

In cold, unforgiving space, a nomads squadron is in transit near a deep-space station in the Human Edge...

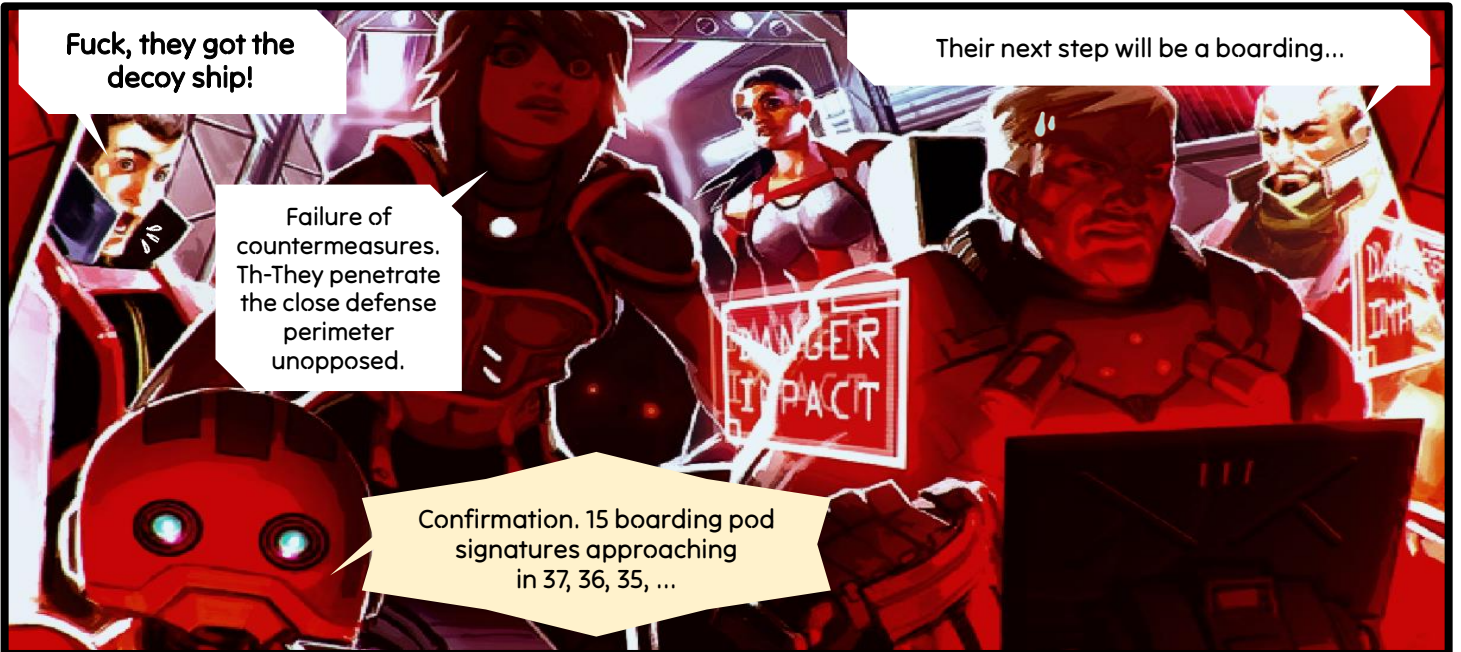


Unknown radar signature emerges from the void

WHAT?! HOW THE HELL DID THEY FIND US!



Automated defense systems have been activated



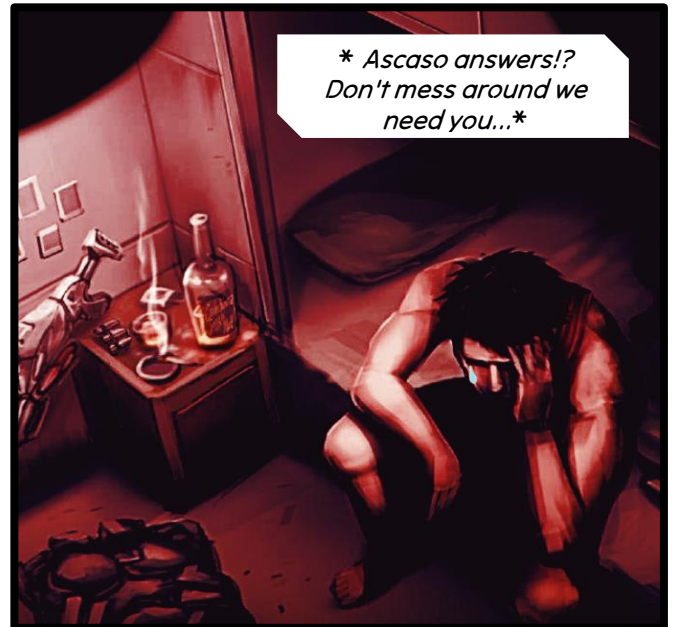
Fuck, they got the decoy ship!

