THE MATCHMAN

ISSUE 16

THE ULTIMA THULE PROJECT / UNTERGANGSTA

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Brace yourselves, Matchfans, for the mind-numbing conclusion to the Ultima Thule Project! Code name: UNTERGANGSTA! Read on...if you dare!



And so, while DER GLOCKENSPIEL awaits justice in Berlin...



LANCE CORPOREAL

Well, there it is, then...

...Our heroes convene back at VALentine Complex in order to plan the second stage of their campaign!



LANCE CORPOREAL

...Thanks to the information that you've acquired, we now know that we have to stop WILHELMINA VON KENYA from uncovering the key to that Nazi UFO that she's chasing!

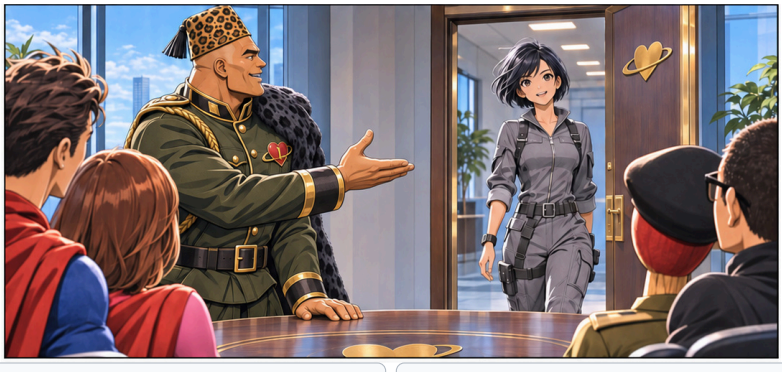
Z-GIRL

Yeah, and on a skeleton staff, too, what with SUZANNE on personal leave and DOCTOR DENDRITE still in critical condition!*

MATCHMAN

If only we could find the key, whatever and wherever it is, ahead of that villainous vixen!

*Yes, ever since Issue Number 11, ye of long memory! -Eds.



LANCE CORPOREAL

While you fellows were digging up clues in Swabia, this talented young lady came calling at HQ on a mission of grave import! Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce Special Agent KIMOKO of Japanese Intelligence!

KIMOKO

Good morning, everyone!



KIMOKO

We don't have much time, so I'll be as swift and precise as possible in my briefing! Lately, it has come to the attention of my organization that a crisis of grave proportions has been brewing - both at home and abroad!



KIMOKO

Before the War, a secret coterie of Japanese military officers swore themselves to annexing all of Asia and to eventual world domination! These were the Black Ocean Society!



KIMOKO

Recently, it came to the attention of my department that the Sons of the Black Chrysanthemum were still alive and well and conducting operations at the highest levels of the MITI!* In the course of our raid, many details came to light!

Ministry of International Trade and Industry - Eds.



KIMOKO

We learned that the Black Ocean Society, through their contacts with the Nazis before, during, and after the War, had managed to acquire alien technology far in advance of human scientific progress! Not only were many of the inventions of Japanese companies over the last fifty years merely introductions of alien tech in disguise, but many even greater developments lay hidden! Such as the secret of interstellar travel itself - the Stealth Saucer!



KIMOKO

Thousands of years ago, before the beginnings of our recorded history, a globe-spanning Empire of the Vedic civilization had its capital at the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro!



KIMOKO

The Vedic super-scientists, led by the anonymous ruling council of technocrats called the Nine Unknown Ones, entered into bargains with alien beings, who they referred to as “Atlanteans,” for advanced technology! The swastika was originally their emblem to denote off-world technology!



KIMOKO

But relations soon soured as the Vedic Empire realized that the aliens intended to conquer the Earth themselves! All-out war between the two advanced cultures was the result!



KIMOKO

Finally, the Vedic saucer fleets managed to destroy the Atlantean advance base on the Moon, which had been their staging area for the Earth takeover! The characteristic lunar mares are the visible scars of their attack!



KIMOKO

In retaliation, the Atlantean aliens destroyed Mohenjo-Daro with thermonuclear weapons! The Vedic Empire lay in ruins!



