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RETAILER DISPLAY UNTIL JUNE 10, 1996



HEAVY METAL

ONE

GALLERY: *CHRISTOS ACHILLEOS*

GALLERY: *CORNELIUS COLE*

GALLERY: *BEFORE DEN*

BY RICHARD CORBEN

CAPTAIN STERN BY BERNI WRIGHTSON

SOFT LANDING BY DAN O'BANNON

AND THOMAS WARKENTIN

DEN BY RICHARD CORBEN

SO BEAUTIFUL, SO DANGEROUS

BY AGNUS MCKIE

PUBLISHER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
KEVIN EASTMAN

MANAGING EDITOR
DEBRA RABAS

VICE-PRESIDENT
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
HOWARD JUROFSKY

BUSINESS MANAGER
CAROL MAIORELLA

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
PAT HAYWARD

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ONE STEP BEYOND

By the time you read this, the HEAVY METAL animated movie will have made its return to theatres. After fifteen years, this classic is louder and nastier than ever!

The length of its run will be decided by old and new fans, so check it out on the big screen!

The theatrical release will not include any new footage, but the home video, which will be released June 4, 1996, will feature a never-before-seen five minute sequence

entitled *Nowhere Land* by master animator

Cornelius Cole. Although it will not shown in the originally intended sequence, the clip will be shown at the end of the video in its entirety, with a Pink Floyd score. This issue

One Step Beyond will take you even further back to the roots of the movie. We'll revisit the original *Soft Landing*, *Captain Sternn*, and *So Beautiful So Dangerous*. We'll also feature the art of Chris

Achilleos, who painted the original *Tarna*, Richard Corben's classic *The Arabian Nights*, and of course, the art of the great Corny Cole.

Special thanks to Corny and his daughter Dominique, who helped restore the missing *Nowhere Land* to the film.

Kevin Eastman

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and of course, the art of the great Corny Cole.
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King Eastman

CHRISTOS ACHILLEOS



Chris Achilleos was born in Famagusta, Cyprus in 1947, and in 1960, moved to England with his family. He then attended the Hornsey College of Art and has since become one of the world's foremost fantasy illustrators. His fascination with popular heroic imagery goes back to his childhood. While growing up in Cyprus, he learned about Greek myth and legend from "Classic" comics and then moved on to the forceful strips in "Eagle" when he came to live in England. Frank Bellamy's outstanding spread, "Heros the Spartan" was particularly influential on his growing interest in comic illustration.





He collected American comic imports and absorbed the dynamism of their graphics into his own comic style. He combined the technical skill he learned from his studies with these influences to produce highly-finished fantasy designs. His subjects are primarily heroes of the past; noble savages who, like Achilles and Beowulf, fight by hand and sword against enormous odds.

His heroes hack victory from the hideous forms of semi-human adversaries. The worse their chance against these champions are, the more complete and gory their eventual triumph will be, echoing the presence of some dark, mysterious "rightness".





His heroines stand unmoved at the sight of these barbaric carnages. Although somewhat cold, these hauntingly erotic maidens symbolize the epitome of female physical perfection. Their unattainable beauty provides his heroes with the drive and determination to take on any man, army, and/or beast.



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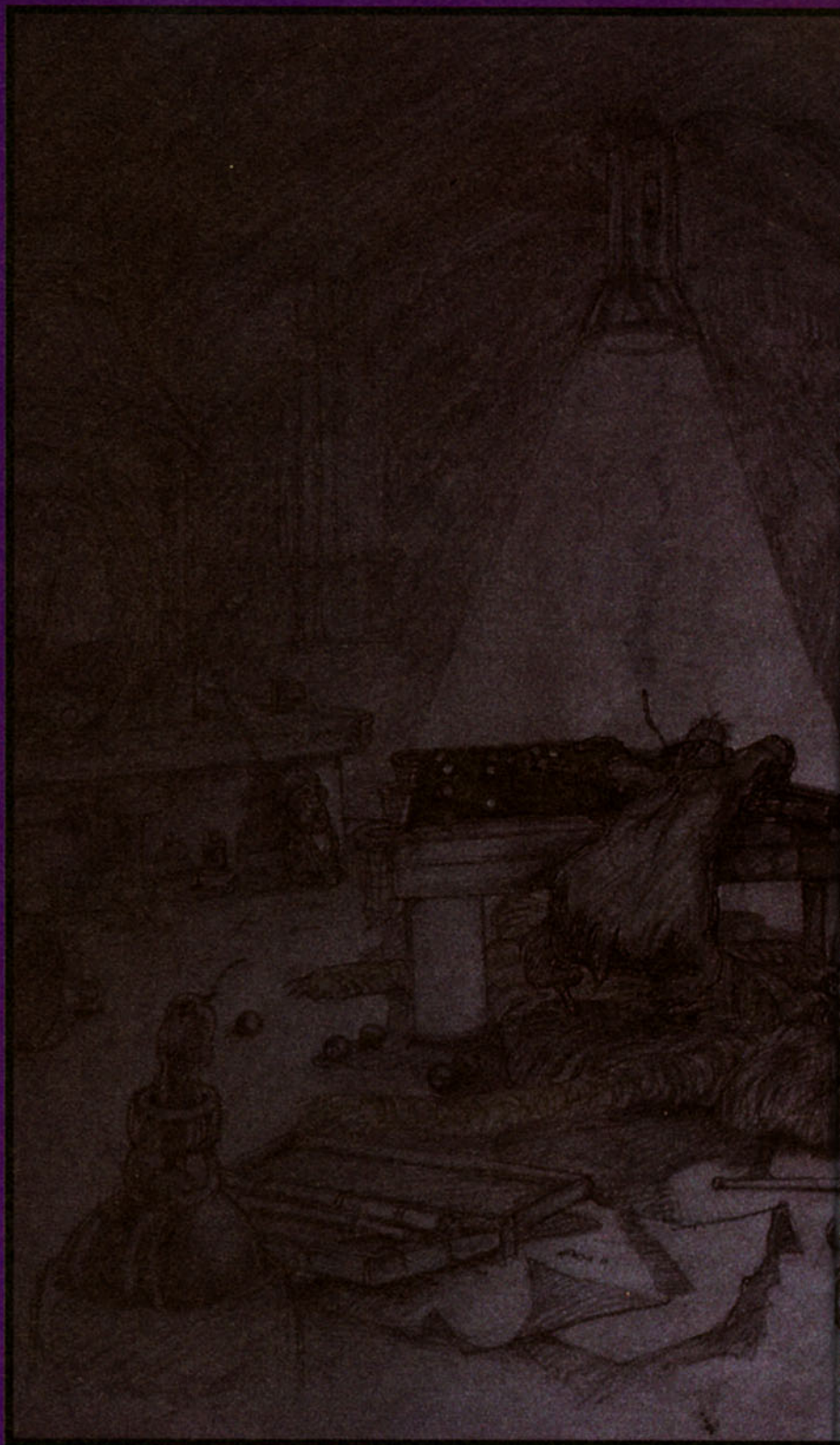
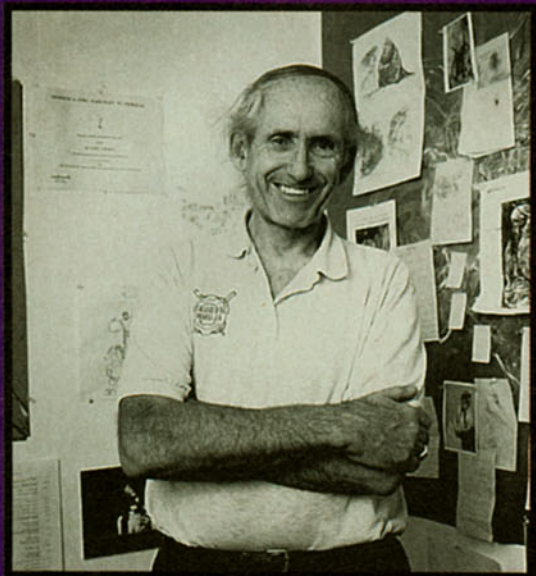


