BOULDER AND FLEET
MINING FOR TROUBLE

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ADVENTURERS FOR HIRE

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By Jerzy Drozd

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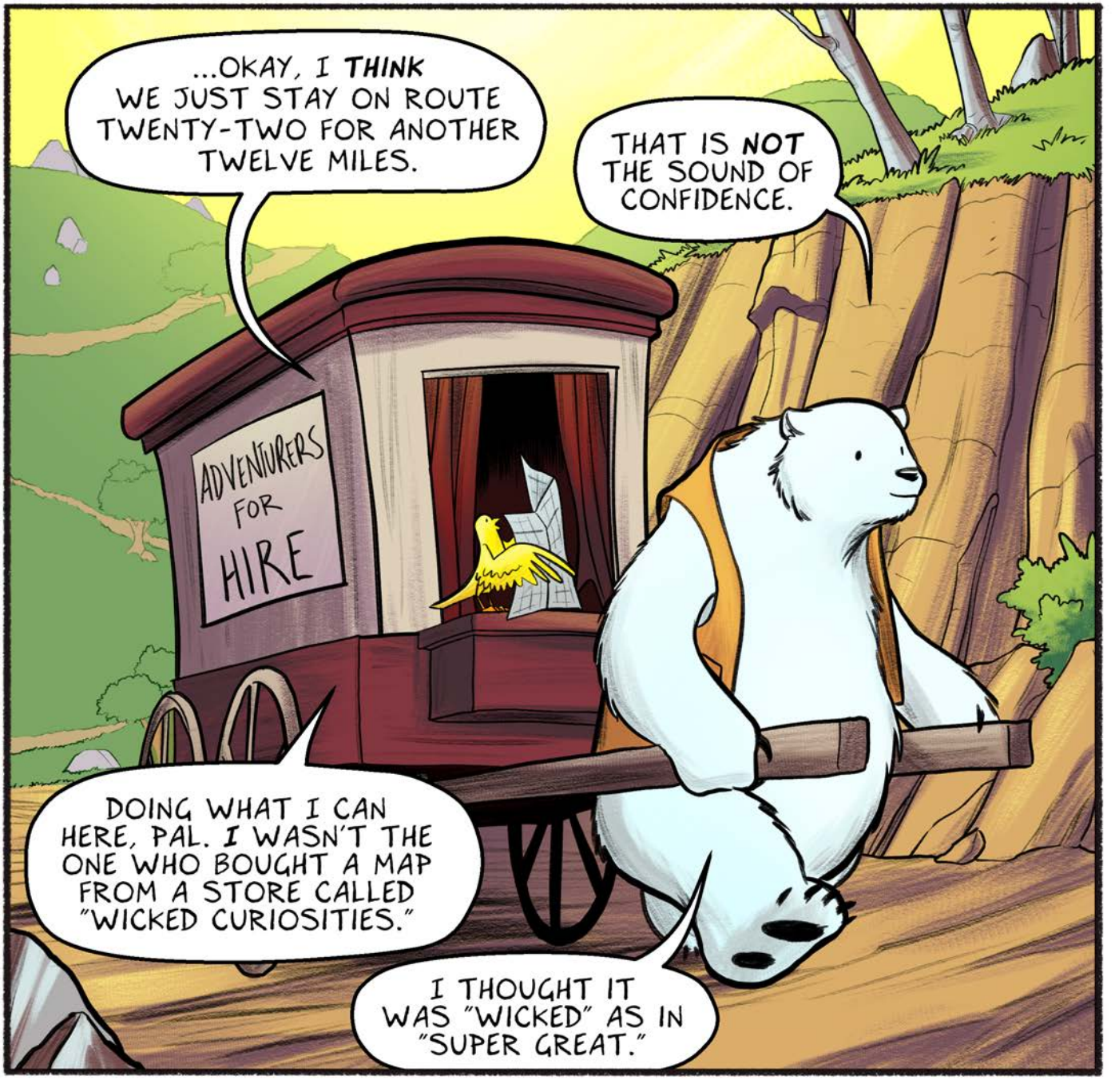
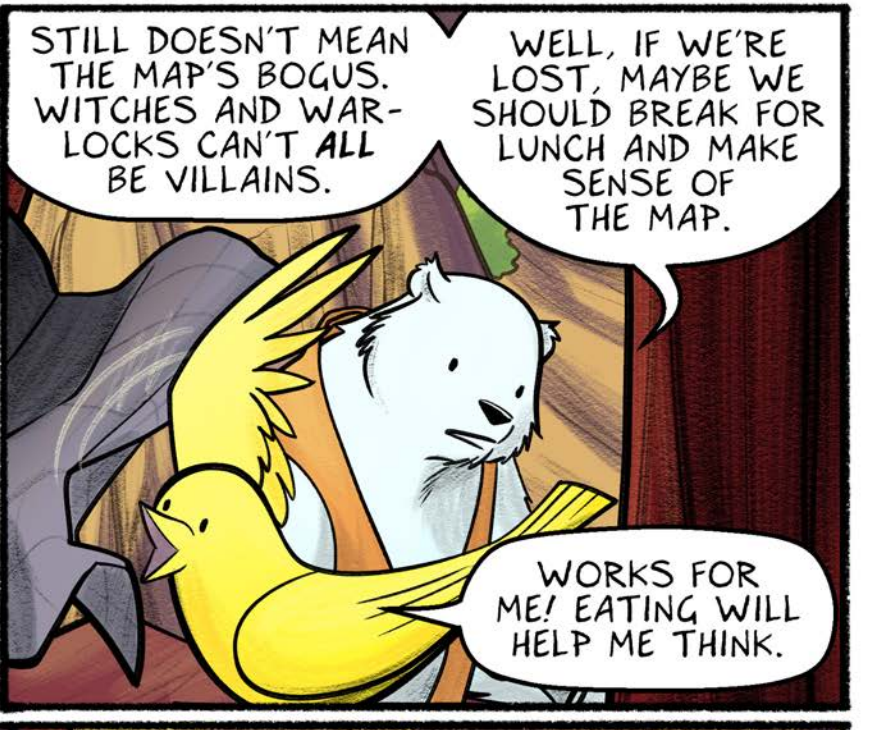
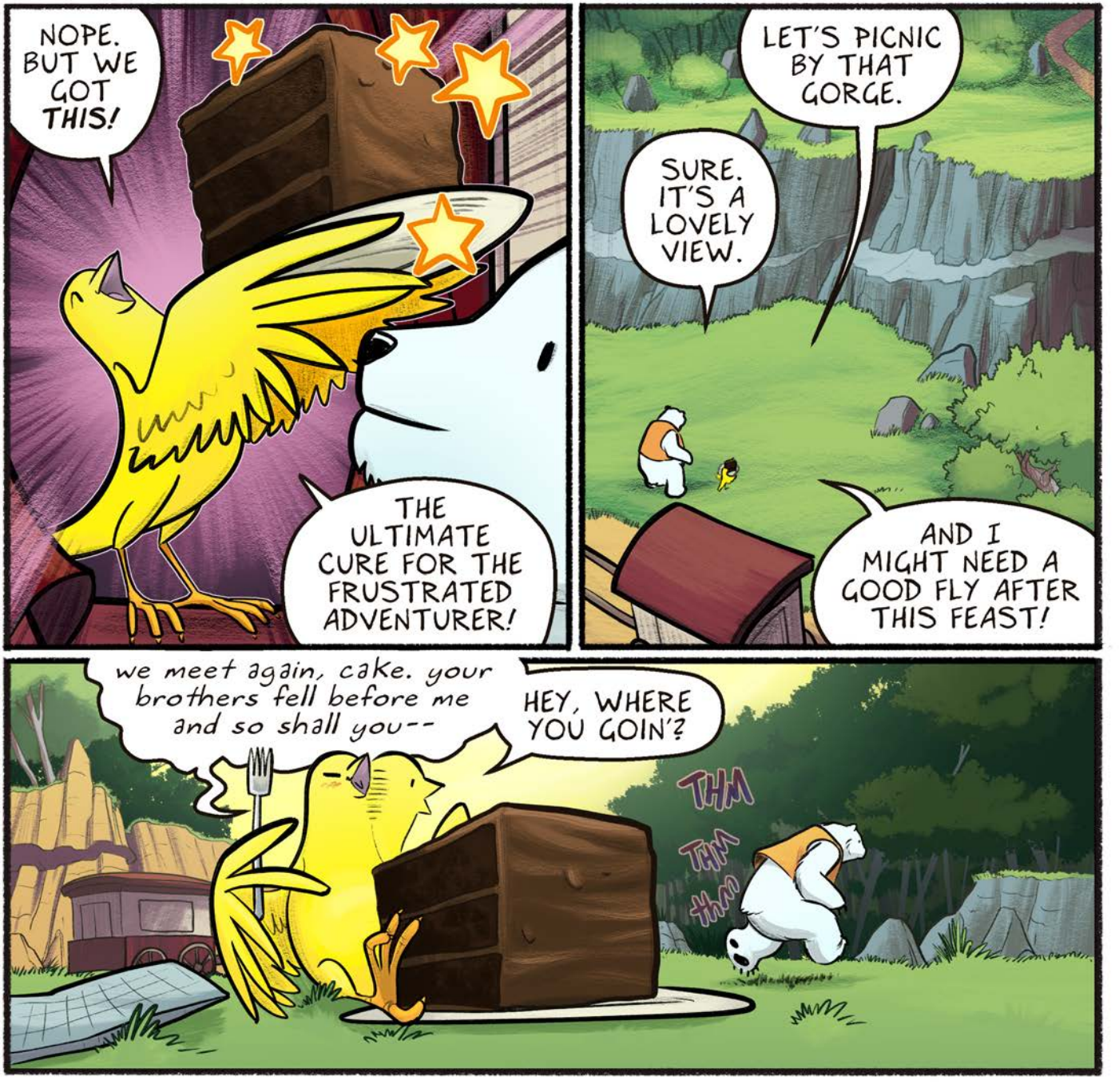
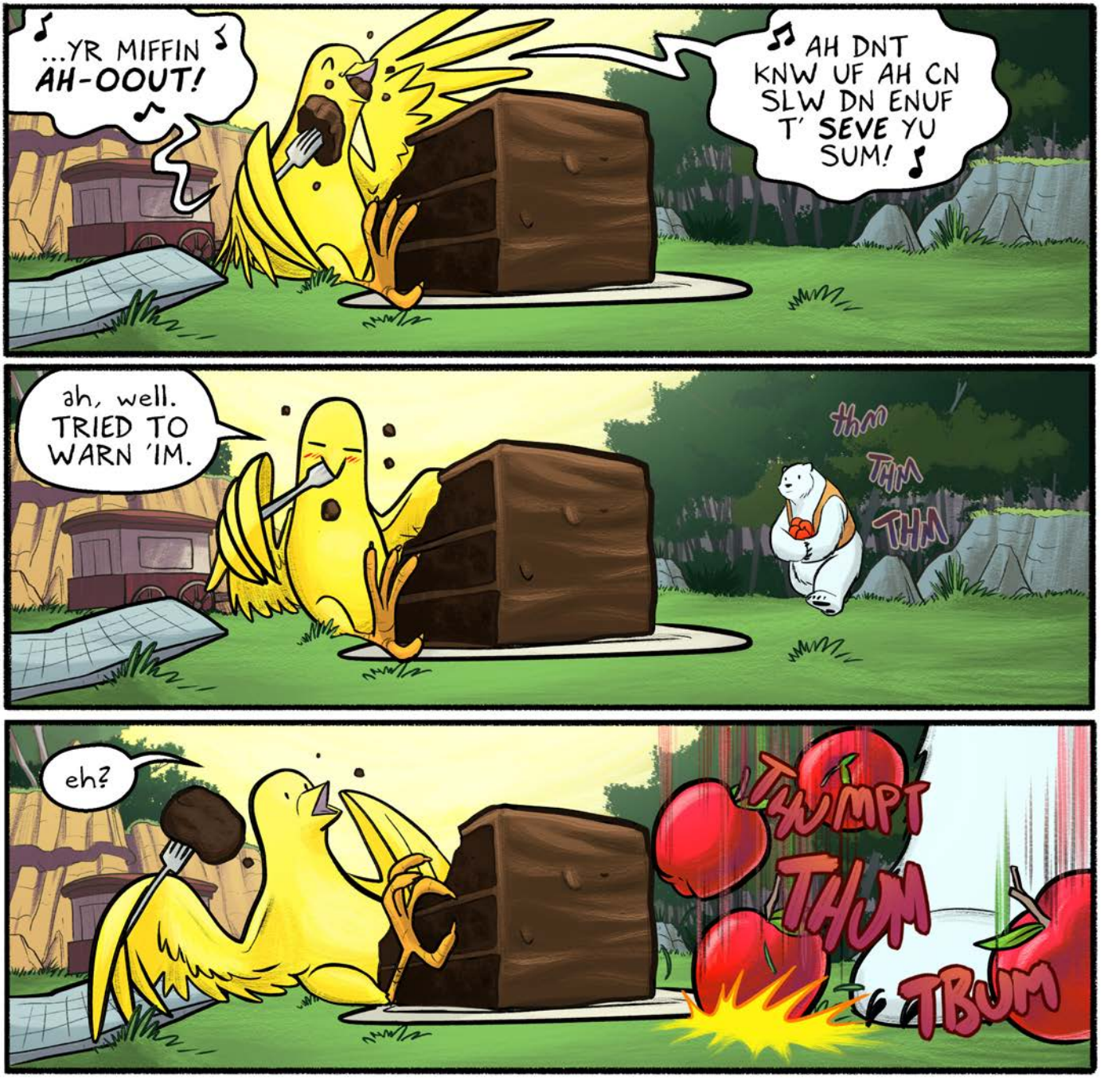

...OKAY, I THINK WE JUST STAY ON ROUTE TWENTY-TWO FOR ANOTHER TWELVE MILES.
THAT IS NOT THE SOUND OF CONFIDENCE.
ADVENTURERS FOR HIRE
DOING WHAT I CAN HERE, PAL. I WASN'T THE ONE WHO BOUGHT A MAP FROM A STORE CALLED "WICKED CURIOSITIES."
I THOUGHT IT WAS "WICKED" AS IN "SUPER GREAT."

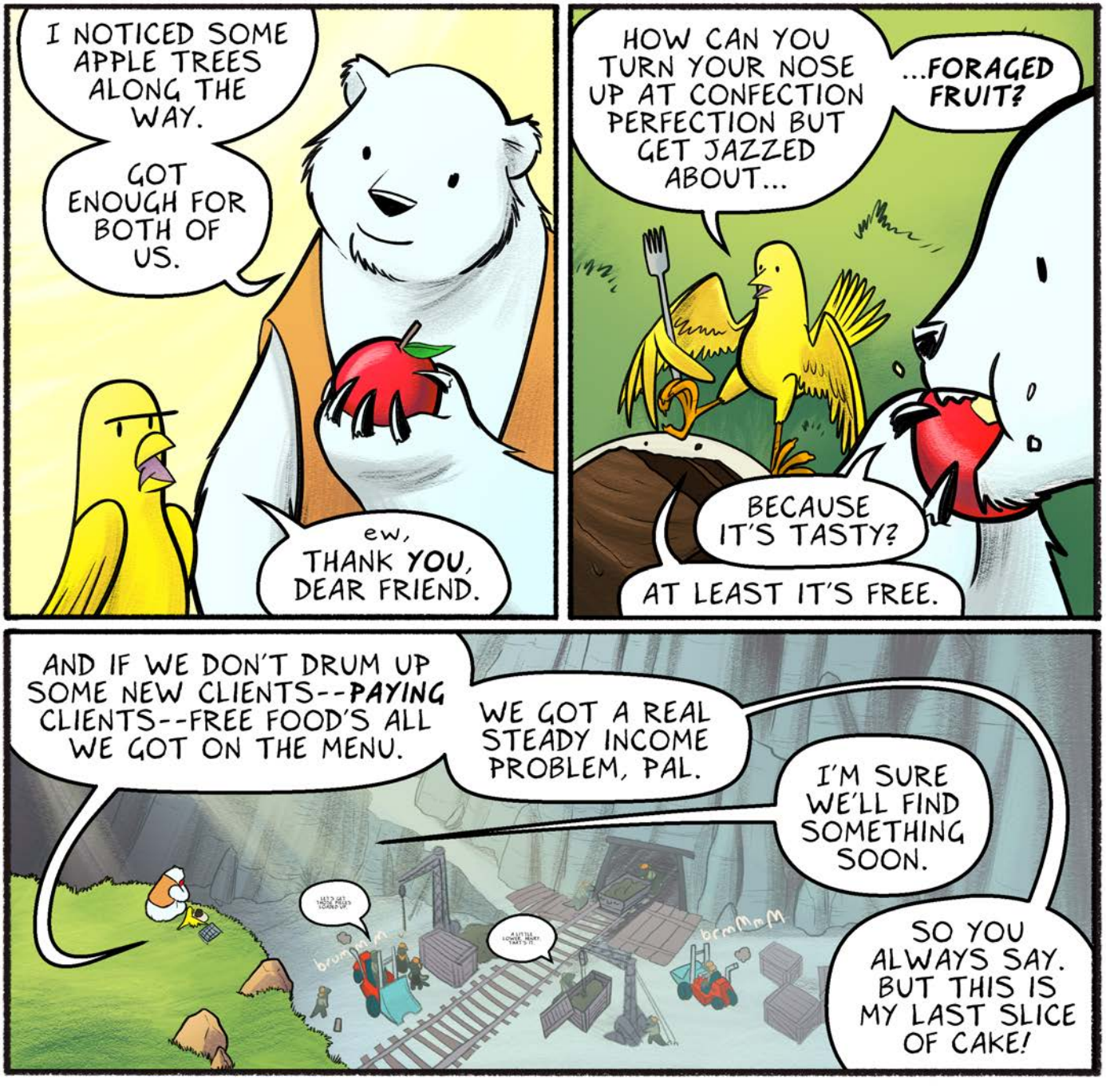
NO, BOULDER. I'M PRETTY SURE IT WAS "WICKED," AS IN "MADE BY WITCHES AND WARLOCKS."

