

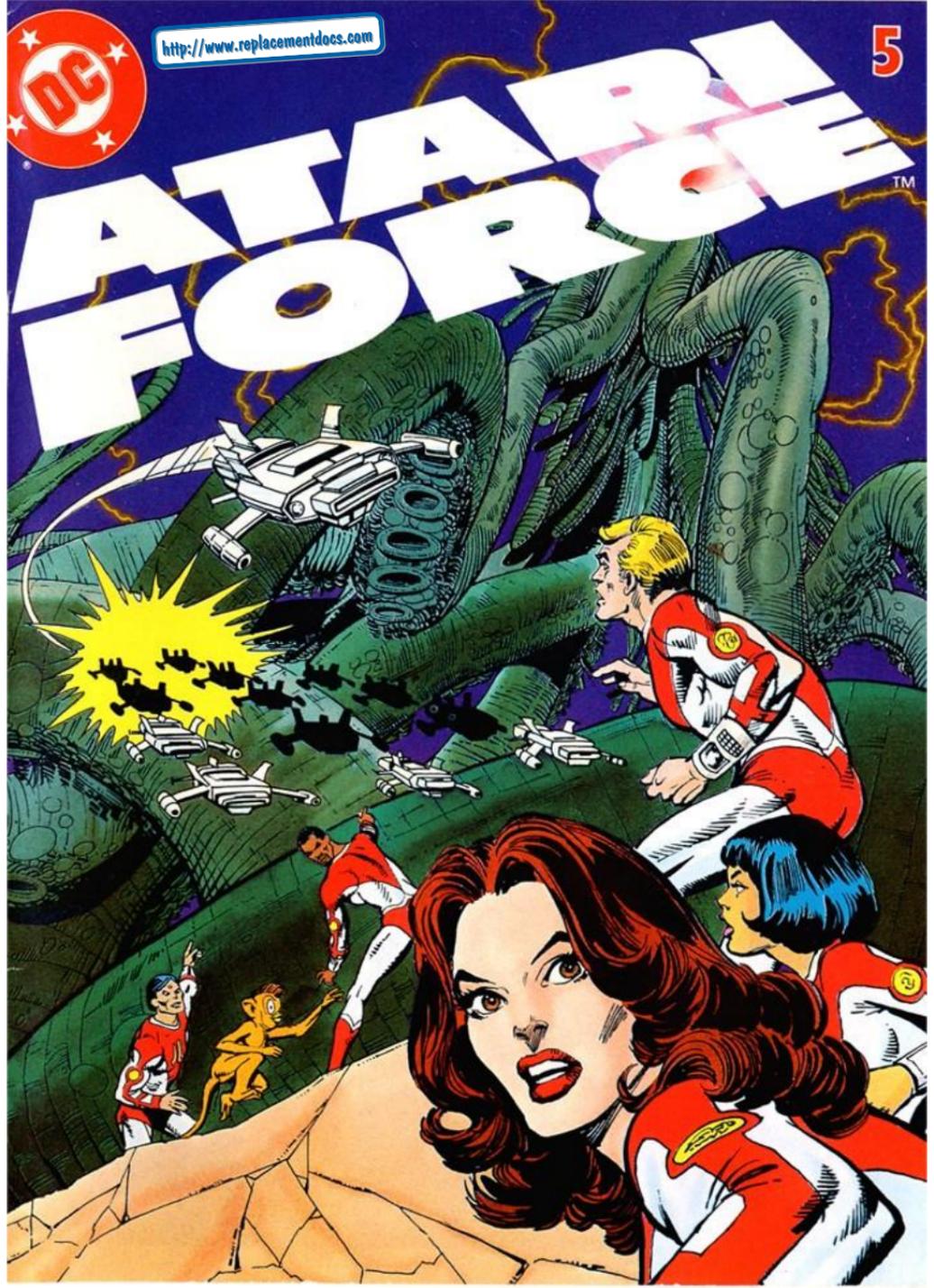


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ATARI FORCE

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ATARI FORCE

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FIVE BRAVE EXPLORERS, WANDERING THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF THE MULTIVERSE, SEEKING A NEW HOME FOR EARTH'S WAR-WEARY MILLIONS: LED BY COMMANDER MARTIN CHAMPION, THEY ARE THE--

ATARI FORCE™

--AND THIS IS THE STORY OF THEIR FINAL MISSION!

ANOTHER USELESS PLANET, CHAMPION! HOW MANY DOES THIS MAKE--

TWELVE?

MAYBE WE'LL FIND WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR NEXT TIME, PEREZ.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY--

GALAXIAN

"LUCKY THIRTEEN?"

GOOD LORD,
PEREZ! THIS RIDGE
WE'VE BEEN STANDING
ON--

--IT
ISN'T
A RIDGE! IT'S
ALIVE!

BZAM

BZAM

AND I
THINK IT
WANTS US
FOR
DINNER!





ABOARD THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL DRIVE RESEARCH SHIP, SCANNER ONE...

TROUBLE,
LI SAN!

APPARENTLY THIS
OLD MOON ISN'T AS
LIFELESS AS
WE THOUGHT!

I'LL BREAK
OUT THE LASER
CANNON--!

NO! WHAT
RIGHT DO WE HAVE
TO HARM THAT
CREATURE?

THIS IS ITS WORLD--
WE'RE THE INTRUDERS!

NOBLE
SENTIMENTS,
DOCTOR ORION...

BUT I'M SURE
THEY'LL BE OF LITTLE
COMFORT TO
OUR FRIENDS IF
THAT THING CATCHES
THEM--!



SINGH! HUKKA! GET BACK TO THE SHIP!

PREPARE FOR EMERGENCY LIFT-OFF!

AYE-AYE, COMMANDER!

THAT'S ONE ORDER YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE TWICE!

HUKKA-HUKKA! RUUN!

CLOSER THAN YOU THINK, COMMANDER...!

HUKKA! SEENGH--?



BLAST!

EVEN WITH OUR JET-PACKS, WE'RE TOO SLOW!

IT'S GOING TO BE CLOSE--!

