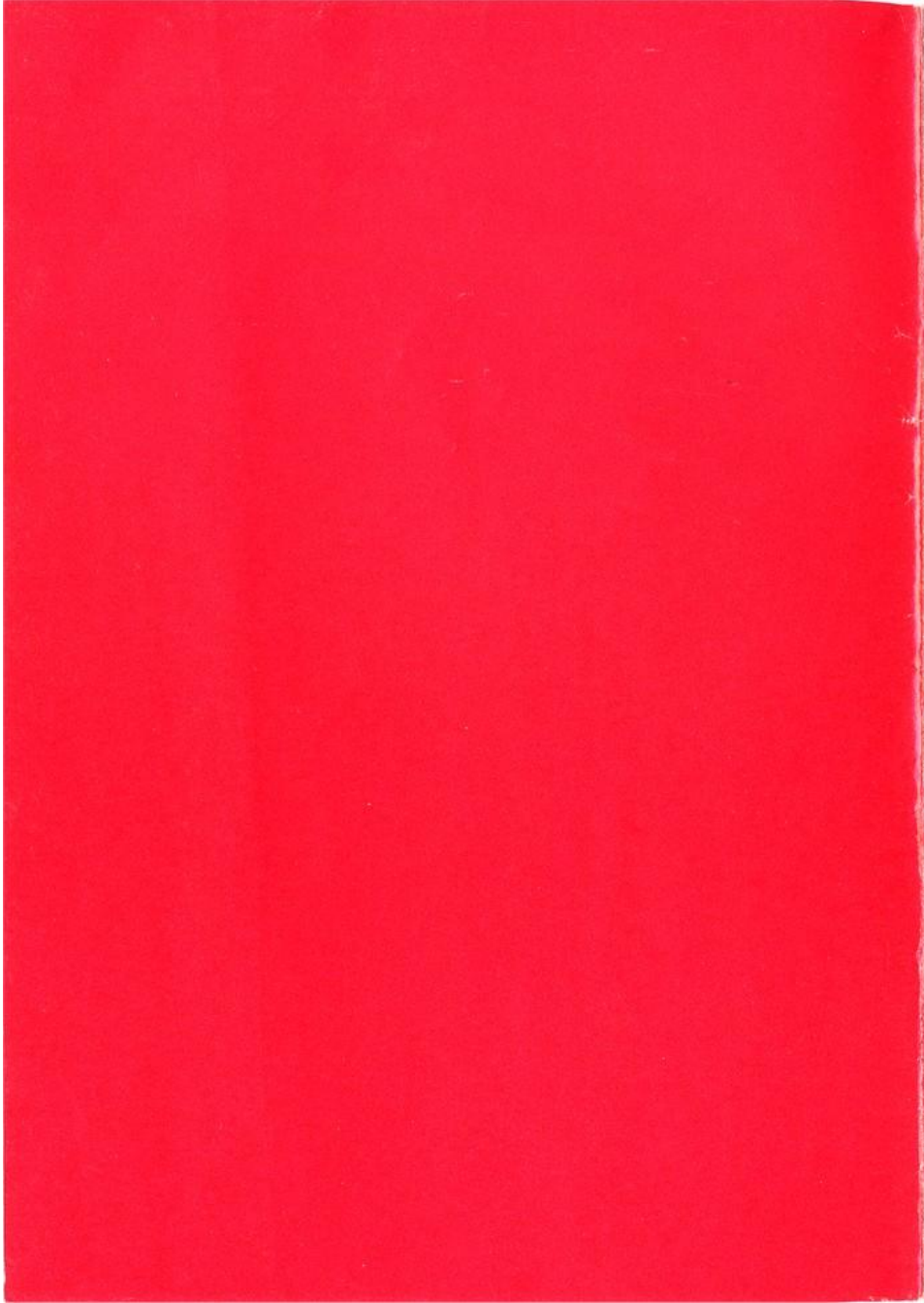




ATARI FORCE™





ATARI FORCE



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THE YEAR:
2005 AD.

THE PLACE: THE *NORTHCAL*
HEADQUARTERS OF THE ATARI
TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE,
IN THAT PART OF THE NORTH AMERICAN
CONTINENT THAT USED TO BE KNOWN AS
CALIFORNIA BEFORE THE 'BREAK-UP'...

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRUDER ALERT!

**THE SITUATION:
A WORLD IN CRISIS...**

SURE, AND THIS
LITTLE BUGGY'S
RADAR SHIELD
HAS DONE ITS
JOB WELL!

IT'S WITHIN
SHOUTING DISTANCE
OF YON FINE BUILDING
THAT
I AM, BUT NOT A PEEP
HAVE I HEARD FROM
THEIR SECURITY SCREENS!

I'LL BE
TAKING THEM
UNAWARES,
I THINK--

--AND AFTER
ALL, WASN'T THAT
THE PLAN?



ITS ENGINES MUFFLED
BY HIDDEN BAFFLES,
THE DARK-PAINTED
HOVERCRAFT SETTLES
SILENTLY INTO THE
SHADOWS OF A MOON-
LIT GROTTA...

THE LADS AT ATARI SECURITY
HAVE GROWN A MITE COCKY
WITH THEIR PRETTY WEAPONS
AND CLEVER SENSORS...

...AND TONIGHT,
I'M THINKING, IT'S
GOING TO COST
THEM DEAR.

AHH, BUT IT'S A
SAD THING THAT
THEY'VE SO
SOON FORGOTTEN
THE LESSONS OF
THE FIVE DAY WAR!

ALMOST, IT'S ENOUGH
TO MAKE MY HEART
BLEED.

SURE, IT'S A
RUDE AWAKENING
THAT AWAITS
THEM.

I THINK I'LL
LET THEM
SLEEP A
WHILE
LONGER.

AND THERE THEY BE,
LIKE DREAMING
BABES.

WITH THE IMAGE INTENSI-
FIER BUILT INTO MY
GOGGLES, I'M SEEING
THEM CLEAR AS A
BRIGHT SUMMER MORN
IN COUNTY KERRY...

"... AND THE POOR DARLINGS DON'T EVEN KNOW THEY'RE BEING WATCHED."

DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET USED TO THE SOUND OF THAT FORCE FIELD.

BLASTED THING MAKES MY TEETH ACHE.

ULTRA-FREQUENCY SONICS... THEY'RE A KILLER, ALL RIGHT.

YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN THE GUARD-DOGS, THE NIGHT WE FIRST TURNED IT ON.

THE DOGS COULDN'T STAND IT-- THEY STARTED HOWLING AS SOON AS THE FIELD WENT UP, AND DIDN'T STOP TILL WE SHUT IT DOWN NEXT MORNING.

NOW WE WALK PATROL WITHOUT THE DOGS... AND I MISS 'EM.

CHECKPOINT DELTA REPORTING TO BASE SECURITY...



... ALL CLEAR
AT THE
PERIMETER.

IT'S A NICE NIGHT, TOO
BAD YOU FOLKS DOWN
IN THE PIT CAN'T JOIN US.

LET'S LEAVE THE
SLANG BACK IN THE
DORMS, DELTA
CHECKPOINT.

WE DON'T CALL IT
"THE PIT" - PROPER
TERMINOLOGY IS SECURITY
BASE STATION, SUB-
LEVEL SEVEN.

BUT THANKS
FOR THE
THOUGHT.

ROGER,
BASE SECURITY.
CHECKPOINT DELTA,
SIGNING OUT.

IT IS A
BEAUTIFUL
NIGHT UP
THERE,
CAPTAIN.

I ALMOST
WISH...

SO DO
WE ALL,
SON.

