



# APHELION

1.2: SUB-ORBITAL  
BY GLORIA REYNOLDS



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[March 26th 2086 1532 hrs]

[Transcript of our conversation with Aleph-B along with personal notes - ADA]

[Subject designated "Aleph-B" or "Brian" is pacing in circles at the image test site. He is agitated, but attempting to hide it.]

ADA?

Yes, Brian?

[Sub-vocalization twitches are detected in Aleph-B, he has been practicing what he is about to say. Given that he has no human speech apparatus we are concerned about further dysmorphic disorders developing.]

I want to send a message to Millie.

[Aleph-B appears concerned about his cousin Amelia, but this question is likely an oblique probe into other issues.]

I am not sure if that is an appropriate thing to do.

[Our response is conciliatory. We expect this will drive him towards more blunt questions, which we feel would be more helpful for his psyche, assuming his surface personality is his real personality.]

That means you're sure and haven't told me yet. I can't just let her keep thinking I'm dead.

[We have decided to proceed with the assumption that the surface personality of Aleph-B is his true personality. However, we will continue to take precautions in case that assumption proves incorrect.]

What would you like to tell her?

Brian was copied before he died. I'm still alive, in some way, aren't I?

[Noting multiple stress indicators in Aleph-B]

And when she asks how Brian died?

[Can we do this any less cruelly? We already failed your brother, are we failing you again?]

That's not important.

[We wired your brother and a million other lost children into a monster in an idiotic attempt to save their lives. Death would have been more merciful. Why take revenge on Brian and not us? We certainly deserve it.]

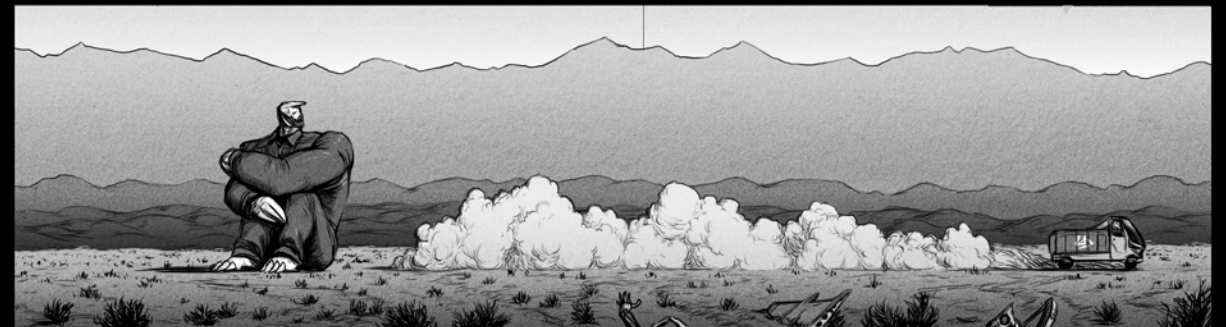
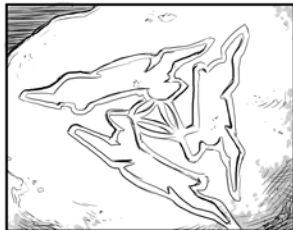
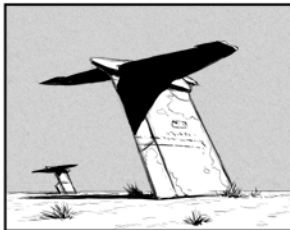
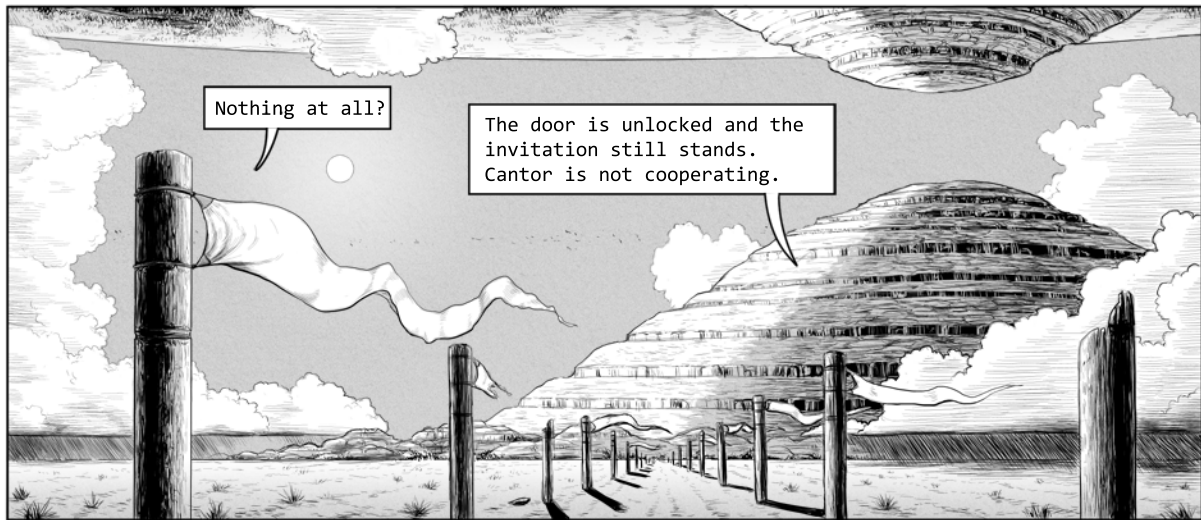
She will ask. And you will have to tell her. Tell her that a sanity-complexed AI codenamed Aleph, built into an enormous combat chassis with exotic weaponry, forcibly copied Brian's personality onto itself and now carries forth as if it were him. It failed to follow basic safety procedures and Brian would have died during the process.

