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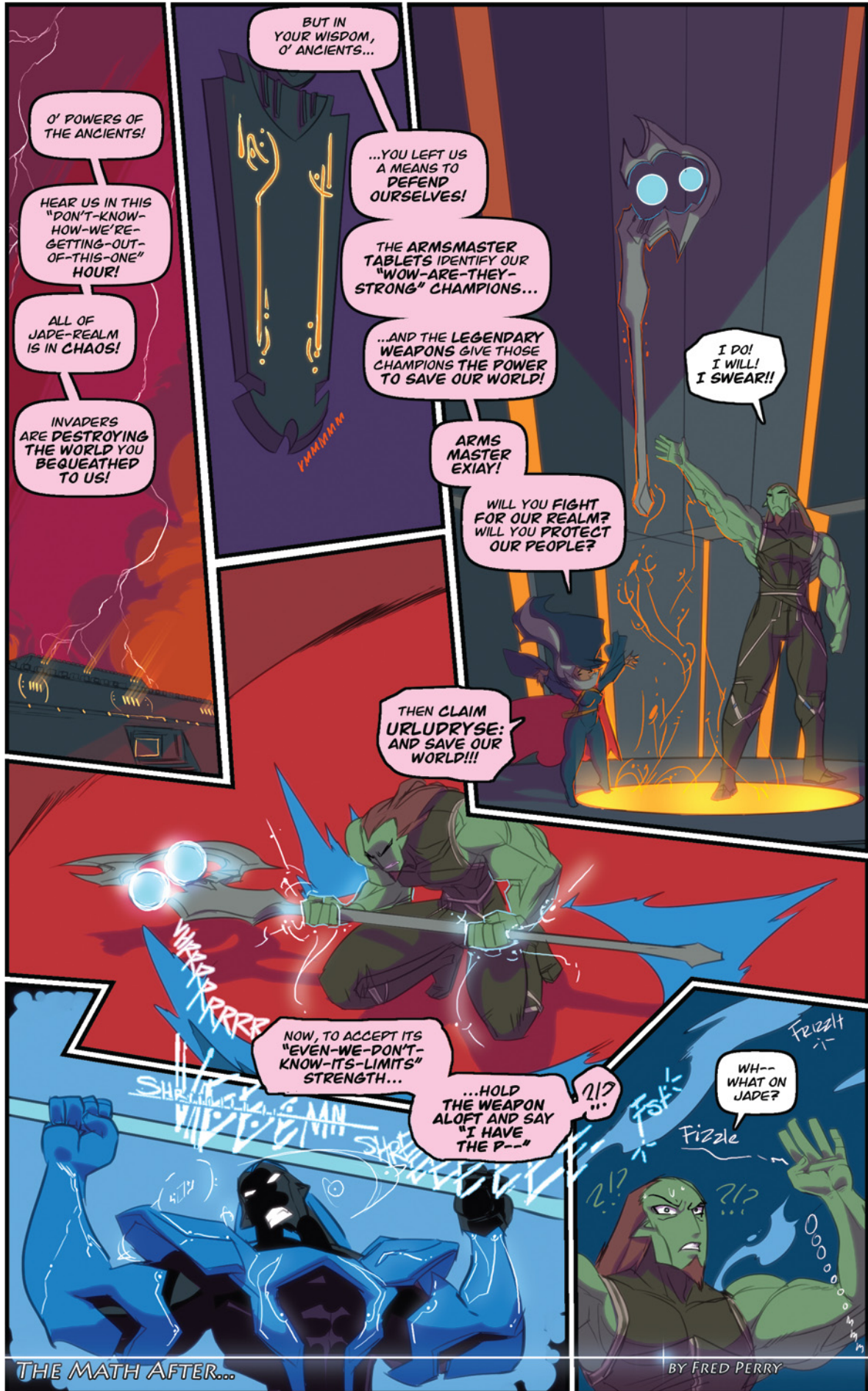
# GOLD DIGGER

FRED PERRY



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O' POWERS OF THE ANCIENTS!

