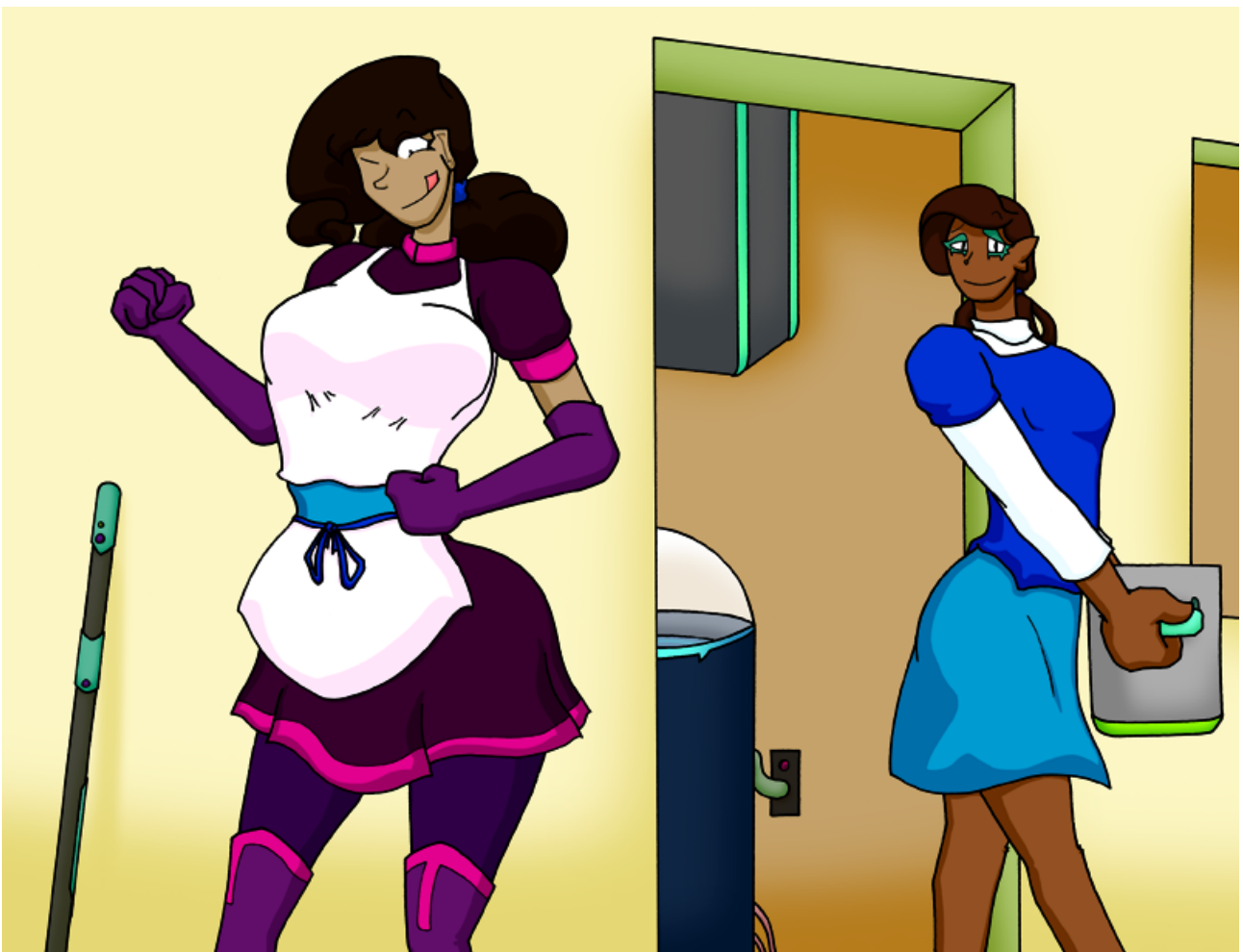


Title: Transported

Chapter 3: Employment  
Page 58

Now settled at the diner thanks to the generosity of the owner (and her willingness to keep quiet about Rico's lack of credentials), Rico starts off with simple cleaning details. It's easy for him to do, his lowly human form doesn't impact it so severely, and he's occasionally out front so the customers can see the diner sports its own human.

Since this is the first real down time Rico has had, he starts to adjust to his body over the coming days. In some cases, "adjust" may be too strong so he just gets used to it and learns to work around it. His apron, built for a normal human, is a bit too tight for his movie starlet figure. Rico also appears have some slight control over his costume now and is able to keep it in a slightly less cheerlead-y shape.



Rico has trouble mopping and walking on hard surfaces in his heels, but he slowly adjusts and learns how to walk in them.

He learns to mind the extra space his curves take up after instances of backing into and bumping over people with his backside or knocking things off counters and breaking dishes when he leans forward.

Some time has gone by and Rico fits in at the diner and has learned his way around the city to some degree. He no longer has to repeatedly ask for directions, understands the basic customs, and the diner regulars now know him as more than a novelty.

Seeing as how Rico now fits in, his boss approaches him before the shift starts. "Rico, honey, I think we're ready to move you up front. You'll be a bigger help out there and it will be good for you and the diner. What do you say?"

Happy to be seen as useful, Rico enthusiastically agrees. Displaying his most impressive control of his new body yet, Rico is able to reshape his cheering outfit into something more befitting a waitress. He may be confined to the costume, but he isn't as severely restricted in how he uses it these days. After finishing reshaping the outfit, Rico tosses on an apron, grabs a pad, and heads out to a table of customers that just sat down.

Rico makes small talk with the new customers, they seem impressed the diner is classy enough to have a human, and they happily order. Rico jots the order down, gives a friendly wave as he sets off, and stares at the notepad. "I have no idea what any of the meals they ordered are..."



After hours at the diner, the cook is helping Rico learn more about the different species that live in the city, their customs, and what they like or don't and how that affects the business.

Rico learns a lot about what things are popular among all of the Standard and what things are specific to certain worlds. A lot of this is done through the food and the diner's business. Rico laps this up and is on his way to becoming a true citizen of the Standard.

The cook makes Rico dishes from different worlds so he can better understand what the diner serves and help the customers choose what's good. Rico tries many new, exciting dishes but forces himself to choke down the others, no matter how vile it is. He fakes enjoying one particularly bubbling dish and gives the cook thumbs up as his face turns green and a small tentacle wriggles out of the side of his mouth.



The cook shakes his head as he takes away the bowl while Rico gags down what he tried. As the cook walks away, he mutters, "The rumors are true... Humans will stick just about anything in their mouths..."

Rico is now working full time as a waitress at the diner and enjoys meeting new people in the city. The diner is busier than when we first saw it. Rico is good for business and the customers like him.

Rico spends time chatting with regulars while they wait for their food and is picking up customs and sayings in their native tongues rather than just those filtered through the translator in his suit.

While helping a regular, Rico overhears some new customers at another table making crude remarks about him and humans as it traces an exaggerated hourglass figure in the air to the delight of its table mates.



Seeing Rico's anger/sadness, the other waitress takes him aside and tries to comfort him. People of every species from every world get that, it's not specifically aimed at him or humans, jerks are a depressing constant across the cosmos. "But hey, at least it helps you bring in good tips, right?"



At night, Rico returns to his living space above the diner. He hangs up his apron and tosses a bunch of small rectangular chips, clear with a metallic line and symbol running through them, into a jar labeled "Ride Home \$". His tips have started to add up and the jar is looking like it's off to a good start.

The next day, Rico is cleaning up in the restaurant in the morning and setting out the supplies. He wipes down a counter as the customers start to fill in for breakfast.

As Rico bends forward towards the camera to clean a table, we see his eyes go wide. A tentacle is slipping out below the frame, there's a sucker mark on Rico's wobbling cheek and his skirt flutters. Some aliens in the background snicker to each other.



Rico spins around and decks the tentacled alien, lifting it up out of its seat, over the back of the booth, and tumbling several tables away. The aliens sharing the table look horrified, but none of the other customers or workers react strongly.

Rico stares down at his hands, flexing his fingers. He barely felt that punch yet still knocked the unruly customer across the room. It's not a super power, but Rico realizes his suit gives him more abilities than just translation and space survival. He can actually look after himself out here in the city and beyond.

Rico excitedly spins to the other waitress, his hands clenched and raised triumphantly. "I'm strong!"

She gives him a smile but with a head tilt and furrowed brows. "And also broke a table or two."



Rico grimaces and shrinks back into himself, looking quite the meek cheerleader he once appeared to be. "I... probably can't totally afford to completely pay for that."

Rambling and apologetic, Rico returns to the diner's owner with his tip jar full of ride home money and offers to pay for the damages. The owner looks the jar over, takes a few of the chips from it, but refuses to take the full amount.

Rico looks down at the jar confused and she pats him on the head. "Maybe it's time you moved on, honey."

The scene shifts to a bit later. Rico hugs the owner, cook, and waitress good-bye and thanks them for helping him get on his feet and for teaching him. They wish him luck and to be safe. Despite being tiny, Rico has proven to be a useful member of the Cosmos. And their diner.



Rico shoulders a shiny new alien duffel bag, looks down the road and then back at the city once more, and finally heads down the road.

Page 65

After a short walk and barely at the edge of the city, Rico stops and realizes he has no idea which way to go. Earth could be anywhere and if the Standard hid its location, he can't just catch a bus back there.

Using the position of the shipping port he first arrived at, Rico finds the path he and the trucker arrived from. "Those idiot aliens' teleporter probably shot me out in a single direction rather than just randomly zapping me around the cosmos... Right?" Rico mumbles to himself. "It's not like I have any other leads..."

Through a port out of the shield surrounding the city and floating on the shipping lane, Rico has his bag on his shoulder as he waves at passing ships, hoping to hitch a ride.

The camera has panned just slightly down the path so we can still see where he just was. Rico now angrily hitches for a ride while holding a sign that reads "Not an escort!" on it.



Page 66

Rico is traveling on a bus-like ship. He sits, staring out the window with a mix of wonder and worry, with his bag on his lap.

An alien comes up, wobbly, to Rico and starts hitting on him and making suggestive comments in a mock "making a joke at your expense for others" way. Rico seems more disappointed than angry.



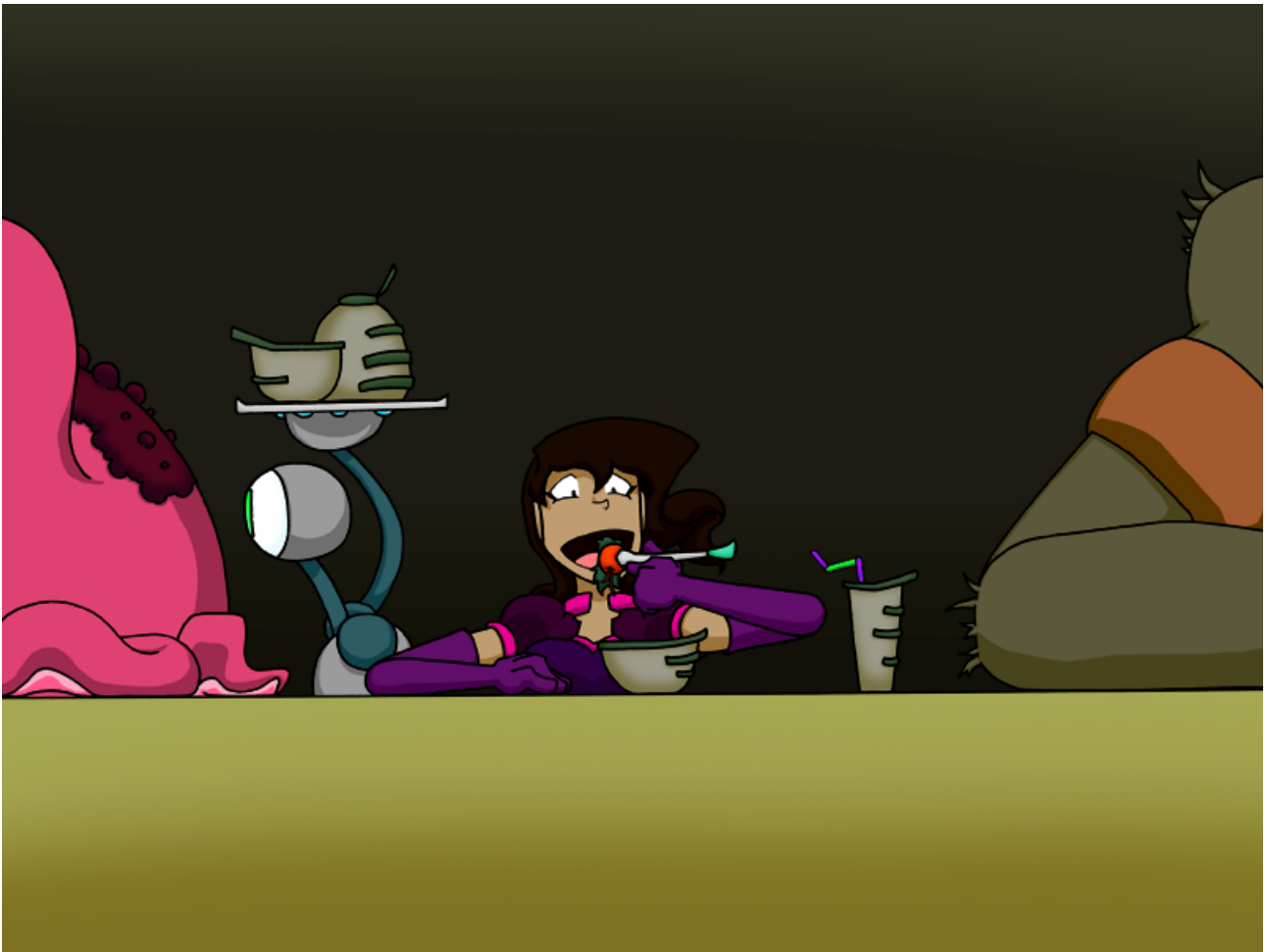
A few more aliens in the back now speak up and join in, more praising Rico for being hot than being overtly predatory like the first alien, but definitely treating Rico like an object.

Rico stomps off the bus at the next stop, grumpy and huffy. The Universe should be better than this, even if Rico is from a species seen as a novelty.

Page 67

Rico travels the road a bit more, preferring to stay by himself for a bit. He has a jetpack looking device attached to his shoulders that propels him along, allowing him to travel faster than "walking" but still enjoy the scenery, what little there is on the outskirts of a civilized chunk of space.

Rico sits in a rest stop finishing up a meal, surrounded by other diners. He looks comfortable and happy, secure in knowing what he just ate thanks to his training, and ignored in the hustle and bustle of a crowd. After the meal, he leaves to enter the adjoining neon futuristic hotel.



Zippering through the crowd in the lobby, Rico asks anybody whose attention he can grab if they know anything (useful) about humans or where Earth is. The shrugs and stares he get are his answers and he moves along.

Several aliens sitting around for a chat mock Rico for having a dumb local name for a dirt planet. It's no wonder it's a lost zone out of the Standard. Rico feels oddly defensive of his home being this far out and leaves the lobby.

Page 68

Rico is in a new hotel for the night as he continues his trek. His bag is on a table and we see him in front of a mirror experimenting more with his costume.

He can't directly change it from his cheering suit with its skirt and heels but is now able to modify it with some mental effort, but the costume seems to fight back. We see him struggling to keep it in the form of a regular shirt so the change only appears to last a short while Rico is fighting it before the suit pops back to its default configuration.

Rico sighs and gets ready for the night. The suit does seem to be more amenable to taking forms that could have been seen in the sci-fi movies that inspired its creation and Rico is able to reshape it into some nightwear.



Rico emerges from the bathroom with the suit reformed into a skimpy nightgown as he crawls into bed. It's now a suitable for most audiences nightie with the gloves resembling opera gloves and the boots still stuck on but reduced to pumps. It's not worth it for Rico to fight the costume anymore and he turns in for the night.



The scene shifts to a new day and Rico is back on the road. This time, the ship is passing through a new portion of the galaxy, so Rico is a far distance from the starting point.

He looks down into his bag and sees that his cache of money is running low. Space travel may be readily accessible, but a journey through the cosmos like this isn't cheap.



Rico gets off at the next stop, which is a smaller city but it's even more lit up and neon than the first. Rico waves good-bye to the driver and heads towards the main streets.

As he wanders the city, he comes across a chrome building, pulsing with lights, but the front entrance is deserted. Rico looks over the building and the translator in the suit soon pops up "Human Club" over the sign.

Two figures at the entrance notice Rico scanning the club and rush over to him. As they pass through the dark entrance into the lights of the city, Rico sees that they're two beautiful human women.

They both excitedly shout "Welcome"s and "Hello"s to Rico and hug in close to him. They take him by the arms and lead the happy Rico towards the back of the club. He's too excited to see fellow humans to speak and follows as they lead him.



Inside the club, Rico hears the thumping of music and pulses of light from up front behind the curtains, but the back area is quieter. The lighting is more dim and relaxed. An alien creature is relaxing on a futon-looking bed sipping a drink. She's tall and has quill-like spikes that form her hair. Sitting at her sides are a human man and a woman, leaning up against her, happily resting with their arms draped around her.

The alien takes notice of Rico and the two women that led him in, then both kisses and giggles off to the front of the club. The music becomes loud as they peel back the curtain to the front but Rico just sees silhouettes and shields his eyes from the pulsing neon lights until the curtain falls back in place. The alien smiles to Rico and raises her glass to him. "I know that look, first time in the city? Welcome, traveler!"

Page 71

Rico is immediately suspicious of the woman and clutches his bag. His eyes scan the room, making sure the exit is clear, but his vision returns to the two humans on the bed now alert and waving happily to Rico.

The alien lady follows Rico's vision and pats her the two humans on the head to their pleasure. "These are my humans. They aren't natural, of course. Just the clones I ordered and grew."

She pets the male and strokes his chin as she rises. It's a smooth, almost snake-like motion. "They work just fine, but it's not the same."

The alien walks over to Rico and studies him. "But you... what lab put you together, sweetie? A new model?"



Page 72

Rico gets defensive of his status. "No lab made me, lady."

The alien is instantly thrilled. Her quills raise in a wave down her body before coming to a rest again. She looks Rico up and down, twisting around him smoothly and quickly.

"A real- I've never seen a real human in the jiggly, quivering flesh before." She happily drums her fingers in the air, trying to contain her happiness.