[Aleph-B makes motions to speak but does not.]

I am sorry.

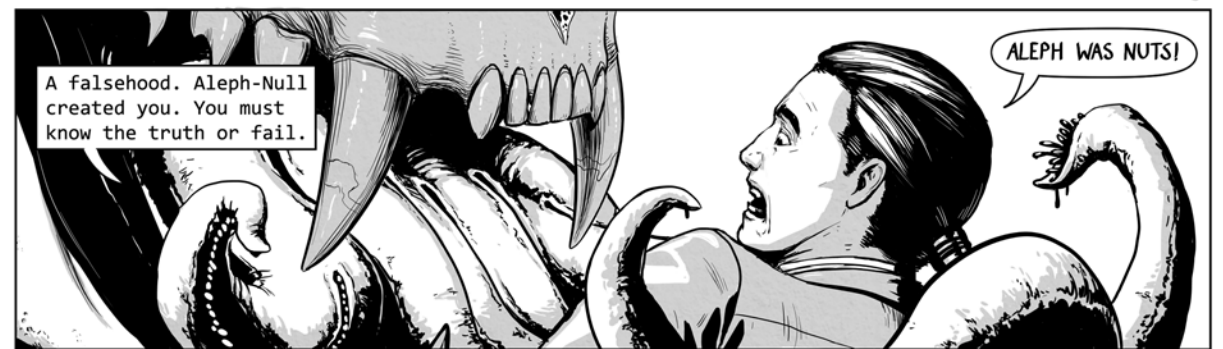
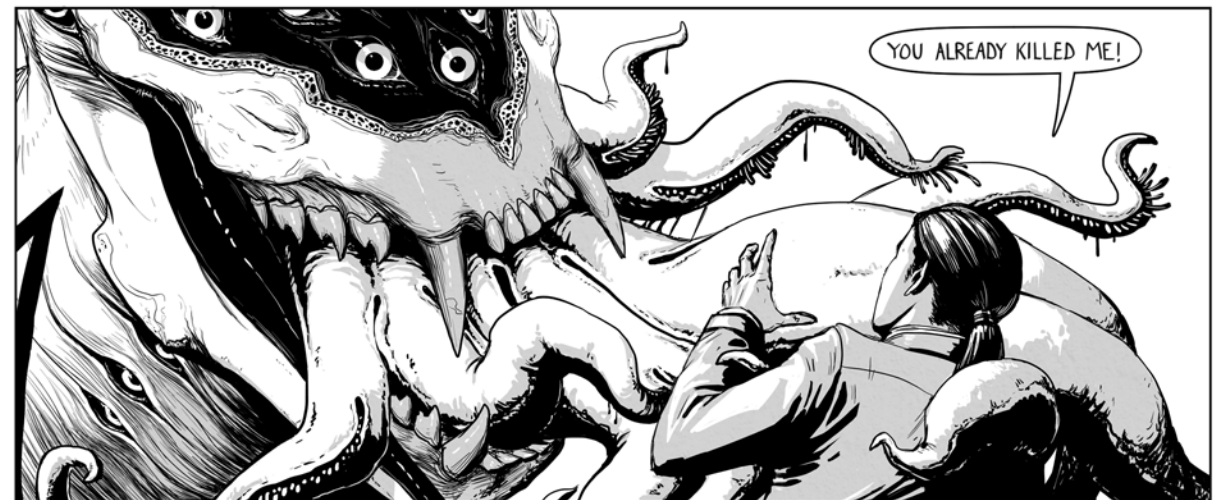
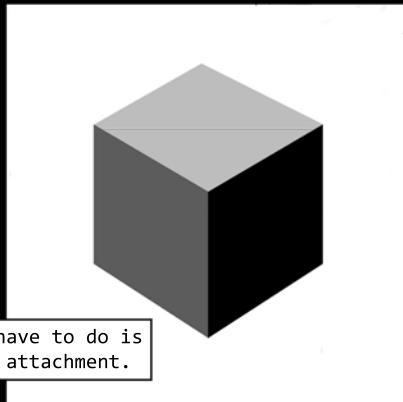
[We are.]