Their next step will be a boarding...

Failure of countermeasures. They penetrate the close defense perimeter unopposed.

Confirmation. 15 boarding pod signatures approaching in 37, 36, 35, ...

BRIDGE TO ALL CREW. RED ALERT. RED ALERT. SHIP IS IN EMERGENCY CONDITION, PREPARE TO BE BOARDED IMMEDIATELY, I REPEAT IMMEDIATE BOARDING. ALL ACCESSES LOCKED.



*\*They're coming!\**

While somewhere in the ship...

You know why we're here, don't you?  
Alarms are no joke.

Oh, I thought it was time for my cigarette break...

The clock is ticking. The Tohaa are about to board our ship. We know they're cooking up something related to the Sphere, and they're hot on your trail. Once again, why are they chasing you?

Perhaps they simply appreciate my journalistic work...

You know, my stories tend to... captivate the audience. They have a way of touching people where it counts.

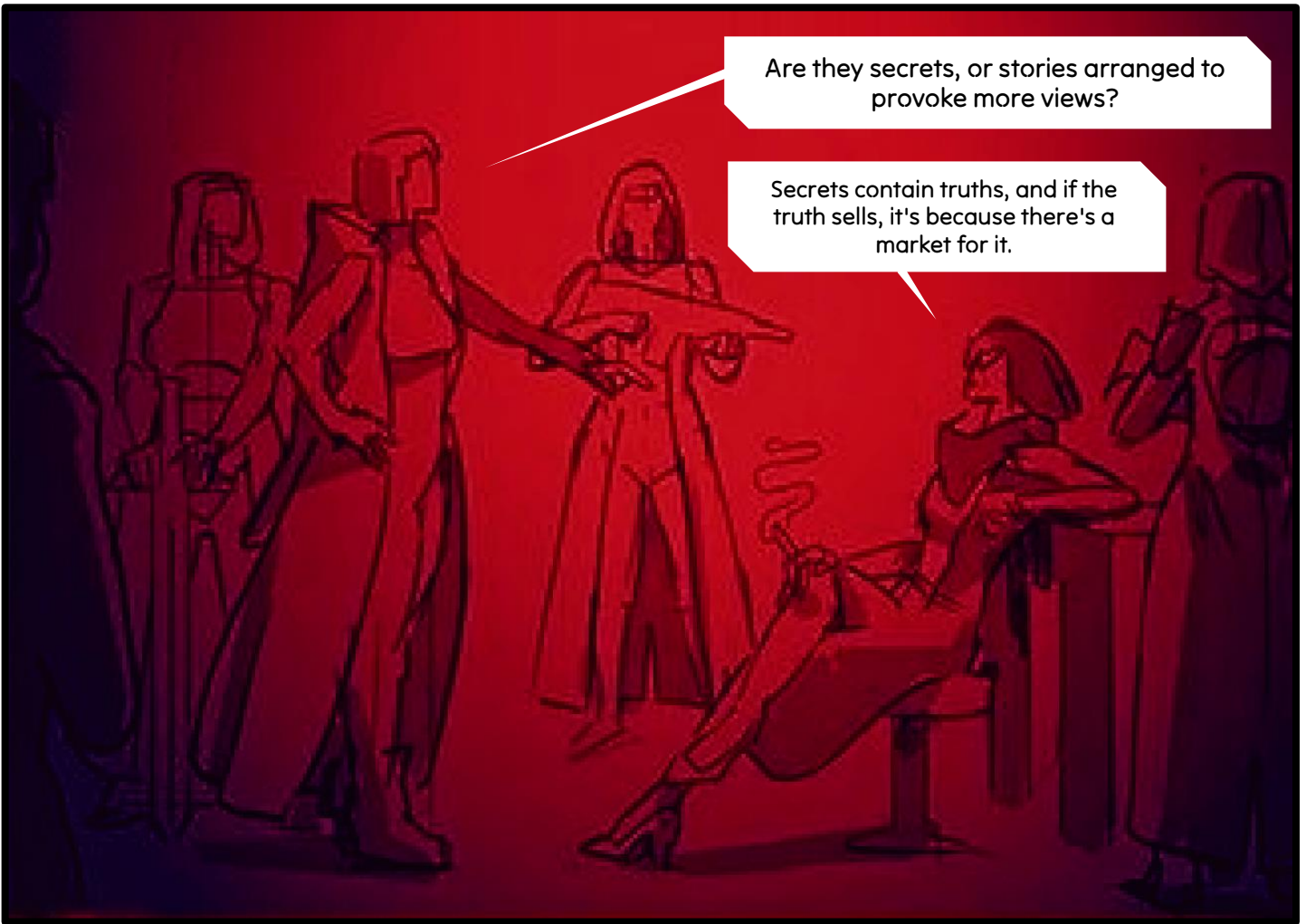
I doubt your stories are as ... 'challenging' than you claim!

