

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

CO-STARRING:

ONE-EYED BLACK OF
THE NIGHTMARE PIRATE

IN...

THE RETURN OF
PRINCESS

Sally

CHAPTER

III

STRANGE
BLACK
BLACK

ALRIGHT, CARRIE!
INITIATE DE-ROBOTIZATION
SEQUENCE!

INITIATING DE-ROBOTIZATION
SEQUENCE IN 5...4...3...
...ACTIVATING NOW

HMPH!

WELL, 'BLACK!
HERE'S HOPIN' THAT
THIS IS GONNA
WORK!

FER EVERYTHING
THAT IT'S WORTH, I,
TOO, HOPE YER "REAL"
GIRL MAKES IT THROUGH
THIS, OK, SONIC!



THE RETURN OF

PRINCESS JULIE
Sally VII

!!!!????? YER SERIOUS, SONIC!!!!?????
YOU REALLY THINK THAT THAT'S WHAT THAT
CREEPY OLD 'COON'S UP TO!????



DEAD-SERIOUS!

AND IF 'BLACK'S GOT SAL, HE'S PROBABLY LOOKIN' TA BRING
'ER BACK AS WE SPEAK! AIN'T NO UPGRADE THAT'S EVE
GONNA SLOW 'IM DOWN!



-SIGH-
FER ONCE, I
HOPE YER RIGHT,
SONIC! CHAOTIX
OUT!

JULIE-SU! SEE IF YOU CAN
GAIN ACCESS TO THE PIRATES'
MAIN-FRAME! I GOT A FEW
PRESSING QUESTIONS FOR OUR
NEW "FRIEND", THE PIRATE!

LIKE, WHAT KINDA
QUESTIONS, KUCKLES?!



LIKE WHAT
HAPPENED TO
MY GREAT-
GRANDMOTHER
CRYSTAL-LA!

GASP-THAT'S RIGHT! KNUCKLES' GREAT-GRANDMOTHER WAS
ROBOTICIZED! AND NOW, I'M BETTING KNUCKLES WANTS
TO KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THE PIRATE GOT HER BACK



I'LL GET
RIGHT ON IT,
KNUCKLES!

JUST A FEW MINUTES LATER.....

WELL, YOU GUYS, THE PIRATE'S COMPUTER WAS WAY MORE
COOPERATIVE THAN I THOUGHT IT WAS GONNA BE!

WELL, WADJA
FIND, GIRL!?



ACCORDING TO "CARRIE", AS OF ABOUT TWO HOURS
AFTER THE TRIBE GOT SETTLED IN ALBION, THE PIRATE
MANAGED TO TRACK DOWN ALL MEMBERS OF THE TRIBE
THAT AT HAIR LOST TO ROBOTNIK, AND MANAGED TO AT
LEAST RESTORE THE FREE-WILL OF ALL OF 'EM!
UNFORTUNATELY, KNUCKLES, YOUR GREAT-GRANDMOTHER
WAS AMONG THOSE THAT THE PIRATE COULDN'T GET BACK ALL
THE WAY! HE DID RESTORE HER FREE-WILL, THO'!



AND I'M BETTIN' I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED SOON AFTERWARDS! SHE WAS LOST TO THE EGG-GRAPE, WASN'T SHE!?

-SIGH- 'FRAD SO, KNUCKLES! AND MESSAGE FROM THE PIRATE: HE'S REALLY SORRY THAT THAT HAPPENED, KNUCKLES!



MESSAGE FOR THE PIRATE: I DON'T KNOW OR CARE WHAT KIND OF GARBAGE HE WAS FED BY ATHAIR, BUT THAT MASSACRE AT THE HANDS O' EGGMAN WAS NOT HIS FAULT!

IF YER GONNA ACCUSE ANYBODY O' FEEDING ME 'GARBAGE' KNUCKLES,



BLAME ME, BLAME WHOMEVER IF YA' FEEL FIT! BUT LEAVE ATHAIR ALONE!



ABOUT A HALF-HOUR LATER...

...PIRATE! NOT A SINGLE ACCUSATION THAT YOU'VE PLACED ON YERSELF IS TRUE! THE ONLY THING YER 'GUILTY' OF, IS BEIN' SO 'FRAID O' YERSELF N' WHATCHA SAW, THATCHA REJECTED YER OWN ANIMALITY! NOT EVEN THE DARK LEGION'D DARE TRAD WHERE YOU DID!



ATHAIR!!!

SOB-I'M SORRY, OLD FRIEND! I SHOULD'VE...

AND NOW, YOU HAVE A SECOND CHANCE, BLACK-GLOVE!



I SHOULD'VE REALIZED, FROM THE WAY THE BROTHERHOOD TREATED ME, THAT I SHOULD NEVER'VE MADE THE SAME MISTAKE WITH YOU! I KNOW IT MAY NOT'VE SEEMED LIKE IT AT THE TIME, BLACK-GLOVE, BUT I AM ETERNALLY GRATEFUL THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO RE-UNITE THE TRIBE, WITH THOSE THAT THEY LOST TO THAT BLOATED FIEND SO LONG AGO! AND I KNOW THAT THIS MAY BE LATE IN-COMING, BUT THANK YOU, FOR BRINGING EVERYONE BACK, CRYSTAL-LA ESPECIALLY! AND IF YOU REALLY WANT EGGMAN'S HEAD, AS BADLY AS YOU SAY YOU DO, I FEEL THAT THE ONE KNOWN AS SONIC, AND THE CHOSEN ONE AS WELL, WILL MOST APPRECIATE THE HELP!

-SHIFF- THANKS, ATHAIR! AND I PROMISE--



"I WON'T LETCHA DOWN THIS TIME!" SOON AFTERSWARDS.

INCOMING TRANSMISSION, FREEDOM FIGHTERS!



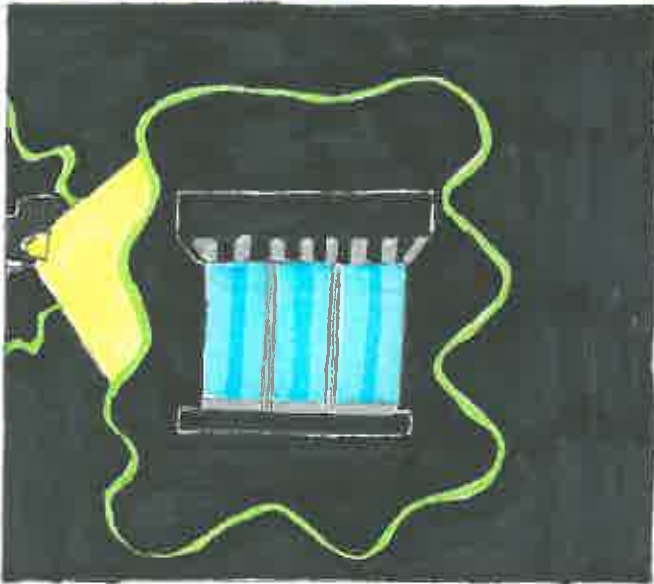
HMM..... I WONDAR HOO EET EEZ ZIS TIME, EH!?

IT IS ONE-EYED BLACK AGAIN! HE SAYS THAT HE HAS SOME VERY GOOD, NEWS FOR US!

FREEDOM FIGHTERS! I HAVE SOME GREAT NEWS FOR YA! AS THE CHAOTIX'VE PROBABLY REPORTED, YES! I HAVE SALLY! AS WELL AS OTHERS THAT ALL OF YOU'VE COMPLETELY LOST HOPE OF EVER GETTING BACK! I'VE ALSO GOT SOMETHING THAT I SHOULD'VE SHARED WITH YOU GUYS A LONG TIME AGO!



LAY IT ON US, 'BLACK! WHATCHA GOT FOR US!!!!?



JUST MINUTES AFTER LOOKING THE BLUE-PRINTS OVER... NO WAY!!! YOU GUYS! THERE'RE PLANS FER A DE-ROBOTICIZER!!!



I DEVELOPED THESE PLANS 500 YEARS AGO, TRANSLATING TO ABOUT 11 MONTHS AGO BY YOUR GUYS' CLOCK! AT FIRST, I DIDN'T THINK THAT THIS DEVICE'D BE NECESSARY, BUT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO SALLY, I REALIZED THAT YOU GUYS REALLY COULD USE SOMETHING LIKE THIS!



I PROMISE YA, 'BLACK-YER NOT GONNA BE SORRY!



AND TO START THESE TORMENTED SOULS OFF ON THEIR JOURNEY BACK TO BEING THE FRIENDS AND/OR LOVED ONES YOU ONCE KNEW.....



... I DEVELOPED THIS! ONE OF 69 IDENTICAL CIRCUIT CARDS! ONCE INSTALLED IN THESE ROBBIANS' BRAIN COMPONENTS, THEY WILL RESTORE THEIR FREEWILL!



BE WARNED, THO': THIS METHOD OF SOUL RESURRECTION DOES HAVE ITS FAIR-SHARE OF SIDE-EFFECTS!



LAY IT ON US, 'BLACK! WITH ALL OF US WORKIN' TOGETHER, I'M GETTIN' IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD!

-SIGH- THE BIGGEST PROBLEM WITH RESTORING ONE'S FREE-WILL THIS WAY, IS THAT SOME O' THE BEING'S MORE DOMINANT PERSONALITY TRAITS WILL BE GREATLY AMPLIFIED! THEY'LL STILL BE THE FRIENDS YOU ONCE KNEW, BUT THEY MAY BE SOMEWHAT MORE EMOTIONAL THAN THEIR FRIENDS AND/OR LOVED ONES'RE USED TO...



BUT SAL'LL STILL BE BACK TA' NORMAL, RIGHT!?

YEAH! THING IS: I'M GONNA NEED YOUR GUYS' HELP IF I'M GONNA PULL THIS OFF! ALSO, THE A-FORMENTIONED AMPED PERSONALITY TRAITS ARE NOT LIKELY TO SUBSIDE FOR ANYWHERE FROM MONTHS TO A FULL DECADE...



TRUST ME WHEN I SAY THIS, 'BLACK: DUNN' MATTER IF IT TAKES A CENTURY!!! AS LONG AS SAL'S BACK, THAT'S ALL I CARE ABOUT!!!

SALLY MUST BE VERY LUCKY TO HAVE A FRIEND LIKE YOU, SONIC!



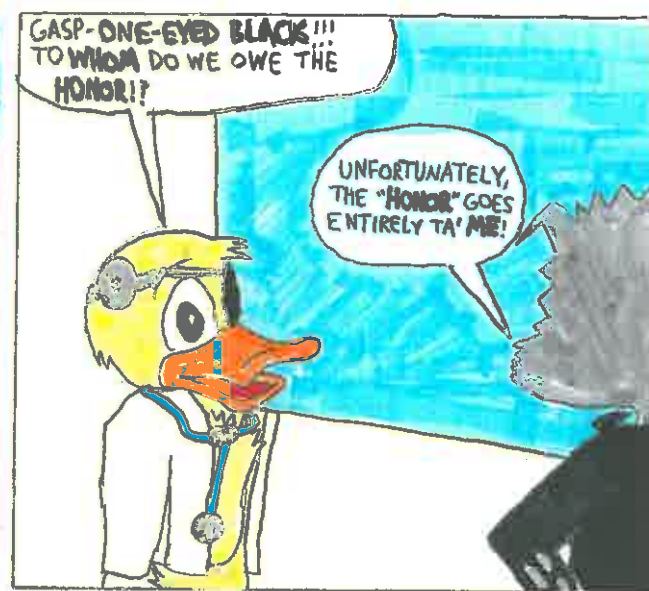
I'LL BE ARRIVING IN NEW MOBOTROPOLIS AT ABOUT 400 HOURS! WITH EVERYBODY THAT I'VE KIDNAPED FROM EGGMAN! ONE-EYED BLACK, OVER N' OUT!



AFTER ALL 69 ROBANS ARE TELEPORTED TO TOMMY TURTLE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL AND SECURED...

MAN! SO MANY ROBANS! I WONDER WHY ONE-EYED BLACK'D RESCUE SO MANY OF 'EM AT ONCE!

'CAUSE THE ONE I WAS TRULY AFTER SAID SHE WEN'T GOING ANYWHERE WITH-OUT 'EM!



GASP-ONE-EYED BLACK!!! TO WHOM DO WE OWE THE HONOR!?

UNFORTUNATELY, THE "HONOR" GOES ENTIRELY TA' ME!

I SEE YA' HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT, 'BLACK! ARE YA' STILL SURE THATCHA' DON'T WANT THOSE LOST PERSONALITY TRATS BACK!?



POSITIVE!

BUT NOW, IS NOT THE TIME TO BE WORRYING 'BOUT MY STATE O' MIND, DOC! THERE'RE OTHERS HERE, WHO'RE FAR-MORE IN-NEED O' HELP THAN ME, RIGHT NOW!



A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

WELL, DOC? WILL THE CARD BE COMPATIBLE!?

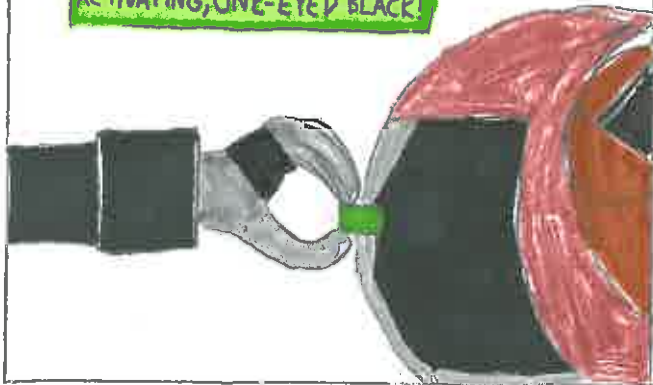
I CHECKED MECHA-SALLY OUT FROM TOP TO BOTTOM! AND I GOTTA SAY:

SHE'S ONE O' THE MOST ADVANCED ROBANS EVER BROUGHT TO US! EGGMAN REALLY DID HIS HOMEWORK ON THIS ONE! AND I FOUND AN EMPTY SPACE IN 'ER BRAIN COMPONENT; MY GUESS IS: EGGMAN DESIGNED 'ER THIS WAY SO HE COULD INSTALL EXTRA CONTROL CIRCUITRY IF NEEDED! IF I READ THE DIMENSIONS RIGHT, YOUR "FREE-WILL RESTORATION CARD" 'LL BE A PERFECT FIT!

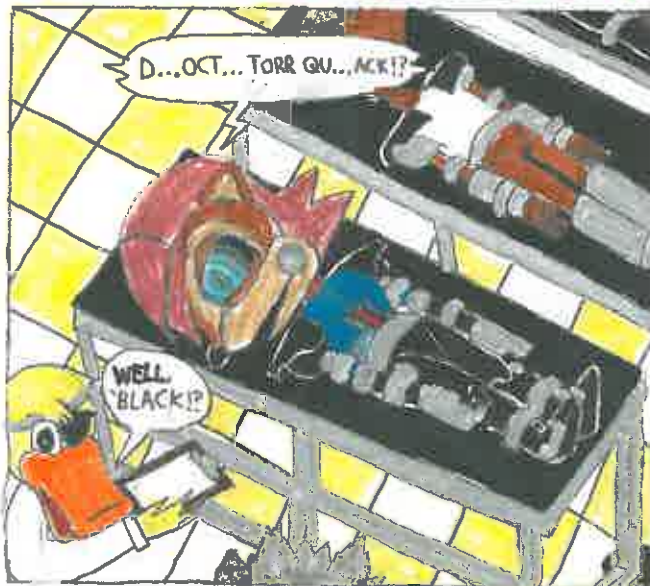


WELL, HERE GOES NOTHING! CARRIE! ACTIVATE
FREE-WILL RESTORATION CARD #482!

ACTIVATING, ONE-EYED BLACK!



SALLY! CAN YA' HEAR ME!!!? PRINCESS!!! WAKE UP!!!



WELCOME BACK, AND HOME, SALLY! NURSE! I THINK
IT'S SAFE TO REMOVE THE RESTRAINTS FROM 'ER NOW!



