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ATARI FORCE™

ATARI FORCE

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

ATARI FORCE™

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

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

TWELVE?

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

YOU KNOW
WHAT THEY
SAY--



GALAXIAN

"LUCKY THIRTEEN?"

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

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

BZAM

BZAAM

AND I
THINK IT
WANTS US
FOR
DINNER!





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

TROUBLE,
LI SAN!

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

I'LL BREAK
OUT THE LASER
CANNON--!

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

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

NOBLE
SENTIMENTS,
DOCTOR ORION...

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





SINGH! HUKKA! GET BACK TO THE SHIP!

PREPARE FOR EMERGENCY LIFT-OFF!

AYE-AYE, COMMANDER!

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

HUKKA-HUKKA! RUUN!

CLOSER THAN YOU THINK, COMMANDER...!

HUKKA! SEENGH-?

BLAST!

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

IT'S GOING TO BE CLOSE--!

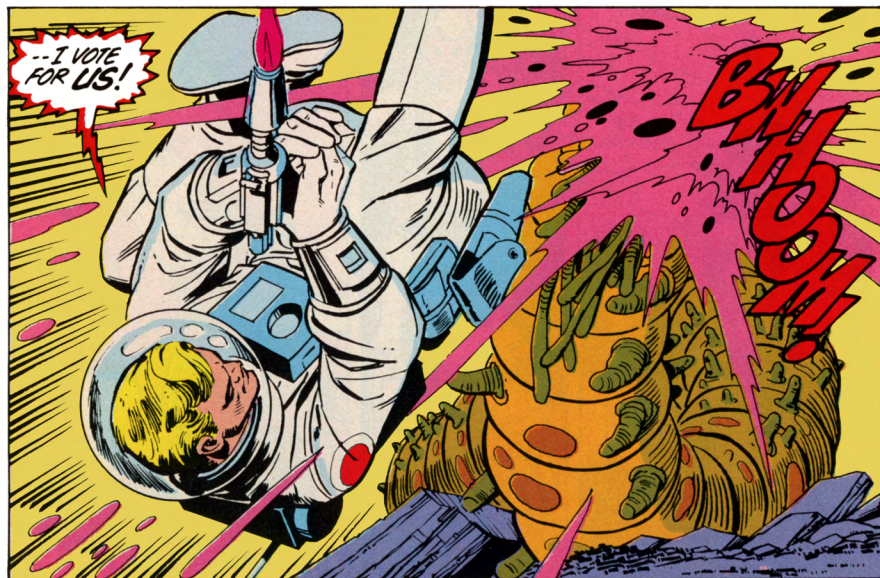
JET-PACK MISFIRING! I'M LOSING MY BALANCE--

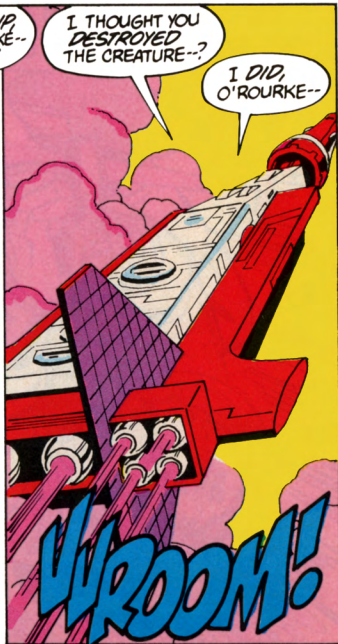
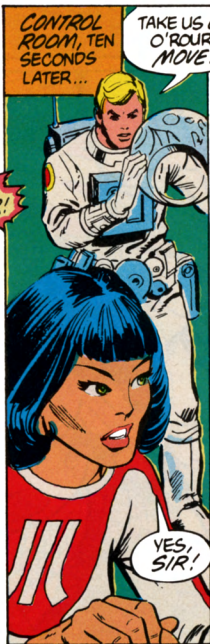
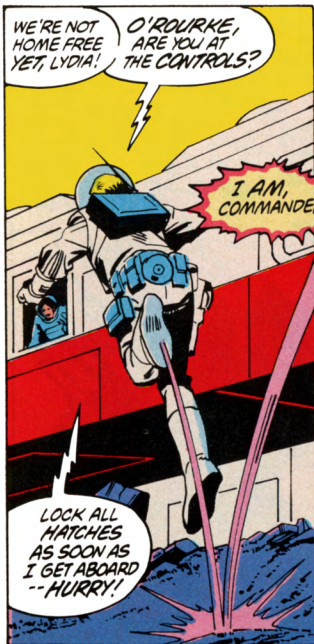
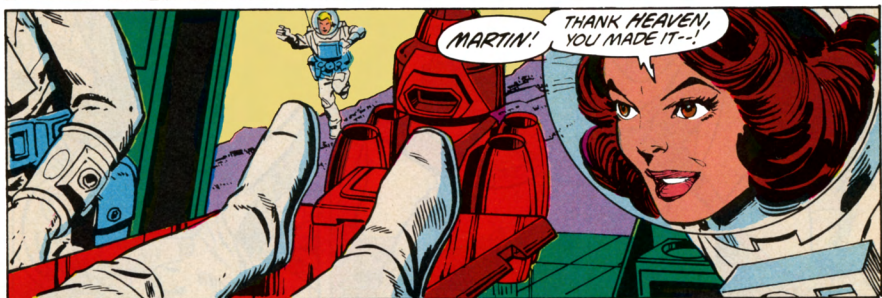
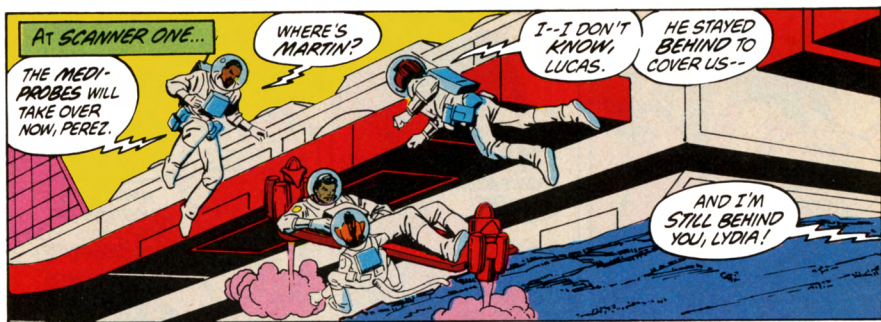
-- GOING TO-- UNNH!

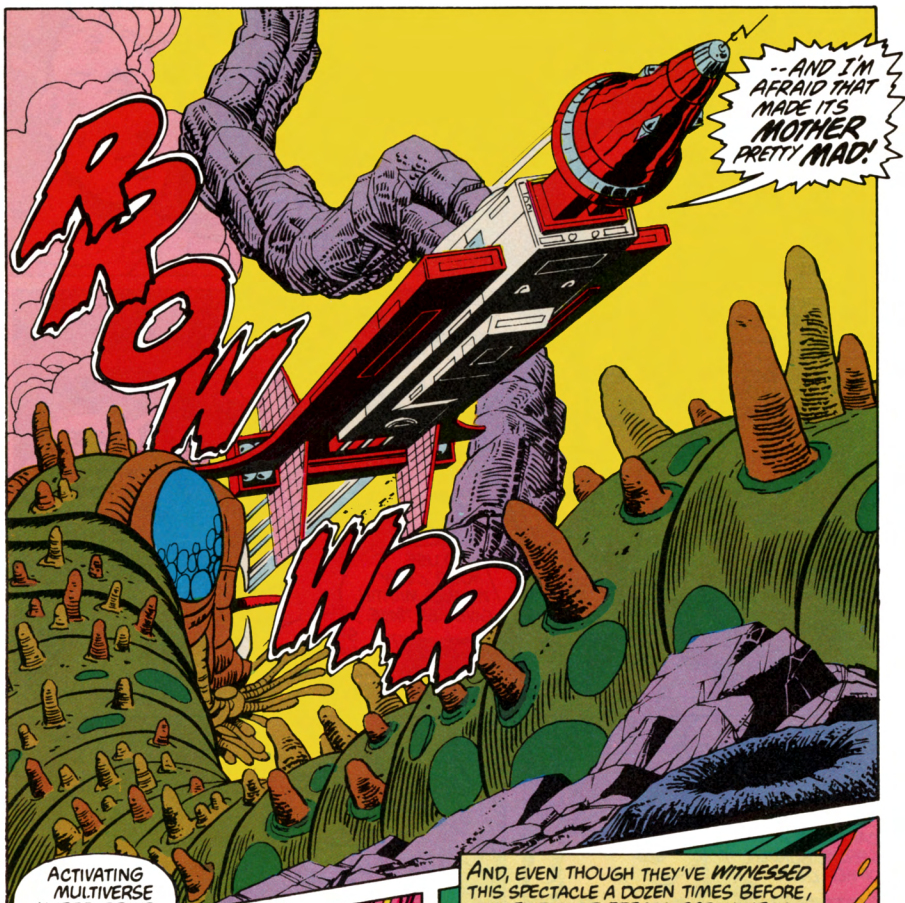
SINGH IS DOWN!