Oh, you'd be surprised. People say my stories have a... penetrating way of revealing hidden truths of the Sphere.



Your articles have an annoying tendency to provoke chaos. What have you discovered that is worthy of such intervention?

I dig up stories, Kusanagi. Stories containing secrets that sometimes have the power to change lives.



Are they secrets, or stories arranged to provoke more views?

Secrets contain truths, and if the truth sells, it's because there's a market for it.



What's your next move? We know you're planning something very big.

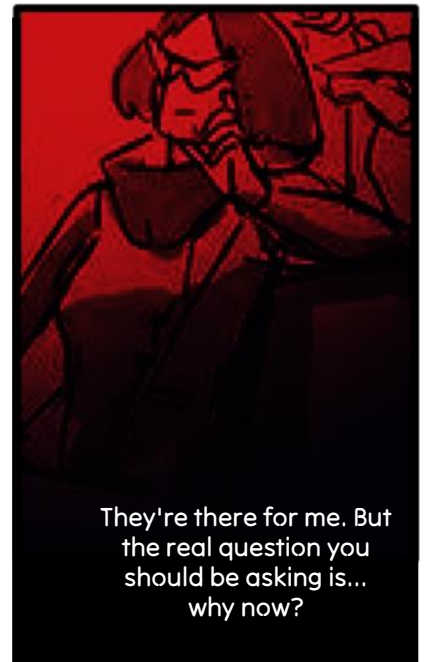
A move? No, a light. On truths you'd rather keep in the dark, I suppose.





Talk now or I won't be able to guarantee your safety.

Security? That's exactly what they promised me.

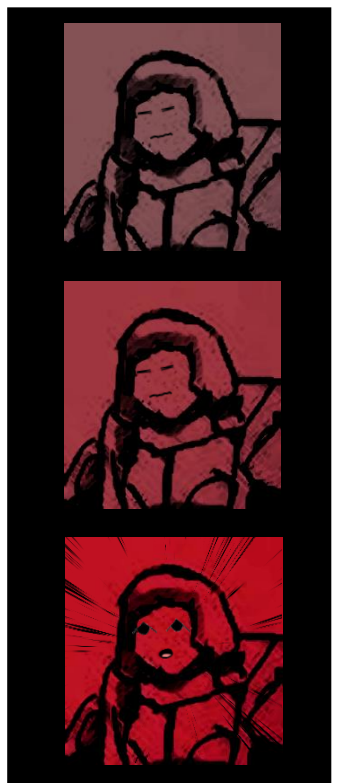


They're there for me. But the real question you should be asking is... why now?



Don't play games with me, Stringer. What do the Tohaa really want?

They want the truth, Kusanagi. The truth I wrote in my 'new stories of the Sphere'.



Exactly, see it as protection. And the truths contained in these stories may well arouse some interest in the Sphere...

The data for the new anthology has been sent to the Tohaa, and you're the only one who can decrypt it, right?

