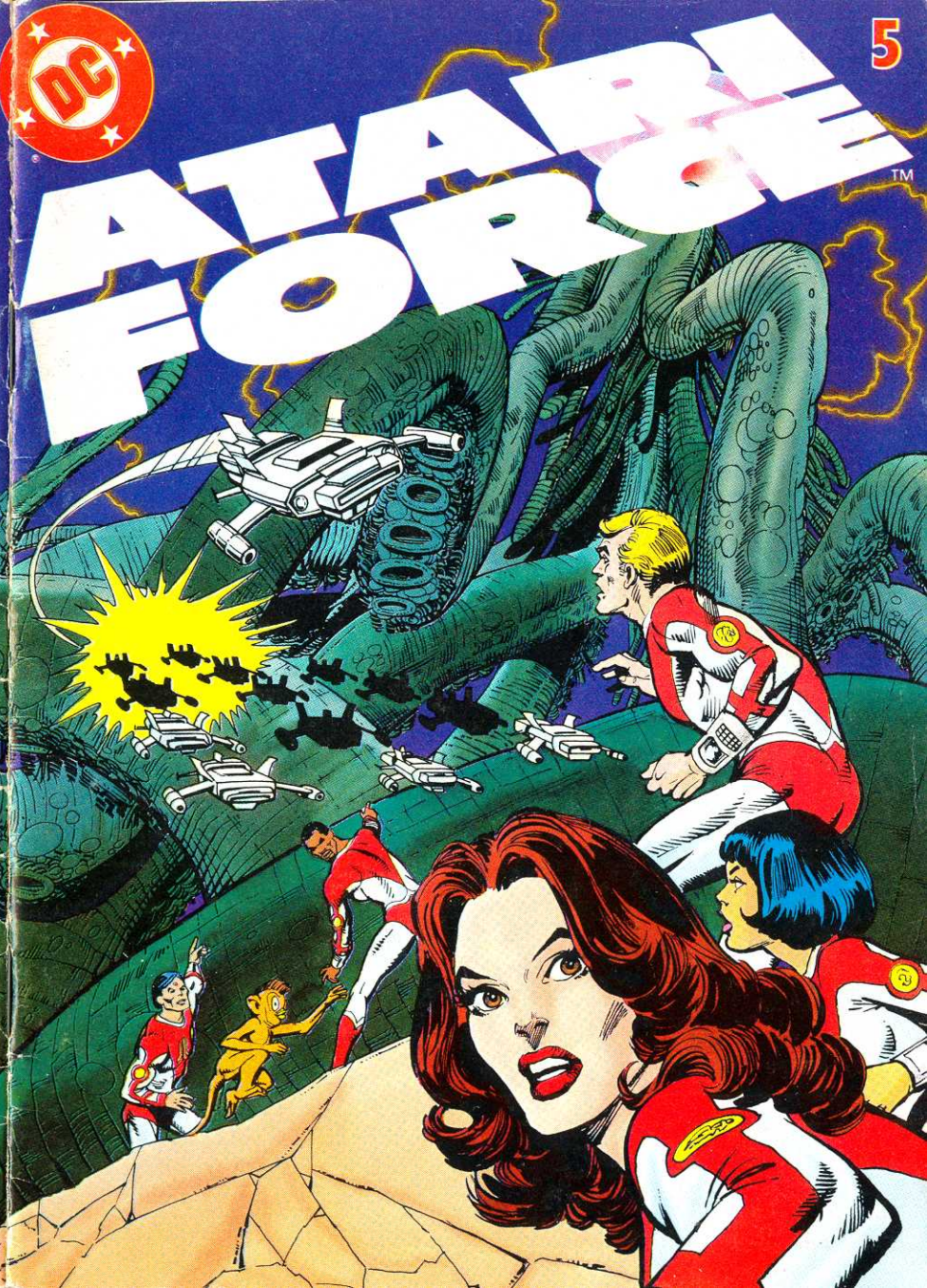




ATARI FORCE™



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

BZAM

AND I THINK IT WANTS US FOR DINNER!

AARRROOOWRR



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--!



MOHANDAS!

ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT? YOUR
SURVIVAL
SUIT--?

JET-PACK OUT
OF COMMISSION,
COMMANDER!

AND I'M
AFRAID--I'VE
TWISTED MY
LEG--!



BLAM!

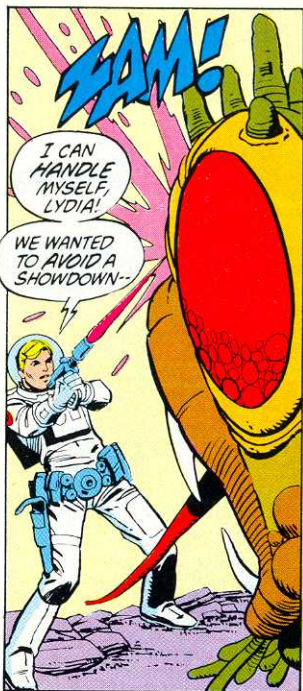
ROWRR

IT'S UP
TO YOU,
LYDIA!

CAN YOU
GET SINGH
BACK TO
SCANNER
ONE?

WITH THIS
WORLDLET'S
LOW GRAVITY,
NO PROBLEM!

BUT WHAT
ABOUT YOU--?



ZAM!

I CAN HANDLE MYSELF, LYDIA!

WE WANTED TO AVOID A SHOWDOWN--



BLAM!

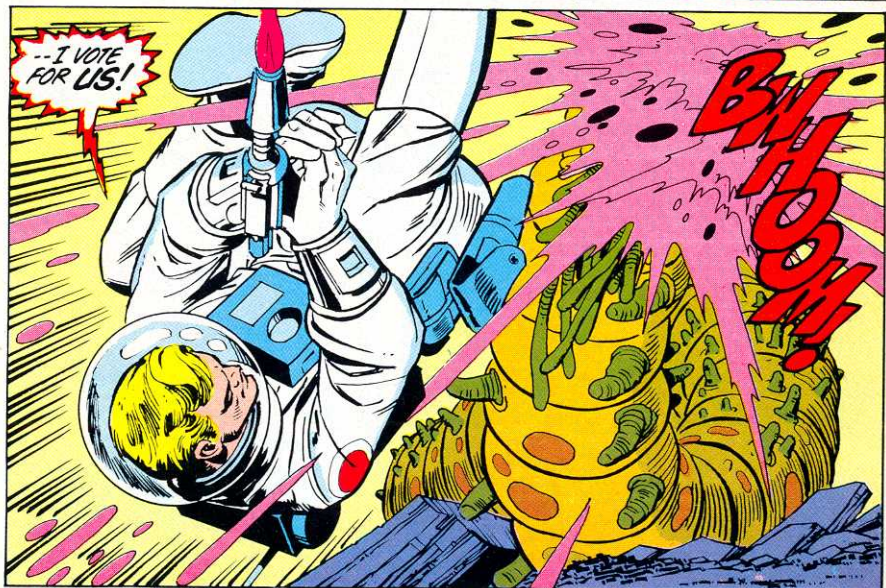
-- BECAUSE WE'RE THE ONES WHO DON'T BELONG HERE!



ZAAAM!

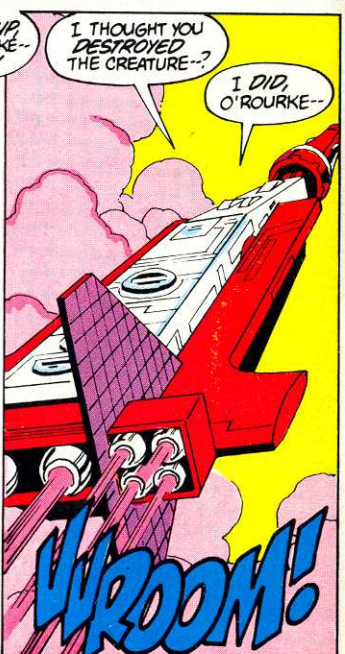
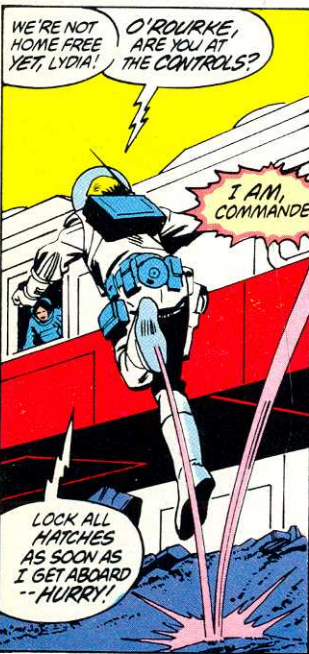
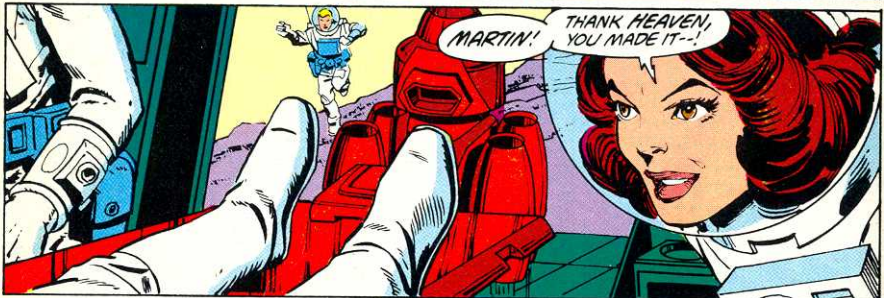
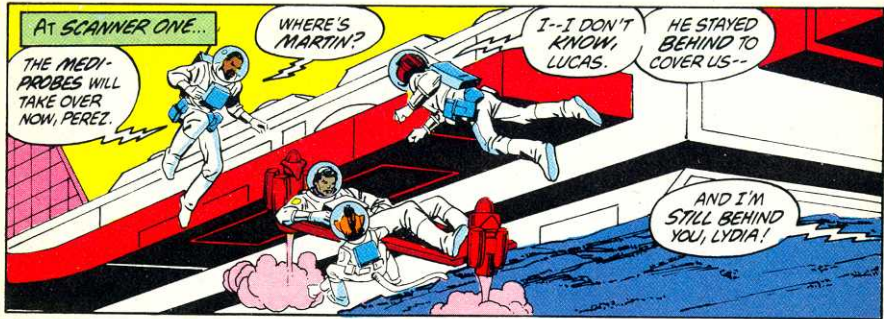
BUT NOW, I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE!

