Creative Writing Beginnings Project Book:

Book 1

MAKING COMIC BOOKS

for absolute beginners

Introduction

This project book aims to look at ways of creating comic books without any prior knowledge base. It assumes you are keen to have a go, but are a total beginner with little or no drawing and/or comic scripting experience.

Consider why you want to make comic books. Will you share finished comics with family and friends or do you hope to earn from your creations?

This book will show you ways to start creating comic books right away that will satisfy any initial creative urges. More in-depth practice and learning will be required to tackle complicated projects such as longer comics and graphic novels.

AI use will be covered too, but I would exercise caution if you are planning on using AI generated art material in commercial projects. AI images need to be Google Lens checked to see if something similar already exists. It may still be a while before you can fully trust AI to deliver an image that is totally unique and therefore not subject to scrutiny. When that day comes, using AI will be like having your own art department capable of implementing all your graphic ideas. Obviously, some image manipulation may still be required to finish projects. You also have the option of using AI to help with the scripting side of comic creation, but again a plagiarism check will need to be carried out on any AI text created. Although, I would hope that you are keen for readers to hear your voice!

PLEASE NOTE: This book is <u>free</u> and not to be sold.

Where to start?

The first thing is to not underestimate the skills you already have. Zines are an ideal way to let go creatively, without worrying too much about your skill level. Zines are personal and unique and many people collect them for this reason.

Adults sometimes envy the way a child draws and paints – this naive quality is mimicked by many artists who make a good living selling ceramics, T-shirts and fine art with a childlike graphic appearance. Some artists struggle to recapture this early freedom of expression, so a naive quality should not be undervalued.

It is worth making some childlike cartoon sketches often, to hone the drawing/painting skills you already possess. Any scraps of paper with something worth keeping can be scanned or photographed and used in a digital journal/scrapbook – why not make a zine portfolio of the type of work you are capable of producing, just for fun, or to look back on.

Zines – my definition: *I would class zines as home made style booklets that don't necessarily have to look like a polished comic book. A zine could include photographed objects found on your local beach, things about your life – your interests etc. or doodles that you make for fun! Search online for lots of examples of zines and how to make them.*

Now, on to ways to create your own comic books as easily as possible.

Beginner friendly comic making resources.

Always check terms of use – as end user agreements can and do change over time. Check you are permitted to use your created content commercially.

There are a number of software programs/apps/sites available that have assets that can be used to make comics – some are a bit limited, but if you have stories to tell and need graphic backgrounds, characters or props to populate your creations, then these computer programs/apps/sites will certainly do the job.

Popular programs/apps/sites are:

Manga Maker Comi Po!
(Available on Steam - £41.99p at time of writing. Extra content available.) (Commercial use allowed)

KumaKuma Manga Editor (Available on Steam - £4.99p at time of writing. Extra content available.) (Commercial use is allowed – users are required to mention that any content made included the use of KumaKuma Manga Editor)

MangaKa (Available on Steam - £8.50p at time of writing. Extra content available.) (Commercial use allowed)

AI Comic Factory www.aicomicfactory.com
Free and paid plans – commercial use is allowed, see frequently asked questions on the home page for a link to read the full terms of use.

Comic Creator Studio **https://summitsoft.com** (£36.99p – at time of writing). This software has plenty of characters and backdrops and is easy to use with a drag and drop feature for the included assets. (Personal, hobby use only.)

https://makebeliefscomix.com (Personal, hobby use only.)
https://app.pixton.com (Personal, hobby use only.)
https://comic.studio (Personal, hobby use only)
https://toonytool.com (Personal, hobby use only.)
This online website enables users to quickly make cartoons and comics to download print or share. Users also have the option to upload their own images. There is also a link to classic.toonytool.com

Toongether – iOS. (Personal, hobby use only.)
This free app lets you concentrate on your storytelling, you need no graphic/art skills at all to produce engaging comic stories. There is a community to share your stories and there are plans for additional features to personalise your creations further.

Doctor Who: Comic Creator – BBC Studios Distribution Ltd. (Free with in-app purchases. {iOS/Android}) (Personal, hobby use only.) Note, the in-app purchase of all the available content packs is not too expensive and is definitely worth the money to keep children occupied. Plus, they will be learning how to make comics too!

https://charactercreator.org (Personal, hobby use only.)

Comic making – serious/professional use:

Comic Draw by Plasq.

Comic Life 3 by Plasq.

Clip Studio Paint Pro/Ex (Incudes access to resources – all materials posted onto Clip Studio Assets can be used for commercial purposes.)

Ibis Paint – (Includes access to resources – read terms of service and material licenses.)

MediBang Paint for Pro (Includes access to resources, read terms of usage, commercial use allowed on most.)

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Character creation – 3D

Daz Studio – Free. Paid and regular free content available. (Adult content advisory – suitable for 16+ only)

Poser – Paid software. Paid and free content available. Suitable for 16+

VRoid Studio – Free.

MakeHuman – Free.

Blender – Free.

https://openart.ai/generator/3d-character – Free trial and subscription plans.

Character creation 2D

Character Creator 2D

Available from Itch.Io - $30 at time of writing – extra content available. Can be used in commercial projects, however it is worth checking if use in commercial comics is covered by their license. (Some limited posing – 2D only, but could be useful for comic creation – especially expanding character options in Doctor Who: Comic Creator.

ePic Character Generator – [MacOS, Windows, iOS, Android]. Pro version for commercial use. (No posing feature of characters. However, this product could be useful for making comics.)