A fastidious painter, Achilleos takes anywhere from one to four weeks to finish a painting. Though his commissions vary, there are three constants in his work: heroes who are "born adventures who live by their wits", beasts who are usually humanoid for "the most effective monster is something you can relate to" and finally, women who are larger than life and "pure fantasy, as perfect as possible."



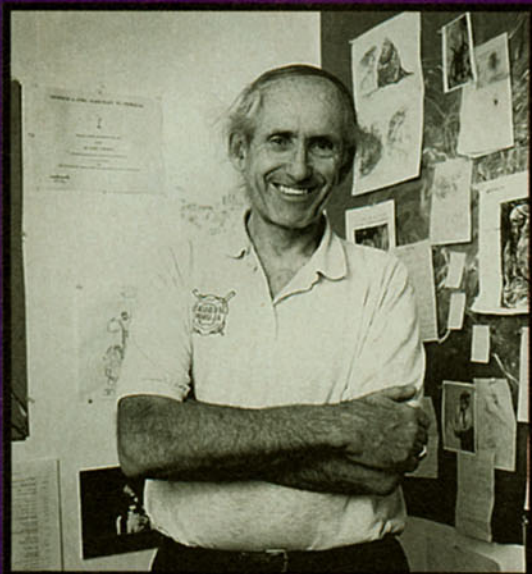
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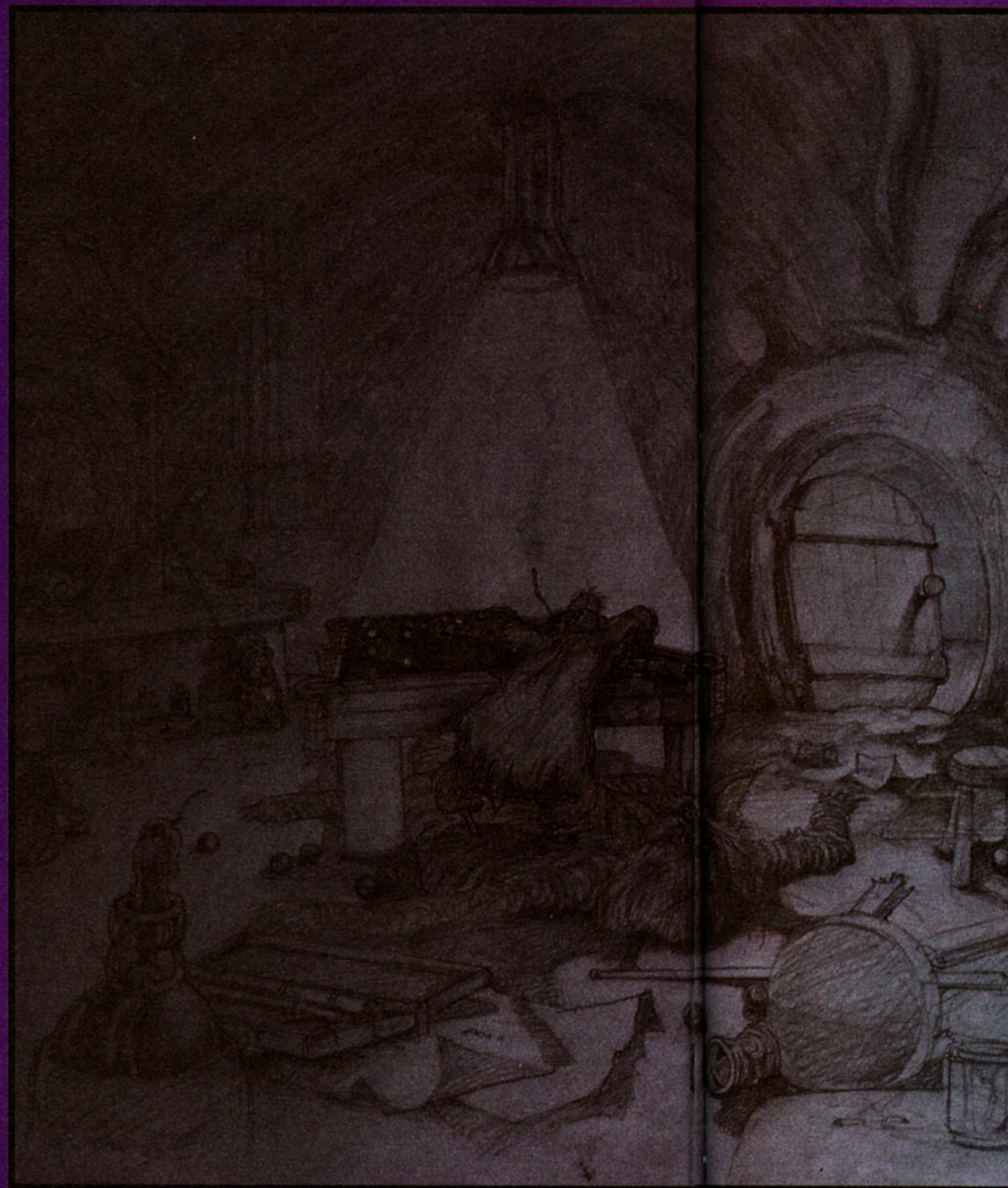


