

**The Adventures of Miranda Mercury-
Episode 295
“The Riddle of Rebel Ronin”**

**by Brandon Thomas
Initial Draft**

Notes: Okay man, since I know exactly who is going to be drawing this, for the most part, I'll be trying to play to your strengths, except when I'm giving you things to stretch you in exciting new directions. This whole book is about discovery and experimentation, and that credo is going to extend to our contributions. Personally, I am scared as hell at the prospect of having to write self-contained stories, but it's what I need, and more importantly, it's what these people need. We're doing this for the people that haven't even realized THIS is the book they've been waiting for. We're making up the rules as we go along, and I want this title to move, and even think differently from 98% of the books on the stands. We're literally going too fast for these jokers to keep up with us.

It's Tomorrow Now...

Let's get started.

Episode 295, pg. 1- (COVER)

(1) Miranda Mercury is trapped in what appears to be the cargo hold of a ship, beating the crap out of about a dozen alien toughs. This is going to be one of the many places where I hand some of the final artistic choices over to you, as I'm not incredibly concerned about the look of Miranda's adversaries, only what they represent. Only suggestion I would have is to make them physically imposing, but not so much so that it's completely unbelievable she's handing them their asses. Also, keep her pistol in its holster for now, I want to use a bigger reveal for it. The challenge of this (first of many, I'm sure) is to use something that'll serve as a strong cover image AND the first page of a story. But I'm sure you'll come up with something cool ;)

There's a figure from off-panel screaming at the aliens, giving us a little cover text.

FIGURE (off-panel)
STOP HER, YOU IDIOTS!!

FIGURE (off-panel)
SOMEBODY STOP MIRANDA MERCURY!!!

Episode 295, pg. 2-

(1) First of 4 panoramic shots. Now imagine, that the camera is slightly above this chaotic scene, as the aliens are attempting to close in and surround Miranda, while she furiously throws punches and kicks, using at least 10 of the 14 inter-dimensional martial arts she's a master of, to stay alive. Now imagine the camera appears to be "walking" across the shoulders of this mass of alien brutes, getting closer and closer to Miranda with every panel, angrily mumbling to itself. How can a camera possibly mumble you ask? Read on, dawg...read on.

FIGURE
MUST I DO **EVERYTHING** MYSELF? SUPPOSED TO BE THE TOUGHEST BOUNTY HUNTERS ON THIS STUPID ROCK, AND THEY CAN'T EVEN TAKE DOWN **ONE HUMAN FEMALE!**?

FIGURE
I **DEMAND** A FULL REFUND.

(2) Walking camera gets even closer to the center of the fray, Miranda flipping one of the aliens onto his back, while the others continue to look for an opening.

FIGURE
MOVE! MOVE! **MOVE**, IDIOT! IT IS **IMPOSSIBLE** TO FIND CAPABLE---

FIGURE
---OOH! **OOH!** HIT HER! **HIT HER!**

(3) Almost there, Miranda nailing one of the aliens in the chin with a stiff kick.

FIGURE
THERE! **THERE!** SHE'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!

FIGURE
SHE'S RIGHT IN—OH, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE—

(4) There. A giant fucking laser gun comes from off-panel, aimed right at the head of Miranda Mercury, who's turned and looking quite curiously at it. What in the hell is going on?

FIGURE
I THINK THAT'S QUITE **ENOUGH**, MS. MERCURY.

Episode 295, pg. 3-

(1) Splash. The “walking camera” is revealed to have been the POV of an alien named Abraham, who happens to be two and a half feet tall, and not the least bit happy about it. He’s perched on the shoulders of one of the larger aliens, holding a laser pistol that’s nearly bigger than him, on Miranda. She is completely unimpressed, even though her assault on the enforcers has halted, a group of them crawling back to their feet, with the rest keeping her surrounded, now that Abe has taken control of the situation. So he thinks, anyway...

MIRANDA

ABRAHAM. I DIDN’T SEE YOU BACK THERE.

ABRAHAM

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE **FUNNY**, MIRANDA?

ABRAHAM

WE’LL SEE HOW **FUNNY** IT IS, AFTER I PULL THIS TRIGGER,
AND RUIN THAT PRETTY, PRETTY **FACE** OF YOURS.

ABRAHAM

I’LL ONLY ASK ONE TIME—RONIN’S RIDDLE, MIRANDA---

ABRAHAM

---WHAT HAVE YOU **DONE** WITH IT?

Episode 295, pg. 4-

(1) Closer on Miranda, still not paying much mind to this giant laser gun in her face.

MIRANDA
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE, ABRAHAM? YOU CAN'T
SOLVE IT. **NO** ONE CAN.

MIRANDA
I IMAGINE THAT'S THE POINT.

(2) One of the bounty hunters hands a brown satchel to Abraham. Something inside it is glowing.

ABRAHAM
AH, BUT IF THAT'S **TRUE**—WHY GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF
FINDING IT THEN?

ABRAHAM
THANK YOU, IDIOT.

MIRANDA
YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION.

(3) Abraham sets his large pistol on the shoulder of the guy he's standing on, which still keeps it somewhat pointed at Miranda, and begins excitedly digging into the satchel.

ABRAHAM
YOU DON'T BELIEVE THE LEGEND **EITHER**. THE RIDDLE CAN BE
SOLVED, AND IN DOING SO, THE SPIRIT OF REBEL RONIN WILL BE
FREE ONCE MORE.

ABRAHAM
AND IN HIS GRATITUDE, HE WILL GRANT HIS LIBERATOR ONE
SINGLE WISH.

(4) Abraham looks at Miranda, smirking, with his hand still in the goody bag.