What kind of truth would cause them to attack us? And why would you give them that?



The Tohaa are losing their influence in public opinion since Daedalus Fall. They need a public relations stunt to put them back in the spotlight... and I'm their author.

You know, the press is in crisis and needs funds to...



**WHAT MAKES YOU SUPPOSE THE TOHAA WILL LET YOU GO ONCE THEY'VE GOT WHAT THEY WANT?**

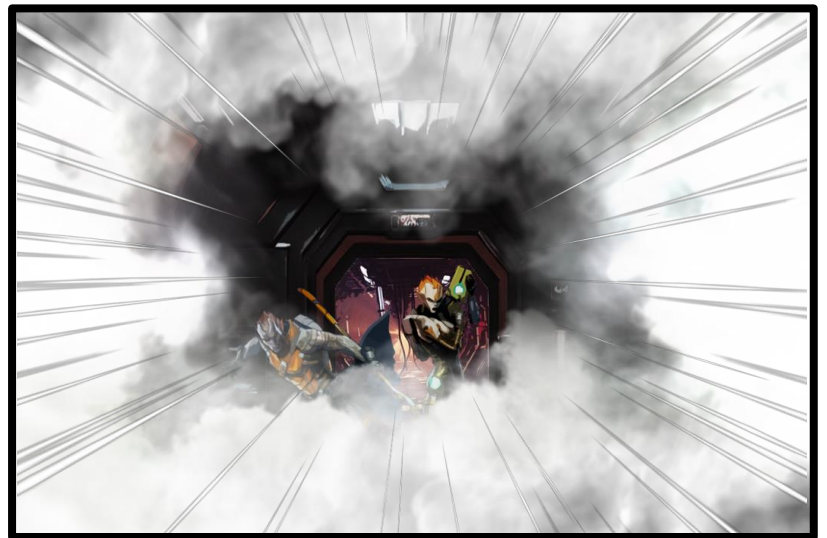
Oh, I can handle myself. Besides, I'm not destitute.

This is no time for jokes, Stringer.

Who said anything about joking? I'm sure the Tohaa will be... delighted with my services.

You can't trust them, Stringer.

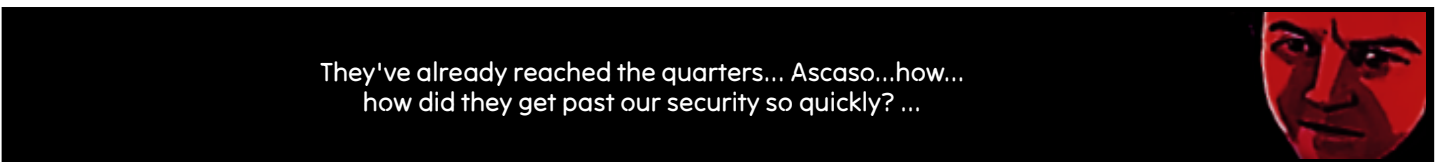
And you, Kusanagi, can I trust you?



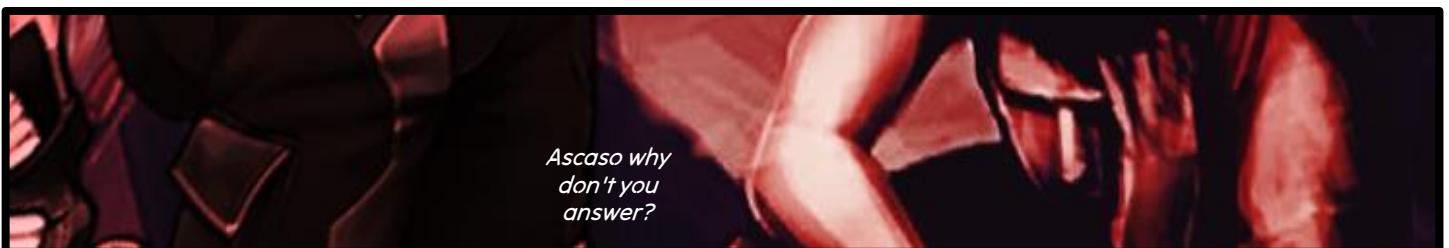
GROUP 1 TO BRIDGE... ENEMY ON BOARD, REPEAT  
ENEMY ON BOARD, ... LOOKS TO BE TOHAA...  
CONFIRMATION WAITING... CONTACT IN PROGRESS...