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









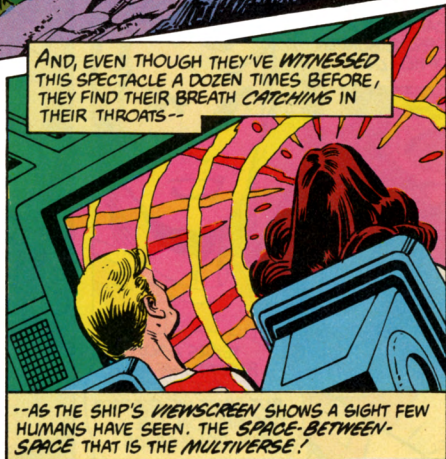
ACTIVATING
MULTIVERSE
HYPER-DRIVE,
COMMANDER!

WE'RE
ON OUR
WAY!

GOOD
WORK,
O'ROURKE!

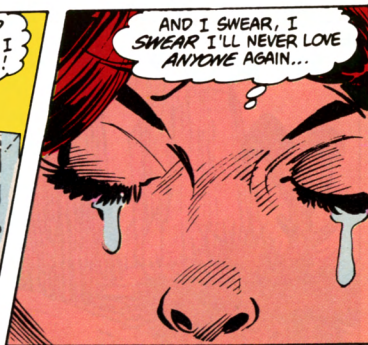
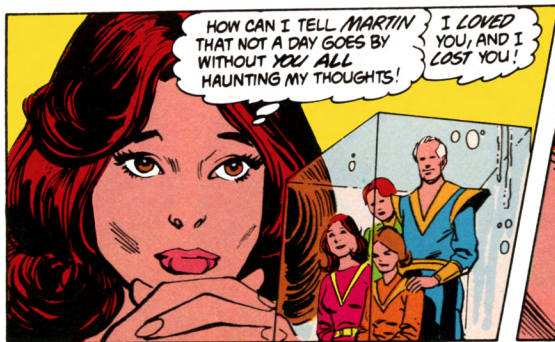
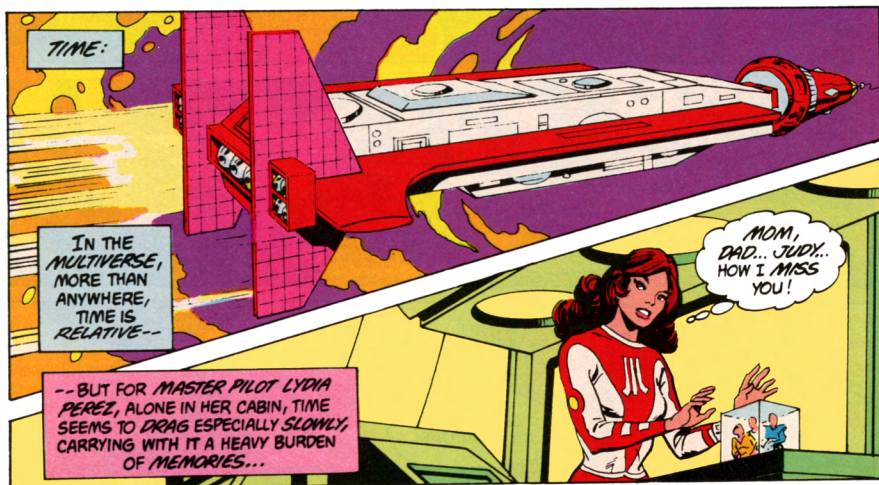
MASTER PILOT
PEREZ, TAKE OVER!

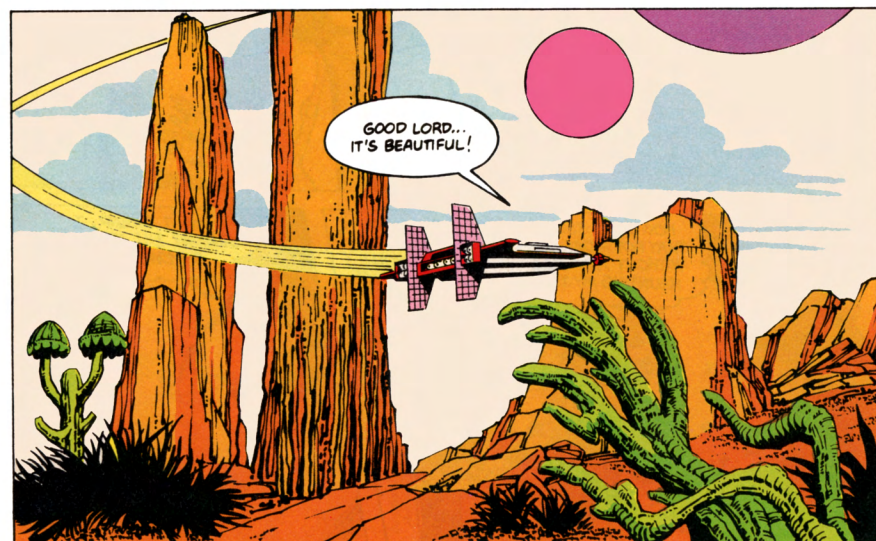
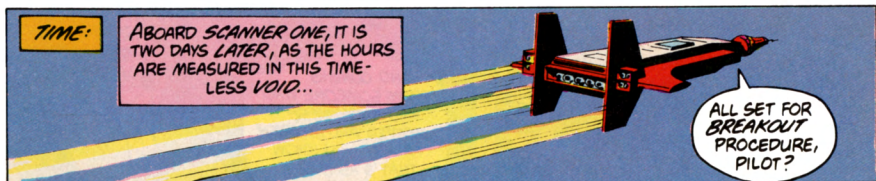
AND, EVEN THOUGH THEY'VE WITNESSED
THIS SPECTACLE A DOZEN TIMES BEFORE,
THEY FIND THEIR BREATH CATCHING IN
THEIR THROATS--

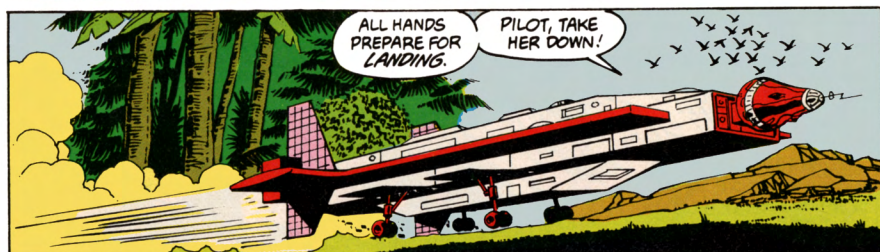
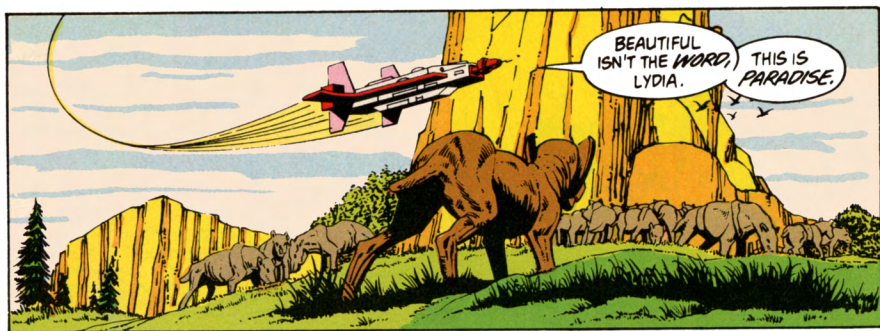


--AS THE SHIP'S VIEWSCREEN SHOWS A SIGHT FEW
HUMANS HAVE SEEN. THE SPACE-BETWEEN-
SPACE THAT IS THE MULTIVERSE!









INDEED, THE
DAY PASSES
LIKE A DREAM.

AND, WHEN
SUNSET COMES...

PERFECT--
IT'S ALL SO
PERFECT!

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

BY THE
TREE OF
BUDDHA!

WHOOOOOSH!