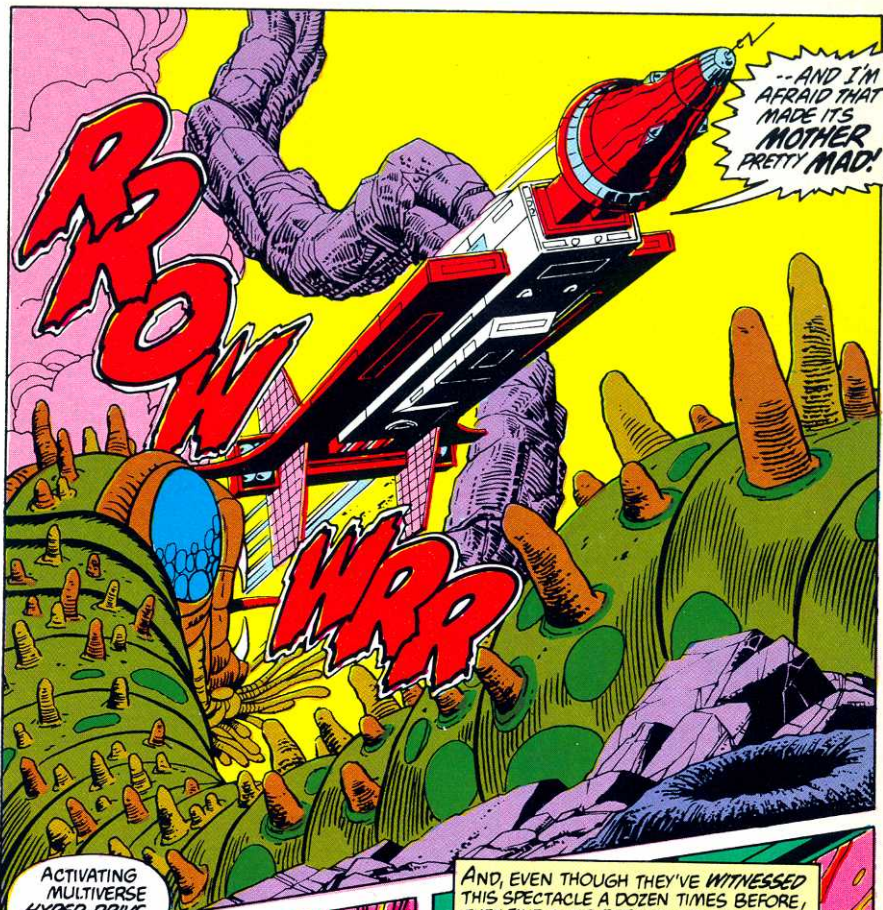
AND IF IT'S A QUESTION OF OUR LIVES-- OR THIS CREATURE'S--



-- I VOTE FOR US!

BN H O M!





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

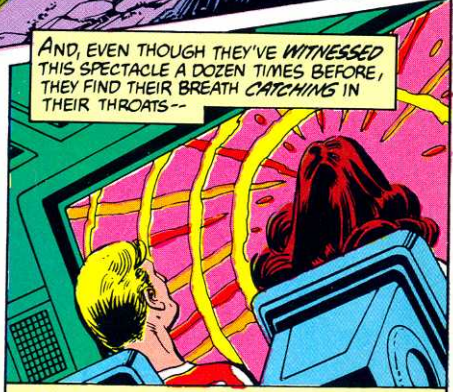
ACTIVATING MULTIVERSE HYPER-DRIVE, COMMANDER!

WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

GOOD WORK, O'ROURKE!

MASTER PILOT PEREZ, TAKE OVER!

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



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



SO WE'VE FAILED--
AGAIN!

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

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

GIVE IT
TIME,
LYDIA...



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

I JUST--DON'T
BELIEVE
ANYMORE.

IT'S
HOPELESS...

HOPELESS.

WE'RE
ALL
DISAPPOINTED,
O'ROURKE.

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

SHE'S
LIPSET...



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

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

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



LOOK OUT
THERE,
MARTIN.

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

BUT, AS
COMPLICATED
AS IT IS--



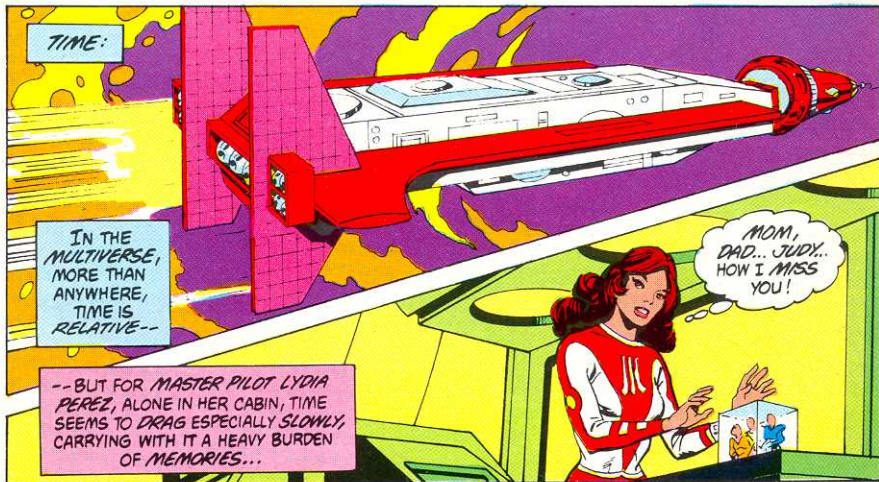
--IT'S *SIMPLICITY* ITSELF COMPARED TO THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE *HUMAN SOUL*.



AND COMING FROM SOMEONE WHO HAD A *CHINESE* MOTHER AND AN *IRISH* FATHER, YOU KNOW THAT'S AS CLOSE TO *TRUTH* AS YOU CAN GET!

I ONLY WISH *LYDIA* WOULD TALK TO ME, *LI SAN*.

THEN, PERHAPS, I COULD *UNDERSTAND*...

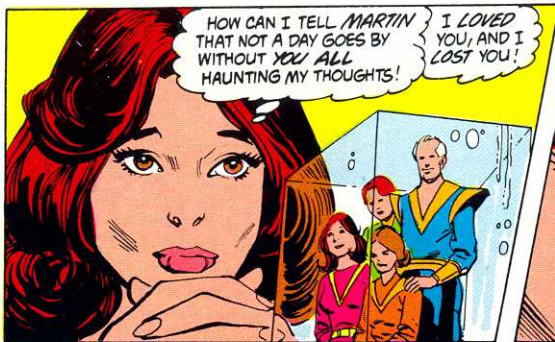


TIME:

IN THE *MULTIVERSE*, MORE THAN ANYWHERE, *TIME* IS *RELATIVE*--

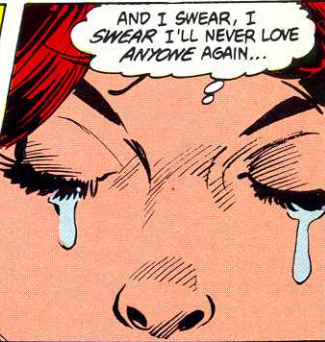
--BUT FOR *MASTER PILOT LYDIA PEREZ*, ALONE IN HER CABIN, *TIME* SEEMS TO *DRAW* ESPECIALLY *SLOWLY*, CARRYING WITH IT A *HEAVY BURDEN* OF *MEMORIES*...

MOM, DAD... *JUDY*.. HOW I MISS YOU!



HOW CAN I TELL *MARTIN* THAT NOT A DAY GOES BY WITHOUT *YOU* ALL HAUNTING MY THOUGHTS!

I LOVED YOU, AND I LOST YOU!



AND I SWEAR, I SWEAR I'LL NEVER LOVE ANYONE AGAIN...

TIME:

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

ALL SET FOR **BREAKOUT** PROCEDURE, PILOT?

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

ESTIMATED **BREAKOUT** IN FIVE SECONDS, SHIPBOARD RELATIVE TIME.

GO FOR IT, PEREZ.

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

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

--THREE--
TWO--ONE--

BREAKOUT

GOOD LORD... IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

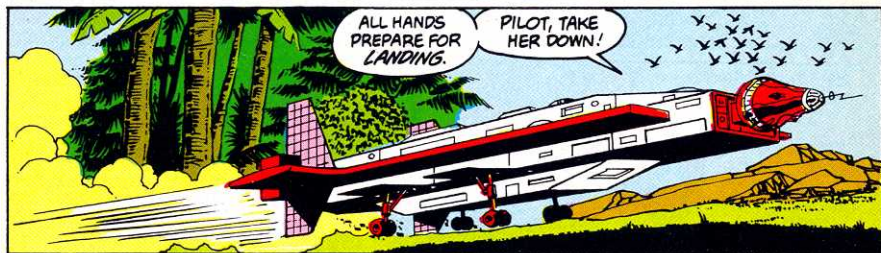


BEAUTIFUL ISN'T THE WORD, LYDIA. THIS IS PARADISE.



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

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



ALL HANDS PREPARE FOR LANDING.

PILOT, TAKE HER DOWN!



AND...

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

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

I'VE ALREADY CHECKED IT, COMMANDER

BACTERIA LEVELS EARTH-NORMAL. IT'S SAFE.

THIS WHOLE WORLD'S LIKE A DREAM.

