CHAPTER 1

R.K. JONES

Going Viral

THE COMIC

COMFORT OF CONFORMITY · BOOK 1



CHAPTER 1

The Drive Home

Then the sky split with sound.

Going Viral

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The Drive Home

June 13th, 2055 · Axtin Laboratory, Minnesota

The lab was hardly ever quiet.

Her co-workers had often teased that once she stood in front of her microscope, she shut everything out and entered her own world.

Its cells had a morphology that neither the database at Axtin nor the CDC could identify.



And to make matters worse, the sample had come from her daughter's pet cockatiel.

Abigail looked up from her microscope, surprised to see that she was the only person in Lab 4.

...lab coats draped over chairs... none of the machines and equipment in the lab had been turned off...

...the more she got an eerie feeling that she'd missed something important.

LAB 4

She still should have noticed that the doors had stopped hissing.

The day before, Abigail had been pulling into her driveway when something slammed against her driver's window.

THUD

THUD!

As she parked in front of the garage, it hit the window again, harder than the first time and in the very same spot.

After climbing out of her car, she lowered herself next to her daughter's pet bird. Lily lay dead and no longer looked ordinary.

In a blind panic, Brittany had stepped away from the stroller. She swung wildly but viciously at a bird that repeatedly swooped, each time seeming to aim for her eyes.

YELP!

Abigail ran into the garage and grabbed a push broom...

...but when she came back out, Brittany was running with the stroller, her dog keeping pace.

The bird that had been attacking Brittany lay dead on the sidewalk. Above it, more birds battled to the death.

She put both dead birds in containers and placed them in the small specimen freezer in her garage.

There were questions she wanted answers to, but the hour had gotten late. Luke never liked when she came home late, and it gave him all the reason he needed to pick another fight.

The employee lounge was packed. Even members of her team stood inside, all of them huddled in front of the television.

AXTIN LABORATORY

The front desk attendants and several armed guards were huddled in front of one of the computers. Abigail didn't break her stride.

When she got on the interstate and found it jammed like a parking lot in both directions, she realized she might have missed a report about a local disaster.

None of the stations worked, and all she got was garbled static.

KSSHHHH

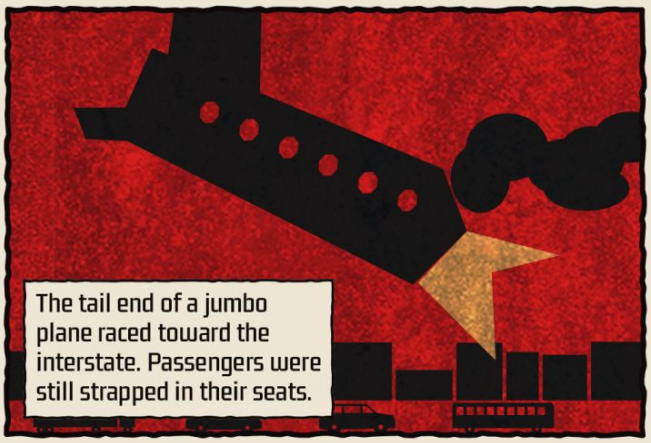
A huge jolt snapped Abigail out of her thoughts. The car in front had backed into her and seemed to have no intention of stopping.

