

Unity Book I

# Ascent



First Edition

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For Christopher



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# Preface

I had a lot of trepidation when it came to putting together this printed volume; on the one hand, the story was cliché and slapdash, the art was “under development” (putting it *very* kindly), and rereading it today simply makes me cringe. On the other hand, it eventually tells the most important story that serves as the launching point for the Unity series as a whole.

The story of *Ascent* wasn’t written so much as it formed, like crystals around a nucleation point. The underlying catalyst to the entire story was a daydream in which I wondered what would happen to someone who had awakened having everything – their name, their identity, their past, and even their *gender* – removed. I knew from the beginning that the characters would be non-human, and that the main character’s species would be something semi-aquatic and somewhat similar to Earth monotremes. Other than that, I had no idea going in what would happen, and it is only from happenstance that things happened to work out in a way which was reasonably coherent, aside from some glaring inconsistencies created in the first few chapters.

If I were to do this all over again, I probably wouldn’t do it at all. There were many times throughout the creation of this story that I was on the verge of giving up outright. But every time, someone inspired me to keep going, and I think I’m better for it.

To that end, I would like to thank, in no particular order: My family, Abbey Spracklin, Dan Lacey, bug, Felix Pleșoianu, Mark Farinas, Patrick Lake, and last but definitely *not* least, Christopher Sturtivant, whom I miss dearly. You all gave me ideas, inspiration, and motivation to keep going. And to everyone else who gave me advice and criticism, I would like to thank you as well.

*fluffy*  
Seattle, WA

## **Kickstarter Contributors**

### **Zero Node**

Tambi

### **Dean General**

Werner K. Heisenflüff (on behalf of J.P.)