They've already reached the quarters... Ascaso...how...  
how did they get past our security so quickly? ...



*Ascaso why  
don't you  
answer?*

*\*Bridge to  
command  
channel\**

*- Reverend Kusanagi, reinforcements are on the way but our defense has been beaten, the enemy is scattering towards you. They seem to know where you are, and seeing how they're getting past our defenses and security, we must have been betrayed...*

*- I see. Open the emergency corridor for command, and we'll retreat to the bridge until reinforcements arrive.*

*- Okay ma'am, it's done, good luck. Over and out.*



Stringer, listen to me. We can still protect you.

After all, they need me. And who knows, maybe I'll even be able to... negotiate a little for you...

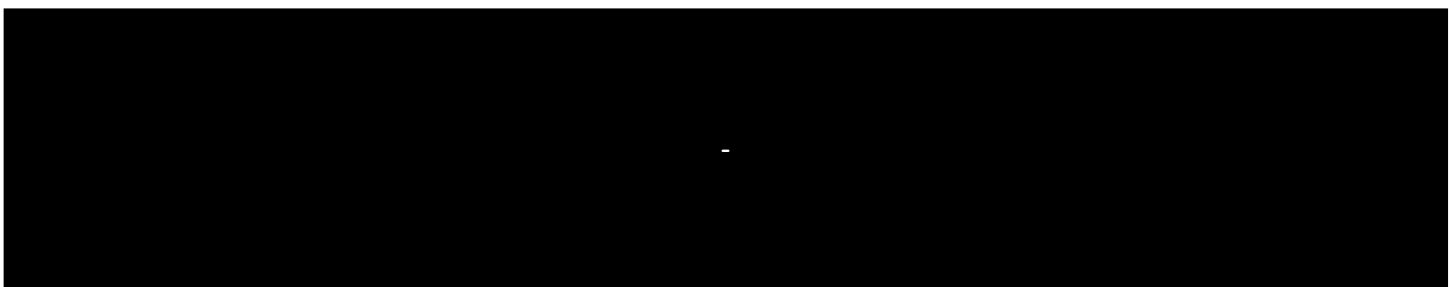
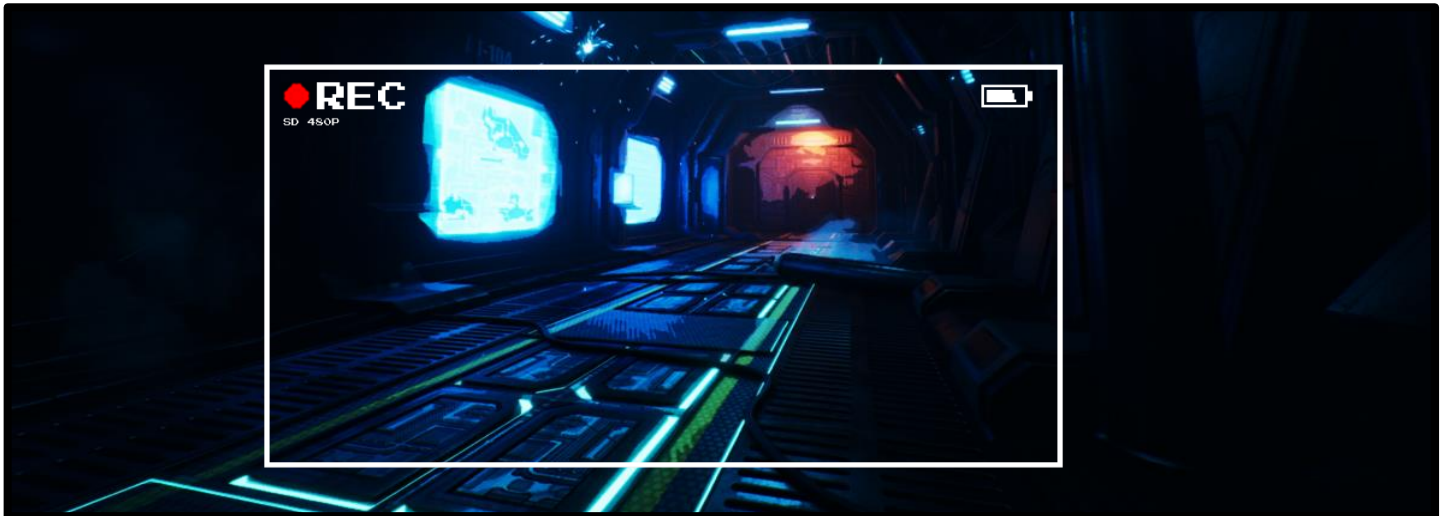
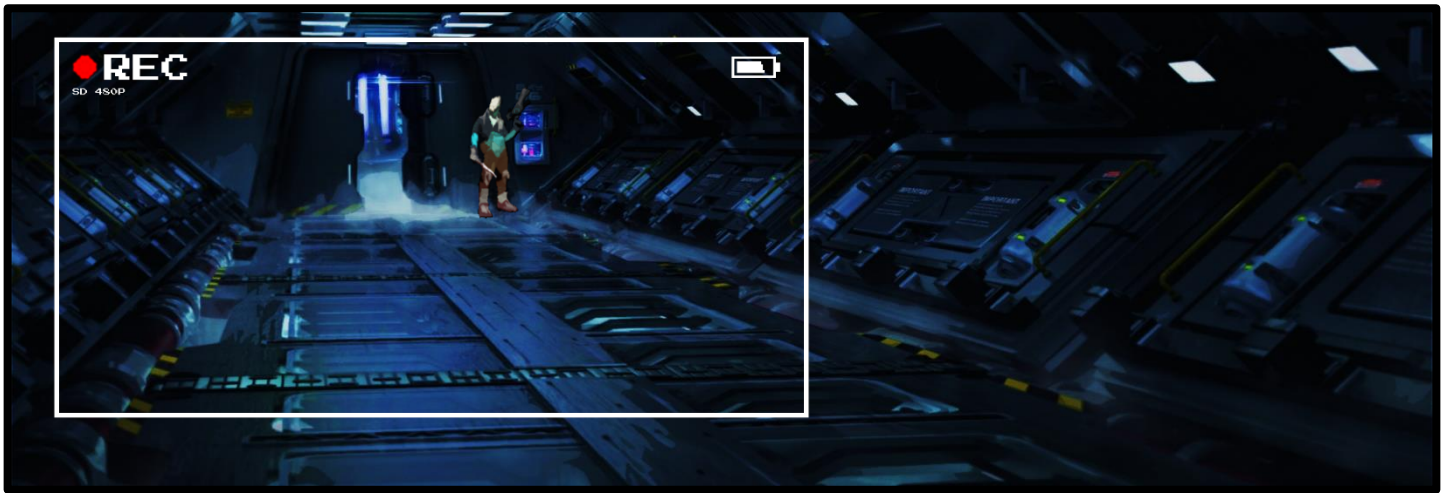
Stringer... you're impossible...