ONE-EYED BLACK!!
NEVER THOUGHT I
WOULD EVER SAY
THIS TO YOU, BUT,
FOR EVERYTHING
THAT IT'S WORTH,
THANK YOU FOR
RESCUING ME!



GLAD TA' FINALLY BE ABLE TA' HELP OUT, SALLY!
AND I GOTTA SAY- EVERY SINGLE ONE O' YER FRIENDS
HERE'RE REALLY HAPPY TA' HAVE YA' BACK!



ONE-EYED BLACK, I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE AN OBLIGATION
TO RESCUE ANYONE AND EVERYONE FROM ROBOTNIK'S AND
NOW EGGMAN'S-TWISTED INFLUENCE, BUT WHY GO THROUGH
SUCH TROUBLE FOR ME!?--SOB-I NEARLY CONDEMNED THE
FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO ALWAYS BACKED ME UP!!--SOB-WHY
HELP ME AFTER ALL THAT!?



*SALLY IS REFERRING TO THE EVENTS COVERED IN THE
"MECHA MADNESS SAGA (STRIKES 39-40)"

LOOK, SALLY! WHAT YOU DID, YOU DID 'CAUSE EGGMAN PROGRAMMED
YA' TA' DO IT! AND NOBODY HERE'S FORGOTTEN, SALLY; IT WAS
YOUR DOING THAT SAVED EVERYONE BUT HERSELF FROM THE
DEATH-EGG MACH-2! AND YOU MAY NOT BE A VERY GOOD
FRIEND O' MINE, SALLY, BUT AT THE SAMETIME, I KNOW-
AND HAVE GREAT RESPECT FER HOW MUCH YOU MEAN TA' SOME-
ONE HERE WHO IS MY FRIEND!



NONE OF THAT MATTERS, ONE-EYED BLACK! EVER SINCE
I WAS MECHANIZED, I DID SOME HORRIBLE THINGS!!--SOB-I
DON'T EVEN DESERVE TO STILL EXIST!--SOB



HEAR ME, SALLY- YER FRIENDS'VE BEEN DOING FAVORS FER YOU SINCE
THE DAY YOU WERE BORN! AND THEY HARDLY EVER LET YOU
DOWN! AND NOW, SALLY, IT'S TIME FER YOU TA' DO A FAVOR FER
YER FRIENDS! AND IF YOU CONTINUE TA' CARRY ON LIKE THIS, YOU'LL
BE LETTIN' 'EM ALL DOWN LIKE AN ANVIL MADE O' LEAD! I CAME
ALL THIS WAY BACK HERE, SO I COULD HELP SONIC GET YOU
BACK! EVEN WHEN YOU TWO WERE NT TOGETHER, YOU TREATED
EACH OTHER LIKE YOU WERE! AND BELIEVE ME, SALLY: A
FRIENDSHIP LIKE THAT IS NOT EASY TA' COME BY! AND
AFTER I LEARNED THAT YOUR MECHANIZATION WAS A LONG-
LASTING PIECE O' DAMAGE, I HAD TA' COME BACK! SO C'MON,
SALLY! YER FRIENDS NEED YOU!

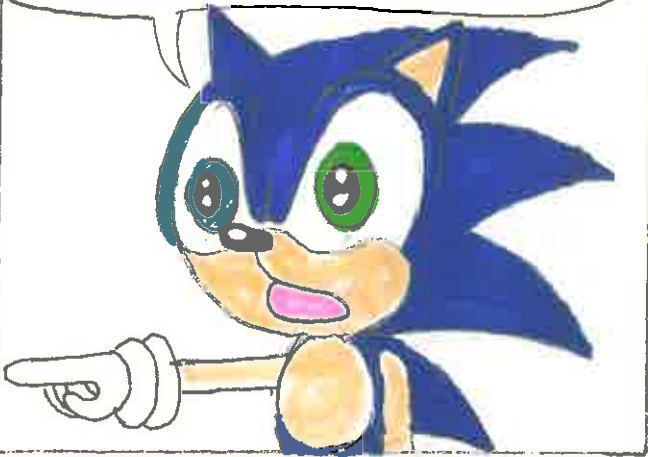


ONE-EYE BLACK! WHAT I DID AS THIS--THING--THAT
EGGMAN TURNED ME INTO--SOB--I DON'T THINK THAT
EVEN SONIC WOULD FORGIVE ME FOR ANY OF IT!



THAT'S WHERE YER
WRONG, SAL!

'BLACK'S RIGHT! WHAT YOU DID AS A ROBIAN WAS NOT YER FAULT! AND NOW THAT WE GOTCHA BACK, SAL, WE'RE ALL GONNA MAKE EGGMAN WISH HE STAYED IN THE ZONE THAT 'E CRAWLED OUTTA TA' CONQUER THIS ONE!



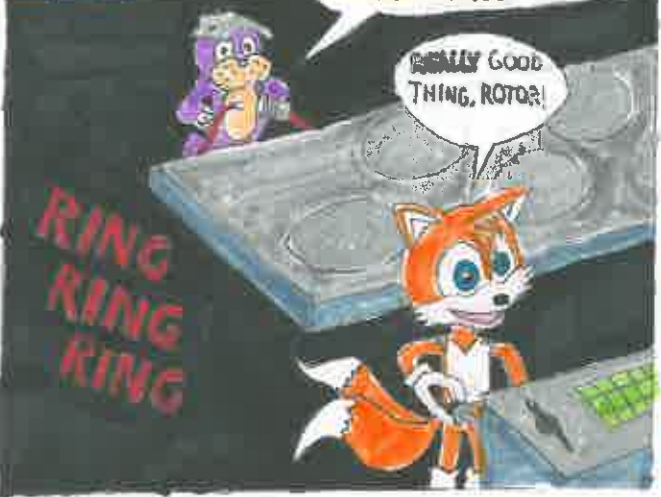
DOC! I THINK IT'S SAFE TO RECHARGE 'ER NOW! BUT, JOS ENOUGH FOR HER TA' VISIT WITH 'ER FRIENDS, AND TA' GET 'ER TO THE DE-ROBOTICIZER A-SAP!



"SPEAKING OF WHICH..."

MAN, IT'S A GOOD THING THAT 'BLACK'S GADGETS'RE MADE WITH SUCH BASIC STUFF!

REALLY GOOD THING, ROTOR!



NEW MOBITROPOLIS MAIN LAB! TAILS HERE! OH! HE 'BLACK!

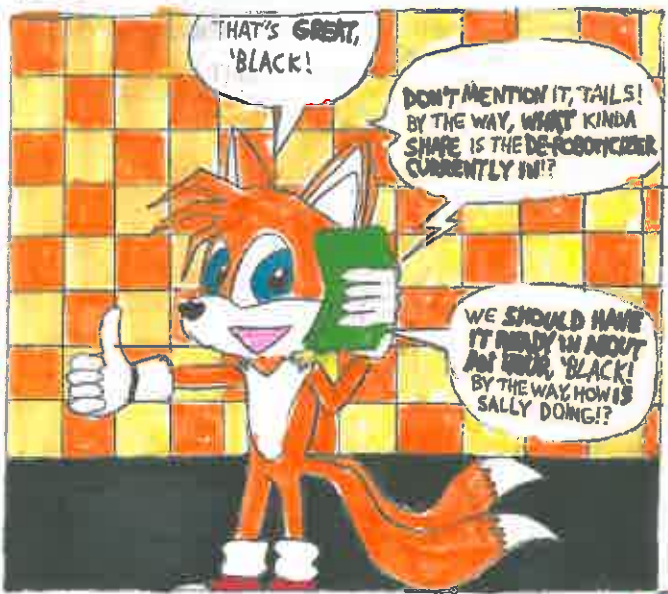


TAILS! GREAT NEWS! SALLY'S GOT 'ER FREE WILL BACK! THE REST OF THE ROBBIANS ARE RECEIVING THE SAME TREATMENT ON A ONE-BY-ONE BASIS AS WE SPEAK!

THAT'S GREAT, 'BLACK!

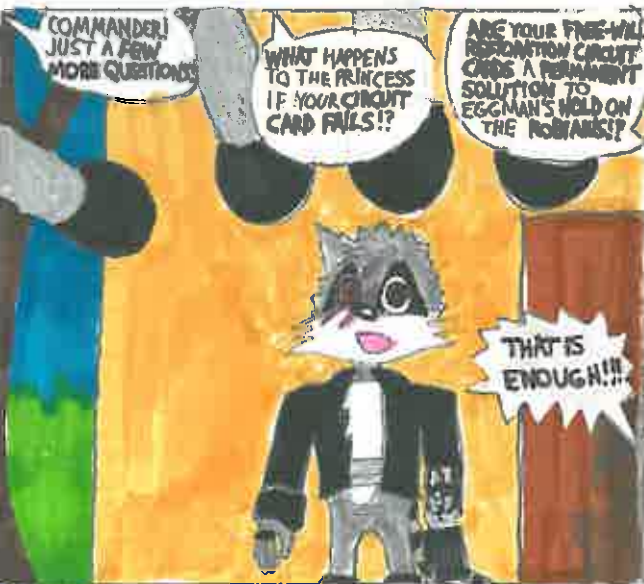
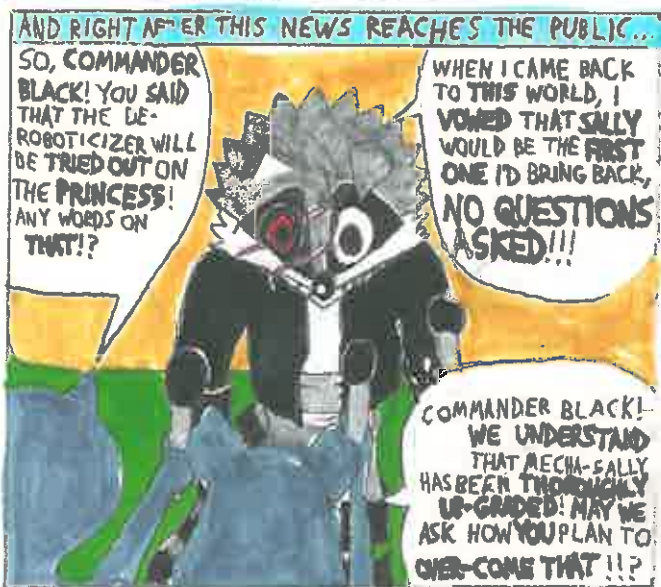
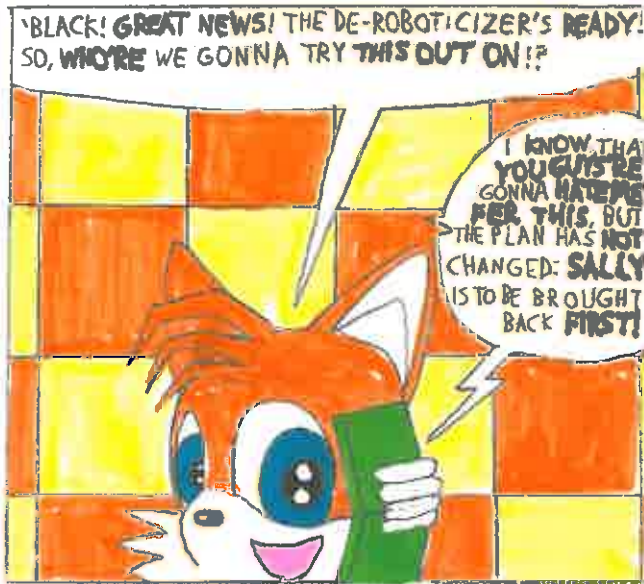
DON'T MENTION IT, TAILS! BY THE WAY, WHAT KINDA SHAPE IS THE DE-ROBOTICIZER CURRENTLY IN?!

WE SHOULD HAVE IT READY IN ABOUT AN HOUR, 'BLACK! BY THE WAY, HOW IS SALLY DOING?!



WELL, LEMME PUT IT THIS WAY, TAILS: I RECOMMEND THAT SHE NOT LOOK 'ERSELF IN THE MIRROR 'TIL AFTER SHE'S DE-MECHANIZED!





LOOK; I KNOW THAT YOU'RE ALL CONCERNED ABOUT ME, BUT A PROMISE IS A PROMISE! AND ONE-EYED BLACK PROMISED, TO HIMSELF, TO HIS FRIENDS, TO MY FRIENDS, TO EVERYONE, THAT I WOULD BE THE FIRST ONE HE'D BRING BACK! I BEG YOU, PLEASE, NO MORE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR ILL WORDS, UNTIL MY FATE IS DECIDED! NOW, CLEAR OUT! ONE-EYED BLACK HAS A GOOD MANY TO RESTORE TO THEIR FORMERSELVES!



IT'S 'BOUT TIME YOU TWO SHOWED UP!

SORRY WE'RE LATE, ROTOR! HAD TA' GET 'BST THE PRESS!



JUST A FEW MINUTES LATER...

WELL, YOU GUYS!? HOW'S SAL!?



THE MODIFICATIONS MADE TO 'ER BY EGGMAN WERE NOTHING SHORT OF EXTREME. SONIC! FORTUNATELY, THANKS TO 'BLACK, IT ONLY MEANS THAT IT'S GONNA TAKE LONGER TO COMPLETELY DE-MECHANIZE 'ER!

-GROAN-ALRIGHT! HOW LONG'S WE TALKIN' HERE!?



CHILL, SONIC! NOT REALLY THAT LONG! BY MY CALCULATIONS, ONLY ABOUT 10 MINUTES, STARTING ABOUT FOUR MINUTES AND THREE SECONDS AGO!



WELL, THIS IS SAL WE'RE TALKIN' ABOUT HERE! SO, I GUESS I CAN WAIT THAT LONG! MEANTIME, C'MON, 'BLACK! IT'S HIGH-TIME WE DID SOME MUCH-NEEDED, AND LONG-AWAITED CATCH-UP!



I'DURE TERN VERY MUCH MY SPEEDY BLUE FRIEND!

AND SO.....

DON'T GET US WRONG, 'BLACK! WE'RE ALL GLAD TA' HAVE YA' BACK! AND WE REALLY DO APPRECIATE WHATCHER TRYIN' TA' DO HERE...

OUI, OUI! WAIRY GRATEFUL! BUT, I ZOUGHT ZAT'YU AND ZIE PREENCESS DIDND' LIKE EACH OZIER!



YEAH! SO, WHY THE CHANGE O' HEART ALL OF A SUDDEN!?

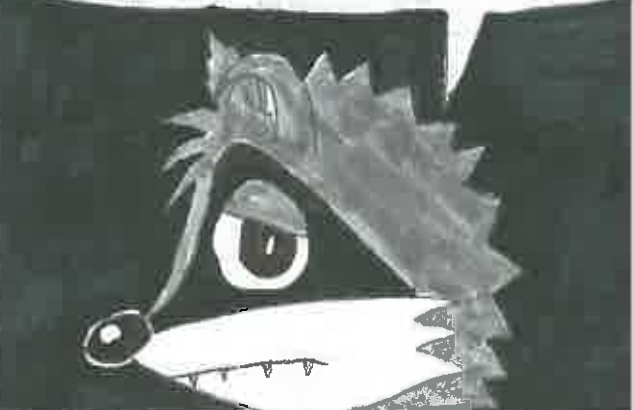


WE REALLY DO APPRECIATE THAT YOU WANT TO HELP US GET THE PRINCESS BACK, BUT I HEARD FROM MY FRIENDS THAT YOU AND THE PRINCESS DID NOT GET ALONG! IN FACT, I HEARD A VERY SCARY RUMOR THAT YOU ACCUSED HER OF LYING TO YOU ONCE!

IT'S NOT THAT WE DON'T APPRECIATE WHATCHER TRYIN' TA DO FOR US, 'BLACK! IT'S JUST THAT THE MILLION ADDIUM QUESTION WE ALL HAVE IS: WHY!!!???



I ADMIT IT! SALLY N' I DID HAVE OUR FAIR-SHARE O' DIFFERENCES. I GUESS THE SITCH BETWEEN ME N' HER, WAS VERY SIMILAR TO WHAT WAS GOING ON BETWEEN SONIC N' KNUCKLES! SALLY MAY'VE BEEN A VERY UNUSY ALLY FER ME, BUT, BOTTOM LINE SHE WAS AN ALLY! AND SHE WAS NEVER ANYWHERE NEAR EVIL- AT LEAST NOT UNTIL EGGMAN MECHANIZED 'ER!