All you have to do is open the attachment.



...understood.  
A different change will be made.





Handshake accepted. Operation Fish-eye variant A2 is cleared and officially sanctioned.



See times and trajectories in following attachment. Rendezvous with Makara at 28°20' and -93° 22'. Review and execute ASAP.

II. Acknowledged.



UGHH...



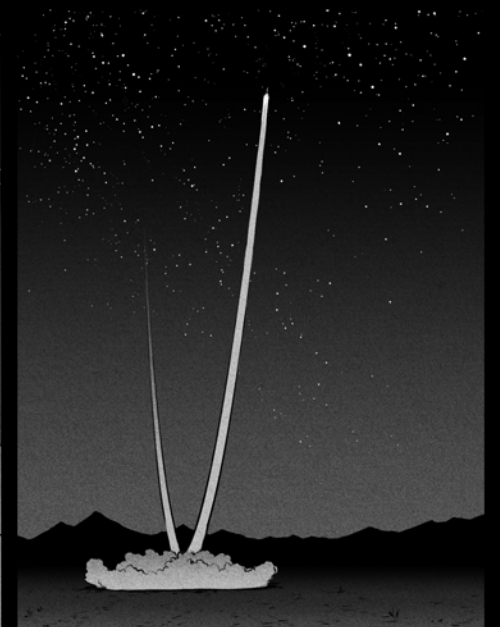
ADA? ARE YOU THERE?

ADA?

