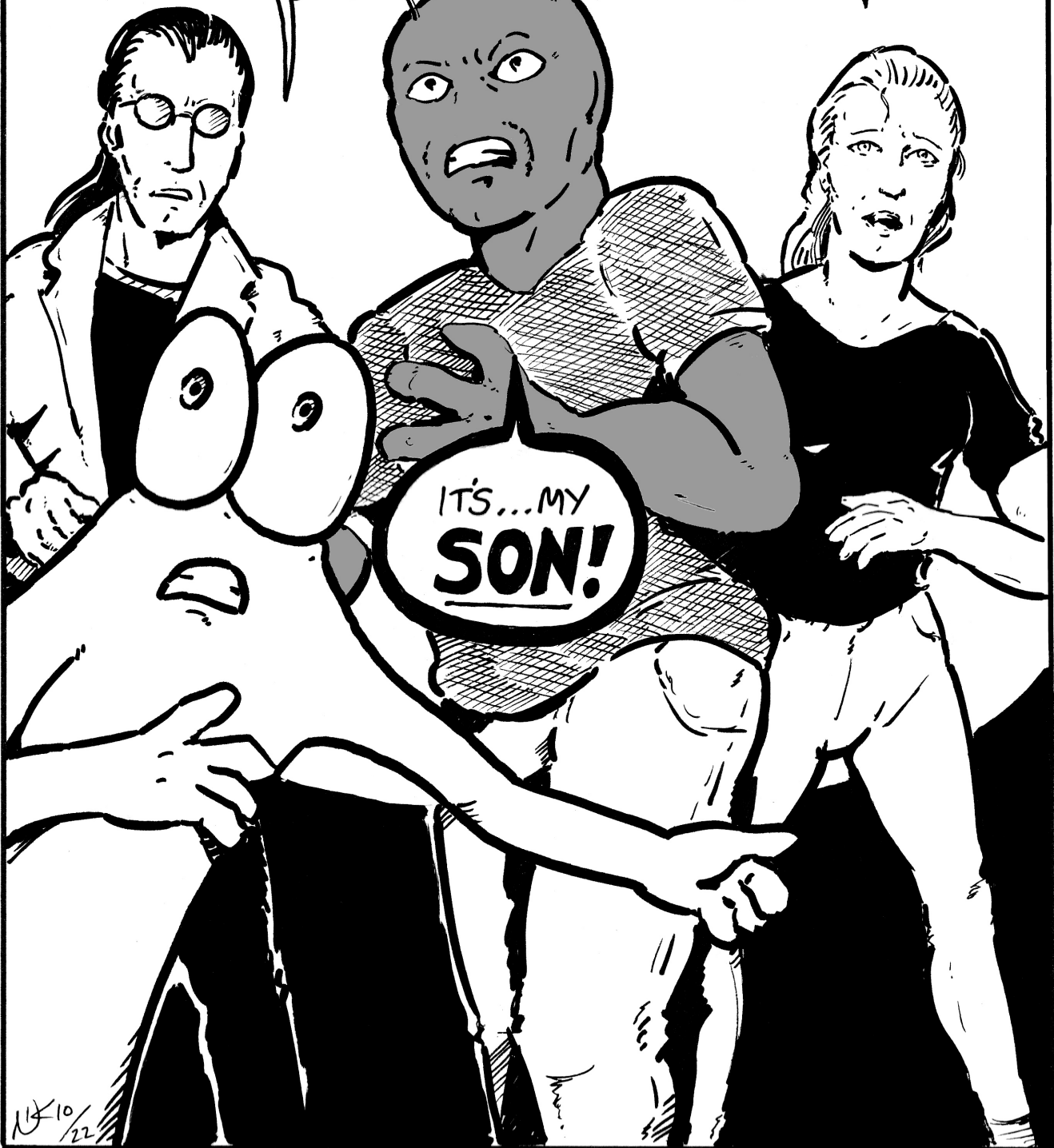


AMOEBA ADVENTURES

THAT... THAT
THING!

WHAT IS IT?



13/10/22

Amoebamail

email: dirganik@gmail.com • amoebaadventures.com • facebook.com/amoebaadventures

Enjoy this issue? Loathe it? Either way, send in your comments, I dig them! Here's a few comments on #31, "Death of the Asbestos Mushroom"!



A good, solid read and a nice send off to one of your classic villains (Did his warranty run out or something? Good villains are hard to come by!). You always do a great job and I love your art in this book - especially the page layouts (I know that's probably an odd thing to compliment, but the pacing is spot on with them). You put this old small presser to shame (and maybe have me thinking I need to step up my game and bring a certain superhero back a little sooner).

Bob Elinskas, New York

(Bob's Mr. Midnite was one of the cooler superheroes of '90s small press, and I for one would dig seeing him rise again!)

My friend Nik Dirga's *Amoeba Adventures* small press comics were great stuff back in the day, but his recent back-after-decades relaunch issues are the best comics I've read in a very long time.

David Hitt, Alabama

It's quintessential Dirga, as the wake for a notorious supervillain leads to both wacky shenanigans and serious pondering about the meaning of life. There are a couple of neat callbacks for long-time fans of the series, but you don't have to have read previous issues to follow this one.

J. Kevin Carrier, Ohio



Our Cast



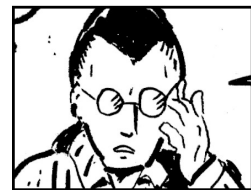
Prometheus is an amoeba whose life is always complicated.



Ninja Ant is a happy-go-lucky adventurer and sometimes detective.



Dawn Star is a semi-retired superhero who can control flame.



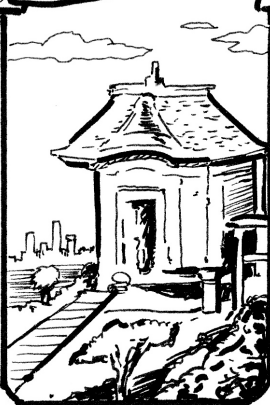
Spif is a former doctor, and superhero, currently a scientist and a teacher.



Karate Kactus is a wise hero and sensei who fought evil for decades. He's also dead.

Amoeba Adventures #32, January 2023. Published maybe twice a year by Protoplasm Press, 262 Konini Road, Titirangi, Auckland New Zealand 0604. Additional print copies of this issue available for \$7.50 postpaid by emailing dirganik@gmail.com. Visit amoebaadventures.com and look for the links to download all 31 previous issues and much more for FREE, and give us a "like" on Facebook.com/amoebaadventures where occasionally I'll remember to post rare art and coming attractions. Amoeba Adventures, Prometheus the Protoplasm and all other characters are (C) 2023 Nik Dirga. All rights reserved.

MANY YEARS AGO!



HOW MUCH FURTHER?

SHH. WE ARE HERE. AND REMEMBER, SHOW RESPECT.



MITSU, IF YOU TRULY WANT TO BE A GREAT WARRIOR, YOU MUST LEARN WISDOM.

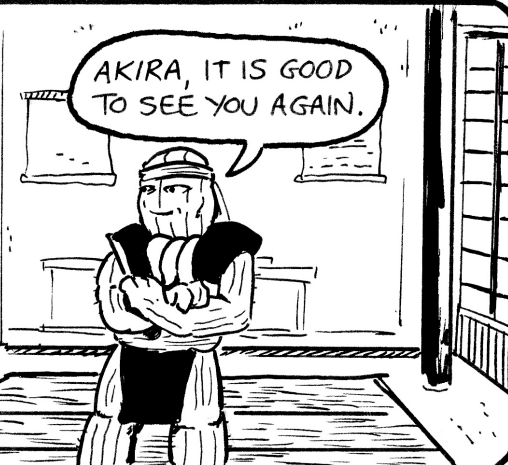
OK...



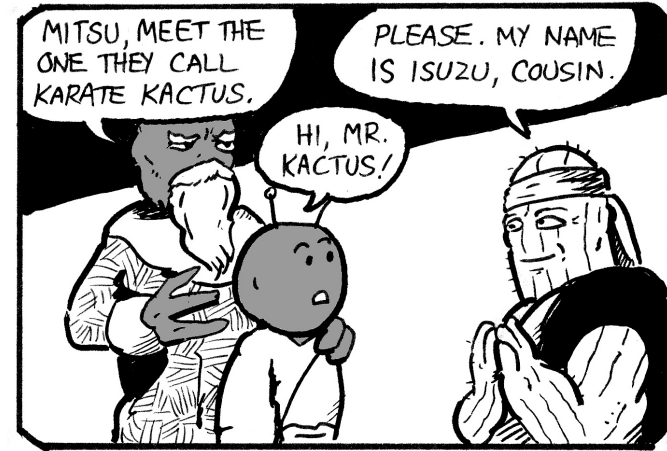
AND THIS...THIS IS THE WISEST PERSON I KNOW.



ISUZU SHIRO, IT IS AN HONOR FOR YOU TO SEE MY GRANDSON.



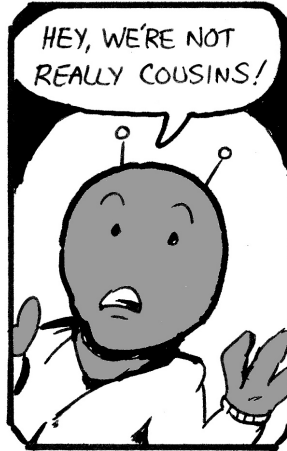
AKIRA, IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.



MITSU, MEET THE ONE THEY CALL KARATE KACTUS.

HI, MR. KACTUS!

PLEASE. MY NAME IS ISUZU, COUSIN.



HEY, WE'RE NOT REALLY COUSINS!

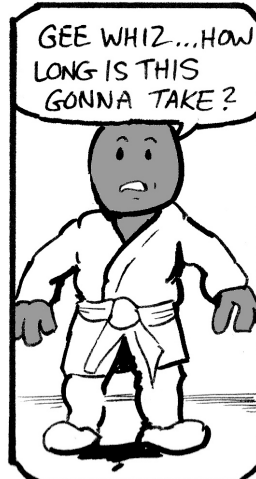


OR, WE ARE ALL COUSINS.

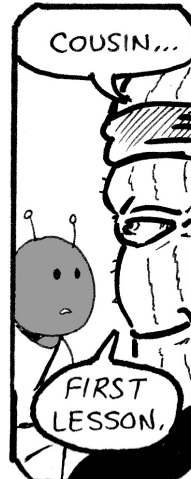
I SHALL CALL YOU MINE.



MITSU, ISUZU SHIRO'S CLAN BOAST A LONG LINE OF GREAT HEROES! HE WILL TRAIN YOU, HE WILL TEST YOU AND ULTIMATELY HE WILL SHAPE THE MAN YOU WILL ONE DAY BECOME.



GEE WHIZ...HOW LONG IS THIS GONNA TAKE?



