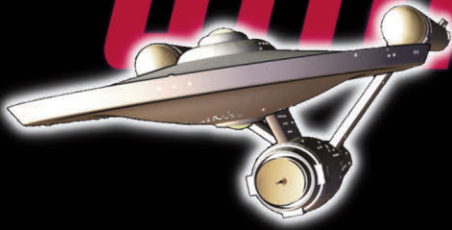


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ALIEN SPOTLIGHT

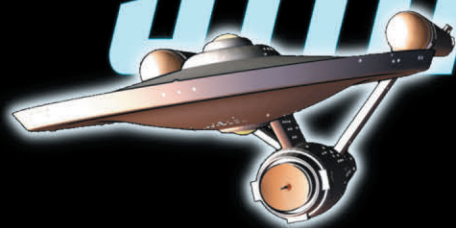
VOLUME 2

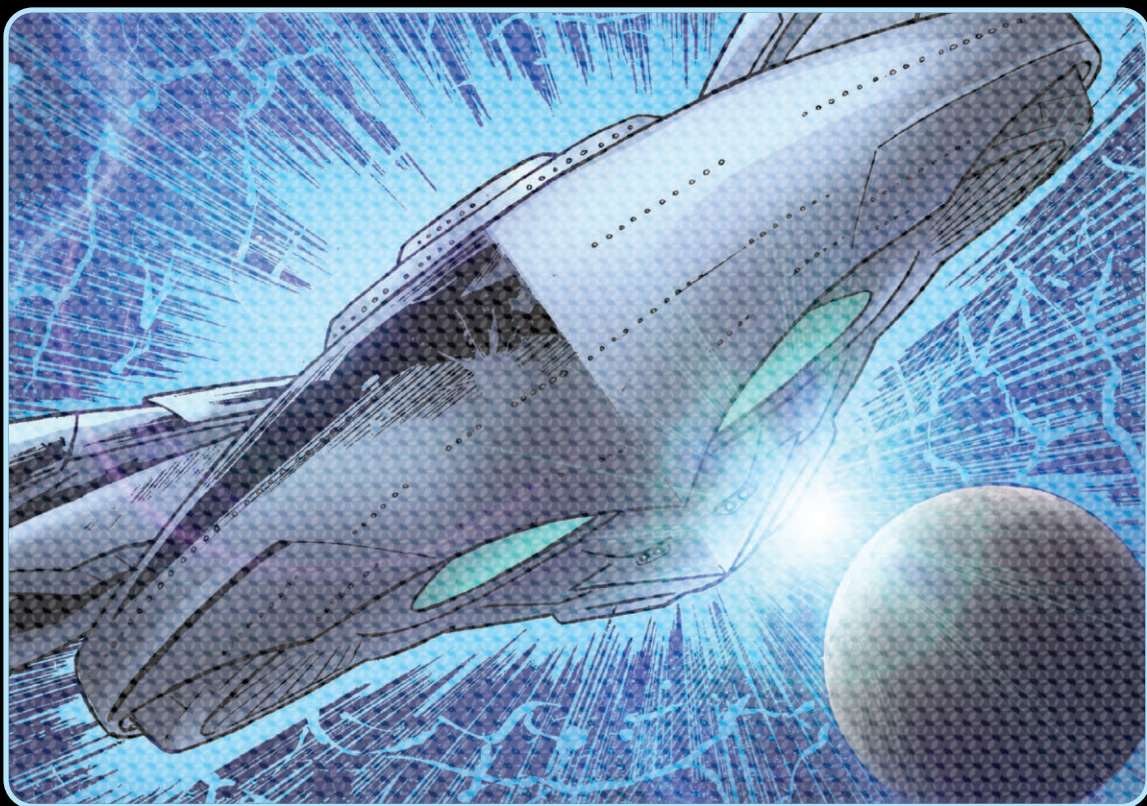


STAR TREK[®]

ALIEN SPOTLIGHT

Volume 2





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CARDASSIANS



WE'RE NEARING POSITION, DEMOS.

FEDERATION PRISON
ANANKE ALPHA



YOU HEARD KLYST. EVERYONE IN POSITION. WE GET ONE SHOT AT THIS.

BAKLOR. YOU'RE OUR TICKET HOME, SO BE READY, KID.

I'M NOT A KID, VALKTAR. I'M NEARLY OLD ENOUGH TO—

SURE THING, KID.



LISTEN UP. WE ALL JOINED THE ROM KNIGHTS FOR A REASON. CARDASSIA'S SEATED GOVERNMENT IS BETRAYING OUR IDEALS. THEY'VE ACCEPTED HANDOUTS FROM THE FEDERATION, ALLOWED BAJORANS ON OUR SOIL, AND ARE NEUTERING EVERY CARDASSIAN WITH EACH STROKE OF NEW LEGISLATION.

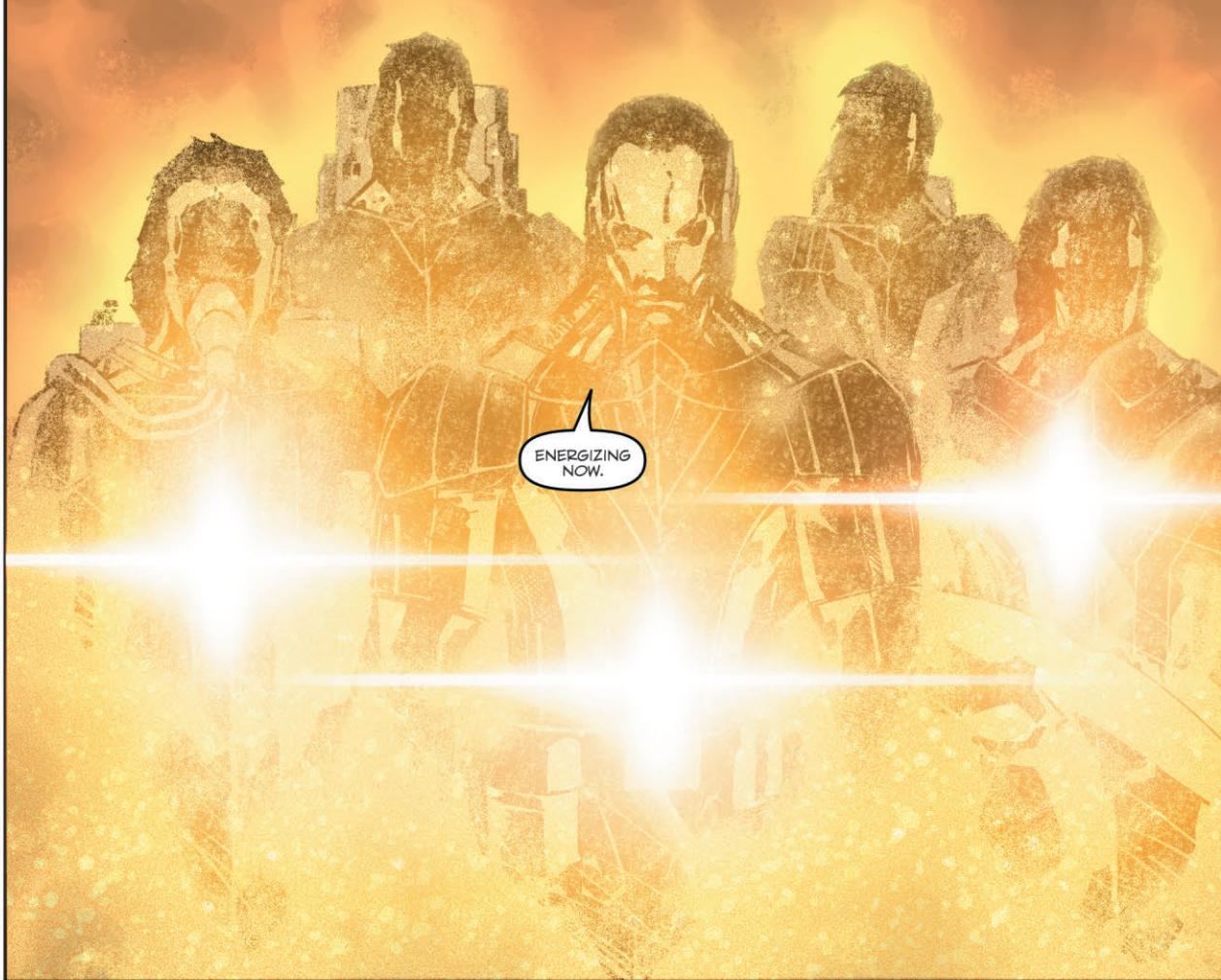
MILLIONS OF US DIED AT THE HANDS OF THE DOMINION. AND WHAT DOES OUR NEW GOVERNMENT DO ABOUT IT?

NOTHING.

TODAY, THAT CHANGES. TODAY, WE RECLAIM OUR HERITAGE. WE RECLAIM OUR PRIDE.

IN THAT FEDERATION PRISON RESIDES THE DOMINION COMMANDER WHO ORDERED THE PLANET-WIDE BOMBING OF OUR HOME, CARDASSIA PRIME.







BAKLOR, REPORT.

AAIII—



...FROM
IN HERE.

I KNOW,
DEMOS! I'M
ON IT!

UNGH.



WHERE'S
BAKLOR?

I THINK
HE'S DEAD, SIR—
TRANSPORTED
INTO SOMETHING
SOLID.

THAT WASN'T
SUPPOSED TO
HAPPEN.



I'M OUT
OF POSITION,
TOO. WAY
OUT.

YOU'RE IN THE
CARGO BAY,
VALKTAR.

THAT'S GREAT,
KLYST. BUT I'M
SUPPOSED TO BE IN
A CLOSET INSIDE
ENGINEERING.

AT LEAST
YOU'RE NOT IN
A WALL.

QUIET. I DON'T
CARE WHAT WENT
WRONG, KLYST.
JUST FIX IT.

LAK'TRKK,
ARE YOU IN
POSITION?



YES, SIR.
CUTTING INTO
THE POWER
GRID.

OKAY, YOUR
MISSIONS REMAIN.
VALKTAR, MAKE YOUR
WAY TO ENGINEERING.
I'LL FIND THE HOLDING
CELLS AND EXECUTE
THE PRISONER.



I'VE CREATED
SENSOR BLIND
SPOTS ON DECKS
SEVEN THROUGH
NINE.

VALKTAR, WHEN YOU
COME OUT OF THE CARGO
BAY, YOU NEED TO GO UP
TWO LEVELS AND HEAD
STRAIGHT ACROSS THE
DECK TO ENGINEERING.
YOU'LL RUN RIGHT
INTO IT.

RIGHT. AND
I'M SUPPOSED
TO DO THAT
WITHOUT BEING
SEEN HOW?

YOU'LL
FIGURE IT
OUT.

DEMOS, I'M
NOT SHOWING AN
EXIT FROM WHERE YOU
ARE. YOU'RE TRAPPED.



DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. AS LONG AS YOU TURNED OFF THE SENSORS IN MY AREA, I'M FINE.



KABOOM



LEST YOU FORGET...



"...I'VE BEEN TRAINED BY THE BEST."

WELCOME TO CARDASSIA PRIME, AGENT DEMOS.

I DON'T LIKE THIS, KIRA. WHY CALL ME TO DUTY HERE?

THE RESISTANCE NEEDS SOLDIERS AND TRAINERS. YOU'RE NOT ONLY BOTH, YOU'RE ABOUT THE BEST I'VE EVER SEEN.

DO RIGHT HERE, AND MAYBE YOU CAN HELP BRING OUR TWO PEOPLE SOME PEACE.



"OUR TWO PEOPLE," KIRA? UNLESS YOU'VE SECRETLY ALIGNED YOURSELF WITH THE CARDASSIANS, I SUGGEST YOU RETHINK YOUR ASSUMPTIONS.

I AM NOT OF CARDASSIA. MY MOTHER WAS A BAJORAN FARMER WHO WAS **RAPED** BY THESE REPTILES.

I'D BURN THIS WRINKLED FLESH OFF MY BONES IF I COULD.



THERE'S A POET IN YOU DYING TO GET OUT, ISN'T THERE?

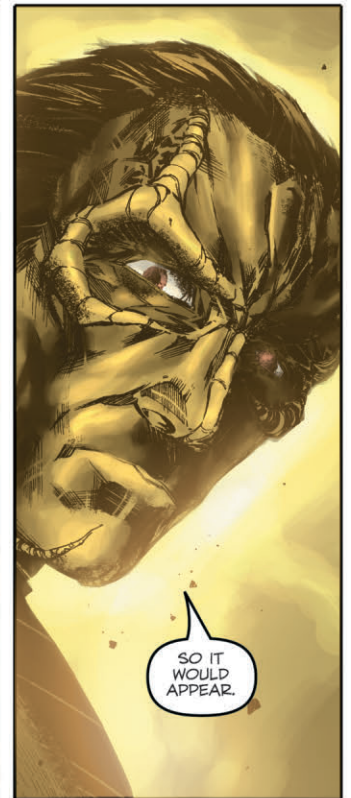
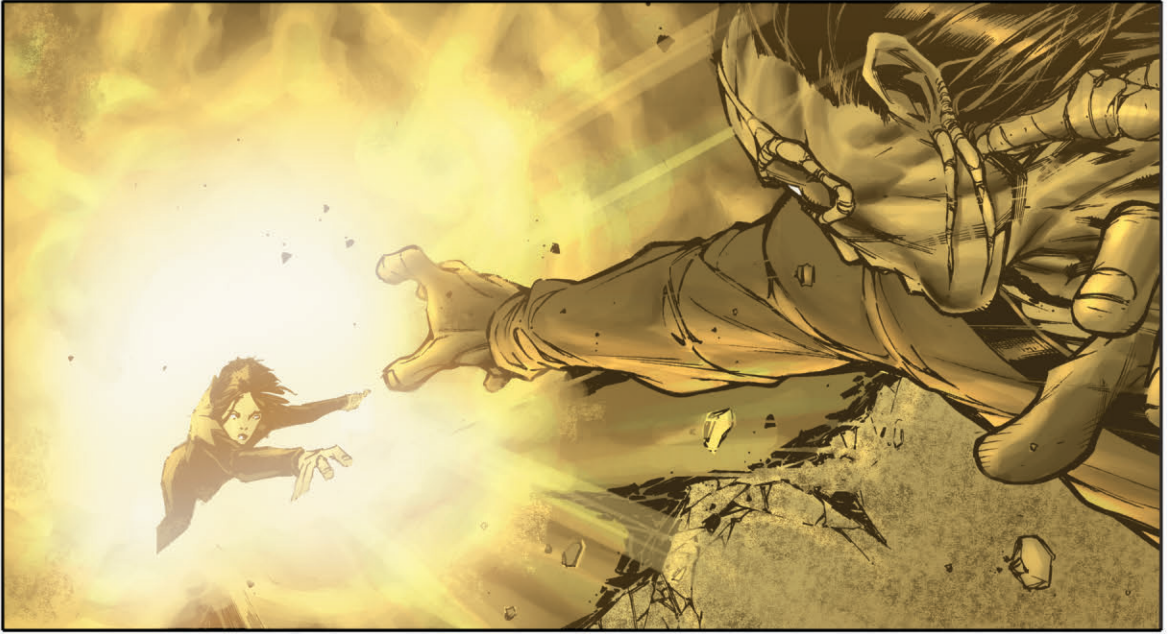
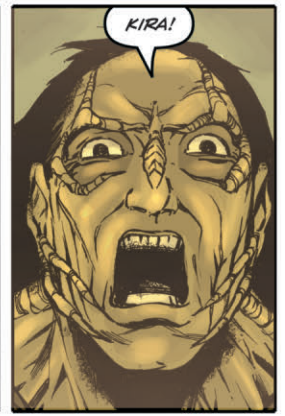
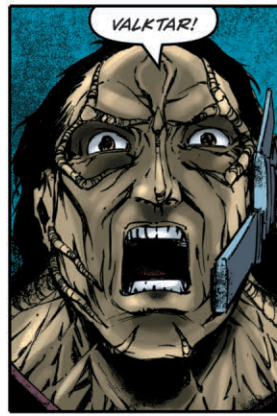
I MEANT NO OFFENSE. WE ALL HAVE OUR GRIEVANCES, OLD FRIEND. BUT THESE ARE NEW TIMES.

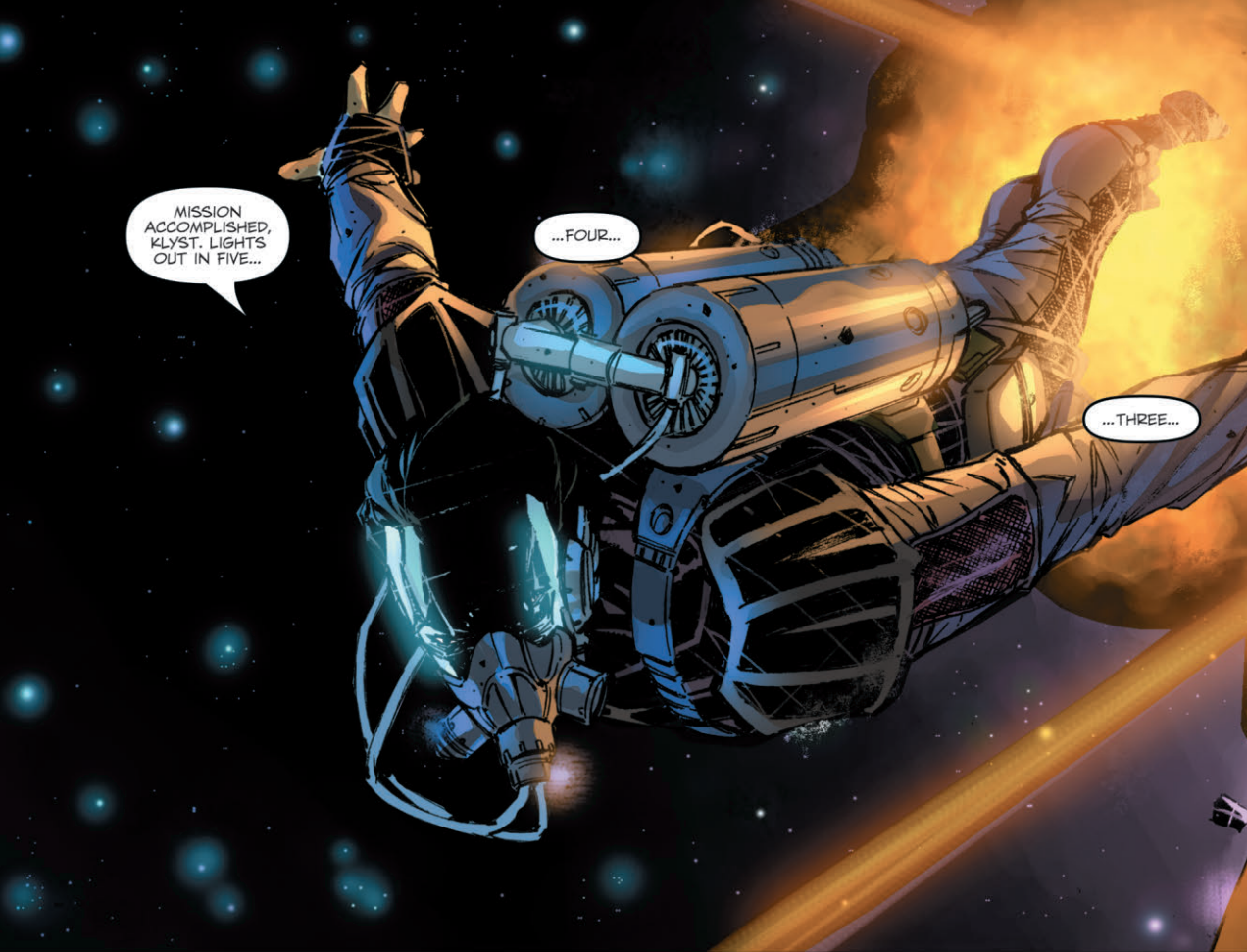
NOW, WE HAVE A WAR TO WIN.



"COME, THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET."







MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, KLYST. LIGHTS OUT IN FIVE...

...FOUR...

...THREE...



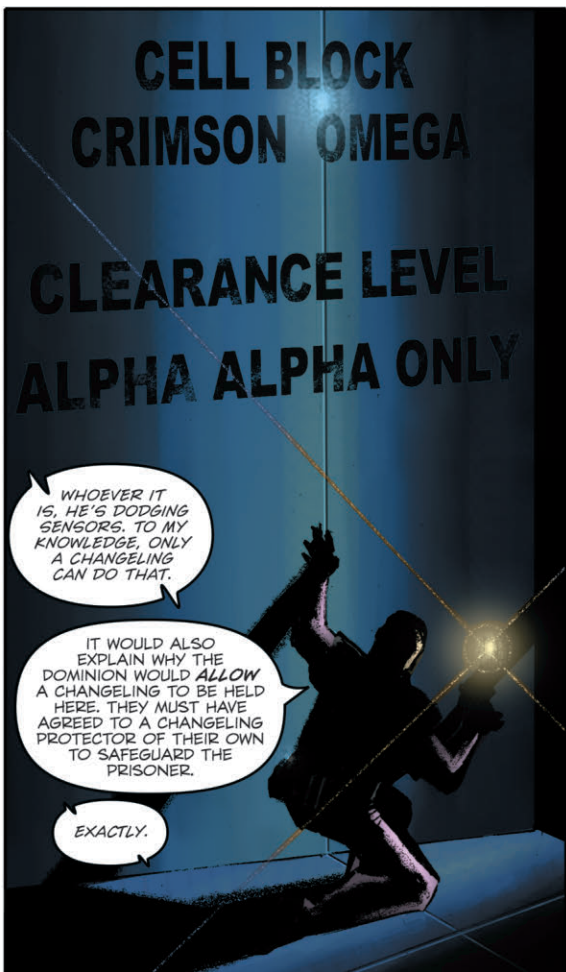
SOMEONE TOOK OUT VALKTAR! AND THEY'RE NOT SHOWING UP ON THE PRISON'S SYSTEMS!

HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

I'M ON MY WAY TO YOU NOW, BUT I THINK WE'RE UP AGAINST A CHANGELING.

THINK ABOUT IT...

...EXPLAIN.



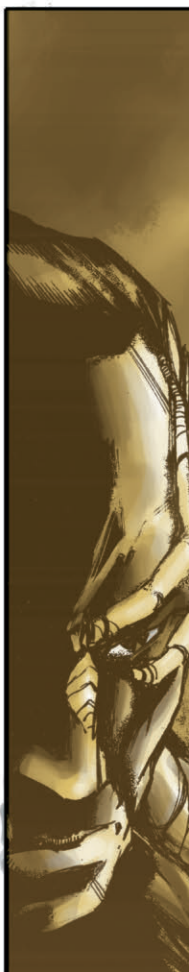
CELL BLOCK
CRIMSON OMEGA

CLEARANCE LEVEL
ALPHA ALPHA ONLY

WHOEVER IT IS, HE'S DODGING SENSORS. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, ONLY A CHANGELING CAN DO THAT.

IT WOULD ALSO EXPLAIN WHY THE DOMINION WOULD ALLOW A CHANGELING TO BE HELD HERE. THEY MUST HAVE AGREED TO A CHANGELING PROTECTOR OF THEIR OWN TO SAFEGUARD THE PRISONER.

EXACTLY.





...TWO...

...ONE...



NO NEED FOR A HAND. I'M GOOD.

I AWAIT YOUR KNIFE IN MY BACK, CARDASSIAN.

THEN I'LL BE SURE TO STAB YOU IN THE CHEST. I'D HATE TO BORE YOU BY BEING PREDICTABLE.

GARAK. BACK OFF.



THE SUPPLY CONVOY IS DESTROYED.

REJOICE, DEMOS! YOU'VE BROUGHT CARDASSIA ONE STEP CLOSER TO FREEDOM!

GARAK, THAT'S ENOUGH. I MEAN IT.

I'M DOING THIS TO PROTECT BAJOR FROM THE DOMINION. THE FACT THAT EVERY BOMB I SET OFF KILLS DOZENS OF CARDASSIAN COLLABORATORS IS A BONUS. I JUST WISH I COULD FIND SOME BIGGER BOMBS.

AND ONCE BAJOR IS SAFE...



...THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I INTEND TO DO.

