



BY
GERRY CONWAY AND
JOSE LUIS GARCIA LOPEZ

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ATARI FORCE™

BLACKJAK IS BACK--



THE NEW



THERE'S NO
STOPPING
US NOW.

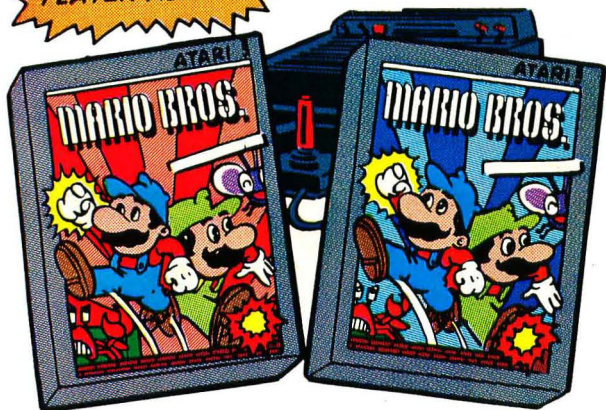
--AND,
BOY,
IS HE IN
TROUBLE
!

Concannon

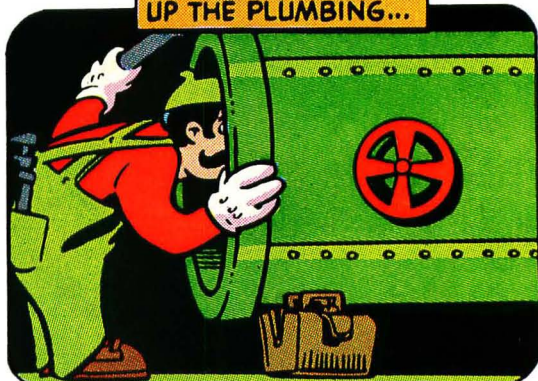
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Another smash arcade hit brought home only by Atari for use with the ATARI® 2600™ Game, Sears Video Arcade† systems and versions exclusively for the ATARI 5200™ Super System.

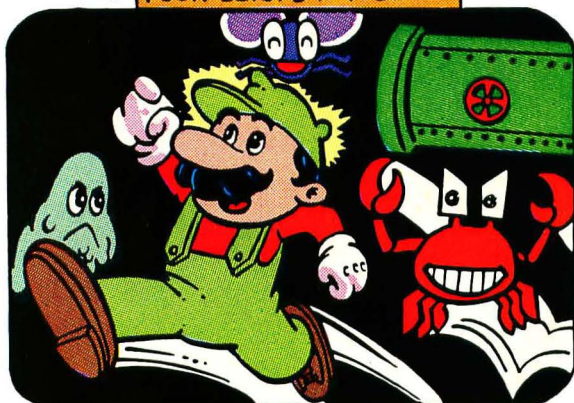
EXCITING 2
PLAYER ACTION!



SOMETHING'S GUMMING
UP THE PLUMBING...



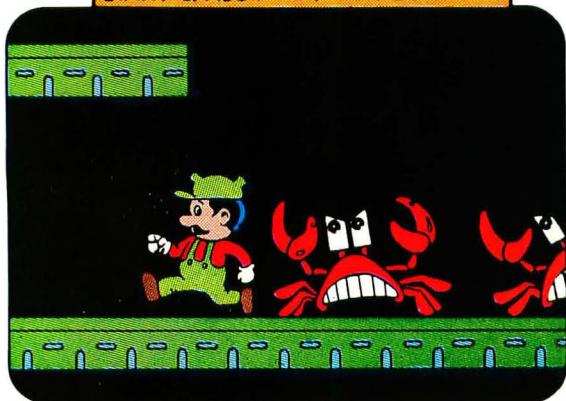
POOR LUIGI'S IN A BIND...



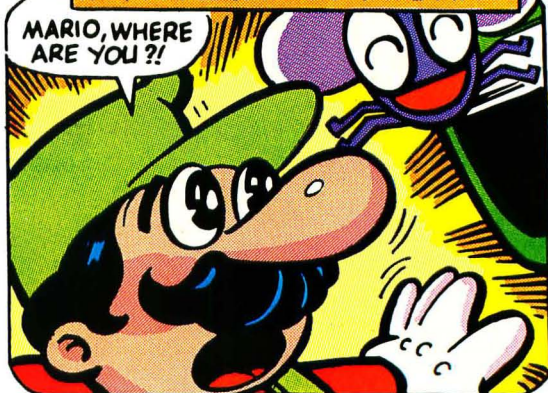
KILLER TURTLES OUT TO GET HIM...



GIANT CRABS ARE RIGHT BEHIND...



FIGHTER FLIES, HOLY CRIPES!
THEY'RE ALL COMING OUT THE PIPES!



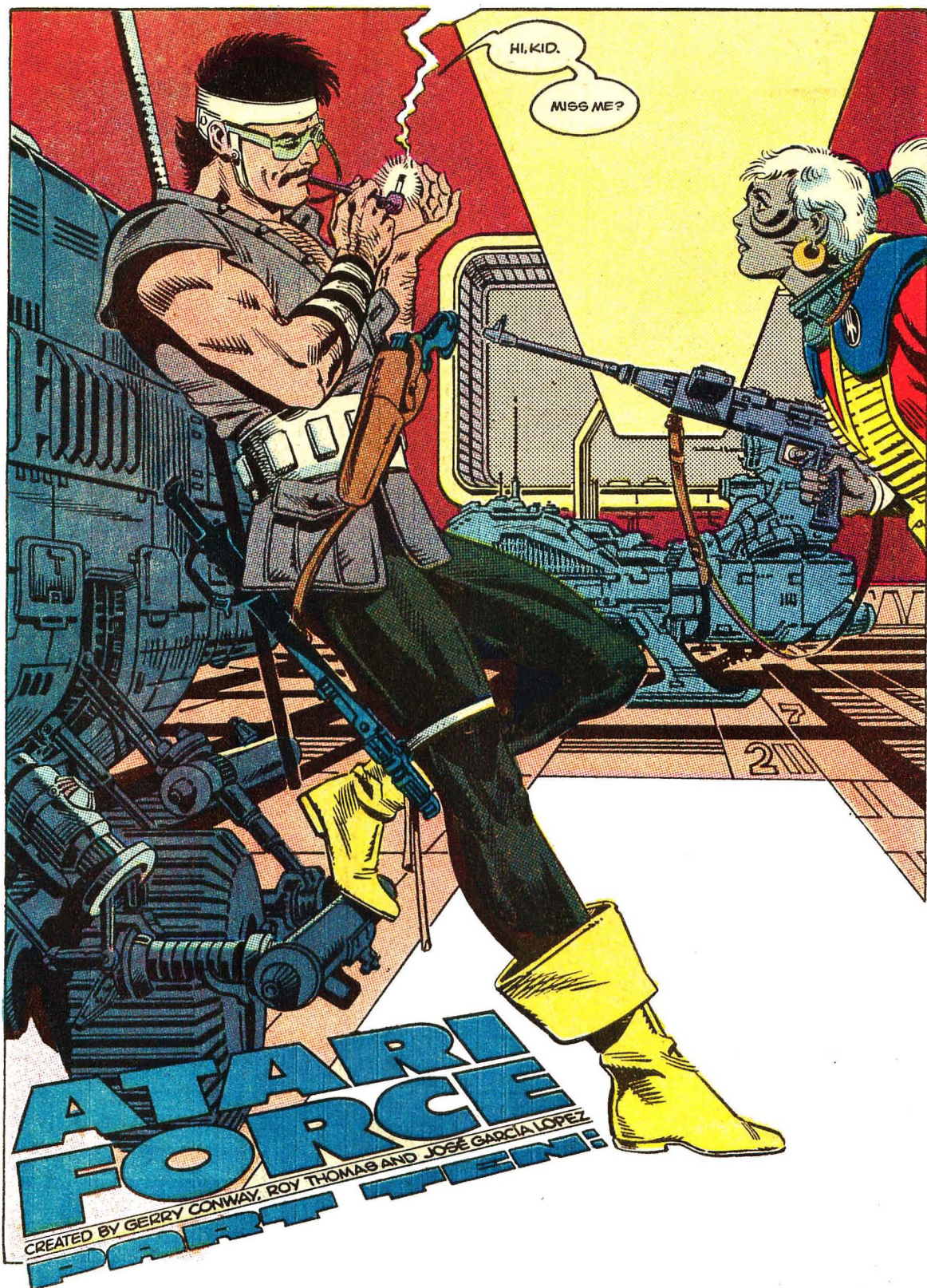
MARIO BROS.*

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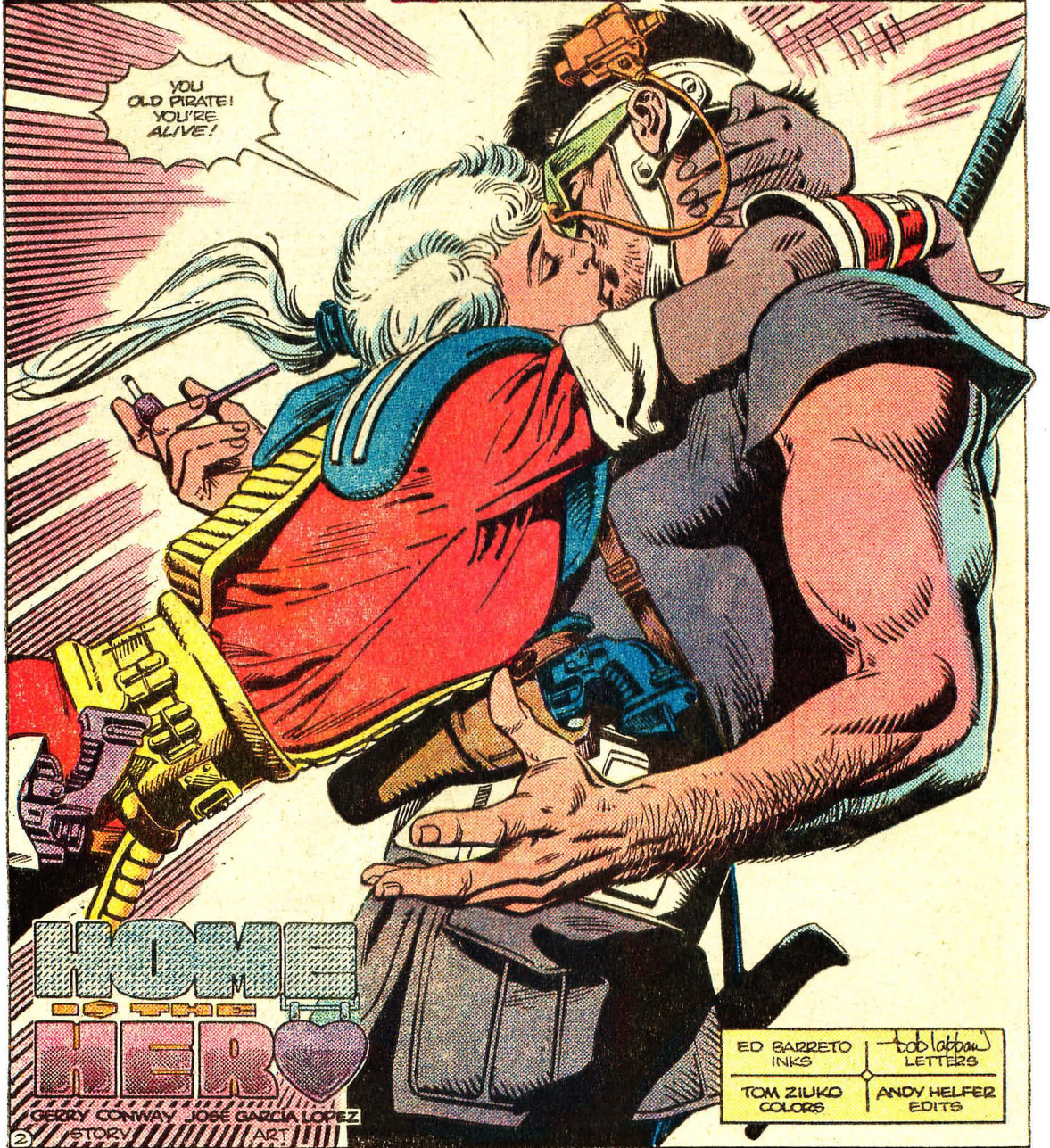


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BLACKJAK...
YOU'RE
ALIVE?



HOME IS THE HER

GEZZY CONWAY JOSE GARCIA LOPEZ

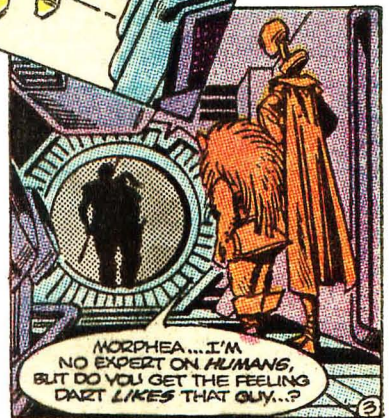
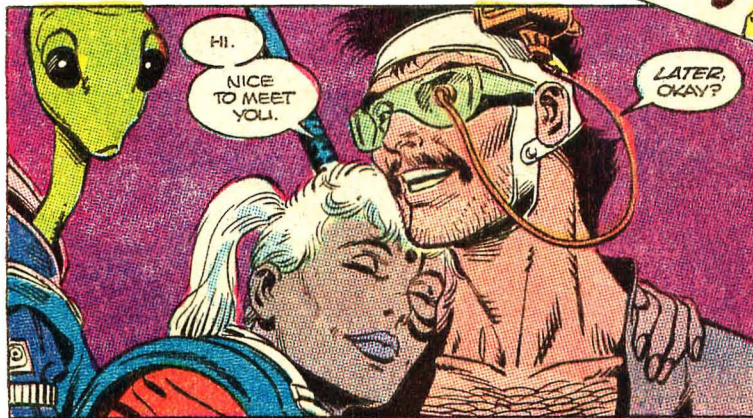
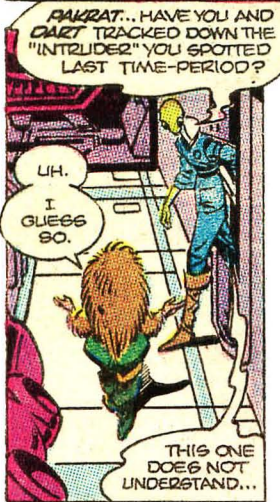
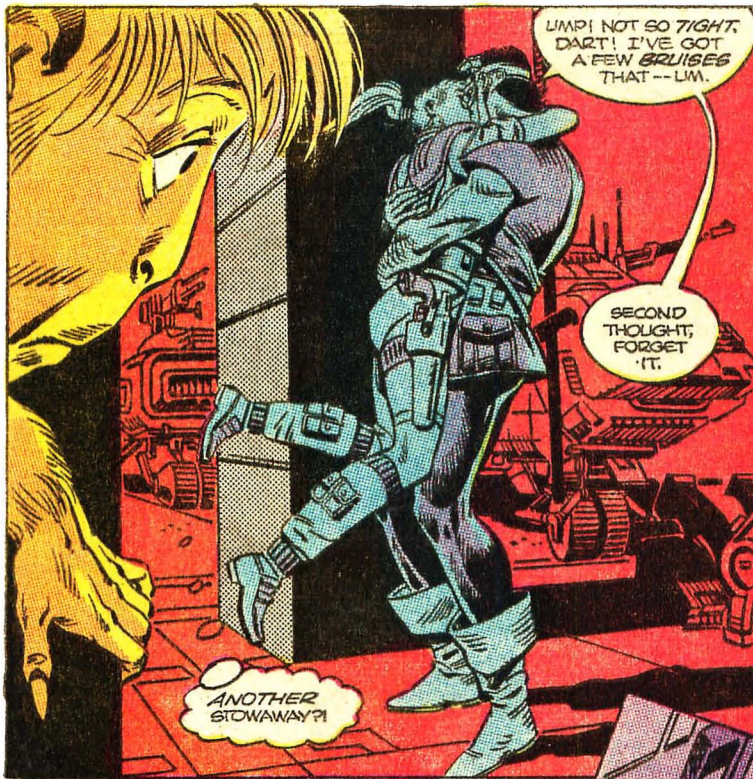
STORY ART

ED BARRETO
INKS

bob labban
LETTERS

TOM ZILKO
COLORS

ANDY HELFER
EDITS



SCANNER ONE

PROTOTYPE RESEARCH SHIP OF THE ORIGINAL ATARI INSTITUTE ON OLD EARTH, COMMANDERED BY MARTIN CHAMPION AND HIS CREW OF MISFITS.