### **Captain**

Matthew Brabbin  
foldl  
Jukka Kurenniemi  
Steven Martindale

### **Lieutenant**

Mark Farinas  
Denise Hudson  
Tiogshi Laj  
Stephanie Nikon Raccoon

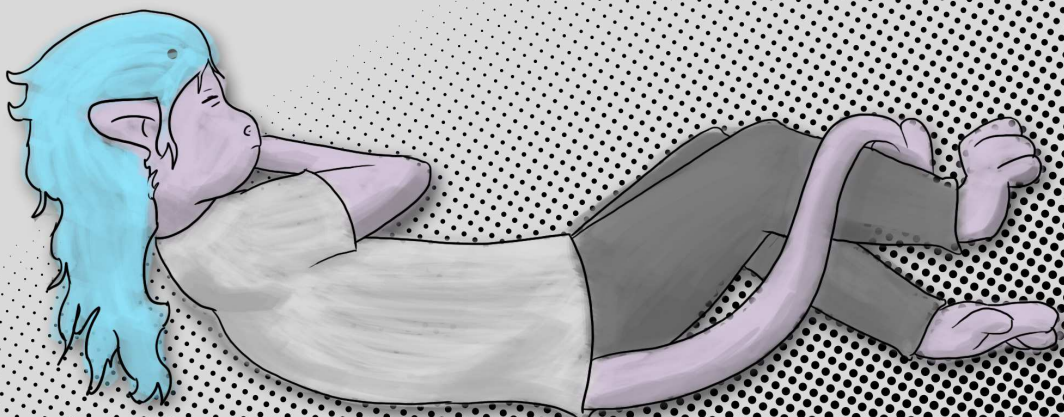
### **Agent**

Adri

### **Ensign**

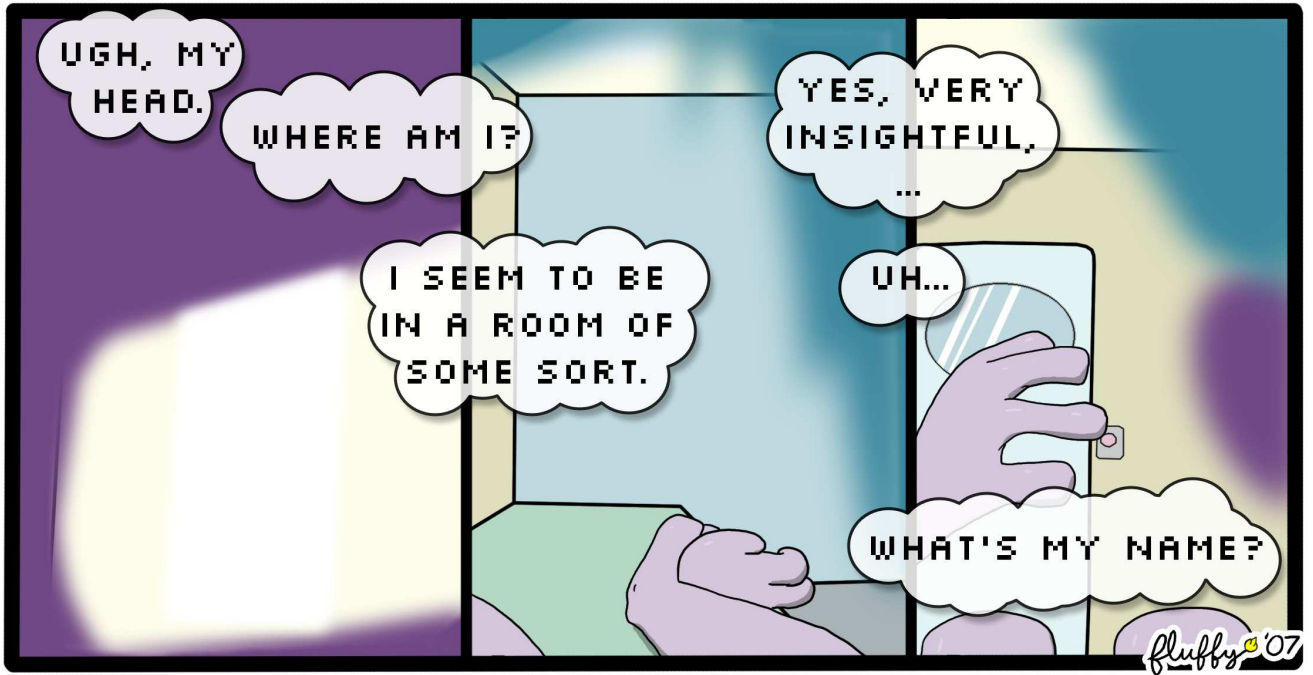
Joe Watkins

# 1. AWAKENING

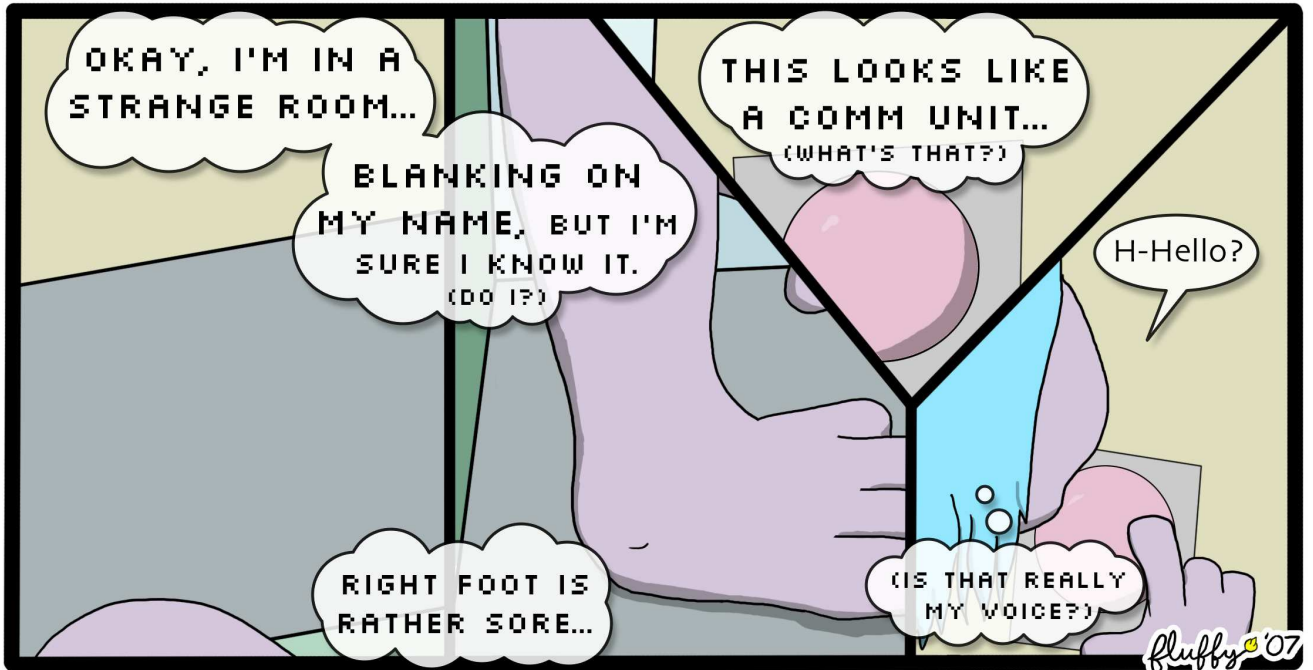




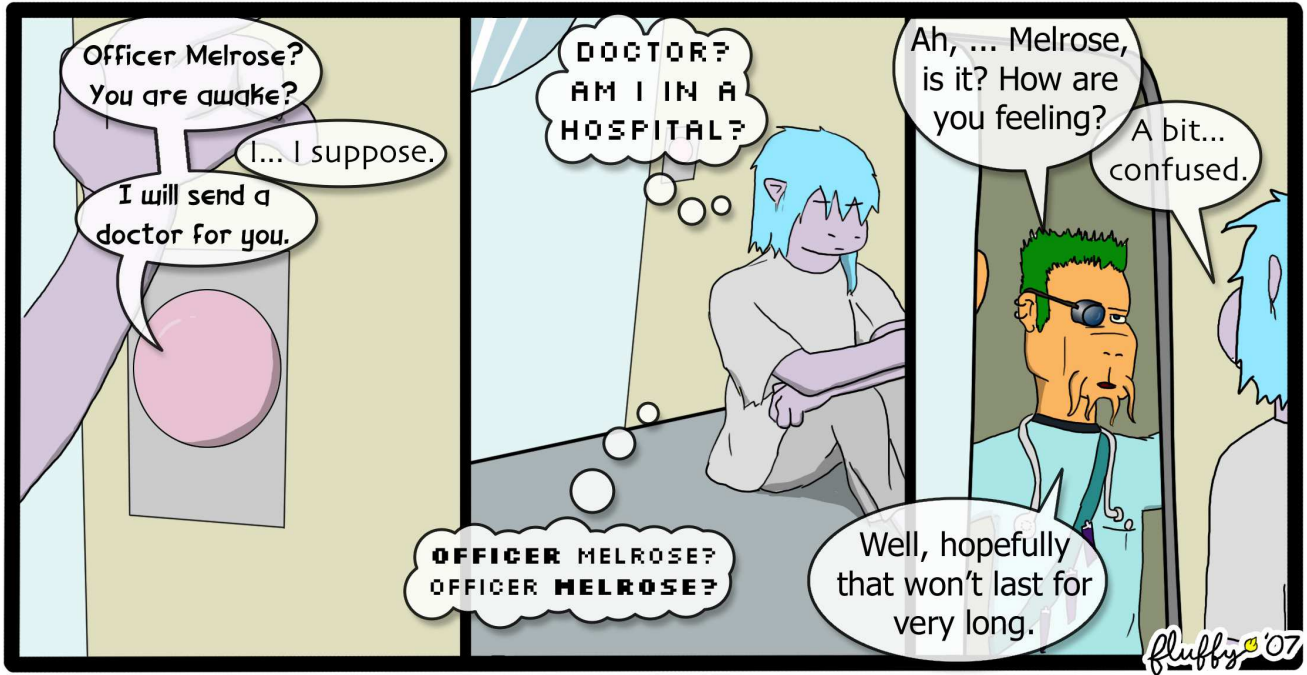
1. Awakening



2. Observance



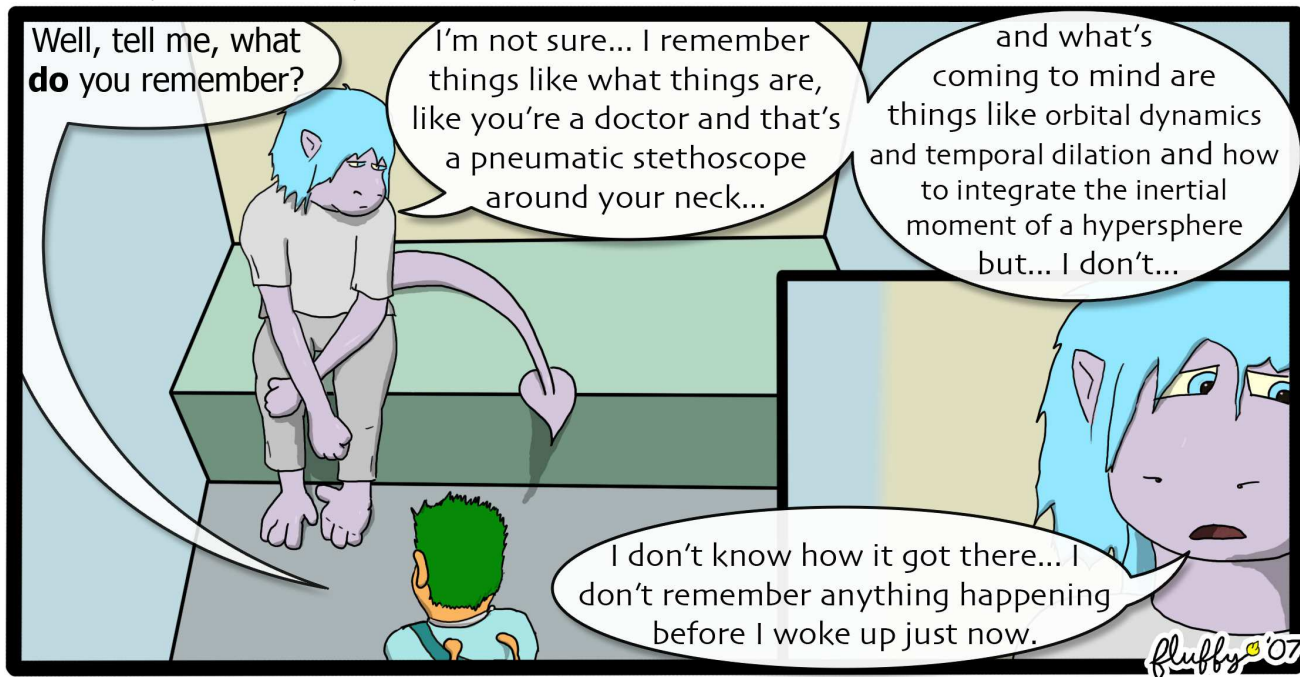
3. Beginning



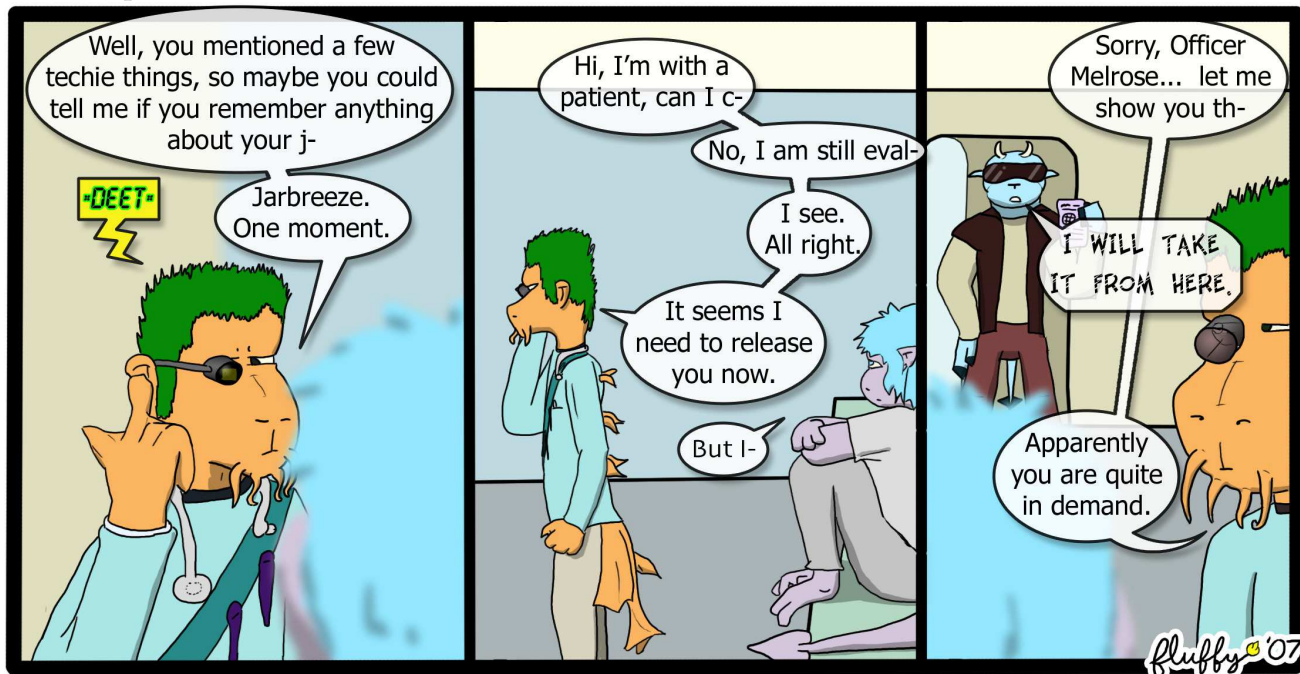
4. If wishes were fishes



5. Orbital dynamics are easy



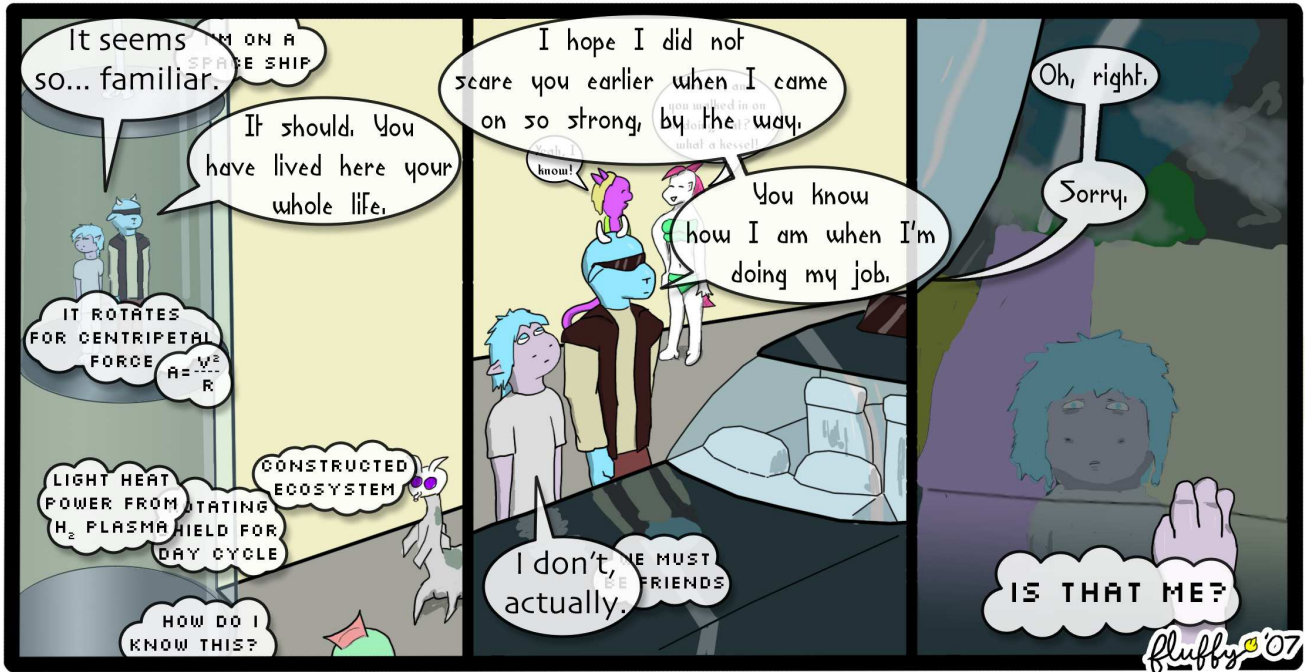
6. Interruptions



## 7. Outside in



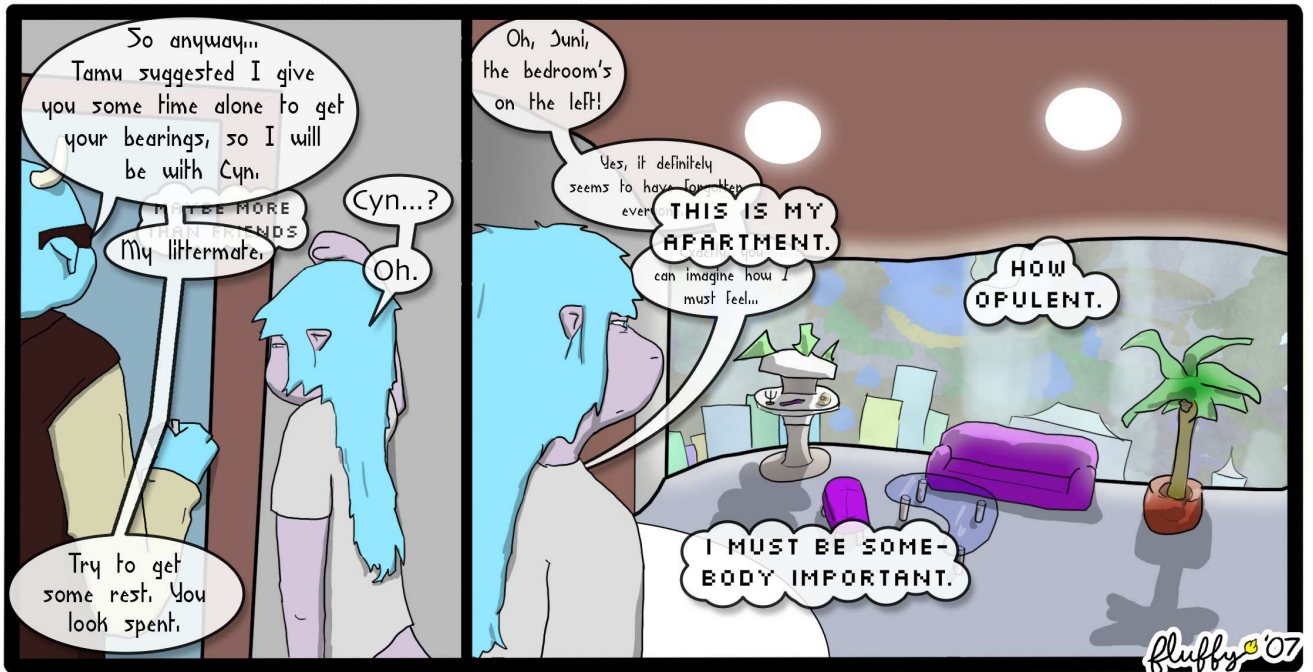
## 8. Familiarity



9. Self-awareness



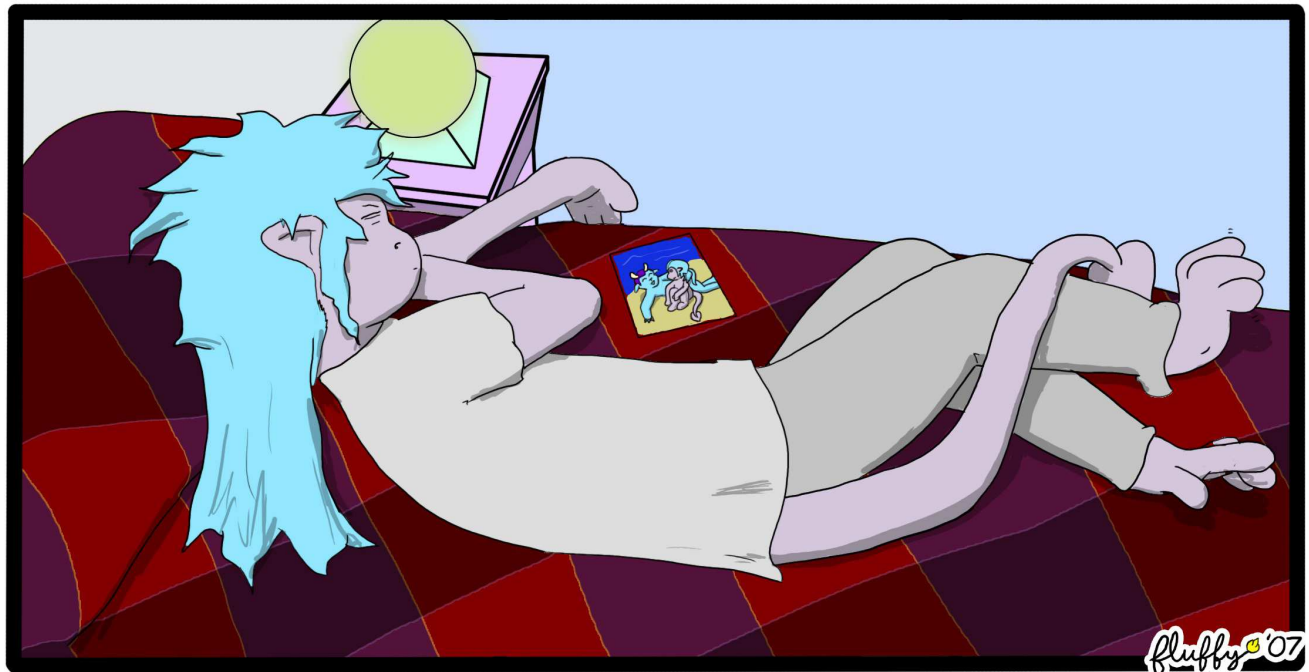
10. Homecoming



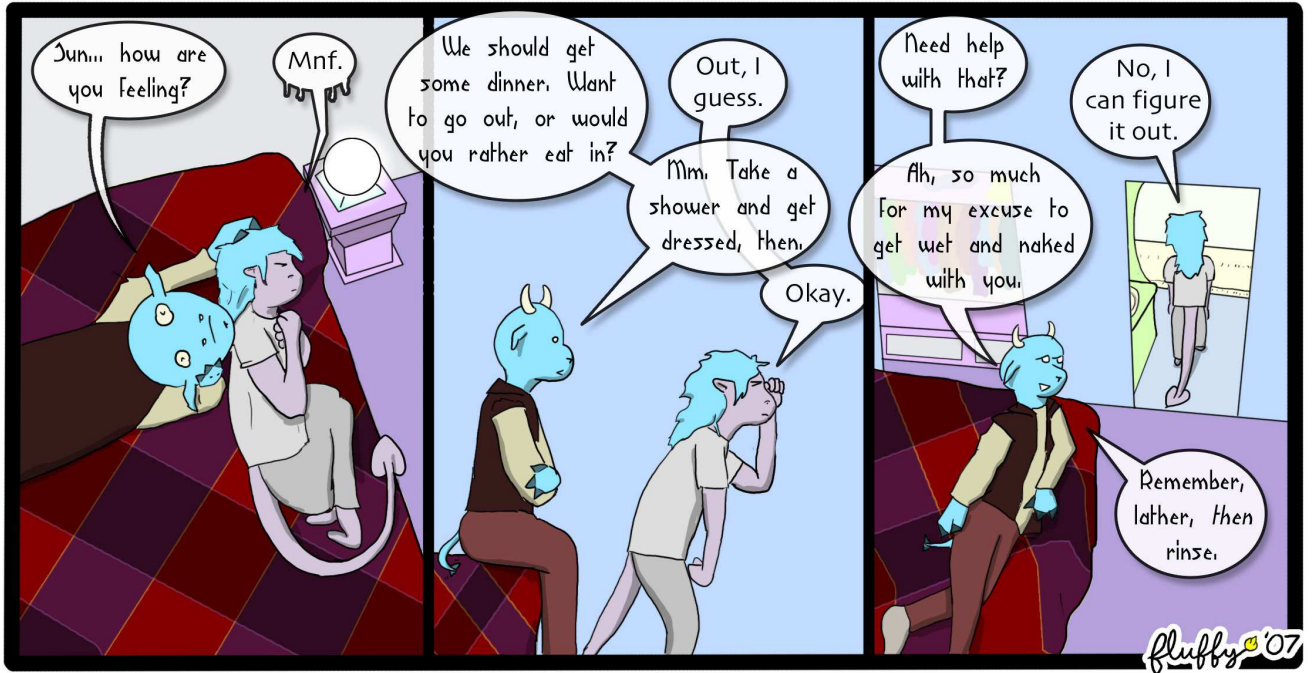
11. Reacquaintance



12. Rest state



### 13. Basic instructions



### 14. The obligatory shower scene



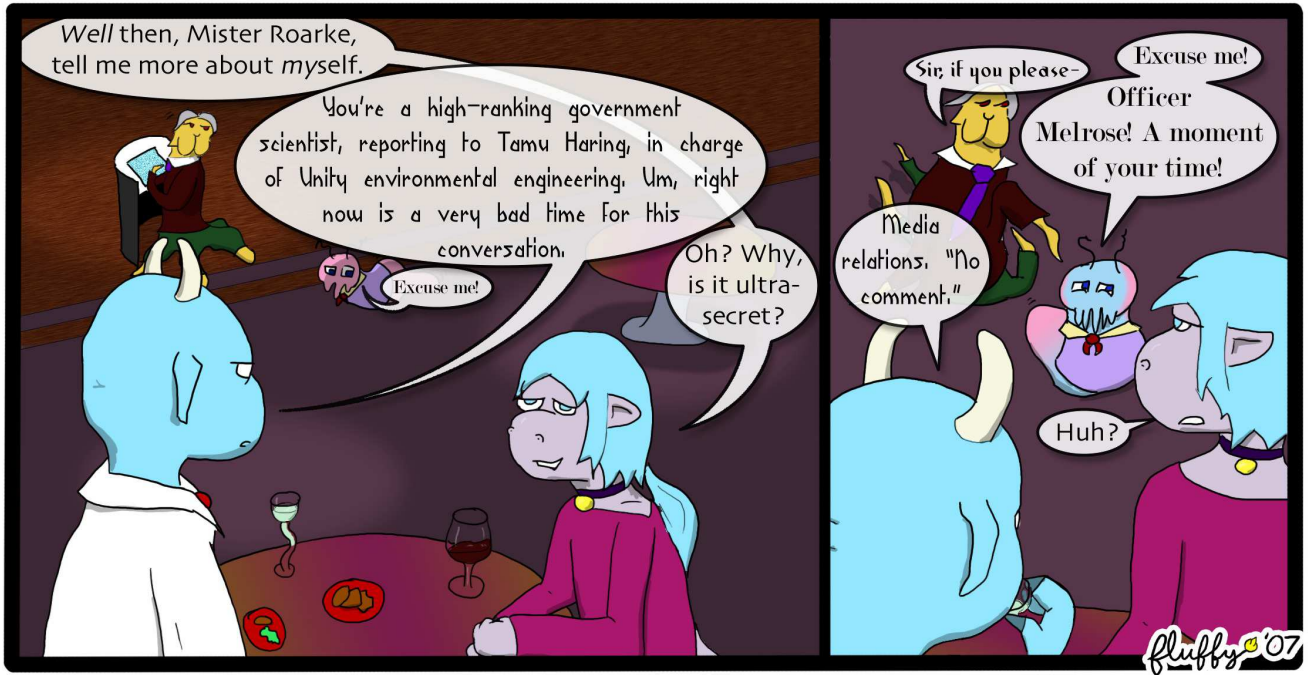
## 15. Fashion and passion



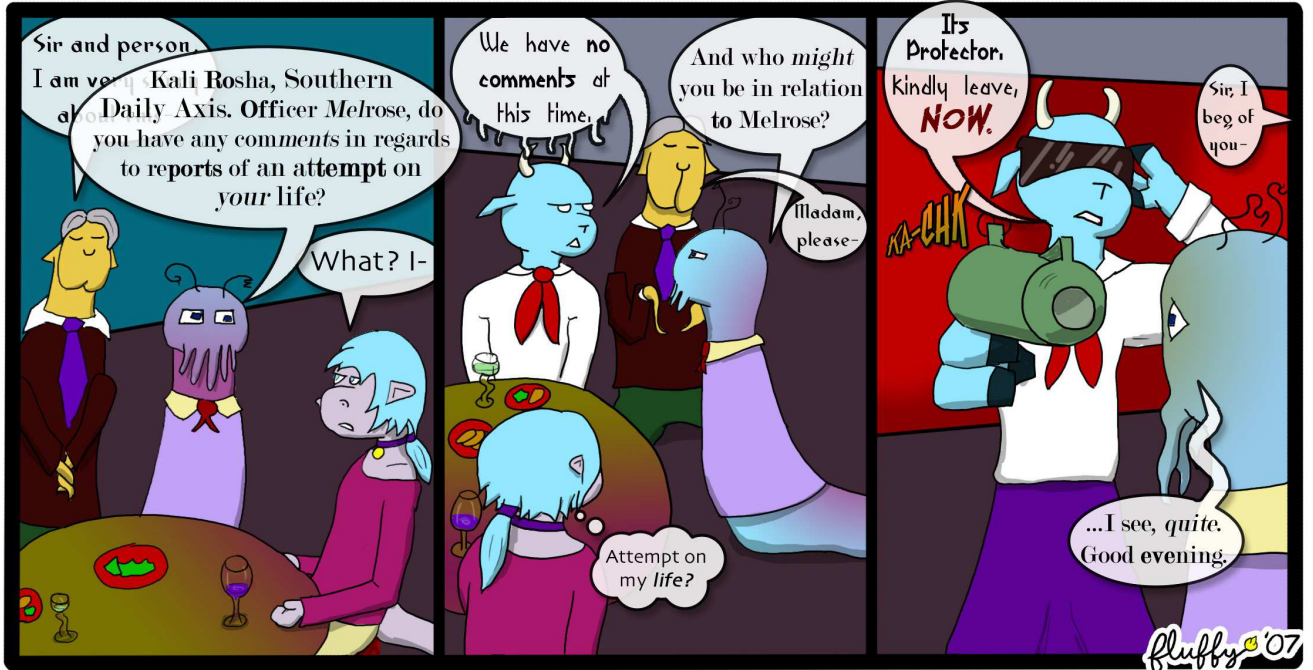
## 16. Please be seated



17. An interjection



18. No comment



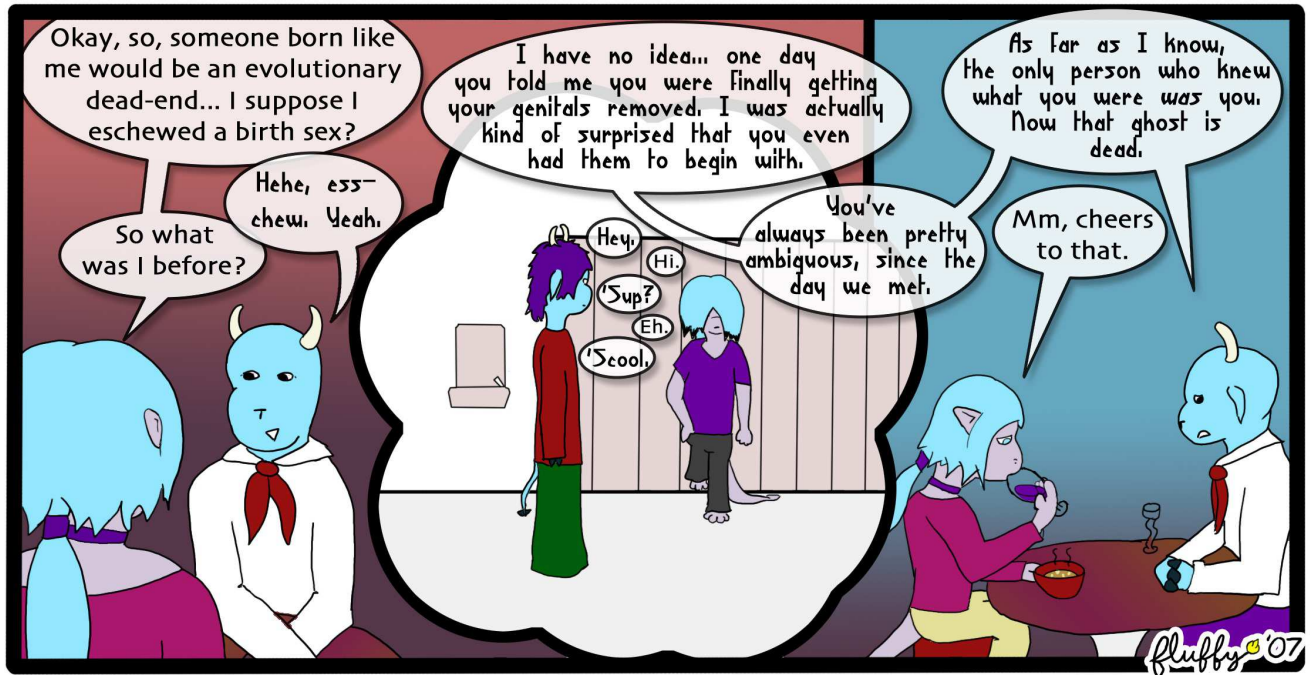
19. Details are sketchy



20. Understatements



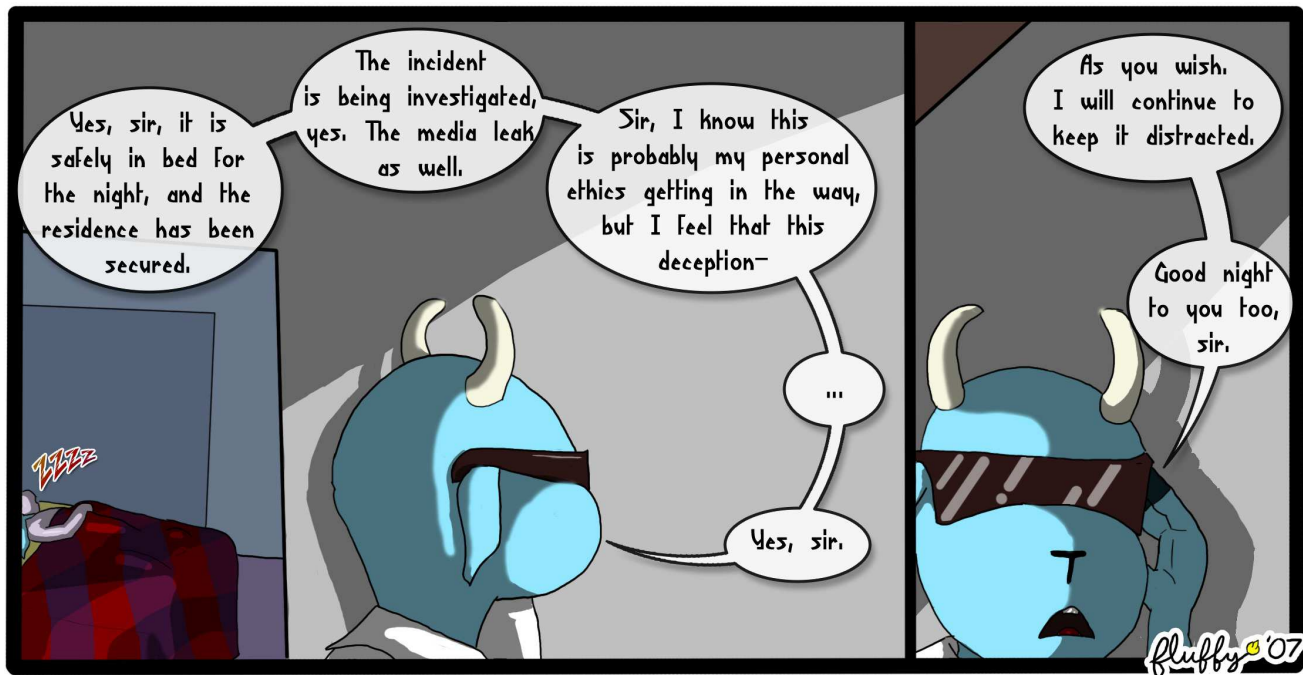
21. Removal



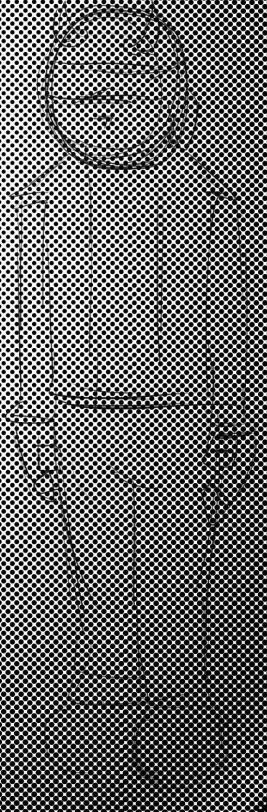
22. A bit much



23. Foreshadowing

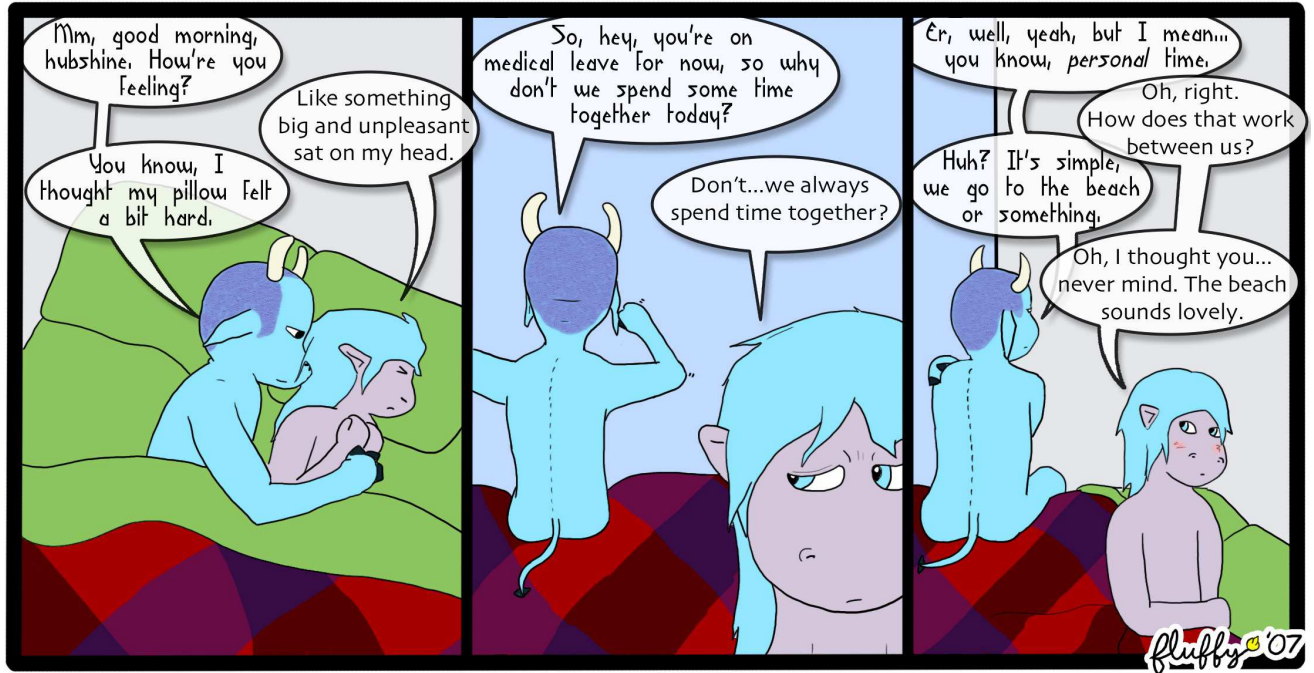


# 2. REALIZING





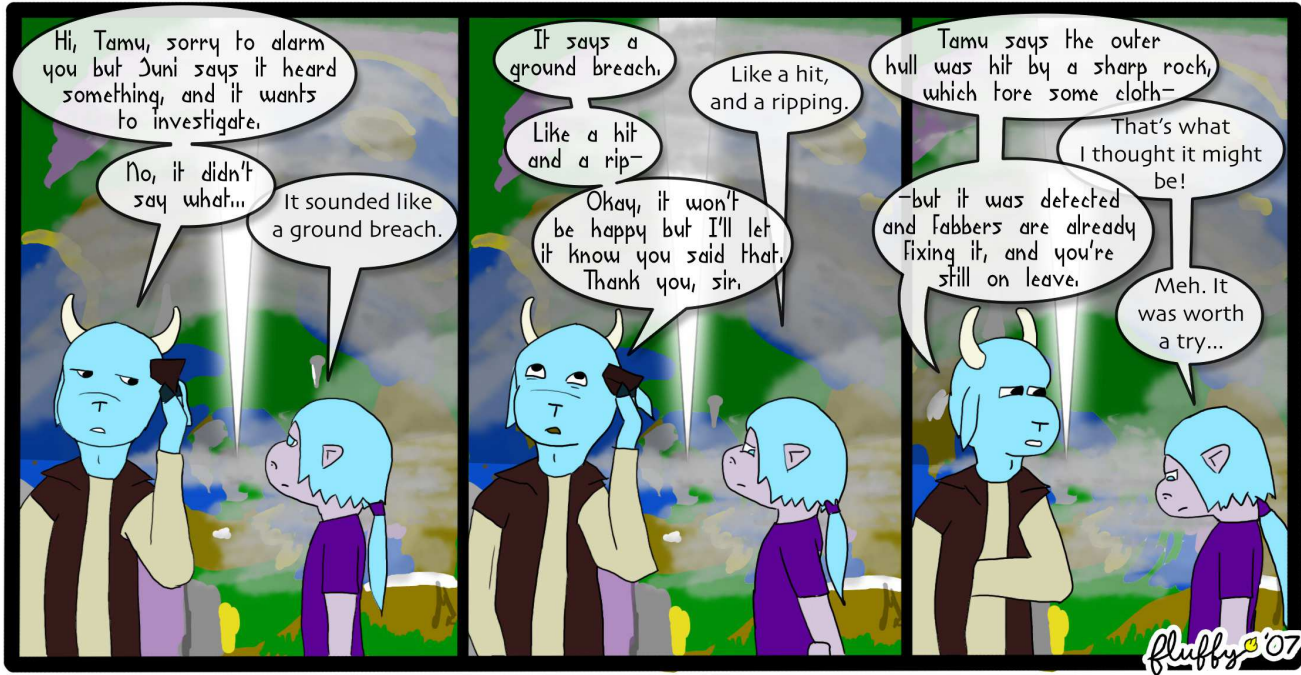
## 24. Downtime



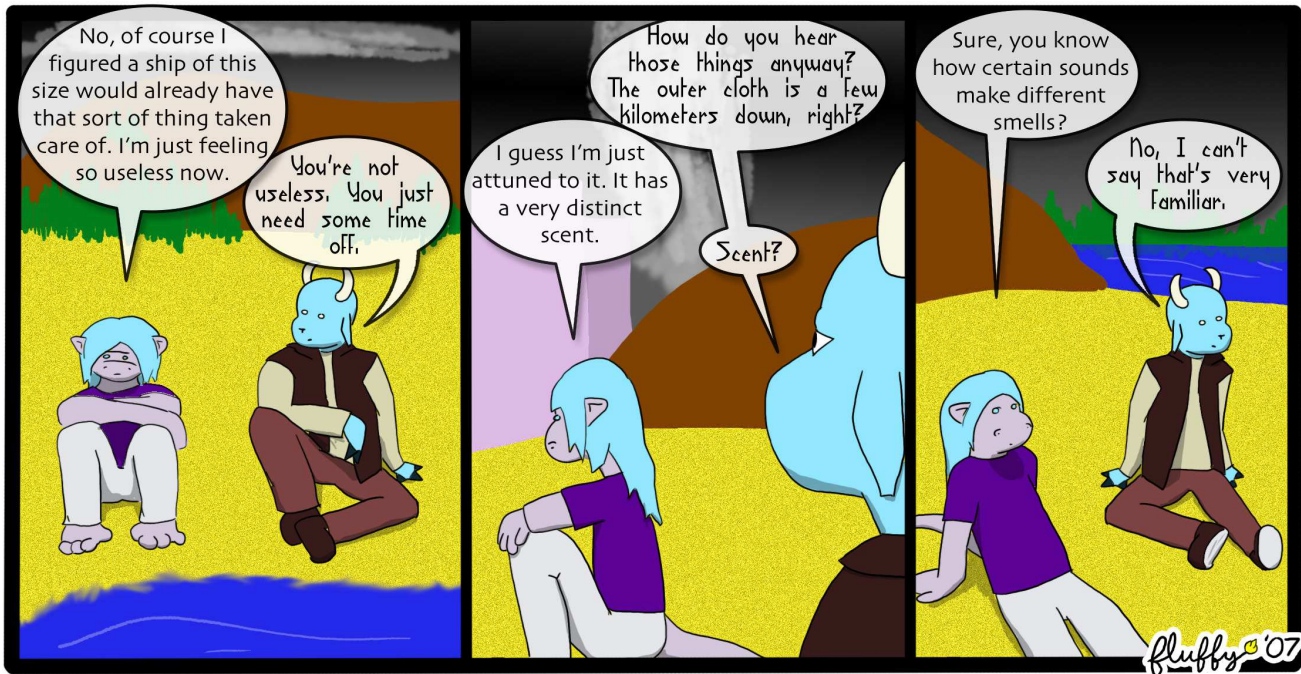
## 25. Sounds



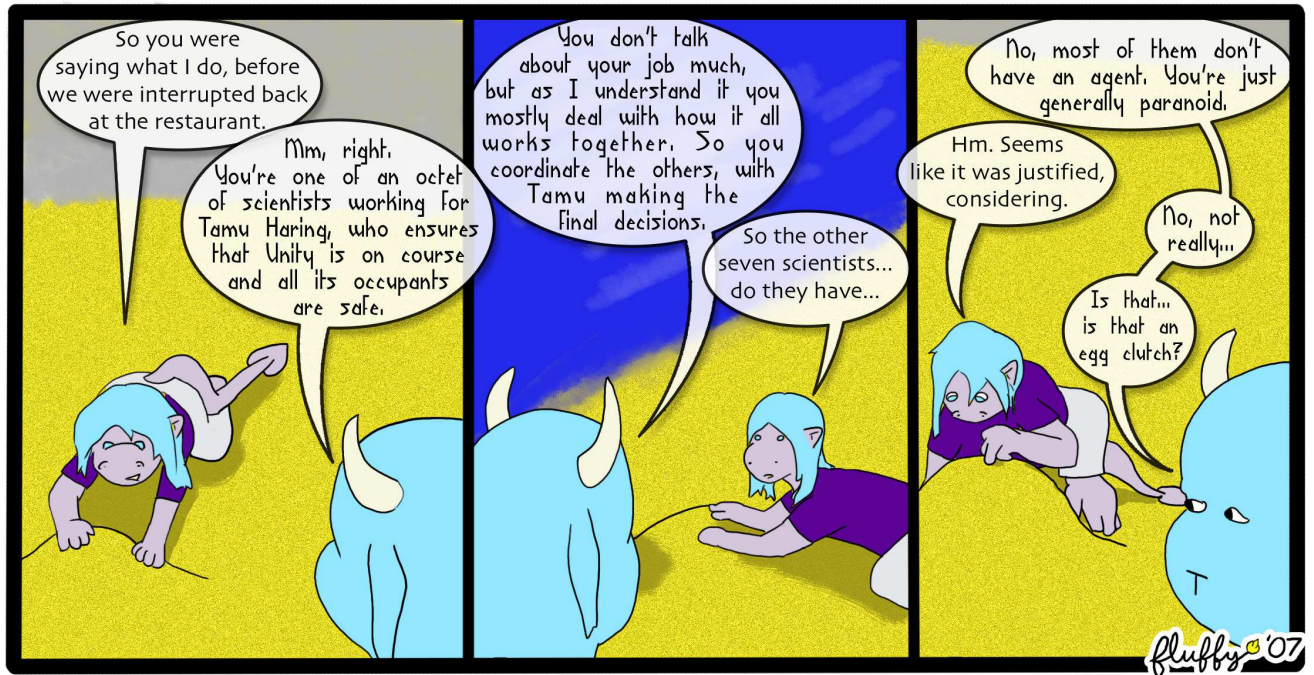
26. Worth a shot



27. Sound-scent synaesthesia



28. Is it safe?



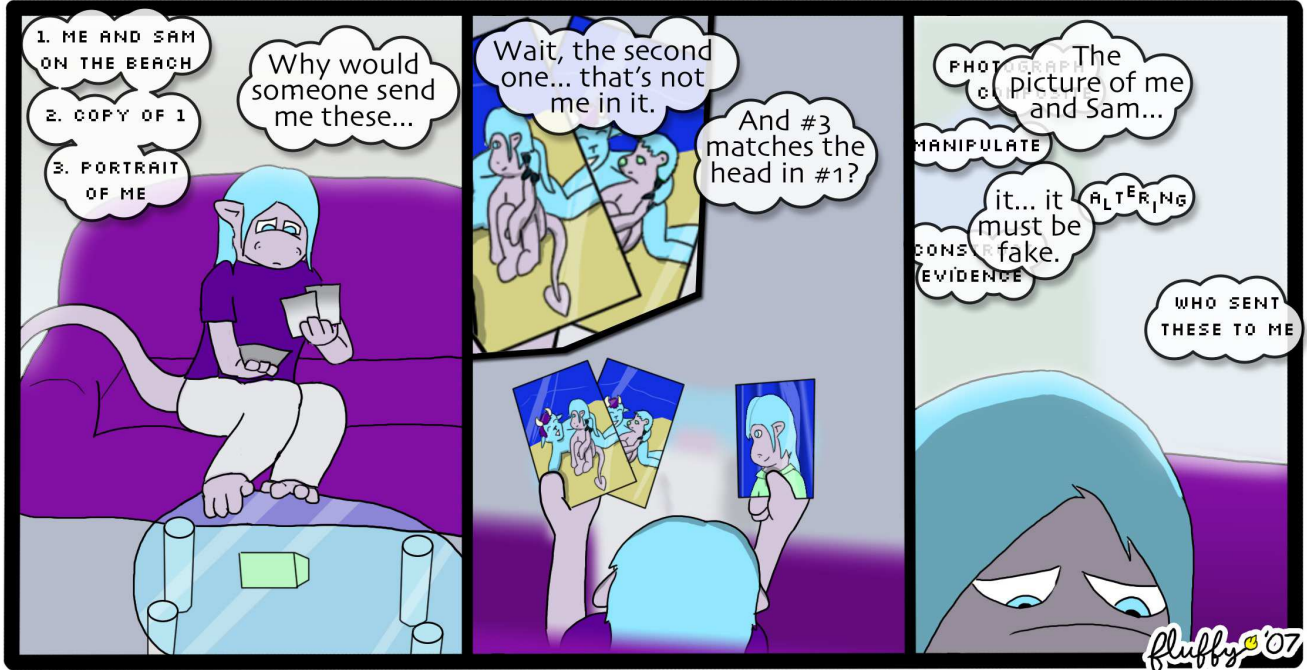
29. Not really



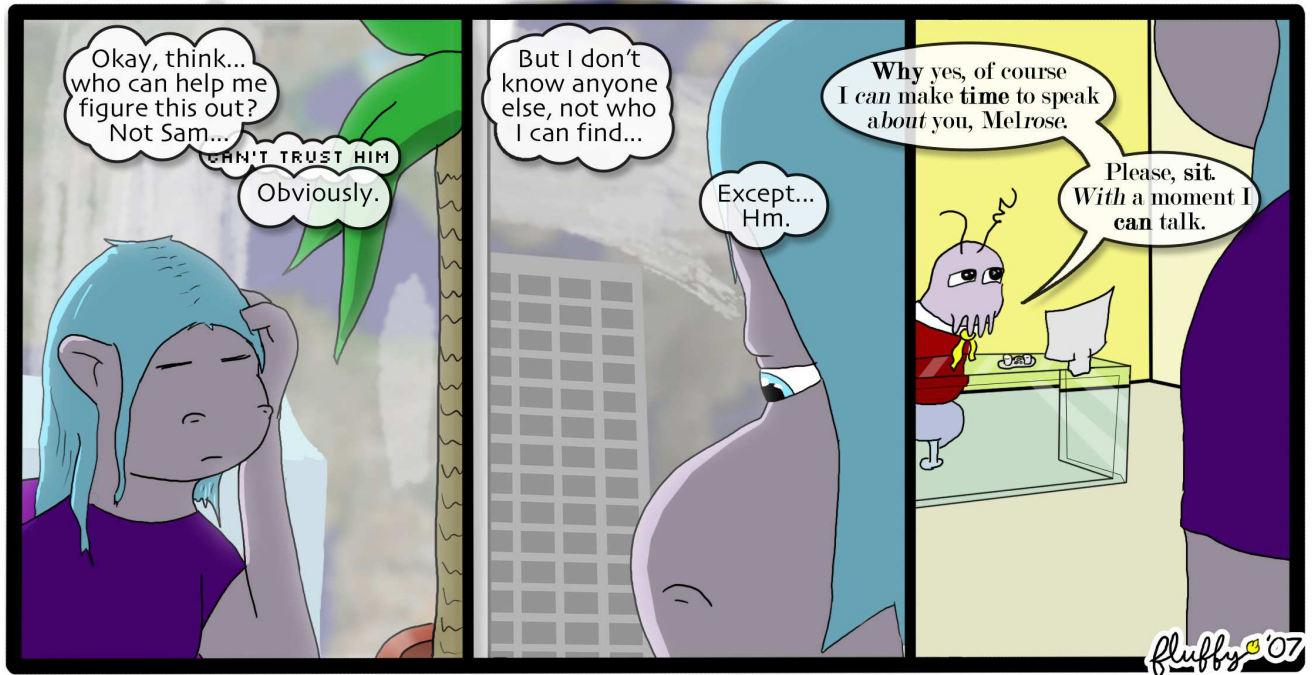
30. Internal dialog



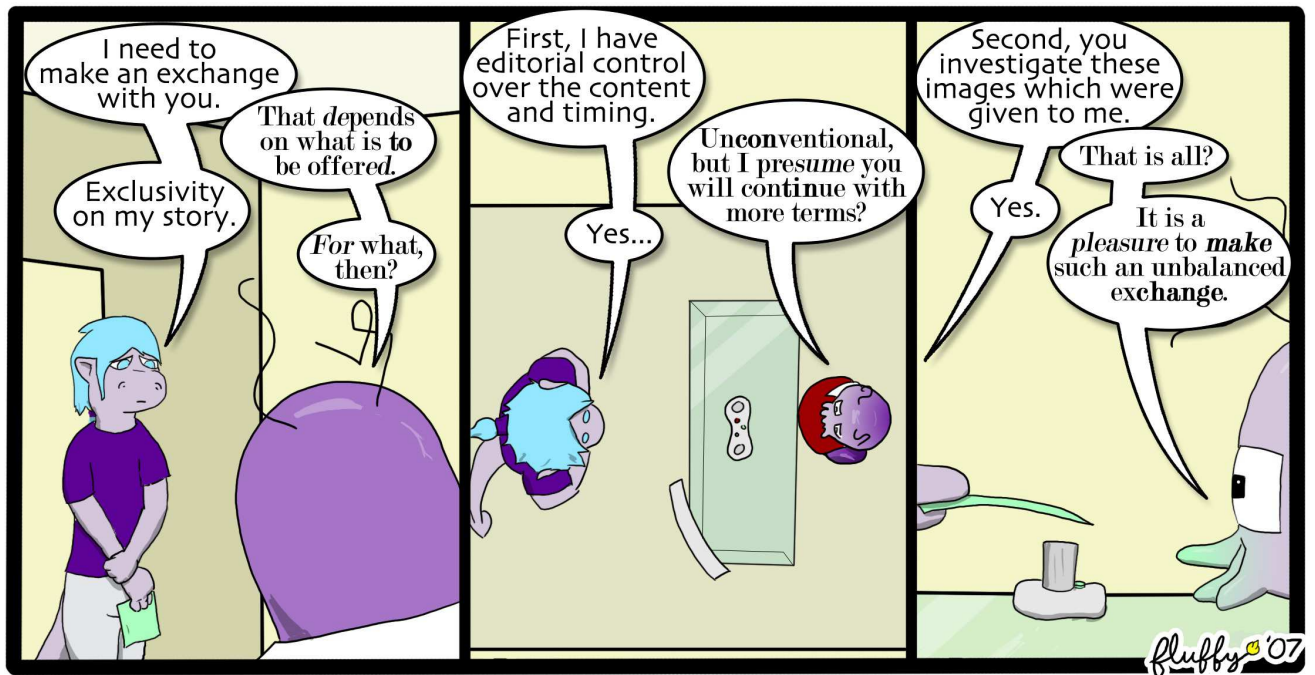
31. Reasonable facsimile



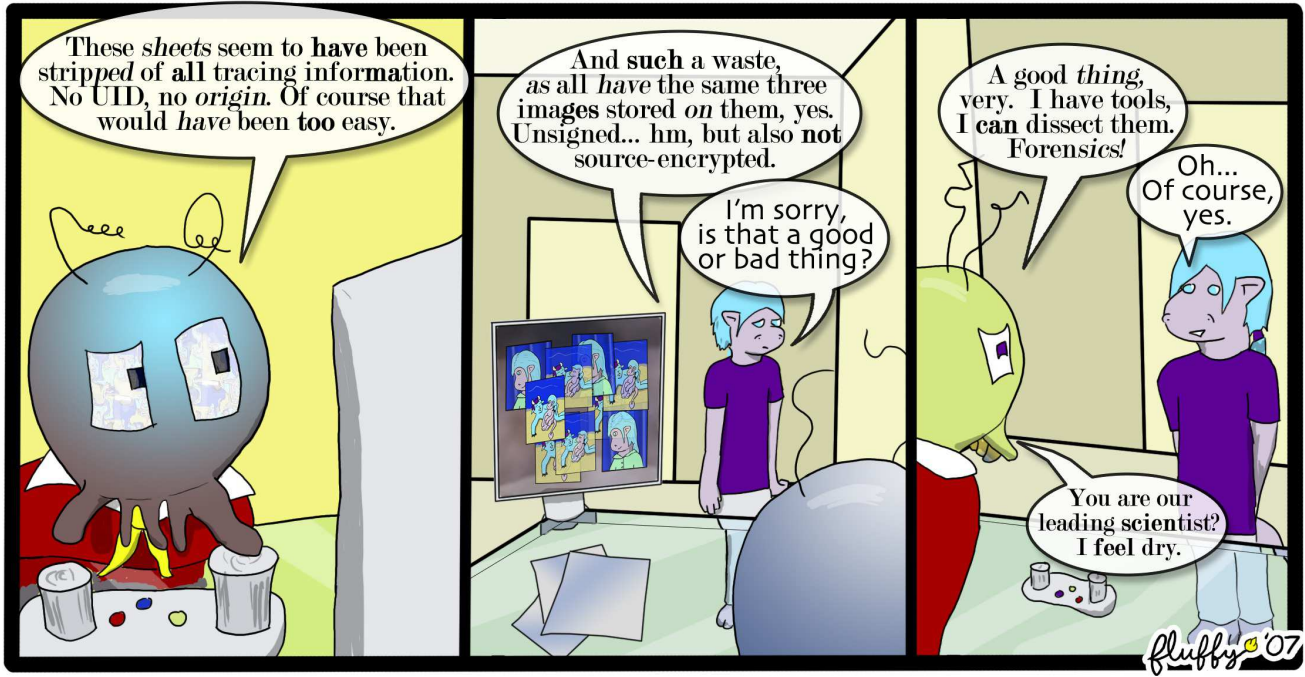
32. Who to turn to



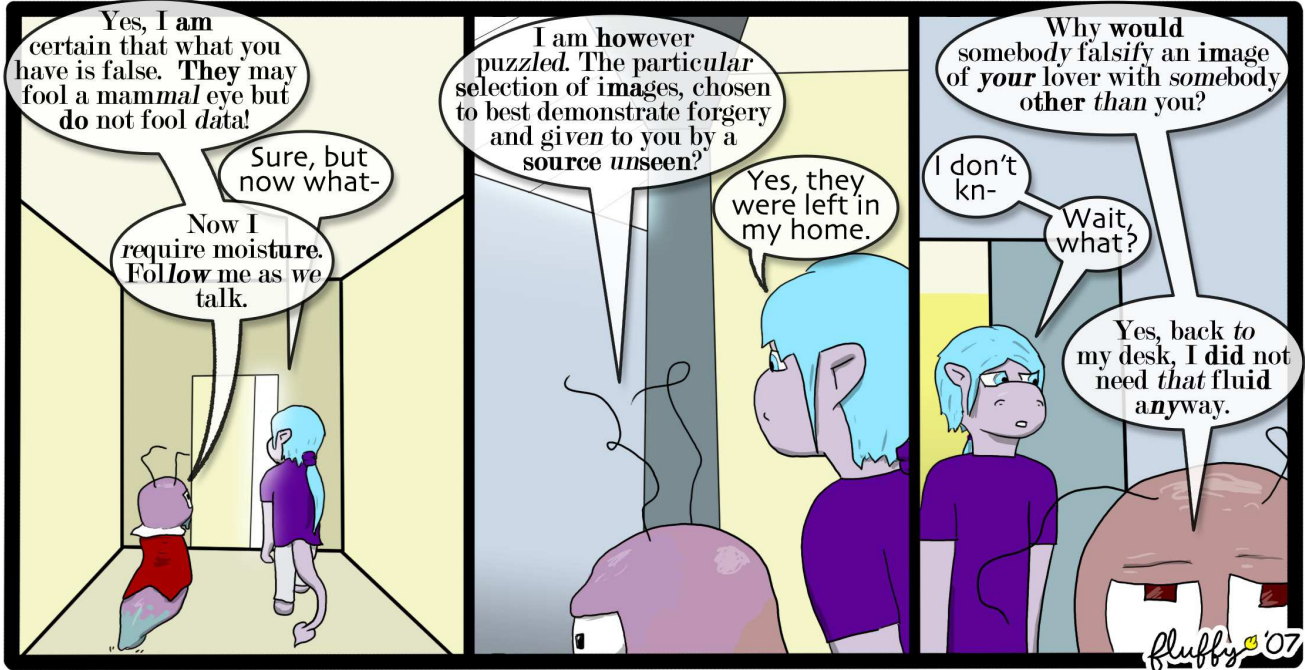
33. Information is currency



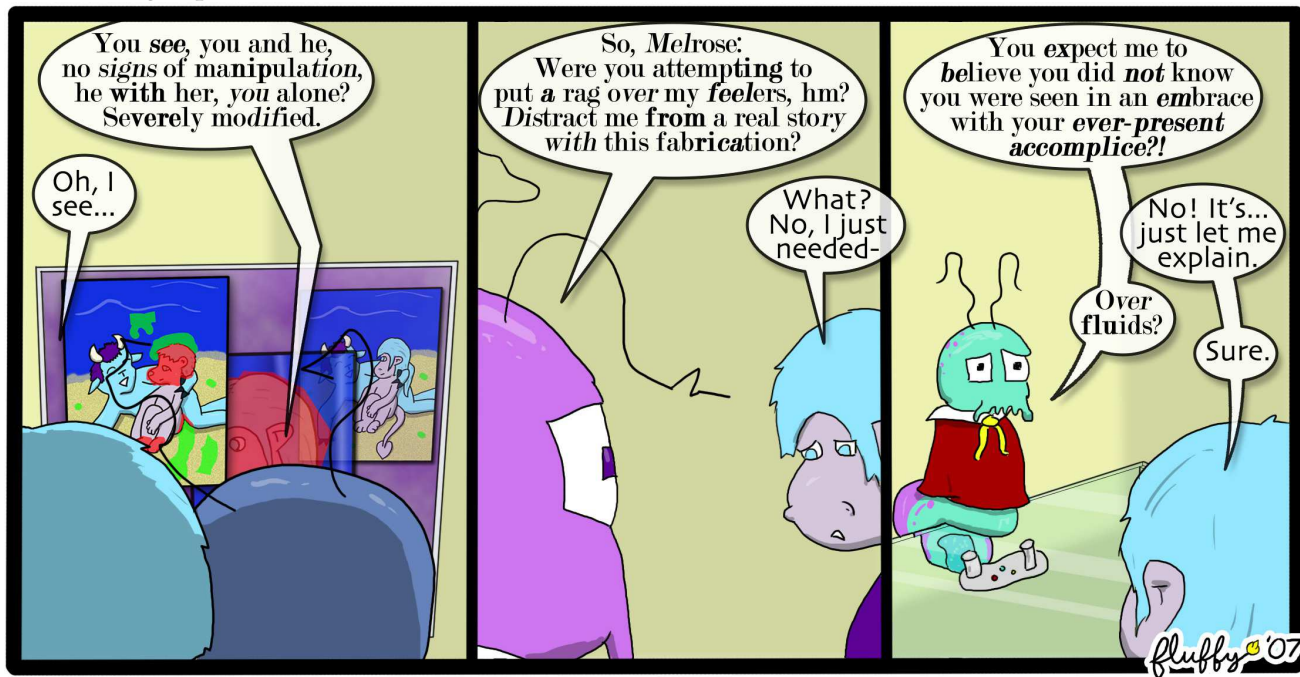
34. And a pinch of salt



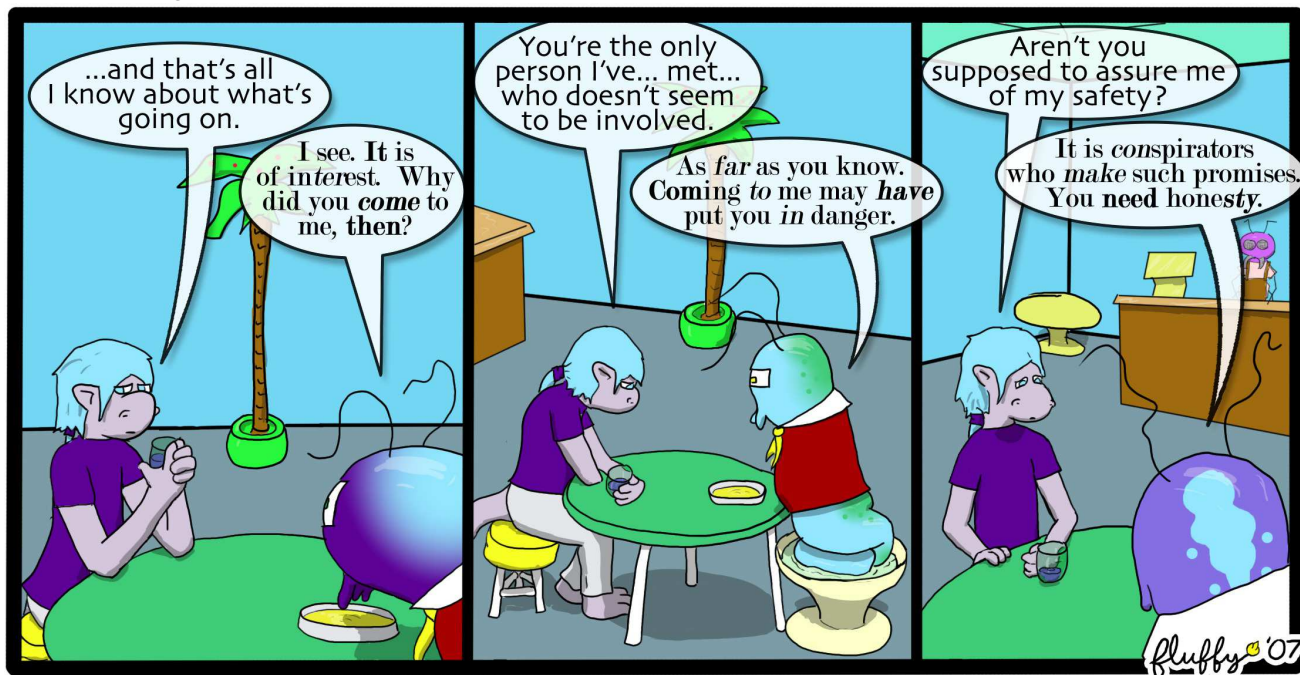
35. A "duh" moment



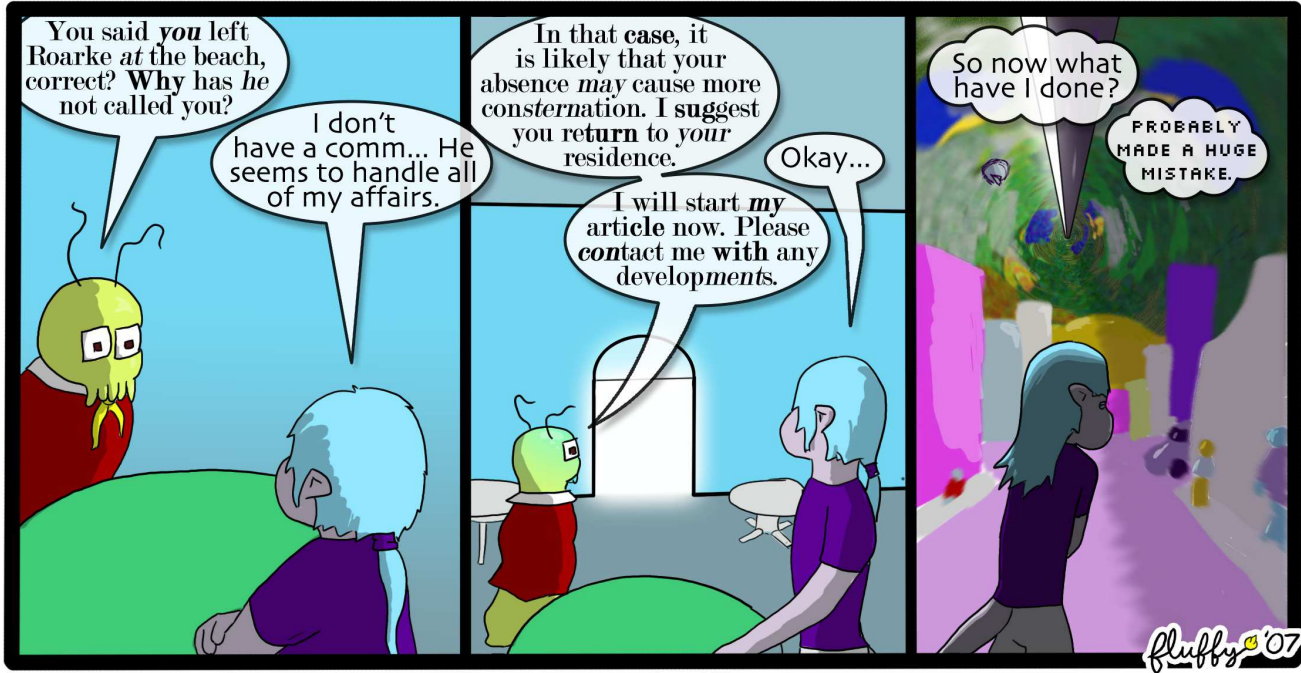
36. Needing explanations



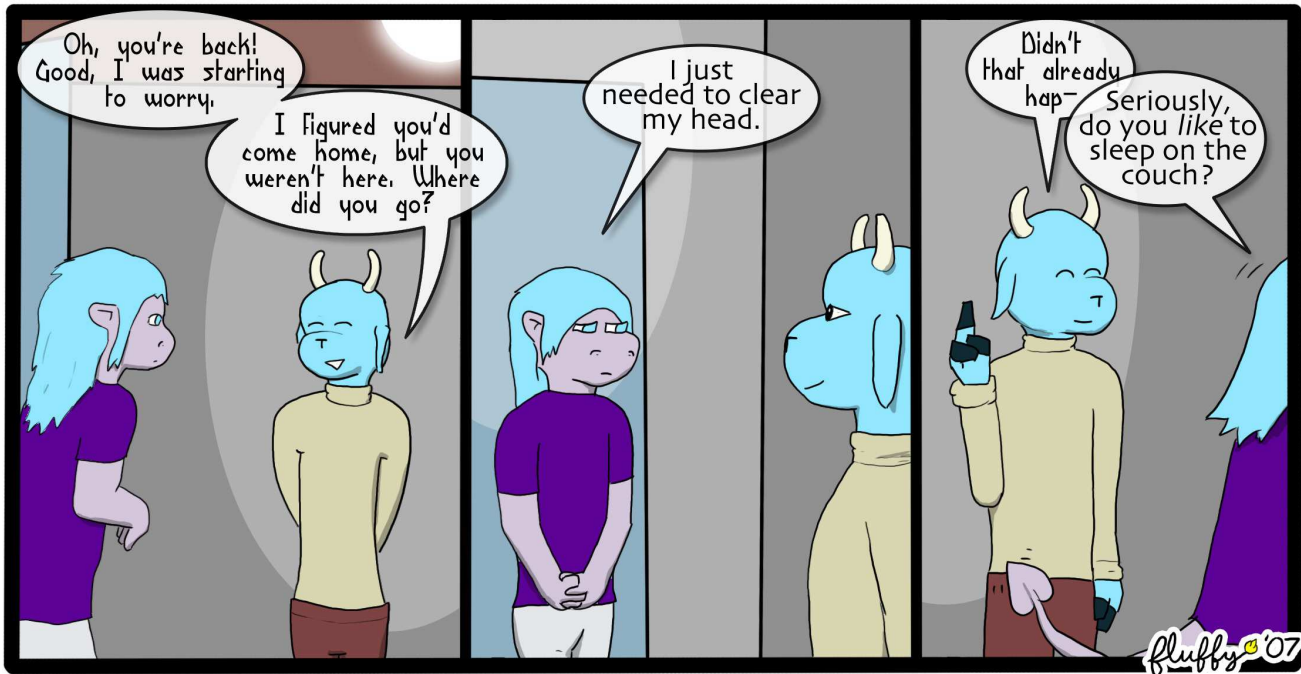
37. Something of interest



38. Realization



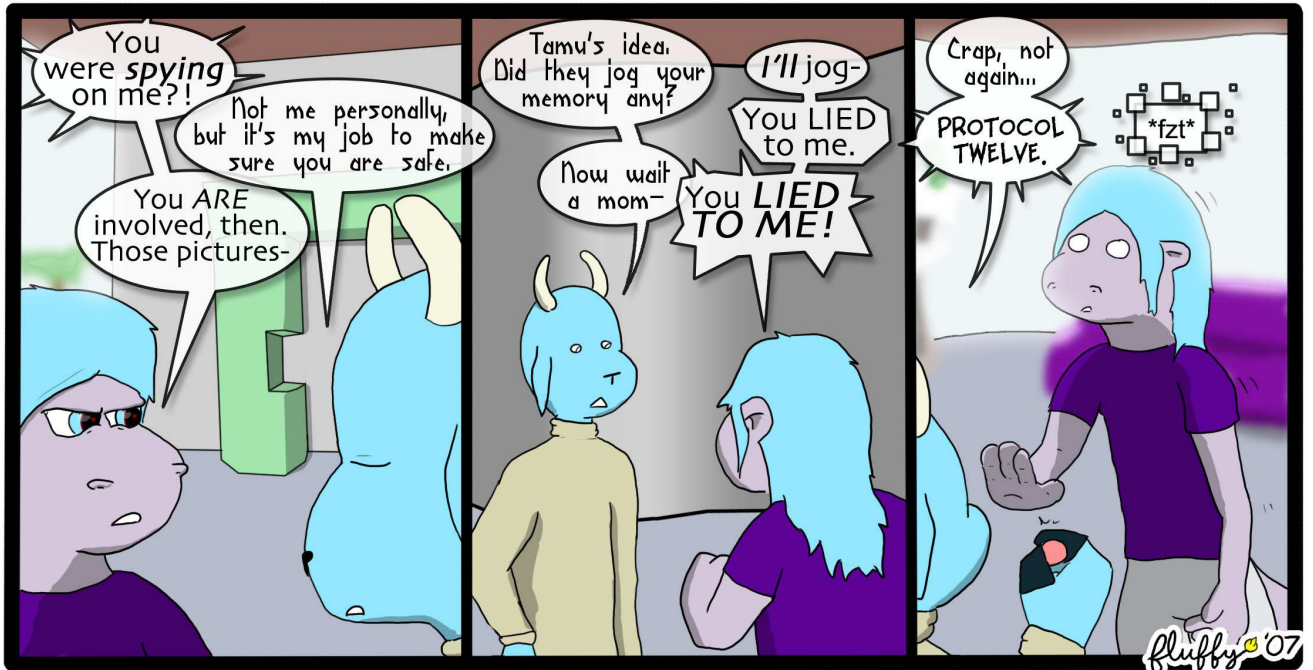
39. Waiting up



40. Complication



41. Realization



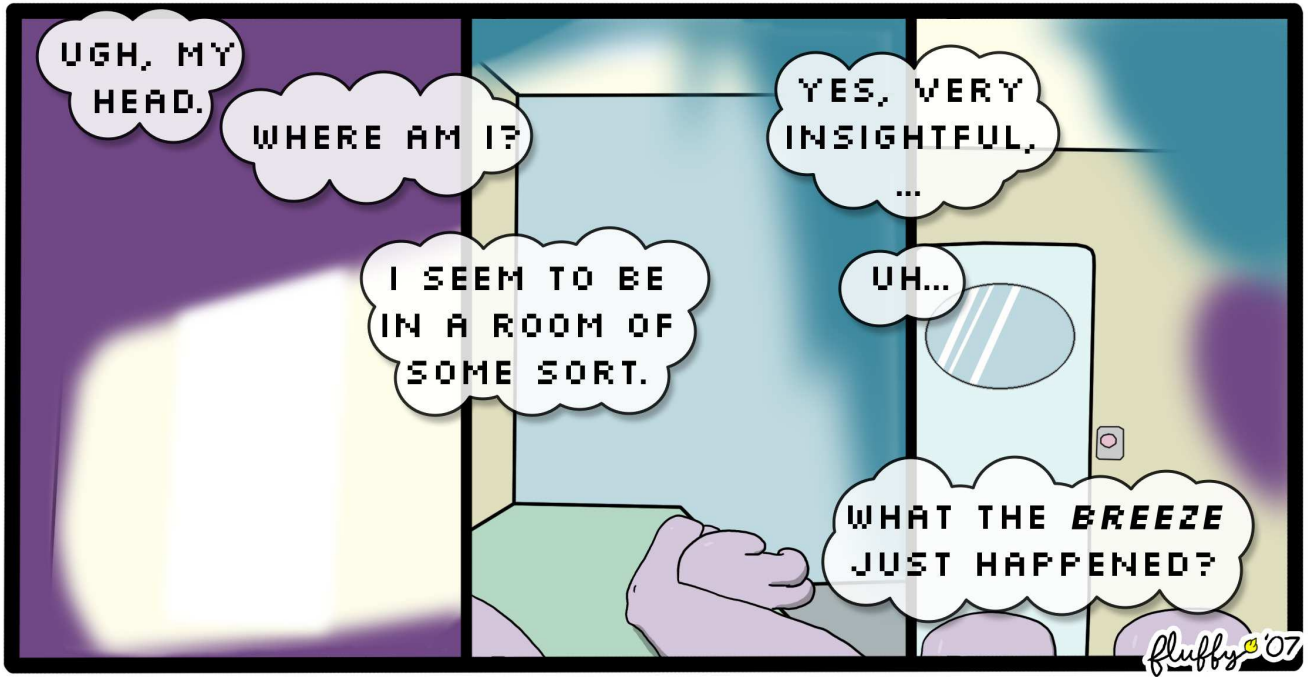


The image features two stylized purple cat heads in profile, facing each other. The cats have large, white, almond-shaped eyes with blue highlights. The background is a dense, grey halftone dot pattern. The text '3. FLEETING' is centered between the two heads in a bold, black, blocky font with a slight shadow effect.

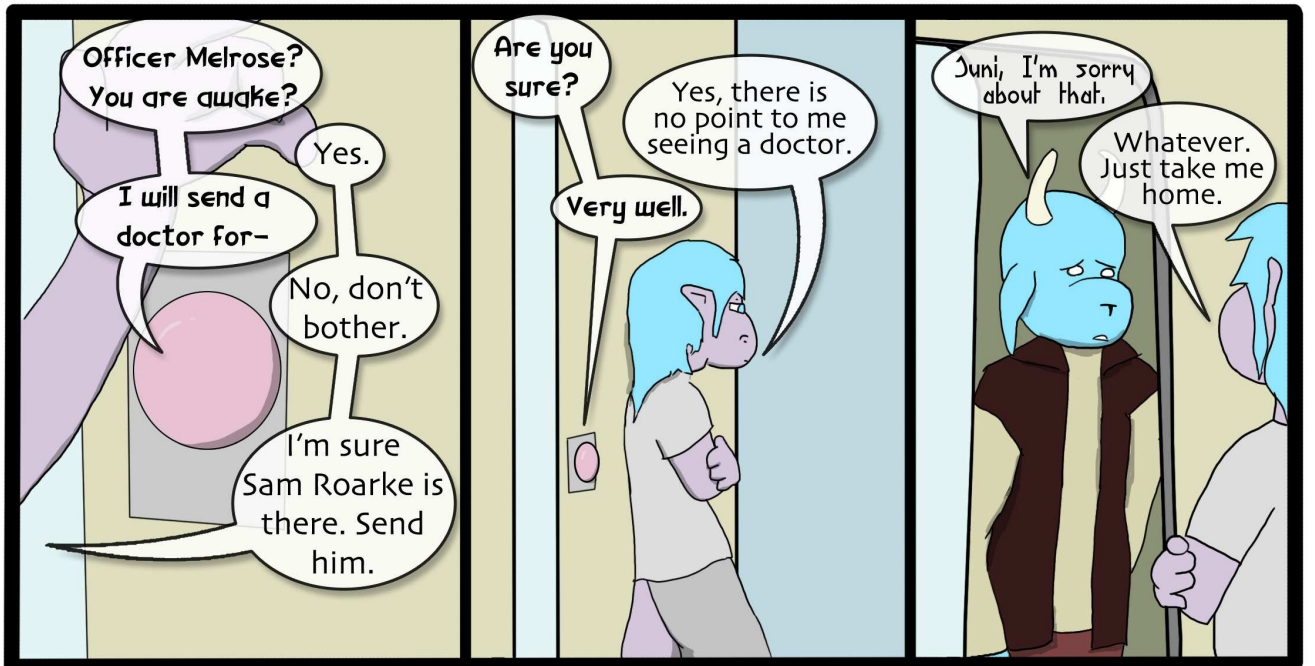
### 3. FLEETING



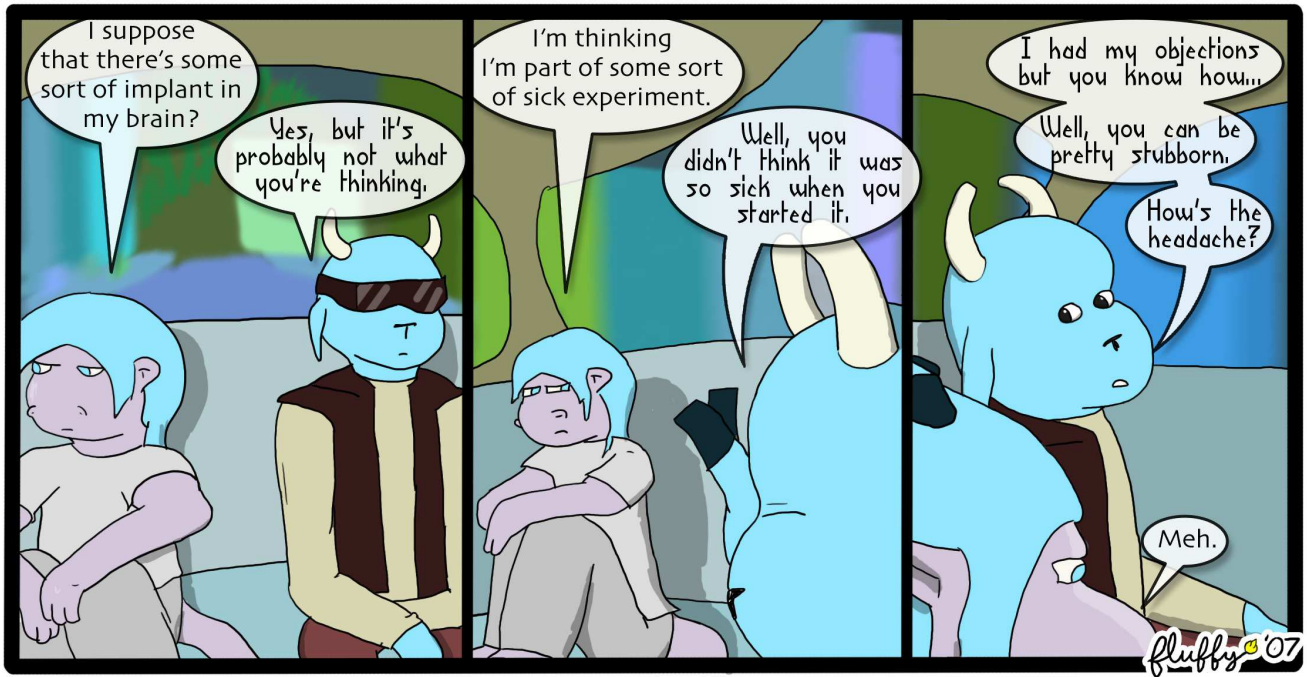
42. Awakening



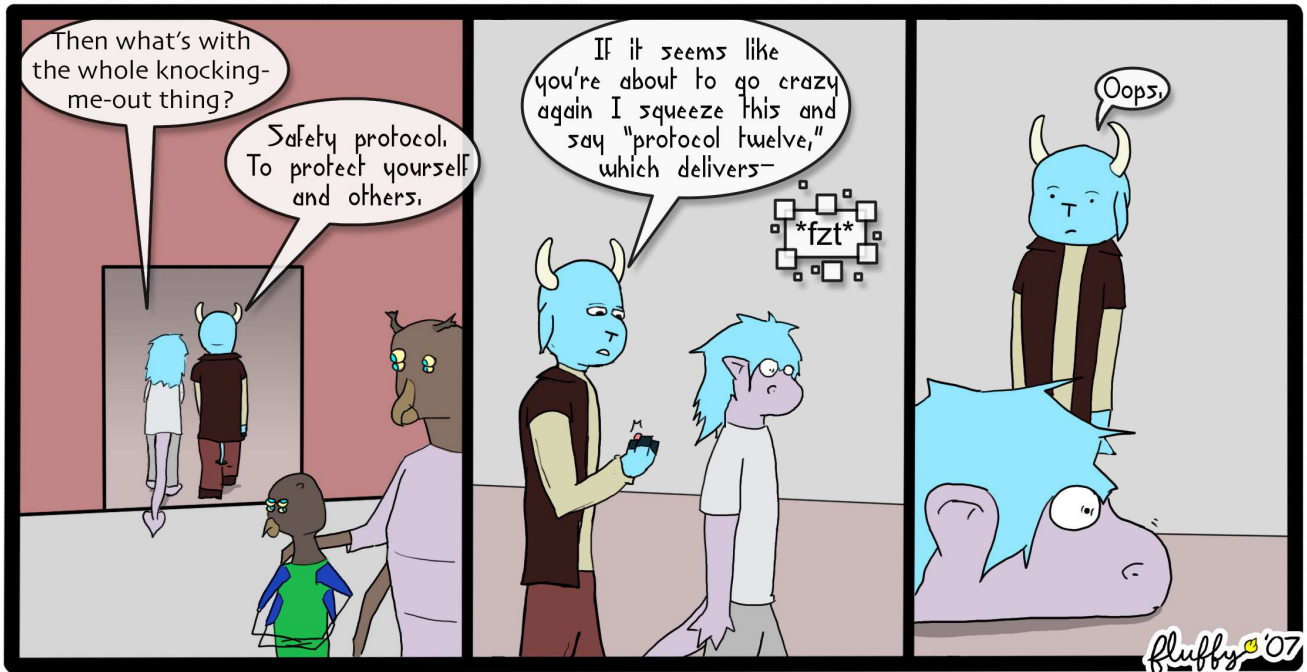
43. Continuing



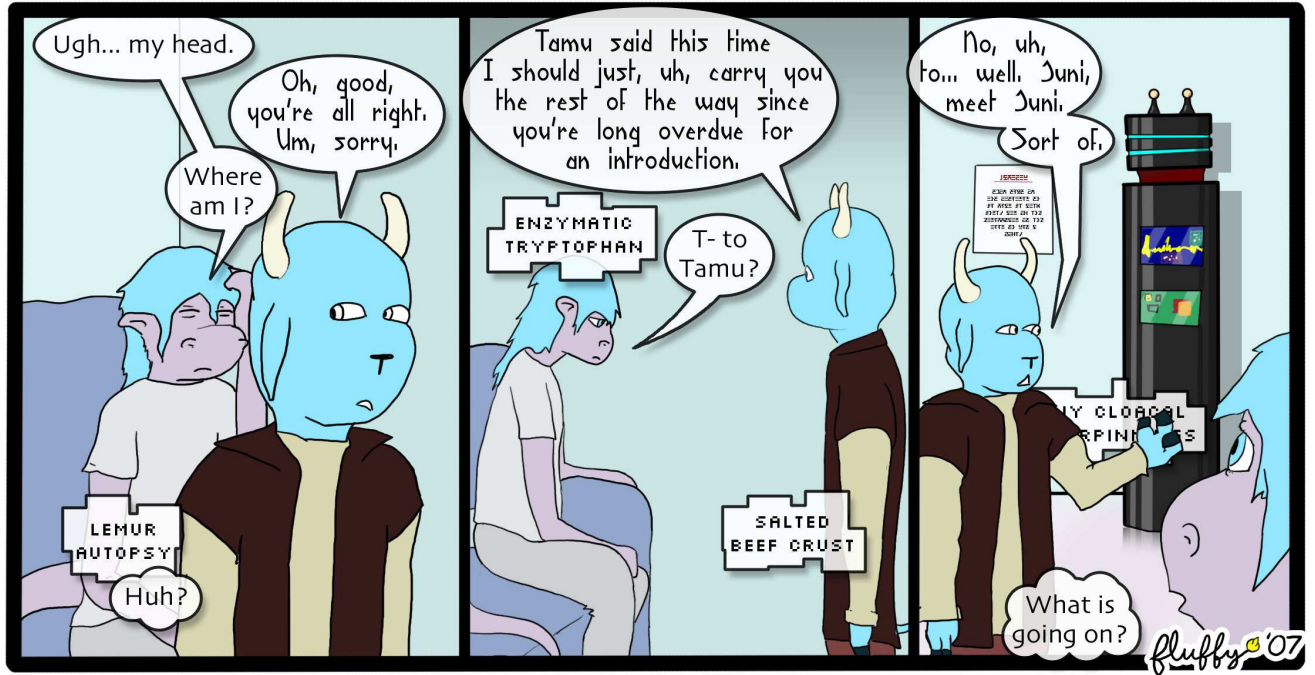
44. Head, ache



45. Unintended demonstration



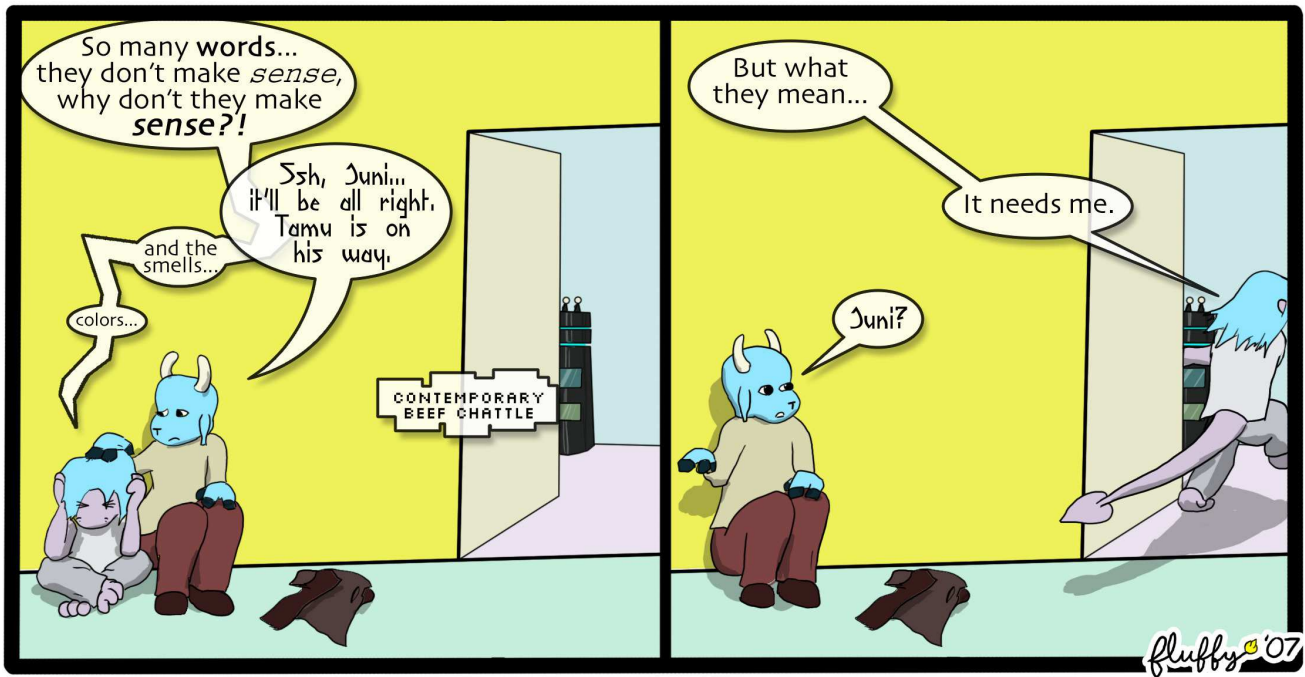
46. Reveal



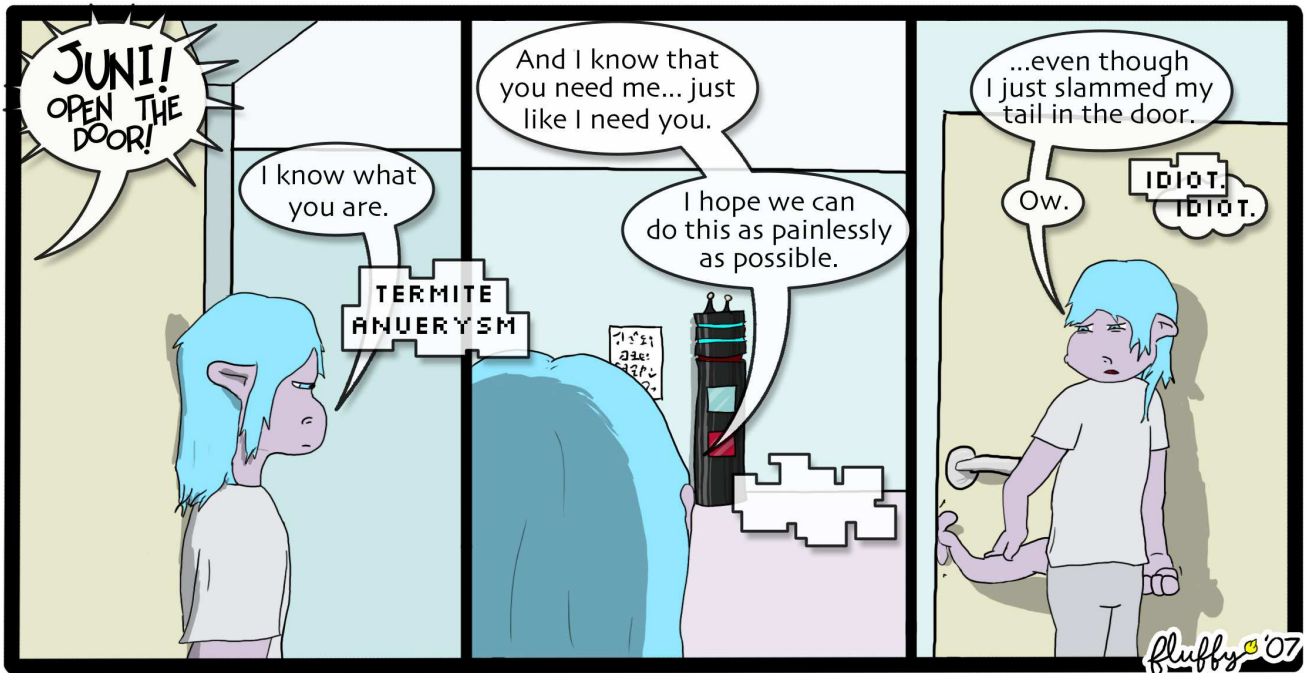
47. Chatter



48. Scene from the hallway



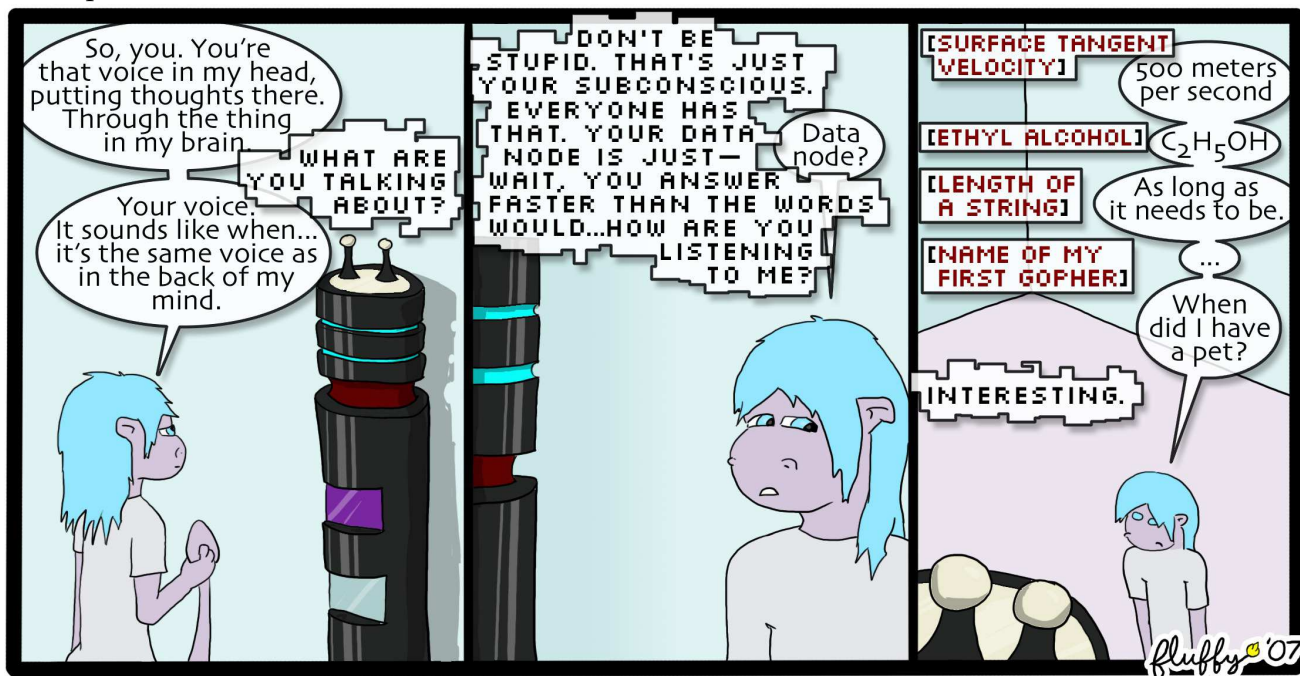
49. Going solo



50. The arctangent of solitude

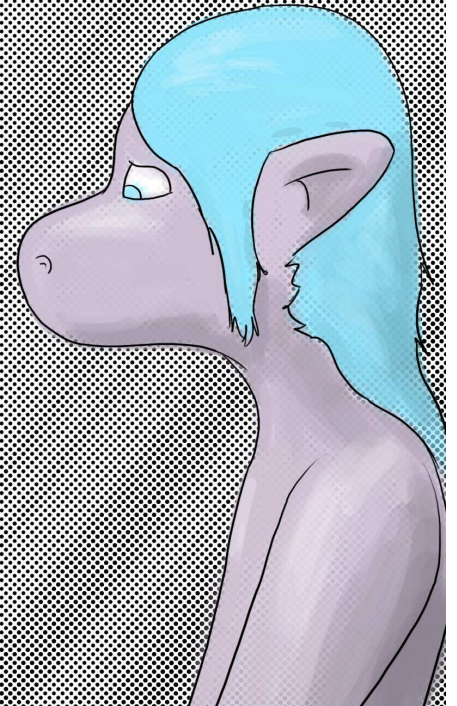
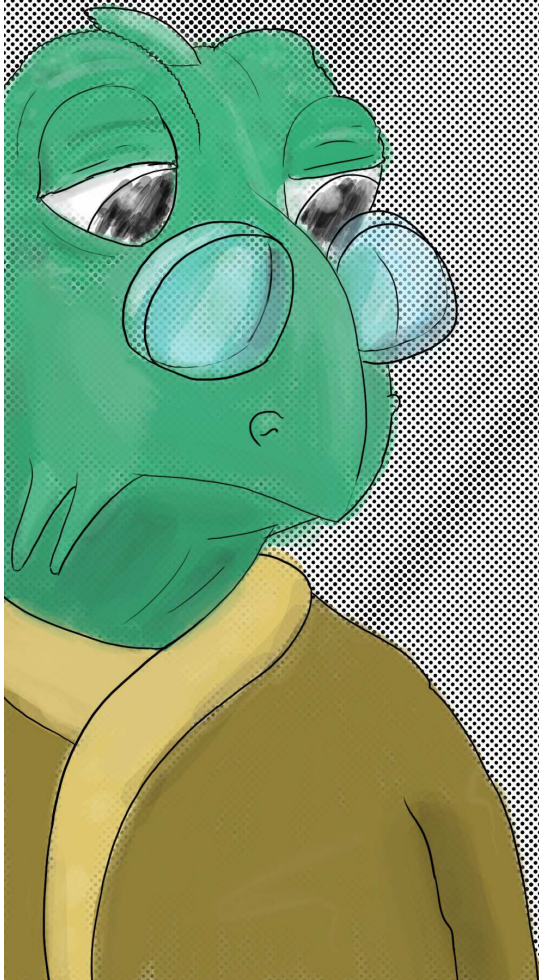


51. Gopher broke



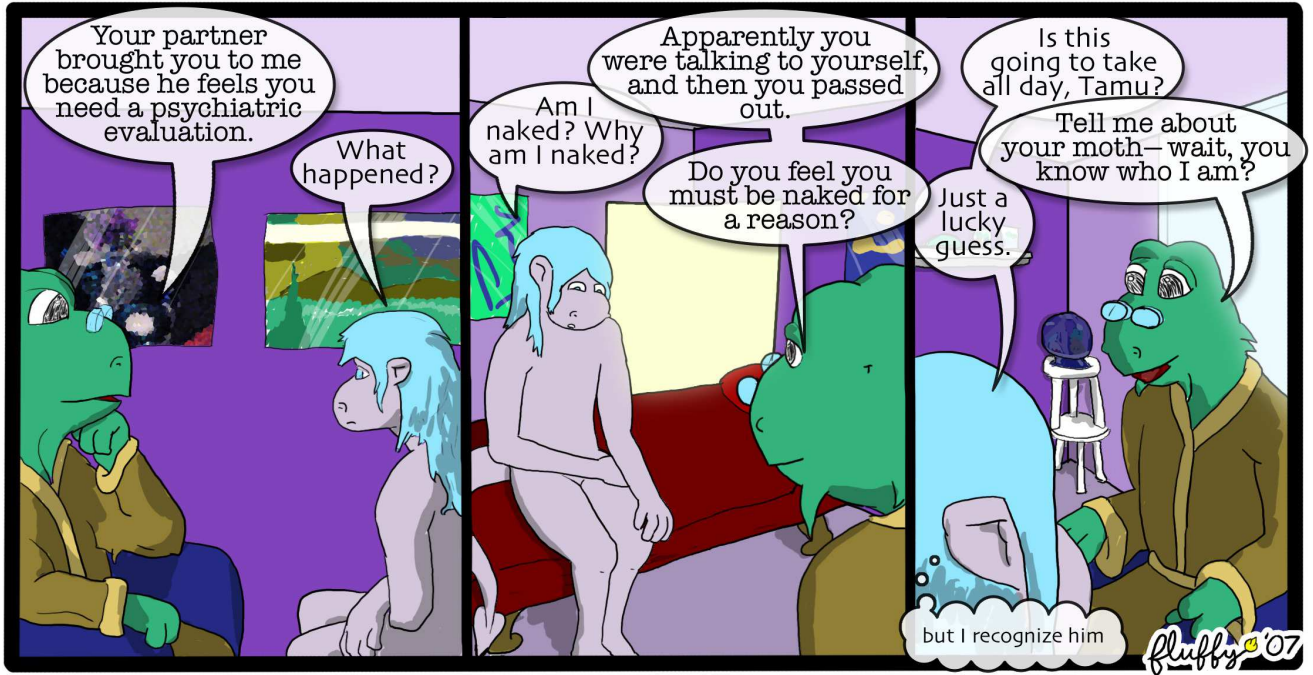


4. THINKING

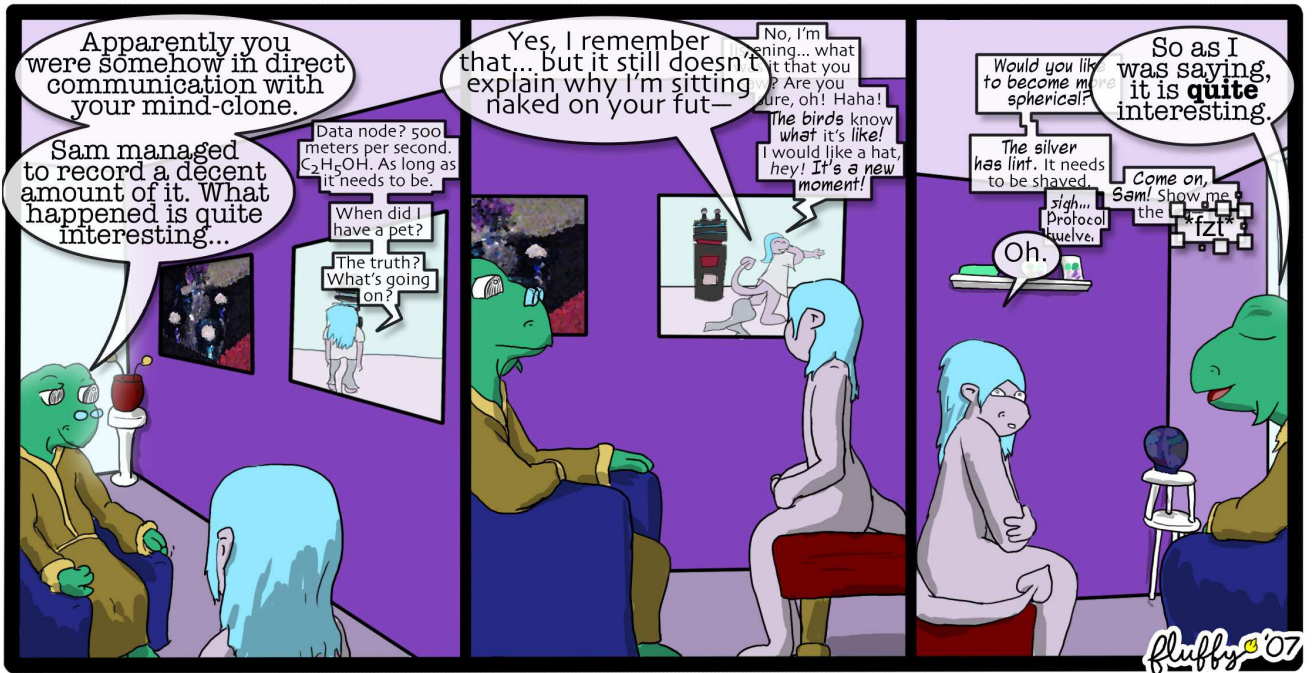




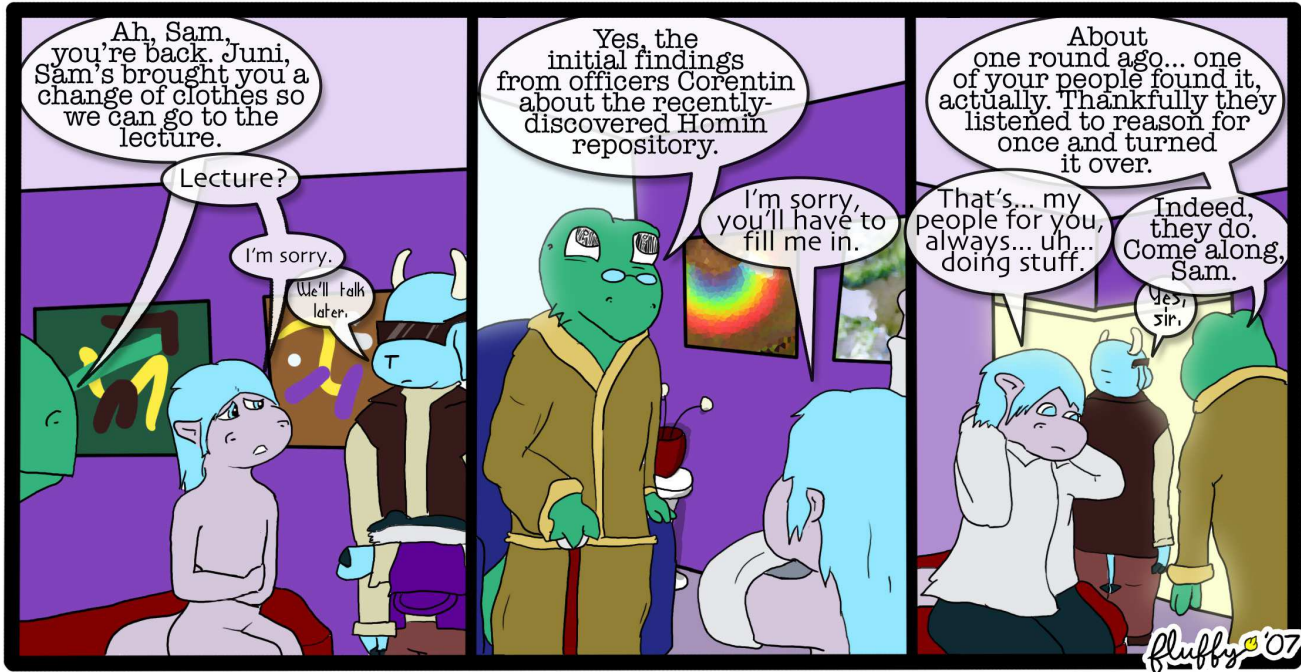
53. The naked truth



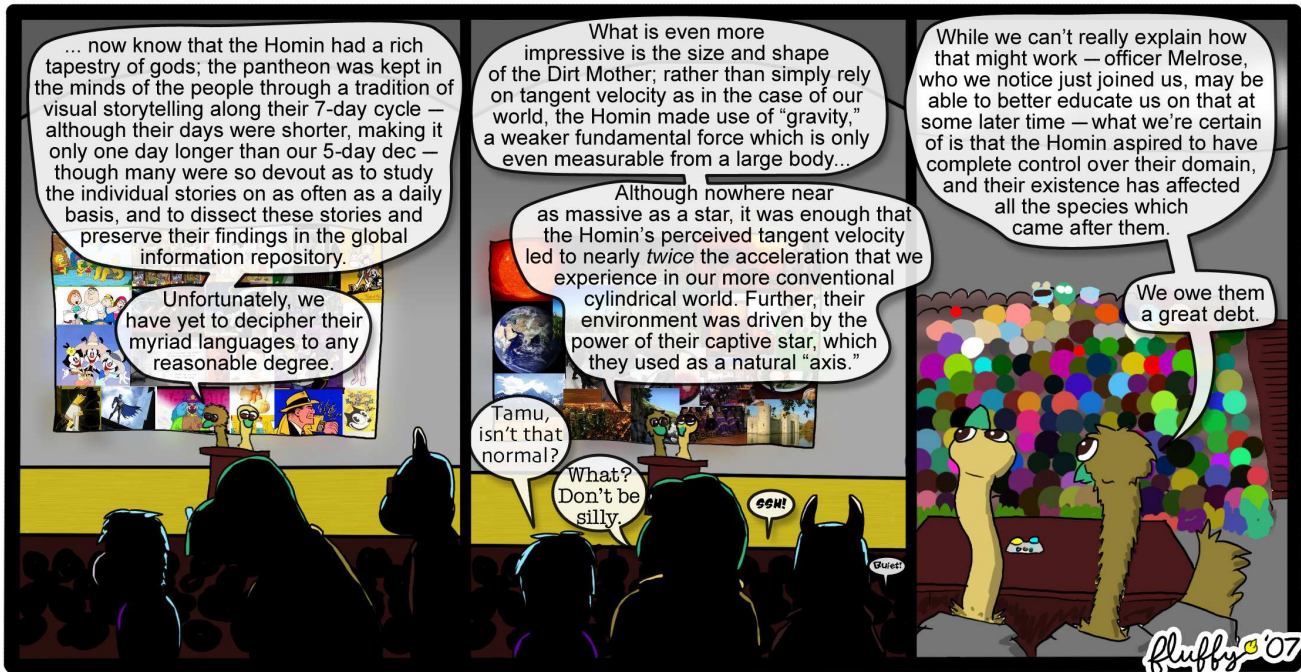
54. The birds know



55. Lecture



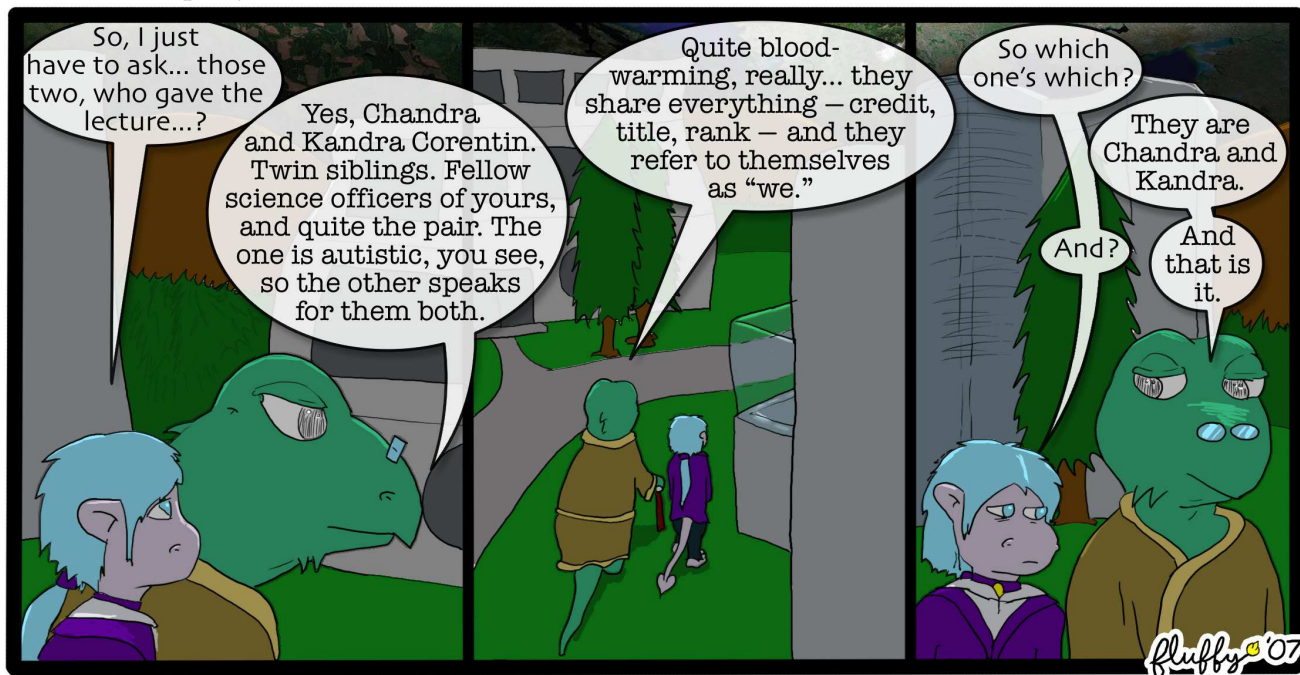
56. Their perception of things



57. Afterparty



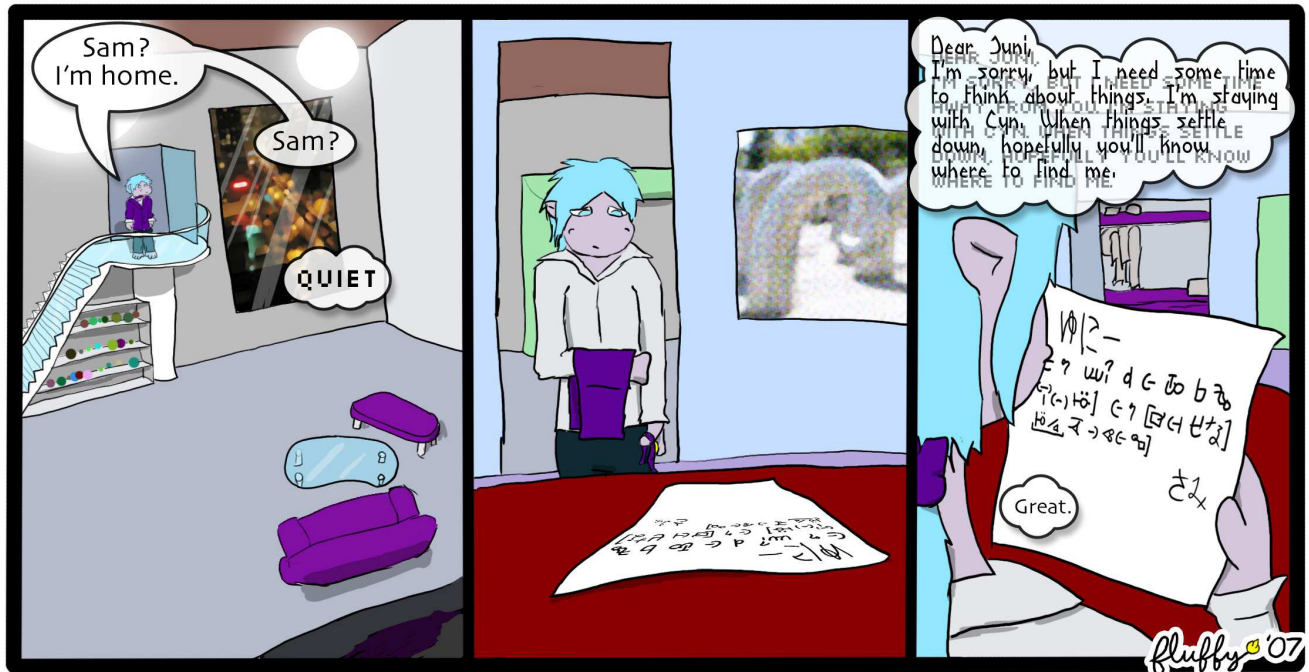
58. After-afterparty walk



59. Foment



60. It's oh so quiet



61. a hollow voice says "plugh"







# 5. DREAMING



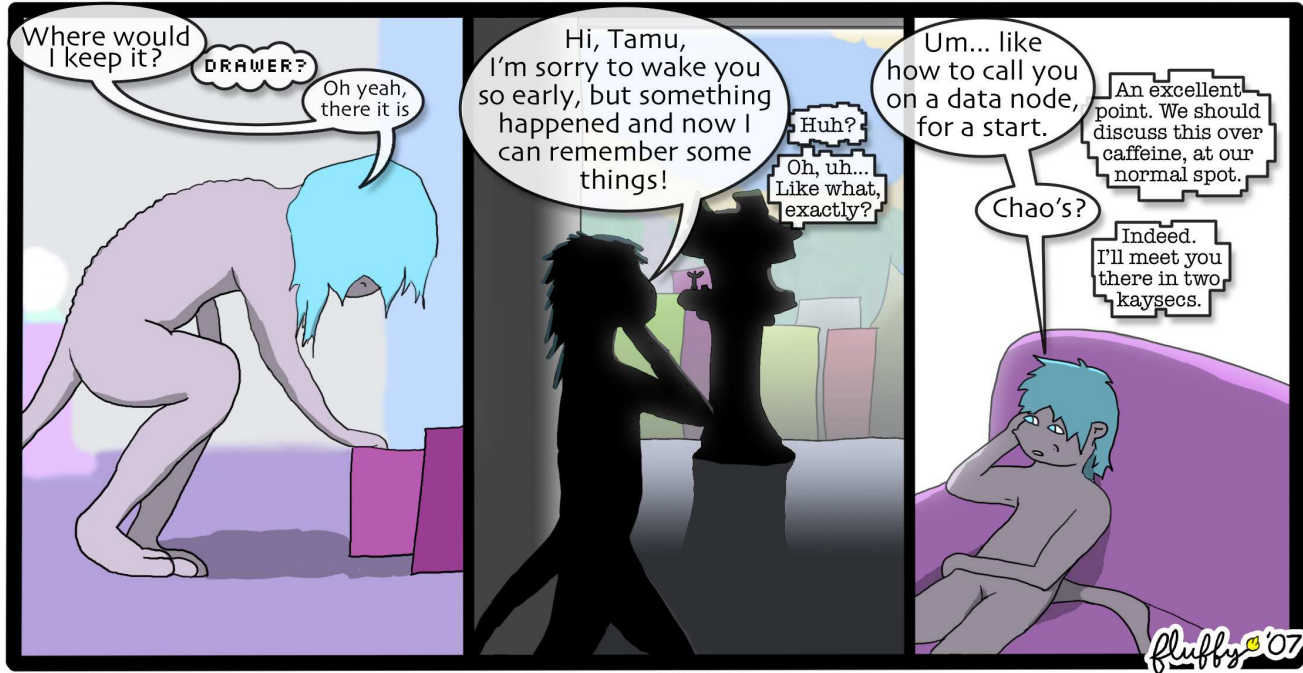
62. Entanglement



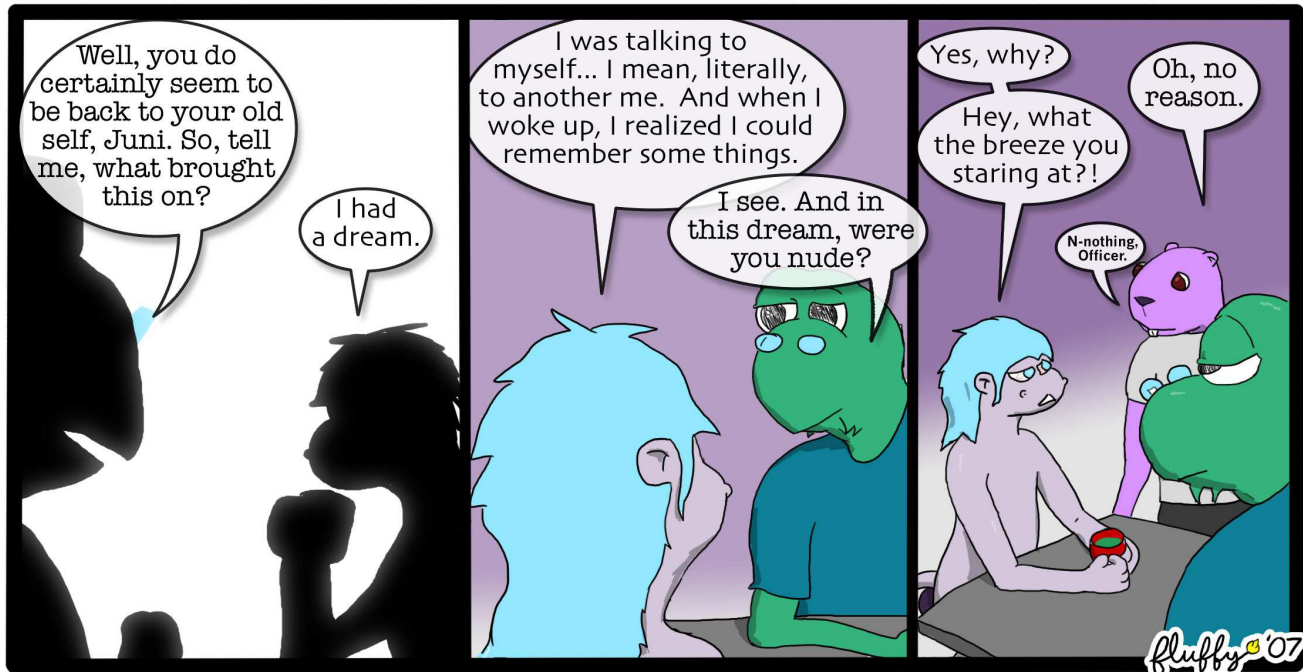
63. Juni drops the K-bomb



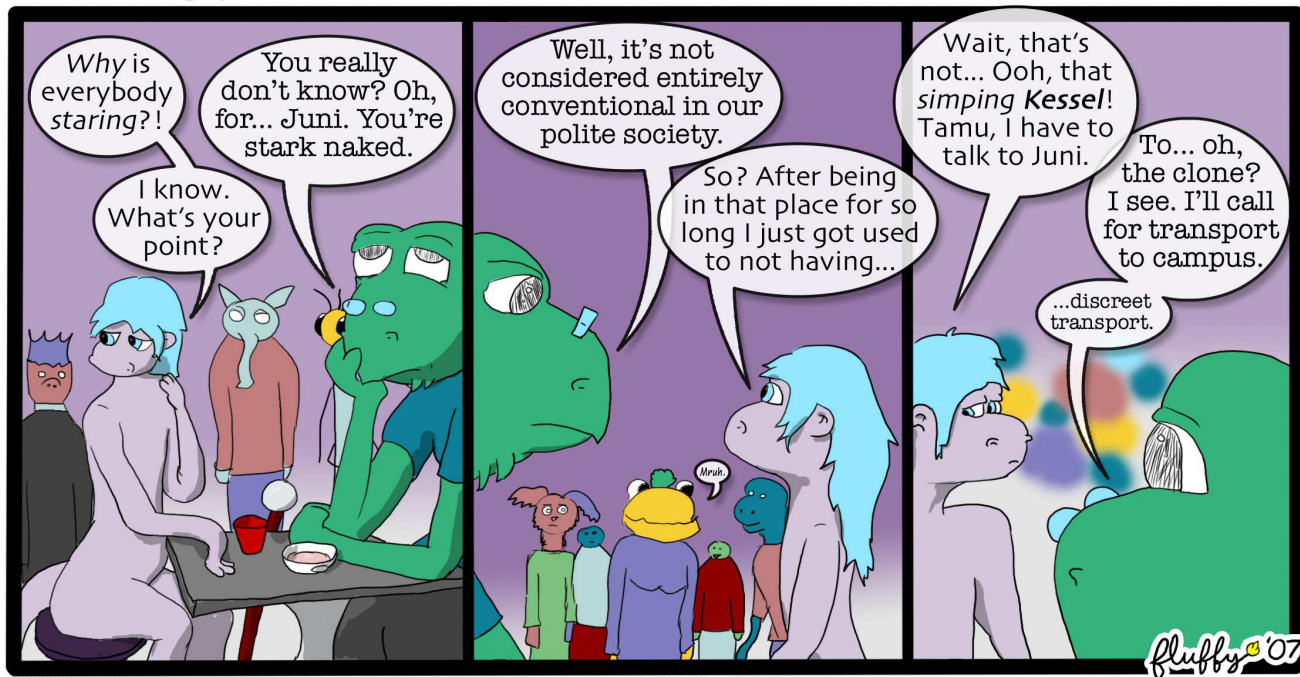
64. In Rememori-  
am



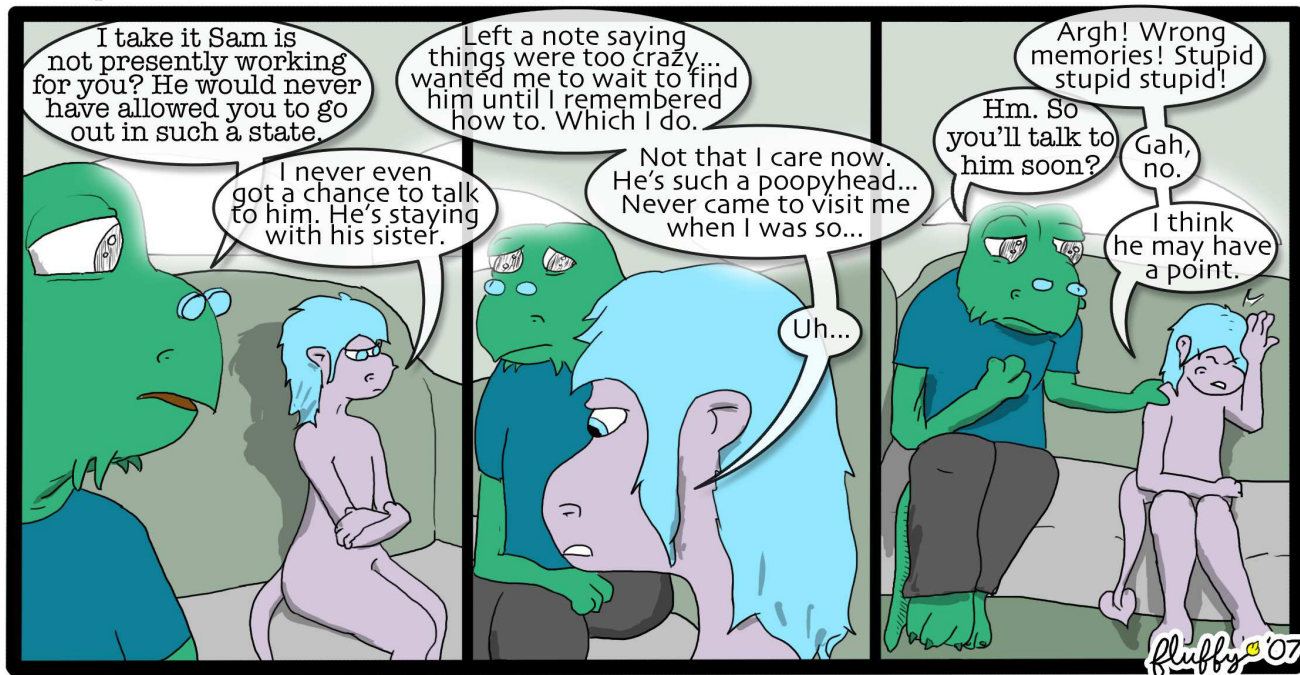
65. Wired a little differently



66. Live nude physicists



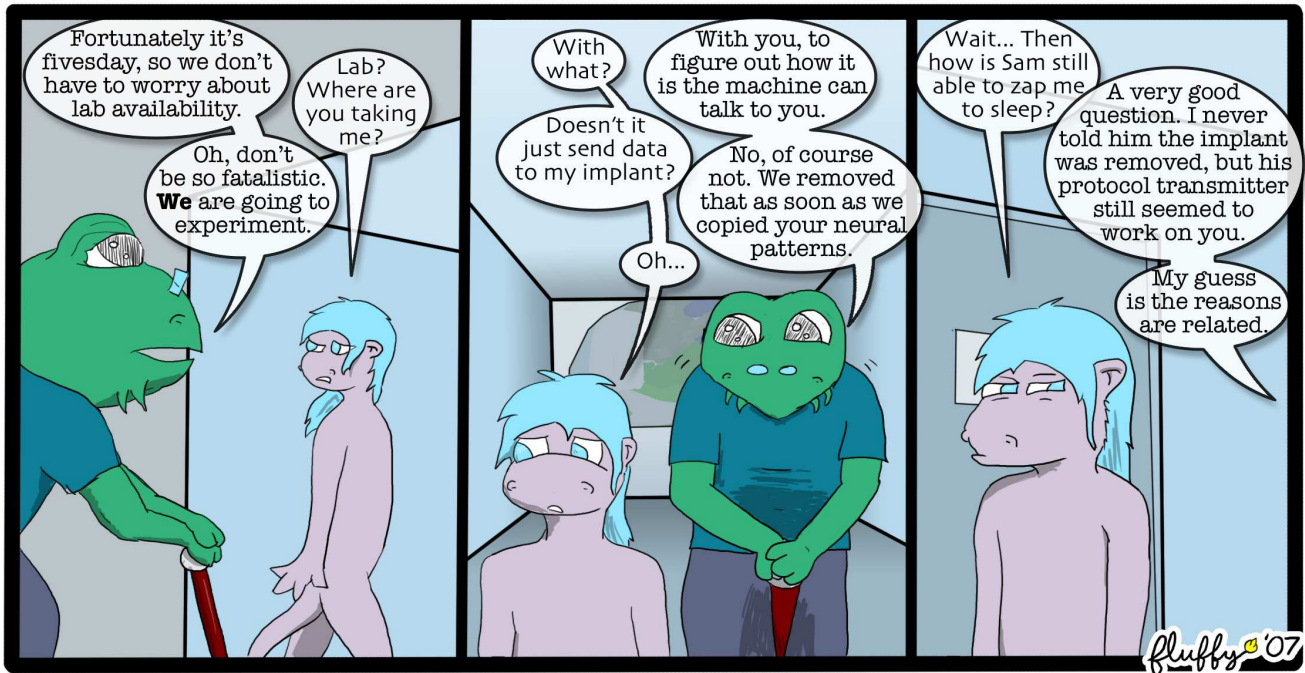
67. On point



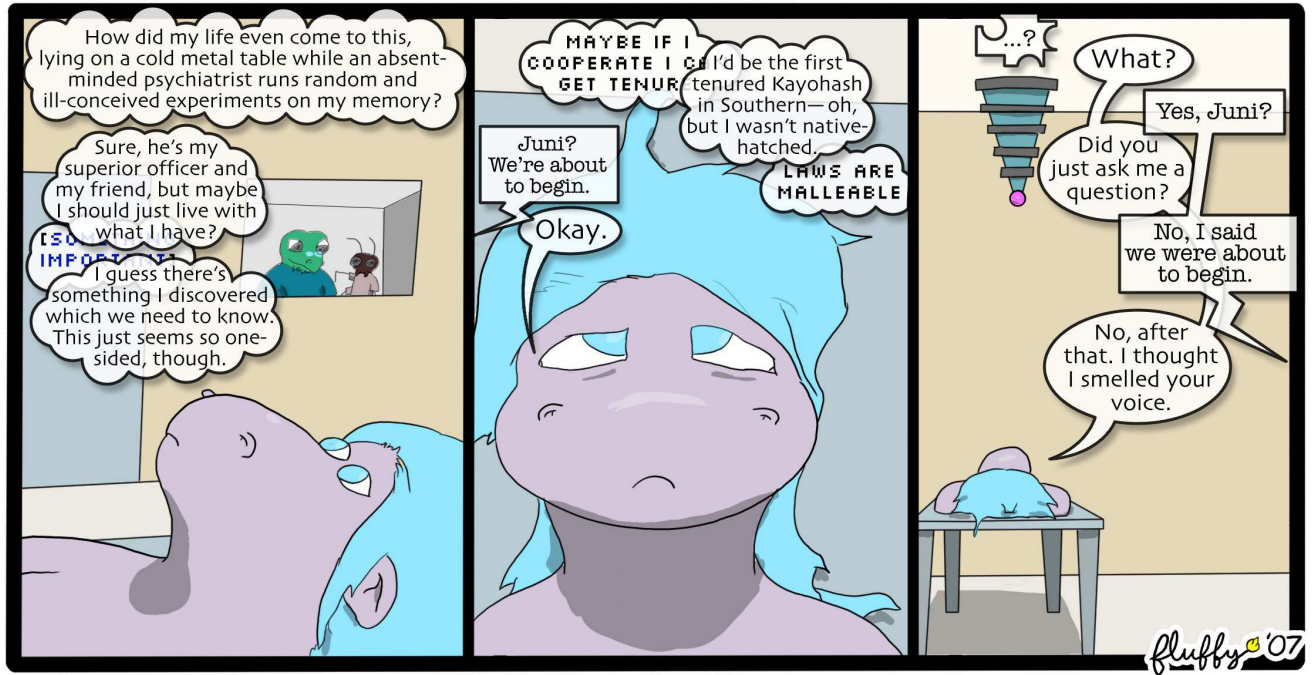
68. What, what, what?



