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written by Ted Anderson

Andy Price Heather Breckel

letters by Neil Uyetake

edits by Bobby Curnow

publisher Ted Adams

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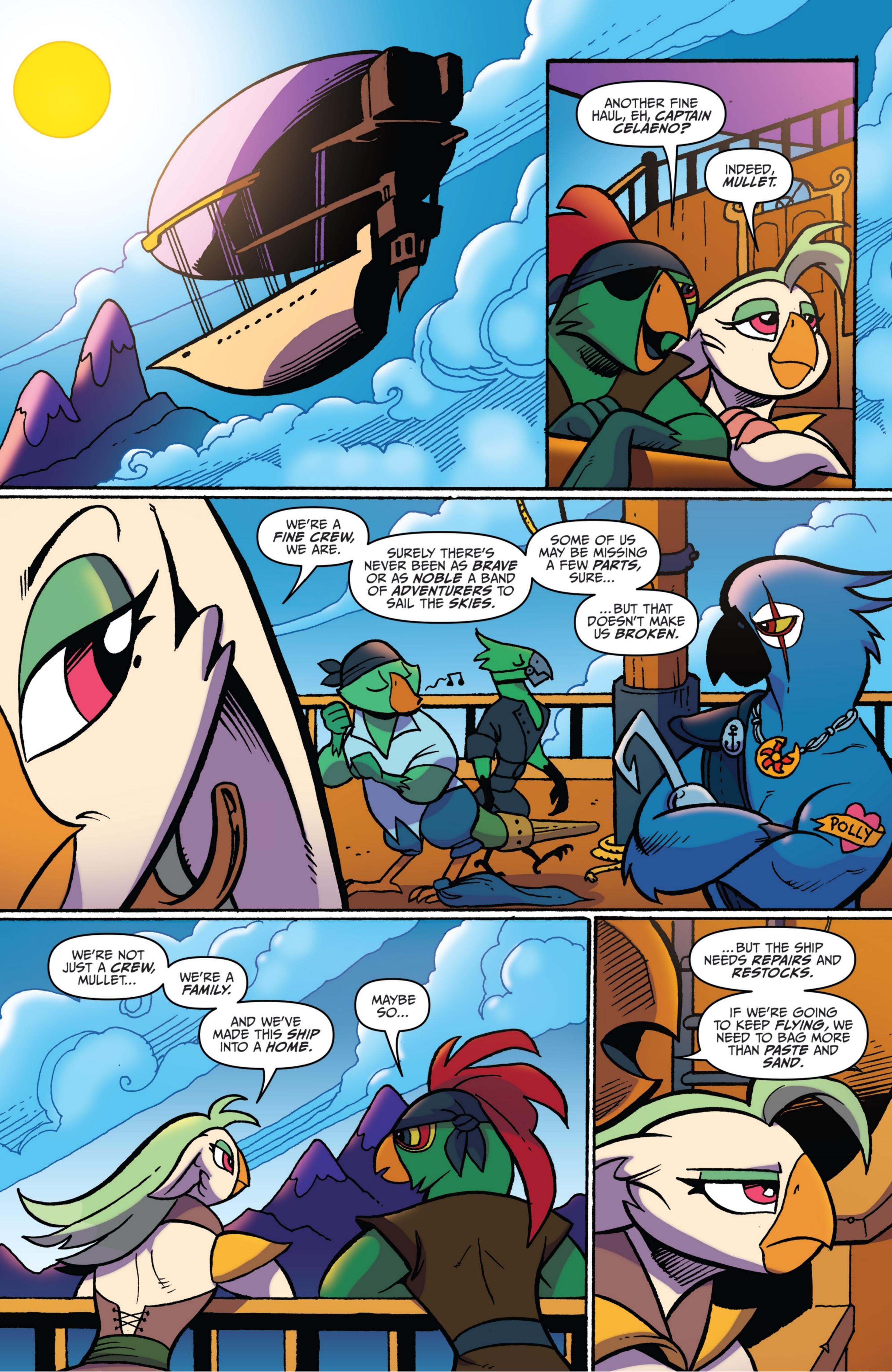


