

PROOF OF CONCEPT VOLUME ONE NUMBER THREE



DANA NOVA DARKO

WRITER, LETTERER, ART DESIGNER, LAYOUTS AND ART MODIFICATION

DAYNA LIVES AND BREATHES ART OF ALL KINDS, WITH A BACKGROUND IN WEBCOMICS MARKETING AND COMICS CREATION.



ZOE JIMENEZ

INSPIRATION.

ZOE, WHO MAY OR MAY NOT EXIST, IS A DJ AND VIRTUAL WORLD DESIGNER, PHOTOGRAPHER, AND ORGANIZER. SHE HAILS FROM PORT JIMENEZ, COSTA RICA.



MISS MIDJOURNEY

ART AND CHARACTER IMAGINEER.

MISS MIDJOURNEY WORKS TIRELESSLY TO CREATE ART IN THE DESIGNER'S VISION, DESPITE NOT EXISTING. SHE CAN'T DRAW HANDS.



MY BROTHER STEVEN

AI AND MIDJOURNEY RESEARCHER, PROOFREADER, EDITOR

A PERPETUAL STUDENT AND TEACHER, STEVEN EXPLORED THE INS AND OUTS OF MIDJOURNEY, ALLOWING FOR THE CREATION OF THIS BOOK.

CREATIVE TEM

Special thanks to Todd Tochioka, Steve Coulson, Christopher English, Danielle Schmitt, my dad, Russina, Luna Gloaming, and everyone at SMASH.

DAYFREE

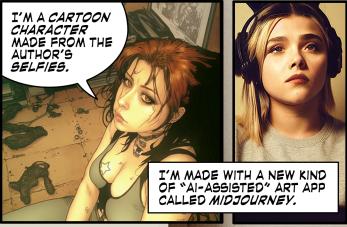
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PROOF OF CONCEPT



















PROPE CAPAFPT

"PROOF OF CONCEPT" WAS ALWAYS MEANT TO BE AN EXPLORATORY PROJECT TO LEARN ABOUT A NEW TECHNOLOGY, BUT I LEARNED MORE ABOUT STORYTELLING, LETTERING, AND ART THEORY IN SEVERAL MONTHS DOING 140+ PAGES OF COMICS WITH MIDJOURNEY THAN I DID PREVIOUSLY BY DRAWING COMICS BY HAND FOR TEN YEARS. THIS PROJECT NOT ONLY BECAME A STUDY OF THE WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS OF MIDJOURNEY AI ART IN LATE 2022, BUT ALSO AN EXPLORATION OF MY OWN RUSTY COMICS SKILLS, OPENING MANY DOORS FOR ME TO LEARN FROM OTHERS, AND TO TEACH. IN THE MEANTIME, THIS HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCES FOR ME AS A WRITER, SEEING MY IDEAS UNFOLD FASTER THAN THEY HAD IN THE PAST, WHILE ALSO DEVELOPING A NEW APPROACH TO WRITING COMICS MORE ROOTED IN COLLABORATIONS, AKIN TO STAN LEE'S "MARVEL METHOD, " RELEASING SOME OF MY CONTROL ON THE PROJECTS TO WORK WITH MISS MIDJOURNEY'S IDEAS.





GOALS WITH THE MIDJOURNEY AI:

- DEVELOP WORKING TECHNIQUES FOR PROMPTING
- CONSISTENT CHARACTERS
- CONSISTENT OUTFITS
- UNIQUE AND CONSISTENT ART STYLES
- HANDS. THOSE DAMN HANDS
- EXPRESSIONS AND BODY LANGUAGE
- MULTIPLE CHARACTERS IN A SCENE
- CHARACTERS PHYSICALLY INTERACTING
- ACTION SCENES
- ENVIRONMENTS AND LIGHTING
- COMPOSITING

GOALS FOR MYSELF:

- COMBINE THE AESTHETICS OF NEWSPAPER / WEBCOMICS HUMOR COMIC STRIPS WITH AMERICAN COMIC BOOK STYLES.
- IMPROVE STORYTELLING SKILLS, VARY CAMERA ANGLES, USE ESTABLISHING SHOTS.
- DYNAMIC PAGE LAYOUTS AND PROFICIENCY WITH SOFTWARE
- ADVANCED LETTERING
- DEVELOP PERSONAL STYLE SHEET
- USE MIDJOURNEY TO INSPIRE HAND-DRAWN ART.
- DEVELOP A VERSION OF "THE MARVEL METHOD" OF PLOTTING € LAYOUTS.
- TEACH WHAT I LEARN. THE NEXT PAGES WILL DEMONSTRATE THE RESULTS...