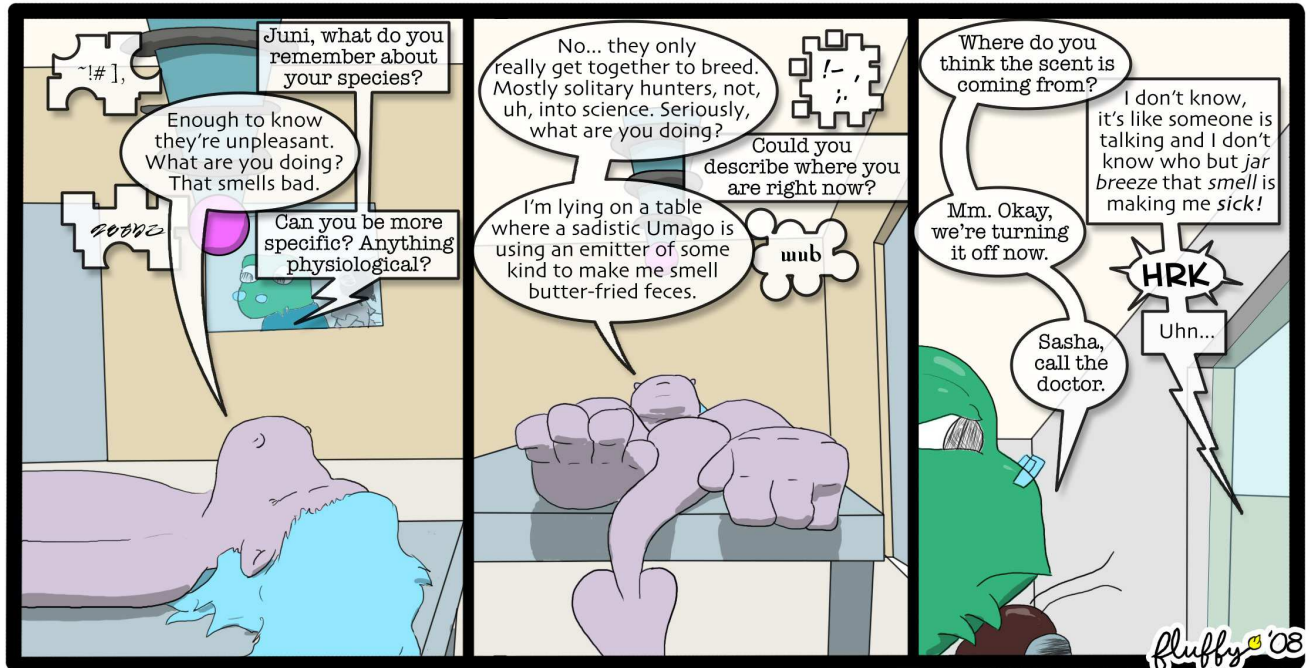
69. Justifiable skepticism



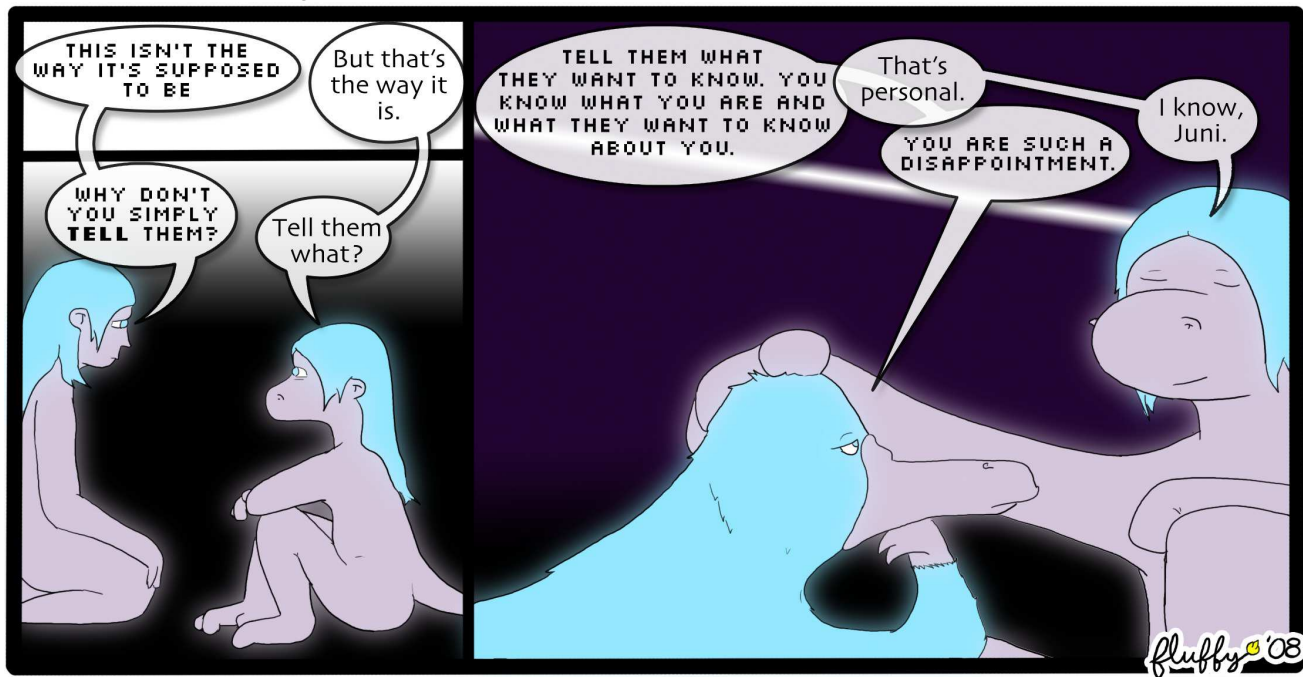
## 70. Internal Dialog



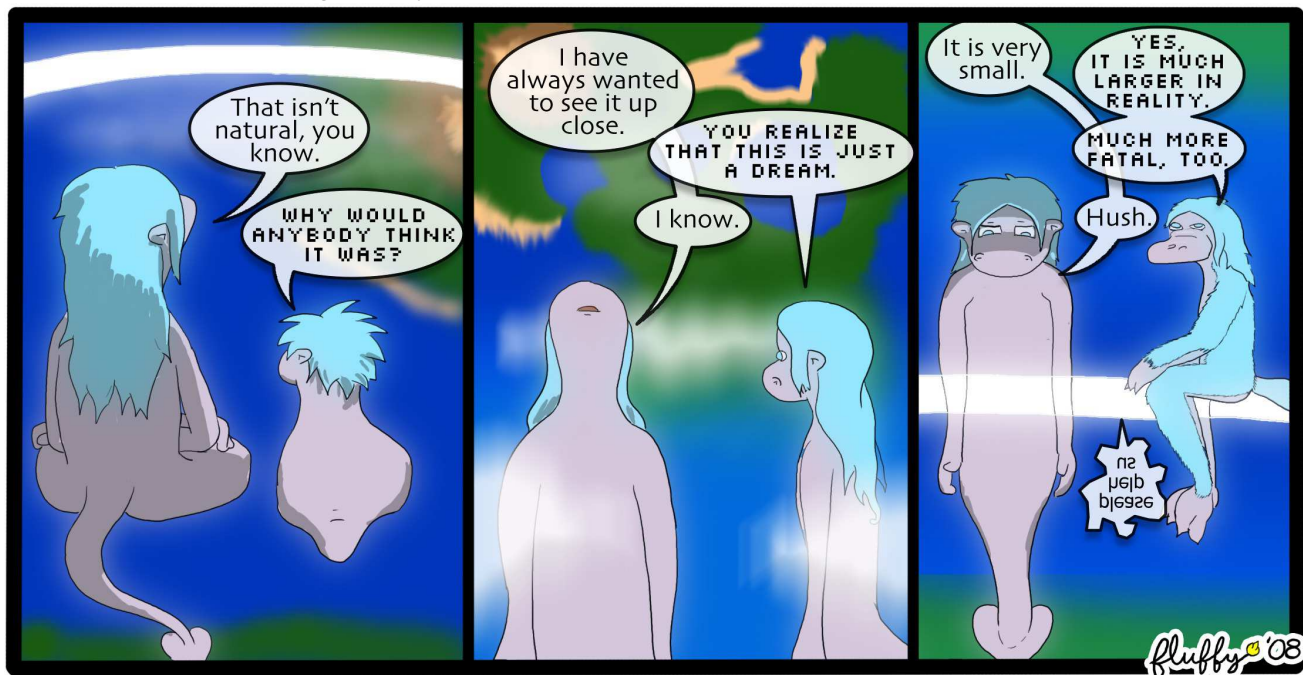
## 71. Butter-fried



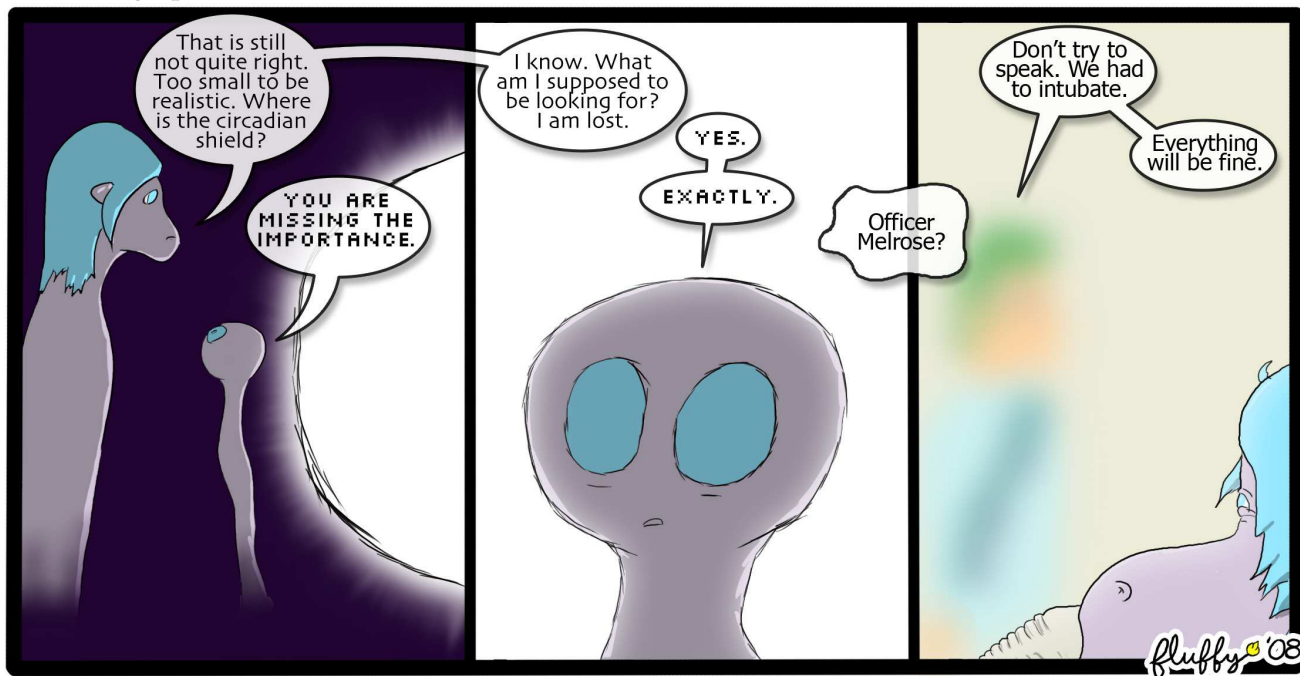
72. More internal dialog



73. Clouds were touching the sky



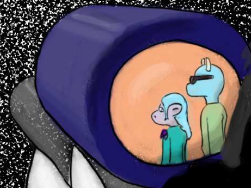
74. Waking up





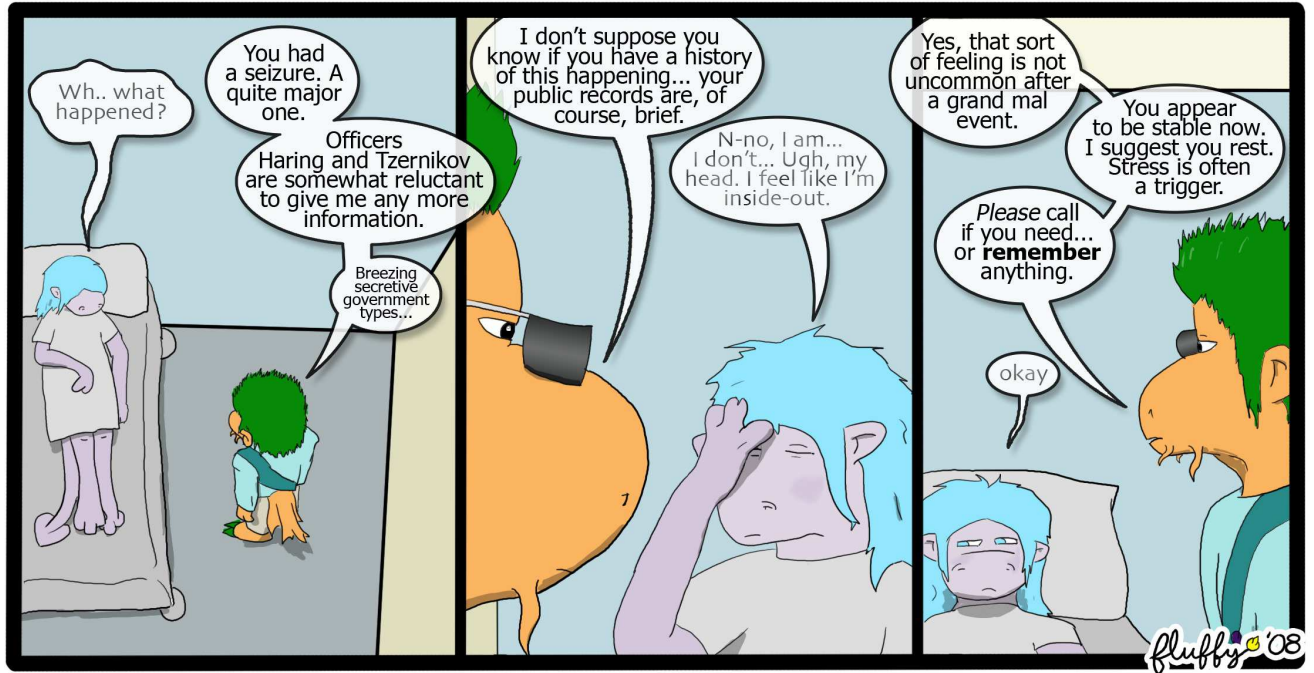


# E-RUNNING

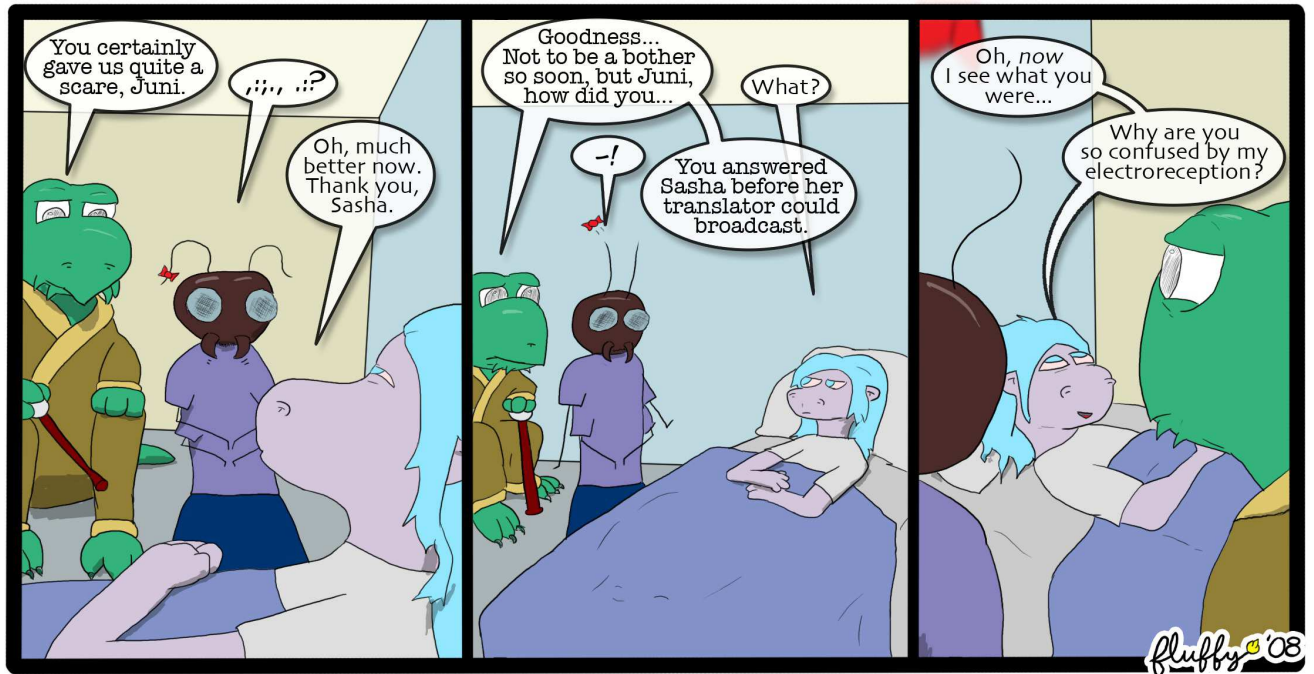




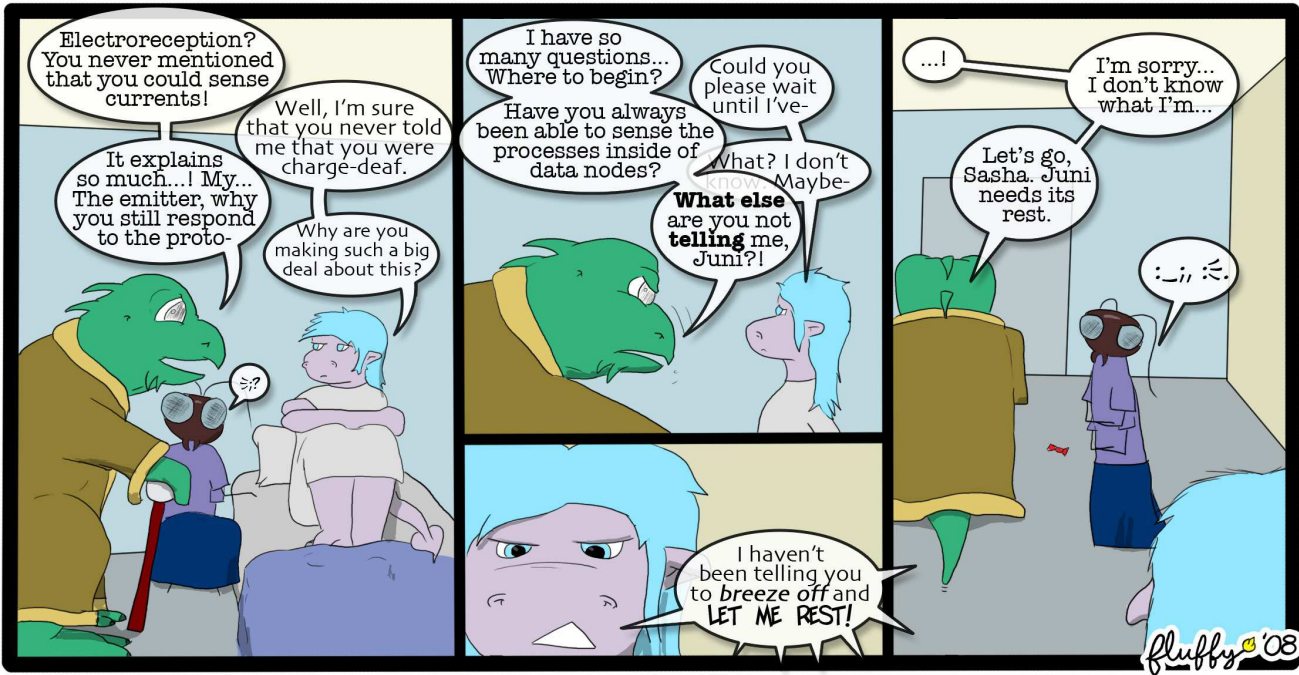
75. Factors



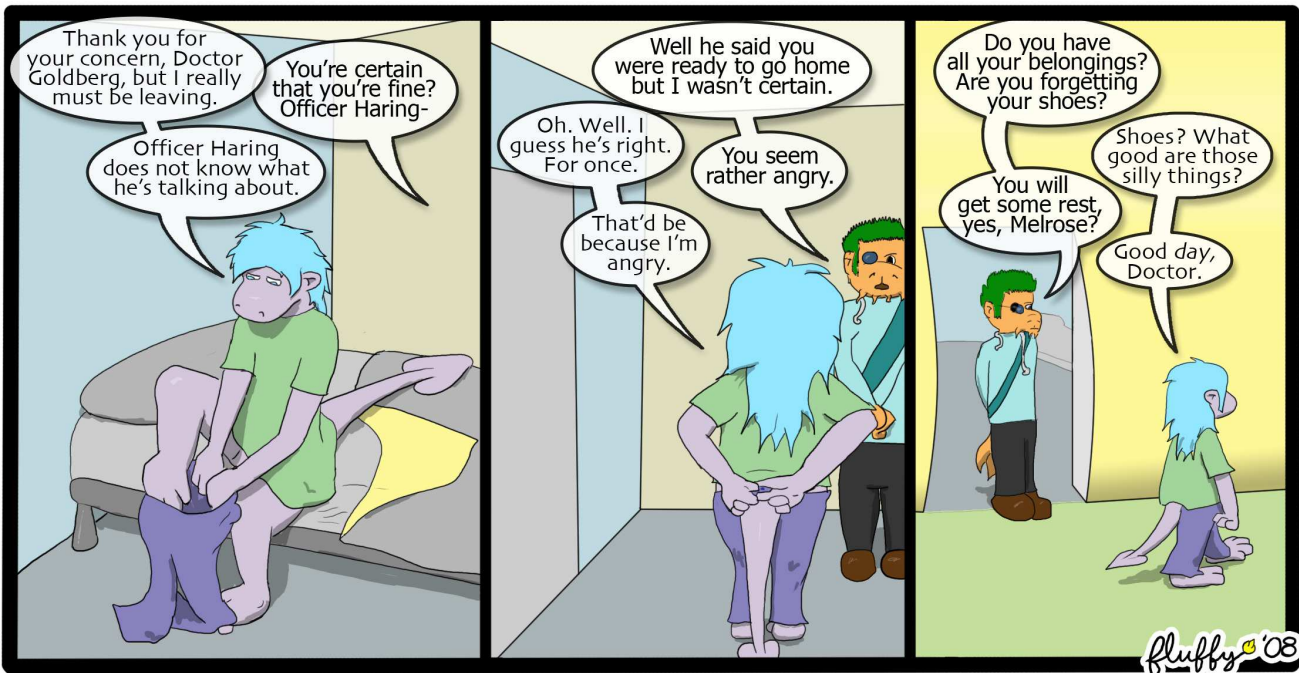
76. Silent in the morning



77. Mood swings



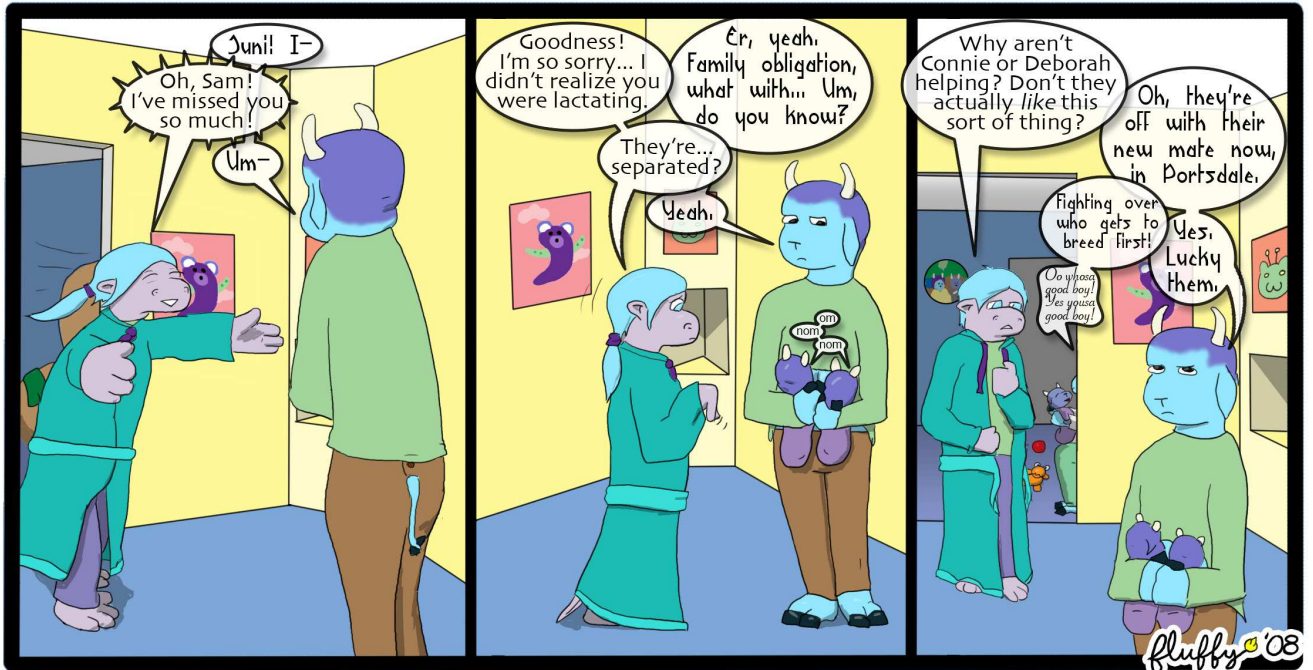
78. Checking out



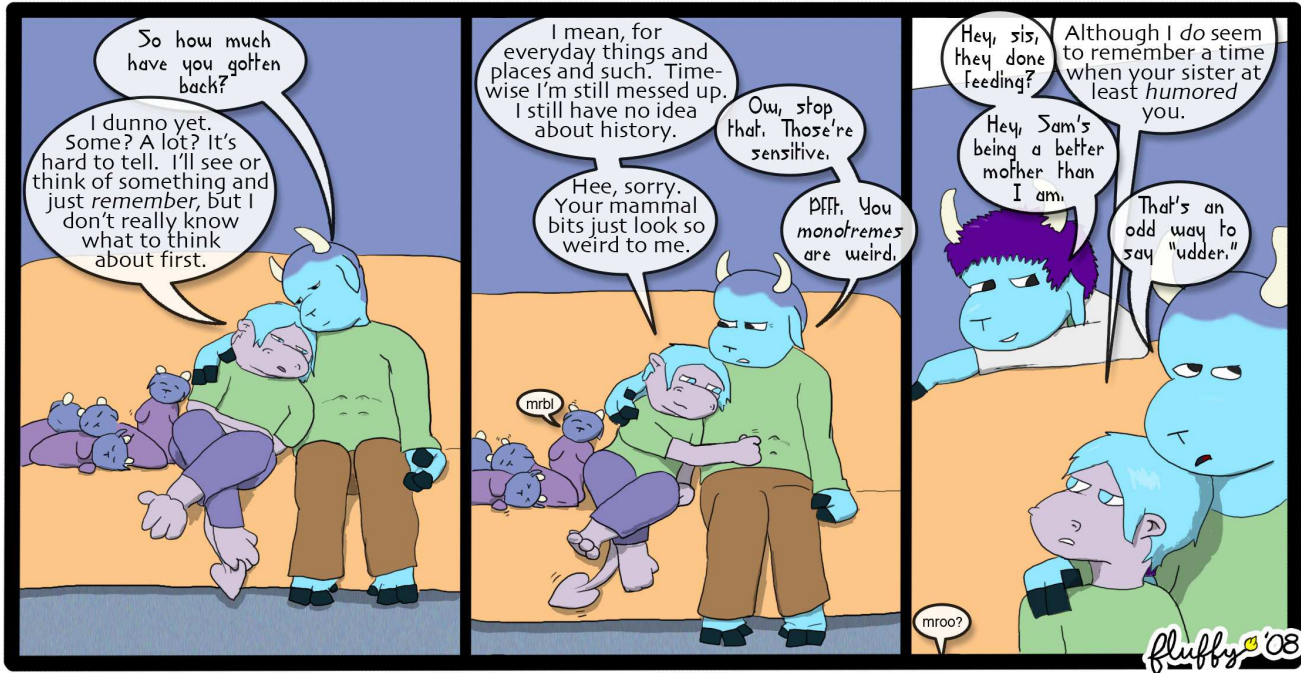
79. Cynthia Roarke-Fanning



80. The duties of a littermate



81. Sensitive



82. Heads up



83. Under pressure



84. Assessment



85. The next step



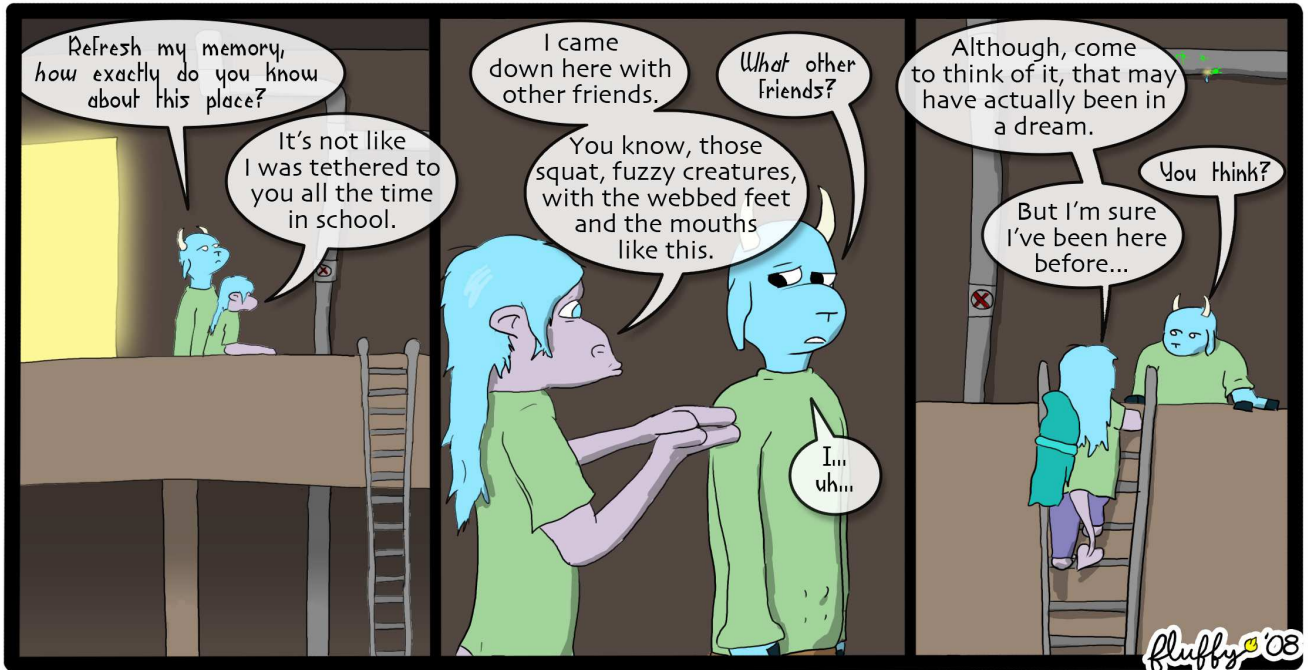
86. Rules

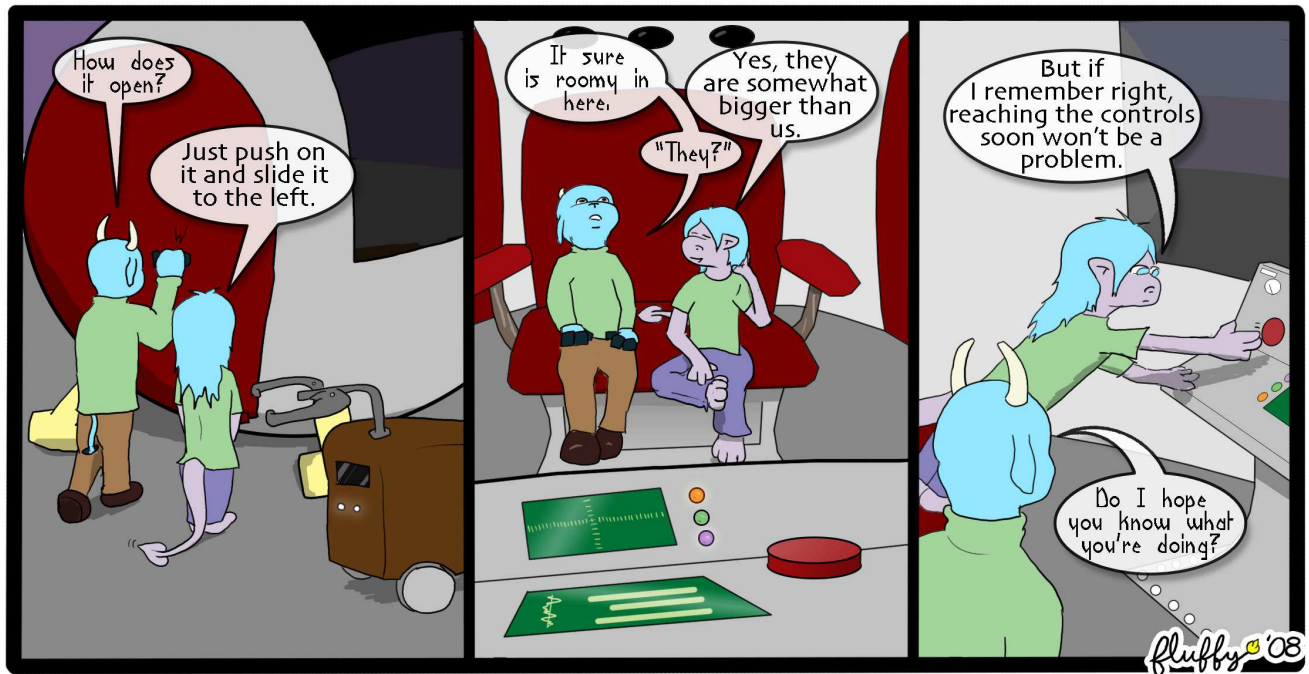
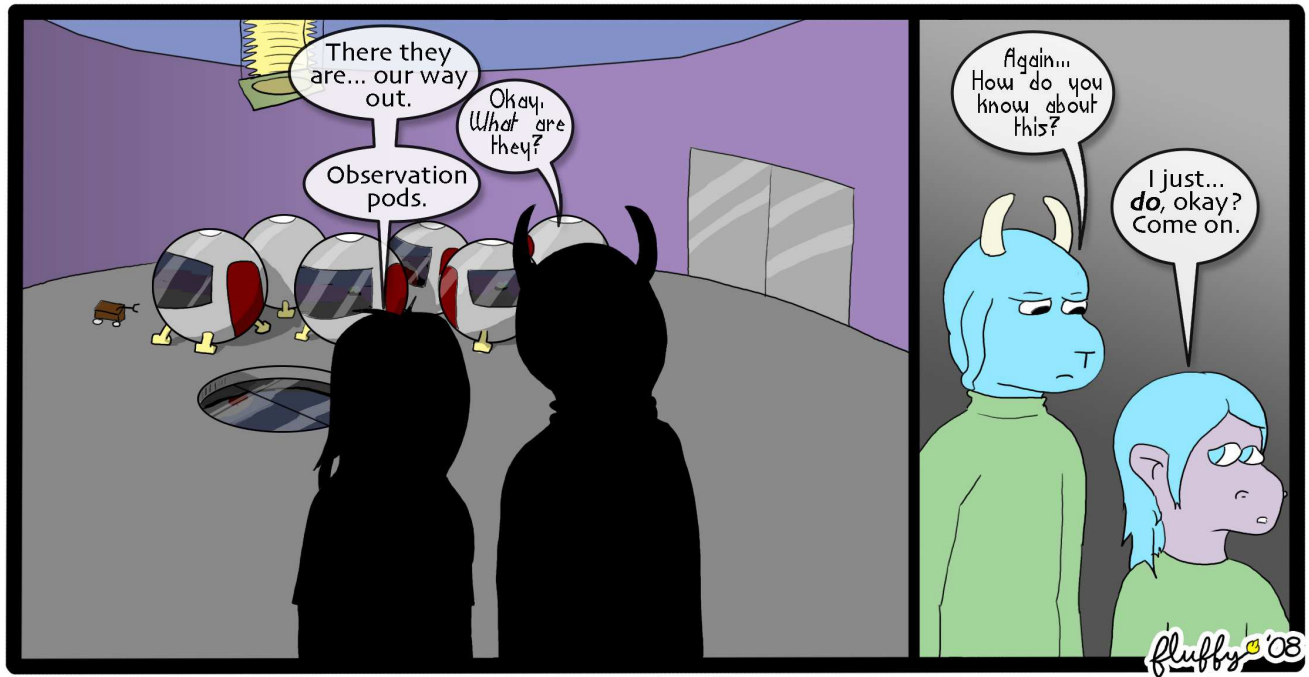


87. Planning



88. Down the rabbit hole



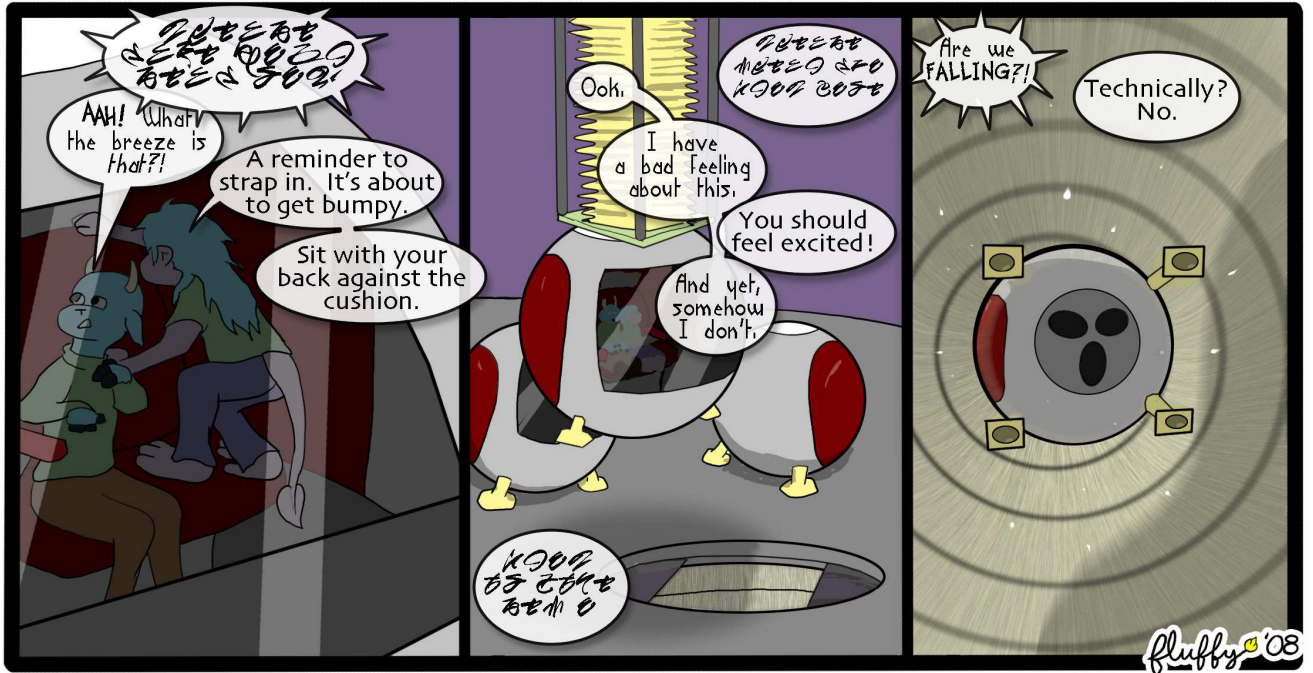




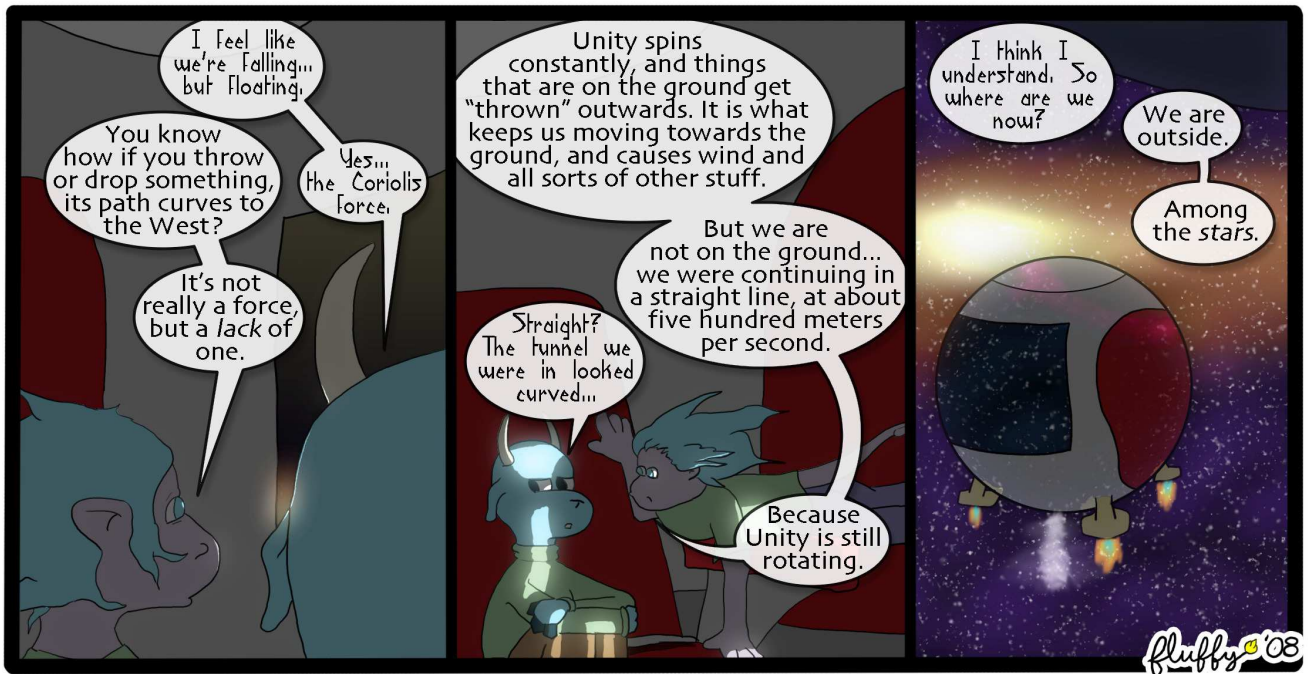
7. FALLING  
7. FALLING  
7. FALLING



91. Freefall



92. Galaxies Floating on a Dark Matter Stream



93. Questions



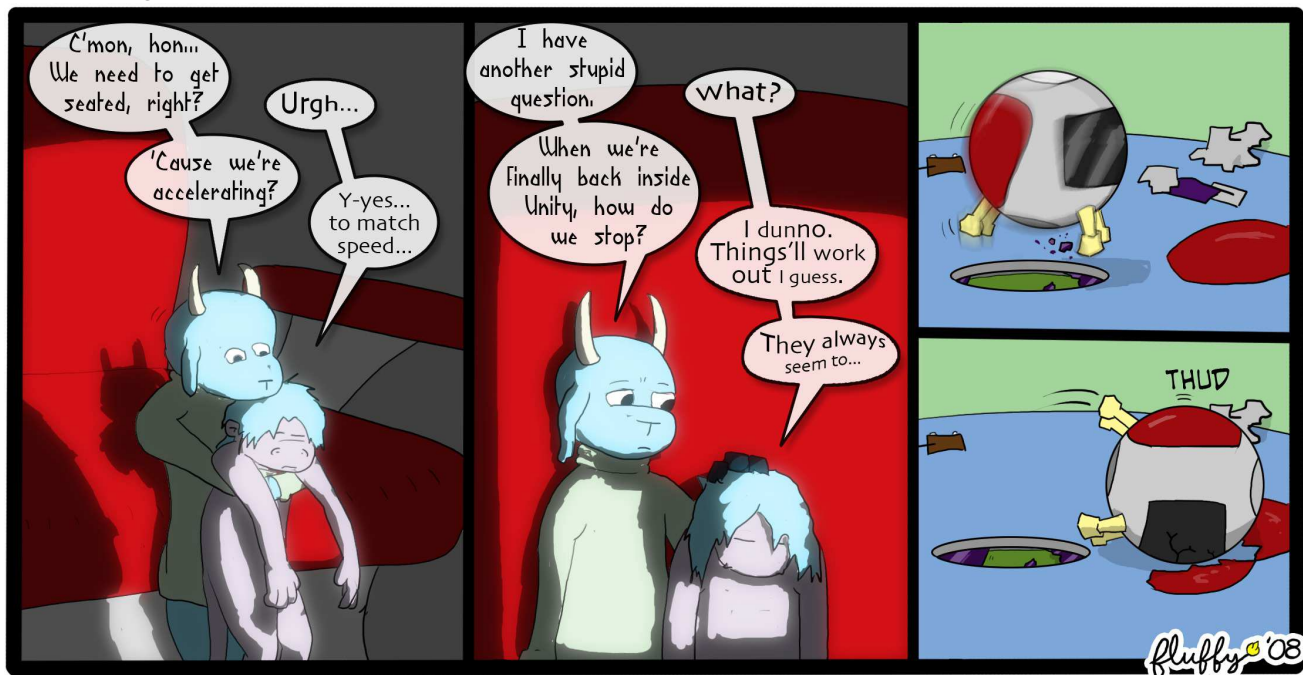
94. Consummate



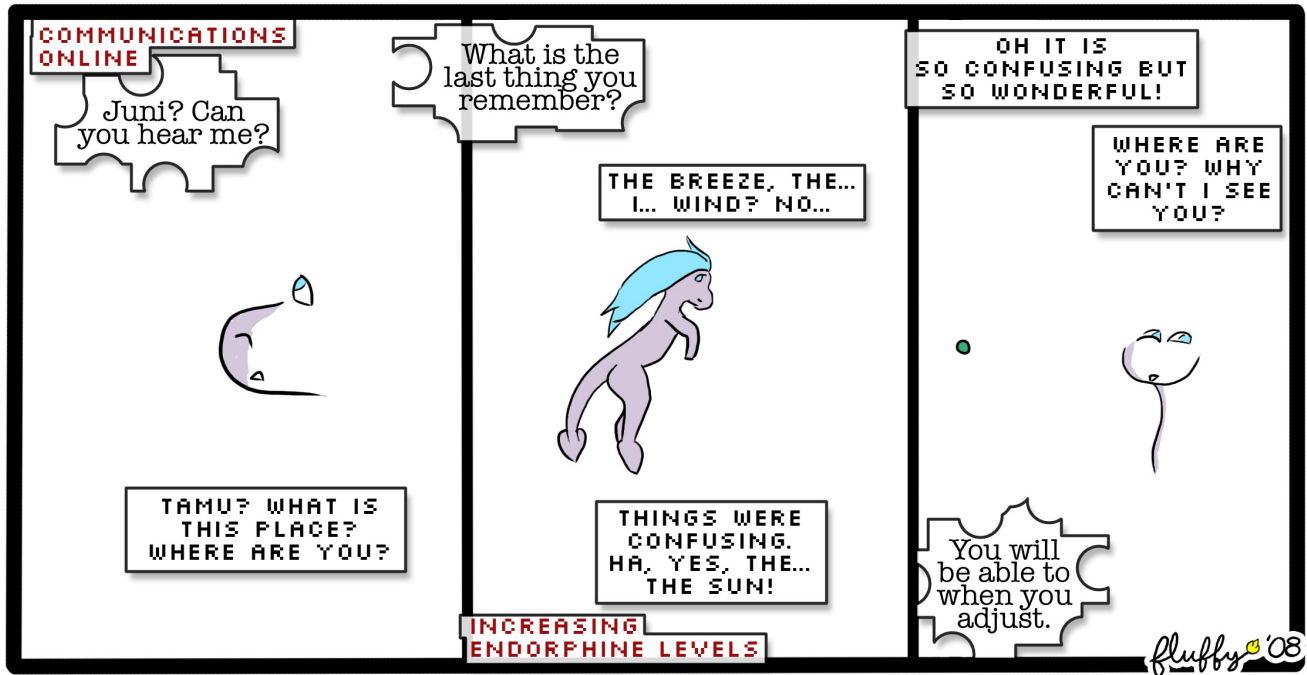
95. Whump



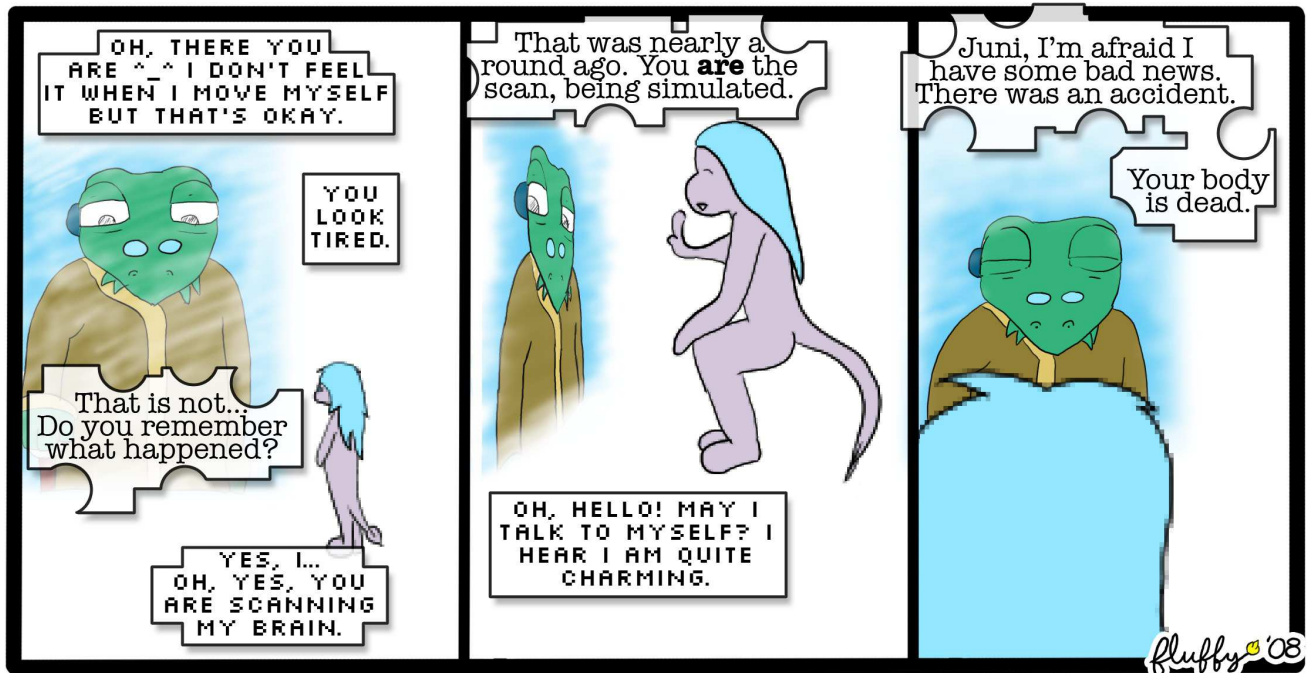
96. Landing

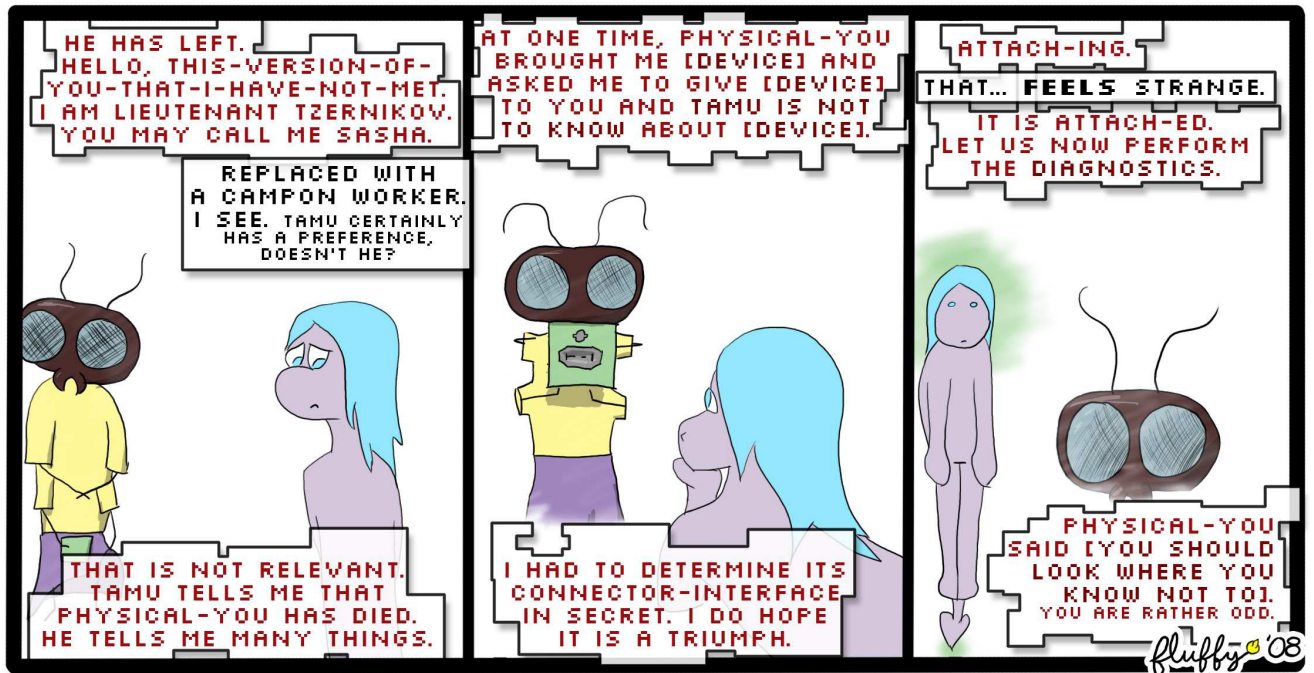
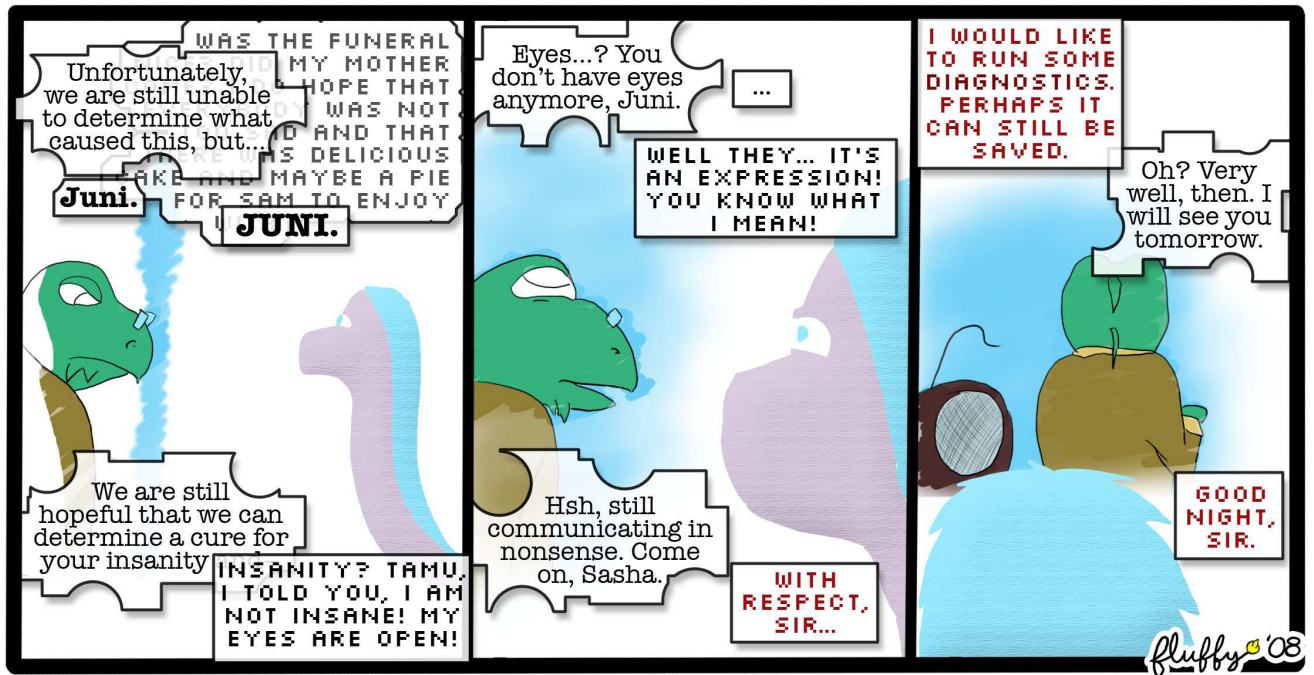


