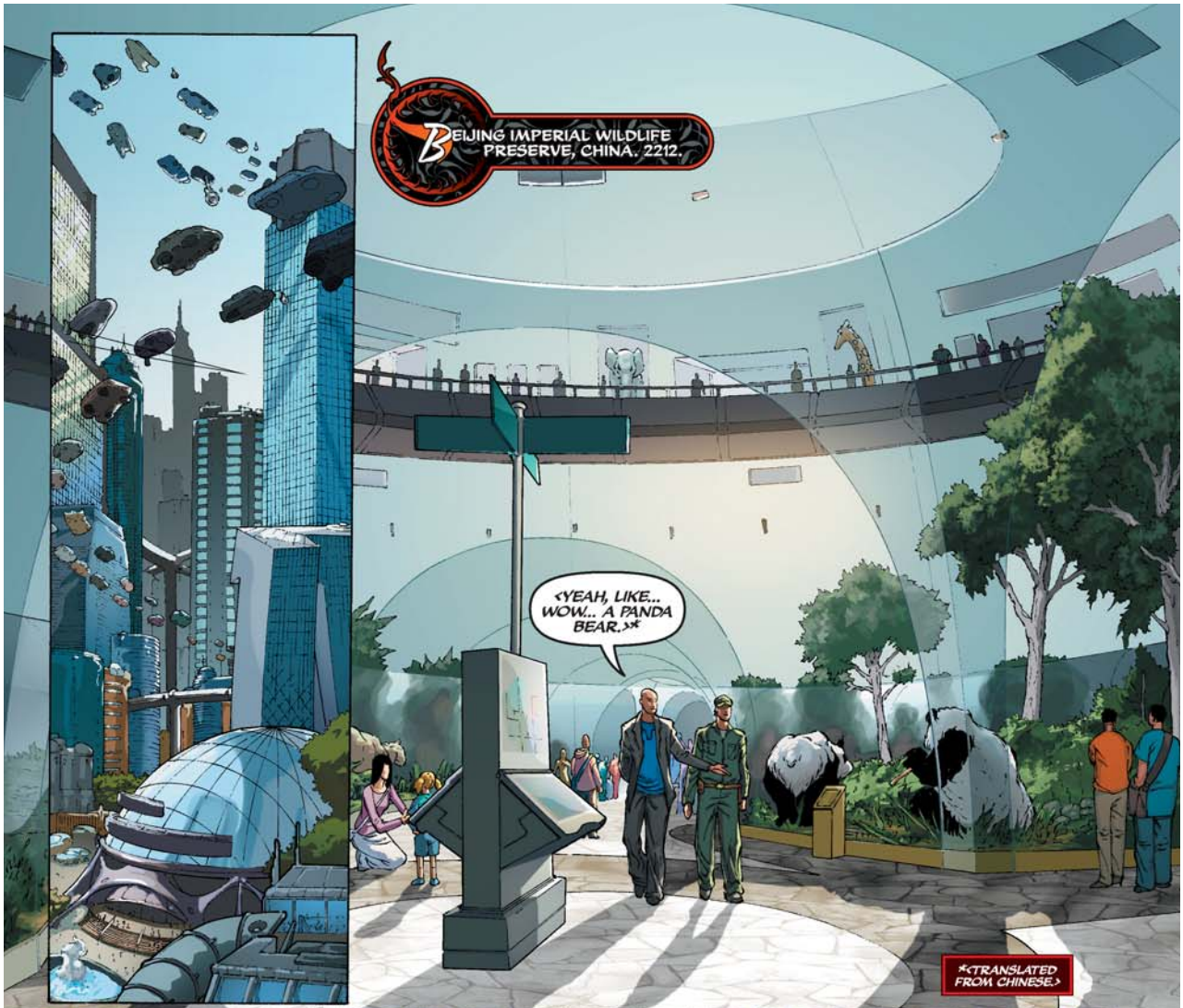


BEIJING IMPERIAL WILDLIFE PRESERVE, CHINA, 2212.





