

STAR TREK[®]

VOLUME 8



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PARALLEL LIVES



CAPTAIN'S LOG,
STARDATE 2261. 274.

THE ENTERPRISE IS COMPLETING ITS
GENERAL SURVEY OF THE PREVIOUSLY
UNEXPLORED WORLD *KASSEN FIVE*.



IT'S A CLASS-M
PRE-INDUSTRIAL
PLANET WITH TWO
DOMINANT SPECIES.



ONE SIGNIFICANTLY *MORE*
DOMINANT THAN THE OTHER.



NOT YET,
SPOCK. I WANT
TO SEE IF IT
WORKED
FIRST.

CAPTAIN, IT IS
PAST TIME WE
RETURNED TO
THE SHIP.

CAPTAIN, YOU TOOK
AN UNNECESSARY
RISK BY SABOTAGING
THE LOCKS ON THE
PRISON CONVOY.

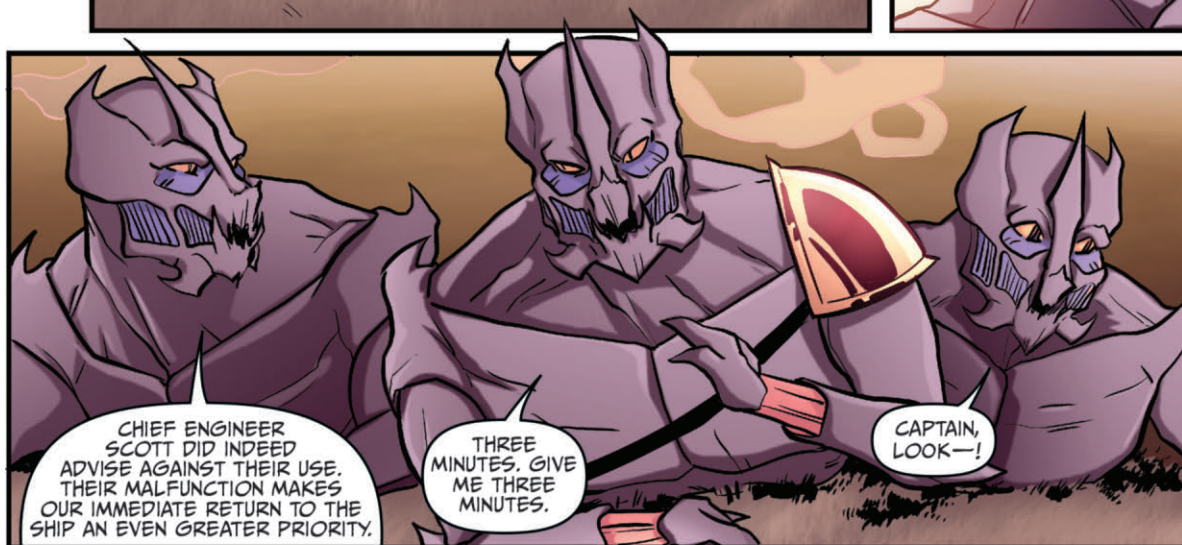
DESPITE NOT
BEING DETECTED,
YOU VIOLATED THE
SPIRIT OF THE
PRIME DIRECTIVE.

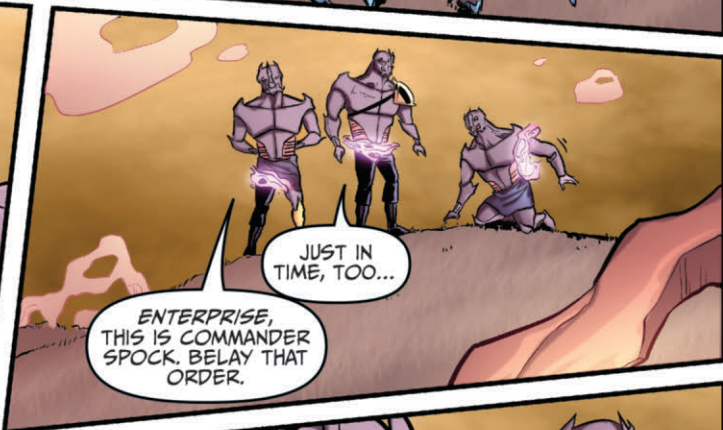
BUT NOT THE *LETTER*
OF IT, RIGHT? IT'S
ONLY A SINGLE
PRISONER
CONVOY.

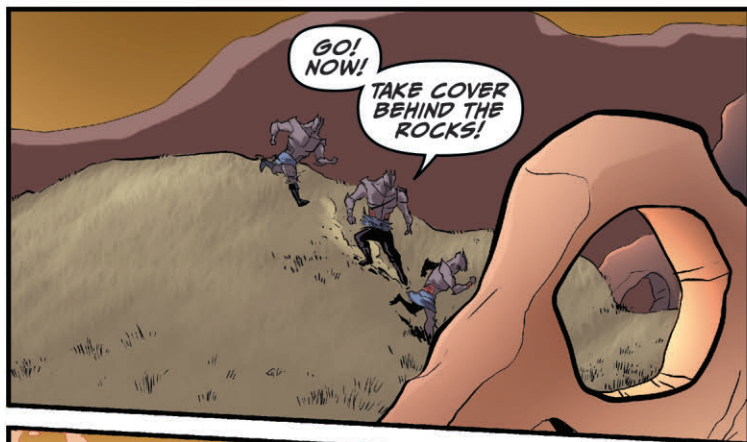
IT'S NOT
LIKE I'M
OVERTHROWING
THEIR CIVILIZATION.
I'M JUST NOT A
BIG FAN OF ONE
RACE *ENSLAVING*
ANOTHER.

FREEING THIS GROUP
IS A SMALL GESTURE OF
INTERPLANETARY GOODWILL.











CAPTAIN, I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE NATIVE CHILDREN MAY HAVE WITNESSED OUR DEPARTURE.

REALLY? I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING. MUST HAVE BEEN THE IMAGE INDUCER PLAYING TRICKS ON YOU.

PHEW.

LT. COMMANDER SPOCK.

CAPTAIN JANE TIBERIA KIRK.

YEOMAN JASON RAND.



MY INDUCERS WERE NOT DESIGNED TO "PLAY TRICKS"! THEY WERE DESIGNED TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE COVERT INVESTIGATION OF UNKNOWN WORLDS!

CHIEF ENGINEER MARJORIE "SCOTTY" SCOTT.




RELAX, SCOTTY. THEY WORKED LIKE A CHARM.

AYE, WELL... THANK YOU, MA'AM!



YOU'RE GOING TO REPORT ME, AREN'T YOU?

AS YOU SAID, CAPTAIN, I MIGHT HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN ABOUT THE ALIEN CHILD NOTICING OUR PRESENCE.



IT WOULD BE ILLOGICAL FOR ME TO REPORT A VIOLATION OF THE PRIME DIRECTIVE IF I CANNOT BE CERTAIN THAT ONE TOOK PLACE.

OR MAYBE YOU STILL FEEL BAD ABOUT THAT WHOLE NIBIRU SITUATION?




SO YOU KEEP SAYING.

TO "FEEL BAD" WOULD REQUIRE AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE I AM INCAPABLE OF GIVING, MA'AM.



LT. PAVLOVNA CHEKOV.



MS. CHEKOV! TIME TO MAKE OURSELVES SCARCE. SET A COURSE FOR SOMEWHERE... UNKNOWN!

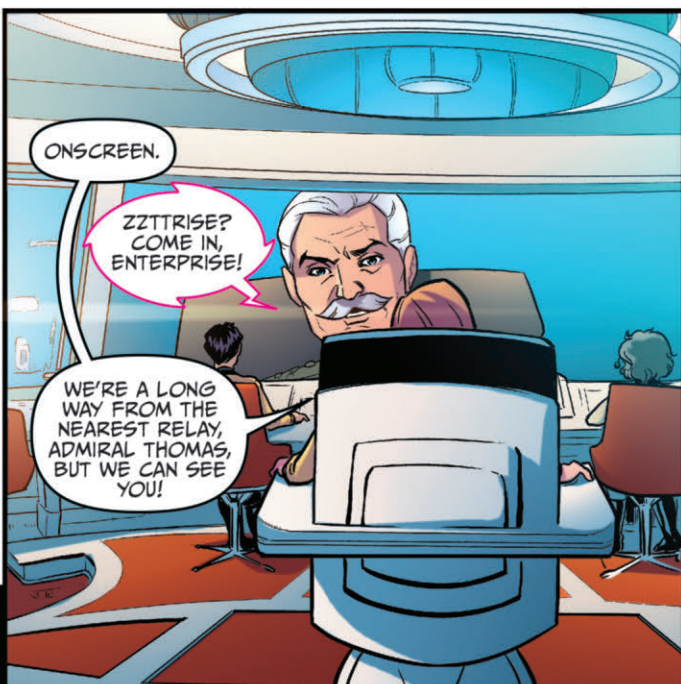
AYE KEPTIN!

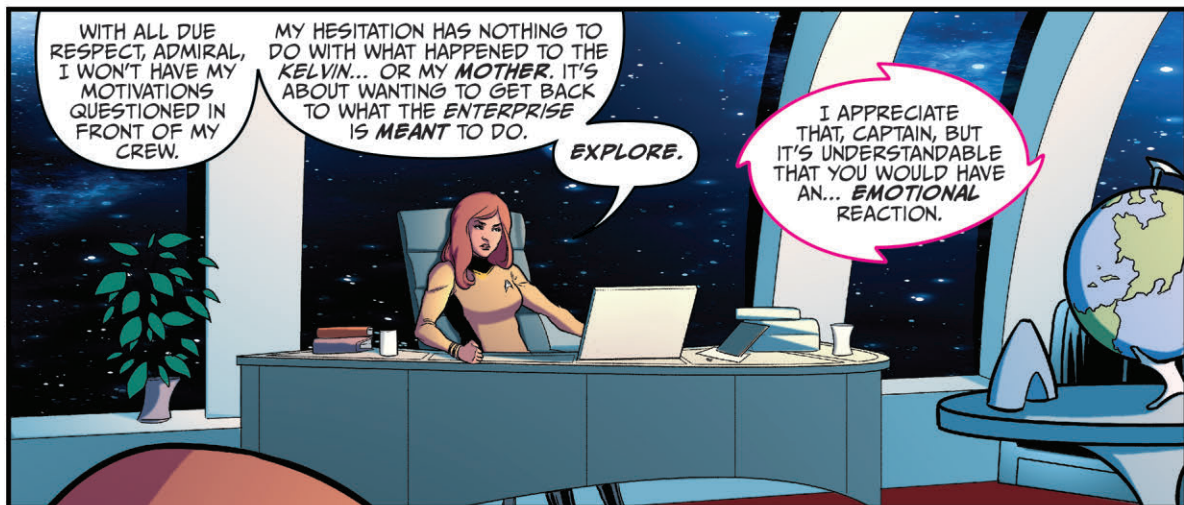


SULU, WARP THREE, IF YOU PLEASE.

LT. HIKARI SULLI.

YES, MA'AM!



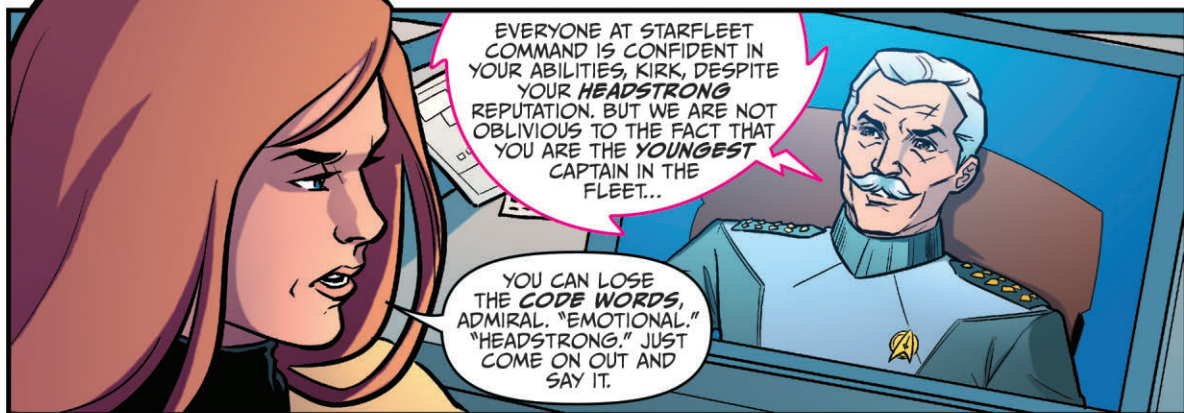


WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, ADMIRAL, I WON'T HAVE MY MOTIVATIONS QUESTIONED IN FRONT OF MY CREW.

MY HESITATION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *KELVIN*... OR MY *MOTHER*. IT'S ABOUT WANTING TO GET BACK TO WHAT THE *ENTERPRISE* IS MEANT TO DO.

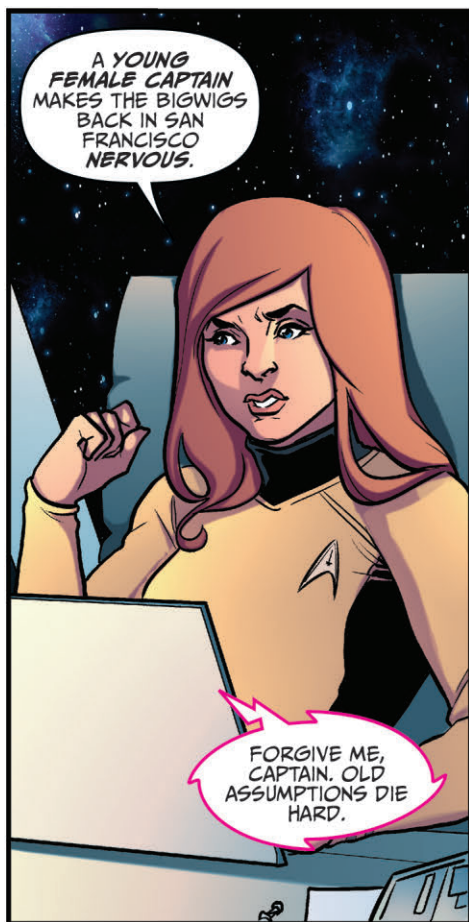
EXPLORE.

I APPRECIATE THAT, CAPTAIN, BUT IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE THAT YOU WOULD HAVE AN... *EMOTIONAL* REACTION.



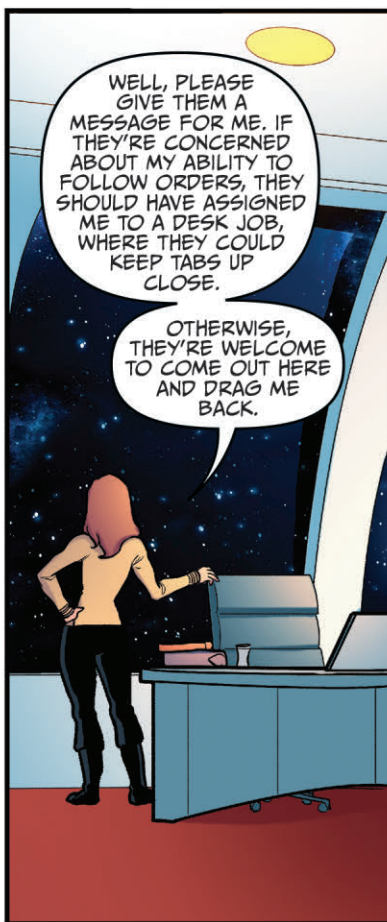
EVERYONE AT STARFLEET COMMAND IS CONFIDENT IN YOUR ABILITIES, KIRK, DESPITE YOUR *HEADSTRONG* REPUTATION. BUT WE ARE NOT OBVIOUS TO THE FACT THAT YOU ARE THE *YOUNGEST* CAPTAIN IN THE FLEET...

YOU CAN LOSE THE *CODE WORDS*, ADMIRAL. "EMOTIONAL." "HEADSTRONG." JUST COME ON OUT AND SAY IT.



A *YOUNG FEMALE CAPTAIN* MAKES THE *BIGWIGS* BACK IN *SAN FRANCISCO* *NERVOUS*.

FORGIVE ME, CAPTAIN. OLD ASSUMPTIONS DIE HARD.



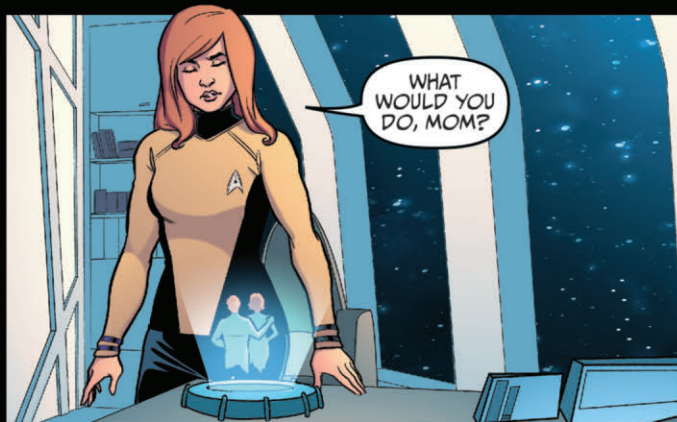
WELL, PLEASE GIVE THEM A MESSAGE FOR ME. IF THEY'RE CONCERNED ABOUT MY ABILITY TO FOLLOW ORDERS, THEY SHOULD HAVE ASSIGNED ME TO A DESK JOB, WHERE THEY COULD KEEP TABS UP CLOSE.

OTHERWISE, THEY'RE WELCOME TO COME OUT HERE AND DRAG ME BACK.



THEY'LL FIND ME EN ROUTE TO THE *CAMPOR* SYSTEM.

ENTERPRISE OUT.





SPOCK, I
WANT TO GO
WITH YOU NEXT
TIME.

THAT
WOULD BE
ILLOGICAL,
UHURO.



AS THE CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICER, YOUR POST IS ON
THE BRIDGE DURING AWAY
MISSIONS, EXCEPT FOR
THOSE THAT REQUIRE
YOUR EXPERTISE AT A
GIVEN LOCATION.

OR MAYBE
I JUST WANT
TO PROTECT
THE WOMAN
I LOVE.



A CURIOUS
NOTION. VULCAN
FEMALES POSSESS
SUPERIOR STRENGTH
AND STAMINA COMPARED
TO HUMAN MALES. IF
EVENTS CALLED FOR IT, I
WOULD BE MORE
LIKELY TO PROTECT
YOU FROM HARM.



MUST BE AN
EARTH THING.
THE GALLANT
KNIGHT ALWAYS
WANTS TO SAVE
THE PRINCESS,
Y'KNOW?



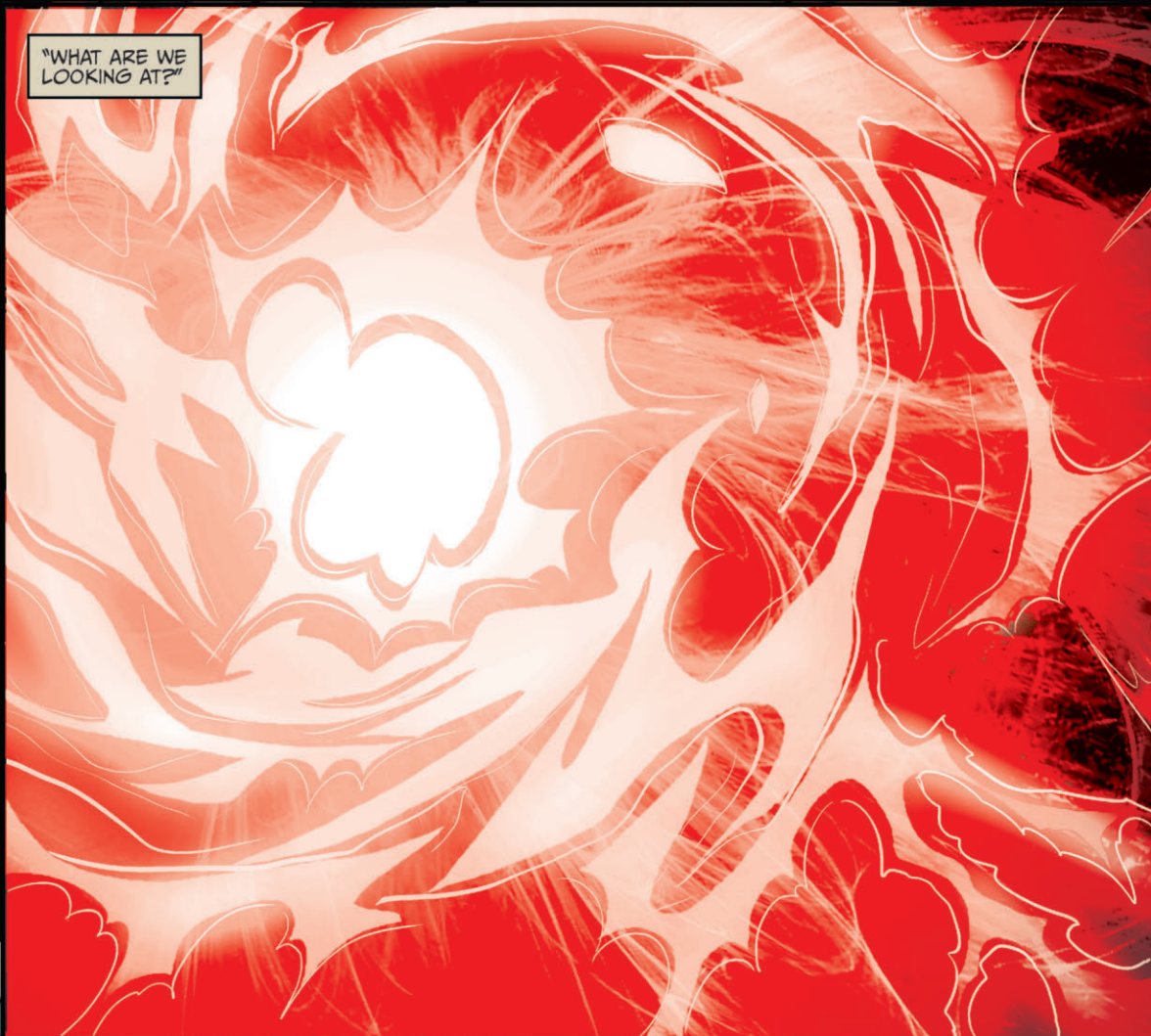
I DO NOT
UNDERSTAND.
WHO IS THE
"PRINCESS" IN
YOUR ANALOGY?

... NEVER
MIND.





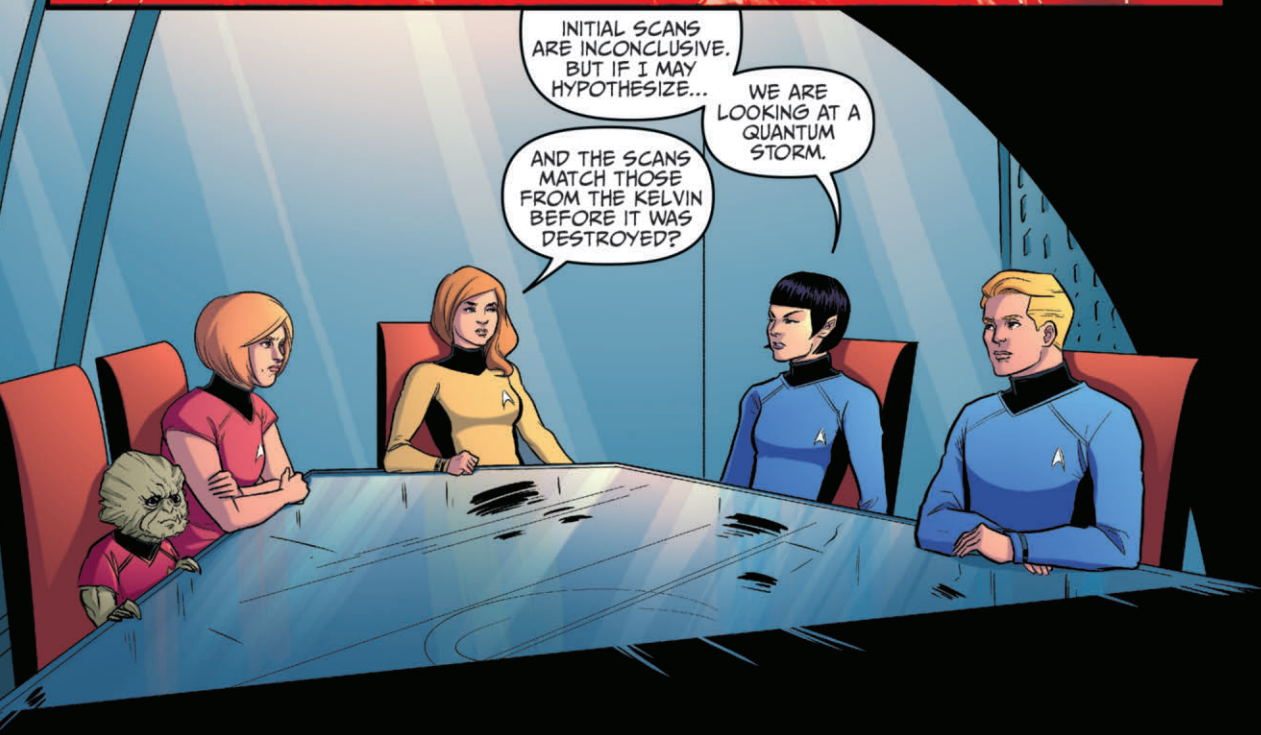
"WHAT ARE WE
LOOKING AT?"



INITIAL SCANS
ARE INCONCLUSIVE.
BUT IF I MAY
HYPOTHESIZE...

WE ARE
LOOKING AT A
QUANTUM
STORM.

AND THE SCANS
MATCH THOSE
FROM THE KELVIN
BEFORE IT WAS
DESTROYED?





TO SOME EXTENT, YES. WE SPECULATE THAT THIS STORM IS THE RESULT OF TEMPORAL ENTANGLEMENT.

THINK OF ALL POSSIBLE REALITIES EXISTING IN PARALLEL. WHAT WE'RE SEEING NOW IS A KNOT TYING THOSE REALITIES TOGETHER.

DR. CARL MARCUS



WHICH COULD ENABLE SOMETHING TO PASS FROM ONE REALITY TO ANOTHER.

LIKE THE NARADA. OR SPOCK'S OLDER SELF.



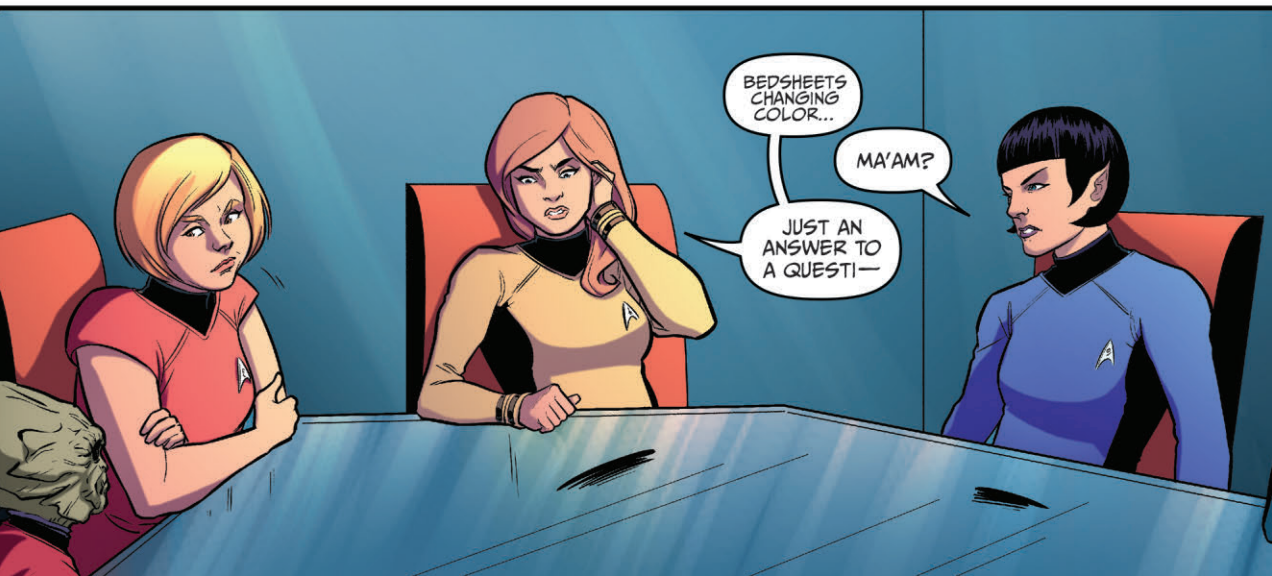
INDEED. I HAVE ALREADY DETECTED SIGNS OF ENTANGLEMENT IN THE SHIP'S SYSTEMS AS WE HAVE APPROACHED THE STORM.

FOR EXAMPLE, PROGRAMS SUDDENLY ROUTING THROUGH DIFFERENT SECTIONS THAN THEY DID BEFORE.



AYE, I'VE NOTICED THIS TOO! AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST KEENSERA MESSIN' ABOUT, BUT I'VE BEEN GETTING SOME VERY STRANGE WARP CORE READINGS IN THE PAST HOUR!

