



Credits

Stories:

Chapter 0 ..... Storm Kwick (Furaffinity: therapywiths)
Chapters 1, 2, 3 ..... Djarums
Chapter 4 ..... Shadowterm

Artwork:

Name	Credits	Pages
Ada Zhao	Furaffinity: adaoz Twitter: @Adaoz_Artz	Page 33, 34 (top), 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 67
Airu	Furaffinity: airu Twitter: @airukitsu	Page 75 (top left)
Coconut Milkyway	Furaffinity: coconutmilkyway Twitter: @COCONUTMILKYWAY	Cover
Commissar-K	Furaffinity: commissar-k	Page 75 (top right)
Cursed Marked	Furaffinity: cursedmarked Twitter: @cursedmarked	Page 56, 68
Fraulion	Furaffinity: fraulion	Page 42
Greevixor	Furaffinity: greevixor Twitter: @Greevixor	Page 74 (bottom left)
Grey White	www.greywhiteart.com	Page 70 (top left)
Incredible Crocodile	Furaffinity: incrediblecrocodile	Page 71
Kaittycat	www.kaitty.com Furaffinity: kaittycat	Page 66 (bottom)
Kitty Dee	Furaffinity: mxxxiii Furaffinity: kittydee	Page 25, 26 (top), 32
Lykanthrope	SoFurry: lykanthrope Twitter: @lykanthrope	Page 27 (bottom), 30 (bottom), 31
Mystik	Furaffinity: mystikfox61	Page 75 (lower left)
Nightterror	Furaffinity: nightterror grimfaust.tumblr.com Twitter: @sonofEa	Page 28
Nommz	Furaffinity: nommz	Page 24
PAC	tacorat.com	Page 26 (bottom), 27 (top), 29, 30 (top), 55 (top)
Pumpkin	Furaffinity: satoshi Twitter: @spoopycatt	Page 75 (lower right)
Seth-Iova	Furaffinity: seth-iova	Page 3 (left) Chapter 1: Page 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 (top), 17, 18, 19
Shiuk	shiuksalamander.tumblr.com Furaffinity: shiuk	Page 3 (right), 5, 6, 20, 21, 22, 23, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55 (bottom), 64, 66 (top), 69, 72, 73, 74 (top), 76, 77, 79
Sirod	Furaffinity: sirod	Page 70 (bottom)
Squeedge	squeedgeart.tumblr.com Twitter: @squeedgemonster	Page 74 (bottom right)
Zanna The Dragon	Furaffinity: zannathedragon Twitter: @zannathedragon	Page 70 (top right)
Zephra	artbyzephra.com Furaffinity: zephra	Page 34 (bottom), 35, 36, 37

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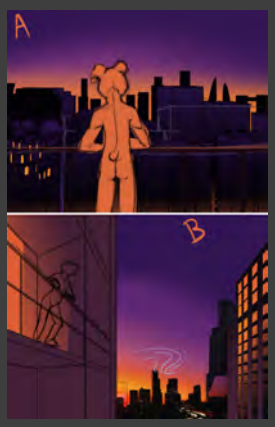
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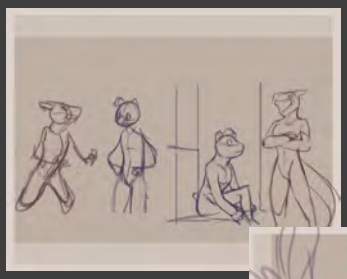
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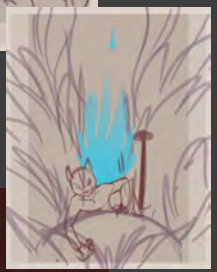
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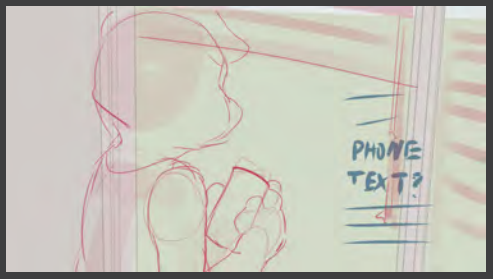


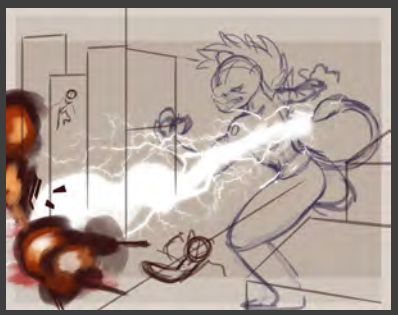


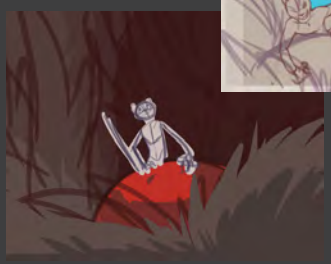














Chapter 0: Transcript of an Interview with Harbor Island Survivor Dr. Eileen Grigg

A middle-aged female lion sits down across the table from the interviewer.

Interviewer: Dr. Grigg, could you please introduce yourself. State your name, age, and occupation.

Dr. Grigg: My name is Dr. Eileen Grigg. I'm fifty-six years old. I was a dentist at Harbor Island Dental.

Interviewer: When you're ready Dr. Grigg, could you please describe for me the events of the attack on the sixth?

Dr. Grigg lets out a slow exhale before speaking.

Dr. Grigg: The first sign of anything wrong that day was when the power went out for the whole island. I had to cancel the rest of my appointments that day as a result, since we had no idea when it would come back on.



With no work to do, I decided to head home for the day. I called my husband Roy while I was headed for the Bayview Bridge...we both worked on the island but lived on the mainland...anyway, I was nearly to the bridge and was checking if Roy was going to be home early too. He worked at First Street Bank, and I wasn't sure if they'd hold him with the power out. It turned out they were going to finish out the work day as usual at the bank, regardless of power.

Since he would be getting home later than me I asked him to pick up some food once he was on his way...

Sorry, I guess those details don't really matter....It's all just still...sorry.

Dr. Grigg takes a deep breath and composes herself.

I got off the phone with Roy just as I made the turn onto the bridge. About forty feet onto the bridge I had to slam on my brakes because the person in front of me stopped their car somewhat suddenly. I wasn't sure what was going on when I saw them get out of the car and run to the bridge rail to look over. That was when I realized others had done the same. I turned my car radio off and rolled the window down to see what was up. I could hear the small crowd peering over the railing mutter and gasp. For a moment I thought someone had jumped, but then I noticed a massive dark shape moving around through the water.

I'd heard about the other attacks on the news, but at the time I didn't put two and two together, I just though a big sea critter might have gotten trapped in the bay.

It didn't take me long to realize what was really happening. The figure moved under the bridge and the whole thing shuddered violently.

I heard screaming and saw the middle of the bridge start to sink down, that's when it burst out of the water with a massive splash.

Interviewer: Can you describe the creature in detail?

Dr. Grigg: The creature looked like a massive monstrous otter, at least 30 feet from toe to tip...very muscular limbs with long claws...I was terrified.

I got a better look later on. The thing's fur was a reddish brown and very thick and sleek. Its tail was as muscular as the rest of it; it was using it to smash up buildings later. The creature's eyes seemed to almost glow, as did the thing...the pearl, I think they call it...on its chest.

Interviewer: Thank you; you can resume your account.

Dr. Grigg: In a panic, I threw my car in reverse as the otter thing climbed up onto the bridge, causing it to collapse into the water even faster…I think that's what it was trying to do… it was trying to bring the bridge down.

I reversed as fast as I could in panic until I backed into another car. The jolt from the crash left me disoriented and dazed…by the time I regained my composure the otter thing was gone and so was most of the bridge. My car wasn't going anywhere, so I got out and staggered over to the side of what was left of the bridge…even if backing up into another car wasn't the safest way to react, I think it saved my life. There was only about 10 feet of bridge left past where my car was…all the people that had gotten out of their cars to look in the water were gone…I could still hear screaming from onlookers…that's when I heard a storm siren go of.

I was still a little out of it processing everything when my phone rang. It was Roy; he'd heard what had happened at the bridge on the radio…I guess I'd been out of it long enough for the news to have spread…I told him I was okay but my car wasn't. He explained that the storm alarm was a signal for people to evacuate the island. Roy asked me if he should pick me up, but I told him to evacuate. His work was closer to the North Bridge than to me, and the creature had left the area so I was safe for the moment.

After I got off the phone I looked around to see if anyone was hurt… that's when I saw the person I backed into was slumped at their wheel. I felt terrible for not checking sooner; it was my fault they were hurt. I got the first aid kit out of my car and went to check on the driver. He was a male coyote, about my son's age. Thankfully he was breathing, just knocked out from hitting his head on the steering wheel when I ran into him. I lightly shook the coyote and roused him back to consciousness. He was understandably disoriented so I did a quick check for a concussion, his eyes responded normally to light, and after a few moments he was pretty coherent.



The young man introduced himself as Eli. He was actually very sweet and understanding about me crashing into him given the circumstances…at this point we were the only ones left in the area. Everyone was headed for the north part of the island. With Bayview gone North Bridge was the only other way off the island by car…that option wasn't around long though. Apparently when the otter monster has disappeared, it had gone under the water and headed for North Bridge.

Eli and I had started heading north on foot when I got a call from Roy. It was hard to make out what Roy was saying… there was so much background noise…screaming and sounds of destruction…

Dr. Grigg takes a moment to clear her throat.

What I managed to make out was that North Bridge was gone…the monster was attacking…

Roy said he was heading back to the bank…well…he yelled it…it's the only way I could hear him over the chaos.

The last thing I heard from Roy's end of the line was my husband cursing followed by a clatter and the line going dead. From the sound of it, I'd guessed he'd dropped his phone…or maybe that was just wishful thinking. I tried calling back but it went straight to voicemail.

Heading for the bank, really was the best idea. The building was sturdy and secure…the only way left off the island was by water, and there was no way I was going to do that with a giant malicious otter thing lurking around…there'd be no way to outrun it in the water.

I decided to make for the bank myself. I asked Eli if he wanted to come along. He thought it sounded like a good idea, so we continued north. We eventually found a pair of abandoned bikes, it felt a bit silly to ride bikes in a crisis, but it was much faster than going on foot…

The most surreal part is that we were biking closer to the area being attacked. My survival instincts kept telling me to turn back, but I wanted to see my husband. Also, the otter monster had to have have been able to circle the island in about 15 minutes, so there was no guarantee the part of town we started in would stay safe for long.

Eli was really very sweet. A young guy like him could have easily out-biked an old broad like me, but he stuck around and made sure I kept pace.

The start of the journey was eerily silent, that part of the city abandoned…but the closer we got, the more we heard screaming…and panic…and saw people running by. Once we started getting close, the streets were congested with cars that got blocked up during the failed evacuation. We stuck to the sidewalk, careful not to run into anyone fleeing on foot…

It really got scary when we started hearing the destruction… the sounds of buildings getting torn apart…the sound of screams that suddenly gets silenced…I don't believe the

monster wanted anything more than to trap everyone on the island and then destroy and kill…it was like it was playing some sick game with us.

When we finally arrived at the bank the beast was close…a creature that big can't exactly hide easily on land…its head would sometimes pop up behind buildings on the next street over as if it was looking for victims. I could feel it homing in on us…

We ran into a problem when we got to the bank. The door was locked.

Eli, bless his heart, tried in vain to kick the door in, but that was hopeless.

The otter creature climbed on top of a building down the street…I remember thinking 'this is it…this is how I die' as it hopped down onto our street after tearing into the building.

I breathed a tentative sigh of relief as I saw someone I recognized sprinting down the sidewalk toward us. It was my husband's boss, Mr. Cecil…I'd never seen the elderly hare looking so spry…I suppose fear and adrenaline can do that…he was bleeding, and he already had a set of keys ready in his hand.

Eli moved aside and Mr. Cecil unlocked the door, letting us come into the bank with him…

We left the door unlocked so others could join us and headed into the vault…

No other survivors ever came into the bank…

Roy…

Dr. Grigg takes a moment to wipe tears from her eyes.

His body has yet to be found. Officially he's 'missing'…part of me still hopes they find him alive…they are still digging through rubble after all…but the chances of that get slimmer every passing day.

Dr. Grigg pauses for a long moment before continuing.

While we hid in the vault, I tended to Mr. Cecil's wounds best I could with what I had on hand. They weren't dire, but I imagine he needed stitches once we were rescued. After a while it became evident that the attack was over and the military was retaking the island and evacuating people.

When I first left the bank I looked back and saw the outside of the building had deep scratch marks, and some of the roof had been torn off.

Dr. Grigg seems to shudder.

Eli and Cecil were taken on one of the early transports out. I decided to stick around and help tend to the wounded… it wasn't me being selfless…I wanted to find my husband…I kept hoping I'd find him amongst the wounded and the survivors…

Interviewer: How have things been for you since the attack?

Dr. Grigg: It's been hard, without Roy around…I've been staying with family. I'm twice a mother and three times a grandmother, and they have been a godsend in this dark time…

I'm currently making arrangements to move into our family vacation home up in the north woods…

This attack wasn't the first of its kind, and it wasn't the last… hearing about the attacks increasing in frequency on the news terrifies me…

Since the attack, anytime I'm in a populated area I get anxious…like I'm playing with fire and any second the ground is going to quiver and a building down the street from me is going to be torn asunder. That's why I'm moving to the vacation home…the area is sparsely populated and is a low priority target. I'll be able to sleep soundly at night again…at least I hope.

Interviewer: Thanks for speaking to us Dr. Grigg.

Dr. Grigg and the interviewer shake hands.

Dr. Grigg: What exactly was this interview for?

Interviewer: I'm a recruiter with Sanctuary. This interview was to determine your suitability for a position within our organization.

Dr. Grigg: Sanctuary? What would Sanctuary be interested in a middle-aged dentist?

Interviewer: Your name was put forward by another member. We have special interest in survivors of attacks. Those who have first-person experience with the Juggernauts and who will have a vested interest in making sure as few people as possible are impacted by these attacks.

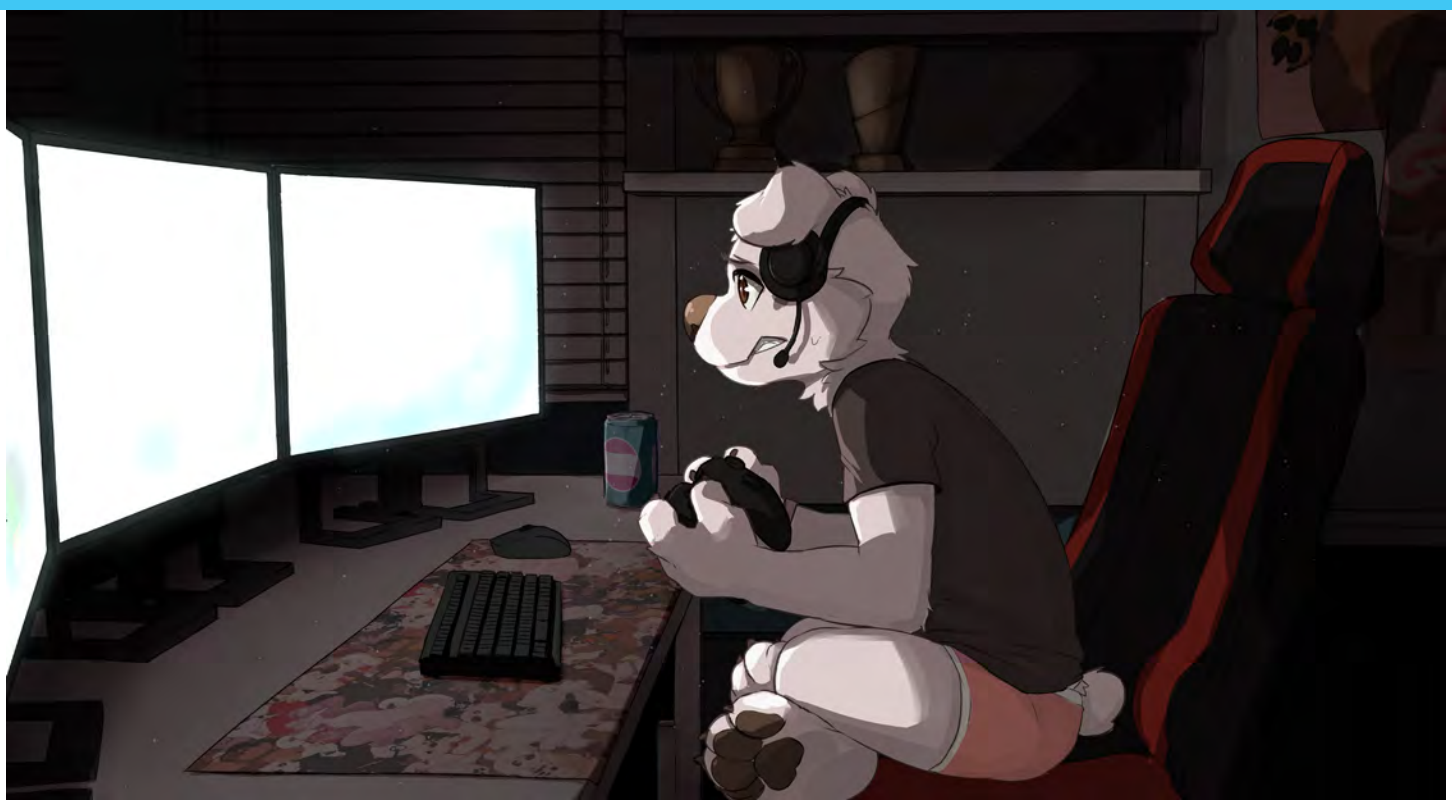
Dr. Grigg: Who put my name forward?

Interviewer: You were put forward by a Mr. Elijah Cross. I believe you knew him as Eli. Mr. Cross was impressed by your ability to stay composed during the crisis and thought you would be an excellent addition to our team. Based on this interview I am inclined to agree. You strike me as a resilient woman, a survivor. Someone will be in touch to go over the position we will be offering you. I do hope you'll be joining us.

The interviewer exits.



Chapter 1: Escape



"No... No.... No, no, no! Rrrrrrff!"

The white German Shepherd grips his controller bitterly, baring his teeth at the screen illuminating his room. The controller clacks and creaks under his frantic paws.

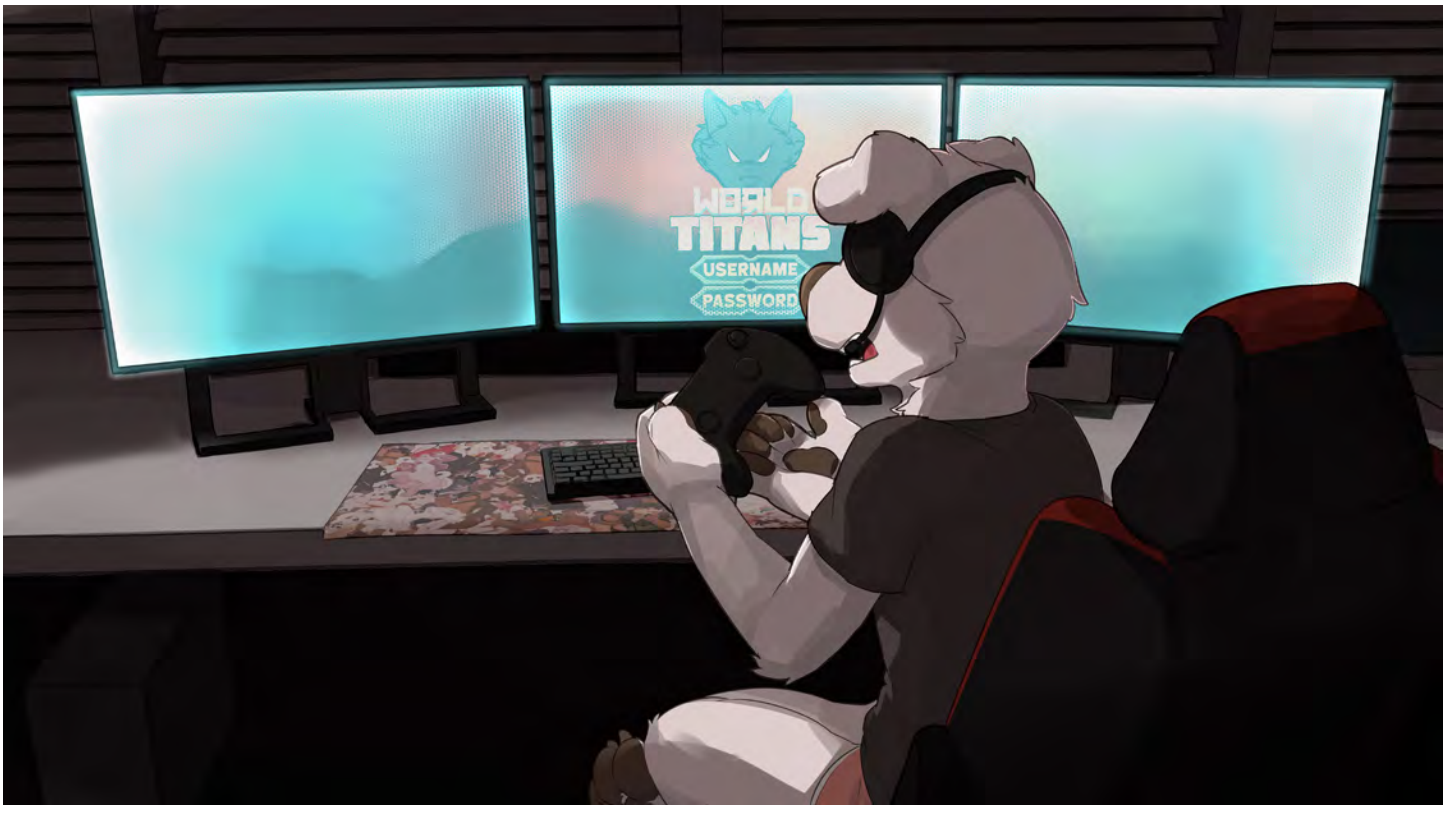
"Aarg! Where are you guys?! I've almost got hi- goddamnit!"