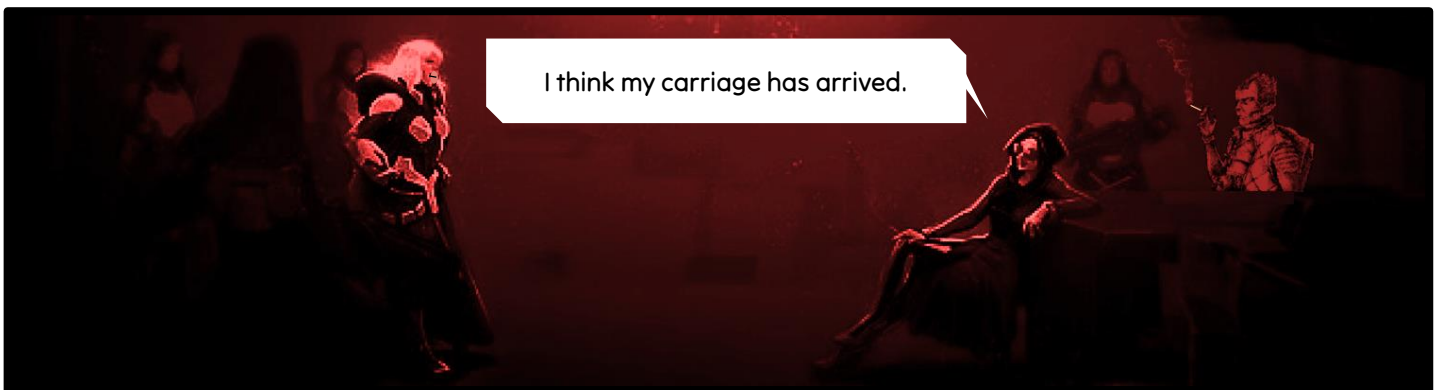
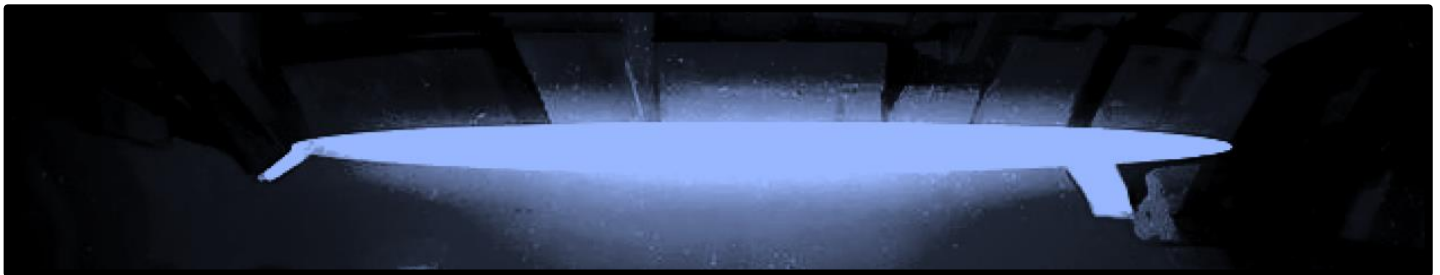
Thanks for the offer, Kusanagi, but I think I'll take my chances with the Tohaa.