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

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

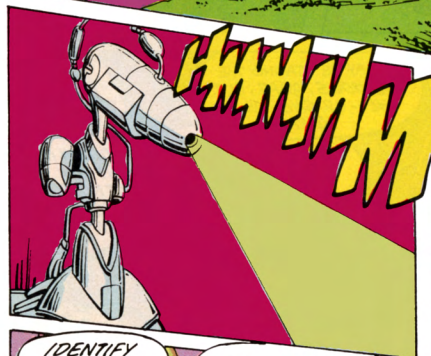
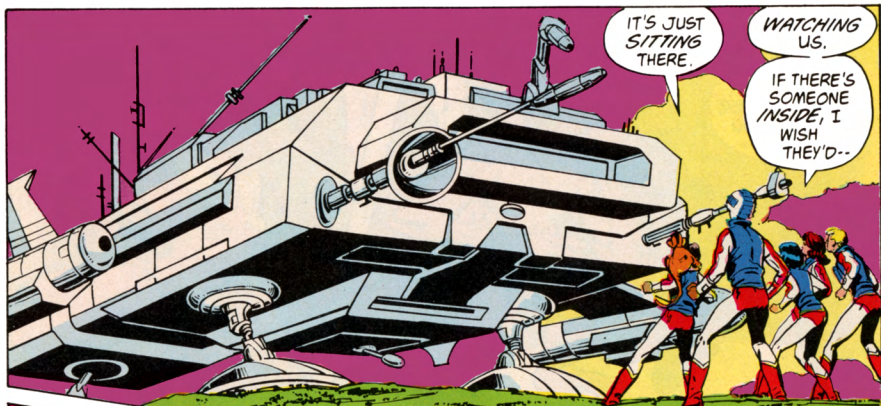
NO! I WON'T LET THEM
TAKE THIS AWAY FROM US--
I WON'T--!

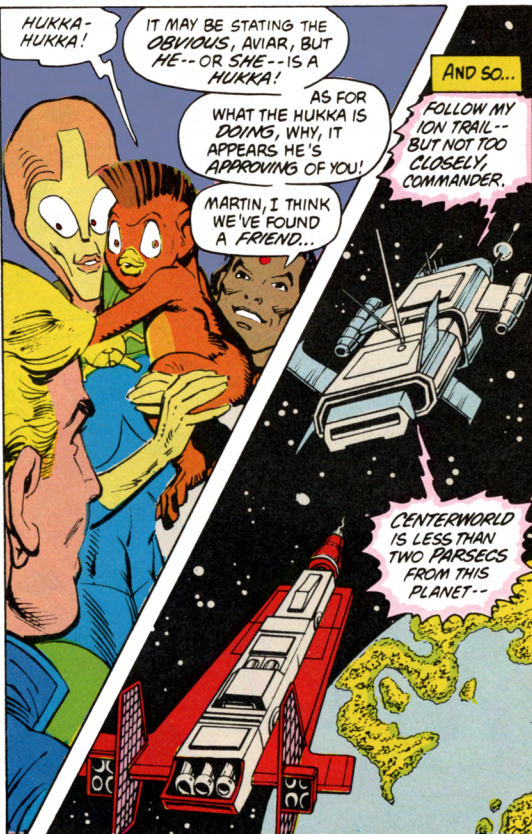
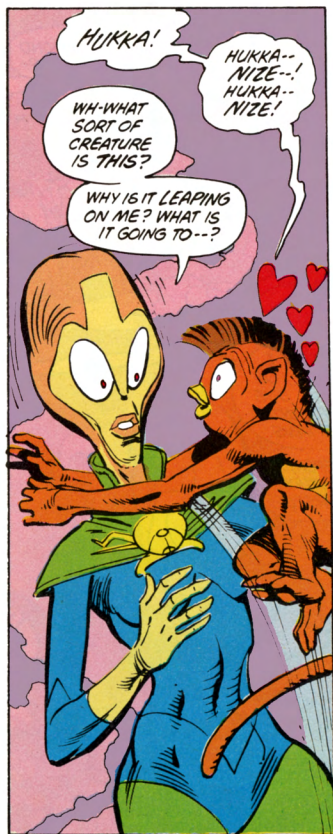
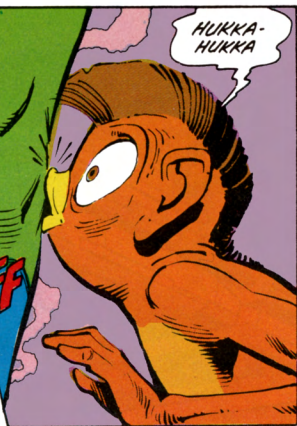
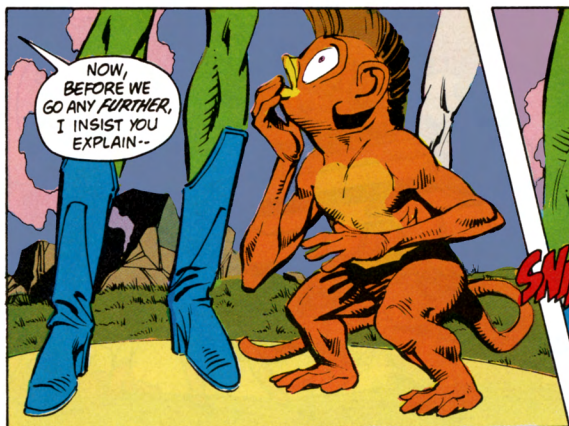
EASY, LYDIA!
DON'T JUMP
THE GUN!

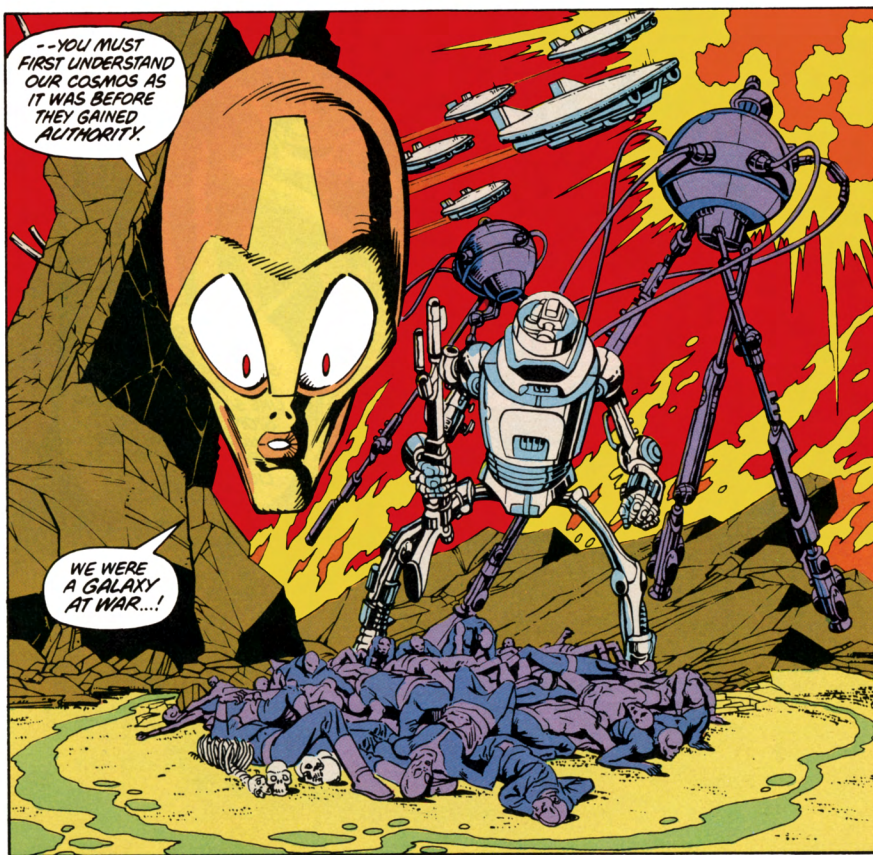
LET'S SEE WHO
OUR VISITORS ARE--
AND WHAT THEY
WANT!