He growls into his headset as the all too familiar World of Titans respawn timer washes over his monitor. With an exasperated sigh, the shep leans back in his creaky chair as the tension leaves his body. He rubs his strained eyes as he listens to his headset and a smirk grows on his muzzle.

"Yeah, yeah" he chuckles "I guess I ran ahead, but you guys are so slow!" He says with a devilish grin. "Okay, this time we work toge-". He stops short as a notification pops up:

-Disconnected from World of Titans, trying to reconnect-

"Oh, c'mon..." The pup grumbles at this new annoyance. "Guys, I got disconnected, just give me a second. Hello?" He raises





an eyebrow, pushes his chair back and leans down to look at his modem nestled in a tangle of wires under his desk. Deciding to take a closer look, he crawls under his desk. The cord of his headphones proves to be a little too short for this investigation and get pulled off of one of his ears. That's when he freezes, the siren in the distance now catching his attention. He stays still, hunched under his desk for a few seconds, pulls off the other half of his headphones, disbelieving what he's hearing. He crawls out and with his ears perked up he rushes over to the window facing the city center. His widened blue eyes dart all over the night sky to no avail. He pulls out his phone to text his mom.

This is a drill right?

The pup holds his phone expectantly, his ears perked up listening for anything out of the ordinary, once more peering out into the dark skyline. The phone vibrates in his paw.

-Can't send, try again?-

"Shit."





The pup promptly scrambles to get dressed while mashing his phone to resend the text. He bursts out the front door and bounds out onto his lawn. The white shepherd stands there in the crisp night air in only jeans and a well-worn "World of Titans" t-shirt. He rubs his cheek dot nervously as he looks again in the direction of the sirens. He's so transfixed on the horizon he barely notices the little groups of neighbors out in the street all gazing in the same direction.

"Jack! Is your mother home?" his neighbor, Rose, yells from across the street upon seeing the young shepherd. "Does she know anything about this? This is just a drill right?"

Just as the shep is about to respond, a distant explosion lights up the sky, catching their attention. Amid the red glow, a familiar silhouette looms on the horizon for all to see. Jack's fur stands up and his eyes widen while he gasps, exclamations of "the monolith" pop up around him from the various clusters of neighbors huddled on the dimly lit street.

Jack distractedly responds "No, Rose. This is not a drill".





With that, the determined pup beelines for the backyard fence and fumbles around in the dark for his bike.

Rose yells tensely as Jack disappears "Wait! You're not going to the Lance already are you?"

Jack rushes his bike out from around the house "Just doing what I'm told Rose. You should go see what the news has to say." Jack then mounts his bike and heads off. He doesn't respond as Rose yells from behind him.

"It's way too early for a full Evac?! Right?!"

Jack pedals through the dimly lit streets passing groups of onlookers pointing to the horizon. More cars dotted the streets than usual for this time of night, all heading toward the blue glow of the Lance. A blue streak on the horizon catches the pups eye. He screeches to a halt and notices a few huddled groups within earshot who let out a cheer here and there. A slight smirk grows on Jack's face, and he mutters to himself "Get 'em, mom." He pedals faster with a newfound sense of hope.

As Jack approaches his destination, he sees a familiar figure leaning on his cane looking out into the night sky like everyone else.





The large bear's ear turns, hearing the approaching bicycle. As Jack dismounts the bike and lets it fall on the grass, the bear directs his gaze toward him. The ursine rises an eyebrow, but shows no sign of concern, and in fact has the sliver of a comforting smile on his muzzle upon seeing the young white shep.

"She must already be out there if you're coming here alone. You make it here without too much trouble, kiddo?"

Jack runs up and hugs the bear around his tummy instead of answering. Only after a good squeeze does a muffled answer emerge from the bear's fur.

"Yeah, I'm okay. "

Jack turns to regard the now numerous blue streaks in the sky. "Which one do you think is her?"

The bear scoffs in his low rumbly tone, "The one kicking that Juggernaut's ass, no doubt."

They both stand there for a moment, getting lost watching the dancing lights. The bear ruffles the pup's head fur and turns toward the house, making his way inside. Jack is engrossed in the display, studying every blue streak for signs of victory. His attention is abruptly broken.





"Alright kiddo, I don't think you, or especially me, want to disobey your mother's orders now, do we?"

Jack turns to see the bear, his large frame making the doorway look small, his lush white fur accentuated by the dim porch light. He's got a backpack over one shoulder and a jacket draped over his arm. The shepherd's ears perk up and his eyes widen.

"Shi... crap."

"Kinda noticed you didn't bring anything."

"I-I just high-tailed it outta there like I was supposed to. I was in the middle of a game and then I just split..."

A blush comes to Jack's cheeks as he rubs his cheek dot feeling a little embarrassed he left home with nothing but the clothes on his back. The bear steps up and drapes a jacket around the pup. The jacket is ridiculously oversized on Jack, the back has the D.A.V.D logo beautifully embroidered with the letters LEVI arching across the top. All the tension leaves Jack's body. He looks up to meet the bear's reassuring brown eyes and smiles. Levi smiles back noting his pup is a bit calmer and nods toward the car.

"Don't worry 'bout that, I'm sure we'll be back in no time. And if not you can get anything you need on Sanctuary."





The bear gives a comforting smile and ruffles Jack's head fur again. Jack glances back at the ensuing battle then follows Levi reluctantly to the car.

Throughout the neighborhood the drive is slow going, definitely busier than what is normal for this time of night but not a complete traffic jam. Jack, restless, his eyes darting to the rear-view mirror off and on, turns on the radio and closes his eyes to listen.

"...records show that the last category 3 to make landfall was over a year ago in Neo Tokyo. We've yet to obtain any visuals of the new Juggernaut, but reports all seem to indicate this particular beast is black feathered, over 20 stories tall, and has laid waste to a sizable portion of the city already. Our local D.A.V.D. brigade has been dispatched and fully engaged for the past half hour. Casualties are high. The Oren City defense commander is on record saying everyone should be prepared for a full evacuation tonight. Oh, and looks like we have new details coming in about the Juggern- ..." CLICK.

Levi clicks off the radio and glances over at Jack. "An Evac don't mean nothing kiddo. All that means is our guys will need help from Sanctuary."





Jack silently fixes his gaze on the rear-view mirror, clutching the oversized D.A.V.D jacket around him closer. Levi looks back at the road and scoffs.

"Heck, when your mom and I were on Sanctuary we were unstoppable." Then wistfully he says, "Her hammer swing is the epitome of precision."

The drive in silence doesn't last much longer. The widening roads closer to the Lance accommodate the growing number of cars arriving at the base. Rows of parked cars are enveloped in the comforting blue glow. Shadows dot the hued landscape making their way to the awe-inspiring tower. Levi lights up a cigarette craning his neck to see if there are lines forming yet.

"Looks like it's smooth sailing Jack, let's get going while that's still the case."

The bear slowly turns after not hearing any response to see Jack looking distractedly up at the Lance, mouth agape.

The Lance, as it came to be called, has a circular base the size of 5 square football fields with walls glowing bright blue that can be seen for miles around. The building slowly curves inward, getting smaller as it juts up into the sky and pierces the scattered clouds. Awestruck, Jack speaks:

"It looks so different up close"

"That it does. Quite the marvel, ain't it?"

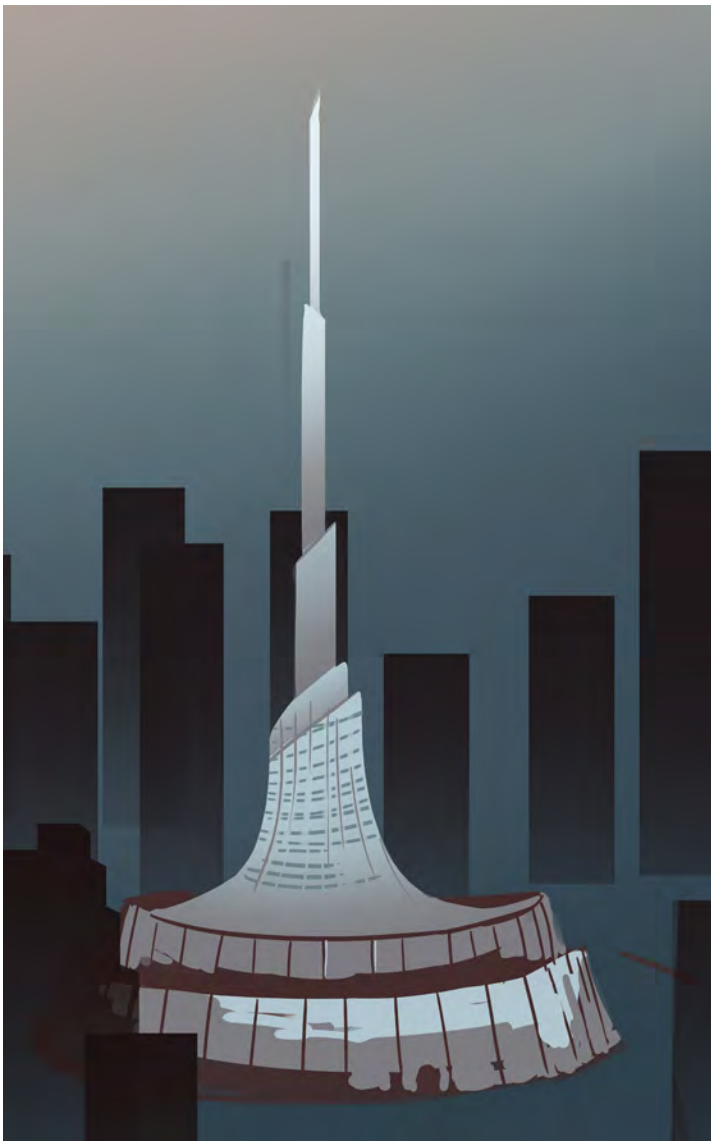
"Is Sanctuary here yet?"

"Trust me kiddo, you'd be able to see her from here. There is a chapter about it in your social studies class isn't there?" The bear says as he arches an eyebrow.

The shep rubs his cheek dot as he stammers "Uh... Well, most of that chapter just covers the Juggernauts actually".

The pair make their way to one of the many entrances at the base of the spire. Levi flicks his cigarette off into the night and approaches one of the entrance guards. A uniformed Doberman straightens up and salutes as the bear approaches with the shepherd in tow.

"S-sir? Is that..."





The bear nods.

"I didn't know you were stationed here!" The excited Doberman exclaims.

"I'm not stationed anywhere now, everyone knows that."

"Err… Of course. Right…" The guard lower his ears, slightly embarrassed.

Levi places a large paw on the guard's shoulder. "Eyes on the prize kiddo, this night might get a lot worse."

The Doberman lowers his ears more, "We haven't had a full Evac here for over 10 years! Our D.A.V.D's are some of the best defense on the planet."

Levi grips his cane, narrows his eyes and leans closer to the guard dog.

"Never… ever, underestimate these… monstrosities"

The Doberman huffs, perks up his ears and regains his vigilant stance. "Of course! Please take any elevator in an orderly manner. None are full as of right now."





Inside, the staging area floor sprawls out before the pair. The circular space has roughly a 100-yard radius. Large elevators line the perimeter of the massive room with multicolored lines directing people to each one. Informative signs are peppered throughout the space sporting various bits of information:

-Only one bag allowed per civilian before ascending-

-Please no smoking-

-Please allow children and the elderly on the platforms first-

With Levi's paw on the small of Jack's back he leads the pup onto a quarter full elevator. The mostly empty platform could hold about 4 large cars, but only has roughly 10-12 other people. The edge of the elevator is lined with thick glass and a brass bar handle. Jack walks over to the edge of the platform and gazes off into the horizon. He can overhear a couple of riders having an exuberant conversation.

"I heard it was a raven!"

"Has there ever been a raven?"



"Like once? Maybe? But that was ages ago! And it definitely wasn't a Category 3."

"Wow! A category 3, here!"

"I can't wait to see if they get any shots of it!"

"Oh wait! Got a message..."

"Huh! Me too!"

Several different cell phone jingles and tones go off in a jumbled mass of sounds, followed closely with some hushed gasps. Jack feels his father's paw on his shoulder as his own cell phone goes off in his pocket.

Jack slowly realizes he hasn't seen any more blue streaks off in the distance.



D.A.V.D.s



Pilots of D.A.V.D. gear are dispatched during a Juggernaut attack, and are equipped with either a hammer or a chisel used to break the Juggernaut's Pearl for its defeat.

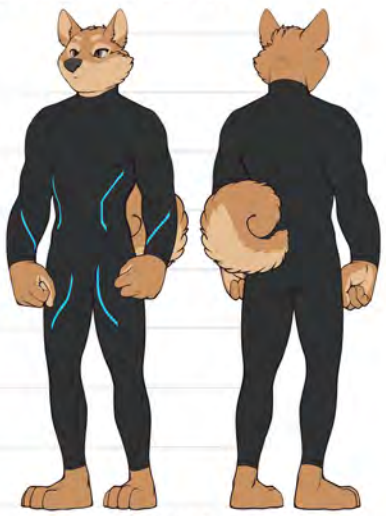
History

Soon after the surprise victory at Port Arthur, shards from the first shattered pearl were discovered to share the same gravity-defying properties as the pearl that powers Sanctuary. With this technological advance and the knowledge that the juggernaut scourge could actually be defeated, the world's first Juggernaut fighters were formed.

With the newly obtained pearl shards, Defensive Aerial Versatility Devices were made in hopes of finally being able to defend against what was considered to be an unstoppable disaster. D.A.V.D. gear, as it came to be called, enabled an able-bodied citizen to fly effortlessly to any height and position themselves to strike at the Juggernaut's newly-found weakness. The distinctive blue streaks they leave behind as they fly are usually met with cheers from the citizens below.

To recreate the victory at Port Arthur an attack strategy was born. The hammer and chisel formation has D.A.V.D. pilots working in teams. The two-person team must cooperate effortlessly to be in the perfect positions to achieve victory.

D.A.V.D.
CHISEL UNIT



SKINSUIT



ARMOR



D.A.V.D. GEAR





CLAW V.0.8a



CHISEL V.1.4c

D.A.V.D.
HAMMER UNIT



SKINSUIT



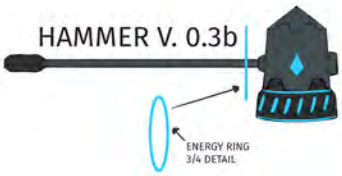
ARMOR



D.A.V.D. GEAR



HAMMER V. 0.3b



HAMMER IS POWERED BY A PEARL SHARD WITH TWO MODES.

FLIGHT MODE:
MAKES THE WEAPON LIGHT TO CARRY

SWING MODE:
PROVIDES THE WEAPON WITH WEIGHT TO GIVE IT A POWERFUL SWING









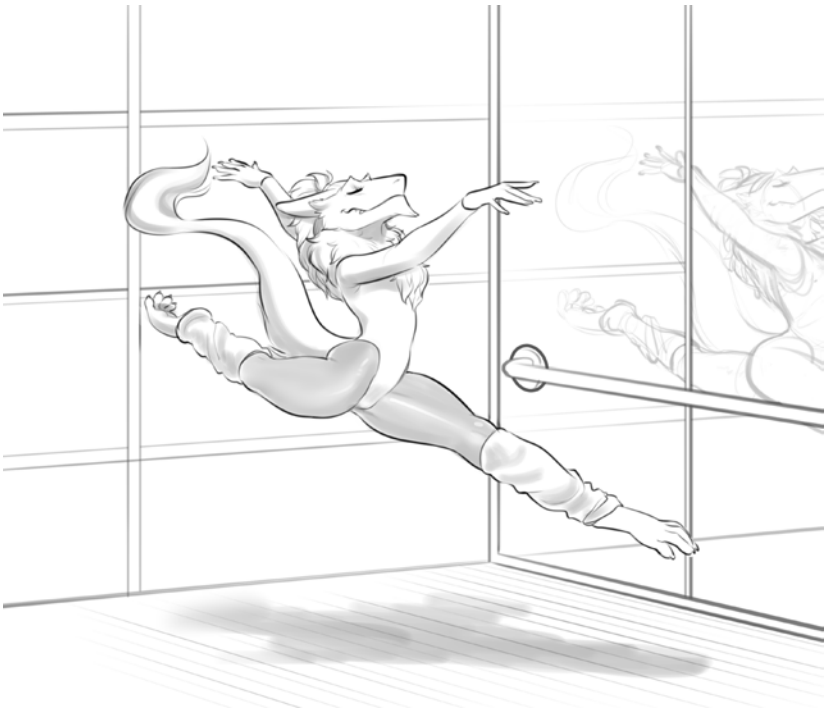








Chapter 2: Juggernaut



The black and white sergal leaps, and lands deftly. Sweat drips off her chin for the short amount of time she's still. The song "Wherever I Go" fills the almost empty yoga studio as she swings one arm out, then the other, all perfectly timed to the rhythm. She leaps again and lands in a crouch, then slowly rises. The beat drops and her arms and shoulders move sharply, hitting every beat with both force, precision, and delicacy. With her eyes closed she beats her chest along with the song passionately. She sees nothing except the next move coming up; where she has to be from moment to moment is defined by the song around her.

The song ends as she lets out a contented sigh, feeling like she just finally nailed her routine. As the sergal collects her things and shoulders her gym bag, she catches her reflection in the glass, and a glimpse of her own satisfied smile. The smile fades as she notices the cheetah on the stationary bike just past her reflection, watching her and the yoga studio like it's the latest blockbuster movie.

The sergal pokes her head out of the glass door. Her piercing blue eyes give her apparent audience member a look that can only be described as a mixture of annoyance and embarrassment. She stops, crosses her arms and raises her eyebrows. The cheetah leaning on the handlebars wasn't even cycling anymore; her round ears perk up as she snaps out of her entranced state.

"What?" The cheetah says through a roguish smile. "I can't help it Jolie! You are better than FNN!"

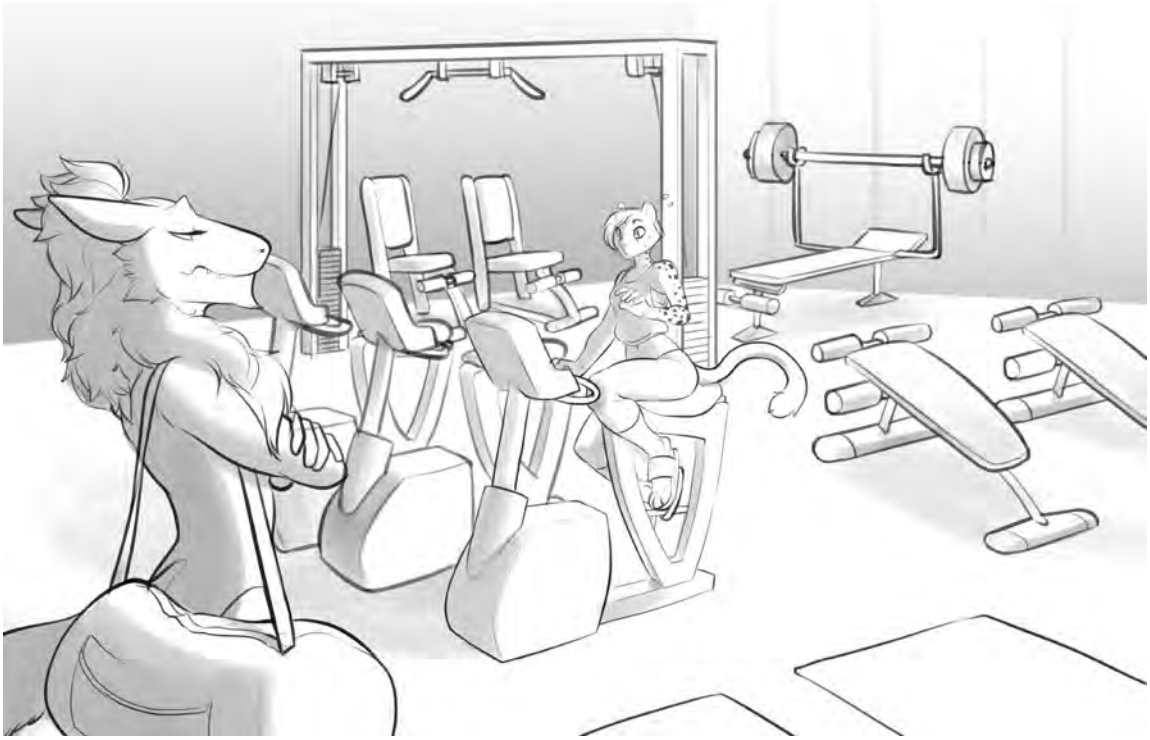
Jolie sheepishly runs her paw through her sweaty, matted fur. "It's nerve wracking to know someone is watching me. Hell, were you even cycling?"

The cheetah's eyes dart around and says through a chuckle "Uh yeah, of course I was..." greatly emphasizing the 'course'.

Jolie very visibly rolls her eyes and huffs, "Jesus Nell, I work out this early to avoid this."

"Right! So instead of the entire gym watching you, it's just little old me!" Nell says with the biggest grin she can muster.

The sergal doesn't respond, rather she just rubs her temples and makes her way to the locker room with an almost inaudible grumble. As Jolie exits, Nell says "Aw... have a good morning, dancing queen!" in the perkiest way possible.





the sound to see a large "something" in the middle of the street towering above her.

"No." Jolie whispers to herself. Her eyes strain to see through the blackness trying to disbelieve what she's seeing. Her breath quickens as she looks away from the sound for an option to flee, but sees nothing but pitch black now.

"Shit..."

Returning her gaze toward the sound she can see slight outlines of buildings and at least a way to run from what the sergal now suspects to be an enormous leg. Jolie makes her way out the blackness to a wall and slides closer and closer to where she can see again. She finally gets out of the black and cranes her head up.

"Goddammit"

Looming above the sergal is a monster in the semblance of a white rabbit. The Juggernaut is only half emerged from the blackness, which Jolie now recognizes as the monolith she's seen on the news. The exterior of the monolith ripples like the surface of a pond as large extremities exit the pillar of darkness. The bunny's paws rest on the tops of the buildings to either side as its monstrous head looks around.