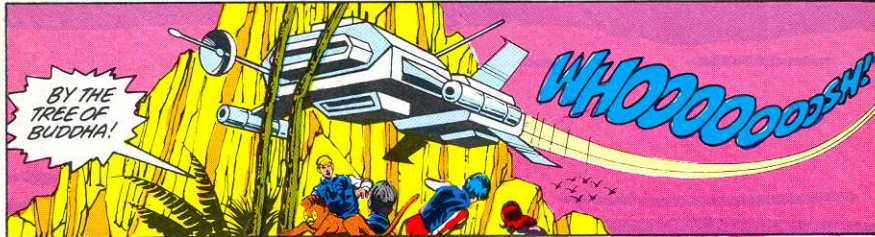
INDEED, THE DAY PASSES LIKE A DREAM.

AND, WHEN SUNSET COMES...



PERFECT-- IT'S ALL SO PERFECT!

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



BY THE TREE OF BUDDHA!

WHOOOOOOSH!



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

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

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

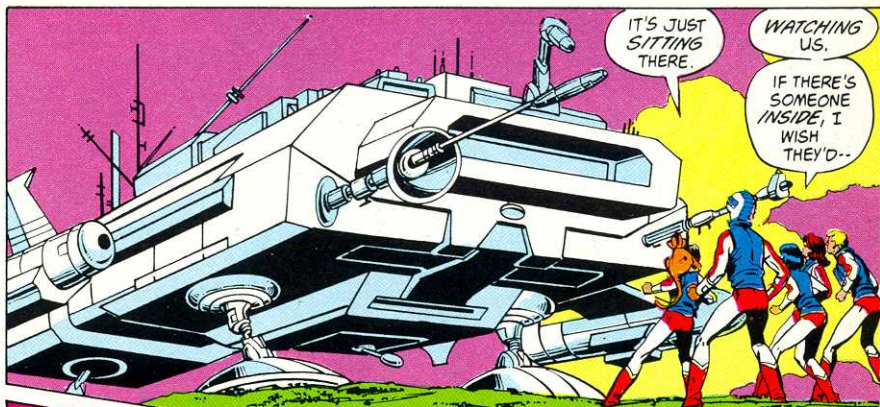
EASY, LYDIA! DON'T JUMP THE GUN!



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

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

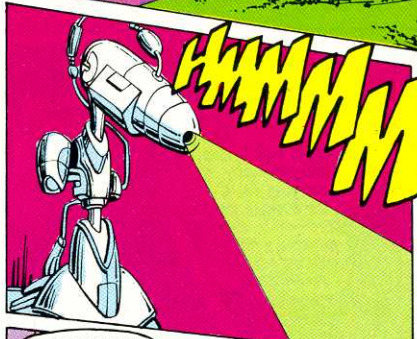
OH, PLEASE, I CAN'T STAND ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT...!



IT'S JUST SITTING THERE.

WATCHING US.

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



HAMMM



BACK OFF, EVERYONE! SOME KIND OF TELEPORTATION BEAM--!



IDENTIFY YOURSELVES.

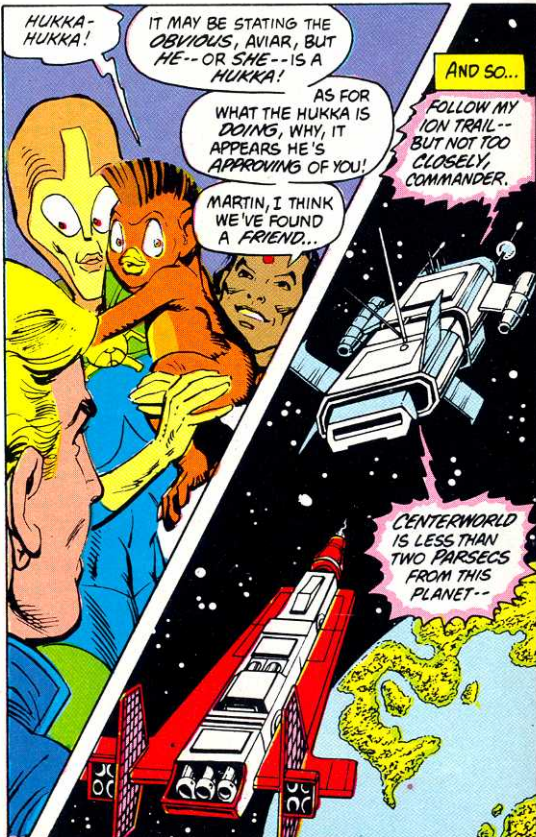
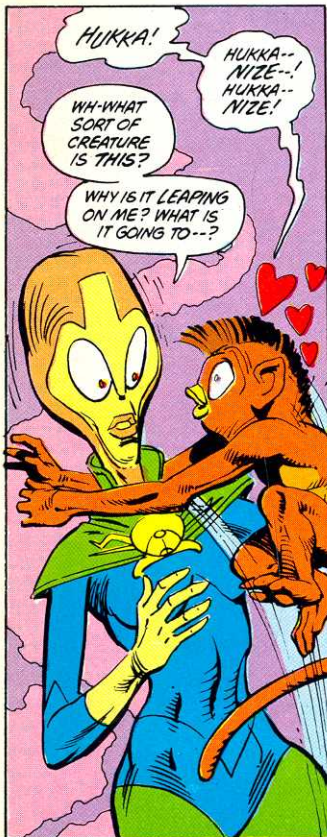
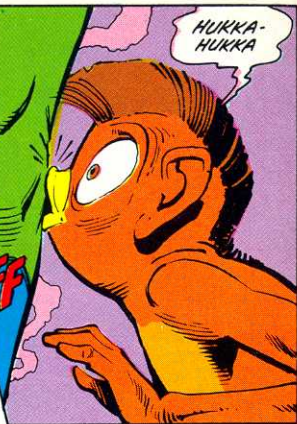
BY WHAT RIGHT DO YOU TRESPASS ON THIS PLANET?

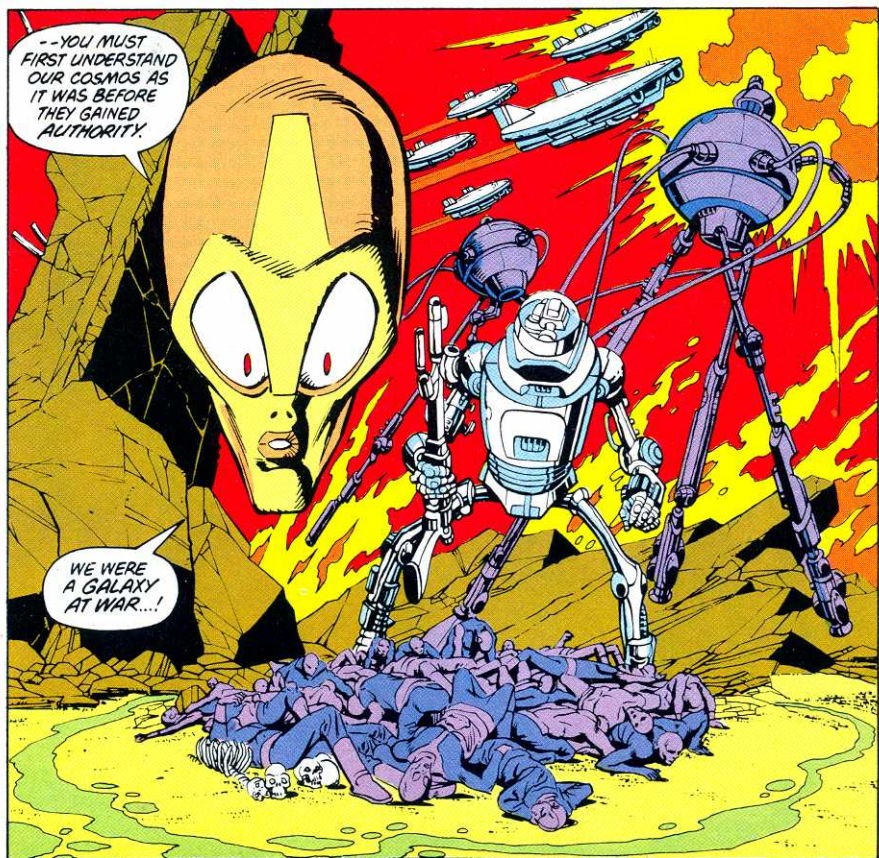
WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF YOURS?

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

I REPEAT: IDENTIFY YOURSELF!

CHAMPION, COMMANDER OF THE ATARI FORCE.





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

HATE!

RACE FOUGHT
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 CONTA-
GION, AND PERHAPS IT
WOULD HAVE CONTINUED
FOREVER UNTIL THE LAST
LIGHT OF LIFE WAS
EXTINGUISHED--

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

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

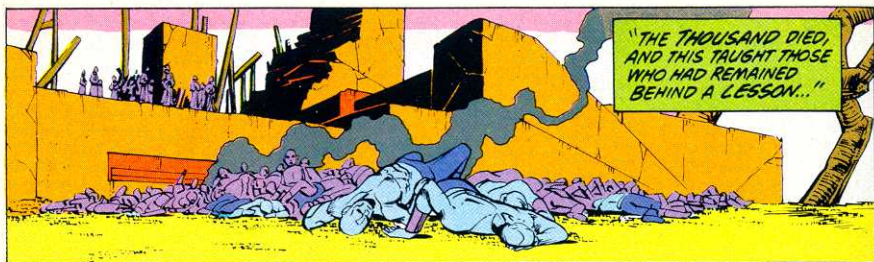
"... AND THE THOUSAND TURNED
THEIR BACKS ON THE LEADERS OF
THEIR WAR-BLASTED PLANET, AND
REFUSED TO WAR ANYMORE!"

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

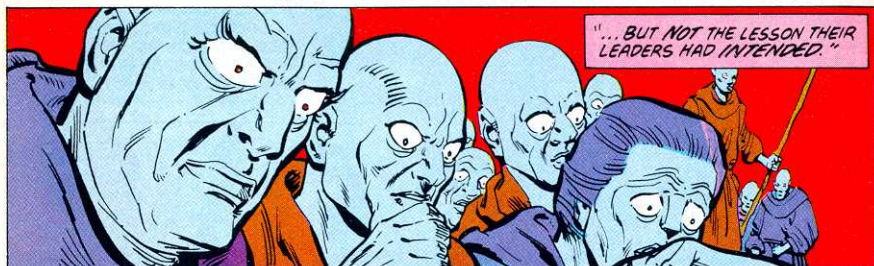
"THEY THREATENED,
AND WHEN THREATS
FAILED--"

"-- THEY DID
WHAT CAME
NATURALLY."