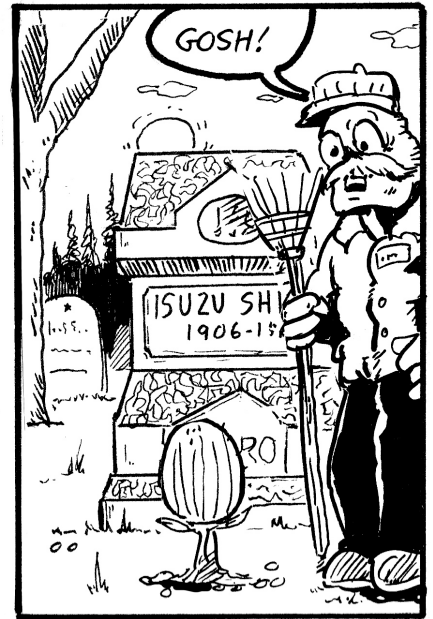
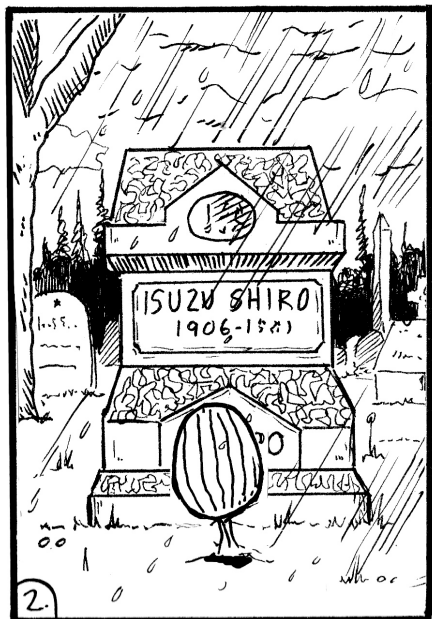
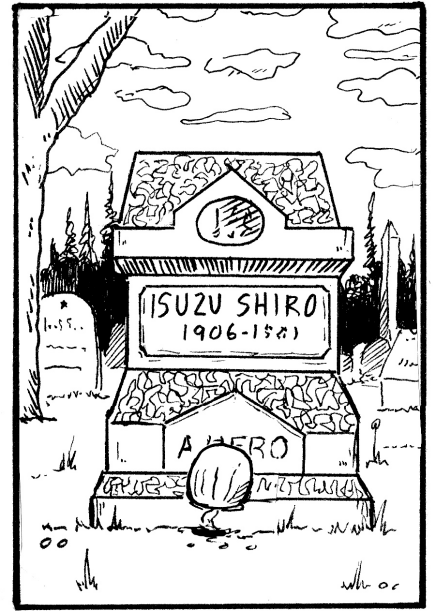
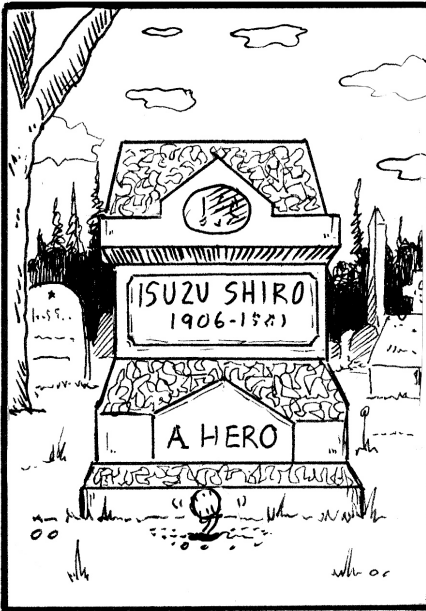
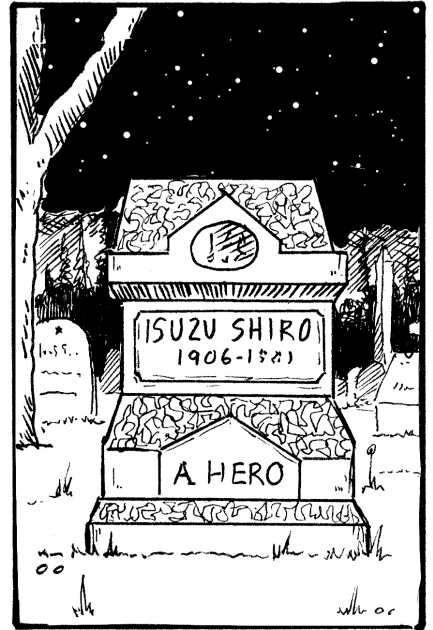
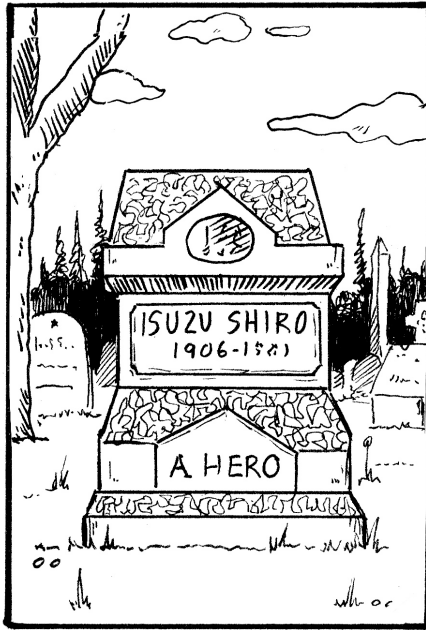
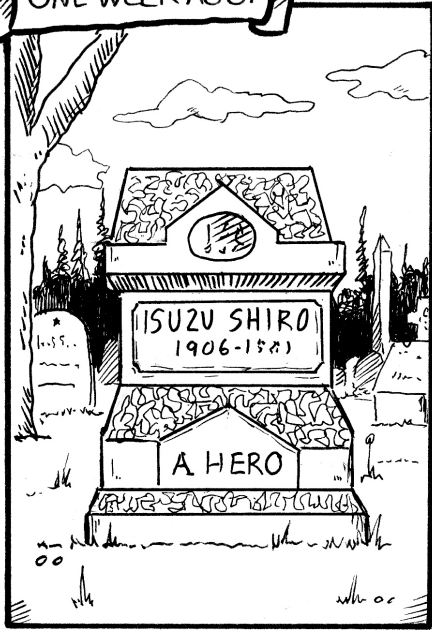
COUSIN...

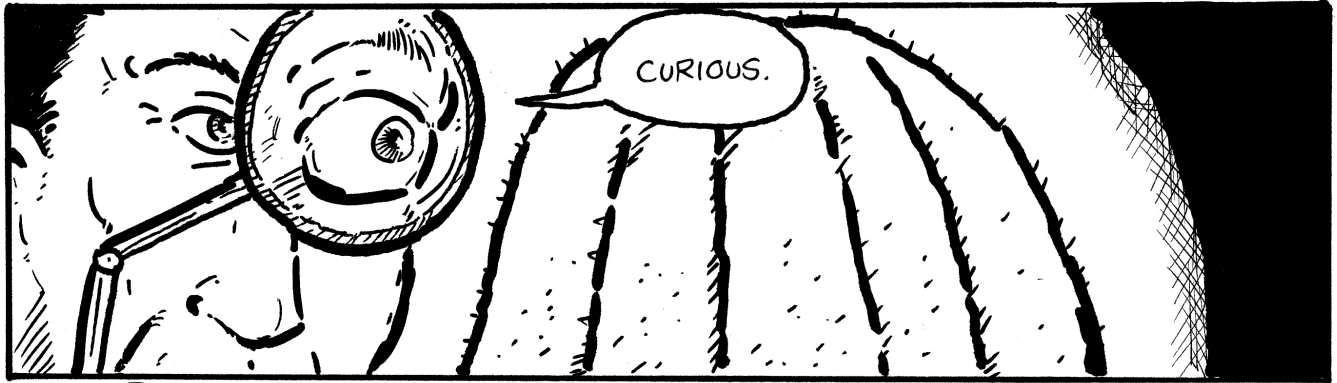
FIRST LESSON.



NOTHING EVER REALLY ENDS.

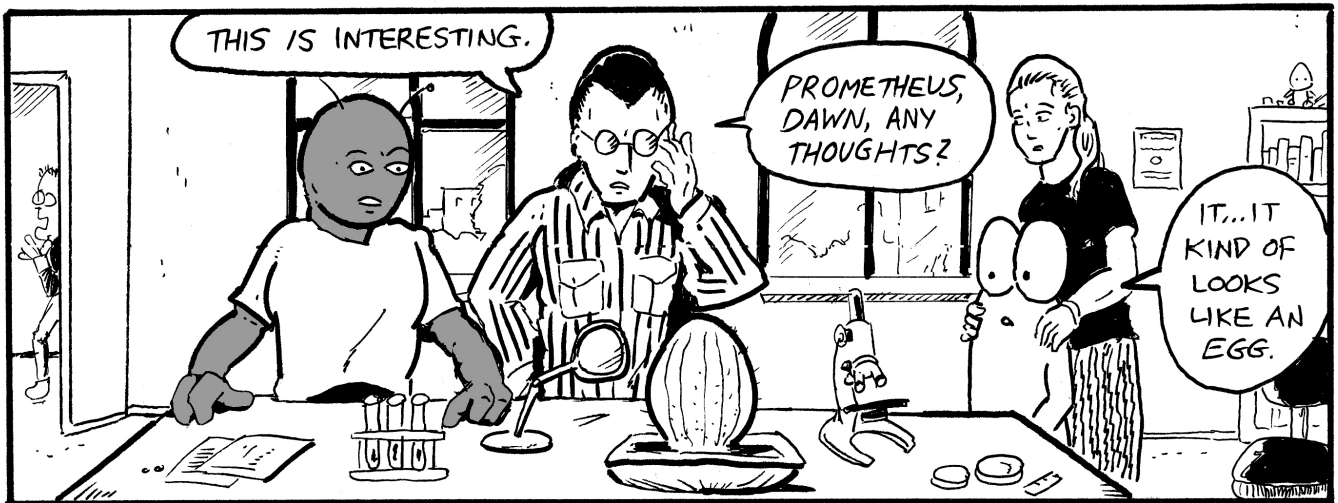
ONE WEEK AGO.





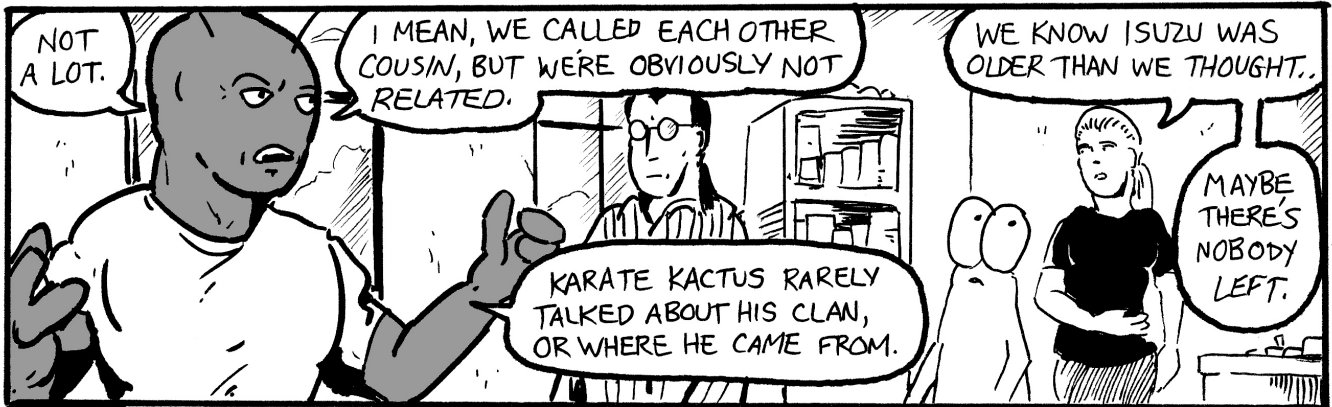
SEEDLING

~ AN AMOEBIA ADVENTURES STORY ~



WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY NIK DIRGA 8/22-1/23





NOT A LOT.

I MEAN, WE CALLED EACH OTHER COUSIN, BUT WERE OBVIOUSLY NOT RELATED.

WE KNOW ISUZU WAS OLDER THAN WE THOUGHT.

MAYBE THERE'S NOBODY LEFT.

KARATE KACTUS RARELY TALKED ABOUT HIS CLAN, OR WHERE HE CAME FROM.