Cornelius "Corny" Cole
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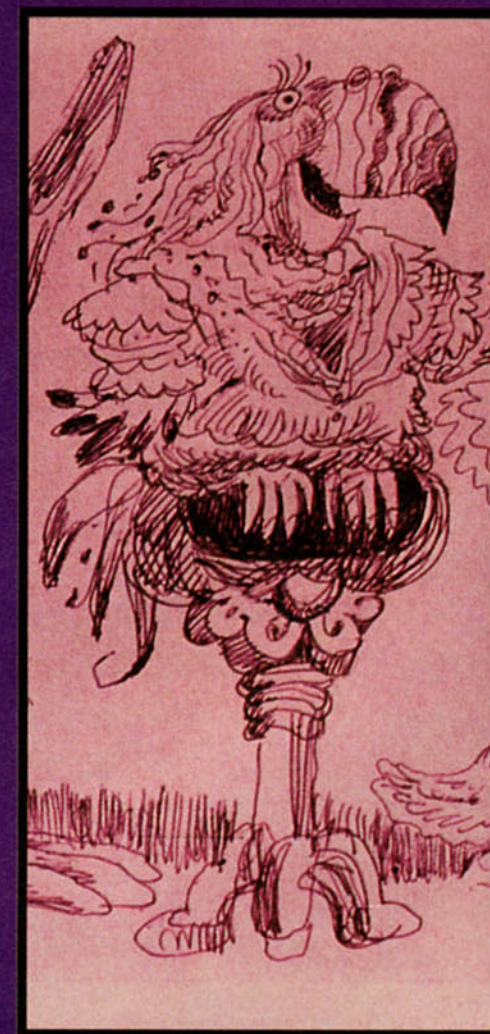
CORNELIUS COLE

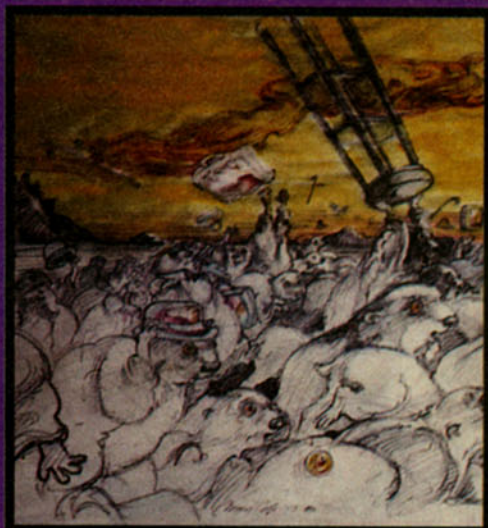


Cornelius "Corny" Cole does things his own way. *His* way has enriched animated motion pictures over the last thirty years. He writes, animates, does backgrounds, and even inks and paints his own cels. A true Renaissance man of animation.