ABRAHAM
THOUGH I AM **CURIOUS** WHAT MIRANDA MERCURY,
"THE GALAXY'S GREATEST ADVENTURER," COULD POSSIBLY
DESIRE. PERHAPS THE RUMORS **ARE** TRUE...

MIRANDA
YOU FIRST.

Episode 295, pg. 4 cont-

(5) Close on Abraham, having finally removed the object from the bag, gazing upon it longingly. It's a luminescent Rubric's cube, unsolved, yet glittering with the promise of ultimate power.

ABRAHAM
TO BE TALLER, OF COURSE.

ABRAHAM
TO HAVE GENITALIA THAT RIVALS THE GREAT BOARDS OF
ATAXIA, AND THE KNOWLEDGE TO USE IT PROPERLY.

ABRAHAM
THAT IS ALL.

Episode 295, pg. 5-

(1) Close on Miranda, now sporting her own mischievous grin.

MIRANDA
HOW VERY **OBVIOUS** OF YOU, ABRAHAM. PROBABLY MEANS
YOU'LL HOLD A TERRIBLE GRUDGE FOR THIS.

ABRAHAM
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, WOMAN?

(2) Without any warning, Miranda head butts Abraham, sending him flying backwards off his perch, and the cube into the air.

MIRANDA
MY RIDE'S HERE.

(3) Miranda springs up and over the shoulders of the alien henchman, snatching the Rubric's Cube out of the air, before the rest of the "idiots" have a fair chance to react.

No copy.

(4) On Miranda, as she sprints to an exit, her arm thrown in front of her, like she's holding a weapon, but quite obviously, she isn't.

MIRANDA
JACK.

(5) Exact same shot, but the gun that's remained holstered thus far, snaps into her grip.

JACK (via comm.)
YES, MIRANDA?

MIRANDA
I'M ON MY WAY.

JACK (via comm.)
COPY THAT.

Episode 295, pg. 6-

(1) Camera directly on a window from the outside as laser fire shatters it, the laser bolts and shards of glass coming right at us.

No copy.

(2) Far shot of Miranda Mercury, having exited the cargo hold, sprinting across the top of an elevated train, which is speeding down a busy sky lane, filled with a few other elevated trains, gliding on rails hundreds of feet in the air. This is a big “reveal” Lee, since until now, the readers have been under the impression that Miranda was just fighting the bad guys in some room, when it was actually a train car, that’s part of a high-tech space age monorail system. I want this to be the most complicated, congested shot you’ve ever done, filled with all types of cool shit, including but not limited to, the trains, with a gorgeous skyline of a city, constructed from shining metal and glass forming a distant backdrop.

This particular panel is very symbolic of the entire series actually, an immense scale which everything operates upon, that this one woman, rendered here as infinitesimal in comparison, always manages to change through her actions. Credits appear along the bottom of one of the railings, running along with Miranda.

CREDITS

BRANDON THOMAS & LEE FERGUSON PRESENT...

CREDITS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE FICTION HOUSE

Episode 295, pg. 7-

(1) Cut back to the shattered window from where Miranda just made her escape, two of the aliens poking their heads and torsos through the opening, one firing a blaster at the fleeing woman, and the other screaming some alien language into a comm. unit.

ALIEN
ΣΗΕ'Σ ΧΟΜΙΝΓ ΨΟΥΡ ΩΑΨ, ΒΑΡΤΗΟΛΟΜΕΩ! ΣΤΟΠ ΗΕΡ, ΒΕΦΟΡΕ ΙΤ
Σ
ΤΟΟ ΛΑΤΕ!

ALIEN
ΣΤΟΠ ΗΕΡ!!

(2) Back to Miranda, as she sprints into the distance, the clumsy and desperate laser fire not even coming close.

No copy.

(3) Tight on Miranda's eyes, looking fierce and determined as she prepares for her next daring maneuver.

No copy.

(4) Upshot, with the camera situated in the gap separating two compartments on the monorail, angled so the door on the left side is somewhat visible. Above, Miranda hurtles over the gap, heading for the next car.

No copy.

(5) Same shot, but with another bounty hunter emerging from the door on the left, carrying the same comm. unit glimpsed in panel one. Seeing how this guy wasn't even present during the initial escape, there's one thing certain at this point, Lee... the reinforcements have arrived.

ALIEN
ΩΕ ΗΑÇΕ ΗΕΡ, ΡΟΝΑΛΛΔ! Ι ΡΕΠΕΑΤ—ΩΕ ΗΑÇΕ ΜΙΡΑΝΔΑ
ΜΕΡΧΥΡΨ!! ΣΤΑΝΔΒΨ ΦΟΡ ΧΑΠΤΥΡΕ.

Episode 295, pg. 8-

(1) Over Miranda's shoulder (an almost identical shot from the one in Matrix Reloaded where Morpheus took out that car's exposed gas tank, actually) as she blasts away at a couple aliens in her path, as they attempt to climb on board the train car with her, and prevent her escape.

MIRANDA
JACK.

JACK (over comm.)
WHAT'S WRONG?

MIRANDA
I'M GOING TO NEED A MINUTE.

(2) A laser blast hits Miranda on the back of her shoulder, and she loses hold of the cube.

MIRANDA
AAHHH!

(3) Panoramic shot, with the camera focused on the cube, sliding away from Miranda, toward us and the edge of the train car. Miranda is preparing to give chase, but first spins her gun and fires off a couple shots at the alien (from the last page) approaching on the left. The shoulder that took the hit is smoking, but she doesn't seem to notice.

JACK (over comm.)
MIRANDA---**MIRANDA!!** MIRANDA, WHAT'S HAPPENING?

(4) Miranda dives after it, as it tumbles off the edge, her hand outstretched, only millimeters away from the glimmering cube. Now, I'm imagining this looking like one of those old Kirby drawings, with Miranda's giant hand, and the cube threatening to come right off the page and fall into our laps. A little taste of the old school, as we drag everyone kicking and screaming into the future.