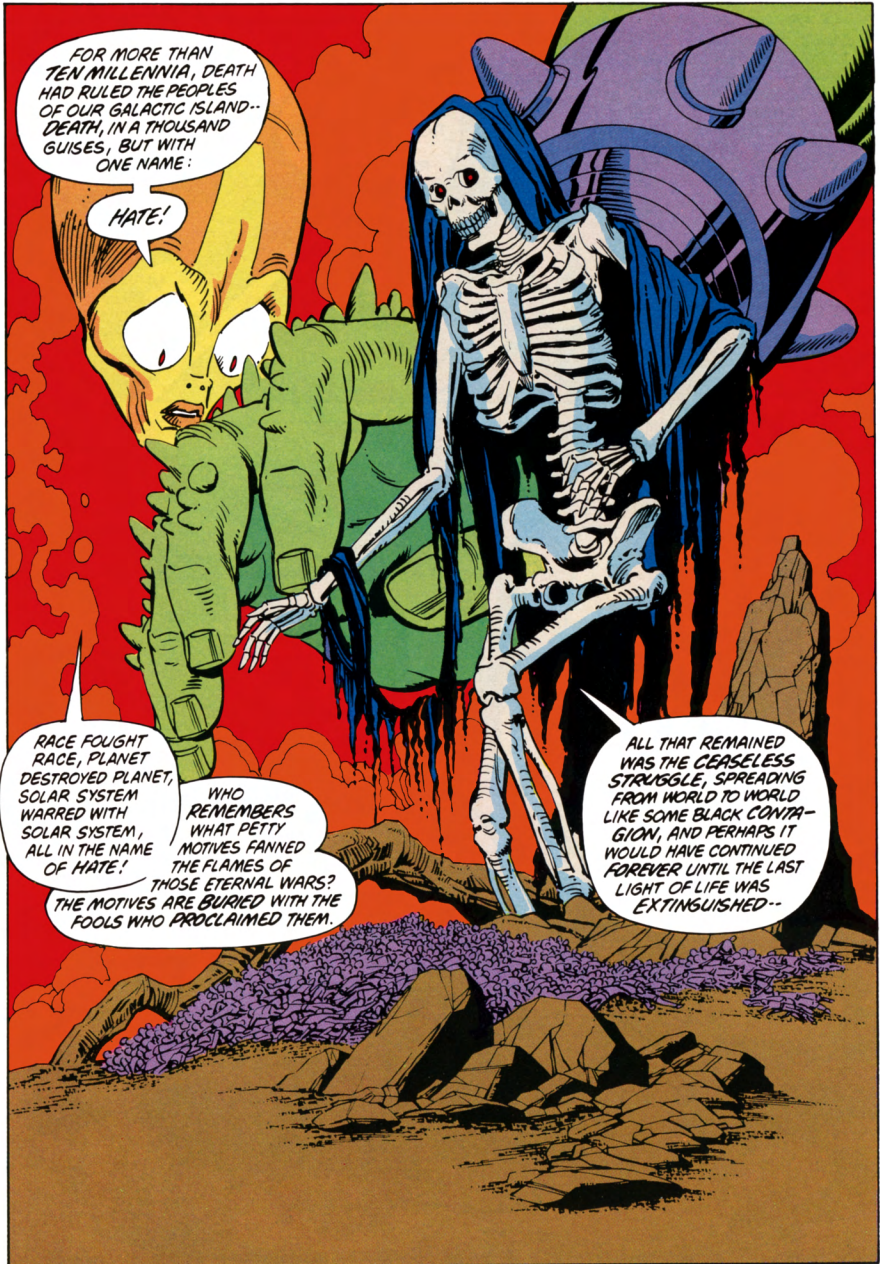
MAYBE THEY'RE
JUST THE LOCAL
VERSION OF A
WELCOME WAGON!

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









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

HATE!

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

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

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

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

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

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

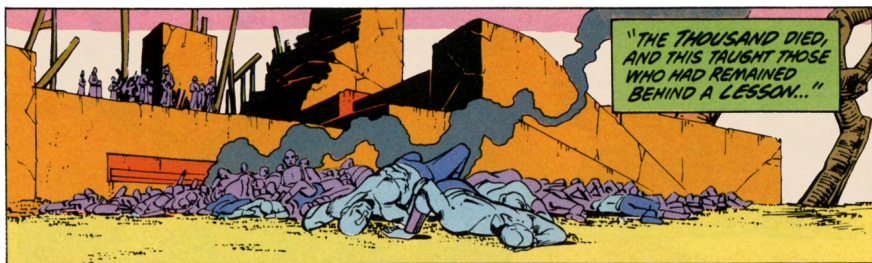
"OF COURSE, THE LEADERS DEMANDED THAT THE REFUSERS RETURN."

"THEY THREATENED, AND WHEN THREATS FAILED--"

"--THEY DID WHAT CAME NATURALLY."

ZAM

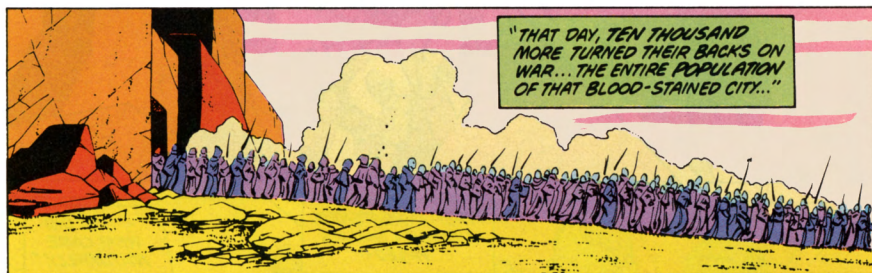
ZAM ZAM ZAM



"THE THOUSAND DIED,
AND THIS TAUGHT THOSE
WHO HAD REMAINED
BEHIND A LESSON..."



"... BUT NOT THE LESSON THEIR
LEADERS HAD INTENDED."



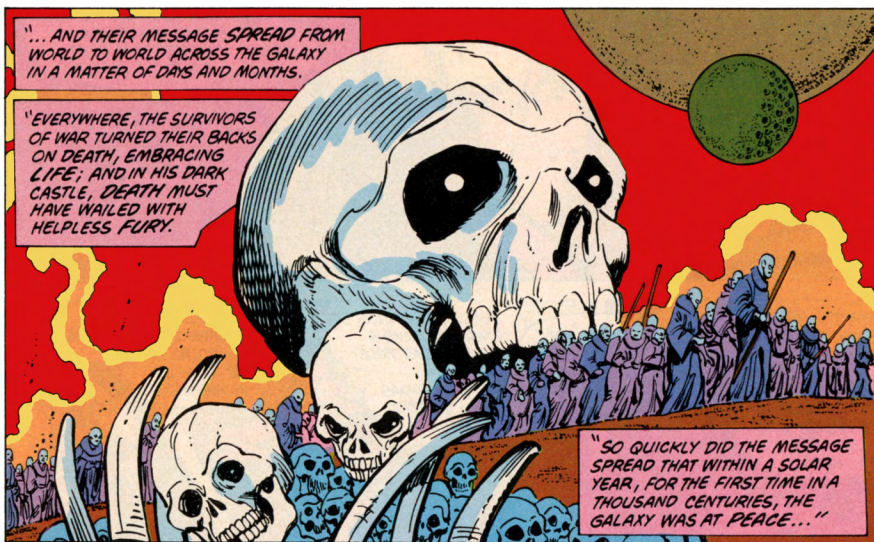
"THAT DAY, TEN THOUSAND
MORE TURNED THEIR BACKS ON
WAR... THE ENTIRE POPULATION
OF THAT BLOOD-STAINED CITY..."



"... AND THE LEADERS, WITH
NO ONE LEFT TO FIGHT BUT
THEMSELVES, TURNED ON
EACH OTHER LIKE MAD
BEASTS."



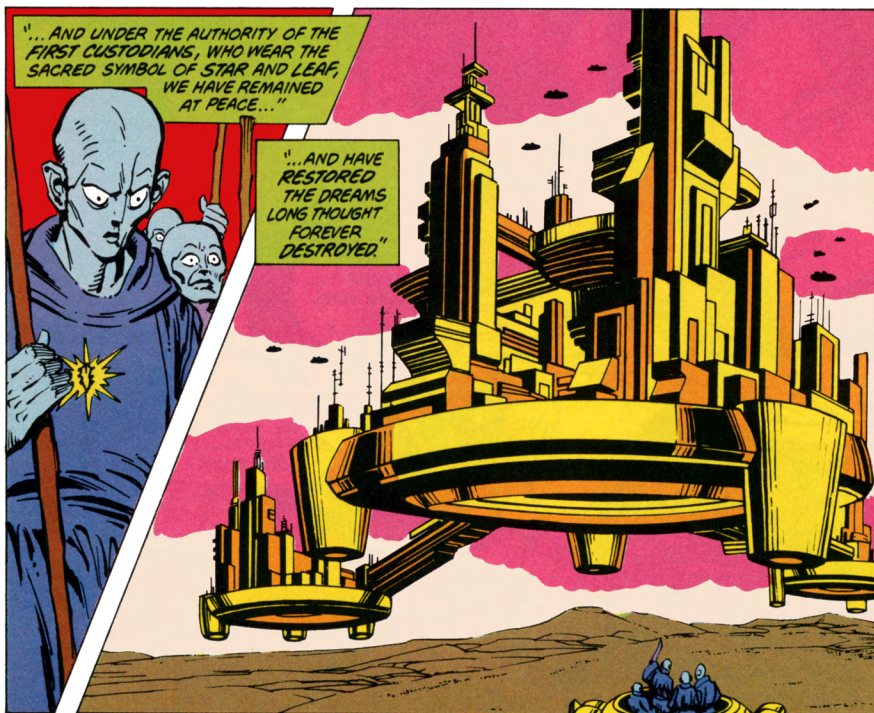
"THOSE WHO
REFUSED WAR
CALLED THEMSELVES
THE CUSTODIANS
OF LIFE..."



