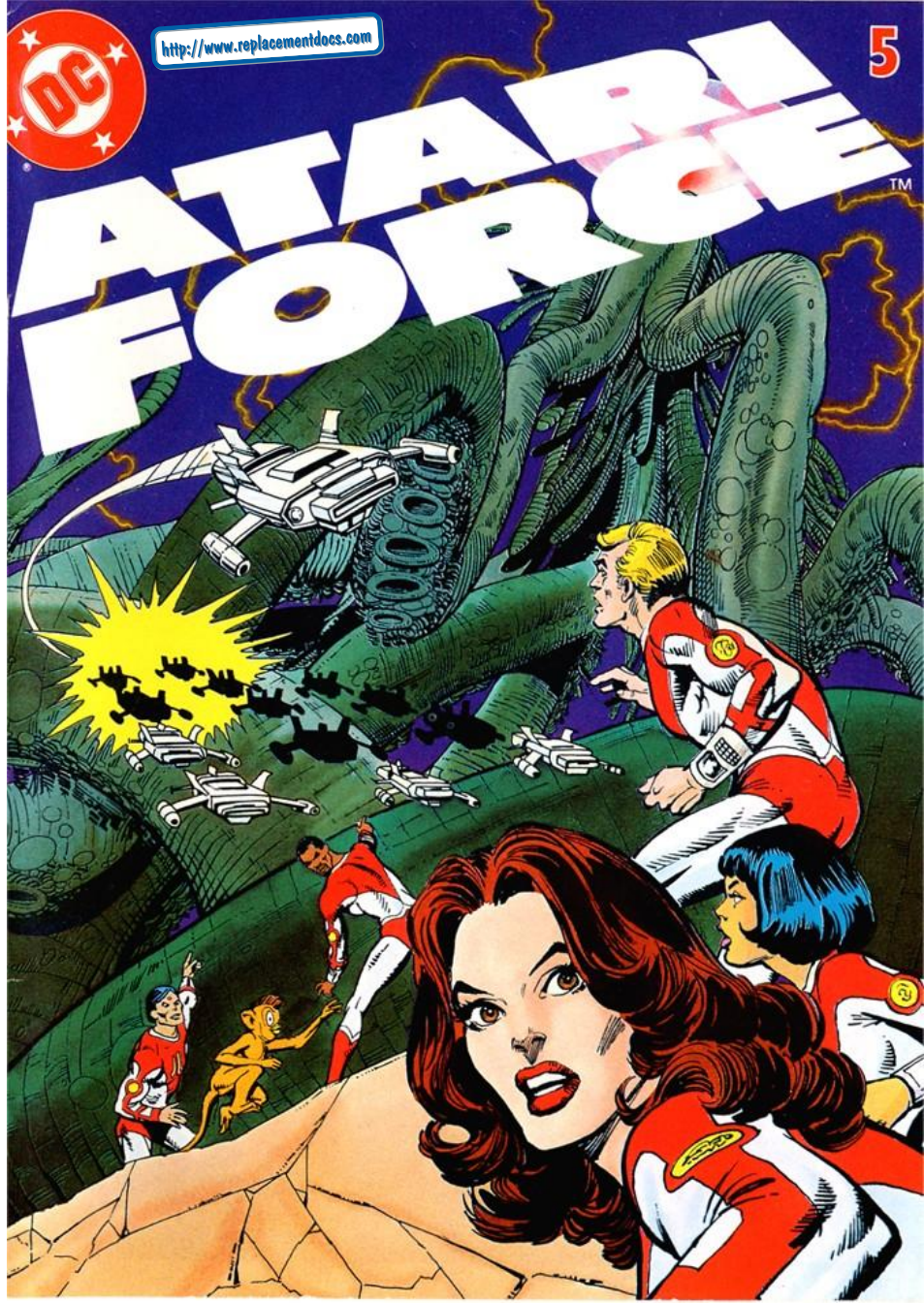




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5



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--!





I CAN
HANDLE
MYSELF,
LYDIA!