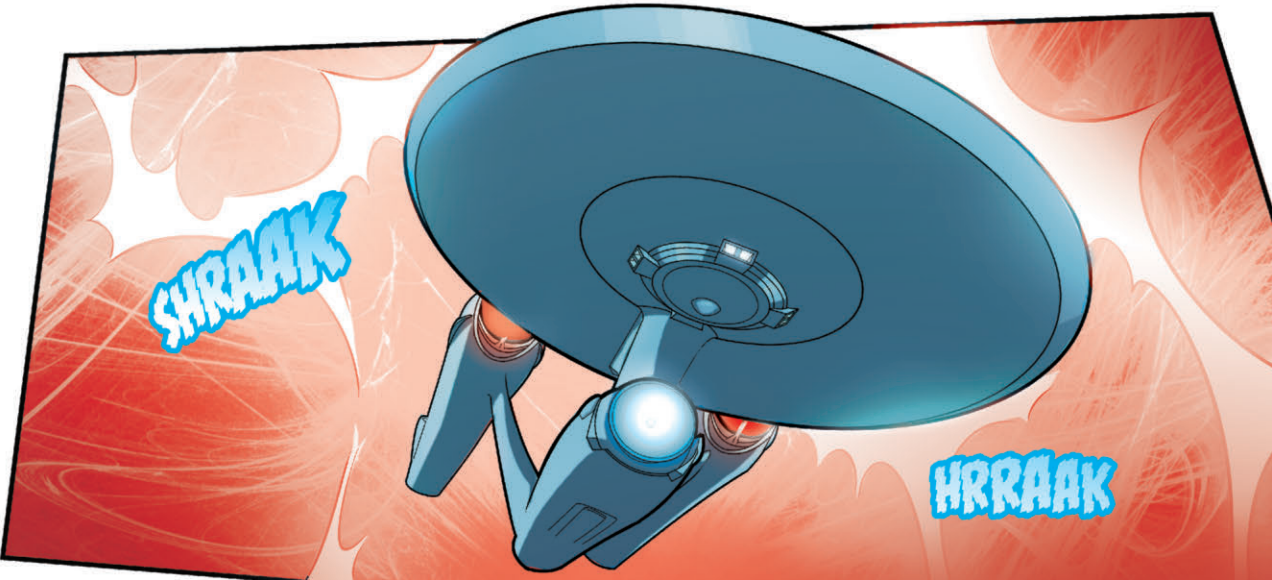
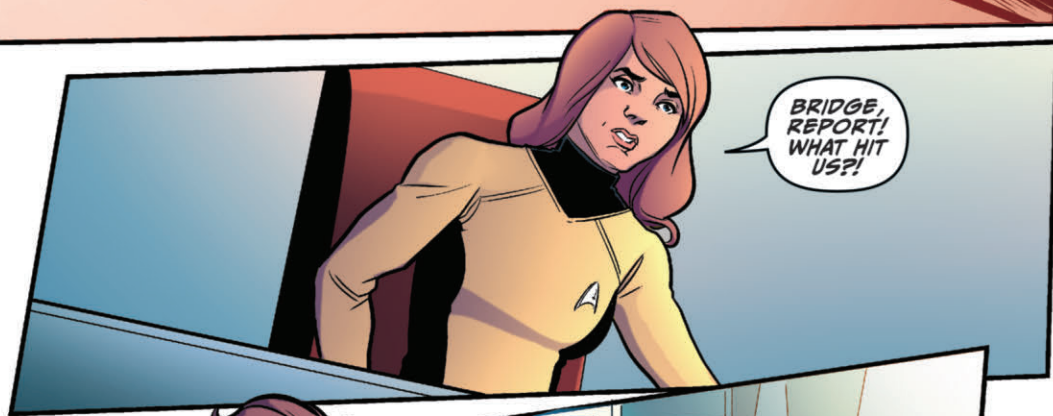
LT. KEENSERA

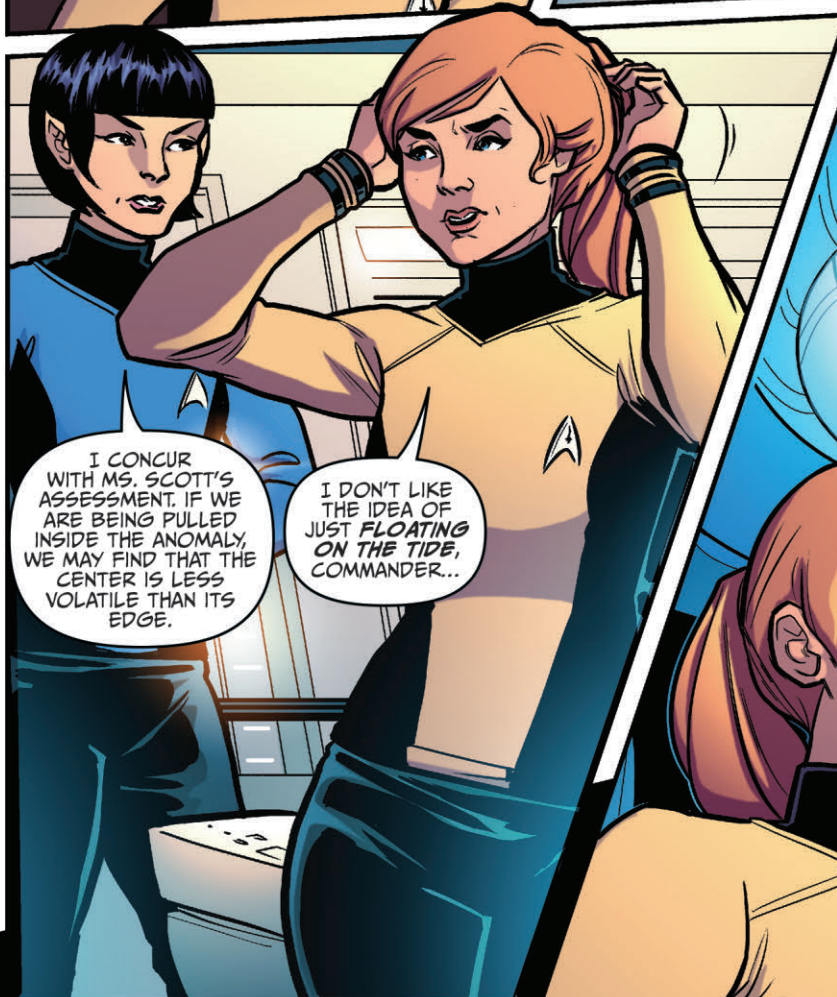
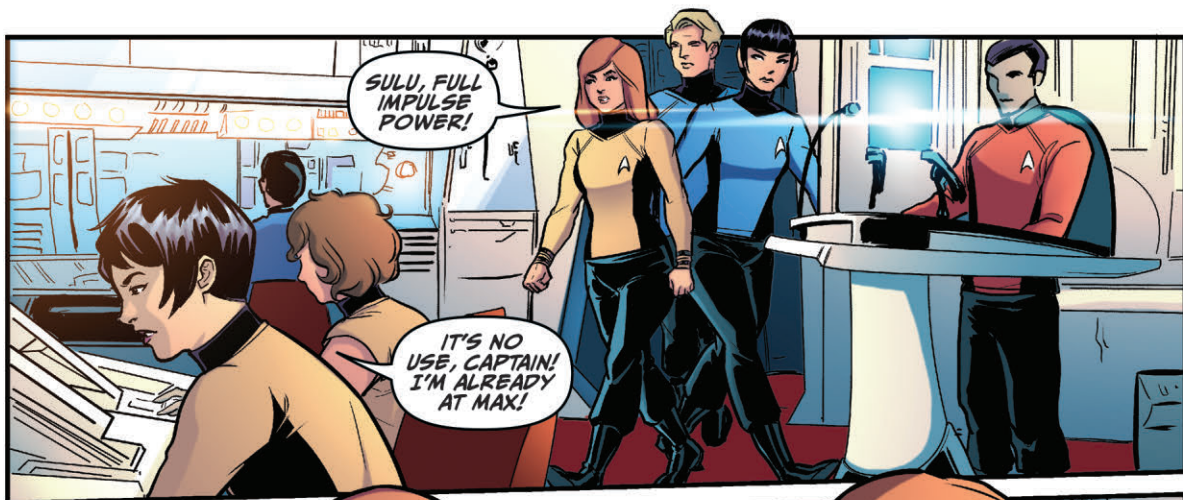


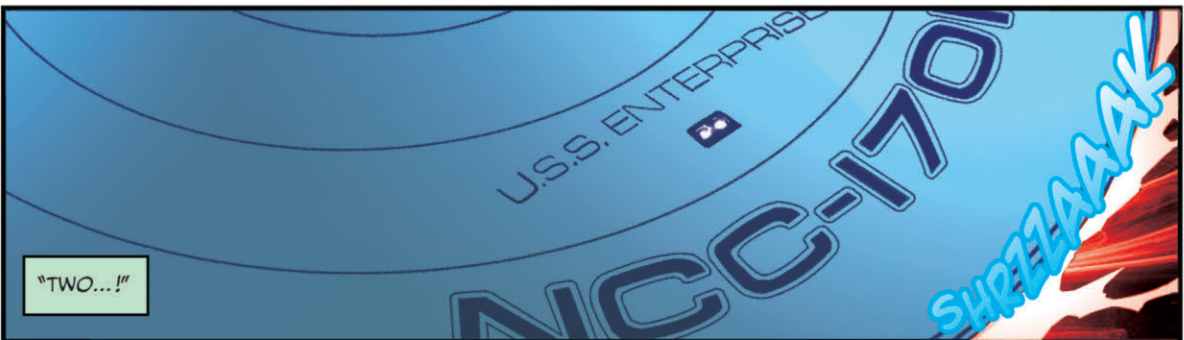
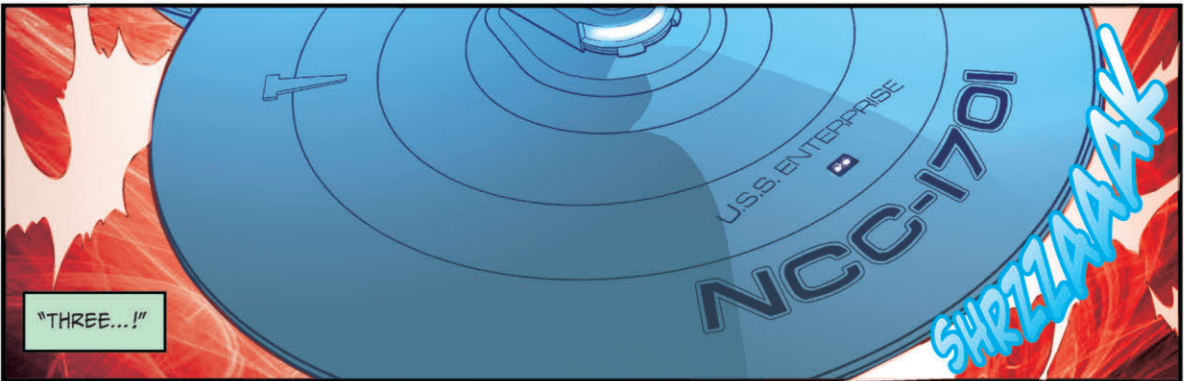
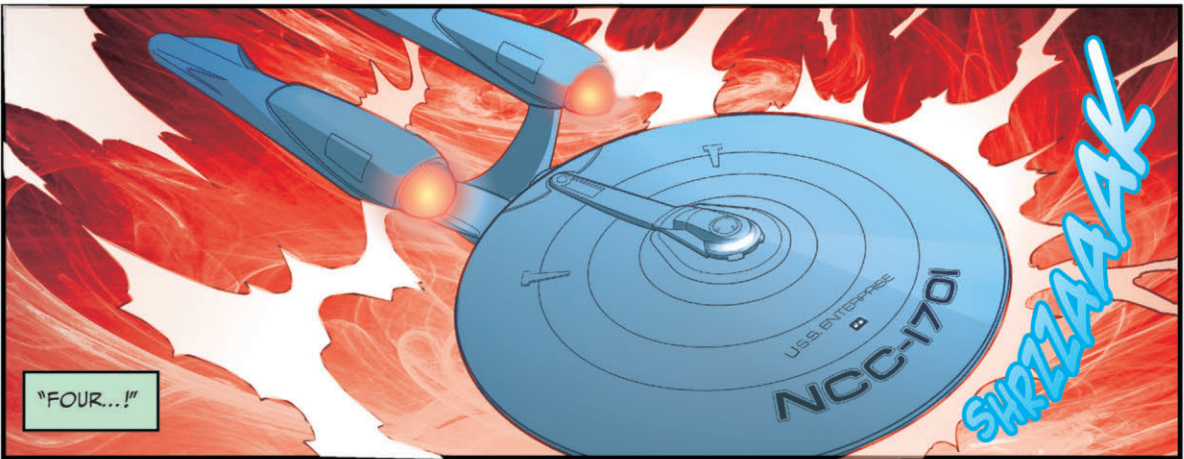
BEDSHEETS CHANGING COLOR...

MA'AM?

JUST AN ANSWER TO A QUESTI—

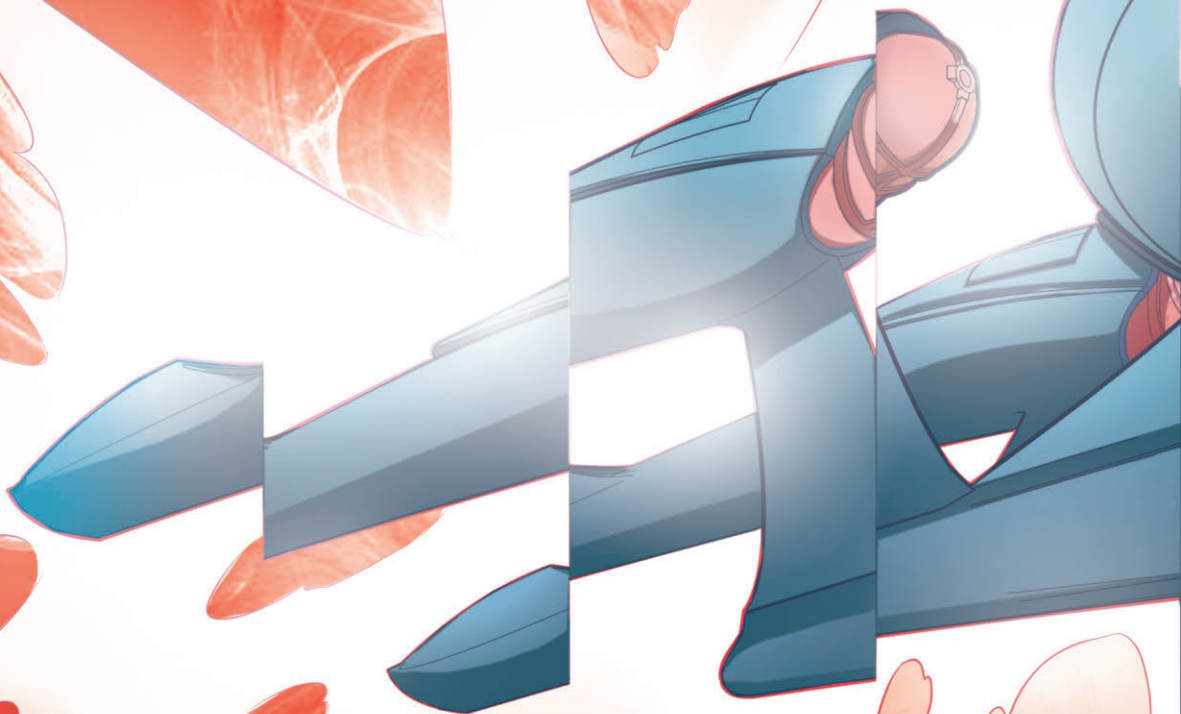


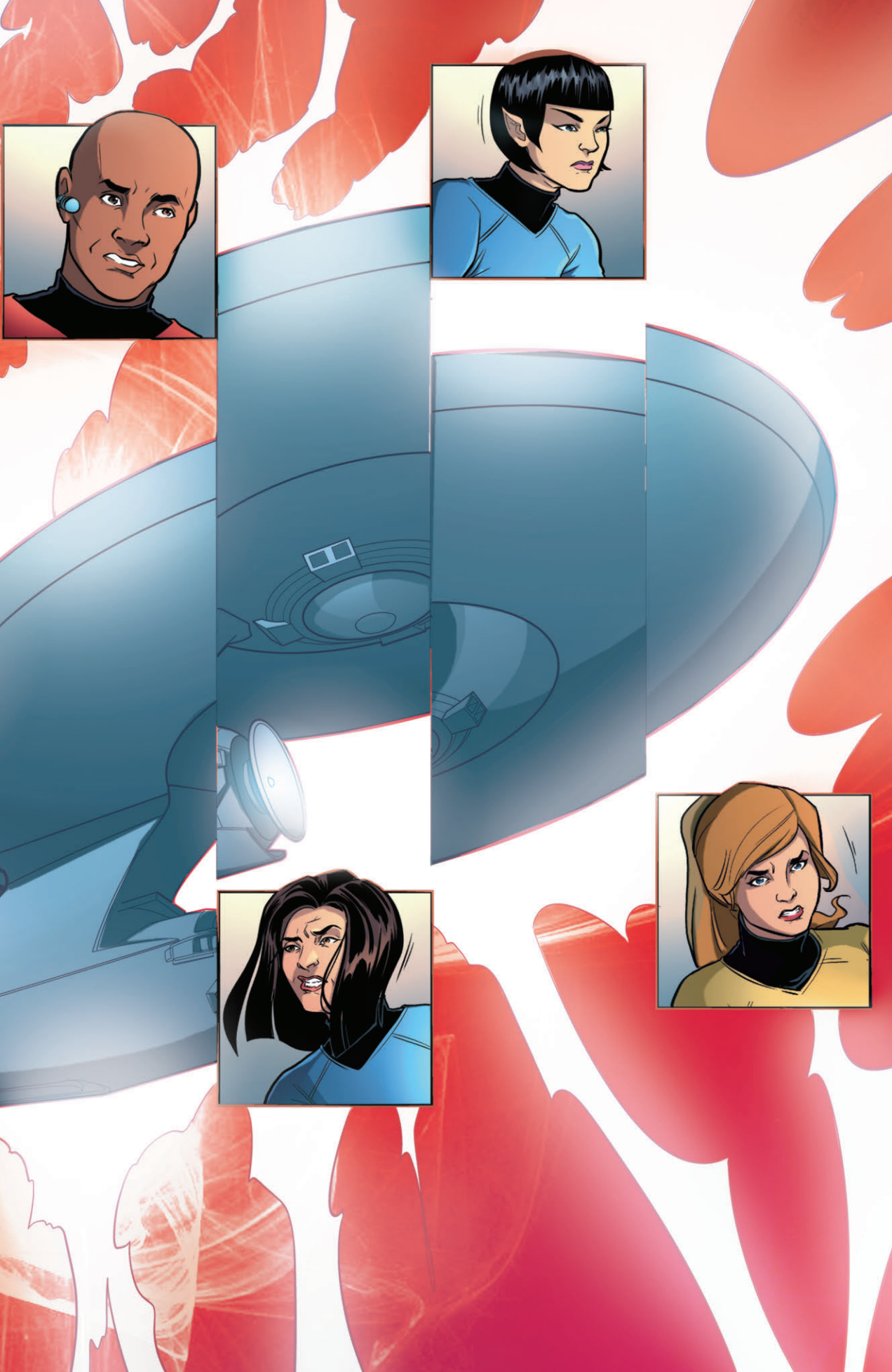


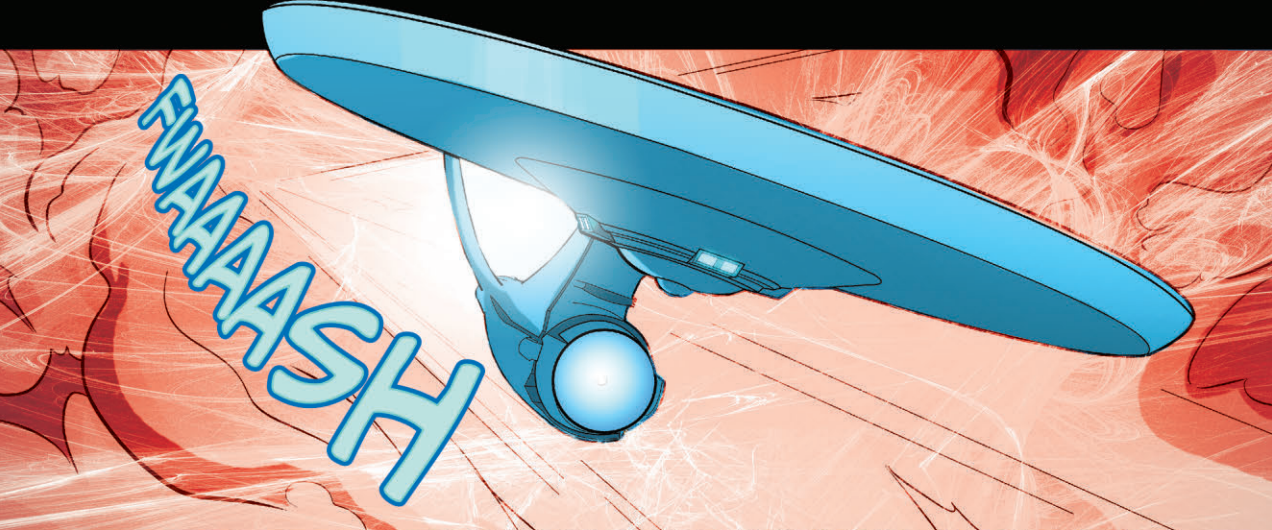




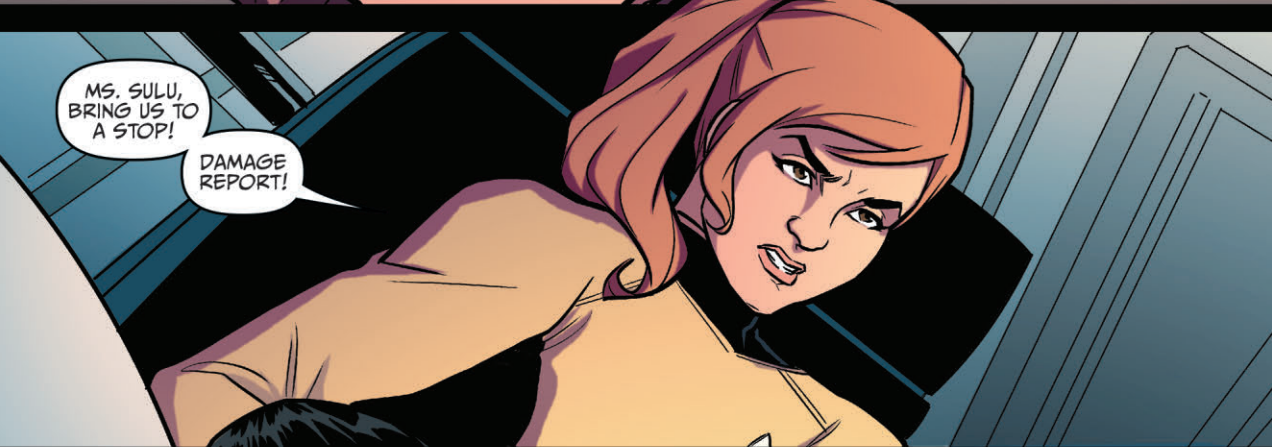
... ONE!







KEPTIN! WE
ARE FREE OF
ZE ANOMALEE!

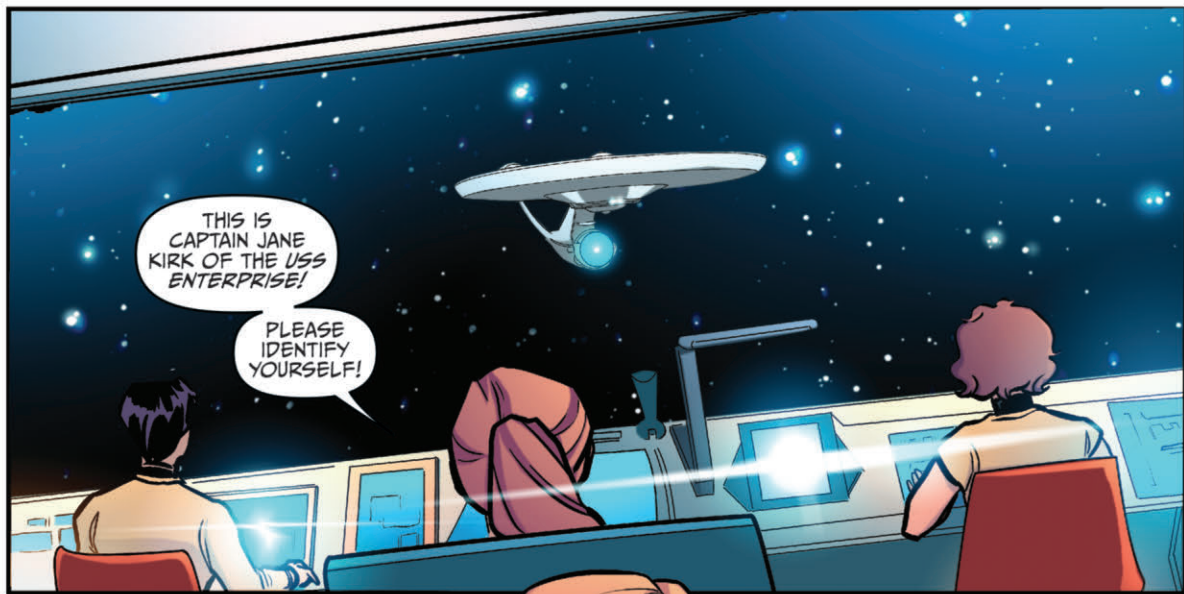


MS. SULU,
BRING US TO
A STOP!

DAMAGE
REPORT!



MINOR HULL
DAMAGE IN
MULTIPLE SECTIONS,
CAPTAIN, BUT NO
SERIOUS THREAT TO
SHIP SYSTEMS.





...\"JANE KIRK\"?



CAPTAIN'S LOG,
STARDATE 2261.234.

THE *ENTERPRISE* IS UNDAMAGED AFTER ITS
JOURNEY THROUGH THE ANOMALY DUBBED A
"QUANTUM STORM" BY COMMANDER SPOCK.

SENSORS INDICATE THAT WE HAVE BEEN
TRANSPORTED TO AN UNKNOWN REGION OF SPACE,
BUT THE FIRST SHIP WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED...

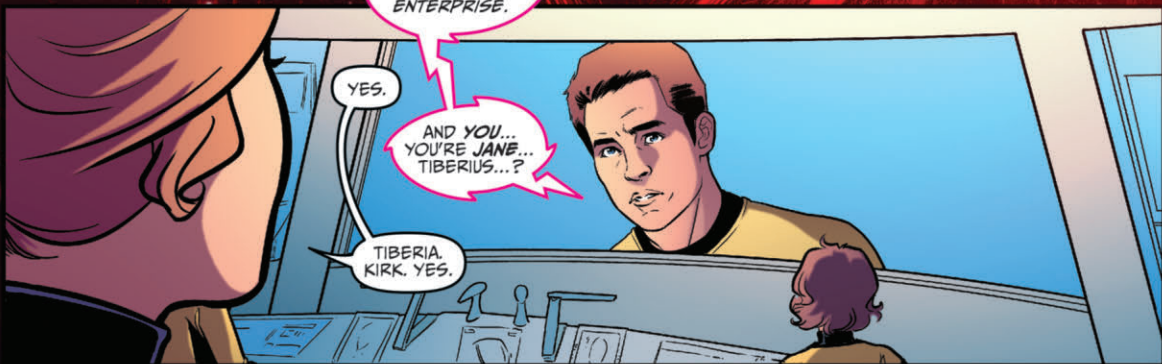
...IS DISCONCERTINGLY FAMILIAR.

YOU SAY
YOU'RE THE *USS*
ENTERPRISE.

YES.

AND YOU...
YOU'RE JANE...
TIBERIUS...?

TIBERIA.
KIRK. YES.

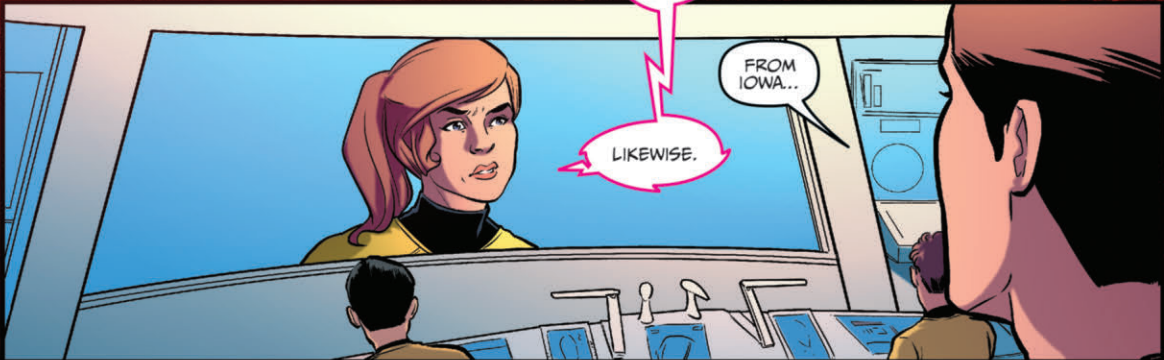


CAPTAIN'S LOG,
STARDATE 2261.234.

WE'VE EMERGED FROM THE ANOMALY
COMMANDER SPOCK CALLS A "TEMPORAL
KNOT" TO FIND OURSELVES OFF THE EDGE
OF EVERY STELLAR MAP WE KNOW OF.

THAT WOULD BE ENOUGH TO CAUSE
CONCERN, IF NOT FOR THE FACT THAT
WE ARE NOW FACE TO FACE WITH...

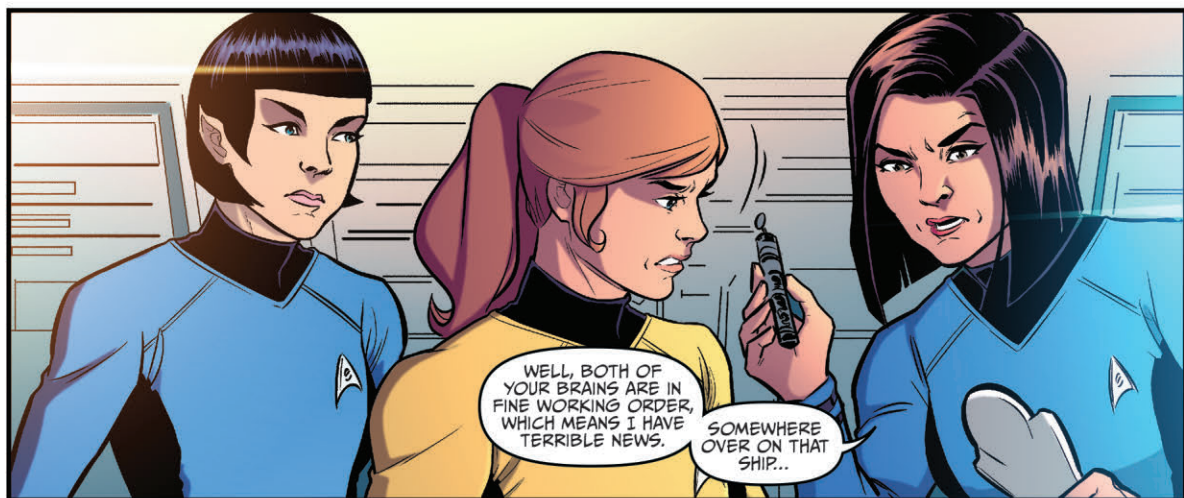
... OURSELVES?

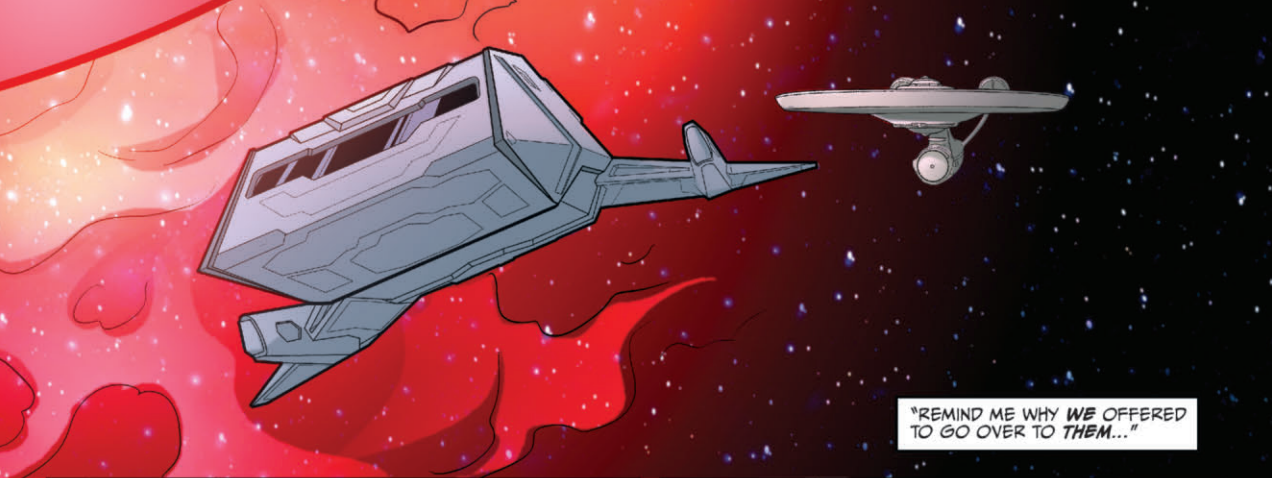


AND
YOU'RE
JAMES.

FROM
IOWA...

LIKEWISE.





"REMIND ME WHY *WE* OFFERED TO GO OVER TO *THEM*..."



...AND WHY I NEED TO GO AT ALL?

BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE THE GENTLEMANLY THING TO DO, AND BECAUSE I WANT MY SENIOR STAFF WITH ME.



JUST TELL THE TRUTH, CAPTAIN! YOU WANT TO MEET YOUR LADY-SELF JUST AS MUCH AS I DO!

I WONDER IF SHE'S GOT MY DEVASTATING CHARM?

I FAIL TO SEE HOW THERE WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT VARIATION IN YOUR PERSONALITIES GIVEN THAT THE ONLY APPARENT DIFFERENCE IS A PHYSICAL ONE.



HAVE YOU NEVER VISITED **PLANET EARTH**, MR. SPOCK? MEN AND WOMEN MAY AS WELL BE **TWO DISTINCT ALIEN SPECIES!**

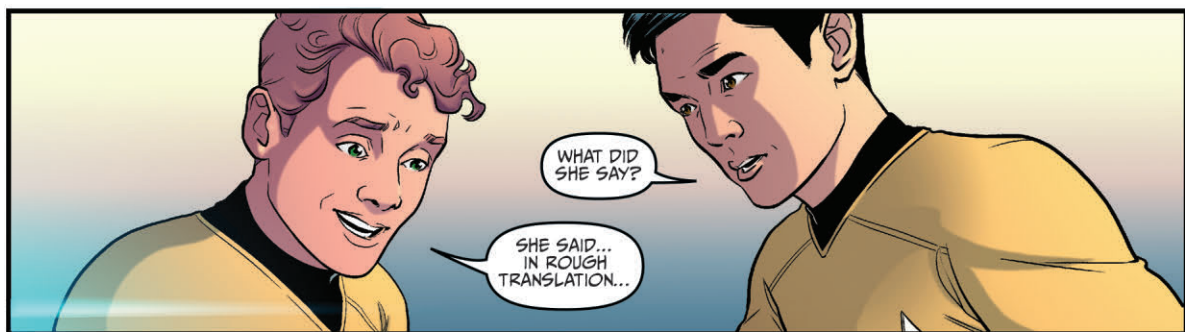
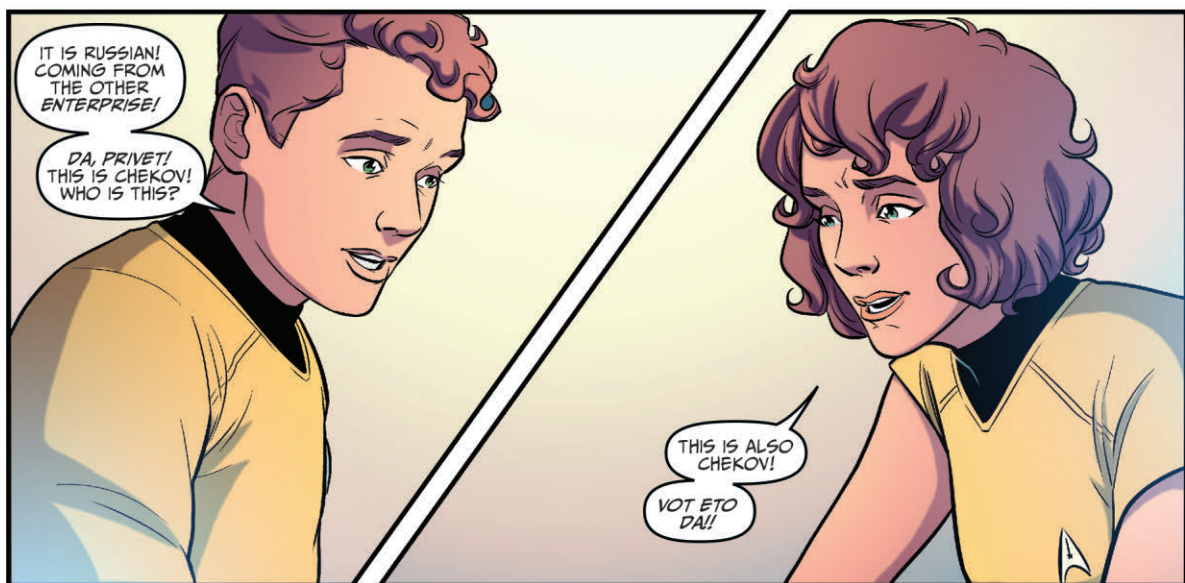


A FAULTY ANALOGY, MR. SCOTT, GIVEN THAT THE VERY DEFINITION OF A SPECIES IS THE ABILITY OF TWO MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE SEX TO PRODUCE VIABLE—



JUST FLY THE SHUTTLE, SPOCK.

I CAN'T WAIT TO MEET *YOUR* DOUBLE...





"...WOW!"

THIS IS...

...MIND-BENDINGLY STRANGE...

FOR ALL OF US, BUT WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO.



I'M FREAKING OUT RIGHT NOW. WHY AREN'T YOU FREAKING OUT? WHY ISN'T EVERYONE FREAKING OUT?!

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, MAN.



WE'RE BOTH IN UNKNOWN SPACE WITH NO CLEAR PATH BACK.