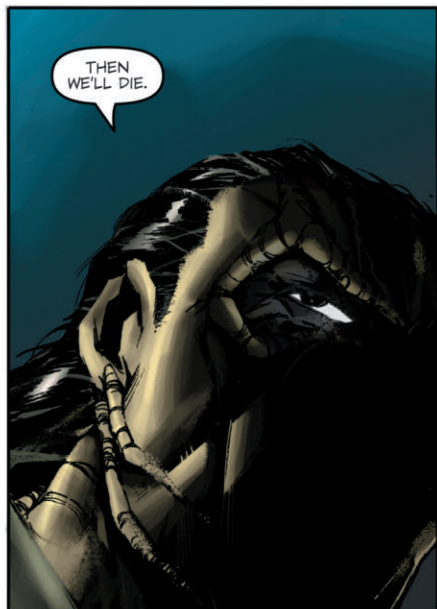


DEMOS. WE
CAN'T COMPLETE
THE MISSION.

NOT
WITHOUT ONE
OF US DYING, I
KNOW.



YOU'RE
JOKING. WE'LL
ALL DIE IF THEY
CATCH US.



THEN
WE'LL DIE.

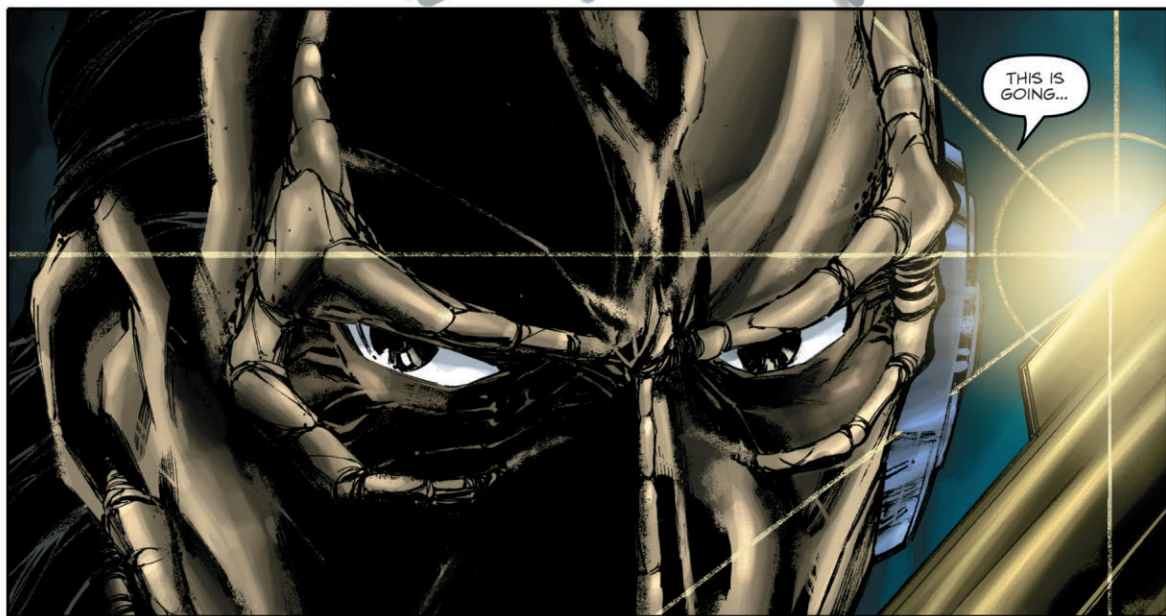


BUT,
SIR—

WE'RE SOLDIERS,
KLYST. AT SOME
POINT, WE'RE ALL
GOING TO DIE.



MIGHT AS
WELL BE
TODAY.



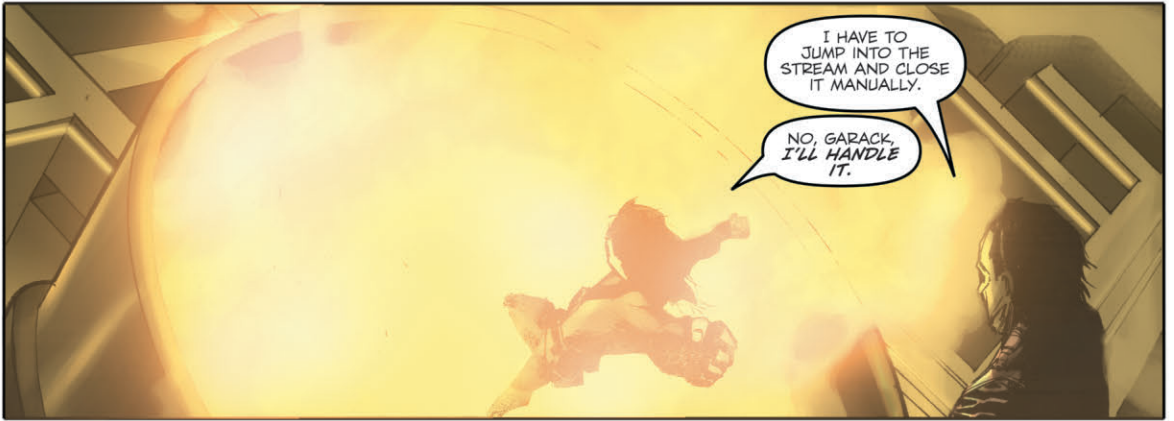


...TO
HURT.

I CAN'T GET
THE REACTOR
OFF-LINE!

THERE HAS TO
BE A WAY! IF WE
DON'T SHUT IT DOWN,
THE ORBITAL DEFENSE
PLATFORMS WILL BE
UNBEATABLE.

I DO HAVE
ONE IDEA, BUT
YOU AREN'T GOING TO
LIKE IT.



I HAVE TO
JUMP INTO THE
STREAM AND CLOSE
IT MANUALLY.

NO, GARACK,
I'LL HANDLE
IT.



AAAAA



I'VE DONE
ALL I CAN,
DEMOS. YOU'VE
GOT TO PLUG
THAT LEAK!



I...

...SAID...





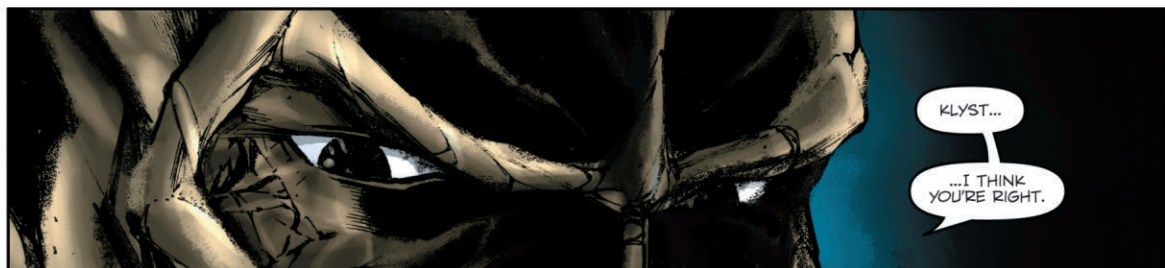
I'M READY.

I KNOW, BUT
THE CODE ISN'T
WORKING!



HOW IS THAT
POSSIBLE?

WE'VE BEEN
SABOTAGED—THE
CHANGELING—THE MIXED
UP TRANSPORT DROPS—
EVERYTHING FROM START
TO FINISH. *SOMEONE*
INFILTRATED US.



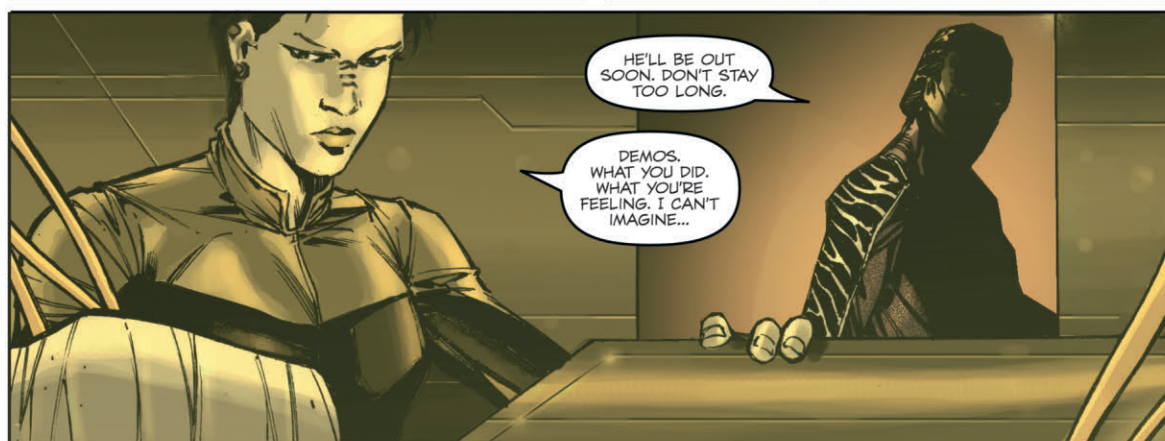
KLYST...

...I THINK
YOU'RE RIGHT.



AAIIIEEE!







"...BE SERIOUS."



"YOU'RE SURE
YOU WANT TO
DO THIS?"

"I HAVE
TO."



"GOOD
LUCK..."



"...AND
GOODBYE."





WHEN I WAS A CHILD, MY FATHER TOLD ME THAT FALLING STARS WERE WARRIOR SPIRITS OF FALLEN CARDASSIAN GENERALS AS THEY BURNED THE NIGHT SKY.

FUNNY, I WAS TOLD THAT THEY WERE CARDASSIAN SPIRITS TOO, AS THEY WERE INCINERATED ON THEIR WAY TO DAMNATION.



DO YOU SUPPOSE ONE OF THOSE IS DEMOS'S SPIRIT?

AND IF SO, IS HE THE HERO OR THE VILLAIN?

I DON'T KNOW, GARAK. I SUPPOSE WE'LL NEVER KNOW.



HARD TO IMAGINE A MAN FIGHTING SO HARD AS DEMOS...

...DYING ON THE OPERATING TABLE LIKE THAT.



HE'S GONE, GARAK.

AND I'M SURE HIS WARRIOR BROTHERS WILL GREET HIM...

...BAJORAN AND CARDASSIAN ALIKE...

...WHEREVER HIS SPIRIT RESTS.



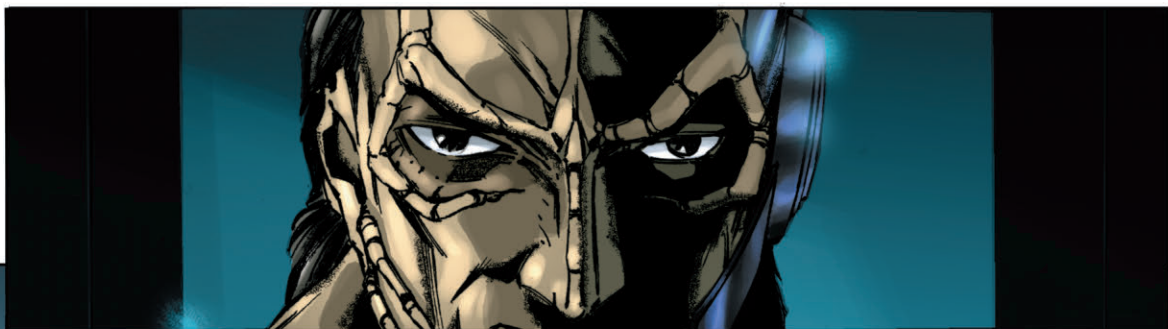
COMMANDER KIRA?

HM?



NOTHING, COMMANDER.

NOTHING AT ALL.



ONE LAST
BOMB TO PLANT,
EH, DEMOS? HOW
MANY CARDASSIANS
DO YOU THINK YOU
CAN KILL WITH
THIS ONE?



GARAK.
HAD TO
BE YOU...



I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR YOU. TONIGHT YOUR SECRETS MAKE YOU A TRUE CARDASSIAN.

YOU'RE TRYING TO STOP ME? DON'T YOU WANT JUSTICE—REVENGE ON THE THING THAT ANNIHILATED YOUR HOME?

THE PRICE FOR REVENGE IS TOO HIGH. BUT I THINK YOU KNOW THIS.

YOU'RE NOT ON A CARDASSIAN MISSION. YOUR GROUP—THESE ROM KNIGHTS—THINK THEY ARE SERVING CARDASSIA, BUT THEY ARE NOT.

CARDASSIA IS MOVING BEYOND ITS OLD WAYS. WE'VE LEARNED FROM OUR MISTAKES.



WHICH BRINGS US TO YOU? YOU DON'T WANT A RETURN TO THE OLD WAYS—A RETURN TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT TORMENTED YOUR BAJORAN MOTHER. *SO WHAT DO YOU SEEK?*



OUT OF MY WAY, GARAK!



THE CARDASSIAN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN BOMBED BACK TO THE STONE AGE. BUT WE'RE SURVIVORS.

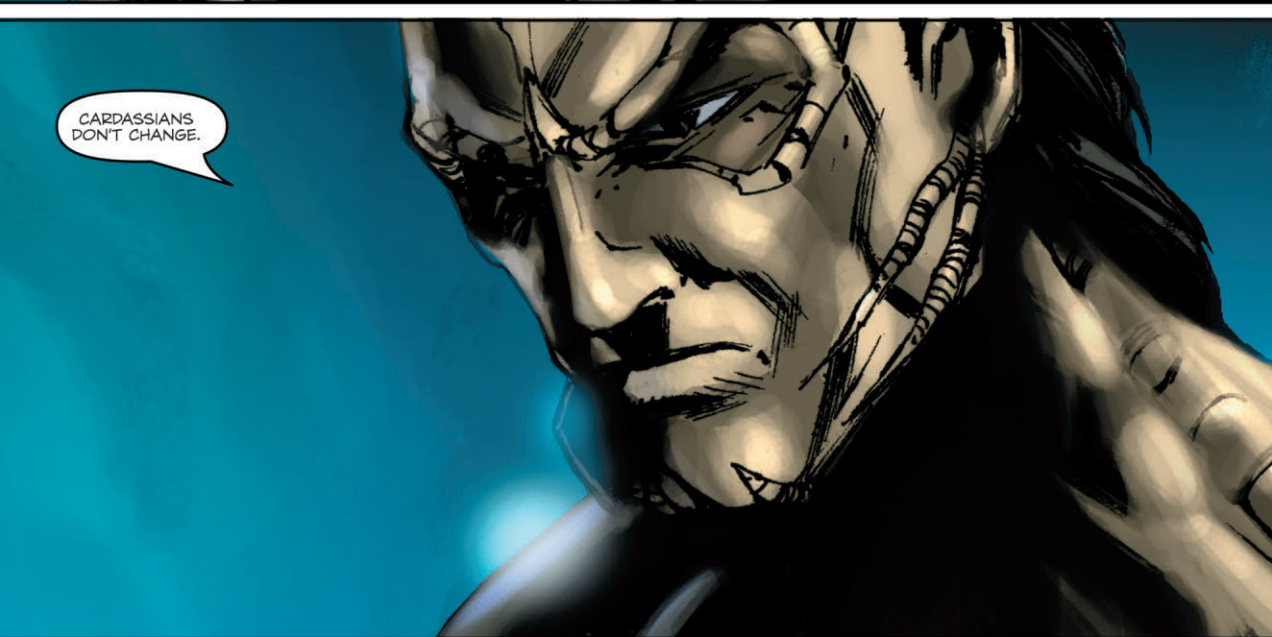
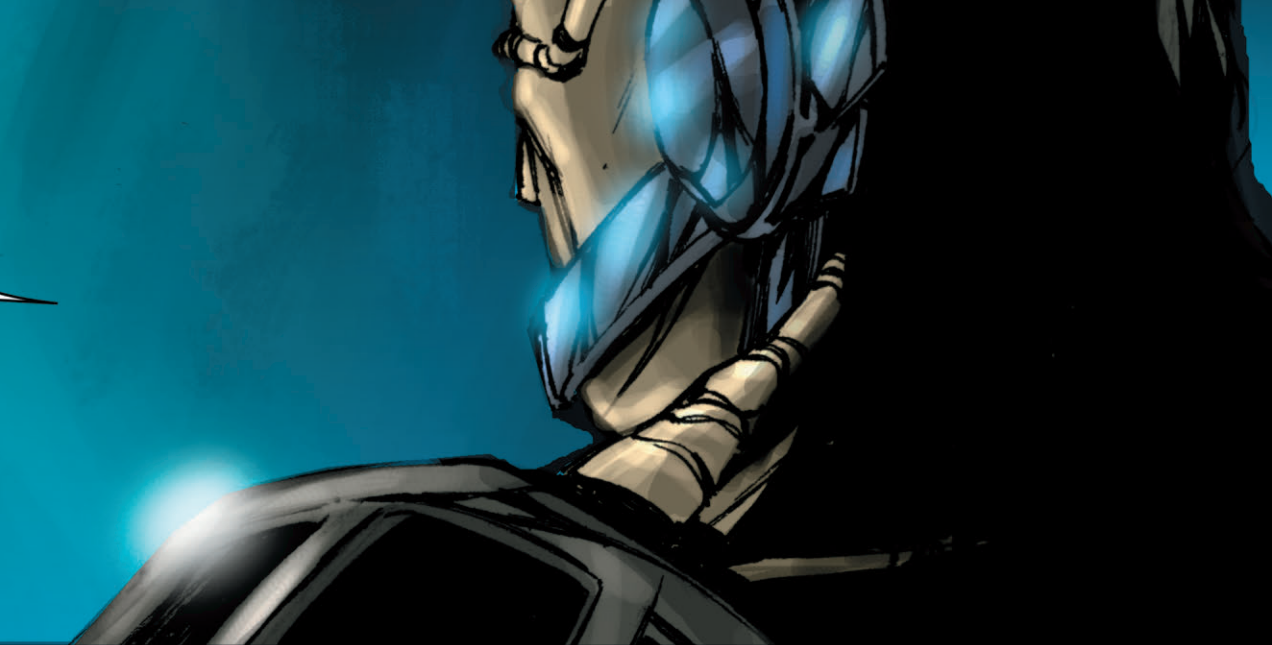
AND TO DO THAT—TO *SURVIVE*—WE'RE CHANGING...

...FOR THE BETTER.

YOU'RE STILL—FROZEN. HOLDING ON TO THE PAST.



THE CARDASSIANS HAVE TO PAY FOR WHAT THEY DID TO BAJOR. TO MY MOTHER. TO ME!



CARDASSIANS
DON'T CHANGE.



WE HAVE!
EIGHT HUNDRED
MILLION DEAD!

NOT
ENOUGH!

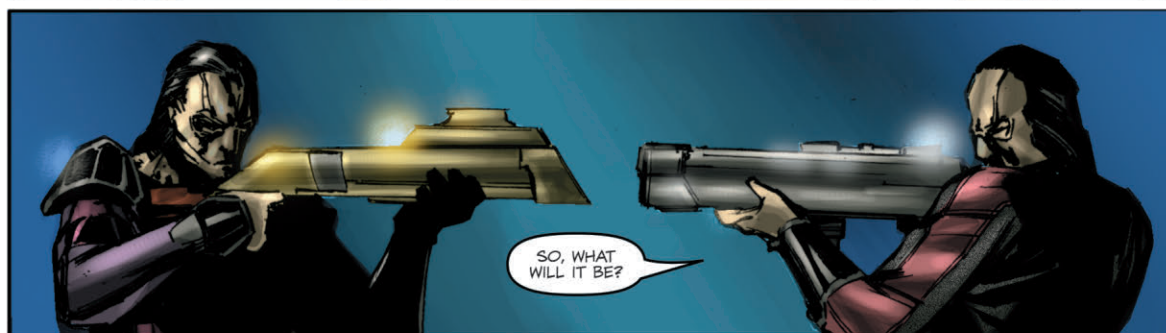
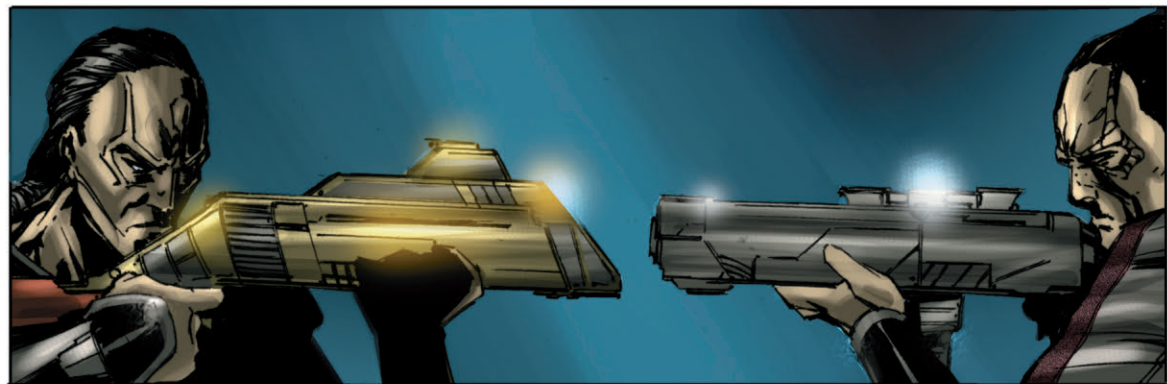
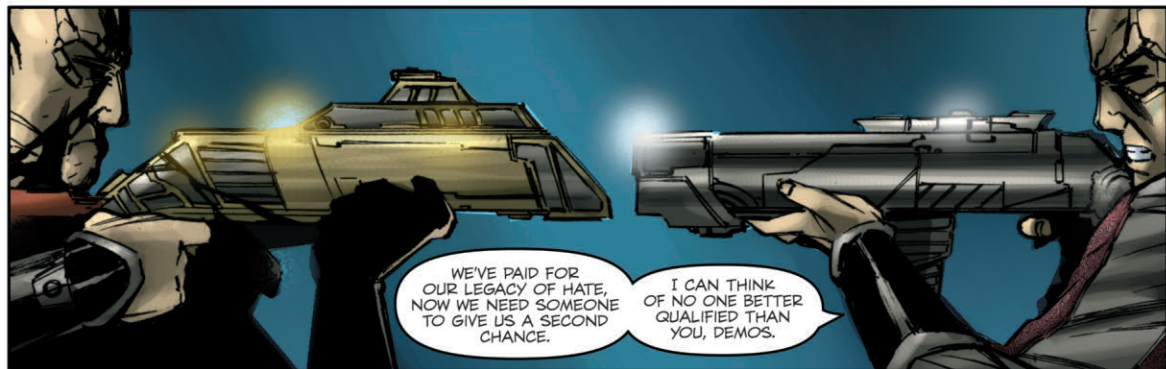


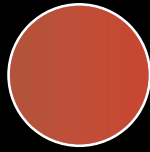
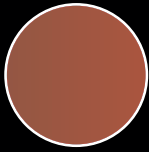
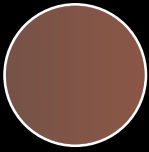
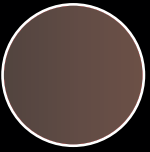
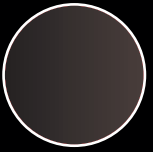
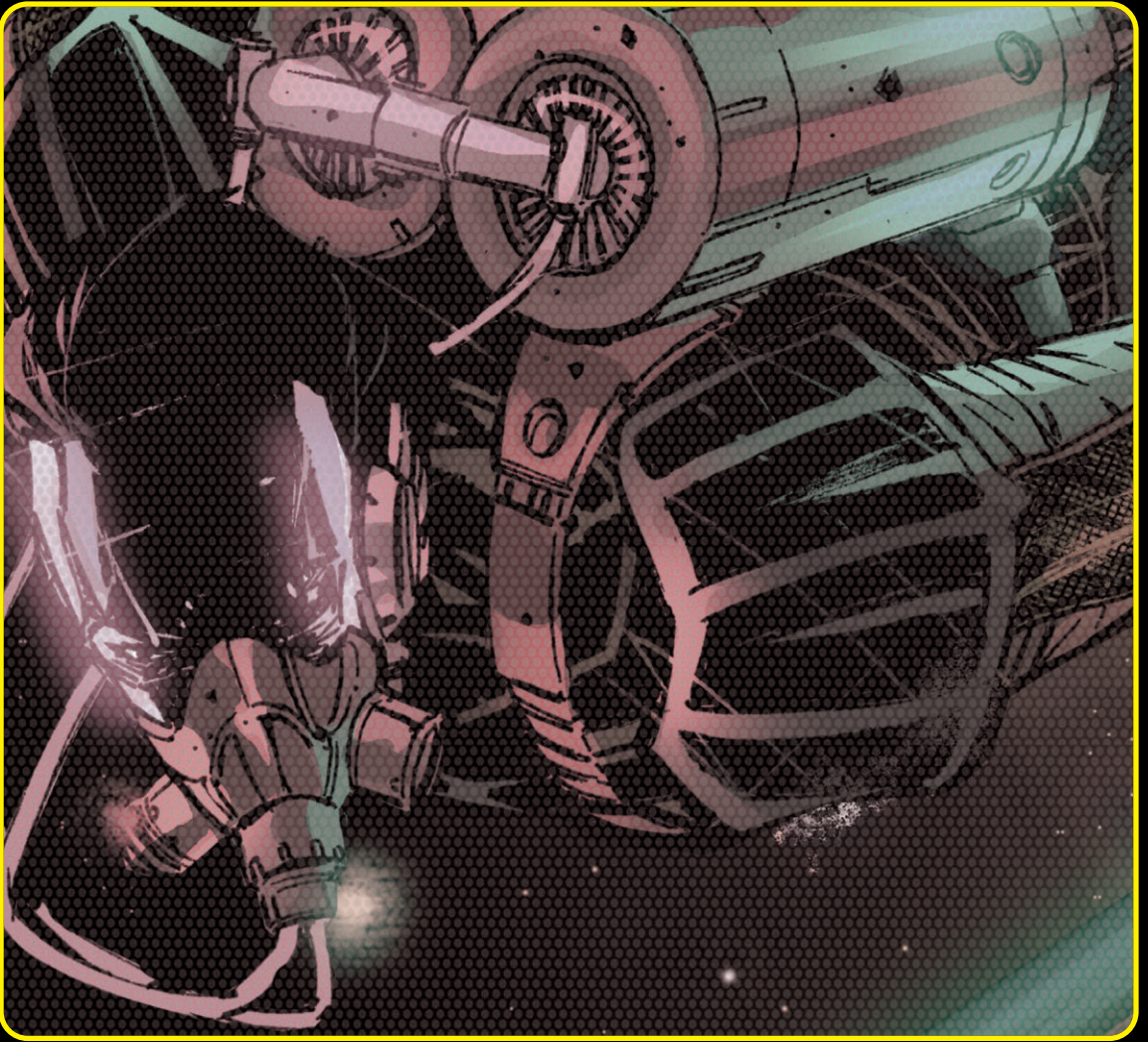
AND SO YOUR
LAST SECRET
FALLS AWAY.