JET-PACK MISFIRING! I'M LOSING MY BALANCE--

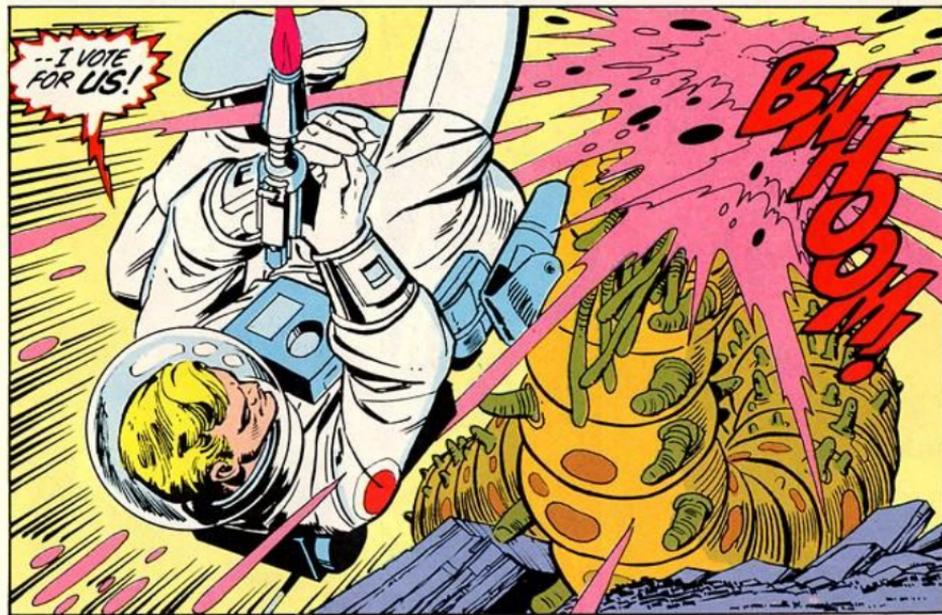
--GOING TO--
UNNH!

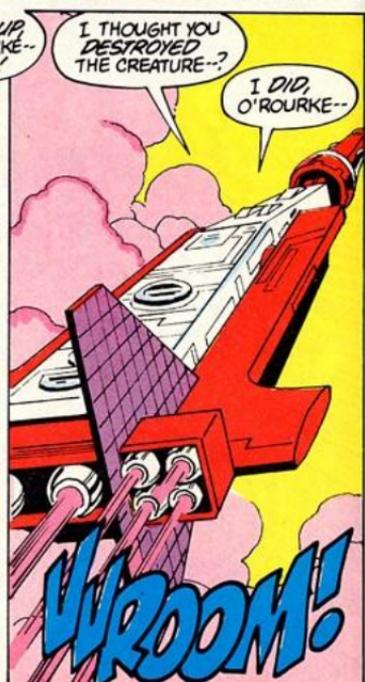
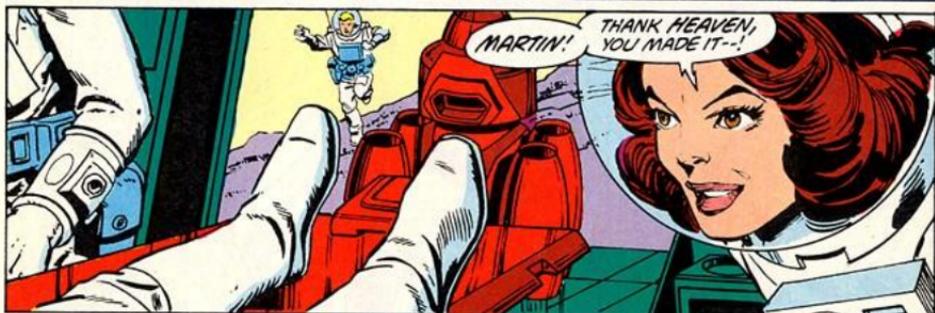
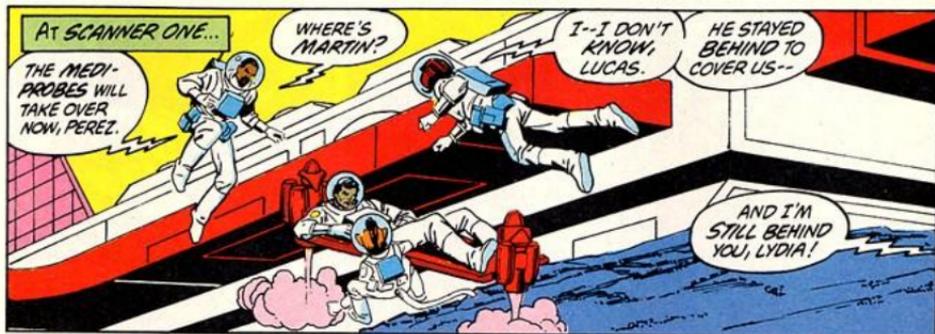
SINGH IS DOWN!

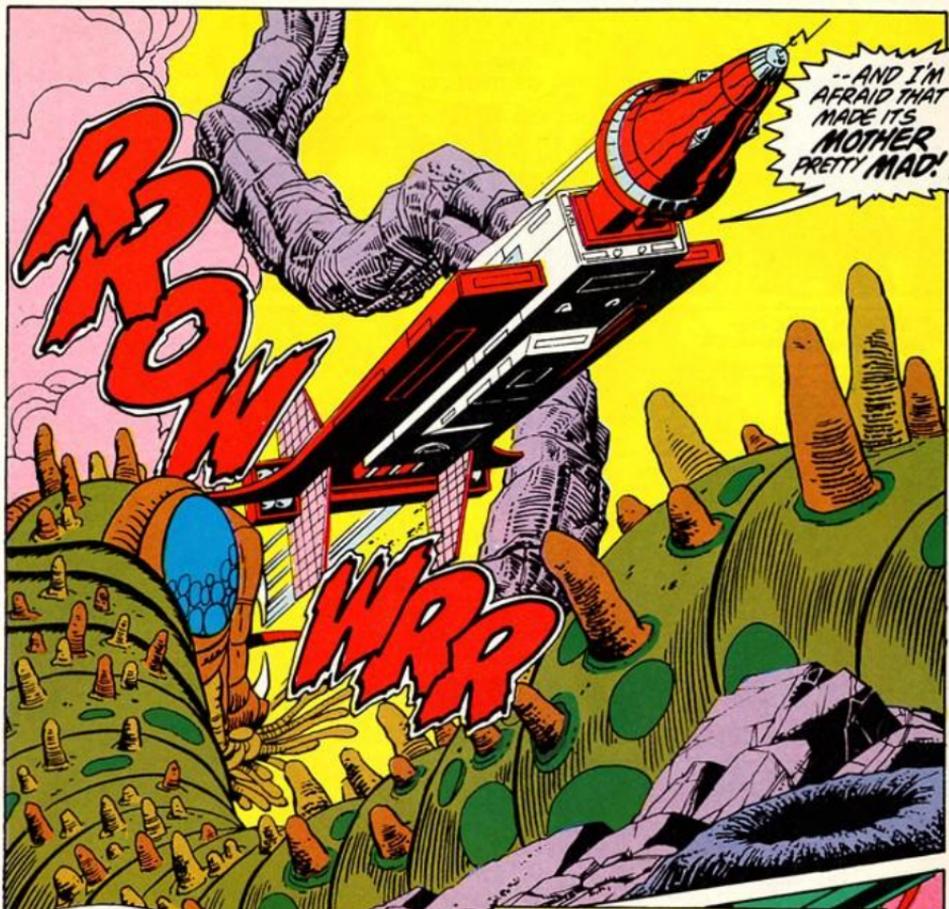


GET UP, MOHANDAS! FOR THE LOVE OF MERCY--!