"The grown ones, everybody knows they're fakes. You just can't recreate their natural habitat, early development, and how they grow up and are taught in the labs." Rico shifts his weight to one leg and swings his travel bag low. More "done with this crap" than angry.



Page 73

Rico pulls back from the alien lady. "I'm NOT an escort."

She snaps back up straight and scoffs. "Pfah! Humans are wasted in the other cities as escorts. You don't squander fine materials on mere minutes of carnal dalliances."

"In my club, my humans are partners. Your innate desirability is... distracting. Businesses from all over rent my club and its services, so you can... dull the senses of their prospective clients. Maybe they don't read the fine print as finely when their minds are preoccupied by drink and such lovely scenery."

Rico hasn't changed his posture and stares ahead as the lady twists while she waves her hands in grand gestures. He stops her, "What's in it for me?". She smiles and twists back to Rico, all business but quite content, "A percentage of every deal you help close. I'm paid for the use of the club by one party and they give us bonuses based on how good of a deal we can get them with their client."



Page 74

Some time later, Rico walks through the club wearing a sparkly black cocktail dress and carrying a tray of bubbling vials and cups of what we're sure are intoxicating drinks. He heads past several other well dressed human men and women tending to smaller tables.

Rico arrives at a table full of aliens, dressed sharply and slightly on edge, there is clearly some business going down here. Rico leans down with drinks to the alien that has the most paperwork, winking to it as their eyes meet and resting his chest on the alien's shoulder while Rico passes out the cups.

Rico bends low as he distributes small napkins to the table and collects old cups. One half of the table stares at his front while the other checks his behind. The female alien, the boss of the club from the previous page, well dressed and formal, nods, but only Rico can see it as the others are preoccupied.

As Rico gets ready to leave with the tray of empties, he sidles up close to the main alien and makes a show of glancing at the contract before it. Rico coos in awe of the alien's money and how important he must be to have such a generous offer before him.





Page 75

Now only half paying attention, the alien businessman scribbles on the offer while happily looking over Rico.



Rico briefly takes a moment and steels himself.

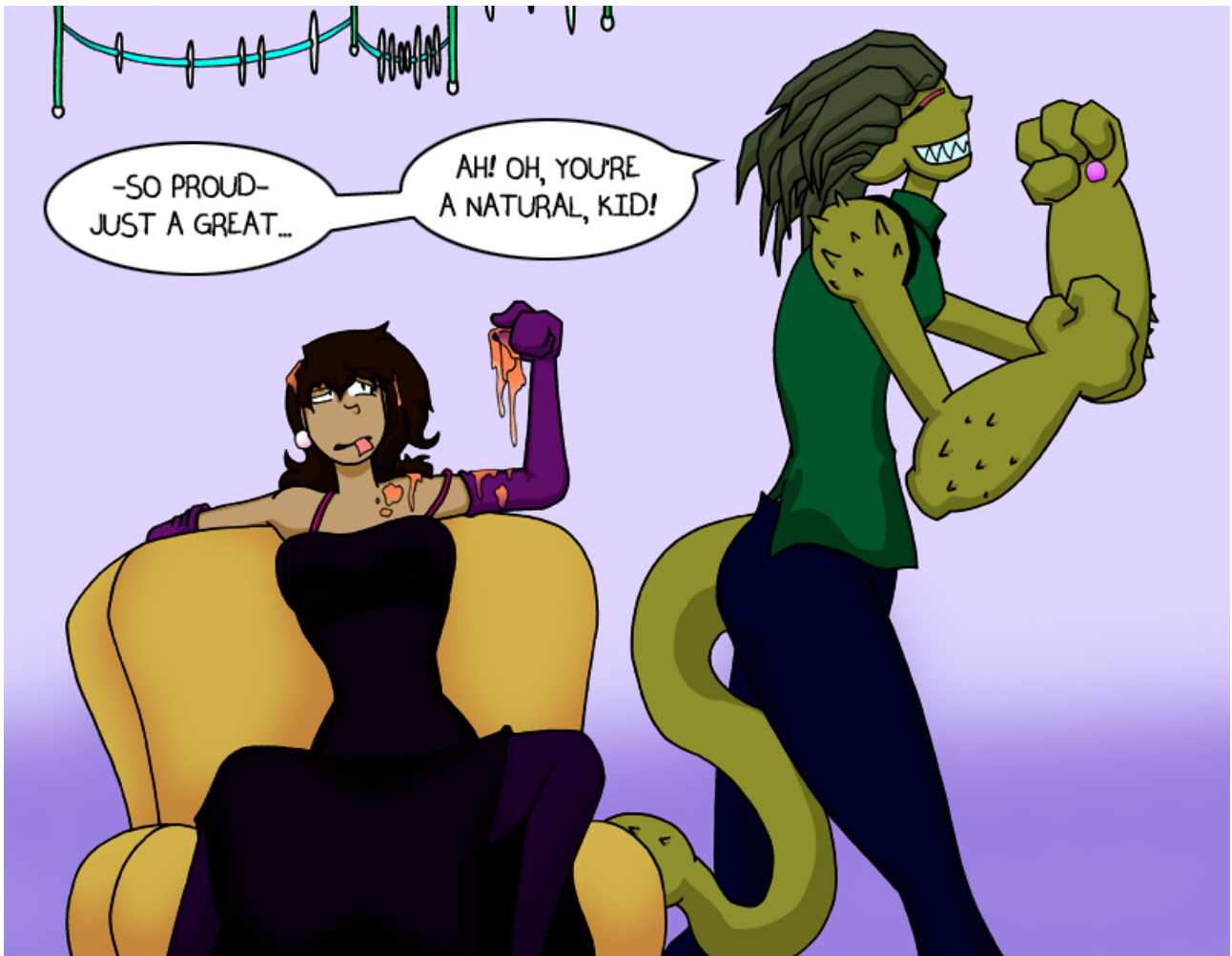
Rico plops down onto the alien's lap with a wink. The club owner quickly collects the signed device and passes it to her clients, who also rapidly sign it and shuffle it away for safe keeping. They're rather pleased to get whatever that contract was for signed so quickly.

The club owner motions beyond the table and soon a gaggle of the owner's clones, male and female, rush to the table to help celebrate. The clones cuddle around everybody at the table and the alien that just signed the contract has several. Beside itself with the attention and already ignoring the contracts just signed, it puts its arm around one of the women at his side and then pulls Rico in tight.

Page 76

Later that night, the club is quiet and lit normally. The tables and chair are put away and the club is clean. Rico sits slumped forward on a couch and lets out a "bleh" as he peels some dried slime off his shoulder. His fancy dress is disheveled and his hair mussed.

The club owner beams and paces back and forth behind him, happily shaking her fists. "-So proud- Just a great... Ah! Oh, you're a natural, kid!"



Rico rolls his eyes as he fixes himself up. "No, I am not." The owner's eyes raise. Sensing his reluctance, she quickly stands behind him, leaning forward to be on his level.

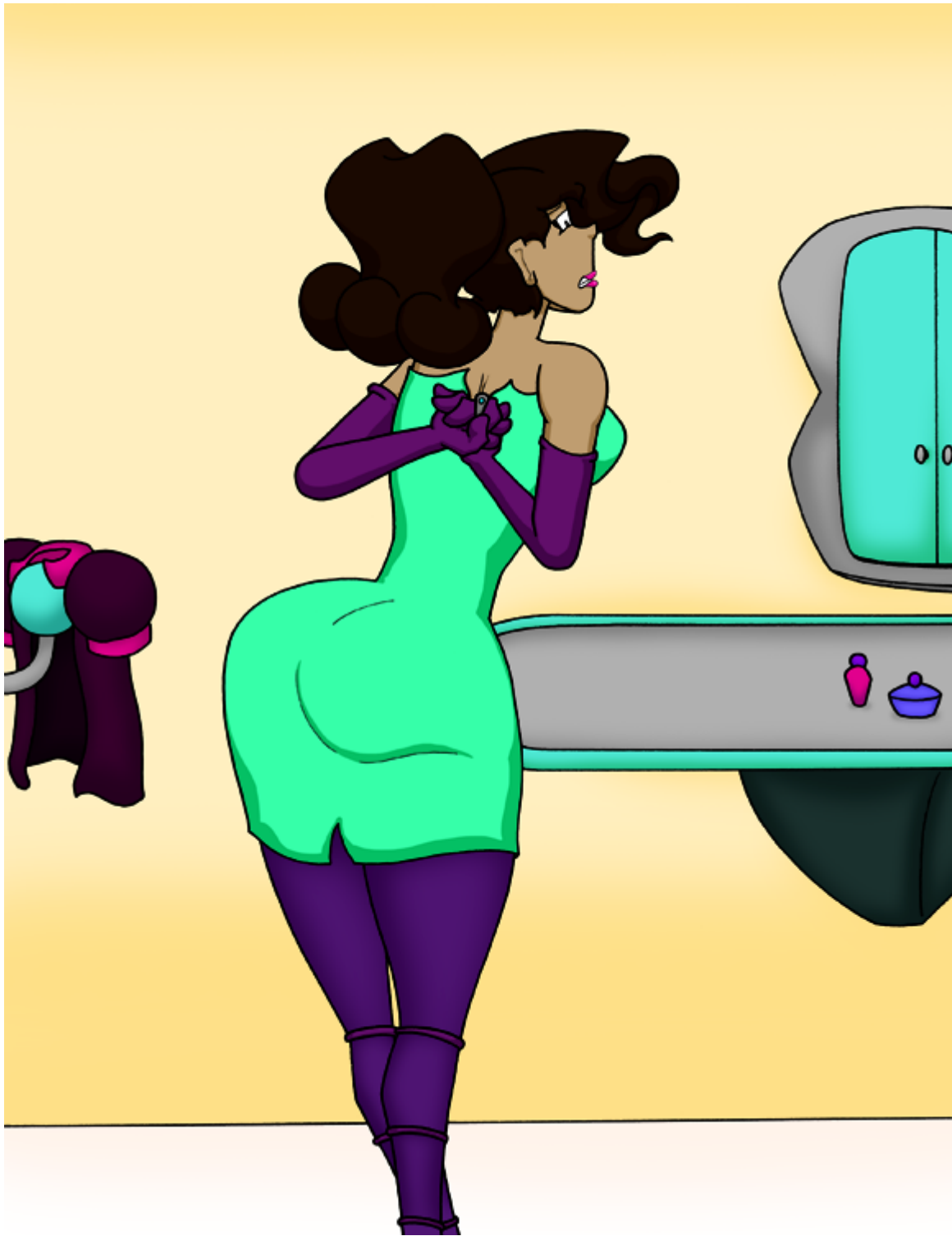
She coos and gently rubs his back. "No, my dear, you were wonderful. You're different from those clones. You're special."

Page 77

Some time has passed. Rico slowly wakes up in a bedroom and stretches. He's laid out on an enormous plush bed with a canopy top. The room is luxurious and dimly lit in neon as a shade keeps the afternoon sun out of the room.

As Rico leaves the bed, we see his suit has been reformed into some swanky, expensive lingerie and stiletto heels as Rico tosses on a sheer nightgown and walks to another room, any former traces of difficulty in his body long gone.

Later that night, we see Rico painting on some lipstick from a small vial, fidgeting with his hair, and then squeezing into a tight, and rather expensive, dress.

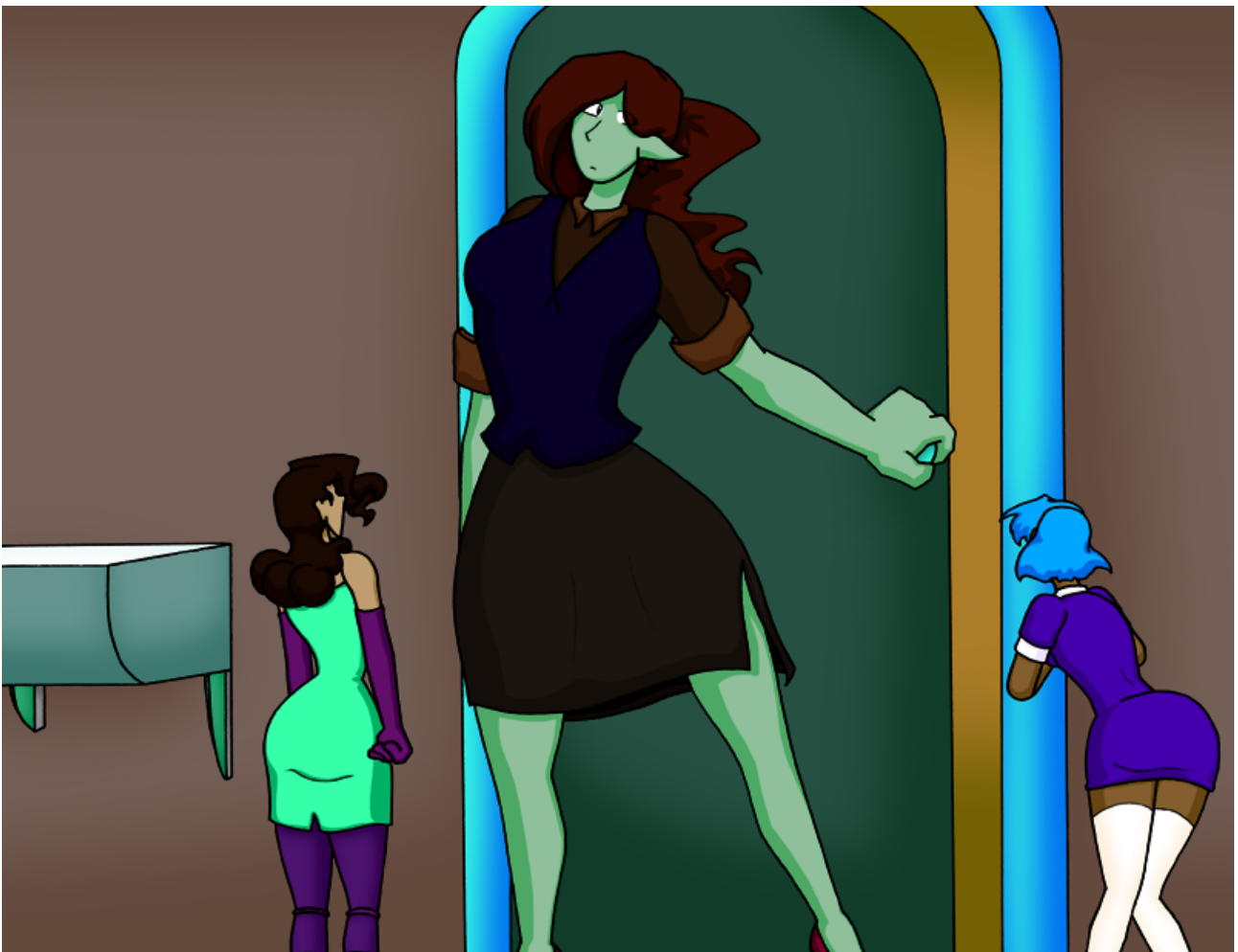


There's a soft "bing" from out front and the doorway opens to reveal two curvaceous cloned women. They wave enthusiastically and prance inside. "Hiii, Rico!" "You ready? Tonight's a biiig ooone!"

Rico and the clones get out of a fancy shuttle at the top of a skyscraper. They enter through a long bubbled balcony overlooking the city.

They're immediately met by several smartly dressed bouncers that look the trio up and down. One is holding a scanner and gives a curt nod, leading the other agents to remove their hands from their jackets and pockets, where weapons are likely hid. The scanner agent waves the women inside further.

The office is enormous on the inside and the room the trio are ushered into what looks like a grand ballroom. Stepping out from another room through an enormous doorway, a giantess alien woman welcomes the group. She's dressed formally and comes across as alluring and extremely powerful, both in strength and likely politically.



The clones go weak in the knees and swoon at her side. Rico offers a smile as she lifts his chin with a huge finger and grins herself.

The clones act very submissively around the alien but are demanding for attention, one draped on her shoulder, and Rico stays by her side trying to glance over her paperwork and holo-devices without her noticing. He does his best to memorize any important looking names or figures to report back to the boss and her real clients. The giantess seems to just be taking in the trio's presence as she finishes up some work. Rico is slightly frustrated that the client is paying so much attention to the paperwork and not them. He hasn't had this much trouble demanding attention before and a well-read client is bad for business.

Rico startles at a faint knock from a side door to the room. The giantess sets the clone on her shoulder down to the ground and rises up. She smiles to the group, "I invited some more companions over for our celebration tonight."

She heads over to the door. Rico slumps against the giant desk, grumbling, "Boss never said anything about sending over other girls. I don't need the competition for this deal..."



The giantess opens the door and Rico can hear a greeting from behind the desk. Something grabs his interest and he spies around the desk leg to notice a humanoid alien and Blue being led inside.