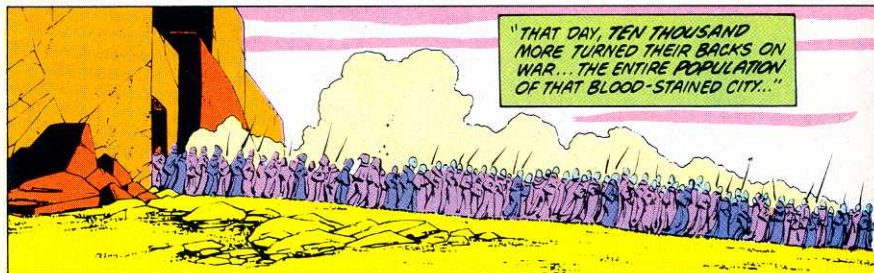
ZAM
ZAM
ZAM



"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..."

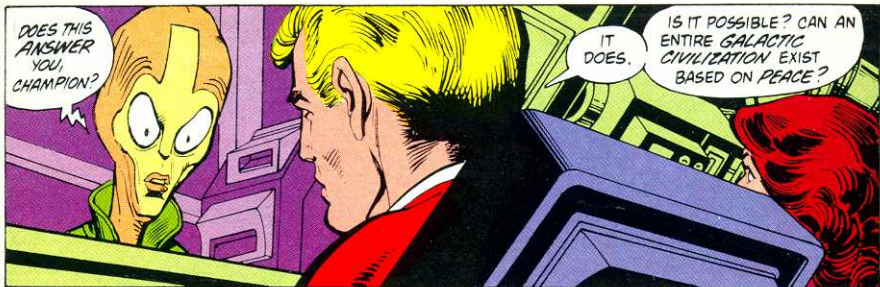
"... AND THEIR MESSAGE SPREAD FROM WORLD TO WORLD ACROSS THE GALAXY IN A MATTER OF DAYS AND MONTHS.

"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..."

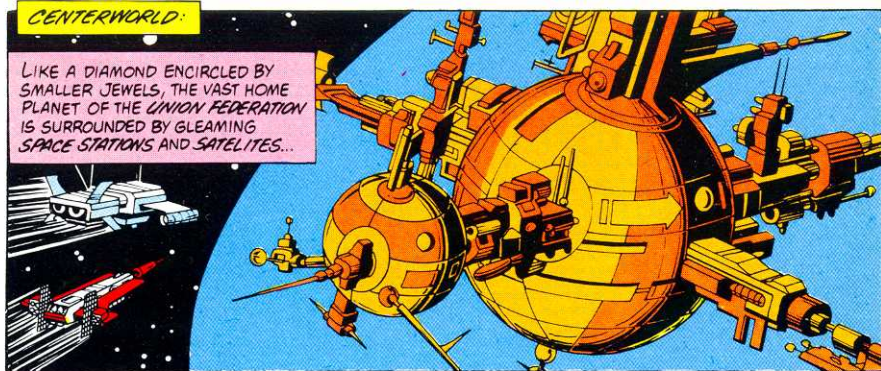
"... AND UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST CUSTODIANS, WHO WEAR THE SACRED SYMBOL OF STAR AND LEAF, WE HAVE REMAINED AT PEACE..."

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

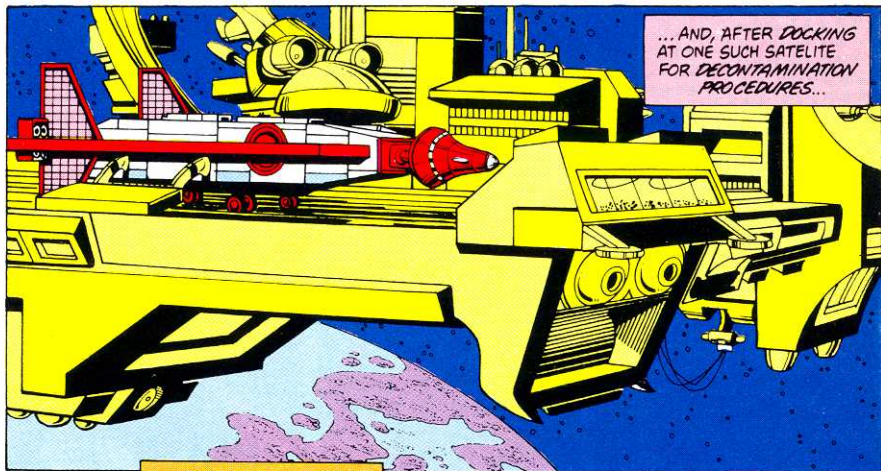


CENTERWORLD:

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



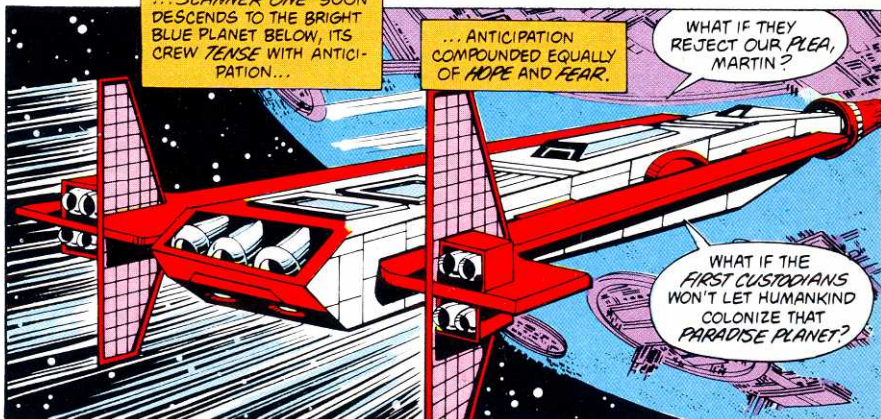
... AND, AFTER DOCKING AT ONE SUCH SATELITE FOR DECONTAMINATION PROCEDURES...



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

... ANTICIPATION COMPOUNDED EQUALLY OF HOPE AND FEAR.

WHAT IF THEY REJECT OUR PLEA, MARTIN?



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

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

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

AVIAR HAS ALREADY LANDED.

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

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

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

IT'LL TASTE LIKE A SHEET-METAL SNOP, 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.

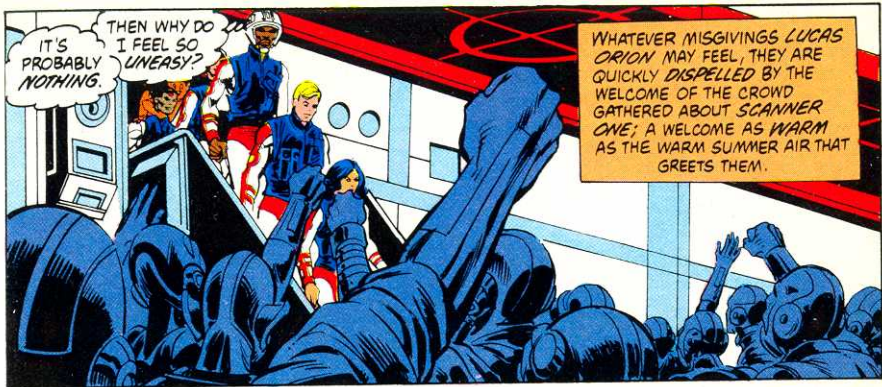
IT COULD BE ANOTHER SPACE STATION -- BUT THE READING INDICATES A SINGLE ORGANISM.

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 LINEASY?

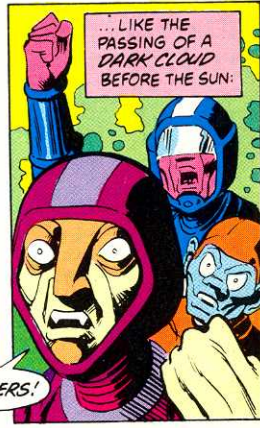
WHATEVER MISGIVINGS LUCAS ORION MAY FEEL, THEY ARE QUICKLY DISPELLED BY THE WELCOME OF THE CROWD GATHERED ABOUT SCANNER ONE; A WELCOME AS WARM AS THE WARM SUMMER AIR THAT GREETES THEM.



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



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



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

INTRUDERS!



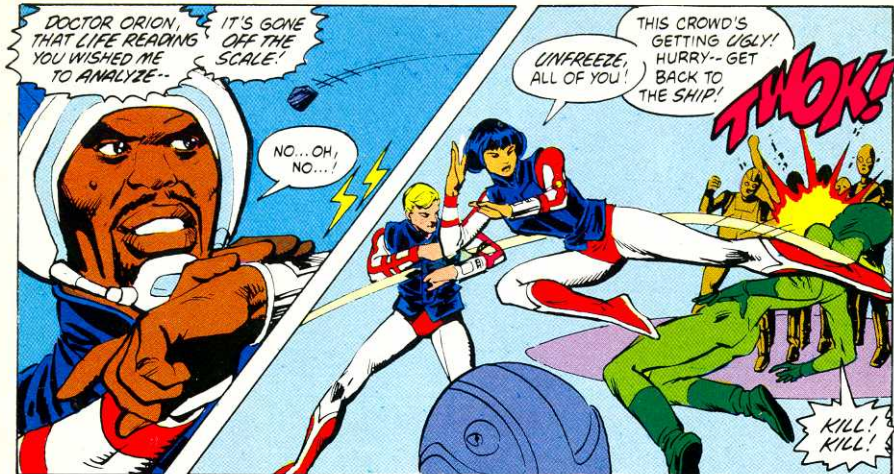
MARTIN-- WHAT'S HAPPENING--?