*YOU WANT TO
RESTART THE WAR.
MURDER THE DOMINION
LEADER WHO ORDERED
THE CEASE-FIRE AND
HER DOMINION ALLIES
RETURN TO FINISH
THE JOB.*



THAT'S THE
PLAN.







KLINGONS

THE YEAR OF KAHLESS 893.

(EARTH CALENDAR YEAR 2267).



THE I.K.S. VOH'TAHK, UNDER
THE COMMAND OF KANG.



IS IT TRUE?
IS THE WAR
OVER?

YES.

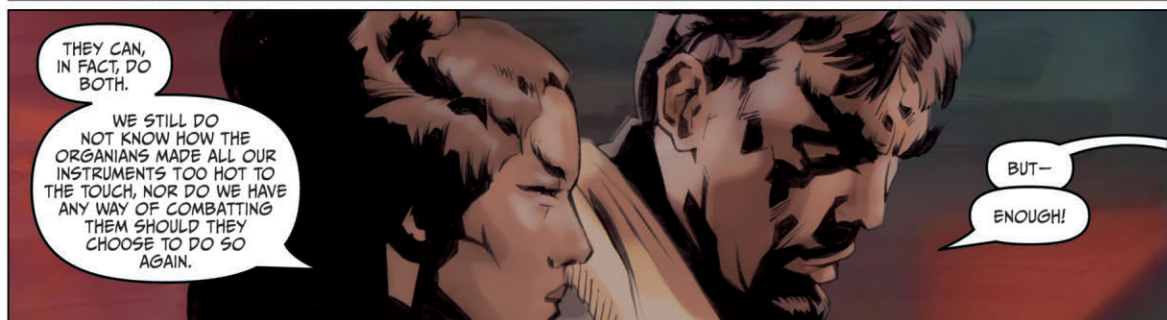
THE ORGANIANS
HAVE MADE IT CLEAR
THAT THEY WILL NOT
TOLERATE A WAR, SO
THE HIGH COUNCIL IS
NEGOTIATING A PEACE
TREATY WITH THE
FEDERATION.



QU'VATLH!

MADNESS!

THOSE FILTHY
PETAGPU' CANNOT
DENY US BATTLE!
THEY CANNOT DENY
US GLORY!

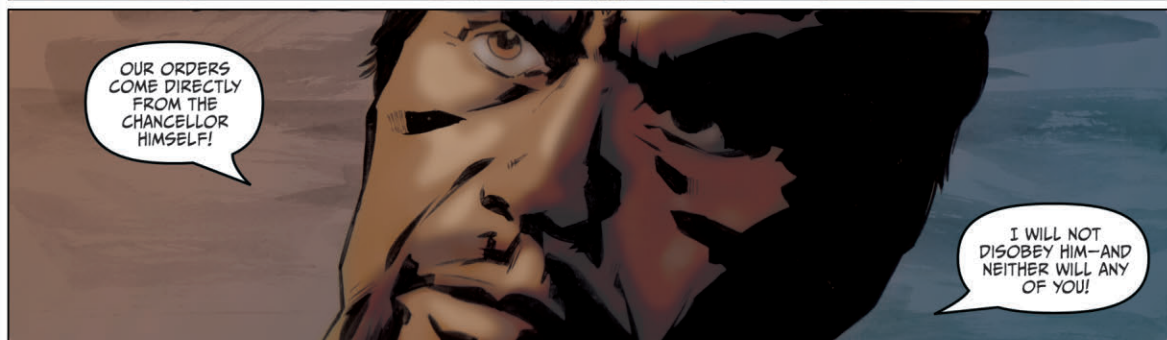


THEY CAN,
IN FACT, DO
BOTH.

WE STILL DO
NOT KNOW HOW THE
ORGANIANS MADE ALL OUR
INSTRUMENTS TOO HOT TO
THE TOUCH, NOR DO WE HAVE
ANY WAY OF COMBATTING
THEM SHOULD THEY
CHOOSE TO DO SO
AGAIN.

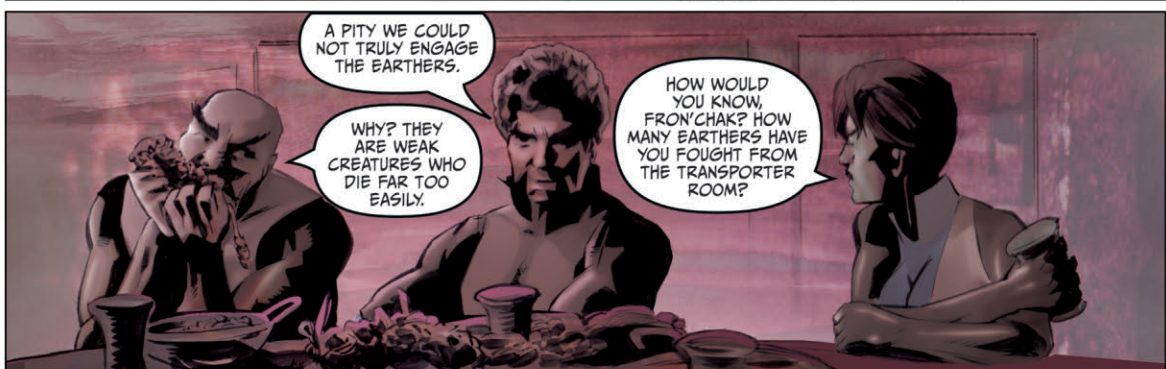
BUT—

ENOUGH!



OUR ORDERS
COME DIRECTLY
FROM THE CHANCELLOR
HIMSELF!

I WILL NOT
DISOBEY HIM—AND
NEITHER WILL ANY
OF YOU!

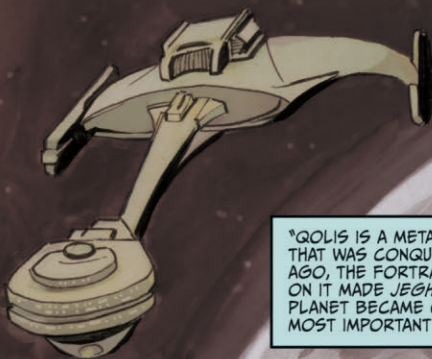


"THE FEDERATION WAS SPREADING LIKE A FUNGUS. THOUGH THEY ACCUSED US OF IMPERIALISM, THEY BROUGHT WORLDS TO THEIR SIDE WITH REMARKABLE SPEED.

"ONE SUCH WORLD WAS FORTRA, A PALTRY PLANET THAT WAS BENEATH OUR NOTICE TO CONQUER.

"ESPECIALLY SINCE WE HAD ONE OF THE FORTRANS' COLONIES.

"GOLIS IS A METAL-RICH PLANET THAT WAS CONQUERED DECADES AGO, THE FORTRANS WHO LIVED ON IT MADE *JEGHPU'WI'* AND THE PLANET BECAME ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT SHIPYARDS.



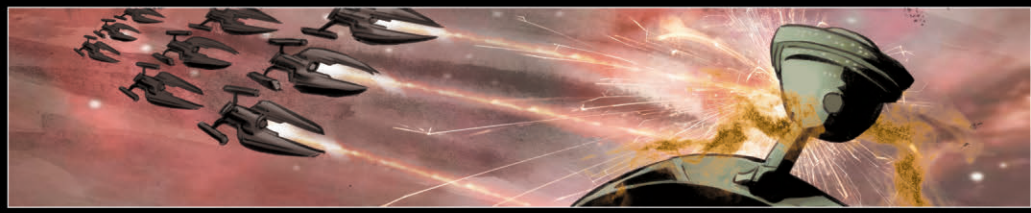
"AFTER THE FEDERATION MADE FORTRA INTO A PROTECTORATE—ONE OF THEIR TIRED LEGALISMS FOR CONQUEST—COMMAND SENT THE RONEY TO GOLIS.

"I SERVED ON THAT VESSEL AS GUNNER UNDER CAPTAIN KRAVIG. WE WERE THERE TO REMIND THE FEDERATION AND THE FORTRANS THAT GOLIS WAS A KLINGON WORLD."

CAPTAIN! A DOZEN VESSELS ON APPROACH—THEY READ AS FORTRAN!

FORTRAN VESSELS ONLY HAVE LASERS, CAPTAIN. THEY CANNOT PENETRATE OUR SHIELDS.

EXCELLENT, LIEUTENANT. PREPARE TO—




DAMAGE REPORT!

SHIELDS ARE DOWN! HULL BREACHES REPORTED ALL ACROSS THE SHIP!

CAPTAIN, THOSE WERE NOT LASERS—THOSE WERE FEDERATION PHASERS!

WHAT!?






"MY SCANS WERE CONFIRMED—
THE PHASERS THE FORTTRANS
USED HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN
GIVEN TO THEM BY THEIR NEW
HUMAN PROTECTORS."


RETURN FIRE!
ALERT COMMAND
IMMEDIATELY!

WEAPONS
NON-FUNCTIONAL!

QI'YAH!



"THE FORTTRANS DESTROYED
THE GOVERNOR'S SATELLITE,
INSTANTLY KILLING HIM AND
HIS ENTIRE STAFF."



"USING A TRACTOR BEAM THAT WAS ALSO
A GIFT OF THE FEDERATION,
THEY TOOK US PRISONER, NOT ALLOWING US TO DIE."




"WE WERE ALL PLACED IN A SINGLE
CELL, OUR WEAPONS TAKEN FROM US."



WE WERE
ABLE TO ALERT
COMMAND-GENERAL
TORK'S FLEET WILL
COME.

YES, BUT
THEY ARE TWO
DAYS AWAY.

WE
CANNOT
WAIT.



IN LESS THAN *ONE*
DAY, THE FORTTRANS WILL
HAVE CONSOLIDATED THEIR
POSITION AND GOLIS WILL
BE LOST.


ESPECIALLY
SINCE THEY HAVE
THE HELP OF THE
EARTHERS.




WE MUST ACT
SOONER.

HOW?

PATIENCE. AN
OPPORTUNITY
WILL PRESENT
ITSELF.



"THAT OPPORTUNITY
CAME WHEN THEY
TOOK CAPTAIN KRAVIQ
FOR QUESTIONING.
HE WAS ABLE TO KILL
THE GUARDS AND
MAKE HIS ESCAPE.





"KRAIVQ ESCAPED TO THE HILLS. HE USED THE NATIVE FLORA TO FASHION HIMSELF A WEAPON."



"THEN, UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS, HE RAN THROUGH THE CAPITAL CITY OF QOLIS."



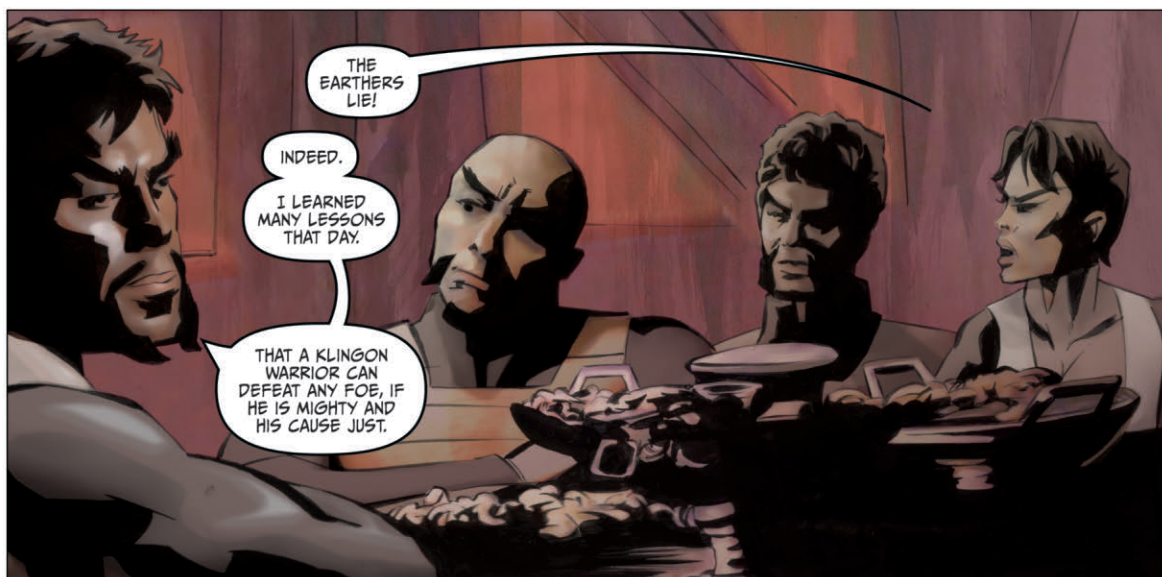
"THE FORTTRANS NEVER SAW HIM COMING."



"BY THE TIME GENERAL TORK ARRIVED WITH HIS FLEET, KRAIVQ WAS DEAD."



"BUT HE HAD TAKEN FOUR THOUSAND OF THE ENEMY WITH HIM."



THE YEAR OF KAHLESS 936.

(EARTH CALENDAR YEAR 2310).

THE HOUSE OF KANG ESTATE,
NEAR KOPF'S CLIFF, QO'NOS.

THE COOK SAID
SOMEONE WAS
RAIDING THE PANTRY
FOR LEFTOVER KLONGAT.
I DID NOT REALIZE IT
WAS THE HEAD OF
THE HOUSE.

WELCOME
HOME, KANG.
WHEN DID YOU
RETURN?

NOT LONG
AGO. THE K'TANGO
HAS PUT IN FOR
REPAIRS.

HOW FARED
YOUR MISSION?

SINCE RESIGNING
FROM THE DEFENSE
FORCE AFTER THE DEATH
OF OUR SON, I THOUGHT
YOU NO LONGER CARED
ABOUT MY MISSIONS,
MARA.

AND SINCE I
RESIGNED FROM THE
DEFENSE FORCE, YOU
HAVE CARED FOR
NOTHING ELSE—

—SAVE FOR YOUR
QUEST TO FIND OUR
SON'S KILLER, ABOUT
WHICH YOU REMAIN
SILENT.

WE ARE
MATED, KANG,
YET WE NEVER
SPEAK.

VERY WELL.
WE SHALL SPEAK
OF MY MISSION.

"WHEN PRAXIS WAS DESTROYED, MANY NOBLE HOUSES WERE RENDERED DESTITUTE. ONE SUCH WAS THE HOUSE OF TAKLAT.

"WITH THE LOSS OF THEIR FACTORIES ON PRAXIS, TAKLAT COULD NO LONGER MAINTAIN THEIR URIDIUM MINES OR THEIR FARMS ON THE PLANET GADYAQ.

"NOW, SEVENTEEN TURNS LATER, THE FARMS ARE STAGNANT, THE MINES SHUT DOWN—AND THOSE FEW WHO STILL LIVE ON GADYAQ ARE LEFT TO STARVE.

"AS PART OF THE RELIEF EFFORTS PROMISED IN THE KHITOMER ACCORDS, THE FEDERATION BROUGHT SUPPLIES AND FOOD FOR THE FOUR THOUSAND WHO STILL LIVE ON GADYAQ.

"MY MISSION WAS TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE *U.S.S. ENTERPRISE*, THE SHIP PROVIDING THE RELIEF.

"THE *ENTERPRISE* YOU AND I ONCE BOARDED IS LONG GONE, OF COURSE, AS IS ITS SUCCESSOR. WITH KIRK DEAD, AN EARTHER NAMED JOHN HARRIMAN NOW COMMANDS THE VESSEL WITH THAT NAME."

CAPTAIN KANG,
WE'RE READY TO
BEAM DOWN THE FOOD
AND EQUIPMENT
WHENEVER YOU'RE
READY.


LIEUTENANT J'LAG,
CONTACT THE SURFACE
AND OBTAIN THE
COORDINATES FOR
TRANSPORT.

YOU KNOW, THIS
ISN'T NECESSARY. WE
CAN CONTACT THE
SURFACE AND—

THOSE ARE NOT
THE CONDITIONS,
CAPTAIN. THIS IS
STILL A KLINGON
WORLD.

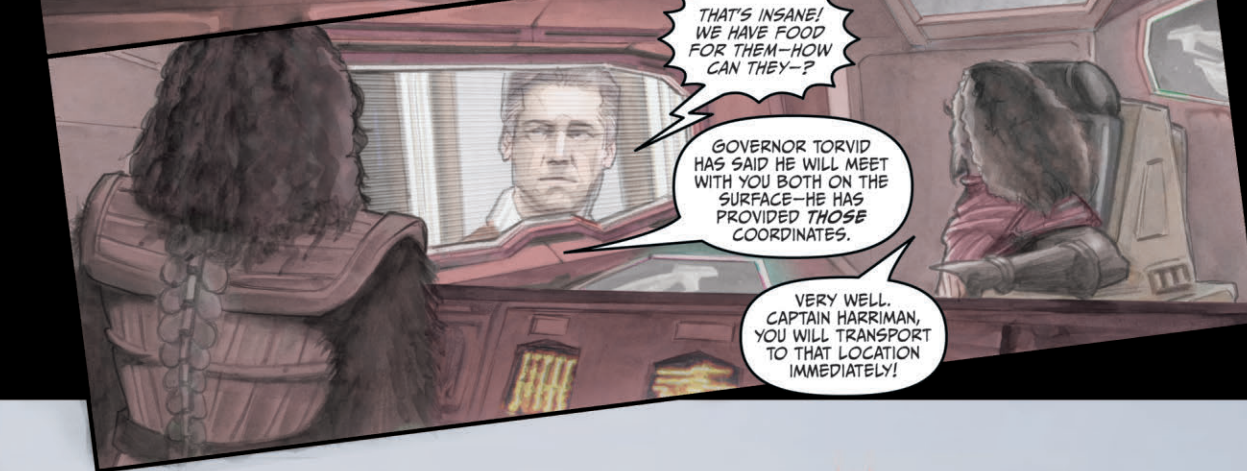
OF
COURSE.

CAPTAIN!



THE PEOPLE
OF QADYAG ARE
REFUSING TO ACCEPT
THE FEDERATION'S
CHARITY.

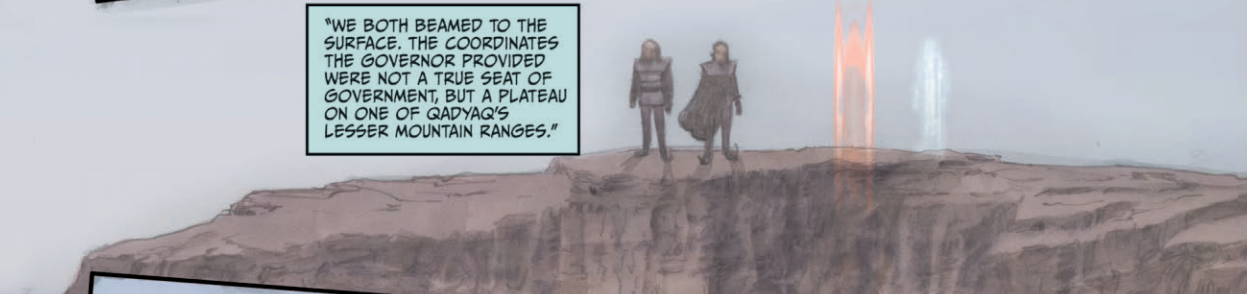
WHAT?



THAT'S INSANE!
WE HAVE FOOD
FOR THEM—HOW
CAN THEY—?

GOVERNOR TORVID
HAS SAID HE WILL MEET
WITH YOU BOTH ON THE
SURFACE—HE HAS
PROVIDED *THOSE*
COORDINATES.

VERY WELL.
CAPTAIN HARRIMAN,
YOU WILL TRANSPORT
TO THAT LOCATION
IMMEDIATELY!



"WE BOTH BEAMED TO THE
SURFACE. THE COORDINATES
THE GOVERNOR PROVIDED
WERE NOT A TRUE SEAT OF
GOVERNMENT, BUT A PLATEAU
ON ONE OF QADYAG'S
LESSER MOUNTAIN RANGES."



I'M CAPTAIN JOHN
HARRIMAN OF THE
FEDERATION STARSHIP
ENTERPRISE.

WE KNOW
WHO YOU ARE,
HUMAN.

THEN YOU
KNOW WHY I'M
HERE. WHY ARE
YOU REFUSING
OUR HELP?

WE DO NOT
REQUIRE IT.

MADNESS!



YOUR PLANET
WAS PLUNDERED
BY ITS OWNERS.

IN ORDER TO
SAVE ITS FORTUNE,
THE HOUSE OF TAKLAT
HAS SPENT THE LAST
SEVENTEEN TURNS SELLING
OFF THE FARMING AND
MINING EQUIPMENT THAT
ALLOWED THIS WORLD
TO THRIVE.



YOUR INTELLIGENCE IS FAULTY, CAPTAIN KANG, FOR QADYAQ NEEDS NEVER BEG FOR SCRAPS FROM THE FEDERATION.



BEHOLD!

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

THAT IS NOT YOUR CONCERN, CAPTAIN. I INVITED YOU HERE BECAUSE I KNEW YOU WOULD BELIEVE ONLY THE EVIDENCE OF YOUR EYES.

BUT NOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN, YOU WILL LEAVE, EARTHER. FIND SOME OTHER WORLD THAT WILL BEND ITS KNEE TO YOU.

QADYAQ IS NOT THAT WORLD.




"I DID NOT HEED THE GOVERNOR'S WORDS. THIS PLANET'S SUDDEN PROSPERITY WAS MY CONCERN."




RETURN TO THE CAPITAL QUICKLY, MAZKA.

YES, MY LORD!



HOW ARE YOU TO GUARD YOUR GOVERNOR IF HE WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO TRANSPORT WITH HIM?

DO NOT LET HIS BLUSTER FOOL YOU, CAPTAIN—WE ARE NOT AS WELL OFF AS HE WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE.



WE HAVE INSUFFICIENT POWER TO "WASTE" ON TRANSPORTING—UNLESS, OF COURSE, ONE IS THE GOVERNOR.