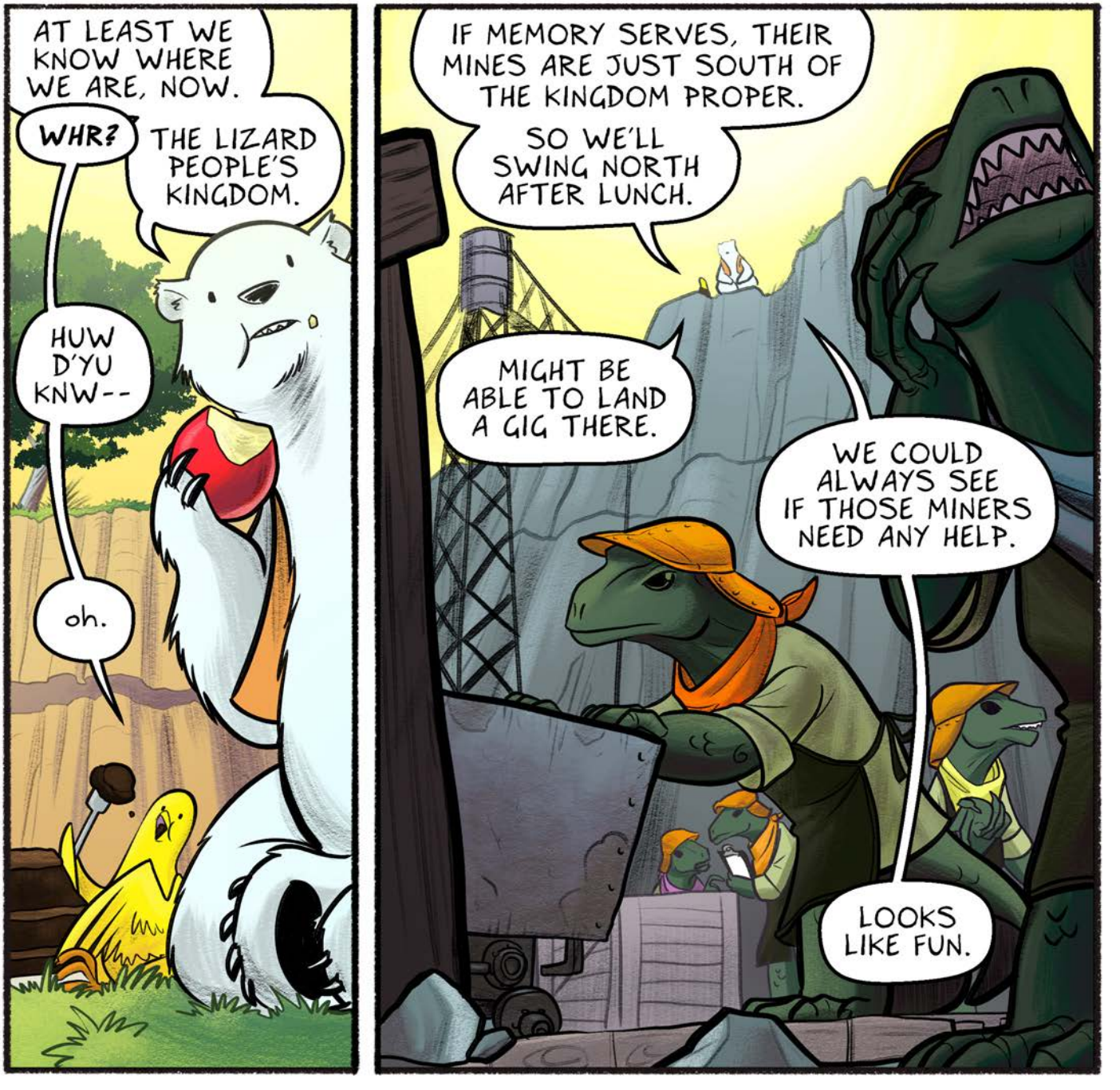

STILL DOESN'T MEAN THE MAP'S BOGUS. WITCHES AND WARLOCKS CAN'T ALL BE VILLAINS.
WELL, IF WE'RE LOST, MAYBE WE SHOULD BREAK FOR LUNCH AND MAKE SENSE OF THE MAP.
WORKS FOR ME! EATING WILL HELP ME THINK.

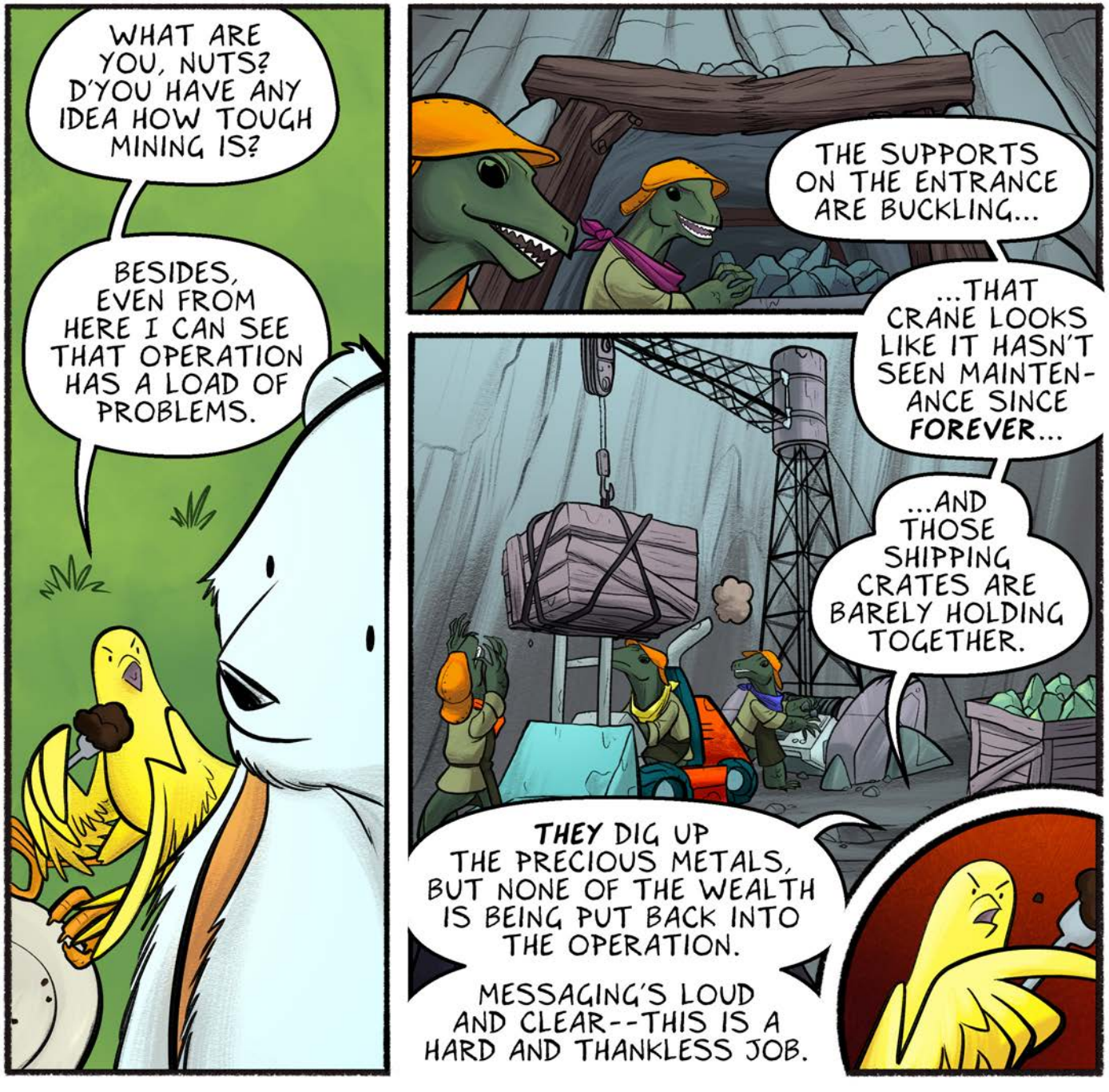
RERS
R
RE
BF
BNN
BIFF
BM
ugh, where did you put the cake?
IN THE PANTRY. WHERE IT GOES.
why would you put it where i can't see it?
WE GOT ANY FRUIT LEFT?


NOPE. BUT WE GOT THIS!
THE ULTIMATE CURE FOR THE FRUSTRATED ADVENTURER!
LET'S PICNIC BY THAT GORGE.
SURE. IT'S A LOVELY VIEW.
AND I MIGHT NEED A GOOD FLY AFTER THIS FEAST!
we meet again, cake. your brothers fell before me and so shall you--
HEY, WHERE YOU GOIN'?
THM
THM
THM

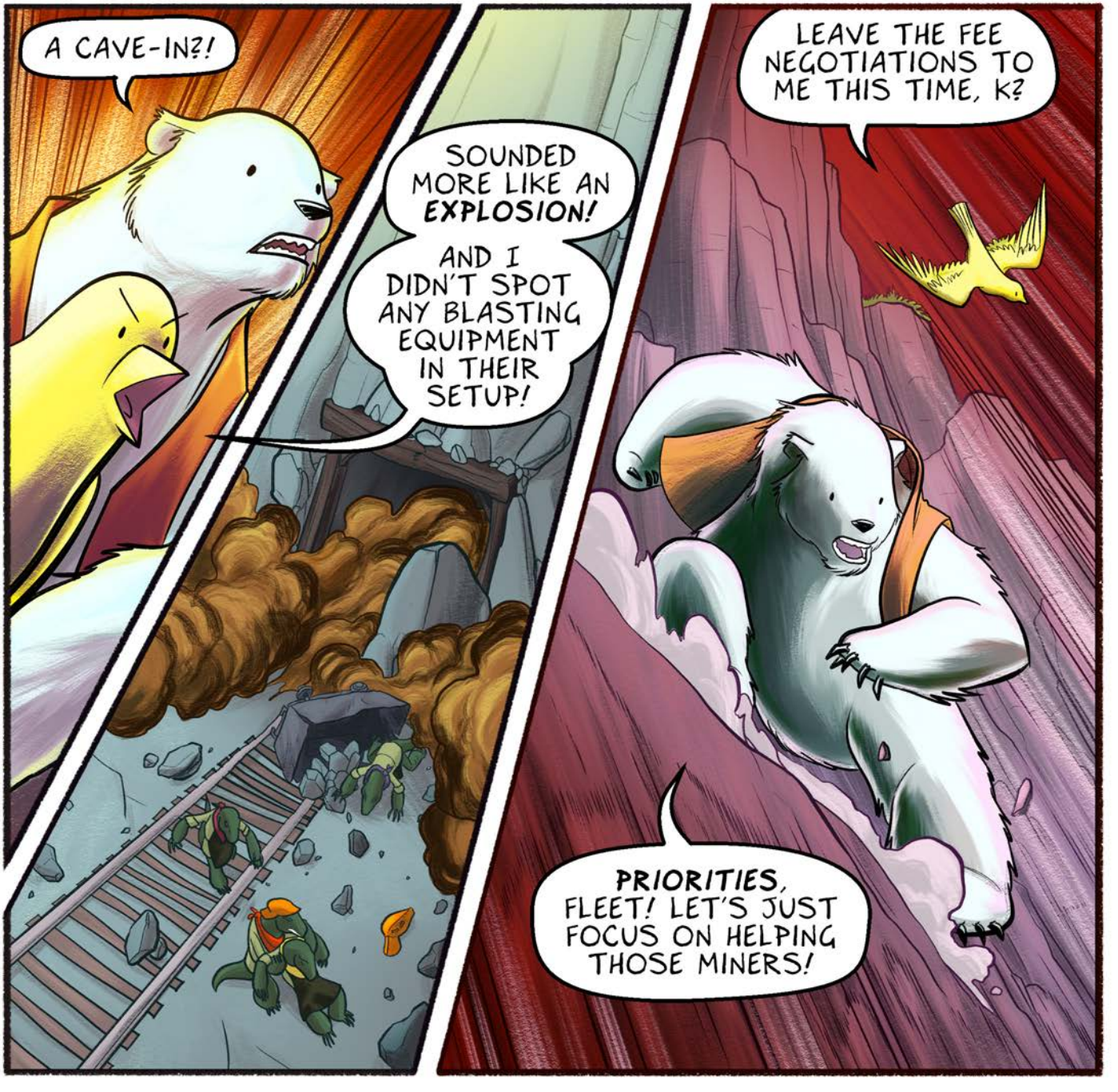

...YR MIFFIN AH-OOUT!
AH DNT KNW UF AH CN SLW DN ENUF T' SEVE YU SUM!
ah, well. TRIED TO WARN 'IM.
THM
THM
THM
eh?
THUMPT
THUM
TBUM


I NOTICED SOME APPLE TREES ALONG THE WAY.
GOT ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF US.
ew, THANK YOU, DEAR FRIEND.
HOW CAN YOU TURN YOUR NOSE UP AT CONFECTION PERFECTION BUT GET JAZZED ABOUT...
...FORAGED FRUIT?
BECAUSE IT'S TASTY?
AT LEAST IT'S FREE.
AND IF WE DON'T DRUM UP SOME NEW CLIENTS--PAYING CLIENTS--FREE FOOD'S ALL WE GOT ON THE MENU.
WE GOT A REAL STEADY INCOME PROBLEM, PAL.
I'M SURE WE'LL FIND SOMETHING SOON.
SO YOU ALWAYS SAY. BUT THIS IS MY LAST SLICE OF CAKE!
brrmmm
brrmmm


AT LEAST WE KNOW WHERE WE ARE, NOW.
WHR?
THE LIZARD PEOPLE'S KINGDOM.
HUW D'YU KNW--
oh.
IF MEMORY SERVES, THEIR MINES ARE JUST SOUTH OF THE KINGDOM PROPER.
SO WE'LL SWING NORTH AFTER LUNCH.
MIGHT BE ABLE TO LAND A GIG THERE.
WE COULD ALWAYS SEE IF THOSE MINERS NEED ANY HELP.
LOOKS LIKE FUN.


WHAT ARE YOU, NUTS? D'YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW TOUGH MINING IS?
BESIDES, EVEN FROM HERE I CAN SEE THAT OPERATION HAS A LOAD OF PROBLEMS.
THE SUPPORTS ON THE ENTRANCE ARE BUCKLING...
...THAT CRANE LOOKS LIKE IT HASN'T SEEN MAINTENANCE SINCE FOREVER...
...AND THOSE SHIPPING CRATES ARE BARELY HOLDING TOGETHER.
THEY DIG UP THE PRECIOUS METALS, BUT NONE OF THE WEALTH IS BEING PUT BACK INTO THE OPERATION.
MESSAGING'S LOUD AND CLEAR--THIS IS A HARD AND THANKLESS JOB.

YEAH, BUT YOU GET TO DRIVE THOSE NEAT LITTLE CARS AND WEAR HARD HATS.
OKAY, THAT PART IS FUN.
oh, cake, YOU ARE GONE FROM THIS WORLD TOO SOON.
LEMME STRETCH MY WINGS AND WE CAN--
THBOOM!!


A CAVE-IN?!
SOUNDED MORE LIKE AN EXPLOSION!
AND I DIDN'T SPOT ANY BLASTING EQUIPMENT IN THEIR SETUP!
LEAVE THE FEE NEGOTIATIONS TO ME THIS TIME, K?
PRIORITIES, FLEET! LET'S JUST FOCUS ON HELPING THOSE MINERS!

C'MON, ELMER! WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE BEFORE THE MINE FALLS IN!
cuh- CAN'T!
PINNED--!
KH!
?
KRRRKRGRRR
FFFFFFFPN!
NUH!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

THIS WAY TO SAFETY, FELLAS.
AND MAYBE YOU CAN GIVE US A CLUE AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.
I DUNNO, MA'AM! BUT THERE ARE TWO MORE INSIDE!
GOOD TO KNOW. YOU HEAR THAT, BOULDER?
GOTCHA. JUST NEED TO FIGURE OUT GETTING RID OF THIS ROCK WITHOUT HURTING ANYONE.
NHrRGH-RNGg
ON IT AND ON IT.
ALL CLEAR OVER HERE, PAL!
NOW PITCH THAT THING BEFORE YOU HERNIATE SOMETHING!
NHrrghARGRRgh

NUWAH!
AAAND RIGHT ON TARGET!
THMB!
YEESH, WATCH YOUR STEP. FLOOR'S PRETTY UNEVEN IN HERE.
Y'THINK THESE GUYS EVER HEARD OF A TAMPER?
I THINK THOSE SHARP, CRITICAL EYES OF YOURS WOULD BE BETTER USED IN FINDING THE MINERS.

PSH! FLEET'S PLAYBOOK, PAGE TWELVE: "NEVER STOP SCANNING FOR PROBLEMS, EVEN WHEN ON A RESCUE MISSION."
AND VOILA!
Koff Koff
uhnh...
TRY NOT TO WALK. JUST HOLD ON TO M AND WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
uh, BOULDER...
th-thank you...
BOULDER...!
HEADS UP, BOULDER!
WHAT?
ZCHOWCHOWKK
KRCM
Uh--!

