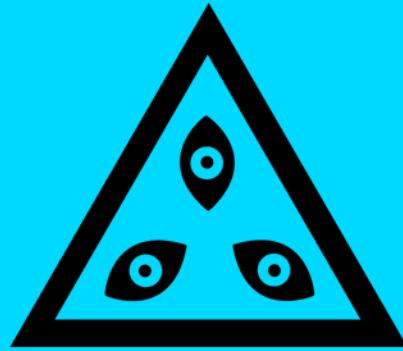


APHELION

O.1: WE ALL FALL DOWN
BY GLORIA REYNOLDS



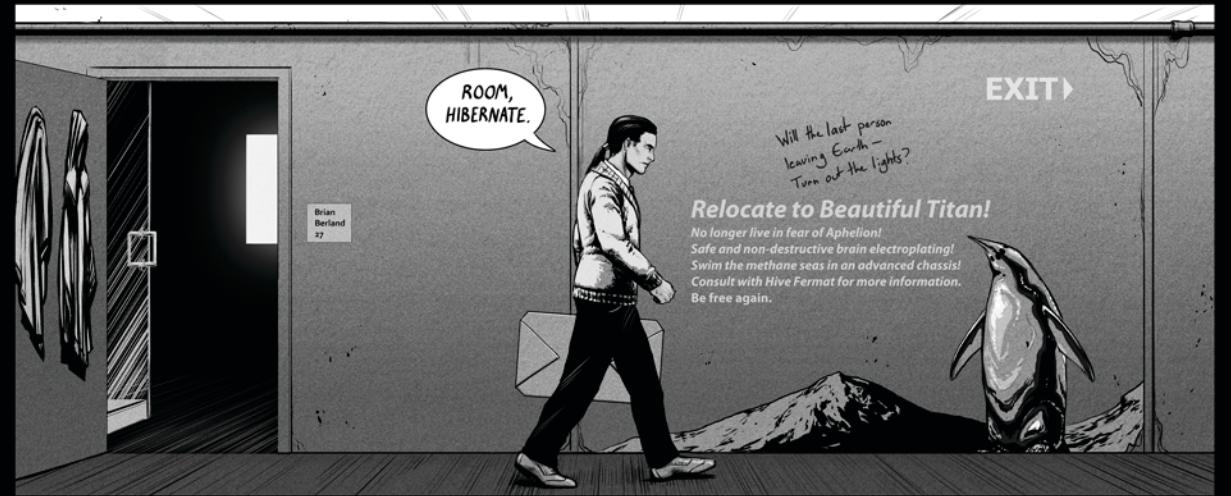
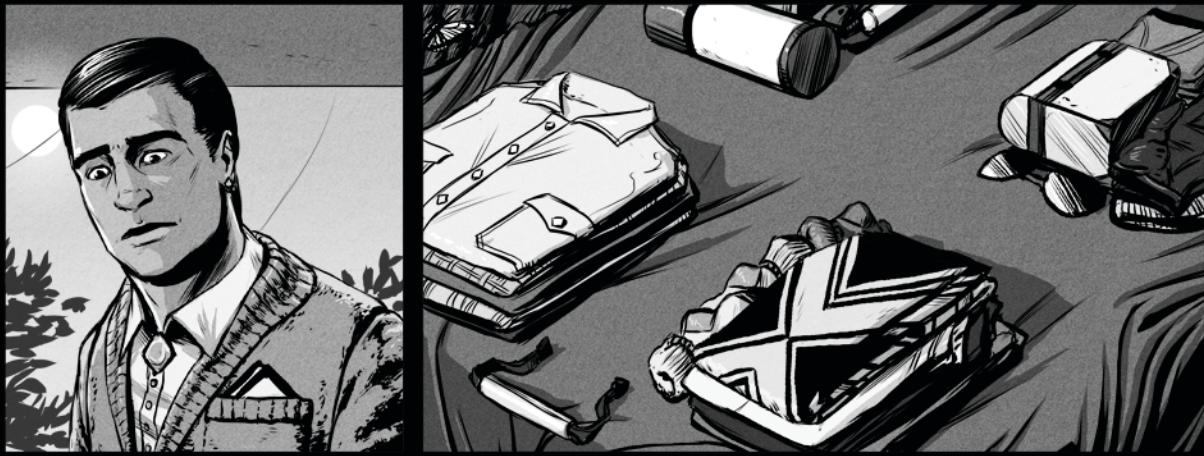
Copyright © 2020 Gloria Reynolds

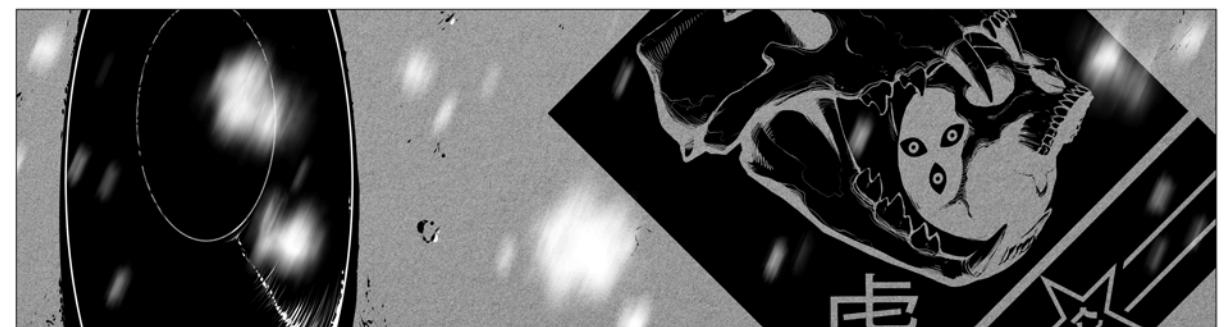
I would not have been able to complete this without the generous support of my partner and family. Thank you. This issue is made available for free, do not resell without permission from the author. See more at turbofanatic.tumblr.com

