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THE PRINCESS

IN THIS ISSUE:

A DEVIANT MIND

TARA RESCUES A GIRL, SWEEPS HER OFF HER FEET...AND LATER WISHES SHE COULD SWEEP HER UNDER THE RUG! WHEN TARA MEETS NAJIMI, A SLAVE AT A DESERT KIOSK, IT BECOMES PAINFULLY CLEAR THE GIRL DOESN'T LIKE HER LOT AND WANTS OUT.

TARA AND THE STRESSED KIOSK OWNERS STRIKE A DEAL, AND TARA USES THE CREDIT CARD LUCKY SET UP FOR HER--TO BUY THE GIRL! TARA SOON REALIZES THE PURCHASE WAS A VERY BAD BARGAIN.

THE GIRL, OVER-PRIVILEGED ON HER OWN WORLD, IS SPITEFUL AND FOUL-TEMPERED. TARA IS TESTED TO THE LIMITS OF HER PATIENCE. THEIR ONLY HOPE IS TO CONTINUE THE TREK TO THE NEXT CITY...IF TARA DOESN'T KILL NAJIMI FIRST.



TARA AWAKENS IN A REGENERATION TUBE WITH NO RECOLLECTION OF WHO SHE IS AND WHERE SHE COMES FROM. THE INSIDIOUS TRUTH BEHIND TARA'S AMNESIA IS, SHE HAS A SECRET THAT MAKES HER WORTH HUNTING--AND IT'S FAR MORE TERRIBLE THAN ANYONE COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED. DOES TARA EVER FIND OUT WHO SHE IS AND WHERE SHE COMES FROM? FOLLOW THE ADVENTURE HERE, AND LEARN WHAT HAUNTING, DARK SECRETS LIE DEEP WITHIN...

A DEVIANT MIND

CREATED, WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY PAM HARRISON

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I'VE BEEN
WALKING
ALL NIGHT.

OVER MY RIGHT SHOULDER,
FAR IN THE DISTANCE, LIES
THE PLACE THAT WAS
BRIEFLY MY PRISON--

...BUT FOR
THE KINDNESS OF
SOME CREATURES
I COULD NOT EVEN
COMMUNICATE WITH.

I'M GETTING
HUNGRY. I'M NOT
SURE HOW LONG I
SLEPT, BUT IT
SERVED ME WELL.

I'VE SEEN NO OTHER
BEINGS LIKE MYSELF
SINCE I SET FORTH
INTO THE DARK TOWARD
WHAT LOOKED LIKE THE
LIGHTS OF A CITY.

JUST WHEN I BEGIN
TO FEEL TERRIFIED
THAT I'VE STEPPED
OUT INTO NOWHERE,
I SEE SOMETHING.





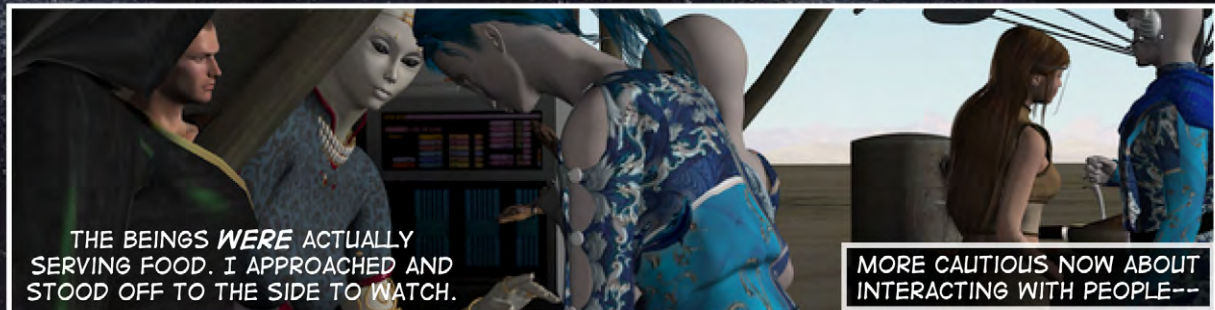
SOME SORT OF
DWELLING, OUT HERE
IN THE MIDDLE OF
NOWHERE?

I HAVE TO
ADMIT, I'M GLAD
TO SEE THEM.