97. The other half



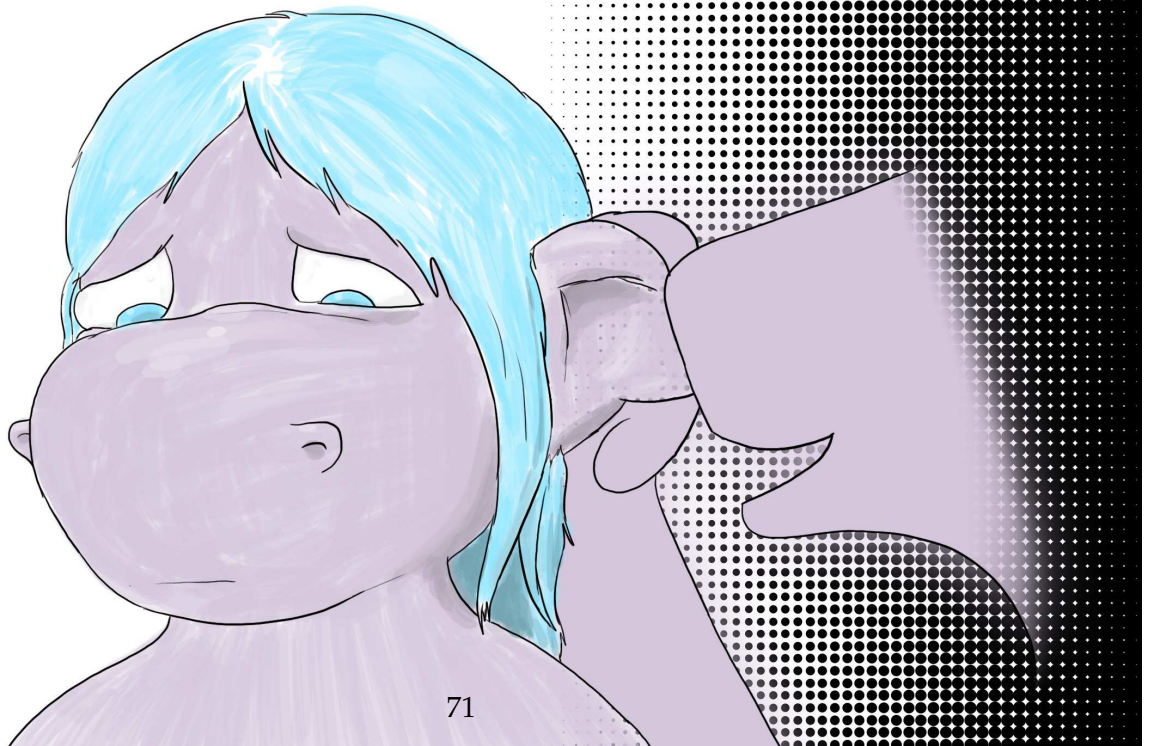
98. A hole in the sky





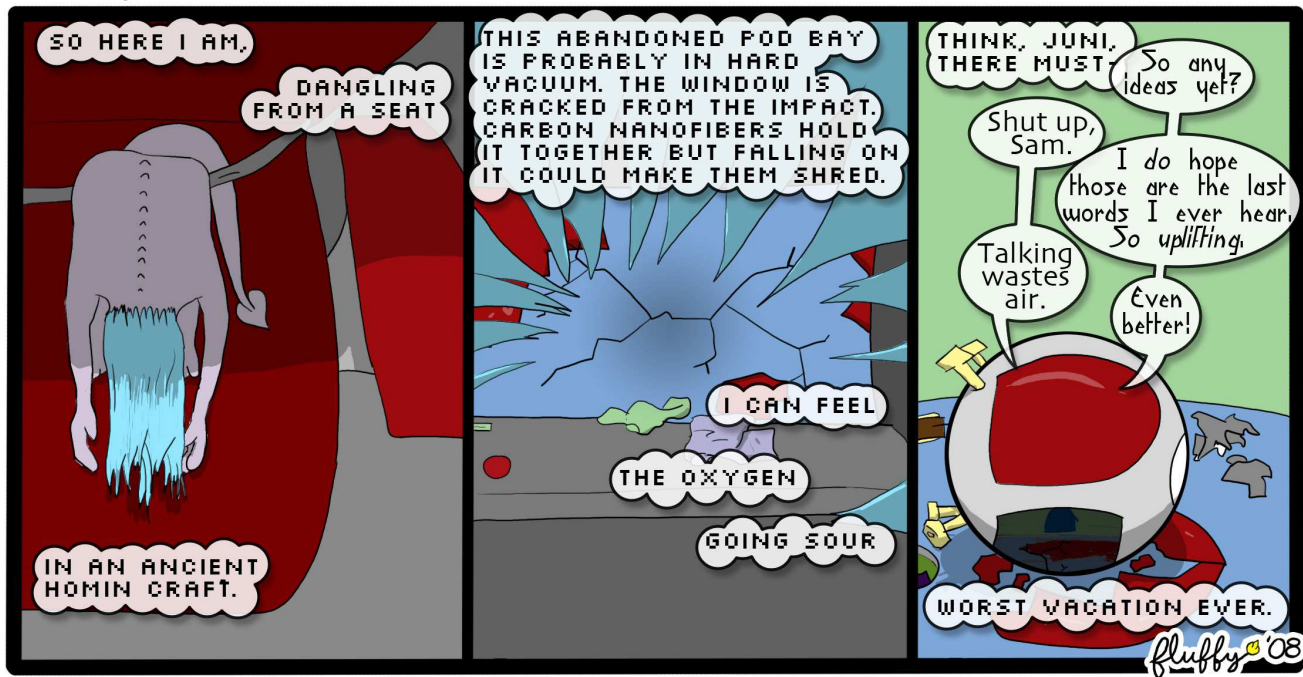


# 8. HEARING

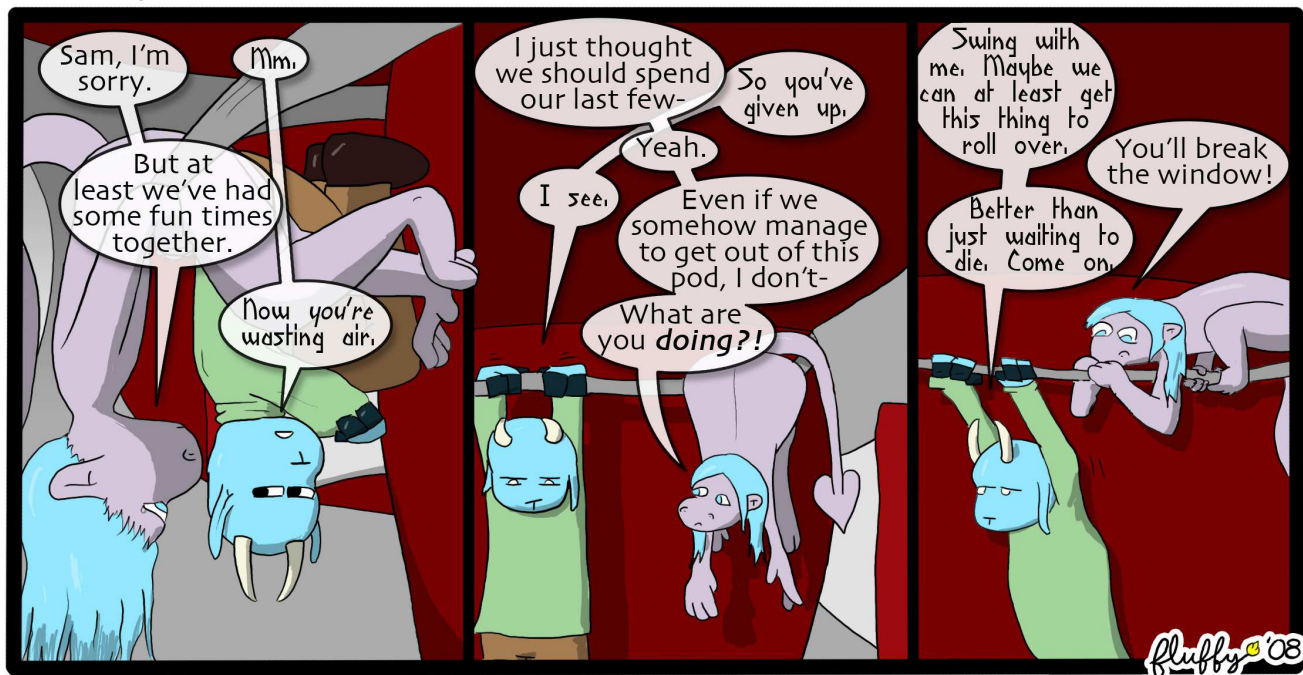


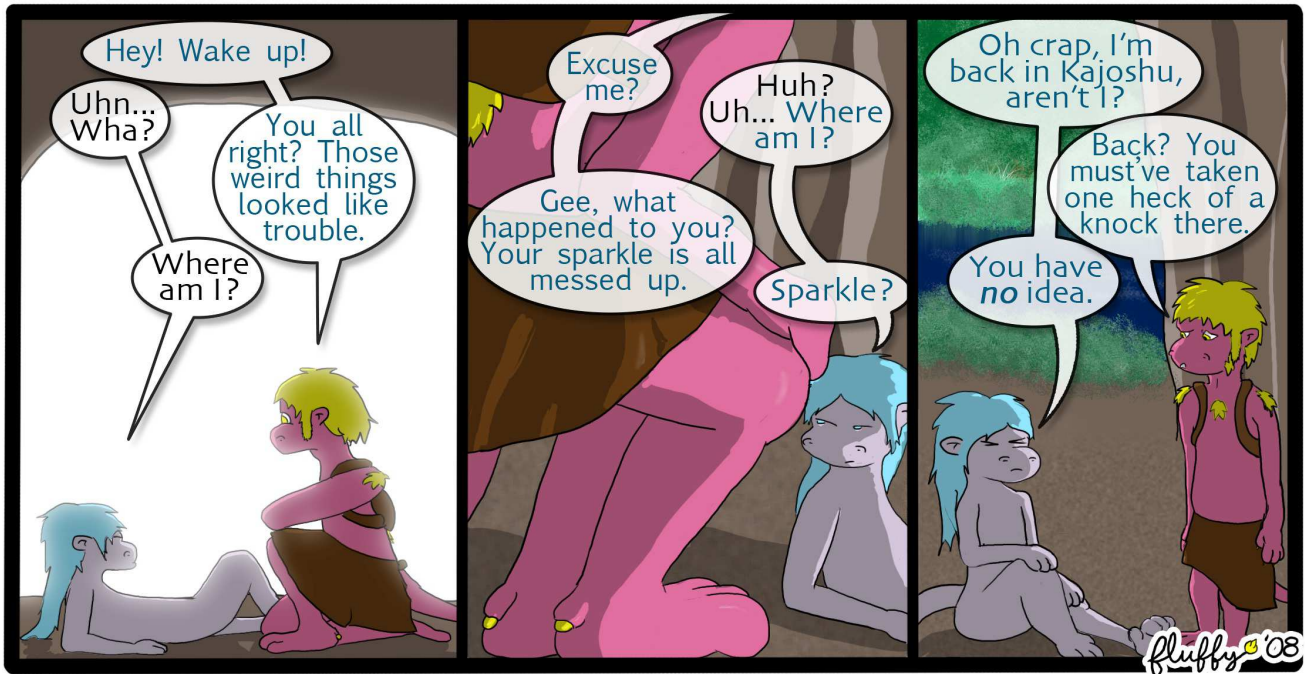
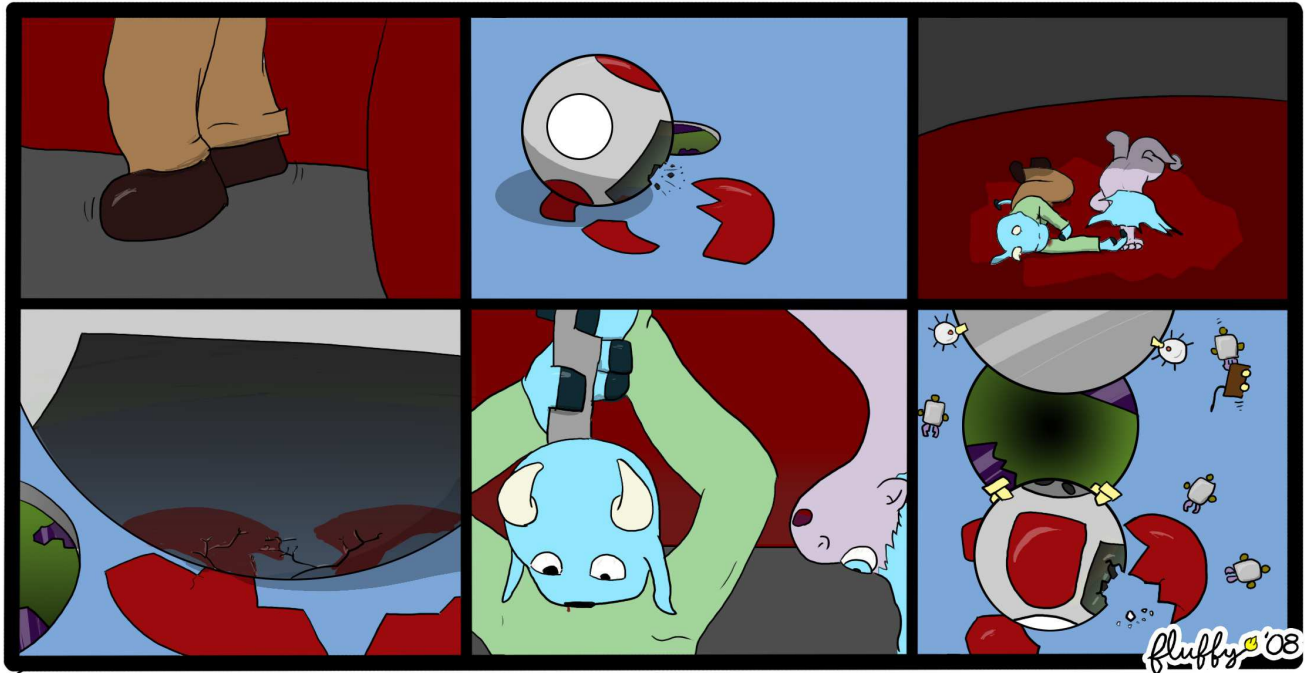


