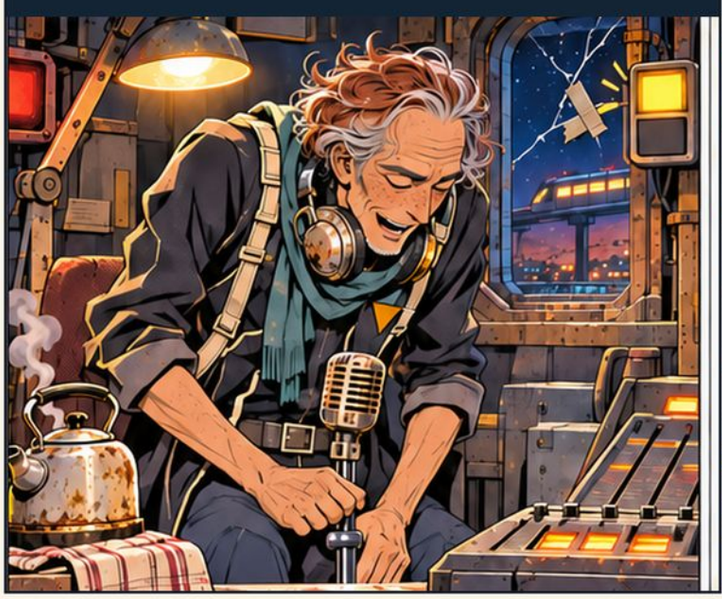
OLD PIP



OLD PIP

Tonight, the story of our runaway ancient core.



OLD PIP

Thirty seconds standing; my microphone needs help.



PIP · LATER

That core nearly crushed a school trip; now it was loose again.

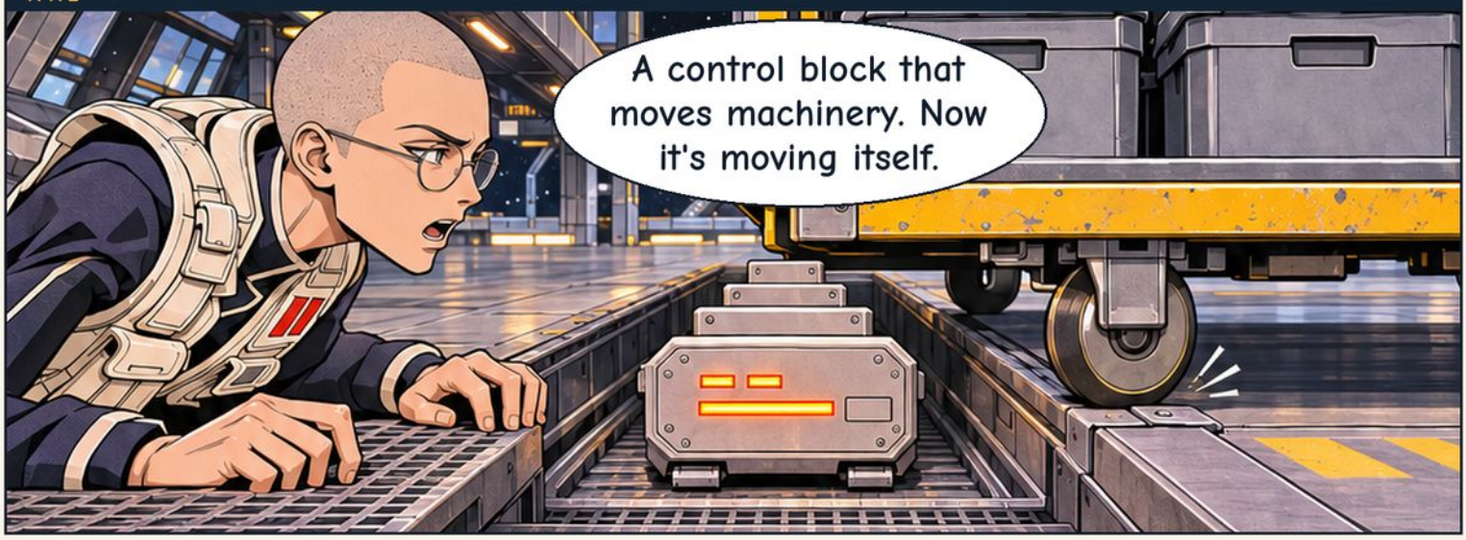
PIP



ROOK



TAVI



IONA



SERA



CRELL



PIP · LATER

The core took a freight ferry down to Mars; we followed.

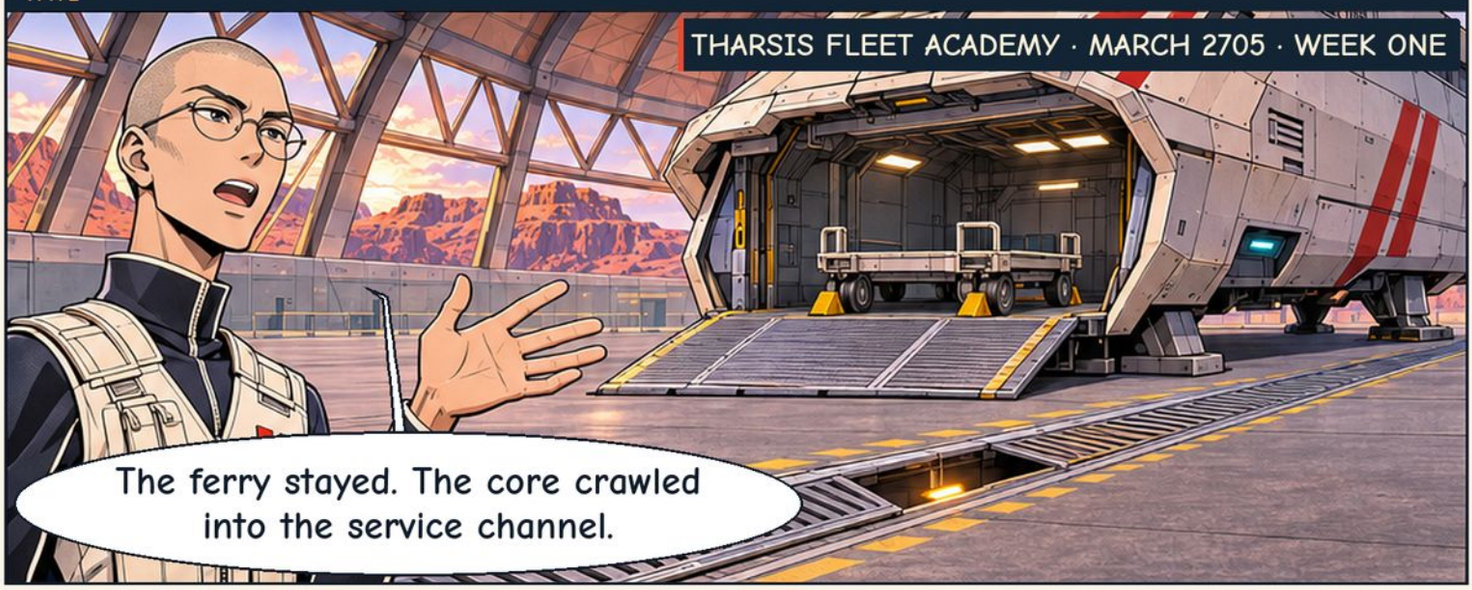
ROOK



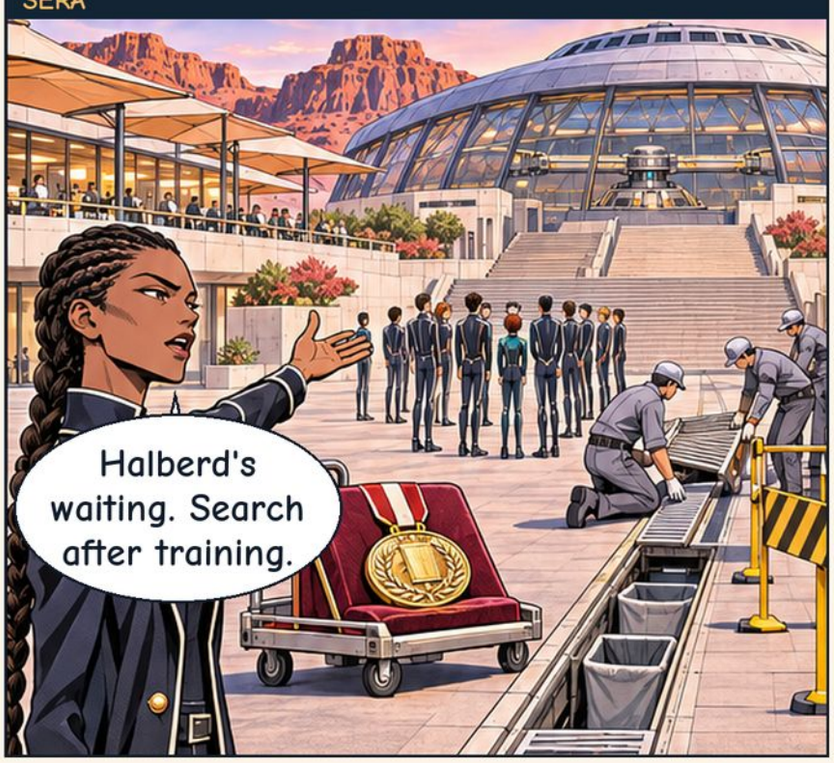
PIP · LATER

Maintenance searched while we trained to survive Earth weight.

TAVI



SERA



ROOK

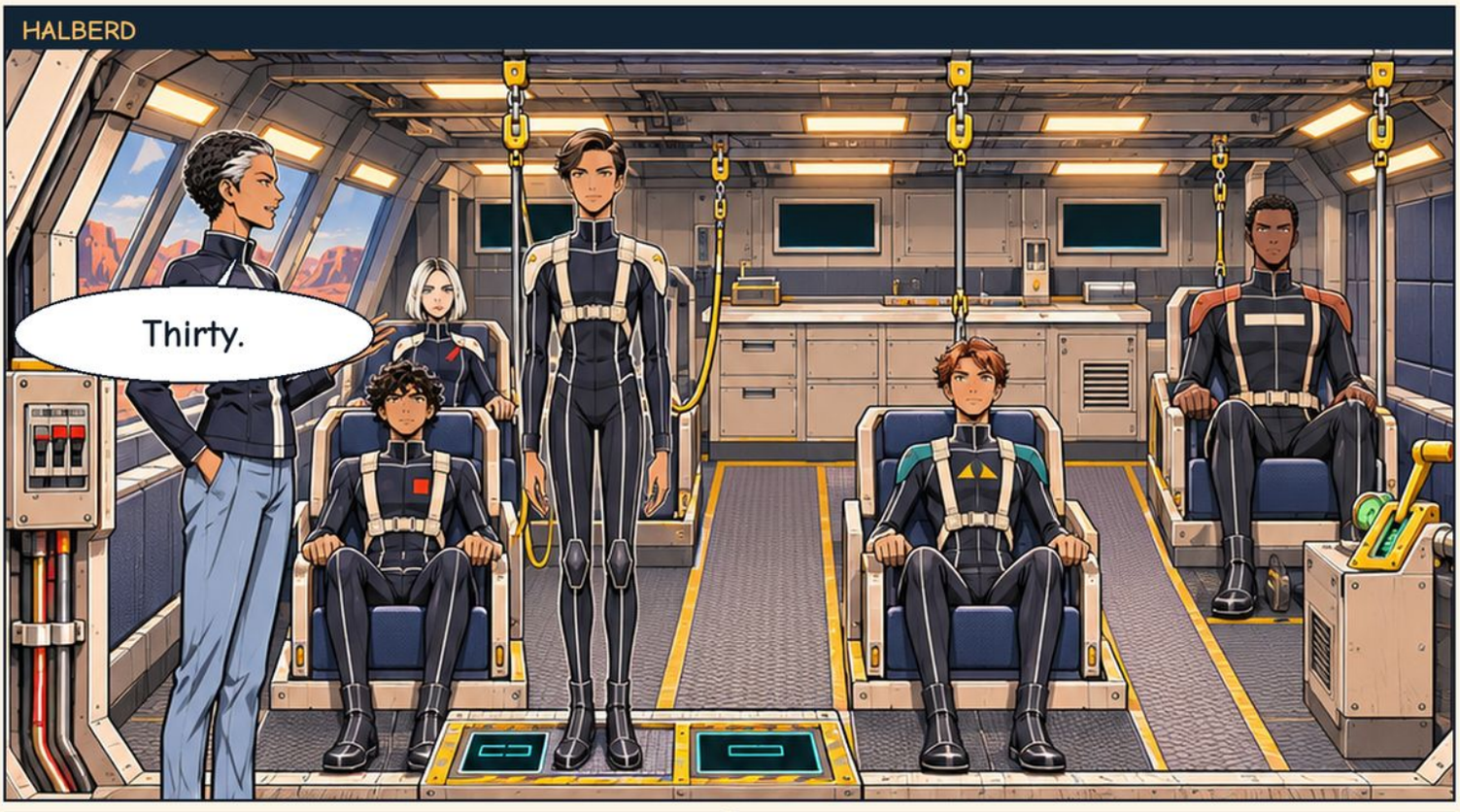


BRAM



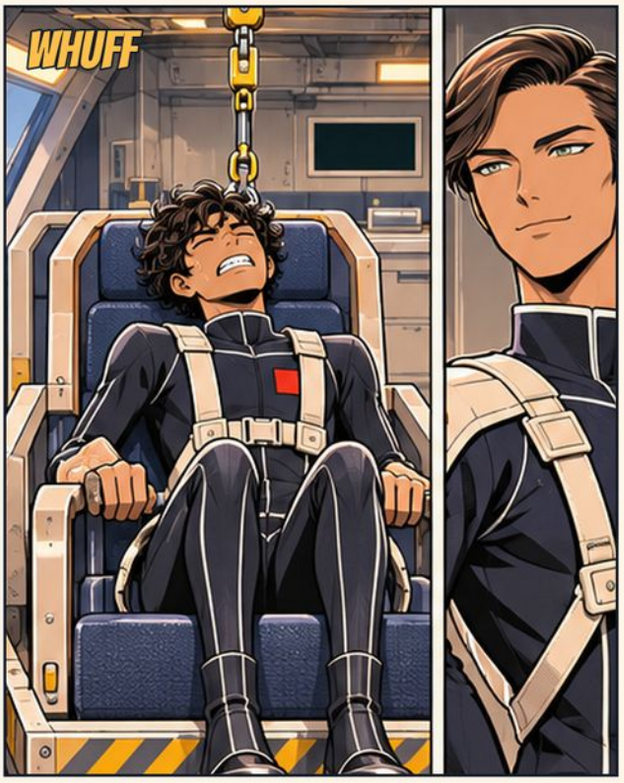
HALBERD

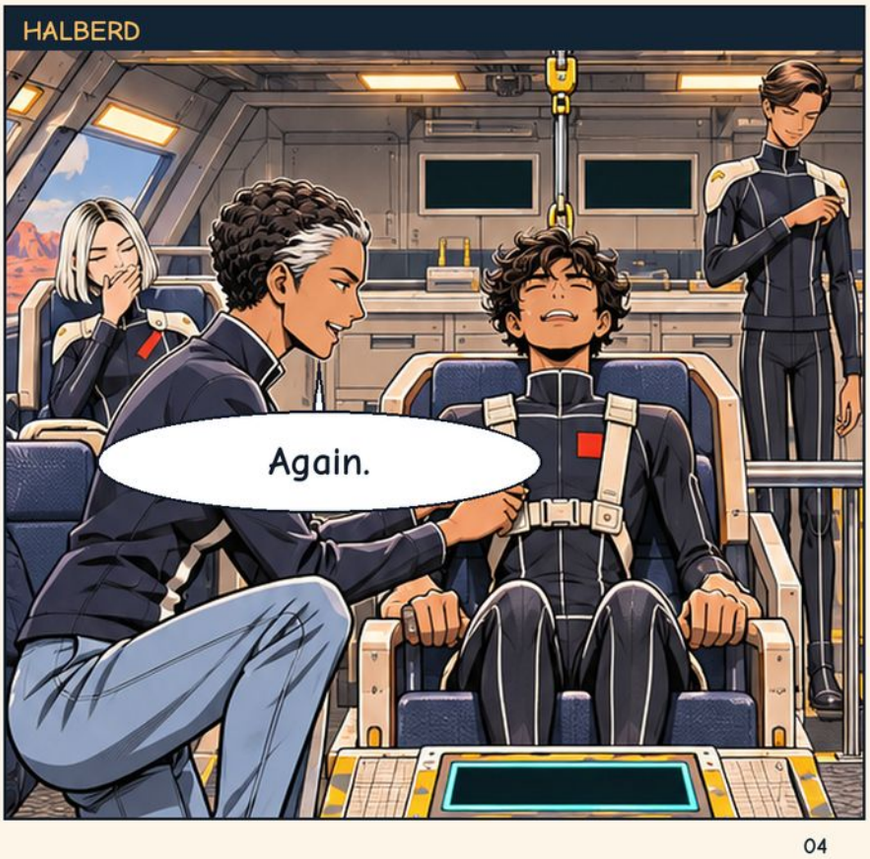


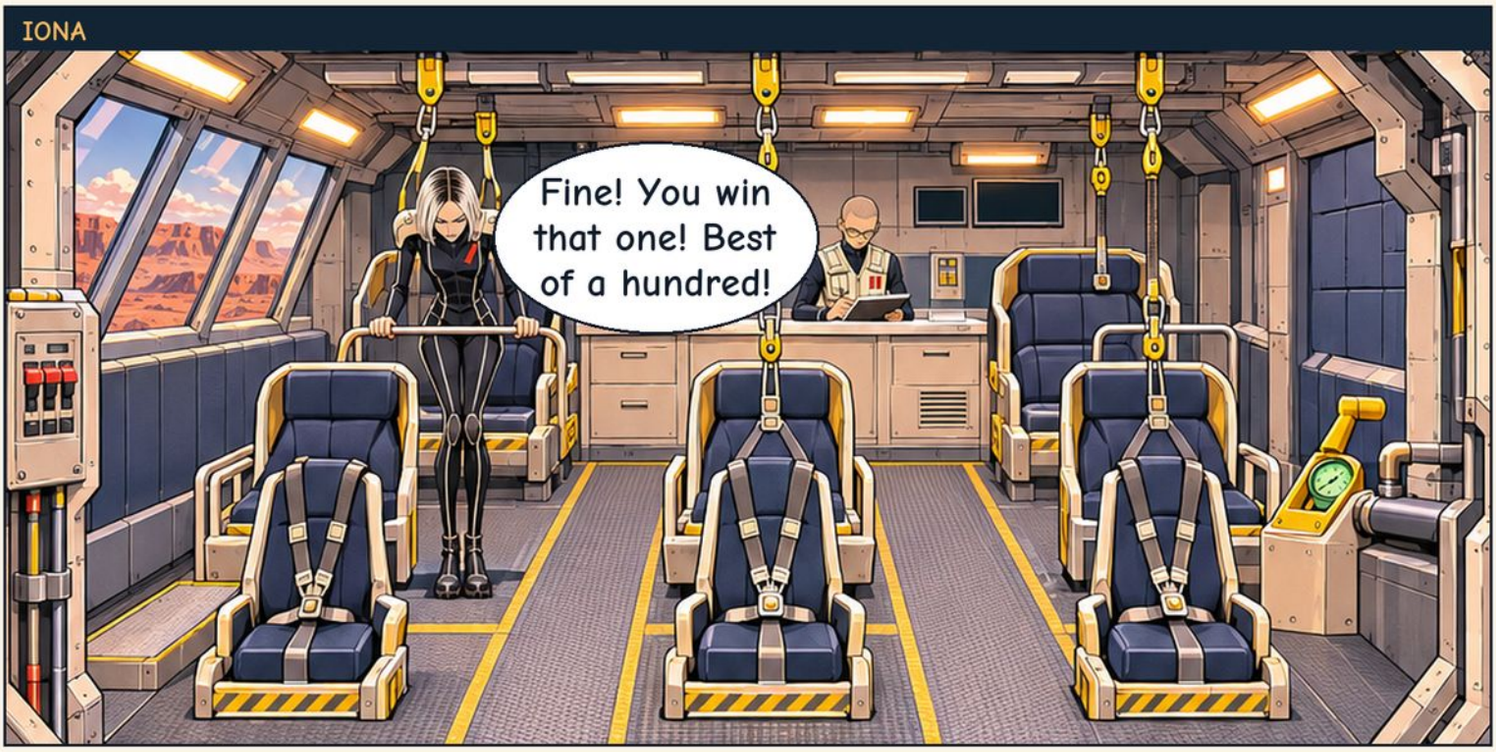

HALBERD
Thirty.