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Posing apps

https://posemy.art (Free for hobby use. Pro subscription plans available.)
Easy Pose.
Magic Poser.
Poseit.
Handy Art Reference Tool.
Art Model – 3D Art pose tool.
Pose Maker Pro.
3D Mannequins.
Storyboarder. (Free – Explicit language used in introduction!)

3D models and viewers.

Microsoft 3D Viewer (Free from Microsoft Store.)
Comes with loads of models useful for comic making. Models can be rotated and lit from different angles (lighting can be coloured too). **Hobby use.**

Also check out:
Sketchfab, Turbosquid, CGTrader, Modelo
Check licensing for each model.

And:
Blender

<p align="center">***</p>

Comic Scripting

www.superscript.app – Free - (This software is very easy to learn and use.)

DramaQueen (free/paid)
www.dramaqueen.info/products (Screenwriting software. Fully featured. Could be useful for comic book scripting.)

Trelby (free)
www.trelby.org (Free screenwriting software. Fully featured software. Could be useful for comic book scripting.)

Comic Book Script Writer (CBSW) Android/Microsoft Store (free demo version.)

https://comicwriter.io Free, open source comic scripting project that works within desktop browsers.

Scrivener Software & App versions [MacOS, Windows, iOS] - {https://www.literatureandlatte.com/learn-and-support/video-tutorials/scriptwriting-in-scrivener#}

Comic Draw iPad App (Full comic script editor included.)

Comic Life 3 Software & App versions [MacOS, Windows, iOS] - {https://plasq.com/2015/02/using-the-script-editor-in-comic-life-3/}

Clip Studio EX (Story editor) {https://tips.clip-studio.com/en-us/articles/2875}

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Image Manipulation

GIMP 3.0.2 (Free & open source image editor. A feature packed option for image manipulation/creation.) {www.gimp.org}

FireAlpaca (Free software & materials – read usage before using materials commercially.) {www.firealpaca.com}

Krita (Free & open source. A feature packed option for image creation.)

Also: **Microsoft Paint, Paint.NET, Inkscape, Graphite online editor.**

AI Image Creation

Midjourney, NightCafe Creator, Dream by Wombo

Also read:
www.tomsguide.com/best-picks/best-ai-image-generators

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My experiments in comic making.

The following are examples of my experiments with comic making over the past four years.

I have many years of experience when it comes to image manipulation, however, I am new to comic making. I am a fiction writer and wanted to branch out into comic creation, mainly so I could produce writing prompts in a graphic form.

Below is my attempt to translate a small section of one of my spy novelettes into graphic form.

An excerpt from "The Denzcracz File"

Volgier noticed a strange cloud formation over Antarctica. 'What do you make of that?' he said, pointing out the window. A thick cloud seemed to swirl in a circle, but the view of the ground below was visible in the centre – it looked like a doughnut.
   Sean thought for a moment. He'd seen articles about possible secret bases in Antarctica. Tanner made a decision. 'Fly through; it might provide us some cover.'

As their craft descended, Volgier realised where they were. 'We can't be here,' he said, panicking. 'This is a no-fly zone!'

Tanner was firm. 'Keep going!'

'Don't blame me if we end up in tiny pieces!' Volgier said.

As Volgier lowered the machine vertically through the opening in the centre of the cloud, the two jets caught up with them. Tanner noticed the blips on the radar; he saw them closing in fast.

Volgier tried to take evasive action, but it was too late; a blast from the lead jet melted most of the back end of Volgier's pride and joy. 'We're going down!' he cried.

Volgier and Tanner's stricken craft smashed to the icy ground. It broke into flaming fragments; Tanner and Volgier were thrown against soft snow drifts that had formed at the foot of a mountainous ice-covered rock. A few seconds passed, and then suddenly, there was a roar as an ice sheet sheared away from the towering rock face above them.

Tanner and Volgier quickly got up and dived for cover as shards landed around them. The two friends managed to escape injury and gathered surviving equipment from their downed craft.

Volgier shouted to Sean, 'Tanner, I've found the survival suits!'

Tanner was staring at the rock face.

Volgier swung around to see what he was looking at. A giant door was now visible where the ice sheet had been. 'Wow!' Volgier crunched his way over to Tanner. 'Shall we knock, old boy?' he mocked.

Momentarily, Tanner was speechless, he paused to look back at the flaming wreckage they'd escaped from. 'We might as well, otherwise, once those fires go out, we'll freeze to death.'

The two men put on their heated suits and helmets. They figured it might take a while for someone to answer the door. Tanner knocked. The sound reverberated with every knock. There was a loud clunk, and the door began to rise slowly.

The two helmeted friends looked at each other, seeing only their reflections in the mirrored visors.

Volgier's helmet communicator clicked. 'Shall we go in, or do you want to stay out in the cold?' he heard Tanner say.

Behind his helmet, Volgier blew out his cheeks, 'Let's go in,' he said wearily.

As they stepped into the hanger-sized building, banks of lights illuminated the giant room. There was a smooth floor of ice. However,

their helmet HUDs showed the temperature was warm enough for them to remove their survival suits.

Once free of their suits, they could move freely. Tanner could see Volgier was getting slightly twitchy. The door quietly closed behind them.

'Relax, if they wanted us dead, then we would already be dead,' Tanner said.

'You English are far too trusting.' Volgier kept vigilant, looking in every direction for the first sign of trouble.

They walked farther into the frozen base, and around the first corner, they stopped dead. Pre-historic creatures – frozen solid, lined the route they were travelling.

Eventually, they arrived at a pair of giant, transparent doors; they could see a vast underground city with flying craft darting high above the built structures. As the men approached, the doors slowly began opening inwards, away from them. They walked through and saw a man. The man greeted them warmly; he looked elderly, but he was very fit and agile. After shaking hands with both Volgier and Tanner, the man introduced himself.