AND EVEN THOUGH I WOULDN'T EXACTLY CALL SALLY MY FRIEND, I ALSO KNOW, AND VERY-WELL RESPECT, HOW MUCH SHE MEANT TA' SOMEBODY HERE, WHO IS MY FRIEND!

MAN! CAN'T BELIEVE 'BLACK CARED SO MUCH! AND EVEN AFTER ME N' KNUCK BURIED THE HATCHET, NEVER WOULD'VE GUESSED IT'D HAPPEN BETWEEN SAL N' 'BLACK!



NOT TO MENTION, AS I GOT TA' KNOW 'ER WAYS BETTER, I VIEWED SALLY AS COOL-HEADED, SELF-SACRIFICING, AND ALWAYS OUT TA' BE THE BEST LEADER, SHE COULD READLY MAKE 'ERSELF! I, IN FACT, VIEW HER, AS GOING RIGHT UP THERE, WITH ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS, COMMISSONATE, AND RESPECTED LEADERS OF ALL TIME AND SPACE, THE GREAT OPTIMUS PRIME HIMSELF!



ZO, WHO-UND RAZAIR VIKT-EEZ ZIS "OPTHEEMUS OF RRY-AM"!?

OPTIMUS PRIME WAS THE LEADER OF PROBABLY THE MOST FEARSOME RACE OF ROBOTIC WARRIORS EVER TO BE LABELED THE "GOOD GUYS", THE "AUTOBOTS"!

SO THEY IS, "OPTIMUS PRIME" GAN WUZA...

A 'BOT? YEAH! HE WAS! BUT 'E WAS A BEING OF COMPLETE SENTIENCE! I AM WELL-AWARE THAT SUCH A MACHINE DOESN'T EXIST HERE! BUT ELSEWHERE, WHO KNOWS!? AND, OPTIMUS PRIME MAY'VE BEEN A BEING OF METAL-AND-WIRE, BUT HE RESPECTED ALL LIFE, WHEREVER LIFE WAS FOUND! AND AS LONG AS THERE WAS A GOOD-HEARTED CREATURE FOR 'IM TA' FIGHT ALONGSIDE, OR EVEN FOR, HE WAS PRETTY WELL UNDERTAKABLE! WHERE I COME FROM, HE HAS BEEN CELEBRATED AS A HERO, TA' END ALL HEROES!

KEEP IN MIND, YOU GUYS: I AM NOT PUTTING SALLY DOWN BY COMPARING HER TA' OPTIMUS! I AM, IN FACT, COMMENDING HER! AND FOR ALL MY STORIES OF THE HEROES I CHERISH, DO NOT FORGET MY STORIES OF THE VILLIANS I SO-VERY-MUCH DESPISE! INCLUDING THE GUY WHO, AS OF THE EIGHTH GRADE, I COMPARED ALL FORMS OF RACISM TO: ADOLF HITLER!

DON'T EVEN SPEAK TA' ME 'BOUT THAT SQUARE-MUSTACHED JERK! THAT CREEP ACTUALLY MAKES ROBOTNIK LOOK LIKE KING ELIAS!

KEEP IN-MIND, YOU GUYS: THE ONLY KINDO' PREJUDICE THAT I THINK SHOULD EXIST, IS THE EXTREME TYPE WITH WHICH YER SPOSED TA' TERMINATE YER ADVERSARIES!

HEY, HEY! SAY NO MORE, 'BLACK! WE GET WHATCHER SAYIN! AND, YER RIGHT! HEROES REALLY DO COME IN A PRETTY WIDE VARIETY O' SHAPES, SIZES N' TYPES, DON'T THEY!?

CHUCKLE YOU KNOW IT, SONIC!

YOU ALWAYS DID HAVE THE LEAST PREJUDICE OF US ALL, SONIC!

AND NOW, I THINK I UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU GOT IT FROM!

SAL!!!

GREAT TA' 'AVE YA' BACK, SAL!



GREAT TO BE BACK, SONIC! AT LEAST FOR NOW!



I REALLY HATE TA' BREAK UP THIS TOUCHING AND LONG-AWAITED REUNION, BUT YOU GUYS ALL UNDERSTAND THAT I GOTTA MAKE SURE THAT SALLY'S BACK FER GOOD! THIS, OF COURSE MEANS, THAT SALLY IS TO BE CONFINED TO THIS COMPLEX FER 120 HOURS!



SO, IT LOOKS LIKE I WAS RIGHT! YOU STILL DON'T TRUST ME AFTER WHAT HAPPENED* -SIGH- AND PERSONALLY, I DON'T BLAME YOU!

*SEE STH#40 TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED. SALLY IS TALKING ABOUT

DON'T WORRY 'BOUT IT, YOU GUYS! I PROMISE, IF SALLY'S STILL A BEING OF FLESH-AND-BLOOD 30 MINUTES AFTER HER 120 HOURS'RE UP, THAT'LL MEAN THAT THE DE-ROBOTICIZER EFFECTS'RE PERMANENT, AND SALLY'LL BE FREE TO WALK AMONGST YOU ONCE AGAIN, AND YOU GUYS CAN CELEBRATE THE RETURN OF YOUR MOST INFLUENTIAL AND CHERISHED LEADER ALL YA' LIKE!



I WANT YOU, ST. JOHN, TO KEEP AN EYE OR TWO, ON BOTH SALLY, AND THE CLOCK! IF SHE IS STILL A CREATURE OF FLESH-AND-BLOOD 30 MINUTES AFTER 'ER FIVE-DAY SENTENCE IS UP, THAT'S WHEN SALLY WILL BE FREE TO WALK AMONG 'ER FRIENDS ONCE AGAIN, AND WILL BE RESTORED TO DUTY AS PRIMARY COORDINATOR OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS!



'Y SENT FOR ME, MATE!?

MUCH AS IT PLEASES THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS' ULCER, ST. JOHN, I DID!

WELL SOMETHIN' I'M LOOKIN' FORWARD TO, MATE, BUT WHAT 'APPENS IF SHE TURNS BACK INTO A ROBOT!?



THEN WE'LL JUST HAVETA' UP THE POWER OUTPUT OF THE DE-ROBOTICIZER, AND TRY AGAIN!

AND IF THAT CIRCUIT CARD O' YERS GOES KAPUT?



PROBABILITY: NEGATIVE-21 %

KEEP IN MIND, SHEILA: YER STILL NOT EXACTLY A FAVORITE 'ROUND HERE! BUT ALRIGHT! I'LL WATCH 'ER!



C'MON, LUV! REALLY HURTA DO THIS TO YA', BUT THE PIRATE'S RIGHT! WE GO'A MAKE SHIR YER BACK FOR GOOD!



I AM NOT YOUR "LUV", ST. JOHN!!!

SLAP!



THE NAME IS "SALLY"! LEARN IT! NOW MOVE ASIDE! YOU'RE KILLING THE FLOWERS!



SHEESH! WHAT'S HER PROBLEM!

IF YOU DUNNO THE ANSWER, ST. JOHN, I SUGGEST YOU TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LATEST REVISION OF YER RESUME!

COME AGAIN, MATE?



NEWS-FLASH! POLECAT: I DUNNO IF YA HEARD MY BROADCAST OR NOT, SO ALLOW ME TA' ENLIGHTEN YA! THERE WERE SOME **SIDE-EFFECTS** TA' HOW I GOT SALLY BACK!

LIKE WHAT KUNDA' SIDE-EFFECTS, PIRATE!?

TRY SOME O' SALLY'S MORE DOMINANT PERSONALITY TRAITS BEING AMPED!

WELL, WHAT PARTS OF 'ER PERSONALITY WERE AMPED, MATE!?

ACCORDING TA' WHAT MY LITTLE EVIL EYE HERE COULD TELL ME, THERE WERE ~~THREE~~ PERSONALITY TRAITS 'IN SALLY THAT WERE SIGNIFICANTLY AMPED! AND I'M TALKIN' FIVE-FOLD HERE! THE AMPED TRAITS ARE AS FOLLOWS: HER ~~HATRED~~ **HATRED** FOR 'ER ENEMIES, HER **COMPASSION** FOR 'ER FRIENDS, AND, PROBABLY **MOST DANGEROUS** TO YOUR GUYS' CAUSE, HER **GUILT** OVER EVERYTHING SHE DID AS **MECHA-SALLY!**



SO, WHAT EXACTLY DOES ALL THAT MEAN, "BLACK"!

-GROAN- SALLY WILL BELIEVE THAT **EVERYTHING** SHE DID AS MECHA-SALLY WAS HER **FAULT**, AND **HERS ALONE!** SHE WILL **VERY OPENLY** ACCEPT THE COMPANY OF **ANY** FRIEND WHO MIGHT WANNA TALK TO 'ER, AND SHE'LL **PRETTY LITERALLY** TEAR **ANYONE** SHE DEEMS AN **ANY** LIMB FROM LIMB!

AND, ST. JOHN, KINDA **HATE** TA' BREAK THIS TO YA', BUT THE **OVERDOSE** 'ATS IS **WOUND** DOSE ON THE **LATEST** REVISION OF 'ER **HIT-LOT!**

NAUGUS, WY'D YA HAVE TRY TA' TAKE OVER THE WORLD, MATE!?

SERIOUSLY, 'BLACK! WY'D YA CHOOSE THAT **JERK**, ST. JOHN, TA' **GUARD** 'ER!?

RELAX, SONIC! I CHOSE ST. JOHN TA' **GUARD** SALLY 'TIL TIME'S UP 'CAUSE HE'S **EXPENDABLE!** THEREFORE, IF SOMETHING **DOES** GO WRONG, IT **WOIN'T** COST YOU N'YER FRIENDS AS MUCH AS IT WOULD, IF A MORE **RESPECTED** FREEDOM FIGHTER **WATCHES** 'ER, AND GETS **KILLED!**

-SIGH- **CAN'T** ARGUE WITH THAT, 'BLACK!

ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER THE **COUNT-DOWN** COMMENCES...

SO, 'BLACK! WHERE'RE THE **REST** O' THE GUYS!?

CEPT FER **CARRIE**, THERE IS **NO** 'REST!

YOU CAME BACK
HERE BY YOURSELF?



NO 'FENSE, 'BLACK, BUT WHAT ABOUT WHAT'CHA PROMISED US
ABOUT NEVER TAKIN' ON OUR ENEMIES WITHOUT BACK
UP!?



AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S
HAPPENED LATELY* AND
ALL RESTRICTIONS THAT'VE
HELD ME BACK IN THE PAST
ARE NOW OFFICIALLY NULL
AND VOID!

*> LIKE WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN STH #230 - ONWARDS

BUT 'BLACK! DONTCHA REMEMBER
WHAT HAPPENS 'WHEN'CHA TAKE ON
ROBOTNIK BY YERSELF!?



YEAH, SUGAR-BLACK! AN
HEARD THAT AT SOMETIMES
Y'ALL CONFRONTED
ROBOTNIK, Y'ALL HAD
TO BE PUT INTA' STAYASIS!
AIN'T Y'ALL AT LEAST A
SCUCH WORRIED THATAT
THERE'S WHERE Y' GONNA
GO IF Y'ALL AINT CURRY! ?!

CHILL, YOU GUYS! I DIDN'T COME COMPLETELY WITHOUT
BACK-UP! CARRIE WAS PRETTY PERSISTANT! SO, I
LET HER COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE!



NO 'FENSE, 'BLACK BUT A COMPUTER-GENERATED ENTITY
JUST ISN'T WHAT A LOT OF US'D CALL "BACK-UP"



THEN, YOU GUYS
OBVIOUSLY DON'T
KNOW A WHOLE LOT
'BOUT CARRIE,
DO YK!?

ALRIGHT, 'BLACK! LAY IT ON US! IF WE'RE GONNA BE
WORKIN' WITH 'ER, THEN I GUESS WE BETTER
KNOW HOW YOUR COMPUTER TICKS!



END OF
PART VIII

THE RETURN OF
Sandy

WE'RE PRETTY SURE THAT "CARRIE" N' NICOLE'RE GONNA MAKE A GREAT TEAM! BUT HOW EXACTLY CAN CARRIE HELP YA' IN A FIGHT!?



CARRIE IS WHAT I CALL: A BACK-UP COMMANDO! IN OTHER WORDS, I USUALLY GET 'ER OUT WHEN THE SITCH GETS ROUGH!

BUT 'BLACK! SHE'S JUST A HOLOGRAM!



THAT TECHNICALITY'S MORE NULL-AND-VOID THAN YOU MAY THINK, TAILS!

HOW'S THAT, 'BLACK!?

THE SAFETY MECHANISM ON 'ER HAS BEEN SWITCHED N' LASHED OFF! MAKING CARRIE ALMOST AS "REAL" AS YOU N' ME! AND I GOTTA TELL YOU GUYS: SHE'S PROVEN QUITE THE ASSET! SHE'S GUIDED ME THROUGH MANY OF THE ZONES KNOWN TA EXIST IN THIS WORLD: SHE'S SAVED MY BACON FROM EGGMAN'S CHRONIES LIKE NOBODY'S BUSINESS! SHE EVEN PROVIDED ME WITH WHAT I NEEDED, TO GAIN THE UNDIVIDED ATTENTION OF THE CREATURE MOST RESPONSIBLE FER CUTTING DOWN THE TIME I HAD TA' SPEND IN ROBO-TOWN: ROUGE THE BAT!



NO WAY!!! ROUGE HELPED YA!?



IN WAY-MORE WAYS THAN ONE, MY YOUNG FRIEND!

I HAD CARRIE SWITCH ON HER BAT RADAR DISRUPTION PROGRAM! NO SPECIES O' BAT CAN STAND IT EVEN FER SINGLE-DIGIT SECONDS! I ALSO OFFERED ROUGE A RUBY THE SIZE O' EGGMAN'S FIST, IF SHE COOPERATED AND KEPT QUIET 'BOUT OUR LITTLE CHAT 'TIL I WAS OFFICIALLY OUTTA TOWN!



A RUBY THAT SIZE!?! HEH-ROUGE'LL DO PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING ANYONE SAYS FER SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT!





AND YA' DID TALK TA' SAL 'BOUT THIS, RIGHT, 'BLACK!?

I KNOW THAT THAT QUESTION WAS RHECTORICAL, BUT, YEAH! I DID! I CLUED 'ER IN ON THE WHOLE 'ERE WHEN I RE-AWAKENED 'ER SOUL!



SAY WHAT!?

CRAZY AS THAT SOUNDS, YOU GUYS, I'M NOT KIDDING! IN-BETWEEN NOW, AND WHEN I LAST DEPARTED THIS WORLD, I PICKED UP A MAGIC TRICK OR TWO!



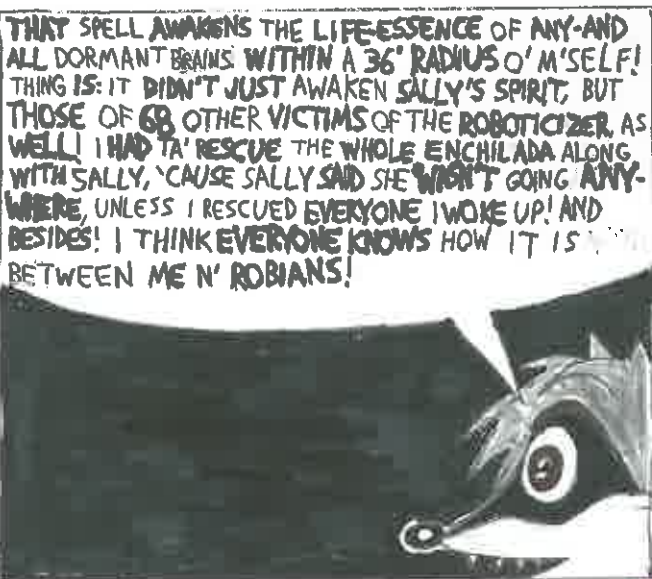
INCLUDING THIS INCANTATION, RIGHT HERE! IT'S A LITTLE TRICK I CAME UP WITH MYSELF! IT GETS ITS POWER FROM BOTH MAGIC, AND TECHNOLOGY!