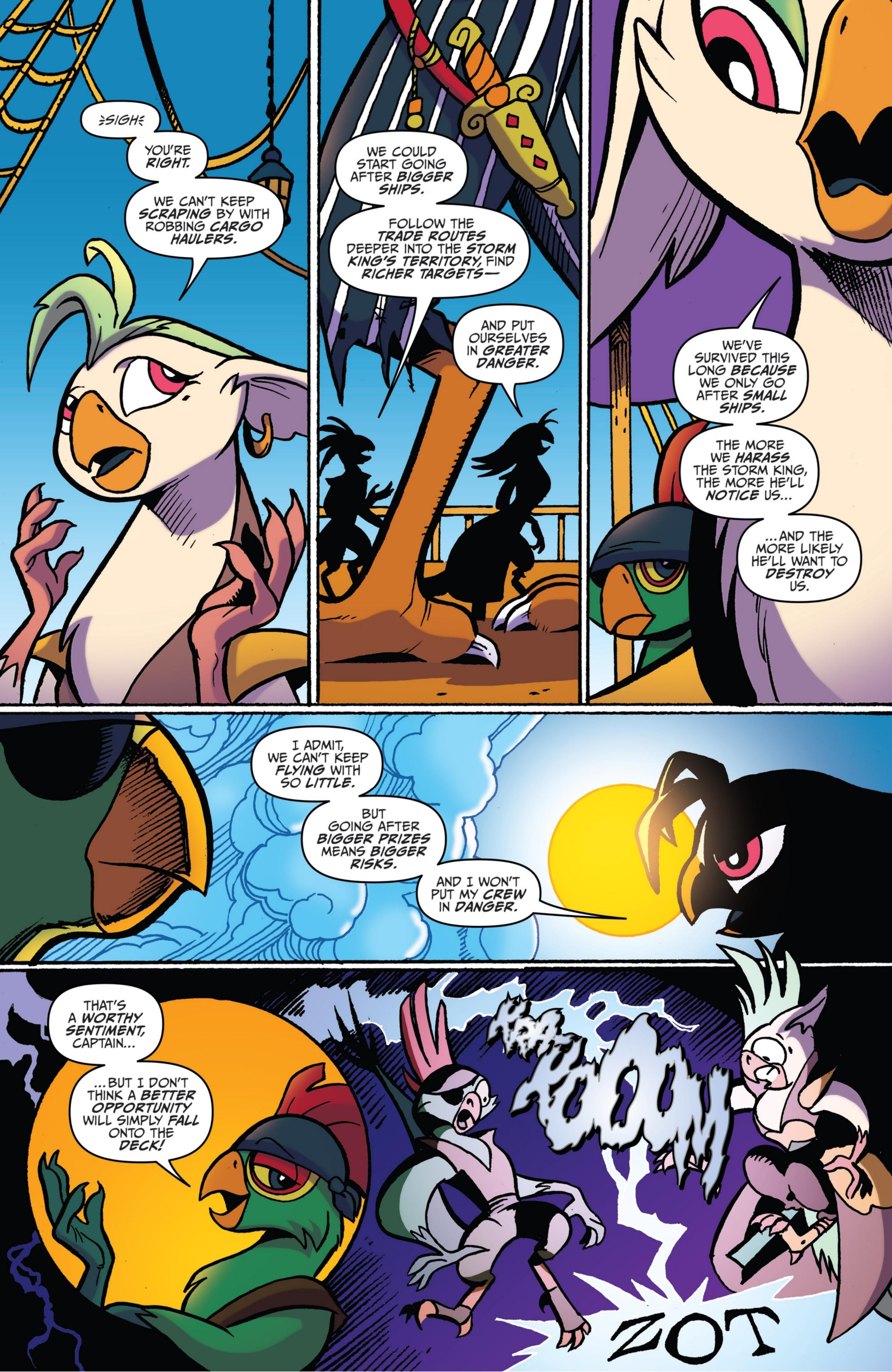
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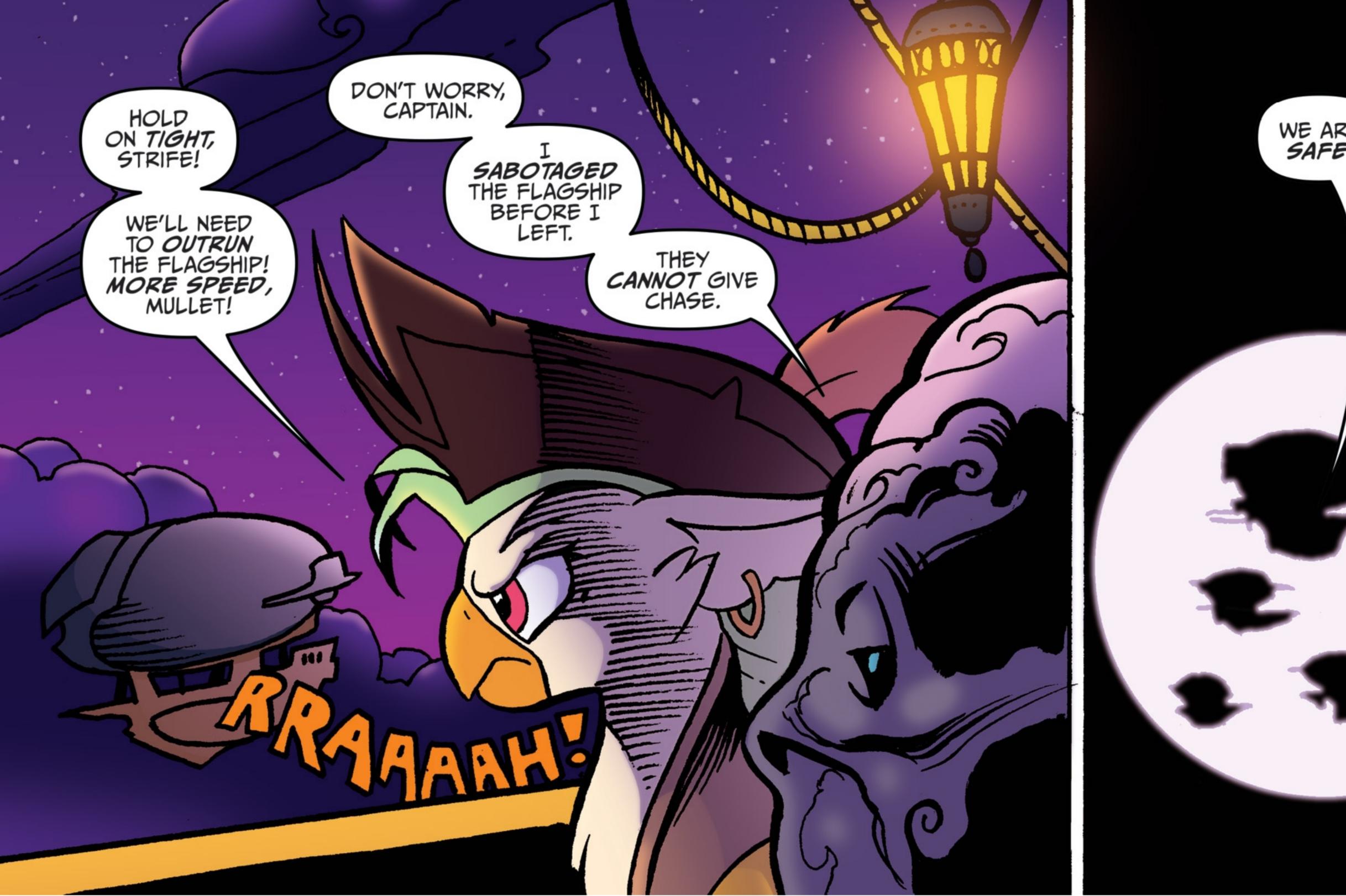