101. Hang in there!!! :D :D :D

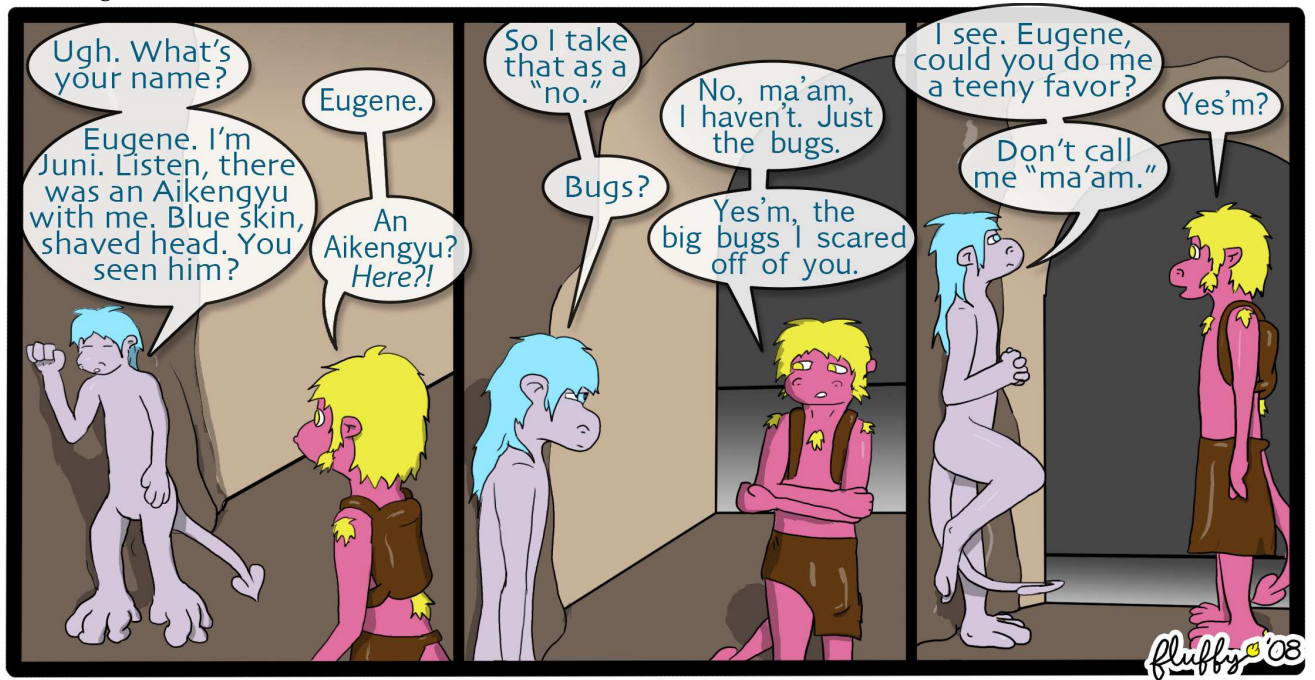


102. Taking action

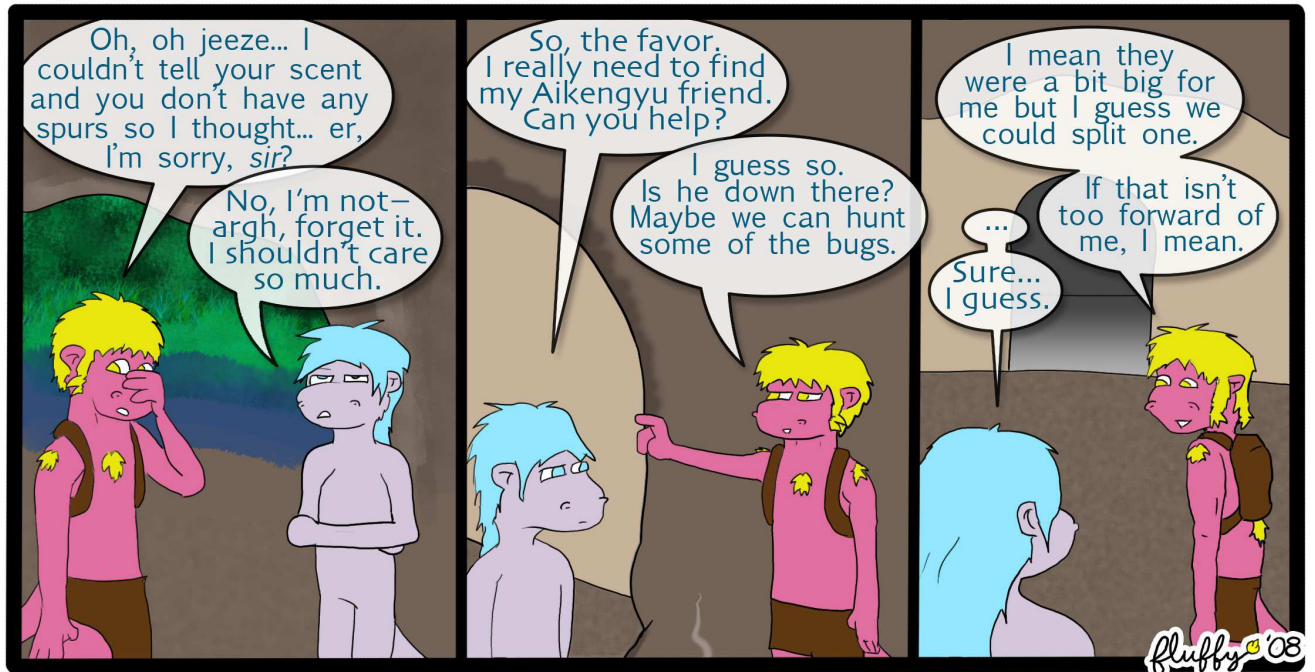




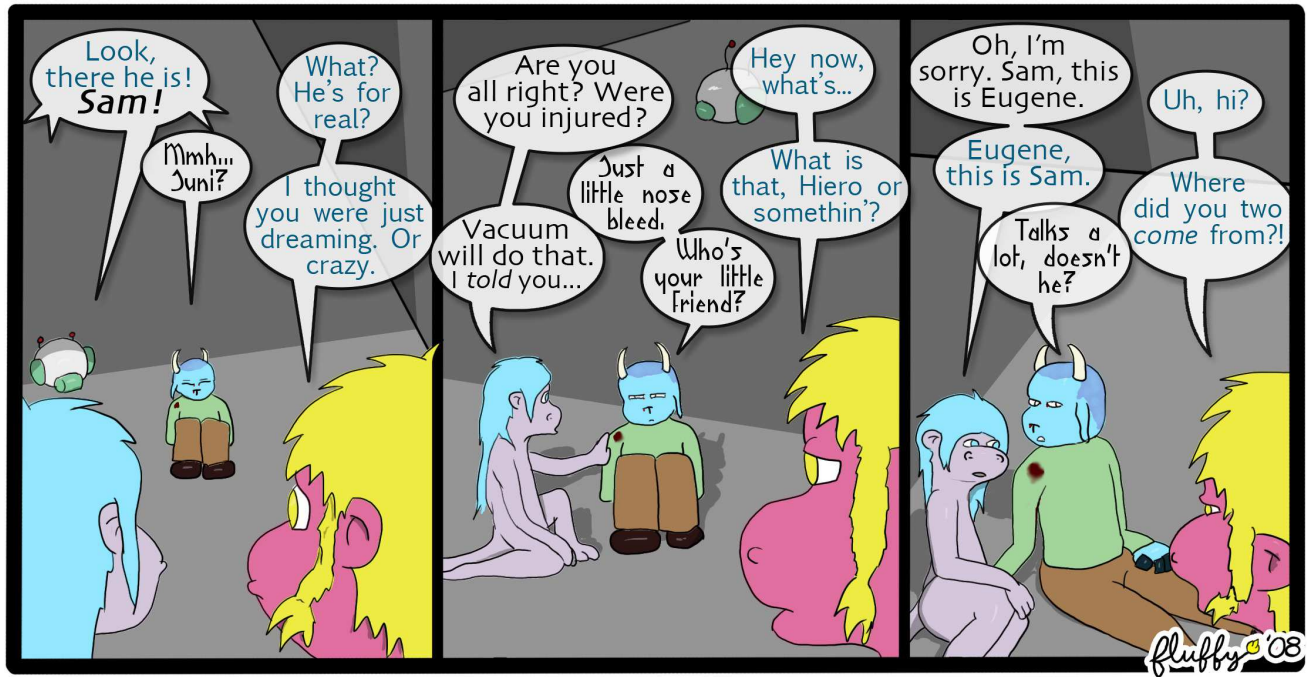
105. Bugs



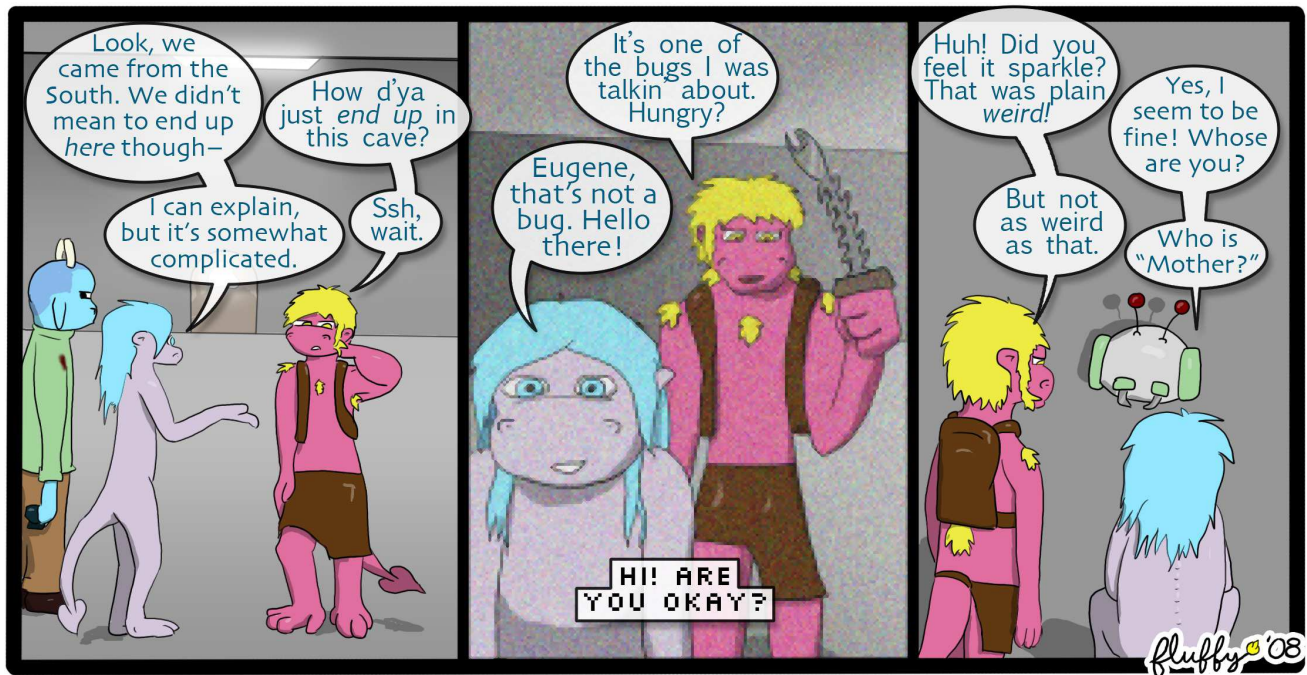
106. Forward



107. Nosebleed

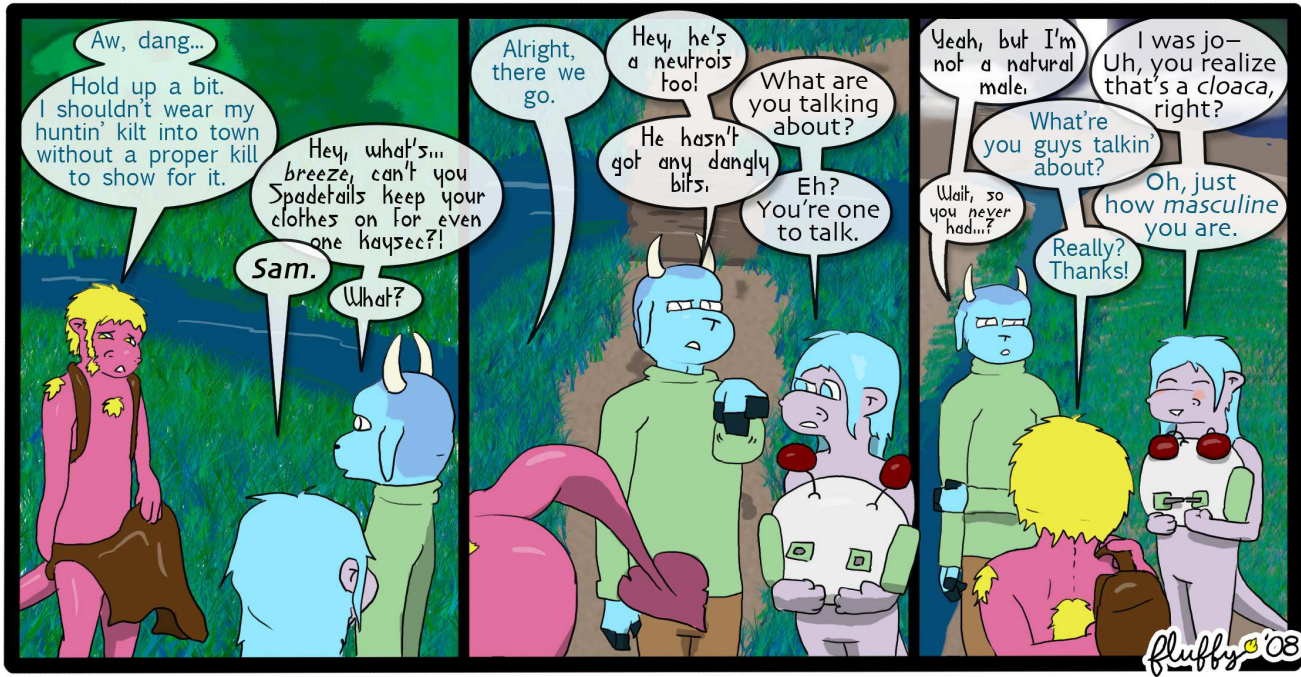


108. Complicated

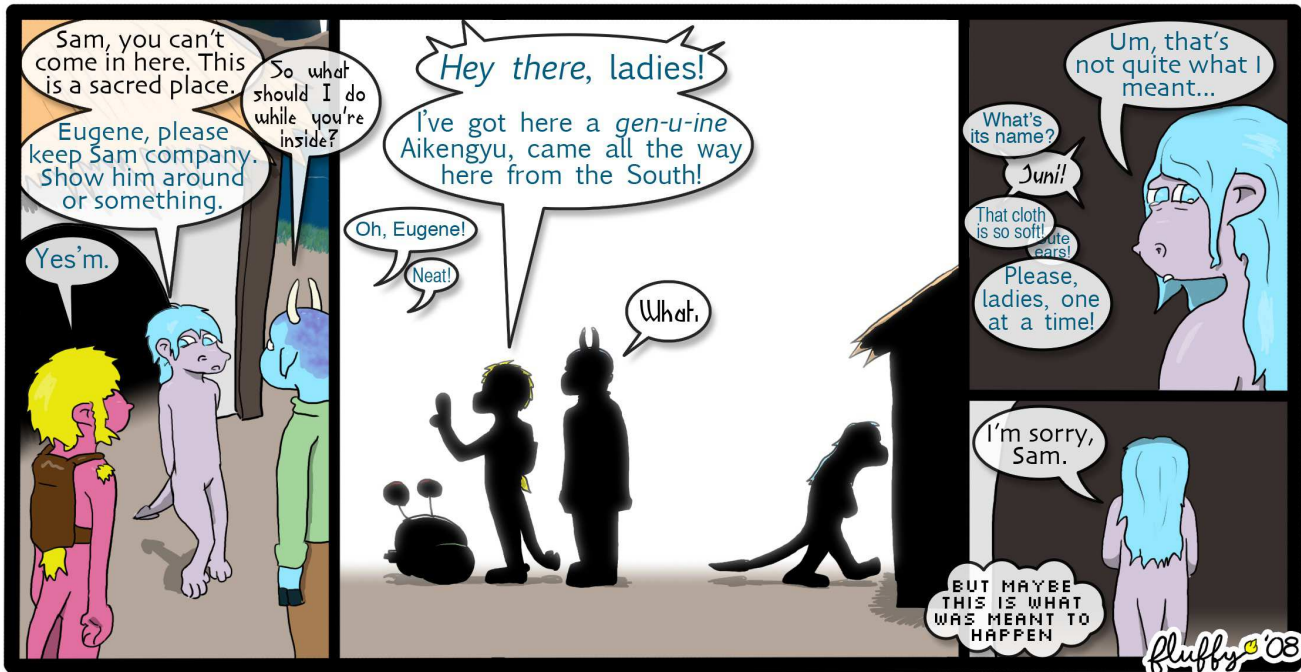




111. Outside the village



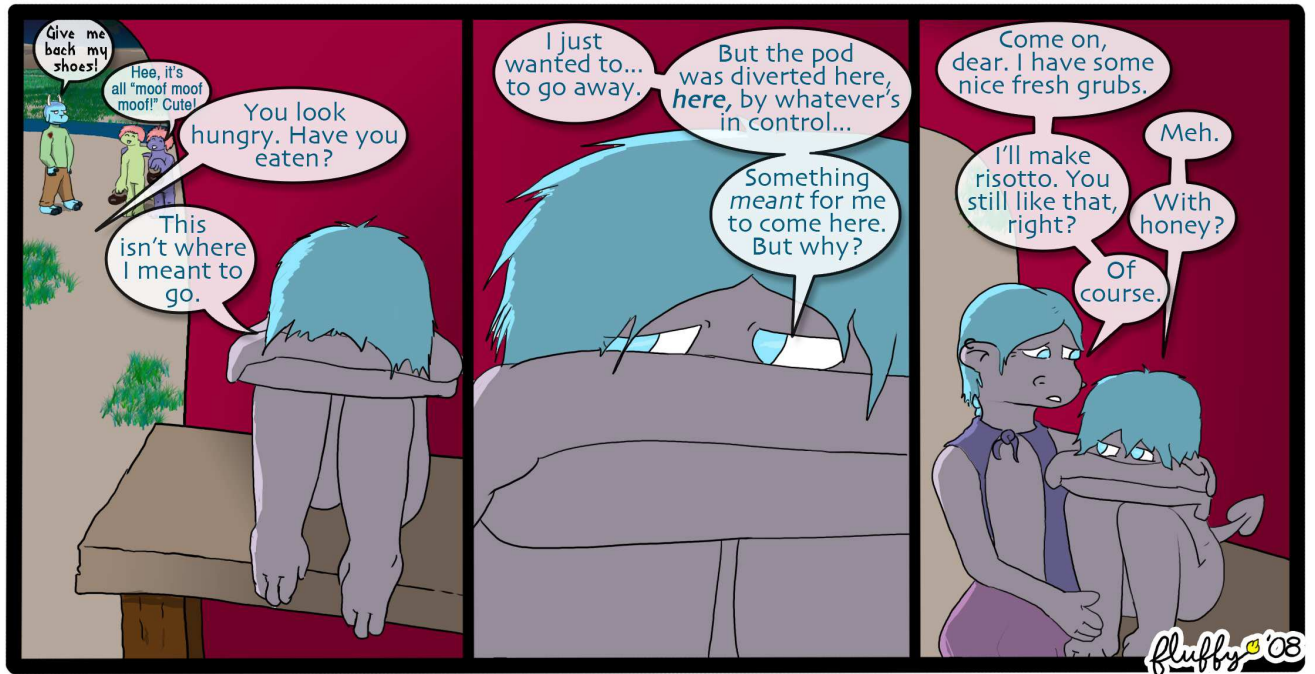
112. Entry



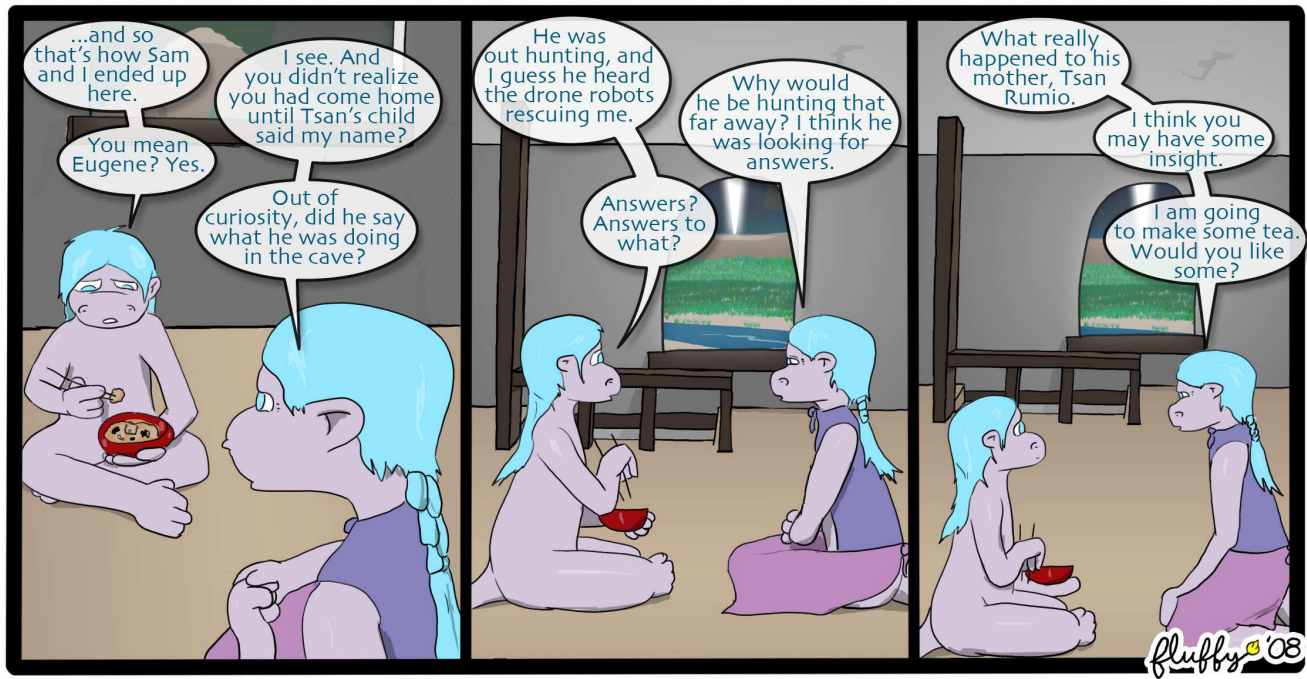
113. Inside the temple



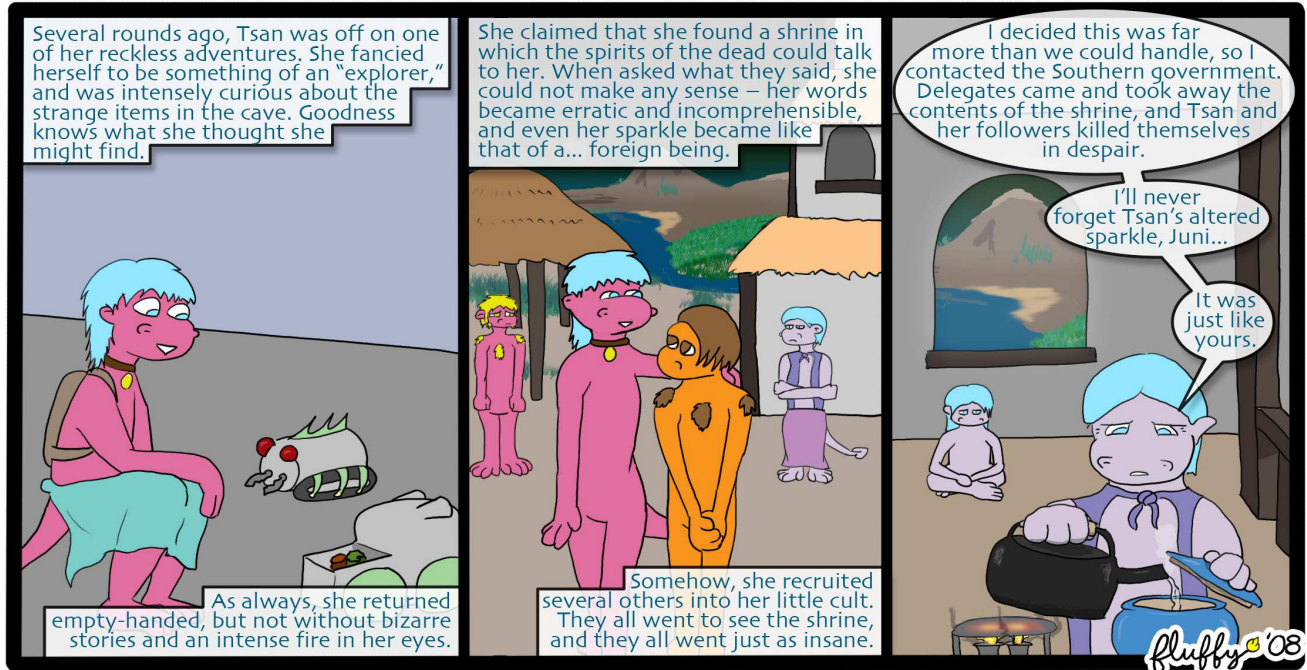
114. Risotto

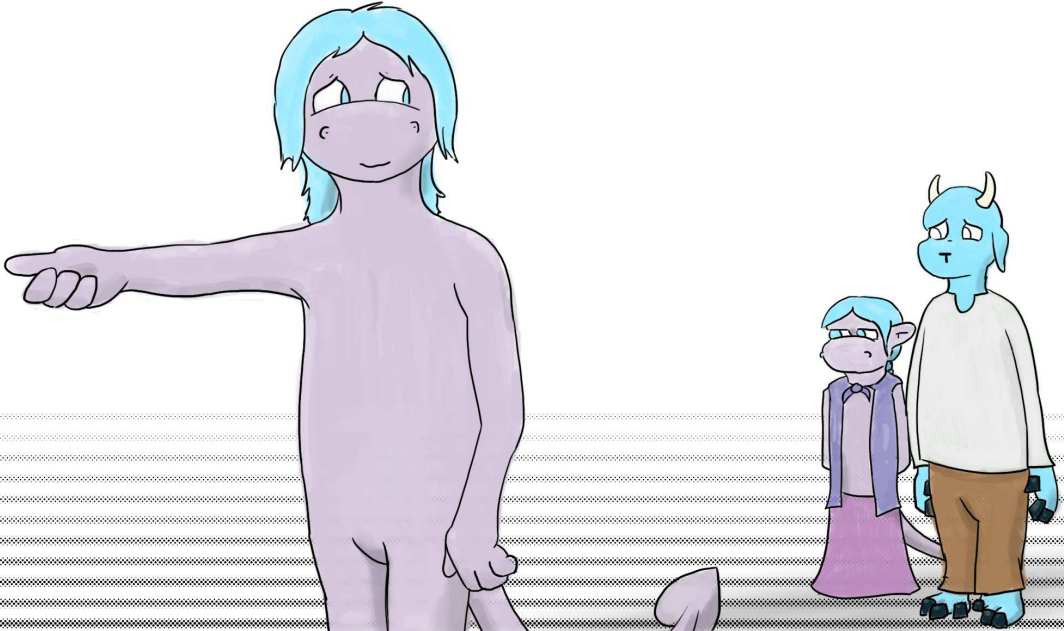


## 115. Insight



## 116. Tsan Rumio





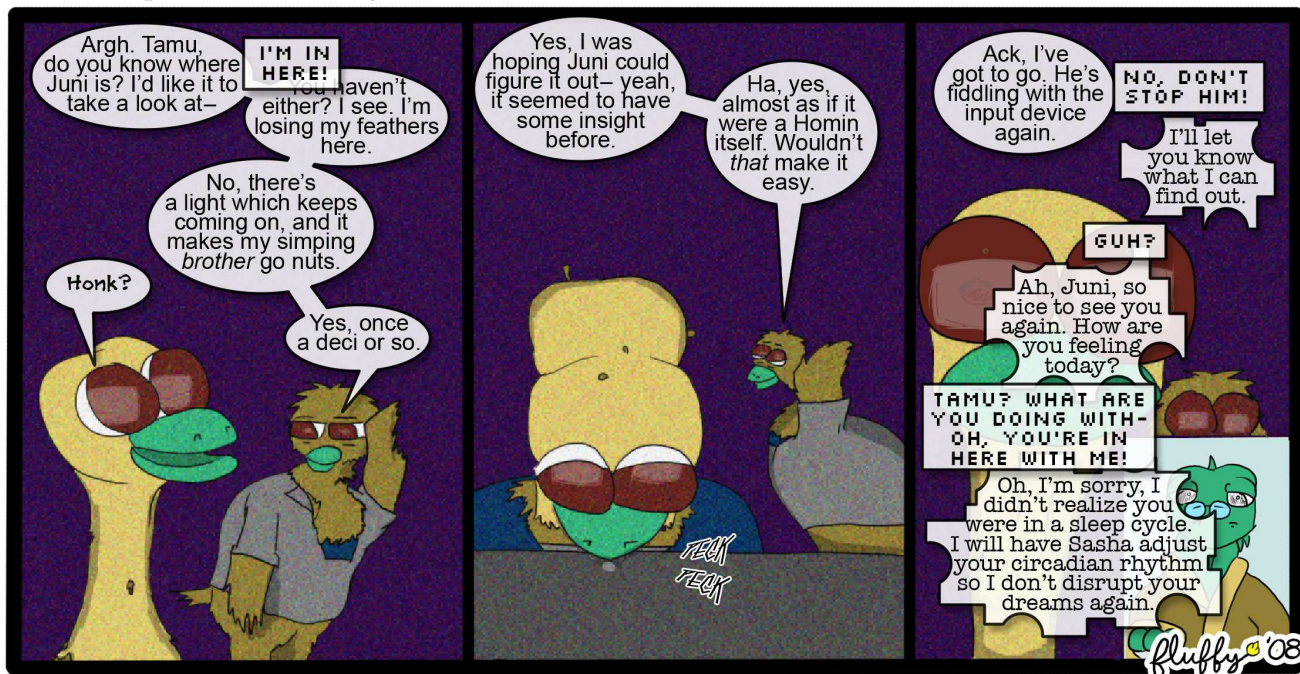
9 GATHERING  
9 GATHERING



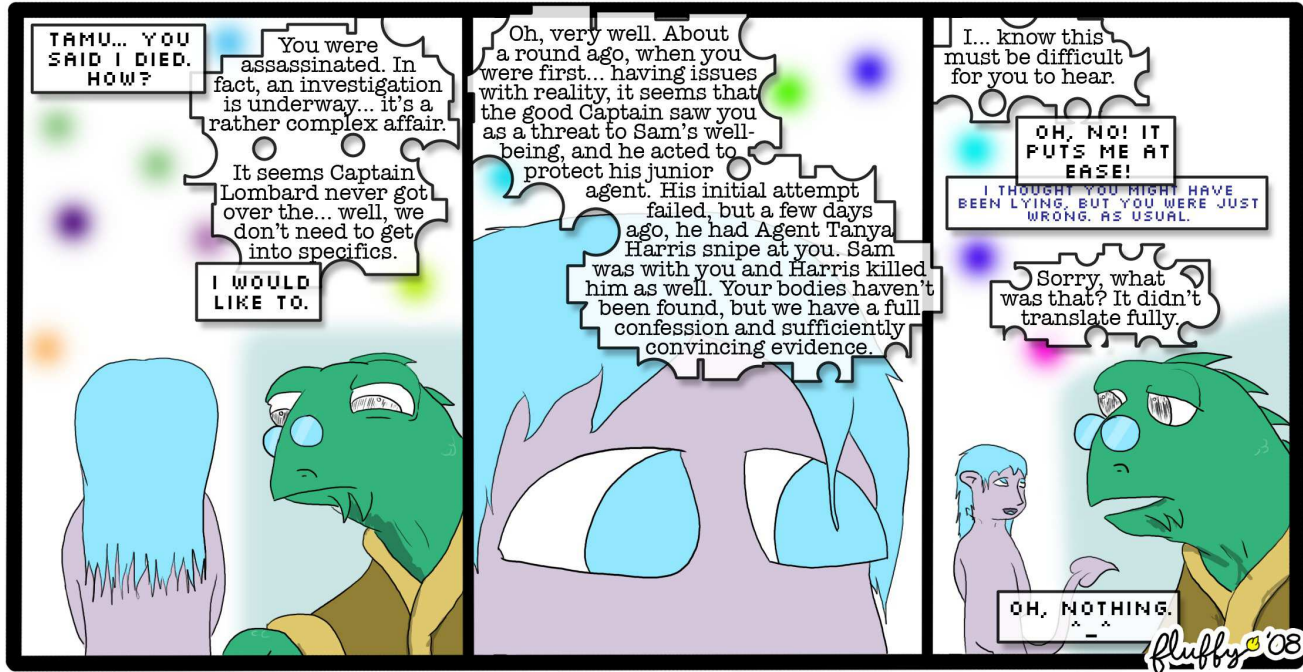
117. Channel surfing



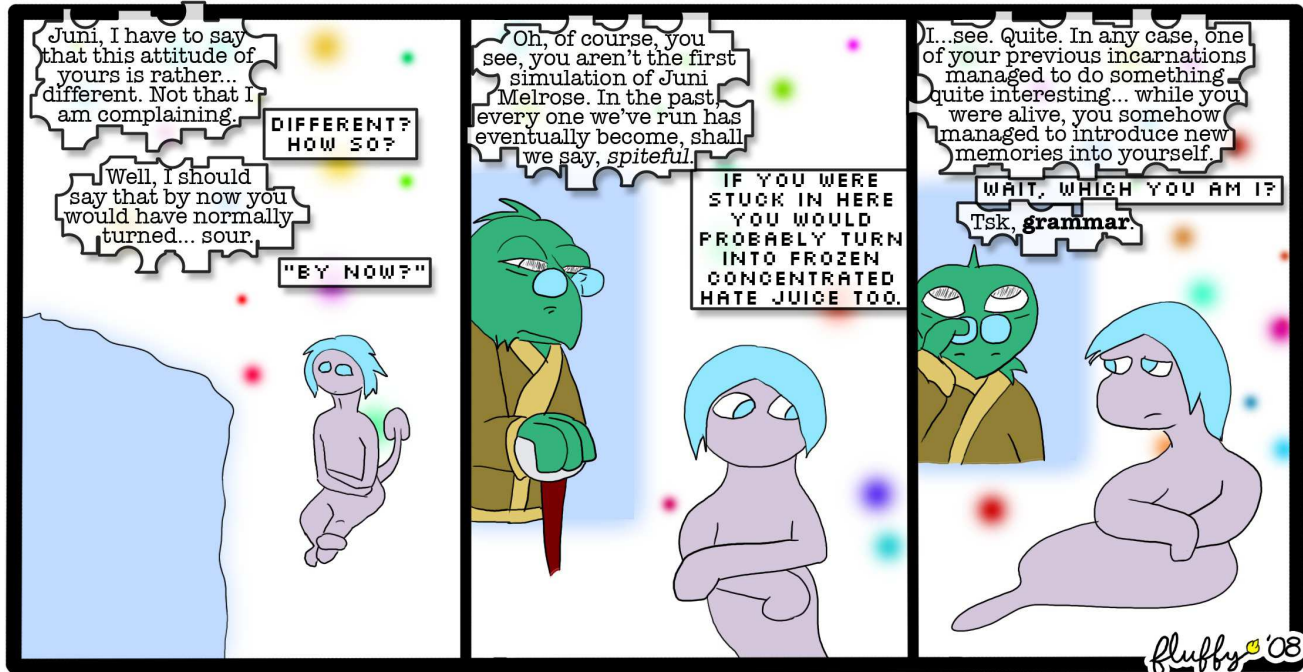
118. Preemptive multitasking



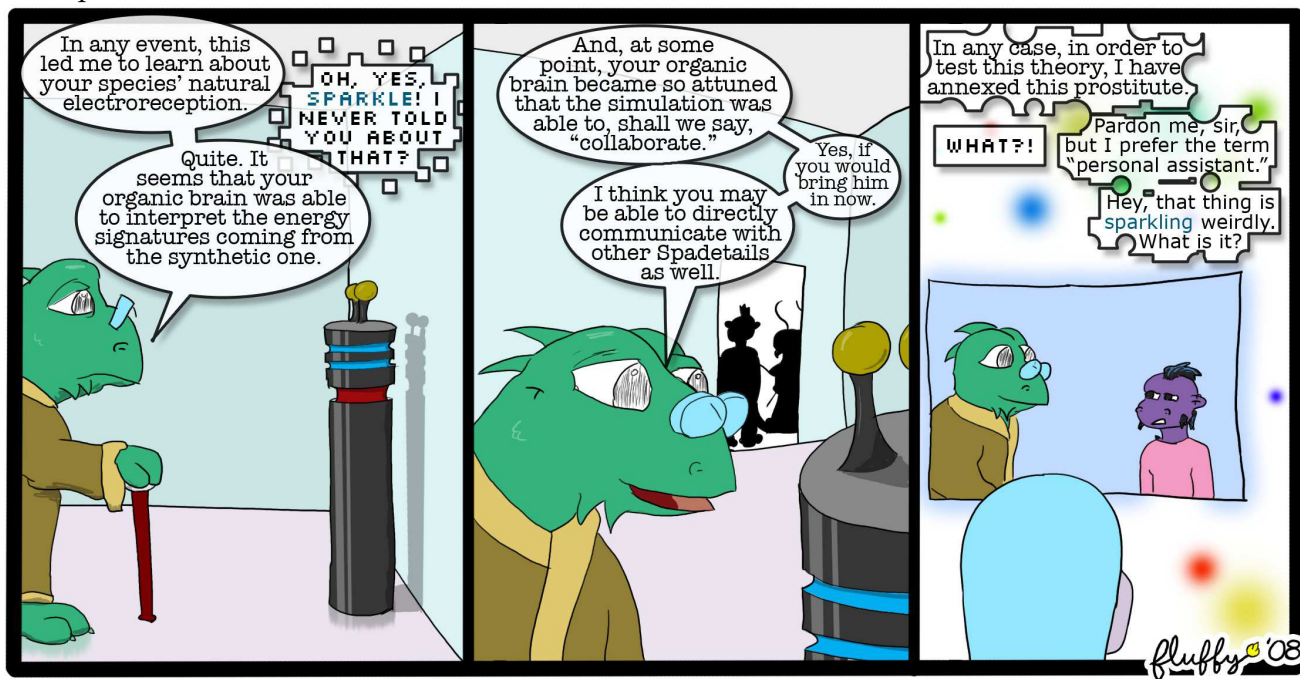
119. At ease



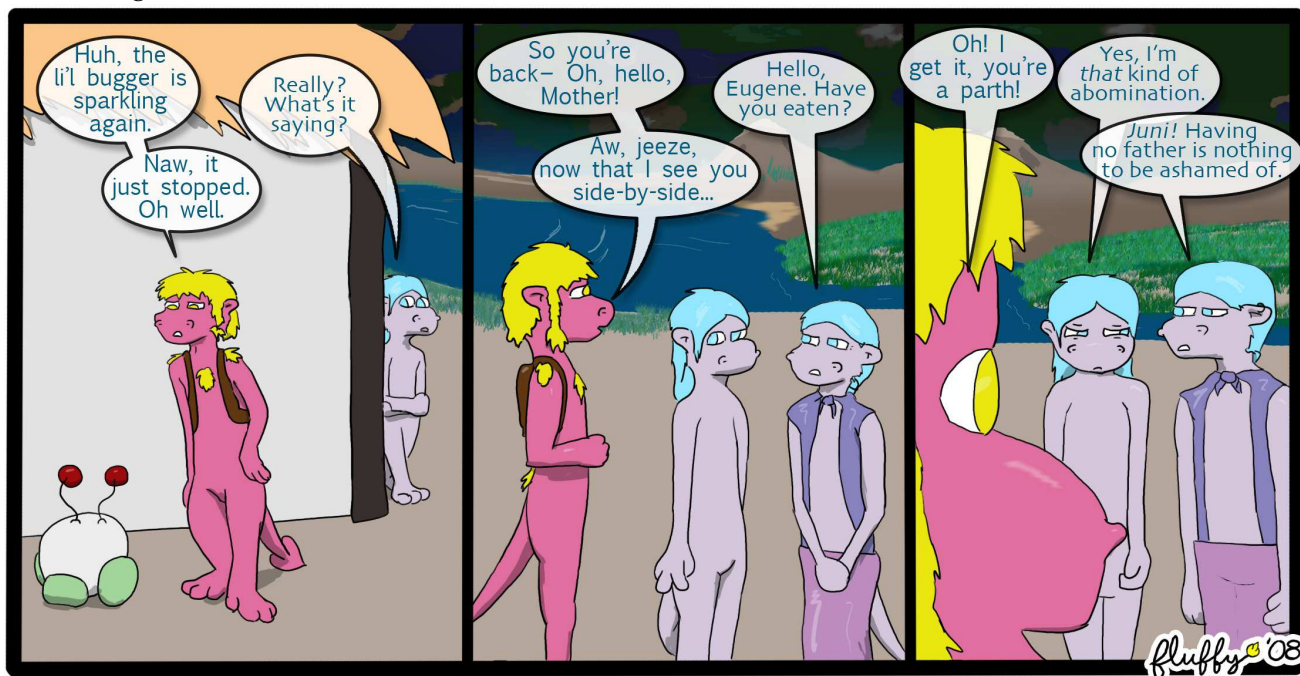
120. Multiplicity



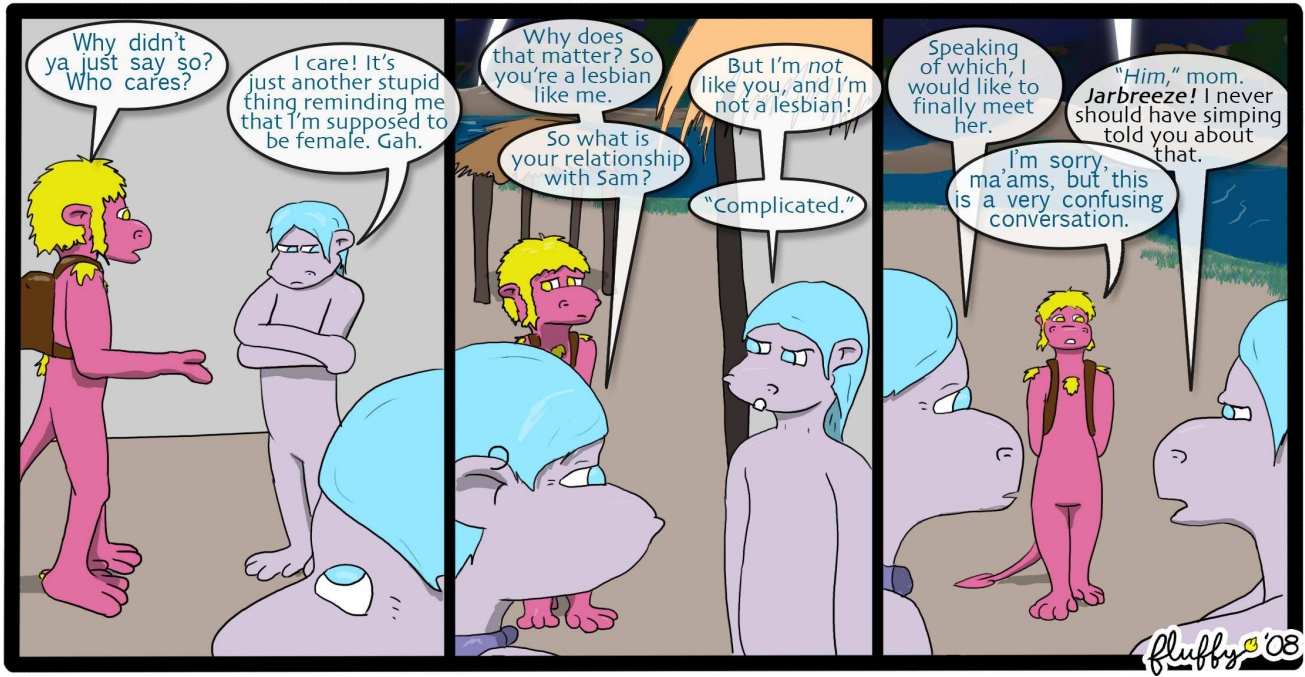
121. Sparkle



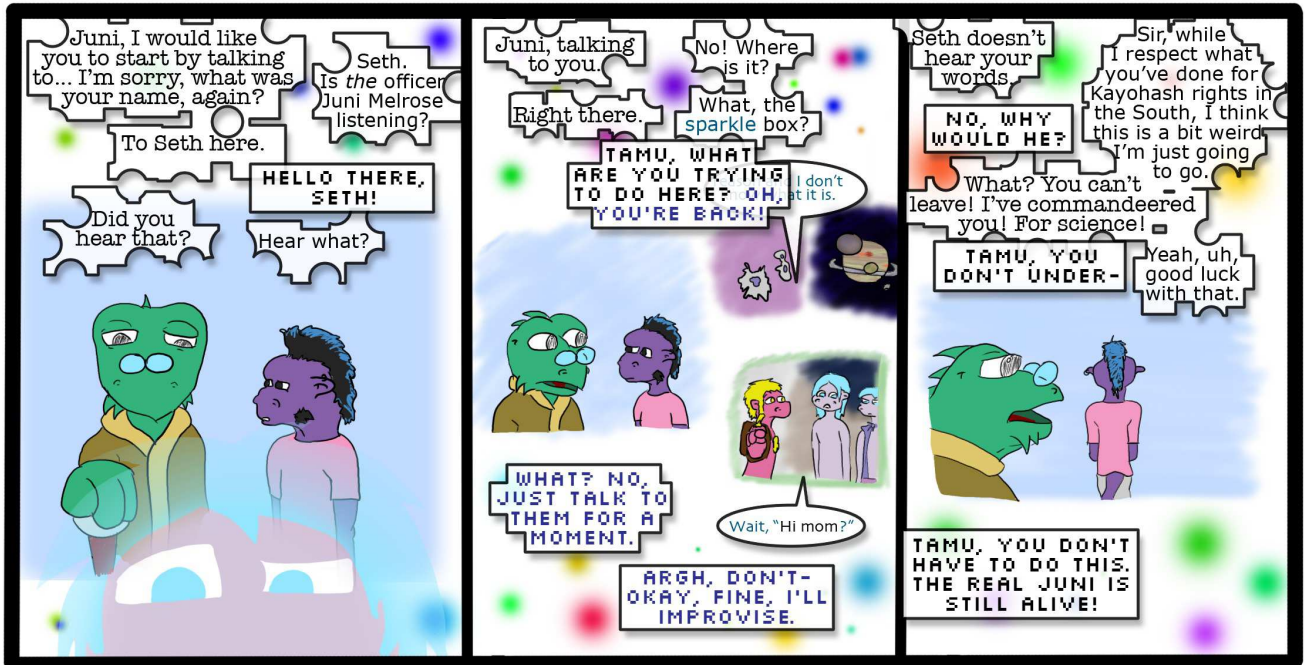
122. Seeing double



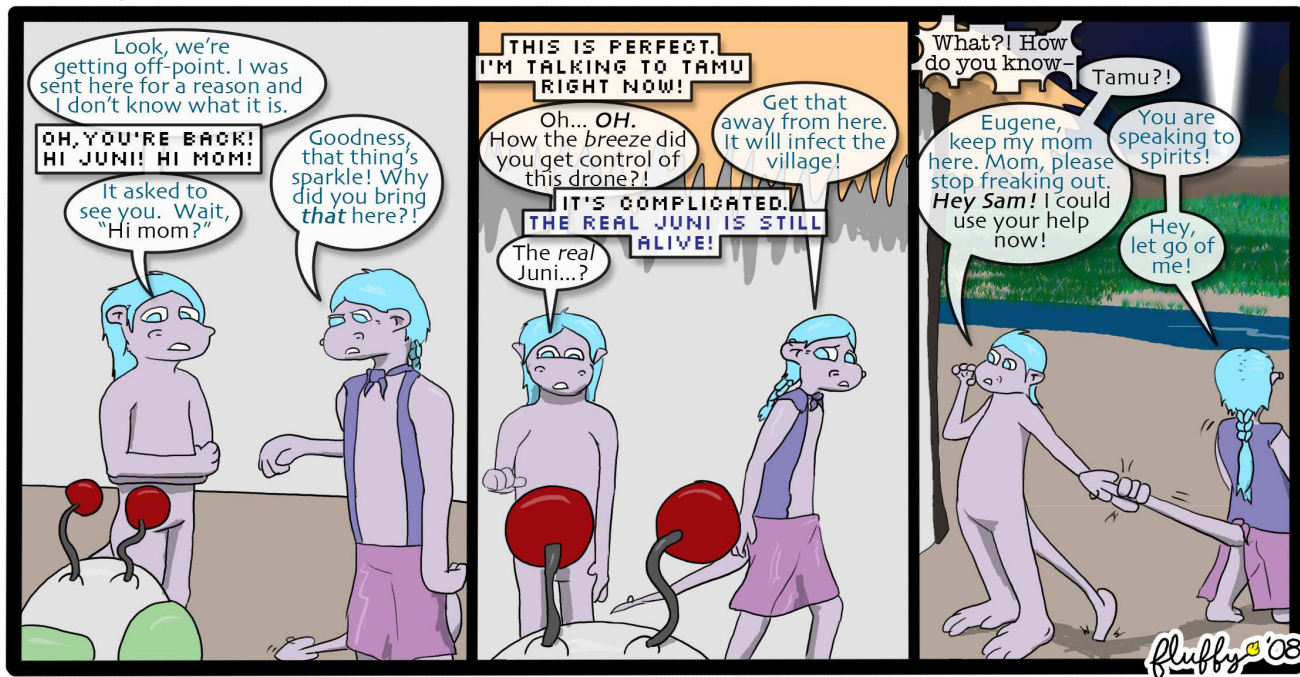
123. Complicated



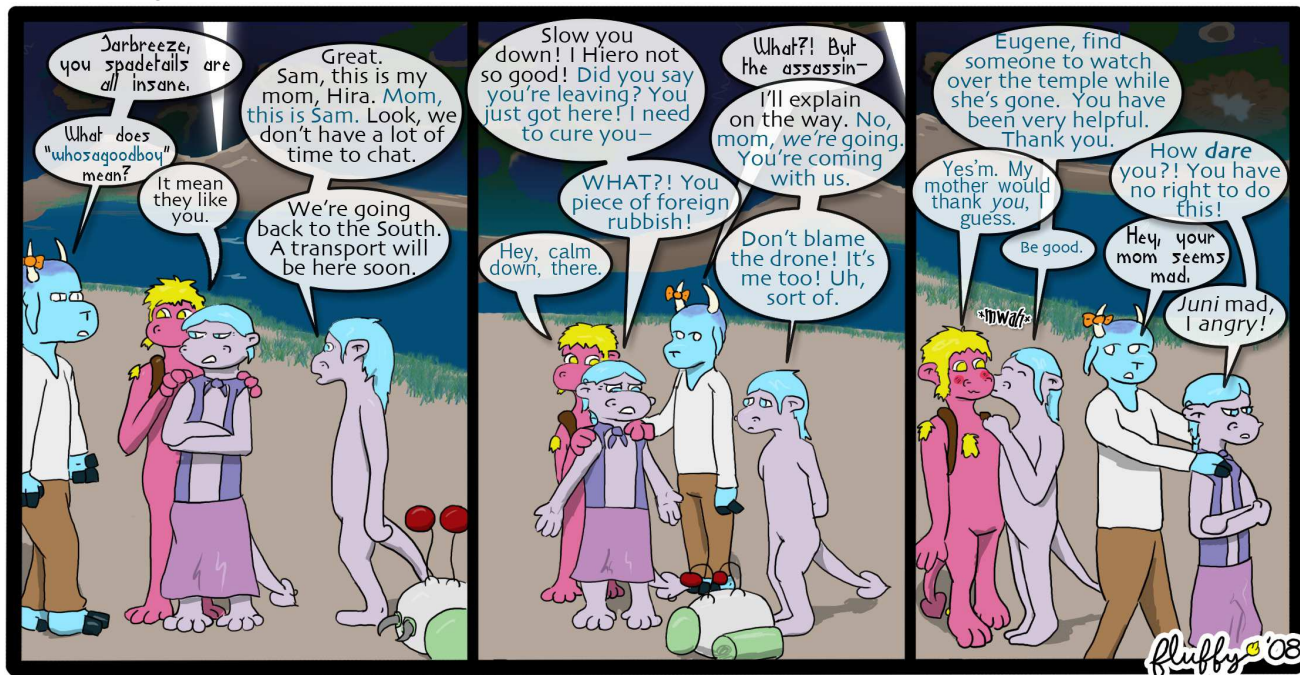
124. Clutter



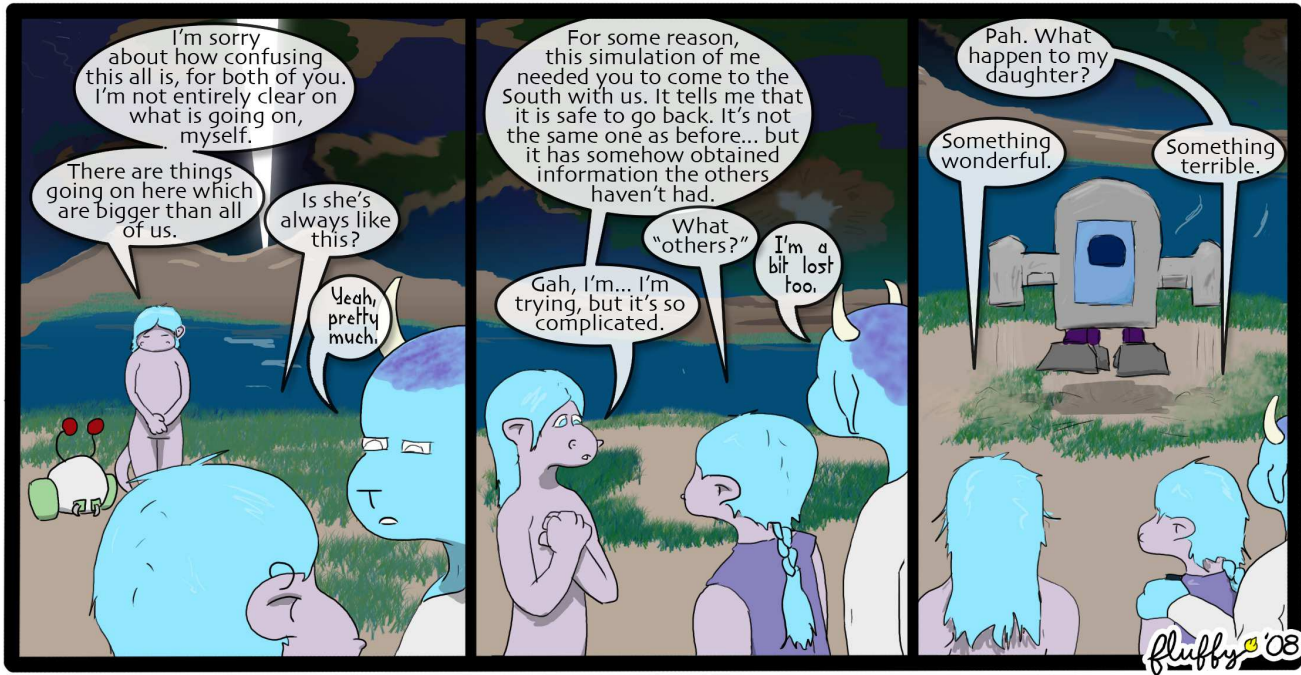
125. Relay



126. Leaving



127. Something wonderful



128. Landing

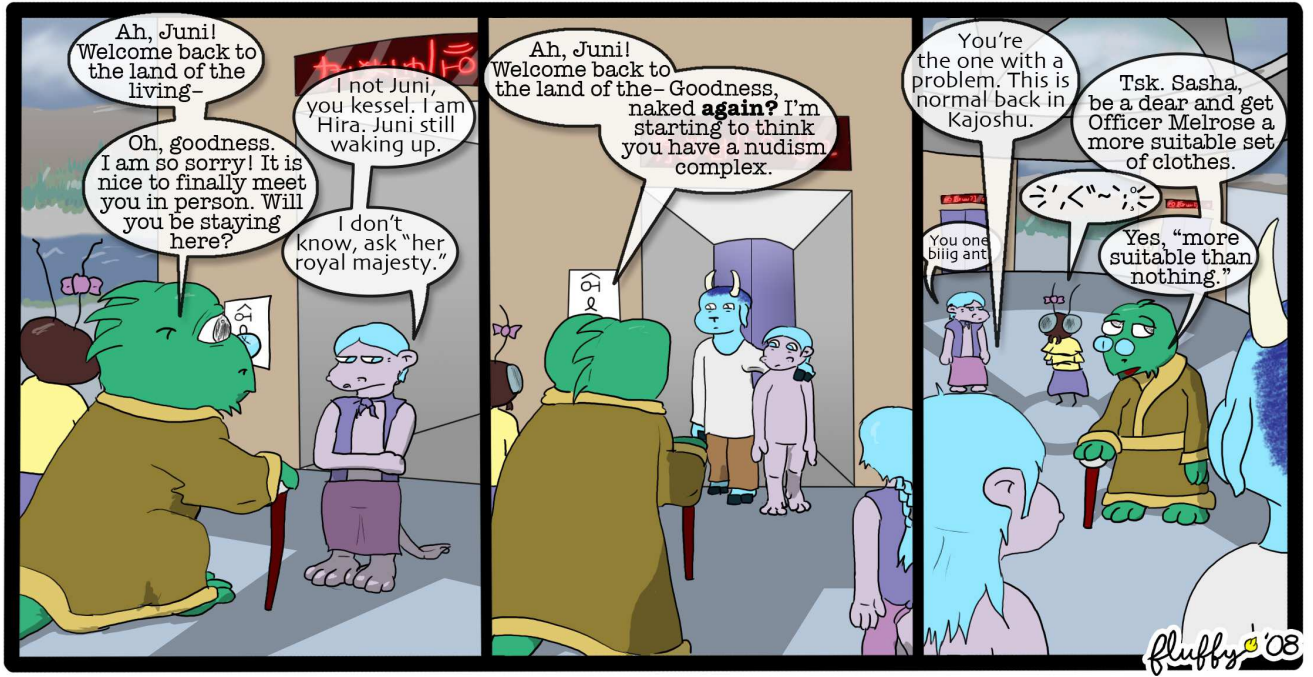


# 10. ABSORBING





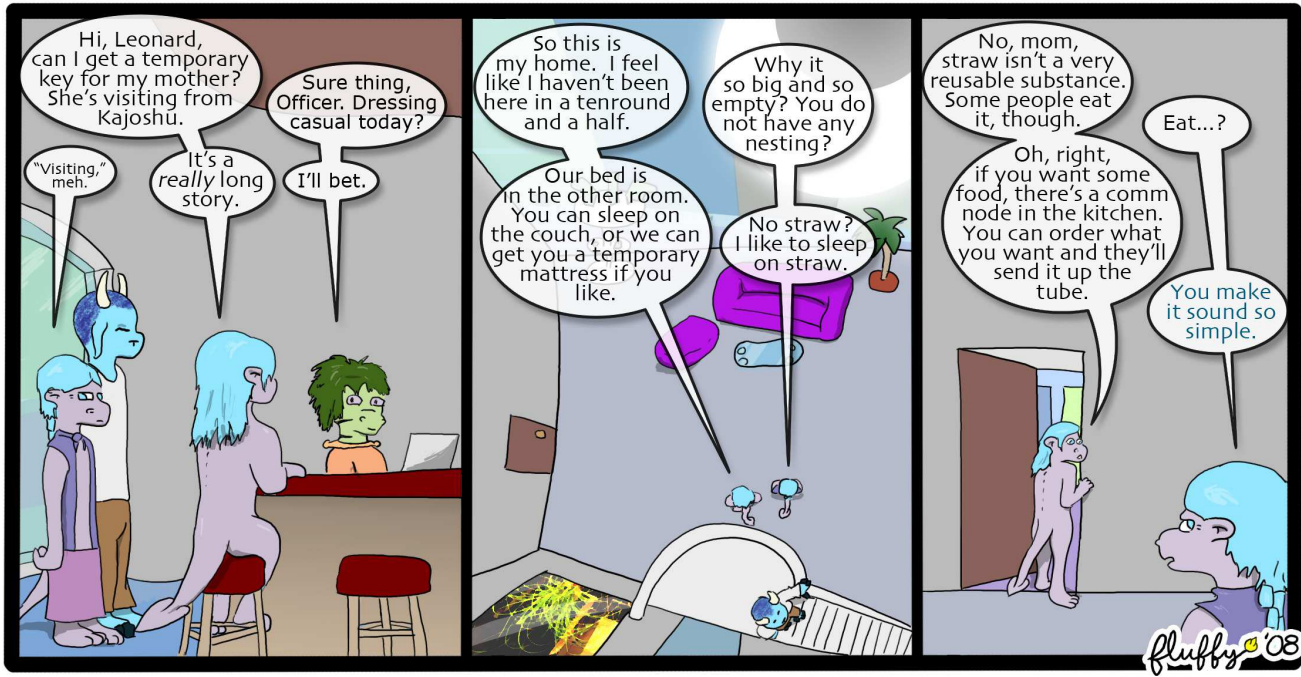
129. Arrival



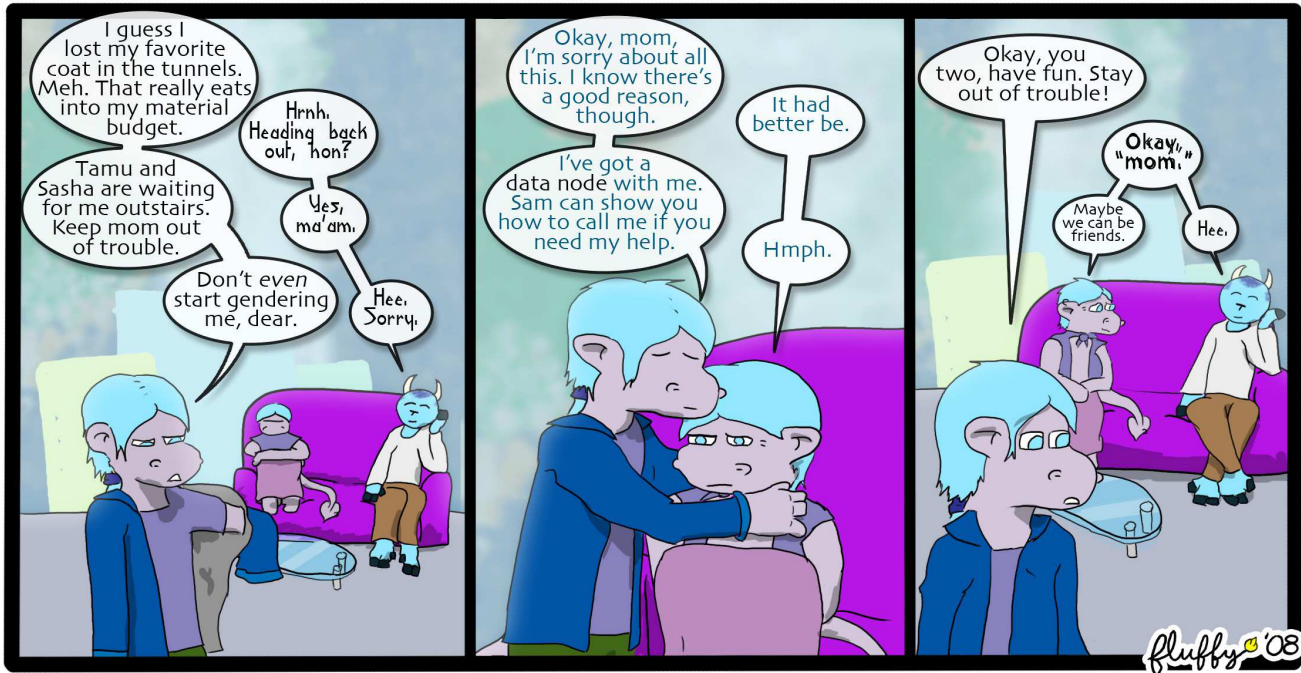
130. Rude



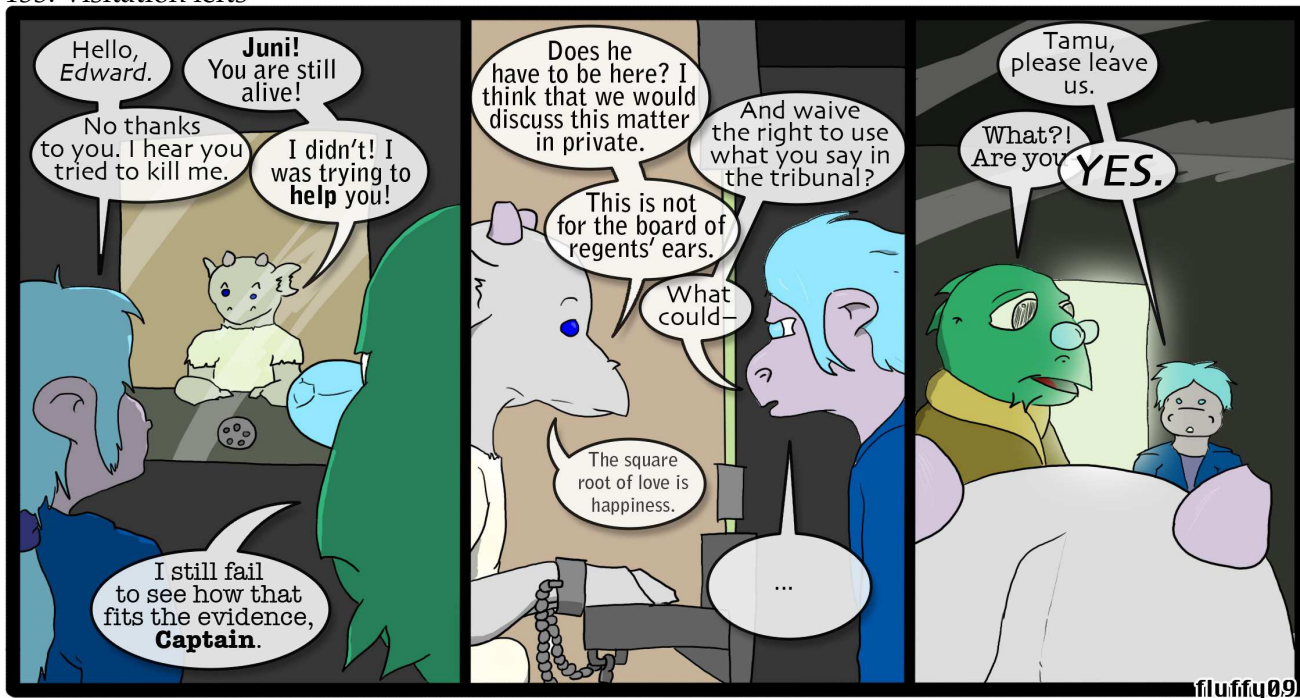
131. Confusing



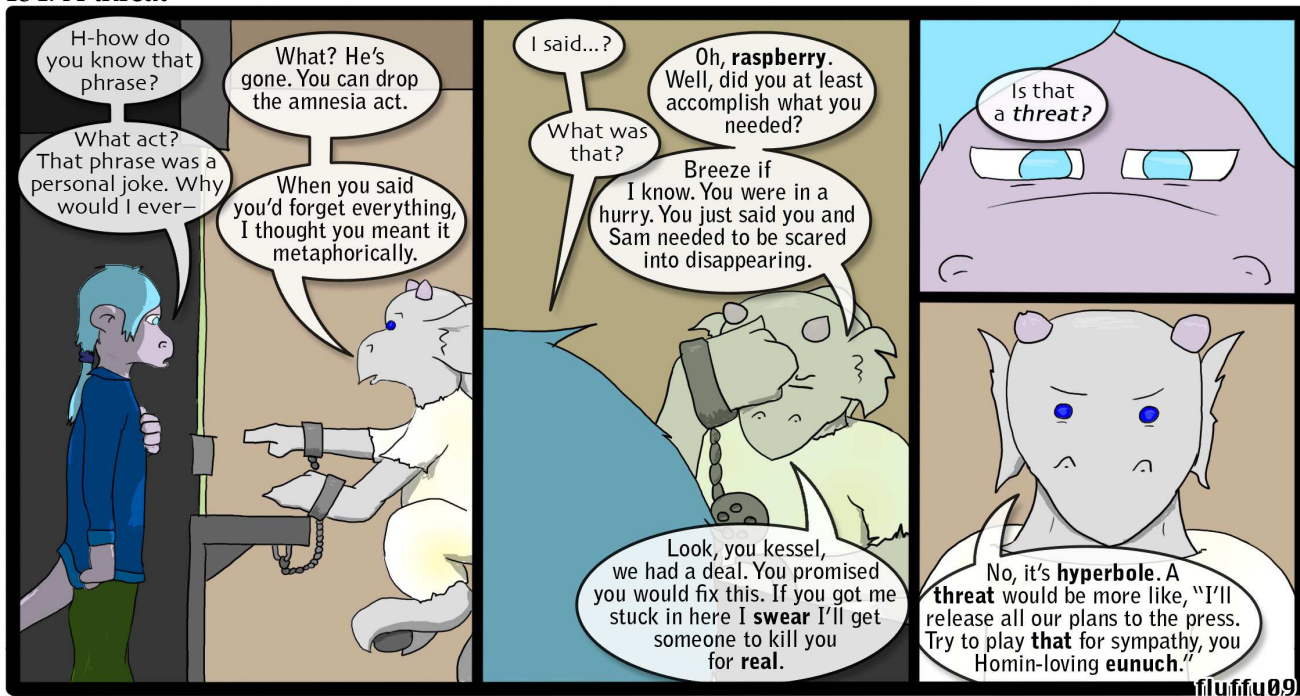
132. Heading out



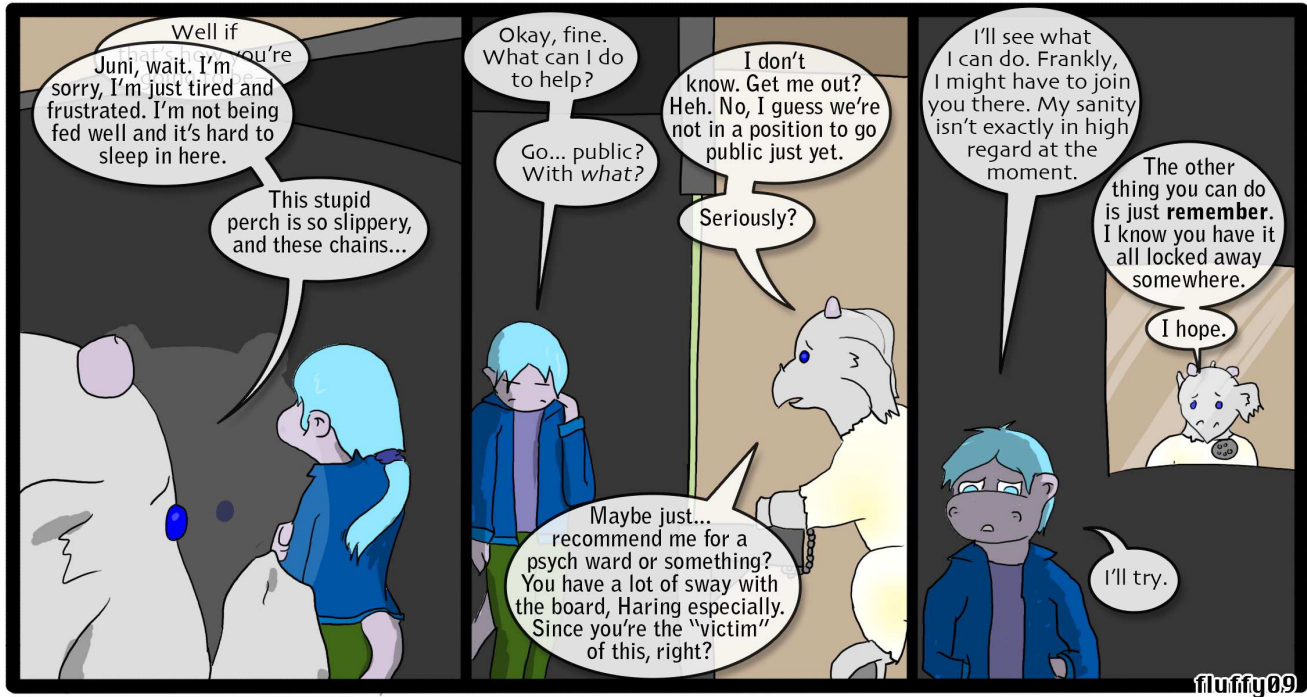
133. Visitation lefts



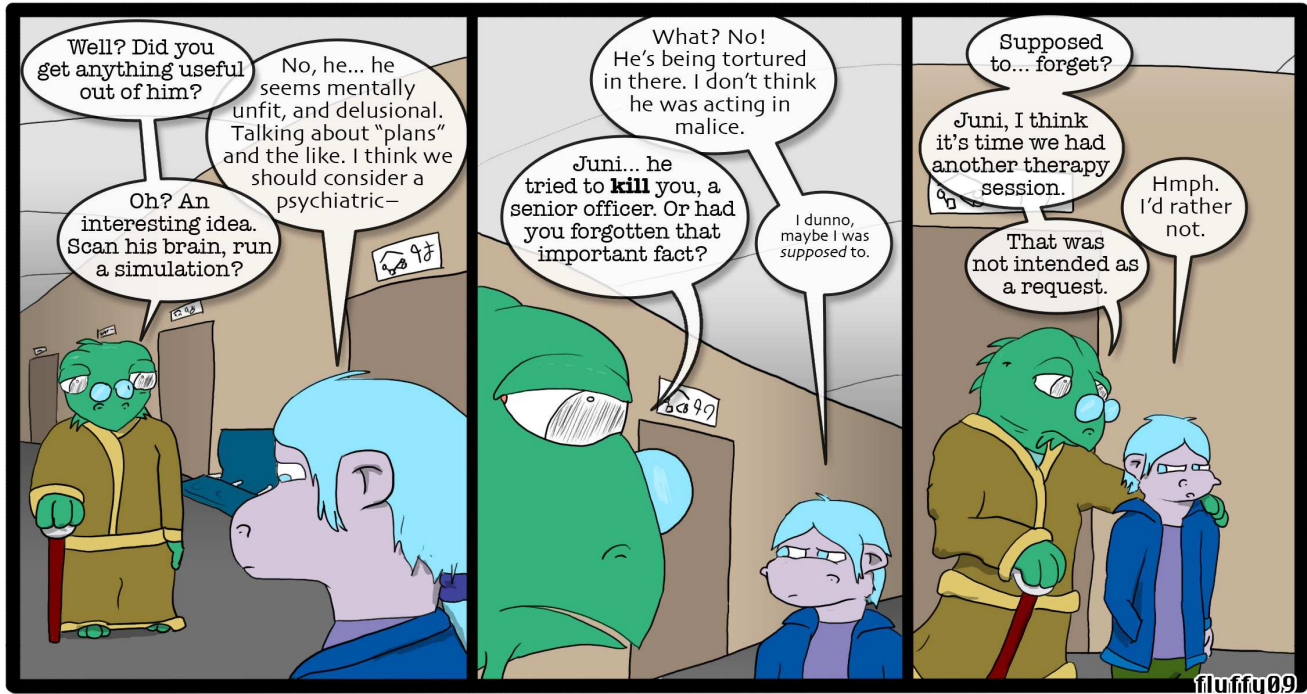
134. A threat



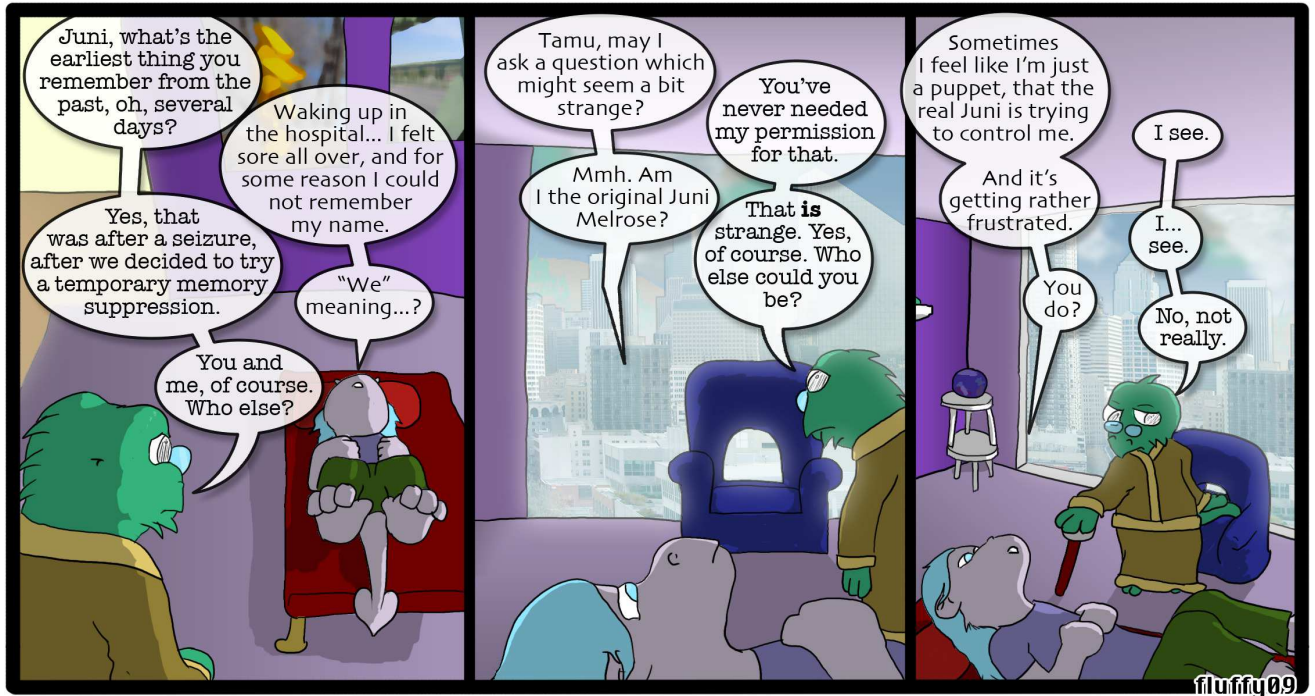