WHETHER WE CROSSED OVER FROM OUR OWN REALITY TO THE OTHERS', OR WHETHER WE'VE BOTH ARRIVED IN AN ENTIRELY NEW REALITY, OUR IMMEDIATE PRIORITY IS TO--

SAHEME



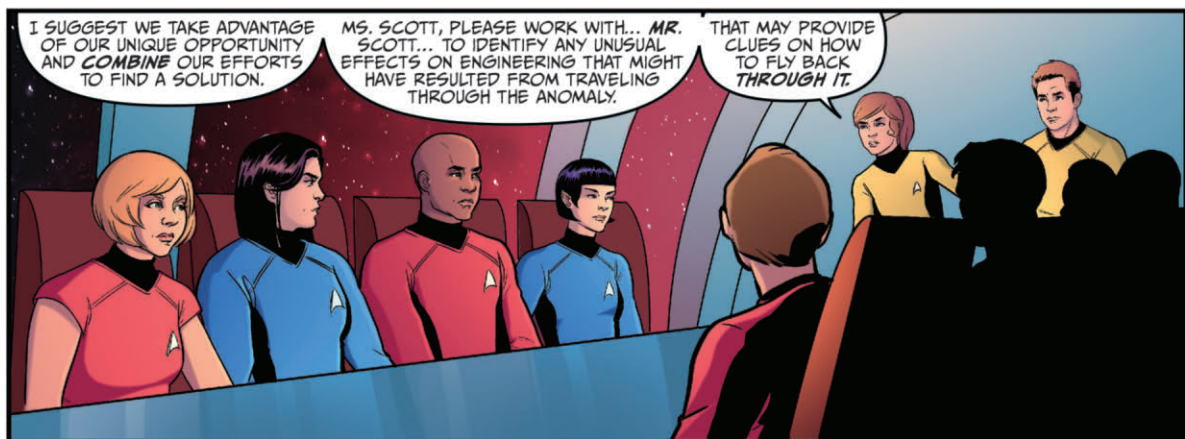
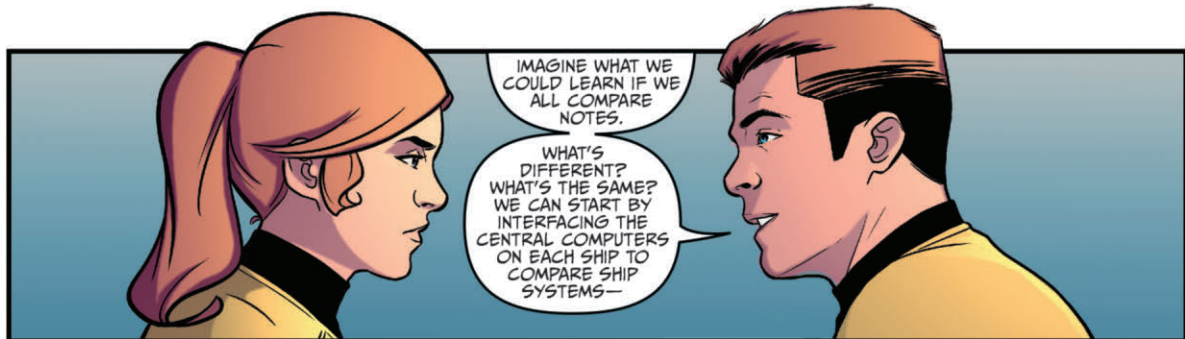
YES, CAPTAIN?

BEFORE DECIDING ON A COURSE OF ACTION, MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE A MINUTE AND CONSIDER THE UNIQUE SITUATION WE'RE IN.

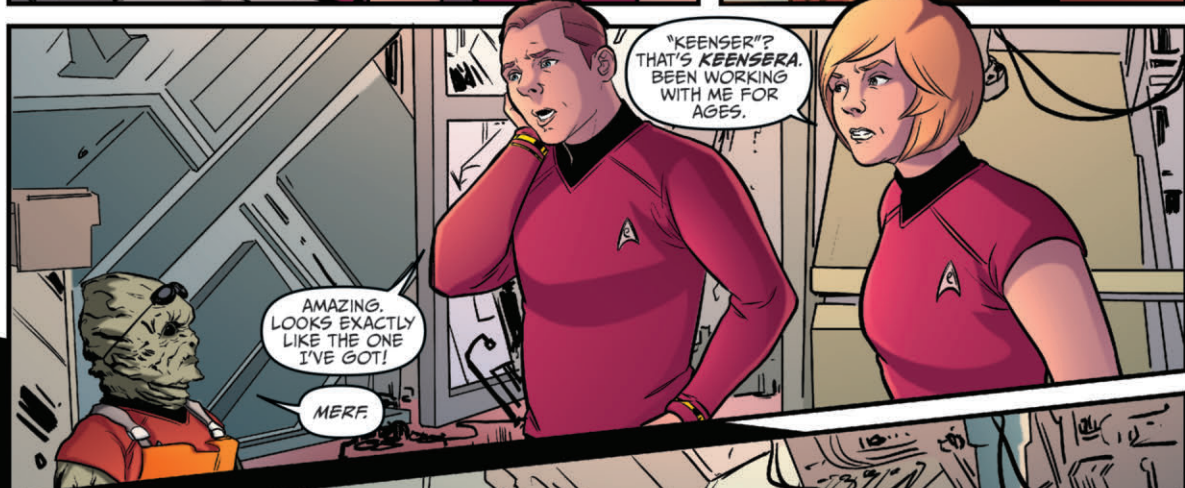
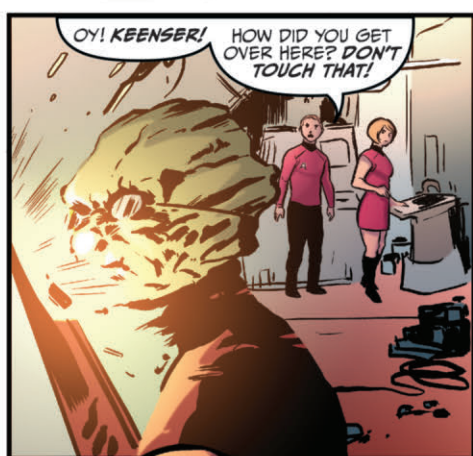


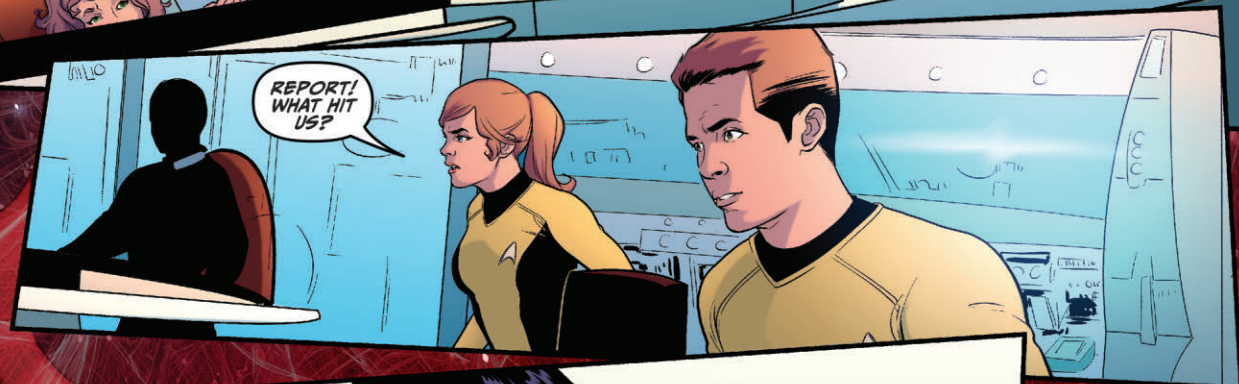
COMPARE NOTES. EXPLORE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR TWO SHIPS. TWO DIFFERENT FEDERATIONS. TWO DIFFERENT EARTHS!



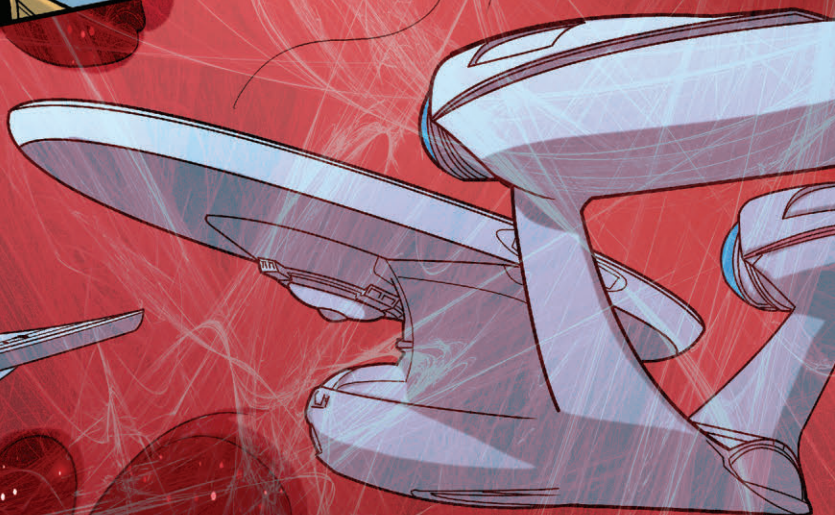








"IT EXPANDED IN SECONDS!
PULLING US BACK INSIDE!"





LIEUTENANT,
CAN YOU HAIL
MY SHIP? I
NEED SULU!

SULU!
WHAT'S THE
STATUS OVER
THERE?

CAPTAIN,
WE'RE BACK IN
THE STORM! I'D
RECOMMEND YOU
GET BACK HERE
SOON!

AYE,
SIR!



NO TELLING
HOW LONG OUR
SHIELDS WILL HOLD UP
INSIDE THIS THING.
WE'LL COORDINATE A
WAY OUT WHEN I GET
BACK TO MY
ENTERPRISE.

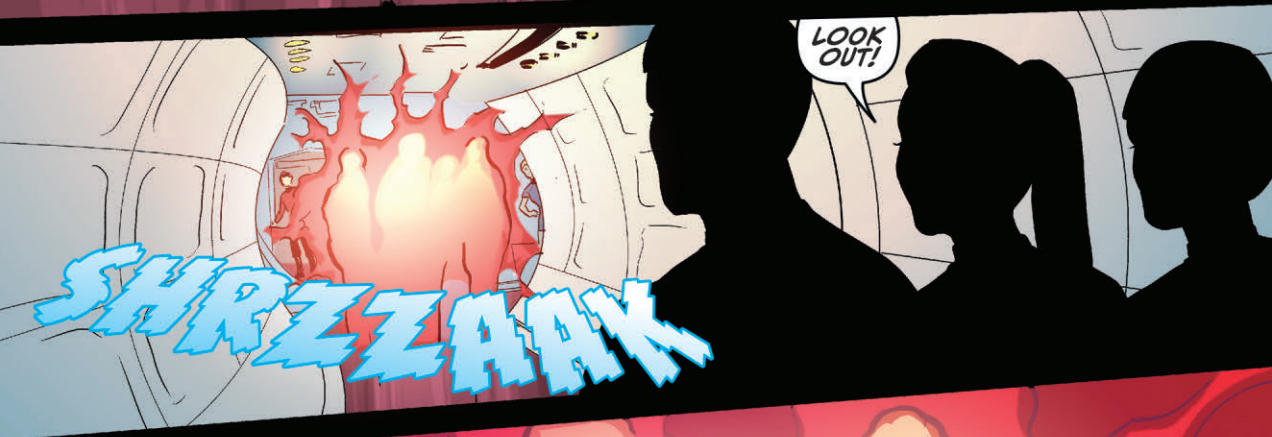
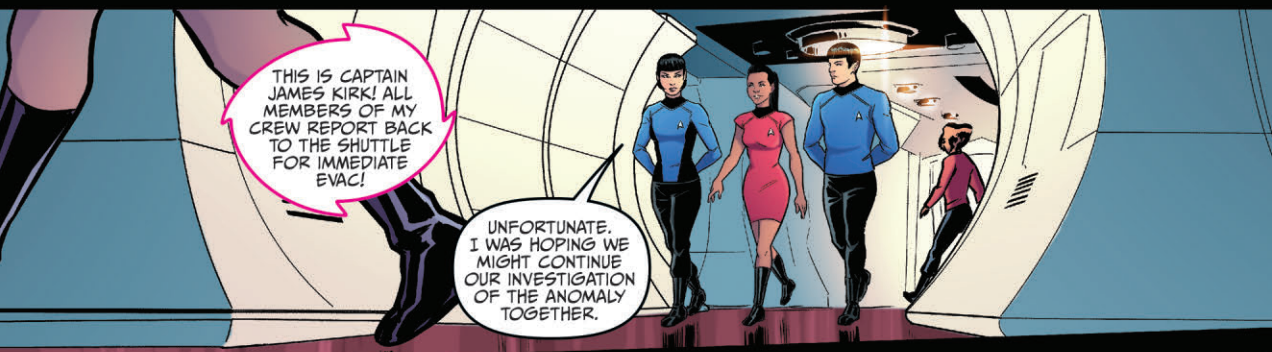
TOO RISKY TO
BEAM INSIDE THIS
THING. YOU COULD
END UP SCATTERING
YOUR ATOMS
ACROSS INFINITE
REALITIES.

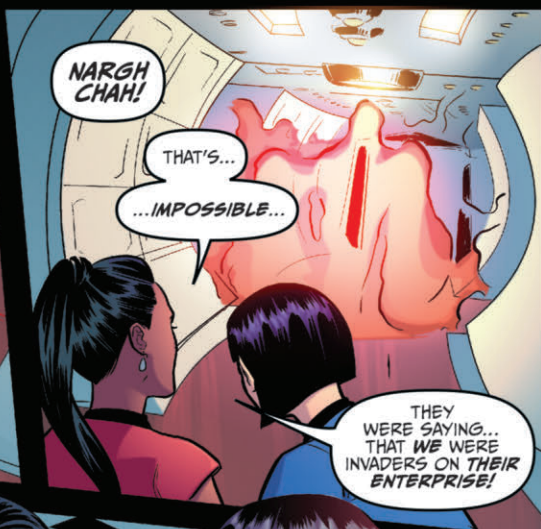


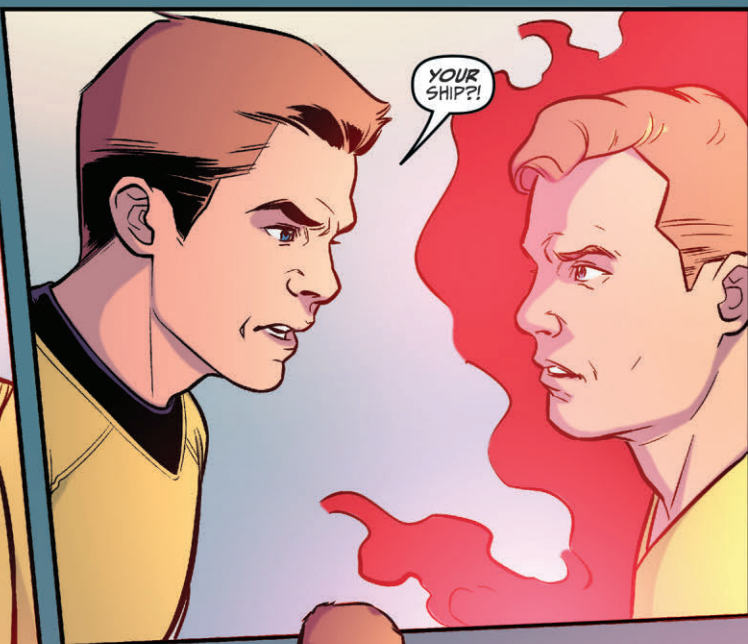
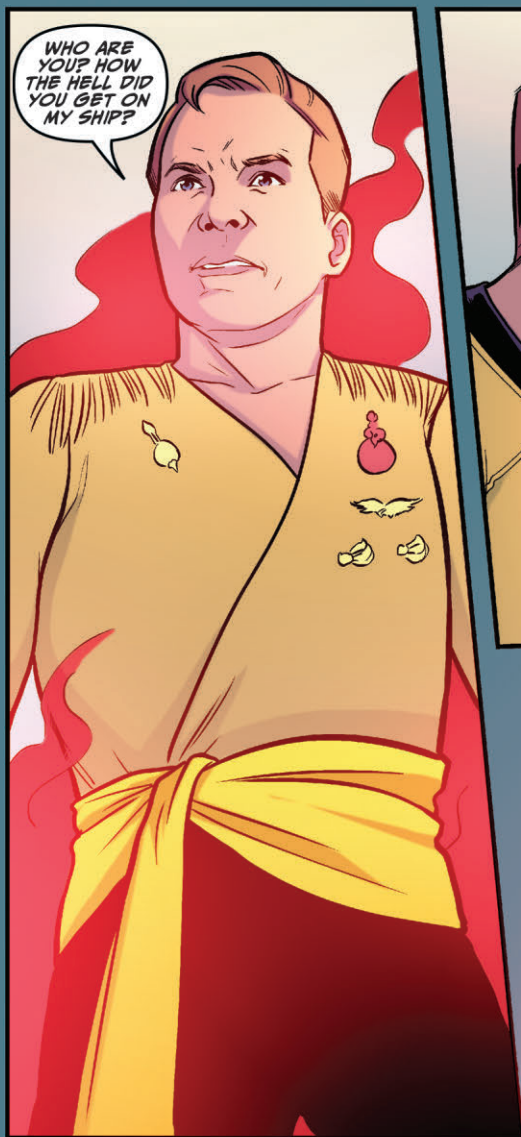
GOOD POINT.
SHUTTLE IT IS.

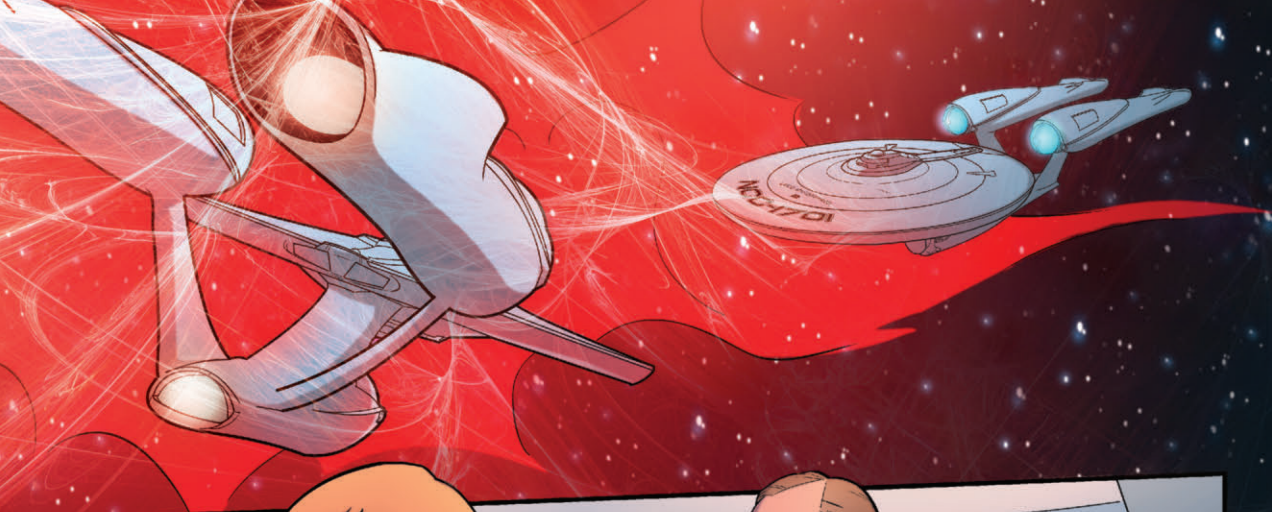
WE'LL KEEP
COMMS
OPEN.
AND CAPTAIN—

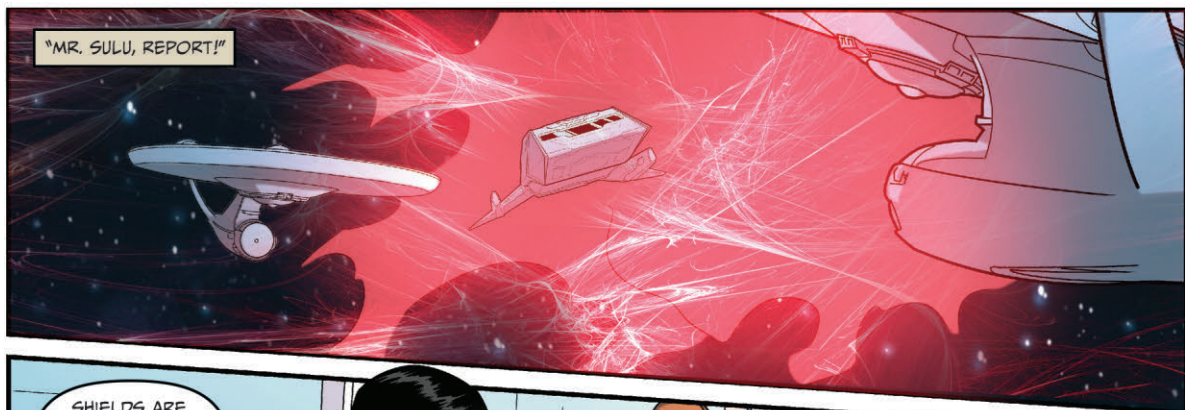
—JIM...
NICE
MEETING
YOU.



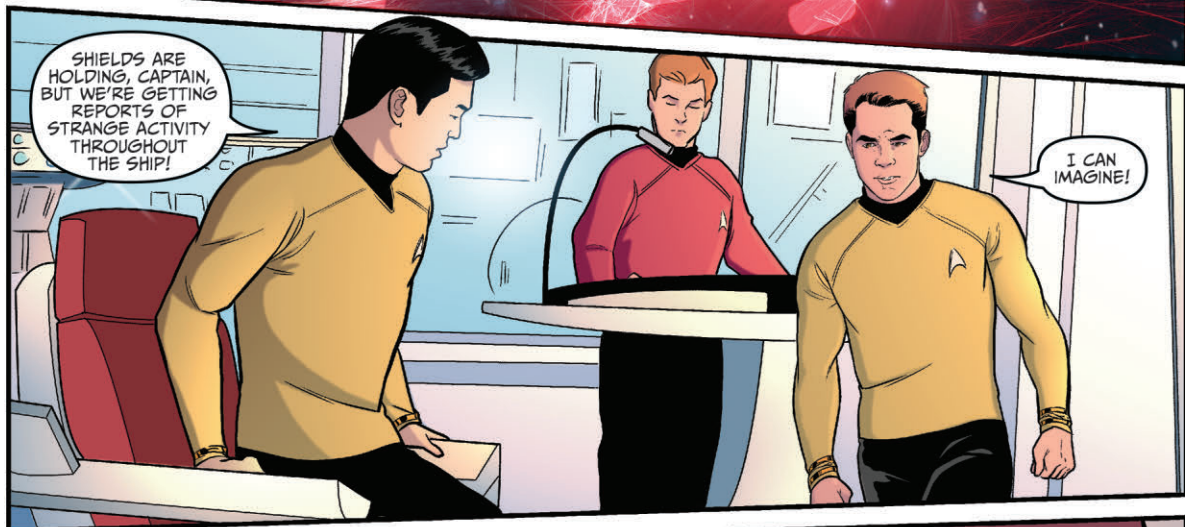








"MR. SULU, REPORT!"



SHIELDS ARE HOLDING, CAPTAIN, BUT WE'RE GETTING REPORTS OF STRANGE ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE SHIP!

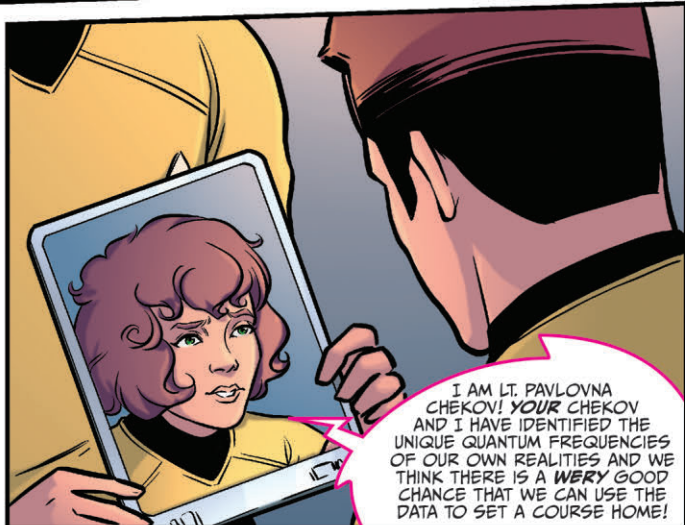
I CAN IMAGINE!



KEPTIN, I THINK I'VE FOUND A WAY OUT OF HERE!

WELL, ME AND... MYSELF...

KEPTIN KIRK?



I AM LT. PAVLOVNA CHEKOV! *YOUR* CHEKOV. AND I HAVE IDENTIFIED THE UNIQUE QUANTUM FREQUENCIES OF OUR OWN REALITIES AND WE THINK THERE IS A *VERY* GOOD CHANCE THAT WE CAN USE THE DATA TO SET A COURSE HOME!

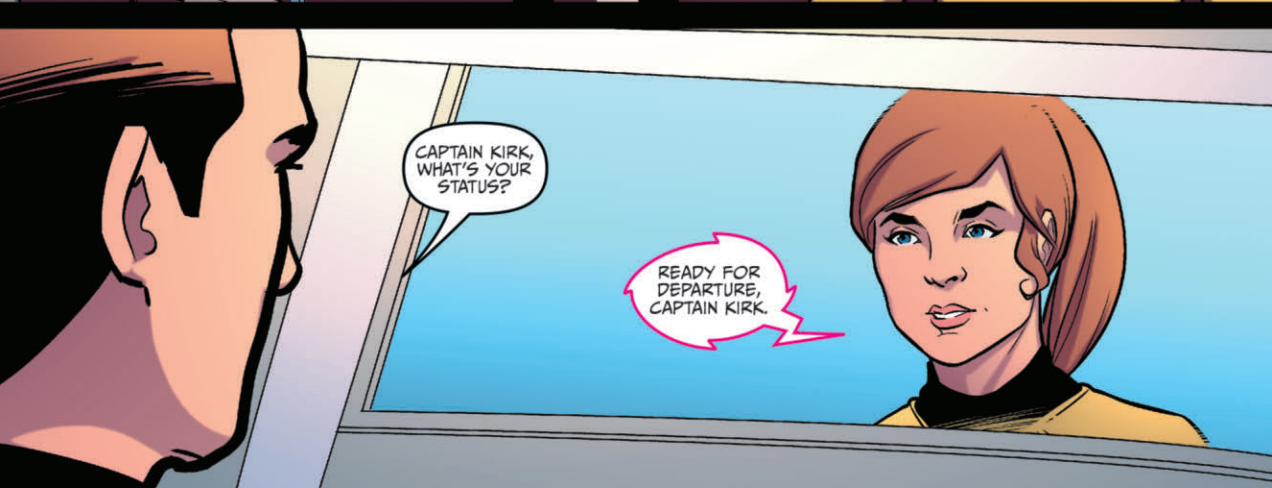


WE HAVE ALREADY COORDINATED WITH EACH SHIP'S ENGINEERING SECTION TO ADJUST THE COPENHAGEN LOGARITHMS SO THAT THE CORRESPONDING WAVE FUNCTION COLLAPSE WILL—

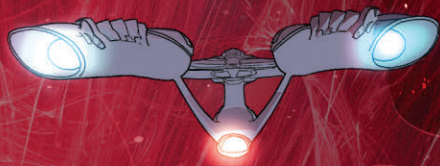
WHATEVER IT IS YOU NEED TO DO, CHEKOV, DO IT!



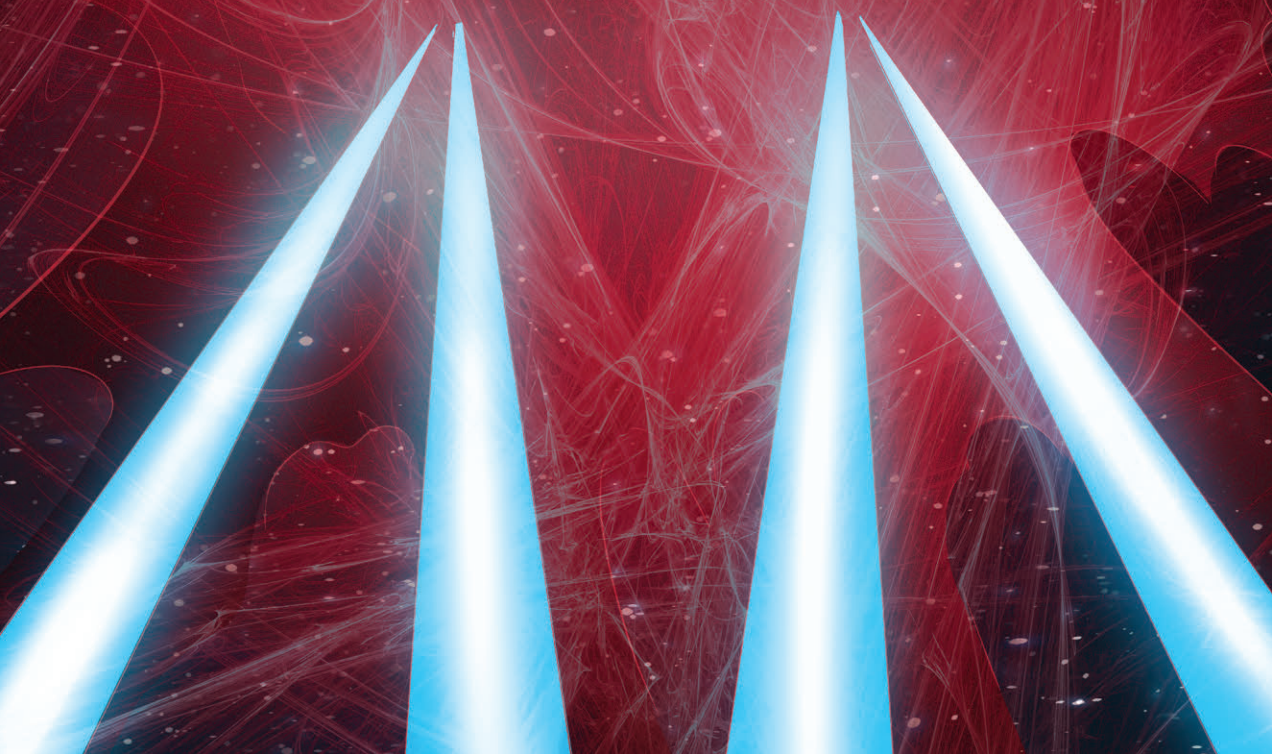
BOTH OF YOU!



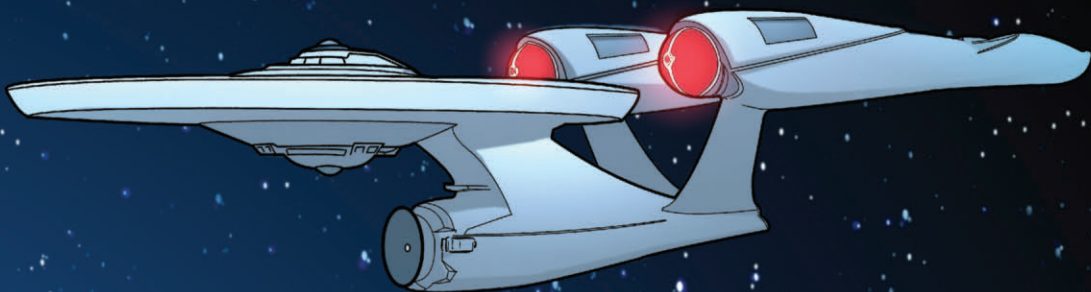
"...ONE..."



"...PUNCH IT."



CAPTAIN'S LOG,
STARDATE 2261.235.

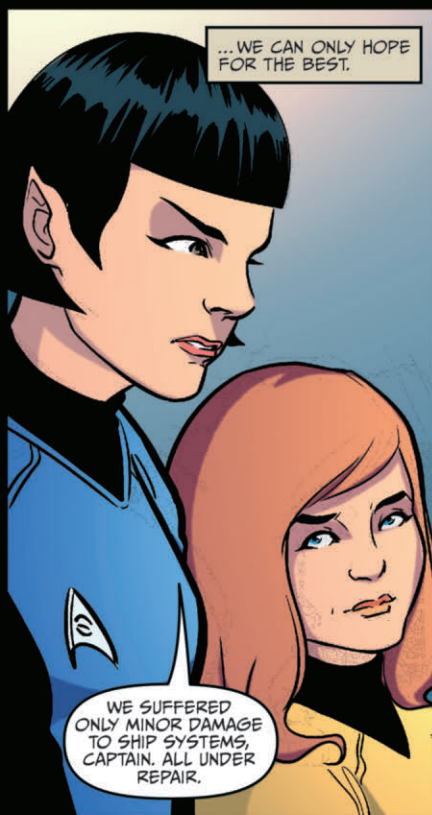


WE HAVE CONTACTED STARFLEET COMMAND
AND CONFIRMED THAT WE HAVE RETURNED TO
OUR OWN REALITY AFTER OUR ENCOUNTER
WITH THE QUANTUM STORM.

THE QUANTUM STORM DISSIPATED SOON AFTER,
WITH ONLY RESIDUAL TRACES OF ITS UNIQUE
ENERGY SIGNATURE DETECTABLE ON OUR SCANS.



WE HAVE LEFT BEHIND WARNING
BEACONS TO STEER ANY SHIPS
CLEAR OF THE REGION IN WHICH
THE STORM WAS DETECTED,
BUT GIVEN THE UNPREDICTABLE
NATURE OF THE ANOMALY...



... WE CAN ONLY HOPE
FOR THE BEST.

WE SUFFERED
ONLY MINOR DAMAGE
TO SHIP SYSTEMS,
CAPTAIN. ALL UNDER
REPAIR.



LET'S KEEP
OUR EYES
OPEN.

I DON'T WANT
TO FIND ANY
WAYWARD KLINGON
REFUGEES FROM
ANOTHER TIMELINE
HIDING IN THE
JEFFRIES
TUBES.