HEAR US IN THIS "DON'T-KNOW-HOW-WE'RE-GETTING-OUT-OF-THIS-ONE" HOUR!

ALL OF JADE-REALM IS IN CHAOS!

INVADERS ARE DESTROYING THE WORLD YOU BEQUEATHED TO US!

BUT IN YOUR WISDOM, O' ANCIENTS...

...YOU LEFT US A MEANS TO DEFEND OURSELVES!

THE ARMSMASTER TABLETS IDENTIFY OUR "WOW-ARE-THEY-STRONG" CHAMPIONS...

...AND THE LEGENDARY WEAPONS GIVE THOSE CHAMPIONS THE POWER TO SAVE OUR WORLD!

ARMS MASTER EXIAY!

WILL YOU FIGHT FOR OUR REALM? WILL YOU PROTECT OUR PEOPLE?

I DO! I WILL! I SWEAR!!

THEN CLAIM URLUPRYSE: AND SAVE OUR WORLD!!!

NOW, TO ACCEPT ITS "EVEN-WE-DON'T-KNOW-ITS-LIMITS" STRENGTH...

...HOLD THE WEAPON ALOFT AND SAY "I HAVE THE P--"

WH-- WHAT ON JADE?





GUARDIAN!?

WHAT HAPPENED?

WHY DID YOU RESCIND THE LEGENDARY WEAPON!?

IT WASN'T ME!

THE TEMPLE'S AURA SUDDENLY... COLLAPSED!

I-I'D BETTER "UH-OH-COULD-BE-TROUBLE" CHECK WITH MY FELLOW TEMPLE GUARDIANS.

A DISRUPTION? HAVE THE INVADERS DEFEATED US SOMEHOW?

NAY... THIS WASN'T A "HELP-OUCH-THUD" COLLAPSE.

MORE LIKE A "WHEW-THANK-GOODNESS" COLLAPSE!

WHAT?



LILY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

THE ENEMY FLED FROM MY ZIGGURAT.

ARE YOU SAFE AS WELL?

WE ALL ARE.

GUARDIAN VICTORIA!

GUARDIAN LE!

SO THE THREAT IS OVER?



WE'RE IN LINK CRYSTAL CONTACT WITH AN EARTH-BORN SAGE AT ZIGGURAT ALTHO!

THE CHAIRPERSON OF EARTH-REALM'S EXPLORERS' SOCIETY, PROFESSOR GINA DIGGERS!

SHE WAS PRESENT WHEN THE INVADERS TWISTED THEMSELVES OUT OF THE VEIL OF OUR REALM!

AND OUT OF TIME AND SPACE AS WE KNOW IT!

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN ZIGGURAT ALTHO THAT CAUSED ALL BADDIES TO CHEESE IT!



"AND NOT  
A MOMENT  
TOO SOON!