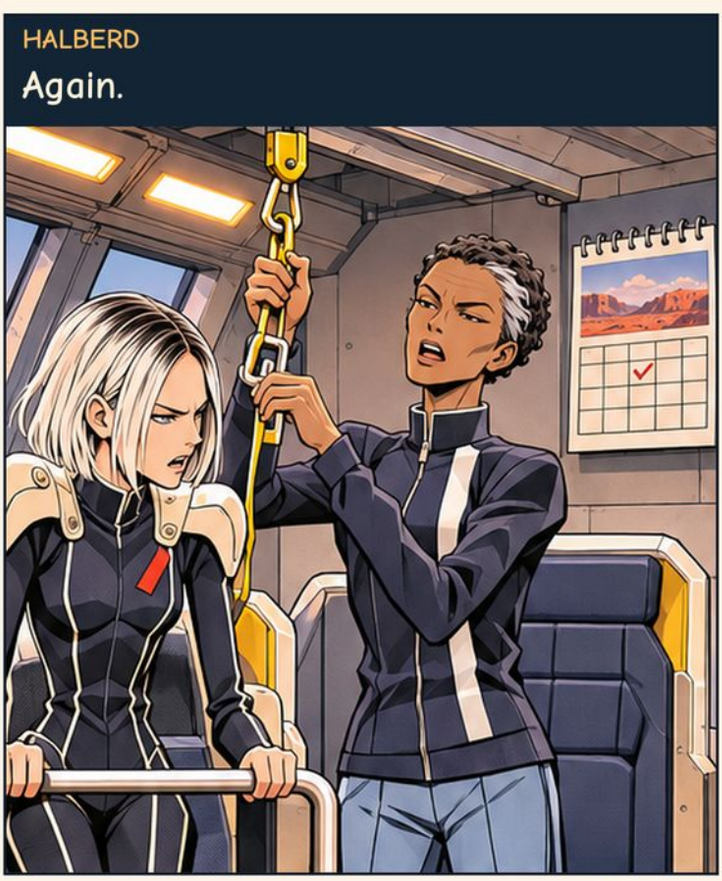

DAX
I like to leave a margin.

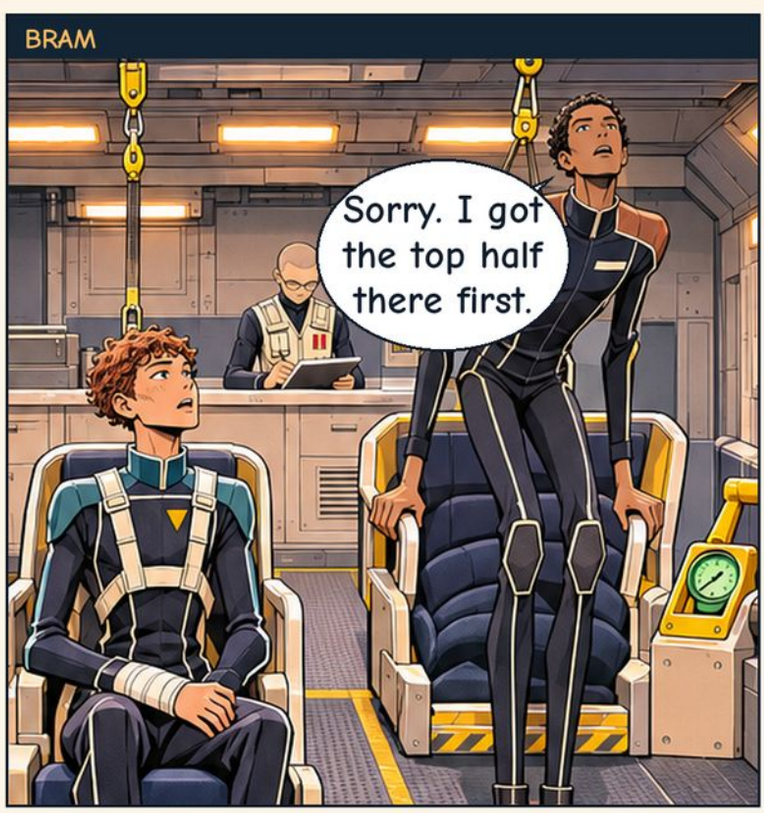

ROOK
So do I. Mine's mostly horizontal.


WHUFF


HALBERD
Again.


IONA
Fine! You win that one! Best of a hundred!


HALBERD
Again.


BRAM
Sorry. I got the top half there first.

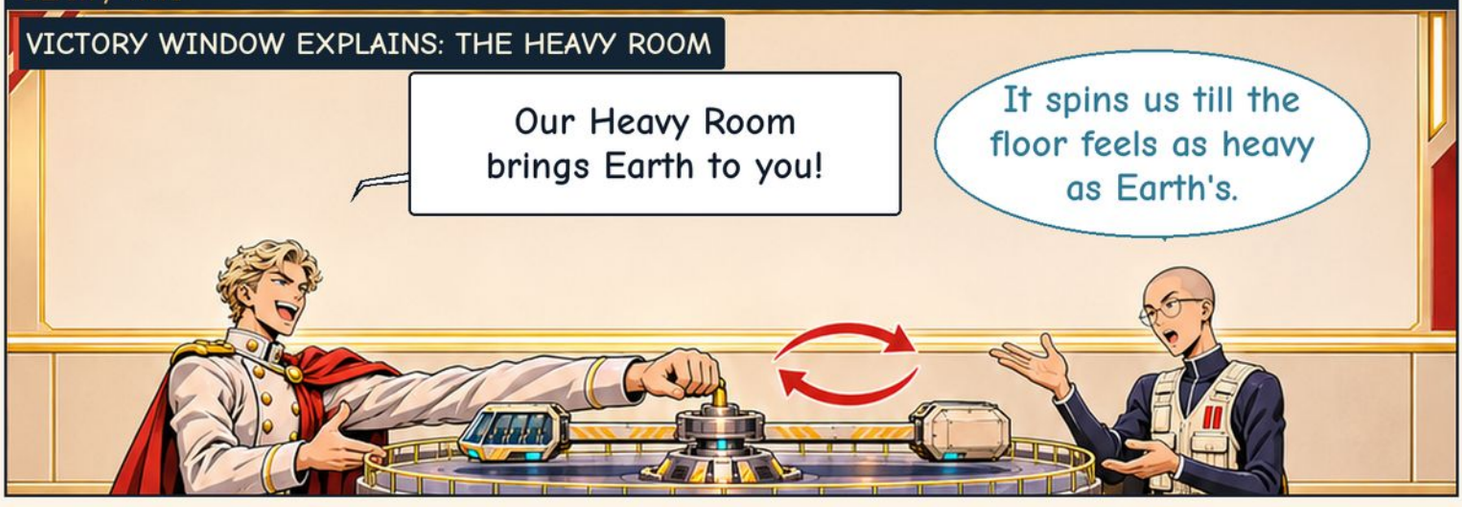

HALBERD
Again.


ROOK
It's a landing pad. I'm practising the landing.

PIP · LATER

Beam's TV lesson came with free corrections from Tavi.

BEAM / TAVI



BEAM / TAVI



BEAM / TAVI



BEAM / TAVI



BEAM / TAVI



HALBERD

The yellow hand brake stops us gently in thirty seconds.

TAVI

Hydraulic means fluid does the work. No electrical controls needed.

CABIN TILTS AS IT SPINS

SPIN PUSH

MARS PULL

FLOOR LOAD

BRAM

This bit I can reach without hitting my head.

ROOK

The seat's been practising. It's getting very good.

HALBERD

Again.


BRAM
Does his hair get separate training?

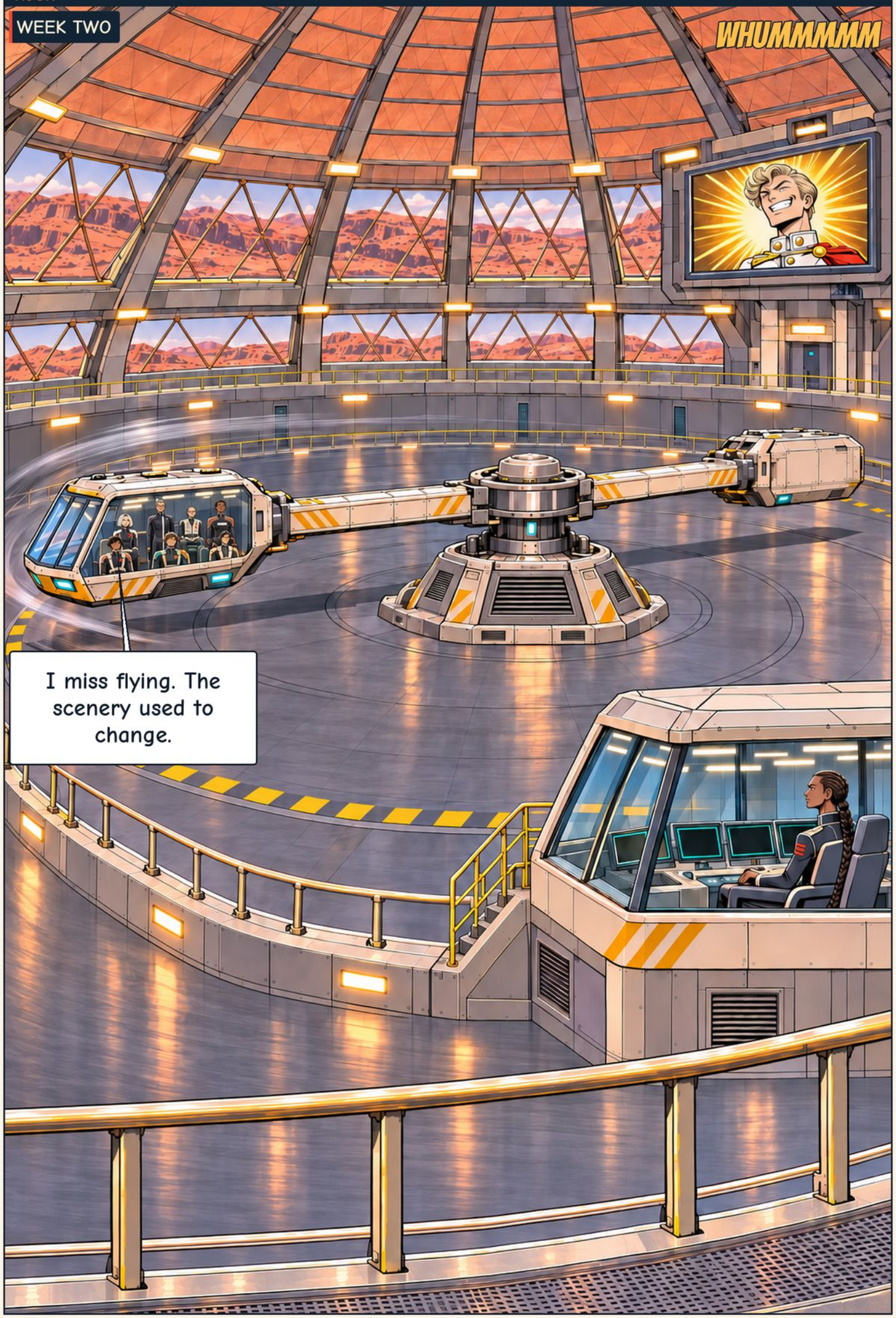

IONA
Bram! Feet first! Beat his hair later!


BRAM
Oh. Those are meant to arrive together.


PIP
Shaking's allowed. Found that out last month.


ROOK
I've brought drinks. Nobody salute. This is advanced stuff.

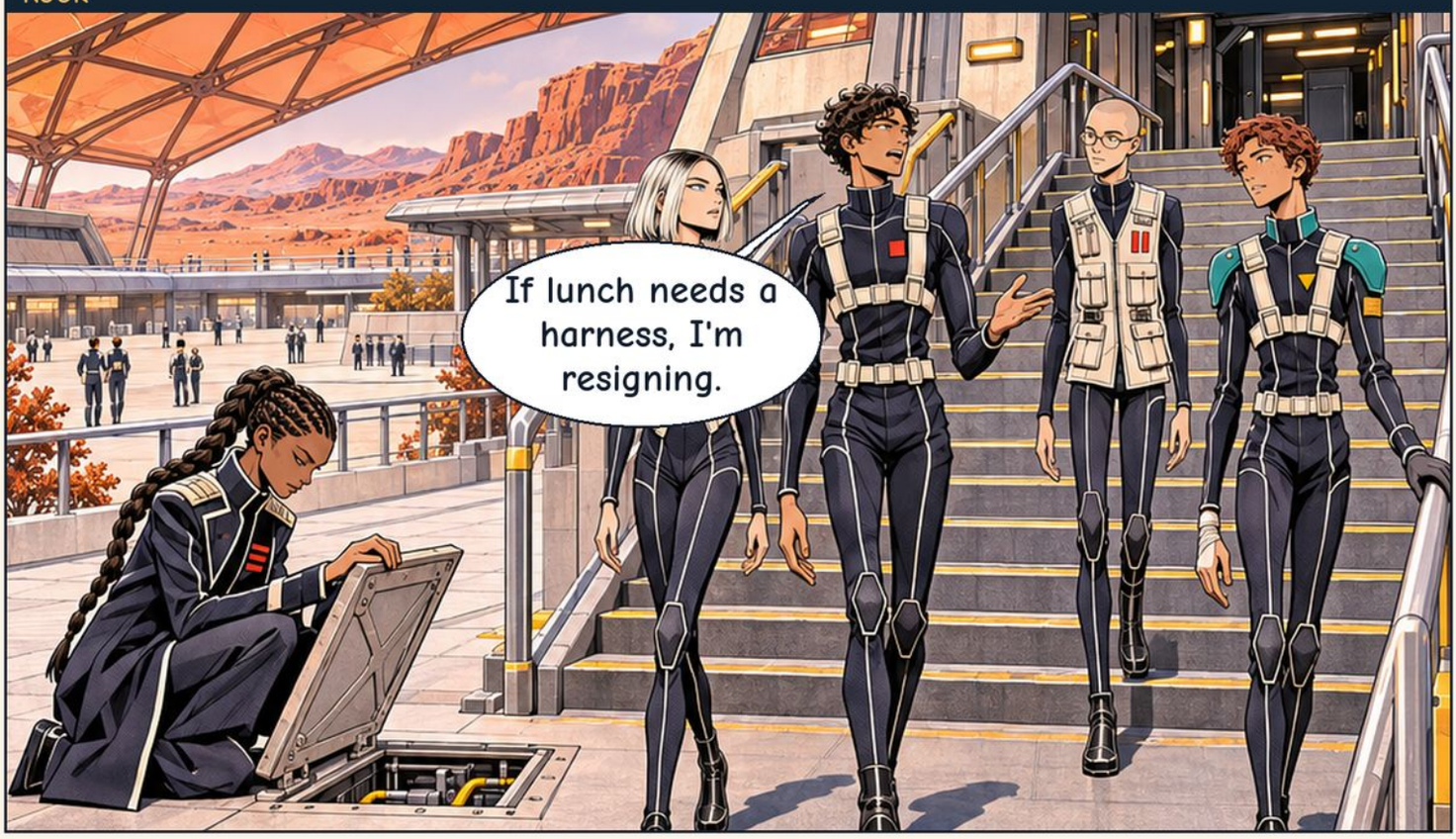

CRELL
Thirty-one seconds. Well done, Morrow.
DAX
I prefer a standard I can exceed, sir.
ROOK
I'd settle for one that comes with a chair.
CRELL
Pad the exits. Case stays at reception.
TIK · TIK · TONG

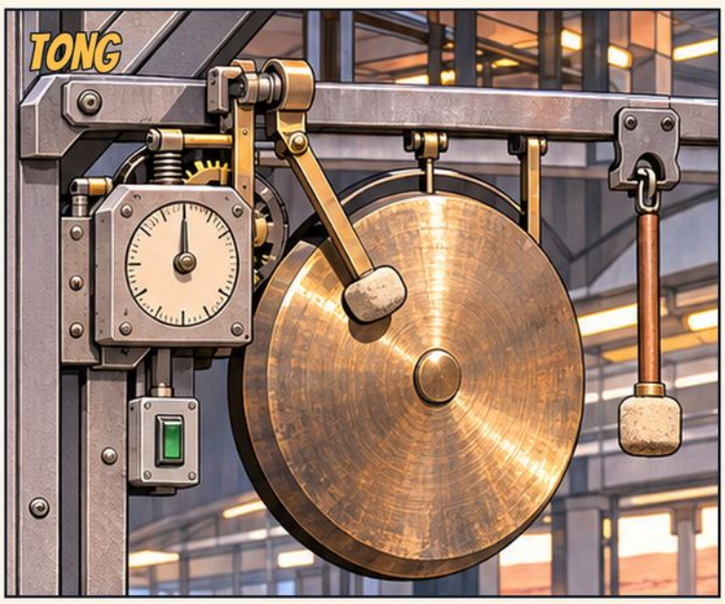

WEEK TWO
WHUMMMMM
I miss flying. The scenery used to change.

PIP · LATER

At lunch, we needed a tray; those moving shoes could crush fingers.