BUT THE WAR
LEFT THINGS PRETTY
UNSETTLED,
OUTSIDE.

WE HAVE
TO BE ON
GUARD
CONSTANTLY.

LET'S
HOPE THOSE
MEN
REMEMBER
THAT...

"BECAUSE, IF
THEY SLACK
OFF--"

"--IT
COULD
MEAN
DISASTER!"

WHAT
THE--?

LESSON ONE IN
GUERRILLA WARFARE
TACTICS: GRAB THE
INITIATIVE AND
KEEP IT--

--BECAUSE,
IF YOU LET IT SLIP--

WHAK!

KTHUNK!

--YOU'RE
FINISHED!



IN "THE PIT" (OR, IF YOU PREFER,
SECURITY BASE STATION, SUB-
LEVEL SEVEN)...

BEEP BEEP

CAPTAIN--
WE'VE GOT A
FIELD BREAK
AT CHECKPOINT
DELTA!

NO...NO, THAT'S
FUNNY...

PROBABLY JUST A
MOMENTARY POWER
SURGE.

SENSORS SHOW
THE BREAK
CLOSED BY
ITSELF.

KEEP AN EYE OPEN
TO SEE IF IT
REPEATS.

NO ALARMS...
NO EXTRA GUARDS
ON THE PROWL...!

I'D CALL IT THE
LUCK OF THE IRISH--
BUT I'M NOT A
WOMAN TO BELIEVE
IN LUCK!

NOW IT'S TIME
TO BE TAKING THE
NEXT STEP.

FOR WEEKS, THERE'VE
BEEN RUMORS OF A
TOP SECRET OPERATION
CALLED PROJECT: MULTIVERSE
A'WORKING DOWN IN
SUB-LEVEL SEVENTEEN.

THAT'S
WHERE I'LL
BE HEADING...

...AND PITY
ANYONE WHO TRIES
TO STOP ME!




AND, AS THE MYSTERIOUS
GAELIC ACCENT MAKES HEAD-
QUARTERS COMPOUND
NEW SCENE, 40,000 KIL-

THE PLACE: ATARI SOLAR
SATELLITE STATION ONE,
DESIGNED TO BRING THE SUN'S
ENERGY TO A FUEL-STARVED
WORLD.

EASY WITH
THAT ELECTRIC
TORCH, LANSKY.

WE'RE TRYING TO WELD THESE PANELS TOGETHER--NOT MELT THEM TO SLAG!



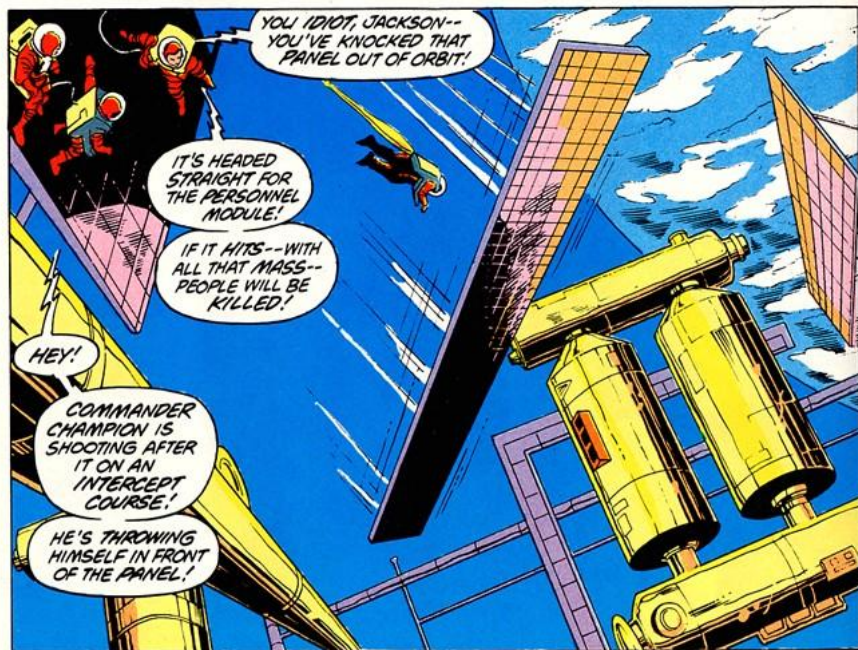


THE MAN: MARTIN
CHAMPION, COMMANDER
OF STATION ONE AND
CHIEF TROUBLESHOOTER
FOR ATARI INSTITUTE...

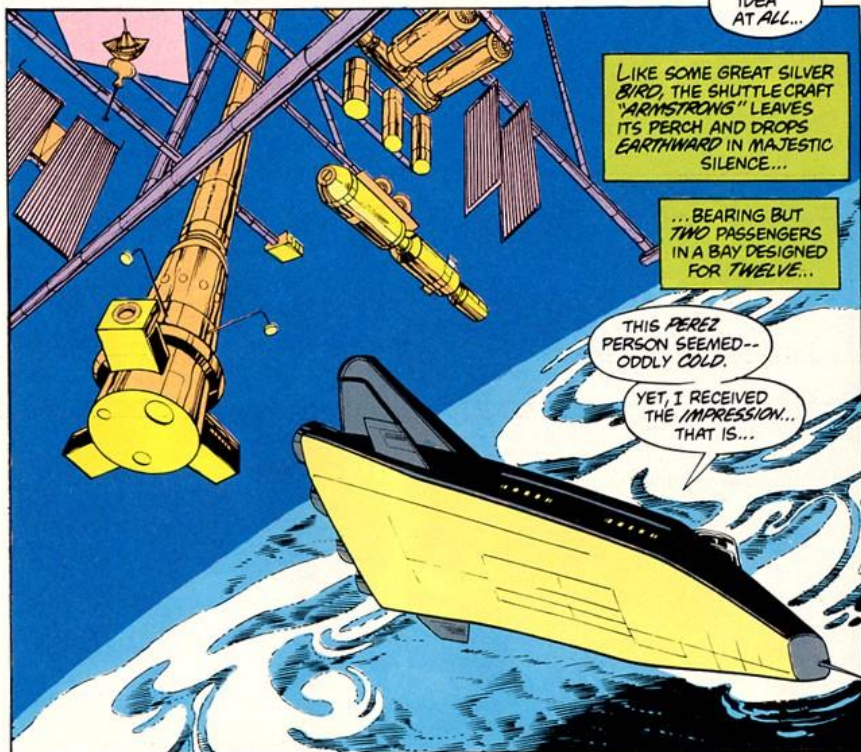
SURE THING,
COMMANDER.

GUESS I'M
STILL NOT USED
TO WEIGHTLESS
CONSTRUCTION
WORK.

REBUILDING
THE GOLDEN
GATE WAS A
WHOLE LOT
SIMPLER
THAN THIS!









...IT SEEMED
AS IF THE TWO OF
YOU *KNEW*
EACH OTHER.

IS SHE A FRIEND
OF YOURS, MARTIN?

I ALWAYS *THOUGHT*
SO, LUCAS... BUT NOW,
I'M NOT SO SURE.

IT'S BEEN
YEARS SINCE
I SAW HER.

WE MET SEVEN
YEARS AGO, HERE
IN EARTH-ORBIT.
YOU REMEMBER
THAT DAY...



...OCTOBER 18,
1998...



"...THE DAY ALL
HELL BROKE
LOOSE ON THE
MOON!"

"NASA--REMEMBER
NASA?--HAD ESTAB-
LISHED THE FIRST LUNAR
COLONY SIX MONTHS
BEFORE, AND USING A
MASS ACCELERATOR,
THE COLONY WAS JUST STARTING
TO EXPORT BUILDING MATERIALS
TO NEAR-EARTH ORBIT..."