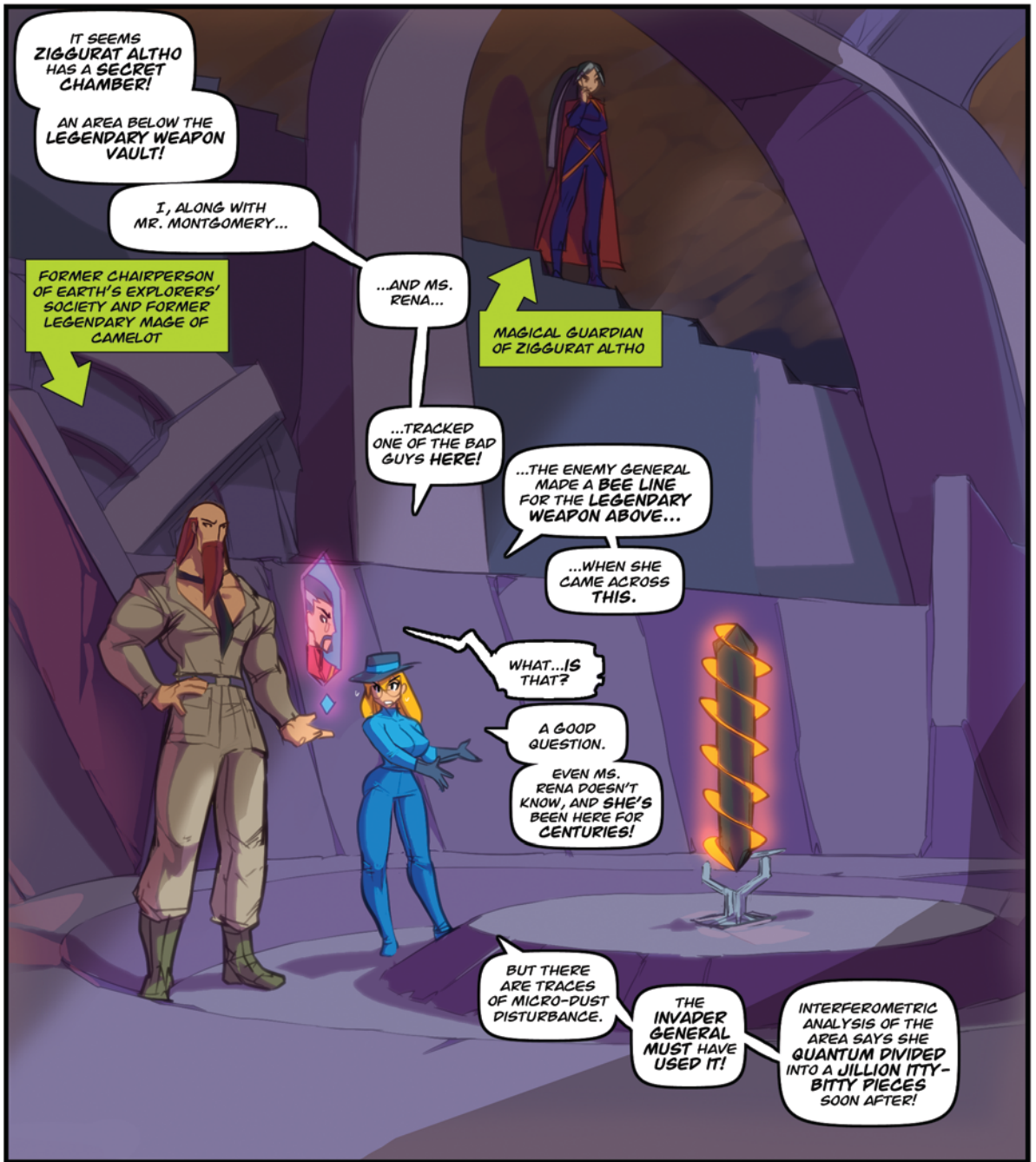
"THE INVADERS  
WERE ATTACKING  
EVERYWHERE  
AT ONCE!

"SPREADING  
JADE-REALM'S  
DEFENSE FORCES  
REALLY THIN!

"WE WERE  
LOSING ALMOST  
EVERY BATTLE!

"BUT SOMETHING  
SUDDENLY  
DROVE THE  
INVASION ARMY  
BACK..."

"...AND I  
THINK MY  
INSTRUMENTS  
RECORDED  
WHAT THAT  
'SOMETHING'  
WAS!"



IT SEEMS ZIGGURAT ALTHO HAS A SECRET CHAMBER!

AN AREA BELOW THE LEGENDARY WEAPON VAULT!

I, ALONG WITH MR. MONTGOMERY...

FORMER CHAIRPERSON OF EARTH'S EXPLORERS' SOCIETY AND FORMER LEGENDARY MAGE OF CAMELOT

...AND MS. RENA...