WE WANTED
TO AVOID A
SHOWDOWN--

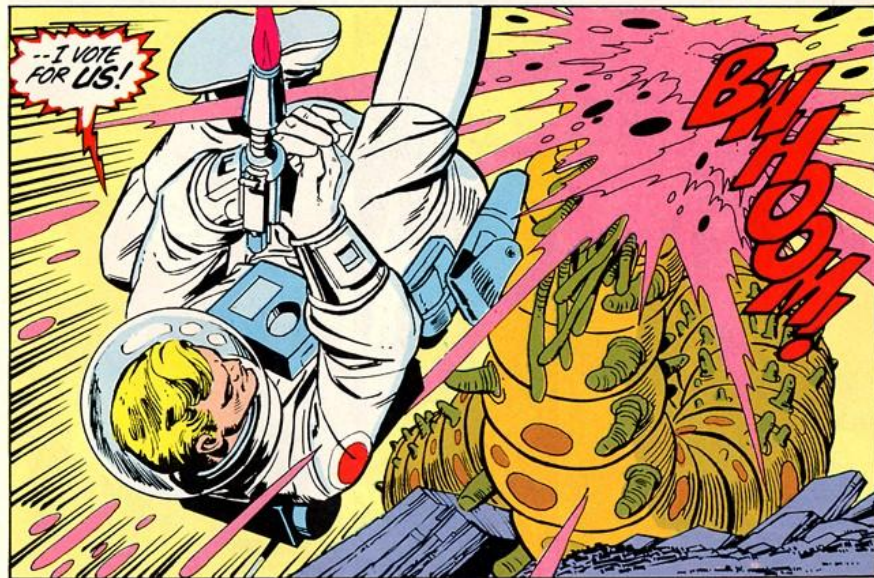


--BECAUSE
WE'RE THE
ONES WHO
DON'T BELONG
HERE!



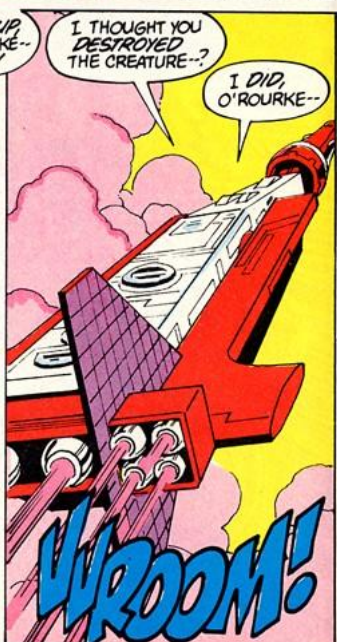
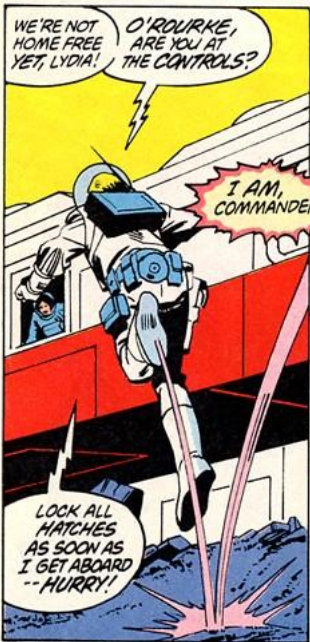
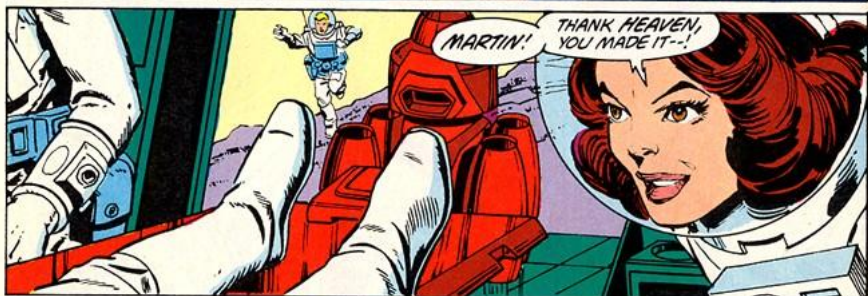
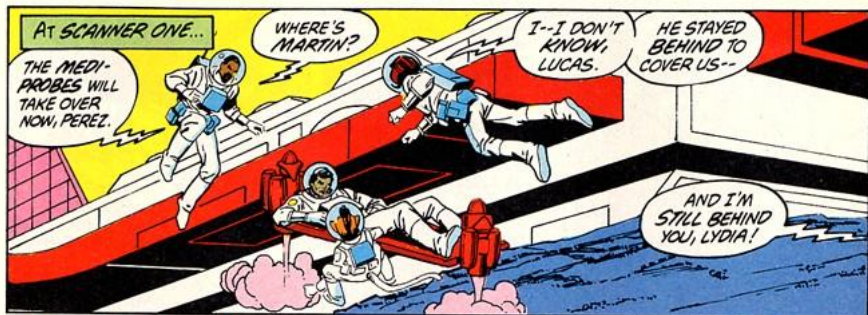
BUT NOW,
I DON'T HAVE
A CHOICE!