<WELL?>

<HOLY CRAP!>



<WHAT IS IT?>

<THEY DON'T KNOW.>

<IT TURNED UP ON A DIG OUT IN THE XIZANG REGION NEAR THE BORDER OF NEPAL. IT'S DEFINITELY A REPITILIA SQUAMATA.>

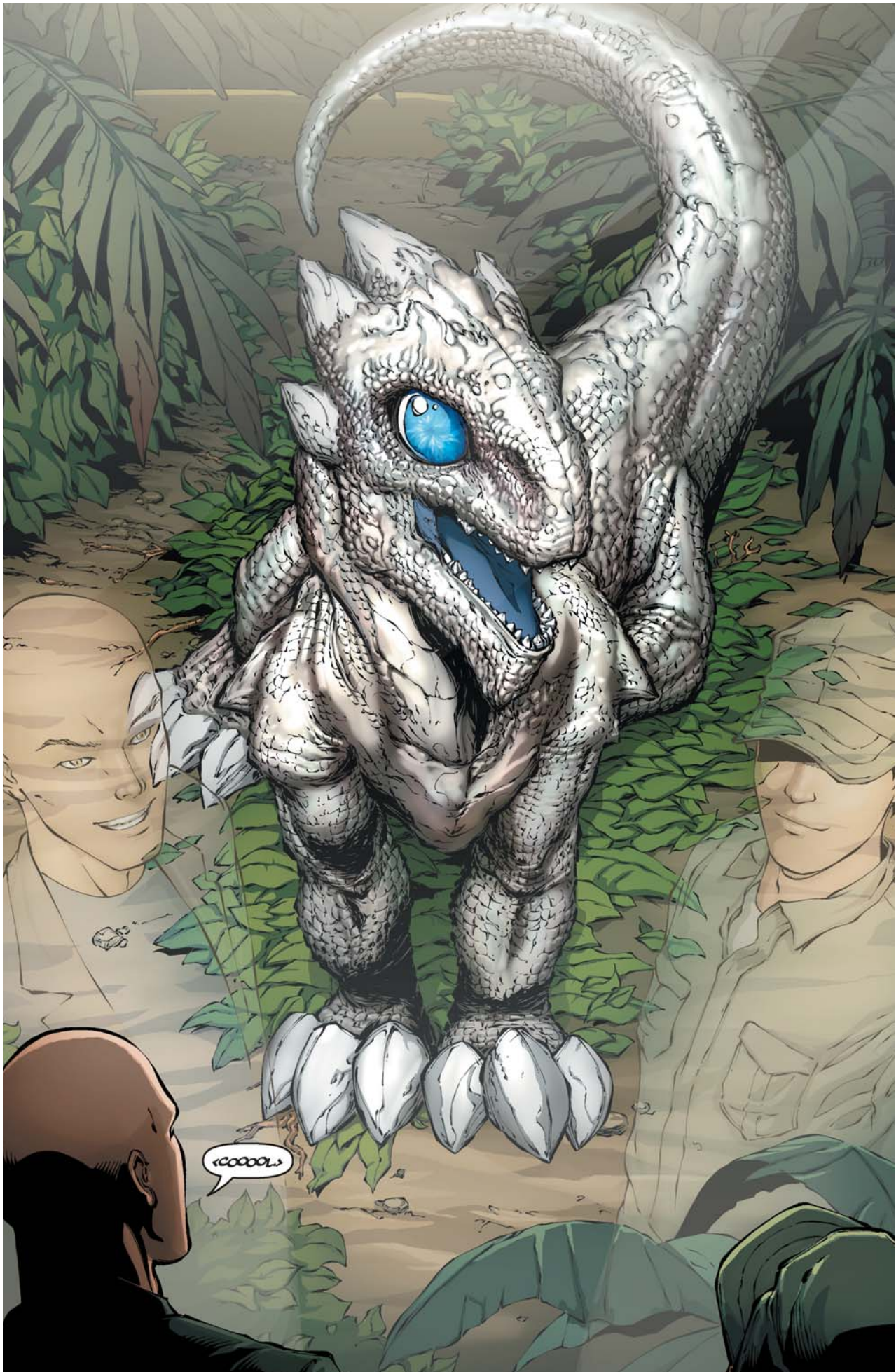


<A WHAT?>

<A LIZARD.. I THINK.>
<COULD EVEN BE A SUB-SPECIES OF THE EXTINCT KOMODO DRAGON.>



<DRAGON, HUH?>



COOOOL







DAMN...
NINETY-EIGHT
FEET!