"IT WAS A PRIMITIVE LITTLE
COLONY, NO MORE THAN TWO
DOZEN PERSONNEL ON SITE...
BUT IT WAS THRIVING..."

"... AND SOMEONE AMONG
OUR ENEMIES DECIDED IT
WAS THRIVING TOO WELL..."

CHAPTER TWO:

DEADLY ORBIT



"IT TOOK NASA SIX MONTHS OF BACK-BREAKING EFFORT TO ESTABLISH MAN'S FIRST TENTATIVE FOOTHOLD ON THE MOON."

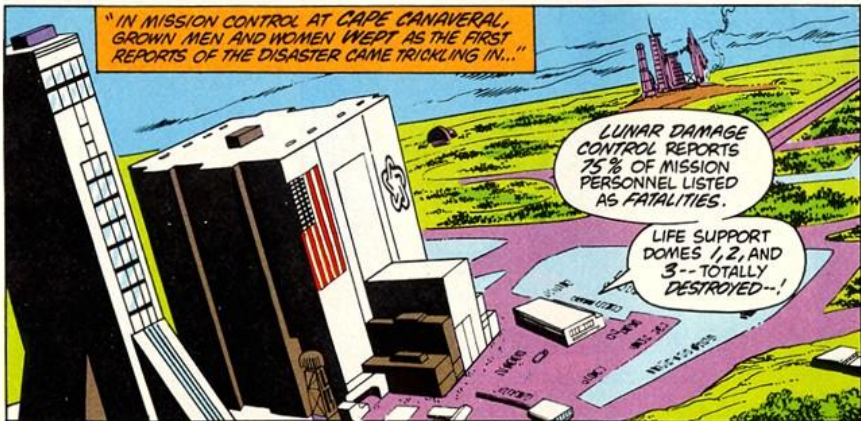
"AND IT TOOK SOMEONE ELSE JUST SIX SECONDS TO KNOCK THAT FOOTHOLD LOOSE."



"IN MISSION CONTROL AT CAPE CANAVERAL, GROWN MEN AND WOMEN WHEED AS THE FIRST REPORTS OF THE DISASTER CAME TRICKLING IN..."

LUNAR DAMAGE
CONTROL REPORTS
75% OF MISSION
PERSONNEL LISTED
AS FATALITIES.

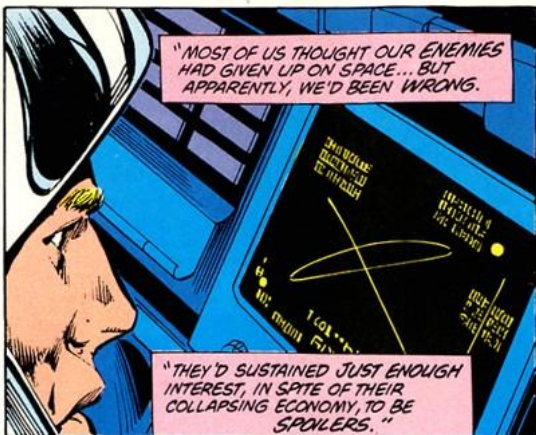
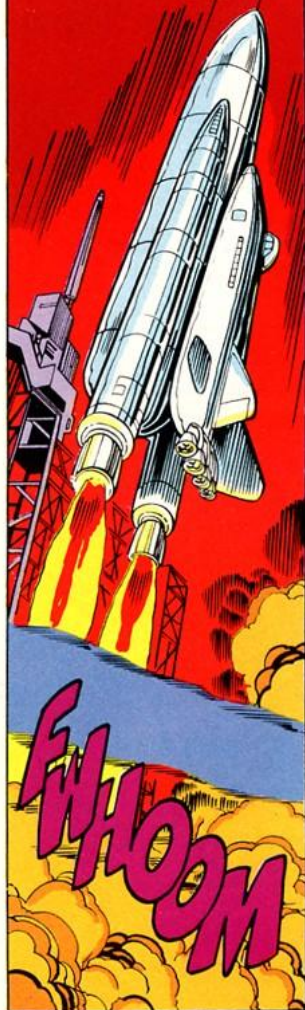
LIFE SUPPORT
DOMES 1, 2, AND
3--TOTALLY
DESTROYED--!





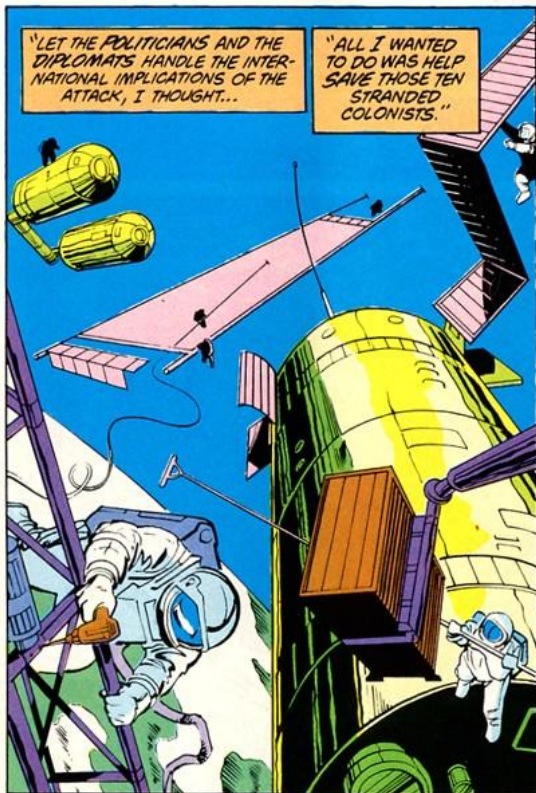
"'EXPERIENCE' IS RELATIVE. I'D BEEN TO THE MOON FOUR TIMES SINCE THE U.S. SPACE PROGRAM STARTED UP AGAIN, FULL BORE, IN THE MIDDLE 1990S..."

"...BUT NOBODY ELSE HAD COMMANDED A LUNAR MISSION MORE THAN TWICE."



"MOST OF US THOUGHT OUR ENEMIES HAD GIVEN UP ON SPACE... BUT APPARENTLY, WE'D BEEN WRONG."

"THEY'D SUSTAINED JUST ENOUGH INTEREST, IN SPITE OF THEIR COLLAPSING ECONOMY, TO BE SPOILERS."



"LET THE POLITICIANS AND THE DIPLOMATS HANDLE THE INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATTACK, I THOUGHT..."

"ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS HELP SAVE THOSE TEN STRANDED COLONISTS."



THIS GUY
PEREZ
WORKS FAST!

HE'S TAKEN A SOLAR
PANEL PLATFORM--
WELDED ON A SET OF
BOOSTER-ROCKETS--
AND A COMMAND
MODULE--

-- STRUNG THE
WHOLE THING WITH
OXYGEN TANKS LIKE
ORNAMENTS ON A
CHRISTMAS TREE--

-- AND FINISHED
THE ENTIRE JOB IN
LESS THAN FIVE
HOURS!



--WHO CARES
HOW IT
LOOKS?

HUIH? PEREZ...
YOU'RE A
WOMAN!