BOULDER! YOU OKAY, PAL?
nuh h h...
GOT AN EXTRA COPY OF THAT PLAYBOOK?
DONK!
OW!
I SURE HOPE SO, 'CAUSE YOU JUST RAN INTO THE VARSITY TEAM.
THIS MINE AN' ALL ITS TASTY METALS ARE NOW OFF LIMITS...
...AN' I DOUBLE DARE YOU T'SAY IT AIN'T SO.

hnh. MINERAL FOLK.
OKAY, I'LL GO IN FROM ABOVE AN' YOU--
=akhem=
excuse me? -aha- RUBE, MAY I SEE YOU FOR A MOMENT?
WUT--
SORRY, THIS'LL ONLY TAKE A SEC.
WHAT DID WE TALK ABOUT, HUH? WHAT?!
WE WERE ALL SUPPOSED TO MAKE THE BIG APPEARANCE TOGETHER!
?
ugh, here we go...

NO, HERE YOU GO. AGAIN. YOU DIDN'T EVEN MENTION THE GROUP --JUST JUMPED OUT THERE LIKE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WORTH NOTICING.
i said varsity team, jeez
PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING. IF WE'RE GOING TO SUCCEED AT THIS WE HAVE TO COME OFF AS
I KNOW "WE GOTTA COME OFF AS ONE BIG FEARSOME GANG."
OKAY, BUT DOESN'T A BIG PART OF BEING FEARSOME INVOLVE BEATING PEOPLE UP?
SO YOU WOULD RATHER BE A THUG THAN A LEGEND, I GUESS?
FINE, HAVE YOUR LITTLE SHOW.
IT'S OUR SHOW, RUBE.
AND YOU DON'T GET A SECOND SHOT AT AN OPENING ACT.

YEAH, NO FOOLIN'?
?
um, YOU COMIN' OUT?
OR ARE WE GOIN' IN?
oh, YOU'LL BE GOING **DOWN**, BECAUSE YOU JUST CROSSED PATHS WITH THE FOUR MOST DANGEROUS--
--WHERE ARE THE OTHER TWO?
guh

ROCKSANNE! AGNES!
o mahn thiths's schzo guwd
HEY, SAPPH-FIRE! LOOK! THEY DUG UP SOME MOLYBDENUM! LOOK!
SOUNDS DELICIOUS, AND I'M HUNGRY TOO, BUT WE'RE--
YOU KNOW...
...WE HAVEN'T HAD SLOW-ROASTED MOLYBDENUM IN AGES. I'M THINKING WITH AN IRON GLAZE?
OOO! RUSTIC! BUT WE NEED OUR GREENS. MAYBE COPPER?
QUIT TRADING RECIPES AND GET YOUR BUTTS OVER HERE!

Keep it together sapph you can save this
=ack-hem=
AS I WAS SAYING--
--YOU'RE GOING DOWN!
'CAUSE YOU JUST CROSSED PATHS WITH THE FOUR MOST DANGEROUS BANDITS ON THE PLANET--
--THE GEM GIRLS!
YEAH!

"gem girls"...? really?
TWO SYLLABLES, ALLITERATION, ROLLS OFF THE TONGUE ANDWE CANDISCUSS THISLATER!

YEAH? WELL, YOU JUST CROSSED PATHS WITH NONE OTHER THAN
BOULDER AND FLEET
ADVENTURERS FOR HIRE
HA!

THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN SOMETHING TO US?
ARE YOU FAMOUS?

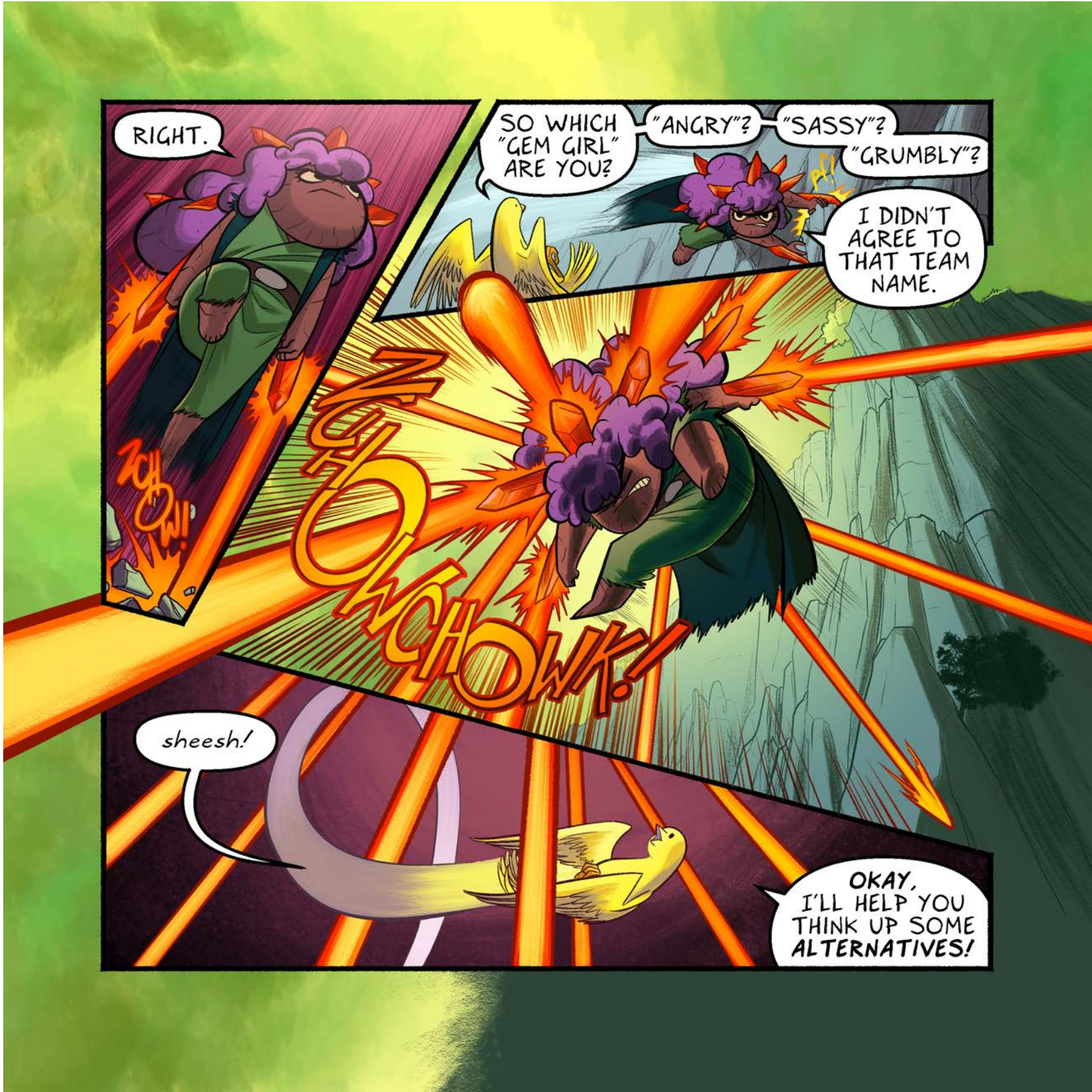
NRNN. LET'S JUST GET THIS OVER WITH...
EASY, PAL.
LET ME TRY SOMETHING.

WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR A FIGHT.
BUT IF YOU INSIST ON FORCING US INTO ONE, AT LEAST LET US FIRST GET THESE MINERS TO SAFETY.
SOME OF THEM NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION, AND I'D RATHER NOT HAVE HARM COME TO ANY OTHERS.
IT'S SO CUTE HOW YOU THINK THEY'LL GO FOR THAT.
ALWAYS WORTH A SHOT, FLEET.
SOUNDS REASONABLE. ALL WE REALLY WANT IS THE METAL, YOU KNOW?
NRRRRRRR
AND WHILE THEY GET THE LIZARDS OUTTA HERE WE BREAK FOR LUNCH!
WIN/WIN!

GIRLS! FOCUS! YOU ALL MADE A COMMITMENT, RIGHT?!
SO SEE IT THROUGH, AND--
--ATTACK!
THRDDD

STAY HERE AND KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.
LEMME GET THE HEAT OFFA YOU.
Chokka
Chokka Chikkity
YO!
CABBAGE HEAD!
FWOOOO
I GOT A SPEEDY DELIVERY FOR YOUR FACE!
na-hah!
ERRT!
TWO FOR FLINCHING, YA TURD.
wuh
HONK HONK
RAAAAA
HA!
BIG EGOS MAKE EASY TARGETS!

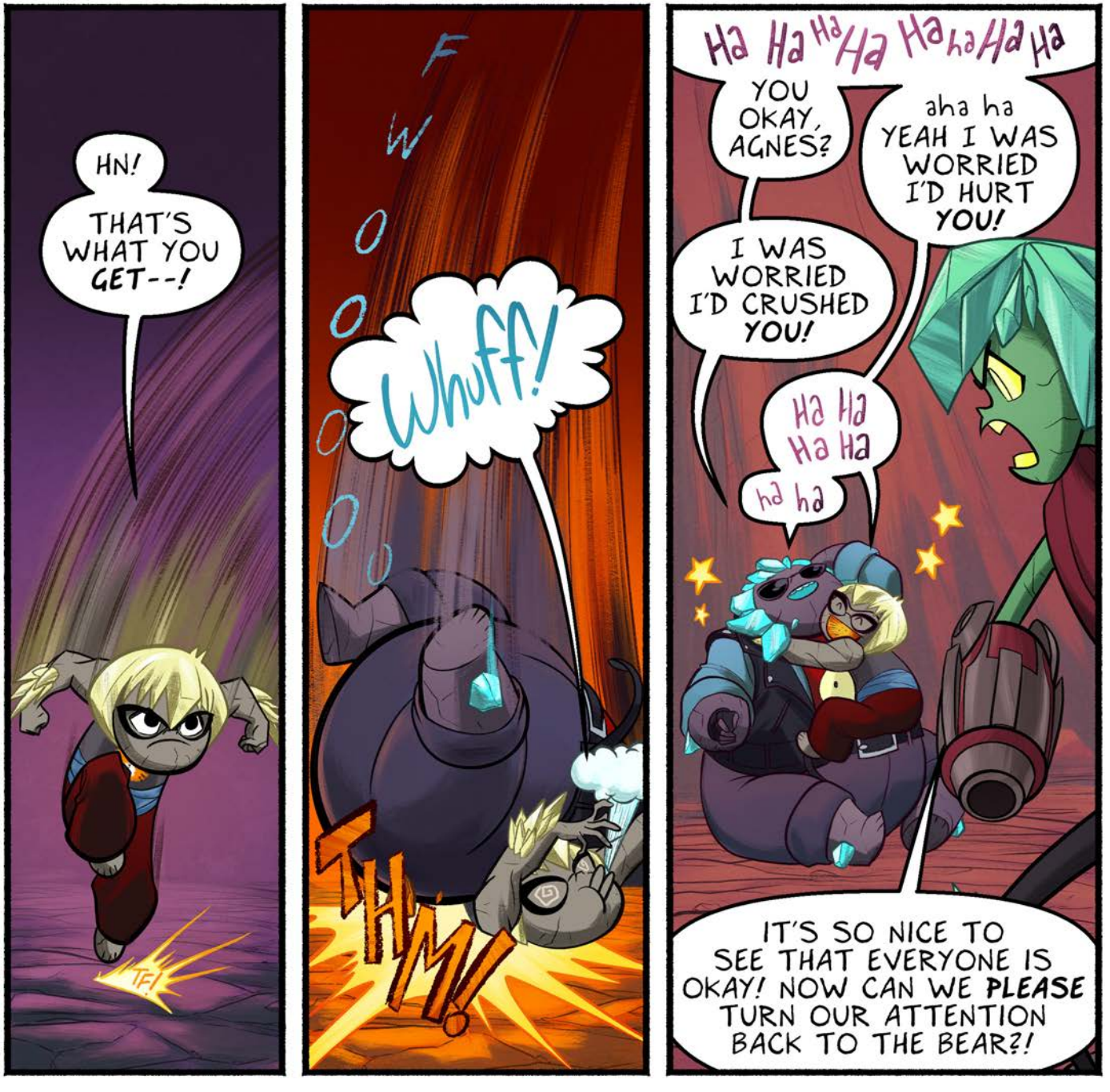
aw, COME ON, BIG SHOT. I'M BRIGHT YELLOW, HOW HARD CAN IT BE TO GET ME?
THRDDRD DDDRRD DR DDD D DRDD
NRRGH! SHUT UP!
OKAY, BOULDER. SHE'S GOOD AND RILED.
LET'S PUT A LID ON THIS!
FIRST IMPRESSIONS, AMIRITE?
MAYBE SHE'S TRYING TO LOOK BAD. Y'KNOW, TO GET THEM COCKY?
REALLY? WOW, SHE MAKES IT LOOK SO EASY!
THIS'LL BE A HECKUVA LOT EASIER IF YOU STOP WITH THE CHUMMY CHIT-CHAT AND GET TO WORK!
RUBE, TAKE THE LADY BIRD. I'M ABOUT TO HAVE BEAR PROBLEMS!


RIGHT.
ZCH OW!
SO WHICH "GEM GIRL" ARE YOU?
"ANGRY"?
"SASSY"?
"GRUMBLY"?
PF!
I DIDN'T AGREE TO THAT TEAM NAME.
ZCHOWK!
sheesh!
OKAY, I'LL HELP YOU THINK UP SOME ALTERNATIVES!

ROCKSANNE, WE NEED A BEAR FLATTENED, LIKE, RIGHT NOW!
YOU GOT IT, SAPPH.
RUBE HAS A POINT, THOUGH--
--WE NEVER DID ALL AGREE ON A TEAM NAME.
WHAT ABOUT "GENIAL GEMS?" THAT ONE IS ACTUALLY AL-LITERATIVE AND
doOoff!
BHM!
RUMMBBBBBBD
KAF!
THUMM

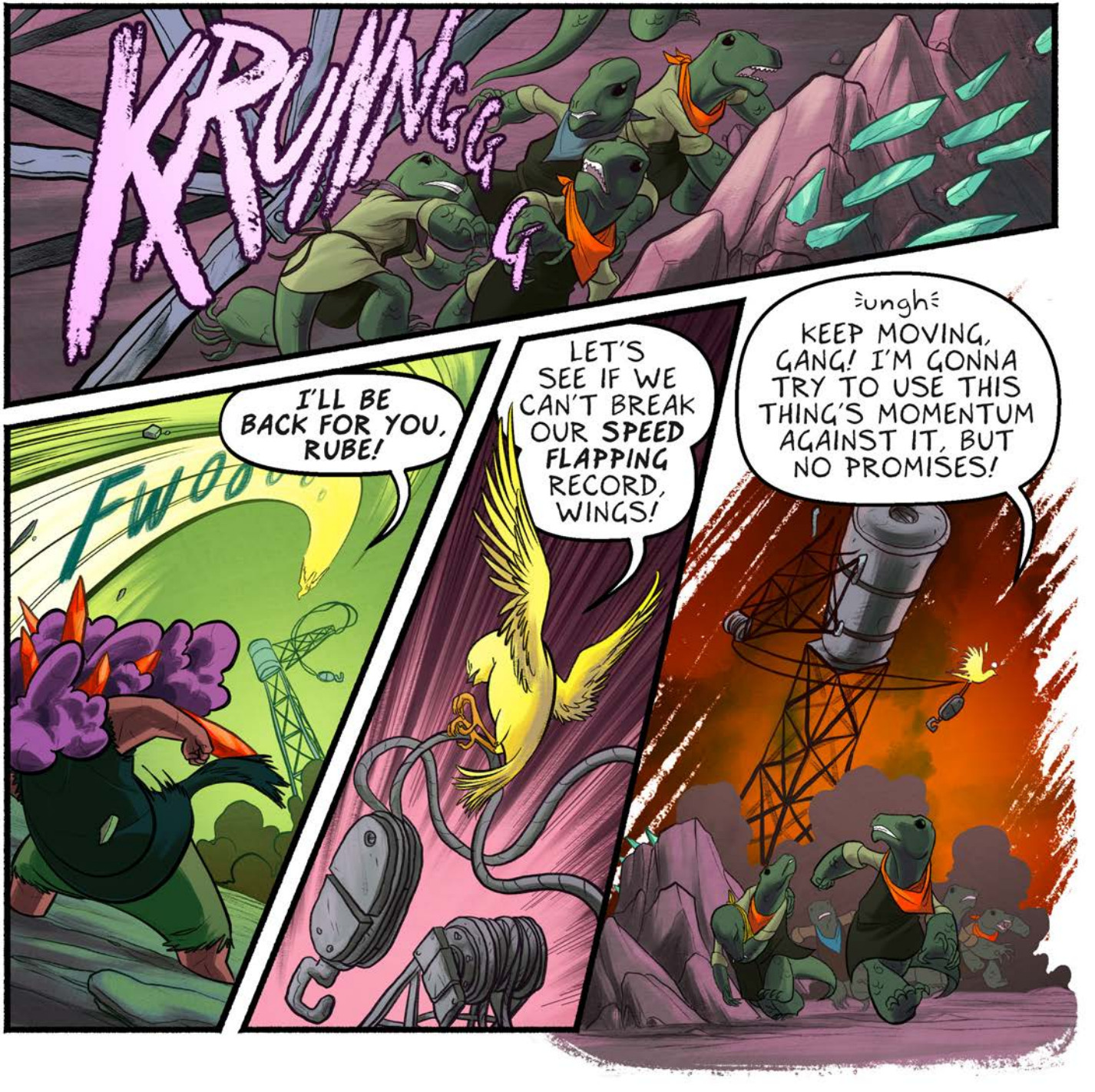
I VOTE FOR MINERAL MAULERS!
NICE ONE. I KINDA LIKE ROCK TUMBLERS. HAS A--
KRACK
SOMEONE NEEDS A LESSON IN PERSONAL SPACE ETIQUETTE.
NF!
FFFFFFFN!
Wodh wodh wodh
HEY, YOU INTERRUPTED ROCKSANNE. TALK ABOUT ETIQUETTE!
SHUNG!
SHUNG!
TIME FOR ME TO DIG SOME DIRT--
--'CAUSE I DON'T DIG RUDE DUDES!
PM!
HOLD TIGHT, ROCKSANNE!
BRRRRRRRRMMBRRRRRR

OKAY, FUN IS FUN, BUT YOU CAN LET ME DOWN, NOW.
HAPPY TO OBLIGE. FIRST LET'S FIND A PLACE TO PUT YOU WHERE YOU CAN'T CAUSE SO MUCH TROUBLE--
HANDS OFF MY BUDDY, BEAR!
TRRRMMMBKRKRKMMMMB
BMB!