-- AND I'M AFRAID THAT MADE ITS MOTHER PRETTY MAD!

ACTIVATING MULTIVERSE HYPER-DRIVE, COMMANDER!

AND, EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE WITNESSED THIS SPECTACLE A DOZEN TIMES BEFORE, THEY FIND THEIR BREATH CATCHING IN THEIR THROATS--



WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

GOOD WORK, O'ROURKE!

MASTER PILOT PEREZ, TAKE OVER!



-- AS THE SHIP'S VIEWSCREEN SHOWS A SIGHT FEW HUMANS HAVE SEEN. THE SPACE-BETWEEN-SPACE THAT IS THE MULTIVERSE!



SO WE'VE FAILED--
AGAIN!

I'M BEGINNING TO
BELIEVE WE'LL
NEVER FIND AN
EARTH-LIKE
WORLD--

--NO MATTER HOW
MANY PARALLEL
TIME-LINES
WE TRAVEL TO!

GIVE IT
TIME,
LYDIA...



I'VE GIVEN IT ALL THE
TIME I CAN, COMMANDER.

I JUST--DON'T
BELIEVE
ANYMORE.

IT'S
HOPELESS...

HOPELESS.

WE'RE
ALL
DISAPPOINTED,
O'ROURKE.

TO USE
YOUR OWN
WORDS, MARTIN,
GIVE HER TIME.

SHE'S
CIRSET...



THIS "ADVENTURE"
HASN'T TURNED OUT
AS WE EXPECTED.

BUT LYDIA PEREZ
SEEMS TO BE
CARRYING A
SPECIAL BURDEN
OF HER OWN.

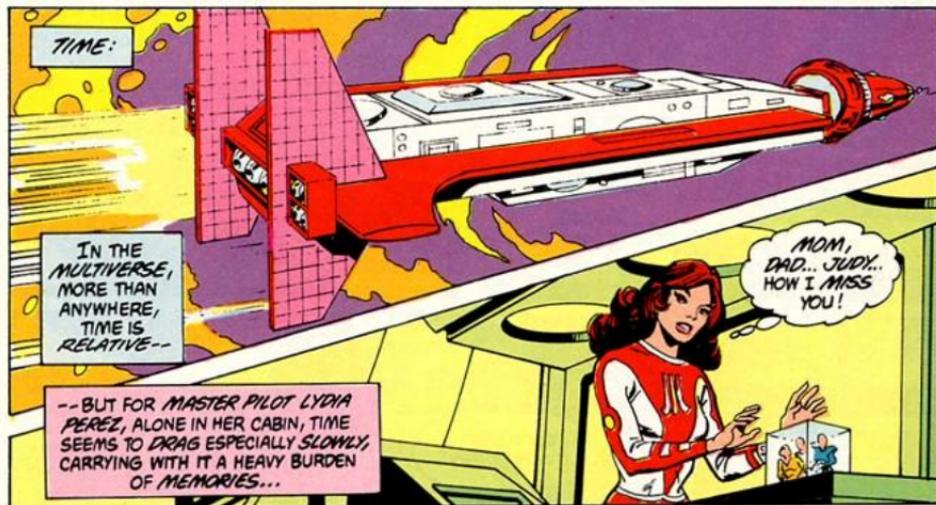
YEARS AGO,
BEFORE THE WAR,
WE WERE FRIENDS...
BUT SINCE WE STARTED
THIS MISSION, SHE'S
BEEN COLD AS ICE.



LOOK OUT
THERE,
MARTIN.

THE MULTIVERSE--
AN INFINITY OF
ALTERNATE REALITIES--
WORLDS AND UNIVERSES
WHOSE HISTORY
DIFFERS FROM OUR
OWN.

BUT, AS
COMPLICATED
AS IT IS--



TIME:

ABOARD SCANNER ONE, IT IS TWO DAYS LATER, AS THE HOURS ARE MEASURED IN THIS TIME-LESS VOID...

ALL SET FOR BREAKOUT PROCEDURE, PILOT?

READOUTS SHOW A LIFE-SUPPORTING UNIVERSE AT THE SPECIFIED TIME-LINE COORDINATES, COMMANDER!

ESTIMATED BREAKOUT IN FIVE SECONDS, SHIPBOARD RELATIVE TIME.

GO FOR IT, PEREZ.

I HAVEN'T TOLD HER-- OR THE OTHERS-- BUT THIS IS OUR LAST CHANCE TO FIND A HABITABLE WORLD!

IF WE COME UP ZERO THIS TIME, I'M TURNING BACK FOR HOMEBASE.

--THREE--
TWO--ONE--

BREAKOUT

GOOD LORD... IT'S BEAUTIFUL!



BEAUTIFUL
ISN'T THE WORD,
LYDIA.

THIS IS
PARADISE.



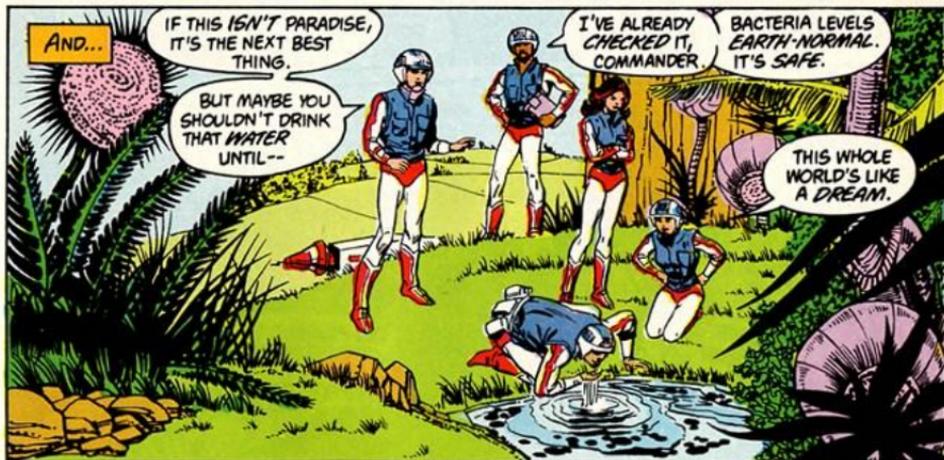
IT--IT'S WHAT
WE'VE BEEN
LOOKING
FOR, ALL THESE
MONTHS!