MIRANDA
NOTHING.

MIRANDA
JUST MAKE IT TWO MINUTES.

Episode 295, pg. 9-

(1) Camera directly on the persistent alien, peeking his head over the side of the train car, and looking more than a bit confused at us.

ALIEN
ΙΣ ΣΗΕ ΔΕΑΔ?

(2) Close on Miranda, her boots magnetized to the side of the train, and her back pressed against it, which puts her just out of the creature's line of sight. One hand is holding the cube, with the gun in the other, as she waits for the right opportunity.

No copy.

(3) The alien sticks his head out a little further, craning for a better look, but Miranda shoves the barrel of her gun under his chin for his curiosity.

No copy.

(4) Close on Miranda's finger pulling the trigger.

No copy.

(5) Large beautiful panel of Miranda running towards the camera, scurrying down the side of the monorail like Spider-Man. In the background, the poor alien is plummeting through the night sky.

CAP
MIRANDA MERCURY—

THE GREATEST ADVENTURER IN **THIS** OR ANY OTHER GALAXY--

Episode 295, pg. 10-

(1) Small inset panel of Miranda, tapping the side of her goggles.

No copy.

(2) Through her eyes, as the infrared feature comes to life, and a large heat signature approaches her, as she looks out onto the distant sky.

No copy.

(3) Another small shot of Miranda cutting the magnetics on her anti-grav boots.

No copy.

(4) Take the camera up for a beautiful downshot of Miranda springing off the side of the monorail, launching into a back flip. I know, I know, I'm killing you, but it gets a bit worse, because underneath her, slowly dropping its cloaking field, is a small gleaming shuttle, speeding into position to catch her.

No copy.

(5) Miranda lands safely on the metallic hull, close enough to the main windshield so we can get our first glimpse of partner Jack Warning, at the helm of the shuttle.

CAP
JACK WARNING---

THE BOY WITH THE GOLDEN BRAIN.

MIRANDA
JACK.

JACK
MIRANDA.

Episode 295, pg. 11-

(1) On the backs of a couple of the enemy aliens, Abraham standing on one of their shoulders, as they all watch Miranda's shuttle speed off into the far distance.

ALIEN

ΩΗΟΑ—THAT ΩΑΣ ΠΡΕΤΤΨ ΦΥΧΚΙΝ' ΧΟΟΛ, ΒΟΣΣ.

ABRAHAM

SHUT UP, IDIOT.

(2) Large beautiful shot of the shuttle, having now cleared orbit and in deep space, vectoring in on a much larger spacecraft.

Now...we can truly begin...

CAP

IN---THE RIDDLE OF REBEL RONIN!!!

Episode 295, pg. 12-

(1) Inside Miranda's ship, which she calls Dorothy, after her late grandmother, as our two leads walk through the shuttle bay, the smaller craft from last scene visible in the background. This should be primarily a large open space, where the smaller vehicles are stored. Nothing TOO complicated, but we could probably sneak a little speeder bike or something into the background, just for decoration.

JACK
SO...HOW IS ABRAHAM?

MIRANDA
THE SAME. WANTED TO SOLVE THE RIDDLE AND ASK RONIN FOR A FEW MORE INCHES...IN MORE THAN ONE DIRECTION, ACTUALLY.

JACK
EWWW...

MIRANDA
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IN A FEW YEARS, JACK.

(2) Jack triggers his trusty hard light laptop, projected from a metallic band on his wrist, and begins typing away. I'm going to leave the final design for this in your hands, because admittedly, it's probably going to be a pain in the ass. With that said, this is how I'm imagining it, and then after reading this nonsensical description, we'll proceed with the back and forth.

As you know, a large part of Jack's character is his running log of the adventures he and Miranda are getting into, and so from a practicality standpoint, his laptop needs to be something instantly accessible, and yet instantly collapsible. So, I'm thinking, that when he hits the button on his wrist, a holographic representation of a laptop projects from the band. Should be slightly smaller than a full-size model, a small keyboard he can type into with one hand, and a screen, but we'll probably use the color phase of production to ensure it looks significantly out of sync with the rest of the scene. But like I say, we likely need some discussion, before settling on the best look for this.

JACK
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT BASED ON MY VERY **EXTENSIVE** GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH, THERE IS A NINETY PERCENT CHANCE THAT BY MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY, I'LL HAVE REACHED AN APPROXIMATE HEIGHT OF SIX FEET, FOUR INCHES.

JACK
PROBABILITY TABLES EVEN SUGGEST I'LL WEAR A SIZE 14 SHOE.

Episode 295, pg. 12 cont.-

(2)

MIRANDA
AND YOU'RE **SURE** ABOUT THAT?

JACK
MIRANDA...

(3) Miranda gazing at the glowing puzzle box, smiling a bit.

MIRANDA
JUST CHECKING. OTHERWISE, THAT BUSINESS BACK THERE WAS
ALL FOR NOTHING, MY REPUTATION NOTWITHSTANDING.

MIRANDA
STILL CONFIDENT WE CAN DO THE IMPOSSIBLE?

MIRANDA
AGAIN, I MEAN?

(4) She hands it to Jack.

JACK
NO QUESTION. I'LL HAVE US SET UP IN AN HOUR.

MIRANDA
GOOD MAN. I'M GOING TO CATCH A SHOWER.

(5) Miranda heads toward a connecting corridor, as Jack looks upon it the cube, his face bright with uncontrollable curiosity.

JACK
OH, HEY---MIRANDA? AFTER WE CRACK THIS THING, AND REBEL
RONIN ASKS YOU FOR THE **ONE** THING YOU WANT, MORE THAN
ANYTHING ELSE...?