'My given name is Blealarx; I am the fourth son of Tarebacxel – The Founder.' he looked at Tanner and Volgier. 'Of course, you won't have heard of me or my people. We oversee your world; keep your kind in check, make sure you don't blow your planet up with atomic bombs and so forth.'

'I'm Sean Tanner, and this is my colleague and friend Volgier.'

'I know both of you; we monitor everything. There is nothing on Earth that we do not know about.' Blealarx took Sean and Volgier to a huge cabinet with a transparent viewing window. 'Destiny led you to us; this is why you're here'. Through the viewing window, they could see a figure that seemed to be made of light, floating in an amber-coloured liquid. 'The craft destroyed in 1970 was carrying our spiritual leader – he was to usher in an era of enlightenment – the people of your world called it "The Age of Aquarius". We managed to rescue his essence from the fire to prevent him from returning home to The Source. We now have to wait for our Mother-ship to complete her mission and re-enter your solar system: She is due soon; once our Mother-ship is close by, we can transport him there, and he can become whole again with a newly constructed body'.

Suddenly, a point of light appeared in front of them. The bright dot gradually expanded, and a holographic image appeared.

Blealarx looked worried. 'It seems the two jets that destroyed your craft haven't given up. They are heading towards us.'

'Have you got a way of defending yourself?' Sean asked.

'We haven't used our defensive system in a long time; reactivation will take a while. But our worker teams will get right on it.' Blealarx touched the holographic image, and a siren sounded...

Rouger Finesel looked out of his cockpit window. Below, the Antarctic base had become exposed with the broken ice sheet lying fragmented on the frozen ground. HQ2's craft was still smouldering with black smoke billowing. Rouger expected that the occupants had perished, but now, his attention diverted towards the base.

Sean Tanner and Volgier find the base is warm. They take off their survival suits and walk deeper inside.

A friendly figure greets the two friends.

Tanner and Volgier listen to the base leader
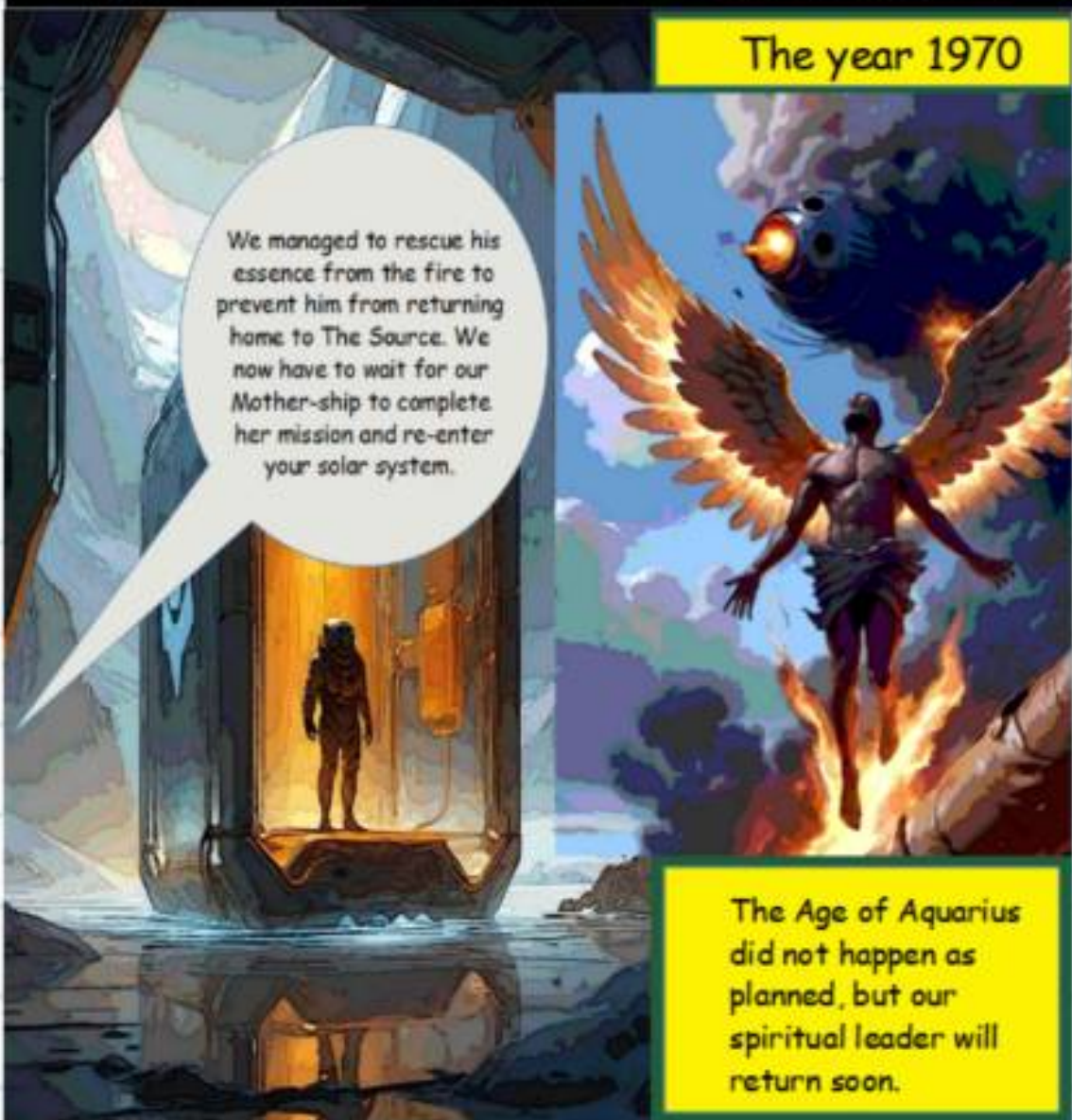
The year 1970

We managed to rescue his essence from the fire to prevent him from returning home to The Source. We now have to wait for our Mother-ship to complete her mission and re-enter your solar system.