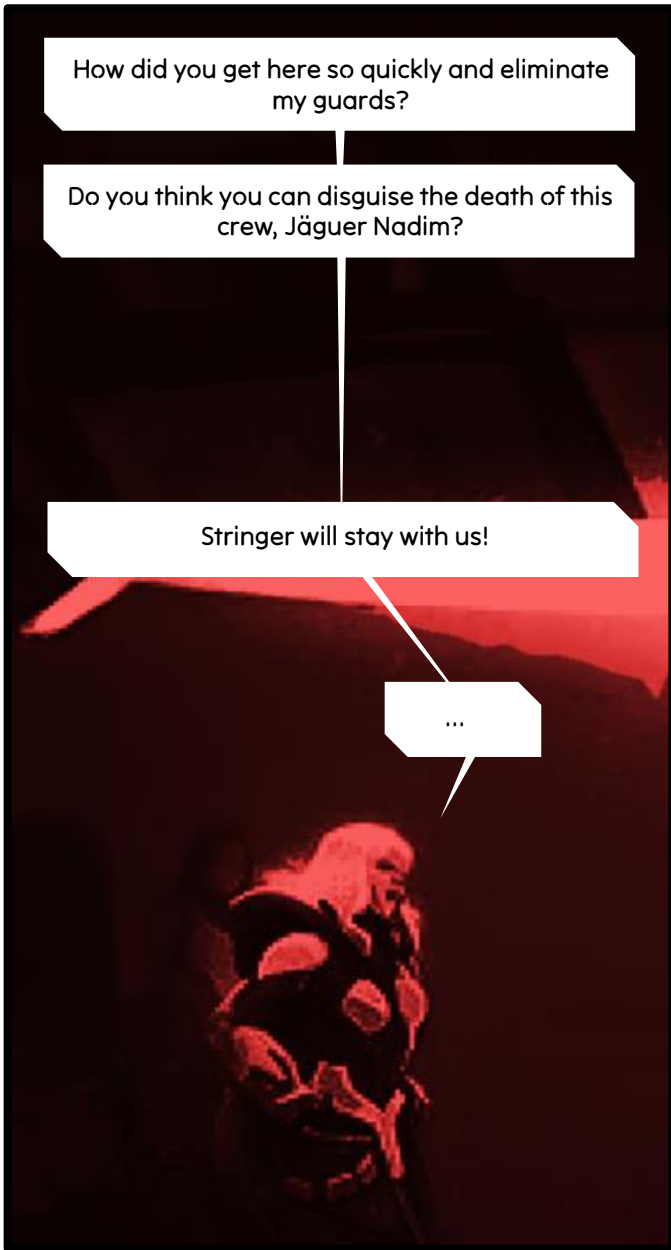
Anyway, we need to prepare for boarding, and you're coming with us...