KIMOKO

A cache of advanced Vedic weaponry was preserved in the wastelands of Antarctica! Discovered by a German expedition in the 1930’s, the Nazis exploited its stash of advanced technology in order to create advanced weaponry for the War! Afterwards, the remnants of the various “Fourth Reich” movements, the Werewolves and the Odessa, headed south, hoping to regroup at the lost base! Many of them only got as far as Argentina, thanks to the diligent efforts of Israeli agents!

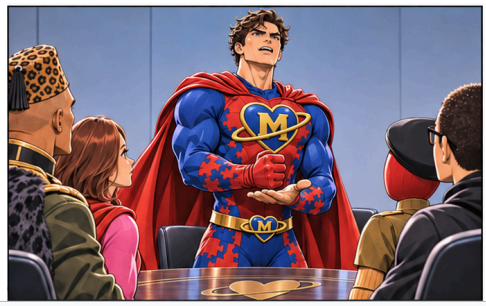


KIMOKO

And, thanks to our interrogations of captured Black Ocean Society members, we now know the location of that secret Vedic base! Here - in the Executive Committee Range!

MATCHMAN

Mother of mayonnaise! That's got to be it!



MATCHMAN

WILHELMINA VON KENYA is headed for that base! There must be some way of contacting the giant stealth frisbee from there! We've got to head her off at the pass, team! The security of the Earth depends upon it!



MATCHMAN

Z-GIRL! You and ARNIE go and get the cold weather kits! KIMOKO, may I presume that you will be joining us? Only you can guide us to that secret base!

KIMOKO

I'll be happy to do what I can, MATCHMAN! I want to see this thing through to the bitter end!

LANCE

And I'll stay behind to mind the store! Signal me if anything goes seriously haywire!

Z-GIRL AND ARNIE

Right, boss!



MATCHMAN

All right, folks! Time to make the doughnuts!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

It is near, mein liebchen! The sensors detect an abundance of energy!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Danke Gott!

Meanwhile...Antarctica! Somewhere in the foothills of the Executive Committee Range!



SCHLINKENHAMMER

Another few minutes and I would have been eine kleine Schlinksicle!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Silence, pickle! Mommy must concentrate!

Breeeeeooooooeeeeeooooooodeetdeetdeet!



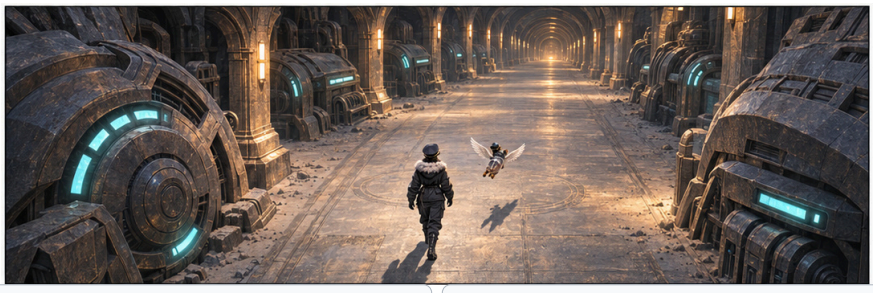
WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Aha! And there it is! Come, SCHLINK! Global domination awaits!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

The world is our squeaky toy, mein Fuehrerin!

Shoonk!

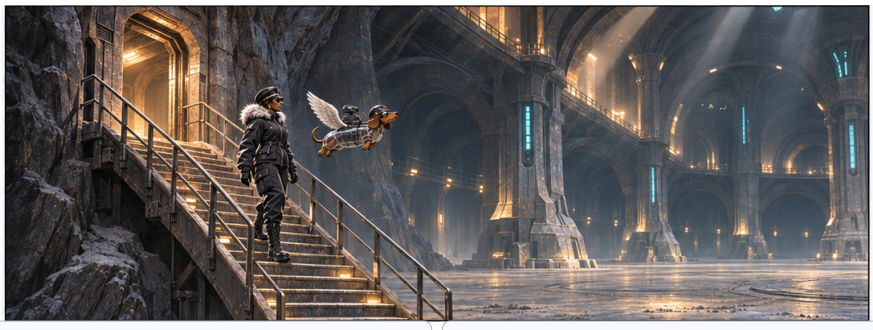


WILHELMINA VON KENYA

This is it, SCHLINK! The ultimate repository of Aryan superscience from beyond the stars!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Isn't that a song?