I DON'T KNOW.

I NEVER HEARD OF ANYTHING LIKE THIS.

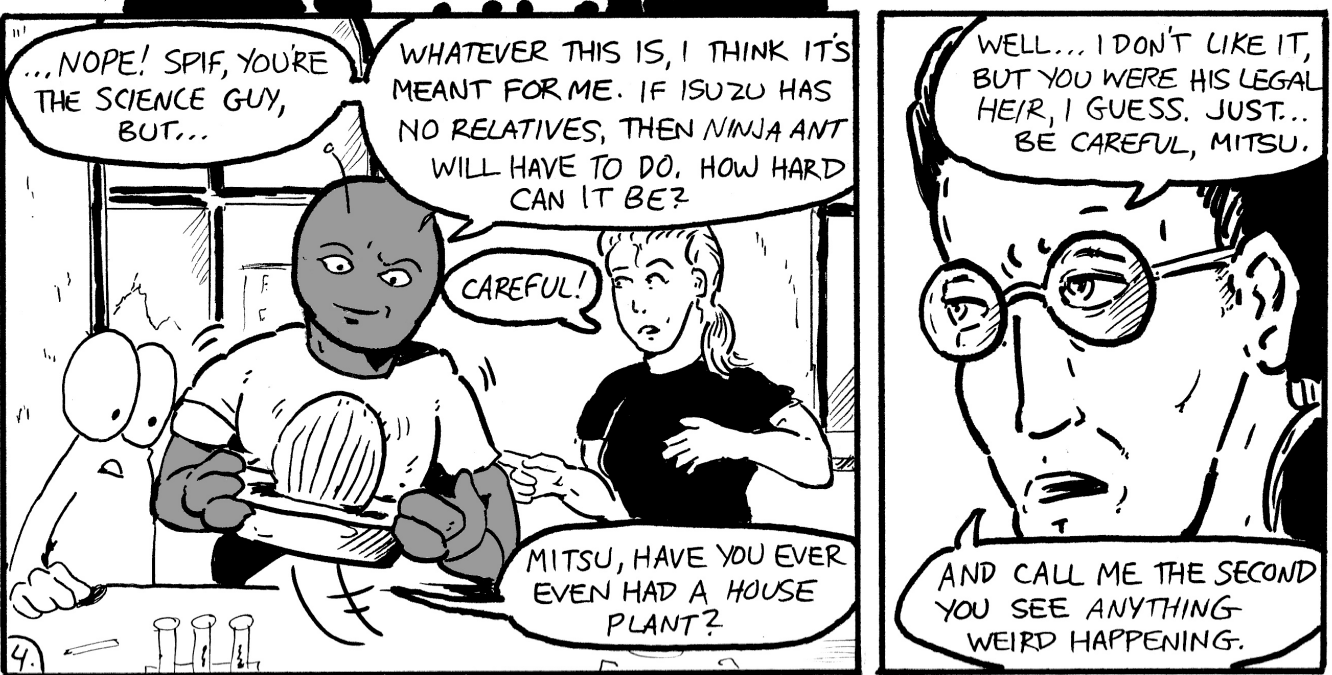
IF IT IS A SEED... WHAT DO WE DO?

I REALLY WISH I'D KEPT UP ON MY ETHNO-BOTANY. I'LL CHASE UP SOME CONTACTS, BUT FOR NOW, I CAN JUST KEEP IT HERE UNDER OBSERVATION...

I MEAN... SHOULD WE JUST STICK IT IN A POT AND WATER IT?

IF IT IS A CACTUS, IT MIGHT NOT EVEN NEED MUCH OF THAT.

HMMM...



...NOPE! SPIF, YOU'RE THE SCIENCE GUY, BUT...

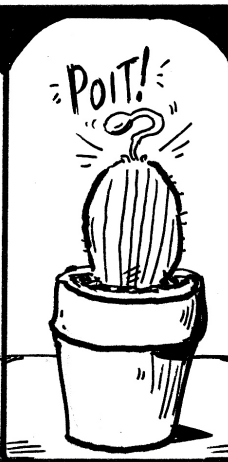
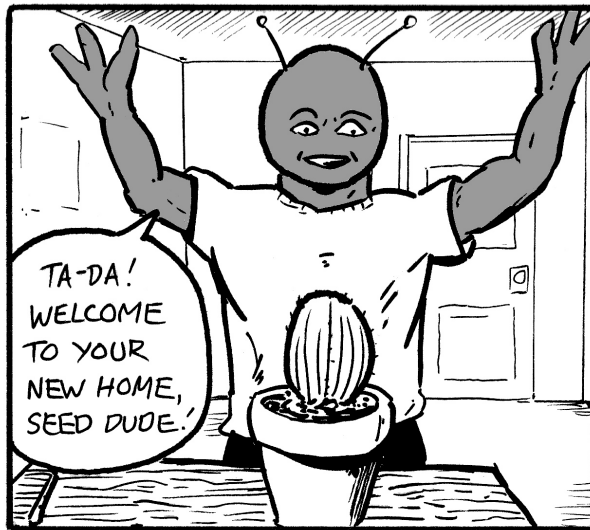
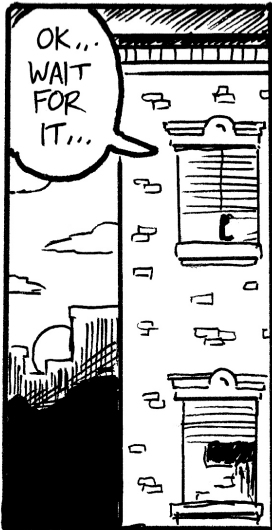
WHATEVER THIS IS, I THINK IT'S MEANT FOR ME. IF ISUZU HAS NO RELATIVES, THEN NINJA ANT WILL HAVE TO DO. HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

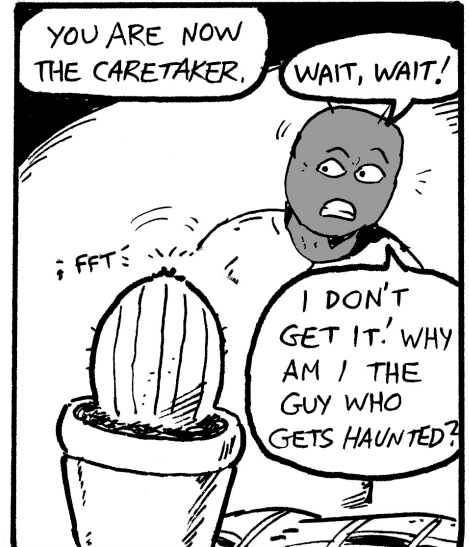
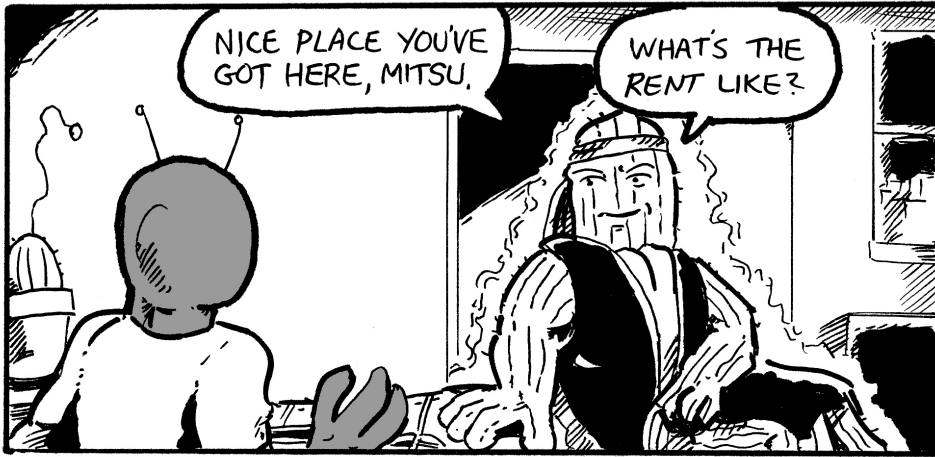
CAREFUL!

WELL... I DON'T LIKE IT, BUT YOU WERE HIS LEGAL HEIR, I GUESS. JUST... BE CAREFUL, MITSU.

MITSU, HAVE YOU EVER EVEN HAD A HOUSE PLANT?

AND CALL ME THE SECOND YOU SEE ANYTHING WEIRD HAPPENING.





HAUNTED? MITSU, YOU ARE NOW A PART OF THE GREAT KAKUTASU GARDEN!

YOU KNEW LITTLE OF MY PAST, MY PEOPLE.

WHEN WE DIE, OUR REMAINS PROVIDE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE SEED.

IT IS WHAT WAS, WHAT IS, AND WHAT WILL BE.

MY CLAN ARE FEW NOW, AND THEY CANNOT GUIDE THE SEED YET. I HAVE CHOSEN YOU FOR NOW.

SOON, MY CLAN WILL COME FROM DISTANT LANDS.

UNTIL THEN, YOUR JOB IS TO NURTURE THE SEED, TO PREPARE ITS BECOMING.

BUT... BUT... I CAN'T EVEN PAY MY RENT ON TIME!

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN STRONGER THAN YOU THINK.

JUST BE PRESENT.

BUT YOU MUST BE CAREFUL. A SEED CAN BE GOOD OR IT CAN BE BAD.

BUT... I TRUST YOU, COUSIN.

boop boop
SPIF!
SOMETHING WEIRD HAPPENED!!

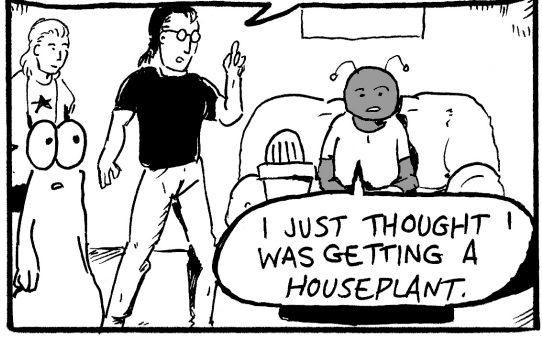
THE SEED WILL BE SHAPED BY ITS CARER'S HEART.

WE'LL TALK AGAIN.

OK, LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT...