The Age of Aquarius did not happen as planned, but our spiritual leader will return soon.

The project involved extensive use of AI. Daz Studio was used for Sean Tanner and Volgier. Gimp and Libre Office were also used plus Book Creator for iPad.

The Fourth Sentinel: The Keeper's Watch.

This was my attempt at a fantasy/Sci-fi mix. My main interest was stretching my graphic capabilities. AI and Daz Studio were both used to create this example.

Project: Carry on the story about the first settlers arriving and occupying their new home planet. You could write a short story first and then convert that into a comic script; concentrate on the way you would like your panels/pages to look, even if you can't actually draw them. You could use **Storyboarder** to sketch out some rough panels just to get an idea of what your story would look like visually.

The Fourth Sentinel: The Keeper's Watch

Zan Foster, mission survey leader, has landed on off-world colony Delta55#Omega.4597

The planet had been watched over for fifty years by chosen Sentinels. The most recent was Georgia Aston. She had overseen the safe removal of native animals with the help of Tam Forester.

Escape.

This is a comic example that I started using Book Creator for iPad.

I used **Daz Studio** for the characters and **Dream by Wombo** for the AI backgrounds. (Dream by Wombo: Please read their terms of use and pricing plans if you wish to use AI images commercially.)

The background image with the black smoke rising is from **Clip Maker** available on **Steam**. This software has adult themes so is not suitable for children. Also, I am not sure if the backgrounds can be used commercially.

Project: Carry on the story; Sean Tanner and Volgier's mission to find the stranded young woman in the desert has just become a lot harder. Now on foot, the two spies must traverse the hostile terrain without any equipment apart from their radio headsets.

Escape
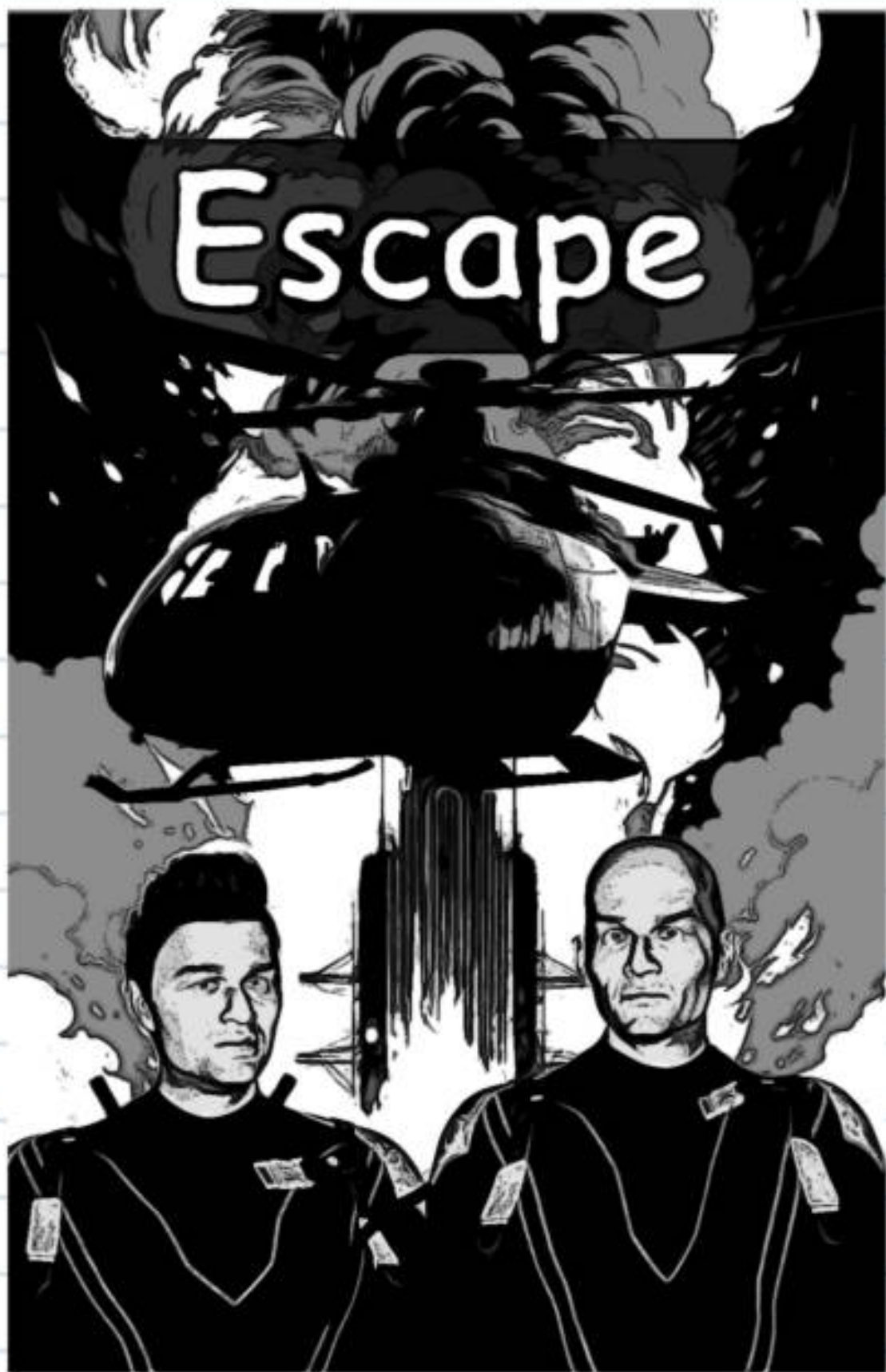
Creative Writing Beginnings

SEAN TANNER AND VOLGIER ARRIVE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FLAT DESERT.