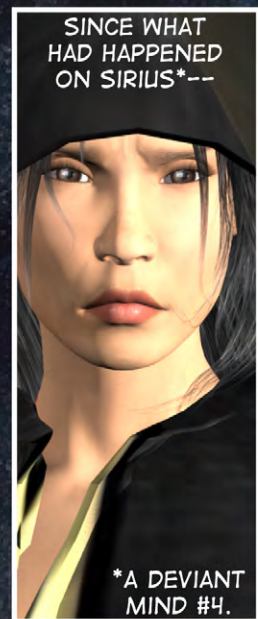
THAT'S CURIOUS.... WHAT
ARE THEY
DOING?

IS THAT *FOOD*
I SMELL?



THE BEINGS *WERE* ACTUALLY SERVING FOOD. I APPROACHED AND STOOD OFF TO THE SIDE TO WATCH.

MORE CAUTIOUS NOW ABOUT INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE--



SINCE WHAT HAD HAPPENED ON SIRIUS*--

*A DEVIANT MIND #4.



...I LET MY FOCUS DRIFT AND LOOKED TO SEE--

...IF ANY MORE BOUNTY HUNTERS WERE ABOUT.



MY HEAD DIDN'T HURT ANYMORE WHEN I DID THIS.

NO MORE PAIN, DIZZINESS OR FAINTING.

THIS WAS GOOD.

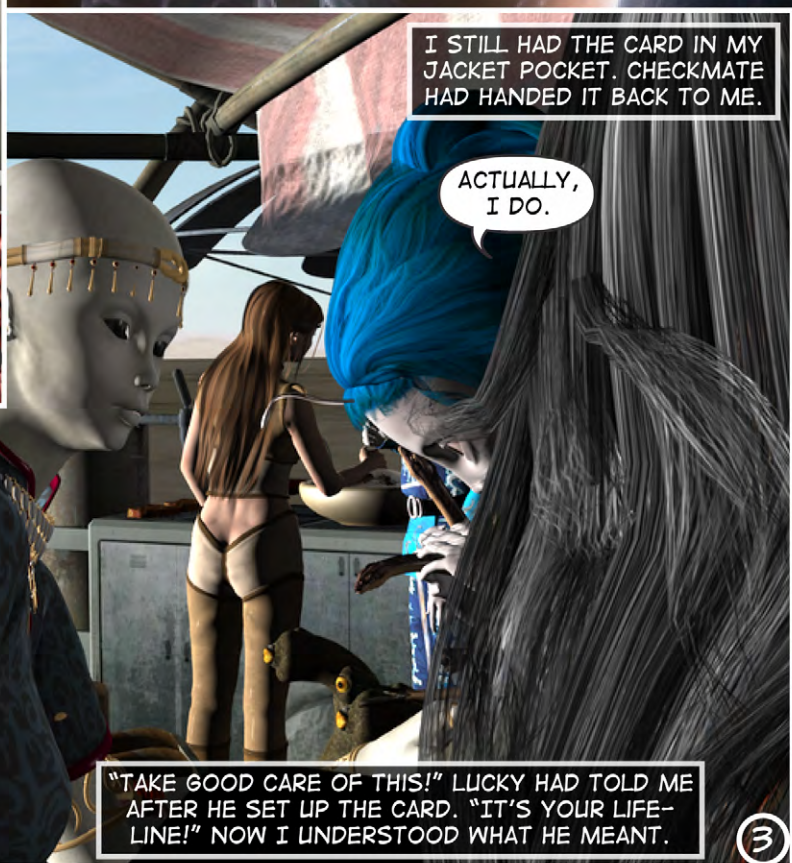


NO. I'M... KIND OF HUNGRY.

HAVE YOU BEEN ASSISTED?

SO, HOW DOES THIS WORK?

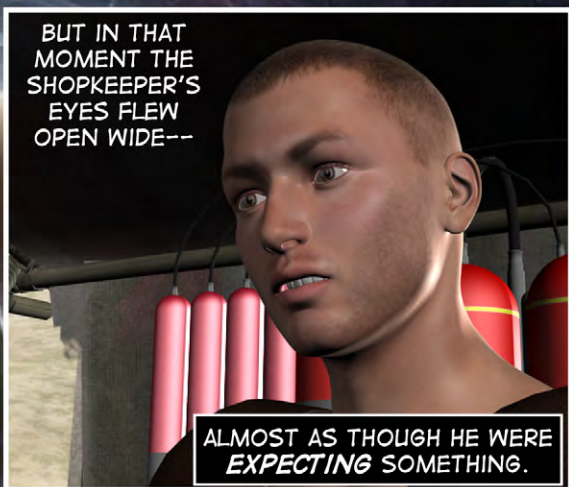
YOU HAVE CREDIT?