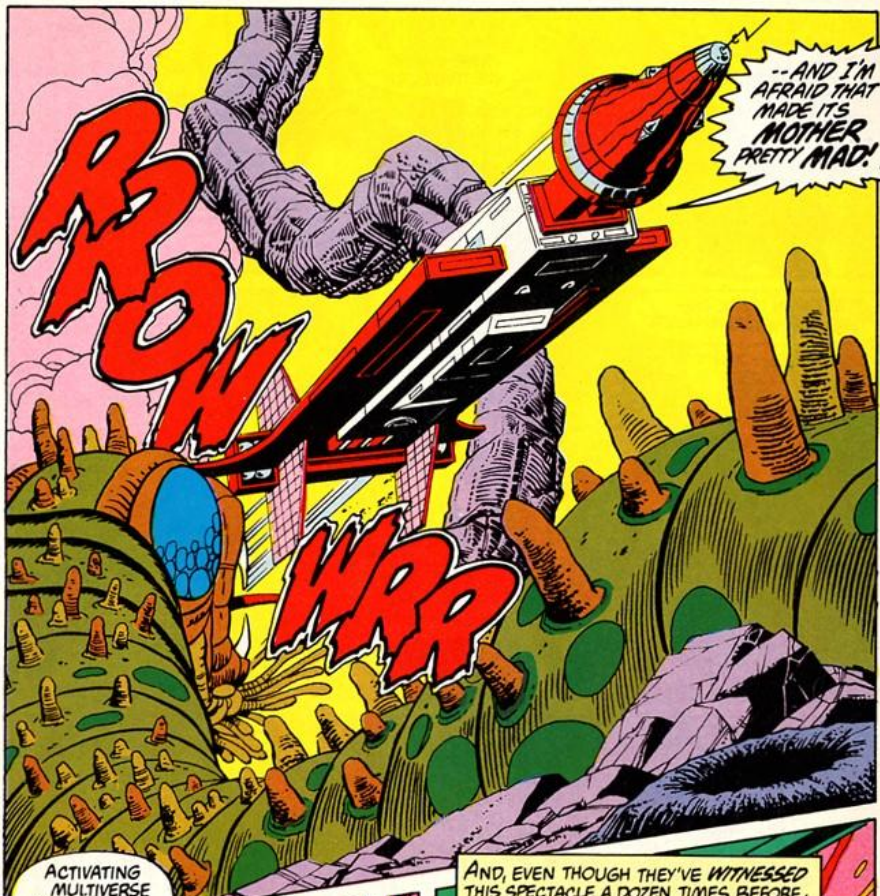
AND IF IT'S A
QUESTION OF
OUR LIVES--OR
THIS CREATURES--



--I VOTE
FOR US!

BII
HOO!





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

ACTIVATING
MULTIVERSE
HYPER-DRIVE,
COMMANDER!

WE'RE
ON OUR
WAY!

GOOD
WORK,
O'ROURKE!

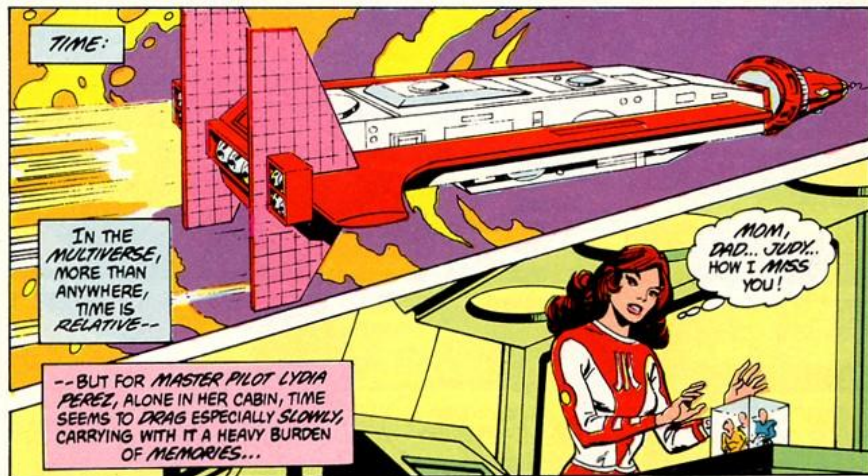
MASTER PILOT
PEREZ, TAKE OVER!

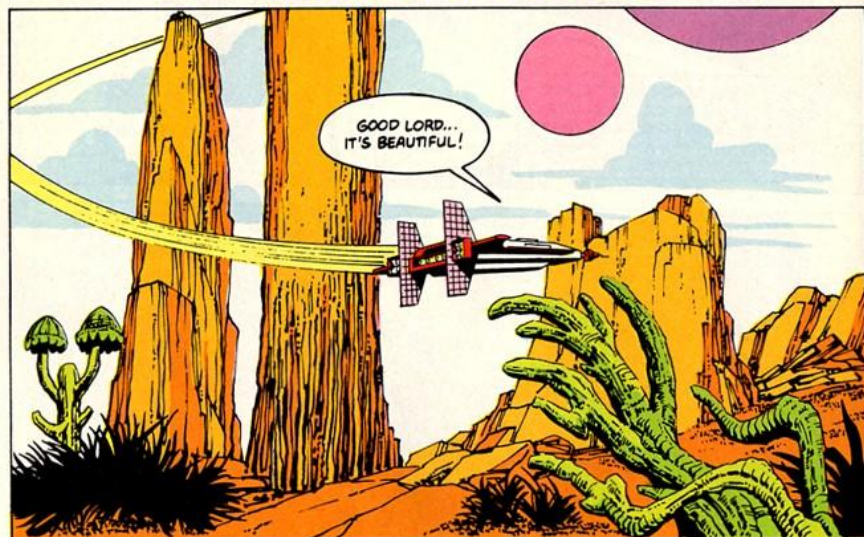
AND, EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE WITNESSED
THIS SPECTACLE A DOZEN TIMES BEFORE,
THEY FIND THEIR BREATH CATCHING IN
THEIR THROATS--