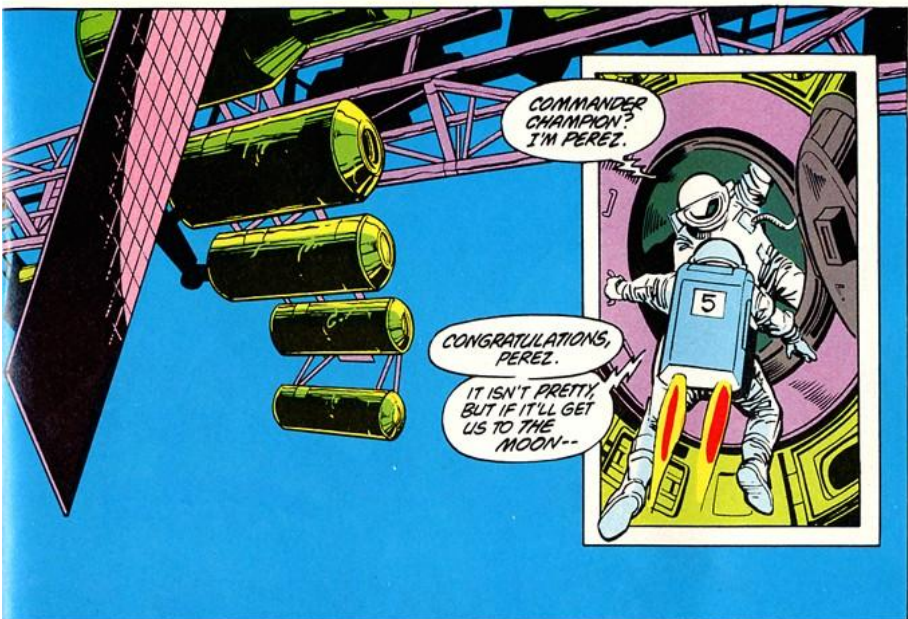
SO WAS
MY MOTHER.

STRAP IN,
COMMANDER--



--WE'LL BE
LEAVING EARTH
ORBIT AS SOON
AS THE NAV
COMPUTER
COMES UP WITH
A MISSION
TRAJECTORY.

LOOK, I DIDN'T
MEAN TO--
FORGET IT.



COMMANDER
CHAMPION?
I'M PEREZ.

CONGRATULATIONS,
PEREZ.

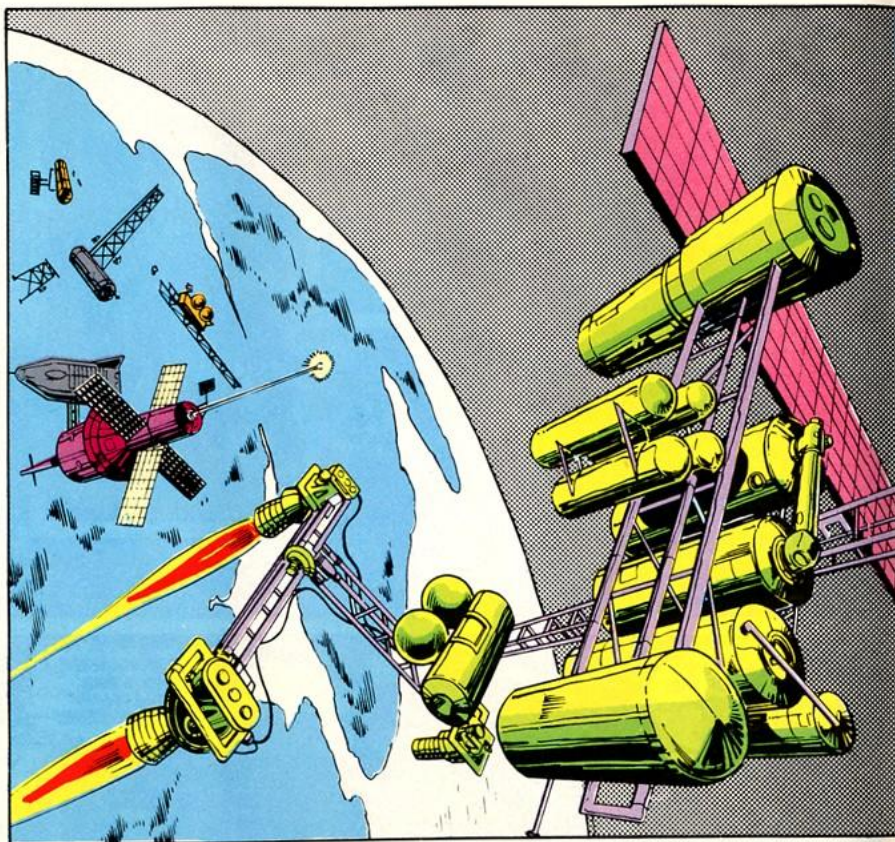
IT ISN'T PRETTY,
BUT IF IT'LL GET
US TO THE
MOON--

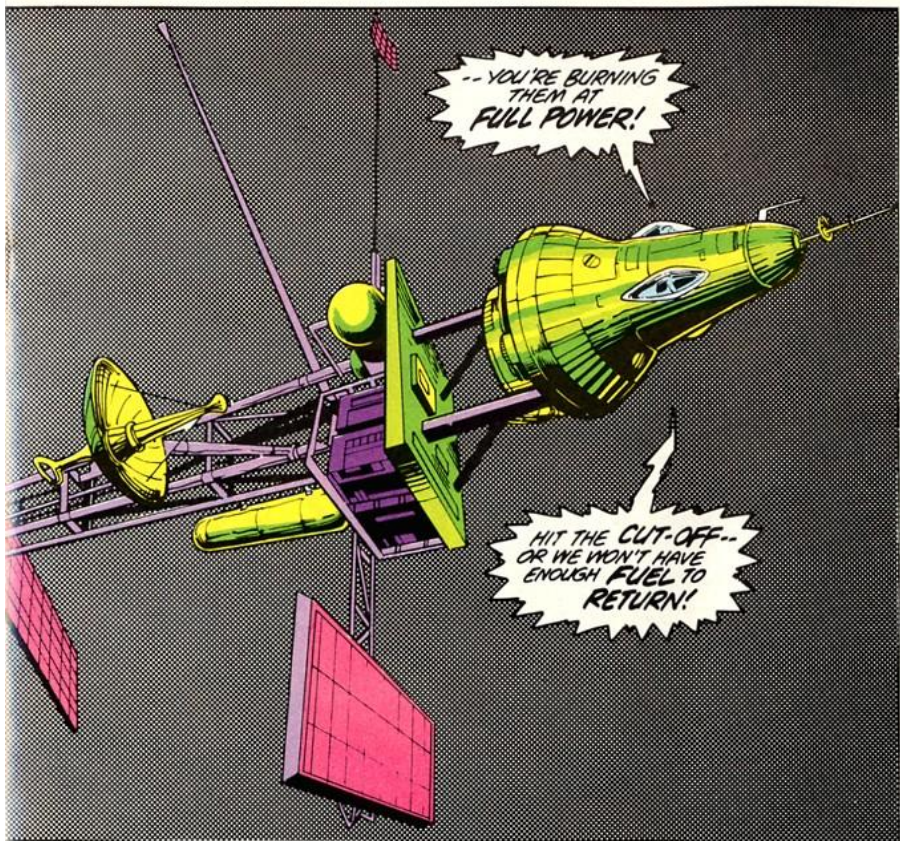


AND FORGET
WAITING FOR THE
NAV COMPUTER
TO FINISH ITS
PROGRAM.

WE'RE
BREAKING
ORBIT RIGHT
NOW!