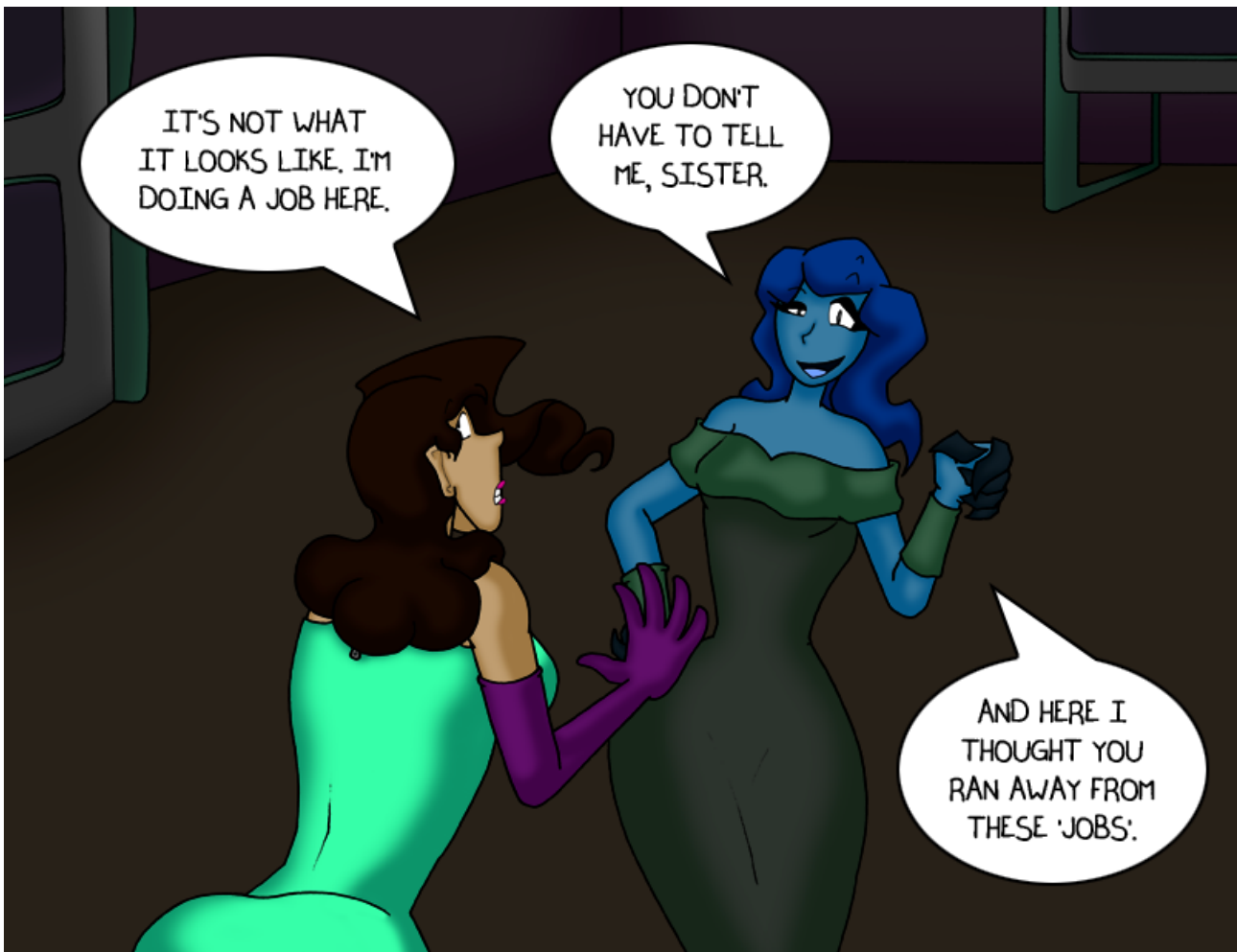


Rico is shocked and almost giddy to see Blue enter the office. She's dressed elegantly in an evening gown but still has her casual air to herself despite it. She gently brushes the giantess's arm and saunters into the office.

Rico rushes over to Blue, giving her a quick excited wave. Blue's calm breaks for the first time and she's momentarily stunned to recognize Rico. She looks him up and down and is shocked and confused to see him so done up and overtly feminine. And here.

Her look sinks in and Rico grabs Blue by the arm and rushes her into another room off to the side and away from the group.

Rico hunkers down and holds up his hands. "It's not what it looks like. I'm doing a job here." Blue raises an eyebrow with some self-satisfied snark. "You don't have to tell me, sister. And here I thought you ran away from these 'jobs'."



Blue's snark quickly sinks in and Rico emphatically shakes his head, his hair bobbling as he does so. "No! You jerk. Not like that. It's a hustle." Blue immediately perks up and returns to her normal self. "Oooh. I want in!"

The floor shakes slightly and the duo quivers as the giantess approaches them from around the corner. The giantess leans down to the pair, "And what am I missing, ladies?"

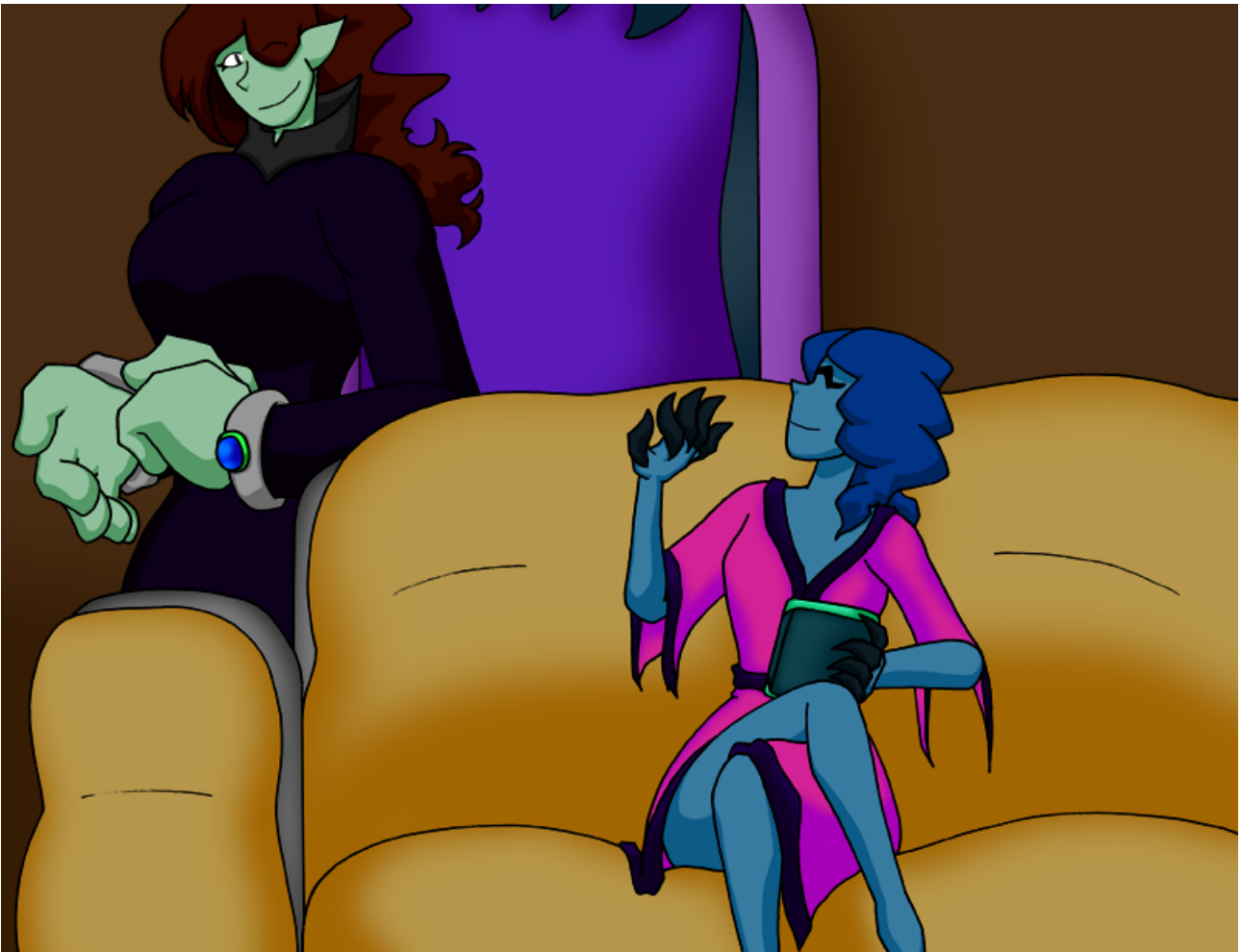
Blue elegantly holds her hand out to be taken and demurely smiles to the giantess. "My lady was a bit overcome by her shyness around you and was worried it might two to satisfy such a ... grand woman."

The alien smiles and extends a finger for Blue to take. "I'm sure I can make such an offer work."



The next morning, Blue is sitting, dwarfed, in what appears to just be a stool or ottoman for its owner. She's wearing a only a slinky silk robe tied at the waist as she leans back and looks over a holo-device.

The giantess client comes out of a room, pushing aside a curtain then putting the finishing touches on her formal outfit and getting ready for the day. She gives Blue a cheerful nod and greets her. Blue responds with a cute wave of her fingers.



The giantess gathers her things and addresses Blue, "It's time for work. Your lady may need a hand, but my driver will take care of you and see you home safely."

She turns to exit but stops at the door. "Or you can leave her here for when I return home from work..."

Page 83

Rico is strewn out, collapsed, on a gigantic bed. His costume barely reformed on his body as he stares blankly into space, groaning and tired.

Blue strolls into the room and sits demurely on the edge of the bed with her device. Rico notices her but can't move, "Not how I was expecting my first night of an alien three-way to go..."

Blue snaps the holo-device closed and crosses her legs and smiles. "Your boss

acknowledged the data transfer was a success and the deal went through. I've already taken my cut, naturally, and the rest is yours."

She stretches out on the bed next to Rico and props her head in her hands. "You and I make a good team..." Rico just groans softly.



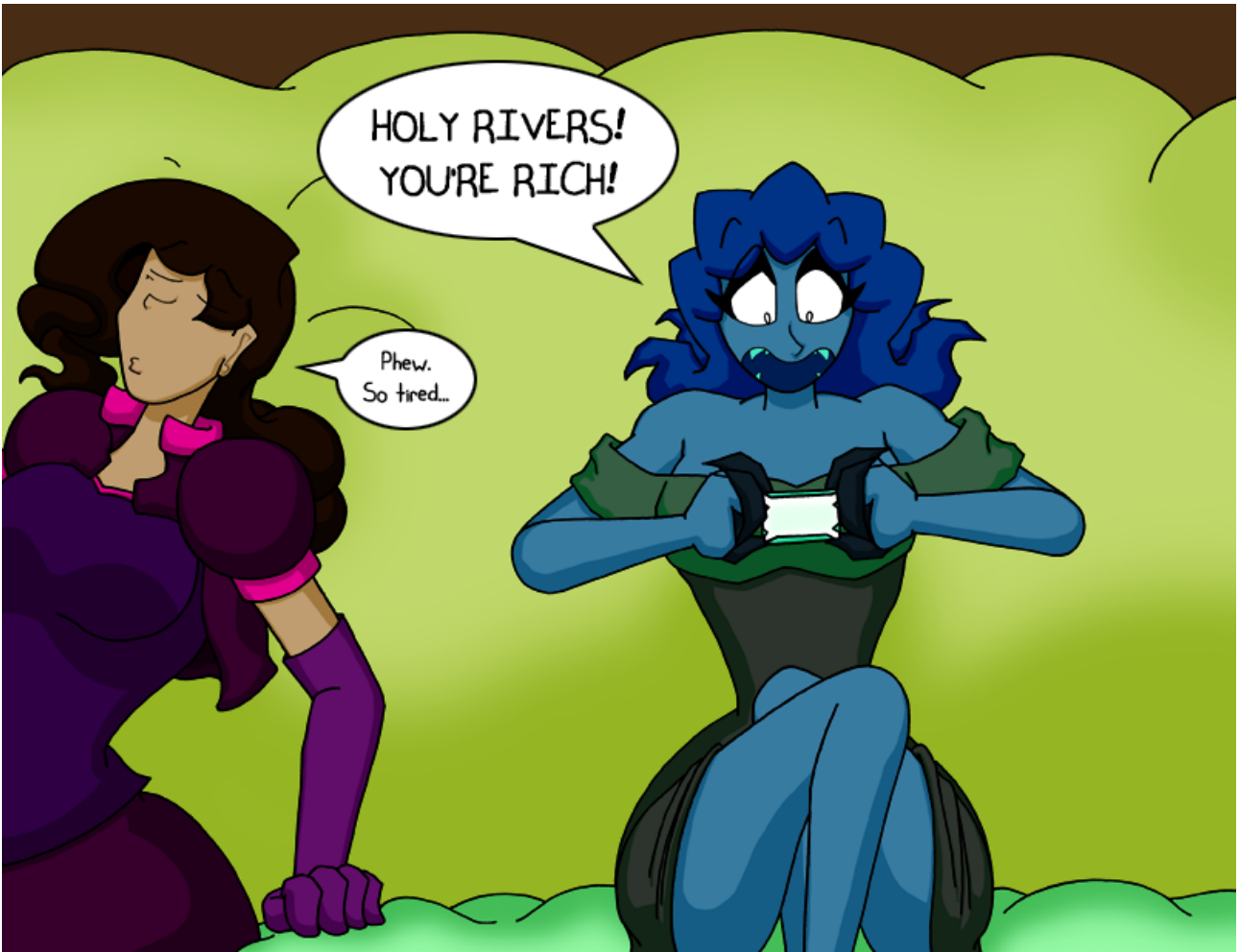
Page 84

Rico has composed himself, his costume now back to normal, as he and Blue sit in the client's living room. Rico stretches, "I'm just doing this to collect money to get home. Traversing uncharted space isn't cheap." Blue raises an eyebrow, intrigued and suspicious.

Rico arcs his back to hear it crackle as he stretches more. "I got too caught up in this and lost focus. Last night was a good signal that it's time to move on."

Blue leans back a little while keeping her eyes on Rico. "Just... how much money have you made doing this?". Rico motions to his holo-device.

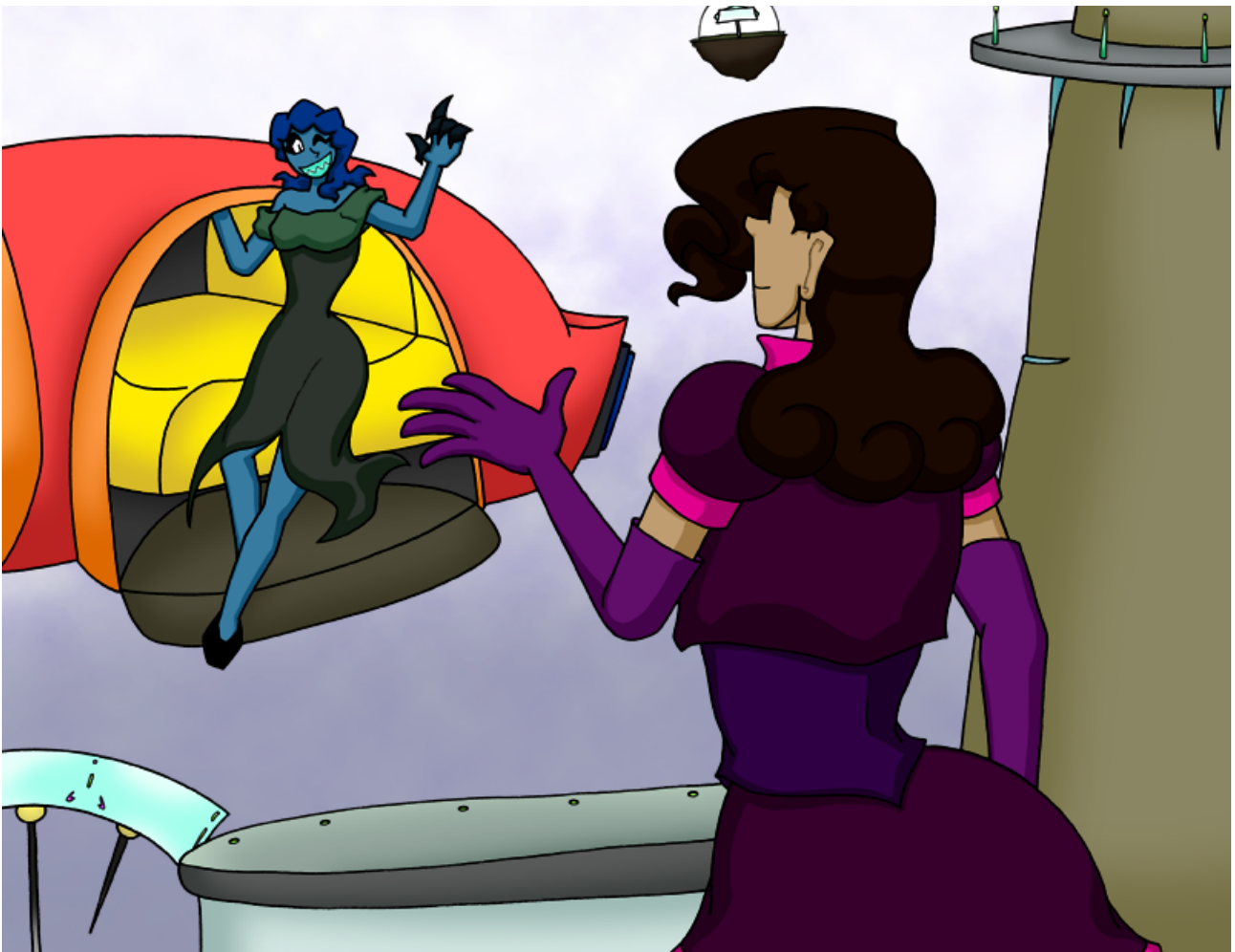
Blue grips the device, her eyes wide, the most emotion she's shown and her casual demeanor shattered, "Holy Rivers! You're rich!"



Page 85

The shuttle drops the two off away from the giantess's properties and Rico and Blue exchange a quick hug before preparing to part ways. Blue winks at Rico, "Girls like us get around. We'll cross paths again."

They hug good-bye awkwardly after that comment and Blue dials in for her own shuttle.



Rico starts to walk away but his legs are still wobbling. He catches himself and tries to stand steady.

He props himself against a wall and catches his breath. "Maybe... maybe I'll spend the weekend recovering before I leave town."

Page 86

Rico is seen leaving his apartment, looking rested and happy, and back in his usual outfit. He hoists his travel bag on his shoulder and looks around the city one last time.

He checks in his bag at his holo-device and confirms a departure schedule before heading down the street.

Rico is waiting at the shuttle depot for his ride. He glances around, one hand on his bag and the other fiddling with his rather expensive ticket, lazily rocking on his feet as he waits. Two figures are seen off to the side talking to each other.

With Rico close to the foreground, the camera is focused behind him. The two figures are revealed to be aliens and they approach. An almost dryad-looking alien stands back looking around, while the rather reptilian one approaches Rico, leans in, and asks if he's a human in hushed tones.





Page 87

There's really no hiding or denying his humanity, so Rico suspiciously says "Yes..." to the lizard woman.

The two aliens turn back to each, most pleased and practically giddy at the answer.



The reptilian alien turns back to Rico and sidles up to him. Glancing around, she leans in closely. "We need a favor that only a human can do."

Rico shrugs and shakes his head, pulling his bag closer to him. "No thank you. I'm out of that business."