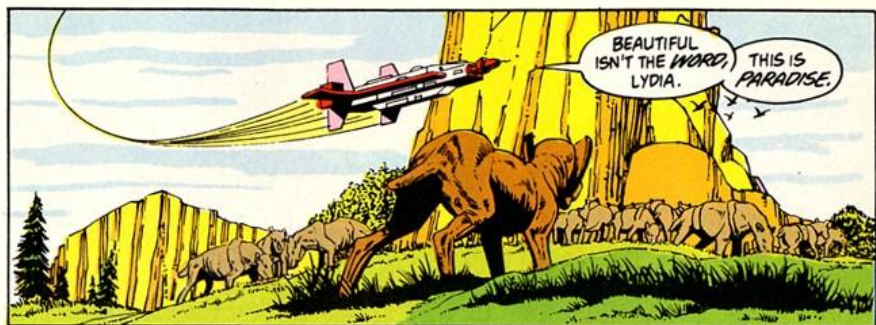


--AS THE SHIP'S VIEWSCREEN SHOWS A SIGHT FEW
HUMANS HAVE SEEN. THE SPACE-BETWEEN-
SPACE THAT IS THE MULTIVERSE!









INDEED, THE
DAY PASSES
LIKE A DREAM.

AND, WHEN
SUNSET COMES...



PERFECT--
IT'S ALL SO
PERFECT!

NO CIVILIZED
LIFE--A BEAUTIFUL
WORLD, JUST
WAITING FOR--

BY THE
TREE OF
BUDDHA!



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!

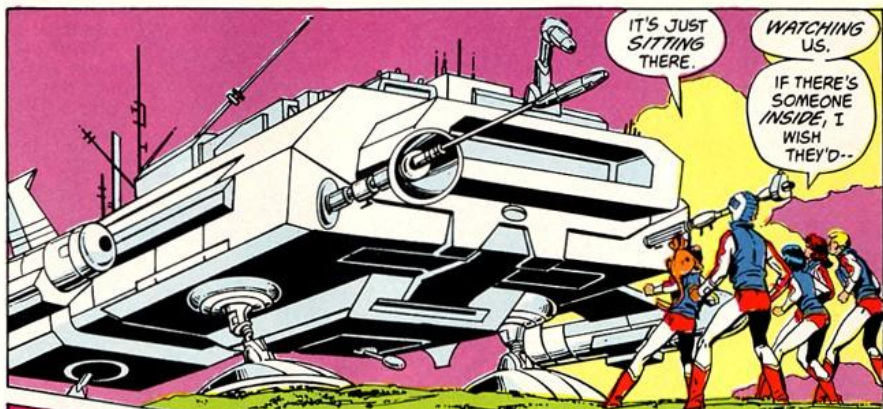


LET'S SEE WHO
OUR VISITORS ARE--
AND WHAT THEY
WANT!

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

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

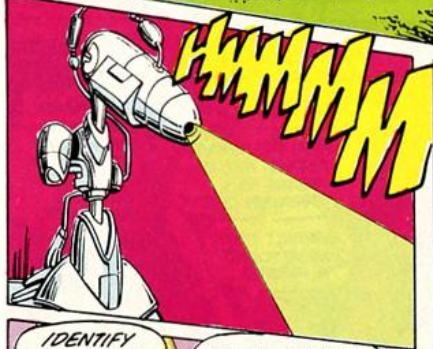




IT'S JUST
SITTING
THERE.

WATCHING
US.

IF THERE'S
SOMEONE
INSIDE, I
WISH
THEY'D--



HHHHHH



BACK OFF,
EVERYONE! SOME KIND
OF TELEPOR-
TATION
BEAM--!



IDENTIFY
YOURSELVES.

BY WHAT RIGHT DO
YOU TRESPASS ON
THIS PLANET?

WHAT
BUSINESS
IS IT OF
YOURS?