CHAMPION'S SELF-IMPOSED MISSION: TO FIND AND REMOVE THE BEING KNOWN ONLY AS THE DARK DESTROYER...

...A MISSION THAT'S JUST BEEN MADE A TAD MORE COMPLICATED.

ACCORDING TO WHAT DART TOLD US WEEKS AGO, THIS MERCENARY FRIEND OF HERS DIED IN A TRAP SET BY THE DESTROYER-- SHE CONFIRMED IT, SAW IT.*

IT WOULD APPEAR SHE WAS MISTAKEN.

*ATARI FORCE #3 --Andy

I DON'T BUY IT. DART'S A TRAINED SOLDIER, AN EXPERT. SHE WOULDN'T HAVE LASTED TEN MINUTES IN A WAR IF SHE MADE MISTAKES LIKE THAT.

THIS "BLACKJAK" MUST BE AN IMPOSTOR.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE EVIDENCE PROVES OTHERWISE. ALL SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE OPERATING IN OUR GALAXY MUST REGISTER THEIR GENE CODES WITH THE SUPREME COUNCIL.

BLACKJAK ALLOWED THIS ONE TO TAKE A SAMPLE OF HIS BLOOD SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL.

CODE DIND

THE GENE CODE MATCHES PERFECTLY WITH THE CODE ON FILE IN ATARI'S MAINFRAME COMPUTER.

IT STINKS.

YOU'RE THE ENMATH, MORPHEA. GET CLOSE TO HIM...TRY TO READ HIS MIND, IF YOU CAN.

I'LL LAY ODDS HE'S BEEN SENT BY THE DESTROYER. I FEEL IT IN MY BONES.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

FUN FOR EVERYONE!

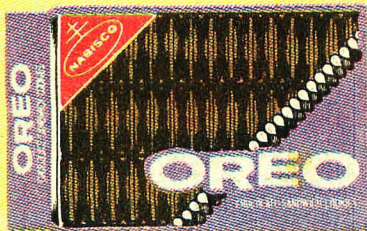
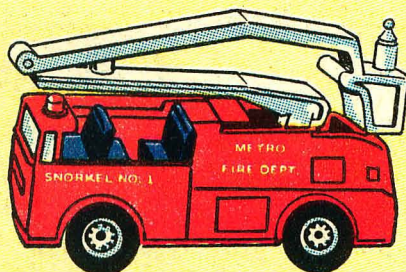
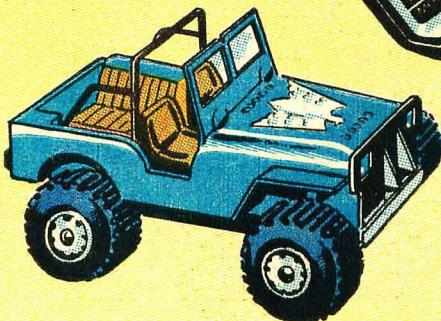
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I have enclosed \$1.00 and
TWO Purchase Seals from
any two packages of OREO®,
FIG NEWTONS and/or
APPLE NEWTONS Cookies
for each set of stickers.

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THREE Purchase Seals
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Cookies for each watch.

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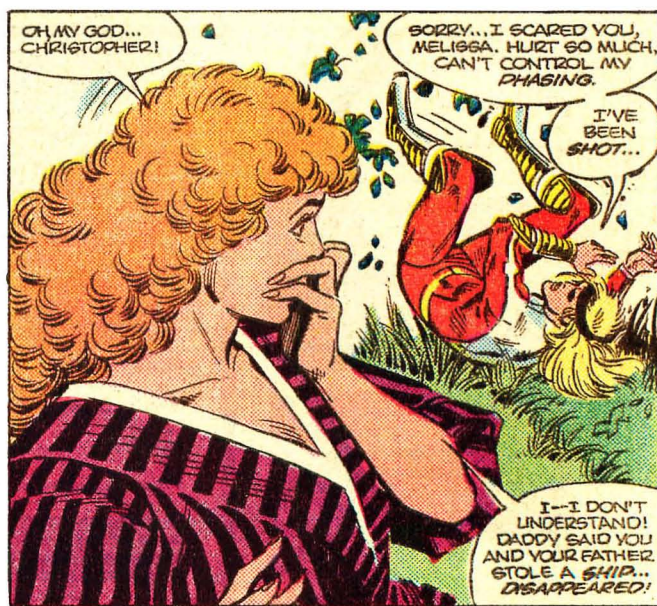
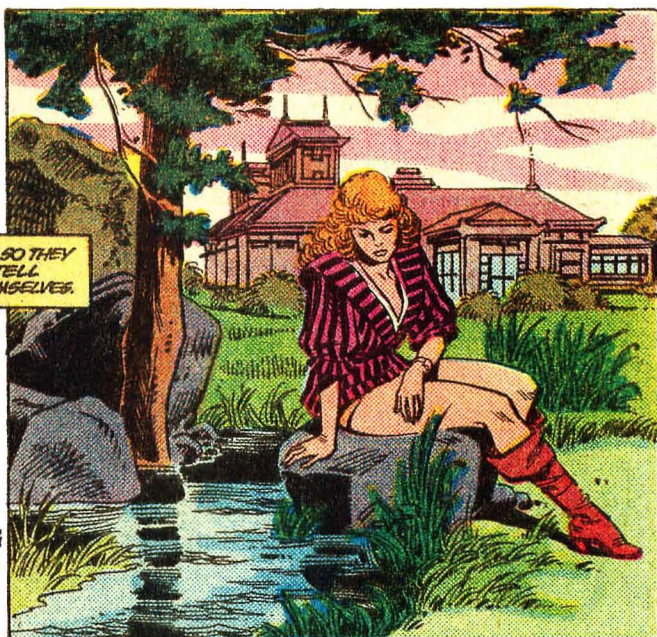
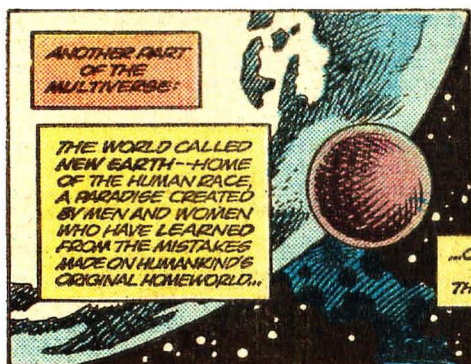
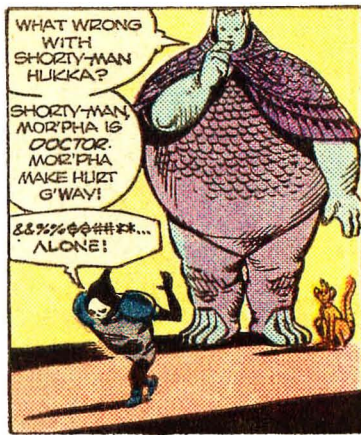
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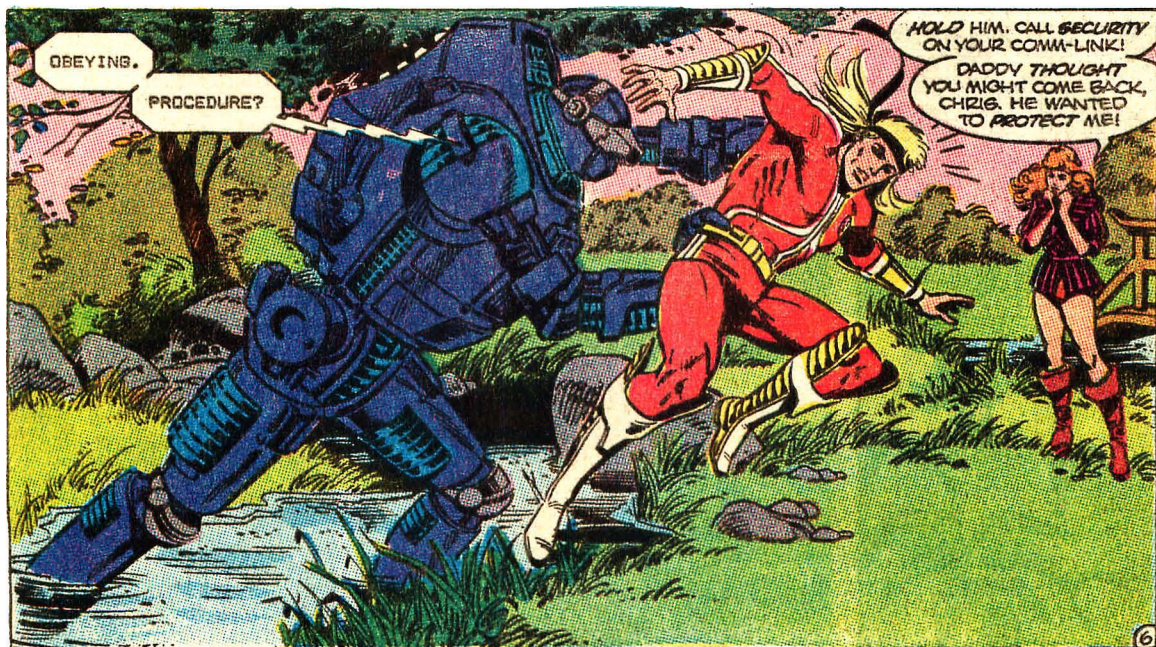
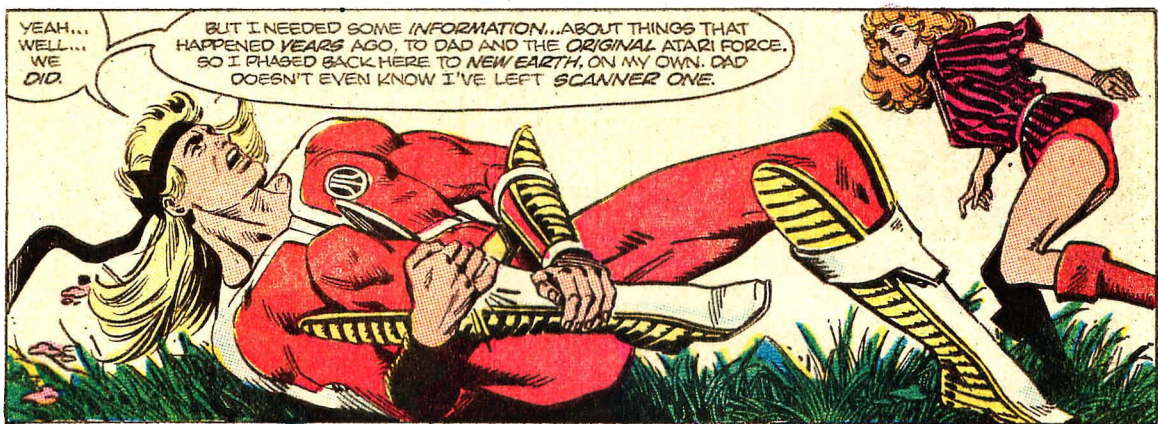
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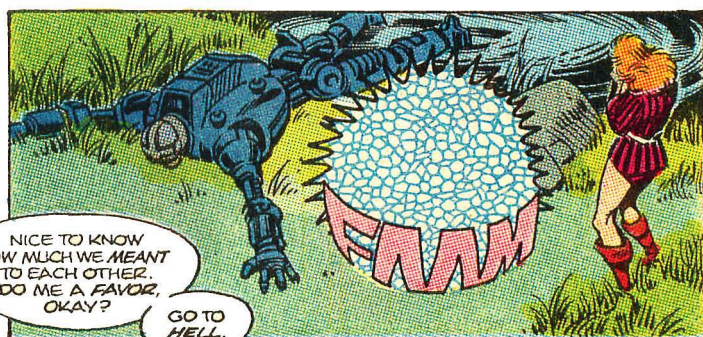
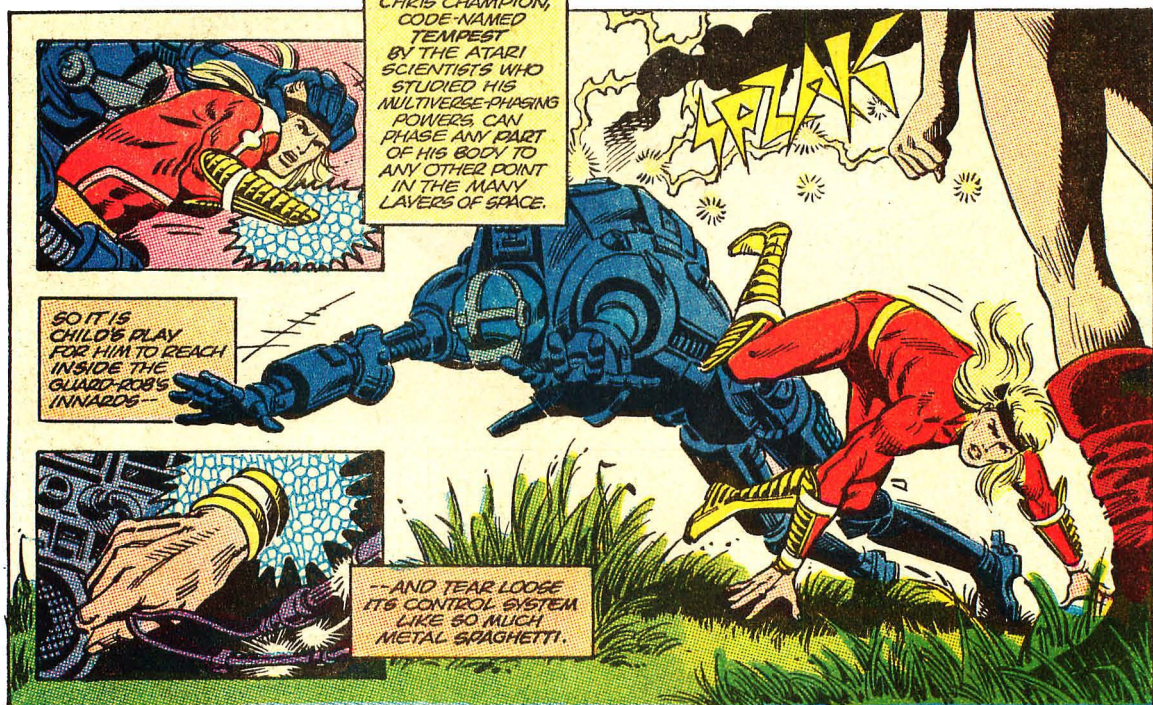
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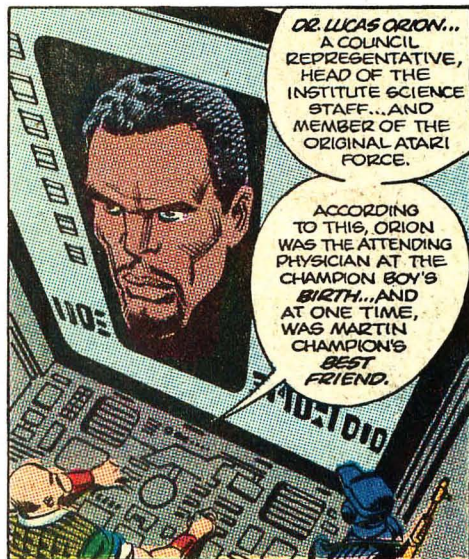
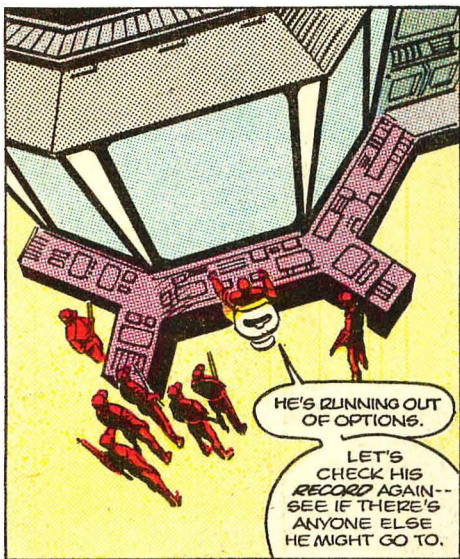
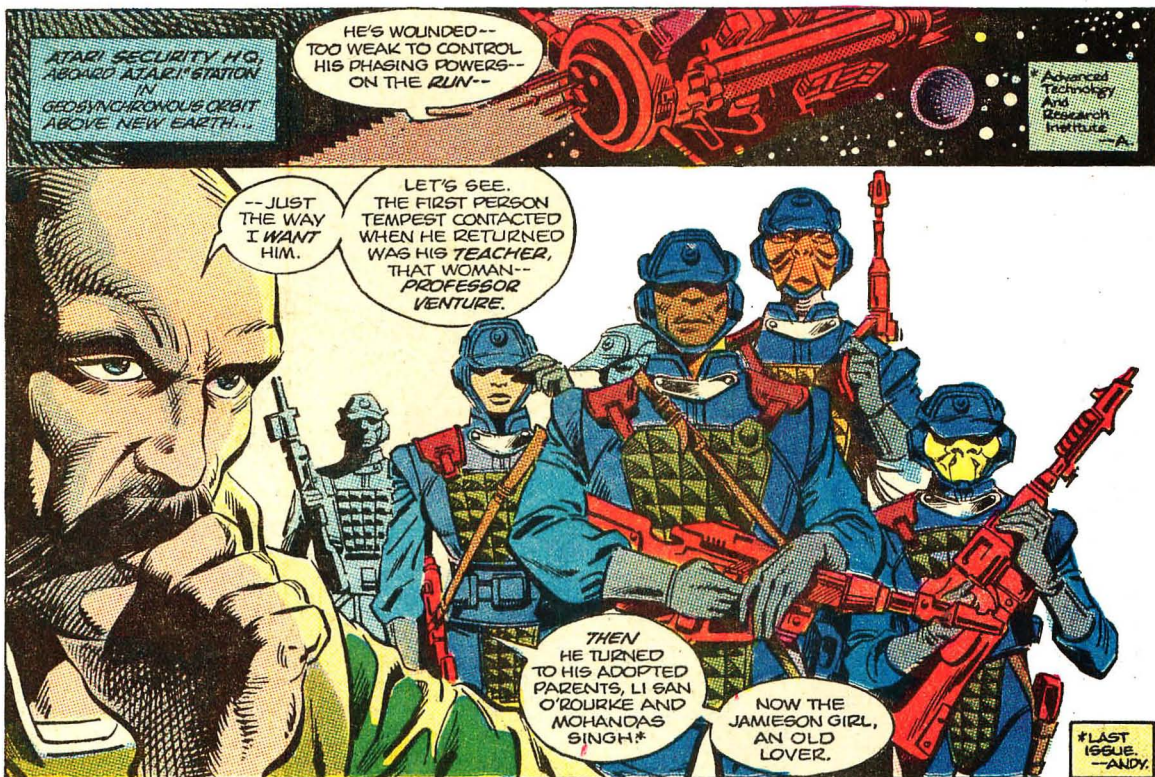
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ELSEWHERE
IN THE
MULTIVERSE:

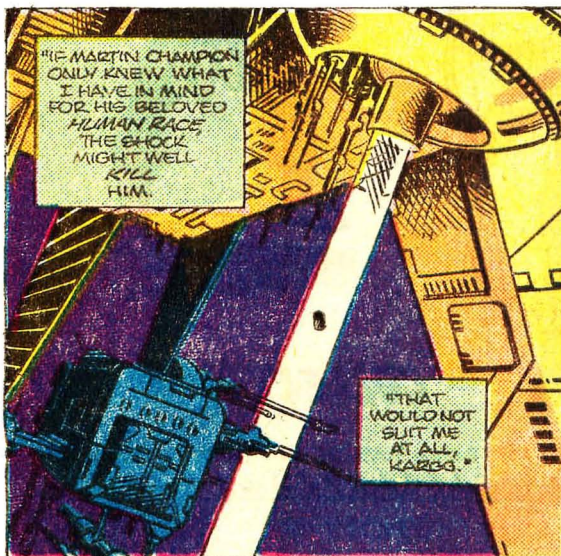
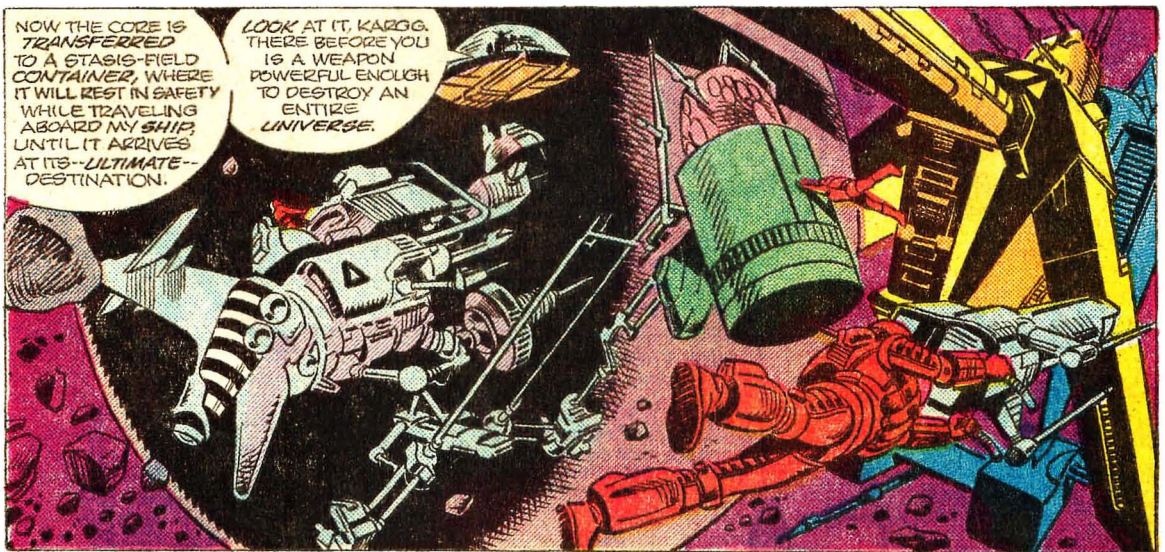
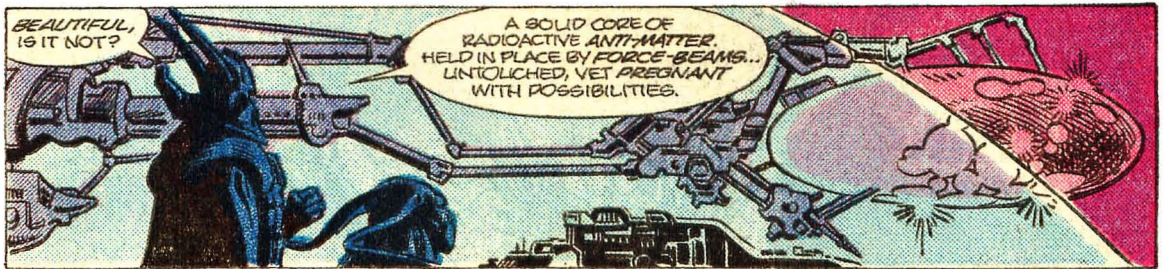
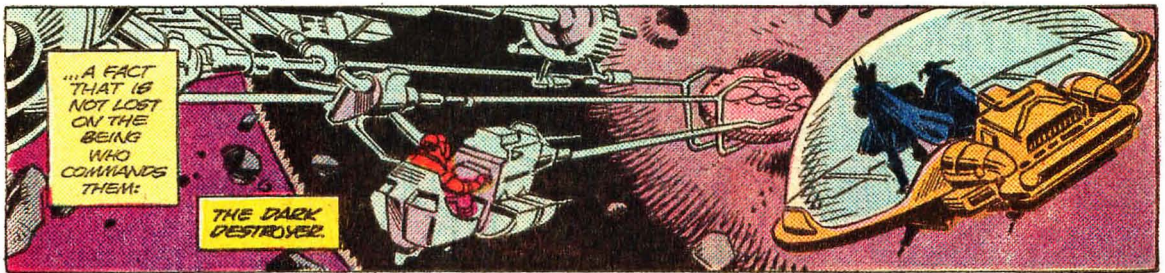
THE ALTERNATE UNIVERSES
OF THE MULTIVERSE ARE MANY,
AND AS VARIED AS THE GRAINS
OF SAND ON A TROPICAL BEACH—
EACH UNIVERSE WITH ITS OWN
HISTORY, ITS OWN STRUCTURE,
ITS OWN REALITY.

SOME OF THESE STRUCTURES
ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM
THOSE WE KNOW: DIMENSIONS
IN WHICH ENERGY IS A FORM OF
SOLID MATTER, DIMENSIONS
IN WHICH NO LIFE EXISTS,
DIMENSIONS IN WHICH TIME
ITSELF FLOWS BACKWARD.

AND THERE ARE THOSE
UNIVERSES WHERE THE
NATURE OF MATTER IS
REVERSED—WHERE ALL
MATTER IS ANTI-MATTER,
A MIRROR IMAGE OF THE
MATTER IN OUR OWN
UNIVERSE AND IN THAT
OF NEW EARTH.

IN ONE SUCH
ANTI-MATTER UNIVERSE,
A CREW OF
EAGER PLUNDERERS
SWARMS OVER A
RADIOACTIVE ASTEROID—
MINING THE ASTEROID
CORE BY MEANS OF A
FORCE-FIELD PROJECTOR,
TAKING GREAT CARE NOT
TO MAKE PHYSICAL CONTACT.

PHYSICAL CONTACT
BETWEEN MATTER
AND ANTI-MATTER,
THEY KNOW,
WOULD MEAN
INSTANT AND TOTAL
DESTRUCTION...



CROSS SWORDS WITH CHAMPIONS!
enter the lost world of

THE WARLORD

WITH REMCO TOYS!

ARAK



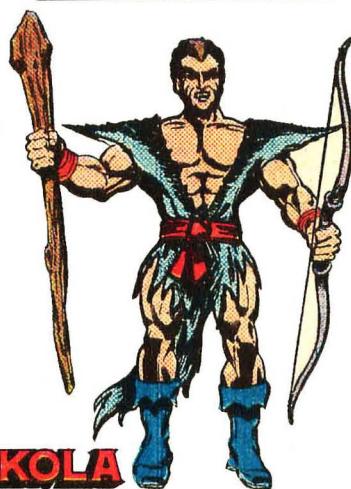
HERCULES



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JOIN FORCES with..

DEIMOS



MIKOLA



MACHISTE

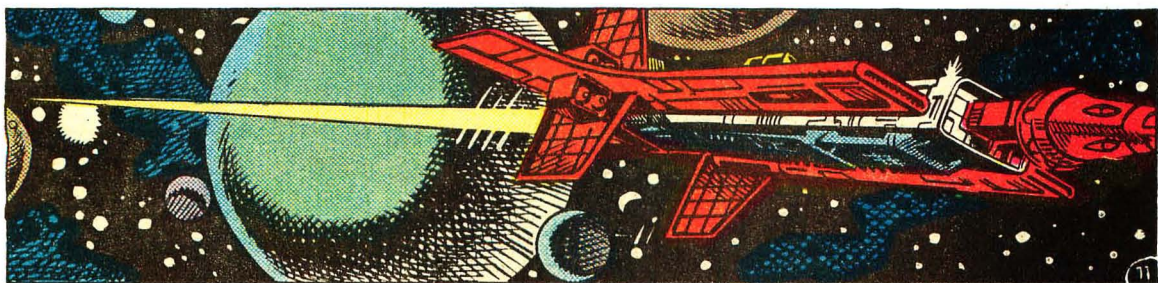
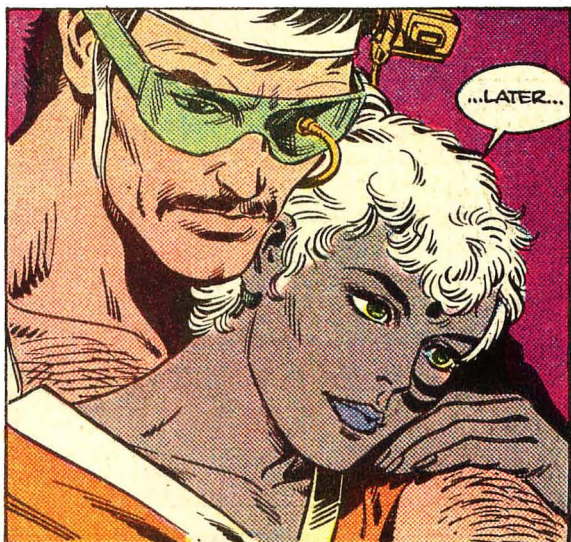
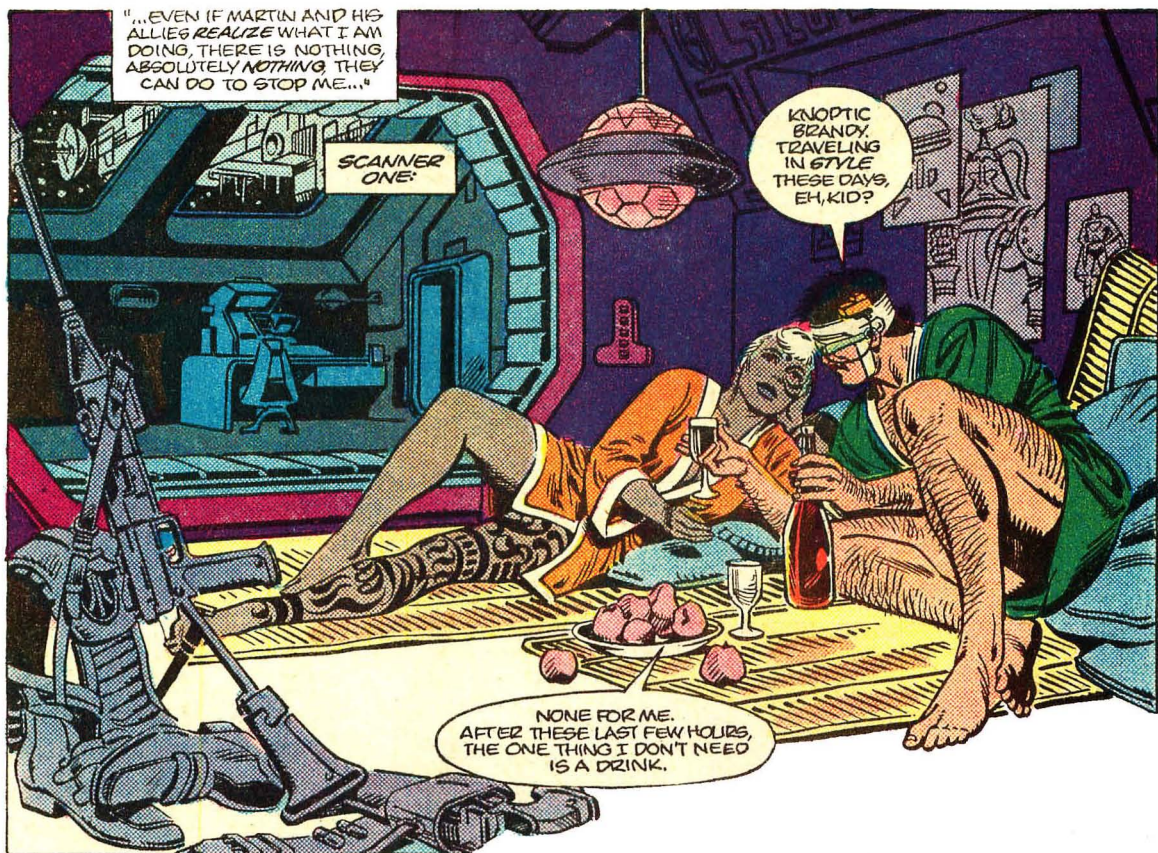
COLLECT THEM ALL!