THOOM.

After a long shower to soothe her aching muscles, Jolie opens the 20Fur Hour Fitness doors to a cold January morning. The navy-blue sky peeking through the towering empty buildings downtown is only hinting at the coming dawn. She flips her hood up and puts in a single earbud, letting the other one dangle along with her hood strings as she makes her way home.

She stops at a street corner at the traffic light's behest. She looks down the street and, as usual for this hour, there's not a car in sight, but something catches her eye. Under a nearby streetlamp she notices something small and black, about the size of a quarter, floating up. First a few black dots, then as her eyes focus, more and more. All she can gather is that it looks like a light snowfall, but black, and rising up. Her head snaps back as a black particle floats up right past her snoot. She follows the particle up with her eyes. She can barely see it against the now navy-blue sky. Suddenly one after another, more flakes of this black "snow" float past her upturned muzzle. She looks down to see more, a lot more. She can't even see down the street at this point. Jolie is practically enveloped by the silent dark plumes of "snow" that reach up to the barely lit sky. They're so thick they obscure huge sections of buildings and the streetlights that dot the roads.

THOOM.

A monstrous sound interrupts the sergal's rapt attention to her changing surroundings. The ground shakes below her feet as she slowly turns toward

The second enormous foot paw slams down, pulverizing the pavement underneath. The bunny, now fully free of the Monolith, towers over 5 stories above little Jolie. The Juggernaut swings its head around toward her as if it's looking for something before its



large pupil-less black eyes stare off into the distance. A large red pearl sits perfectly between the rabbit's collar bones, just under the neck. The pearl's shiny surface reflects the various street lights as well as the sunlit skyline. The bunny slowly turns the opposite direction, turning its back to Jolie. The monster reaches up, its paw grabbing at the roof ledge of a nearby building as it begins to scale upwards. Its weight cracks the wall and shatters windows next to its paw. Debris falls to the ground across the street as the gigantic lagomorph makes its way up the structure. In full view now is what's been called the "cable." The bunny's cable, firmly tethering it to the monolith, juts out of the white fur on its neck. The cable almost weightlessly droops a bit before leading back to the blackness Jolie had just escaped from.

Stunned, the sergal watches the giant. She stays glued to the wall, breathing in heavy huffs. The Juggernaut slowly turns on top of the building, almost surveying the landscape. It doesn't even react when a siren starts wailing off in the distance. After a good look around, it looks at a few smaller buildings





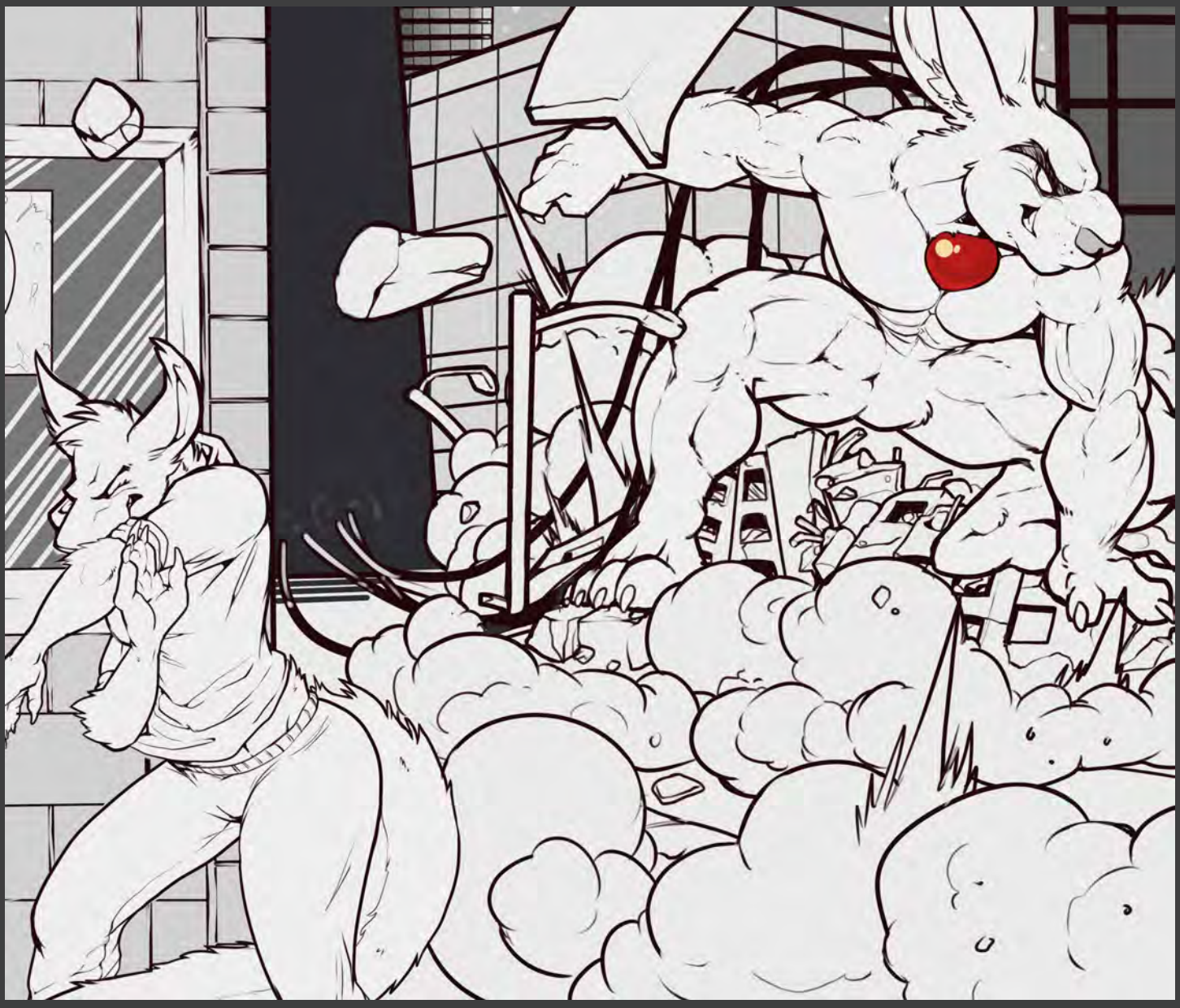
below. Suddenly it crouches and leaps into the air and lands on one of the adjacent buildings utterly demolishing it, almost playfully. Jolie shrieks at the impact as she's quickly enveloped by dust and various bits of debris.

The explosion and the lack of seeing the beast snap her out of her paralysis. She looks down a street away from the Juggernaut and monolith and slowly starts clambering toward her escape. The sounds of destruction don't seem to stop as she flees.

THOOOM...THOOOM...THOOOM...

The Juggernaut continues its rampage, thrusting its paw into buildings, stomping the ground, toppling another building with a good kick at its base. Jolie turns to look after getting about a block away. All she can see is the top half of a large lagomorph on top of a cloud of dust flailing and destroying anything it can touch with what looks to be a smirk.

It doesn't wear the smirk for long. The sergal's eyes widen as a blue streak hits the Juggernaut's chin, knocking its head back and causing it to stumble. Seconds later, another blue streak goes right for the red pearl at the large bunny's chest. No impact this time





though; instead what remains is a small seemingly regular sized person perched on the pearl. A third streak following the previous one follows right behind but is swatted out of the sky by the roaring Juggernaut before it can hit the "pearl".

"No..." Jolie mutters to herself, knowing full well the blue streak is one of the venerable D.A.V.D.'s dispatched during an attack. The swatted hero flies over Jolie's head as it lands in the street bouncing and skidding on the asphalt about a block away from her. The sergal watches and turns as the D.A.V.D. crashes, her back now to the Juggernaut. Above where the hero landed she catches a glimpse of the bright blue spire in the distance towering over the city. Her eyes dart to the Lance, then back at the fallen fighter. She hesitates for only a second.

The sergal clenches her fist around her gym bag as a look of unbridled determination overcomes her. She begins to dash over to the hero. Unbeknownst to the sergal, the Juggernaut



also turns and makes its way to the downed D.A.V.D.

Her long strides only get her about halfway down the block before she hears something growing louder by the second from behind her.

"Hey Sergal! Heads-fucking-UP!"

Jolie turns to look and for only a split second she sees a large white bear with his arms ready to scoop her up jetting across the ground toward her.

FWUMP! Suddenly, Jolie is airborne. The ground moves swiftly under her and then further away as they gain altitude. Her gut hurts from being tackled into the air and slung over the shoulder of the bear. She barely notices the pain as she's more focused on the Juggernaut now lumbering over the very spot she was a few seconds ago, looking up at her like a cat looks at a string.

The bear yells over the rush of the air blowing past them "Sergal! You okay back there?"

Jolie doesn't answer and is instead absorbed by all that just happened.

"Hay cheese-head! You awake back there?" The bear yells louder while using the paw holding her to shake rather roughly.





"Y-yes!" she finally utters.

"Ok good! I didn't knock you out! So, are you deaf or do you have a death wish??" the bear yells.

"I-I didn't even hear it coming. Is your friend ok?" Jolie says still stunned.

"Hell, if I know! Too busy saving your du-"

The bear is interrupted by the D.A.V.D gear sputtering; the blue hue behind him disappearing as they both plummet. Jolie only has time to emit a slight scream as they ascend again when the gear kicks back in.

"Shit, lil' bugger got me good! As I was saying, HOLD ON!" The bear yells. Jolie looks down to see a stream of white smoke trailing along with the distinctive blue streaks the D.A.V.D.'s are known for. She finds places to hold onto the large flying bear. Finally getting her bearings, Jolie looks down at the rather fixated rabbit staring holes in them as it gives chase. The Juggernaut, no more than several yards away, clambers over buildings almost clumsily making a beeline for the airborne pair. The beast knocks over lamp posts, crushes corners of buildings, kicks cars, destroying anything between it and its goal. Jolie gasps when their pursuer stops on top of a building. She only has a moment to grow a grin before she notices the Juggernaut has torn an air conditioning unit from the roof of the building it's on.

"Um bear! Hey bear! BEAR!" the sergal yells over the rushing wind.

"Name's Levi, ma'am" the bear says, distractedly trying to fly.

The large bunny then proceeds to ready the large piece of machinery for a toss.

"Levi! We need to get a building between us and IT right now!" Jolie screams further.

"What?" Levi turns his head and flies sideways for a bit just in time to see the large piece of metal leave the Juggernaut's paw. "Oh goddamnit". The bear veers to the right to round the corner of a building a few seconds too late. The hurled unit crashes into the building right next to them, pelting the pair with glass and metal from the impact. The bear grits his teeth and powers through the turn while the sergal shrieks. As they break line of sight with the rampaging giant, Levi notices a shocking red streak from his shoulder where the sergal's head is resting, and that his passenger's once frantically tight grip has slackened.

Taking advantage of not being under the watchful gaze of their hunter, Levi quickly lands on a nearby rooftop and winces at the pain of putting weight on his very obviously broken leg. Gritting his teeth, he lays the sergal out behind a line of chimney stacks to inspect her.

THOOM.

The bear's ears twitch toward the loud crashing. He turns his gaze toward the sound to make sure he hasn't been seen, then turns his attention back to the seemingly wounded sergal girl. Levi pets back the matted fur along the side of her face after picking out bits of glass.

THOOM.

This crash is closer, no more than a block away. Levi tenses up and looks around again for their pursuer's steely gaze. He turns



his attention back to the sergal, again looking for trauma. Jolie starts to groan as he notices her eye is red, puffy and sealed shut. Seeing as that is the extent of her injuries, he leans her up against a wall, cradles her muzzle in his paws, looking her square in her eye, and in a hushed tone says.

"Hey cheesehead? Ya got yer bell rung, ya with me?"

The bear smiles in relief as he sees the sergal grimace and begin to say "You call me cheesehead one more-"

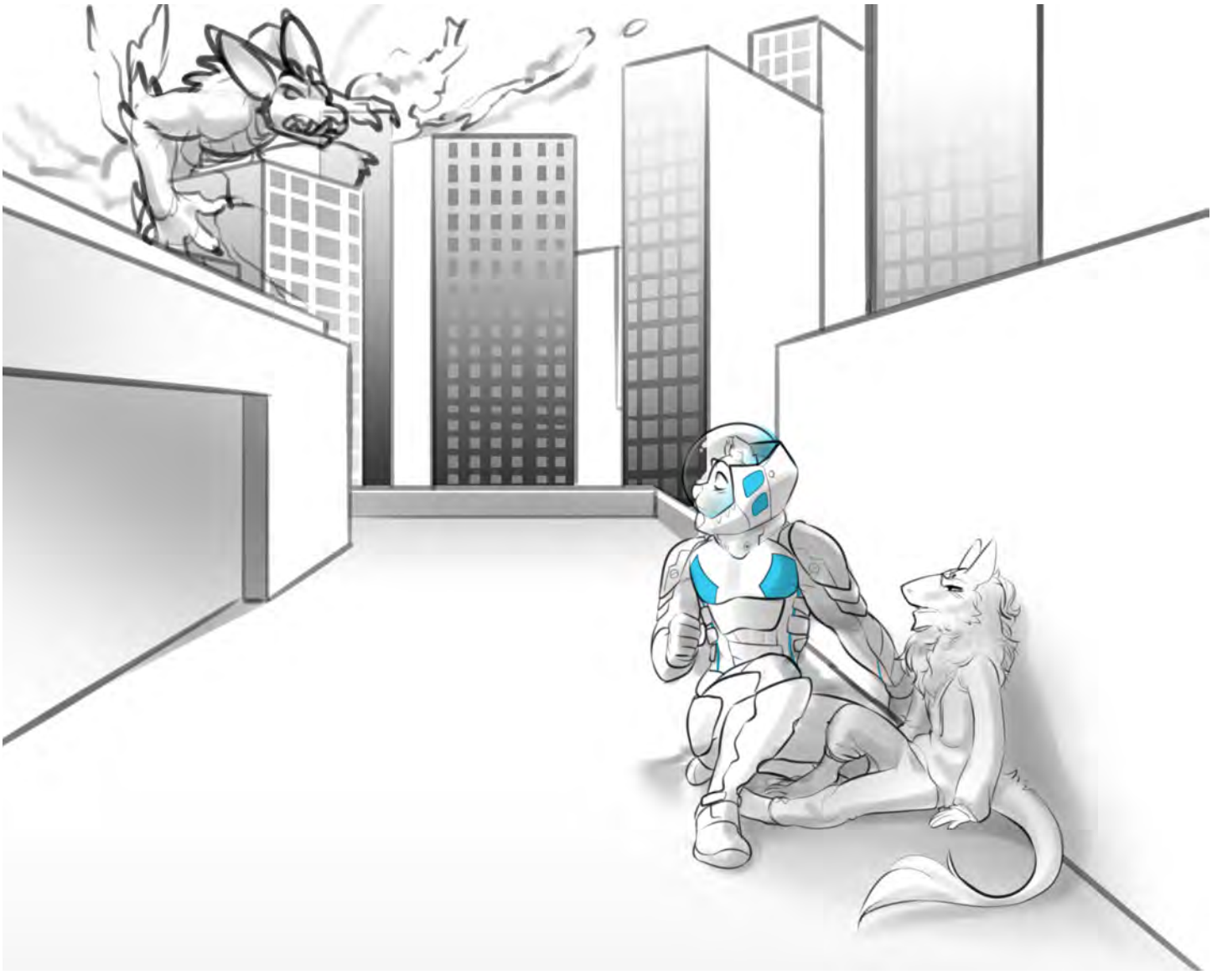
THOOM.

Levi's expression instantly turns from relief to alarm as the Juggernaut lands on a building across the street, finally within line of sight. The groggy sergal snaps to attention too. Jolie's only operable eye widens as she sees the fear in Levi's face.

Jolie begins to get up, "I'm here, I'm here," she whispers. They both slowly and methodically move as the enormous bunny surveys the landscape. Levi stands up putting most of his weight on one leg and propping himself up on a wall, then slaps his D.A.V.D. gear beckoning the sergal.

"Are you ok?" Jolie says as she grabs ahold of the bear.

"Well... I certainly won't be running a marathon any time soon. Ready?" Levi says, looking for an avenue of escape.





He turns on his D.A.V.D gear. Three luminescent blue flame trails sputter out of his backpack. Jolie's eye widens as the bright blue fire brushes close to her legs. The large bear noticing his passenger tense up says through a smirk, "Don' worry darlin'. My foxtails are cool to the touch." The bear then waves his paw right through them, prompting Jolie to confidently reapply her grip.

Levi and his passenger effortlessly lift off the ground, but the bright glow finally catches the attention of the Beast. As the pair jet off, the Juggernaut leaps from the adjacent building landing right where they were only seconds before, obliterating the rooftop.

As Levi flees, he eyes the outskirts of the city and most importantly the tree line. He veers directly for what he hopes is a good place to lose the Juggernaut. The gargantuan rabbit leaps from rooftop to rooftop in pursuit. The passing buildings get shorter and shorter as they reach the city limits, but they descend too slowly due to the failing D.A.V.D. gear. Eventually they get to street level, rushing down the road toward the trees they so desperately need for cover.

"Shit" Levi says through his teeth. "We're not going to make it with my gear sergal"

"What do we do??" the sergal shrieks in his ear.

"You are getting off and I'm going to distract it while you run like your life depended on it for those trees. Hell, I'm willing to bet it's after me anyways".

Through heavy breathing, she reluctantly replies "Okay".

Levi slows only a bit to do a running landing, his feet hit a few times and then finally lands hard on his injured leg and tumbles with the sergal down the middle of the road. Jolie props herself up, looks around, and winces at the road rash she sustains from the crash. Dazed, her eyes lock onto Levi lying in a lump a few feet away, groaning and cursing.

THOOM.

The pair both look down the road to see the Juggernaut land right in the center of the street about two blocks away. The asphalt cracks and cars fly about at its feet. The monster slowly makes its way toward them, its white eyes fixed on them. Another line of expletives comes from the downed bear as he turns to look at Jolie.

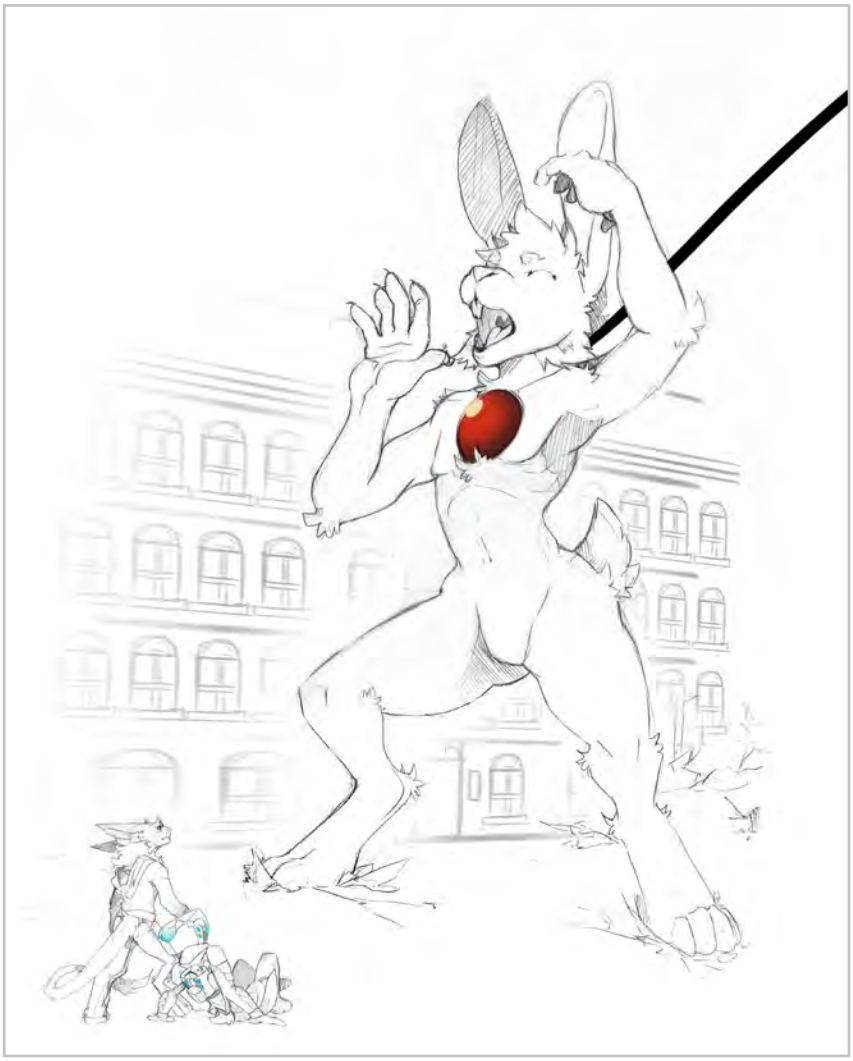


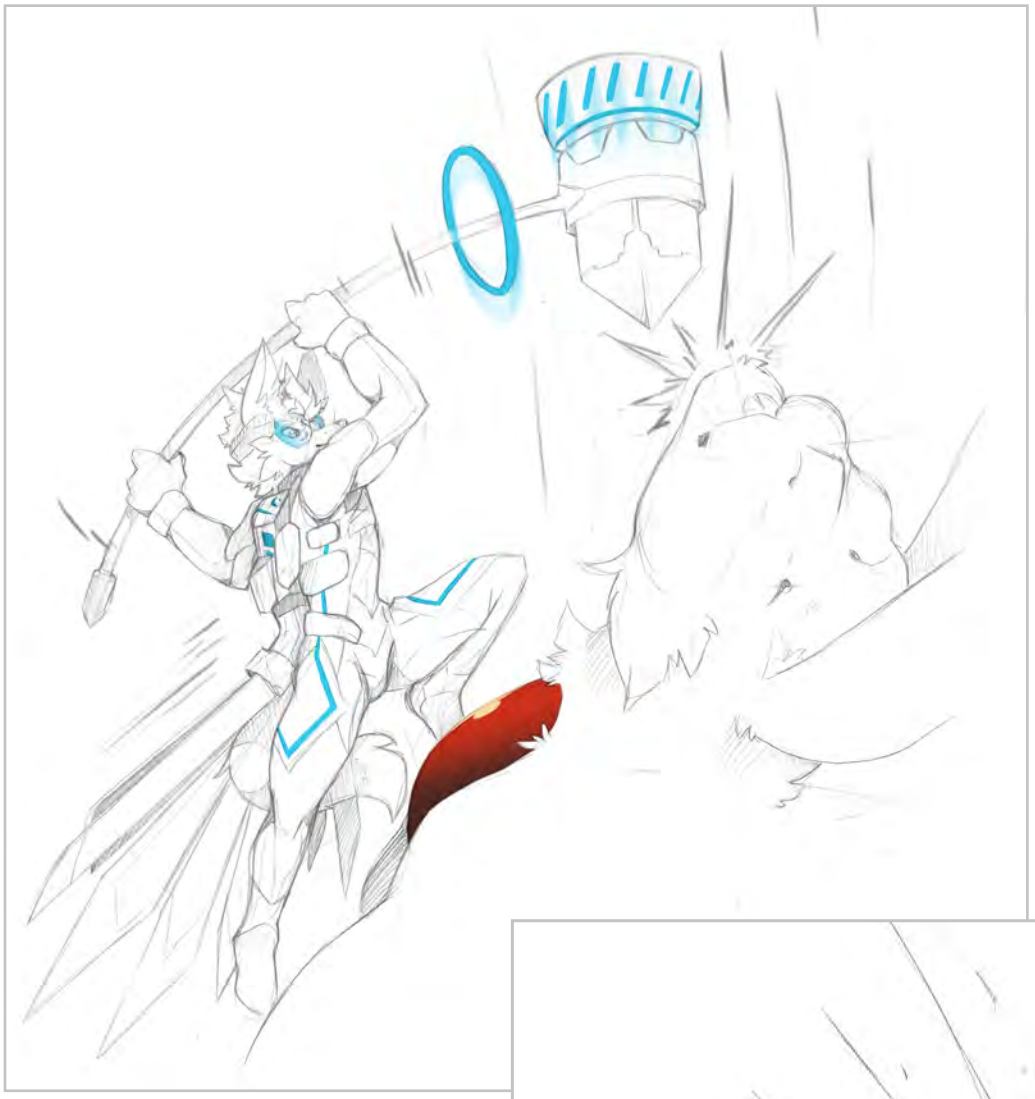
"It doesn't look like you're running cheesehead! Get your tail in those trees!" He screams as he tries to get up, but unable due to the searing pain in his leg. "Ghhhh goddamnit!!"