JACK
HAVE YOU ACTUALLY THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING
TO SAY?

Episode 295, pg. 13-

(1) On Jack, his head craned back towards Miranda, the cube still in his hand, and the hard light computer hanging in the air.

MIRANDA (off-panel)
IT'S ABOUT THE **JOURNEY**, JACK---NOT THE DESTINATION.

JACK
WELL, OF **COURSE**—BUT IT'S JUST---WE'VE BEEN AT THIS A LONG TIME AND YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN TELL ME---

(2) Miranda breaks eye contact a little, while gently massaging her wounded shoulder.

JACK
---MIRANDA, DO YOU TRUST ME?

(3) On Miranda, deadly serious, and without hesitation.

MIRANDA
WITH MY LIFE.

(4) Miranda walks off, leaving Jack alone in the shuttle bay, both of their backs facing the camera.

MIRANDA
I'LL BE OUT SOON.

(5) Same shot, Miranda completely out of frame, as Jack types something into his computer. (We'll reveal exactly what he writes in his journal at the end.)

SFX
TIKATIKATIKATAKKATIKA---

Episode 295, pg. 13 cont.-

(6) Cut to the corridor Miranda is walking through, the heroine having stopped midway down, and turning back to us, an unmistakable look of sadness and regret on her face. Something about the conversation with Jack has obviously bothered her. Could it be possible that she can hear Jack typing in the shuttle bay?

No copy.

(7) Whatever it is gets pushed away, Miranda bowing her head in obvious shame, and turning to continue down the hall.

No copy.

Episode 295, pg. 14-

(1) Close on Jack Warning, cracking his knuckles directly in front of the camera, preparing to get to work.

CAP
LATER...

JACK
OKAY, SO HERE'S THE BIG PROBLEM WITH RONIN'S RIDDLE...

JACK
WE'VE BOTH SEEN PUZZLE CUBES LIKE THIS BEFORE---PROBABLY
CRACKED **MY** FIRST ONE BEFORE I COULD EVEN **WALK** STRAIGHT,
ACTUALLY--- BUT TO BE FAIR, MINE DIDN'T HAVE THE SPIRIT OF A
SAMURAI GENIE TRAPPED INSIDE.

(2) Pull out a bit, as Jack triggers a small metallic disc, that's resting in his palm, and projecting a hologram of Rebel Ronin into the air, while Miranda looks on. She's fresh out of the shower, so her clothes should reflect that a little. Give her the spandex pants, though a different color this time, and maybe a cut-off tee. Somethin' real sexy, as we play up the fact that Jack never seems to notice just how incredibly fine his boss is. Also, two huge things we need to get settled before staging this scene. Right now, Miranda and Jack are in the room that serves as their rec center, and it's filled with many of the things that could be found in an Earth bound one. Some weights for lifting, possibly a treadmill, all glossed in a hint of the futuristic sci-fi that'll become our staple. As with most of the major visual elements, especially things that'll have to be replicated more than a bit, I'll defer to your final judgment and design sense, so if you have a better notion, feel free to run with it. Main thing is that there's a relatively large table somewhere in the room that'll serve as the "staging ground" for the impossible task they're about to undertake. Maybe something that could serve multiple functions, easily convertible from a typical tabletop to a holographic pool table, and so on. But this particular object is going to serve as the actual space where they team-up and solve the puzzle.

Other major thing is obviously Rebel Ronin himself, who is for all intents and purposes, a samurai genie. His head and torso are clad in typical samurai gear, complete with ceremonial blade, but his body disappears into mist just slightly past his waist. We can probably do a few interesting things with the mist as a visual, but another important element is the back of his head, which resembles one of those transparent IMAC computers from a few years ago. You know the ones right, where you could look through the plastic casing and see all the cool circuitry inside? EXACTLY like that. So, a samurai warrior, whose feet are replaced by a smart, bio-adaptable mist, with a see through head, that displays the computer where his brain should be.

Episode 295, pg. 14 cont.-

(2)

JACK
ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THE BATTLE GYPSY CURSE **REQUIRES**
RONIN TO WORK AGAINST **ANYONE** TRYING TO BREACH HIS
PRISON, AND CONSIDERING IT'S BEEN ALMOST TWO **THOUSAND**
YEARS... HE'S GOTTEN A BIT GOOD AT IT.

JACK
STILL, EVEN WITH THE ABILITY TO CHANGE THE FINAL
COMBINATION OF THE PUZZLE, WHILE IT'S BEING **SOLVED** MIND
YOU, THAT ALONE ISN'T ENOUGH TO KEEP EITHER OF US OUT.

(3) Close as Jack zooms in on the projection, focusing on the back of Ronin's head, computer circuitry where brain tissue is normally stored.

JACK
WHAT MIGHT IS THAT BEFORE HE WAS SEALED INSIDE, THE
GYPSIES PERFORMED A TEMPORARY QUANTUM SHIFT, AND
REPLACED HIS BRAIN MATTER WITH A CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT.
FROM THE FUTURE.

JACK
ONE THAT'S LEARNED FROM EVERY **SINGLE** PIECE OF STIMULI IT'S
EVER ENCOUNTERED.

(4) He deactivates the hologram, and points at Miranda.

JACK
TWO THOUSAND YEARS WORTH OF IDIOTS ARE GOING TO DO THEIR
VERY BEST TO KEEP US OUT OF THIS THING, BUT THEY'RE GOING
TO FAIL. CLEARLY.

MIRANDA (off-panel)
TELL ME WHY.

Episode 295, pg. 14 cont.-

(5) Jack turns, reaching for something in a compartment on his belt.

JACK
OKAY...BUT YOU HAVE TO **PROMISE** YOU'LL LET ME EXPLAIN.