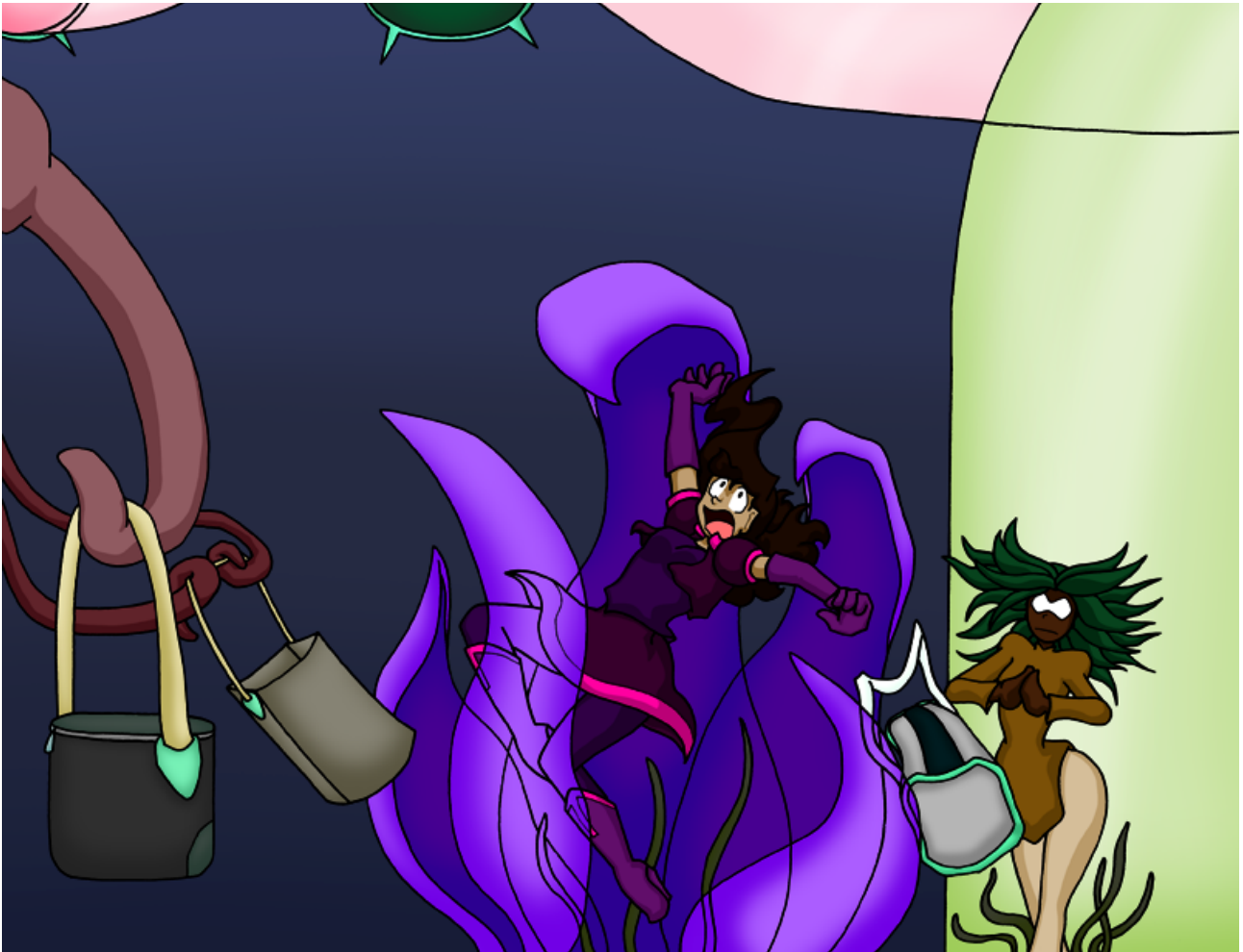
Page 88

The reptilian alien looks worried and leans back into Rico, making up the lost space. "You really must help. We have no other access to... humans.". Rico looks nervously away, fidgeting as a shuttle starts to pull into the depot.

The reptilian woman pleads more. "We just don't trust those artificial, cloned-in-a-lab humans. And they're so expensive.". Rico says nothing and looks away, pretending to ignore her.

With the shuttle now settled on the ground, Rico quickly gets up and heads toward it, politely declining the stranger once more.

As Rico steps away, he's quickly surrounded by something rising up out of the ground and the world goes dark as he's swallowed up. The other creatures in the depot don't notice, or don't care, as they shuffle on to the shuttle and it readies to depart.



Page 89

Rico comes to in a strange room. It's not a hotel room, but it has the same sterile, phony home-like feeling to it. He tries to get up but collapses back down. He's propped up in what appears to be a dentist's chair that glows around the edges. Rico can just faintly see the field keeping him down. If he tries to get up, it feels like gravity yanks him back to the chair.



The dryadic alien from earlier appears over him. She's a bundle of nerves, apologetically quivering and nervously shifting back and forth. "Oooh. I'm sooo, so sorry for the treatment."

She talks quickly and nervously. "We didn't want for it to go this way. If you'd just help us..."

The reptilian woman joins her in Rico's view and takes her hand. The dryad alien seems to calm down at this. "Sometimes you need to be rash for true love."

Rico lays there, listening to their story. Intrigued, but if he could get up, he'd have bolted for the door. The reptilian woman speaks as she holds the dryad at the waist. "We're two incompatible species."

"Our worlds are at the edges of our sectors of the Standard and we've branched too far apart to join together."

The dryad woman nods rapidly, her face full of worry and sorrow once more. "Oh, we're desperately in love, but biology keeps us apart."



Rico looks up from his chair, confused. "Congrats to the happy couple?". The women look thrilled and the dryad bounces a little. The reptilian woman speaks up, "Oh, good! We're so thankful you'll help!"

The reptilian alien pushes a small, squishy bioluminescent green sphere about the size of a large gumball down Rico's throat.



Rico gags and claws at his throat in panic. "What the hell was that?! What did you do to me?!"

The dryad happily claps. "It's not what we did to you, it's what you're going to do for us!"

The reptilian hugs the dryad close and beams. "You're going to help us become parents!"

Page 92

The reptilian smiles at Rico. "Everybody knows that if your species are too distant, you need a human to be a processor."

The dryad bounces, her leafy hair rustling. "Because humans are a base genetic blueprint, they're universal donors."

She pulls out her own sphere. A hard, blue one with a thin shell. It looks delicate, like a bird's egg, but she happily pops into Rico's slack jaw and down his throat.

Rico flails, not expecting the first and definitely not the second, horrified at their casual appropriation of his genetics. The alien women are giddy with joy. "You're going to be our converter!"





Page 93

Time has passed and Rico is still confined with the aliens in their artificial home. The door is clearly locked, so Rico is not here by choice.

As the days progress, the alien girls dote on Rico, making sure he stays well fed, hydrated, and rested so he's healthy, even if he's not happy.

The dryad alien cuddles him as she places a steaming plate of food down for their guest. "Eat well and stay strong! ...But not so strong you get angry again. We don't want a repeat of your last escape attempt, right?"



The reptilian alien settles down at the table with her own plate and happily nods in agreement. "It's much more fun, and good for helping when we don't have to restrain you."

Page 94

The alien women regularly give Rico strange liquids to drink and monitor him. The process seems to be sapping his strength, super suit or not, and Rico is exhausted. The women seem quite pleased with the process though and treat Rico like a goddess, aside from the unlawful imprisonment and all.



Rico sits back in a comfy chair and rolls his head back after chugging a large mug of something blue and frothy, "How much longer is this going to go on for?"

The dryad goes to the kitchen to clean the mug. "Oh, it should just be one more month." She beams proudly, "My species grows quickly."

The reptilian shuffles, grumpy in her chair, pulling a holo-device close to her. She's in a huff and sounds offended. "You always have to bring up your budding rate. Good work takes time!"

Page 95

Rico's stomach gurgles as he groans in his chair. His complexion is turning green and even his eyes look discolored.



The alien women are giddy, hugging each other closely as they watch over their captive/surrogate. The dryad practically swoons in her partner's arms. "It's almost time!"

Rico clutches his stomach as it gurgles again. He has his head below his legs as he breathes deeply to calm himself. Snidely, "And what happens next? Your spawn is going to come bursting out of my chest?"

The women look horrified, obviously not getting Rico's reference, and now worried about humans and what is going to happen. "Do things normally burst from the human canals in this process?!"

Page 96

We have a close-up on Rico shivering. His skin now discolored and his hair tinted green at the ends.

We pull out farther and Rico is sitting in a pool of a glowing sludge with the alien women kneeling outside it next to him, looking on intently.

They regularly splash the goop on him with great care, coating him often. The dryad girl looks completely overwhelmed with joy and worry. "It's almost here!"



Rico starts to cough. It continues and follows into light gagging. The aliens look on with wide-eyed excitement.

Page 97

Rico clutches his stomach, moaning lightly. He leans forward while the alien girls pat his back and soothe him, whispering encouragement in their native tongues that Rico is too preoccupied to translate.

Rico gags once more and spits out two minute pellets. They plop into the goop and look like the nothing more than large seeds or flower bulbs. The alien girls are silent in awe.

The goo turns to a rigid protective jelly around the pellets, encasing them.



Rico sits slack-jawed and confused as all heck. Even already, his cheeks are flush and healthy and his eyes have their sparkle back. The alien girls explode in giddy cheering.

Page 98

Rico is frozen in the pool, stammering for a long time with no noise coming out. His regular color quickly flourishes through his body and within minutes he looks the picture of his normal health. "What was- That- Whose- ...What happened?!"





The aliens crowd the pellets in the gel and coo at them in awe. "The processing was a success!"

The dryad fans the pellets, struggling to compose herself. "Now, the seedlings will absorb the nutrients and start to mature. Once they've built up, they can be fertilized until they eventually hatch gloriously and our babies will be ready!"

Rico thrusts his arms out, boiling over in confusion and anger. "You kidnapped me for THAT!?"

Page 99

The aliens are thrilled and joyous over their new seedlings, disregarding Rico's anger and rightful accusations of kidnapping. The reptilian thanks Rico for his hard work, beaming over the seedlings. "And you made TWO! You really went above and beyond for us."

Rico is furious but the aliens pay him no mind. He wants them to react to his fury, but their constant stream of happiness is putting him off and gives him no chance to bring them down.

The girls hug and coddle their surrogate, thanking him over and over, alternating between praising their new seedlings and praising Rico. He struggles to stay angry.

Having enough, Rico shakes them away and mucks himself off in a huff. He hates them both but they're too self-involved to key into it. Rico climbs out of the pool, "You two assholes have to at least give me a ride home now."

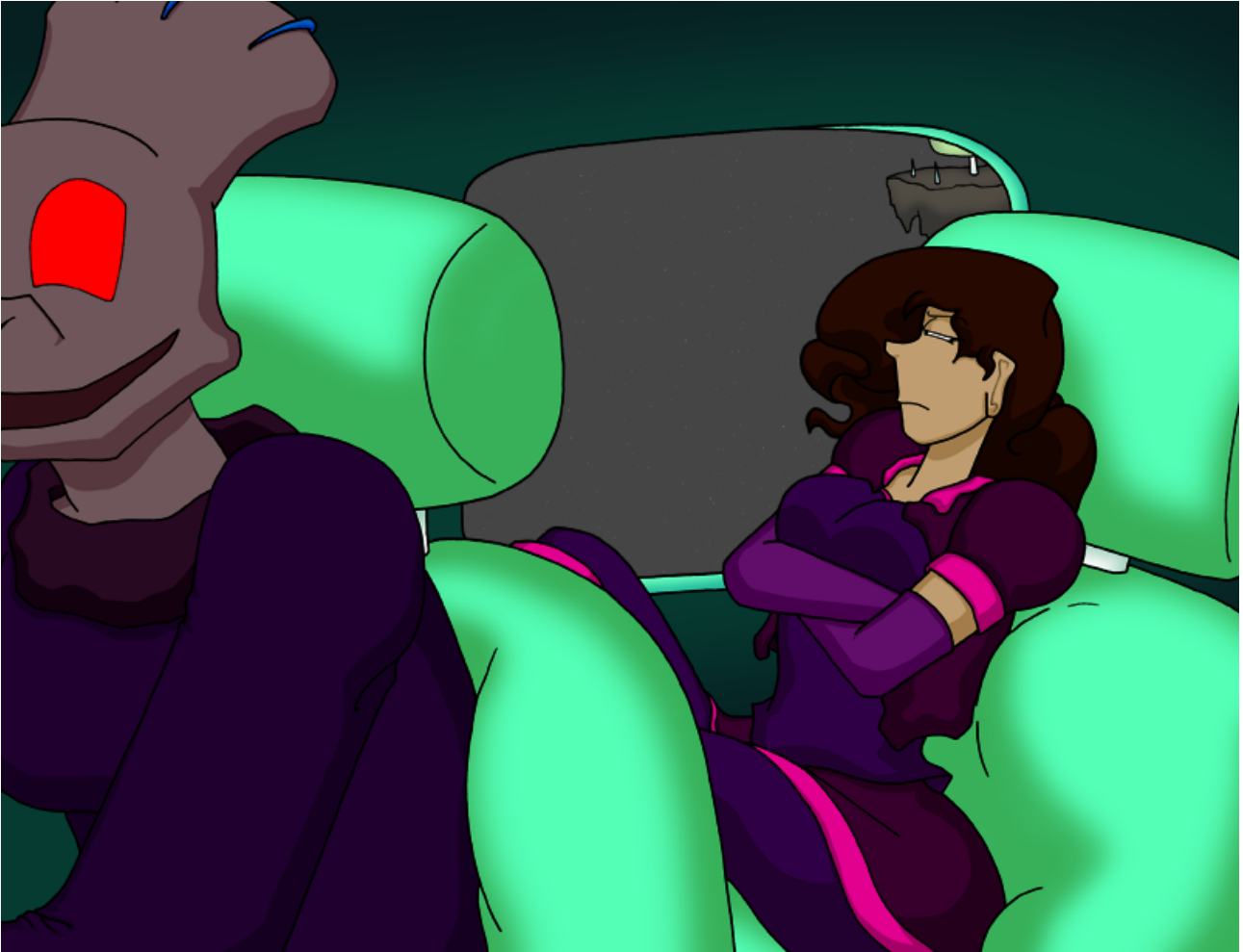


Page 100

The reptilian alien shuffles Rico off to her ship, while the dryad is in the background waving good-bye. The reptilian happy smiles and waves to her wife while Rico stares straight ahead, angry and hunched together.

As she powers up the ship and Rico climbs aboard, the alien talks to Rico. "We can head out but I can't take you too far because I have to be home by the time our babies hatch."

Rico is grumpy and solitary in the backseat of the ship. He doesn't say a word and just stares out the window as the ship leaves the station.



The ship blasts off into space as the alien happily pilots it and gabs. "You really were an excellent surrogate. You should help out other pairings, like us. Humans could bring a lot of good to-". Rico cuts her off while still staring out the window. "Shut up and just fly."

Page 101

The ship lands on a small way station, basically a rest stop floating in space entirely encased in a bubble dome. Rico scrambles for the opening mechanism on the ship's door.

As he bolts, the reptilian leans out the door from the pilot's seat, says good-bye and thanks Rico once more, and loudly announces "You were such a good proto-mom! Have fun!"

All the aliens outside the station turns to look at Rico. His face is glowing red as he heads inside, quickly with rather determined fast steps.



Some female aliens in the background are sizing him up. They chat happily about his robust figure and fine birthing prospects. Rico shuts it all out, slaps his card down on the counter, and glares at the creature manning the counter. "I want to get out of here. Fast."

Page 102

Heading out into the Cosmos, Rico hops from station to station, chartering rides to get him farther and farther away from society. Losing his ticket, credits on hand, and travel bag from when he was kidnapped at the station by the reptile and dryad aliens has hurt his funds, but Rico is still able to draw on what he'd banked from his previous job at the club.

He asks all around but nobody knows the location of Earth and barely anybody actually recognizes the name, while Rico is rather bad at explaining where in the Universe his galaxy is.

Rico checks his holo-device and his bank account is still in good standing, but he knows it won't be so forever if he keeps aimlessly hopping around without any information.

He putters around the small station he's arrived at and sees an impressive sign plastered on the dome. It offers travel and sights across the known AND unknown parts of the Cosmos. Rico looks it over multiple times and nods slightly, he doesn't have any better leads.



Page 103

Rico is standing in a waiting room, cold steel-looking and too brightly lit. He's trying to forge his cheering suit into professional attire as best he can, but he's still a cutie. A business robot is working away in the next room.



Rico walks into the robot's room and cheerfully introduces himself, rattling off jobs he's had back on Earth before the robot can inquire about the kind of employment he's had lately. As Rico talks, the robot hovers dispassionately and soon visibly scans Rico with a red beam from head to toe.

Rico soldiers on but the robot cuts him off mid-sentence. "You are acceptable."

The robot hovers over to an arrangements of hundreds of holo-devices, surveys them for only a second, and grabs one. It hovers back to Rico before thrusting the device into his arms. "Report at this location tomorrow." Rico is startled and fumbles with the device, nodding quickly.

Page 104

Rico sits, leaning forward with his hands clasped between his knees, in a small office space, the equivalent of a trailer in sci-fi worlds. A female alien sits across from him behind a desk. She's considerably more casual than the recruiting robot Rico faced earlier, as she leans back and fidgets back and forth in an old chair.

She bobs back and forth in her chair, spinning and drumming a stylus in her hand, before planting her feet on the ground, tossing one arm on the desk and leaning towards Rico. "Sure, we'll take you on board."



She leans back in her chair and squints over Rico. "What species are you?". Rico hems and haws, rambling about being from far off but avoiding saying he's human. That has brought on enough baggage.

The alien lady takes his muffled ramblings as a sign that he doesn't know what he is and leans back in her chair with a hefty bump. "Welcome aboard." Rico stands, thanking the woman for the opportunity.



Page 105

Rico wakes up in a small studio apartment-looking space. He stretches and yawns as the simple covers fall off him, while light lazily spills in through the large windows.

Rico glances over while the camera pans out, revealing a throng of aliens of all shapes and sizes gawking at him.



Rico shrieks, jumping back onto the bed on his knees, scrambling for the sheets to drape over himself. The aliens outside clap and wave.

The camera continues its movement outside to show that Rico's room is surrounded by aliens while the shot inside is being projected on screens all around the room to watching crowds of aliens. Similar rooms dot the arena, while the boss waves majestically at the screen, telling tales and spinning yarns to a rapt audience below her.

Page 106

The circus boss is on a stage outside of Rico's room, having dragged her new employee on out beside her. Rico is frozen, staring blankly, too shocked to even be confused, and clutching the loose bed sheet. The boss waves a wand over Rico, regaling the audience with the fact that Rico is an unknown experimental waste product, the lone version of him in all the known Universe. The collected crowd ooohs and aaahs at the oddity.