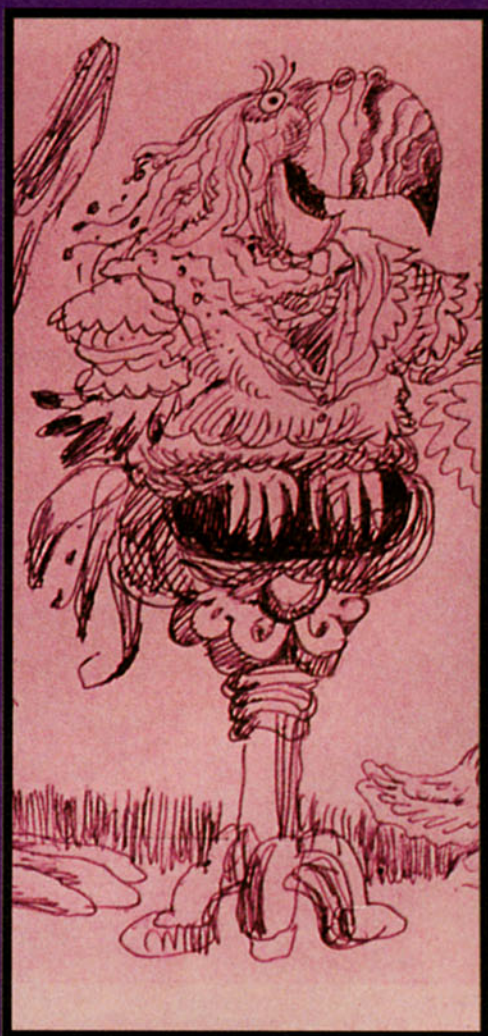


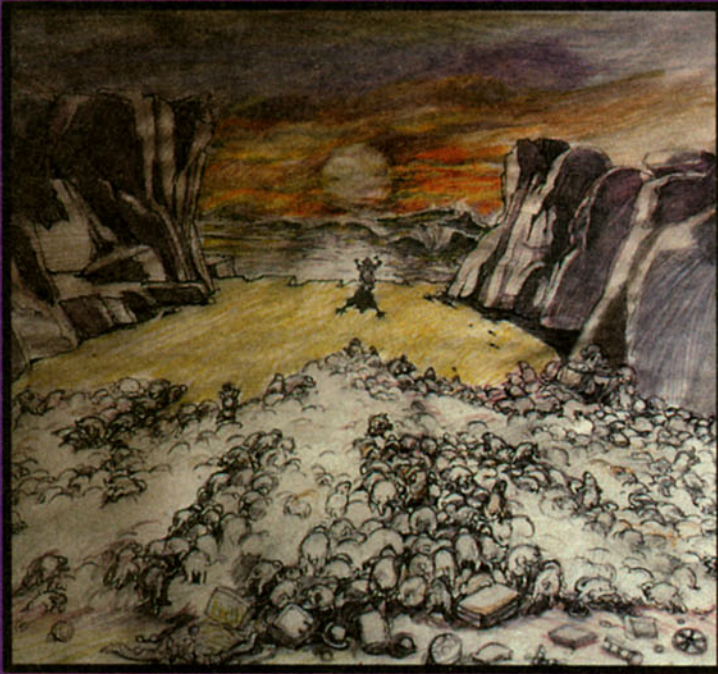
Born in Santa Monica, Corny attended the Chouinard Art Institute and then went to the Walt Disney studio, where he worked on the animated classic, *Lady and the Tramp*. But there was little opportunity for him to utilize his avant-garde drawing style. Once the feature was completed, he moved on to Warner Brothers studio.



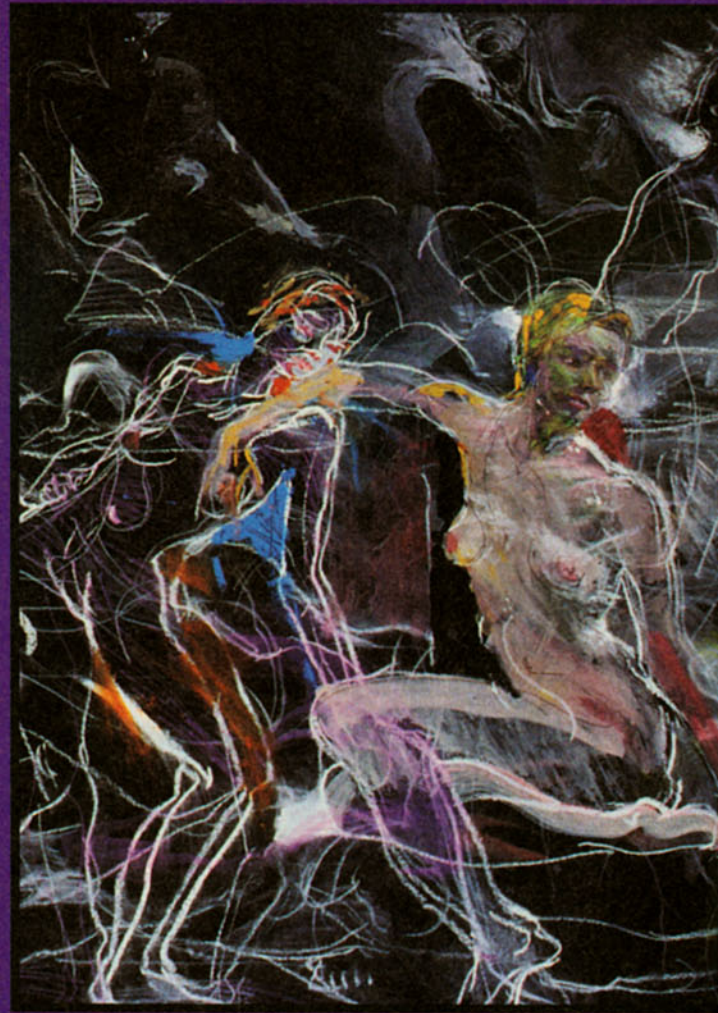


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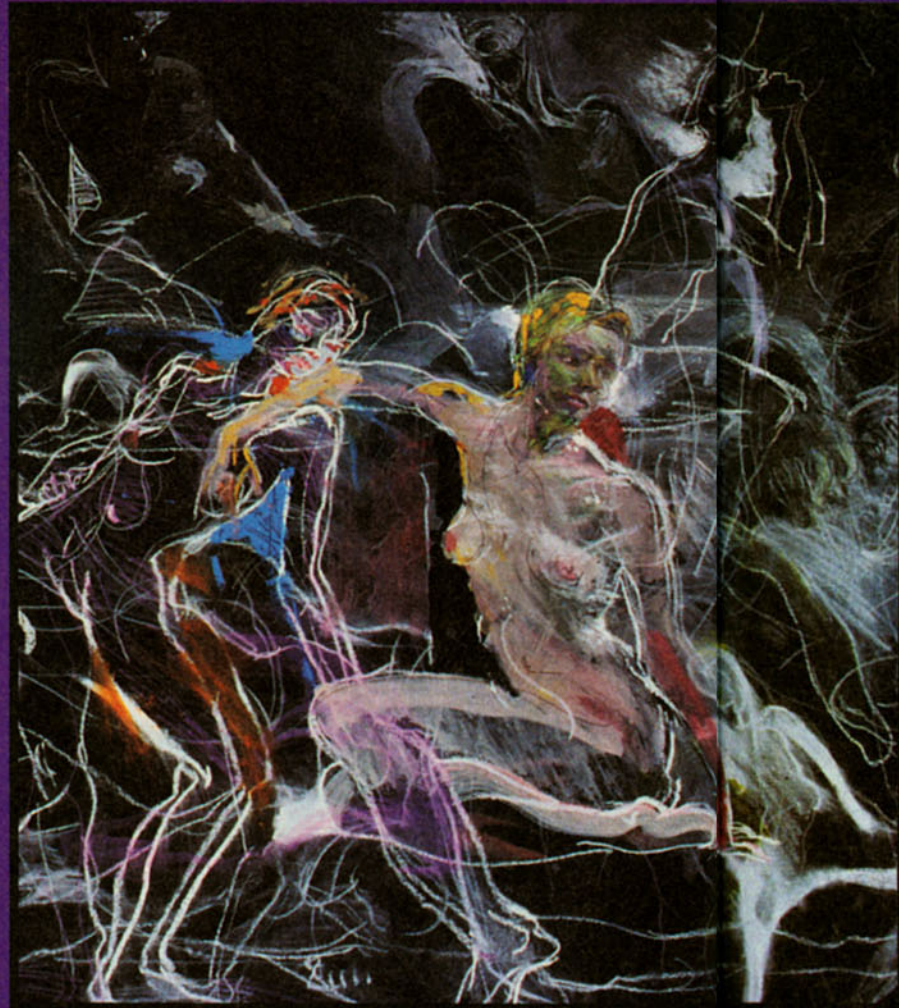


During the sixties and seventies, Corny seemed to be everywhere. He did educational films, worked for UPA, and Hanna-Barbera. UPA's feature film, *Gay Purree*, was the first film that featured Corny's design talents. He then directed the cartoon feature *The Phantom Tollbooth* and designed the characters, layouts, and storyboards for Richard Williams' feature *Raggedy Ann & Andy*. His drawings were full of charm and invention. He also spent some time at Depatie-Freland, where he art-directed an animated special based on NBC's hot star at the time, Flip Wilson.