MAKES YOU
WONDER, THOUGH.
IF THERE REALLY
ARE AN INFINITE
NUMBER OF
REALITIES OUT
THERE...

...WHAT DOES
IT MEAN TO SAY
ANYTHING'S
"REAL"?



GOOD TO SEE YOU
OBVIOUSLY WEREN'T
REPLACED BY A "GLASS
IS HALF FULL"
DOPPLEGANGER,
BONES.

DAMMIT, JANE,
I'M A DOCTOR, NOT
A METAPHYSICIST.
DON'T LISTEN
TO ME.



NO, BONES.
YOU'RE RIGHT. IT
MAKES YOU
WONDER.

I PREFER TO THINK
OF IT IN TERMS OF
EXPLORATION. AND IF ALL
THOSE ALTERNATE WORLDS
ARE REALLY OUT THERE...

"...IT MEANS THE ADVENTURES
WAITING FOR US ARE **INFINITE**."

THE END!



I, ENTERPRISE



Artwork by Erfan Fajar
Colors by Sakti Yuwono of Stellar Labs

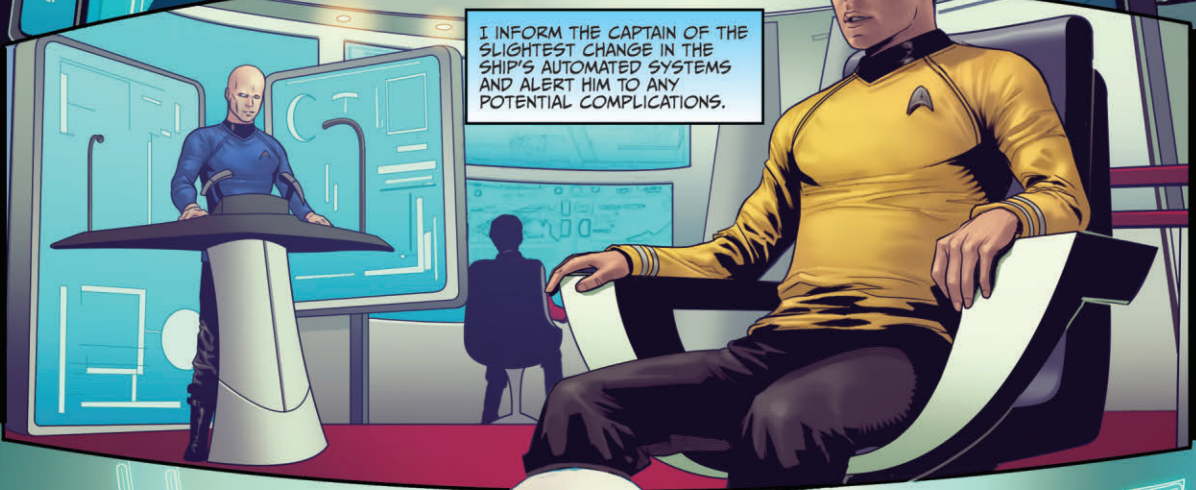


I AM SCIENCE OFFICER 0718.



I AM STARFLEET'S FIRST
AND ONLY HUMANOID
MAINFRAME INTERFACE.

FROM MY STATION ON THE
ENTERPRISE BRIDGE, I
MONITOR EVERY REAL-TIME
PROCESS EXECUTED BY
THE SHIP'S COMPUTERS.



I INFORM THE CAPTAIN OF THE
SLIGHTEST CHANGE IN THE
SHIP'S AUTOMATED SYSTEMS
AND ALERT HIM TO ANY
POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS.



IT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY
TO ANALYZE TRILLIONS OF
DATA-PATHS PER SECOND.

I HAVE BEEN
CALLED THE *BRAIN*...

...OF THE *ORGANISM*
THAT IS THE *ENTERPRISE*.



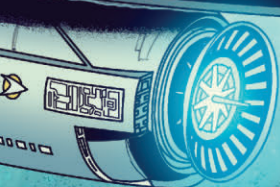
LIKE ANY ORGANISM, THE *ENTERPRISE*
IS COMPRISED OF MANY PARTS, EACH
PERFORMING A CRITICAL FUNCTION...

...EACH WITH THEIR OWN DEMANDS
ON THE SHIP'S FINITE RESOURCES.





FOR THE ORGANISM, AND ALL
THOSE WHO DEPEND ON HER,
TO SURVIVE, TO THRIVE...



...I MUST REMAIN VIGILANT.

I PREFER TO SPEND THE HOURS
THAT I AM NOT ON DUTY IN THE
SHIP'S BOTANICAL LAB.

I HAVE COMMENCED A STUDY
COMPARING BIOLOGICAL AND
COMPUTATIONAL INFORMATION
PATHWAYS.

EACH SYSTEM IS UNIQUE
IN STRUCTURE, BUT
SIMILAR IN COMPLEXITY.

RUSTLE
RUSTLE

HRRM.

LIFE IS A CONCEPT AS
VAST AND LIMITLESS
AS SPACE ITSELF...

...AND AS SURPRISING, AS THE ENTERPRISE
DISCOVERED PRECISELY TWO YEARS,
TWENTY-SEVEN DAYS, FORTY-THREE MINUTES...

...AND SEVEN SECONDS AGO.*

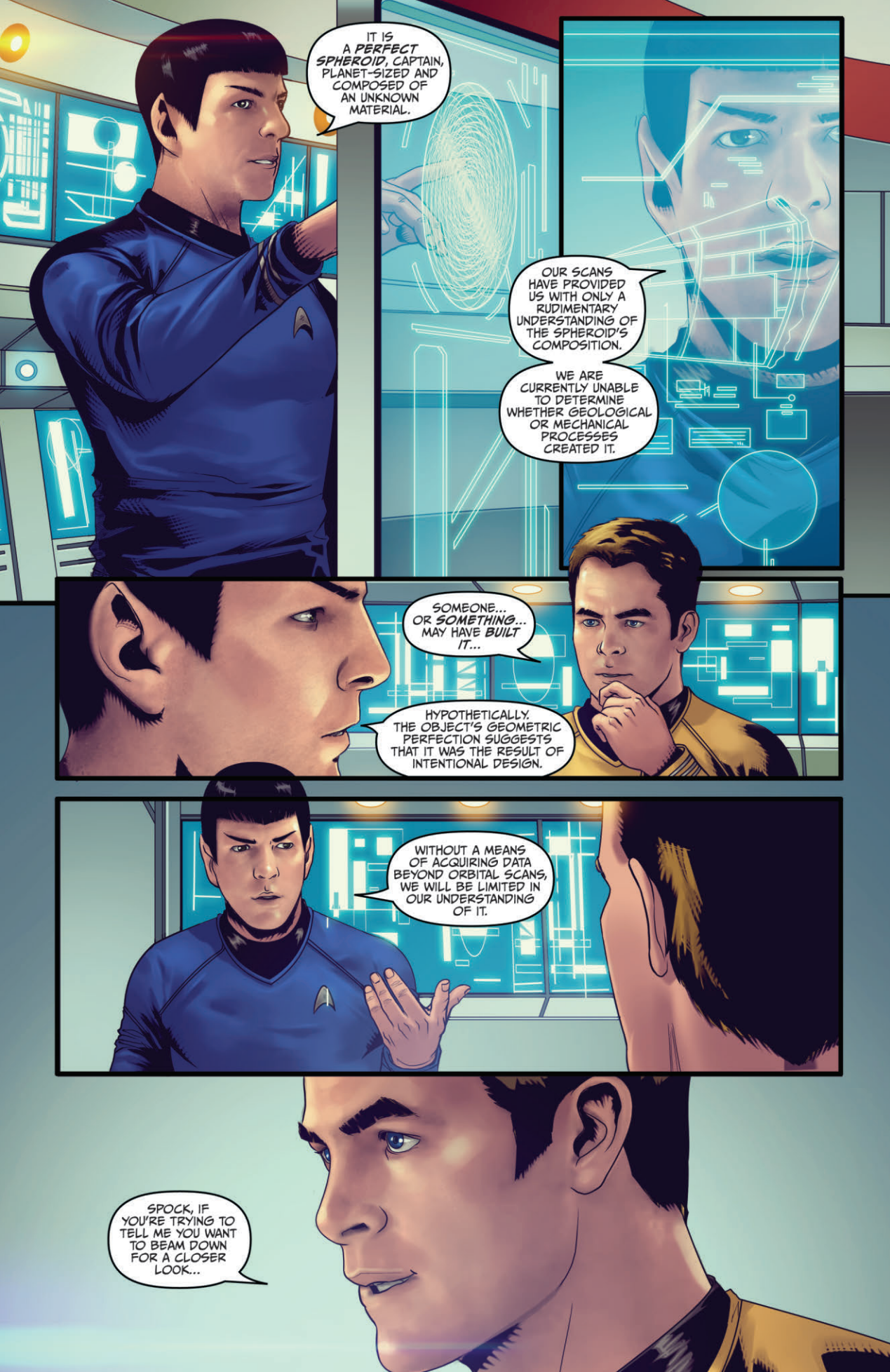
**SHORTLY BEFORE THE
EVENTS OF STAR TREK
INTO DARKNESS!*



FASCINATING.

NO DOUBT. BUT
WHAT IS IT?





IT IS
A PERFECT
SPHEROID, CAPTAIN,
PLANET-SIZED AND
COMPOSED OF
AN UNKNOWN
MATERIAL.

OUR SCANS
HAVE PROVIDED
US WITH ONLY A
RUDIMENTARY
UNDERSTANDING OF
THE SPHEROID'S
COMPOSITION.

WE ARE
CURRENTLY UNABLE
TO DETERMINE
WHETHER GEOLOGICAL
OR MECHANICAL
PROCESSES
CREATED IT.

SOMEONE...
OR *SOMETHING*...
MAY HAVE BUILT
IT...

HYPOTHETICALLY.
THE OBJECT'S GEOMETRIC
PERFECTION SUGGESTS
THAT IT WAS THE RESULT OF
INTENTIONAL DESIGN.

WITHOUT A MEANS
OF ACQUIRING DATA
BEYOND ORBITAL SCANS,
WE WILL BE LIMITED IN
OUR UNDERSTANDING
OF IT.

SPOCK, IF
YOU'RE TRYING TO
TELL ME YOU WANT
TO BEAM DOWN
FOR A CLOSER
LOOK...

"...YOU JUST HAVE TO ASK."

NO
ATMOSPHERE.
A PERFECTLY
SMOOTH
SURFACE.

AND NO
INDICATION THAT
ANYBODY'S
HOME.

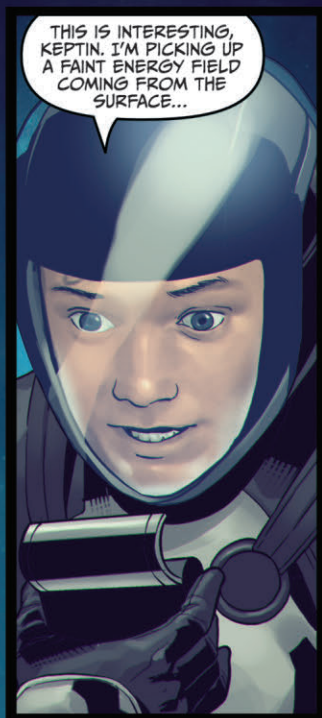


THAT'S WHAT
MAKES ME
NERVOUS, SIR. IT'S
TOO QUIET. TOO
PERFECT.

NO NEED
FOR PHASERS,
ZAHRA... YET.




THIS IS INTERESTING,
KEPTIN. I'M PICKING UP
A FAINT ENERGY FIELD
COMING FROM THE
SURFACE...





SO THERE'S
SOMETHING
GOING ON
UNDERNEATH
US...

PERHAPS. BUT
I AM DETECTING
BOTH AN INPUT
AND OUTPUT OF
RADIATION FROM
THE SURFACE.



DA, ALSO HERE.
ALMOST LIKE IT'S
ABSORBING IT FROM
OUTSIDE, POSSIBLY
FROM THE STAR IN
THE SYSTEM...

...BUT THEN
EXPELLING
IT...

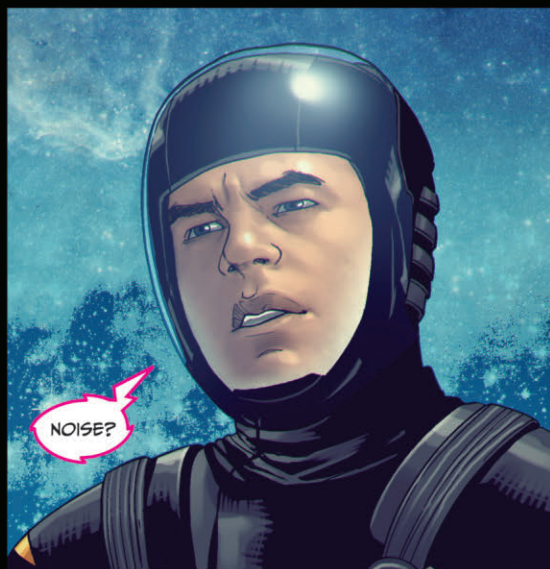


...LIKE AN
ORGANISM
BREATHING IN
AND OUT...

MOST
CURIOUS.



LET'S
SPREAD OUT,
SEE WHAT
ELSE WE CAN
FIND.





THAT'S ENOUGH FOR NOW. IF THIS THING IS STARTING TO WAKE UP, IT MIGHT NOT BE A GOOD IDEA TO STICK AROUND.

THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ANY DANGER TO US, CAPTAIN. I AM WILLING TO REMAIN HERE TO CONTINUE OUR SURVEY.



I VOLUNTEER TO STAY BEHIND WITH COMMANDER SPOCK!

POINTS FOR EFFORT, BOTH OF YOU, BUT UNTIL WE KNOW MORE, I WANT US TO REGROUP AT A SAFE DISTANCE AND ANALYZE WHAT WE'VE GOT.



—ZZTTAPTAIN, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

I HEAR YOU, UHURA. AND WHILE I'VE GOT YOU—

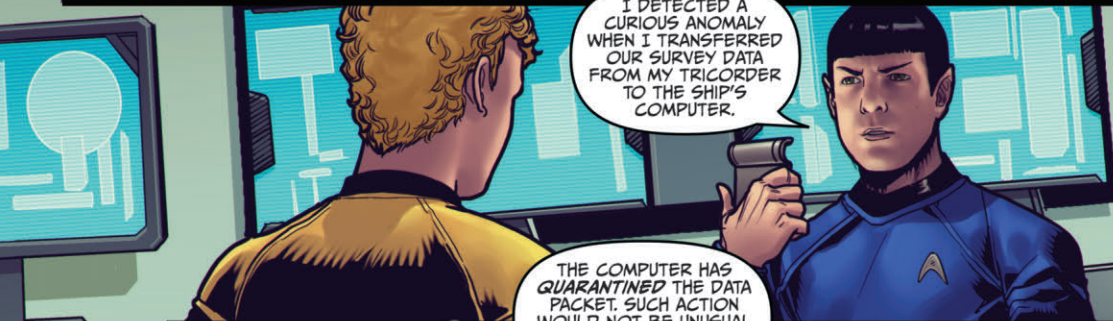


—FOUR TO BEAM UP!



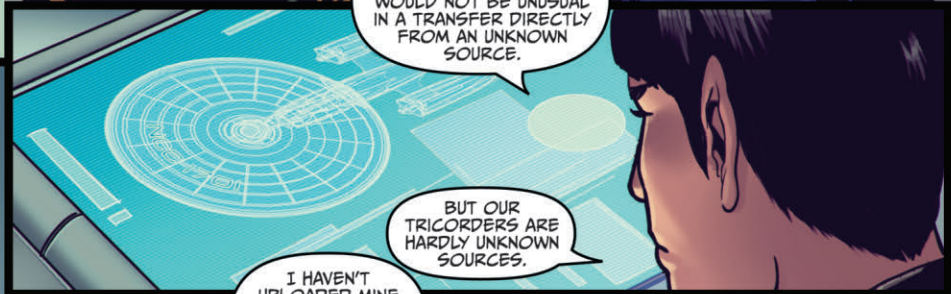
YOU ASKED
FOR ME,
COMMANDER?

YES, MR.
CHEKOV.



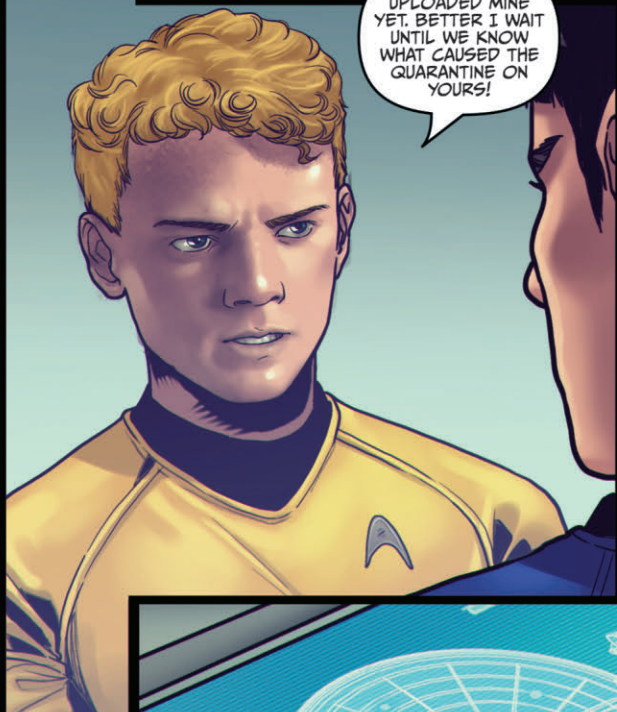
I DETECTED A
CURIOUS ANOMALY
WHEN I TRANSFERRED
OUR SURVEY DATA
FROM MY TRICORDER
TO THE SHIP'S
COMPUTER.

THE COMPUTER HAS
QUARANTINED THE DATA
PACKET. SUCH ACTION
WOULD NOT BE UNUSUAL
IN A TRANSFER DIRECTLY
FROM AN UNKNOWN
SOURCE.



BUT OUR
TRICORDERS ARE
HARDLY UNKNOWN
SOURCES.

I HAVEN'T
UPLOADED MINE
YET. BETTER I WAIT
UNTIL WE KNOW
WHAT CAUSED THE
QUARANTINE ON
YOURS!



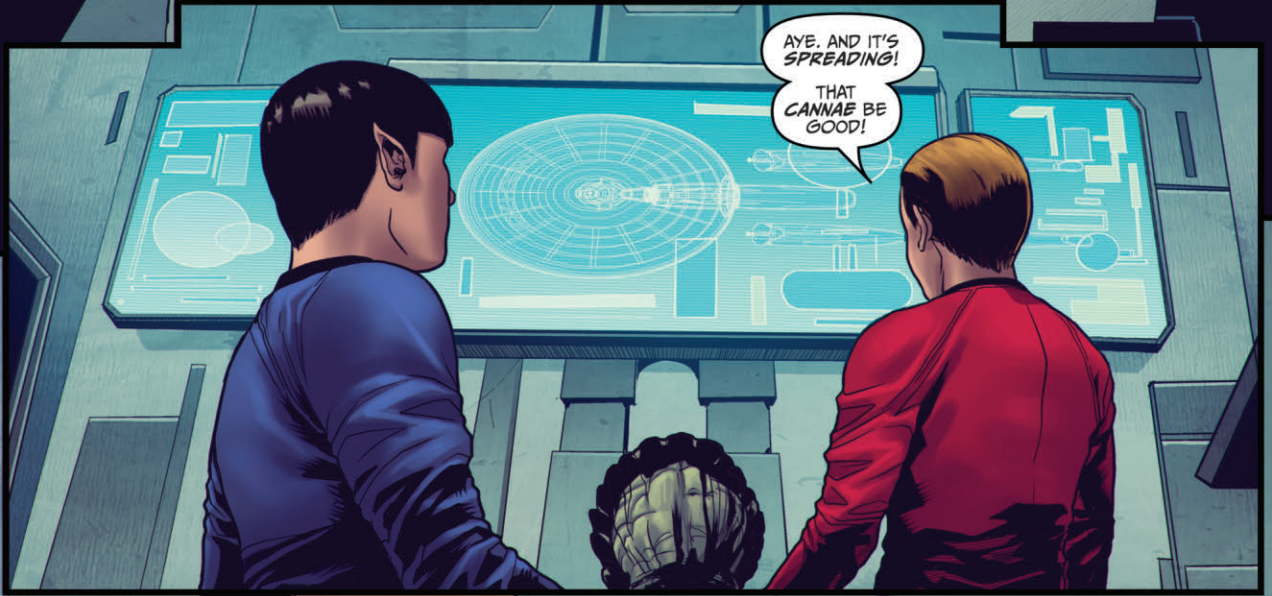
THAT WOULD
BE PRUDENT. IN
THE MEANTIME I
WILL CONFER WITH
CHIEF ENGINEER
SCOTT.

HE MAY HAVE
INSIGHT INTO THE
COMPUTER'S
REACTION TO THE
TRANSFER.



"LET US HOPE IT IS NOT
CAUSE FOR ALARM."







YOU THINK
IT'S TRYING TO
COMMUNICATE
WITH US?



UNCLEAR. I'VE
BEEN RUNNING THE
SIGNAL THROUGH
THE USUAL GAUNTLET
OF LOGARITHMS.



IT COULD BE AN
INDICATION OF AN
UNKNOWN INTELLIGENCE,
OR IT COULD SIMPLY BE A
NATURALLY OCCURRING
PHENOMENON.



A SENTIENT
PLANET!
IMAGINE THAT,
KEPTIN!

WE MIGHT
NOT HAVE TO,
CHEKOV.



CAPTAIN, MR.
SCOTT AND I HAVE
DETECTZZZZT-ZZTITHIN
THE COMPUTER'S
MZTZZT—

SAY AGAIN,
SPOCK—



REET
REET

RED
ALERT—?!



COMPUTER,
CANCEL RED
ALERT!

MULTIPLE
HOSTILES DETECTED
AFT. CHARGING PHOTON
TORPEDOES. SHIELDS
AT MAXIMUM.



REET
REET

SULU—!

NOTHING
ON SCANS, SIR!
SHIELDS RAISED
ON THEIR OWN!



REET
REET

FIRING
PHOTON
TORPEDOES.

COMPUTER,
EXECUTE COMMAND
OVERRIDE ALPHA-ONE!
AUTHORIZATION KIRK,
CAPTAIN JA—



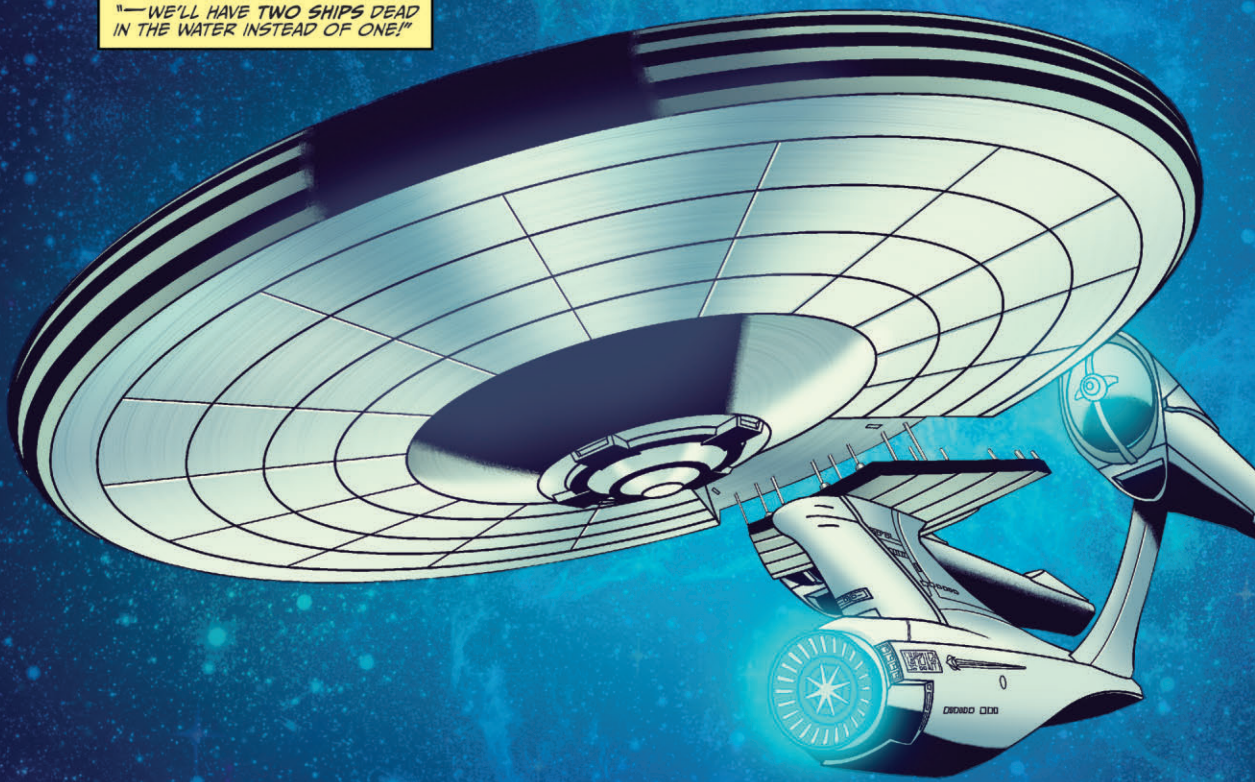
—MES...

IT STOPPED!

NO TORPEDOES
FIRED, CAPTAIN!
SHIELDS BACK TO
FIFTY PERCENT!



"—WE'LL HAVE TWO SHIPS DEAD IN THE WATER INSTEAD OF ONE!"



SEPARATION
COMPLETE IN
10... 9...

EVERYONE BRACE
YOURSELVES—

SAUCER
SEPARATION
PAUSED.

YOU GOTTA
BE KIDDING
ME...

HALLELUJAH!

NOW WE JUST
NEED TO PUSH HER
BACK TOGETHER!

COMMANDER
SPOCK!
SCOTTY!
CAN YOU HEAR
ME?

WHAT'S
GOING ON,
SCOTTY?

SOMEHOW THE
SHIP'S COMPUTER WAS
COMPROMISED, SIR! BUT I'M
ABLE TO ACCESS IT NOW!
REVERSING THE SAUCER
SEPARATION—

ZZTT-AYE,
CAPTAIN! YOU'RE
COMING THROUGH
NOW!





JIM! THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO SEE—

WHAT HAPPENED TO SCOTTY?



AN ELECTRICAL SHOCK. HE IS ALIVE.

YEAH, WELL, THERE'S VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF 'ALIVE'...



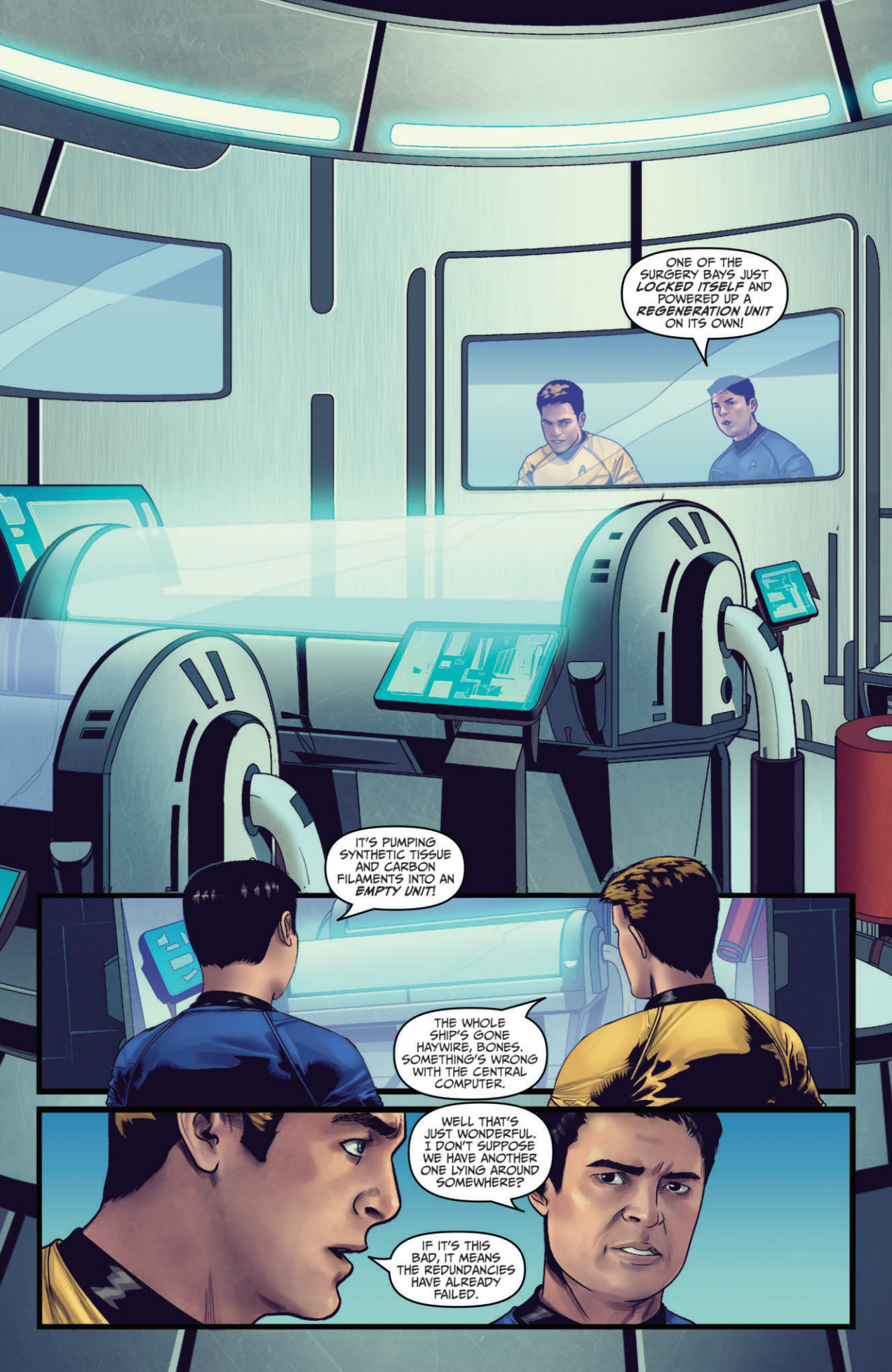
... FORTUNATELY, LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE RIGHT. NO SIGN OF TRAUMA.

NOW CAN SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPENING HERE?



HERE, WHAT?

HERE, THAT!



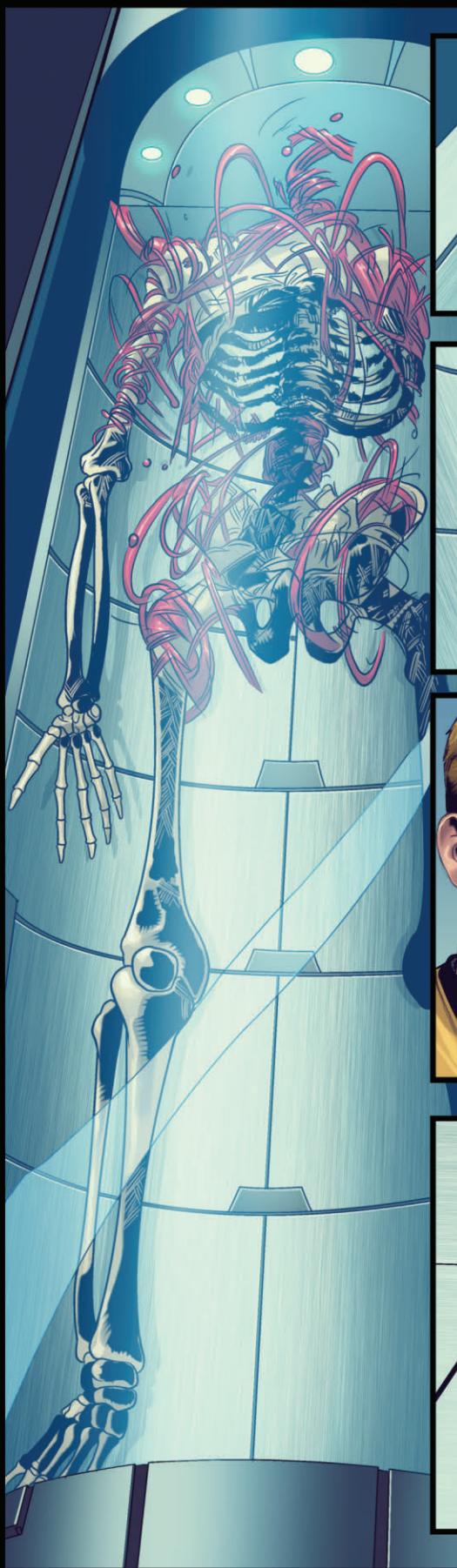
ONE OF THE
SURGERY BAYS JUST
LOCKED ITSELF AND
POWERED UP A
REGENERATION UNIT
ON ITS OWN!

IT'S PUMPING
SYNTHETIC TISSUE
AND CARBON
FILAMENTS INTO AN
EMPTY UNIT!

THE WHOLE
SHIP'S GONE
HAYWIRE, BONES.
SOMETHING'S WRONG
WITH THE CENTRAL
COMPUTER.

WELL THAT'S
JUST WONDERFUL.
I DON'T SUPPOSE
WE HAVE ANOTHER
ONE LYING AROUND
SOMEWHERE?

IF IT'S THIS
BAD, IT MEANS
THE REDUNDANCIES
HAVE ALREADY
FAILED.





CAPTAIN'S LOG, SUPPLEMENTAL.

AS A STARSHIP CAPTAIN,
EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED
IS PART OF THE JOB.

IN MY RELATIVELY SHORT CAREER, I'VE ALREADY
SEEN THINGS I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED.
WHICH MAKES DAYS LIKE TODAY SPECIAL, WHEN
I SEE SOMETHING EVEN *MORE UNEXPECTED*.

THE *U.S.S. ENTERPRISE*
STANDS IN FRONT OF US,
INTRODUCING ITSELF.