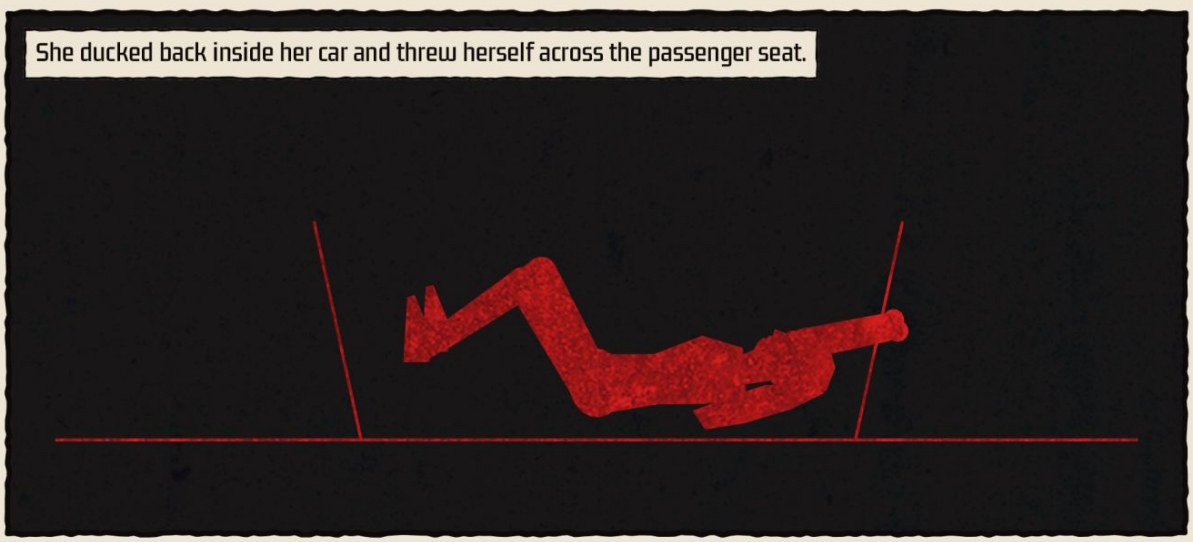
What's happening?

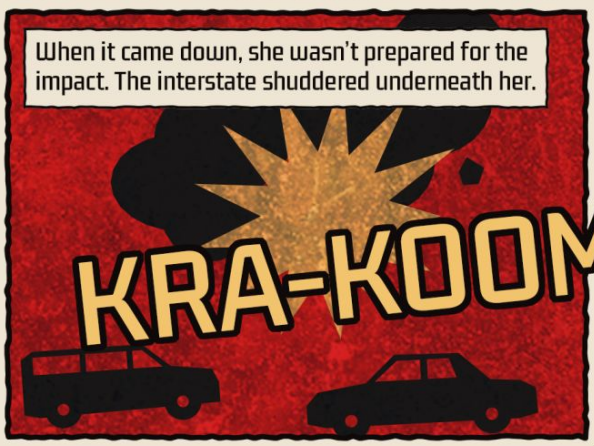
CRUNCH!


Drivers and their passengers gave up on driving backward and jumped out of their vehicles, all of them running in the same direction.


She opened her door to get a better look up ahead, but buses and big rigs blocked her view.


The tail end of a jumbo plane raced toward the interstate. Passengers were still strapped in their seats.


She ducked back inside her car and threw herself across the passenger seat.


When it came down, she wasn't prepared for the impact. The interstate shuddered underneath her.
KRA-KOOM


WEE-OO WEE-OO


Then the sky split with sound.
VRRRRRRMMM
Oh, God! Oh, God!
...a military jet flew so low over her car that it shook.
Oh, God!
The jet fired missiles onto the freeway up ahead.
Her entire car lifted from the impact, then dropped and collided with other cars.
BOOM!
She covered her ears, closed her eyes, and prayed.
In the distance, flames and smoke billowed into the sky. The freeway buckled, all of its lanes rippling like a wave traveling toward shore.
A tour bus toppled over. Too many cars had become displaced and blocked her in.

A loud crack rang out, unmistakably a gunshot. To her horror, the guy in the car next to her was opening up with a large-caliber handgun on the people in the cars around him.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

Screams and shouts were continuous. People climbed on top of her car to escape the interstate.

With no way to fight back, she sank into the footwell and dragged a blanket from the passenger seat on top of her.

She could lie here and wait to die, or do something, anything, to increase her chance of survival.