JUST WHEN
WE WERE
BEGINNING TO
BELIEVE WE'D
NEVER FIND
IT...



ALL HANDS
PREPARE FOR
LANDING.

PILOT, TAKE
HER DOWN!



AND...

IF THIS ISN'T PARADISE,
IT'S THE NEXT BEST
THING.

BUT MAYBE YOU
SHOULDN'T DRINK
THAT WATER
UNTIL--

I'VE ALREADY
CHECKED IT,
COMMANDER.

BACTERIA LEVELS
EARTH-NORMAL.
IT'S SAFE.

THIS WHOLE
WORLD'S LIKE
A DREAM.

INDEED, THE DAY PASSES LIKE A DREAM.

AND, WHEN SUNSET COMES...



BY THE TREE OF BUDDHA!

WHOOOOOSH!



DON'T UNDERSTAND--MY MONITORS SHOWED NO INTELLIGENT LIFE--FORMS--!

NEVER TRUST MACHINES, ORION! DON'T YOU KNOW THAT?

NO! I WON'T LET THEM TAKE THIS AWAY FROM US-- I WON'T--!

EASY, LYDIA! DON'T JUMP THE GUN!

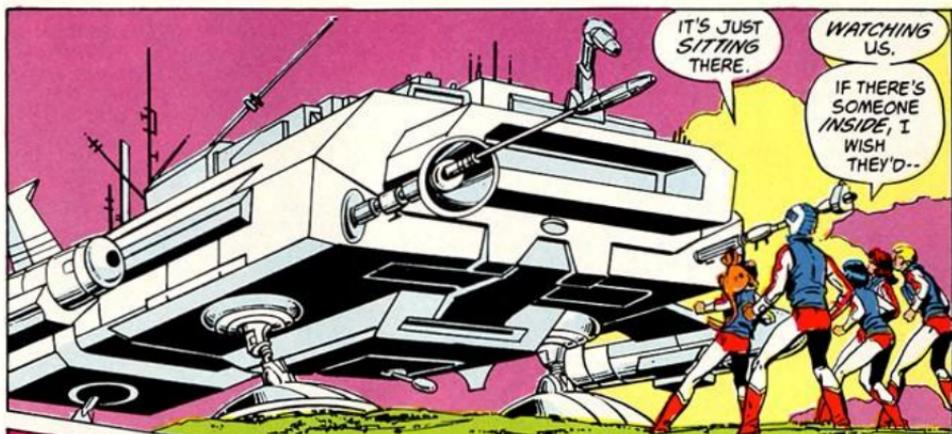


LET'S SEE WHO OUR VISITORS ARE-- AND WHAT THEY WANT!

MAYBE THEY'RE JUST THE LOCAL VERSION OF A WELCOME WAGON!

OH, PLEASE, I CAN'T STAND ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT...!









-- A FEW HOURS TRAVEL THROUGH WARP SPACE, AND YOU CAN MAKE YOUR CASE TO THE FIRST CUSTODIANS THEMSELVES.

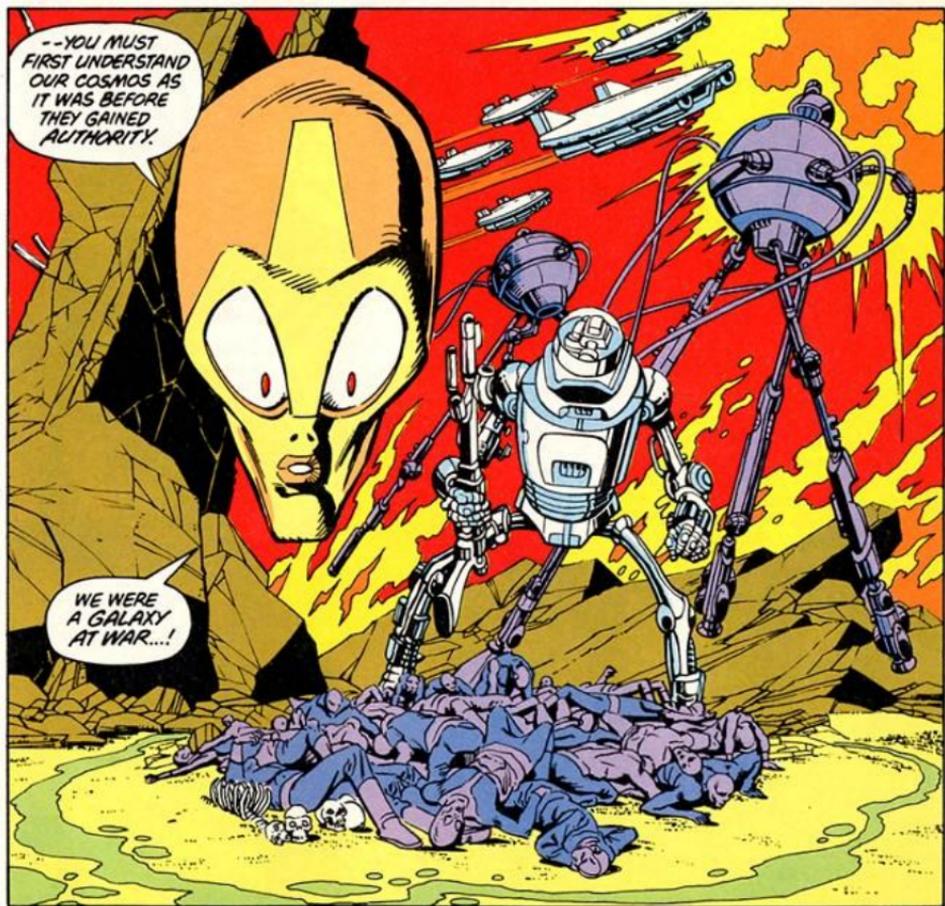
WE'VE ACCEPTED THAT YOUR INTENTIONS ARE GOOD, AVIAR. THE HUKKA IS NEVER WRONG JUDGING CHARACTER.

BUT WE'D FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE--

-- IF WE JUST KNEW MORE ABOUT THESE CUSTODIANS YOU KEEP REFERRING TO.

THE CUSTODIANS OF LIFE ARE THE MOST ETHICAL BEINGS IN THE UNIVERSE, COMMANDER.