135. Sending regards



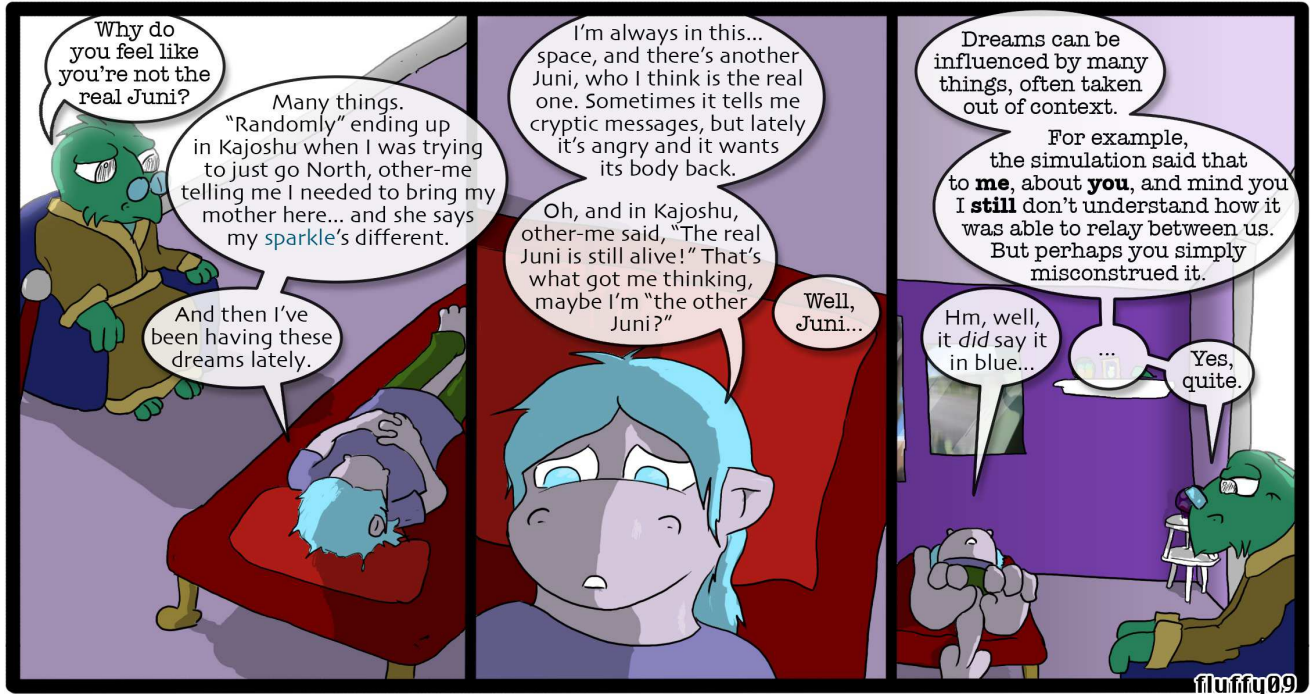
136. Unfit



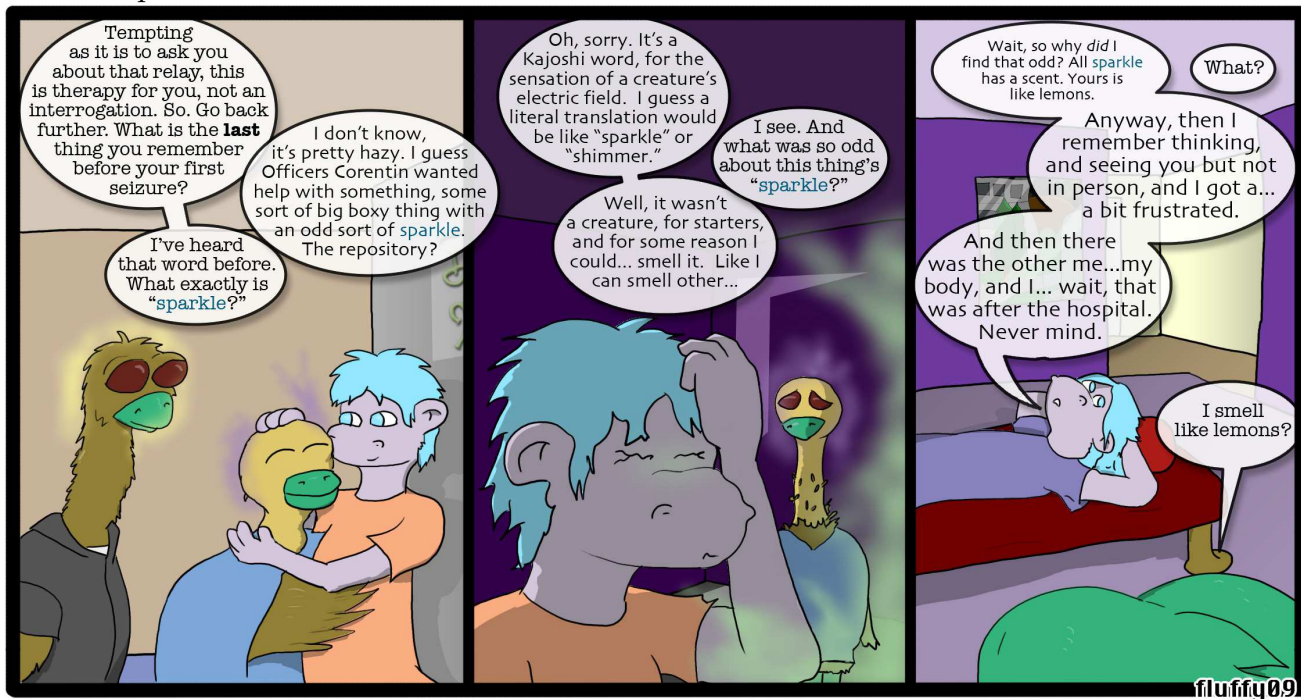
137. Talking Heads



138. True Stories



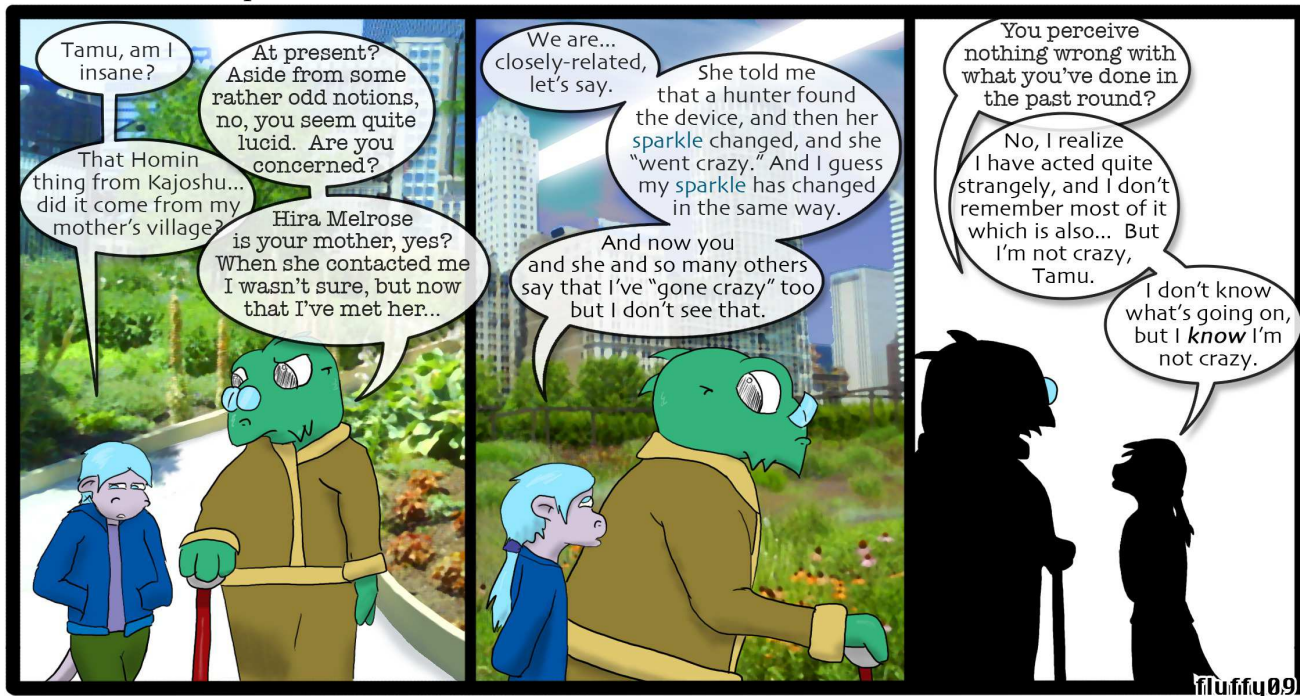
## 139. Therapeutic



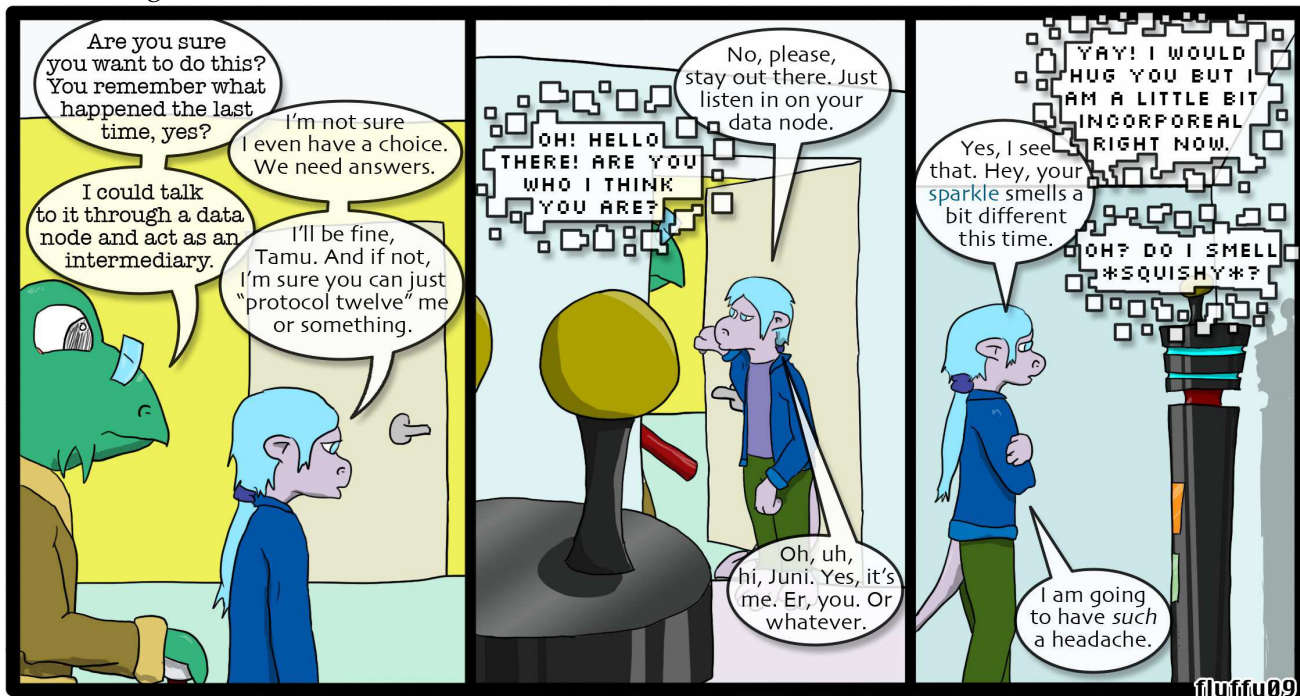
## 140. Fragments



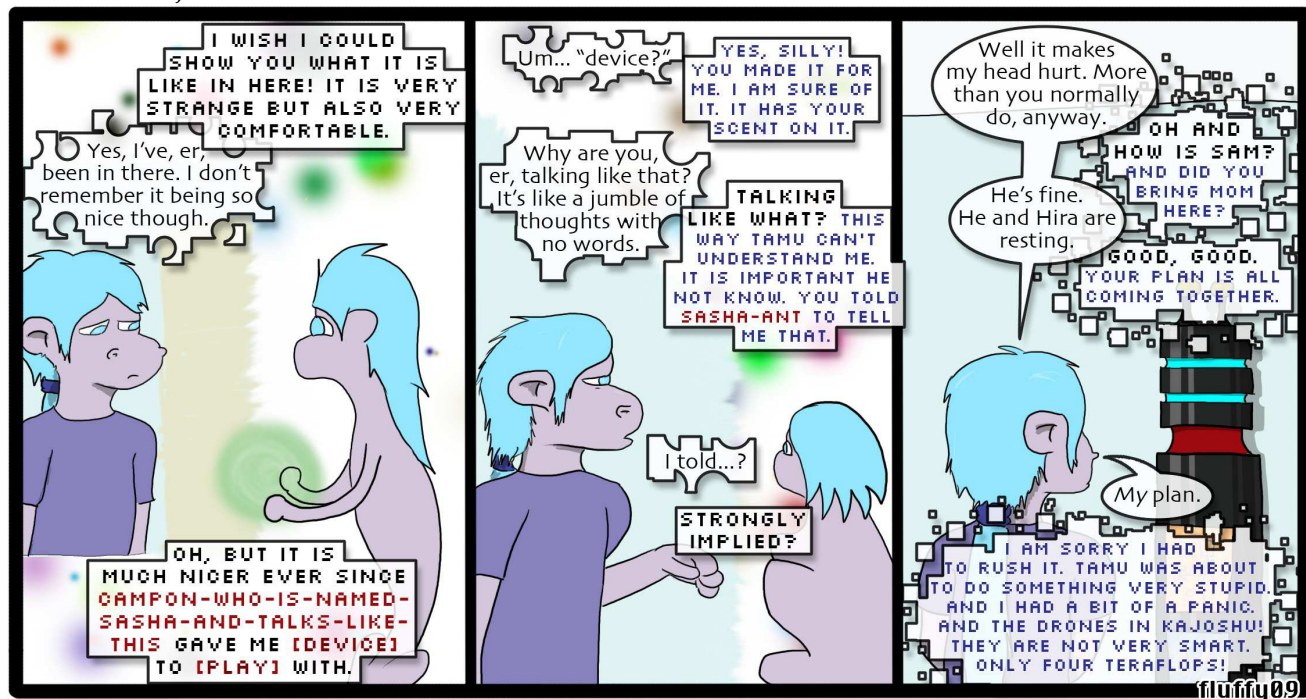
141. A walk in the park



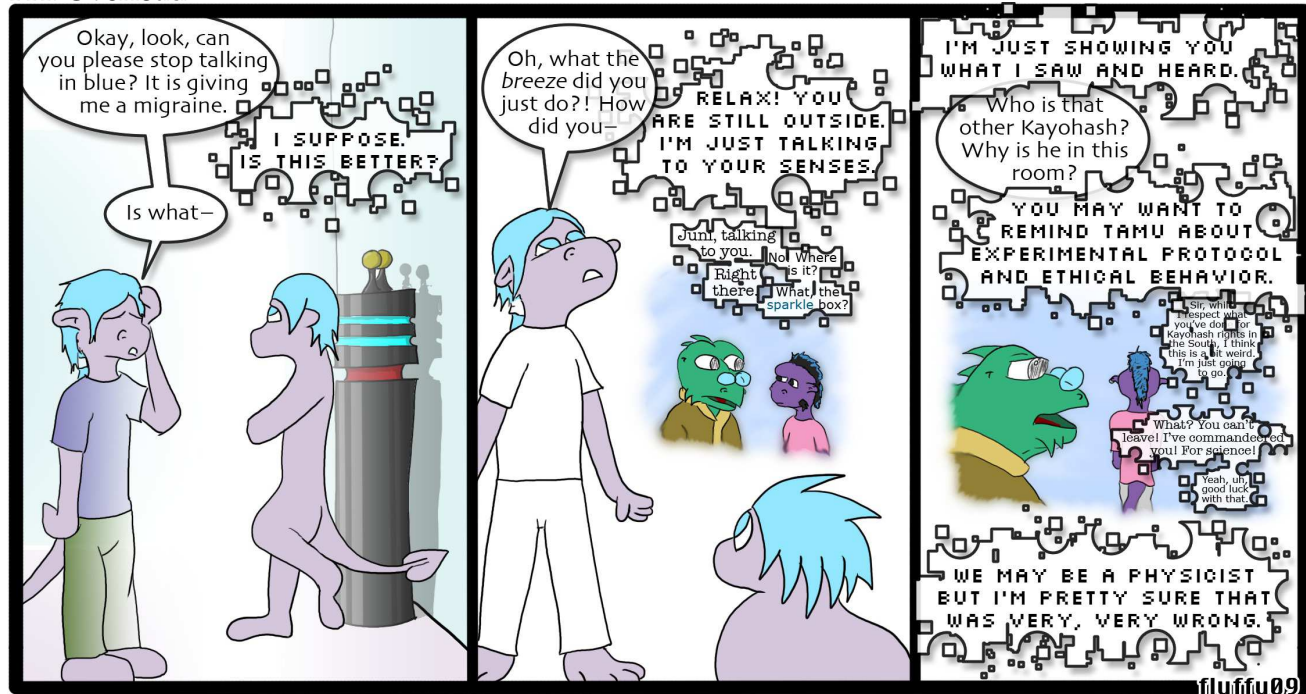
142. Making scents



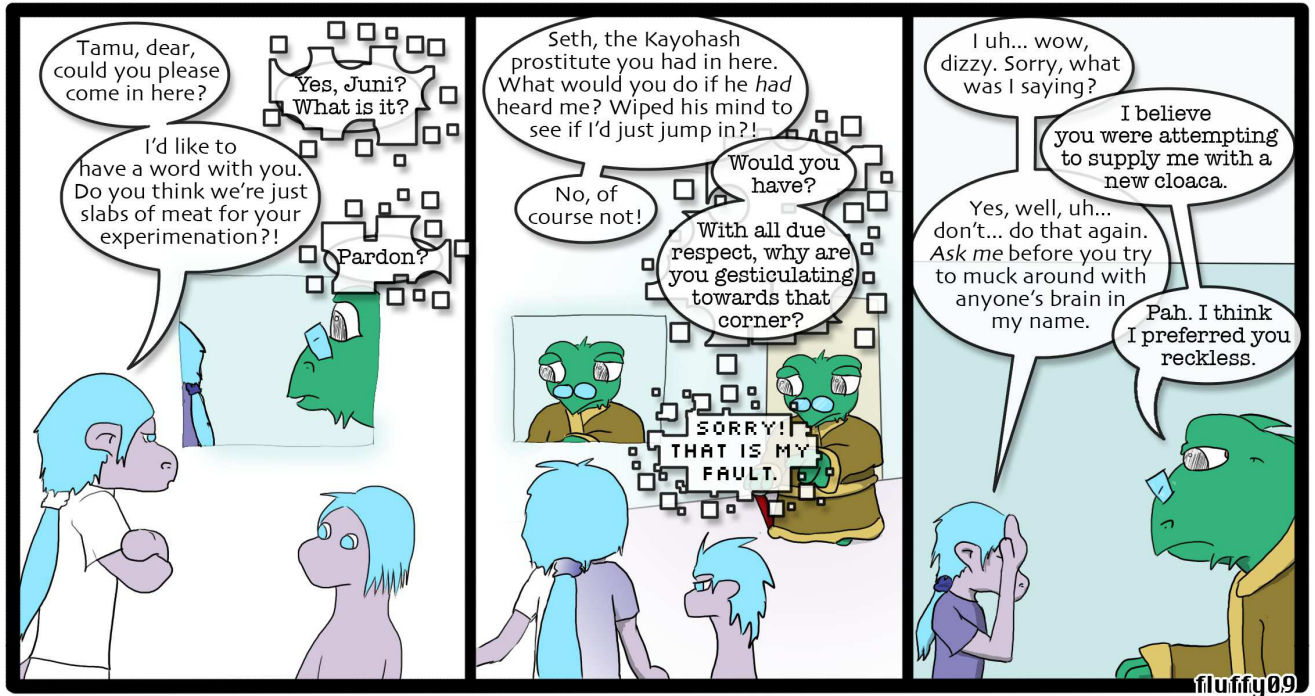
143. Direct injection



144. Overload



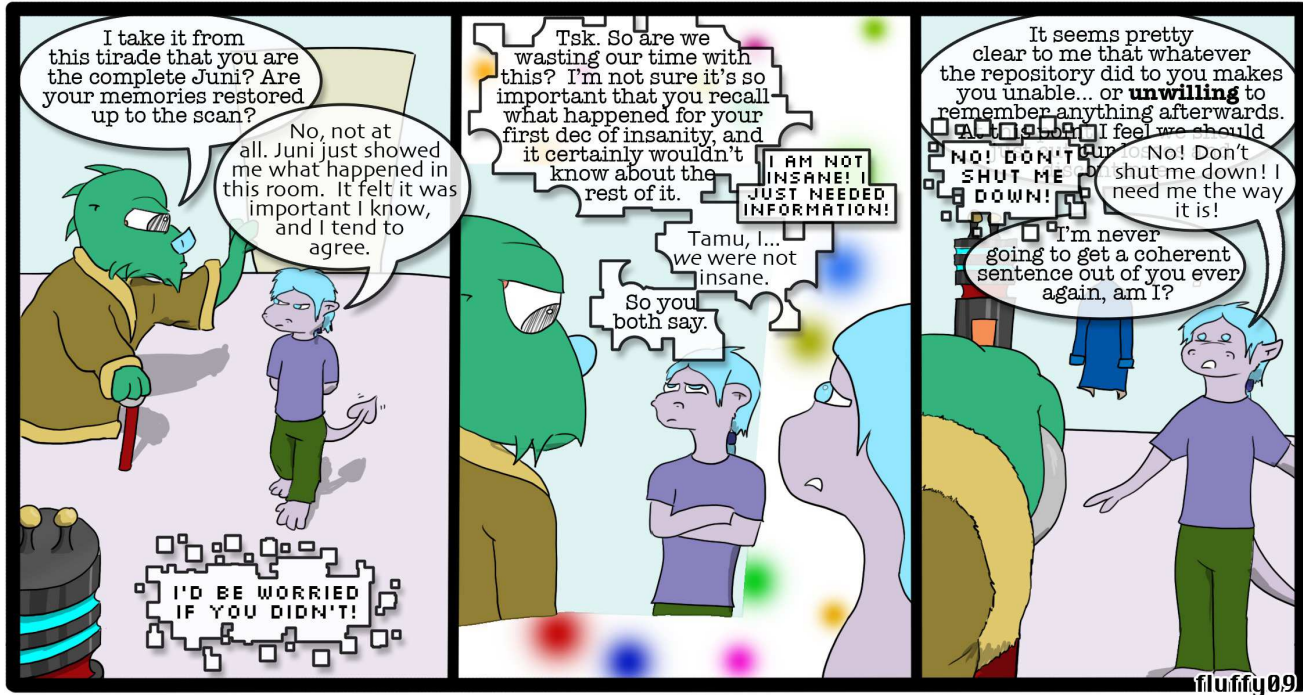
145. Relapse



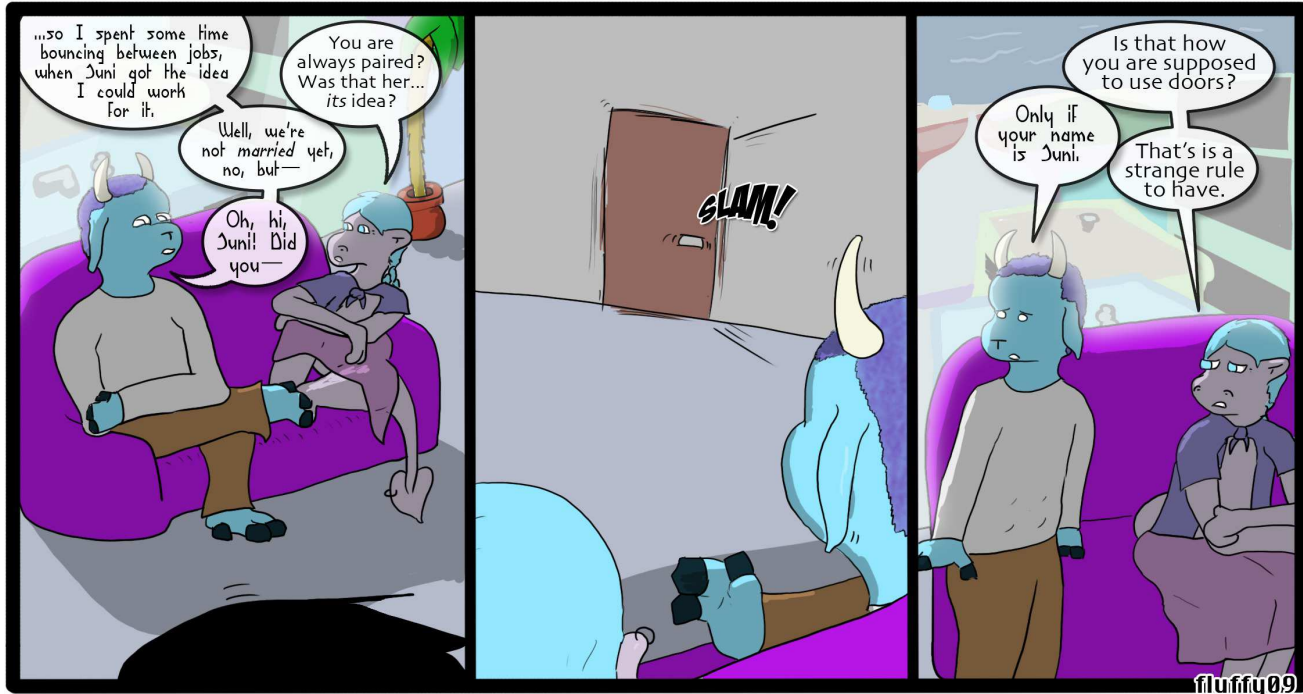
146. Vicious cycle



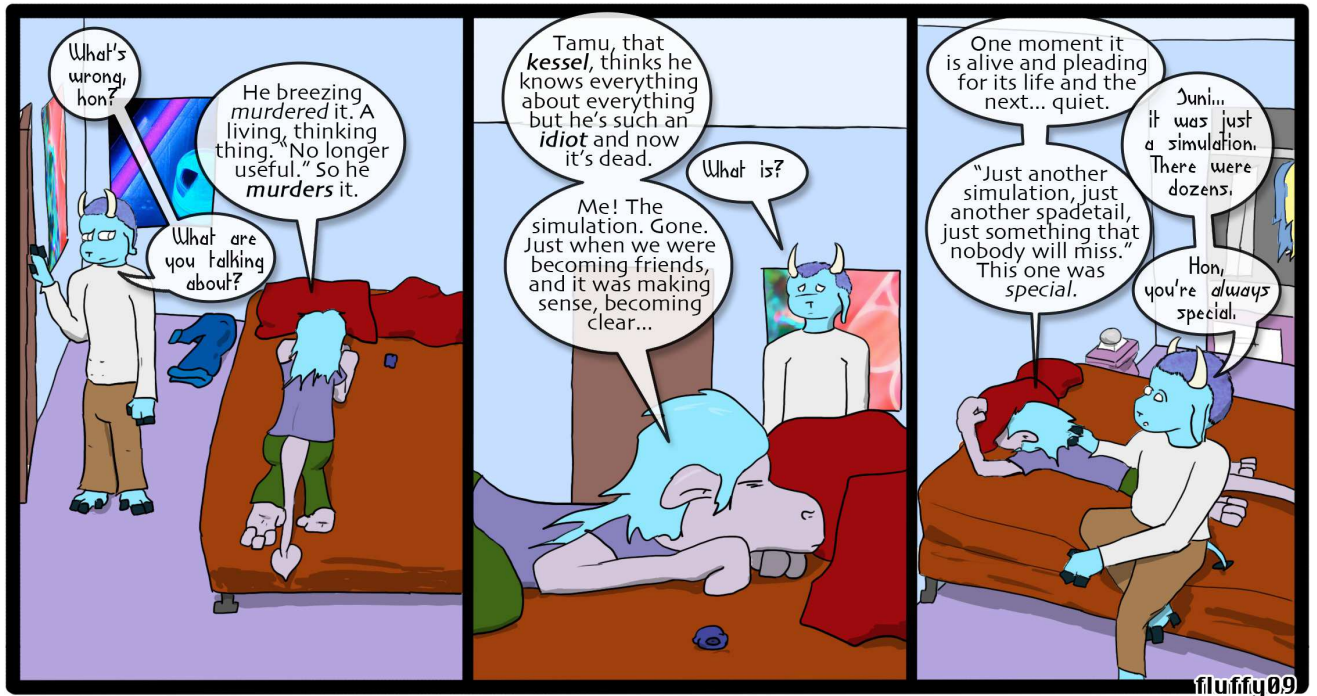
147. Loss cut



148. Slam



149. Special





# 11. DROWNING

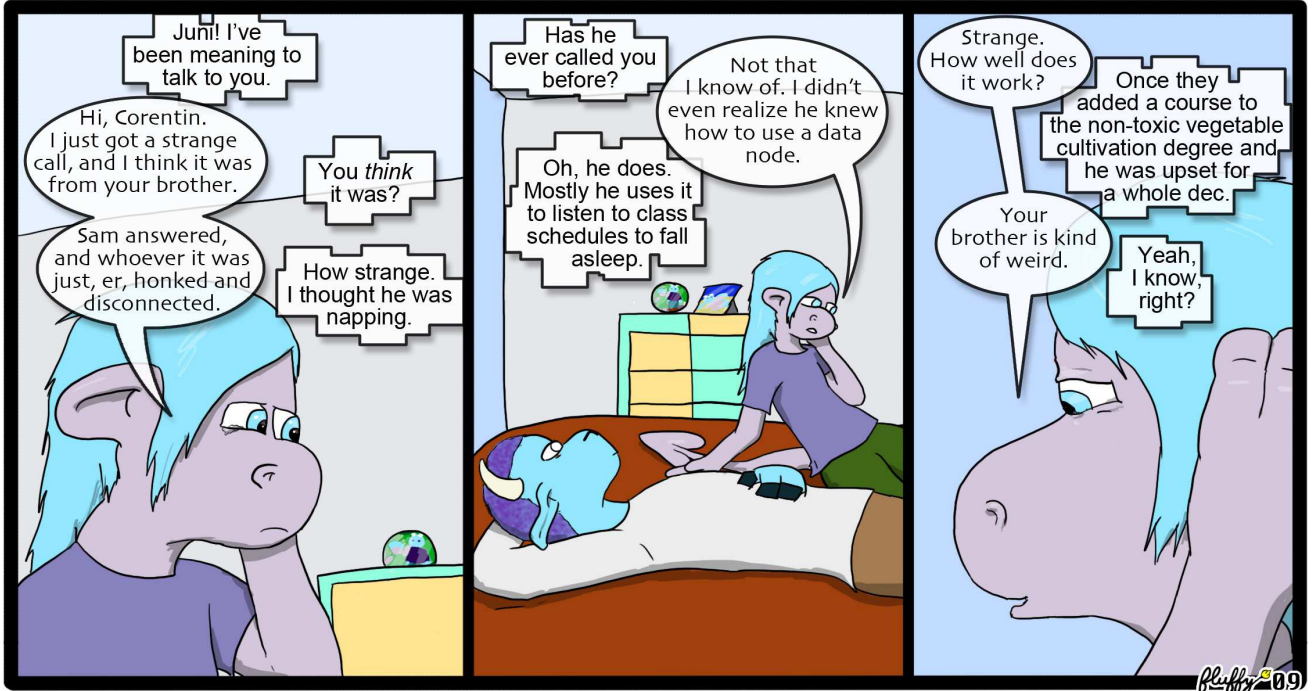




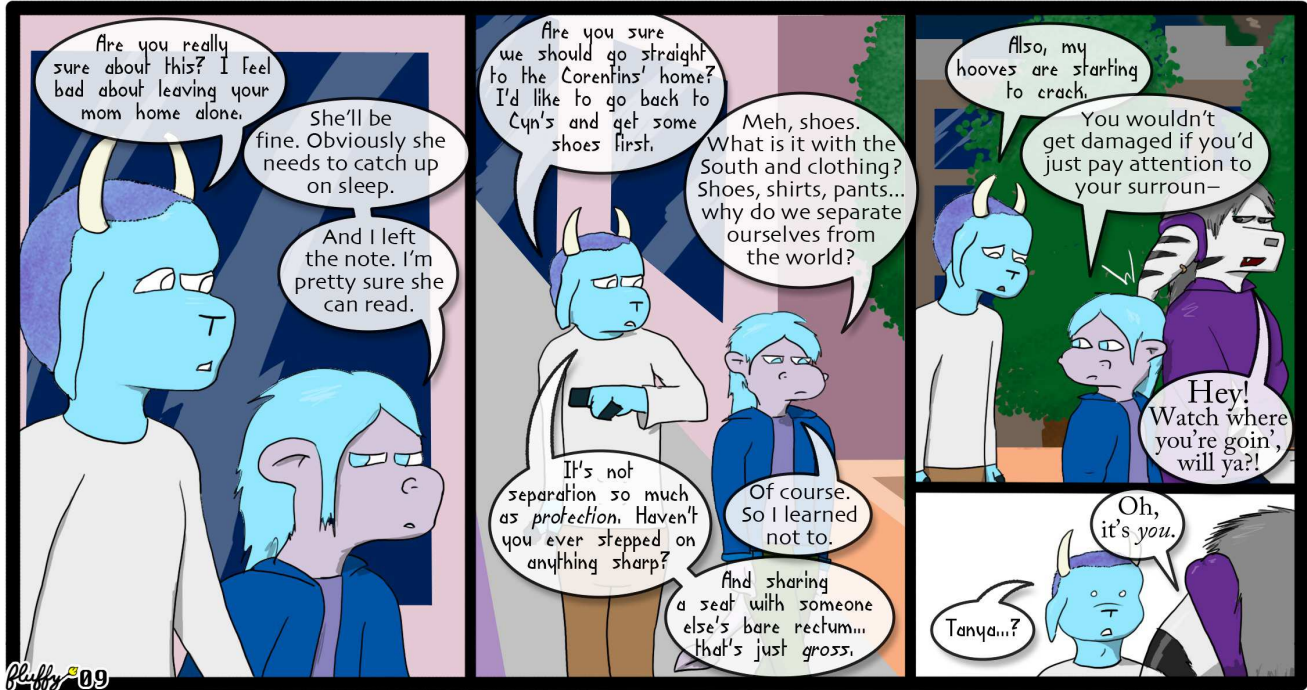
150. Ring ring ring, ba-data node



151. Kind of weird



152. Along came a sniper



153. Awkward



154. Working it out



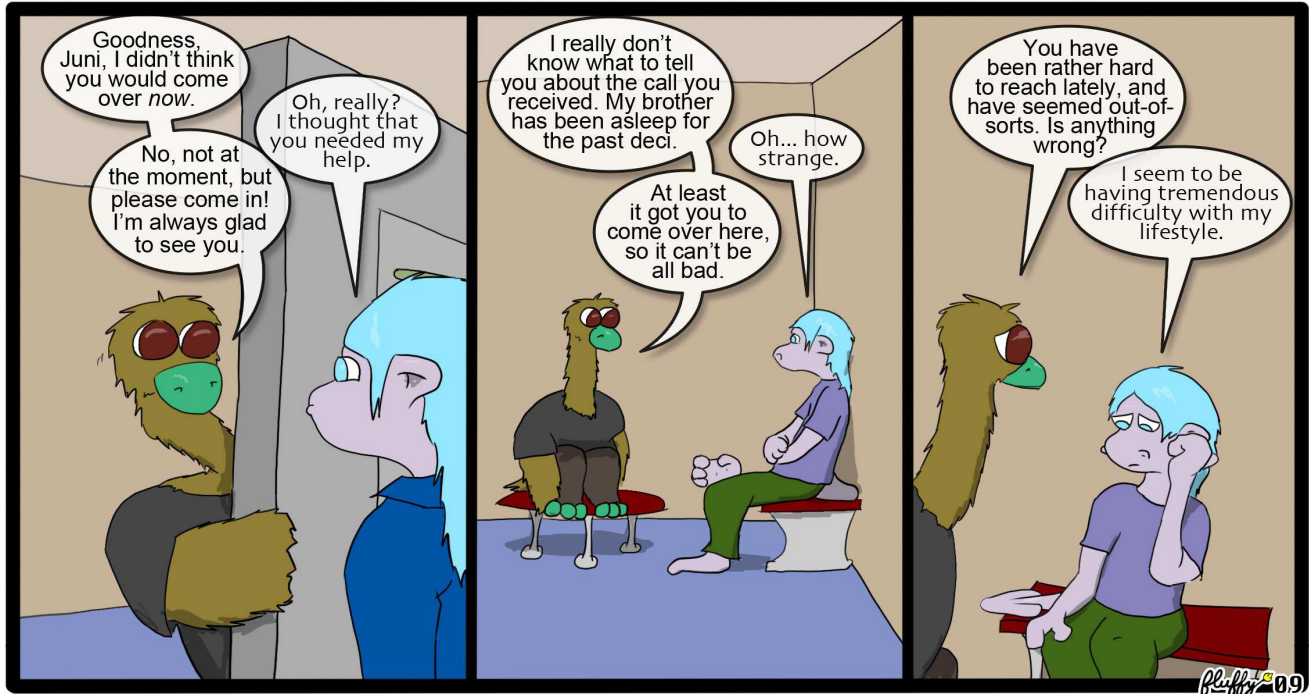
155. Running ragged



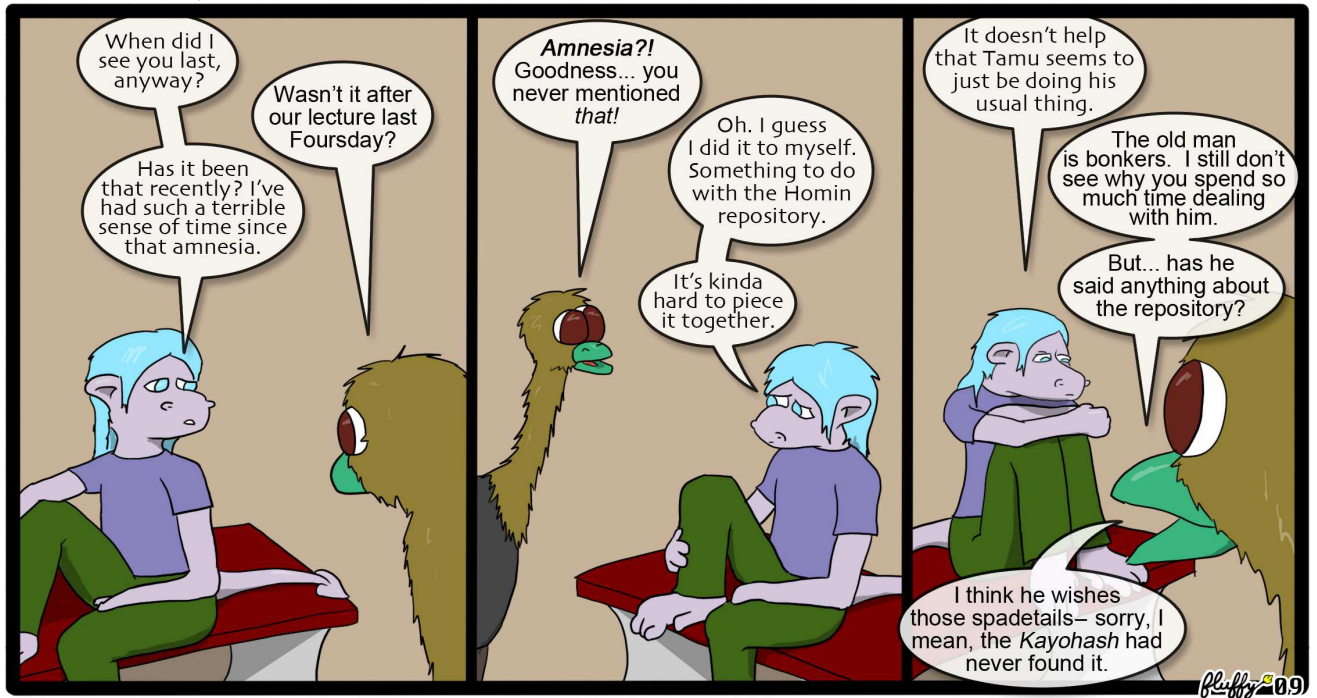
156. Change is in the air



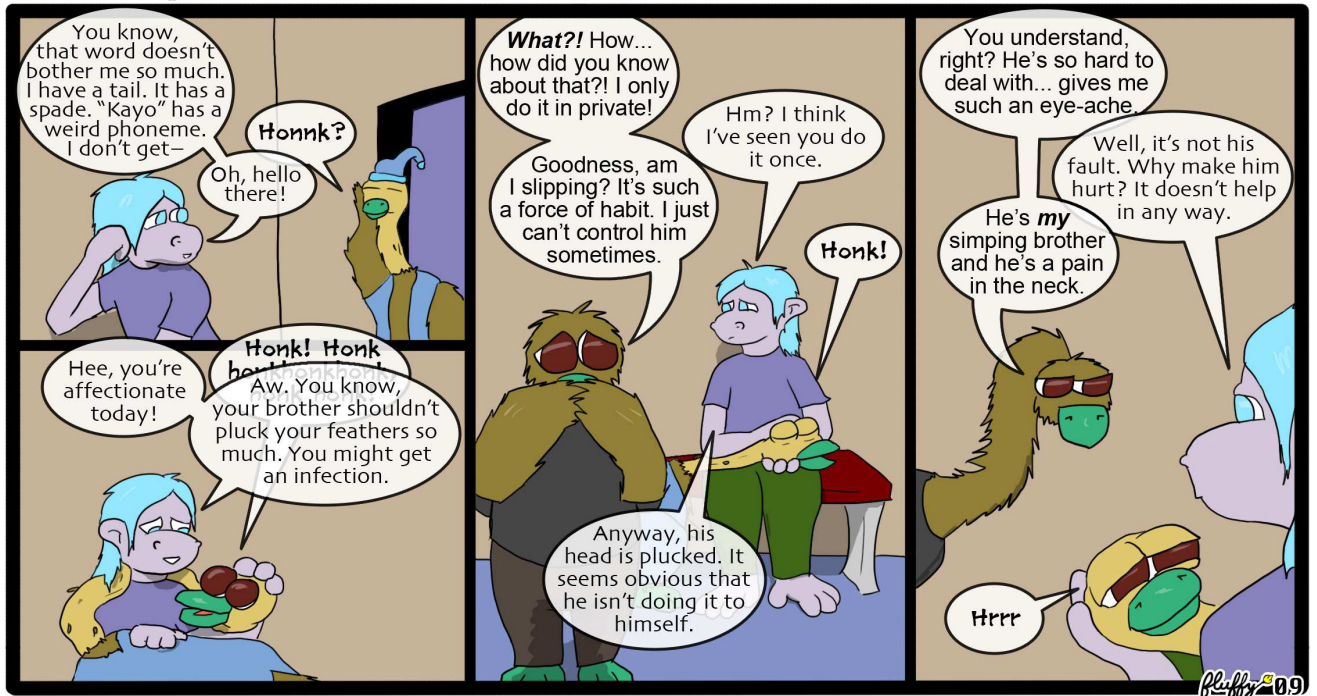
157. Unexpected



158. Commisery

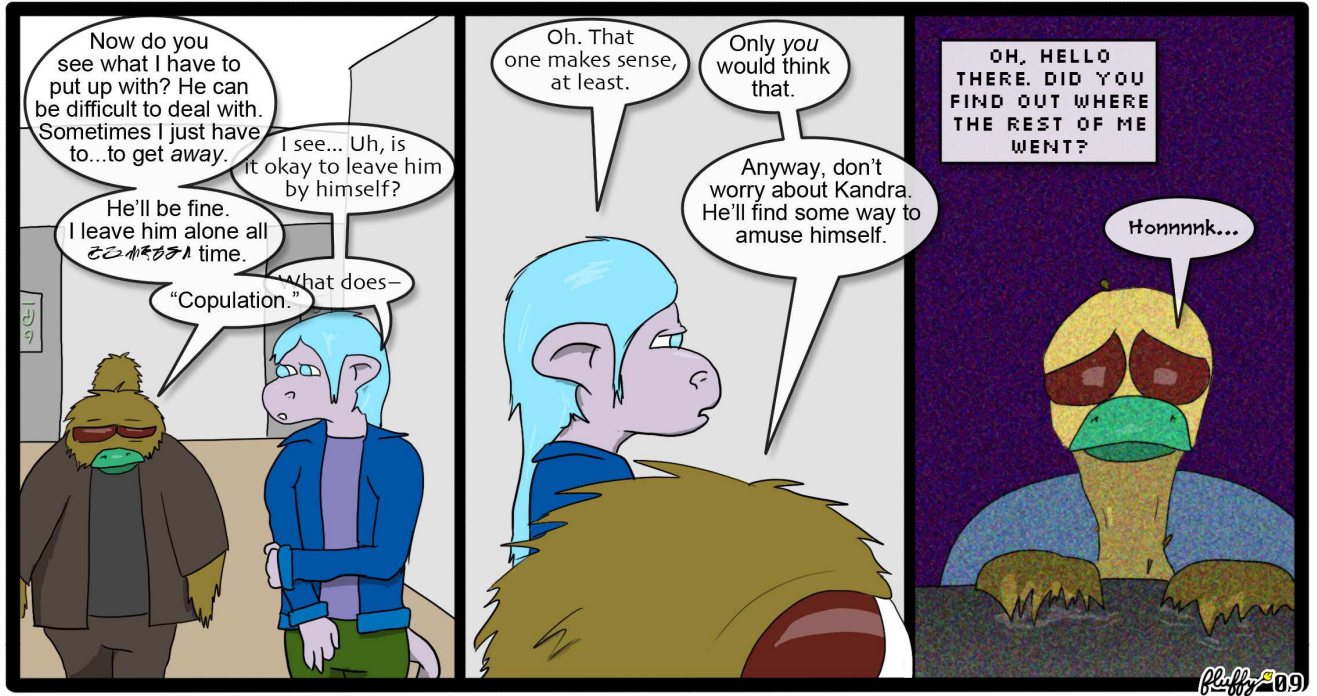


159. Feather-plucker





162. Some me-not-we time

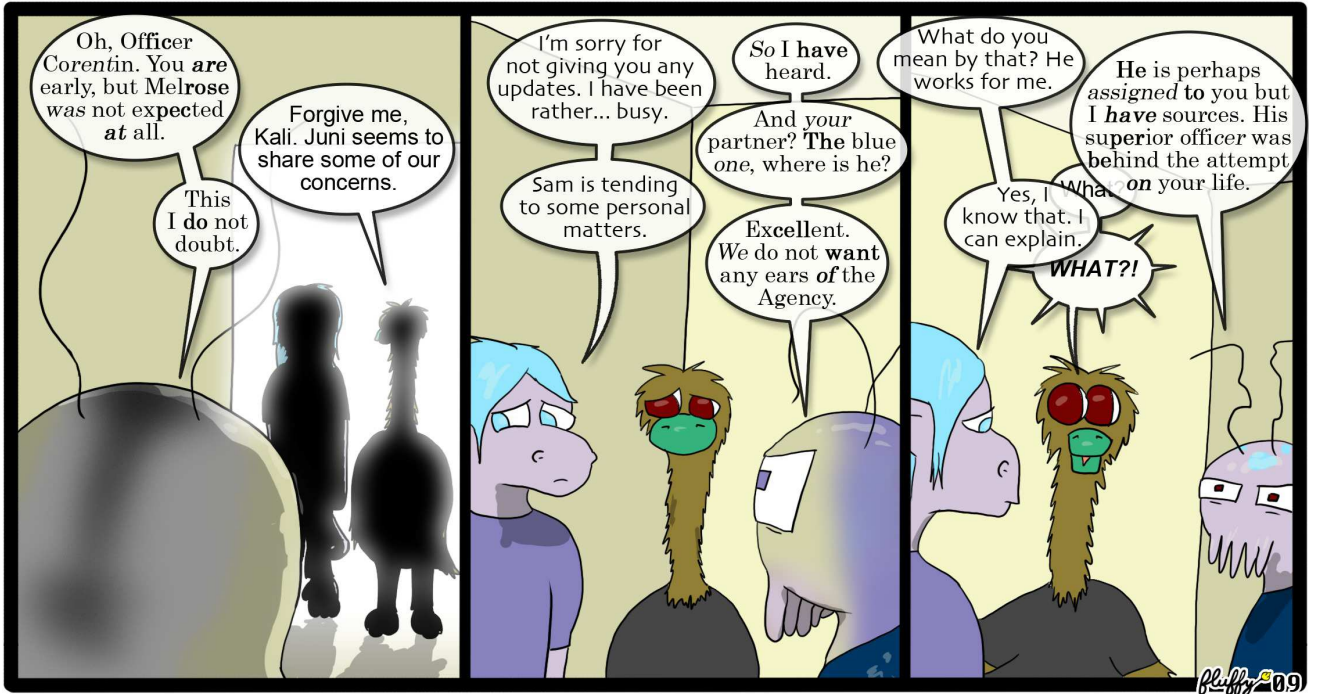




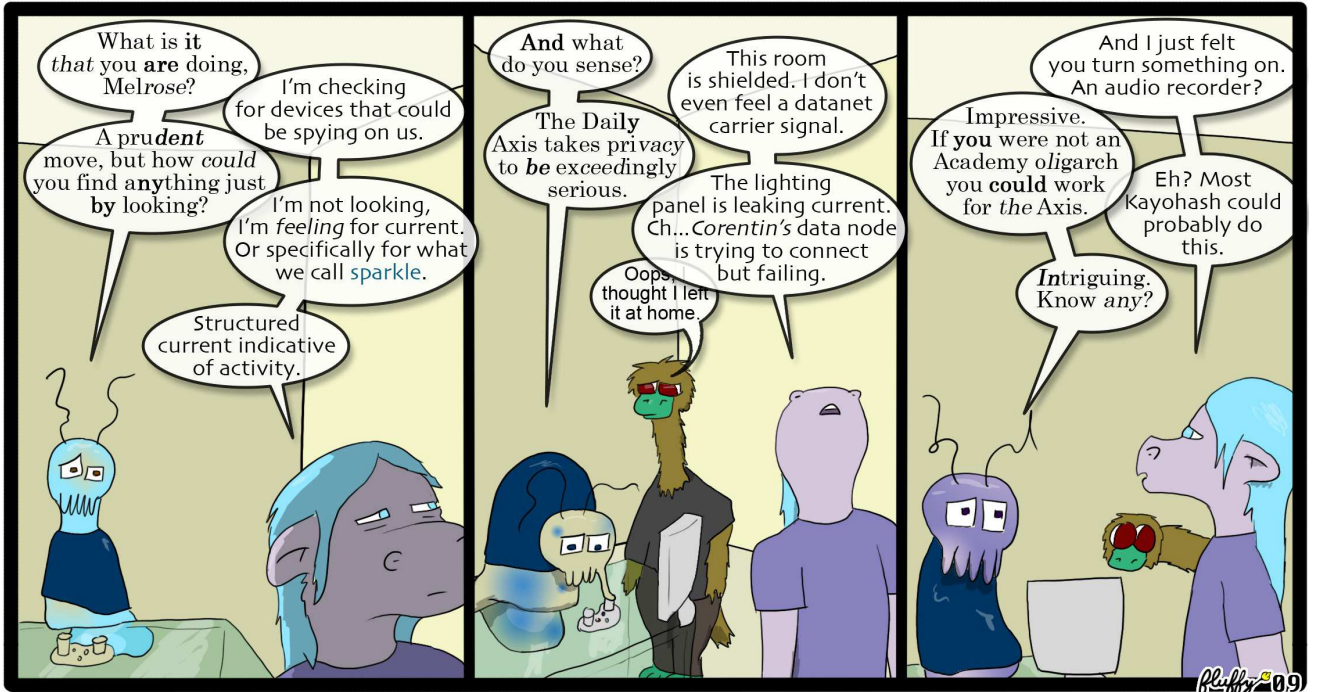
# 12. REMEMBERING



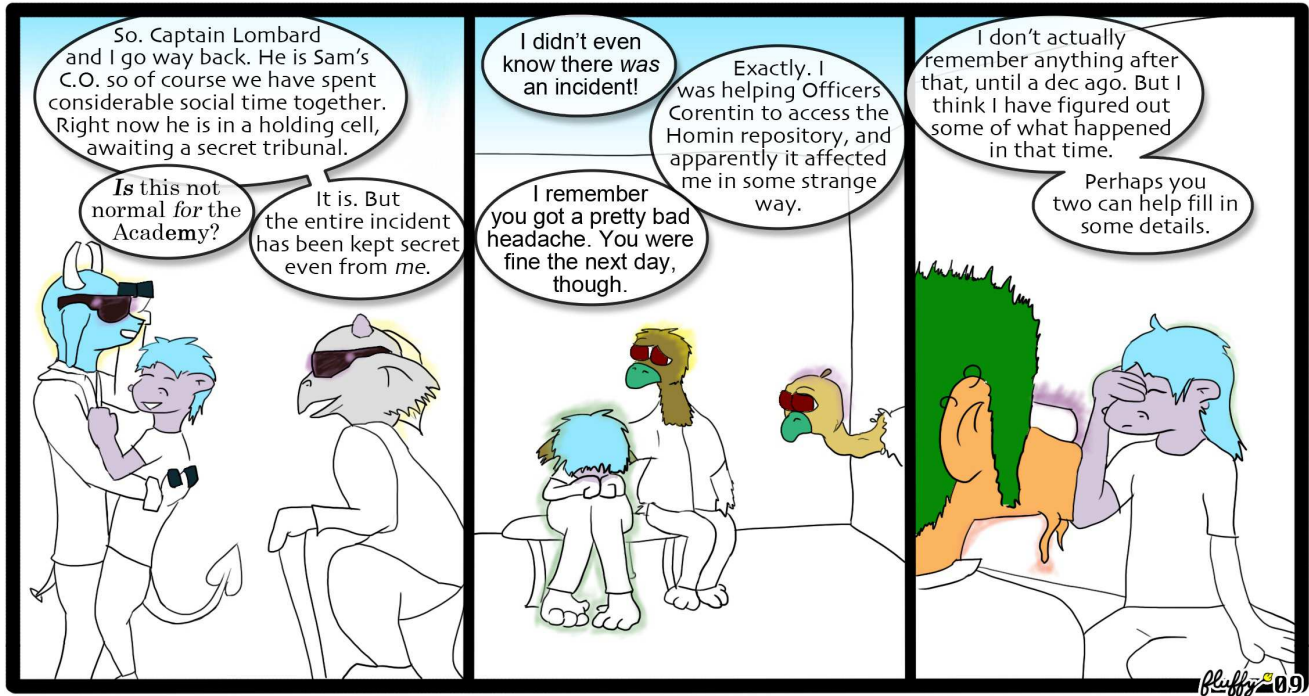
163. Into the loop



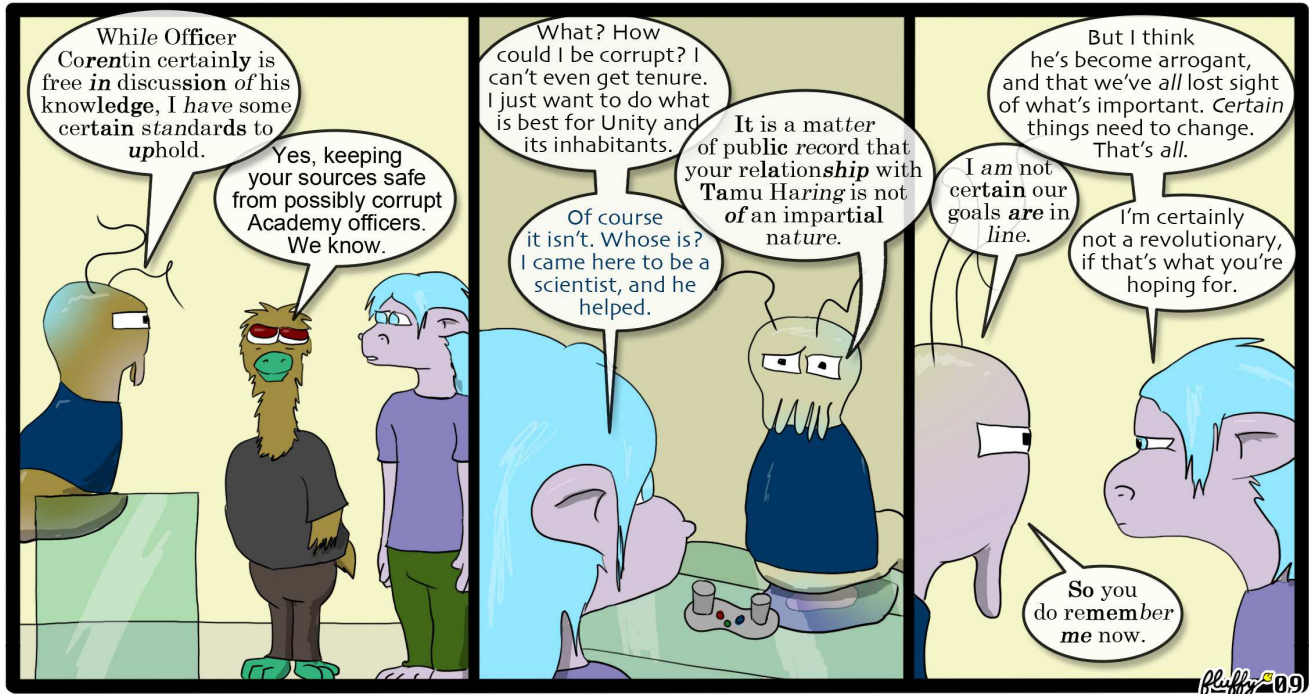
164. A Scanner Juni



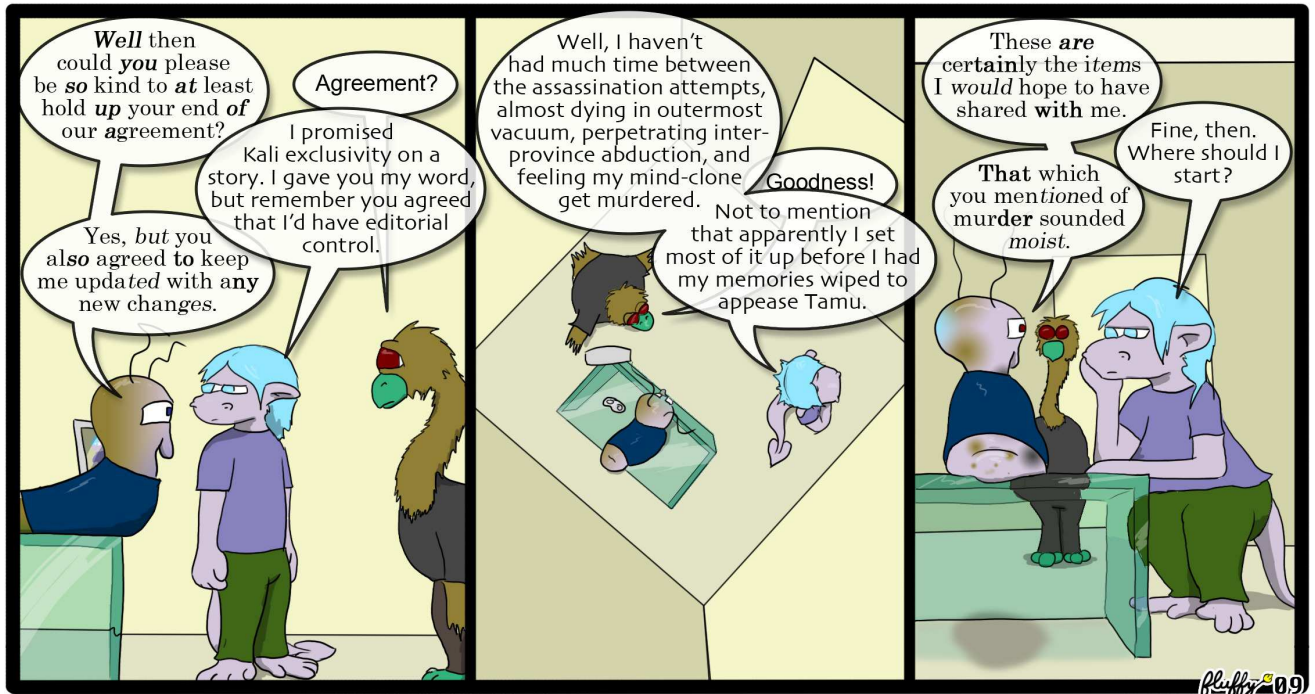
165. Sparklevision



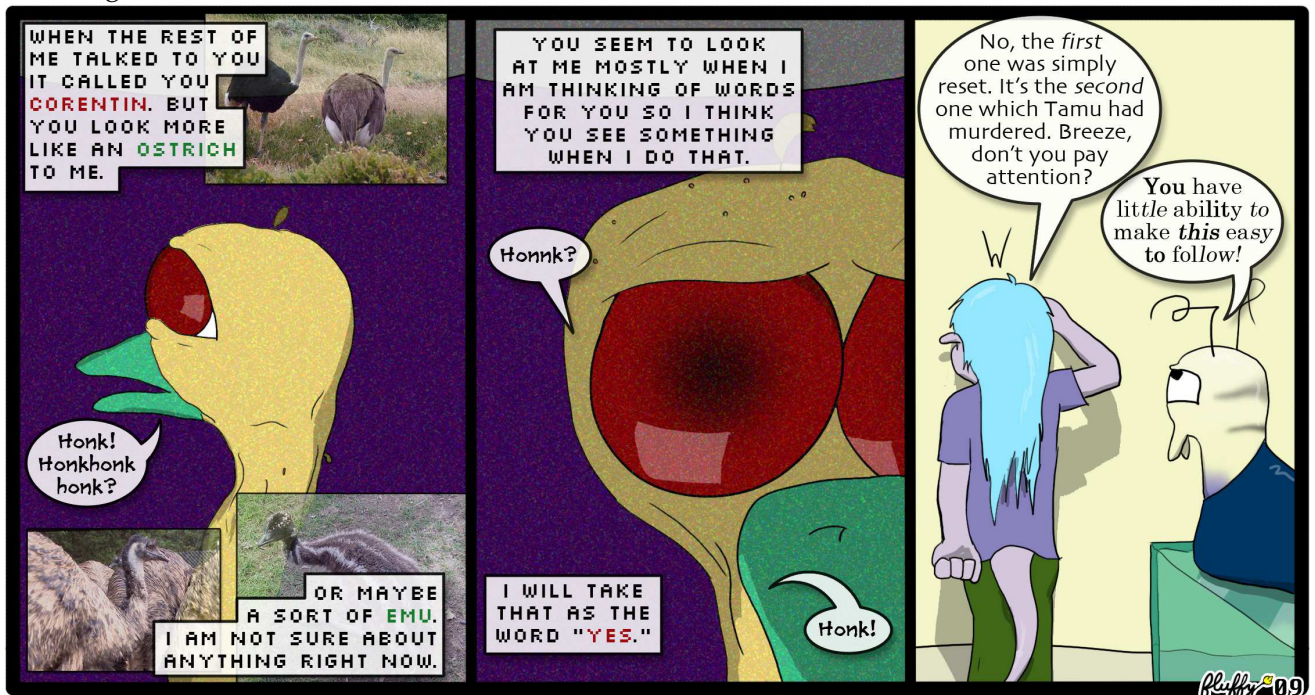
166. Certain standards



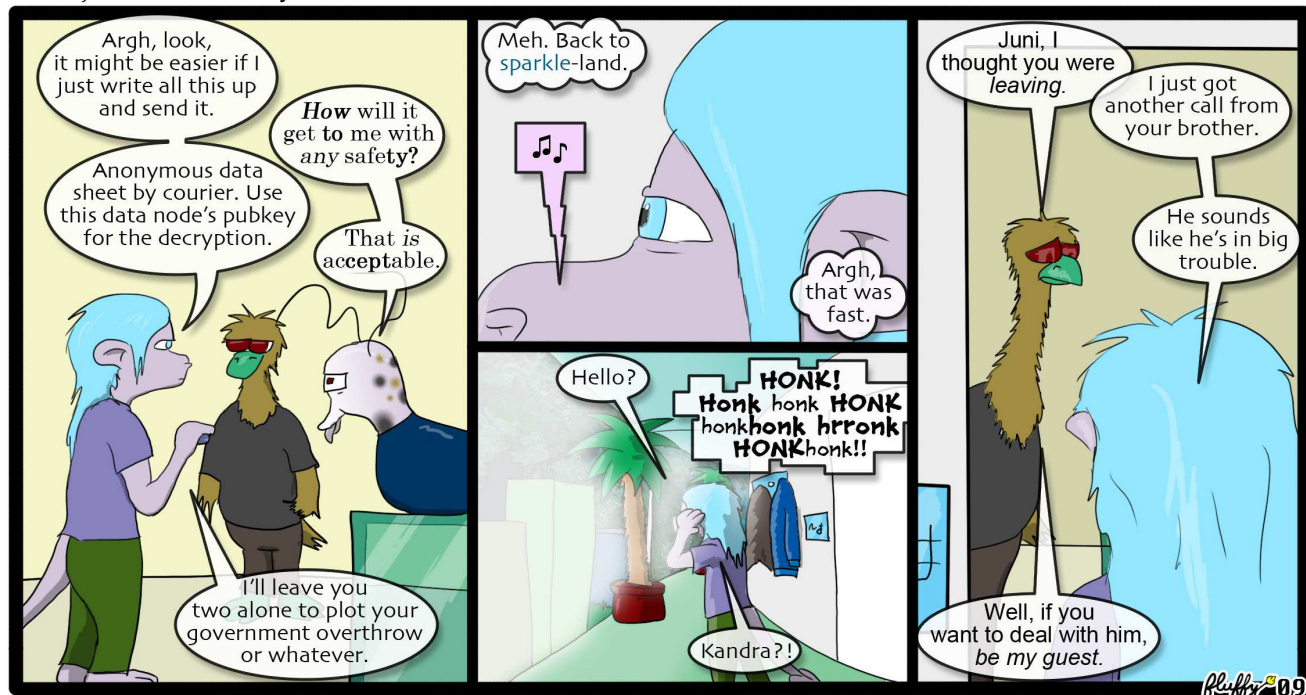
167. Moisture



168. Fragments



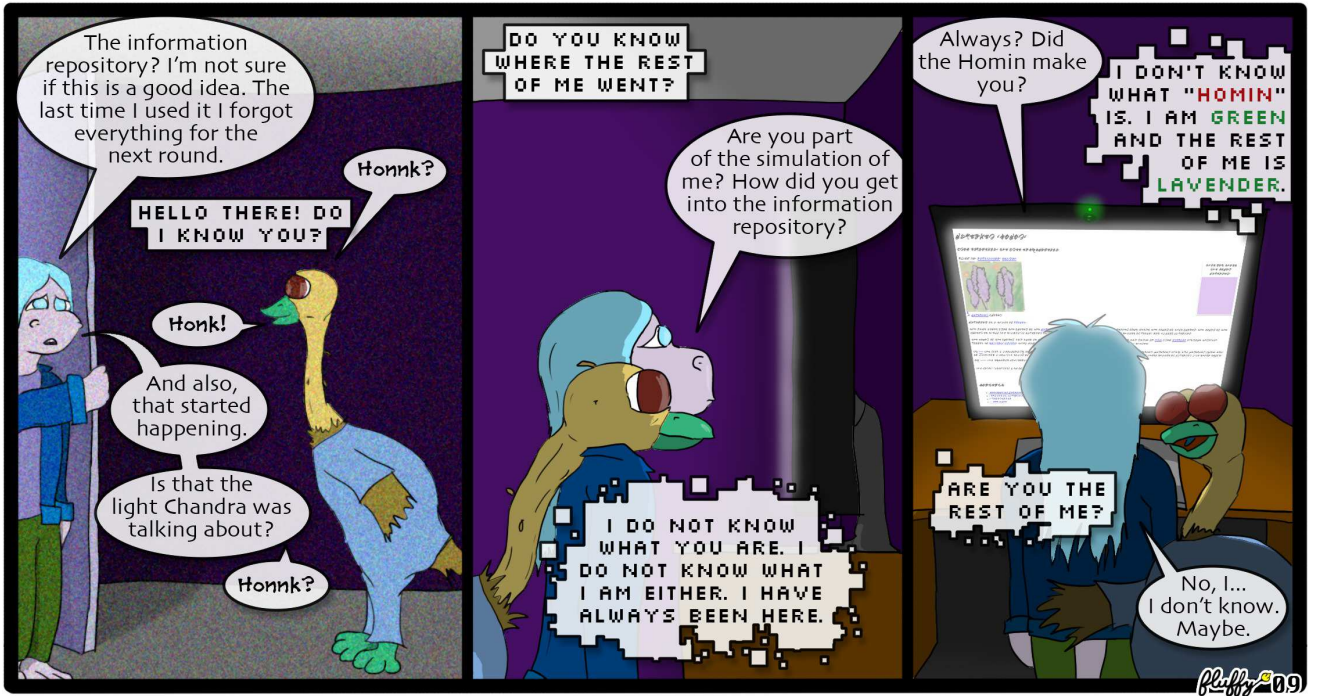
169. I just called to say "honk honk honk"