The Juggernaut suddenly tenses up and begins running down the road. Jolie doesn't respond, but rather, runs to her savior to pick him up. Jolie grunts, trying to lift the bear and his gear, frantically looking back at the large rabbit barreling toward them. She hears the booming footfalls get closer and stops her attempt to release Levi from his gear. Jolie and Levi lock eyes for a split second, the bear looking angry and the sergal giving a weak smile and shrug as if to say "sorry".

TWANG.

The wounded pair both look startled as they slowly turn to look at what should have been impending doom behind them. The Juggernaut, no more than a handful of yards away, stops, its feet digging into the ground and crumbling up the asphalt, trying to move forward but failing. The cable on the back of its neck is pulled taut, directing straight back to the monolith miles away. Stunned, Levi and Jolie can do nothing but stare. The large bunny stops its advance, still showing no real emotion, and attempts a few leaps to test its restraint. The pair are shaken and deafened by the commotion. The Juggernaut stops again, turns to pick up a freshly made chunk of asphalt, then raises its paw to hurl it at its prey. Jolie moves her body to cover Levi again, facing the monstrosity with her head held high.







CRACK!

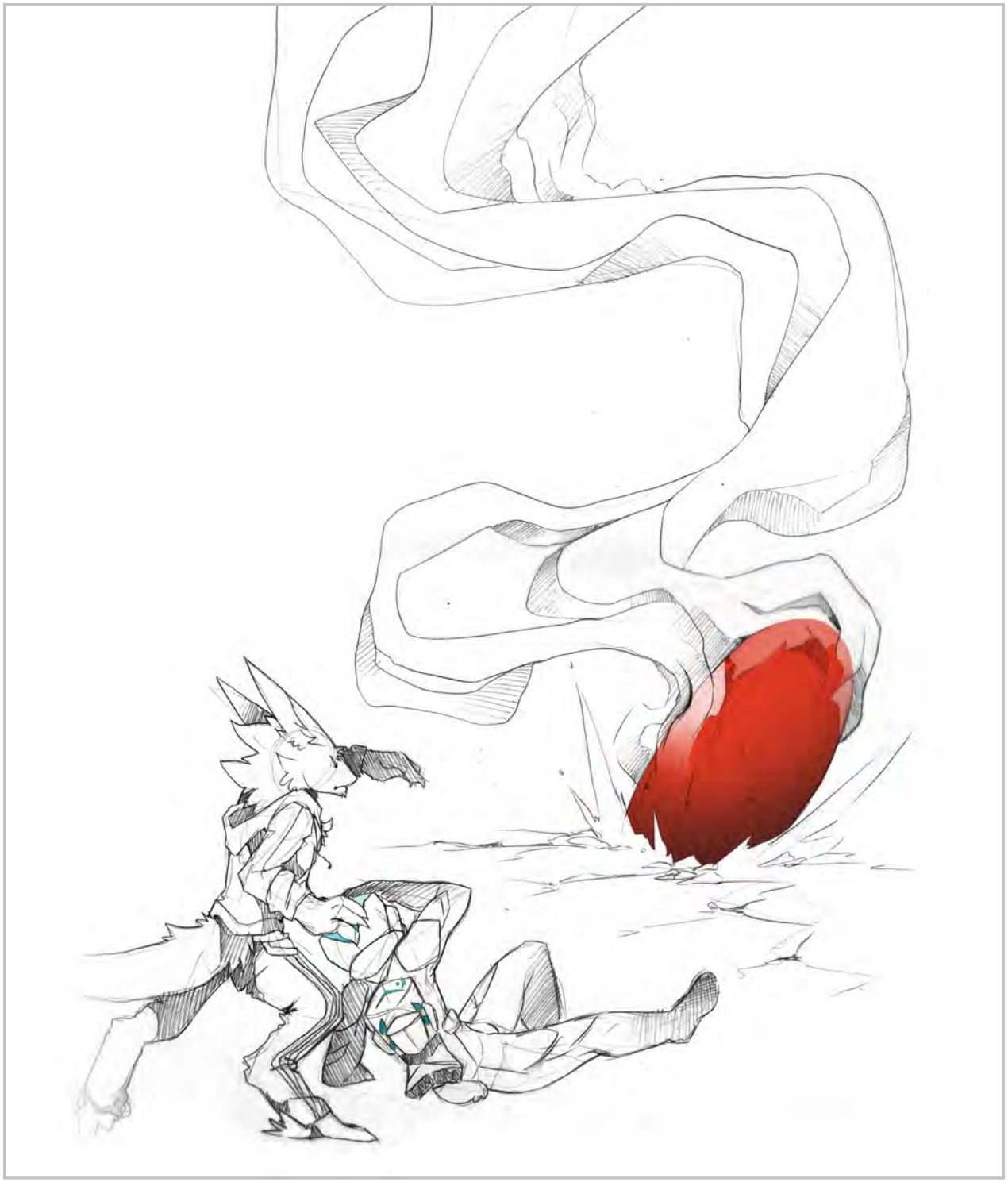
A familiar blue light streaks across the bunny's muzzle, knocking the monster's head up and forcing it to stumble. Seconds later, a D.A.V.D pilot lands on the enormous red pearl on its chest, perched via a clawed glove. The pilot is fitted with what looks to be a large chisel attached to her forearm, the tip extending past her paw and the other end flat, extending even further past her elbow. She points the tip at the pearl like she knows what she's doing. A fraction of a second later another D.A.V.D swoops in hitting the chisel into the pearl with an enormous hammer, systematically cracking it in several places.

The Juggernaut unceremoniously vanishes in a cloud of black ash. The chunk of asphalt and its "pearl" crash to the ground. The two victorious D.A.V.D. pilots land next to the wounded pair. Jolie stares awestruck at where the monster had been only seconds earlier. The cable that had saved them slowly fades into nothing, retreating into the monolith where she had started this whole endeavor. The monolith itself now slowly fades up into the clouds and eventually disappears.

Levi's comrade kneels next to him. "Jesus Levi, you're a mess. Are you ok?"

"Yeah, yeah. I'm pretty sure my leg is toast though. Luckily, I had this little lady protecting me. Unless I was lucky, I'm sure your name isn't Cheesehead."

The sergal turns to regard the three heroes before her lit by the growing dawn behind them. Starry eyed, she replies, "Jolie."





Juggernauts

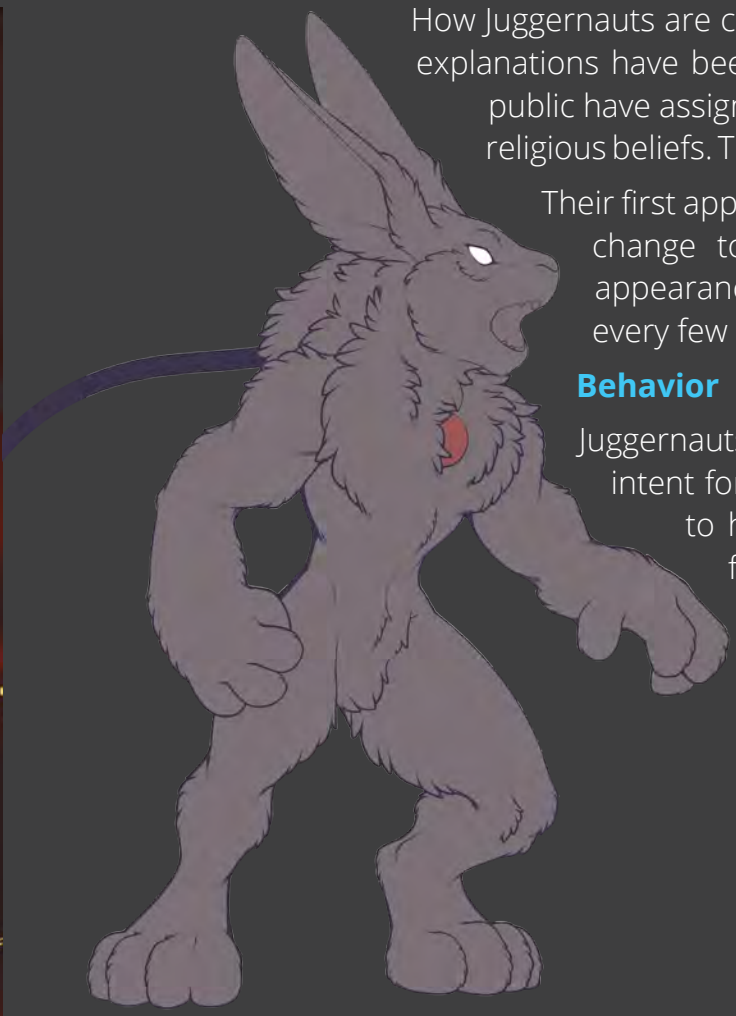


Juggernauts are characterized by their gigantic size, white pupil-less eyes, the red pearl(s) present on their body and the black cables coming out of the back of their neck.

The monsters that emerge from the monolith vary in size, species and intelligence. They mercilessly terrorize and destroy our cities. Their weak points are the Pearls on their body. Eliminate at all costs.

Origin

The Juggernauts are creatures of tremendous size, abilities, and of varying species. Their origin is unknown; Juggernauts emerge from a black pillar, the Monolith, that rises from the ground. Their intent is unknown; communication and behavioral analysis has proven fruitless. Juggernauts are extremely dangerous and citizens are advised to follow EVAC procedures should one appear.



How Juggernauts are created and where they come from is unknown. Multiple explanations have been proposed but no concrete facts have emerged. The public have assigned responsibility to government experiments, aliens, or religious beliefs. There is no clear answer as to the origin of the Juggernauts.

Their first appearance has been labeled Year 0 due to the catastrophic change to the world. Several years passed before the next appearance, but now attacks are a regular occurrence, usually every few months.

Behavior

Juggernauts are highly aggressive feral creatures, however their intent for attacking a city is unclear. Their attacks do not appear to have any correlation with city size, nuclear material, or food source.

Opposition from D.A.V.D.'s or G.O.L.I.A.T.H.'s is met with extreme ferocity, sometimes to the point of it being the Juggernaut's primary focus.



Cooperation among Juggernauts is rare but has proven to be devastating. They will also attack each other, often ignoring advances from D.A.V.D.'s or G.O.L.I.A.T.H.'s.

Their intelligence is often correlated with the number of Pearls present on the creature's body, but In a few instances creatures with a single Pearl have been reported to have high intelligence as well. Their strength and possessed abilities are also correlated with the number of Pearls present. Common abilities include regeneration, energy projection, invulnerability, lava breath. Abilities continue to be discovered.

Djarums Note: *Juggernauts are controlled by regular civilians playing the video game "World of Titans" somewhere far away from the city being destroyed. The players do not know they are destroying real world cities.*

Juggernaut behavior is strange to a normal viewer due to the way a player behaves in the game. The player could potentially be trying to earn achievements (destroy 15 buildings in a minute, jump 1000 times), might be trying

to accomplish the goal the game has given them (destroy building A, B, C, D in a certain order, demolish everything), might be playing while drunk, might be having connection issues, or might be idle.

Juggernauts may appear to even be having fun!





Categories

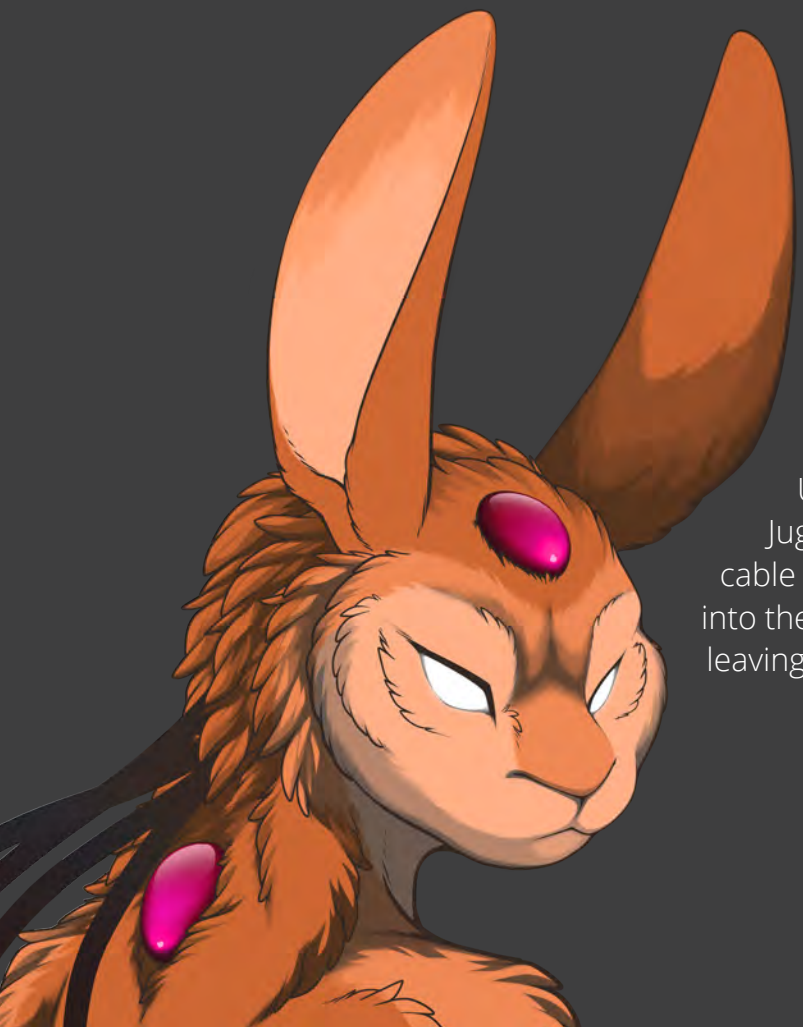
Juggernauts are classified on the "Donnyvich Scale." Each is classified under different categories based on the number of Pearls present on their bodies. The Pearls are believed to provide power to the creatures, as the destruction of these Pearls lessens the strength and abilities of the creature.

The lower the category of the Juggernaut the weaker it is. Juggernauts possessing up to 5 of these Pearls have been recorded, however it is not known if that is the limit. More Pearls mean more abilities, which make the Juggernaut harder to defeat.

Djarums Note: *Categories of a Juggernaut are the experience level of the player. The more crystals the Juggernaut has the higher the level of the player and the more powers and abilities a player has. This means that a lower level player can simply be skilled at playing as a Juggernaut, similar to griefer players.*







Destruction

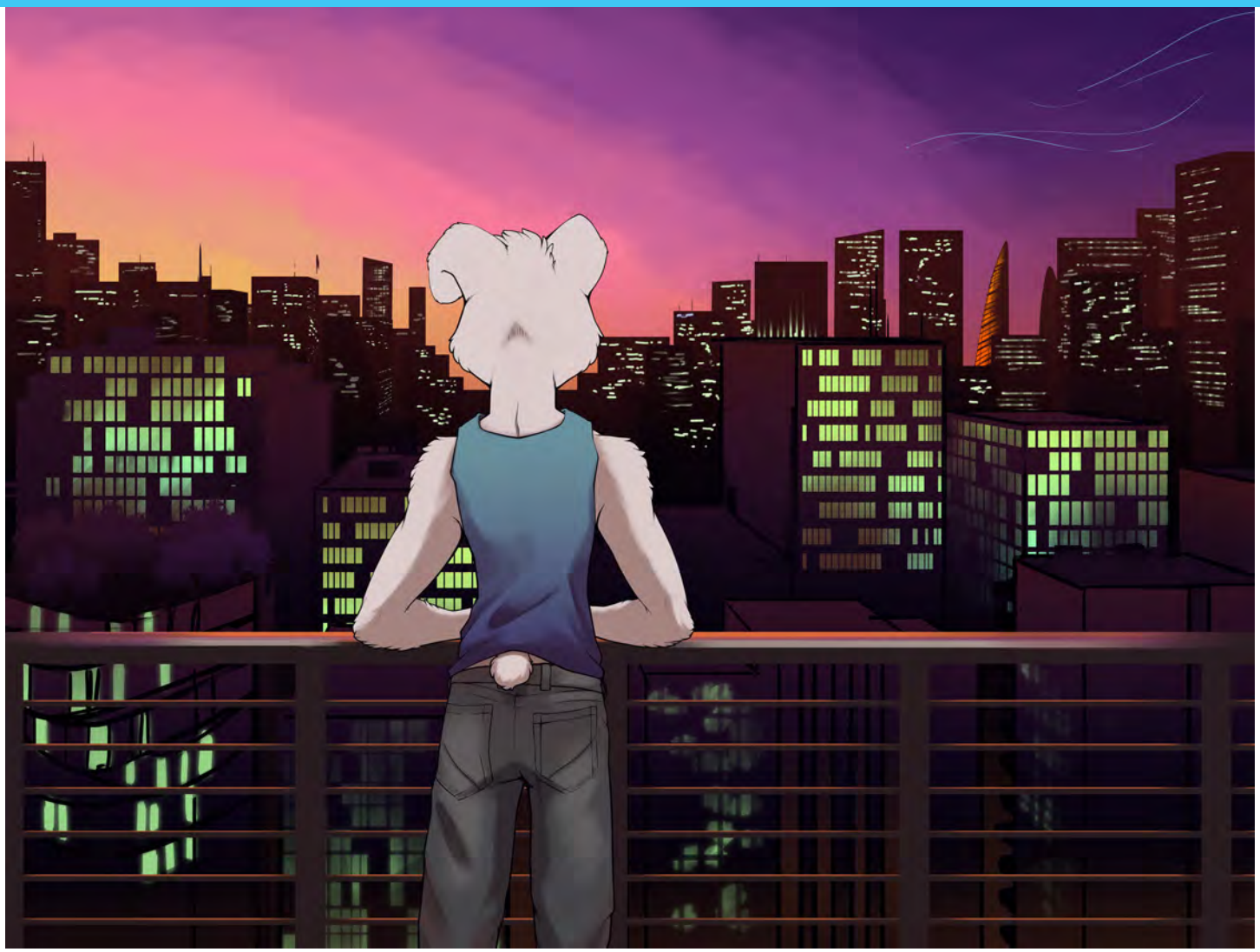
The Juggernaut's hide is tough and hard to penetrate. Conventional weapons have proven to be inefficient methods of deterring attacks.

The revelation of a Juggernaut's weak point happened during the attack on Port Arthur. It was here that the Juggernaut stumbled and fell upon a statue of a hero with a lance. Civilians on the ground reported that the lance penetrated the Pearl of the Juggernaut, cracking the Pearl, with the monster quickly disappearing after that.

Upon complete destruction of these Pearls, the Juggernaut's body turns into a cloud of black ash, the cable connecting the Juggernaut to the Monolith retracts into the Monolith. The Monolith then floats up into the sky, leaving behind only shards of the Pearl.


fraulion

Chapter 3: Sanctuary



"Yeah yeah...alright dad...I promise...I got it."

Jack rolls his eyes while holding the phone to his ear and slumps back into his sofa.

"Wow! If she knew you were using the c-word she'd have your hide, but yes she's still my partner... Good lord dad! JUST my partner."

A blush comes across the white shepherd's face as he rubs his cheek dot, his dad's comments making him aggravated as he paces around his apartment.

"Ok, that's enough of that. Bye Dad...bye...yep, bye. Love you."

Jack hangs up the phone and closes his eyes as he rubs his temples in consternation. When he opens his eyes they meet the sun-bleached posters on his wall. One is his old World of Titans poster, the other is a recruitment poster featuring his dad. The poster depicts the big bear, posing valiantly, brandishing his chisel, and in full D.A.V.D. gear. The tagline at the bottom reads, "Be Grand, Be a D.A.V.D."

Jack huffs and says under his breath "Crazy ol' coot."