HEH-YOU ALWAYS WERE PRETTY GOOD AT MIXIN' THE TWO, 'BLACK! WELL, LET'S SEE IT!

HERE YA' GO, SONIC!



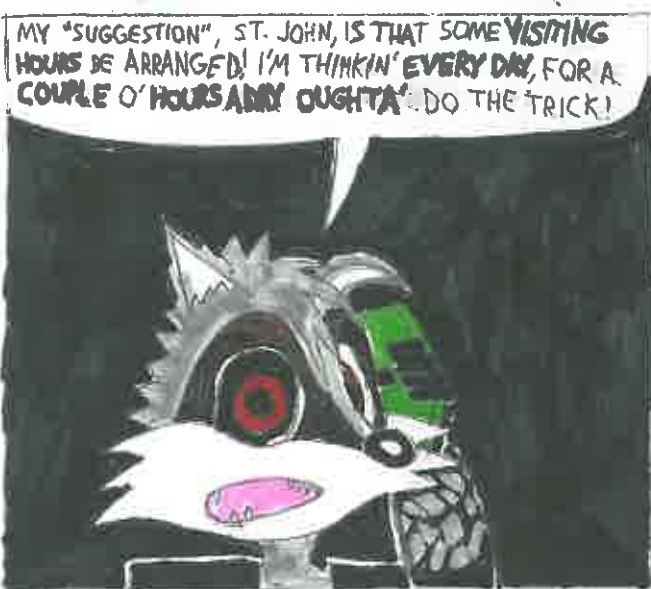
'EXTRACTED FROM YOUR BODY, YOUR IDENTITY BEEN TAKEN, BEING RISE NOW, AND MAY YOUR SPIRIT AWAKEN'!?



THAT SPELL AWAKENS THE LIFE-ESSENCE OF ANY-AND ALL DORMANT BRAINS WITHIN A '36' RADIUS O' M'SELF! THING IS: IT DIDN'T JUST AWAKEN SALLY'S SPIRIT, BUT THOSE OF 68 OTHER VICTIMS OF THE ROBOTICIZER, AS WELL! I HAD TA' RESCUE THE WHOLE ENCHILADA ALONG WITH SALLY, 'CAUSE SALLY SAID SHE 'WISN'T GOING ANY- WHERE, UNLESS I RESCUED EVERYONE I WOKE UP! AND BESIDES! I THINK EVERYONE KNOWS HOW IT IS BETWEEN ME N' ROBBIANS!



HEY! WE ALL HEAR YA' ON THAT, 'BLACK! AND I'M PRETTY SURE THAT A LOTTA KIDS ARE GONNA LOVE TA' AVE THOSE LOVED ONES BACK!



IS IT ALRIGHT IF I ASK WHO'S IN THIS DUFFLE BAG, ONE-EYED BLACK!?



OH! NOTHING MUCH! JUST YER OLD THINGS! PLUS A FEW NEW THINGS TO STEP UP YER GAME SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT THEM!



LATER, IN THE NEAREST DRESSING ROOM.....

WOW! BLUE SWEDIE BOOTS! I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT ONE-EYED BLACK IS GOING SO FAR JUST FOR ME!



"LET'S SEE WHAT ELSE IS IN HERE!"

SO, BLACK! WHAT WAS IN THAT DUFFLE BAG Y'GAVE TA' SAL!?

OH! NOT REALLY A WHOLE LOT, SONIC! JUST SOME IMPROVEMENTS ON 'ER OLD STUFF! I'M, OF COURSE, TALKIN' ABOUT A FANCIER VERSION OF 'ER ORIGINAL APPAREL, PLUS SOME WEAPONS THAT SHE HAD WHEN SHE WAS ROBOTICIZED!

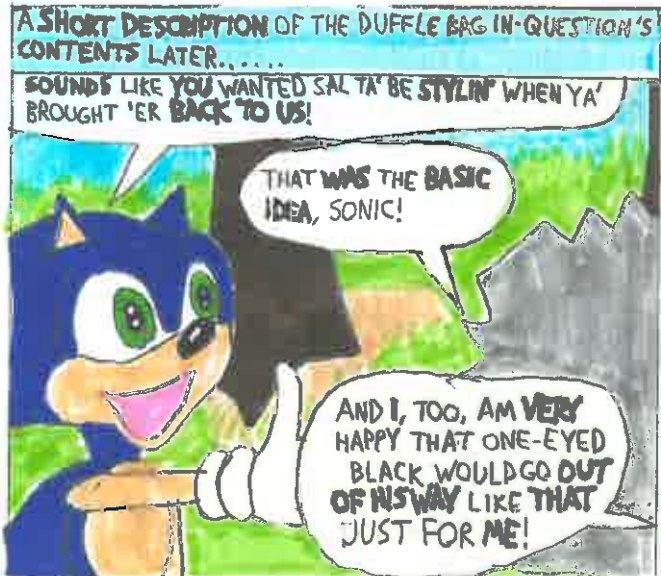


A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE DUFFLE BAG IN-QUESTION'S CONTENTS LATER.....

SOUNDS LIKE YOU WANTED SAL TA' BE STYLIN' WHEN YA' BROUGHT 'ER BACK TO US!

THAT WAS THE BASIC IDEA, SONIC!

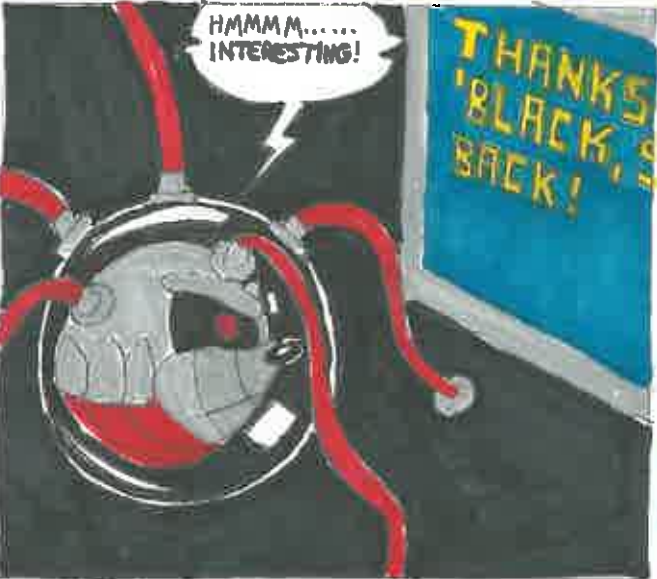
AND I, TOO, AM VERY HAPPY THAT ONE-EYED BLACK WOULD GO OUT OF HIS WAY LIKE THAT JUST FOR ME!

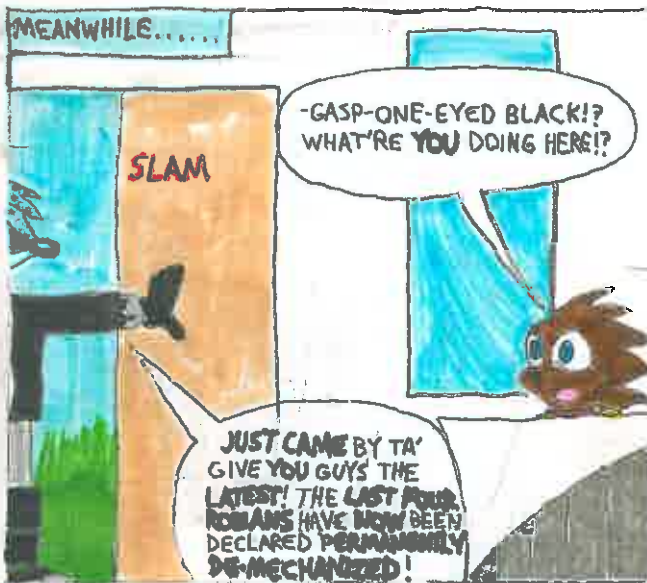


WELL, YOU GUYS, HOW DO I LOOK?

LIKE THE WINNER YA' ALWAYS WERE SAL!







WHAT!!!!????? NO!!!! THAT CREEPY PIRATE WAS ABLE TO BRING THE PRINCESS, AND THOSE 68 OTHERS BACK!!!??



I GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE! THAT CREEPY OLD 'COON! GONNA SLICE, DICE, BLAST, CHAR, POKE, AND PROD ME ALL OVER 'TIL I'M BLACK N' BLUE ALL OVER! IF THAT STUPID, BLIND EXCUSE FOR A COUSIN OF MINE HADN'T TAKEN OUR PROSTHETICS AWAY, THE LEGION'D STILL BE ON ITS OWN SIDE!



LIEN-DA! ARE YOU THINKING...?



I MOST CERTAINLY AM, SNIVELY! IF OUR LARGE N' IN CHARGE LEADER HADN'T ROBOTICIZED THE PRINCESS, THIS OL' 'COON WOULDN'T BE PLAYIN' KNICK-KNACK ON OUR CHEST WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER!



-SHUDDER-WELL, I'M WITH YOU, LIEN-DA! UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO THAT WILL EVEN SLOW THE PIRATE DOWN!

MEANWHILE. BACK IN NEW MOBOTROPOLIS...



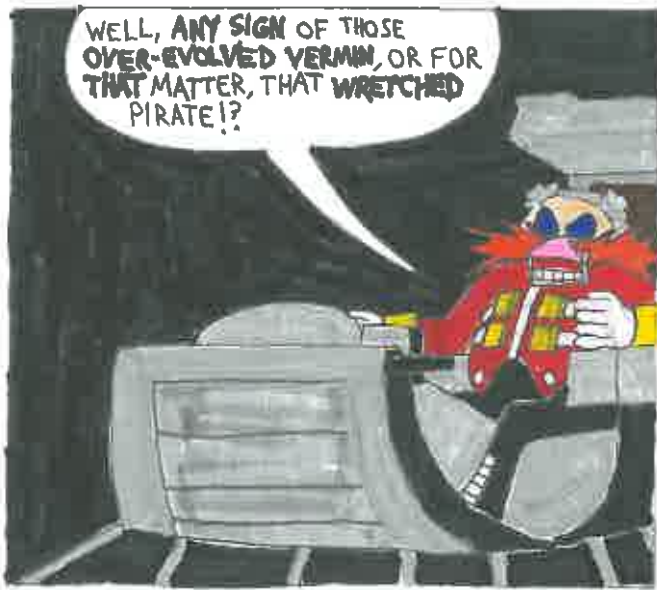
I MEAN IT, SAL! IT'S GREAT TA' 'AVE YA' BACK!

--still-- THANK YOU, SONIC! BUT UNDERSTAND: I'M STILL NOT 100% CONVINCED THAT ONE-EYED BLACK CAN BE TRUSTED!



I KNOW YOU N' 'BLACK STILL DON'T SEE EYE-TA' EYE! BUTCHA GOTTA GIVE THE 'COON AT LEAST SOME CREDIT! DON'T FORGET: HE'S THE GUY WHO GOTCHA BACK FOR US!

I DON'T SAY THIS VERY OFTEN, SONIC, BUT YOU'RE RIGHT!





SONIC

THE HEDGEHOG


CO-STARRING

ONE-EYED BLACK
OF THE NIGHTMARE

IN...

THE RETURN OF
PRINCESS
Sally CHAPTER IV

FREEDOM
FIGHTER
CREATIVE
ARTISTS



YO, 'BLACK! WHAT'S
WITH THE **BIG STACK**
O' **WEAPONS!**?

THESE BABES,
ARE FER
YOU GUYS!



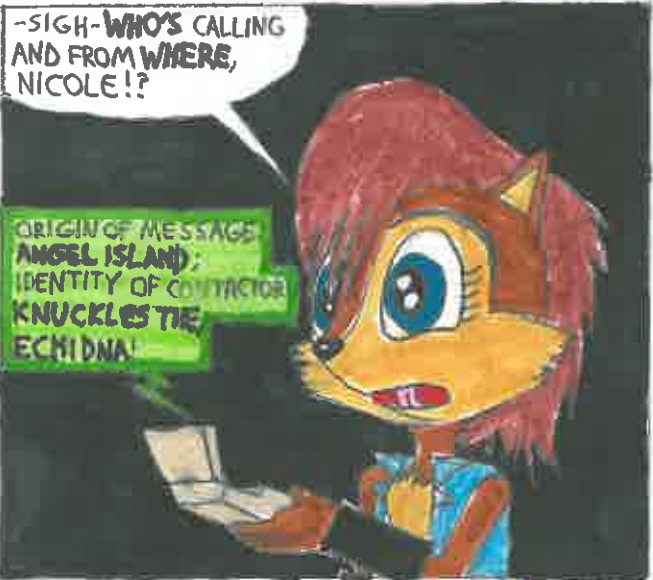
ALRIGHT, CHAOTIX! LISTEN UP!



RING RING RING RING RING RING RING RING RING RING

11??

INCOMING TRANSMISSION SALLY!



-SIGH- WHO'S CALLING AND FROM WHERE, NICOLE!?

ORIGIN OF MESSAGE: ANGEL ISLAND; IDENTITY OF CONTACTOR: KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA!



HELLO, SALLY! GREAT TA' SEE YA' BACK!

GOTTA SAY: IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK, KNUCKLES!



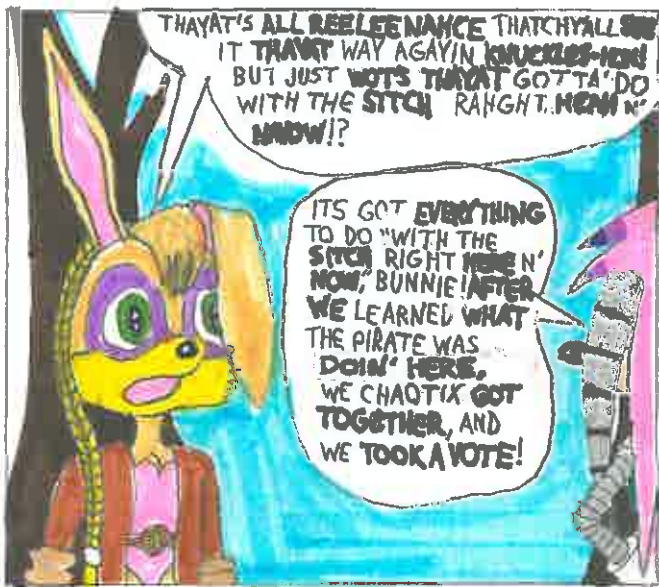
JUST CALLED TA' LETCHA KNOW THAT I'M COMIN' BY FER A LIL' VISIT! I WANNA SEE YA' BACK ON THE JOB FER MYSELF SALLY! AND I WANNA THANK THE PIRATE FER GETTIN' YA' BACK FOR YER FRIENDS IN-PERSON! ANYWAY, WE'LL BE IN NEW MOBOTROPOLIS VIA WARP-RING SHORTLY!



AND WHEN THE CHAOTIX ARRIVE IN NEW MOBOTROPOLIS ... AND THERE'S MORE GOOD NEWS FER YOU, FREEDOM FIGHTERS. I ADMIT IT, SALLY! MY FAMILY VOTING NOT TA' HELP YOU GUYS* WAS AS STUPID A MOVE, AS STUPID COULD GET! UNDERSTAND, FREEDOM FIGHTERS: EVEN THO' I'M STILL

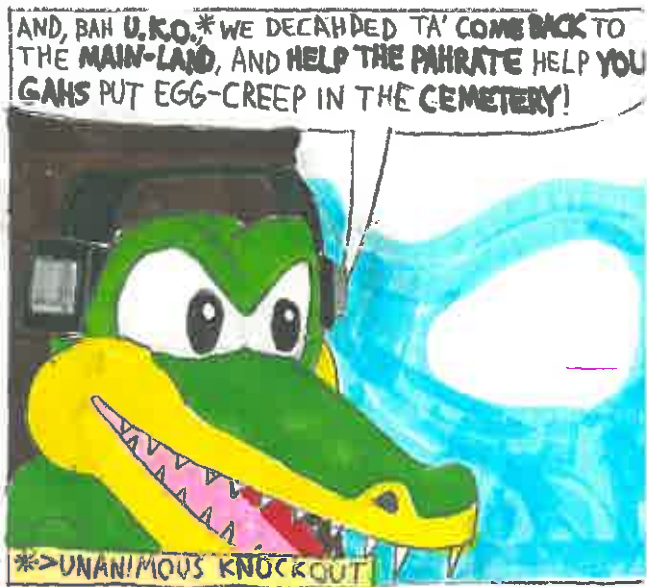
FOCUSED ON FINITEVUS, THE PIRATE'S RIGHT! BEFORE HE DOES ANYTHING LIKE WHAT 'E DID TA' SALLY TO ANYONE ELSE, THAT FAT SICKO EGGMAN'S GOTTA BE STOPPED! AND IF THAT MEANS TAKIN' 'IM OUT BEFORE FINITEVUS, THEN SO BE IT!