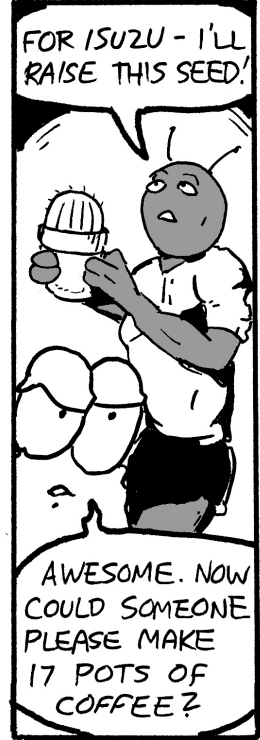
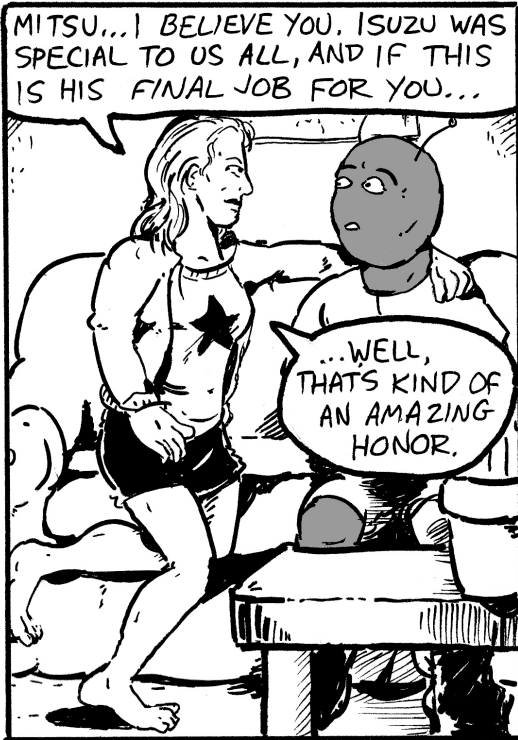
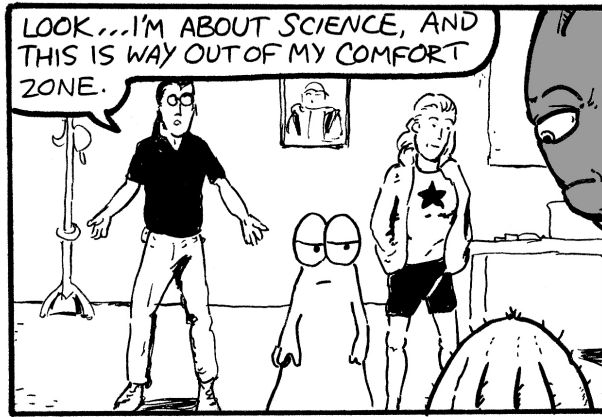
OUR OLD FRIEND SPROUTED A SEED, AND THE SEED DOSED YOU SO YOU SAW HIS GHOST, WHICH TOLD YOU TO MIND THE SEED UNTIL IT'S READY?

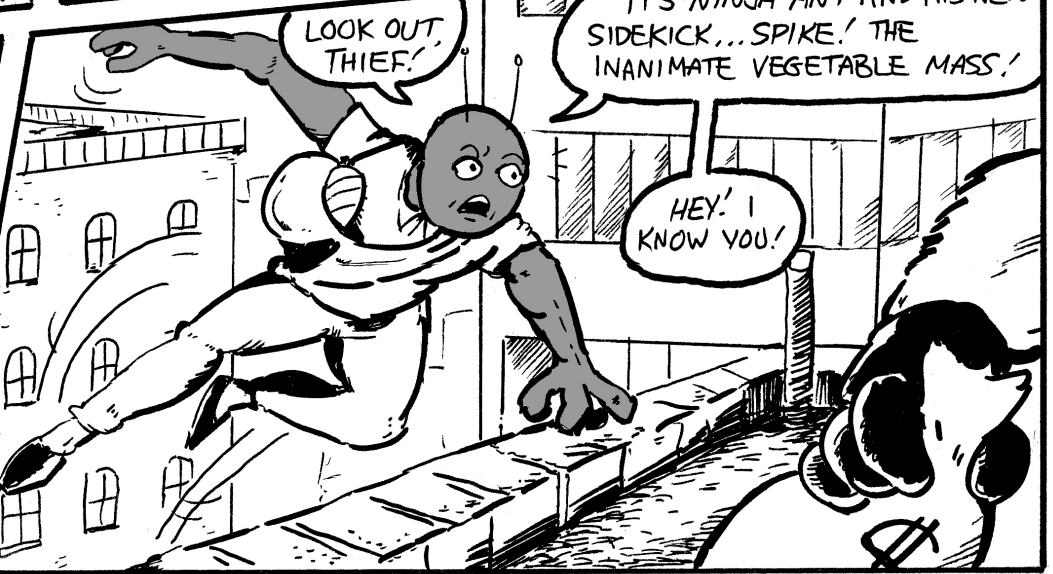
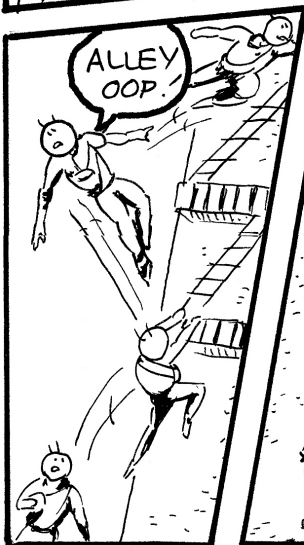
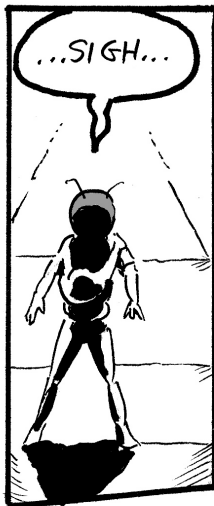
IS... IS ISUZU HERE NOW?

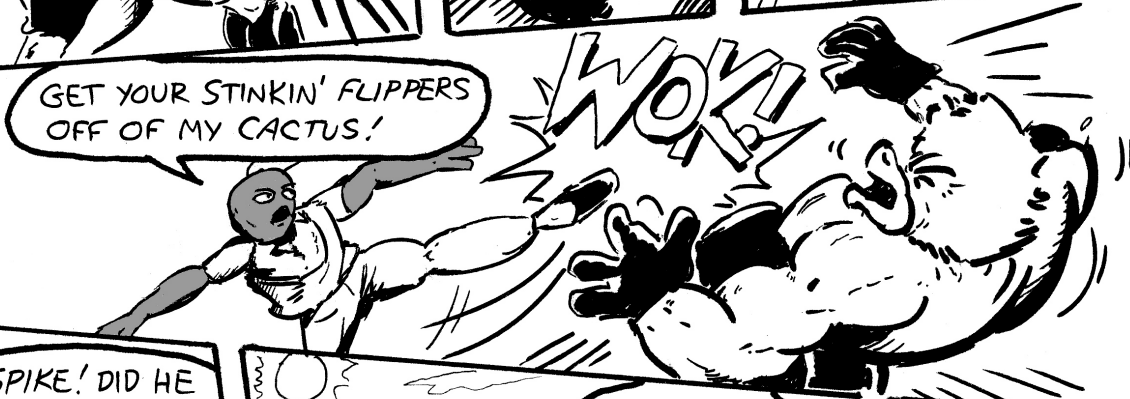
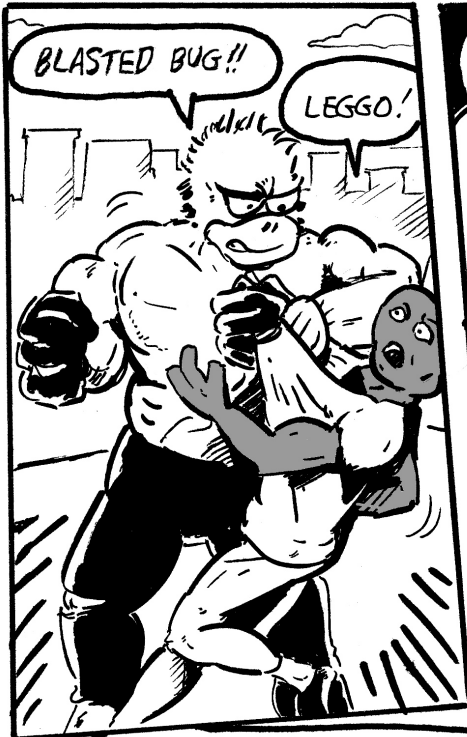
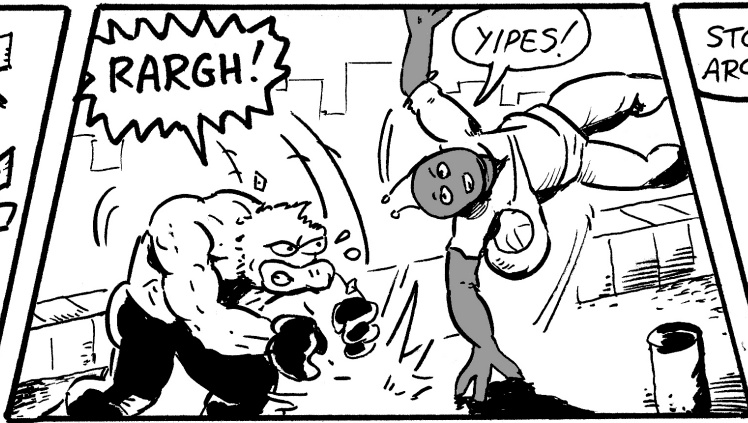


I JUST THOUGHT I WAS GETTING A HOUSEPLANT.

HE SAYS HE LIKED YOU BETTER WITH A BEARD.







I REALLY NEED THAT BAGEL!

ONWARD, SPIKE! CARPE DIEM!

LIFE LESSON 5: A TIDY CITY IS A GOOD CITY TO LIVE IN!

HEY, SCOFFLAW!

LIFE LESSON 12: NEVER FORGET YOU'RE IRONING!

URGH... LIFE... LESSON... 33... ALWAYS CHECK IF THERE ARE HENCHMEN.

UGH.

LIFE LESSON 27: REMEMBER THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE.

LIFE LESSON 68... NO, 69... ALWAYS WRITE DOWN THE LIFE LESSONS

LIFE LESSON 51: PAY THAT ELECTRIC BILL!

BOWL-A-RAMA!

I'M SORRY I'M SORRY I'M SORRY

LIFE LESSON 76: NEVER, EVER ACCIDENTALLY FORGET YOUR PAL SPIKE AT THE BOWLING ALLEY!

ONE WEEK LATER:

..Urgh... LIFE... LIFE LESSON 83... COFFEE... MAKE... BRAIN...

HARD WEEK, MITSU?

CAFE MECCA

YOU KNOW, PRO, SPIF AND I CAN HELP YOU OUT.

YOU'VE GOT TO RELAX, TAKE TIME TO BREATHE.

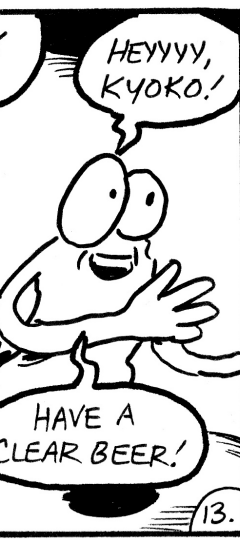
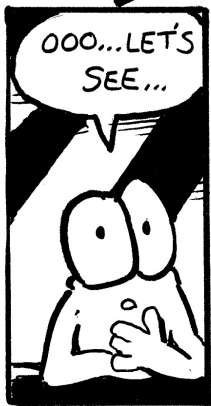
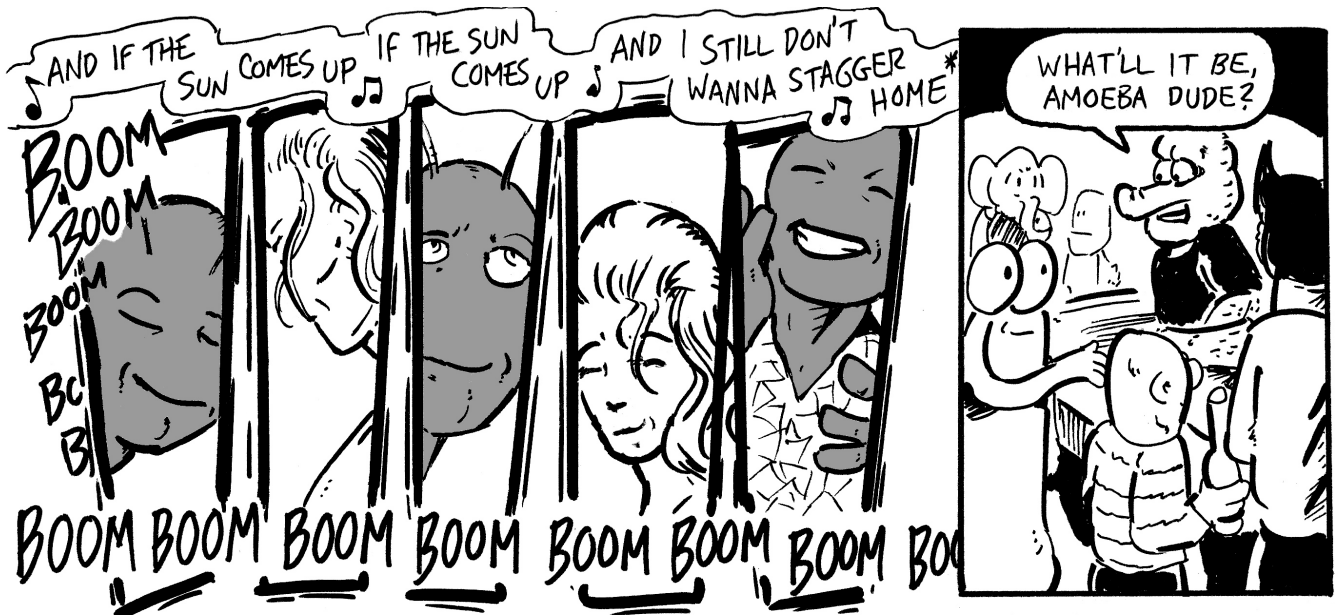
CAN'T... MUST NOT LET ISUZU DOWN... WITH GREAT SEED COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY..