COMMANDER--
THOSE ARE
THE MAIN
THRUSTERS--

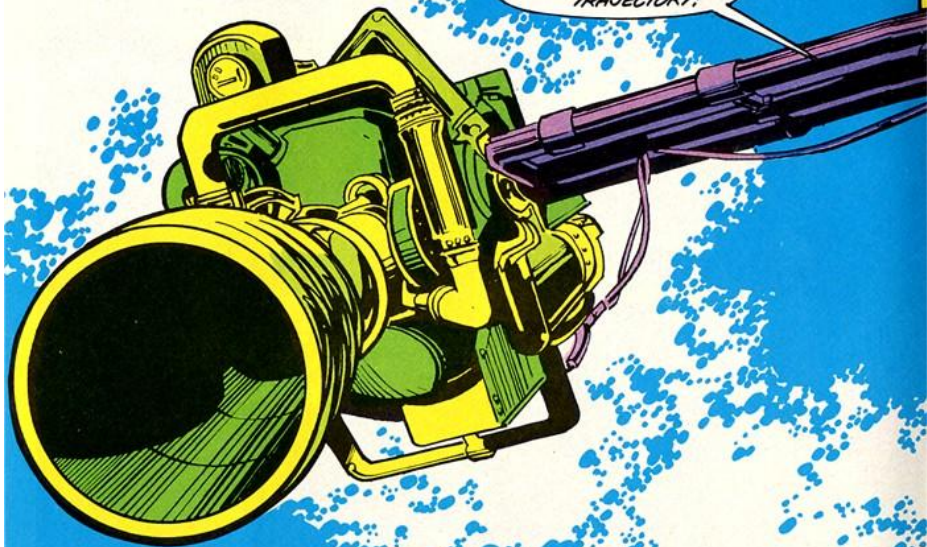




IF WE'RE EVEN A FEW SECONDS LATE, WE'VE LOST THE RACE AGAINST TIME-- AND THOSE PEOPLE UP THERE WILL BE DEAD!

REMEMBER, PEREZ, I'VE "FLOWN" THIS ROUTE BEFORE--THE NAV COMPUTER CAN PLOT OUR COURSE AS EASILY IN FLIGHT AS BEFORE FLIGHT--

--AND RIGHT NOW, TIME IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN A PRE-PLANNED TRAJECTORY!



WE'LL USE THE MOON'S GRAVITY TO SLOW US DOWN.

MAYBE WE'LL HAVE A HARD LANDING--AND MAYBE WE'LL FAIL--

--BUT WE'LL HAVE GIVEN IT OUR BEST SHOT.

AND, PEREZ--

MY NAME IS MARTIN.



BUT, CHAMPION,
WITHOUT THE NECESSARY
FUEL--

--HOW CAN WE
BRAKE OUR
VELOCITY TO
LAND?

...

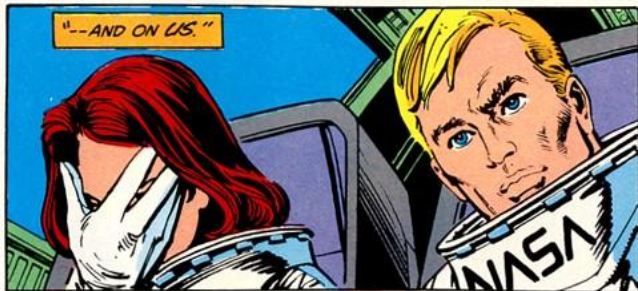
LYDIA.

APOLOGY
ACCEPTED.

"MISSION CONTROL RELAYED REPORTS FROM THE COLONY...THINGS WERE GETTING BAD AS THE AIR TURNED FOUL.. FIGHTS BROKE OUT ...A MAN WENT SCREAMING MAD FROM CLAUSTROPHOBIA... AND EVERY HOUR THAT PASSED INCREASED THE PRESSURE ON THEM--



"--AND ON US."



"THEN, ON THE MORNING
OF THE THIRD DAY, WE
LOOKED THROUGH THE
VIEWPORT--

"-- AND THERE
IT WAS."

"LUNAR RESCUE
TEAM, THIS IS MISSION
CONTROL. WE'VE JUST
LOST RADIO CONTACT
WITH LUNAR BASE."

"COMPUTER PROJECTIONS
INDICATE--A 95%
PROBABILITY--THAT IT'S
ALL OVER."

"YOUR MISSION
IS SCRUBBED.
STAY IN LUNAR ORBIT
UNTIL A PROPER
RELIEF SHIP CAN--"

NEGATIVE,
MISSION CONTROL

WE DIDN'T COME
THIS FAR TO QUIT
WITHOUT TRYING
FOR A
TOUCHDOWN!

"CHAMPION! THIS IS DIRECTOR LASKY! DON'T BE A FOOL-- RISKING YOUR LIVES WHEN THERE'S SO LITTLE HOPE!"

"I'M ORDERING YOU TO--
SKWAARK!"

SO MUCH FOR MISSION CONTROL.

WE CAN'T HEAR THEM AS WE SWING AROUND LUNAR DARKSIDE.

ANY RESERVATIONS, PEREZ?

NONE. YOU'RE PILOTING THIS JUNKPILE, CHAMPION.

GO FOR IT!

"--IT WAS TIME TO BRING THAT BABY DOWN!"

"ONCE... TWICE... HALF A DOZEN
TIMES, WE CIRCLED THE MOON,
AND WITH EACH ORBIT WE DROPPED
LOWER, SLOWING OUR DESCENT
WITH A COMBINATION OF GRAVITY
AND DYING RETRO-ROCKETS..."

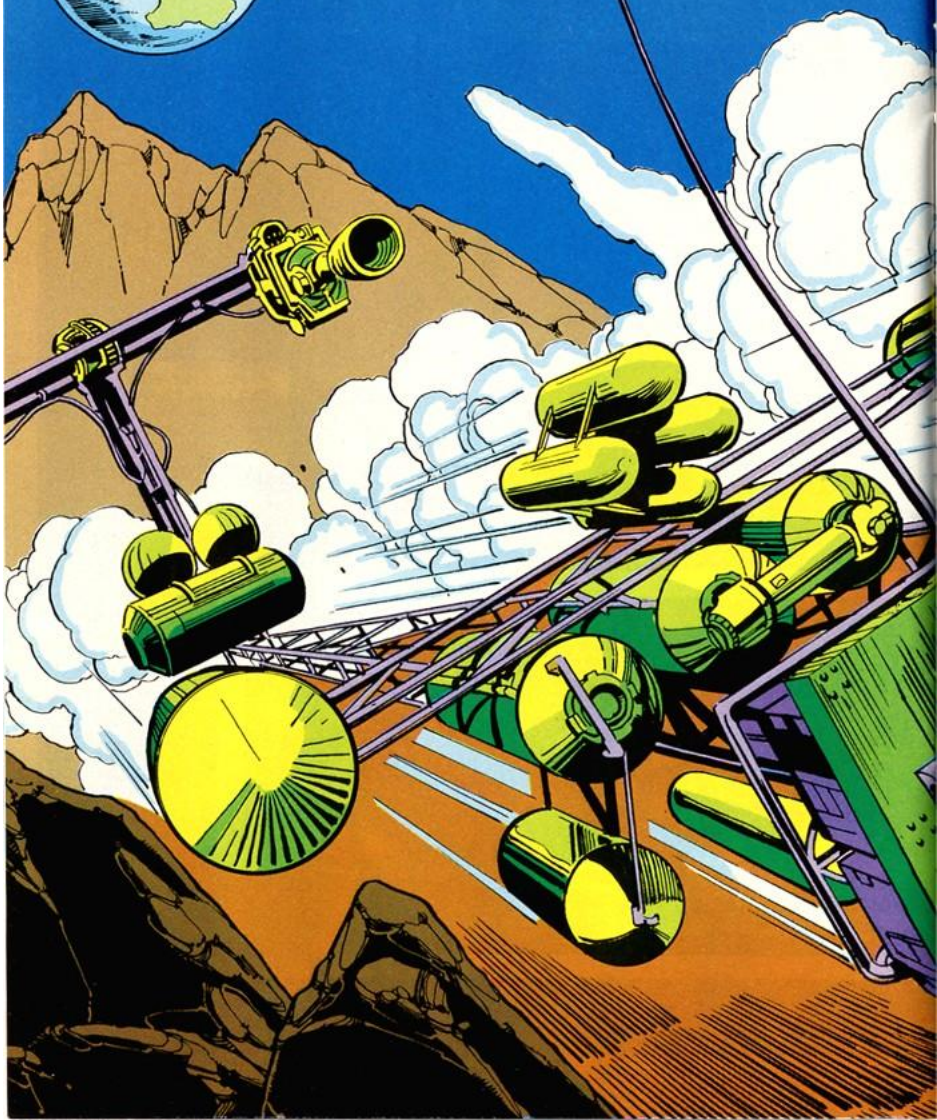
"FINALLY, WE WERE
TOO LOW TO MAKE
ANOTHER ORBIT...
AND, LIKE IT OR
NOT--"

