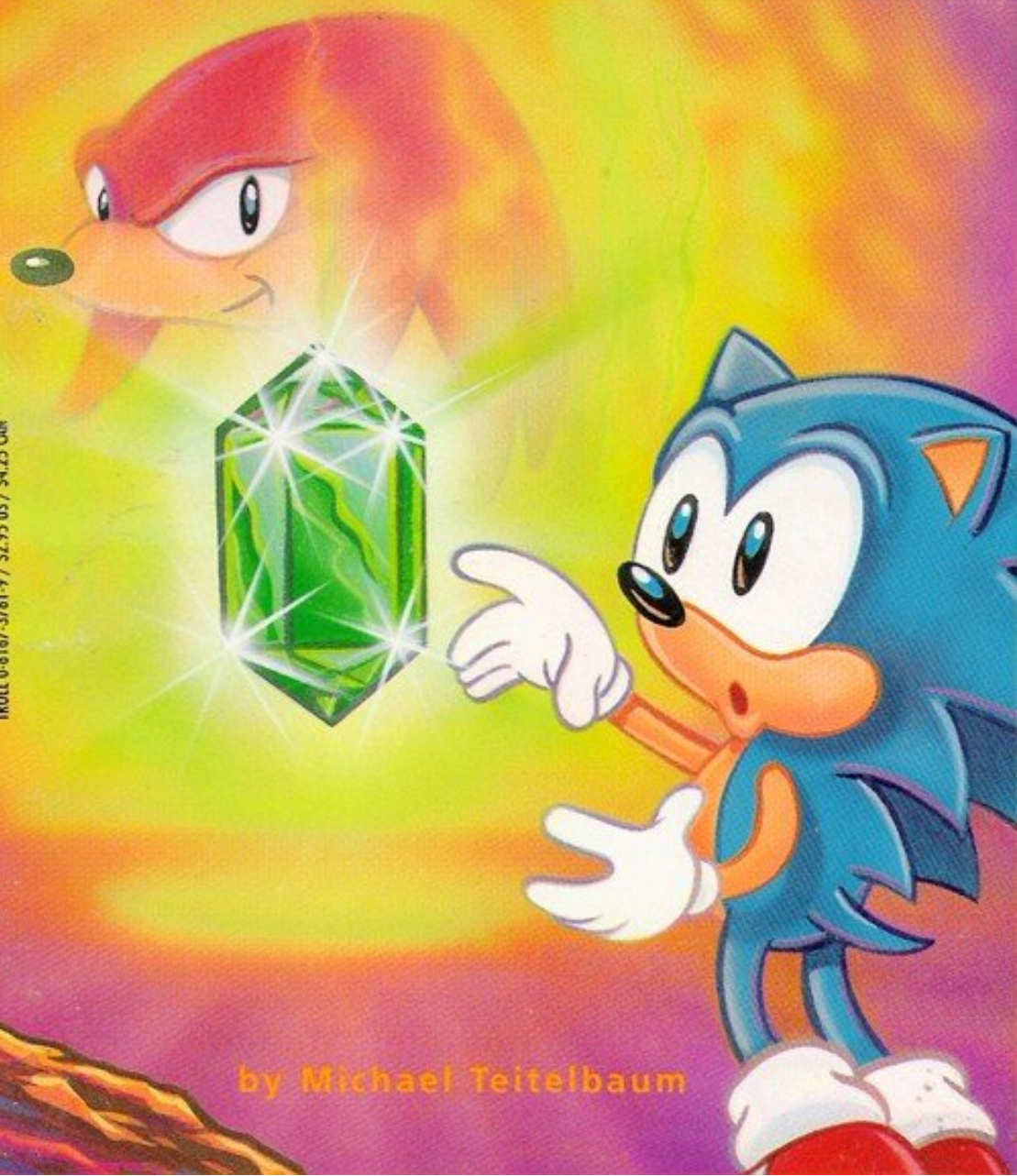


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Chapter

1

Sonic The Hedgehog sped through the Great Forest of the planet Mobius. As usual, he was out on patrol. *No sign of Swatbots here,* though Sonic, as he dashed off at Super Sonic Speed towards another section of the forest.

Sonic belonged to a group of Freedom Fighters who lived in a secret underground hideout called Knothole Village. This brave band of friends worked together to free Mobius from the clutches of the evil Dr. Robotnik.

Robotnik had taken control of the planet and kidnapped its good king. Mobius was once a happy, clean and festive place to live. It was now a

dark, polluted wasteland patrolled by Robotnik's mechanical soldiers, known as Swatbots.

No Bot-heads here, either, thought Sonic after he had covered the next section of the forest. *On to the last section.*

Sonic turned, about to run off, when suddenly a wave of dizziness overcame him.

“Wow!” he said, leaning against a tree. “Maybe three chili dogs for breakfast *wasn't* such a great idea!”

From out of nowhere, a mysterious green glow appeared. The brilliant green light spread until it completely surrounded Sonic. “Now I *know* I shouldn't have had those chili dogs!” he said, grabbing the tree for balance.