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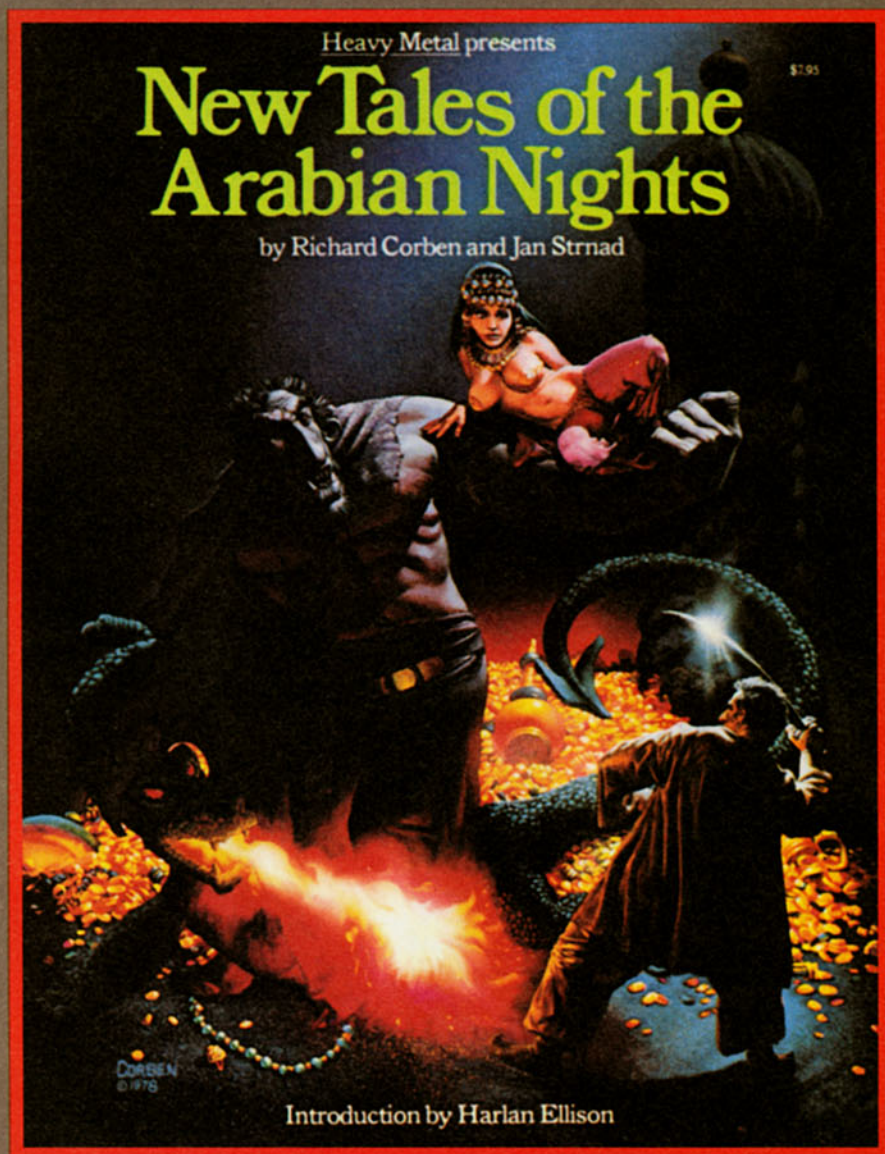
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GALLERY: MOVIE FLASHBACK

BEFORE DEN...

...THERE ALMOST WAS...