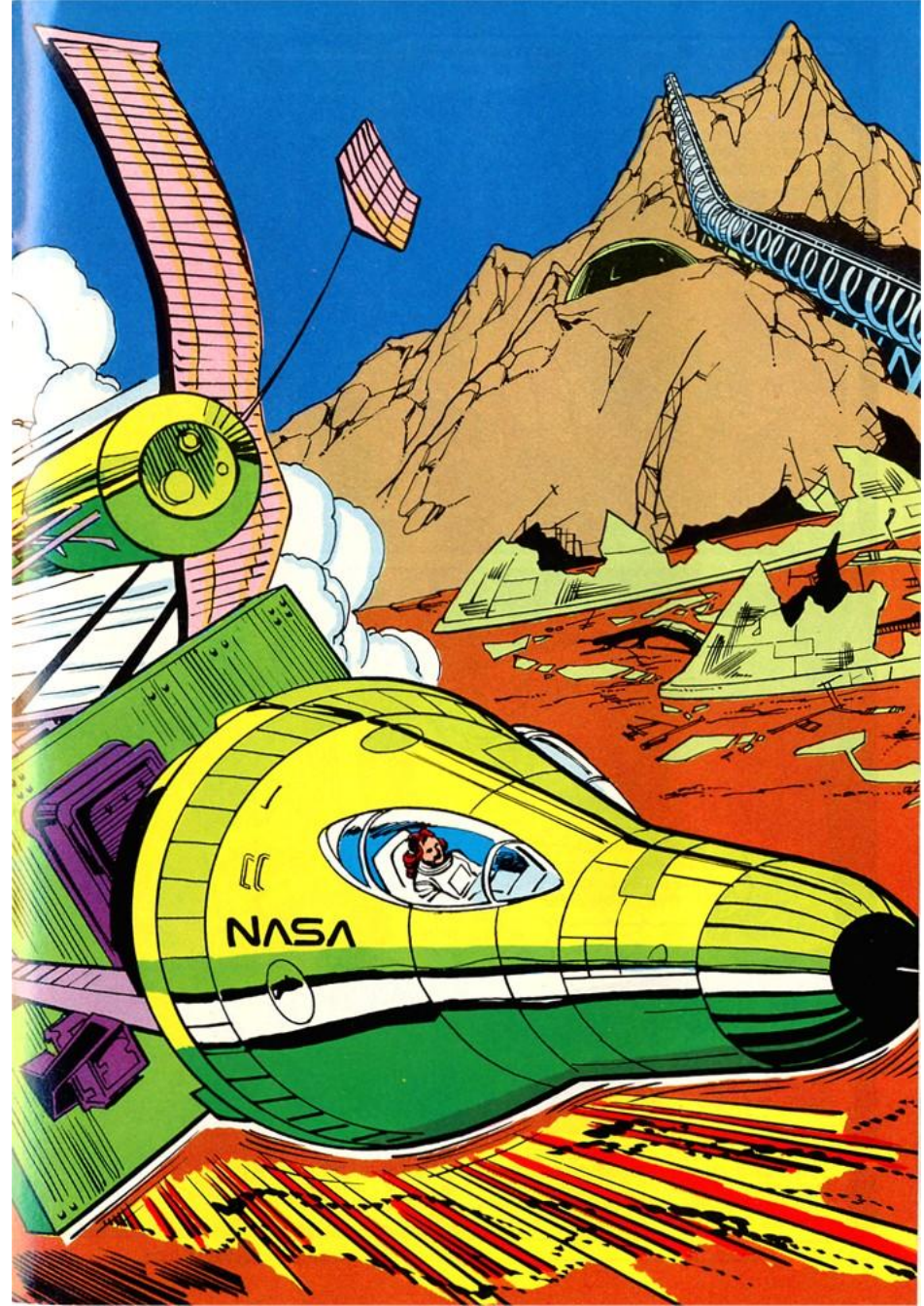




"I DON'T THINK
MY HEART STOPPED--

"--BUT IT SURE
AS HELL MISSED
A BEAT!"





CHAMPION, YOU'RE CERTIFIABLE--BUT YOU'RE ALSO ONE HECK OF A PILOT.

PEREZ, AS A HERO OF MINE ONCE SAID--

"THIS MAY BE THE START OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP"

ONCE I GET LOOSE OF THESE STRAPS, I'M GOING TO KISS YOU.

AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT AT THE TIME.

A FEW DAYS LATER--WHILE WE WERE WAITING WITH THE LUNAR COLONISTS FOR A RESCUE SHIP TO ARRIVE--THE WAR STARTED.

NASA MANAGED TO PROVE WHICH OF OUR ENEMIES TRIED TO WIPE OUT THAT MOON BASE--

--AND THAT LED TO A WORLD-WIDE SHOOT-OUT!

THE EARTH LYDIA AND I CAME HOME TO WASN'T THE SAME ONE WE'D LEFT.

WE LOST TRACK OF EACH OTHER AFTERWARD, DURING THE BREAK-UP... AND LIKE SOME OTHERS, WE BOTH ENDED UP WORKING FOR THE ATARI INSTITUTE, WHEN THINGS FINALLY SETTLED DOWN.

IT'S BEEN SEVEN YEARS SINCE I LAST SAW HER... WHY WAS SHE SO COLD?

CHAPTER THREE:

FINAL APPROACH

"ATARI CONTROL,
WE'RE IN THE
GLIDE PATH."

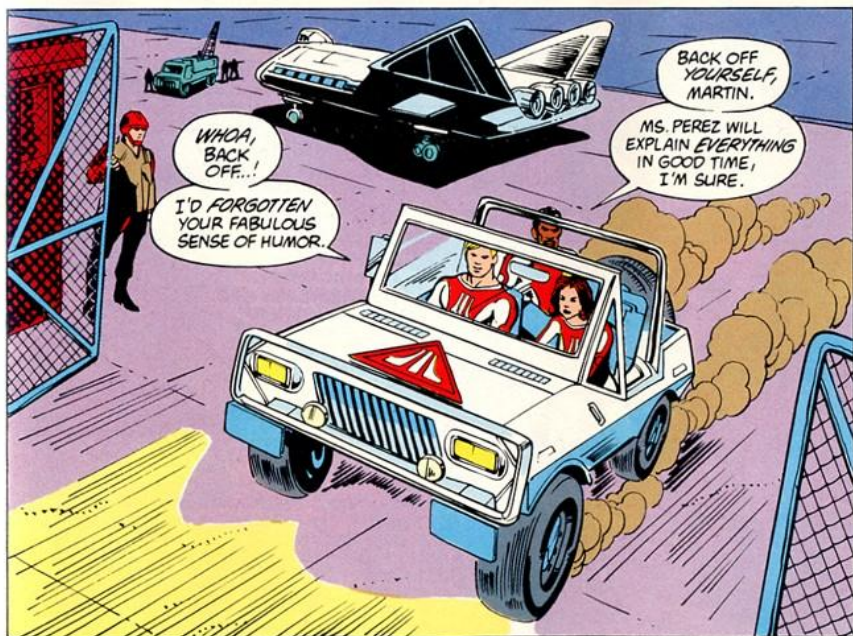
"ESTIMATED
TOUCHDOWN AT
2202:00:00."