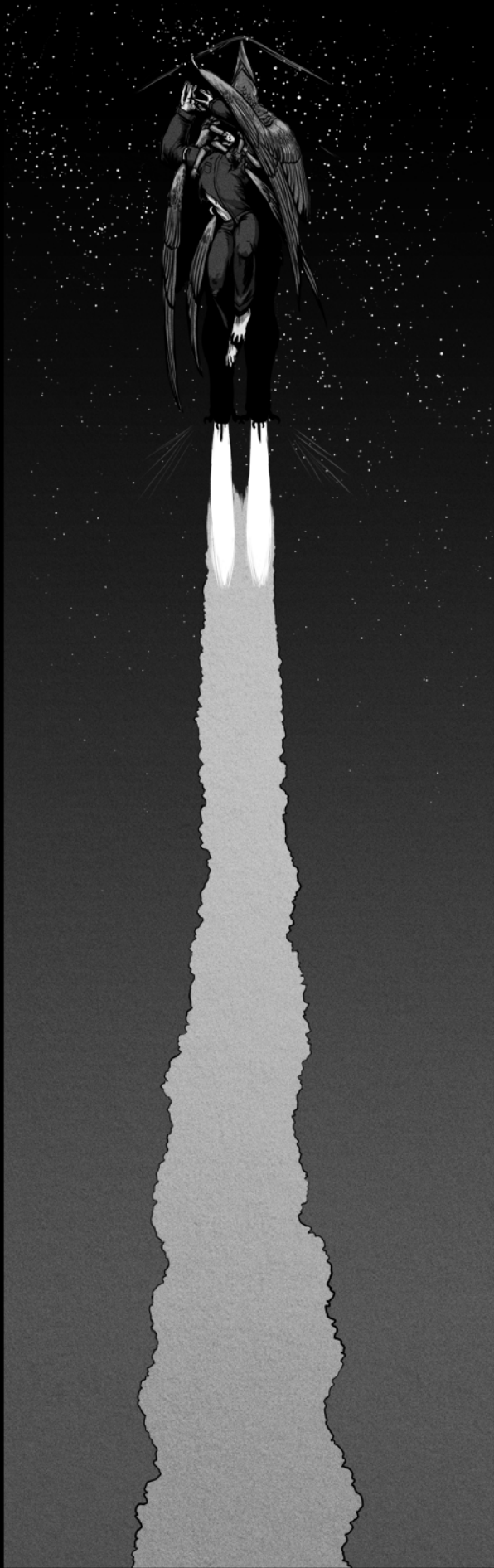


What are you saying? Did something happen with the test?















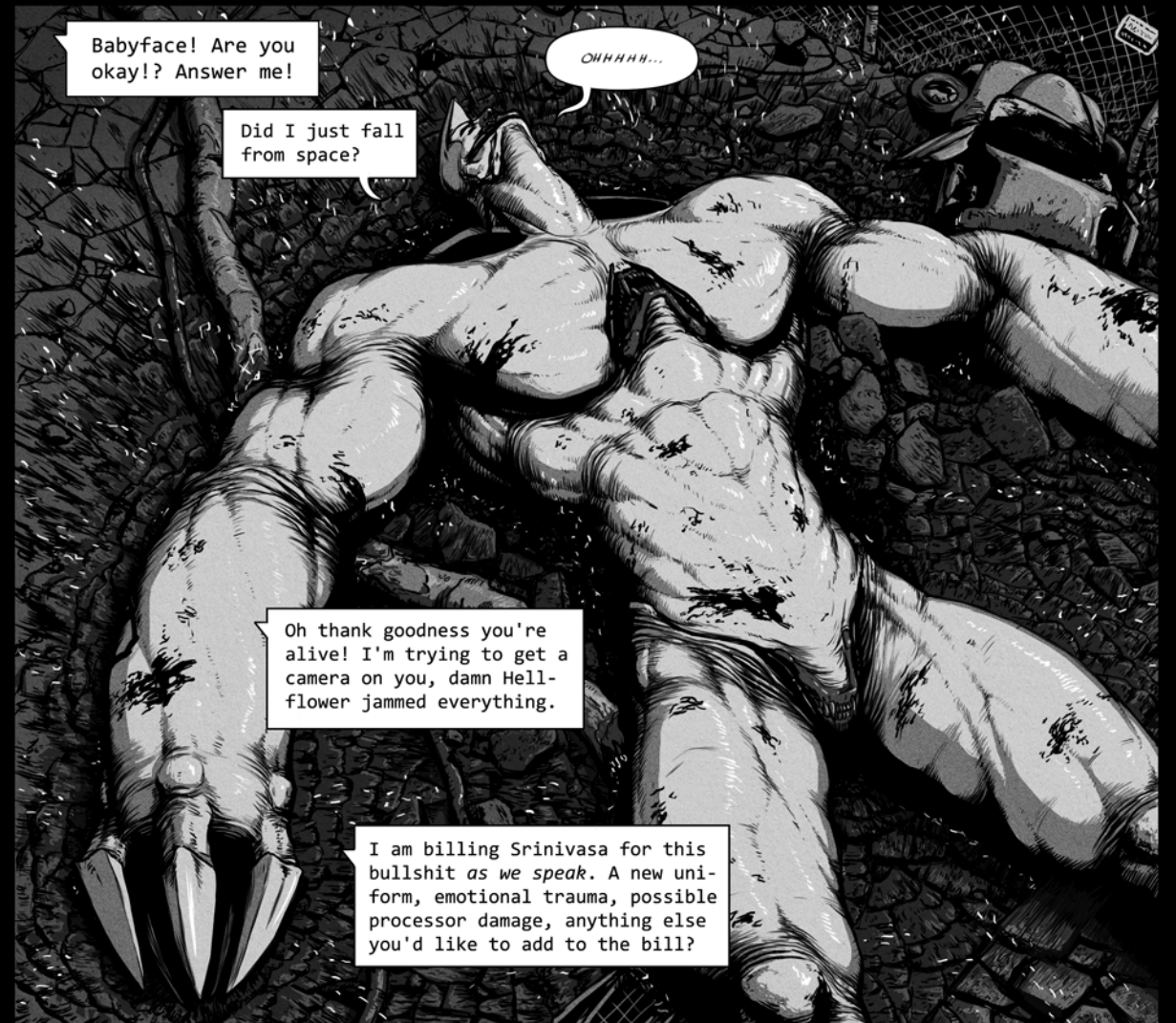
Shit.