MAGICAL GUARDIAN OF ZIGGURAT ALTHO

...TRACKED ONE OF THE BAD GUYS HERE!

...THE ENEMY GENERAL MADE A BEE LINE FOR THE LEGENDARY WEAPON ABOVE...

...WHEN SHE CAME ACROSS THIS.

WHAT...IS THAT?

A GOOD QUESTION.

EVEN MS. RENA DOESN'T KNOW, AND SHE'S BEEN HERE FOR CENTURIES!

BUT THERE ARE TRACES OF MICRO-DUST DISTURBANCE.

THE INVADER GENERAL MUST HAVE USED IT!

INTERFEROMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE AREA SAYS SHE QUANTUM DIVIDED INTO A JILLION ITTY-BITTY PIECES SOON AFTER!



HAVING ONE OF THEIR GENERALS OBLITERATED IN AN INSTANT PROBABLY CAUSED THE REST OF THE INVASION FORCES TO FILL THEIR PANTS AND SKIPPADLE...

SO WHAT HAPPENED IN HERE?

I'M GUESSING THAT THE INVASION GENERAL FOUND THIS DEVICE...

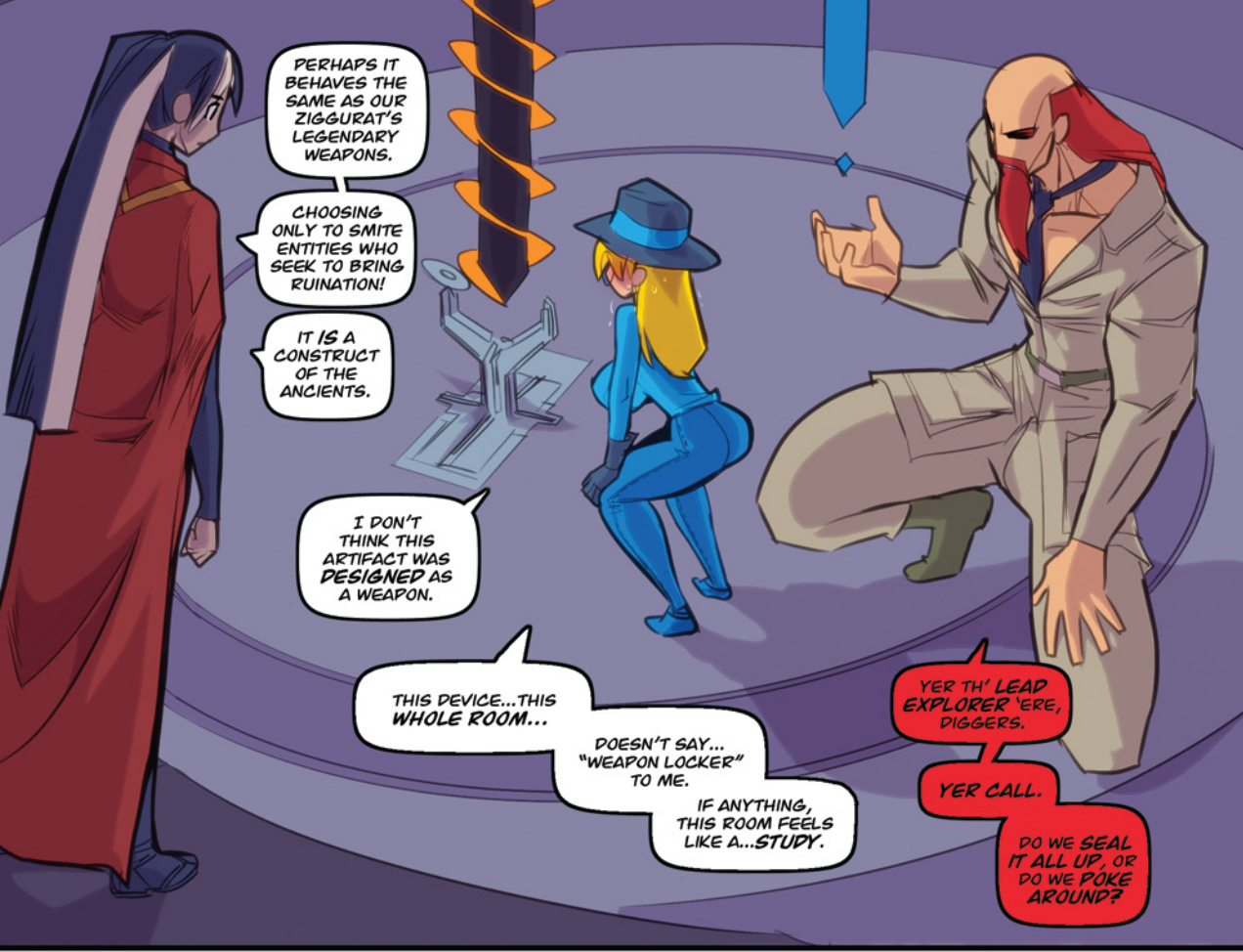
...DISCOVERED IT COULD BE USED AS A WEAPON...