I STILL HAD THE CARD IN MY JACKET POCKET. CHECKMATE HAD HANDED IT BACK TO ME.

ACTUALLY, I DO.

"TAKE GOOD CARE OF THIS!" LUCKY HAD TOLD ME AFTER HE SET UP THE CARD. "IT'S YOUR LIFE-LINE!" NOW I UNDERSTOOD WHAT HE MEANT.



I WASN'T
REALLY IN THE
MOOD FOR THIS.

ALL I WANTED WAS TO
FINISH MY FOOD AND
GET MOVING AGAIN.

QUIT
CHASING
OFF ALL OUR
CUSTOMERS!!

**LET GO
OF ME!!!**

LET GO, OR
I'LL **MAKE
YOU PAY!!**

--**YOU**
SHOULD BE
MORE WORRIED
ABOUT THAT.

YOU'VE BEEN
NOTHING BUT A
PAIN IN THE--!

I **REGRET**
BUYING YOU!! BUT
YOU **COULD** HAVE
ENDED UP--

...SOMEWHERE
WORSE. DID
YOU EVER THINK
OF **THAT?**

ENOUGH.
BOTH OF YOU
ARE CREATING
A SCENE.

CLEARLY, AKAR,
THIS SLAVE IS
NOT GOING TO
WORK OUT.

@#%!
YOU'RE
TELLING **ME**.

HMF. **YOU**
HEARD THE
KNIGHT.

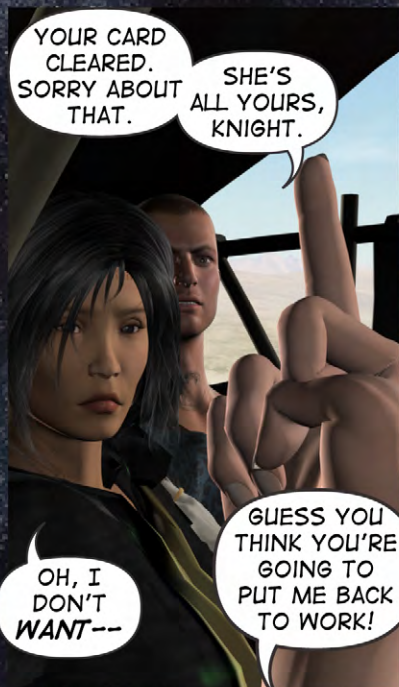
NOW **LET
ME GO**.

HISS!!!

YES, THAT IS WHEN I
SHOULD HAVE PACKED MY
THINGS AND KEPT MOVING.







YOUR CARD
CLEARED.
SORRY ABOUT
THAT.

SHE'S
ALL YOURS,
KNIGHT.

OH, I
DON'T
WANT--

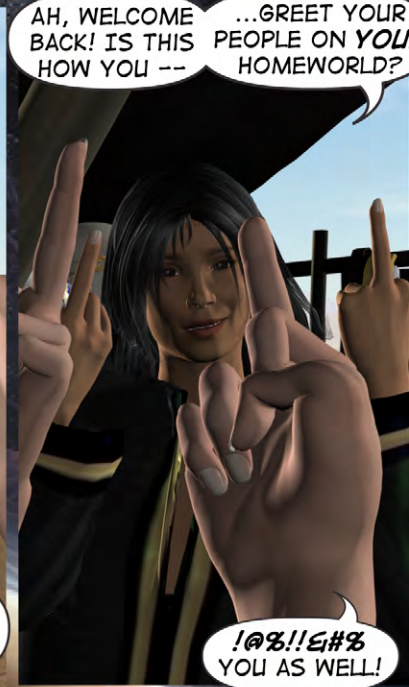
GUESS YOU
THINK YOU'RE
GOING TO
PUT ME BACK
TO WORK!



WELL, YOU
WON'T! I'M SICK
OF ALL OF YOU!!!

!@%!!£#%
YOU, AND
!@%!!£#%
YOU--

--AND
!@%!!£#%
YOU, TOO!!!