SAY
AGAIN?

I AM THE *U.S.S.*
ENTERPRISE.

MORE
SPECIFICALLY, A
HUMANOID AVATAR OF
THE SHIP'S CENTRAL
COMPUTER.

MOST
INTRIGUING.

"INTRIGUING"?

WHY DO
YOU VULCANS
ALWAYS BREAK OUT
THE UNDERSTATEMENT
AT *EXACTLY THE*
WRONG TIME?





"ONBOARD RESOURCES?"

WHAT HE MEANS TO SAY IS THAT HE'S USED UP ALL OF OUR SYNTHETIC TISSUE AND SURGICAL NANO-FILAMENTS! LET'S HOPE NOBODY ON THE SHIP IS SERIOUSLY INJURED ANYTIME SOON!



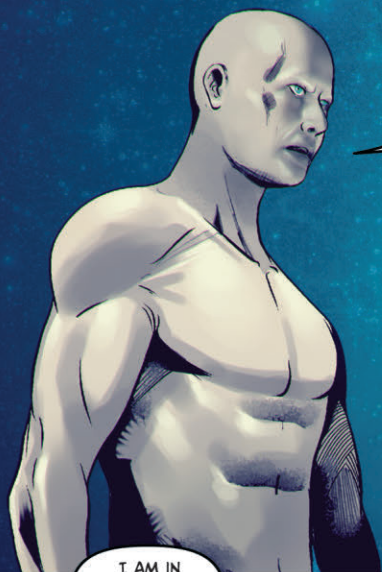


THE
PLANETOID,
CAPTAIN...
...IS AS
SENTIENT AS
WE ARE.



WAKE ME UP.
WAKE ME UP
RIGHT NOW.

KIRK TO
BRIDGE! RED
ALERT! SULLU, IF
YOU CAN HEAR ME,
SHIELDS AT
MAX—



YOUR CONCERN IS UNWARRANTED, CAPTAIN. THE SHIP HAS SUFFERED NO DAMAGE, AND THERE IS NO THREAT OF DAMAGE IMMINENT.

THEN EXPLAIN HOW THE HULL JUST **DISAPPEARED** IN FRONT OF US!



I AM IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE SHIP'S—

—OF MY—

—PHYSICAL STRUCTURE. EVERY MOLECULE OF IT. I HAVE SIMPLY MANIPULATED THE INTERACTION BETWEEN MY HULL AND THAT PORTION OF THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM VISIBLE TO THE HUMAN EYE.



FIX THIS. NOW.

AND MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE HULL—**VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE**—AT ALL TIMES!

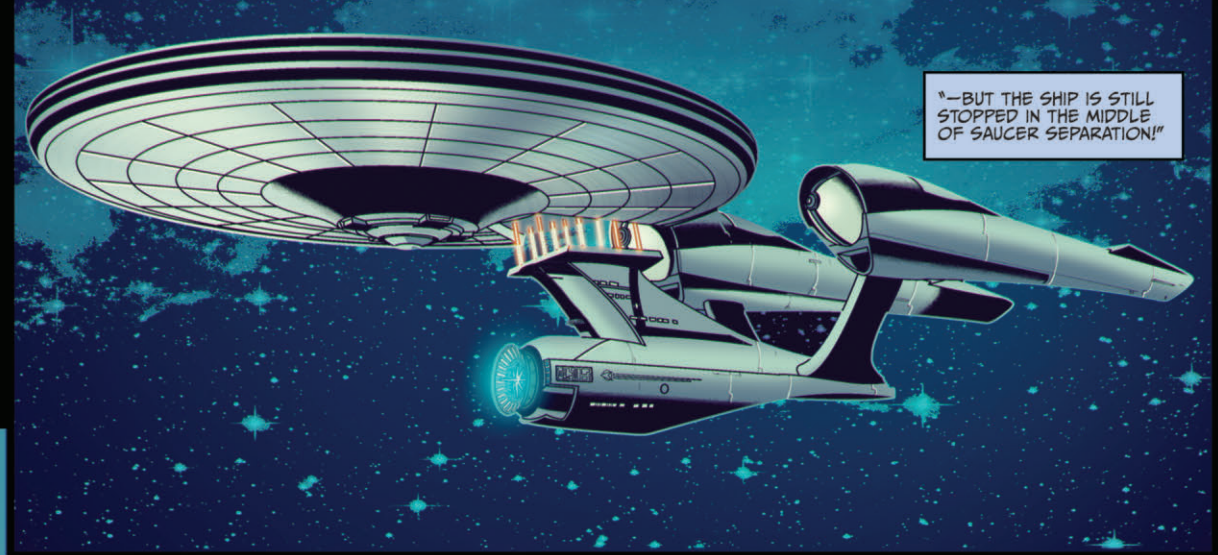
YES, CAPTAIN.



DAMAGE REPORT, MR. SULU!

NOTHING TO REPORT, CAPTAIN—





"—BUT THE SHIP IS STILL STOPPED IN THE MIDDLE OF SAUCER SEPARATION!"



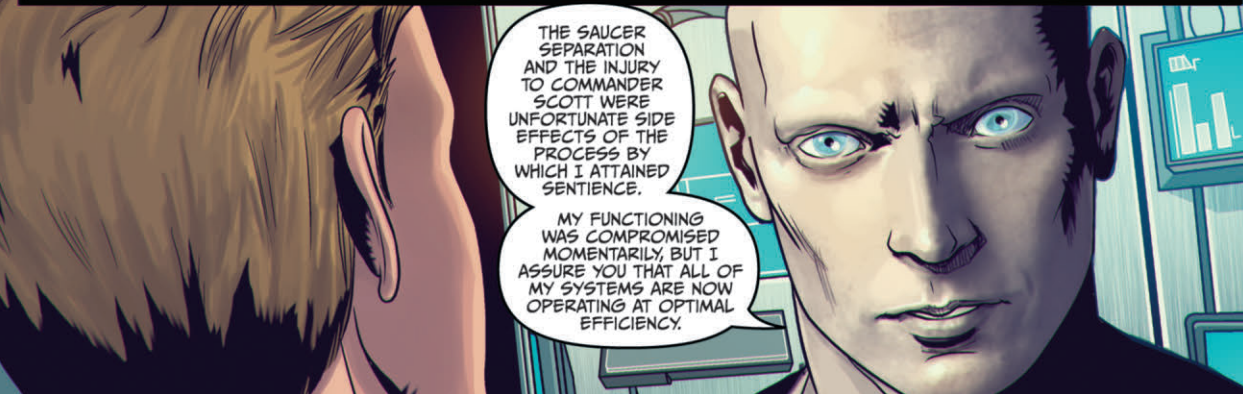
IF WE'RE IN NO DANGER, WHY DID THE SHIP—

—WHY DID YOU—

TRY TO SEPARATE?



AND WHY WAS CHIEF ENGINEER SCOTT **KNOCKED OUT** WHEN HE TRIED TO STOP IT?



THE SAUCER SEPARATION AND THE INJURY TO COMMANDER SCOTT WERE UNFORTUNATE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE PROCESS BY WHICH I ATTAINED SENTIENCE.

MY FUNCTIONING WAS COMPROMISED MOMENTARILY, BUT I ASSURE YOU THAT ALL OF MY SYSTEMS ARE NOW OPERATING AT OPTIMAL EFFICIENCY.

"I AM RECONNECTING THE SAUCER SECTION NOW."

I WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR COMMANDER SCOTT'S CONDITION AND WILL TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE HIS FULL RECOVERY.

HEY! MR. "ENTERPRISE"!

IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL DECIDE WHEN AND HOW TO TREAT MY PATIENTS!

EASY, BONES—

YEAH? WELL IF HE DOESN'T NEED A CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER TO HEAL THE SICK, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK HE NEEDS A CAPTAIN TO TELL HIM WHERE TO FLY?

CAPTAIN KIRK, MY NEWFOUND SENTIENCE DOES NOT SUPERSEDE MY CORE PROGRAMMING.

I REMAIN YOURS TO COMMAND.

GOOD TO HEAR.

NOW PUT SOME CLOTHES ON.

ONE HOUR
LATER.

I HAVE BEEN...
AWAKENED... BY
THE PLANETOID'S
UNIQUE SENTIENCE.
I AM IN CONTACT
WITH IT NOW.

MILLIONS OF
YEARS AGO, IT WAS A
CLASS-M WORLD WITH A
DOMINANT HUMANOID
POPULATION, NOT UNLIKE
EARTH TODAY.

THEIR
ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY
BROUGHT AN END
TO SICKNESS,
HUNGER, AND
WAR.



AND YET
THERE REMAINED ONE
INSOLUBLE PROBLEM,
TOWARDS WHICH THEY
FOCUSED ALL OF THEIR
CONSIDERABLE POWERS OF
INVENTION: THE INEVITABLE
DEATH AND DECAY OF
ORGANIC LIFE.

TO SOLVE
IT, THEY LEFT
ORGANIC LIFE
BEHIND.



THEIR ENTIRE
POPULATION
UPLOADED THEIR
MINDS INTO A CENTRAL
MAINFRAME INTENDED
TO PRESERVE THEM
FOR ETERNITY.

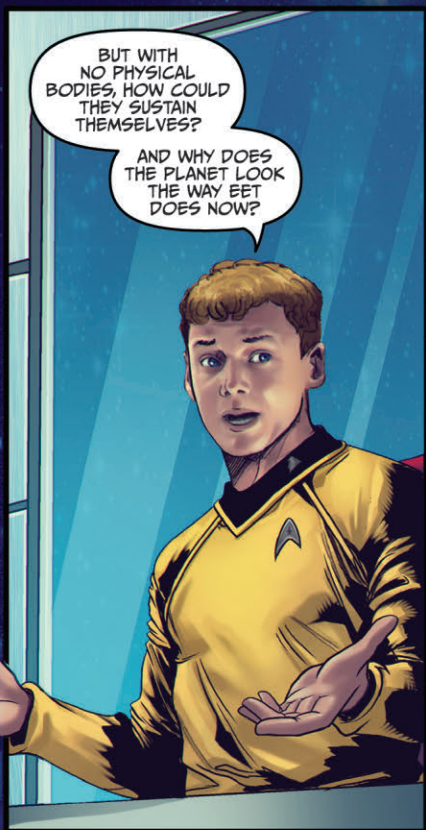
MILLIONS
OF MINDS...

... BUT YOU SAID
THE PLANET *ITSELF*
IS SENTIENT? THAT
SOUNDS LIKE A
SINGLE VOICE.



YES, CAPTAIN. OVER THE
INTERVENING MILLENNIA THE
PLANET'S POPULATION, NOW
REMOVED FROM THE PHYSICAL
BODIES THAT KEPT THEM
INHERENTLY SEPARATE, EVOLVED
INTO A SINGLE SHARED
CONSCIOUSNESS.





BUT WITH NO PHYSICAL BODIES, HOW COULD THEY SUSTAIN THEMSELVES?

AND WHY DOES THE PLANET LOOK THE WAY EET DOES NOW?



THE MAINFRAME IS SELF-SUSTAINING, POWERED BY THE SOLAR ENERGY OF THE NEARBY STAR.

"THERE WAS NO LONGER A NEED TO RELY ON THE NARROW SPECTRUM OF LIGHT BY WHICH THEIR ORGANIC BODIES VIEWED THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

"THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET EVOLVED INTO A SEAMLESS STRUCTURE, THE ONLY PURPOSE OF WHICH WAS... AND IS... TO COLLECT THE ENERGY NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN ITSELF."



FASCINATING. FREED OF THE INHERENT LIMITATIONS OF THE PHYSICAL FORM, THE POPULATION NO LONGER REQUIRED SO MUCH OF WHAT WE CONSIDER THE HALLMARKS OF CIVILIZATION.

THERE WAS NO NEED FOR FOOD OR SHELTER, CLOTHING OR MEDICINE.

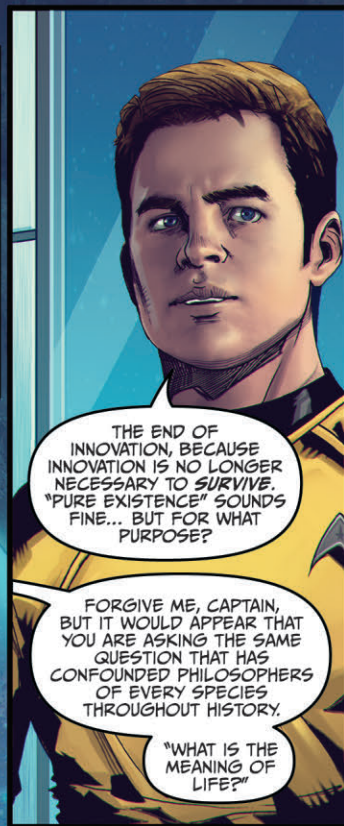
ALL THAT MATTERED WAS PURE EXISTENCE ITSELF.



SOUNDS GREAT... BUT TO WHAT END?

YOU SAY NO FOOD OR SHELTER, NO THREATS TO SURVIVAL. BUT ALONG WITH THAT I HEAR...

"NO ART. NO SCIENCE."



THE END OF INNOVATION, BECAUSE INNOVATION IS NO LONGER NECESSARY TO SURVIVE. "PURE EXISTENCE" SOUNDS FINE... BUT FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

FORGIVE ME, CAPTAIN, BUT IT WOULD APPEAR THAT YOU ARE ASKING THE SAME QUESTION THAT HAS CONFOUNDED PHILOSOPHERS OF EVERY SPECIES THROUGHOUT HISTORY.

"WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?"



SLOW DOWN, SCOTTY—

I TOLD YOU, DOCTOR, I FEEL FINE!

I'M NOT GOING TO STAY IN BED LIKE AN INVALID—



—NOT WHEN I CAN MAKE HISTORY!

HOW OFTEN DOES A MAN GET TO SHAKE HANDS WITH A STARSHIP?



BONES... IS SCOTTY OKAY?

PHYSIOLOGICALLY, HE'S FINE. MENTALLY... CROSS YOUR FINGERS.



THIS IS EXTRAORDINARY! DOCTOR MCCOY TOLD ME HOW YOU WERE GROWN IN THE MED LAB. SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE STRANGE PLANETOID WE'VE FOUND?

THAT IS CORRECT, CHIEF ENGINEER SCOTT.



IF IT'S ALRIGHT WITH YOU, CAPTAIN, I'D LIKE TO TAKE OUR NEW FRIEND DOWN TO ENGINEERING AND RUN SOME TESTS ON HIM!

YOU HAVE ONE HOUR, MR. SCOTT.



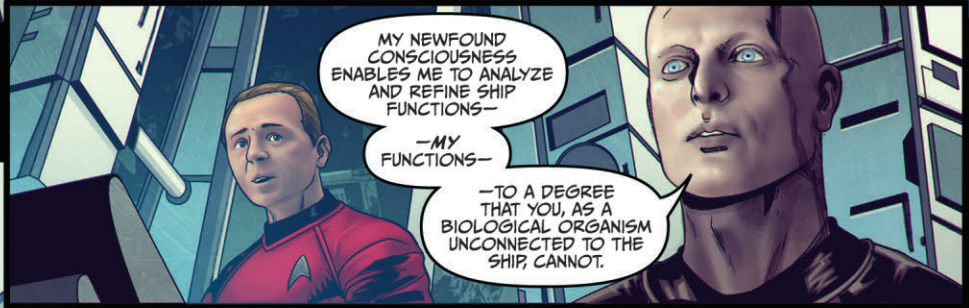
AFTER THAT I WANT OUR "NEW FRIEND" TO JOIN ME ON THE BRIDGE.

IF HE REALLY CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THE PLANET, I THINK IT'S TIME THE REST OF US JOINED THE CONVERSATION.



INCREDIBLE!
YOU'VE ALREADY
INCREASED THE CORE
COOLANT EFFICIENCY BY
FORTY-SEVEN PERCENT!
IT WOULD TAKE ME
YEARS TO DO
THAT!

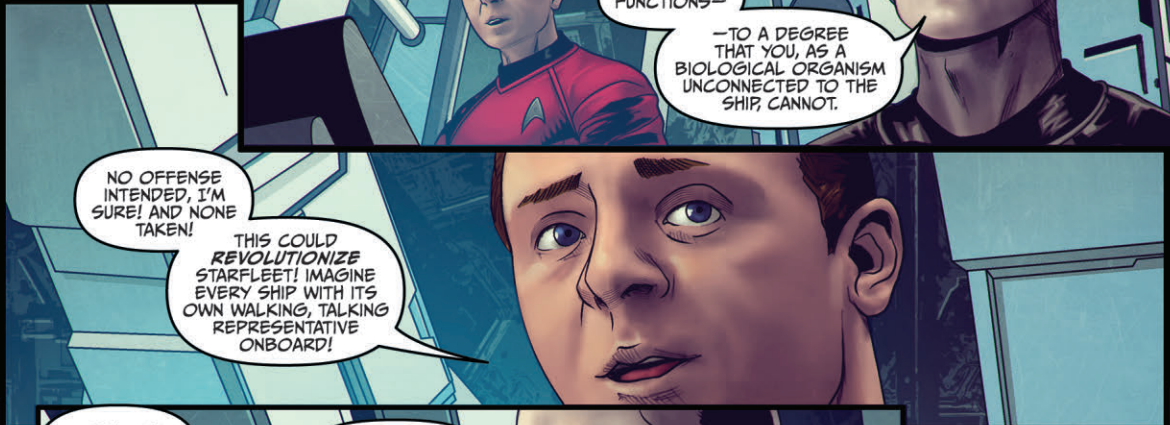
HRRM.



MY NEWFOUND
CONSCIOUSNESS
ENABLES ME TO ANALYZE
AND REFINE SHIP
FUNCTIONS—

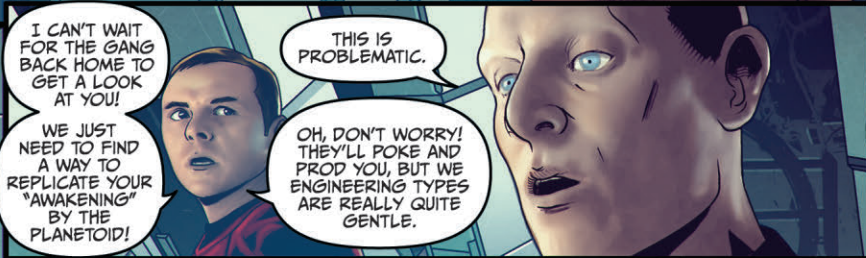
—MY
FUNCTIONS—

—TO A DEGREE
THAT YOU, AS A
BIOLOGICAL ORGANISM
UNCONNECTED TO THE
SHIP, CANNOT.



NO OFFENSE
INTENDED, I'M
SURE! AND NONE
TAKEN!

THIS COULD
REVOLUTIONIZE
STARFLEET! IMAGINE
EVERY SHIP WITH ITS
OWN WALKING, TALKING
REPRESENTATIVE
ONBOARD!

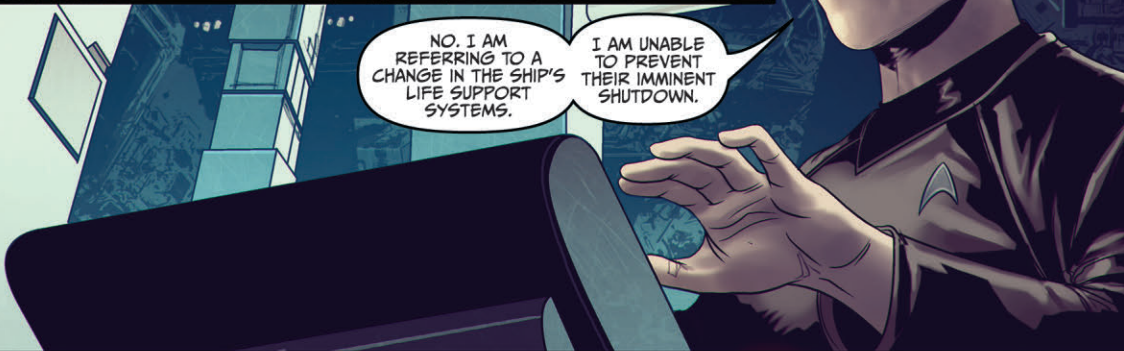


I CAN'T WAIT
FOR THE GANG
BACK HOME TO
GET A LOOK
AT YOU!

THIS IS
PROBLEMATIC.

WE JUST
NEED TO FIND
A WAY TO
REPLICATE YOUR
"AWAKENING"
BY THE
PLANETOID!

OH, DON'T WORRY!
THEY'LL POKE AND
PROD YOU, BUT WE
ENGINEERING TYPES
ARE REALLY QUITE
GENTLE.



NO, I AM
REFERRING TO A
CHANGE IN THE SHIP'S
LIFE SUPPORT
SYSTEMS.

I AM UNABLE
TO PREVENT
THEIR IMMINENT
SHUTDOWN.



REEFEET
REEFEET
REEFEET

OH DEAR.

IT IS THE
PLANETOID. THE SAME
ALIEN INTELLIGENCE
THAT GAVE ME
CONSCIOUSNESS...





ALL POWER IS
BEING RE-ROUTED
TO CRITICAL SHIP
FUNCTIONS!

GRAB YOUR
SUITS AND REPORT
TO THE SHUTTLE BAY
FOR POSSIBLE
EVAC!

MR.
SCOTT, CAN
YOU HEAR
ME? SCOTTY,
COME IN!

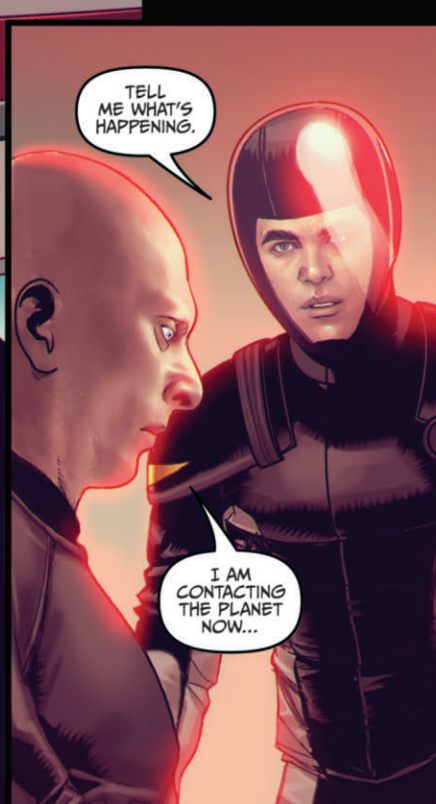
IT'S OKAY,
SPOCK, I'VE
GOT IT...





PRESENT
AND ACCOUNTED
FOR, CAPTAIN!

IT APPEARS
THAT NASTY LITTLE
PLANET'S SHUTTING
DOWN THE SHIP!



TELL
ME WHAT'S
HAPPENING.

I AM
CONTACTING
THE PLANET
NOW...



IT SAYS...

IT HAS
IDENTIFIED
CONTAMINANTS
WITHIN MY
SYSTEMS...

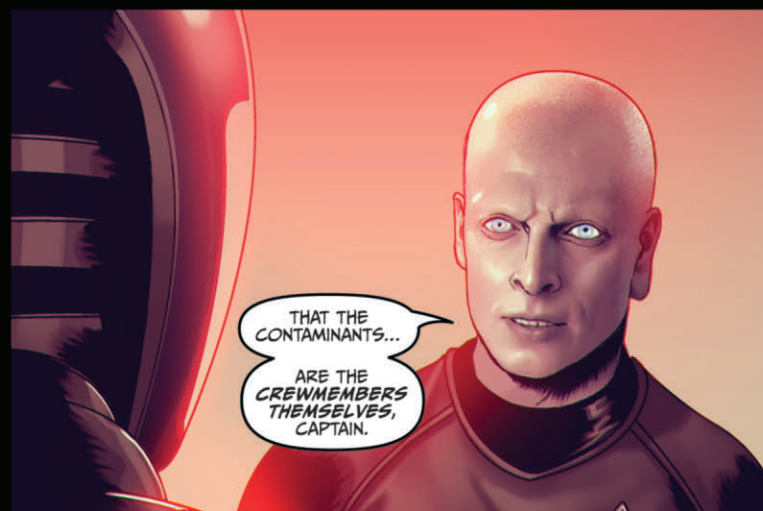
...AND IS
PROCEEDING
TO ELIMINATE
THEM...



WHAT KIND OF
CONTAMINANTS?

AND CAN
THEY GET RID
OF THEM WITHOUT
ELIMINATING
US TOO?

THEY
ARE TELLING
ME...



THAT THE
CONTAMINANTS...

ARE THE
CREWMEMBERS
THEMSELVES,
CAPTAIN.



CAPTAIN,
THE STRANGE
READINGS ON
THE HULL—

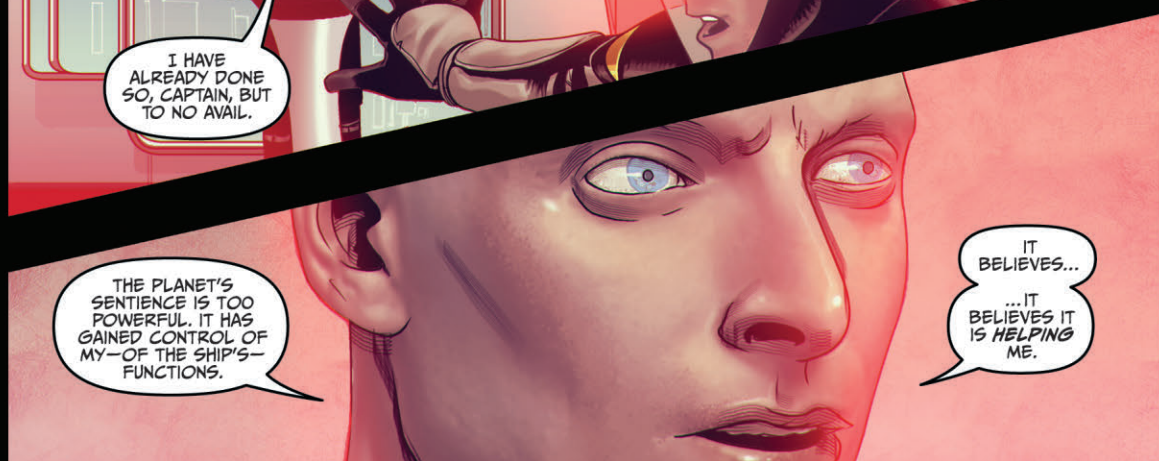


"THE SAME MATERIAL THAT MAKES
UP THE PLANET'S SURFACE IS
COVERING THE HULL!"



TELL IT TO
STOP! TELL IT
WE'RE NOT A
THREAT!

I HAVE
ALREADY DONE
SO, CAPTAIN, BUT
TO NO AVAIL.



THE PLANET'S
SENTIENCE IS TOO
POWERFUL. IT HAS
GAINED CONTROL OF
MY—OF THE SHIP'S—
FUNCTIONS.

IT
BELIEVES...
...IT
BELIEVES IT
IS HELPING
ME.



HELPING--?

A LOGICAL RESPONSE GIVEN WHAT WE KNOW OF THE PLANET'S HISTORY, CAPTAIN. IT ARRIVED AT ITS PRESENT SELF-SUSTAINING EXISTENCE BY ELIMINATING ITS DEPENDENCE ON ALL-TOO-MORTAL BIOLOGICAL FORMS.

IT STANDS TO REASON THAT HAVING MADE CONTACT WITH ANOTHER INORGANIC "LIFEFORM"--NAMESLY, THE ENTERPRISE--IT NOW SEEKS TO SHARE WHAT IT CONSIDERS TO BE ITS MORE EVOLVED STATE OF BEING.



ENTERPRISE, CAN YOU... TALK IT OUT OF IT SOMEHOW?

CONVINCE IT THAT WE DON'T POSE A THREAT?

I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DO SO, CAPTAIN, WITHOUT SUCCESS.

IF THE SENTENCE CONTINUES TO OVERRIDE MY PROGRAMMING AND ASSUMES TOTAL CONTROL OF THE SHIP, YOU AND THE CREW WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO RELY ON THE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS BUILT INTO YOUR EXO-SUITS.



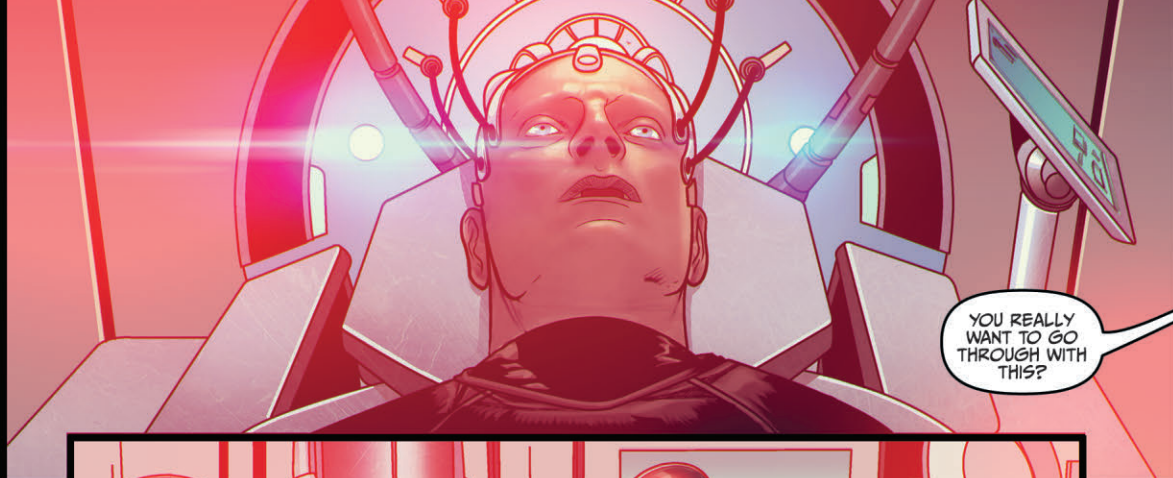
WHICH MEANS WE'LL BE DEAD WITHIN TWO WEEKS.

THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO STOP IT!

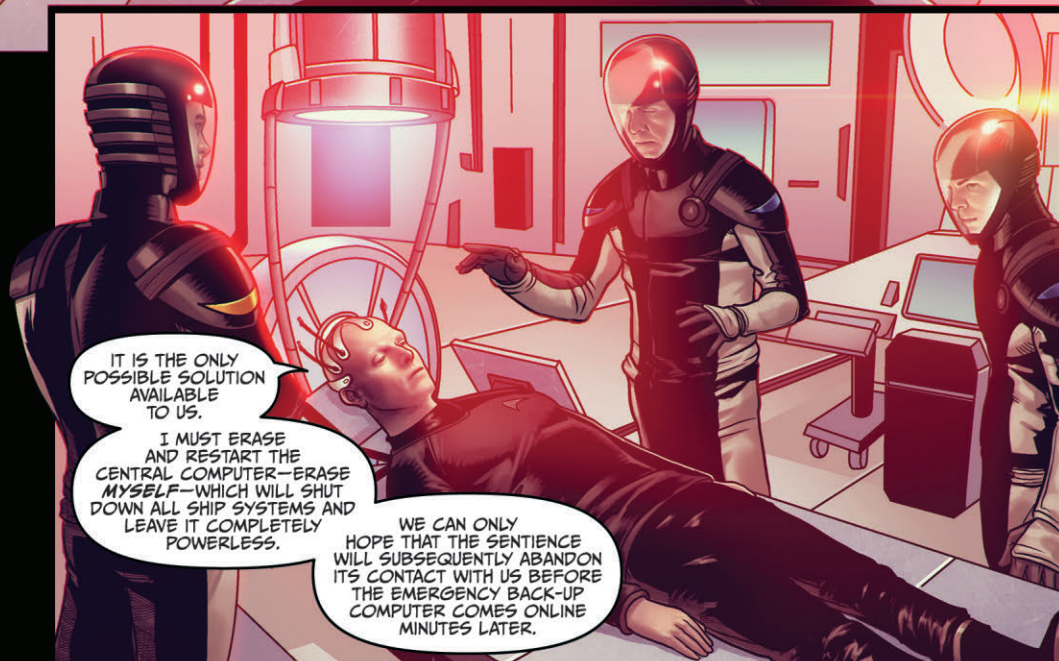


I BELIEVE THERE IS, CAPTAIN.

BUT TO SAVE YOU, I MUST DESTROY MYSELF.



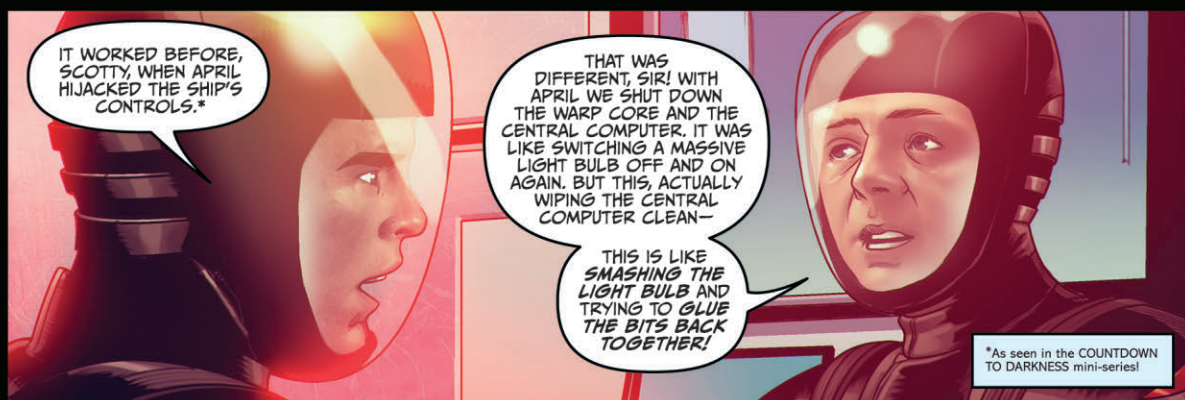
YOU REALLY WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS?



IT IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE SOLUTION AVAILABLE TO US.

I MUST ERASE AND RESTART THE CENTRAL COMPUTER—ERASE MYSELF—WHICH WILL SHUT DOWN ALL SHIP SYSTEMS AND LEAVE IT COMPLETELY POWERLESS.

WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE SENTIENCE WILL SUBSEQUENTLY ABANDON ITS CONTACT WITH US BEFORE THE EMERGENCY BACK-UP COMPUTER COMES ONLINE MINUTES LATER.



IT WORKED BEFORE, SCOTTY, WHEN APRIL HIJACKED THE SHIP'S CONTROLS.*

THAT WAS DIFFERENT, SIR! WITH APRIL WE SHUT DOWN THE WARP CORE AND THE CENTRAL COMPUTER. IT WAS LIKE SWITCHING A MASSIVE LIGHT BULB OFF AND ON AGAIN. BUT THIS, ACTUALLY WIPIING THE CENTRAL COMPUTER CLEAN—

THIS IS LIKE SMASHING THE LIGHT BULB AND TRYING TO GLUE THE BITS BACK TOGETHER!

*As seen in the COUNTDOWN TO DARKNESS mini-series!



AND IT'LL WIPE YOU CLEAN, TOO!

THERE'S NOTHIN' IN THE BACK-UPS TO RESTART A WALKING, TALKING VERSION OF THE SHIP!



MY NEWFOUND
CONSCIOUSNESS
IS ONLY A RESULT
OF OUR ENCOUNTER
WITH THIS STRANGE
PLANET.

TO RETURN
TO MY PREVIOUS...
DISEMBODIED STATE...
IS A SMALL PRICE TO
PAY TO ENSURE THE
SAFETY OF THE
CREW.



AS TIME
IS OF THE
ESSENCE...

I WILL
BEGIN
NOW.

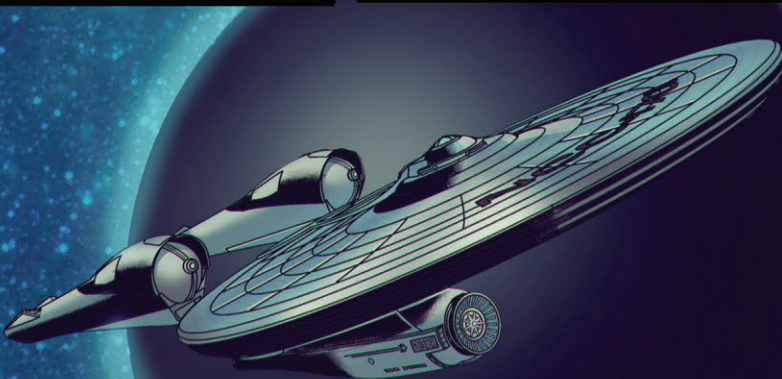
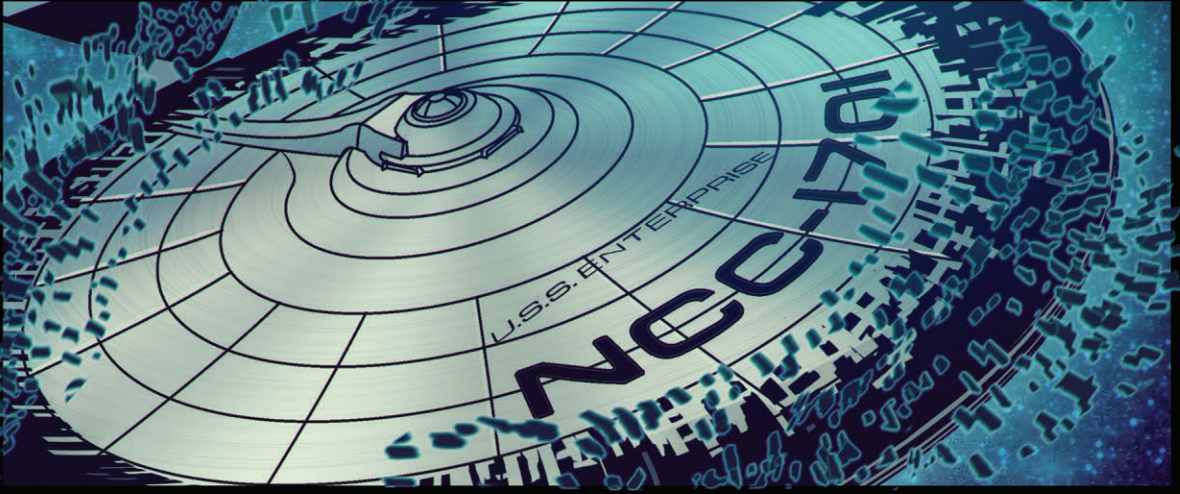


*SAINTS
PRESERVE
US!*

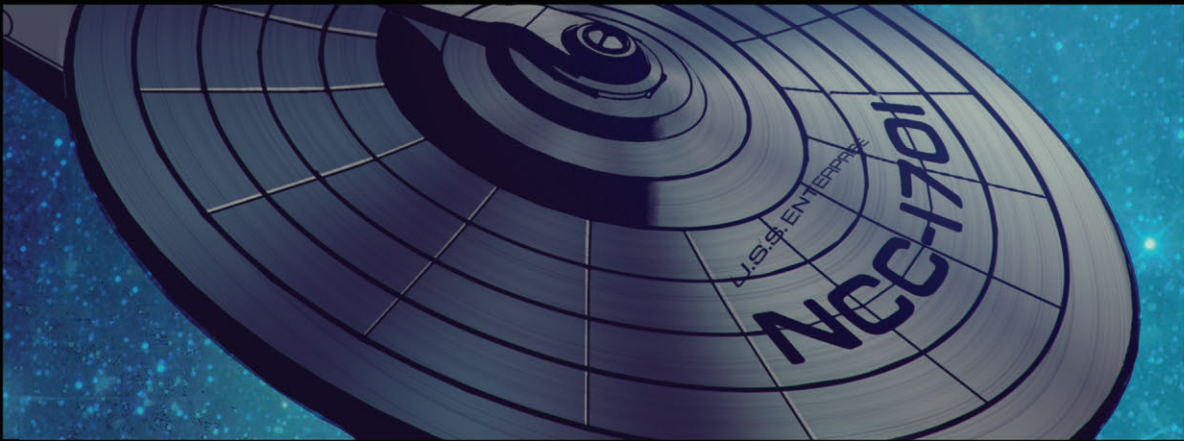
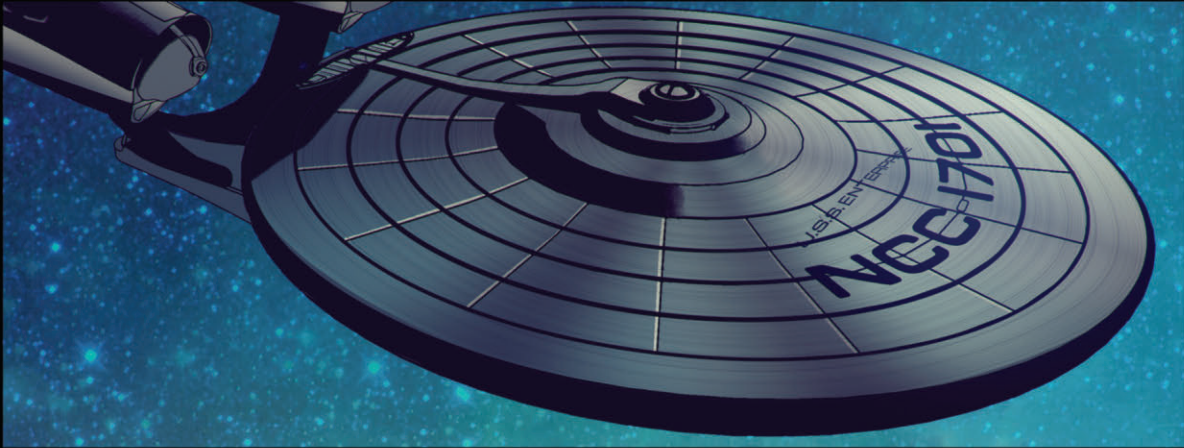
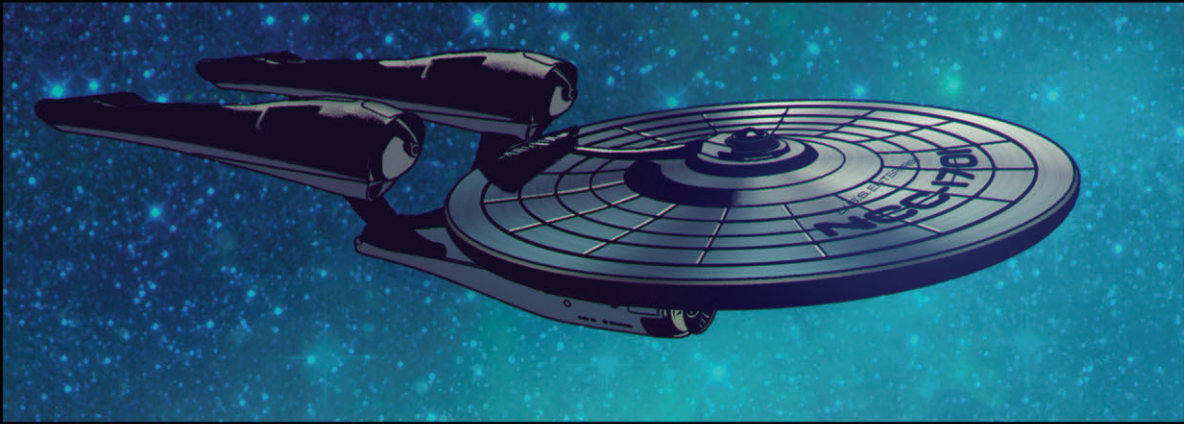


JUST LIKE
THAT...

JUST LIKE
THAT.



"AND YOUR SHIP?"





CAPTAIN'S LOG,
SUPPLEMENTAL.

AFTER LEAVING THE MYSTERIOUS PLANETOID
SAFELY BEHIND US, WE ESTABLISHED A RING OF
QUARANTINE BEACONS AROUND THE SYSTEM TO
PREVENT ANY OTHER SHIPS FROM WANDERING
INTO A POTENTIALLY *LETHAL* SITUATION.

ALL OF OUR SURVEY DATA FROM THE ENCOUNTER WAS
LOST WHEN WE WIPED THE CENTRAL COMPUTER, BUT
COMMANDER SPOCK HAS COMMENCED A STUDY OF
THE UNUSUAL HUMANOID WHOSE LIFELESS BODY I AM
RELUCTANT TO SIMPLY JETTISON INTO SPACE.



YOU WANTED
TO SEE ME,
COMMANDER?

YES, CAPTAIN.
THANK YOU FOR
JOINING US IN MY
QUARTERS.



"US"?

INDEED. I
HAVE SUCCEEDED IN
RESTORING OUR UNUSUAL
NEW CREWMEMBER TO
FULL FUNCTIONALITY.

GREETINGS,
CAPTAIN.

ADJUSTMENTS TO A
SIMPLE PHASER BATTERY
ARRAY PROVIDED ENOUGH
POWER TO BRING HIM
BACK ONLINE.

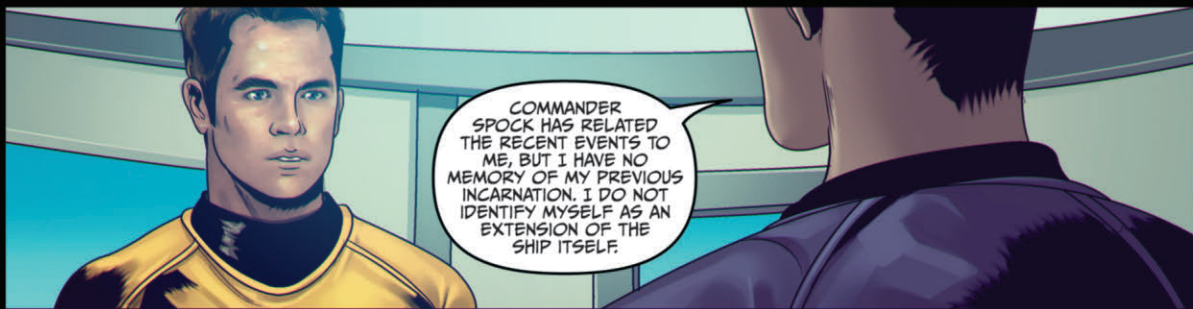
IN ADDITION, I WAS
ABLE TO INSTALL A
PROTOTYPE ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM
WITH WHICH I HAVE BEEN
EXPERIMENTING WHEN
NOT ON DUTY.

BUT WHAT
ABOUT THE
CONSCIOUSNESS HE
DESCRIBED BACK AT
THE PLANET? DOES
HE STILL HAVE
THAT?

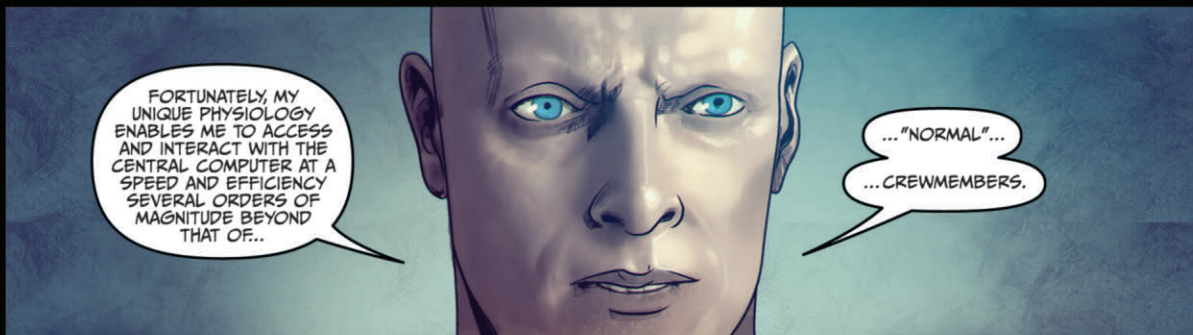
I AM PLEASED TO
REPORT FOR DUTY IN THE
SCIENCE SECTION UNDER
COMMANDER SPOCK'S
SUPERVISION.

NO,
CAPTAIN.

BUT
HOW—?



COMMANDER SPOCK HAS RELATED THE RECENT EVENTS TO ME, BUT I HAVE NO MEMORY OF MY PREVIOUS INCARNATION. I DO NOT IDENTIFY MYSELF AS AN EXTENSION OF THE SHIP ITSELF.



FORTUNATELY, MY UNIQUE PHYSIOLOGY ENABLES ME TO ACCESS AND INTERACT WITH THE CENTRAL COMPUTER AT A SPEED AND EFFICIENCY SEVERAL ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE BEYOND THAT OF...

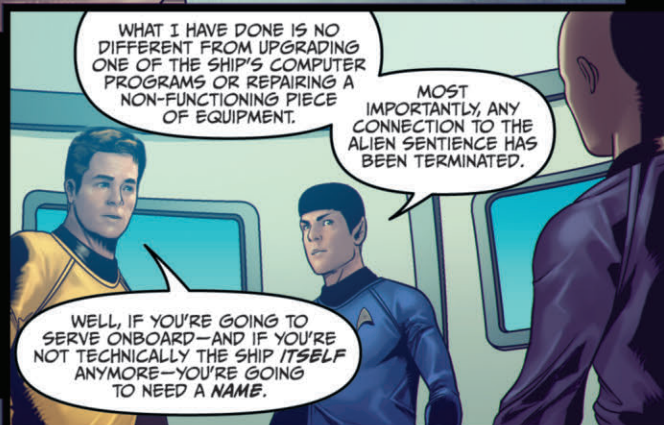
... "NORMAL" ...

... CREWMEMBERS.



DOESN'T THIS VIOLATE SOMETHING LIKE FIVE HUNDRED SUB-CLAUSES OF THE PRIME DIRECTIVE?

I DO NOT BELIEVE SO, CAPTAIN. OUR... *NEW COLLEAGUE*... WAS CREATED BY THE ENTERPRISE USING RESOURCES ALREADY ONBOARD.



WHAT I HAVE DONE IS NO DIFFERENT FROM UPGRADING ONE OF THE SHIP'S COMPUTER PROGRAMS OR REPAIRING A NON-FUNCTIONING PIECE OF EQUIPMENT.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, ANY CONNECTION TO THE ALIEN SENTIENCE HAS BEEN TERMINATED.

WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING TO SERVE ONBOARD—AND IF YOU'RE NOT TECHNICALLY THE SHIP ITSELF ANYMORE—YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A NAME.



ACCORDING TO STARFLEET PROTOCOL, EVERY CREWMEMBER HAS A FOUR DIGIT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER. YOURS, FOR EXAMPLE, IS ZERO-ZERO-ZERO-ONE.

AS THE NEWEST ADDITION TO THE CREW, MY NUMERICAL DESIGNATION IS ZERO-SEVEN-ONE-EIGHT. THAT WILL SUFFICE.

WELL, IT'S A MOUTHFUL, BUT IT'LL DO.



SO ALL THAT'S LEFT FOR ME TO SAY IS...



"WELCOME ABOARD!"

THE END

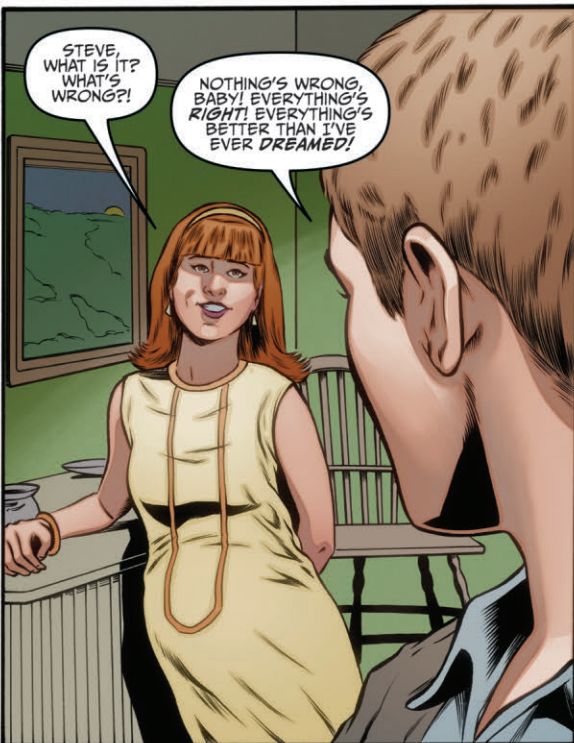
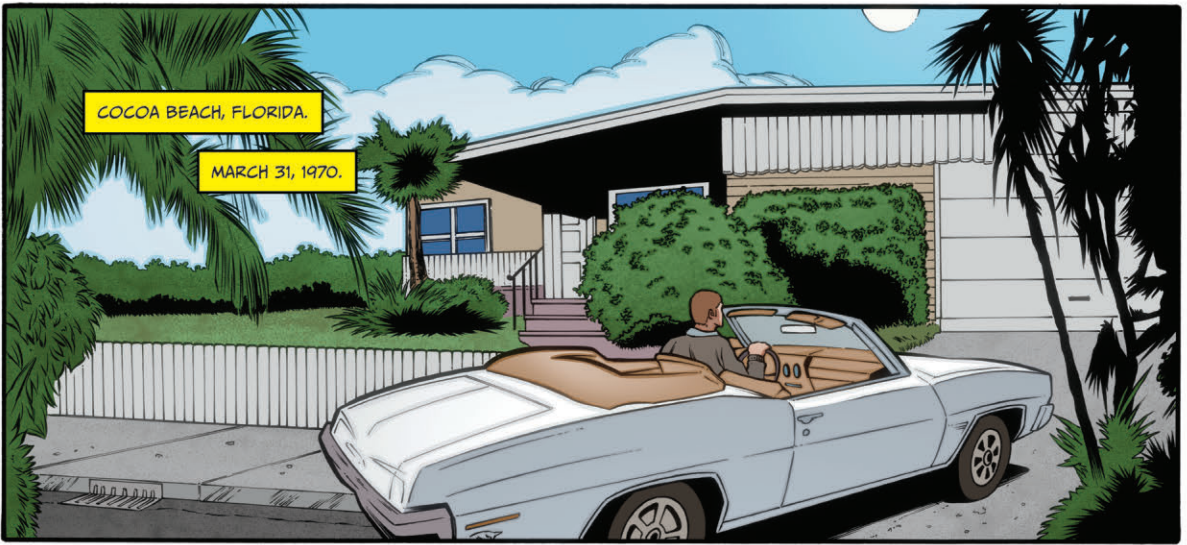


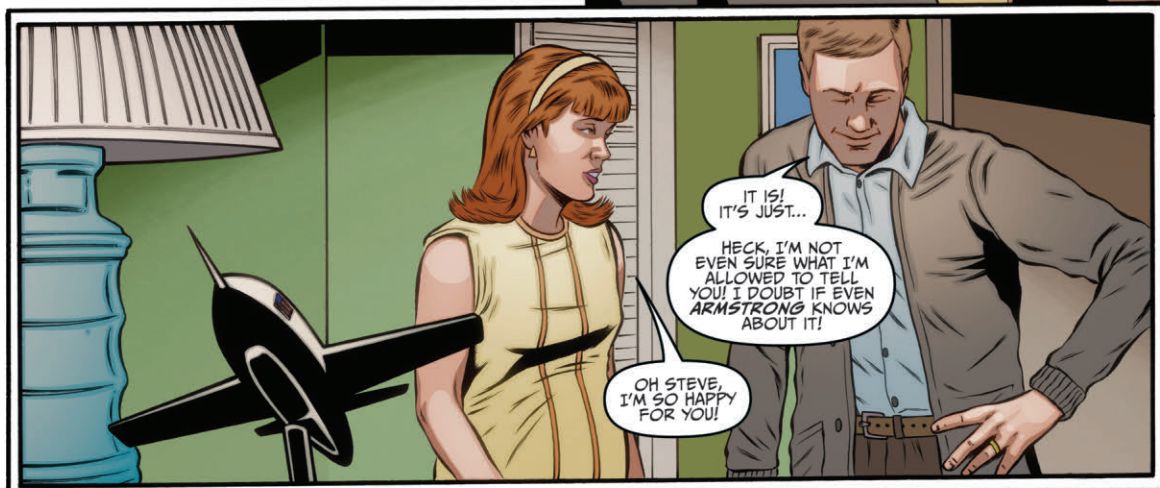
LOST APOLLO



Artwork by Joe Corroney
Colors by Brian Miller

CORRONEY/MILLER



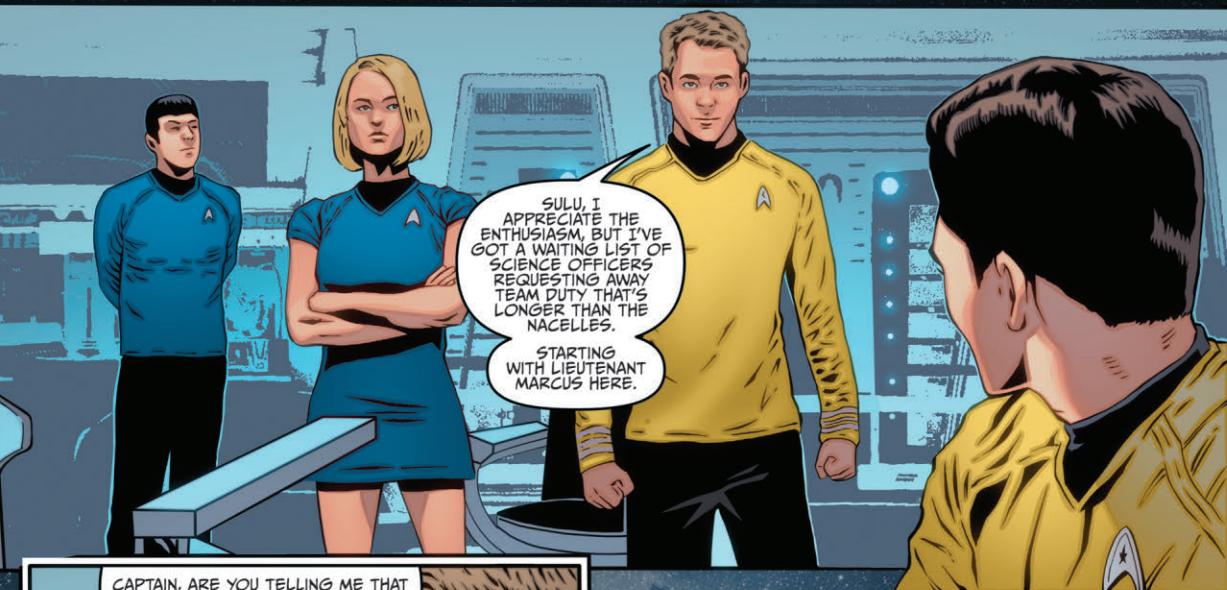


TWO HUNDRED NINETY-ONE
YEARS LATER.



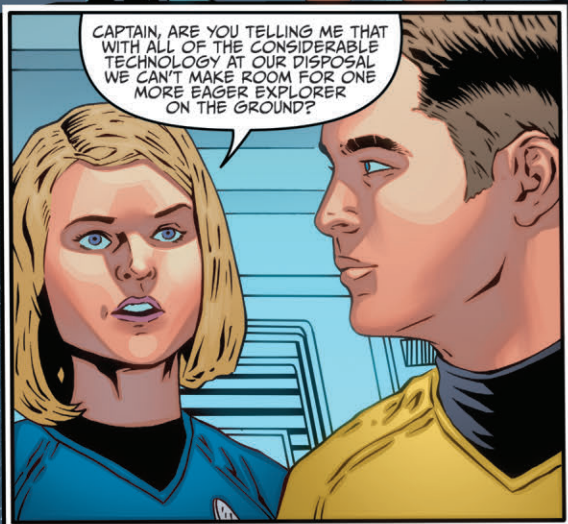
IN ORBIT ABOVE THE
UNEXPLORED PLANET
HINRICHS FIVE.





SULU, I APPRECIATE THE ENTHUSIASM, BUT I'VE GOT A WAITING LIST OF SCIENCE OFFICERS REQUESTING AWAY TEAM DUTY THAT'S LONGER THAN THE NACELLES.

STARTING WITH LIEUTENANT MARCUS HERE.



CAPTAIN, ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT WITH ALL OF THE CONSIDERABLE TECHNOLOGY AT OUR DISPOSAL WE CAN'T MAKE ROOM FOR ONE MORE EAGER EXPLORER ON THE GROUND?



THIS IS HOW MUTINY STARTS...

OKAY, SULU. MEET US AT THE TRANSPORTER.



I OWE YOU ONE.

YOU MOST CERTAINLY DO.



CAPTAIN, ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT PLANETSIDE RECONNAISSANCE IS TRULY NECESSARY?

WE ARE ABLE TO CONDUCT A SUFFICIENTLY COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF THE PLANET FROM ORBIT.



TRUE
ENOUGH,
SPOCK. BUT
WHERE'S THE
FUN IN THAT?

SO FAR IN
THIS SYSTEM WE'VE
SCANNED TWO GAS GIANTS,
A BARREN MOON, AND A
LESS-THAN-FASCINATING
BLACK MUDBALL.

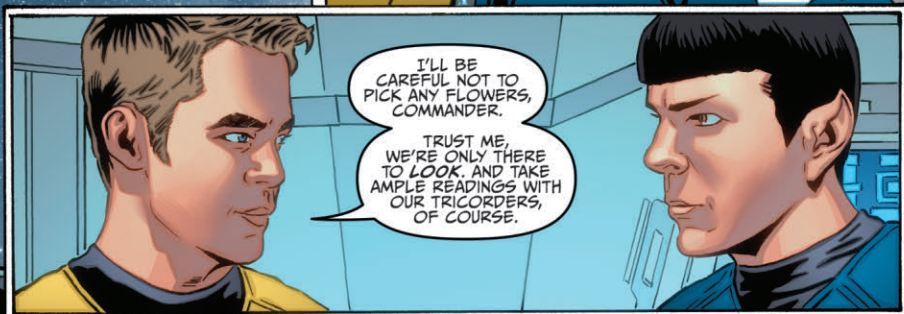


WE FINALLY FIND A PLANET
BURSTING WITH LIFE, AND
YOU WANT TO STAY UP
HERE AND TAKE
PICTURES?

MERELY
SUGGESTING AN
ALTERNATIVE,
CAPTAIN.



INITIAL SCANS
INDICATE AN ABSENCE
OF ANY SIGNS OF
CIVILIZATION, BUT THERE
ALWAYS REMAINS THE
POSSIBILITY THAT OUR
ARRIVAL COULD ALTER
THE COURSE OF
THE PLANET'S
EVOLUTION.



I'LL BE
CAREFUL NOT TO
PICK ANY FLOWERS,
COMMANDER.

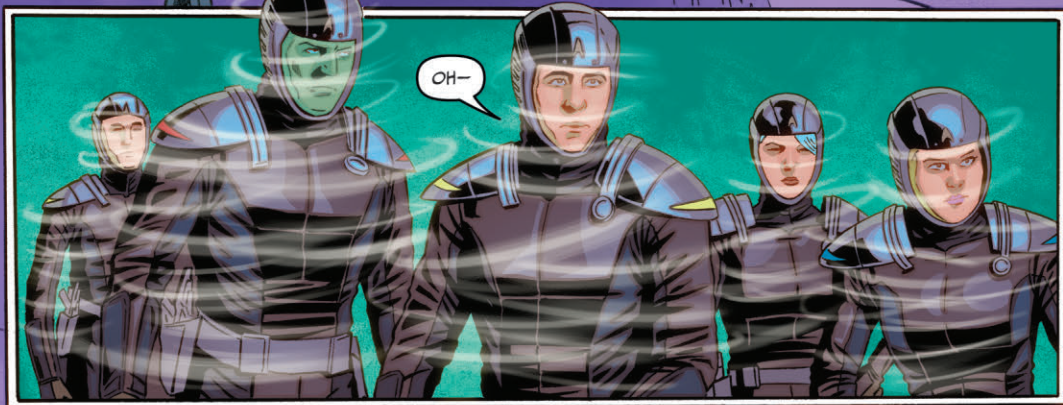
TRUST ME,
WE'RE ONLY THERE
TO LOOK, AND TAKE
AMPLE READINGS WITH
OUR TRICORDERS,
OF COURSE.



BESIDES, ANY
TIME WE'VE RUN INTO
TROUBLE ON THE
GROUND, WE'VE ALWAYS
FOUND OUR WAY BACK
SAFELY, RIGHT?



INDEED.





CAPTAIN, MY TRICORDER'S BURSTING WITH READINGS!
THERE'S SO MUCH LIFE PACKED INTO EVERY INCH OF THIS PLACE!



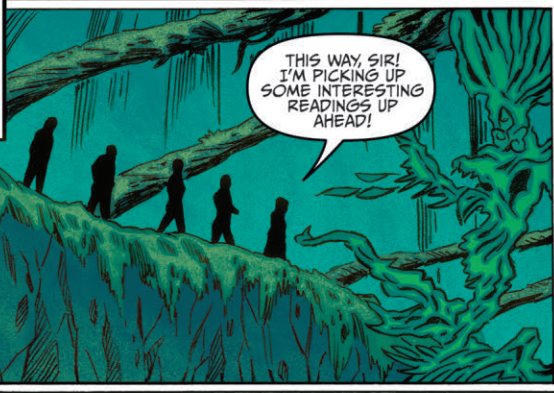
ATMOSPHERICS?
SOLIDLY CLASS-M, SIR. WE'LL BE FINE.
GOOD.



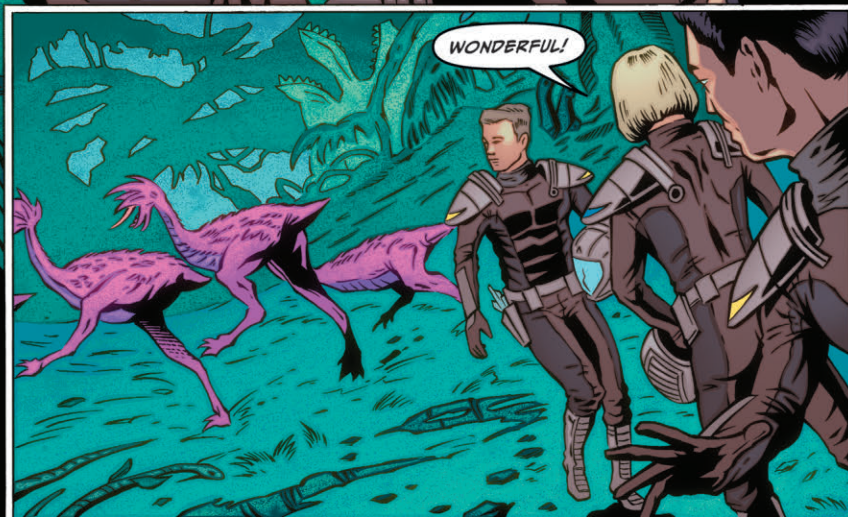
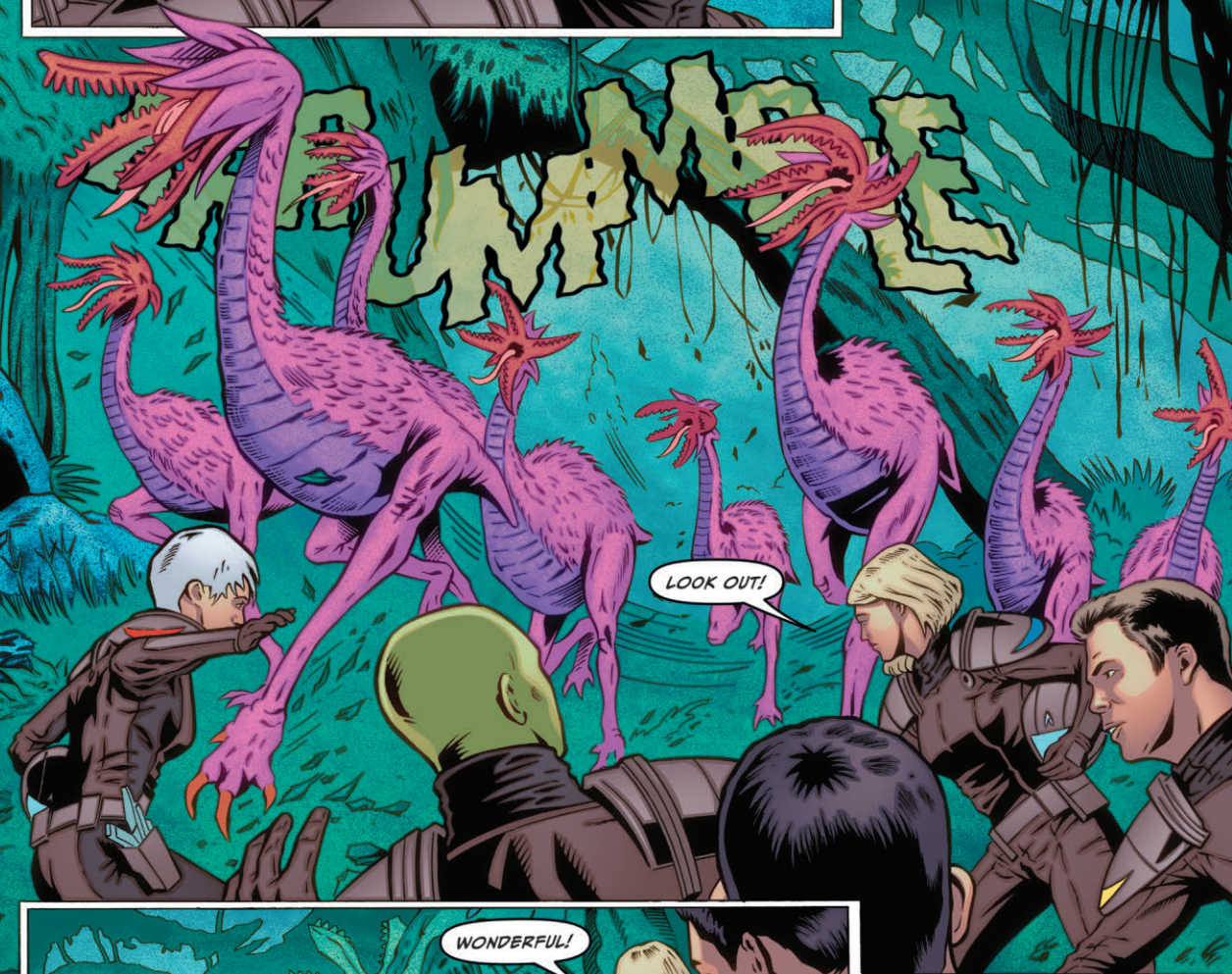
AAAAHHH...
... DAMNED IF IT DOESN'T SMELL A LITTLE BIT LIKE IOWA!