...THEN ACCIDENTALLY "PULLED THE TRIGGER" WHILE "PEERING DOWN THE BARREL".

THE ARTIFACT'S BASE SEEMS TO HAVE PHYSICAL ACTIVATION OR MANIPULATION SWITCHES...

SO, WE SHOULD BE SAFE AS LONG AS WE DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING BEFORE WE'RE SURE OF WHAT WE'RE TOUCHING.





PERHAPS IT BEHAVES THE SAME AS OUR ZIGGURAT'S LEGENDARY WEAPONS.

CHOOSING ONLY TO SMITE ENTITIES WHO SEEK TO BRING RUINATION!

IT IS A CONSTRUCT OF THE ANCIENTS.

I DON'T THINK THIS ARTIFACT WAS DESIGNED AS A WEAPON.

THIS DEVICE...THIS WHOLE ROOM...

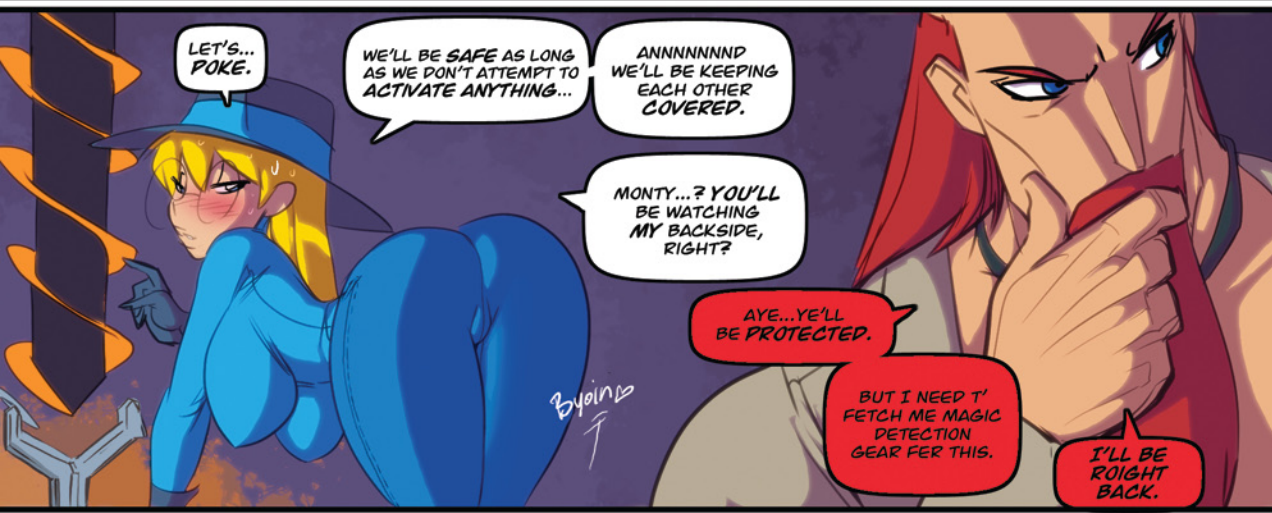
DOESN'T SAY... "WEAPON LOCKER" TO ME.