ROOK

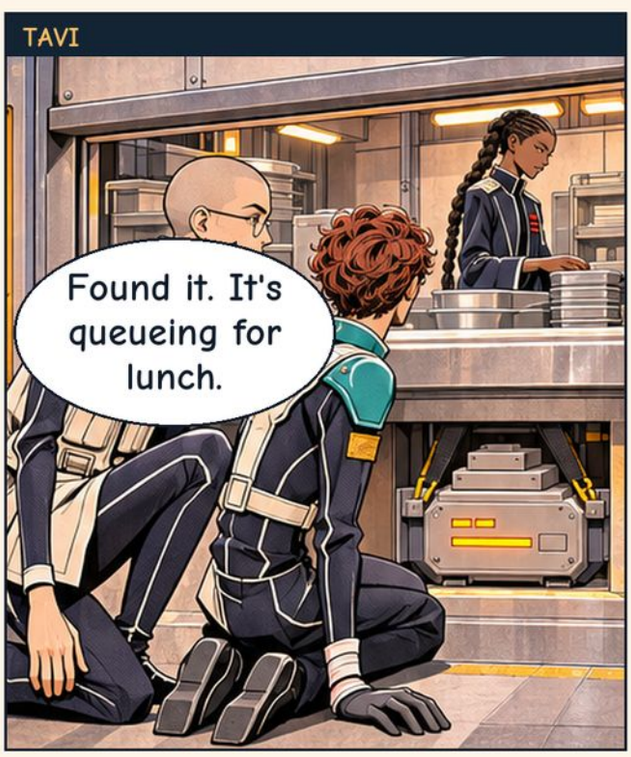




PIP



TAVI



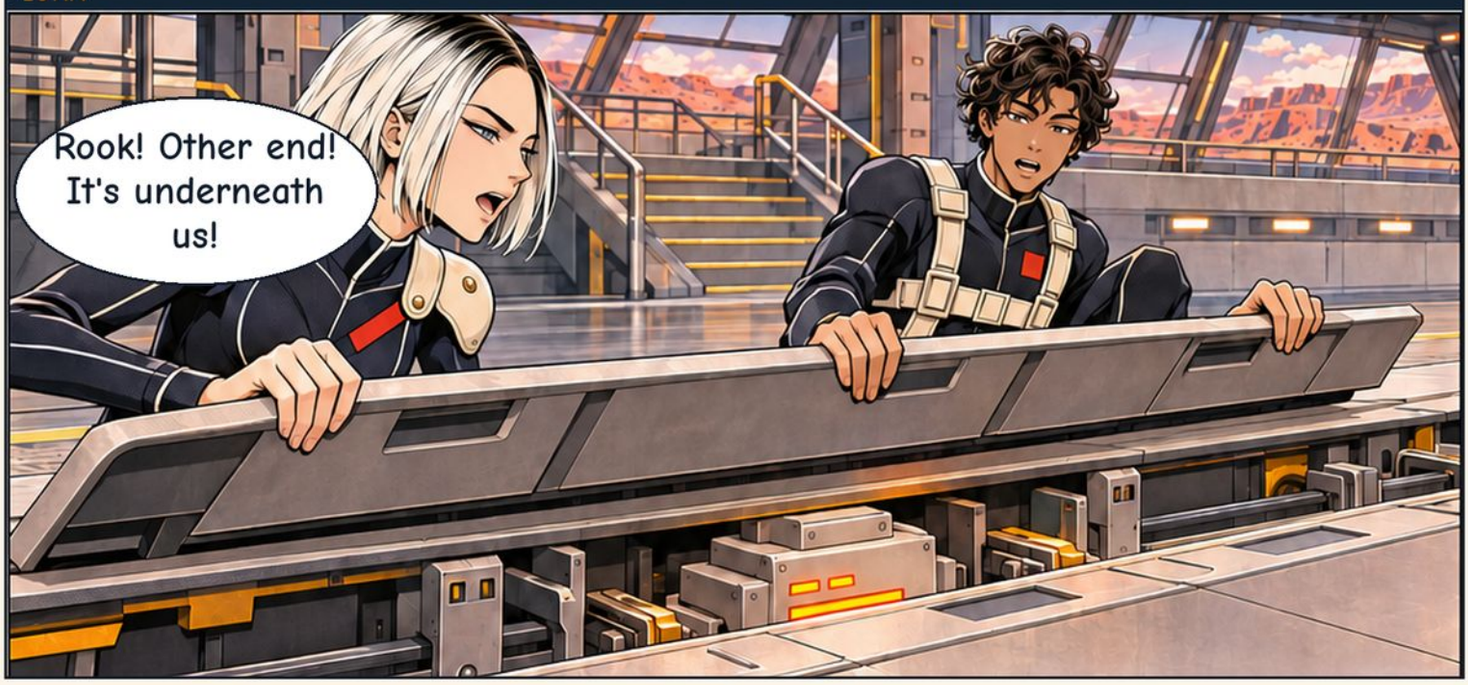
IONA



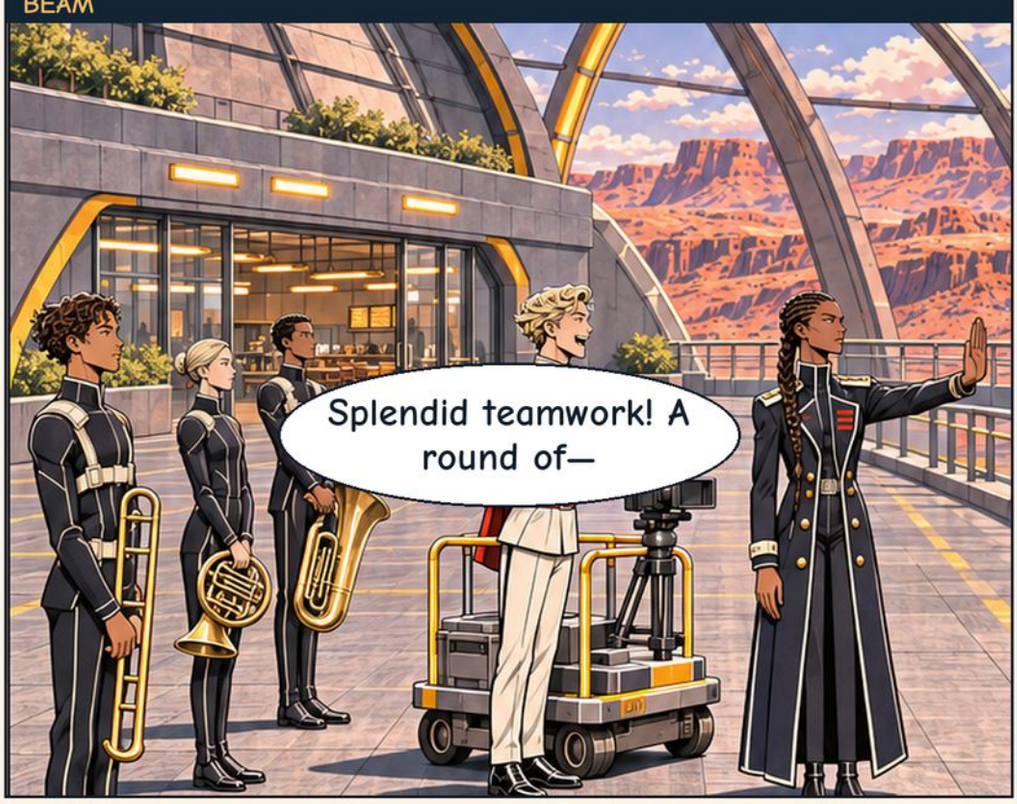

ROOK
Our lunch bell's recruiting it. Vibrations travel through the metal.
TAVI
Switch it off. Let's not encourage it.
IONA
Come on. One boring little step. That's all!
KA-TIK . KA-TIK
ROOK
It's found the express queue.


IONA
Stay there! I'm not chasing dessert as well!
TAVI
Little service shoes: metal pads that push it along.
PIP
There's another beat. Outside.
ROOK
Excellent. Lunch comes with a pursuit band.
TIK · TIK · TAK

IONA



BEAM



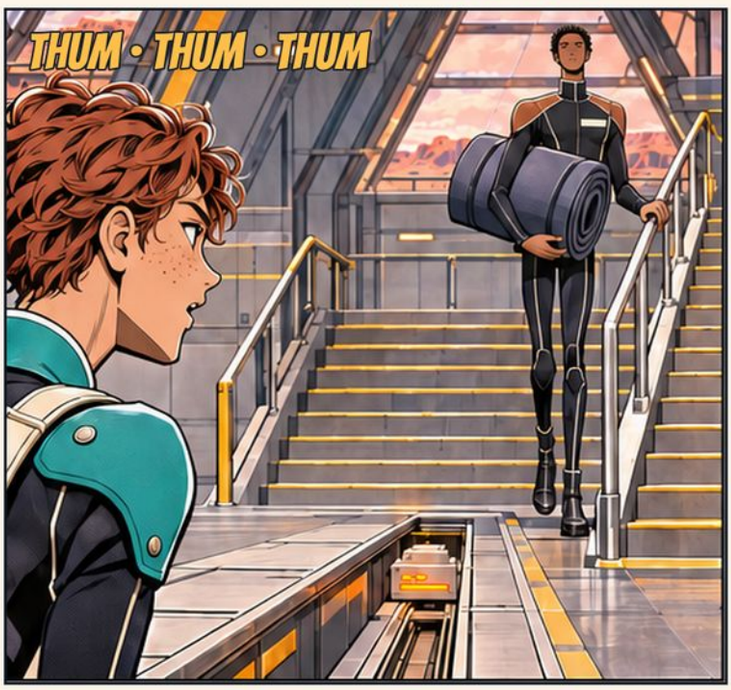
BEAM

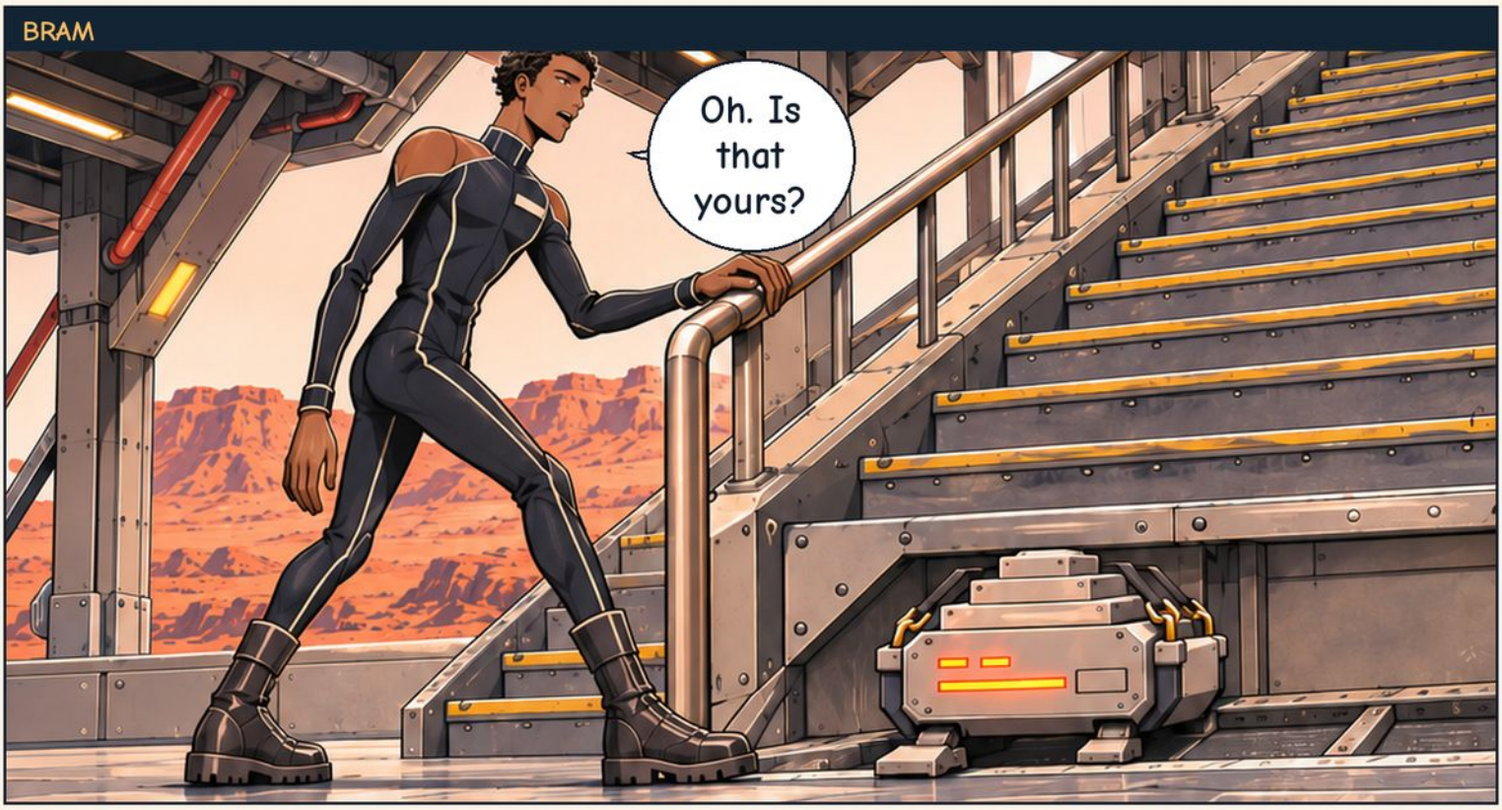
Quiet appreciation. Very modern.

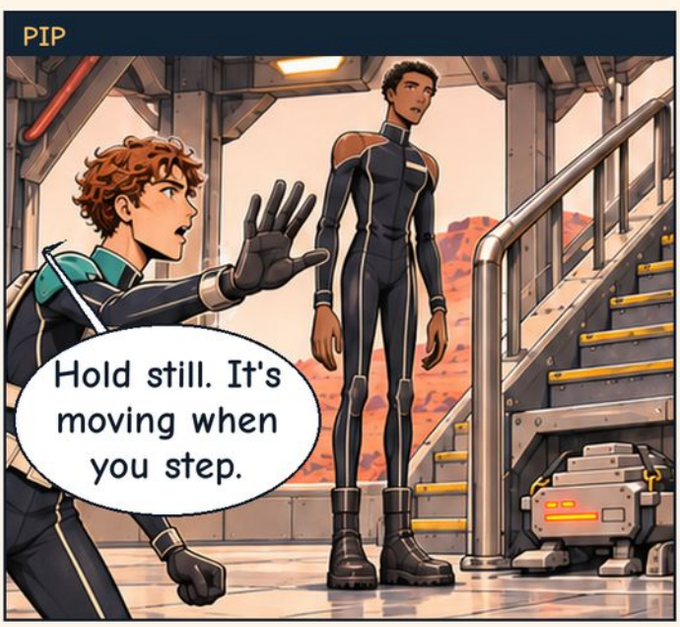


ROOK



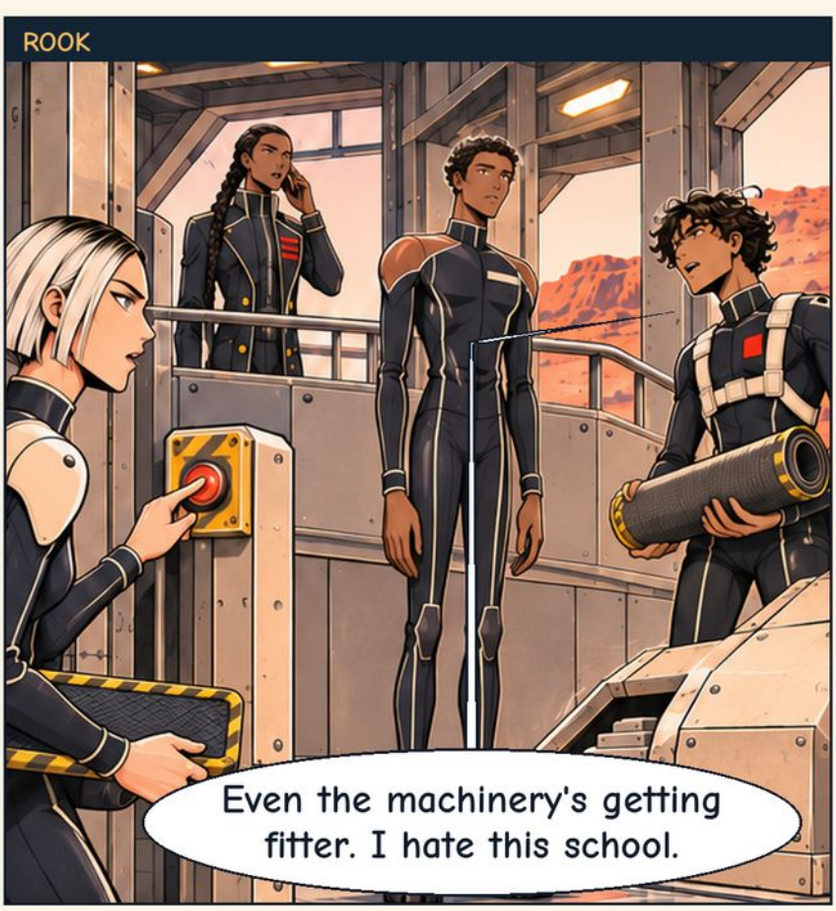



BRAM
Oh. Is that yours?


PIP
Hold still. It's moving when you step.


BRAM
Sorry. I was only going for soup.

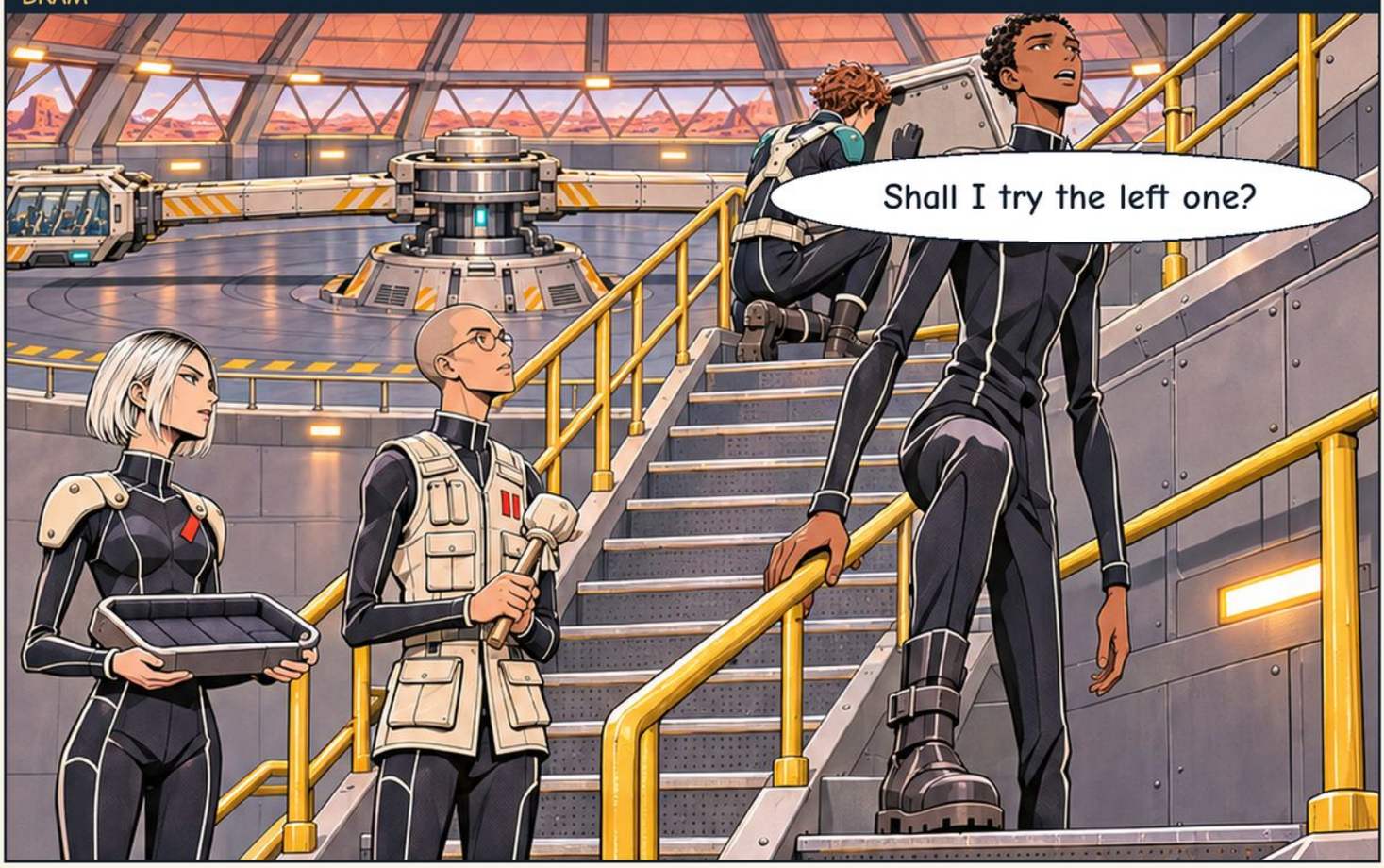

WHUM · WHUM


ROOK
Even the machinery's getting fitter. I hate this school.