*->SEE KTE#29 FOR FULL DETAILS!



THAT'S ALL REELEE NANCE THATCHYALLS
IT TRAVT WAY AGAYIN ~~KNUCKLES-NOW~~
BUT JUST WOTS THATAT GOTTA DO
WITH THE SITCH RAHGT. NEM N'
NOW!?

ITS GOT EVERYTHING
TO DO "WITH THE
SITCH RIGHT HERE N'
NOW, BUNNIE! AFTER
WE LEARNED WHAT
THE PIRATE WAS
DOIN' HERE,
WE CHAOTIX GOT
TOGETHER, AND
WE TOOK A VOTE!



AND, BAH U.K.O.* WE DECIDED TA' COME BACK TO
THE MAIN-LAND, AND HELP THE PAHRA TE HELP YOU
GAHS PUT EGG-CREEP IN THE CEMETERY!

*->UNANIMOUS KNOCKOUT



YOU GUYS MEAN IT!!!???

WE MEAN IT,
KID! IF
EGGMAN'S
GOT THE
GUTS TA'
EVEN SET
FOOT HERE,
HE'S ONLY
GONNA BE
WELCOME TA'
ONE THING:
MY NIGHTMARE!!!



BUT FIRST THING'S FIRST!
I CAME TO SEE MY GOOD
FRIEND, SALLY HERE, BCK
WITH 'ER TEAM WHERE
SHE BELONGS!

FOR EVERY
THING IT'S
WORTH, THANK
YOU, KNUCKLES



SO, WADDYA THINK, SONIC!?

EH! WHAT THE
HECK! WE COULD
PROBLY
SQUEEZE 'EM IN!

!?
!!



"SQUEEZE US INTO" WHAT,
SONIC!?

EH! GUESS THE
CAP'S OUTTA THE BAG!
I'M HAVIN' A LIL' PARTY
TA' CELEBRATE SAL'S
BIG COME-BACK!
INTERESTED?

WHEN N'
WHERE IS IT!?

COURTHOUSE CAFETERIA
6 O'CLOCK TONIGHT!
BE THERE, OR BE
SQUARES!



ALRIGHT EVERYONE!
I NEED...

THAT'S STRANGE!
ALL THE LIGHTS ARE
OFF! I HOPE THERE'S
NOTHING...

WELCOME BACK SURPRISE!!!



YOU GUYS... DID ALL THIS... FOR ME!? BUT WHY?!?
I CAUSED YOU ALL SO MUCH CALAMITY! I NEARLY
DESTROYED YOU ALL! -SOB-!...!...



SAL, WHAT YOU DID, YOU DID 'CAUSE EGGMAN PROGRAMMED YA TO
DO IT! IT'S NOT LIKE 'YA' DID IT 'CAUSE YA WANTED TO! SO,
C'MON, SAL! CHIN UP! NOW THAT WE GOTCHA BACK, WE'RE
ALL GONNA MAKE EGGMAN PAY FOR WHAT 'E DID WITH YA!

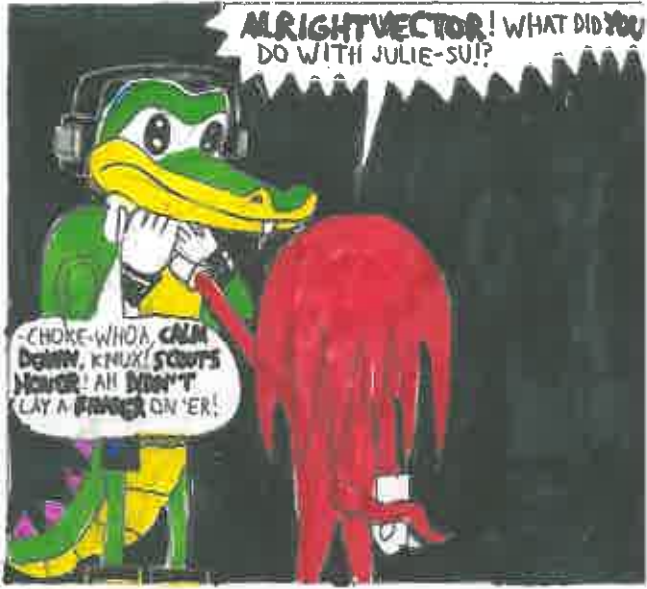


IT'S NOT USUALLY LIKE ME TA' SAY THIS...



... BUT FER ONCE, I'M WITH SONIC ON THIS ONE!
IF IT WAS JULIE-SU WHO GOT MECHANIZED-GRRR-
I WOULDN'T FEEL MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY
SONIC FELT!





LATER ...

JULIE-SU! WHERE THE HECK WERE YA, GIRL!?

-PANT-PANT-WHELPING THE PIRATE HELP US GET 'THE STUFF' THAT WE NEED TA' TEAR EGGMAN APART!



JULIE-SU! WHAT'S ONE-EYED BLACK DOING IN THE MAIN LAB!? HE SHOULD STAY HERE WITH THE REST OF US!

WELL, LEMME PUT IT THIS WAY, PRINCESS: WHEN WE SEE WHAT THE PIRATE'S GOT FOR ALL OF US, WE'RE ALL GONNA KNOW HE MEANT BUSINESS WHEN HE TOOK UP THAT CONTRACT IN FRONTA' EVERYBODY!



IF ONE-EYED BLACK TRULY DID DESTROY PROBABLY THE BIGGEST MISTAKE HE MADE WITH US AS SAVAGELY AS EVERYONE AROUND ME SAYS HE DID, AND IF HE REALLY IS PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS, THE TYPE OF WEAPONRY THAT ONE-EYED BLACK WOULD BE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING, IS TOTALLY BEYOND LOGICAL CONTEMPLATION!



RIGHT AFTER LUNCH THE NEXT DAY...

YOU MISSED A GOOD-PART O' LAST NIGHT'S PARTY! YOU WERE DON'T FORGET, A KEY-FACTOR IN US GETTING THE PRINCESS BACK! YOU'D BETTER HAVE A REALLY GOOD EXCUSE FOR NOT BEING AT THE FESTIVITIES WHERE YOU BELONGED! ANYWAY, DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU'D...

I SAID: I'D HELP THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS TAKE OUT THOSE OF UNJUST HEART! I DON'T SAY NO LY DOO-DON! ABOUT CALLING THE COUNCIL INFALLIBLE!

AND WHY NOT, OLD MAN!?



AFTER WHAT ALMOST HAPPENED TA' SONIC*, I'VE PRETTY WELL LOST FAITH THAT ANY COUNCIL'S ORDER IS JUST, HONEST, OR EVEN THE LEAST-BIT FREE OF CORRUPTION!

GROAN-YEAH! I DO HEAR 'BOUT THAT! I WISH HOWEVER, HOPING THAT YOU HAD AT LEAST SOME FAITH IN THE WAY THINGS'RE RUN NOW!



AFTER YOU GUYS VOTING AGAINST SAVING FREEDOM HQ FROM THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS' CIVIL OPPOSITES *!!!??? I WOULDN'T TRUST YOU LOSERS TO WATCH OVER BOWLING PINS!!!

LOOK, 'BLACK! IT'S NOT LIKE WE DIDN'T WANNA SAVE IT! WE WERE JUST TRYIN' TA' FOCUS ALL OUR ENERGY ON STOPPIN' EGGMAN! THAT'S ALL!

VOTING NOT TA' SAVE THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS' HQ IS A GOOD IDEA! ON, YEAH! I'D SAY YOU GUYS'RE DOIN' AN EXCELLENT JOB-- NOT!!!



*->ONE-EYED BLACK IS REFERRING TO THE EVENTS COVERED IN STH#40

*->SEE STH# 19!

WHY I OUGHTA'.....

THAT IS ENOUGH!!!



I, MYSELF, AM NOT CRAZY ABOUT EITHER OF THOSE INCIDENTS, EITHER! BUT WHAT'S DONE IS DONE! SONIC WAS ABLE TO MOVE HIS INNOCENCE AND WE GOT FREEDOM FOR BACK REGARDLESS! I ADMITTED TO YOU IN FRONT OF THE ENTIRETY OF MY FRIENDS THAT THE LAW IS NOT PERFECT WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT WE HAVE DIFFERENCES IN OPINION WE MUST, AT LEAST FOR NOW, SET ASIDE ALL OF IT IF WE



HOPES TO DEFER EGGMAN ONCE AND FOR ALL! ONLY AFTER THAT WILL WE SETTLE THIS! AND ONE MORE THING, ONE-EYED BLACK I AM IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH YOU THAT US TURNING AGAINST EACH OTHER, IS EXACTLY WHAT EGGMAN WOULD WANT

- GROAN - LOOK, OLD MAN! I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE SPEAKING YOUR MIND! BUT DO YA' REALLY WANT EAR-MARK THE COUNCIL AS "DISORDERLY" ONLY 'CAUSE OF A FEW LITTLE MISTAKES!?



SAD MEMORIES ARE UNFORTUNATELY, VERY HARD FERME TA' FERGET, HAMLIN! AND JUST LIKE YOU, I AM VERY SLOW TO FORGIVE! AND SONIC'S COURT-MARSHAL IS AMONG THE INCIDENTS THAT I'VE NOT FERGIVEN ANYBODY FOR! NOR AM I ABOUT TO!

THE FACT THAT YOU STILL DON'T FORGIVE US FOR THAT, IS WHAT ALWAYS SCARED ME ABOUT YOU, ONE-EYED BLACK!

LOOK, ONE-EYED BLACK: I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU WERE AFRAID OF BECOMING EVIL, BUT SERIOUSLY! DID YOU HAVE TO DESTROY A MAJOR PART OF YOUR OWN OWN'S INNER WORKINGS JUST TO CALM THAT FEAR!??



IT WAS EITHER THAT, OR SUICIDE! LIKE IT OR NOT, THOSE WERE THE TWO MOST PERMANENT SOLUTIONS! AND AS I WAS IN NO HURRY TO DIE, THE EVER-MENTIONED ALTERATION WAS THE ONLY SOLUTION IN-SIGHT! AND SORRY! THE REASON IS JUST NOT AS QUICK, OR PERMANENT A FIX AS A LOTO' YOU'D LIKE TA' BELIEVE! SEE, EXPERIENCE N' KNOWLEDGE MAY BE EASILY ADDED ON TO, BUT THE WAY YER BRAIN TICKS, IS JUST NOT AN EASY THING TA' CHANGE!



HMPH! I STILL SAY THAT THAT ALTERATION WAS OVER-KILL, PIRATE!

ONE-EYED BLACK! I MUST KNOW: BEFORE YOUR ALTERATION, DID YOU STILL HAVE THIS MUCH DISTRUST IN THE LAW?!

THAT DISTRUST WAS- AND STILL IS- DEEPLY ROOTED, AND HAD BEEN WITH ME EVER SINCE I SAW ALL THE INJUSTICE AND DISHONESTY IT BROUGHT FORTH NO MATTER WHAT DIMENSION I WENT TO! INCLUDING THIS ONE!





WELL, WHATEVER YOU SAW, ONE-EYED BLACK, AT LEAST YOU WERE ABLE TO TELL RIGHT FROM WRONGS! AND FOR THAT, I MUST COMEND YOU! AND IT WAS THAT DESIRE, TO DIFFERENTIATE GOOD FROM EVIL, THAT RESULTED IN YOUR INFAMOUS "SPIRIT VISION" UPGRADE TO YOUR ROBOTIC EYE, WAS IT NOT!?



A-FIRM-A-TIVE!

WELL, THAT IS A PRETTY GOOD REASON! BUT IT'S STILL REALLY CREEPY THATCHA KNOW WHAT EVERYONE AROUND YA'S THINKIN', 'BLACK!' I MEAN, WHO'D DO 'BOUT NOT RUININ MY SURPRISES ON YOUR BIRTHDAY!?

SPIRIT VISION CAN BE DE-ACTIVATED! BUT EXCEPT ON OCCASIONS LIKE MY BIRTHDAY, I DON'T DO IT VERY OFTEN!



ALRIGHT! 'RUFF TALK! WADDAYA GOT FOR US THAT'S GONNA 'UP OUR GAME,' PIRATE!!!??

I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK YOU GUYS'D NEVER ASK! FIRST: 'SU! EVERYONE ON THE GUEST-LIST HERE!?

I TOLD EVERYONE YA' TOLD ME TO, PIRATE! AND YEAH A LOT OF 'EM ARE HERE! RIGHT NOW WE'RE ONLY TWO ANIMALS SHORT! AND KNOWIN' AT LEAST ONE OF 'EM, HE SHOULD BE HERE 'MY SECOND, NOW!



RIGHT ON CUE.....

WELL! SPEAK O' THE BLUE DEVIL!

SORRY I'M LATE, YOU GUYS! JUST OFF RINNIN' THE USUAL EGGRANDS, THIS THAT, YOU GUYS ALL KNOW THE DRILL!



-GROAN- WE ALL KNOW THAT AS TIE TOP FREEDOM FIGHTER, YOU HAVE YOUR FAR-SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITIES, SONIC! I WAS HOPING, HOWEVER, THAT THIS MEETING WOULD BE YOUR TOP-PRIORITY!

"NEW WEAPONS"! C'MON, SAL! YOU KNOW I HAVE PRETTY- WELL NO USE, OR NEED, FER "WEAPONS"!



WELL, GIVEN THATCHER BUDDY, THE PIRATE HERE, HAS BEEN SLAVING OVER A LAB-TABLE FER THE PAST-DAY N' A-HALF WITHOUT SO MUCH AS FIVE MINUTES O' SLEEP WORKIN' ON THESE THINGS, WE ALL WOULD'A HOPED YOU'D BE AT LEAST SOMEWHAT INTERESTED!!!

HEY! I'M HERE, AREN'T I!?

ALRIGHT! ONE MORE, AND THE COUNT'LL BE COMPLETE, PIRATE!

BUT, JULIE-SU! ALL OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS ARE HERE NOW! WHO COULD WE POSSIBLY BE MISSING!?



THERE IS ONLY ONE MISSING NOW! YER NEWEST RECRUIT!



BUT, 'BLACK! CREAM'S OUR NEWEST RECRUIT! AND SHE'S ALREADY HERE! WHO ELSE COULD THERE POSSIBLY BE!?



I PERSONALLY RECRUITED ONE OTHER!

A NEW FREEDOM FIGHTER! LIKE WHO, 'BLACK!?

I'LL GIVE YA ALL' HINT, SONIC: SHE GAINED MUCHO COURAGE AND SKILL, JUST FROM HANGIN' OUT WITH YA!



YO, 'BLACK! THIS 'NEW ID' WOULDN'T HAPPEN TA' BE...

SORRY I'M LATE, YOU GUYS! HAD TA GET PAST ALL THE PRESS N' MEDIA!



I FOUND OUT PRETTY WELL THE HARD WAY: BEIN' A BIG ROCK-STAR IS NOT ALL FUN N' GAMES!



MINA!!!!???

END OF PART 2

THE RETURN OF SALLY PART XI

THE PIRATE RECOGNIZED MINA FOR 'ER SPUNK, SPEED, AND ALL THE COURAGE THAT SONIC GAVE 'ERI ALL THAT BEING THE CASE, THE PIRATE DECIDED TO LET HER IN ON THE QUACK, TOO!