The shepherd walks out to his deck and leans on the railing. It's almost dusk and Jack has an amazing view of Sanctuary from the 160th floor. Clouds as high up as his apartment building slowly float past on both sides as he lets out a sigh.

- "Be careful pup..." -

His dad's words resonate in his head. The shepherd gazes over the ledge and sees the beautiful floating city he's so proud of sprawled out in front of him. Being on one of the tallest buildings in Sanctuary, Jack can easily see the clusters of densely packed skyscrapers. The structures are all different styles and shapes, providing quite a beautiful mosaic of architecture representing the different regions the inhabitants have been pulled from. Off in the distance, he can see the tell-tale comforting blue streaks of D.A.V.D.'s flying in formation for some sort of training exercise.

Jack had always known his father had left Sanctuary on less than stellar terms, but never really had an inkling as to why until today. He pulls out his phone and starts to type out a text message, but pauses. Taking a moment to look at what he's trying to send, slight signs of tears start to well up in his eyes. He promptly erases the text and slips the phone back into his pocket with a huff. He snatches his keys off the kitchen counter and leaves.

The elevator takes a good 2-3 minutes to arrive, a small price to pay for living in such a prestigious building. Being the son of a renowned D.A.V.D. pilot didn't hurt when Jack was trying to join the brigade and in turn, find a suitable residence. On the way down,

Jack browses the internet for any news about Sanctuary, reading the headlines:

- Docking with Port Arthur today! Come tour the city that started it all! -
- Sanctuary's window washer's union clamoring for the use of D.A.V.D. gear -
- Applying for residency to Sanctuary? 5 new skyscrapers slated to start construction this year! -
- New Shocking pictures of last month's attack finally unveiled -

DING

The elevator's chime snaps Jack's attention away from his phone as a well-dressed snow leopard enters the cab.

The feline gives a slight nod and nonchalantly greets the shep, "Jack".

Jack distractedly nods and gets back to browsing his phone. The pair ride in silence for a few floors and then Jack's brow furrows.

"Hey Derek, um... you moved here like a year ago, right?"

The leopard adjusts his small round glasses and turns to face the shepherd. "Yeah... yeah, I think it has been about a year since that attack."

Jack tilts his head only slightly. "Why didn't you go back home after the evacuation was over? I mean why did you stay in Sanctuary?"

The snow leopard smiles, his tone quickly changing. "I mean, who wouldn't? And of course, being offered a job as soon as I stepped on this floating marvel didn't hurt either. It's not like the pile of rubble that was my lab was going to be cutting me any more checks," Derek smugly boasts as his tail begins twitching happily.

Jack's eyes narrow slightly. "Huh... that quickly? Guess you're like world renowned n'shit."

Derek raises an eyebrow and smirks, "well let's not go that far, I'll never be as famous as you guys. I guess my pearl shard research must have gotten around to the right people. I mean heck, I wasn't even published. Honestly, it felt like destiny brought me here."

Jack looks aside. "Heh, destiny."

Jack walks aimlessly around the city, paws in his pockets, slouched deep in thought. He visits various favorite spots he's come to love over the years living in Sanctuary, but they don't elicit the same feeling of pride they used to bring. He finally ends up at the Lance monument. The statue stands 3 stories tall with a lizard clad in medieval armor holding a broken lance up to the sky. The monument is perched on the nose of Sanctuary, seemingly always guiding the massive city toward its destination. The symbol of hope that turned the tide against the juggernaut scourge so many years ago now seemed to be devoid of the awe and glory it once had to the shep. Jack walks over to the railing that lines the sheer drop-off that denotes the edge of Sanctuary. He peers down to the city of Port Arthur miles below as it slowly moves under Sanctuary.



BWEE BWEE

Jack's ears perk up as the city-wide siren blares. The sound was unmistakable. Jack dashes to a line of parked cabs and gets in the back of one of them.

"Hey! You hear th-" The tiger at the wheel starts asking before getting interrupted by Jack.

"Yes! I need to get to D.A.V.D. HQ immediately, please!" he pulls out his ID badge showing his face and rank, pressing it against the glass partition.

"Woah! Holy crap! OK!" The tiger almost smiles, looking quite excited. "Yes, sir!"

The pair speed off into the thick of the city. Jack stares off out the window, as his father's words creep into his head again.

-" Sanctuary knows"-

After a few minutes into the ride, Jack snaps back to attention when the tiger asks "I tell ya, it's an honor ta be helpin' out someone as yerself. How long've ya been in the fight?"

"This will be my 5th time out if the locals don't dispatch it" Jack replies.

"5th time out?! That's a little greener than I thought the D.A.V.D.'s on Sanctuary were, damn!"

"Heh... well, long story." Jack leans back and nervously rubs his cheek dot.

Roughly 20 minutes later the car screeches to a halt in front of D.A.V.D. HQ, a large building in the center of Sanctuary adorned with a glass-mirrored sphere at the very top.

"You fuggin' get that Motherjugger alright kid?!" The tiger gives Jack a big thumbs-up and an even bigger smile as the shepherd exits the cab. Jack pushes through several other pilots and researchers rushing into the facility all heeding the call of the alarm blaring through the city.



-

Jack bursts into the busy locker room. After rushing past several pilots in various degrees of dress he arrives at his locker. With his body suit half on, he spies his partner round the corner. The sergal approaches him, completely suited up in her D.A.V.D. gear and ready for battle.

"You were ten minutes late Jack," Jolie says coldly. Her single eye calm but at the same time serious.

"Sorry Jol', I had to hail a cab since the call came out while I was in the city." The shepherd continues to get geared up as he speaks.

The sergal huffs and picks up his grapple claw, turning it so Jack can slip his paw in. Upon noticing the help, the shepherd shoots her a determined and confident smile.

Jack watches the sergal secure his gear and asks, "So, whatchya know about the new baddie?"

"The reports so far indicate the Juggernaut is about 30 minutes out. It's a lion this time and apparently, a category two, one pearl on the backside of its paw, the other on its shoulder. Oh!



And this one? It can apparently emit lightning from its tail?"

"What?! A category two? Are you sure?" Jack's ears perk up.

"Yeah, it's bizarre, a cat two usually can't do anything like that." Jolie looks the shepherd up and down with her piercing eye. "So, you were late because you were in the city? Hot date? A little vino?"

Jack finally closes his locker and zips his last zipper up. "Jesus Jolie, you're as bad as my dad. I'm at one-hundred and ten percent, I promise," the shepherd reassures the sergal with a wink and a smirk.

"You better be, kiddo. C'mon." The sergal responds with a toothy grin.

As the pair exits the locker room the sergal snatches the lit cigarette from a fellow pilot smoking outside.

"HEY!" the calico hollers.

Jolie flicks the butt away ignoring the feline and looks directly at Jack arching an eyebrow.

Jack scoffs, "I ain't my dad ya worry wort, cool your jets."

Jolie sniffs him and narrows her eyes at her teammate.



- 30 minutes later -

This is Sanctuary Central Command. Current status: 1st pearl shattered, local forces rendered inoperable. Category 2 juggernaut has been attacking the city for 20 minutes without interference. One pearl remains, located on the left shoulder. Confirmed ability: Lightning from tail with only moderate accuracy.

"You get all that Jack?" The sergal confirms with Jack over their personal com system.

"Yes, sir!"

Jack and Jolie careen toward the Juggernaut over a mile away. Block after block is utterly destroyed around the gigantic lion. All the pair can see from this distance are the lion's cream colored torso and enormous golden mane flailing about. The bottom half of the juggernaut is obscured by the dust being kicked up around it as it rampages through downtown. It seems fixated on bashing the buildings on the block it's on for the moment.

"Damn! He's a big one. I can see the pearl. That'll be easy to land on Jol, it's huge!" Jack says excitedly.

Jolie responds over the com, "Hrmm, wait for our turn. Let's circle him. See what he does to the first wave."

The duo maintains a distance a quarter mile away as they watch 6 blue streaks fly toward the Juggernaut. The D.A.V.D.'s fly past the massive lion and instantly get its attention. The Juggernaut stops its rampage and follows them with its pupil-less eyes. The D.A.V.D.'s turn for another pass, a few streaking past its massive paws as it swipes at them; another pilot connects a hammer blow to its head forcing the Juggernaut to stumble. The lion roars, brings its tail up and a bright light forms at the tail tip. Lightning crackles toward the pilot that just landed a blow, barely missing him and hitting the surrounding buildings.

"Jesus! That shit is no joke!" The white shepherd yells over the thunder into his headset as they fly. Jolie watches as another pair of D.A.V.D.'s go in for a strike but pull off at the last minute when the Juggernaut notices their approach.

"Ok, we can do this, it's distracted. HQ, Team Juliet is going in." Jolie says calmly.

"Now? Like now, now?" Jack pipes up.

"Yes, now!"

Jack readies his chisel and checks his visor data making sure it's locked onto the pearl on the lion's shoulder. He dives toward the rampaging Juggernaut. "Alright! Making an attack run!"



"Following your approach... and please don't s-"

"BOW WOOOOW" Jack hollers as he barrels toward the beast.

The juggernaut's gaze is following the last pair of D.A.V.D's and doesn't notice Jack's approach. Jack opens his clawed glove and readies his chisel as he prepares to land on the lion's pearl.

-"careful pup... sanctuary knows"-

His father's words suddenly echo in his head again. Jack loses his focus just as he makes contact with the pearl. The white shepherd misses his grapple, hitting the lion's shoulder and sliding off into the thick mane of the gigantic lion.

"Aborting!" the sergal yells as she suddenly changes course. "Jack! You okay?"

Jack holds on to long tufts of fur as the Juggernaut continues to pursue other D.A.V.Ds. Jack looks up but all he can see is more of the thick fur; he can't even see the sky. The only sound that isn't muffled in the forest of fur he landed in is the com system in his helmet.



After an aggravated sigh, Jack utters "Yeah Jol, sorry. I fucked up. I'm O.K." He reaches to rub his cheek dot but is stopped by his helmet.

**This is Sanctuary Central Command: Juliet's strike was aborted. Team Sierra, prepare for approach **

"They are going in for another approach. I've lost track of you, are you clear of the pearl??" Jolie yells.

Jack tries to start his D.A.V.D. gear as he hears his teammate and Central Command in his ears. The Lion's mane surrounds him on every side and clogs the blue jets from taking form. "Shit um... I will be!"

Jack struggles to navigate away from the pearl, pushing through the long fur as if it were a dense cornfield. Seconds later Jack hears a sharp clang, followed by what sounds like nails on a chalkboard.

"Ha-ha! Yes!" A huge grin grows on the shepherd's muzzle. His ears perk up and seconds later an earth-shattering sound of breaking glass fills the air. Jack pumps his paws in the air and hollers "bow woooo...." but is quickly cut off when he topples due to the massive beast still moving under him.



"Why is it still there? We got the 2nd pearl! Fan out! Find that other pearl! Jack get out of there, now!" Jolie commands rather sharply over the com. Upon hearing this, Jack puts his ears back and tries firing up his gear again. Just like before, the lion's golden mane envelops him and the gear so tightly the jet trails won't take form. As the canine pilot struggles to get out of the forest of fur, a sliver of red catches his eye. Between a couple of large tufts of matted fur, he sees a pearl nestled in a small clearing under the thick mane.

"The third pearl! It's under his mane! I can see it!" Jack yells into his com.



"What? Where? Where are you, Jack?" Jolie responds.

"Um... shit! Hell if I know! All I can see is fur and this goddamn pearl!!"

"Alright Jack, I'm circling. I'll find you!"

Jack pushes through the thick fur and gets on the pearl. The long fur surrounds the red globe, leaving a space large enough for him to walk freely. He slams his claw down and points his arm mounted chisel at the enormous pearl.

"In position! Ready when you are Jol!" The shep yells into his headset.

"I still do not see you, Jack!"

"Hold on!" Jack looks up and only sees a tiny bit of sky above him through the thick canopy. He puts his ears back and emits a muffled "wrff" as he looks around for anything to indicate where he is. All Jack can see is fur bouncing about as the monster lumbers around no doubt destroying more of the city.

"Just fly out Jack! We can land again after you show us where the pearl is!" Jolie shrieks over the comm.

"Ghhh Goddamnit... OK!" Jack reluctantly kicks on his D.A.V.D. gear to notice that the flame trails are blowing back the mane. "Holy shit! Check this out Jol! Can ya see me now?!"

The large blue flame trails weave out of the lion's mane. "You're on the back of the neck! I'm comin' pup!"

Jack sports a huge grin after hearing his comrade. He turns up the D.A.V.D. gear to full throttle, blowing the mane back even more and exposing the hidden pearl. With the D.A.V.D. gear at full throttle but nowhere to go, the force tears at the shepherd's armor, ripping it to shreds off his body.

Jack yells as his clawed hand slowly falls apart and loses its grip, his other arm shaking and barely managing to keep the chisel aimed at the pearl.

CRACK

Seconds later, Jack is falling through black ash, gear gone, armored suit in tatters. Dazed and clutching his arm that had the chisel mounted to it only moments ago, he sees a familiar blue streak coming toward him. His partner scoops him up and lands



on one of the few buildings not destroyed by the Juggernaut. Jolie props him up against a chimney.

The sergal pulls off her helmet and cradles the shepherds muzzle in her paws. "Jack...are you ok?"

"I.. heh... I can't believe that worked" Jack's says all loopy -ike and then winces as he reaches up for his partner.

"Are you okay!?" The sergal repeats. Her piercing eye darts around her wounded teammate.

Jack gives a pained slight smirk and raises his obviously broken paw droopily, "Yeah... although I think you could work on your hammer swing there Jol."

Jolie doesn't respond but sighs and looks at him with an expression that can only be described as a mixture of annoyance and relief. Jack leans forward suddenly and hugs the sergal, wincing as he moves his arm. "Thanks, Cheesehead."

Jolie, caught by surprise, is tense at first, but then hugs back.

Jack looks over Jolie's shoulder during the embrace. The city is devastated, and brightly colored police beacons and pillars of smoke dot the landscape amid the endless rubble.

"Jol?" Jack leans back and looks the sergal in the eye.

"Hm?"

"How can Sanctuary let something like this happen? It took us an hour to get here and I mean just look."

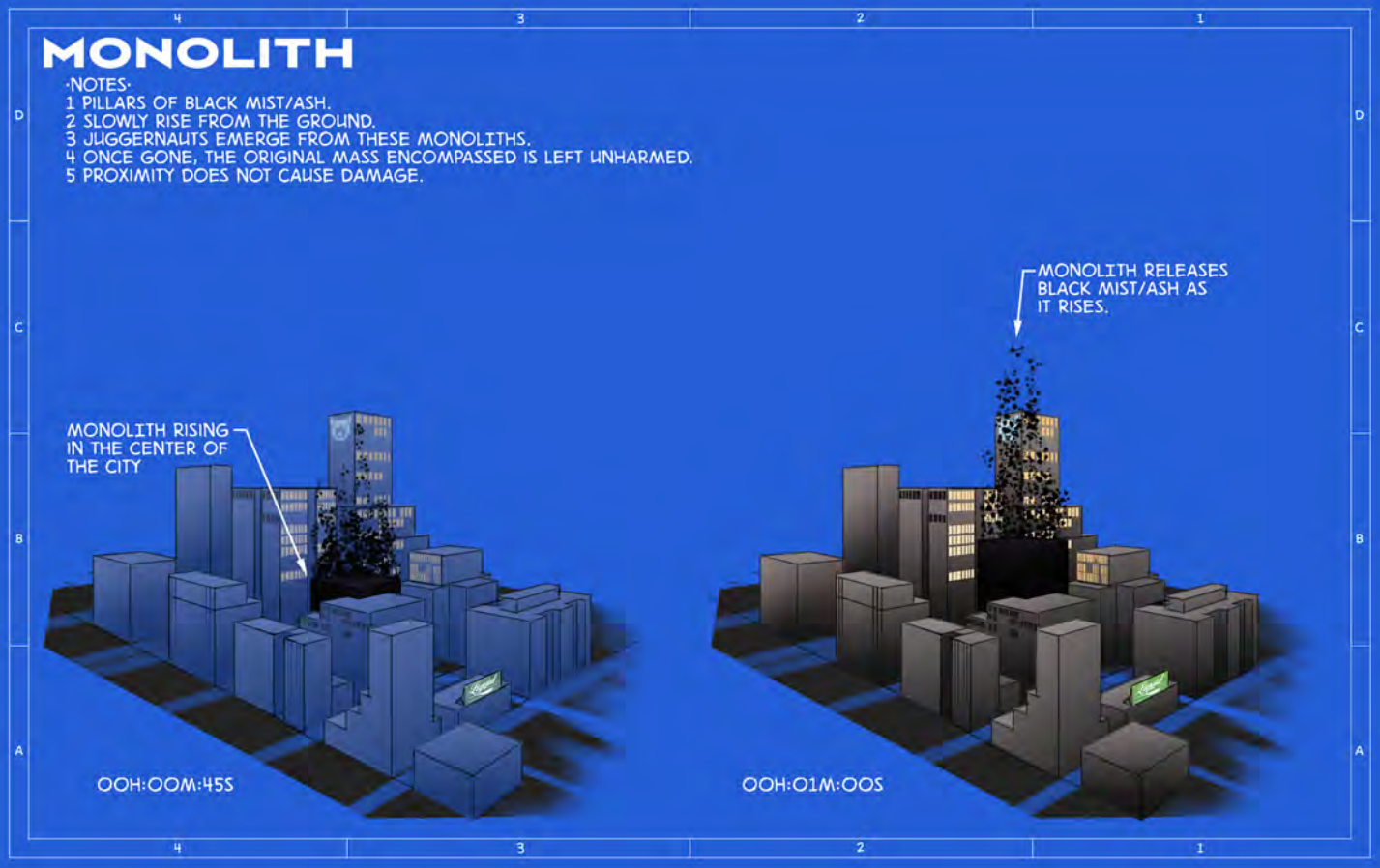
"Oh... he told you about that, huh?"

"You" Jack coughs, "You knew? How... I mean, why still fight?"

"What other choice do we have?"



Environment



Monoliths

A black rectangular column that rises to the sky, made of black plumes of ash that rise from the ground. It can appear anywhere, and nothing is affected where it appears. Contains a Juggernaut that emerges from it.

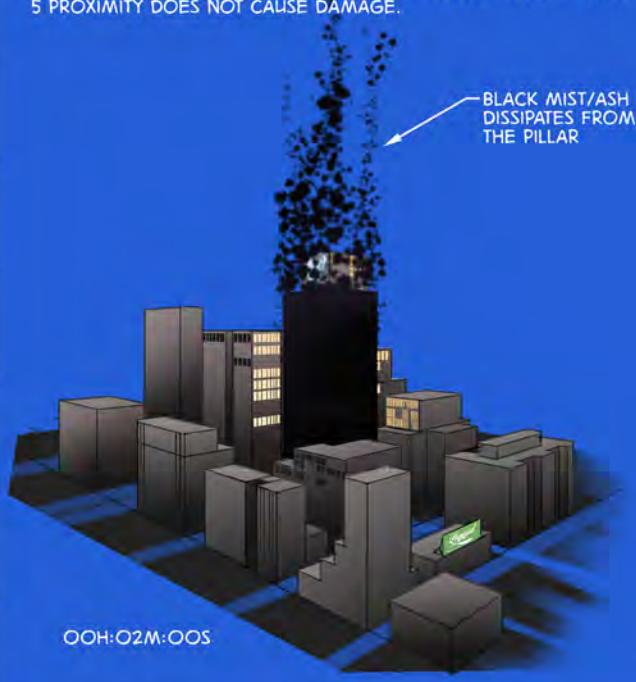
Juggernauts emerge from the Monolith. The Monolith starts as a black mist or ash that silently rises from the ground, slowly forming a black pillar of ash that continues forever into the sky. The Monolith is impenetrable by light and forms what looks to be a black liquid wall once the Monolith is completed. The Monolith can rise through solid matter, and when it disappears, the solid matter is left intact.

A Juggernaut emerges from the Monolith. A cable made from the same material tie and leash the Juggernaut to the Monolith.

Multiple Monoliths have been sighted during an attack, but only one Juggernaut can come out of a Monolith.

MONOLITH

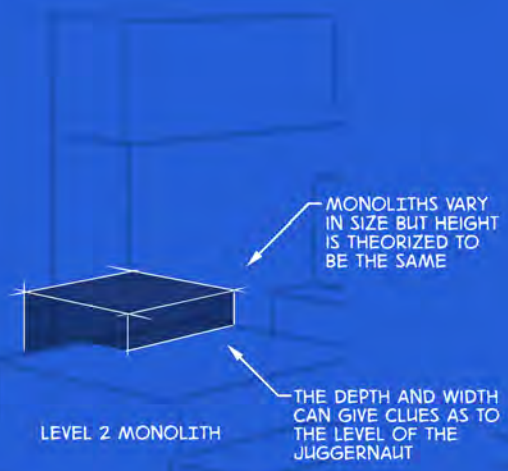
·NOTES·
1 PILLARS OF BLACK MIST/ASH.
2 SLOWLY RISE FROM THE GROUND.
3 JUGGERNAUTS EMERGE FROM THESE MONOLITHS.
4 ONCE GONE, THE ORIGINAL MASS ENCOMPASSED IS LEFT UNHARMED.
5 PROXIMITY DOES NOT CAUSE DAMAGE.