AH, WELCOME
BACK! IS THIS
HOW YOU --

...GREET YOUR
PEOPLE ON *YOUR*
HOMEWORLD?

!@%!!£#%
YOU AS WELL!



IT WOULD BE
THE FIRST TIME
AND THE LAST--

...THAT THE GIRL HAD
NO COMEBACK FOR
MY COMMENTS.

I GOT DIRECTIONS TO THE
NEAREST TOWN. IT WOULD BE
TWO DAYS' WALK ON FOOT. SO
I BOUGHT SOME FOOD TO
LAST UNTIL I ARRIVED THERE.



THE GIRL WATCHED US QUIETLY
AS I MADE MY PREPARATIONS
AND TURNED TO LEAVE. IT HAD
SUDDENLY DAWNED ON HER
WHAT HAD JUST HAPPENED.

HEY,
WAIT A
MINUTE--!

AREN'T
YOU GOING
TO TAKE ME
WITH YOU???

IN TRUTH, IT WAS *I*
WHO HAD NO INKLING
OF WHAT I HAD DONE.



NO. YOU ARE
FREE TO GO
HOME NOW.

I **BOUGHT**
YOU--BUT I
DON'T **OWN** YOU.
GO HOME.



IT NEVER
OCCURED TO
YOU, DID IT?

I'M NOT
FROM THIS
PLANET!

DORK!



I ALMOST
CHOKED AT
THOSE WORDS.

MY EYES WELLED UP WITH
TEARS. I WASN'T THIS HURT WHEN
KOHL SHOT ME POINT-BLANK.*

*A DEVIANT MIND #4.



BUT I DID NOT CRY. I
PULLED UP MY HOOD
AND KEPT MOVING.

**WAIT
FOR ME!!!**



**SLOW DOWN,
KNIGHT! I CAN'T
KEEP UP WITH YOU!**

WHAT MAKES
YOU FOLK
THINK I'M A
KNIGHT?

YOU WEAR
THE ROBE AND
SABERS!



I BET
YOU KNOW
HOW TO USE
THEM, TOO!

WHY'D
YOU BUY ME,
ANYWAY?

I'M NOT
ENTIRELY
SURE.

**HEY, WAIT
UP!!!**

**I'M
TIRED--!!**

THEN
GO BACK.

**NOT ON
YOUR
LIFE!!**

A FEW HOURS LATER:



I'M THIRSTY!

KEEP WALKING.

KEEP WALKING!

I'M HUNGRY!!

I'M TIRED!!

KEEP WALKING OR GO BACK!



SEE THOSE CLIFFS IN THE DISTANCE?

CAN'T WE STOP THERE AND REST FOR THE NIGHT?



THAT WAS MY PLAN.



THANK THE GODS---

I DIDN'T THINK THIS CRAZY \$@#% WAS EVER GOING TO STOP.



WE WILL BE THERE SOON. THEN YOU CAN REST.

GOOD TO KNOW.

SCREW YOU, LADY!

....

WHERE DID
YOU SAY WE
WERE GOING?

I DIDN'T.
BECAUSE I
DON'T KNOW.

JUST
HEADING FOR
THE NEXT
CITY.

SO WHERE
IS HOME?

FOR NOW,
IT'S ALPHA
CENTAURI.

ANYONE
WAITING FOR
YOU BACK
HOME?

YES. I
MISS HER
VERY MUCH.

I'M
READY TO
GO HOME.

WHAT DOES
"FOR NOW"
MEAN?

IT'S A
LONG
STORY.

WHO'S
"SHE"?
FAMILY?
LOVER?

YOU'RE FULL
OF QUESTIONS,
AREN'T YOU?

JUST LIKE TO
KNOW WHOM I'M
TRAVELING WITH.

GOOD
POINT.

I SHOULD
HAVE USED THE
SAME CAUTION.

SO HOW DID
YOU COME
TO BE HERE?

OUCH.
THAT'S A
LONG STORY,
TOO.

UUHHHMM...
WHAT ARE
YOU...?

OH, YOU
REALLY
SHOULDN'T---

OH, I
KNOW YOU'RE
LONELY.

AND I *KNOW*
YOU'RE A
DEVIANT.

YOU WOULD
NOT HAVE GIVEN ME
A SECOND GLANCE
OTHERWISE.

YOU HAVE ME
ALL WRONG. I
RAN AWAY.



SHE WOULD
HAVE **SEARCHED**
FOR YOU IF SHE
REALLY CARED.