The boss continues to wave her wand from Rico's head to toe and the nearby screens capture the same image. "You can clearly see its mad creators intended this oddity for SOMETHING, but its lack of abilities have made it a genetic dead end." The crowd nods in agreement, a lone alien mixed in laments poor Rico's sorry existence.

The view zooms in to frame only Rico's curves as the crowd looks on. "Here we have evidence of this being some sloth-like creature, so poorly adapted, it can only lay around and jiggle its goo-filled growths."



The aliens in the crowd oooh and aaah some more, a few camera flashes go off, and the clapping dissipates as the crowd moves to the next attraction. Rico remains on stage, just barely clutching the sheet as a random alien wanders by, gawks at him, and moves on. Rico's body stays frozen but his expression is of annoyed confusion.

Page 107

Some time later, Rico and the boss are back at her trailer. She sits back in her chair, eyes half closed, as Rico rants and raves, mostly incoherently, but usually about not knowing what he signed up for or the boss's ludicrous origin stories.

As Rico seems to be winding down or taking a break to gasp for air, the boss waves her hand. "Don't take any of what I said personally, it's just a show."

"The crowds out there, the visitors. Nobody really cares what you are. They're just paying for a story. Something to spread back to the folks at home. Makes 'em seem worldly."

" 'Sides. You can't really fault me for some of that. I mean, what ARE those even about? Doesn't seem helpful at all". She annoyingly and repeatedly gently prods Rico's chest with her wand, transfixed by his wobbling.



Page 108

Back to the circus, Rico has now taken to a stage outside his room and stands above a small crowd. Rico grandly gestures with excitement as he tries, and is thoroughly failing, to impress the crowd with a talk on how amazing humanity is.

The aliens in the crowd are bored and yawning, some glancing around, the young ones looking fidgety. We overhear snippets of Rico's talk from off screen rambling about how great spleens are.

Away from the main stage, the boss catches a glimpse of Rico's bored crowd and curses under her breath before she rushes over.



The boss zips on stage and dramatically gestures to the crowd, cutting off Rico and having him hop back in shock. "You've fallen for her tricks, you fools! The monster's tactic is to lull its victims into boredom and then consume them!". The crowd shrieks in happy shock and clapping rises up from the audience below.

Page 109

After the show, Rico and the boss walk back to her trailer. Rico is grumpy and the boss shakes her head, exasperated. "You're lucky I was around to save that... that... whatever that sorry performance was."

Rico gets angry back at her. "I didn't need 'saving!'". The boss shakes her head again and chuckles. "Disagree. You are a horrible showman."

She walks up to the door of her trailer but blocks the entrance. "If you want to stay on, you'll have to do better." Rico stomps his boot and leans up at her. "I'm not a trained seal!"

The boss shrugs and raises her hands. "I- I have no idea what a 'seal' is. But can they at least dance or do tricks?" Rico begrudgingly slumps forward. "Yeah... Yeah, they can. Seals are pretty great."



Page 110

It's another day and Rico is back on stage, animatedly broadcasting to the small group of aliens by his room. Desperate to prove humanity's greatness, Rico tells tales of his adventures, but we as an audience can easily recognize that Rico is just placing himself in plot lines stolen from movies and video games.

As Rico is recanting his valiant efforts to save princesses or small animals from harm, the crowd grows bored and fidgety.

The boss dramatically waves her way up on the stage holding a metal bucket above the crowd. Small blobs slither over the side. She waves to her ear and leans over the aliens gathered, "Make some noise if you want to see the freak eat!"





The crowd cheers and more visitors gather around the stage. Rico and the boss bicker through gritted teeth and hushed yelling so the crowd doesn't hear them. Rico argues, eyes shifting nervously, "You can't keep doing this!". The boss leans in more, towering over Rico and pressing the bucket against him, "I absolutely can. Now open wide."

Page 111

Some time later, the circus's shuttle train is stopped at a new outpost. Several bays are open and a crew is taking supplies out to set up.

Back in Rico's studio, he sits on the bed while the boss paces back and forth. "We've had fun... and you're certainly weird enough that we can draw a crowd..."

She sighs and spins her hand in the air. "But you don't have any showmanship. You're cut from the act. You're on your own, kid."

Rico sits on the bed, pondering. He's never been so relieved and so offended at the same time over losing a job.

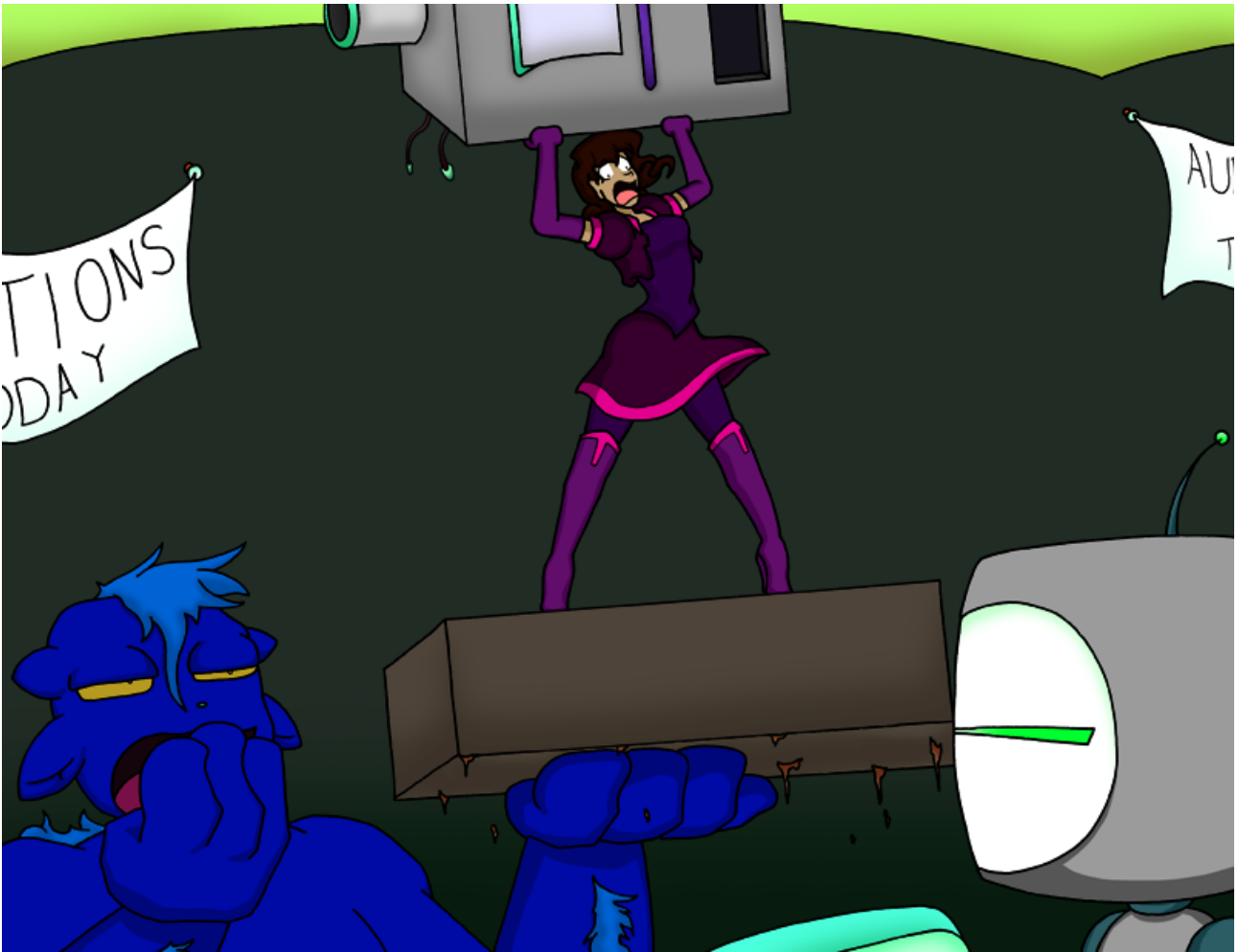


Page 112

Unemployed once more, Rico wanders a new city. He applies for a few jobs with different agencies across the outpost but we can tell it hasn't been working out.

The suit gives him strength and he shows off to a recruiter...

But there are always creatures that are bigger and stronger. Rico is impressive compared to a human, but he's still just a human.



The recruiters dismiss him repeatedly. As he was told long ago, he's strong, but not stronger than species evolved for strength. Fast, but not faster than those with multiple, highly-skilled limbs. And probably not all that smart, but definitely not as smart as a robot. Rico can't compete.

Page 113

Rico sits at a booth, head resting in gloved hand, the other arm curled around a frosty, frothing mug. He's upset and moping. "The only thing I seem to be good for out here is being eye candy."

"Back on Earth, my powers would make me a super hero... But out here, I'm alone and useless..."

The camera pans back to reveal Rico is sitting at the counter of a diner. A waitress listens while she cleans up at night and readies to close down. She's apologetic and kind, but has to shrug a little. "The Universe just doesn't work like that."



She takes the mug from Rico with one of her limbs and quickly wipes up under it with another, before passing it to another arm to dump the mug. "You should be happy you have something going for you. Embrace that body and own it. You act like it's a prison and that gets people to walk over you."

Page 114

Rico sighs and steels himself outside the bubble door leading into a building.

He steps through with squared shoulders and approaches the receptionist working at a desk. "I'm here to apply for a gig."

The alien looks at him and perks up in its seat. Other workers lean in from their cubes. "A human! We'd be very happy to bring on a human to work with us. And your employment card..."



Rico nods, determined, but leans on the counter. "But I have some conditions. I'm doing this my way."

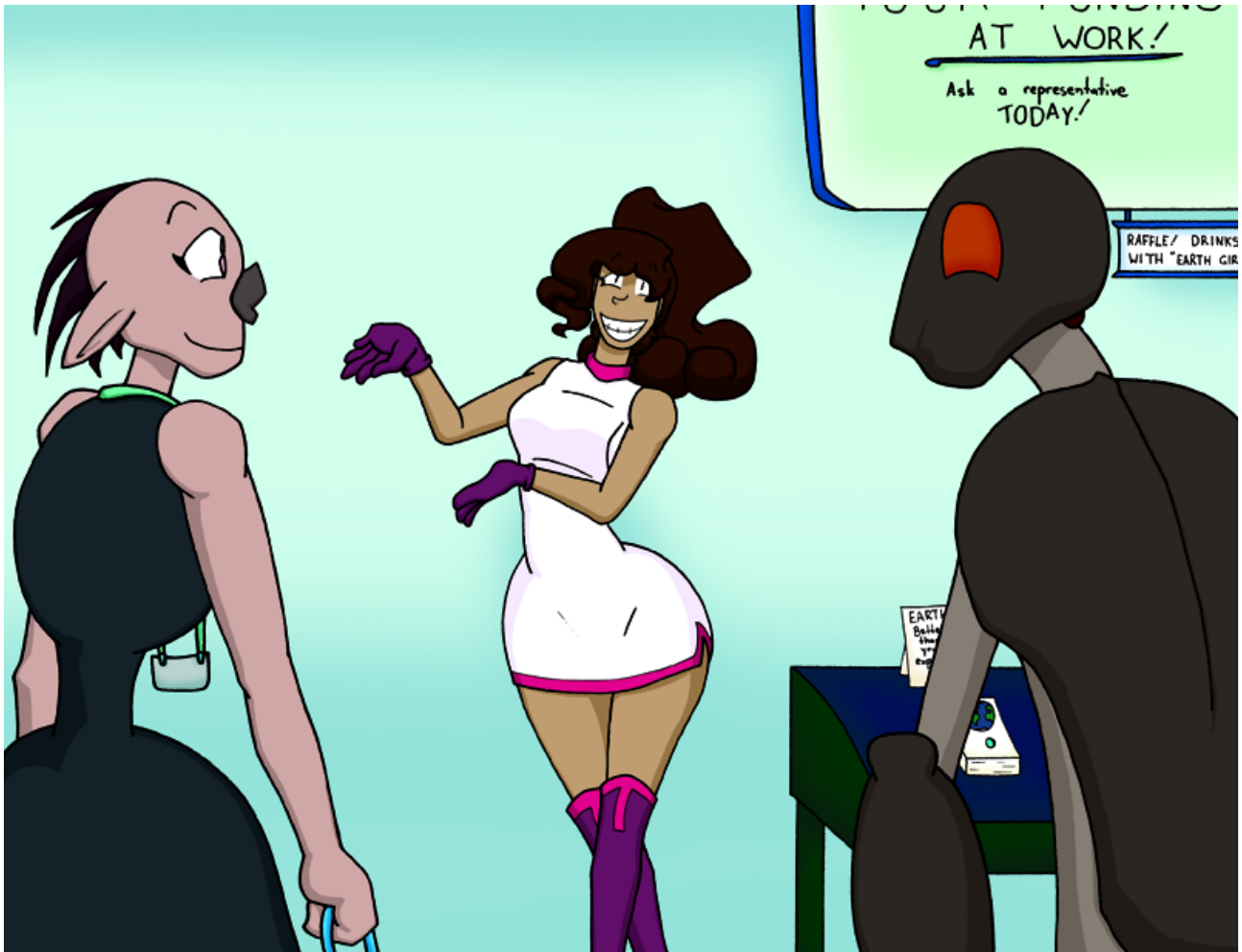
Page 115

The camera pans by a series of advertisements displayed on a wall. In them, Rico is posed provocatively with models of planets or stars, is spread out on a beach of neon teal sand looking out at a spiral galaxy, or curled up in the arms of an alien clinking glasses together as they laugh out over a shining city.

We follow over to Rico, dressed in a tight, white mini-dress, hair up in a ponytail, posing and waving to passing crowds at some kind of convention center. He seems to be drawing quite a lot of attention, even if everybody doesn't stop at his booth to read what it's actually about. A group of aliens and robots busily man the booth and tend to the people Rico draws in.

Through the signs and overhearing snippets of conversations and sales pitches, we find out that the booth is for a science campaign promoting research, discovery, and to study a lost planet called "Earth".

Rico continues to vamp it up for passing scientists, business people, and anybody that looks like they have money or resources to not-so-subtly convince them to invest in the exploration research, using all of the skills and showmanship he picked up in the diner, clubs, and circus.



Page 116

As Rico continues to pose it up for the crowds, a booth alien from a medical display a few stands down stomps over to Rico's area. "Hey! What gives?! You're taking all the marks!"

Rico politely apologizes but continues flaunting what he has. "Really sorry, but I need their work.". This just seems to annoy the rival woman more. "I need the gig too."

Rico backs down and starts to walk away. He apologizes to the woman and heads towards the main part of his booth and the workers inside. Over his shoulder, we can see the rival woman is winding up and grimacing.





The scientists and robots run around in a flurry of excitement while materials and displays float around the air in a scene of localized chaos. Among the workers' panic, we get glimpses of fists and smacking and angry grunts from hitting and fighting off camera.

Page 117

Rico and the rival woman are being carted off by a large security creature. It holds them at its sizable arms' length away from each other, but the two continue to growl and gnash at each other. They both have mussed up hair and makeup and their dresses are askew.

The two are thrown on their cushioned behinds as they are plopped into a cell, both handcuffed but still sneering and sticking their tongues out at each other.



While Rico sits silently, staring at the wall, the rival booth alien grouses. "Dumb bimbo cost me my gig, a paycheck, probably not going to get called back next time so there goes my-". Her complaining is finally cut off by a commotion outside the cell as a door slams open and there's a patter of people outside.

A security droid is failing to hold back a gaggle of marketers and presenters all excited and clamoring to book the two women that just drew an enormous crowd. They all seem to think it was a stunt and that the show was for attention, and they want that energy for their own displays.

Page 118

The rival booth woman is beaming with joy, suddenly chipper and happy that she's popular and in demand as the people outside the cell bustle to get them freed.

Now suddenly Rico's best friend, she thanks him for his help. "You want to go for it? We could put on a show like that twice, no! Three times an event!"

Rico shakes his head. "I- I have some travel plans. You go for it, but, er, thanks for the offer...". He's weirded out by her, but should probably come to expect this kind of behavior given his experiences so far.

The rival looks disappointed but is still beaming. "That's a shame, but more attention for me! I can rope somebody else in on this. You come to your senses, let me know. We can use a babe like you. I mean, you're practically escort material."



Page 119

Rico is dressed in a fancy evening gown, hobnobbing with a group of scientists and business aliens. Around them are signs for a grand opening and there's an enormous ribbon over an elaborate metal door.

As Rico mingles from group to group, clinking glasses, waving coyly at compliments, we pick up bits of conversations revealing that this is the grand opening for a new lab that's some kind of joint venture with other labs and businesses across the Standard. Everybody is amazed at the kind of funding it has received, most thought only the Standard itself would be capable of such a feat.

Rico wanders the dim hallways to grab a breather from the event. He struggles to smile as he passes wall after wall of photo shoots of his sexy science ads in the lobby.

At the far end of the lobby, Rico can't help but overhear the conversations at the entrance of the hallway. His smile twitches and cracks as a group of scientists look in awe at his ads and blithely go on about how this fine young human's sex appeal will forever be associated with "knowledge" across the Universe. Creatures everywhere will associate learning with this woman's curves.



Page 120

Rico escapes off to the side of the building to grab a moment alone. He slumps against a pillar as much as the tight dress will allow but desperately needs the time to himself. The party and this process has taken a lot out of him.

He sighs and composes himself. "I'm sorry I have to sell myself like this, but it's the only way home..."

A lone well-dressed alien with a large drink is walking by and notices Rico. Rico notices him too and props himself up and plasters on his ditzy smile once more. The alien guy smiles and raises his drink. "You're the model from all those ads, right?". Rico mumbles out a forced happy agreement.



Immediately, a long, quilled hand drops from above, slapping itself over Rico's mouth as tentacles wrap around him, then drag him into the night.

Page 121

Rico recovers, bound and gagged, in a tiny room. Bright lights shine over at him, obscuring the figures shuffling around him outside the room.

The group is large and constantly moving, the ones in the back pushing forward to talk and stare at the captive. Rico can just barely see that they're a collection of different kinds of aliens. The creatures discuss what to with their prisoner.