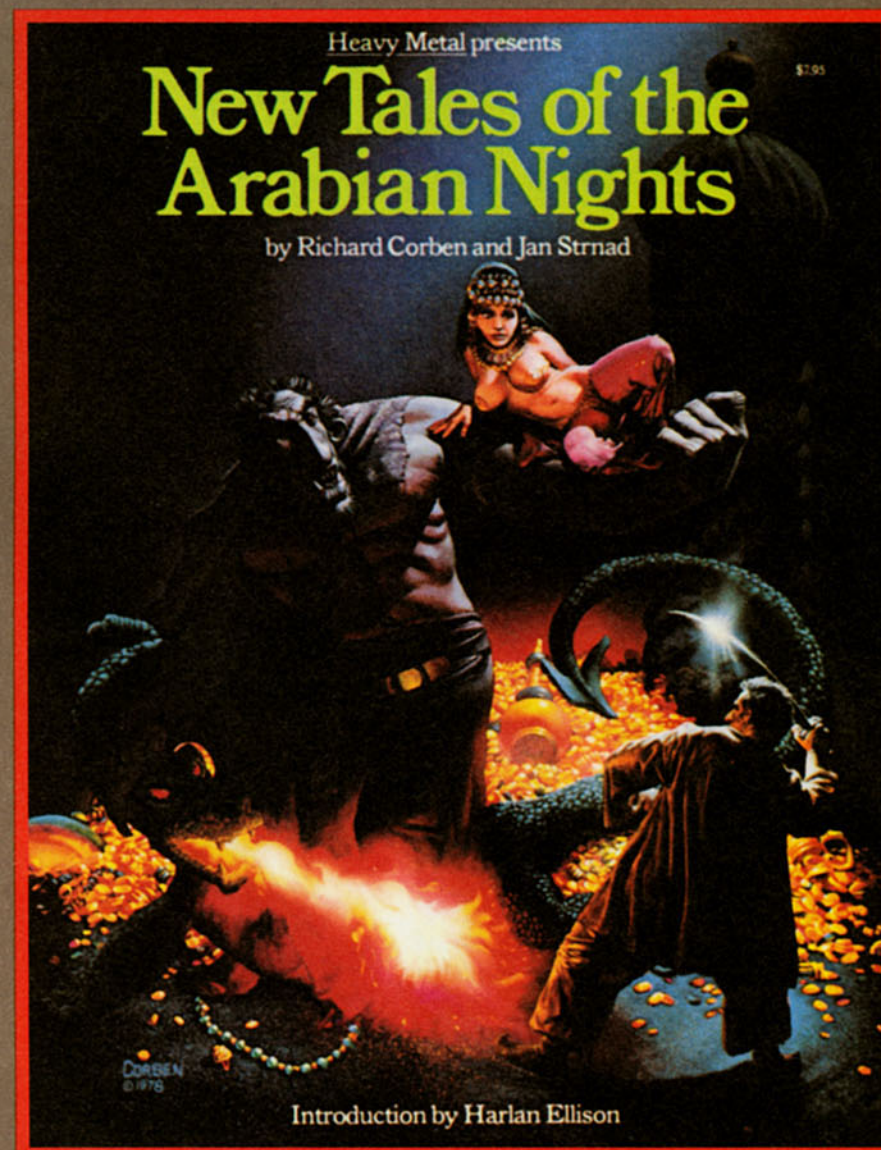


In the early stages of pre-production, Reitman, Mogel, Potterton, and Gross went through the "concept" possibilities of what was to go in the HEAVY METAL movie. Before *Den* was in - the team tested - *New Tales of the Arabian Nights*.



BEFORE DEN...

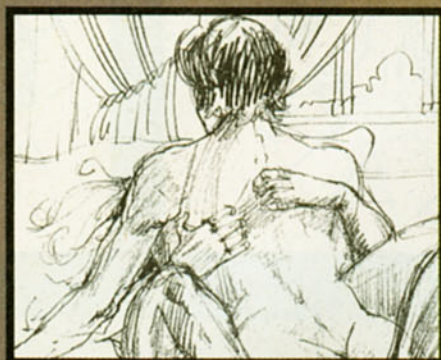
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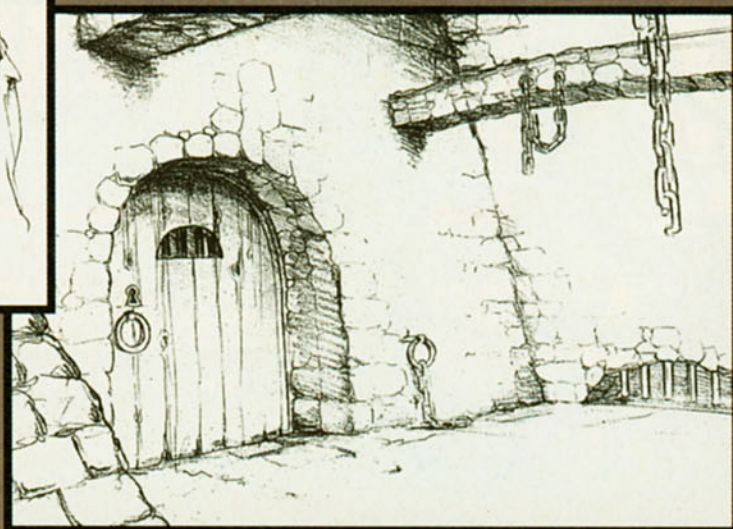
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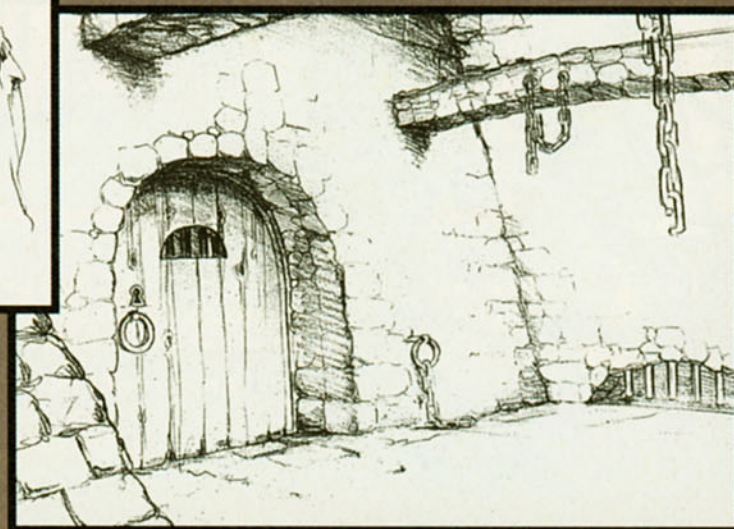


Above are scenes from the Corben/Strnad Arabian nights. On the bottom are Sinbad designs and rough story boards, believed to be the work of Jack Stokes and Harold Whitaker.



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When the time to make the final decision arrived, a key love scene with Sinbad and an oriental beauty had already been penciled (middle). Even though *Den* was the final choice, the scene was incorporated into the final film. *Sinbad* was brilliant, but *Den* was better for a step beyond...



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hahzaman! Wake up!
The fury of Allah
is upon us!

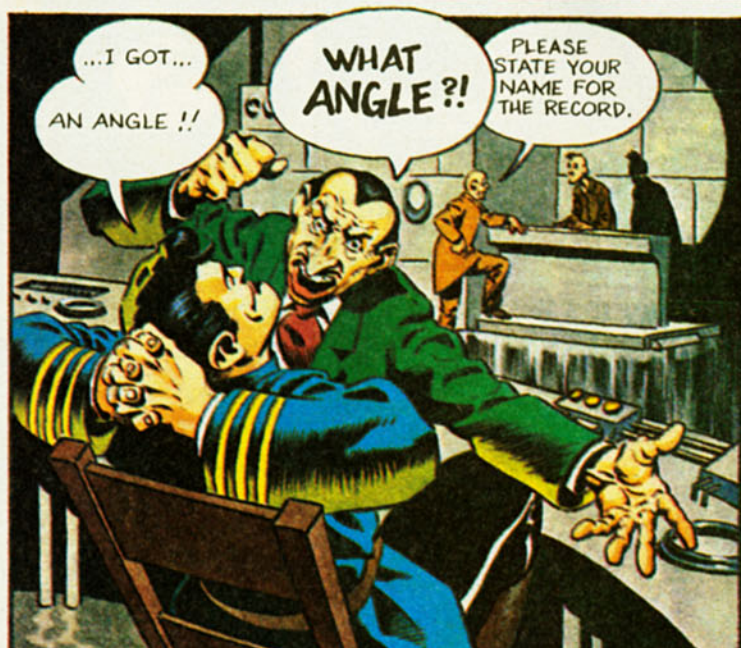


Captain Sternn

FEATURING:

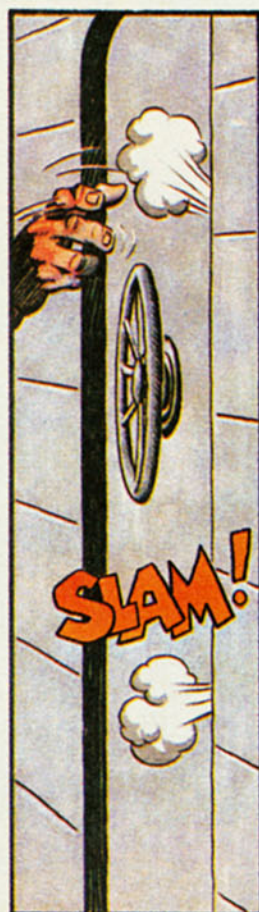
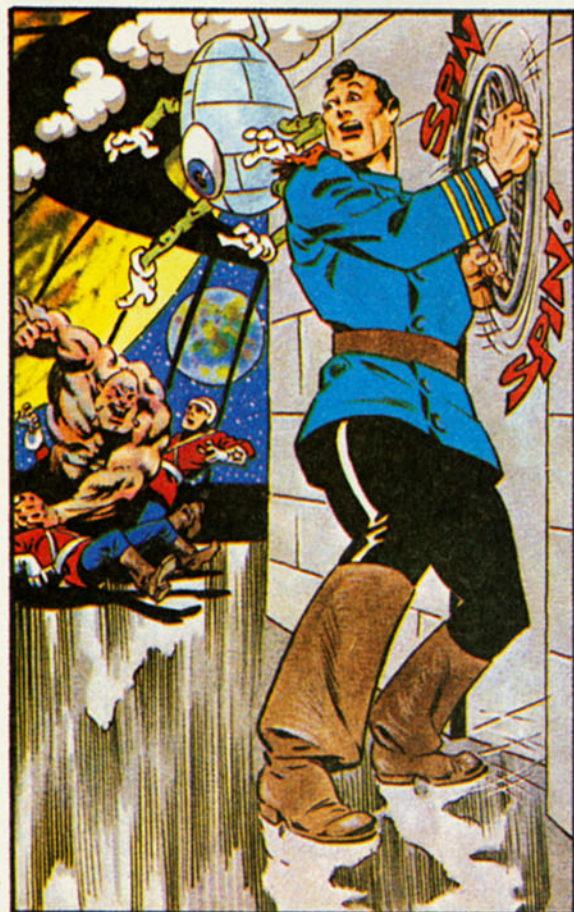
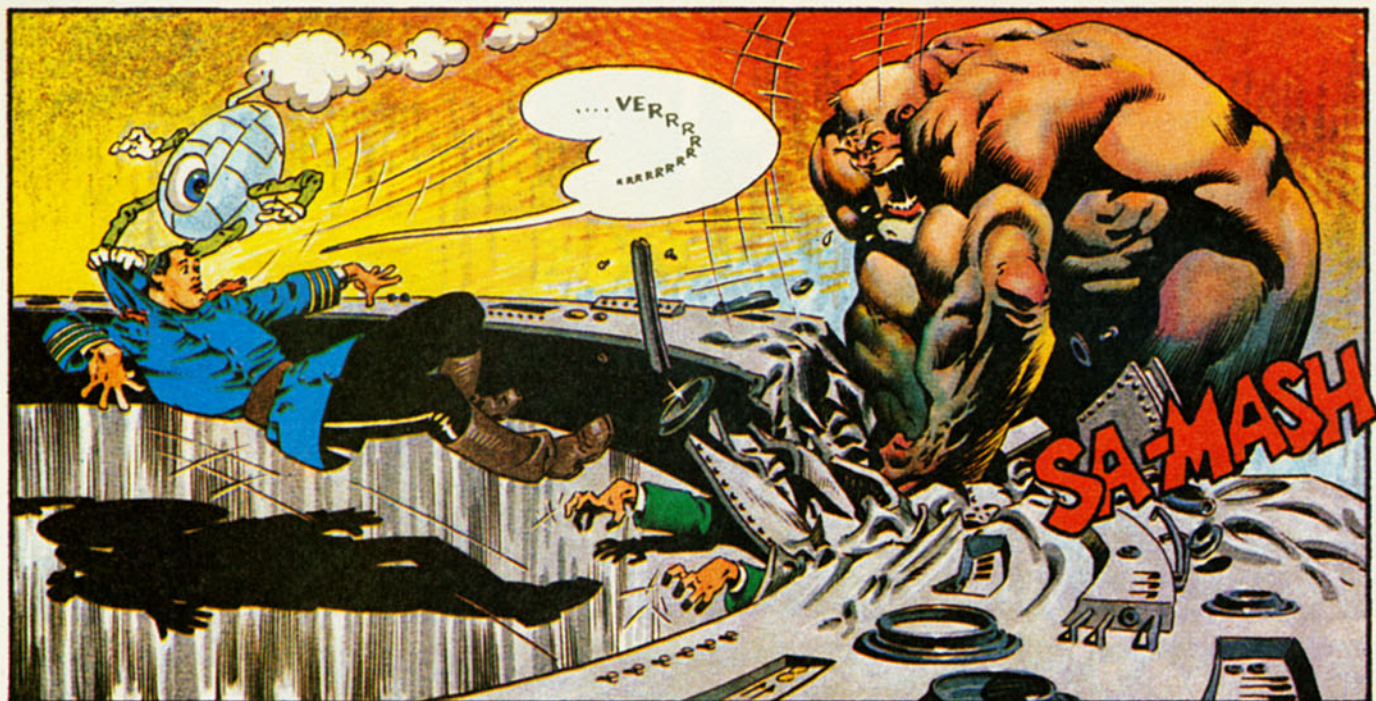