PAGE ONE



PREPORT Card PI



HANDS

MIDJOURNEY V.4B

I KNEW FROM THE OUTSET THAT ONE OF THE REASONS AI-ASSISTED ART WASN'T READY TO MAKE COMICS WAS ITS MASSIVE INCOMPETENCE TRYING TO DRAW HUMAN HANDS. SOMETIMES YOU GET LUCKY... SOMETIMES NOT.





SOMETIMES I GOT
A GREAT PANEL
THAT JUST NEEDED
SOME TOUCHINGUP. I DECIDED TO
BE HAPPY WITH THE
HANDS IF THEY
WERE ABOUT 90%
CORRECT. WE ALL
KNOW WHAT WE'RE
DEALING WITH,
AND THE AI WILL
GROW BETTER
VERY QUICKLY.





USING LINKED
REFERENCE IMAGES
OF MY OWN HANDS
OR CLIP ART
SOMETIMES
WORKED WELL, BUT
THERE COULD STILL
BE SOME MINOR
EDITS NEEDED.
THESE WOULD'VE
BEEN FINE FOR DR
STRANGE'S
HANDS.



ONE OF MY BIG CLUES AS TO HOW MIDJOURNEY WORKED WAS FOUND WHEN I STARTED PROMPTING THE NAMES OF SOME COMMON HAND POSES, SUCH AS "THUMBS-UP."









PROPERT CONGEPT

I STARTED OUT MAKING COMICS IN THE TRADITIONAL AMERICAN NINETIES COMIC BOOK STYLE, WHEN I WAS FIRST LEARNING.

TO MEATING BUTCH TO REALING BUTCH THE RANGE SHEET TO SHEET THE AN OPPOSITION AND SHEET THE AN OPPOSITION AND SHEET THE AND SHEET

"SEPTEMBER 17" #1 - 1998

COMIC STRIPS

SWITCHCATS







WITH THE ADVENT OF WEBCOMICS, I GOT INVOLVED WITH THAT SCENE AND DID ABOUT 500 HUMOR COMICS STRIPS BEFORE GOING ON A VERY LONG HIATUS.

INSPIRED TO RETURN TO MAKING COMICS BY LEARNING MIDJOURNEY, I FOUND THAT MY STYLE HAD BECOME A HYBRID OF THE TWO STYLES.

"ROBOT STORIES" 2004



"SEPTEMBER 17" #1 1998

"LEVIATHAN LENS" 2023

SOMEONE NEEDS TO GO OUT THERE AND FIND IT. IT'S NOT FAIR TO THE ELN'S.





"PROOF OF CONCEPT VOL.
ONE" BECAME AN EXERCISE IN
CREATING SMALL PUNCHLINES,
HOOKS, AND REVELATIONS IN
EACH SEQUENCE OR PAGE,
WHILE TRYING NOT TO DISTURB
THE SERIOUS SCI-FI NARRATIVE.

SO, DID IT WORK? WE'LL SEE...





PAGE THREE



I BEGAN PLAYING WITH MIDJOURNEY AS A FASCINATING NEW TOY, AND ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I WORKED AT WAS CREATING A RENDITION OF MY DJ ALTER-EGO, ZOE JIMENEZ.

I BEGAN USING "TEST" MODE, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED BETWEEN V.3 AND V.4 - WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE results similar to some stable DIFFUSION MODELS AT THAT TIME.*

MY NEXT PROJECT WITH TEST MODE WAS TO USE THIS CHARACTER DESIGN TO CREATE FAUX COVERS OF SOME COMIC BOOK IDEAS AND STYLES THAT I FOUND INTERESTING. I DIDN'T FEEL TEST WAS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY MAKE A COMIC BOOK, SO I WAS JUST DREAMING AND CREATING.

