HN!
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET--!
TF!
F
W
O
O
O
O
O
Whuff!
THM!
Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha ha Ha Ha
YOU OKAY, AGNES?
aha ha YEAH I WAS WORRIED I'D HURT YOU!
I WAS WORRIED I'D CRUSHED YOU!
Ha Ha Ha Ha
ha ha
IT'S SO NICE TO SEE THAT EVERYONE IS OKAY! NOW CAN WE PLEASE TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE BEAR?!

...FINE, BUT YOU DON'T GET TO COMPLAIN WHEN RUBE AND I ARE THE ONLY ONES ON THE WANTED POSTERS.
TM!
TM!
TM!
TM!
uhn... I THINK THEY DID THEIR SHARE.
DON'T HONOR MEDIOCRITY!
THRBDDD!
IT'S GREAT TO DO YOUR BEST--
CHOK CHOK
Chokkd
chok
chok
--PROVIDED THAT IT'S ON THE RIGHT THINGS.
Chok
K K K K K
LIKE MINE CART CONSTRUCTION.
WHEW!

...“THE PRECIOUS PREDATORS”?
NO.
chowk
chowk
“SPITEFUL SPARKLIES”!
NO.
LOOK, A LITTLE FEEDBACK WOULD GO A LONG WAY, HERE.
SHFF
HOW ’BOUT--
--“RUBE AND THE RECKLESS ENDANGER-MENTS”?
ZCHOWCHOWK!
KRAAAAANNGG


KRUUNGGG
I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU, RUBE!
FWOOO
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T BREAK OUR SPEED FLAPPING RECORD, WINGS!
=ungh=
KEEP MOVING, GANG! I'M GONNA TRY TO USE THIS THING'S MOMENTUM AGAINST IT, BUT NO PROMISES!

Nuh huh huu u u
huh!
Krunng g g
oh, WHO AM I KIDDING? BOULDER'S GOT THE MUSCLES BETWEEN US--
--oh-ho...
...BUT I GOT THE SPEED!
CHUKK!
KRUNNGG
TNG!
GRMMBRRB B B B B B

KRMBBMBTHMMMM
whew! nice job, wings.
HOW ARE WE ALL DOING OVER HERE?
WE'RE OKAY, MA'AM. THANKS TO YOU!
MS. BIRD-- LOOK OUT!
?
SERIOUSLY?
ZCHOWCHOW!
CHOW!
KRM
KRM
KRM
HEY, GENIUS, IF YOU'RE GONNA FIGHT DIRTY, YOU COULD AT LEAST AIM STRAIGHT!

YUP, I JUST PLAIN STINK AT THIS.
ZOHONCHOW
THOOM!
THOOM
THOOM
THOOM
NOT AT ALL LIKE I WAS GETTING YOU NEAR THE GORGE WALL SO I COULD DO THIS--!
KRRUMMMGHCHKCH K
aw, turds.
MS. BIRD...?
Pf--

LET'S GET HER OUT OF THERE.
KEEP AWAY FROM HER, YO
oooh, LOOKIT ME SHAKING.

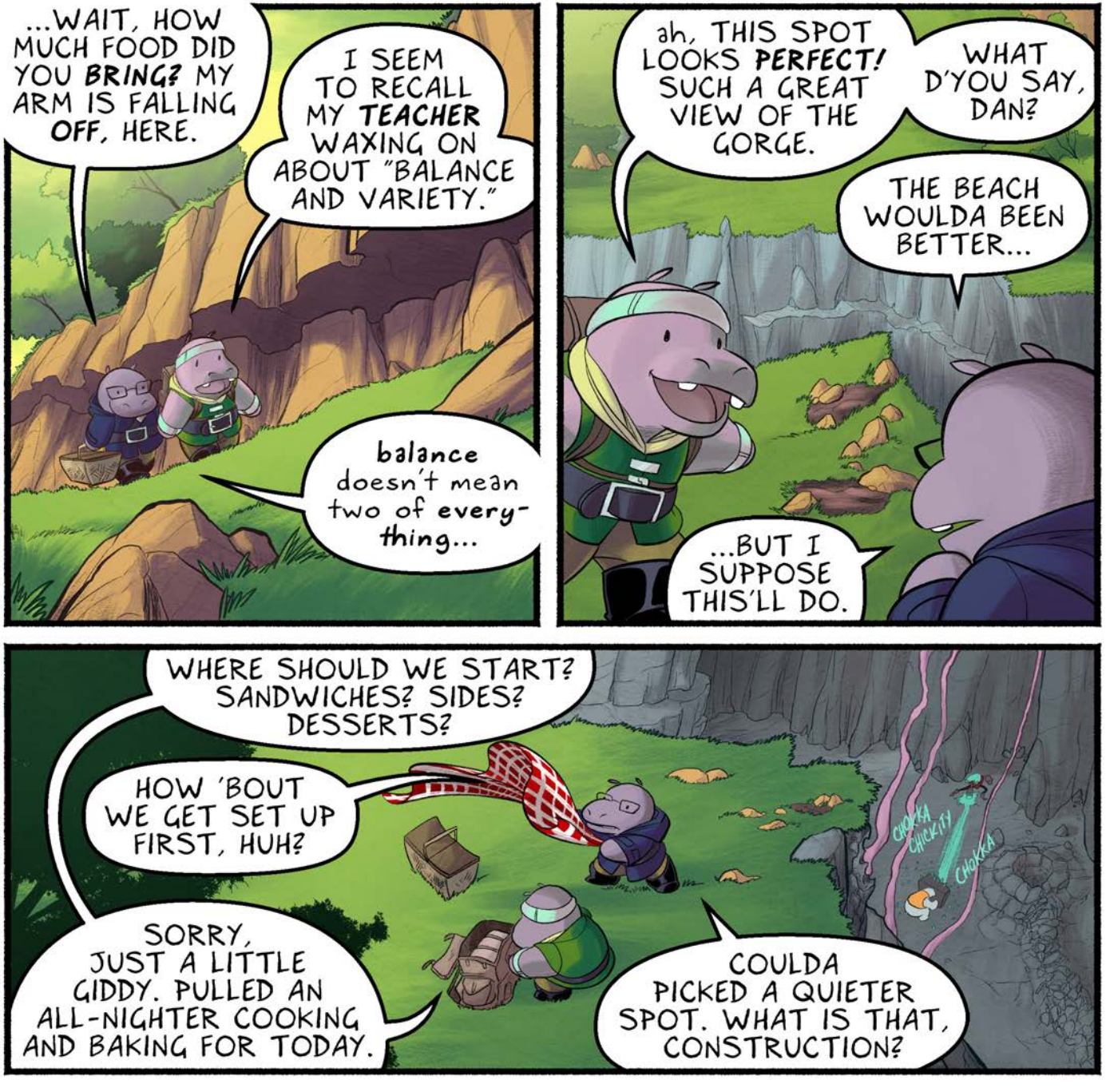
RELAX, SCREAMZILLA. I JUST WANNA MAKE SURE SHE'S DOWN FOR THE COUNT.
PTH!
YUP.

SHE WAS ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT US...
WOW, DON'T CARE. GOT METAL TO EAT.
LATER, GATOR.

T'HECK WITH THIS! SEE TO MS. BIRD.
WAIT, WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MARISA?
I'M DONE LETTING THESE MINERAL BANDITS FRIGHTEN US!

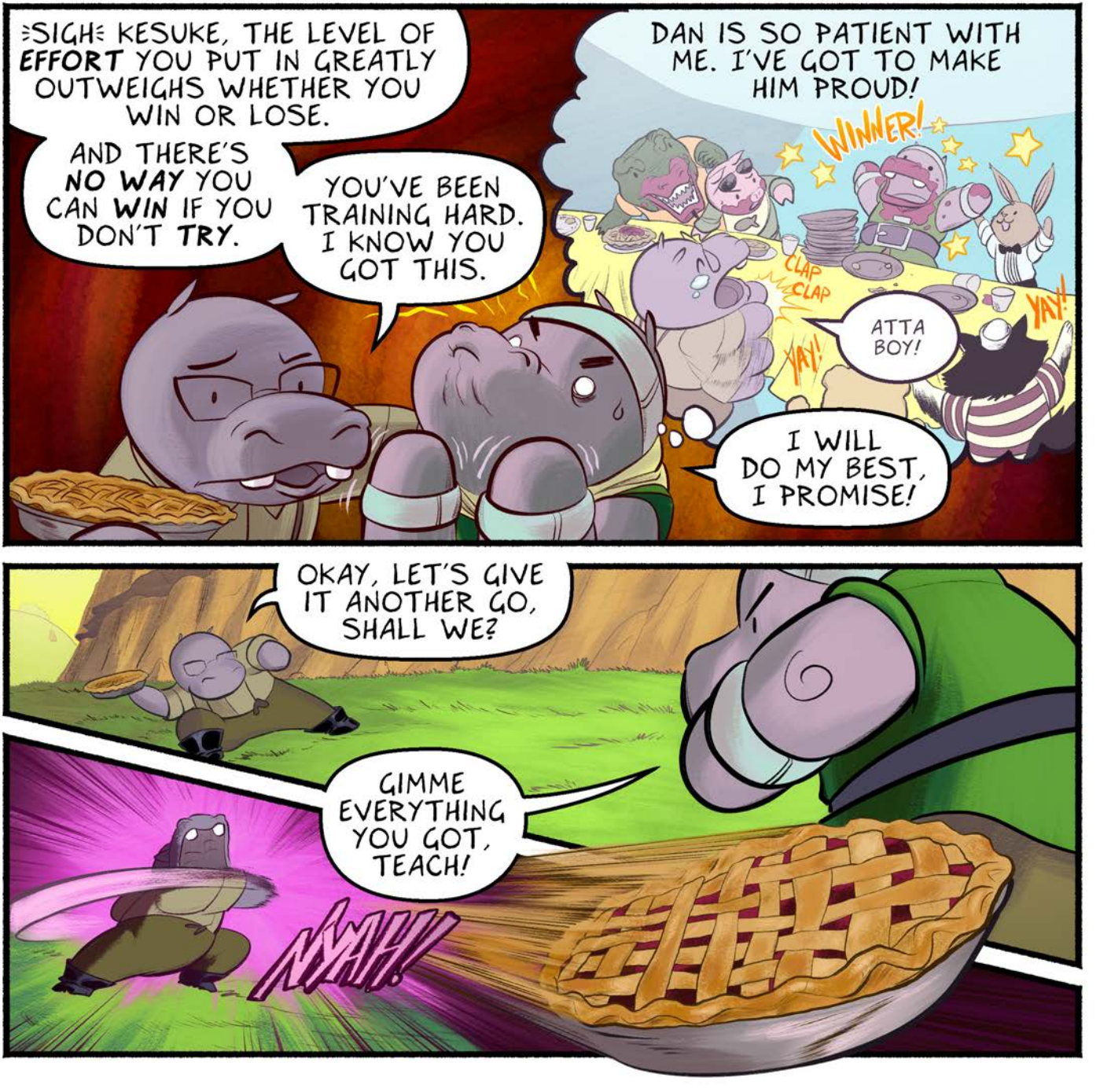
brum!
?
HEY, GEM GIRL, WE'RE NOT FINISHED, HERE!
BRUM!
I NEVER AGREED TO
ZIOW
ZIOW
THAT NAME!
PTANG
PTANG

THOOM!
THOOM
THIM
THOOM!
K
KR
RMBBBL K
WUT
brum.
YOU ALRIGHT IN THERE?
GET ME OUTTA HERE!
WOW, DON'T CARE. GOT FRIENDS TO HELP.
LATER, TATER.

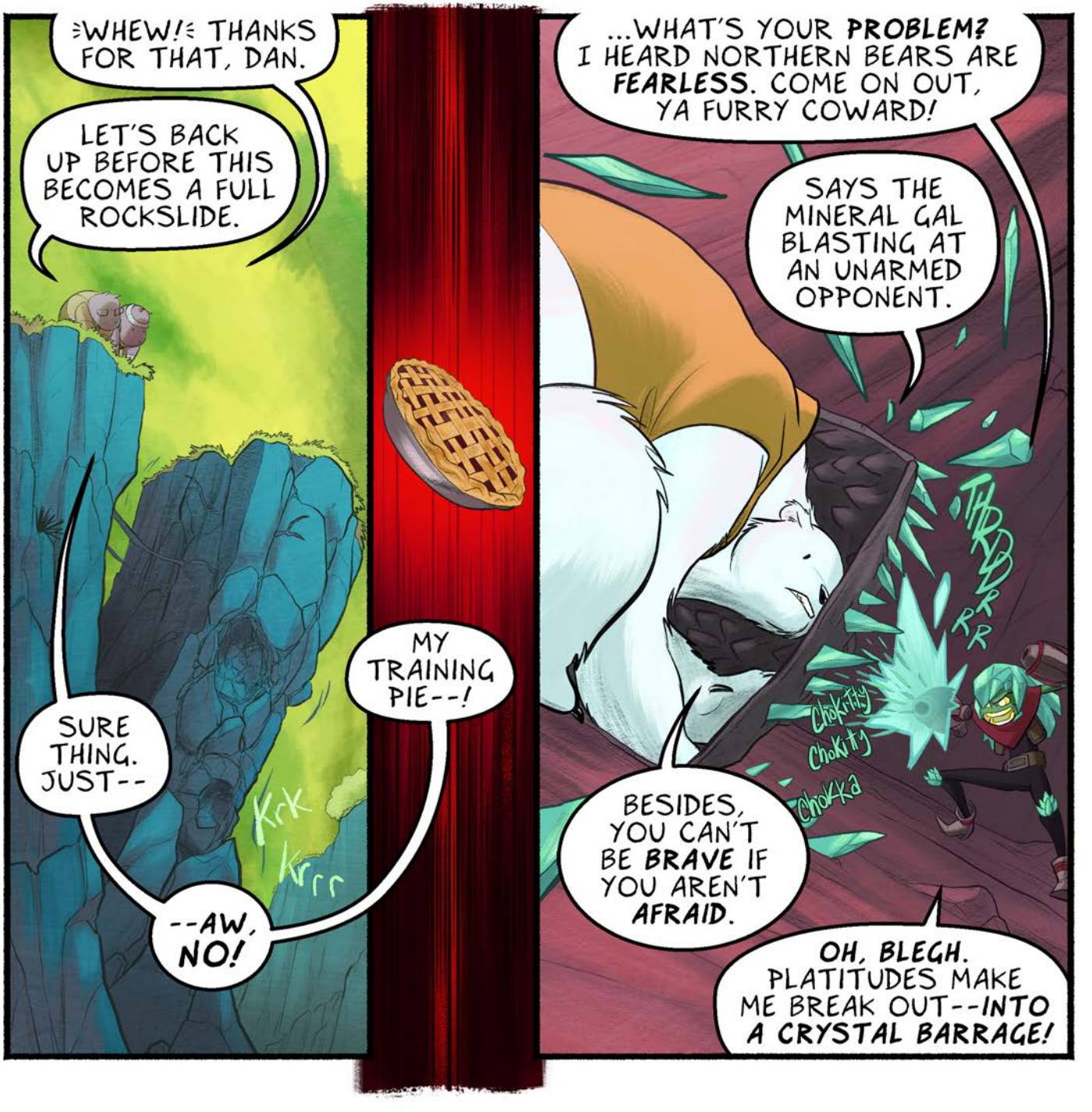

...WAIT, HOW MUCH FOOD DID YOU BRING? MY ARM IS FALLING OFF, HERE.
I SEEM TO RECALL MY TEACHER WAXING ON ABOUT "BALANCE AND VARIETY."
balance doesn't mean two of everything...
ah, THIS SPOT LOOKS PERFECT! SUCH A GREAT VIEW OF THE GORGE.
WHAT D'YOU SAY, DAN?
THE BEACH WOULDA BEEN BETTER...
...BUT I SUPPOSE THIS'LL DO.
WHERE SHOULD WE START? SANDWICHES? SIDES? DESSERTS?
HOW 'BOUT WE GET SET UP FIRST, HUH?
SORRY, JUST A LITTLE GIDDY. PULLED AN ALL-NIGHTER COOKING AND BAKING FOR TODAY.
COULDA PICKED A QUIETER SPOT. WHAT IS THAT, CONSTRUCTION?
CHOKKA CHICKITY CHOKKA

YOU GOT ENOUGH HERE FOR SEVEN IRON MASTER EATING CHEF TOURNAMENTS, KESUKE.
SURE HOPE SO.
OKAY, I THINK I'M--
BNT!
buh
YOU SAID WAIT UNTIL WE'RE SET UP!
EATERS ARE ALWAYS READY WHEN TRAINING!
CORN ON THE COB
BUS STOP GOBBLE!
FP!
Chottita Chottita
TOFU DOGS
CHESTNUT DUNK AND GULP!
glunk!
H2O

LATTICE CRUST PIE!
uh
IT'S THE EAT BE MERRY CRISS CROSS! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
I--I NEVER COULD BEAT THE LATTICE CRUST PIE, DAN.
YOU BAKED IT, DIDN'T YOU?
THAT'S HALFWAY TO EATING IT.
ah...BUT SO MANY CHAMPION EATING CHEFS'LL BE THERE...
...SUPPOSING I FAIL IN FRONT OF ALL OF THEM...