CRELL
Bring it here. Not through another crowd.
TAVI
The padded case blocks vibration. First we've got to catch it.
SERA
No music. Pads on rails.
BEAM
We can add the cheering later! Nobody mime it too loudly!
ROOK
Silent Beam. I knew this course had a reward.


HALBERD
WEEK THREE
Twelve.
BRAM
Fourteen. That's more than yesterday.
DAX
It's still sixteen short.
IONA
Then we've got sixteen left to beat! Watch us!
ROOK
I'd lead the standing ovation. Small technical problem.

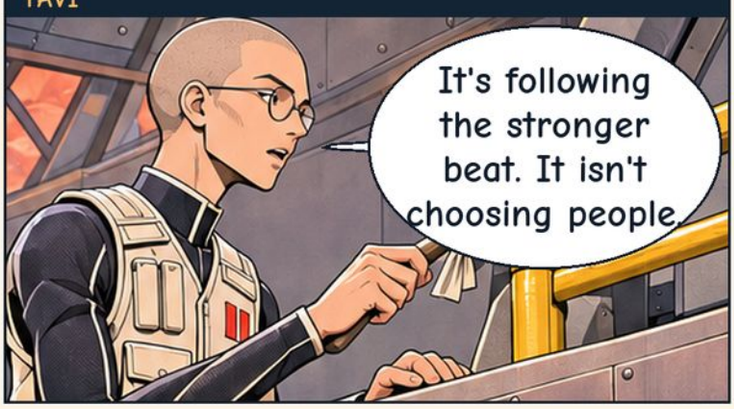
BRAM



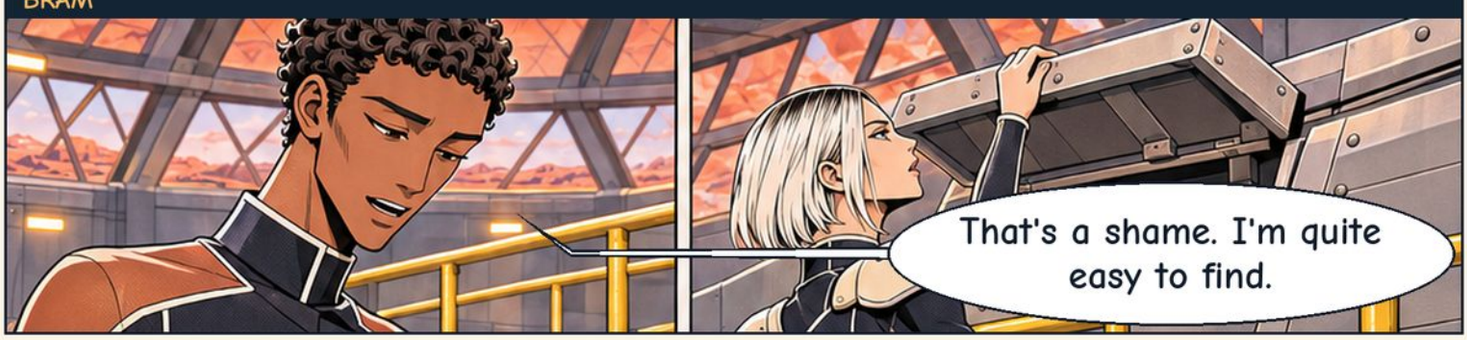
PIP



TAVI



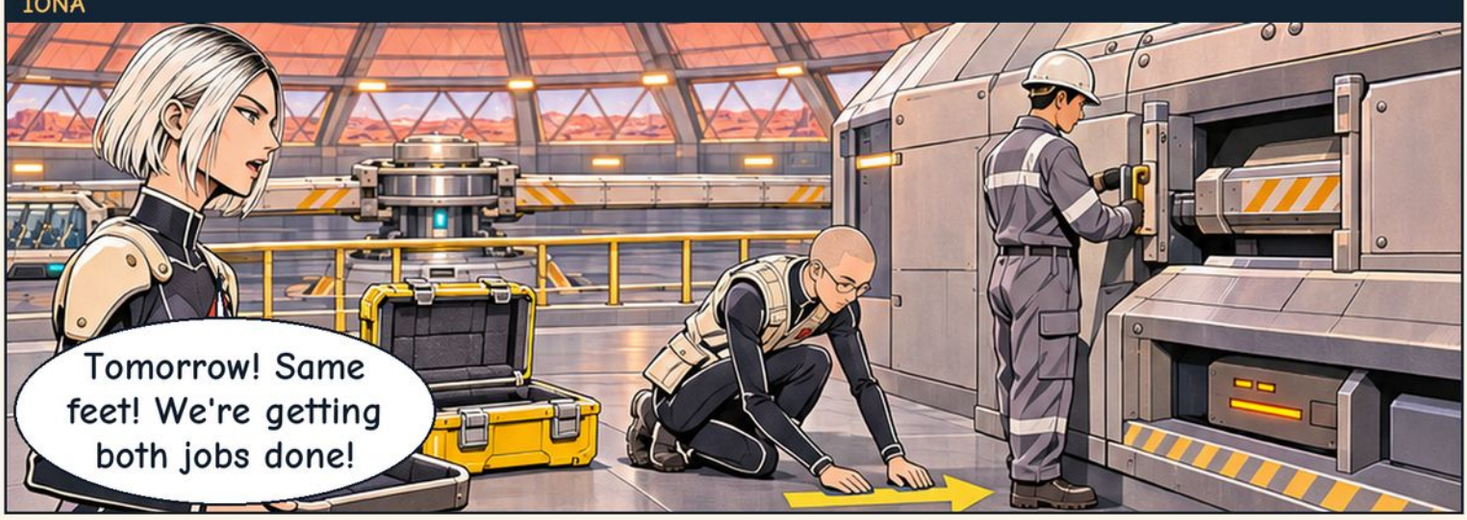
BRAM



PIP · LATER

Unseen, it slipped through the service opening into the empty cabin.

IONA

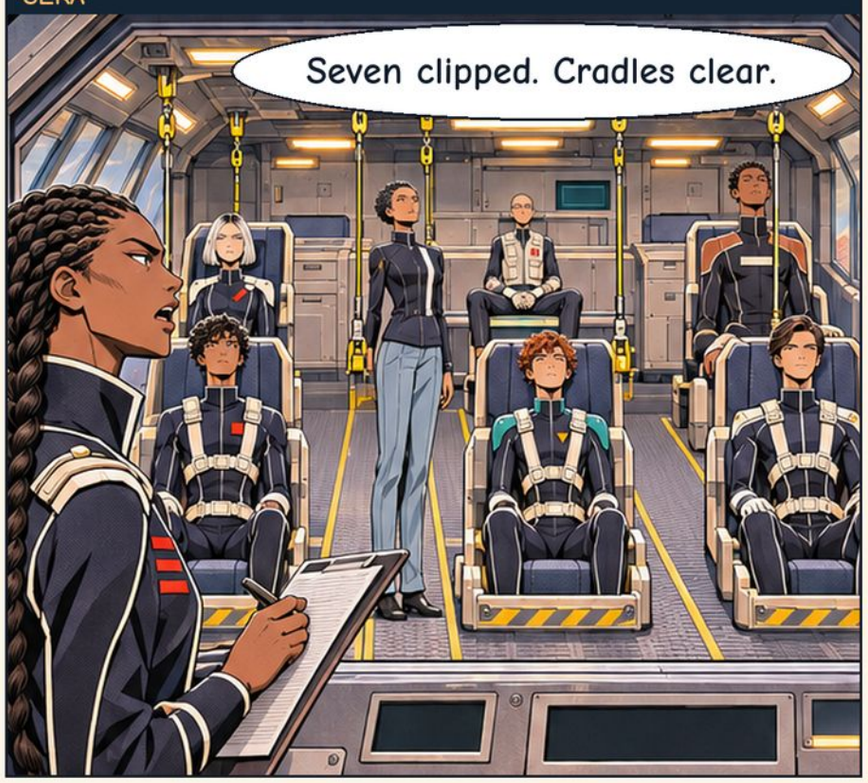


TAVI

I'll ride along. The floor's vibration sensor is still rattling.

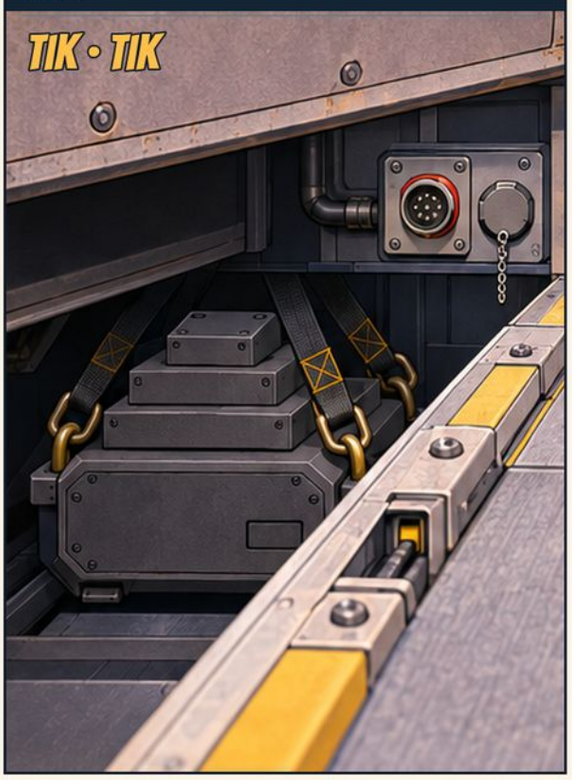


SERA



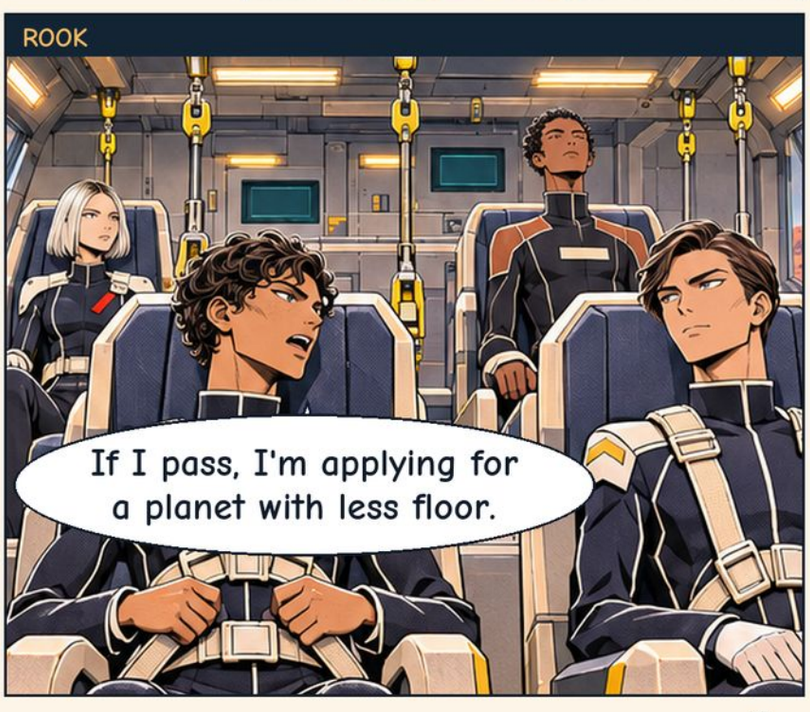
PIP · LATER

The safety check missed it behind a bench; its lights were dark.





ROOK




HALBERD
Thirty.
1.00 g
IONA
Ha! Your turn! No speeches till you're sitting!
ROOK
I had a speech. It's gone to my knees.
PIP
Okay. Okay. Still here.
HALBERD
Again.

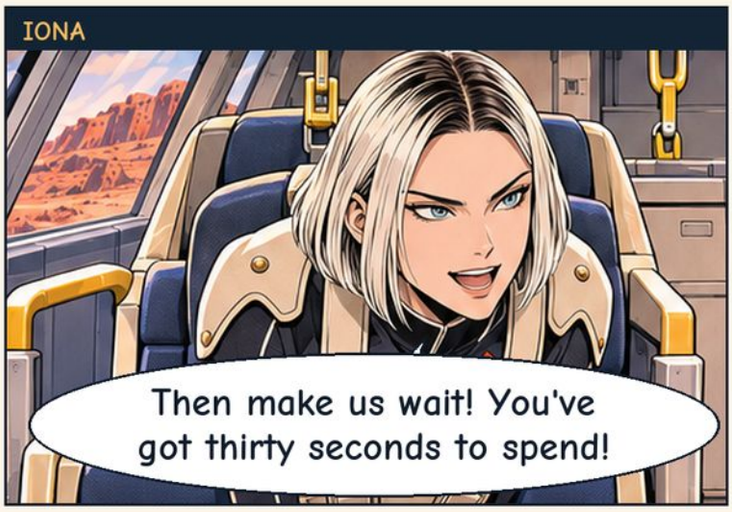
PIP · LATER

Bram was last: thirty seconds, hands free, no support.