I SHOULD KILL YOU FOR SPEAKING ILL OF YOUR SUPERIOR.

WERE HE MY SUPERIOR, I WOULD AGREE.

BUT HE IS AN HONORLESS COWARD.

HE DENIES THE FEDERATION'S CHARITY, BUT OUR OWN GAINS COME AT THE EXPENSE OF OUR FELLOW KLINGONS.


WHAT!?

EXPLAIN YOURSELF!

OUR FARMS GROW AND OUR MINES YIELD URIDIUM ONLY BECAUSE WE WERE ABLE TO STEAL FROM OUR NEIGHBORS.

*THE GUARD—WHOSE NAME WAS MAZKA—EXPLAINED TO ME WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

*AFTER BEING APPOINTED GOVERNOR, TORVID ORDERED THE SHIPS THAT THE HOUSE OF TAKLAT HAD LEFT BEHIND REFURBISHED AND USED TO TRANSPORT THIEVES TO NEIGHBORING WORLDS IN THE EMPIRE.




*THEY STOLE WHAT THEY NEEDED, WITH NO REGARD FOR THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS OF THE EMPIRE.

*THEY ARE WITHOUT HONOR.



*I TOLD MAZKA THAT BY TELLING ME, HE AVOIDED HIS PEOPLE'S SHAME.

*BUT MY WORDS DID NOT SEEM TO COMFORT HIM.



"I SENT A MESSAGE TO
COMMAND OF THE
GOVERNOR'S REJECTION,
AND NO DOUBT HARRIMAN
DID THE SAME FOR HIS
SUPERIORS IN STARFLEET.

"THE NEXT MORNING,
EVERYTHING WAS
DIFFERENT."

CAPTAIN, WE ARE
DETECTING NO KLINGON
LIFE SIGNS ON THE
SURFACE--AND THE
EARTHERS HAVE BEAMED
DOWN ONE OF THEIR
LANDING PARTIES.

ARE THEY
RESPONSIBLE?

NO, SIR--THEIR
PARTY TRANSPORTED
ONLY AFTER THE LIFE
SIGNS DISAPPEARED.

"I TOOK A SQUAD
TO THE SURFACE.

"THE HUMANS' TEAM WAS LED BY COMMANDER
DEMORA SULU, THE DAUGHTER OF MY SOMETIME
ADVERSARY, CAPTAIN SULU OF THE *EXCELSIOR*.
SHE SERVED AS HARRIMAN'S FIRST OFFICER."

WHAT HAS
HAPPENED?

WE'VE BEEN
INVESTIGATING FOR THE
PAST HOUR. IT LOOKS LIKE
EVERYONE ON THIS
PLANET IS DEAD.

AS OF YESTERDAY,
QADYAG'S POPULATION
WAS FOUR THOUSAND AND
FIFTEEN. AS OF TODAY,
IT'S ZERO.

FOUR THOUSAND
AND FOURTEEN OF
THEM HAD THEIR
THROATS SLIT.

AND THE
OTHER?

THIS ONE.

MAZKA.



THE YEAR OF KAHLESS 996.

(EARTH CALENDAR YEAR 2370).

DAYOS IV. A REMOTE CABIN THAT KANG PURCHASED SEVEN YEARS BEFORE.

...AND THEN WHEN I REALIZED THAT THIS FOUL ALIEN CREATURE WAS MANIPULATING THE EARTHERS AND MY CREW ALIKE, I THREW DOWN MY SWORD.

WE NEED NO URGING TO HATE HUMANS, AND WE DO IT FOR OUR OWN PURPOSES. AND THE EARTHERS OF THE ENTERPRISE DID FIGHT US WITH HONOR.

THAT IS A WONDERFUL STORY—BUT TELL ME—

—YOUR OFFICER SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A RUNNING MAN AND THROATS?

"FOUR THOUSAND THROATS MAY BE CUT IN A SINGLE NIGHT BY A RUNNING MAN."


IT IS AN OLD PROVERB OF MY PEOPLE.

PROVERBS OFTEN HAVE ORIGINS, DO THEY NOT?

COUGH

INDEED. VERY WELL, YLDA, I WILL TELL YOU ONE LAST TALE BEFORE YOU REST.

IT IS THE STORY OF THE CAMPAIGN AT KOL'VAT.

A dramatic illustration of a Klingon fortress built into a massive, dark, and jagged cliff. The fortress features several tall, cylindrical towers with pointed tops, and a central structure with a large, circular opening. A long, narrow bridge or walkway extends from the cliff edge towards the fortress. In the foreground, the ground is covered in dark, jagged rocks and debris. The sky is dark and cloudy, with a hint of light on the horizon. The overall tone is somber and epic.

"IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF KAHLESS,
LONG AGO, BEFORE WE VENTURED
OUT TO CONQUER THE STARS, WHEN
WE WERE STILL A FRACTURED PEOPLE.

"ALL ON THE HOMEWORLD
HAD HEARD OF KAHLESS AND
MANY LEARNED HIS WISDOM.
MOST UNITED UNDER HIM.

"BUT THERE WERE THOSE WHO
DID NOT HEED KAHLESS'S WORDS
AND REJECTED HIS TEACHINGS.



*ONE WAS RALKROR, THE WARLORD OF
KOL'VAT. HE RULED FROM GOQLATH CASTLE,
A MASSIVE EDIFICE ON GOQLATH MOUNTAIN.

*OVER THE YEARS, MANY ARMIES TRIED TO
STORM GOQLATH, BUT ALL WERE REPELLED
BY THE FOUR THOUSAND WARRIORS WHO
DEFENDED THE BATTLEMENTS.

*NONE COULD GET PAST THEM,
FOR NONE COULD COME UPON
THEM UNAWARES.

"RALKROR BELIEVED HIMSELF TO BE INVINCIBLE."

I AM THE MIGHTIEST WARLORD IN THE WORLD! I WILL NOT BEND MY KNEE TO THIS UPSTART WHO CLAIMS TO BRING UNITY TO OUR PEOPLE.

AND IF HE ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY ME, THEN HE WILL LEARN WHY GOGLATH CASTLE HAS STOOD FOR A HUNDRED TURNS!

"GENERAL TYGRAK WAS A DEVOUT FOLLOWER OF KAHLESS, AND HE BELIEVED THAT HIS FAITH IN THE GREAT ONE WOULD BE ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE UNDEFEATABLE."

WE WILL ATTACK AT DAWN. WHEN THE SUN STRIKES THE MOUNTAIN FACE, THE WARLORD'S GUARDS WILL BE BLINDED.

THE LIGHT WILL BE AT OUR BACKS, SO WE WILL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE.

MY LORD! THE FORCES OF KAHLESS ATTACK OUR STRONGHOLD!

THEN THE FORCES OF KAHLESS WILL DIE.



"KAHLESS ONCE SAID THAT FAITH COULD MOVE MOUNTAINS."



"HOWEVER, ON THIS DAY, GOGLATH MOUNTAIN WAS IMMUNE TO SUCH."



"TYGRAK'S FORCES WERE ROUTED, AND FORCED TO RETREAT."



"ONE OF TYGRAK'S WARRIORS WAS A YOUNG MAN NAMED KRIM. HE JOINED THE GENERAL'S ARMY BECAUSE HE, TOO, BELIEVED IN KAHLESS."

"BUT HE ALSO BELIEVED IN STRATEGY, AND HE FOUND THAT OF HIS COMMANDER LACKING."



A FRONTAL ASSAULT WILL NOT WORK. FOR MANY TURNS, WARRIORS HAVE TRIED TO STORM GOGLATH CASTLE THAT WAY, AND STILL IT STANDS.

WHAT OTHER WAY CAN THERE POSSIBLY BE?

STEALTH, MY FRIEND. STEALTH AND GUILE.



KRIM, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TO DEFEAT OUR ENEMY.

ALONE? AT NIGHT? WITHOUT YOUR ARMOR? ARE YOU MAD?

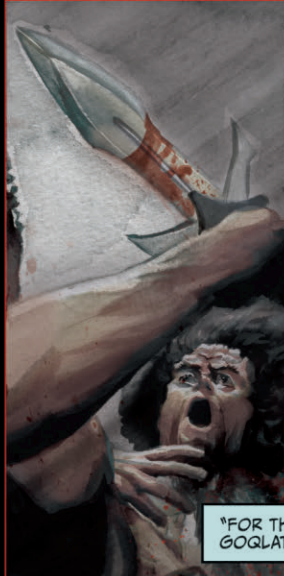
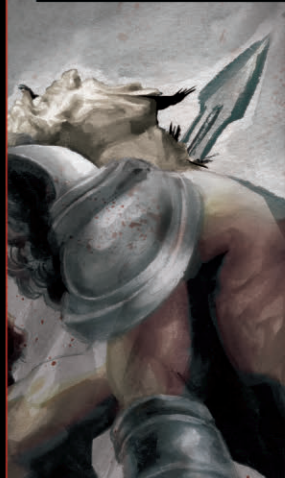
NUMBERS WILL NOT WIN THE DAY, KRALOS.



"AND SO KRIM WENT INTO THE MOONLESS NIGHT."

"ARMED ONLY WITH HIS D'K TAGO, HE CLIMBED GOGLATH MOUNTAIN, MOVING WITH THE STEALTH THAT CAN ONLY COME OF ONE WARRIOR MOVING INSTEAD OF A THOUSAND."

"KRIM SLIT THE THROATS OF EACH
OF THE FOUR THOUSAND WHO
GUARDED THE CASTLE THAT NIGHT.



"FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY,
GOGLATH CASTLE WAS UNDEFENDED."

THE WAY IS
CLEAR!



THEN WE
WILL ATTACK.
TO ARMS, MY
WARRIORS!



"AND SO THE ASSAULT BEGAN ANEW—
BUT THIS TIME, THERE WERE NONE
TO REPEL TYGRAK'S FORCES.



"THE UNDEFEATABLE WAS DEFEATED.
HONOR WAS SERVED. THE DAY WAS WON."





IS THAT HOW YOU
INTEND TO DEFEAT MY
FORMER HUSBAND,
KANG?

COUGH

YOU WILL USE
STEALTH AND GUILT
TO DEFEAT GAGH,
WHEN EIGHT DECADES
OF FRONTAL ASSAULTS
HAVE DONE YOU NO
GOOD?



I HAVE CARED
FOR YOU THESE
SEVEN TURNS, YLDA,
BECAUSE I HOPE TO
CLEAN THE ALBINO'S
LOCATION.

THE CASTLE BEHIND
WHICH HE HIDES IS HIS
SECREC—AND THE MEANS
BY WHICH I WILL CUT THE
THROATS OF HIS PROTECTORS
IS YOU PROVIDING THAT
INFORMATION.

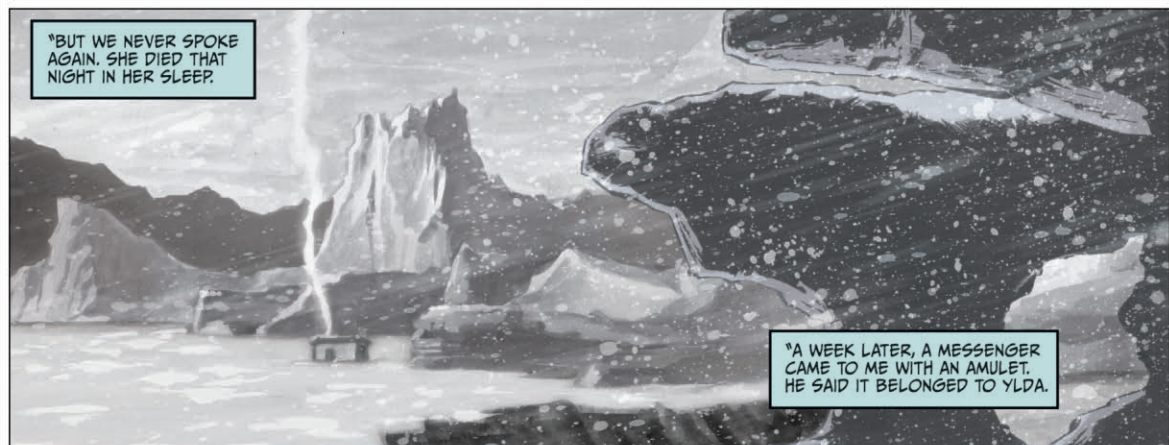


HE KILLED MY
SON, AND THE SONS
OF MY BLOOD
BROTHERS.

I KNOW. YOU HAVE
TOLD ME MANY TIMES
OF KOR AND KOLOTH
AND THEIR SONS AND
OF YOUR SON DAX.

COUGH

SLEEP NOW,
YLDA. WE WILL
SPEAK AGAIN
TOMORROW.



"BUT WE NEVER SPOKE
AGAIN. SHE DIED THAT
NIGHT IN HER SLEEP.

"A WEEK LATER, A MESSENGER
CAME TO ME WITH AN AMULET.
HE SAID IT BELONGED TO YLDA.

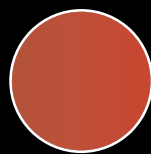
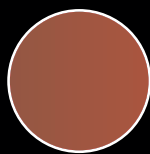
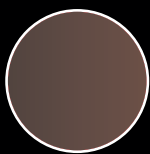
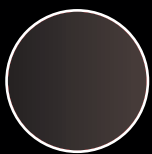


"I HAVE THE LOCATION OF THE ALBINO.
SOON, MY SON WILL BE AVENGED—

"—AND I CAN AT LAST REST.

"AFTER EIGHT DECADES,
THE CASTLE WILL FALL."

THE END.





CAPTAIN'S PERSONAL LOG, STARDATE 51062.7.
THE ENTERPRISE HAS COMPLETED ITS FIRST
FULL MONTH OF SERVICE FOLLOWING THE
SUBSTANTIAL REPAIRS MADE NECESSARY
FOLLOWING OUR RECENT ENCOUNTER WITH
THE BORG.



BOTH SHIP AND CREW ARE OPERATING AT PEAK
EFFICIENCY, ACCORDING TO LT. COMMANDER
LAForge AND COUNSELOR TROI, AND WE ARE
PROCEEDING TO THE VASTAK SYSTEM TO
UNDERTAKE OUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT.



AND YET I FEEL...
UNEASY.



WHILE THE BORG'S LATEST ASSAULT ON EARTH WAS REPELLED, THE EXPERIENCE HAS... **REKINDLED** SOMEWHAT THE MEMORIES OF MY TIME SPENT UNDER THE BORG'S CONTROL AS LOCUTUS.



RIKER TO CAPTAIN.

GO AHEAD, NUMBER ONE.

WE'RE READY FOR YOU IN THE OBSERVATION LOUNGE, CAPTAIN.

I'M ON MY WAY, COMMANDER.



DECK TWO.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE UNPLEASANT MEMORIES WILL ONCE AGAIN FADE WITH TIME, BUT THE EXPERIENCE HAS LEFT ME WITH A FEELING OF FOREBODING...



...AND AN UNDENIABLE SENSE OF DEJA VU...





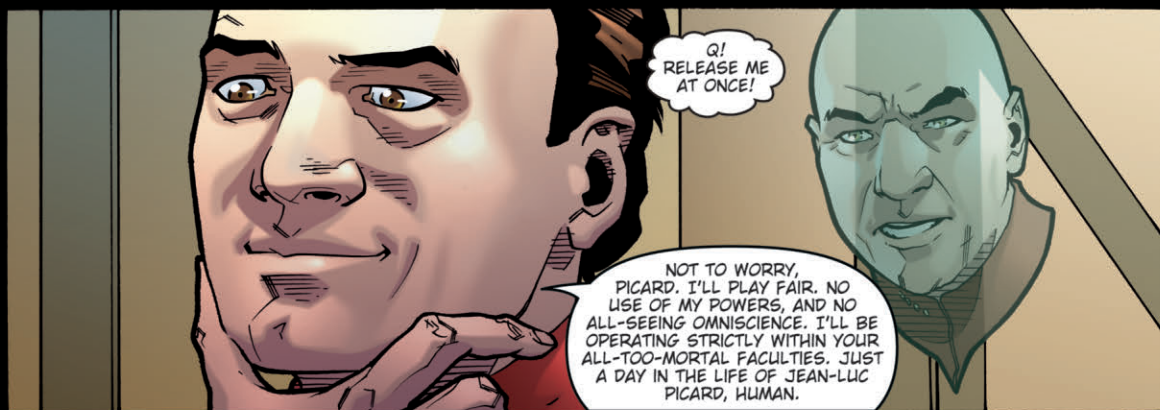


FWASH





THIS IS ALL ANYONE SEES, PICARD. JUST YOU GOING ABOUT YOUR DUTIES, ONLY I'LL BE AT THE HELM.



Q!
RELEASE ME AT ONCE!

NOT TO WORRY, PICARD. I'LL PLAY FAIR. NO USE OF MY POWERS, AND NO ALL-SEEING OMNISCIENCE. I'LL BE OPERATING STRICTLY WITHIN YOUR ALL-TOO-MORTAL FACULTIES. JUST A DAY IN THE LIFE OF JEAN-LUC PICARD, HUMAN.



THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE FAR TOO IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO BE TOYING WITH! THERE ARE UNTOLD LIVES AT STAKE!

IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME WITH YOU, PICARD—"LIVES AT STAKE!" YOU HUMANS ARE ALWAYS SO CONCERNED WITH CAUSE AND EFFECT, AS IF YOU HAD ANY CONTROL OVER THEM ANYWAY.

VERY WELL, THEN—IF IT WILL SECURE YOUR PARTICIPATION IN MY EXPERIMENT I GIVE YOU MY WORD THAT I'LL UNDO ANY DAMAGE DONE AND MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO WORK YOUR DIPLOMATIC WILES.

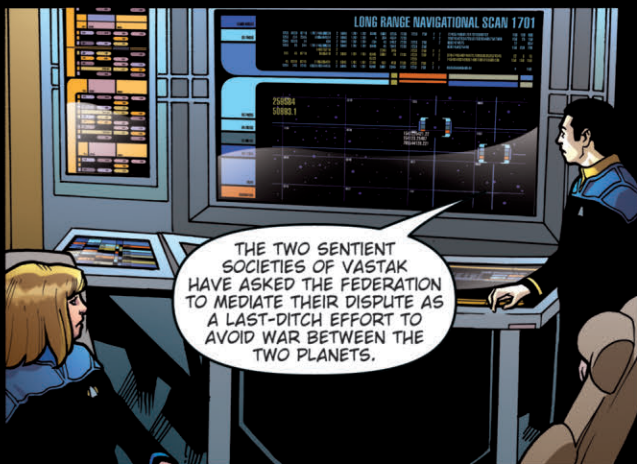
BREE-DEET

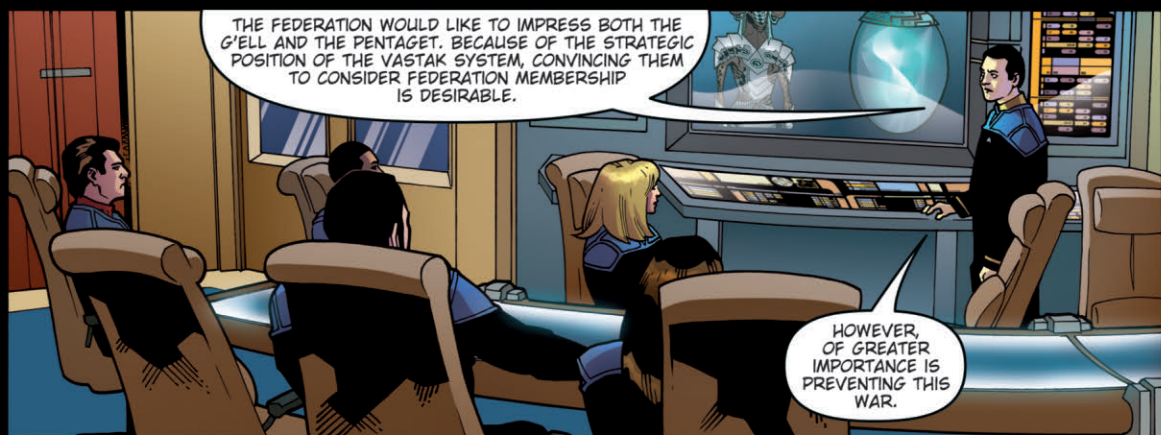


IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, CAPTAIN? THE BRIEFING IS READY TO BEGIN.

I BELIEVE THAT'S MY CUE.

AHEM... ON MY WAY, COMMANDER...

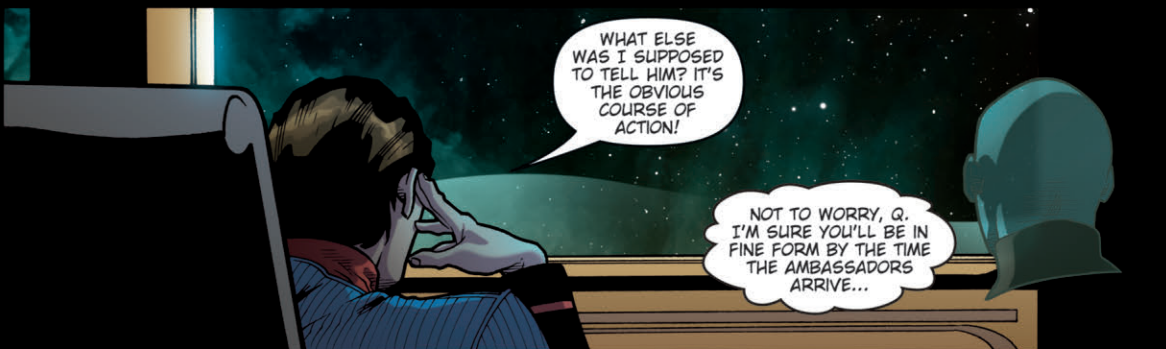


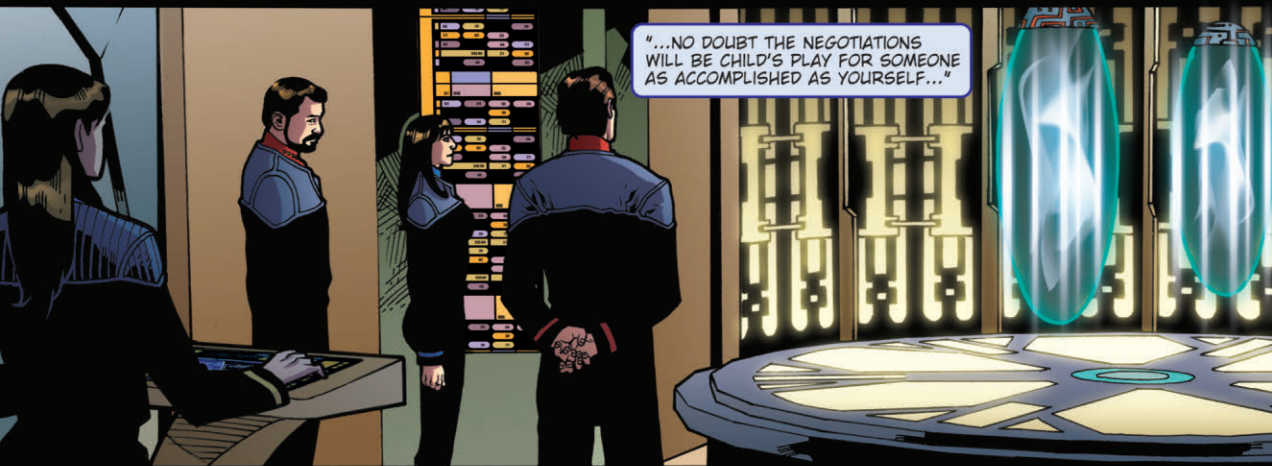












"...NO DOUBT THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE CHILD'S PLAY FOR SOMEONE AS ACCOMPLISHED AS YOURSELF..."



I AM CAPTAIN JEAN-LUC PICARD OF THE FEDERATION STARSHIP ENTERPRISE. WELCOME ABOARD.

I AM KNOWN AS NAR, CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR THE G'ELL AFFILIATION. WE THANK THE FEDERATION FOR ITS ASSISTANCE AND HOSPITALITY.

THIS IS MY FIRST OFFICER, COMMANDER RIKER. IF YOU'LL FOLLOW HIM, HE'LL TAKE YOU TO THE CONFERENCE ROOM.



VERY GOOD, Q! THAT WAS ALMOST HUMAN-SOUNDING!

RIGHT THIS WAY...