A Man Disappeared.

This was my first attempt at making a comic (ever!). It features the fictional spy character Sean Tanner. I used images from Pixabay, Comic Creator Studio (Summitsoft), Microsoft 3D models and a few effects using various filter apps from Microsoft store. Lastly, I used Daz Studio for Misha Bardoe.

Please note: Comic Creator Studio (Summitsoft), can only be used for personal use.
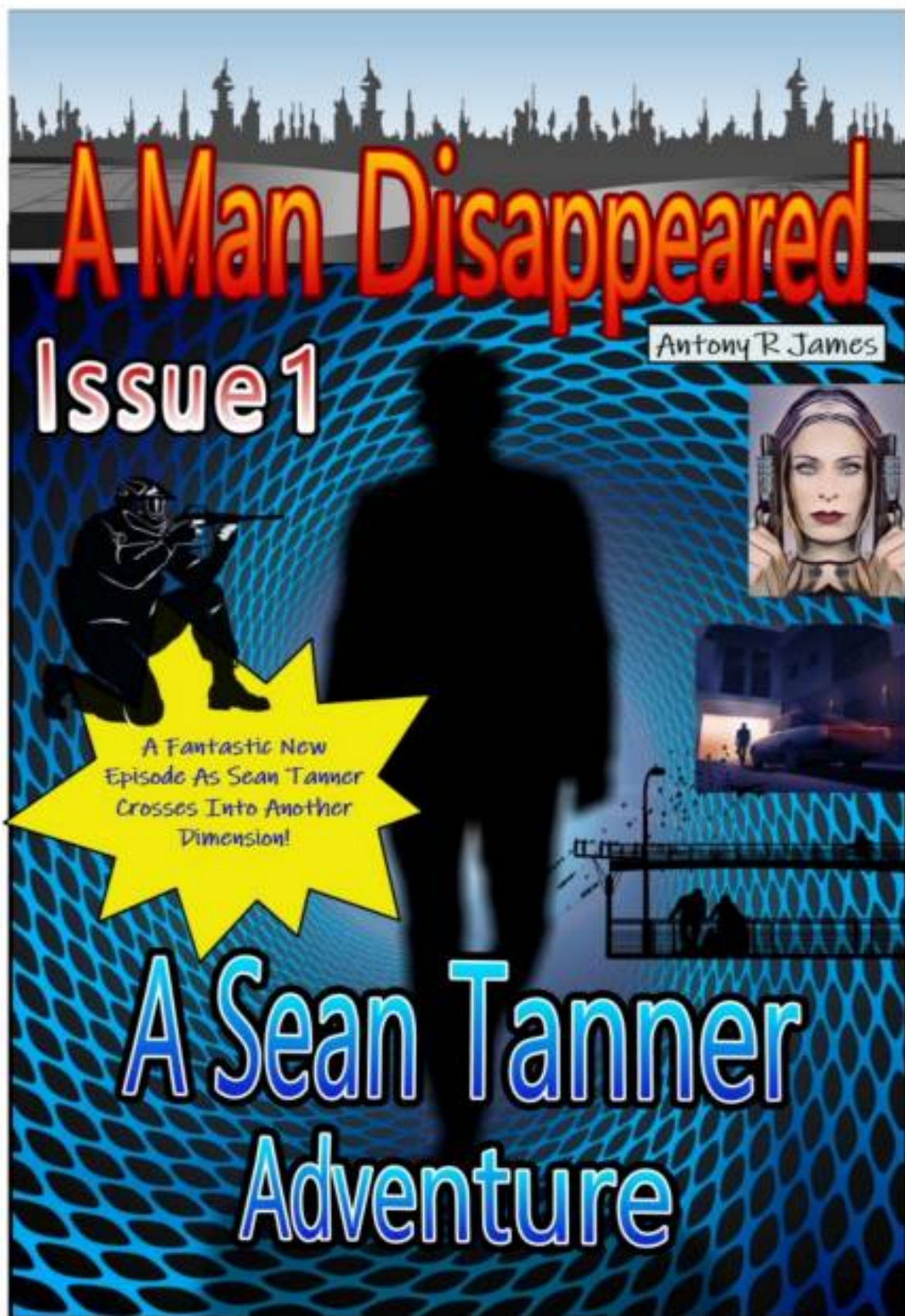
Part One: A Man Disappeared.

Sean Tanner was home at last. It had been an eventful week; Monday he was nearly killed by a crazed gunwoman who leapt out of an alleyway with both guns blazing.

Wednesday was the beginning of a strange episode that would affect Sean Tanner for the next thirty years.

A phone call from Sarah Serking required Sean to attend a hastily assembled astronaut training camp. The British Space Programme was quickly reformed when old telecommunication satellites began malfunctioning. It seemed the space agency had been moth-balled for so long, that they had no active astronauts left.

After an intense one-day training program, Sean Tanner was whisked into space aboard an old British re-useable space shuttle.