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

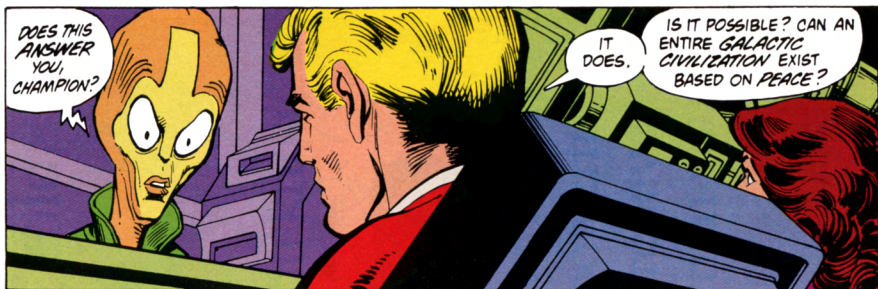
"EVERYWHERE, THE SURVIVORS OF WAR TURNED THEIR BACKS ON DEATH, EMBRACING LIFE; AND IN HIS DARK CASTLE, DEATH MUST HAVE WAILED WITH HELPLESS FURY.

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



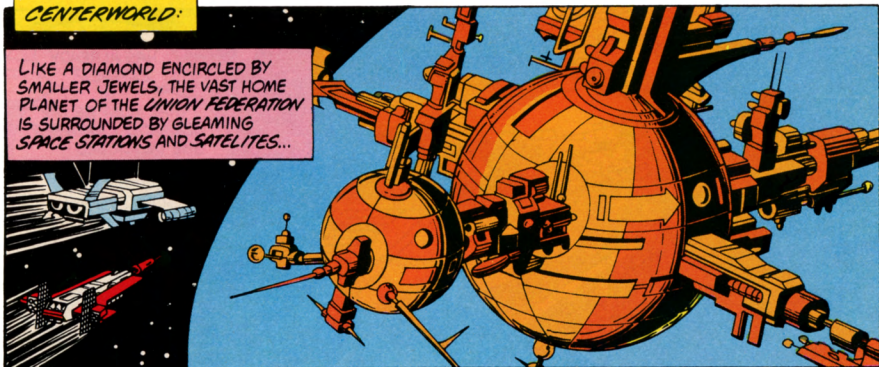
"... AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST CUSTODIANS, WHO WEAR THE SACRED SYMBOL OF STAR AND LEAF, WE HAVE REMAINED AT PEACE..."

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

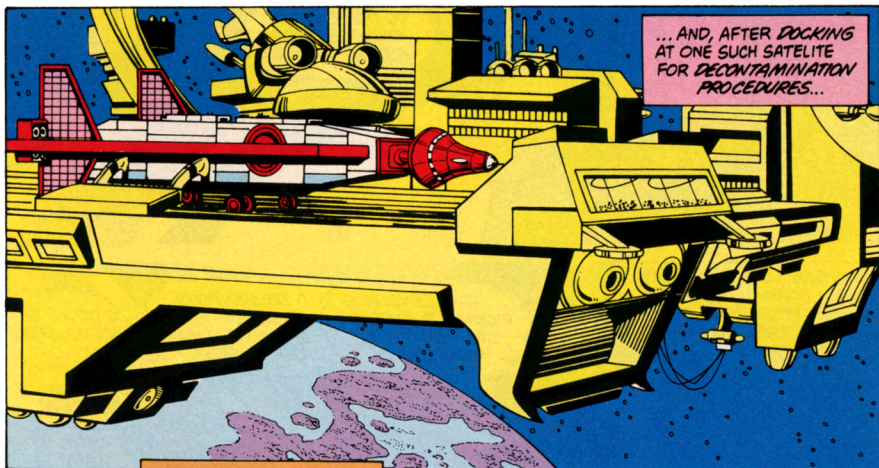


CENTERWORLD:

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



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

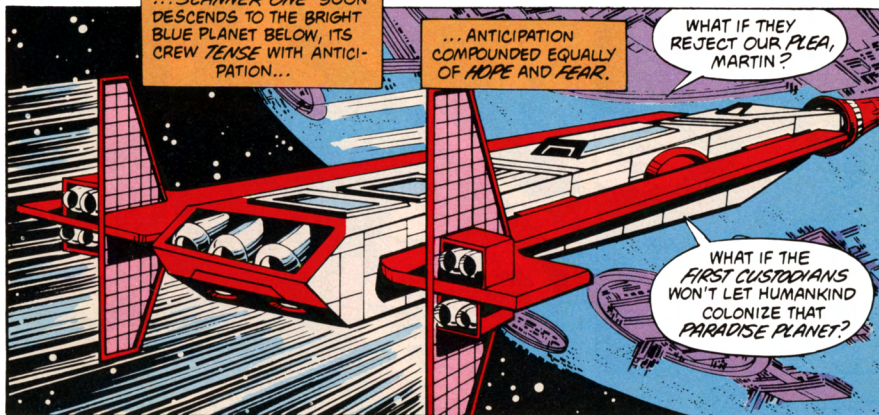


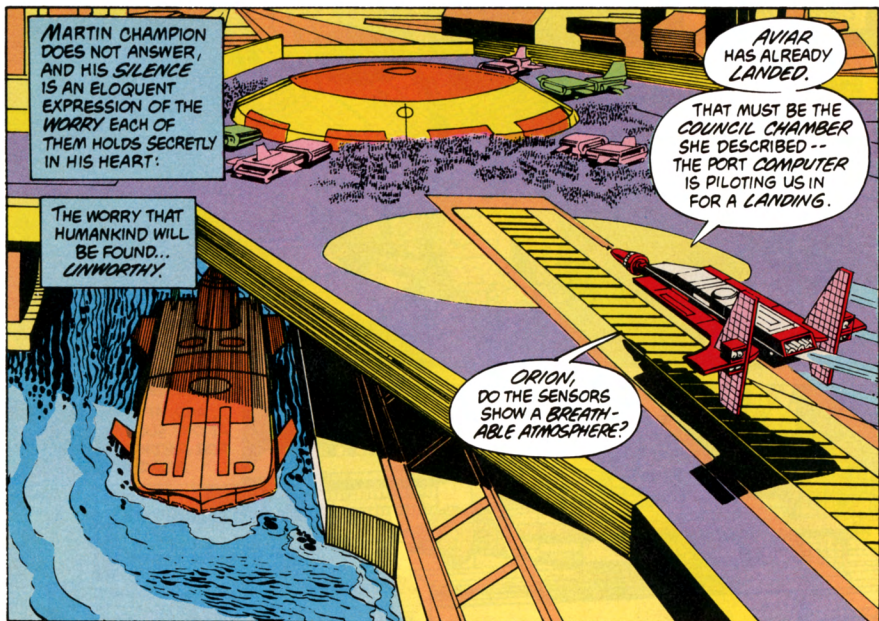
... SCANNER ONE SOON DESCENDS TO THE BRIGHT BLUE PLANET BELOW, ITS CREW TENSE WITH ANTICIPATION...

... ANTICIPATION COMPOUNDED EQUALLY OF HOPE AND FEAR.

WHAT IF THEY REJECT OUR PLEA, MARTIN?

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





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

AVIAR HAS ALREADY LANDED.

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

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

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



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

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

EH? THAT'S *ODD*...



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

A TREMENDOUS CONCENTRATION OF MENTAL AND LIFE-ENERGY.

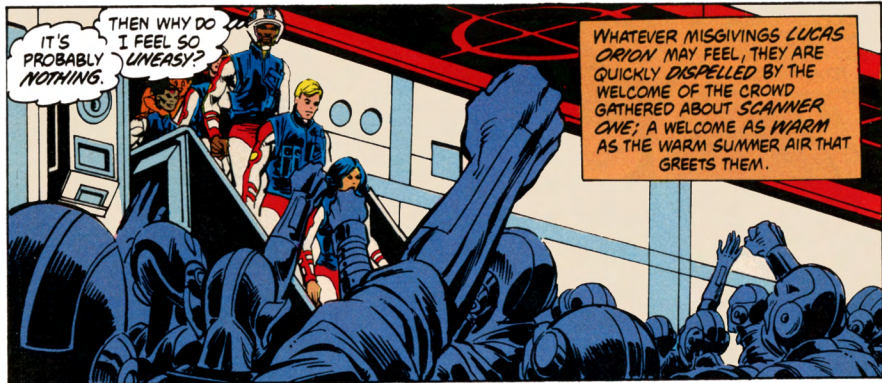
IT COULD BE *ANOTHER SPACE STATION*-- BUT THE READING INDICATES A *SINGLE ORGANISM*.

VERY, VERY *ODD*.

ORION TO ATARI 8000 COMPUTER.

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

AS YOU WISH, DOCTOR; *PROCESSING*.



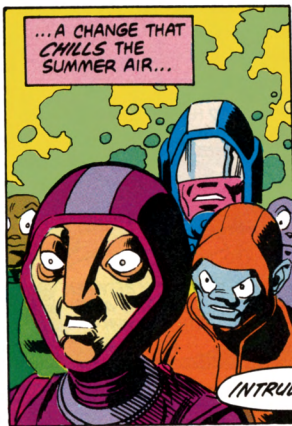
IT'S
PROBABLY
NOTHING.

THEN WHY DO
I FEEL SO
UNEASY?