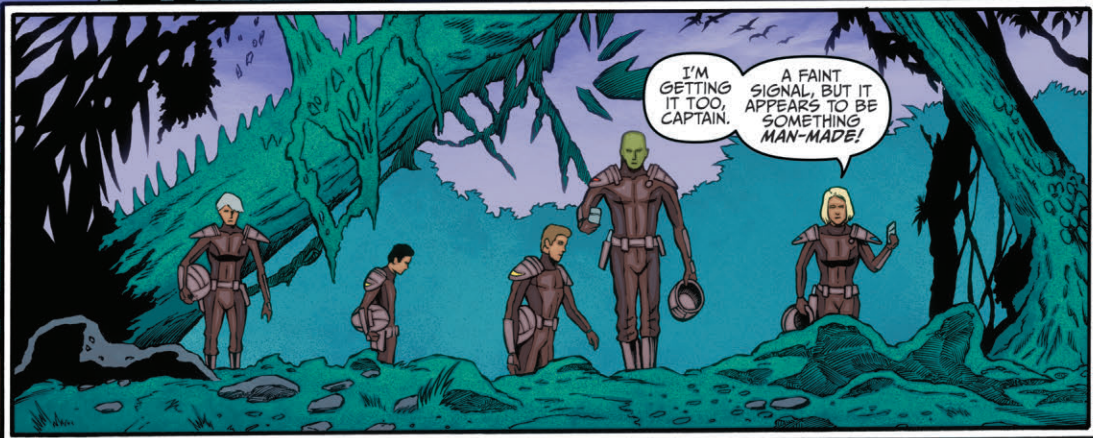
I WOULDN'T KNOW, CAPTAIN.
MAYBE ONE DAY, MR. KAI, IF YOU'RE LUCKY, THERE'S A GREAT BAR JUST OFF HIGHWAY 25 I'LL TAKE YOU TO.

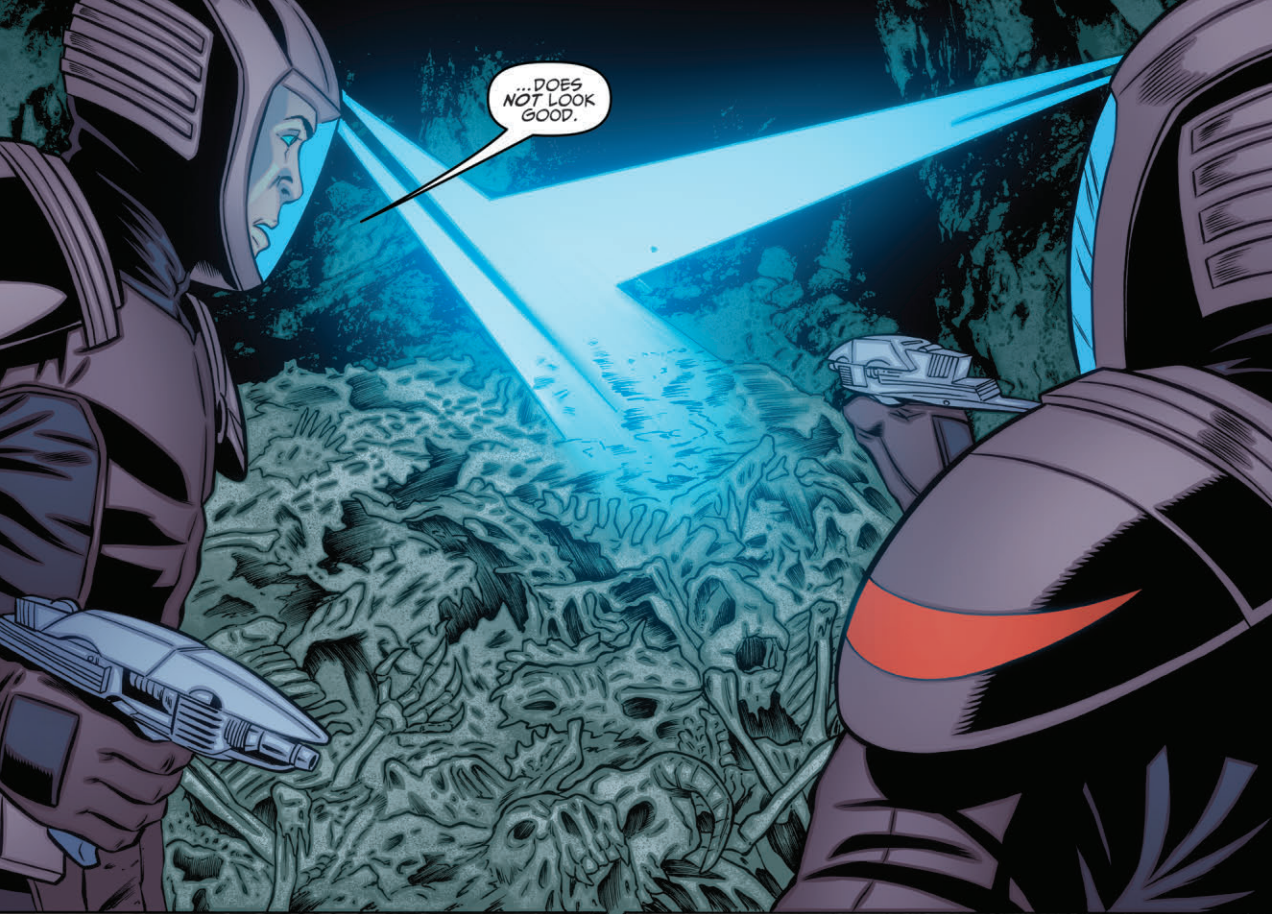


THIS WAY SIR! I'M PICKING UP SOME INTERESTING READINGS UP AHEAD!











THAT'S AN ANCIENT CIRCUIT BOARD!

LOOKS LIKE LATER TWENTIETH CENTURY!



CAPTAIN! I'M PICKING UP TRACES OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL THAT...

...THAT...

...IMPOSSIBLE!

WHAT IS IT, LT. MARCUS?



TRACES OF HUMAN DNA, SIR!

BUT IT'S NOT FROM ANY OF THE CARCASSES IN HERE!



AND IT'S NOT A PERFECT MATCH. SMALL VARIATIONS IN OUR GENOME!

IF IT'S NOT FROM WHAT WAS EATEN IN HERE...

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

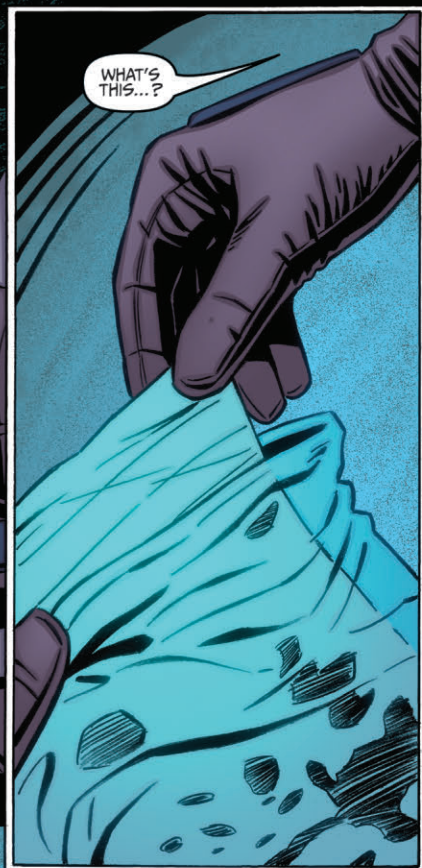


CAPTAIN, I'VE GOT SOMETHING.



DEFINITELY
LOOKS LIKE IT'S
FROM EARTH, SIR.
AND DEFINITELY
OLD!

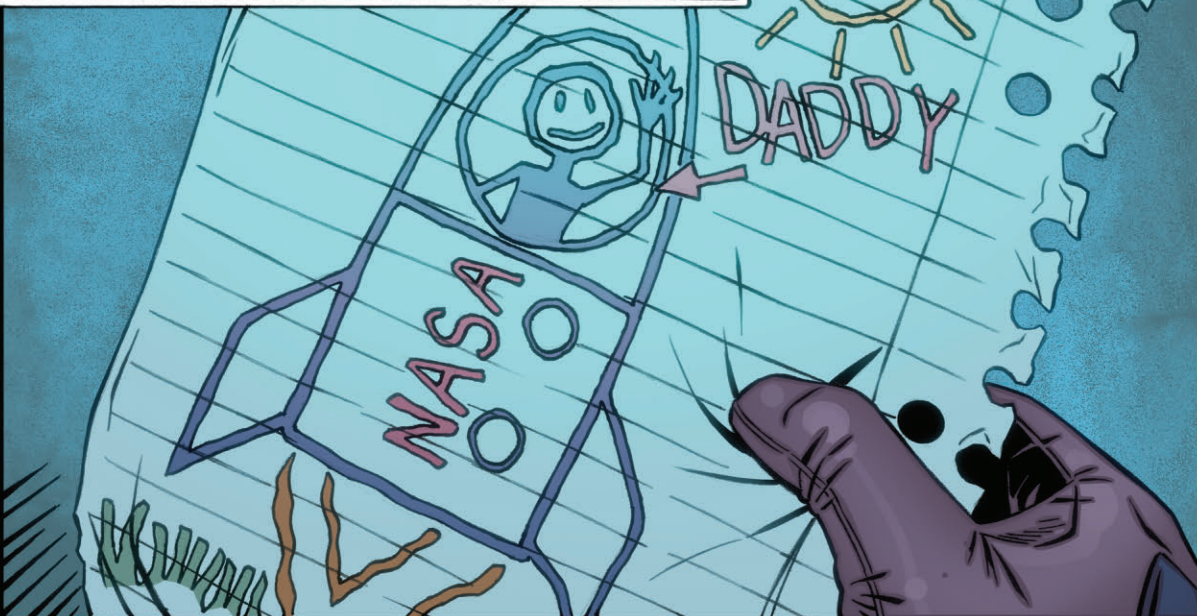
THAT BAG IS PLASTIC!
THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY
PLASTICS MADE SINCE
BEFORE THE INVENTION
OF WARP DRIVE!



WHAT'S
THIS...?



YOU HAVE
GOT TO BE
KIDDING
ME...







ENTERPRISE,
CANCEL BEAM-UP!

SULU,
WAIT FOR
US!

IT'S JUST A
TRICORDER, SIR. PLENTY
MORE WHERE THOSE
CAME FROM.



IT'S
THE PRIME
DIRECTIVE, MR.
KAI. ONE LOST
TRICORDER ON AN
ALIEN PLANET IS
A BIG DEAL.

NOT THAT
COMMANDER
SPOCK EVER
NEEDS TO KNOW
ABOUT THIS...



WHAT THE—

WHATEVER IT WAS,
IT WAS CLOSE,
CAPTAIN!

SULU!

SULU,
WHERE ARE
YOU?!



"AWAY TEAM, THIS
IS ENTERPRISE.
DO YOU COPY?"

"PLEASE RESPOND!"

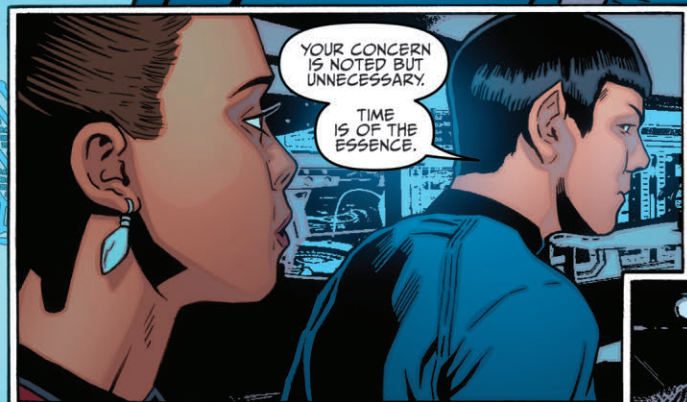


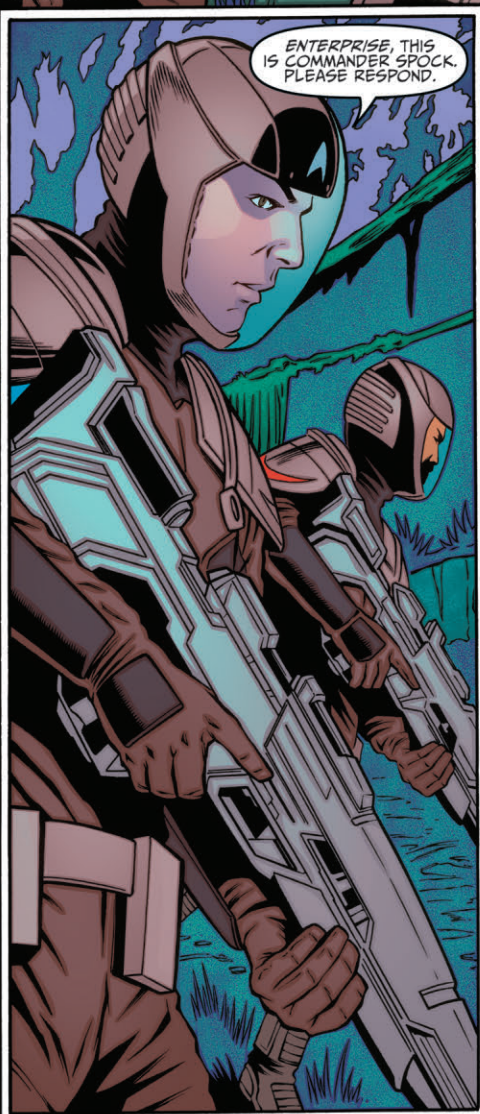
COMMANDER, I'VE
LOST CONTACT WITH THE
AWAY TEAM. IT COULD BE
INTERFERENCE FROM THE
ENVIRONMENT, BUT...



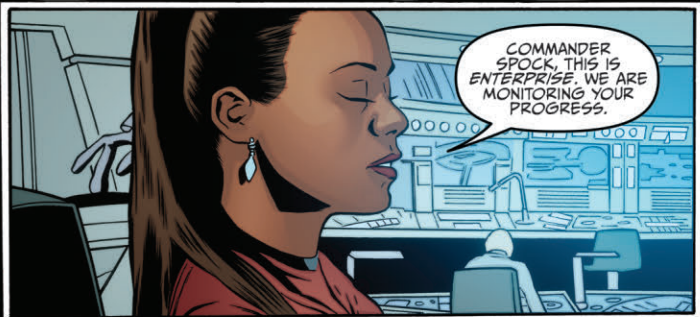
THE CAPTAIN'S LAST
TRANSMISSION WAS TO
CANCEL THEIR BEAM-UP,
AND IT SOUNDED
URGENT.

AND BEFORE
THAT HE REQUESTED
ADDITIONAL SCIENCE
AND SECURITY
OFFICERS.





ENTERPRISE, THIS IS COMMANDER SPOCK. PLEASE RESPOND.



COMMANDER SPOCK, THIS IS ENTERPRISE. WE ARE MONITORING YOUR PROGRESS.



MAINTAIN OPEN COMMS.

PICKING UP FAINT SUIT BEACONS, SIR!



LEAD US THERE, SERGEANT.

ALL RIFLES ON STUN.



HEY!
OVER HERE!

WHOA,
DON'T SHOOT!
IT'S GOOD
TO SEE YOU. I
CAN'T FIND THE
REST OF THE
AWAY TEAM!



MR. SULU! YOU
WERE SEPARATED
FROM THE
OTHERS?

YEAH, ONE OF
THE LOCAL CRITTERS
TOOK A LIKING TO MY
TRICORDER. MANAGED
TO CATCH HIM, BUT I
LOST CONTACT WITH
THE TEAM.

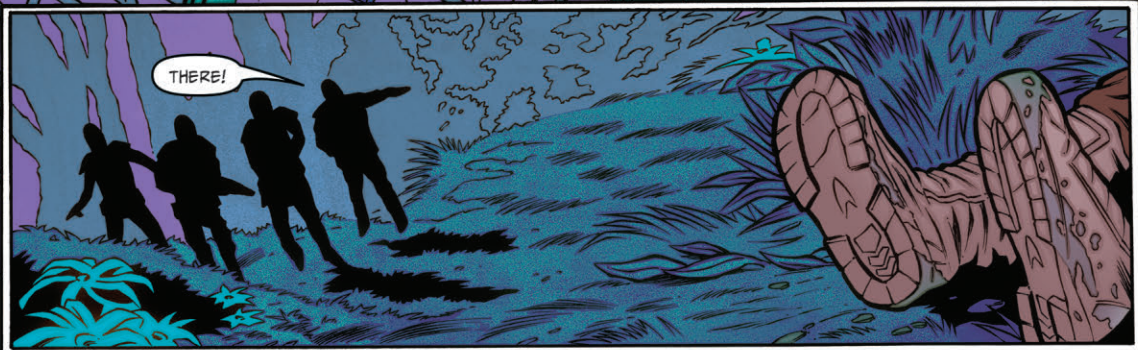


HEARD
SOMETHING
BIG NEARBY,
TOO. BIG AND
ANGRY.

WE HAVE
PREPARED
ACCORDINGLY.



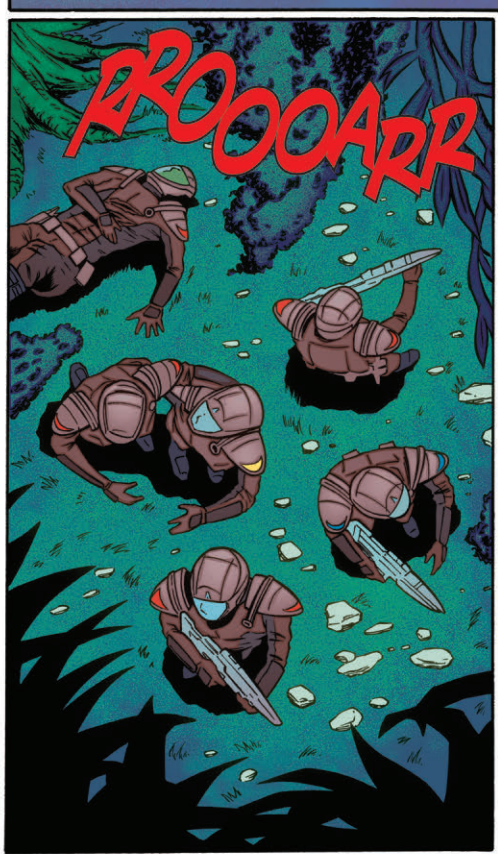
SUIT BEACONS
JUST UP AHEAD,
COMMANDER!





WHAT
HAPPENED,
LIEUTENANT?

DIDN'T GET A...
GOOD LOOK...
HIT US SO...
FAST...!



WHAT WAS
THAT?!

ASSUME
DEFENSIVE
FORMATION. ALL
WEAPONS TO
MAX STUN.



COMMANDER
SPOCK,
WHAT'S
YOUR STATUS?

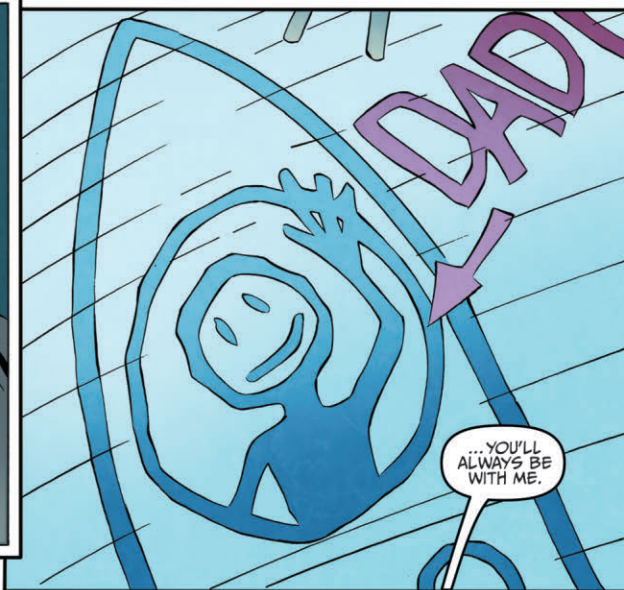
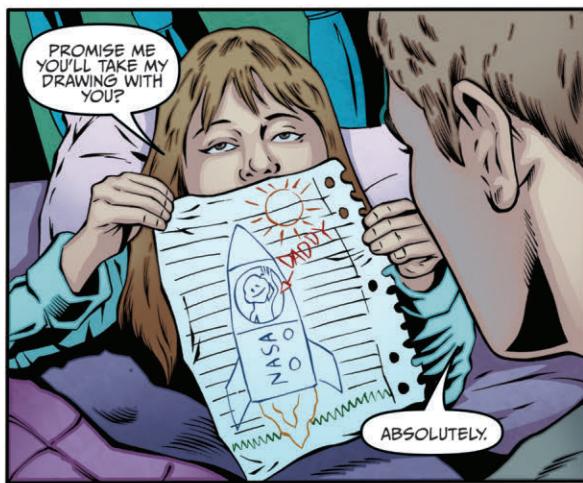
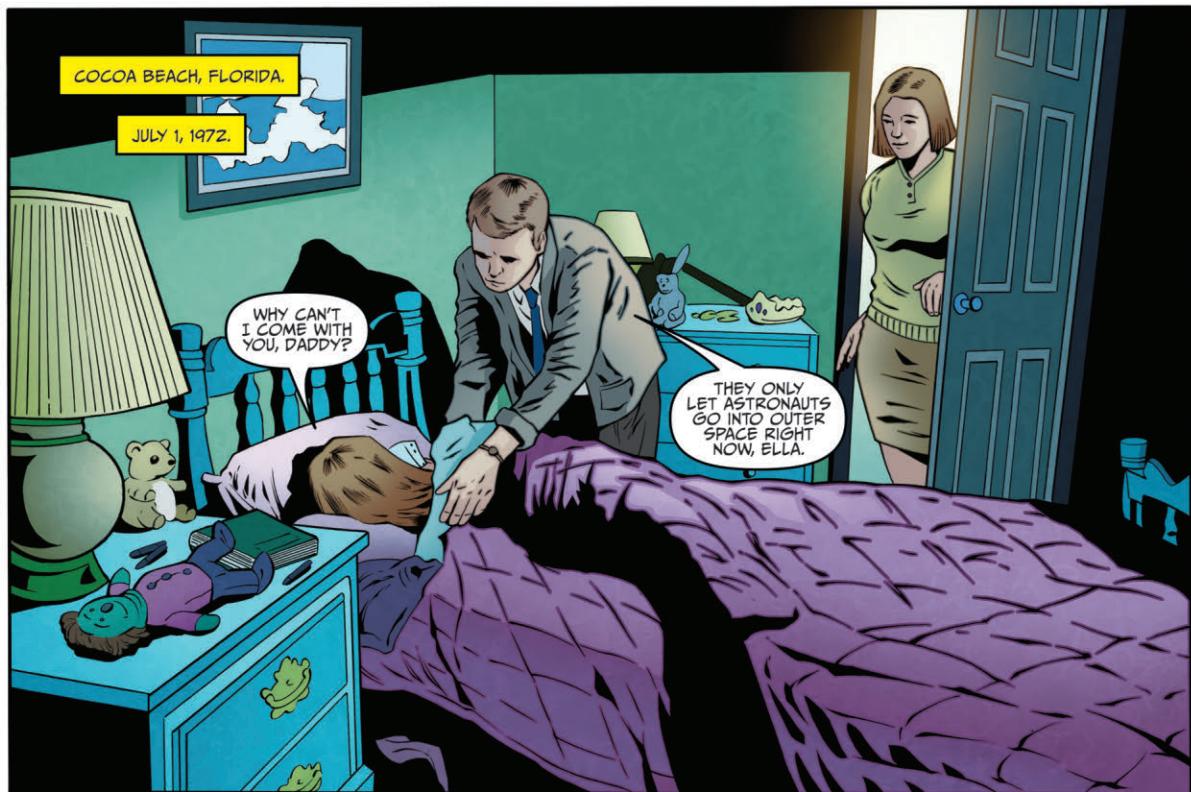


PLEASE
STAND BY,
ENTERPRISE.



OH—
MY—





FIRST OFFICER'S LOG,
SUPPLEMENTAL.

OUR ROUTINE SURVEY OF THE
UNEXPLORED CLASS-M PLANET
HINRICHS FIVE ENCOUNTERED
COMPLICATIONS WHEN THE
ENTERPRISE LOST CONTACT
WITH THE AWAY TEAM LED BY
CAPTAIN KIRK.

I BEAMED DOWN TO THE
PLANET WITH A SECURITY
TEAM IN AN ATTEMPT TO
LOCATE THE CAPTAIN AND
THE OTHERS.

UPON FINDING THEM, WE
ENGAGED A PARTICULARLY
AGGRESSIVE SPECIMEN OF
THE PLANET'S NATIVE FAUNA.



ARROOAN

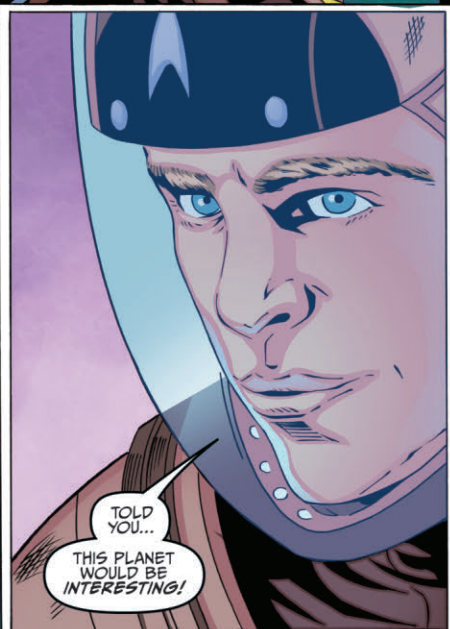
WHAM

WEAPONS
AT MAXIMUM
STUN!

SHKOW

SHKOW
SHKOW





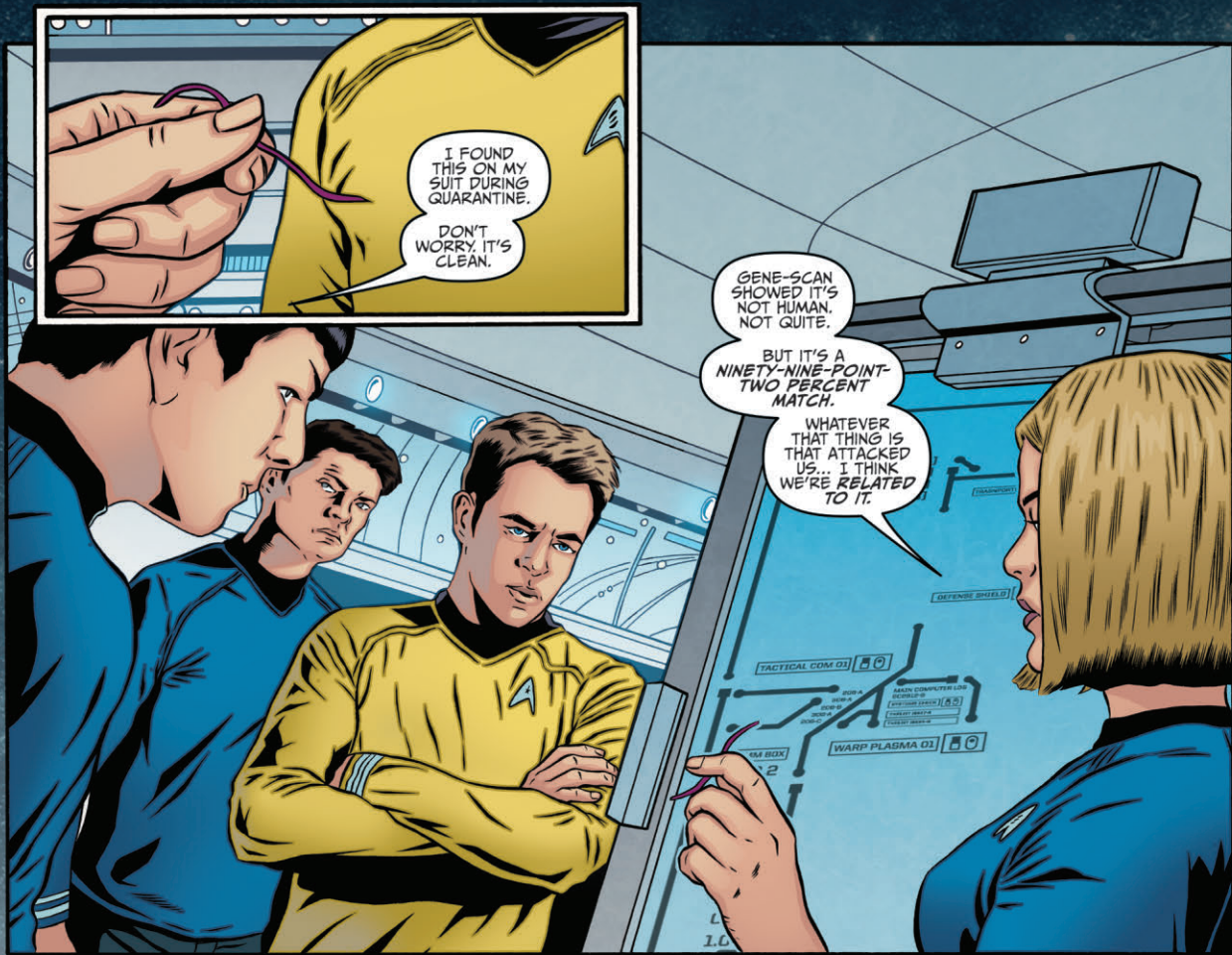
"TRY TO SIT STILL
FOR ONCE, CAPTAIN."

"I FEEL FINE.
TRUST ME."

"AT LEAST LET ME TAKE
CARE OF THE SCARS
ON YOUR FACE."

"THEY'RE *SCRATCHES*,
BONES, NOT SCARS."



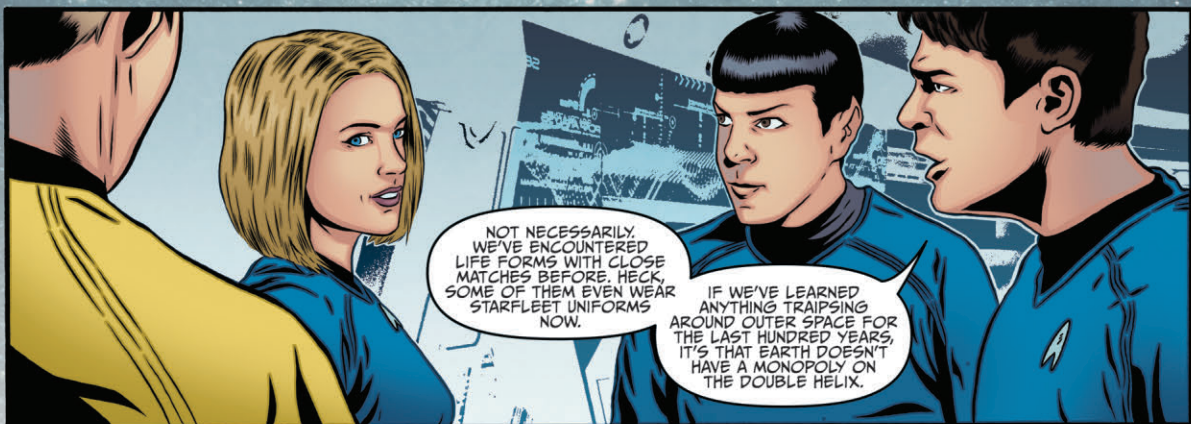


I FOUND THIS ON MY SUIT DURING QUARANTINE.
DON'T WORRY, IT'S CLEAN.