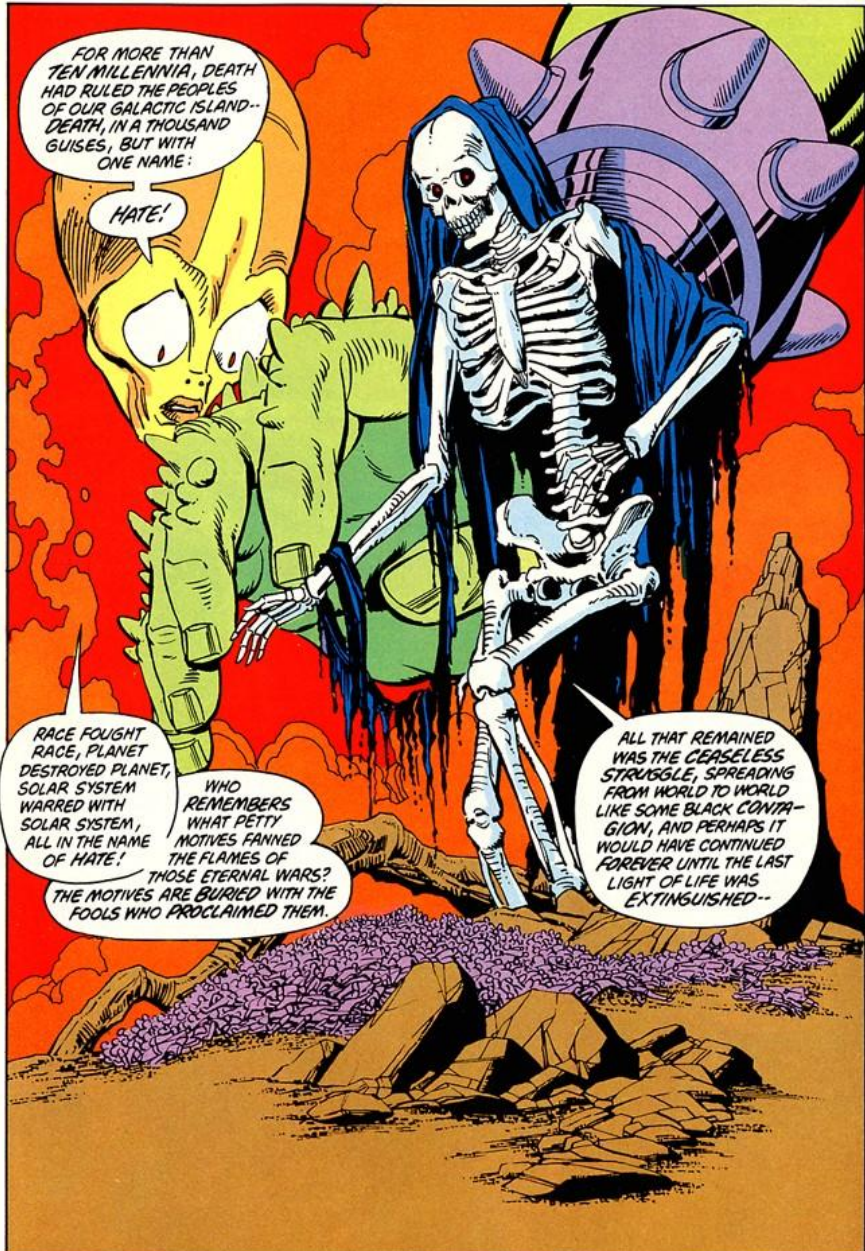
KNOW THAT I
AM AVIAR, OF
ANTAIRAE, ONE
OF THE APPOINTED
CUSTODIANS.

I REPEAT:
IDENTIFY
YOURSELF!

CHAMPION,
COMMANDER
OF THE ATARI
FORCE.







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 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."

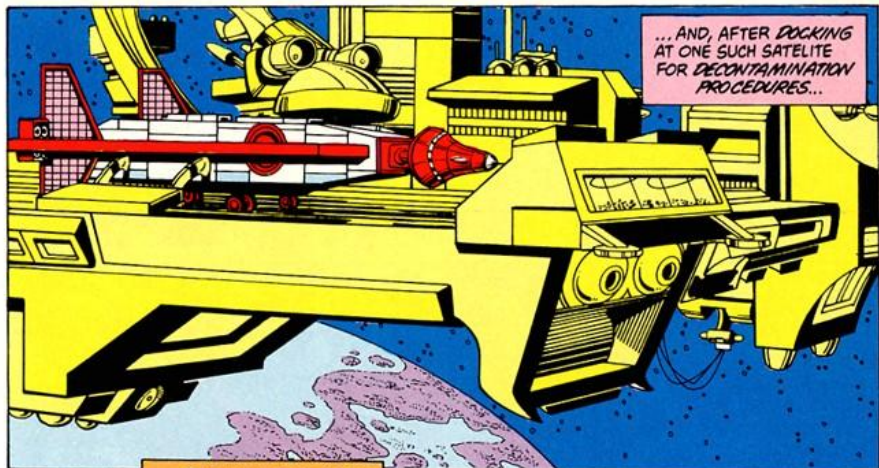


CENTERWORLD:

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



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

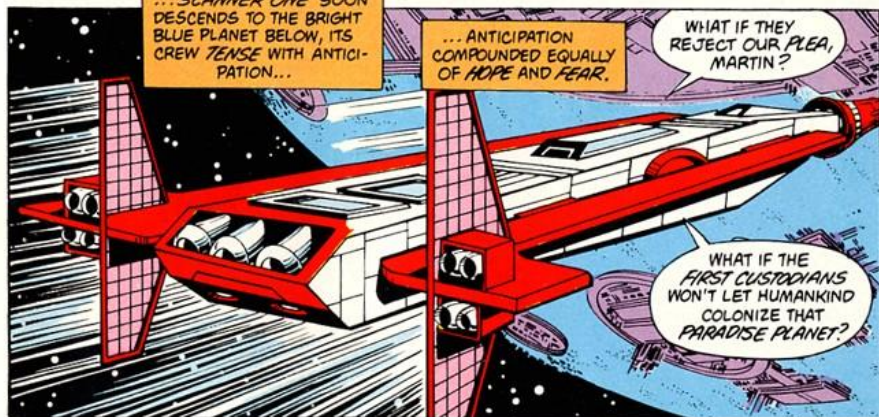


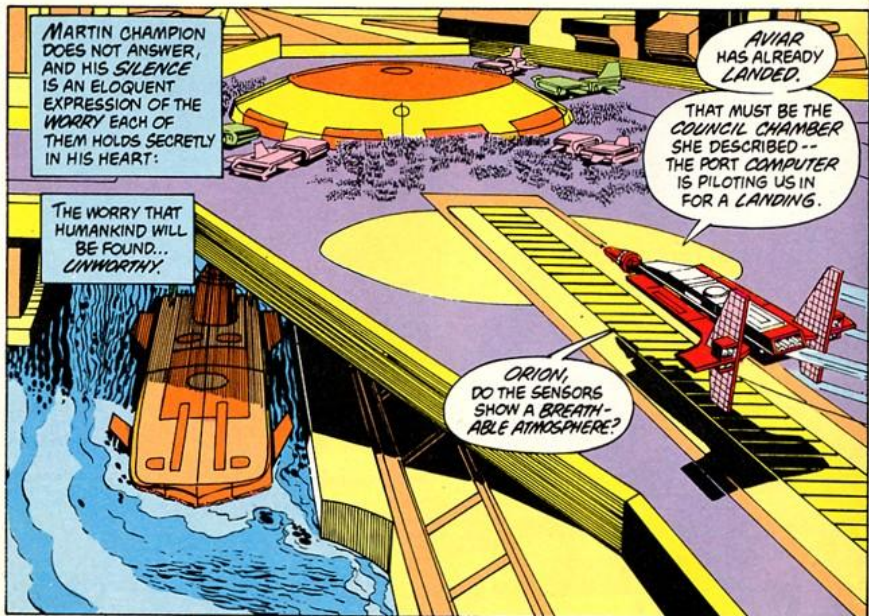
...SCANNER ONE SOON DESCENDS TO THE BRIGHT BLUE PLANET BELOW, ITS CREW TENSE WITH ANTICIPATION...

...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:

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

AVIAR HAS ALREADY LANDED.

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

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.



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:

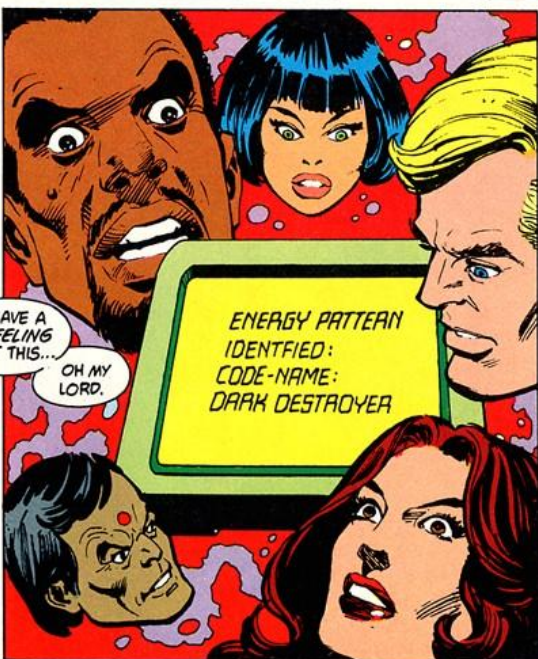
INTRUDERS!



INTRUDERS! TRESPASSERS! KILL THE ALIENS!

KILL THEM ALL!







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 NUKKA'S
HOMEWORLD!