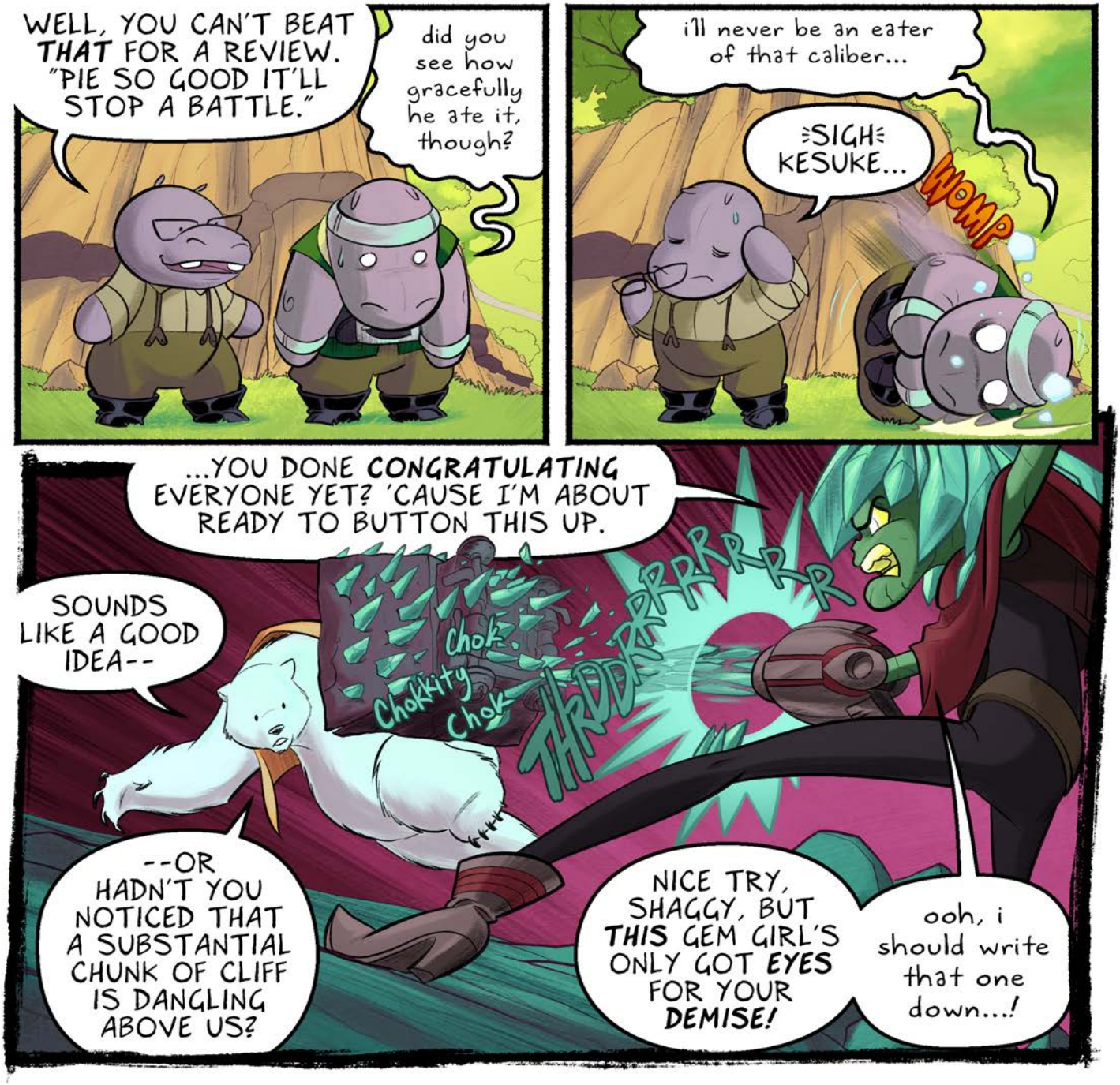

SIGH KESUKE, THE LEVEL OF EFFORT YOU PUT IN GREATLY OUTWEIGHS WHETHER YOU WIN OR LOSE.
AND THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN WIN IF YOU DON'T TRY.
YOU'VE BEEN TRAINING HARD. I KNOW YOU GOT THIS.
DAN IS SO PATIENT WITH ME. I'VE GOT TO MAKE HIM PROUD!
WINNER!
CLAP CLAP
YAY!
YAY!
ATTA BOY!
I WILL DO MY BEST, I PROMISE!
OKAY, LET'S GIVE IT ANOTHER GO, SHALL WE?
GIMME EVERYTHING YOU GOT, TEACH!
NYAH!

nuf!
Pf!
AND NOW, LATTICE CRUST PIE--MEET THE BELLY OF YOUR MAKER!
wha--?
KRM
MBBB


WHEW! THANKS FOR THAT, DAN.
LET'S BACK UP BEFORE THIS BECOMES A FULL ROCKSLIDE.
SURE THING. JUST--
--AW, NO!
MY TRAINING PIE--!
Krk Krrr
...WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? I HEARD NORTHERN BEARS ARE FEARLESS. COME ON OUT, YA FURRY COWARD!
SAYS THE MINERAL GAL BLASTING AT AN UNARMED OPPONENT.
BESIDES, YOU CAN'T BE BRAVE IF YOU AREN'T AFRAID.
OH, BLEGH. PLATITUDES MAKE ME BREAK OUT--INTO A CRYSTAL BARRAGE!
THRRRRR
Chokitty Chokitty Chokka

I THINK I SEE A TREATMENT FOR YOUR AFFLICTION, SAPPH-FIRE.
Chokkitty
Chokkg
THRRRDRRRR
YEAH? WELL, MY PRIMARY PRE-SCRIBED A DAILY SMACKDOWN ON LAME BEARS WHO PLAY ARMCHAIR PHARMACI--
SPLRK!
--?

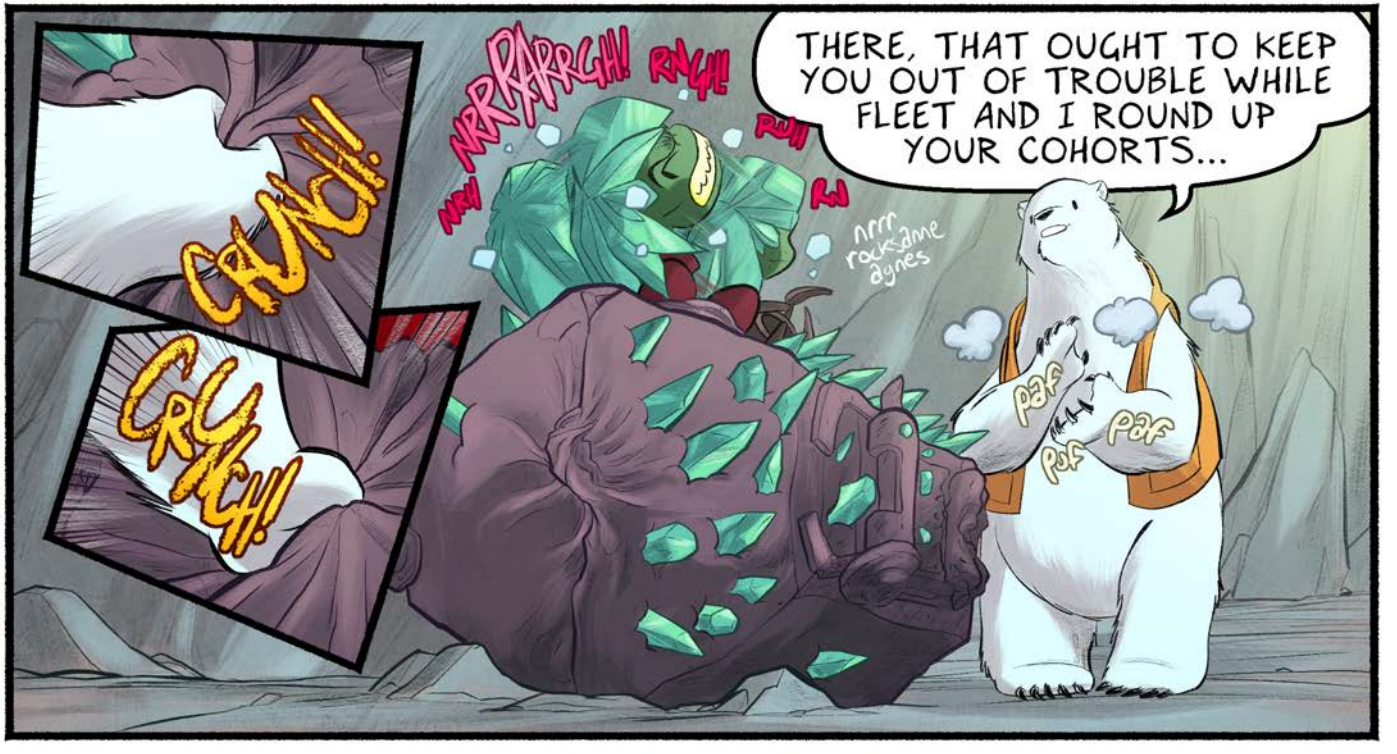
sorry!
Slorp glumph!
ew. THE SQUISHY STUFF YOU CREATURES EAT, AND THE **NOISES** YOU MAKE WHEN YOU EAT IT--
--SO GROSS.
WOW, THAT WAS GREAT!
YOU MUST HAVE WORKED HARD TO BECOME SUCH A TERRIFIC BAKER. THANKS FOR THE PIE!


WELL, YOU CAN'T BEAT THAT FOR A REVIEW. "PIE SO GOOD IT'LL STOP A BATTLE."
did you see how gracefully he ate it, though?
i'll never be an eater of that caliber...
SIGH KESUKE...
WOMP
...YOU DONE CONGRATULATING EVERYONE YET? 'CAUSE I'M ABOUT READY TO BUTTON THIS UP.
SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA--
Chok
Chokkity
Chok
THRDDRRRRRRRRR
--OR HADN'T YOU NOTICED THAT A SUBSTANTIAL CHUNK OF CLIFF IS DANGLING ABOVE US?
NICE TRY, SHAGGY, BUT THIS GEM GIRL'S ONLY GOT EYES FOR YOUR DEMISE!
ooh, i should write that one down...!

THAT'S RIGHT, BIG GUY --RUN ON HOME!
AND BE SURE TO TELL 'EM SAPPH-FIRE AND THE GEM GIRLS SENT YOU!
SHF!
HA!
Chokka Chokka Chikkity!
fwh fwh
KRNG
THINK I'LL STICK AROUND FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER...

UH, AGNES! ROCKS-ANNE--!
RTANG!
ptang!
I DON'T MEAN TO TROUBLE YOU, BUT I COULD USE A BIT OF TEAMWORK OVER HERE!
THRDDR
SORRY, SAPPH-FIRE--
nrgh!
Ptng
tng
tng
--BUT YOU JUST GOT FOULED OUT--
nuf!
Chokka
Chikkity
Chokka
fwp
fwp
fwp
fwp
--ON ACCOUNT OF PLAYING UN-NECESSARILY ROUGH!

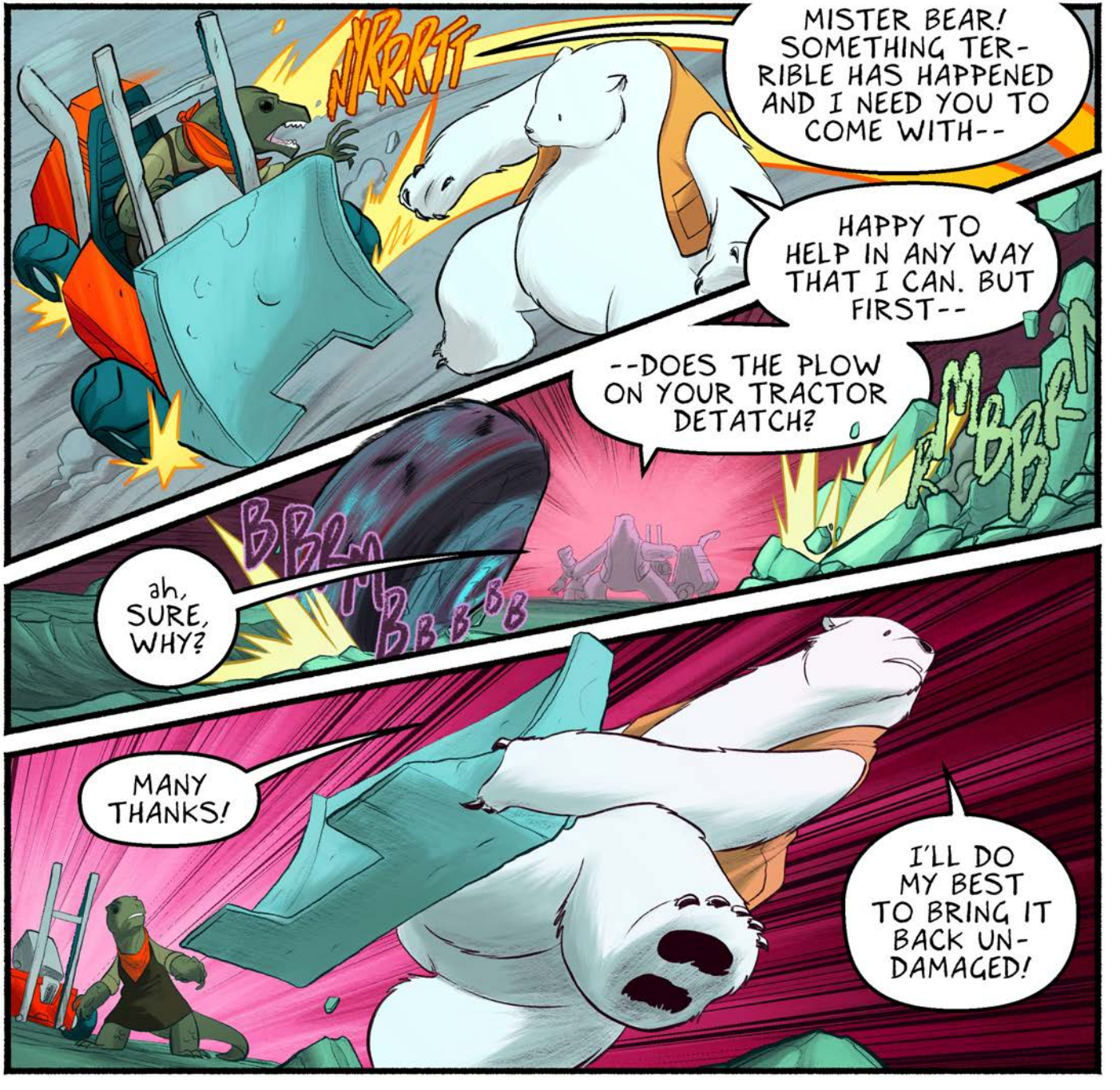
AND YOUR TEAM WILL HAVE TO GET BY--
--WHILE YOU SPEND FOUR MINUTES--
fwp
fwp
fwp
crack
wha--
KRUNG!
--IN THE PENALTY BOX!