MIDJOURNEY V.TEST

FOR IMAGES OF ZOE, I STARTED USING A PROMPT TO MIX THE LOOKS OF TWO ACTORS IN ORDER TO AVOID using someone's likeness.



THEN, ONE DAY, I HAD AN IDEA FOR A PARODY COMIC, AND I SLAPPED TOGETHER "DON'T FORGET MARY" IN A RETRO-FUTURISM ROCKWELL STYLE. I HAD SO MUCH FUN THAT I WENT ON TO DO MORE SHORT COMICS: 1-4-PAGE "PROOFS OF CONCEPT." TEST MODE REALLY DOESN'T OBEY PROMPTS VERY WELL, BUT IT HELPED ME LEARN MIDJOURNEY AND GAVE ME AN ABUNDANCE OF ARTISTIC CONCEPTS AND IDEAS.

THESE ARE THE CHAPTERS** IN VOLUME ONE MADE USING TEST MODE, IN ORDER OF PRODUCTION: 1. MARY (VAULT)

- 2. FRIEND REQUEST
- 3. DARKNESS
- 4. ATOM PUNK
- 5. BLACK MERCURY
- 6. THE BUNKER
- 7. IMPERIUM
- 8. THE INVERSION (PARTIALLY)









THE BIG SURPRISE CAME WHEN V.4 DROPPED, AND I LEARNED THAT MAKING IMAGE REFS IN TESTP MODE WORKED PERFECTLY WITH V.4, WHICH IS DETAILED IN "CHROMIUM DECAY PROCESS."***

PAGE FOUR

*I HAVE NOT USED STABLE DIFFUSION YET. **"CHAPTER" REFERS TO ONE OF THE VARIOUS SHORT STORIES WITHIN AN ISSUE.

*** "CHROMIUM DECAY PROCESS" WAS CREATED FOR THE AI COMIC BOOK CREATORS GROUP ON FACEBOOK AND WILL BE REPRINTED IN ISSUE 15.

IN LATE 2022 / EARLY 2023, THIS IS THE BIG ONE THAT EVERYONE WAS TRYING TO DO WITH THEIR MIDJOURNEY COMICS, AND THIS WAS SOMETHING MISS MIDJOURNEY DID NOT WANT TO DO. WE HAD TO BREAK IT, MUCH AS ATARI 2600 PROGRAMMERS HAD TO BREAK THE ATARI TO GET IT TO DO MORE THAN PONG AND TANK. AI ART WAS LIKE ATARI IN THAT IT WILL GO KICKING AND SCREAMING BUT ONCE YOU KNOW HOW IT WORKS, ONE CAN COME UP WITH WAYS TO GET IT TO GO BEYOND*.







INITIALLY, I WAS USING A COMBINATION OF TWO ACTORS TO CREATE A CONSISTENT CHARACTER IN TESTP MODE. WHEN V.4 WAS LAUNCHED, THE RESULTS OF THIS CREATED A VERY DIFFERENT CHARACTER. WHEN I ASKED TESTP TO USE MY FORMULA FOR ZOE TO MAKE TWO CHARACTERS TOGETHER, IT ALMOST ALWAYS RESULTED IN A BLONDE AND A BRUNETTE. SUDDENLY I HAD SISTERS - ZOE & MARIE.

TESTP MODE IS VERY DIFFICULT TO USE FOR STORYTELLING, AND IS UNABLE TO USE LINKED REFERENCE IMAGES IN THE PROMPT. BUT V.4 THRIVES ON IT. IN FACT, V.4 THRIVES ON TESTP REFERENCE IMAGES**. I HAD FOUND MY SYSTEM.



MIDJOURNEY V.4 PRODUCED GORGEOUS RESULTS, BUT SHE WASN'T MY DJ ZOE.