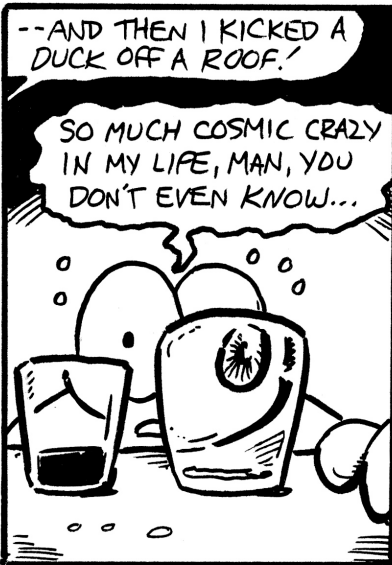
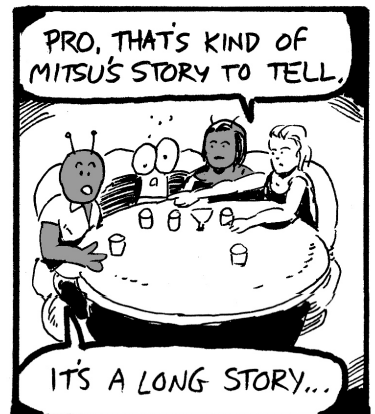
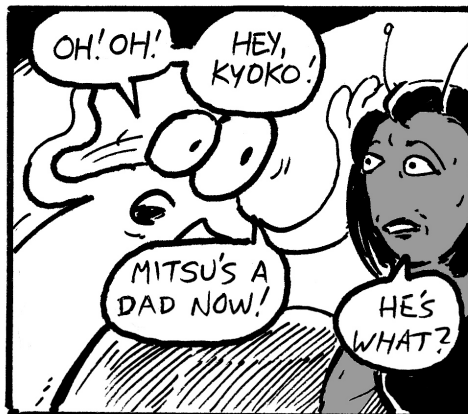
BUT IT'S HARD...

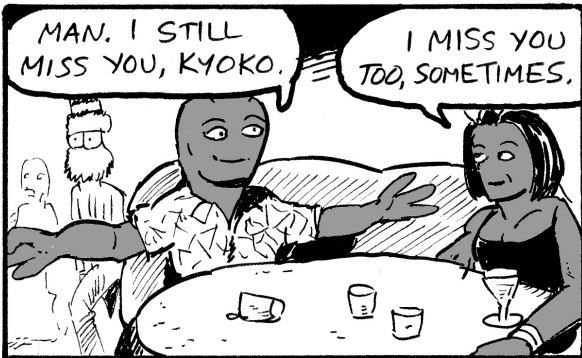
LOOK, MITSU, EVEN PARENTS TAKE BREAKS... AND I'VE GOT THE PERFECT STRESS RELIEVER.

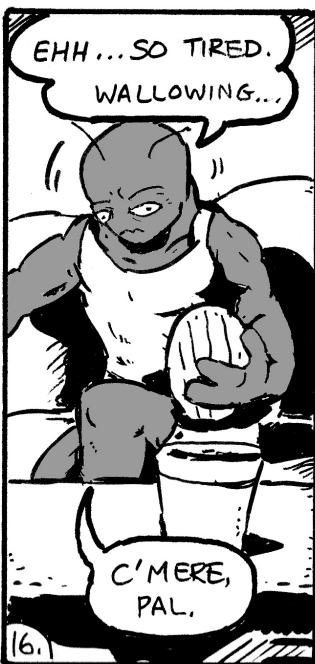
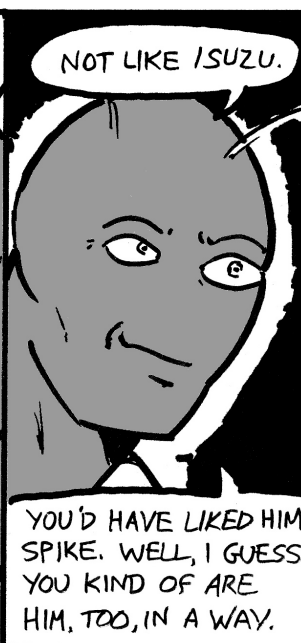
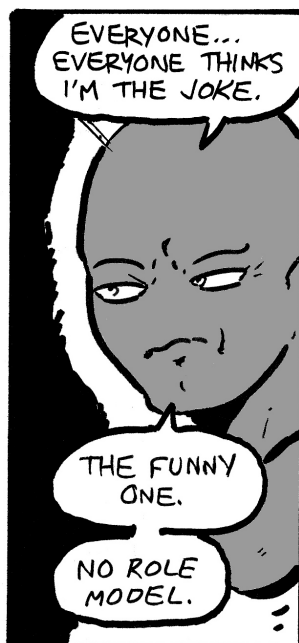
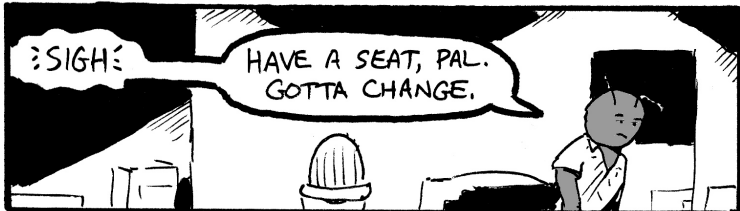
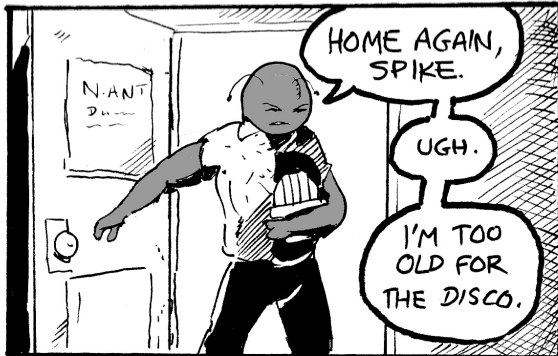
WAIT... YOU DON'T MEAN...

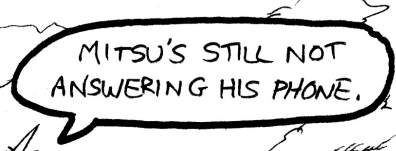
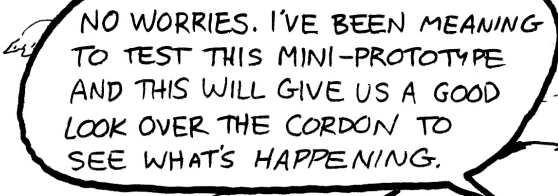
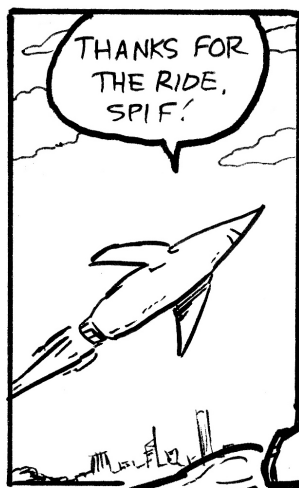
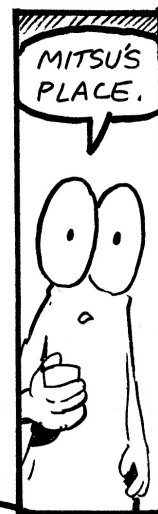
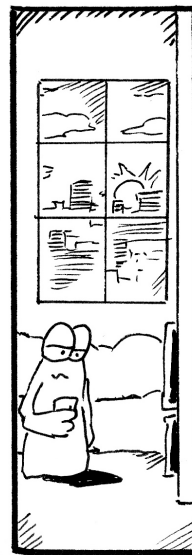