WELCOME TO THE ENTERPRISE. I AM CAPTAIN JEAN-LUC PIC—

YES CAPTAIN PICARD WE HAVE ALREADY READ ALL RELEVANT PREPARATORY BRIEFS PLEASE CONVEY US TO THE NEGOTIATIONS THERE IS MUCH TO DISCUSS



BY ALL MEANS! LET US GET THINGS UNDERWAY!

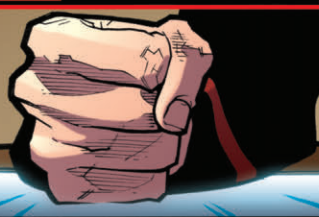
YOU SEE, PICARD? I'M GETTING THE HANG OF THIS AFTER ALL...



WE REQUIRE VASTAK VII THE
TERRAFORMING OF THE PLANET HAS BEEN
OUR DESTINY FOR GENERATIONS THOUSANDS OF
OUR PEOPLE HAVE WORKED THEIR ENTIRE LIVES
TO IMPLEMENT THE TERRAFORM INITIATIVE
WITHIN DECADES OUR PLANET WILL NOT
SUSTAIN US VASTAK VII IS OURS WE
WILL HAVE IT



NEVER! WE'LL
DESTROY IT
FIRST!



THAT'S
ENOUGH!



YOU WILL **END**
ALL HOSTILITIES AND
WORK TOGETHER,
OR **ELSE**.



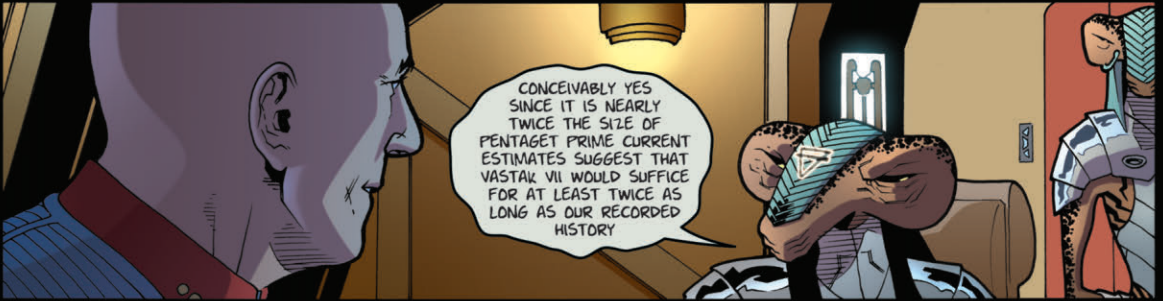




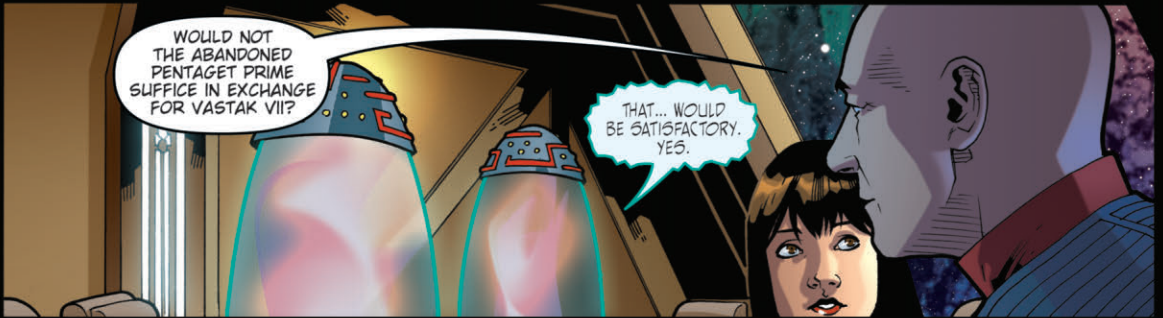


AMBASSADORS,
PLEASE. LET US ALL TRY TO
REGAIN OUR COMPOSURE. I
BELIEVE WE HAVE GOTTEN OFF
TO A HASTY, ILL-CONSIDERED
BEGINNING.

NOW, AMBASSADOR.
THERE'S SOMETHING THAT
HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE
CLEAR TO ME. ONCE
TERRAFORMED, WILL VASTAK
VII ALONE SUSTAIN YOUR
PEOPLE?

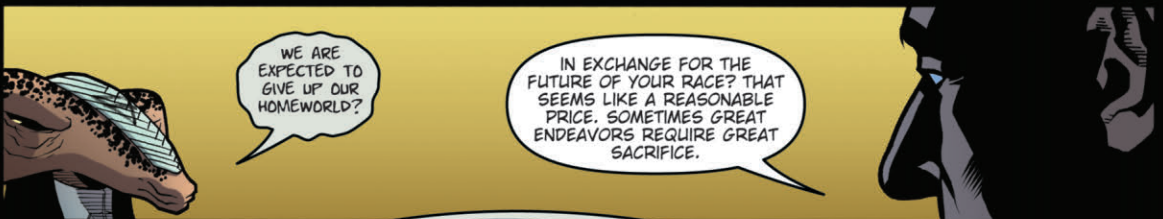


CONCEIVABLY YES
SINCE IT IS NEARLY
TWICE THE SIZE OF
PENTAGET PRIME CURRENT
ESTIMATES SUGGEST THAT
VASTAK VII WOULD SUFFICE
FOR AT LEAST TWICE AS
LONG AS OUR RECORDED
HISTORY



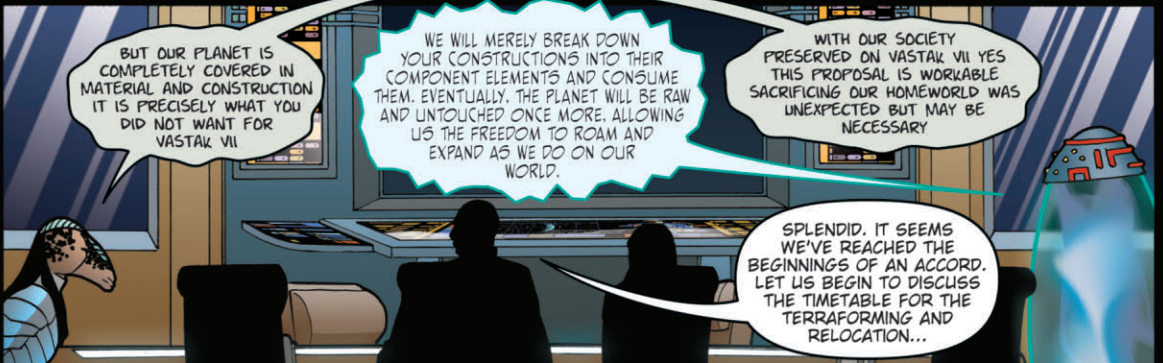
WOULD NOT
THE ABANDONED
PENTAGET PRIME
SUFFICE IN EXCHANGE
FOR VASTAK VII?

THAT... WOULD
BE SATISFACTORY.
YES.



WE ARE
EXPECTED TO
GIVE UP OUR
HOMEWORLD?

IN EXCHANGE FOR THE
FUTURE OF YOUR RACE? THAT
SEEMS LIKE A REASONABLE
PRICE. SOMETIMES GREAT
ENDEAVORS REQUIRE GREAT
SACRIFICE.



BUT OUR PLANET IS
COMPLETELY COVERED IN
MATERIAL AND CONSTRUCTION
IT IS PRECISELY WHAT YOU
DID NOT WANT FOR
VASTAK VII

WE WILL MERELY BREAK DOWN
YOUR CONSTRUCTIONS INTO THEIR
COMPONENT ELEMENTS AND CONSUME
THEM. EVENTUALLY, THE PLANET WILL BE RAW
AND UNTOUCHED ONCE MORE, ALLOWING
US THE FREEDOM TO ROAM AND
EXPAND AS WE DO ON OUR
WORLD.

WITH OUR SOCIETY
PRESERVED ON VASTAK VII YES
THIS PROPOSAL IS WORKABLE
SACRIFICING OUR HOMEWORLD WAS
UNEXPECTED BUT MAY BE
NECESSARY

SPLENDID. IT SEEMS
WE'VE REACHED THE
BEGINNINGS OF AN ACCORD.
LET US BEGIN TO DISCUSS
THE TIMETABLE FOR THE
TERRAFORMING AND
RELOCATION...

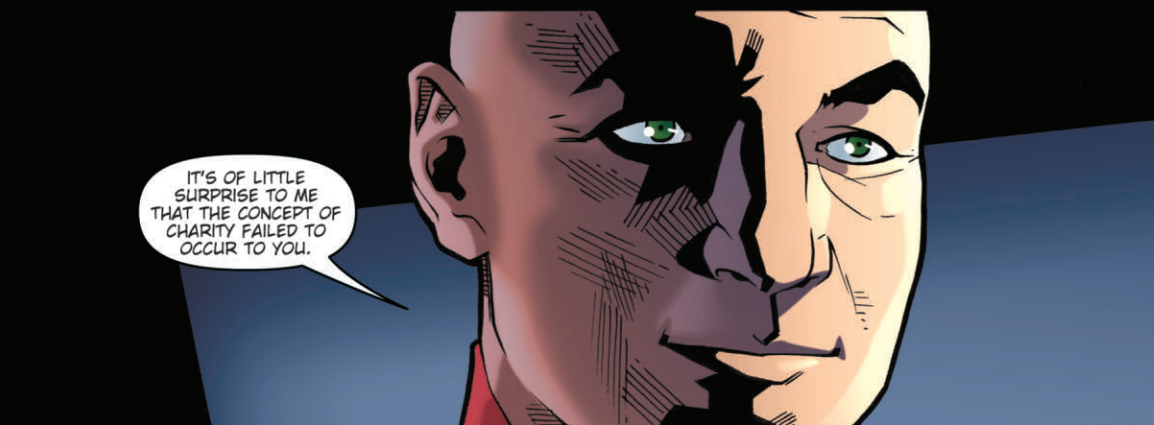
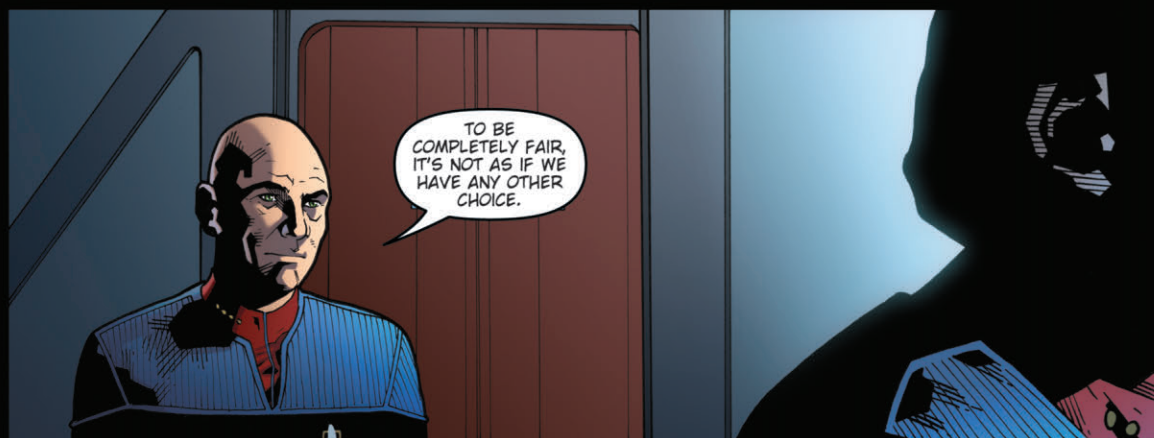
CAPTAIN'S LOG, SUPPLEMENTAL.
THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE
G'ELL AND THE PENTAGET WERE A
SUCCESS. WHILE MUCH REMAINS
TO BE AGREED UPON, THE THREAT
OF WAR NO LONGER LOOMS, NO
THANKS TO Q.

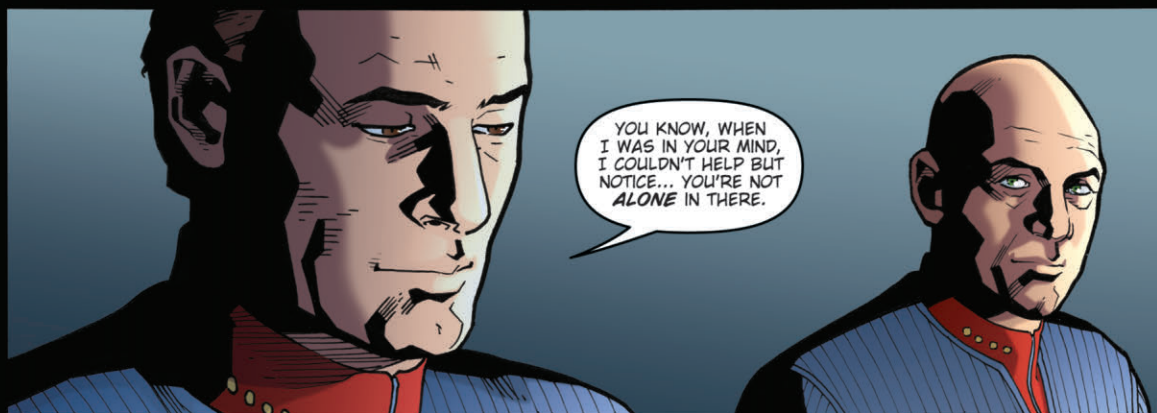


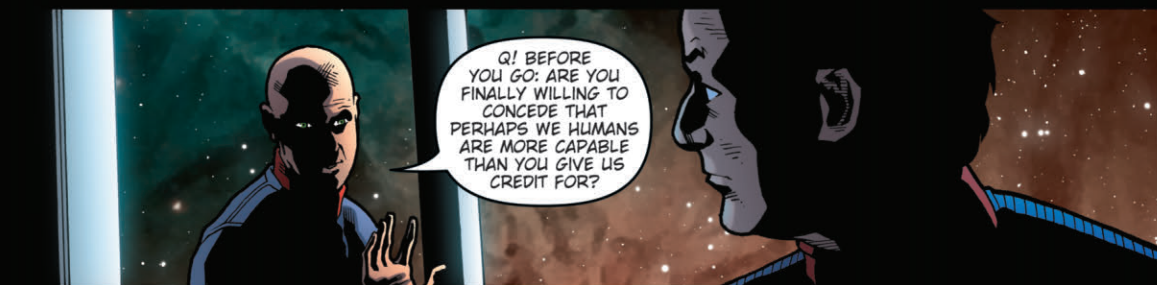
HOW,
PICARD?

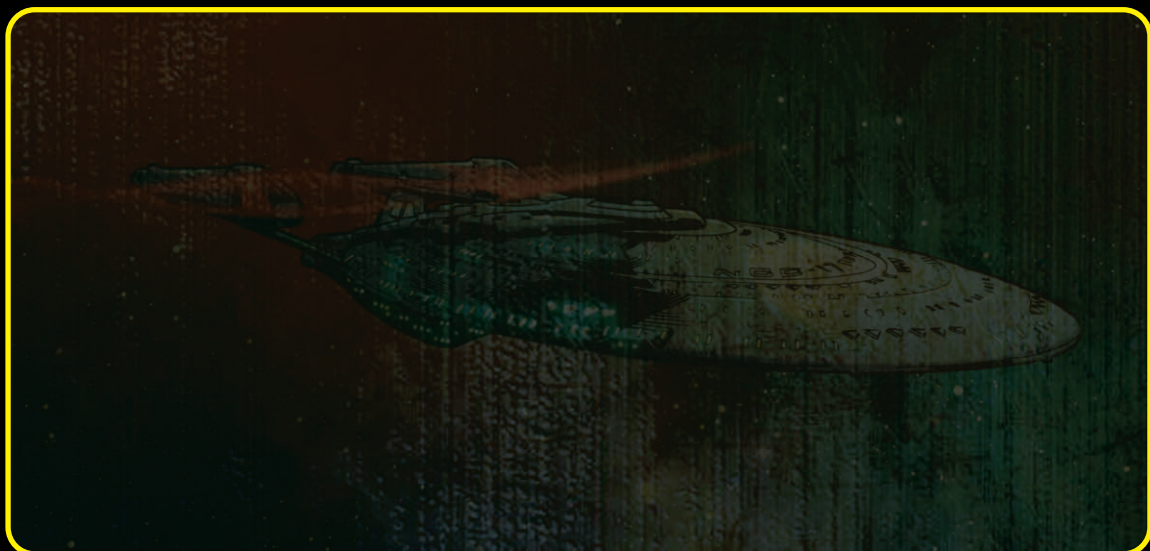
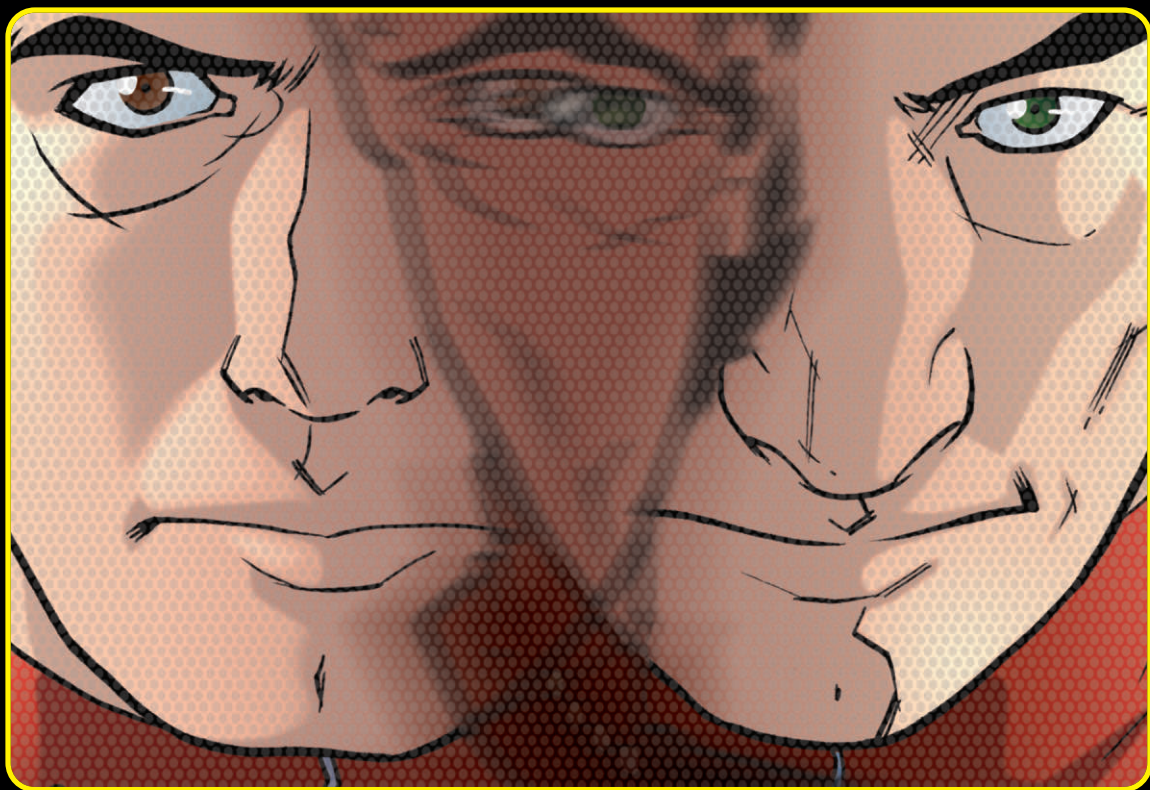


HOW DO
YOU HUMANS
DO IT?












ROMULANS



"COMMANDER! SHIELDS ARE FAILING! PORT DRIVE ASSEMBLY IS NON-RESPONSIVE. WE HAVE MANEUVERING THRUSTERS ONLY. SENSORS AND TARGETING ARRAYS ARE OFF-LINE. THERE ARE FIRES ON ALL DECKS. DECKS TWO, FOUR, AND FIVE ARE BREACHED AND VENTING ATMOSPHERE!"



COMMANDER
ACASTUS, IT'S NO
GOOD... WE'VE BEEN
CRIPPLED! WE'RE
DEAD IN THE
WATER!

WHERE IS YOUR
SPINE, LIEUTENANT!
YOU'RE A DISGRACE
TO THAT UNIFORM!

THIS! THIS
IS NOTHING! I'VE
COME BACK FROM
WORSE, BELIEVE
ME!



ENGINEERING...
ENGINEERING!
IS THE
COM DOWN
TOO?

NO... NO SIR,
IT'S NOT THE COM.
NO ONE'S ALIVE DOWN
THERE... ENGINEERING
IS OPEN TO
VACUUM...

VERY WELL.
DO WE STILL HAVE
A COMPLEMENT
OF ATOMIC
TORPEDOES?



YES, SIR.

CHARGE THEM
AND PREPARE FOR
FIRING. I'LL TARGET THEM
MANUALLY! RE-ROUTE ALL
POWER TO THE SHIELDS,
INCLUDING LIFE SUPPORT,
AND BRING US
ABOUT!



WE SHALL
SHOW OUR
ADVERSARY THAT
WE STILL HAVE
TEETH!

FORTY- EIGHT HOURS EARLIER.

...BUT A NEW
BEGINNING, FOR
ME AND FOR
ROMULUS.

LONG AGO,
WHEN I WAS
BARELY A YOUTH, I
ACCEPTED THE CALL TO
DUTY. TO PLEDGE MY
HONOR AND MY LIFE IN
THE SERVICE OF MY
PEOPLE AND MY
WORLD.

NOW, THOUGH
THE UNIFORM HAS
CHANGED, MY LOVE AND
LOYALTY TO THE EMPIRE
REMAIN CONSTANT
AS EVER.

WHETHER ON THE
FRONT LINE OF THE
HIGH FRONTIER ABOVE
US, OR ON THE FLOOR OF
THE SENATE, I LIVE TO
SERVE YOU, THE PEOPLE
OF ROMULUS...

BIP

WELL,
WHAT DO YOU
THINK?

BEARING IN
MIND, IT'S ONLY
A ROUGH
CUT.

IT'S NOT
EXACTLY... SUBTLE,
IS IT? YOU SOUND MORE
AS IF YOU'RE RALLYING
THE TROOPS. YOU'RE
FIGHTING IN A DIFFERENT
ARENA NOW, A LITTLE
FINESSE WOULDN'T
BE AMISS.

IT'S THE
SAME TONE I
TOOK WHEN I
WAS CANVASSING
AND WON MY
SEAT.

I'M APPEALING
TO THE PEOPLE, LILA,
THEY'VE HAD THEIR FILL
OF SIBILANT, SNAKE-LIKE
SENATORS!

THEY APPRECIATE
A BLUNT, PLAIN, AND
HONEST SPEAKER.



HONEST?
THEN THE SENATE
DEFINITELY ISN'T
THE PLACE FOR
YOU.

I NOTICE YOU
DON'T MENTION THE
PRAETOR ONCE IN
YOUR ADDRESS, AND
I WON'T BE THE
ONLY ONE.

I'VE WON
ENOUGH BATTLES
AND CAMPAIGNS
FOR HIM TO KNOW
MY LOYALTY TO
ROMULUS IS A
GIVEN!



TO ROMULUS,
YES, BUT YOU KNOW
HOW UNPREDICTABLE
THE PRAETOR
CAN BE.

IS THIS WISE, MY
HUSBAND? TO RESIGN YOUR
COMMISSION FOR A TENUOUS
SEAT IN THE SENATE? I KNOW
WHAT DRIVES YOU BUT YOU
MUST LET IT GO!

I... I CANNOT. I'VE
BEEN A COMMANDER FOR
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS NOW.
REPEATEDLY PASSED OVER
FOR PROMOTION WHILE
OTHERS LESS ABLE HAVE
ADVANCED.

THROUGH
NO FAULT OF
YOUR OWN!

YOU ARE A HERO
OF THE EMPIRE, IT WAS
CERAPH WHO WAS THE
TRAITOR... HE WAS PART
OF THE UNIFICATION
SECT, NOT YOU!



YOU WERE
EXONERATED!