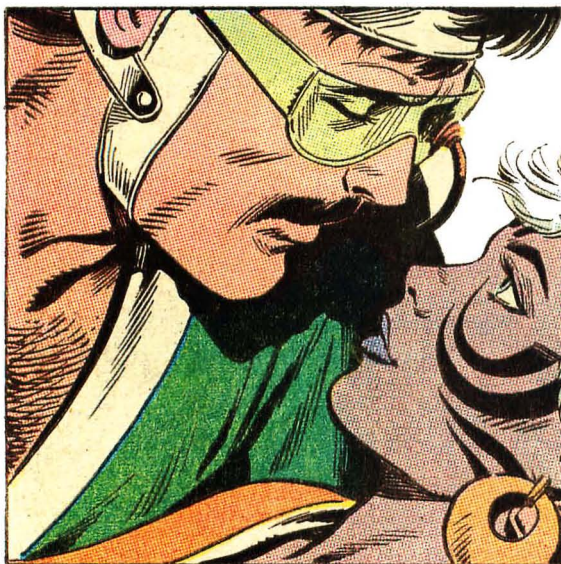
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AVAILABLE AT PARTICIPATING

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THE SAVING PLACE

STORES!





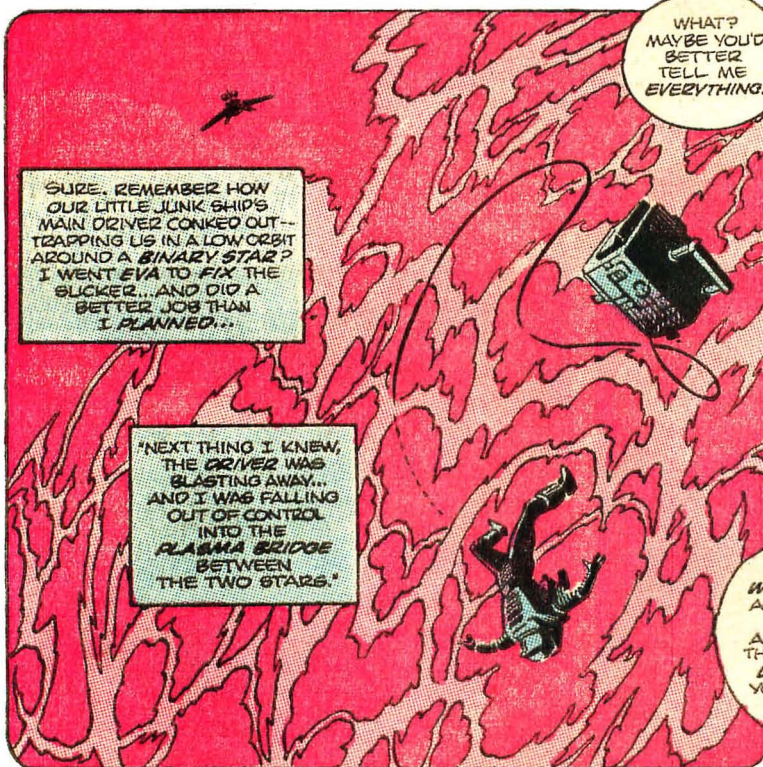
LATER.

...SO THAT'S MY STORY, LOVER. AFTER YOU, UH, *DIED*... I WENT HOME TO MY PARENTS ON *NEW EARTH*. MARTIN CHAMPION SHOWED UP WITH A *PROPOSITION*... HELP HIM STEAL THIS SHIP AND TAKE OFF AFTER SOMEONE HE CALLED *THE DARK DESTROYER*.

IT WAS SOMETHING TO DO. SOMETHING TO TAKE MY MIND OFF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU.

THE DESTROYER. EH? NOW THAT'S INTERESTING, THAT'S *VERY* INTERESTING.

GEE, KID, IT WAS THIS *DESTROYER* GUY WHO SAVED MY LIFE...

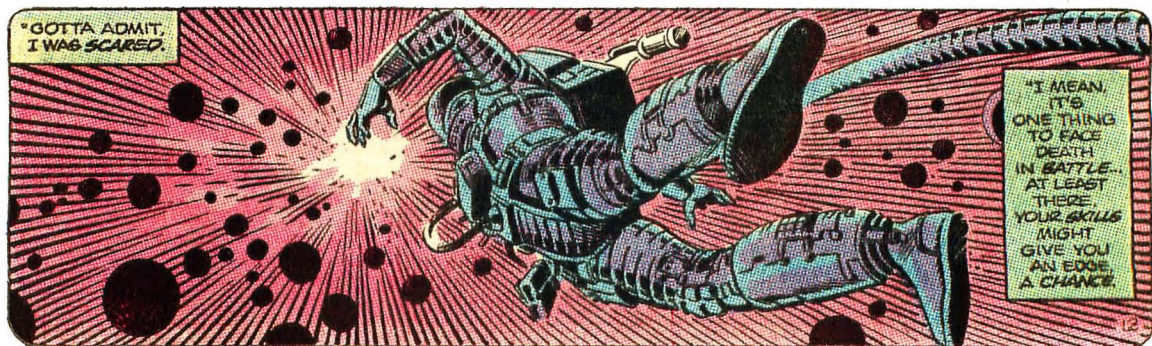
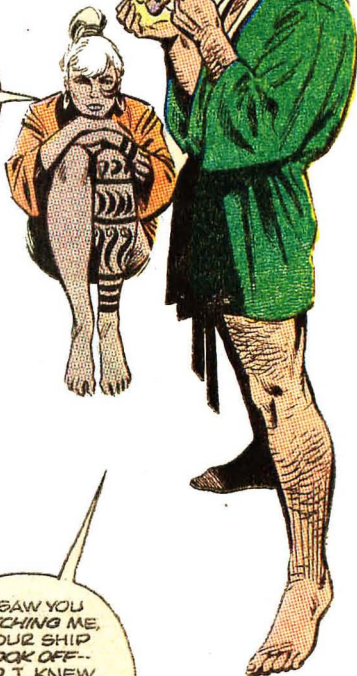


WHAT? MAYBE YOU'D BETTER TELL ME EVERYTHING...

SURE. REMEMBER HOW OUR LITTLE JUNK SHIP'S MAIN DRIVER CONKED OUT-- TRAPPING US IN A LOW ORBIT AROUND A *BINARY STAR*? I WENT EVA TO FIX THE SUCKER... AND DID A BETTER JOB THAN I PLANNED...

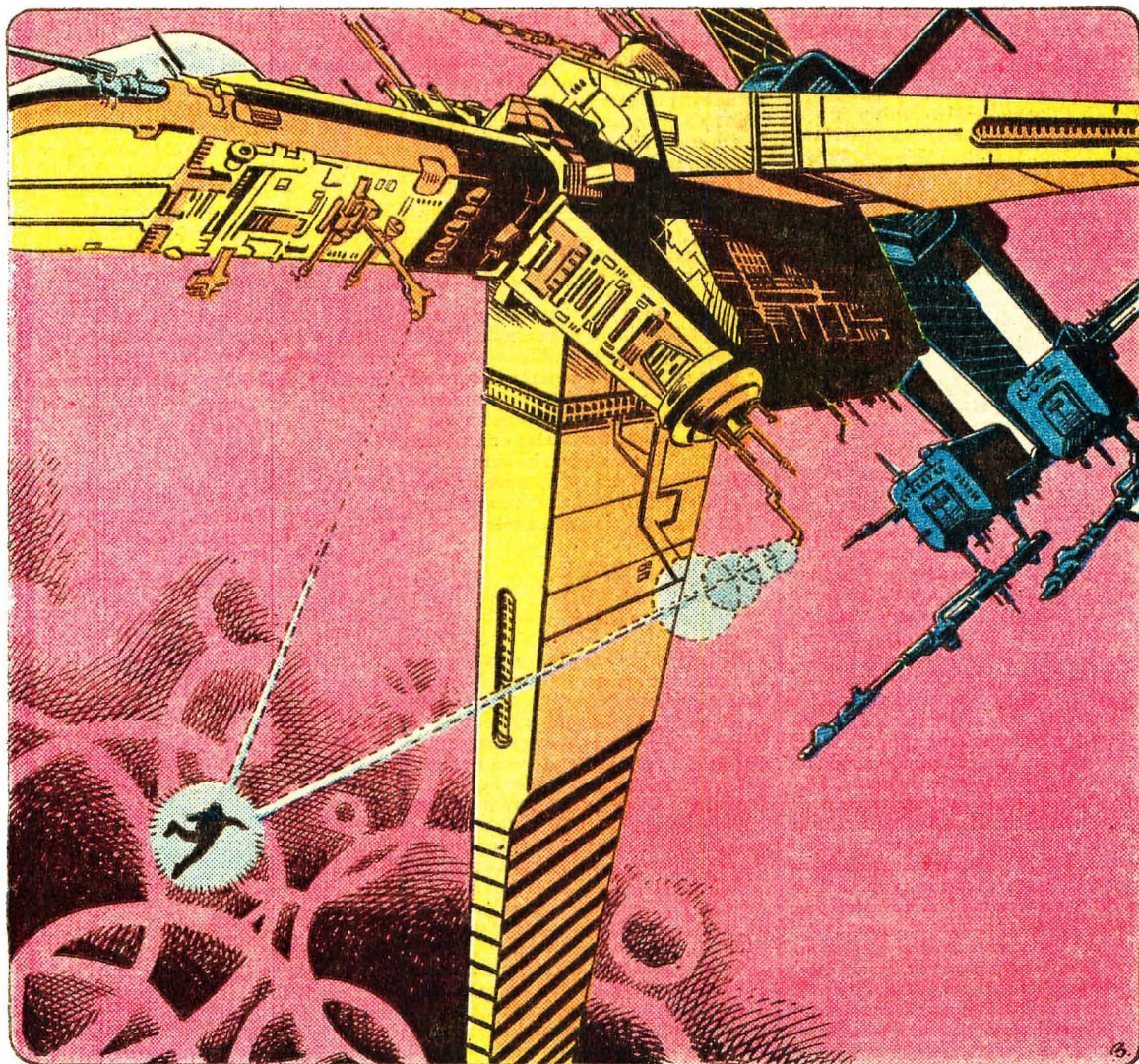
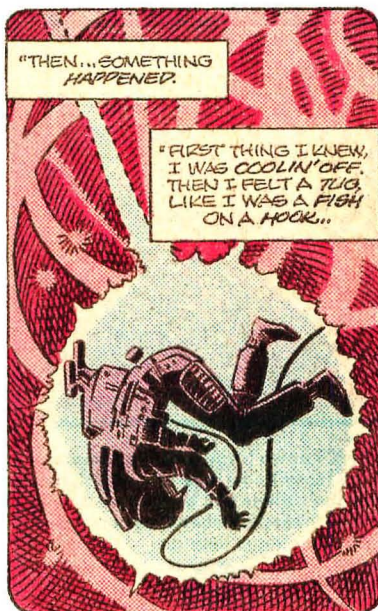
"NEXT THING I KNEW, THE *DRIVER* WAS BLASTING AWAY... AND I WAS FALLING OUT OF CONTROL INTO THE *PLASMA BRIDGE* BETWEEN THE TWO STARS."

I SAW YOU WATCHING ME, AS OUR SHIP TOOK OFF... AND I KNEW THERE WASN'T A DAMN THING YOU COULD DO TO HELP ME.



"GOTTA ADMIT, I WAS SCARED."

"I MEAN, IT'S ONE THING TO FACE DEATH IN BATTLE... AT LEAST THERE YOUR SKILLS MIGHT GIVE YOU AN EDGE, A CHANCE."



CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

MEANWHILE...

If I were asked to sum up DC's publishing philosophy in two words (and incidentally, no one has actually asked me to do so), I would have to respond: diversity and commitment. (Er...the similarity between those words' initials and our company's name is purely coincidental.) Diversity in genre, diversity in format, diversity in style. We strive to present a variety of styles rather than a standardized (but easier to attain) "house look." We know we could milk the success of **TEEN TITANS** and **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES** by endlessly cloning or spinning off new titles from those (and other) titles. The advantages are obvious. The advantages are also short term. We know we could borrow the success of properties developed by others by licensing. Profitable in the short term...? Maybe. We know we can generate a good chunk of revenue by reprinting everything good and everything not-so-good in our library. Again short term. Instead we choose to build for the future with diverse formats, genres, and styles like **CAMELOT 3000**, **NATHANIEL DUSK**, **RONIN**, **THRILLER**...yes, even **OMEGA MEN**, **BLUE DEVIL**, and **VIGILANTE**, which, even though they fall broadly into the "favored genre" of super-heroes, try to appeal to different segments of the audience by using a different approach to that "favored genre." Super-heroes make wonderful reading and I wouldn't for a moment suggest that we abandon them. To the contrary, much of our 1985 production will concern itself with the enhancement of all of DC's super-heroes, to redefine our universe and recreate our older characters; to create new characters to populate our universe. But expanding the scope of our audience demands diversity. To meet that demand requires time, patience, money, and a willingness to gamble occasionally. We need to be very active in the solicitation of new ideas. We have to read and examine 15 or 20 presentations for every one we select. I think you'd be surprised at some of the creator names on presentations now sitting on my desk. Our open-door policy and the fact that we do not operate from a preconceived notion of what's doable and what is not

is well known to the creative community and they know that, at the least, they and their ideas will be greeted openly and with respect when they come to us. And come to us they do.

Since diversity of product line springs from diversity of thought, we have altered the mix of our editorial staff, as reported in this column earlier, by adding talented people to our crew who had previously earned their keep in other publishing fields. The mixing of ideas and skills from several different publishing disciplines has already proved to be an asset for us.

Commitment. What are we committed to? Well, we're committed to publishing the best comics we can. We're committed to searching out and utilizing the most appropriate production and printing techniques for our new properties. We're also committed to taking the time to make sure those techniques work as they were intended. We're committed to the ongoing need to search for and develop new talent.

When World Color Press, in Sparta, announced the potential availability of a new printing technique, that news was greeted by a distinctly ho-hum attitude from our major competitors. We enthusiastically endorsed their experimentation and made them promise to let us know on what day we could first see the results of that new technique. Bob Rozakis and I will go to Sparta on that day and have us a look. We choose our color separation method and supplier carefully, based on the property involved and its peculiar creative requirements. Bob and I and occasionally members of the creative team spend odd hours in odd places looking at proofs or make-readies at press. Weeks ago Bob

Rozakis and I journeyed to Sparta for one day to look at press proofs of **THE NEW TEEN TITANS** #1. We checked some of those proofs after being dragged kicking and screaming out of bed sometime past midnight to return to the plant to check the final form.