A vision started to take shape within the green glow. The image of an island appeared before Sonic – an island that was floating in the sky. “Is this weird or what?” Sonic wondered.

The image of the floating island faded from view. The green glow remained. Within the glow another

vision appeared. This time the vision was of a figure with long dreadlocks and huge knuckles.

“Hey, pal!” Sonic called out. “How are you doing? The name's Sonic. Sonic The Hedgehog. Listen, maybe *you* can tell me what in Mobius is going on around here!”

The figure said nothing. Then he began to glide, first to the left, and then to the right. He moved faster and more smoothly than anyone Sonic had ever seen.

“Way past cool, buddy,” said Sonic. “You're almost as fast as I am!”

Then the silent, speedy figure disappeared, leaving only the green glow.

“This is too crazy,” said Sonic. “I've got to get back to Knothole Village and tell the others about this.”

Sonic turned to run, but a second wave of dizziness washed over him. He caught hold of another tree to keep from falling. When he looked up, a new vision was forming within the green

glow in front of him. This time the shape was unmistakable.

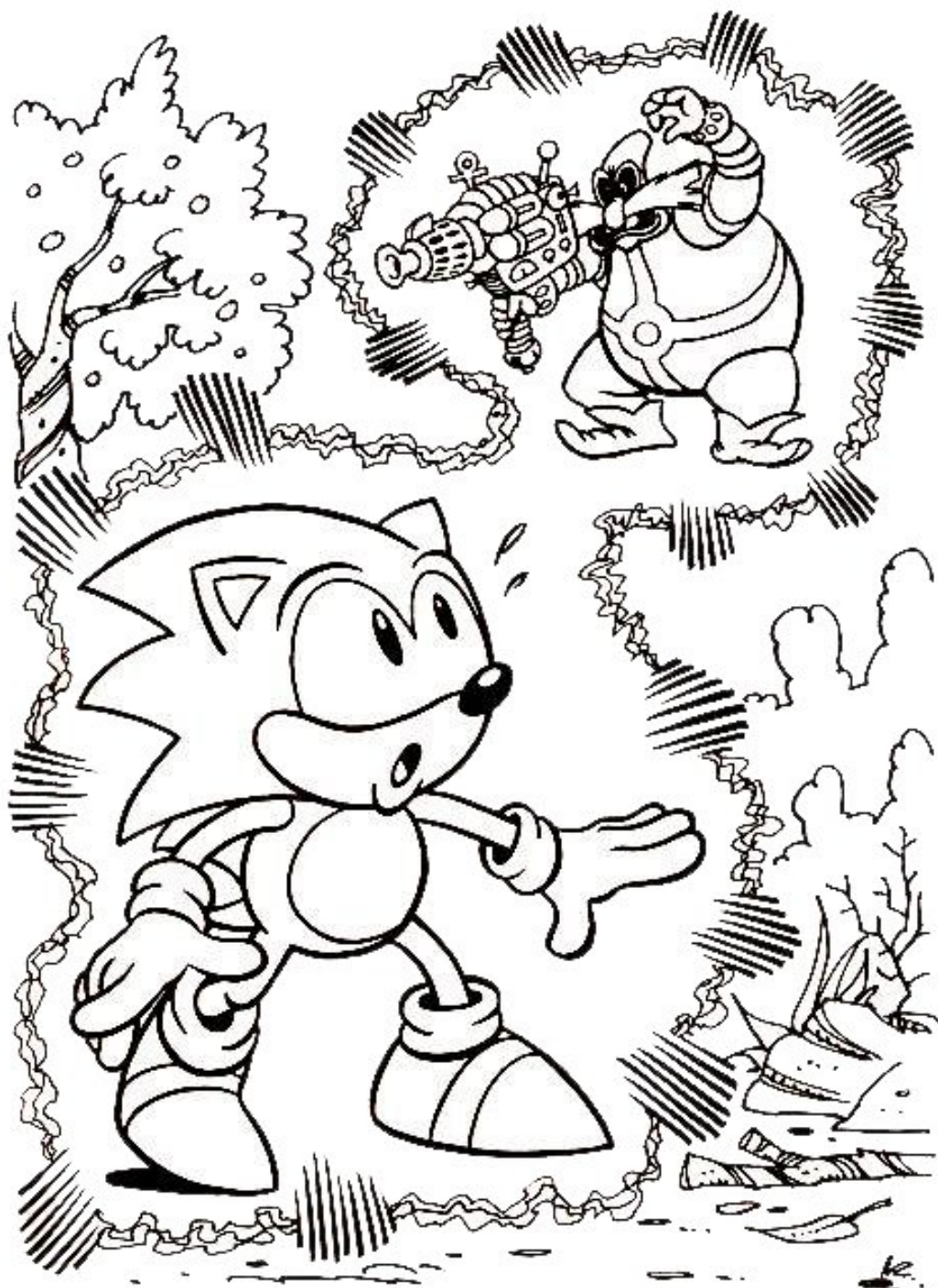
“Robotnik!” gasped Sonic, when the image had fully formed. *I feel too weak to outrun him*, thought Sonic. *Maybe I can bluff my way through this!*

“Hey, Butt-nik!” shouted Sonic, struggling to keep his balance. “You'd better clear out. I've got friends all around me. You're hopelessly outnumbered, you big waste of space, so why don't you just crawl on back to your fortress!”