JACK
BEFORE YOU SAY NO...JUST LET ME EXPLAIN.

Episode 295, pg. 15-

(1) Jack responds back with a nervous smile, holding out his palm, where two transparent pills sit harmlessly, florescent liquid swirling within them.

JACK
YOU SAID YOU TRUST ME.

(2) On Miranda, not pleased in the slightest, the shame displayed in the last scene instantly turning into rage.

MIRANDA
.....

MIRANDA
JACK.

JACK (off-panel)
JUST HEAR ME OUT, IT'S NOT WHAT IT---

(3) The partners begin facing off, exchanging heated words, this subject obviously a raw nerve for Miranda.

MIRANDA
TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T BEEN **MAKING** THIS CRAP ON MY SHIP!

JACK
LISTEN, IT'S **NOT** LIKE THAT---IT'S---OKAY, OKAY, YOU REMEMBER THAT MINDWORM WE GOT INFECTED WITH ON SOLUSTA?

(4) Jack, further pleading his case.

JACK
THE CAPSULES OPERATE ON THE SAME REGION OF THE BRAIN, ONLY THEY **INCREASE** THE MIND'S EXPONENTIAL FUNCTIONING, INSTEAD OF BREAKING IT DOWN. THE EFFECT **IS** ONLY TEMPORARY, BUT EVEN STILL, IT'LL GIVE US **MORE** THAN ENOUGH TIME---

MIRANDA
JACK, I DON'T CARE. YOU **KNOW** HOW I FEEL ABOUT THIS. AND YOU KNOW WHY.

Episode 295, pg. 15 cont.-

(5) Jack trying even harder to get Miranda on board with this, her back turned to him.

JACK
OF COURSE, AND YOU **KNOW** I WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN BROUGHT
IT UP, IF THERE WAS A BETTER WAY. I'VE SPENT **TWO** STRAIGHT
WEEKS TRYING TO FIND ONE, AND THERE ISN'T.

JACK
WE **HAVE** TO MAKE THIS THING HAPPEN, AND THIS IS OUR ONLY
OPTION. IT'S TOO **IMPORTANT**, MIRANDA.

MIRANDA (muttering)
JACK...

(6) Miranda turns back and looks at Jack, deeply hurt.

MIRANDA
ON MY **SHIP!!!?**

Episode 295, pg. 16-

(1) Catch them both in the frame, Miranda turning away again, and Jack with nothing more to say.

No copy.

(2) Jack, coming up behind her, places his hand gently on her shoulder.

JACK
IT'S NOT HABIT-FORMING, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT. WE WOULDN'T EVEN BE **HAVING** THIS CONVERSATION IF I WASN'T SURE.

JACK
THE THING IS---

(3) Same shot, Jack continuing his plea.

JACK
---WELL, THE THING IS---IF WE MAKE **ONE** MISTAKE DURING THE PROCESS...JUST **ONE**, THE FINAL COMBINATION RESETS ITSELF, AND WE HAVE TO START FROM THE BEGINNING. **AND** REBEL'S CPU WILL LIKELY HAVE ADAPTED TO OUR APPROACH.

(4) Miranda walks forward, Jack's hand falling from her shoulder.

MIRANDA
...HOW TEMPORARY?

JACK
FOR 42 SECONDS, OUR THOUGHT PROCESSES WILL INCREASE BY A POWER OF TEN. SHOULD BE **MORE** THAN ENOUGH TIME TO GET IT DONE.

(5) Quick shot of Miranda, looking almost disgusted at his assessment.

MIRANDA
SHOULD BE?

(6) Quick on Jack, appearing far more confident.

JACK
WILL BE.

Episode 295, pg. 16 cont.-

(7) Camera on Miranda's back, as she walks off.

MIRANDA
BETTER.

Episode 295, pg. 17-

(1) Now, we're almost ready to begin our little "code-breaking" sequence. Jack and Miranda are sitting across from each other, separated by a small tabletop, on which our little puzzle cube is resting. Don't make the table too large, as they need to be able to pass this thing to each other, at a very quickened pace. Plus, I want a bit of physical intimacy definitely present, a sense that they're quite accustomed to being in each other's personal space, almost to the point of intrusion. Start with a profile shot here.

CAP
SHORTLY...

MIRANDA
I **MEANT** WHAT I SAID IN THE SHUTTLE BAY. THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I'VE AGREED TO THIS---BUT, SO WE ARE CLEAR---

MIRANDA
---YOU **EVER** BRING SOMETHING LIKE THIS, YOU EVER **MAKE** SOMETHING LIKE THIS ON MY SHIP AGAIN, AND WE'RE DONE. NO DISCUSSION.

JACK
UNDERSTOOD.

(2) Miranda picks up the cube, gazing at it, not really believing the great trouble they're preparing to go through, just to open it.

MIRANDA
WE'LL ONLY NEED 37 MOVEMENTS FOR THIS?

JACK
YEAH. I'VE GOT THIS WORKED OUT TO THE LAST POSSIBLE SECOND, SO **YOU'LL** BE THE ONE THAT MAKES THE FINAL MOVE AND FREES RONIN. IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE **YOUR** REQUEST IS THE ONE HONORED.

Episode 295, pg. 17 cont.-

(3) She looks across the table at him, almost glaring, as she's placing the cube back on the table.

MIRANDA
HOW DO WE KNOW THIS...**MIXTURE** OF YOURS IS TAKING EFFECT?

JACK
WHAT'S 4,287 TIMES 3,625?

MIRANDA
...WHAT?

JACK
NOT YET.

(4) Close on Jack, looking across the table silently.

No copy.

(5) Same shot, except he speaks.