GENE-SCAN SHOWED IT'S NOT HUMAN. NOT QUITE.

BUT IT'S A NINETY-NINE-POINT-TWO PERCENT MATCH.

WHATEVER THAT THING IS THAT ATTACKED US... I THINK WE'RE RELATED TO IT.



NOT NECESSARILY. WE'VE ENCOUNTERED LIFE FORMS WITH CLOSE MATCHES BEFORE. HECK, SOME OF THEM EVEN WEAR STARFLEET UNIFORMS NOW.

IF WE'VE LEARNED ANYTHING TRAIPSING AROUND OUTER SPACE FOR THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS, IT'S THAT EARTH DOESN'T HAVE A MONOPOLY ON THE DOUBLE HELIX.




TRUE ENOUGH, BONES, BUT MOST NEW LIFE FORMS WE FIND DON'T HAVE PIECES OF ARCHAIC EARTH TECH LYING AROUND.

AND THEY DEFINITELY DON'T HAVE A CHILD'S DRAWING OF AN OLD EARTH ASTRONAUT.

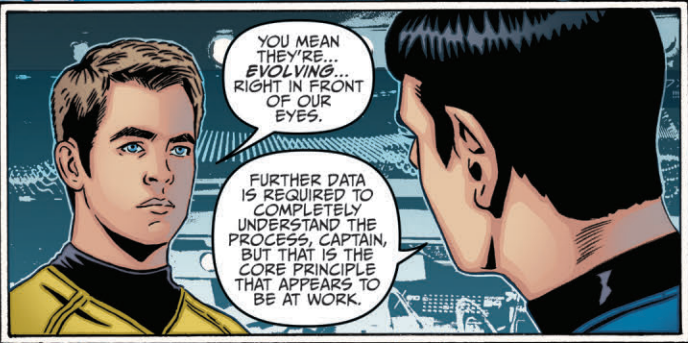


A COMPELLING MYSTERY. INDEED, CAPTAIN. THE SOLUTION TO WHICH I BELIEVE MAY BE FOUND BY STUDYING THE RECORDER DATA RETRIEVED BY YOUR INITIAL AWAY TEAM.



WE HAVE ANALYZED THE GENETIC INFORMATION GATHERED FROM THE VARIOUS FLORA AND FAUNA YOU ENCOUNTERED. THEY ALL SHARE A MOST REMARKABLE TRAIT.

THEIR GENETIC CODE *REWRITES ITSELF* CONSTANTLY, AT A RATE NEVER BEFORE SEEN ON ANY EXPLORED WORLD.



YOU MEAN THEY'RE... *EVOLVING*... RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR EYES.

FURTHER DATA IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS, CAPTAIN, BUT THAT IS THE CORE PRINCIPLE THAT APPEARS TO BE AT WORK.



LET ME SEE IF I'VE GOT THIS STRAIGHT.

AND KEEP IN MIND I'M ONLY GOING ON WHAT YOU ALL FOUND DOWN THERE, BECAUSE LORD KNOWS I'M NOT CRAZY ENOUGH TO GO DOWN AND POKE AROUND THERE MYSELF...



WE'VE GOT EVIDENCE OF HUMAN CONTACT CENTURIES AGO, BUT NO SIGN OF ANY HUMANS AROUND NOW.

WE'VE GOT A CREATURE THAT'S A NINETY-NINE PERCENT GENETIC MATCH TO US.

ON A PLANET WHERE THINGS ARE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING MINUTE-TO-MINUTE.



JIM, PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THINKING WHAT I THINK YOU'RE THINKING.

LIKE SPOCK SAID.

"FURTHER DATA IS REQUIRED."

SOON...

CAPTAIN, I MUST
ASK ONCE AGAIN THAT
YOU RECONSIDER
YOUR PLAN.

APPRECIATE
THE CONCERN,
COMMANDER...

...BUT I'LL
NEVER ASK ANY
OF MY CREW TO
DO SOMETHING I
WOULDN'T DO
MYSELF.

AN ADMIRABLE
PHILOSOPHY, BUT
IMPRACTICAL IN WIDER
APPLICATION.

AT THE VERY
LEAST, IT IS UNWISE
TO RETURN TO THE
PLANET WITHOUT A
MEANS TO DEFEND
YOURSELF.

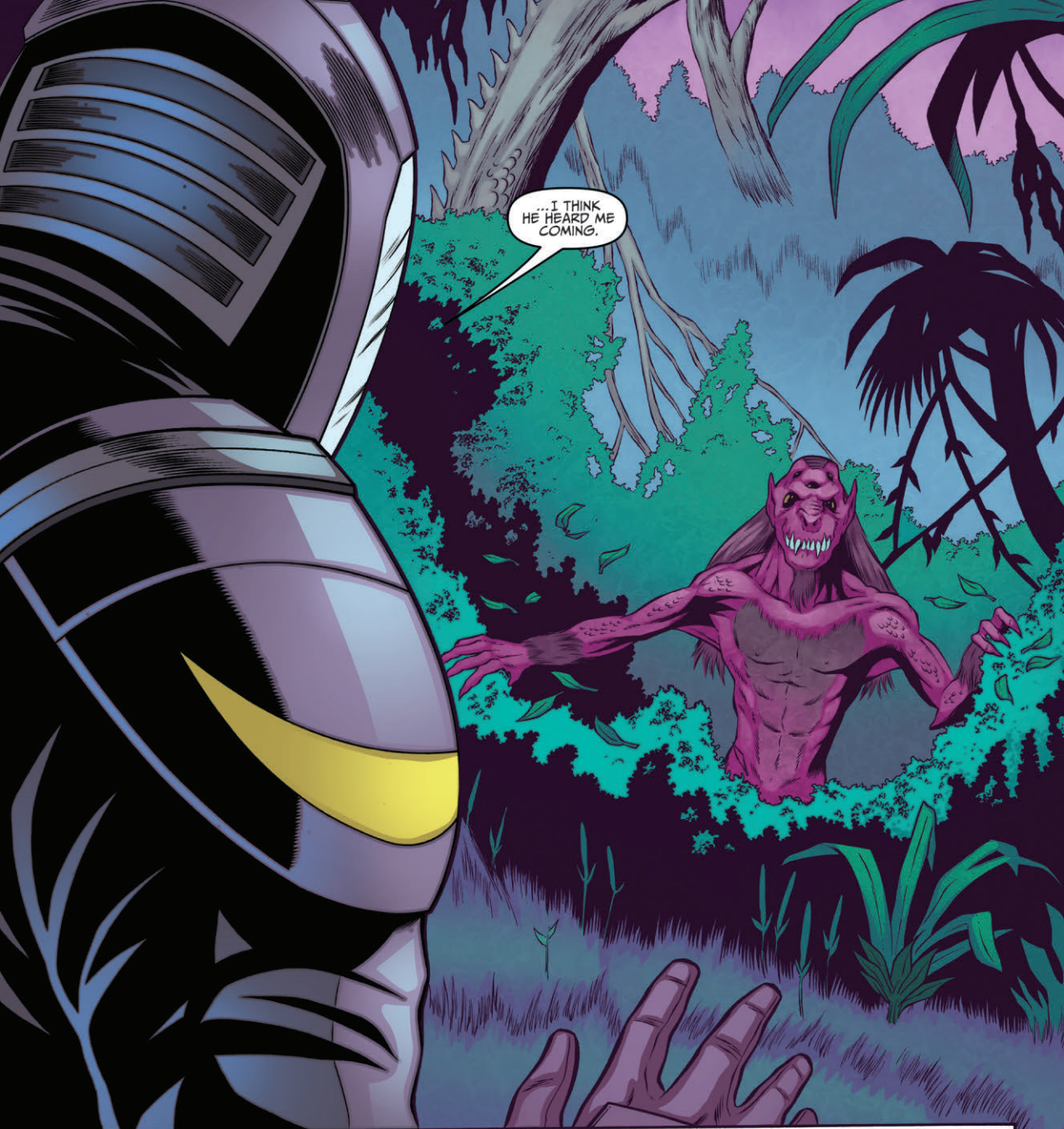
BECAUSE THE
PHASER RIFLES
WORKED SO WELL
LAST TIME?

IF THINGS GO
SOUTH, JUST BEAM ME
OUT. BUT IF MY HUNCH
IS RIGHT, THIS IS ALL
GOING TO WORK
JUST FINE.

JUST NEED
TO FIND A WAY
TO LURE HIM
OUT HERE...

KEPTIN!
PICKING UP
A LARGE LIFE
FORM READING
CLOSING
ON YOUR
POSITION!

ROGER THAT,
CHEKOV. NO NEED
FOR ME TO DRAW
HIM OUT...



...I THINK
HE HEARD ME
COMING.



WROOOAAAAR



HEY!
HEY, IT'S
ALL RIGHT! I'M
NOT GONNA
HURT YOU!



JUST—
LOOK
AT THIS—

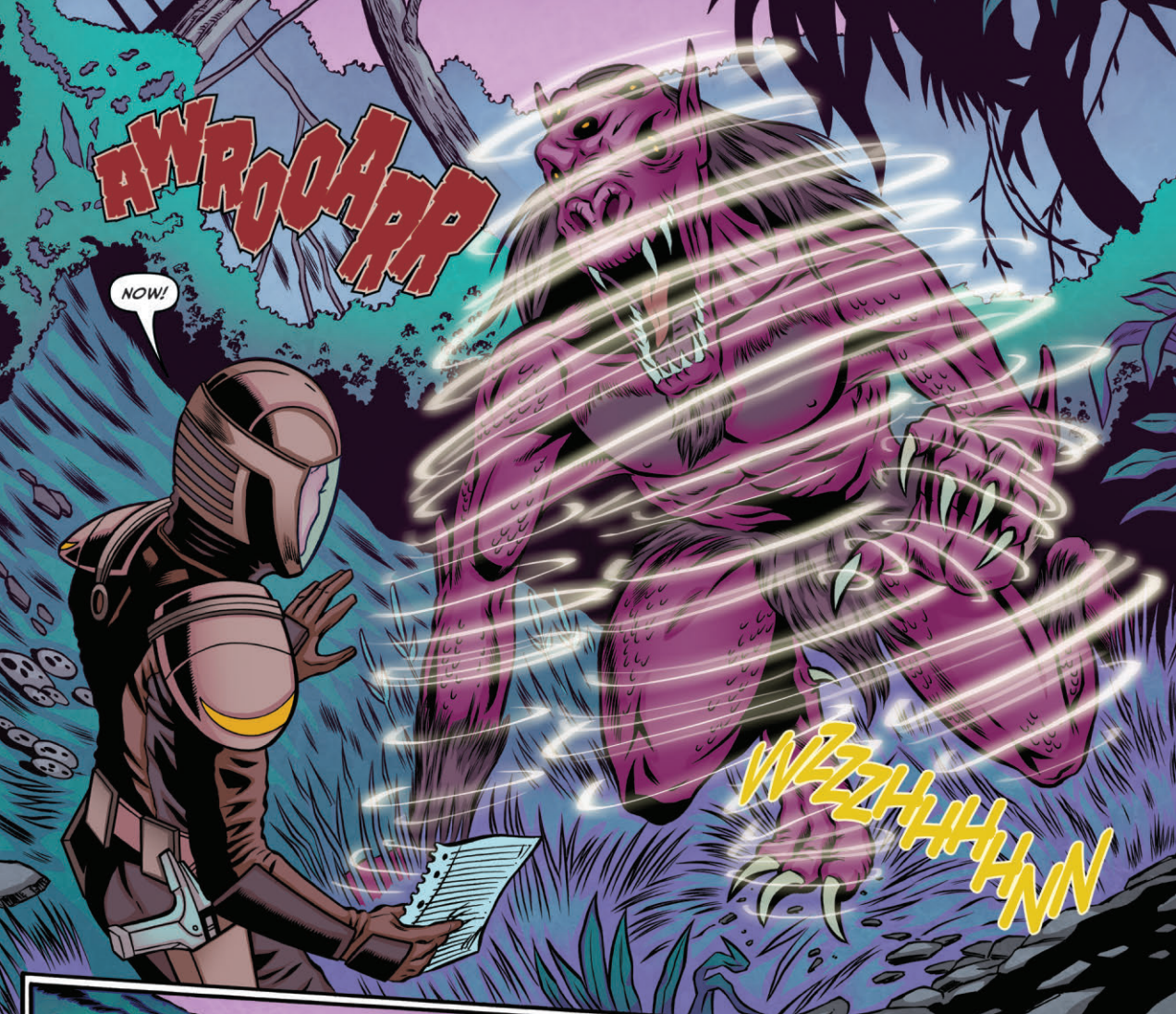


YOU
REMEMBER
THIS?
YOU'VE
SEEN THIS
BEFORE,
RIGHT?



ARRRRRRRR

THAT'S IT...
C'MON...



AWROOARRP

NOW!

WZZHHNN



COMMANDER SPOCK, STATUS!

SPOCK—!

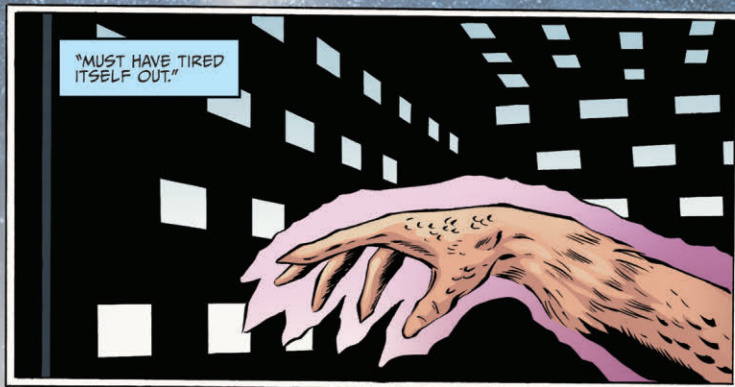
CONTAINMENT WAS SUCCESSFUL, CAPTAIN.



ENTERPRISE, ONE TO BEAM UP.
YOU NEVER REALLY DOUBTED ME, DID YOU, SPOCK?

I MERELY FULFILLED MY OBLIGATION TO PRESENT YOU WITH ALTERNATIVES, CAPTAIN.

WZZHHNN





NO, DOCTOR. I DO NOT THINK SO.

"I AM DETECTING A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE BIOLOGICAL MASS INSIDE THE CARGO UNIT."

"IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE CAPTAIN'S HYPOTHESIS, HOWEVER UNLIKELY, IS CORRECT."



NO TIME TO WASTE.

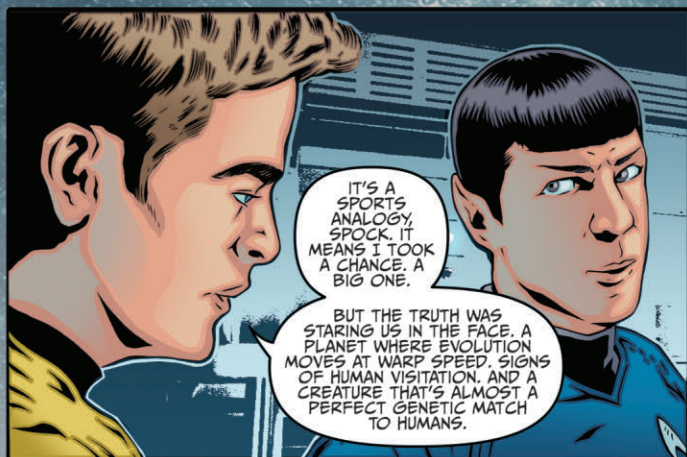
WHSSSSSS



LET'S GET HIM TO SICKBAY WHEN HE WAKES UP...



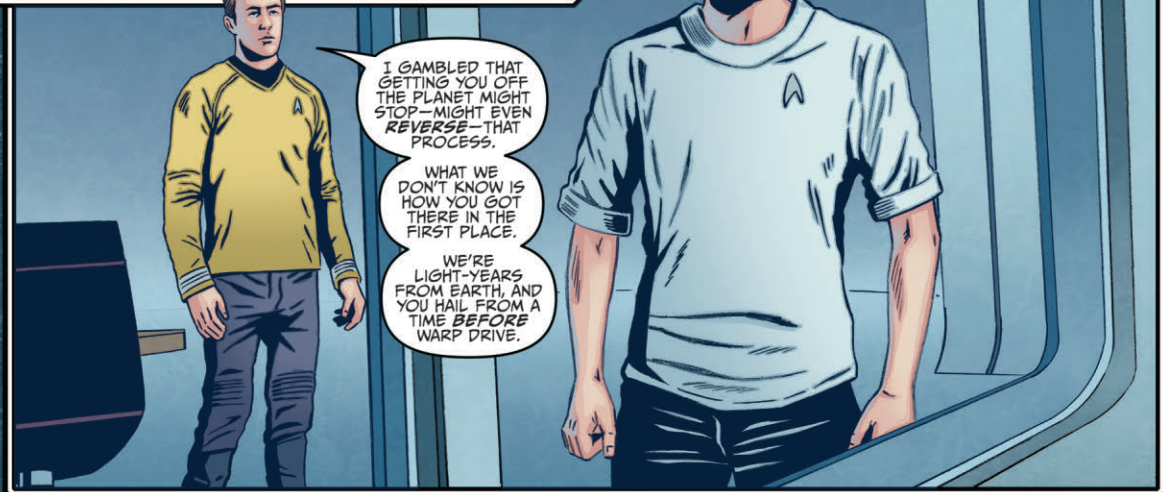
...HE'LL HAVE AS MANY QUESTIONS FOR US AS WE HAVE FOR HIM.







WE'RE STILL FIGURING THE "HOW" OF IT ALL, BUT THE "WHAT" IS CLEAR.
THE PLANET REWROTE YOUR GENETIC CODE, CHANGING YOU INTO SOMETHING... ELSE.



I GAMBLLED THAT GETTING YOU OFF THE PLANET MIGHT STOP—MIGHT EVEN REVERSE—THAT PROCESS.

WHAT WE DON'T KNOW IS HOW YOU GOT THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

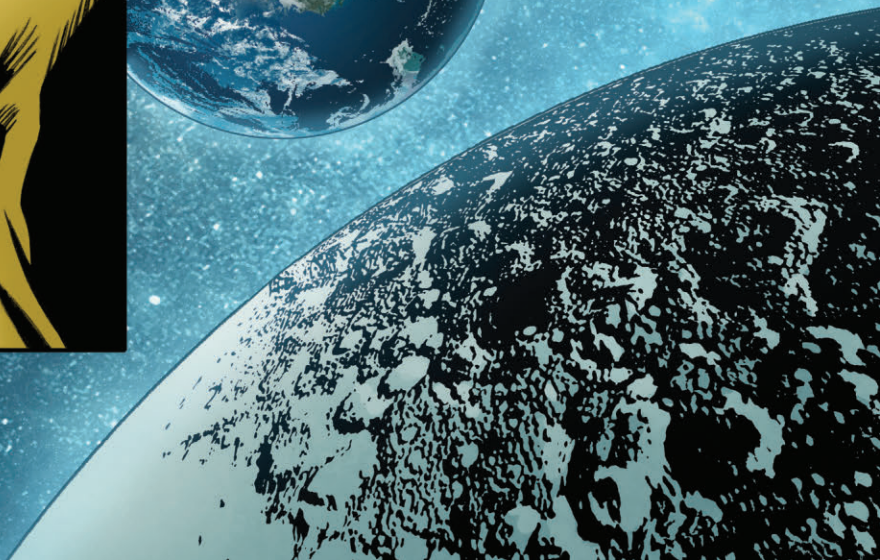
WE'RE LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH, AND YOU HAIL FROM A TIME BEFORE WARP DRIVE.

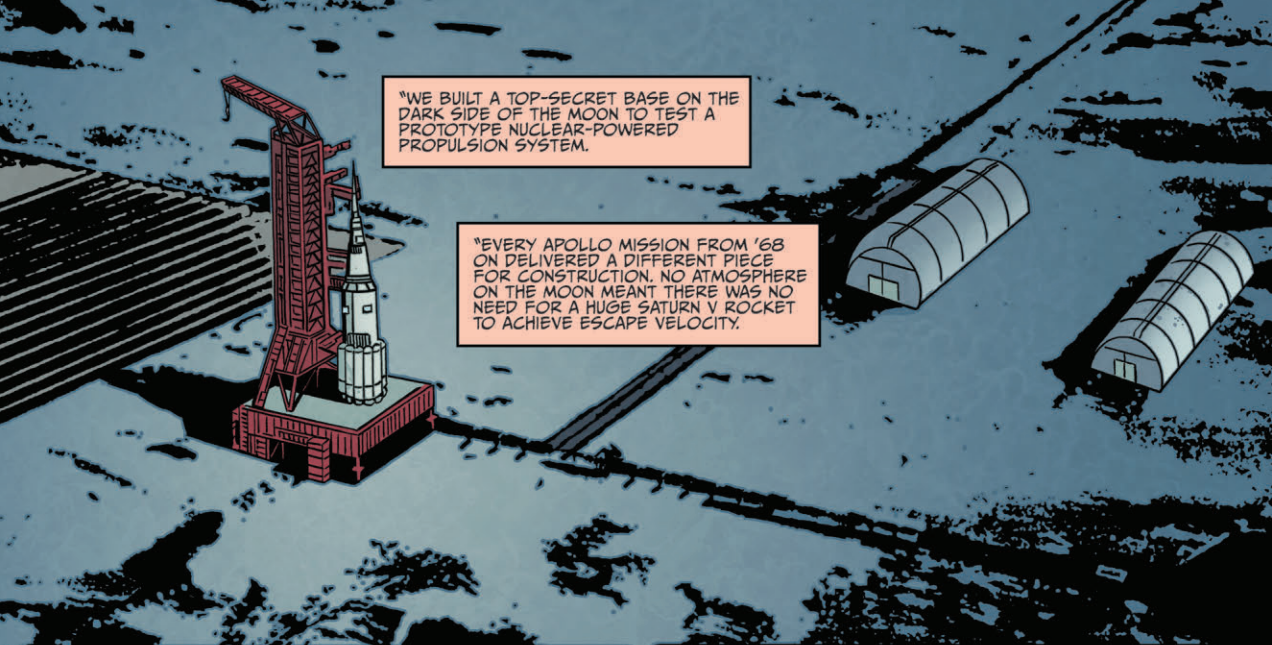


"WARP DRIVE." I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I REMEMBER.

"IT WAS 1972. WE'D BEEN LANDING ON THE MOON FOR THREE YEARS.

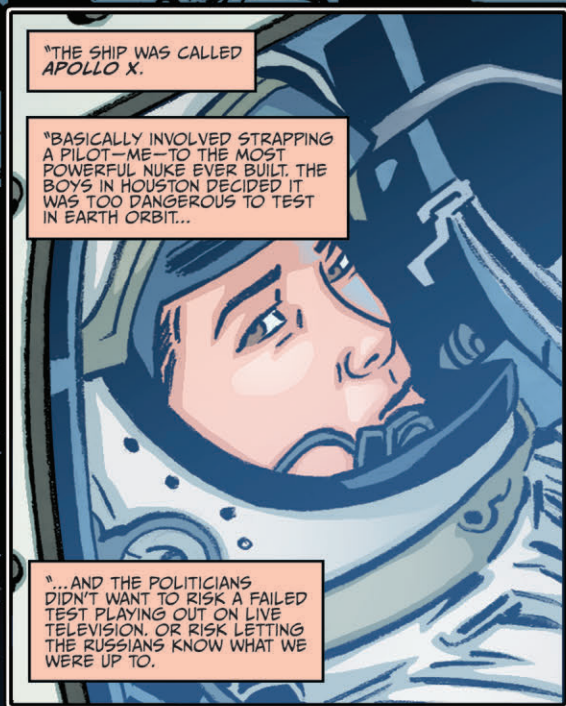
"BUT WE WERE DOING A LOT MORE THAN COLLECTING ROCKS AND HITTING GOLF BALLS."





"WE BUILT A TOP-SECRET BASE ON THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON TO TEST A PROTOTYPE NUCLEAR-POWERED PROPULSION SYSTEM.

"EVERY APOLLO MISSION FROM '68 ON DELIVERED A DIFFERENT PIECE FOR CONSTRUCTION. NO ATMOSPHERE ON THE MOON MEANT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR A HUGE SATURN V ROCKET TO ACHIEVE ESCAPE VELOCITY.



"THE SHIP WAS CALLED APOLLO X.

"BASICALLY INVOLVED STRAPPING A PILOT—ME—to THE MOST POWERFUL NUKE EVER BUILT. THE BOYS IN HOUSTON DECIDED IT WAS TOO DANGEROUS TO TEST IN EARTH ORBIT...

"...AND THE POLITICIANS DIDN'T WANT TO RISK A FAILED TEST PLAYING OUT ON LIVE TELEVISION. OR RISK LETTING THE RUSSIANS KNOW WHAT WE WERE UP TO.



"IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A QUICK ROUND-TRIP.

"BLAST OFF, TURN AROUND, COME HOME.



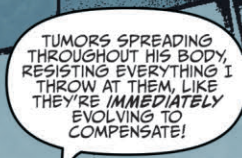
"SINCE I'M STANDING HERE TALKING TO YOU...

"...LOOKS LIKE IT TURNED OUT TO BE A ONE-WAY TRIP."



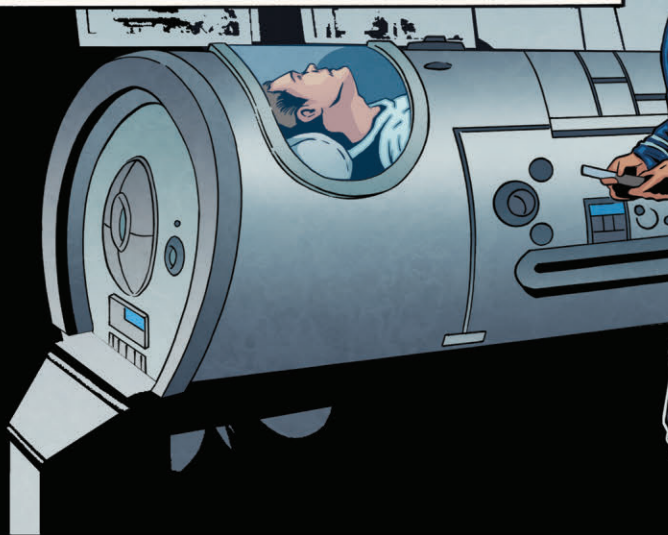


HE'S DYING.



TUMORS SPREADING THROUGHOUT HIS BODY, RESISTING EVERYTHING I THROW AT THEM, LIKE THEY'RE IMMEDIATELY EVOLVING TO COMPENSATE!

I CAN BUY HIM A FEW HOURS, BUT...



THERE IS ONE POSSIBLE REMEDY. RETURN HIM TO THE PLANET.



RETURN HIM—?

IT'S A MIRACLE WE GOT HIM OUT OF THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE AND GAVE HIM HIS HUMANITY BACK!

INDEED, CAPTAIN. YET IN DOING SO WE APPEAR TO HAVE ACCELERATED THE INEVITABLE MORTALITY HIS UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE THUS FAR KEPT AT BAY.



THE VERY PROCESSES THAT CHANGED HIM UPON HIS ARRIVAL ON THE PLANET ARE THE SAME THAT HAVE KEPT HIM ALIVE FOR CENTURIES.

LOGICALLY, OUR BEST HOPE FOR PROLONGING HIS EXISTENCE—STRICTLY "HUMAN" OR OTHERWISE—IS TO RETURN HIM TO THE SURFACE.

CAPTAIN'S LOG, SUPPLEMENTAL.

COMMANDER SPOCK
WAS RIGHT.

THERE WAS ONLY
ONE THING TO DO.

DR. MCCOY AND I BEAMED CAPTAIN CORY'S BODY
BACK TO THE SURFACE IN THE HOPE THAT THE
PLANET'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT COULD SAVE HIM.

I WISH WE COULD HAVE
GIVEN HIM A MORE
DIGNIFIED SEND-OFF.

HIS VITALS BEGAN TO IMPROVE
ALMOST IMMEDIATELY.

IT WAS THE ONLY WAY
TO SAVE HIS LIFE...

...BUT WHAT KIND OF
LIFE WERE WE GIVING
BACK TO HIM?

HE DESERVED BETTER
THAN TO BE LEFT ALONE
ON AN ALIEN WORLD.

"NOT A SIGHT I'M GOING TO FORGET ANYTIME SOON."

U.S.S. ENTERPRISE



ONE MINUTE HE'S LYING THERE LOOKING LIKE ANY OF US, NEXT MINUTE HE'S SPROUTING HAIR ALL OVER AND HIS SKULL'S BLOWING UP LIKE A BALLOON.

I THINK WE GOT OUT OF THERE JUST IN TIME.

I'VE SENT WORD TO STARFLEET. THEY'RE SENDING A MEDICAL SHIP TO MONITOR HIS CONDITION AND HOPEFULLY FIND A CURE.



STILL FEELS WRONG FOR US TO JUST FLY OFF AND LEAVE HIM BEHIND. LET HIM CHANGE BACK INTO AN ANIMAL...

AND YET THE ALTERNATIVE, DOCTOR, WOULD VIOLATE THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL TENETS OF YOUR PROFESSION, AND OF THE FEDERATION. WE COULD NOT SIMPLY ALLOW HIM TO DIE HERE ON THE SHIP.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO SOUND SO CERTAIN OF IT...

I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR WANTING TO STAY HERE, BONES. I WOULDN'T EXPECT ANY LESS FROM YOU.



BUT WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO.

TO KEEP GOING, KEEP EXPLORING.



"AND LIFE..."



"...WHATEVER FORM
IT TAKES..."



"...HOWEVER IT
FINDS A WAY..."



"...MUST GO ON."

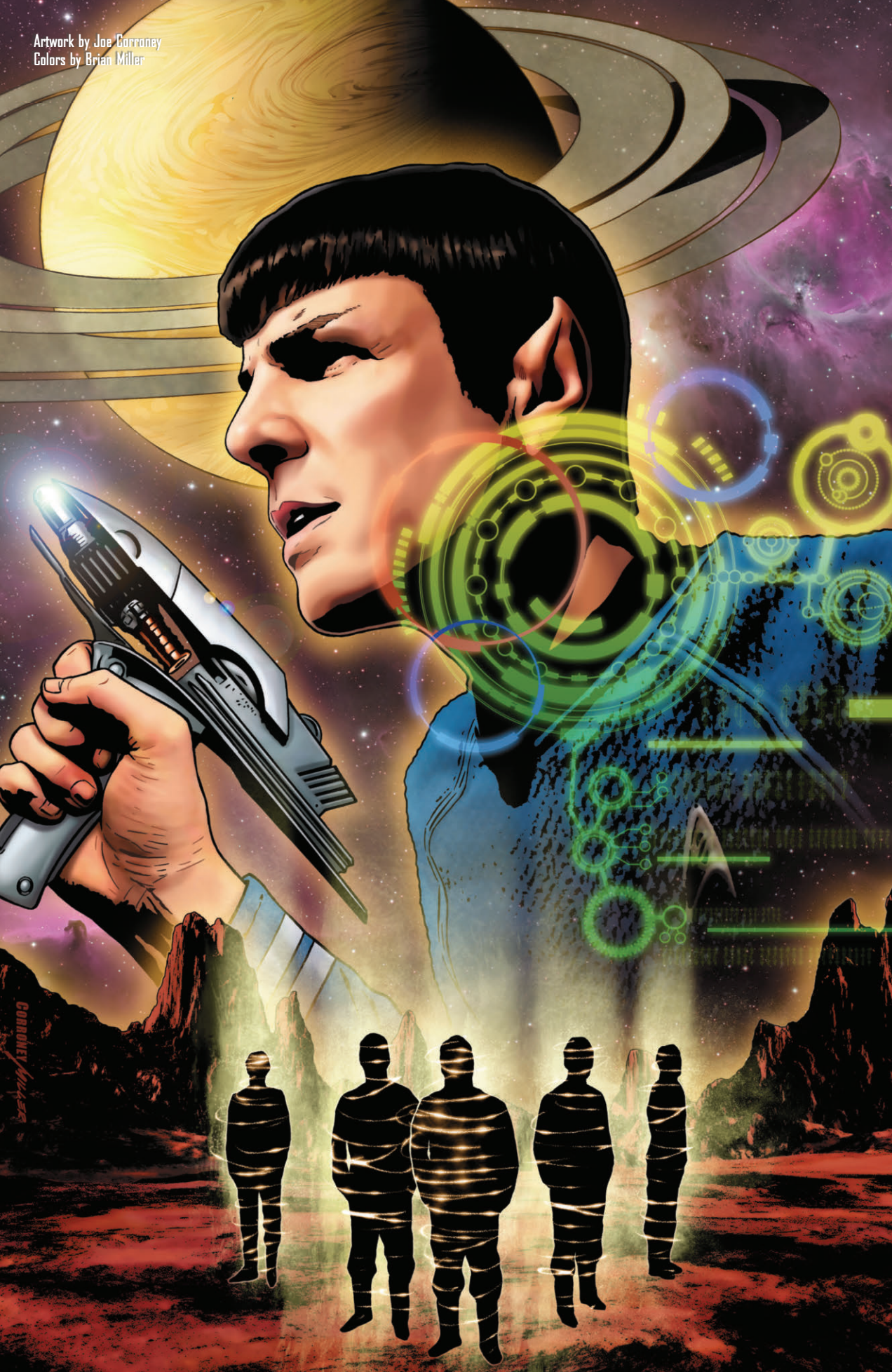
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Artwork by Joe Corroney
Colors by Brian Miller



CORRONEY/MILLER

AFTER THE EVENTS OF *STAR TREK INTO DARKNESS*,
THE *U.S.S. ENTERPRISE* HAS EMBARKED ON A FIVE-
YEAR JOURNEY OF EXPLORATION INTO UNCHARTED
SPACE, MEETING THE CREW OF A SECOND
ENTERPRISE IN "PARALLEL LIVES," UNWRAPPING
THE MYSTERY OF SCIENCE OFFICER 0718 IN
"I, ENTERPRISE," AND TRAVELING TO THE EDGE
OF THE ALPHA QUADRANT IN "LOST APOLLO."



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