IF ANYTHING, THIS ROOM FEELS LIKE A...STUDY.

YER TH' LEAD EXPLORER 'ERE, DIGGERS.

YER CALL.

DO WE SEAL IT ALL UP, OR DO WE POKE AROUND?



LET'S... POKE.

WE'LL BE SAFE AS LONG AS WE DON'T ATTEMPT TO ACTIVATE ANYTHING...

ANNNNNND WE'LL BE KEEPING EACH OTHER COVERED.

MONTY...? YOU'LL BE WATCHING MY BACKSIDE, RIGHT?

AYE...YE'LL BE PROTECTED.

BUT I NEED T' FETCH ME MAGIC DETECTION GEAR FER THIS.

I'LL BE ROIGHT BACK.

Byeind



AW...

HE DIDN'T EVEN LOOK.

WHAT THE...

WHY DID I JUST-- PR-PRESENT MY BOOTY TO MONTY!?





BUT... JUST THEN... I-I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF!

...WHEN ALTERNATE-UNIVERSE MONTY USED A CHARM SPELL ON ME WITH HIS COPPICE AS THE KEY COMPONENT!

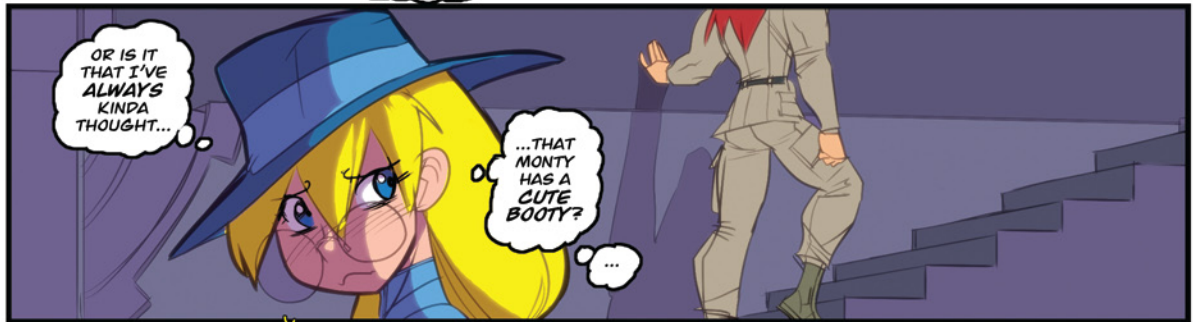
MY BRAIN WAS COMPLETELY BEFUDGLED BY ITS JIGGLE-PHYSICS!!

JUST AS I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF DURING THE BATTLE AGAINST THE INVADERS...

THE REAL MONTY CAME TO RESCUE ME AND BROKE THE SPELL...

BUT IS IT TRULY BROKEN?

ARE THERE RESIDUAL EFFECTS?



OR IS IT THAT I'VE ALWAYS KINDA THOUGHT...

...THAT MONTY HAS A CUTE BOOTY?



NO! NO!! NO!!!

YOU'VE ALREADY GOT A HOT BEAU!

NNH! NNNH!!!

YOU'VE GOT WORK TO DO!

BAD! BAD!! BAD!!!

FOCUS, GINA!



YOU'VE GOT TO FOCUS ON SCIENCE!

FOCUS ON UNRAVELING THE SECRETS OF WHAT COULD BE MORPHED INTO A COSMIC CUISINART!!