HAVING COME UP WITH MY "CHROMIUM DECAY PROCESS," EVERYTHING BECAME FASTER AND MORE EXCITING. I STILL HAD CHALLENGES, AS MISS MJ LOVES TO CHANGE THE CLOTHES, HAIRSTYLE, ACCESSORIES, ETC. SOMETIMES I'D JUST EDIT THE IMAGES, OR REROLL, REMIX, OR ADJUST MY SOURCE IMAGES AND PROMPTS TO GET THIS STUFF CLOSER.

I'LL TALK FOR HOURS. **SEE "IMAGE PROMPT" IN THE

MIDJOURNEY DOCS.



PREPORT CARGEPT

WE TESTED ABOUT 700 ARTIST NAMES AND ART STYLES TO SEE WHICH ONES WOULD GIVE US CONSISTENT RESULTS.

ART STYLES

MIDJOURNEY V.48

THE NIKOPOL TRILOGY



ACTUAL ENKI BILAL



MIDJOURNEY'S ENKI BILAL

WE TESTED THEM WITH A SIMPLE PROMPT: "/IMAGINE ART IN THE STYLE OF _____" WITH STYLE SET TO MEDIUM / REGULAR, AND CATALOGUED THE RESULTS.

WE LEARNED THAT IN MANY CASES, THERE WERE ARTIST NAMES THAT WOULD GIVE A CONSISTENT RESULT, BUT MORE A CONTENT ASSOCIATED TO THE ARTIST AS OPPOSED TO THE ARTIST'S ART STYLE. THIS IS WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR... SOMETHING ORIGINAL.

SO, JUST AS I MERGED TWO ACTOR NAMES TO GET SOMETHING CONSISTENT YET ORIGINAL, I DECIDED I WOULD PROMPT USING TWO TO FOUR ART STYLES MIXED TOGETHER. APPLYING THAT TO A LINKED IMAGE REFERENCE IN THE PROMPT GOT ME THE FINAL LOOK OF MY "DECAY" STYLE.



A HYBRID STYLE



TESTP REFERENCE



FINAL STYLE

WE ALSO GOT GOOD RESULTS FROM JUST DESCRIBING A STYLE CONCEPT RATHER THAN NAMING IT. I'M EXCITED TO TELL STORIES WITH THESE.



ANIME SCREENGRAB



SHINY CHROME



NEGATIVE SPACE



GPT3 GOTHIC HEROES

"THE MACHINATIONS"

PAGE SIX







AT THIS POINT MIDJOURNEY HAD SOME QUIRKS WHEN IT CAME TO RENDERING CHARACTERS. BECAUSE OF THESE QUIRKS, THE EASIEST COMICS TO CREATE WITH IT EITHER FEATURED A SINGLE CHARACTER NARRATING OR SPEAKING. OR NO DISTINCT CHARACTERS AT ALL.





MIDJOURNEY LOVED MORPHING. DESCRIBING TWO DIFFERENT CHARACTERS, OR USING TWO LINKED IMAGES OF DIFFERENT CHARACTERS TENDED TO MIX UP THEIR FEATURES, ESPECIALLY SKIN COLOR, HAIR COLOR, ETC. THIS IS HOW I CREATED MY MODEL OF DJ ZOE IN TESTP - MORPHING TWO ACTORS. NOW, I HAD TO STOP IT.

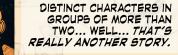
WE EXPERIMENTED HEAVILY, AND THE FIRST CLUE WE FOUND WAS THAT MIDJOURNEY WAS LESS LIKELY TO MORPH A MALE AND FEMALE TOGETHER. WHILE MAKING SOME FAUX MOVIE POSTERS IN TESTP, WE DEMONSTRATED THAT REQUESTING A MALE AND A FEMALE ACTOR COULD PRODUCE TWO DISTINCT CHARACTERS.





SO, I HAD MY "ACCIDENTAL SISTERS" CREATED IN TESTP. I FOUND THAT USING AN IMAGE OF THEM TOGETHER AS A LINKED REFERENCE RELIABLY PRODUCED THE TWO GIRLS IN V.4. THIS BECAME THE BASIS FOR "CHROMIUM DECAY."





MANAGE



THE SAME METHOD WAS USED IN "LEVIATHAN LENS" TO HAVE DIANA AND DAVID TOGETHER WITHOUT HAVING TO ROLL THE DICE TO DESCRIBE THEM REPEATEDLY.