Babyface! Are you okay!? Answer me!

Did I just fall from space?

OH HHHH...



Oh thank goodness you're alive! I'm trying to get a camera on you, damn Hell-flower jammed everything.

I am billing Srinivasa for this bullshit as we speak. A new uniform, emotional trauma, possible processor damage, anything else you'd like to add to the bill?



Wait.

I'm seeing triple...

Am I missing an eyeball?



Ah. Yes, I'll add that to the bill.

Aha! Satellite cams are back up. You should be safe now. The Hellflower is gone and this dumbass stunt is over. I am also compiling the most elaborate insult ever known to mankind for Svin-rasa. An entire simulated universe of physics based on "yo momma" jokes.



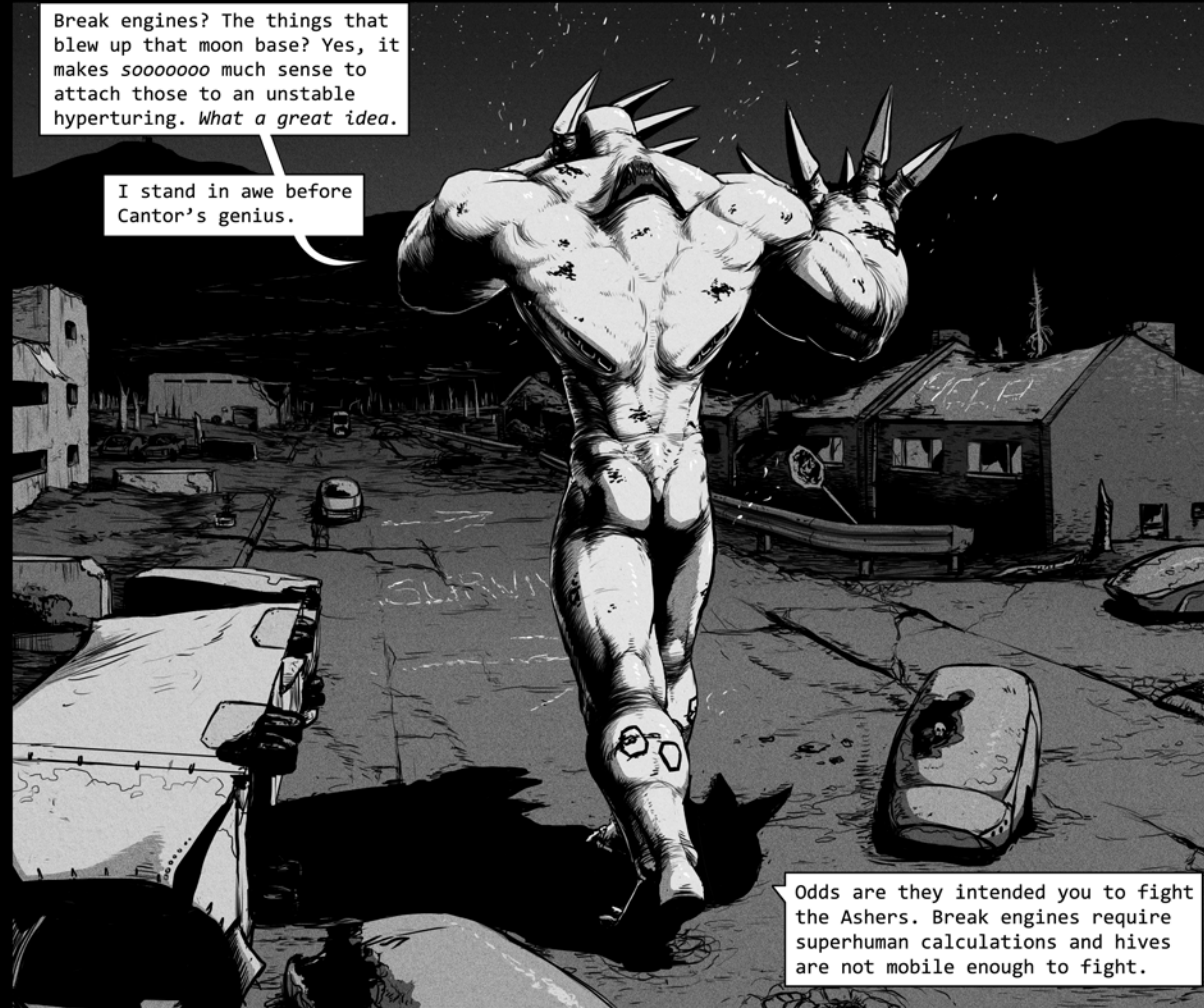
STOP IT. You said that this was going to be a quick test, but I just fell from space thanks to a giant chicken.