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Perhaps but doubtful, my little pot pie! But if you will hum a few bars, soon I will no longer have to fake it!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

I take it, then, that we are approaching the means by which we may at last board the nuclear fris - ah, I mean the nuclear-armed stealth saucer?



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

But of course! See for yourself, my little chocolate-covered nougat!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

But it's so far away! What on earth did you just call me?!?



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

But not for long! We shall call to it, like so! Ha! Punkt!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Hrmf! "Nougat!"

Klik!



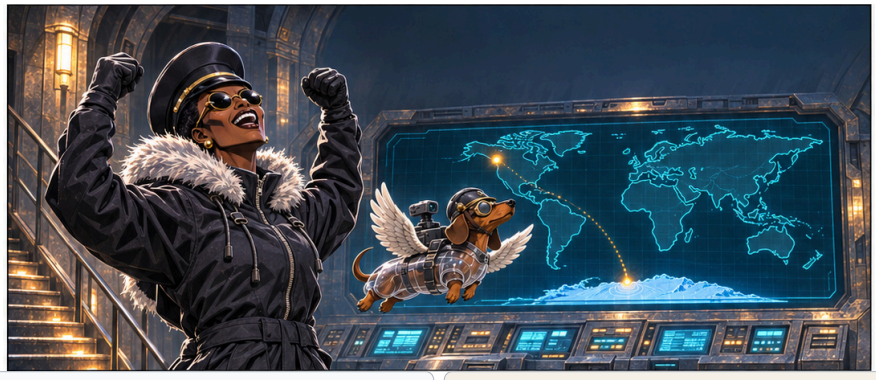
High above the Earth's surface, at the very edge of the stratosphere, the Stealth Saucer lurks...awaiting orders!



Finally, after many decades, the signal has arrived!



Faster than one can say "MACH 5"...



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

And here it comes! We must position the Stealth Saucer in geosynchronous parking orbit directly above the ozone hole, as the ancient Vedic technocrats once did - otherwise the teleportation beam will be inadvertently scrambled by the natural action of the atmosphere!

...It arrives at its ultimate destination!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Hmmm-hmm-hmmmm...and there we are! The teleportation system is warming up, nicht wahr? Almost there, mein pickle!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

I'm glad something is at last warming up! I hope the Stealth Saucer has climate control!



Unbeknownst to our gloating villains...



MATCHMAN · THOUGHT

We've got to hurry! It may already be too late! The nuclear integrity of the entire planet is at stake!

...It is about to get very hot indeed for them all too soon!



Z-GIRL · THOUGHT

Soon I'll finally be able to confront this madwoman VON KENYA that I've heard so much about over the past few weeks! I hope that I'm up to the task of taking her down once and for all!



KIMOKO · THOUGHT

There is a distinct species of austere beauty resident in the stark terrain that unfolds beneath us!

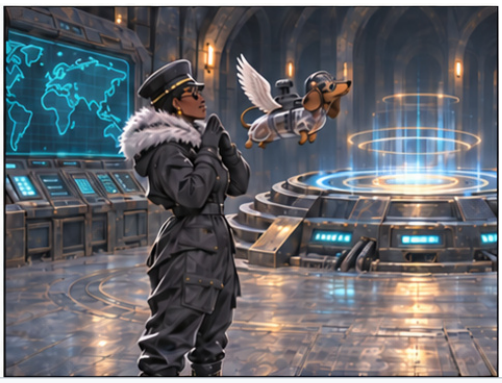


ARNIE · THOUGHT

Getting...airsick! Mustn't...toss...cookies!