When I was first given my current responsibilities at DC, one of my first acts was to announce a talent search. I knew we, the industry, could not get through the Eighties with only the talent pool available then, and the only way to draw new talent in was to go out and look for it. The program has worked (as an example, 3 current members of the creative teams on both versions of **LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES** are graduates of that program). And we anticipate even better results in the future. The page count of **NEW TALENT SHOWCASE** has been expanded. Four seminars for selected talented people in the USA and Canada will be organized and conducted this summer by Talent Coordinator Sal Amendola. Ongoing workshops are held weekly at our offices, conducted by Sal, Paul Levitz, and, occasionally, yours truly. We look for existing talent outside our country. **SWAMP THING** writer, Alan Moore, current **GI** artist, Dave Gibbons, and of course **CAMELOT**'s own Brian Bolland are or were regular contributors to British comics. We've been working with Kevin O'Neill, also from England, and deals are in the works for at least limited contributions from other British creative people. We've also gone to other fields in search of new talent and we are currently discussing potential projects with illustrators, novelists, and Science Fiction writers.

We have a road map. We know where we're going. We have the will and the means and the right stuff to get us there and we hope you'll join us.

Thank you and Good Afternoon.

Dick

THE DRAMA CONTINUES TO UNFOLD...



You can stand alone in the blind darkness and know that were you to raise your arm, reaching out to its fullest extremity, your fingertips would brush with something wet, something supple and resilient.

Something moving.

You shouldn't have come here.

This is the place.

This is the story.

**The Saga of
the Swamp Thing**

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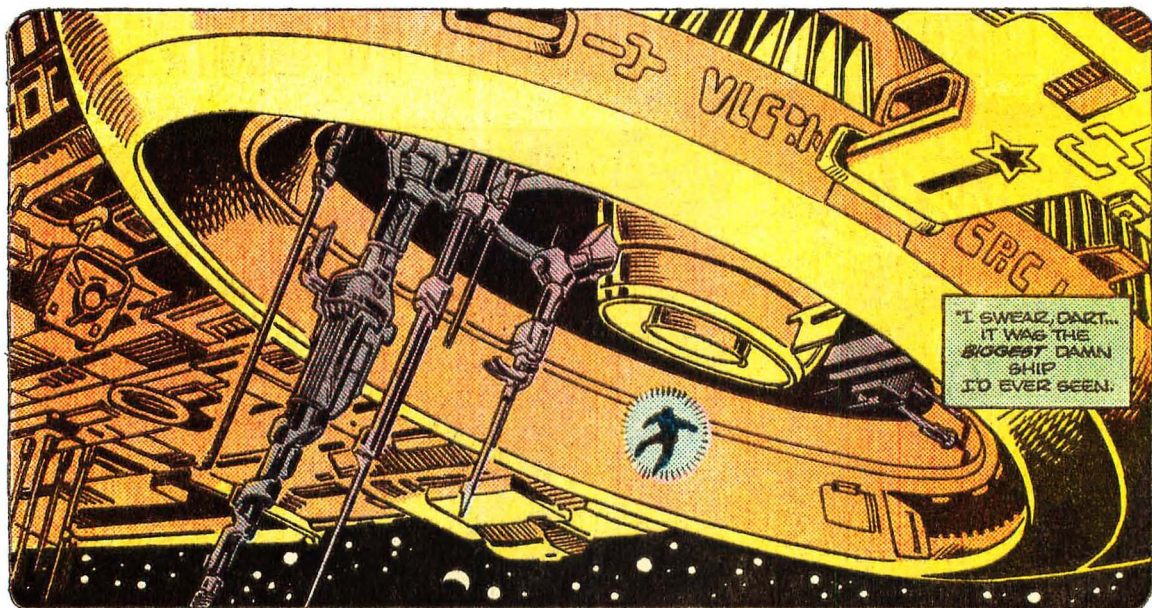
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**The Saga of
the Swamp Thing**





"I SWEAR, DART...
IT WAS THE
BIGGEST DAMN
SHIP
I'D EVER SEEN."



"AND AS SOON
AS I LANDED
INSIDE...
I KNEW I WAS
IN TROUBLE."



"THEY STRIPPED MY SUIT OFF... GAVE ME A BEATING I STILL HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT... AND THREW ME IN THE BRIG."

"FUNNY THING IS, THOUGH, I COULDN'T STOP THINKING HOW LUCKY I WAS JUST TO BE ALIVE."



CHOW TIME, EH, PAL?

UGLY CRITTER, AREN'T YOU? REMIND ME OF A MONGREL DOG I ONCE...

HMM.



I THOUGHT SO. YOU LIKE A GOOD SCRATCH, DON'T YOU... BOY?

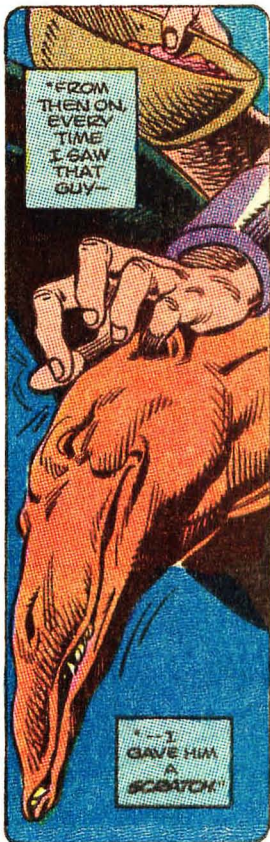
GOOD BOY. NICE BOY.

SCATCH SLEIGH?



AAWWOODDDO

OH, BROTHER.



"FROM THEN ON EVERY TIME I SAW THAT GUY--"

"--I GAVE HIM A SCRATCH."



"IF MY BODY HADN'T BEEN SO BROKEN UP FROM THAT BEATING, I WOULD'VE MADE MY MOVE A MONTH AGO... BUT I DIDN'T THINK TO GET VERY FAR WITH A PAIR OF FRACTURED RIBS."

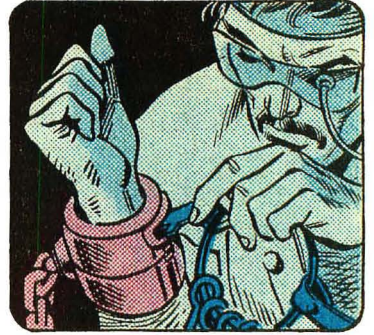
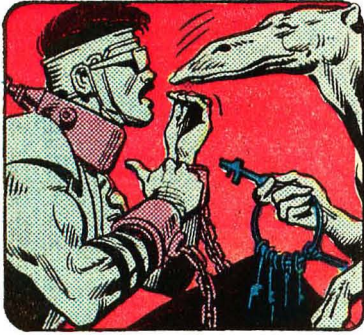
"I WOULD'VE MADE MY MOVE."

"SO I WAITED AND I WONDERED... WHO WERE THOSE CREEDS AND WHAT DID THEY WANT WITH ME?"

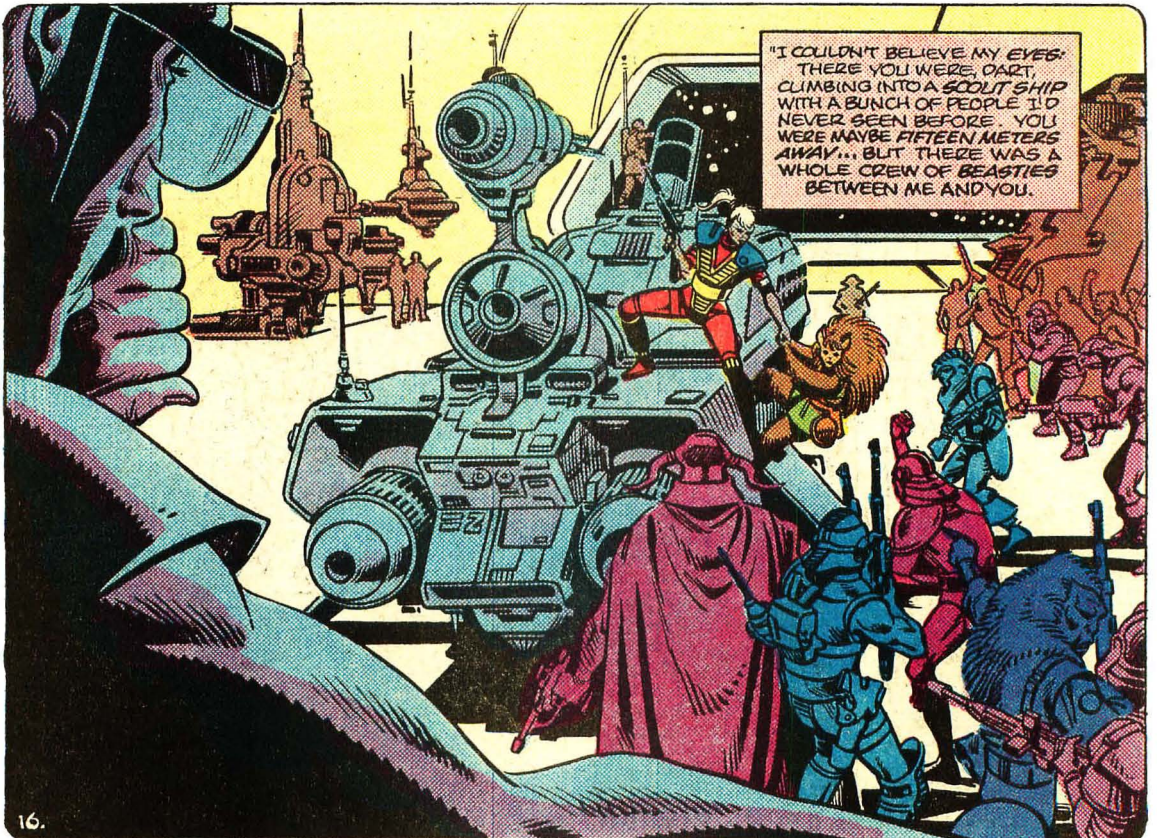
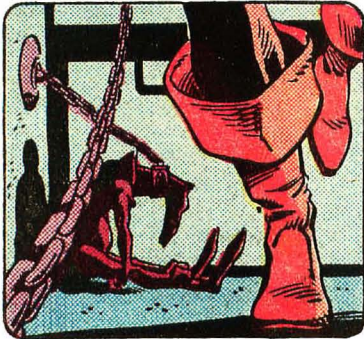


"I NEVER DID FIND OUT."

"FINALLY, THE TIME CAME WHEN I WAS AS READY AS I WAS EVER GONNA BE..."



"... BUT I'VE GOTTA ADMIT, I FELT LIKE A REAL HEEL. I'D GOTTEN TO LIKE THAT UGLY SON. STILL, I WANTED OUT.
AND THAT'S WHEN I GOT THE SHOCK OF MY LIFE...



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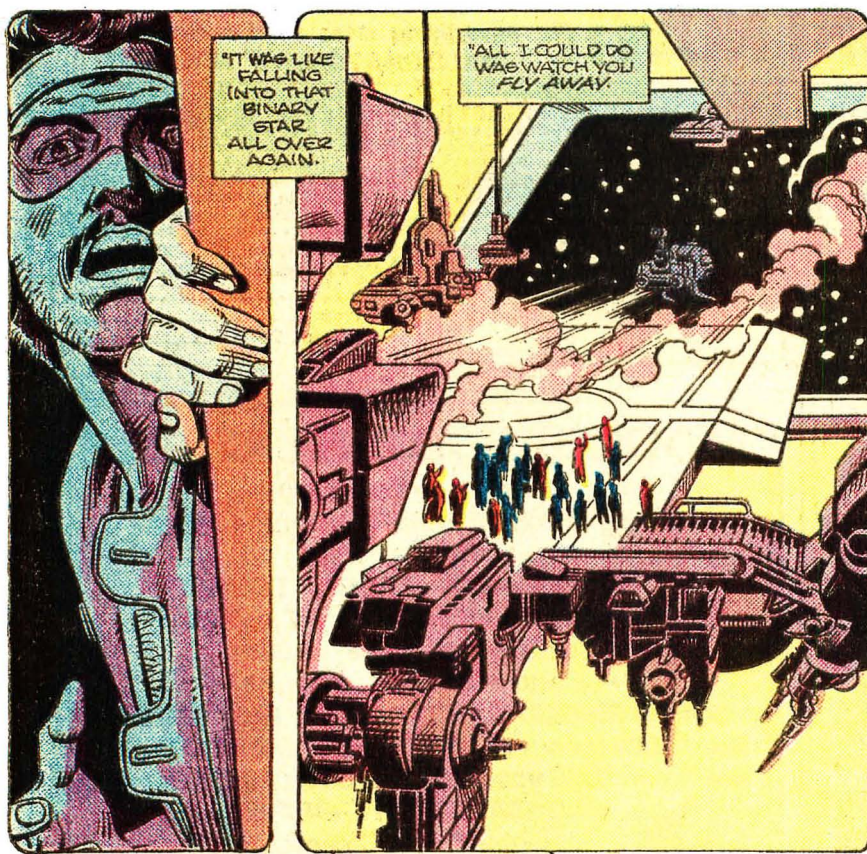
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"IT WAS LIKE FALLING INTO THAT BINARY STAR ALL OVER AGAIN."

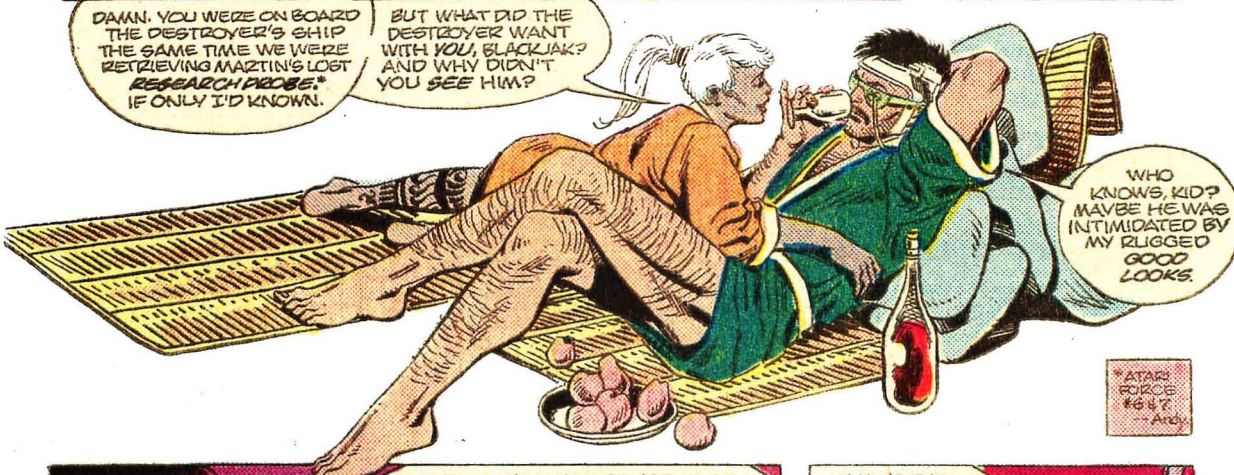
"ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH YOU FLY AWAY."



"FIVE MINUTES LATER, WHEN THE CREW CLEARED OUT OF THE HANGAR, I STOLE A SMALL SCOUT... BUT BY THAT TIME, YOU'D REACHED SCANNER ONE AND I DIDN'T HAVE THE POWER TO CATCH YOU. ALL I COULD DO WAS FOLLOW YOUR TRAIL..."

DAMN. YOU WERE ON BOARD THE DESTROYER'S SHIP THE SAME TIME WE WERE RETRIEVING MAZTIN'S LOST RESEARCH PROBE. IF ONLY I'D KNOWN.

BUT WHAT DID THE DESTROYER WANT WITH YOU, BLACKJACK? AND WHY DIDN'T YOU SEE HIM?

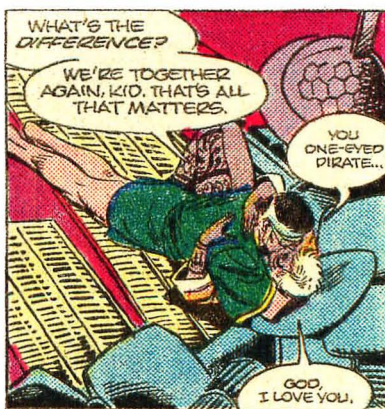


WHO KNOWS, KID? MAYBE HE WAS INTIMIDATED BY MY RUGGED GOOD LOOKS.