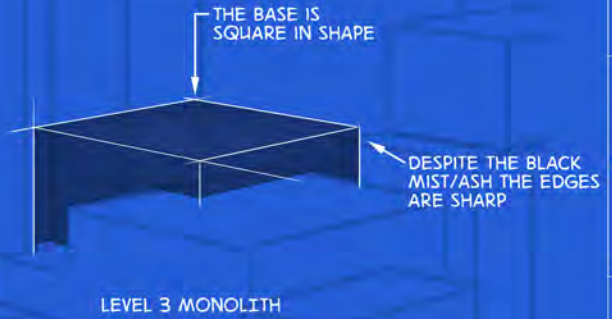




MONOLITH

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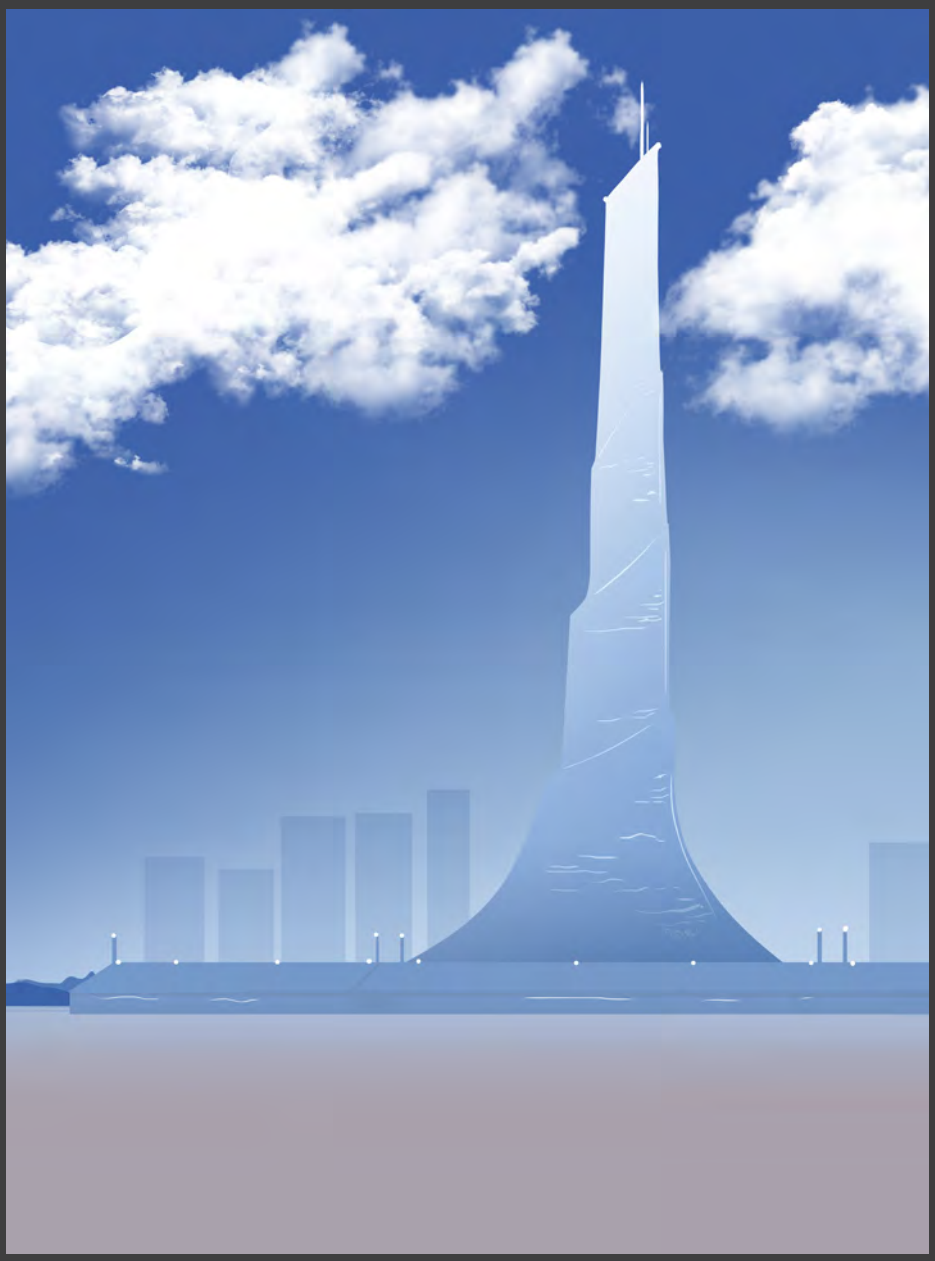
The Lance

Tall spires built in every major city to evacuate citizens during a Juggernaut attack. They glow bright blue as to be seen from miles around, a beacon of hope. It curves up like a Lance pointed at the sky.

A large structure that serves as an EVAC point for the citizenry during a Juggernaut attack.

General Information

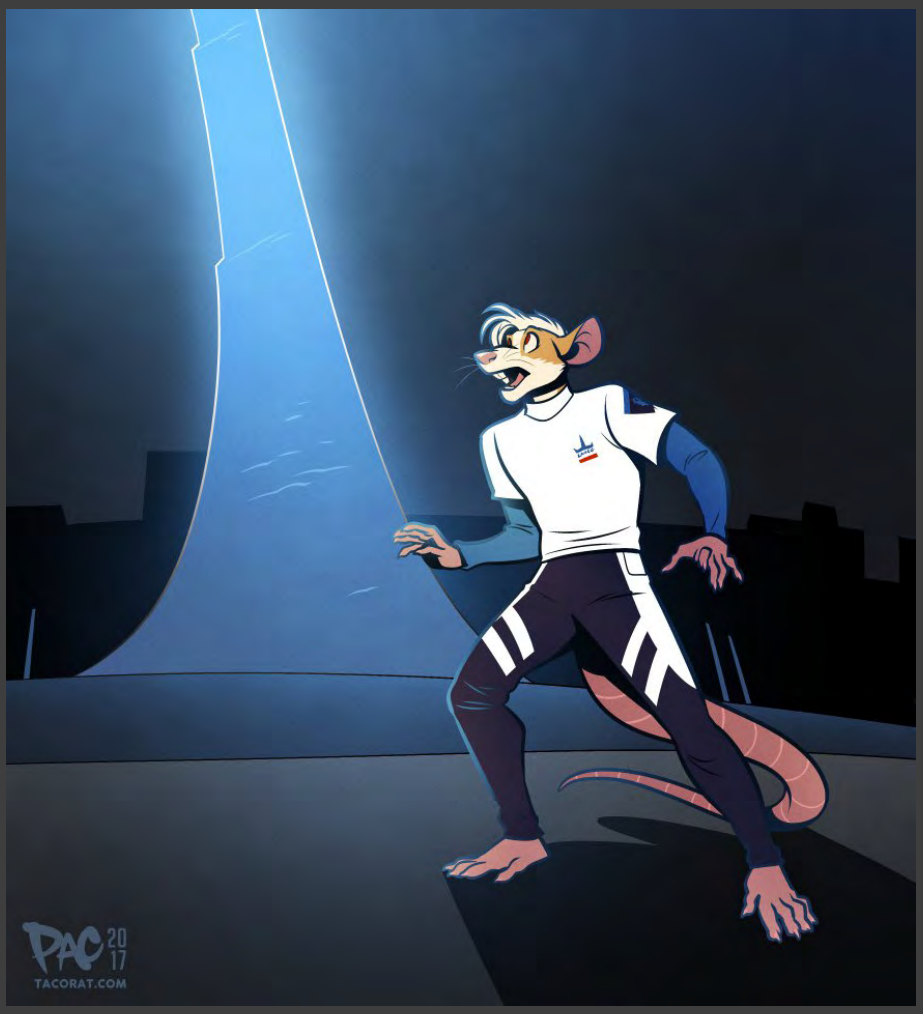
Lance structures were built in response to the second rash of attacks and the introduction of Sanctuary to the world stage. Many cities tried to build their own versions of a "dock" for Sanctuary with only a few successes. A public statement from Sanctuary itself proposed a standardized facility that any city could build, and was soon accepted with raucous support from people all over the world. Country after country vowed to aid in yet another world-wide endeavor for the safety of all.



These buildings were originally called spires until the victorious battle of Port Arthur. It was here during a desperate fight a Juggernaut stumbled and fell onto a massive statue in the center of town depicting a Knight in a heroic pose brandishing a shield and lance. By a fortuitous stroke of luck, when the Juggernaut was toppled, the statue's lance pierced and cracked the Juggernauts pearl, which is now known to be their only weak point.

The Lance is easy to find during EVAC situations due to its immense size and bright blue glow; the glow was chosen as a stark contrast to the ominous Monolith. People are moved to the dock located at the top of the Lance via numerous large elevators. From the dock people board the safety of Sanctuary.

At the first sign of a Juggernaut attack the massive structure is lit up and is vibrant enough to not be missed even during the daytime. Sirens sound to alert both the



public to its location and the local contingent of D.A.V.D. fighters of an assault. The skeleton crew that mans the structure is then increased tenfold and is mainly tasked with crowd management and elevator operation to efficiently evacuate the city's population.

Historically, Sanctuary has been very successful in saving major populations since the very first Lance was built.

Notes

The base of a lance is roughly 5 football fields in diameter to accommodate mass evacuation for large cities, surrounded by rings of parking lots. The structure is wide at the bottom and then angles up in an almost exponential curve up into the clouds.





Chapter 4: GOLIATH

The sharp click of plastic heels echoed through the hall as a feline in a professional suit and pants strode by. Only the occasional whir of an automated facility drone scooting by interrupted her journey to the office she'd arranged a meeting in. She knew enough about Levi to know the higher-ups probably kept him buried deep in the maintenance corridors on purpose. Her ocelot tail twitched with mild agitation as she gave the windowed door three sharp knocks. A rough "Come in!" bellowed from the other side. She took a deep breath to compose herself and opened the door with her best attempt at a tight-lipped smile.

Before her was a powerful polar bear, stationed behind an empty desk obscured by the haze of his cigarette. His lush white fur, dotted with occasional combat scars, was almost glowing from the gloom in the dimly-lit room. Some might have looked menacing with his appearance but he carried it with dignity. His expression was almost soft as he scanned her up and down. She extended her paw and he shook it firmly.

"Levi, thank you for agreeing to meet me; my name is Grace Taylor. It's a pleasure to meet you in person, sir."

The wooden chair creaked under the weight of the bear as he reclined on it, exhaled and waved off the formal greeting. A slight annoyance was hinted through his tone, though his expression remained soft.

"We both know my days of having a fan club are over. Just give me your pitch so I can satisfy my curiosity and get back to work. Have a seat."

Grace nodded quickly as she dusted off a cheap folding chair and sat down.

"I was instructed to be vague until we're somewhere we know isn't being monitored."

Levi stared off into the darkness of the room and leaned back in his office chair. "Look, I'm not using this goddamn broom closet as my office because I like the decor. You wanted to meet somewhere private and I gave you that. No one ever comes down here, no one is monitoring this room. Stop being vague and mysterious, tell me what you want."

The ocelot clasped her paws before placing them on the desk, staring the bear down in an attempt to get through to him. "Levi, the directions I was given are specific. What you get to know now is that we have a means to get you back in the fight. Something new, something your current injuries won't factor into. We believe given your strong leadership with the D.A.V.D.'s, your high interception count with the Juggernauts and your...how should I put it... *complicated* discharge by Sanctuary, that you're quite likely to join our project."

Levi sat forward sharply, snatching his cane from the corner next to him before leaning his weight onto it with a grunt. "I really

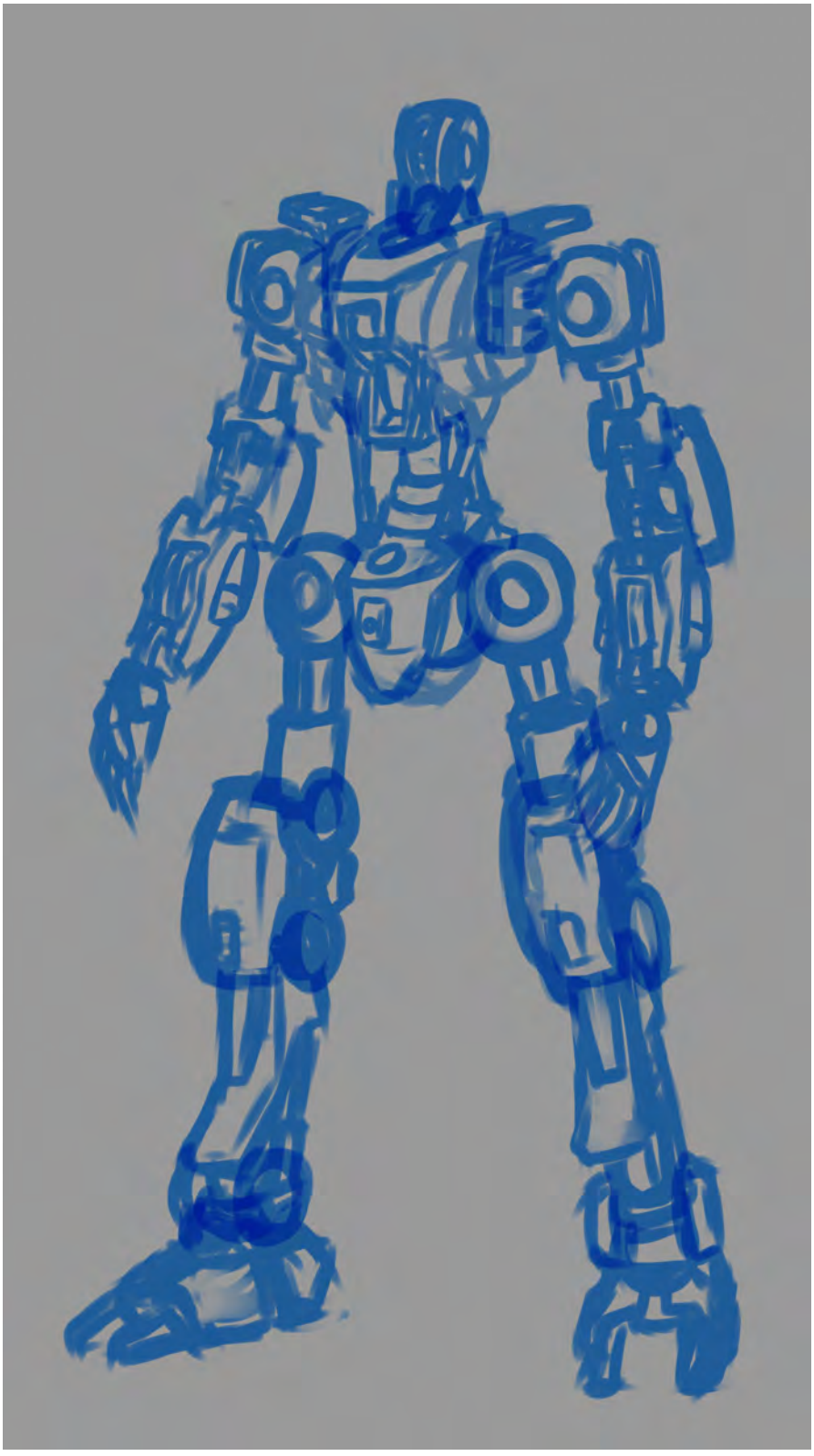


hoped you had more for me than vague promises of some magic doo-dad and reminiscing about my questionable past. I have done my time to serve Sanctuary and I have no interest in helping them any longer, my only interest is in the safety of civilians. I think it's time for you to go so I can get back to helping people the best way I can these days."

Grace's ears twitched and her tail flicked with agitation behind her as she reached into her bag. Grace placed a memory card deliberately on the desk, replying sharply: "I was told that at the very least I should give you this. It's directions to access our facility. We'll be running a few tests later this evening and we would greatly appreciate it if you'd at least observe and give us your feedback. It's not the support we were hoping for, but someone with your experience taking those monsters down will have valuable insight. Good day, Levi."

She stood quickly and left the room, the door slamming shut behind her as she clicked back off down the hallway.

Levi shook his large head softly and reached down to grab the memory card that had been left on the desk. He turned it over a few times in his paw before grunting and slotting it into his phone. His evening was free; if nothing else he could keep more misguided people from trying something crazy to stop the Juggernauts.



-

Levi couldn't help but cock one of his eyebrows as he walked from his car to the warehouse. It was a larger facility, but it looked like more than half of the loading dock was sitting unused at the moment. It seemed the people that contacted him at least weren't poor. Orchestrating a weapons test of some kind in the industrial district took capital, not to mention nerve. The rather plain-looking security guard at the door to the facility waved his badge over a sensor beside the door and it clicked open. The canine smiled as he stepped out of the way and offered his paw to greet Levi. "I just want to say that not everyone lost faith in you after what happened. What you did saved my sister and her husband's lives. Thank you."

Levi stood slightly stunned before shaking his head and flicking away his cigarette.

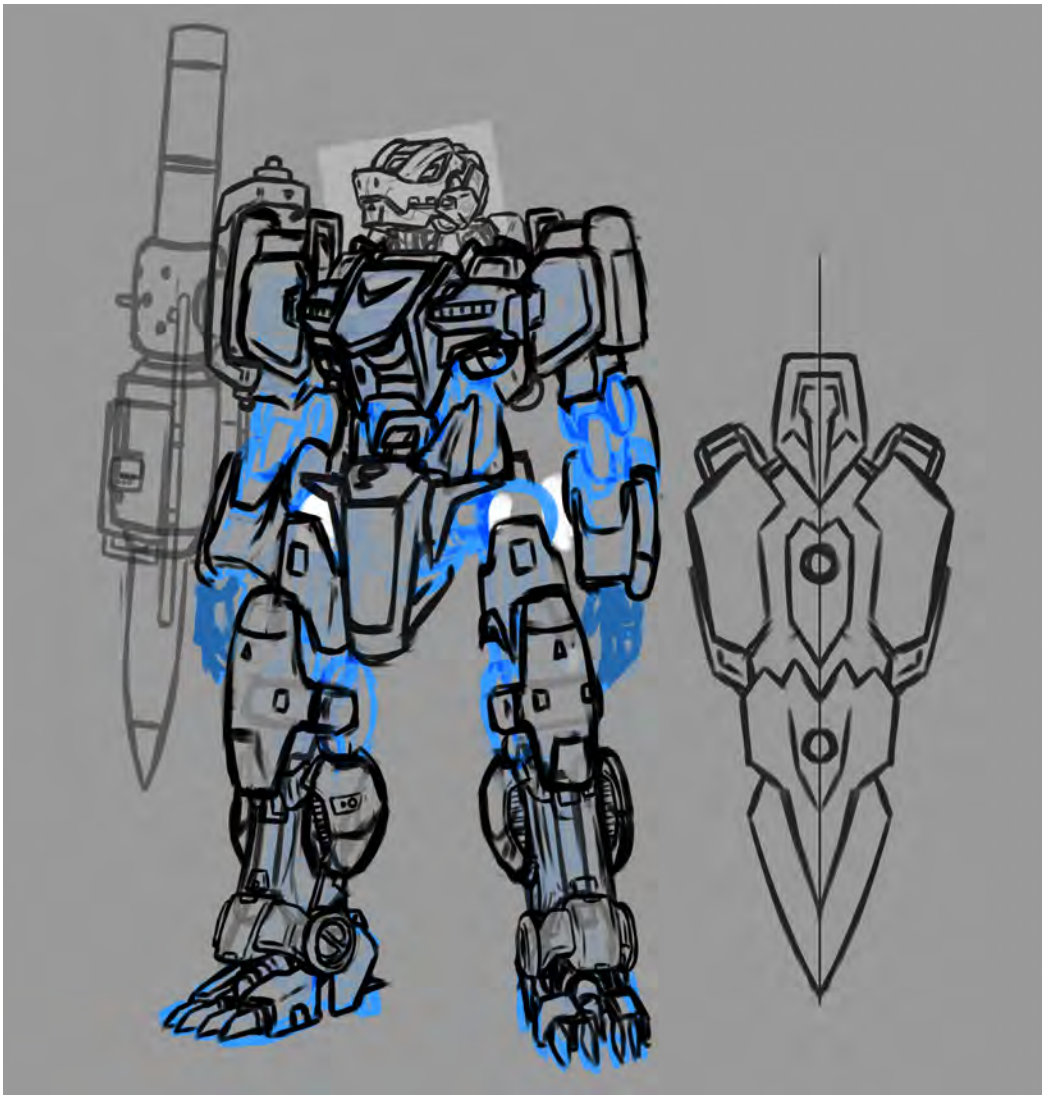
"I'm no hero, kid. Not sure I ever was. We worked as a team. That team was full of heroes. They were saving lives and protecting what was important to them. I was just naive and in it for the glory. Be thankful for the ones that are still willing to keep up the fight."

The guard gave a worried look and turned away, hoping to keep from upsetting him further. Levi took his leave eagerly and stepped through the door.

Levi stepped in to find scaffolding constructed into a makeshift observation platform. Cheap fencing stretched off towards the walls of the warehouse in both directions. From his vantage point on the ground it was impossible to say how big the testing area they'd set up here was. He'd initially thought they'd made some kind of ranged weapon, maybe a rail gun that actually worked worth a damn. Now it was clear they had something that needed room. Lots of it. A vehicle seemed unlikely. The ceiling was too low to test a flyer like a D.A.V.D. suit prototype and fighting a Juggernaut with something on wheels just sounded like suicide. His mind raced with questions as a short raccoon in a bright jumpsuit beckoned him to step onto a cherry picker set next to the platform.

The raccoon raised it to another platform before saying, "One moment, sir" and rushed

off down the catwalk. He made his way towards Grace and a hyena in a suit, grabbing their attention and gesturing to the bear before scurrying off to a series of monitors. The pair casually made their way over to Levi. The suit was well made, almost too well made. It looked out of place on the industrial scaffolding platform. His shined shoes clashed with the plywood panel floor and the neatly pressed suit seemed to be begging to catch a stray bolt on the railing and get torn. The hyena grinned and offered his paw.



"Levi! I'm so glad you could make it. I'll admit, I had doubts you'd come. I was given reassurances from someone I consider a reliable source that you'd come around though. Please, we'll be starting shortly; you should join us to watch the show. I'm told our efforts have paid off quite nicely." The hyena's warm tone was slick, but earnest. He looked familiar but Levi couldn't pin down why. He shrugged the notion off. He had one of those faces that looked at home on a business insider magazine, next to a tagline about how you too could make millions investing in the right government-backed research and development corporations.

After settling into place at the railing, Grace waved to the raccoon at the monitors. He nodded eagerly and lights bathed the testing area. The warehouse floor had been strangely configured. There was a grid pattern of shipping containers with wide aisles between them. Forklifts and boxes were strewn about almost chaotically in the aisles.

A warm androgynous voice came through a speaker on the platform.