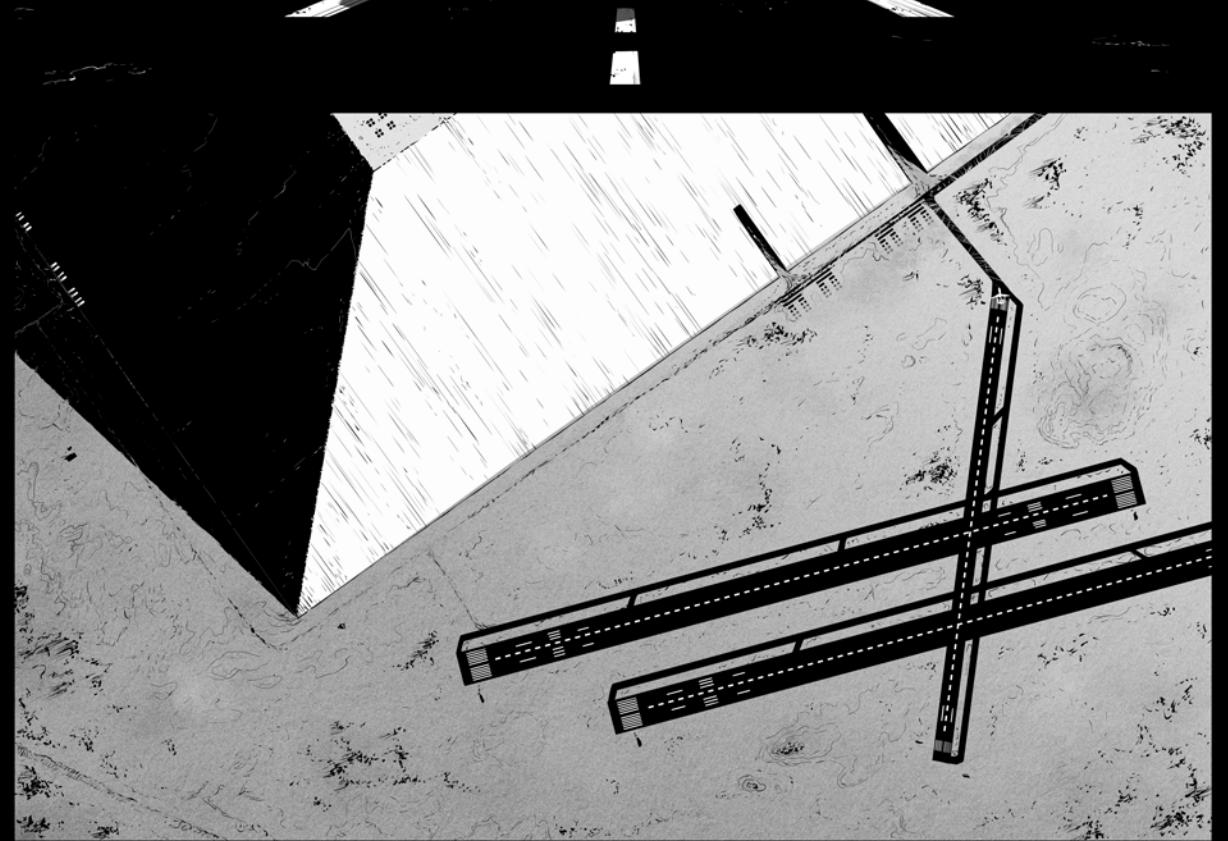
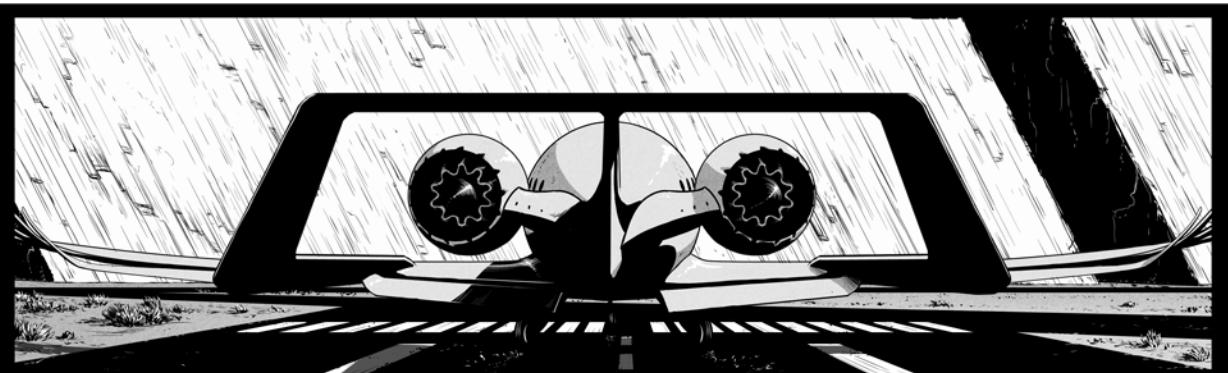