The shuttle captain, Misha Bardoe helped Sean suit up. They were scheduled to rendezvous with a malfunctioning British communications satellite that needed to be repaired.
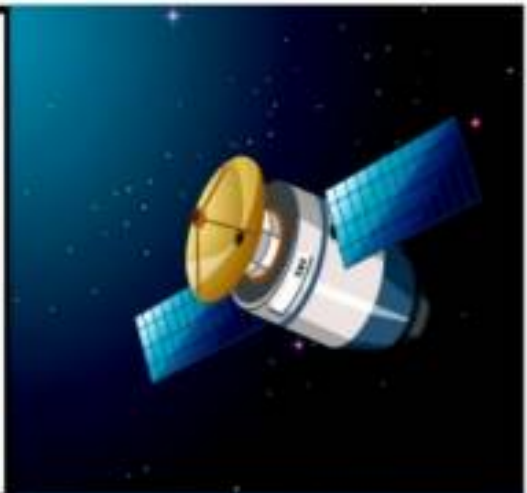
What Sean Tanner didn't know, was Misha Bardoe had other plans!

Finally, I have avenged my father. Sean Tanner is finished!

She's cut my lifeline!

I'm drifting towards the light.

For hours, Sean Tanner was slowly drawn towards the light in the distance, until finally, he entered...

Suddenly, he was gripped by a force which acted on his body and mind.

He felt safe and was lowered gently down to a strange city below.

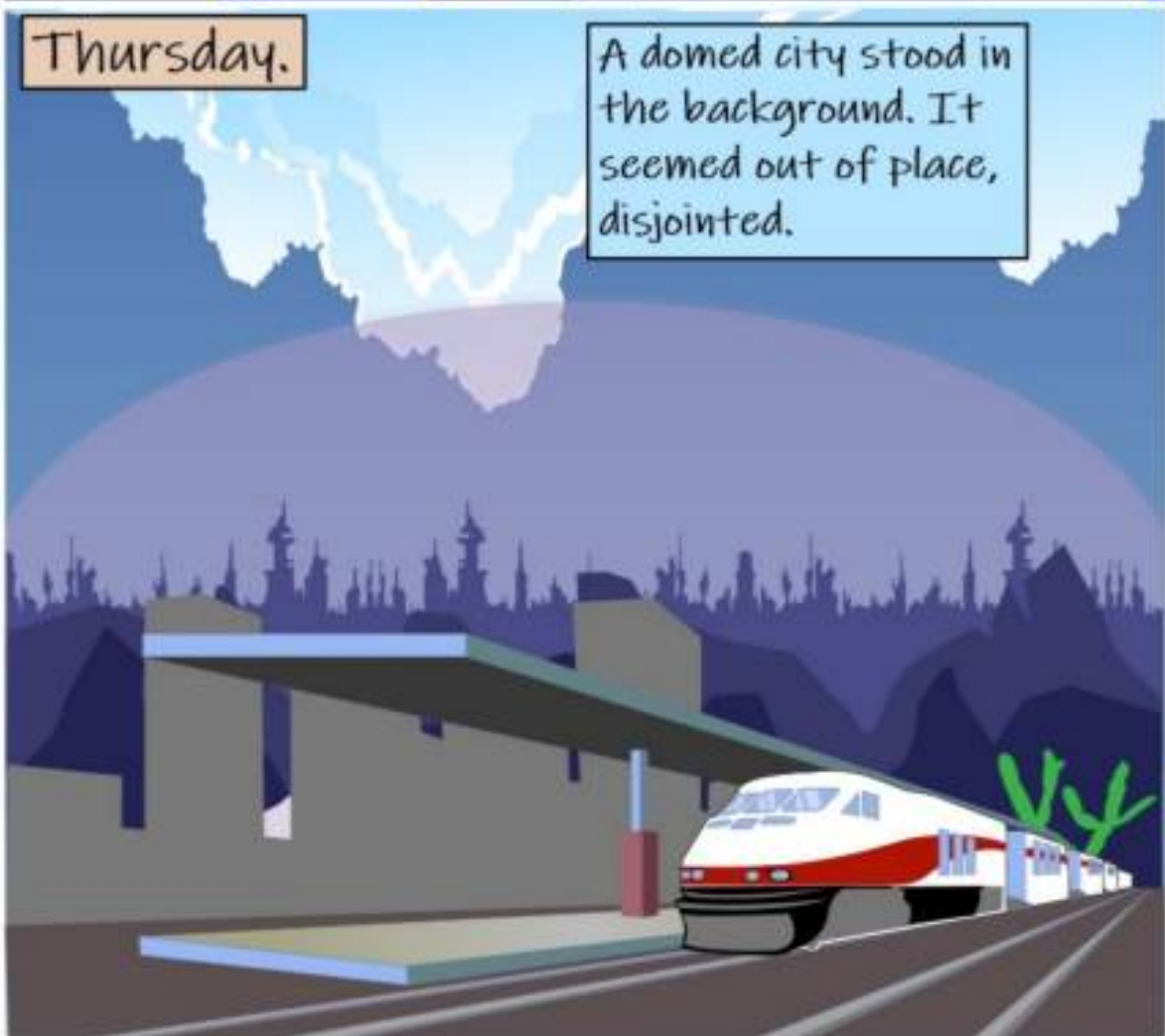Sean passed down past a peculiar mix of hi-tech and traditional architecture.
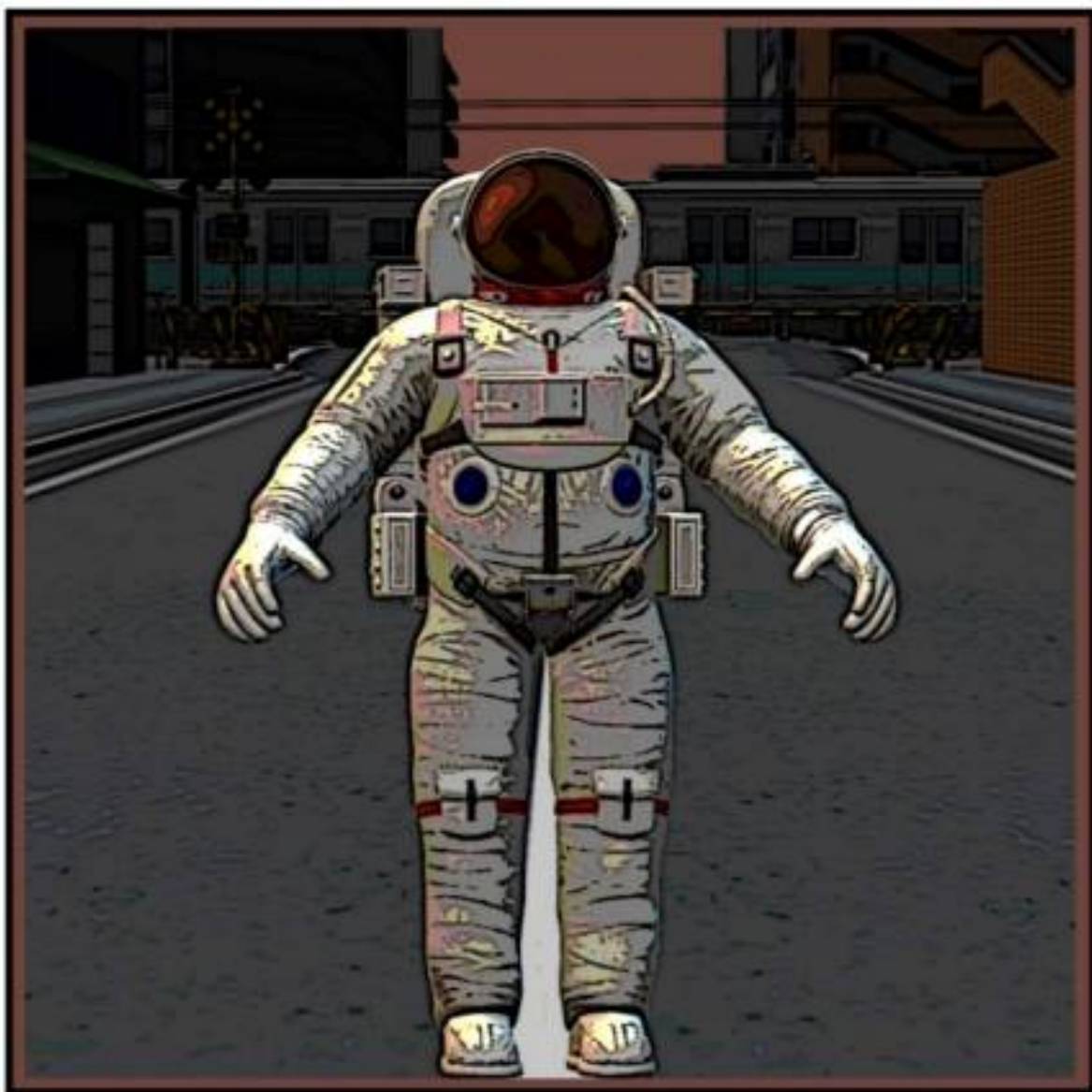
Sean Tanner felt strange. His body changed as he adjusted to a different dimension.