The image of Robotnik seemed to not even hear Sonic. Suddenly a huge weapon appeared in Robotnik's hand. It was unlike any weapon Sonic had ever seen.

Uh-oh, thought Sonic. *I think this is big, big trouble. Look at the size of that nasty thing!*

Powerful green beams shot out in all directions from the massive weapon. Sonic dove behind a tree, but Robotnik didn't seem to notice him. The weapon's deadly beams didn't have any effect on Sonic.



“None of this is real!” said Sonic aloud. “These are just images, visions being put into my head. But who is doing this, and what does it mean?”

Sonic gazed at the terrifying vision of Robotnik and his super weapon. Freedom Fighters suddenly rushed at Robotnik from all sides. Some of the Freedom Fighters were Sonic's friends; others he didn't know. But none of them stood a chance against Robotnik and his incredibly powerful weapon.

Freedom Fighters fell left and right. The green beams fired so swiftly that no one had any time to think or react.

“This may not be real,” said Sonic to himself, “but its still pretty scary! Does a weapon of such tremendous power really exist? I've traveled all over Mobius, and I've never come across a source of energy great enough to power a weapon like that one. Where is that horrible thing getting its strength from, anyway?”

Almost as if it were answering Sonic's question, the scene of Robotnik, his weapon, and its terrible destruction disappeared. The green glow that had

been surrounding Sonic got smaller and sharpened into the image of a group of green glowing stones.

The shining gems hovered in the air right in front of Sonic's eyes. Their brilliance was overwhelming.

“Wow!” exclaimed Sonic. “These stones are the most beautiful things I've ever seen!”

They were also the last things that Sonic saw before he passed out and fell to the ground, unconscious.

Chapter

2

Some distance from the Great Forest of Mobius stood an ugly and dark fortress. This immense structure had once been the palace of the good king of Mobius. From this once-grand palace the good king had ruled kindly and fairly.

But now the fortress was an evil place. Armed Swatbots patrolled the grounds. Hungry crocodiles swam in the moat that surrounded the fortress. Its outer stones were crumbling. It had been years since the building had been repaired. These days, the neglected fortress was the home of Dr. Robotnik, the terrible dictator of Mobius.

Deep within the foul-smelling fortress, Dr. Robotnik paced back and forth in his secret

control room. It was from this room that Robotnik directed the evil operations that kept Mobius in his greedy hands.

As Robotnik paced excitedly, his faithful assistant, Snively, followed him from one end of the room to the other, trying to avoid a collision with his boss. Robotnik was yelling at the top of his lungs, and Snively was trying to figure out what he was shouting about.

“They're back, Snively!” shouted Robotnik.
“They're back in our dimension!”

“Who is, sir?” asked Snively.

“Not *who*, you fool,” snapped Robotnik. “What!”

“What, sir?” asked Snively.

“Exactly,” replied Robotnik. “What, Snively, What!”

“I don't know, sir,” said Snively sheepishly, seeing that this was leading nowhere. “You said what first.”

“What, first, Snively?” asked Robotnik, getting irritated.



“Sir, what *are* we talking about?” asked Snively, finally.

Robotnik's face grew serious. His eyes narrowed and his voice lowered to a whisper. “The emeralds, you fool!” he said.

Snively had never seen Robotnik like this. It was as if his boss was talking about the most important thing in the world to him. Snively stood silently and waited for him to go on.

“The Chaos Emeralds, Snively,” Robotnik continued. “They are back!”

“Excuse my supreme ignorance, sir, back what are the Chaos Emeralds?” asked Snively.

“They are beautiful gems,” explained Robotnik. “Mysterious, the stuff of legends. They are also the greatest source of power on Mobius. But they are not really here *on* Mobius. The Chaos Emeralds exist in another dimension. This dimension occupies the same space as Mobius. Every so often the Chaos Emeralds cross over and appear in our dimension, right here inside the Great Forest on our planet.

“The trouble is, Snively, that it is impossible to know when they will appear. The ancient legend says that the emeralds are located on an island floating deep within a parallel dimension. According to the legend, this entire floating island moves back and forth between dimensions, bringing the Chaos Emeralds and their incredible power with it.”

“But how do you know they are back now, sir?” asked Snively, who didn't know what to make of all this.

“I can feel them, Snively,” replied Robotnik. “I am attuned to their energy. I know that they are back here in our dimension, somewhere in the Great Forest.

“They possess such awesome power that they can change the outcome of history. They can alter the future. If I can get my hands on the Chaos Emeralds, I will be able to construct a weapon so powerful that I could eliminate all opposition to my takeover of Mobius. I could easily wipe out all the so-called Freedom Fighters on Mobius in a

single stroke. And I could put an end to that meddling hedgehog forever!”

Robotnik walked quickly from his control room. “Snively!” he boomed, his voice filling the fortress. “Get me a team of SWATbots. I must go find the Chaos Emeralds!”