ATARI FORCE #817
--Andy



IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. IF HE CAPTURED YOU, IT'S BECAUSE HE WANTED TO USE YOU AGAINST ME--SO WHY DIDN'T HE, WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE?



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN, KID. THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.

YOU ONE-EYED PIRATE...

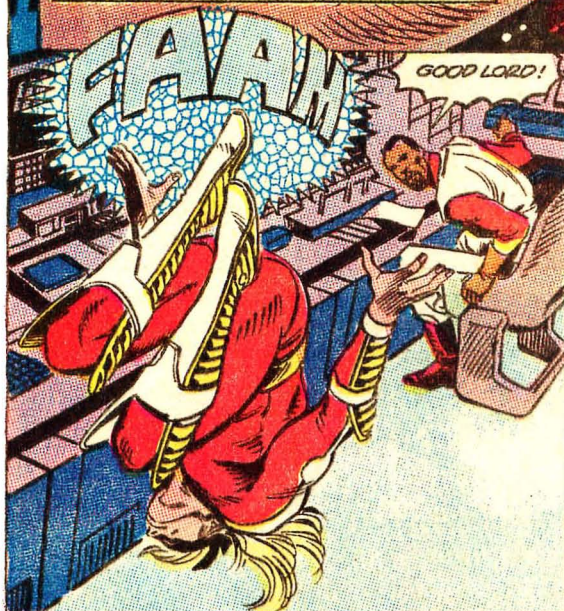
GOD, I LOVE YOU.

DR. LUCAS ORION HAS LIVED AND WORKED ABOARD ATARI STATION FOR THE BETTER PART OF TWENTY YEARS, CONTINUING RESEARCH BEGUN TWO DECADES BEFORE INTO THE MEDICAL AND GENETIC EFFECTS OF UNSHIELDED EXPOSURE TO THE MULTIVERSE.

HE BELIEVES IT WAS EXPOSURE TO THE MULTIVERSE DURING THE ORIGINAL VOYAGES OF SCANNERONE THAT AFFECTED THE GENES OF LYDIA PEREZ AND LI SAN O'BROURKE, THE MOTHERS, RESPECTIVELY, OF TEMPEST AND DART... PROVIDING TEMPEST THE ABILITY TO PHASE BETWEEN DIMENSIONS, AND DART THE GIFT OF POSSIBILITY-PRÉCOGNITION.

IT'S A THEORY HE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO PROVE.

THAT WORRIES HIM.



GOOD LORD!

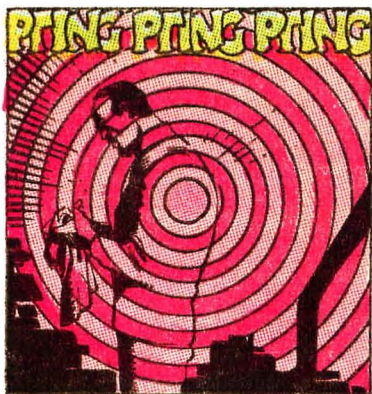
CHRIS! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU, BOY?

COMING BACK TO ATARI STATION-- WHERE'S YOUR FATHER?

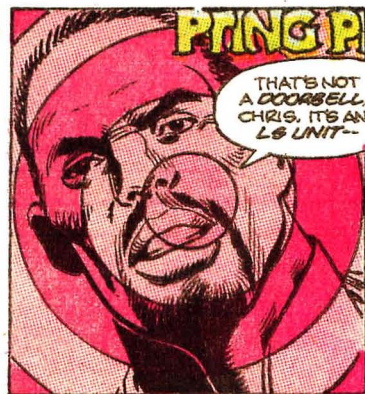
NEED... ANSWERS... DARK DESTROYER... BUT IT HURTS, LUCAS... HURTS SO...

CHRIS?

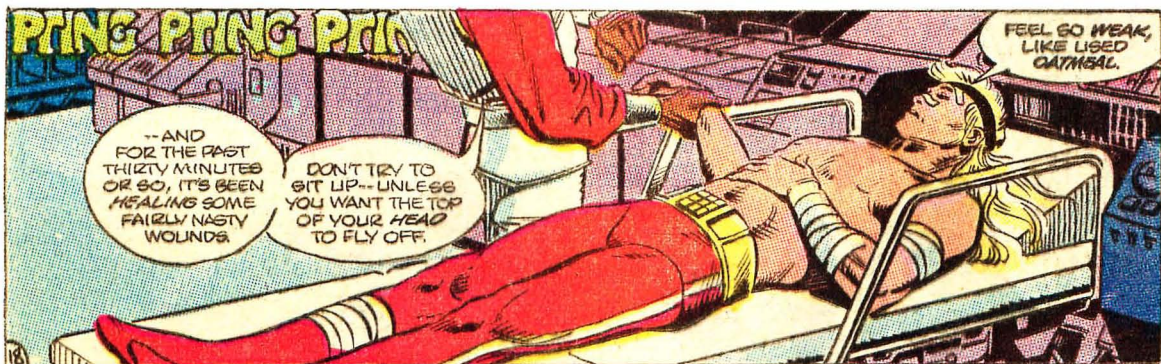
HE'S PASSED OUT... BADLY WOUNDED... WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU, BOY?



SOMEBODY ANSWER THE DOOR.



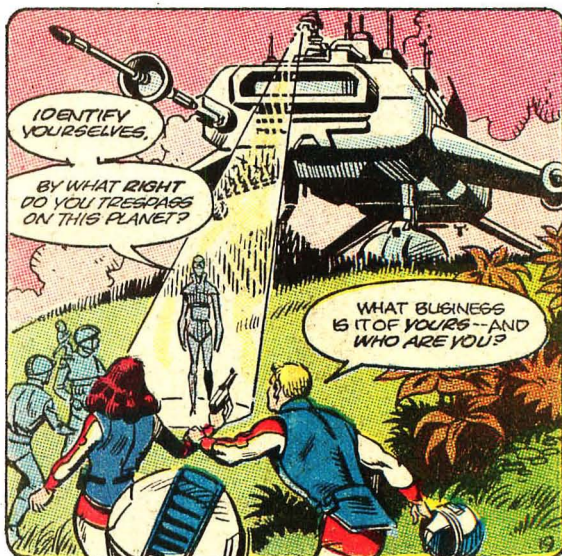
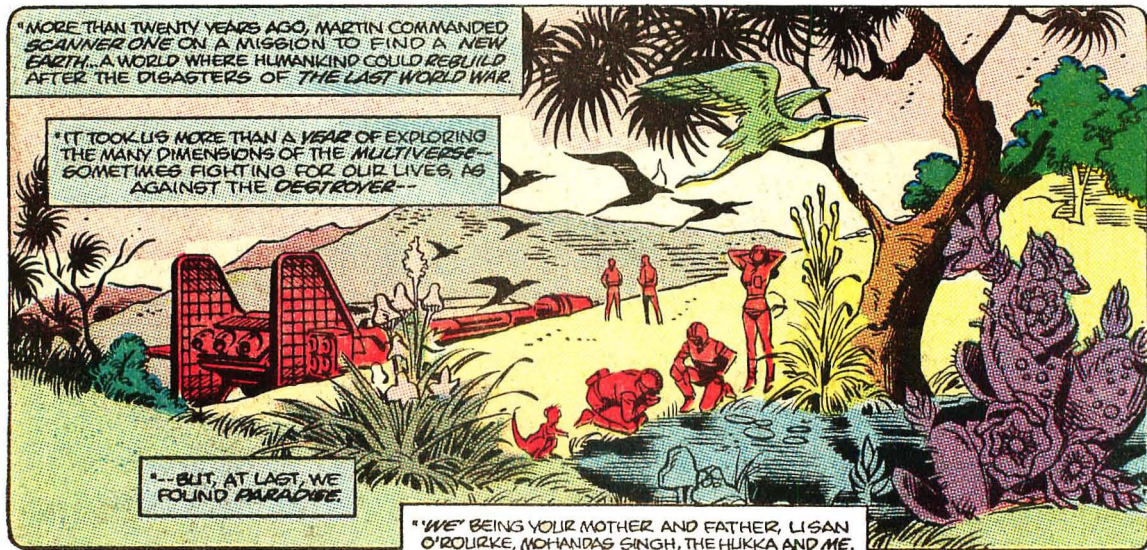
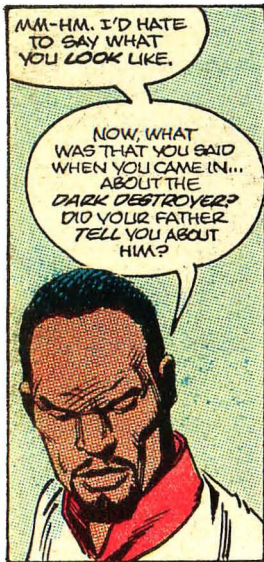
THAT'S NOT A DOORBELL, CHRIS. IT'S AN LG UNIT--

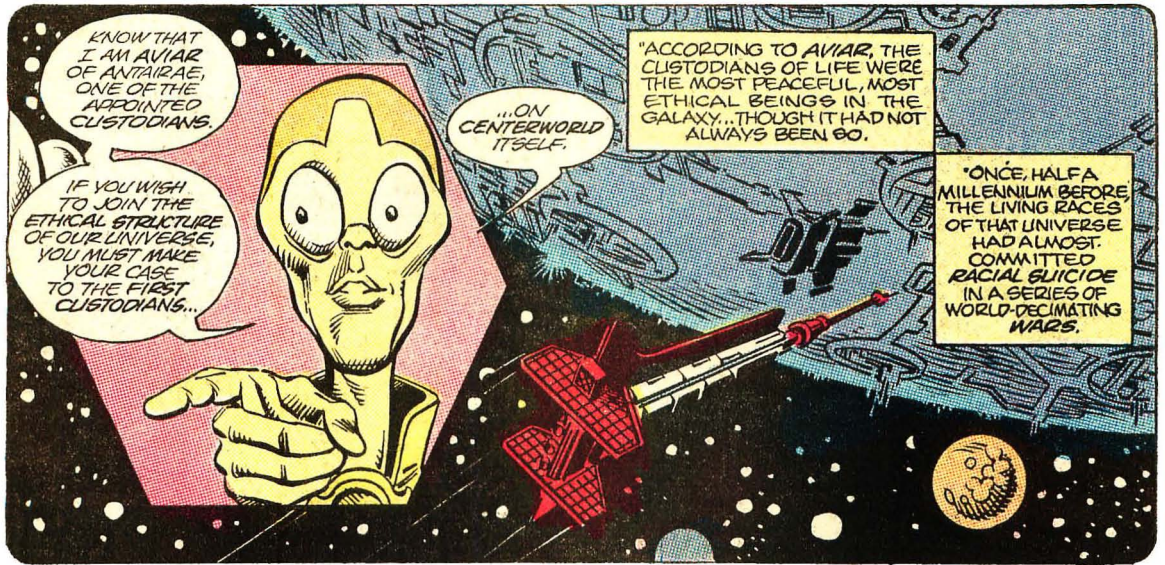


--AND FOR THE PAST THIRTY MINUTES OR SO, IT'S BEEN HEALING SOME FAIRLY NASTY WOUNDS.

DON'T TRY TO GET UP--UNLESS YOU WANT THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD TO FLY OFF.

FEEL SO WEAK, LIKE USED CATFISH.





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

IF YOU WISH TO JOIN THE ETHICAL STRUCTURE OF OUR UNIVERSE, YOU MUST MAKE YOUR CASE TO THE FIRST CUSTODIANS...

...ON CENTERWORLD ITSELF.

"ACCORDING TO AVIAR, THE CUSTODIANS OF LIFE WERE THE MOST PEACEFUL, MOST ETHICAL BEINGS IN THE GALAXY...THOUGH IT HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN SO.

"ONCE, HALF A MILLENNIUM BEFORE THE LIVING RACES OF THAT UNIVERSE HAD ALMOST COMMITTED RACIAL SUICIDE IN A SERIES OF WORLD-DECATING WARS.



"ALL OF THAT WAS HISTORY, NOW. THE CUSTODIANS MAINTAINED A SMALL POLICE FORCE...BUT IT WAS MOSTLY UNNECESSARY. THERE HAD NOT BEEN A WAR IN THAT GALAXY FOR MORE THAN SIX CENTURIES."

HUKKA-HUKKA!

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, HUKKA... THEY LIKE US!

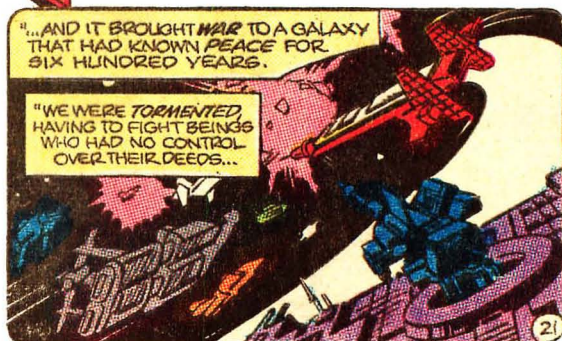
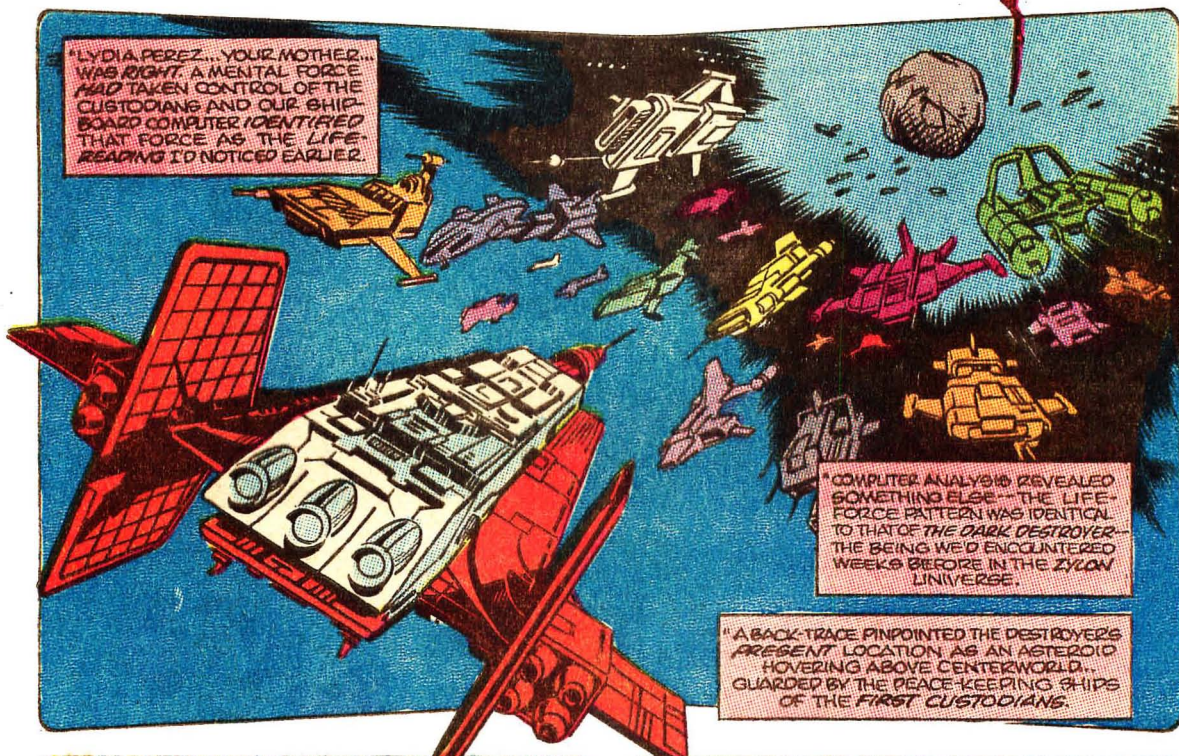
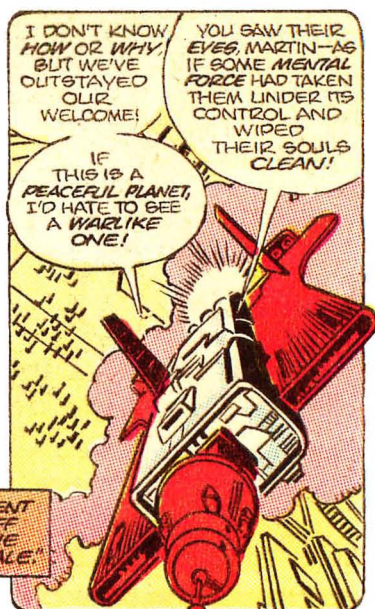
"BUT I HAD MISGIVINGS. MY SCAN OF CENTERWORLD HAD PICKED UP ANOTHER LIFE-READING, FROM SPACE...A PATTERN I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED. BUT MY FEARS WERE DISPELLED BY THE WELCOME OF THE CROWD...