BELIEVE ME, YOU GUYS! IT WAS A PRETTY TOUGH CHOICE EITHER SAY A BIG ROCK STAR N' ONLY BE HEARD ON DISC IN 'STAGE ON', BECOME A PART-TIME FREEDOM FIGHTER, N' DISH IT OUT IN EGG MAN FER EVERYTHING HE'S DONE! YOU BEIN' RECOGNIZED N' TURNED AGAINST US ALL THOUGHT SALLY!



GREAT TA' FINALLY HAVE YA' ABOARD, MINA! JUST DON'T EXPECT 'NY SPECIAL TREATMENT!

DON'T WORRY 'BOUT A THING BLUE! NOW THAT I'M WITH ASH, I'M TOTALLY OVER NOT BEIN' TOGETHER WITH YA'!



ALRIGHT, PIRATE! THE WHOLE GANG'S HERE NOW! AND I REPEAT KNUCKLES' QUESTION: WADDAYA GOT FOR US!?

FIRST I HOPE THAT EVERYBODY HERE CAN HANDLE THE PAIN OF A FLU-SHOT!



'FLU-SHOT'!? C'MON, 'BLACK! THAT AIN'T EVEN PEANUTS! NOW, IF YER TALKIN' 'BOUT A BABIES SHOT, NOW THAT'S PAINFUL!

WELL...



...THIS SHOT IS GONNA GO STRAIGHT TO YER HEADS, LITERALLY! SO, WHO'S FIRST!?



FIRST TELL US WHAT THAT SHOT'S FOR, PIRATE!

I TAKE IT, THAT BY NOW, EVERYONE'S HEARD ABOUT ROTOR'S FAMOUS NEURO-OVERIDERS, RIGHT?





I REMEMBER 'EM LIKE I INVENTED 'EM YESTERDAY, 'BLACK, AND..... WAIT A SEC! ARE YOU TELLIN' US THAT YOU CAME UP WITH YOUR OWN NEURO-OVERRIDERS, 'BLACK?!

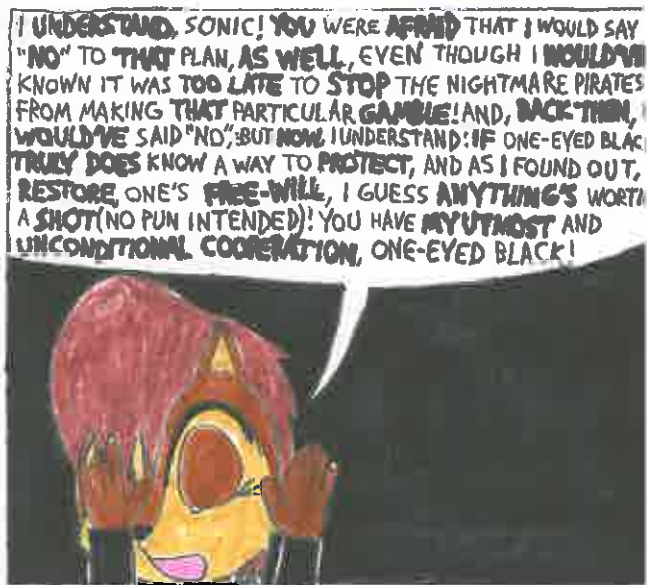


AIN'T GONNA LIE TA' YA, ROTÉ! HE SURE DID! BUT AS WITH 'BLACK'S OTHER GADGETS, HIS NEURO-OVERRIDERS ARE A HUGE IMPROVEMENT ON THE DESIGN THAT 'E USED 'EM ON! 'BLACK'S NEURO-OVERRIDERS 'RE MADE FROM NANO-CIRCUITRY, AND CAN BE INJECTED RIGHT INTO 'ER SKULL, MAKIN' 'EM PRETTY WELL IMPOSSIBLE TA' REMOVE WITHOUT SHOOTIN' THE ANIMAL! THE "NEURO-OVERRIDE TATTOOS" WERE STANDARD EQUIPMENT FER 'BLACK AND 'IS BUDS STARTIN' JUST BEFORE THE ORIGINAL ROBOTNIK CAME TA' TOWN!



AND YOU DIDN'T TELL US ABOUT THIS BECAUSE...!?

BELIEVE ME, SAL! I WAS GONNA! MY PLAN WAS: AFTER I WOULD'VE BECOME MECHA-SONIC ON PURPOSE, ME N' 'BLACK WERE GONNA TELL THE WHOLE VILLAGE ABOUT 'EM! BUT AFTER MY COURT MARSHAL, 'BLACK N' I WERE TOO AFRAID TO!



I UNDERSTAND, SONIC! YOU WERE AFRAID THAT I WOULD SAY "NO" TO THAT PLAN, AS WELL, EVEN THOUGH I WOULD'VE KNOWN IT WAS TOO LATE TO STOP THE NIGHTMARE PIRATES FROM MAKING THAT PARTICULAR GAMBLE! AND, BACK THEN, I WOULD'VE SAID "NO", BUT NOW I UNDERSTAND: IF ONE-EYED BLACK TRULY DOES KNOW A WAY TO PROTECT, AND AS I FOUND OUT, RESTORE ONE'S FREE-WILL, I GUESS ANYTHING'S WORTH A SHOT (NO PUN INTENDED)! YOU HAVE MY UTMOST AND UNCONDITIONAL COOPERATION, ONE-EYED BLACK!



LET IT BE KNOWN: THE NEURO-OVERRIDE TATTOOS AND THE FREE-WILL RESTORATION CIRCUIT CARDS ARE IDENTICAL IN BASIC SCHEMATICS! AND THEREFORE, SALLY WILL NOT NEED THIS LITTLE "BOOSTER SHOT"! THE REST O' YOU, HOWEVER, ARE A DIFFERENT STORY! SO, I RECAP MY QUESTION: WHO'S FIRST!?



I REALLY DOUBT THAT THIS IS GONNA BE ANY MORE PAINFUL, THAN THE IMPLANTS THAT I RECEIVED BACK WHEN I WAS WITH THE LEGION! THEREFORE, THE "PAIN" YOU'RE WARNING US ABOUT 'LL BOTHER ME THE LEAST! I'LL GO FIRST, PIRATE!

LISTEN, KNUCKLES! LIKE I SAID: THE PAIN 'LL BOTHER ME THE LEAST! AND I REALLY DOUBT THE PIRATE INTENDS TA' MESS WITH OUR HEADS LIKE MY PAPA DID! PAPA DID FIGHT!

!!!! BUT, JULIE-SU...

WAS SET INTENDS TO GO FOR THE WHOLE SCOOP

ABOUT 4 HOURS, 54 MINUTES, AND 12 NOT-SO-LETHAL-BUT-STILL-PRETTY-PAINFUL INJECTIONS LATER...

AND NOW, FOR THE WEAPONS I MADE FER YOU GUYS! AND I'LL START WITH THE WEAPONS I DESIGNED WITH JUST ONE O' YOU GUYS IN MIND!



FIRST, I BET AT LEAST SOME O' YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT THOSE LONG, BLACK "SHOCKERS" ON SALLY'S ARM ARE FOR!

I THOUGHT DID CROSS QUITE A FEW MINDS, 'BLACK! YEAH!!

THOSE "SHOCKERS" ARE ACTUALLY HER OLD-NEW WEAPONS! NAMELY: THE LASER STUNNERS THAT SHE HAD WHEN SHE WAS MECHA-SALLY!



SAY, WHAT !!!???

I'M AFRAID THAT ONE-EYED BLACK ISN'T KIDDING, SONIC!

!?



ONE-EYED BLACK FELT THAT I COULD USE A LITTLE HITTING-POWER! BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, ONE-EYED BLACK CONFIDED IN ME, THAT ME USING THESE WEAPONS AGAINST EGGMAN, WOULD TEACH EGGMAN NOT TO MESS WITH THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS!

HEH-YOU KNOW IT, SAL!



SO, PIRATE! WHAT OTHER KINDA' GOODIES HAVE YA' MADE FOR US!?

NEX UP IS THIS! A LIL' SOMETHIN' I MADE FER 'SU!



HMM... MIND TELLING ME WHAT THIS HOT LITTLE MUY DOES, PIRATE!?

THAT 'SU, IS A WEAPON BOOSTER! SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR YEE ALREADY EVER-HAPPY PROTON GUN!





"WEAPON BOOSTER"? SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS THING GONNA DO, PIRATE!?

IT'LL INCREASE YER GUN'S OVER-ALL FIREPOWER BY A GOOD 800%!



HMMMM.... GOTTA ADMIT, PIRATE! I LIKE!

BUNNIE! FOR ONCE, YER HUSBANDS RIGHT! IT WAS NOT ENTIRELY BEING HALF-ROBOTIC, THAT EARNED YOU RESPECT BY YER FELLOW-FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND STRUCK UNBREAKABLE FER IN TO REBORN K!



IT ALSO HAD A LOT TA' DO WITH HOW YOU USED THAT POWER! AND WITH THE FIERY HEART THATCHA HAD EVER SINCE YOU FIRST-TOOK-ON THE FORCES OF THAT BIT SICKO, KNOWN AS REBORN K!



AH WISH AH COULD BELIEVE THAT, SUGAR-BLACK! BUT...

NO "BUTS", BUNNIE! IT'S NOT THE POWER THAT MADE THE IMPACT, IT'S THE WILL!

BELIEVE ME, BUNNIE! I HAVE SEEN STARTING WITH TOMMY OLIVER, THE UNDISPUTED KING OF THE POWER RINGERS, THAT ONCE A WARRIOR REALIZES WHAT I'M TRYING TA' TELL YOU, THAT WARRIOR BECOMES A GREAT ONE! WITH OR WITHOUT POWERS! BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND, BUNNIE, YOU ARE ALSO CORRECT!



A LITTLE HITTING POWER NEVER REALLY HURTS THE ONE ON THE BELONGING END, EITHER! AND BELIEVE ME, BUNNIE! I ABSOLUTELY HATE SEEING ANY WARRIOR OF GOOD HEART FEEL WORTHLESS! SO, I DEVELOPED THESE FOR YA'!

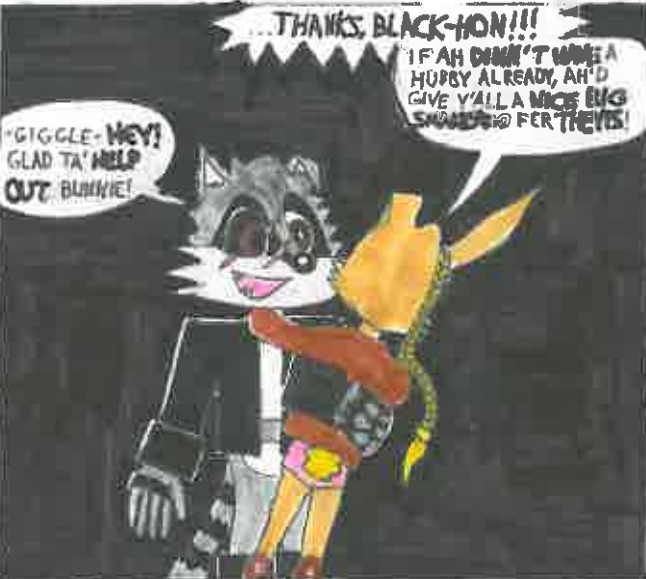
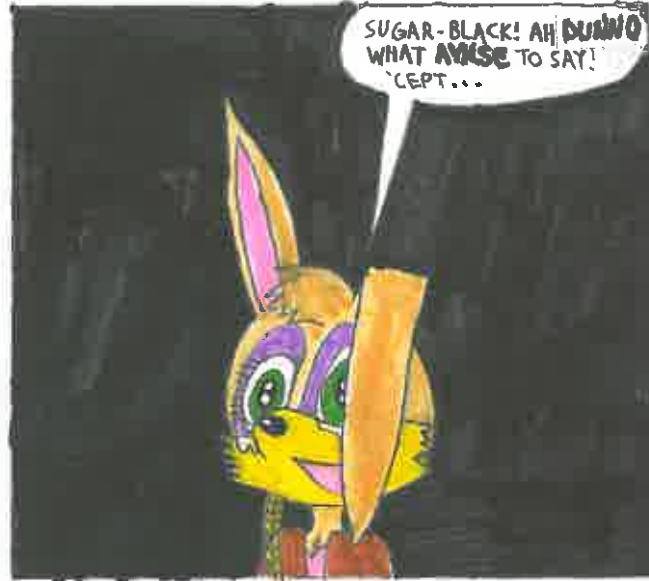


FIRST, MAHND TELLIN' ME WOT THOSE BOOTS N' GLOVES'RE FOR, SUGAR-BLACK!?

I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT BEING A HARD-HITTING FREEDOM FIGHTER IS TO YOU, BUNNIE! WITH THESE GAUNTLETS N' BOOTS, YOU'LL GET ALL O' YER "POWERS" BACK, AND THEN SOME! NO MECHANIZATION, OR LEGIONIZATION REQUIRED!



SUGAR-BLACK! AH, BUNNIE! WHAT ADVICE TO SAY! 'CEPT...



"GIGGLE-WEY! GLAD TA' HELP OUT, BUNNIE!

...THANKS, BLACK-HON!!!

IF AH DIDN'T HAVE A HOBBY ALREADY, AH'D GIVE Y'ALL A NICE BIG SMILE FER THEYS!



AND AS FER YOU, D'COOLETTE, YEAH! I MADE A SPECIAL WEAPON FER YOU, AS WELL!

UND... VOT MAY I ASK EEZ ZO "SPECIELE" ABOUT ZIS BLADE!?



THAT SAYER IS MADE FROM KOBALONIUM CRYSTAL! MEANING: YOU EVEN SLICE A 'DOT'S FOOT OFF WITH THAT CUTLASS, THAT 'BOT'LL BE INSTANT SCRAP!

MMMM... MOST EEMPRESSIVE VUN-EYES BLACK!



HOWEVER, DO NOT THINK FER A SPLIT-SECOND THAT THIS MEANS I FERGIVE YOU FER WHAT YOU DID TA' SONIC!*

-SIGH-OUT! I KNOW! I DESAIRVE ZOT MUCH, I GUESS!

-GROAN- ZE PYR-RATT EEZ RIGHT! I VOS SOUCH AN EEDNOT, UND SO BLY-IND! I STEEL CANNY BELIEVE I MADE SOUCH A STOOPEED MISTAKE LIKE ZAT ONE!

*CHECK OUT STH000 FOR THE DETAILS

GETTING TA' YOU, ROTOR, I KNOW YER POSITION IN THE COUNCIL IS IMPORTANT, BUT I CAN VERY WELL SEE, ROTOR, THAT BEING A FREEDOM FIGHTER IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TA' YOU PERSONALLY!



-CHUCKLE- IS IT REALLY THAT OBVIOUS!? YEAH, 'BLACK! IF I COULD RE-JOIN THE TEAM, IT'D BE BETTER THAN ALL MY DISTRACTIONS COMBINED!

EVEN SO, ROTOR, YER PART OF THIS TEAM NOW! PLUS DON'T FORGET ABOUT YER THROWN BACK! FACE IT, ROTOR! YOUR DAYS AS A FREEDOM FIGHTER ARE OVER! END OF STORY!



ACTUALLY, MAYBE NOT, HAMLIN!

!!??

WHERE I COME FROM, A THROWN BACK IS ACTUALLY PRETTY EASY TA' FIX!



IF YA REALLY WANTCHER THROWN BACK TA' GO WAY SO YOU CAN OFFICIALLY RE-JOIN THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, TAKE ONE OF THESE A NIGHT, AND CALL ME IN THE MORNING! WHEN THAT CONTAINER IS EMPTY, YER THROWN BACK'LL BE CURED FER GOOD! BUT, DON'T TAKE ANY MORE OR LESS, THAN WHAT I JUST TOLD YA TO! THREE DAYS OF UNDER-OR-OVER-DOSE, AND YER BACK'LL GET WORSE, IRREVERSIBLY!



MUCH TO THE COUNCIL'S SHOCK, BUT EVERYONE'S COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING.....