THERE, THAT OUGHT TO KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE WHILE FLEET AND I ROUND UP YOUR COHORTS...
CRUNCH!
CRUNCH!
NRRRARRGH!
RWH!
RWH!
RWH!
nrrr rocksanne agnes
paf
paf
paf

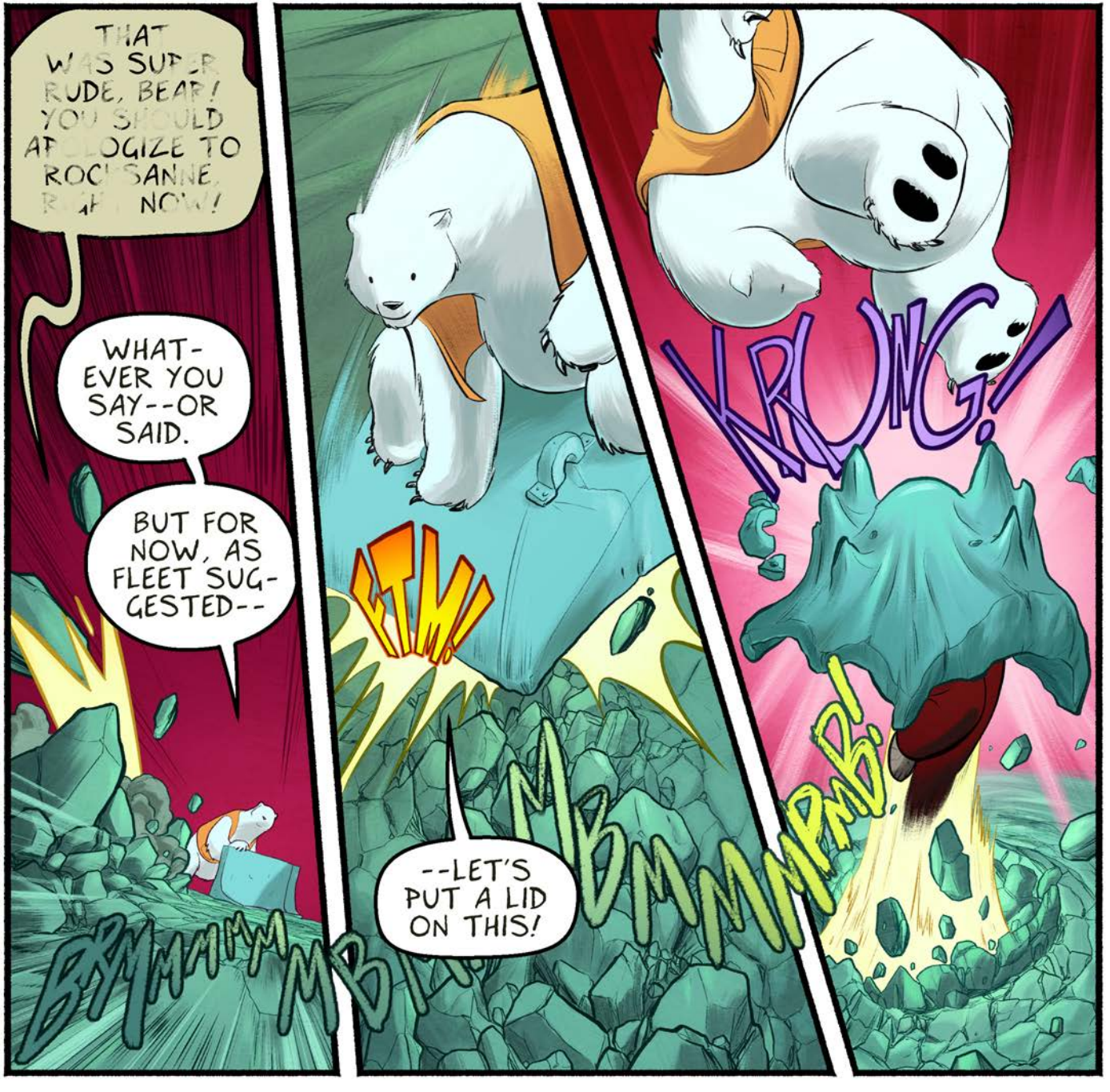
AW, LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE HAVING FUN OVER THERE. SO YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE NOTICED THAT ONE OF YOUR TEAM NEEDS ASSISTANCE!
hom hom
oh wow this tastes so good

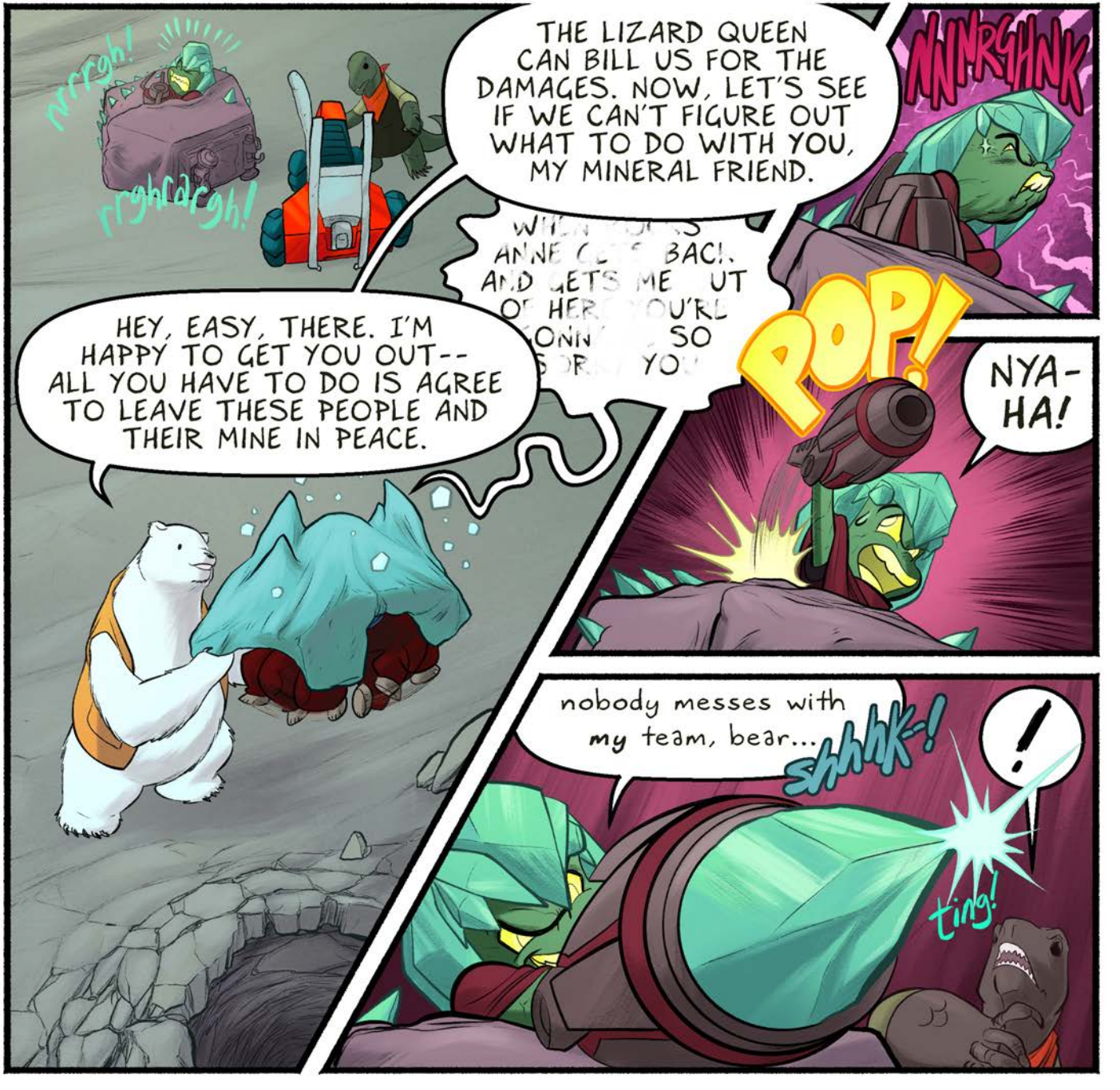
oh ha ha thos righ wer suffose tu helf saff fighduh bear...
whups

ON OUR WAY, SAPPH-FIRE!
i'm just gonna save a few for later--
--right here in my molybdenum pocket!
good plan.
GET OVER HERE!
NOW!!
THAT'S SAPPH'S BUGLE.
I'LL HIT HIM HIGH!
Krm!
Chm Dch Chm
BRUMBBBBBBB
BRMMMM MMBMM
AND I'LL TAKE THE LOW ROAD!


NRRRTT
MISTER BEAR! SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAS HAPPENED AND I NEED YOU TO COME WITH--
HAPPY TO HELP IN ANY WAY THAT I CAN. BUT FIRST--
--DOES THE PLOW ON YOUR TRACTOR DETATCH?
MBBR
BBLU
BBBBB
ah, SURE, WHY?
MANY THANKS!
I'LL DO MY BEST TO BRING IT BACK UNDAMAGED!

FAIR WARNING: KINDA HARD TO STOP ME ONCE I GET ROLLING.
DON'T NEED TO **STOP** YOU WHEN I CAN--
--**DIVERT** YOU!
BRUUUU!
G!
whaaaaa


THAT WAS SUPER RUDE, BEAR! YOU SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO ROCHSANNE, RIGHT NOW!
WHATEVER YOU SAY--OR SAID.
BUT FOR NOW, AS FLEET SUGGESTED--
BRMMMMMB
FTM!
--LET'S PUT A LID ON THIS!
MBMMMMPMB!
KRUNG!


nrrrgh!
rrghrargh!
THE LIZARD QUEEN CAN BILL US FOR THE DAMAGES. NOW, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH YOU, MY MINERAL FRIEND.
NNNRGHNK
HEY, EASY, THERE. I'M HAPPY TO GET YOU OUT-- ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS AGREE TO LEAVE THESE PEOPLE AND THEIR MINE IN PEACE.
POP!
NYA-HA!
nobody messes with my team, bear...
shhhk-!
!
ting!

NOPE!
NOT GONNA HAPPEN, YOU MINERAL PUNK!
wha

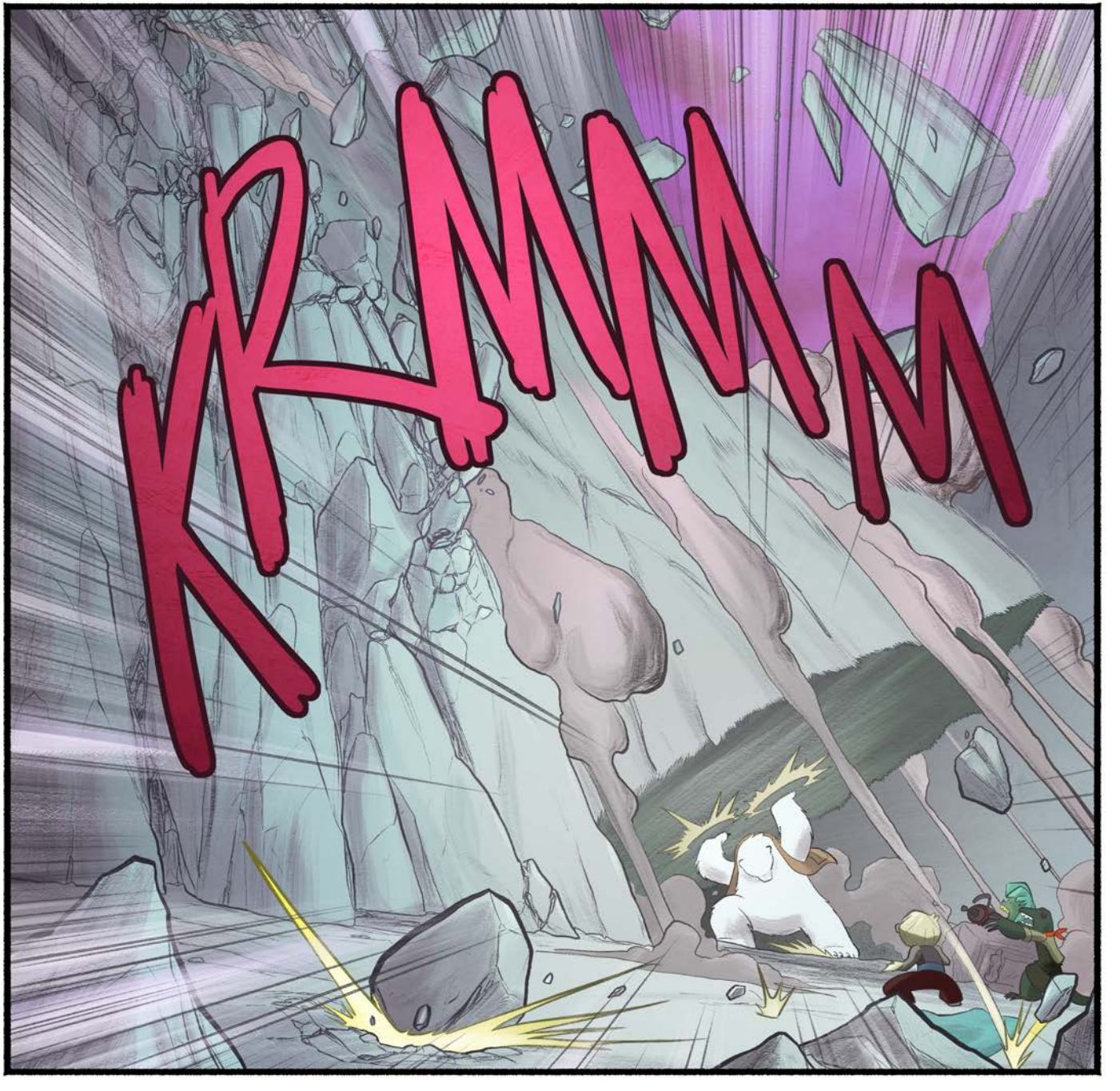
?
Knock it off--nf! ungh!
rgh! lower that camon! gh!

WAIT--!
STOP!
tell you what i'll just chill out here...

WILL YOU--
TH PUM!
--LET GO!

SHHFF
oh, no...
MOVE THOSE LEGS, KESUKE!
huff huffa
CHDMMMMM

KG
KRUMMM
mBAH!
better
WAH--!

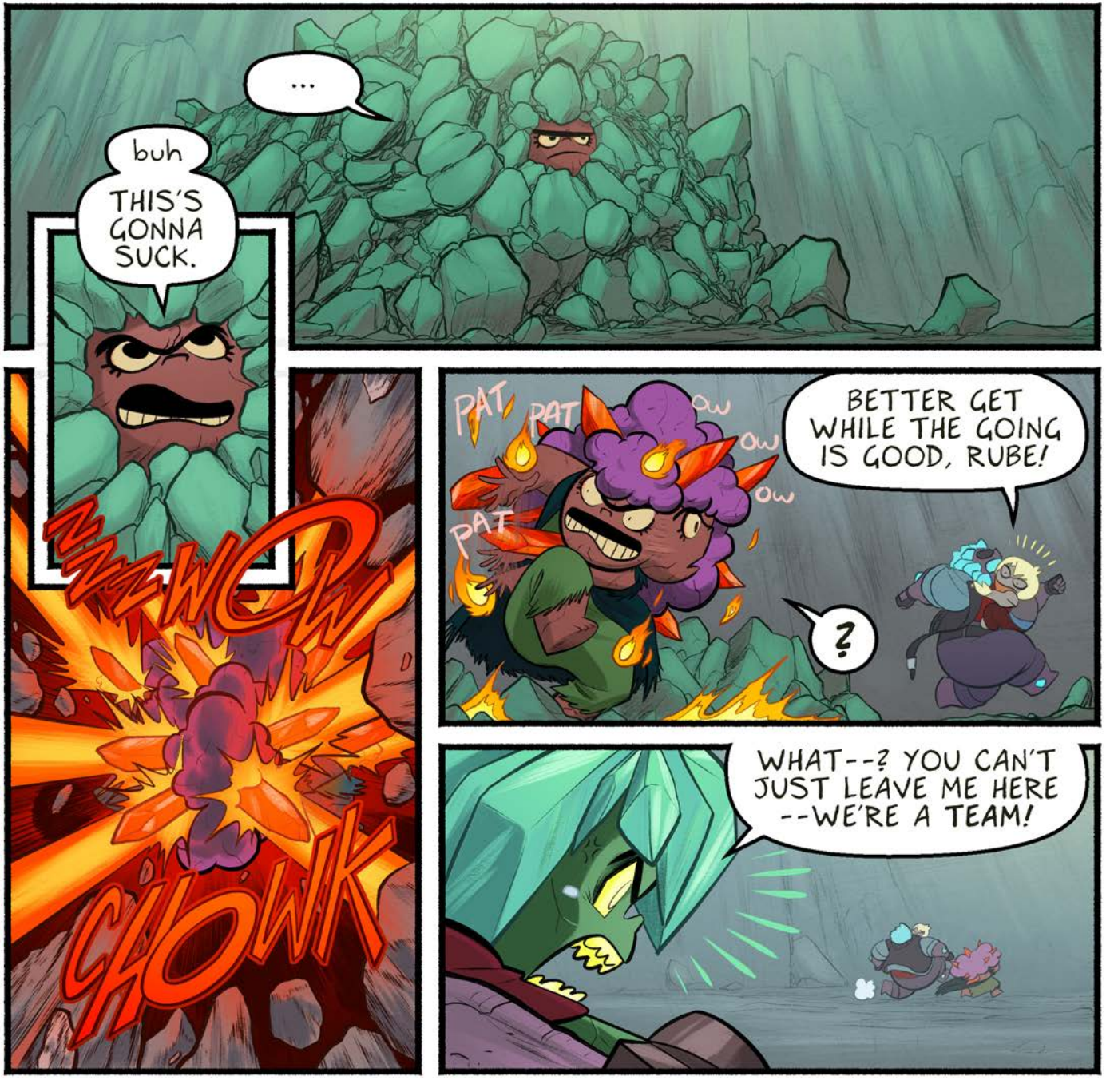

KRAMMM

nuh hrrrrrn
KRR R
ah
ahem.
LIKE A WELL-OILED MACHINE. NOW WE GET YOUR METAL AND BIG FUZZY'S TOO TIED UP TO STOP US.
YOU MORON!
IF MR. BEAR'S STRENGTH FAILS, ALL OF THAT ROCK TORN UP BY THE CLIFF CHUNK COULD RAIN DOWN AND BURY US ALL!
WHAAT NO, NO IT WON'T. IT ISN'T THAT MUCH ROCK.
RIGHT?

ugh...

yeesh.
THAT IS ALL SORTS OF NOT GOOD.

LET'S CLEAR OUTTA HERE, AGNES!
PU MM MBB
GET BACK HERE, YOU TWO!

