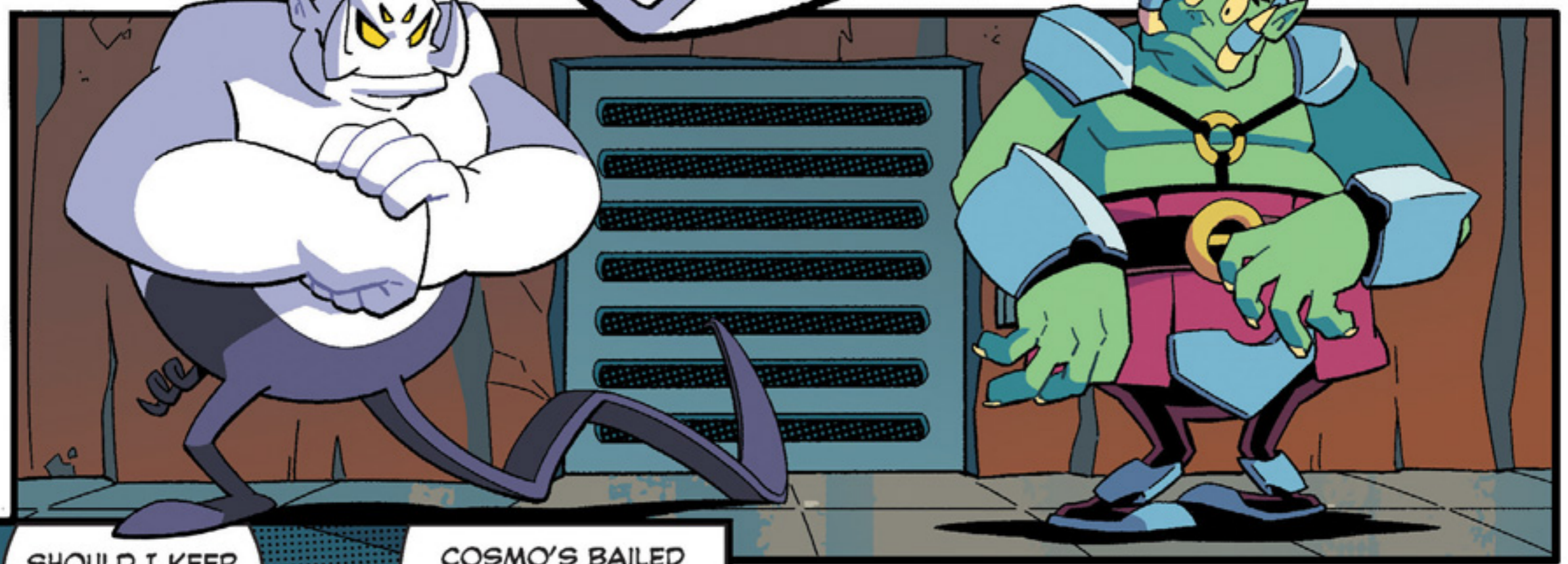
...AND MAKE YOU MY KING.



CAPTAIN'S LOG...PERHAPS MY LAST...
MAX STRONGJAW OF EARTH
RECORDING...

MY TIME IN THE
VENUSIAN DUNGEON
DRAGS ON. NOTHING
TO EAT. NOTHING
TO DRINK. TIME HAS LOST
ALL MEANING...

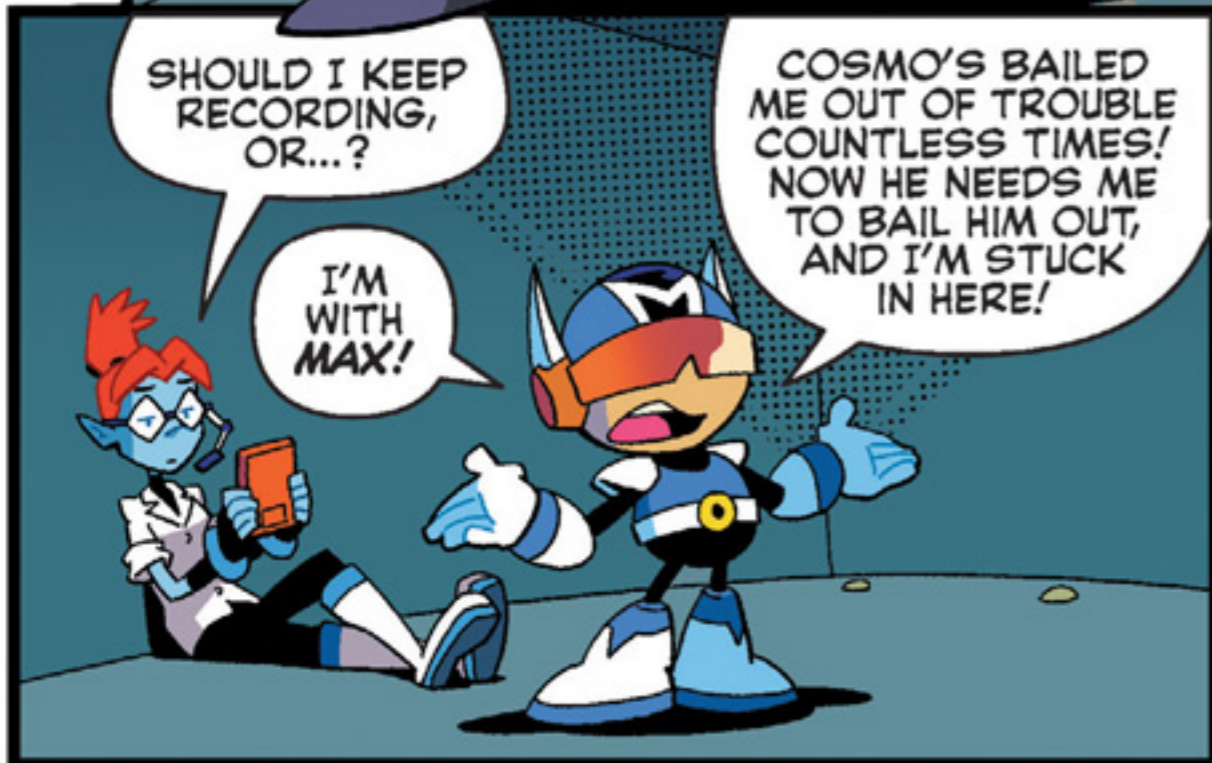
WE HAVEN'T BEEN IN
HERE FOR *TEN MINUTES!*
STOP SCRATCHING UP
THE WALL! YOU'RE
DRIVING ME *CRAZY!*