And the world shall hold its breath!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Tum tee tum...Jederzeit!



Z-GIRL

That's gotta be it!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Ja!

MATCHMAN

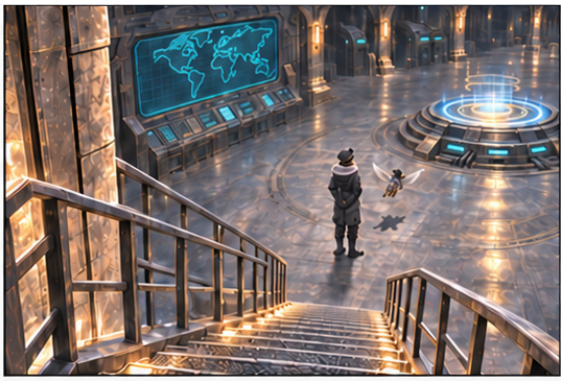
Indubitably so, my faithful sidekick!

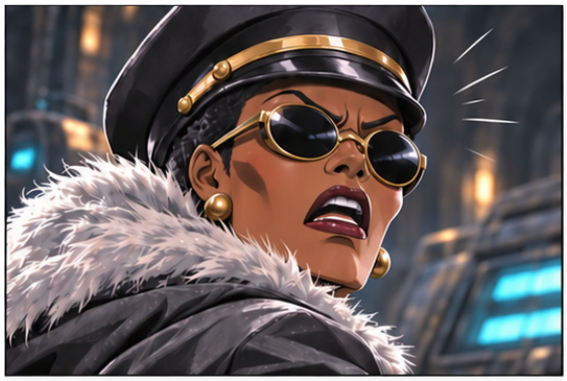












WILHELMINA VON KENYA

What?!? Nein! It cannot be! You! Here?!? Now?!?



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Damn you to hell, MATCHMAN! At them, SCHLINK! Schnell!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Zu befehlt, mein Fuehrerin!

MATCHMAN

Give it up, VON KENYA! Your twisted Nazi scheme is finished!

Z-GIRL

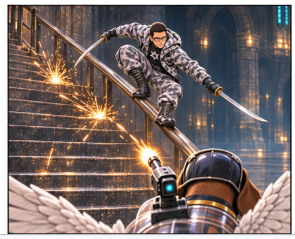
Right behind ya, big guy!

ARNIE

Homey don’t play that! Not even on holidays!

KIMOKO

Stop them! They’ve activated the access device for the Stealth Saucer!



SCHLINKENHAMMER · THOUGHT

I am the Red Baron!

Chud! Chud! Chud! Chud!



SCHLINKENHAMMER

Obey the dachshund!

ARNIE

Bite my chunk!

Budda budda budda patow twee pa-ting pow!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Fools! You shall never stop WILHELMINA VON KENYA from reaching her objective!

MATCHMAN

You know, it really gripes me when the bad guys refer to themselves in the third person!

Z-GIRL

I know what you mean!

KIMOKO

Ohmigod! ARNIE! Look out!

ARNIE

Yaaaaaaaaaaaah!

Zeeeeeeeram! BAWHOOM!



KIMOKO

Holy Amaterasu! She nailed ARNIE! Somebody see if he's O.K.!

MATCHMAN

There's no time! We have to keep that black leather piranha from boarding the secret nuclear frisbee!