"Connection established. Power on self-test complete and shows green across the board. Ready to initialize test when authorized."

The hyena chuckled and nodded. "Convincing, I almost feel bad it's been built for combat. It would be wonderful at screening my calls. Start the test."

The warm voice returned, "Acknowledged. Starting from the top, sir." Metallic impacts started to ring through the warehouse before a ten-meter tall anthropoid pillar of metal barreled into view from a container. It turned the corner nimbly and sprinted toward the observation deck, each step flawlessly planting on the warehouse floor without disturbing a single obstacle. It stopped abruptly about 30 meters away from the viewing platform, compressing and skidding slightly on the concrete just like a professional runner. The hyena was laughing and clapping as Levi stood stunned. He turned to see Grace shaking her head with the raccoon at the monitors and she walked out to the edge of the platform.

"That was half a second slower than our practice runs, care to explain the deviation?" She crossed her arms as the raccoon continued to tap away at the console in front of him.

"There was a temporary increase in latency that made precision control more difficult. My options were to attempt to simulate the exact path I had used previously despite the delay in reaction time or to slow down. I chose the more reliable approach." The man running the show laughed again and waved down Grace.

"Losing half a second is well within our design goals. Your perfectionism is appreciated, but we have guests we're trying to impress here. Save the nit-picking for the hiss and purr meeting after testing is over." He shook his head with a grin and waved at the giant machine below. "Continue the test; we're here for more than a simple sprint down a simulated roadway."

"Understood, proceeding with the testing itinerary." The machine turned in place before sprinting off, this time turning corners and making a path around and between the tall stacks of shipping containers at high speeds. Levi couldn't help but be impressed. The mech could turn almost on a dime, the feet planting firmly in the ground and springing it into action. Its height meant it could see over most obstacles while still being obscured by buildings. Still, it moved wrong somehow. The way it navigated seemed scripted or fake. It was hard to pin down why.

"The navigation and movement demonstration is now complete. Now beginning live fire test to confirm weapons system calibration." The machine walked to a shelving unit and pulled out

with what looked like a rifle the size of an artillery emplacement. The mech turned to a series of concrete pylons that had been placed along one side of the room and paused.

"It is recommended that all participants put on their hearing protection to prevent permanent harm." Grace walked over to her boss and handed him a set of plugs before joining Levi and handing him his. After everyone had finished squeezing the foam into their ears, Grace grabbed an air traffic wand from the table next to her, lit it up and waved it slowly high over her head. Before she had a chance to lower her arm thunder rang through the air. Sound poured over Levi in a way it never had before. The only sensation that came close to the shock wave being produced by the fully automatic cannon was striking a Juggernaut with a HAMMER and feeling the strike travel through the handle and into your suit. The man Levi was quickly beginning to internally refer to as "Mr. Money" was giggling like a school child. As the shock of the explosions that ripped through the air subsided everyone took their hearing protection out and gawked at the rubble that used to be reinforced concrete.

"One hundred and five-millimeter shells!" The hyena shouted gleefully. "The design team said I was crazy but I insisted. They're also working on a few other weapons systems but this was the simplest to solve the engineering problems on. Cooling it was problematic so we decided to use a tungsten alloy for the barrel and, well, nevermind. You can look over the specifications tomorrow if you're curious." He turned to Levi and grinned, still rubbing at his ears and yelling his words rather than speaking plainly. "What do you think? We're proud of what we've achieved technically but we lack someone who has the experience to say soundly that we have something that's tactically viable."

Levi stood in silence for a moment and looked from Mr. Money over to the mech. "First of all, the military already tried tanks and one hundred and five-millimeter shells can't penetrate pearls. The pilot sucks, he runs this course great but he runs it like every movement was scripted ahead of time. It's almost too perfect. What if something unexpected happens? Buildings fall; civilians get in the way. Nothing remotely like that happened in your test. If you want to send that thing into combat you'll need someone with a lot more improvisational talent. As for the whatever it is, I'd say it has a lot of potential. Not sure if that potential will go anywhere, but it's a start."

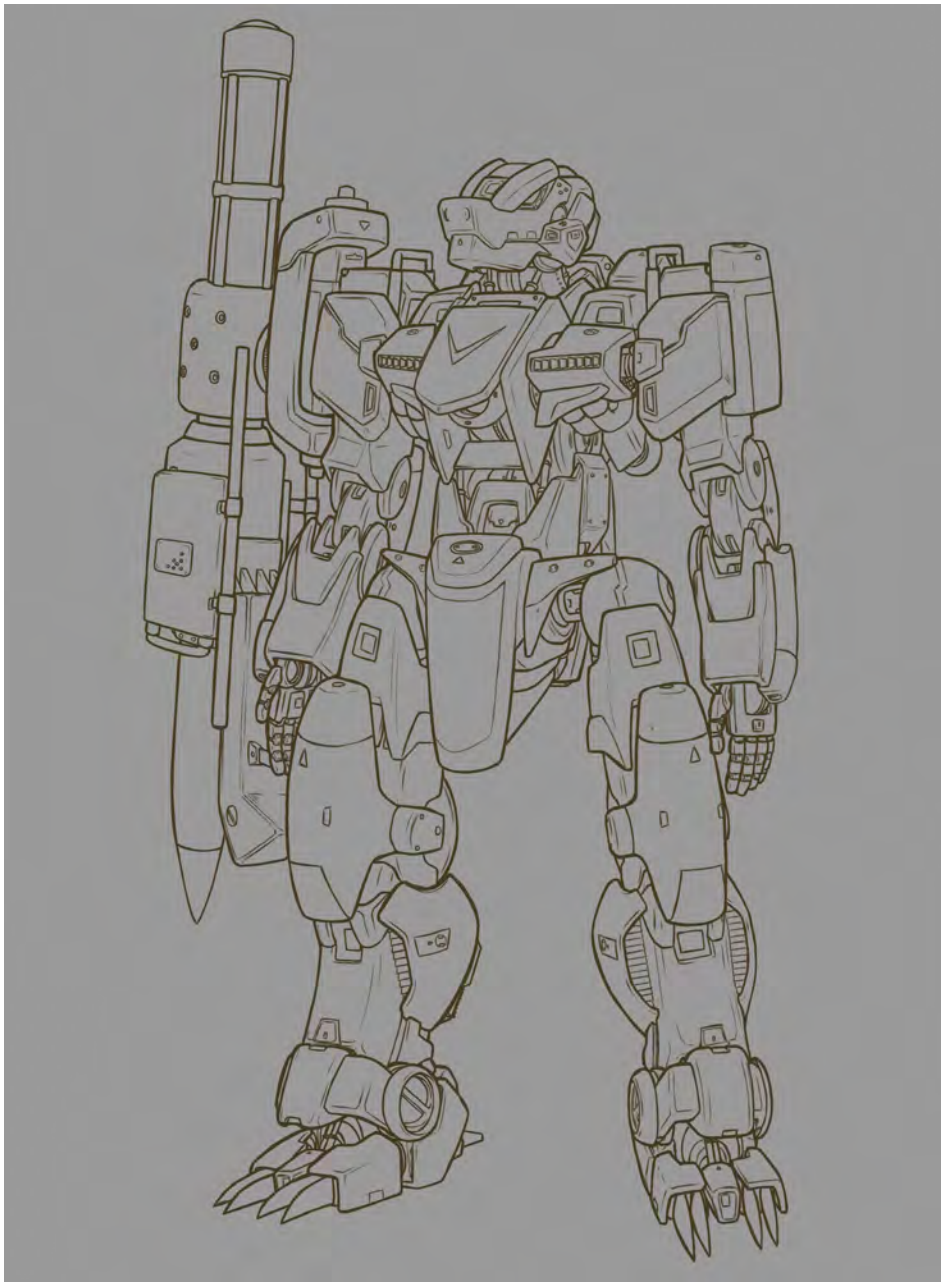
Mr. Money beamed and shook his head in approval. "Perhaps I should introduce the pilot then. DOG, come, bring the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. over." The mech jogged over to the platform and stood almost directly against it. "Show our good friends some hospitality and open up, boy."

The front of the mech opened and Levi found it was finally his turn to pick his jaw up off the floor as he stared into the empty cockpit. "Is there something wrong? I don't have something on my face do I?" The warm voice apparently known as DOG was met with laughter from Mr. Money while Levi gaped.

"Grace, I want the software department to get a bonus. I'm sure it wasn't on purpose but it can't be easy to make an A.I. with a decent sense of humor. Levi, you think it needs a pilot; we agree. We want you to be that pilot. You've got the experience, the motive, and you trust Sanctuary as little as we do. This is your shot, son. Your ticket back into the ring where we all really need you."

Levi blinked before taking out a cigarette and lighting it. He took a long drag and sighed before shaking his head. "Mr. Money, I must have lost my mind on my way in from my car because I think I might actually take you up on that offer."

The hyena blinked and chuckled softly. "It's Dr. Brontes; forgive me for failing to introduce myself. I was a little excited and forgot my manners. If you insist on the nickname I'm afraid I'll have to ask you use 'Dr. Money.' I worked hard for my degree after all." He stood a moment and broke into a smirk. "I guess it also makes me sound a bit like a super villain, which is fitting given I now have my own private giant robot." He chuckled as he slowly walked onto the



cherry picker and Grace took the lift down with him, leaving Levi there wondering if he could really change things this time.

-

Levi grunted as the cockpit shuddered, kinetic compensation doing its best to provide a steady ride as the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. lumbered down a street and took position at the opening of an alleyway.

"Levi! The target is approximately 30 meters down the connecting street. Current intel suggests there are no pearls at the Juggernaut's flank, we'll need to engage it from the front in order to begin damaging the pearls," DOG chirped.

Levi gave a curt nod and punched the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. out of cover. As he rounded the corner into the street he shouldered the rifle. The weapon clicked but bullets failed to fire. "What the fuck!" he snarled angrily as he put the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. into a slide and threw the rifle off into the distance. He readied the high-frequency dagger as he rushed the Juggernaut.

An alarm sounded as he got in close at the rear of the Juggernaut. "Levi, proximity warning, the tail!" Abruptly the cockpit shook before going dark and quiet, the A.R. overlay shutting down.

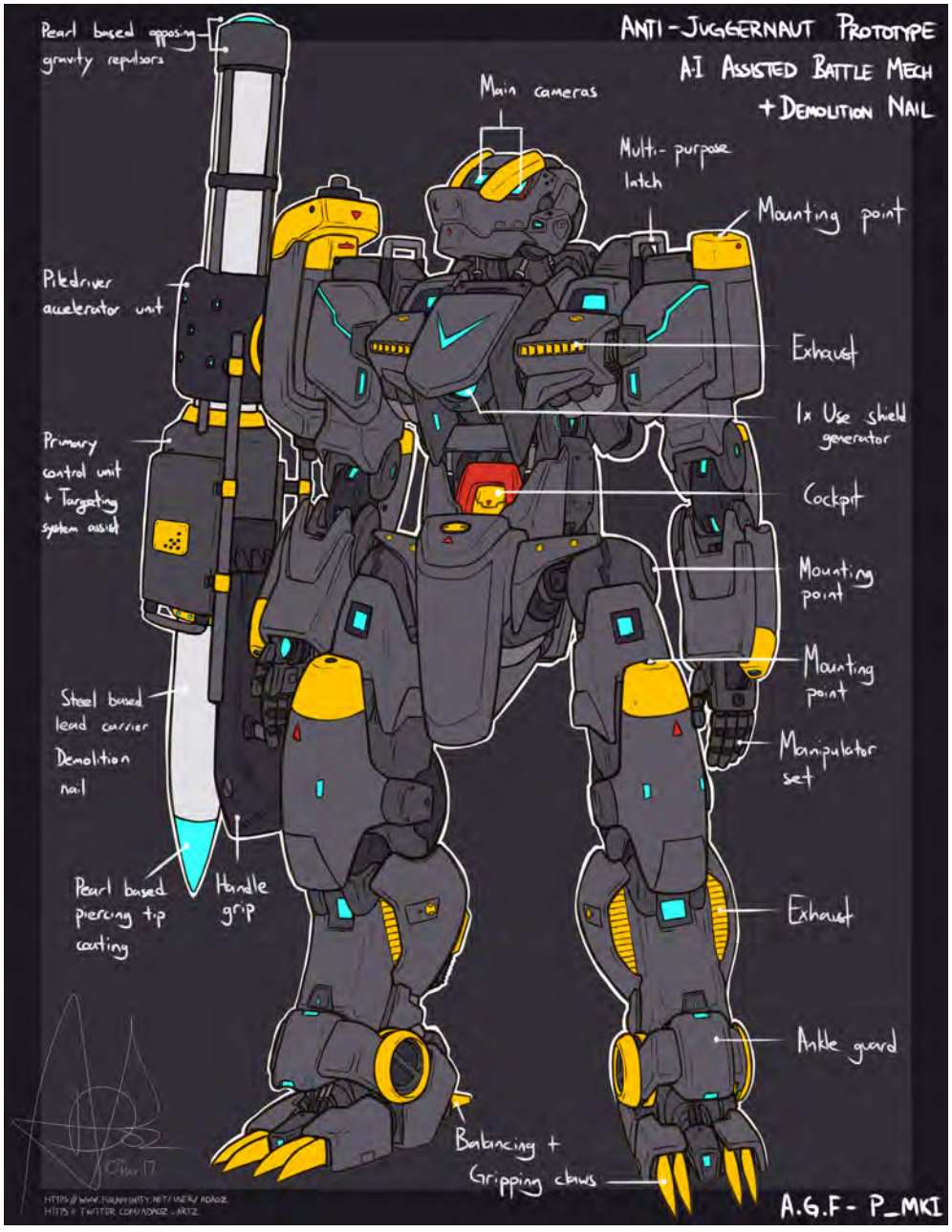
"FUCK!"

"Analysis of impact shows that the pilot's organs were partially liquefied by the sudden acceleration. The unit was flung from a standing position near the Juggernaut to a prone position one-quarter of a kilometer south." DOG chirped in his usual perky tone. "Would you like to run the simulator again Levi? That was our most successful run thus far-"

"This is useless!" Levi slammed his fist down on the control panel and growled. "We've got the power to take them on but we gave up the biggest advantage a D.A.V.D. has, being a small target. It's a hell of a lot easier to swat a dog than a housefly."

There was a pause before DOG broke the silence. "Was that pun intentional Levi? That's rather uncharacteristic of you."

Levi froze a moment before groaning and burying his face in his paws. "Oh, goddammit. Please don't tell me you do jokes now too."



The intercom lit up with the face of Dr. Brontes and his voice filled the cockpit. “An adjustment period was understandable Levi, but I’m not in the habit of backing a losing horse. Tell me what’s wrong and we’ll adjust DOG as needed.”

“DOG, why didn’t the rifle fire when we were approaching the Juggernaut?”

“Apologies Levi, this is a conversation best had between you and Dr. Brontes.” Levi cocked an eyebrow. Dr. Brontes slowly turns his chair so that the back is facing Levi. He cleared his throat and spoke brashly. “I wanted to see these improvisational talents that you spoke so highly of.”

“You son of a- You jammed the weapon on purpose?”

“Levi, the rifle jam was not the cause of your failure. Your approach to the Juggernaut was reckless. You are not a D.A.V.D. anymore.”

Levi sighed and took a deep breath to compose himself. “Right, right… I’m used to being a gnat in a swarm, not a lone wolf on the hunt. I need to use hit and run tactics until we get more G.O.L.I.A.T.H. units up and running.”

“More G.O.A.L.I.T.H.’s? Levi, I don’t-”

Alarms rang through the facility outside and an alert flashed on DOG’s displays. “Levi, there is a Juggernaut emerging. Initial reports suggest that it’s within the top 15% of observed specimens in terms of mass. A canine of sorts. There aren’t conclusive reports on the number of pearls or combat abilities at this time. D.A.V.D.’s are launching but assuming a mean average for conflicts with a specimen of this type we can expect several casualties. Dr. Brontes, the statistics for the D.A.V.D.’s are drastically improved if we intervene.”

Dr. Brontes glared into the video feed before sighing. “I can’t help but notice you didn’t include statistics for your survival odds, DOG.”

DOG chirped back almost immediately. “I’m a telepresence, my physical shell is located in the sublevels. My survival odds are 100%. The Goliath has a 98% chance of being entirely salvageable with only a minor setback in terms of maintenance projected.”

Levi shifted uncomfortably under the straps of his seat. “Hey, what am I, chopped liver? I don’t survive most of these simulations we’ve been running.”

DOG paused for a long moment before chiming back, “your odds have improved significantly now that you have a better idea how to engage the enemy.”

“Don’t dodge the question you tin can, how bad is it?” Levi barked into the console.

“Enough!” Brontes shouted, several office staff behind him startled in the background of the display. “Look. I can’t make you go, but if odds are that favorable you could really save some lives… I don’t like talking numbers,” Brontes looked down at a tablet next to him and frowned, “but you could save some good people out there and I don’t know that we’ll ever truly be ready without some more concrete combat data. There’s only so much we can predict on how a Juggernaut will react to your presence. For all we know we’ve had you fighting them with your paws behind your back.”

Levi growled and leaned back with his eyes closed. An almost annoyingly friendly voice broke the silence. “We can do it; our odds of success are actually pretty statistically significant!”

Levi groaned and tightened the straps on his chair. “Fine, but if I die I’m haunting the next pilot.”

“That’s the spirit!” DOG chirped.

“Alright, I don’t know who else you’ve been talking to but when we get back we’re having a serious conversation about assimilating these puns.” Levi couldn’t help but smirk as he guided the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. to the launch bay.

-

Levi let out an incredibly uncharacteristic yelp as the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. made a rough landing in the city’s public park. Letting out a low growl, “Not exactly as smooth as the simulated landings, is it?”

“Our impact peaked at approximately two point five times earth gravity. If that’s outside your comfort range there are a number of pharmaceutical solutions. Should I notify medical back at base?” DOG chirped.

“Just give me a heading so we can go get ourselves killed.” Levi betrayed a light chuckle as he started flicking through status confirmations and warm up tests.

“Updating your heads up display so you can go get yourself killed, Levi.” DOG chimed and the compass updated with a destination and a suggested route overlaid on the streets just outside the park.

“Don’t sound so smug, the next pilot might not decide he likes a sassy co-pilot like I do. Maybe a perky maid persona would be more their speed? Think you’d get used to that so easy?” Levi eased the controls forward and the Goliath jogged out onto the street and towards the nav point. Faint sounds of wailing alarms and sirens began to fill the air, punctuated by impact tremors and explosions.

A giggle filled the cockpit. “Sorry to interrupt sir, but that nasty monster is just two blocks ahead! All systems are looking good on my end, I’m sure you’ll be able to win this fight no problem! Go get them, senpai!”

Levi shook his head and positioned the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. behind a building, the rumbling of the Juggernaut’s steps shook the controls slightly as they provided tactile feedback. “Alright, thanks for the heads up but it’s time to put on your serious face and lie to me about the odds. I want to hear we have a shot before I get turned to paste against the side wall of the cockpit.”

“Oh I don’t need to falsify the data Levi, there’s certainly a good chance this goes well. You do your part and I’ll do mine. Update on intel being intercepted between D.A.V.D. units on coms, there are three pearls. Chest, the back of the left paw, and at the small of the back,” Dog chirped matter of factly.

“Alright, on my mark we go for the tramp stamp, a strike from the knife should be enough to take it out. Then we fall back and plan another surprise strike.” Levi thumbed at the controls. Blue high-frequency daggers extend out of the G.O.L.I.A.T.H.’s forearms. “Mark!”. Levi rushed the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. down the city streets to find the Juggernaut with its back turned, just as he had been hoping. The purple wolf was too busy swatting the attacking D.A.V.D.s to notice the giant lumbering mech behind it a few blocks away. Levi readied the G.O.L.I.A.T.H., barreling towards the Juggernaut as he prepared to strike. The giant wolf turned towards a formation of D.A.V.D.’s approaching from its side, opening its maw to reveal a terrifying crimson glow building within.

“Levi, it would appear this specimen possesses a ranged energy attack. Considering the increased threat, contingency plan en-”.

“Damnit!” Levi punched the controls and retracted his daggers back into his forearms, abandoning his attack. The G.O.L.I.A.T.H. rushed toward the Juggernaut and the squad of approaching D.A.V.D.’s.

The beam of red light shot forth from the wolf's jaws just as Levi and the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. skidded to a stop in between the Juggernaut and the D.A.V.D.'s, the mech's giant left arm raised in a defensive position. A bright blue dome of energy burst forth from the G.O.L.I.A.T.H., the forces of energy met and a concussive blast echoed through the square.

The G.O.L.I.A.T.H.'s left arm crackled with the remaining energy from the shield and the blast. The massive wolf seems to pause with the new challenger in front of him.

DOG pipes up and breaks the silence. "Levi, that was an emergency defensive countermeasure and can only be used once per engagement." Levi panted and shook his head, sweat dripping from his white fur. "Forget that, did we save the D.A.V.D. squad that was in the line of fire?"

"Yes, but considering their agility they could've easily-"

DOG's cheerful chatter was interrupted by a punch from the Juggernaut, the force knocking the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. back. The Juggernaut continued its assault with a barrage of swipes pinning Levi against a building. Levi reached out to grab the flailing limbs, testing his mech's strength against the hulking beast. The two wrestle as DOG chirped, "Levi, the contingency plan has arrived, located on the south edge of the square."

"What?" Levi barked, the distraction causing him to lose his grip on one of the wolf's arms, allowing the beast to topple the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. to the ground. The wolf loomed over the giant machine, howling in victory, Its jaws glowing as it prepared another beam attack.

"The Juggernaut is readying to engage, we need a different approach!" DOG alerted.

Levi glared up at the juggernaut and readied the energy daggers with a wicked grin.

He yelled as he reached up to grab the wolf by the scruff, pulling the giant monster down as he threw everything he could into punching the dagger down into the pearl in the beast's chest. A brilliant flash of red filled the air as the dagger split the gem nearly in twain. The Juggernaut let out another otherworldly howl, this one pained and furious. Levi deftly maneuvered, the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. kicking off the wounded Juggernaut and bolting toward the supply drop that had crashed to the surface at the edge of the square.