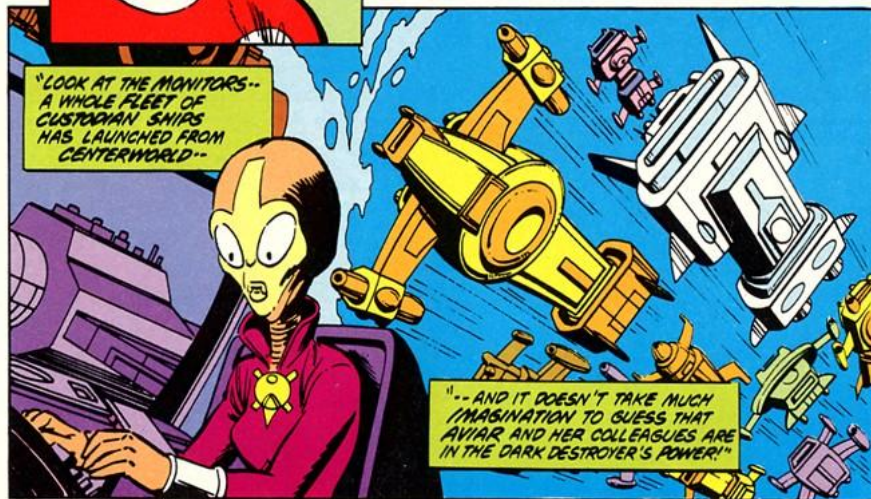
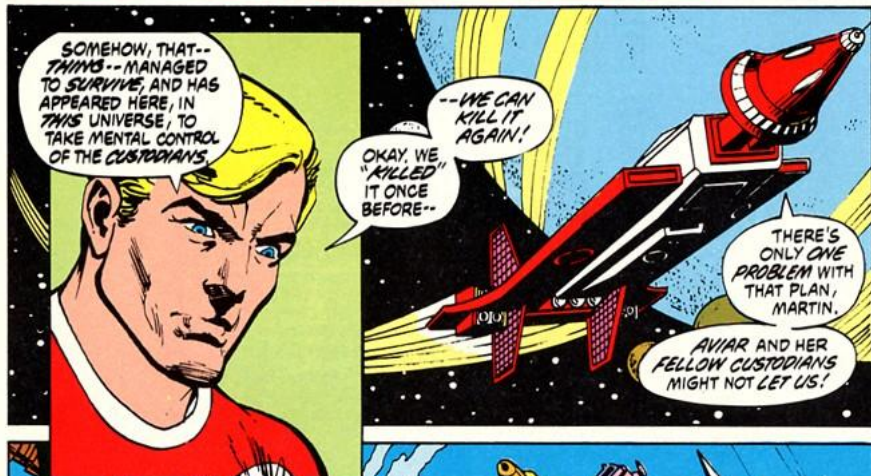


"IT CAUGHT US, ALMOST
DESTROYED US, TOO,
BUT IN THE END--"

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

"HOW?"

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









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

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



--DROPPING INTO ATTACK FORMATION!

WE HAVE TO FALL BACK BEFORE THEY--

BW HOOH!

WE'RE HIT!

SINGH, SEND OUT THE REPAIR-ROBS!

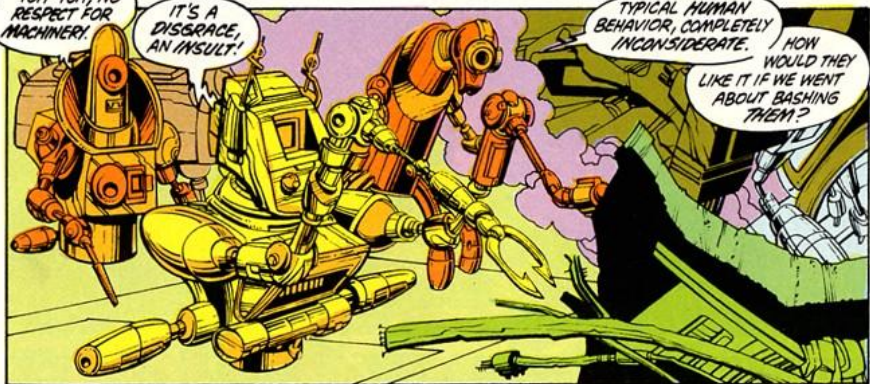


TCH-TCH, NO
RESPECT FOR
MACHINERY!

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
BZAM!