JACK
I AM **SO** SORRY ABOUT THIS, MIRANDA. BRINGING THIS ALL BACK FOR YOU WASN'T **ANYTHING** I WANTED, YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT. IT'S JUST...I KNOW...MIRANDA, I **KNOW** THAT VEGA---

MIRANDA
15,540,375.

(6) Extremely close on Jack, a smirk creeping onto his face.

JACK
GO.

Episode 295, pgs. 18 & 19-

Okay, here we go...

Now, I'd actually decided against going for the full 42 panels for a while, but the more I ran from even writing this sequence, I realized we should at least give it a go and then decide later on if I was completely nuts. Apologize ahead of time for any temporary or permanent damage this whole thing causes ☺

Here's where we are right now, this spread will be comprised of about 90% repeated panels, with some new cuts appearing at the very end. Because of this, I actually wrote a "key" of sorts for this insane endeavor to keep things straight. I see this being set up as 6 rows of 7 panels each, possibly 6 equal sized shots, with a larger rectangle in the middle overlapping the "bleed" that'll fall across the staple. The following elements we'll be able to "stat" are (1) Miranda twisting the cube, (2) Jack twisting the cube, and before too long (3) Both of them twisting the cube, operating in perfect unison, while solving the legendary "riddle" of Rebel Ronin, that will increase in luminescence as the final combination nears completion, which'll be something we take care of primarily during the coloring stage, but thought I should definitely mention it. Going to group these by row too. Please let me know if this all makes sense.

Row 1-

(1) Miranda (2) Jack (3) Miranda (4) Jack (5) Miranda (6) Jack (7) Miranda

Row 2-

(8) Jack (9) Miranda (10) Jack (11) Both (12) Miranda (13) Jack (14) Miranda

14 MIRANDA
WHOA.

Episode 295, pgs. 18 & 19 cont.-

Row 3-

(15) Jack (16) Miranda (17) Jack (18) Both (19) Miranda (20) Jack (21) Jack

15 JACK
I KNOW.

16 MIRANDA
I CAN

17 JACK
SEE

18 MIRANDA
IT

19 MIRANDA
BEFORE

20 JACK
IT

21 MIRANDA
HAPPENS.

Episode 295, pgs. 18 & 19 cont.-

Row 4-

(22) Miranda (23) Jack (24) Miranda (25) Both (26) Miranda (27) Miranda (28) Miranda

22 MIRANDA
SHOW

23 JACK
OFF.

24 MIRANDA
HA.

25 MIRANDA
HE'S TRYING

26 MIRANDA
TO STOP

27 JACK
US.

28 JACK
HE WON'T.

Episode 295, pgs. 18 & 19 cont.-

Row 5-

(29) Jack (30) Miranda (31) Jack (32) Both (33) Miranda (34) Miranda (35) Miranda

29 MIRANDA
SOMETHING

30 JACK
ELSE.

31 JACK
DAMN.

31 MIRANDA
YES.

32 JACK
YOU KNOW

33 MIRANDA
YOU LIED.

34 MIRANDA
YES.

35 MIRANDA
I KNOW.

Episode 295, pgs. 18 & 19 cont.-

(36) The back and forth between the partners ends, Miranda holding onto the cube at the moment, the glow finding a new level of intensity.

36 JACK
MIRANDA.

(37) Hold here for a beat.

37 MIRANDA
NO, JACK.

(38) For another.

38 MIRANDA
NO.

(39) Jack desperately stretches across the tabletop, reaching for the cube.

39 JACK
MIRANDA

(40) Miranda pulls away from him, forcing him to reach even farther, nearly climbing onto the table.

40 JACK
DON'T!

(41) Before he can stop her, she makes the final movement, the box engulfed in blinding light.

41 JACK
MIRANDA!!

(42) She grabs onto his outstretched arm, leaving the cube hanging in the air.

NO COPY.

Episode 295, pg. 20-

(1) Miranda, with Jack in her grip, dives to the floor, the cube's luminescence spreading outwards and filling the entire rec. room.

MIRANDA
DOWN, JACK!

(2) Bring the camera in on the pair, Jack completely pissed off and screaming at Miranda, the incredible light still bathing the room.

JACK
WHAT THE **HELL** WAS THAT, MIRANDA!?

MIRANDA
YOUR LITTLE DRUG WORKS BETTER THAN YOU EXPECTED. THE
PUZZLE WAS MEANT TO BE SOLVED WITH **36** MOVEMENTS, NOT 37.

MIRANDA
YOU WANTED REBEL RONIN INDEBTED TO **YOU**.

(3) Jack pressing her even more, a harsh finger leveled in her direction.

JACK
AND YOU KNOW **WHY**, MIRANDA! BECAUSE YOU ARE **STUBBORN**
AS A NEAVIAN **BULL**, AND I WILL **NOT** STAND BY AND LET THAT
BASTARD KILL YOU!

JACK
FOR GOD'S SAKE MIRANDA, JUST ASK HIM TO **CURE---**

MIRANDA
LATER.

MIRANDA
HE'S HERE.

Episode 295, pg. 20 cont.-

(4) The highlight of the entire page, a full body shot of Rebel Ronin, finally freed from his impenetrable prison, and towering over the much smaller forms of Jack and Miranda. The harsh lighting is subsiding here as well, giving us a really good look at the samurai genie in all his glory. Have fun here.

RONIN

WHO AMONG YOU HAS **DONE** THIS BRAVE AND NOBLE THING?
ACCOMPLISHED A FEAT THAT WAS SAID TO EXIST **BEYOND** THE
CAPACITY OF **ANY** BEING, LIVING OR DEAD?

RONIN

WHO HERE HAS **FREED** THE LEGENDARY **SAVIOR** OF
MAN...REBEL RONIN? STEP **FORWARD**, SO THAT YOUR TRUE
HEART'S DESIRE CAN BE MADE MANIFEST.