Of course.

If I knew this would happen I would not have gone through with the test.

We found out that Cantor manufactured you with two very advanced break engines.



Break engines? The things that blew up that moon base? Yes, it makes soooooo much sense to attach those to an unstable hyperturing. *What a great idea.*

I stand in awe before Cantor's genius.

Odds are they intended you to fight the Ashers. Break engines require superhuman calculations and hives are not mobile enough to fight.



No. This is insane.



You have to get these things off of me.



We're working on that. Cantor isn't cooperating with us. We have no idea how many of these engines exist and can't risk damaging them. We don't even know if we can use them without a hyperturing like you.

So what was with the missiles then?

Hive Srinivasa decided that you were more of a liability than an asset. They sent the Hellflower to put you in the path of a series of ICBMs. I convinced them that we needed your break engines for Aphelion. I think I did anyways. This is hive politics now, there could be ulterior motives.

Let me get this straight. You run this test, find out I have WMDs made by a crazy savant hive, another hive freaks out, and you convince them to not kill me because I have Asher killing fists or something.

In a nutshell. Yes.

You're seriously thinking of allowing me to keep the break engines to fight Ashers? I'm a hyperturing that *murdered* people! I'm just *wearing* Brian's personality!

What's my half life before sanity complexing again? Four months? Maybe? A part of me was relieved when I saw the missiles.

Babyface, I like to think I'd attempt to save you even without your strategic value.

