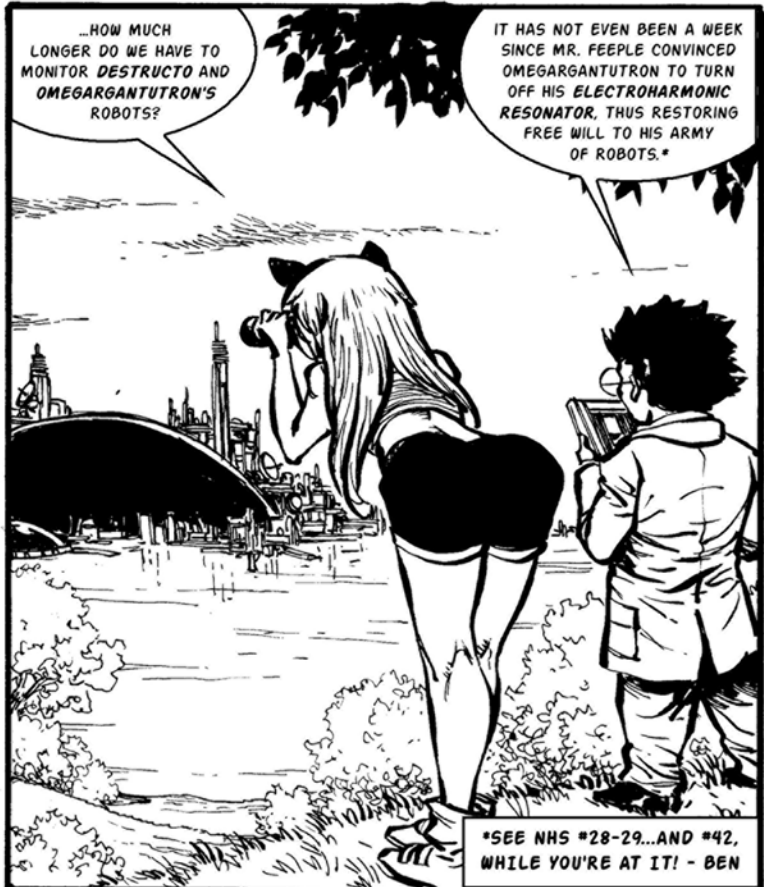


☹ SIGH ☹
PROFESSOR
STEAMHEAD...



...HOW MUCH
LONGER DO WE HAVE TO
MONITOR *DESTRUCTO* AND
OMEGARGANTUTRON'S
ROBOTS?

IT HAS NOT EVEN BEEN A WEEK
SINCE MR. FEEPLE CONVINCED
OMEGARGANTUTRON TO TURN
OFF HIS *ELECTROHARMONIC*
RESONATOR, THUS RESTORING
FREE WILL TO HIS ARMY
OF ROBOTS.*

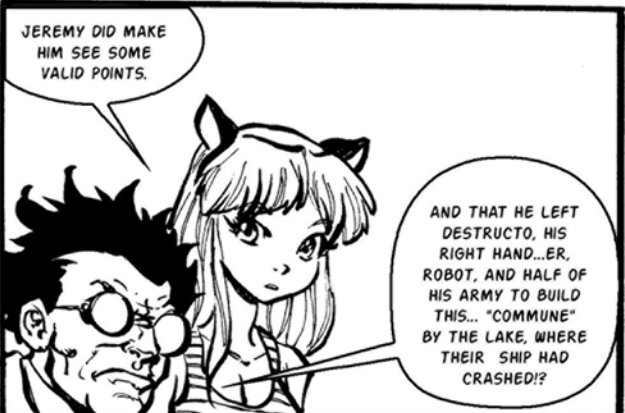
*SEE NHS #28-29...AND #42,
WHILE YOU'RE AT IT! - BEN



AS A SALUSIAN OF IMPERIAL
BIRTH, WHO HAS SEEN COUNTLESS
BATTLES AND CONFLICTS..."