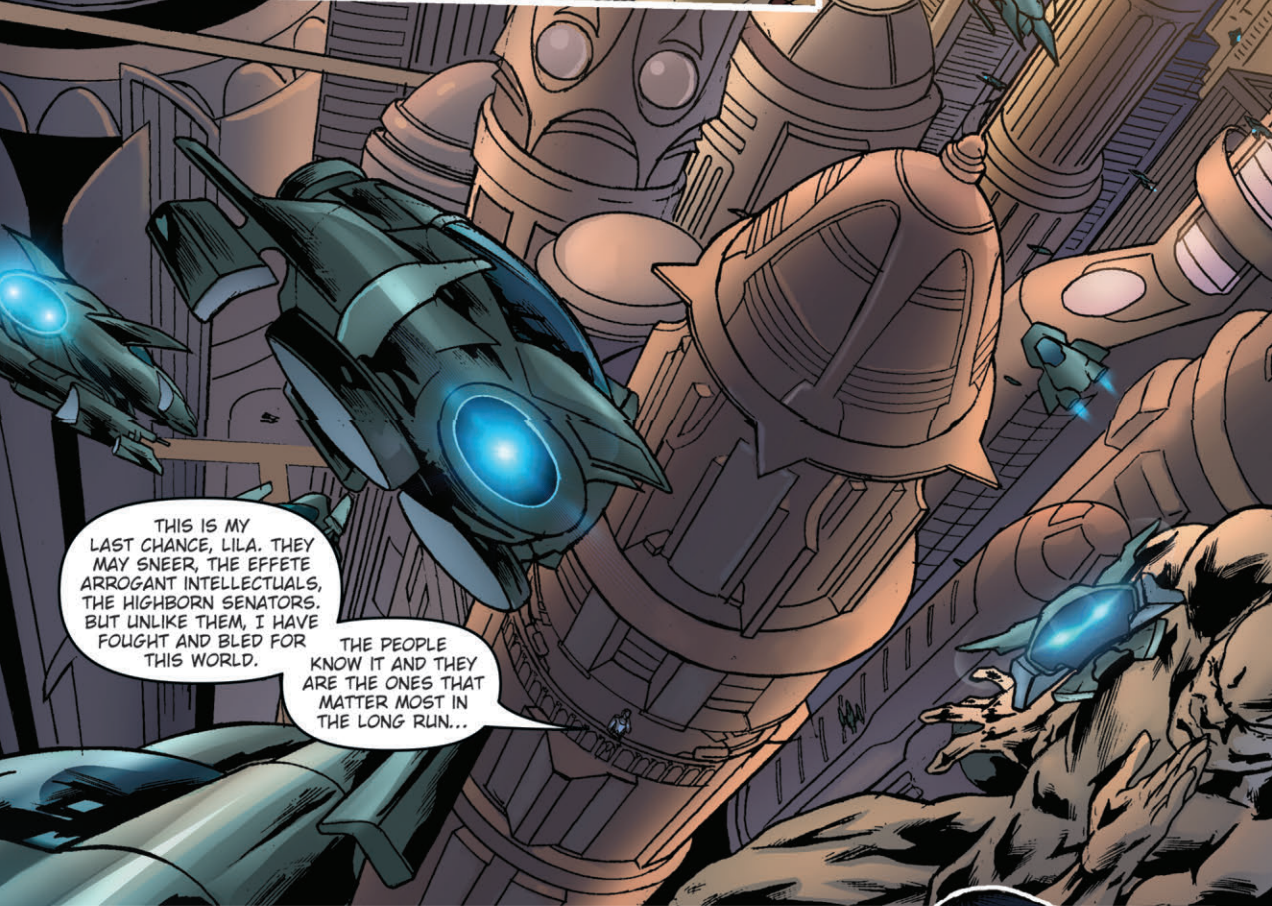
BUT THE STAIN
OF THE SHAME
ENDURES, IF ONLY
BY ASSOCIATION.



CERAPH AND I
CAME UP FROM THE
ACADEMY TOGETHER.
HE WAS MY FIRST
OFFICER... MY
FRIEND.

HE STOOD
NEXT TO ME AS
MY HONORED
BROTHER AT OUR
BETROTHAL,
LILA...

YET I DID
NOT ONCE SEE
HIS RADICALISM...
HIS TREACHERY.



THIS IS MY
LAST CHANCE, LILA. THEY
MAY SNEER, THE EFFETE
ARROGANT INTELLECTUALS,
THE HIGHBORN SENATORS.
BUT UNLIKE THEM, I HAVE
FOUGHT AND BLED FOR
THIS WORLD.

THE PEOPLE
KNOW IT AND THEY
ARE THE ONES THAT
MATTER MOST IN
THE LONG RUN...



THE PEOPLE
OF ROMULUS ARE
BEHIND ME.

THEN HAVE
A CARE MY LOVE...

"THAT THEY DO NOT
STAB YOU IN THE BACK."

I LIVE TO
SERVE YOU, THE
PEOPLE OF
ROMULUS...

PAH!
JINGOISTIC,
HOMESPIN CLAPTRAP!
WHAT IDIOT DOES HE
HAVE WRITING HIS
SPEECHES?

I BELIEVE,
PRAETOR, THAT THE
COMMANDER INSISTS
ON WRITING THEM
HIMSELF.

REALLY?
I NEVER
KNEW A MILITARY
MAN WHO COULD
STRING MORE THAN
TWO SENTENCES
TOGETHER... I
STILL DON'T!

WITH RESPECT, PRAETOR,
I DON'T FEEL COMMANDER
ACASTUS SHOULD BE
UNDERESTIMATED.

HE EARNED HIS
PLACE IN THE SENATE
BY CAMPAIGNING AND
WINNING THE VOTES OF THE
MOST DISENFRANCHISED AND
DANGEROUS DISTRICTS IN
THE PROVINCES.

SO, HE
GRUBS FOR VOTES
AMONGST THE
DETTRITUS, WHAT IS
THIS TO ME?

THERE ARE MANY
OF THEM, PRAETOR... A
GOOD MANY, ALL VOTERS,
AND ACASTUS' APPEAL
APPEARS TO BE
GROWING.

HE HAS MORE
THAN THEIR VOTES,
HE HAS THEIR
RESPECT—A RARE
COMMODITY FOR
ANY POLITICIAN.

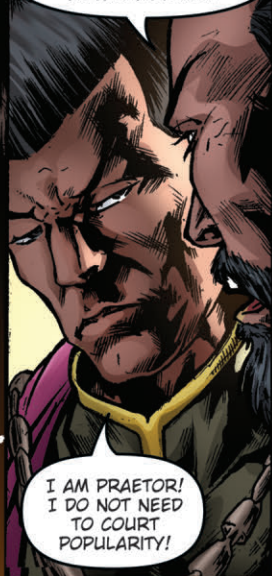


HE IS A
POPULIST TO
BE SURE, BUT HE HAS
A RESPECTED MILITARY
RECORD TO BACK
IT UP.

AFTER ALL,
EVERYONE LOVES
A HERO.

INDEED? EVEN ONE
WHOSE CLOSE FRIEND
WAS A TRAITOR AND
SEDITIONIST?

HE WAS CLEARED
OF ALL CHARGES.
BESIDES, AN ASSOCIATION
WITH COMMANDER
ACASTUS COULD BE...
ADVANTAGEOUS.



I AM PRAETOR!
I DO NOT NEED
TO COURT
POPULARITY!



BUT THERE
ARE THOSE IN
THE SENATE
WHO DO.

THOSE
WHO HAVE
OFTEN OPPOSED
YOU AND WHO SEE
ACASTUS' WORTH
AND WILL SEEK TO
MONOPOLISE IT FOR
THEMSELVES.



YOU ARE EVER THE
TACTICIAN, ADMIRAL. WHY
IS IT YOU HAVE NEVER
CHOSEN A CAREER IN
POLITICS?

I PREFER MY
ENEMIES IN FRONT
OF ME, WHERE I CAN
SEE THEM, SIRE.



A WISE
CHOICE.



"ONE WONDERS IF COMMANDER ACASTUS EVER CONSIDERED IT?"



YOU WISHED TO SEE ME, PRAETOR?

YES, COMMANDER... OR SHOULD I SAY... SENATOR ACASTUS? I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE BEEN MAKING QUITE A NAME FOR YOURSELF ALREADY.

IT IS AN HONOR TO SERVE ROMULUS... AND YOURSELF.

OF COURSE IT IS. NOW, I BELIEVE YOUR MILITARY COMMAND ENDS IN TWO DAY'S TIME?

YES, PRAETOR.



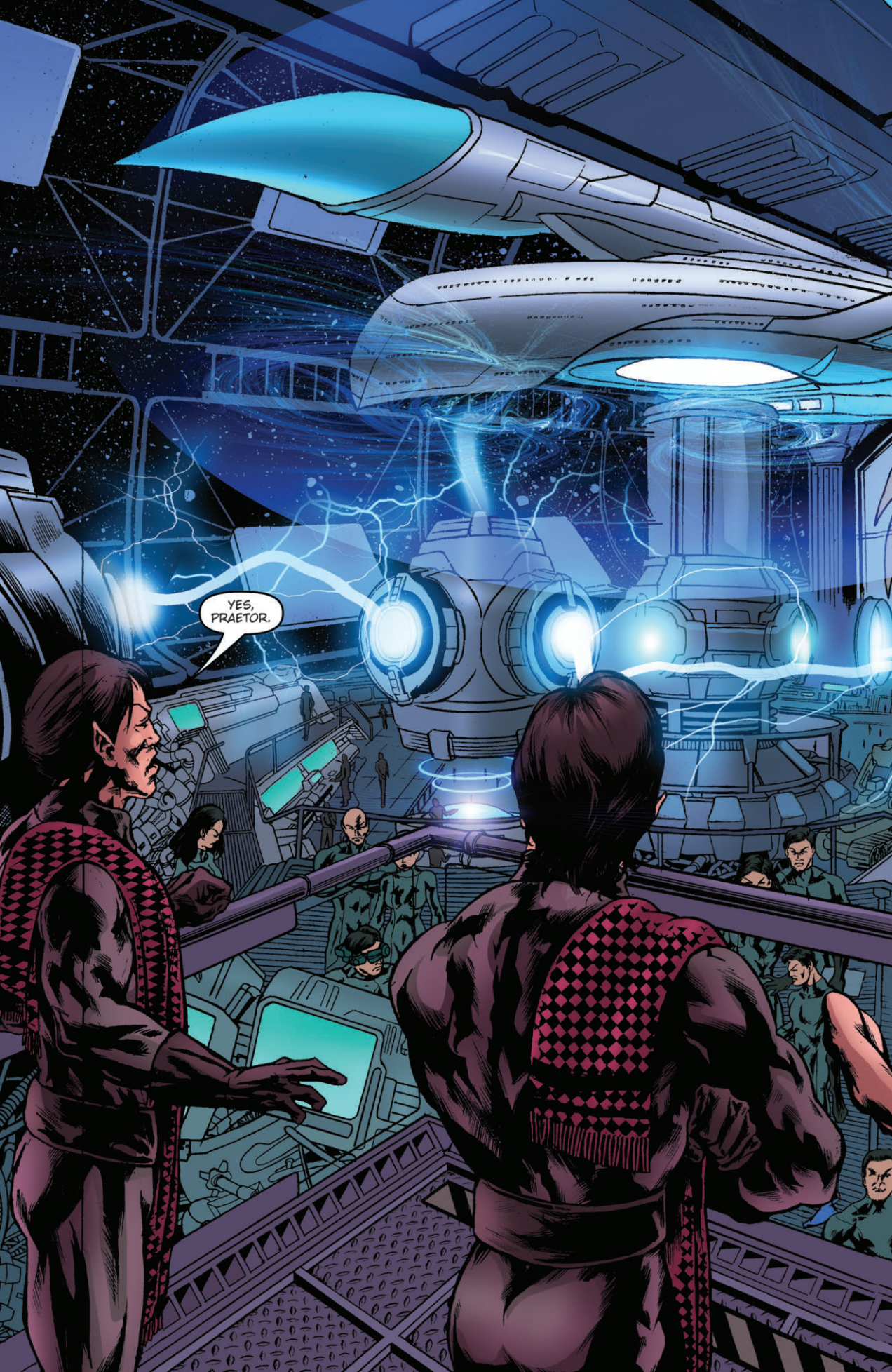
THEN I HAVE A GIFT FOR YOU.

A FITTING CAPSTONE TO YOUR MILITARY CAREER.



THE LAST OF THE DREADNAUGHTS.

YOU *BEGAN* YOUR CAREER ON ONE OF THESE, I BELIEVE?



YES,
PRAETOR.



WE ARE
RETIRED THE
LINE—THIS IS
THE FINAL
SHIP.

I FEEL IT WOULD
GIVE THE OCCASION A
SENSE OF SYMMETRY IF YOU
WERE TO COMMAND HER
INAUGURAL FLIGHT.

INDULGE US
WITH A TRAINING
EXERCISE.

I WOULD
BE HONORED,
PRAETOR.

IT IS MY HUMBLE
WAY OF MAKING UP
FOR THE SHORT SHRIFT
YOU HAVE BEEN SHOWN
OVER THE YEARS.

IT IS NO EASY DECISION
TO MAKE, TO STEP OFF
THE BRIDGE AND ONTO
THE SENATE FLOOR.

I KNOW
THERE ARE
THOSE WHO
DISPARAGE YOUR
SEEMING LACK OF
EXPERIENCE BUT
PAY THEM NO
MIND.



"FOR YOU HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES NOW, COMMANDER."

WHEN WE REACH THE TESTING ZONE AND COME OUT OF WARP, I WANT SHIELDS RAISED AND WEAPONS ON-LINE IMMEDIATELY!

THIS MAY ONLY BE A SHAKE DOWN FOR US, BUT IT'S LIFE-OR-DEATH FOR OUR FOE, AND LIKE ANY DESPERATE CREATURE, SHE CAN BE MOST SAVAGE AND UNPREDICTABLE WHEN CORNERED.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT, SIR?

A SHIP CREWED BY CRIMINALS, DISSIDENTS, AND ENEMIES OF ROMULUS, GIVEN THE CHANCE TO DIE FIGHTING INSTEAD OF LIKE CATTLE!

AND WHO KNOWS, IF THEY GET THE BETTER OF US, THEY MAY WIN THEIR FREEDOM!

HAS IT EVER HAPPENED?

NOT ON MY WATCH!

STAND BY TO DROP OUT OF WARP. SHIELDS AND WEAPONS READY.





SHIELDS ARE HOLDING!

FIRE AFT BATTERIES, FULL SPREAD AND BRING US ABOUT!

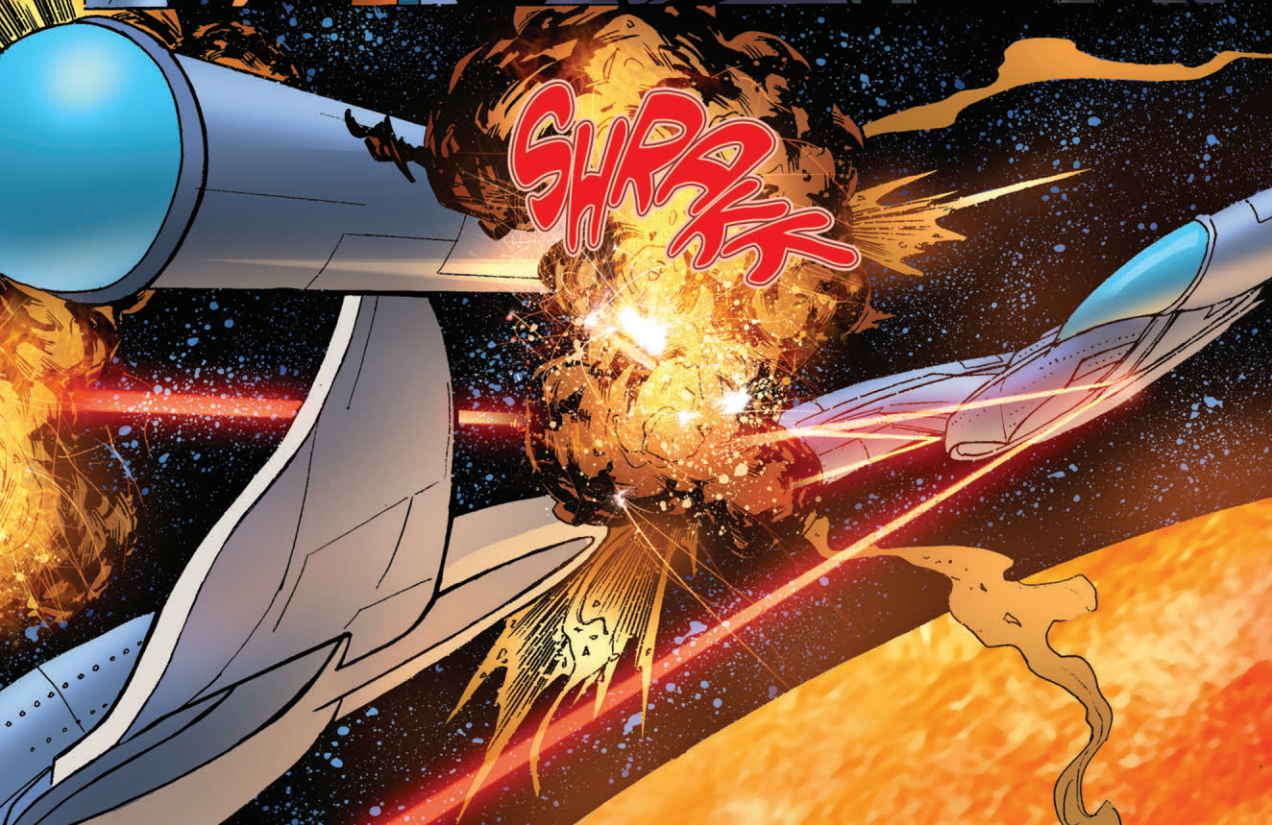


THEY HAVE MINIMAL SHIELDS REMAINING AND SUSTAINED HEAVY DAMAGE.

SIR, AT THAT DISTANCE FROM THE STAR, AND WITH NEGLIGIBLE SHIELDING, THEY HAVE RECEIVED A LETHAL DOSE OF RADIATION.

YET THEIR CAPTAIN SHOWS NO SMALL DEGREE OF SKILL.







SIR,
WE'RE BEING
HAILED.

ON
SCREEN.

UHH...
FIGHTING MEN OF
ROMULUS, I AM... WAS
SUB-COMMANDER CERAPH OF
THE IMPERIAL FLEET. LOOK
UPON ME... UPON US, AND
SEE YOURSELVES...

LOYAL SERVANTS
OF THE EMPIRE
TURNED ENEMIES
BECAUSE WE DARED TO
BELIEVE SOMETHING
OTHER THAN THE LIES
WE HAD BEEN
TOLD.



SPLITTING
SEDITION 'TIL THE
LAST, EH, CERAPH!

ACASTUS? IS
THAT YOU?

IT IS. I'D LONG
THOUGHT YOU DEAD
BUT IT SEEMS YOU
ARE A GIFT FROM
THE PRAETOR!

I'D HEARD
YOU'D GONE UP IN
THE WORLD. SO, WHAT
IS THIS? A TEST OF
YOUR LOYALTY? OR A
CHANCE TO EXERCISE
YOUR VENGEANCE?





BOTH.

FINISH
THEM.

COMMANDER...



FINALLY,
THE CIRCLE IS
CLOSED. NOW IT
IS TIME FOR ME
TO MOVE ON.

AH, SIR. JUST
BEFORE WE FIRED,
SENSORS DETECTED
SOMETHING... A
TRACE... A GHOST
IMAGE.



OF WHAT?

I'M NOT
CERTAIN, SIR,
BUT IT APPEARED
TO BE A SHIP...

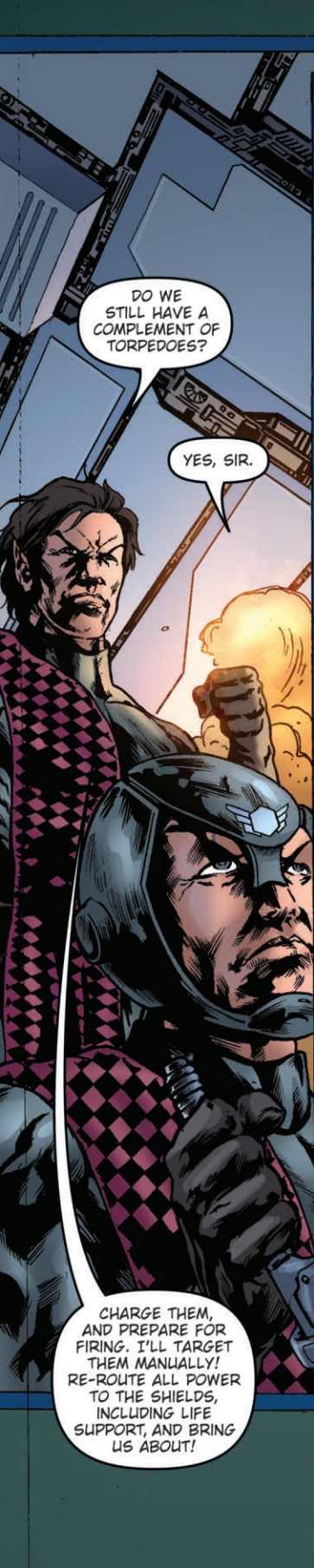


IT... IT'S
GONE! WHAT
WAS IT?

IT'S ONE
OF OURS. THIS
ISN'T OUR TEST
RUN...

"IT'S THEIRS!"

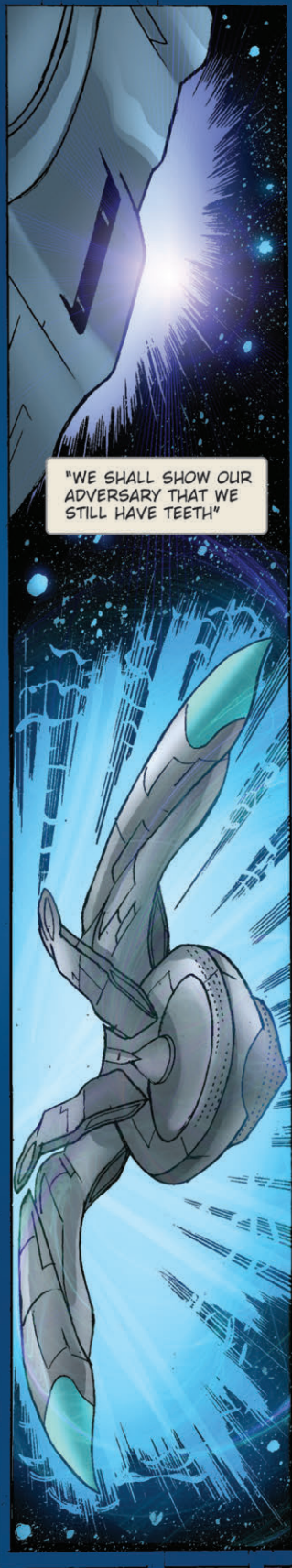
GAZAKK



DO WE STILL HAVE A COMPLEMENT OF TORPEDOES?

YES, SIR.