SHOULD I KEEP
RECORDING,
OR...?

I'M
WITH
MAX!

COSMO'S BAILED
ME OUT OF TROUBLE
COUNTLESS TIMES!
NOW HE NEEDS ME
TO BAIL HIM OUT,
AND I'M STUCK
IN HERE!



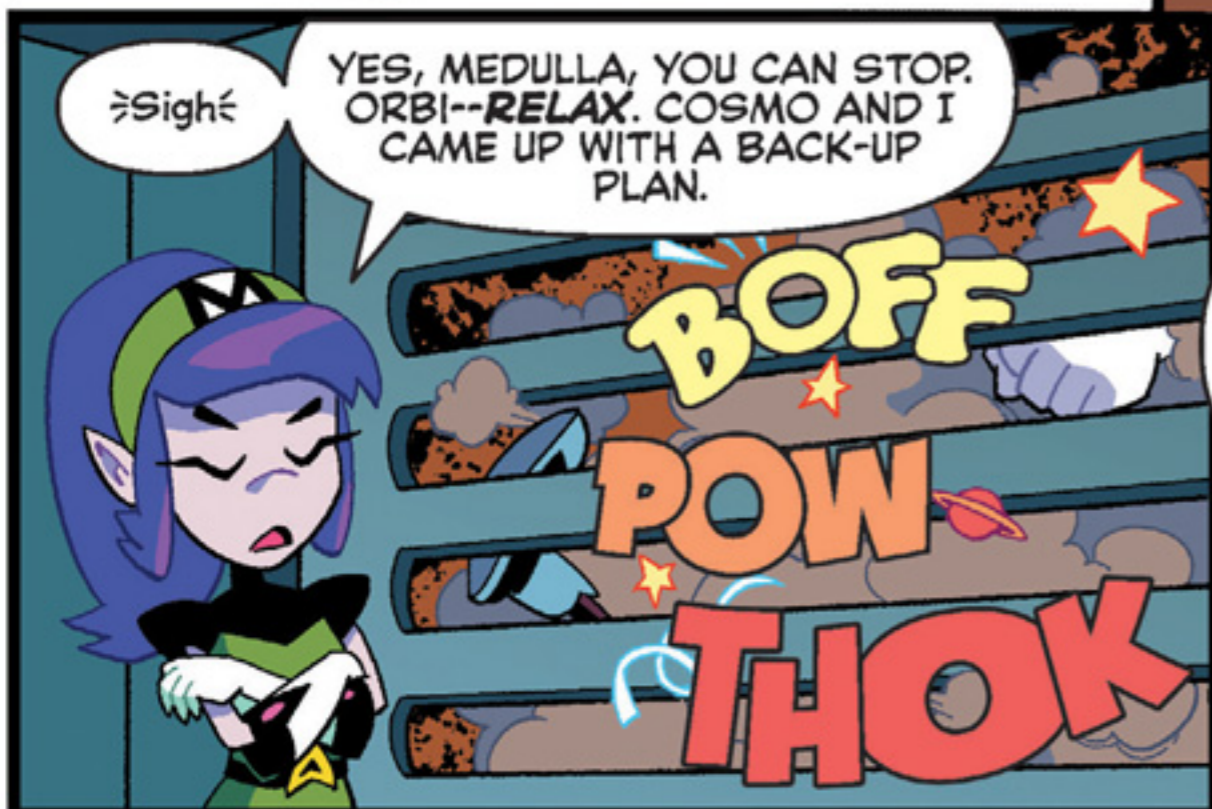
WE *KNEW* THE ODDS
OF US GETTING IN AND
OUT WERE SLIM TO NONE,
AND WE *KNEW* HESPER
WOULD FOCUS ON *COSMO*
IF WE GOT CAUGHT.