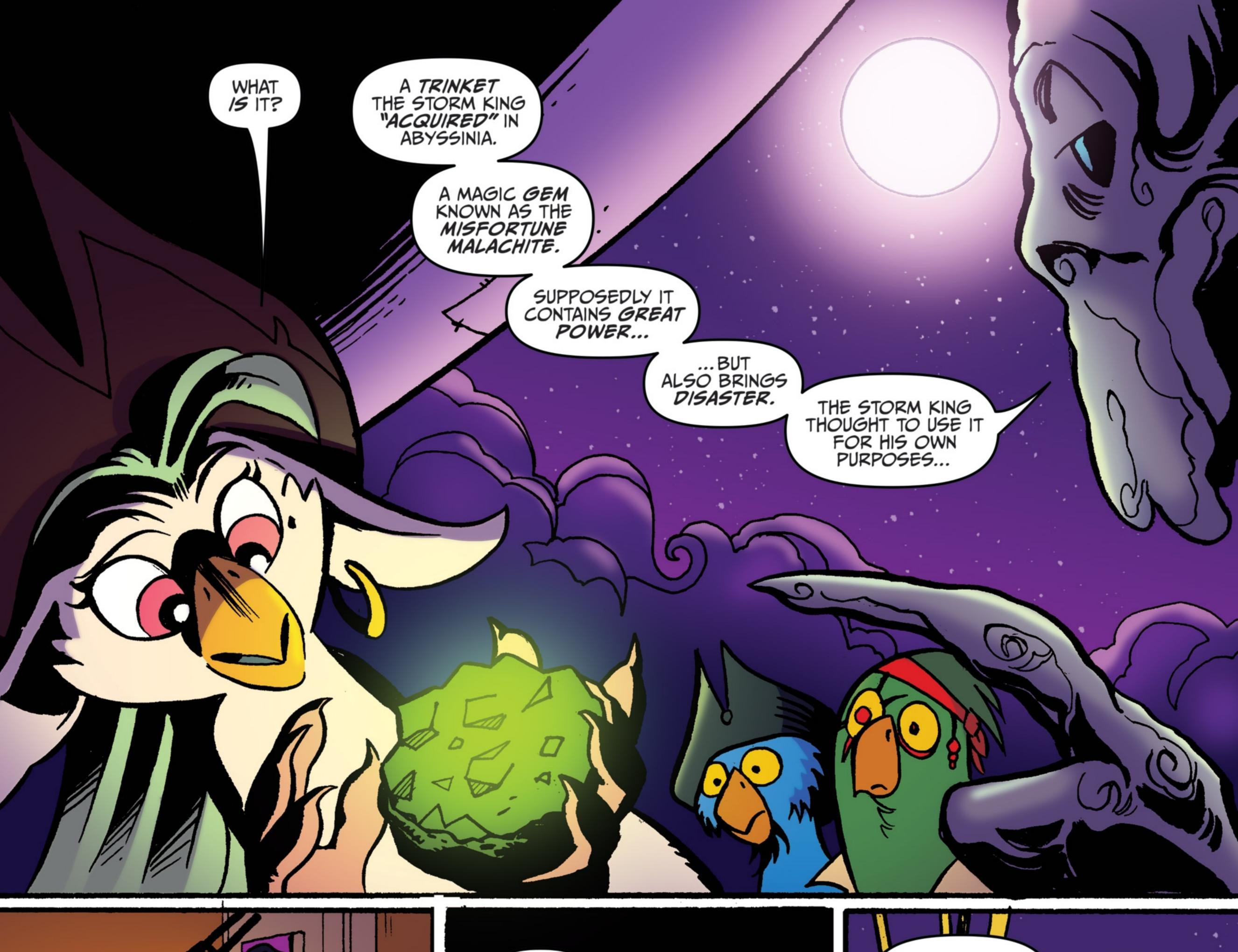




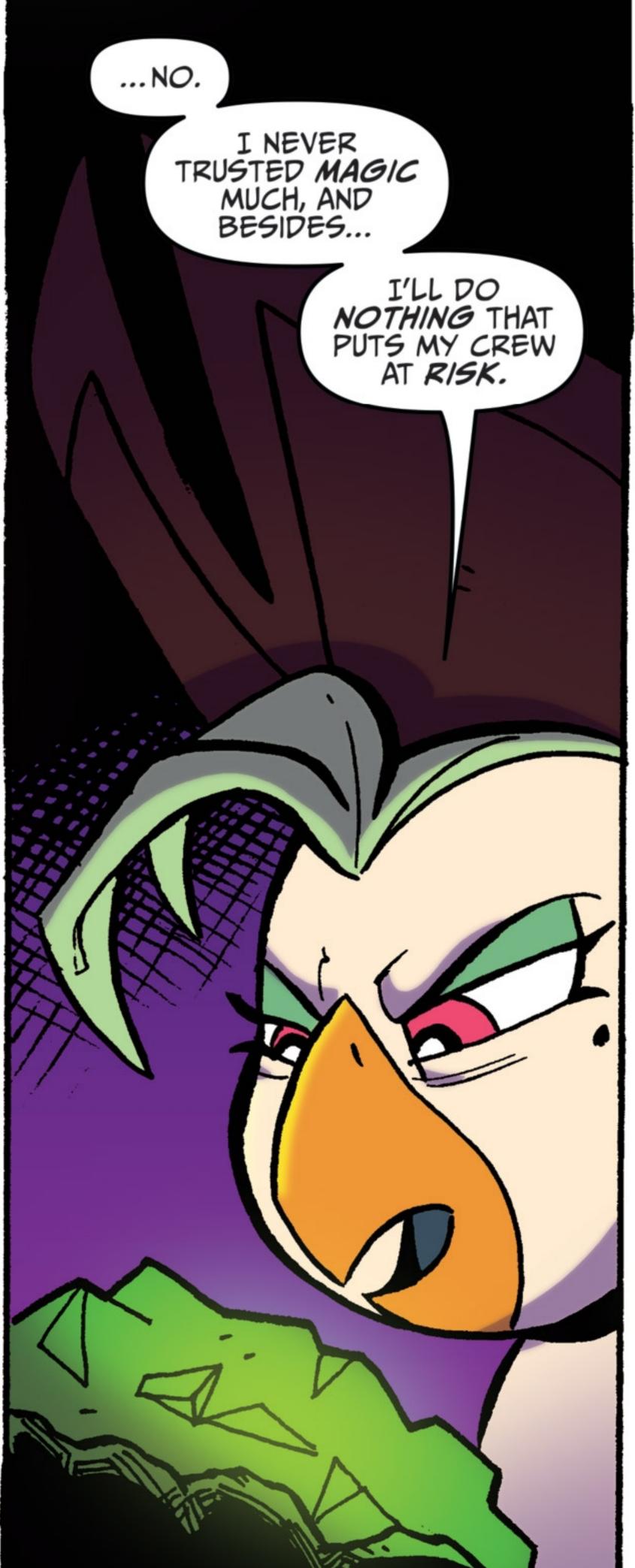




















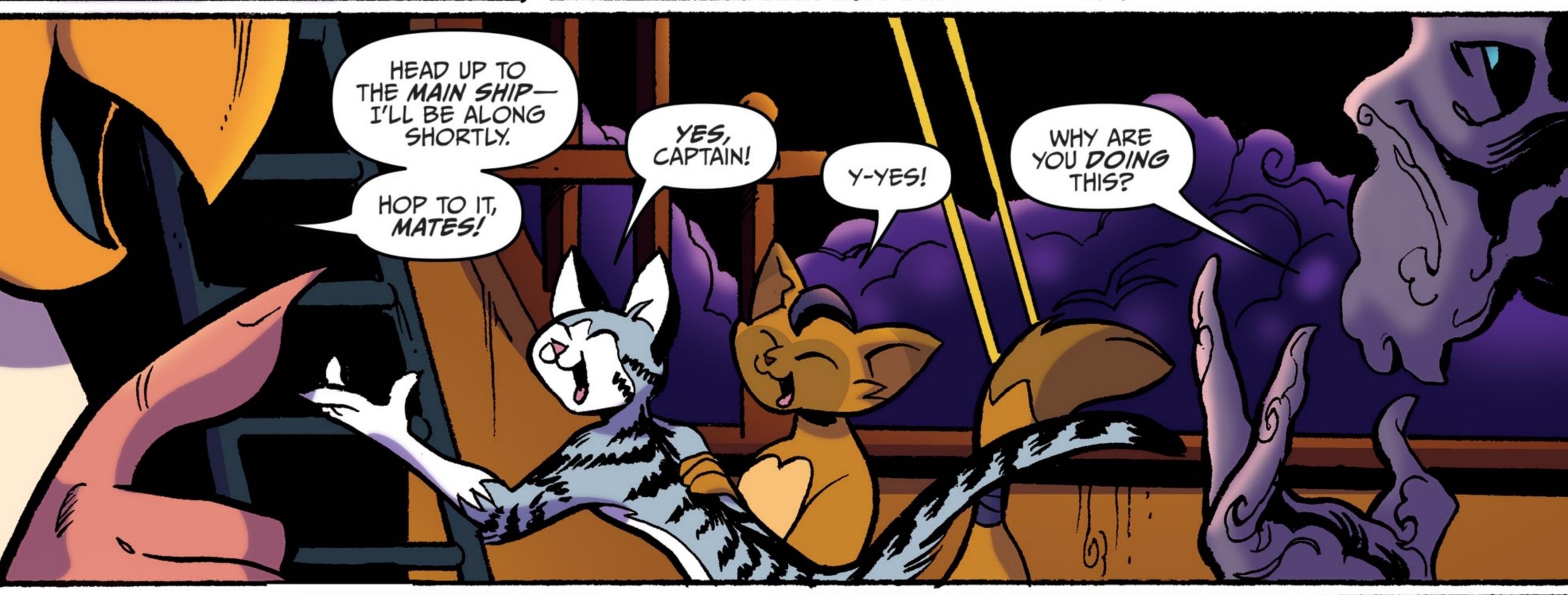












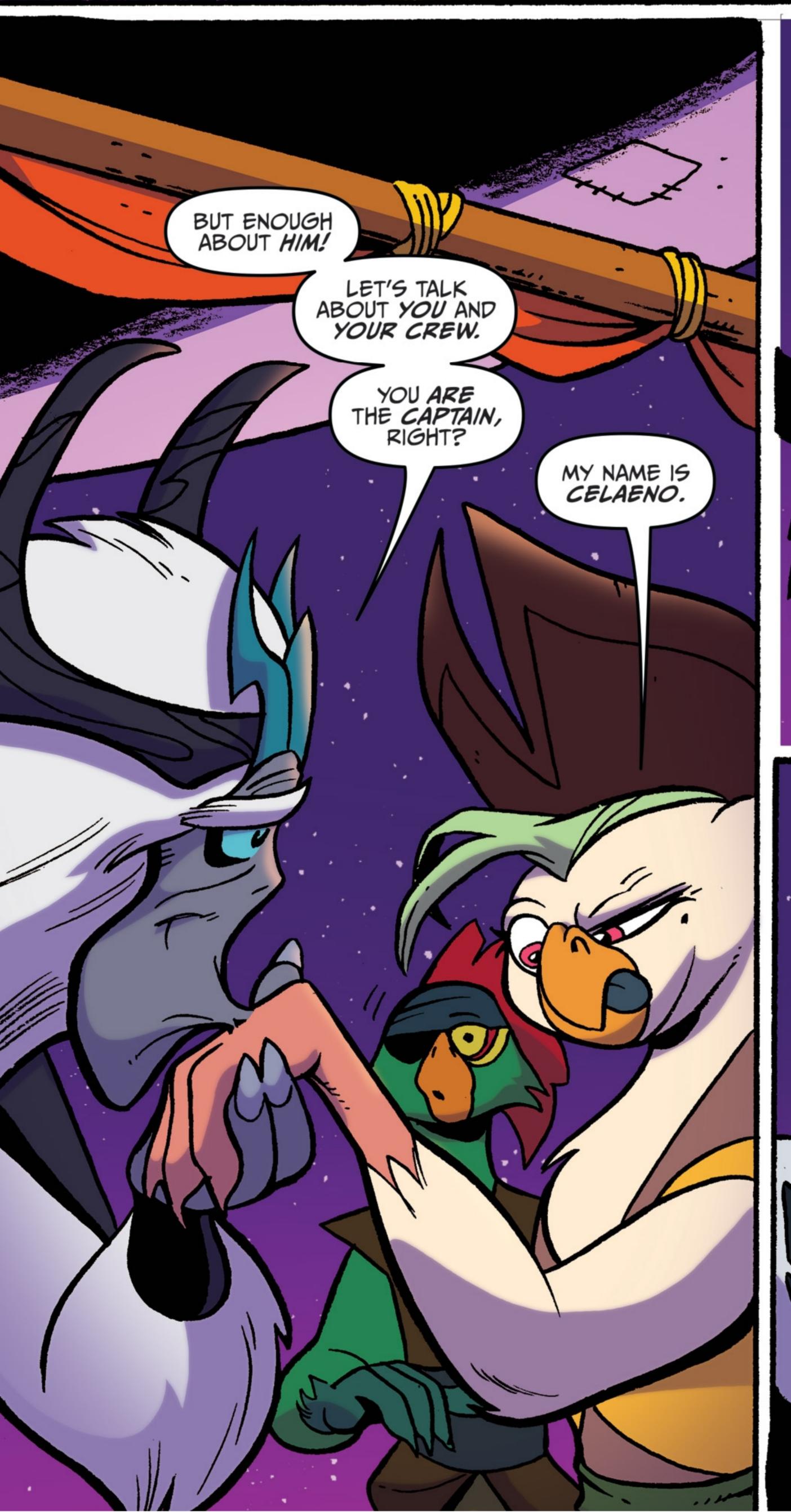






























FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK by Ted Adams



July brings a comic I can't wait to read, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles/Usagi Yojimbo* written and drawn by Usagi's creator **Stan Sakai.** Co-produced with Dark Horse Comics, this one-shot finds the Turtles transported to Edo-era Japan, the world of Usagi Yojimbo. I reached out to Stan to learn more about his long-running relationship with the Turtles and his plans for this story.