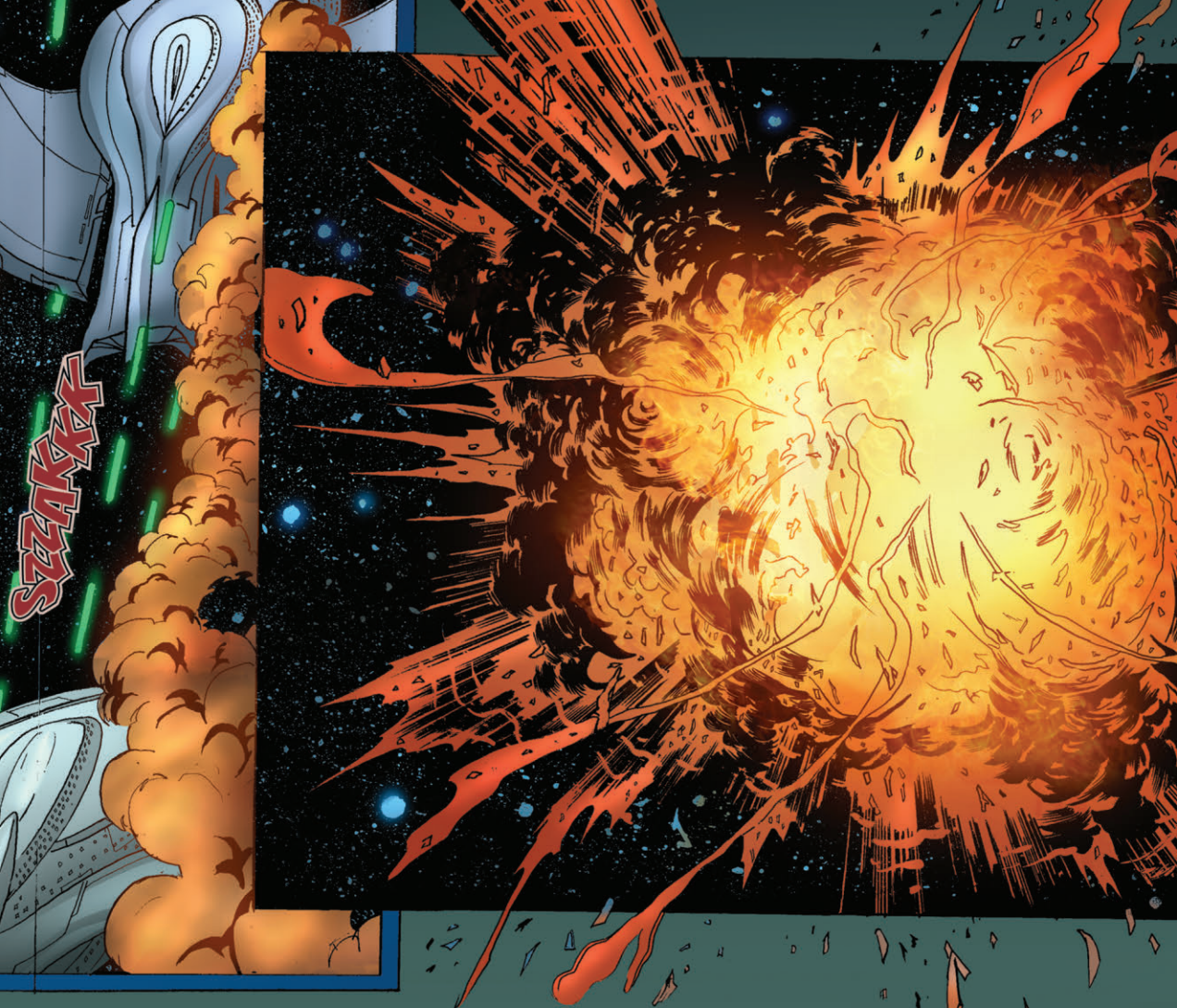
CHARGE THEM, AND PREPARE FOR FIRING. I'LL TARGET THEM MANUALLY! RE-ROUTE ALL POWER TO THE SHIELDS, INCLUDING LIFE SUPPORT, AND BRING US ABOUT!



"WE SHALL SHOW OUR ADVERSARY THAT WE STILL HAVE TEETH"



SET COURSE FOR ROMULUS. MAXIMUM WARP.



"GOOD WORK, ADMIRAL, YOUR REPORT WAS MOST... ENLIGHTENING."

FROM NOW ON, WE SHALL CONCENTRATE ALL OUR RESOURCES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THESE *GHOST SHIPS* AND THEIR DISRUPTION WEAPONS.

THE DAY OF THE DREADNAUGHT HAS PASSED.

AND WHAT OF COMMANDER ACASTUS?

HE SOUGHT RECOGNITION FOR HIS SERVICE AND NOW HE HAS IT.

HE DIED, A HERO TO THE LAST, COMBATING THE ENEMIES OF THE EMPIRE.

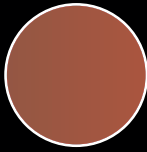
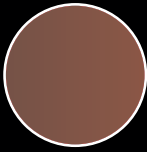
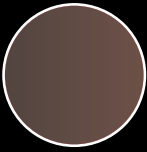
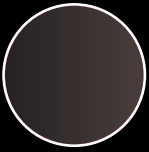
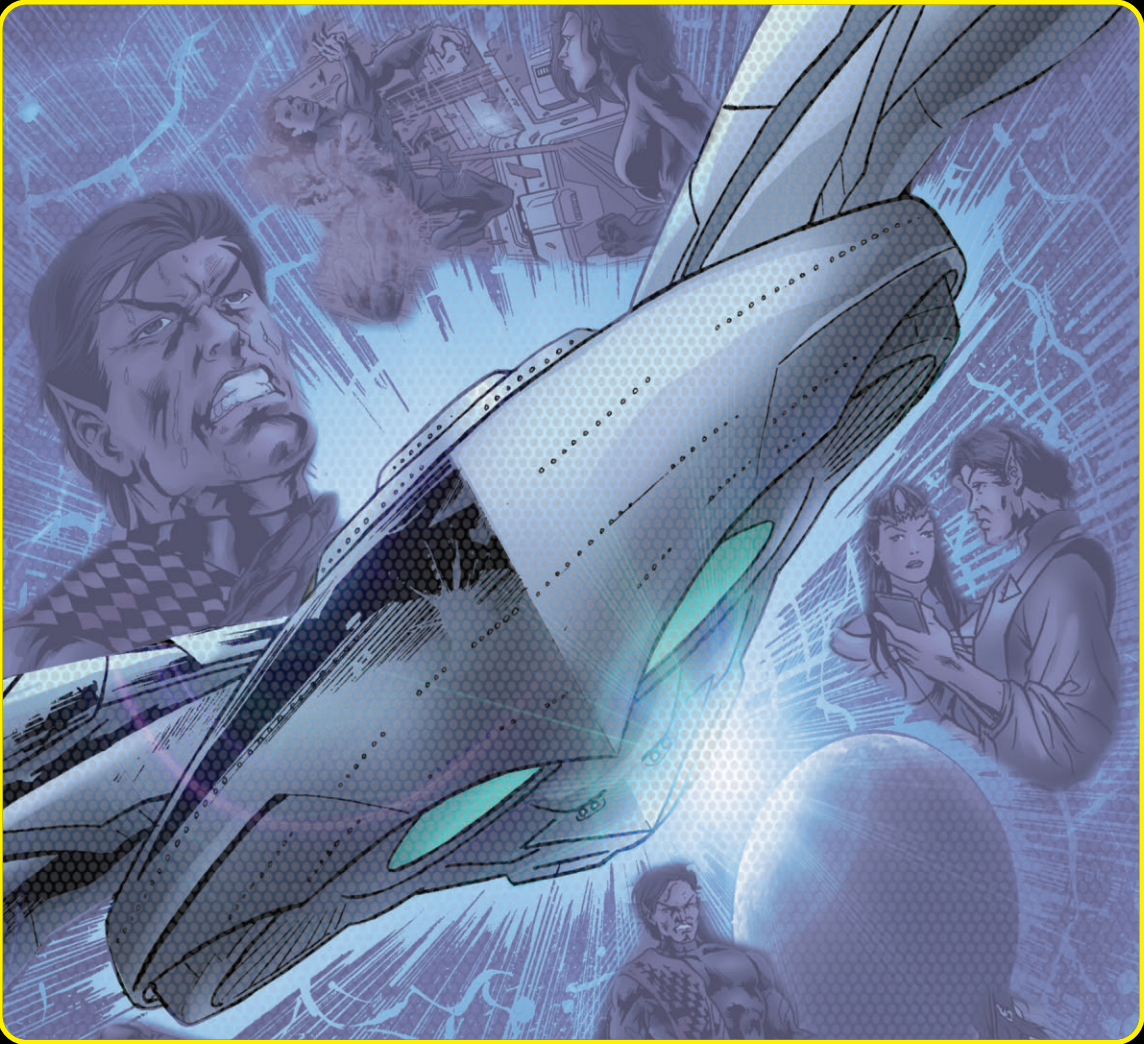
MEANWHILE, I HAVE REMOVED A POSSIBLE ALLY TO MY POLITICAL RIVALS AND ASSOCIATED MYSELF WITH THE GOLDEN MEMORY OF A HERO OF ROMULUS.

TELL ME, ADMIRAL, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE BEST THING IS ABOUT A DEAD HERO?

NO, SIR.

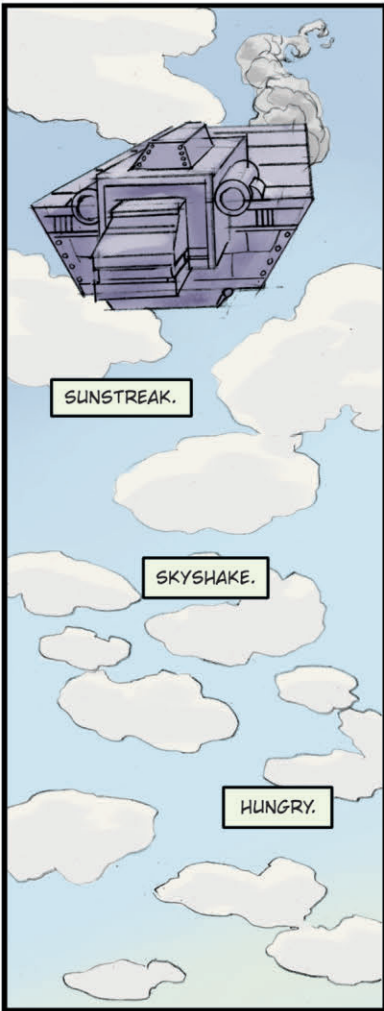
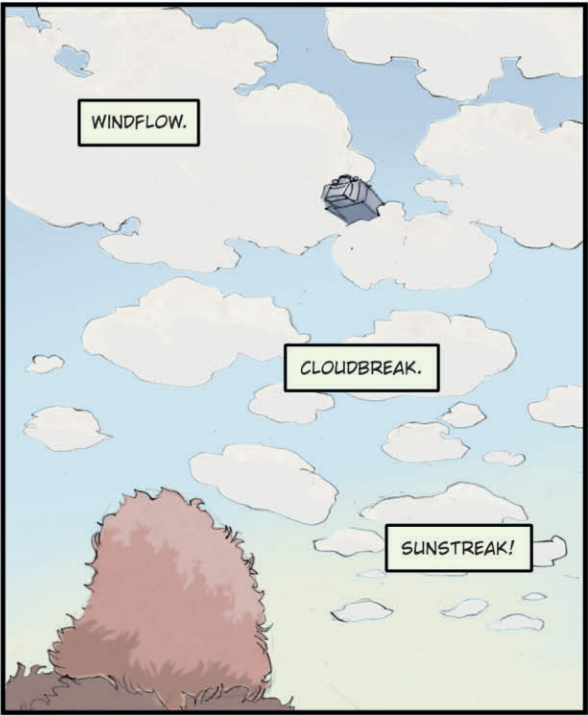
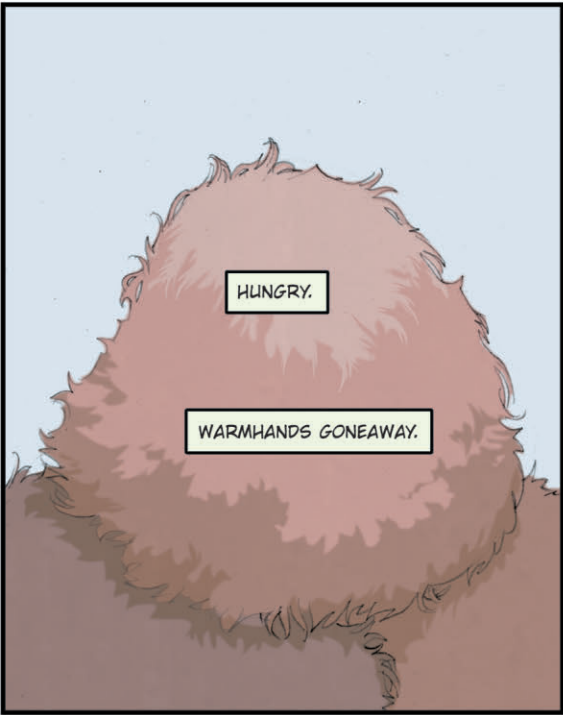
"THEY CAN NEVER LIVE TO DISAPPOINT YOU."

THE END.





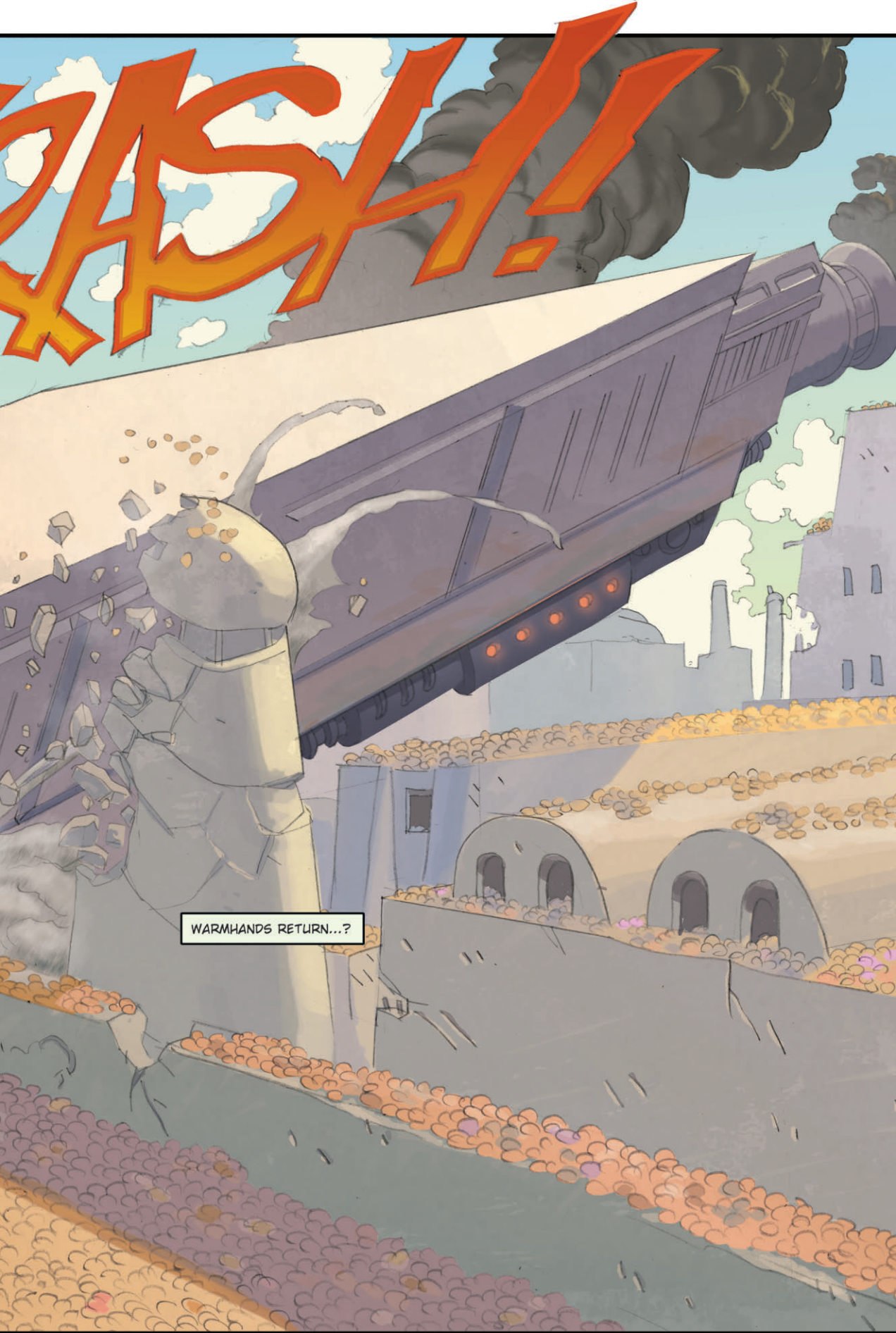
TRIBBLES



SERJILLA IV
THE OUTER GALACTIC RIM
STARDATE 1422.3

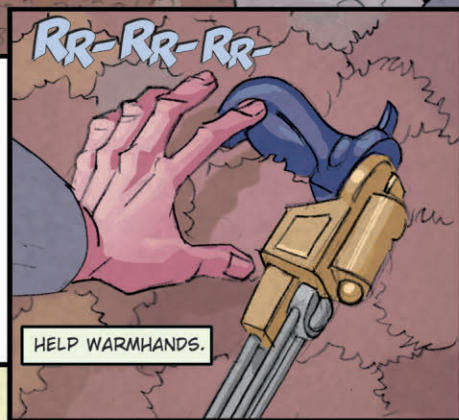
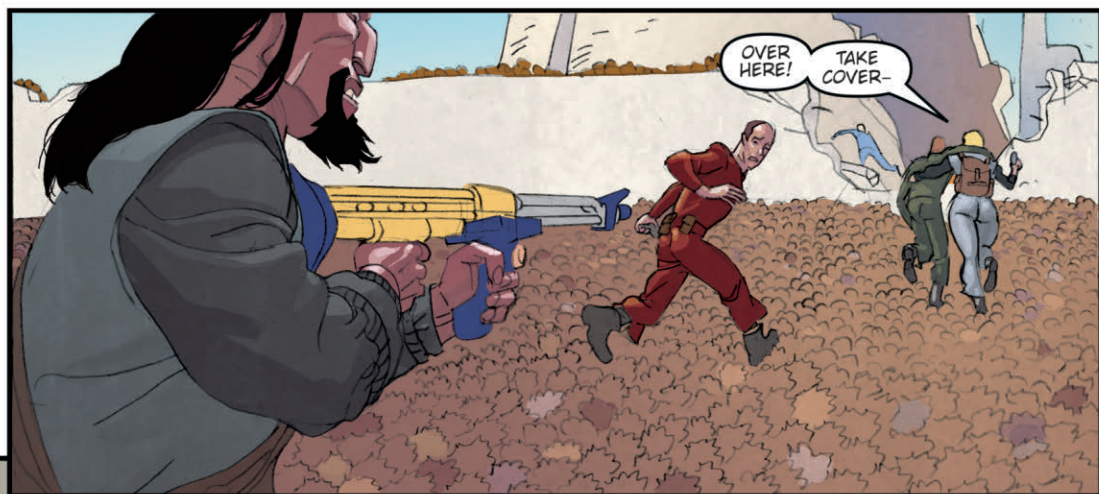
KAKA



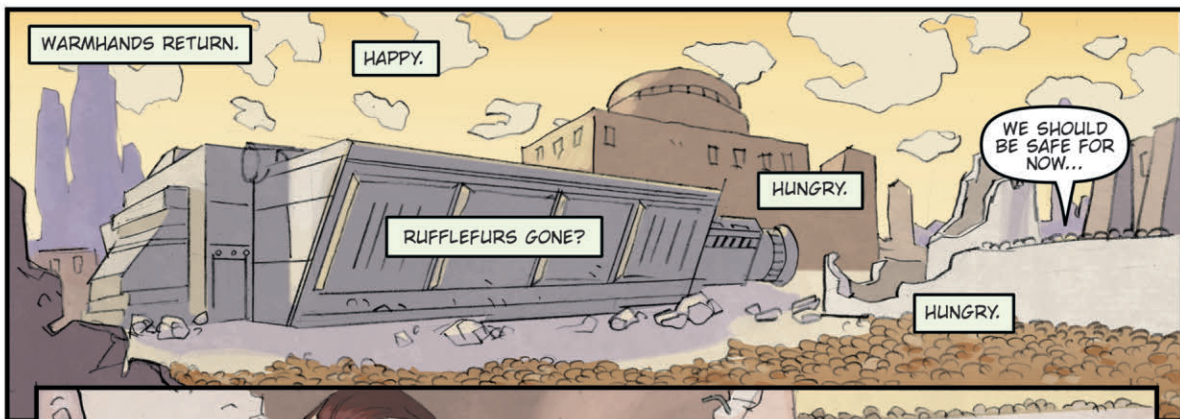


WARMHANDS RETURN...?









WARMHANDS RETURN.

HAPPY.

HUNGRY.

RUFFLEFURS GONE?

WE SHOULD
BE SAFE FOR
NOW...

HUNGRY.



...BUT WE'VE
GOT TO RE-TAKE
THAT SHIP.

YOU AIN'T KIDDIN',
CARTER. I ALREADY OWE
THE COMPANY THOUSANDS
OF CREDITS.

WE LOSE THAT
DILITHIUM SHIPMENT, I'LL
BE WORKIN' FOR 'EM THE
REST OF MY LIFE.



YOU KNEW THIS
WAS A HAZARDOUS
JOB WHEN YOU TOOK
IT, GEARY.

THAT'S WHY IT
PAYS SO WELL.

YEAH,
BUT-



THIS IS A
HAZARDOUS ROUTE FOR
A REASON, GUYS. THE
KLINGON BORDER IS LESS
THAN FIVE PARSECS
FROM HERE.

AND IN CASE YOU
HAVEN'T BEEN LISTENING
TO THE STARFLEET
CHANNELS-THEY'RE
GEARIN' UP FOR A WAR.



I DIDN'T SIGN
UP FOR NO
WAR-

GOOD THING,
GEARY.

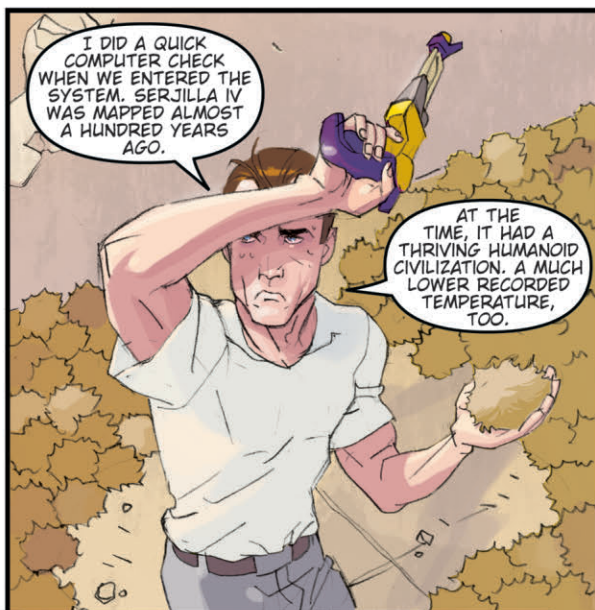
THESE LITTLE
GUYS FOUGHT BETTER
AGAINST THE KLINGONS
THAN YOU DID.



WHAT ARE THESE FUZZY THINGS, ANYWAY?

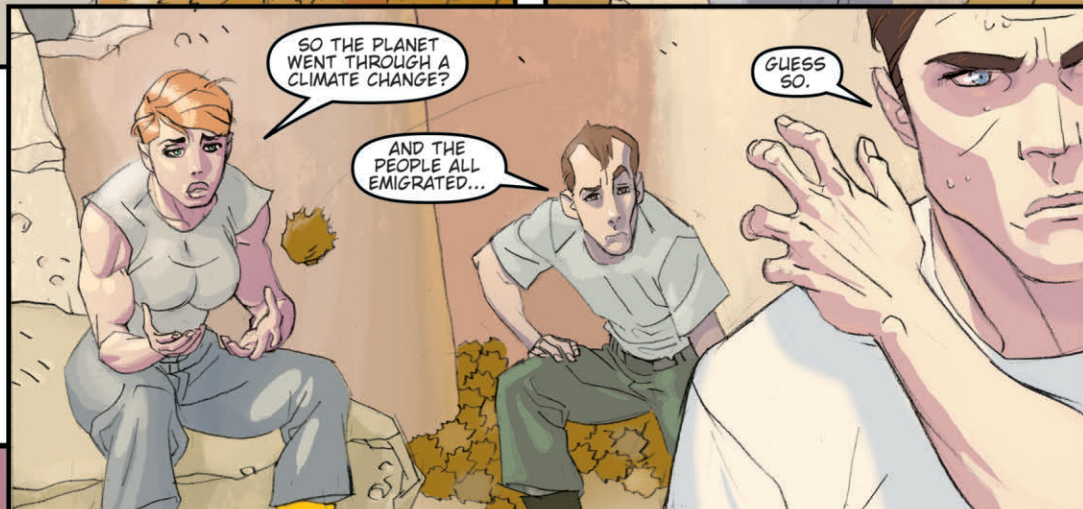
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE-

I DON'T KNOW, TINK. THEY WEREN'T ON THE LAST PLANETARY SURVEY.