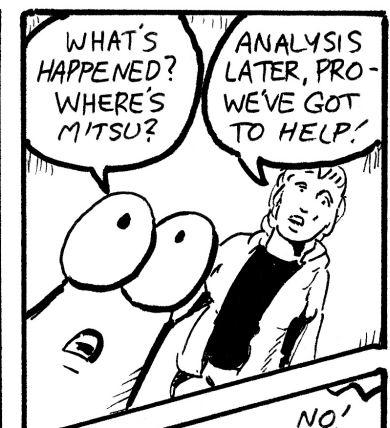
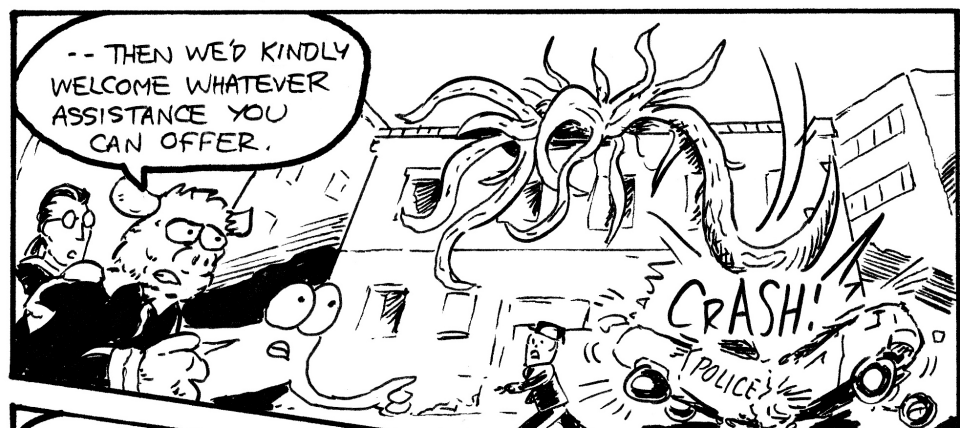
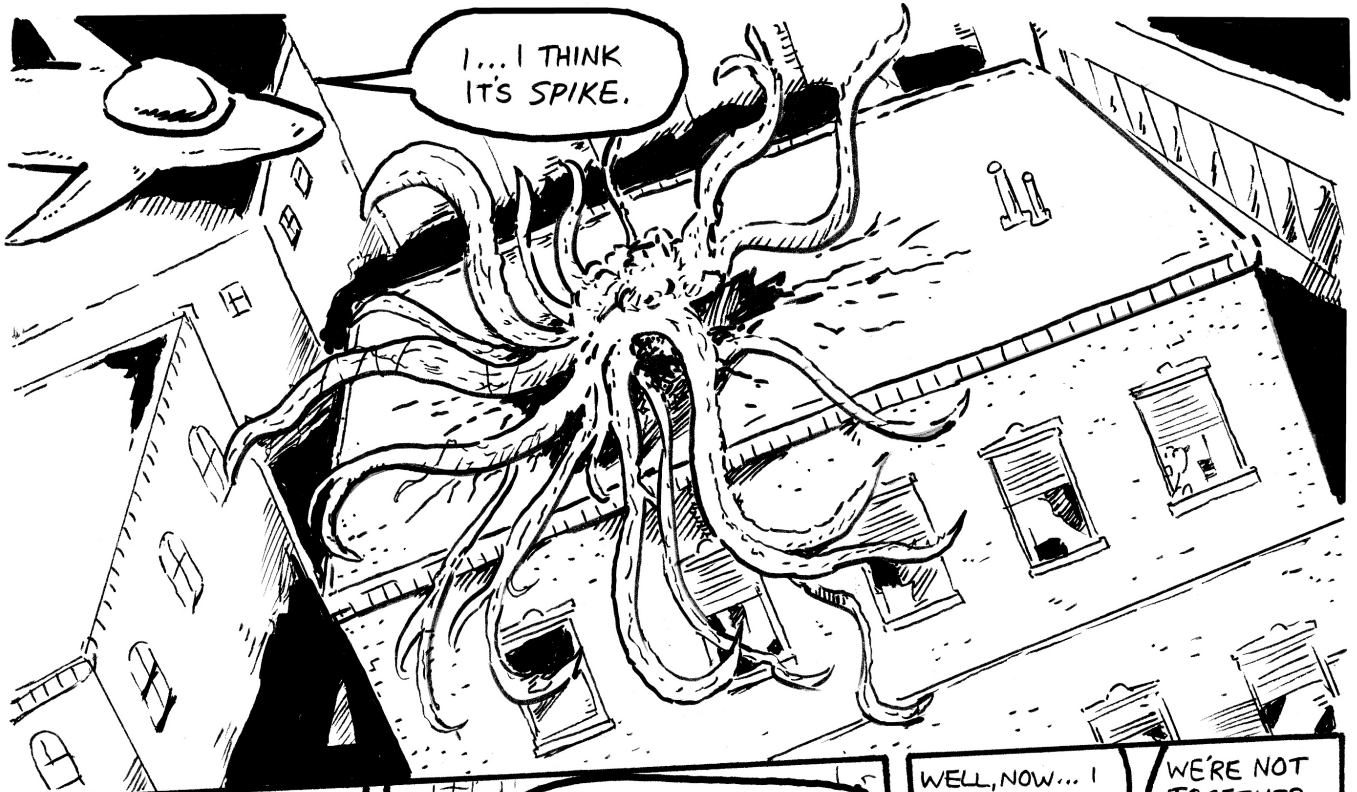


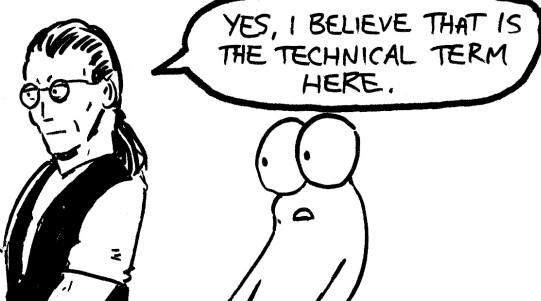
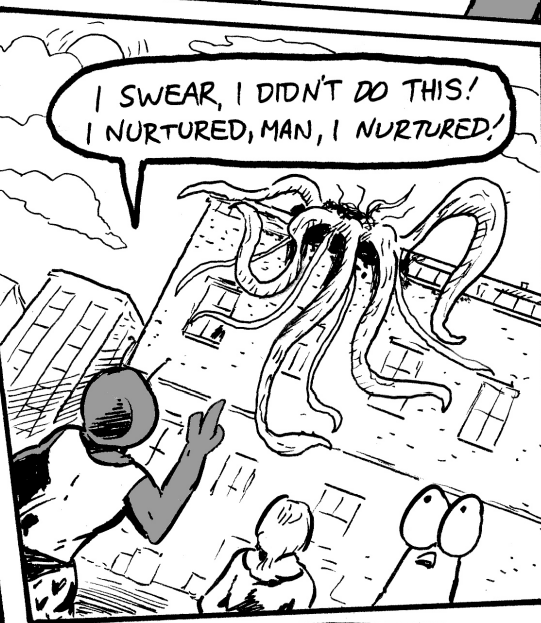
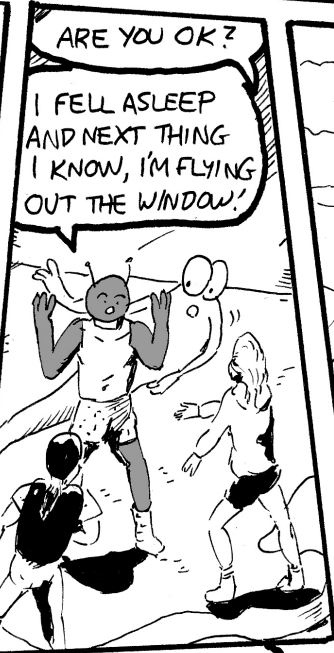
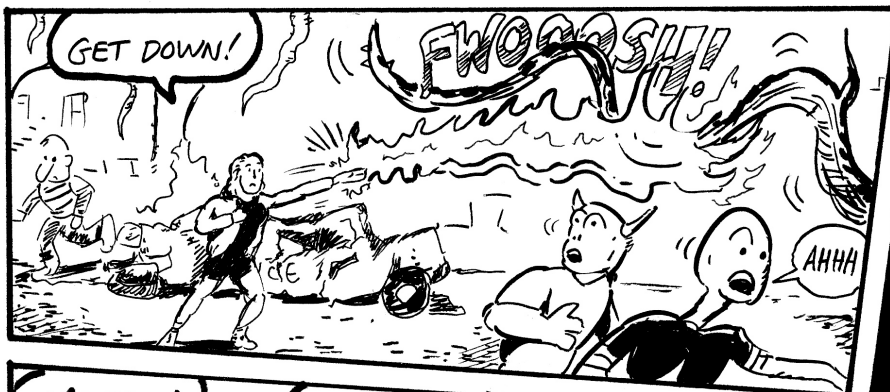


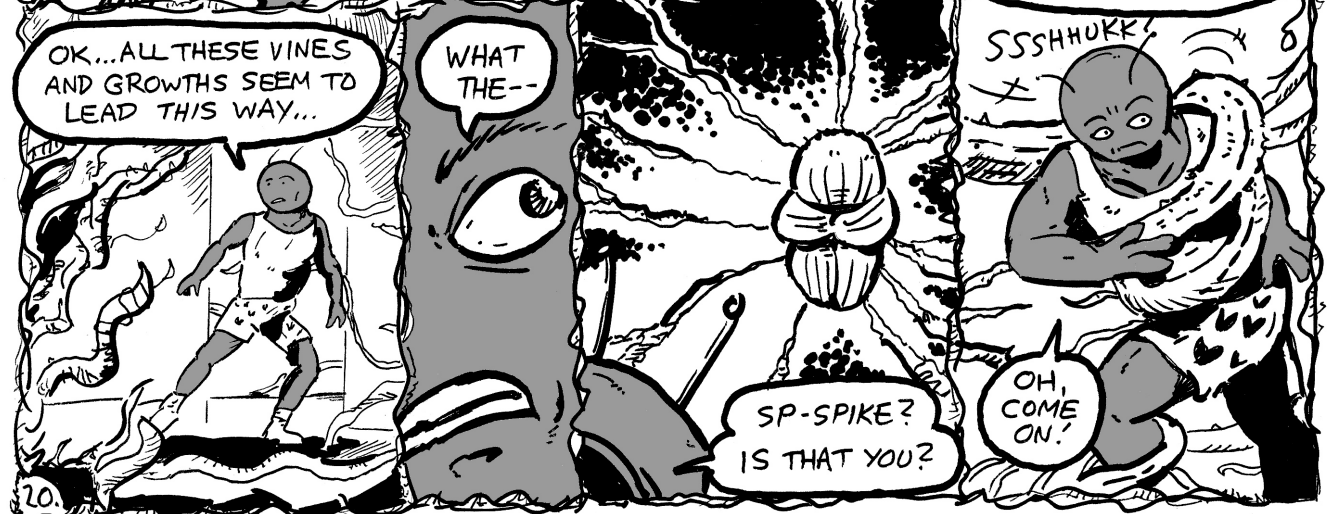
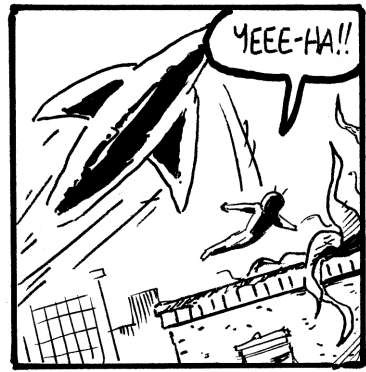


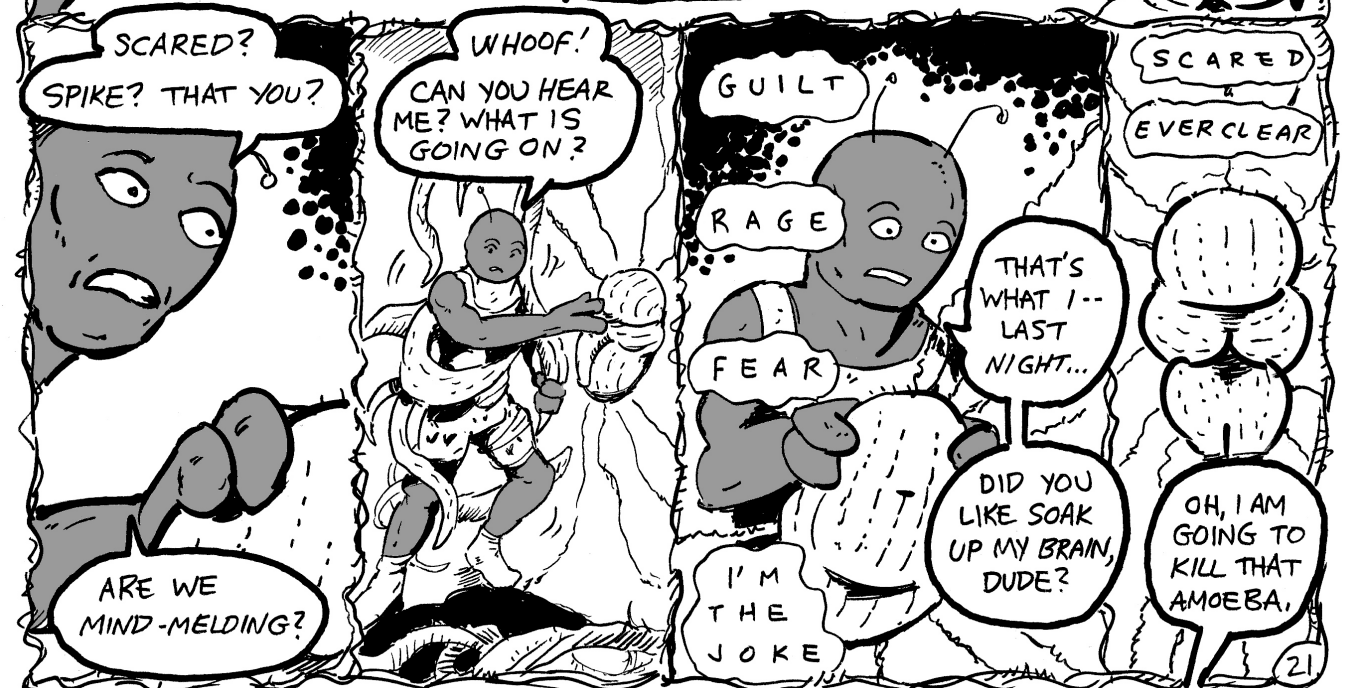




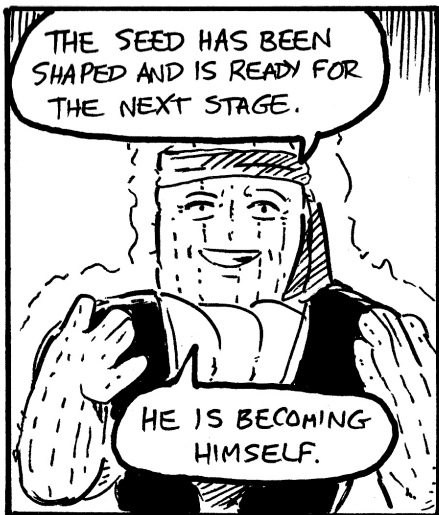












THE SEED HAS BEEN SHAPED AND IS READY FOR THE NEXT STAGE.