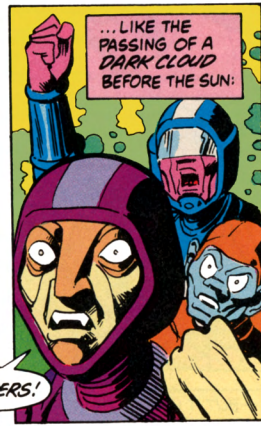
WHATEVER MISGIVINGS LUCAS
ORION MAY FEEL, THEY ARE
QUICKLY DISPELLED BY THE
WELCOME OF THE CROWD
GATHERED ABOUT *SCANNER
ONE*; A WELCOME AS WARM
AS THE WARM SUMMER AIR THAT
GREET'S THEM.



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



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



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

INTRUDERS!



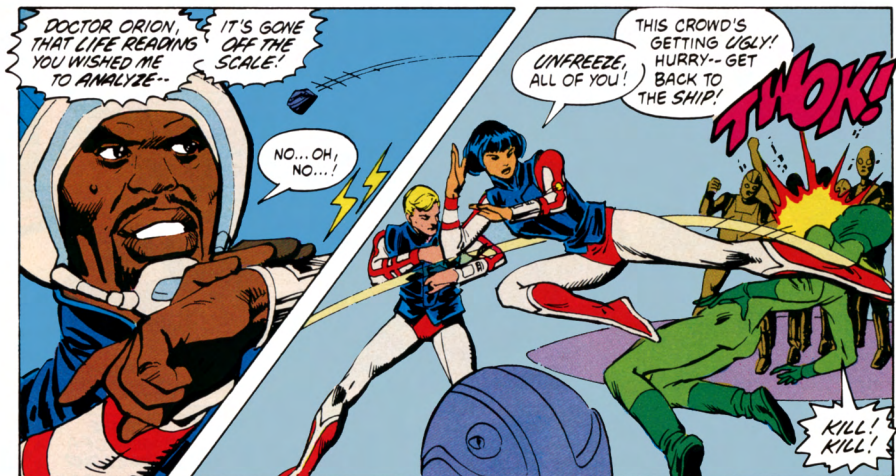
MARTIN--
WHAT'S
HAPPENING--?

THEIR
FACES,
LOOK AT
THEM--!

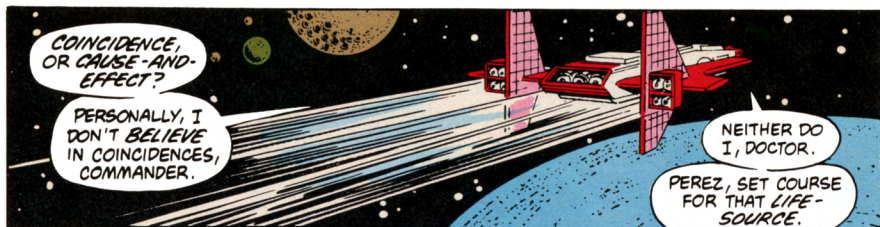
THEY'RE
GOING
CRAZY!

INTRUDERS!
TRESPASSERS!
KILL THE
ALIENS!

KILL
THEM
ALL!





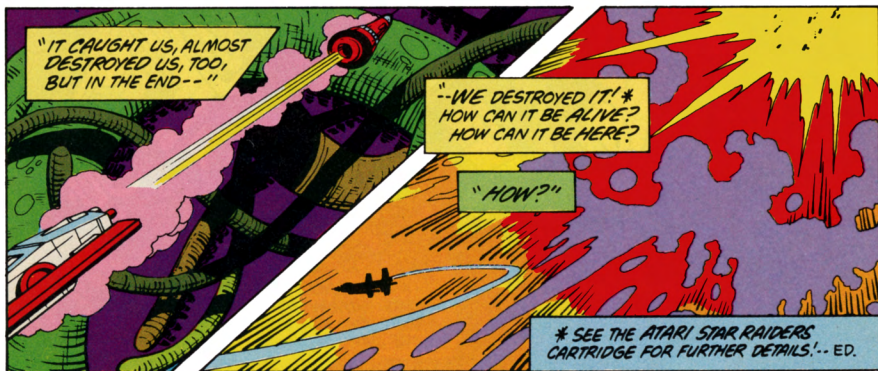




NO-- IT
CAN'T BE!
THE DARK
DESTROYER
IS DEAD!

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

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

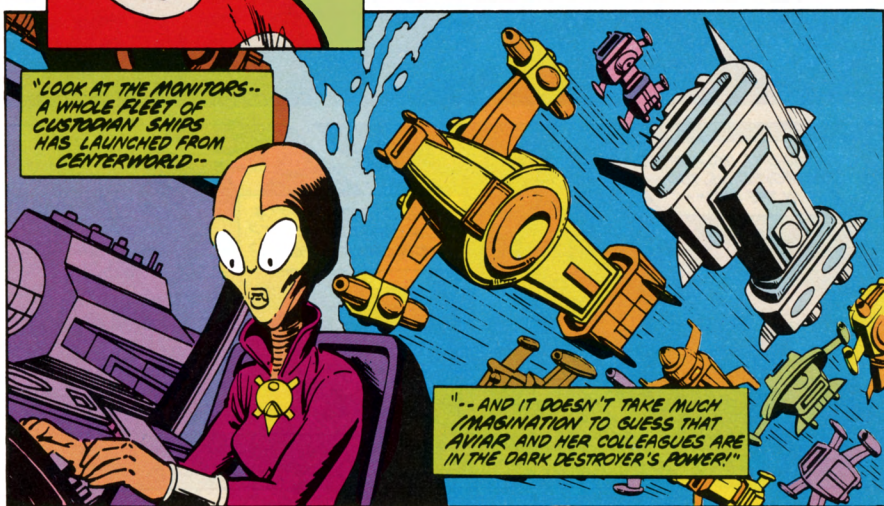


"IT CAUGHT US, ALMOST
DESTROYED US, TOO,
BUT IN THE END--"

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

"HOW?"

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





WONDERFUL.

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



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

THE GALAXIAN VESSELS
HAVE WARPED AHEAD
OF US.

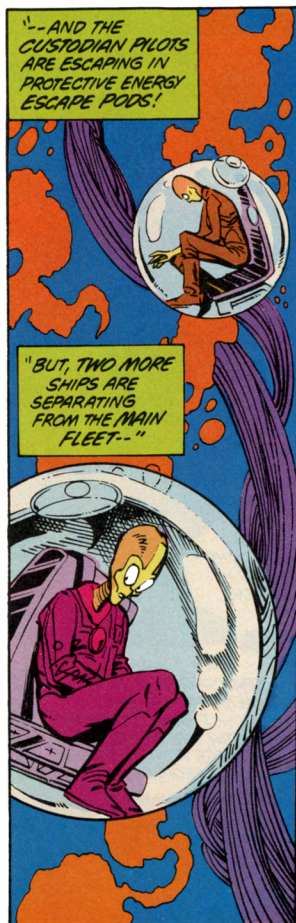
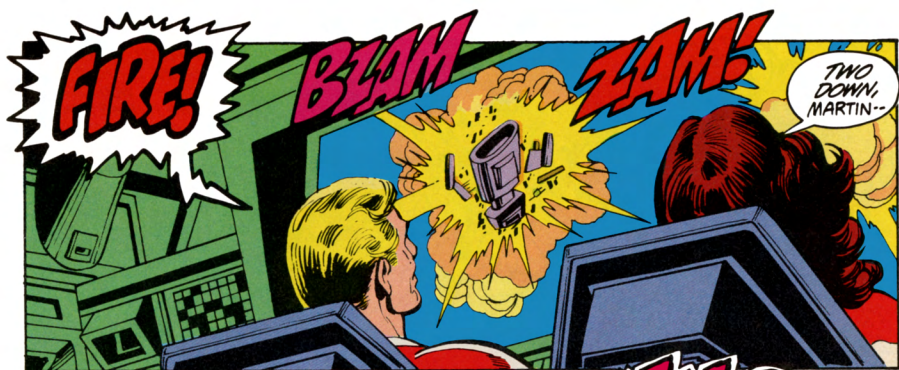
THEY'RE REAPPEARING
BETWEEN US AND OUR
DESTINATION, THAT
DISTANT ASTEROID
PINPOINTED BY OUR
COMPUTER AS THE
SOURCE OF THE DARK
DESTROYER'S LIFE
READINGS.



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

I'M
AFRAID!