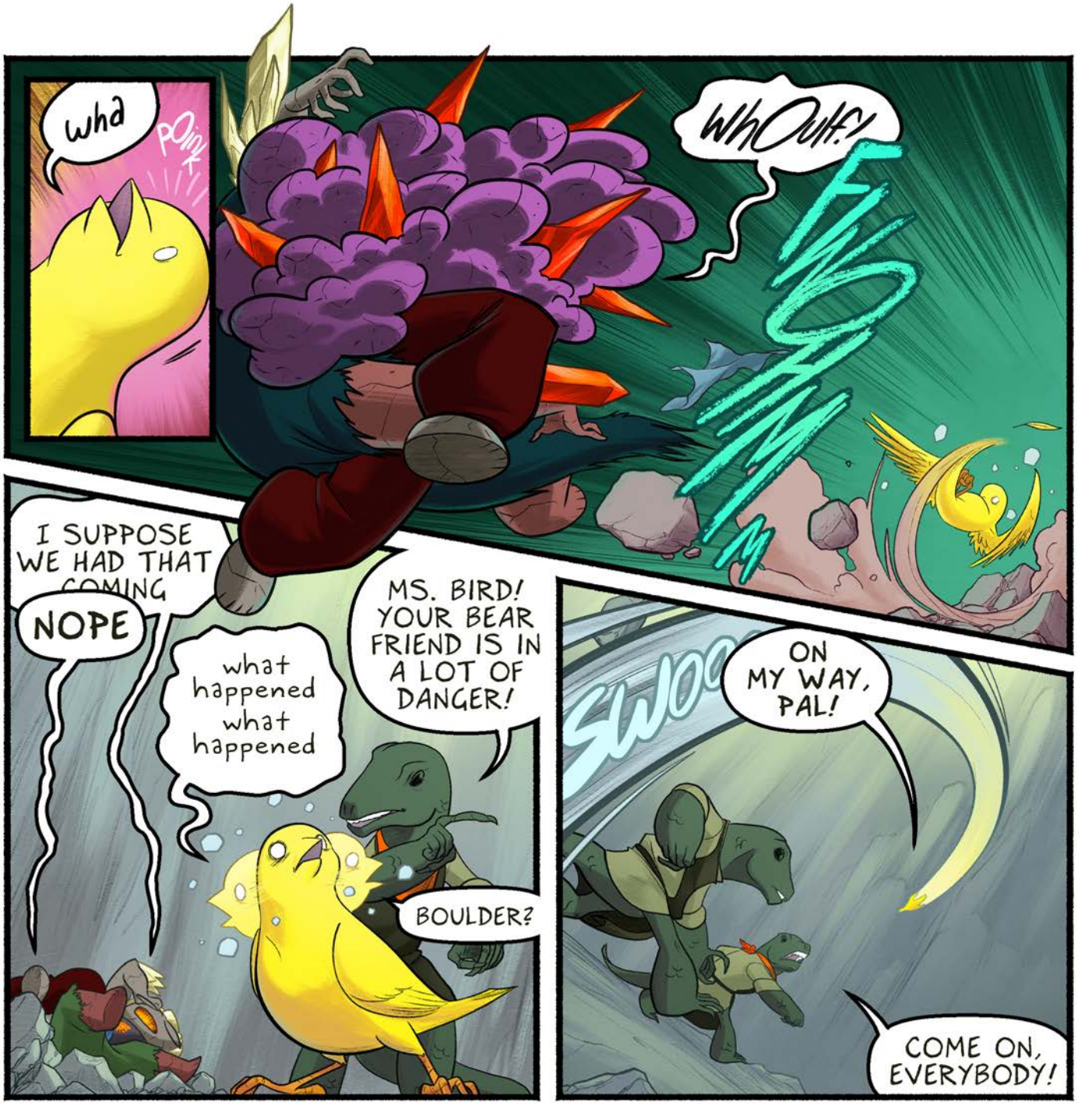

...
buh
THIS'S GONNA SUCK.
ZZZWOW
CLOWK
PAT
PAT
PAT
OW
OW
OW
BETTER GET WHILE THE GOING IS GOOD, RUBE!
?
WHAT--? YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE ME HERE --WE'RE A TEAM!

FAT CHANCE.
WE NEVER AGREED TO US ALL GOIN' DOWN WITH THE SHIP!
WELL I GUESS YOU DIDN'T! LOOKS LIKE I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD ANY SENSE OF SOLEMNITY WHEN PLEDGING MY LOYALTY TO THE GROUP AND ITS MISSION!
SO, GO! WHEN I'M THE MOST FAMOUS BANDIT EVER AND THE MEDIA COMES TO INTERVIEW ME I'LL BE ALL LIKE: "RUBE? WHAT'S A RUBE? SOME KIND OF SANDWICH?" "ROCKSANNE? SOUNDS LIKE A STUPID MUSIC GROUP!"
BUT Y'KNOW WHAT? THEY WON'T EVEN ASK ABOUT YOU, BECAUSE THE ONLY ONES WHO GET REMEMBERED ARE THE ONES WHO DON'T BOLT THE MOMENT THINGS GET A LITTLE TOUGH! THE ONES WHO PUT THEIR TEAM AND GOALS BEFORE THEMSELVES! G'WAN, GO! WHO NEEDS HALF-HEARTED HELP?!
...they're really leaving...
nh!
YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT SUPER EASY TO STAY, SAPPH-FIRE.

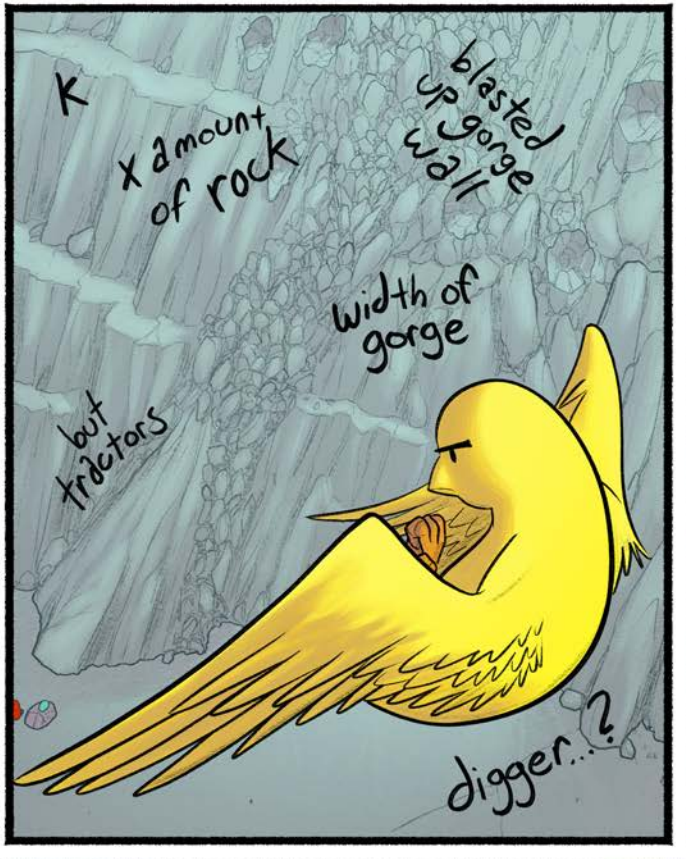
yeah, i guess not, boulder
still...
K well
bye girls
Sorry
ROCKSANNE...?
YEAH?
CAN WE GO BACK FOR SAPPH? I FEEL LIKE WE REALLY OUGHTTA GO BACK FOR SAPPH. DON'T YOU?

oh, BOO-HOO. JUST 'CAUSE SHE HAS ONE REAL FEELING WE GOTTA--
EY!
pf
ugh, WE'RE DOING THIS? REALLY?
MM-HM.
SAPPH MAY YELL A BUNCH, BUT SHE'S ON OUR TEAM!
SO LET'S TEAM UP TO RESCUE OUR TEAMMATE!
GIRLS--! THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, GET ME OUTTA HERE!
I THINK TIME JUST RAN OUT FOR ANY OF US TO GET AWAY.
HOW CAN WE HELP, BEAR?
fuh--fleet... gh--getfleet
SHE'S WITH THE OTHERS, FOLLOW ME!

MARISA, WHAT IN THE WORLD--
IT'S OKAY! BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THEY'RE HERE TO HELP THIS TIME.
IS SHE STILL OUT?
UNFORTUNATELY, AND NO THANKS TO YOU. WE THINK IT'S JUST A CONCUSSION, BUT WE CAN'T WAKE HER.
MIND IF I TRY AN OLD MINERAL FOLK REMEDY?
COME ON WAKE UP WE
HELP


whd
POINK
WhOuf!
FWOOSH
I SUPPOSE WE HAD THAT COMING
NOPE
what happened what happened
MS. BIRD! YOUR BEAR FRIEND IS IN A LOT OF DANGER!
BOULDER?
SWOO
ON MY WAY, PAL!
COME ON, EVERYBODY!

NNRGH
HRRNRNNNGH!
Y'KNOW, ANOTHER PAIR OF ARMS MIGHT BE GOOD RIGHT ABOUT NOW, LEMME HELP--OH, WAIT, YOU LEFT ME TRAPPED IN HERE. WHOOPS.
BOULDER!
fuh-- fleet...
Y'KNOW WE WOULDN'T GET INTO THESE JAMS IF YOU WERE JUST A LITTLE LESS GOOD, BUDDY.
BUT WE'LL GET OUTTA THIS ONE YET-- JUST NEED TO PUT MY PROBLEM FINDERS ON THE WHOLE SCENE!
HANG IN THERE!


K
x amount of rock
blasted up gorge wall
width of gorge
but tractors
digger...?

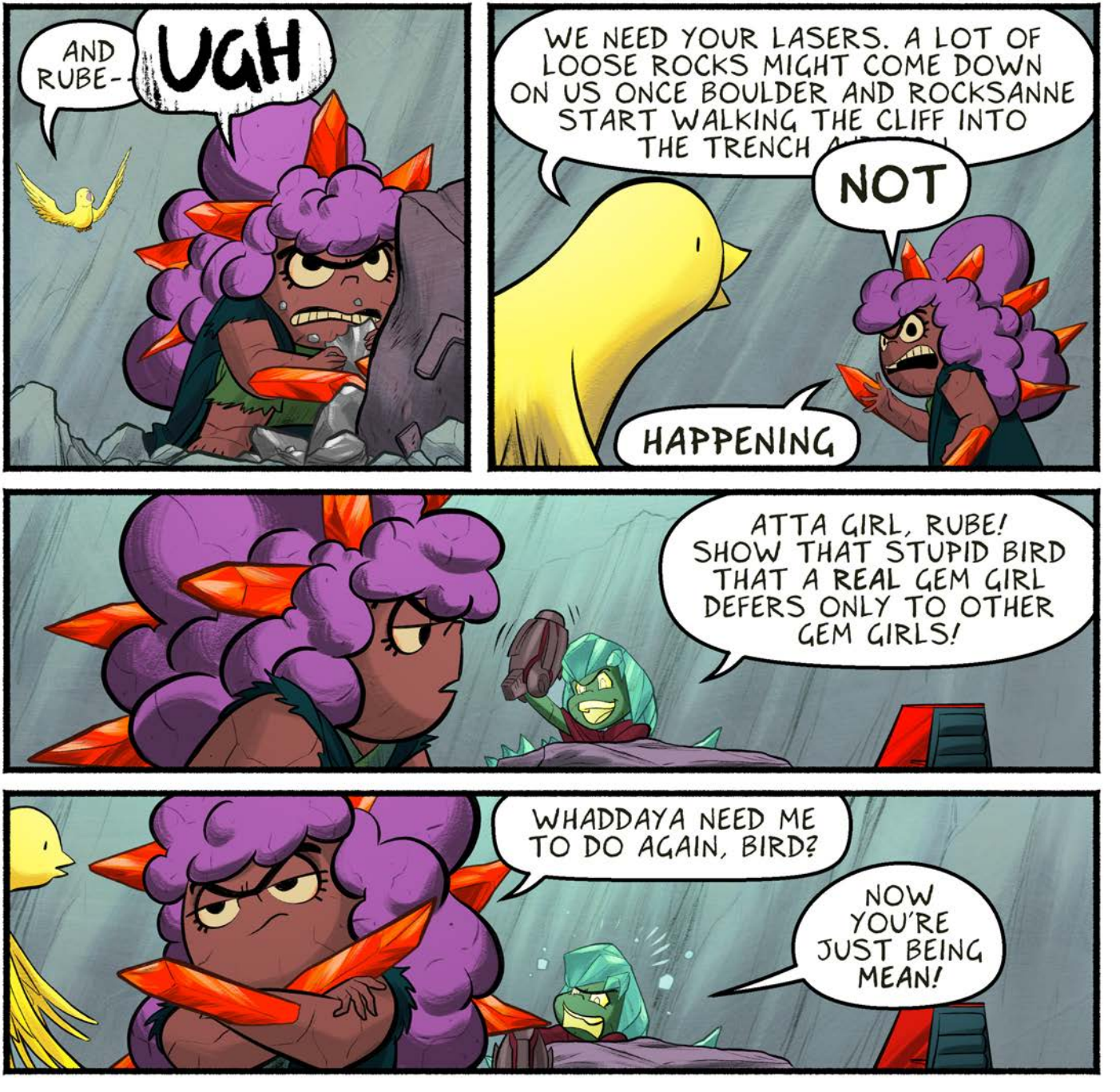
OKAY, WE GOT A BIG MESS, PAL.
nh nrrrr
THERE'S NO WAY YOU AND THE MINERAL GAL ARE SETTING THIS THING DOWN WITHOUT LETTING LOOSE A PRETTY BIG LANDSLIDE.

BUT TRY NOT TO SWEAT IT...
...I GOT AN IDEA!

oh, rocksanne, you're being super brave...
nrrr
HOW FAST CAN YOU DIG, MS.--?
AGNES!
AGNES. HOW FAST?

WE NEED A TRENCH IN FRONT OF BOULDER AND ROCKSANNE, AND WE NEED IT NOW. SO HOW FAST CAN YOU DO IT?
ULTRA FAST!
hey gem girls don't take orders from birds

SHE'S GONNA MAKE A LOT OF DEBRIS IN HER WORK--
THAT'S WHERE YOU MINERS COME IN! GET THOSE TRAC-TORS AND KEEP THE AREA CLEAR!
HURRY!
CHM! CHUDDA CHUDDA CHUD CHU


AND RUBE--
UGH
WE NEED YOUR LASERS. A LOT OF LOOSE ROCKS MIGHT COME DOWN ON US ONCE BOULDER AND ROCKSANNE START WALKING THE CLIFF INTO THE TRENCH
NOT
HAPPENING
ATTA GIRL, RUBE! SHOW THAT STUPID BIRD THAT A REAL GEM GIRL DEFERS ONLY TO OTHER GEM GIRLS!
WHADDAYA NEED ME TO DO AGAIN, BIRD?
NOW YOU'RE JUST BEING MEAN!

OKAY, AGNES HAS THE TRENCH UNDERWAY. NOW, **SLOWLY** WALK THAT CLIFF CHUNK DOWN...
Chudda Chudda
DON'T YOU **DARE** HELP THEM, ROCKSANNE!
THEY WOULDN'T BE **IN** THIS MESS IF THEY HAD JUST MINDED THEIR OWN BUSINESS!

WILL YOU GIVE IT A REST? WE'RE **ALL** IN DANGER, HERE!
SO? YOU'RE THE BIG-SHOT HERO. **YOU** GET US OUT OF IT!
WE ARE **BANDITS**, AND WE DON'T ANSWER TO LOUD-MOUTHED B/||'RRDS?

VRN!
BUT WE MINERS **DO**! JUST CLEARNING DEBRIS, LIKE YOU SAID!

BE SURE TO CLEAR IT WAAAAY OUT OF HERE!

CHUDDA CHUDDA CHUDDA CHUDDA
KRRR
K
nh
nrrr
KKRR
K
rggh h
CHUDDA CHUDDA CHUDDA CHUDDA
VRRRW

ZWOW
PM!
CHOWK!
PM!
CHOW!
PM!
CHCH
CHOWK!
PM!
CHUDDA CHUDDA CHUDDA CHUDDA
KRRRR
nhr rrr
KRMM!
nh!

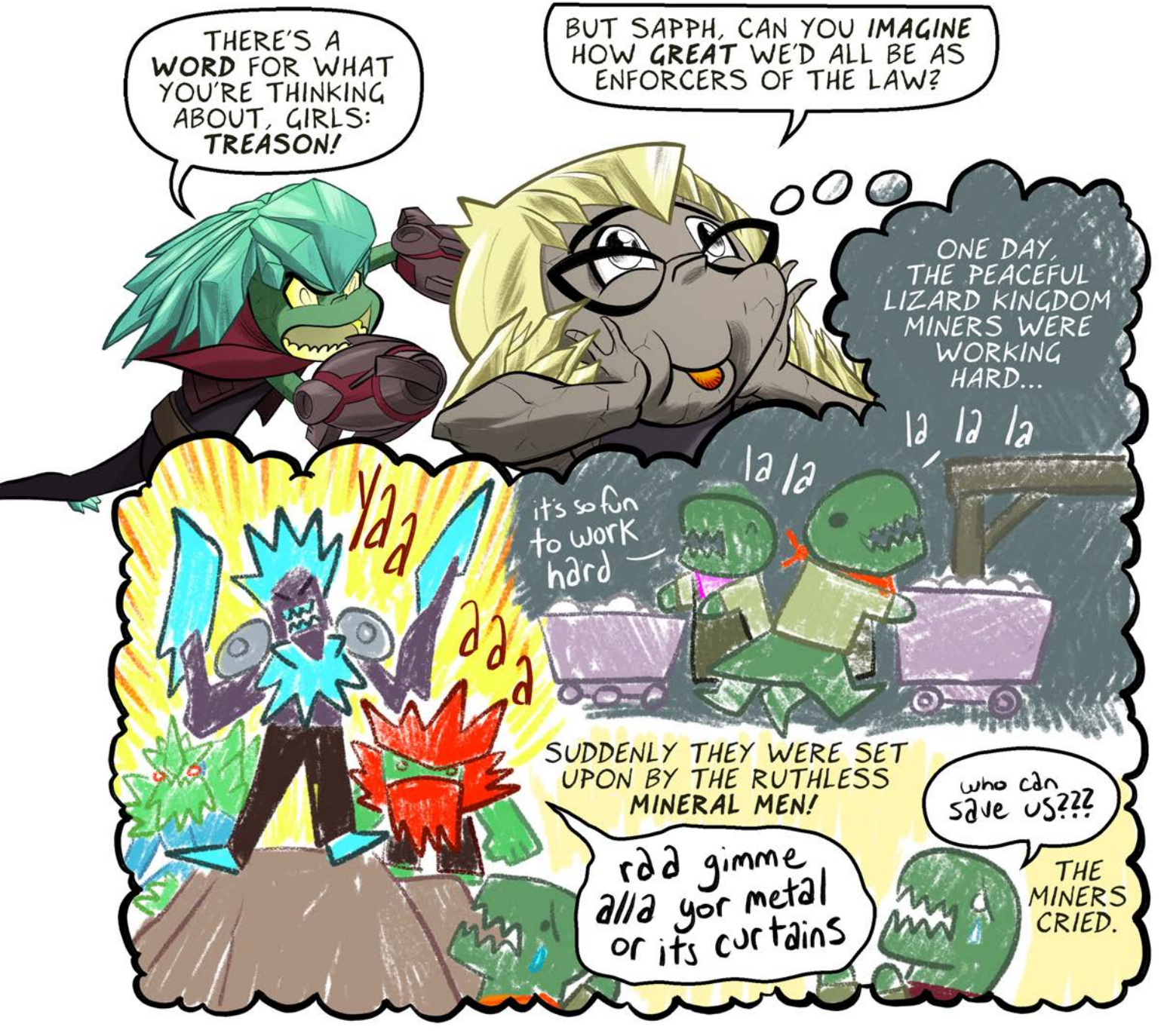
huh h
huff
huhhgh huff huf
POINK
Nh
HOPE YOU DON'T MIND I MADE A QUICK STOP AT OUR PICNIC SITE. THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED A PICK-ME-UP.
THANK YOU, DEAR FRIEND.
SOMETHING FOR THE HEROES OF THE DAY?
really?
SHE'S GOT A POINT. YOU DID DIG LIKE CRAZY TO SAVE US ALL.
PK!
YOU WERE THE MOST COURAGEOUS, HOLDING THAT CLIFF UP!