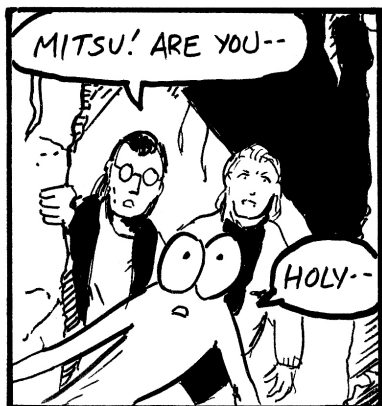
HE IS BECOMING HIMSELF.



YOU MEAN... THIS IS NORMAL? KABLOOEY? CARNAGE?

IT ISN'T USUALLY THIS... DRAMATIC, TRUE. THE UNIQUE COMBINATION OF YOUR... SPIRIT AND THE SEED HAS LED THINGS TO UNFOLD RATHER UNIQUELY.

ER, SORRY ABOUT YOUR APARTMENT.

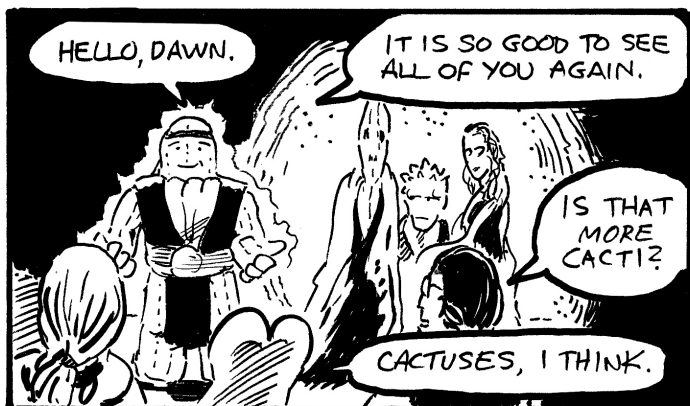


MITSU! ARE YOU--

HOLY--



OH, MY GOD. ...ISUZU?

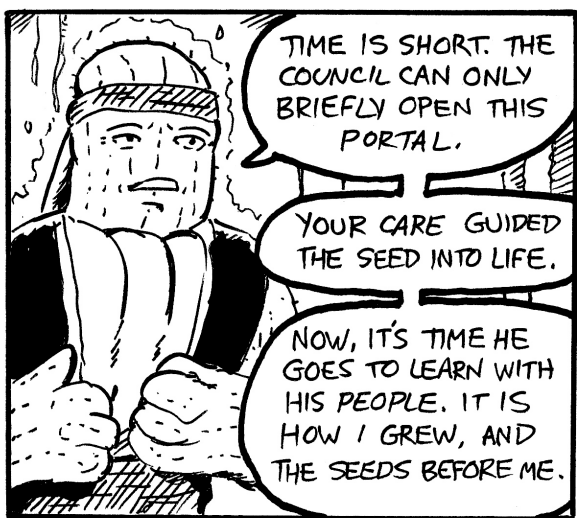


HELLO, DAWN.

IT IS SO GOOD TO SEE ALL OF YOU AGAIN.

IS THAT MORE CACTI?

CACTUSES, I THINK.



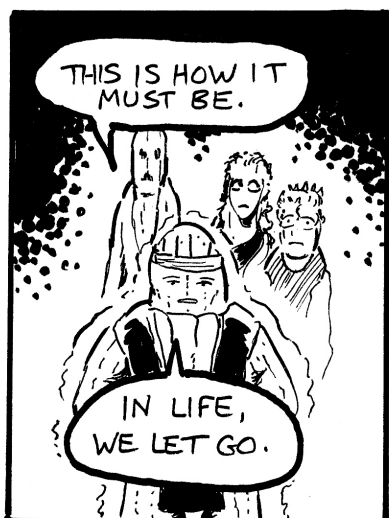
TIME IS SHORT. THE COUNCIL CAN ONLY BRIEFLY OPEN THIS PORTAL.

YOUR CARE GUIDED THE SEED INTO LIFE.

NOW, IT'S TIME HE GOES TO LEARN WITH HIS PEOPLE. IT IS HOW I GREW, AND THE SEEDS BEFORE ME.

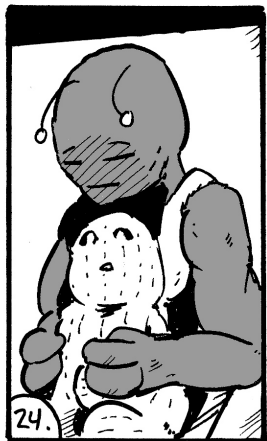


YOU MEAN, GIVE HIM UP? BUT...



THIS IS HOW IT MUST BE.

IN LIFE, WE LET GO.

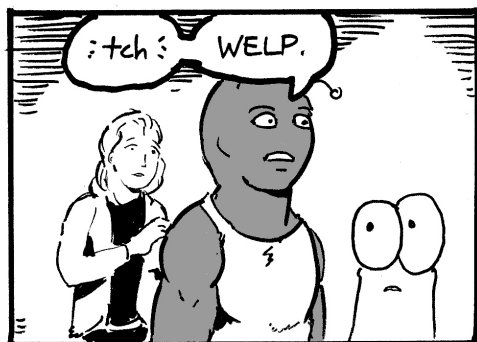
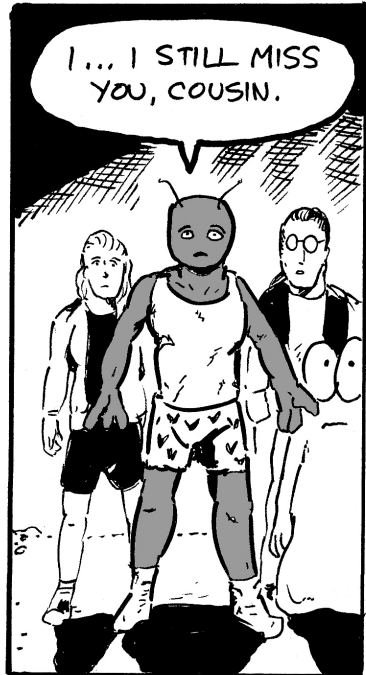
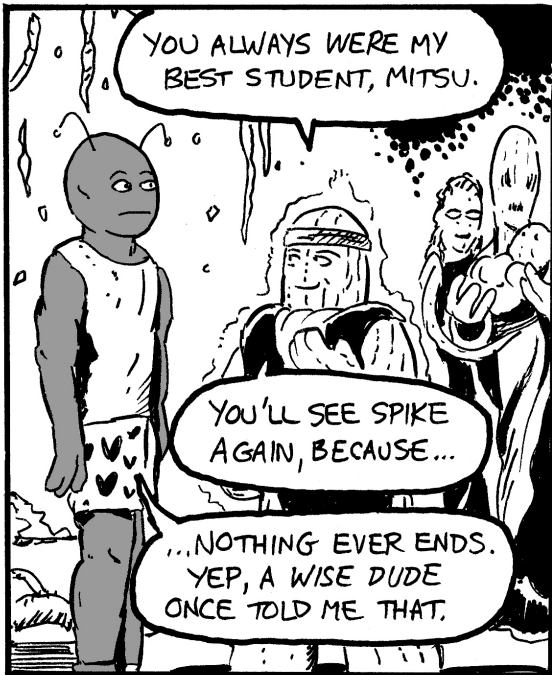
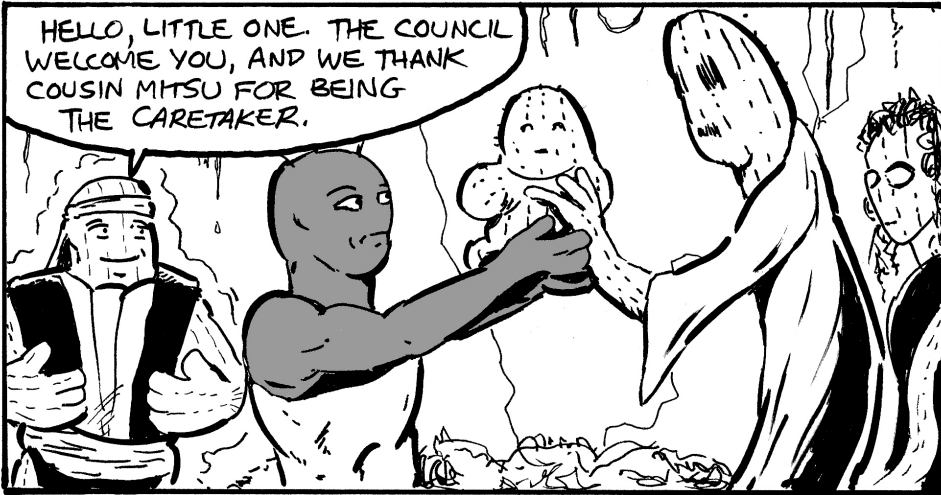