Ted Adams: Usagi has been a part of the *TMNT* comic book universe since the late 80s. How did the first crossover come about?



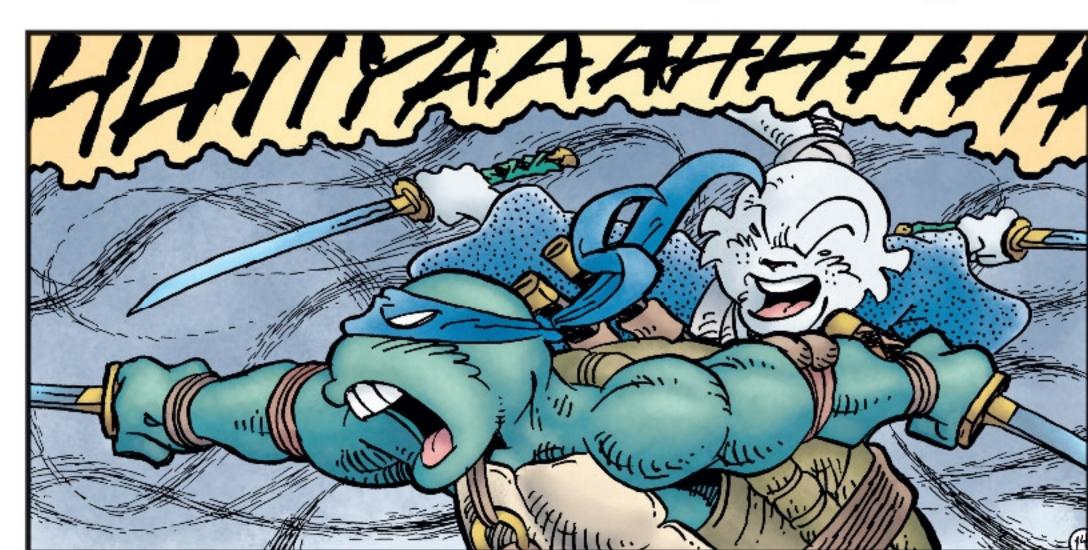
Stan Sakai: Usagi was first published in 1984, the same year *TMNT* #1 came out. There were very few black and white books out at the time, so we wrote fan letters to each other. In one of those, I enclosed a very quick drawing of Usagi with the Turtles and was very surprised when it was printed in the *Donatello One-Shot*. If I had known it was going to be printed, I would have made a much better drawing. The first cross-over story was for *Shell Shock*. I was invited to contribute to that anthology along with many other creators.

TA: It's unusual for a creator-owned character like Usagi to be included in another property's tv and toys. Was that a result of your relationship with Kevin and Peter? SS: Definitely. The Turtles already had their TV series and merchandising line and I was sitting with Peter at a

SS: Definitely. The Turtles already had their TV series and merchandising line and I was sitting with Peter at a San Diego Comic-con when he asked if I would like Usagi to be in their series and toy line. I jumped at the opportunity. It was a lot of fun working with their company, Mirage. I would later take Usagi to Mirage Publishing and did a cross-over for the first story arc.

TA: I remember buying the original Usagi Playmates toy in 1989, do you have a favorite version from the various toys and tv shows?

SS: I still have a fondness for the first Playmates figure. I met with the sculptor and saw the original wax sculpt. The detailing was just amazing. I got quite a few comments about how super buff he is, but you should have seen the version we declined. Playmates has always been great to work with, and I'm looking forward to this new incarnation of the Usagi action figure.



TA: Usagi often teams up with Leonardo. Is he your favorite turtle?

SS: Yes, he is. There is the connection because they both use swords and their personalities just seem to match.

TA: What can you tell us about the latest cross-over?

SS: "Namazu" was inspired by the legend of a giant catfish that lives under the Japanese islands whose movements are the cause of the frequent earthquakes. A great hero was able to pin the fish under a massive rock at Kashima Shrine. In my story, a piece of the rock had broken off weakening its power and the catfish now threatens to devastate the entire country. It is up to Usagi, the Turtles and Kakera (my version of Splinter) to replace the stone fragment. Jei, the demonic spearman who thinks himself an emissary of the Gods, wants the country destroyed and is determined to stop them with his horde of mercenaries. The story climaxes in a huge double-double page spread of all the characters in battle during a huge earthquake.

TA: Thanks, Stan! I'll be back next month to tell you about our upcoming Hasbro event, First Strike.