**WHAT...**

Well then, Kusanagi, at your age, are you afraid of the dark?





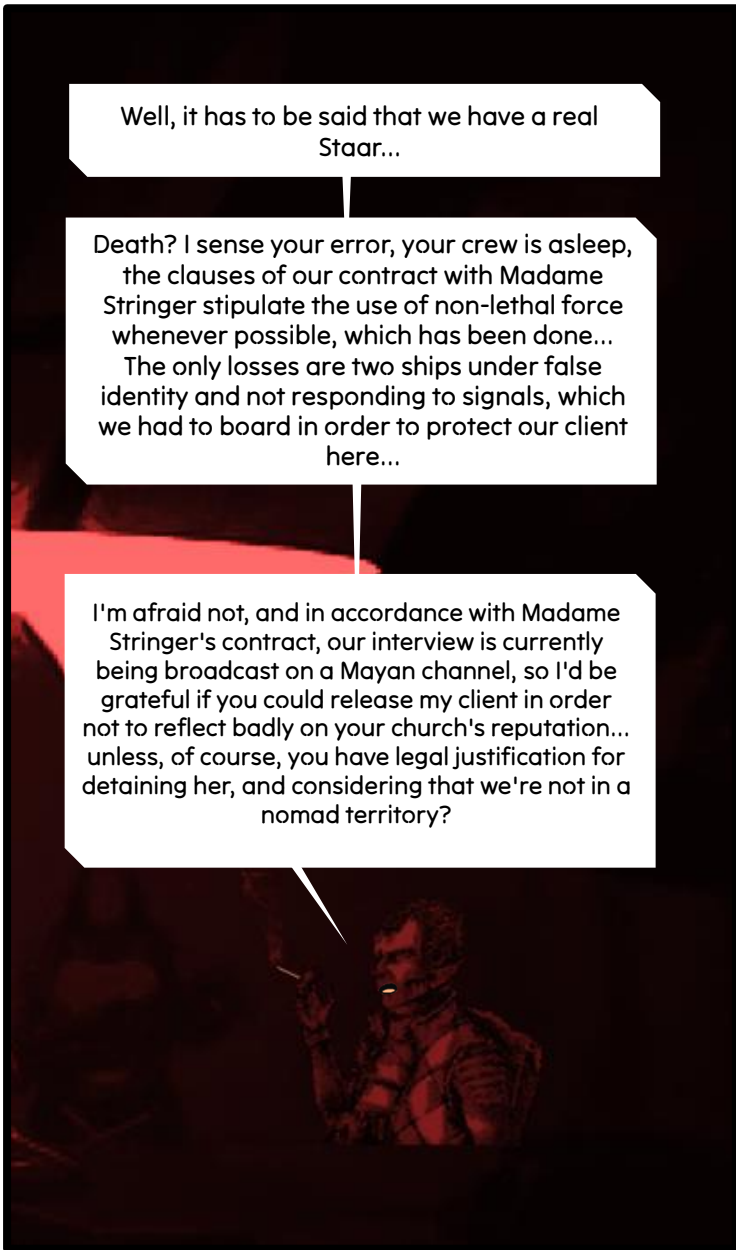


How did you get here so quickly and eliminate my guards?

Do you think you can disguise the death of this crew, Jäger Nadim?

Stringer will stay with us!

...



Well, it has to be said that we have a real Staar...

Death? I sense your error, your crew is asleep, the clauses of our contract with Madame Stringer stipulate the use of non-lethal force whenever possible, which has been done... The only losses are two ships under false identity and not responding to signals, which we had to board in order to protect our client here...

I'm afraid not, and in accordance with Madame Stringer's contract, our interview is currently being broadcast on a Mayan channel, so I'd be grateful if you could release my client in order not to reflect badly on your church's reputation... unless, of course, you have legal justification for detaining her, and considering that we're not in a nomad territory?