BUT TO UNDERSTAND THEM--



-- YOU MUST FIRST UNDERSTAND OUR COSMOS AS IT WAS BEFORE THEY GAINED AUTHORITY.

WE WERE A GALAXY AT WAR...!

FOR MORE THAN
TEN MILLENNIA, DEATH
HAD RULED THE PEOPLES
OF OUR GALACTIC ISLAND--
DEATH, IN A THOUSAND
GUISES, BUT WITH
ONE NAME:

HATE!

RACE FOUGHT
RACE, PLANET
DESTROYED PLANET,
SOLAR SYSTEM
WARRED WITH
SOLAR SYSTEM,
ALL IN THE NAME
OF HATE!

WHO
REMEMBERS
WHAT PETTY
MOTIVES FANNED
THE FLAMES OF
THOSE ETERNAL WARS?
THE MOTIVES ARE BURIED WITH THE
FOOLS WHO PROCLAIMED THEM.

ALL THAT REMAINED
WAS THE CEASELESS
STRUGGLE, SPREADING
FROM WORLD TO WORLD
LIKE SOME BLACK CONTA-
GION, AND PERHAPS IT
WOULD HAVE CONTINUED
FOREVER UNTIL THE LAST
LIGHT OF LIFE WAS
EXTINGUISHED--

"-- BUT, ON A DAY SIX CENTURIES
AGO, A FEW BRAVE ONES
SAID... 'ENOUGH!'

"AT FIRST, THEY WERE BUT A
HANDFUL; THEN OTHERS,
SICKENED BY THE ENDLESS
FIGHTING, JOINED THEM, AND
THE HANDFUL BECAME A SCORE,
AND THE SCORE BECAME A
HUNDRED, THEN A THOUSAND..."

"... AND THE THOUSAND TURNED
THEIR BACKS ON THE LEADERS OF
THEIR WAR-BLASTED PLANET, AND
REFUSED TO WAR ANYMORE!"

"OF COURSE,
THE LEADERS
DEMANDED
THAT THE
REFUSERS
RETURN."

"THEY THREATENED,
AND WHEN THREATS
FAILED--"

"-- THEY DID
WHAT CAME
NATURALLY."

ZAM
ZAM
ZAM



... AND THEIR MESSAGE SPREAD FROM WORLD TO WORLD ACROSS THE GALAXY IN A MATTER OF DAYS AND MONTHS.

"EVERYWHERE, THE SURVIVORS OF WAR TURNED THEIR BACKS ON DEATH, EMBRACING LIFE; AND IN HIS DARK CASTLE, DEATH MUST HAVE WAILED WITH HELPLESS FURY.

"SO QUICKLY DID THE MESSAGE SPREAD THAT WITHIN A SOLAR YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A THOUSAND CENTURIES, THE GALAXY WAS AT PEACE..."

... AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST CUSTODIANS, WHO WEAR THE SACRED SYMBOL OF STAR AND LEAF, WE HAVE REMAINED AT PEACE..."

"...AND HAVE RESTORED THE DREAMS LONG THOUGHT FOREVER DESTROYED."

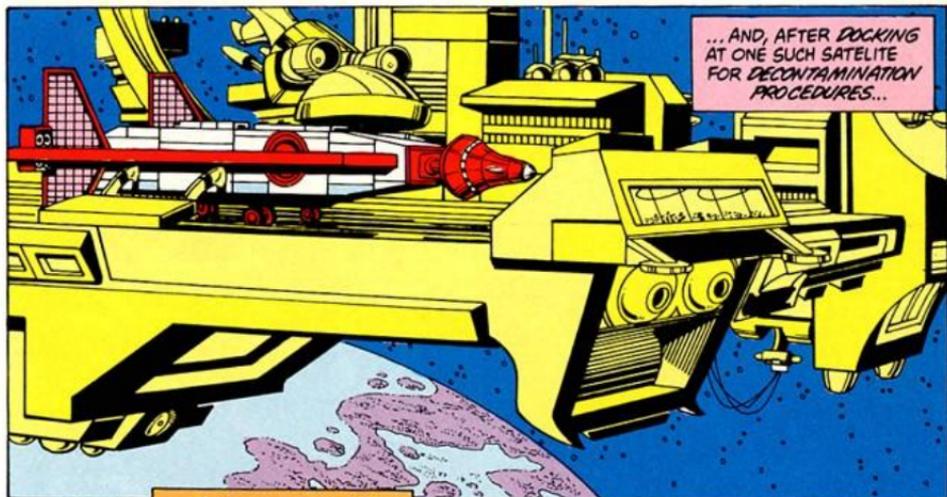


CENTERWORLD:

LIKE A DIAMOND ENCIRCLED BY SMALLER JEWELS, THE VAST HOME PLANET OF THE UNION FEDERATION IS SURROUNDED BY GLEAMING SPACE STATIONS AND SATELITES...



... AND, AFTER DOCKING AT ONE SUCH SATELITE FOR DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES...

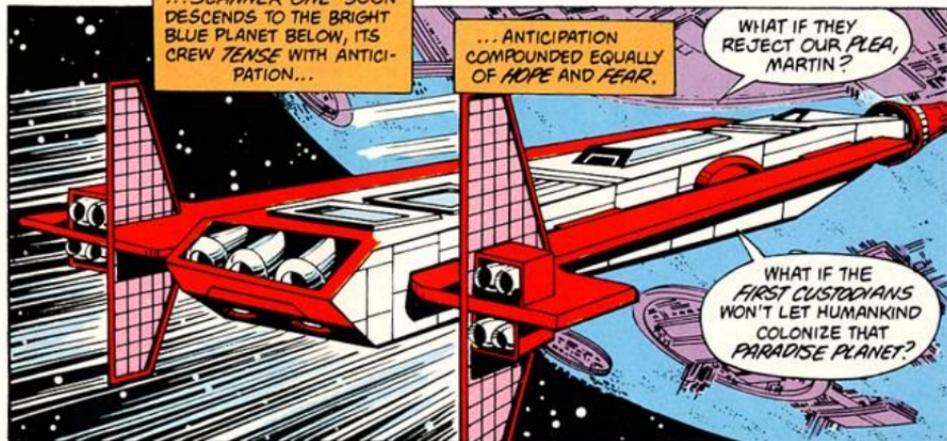


... SCANNER ONE SOON DESCENDS TO THE BRIGHT BLUE PLANET BELOW, ITS CREW TENSE WITH ANTICIPATION...

... ANTICIPATION COMPOUNDED EQUALLY OF HOPE AND FEAR.