SO NOW THAT COSMO
IS DISTRACTING EVERYONE,
WE'RE FREE TO GRAB THE RELICS,
RESCUE HIM AND MAKE A RUN FOR IT!

⇒Sighé

YES, MEDULLA, YOU CAN STOP.
ORBI--RELAX. COSMO AND I
CAME UP WITH A BACK-UP
PLAN.

BOFF
POW
THOK





FINE. I'LL KNEEL, I'LL SERVE-- ANYTHING TO SAVE MY FRIENDS.

BUT, HESS...



MY MIND IS MY OWN. AND YOU KNOW WHO MY HEART BELONGS TO.

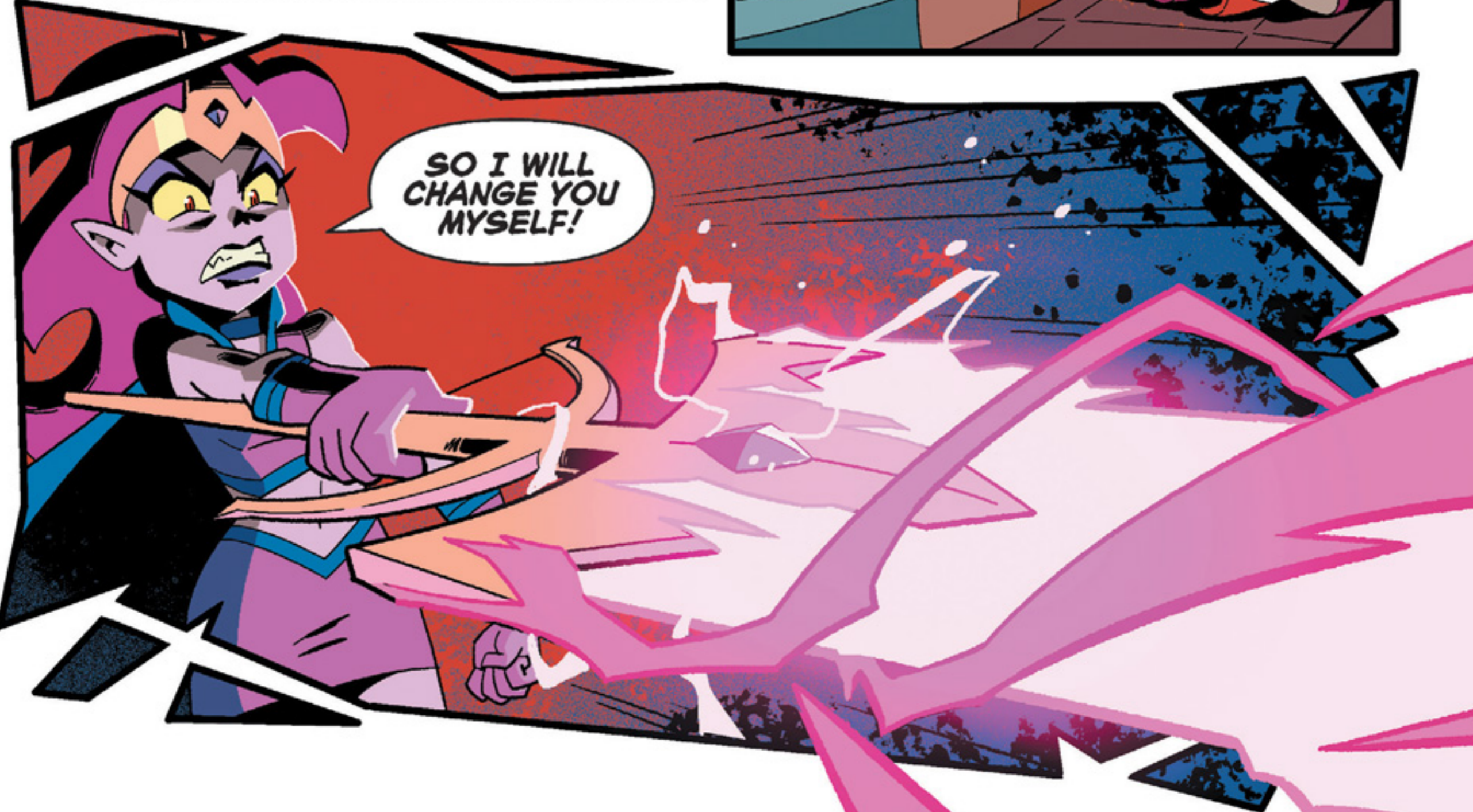


AND WHAT IS THE "SOUL," REALLY? COUNTLESS CIVILIZATIONS HAVE GRAPPLED WITH THE NOTION, AND...



NO MORE!

I WAS A FOOL TO THINK YOU'D WILLINGLY CHANGE!



SO I WILL CHANGE YOU MYSELF!