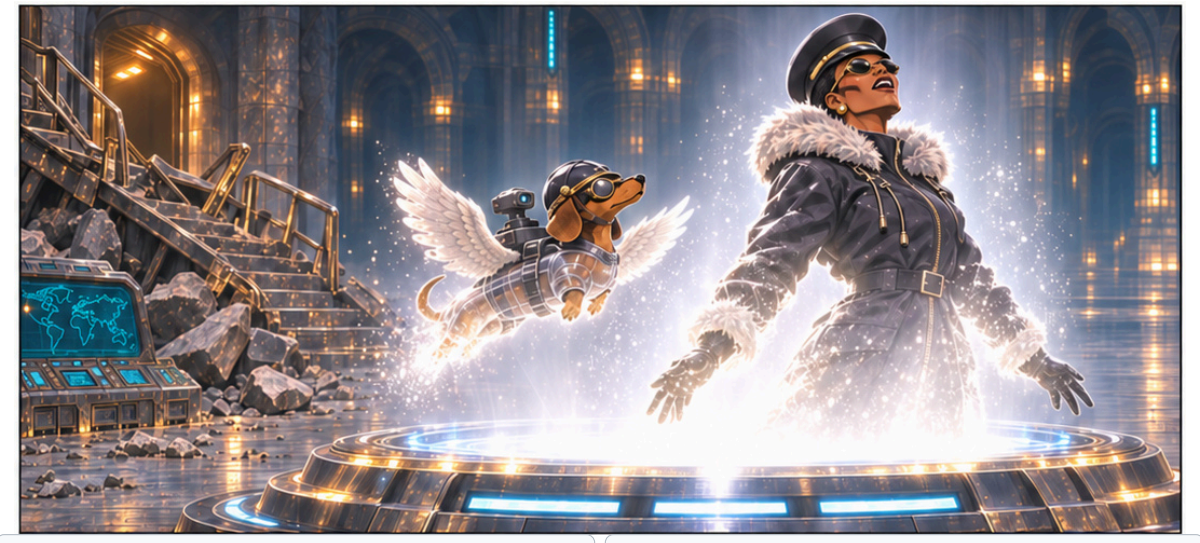
Z-GIRL

He means the Stealth Saucer!

ARNIE

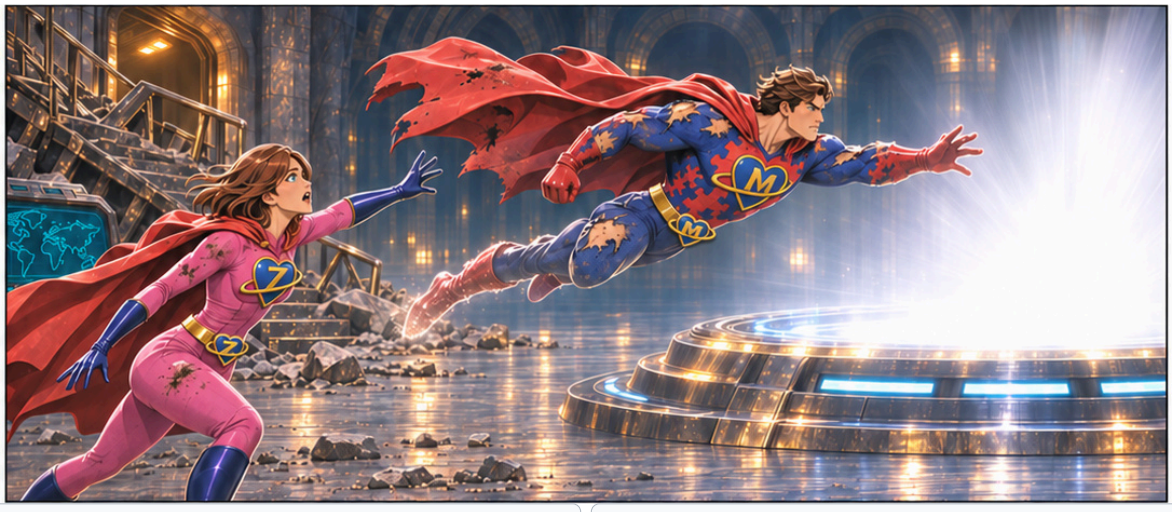
Unnnnnnnh!

Whammm!



Z-GIRL
MATCHMAN! They’re getting away!

Vowm!



MATCHMAN
Not on my watch!

Z-GIRL
No! Wait! We’re coming...



Vowm!

“...With you.”



“Oh, my sweet little cliché…”



MATCHMAN

Um…guten tag?

“…How long have I waited for this moment?”

Klik!



MATCHMAN

Yeeeeaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrgggghhhhh!

Sheeeeeeeerrraaaaaaaaaaaakkkkkkk!