WHATEVER.
EITHER WAY I WAS GONNA GET THIS.
Swip!

ANYBODY BADLY HURT?
NOPE. MOSTLY A BUNCH OF PROPERTY DAMAGE, THANK GOODNESS.

THANK YOU. WE COULDN'T HAVE SAVED THE MINERS WITHOUT YOUR HELP.
MAYBE A CAREER CHANGE IS IN ORDER. YOU BOTH MAKE BETTER **HEROES** THAN **BANDITS**.

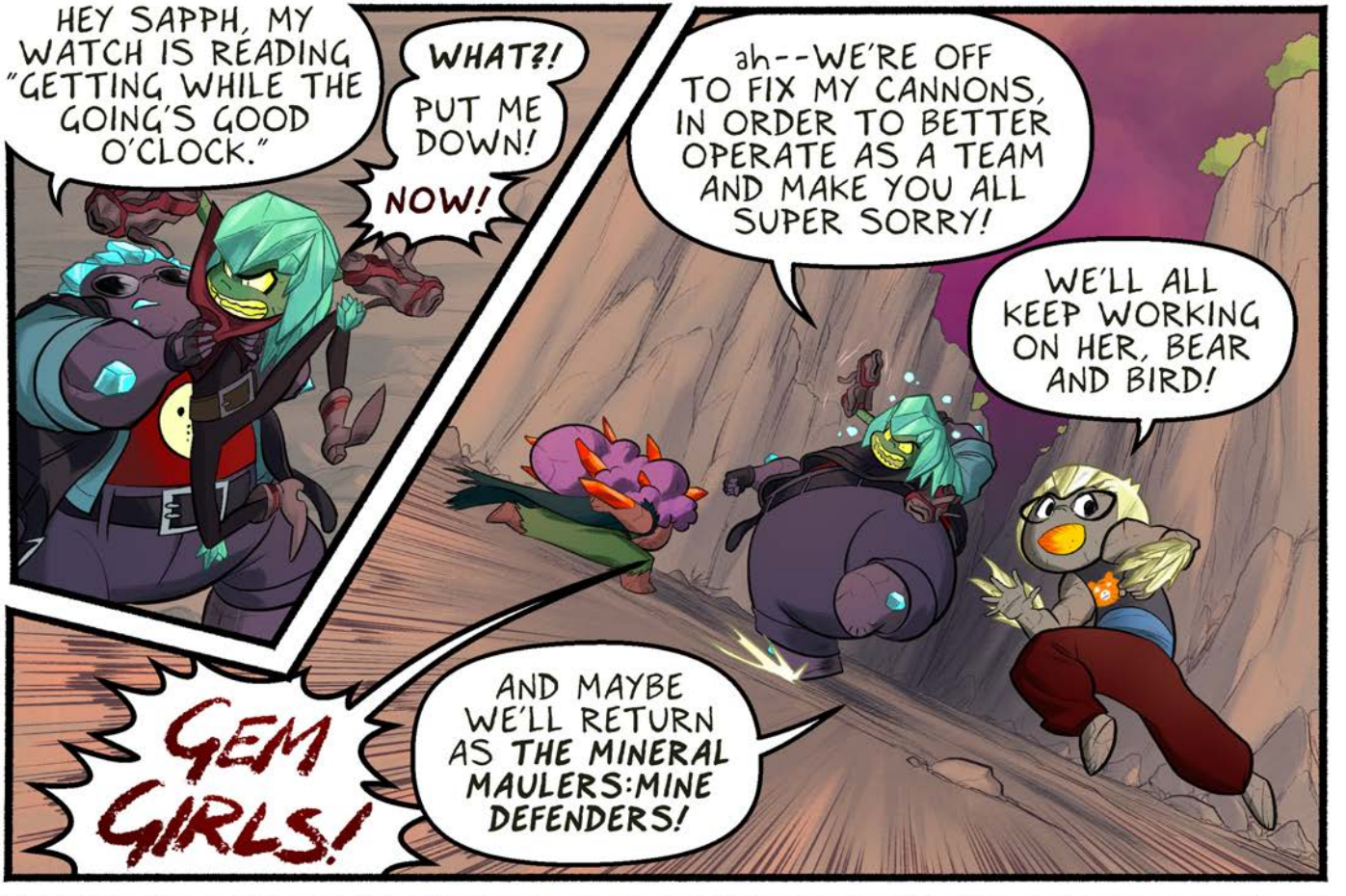
KUNG!
KUNG!
KUNG!
JUST THINK OF ALL THE GOOD THAT WOULD COME OUT OF **TEAMING UP** TO **PROTECT** THE MINE INSTEAD OF WRECKING AND STEALING IT.
AND WE COULD **PAY** YOU IN UNPROCESSED METAL ORE!
RRRAA
AAAHHGH!
KRUNG!
HMM. INSTEAD OF LOOKING FOR NEW MINES TO PLUNDER, WE HELP KEEP THIS ONE RUNNING?
AND ALL THE METAL WE CAN EAT?
woah, what now?
NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!


THERE'S A WORD FOR WHAT YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT, GIRLS: TREASON!
BUT SAPPH, CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW GREAT WE'D ALL BE AS ENFORCERS OF THE LAW?
ONE DAY, THE PEACEFUL LIZARD KINGDOM MINERS WERE WORKING HARD...
la la la
la la
it's so fun to work hard
yaa
aa
a
SUDDENLY THEY WERE SET UPON BY THE RUTHLESS MINERAL MEN!
rad gimme alla yor metal or its curtains
who can save us???
THE MINERS CRIED.

THE MINERAL MEN WERE DISMAYED TO HEAR--
we will
bra ta ta - taaaa!
--BECAUSE IT MEANT THAT THE WORLD FAMOUS MINERAL MAULERS HAD ARRIVED TO PROTECT THE MINERS AND THEIR METAL!
GEM GIRLS!
yeah!
wadda!
ROCKSANNE KICKED A GUY IN THE BUTT!
boox
SAPPH AND RUBE CHASED THE OTHER BAD GUYS INTO A TRAP--
pew
pew
--DUG BY THE COURAGEOUS AND CRAFTY AGNES!

AND THE LIZARDS THROW A PARADE IN THEIR HONOR, AND THEY ALL GO OUT FOR ANTIMONY CONES AND THE LOCAL NEWS SAYS SUPER NICE THINGS ABOUT THEM AND THEY STAY FRIENDS FOREVER.
yay
yay
THE END!
antimony cones, eh?
everyone loves us...
WELL, SAPPH? WHADDAYA SAY ABOUT THAT?
wow. i say--
SERVING PEOPLE--?! I THOUGHT WE'D AGREED THAT THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO GET WHAT YOU WANT--
--MAKING PEOPLE AFRAID OF YOU!

AND THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT IS OBLITERATE ANYONE STANDING IN YOUR WAY.
wh CHK!
PF! CHOOSING BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR OTHERS OVER FAME AND POWER? SERIOUSLY?
YOU TALK ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY AND POWER--
KRUN
CHK!
--LIKE THEY'RE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.
FZZT
dyah
hurh
THAT TEARS IT! GEM GIRLS--
--ANNIHILATE THEM!


HEY SAPPH, MY WATCH IS READING "GETTING WHILE THE GOING'S GOOD O'CLOCK."
WHAT?! PUT ME DOWN! NOW!
ah--WE'RE OFF TO FIX MY CANNONS, IN ORDER TO BETTER OPERATE AS A TEAM AND MAKE YOU ALL SUPER SORRY!
WE'LL ALL KEEP WORKING ON HER, BEAR AND BIRD!
GEM GIRLS!
AND MAYBE WE'LL RETURN AS THE MINERAL MAULERS:MINE DEFENDERS!

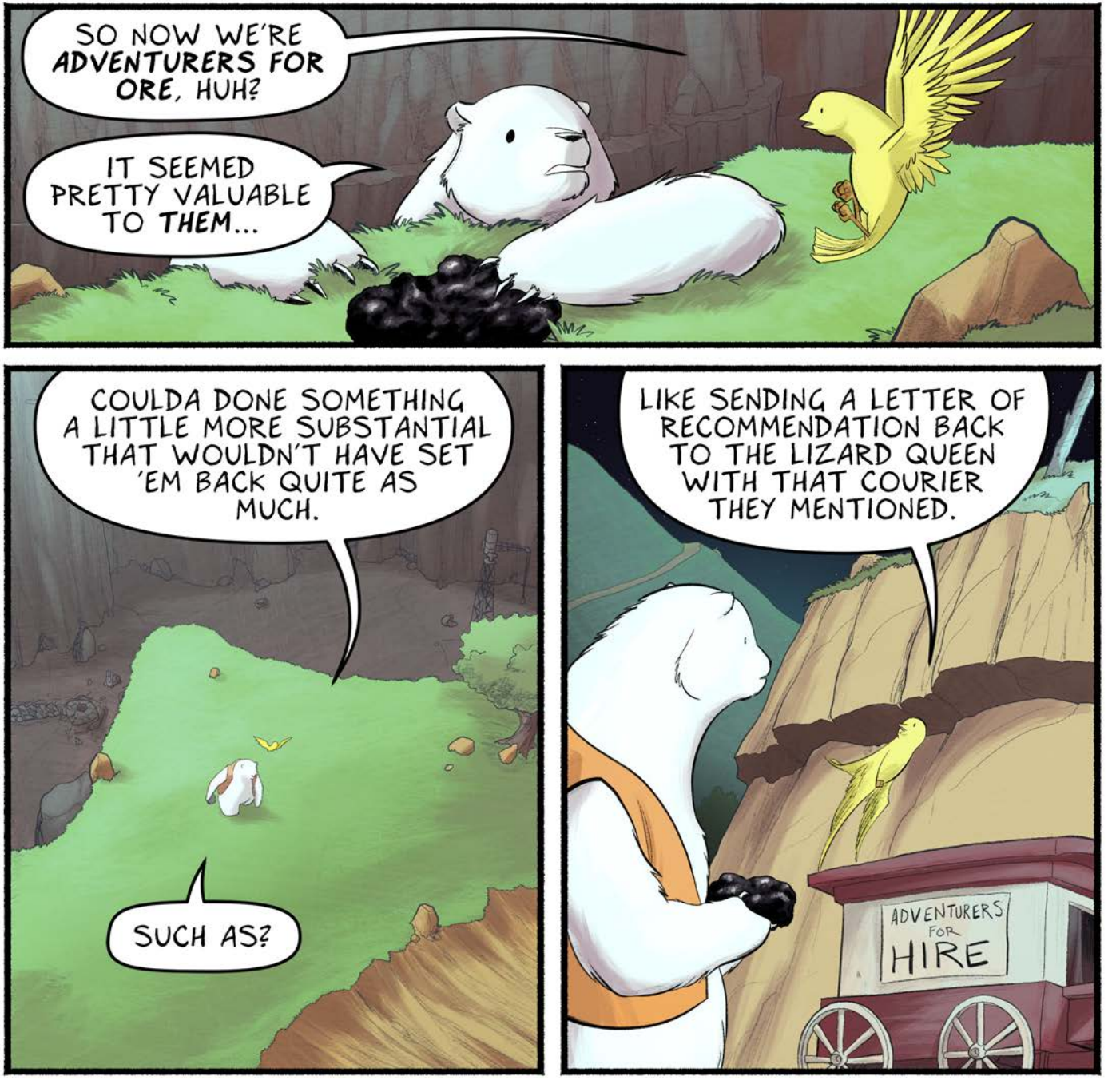
SIGH
A GUESS? YOU DON'T WANNA CHASE 'EM DOWN.
I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE THEY CAN TURN THINGS AROUND IF GIVEN ANOTHER CHANCE, YEAH.

THANK YOU FOR STICKING AROUND TO HELP WITH CLEANUP. WE CAN TAKE CARE OF THINGS FROM HERE.
THM!
YOU'RE SURE? WE ARE GLAD TO HELP OUT.

ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO REPAIR AND REPLACE THE DAMAGED EQUIPMENT. A COURIER IS EN ROUTE TO THE KINGDOM TO FETCH A MAINTENANCE TEAM.
WE'D LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR THANKS FOR SAVING US.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH, BUT...

ah, NO NEED TO--
BUT WE'LL ACCEPT YOUR KIND OFFER WITH DEEPEST GRATITUDE!

AGAIN, OUR THANKS.
ah. SHINY METAL.
OSMIRIDIUM, AN ALLOY FROM OUR MINES.
IT'S A SPECIAL MATERIAL USED IN THE FORGING OF OUR QUEEN'S TALISMANS.
IT MAY BE USEFUL WHEN TRAVELING AT NIGHT.
well, it's super pretty, i'll give it that...
you're carrying it back to the wagon, pal.
WE'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR KINDNESS AND COURAGE.


SO NOW WE'RE ADVENTURERS FOR ORE, HUH?
IT SEEMED PRETTY VALUABLE TO THEM...
COULDA DONE SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE SUBSTANTIAL THAT WOULDN'T HAVE SET 'EM BACK QUITE AS MUCH.
SUCH AS?
LIKE SENDING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION BACK TO THE LIZARD QUEEN WITH THAT COURIER THEY MENTIONED.
ADVENTURERS FOR HIRE

AND THAT WOULD BE BETTER BECAUSE...?
WELL, SHE MIGHT HAVE A GIG FOR US.
MAYBE CONNECT US WITH A **RICHER, MORE FAMOUS** GROUP OF CLIENTS.
ADVENTURERS FOR HIRE

COULDN'T HURT TO PERFORM ON A **LARGER STAGE**, PAL.
ADVENTURERS FOR HIRE
MAYBE. BUT I GET STAGE FRIGHT EASILY.

AND YOU SAW WHAT CHASING FAME DID FOR SAPPH-FIRE'S RELATIONSHIPS.
I WAS KINDA OUT OF IT FOR A BIT BACK THERE. YOU'LL HAVE TO BRING ME UP TO SPEED ON THE WAY.

ON THE WAY TO THE LIZARD KINGDOM?
MAYBE. BUT FIRST, LET'S STOP AT ONE OF ITS SOUTHERN CANALS.
I KNOW THIS LITTLE CAKE BAR THAT SERVES UP A RED VELVET THAT'LL MAKE YOU **FEEL** LIKE YOU'RE FAMOUS...
HIRE
THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jerzy Drozd co-wrote and co-illustrated *Science Comics: Rockets* with his wife Anne. He was one of the artists of *The Warren Commission Report* and has drawn special projects for Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, Marvel Comics, VIZ Media, and others. He leads cartooning workshops for children and teens in libraries and schools, as well as for teachers who want to bring comics to the classroom. Drozd also hosts podcasts about comics and how to make them.

BOULDER AND FLEET: ADVENTURERS FOR HIRE

Fleet is a plucky bird with ambition. She'll settle for nothing less than to be the greatest adventurer the world has ever known. Her partner Boulder certainly has the muscle to help her, but he's a gentle soul who'd rather spend peaceful afternoons chatting with locals than fighting monsters.

Thanks to a faulty map, Boulder and Fleet have found themselves lost in an unknown land. When they picnic by a nearby mine, they find themselves caught up in a battle over precious metals!

"Jerzy Drozd knows his way around adventuring duos, and the perfectly matched odd couple of Boulder and Fleet is Jerzy at his very best. I hope you fall in love with these two friends, their hilarious banter, and the optimistic, anthropomorphic world they inhabit.

I give Boulder and Fleet perhaps the highest praise that can be given to fictional persons: when they ride off into the sunset I want to go along with them to see what they get up to next."

– Ben Hatke, MIGHTY JACK, ZITA THE SPACEGIRL

"Jerzy imbues his animal (and mineral) characters with such humanity and charm that every scene, from eating cake to holding up a mountain, shines"

– Gregg Schigiel, PIX: ONE WEIRDEST WEEKEND, PIX: TOO SUPER FOR SCHOOL

Read more at
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