Notes. Page 1

Sean Tanner has passed through a space anomaly. He finds himself on a different Earth. Some of the people he knows are here, but they are all slightly different.

Notes. Page 2
The domed city appeared from nowhere as a result of the same space anomaly that Sean passed through. Although it had been there for five years, little was known about its occupants.

Notes. Page 3

Sean spends the next thirty years helping his duplicate friends. He misses his Rebecca. It takes decades for technology to advance enough for Sean to travel back through the anomaly.

Notes. Page 4

Friday. With his age restored, a recognisable Sean Tanner arrives home the same week he left. No one realises he had disappeared for thirty years! He has plenty of memories of his time spent on another Earth. And so begins "THE SEAN TANNER CHRONICLES".

Notes. Page 5

There is plenty of scope for episodes over a thirty-year period for "The Sean Tanner Chronicles". One idea is that the occupants of the domed city start to venture out of their dome. They use a strange flying device with unknown propulsion.
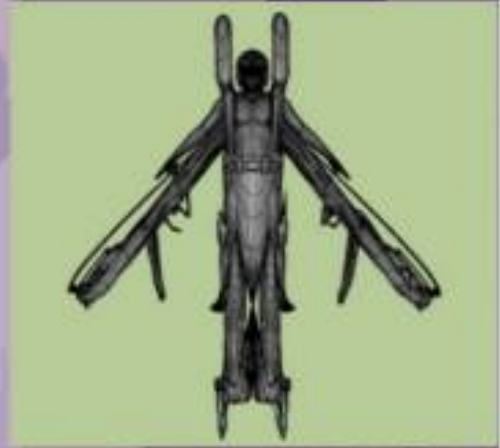
Doctor Who: Comic Creator

It is worth purchasing the extra content for Doctor Who Comic Creator as it can be used by children as a fun introduction to comic making.

My example could be expanded.

Project: Why are all the Doctors waiting for their seventh incarnation? What won't they forgive? What mischief has he been up to?

ONE DAY THE DOCTOR COMES UP WITH A BRILLIANT IDEA.

I COULD VISIT MY GRANDAUGHTER

The following image is a mash-up of AI images to represent the spy world. It's the sort of image that would be good for illustrating a blog article about creating spy fiction.

Project: Why not have a go at making a spy themed montage that would look good as either a front cover for a just-for-fun spy comic book or maybe for a practice article about spy fiction or comics.