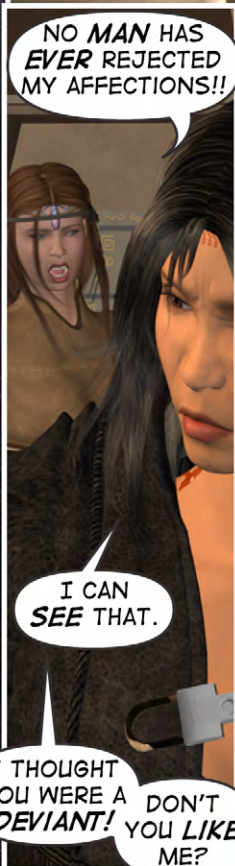
PERHAPS
I CAN MAKE
YOU **FORGET**
HER.



SIGH!

YOU'RE NOT
DOING THIS
BECAUSE YOU
LOVE ME.

YOU ONLY DO
IT SO I'LL MAKE
THINGS **EASIER**
FOR YOU.



NO MAN HAS
EVER REJECTED
MY AFFECTIONS!!

I CAN
SEE THAT.

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE A
DEVARIANT! DON'T
YOU **LIKE**
ME?



YOU CAN'T
WALK AWAY
FROM ME!!

NO MAN
HAS **EVER**--



I AM NOT
A **MAN**.

WHY
DON'T YOU
LIKE ME?

BECAUSE
YOU'RE
UGLY.

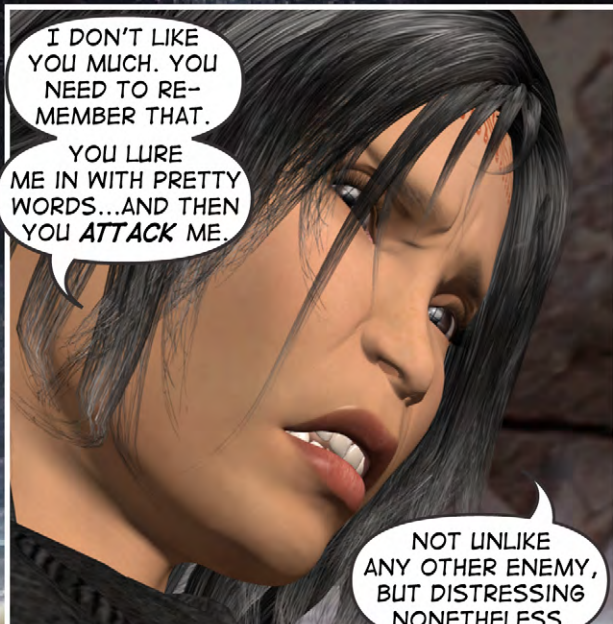
YOU CAN'T
CALL ME
UGLY!!



MY FATHER SAYS
I AM THE **MOST**
BEAUTIFUL GIRL
IN SEVEN STAR
SYSTEMS!!

NOT
WHERE IT
COUNTS.





THE CIRCLE OF STONES IN THE BACK OF THE STRUCTURE TOLD US WE WERE NOT THE FIRST TO CAMP HERE.

THE SABRES CAME IN HANDY FOR THAT. FOR FORCING HER TO DO AS I REQUESTED, THAT IS.

IN ADDITION, THEY IGNITED THE FIRE.

NIGHT FELL QUICKLY. I ORDERED NAJIMI TO FETCH SOMETHING TO START A FIRE WITH.

THE FIRE WAS A CALM REFUGE FOR INTROSPECTIVE THOUGHT. UNAWARE THAT SHE WAS IN THE CARE OF A TELEPATH--

NAJIMI'S THOUGHTS CAST WISTFULLY BACK TOWARD *HOME*. SOMETHING TERRIBLE *HAD* HAPPENED TO HER OUT THERE.

SHE DREADED TO SLEEP AND TO DREAM--

...LEST THOSE MEMORIES CREEP UP ON HER UNAWARES.

HER ABILITY TO DREAM FASCINATED ME, AS I COULD NEVER *REMEMBER* MINE.

AS MUCH AS *I* WANTED TO REMEMBER, *SHE* WANTED TO *FORGET*.

IT MADE ME WONDER IF MY ORDEAL HAD BEEN FAR WORSE.