WHAT IF THEY REJECT OUR PLEA, MARTIN?

WHAT IF THE FIRST CUSTODIANS WON'T LET HUMANKIND COLONIZE THAT PARADISE PLANET?



MARTIN CHAMPION DOES NOT ANSWER, AND HIS SILENCE IS AN ELOQUENT EXPRESSION OF THE WORRY EACH OF THEM HOLDS SECRETLY IN HIS HEART:

AVIAR HAS ALREADY LANDED.

THAT MUST BE THE COUNCIL CHAMBER SHE DESCRIBED -- THE PORT COMPUTER IS PILOTING US IN FOR A LANDING.

THE WORRY THAT HUMANKIND WILL BE FOUND... UNWORTHY.

ORION, DO THE SENSORS SHOW A BREATH-ABLE ATMOSPHERE?

OXYGEN LEVELS ARE NEAR EARTH NORMAL, WITH A HIGHER PROPORTION OF INERT GASES THAN WE'RE ACCUSTOMED TO.

IT'LL TASTE LIKE A SHEET-METAL SHOP, BUT WE CAN BREATHE IT, COMMANDER.

EH? THAT'S ODD...

...THE SENSOR IS PICKING UP ANOTHER LIFE-READING, FROM SPACE.

A TREMENDOUS CONCENTRATION OF MENTAL AND LIFE-ENERGY.

IT COULD BE ANOTHER SPACE STATION-- BUT THE READING INDICATES A SINGLE ORGANISM.

VERY, VERY ODD.

ORION TO ATARI 8000 COMPUTER.

ANALYZE LIFE READING, CORROLATE WITH SHIPBOARD MEMORY BANKS. REPORT FINDINGS ON REQUEST.

AS YOU WISH, DOCTOR; PROCESSING.



IT'S PROBABLY NOTHING.

THEN WHY DO I FEEL SO UNEASY?

WHATEVER MISGIVINGS LUCAS ORION MAY FEEL, THEY ARE QUICKLY DISPELLED BY THE WELCOME OF THE CROWD GATHERED ABOUT SCANNER ONE; A WELCOME AS WARM AS THE WARM SUMMER AIR THAT GREETES THEM.



BUT THEN, IN THE SPACE BETWEEN ONE INSTANT AND THE NEXT, A CHANGE COMES OVER THE SMILING FACES OF THE CLUSTERING CUSTODIANS OF LIFE...



...A CHANGE THAT CHILLS THE SUMMER AIR...



...LIKE THE PASSING OF A DARK CLOUD BEFORE THE SUN:

INTRUDERS!



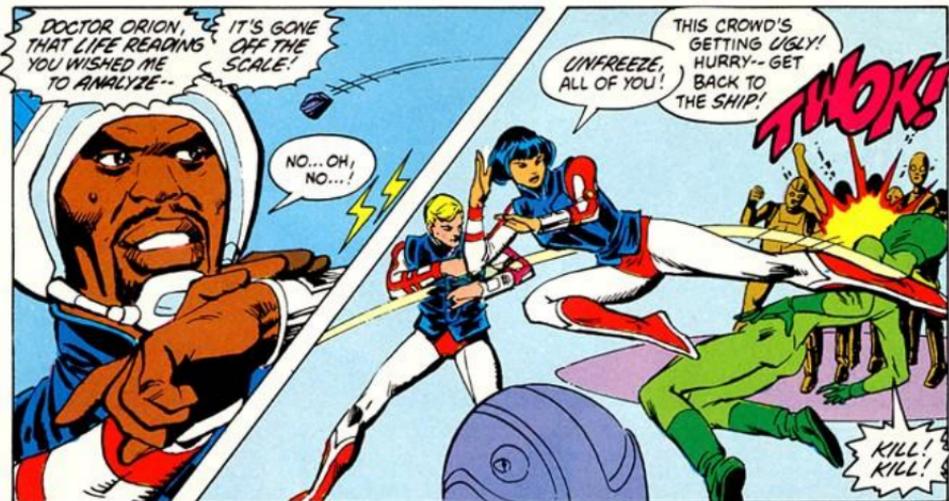
MARTIN-- WHAT'S HAPPENING--?

THEIR FACES, LOOK AT THEM--!

THEY'RE GOING CRAZY!

INTRUDERS! TRESPASSERS! KILL THE ALIENS!

KILL THEM ALL!





IF THIS IS A PEACE PLANET, I'D HATE TO SEE A WARLIKE ONE!

THAT'S NOT FAIR, MARTIN! YOU SAW THEIR EYES--

-- YOU SAW HOW THEY CHANGED!

AS IF SOME MENTAL FORCE HAD TAKEN THEM UNDER CONTROL, WIPED THEIR SOULS CLEAN IN AN INSTANT!

MAYBE-- MAYBE AVIAR LED US INTO A TRAP!

THE HUKKA COULD HAVE BEEN WRONGS ABOUT HER-- COULDN'T HE?



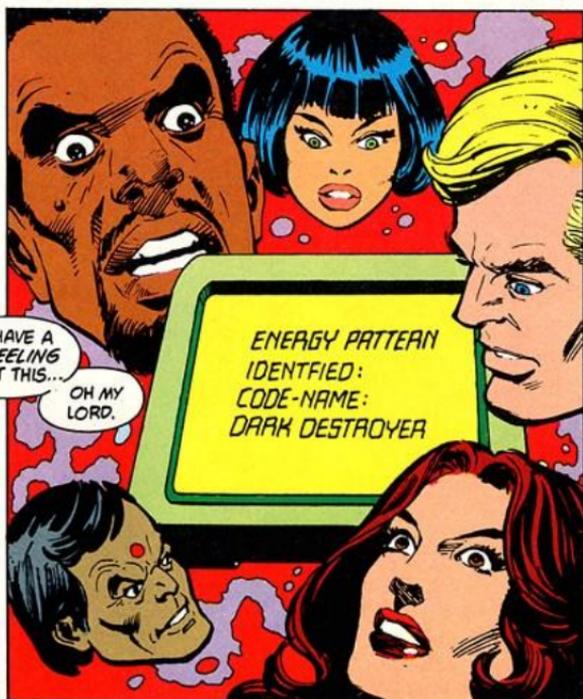
THE HUKKA WASN'T WRONG, MARTIN.

PEREZ HAS IT RIGHT: A MENTAL FORCE TOOK CONTROL.



LET ME HOOK UP MY SENSOR TO THE COMPUTER--

--AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT:





NO-- IT CAN'T BE!

THE DARK DESTROYER IS DEAD!