The aliens gleefully discuss demeaning things to do to their prize. Snickering about dressing her up in costumes and demanding back rubs. The more Rico listens, the more he realizes that it's all somewhat innocently naive rather than anything perverted or dangerous, aside from the whole kidnapping part.



A large alien standing to the side of the swirling group speaks up and the group silences for her. "This has always been a pure ransom job. Clone or not, she'll fetch a high price."

Page 122

A murmur spreads through the crowd and the group nervously starts to spread. Rico can make out repeated mentions of "The Captain" coming down the deck. The group is now in happy agreement and falling into order. "The Captain will know what to do with the hostage."

Rico shrinks back in his bindings. He looks around, but the cell is too small to go anywhere and the gathered group is blocking the only way out. He knows he'd never get anywhere, even if he could destroy the cell door and run.

Rico clamps his eyes shut as the light swivels, the clomping of boots enters the hallway, and the group parts down the middle. A voice rises up from the darkness, "It's a good look for you."

Rico quickly opens his eyes and blinks away the remaining spots of light. Through the dim room, Rico can make out the sight of Blue smiling down upon him, a crew of pirates gleefully surrounding her.





END CHAPTER 3

Muffled through the snickering crowd, Rico shouts, "BLUE?!"

Blue walks over to him with a knowing chuckle and cuts off Rico's bindings with a hefty glowing knife.

Rico immediately starts shouting and ranting, yelling at her for kidnapping him, how is she a pirate, thought they were good friends, who is this crew... Rico pauses for a second before blurting, "Have you been stalking me!?" Blue stands still, watching silently as Rico shouts it all out.

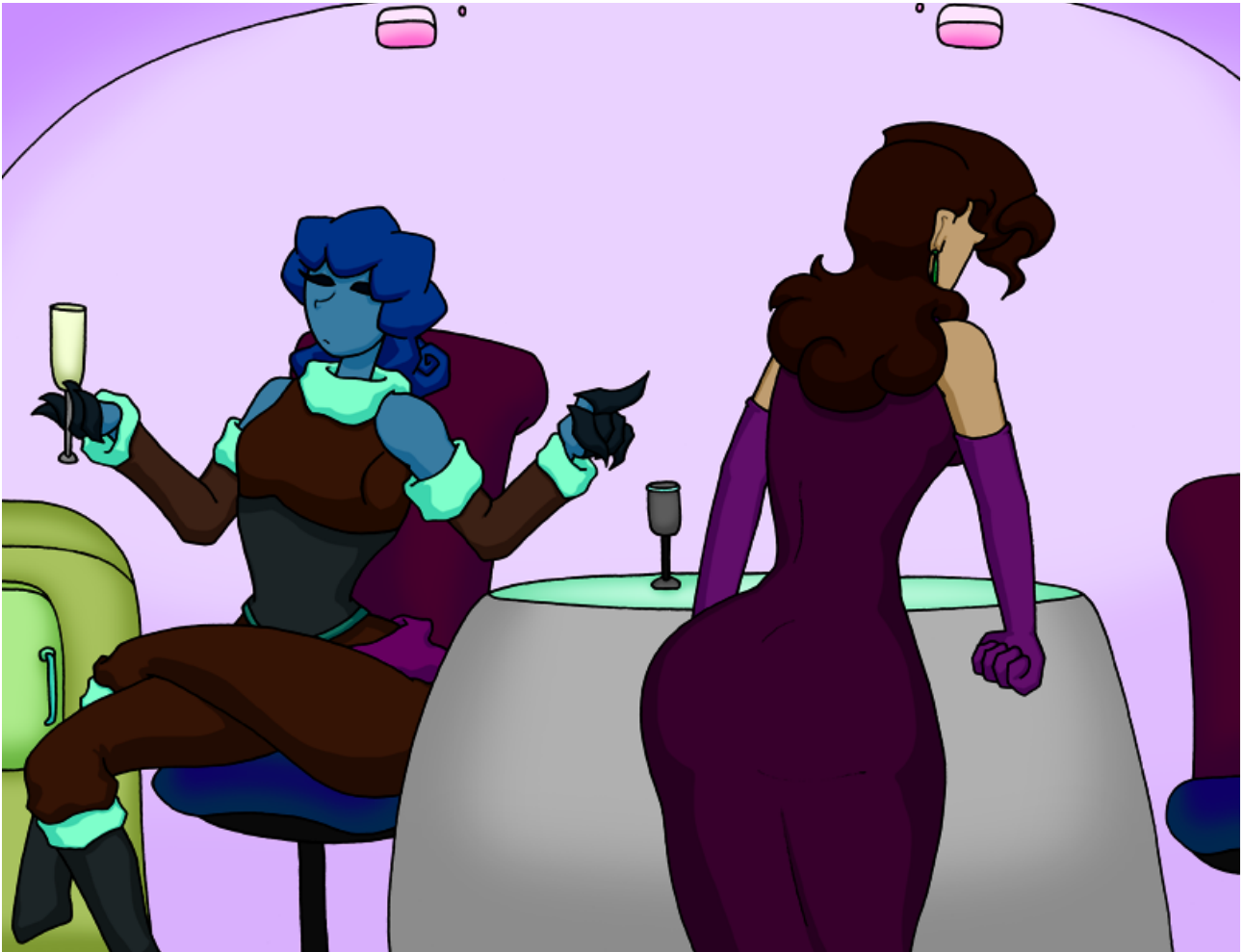


Blue just shrugs. "Oh, you really should have just stayed as an escort. You were good at THAT."

Blue walks down a metallic hallway towards her quarters and welcomes Rico to her ship. Rico shrugs off the last of his cut bindings while some small members of the crew trail behind the duo and pick up the mess.

Rico is still pissed/confused as they approach a menacing door that slides up at Blue's touch. "Why the hell do you have a ship? And pirates? AND ARE KIDNAPPING PEOPLE?!"

Blue plops down in a cushioned seat and beckons Rico to do the same across the table. She pours two drinks and slides one to Rico's side as she leans back in her chair.



"The escort gig is just something I do on the side to track down rich people to rob or to gather info. Everybody blabs to their escort and you get some juicy details on them, their company, or their friends."

Rico's in a huff as he swirls his drink, "Well if you're planning on robbing me, I'm broke again."

"I spent most of my money traveling and dumped what was left of it and any new money into the exploration facilities."

Rico drops the cup to the table, puts his palms to his forehead, and leans back with an agonized groan. "Auugh! The institute is probably going to shut down now! Once they notice I'm missing-". Blue gently sets her cup down as well. "Oh, we're going to let you go."

Blue leans in across the table with a jagged grin. "For a price."



Rico watches on from the table as Blue paces the front of her quarters. "You can, naturally, take all the research you need to plot your course to Earth and continue about your business."

"In turn, my crew and I will be funneled any new or interesting stellar charts that pop up among your team's discoveries. Aaand the names and information on any wealthy donors that are done supporting you and your cause but that might still have some extra cash on hand for MY cause."

Blue leans down to Rico, seductively but still sinister. "Do we have a deal?"

Rico calmly looks up at her. "Being a pirate is kind of every kid's dream, so obviously, yeah."



Blue and Rico leave the captain's quarters and address the amassed crew. Blue has her arm tight around Rico, practically raising him off the ground. "She's on as a crew member!"

Some griping is heard among the assembled pirates. A tiny indistinguishable voice comes out of the crowd, "We were supposed to ransom the bimbo off for money!"

Blue calmly puts her free hand to her hip. "Well now we're not going to do that!". A voice filters up from the crowd off-screen. "Can we at least make her a mascot and have her wear fun outfits?"



Blue triumphantly raises a clenched fist to the crowd and boisterously announces, "I don't see why not!". Rico glares at her, his arms outstretched in silent judgement.



A small shuttle drops Rico off back at his event. Rico's hair and dress are mussed from the experience, but he quickly heads back into the facility where the unveiling has already commenced.



One of the scientists addressing the crowd notices Rico rushing in and motions above. A colored light quickly shines down on Rico, who stops in his tracks to offer the staring crowds a wave. The alien at the lectern waves heartily to Rico. "There she is! Our guest of honor! To the stage! Come, come!"

Rico shuffles up on stage, trying to smooth out his dress and fix his hair as casually as he can while joining the research crew. The announcer makes a joking remark that judging by her looks, their lovely model was having some fun outside too. The crowd murmurs and chuckles.

Rico grits his teeth and looks down across the scientists and attendees. To himself, "Oh, you are all getting SO looted."

We have a montage of time passing, with Rico bouncing back and forth between his science team and Blue's crew. The pirates are now happy to have Rico as a member.

A scene of Rico dressed up as a barmaid, serving the joyful pirates food and drink. Blue watches from above at the captain's table happy as can be.



Later, Rico grimaces and holds himself as far away as possible as he tries to put a bandage over an oozing wound on a crew member's tentacle, where it seems to have been partly disintegrated in a fight from a raid. Rico is horribly grossed out but tries to appear like he knows what he's doing for the crewman's sake.

Blue and Rico sit at the captain's table, arms around each other, both clearly drunk off their asses singing. The crew below have their mugs raised in joyous support.

Rico is tied up at the top of a high building, overlooking the neon lit city below. He's doing a poor job feigning distressing and moaning for help with one arm to his head and the other behind his back, tucked behind what we as the audience see are fake ropes loosely clamped shut.



A gallant space cadet-type lands his craft on the building motioning that he's here to rescue the damsel in distress. Blue's crew is peaking out from behind a fake backdrop, their weapons at the ready.

As the cadet helps Rico to his feet, the rescuer notices Blue's crew members ransacking his ship and stealing weapons and goods from it. He turns to give chase, leaving Rico.

The rescuer turns back to see Rico and some more crew members commandeering his craft and flying away while the earlier crew hop into a waiting shuttle and blast away as well. The cadet is left stunned and stuck on the roof of the building.

Rico sits at a table in a fancy restaurant, dressed elegantly but practically spilling out of the tiny dress as he leans forward. A scientist sits across from him, flustered and nervously drumming his fingers on the table. Glasses of no doubt alcohol are between the two.



Rico leans forward with a pouty smile. "How are my facilities running along? And your research?"

Some of the pirate crew are peaking out of the background, weapons at the ready, and eyeing the scientist. The scientist nervously ramblings, trying not to stare down Rico's dress.

The scientists finally manages to compose himself and spits out, "We-We've found a theoretical pathway of d-devolving species that we are now studying.". Rico leans back upright in his chair and slyly motions for the pirates to stand down.

Now more serious and composed, Rico urges the scientist to continue and tell him more. The scientist proudly announces, "We've named it the 'Boring Point'."



"Our best guess work right now is that it's a theoretical termination of a cone of evolution. B-But we'll require more study, ma'am!"

"The farther away from the point, the more advanced and creative species are, but closer to the point, the more plain and unadapted they become."

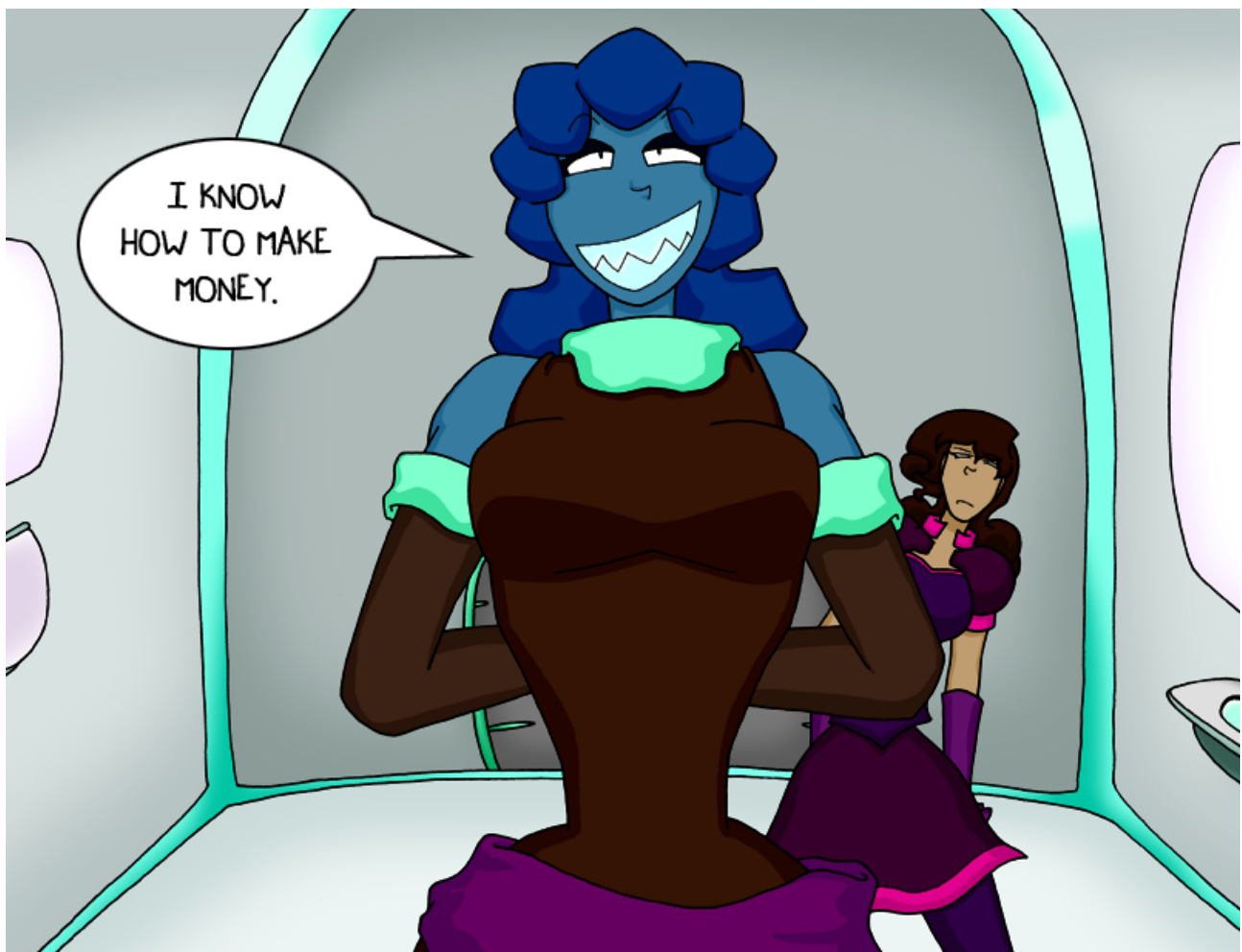
"It's not a singular location, but if you could assemble enough Boring Points, they should serve as an arrow pointing in the direction of the end of the Galactic Standard's territory and where the uncharted space you are interested in begins."

Back on the pirate ship, Rico is animatedly discussing the dinner with Blue. Blue leans back in her chair, tapping her finger to her chin while she ponders. "You'd need to identify a number of Points all around the Universe. Surround uncharted space with them to even remotely narrow it down..."

Rico excitedly hops like a child. "That's what all my facilities are for. Now that they have this information, they can propagate it out to the rest of the labs and they'll know what to compute. We'll open new ones. Focused on just this one thing!"

Rico stops and looks out to the ship. "But it's going to take money."

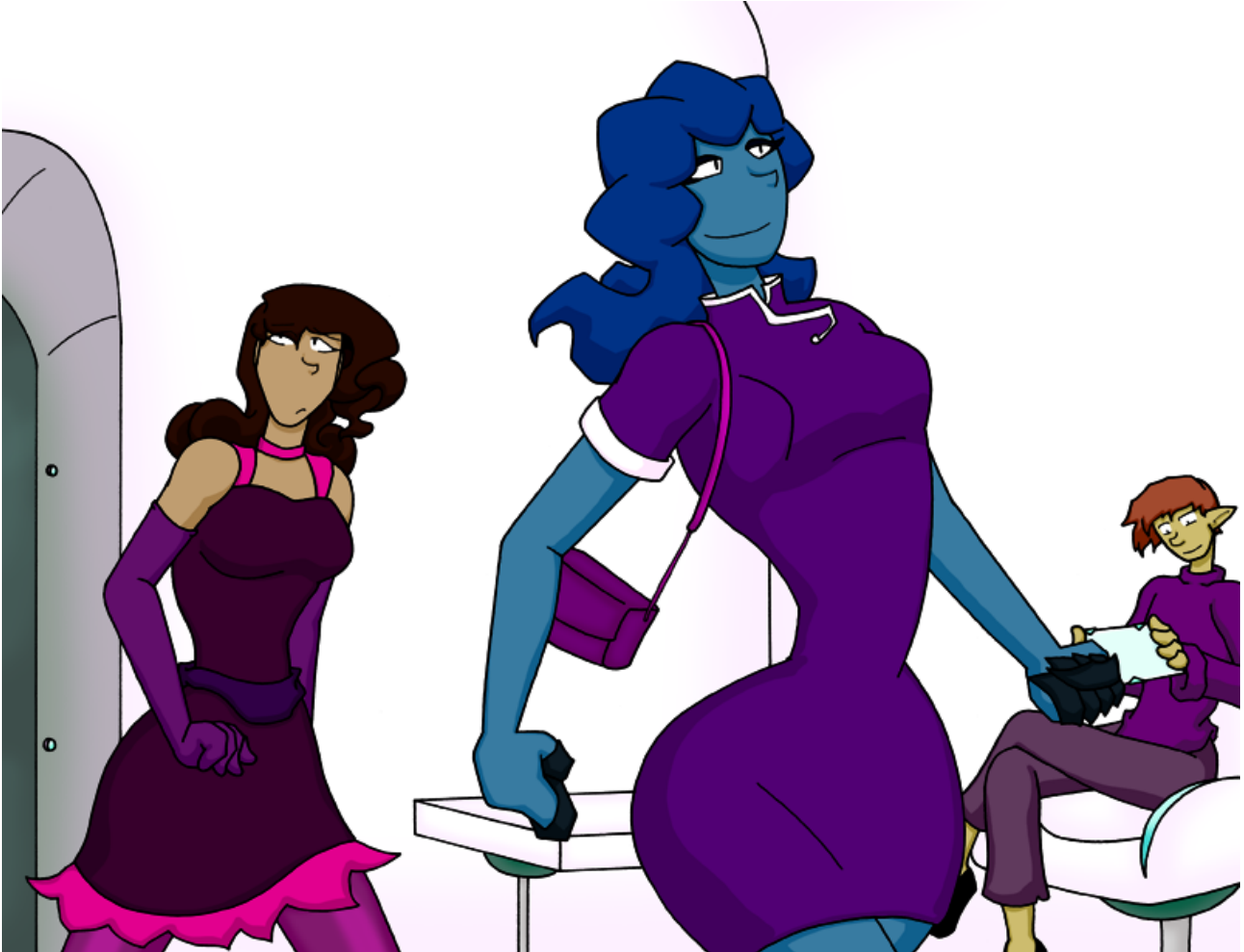
Blue grins her jagged grin. "I know how to make money.". Rico doesn't like that look and instinctively gets defensive and suspicious.