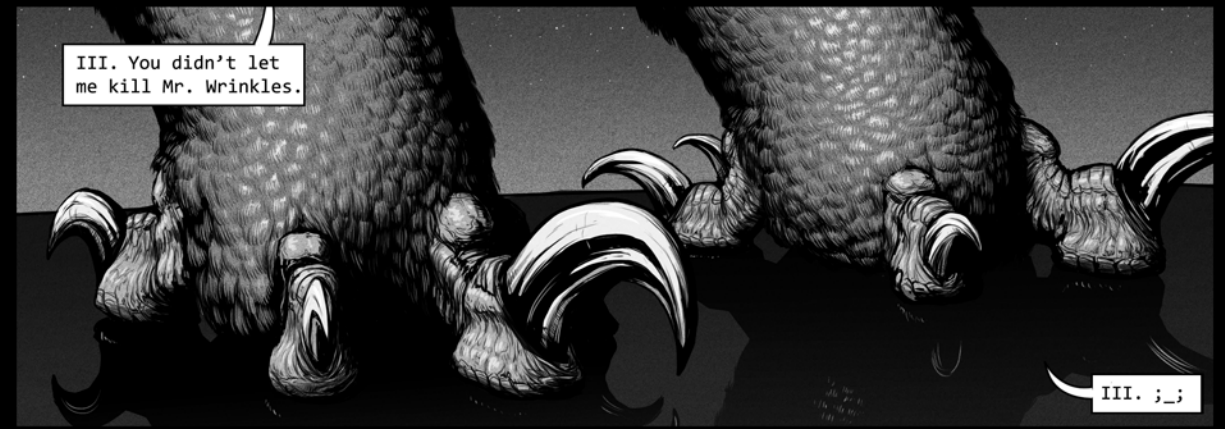
Furthermore, if you did care about the people your earlier instantiation killed you'd assist us in keeping the Ashers from killing more. Or I suppose you could let Brian die in vain as you wallow in self-indulgent pity. It's your choice.



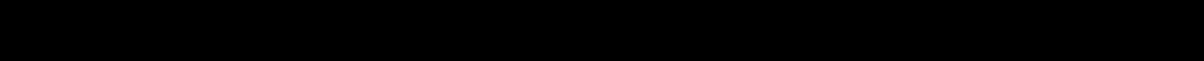
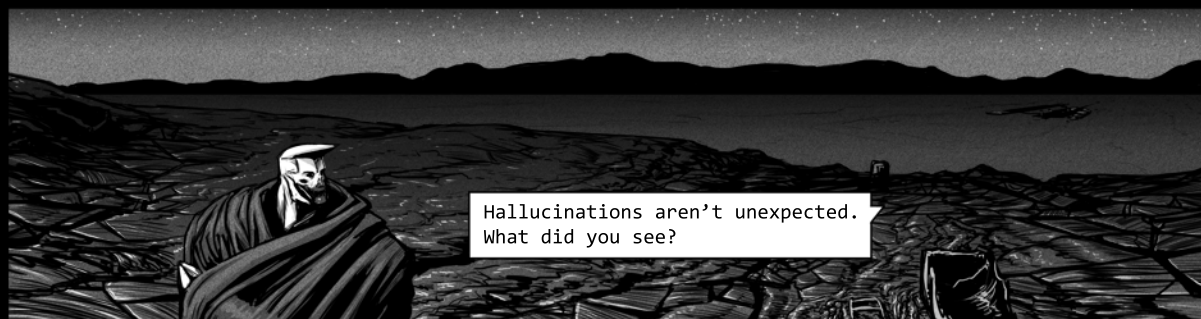
You really think I can fight these things?

It's possible.

Fine. When Aphelion rolls around in a few months I'll die trying to fight it. Problem solved.









# Hellflower Series - Overview

Colloquially referred to as “Hellflowers,” 12th generation multifunction combat vehicles are the most advanced weapon platforms known to the public ( hough there are rumours of even more advanced underwater experiments). Developed by Hive Srinivasa during the emergence of the first Sanity Complexed AI in the Automatic War, Hellflowers were subsequently rented to various militaries and deployed worldwide to combat Sane AI. After the first generation of Hellflowers dealt with the surge of sane AIs during and after the Automatic War, some were retrofitted to support operations during Aphelion; the rest chose retirement in space, assisting with outposts in the rest of the solar system, sleeping in orbit until called upon, or even embarking to Alpha Centauri.

This document offers some confirmed and some speculative information about Hellflowers. Disinformation is, as always, expected. Hellflowers themselves run close to sanity, but seem to suffer none of its effects. Like much about the Hellflowers, the reasons for this are secret, but it is speculated that their resilience is due to being a small hive themselves, with three female subpersonalities selected from human volunteers. Each subpersonality has her own specialty, such as aerial combat, network cracking, and AI forensics. When combined with the support of Hive Srinivasa, Hellflowers are capable of taking down even the most virulantly powerful sane AIs. Why they are always female remains a mystery, with theories ranging from female gender profiles handling sanity complex attacks better, to Hive Srinivasa having a secret army of male and other gendered Hellflowers, waiting to be unleashed.