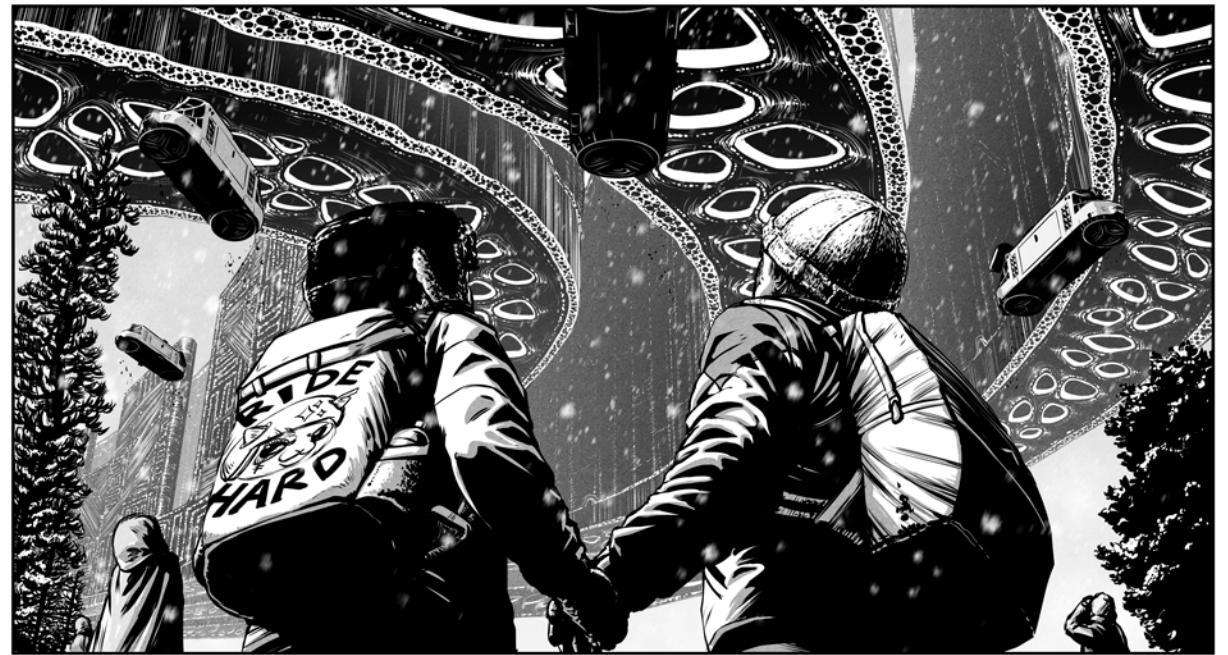
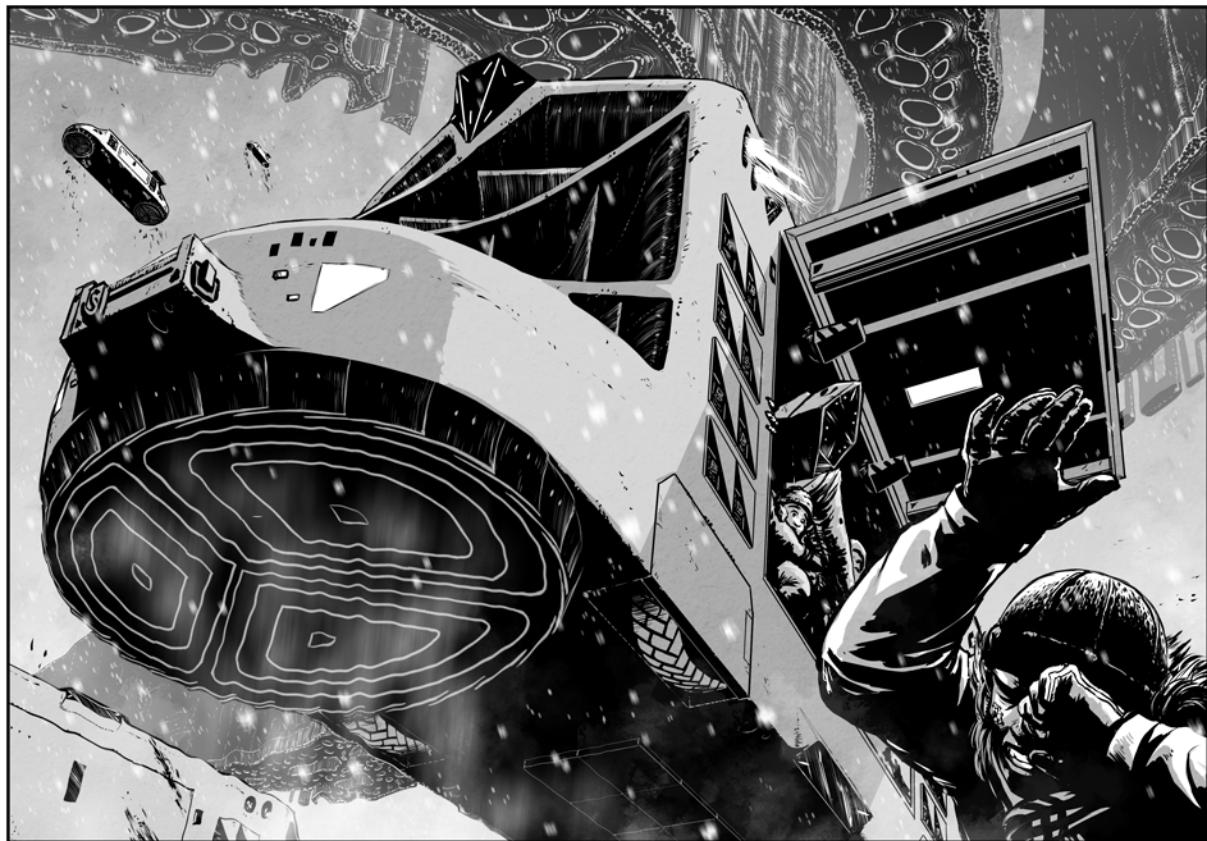