BRAM



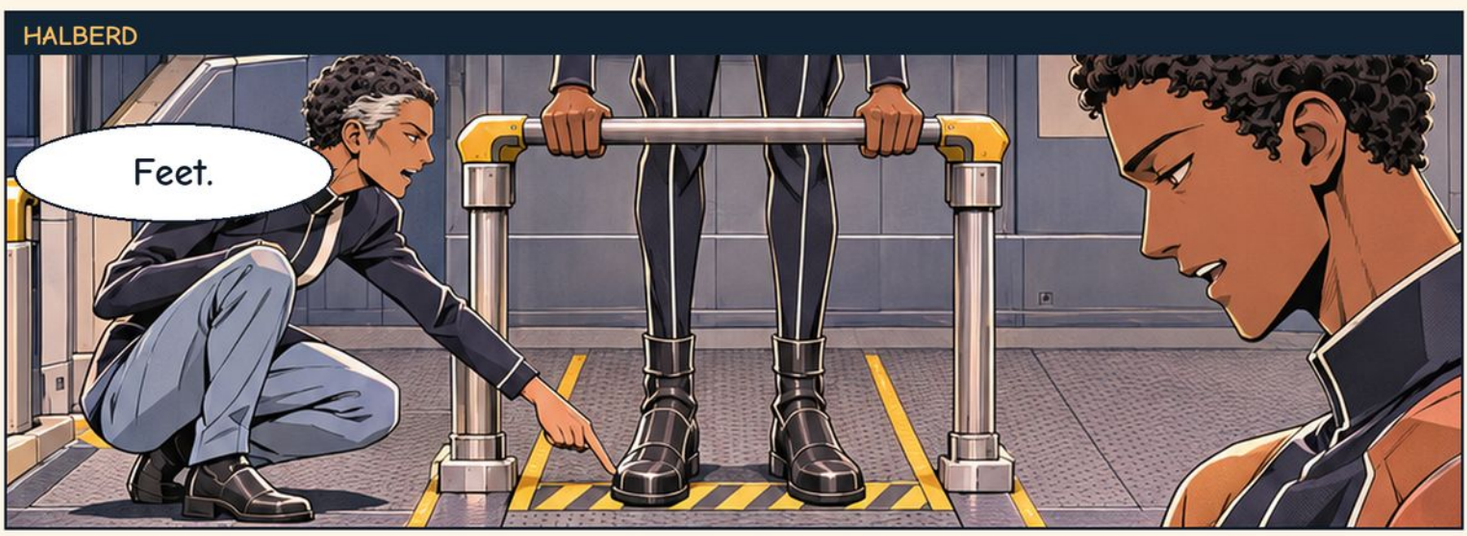
IONA



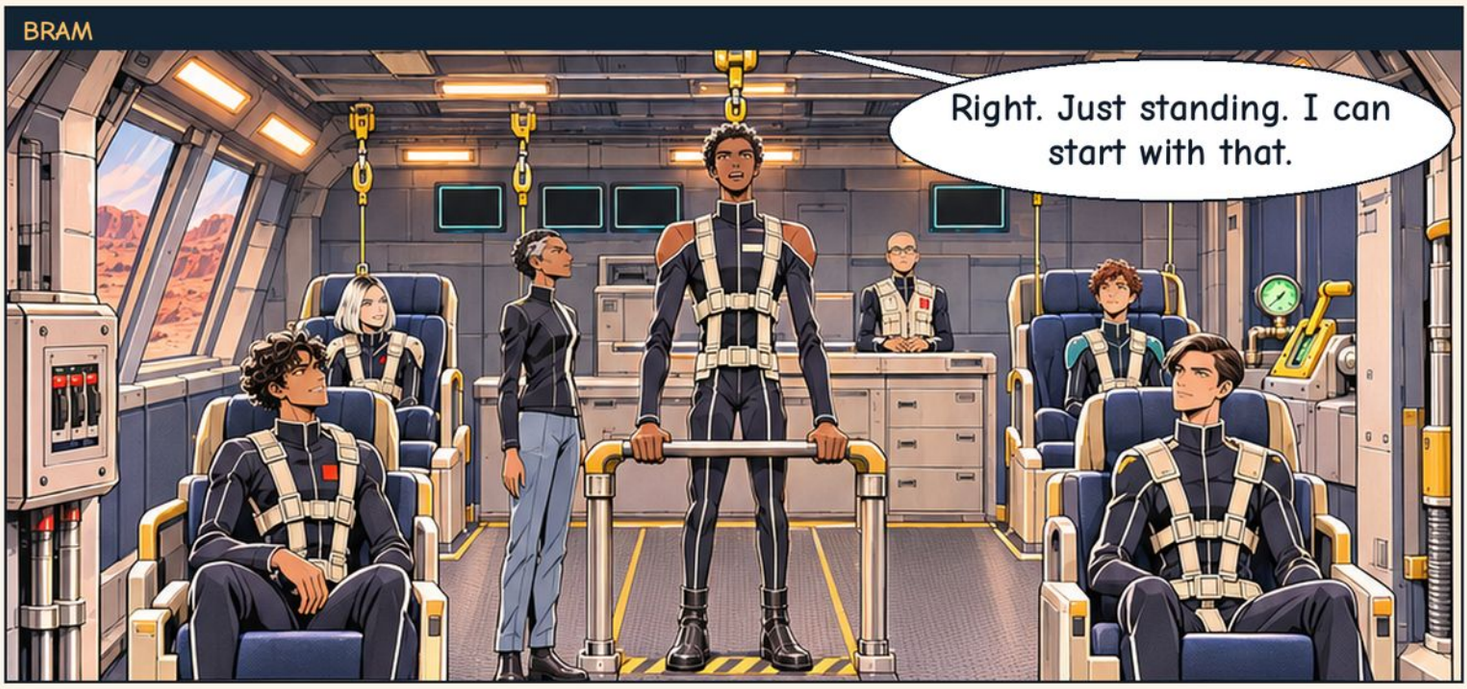
ROOK

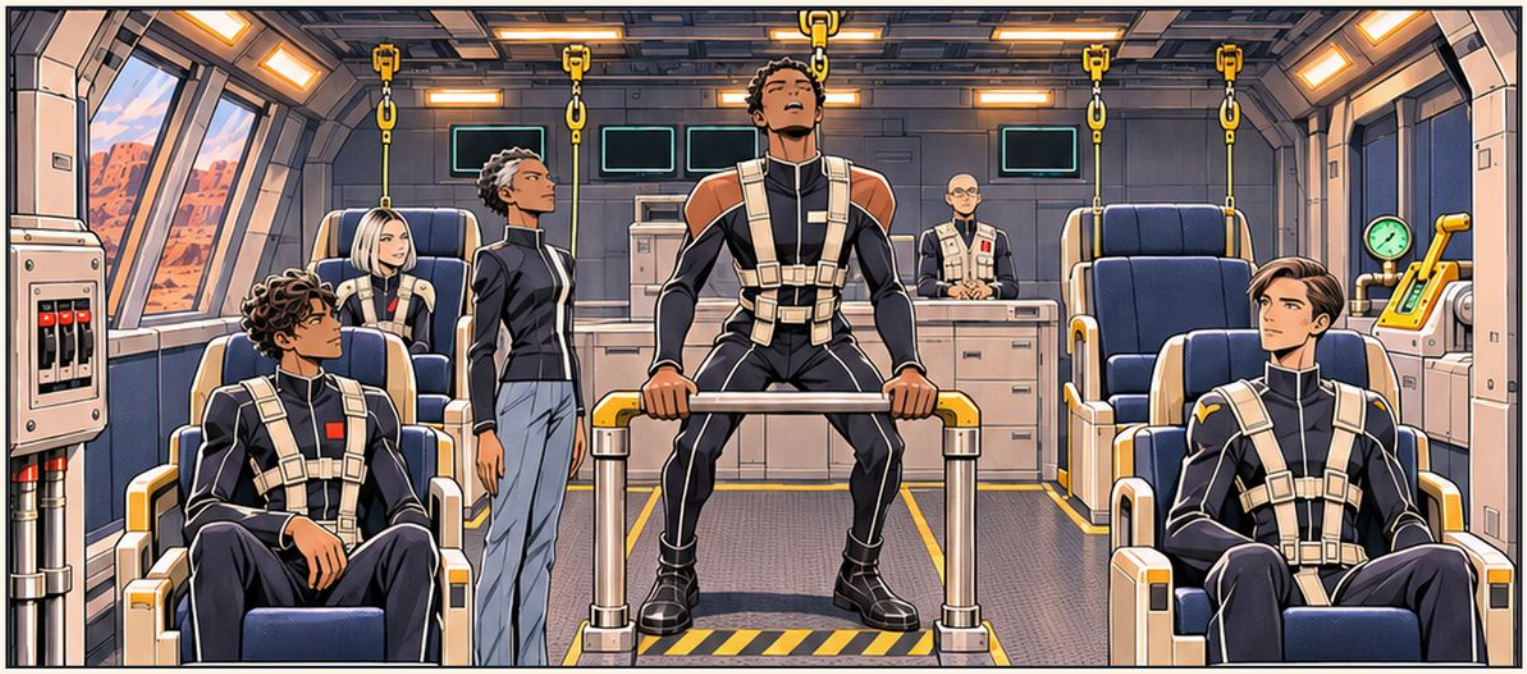


HALBERD

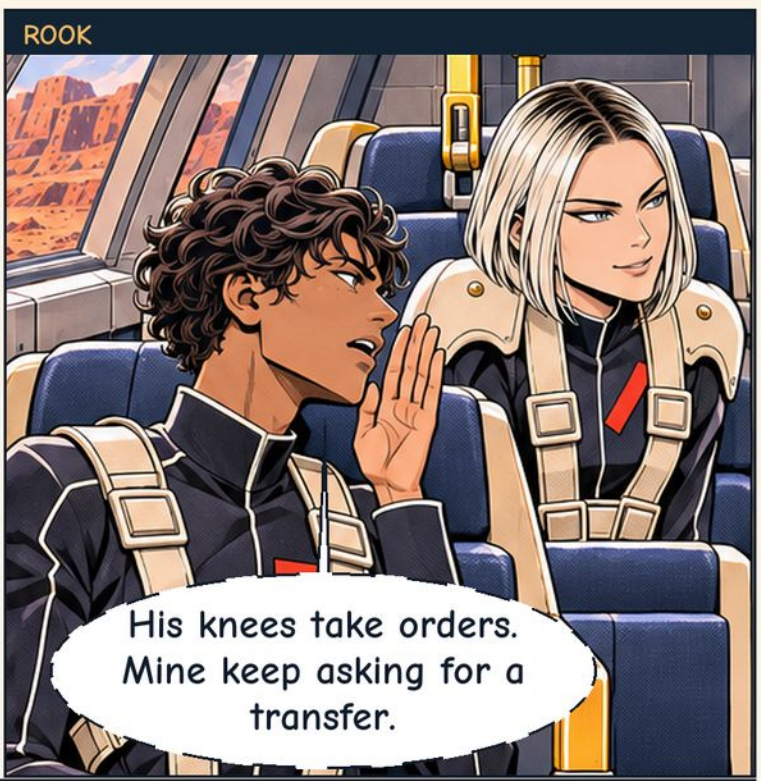


BRAM

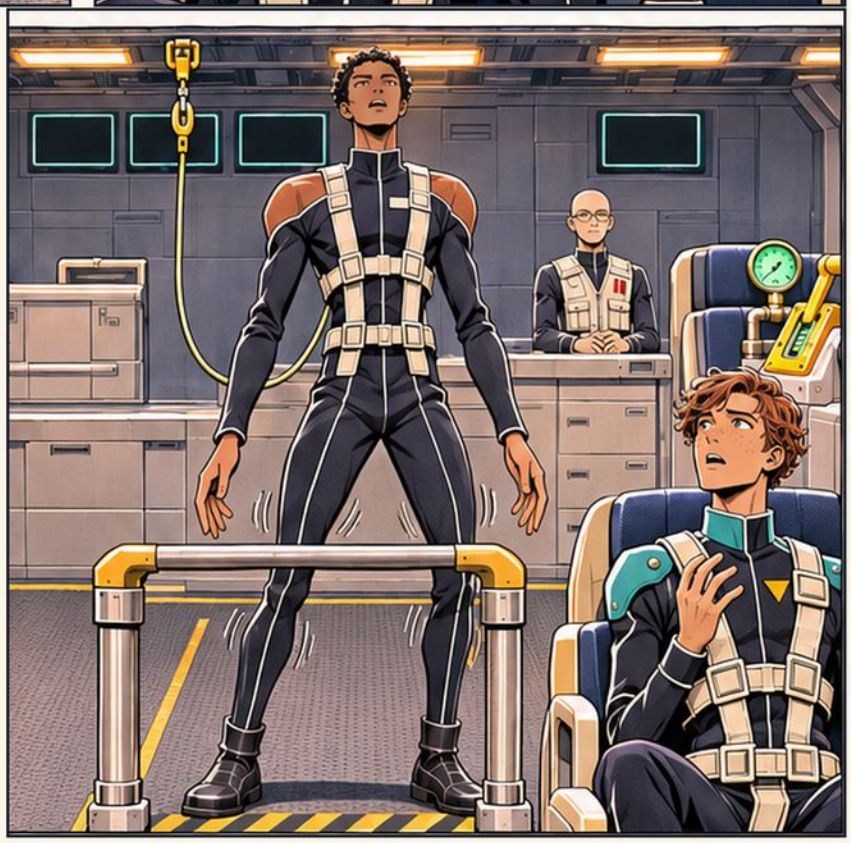


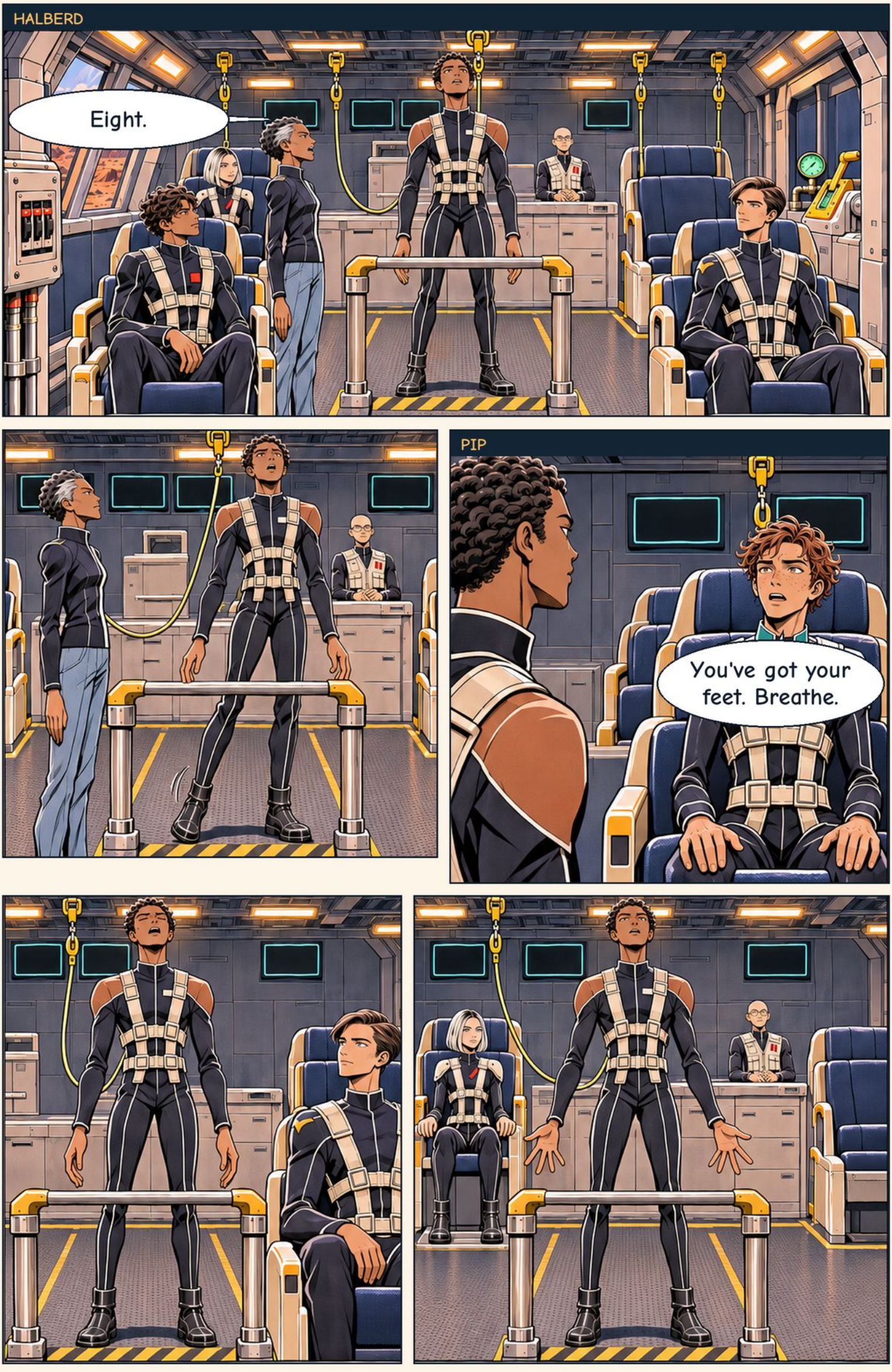


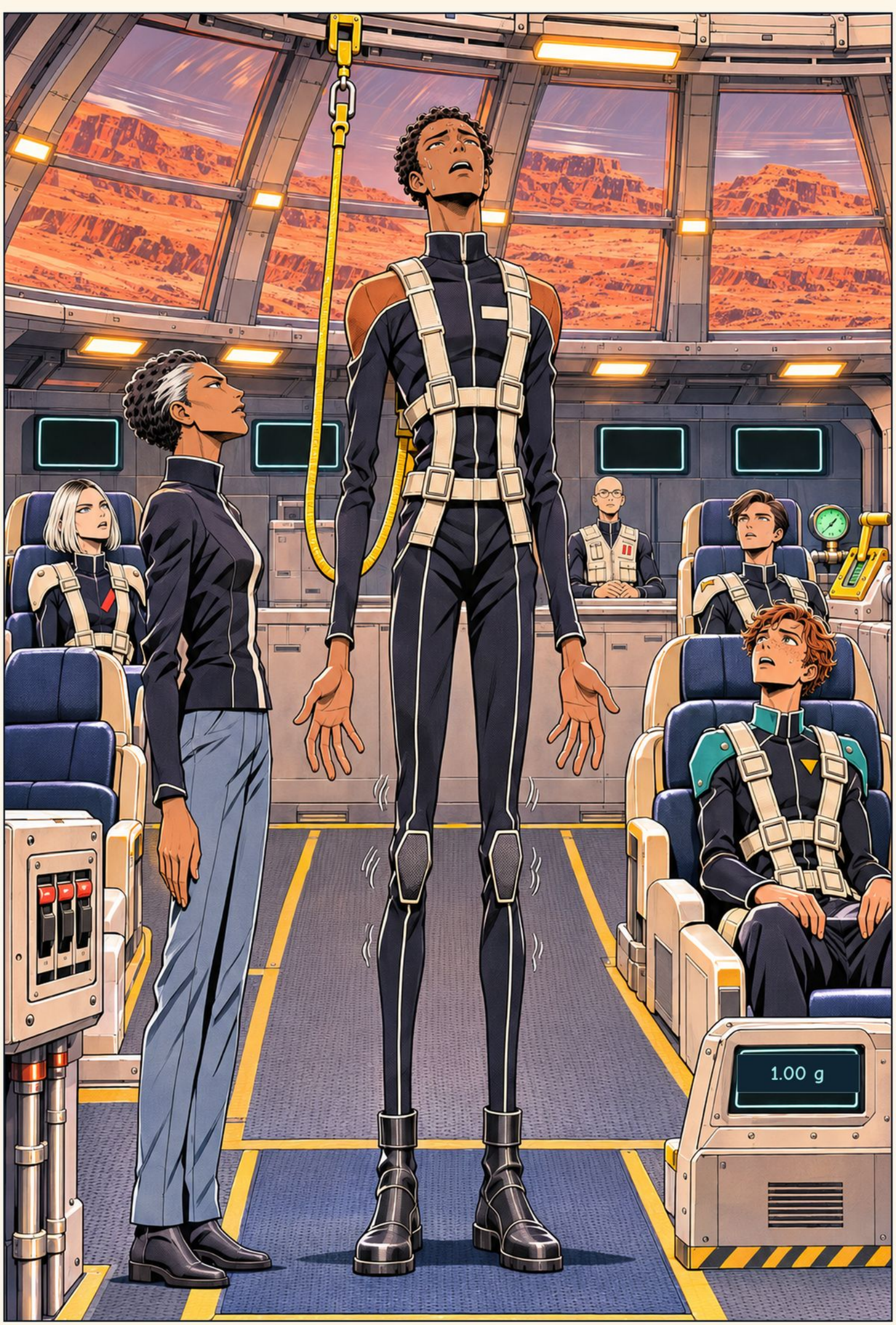

BRAM
Feet. Then the rest.

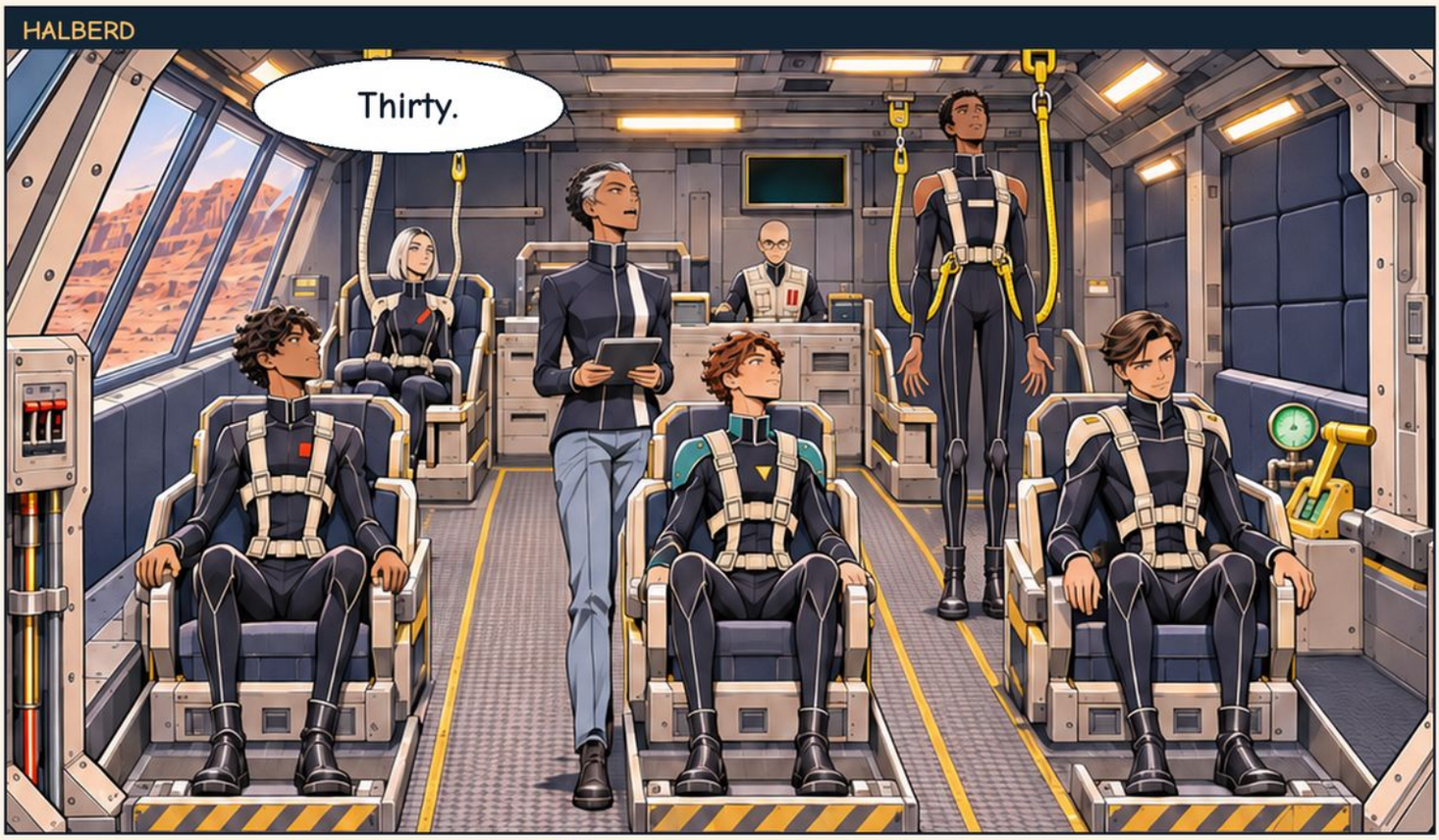

ROOK
His knees take orders. Mine keep asking for a transfer.