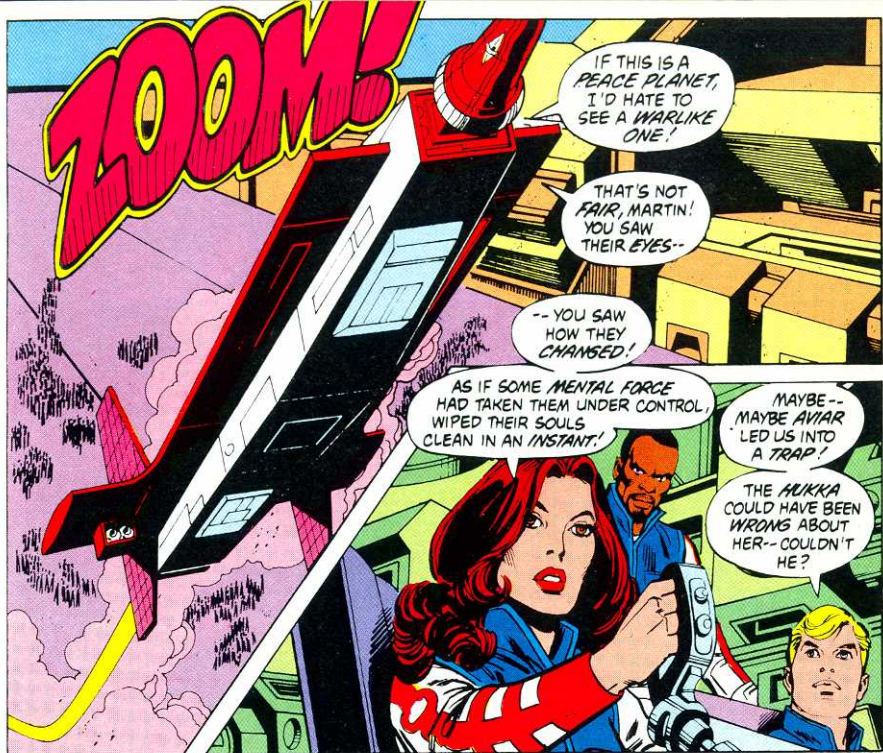
THEIR FACES, LOOK AT THEM--!

THEY'RE GOING CRAZY!

INTRUDERS! TRESPASSERS. KILL THE ALIENS!

KILL THEM ALL!





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

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

-- YOU SAW HOW THEY CHANGED!

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

MAYBE-- MAYBE AVIAR LED US INTO A TRAP!

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



THE HUKKA WASN'T WRONG, MARTIN.

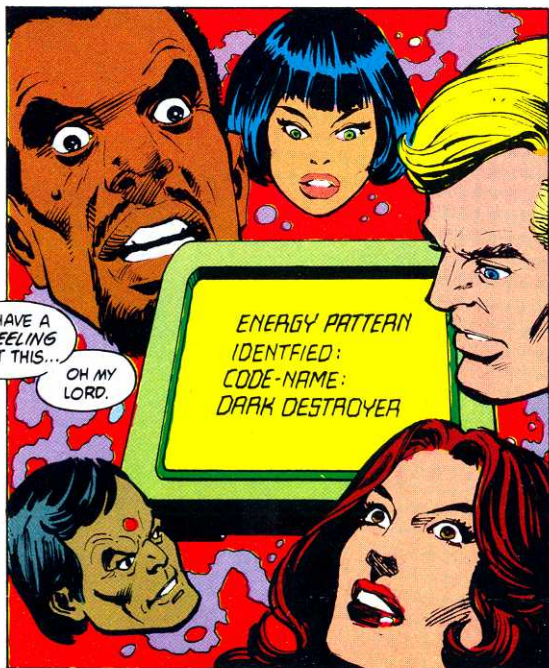
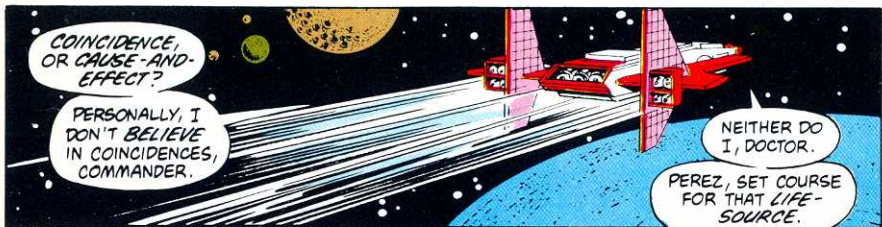
PEREZ HAS IT RIGHT: A MENTAL FORCE TOOK CONTROL.



LET ME HOOK UP MY SENSOR TO THE COMPUTER--

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

WHRRRRR

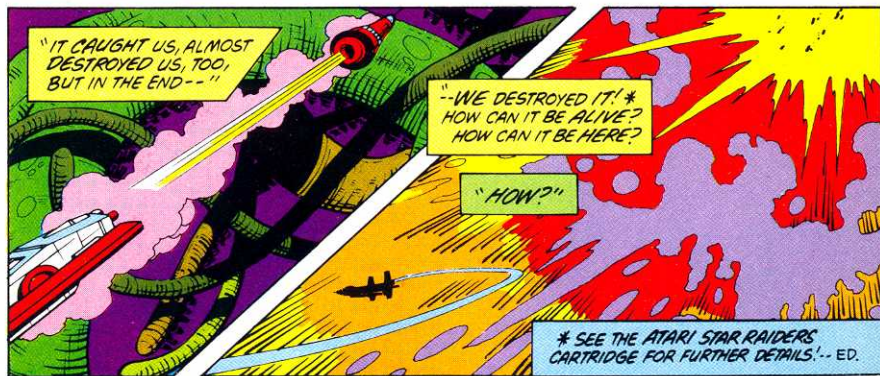




NO-- IT CAN'T BE!
THE DARK DESTROYER IS DEAD!

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

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

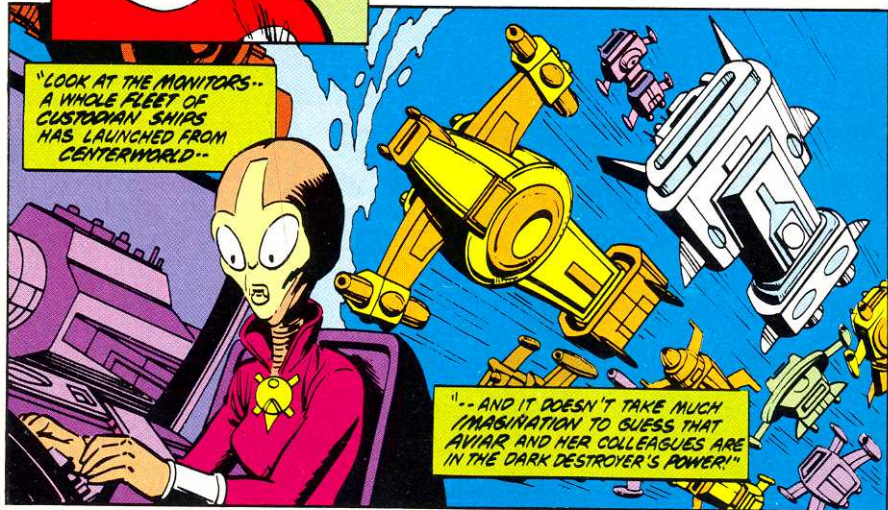
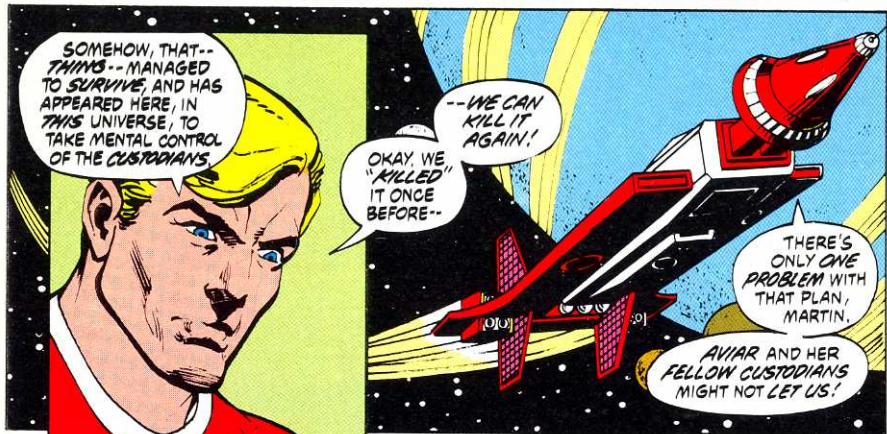


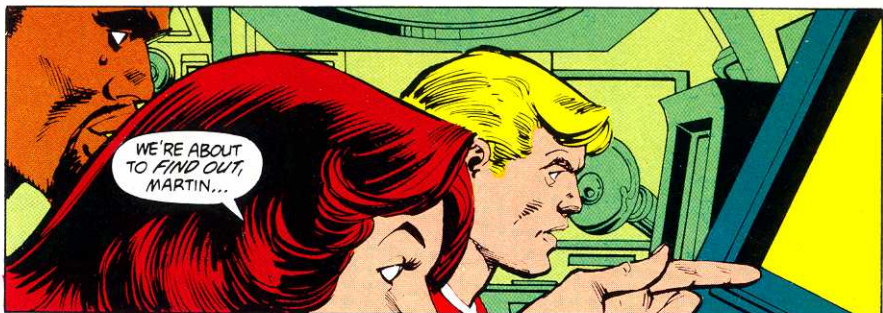
"IT CAUGHT US, ALMOST DESTROYED US, TOO, BUT IN THE END--"

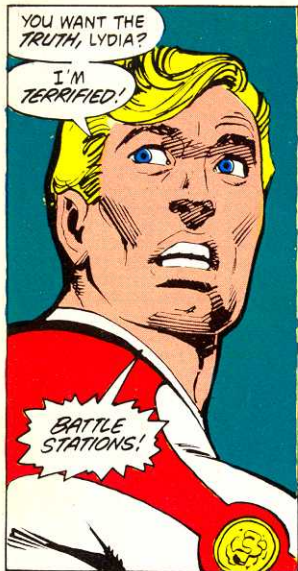
--WE DESTROYED IT! * HOW CAN IT BE ALIVE? HOW CAN IT BE HERE?