IT WAS A HUGE, APPARENTLY UNTHINKING CREATURE WE DISCOVERED IN THE MULTIVERSE, EXISTING BETWEEN DIMENSIONS!

SOMEHOW, IT GAINED MENTAL CONTROL OVER A RACE OF BEINGS CALLED THE ZYLON-- AND THROUGH THEM, DESTROYED THE HUMANOID RACE THAT ONCE LIVED ON THE MUKKA'S HOMEWORLD!

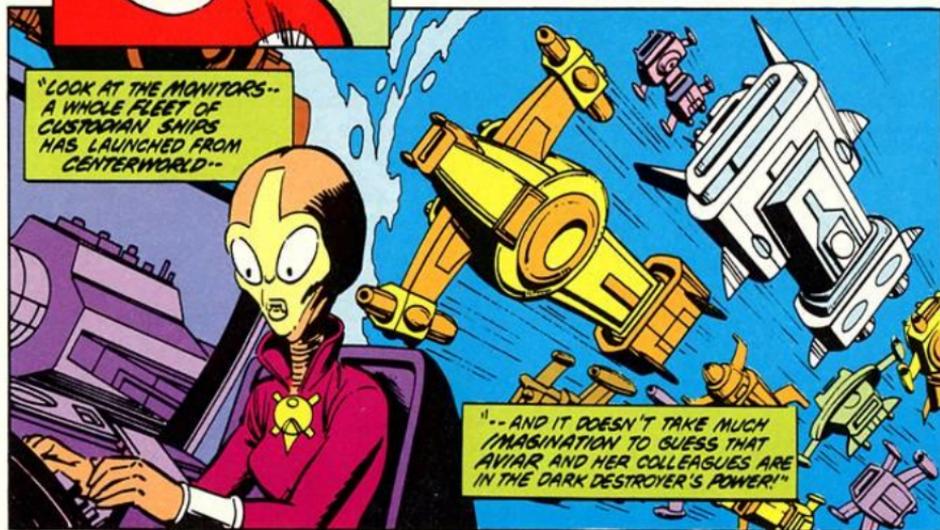


"IT CAUGHT US, ALMOST DESTROYED US, TOO, BUT IN THE END--"

"--WE DESTROYED IT! * HOW CAN IT BE ALIVE? HOW CAN IT BE HERE?"

"HOW?"

* SEE THE ATARI STAR RAIDERS CARTRIDGE FOR FURTHER DETAILS!.. ED.





WONDERFUL.

SCANNER ONE IS THE BEST ATARI CAN BUILD, BUT CAN EVEN IT TAKE ON AN ENTIRE WAR-FLEET OF GALACTIC CIVILIZATION - BUILT STARSHIPS?



WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT, MARTIN...



THE GALAXIAN VESSELS HAVE WARPED AHEAD OF US.

THEY'RE REAPPEARING BETWEEN US AND OUR DESTINATION, THAT DISTANT ASTEROID PINPOINTED BY OUR COMPUTER AS THE SOURCE OF THE DARK DESTROYER'S LIFE READINGS.



MARTIN, JUST A FEW HOURS AGO, I WOULD HAVE DIED RATHER THAN ADMIT THIS, BUT--

I'M AFRAID!



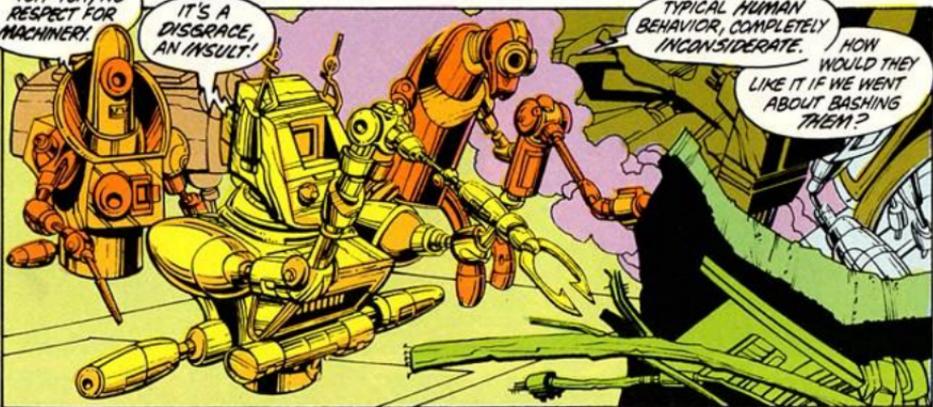


"-- AND THE CUSTODIAN PILOTS ARE ESCAPING IN PROTECTIVE ENERGY ESCAPE PODS!"



"BUT, TWO MORE SHIPS ARE SEPARATING FROM THE MAIN FLEET--"





TCH-TCH, NO RESPECT FOR MACHINERY!

IT'S A DISGRACE, AN INSULT!

TYPICAL HUMAN BEHAVIOR, COMPLETELY INCONSIDERATE.

HOW WOULD THEY LIKE IT IF WE WENT ABOUT BASHING THEM?

BATTLE:

IN A GALAXY THAT HAD KNOWN PEACE FOR MORE THAN SIX CENTURIES, WAR IS REBORN, AND DEEP WITHIN THE SEEMINGLY LIFELESS ASTEROID WHICH IS AT THE CENTER OF THIS NEW COMBAT--

-- SOMETHING STIRS, AND RISES, LIKE A FLOWER OPENING ITS PETALS TO THE DAWNING SUN:



GOOD... IT IS GOOD TO TASTE THE MENTAL ANGUISH OF VIOLENT DEATH, AGAIN!

WHEN I WAS TRANSPORTED TO THIS DIMENSION-- AGAINST MY WILL-- I WAS TOO WEAK TO STIR THE HATREDS OF THESE PUNY "PEACEFUL" PEOPLES.



WITHOUT THEIR TORMENT AND PAIN TO FEED ME, I WASTED AWAY, ALMOST DIED.

THEN...THE HUMANS CAME! THE HUMANS, WHOSE ATTEMPT TO SLAY ME FORCED ME TO FLEE TO THIS WORTHLESS DIMENSION!

THE HUMANS ARE AN EMOTIONAL RACE. THE TASTE OF THEIR FEAR SUSTAINED ME.

THEIR PASSION GAVE ME STRENGTH TO STIR THE PASSIONS OF THESE SELF-STYLED CUSTODIANS...



... AND THROUGH THEM, TO WREAK VENGEANCE ON THE HUMANS THEMSELVES!

STRANGE, THAT I CAN FEED ON THE HUMANS' EMOTIONS...



...YET CANNOT SEEM TO GRASP THEIR MINDS!