"ROGER,
SHUTTLE EIGHT.
YOU'RE RIGHT
ON THE BUTTON."

"INFORM YOUR PASSENGERS
THAT ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
PEREZ WILL BE ON THE PAD
WITH A TRANSPORT VEHICLE
WHEN THEY DEBARK."

"ATARI
CONTROL--
OUT!"







IT'S NOT MY
PLACE TO
EXPLAIN,
DOCTOR.

THAT'S UP TO THE
DIRECTOR-- HE'S BEEN IN
COMMAND OF **PROJECT:
MULTIVERSE** FROM THE
BEGINNING. I WAS ONLY
BROUGHT IN ON THE DESIGN
END SIX MONTHS AGO.

BUT I *CAN* TELL YOU
THIS... SINCE *THE WAR*, WE'VE
SEARCHED FOR A SOLUTION
TO THE WORLD **FOOD
SHORTAGE**...

...AND WITH **PROJECT:
MULTIVERSE**, WE MAY HAVE
FOUND THE SOLUTION TO
THAT, AND A WHOLE HOST
OF OTHER POTENTIAL
DISASTERS!

LUCAS ORIN LISTENS WITH ONLY *HALF-ATTENTION*: THE MENTION OF *THE WAR*, AND THE SIGHT OF *THE RUNNERS* WHO JOG HOMEWARD ALONG THIS ABANDONED STRETCH OF HIGHWAY, HAVE STIRRED MEMORIES HE THOUGHT WERE DEEPLY BURIED...

... MEMORIES OF A DAY SIX YEARS IN THE PAST, DURING THE DARK MONTHS OF THE BREAK-UP, THAT PROLONGED PERIOD OF WORLD-WIDE CHAOS WHICH FOLLOWED ON THE HEELS OF THE WAR...

***RUNNING
FIGURES:***

THE RUNNERS OF HIS MEMORY WERE REFUGEES, FLEEING A BLOODY CIVIL WAR IN THE HEART OF A ONCE-STABLE AFRICAN STATE.

LUCAS ORION WAS A MEDIC ATTACHED TO A UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING FORCE... THE LAST SUCH "PEACE-KEEPING" FORCE THAT DYING ORGANIZATION WAS EVER TO SPONSOR.

DEAR HEAVEN--THIS IS THE FOURTH BURNING VILLAGE WE'VE PASSED THIS MORNING!

WHEN IS THE FIGHTING GOING TO STOP?

WHEN THE LAST MAN DROPS DEAD, DOC, AND THE WHOLE WORLD IS--

HE DIDN'T EVEN
FEEL THE BLAST.

AFTERWARD, HE
REALIZED THEIR
JEEP MUST
HAVE BEEN
STRUCK BY
A MORTAR
SHELL.

THE CONCUSSION LIFTED HIM
INTO THE AIR LIKE A STUFFED
TOY... BUT SOMEHOW, HE
SURVIVED WITHOUT A SCRATCH.

WHAM

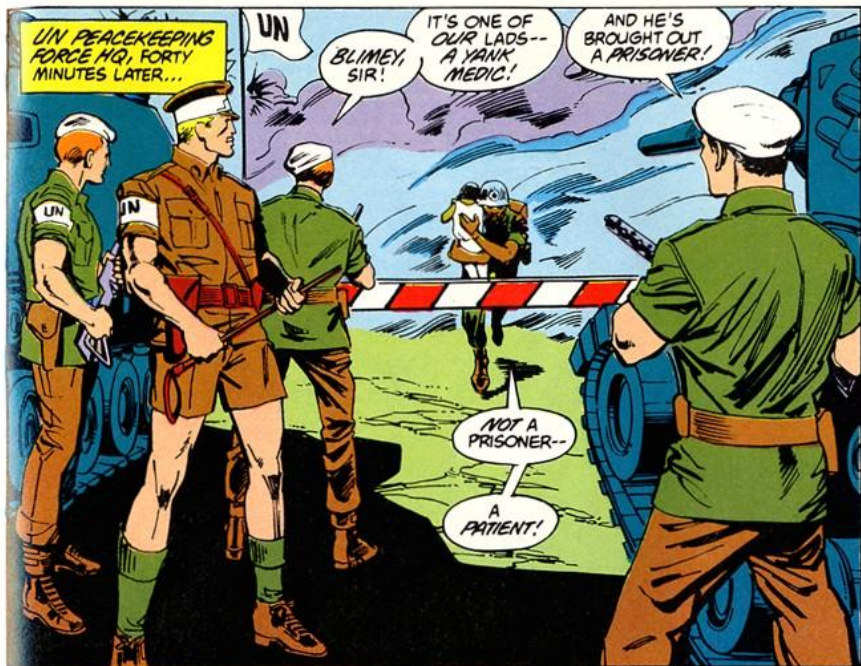
HIS DRIVER
WASN'T AS
LUCKY...

LUCAS MIGHT HAVE STAYED THERE,
HUNCHED OVER IN SHOCK, WITH-
DRAWING FURTHER AND FURTHER
FROM REALITY... BUT THEN HE
HEARD A SMALL VOICE, CRYING...

WAAAA









AND SO, THE NIGHTMARE CONTINUED, AS THE PEACEKEEPERS WAGED A BLOODY PEACE THAT SEEMED WORSE THAN WAR ITSELF.

LUCAS SPENT HIS DAYS BATTLING THE RAVAGES OF A DISEASE AS OLD AS CAIN AND ABEL--



--AND HIS NIGHTS FIGHTING THE MORE PERSONAL RAVAGES OF DESPAIR:

I CAN'T GO ON. IT'S INSANITY, BEING A PART OF THIS.

WHEN I VOLUNTEERED FOR THE UN MEDICAL CORPS, IT WAS A WAY TO SERVE HUMANITY.



INSTEAD, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, I FEEL AS IF I'M AIDING HUMANITY'S ENEMIES.

I HEAL MEN SO THEY CAN DIE.

NO MORE. NO MORE.

PERHAPS IT'S FATE
THAT THIS CAME
TODAY.

A NEW BEGINNING
...NEW HOPES,
NEW DREAMS...

UNITED NATIONS
SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE
TO: DR. LUCAS ORION
% UN FORCE X320
FROM: ATARI
INSTITUTE
SUNNYVALE, CA.
DEAR DR. ORION:
BECAUSE OF EXPANDED RESPONSIBILITIES
DUE TO THE BREAK-UP OF TRADITIONAL
POLITICAL-NATION-STATES, ATARI INSTITUTE
IS ASSUMING CONTROL OF NASA AND THE
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE. STOP. YOUR
OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC RECORD LEADS
US TO OFFER YOU A POSITION AS
MEDICAL RESEARCH

...PERHAPS EVEN
A NEW FUTURE FOR
ALL HUMANKIND.

ATARI
INSTITUTE
WANTS TO MAKE
ME THEIR
DIRECTOR OF
MEDICAL
RESEARCH.

I COULD
LEAVE ALL
THIS BEHIND.