NOT BAD. I
WAS GONNA WAIT
EVEN LONGER BUT
YOU LOOKED
NERVOUS.


NO WAY,
MAN. I KNOW YOU
GOT MY BACK...
LITERALLY.

I BET WE
COULD HIT
FIFTY!

THAT SOUNDS
AN AWFUL LOT LIKE
A CHALLENGE, P.J.

IT IS.

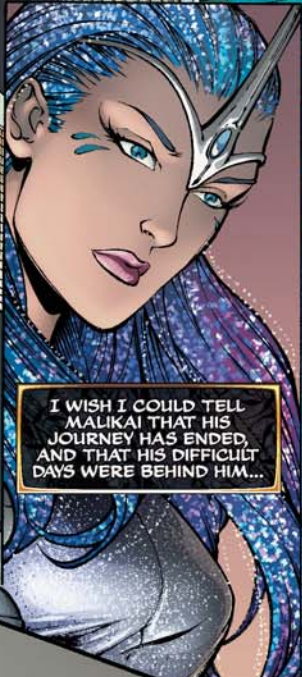
I'M GAME IF
YOU ARE.



I HAVE ROAMED THIS WORLD FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, WAITING THROUGH THE DARK AGES FOR THE LIGHT OF *MAGIC* TO RETURN. AND THOUGH HIS SPIRIT IS OLD AND STRONG, I SOMETIMES FORGET THAT *MALIKAI* IS JUST A BOY.

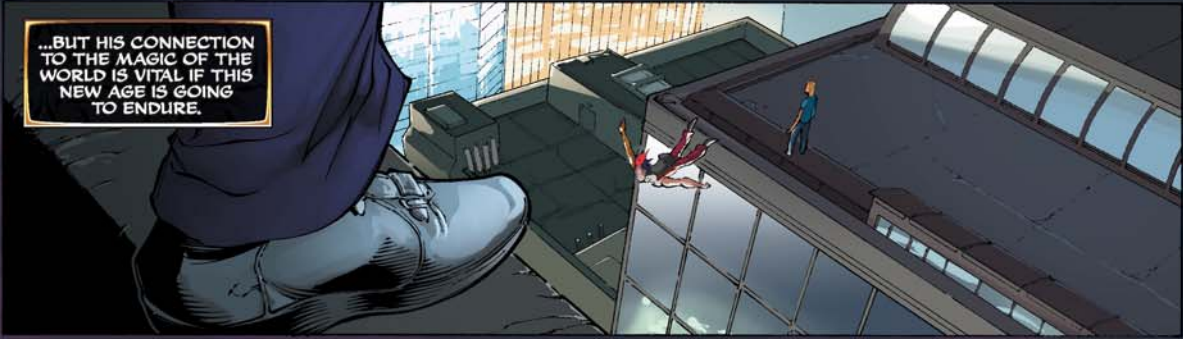
MALIKAI DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE IN FULFILLING HIS ROLE AS THE *SAMUSARA*—THE BRINGER OF THE LIGHT. IT IS LARGELY DUE TO HIM THAT THE MAGIC HAS BEEN REPLENISHED.

HE SURVIVED THE *RITUAL OF THE FIVE MASTERS* AND EVEN DEFEATED THE TYRANNICAL *RAINIER*, A MONSTER WHO HAS BEEN AT WAR WITH THE MAGIC ITSELF SINCE AS FAR BACK AS I CAN REMEMBER.



I WISH I COULD TELL *MALIKAI* THAT HIS JOURNEY HAS ENDED, AND THAT HIS DIFFICULT DAYS WERE BEHIND HIM...

...BUT HIS CONNECTION TO THE MAGIC OF THE WORLD IS VITAL IF THIS NEW AGE IS GOING TO ENDURE.



I HOPE MALIKAI CAN ENJOY THIS SMALL RESPITE WITH THOSE CLOSEST TO HIM.



AS FOR ME... WITH MAGIC SURFACING AROUND THE WORLD, THERE CAN BE NO SUCH BREAK.

IT IS MY DUTY.