"HOW?"

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









FIRE!

BLAM!

ZAM!

TWO
DOWN,
MARTIN--

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

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

BWHOOH!

WE'RE
HIT!

-- DROPPING
INTO ATTACK
FORMATION!
WE
HAVE TO FALL
BACK BEFORE
THEY--

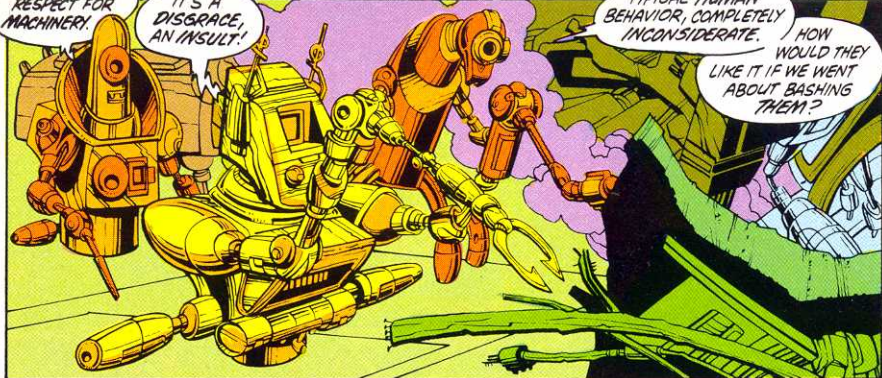
SINGH,
SEND OUT
THE REPAIR-
ROBS!

TCH-TCH, NO RESPECT FOR MACHINERY.

IT'S A DISGRACE, AN INSULT!

TYPICAL HUMAN BEHAVIOR, COMPLETELY INCONSIDERATE.

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



BATTLE:

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



...YET CANNOT SEEM TO GRASP THEIR MINDS!

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



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

COMMANDER,
IS IT MY FEVERED
IMAGINATION--

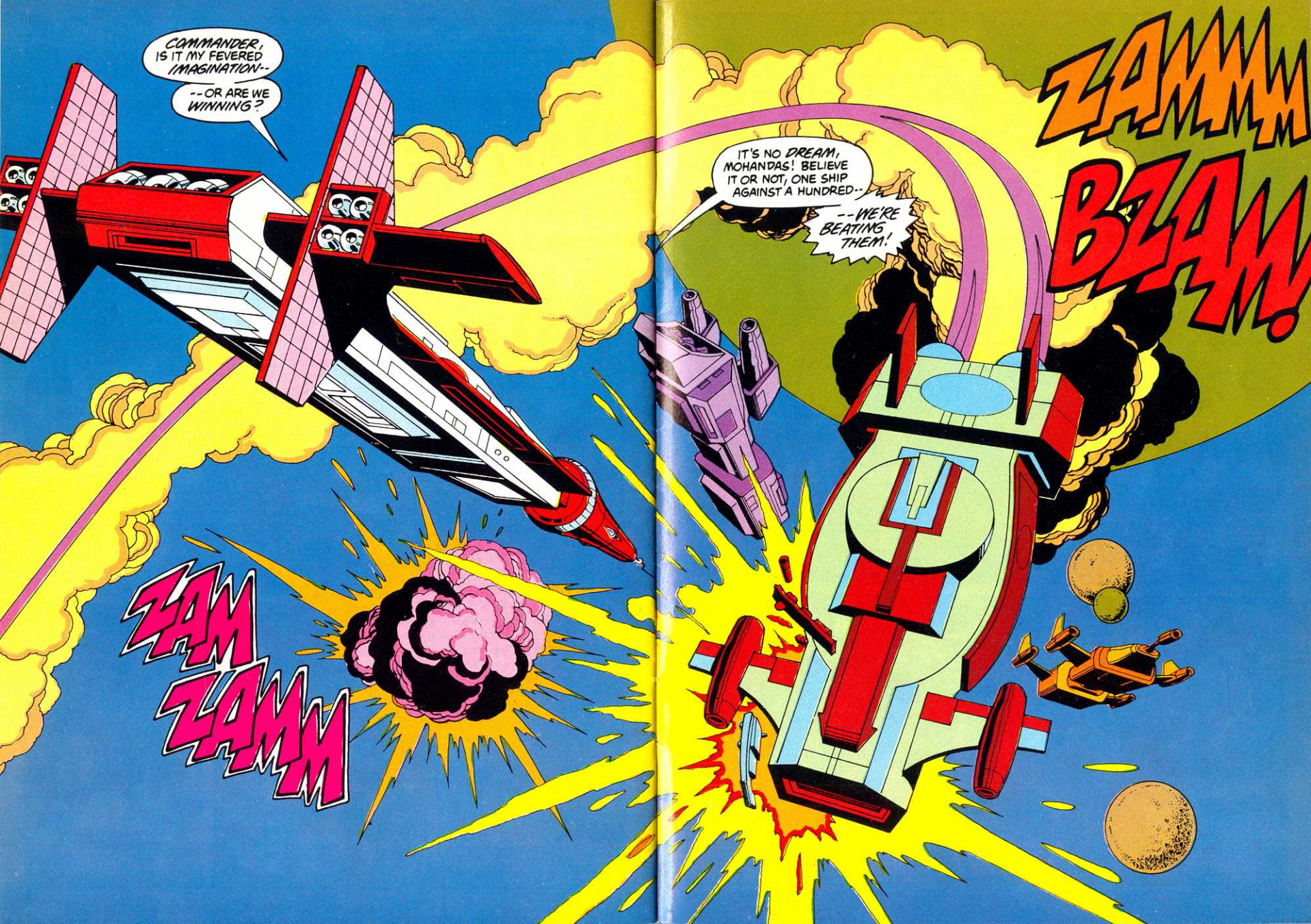
--OR ARE WE
WINNING?

ZAM
ZAMM

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

--WE'RE
BEATING
THEM!

ZAMMM
BLAM!



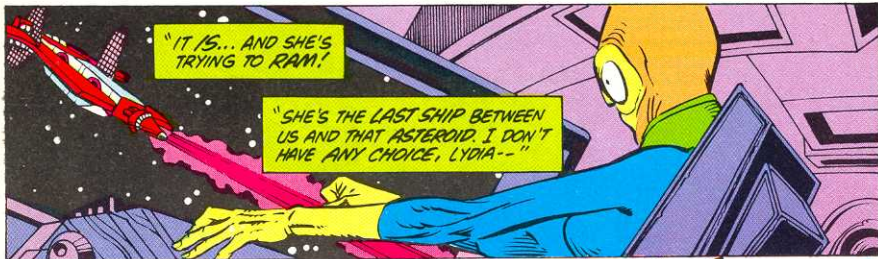


AND WE ALL KNOW WHY:

BECAUSE ~~WE~~ WE COME FROM A WORLD THAT HASN'T YET OUTGROWN WAR, AND ~~THEY~~ THEY WERE BORN TO A CULTURE DEDICATED TO PEACE!

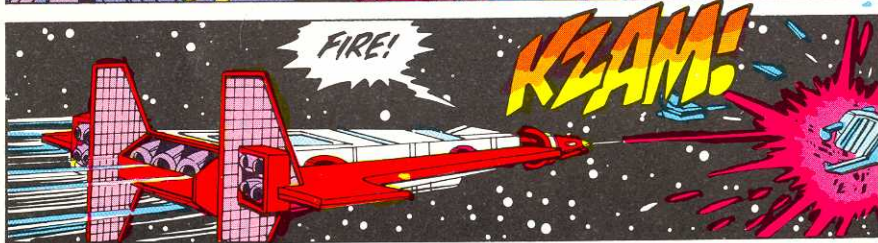
HEAVEN FORGIVE US, WE HAVE ONE ADVANTAGE-- PRACTICE!

MARTIN-- DIVING AT US-- ISN'T THAT AVIAR'S SHIP?



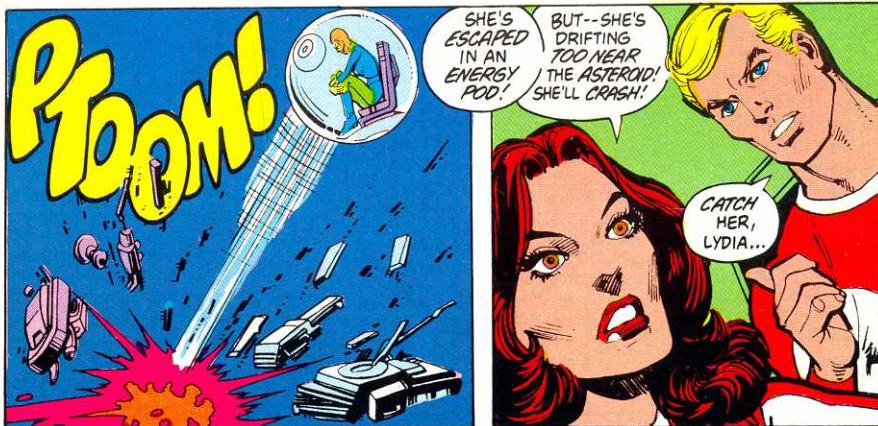
"IT IS... AND SHE'S TRYING TO RAM!"

"SHE'S THE LAST SHIP BETWEEN US AND THAT ASTEROID. I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE, LYDIA--"



FIRE!

KZAM!