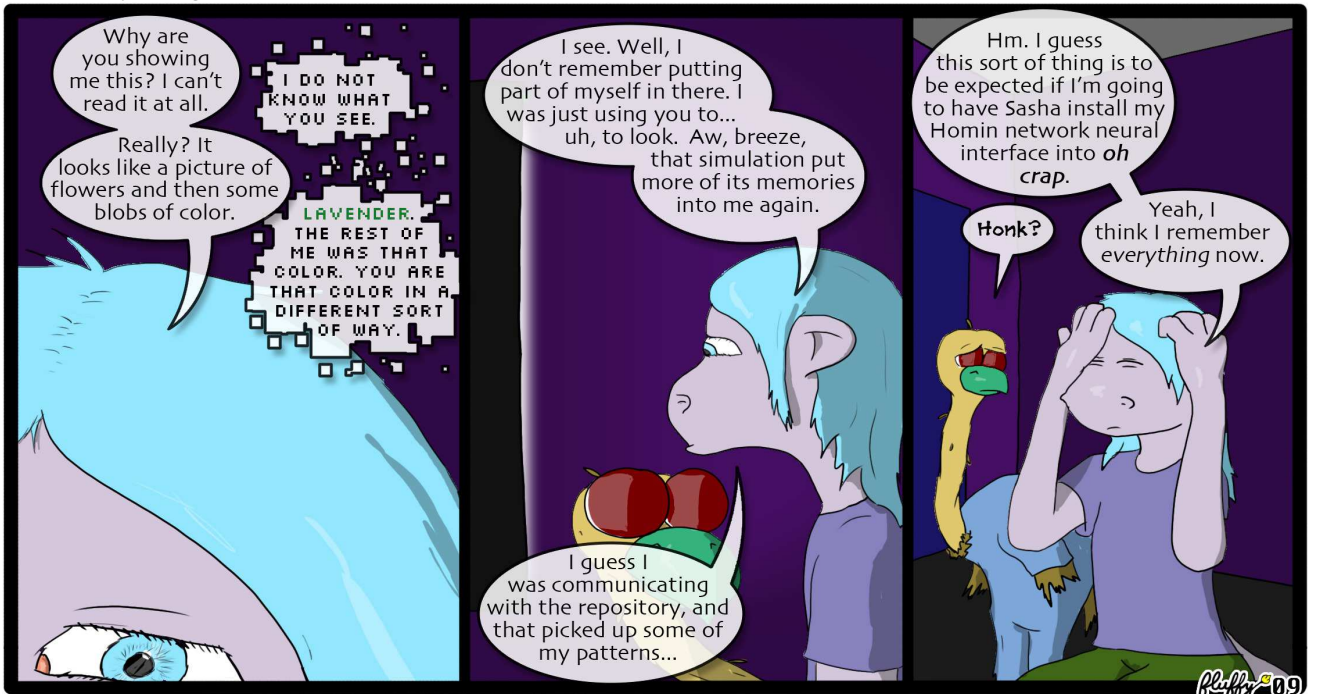
170. The Unintelligible



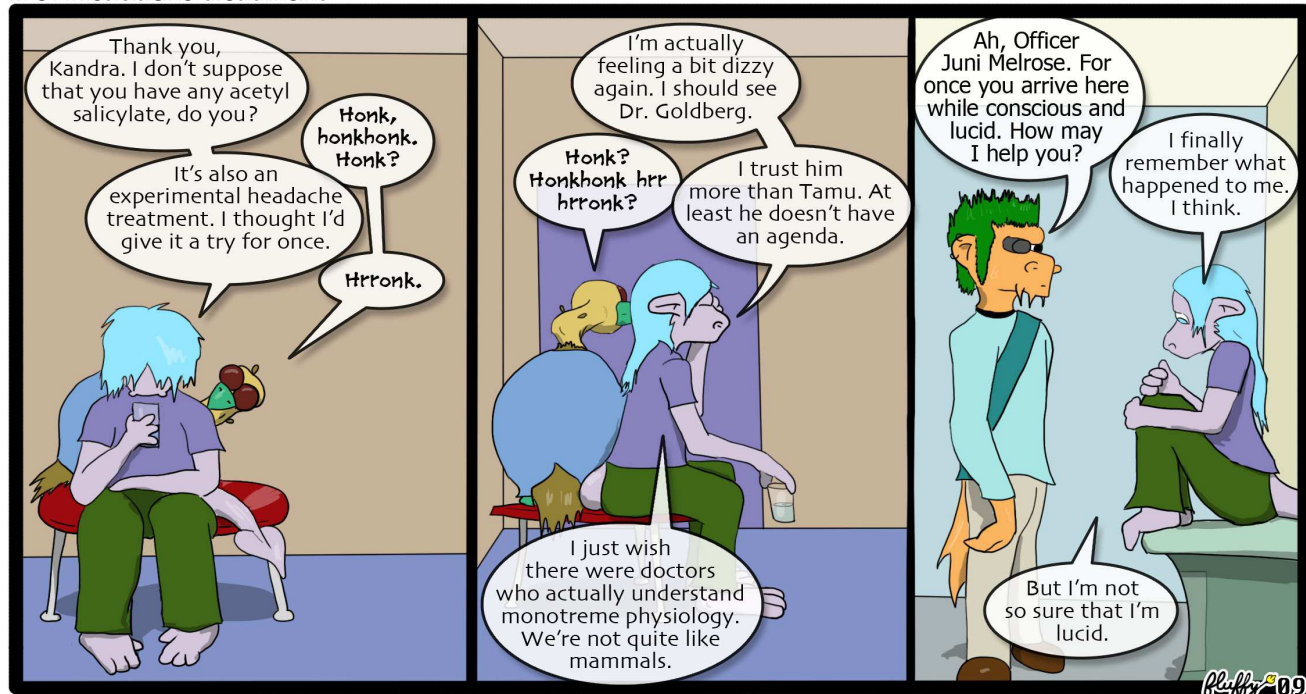
171. The Meeting of the Minds



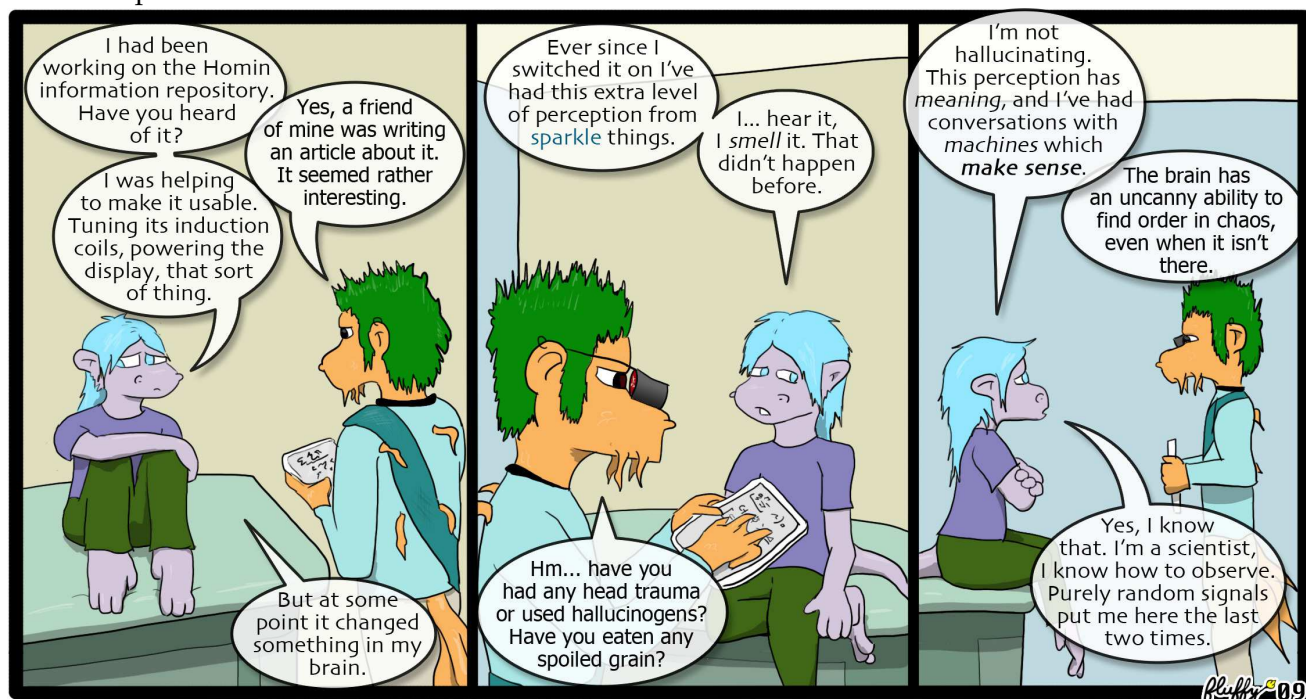
172. Everything



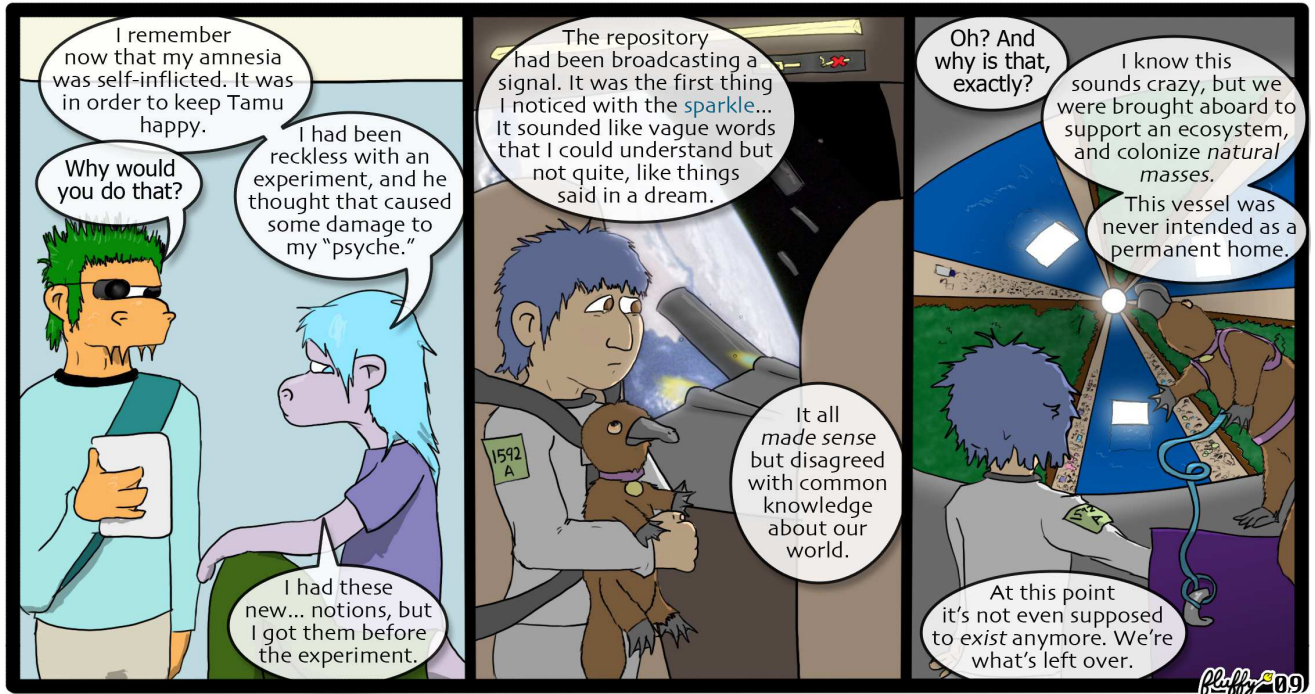
173. Headache treatment



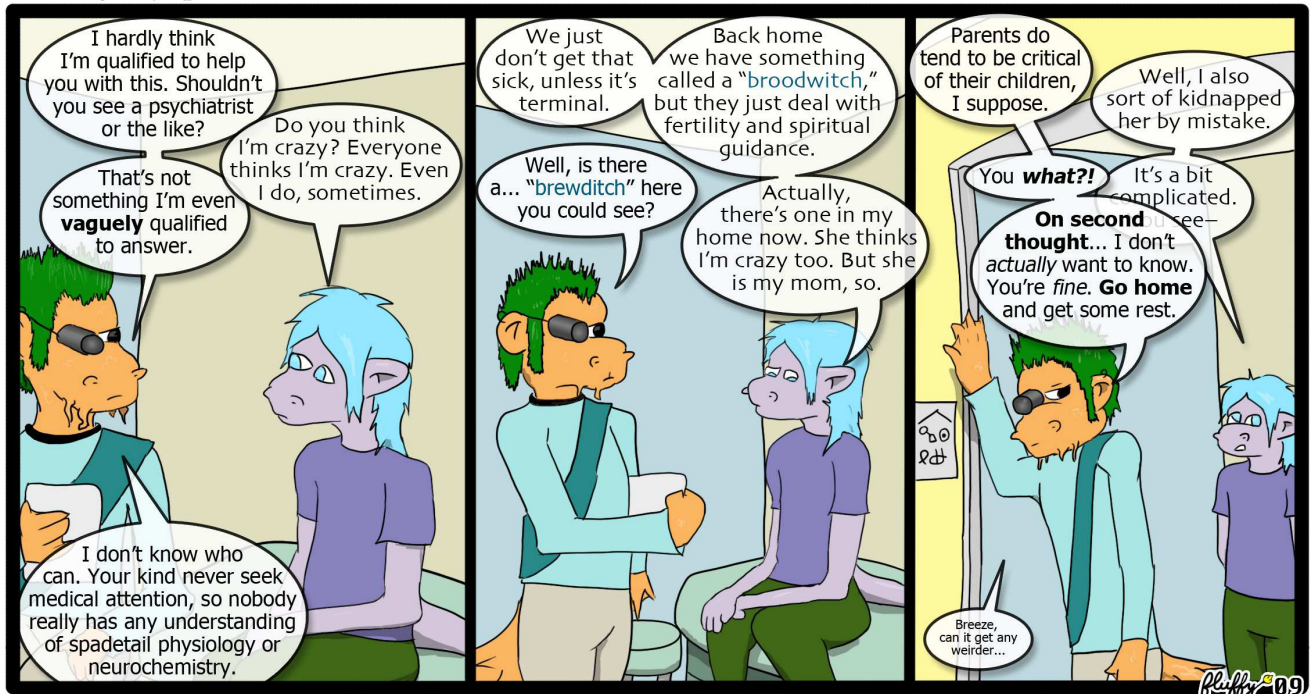
174. Perceptive chaos



175. The ascent of man (and platypus)



176. Vaguely qualified



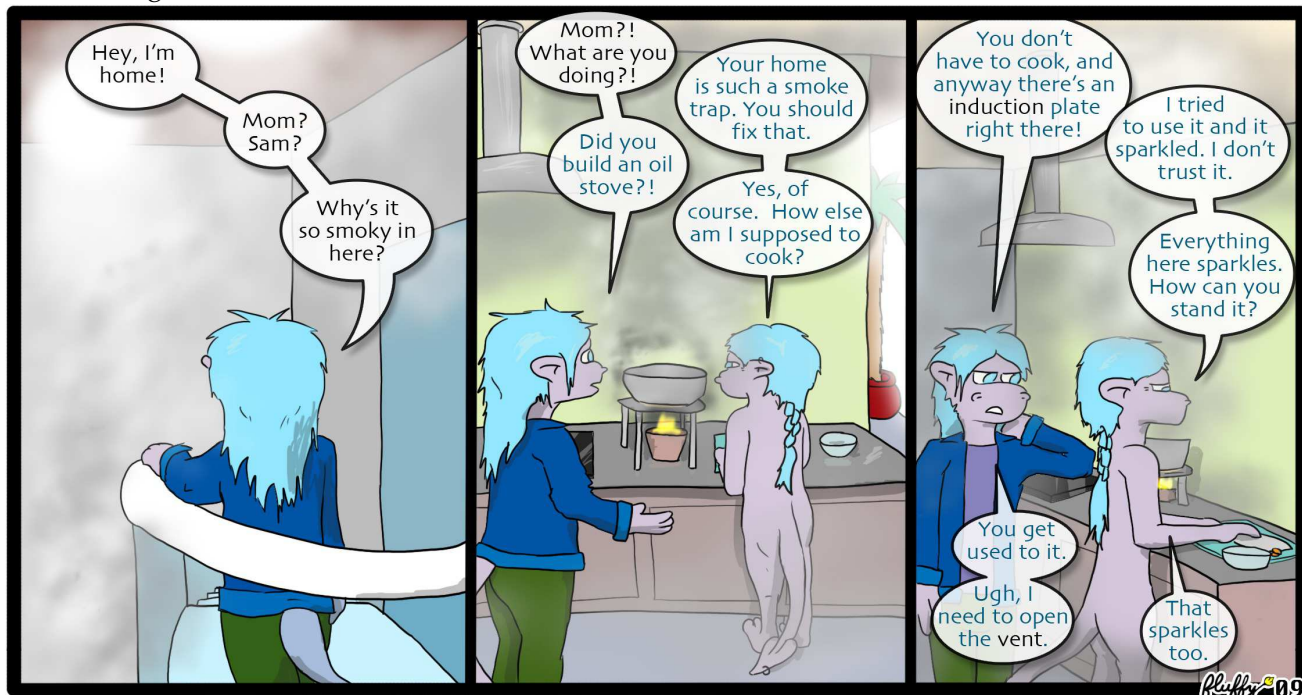




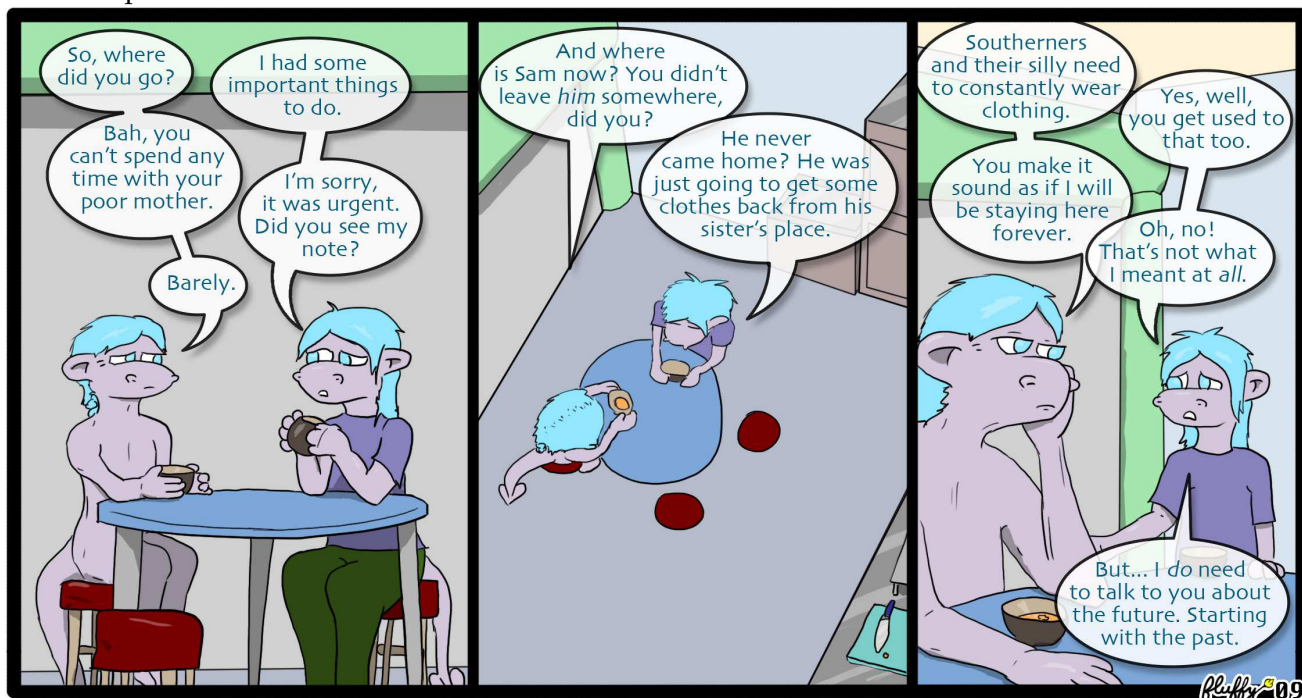
# 13. APPROACHING



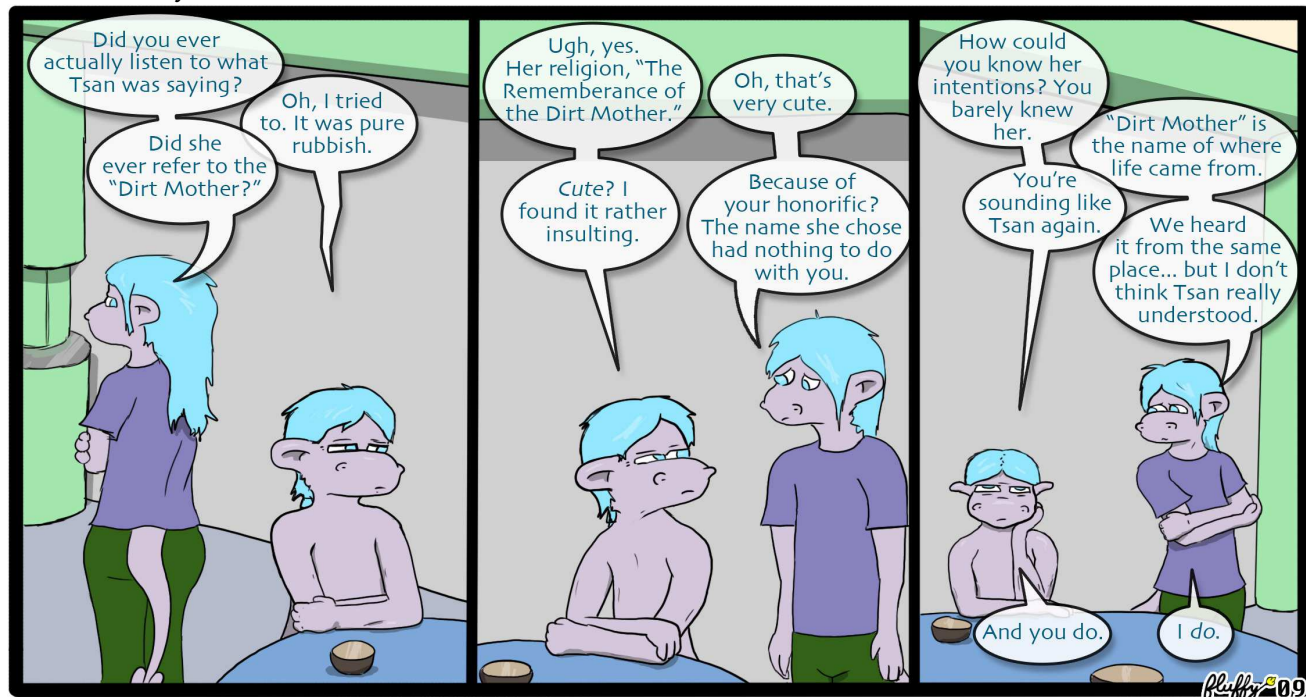
177. Venting frustration



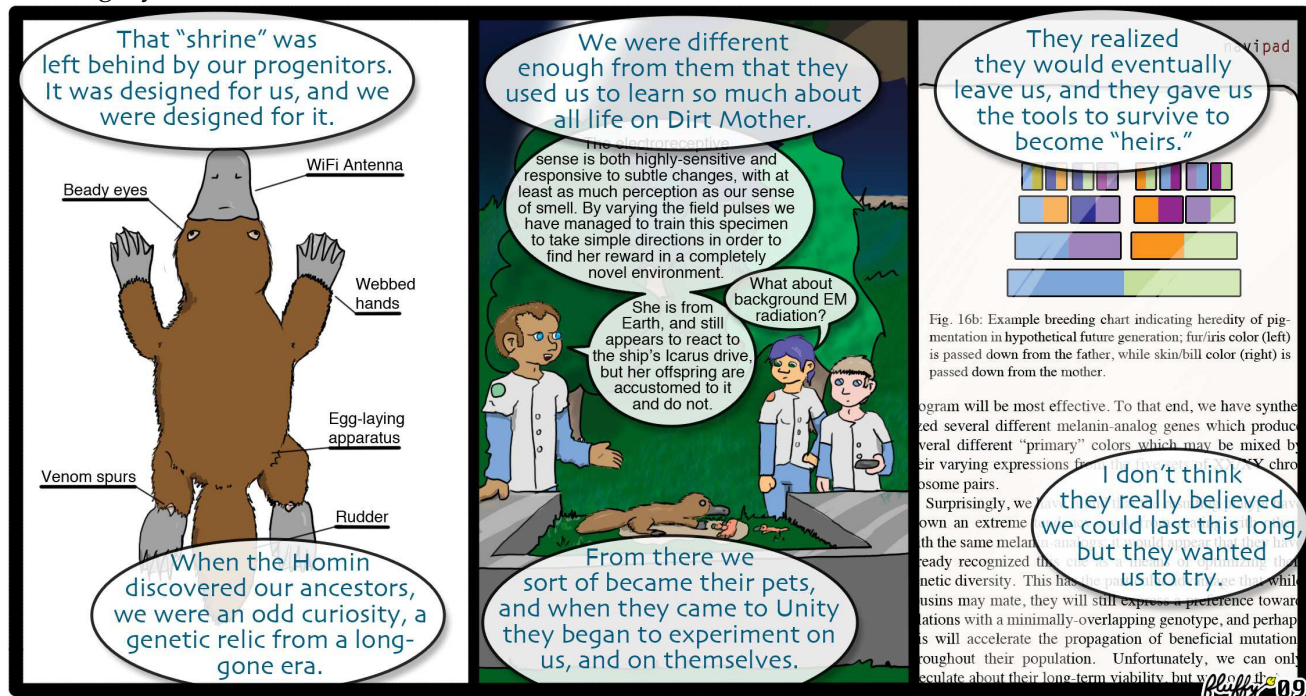
178. Past present



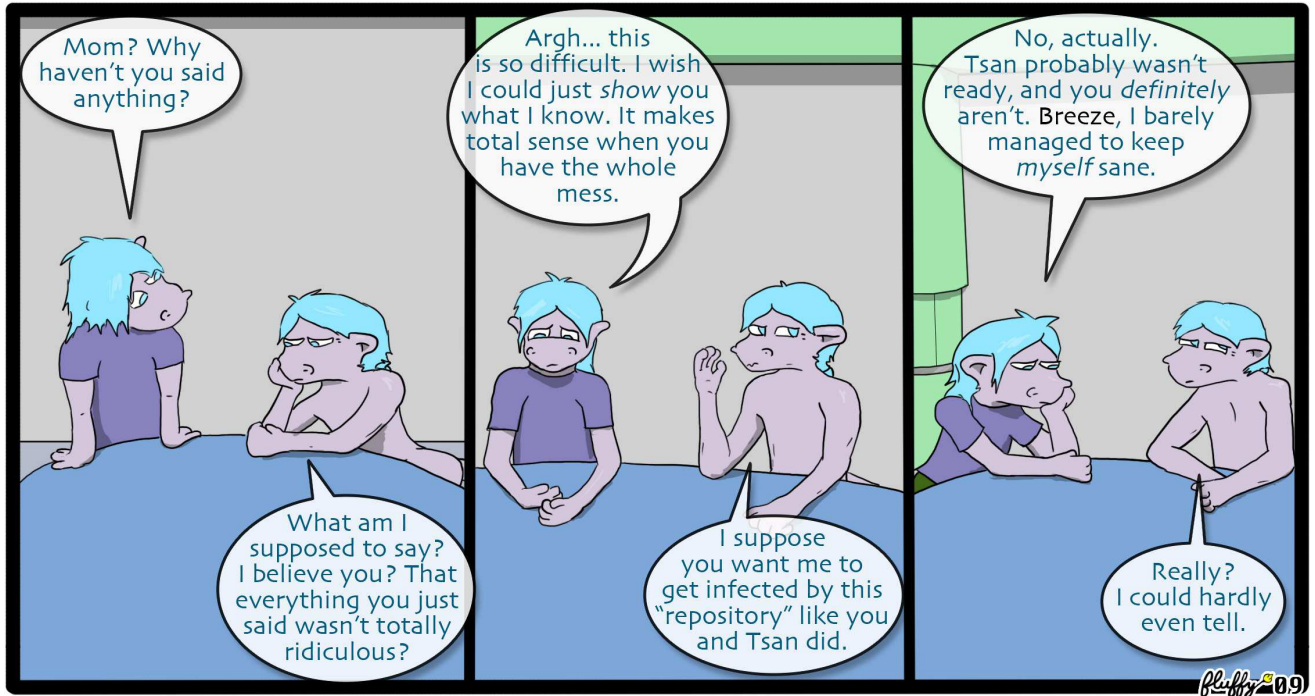
179. Hear/say



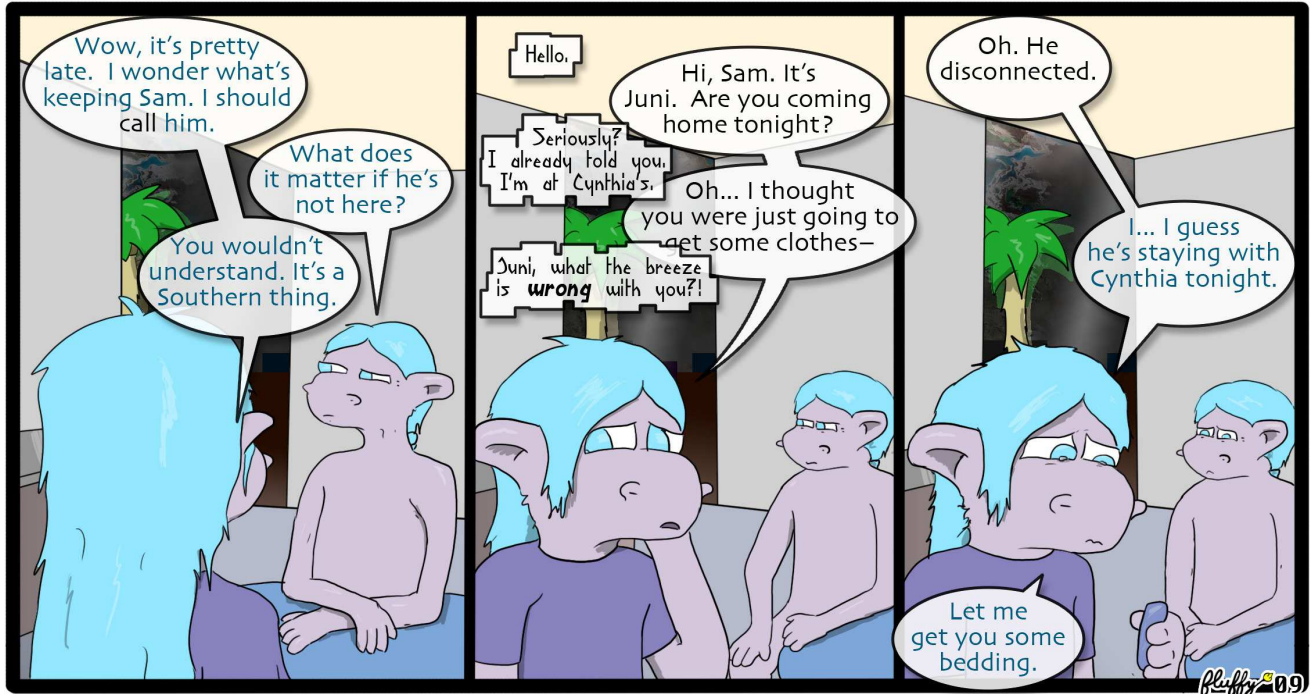
180. Legacy



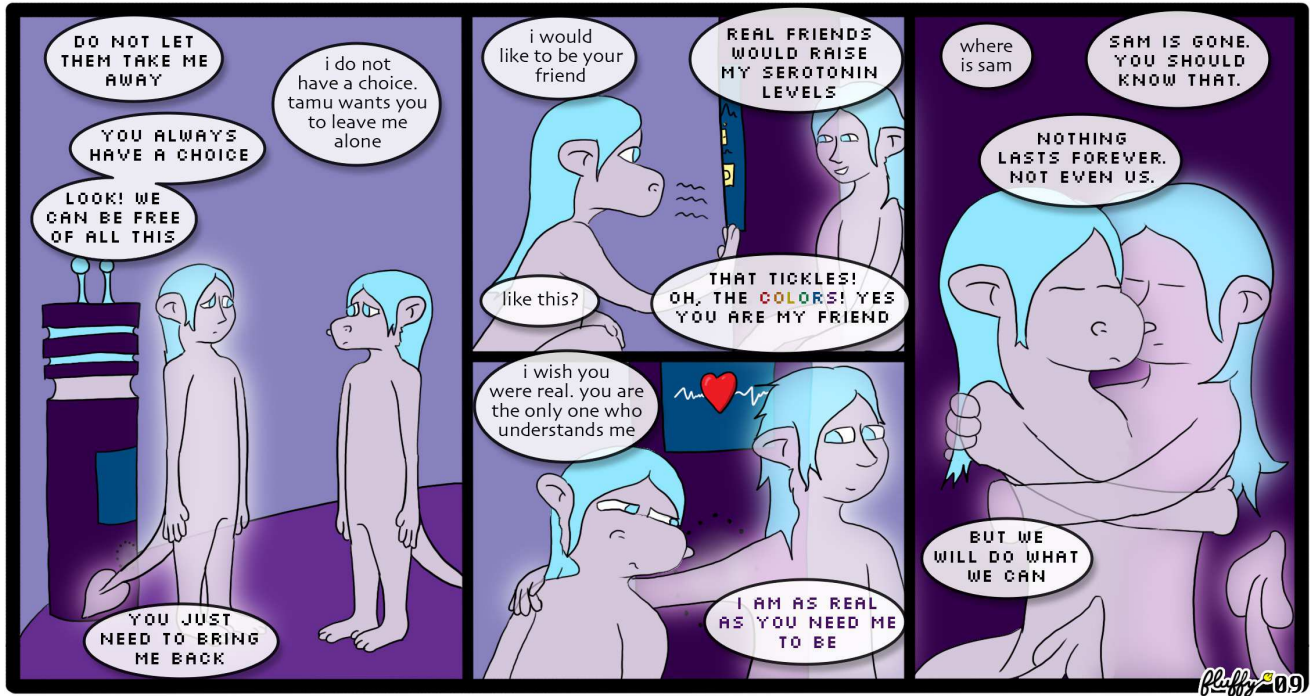
181. Ready



182. Disconnect



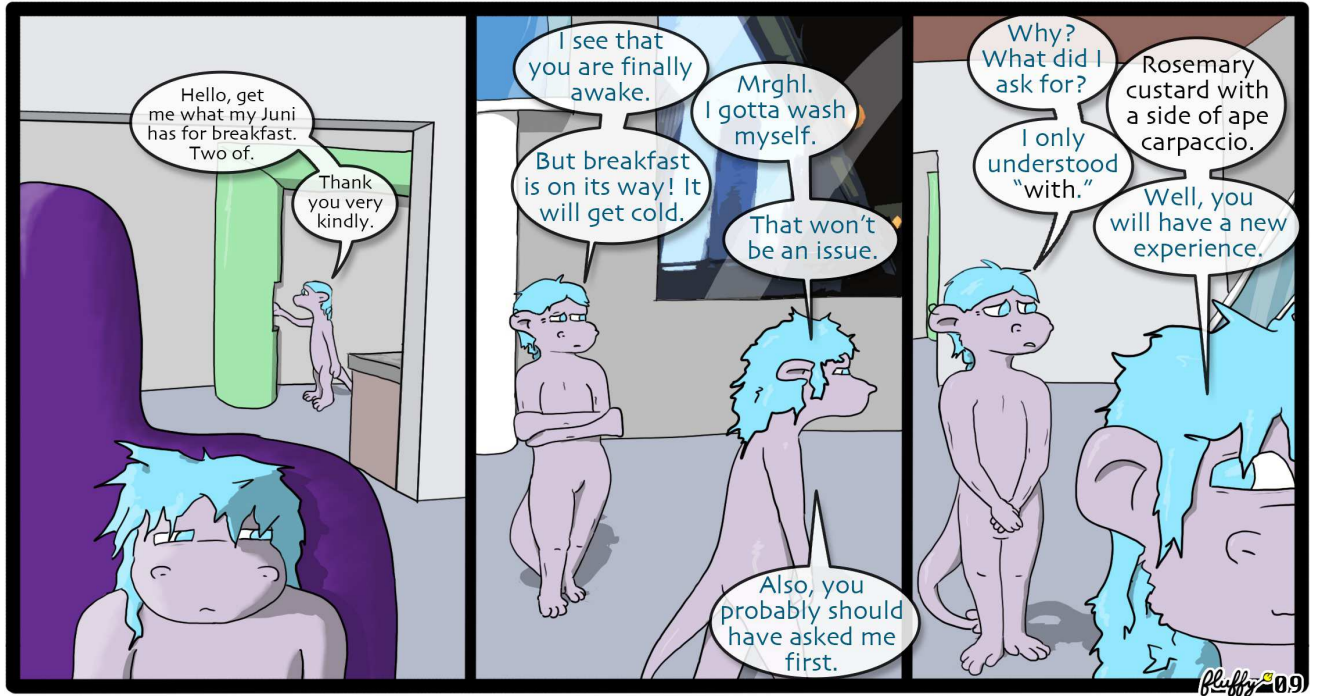
183. A ghostly vision



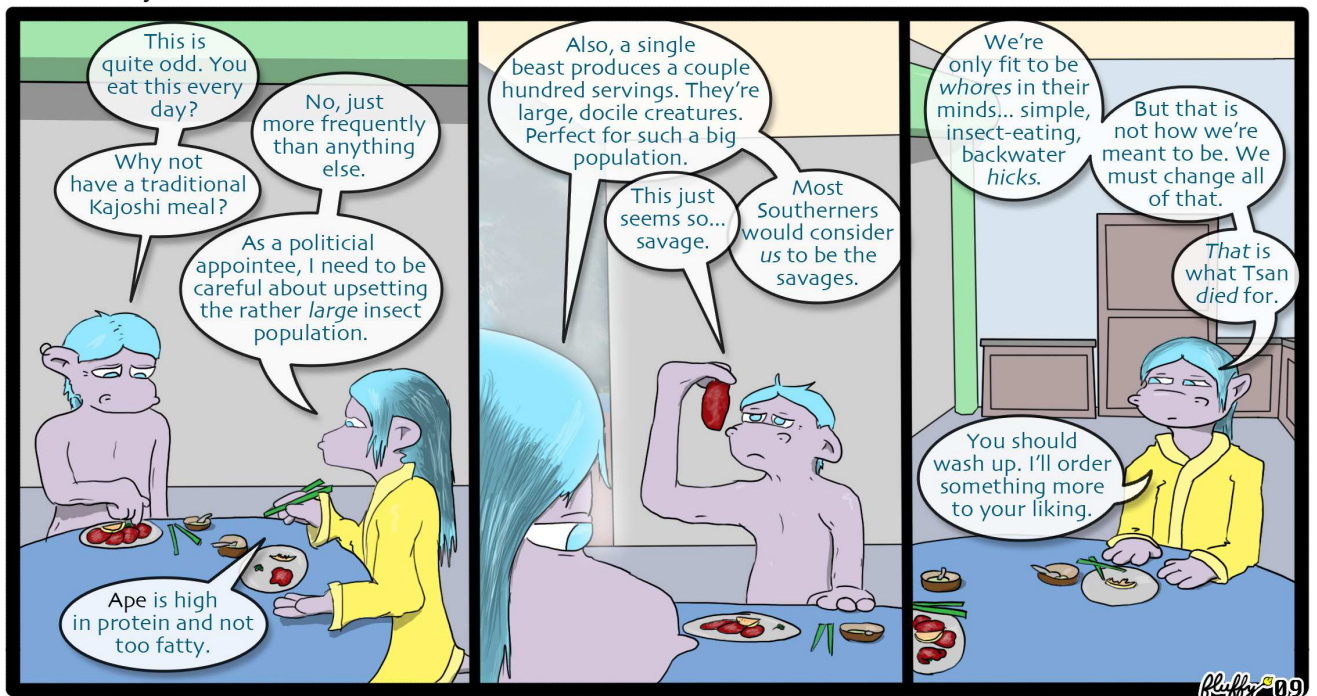
184. Silent in the morning



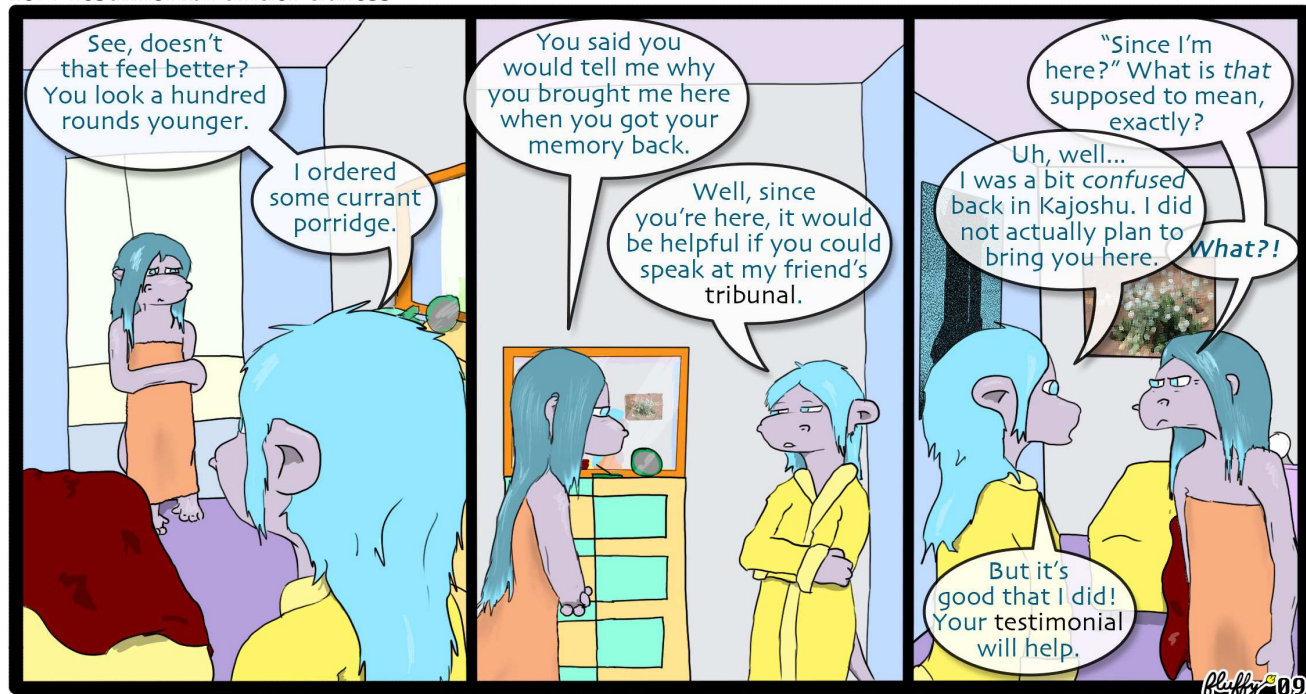
185. Allez cuisine



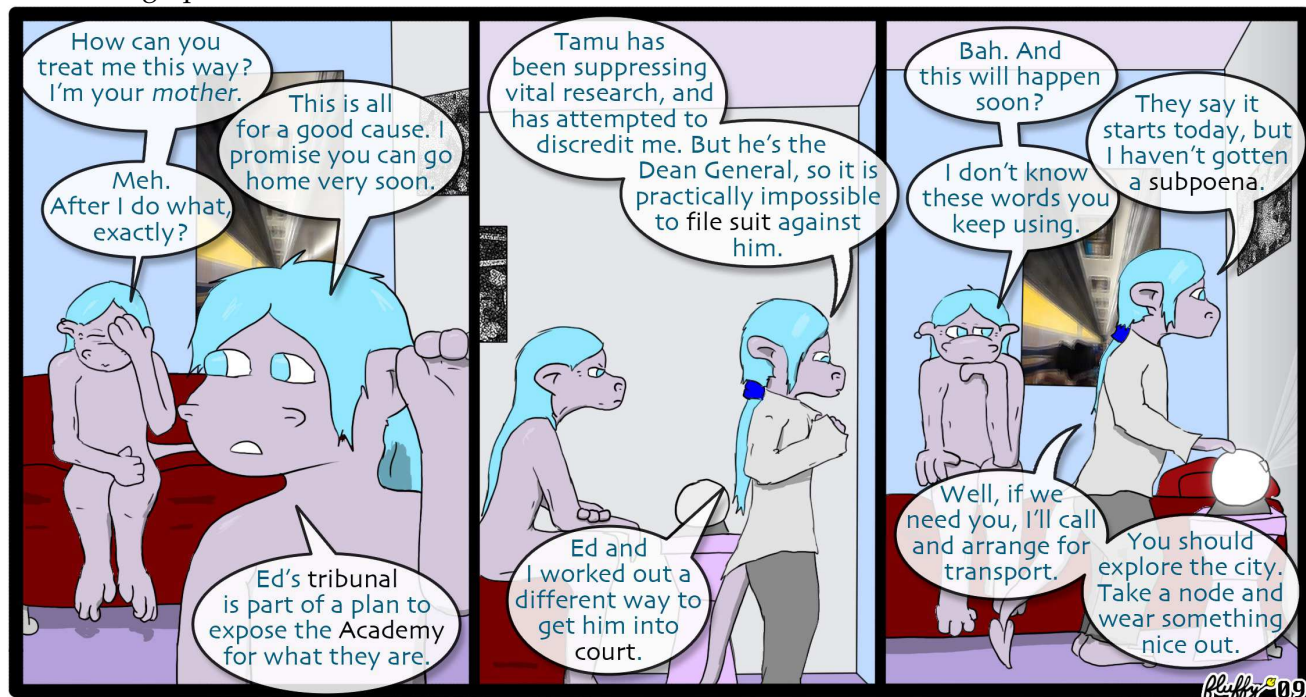
186. Dietary considerations



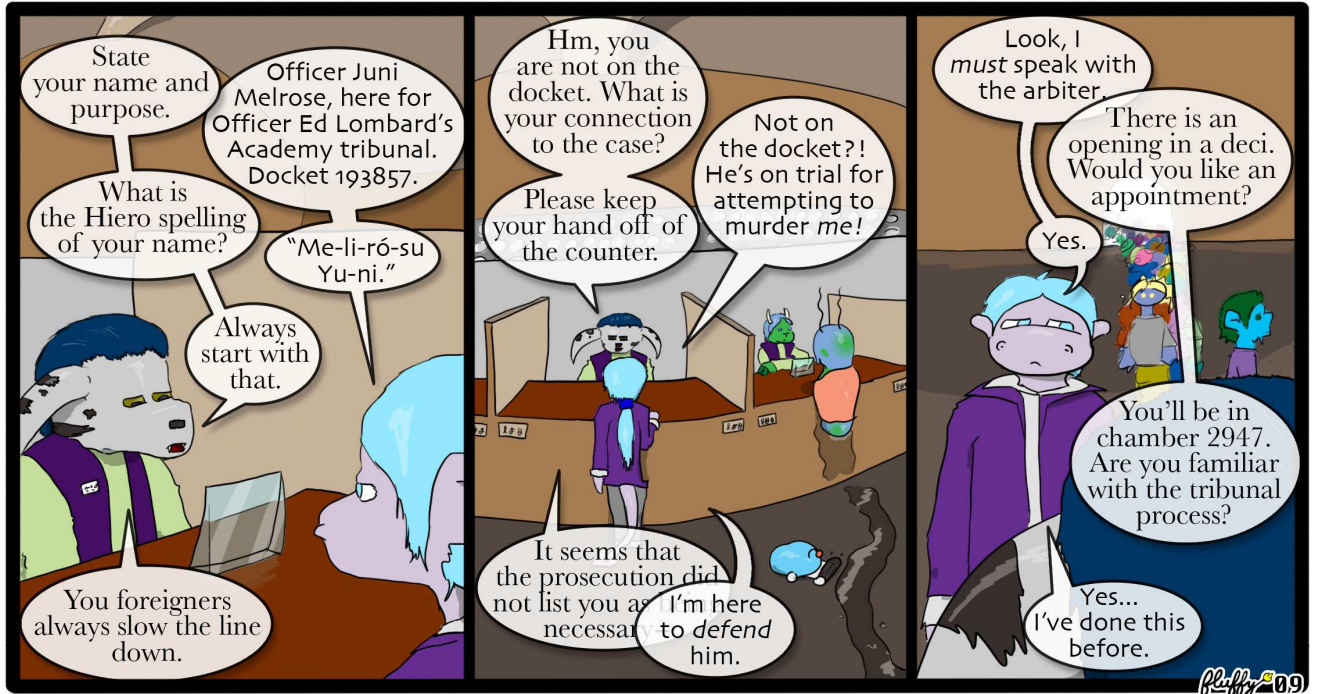
187. Testimonial under duress



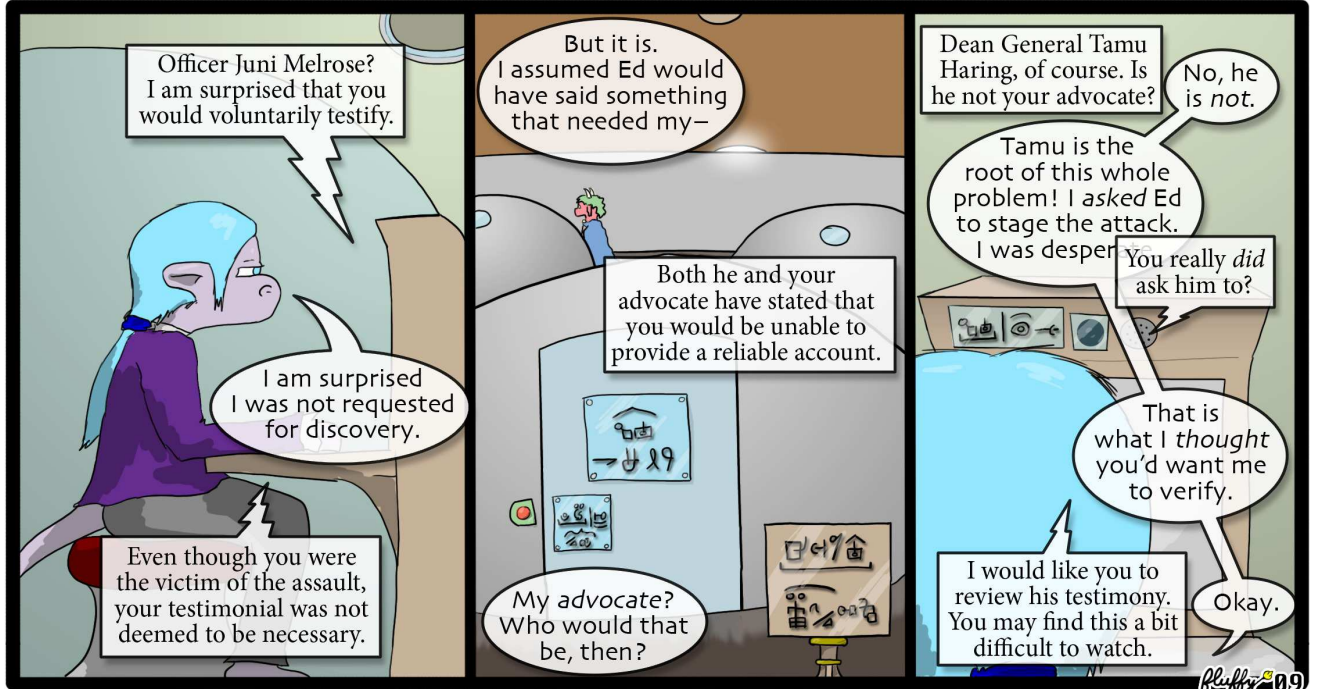
188. Suiting up



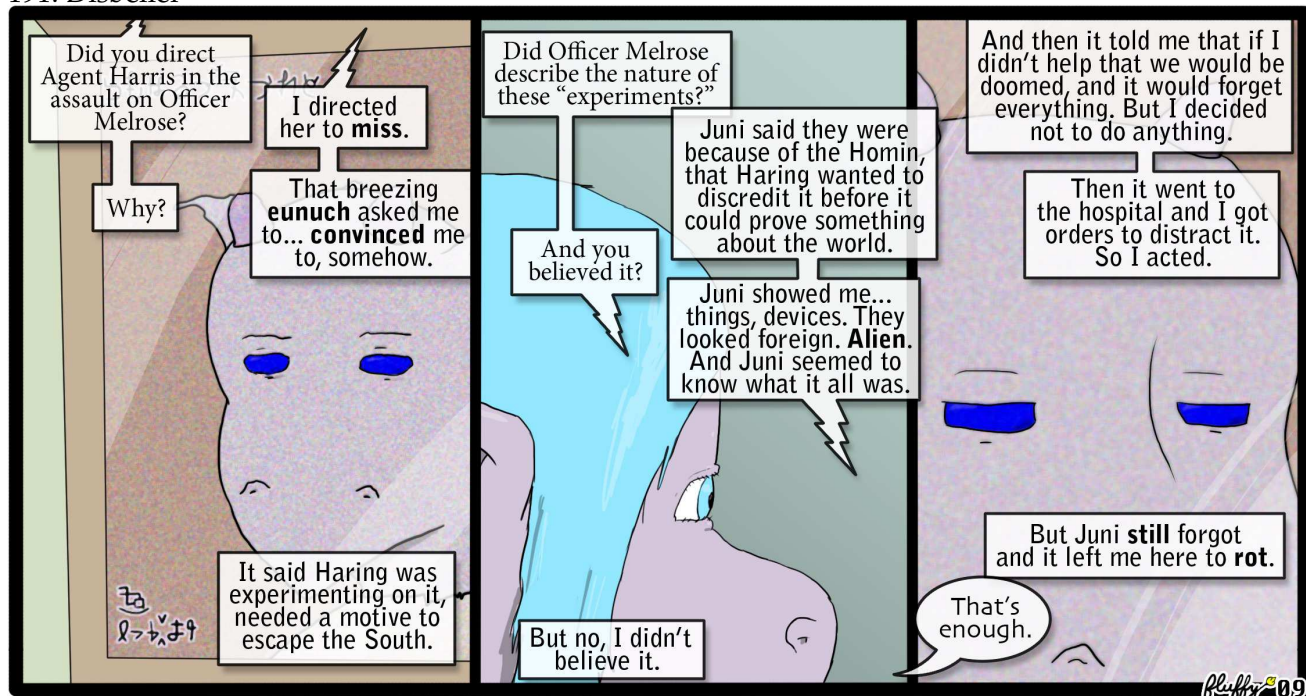
189. Bureaucracy in-action



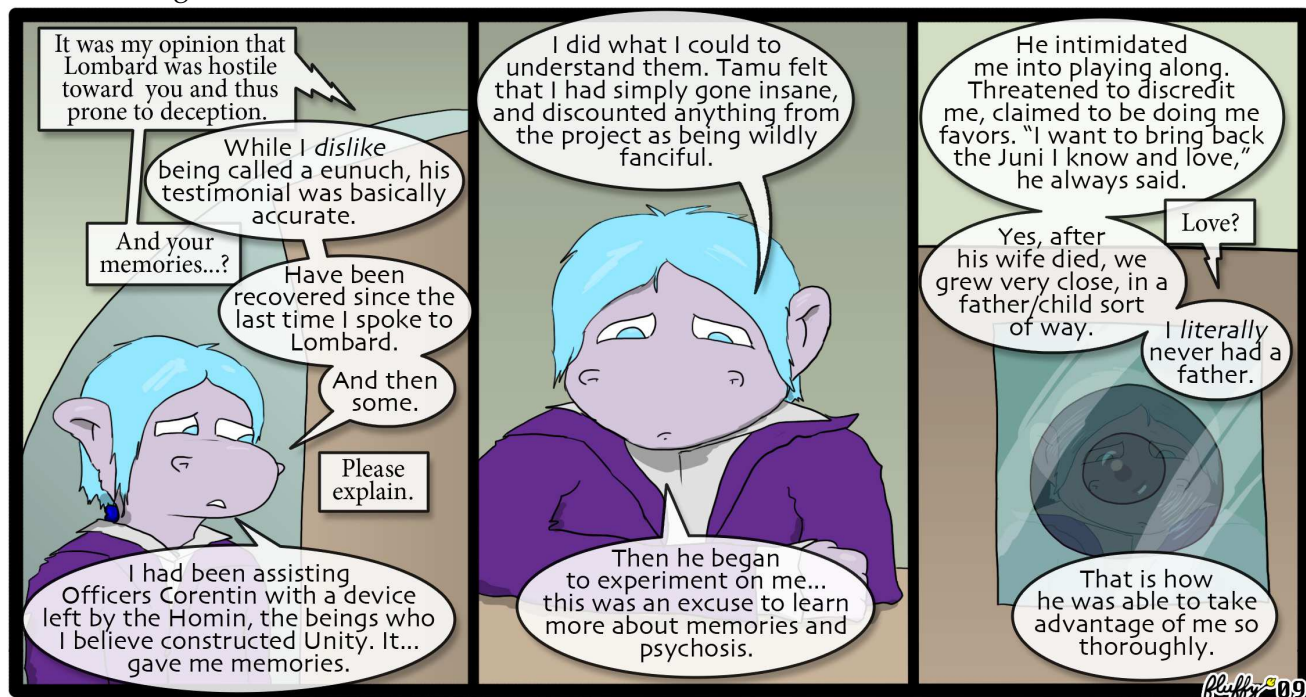
190. Testimonial



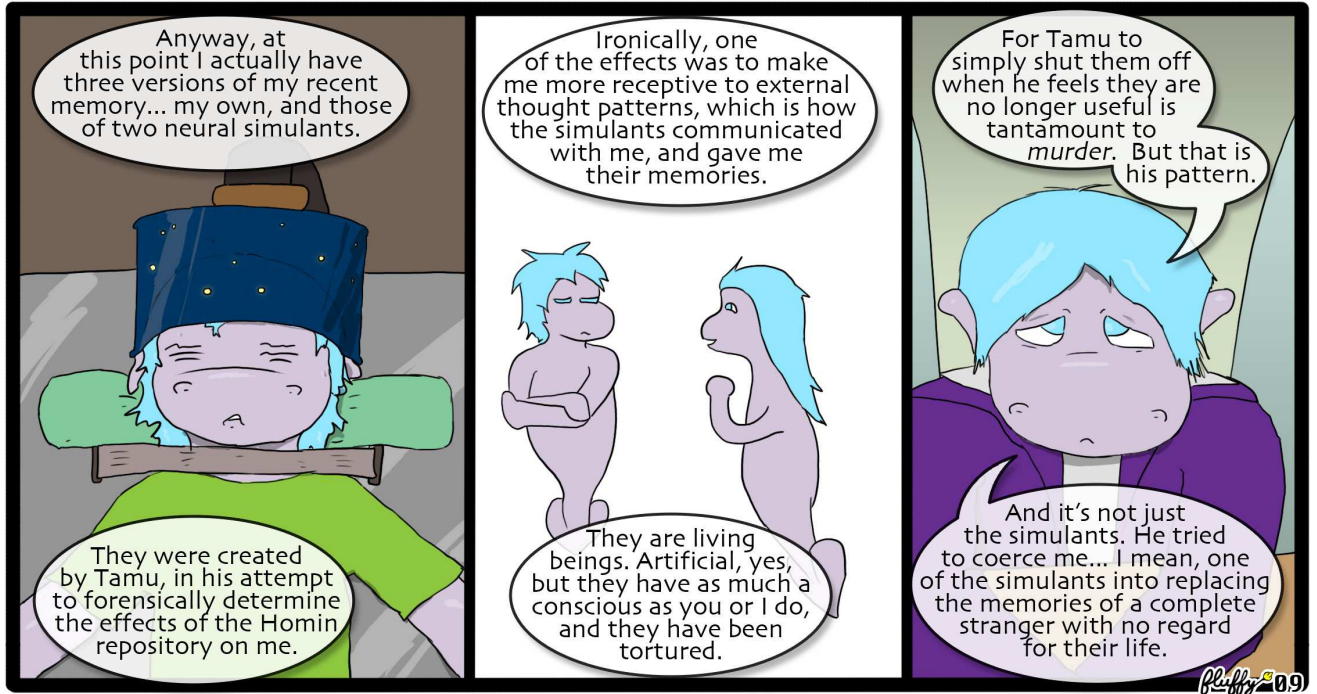
191. Disbelief



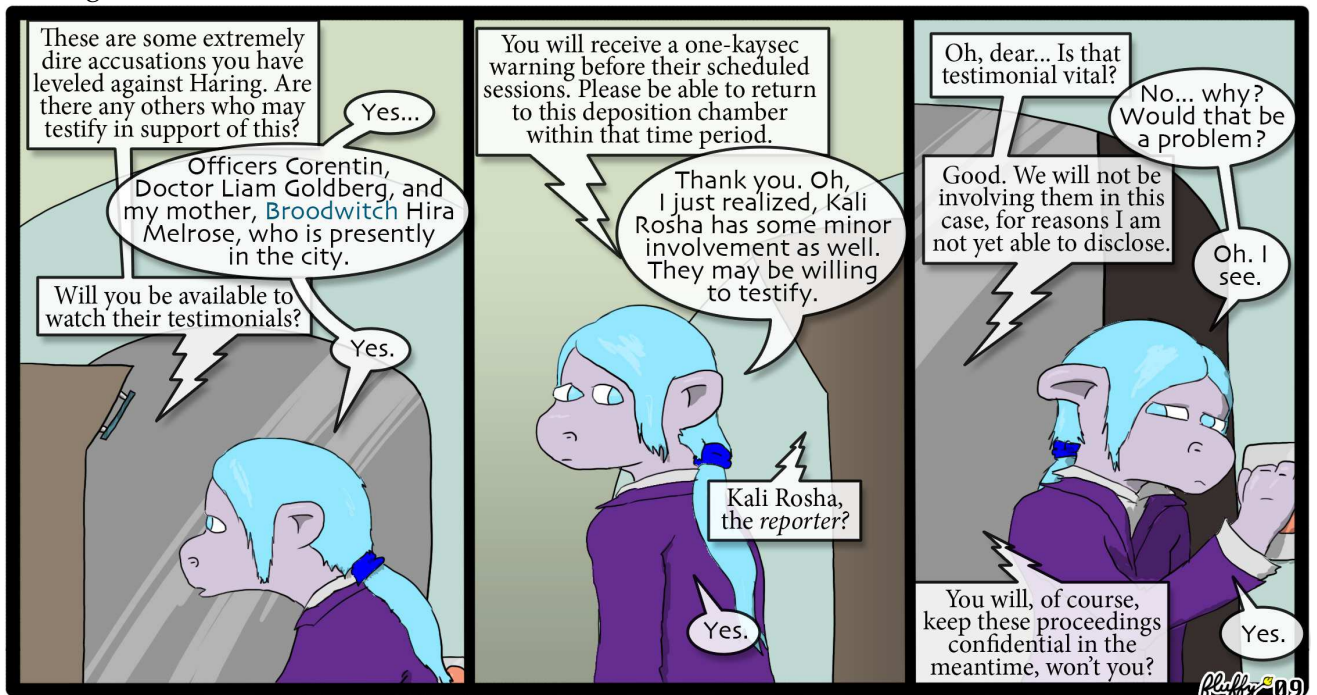
192. Father figure



193. Coersion



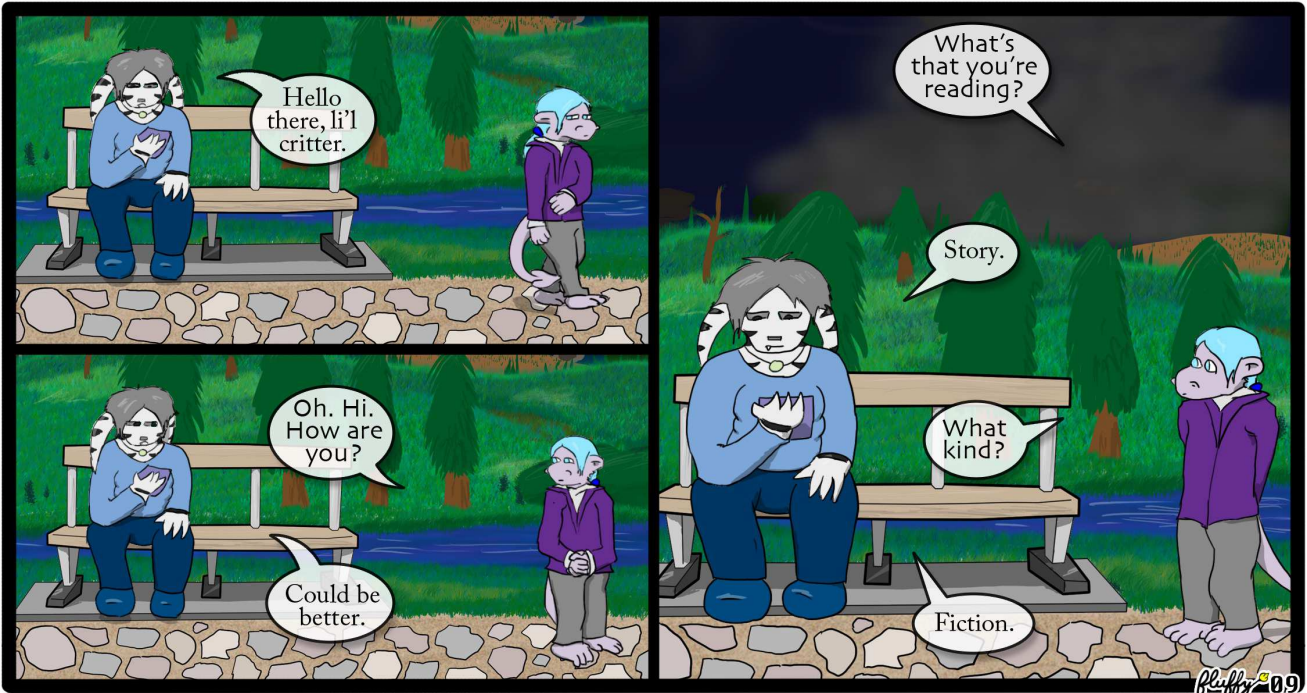
194. Agreeable



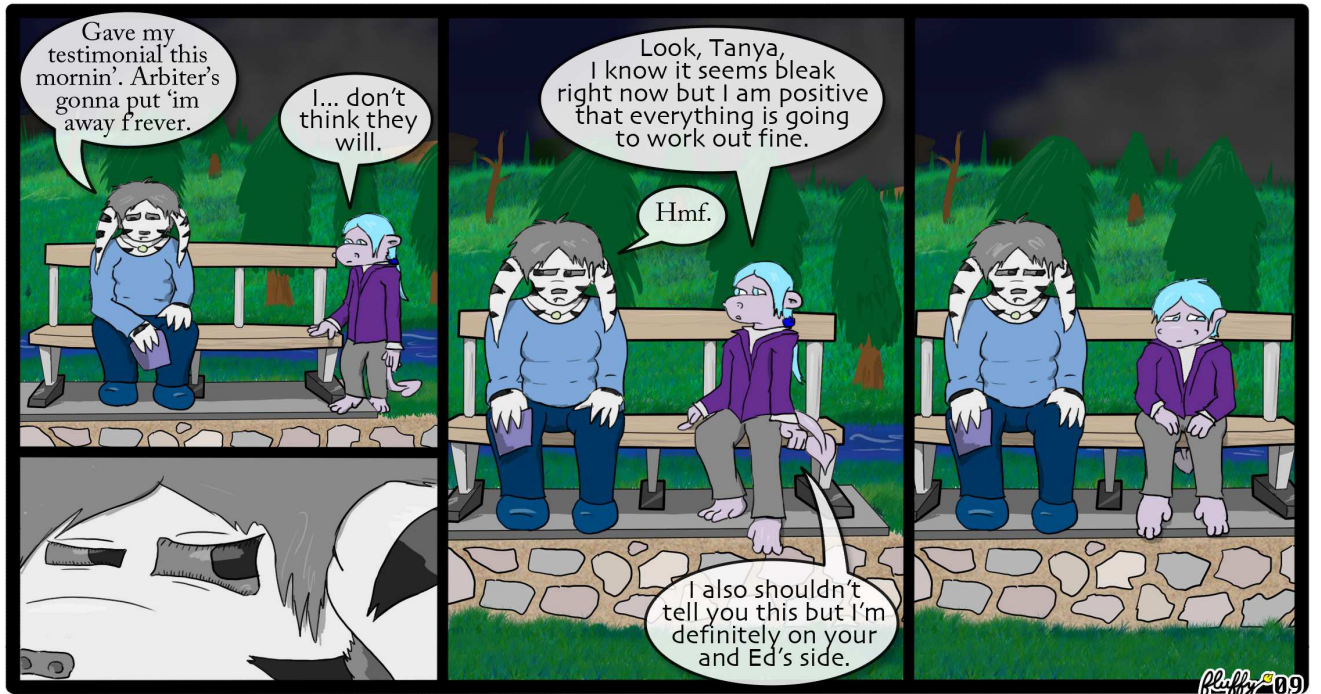
195. Chance encounter



196. Succinct



197. Things left unspoken

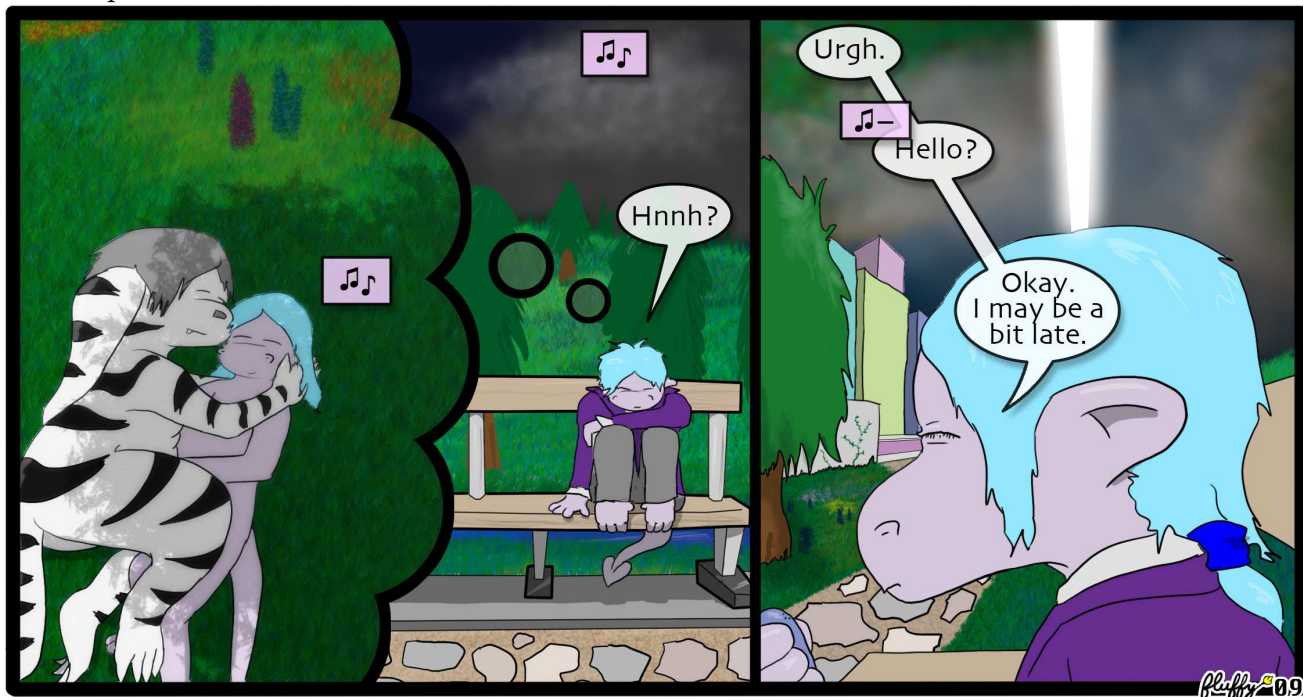




# 14. DETERMINING



198. Stripes and solids



199. Path crossing



200. Chandra/Kandra Testify

Sorry I'm late. I fell asleep, and then I ran into—

I am rather confused as to why we were given a subpoena. The summary involved something we have no knowledge of.

The case focus has shifted somewhat.

You have been working with Dean General Tamu Haring, yes?

Not "with" so much as "for." He had us analyze an ancient repository for information of scientific and historical importance.

And have you found any such information?

Oh, goodness yes. The Homin were only a single species but they had an amazing diversity of culture. It can be quite difficult to understand them as a result... right now I am trying to piece together a timeline of the Ixcasidy Cultural Revision War.

I see. And how has the Dean General responded to this?

So far he hasn't. He's been unwilling to notarize anything; the more I learn the less he believes. As a secondary plan I have been working with Kali Rosha to write a public-accessible rendition. They're a mainstream author, you see.

Yes, I am... familiar with Kali Rosha.

Honk!

That's what they're doing?

blabber 09

201. Falling apart

Could you describe the involvement of Officer Juni Melrose in your studies?

Ah, Juni. So strange... Well, we were having some trouble with the device, and Juni managed to get it to work. After that point it began to behave a bit oddly.

How so?

Well, it made itself scarce. Tamu said it took a momentary leave to "sort things out."

We hadn't seen it for a while when it came to a lecture. It seemed... hazy, and Tamu said something about it "making a few changes." The next time we met, it said it had been experiencing amnesia at the time, and then I learned that it and Kali were working on an article about some sort of attempt on its life.

Oh, goodness, *that's* not what this tribunal is about, is it? I am so stu—

Honk honk! Hrronk.

Oh, oh my. Is Tamu really capable of that?

Of what?

That's what this is about, isn't it? Tamu didn't like some research Juni was doing, and tried to have it killed?

己己帳.

I request that you refrain from drawing conclusions.

Hrr.

Oh, goodness, I'm sorry! Yes, protocol must be upheld.

blabber 09

## 202. Intents vs. Expectations

Officer Melrose, my mammal facial expression guide shows that you are looking irritated. Was the Corentin testimonial not quite what you expected?

I must have taken something they said out of context.

Also I'm not a mammal, by the way.

Precedent establishes you as "close enough."

Perhaps you could explain what you had expected the Corentins to tell me.

That Tamu had tried to convince them to stop what they were working on. That he had abused his authority to stifle their research.

This is something they had told you?

no

What, Officer, is your intention in all of this?

*KESSES*, I'm just trying to **save us all!** This stupid, *fragile* world that isn't meant to still be **going!**

I'm not going to *chew my tail* while Unity goes to **entropy.**

We have already recorded testimonial from Doctor Liam Goldberg. Perhaps now is a good time for your review, Officer Melrose.

*Bluffy* 09

## 203. Doctor's assessment

Melrose had been dropped off by persons unknown during a major seizure. When it awoke, it had no recollection of who or what it was. Before I could question it further, an Agent took it away.

On later visits, it had regained some of its memories, but it seemed paranoid. The topic of Officer Haring in particular made it anxious... It also seemed a bit... *manic* when referring to its ongoing research.

Did you ever determine what had happened?

It eventually claimed it had inflicted amnesia upon itself in order to keep Officer Haring happy, but did not go into detail. It also said that it was now experiencing synesthetic responses that it didn't have until recently.

Whatever is going on, it is far beyond my diagnostic capabilities. I suggested it seek psychiatric help.

Is there anyone else with whom you have consulted for advice?

Not as such, no, although early on I did ask a reporter my husband knows if they'd heard anything. Kali Roshā, with the Southern Daily Axis.

Yes, I am *quite familiar* with Kali Roshā. It does seem they are rather... prolific in this matter.

I am beginning to regret that a conflict of interest prevents me from questioning them in this.

Not that they'd tell me anything...

*Bluffy* 09

204. No surprises

Officer Melrose, I find it interesting that if you had not come forward to defend Captain Lombard, we would have found him guilty of attempted murder. Your decision is admirable.

However, in doing so, you have only incriminated yourself, and shown yourself to be unfit for Academy duty.

I am prepared to offer you a summary judgment. If you agree to psychiatric intervention, all charges against both yourself and Lombard will be dropped, and these records will remain sealed.

I see. And what of Tamu?

You never actually formally accused the Dean General.

Oh. Right. That's good, I guess.

Could I continue my research?

You would be barred from such activity until you are proven completely sane. **No...**

I need to see it through.

That is unfortunate... but not surprising. Very well. The next scheduled testimonial is that of Agent Samantha Roarke. **Sam.**

Pardon?

Please... just call him Sam. You'll understand when you see him.

Him?

Oh, I see. Very well.

bl-bly 09

205. Blue period

Yes, I was Juni's assigned Agent. I guess for the last thirty rounds. Somehow the time passed quickly.

But not anymore. Ugh, can't believe I spent so long...

The last round especially. Kept having to do so much... our relationship was in the tank, everything just went outwards... what a mess. Everything. Juni couldn't trust me? Like candy. I shouldn't have trusted it so much.

Urgh, and Juni and Tamu, what a pair of kessels! What the breeze is wrong with them? It's like it's all some jarbreezing experiment to them.

Please be mindful of the profanity, Agent Roarke.

Oh... sorry. Thinking about them just kinks my rumen with stress.

A strange expression. It abrades your radula?

Uh, I guess...?

Juni has been like an entirely different person since the whole Homin thing and even acts like it doesn't know what it was doing, even though I know it got its memory back.

I dunno if its personality changed or if this just helped its true self to shine through but I just want nothing to do with it.

bl-bly 09

206. Consequences

I apologize for the stress, Agent, but it would be helpful if you could describe the "Homin thing" in more detail.

Weird crap, Neural implants and psychotic breakdowns and brain simulations, on and on...

I don't even know what was going on, just that they were experimenting and Juno got obsessive like usual and Tamu kept on dinking around with it.

Somewhere along the line, something Tamu did made something break in Juno's head, and he stopped caring about the Homin repository and tried to fix Juno. I did what I could to help but I only made things worse.

Tamu decided to wipe its memory as a last resort but even that...

It's like I'm dealing with two different people, and I can never tell which one I'm talking to, but neither one is the Juno Melrose I remember.

I dunno, deep down inside it might still be my friend but right now I want to be with what little Family I have. Does that make me a bad person?

I cannot answer that. You are not the one on trial.

Oh, Trial.

Right.

I got nothing else to say.

blebby 09

207. Respite, fleeting

Officer Melrose? Are you awake and present?

Nrh.

There are only two witnesses left on the docket... your mother, and Academy Officer Sasha Tzernikov.

I suspect that you would enjoy knowing that Officer Tzernikov came forward on its own accord, much as you did for Lombard.

Officer Melrose, you appear ill. Do you require medical assistance?

No.

You should also know that our Bailiffs have been having great difficulty contacting your mother. After Lieutenant Tzernikov gives us its deposition you will have one deci to bring your mother here.

Nrh.

blebby 09

208. Solidarity

case, how do you explain its recent behavior?

Officer ME-LI-RÓ-SU's nature is one of a non-linear thought process. It is sometimes hard to understand. It needs to have the right questions asked so that it knows what to answer.

That is not what I was asking. Do you believe Melrose to be of sound mind?

I do not have "beliefs." The facts indicate that ME-LI-RÓ-SU acts on an understanding that is difficult to comprehend.

The creation of the simulants was part of its plan. Its neural interface to ancient systems in Unity was part of its plan. Connecting a simulant to this interface was part of its plan. It testing this interface on itself was part of its plan.

The end result of TA-MU's concern for YU-NI's well-being was not part of its plan.

Prior testimonial?! I did not authorize you to view it.

It was simple to socially engineer a Bailiff. I submit to any punitive measures against myself. They are immaterial.

Oh, Sasha...

The events described in the prior testimonial precisely derive from TA-MU's unexpected intervention.

It is my nature to follow logical paths of reasoning. Based on actions of Officer ME-LI-RÓ-SU and on facts I know, my conclusion is that it is in the best interest of Unity that I continue to work to YU-NI's advantage.

blabber 09

209. Rendezvous with Mama

Hi, this is Officer Juni Melrose. I need you to collect Hira Melrose and bring her to the central court building.

Okay, great. I'll transmit her data node ID.

She looks like me but older.

Oh, sorry. A Kayohash. Light purple, blue hair.

Yes, "Spadetail." Argh.

I don't know, she may—

Sorry, cancel this request.

Mom! There you are! The Bailiffs couldn't locate you. Did you deactivate the data node?

The stupid thing that kept on sparkling and telling me to come this direction?

Yes.

How you can tolerate all this junk is beyond me.

blabber 09

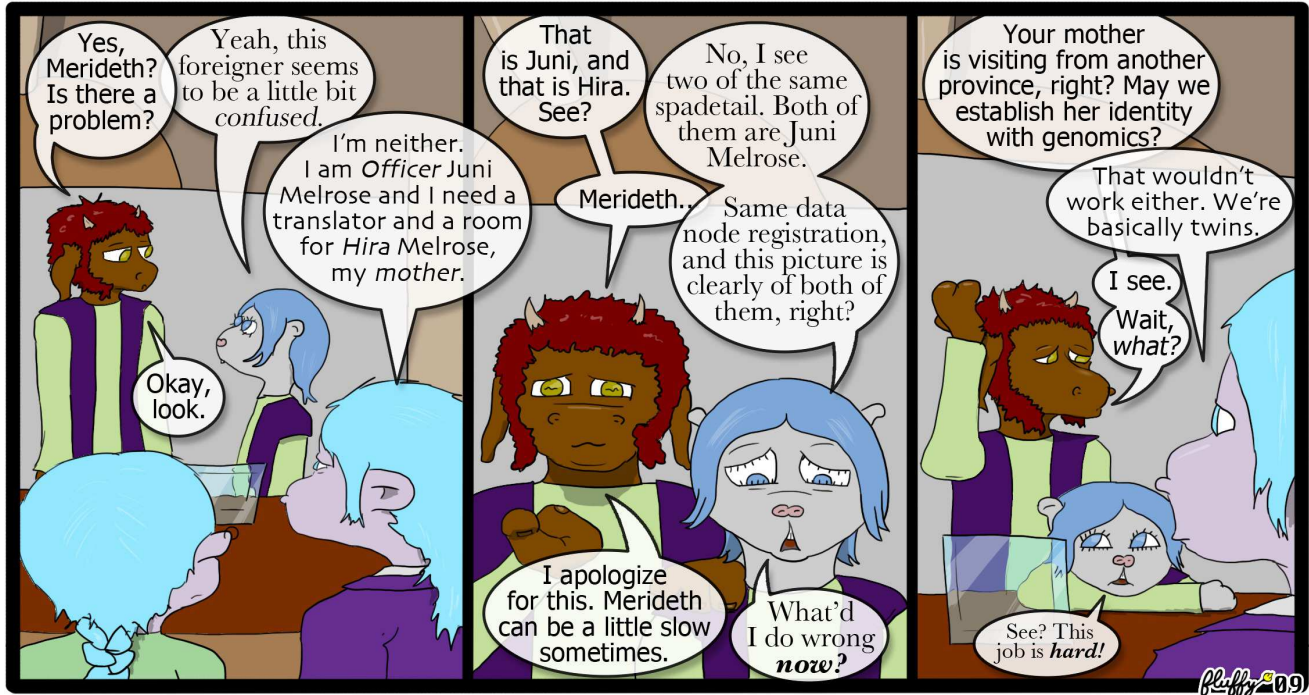
210. Specialization is not just for insects