The camera reveals a shot of an escort facility, much like the one at the start of the series.

Rico and Blue enter the facility, dressed for work. Blue confidently struts across the waiting room floor to sign in with the front desk worker, while Rico follows behind, not quite feeling as powerful.



The alien working the desk looks over their work and employment cards. She politely starts talking down to Rico. "The system says here that you signed up in the past but failed with us. You left the facility without completing an assignment successfully? Oh, but don't worry, lots of our members come back, you're not alone."

A shot from behind our heroes' backs reveals that Blue is painfully twisting Rico's arm to hold back his outburst about his adventures and that he's coming off a stint as a successful business host, model, and scientist. He'd probably leave out the circus freak part, but for now, he just replies with a twisted, pained smile as the office worker continues typing.

Now that the two have access to the facility, we see that this is a set-up. Rico and Blue are secretly letting her crew members into the facility, who spread out through the company rooms, while Rico and Blue keep their presence hidden from the workers. Blue receives updates from them through a hidden earpiece.

One tiny crew member scurries by, waving a holodevice to Blue, before hurrying down a hall and out through a window. Blue gives it a thumbs up and pivots towards the entrance.

Out front, Blue motions for the front desk clerk and tells her that something has come up and Blue has a meeting with a previous client. As she leaves, she motions with her hand to Rico, who is trying to follow behind.

As he reaches the door, the desk worker calls out. "Oh, not you, dear. We have your special assignment ready. Do the facility proud this time, Honey." Rico looks quickly back and forth between the worker and Blue rapidly disappearing out the door, shocked.



Blue heads up a ramp onto her ship, where her crew are waiting. She grabs an overcoat from one of the members and just tosses it over her escort dress, followed by a simple mask that she fiddles with. The crew are trying not to gawk. Blue turns to her crew, "Let me see the codes, please."

We cut back to Rico, looking in dread at the number on a door that matches the number given to him by the facility, displayed on his card as the address for his job.

Back to Blue in a new location on the ship, she and her crew are looking over a large holodevice spread out on a desk, while several crew members takes notes on their own pads. Blue points out several spots that glow on the device. "I want the explosives here. And here, here, and here."

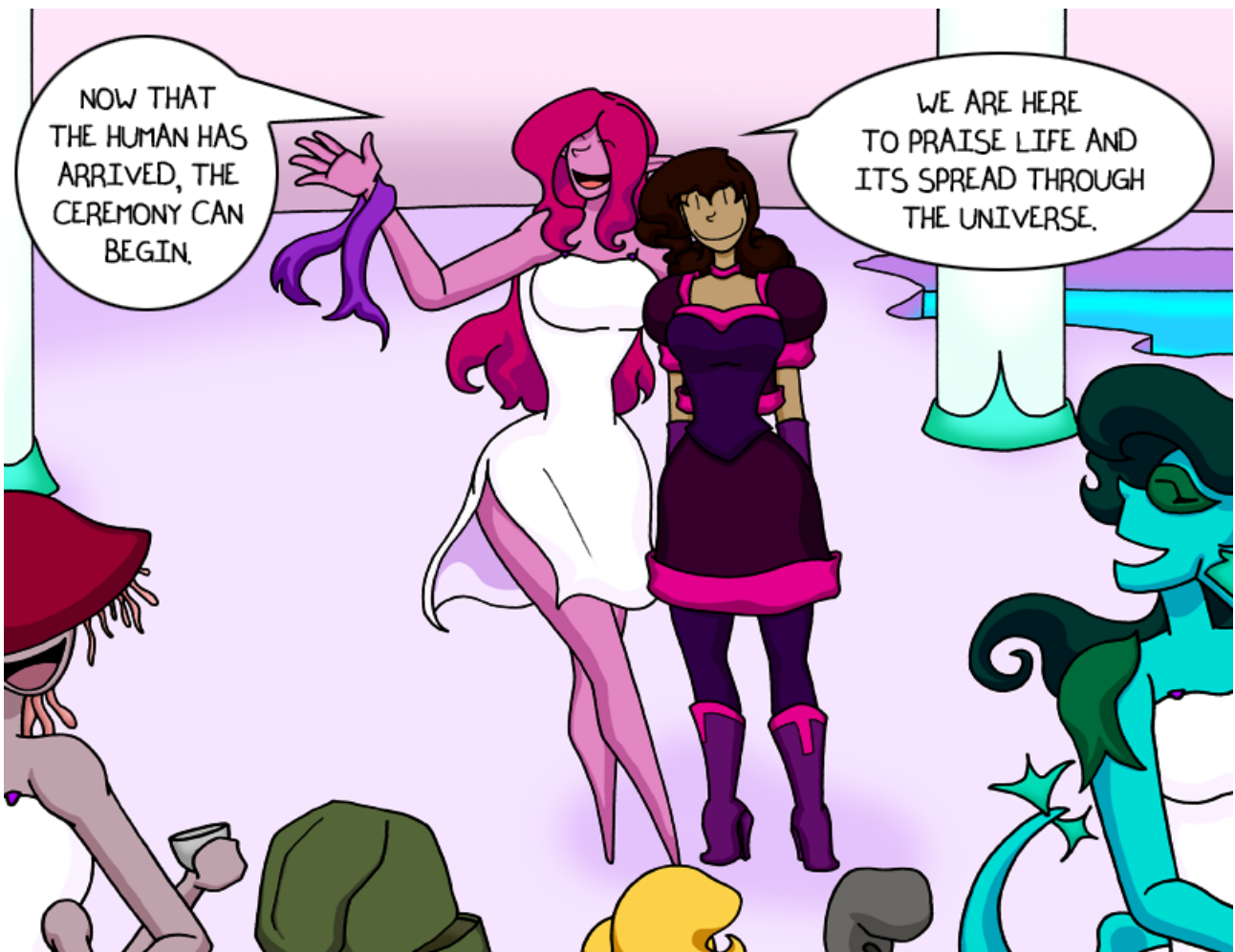


Back to Rico, he knocks gently on the door. Down the hall and out the window onto the city, the reader can see Blue and her crew are actually landing just one building over.

Rico gulps and winces as he enters through the door and we hear some music pulsing from within.

He opens his eyes and sees a gaggle of gorgeous humanoid women mingling and chatting at what appears to be an enormous party. They're dressed in loose flowing robes, sitting around on pillows strewn about a temple-like room.

A tall alien woman, more gorgeous than the rest, saunters over to Rico and gently strokes his cheek before pulling him tight to her. She smiles, looking him over, and caresses his back. She then turns to address the assembled women, "Now that the human has arrived, the ceremony can begin. We are here to praise Life and its spread through the Universe."



The assembled women start softly repeating chants of "Praise Life, Praise Evolution" as they gather together. A smile spreads across Rico's face as the woman leads him to the group and he too starts to repeat the chant and feel the good vibes the room gives off.

Rico is cuddled by several of the women, the group sprawled out together on the comfy pillows. Rico and another woman lean forward to kiss.

Suddenly, an enormous explosion rips through the wall behind Rico. His eyes are propped wide open and he's frozen leaning forward with his lips puckered as small bits of debris settle around or bounce off him. The other women are reeling away from the exploded wall.

Blue swings down through the hole on a ladder, still wearing just an overcoat over her escort dress but now donning her mask. She winks and makes a finger gun at the closest woman, who swoons and falls into the arms of the alien lady behind her.



Blue smiles to the crowd and bows slightly. "Excuse me, ladies, I've come to capture my maiden, please.". Rico looks on aghast, silent and frozen with his hands clenched.



Blue starts hoisting Rico up through the hole in the wall. Rico struggles weakly against her grip around his waist, repeating, "No!"s and "I want to stay!"s that Blue ignores.

Rico reaches out for the now saddened gathering of women and Blue pulls him up to the ship. The women huddle with each other, waving Rico good-bye.



Cheery and proud of herself, Blue monologues. "This was all for the diversion! The leader of the cult is the head of the escort facility. I needed her preoccupied and the staff out of the main office so we could go ahead with our raid."

"I knew they couldn't resist an invitation from a human for their cult, what a prize for them! That would be the perfect time to empty out the elite escort facilities for a gathering and a grand meeting.". Rico whimpers, swinging helplessly as Blue carries him on-board. "It was a good cult. That cult should be given a chance."



The pirate crew is seen raiding and looting an office. They cheer merrily as they dismantle electronic devices and toss the parts, some holodevices, and safes down a line and back onto a shuttle that repeatedly deposits the loot back to the main ships and scuttles back to the building.

Rico is a bit grumpy but still excited, occasionally glancing down outside back to the cultist's building, as he and Blue head over to the join the looting fun.

Blue gracefully swings through to the looted facility while Rico lands gracelessly, probably only held upright by his suit.



Rico rapidly looks around but the facility is abandoned. Aside from some computers and a few drones the crew have tied up, the facility has no inhabitants.

Rico turns around scanning the office. Upset, he turns to Blue, "Wh-What kind of raid is this?"

Blue looks around, quickly picking up on Rico's issue. "It's an automated deposit facility where the individual escort chapters funnel their goods. With the boss and her cult away, of course nobody would be here but some drones."

Rico waves around a bit, dejected. "I expected more terrified people. Those cowering would spread our fearsome tale. People tied up. That sort of thing."



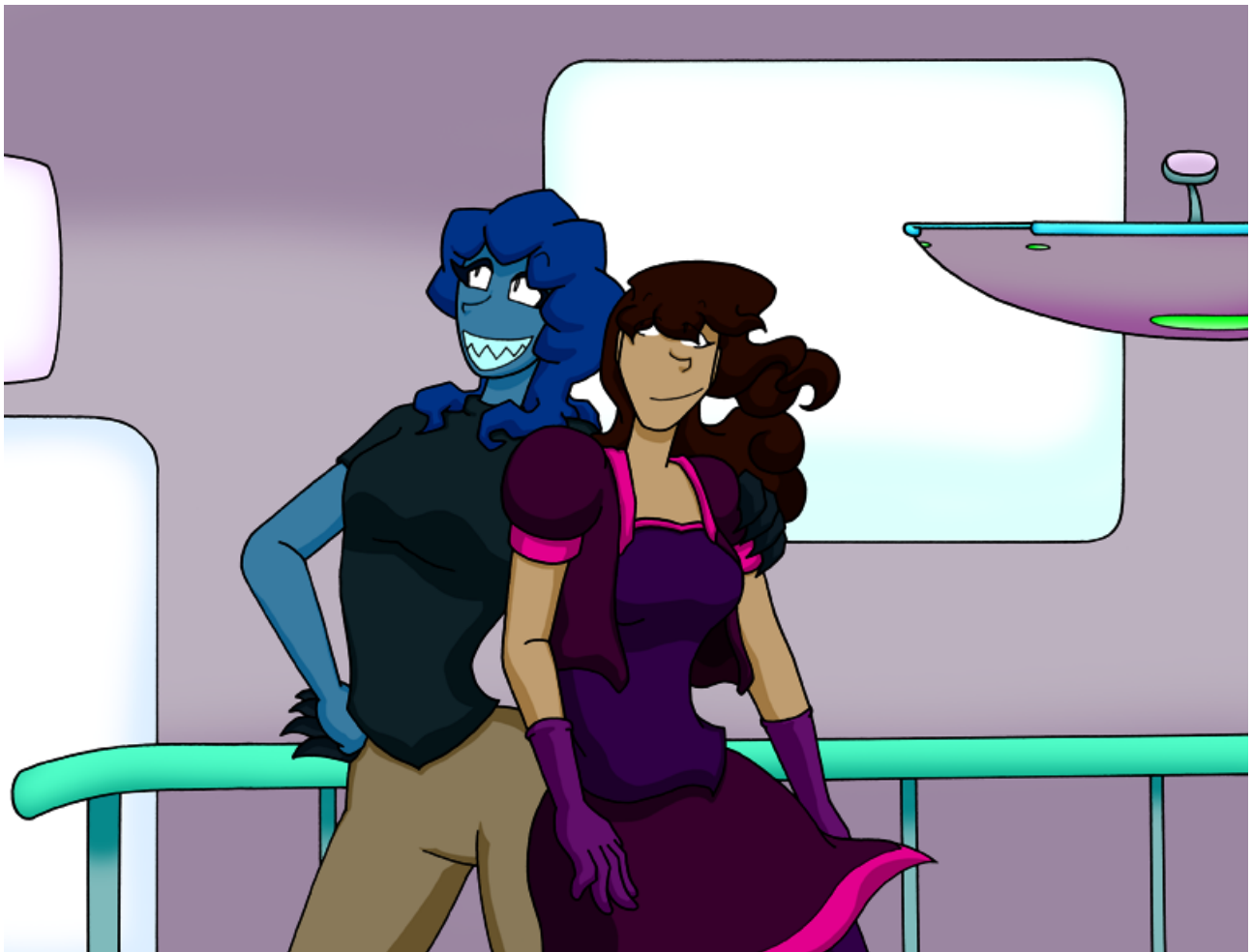
Blue shakes her head as if dealing with a dumb child. "We're not trying to get caught here. Jeez, you really got into that bondage thing during your time as an escort."

Back on the ship, the crew is distributing the loot and sharing or trading some items between themselves. Blue and Rico climb up to the higher level and watch over the scene as they settle.

The crew scurries around, the small quick ones running off to resupply the ship with their stolen office supplies and the larger ones making small repairs or patches to the ship. When in their element, they're an efficient group that knows what they're doing.

A smaller group has broken off and has the hoard of holodevices spread around them. The repairing members of the crew give this batch plenty of room. As they scan the devices, they pluck out important codes and information while an even smaller team off to the side starts plans to launder the money.

Blue hugs Rico and he looks up at her with admiration. They've really hit it off, despite her treatment of him at times, but not in a romantic way. They're more like sisterly best friends now.



Some time has passed and the pirates have really taken to Rico as he spends more time on the ship between visits to the labs and to try to keep a low profile after being "kidnapped" by Blue's crew before their raid.

The crew doesn't know his backstory or what he originally was, so they just think of him as a model and praise his cuteness as he walks down a hallway. It's not catcalling or demeaning, they just really think that's what Rico wants to hear, as they only know him from Blue (an unreliable source) and Rico's ads.

One of the tiny crewmen presents Rico with a cute little gift all tied up in wrapping paper. Rico thanks it, embarrassed, and continues on his way. We can tell this happens a lot.



Across missions and the various different outposts the ship visits, the crew keeps bringing Rico all the pretty things they can find like jewelry, clothes, and makeup so he doesn't miss his pampered model life.

Rico, carrying a selection of pretty wrapped boxes and gifts, leans against a door and sighs a little. He doesn't have the heart to ask the crew to stop, but he doesn't want them to think of him like a princess. He's grown to like them too.

He sets the gifts down in his quarters and we can see the team made up a cabin just for him. It's small, but having individual quarters is probably a luxury, even for space pirates.

Rico walks through the small and over-girly room to a closet. All the furniture, spreads, and decorations are frilly and silky, like a 5 year old girl's princess themed party exploded over everything.

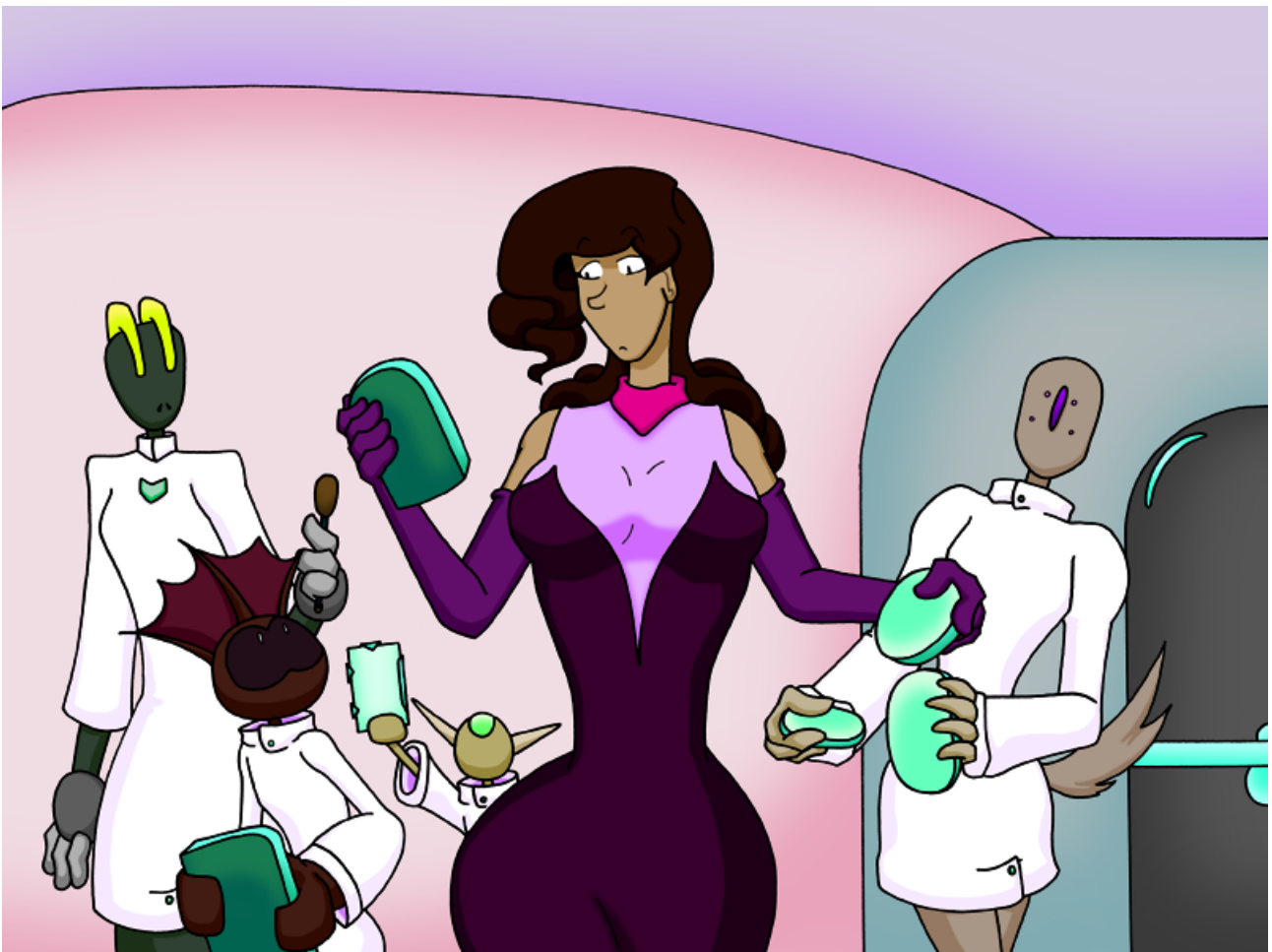


Rico changes into a more formal dress over at the closet. A voice comes from an intercom-looking display on the room's holodevice, "Miss Rico. We're as close as we can get. A shuttle is ready for you in the bay."