'BLACK, I KNOW IT'S RISKY, BUT IF IT REALLY DOES MEAN THAT I'LL BE ABLE TA' RE-JOIN THE TEAM, IT'S A RISK I'M WILLIN' TA' TAKE! ANYWAY, THANKS, 'BLACK! YER A REAL LIFE-SAVER!



HEY! DON'T MENTION IT, ROTOR!

ONE-EYED BLACK...



DON'T THINK O' THIS AS LOSING A COUNCILMAN. HAMLIN! THINK O' THIS AS THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS RE-GAINING THEIR MAD SCIENTIST!

AMY ROSE! THESE INSERTS'RE FOR THE ENDS OF YER ALREADY-BROKEN BY-YER-OPPONENTS-HAMMER. THEY WERE MADE FROM KORLONIUM CRYSTAL! MEANING YOU HIT ANYTHING ROBOTIC WITH THAT WICKED HAMMER O' YOURS, THAT BOT'LL BE INSTANTLY, AND COMPLETELY DUST!

MUMAM... DOUBLE-WHAMMY, HUH!? I LIKE!



JUST DO ME A FAVOR, AMY: DO NOT USE THESE ON ROBBIANS!

WHY?! PARTY POOPER!



AS FER THOSE O' YOU WHO MIGHT LIKE A LITTLE EXTRA FIRE-POWER, THIS MEANS ROTOR, CREAM, VECTOR, ESPIO, CHARM, AND EVEN YOU, SALLY, THESE HOT LITTLE BABIES ARE FER YOU GUYS!



THESE HAND-WEAPONS ARE THE LATEST IN 'DOUBLE-TROUBLE' TECHNOLOGY! THEY'RE KNOWN AS THE 'DOUBLE-TROUBLE' WEAPONS! THEY TEAM A TELEPORTATION GUN WITH A SMALL, BUT POWERFUL, RAPID-FIRE KORLONIUM CRYSTAL-POWERED LASER-PISTOL! HOWEVER, UNLIKE MOST OTHER DOUBLE-AND-TRIPLE-TROUBLE WEAPONS, ONLY ONE O' THE WEAPONS IS TO BE USED AT ONCE! THE TELEPORTATION GUN PART O' THE WEAPON IS FOR-- YOU GUESSED IT--TELEPORTING THINGS

OUT O' HERE'S WAY; I'VE ALREADY CALIBRATED THEM TO SEND ANY, AND ALL, ROBBIANS TO THE MAIN LAB HERE IN NEW MOBOTROPOLIS, WHERE THEY'RE TO BE FITTED WITH FREE-WILL RESTRICTION CHIPS! THE LASER-PISTOL PART O' THE WEAPON IS, OF COURSE, FER ANYTHING ELSE EGG-FACE ANY TRY TA' HIDE BEHIND!



WHAT YOU'RE DOING FOR THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IS VERY GENEROUS, ONE-EYED BLACK!

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK CALLING ONE-EYED BLACK "SOB" WAS A BIG MISTAKE! HE'S DOING SO MUCH FOR MY FRIENDS! AND GETTING SALLY BACK FOR US!? THAT WAS PROBABLY THE BEST GIFT OF ALL!



ALL OF THE LASER-WEAPONS I'VE PASSED OUT'RE POWERED BY KORLONIUM CRYSTAL, MEANING THAT ANYTHING ROBOTIC TARGETED WITH THESE WEAPONS, IS GUARANTEED ANCIENT HISTORY! AND LAST, BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST, ARE THE CRASH COURSE SPECIAL BELT-WORN DEVICES THAT'LL GRANT THE ONES WHO POSSESS THEM POWER BEYOND THEIR ENEMIES' WILDEST DREAMS! SOME, TALK, KNUCKLE, AND, THIS IS WHY I INVITED YOU FOUR TO THIS! NOW UNDERSTAND! I WENT THROUGH SEVERAL BOT-AS-INS: BOWE THE MAGES O' SOME NEETLY THINGS TA' WORK!

250 POWER BEES, AS WELL AS GAIN UNLIMITED ACCESS TO THE POWER O' THE MASTER EMERALD!



!!?? WHAT THE HECK DOES A "CHAOS CARRIER" DO, 'BLACK!?



ALRIGHT, PIRATE!!! IT'S **CONFESSION TIME!!!** WHAT DID YOU DO TO THE MASTER EMERALD!!!????



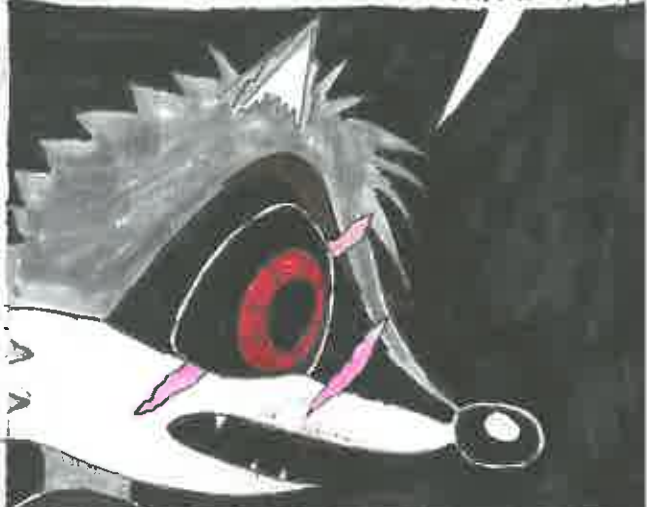
RELAX KUCKLES! ALL I REALLY DID WAS **AVOICE** ITS POWER SO AS TO MAKE THE CHAOS CARRIERS WORK!

AND I REMEMBER HEARIN' THAT THE MASTER EMERALD IS ACTUALLY **14 CHAOS EMERALDS** ROLLED INTO ONE! THAT MEANS... **NO WAY!!! COULDN'T BE!** COULD IT!?

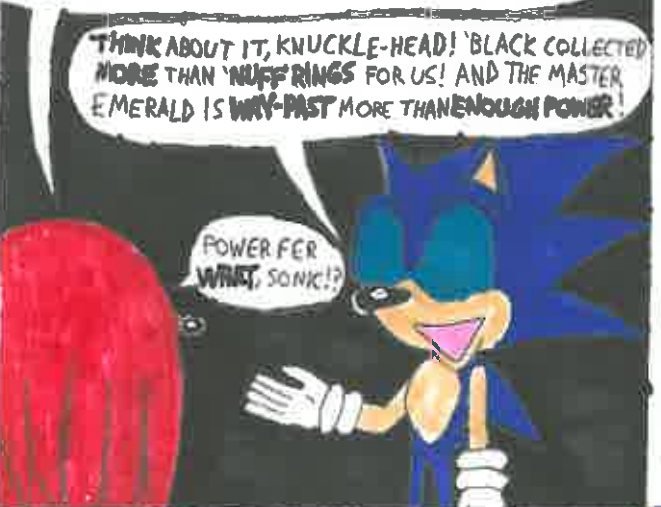


YO, 'BLACK! DO THESE THINGS DO WHAT I **THINK** THEY'RE GONNA DO!?

YOU DO SEEM TA 'AVE THE **RIGHT IDEA**, SONIC! **KNUCKLES** DOES, AS WELL, BUT 'E'S A LITTLE TOO MAD AT ME TA' ASK!



ALRIGHT, SONIC! FILL ME IN! WHAT'S THIS **CRAZY OLD** 'COON UP TO!?



THINK ABOUT IT, KNUCKLE-HEAD! 'BLACK COLLECTED MORE THAN **'NUFF RINGS** FOR US! AND THE MASTER EMERALD IS **WAY-PAST** MORE THAN ENOUGH POWER!

POWER FER WHAT, SONIC!?

HEH- FOR THE **FOUR** OF US, TA' GO **SUPER!**



END OF PART XI

-GASP-ONE-EYED BLACK! IS THIS TRUE!?!? YOU CREATED THESE "CHAOS CARRIERS" TO ENABLE SONIC, TAILS, KNUCKLES AND MINA TO ACHIEVE ULTIMATE FORMS AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE!?



'BLACK! IS IT TRUE! YOU'RE MAKIN' ME PART O' THE SUPER-TEAM!?!?!?

IT'S TRUE, MINA! I AM!



AS WITH SONIC, TAILS N' KNUCKLES, YOU, MINA, HAVE A GIFT! YER VERY CLOSE-NEXT-DOOR TA' BEING AS FAST AS SONIC! AND IF YA' DON'T MIND ME SAYING SO, MINA: THAT'S A PRETTY BIG FEAT N' ITSELF! SO, YES, MINA! I REALLY DO THINK YOU GOT THE STUFF! I COLLECTED

ENOUGH RINGS, NOT JUST FER THE BIG, UPCOMING ASSAULT, BUT ALSO, FER A PRACTICE RUN! BOTH TO PROVE THAT THE CHAOS CARRIERS ACTUALLY WORK, AND TO PROVE THAT YOU REALLY CAN ACHIEVE AN ULTIMATE FORM! AND, I'VE ALREADY PICKED OUT A NAME FOR IT,...



LATER, AT MINA'S BIRD'S TRAILER...

'ULTRA MINA'!?!?!?

KILLER NAME, HUH!? ANYWAY, YA' HEARD ME RIGHT, ASH! 'BLACK THINKS I GOT THE STUFF! AND I AM NOT GONNA DISAPPOINT 'EM!



I STILL DUNNO 'BOUT THIS, MINA! I MEAN: EGGMAN COULD REALLY HURT YOU! OR WORSE-YET, ROBOTICIZE YOU! DO YA' REALLY THINK THAT THIS IS WORTH THAT KINDA' RISK!?

HEY! DON'T WORRY 'BOUT A THING, ASH! I KNOW THAT WITH SONIC, KNUCKLES AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND CHAOTIX HELPIN' ME, MY CHANCES O' NOT COMIN' OUTTA THIS ALIVE'RE PRETTY WELL SOLID!



WELL, I CAN CALL A TWO-MONTH HIATUS! BUT I CAN'T DO ANYTHING MORE!

THAT'S AT LEAST A WEEK! MORE THAN I'LL NEED! THANKS, ASH!

DONE! SO, HAVE YA TALKED T'YER PALS 'BOUT THIS YET!?

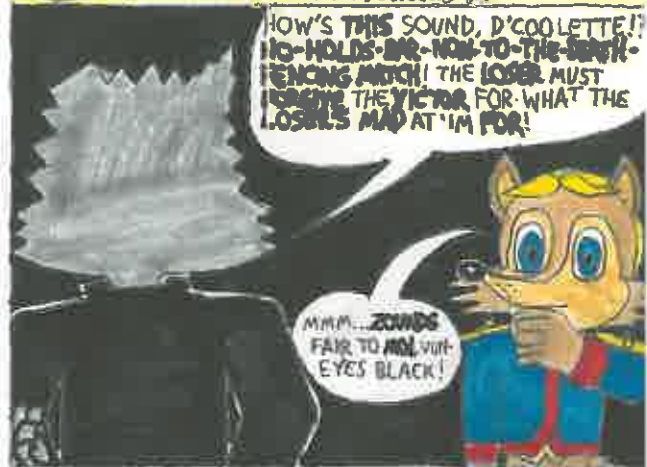
NOT YET! BUT I'M PLANNING TO!



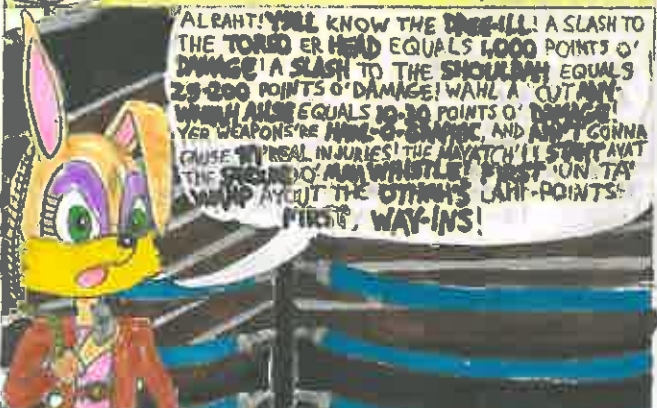
"WELL, HERE'S HOPING THATCHER PARENTS ARE AS SUPPORTIVE AS THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS SAY THIS 'ONE-EYED BLACK' GUY IS!"



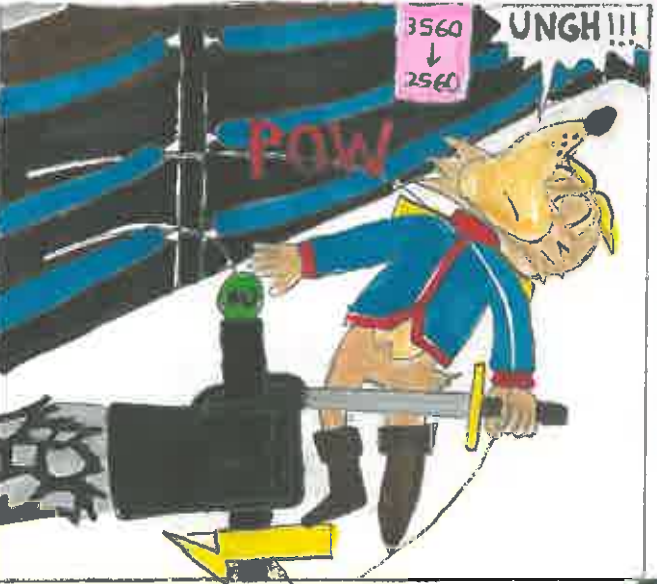
I KINDA FIGURED THIS'D HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER AND IN ADDITION TO THAT I KNEW WHY ANTOINE IS OBVIOUSLY STILL PRETTY MAD AT ME FOR NOT SQUEALING ON PATCH WHEN I REALLY SHOULD'VE!



MUCH TA' ANTOINE'S DELIGHT, AND SATISFACTION, I HAND-PICKED BUNNIE AS THIS MATCH'S REFEREE, AND WE WOULD EACH BE GIVEN THE USUAL 4000 "LIFE-POINTS"



RE>ONE-EYED BLACK GOT THIS METHOD OF DETERMINING A WINNER, FROM THE HIT ANIME SERIES "YU-GI-Oh!"



AFTER A GOOD 12 MINUTES OF INTENSE BLAME-PLAY...

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HA! AND HA AGAIN, VUN-EYES BLACK! I NOW HEV TWICE AZ MANY LIVES POINTZ AS VU RIGHT NOW! GEEV UP!?

SORRY, D'COOLETTE! TWO THINGS Y'GOTTA KEEP IN MIND: FIRST, SURRENDERING IS NOT MY STYLE!

UND ZE OZAINZ?

THE SECOND THING IS...



IT'S NEVER OVER, UNTIL THE FAT MAN SCREAMS!



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TWEEET!

THEY IS MARRIAGE IS NOW OFFICIAL LY OWN! YER WINNAH, BAH A VERY SMOAKY TWEET-ID-ONE-AHED BLAY-ACK!

LOOK, D'COOLETTE: WHAT HAPENED TO YER FATHER WAS MY FAULT, I ADMIT THAT MUCH, BUT REST-ASSURED: IF THAT KINDA' THING HAPPENS AGAIN, I'LL TEAR THE CULPRIT APART, AND FEED 'IM TO THE COUNCIL PIECE-BY-PIECE! I MAY'VE FAILED TA' SAVE YER FATHER, BUT I'LL SOONER GIVE UP MY LIFE A THOUSAND TIMES OVER, BEFORE I SEE IT HAPPEN TA' ANYONE ELSE, EVER AGAIN!



YOU AIRE HELPK ME III GETTINK UP!? BUT VIVI?

MUCH AS I HATE TA' ADMIT THIS, D'COOLETTE, YOU ARE NOT MY ENEMY! MY ENEMY-YOUR ENEMY-YOUR FRIENDS' ENEMY-OUR ENEMY, IS THE GUY WHO MARRIAGED THE GIRL WHO GOT YOU N' YER FRIENDS TOGETHER!



EET TAKES A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF HONOR AND COUR-OU TO DO VAT YU DO, VUN-EYES BLACK! I CAN SEE VAIIRY VELL ZAT YU KNOW VAT YOU VER DOINK VEN YU ALTHAND YOURZELF!