I DID A QUICK COMPUTER CHECK WHEN WE ENTERED THE SYSTEM. SERJILLA IV WAS MAPPED ALMOST A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

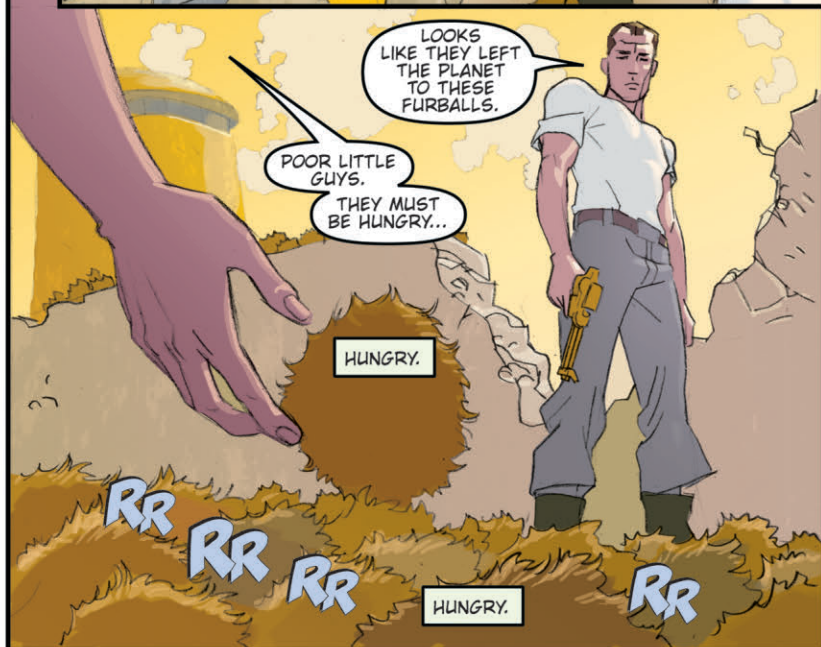
AT THE TIME, IT HAD A THRIVING HUMANOID CIVILIZATION. A MUCH LOWER RECORDED TEMPERATURE, TOO.



SO THE PLANET WENT THROUGH A CLIMATE CHANGE?

AND THE PEOPLE ALL EMIGRATED...

GUESS SO.



LOOKS LIKE THEY LEFT THE PLANET TO THESE FURBALLS.

POOR LITTLE GUYS. THEY MUST BE HUNGRY...

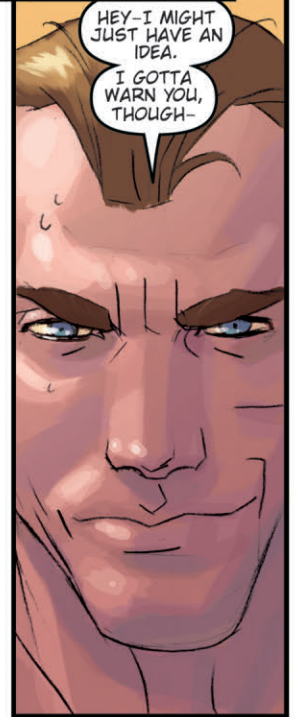
HUNGRY.

HUNGRY.



GREAT. SO THEY'RE FRIENDLY AND CUTE AND THEY SAVED OUR ASSES.

THAT DON'T GET US OUR CARGO BACK.







KASSAR-SHIP'S STATUS?

SENSORS AND WEAPONS STILL DOWN, ENGINES DAMAGED BUT REPARABLE. A FEW HOURS' WORK.

SIR-WHILE THE MEN SEE TO THAT DUTY-



-I WOULD BE HONORED TO HUNT DOWN THE HUMANS AT YOUR SIDE.

MM.



NO. I THINK-

SIR?



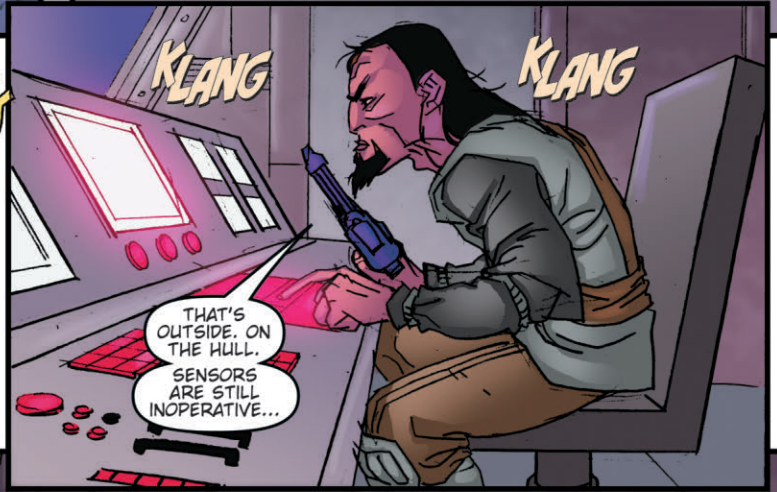
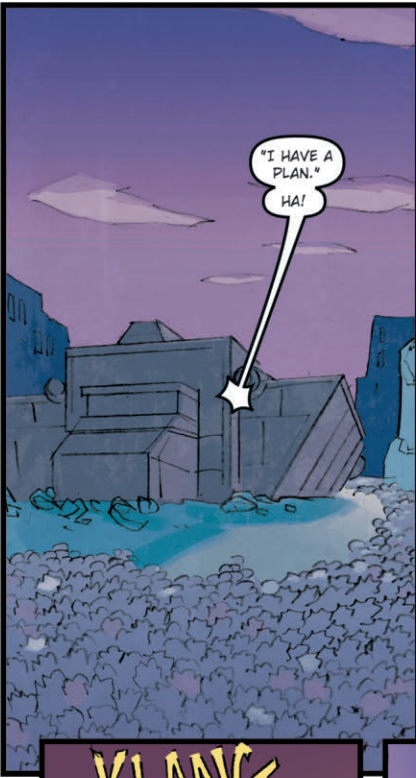
WITH RESPECT, LIEUTENANT: SECTION ALPHA, SUBSECTION OMEGA OF ENEMY CONTACT GUIDELINES CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE EXTERMINATION FOLLOWING COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES.

NO EXCEPTIONS.



TO ACT OTHERWISE WOULD BRING DISHONOR TO THIS BAND OF-











I QUITE AGREE,
KASSAR.
BEGIN PRELAUNCH
COUNTDOWN.

YES
SIR!

SIR...



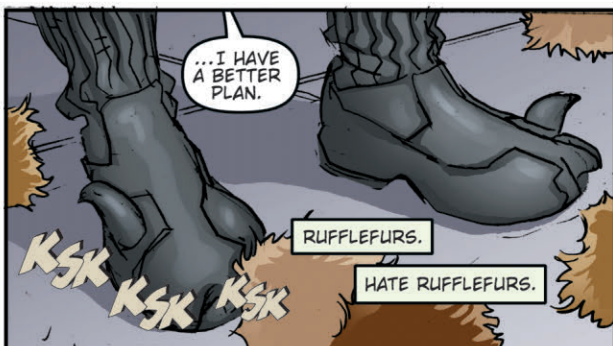
"...ARE WE JUST
GOING TO LEAVE
THE HUMANS HERE?"

RUFFLEFURS?

RUFFLEFURS
GOWAY?



NO,
KOLLOW. AS I SAID
BEFORE...



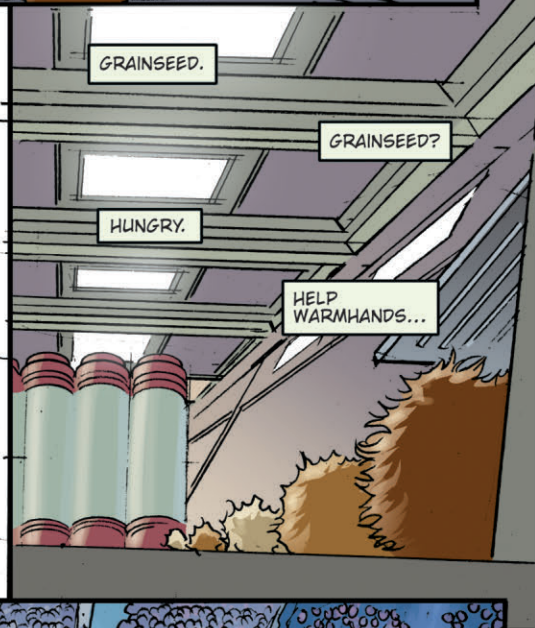
...I HAVE
A BETTER
PLAN.

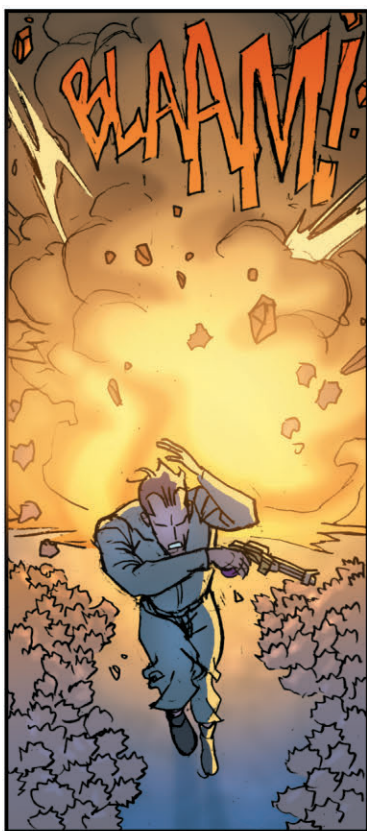
RUFFLEFURS.

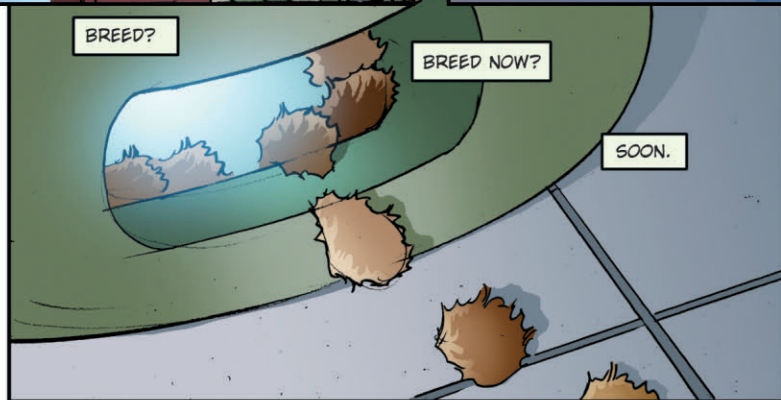
HATE RUFFLEFURS.

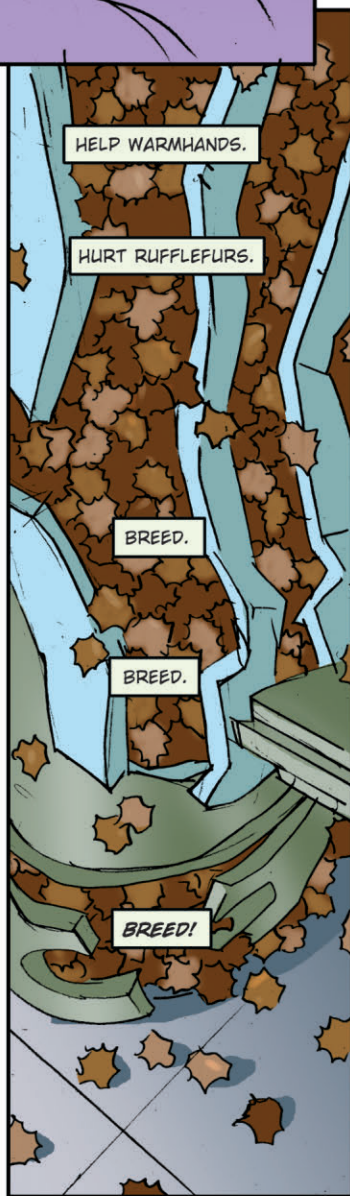


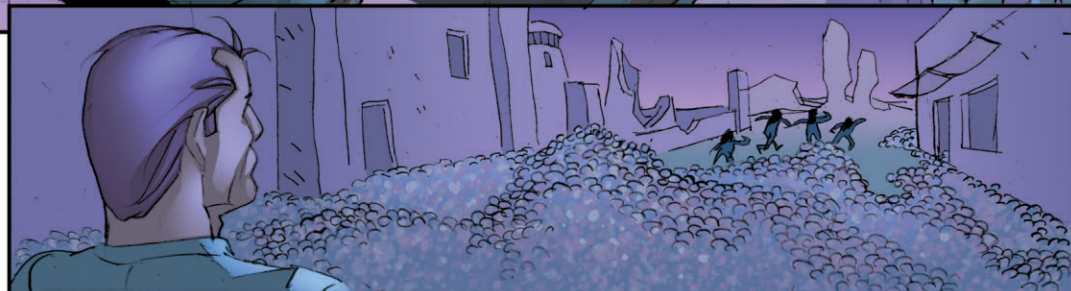
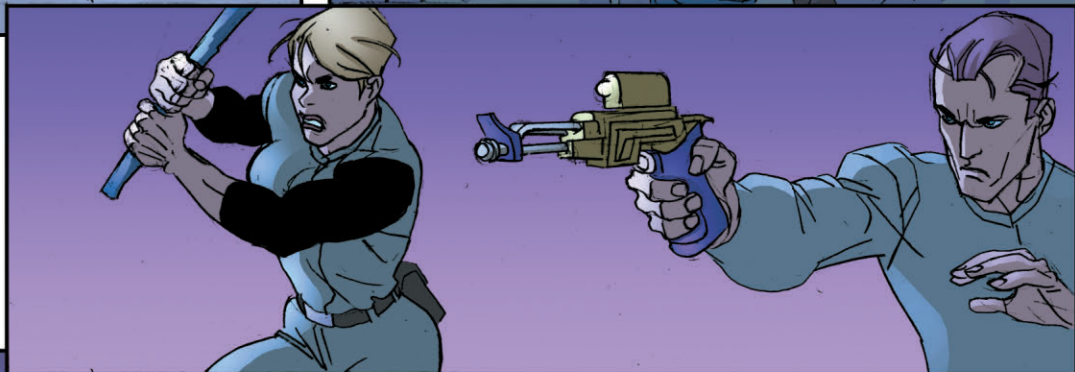
UH-OH...

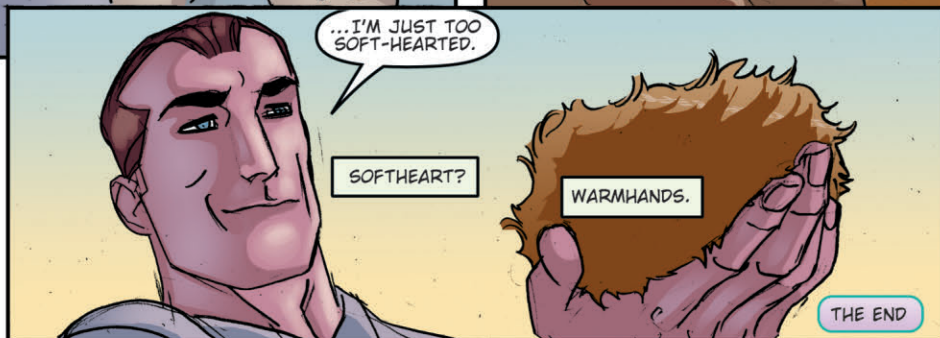
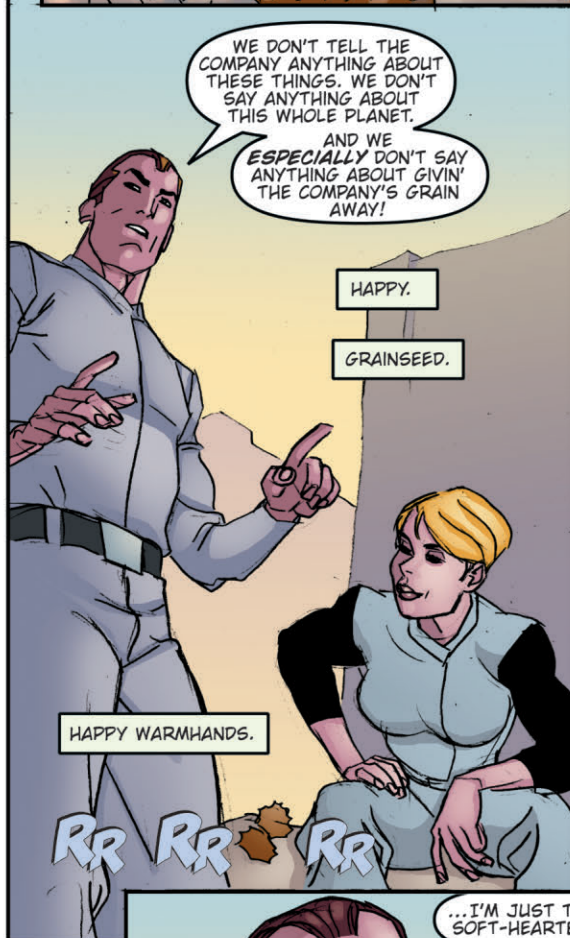
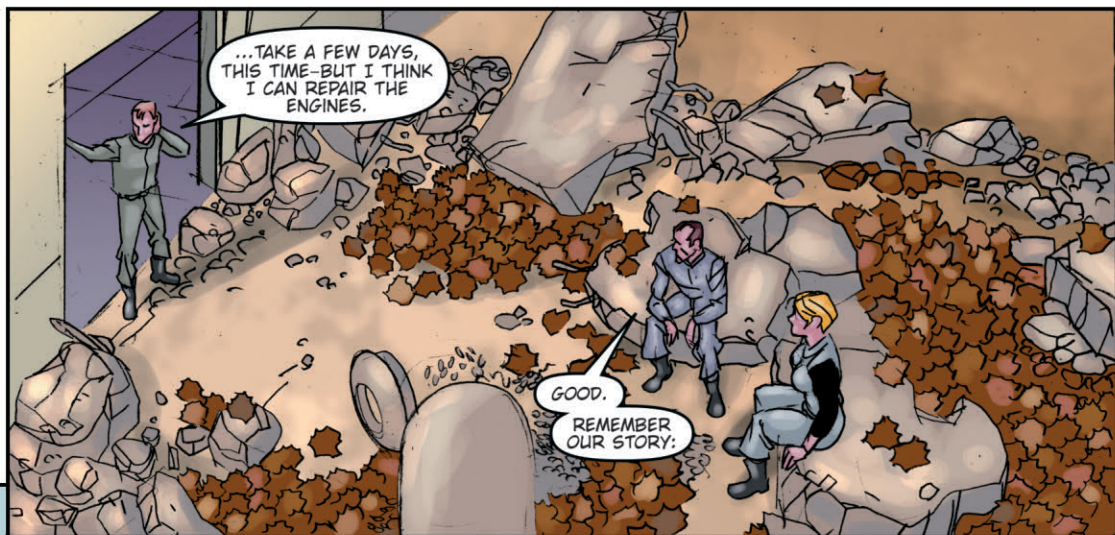


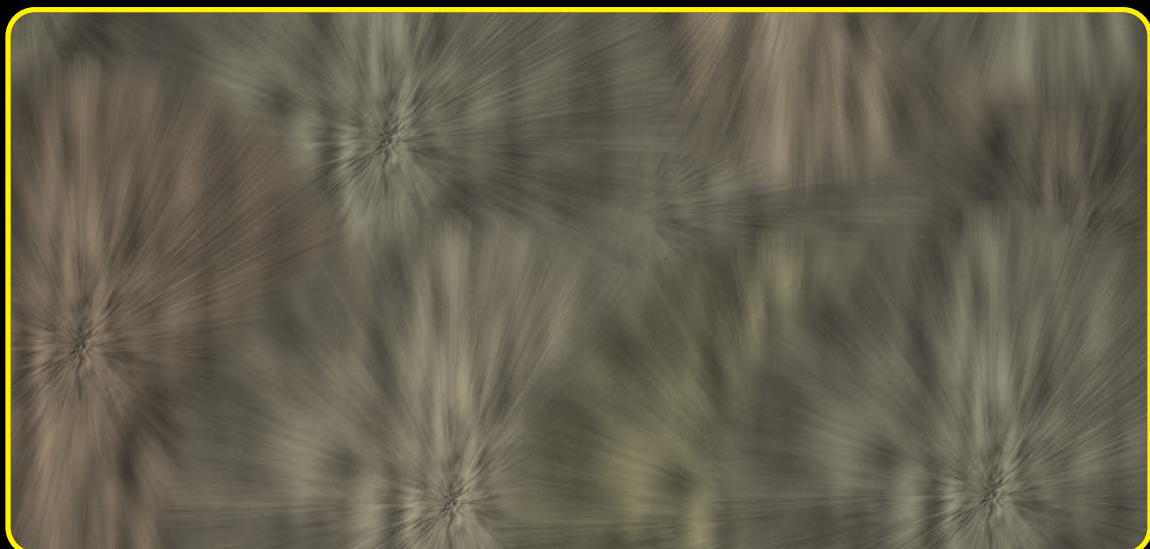
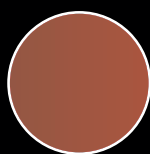
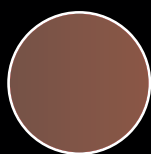
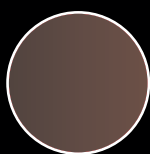
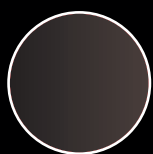






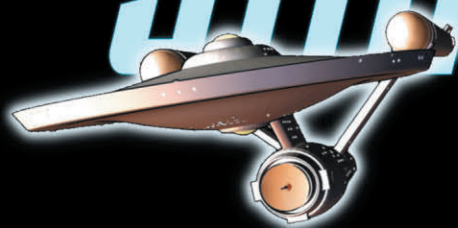


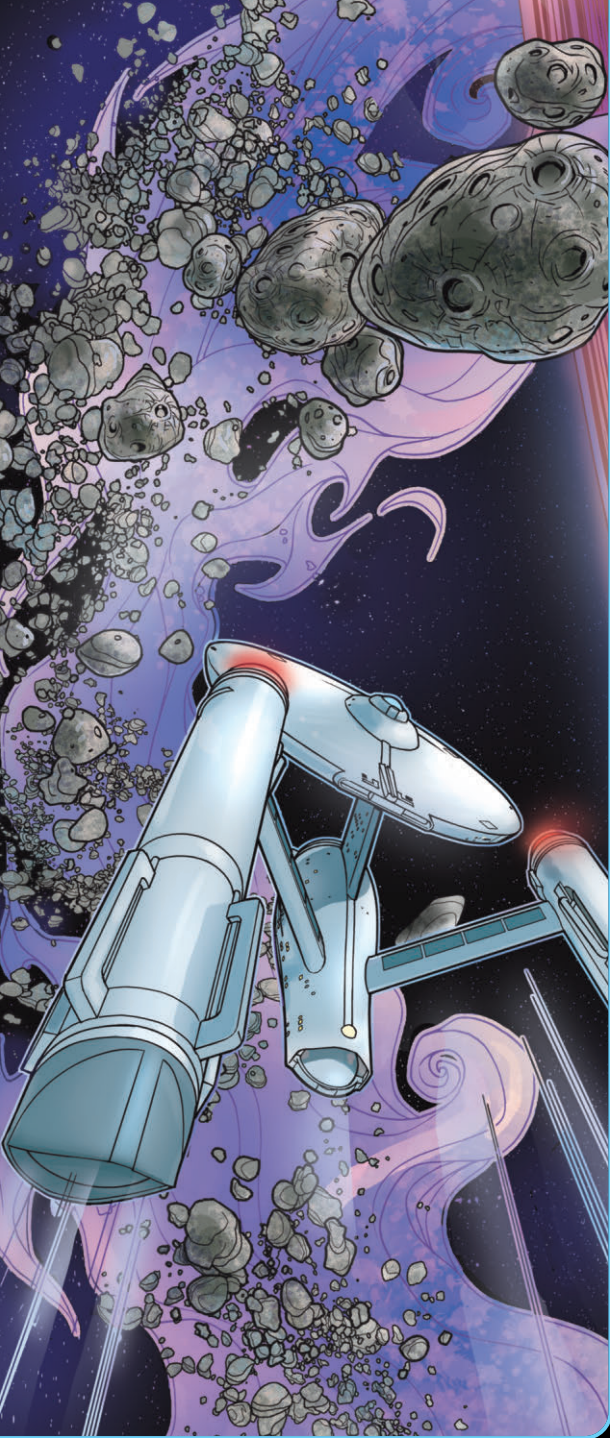




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