HALBERD
One.



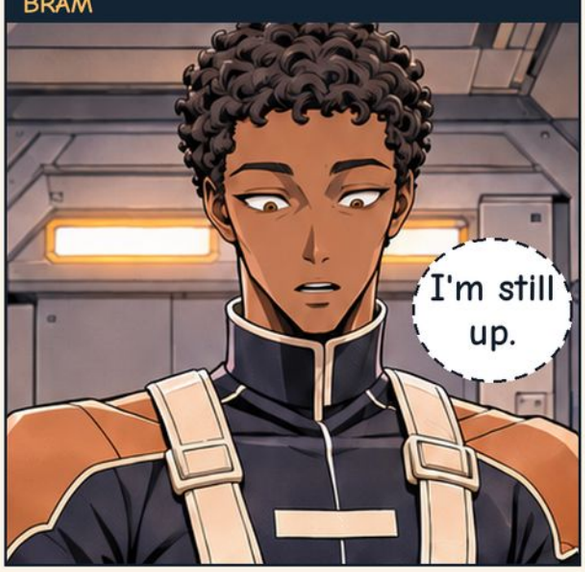

HALBERD
Eight.
PIP
You've got your feet. Breathe.


1.00 g



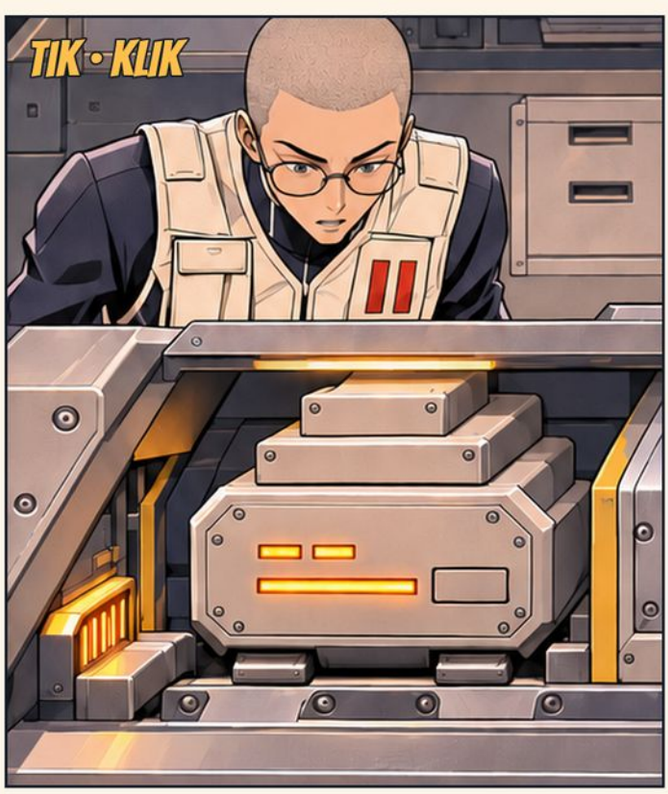
PIP · LATER

Bram had done it, before the core caused any trouble.









TAVI

The core! Its pulses are triggering the floor's inspection flap!

TIK · TIK · TAK

PIP · LATER

The core tripped one controller: Iona's foot trapped, electric brake dead.

IONA

FLOOR EDGE · SECTION VIEW



It's lifting the floor! Get us stopped!

SERA

Motor off. Electrical brake's failed. Stay clipped.

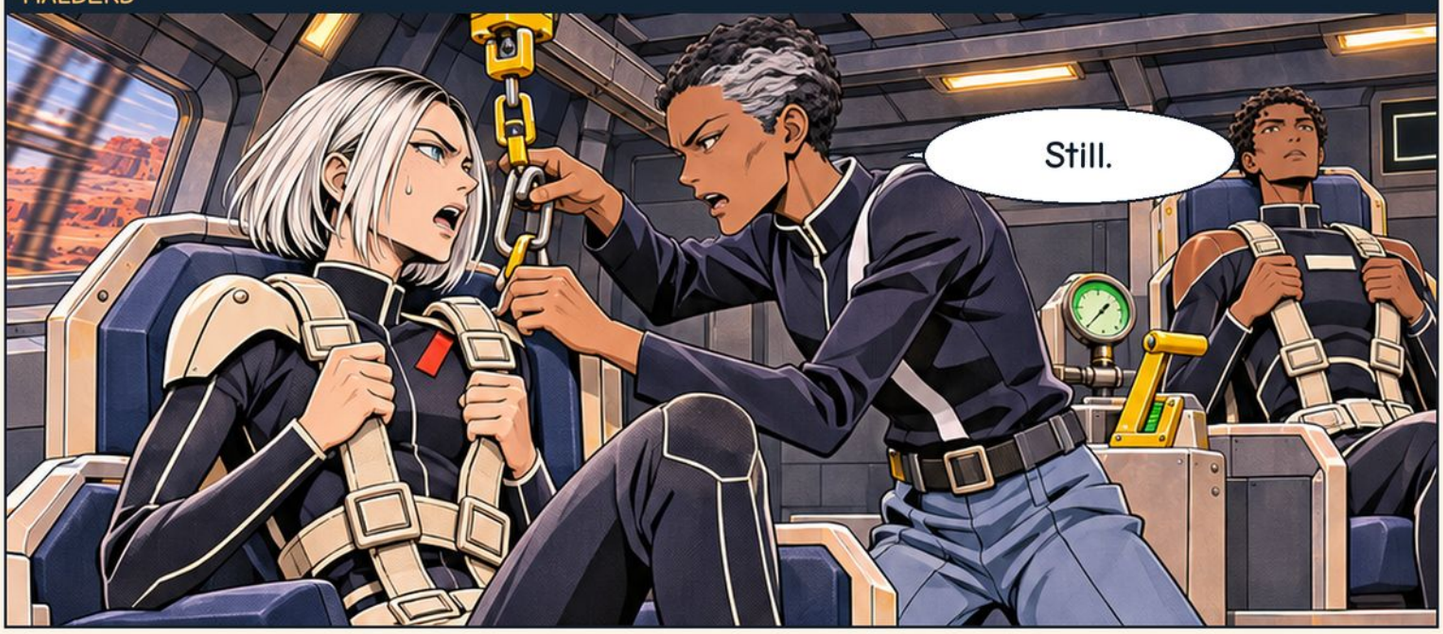
ROOK

Nobody move. The floor's started taking prisoners.

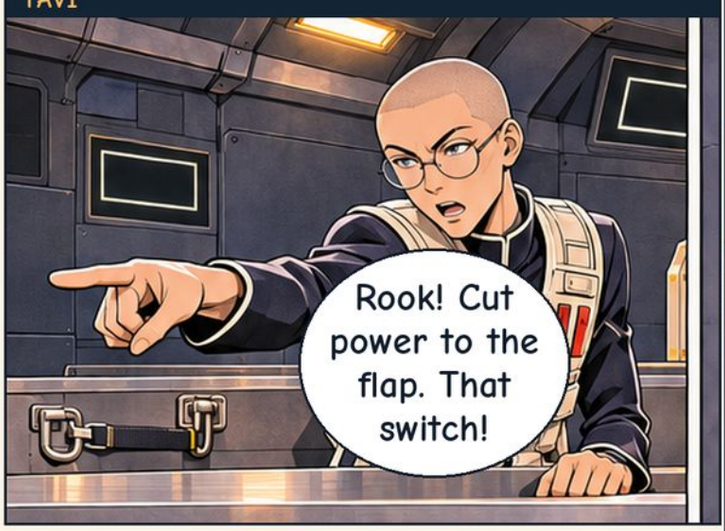
PIP · LATER

All seven safety lines stayed clipped; Halberd took Iona's weight.

HALBERD

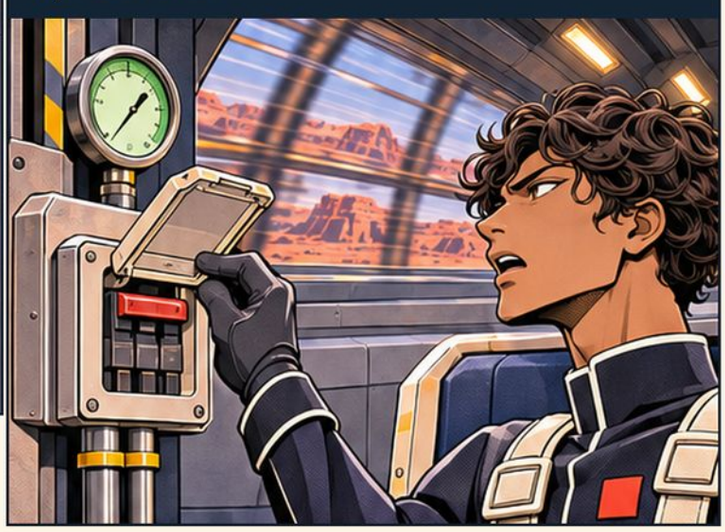


TAVI



ROOK

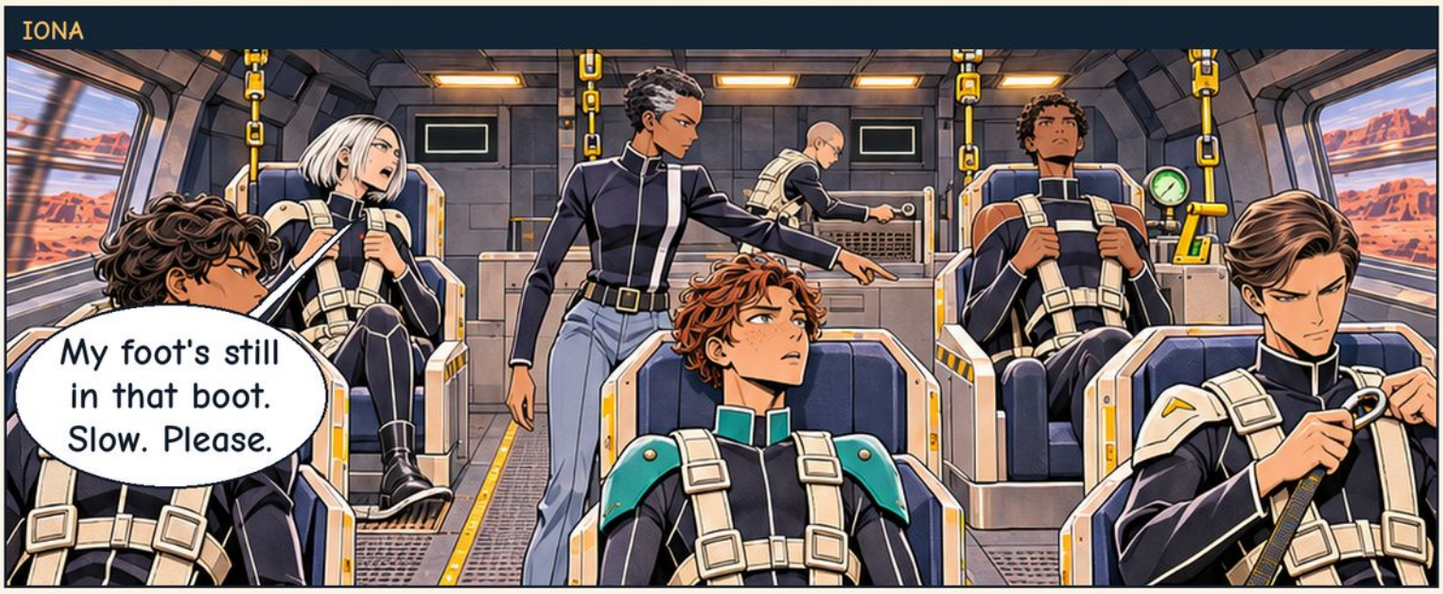
Flap's off. We're still spinning. Farewell lap. Several.