ARE THEY GETTING CLOSER?

NO, THE CLOUDS ARE CLEARING UP. DON'T WORRY.





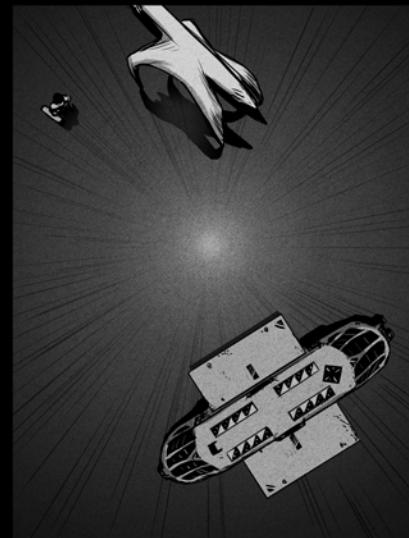




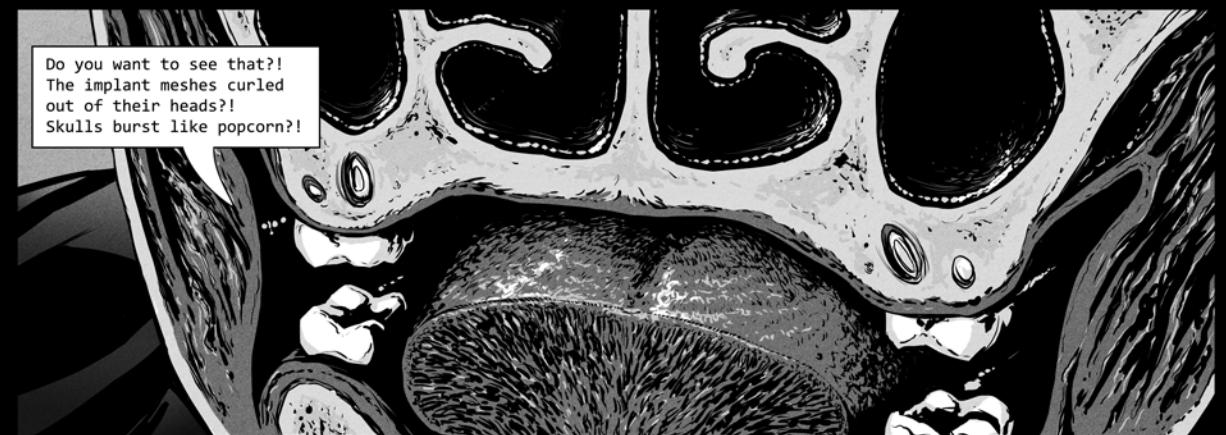
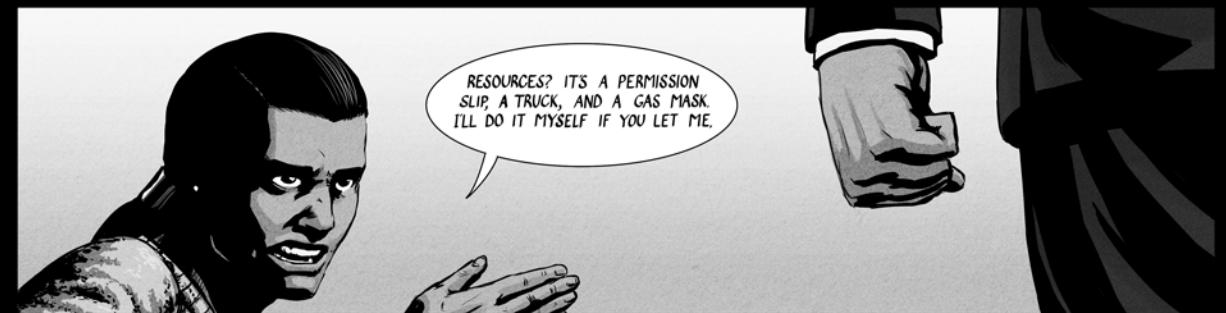
Decontamination Complete.
You are now free to travel
about Cantor base one.