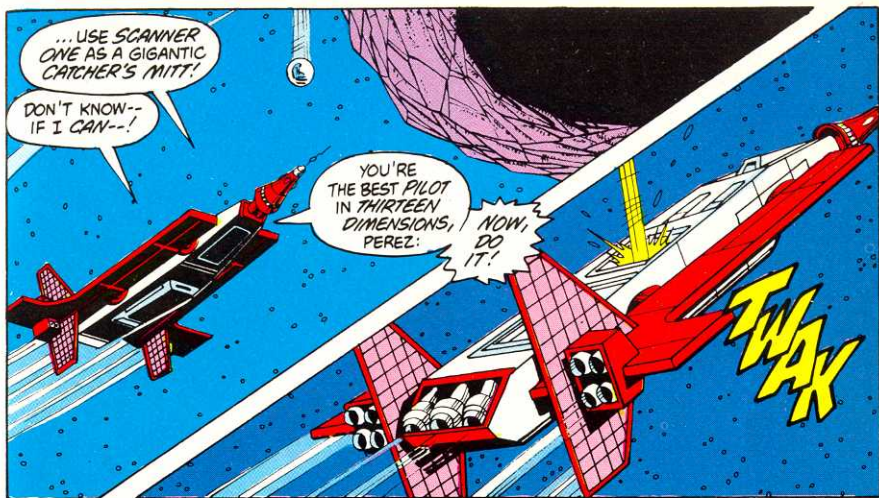


POOM!

SHE'S ESCAPED IN AN ENERGY POD!

BUT-- SHE'S DRIFTING TOO NEAR THE ASTEROID! SHE'LL CRASH!

CATCH HER, LYDIA...



...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!

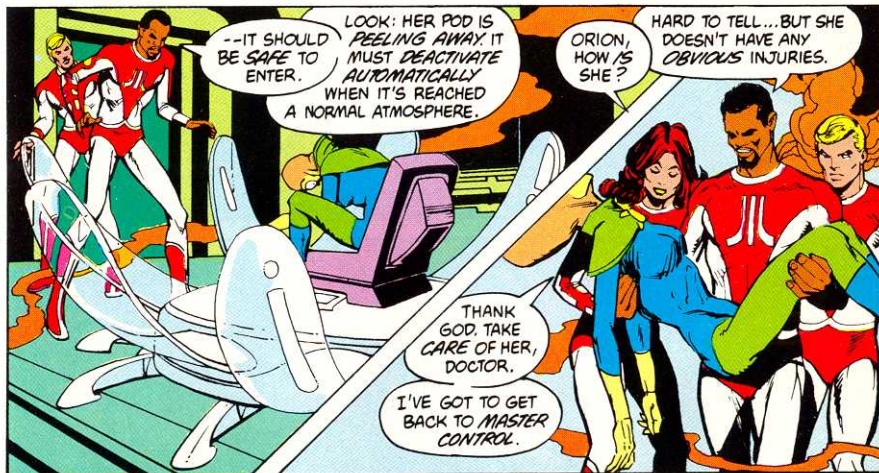
TWAAX



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.

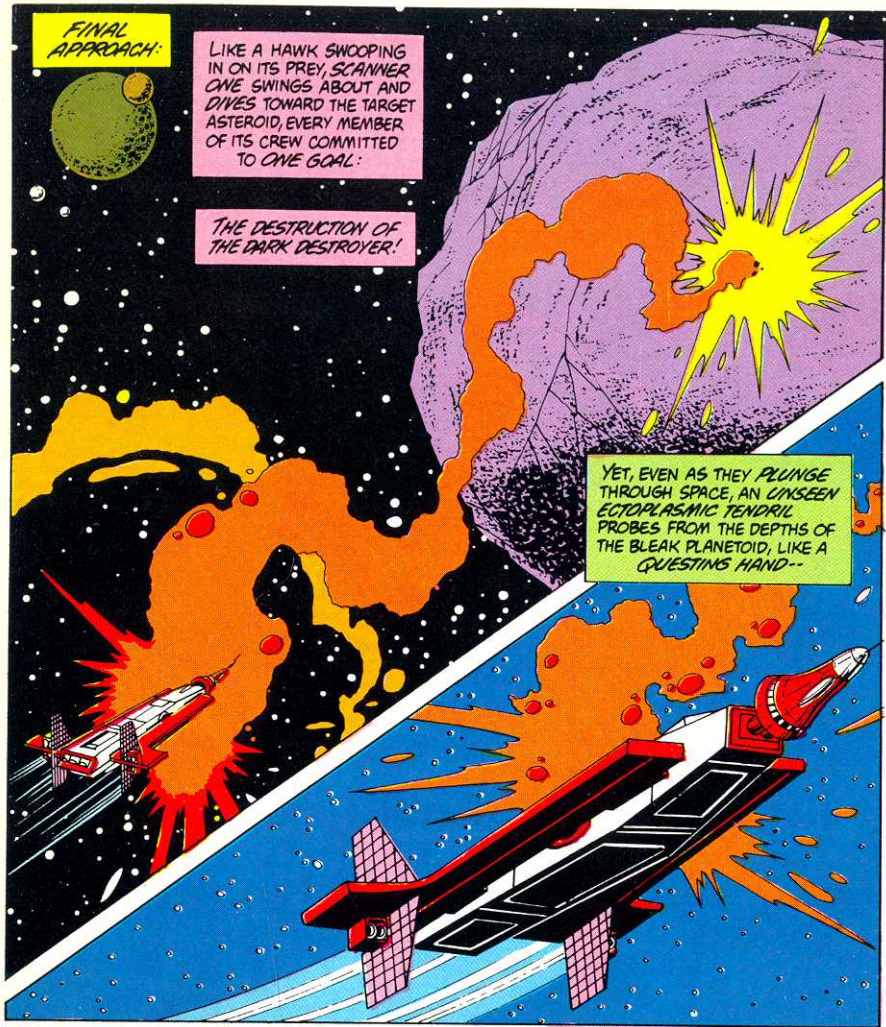
I'VE GOT TO GET
BACK TO MASTER
CONTROL.

**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--

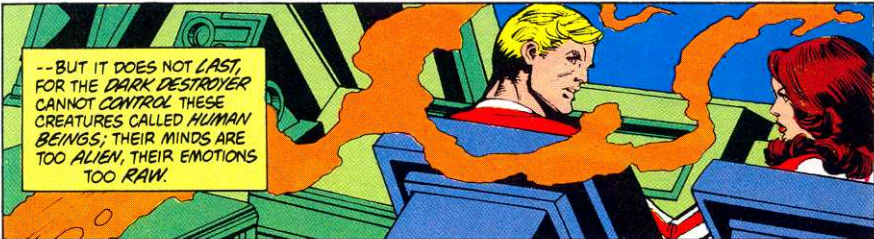


-- AND WHOEVER
IT TOUCHES FEELS
A WAVE OF **BLACK
NAUSEA**, LIKE THE
SUDDEN RISING
TIDE OF AN **EVIL
SEA**:

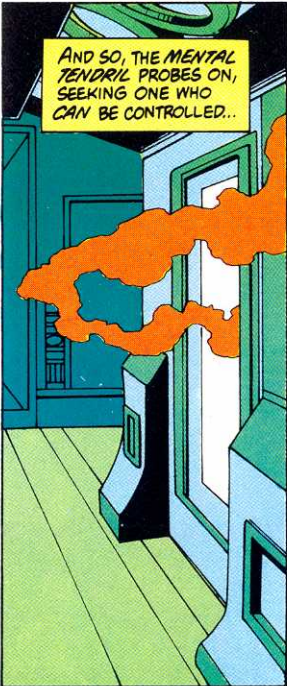




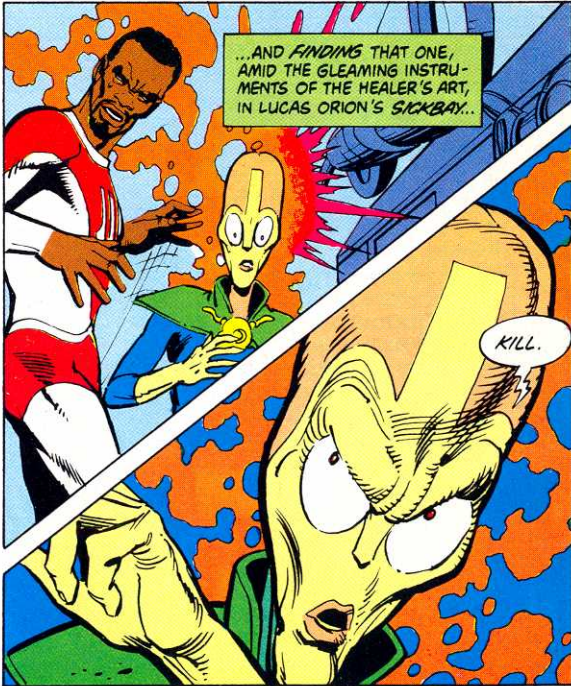
IT IS THE MENTAL
ESSENCE OF THE DARK
DESTROYER, AND FOR
AN INSTANT, FOUL AND
INDESCRIBABLE EVIL
PERVADES THE HEARTS
OF ALL ABOARD--



-- 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.

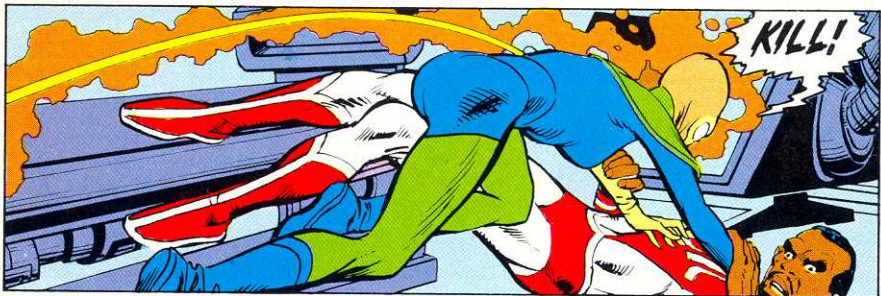


AND SO, THE MENTAL
TENDRIL PROBES ON,
SEEKING ONE WHO
CAN BE CONTROLLED..



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

KILL.