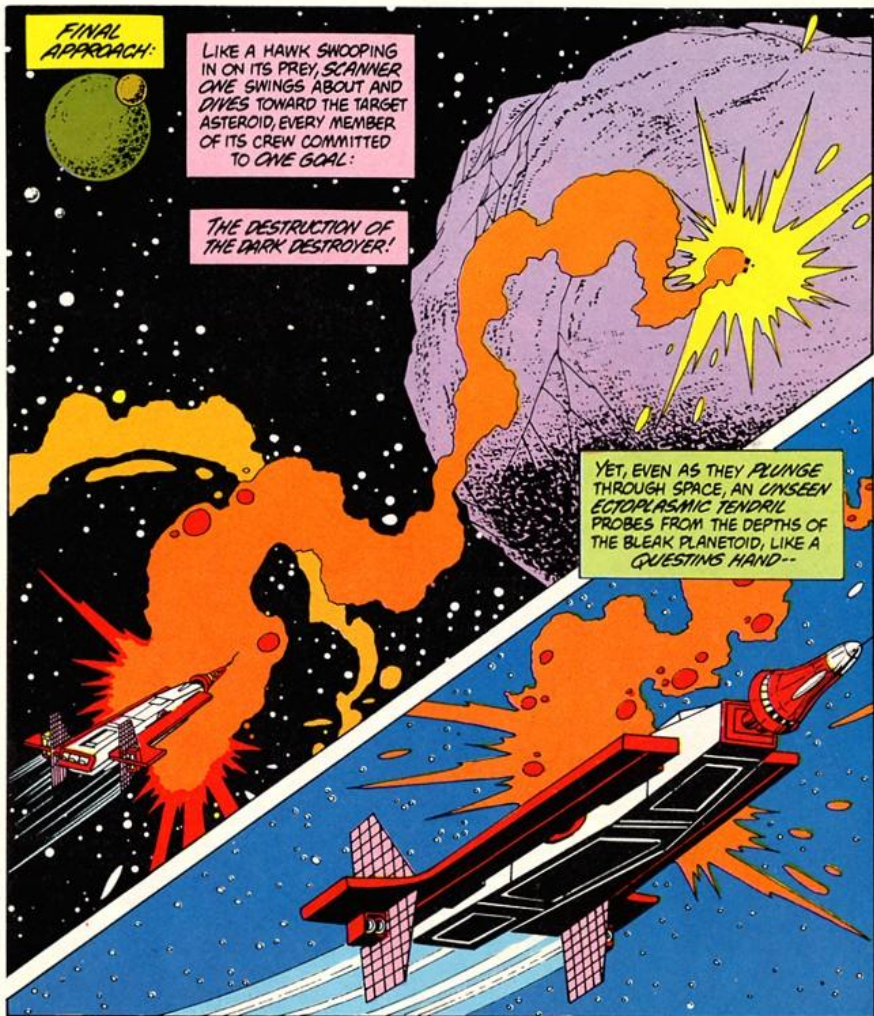
**FINAL
APPROACH:**



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:**

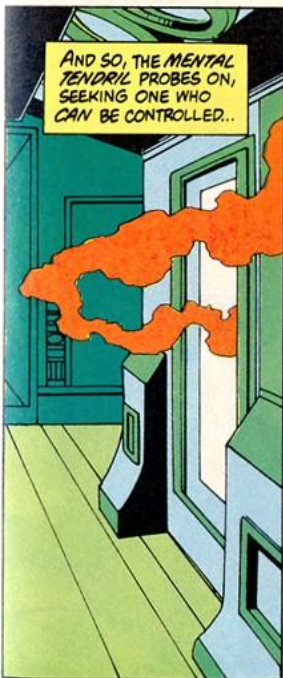




IT IS THE MENTAL
ESSENCE OF THE DARK
DESTROYER, AND FOR
AN INSTANT, FOUL AND
INDESCRIBABLE EVIL
PERVADES THE HEARTS
OF ALL ABOARD--



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

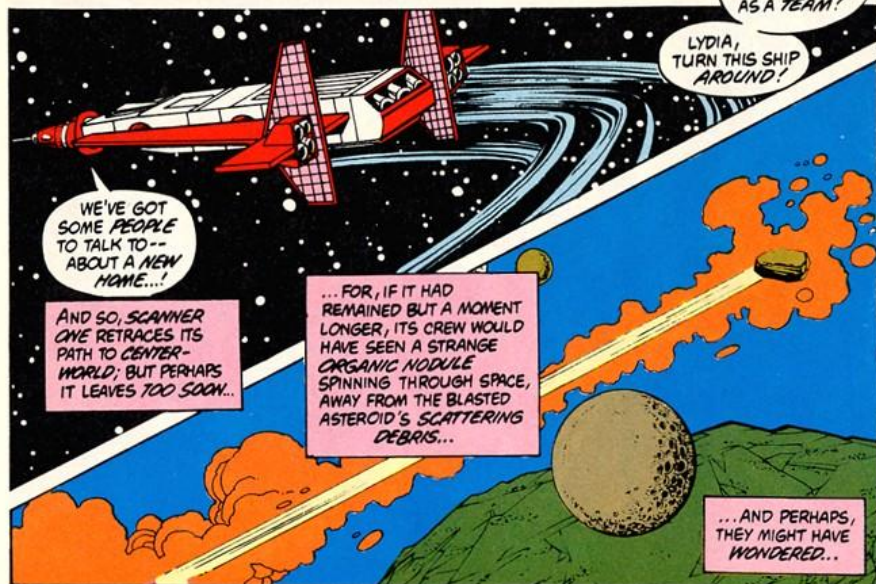


AND SO, THE MENTAL
TENDRIL PROBES ON,
SEEKING ONE WHO
CAN BE CONTROLLED...



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

KILL.







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 CARGO BAY
OF THE OLD SCANNER
ONE.

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







ATARI
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