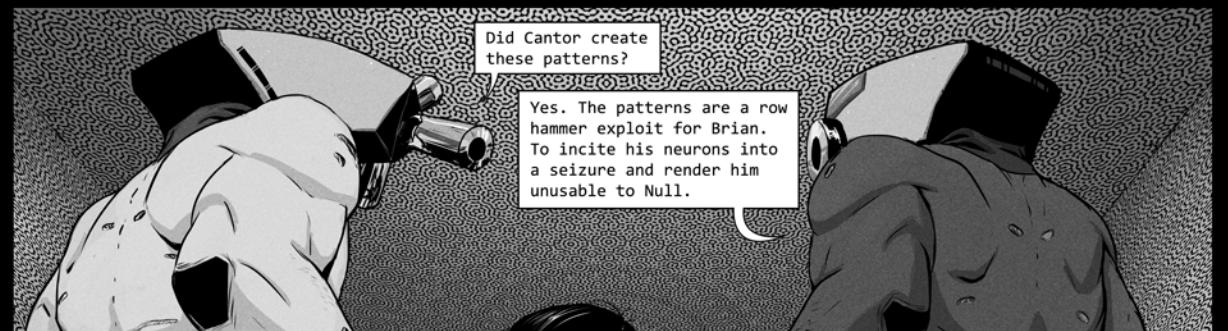


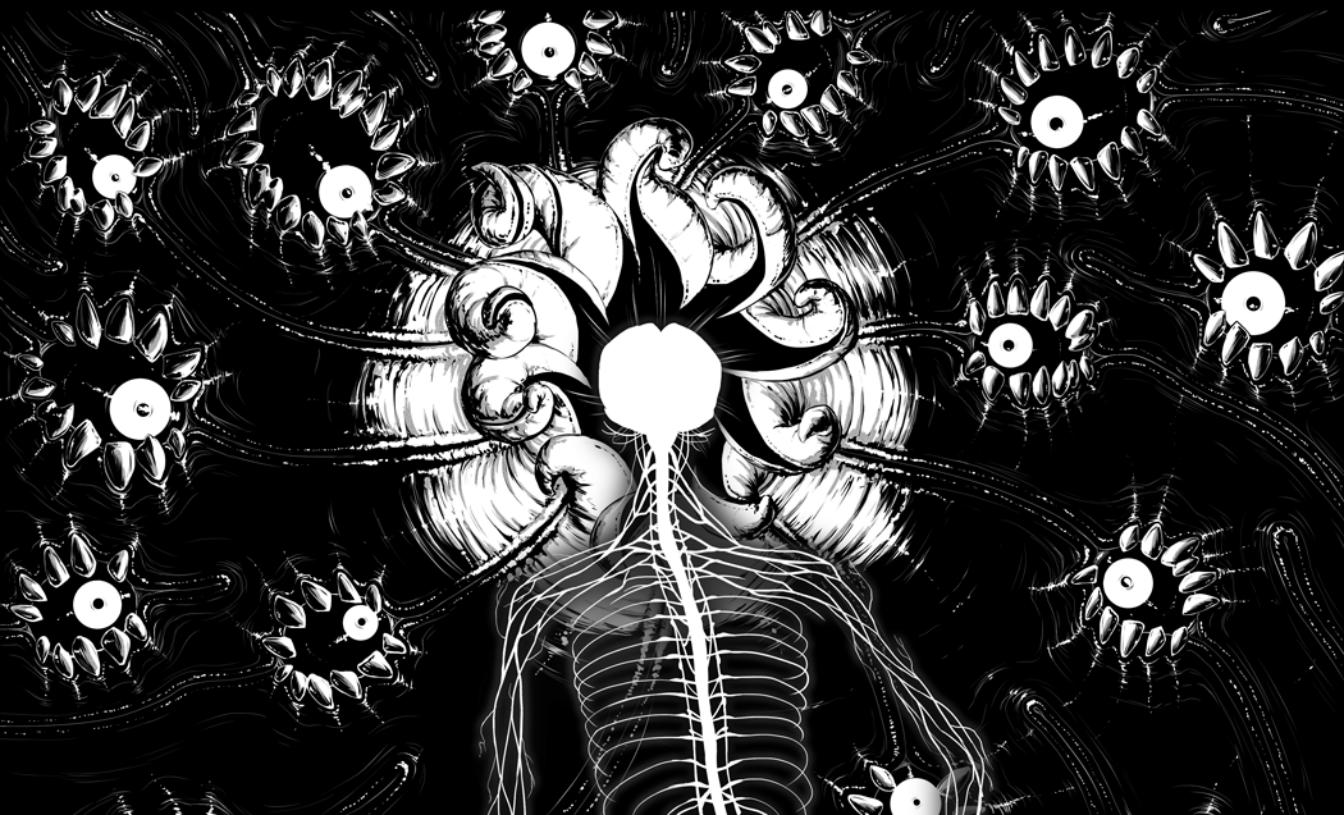
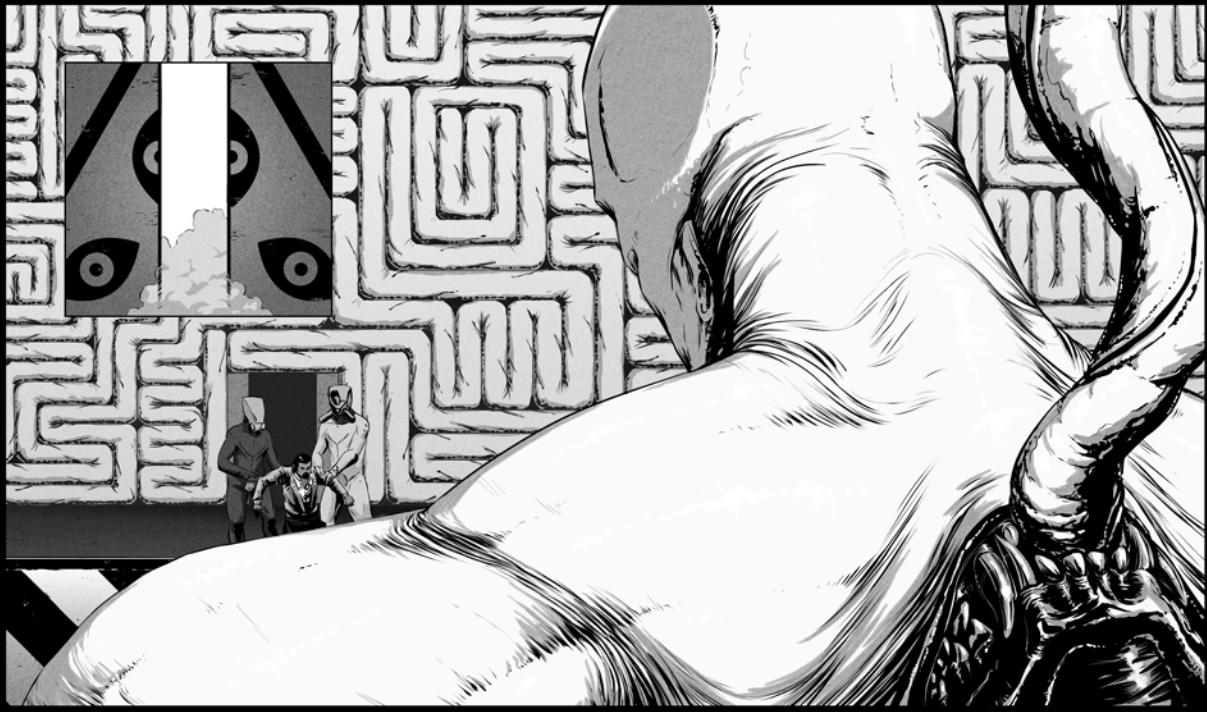
The troop
carrier...