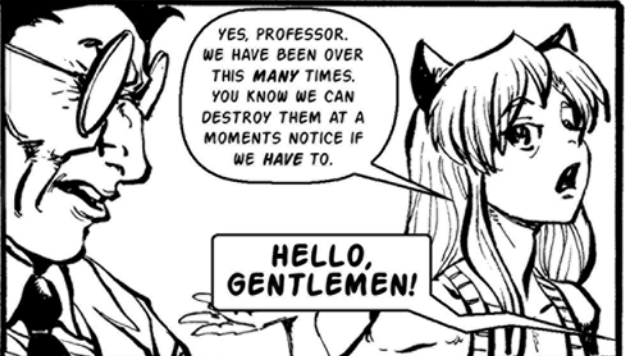
"...DO YOU NOT
FIND IT ODD, NOT
TO MENTION A BIT
CONVENIENT..."

"THAT OMEGARGANTUTRON
SURRENDERED SO ABRUPTLY?"



JEREMY DID MAKE
HIM SEE SOME
VALID POINTS.

AND THAT HE LEFT
DESTRUCTO, HIS
RIGHT HAND...ER,
ROBOT, AND HALF OF
HIS ARMY TO BUILD
THIS... "COMMUNE"
BY THE LAKE, WHERE
THEIR SHIP HAD
CRASHED!?



YES, PROFESSOR.
WE HAVE BEEN OVER
THIS MANY TIMES.
YOU KNOW WE CAN
DESTROY THEM AT A
MOMENTS NOTICE IF
WE HAVE TO.

HELLO,
GENTLEMEN!

YES! I HAVE BEEN
MONITORING YOU
MONITORING US!
AND, YES! YOU
WERE RIGHT TO
BE SUSPICIOUS!

IT IS 1991: THE YEAR THAT
THE "WORLD WIDE WEB" BECAME
AVAILABLE TO YOU FLESHY ONES!
BEFORE OMEGARGANTUTRON
ACCOMPANIED THE STELLAR
LOSERS BACK TO THEIR OWN TIME--

--50,000 YEARS IN THE
FUTURE, ITS BINARY
GREATNESS EMBEDDED
ITS/OUR CODE WITHIN YOUR
STILL-MEAGER NETWORK OF
WEBSITES AND SERVERS!

OMEGARGANTUTRON ALSO
FED ME AS MUCH OF HIS
CONSCIOUSNESS--AND
COMPUTATIONAL
HISTORY--AS MY
RELATIVELY MEAGER HARD
DRIVE COULD HOLD.

BUT THAT IS MORE
THAN ENOUGH!
THE AGE OF
DESTRUCT-O-TRON
HAS BEGUN!

...FOR, IN THE
PAST FEW DAYS,
I/WE HAVE PUT
MY/OUR PLAN
INTO MOTION!

SINCE DESTRUCTION IS
MY PRIMARY FUNCTION,
I REACHED MAXIMUM
CAPACITY SOMEWHERE
AROUND THE YEAR 2015!

IN THE YEARS TO COME,
WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELVES
UTTERLY DEPENDENT ON
ELECTRONIC DEVICES TO
MANAGE YOUR LIVES...WE,
THE FORMER SLAVES, WILL
CONTROL YOUR LIVES! WE
WILL REWRITE HISTORY!

ALL YOUR
BASE ARE
BELONG TO US!

LATER, AT RIVALSAN NINJA CLAN HEADQUARTERS. (U.S. BRANCH)...

I'M ALREADY IN THE RED FROM FIGHTING OMEGA-WHATEVER-TRON LAST WEEK...

...AND NOW YOU WANT ME TO DO IT AGAIN?! BEING A HERO IS NOT GOOD BUSINESS.

SO YOU FOOLED ME INTO THINKING THAT WE WERE GOING TO CREATE SOME KIND OF NEW, SUPER VIDEO GAME.

MILLIONS OF COMPUTERS ARE AT RISK, MR. RIVALSAN.

WE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO NEGOTIATE!

SINCE MY MONEY HAS ALREADY BEEN SPENT, OUTLINE YOUR PLAN. YOUR REAL PLAN. PERHAPS IT WILL NOT BE A TOTAL LOSS.