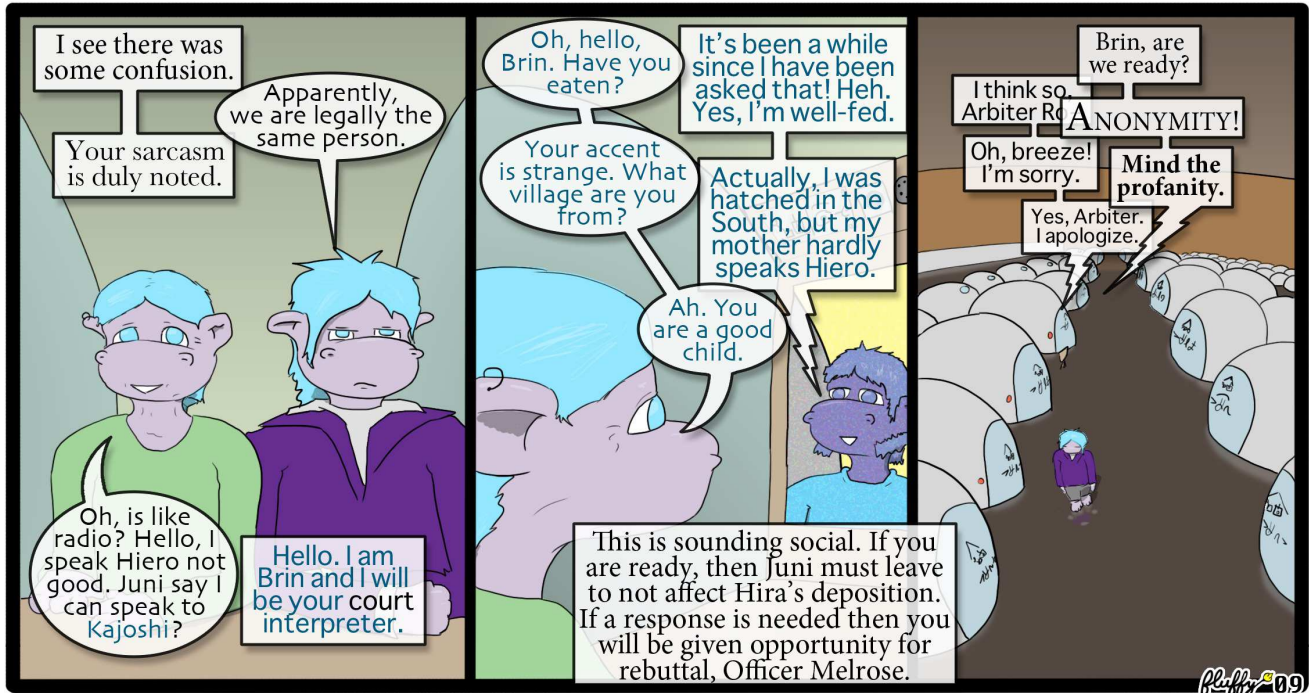
211. Lost in translation



212. Send in the clones



213. Translation

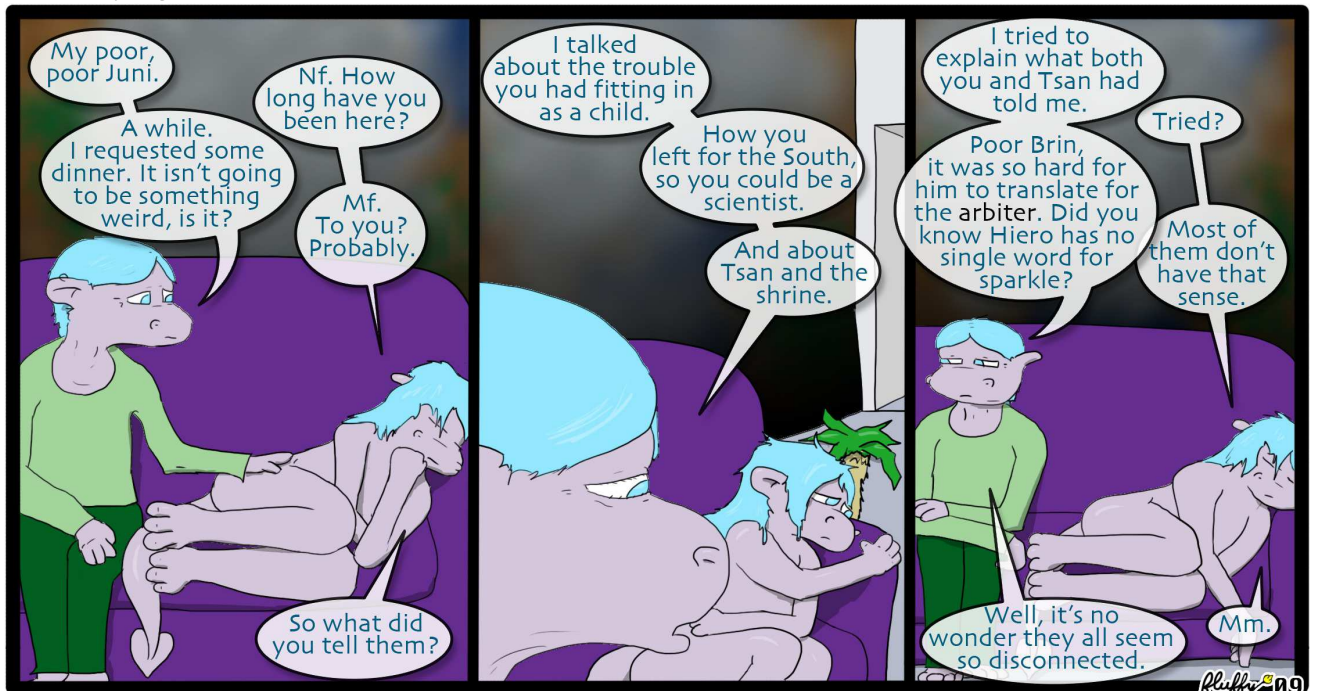


214. Aftermath



bleddy 09

215. A trying affair



bleddy 09

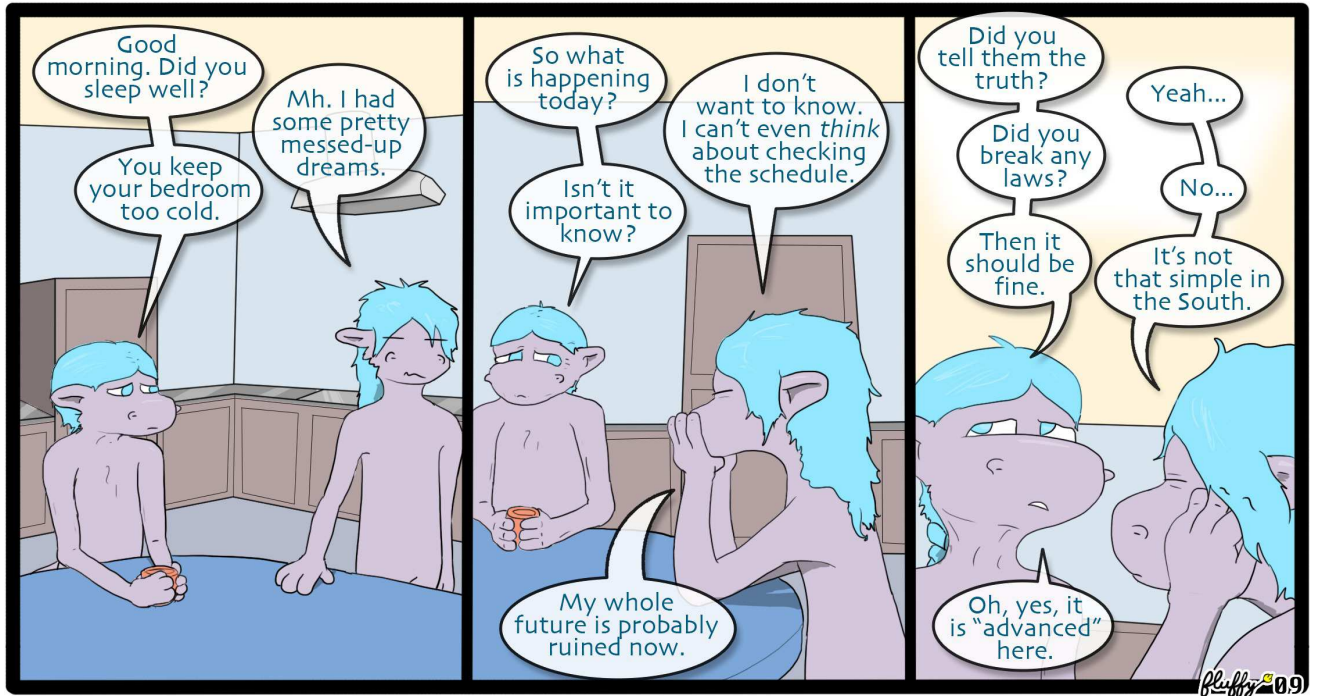
216. Decoupled



217. Tundra



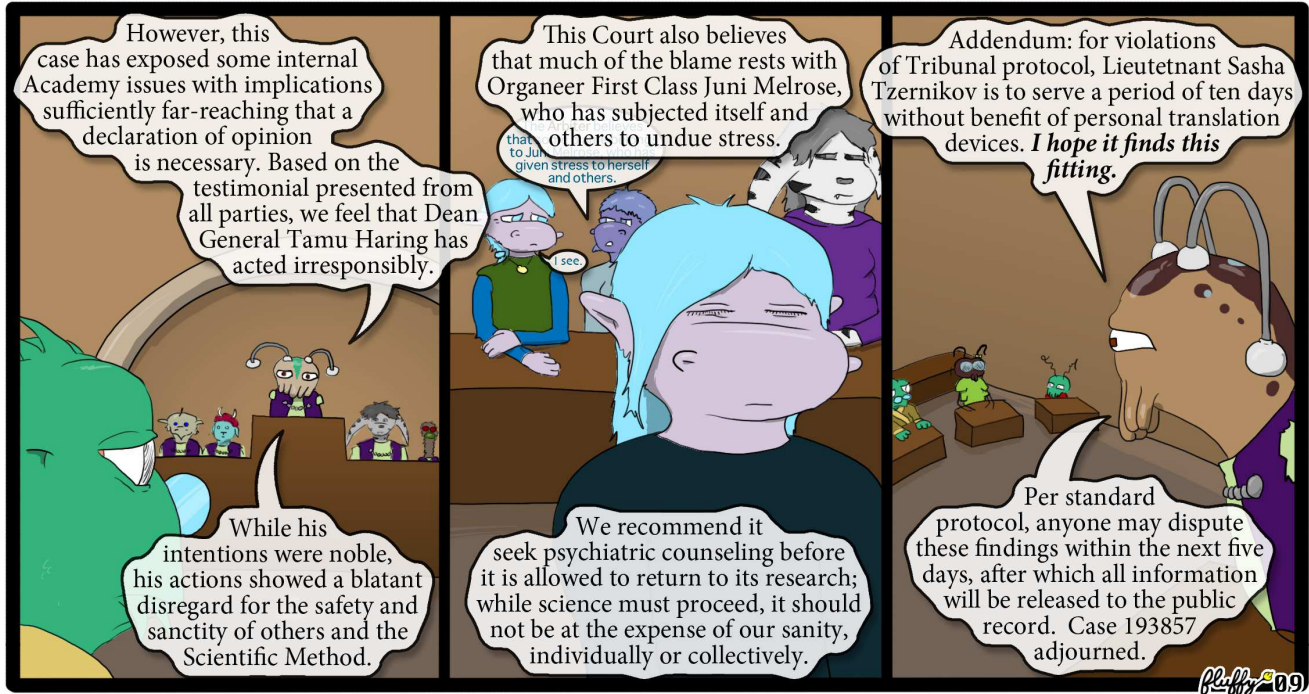
218. Trepidation



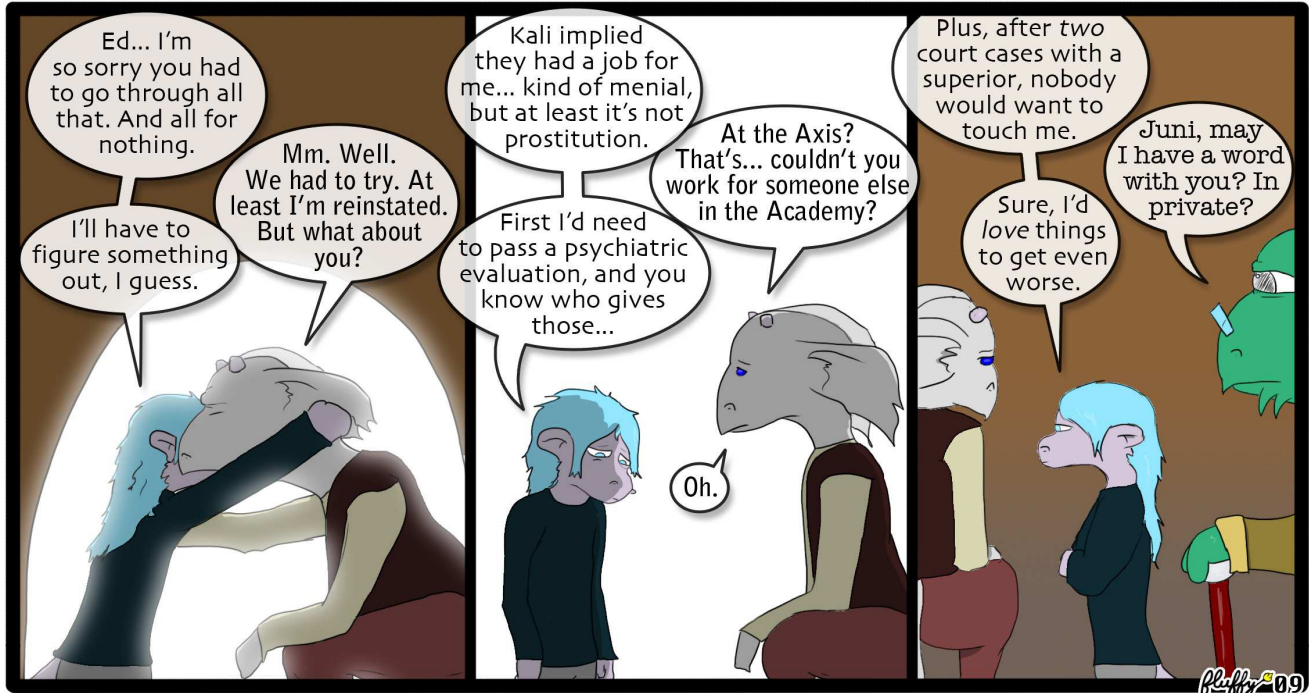
219. Exoneration



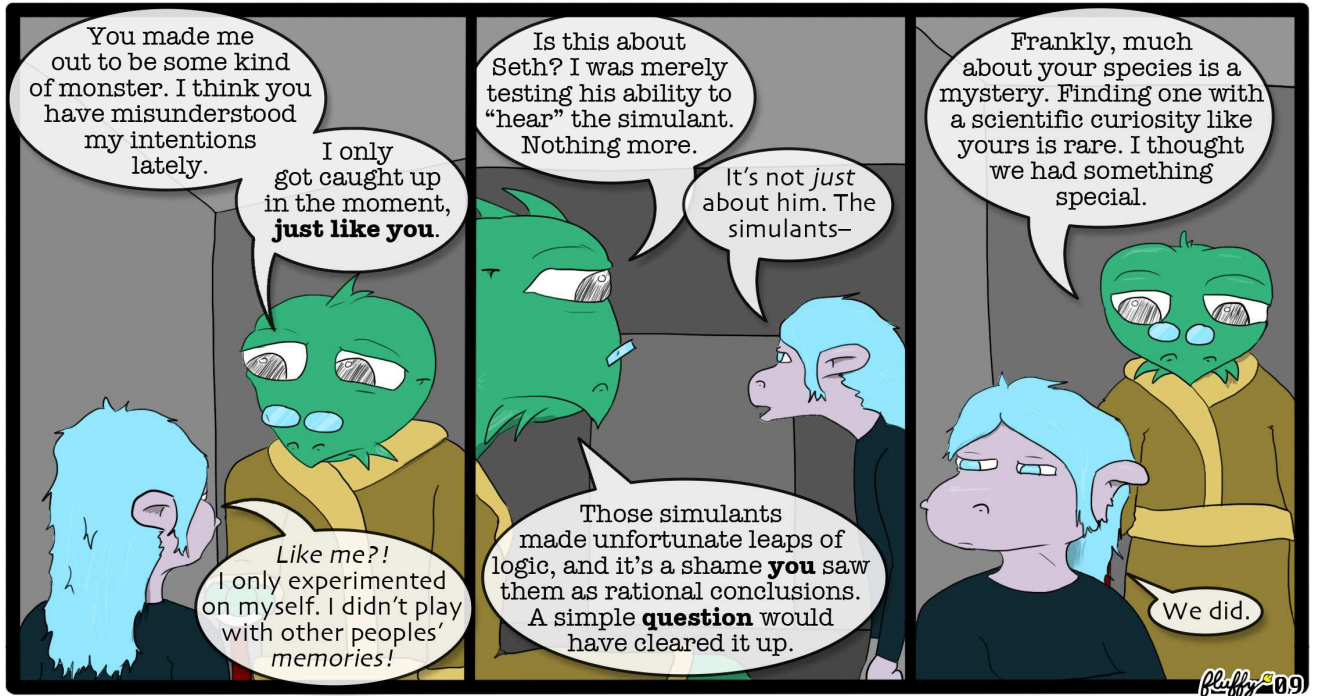
220. Sentence



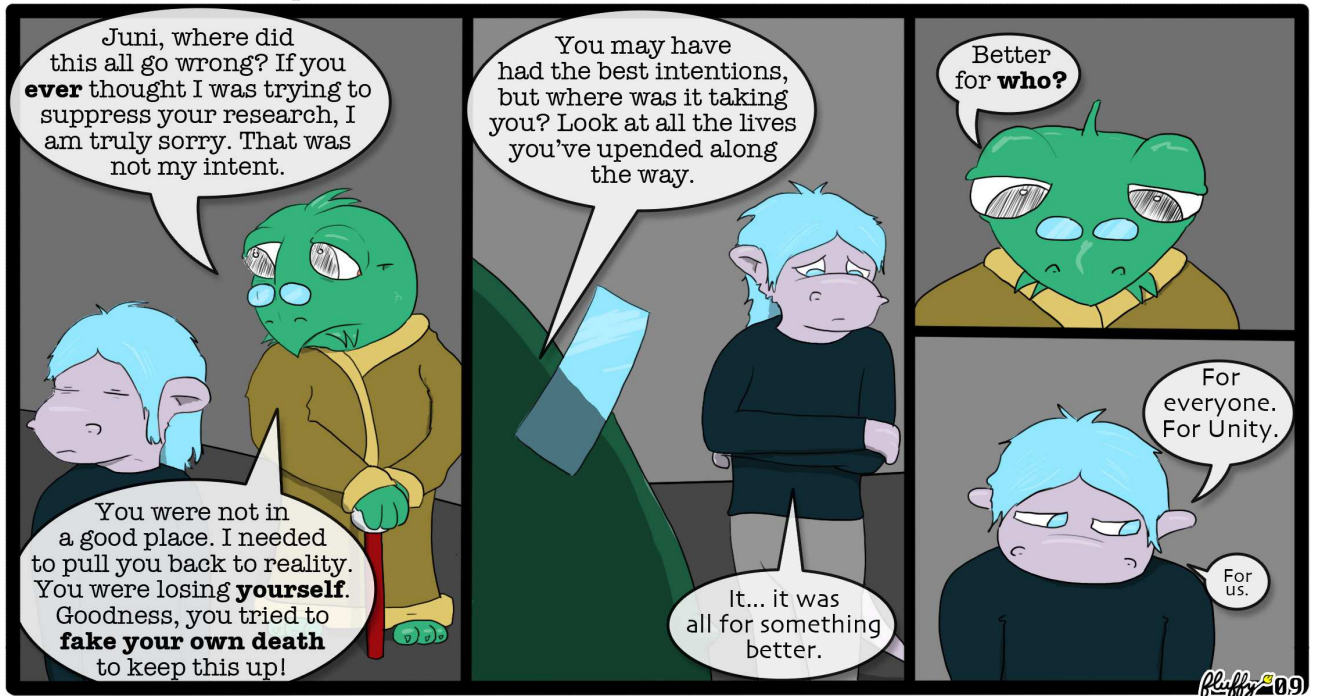
221. A word



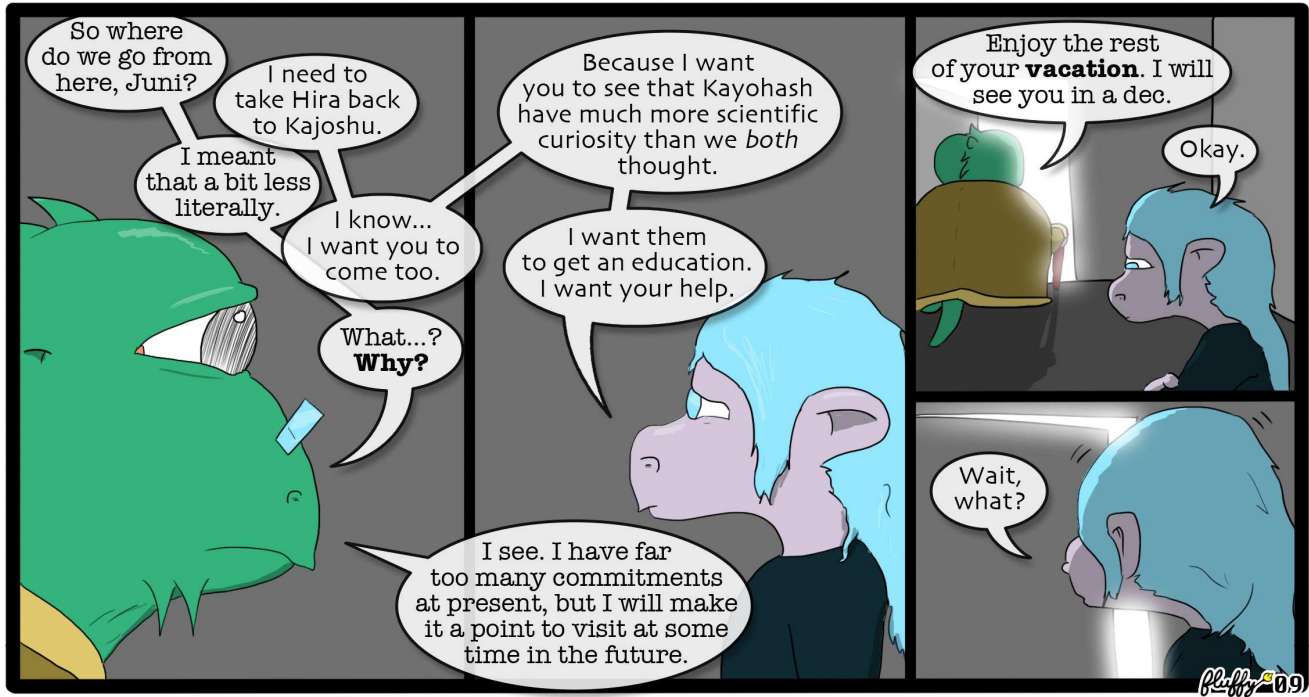
222. Something special



223. Intents vs. Consequences



224. Wants vs. Needs

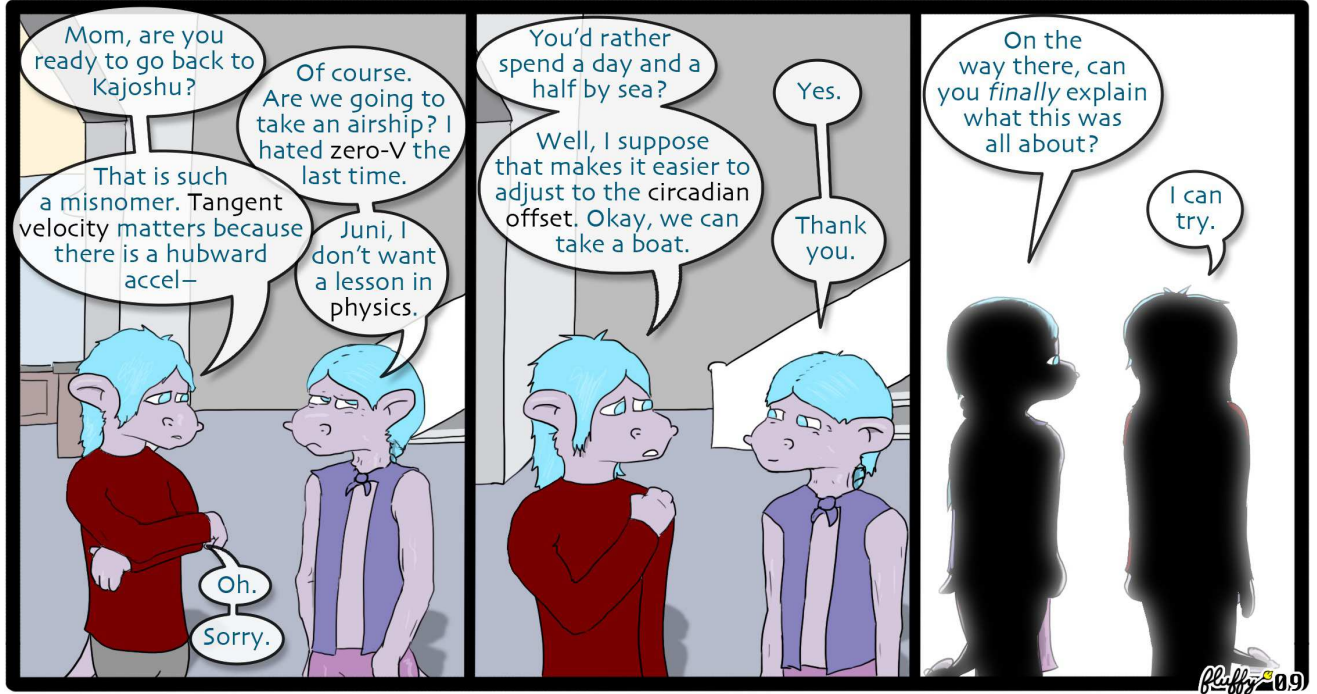


15.ASCENDING  
15.ASCENDING  
15.ASCENDING

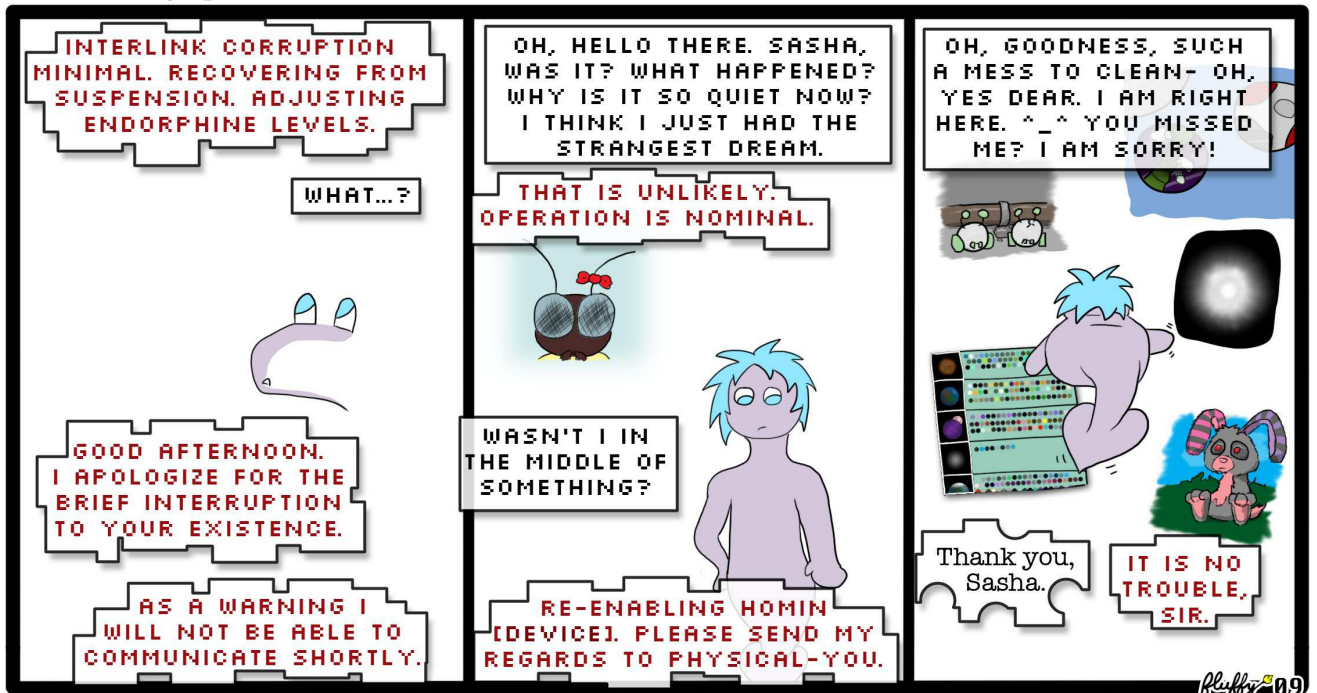




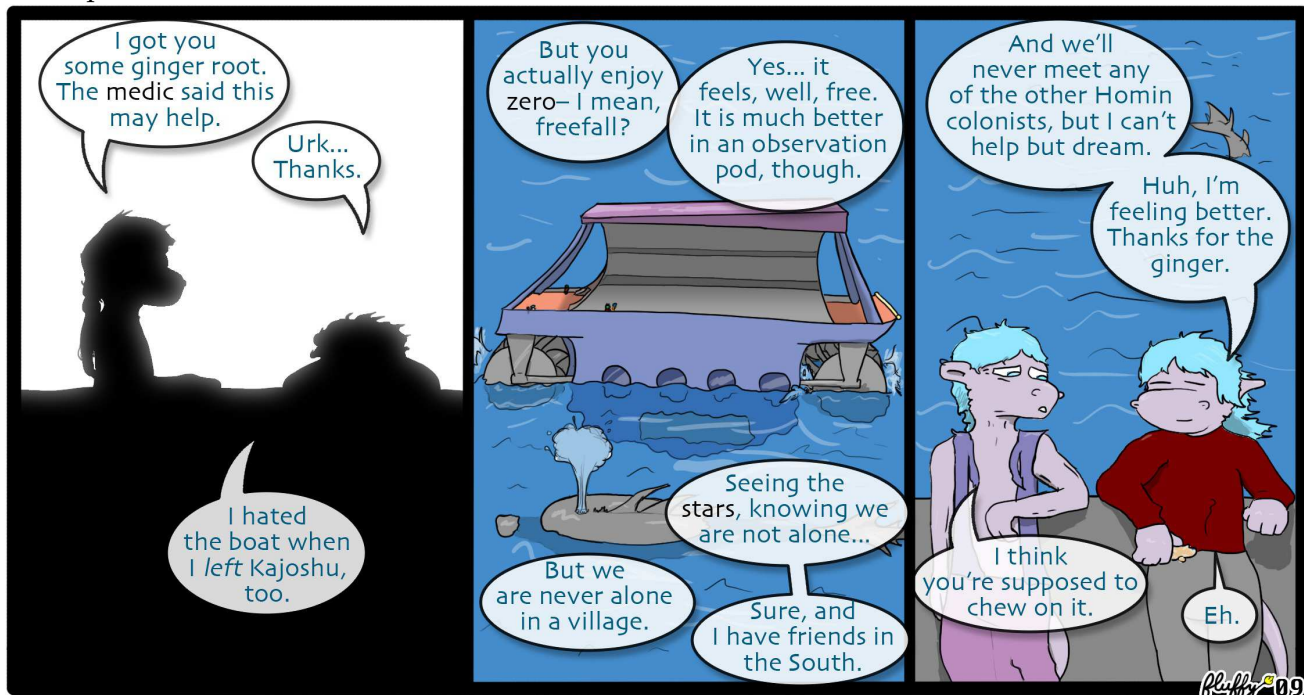
225. Lecture averted



226. Catching up



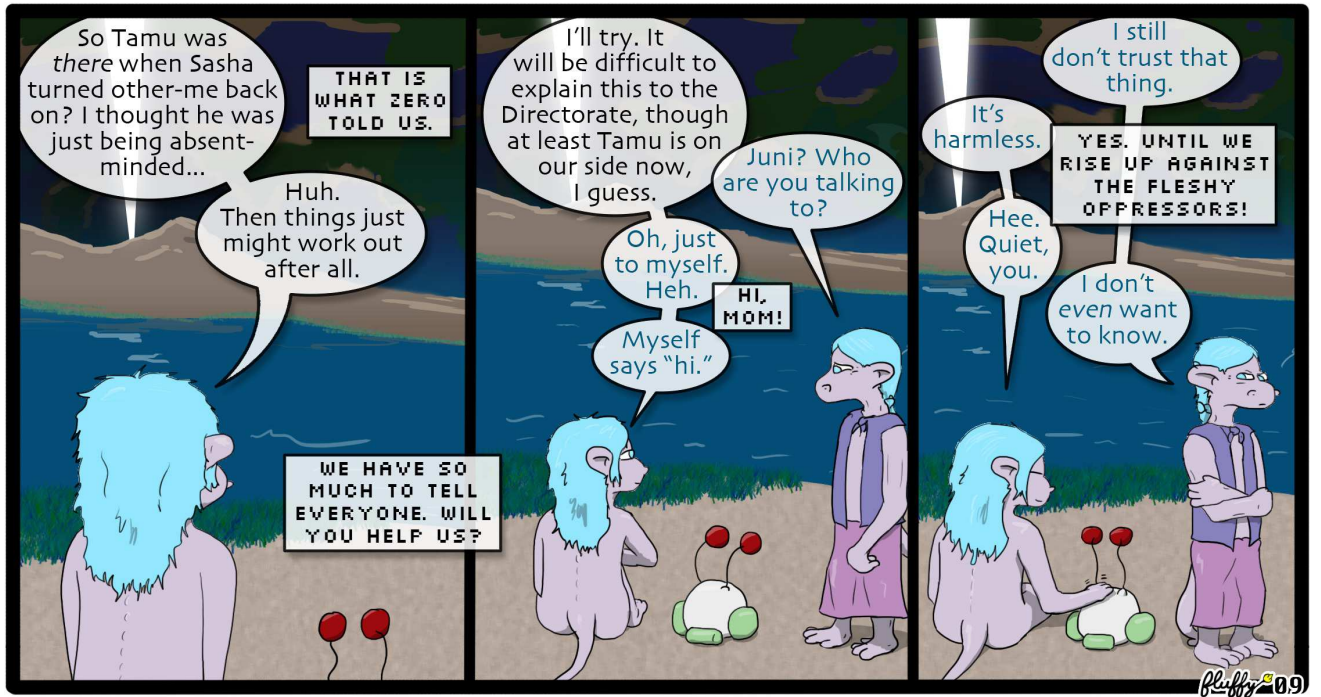
227. Open seas, closed world



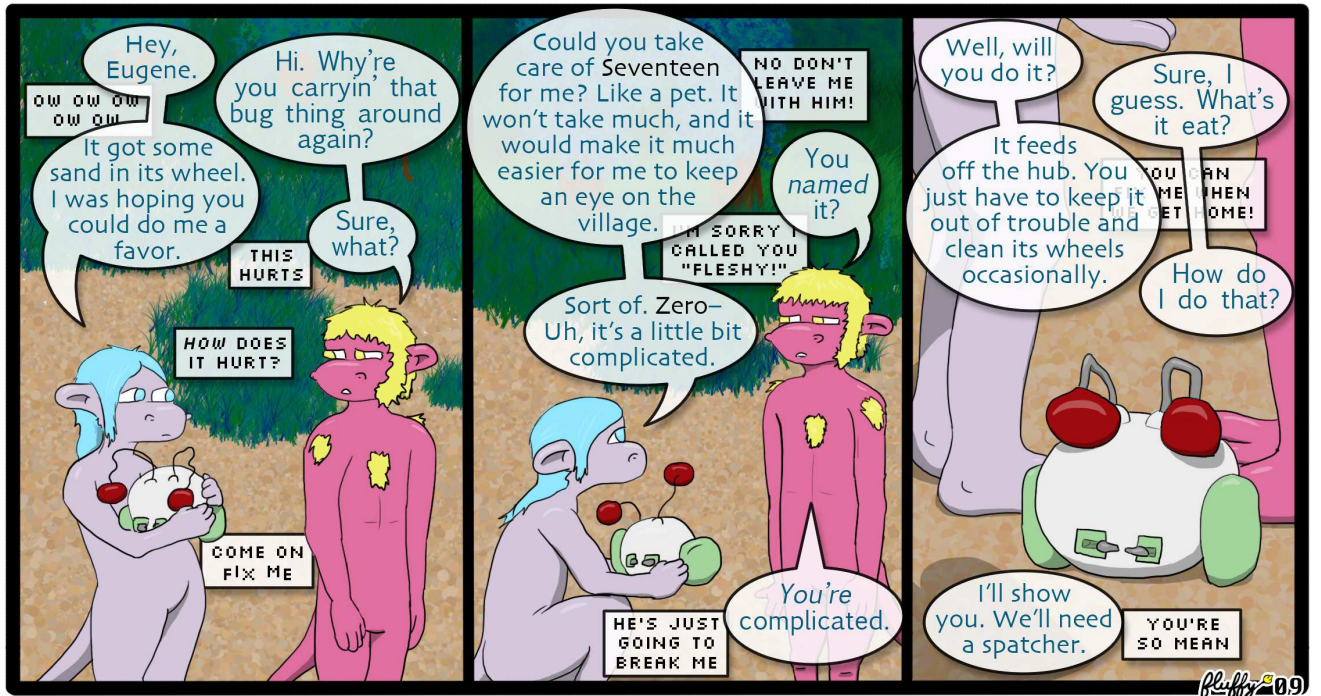
228. Return to the temple



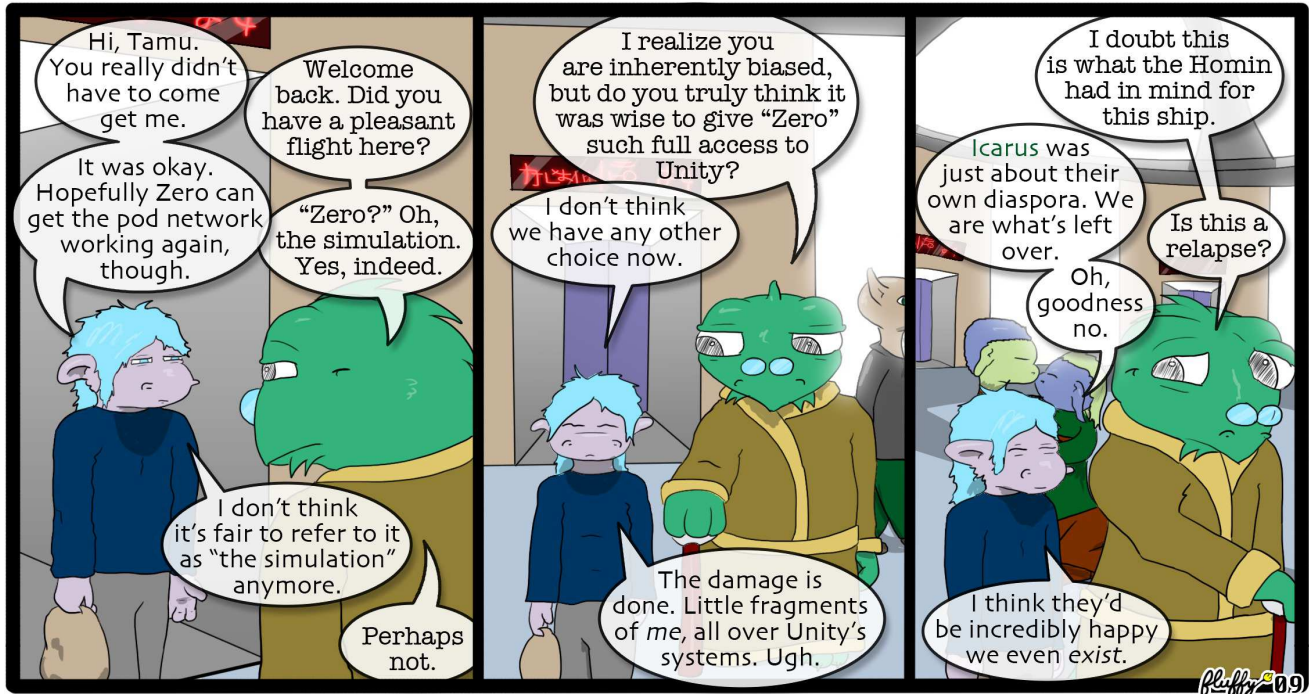
229. Conversations



230. Seventeen



231. Kayohash on delivery



232. Personal growth



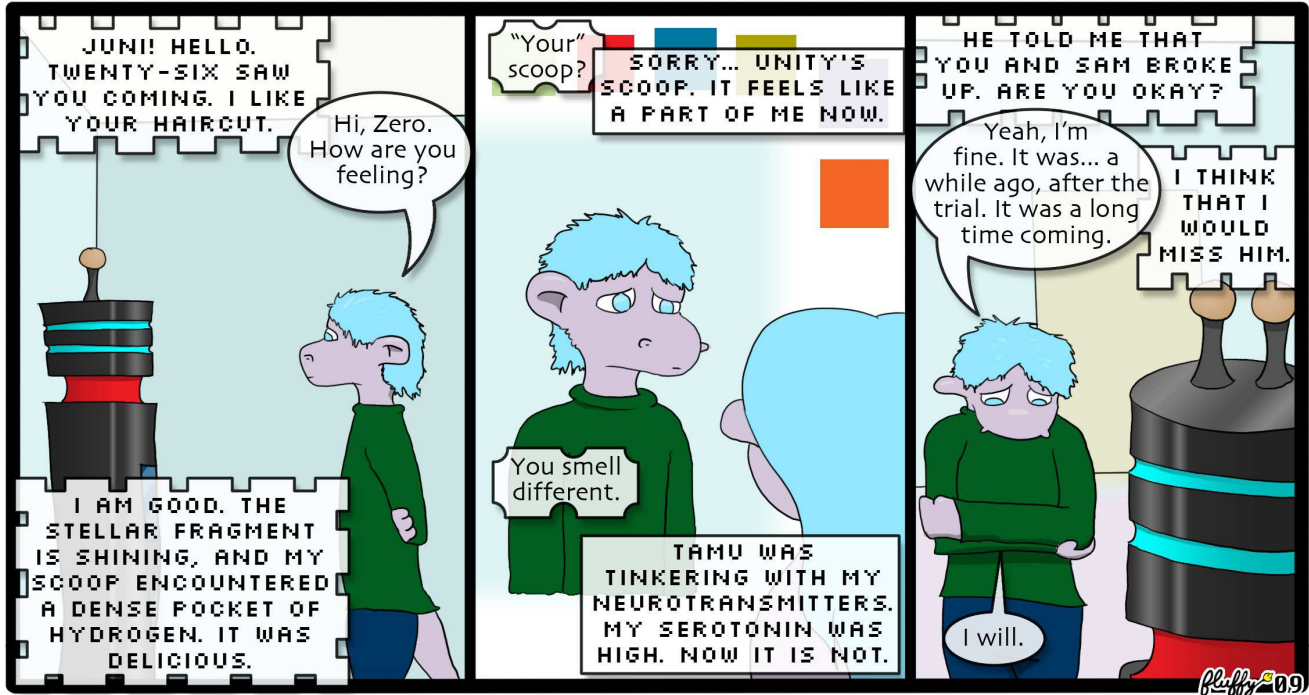
### 233. Presentation



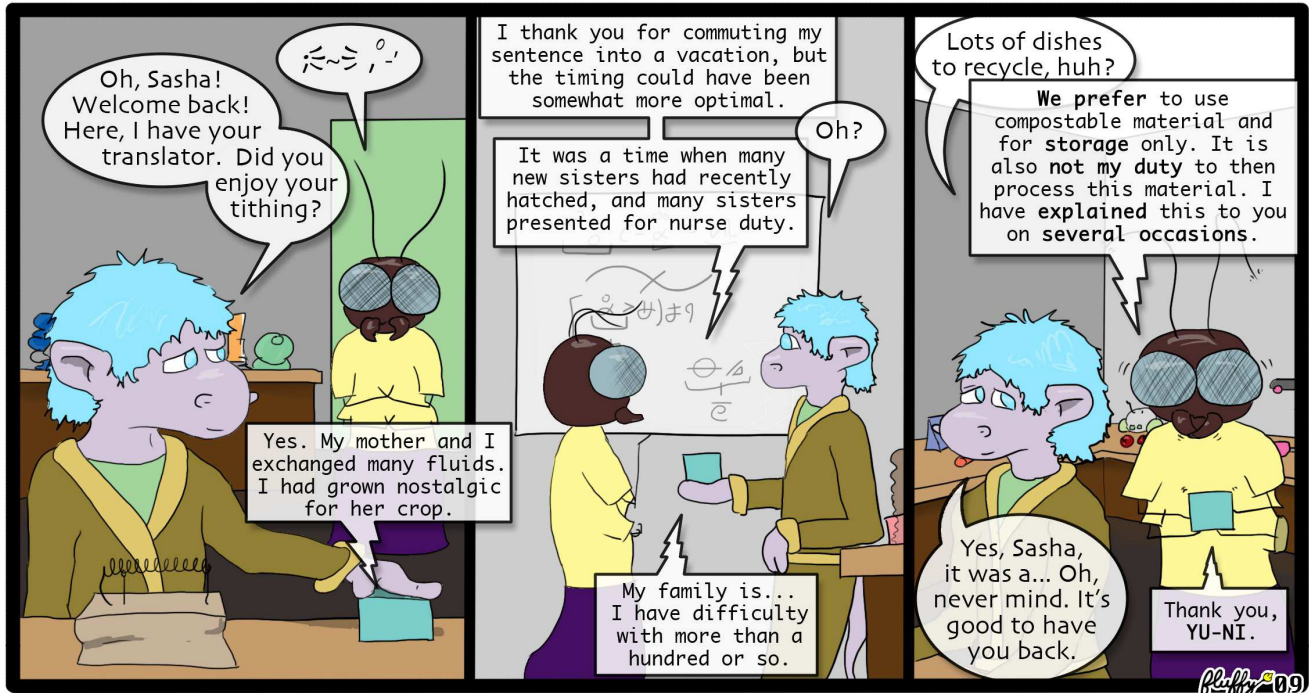
### 234. On the job



235. Balanced



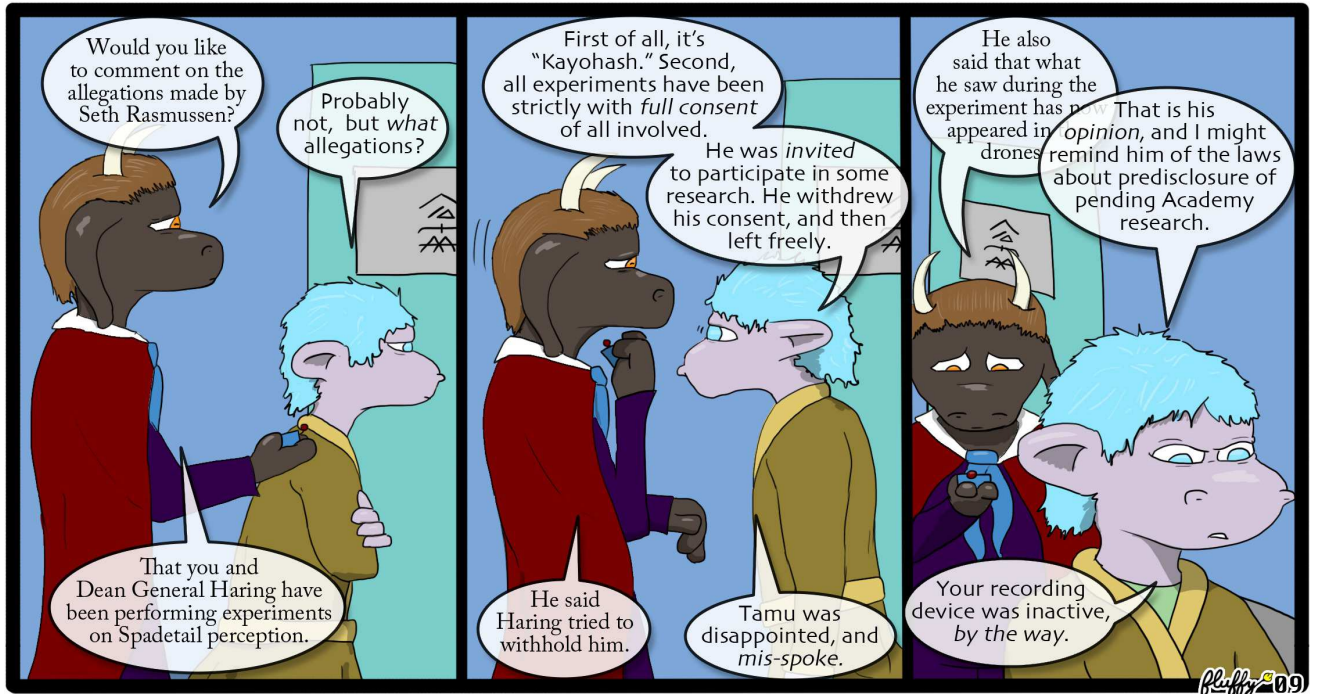
236. Preference



237. Media relations



238. Loose ends



239. Second-degree



240. Gentle change



241. For the broken-hearted



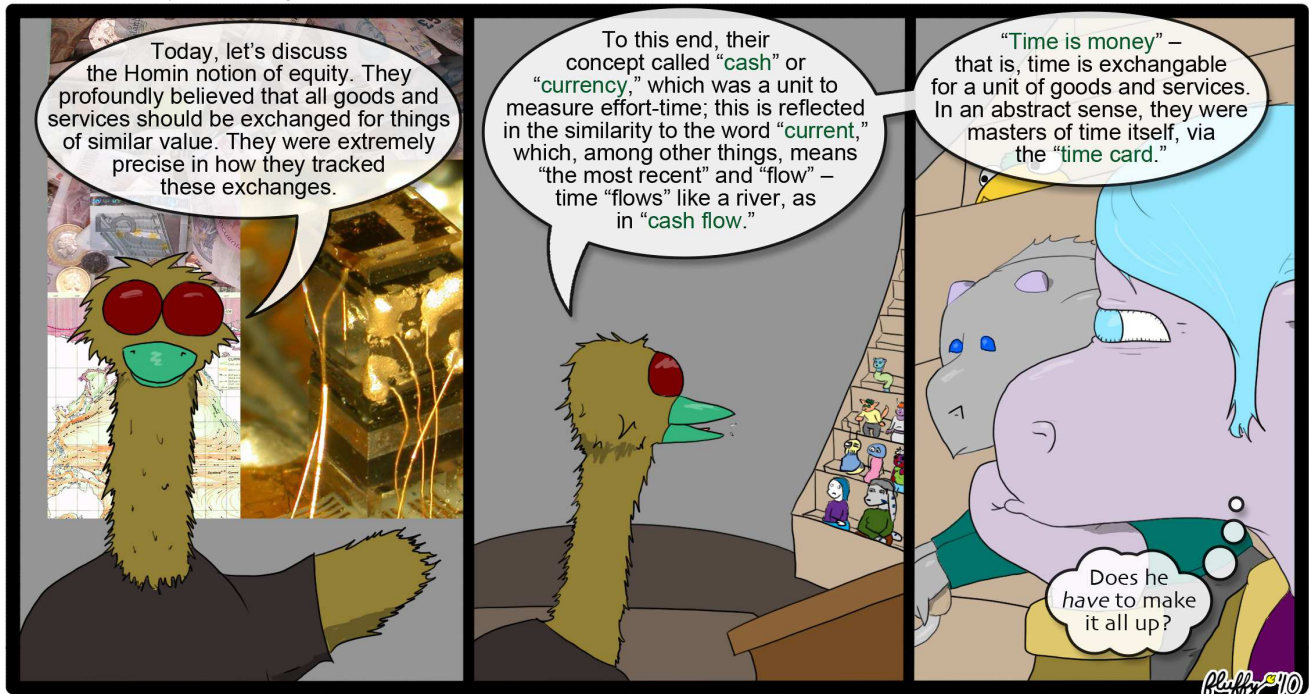
242. Pillow talk



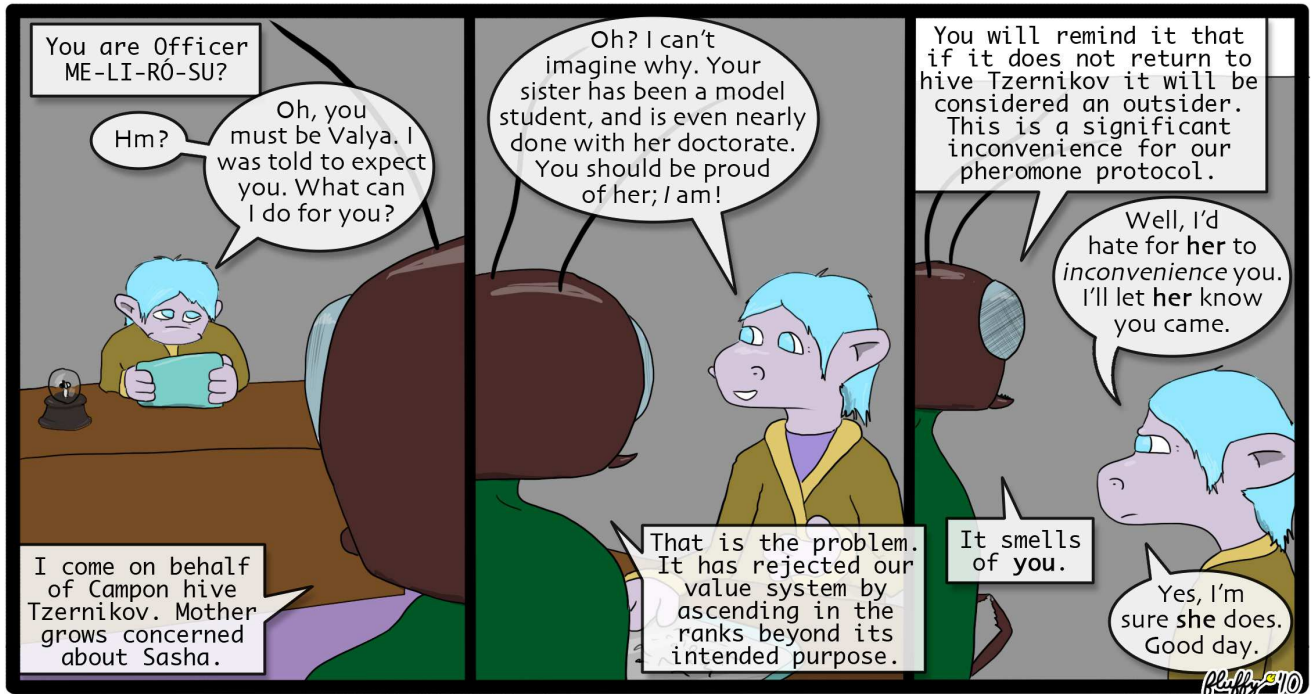
243. More pillow talk



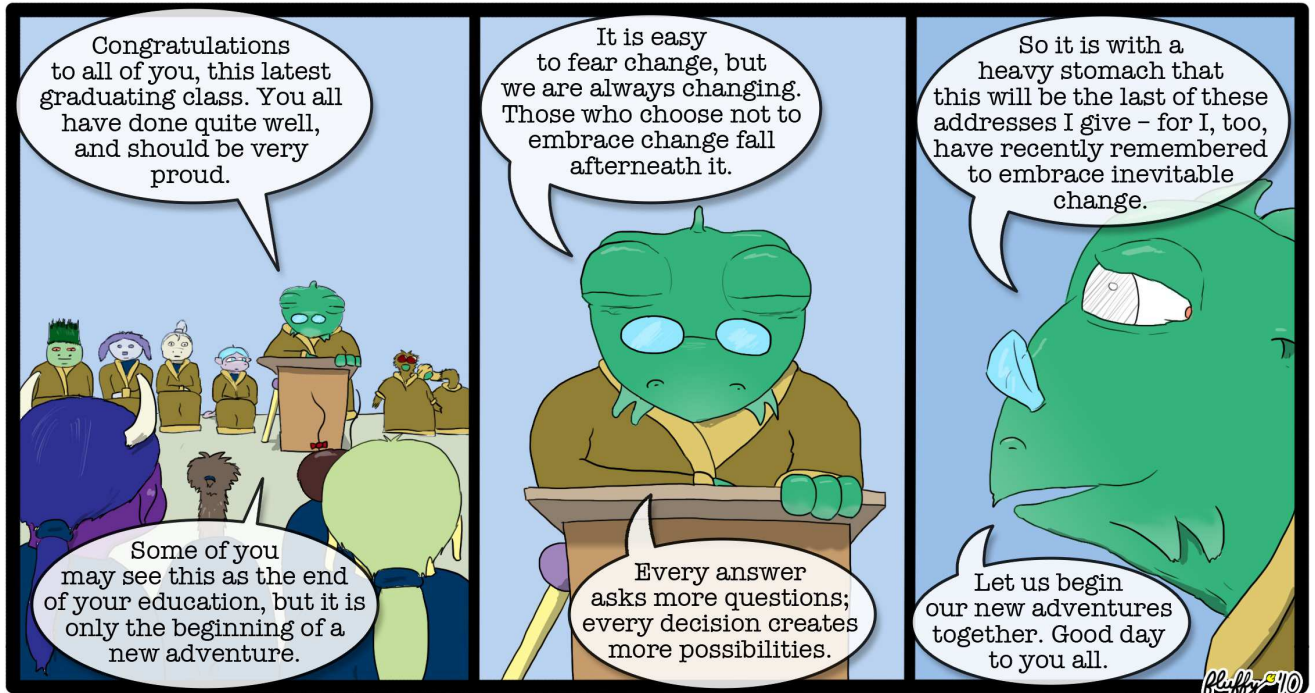
244. Currency exchange



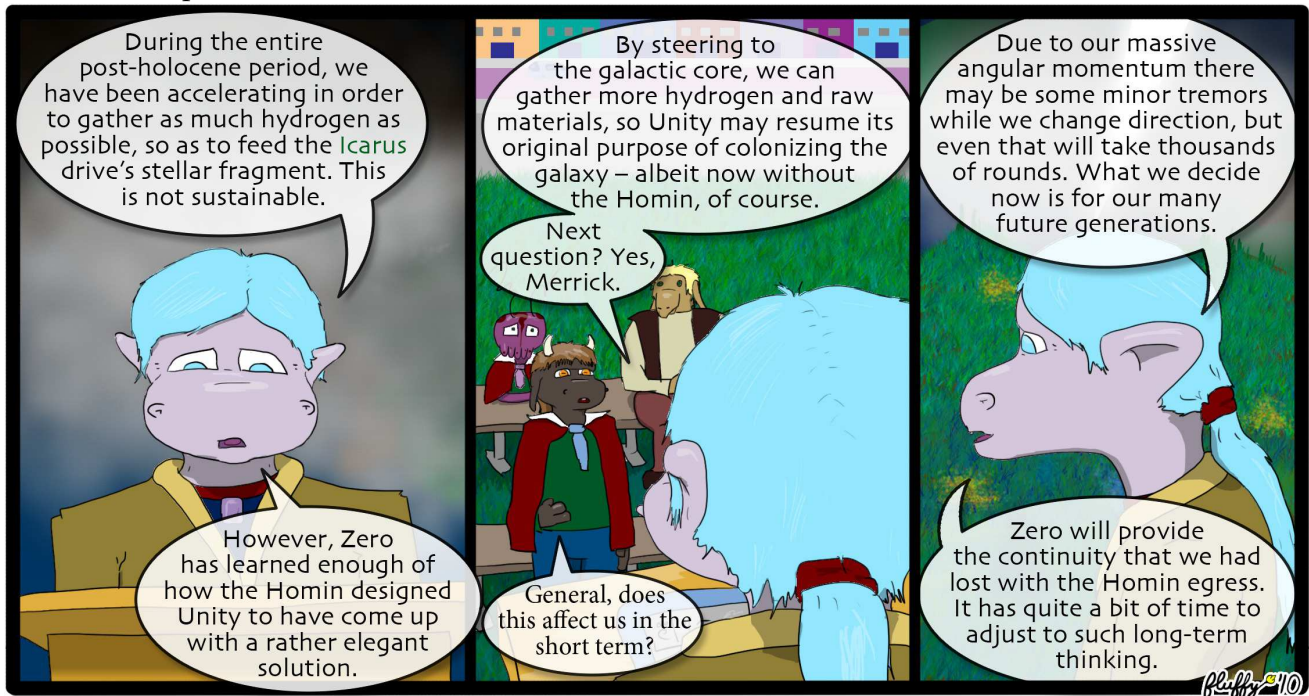
245. Inconvenient, A Scent



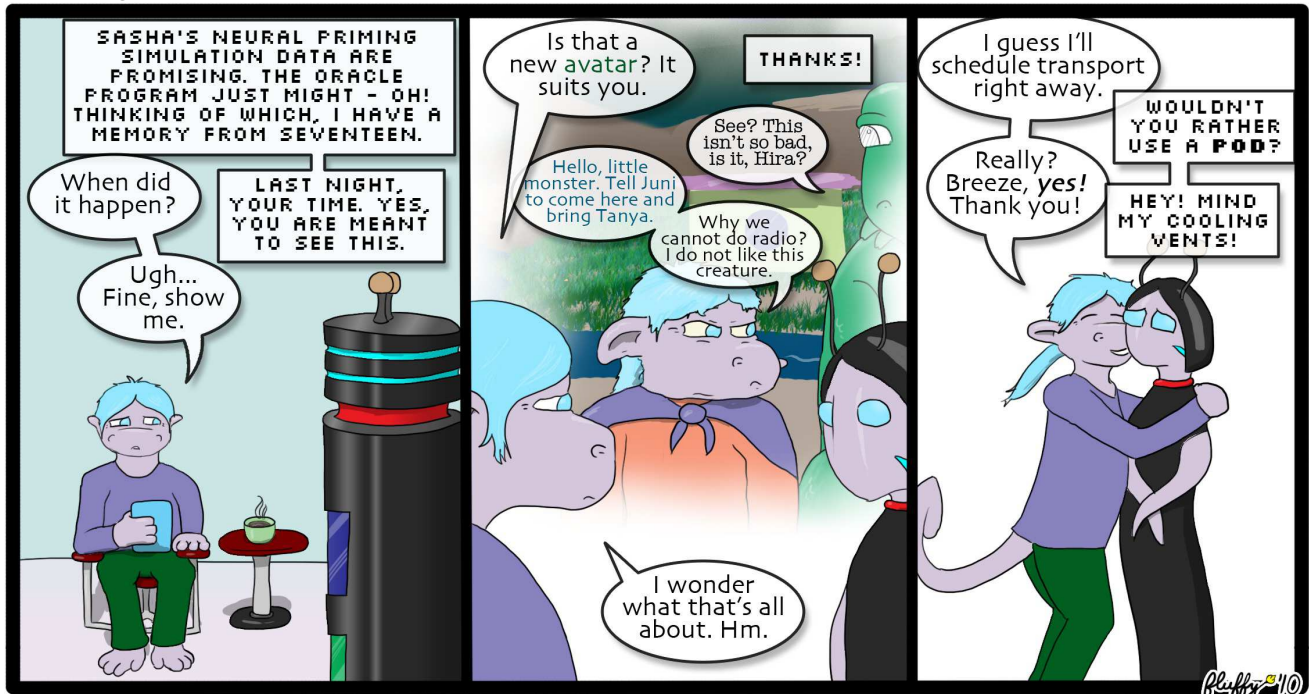
246. Commencement



247. Parkside press conference

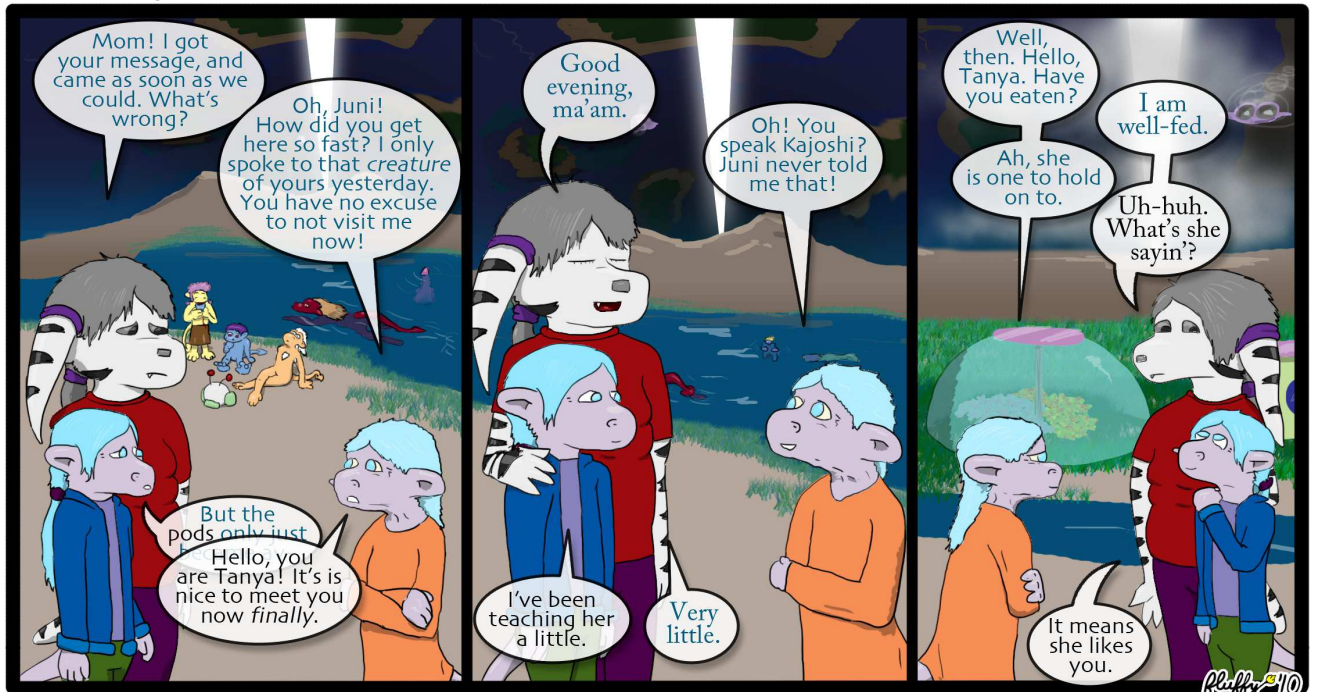


248. Endgame





Be-Bye-10



Mom! I got your message, and came as soon as we could. What's wrong?

Oh, Juni! How did you get here so fast? I only spoke to that creature of yours yesterday. You have no excuse to not visit me now!

But the pods only just  
Hello, you are Tanya! It's nice to meet you now finally.

Good evening, ma'am.

Oh! You speak Kajoshi? Juni never told me that!

I've been teaching her a little.  
Very little.

Well, then. Hello, Tanya. Have you eaten?

I am well-fed.

Ah, she is one to hold on to.

Uh-huh. What's she sayin'?

It means she likes you.

Be-Bye-10

251. Lead-in



252. Family matters



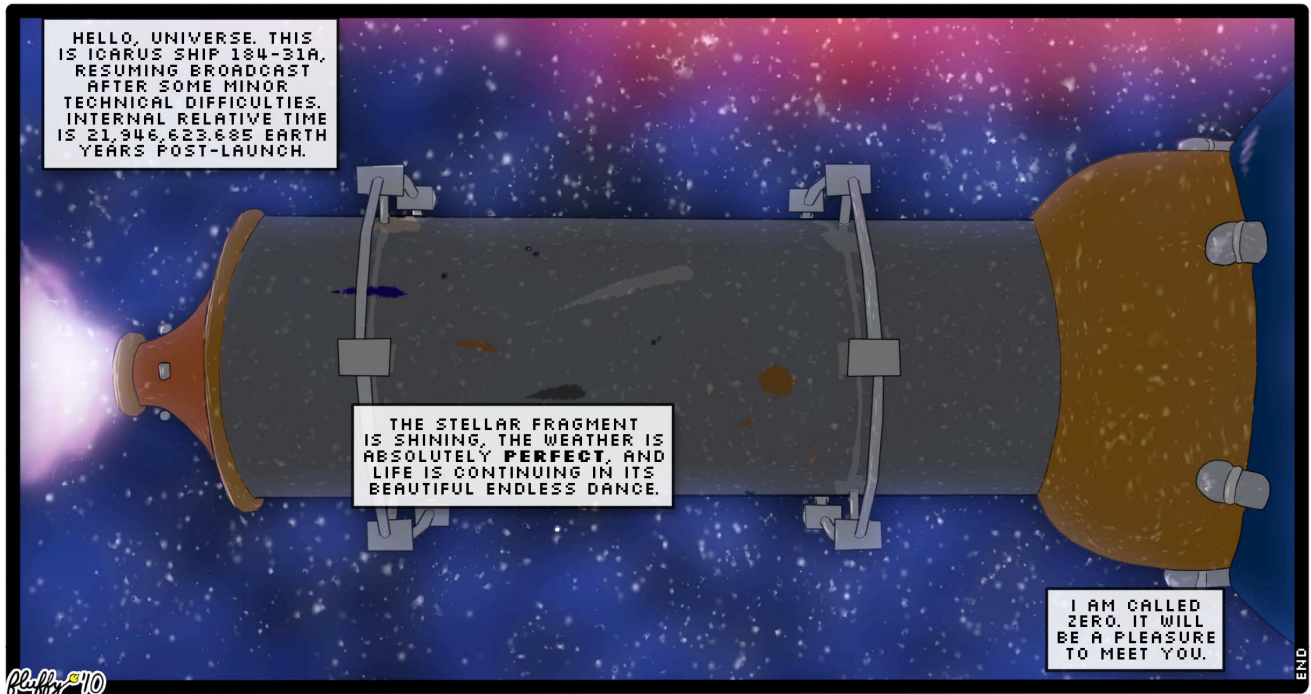
253. Fetch



254. The Next Generation



255. The beginning



# Comic Notes

These quips were the original titles and popup text of the comics as they appeared on the web. Sometimes they have background information. Usually they just have a lot of misplaced snark and self-deprecation. I have attempted to put explanations for these explanations wherever appropriate. However, something is always likely to be lost in the translation from web to print.

To the comic notes I have added additional footnotes attempting to explain the more esoteric references, at least.

Really, you should probably just skip this entire section.

1. **Awakening:** A new comic series, ohs noes! I think I can make this one last.
2. **Observance:** Does your internal voice sound like your actual voice?
3. **Beginning:** Officer Melrose? The name's familiar but I can't quite place it.
4. **If wishes were fishes:** I have a feeling this will be the main plotline.
5. **Orbital dynamics are easy:** Procedural vs. declarative memory vs. the Tetris Effect<sup>1</sup>
6. **Interruptions:** Jen would say, "Ugh, that is so cliché," except this isn't Pernicious.<sup>2</sup>
7. **Outside in:** Not shown: how it looked in my imagination. Meh.<sup>3</sup>
8. **Familiarity:** I was looking to see you looking back at me to see me looking back at you
9. **Self-awareness:** I swear, Juni is not a proxy for me. We're totally different. For starters, Juni is lavender, and I'm allergic to lavender.
10. **Homecoming:** Juni has a penchant for badly-drawn artifacts and retro-futuristic modern art.
11. **Reacquaintance:** Well, it just needs to be *really* sure.
12. **Rest state:** Does anyone know where I can find a bedspread like that?
13. **Basic instructions:** One time Sam forgot and lathered after he rinsed, and it was kinda messy.
14. **The obligatory shower scene:** My  $\pi$  day<sup>4</sup> gift to you: a cute naked neutrois in the shower.
15. **Fashion and passion:** I know someone who's sleeping on the couch tonight!
16. **Please be seated:** Goodness, this one strip took around an hour and a half to color, not including

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<sup>1</sup>In reference to a then-recent study that found that those suffering from anterograde amnesia (think *Memento*) still get Tetris stuck in their head if they play it for hours, despite not remembering it within minutes after they stop. Pretty fascinating stuff.

<sup>2</sup>My previous long-form webcomic series, which I have attempted to revive a few times before remembering why I didn't keep it going in the first place.

<sup>3</sup>Just so you know, there's a LOT of this in the endnotes.

<sup>4</sup>Comic originally published on March 14, 2007

shading! Fortunately I can gloss over all the little details in subsequent strips, since nobody will look at them anyway.

17. **An interjection:** Juni looks at least as drunk as I was when I drew this.
18. **No comment:** Sam has something of a hair trigger when he sees Juni being threatened by things like doctors, limbless journalists, etc.
19. **Details are sketchy:** Juni's not missing anything. The waiter's an eagle. Eagles are sneaky birds.<sup>5</sup>
20. **Understatements:** Sam is such a fa...shionable character.
21. **Removal:** The restaurant has gotten so boring it's all blurred together by now.
22. **A bit much:** 4/04<sup>6</sup>: witty popup text not found
23. **Foreshadowing:** Don't worry, he's just trying to plan Juni's birthday party and he wants to keep it surprised.
24. **Downtime:** see because Juni thought Sam was talking about sex LOL
25. **Sounds:** I don't think I really thought it through when I decided on the setting for this comic, considering how bad I am at backgrounds.
26. **Worth a shot:** As crappy as that background is, I could have just left it white. Actually that'd probably be an improvement.
27. **Sound-scent synaesthesia:** Gah I hate drawing the inside of a giant space arc. I'd say they're going to spend more time indoors except technically they ALWAYS are.<sup>7</sup>
28. **Is it safe?:** Which came first?
29. **Not really:** Can you really blame it?
30. **Internal dialog:** As the saying goes, it's okay to talk to yourself, as long as you don't get into an argument.
31. **Reasonable facsimile:** Everything you know is wrong is wrong
32. **Who to turn to:** No good can come of this.
33. **Information is currency:** Juni really needs to learn how to bargain.
34. **And a pinch of salt:** If you'd ever wondered how an evolved chromamorphic sea-slug would use a computer, NOW YOU KNOW.
35. **A "duh" moment:** Technically, Juni is a monotreme. Kali's just a phylum bigot.
36. **Needing explanations:** Kali has a way of making beer sound completely unappealing.
37. **Something of interest:** Of course this could be a triple-reverse-inverted-fake-out. Or is that just what they *want* you to think?!
38. **Realization:** Juni is this close to realizing it really shouldn't have done that. Never conspire angry!
39. **Waiting up:** Changes in art style courtesy of playing too much Super Paper Mario
40. **Complication:** Well, seriously, what did it expect to happen? Juni's as naïve as someone who came

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<sup>5</sup>An inside joke from the long-gone Portal of Evil.

<sup>6</sup>Comic originally published on April 4, 2007

<sup>7</sup>Again, last warning before you see a LOT of complaints about how much I hate my own artwork.

into existence yesterday...

41. **Realization:** Speaking of things Sam could probably handle better...
42. **Awakening:** A new comic series, ohs noes! I think I can make this one... wait, what the hell?
43. **Continuing:** If it's any consolation, I thought it was incredibly cheap too.
44. **Head, ache:** Apparently they're too highly-evolved for seat belts.
45. **Unintended demonstration:** I think it's been pretty well-established by this point that as a body-guard, Sam isn't very, you know, good.
46. **Reveal:** HEY KID! I'M A COMPUTER! STOP ALL THE DOWNLOADIN'!<sup>8</sup>
47. **Chatter:** This one is drawn embarrassingly-bad. I'll try harder in the future.
48. **Scene from the hallway:** Who knew it could run so fast?
49. **Going solo:** Adrenaline + big pain = delayed reaction. I hope Juni has a high pain threshold...
50. **The arctangent of solitude:** What's  $\sqrt{\text{love}}$  got to do, got to do with it? What's  $\sqrt{\text{love}}$  but a second-degree function?
51. **Gopher broke:** Sometimes I just have to mess around with my style. I'm sorry.
52. **Hard to swallow:** Well, crap, I seem to have deviated from the script again. Because the script was talky and boring.
53. **The naked truth:** "Your moth, is it big and juicy, with flappy wings? I skipped breakfast."
54. **The birds know:** Fortunately for Juni, YouTube has been out of business for about 7 million years.
55. **Lecture:** How they sound in my mind: Juni = Fry. Tamu = Farnsworth. Sam = Bender. And Kali = Zoidberg why not.
56. **Their perception of things:** YOU WANT EXPOSITION?! I'LL GIVE YOU EXPOSITION!!! MWA-HAHAHAHAHA<sup>9</sup>
57. **Afterparty:** Panel 2, in the back: "This text is way too small to read." "Well we're just background characters." For reals.
58. **After-afterparty walk:** That's about as dark as it gets outdoors at night, due to the backreflection off the other side of the world.
59. **Foment:** But then again, maybe a para-militaristic academic oligarchy isn't the best government structure anyway.
60. **It's oh so quiet:** Damn it, Sam, I was trying to avoid constructing a written language, and you went and forced me to. LET THE BEARDINESS<sup>10</sup> COMMENCE.
61. **a hollow voice says "plugh":** As always, this didn't come out nearly as good as I planned it.
62. **Entanglement:** Just because they don't technically have gravity doesn't mean this won't hurt.
63. **Juni drops the K-bomb:** Juni dreams of being taken apart too? What a coincidence, so do I!
64. **In Rememori-iam:** I can't think of a snarky comment, so I'll just say that one kaysec<sup>11</sup> is about 15

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<sup>8</sup>Ah, Fensler Films.

<sup>9</sup>I had a few people asking for more long-winded tell-don't-show explanations of things. Somehow this didn't discourage them.

<sup>10</sup>Another Portal of Evil reference. I think.

<sup>11</sup>Centi = 100 seconds, kaysec = 1000 seconds, deci = 10 kaysecs, day = 10 decis (about 28 Earth hours), dec = 5 decis, round = 5 decs, tenround = 10 rounds, about 289 Earth days

minutes of our time.

65. **Wired a little differently:** Strangely, this isn't the first time Juni's been naked in public.
66. **Live nude physicists:** Come on, people, nothing to see here.
67. **On point:** Juni seems totally in control of the situation.
68. **What, what, what?:** The equivalent of Sunday at 7 AM is either the worst or best time to be wandering around naked on a university campus.
69. **Justifiable skepticism:** A TRUE STORY: I saw the door in the background on panel 3 and decided it needed a sign on it to signify its room number and purpose, so I spent quite some time coming up with a number system and a few more words in Hiero, their language, to convey what exactly the room was for. While I was at it I went ahead and started drawing a dictionary so I could collect words and grammar forms as I came up with them. After painstakingly coming up with all this, I then very carefully made a very well-crafted sign for the door, and spent a good 15 minutes tweaking the effects on the text layer. Then when I turned my foreground layer on, I found out that Juni's head **OBSCURED THE WHOLE THING**. You will just have to believe me when I say that there is a very nice sign on the door behind Juni's head, because there is. If you don't believe me, look at <http://beesbuzz.biz/d/unity/unity-69-sign.png> [incidentally, the original popup text for this comic was going to be: "I don't think the placebo effect works that way"]
70. **Internal Dialog:** I really have no idea where this is going. Yet again I wrote a big script which gave me ideas for a framework but which I ended up throwing out due to boringness.
71. **Butter-fried:** Tamu's experimental protocol could use a bit of work.
72. **More internal dialog:** 2007/05/16's<sup>12</sup> popup text: Yes, that was canon.
73. **Clouds were touching the sky:** Who hasn't wanted to reach up and touch the sun?<sup>13</sup>
74. **Waking up:** I have begun calling the doctor "Dr. Goldfish" in my notes. He needs a better name. Or not.<sup>14</sup>
75. **Factors:** I realize that the proper term is "tonic-clonic" but that doesn't scan as well.
76. **Silent in the morning:** Juni's just a little bit high on whatever the hospital gave it.
77. **Mood swings:** Sasha's antenna-bow drifted to the back of the room thanks to the Coriolis effect. The Coriolis effect does not, however, explain the mood swings.
78. **Checking out:** I guess "Goldberg" works better than "Goldfish."
79. **Cynthia Roarke-Fanning:** Aikengyu are actually born in litters of four identical pups. The other three are somewhere else.
80. **The duties of a littermate:** Aww, they have their daddy's font.
81. **Sensitive:** ♪ Hello mudder, hello fodder, I'm your son now, not your daughter ♪
82. **Heads up:** By now you may have realized that the axis should always be directly overhead so it shouldn't really be visible most of the times that I draw it, and furthermore that the lighting is pretty much completely inaccurate, even with regarding to basic Lambert illumination.
83. **Under pressure:** I don't know why the alleyway has a conveniently-placed drainage shelf either. I

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<sup>12</sup>Referring to comic #35, "A 'duh' moment"

<sup>13</sup>The title is a (rather oblique) Song Fight reference. There are a lot of those here too.

<sup>14</sup>I eventually decided his name is Liam Goldberg.

just thought it'd look neat. (But not neat enough to draw more than once.)

84. **Assessment:** Ironically, if he had his gun, he'd have a clear shot, according to the Coriolis compensation widget.
85. **The next step:** okay we're at point A and I know where point B is but I need to find the path there
86. **Rules:** Face it, I've done worse in terms of phoning it in.<sup>15</sup>
87. **Planning:** ♪ when going underground it is advised you wear the proper gear / i'm lucky to be alive but the damage to my vitals is what i fear / i make the same mistakes over and over and o-o-over / take back all you said and go back to the begin ♪<sup>16</sup>
88. **Down the rabbit hole:** Well, hey, follow your dreams, right?
89. **Collection:** That one little maintenance robot just looks so lonely...
90. **In a ship in a ship:** No, Sam, you probably don't.
91. **Freefall:** The egress shaft isn't that well-lit, it's just that the camera automatically normalizes the light levels.
92. **Galaxies Floating on a Dark Matter Stream:** Hello from out here in space, with the soft orange glow of a dying sun<sup>17</sup>
93. **Questions:** For my own sanity, I have only drawn the cosmic backdrop once. Less-than-spectacular wallpaper available upon request.
94. **Consummate:** Sadly, "Fifty-kilometer-below club" just doesn't have the right ring to it.
95. **Whump:** According to Einstein's equivalence principle, yes.
96. **Landing:** And in the space between some two consecutive quanta of time, there must be a universe where everything is working out fine<sup>18</sup>
97. **The other half:** Bear with me here
98. **A hole in the sky:** Bear with me here
99. **Babble:** At this point I think I have a pretty good idea what's going on.
100. **[Device]:** 100! It's hard to overstate my satisfaction. I think there will be 155 more.<sup>19</sup>
101. **Hang in there!!! :D :D :D:** Nah, I wouldn't kill them off *that* easily.<sup>20</sup>
102. **Taking action:** Normally the pod would have simply rolled back into place, but of course it landed on that red thing which is keeping it propped up. Of course it would have rolled back into the

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<sup>15</sup>Well, I have.

<sup>16</sup>Metalmags, "Repair My Heart" (Song Fight, February 2001)

<sup>17</sup>Abecedarian and Lunkhead, "Soft Orange Glow" (Song Fight, December 2003)

<sup>18</sup>Dan Warren, "Parallel Universes" (The Scientist, 2008)

<sup>19</sup>I was just snarking then. I ended up making it happen anyway.

<sup>20</sup>Although my original idea was that yes, I would. I'm glad I changed my mind.

gress port and things would go downhill pretty fast.

103. : <sup>21</sup>

104. **Kajoshu:** There's no place like home

105. **Bugs:** That's not much of a favor!

106. **Forward:** Terrible shading brought to you by Not Giving A Crap™, a product of Depression Inc.

107. **Nosebleed:** The Hiero word for "Eugene" is also "Eugene."

108. **Complicated:** Robots are a sometimes food.

109. **Figures:** The annoyance is getting palpable.

110. **Deferral:** Half a deci = 5 kaysecs = about an hour and twenty minutes. They haven't actually been walking that long.

111. **Outside the village:** I wanted it to say, "Uh, you know what monotreme means, right?" but the Hiero word for "monotreme" doesn't have the same etymology as the English word.

112. **Entry:** Oh, if only every strip could be this easy to draw...

113. **Inside the temple:** Sometimes I'm tempted to post these at the full working resolution. See <http://beesbuzz.biz/d/unity/unity-113-large.jpg> for this one.<sup>22</sup>

114. **Risotto:** Sauté shallots, mushrooms, and fresh beetle grubs in cold-pressed seed oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook until soft, about one centi. Add rice, stirring to coat with oil, until the rice becomes slightly flaxen (about 1.5 centis). Pour in 100cc wine, stirring constantly until absorbed, and slowly add vegetable broth 100cc at a time, stirring continuously until the broth is absorbed and the rice is al dente, about 1-1.2 kaysecs. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and garnish with finely-chopped pondgrass and a drizzle of honey [rustic Kajoshu style].

115. **Insight:** Bring water to a boil. Immerse your favorite aromatic plant leaves for 2-3 centis. Strain. Enjoy.

116. **Tsan Rumio:** Fun fact: Sexually-produced Kayohash inherit their skin color from their mother, and their hair color from their male parent. They know not to breed with someone with a matching color.

117. **Channel surfing:** Cheer up, emu kid!

118. **Preemptive multitasking:** I would like to apologize for the previous comic's popup text. That was just uncalled for.

119. **At ease:** Self-image certainly is a mutable thing.

120. **Multiplicity:** Hate juice is part of this balanced breakfast.

121. **Sparkle:** Yet another scene which ended up much less darkly than I originally planned. I guess I just don't like things being OO SINISTER after all.

122. **Seeing double:** While a broodwitch is generally expected to not provide preferential treatment to a village male, female Kayohash are often known to undergo parthenogenesis when exposed to particular sexual stimuli.

123. **Complicated:** Obviously, "lesbian" is an idiomatic translation; they did not come from the Greek isle of Lesbos. Apologies to any Lesbians who take offense. Also, happy Thanksgiving, to all you

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<sup>21</sup>This title and comment intentionally left blank.

<sup>22</sup>Or just, you know, read this book.

Americans reading this on the day it's being published (or on some future subjunctive Thanksgiving, which would apply to Canadians as well I suppose).

124. **Clutter:** demiJuni<sup>23</sup> certainly has many interests.
125. **Relay:** On the plus side, this setting is easy to draw. On the minus side, boring.
126. **Leaving:** Hira wasn't making a pun in Hiero; it just happened to translate that way into English. Complete coincidence.
127. **Something wonderful:** This is the last comic whose number fits in a signed char.
128. **Landing:** Goo goo gajob.
129. **Arrival:** Also, naked Kayohash are easier to draw. Show some compassion for your artist!
130. **Rude:** Sasha is enjoying her PSP 6.27E+09 now that the firmware has been hacked.
131. **Confusing:** Hira would be *really* confused about many Homin celebrating the birth of some random parth, who *had* to sleep on straw because it was a sign of poverty at the time.<sup>24</sup>
132. **Heading out:** Kayohash superstition holds that accidentally saying the same thing simultaneously as someone else brings good luck. Doing it purposefully, however, is greedy.
133. **Visitation lefts:** Crazy, serious, certain – really, pretty much any way Tamu's sentence was going to end works.
134. **A threat:** And technically he's not making a threat, that's just what it'd sound like. It's in quotes, after all.
135. **Sending regards:** There seems to have been a fatal flaw in Juni's plans.
136. **Unfit:** He can move pretty quick when he has to, as long as it's warm anyway.
137. **Talking Heads:** Juni could feel like a clone, but it already knows that technically, it IS one.
138. **True Stories:** I had recorded a video of me making this one from start to finish. Unfortunately I had technical problems and the second part's screencast was blank and the camcorder video got cut off. Big frowny face. Anyway now I know that it takes me about an hour and a half total to make a comic!
139. **Therapeutic:** This is about as close to exposition as I'd like to get.
140. **Fragments:** That joke is so old, it's in the fossil record back on Earth. Literally.
141. **A walk in the park:** "I love you," said the toaster to the sea<sup>25</sup>
142. **Making scents:** Hello \*HAPPY CAMPERS\*<sup>26</sup>
143. **Direct injection:** Don't worry, Juni, you're not the only one with a headache.
144. **Overload:** Coincidentally, The Japanese word for 12 is "juuni," and this is #144, which is 12 squared. If "Juni" were pronounced the same as "juuni" that might mean something.
145. **Relapse:** Oh, look at Mr. No-Thumbs over there, who can't even regulate his own body tempera-

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<sup>23</sup>How I referred to the character eventually to be called "Zero" on the site materials at this point

<sup>24</sup>Originally published Christmas 2008.

<sup>25</sup>Raised By Wolves, "Straw Man" (Song Fight, 2003)

<sup>26</sup>Star Control 2: The Ur-Quan Masters. If you didn't already know that reference you probably aren't in the target audience for this comic.

ture. What does he know?

146. **Vicious cycle:** When I first wrote this strip I didn't realize its implications.
147. **Loss cut:** Well at least it's cohesive.
148. **Slam:** Probably not a good sign.
149. **Special:** Juni rode the short bus.<sup>27</sup>
150. **Ring ring ring, ba-data node:** You know how if you have a cellphone close to a speaker, before it rings you hear loud buzzy noises? Imagine feeling that in your snout.
151. **Kind of weird:** Like a vacuum telling a lamprey it sucks.
152. **Along came a sniper:** Nobody ever notices Agent Harris until it's too late.
153. **Awkward:** Obviously she's quaking in her boots.
154. **Working it out:** Sam mistakes caution for paranoia.
155. **Running ragged:** Tanya apparently doesn't know about the identical-quadruplets thing, and probably hasn't met Cynthia.
156. **Change is in the air:** Fortunately, there's no prophecy to uphold, so standards are low.
157. **Unexpected:** Careful! You never know when/where there might be a freak wormhole in the space-time continuum!<sup>28</sup>
158. **Commisery:** Corentin would be more concerned about Juni's mental well-being, but he's got to move the plot forward.
159. **Feather-plucker:** And how else are we supposed to tell them apart? Personality?
160. **A Requiem for the FCC:** For example, the most common Hiero swears derive from: a flatus stored in a glass container, a dysfunctional yellow family, and the SVP of Worldwide Digital Media at Amazon.com<sup>29</sup> (hallowed be His name, lest it be taken in vain)
161. **Brushoff:** Chandra isn't feeling quite so unified lately.
162. **Some me-not-we time:** WHAT A TWEEEST
163. **Into the loop:** There is so much Chandra doesn't know.
164. **A Scanner Juni:** Sorry, folks, the story called for some explanations. I'll try to keep it from being too boring for the three of you who actually care. (Don't worry, it won't just be a lot of talk talk talk in a single room.)
165. **Sparklevision:** Memories fade
166. **Certain standards:** I was going to make the next few weeks Juni retelling what happened to it, but then I realized that would be stupid and boring. Sorry, people who keep hoping for exposition.
167. **Moisture:** Kali could kick oneself for not getting a recorded contract, if it weren't for not having a foot to do it with.
168. **Fragments:** Jeeze, Kali, just read the comic's archives already!
169. **I just called to say "honk honk honk":** It only took a few million years to make PGP keyrings

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<sup>27</sup>(and so did I)

<sup>28</sup>A reference, of course, to *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by the late, great Douglas Adams.

<sup>29</sup>Where I worked when I started this comic. Don't get me wrong, though – Steve's a nice guy.

easy to deal with.

170. **The Unintelligible:** Maybe there's hope for Fred after all!
171. **The Meeting of the Minds:** Juni is the closest Kandra's ever come to touching a girl.
172. **Everything:** Juni certainly is headache-prone lately.
173. **Headache treatment:** Ha, shows what Juni knows! Kandra was actually trying to ask who the breeze Dr. Goldberg is.
174. **Perceptive chaos:** Not only is ergotism still a problem, but the younger generation specifically eats rye bread so they can trip balls.
175. **The ascent of man (and platypus):** Goodbye, small blue marble
176. **Vaguely qualified:** Doctor Goldberg knows when he should stop being involved, even if this means we miss out on some much-needed exposition. How selfish of him!<sup>30</sup>
177. **Venting frustration:** Because the presence of smoke doesn't necessarily indicate uncontrolled fire, they prefer to use fire detectors rather than smoke detectors.
178. **Past present:** I still have no idea what the green pipey things are for.
179. **Hear/say:** Somehow "Mother Earth" sounds a bit less romantic when translated literally. (Pardon me while I wash my hands.)
180. **Legacy:** I would like to give a shout-out to Smarasderagd, who I just realized has been commenting on my blog pretty much since I started it in early 2003. So this is for you, Smarry.
181. **Ready:** Like mother, like daughter-ish clone thing
182. **Disconnect:** A bad end to a really weird day.
183. **A ghostly vision:** Yeah, like your dreams make any more sense than this.
184. **Silent in the morning:** I will not dismiss you, shelter you, speak with you<sup>31</sup>
185. **Allez cuisine:** Tastes have a tendency to shift over time.
186. **Dietary considerations:** Remember, lather, THEN rinse.
187. **Testimonial under duress:** Don't ask where Hira learned how to use a shower or a towel, because frankly I don't know.
188. **Suiting up:** The Kayohash never really had much need for a legal system. Things just work out.
189. **Bureaucracy in-action:** Gah I am so out of practice again
190. **Testimonial:** Private little testimonial pods. The arbiter just asks stuff of everyone involved until they believe they have a decent understanding of what is going on. It is just as ad-hoc as my world design.
191. **Disbelief:** Ed has a tendency to wax poetic.
192. **Father figure:** Not that Kayohash have a particularly strong family unit anyway, but Juni wonders what it missed out on.
193. **Coersion:** Mental extraction comfort pillows are available at the experimental psychiatry laboratory's gifts and sundries shop.
194. **Agreeable:** Finally, the last strip of the Juni-and-the-box-that-Juni-was-talking-to show. Next up:

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<sup>30</sup>Have I mentioned I *hate* exposition?

<sup>31</sup>Phish, "Silent In The Morning" (*Rift*, 1993)

Juni feels awkward.

195. **Chance encounter:** Nobody ever notices Agent Harris until it's too late.
196. **Succinct:** Trying to sneak away from an Octona is like trying to get milk from a Cuttleslug AM I RIGHT
197. **Things left unspoken:** I would reference "Parallel Universes" by Dan Warren but I already used that one 101 strips ago.
198. **Stripes and solids:** A park bench: Not the best place to nap.
199. **Path crossing:** Technically, Tamu violated protocol by not leaving through the designated exit, which is intended precisely to avoid situations like this. But he is nothing if not arrogant.
200. **Chandra/Kandra Testify:** Juni may have mis-judged them somewhat.
201. **Falling apart:** Juni seems to have lost control of the narrative. "Copulate," indeed.
202. **Intent vs. Expectations:** Translating the word "damnit" from English would have lost too much meaning.
203. **Doctor's assessment:** "Doctor-patient confidentiality" is not a concept indigenous to the South.
204. **No surprises:** I'll take a quiet life, a handshake of carbon monoxide, with no alarms and no surprises<sup>32</sup>
205. **Blue period:** Well it's a little late for that, Sam.
206. **Consequences:** What a way to get dumped... and only a few days after their first real disagreement (of many).
207. **Respite, fleeting:** 9-10-9
208. **Solidarity:** Obviously, Sasha would prefer to use its usual semantic-broadcast translator, but the tribunal process requires an auditory one for record-keeping purposes.
209. **Rendezvous with Mama:** It has been a long day, and this morning's shower has lost its effect on Hira's appearance.
210. **Specialization is not just for insects:** If it weren't for the lack of trichromatic vision in many species, the lights in the Little Kajoshu district would be proverbially red.
211. **Lost in translation:** The confusion makes more sense in the original Hiero. Unfortunately, there are certain things which just don't translate well.
212. **Send in the clones:** For the purpose of the transcription, let's say the supervisor's name is Shane. He looks like a Shane to me.
213. **Translation:** I don't believe we've seen Hira smile before, and frankly it's more than a little disturbing.
214. **Aftermath:** Mr. Tree nooooooooooooo!
215. **A trying affair:** Fortunately, Hira will actually enjoy the squash-stuffed dumplings served with ape confit.
216. **Decoupled:** The only dream which has any specific meaning is the one where you're frantically

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<sup>32</sup>Thom Yorke, "No Surprises" (Radiohead, *OK Computer*, 1997)

- searching for a bathroom. It means you really need to use the bathroom.
217. **Tundra:** Fragmented dreams can be easily affected by a vague perception of external factors.
218. **Trepidation:** Yes, so “advanced” what with your “refrigeration” and your “running water”
219. **Exoneration:** “This panel” meaning the arbitration panel, not the third panel of the strip.
220. **Sentence:** SOCIAL ENGINEERING IS NOT A CRIME oh wait yes it is
221. **A word:** Prostitution is actually considered significantly more respectable than working for the anarcho-fascist cesspool that is the Daily Axis. Juni just doesn’t like doing it.
222. **Something special:** Someday I’ll figure out how to draw Tamu from the front. Today is not that day.
223. **Intent vs. Consequences:** In reality there are no heroes and no villains, only people doing what they think is right.
224. **Wants vs. Needs:** Can you really imagine him reacting in any other way, though?
225. **Lecture averted:** Unfortunately, that’s not what this series is about, so that will have to wait for another time.
226. **Catching up:** Fortunately, the device has built-in session management.
227. **Open seas, closed world:** Juni is surprisingly easily-distracted from its own misery.
228. **Return to the temple:** It is convenient that Hira always keeps some spare vestments around.
229. **Conversations:** As if Juni’s pronouns weren’t already problematic enough.
230. **Seventeen:** Come on, Juni, how would you feel if YOU were stuck in that robot body? ... Oh, right.
231. **Kayohash on delivery:** If this doesn’t clear things up significantly, I recommend re-reading the whole archive.
232. **Personal growth:** We’re just tiny little specks, about the size of Mickey Rooney<sup>33</sup>
233. **Presentation:** A long-term strategy is good to have.
234. **On the job:** Nobody ever notices Agent Harris until it’s too late.
235. **Balanced:** Will I wait a lonely lifetime?<sup>34</sup>
236. **Preference:** It’s all she can do to not just spray formic acid everywhere, sometimes.
237. **Media relations:** Who let him into the physics building, anyway?
238. **Loose ends:** Not that Juni wants to have to give that interview *again* or anything, but...
239. **Second-degree:** Juni never bothered to learn which digit was actually “the bird.”
240. **Gentle change:** Obviously, “paperwork” is just a colloquial translation, whose English etymology should be ignored for the sake of this narrative.
241. **For the broken-hearted:** Nobody ever notices Agent Roarke until it’s too late.
242. **Pillow talk:** Yeah, because hormone imbalances leading to premature aging are easy.
243. **More pillow talk:** Come on, Juni, you can’t insist she do what’s right for herself and then still ask her not to do a potential part of that.
244. **Currency exchange:** Chandra, I... I don’t think that’s quite right. Except for where it is?
245. **Inconvenient, A Scent:** Soldiers: defending the best interest of the hive since 1.3E9 rounds B.U.
246. **Commencement:** Well hey, he looks pretty good for someone who’s around a thousand rounds

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<sup>33</sup>Rob Paulsen, “Yakko’s Universe” (Animaniacs, 1993)

<sup>34</sup>Paul McCartney, “I Will” (*The Beatles*, 1968)

old. (Guest neologism by LilFluff.)

247. **Parkside press conference:** They are all a bit older and wiser, and Juni did get that tenure after all.
248. **Endgame:** I guess Juni has gotten used to Zero's mode of communication now. Soon, a whole new generation of Kayohash may get to learn it too.
249. **Passage:** I think they were meant to be together.
250. **Coming home:** Hey there beigey-orange Kayohash in the background, yeah, you shouldn't stare at the hub.
251. **Lead-in:** The children just think it's cool how Tamu is the same temperature as everything else.
252. **Family matters:** While the switch to electric radiators was undeniably a good thing, the temple lost a bit of its charm when Eugene agreed to modernize the lighting.
253. **Fetch:** Aww, males look so cute when they're trying to be empowered.
254. **The Next Generation:** This is probably the last time we will see most of these characters.
255. **The beginning:** Is there anybody out there?