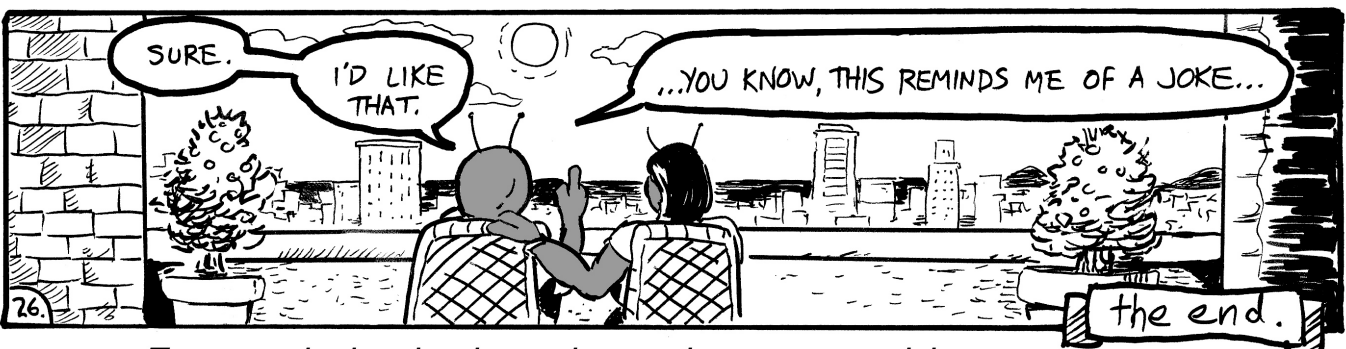
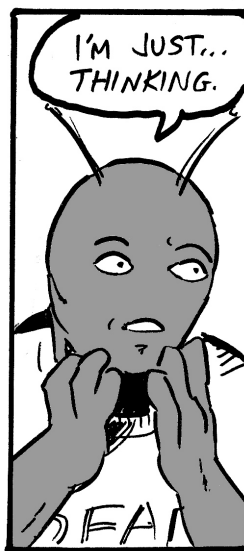
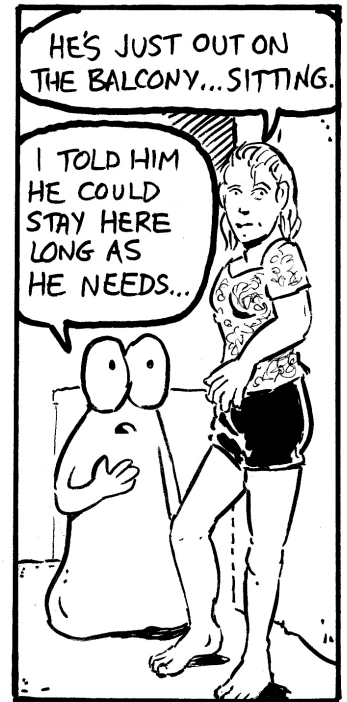
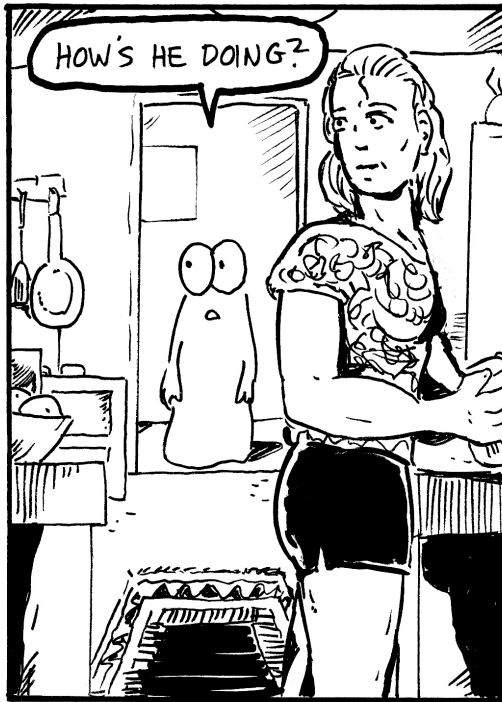
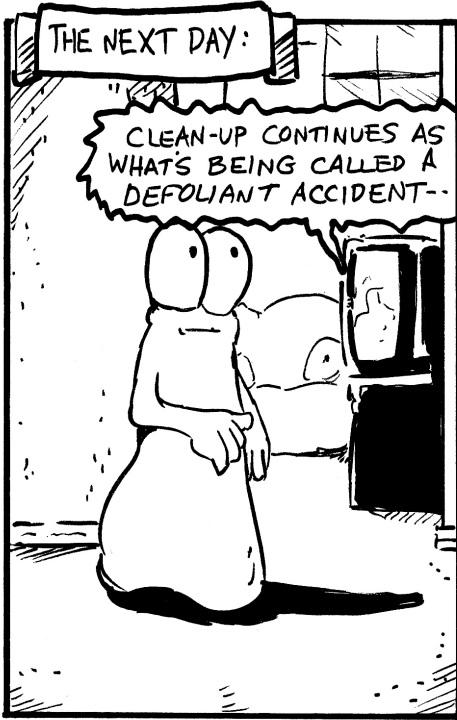
OK.

SPIKE, YOUR FAMILY IS HERE.



COME BACK AND LET'S FIGHT CRIME AGAIN SOME TIME, YOU HEAR?





For my dad, who has always been my guide.

The Slimeball Speaks

email: dirganik@gmail.com • amoebaadventures.com • facebook.com/amoebaadventures

This one nearly finished me! “Seedling” turned out to be the longest *Amoeba Adventures* story I’ve written and drawn in many years, and various real-world dramas, travel and sicknesses meant it took a lot longer to finish than I’d hoped. Anyway, here it is, hope you like, and please, send in your feedback if you have any, it helps keep me going!

I just want to take a moment to remember long-time small presser and comics publisher Andrew Ford, who was a “friendly acquaintance” I corresponded with a fair bit in the 1990s. Back in the day he did the promising minicomic *Rib* and at one point we even talked about a *Rib/Prometheus* crossover that never quite happened. He died due to complications of COVID-19 late last year at just 48 years old, and his loss is a sad one for everyone who digs comics with the passion he had. A fundraiser started by his widow to help with expenses can be found at tinyurl.com/drewfordfund

It’s been a chaotic year (or three) and I want to thank you for reading my goofy little comics. The act of creation helps lighten the load of everyday life quite a bit. Thanks to those who have been “liking” my Facebook page for *Amoeba Adventures* and also reading my ongoing essays, journalism links and more over on my website nikdirga.com. I may forget to say it, but all you folks who read and appreciate the things I scribble and draw are pretty cool cats!

See you next time for a story I’m calling “The Amoeba Who Fell To Earth.” Yikes!



Behind the story

This is a story that’s been percolating in my head ever since 1995 or so, when I killed off Karate Kactus in *Amoeba Adventures* #23. I hated to kill off Isuzu, but it was the 1990s, and grim ’n’ dark was in the air in comics so it felt like the thing to do (I mean, I called the big climactic storyline it happened in “The Dark Ages,” after all).

Yet in the back of my mind I always figured, well, he’s a plant, isn’t he, thus sowing seeds in my mind for some kind of return. It’s only taken a few decades for me to get around to telling that story!



The absolutely horribly drawn first appearance of Ninja Ant, in 1987's *Prometheus* #3.



After a few appearances, I stopped drawing Karate Kactus completely nude (!) and let him get his mildly iconic outfit. From 1988's *Prometheus* #5.



The one and only appearance of "Grandpa Ant," *Amoeba Adventures* #5, drawn by John Hurley.

Kyoko calls it quits, *Amoeba Adventures* #17, drawn by Max Ink.



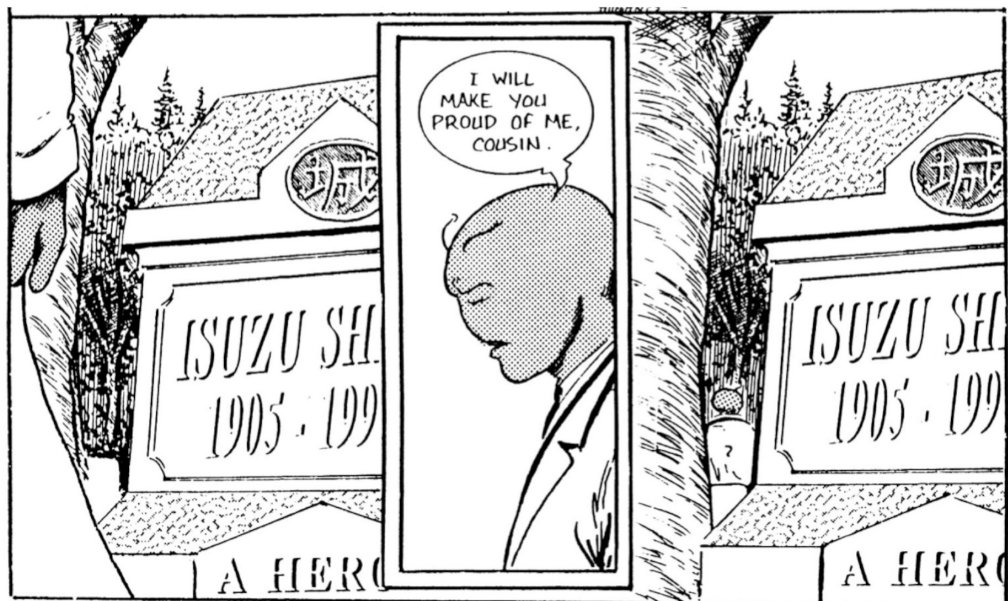
Karate Kactus' "cousin" Ninja Ant is actually the oldest cartoon character I ever created, derived from a fella named "Super Ant" I used to draw when I was a wee lad. He first popped up in *Prometheus The Protoplasm* #3 way back in 1987, but wasn't quite the character he is today, originally a bit more stilted and "stranger in a strange land" ninja.

In hindsight, I'm more than a little embarrassed about some of the rather stereotyped ways I used to portray Ninja Ant and Karate Kactus and particularly the "squinty eyes" I used for a couple of years when I first started drawing them - what now seems a rather lazy and kinda offensive cartooning shorthand for Asian characters that one once saw frequently in comics. It was honestly never meant with any malice on my part but just a fair helping of youthful ignorance and lack of drawing skills.

I finally shook that "look" around AA #9 and eventually both characters developed a more polished appearance, with help from artist **Max Ink** back in the day. Ninja Ant and Karate Kactus have become some of my favourite characters to write over the years. They aren't exactly from OUR Japan but some weird Earth-Spongy version of it, so don't look for any real cultural accuracy here!

Of the other characters this issue, "Grandpa Ant" made his first and only appearance in a rather silly back-up story I wrote back in *Amoeba Adventures* #5 which features some of my most cringe-worthy Asian stereotyping. Kyoko, Mitsu's ex, first appeared back in that same story in #5, but later went on to very briefly join the team starting in #10, before she and Ninja Ant broke up and she moved away in #17. I was never quite able to get her to work as a regular character, but she's popped up every so often since.

"Seedlings" is my kind of farewell to Karate Kactus, who was cut cruelly short as a character way back in the grim 1990s, and also a little bit of a story about fathers and sons and the legacies we leave. Hope you dig it!



The funeral of Isuzu, from *Amoeba Adventures* #24.

Enjoy the finer things in life.



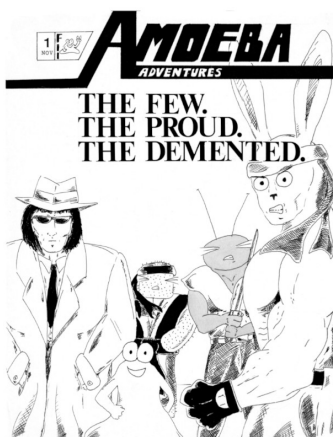
Consider a print version of some of our bespoke publications.

Limited-edition print versions are available of this issue you're reading, and there's still a few left of *Amoeba Adventures* #30 and #31! (Sorry, previous issues are now sold out.)

NEW! The limited *Amoeba Adventures* #27: The 25th Anniversary Edition!

It's the final issue of the original 1990-1998 run of *Amoeba Adventures*! Setting up the status quo for the 2020 *Amoeba Adventures* revival, it features Rambunny, Spif, Ninja Ant, Prometheus and Dawn one last time - and of course, a drunken bar brawl! Long out of print, I wanted to bring this one back to "life" marking a startling 25 years since I first put it out in early 1998. This special reprint also includes EIGHT pages of rare art, interviews and behind-the-scenes commentary. Only a handful of copies available!

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Meanwhile, if you're one of them newfangled digital readers, FREE PDFS of all 32 issues of *Amoeba Adventures* all the way back to the first issue in 1990, spinoffs, the early Prometheus comics, the *Amoeba Adventures* Archive of rarities and much, much more are all available for download at www.nikdirga.com in the *Amoeba Adventures* section or directly at <https://tinyurl.com/amoebacomics> - go dive into the depths of cyberspace and read some fine comics!