This comic page uses three Daz Studio models with clothing and props which are also from Daz Studio. The green target image is from Canva and the backgrounds are AI generated (the seaside view is an AI altered holiday photo of mine!)

Sean Tanner in London.

Using Daz Studio, AI, Canva and Gimp, I created the start of a potential set of comic books featuring a young Sean Tanner as he leaves his rural home for London. There, he is recruited by Deb Shankler and becomes one of the brightest trainees The HUB has ever encountered. Six months later Tanner is plunged head first into action on his first mission. Has the young man got what it takes to out manoeuvre London's worst criminal, Walter T Rhines?

Project: Add some visual sound effects to the comic pages I created. **Hint**; the motorbike, the injured man, the man with the sword shouting, Tanner landing a punch and the VTOL aircraft landing in London.

Tip: Copy the image you want to work on and **Paste** (or create from clipboard) into an art app/program. **Save** the image as a **.jpeg** or **.png** and then **import** the saved image into an appropriate comic making/design app or program/website that has comic visual effect fonts.

I THINK MY MOVE TO LONDON IS GOING TO WORK OUT JUST FINE.

WOW!
Look at
that guy.
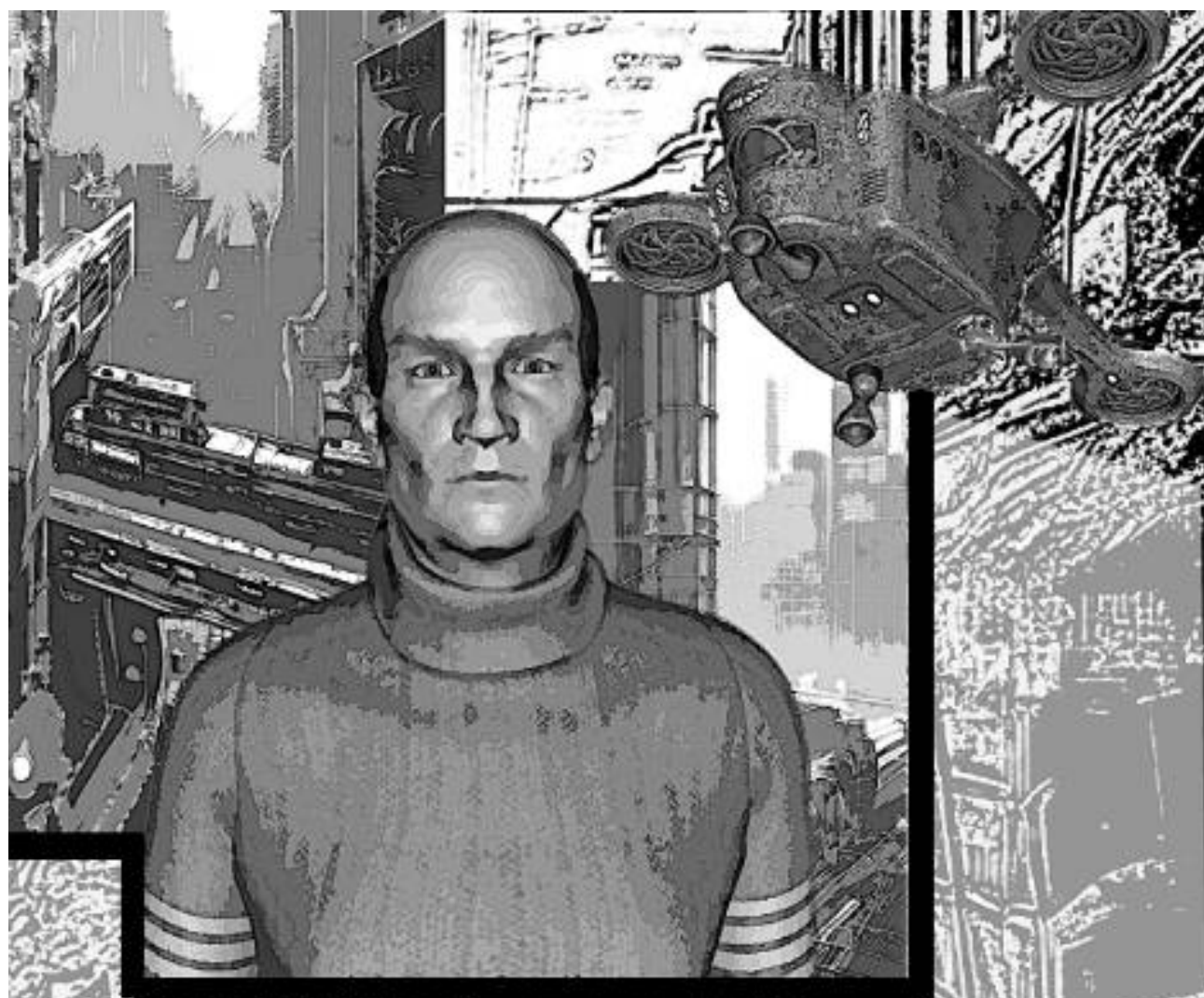
London's biggest crime boss Walter T Rhines has arrived back from his Spanish holiday.

Deb Shankler and Sean Tanner stop their training to join other spy operatives.

This concludes my first attempt at a comic making textbook/project book.

I didn't find it easy because initially, I was hoping to sell this book. However, the controversy over AI image use and the change of terms of usage meant that it became too much of a minefield for me so I decided I would give the book away as a free download.

The books still to come in this series, will also be free and will lean more towards the use of software to achieve desired effects. I will explore techniques in full and will provide comic text and artwork prompts so you can get started without staring at a blank page!

I hope you found this book useful and if you would like to support my work then take a look at my latest books on Amazon.