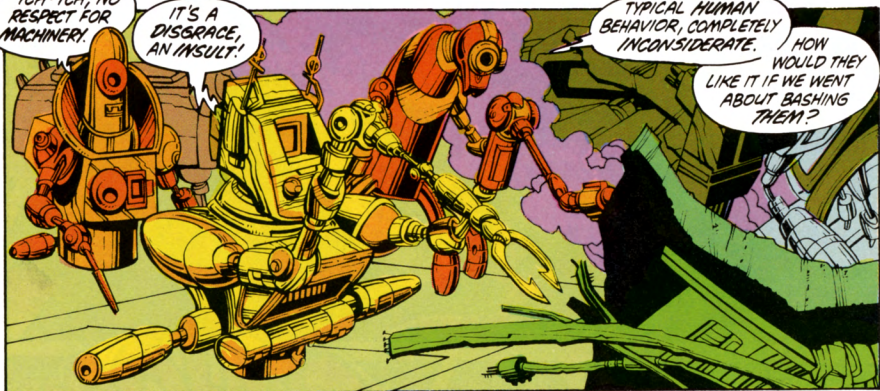


TCH-TCH, NO
RESPECT FOR
MACHINERY.

IT'S A
DISGRACE,
AN INSULT!

TYPICAL HUMAN
BEHAVIOR, COMPLETELY
INCONSIDERATE.

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



BATTLE:

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



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



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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



...YET CANNOT
SEEM TO GRASP
THEIR MINDS!

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




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



COMMANDER,
IS IT MY FEVERED
IMAGINATION--

--OR ARE WE
WINNING?

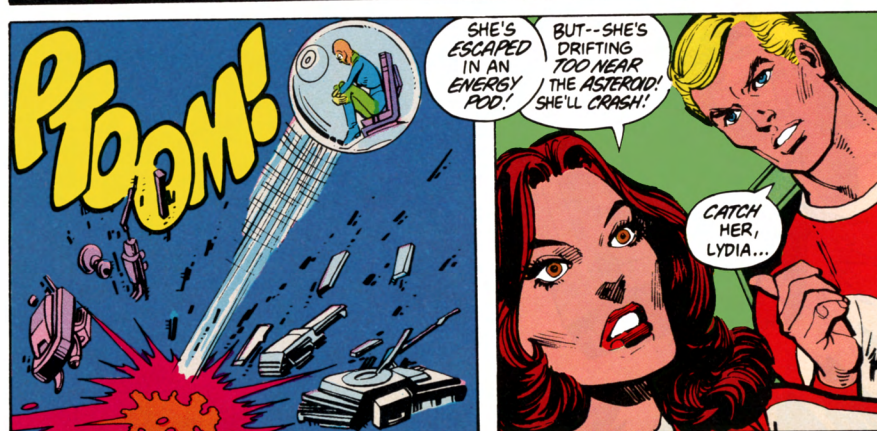
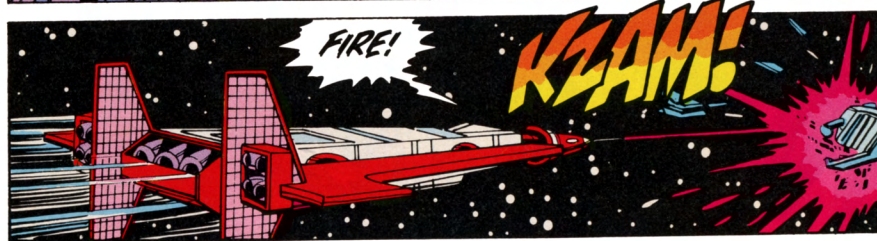
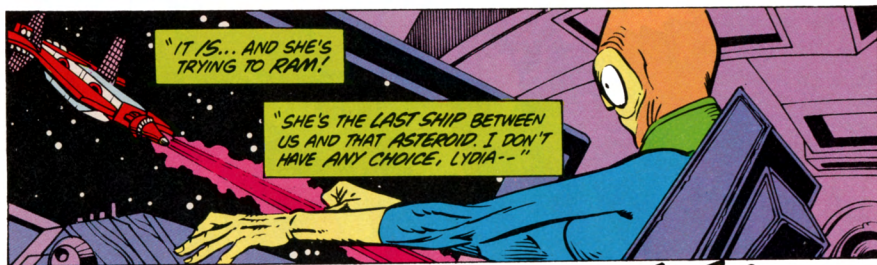
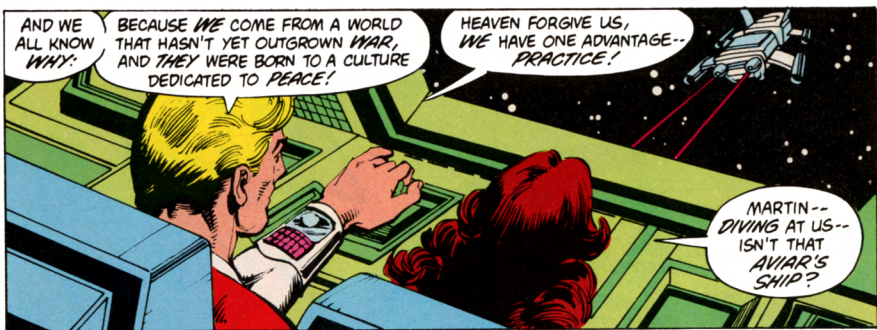
ZAM
ZAMM



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

--WE'RE
BEATING
THEM!

ZAMMM
BLAM!





...USE SCANNER ONE AS A GIGANTIC CATCHER'S MITT!

DON'T KNOW-- IF I CAN--!

YOU'RE THE BEST PILOT IN THIRTEEN DIMENSIONS, PEREZ:

NOW, DO IT!

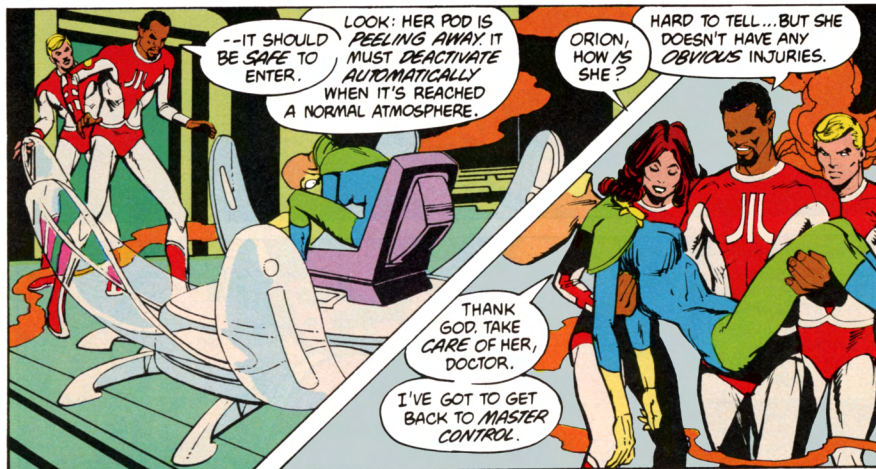
TWAK



MINUTES LATER--

SHE LANDED IN THE CARGO BAY.

THE REPAIR-ROBS HAVE SEALED THE BULKHEAD--



--IT SHOULD BE SAFE TO ENTER.

LOOK: HER POD IS PEELING AWAY. IT MUST DEACTIVATE AUTOMATICALLY WHEN IT'S REACHED A NORMAL ATMOSPHERE.

ORION, HOW IS SHE?

HARD TO TELL... BUT SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY OBVIOUS INJURIES.

THANK GOD. TAKE CARE OF HER, DOCTOR.

I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO MASTER CONTROL.

**FINAL
APPROACH:**

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

**THE DESTRUCTION OF
THE DARK DESTROYER!**

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



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

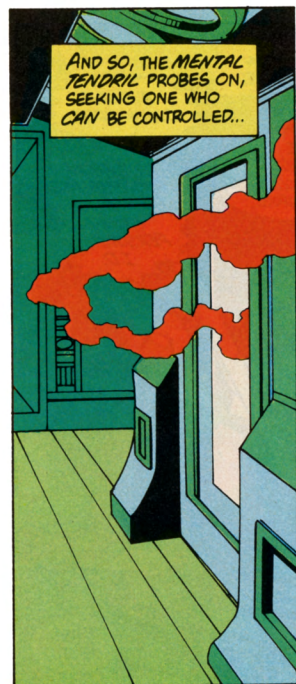




IT IS THE MENTAL
ESSENCE OF THE DARK
DESTROYER, AND FOR
AN INSTANT, FOUL AND
INDESCRIBABLE EVIL
PERVADES THE HEARTS
OF ALL ABOARD--



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

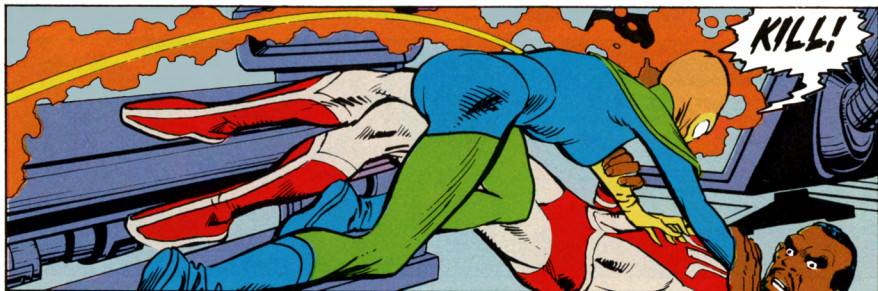


AND SO, THE MENTAL
TENDRIL PROBES ON,
SEEKING ONE WHO
CAN BE CONTROLLED...