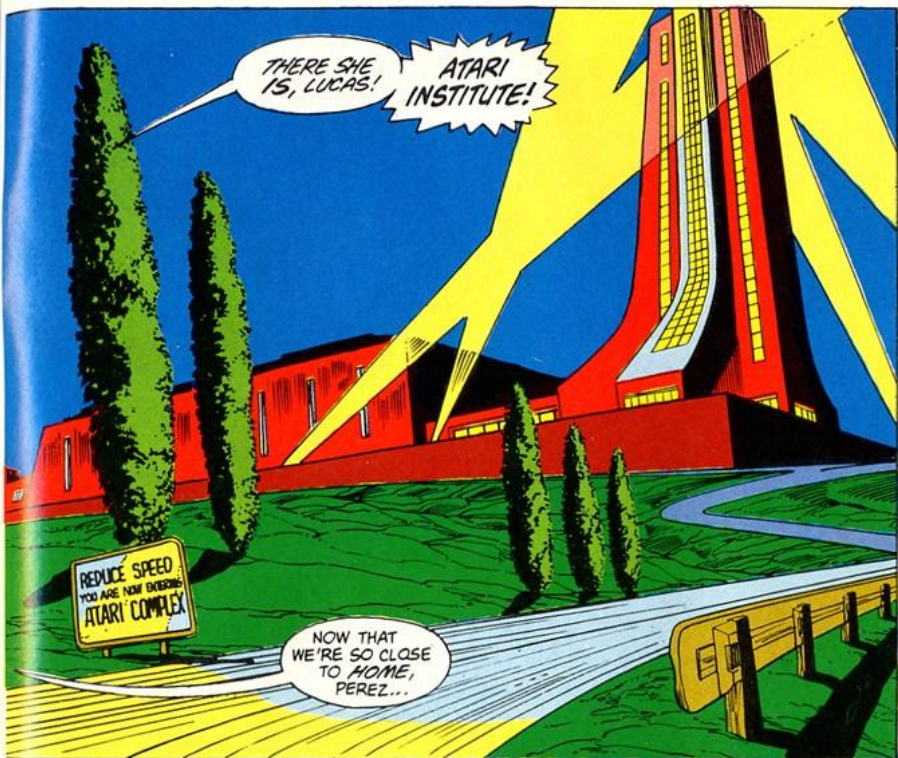
AND THAT'S
WHAT I WANT,
ISN'T IT?

ISN'T
IT...?

THE STARS HAD
NO ANSWER FOR
LUCAS ORION,
THAT NIGHT...

...AND NOW, SIX
YEARS LATER,
THEY ARE AS
CRYPTIC AS
EVER.









-- BUT IT'S CLEAR
THE LADS IN SECURITY
HAVEN'T A NOTION
THAT ANYTHING'S
WRONG!

AYE, THIS
SENSOR-DETECTOR
TELLS THE TALE--

--AND WHAT
A WOEFUL
TALE 'TIS!

A MERE SLIP
OF A GIRL HAS
PENETRATED THE
TIGHTEST SECURITY
SYSTEM IN ALL
NORTHICAL, LAYING
BARE ITS GREATEST
SECRET FOR THE
PLUNDERING--

-- AND NOT A MAN OR
WOMAN IN THE ENTIRE
ATARI COMPLEX EVEN
SUSPECTS I'M HERE!

TO BE CONTINUED

SEE ATARI'S "BERZERK!"
GAME CARTRIDGE
FOR THE STARTLING
CONCLUSION OF
"ATARI FORCE--
THE ORIGIN!"



**THE EXCITEMENT
IS JUST
BEGINNING!**

**DC AND ATARI
PROUDLY PRESENT
THE FURTHER EPIC
ADVENTURES OF**

ATARI FORCE

**IN FREE BONUS COMICS
AVAILABLE ONLY
IN SPECIALLY-MARKED
CARTRIDGES FOR ATARI'S
VIDEO COMPUTER SYSTEM!**

WATCH FOR

ATARI FORCE 2 in BERZERK*

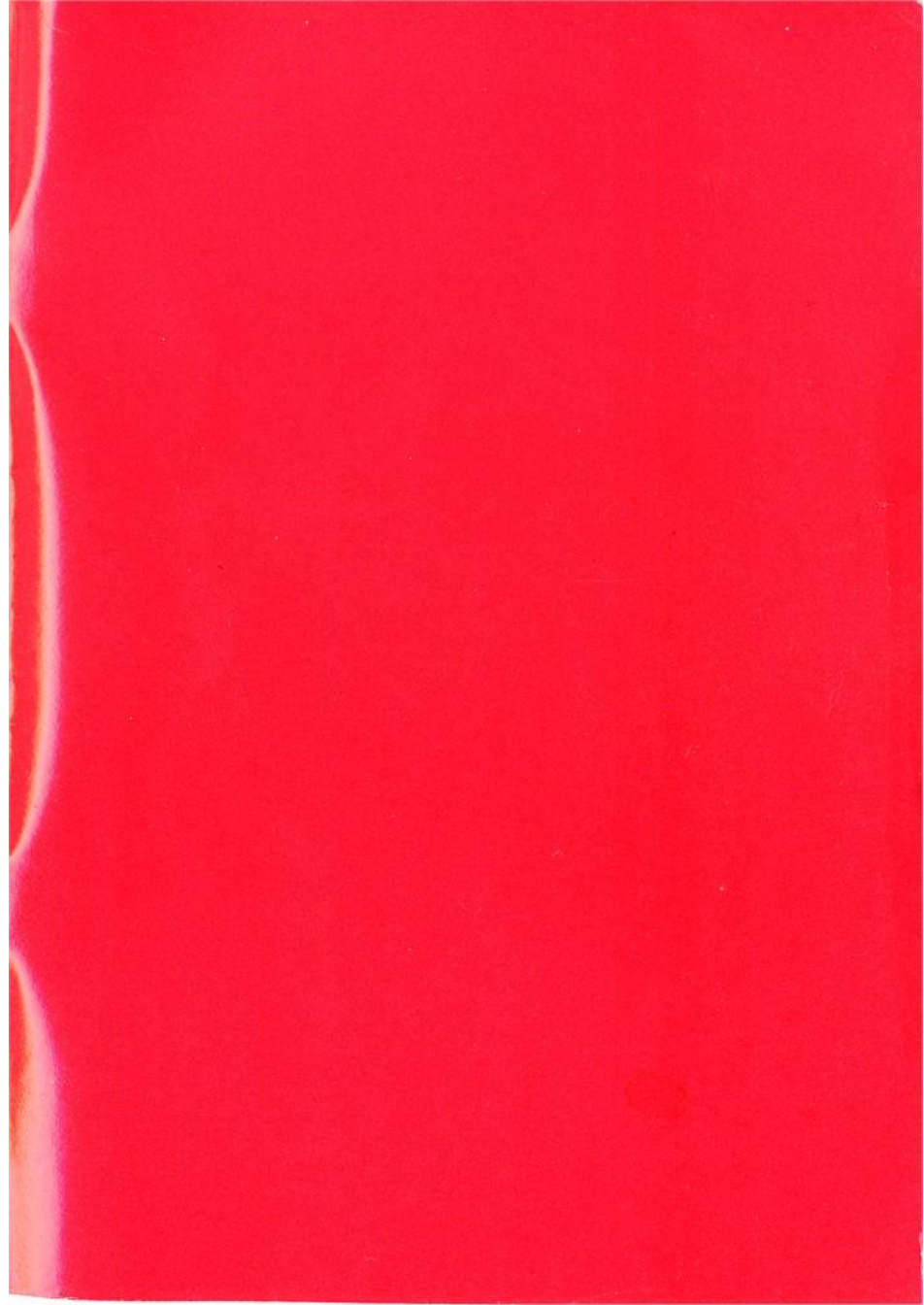
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