YET, NOW THE TIDE TURNS IN THEIR FAVOR...



... SO I MUST PREPARE, IN THE UNLIKELY CASE THAT ONCE MORE I FACE DEFEAT...!

COMMANDER,
IS IT MY FEVERED
IMAGINATION--

--OR ARE WE
WINNING?

ZAM
ZAMM



IT'S NO DREAM,
MOHANDAS! BELIEVE
IT OR NOT, ONE SHIP
AGAINST A HUNDRED...

--WE'RE
BEATING
THEM!

ZAMMM
BLAM!

FINAL APPROACH:

LIKE A HAWK SWOOPING IN ON ITS PREY, **SCANNER ONE** SWINGS ABOUT AND **DIVES** TOWARD THE TARGET ASTEROID, EVERY MEMBER OF ITS CREW COMMITTED TO **ONE GOAL:**

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DARK DESTROYER!

YET, EVEN AS THEY PLUNGE THROUGH SPACE, AN **UNSEEN ECTOPLASMIC TENDRIL** PROBES FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE BLEAK PLANETOID, LIKE A **QUESTING HAND--**



-- AND WHOEVER IT TOUCHES FEELS A WAVE OF **BLACK RIAUSEA**, LIKE THE SUDDEN RISING **TIDE OF AN EVIL SEA:**

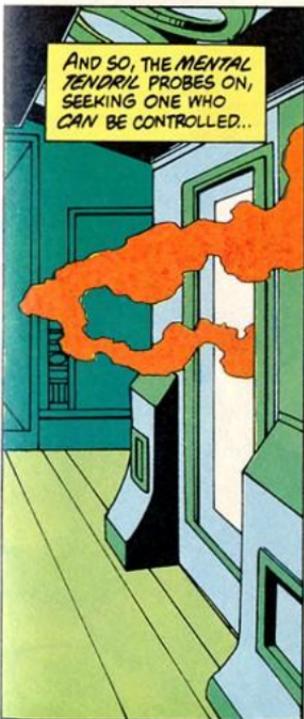




IT IS THE MENTAL
ESSENCE OF THE DARK
DESTROYER, AND FOR
AN INSTANT, FOUL AND
INDESCRIBABLE EVIL
PERVADES THE HEARTS
OF ALL ABOARD--



-- BUT IT DOES NOT LAST,
FOR THE DARK DESTROYER
CANNOT CONTROL THESE
CREATURES CALLED HUMAN
BEINGS; THEIR MINDS ARE
TOO ALIEN, THEIR EMOTIONS
TOO RAW.



AND SO, THE MENTAL
TENDRIL PROBES ON,
SEEKING ONE WHO
CAN BE CONTROLLED...



... AND FINDING THAT ONE,
AMID THE GLEAMING INSTRUMENTS
OF THE HEALER'S ART,
IN LUCAS ORION'S SICKBAY...

KILL.



THAT SCREAM BEFORE SHE PASSED OUT...

... SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE'S DYING CRY!

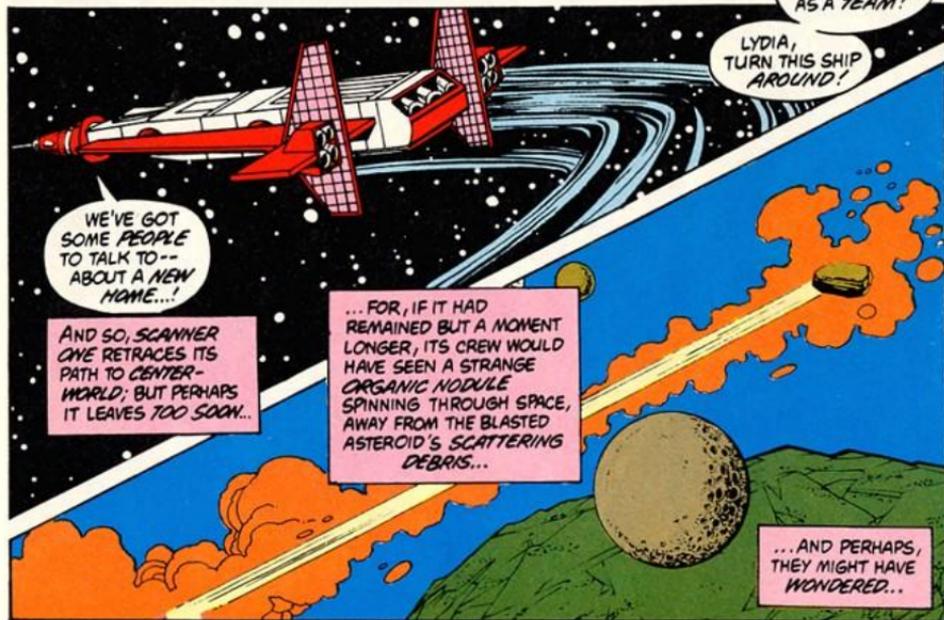
IF SHE WAS UNDER THE DESTROYER'S MENTAL CONTROL, THAT MUST MEAN--



IT'S DEAD!

YOU DID IT, COMMANDER!

WE ALL DID IT, O'ROURKE-- WORKING TOGETHER, AS A TEAM!



LYDIA, TURN THIS SHIP AROUND!

WE'VE GOT SOME PEOPLE TO TALK TO-- ABOUT A NEW HOME...!

AND SO, SCANNER ONE RETRACES ITS PATH TO CENTER-WORLD; BUT PERHAPS IT LEAVES TOO SOON...

... FOR, IF IT HAD REMAINED BUT A MOMENT LONGER, ITS CREW WOULD HAVE SEEN A STRANGE ORGANIC NODULE SPINNING THROUGH SPACE, AWAY FROM THE BLASTED ASTEROID'S SCATTERING DEBRIS...

... AND PERHAPS, THEY MIGHT HAVE WONDERED...





SIX MONTHS LATER,
ON THE WAR-WEARY
WORLD CALLED EARTH,
A FATEFUL COUNTDOWN
REACHES CLIMAX:

THREE...
TWO...
ONE...

MULTIVERSE
DRIVE ACTIVATED!

EXODUS
ONE IS
AWAY!

THERE THEY
GO, LYDIA, THE
FIRST SHIPLOAD OF
COLONISTS FOR
NEW EARTH--

--TWO THOUSAND
MEN, WOMEN, AND
CHILDREN LOADED IN
SUSPENDED ANIMATION
TANKS, CROWDED
INTO THE CARBO BAY
OF THE OLD SCANNER
ONE.

THEY'VE GONE
TO SLEEP ON A
WORLD RUINED
BY WAR...







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