"I am transmitting access codes; the pod will unseal shortly." With a hiss and a bang, the pod seal broke and explosive bolts flung the cover clear of the capsule. Inside was one of the crudest weapons he'd ever laid eyes on. In later stories he'd go on to say it was something like love at first sight.

Levi reached into the pod and took out what appeared to be a pike with a pearl-powered auger at the tip and a pneumatic driver making up the bulk of the assembly. "DOG, help me out here, is this a weapon or demolition gear?"

"Experimental anti-Juggernaut weaponry based on a pile driver, known by a particular staff member as the Pearl Driver. The most accurate answer to your question is the phrase: why not both?"

"Okay, how do I use this?"

"Just stick out the G.O.L.I.A.T.H.'s right arm, it will attach automatically."

"Ah, so, magnets and bullshit, huh?" Levi barked and watched as DOG took care of equipping the crude implement to the G.O.L.I.A.T.H.'s right arm.

"Your explanation is vague enough to at least be mostly correct so I suppose we'll just say you're close enough and move on." DOG chirped as the weapon beamed with a familiar blue glow.

"The weapon is ready, it's underslung on the arm and meant to assist when making strikes with the right arm."

"Simple. I like it." Levi looked up to see the Juggernaut recovering from the wound at its chest. "You think it'll expect us to go over again?"

"You're the one that's supposed to read opponents and make gut decisions. I'm just here to do everything else." DOG chimed back.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm so sorry for you in your safe little bunker back home."

Levi punched the controls forward and lunged at the Juggernaut just as it came at him. As he approached, the wolf wildly swiped with all its force. Levi crouched and broke right. As the wolf's arm came in reach of Levi, he pulled the wolf past him, extending a leg and tripping the monstrosity. The wolf stumbled past the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. and fell to the ground. Levi swiftly swung the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. around to strike, punching the pearl on the back of the Juggernaut. As the fist of the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. met the pearl, the Pearl Driver triggered and a bright blue spiral erupted from the tip of the weapon as it drove forward with hundreds of tons of force.

The pearl exploded into shards almost instantly from the shock of the blow.

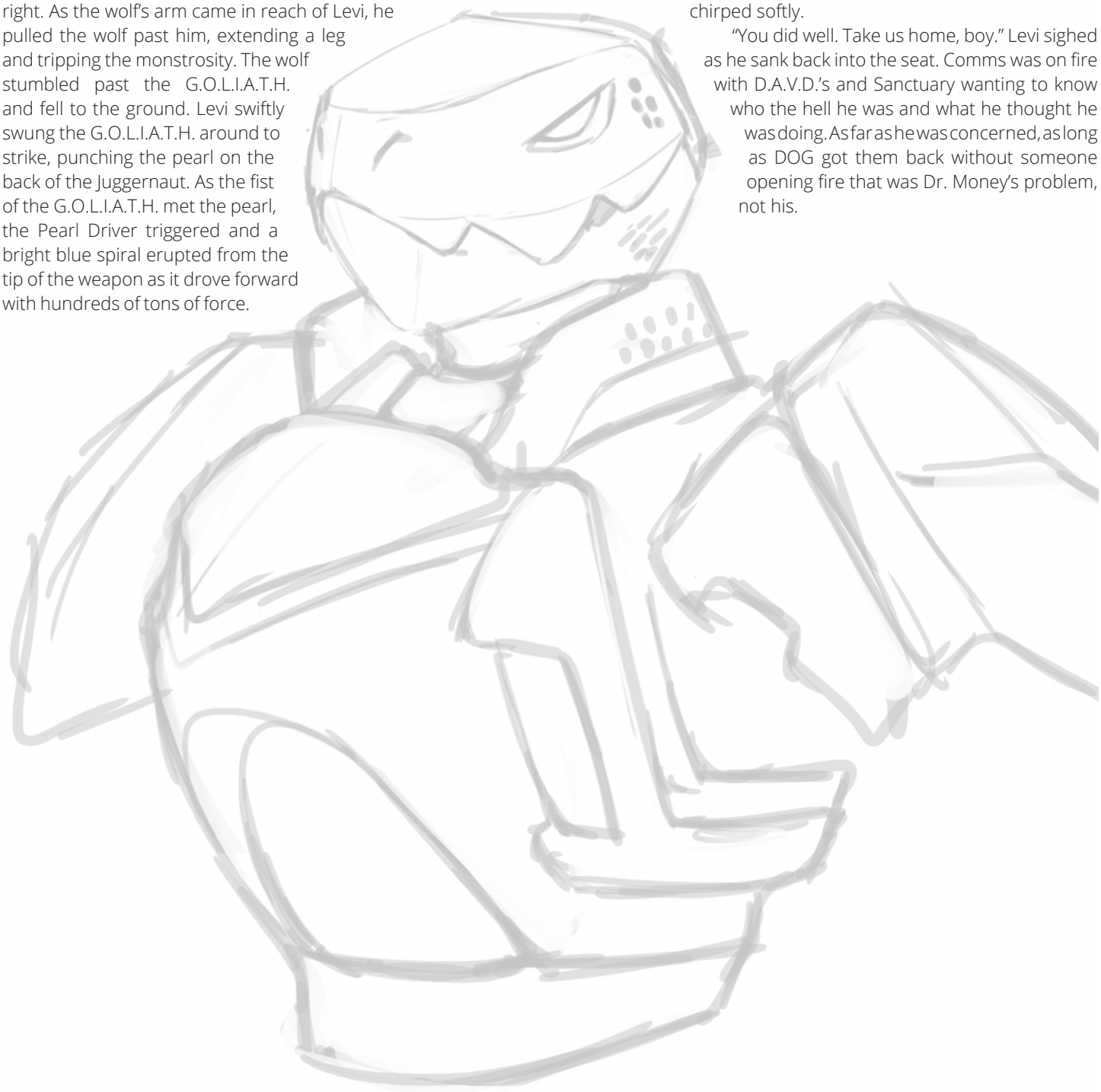
"It's down, move in!" D.A.V.D.'s leapt into the square from behind cover and assailed the remaining pearl. The Juggernaut let out a haunting wail as it slowly faded into black ash, leaving only what remained of its pearls behind.

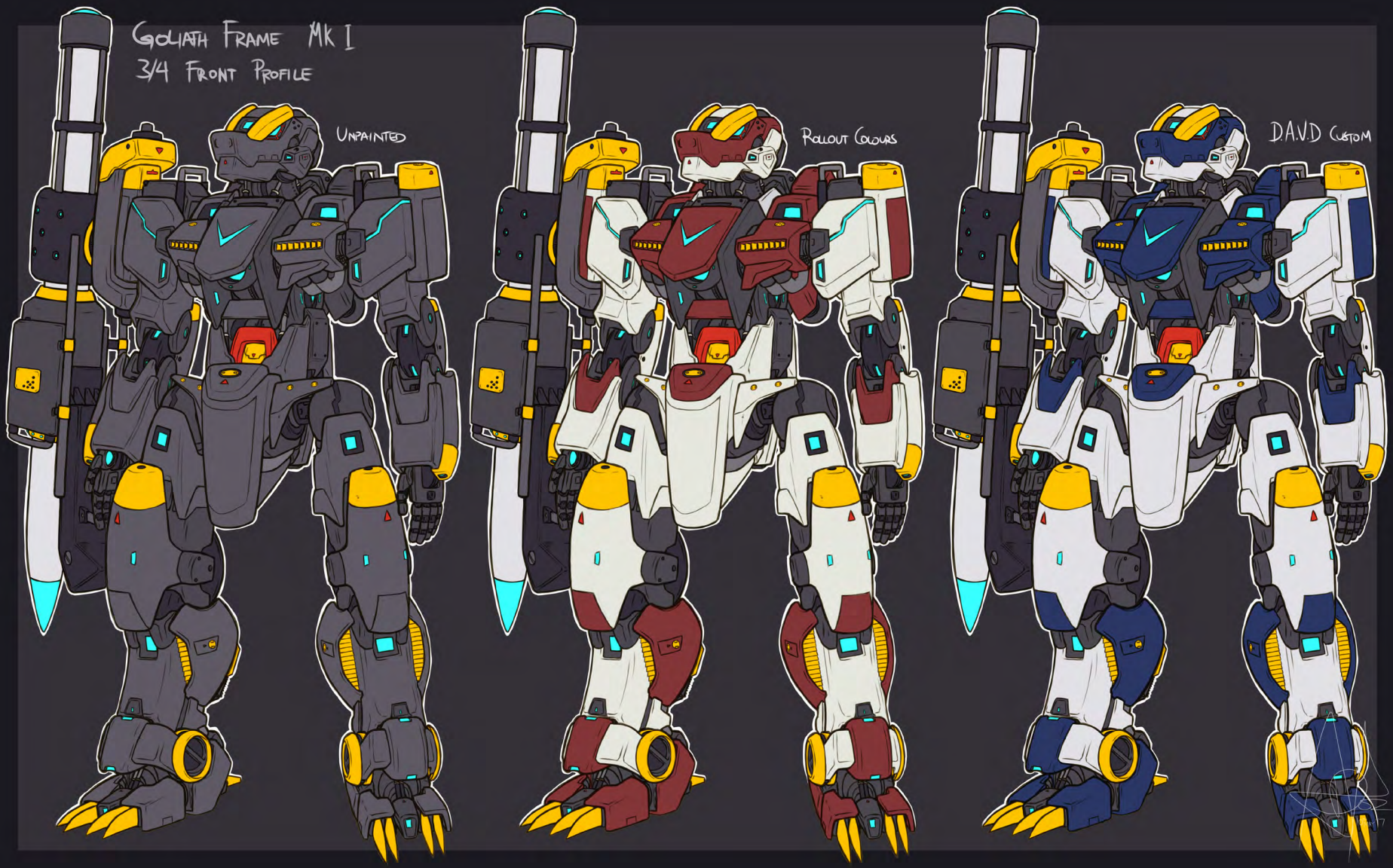
Levi brings the G.O.L.I.A.T.H. back up to a standing position, the intercom in his HUD displaying a cheering staff back at base. "How's that for improvised, Mr. Money?"

"Get back to base Levi. I'm glad I wasn't wrong about you; like I said, I don't like to bet on the wrong horse. That doesn't mean I won't take the underdog though. One hundred and seventy to one odds are pretty good numbers to beat. We might turn the tide in this fight yet." Dr. Brontes' words hung in the air awkwardly for a moment.

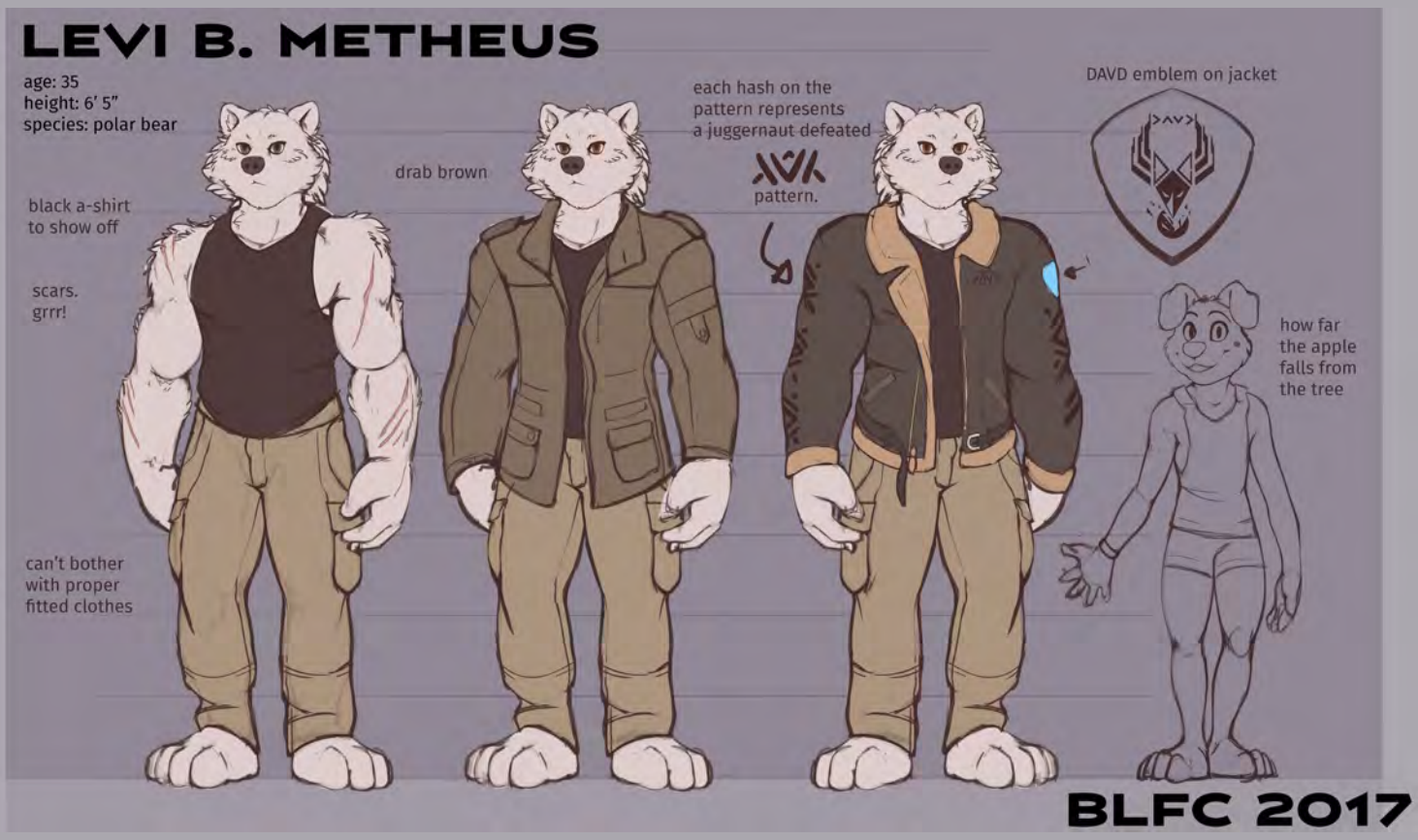
"You did request I lie to you about the odds Levi." DOG chirped softly.

"You did well. Take us home, boy." Levi sighed as he sank back into the seat. Comms was on fire with D.A.V.D.'s and Sanctuary wanting to know who the hell he was and what he thought he was doing. As far as he was concerned, as long as DOG got them back without someone opening fire that was Dr. Money's problem, not his.




Goliath Frame Mk I
3/4 Front Profile
Unpainted
Rollout Colours
D.A.V.D Custom

Levi & Jack


LEVI B. METHEUS
age: 35
height: 6' 5"
species: polar bear
black a-shirt to show off
scars. grrr!
can't bother with proper fitted clothes
drab brown
each hash on the pattern represents a juggernaut defeated
pattern.
DAVD emblem on jacket
how far the apple falls from the tree
BLFC 2017




JUGGERNAUT RESPONSE GROUP
LEVI.B.METHEUS
SANCTUARY DEFENSE CORPS
CHISEL MK17 MOD V2
SECURITY TARGETING
REPULSOR
REPULSOR
LEVI B METHEUS IS PROPERTY OF BLFC
10TH MAY '17
HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/ADAOZ_ARTZ


CMIT

JACK METHEUS

age: 14
height: 4' 4"
species: mutt (gshep + polar bear mix)

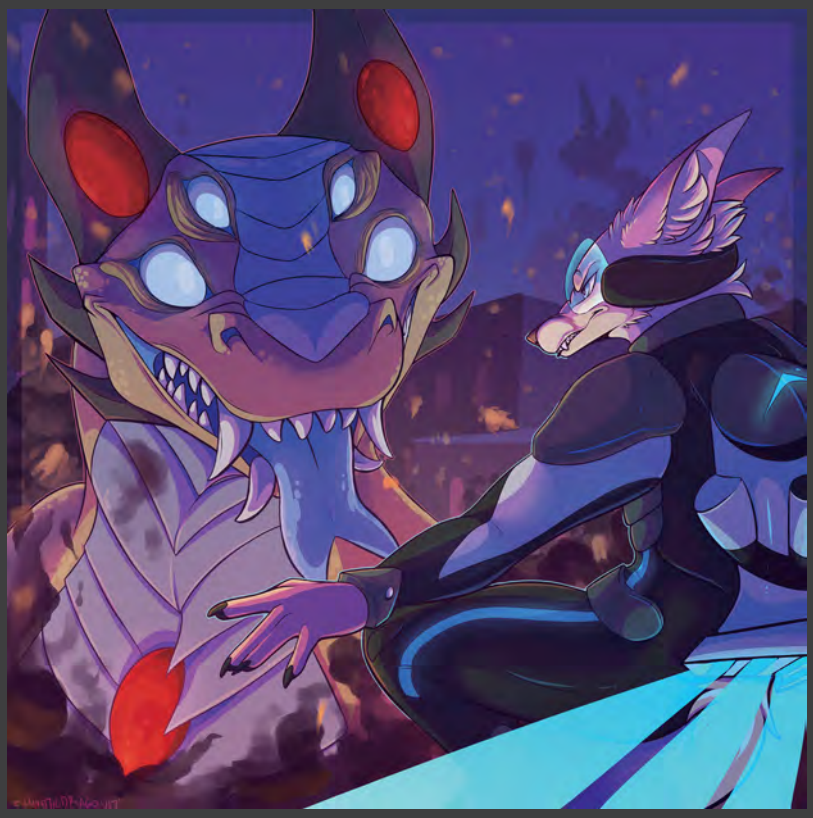


BLFC 2017



Extras

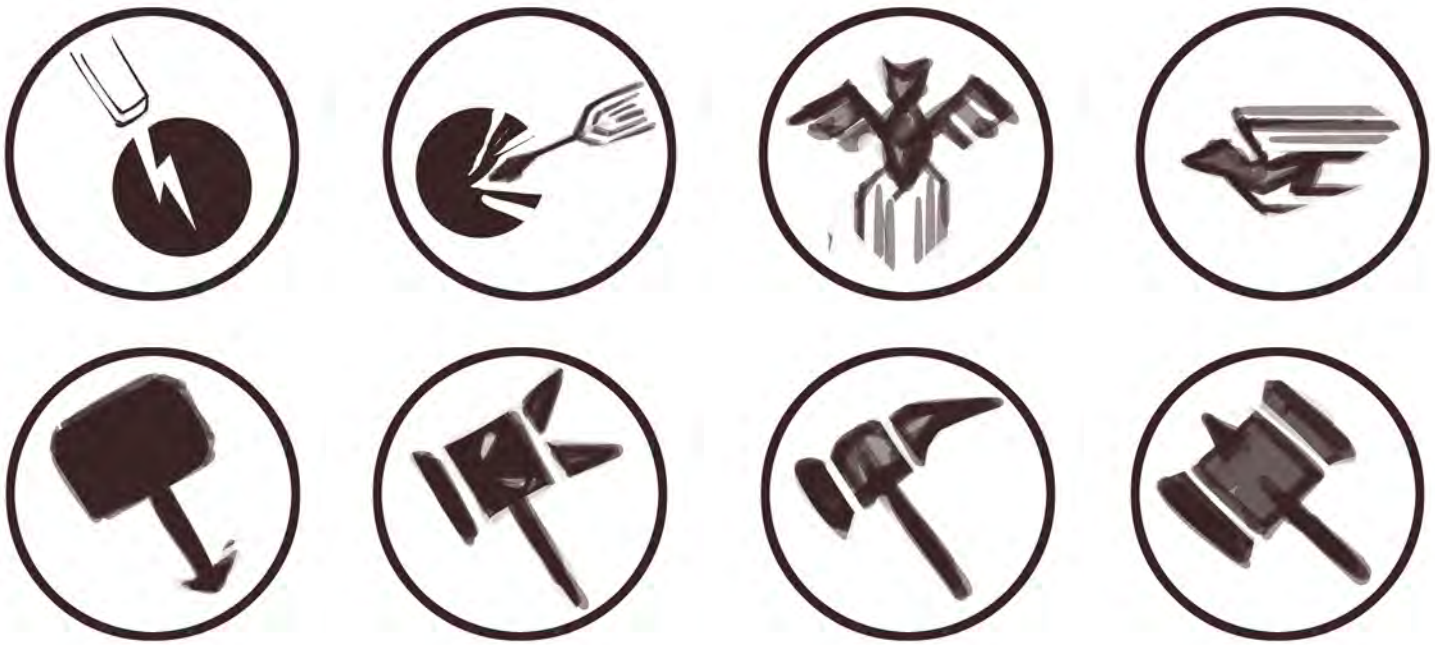







furaffinity.net/incredibleCrocodile

D.A.V.D. Logo Development



This first set of logos are from the initial idea phase. We knew we wanted to represent the Juggernaut fighters in the logo however we didn't know what part of them was the most visually exciting part. We have had ideas of chisels/javelins piercing a pearl, the fighters in flight, and several hammer iterations.

None of these ideas stood out well by themselves however we did like the symmetry provided by the fighters in flight logos.



From there we looked to the U.S. Air Force logo for inspiration. and came up with the first iteration of the final logo. It features a canine face with six "wings" on the side, representing the six light trails left behind by the D.A.V.D. gear in flight.





We knew we wanted the words D.A.V.D. on the logo, and a lucky coincidence from an early font choice made it pretty easy to come up with an interesting design for the words.

The last bit of the design was adding an element from the initial idea phase, the shattered pearl. We ended up deciding that a D.A.V.D. fighter attacking a pearl would make for the best representation of them.



Convention Artwork








Set 'em up...
...and Knock 'em Down!


MAYSTIK




Liqui



Special Thanks

Shadowterm for suggesting the initial theme pitch (sorry we butchered it way beyond your pitch).

Kitty Dee, Lykanthrope, Nighterror, Pac, Zephra, and Seth-Iova for Illustrating our stories.

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Storm Kwick for writing Chapter 0.

Tyco for entertaining the idea of an artbook for the con and for not killing us for our grammar mistakes.

Latte for making us write this page (and checking our grammar and putting the book together).

Special thanks to anyone who made art of this world and of these characters. It warmed our hearts to see it every time.