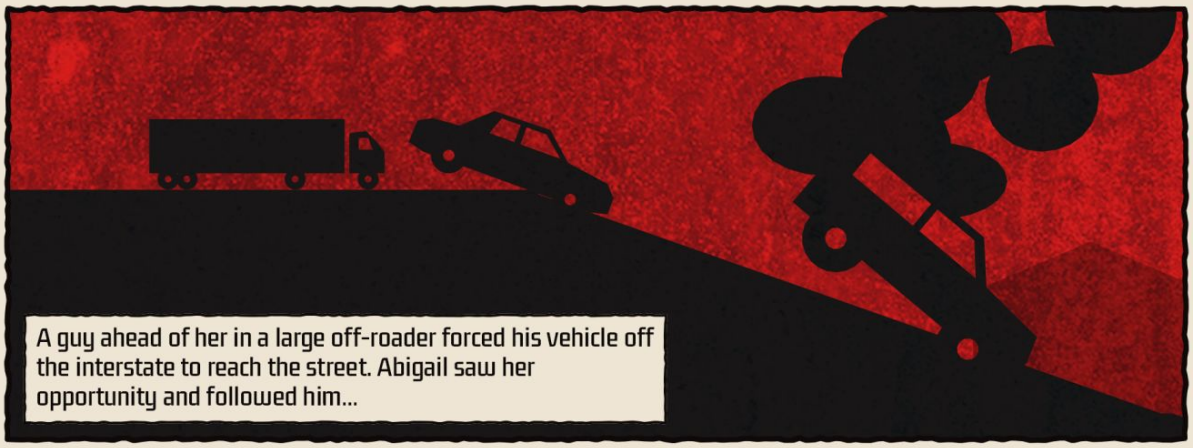
Two women were fighting as if to the death, just like the birds had the day before.

Abigail knew she had to get out of there, so she jumped back into the driver's seat, desperate for a way out.

The sound of another large plane filled the sky as it raced out of control toward the ground.

KA-BOOOM

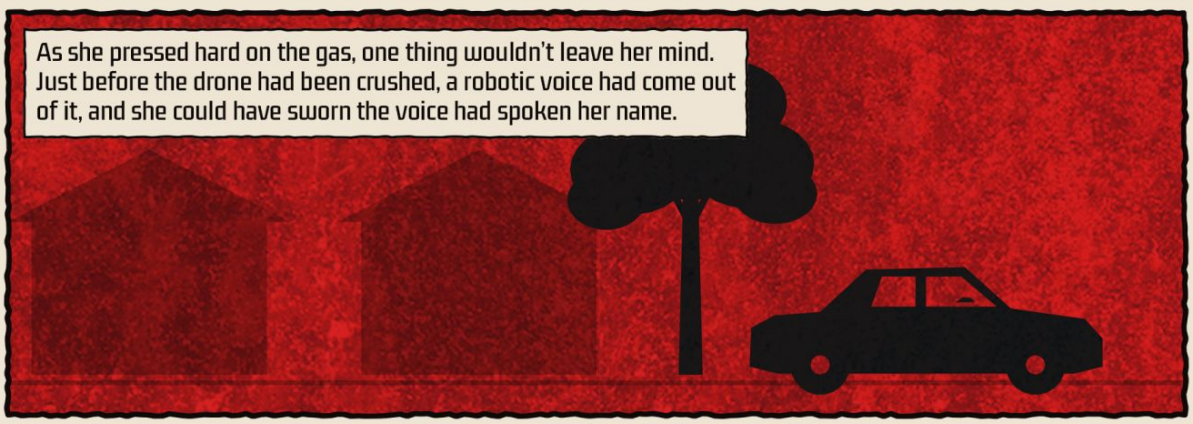
It crashed into a residential community next to the interstate.


A guy ahead of her in a large off-roader forced his vehicle off the interstate to reach the street. Abigail saw her opportunity and followed him...


SCREEECH
...A-BI-GAIL...
...but as soon as she reached the street, a military drone raced toward her car and she slammed on the brakes.


A large chunk of debris dropped on top of the drone.
CRASH!


In her rear-view mirror, people were fleeing the interstate.


As she pressed hard on the gas, one thing wouldn't leave her mind. Just before the drone had been crushed, a robotic voice had come out of it, and she could have sworn the voice had spoken her name.

It's Here



KEEP READING →

Chapter 2 and every chapter of the comic at
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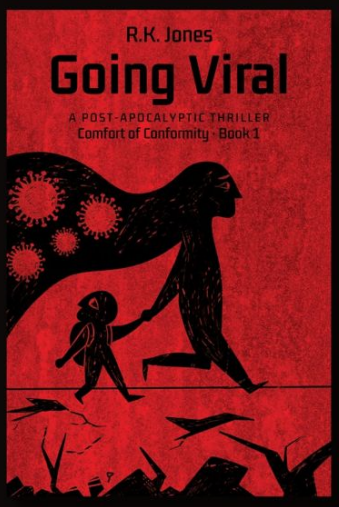

READ THE NOVEL

Going Viral

by R.K. Jones

The full story the comic is drawn from.
Comfort of Conformity · Book 1

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