RONIN

SUCH IS THE **IMMEASURABLE** WILL OF...REBEL RONIN.

Episode 295, pg. 21-

(1) Jack, now back on his feet, shoves Miranda to the side, putting himself directly in front of Ronin, intending to claim their shared victory, and the wish that comes with it.

JACK

I'VE FREED YOU RONIN, AND I WANT YOU TO---

(2) Ronin lifts his arm and fires a powerful burst of energy at Jack, taking him off his feet and throwing him backwards.

RONIN

YOU ARE A **LIAR**, SMALL ONE. **BEGONE** FROM THE SIGHT OF THE MARVELOUS MAJESTY THAT IS...REBEL RONIN.

JACK

AAAGH!!

(3) Miranda, springing back to her feet, throws her hand open to receive her laser pistol that's rocketing across the room to her.

MIRANDA

LISTEN TO ME VERY CAREFULLY---

(4) Close on Miranda, her gun leveled directly at the camera, looking completely pissed.

MIRANDA

---I DON'T CARE **WHO** YOU THINK YOU ARE, OR WHERE IT IS YOU COME FROM...BUT IF YOU **TOUCH** HIM AGAIN, I **WILL** KILL YOU.

RONIN (off-panel)

MY **APOLOGIES**, BRAVE MORTAL—I DID NOT KNOW THE SMALL ONE WAS IMPORTANT TO YOU.

MIRANDA

WELL, NOW YOU DO.

MIRANDA

I'D LIKE TO MAKE MY REQUEST NOW, IF THAT IS ALL RIGHT.

Episode 295, pg. 21 cont.-

(5) Focus on Jack, fighting his way back up, trying to stop his stubborn partner before it's too late.

RONIN (off-panel)

SPEAK YOUR WISH, AND THE INCREDIBLE ARCHITECT OF **ALL** THAT IS...REBEL RONIN, WILL HEED YOUR COMMAND.

JACK

MIRANDA!

MIRANDA (off-panel)

ENOUGH, JACK!

(6) On Miranda, her gun still pointed at Ronin, as she makes her request.

MIRANDA

I WANT YOU TO **RETURN** TO YOUR PRISON, REBEL RONIN. ONCE INSIDE, YOU WILL RECOMMIT ALL OF YOUR CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO **REMAINING** THERE.

MIRANDA

YOU WILL **INCREASE** THE DIFFICULTY OF YOUR SO-CALLED "RIDDLE," TO ENSURE THAT **NO ONE**, BY WAY OF SORCERY, TECHNOLOGY, OR EVEN **CHEMISTRY**, IS ABLE TO SOLVE IT.

MIRANDA

I **COMMAND** YOU, REBEL RONIN...TO MAKE THE WORD **IMPOSSIBLE** ACTUALLY MEAN SOMETHING.

Episode 295, pg. 22-

(1) Close on Ronin, his arms crossed, and a look of disgust present on his face. I want to instantly convey that the “great” Rebel Ronin has just met adventurer Miranda Mercury, and has come to despise her in a matter of moments.

RONIN
THAT IS YOUR WISH?

MIRANDA
IT IS.

RONIN
SO SHALL IT BE.

RONIN
I IMAGINE WE WILL NEVER MEET AGAIN.

(2) The room is ignited with blinding light once again, as Ronin is violently sucked back into the puzzle cube, which is suspended several feet off the ground. Miranda has her arm thrown in front of her eyes, shielding them.

MIRANDA
THAT’S THE IDEA.

(3) Same shot, except the light has vanished as quickly as it emerged. Strangely, the cube remains suspended in the air, though there’s something strange about it. Almost as if it’s not really there, somehow becoming The Ghost Riddle of Rebel Ronin.

No copy.

(4) On Miranda, walking up to the cube, and attempting to grab it out of the air, her hand passing right through it, the item now completely intangible.

MIRANDA
HMM...**CLEVER.**

JACK (off-panel)
NOT THE WORD I’D CHOSE.

Episode 295, pg. 23-

(1) Jack coming toward Miranda, intending to re-ignite the previous argument. As potentially volatile as their last confrontation was, this is really where the tension has reached its breaking point. Jack is angered almost to the point of tears that Miranda just casually dismissed the best option of freeing herself from the deadly virus pumping through her veins, and there's more than a little bit of hurt feelings on his part, that for whatever reason, she still hasn't told him about it.

JACK
STUPID, MAYBE. YEAH, THAT'S THE ONE. THINK **THAT** ONE DEFINITELY APPLIES HERE. I CAN'T **BELIEVE** THAT YOU JUST DID SOMETHING THAT INCREDIBLY **STUPID**.

MIRANDA
JACK...LEAVE IT ALONE.

(2) Jack presses, right in his friend's face, demanding that she explain herself.

JACK
HOW CAN YOU EVEN **SAY** THAT TO ME!? I KNOW **EXACTLY** WHAT HAPPENED THE LAST TIME WE WENT UP AGAINST THAT **BASTARD** VEGA, AND YOU KNOW WHAT THAT LOOKED LIKE!?

JACK
LIKE YOU'RE JUST GONNA LET HIM **WIN**. AND I **NEED** YOU TO **EXPLAIN** THAT TO ME, MIRANDA. I NEED YOU TO TELL ME WHAT JUST HAPPENED HERE.

MIRANDA
THE RIGHT THING.

Episode 295, pg. 23 cont.-

(3) Going to need some dialogue room here, as Miranda outlines her reasoning, somewhat flawed it may be.