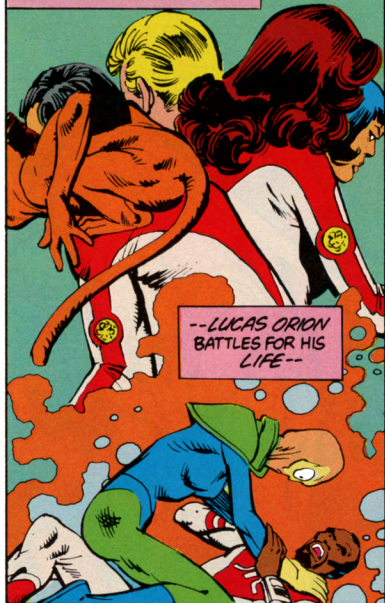


...AND FINDING THAT ONE,
AMID THE GLEAMING INSTRU-
MENTS OF THE HEALER'S ART,
IN LUCAS ORION'S SICKBAY...

KILL.

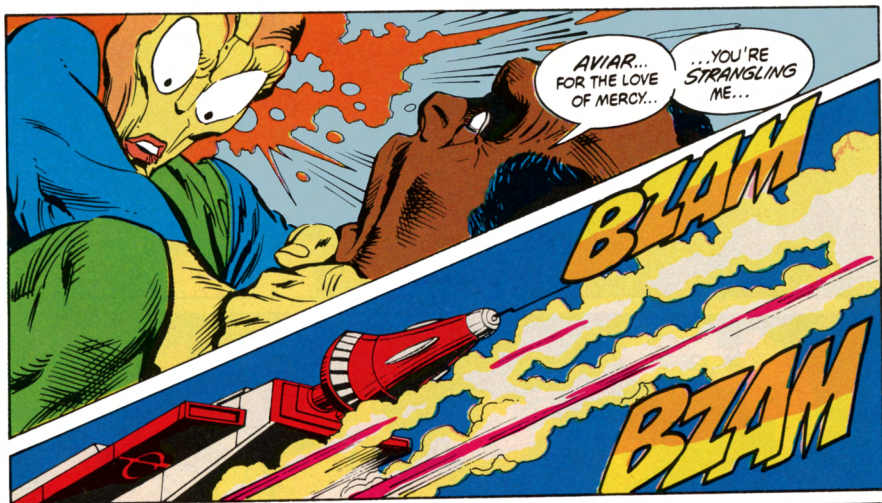


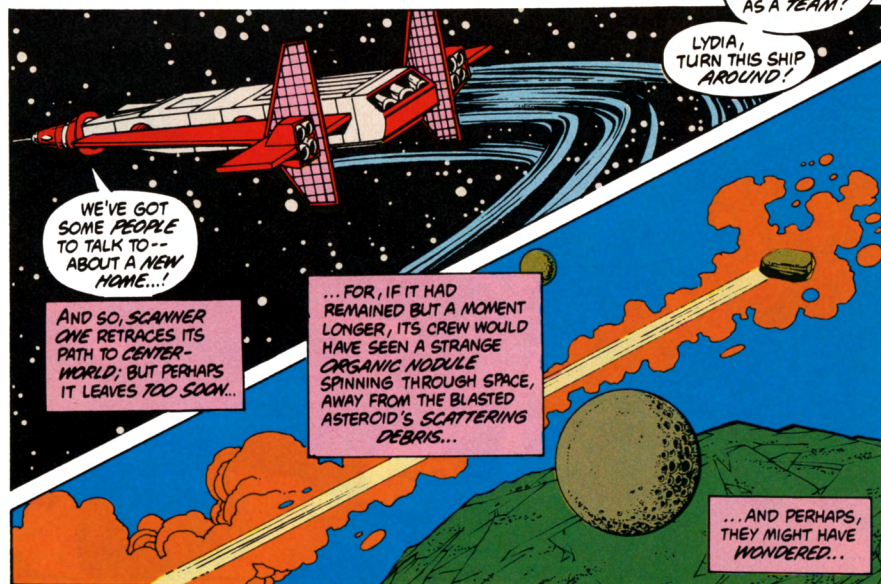
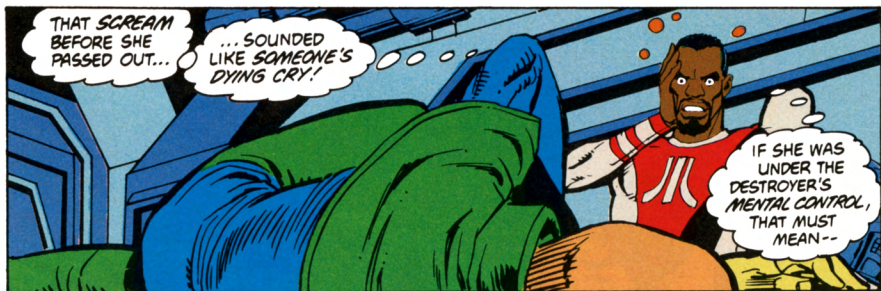
UNNOTICED BY HIS FELLOWS, EACH CONCERNED WITH THEIR OWN DUTIES IN THESE LAST CLOSING SECONDS--



--AS MARTIN CHAMPION GIVES THE FATEFUL ORDER:







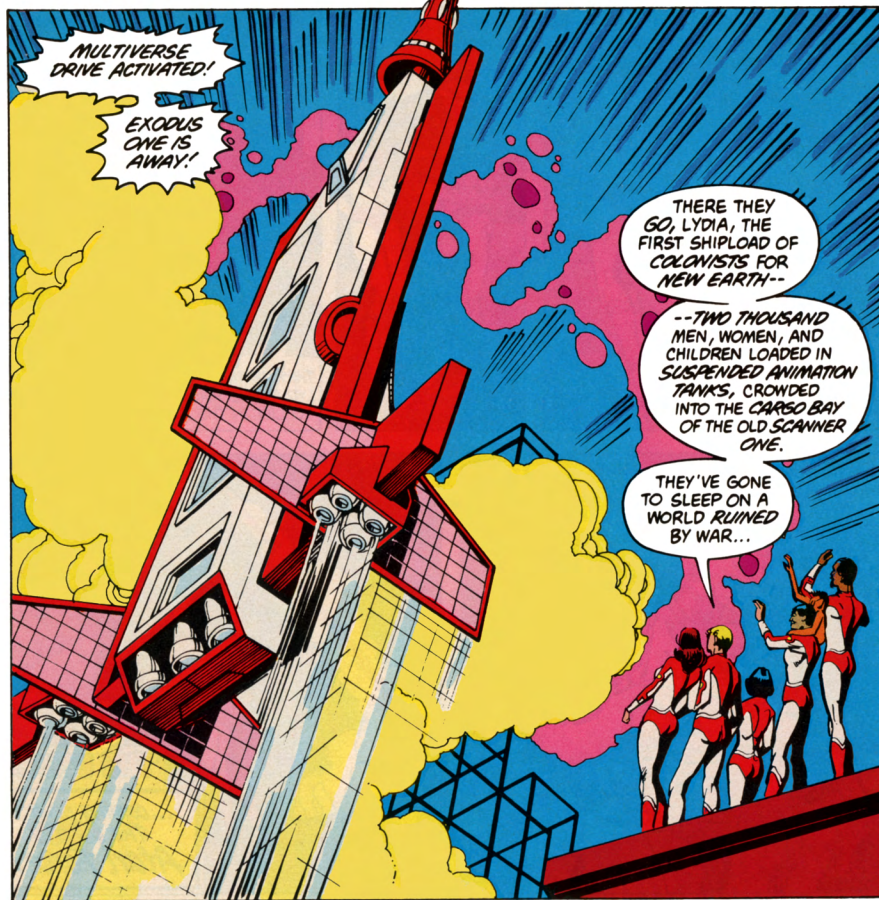






SIX MONTHS LATER,
ON THE WAR-WEARY
WORLD CALLED EARTH,
A FATEFUL COUNTDOWN
REACHES CLIMAX:

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



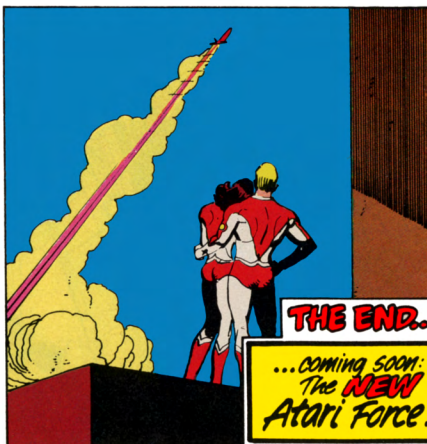
MULTIVERSE
DRIVE ACTIVATED!

EXODUS
ONE IS
AWAY!

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

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

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





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