DOCTOR RHODA DENDRITE

MATCHMAN! Noooooooooooooooo!

SUZANNE GRACE

What the - !? RHODA! You’re awake! How - ?!?

Meanwhile, thousands of miles away in a New York City hospital, a strange synchronicity reveals itself abruptly!

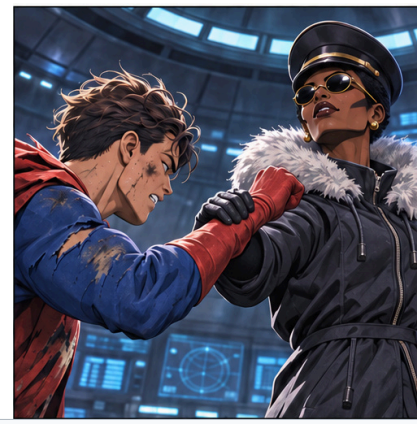


MATCHMAN

It will take more than that!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Yes, I'm sure you're right!



MATCHMAN

Urrrfff!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

In fact...

Smack!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

...I'm looking forward to it!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

To coin a phrase, mein freund: "Marvelous Matchpowers..."



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

"...Deactivate!"

Kawham!

MATCHMAN

Unnnnh!



Z-GIRL

I wish he wouldn't always just barge on in like that! It's going to get him killed one of these days!

KIMOKO

I don't like the looks of this!



Z-GIRL

MATCHMAN!

KIMOKO

VON KENYA!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Naturally you are both correct! Now, you will put down your weapons and back away from the control panel, or must I begin to make the obvious threats, hmmm?



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

That's it! Back away, please! If anyone should lay a finger on my little Wurstl, I could not be held responsible for my actions!

Z-GIRL

I swear to God, lady, if you've hurt him, you are going to pay dearly! And your little dog, too!

KIMOKO

You're not seriously going to incinerate New York, are you? Why? What will that accomplish?

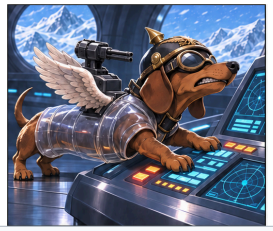


KIMOKO

Freeze, dachshund!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

There will be no freezing, I think!

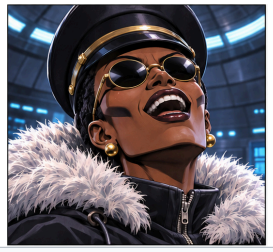


WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Steady as she goes, SCHLINK!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Aye aye, meine flugmeisterin! One vector for New York City, coming right up! Oh, and the thermonuclear warheads are armed and ready!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Have you never heard of art for art's sake? Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!





Z-GIRL

Notice how she adores that dog, but has zero qualms about nuking eight million people?

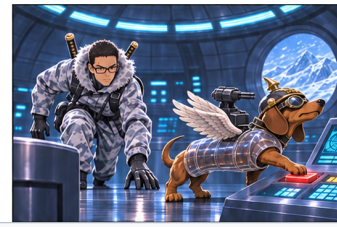
KIMOKO

Hitler had a German shepherd named Blondi!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

Silence!



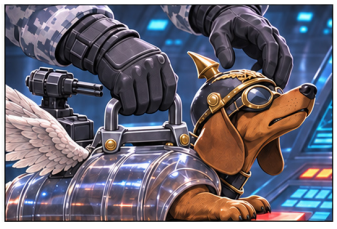


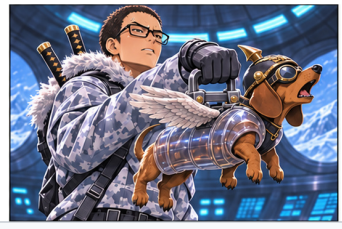
SCHLINKENHAMMER

There! I think that's the afterburners! Either that, or the air conditioning! We shall see!

ARNIE · THOUGHT

Time to rock this like three the hard way!