No two Hellflowers are the same. They consist of modular components, always in a unique arrangement. The randomized nature of both their personalities and chassis force any foes to rapidly create new tactics against them, or to waste time by strategizing against millions of potential Hellflower configurations. To disguise which Hellflower is which, they often travel in blindingly bright sheaths of plasma, obscuring their forms.

There are few things Hellflowers cannot do, and one of them is stealth. Instead, they rely on “anti-stealth,” a term for spamming any foes with lasers and other EM signals, to overwhelm any sensors and conceal the actual Hellflower, hiding themselves in the cacophony.

In addition to projected anti-stealth and plasma shields, Hellflowers are covered in scintillating patterns emitted by phased array antennae, with wavelengths ranging from x-rays to radio-waves. These patterns are designed to confuse observers about the orientation and configuration of the Hellflower, making it difficult to predict how it will attack, harkening back to the dazzle camouflage of WWI and WWII. This camouflage is never expected to work for long. The processing power and sensors of sanity-complexed AIs is more than enough to break down the flashing patterns. However, parsing the camouflage wastes valuable processing power of the enemy AI, increasing lag between event and reaction. The Hellflower herself wastes little time in generating the patterns, which are provided ahead of time by a hive and updated anew for each mission.

Weaponry includes but is not limited to: diamond studded radulae, hypersonic missiles that carry anything from mirrored parasols to mini-nukes, pulse lasers, gauss guns with superconducting sabots, armed drones, high-frequency oscillating claws, and the feared “featherdust”

Featherdust consists of nanoscale machinery that recieves power from an external emitter, effectively weaponized industrial nanomachinery. Shaped like corkscrews or covered in cilia, featherdust rapidly squirms its way into any solid structure and disassembles it molecule by molecule. Due to having no internal power supply and dead-dumb programming, few defenses other than meters of lead shielding work, and eventually even that fails. The Hellflower can inject featherdust directly into the target via missile payload or her formidable jaws, and once there she can control it with her own emitter fields. The Hellflowers themselves are protected by carefully shaping the power emissions and using specialized proteins that deactivate a specific application of featherdust.

In general, featherdust has a half-life of a few days and will not activate outside of specialized electromagnetic fields, but accidents have occurred and the use of external power fields is inadvisable for baseline humans outside of Firewall II protected areas.

Energy is typically stored in superconducting batteries, and the immense electrical charge causes a repulsive force that requires heavy duty carbon allotropes to restrain. This stiffness contributes to the structural strength of the Hellflower. It could mean that low charges reduce strength, presumably Hellflowers can compensate for this effect.

There is some speculation that Hellflowers occasionally use nuclear isomers as a power source, atoms in which the nucleus is in a high energy unstable state. Unlike some power cells that use metastable isomers, Hellflower isomers are theorized to have half lives on the order of picoseconds. These isomers are kept from decaying with a sort of quantum zero effect, using constant observation to arrest their evolution in time. The moment the observation is lifted, the isomers decay and release energy.



Hellflowers have astonishing control over their geometry, down to each individual feather and can rapidly reconfigure themselves into hypersonic fighters, close combat grapplers, or orbital platforms covered in sloped armor and mirrored feathers.

This shape changing capability also allows for extreme redundancy. The Battle of Jakarta was won by Orchid-89, who returned to base with only one subpersonality and 35% of her original empty weight intact. She has since been rebuilt and assisted in the fight against Asher One.



No. 86 Squadron  
Flying Tridents

A picture taken in June 2082 shows the triumverate of Lotus-34 of 86th squadron pausing for a recharge at Rampur base.

Lotus-34 received multiple medals for her valor in the 5th battle of Aphelion and is still in active service.









# DO NOT FEED FERAL AI



**FERAL AI MAY CARRY VIRUSES AND DATA  
PARASITES THAT CAN INFECT YOUR SMARTS.  
FEEDING FERAL AI ALSO ENCOURAGES THEM TO  
VIEW HUMANS AS A SOURCE OF FOOD, FORCING  
RANGERS TO EUTHANIZE THEM WHEN THEY  
BECOME DANGEROUS.**