THE MORE I WORKED WITH MIDJOURNEY, THE MORE I REFINED ALL MY METHODS.



PAGE SEVE



PREPORT CARDETT

I DIDN'T USE IT MUCH AT FIRST, BUT I LEARNED ABOUT THE PROCESS OF REMIX AND COMPOSITE* FOR PLACING TWO VERY DIFFERENT CHARACTERS TOGETHER.

COMPOSITING



MISS MIDJOURNEY TESTP RENDER



MISS MIDJOURNEY CHROMIUM DECAY



MADAM WRIGHT TESTP RENDER



MADAM WRIGHT CHROMIUM DECAY

FIRST, I RENDERED AN IMAGE OF TWO WOMEN TOGETHER. I CREATED THESE CHARACTERS TO DEMONSTRATE A LITERAL PROOF OF CONCEPT FOR THE REMIX AND COMPOSITE METHOD.



TWO GENERIC WOMEN TOGETHER



NEXT, I REMIXED THAT IMAGE TWICE, ONCE WITH EACH TESTP REFERENCE IMAGE.







WHILE THE RESULTS WEREN'T PERFECT, I'D SHOWN MYSELF THAT I COULD DO THIS. I PUT IT INTO PRACTICE FOR "LEVIATHAN LENS."









PAGE EIGHT





*SPECIAL THANKS TO STEVE COULSON.

Report Card-PI ENVIRONMENTS





FORMERLY KNOWN AS "BACKGROUNDS," I WAS JUST GENERATING THE ENVIRONMENTS FOR THE CHARACTERS IN THE MAIN PROMPT. "IN A DARK FOREST" OR "IN A LIVING ROOM, BOOKSHELVES IN THE BACKGROUND" AND THEN DESCRIBING THE LIGHTING SEEMED TO MAKE PERFECT SENSE TO ME.



MY SENSE WAS THAT IF THE PROMPT COULDN'T GET ME WHAT I WANTED, I COULD GENERATE A REFERENCE IMAGE TO PUSH MISS MIDJOURNEY ALONG; BUT, IT TURNED OUT TO WORK EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE. MOST OF THE WORK COULD BE DONE WITH LINKED REFERENCE IMAGES, WITH THE PROMPT JUST BEING USED TO NUDGE IT TO DO WHAT I WANTED WITH THE REFS.



I REALIZED QUICKLY THAT I WASN'T CREATING BACKGROUNDS, BUT WHOLE ENVIRONMENTS. A STRONG SCENERY RENDER WITH A COLOR SCHEME, LIGHTING, AND INTERESTING CONTENT THAT MISS MIDJOURNEY MIGHT ENJOY BECAME AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MY PROCESS WHILE WORKING ON CHROMIUM DECAY. USING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR AN ENTIRE SCENE BECAME ESSENTIAL.