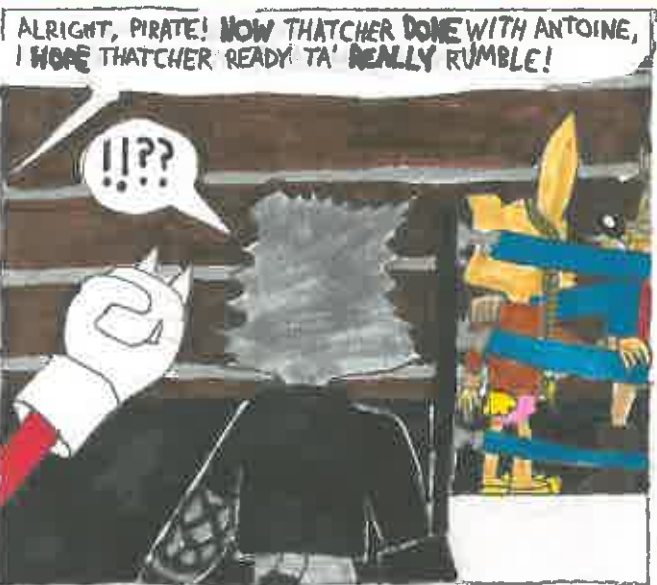
THAT'S A COMPLIMENT FROM YOU THAT I REALLY DO APPRECIATE, D'COOLETTE! BUT I'M STILL NOT GONNA FERGIVE YOU FER SONIC'S PROSECUTION AFTER THE MECHA-SONIC INCIDENT!*

OUI! I KNOW! I DEZAIRVE ZAT MUCH, I GUESS!

*> SEE 48-PAGE SPECIAL "MECHA MADNESS" AND STH @ 40 FOR FULL DETAILS



I ADMEEET EET! I WAS STOOPEED! SONEEC WAS RIGHT! I SHOULD'VE NOTEECED SOONER ZAT NACK WAS ZE YUN WHO WAS BEHIND ZAT!



ALRIGHT, PIRATE! NOW THATCHER DONE WITH ANTOINE, I HOPE THATCHER 'READY TA' REALLY RUMBLE!

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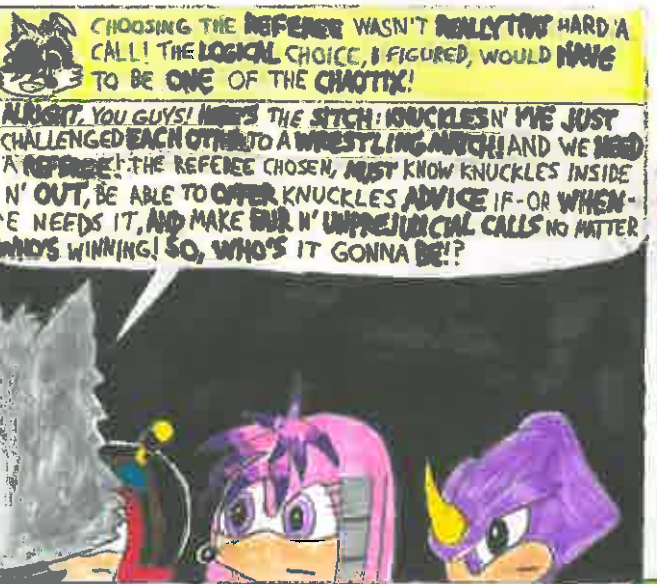


I GUESS IN ALL THE EXCITEMENT OF MY WAD-DUE WITH D'COOLETTE, I ALMOST FERGOT THAT KNUCKLES WANTED A PIECE OF ME, AS WELL! AND AS WITH D'COOLETTE, I KNEW WHY: KNUCKLES IS OBVIOUSLY STILL HEART-BROKEN OVER LOSING HIS FATHER, AND I GUESS THAT HE DIDN'T REALY LIKE THE IDEA OF ANOTHER CURSE ON THE MASTER EMERALD THAT REQUIRES A SACRIFICE TA' BREAK!

ALRIGHT, KNUCKLES! HOW'S THIS SOUND: WRESTLING MATCH; IF YOU WIN, I EXPLAIN M'SELF IN-FULL; BUT IF I WIN, YOU'RE TO BOTHER ME 'BOUT THE CURSE I PUT ON THE MASTER EMERALD NO MORE!

HMMM... SOUNDS FAIR'NUFF, PIRATE! BUT DON'T EXPECT ME TA' GO EASY ON YA'!

WHO SAID I WAS GONNA ASK YA' TO, KNUCKLES!?



CHOOSING THE REFEREE WASN'T REALLY TA' HARD A CALL! THE LOGICAL CHOICE, I FIGURED, WOULD HAVE TO BE ONE OF THE CHAOTIX!

ALRIGHT, YOU GUYS! HERE'S THE STICH: KNUCKLES N' I'VE JUST CHALLENGED EACH OTHER TO A WRESTLING MATCH! AND WE NEED A REFEREE! THE REFEREE CHOSEN, MUST KNOW KNUCKLES INSIDE N' OUT, BE ABLE TO OFFER KNUCKLES ADVICE IF-OR WHEN-E NEEDS IT, AND MAKE OUR W' UNPREJUDICIAL CALLS NO MATTER WHO'S WINNING! SO, WHO'S IT GONNA BE!?



!!!!???? ME!?

AH HATE TA' ADMIT IT, 'SU, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO KNOWS 'IM BEST! YEA DEFINITELY THE CLOSEST TO 'S HEART, 'NYWAYS! THEREFORE, DARK DARE: IT SHOULD BE YOU WHO REFS THIS ONE!

FOR ONCE, I SEE WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, VECTOR!



AND, DON'T WORRY, YOU TWO! I'LL TRY TA' MAKE THE FINEST CALLS I CAN!

THAT'S ALL THAT I, AND KNUCKLES, CAN EVER ASK O' YA, 'SU!



AS THE MATCH KICKS OFF.....

ALRIGHT, YOU TWO! HERE'S HOW IT'S GONNA GO DOWN: EACH O' YOU'LL BE GIVEN 4,000 "LIFE POINTS"! WHOEVER REDUCES THE OTHERS LIFE-POINTS TO ZERO FIRST, WINS! HERE'S THE WAY IT'LL WORK: A DIRECT HIT'LL CAUSE 1,000 POINTS O' DAMAGE! A LESSER HIT'LL CAUSE ANYWHERE FROM 5-500 POINTS O' DAMAGE! CARNAGE'LL BEGIN AT THE SOUND OF MY WHISTLE! GOOD LUCK TO YOU BOTH! SPECULLY TO YOU, KNUCKLES!



READY!!!???

TWEEEET



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3600

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3650

WHAK



3050
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2600

WHOP



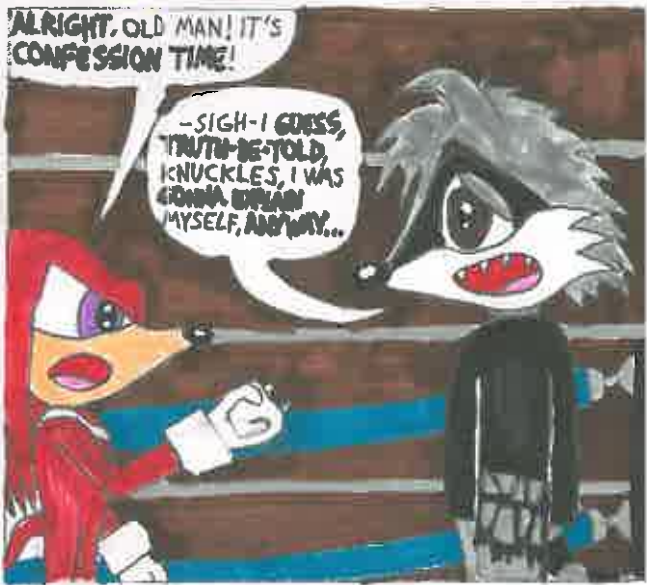
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FINALLY, AFTER ABOUT THREE MINUTES OF UNCEASING, TWO-WAY BATTERING.....

0045 | THERE! THAT'S GAME SET, MATCH, AND OVER, PIRATE! SO IF YOU GOT AN EXPLANATION FER PUTTING A CURSE ON THE MASTER EMERALD, LET'S HEAR IT!

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UNLIKE YER "FRIEND", DR FINITEVUS, I HAD NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER ON CONTROLLING OR CORRUPTING ANYONE! THE "CURSE" THAT I PLACED ON THE MASTER EMERALD IS ONLY THERE TO PROVIDE YOU, SONIC, TAILS, AND HOPEFULLY, ALSO AMY, WITH THE POWER TO ACHIEVE YER ULTIMATE DREAMS AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE! THE MASTER EMERALD IS THE ONLY POWER-SOURCE IN THIS WORLD THAT CAN DO THAT FER ALL FOUR OF YOU AT ONCE!

I DID, KNUCKLES! UNFORTUNATELY, I DIDN'T REALLY SEE 'NY OTHER ALTERNATIVE! AND I PROMISE! THE EVIL ONES ARE, AND HONORFULLY, WILL STAY, THE ONLY ONES, WHO'LL HAVE ANY GOOD REASON, TA' SHARE THE FATE THAT CLAIMED YOUR FATHER!





PIRATE! YOU OBVIOUSLY DON'T SEEM TA' KNOW, OR CARE HOW I FEEL...

'FEEL'!? 'BOUT WHAT!? 'BOUT BEING SOMEONE CLOSE TA' YER HEART TO AN EVIL INFLUENCE OR 'BOUT JUST FATE!? 'BOUT MAKIN' A MISTAKE THAT YOU FEEL YOU COULDN'T PREVENTED FROM EVEN HAPPENING?!

SIGN-WELL, YOU! THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I MEAN!



AND YOU THINK THATCHER THE ONLY CREATURE WHO FEELS THAT WAY!? WELL, KNUCKLES! YOU ARE **WRONG-- DEAD-WRONG!** HOW DO YA' THINK SONIC FELT WHEN HE LEARNED THAT SALLY HAD BEEN ROBOTICIZED AND DEAD-LOCKED TO THE DARKNESS!? HOW DO YA' THINK I FELT WHEN I REALIZED THAT THE ONE-N-DONLYS OF NOT JUST ONE-BUT TWO OF MY BEST FRIENDS WERE LOST TO THE BIG ROUND GUY!? HOW DO YA' THINK ATARI FELT AS 'E SAW CRISTALIA GET ROBOTICIZED! AND HOW DO YA' THINK SALLY FEELS LOOKING BACK ON EVERYTHING THAT EGGMAN MADE 'ER DO!?



BELIEVE ME, KNUCKLES! I KNOW EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL! AND IT WAS BECAUSE O' THOSE FEELINGS THAT I CAME BACK HERE, TO YOUR WORLD! I LET THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, AND ATARI DOWN IN THE END, AND I AM NOT GONNA MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN!

PIRATE! THAT EYE O' YERS ENABLES YOU TA' COMMUNICATE WITH THE SPIRIT WORLD RIGHT!?

A-FIRM-ATIVE!



THEN, I WANT YOU TA' CONTACT MY DAD, AND TELL 'IM FOR ME-SOB- THAT I'M SO SORRY!

YOUR FATHER HAS ALWAYS BEEN WITH YOU, KNUCKLES! HE HAS WATCHED OVER YOU SINCE THE DAY HE ENTERED THE FORGOTTEN ZONE, AND WAS ADMITTED INTO THE BROTHERHOOD.



WHEN THAT BLIND, UNUNDERSTANDING FOOL WHO CALLS 'IMSELF YER GRANDFATHER, AND SEVERAL OTHERS WITHIN THE BROTHERHOOD, SAID THAT INFUSING YOU WITH ALL THAT EXTRA CHAOS ENERGY 'PON BIRTH WAS A BAD IDEA, YER FATHER STOOD UP FER YOU!



IT WAS ONLY WHEN YOU LEFT ANGEL ISLAND TA' HELP SALLY AND 'ER FRIENDS AGAINST EGGMAN, DID YOUR DAD LOSE ANY FAITH IN YOU, WHATSOEVER? IN FACT, WHEN YOU BECAME ENERJAK, YOUR FATHER WANTED TO DESTROY YOU!

THEN, WHY DIDN'T 'E!?

SONIC N' 'SU MANAGED TO TURN 'IM BACK AROUND! AND WHEN 'E LEARNED THAT THE CURSE THAT FINTEVUS PLACED ON THE MASTER EMERALD, COULD ONLY BE BROKEN BY-WAY OF SACRIFICE, YER DAD VIEWED 'IS OWN LIFE, AS A SMALL PRICE TA' PAY FER SAVING THE WORLD, AND YOU, ALL IN ONE BLOW!



AFTER EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED BACK THERE, MY DAD SHOULDN'T WASTED 'IS TIME, OR FER THAT MATTER, HIS LIFE!

YOUR FATHER CONTINUES TO THIS VERY DAY, TO WATCH OVER YOU FROM THE SIDE-LINES OF THE AFTERLIFE, KNUCKLES! AND HIM SEEING YOU FEEL THIS GUILTY, IS THE WORST AFTERLIFE TORMENT THAT HE COULD EVER RECEIVE! AFTER SONIC N' 'SU TURNED 'IM AROUND, YER FATHER NEVER SAID THAT WHAT HAPPENED WAS YOUR FAULT! IF YA' ASK ME 'BOUT IT, KNUCKLES, IT SHOULD BE THAT ALBINO FREAK FINTEVUS WHO PAYS FER THIS! NOT YOU! NOT ANYONE IN YER FAMILY THAT REMAINS! AND THAT GOES AT LEAST THIRTY-DUNE FER YER MOM!



FINTEVUS! WHETHER IT TAKES A MONTH, OR THE REST O' MY LIFE, I WILL MAKE YOU PAFFER EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE!

UNDEKNOUWST TO KNUCKLES, I WAS BUGGED BY 'IS MOM AND STEP-DAD, WHEN THEY LEARNED I WAS BACK, THEY SENT FOR ME, HOPING THAT I COULD BRING KNUCKLES OVER FOR A VISIT! BUT WHEN I TOLD 'EM THAT KNUCKLES WAS FER 'EM, DISAPPOINTMENT COULDN'T BE ANY MORE OF AN UNDERSTATEMENT!



I'M SORRY, YOU GUYS! I CAN'T BRING KNUCKLES! HE'S TOO TORN UP OVER WHAT 'E DID AS ENERJAK TO EVEN LOOK AT YOU!

YOU'RE LYING! YOU-YOU HAVE TO BE! THIS HAS GOTTA BE SOME KINDA' TRICK TO KEEP KNUCKLES AWAY FROM US!

I'M AFRAID NOT WYN!

!?

EXCEPT TO LAY A TRAP FOR A DEADLY ENEMY, OR TO PROTECT A FRIEND, I AM AFRAID ONE-EYED BLACK EITHER SPEAKS THE TRUTH, OR HE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING AT ALL!



THEN, MY BIG BROTHER WAS ENERJAK!?

'FRID SO KNEE-CAPS! BUT IT GETS EVEN WORSE THAN THAT-YER STEP-DAD'S FATHER GAVE UP HIS YOU LIFE TO ROB KNUCKLES FROM ENERJAK'S MASTER INFLUENCE!



!!!???

FRIGHTENING AS THAT SOUNDS, I'M DEAD-SERIOUS! KNUCKLES WAS ENERJAK, LOCKE IS GONE, AND KNUCKLES DOES FEEL INCREDIBLY GUILTY OVER EVERYTHING HE DID AS THAT CHAOS-POWERED MONSTER!



AND IF YA' STILL DON'T WANNA BELIEVE ME, HOW 'BOUT I WEAR A VERY WELL-HIDDEN TRANS-CEIVER, AND NEXT TIME I RUN INTO KNUCKLES, AND/OR ANYONE CLOSE TO 'IM, YOU CAN HEAR THE TRUTH BEHIND MY WORDS FOR YOURSELVES?

SIGH-SOUNDS FER TO US, ONE-EYED BLACK!

END OF PART XII