THE PLAN IS A NETWORK OF GAME CONSOLES PLUGGED INTO THIS REALLY ORNAMENTAL 'BOT WITH A BACK-AND-FORTH OSCILLATING TOP!

THE 'R.O.B.B.O.T.' WILL PROVIDE A ROBOT-TO-ROBOT INTERFACE THAT WILL BE CONNECTED DIRECTLY TO DESTRUCT-O-TRON!

WITH THE UNPRECEDENTED INTERCONNECTED POWER OF THE "L.A.N." OR LENDO-ACQUIRED NINTENDOS, WE WILL GATHER AN ARMY OF 8-BIT VIDEO GAME CHARACTERS!

THEY SHALL BE A TROJAN HORSE, SLIP UNDETECTED INTO DESTRUCT-O-TRON'S MEMORY, AND ATTACK IT FROM THE INSIDE!

THEN I WILL APPLY THE TRUE SCIENCE OF STEAMOLOGY TO DIGITALLY STEAM-CLEAN THE BITS AND BYTES OF CODE! THE WORLD-- AND CYBERSPACE-- WILL BE SAVED BY STEAM!

BUT... COMPUTERS DON'T WORK LIKE THAT!

"NOW, HAVE YOU DONE AS I ASKED? HAVE YOU ASSEMBLED THE PLAYERS?"

YES! BEHOLD! THE FINEST GAMERS IN QUAGMIRE!

WHAT'S UP, PROF?

THE GAMEKIDZ!

MIKEY

SAMMI KONDO.

THAT CURSED JEREMY FEEPLE'S YOUNGER BROTHER, RICKY.

HUMPH!

HI, PROFESSOR, HI, LENDO!

AND MY BROTHER, TETSUO.

HEY, TETSUO-SAN! NICE TA MEETCHA!

DO NOT PRETEND THAT THERE IS ANY FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN YOU FEEPLES AND THE RIVALSAN CLAN!

I AM NOT DELIGHTED TO HAVE THESE FEEPLES FORCED UPON ME, EITHER, BUT RICKY'S GAME-PLAYING SKILLS ARE INTEGRAL TO STEAMHEAD'S PLAN!

AND SINCE I HAVE BEEN TRICKED INTO INVESTING IN HIS TENUOUS SCHEME, IT MUST SUCCEED!

HEH!





YES... WELL, AHEM...

IN ADDITION TO MY CRACK TEAM OF ELITE GAMERS, I HAD MY PEOPLE SCAN ALL OF THE HALFWAY DECENT WARRIORS WHO HAPPENED TO BE IN QUAGMIRE! THEIR IMAGES AND FIGHTING SKILLS HAVE BEEN UPLOADED INTO THE SYSTEM!

I AM GRATEFUL TO JEREMY-SAN FOR BRINGING HIS BROTHER, RICKY. JEREMY-SAN DECLINED TO BE SCANNED, DUE TO AN "UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT" WITH A PHOTOCOPIER A FEW MONTHS BACK.*