JACK
MIRANDA, YOU'RE---

MIRANDA
YES, JACK...I'M **BETTER** THAN SOMEONE LIKE ABRAHAM, WHO'D ONLY USE A **PRICELESS** ARTIFACT LIKE RONIN'S RIDDLE, FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL GAIN. TO BENEFIT A LIFE THAT IS THE WAY IT IS FOR A **REASON**.

MIRANDA
CAN YOU EVEN **IMAGINE** THIS IN THE WRONG HANDS, JACK? CAN YOU HONESTLY STAND THERE, AND TELL ME THAT WE **SHOULDN'T** DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER, TO MAKE **SURE** IT ISN'T EXPLOITED?

MIRANDA
LIFE DOESN'T COME WITH A RESET BUTTON, JACK, AND AS...**DIFFICULT** AS IT IS TO ACCEPT, SOME THINGS AREN'T **MEANT** TO BE UNDONE. TO BE REMADE WITH A FEW MAGIC WORDS, FROM A GENIE IN A MAGIC BOX.

(4) Jack, frustrated almost beyond belief, and a deep sadness on his face.

JACK
MIRANDA, I...I **UNDERSTAND** ALL THAT, BUT...BUT WHAT COULD'VE BEEN THE HARM?

JACK
YOU DON'T **DESERVE** IT, MIRANDA? ALL THE THINGS YOU'VE DONE, THE LIVES, THE **WORLDS** YOU'VE CHANGED? YOU DIDN'T DESERVE IT?

(5) Back on Miranda, her face almost a mirror image of Jack's. Confident about what she stands for, and yet, still sad. Still somewhat disappointed in herself.

MIRANDA
THAT'S NOT FOR YOU OR I TO DECIDE, JACK. WE'VE JUST DONE SOMETHING ELSE THAT PEOPLE SAID COULD NEVER BE DONE.
ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

Episode 295, pg. 24-

(1) Close on Jack, tears welling up in his eyes. The little boy's heart is breaking.

JACK
NOT WHILE YOU'RE STILL DYING IT ISN'T.

(2) Miranda turns her face away from her young partner, breaking eye contact, and noticeably shamed by the revelation of the one secret she's ever kept from him.

NO COPY

(3) Same as panel 2.

JACK
...WERE YOU EVEN GOING TO **TELL** ME?

MIRANDA
JACK, I...

(4) Same as panel 3.

NO COPY

(5) The ship's perimeter alarm rips through the uncomfortable silence, starting them both.

ALARM
REEEP! REEEP! REEEP! REEEP!

MIRANDA
DOROTHY! STATUS!?

SHIP
ABRAHAM IS ON COMM. MIRANDA---DEMANDING YOUR
UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER.

Episode 295, pg. 24 cont.-

(6) Miranda sprints off toward the front of the ship.

MIRANDA
TELL HIM TO GO TO HELL, AND PREP THE ION CANNONS.

SHIP
ALREADY DONE, HONEY.

MIRANDA
YOU COMING, JACK?

JACK
IN A MINUTE.

(7) Jack turns back in the direction of The Ghost Riddle of Rebel Ronin, a look of determination on his face.

JACK
IN A MINUTE.

Episode 295, pg. 25-

Note: Okay, I want to try something a little different for this page, Lee. Right now, I'm thinking four vertical panels taking up the entirety of the page, which will basically show Jack Warning walking back across the room, to where the puzzle cube is suspended in mid-air. Jack is going to start out very small in the top left hand corner of panel 1, and walk diagonally through the panel layout to the bottom right corner of panel 4, where the cube is hanging, looking fairly large because of the perspective. While he's doing this, his hard light computer display has been triggered, and he's frantically typing notes.

(1)

JACK
I KNOW YOU CAN **HEAR** ME IN THERE, RONIN.

JACK
SEE, I CONDUCTED QUITE A BIT OF RESEARCH ON THAT MYSTICAL PRISON OF YOURS, BEFORE I CONVINCED MIRANDA TO STEAL YOU FROM GALACTIC COLLECTOR EBEL YNOS.

(2)

JACK
HE WAS **INTENDING** TO AUCTION YOU OFF TO DIMENSIONAL TERRORISTS, OR AT LEAST---THAT'S WHAT I TOLD HER.

JACK
SHE MIGHT BE THE MOST STUBBORN, PRIDEFUL PERSON I'VE EVER MET IN MY **ENTIRE** LIFE, BUT THAT'S HARDLY THE POINT, IS IT? I **WILL** FIGURE OUT ANOTHER WAY INTO YOUR LITTLE BOX, AND THEN YOU ARE **GOING** TO HELP ME SAVE HER LIFE.

(3)

JACK
TO CURE HER OF THAT SYNTHETIC POISON CYRUS VEGA **INFECTED** HER WITH, AND AFTER THAT, YOU ARE GOING TO MAKE THAT ROTTEN **BASTARD** EXPERIENCE A THOUSAND HORRIBLE DEATHS OF MY CHOOSING.

JACK
THINGS I'VE SPENT ENTIRE **WEEKS** INVENTING. LAST COUNT WAS 886, BUT I HAVE SLOWED DOWN RECENTLY. SOME OF THEM JUST AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH YET.

(4)

JACK
I JUST WANT US TO **UNDERSTAND** EACH OTHER, BEFORE WE MOVE FORWARD.

Episode 295, pg. 26-

(1) Jack stares right through the puzzle cube, directly at the camera.

JACK
MIRANDA IS THE BEST FRIEND I WILL EVER KNOW, AND SAVING
HER LIFE IS THE VERY **LEAST** I CAN DO.

JACK
SO, I'LL SEE YOU SOON, REBEL RONIN---

(2) Camera on the ceiling, looking down into the rec. room as Jack Warning runs off,
leaving the cube hanging in the air.

JACK
---I'LL SEE YOU **SOON**.

END-