Jeremy Whitley

letters by

Neil Uyetake

Brenda Hickey

edits by

Bobby Curnow

Heather Breckel

publisher

Ted Adams

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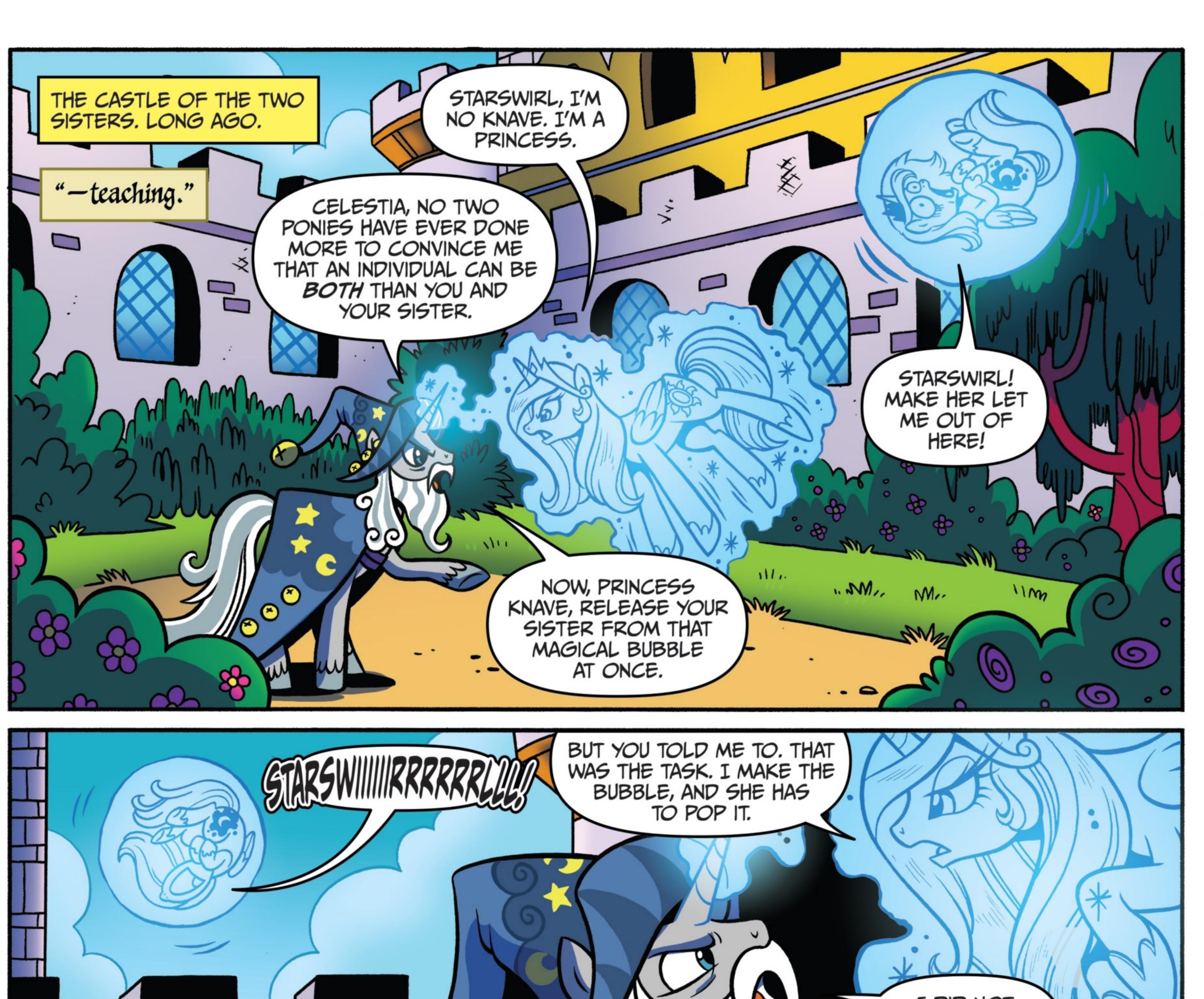