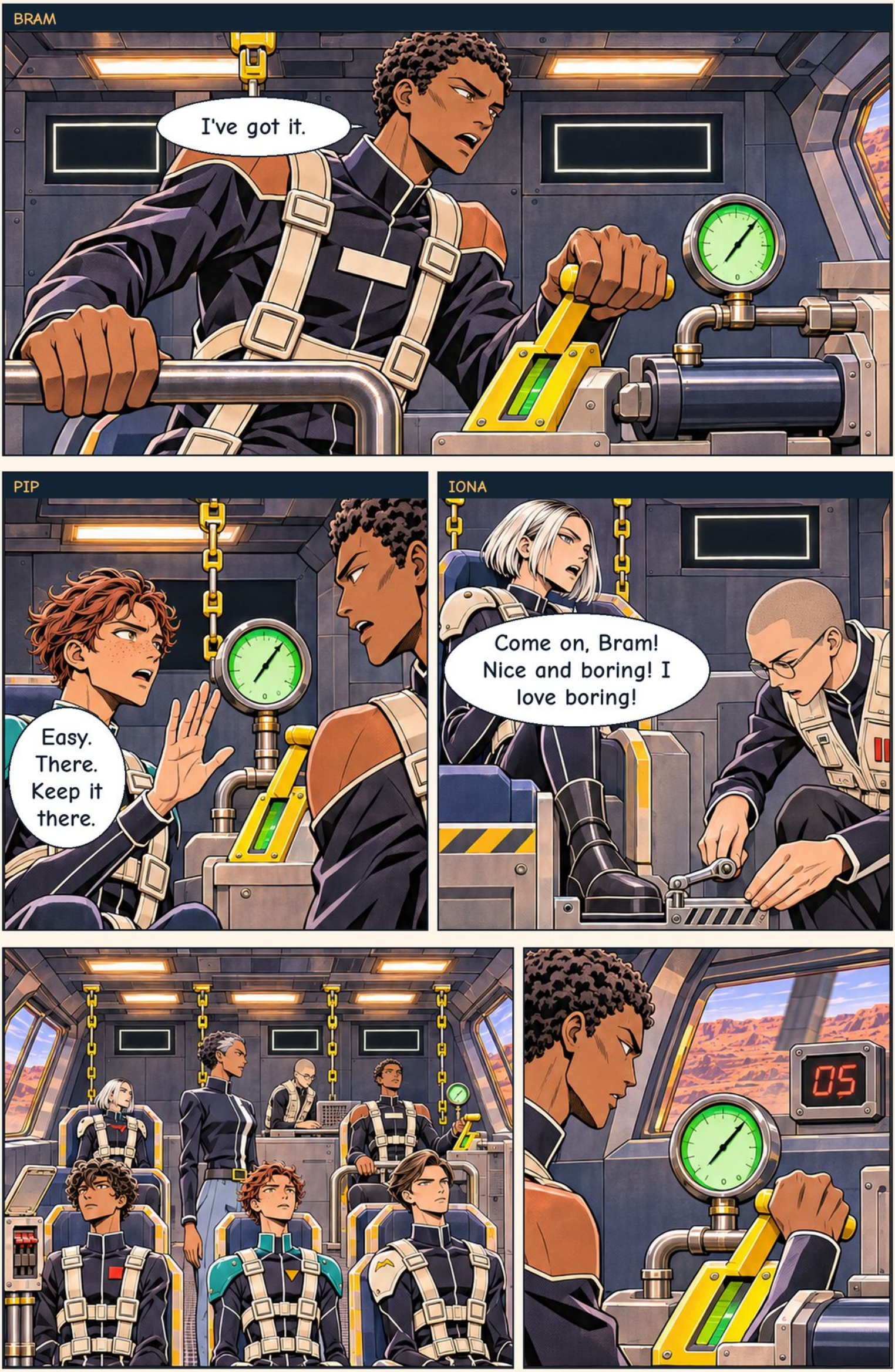
TAVI

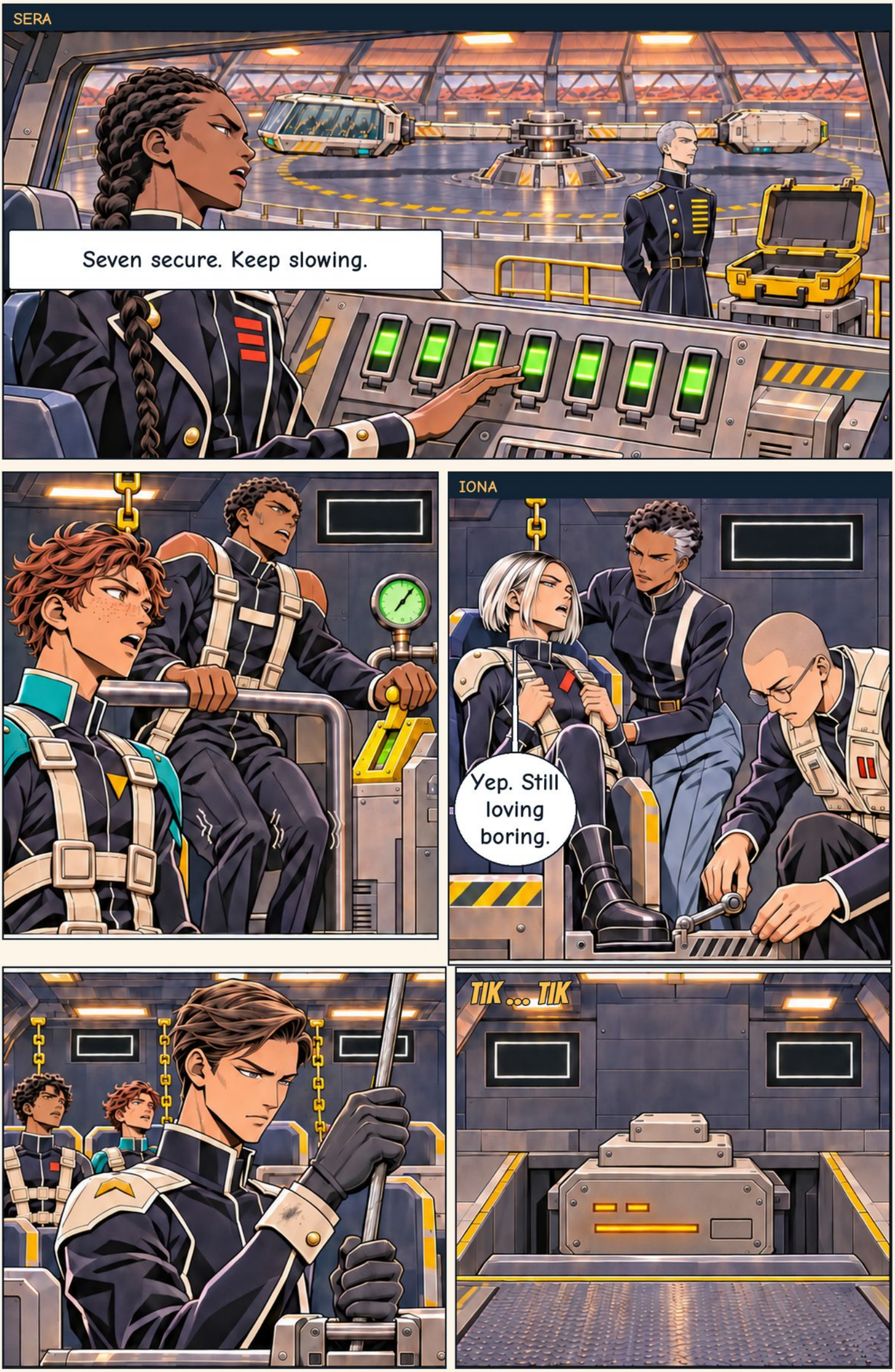


IONA



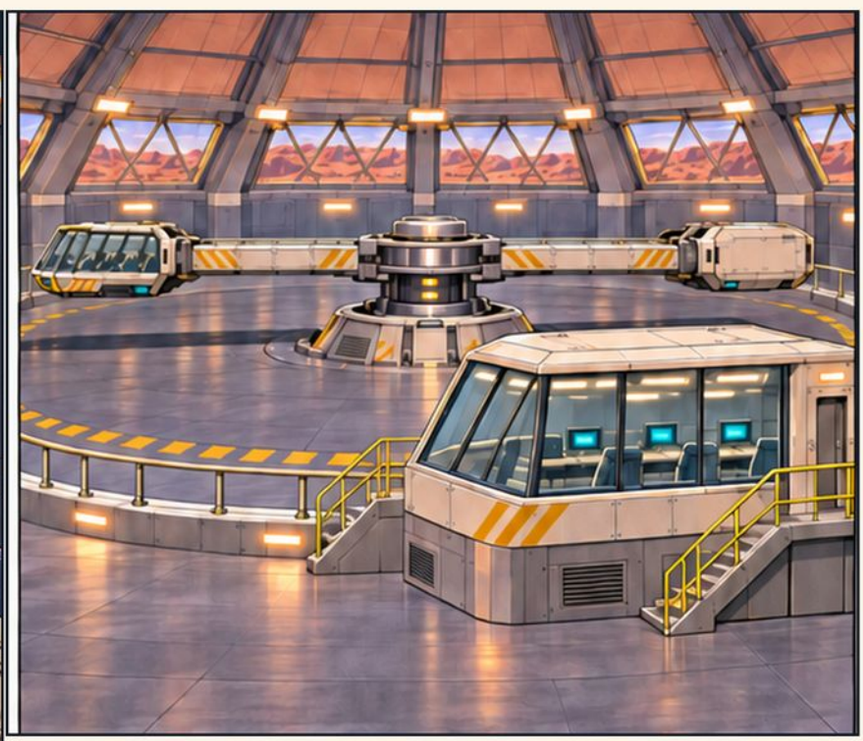

SERA
Bram! Yellow hand brake. That stops us without electricity.
BRAM
Right. Feet. Then the rest.
HALBERD
Slowly.
PIP
Green band. Same as practice.
ROOK
No sudden stops. I'd like my stomach back in one piece.

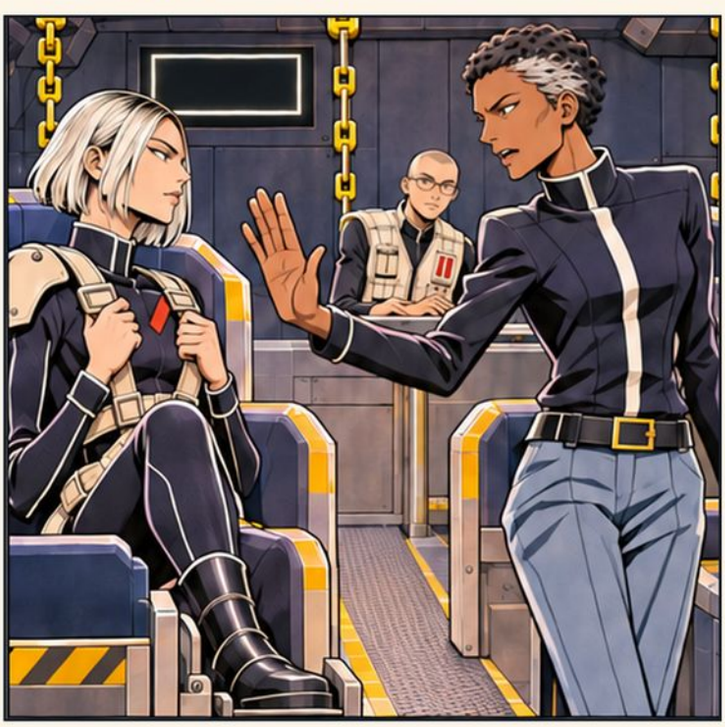

BRAM
I've got it.
PIP
Easy. There. Keep it there.
IONA
Come on, Bram! Nice and boring! I love boring!
05

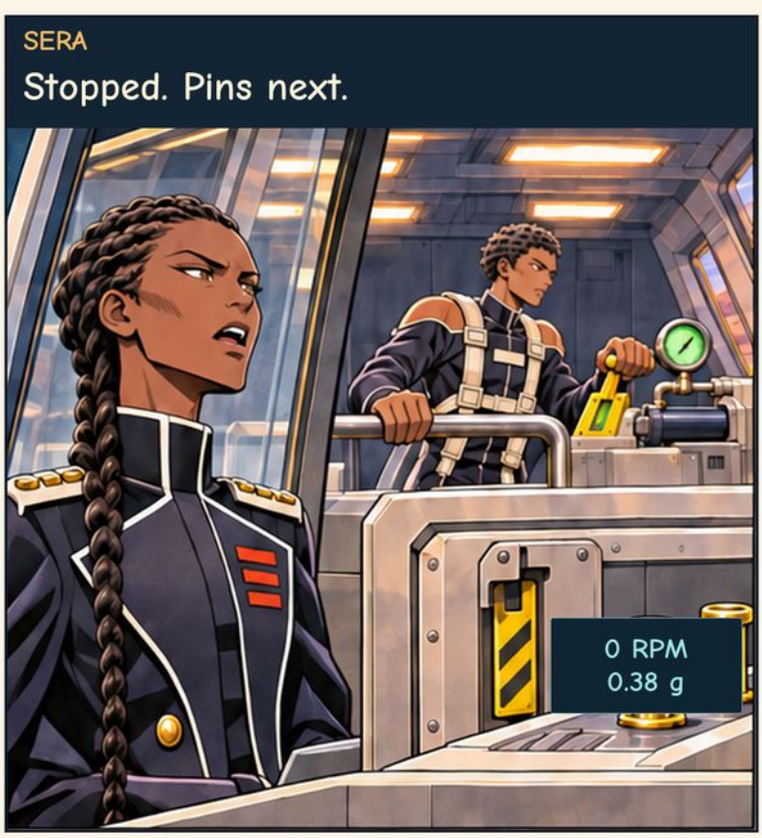

SERA
Seven secure. Keep slowing.
IONA
Yep. Still loving boring.
TIK ... TIK

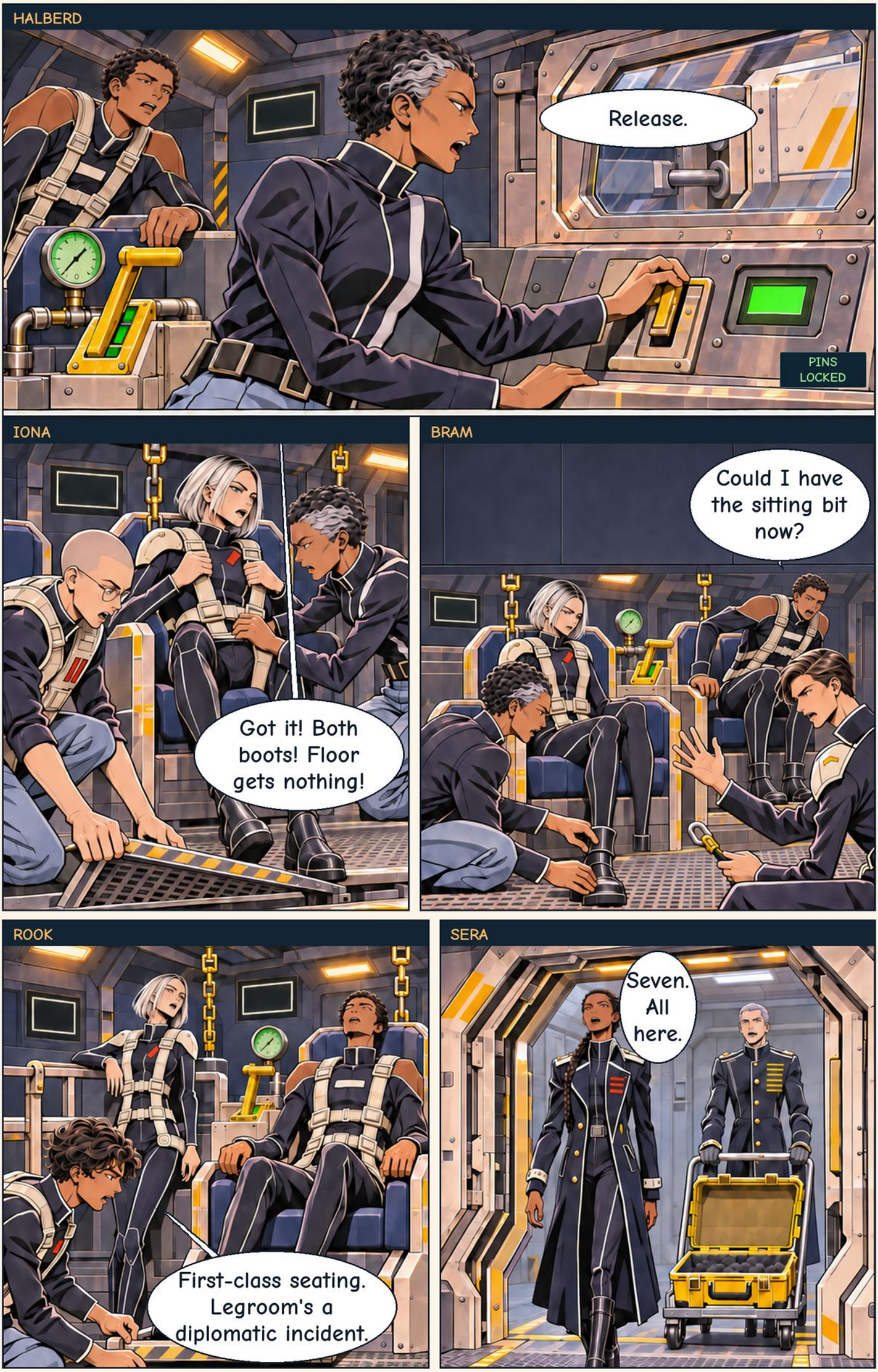

BRAM
Still green.

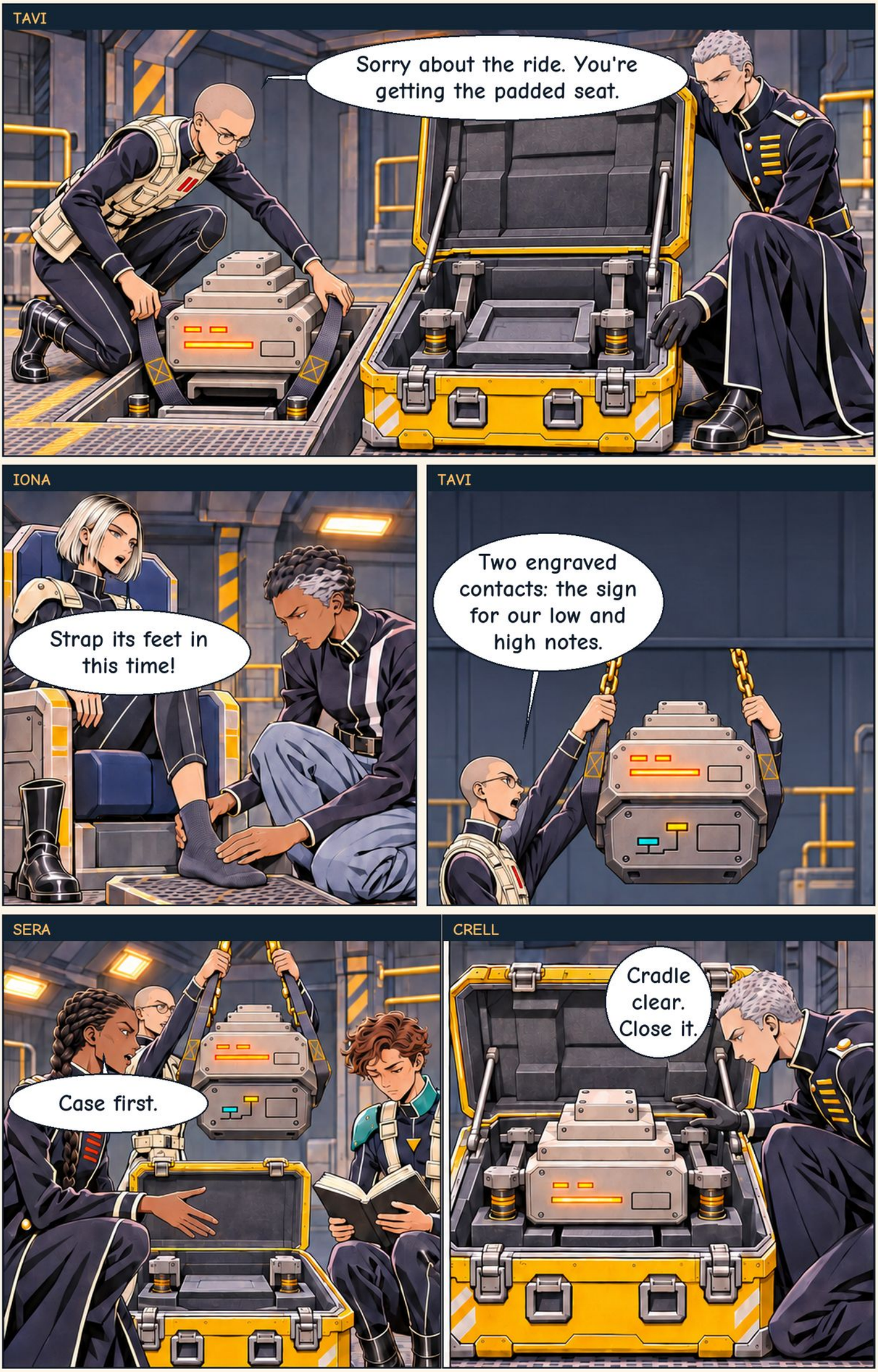

ROOK
The Sitting Duck. Finally, a manoeuvre with proper seating.

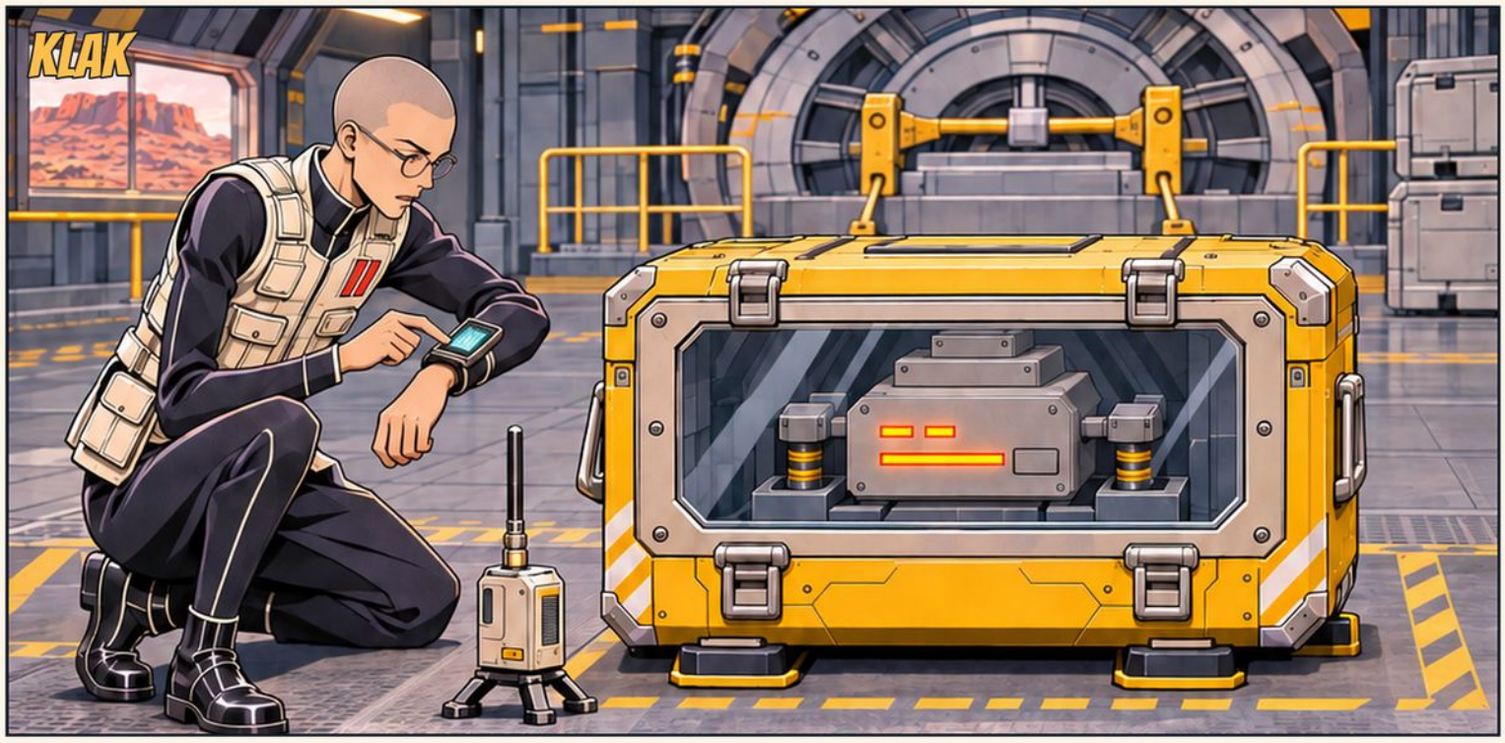


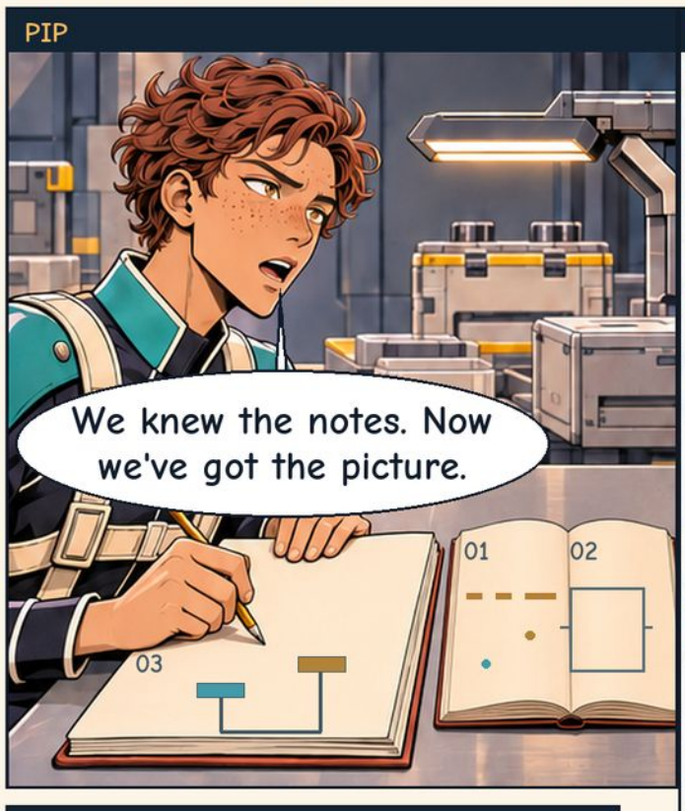



SERA
Stopped. Pins next.
0 RPM
0.38 g


HALBERD
Release.
PINS LOCKED
IONA
Got it! Both boots! Floor gets nothing!
BRAM
Could I have the sitting bit now?
ROOK
First-class seating. Legroom's a diplomatic incident.
SERA
Seven. All here.