"UNTIL, IN THE SPACE BETWEEN ONE INSTANT AND THE NEXT, A CHANGE CAME OVER THE SMILING FACES OF THE CUSTODIANS OF LIFE...



"...A CHANGE THAT CHILLED THE SUMMER AIR...

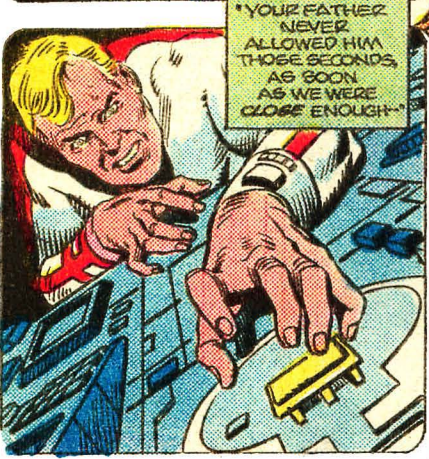
"...LIKE THE PASSING OF A DARK CLOUD BEFORE THE SUN."



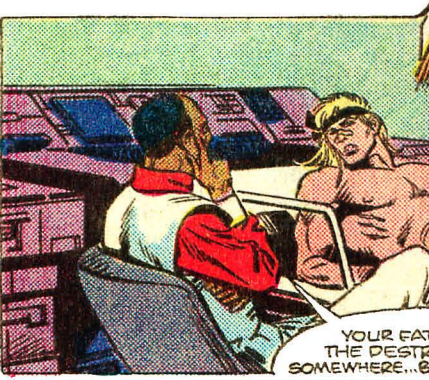
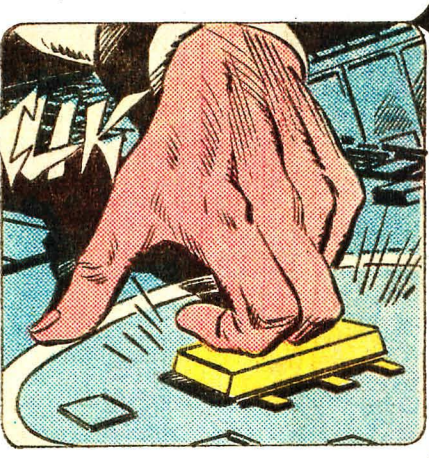
"AND ALL THE TIME WE STRUGGLED WE COULD FEEL THE DESTROYER'S THOUGHTS: TENDRILS TRYING TO TAKE OVER OUR MINDS."



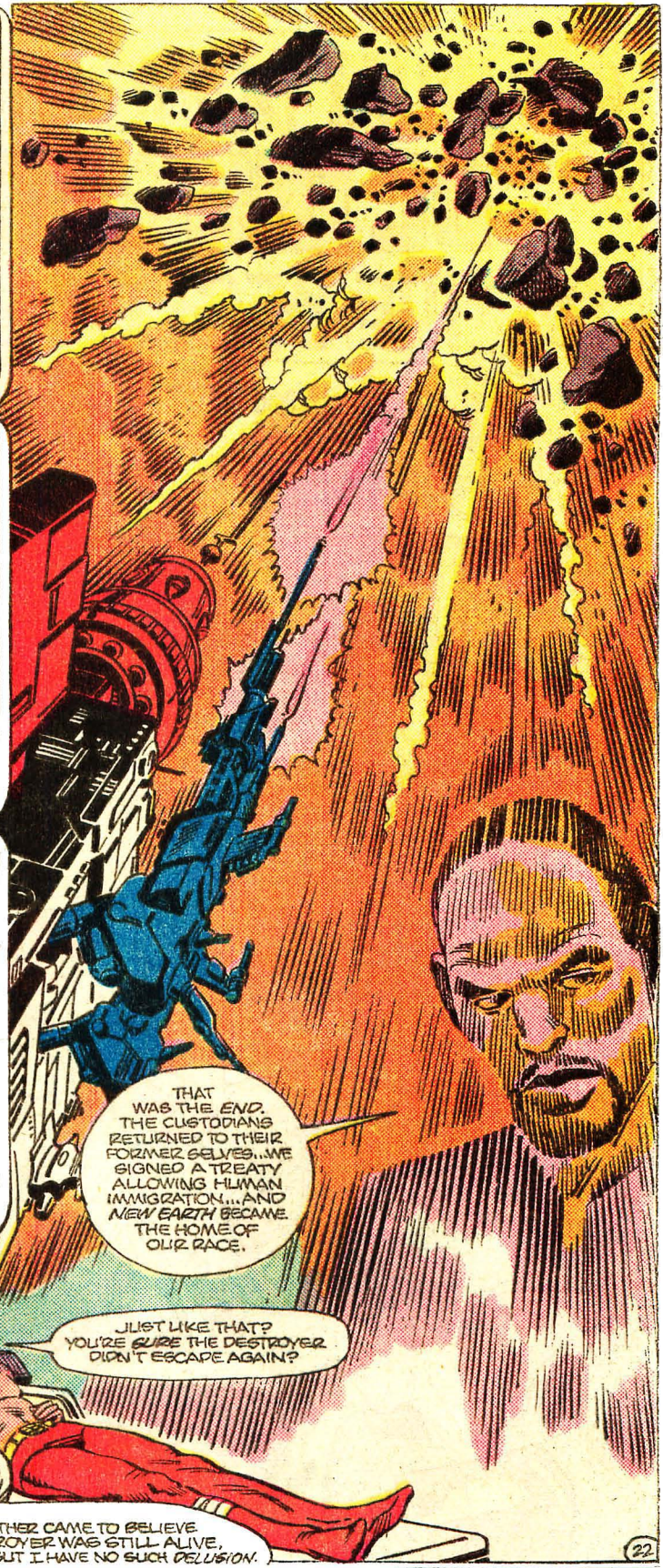
"ANOTHER FEW SECONDS AND PERHAPS HE WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED."



"YOUR FATHER NEVER ALLOWED HIM THOSE SECONDS, AS SOON AS WE WERE CLOSE ENOUGH."



"YOUR FATHER CAME TO BELIEVE THE DESTROYER WAS STILL ALIVE, SOMEWHERE... BUT I HAVE NO SUCH DELUSION."



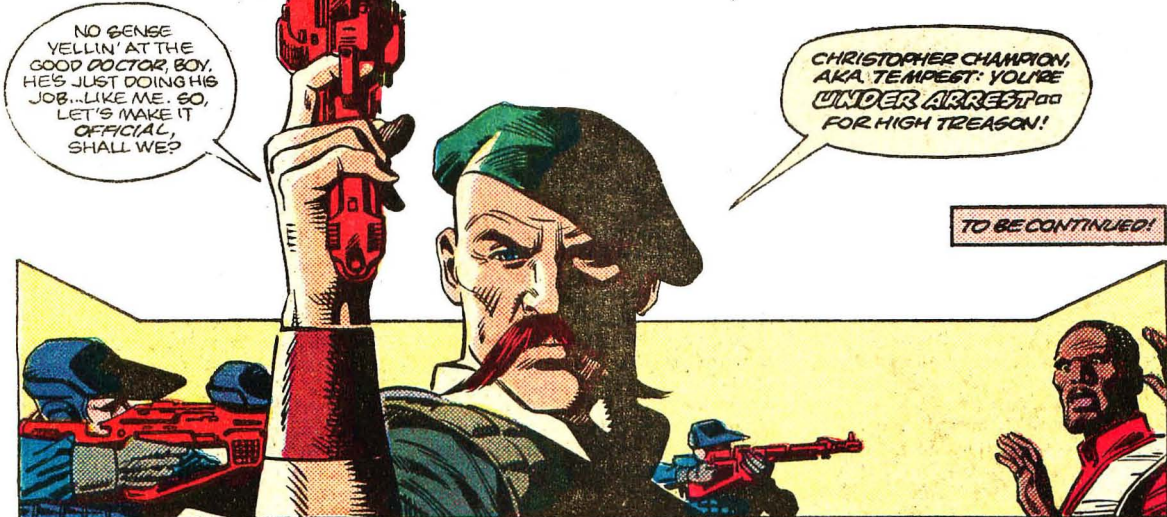
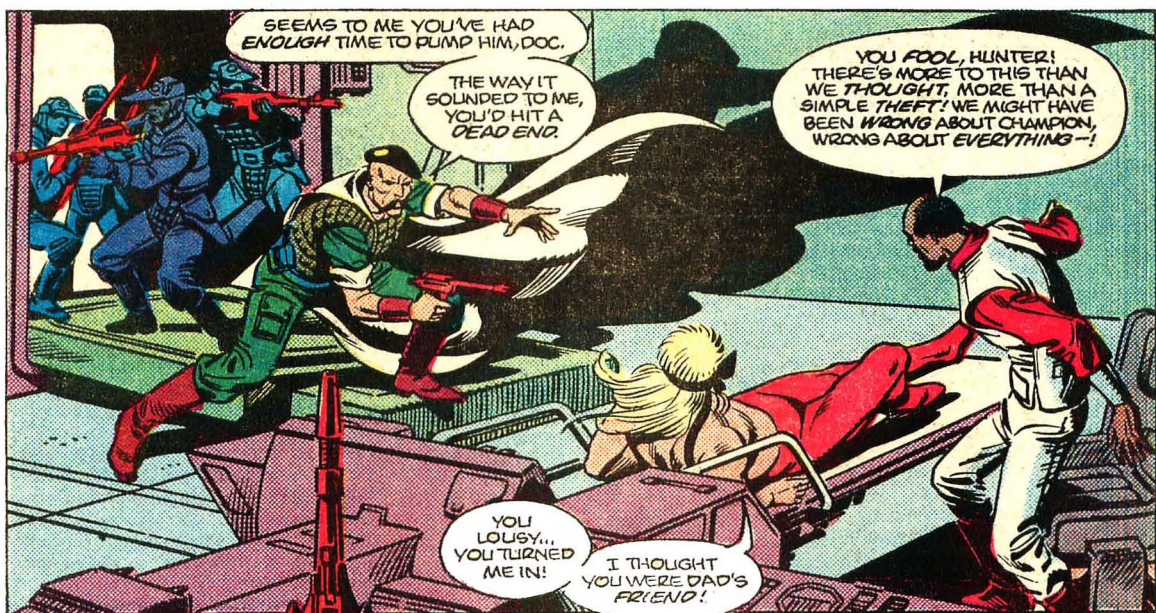
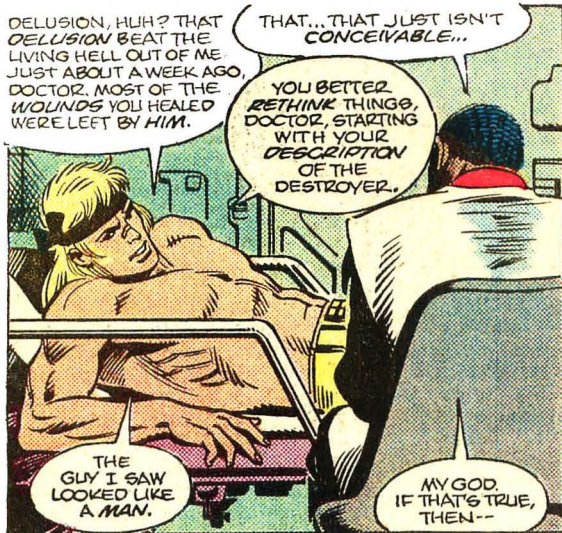
"THAT WAS THE END. THE CUSTODIANS RETURNED TO THEIR FORMER SELVES... WE SIGNED A TREATY ALLOWING HUMAN IMMIGRATION... AND NEW EARTH BECAME THE HOME OF OUR RACE."

"JUST LIKE THAT? YOU'RE SURE THE DESTROYER DIDN'T ESCAPE AGAIN?"

**Q. WHAT DO YOU GET IN THE
DC DIGESTS?**

A. THE BEST OF





FORCE FEEDBACK

L-1758

This issue's guest inker is Eduardo Barreto, one of DC's newest rising young stars. We think he's done a superb job filling in for the all-together-too-busy Ricardo Villagran, who's *still* at work catching up on STAR TREK after completing the mammoth 64-page movie adaptation (which should be on sale soon after you read this). Ricardo promises us he'll be back next issue, so until then we ask you to feast your eyes on Eduardo's distinctive inks. And if you're impressed—and we think you *should* be—then be on the lookout for Eduardo's *pencil and ink* work, which has been (and will be) appearing on a whole passel of DC covers, as well as in the pages of various DC magazines. He's a real find, and sure to be everyone's favorite in the months to come.

And before we forget: We don't make a habit of plugging future issues (unless it's the next issue, and then only in this letter column's final paragraph), but this time we're making an exception. Be warned: ATARI FORCE #12 (the issue after next) is one comic you will *never* forget. It features the wrapping up of a year-long storyline, and includes some incredible changes in the group's makeup that you never thought we'd have the nerve to do. There are some heavy revelations in the works here, and we wouldn't want anyone to miss a single one. So if you think everything Gerry, José Luis, and company have done thus far has been off the wall—you ain't seen nothing yet!

Hope you'll pardon us for this bit of self-indulgence, but as you can see, we're *really* enthusiastic about the stories to come, and we just had to let you readers know. Anyway, on to the letters:

Dear Gerry and José:

As I was filing my comics, I decided to reread issues 1-6 of ATARI FORCE. I'm glad I did. This is distinctly one of DC's best comics (right up there with the TITANS, SWAMP THING, and Doug Moench's BATMAN books), in both story and art. The comic hangs together well as one long story, and the issue-by-issue stories are entertaining and informative. All in all, Gerry, I'd say that this is the best comic you've ever written!

Now on to the *real* reason for this letter. I work part-time in a Science Fiction/Fantasy/Comics shop, and I see many small children (below the age of ten, that is) come in often. They buy ALPHA FLIGHT, SECRET WARS, and

overpriced back issues of SPIDERMAN 252 (the one where he gets his new costume). Adults buy these too, and eagerly await the next issue. I want to shake them and say "Don't buy that stuff! But—" and then I don't know what to say. AMERICAN FLAGGI, CEREBUS NEXUS, THRILLER, DREADSTAR—all of my favorite comics—are too advanced, too intricate for a preadolescent American kid to understand.

And then I read the letter column in AF #6, where Jason Wood, age 8, writes and asks sophisticated questions, and I realized—that's it! ATARI FORCE! It's simple enough for a child to read and appreciate, but the stories also have a fair share of intricacy and subtlety, and the whole comic has an elegance and style that makes it worth an adult's time.

Thank you for giving me the answer to my problem.

Kevin J. Maroney
409 Landerwood
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

(It's always nice to hear from people who actually sell comics, to get a good idea of what's hot and what's not. But more than being a "hot" selling book, it's important to all concerned with ATARI FORCE that we remain a "good" book. That you, and many other retailers we've spoken with, feel that ATARI FORCE bridges the generation gap of comics entertainment is very high praise indeed.)