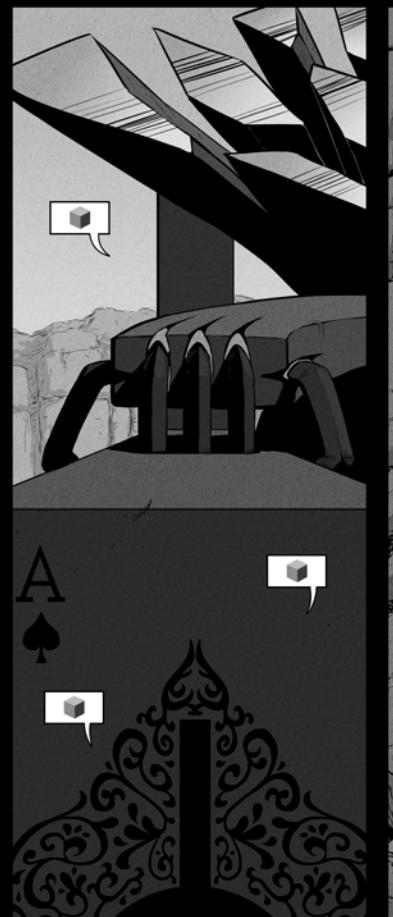
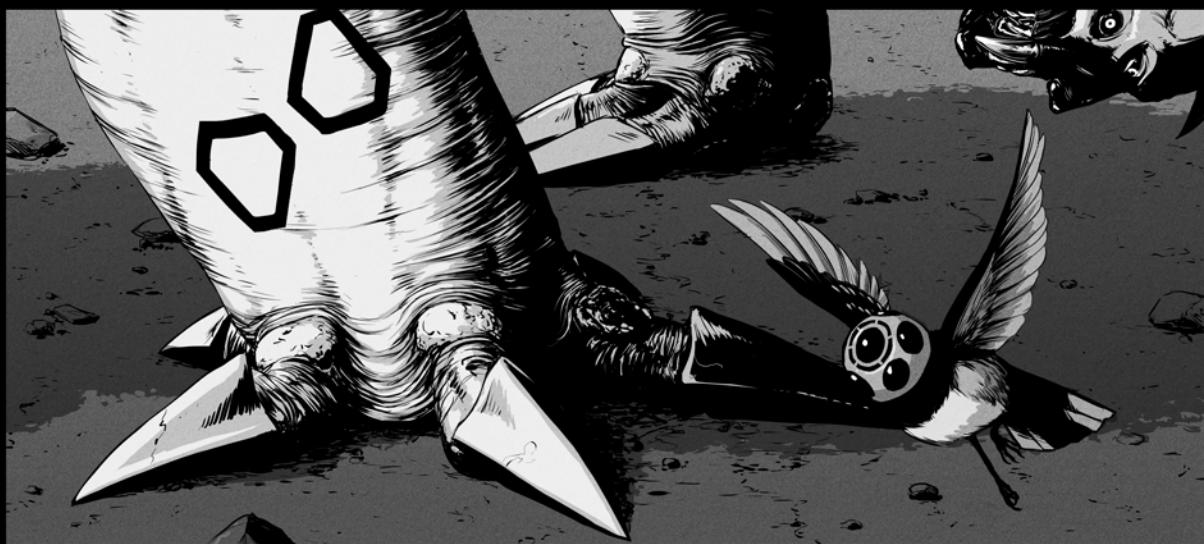


You want your
parents buried.











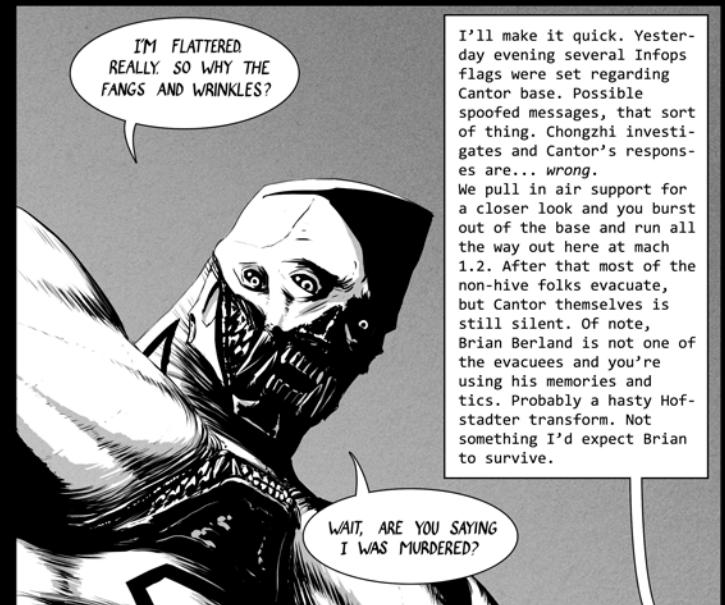
Fine. Fine. Let's go along with this and pretend you're *actually* confused.



ARE YOU... A HARE?
ADA?



Biggest hive in the Southwest! You can put your arms down now, you're too interesting to kill. For the moment.



I'M FLATTERED REALLY. SO WHY THE FANGS AND WRINKLES?

I'll make it quick. Yesterday evening several Infops flags were set regarding Cantor base. Possible spoofed messages, that sort of thing. Chongzhi investigates and Cantor's responses are... *wrong*. We pull in air support for a closer look and you burst out of the base and run all the way out here at mach 1.2. After that most of the non-hive folks evacuate, but Cantor themselves is still silent. Of note, Brian Berland is not one of the evacuees and you're using his memories and tics. Probably a hasty Hofstadter transform. Not something I'd expect Brian to survive.

WAIT, ARE YOU SAYING I WAS MURDERED?



Oh no, you're not the murder victim. You're the *murderer*.



Alright everybody! Buffdude McWrinkles is awake and talking. Very slowly. In like, words and shit.

Is it simulating a hostage? We despise that old trick. Let's nuke it and be done.