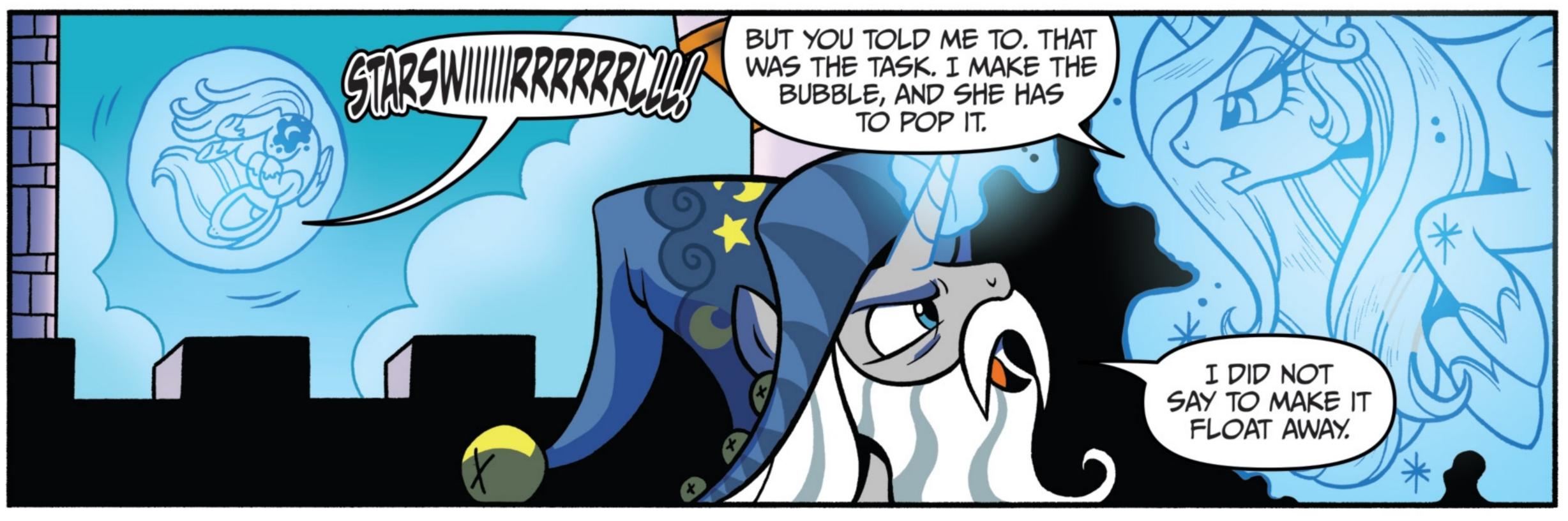
















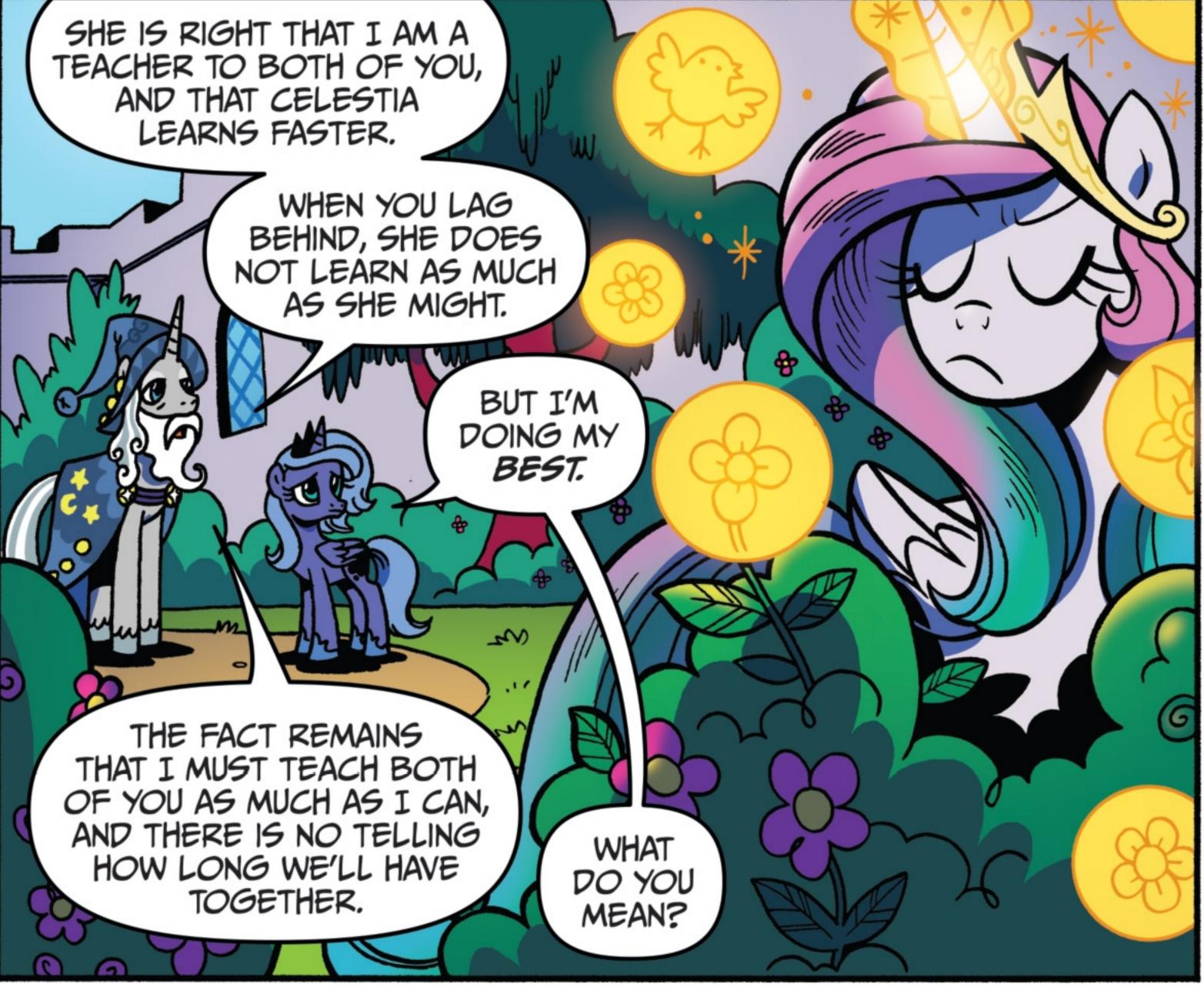


















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