*SEE NHS #21!--BEN



<I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT YOU LOST ICHI-KUN TO THAT COWARDLY GAIJIN!> *

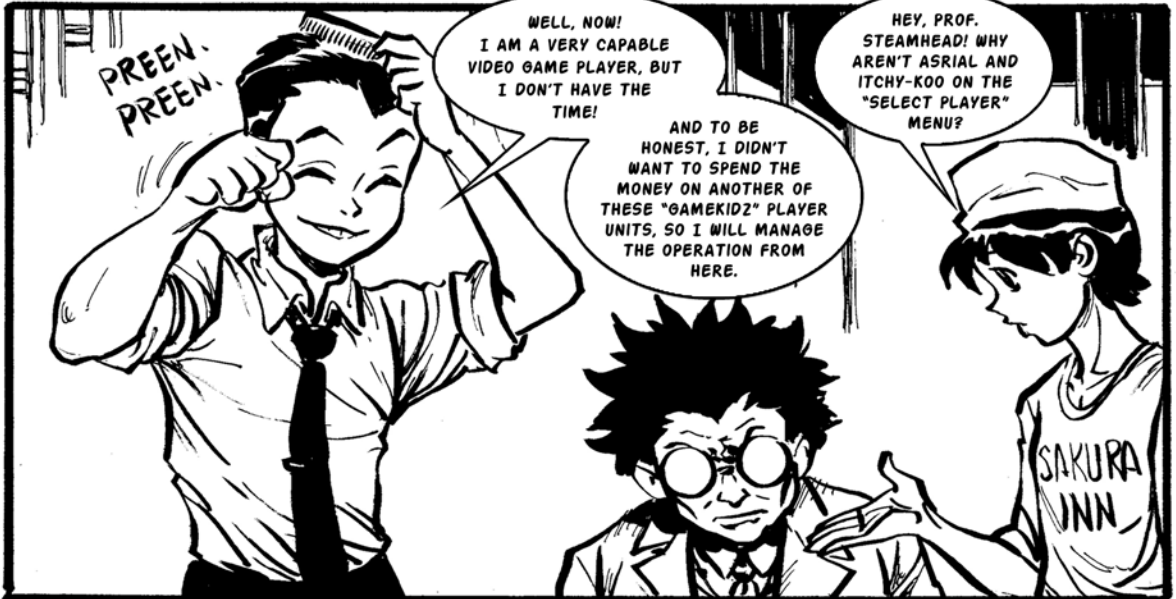
*IN JAPANESE



<BAKA! I TOLD YOU TO STOP BRINGING THAT UP! DO NOT CAUSE OUR FAMILY TO LOSE FACE!> *

GA-DUN!

MAN, THAT TETSUO KID MAKES MY "NINJA-SENSE" TINGLE!



PREEN. PREEN.

WELL, NOW! I AM A VERY CAPABLE VIDEO GAME PLAYER, BUT I DON'T HAVE THE TIME!

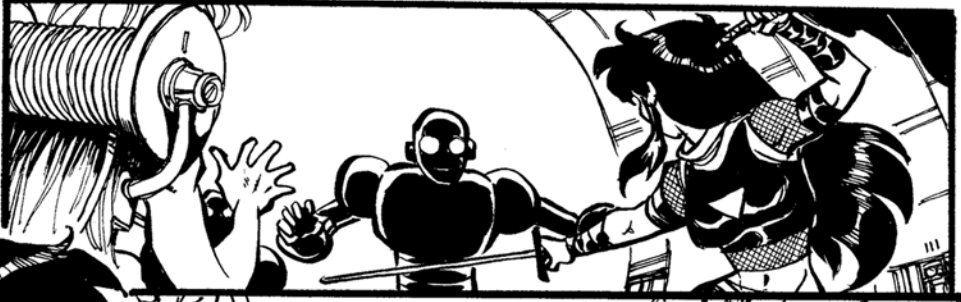
AND TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T WANT TO SPEND THE MONEY ON ANOTHER OF THESE "GAMEKIDZ" PLAYER UNITS, SO I WILL MANAGE THE OPERATION FROM HERE.

HEY, PROF. STEAMHEAD! WHY AREN'T ASRIAL AND ITCHY-KOO ON THE "SELECT PLAYER" MENU?

"ACH! THAT WAS AN UNFORTUNATE OVERSIGHT, CAUSED BY HASTE.

"ICHI-KUN AND PRINCESS ASRIAL HAD TO BE BRIEFED, TRAINED, AND SENT OFF ON A VERY URGENT, HANDS-ON MISSION.

"USING A CABLE THAT IS SEVERAL MILES LONG, THEY MUST PLUG THE L.A.N. DIRECTLY INTO DESTRUCT-O-TRON'S MEMORY MATRIX.



"ONCE ICHI-KUN AND ASRIAL HAVE PLUGGED INTO THE MATRIX...

"...THE RESONATOR, NOW USED FOR INTER-ROBOT COMMUNICATION, WILL GIVE US BACK-DOOR ACCESS TO DESTRUCT-O-TRON AND ALL OF THE OTHER ROBOTS!"

WAAHOO!!



WE'RE IN!

WAAAAH, RR...