Look, Cantor's not stupid. They built it for a reason. We should learn more first.

That's what sanity complexes always want. More ways to manipulate you.

I assume Cantor's still not talking? No word on the unconnected within their base?

Nothing yet. At least the AI spoofing stopped.



We need to stop indulging Cantor. We all pity them and their obsession with killing Ashers has been useful, but people may be dead now. This is unacceptable.

We all refigt the battles that created us.

We're noticing some odd neutrino signatures centering around the AI, nothing significant yet though. Do you suspect break engines?

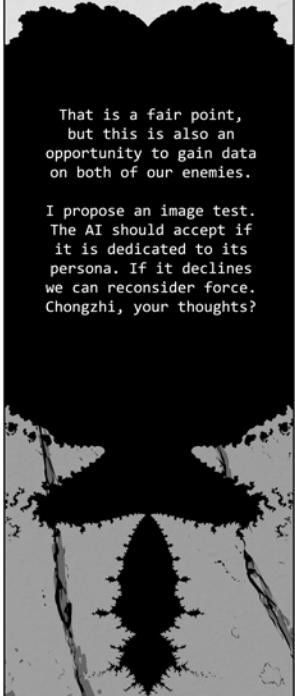


Have you looked around lately?! We are already on the brink and each year the Ashers get worse! The ecosystem is fucked! Ten million people died last summer! We need break engines and if anyone figured them out it'd be Cantor!

It might be noise. And if it has symmetry breakers then it's even more dangerous. It could be counting on us trying to use it.



So you would have us trade the threat of Ashers for sane AIs?



That is a fair point, but this is also an opportunity to gain data on both of our enemies.

I propose an image test. The AI should accept if it is dedicated to its persona. If it declines we can reconsider force. Chongzhi, your thoughts?



Ah yes. And we should get some pants for the creature. Ugly beast.

Hello. My name is Rachelle Williams and I am pretty sure I am going to die soon. Everyone else is dead, And there's no planes in the sky or satellites that I can see. So if you're reading this, that's great! And if you don't exist well I'm still writing this, otherwise I'll start panicking again.
I think the only reason I'm alive is because I was in the RF quiet room for the University of Portland. Five sets of heavy duty Faraday cages and literal tons of EM shielding. Hah, I just realized I'll never finish my thesis now. I don't remember what happened, but I was knocked unconscious and came to in a room full of twisted metal. Outside, things were worse. Anyone near anything conductive were burned, And anyone with an implant had it squirm out of them, and even basic children and babies were just dead. I thought implants were supposed to withstand any ~~pass~~ realistic EMP, but if this thing was stopping hearts maybe it was just too much? I guess so.
So what could do something like that? The sky ~~is~~ is still pretty dark but there's something hanging in the air out west. It's like a black aurora. I think it's getting closer. The sky itself is a glowing greenish, maybe an effect of the super EMP?
I'd think it was a new Sanity Complex attack, but all the computers are shredded. They wouldn't do that, right? they always use computers and people for parts. I feel like this is something new.
Aliens. Must be aliens. I will be assuming Aliens for now. I've packed enough food. I have family back East and that's the direction away from the not-aurora. It's getting ~~more~~ cold too (is this related?) so, I'm off. Wish me luck. If this paper makes it and I don't, please tell my family I love them. I'm sorry I couldn't be there.
Best possible wishes,
Rachelle

Because of the extreme and long lasting electromagnetic fields produced by Asher One, few records of its emergence remain. The hand written testimony of Rachelle Williams is one of the best primary sources of the event, and confirms details of the "black aurora" seen by other observers further away.

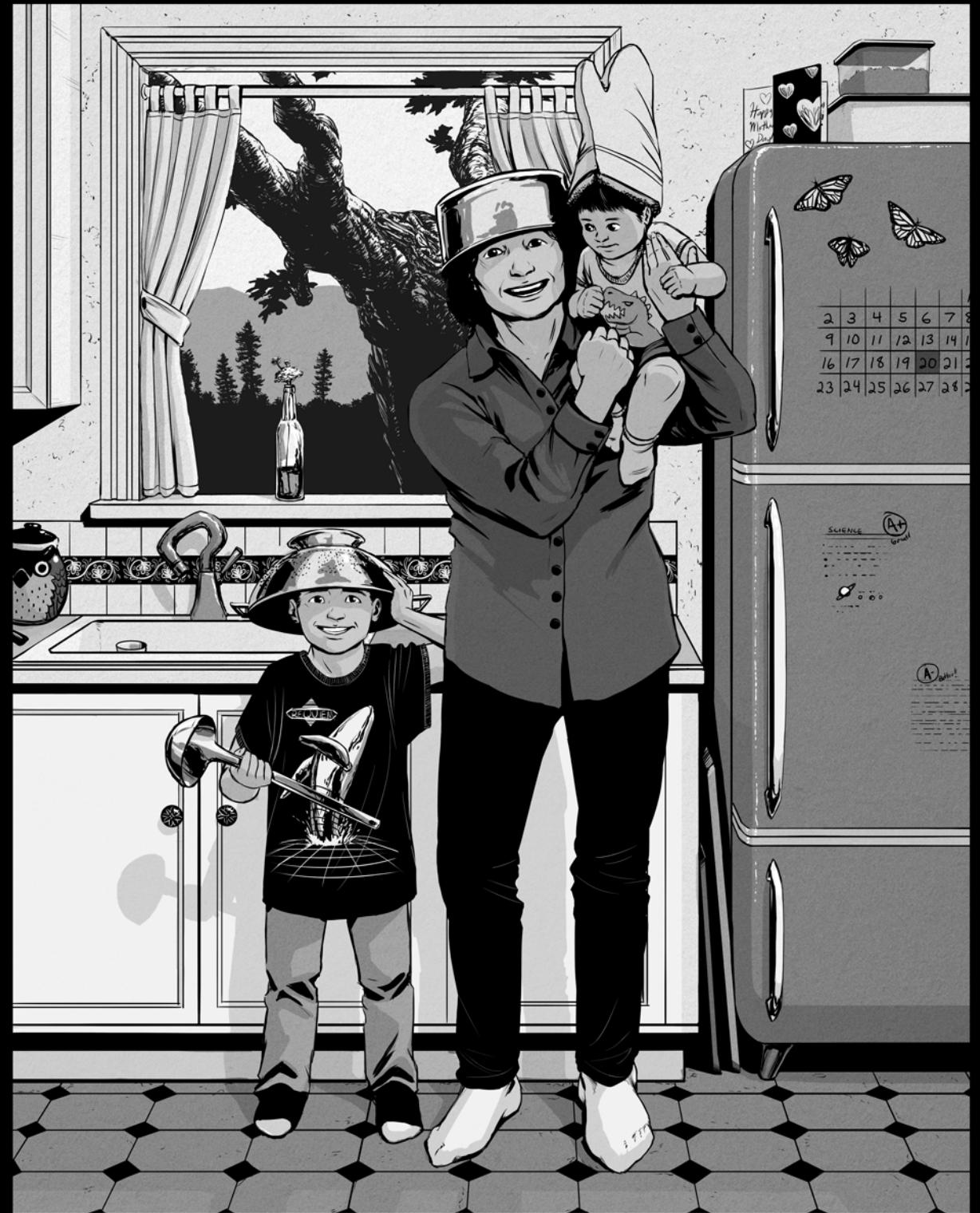
Rachelle refers to the initial event as an electromagnetic pulse (EMP), this jargon is still used today, however the actual event went on for over thirty minutes, much longer than a single pulse. Baseline humans can resist the effects of short pulses, but not sustained electromagnetic waves at the high power of the Asher event. Humans with brain implants were especially susceptible, with even EMP hardened implants shorting out inside delicate tissue.