Dear Mr. Conway:

I used to write many letters to many different titles at DC, but I stopped because none of my letters were ever printed. I always thought that it was because of my age; I was 10, and stated that at the time.

Now I come across ATARI FORCE, a comic in which the editor *encourages* us kids to write. Well, I'm a kid, and I have been encouraged to write, so I have picked up my pen, sat down, and written!! (Thanks, Andy!)

Anyway, first I'd like to commend Mr. Conway for the best job any writer could do on a comic like this. The characterizations are marvelous, as are the stories. One thing, though: I think you should show more of New Earth's environment; most of the stories thus far have taken place with the characters cooped up inside of buildings, spaceships, etc. New Earth is probably a fascinating place!

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And one more thing, about the artwork: MAGNIFICENT!!

Until Morpheus grows a Mohawk.

Anthony Rapp—age 12
24221 Ingalls Ave.
Joliet, IL 60435

(Glad to hear we inspired you to write, Anthony. This is as good a time as any to remind everyone out there that we want to hear from everybody who has something to say—be they eight or eighty! To grant your request—we've already done it! As you've probably already seen, Tempest has been phasing across New Earth since last issue, and will remain on new terra-firma for some time to come as he unravels the secret of the DARK DESTROYER. That is, unless HUNTER gets his way!)

Dear Atari Forcers,

I have been collecting different comics for a long time. About 1982 I lost interest, but when ATARI FORCE and other new comics came out I became a collector again. I love ATARI FORCE! It's great! My favorite characters are Pakrat and Babe. I like Pakrat's cowardliness until he's cornered. That's really cute. I like Babe's bulky body but cute face and dialogue. In issue #6 and 7 I was sorry for Tempest and his father. Tempest getting whipped by that jerk the Dark Destroyer and his father worrying about him. In issue #7 I was amazed. I didn't think gentle Morpheus could be so powerful. I was glad that they all got free but I am worried about Babe lost in space. I hope that he doesn't get hurt. I also hope Pakrat saves him. After Babe splashed him it would be a great way to make up. Well, thanks for a great comic.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Stewart—age 11
2906 So. 3rd St.
Louisville, KY 40208

(As you no doubt have already discovered, Jeremy, Babe is safe and sound aboard Scanner One again, plus one new friend.)

Dear Guys,

ATARI FORCE is really great! The art is fantastic and the stories are really original. But one thing is not as it should be to make this book even better and that's the coloring. The book has too many "light" colors which should be brighter. I hate it when background characters and objects are colored one

single color. I know you can't color every single object as it really is, but I wish you could solve this problem in some new original way. I'm no expert in this field, but I know what looks right and how it could look better.

Thanks for reading and taking note.

Ralph Ienco
11 Oakland Drive
Hamilton, Ontario
Canada L8E 3R4

(Coloring is a tricky thing, Ralph. We're not prepared to give you a crash course right now—there isn't the room—but there are reasons Tom Ziuko colors everything the way he had. The reason he colors many of the background characters "monochromatically," that is, using different values of the same color, is to help those characters in the foreground "pop" or stand out better. On the other hand, in a busy scene, a main character might be colored a single color so it would stand out amid all the other smaller colored areas. If everything was colored the way it might really look, the whole page might turn out to be an unreadable jumble of colors.

As for the "light" colors you complain about, that's purely due to the printing of the book. Sometimes certain color inks print light, other times they print dark. We've vastly improved the reproduction quality over the past months by using the whiter "Mando" paper, so things are better than they were!!

Dear Andy et al:

I picked up ATARI FORCE #6 and #7 at a mini con the other day, having learned that Garcia Lopez was "back at the controls," so to speak. Lopez and Villagran are one hot art team! I've admired Lopez' pencils in the past, however, I am pleased and surprised at the incredibly beautiful stuff he and Villagran are creating. The inks are some of the nicest I've seen—right up there with Terry Austin's work (nice to see Terry on cover inks).

Although it was the art that got me to buy the books, Conway's scripting was very entertaining—not overwritten, thankfully.

I also loved the lettering—great alien dialects!

I particularly enjoyed the various grotesque aliens and robots that populated the Destroyer's ship. I hope to see vast numbers of these amusing critters in future stories (please?). Gosh, this is a great book! I hope Lopez and Villagran can be persuaded to stick with ATARI FORCE for a long time!

Peace,
Jon Freeman
1435 W. Lunt
Chicago, IL 60626

(We're as impressed by the Garcia Lopez/Villagran team as you are, Jon, but we hope you haven't been disappointed by the last two issues' guest inkers. Personally, we feel that both Bob Smith's—(last issue)—and Eduardo Barreto's—(this issue)—inks are just great too!

As for the alien dialects, that's Bob Lappan's boogie. Once Bob gets his hands on a page with either neat sound effects or alien gibberish, it's weeks before we get it back. And when we finally do, it takes everything from a Captain Midnight decoder ring to a hieroglyphics manual to figure out exactly what it is he's written! Usually, it's even something translatable! But seriously, Bob takes a lot of time slugging in unusual typestyles and encoded gibberish on alien word balloons, and we're glad you noticed the extra effort he puts into each one. If you're one of the few who haven't examined Bob's balloons closely, go back and check 'em out—sometimes it's worth a giggle!)

Dear Andy,

I recently acquired ATARI FORCE #7. I read the letter column. I read your reply to Andrew Logan.

I am appalled!

"Only a comic book"? I thought you were a sensitive man.

When I started to read comic books, I found a purpose in life. Before, I was just breathing. Then, I started living!

Superman, Batman, X-Men, Atari Force. They all went together. They made me a person. Them and all the rest made me whole. My comic books made me human!!

And look what you said about them.

"Only a comic book," Mr. Helfer? And I suppose your mother was "only a mother."

THE PHANTOM COMIC

(You suppose incorrectly, Mr. Phantom—my mother is a SAINT! But seriously, we're sorry if we offended you in our reply to Andrew Logan's letter. Perhaps a fuller explanation of our viewpoint is in order. We here at DC all take our comic books very seriously—after all, we earn our livings through them. But more importantly, comics should be fun—a fantasy, an escape from the everyday world. As every psychologist will tell you, all people need an occasional fantasy or two to drop into now and then—it's not only necessary, it's

healthy! But when fantasies take the place of living in the real world—well, then it becomes a problem. In this case, comics cease to be what we, their creators, intend them to be—entertainment. So take it easy, okay?)

Dear Andy buddy,

Before I say anything I'd like to compliment you on your treatment of us ATARI FORCE fans. Not every editor will give personal comments on the letters written. You make letter pages fun again. Thanks!!!

Now on to business. Issue #7 was another captivating story filled with the stunning art of José Garcia Lopez and Ricardo Villagran!!

My favorite character is Pakrat and the reasons are simple: He would be the closest guy on the team I personally could relate to. Not every person (especially not me) could leap into death's arms without a second thought like Dart does. Sure everybody dreams of being a hero, but if you are really faced with a dangerous situation, not many people could handle it like most super-heroes do. Now, Pakrat is a classic character. He plays the part of a wimp (even though I think it's just a front). He gives the comic the lightheartedness all comics need. So in this letter my salute of the day goes to Pakrat!!!!!!

Eric James Baich
77A Fines Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada
S4N 6C1

(We're glad you appreciate the work that goes into these letter columns. When we write them at 4 A.M., it's nice to see a letter from someone who appreciates the extra effort!)

NEXT ISSUE: The penultimate installment to our first 12-part epic is guaranteed to be a shocker. In it, you'll learn the secret of the mysterious death of original ATARI FORCE member Lydia Perez. You'll also get a glimpse of the Dark Destroyer's latest evil designs. And then there's the matter of Blackjak...

Be there—or you may live to regret it!


—ANDY HELFER



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THE WAY TO GO...

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...CAPTAIN "O" OVERHEARS MIKE AND JENNY TALKING.

I'M BORED! EVERYTHING COSTS SO MUCH! WISH I HAD A JOB!

ME TOO! I'D LOVE TO EARN SOME EXTRA MONEY AFTER SCHOOL!

ARCADE PALACE

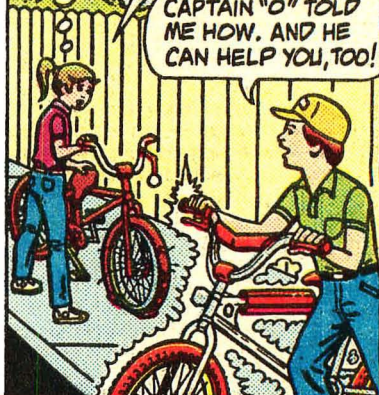


LYNN HAS A PROBLEM, TOO.

MY BIKE BROKE AGAIN!

HEY JEFF, YOU HAVE A NEAT BIKE! HOW'D YOU GET IT?

CAPTAIN "O" TOLD ME HOW. AND HE CAN HELP YOU, TOO!



CAPTAIN "O" TO THE RESCUE!

HEY KIDS... WHY DON'T YOU START YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

MY FRIENDS AT OLYMPIC SALES CLUB HAVE A SUPER WAY FOR YOU TO EARN MONEY IN YOUR FREE TIME...

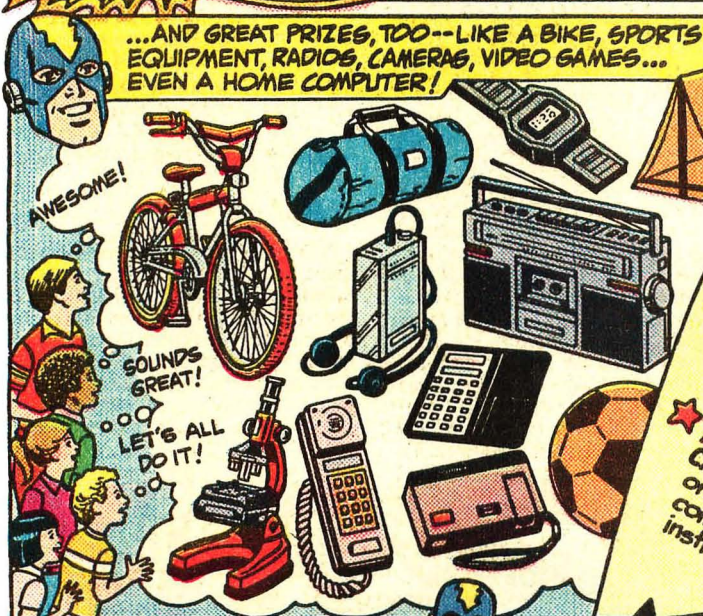


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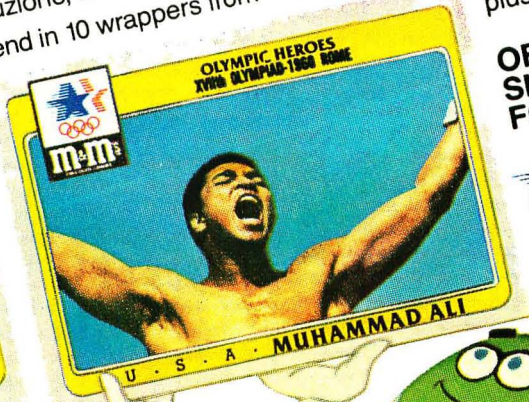
(In Arizona: 1-800-352-0458)

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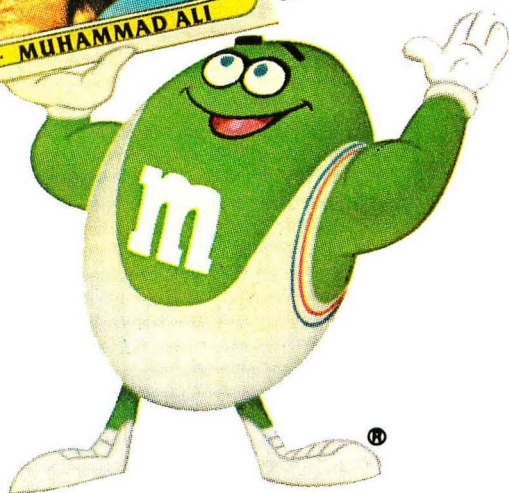
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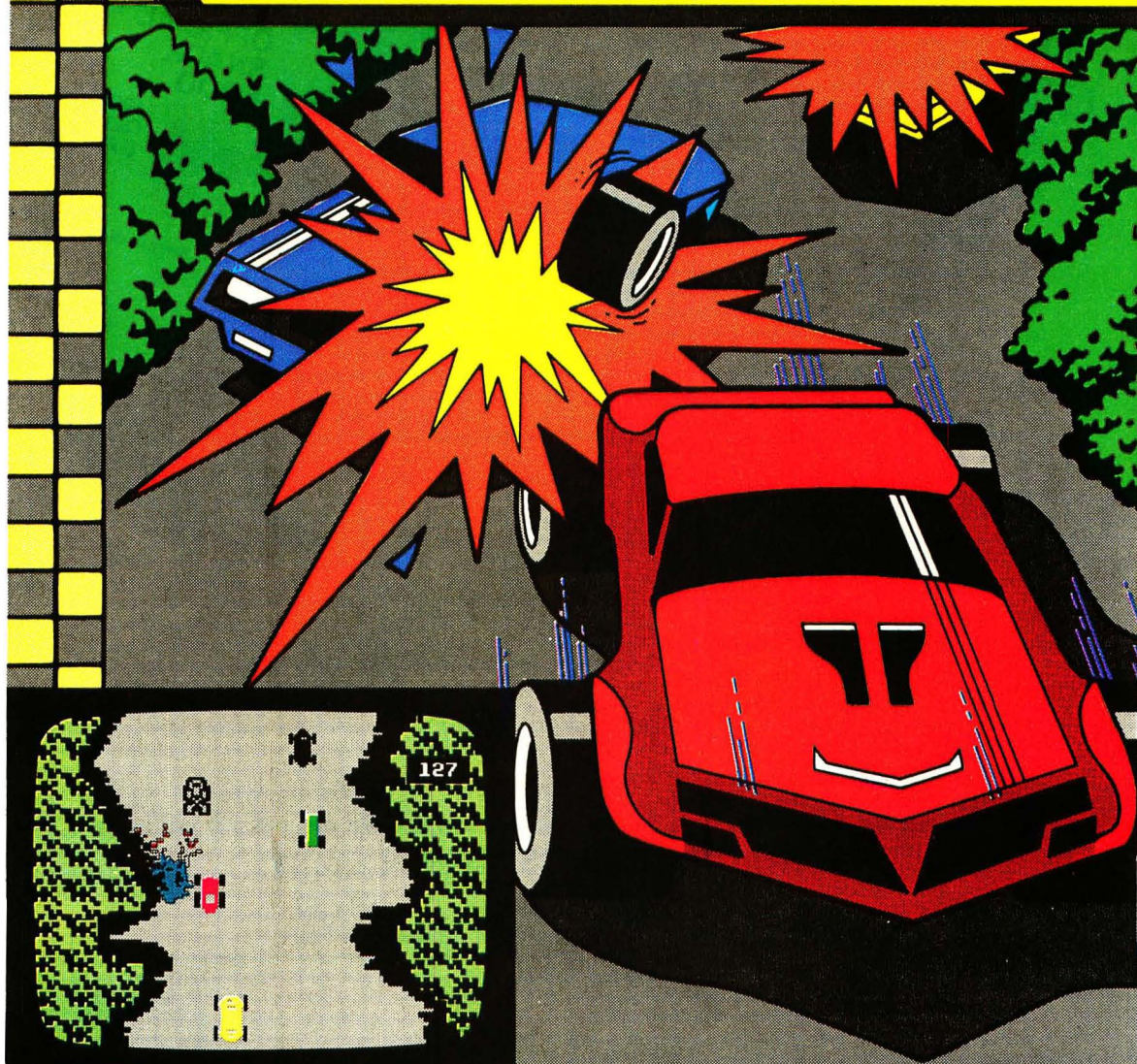
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