TAVI
Sorry about the ride. You're getting the padded seat.
IONA
Strap its feet in this time!
TAVI
Two engraved contacts: the sign for our low and high notes.
SERA
Case first.
CRELL
Cradle clear. Close it.

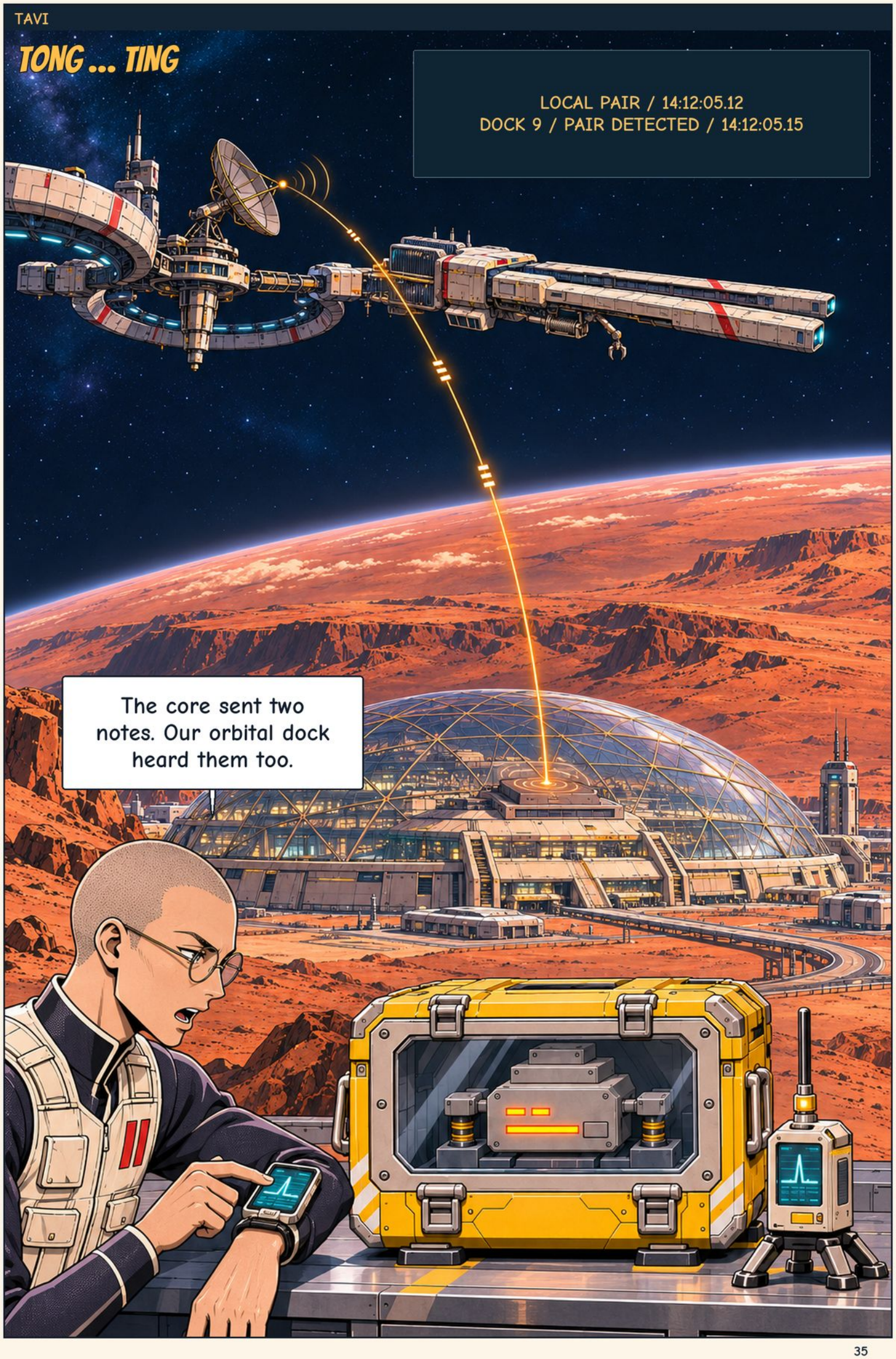

KLAK


PIP
We knew the notes. Now we've got the picture.
01
02
03

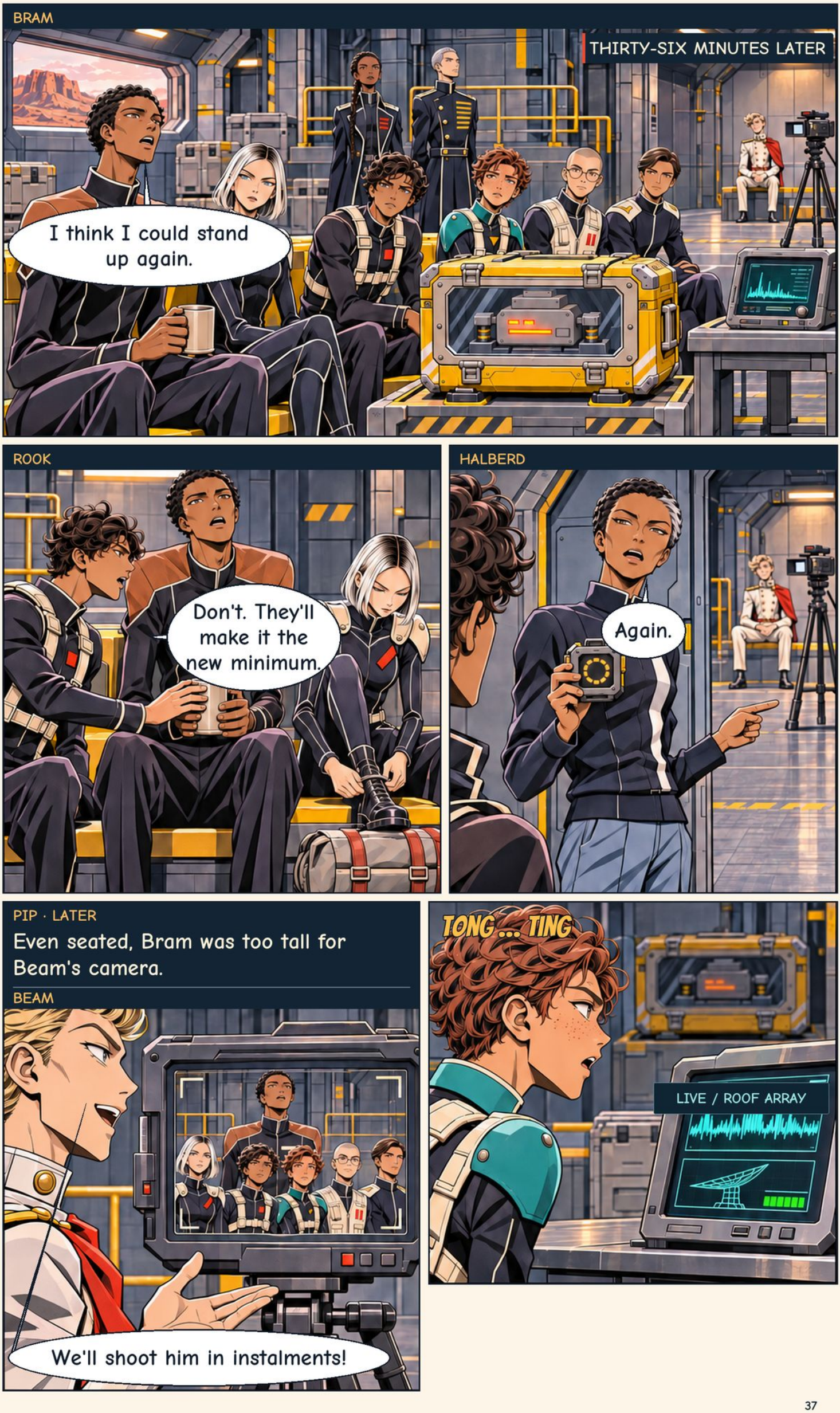

BRAM
30
Did I really do the thirty?


HALBERD
Thirty.
30

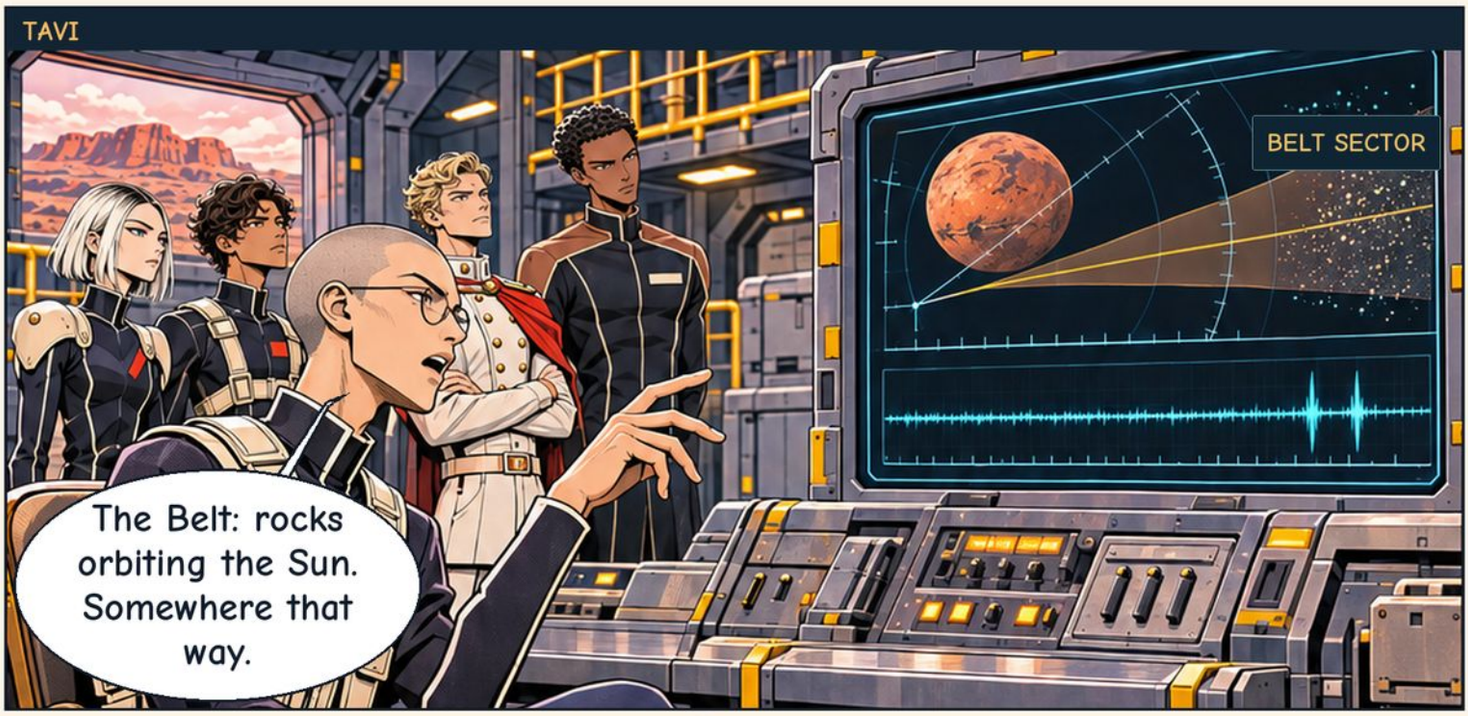

ROOK
30
31
Thirty. Didn't waste a second showing off. I respect that.


TONG ... TING
LOCAL PAIR / 14:12:05.12
DOCK 9 / PAIR DETECTED / 14:12:05.15
The core sent two notes. Our orbital dock heard them too.

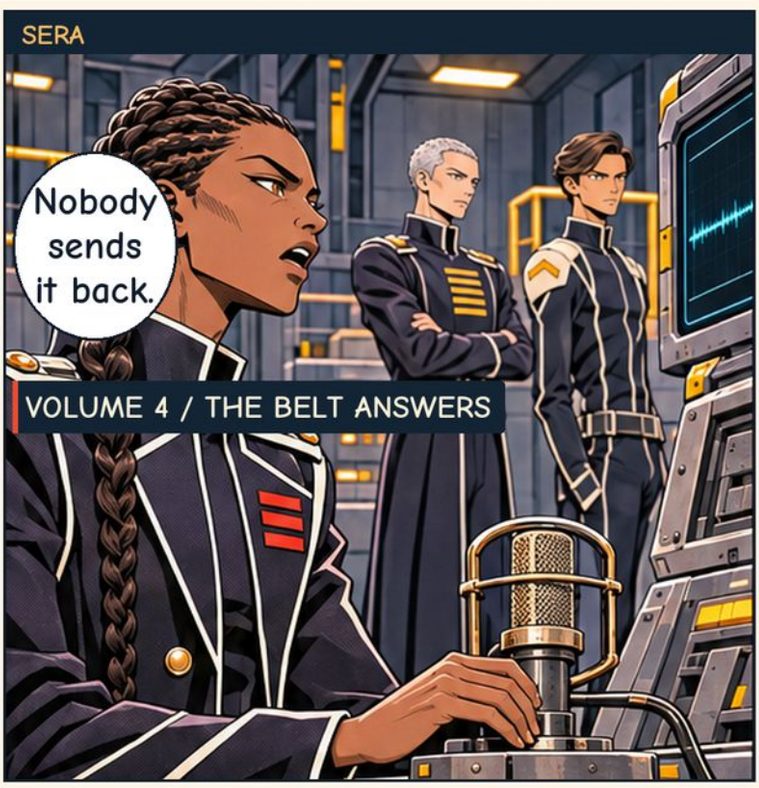

CRELL
RECEIVE ONLY
LOCAL + DOCK 9 / STORED
Did anyone play that pair?
TAVI
None of us. It did.
SERA
Keep listening. Nobody answers.
BEAM
A complete success! Every cadet passed the upright requirement!
ROOK
Tell them we're celebrating horizontally.

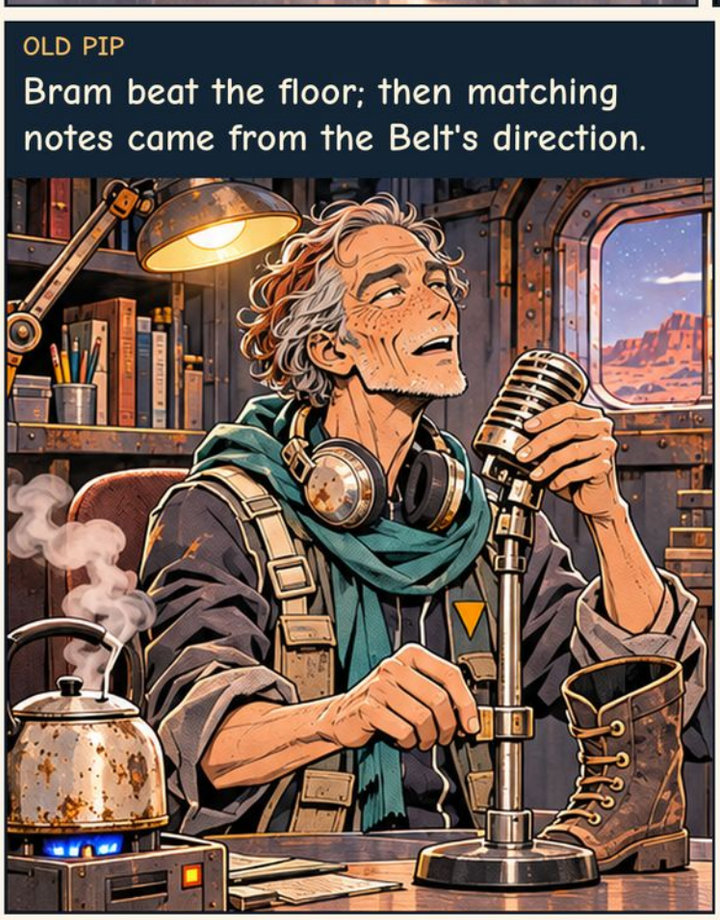

BRAM
THIRTY-SIX MINUTES LATER
I think I could stand up again.
ROOK
Don't. They'll make it the new minimum.
HALBERD
Again.
PIP · LATER
Even seated, Bram was too tall for Beam's camera.
BEAM
We'll shoot him in instalments!
TONG ... TING
LIVE / ROOF ARRAY


PIP
Same pause between notes. Core's dark. That's coming from outside.
ROOF ARRAY / LIVE
LOCAL PROBE / FLAT
TAVI
IN / 14:48:05.12
OUT / 14:12:05.12
A bearing: the roof aerial's direction, not a distance.
SERA
BELT
EARTH
Log both times. Show the bearing.
BEARING ONLY / DISTANCE UNKNOWN
CRELL
That's away from Earth. Towards the asteroid belt.


TAVI
BELT SECTOR
The Belt: rocks orbiting the Sun. Somewhere that way.


PIP
Could something out there have heard it?


SERA
Nobody sends it back.
VOLUME 4 / THE BELT ANSWERS


OLD PIP
Bram beat the floor; then matching notes came from the Belt's direction.

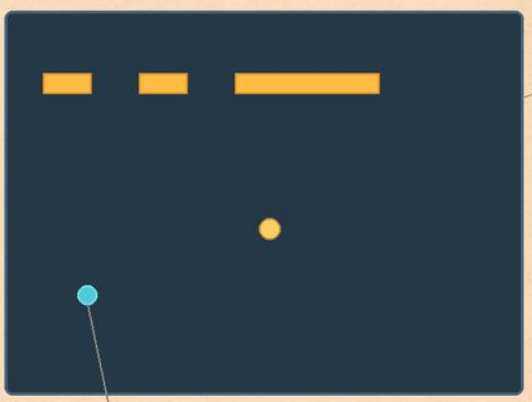

OLD PIP
Who sent them was our next problem.

HANDBOOK?

COLLECTED CLUES

01

RHYTHM



02

SILENCE



03

CONTACTS