Rico is set down after the small shuttle arrives at a research facility. A large flashing Vegas-style sign on the roof displays a neon version of him in a skimpy lab coat announcing the building as one of Rico's. Rico is basically a brand for science.

As he walks through the wide doors into a pristine reception area, the workers and scientists crowd around Rico like he's a celebrity. The assembled team genuinely loves him, for his looks or his money, we don't know.

Peeling off with a smaller more composed group, these higher-ups thank Rico for the latest round of funding. Rico smiles with a nod as they walk through hallways lined with labs.



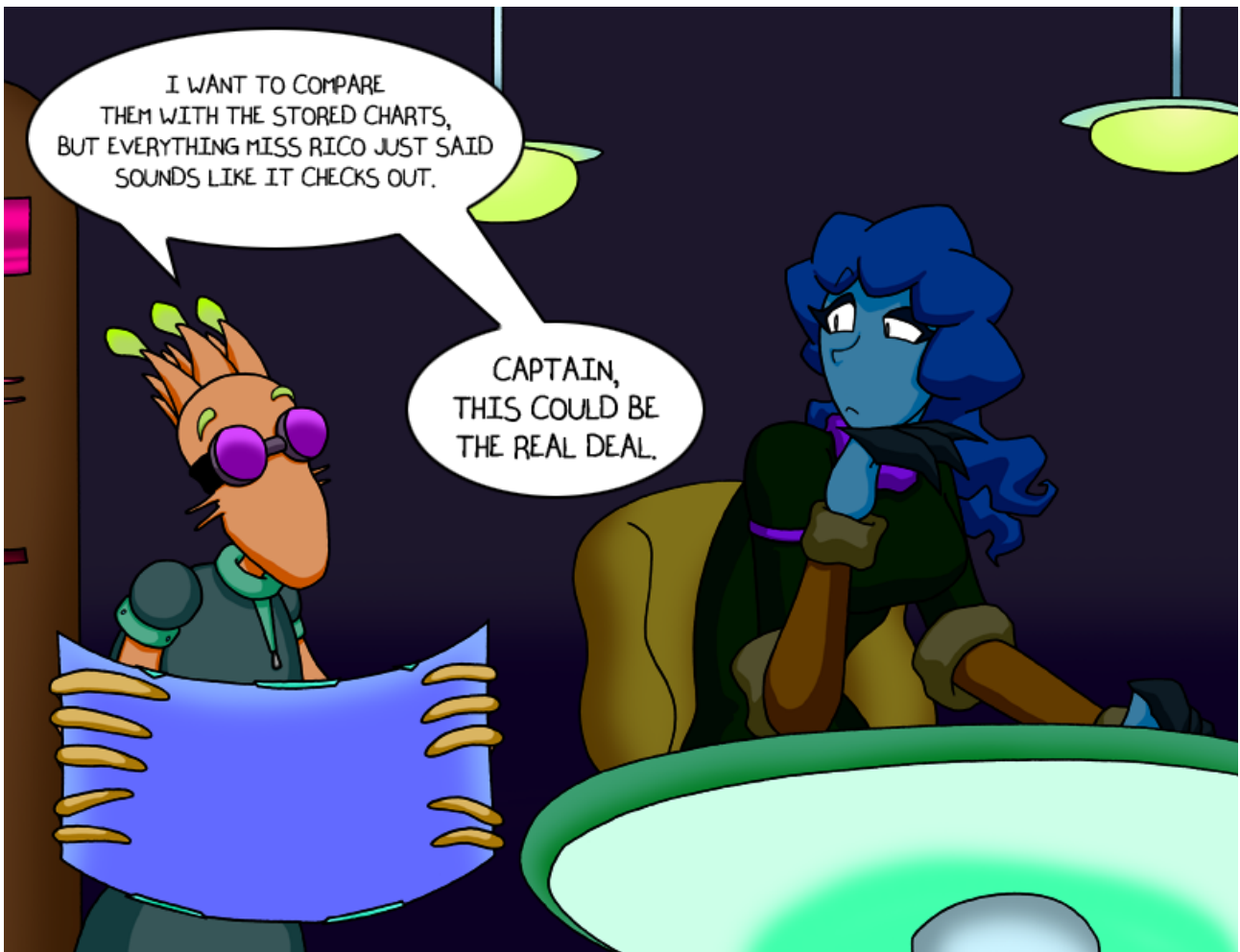
One of the business aliens hands him a flashy holodevice and nods to the her fellow scientists and workers trailing Rico. "The results are starting to come in thanks to your work, Ma'am."



Back on the ship, still in the formal dress, Rico has some holodevices spread out on a table, the fancy one given to him at the lab is in front of Blue. She sits, but even she is leaning forward, excited with what Rico has returned with.

One of Blue's navigator/scientists is looking over the devices intrigued. It frequently jots some notes down on a pad before returning to the devices, scrolling through and scanning multiple ones at the same time.

The navigator composes itself and nods back to Blue. "I want to compare them with the stored charts, but everything Miss Rico just said sounds like it checks out. Captain, this could be the real deal."



Blue leans back, pleased with Rico as he beams off to the side. She addresses the navigator, "Well, good sir, follow that information."

Blue watches over the helm as there's a flurry of activity among the team. The crew man (alien?) stations maintaining the course and ensuring the ship is still stocked and prepped after their journey.

Blue seems nervous as she watches the crew dart back and forth. They're a long way away from where they started and in new territory.

She plucks out a crewman running by and asks for a status report. "Are we in danger? Are there any ships scanning for us? Stay cautious!".

The crewman is thrilled by all this information but he turns her down. "No danger, Captain! Why there's nothing to even crash into. Space out here is so... empty. No satellites, no outposts, not even a Svengolt's Emporium."



The crew stares out at their viewing screens in awe. The entire ship is watching the Universe unfold before them.

Rico giddily hops up and down as he points at a screen. "I recognize that spiral galaxy!"



The ship is seen blasting towards one of the arms of the galaxy, careening towards its final destination.

The ship is seen heading back at a slower pace. Voice-over from Rico addresses the crew, "Look, it has two arms! How was I supposed to pick the exact right one? It was a 50-50 guess!"

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As they head towards the proper arm of the galaxy, Blue seems fidgety and more watchful than usual. She monitors her crew, the view screens, and the constant flow of information being cycled to her.

She grips a railing, hunched slightly, staring at a screen. "Earth is out there. My crew is the first civilization to discover it...". Rico seems partially offended by that.

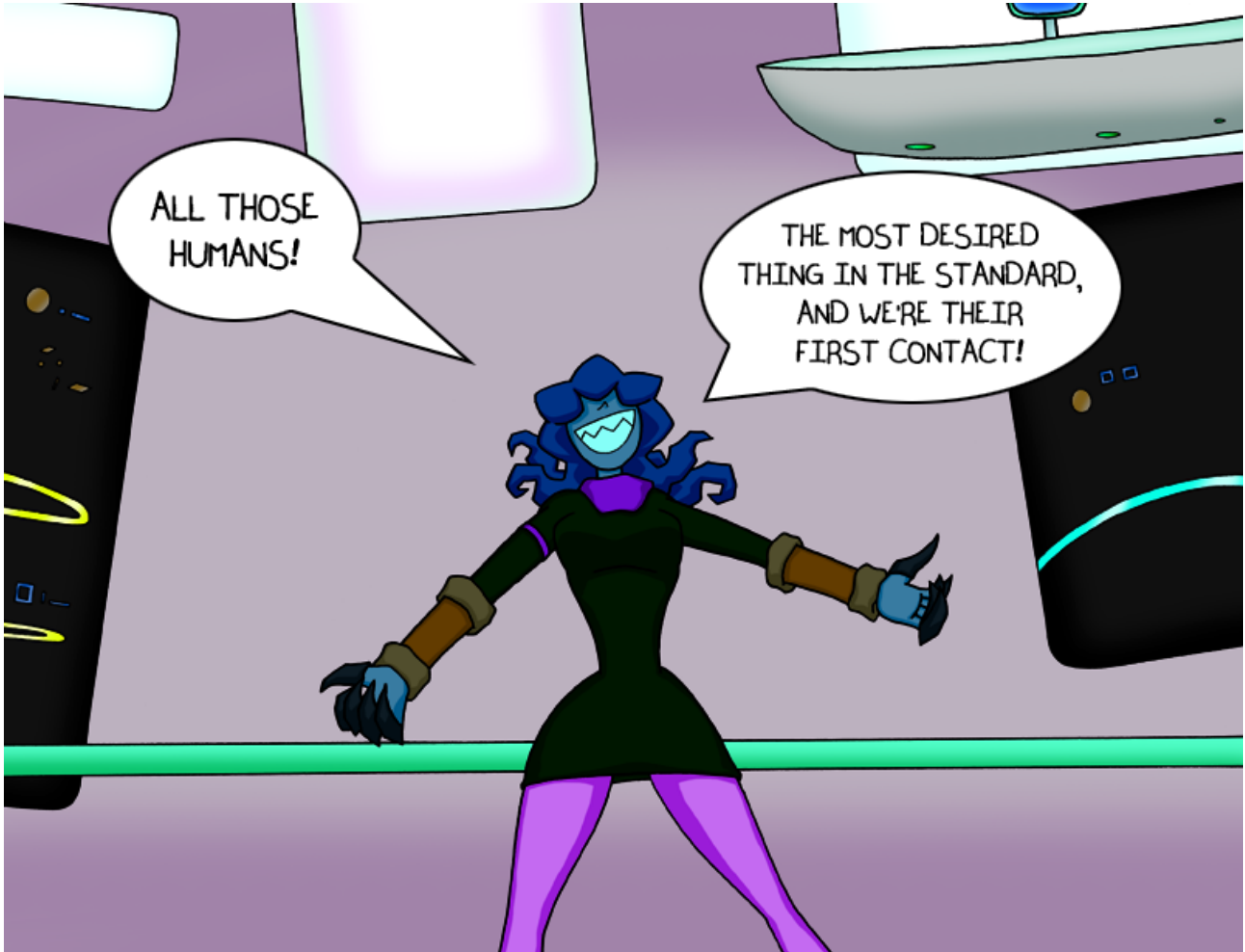
"All those humans, unspoiled, unknown. All there for us."

Rico braces himself against a console after hearing this. He sees Blue in a sinister light as she grins, her fangs glowing more than ever.



Rico forms a fist, hidden behind him, ready to strike Blue even though he knows it's a fight he'd lose quickly with her crew at her side. "What are you planning, Blue?"

Blue grins and spreads her arms out to the viewing screens. "All those humans! The most desired thing in the Standard, and WE'RE their first contact!"



"Any one of them that wants to see the stars can join us and we'll make them rich. And they'll have us to thank for it! We're going to be the most successful agents in the Universe!"

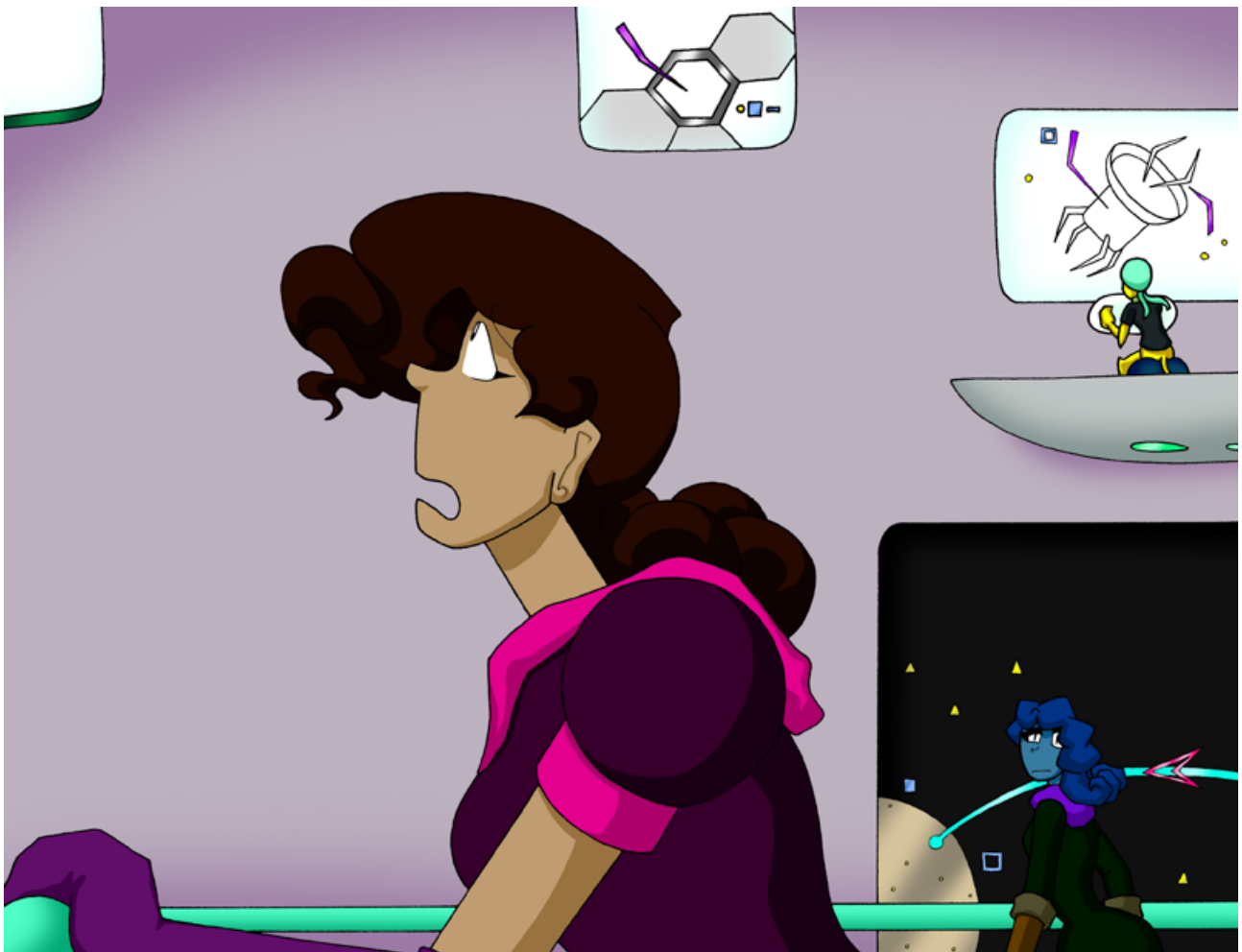
Rico un-clenches his fist and relaxes, keeping a wary but inquisitive eye on Blue. "Like, voluntarily, right?" Blue cuts him a look, "Yeah, totally, of course. It's total win-win for both sides."

As the ship starts slowing down and pulling towards Earth, we see more debris and satellites around the planet. Some are pointing towards the Earth, but others are aimed off into space. The beginning stages of orbital platforms can be seen taking shape in the distance.

Rico stares at the viewing screens with worry, but the rest of the crew just keep piloting on in and avoiding the debris with ease.

The ship steers past some larger satellites, strange looking and advanced. Lights flow from attached vessels to the satellites. Some are connected, forming a web over portions of the sky.

Blue looks over and is confused to see the worry on Rico's face as they pull in closer.





The ship enters the atmosphere and heads through a cloud bank. Fluffy white clouds cover the viewscreen but part as the ship descends. Rico mutters "This is wrong. Something's wrong." to himself.

We get our first good shot of Earth from high above. Cities sprawl out more with extra neon lights, visible from higher up than they normally would be. Artificial islands dot the oceans, churning water, and have tubes leading to the other islands or back towards land.

Blue surveys the planet with a raised eyebrow. "Not quite the backwater burg I expected."

She calls to her pirates, "Crew, ready the shuttles. We're making landfall!". The crew happily cheers, but Rico stays at the viewscreen looking worried.



The first wave of the crew steps out of their shuttle, now landed on solid ground. A neon lit city and domed buildings are spread out before them. The city is clearly human, but with strange additions plopped down or bolted on here and there.

Rico looks around, not recognizing the city's original form but pushing forward. Blue follows behind him, picking up that something is wrong but confused as to what's up. It's all new to her.

From out around one of the domed structures, a gaggle of extremely curvy women run past the team's view and toward one of the human towers. Blue and her crew are wide-eyed, Rico is aghast.

One final woman runs by, followed right behind by an alien, one the audience will remember from the start of the series, hovering to keep up with her. It looks frustrated but plaintive, "Testing is important!"



The alien Grays from the start of the series have taken over and Rico, Blue, and the crew see only beautiful women everywhere they look.

The Gray ships have come to Earth and landed after their initial scouts' encounter with Rico. A line of men and women are seen going into one ship and a line of women with hourglass figures, flawless hair, and dresses or sci-fi costumes are coming out of it at the back.

The Gray aliens are leading the humans in yelling, annoyed, that they know the Earth women hold the secrets. "Don't be failures, pass your tests and share your amazing secrets!". The aliens scan the transformed women leaving the ship but just gesture wildly to each other, pointing at data screens, and bickering about what they should be seeing in the results.

We have a shot back on Rico, his hands clenched in fists and his costume ready for a fight. Blue is posed for battle next to him, a bimbo in a faux animal skin bikini out of a low budget dinosaur movie is cowering behind the captain's crew. A Gray is in front of the team looking confused and oblivious to the hurt that's about to come.