AT THE CORE OF HER RAGE WAS FEAR. NO ONE WOULD EVER GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO HURT HER...NEVER AGAIN.

BENEATH THAT LAY A SENSE OF DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT AND LOSS.

"SHE WOULD HAVE *SEARCHED* FOR YOU IF SHE REALLY *CARED*."

NOW IT SEEMED THAT I FINALLY UNDERSTOOD HOW *LOST* WE TWO WERE.



YOU'RE GOING TO LIE DOWN NEXT TO ME--

...AFTER I WAS SO **HATEFUL** TO YOU?

I KNOW YOU REALLY DIDN'T MEAN IT.



YOU WERE SPEAKING FROM PAIN.

DON'T TRY TO UNDERSTAND ME. YOU CAN'T.



PERHAPS I UNDERSTAND YOU BETTER THAN YOU THINK.

I DOUBT THAT. WHAT'S YOUR NAME, ANYWAY?

MY NAME IS TARA.



WHAT ABOUT **YOU**? TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I CAN'T --I DON'T REMEMBER.

ARE YOU SERIOUS?? MY FAMILY IS ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT.

ALL I WANT TO DO IS GO HOME.

SHE SORTED THRU
HER MEMORIES OF
THOSE SHE MISSED---

IT'S
ALRIGHT.
I UNDER-
STAND.

...SOMETHING
THAT I COULD
NEVER DO.
ALL I HAD
LEFT OF MY
OWN PAST--

...WAS ONE SHORT DREAM THAT MADE
LITTLE SENSE*, AND IT DIDN'T BODE
WELL EVEN IF I DID FIGURE IT OUT.

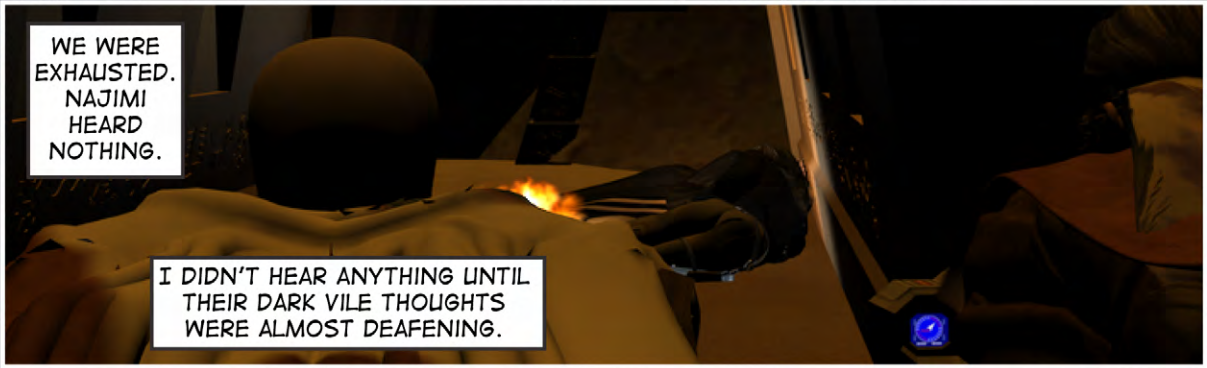
**A DEVIANT MIND #6*

YOU'RE
REALLY **NOT**
GOING TO HURT
ME, ARE YOU?

NO.
THAT DOESN'T
MAKE SENSE.

GET
SOME
SLEEP,
NAJIMI.

WE'LL BE
WALKING AGAIN
TOMORROW.



WE WERE
EXHAUSTED.
NAJIMI
HEARD
NOTHING.

I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING UNTIL
THEIR DARK VILE THOUGHTS
WERE ALMOST DEAFENING.



THEY WERE GOING TO
DO HIDEOUS THINGS TO
US, AND THEN KILL US--



...OR KILL US
AND DO HIDEOUS
THINGS TO US.

IT DIDN'T
MATTER TO
THEM.



AAAAA-
AAAAA-
AAAAAA-
AAHH!!!

FROM THE LIGHT OF THE CAMPFIRE,
NAJIMI COULD SENSE THEM,
STEALTHY PREDATORS IN THE DARK.



NAJIMI!!

STOP

SCREAMING!!



COME
TO ME.