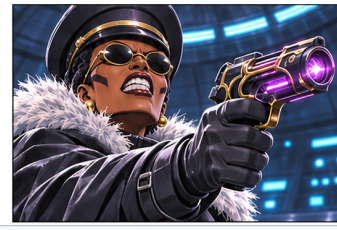
ARNIE

Tha N.Y.C. ain't goin' out like that, beeyatch!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Ulk!





ARNIE

You know how we play this game! Step off, VON KENYA, or the Hebrew National salami here gets it!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

What?!? Of all the impudence!

WILHELMINA VON KENYA

How dare you lay a hand on my SCHLINKUMS?!? DIE!!!



Zeeeeram!



Zeeram! Zeeram! Shashang!



Frrzap! Zzzzt! Klang! Zort!



Wham! Ratatatatatatata! Bzing! Tink! Ping! Etc.





Vowm!



Vowm!



Vowm!



Vowm!





WILHELMINA VON KENYA

SCHLINK! No! Come back to me!

SCHLINKENHAMMER

Hoch himmel!

ARNIE

Whoaaaaaah!

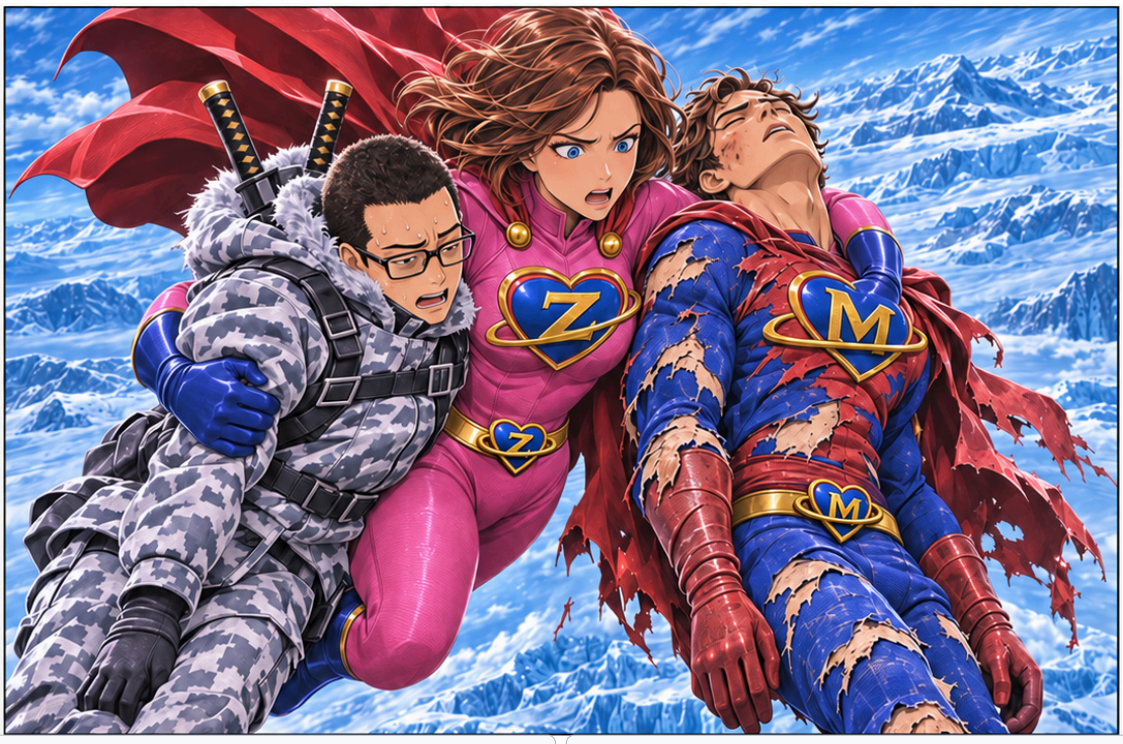
KIMOKO

Aaaiiiiiieeeeeee!

Z-GIRL

What the - ?!? Mother of mayonnaise!

SKEEEEEEEEEEERUNCH!



Z-GIRL · THOUGHT

Great - MATCHMAN'S out cold, and ARNIE can't fly! At least I managed to catch them in time!