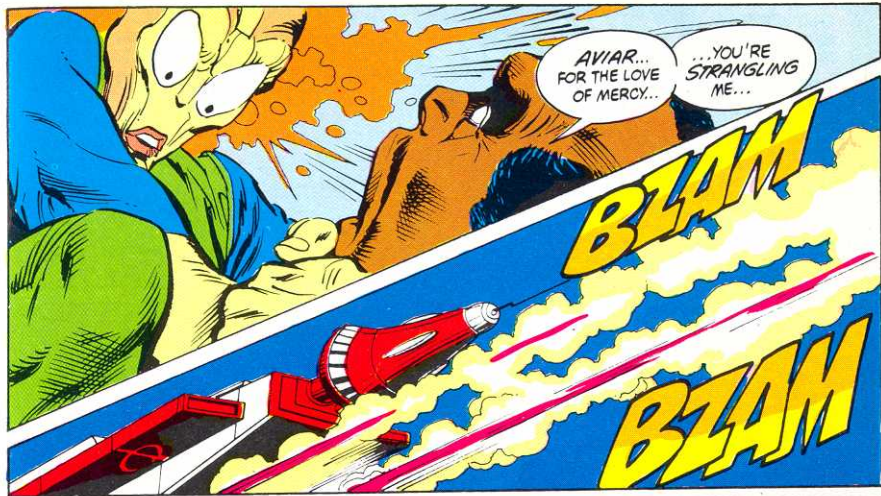


UNNOTICED BY HIS FELLOWS, EACH CONCERNED WITH THEIR OWN DUTIES IN THESE LAST CLOSING SECONDS--



--AS MARTIN CHAMPION GIVES THE FATEFUL ORDER:







THAT SCREAM BEFORE SHE PASSED OUT...

... SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE'S DYING CRY!

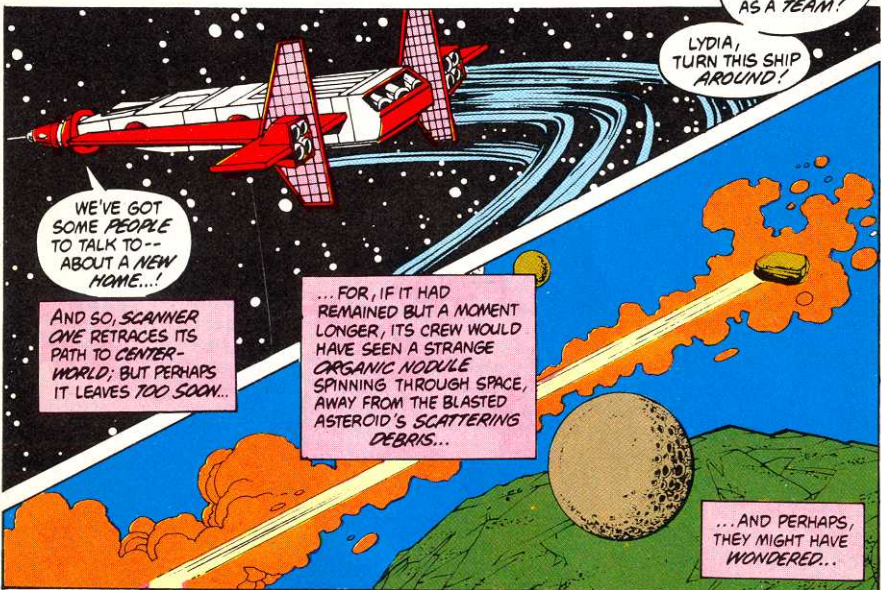
IF SHE WAS UNDER THE DESTROYER'S MENTAL CONTROL, THAT MUST MEAN--



IT'S DEAD!

YOU DID IT, COMMANDER!

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



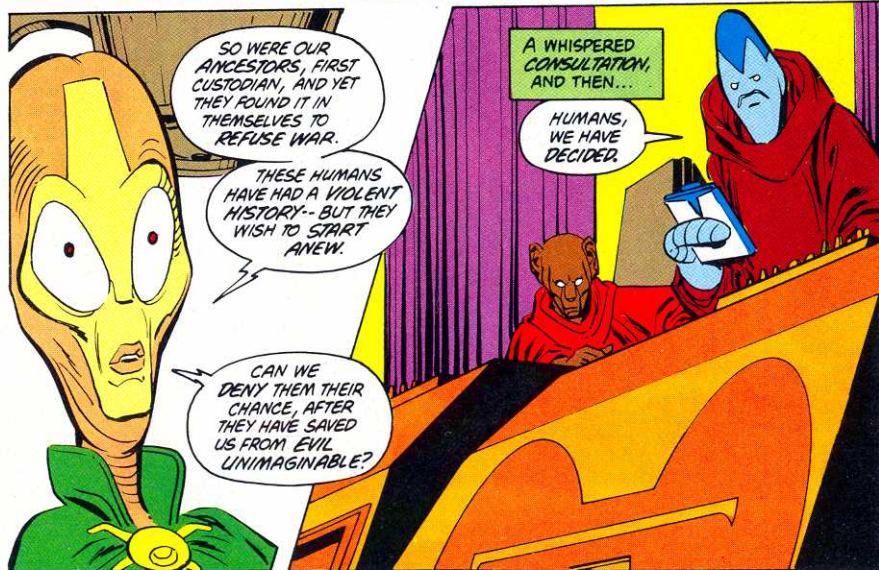
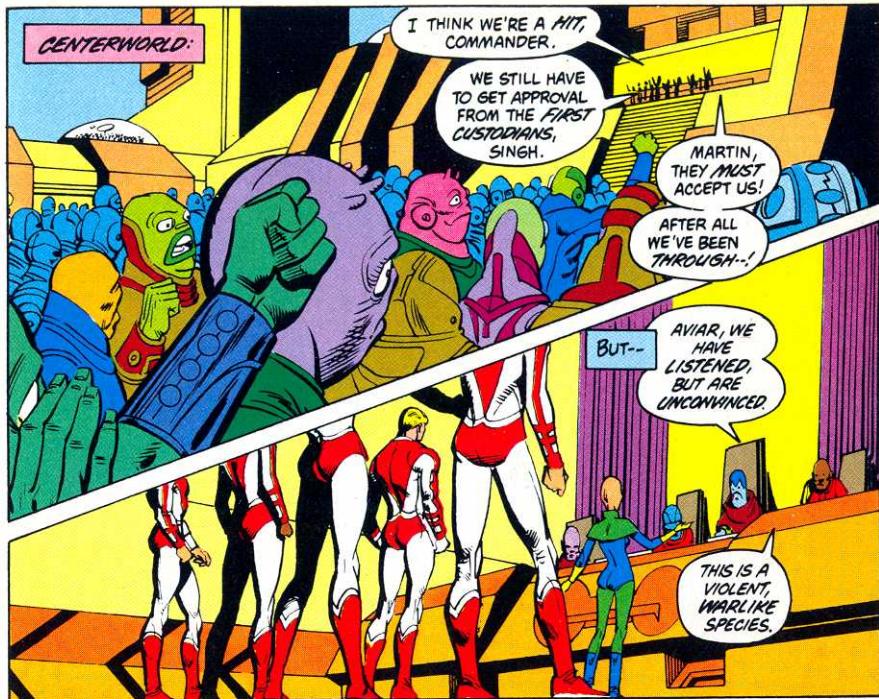
LYDIA, TURN THIS SHIP AROUND!

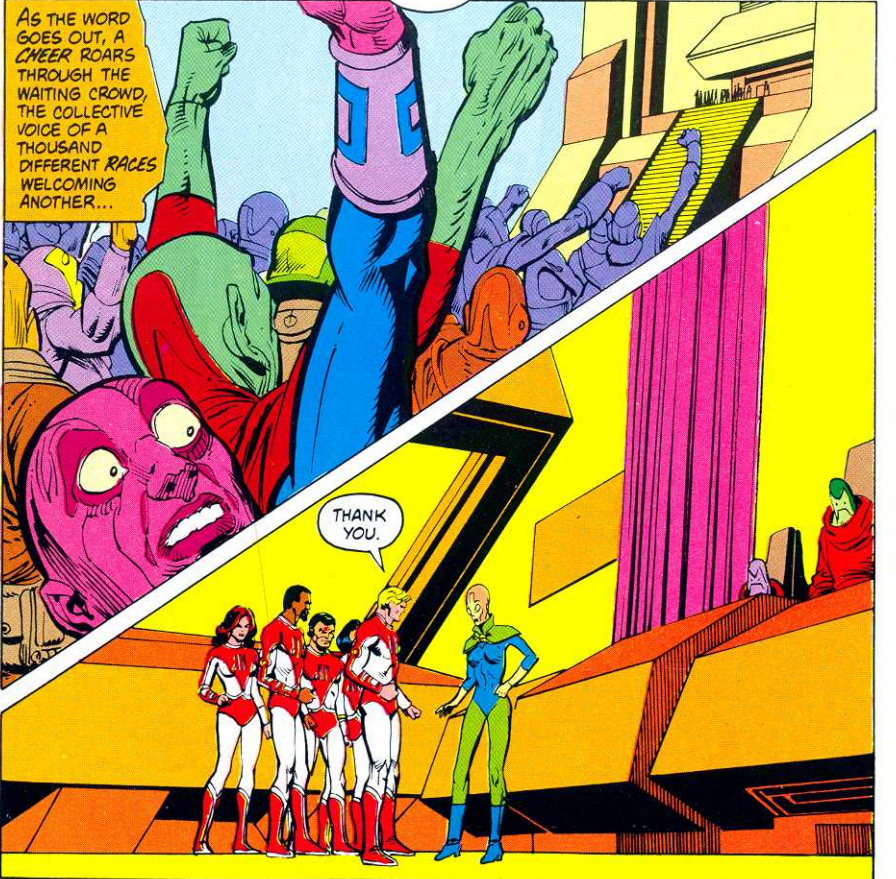
WE'VE GOT SOME PEOPLE TO TALK TO-- ABOUT A NEW HOME...!

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

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

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





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

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



MULTIVERSE
DRIVE ACTIVATED!

EXODUS
ONE IS
AWAY!

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

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

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