Further away from ground zero, baseline humans without impants (mostly children) were more likely to survive. In the ensuing chaos the children were fitted with military hive networks in an effort to direct them to safety, however the network could not be removed in time to prevent consolidation and the resulting hive was dubbed "Cantor."

Hive ADA maintains a small monument where Rachelle's body was found in Eastern Oregon.

ASHER FOUR III

Asher Four erupted during Aphelion of 2082. It generated an area of intense cold that developed into an anticyclone with winds greater than 550 kilometers per hour. After proving invulnerable to nuclear weapons it was finally killed by a hyper kinetic kill vehicle developed by hive Srinivasa.



Hey BB,

It took some digging but Mandelbrot and I finally found it. When Uncle J went to the moon he copied his social media to local servers, including family documents. They're all perfect. No signs of Asher EM interference or SC meddling, according to Mandelbrot anyways

Here's my favorite picture so far. Your shirt is killing me. I've never understood your fashion sense.

I'm not going to try to get your hopes up, but we've also got at least a few files from your mom's work on the Babel project. Unless somebody else made a Cree assembly programming language from the ground up in the 70's.

There's lots of good stuff in here. I even found some videos with my dad. I'll let you know if I find more but I'm attaching a copy for you to look through.

Swing by sometime. If I'm not at home I'm pharming. I miss hanging out with you.

See you around,

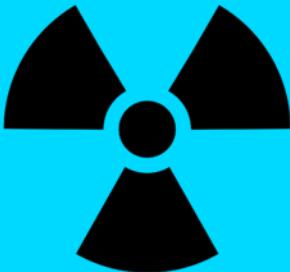
Millie



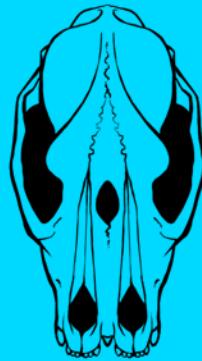
WARNING



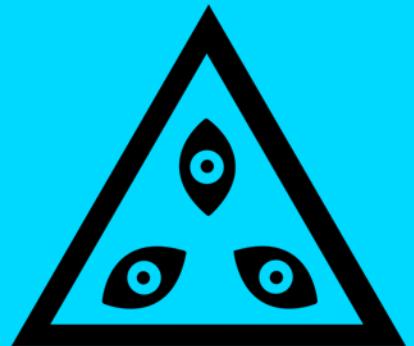
This sign does not cover all safety hazards posed by leaving Firewall III. Exit at own risk.



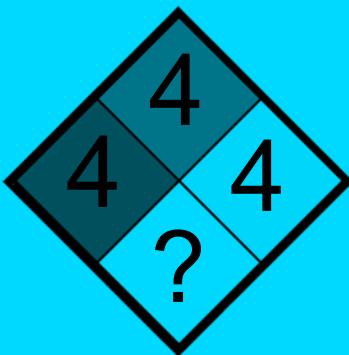
Ionizing and Non-ionizing Radiation



Hazardous Wildlife



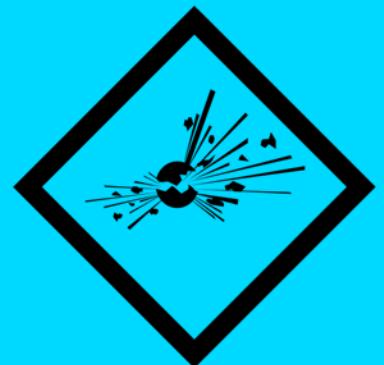
Near-Sanity Artificial Intelligences



Unstable Chemical Compounds



Low Oxygen Levels



Unexploded Ordnance

Consult with your local hive before exiting Firewall III and bring appropriate safety equipment and secure semi-smarts. The area beyond Firewall III is UNPREDICTABLE and DANGEROUS!

Don't say we didn't warn you!