ARNIE

Thanks, Z! But what about -



Z-GIRL

KIMOKO! Noooooooooooo!

KIMOKO

Help meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee...



Whump!



WILHELMINA VON KENYA

No! NO! I will not allow this to happen!

Zeee



Ka-whooooooom!



ARNIE

Man, did you see that sucker hit? I bet that Nazi freak is scattered across four area codes by now!

Z-GIRL

There are no area codes in Antarctica! And besides, I'm more worried about KIMOKO! You stay here with the boss - I'm gonna see if there's anything left of her to take home with us! She hit pretty hard!



KIMOKO

Wh-wh-what happened? I was falling and I - how am I still alive?

Z-GIRL

Good question, girlfriend!



KIMOKO

It must have been that staccato burst of strange radiation that bathed the control room when the Saucer malfunctioned! It seems to have given me the ability to render myself invulnerable by raising my internal density at will!

Z-GIRL

But - but we were all in the control room! Lemme see if I can do anything new and exciting!



Z-GIRL

Yeah! Check it out! Lightning blasts! I was hoping for something more in the heat-rays-from-the-eyes line, but this'll do! Sweet!



Z-GIRL

Hey, ARNIE! We just discovered that the Saucer's radiation has just given us real super powers! Cool, huh?

KIMOKO

Yeah, try a few moves or something and see if anything extraordinary has been given to you!

ARNIE

Well, O.K. - but you guys might want to have a look at MATCHMAN here! I think he's freezing! He doesn't seem to have any of his own powers anymore!



MATCHMAN

What? Where? Oh - Z-GIRL! And your friends, of course! But what happened? Is this still Antarctica? Did we take care of VON KENYA? And why am I so cold? I feel - weak!

Z-GIRL

Easy there, boss! We'll get you home safe!

KIMOKO

We think perhaps that as her last desperate act VON KENYA drained your powers, MATCHMAN!

ARNIE

Yeah, and gave 'em to us. Like - whoah!



Z-GIRL

Looks like he got the super-speed!

KIMOKO

Uh-huh! There goes the neighborhood!

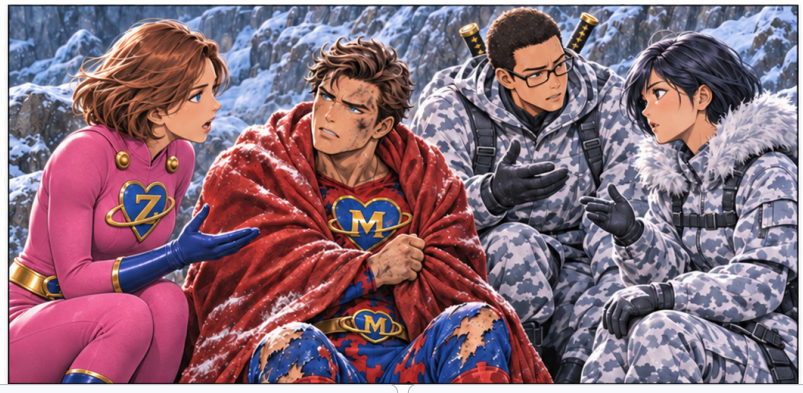
MATCHMAN

Kids today!



SCHLINKENHAMMER · THOUGHT

Fools! They think they have won! But they forgot one crucial element - the dachshund! I'll be back! And when I arrive, I will bring her with me - wherever she may be!



MATCHMAN

Brrrrrrr!

ARNIE

Well, whaddaya know - super speed! I wonder if I can run over water - I could use a decent bagel! I'm starvin' like a hostage here!

Z-GIRL

We've gotta get back somehow! MATCHMAN'S not gonna survive for very long in this kind of weather - not without his super immunity to climatic extremes!*

KIMOKO

You can still fly us to safety! And hey - did anybody see where that little dog went?

* See MATCHMAN Comics Number Ten, for another example! - Eds.



KIMOKO'S question remains unanswered in the gathering polar half-light!

THE END?