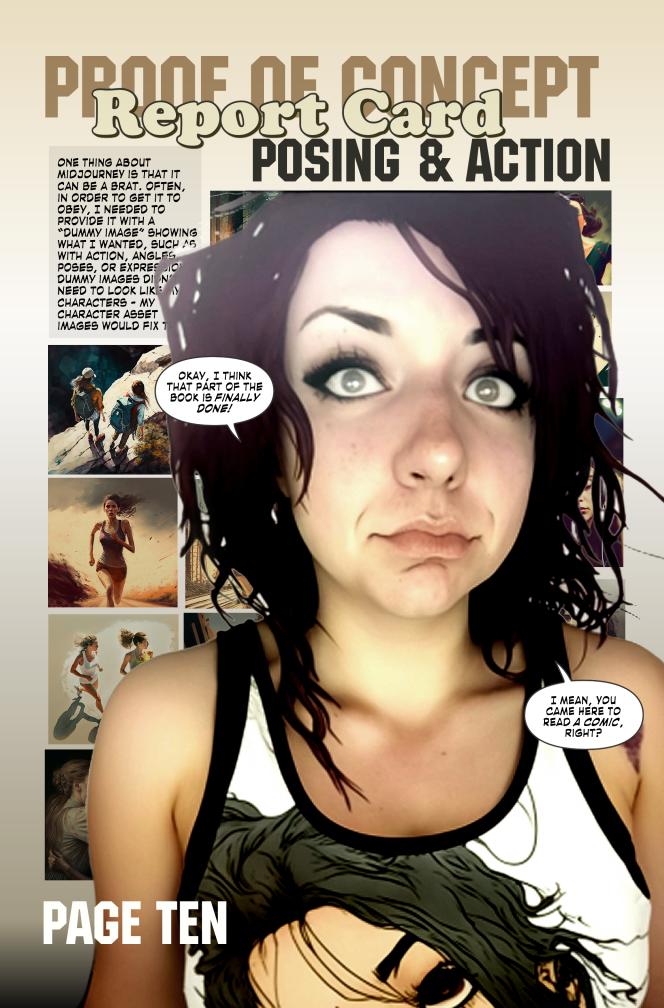




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PROSSIGGONGEPT



















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DANA DARKO ZOE JIMENEZ

Selfier William













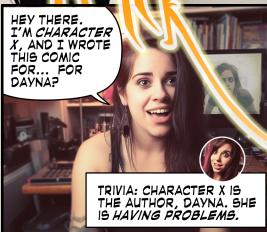


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PAGE TWO

PROCE OF CONCEPT

















PROOF OF CONTRICT















PAGE FOUR

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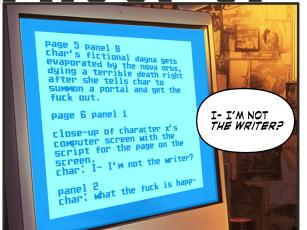








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PROOF OF CONCEPT











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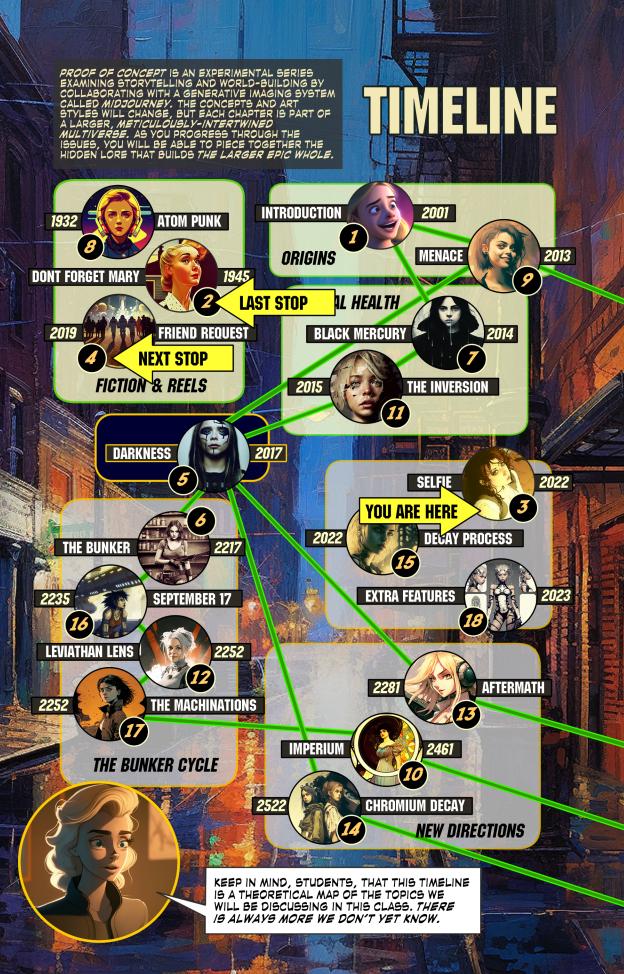


















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ISSUE #5 - "DARKNESS" WILL BE COMING UP NEXT. THIS IS THE ISSUE WHERE THE MAIN PLOT REARS ITS HEAD AND DESTROYS... EVERYTHING.

ALSO, IN SPARK PHASE THREE, CHAR IS FLUNG INTO THE FAR FUTURE OF "AFTERMATH," WHERE MECHA VS. LEVIATHAN IS A DAILY STRUGGLE.



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