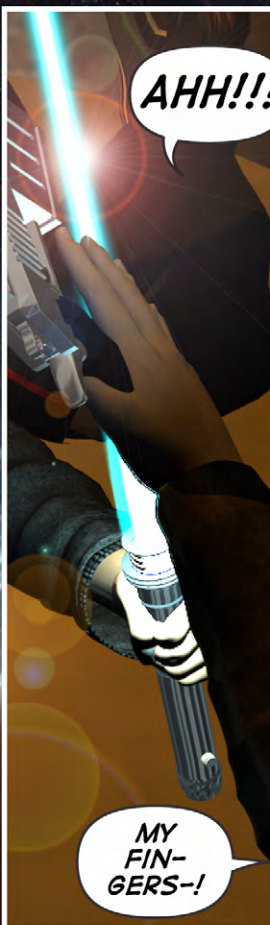
COME ON
INSIDE.



COME ON NOW,
LITTLE GIRL. PUT
THOSE DOWN
AND NO ONE
GETS HURT!

SOMEONE *IS*
GOING TO
GET HURT.

BUT I
DON'T THINK
IT'S GOING TO
BE ME.











LUCKY'S TIP
WAS DEAD-ON!
ONCE WE CLEARED
TARA'S "VENDOR
PURCHASES"---

AND NOW
HERE THEY
ARE!!

I'M AFRAID I'LL
HAVE TO CHECK
YOUR WEAPONS,
MISS--

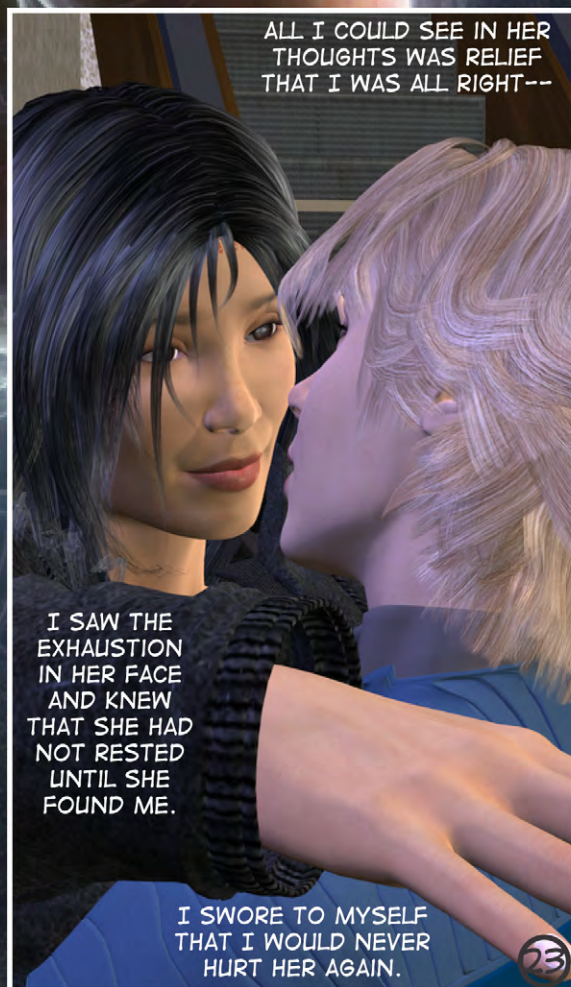
MISS? DO
YOU HAVE YOUR
PASSPORT?



ADRIAN--!!

SECURITY,
LET THEM
THROUGH!

WE CROSSED THAT
DISTANCE IN LESS
THAN A SECOND.



ALL I COULD SEE IN HER
THOUGHTS WAS RELIEF
THAT I WAS ALL RIGHT--

I SAW THE
EXHAUSTION
IN HER FACE
AND KNEW
THAT SHE HAD
NOT RESTED
UNTIL SHE
FOUND ME.

I SWORE TO MYSELF
THAT I WOULD NEVER
HURT HER AGAIN.



ISN'T
THAT SWEET.
THEY'RE IN
LOVE.

SEE, SHE
WAS LOOK-
ING FOR YOU!

OH, SURE IT'S
SWEET. THAT'S
ALL WE NEED.

BUT IT CER-
TAINLY DOES
COMPLICATE
THINGS!

HEART OF THE MATTER

NEXT!

I'VE JOINED THE CAUSE! WON'T YOU?

PROCEEDS FROM A
DEVIANT MIND #7 GO
TO SUPPORT LOVE146
AND GRACEHAVEN
SHELTERS.



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