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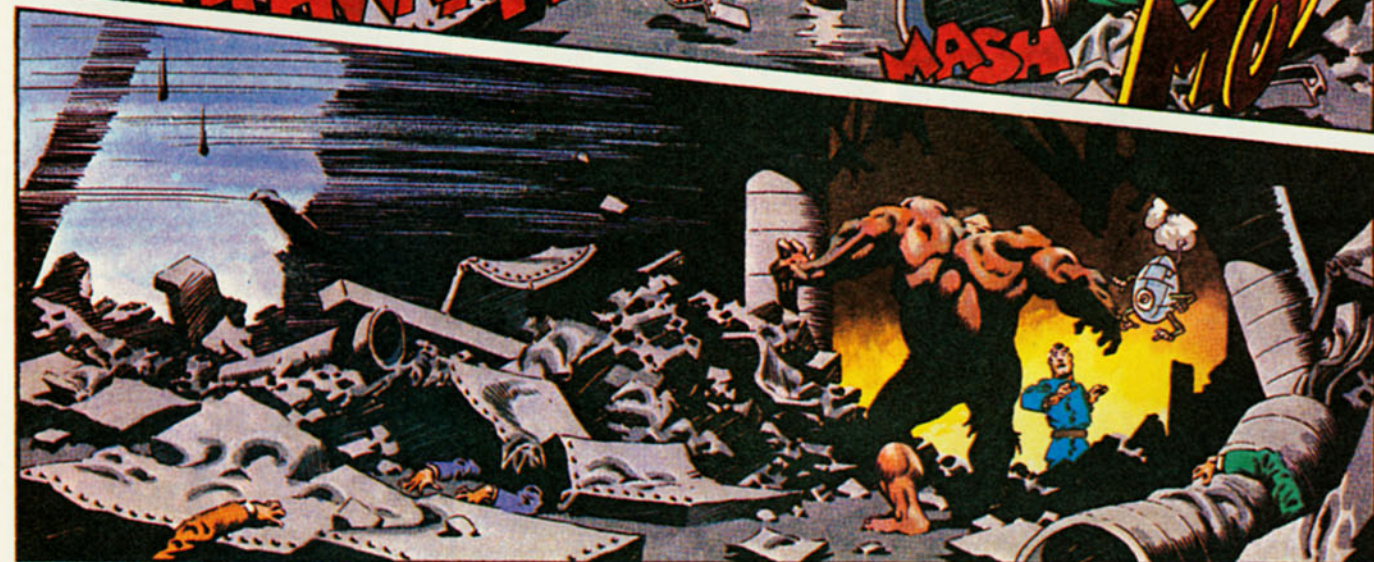
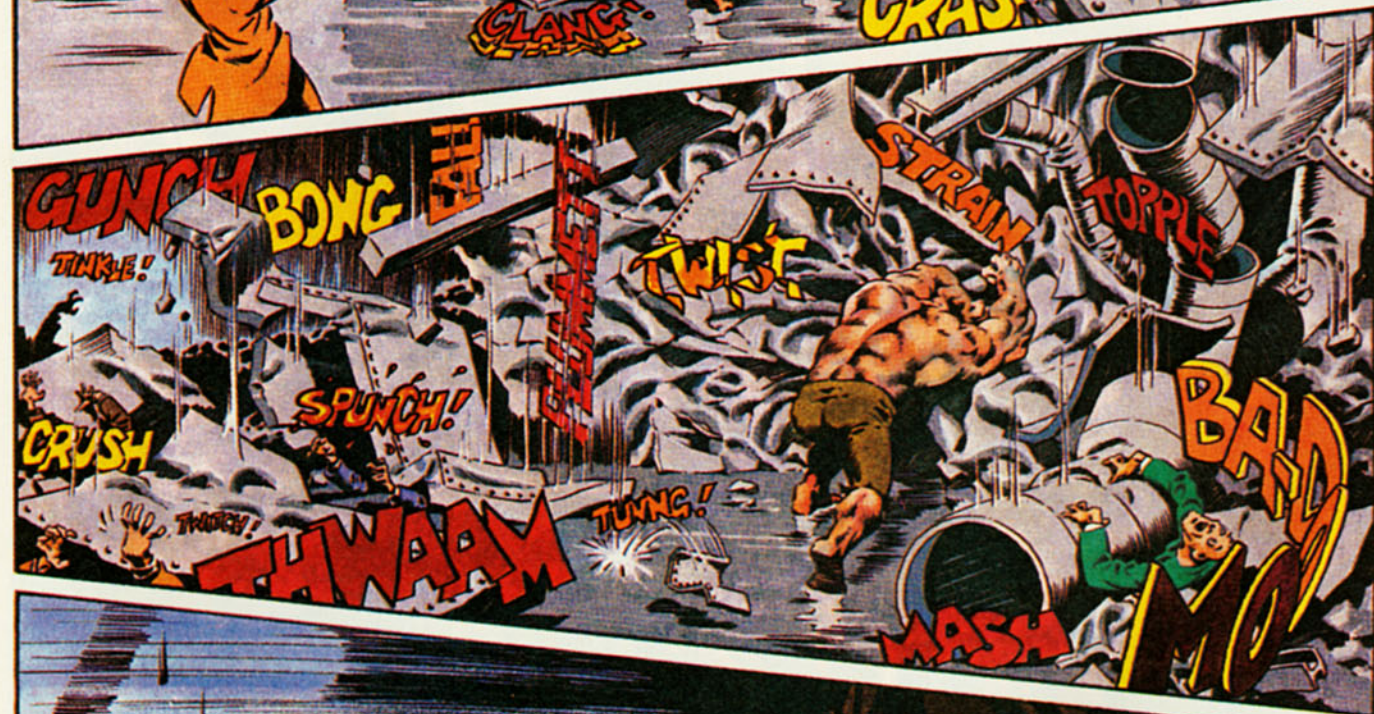
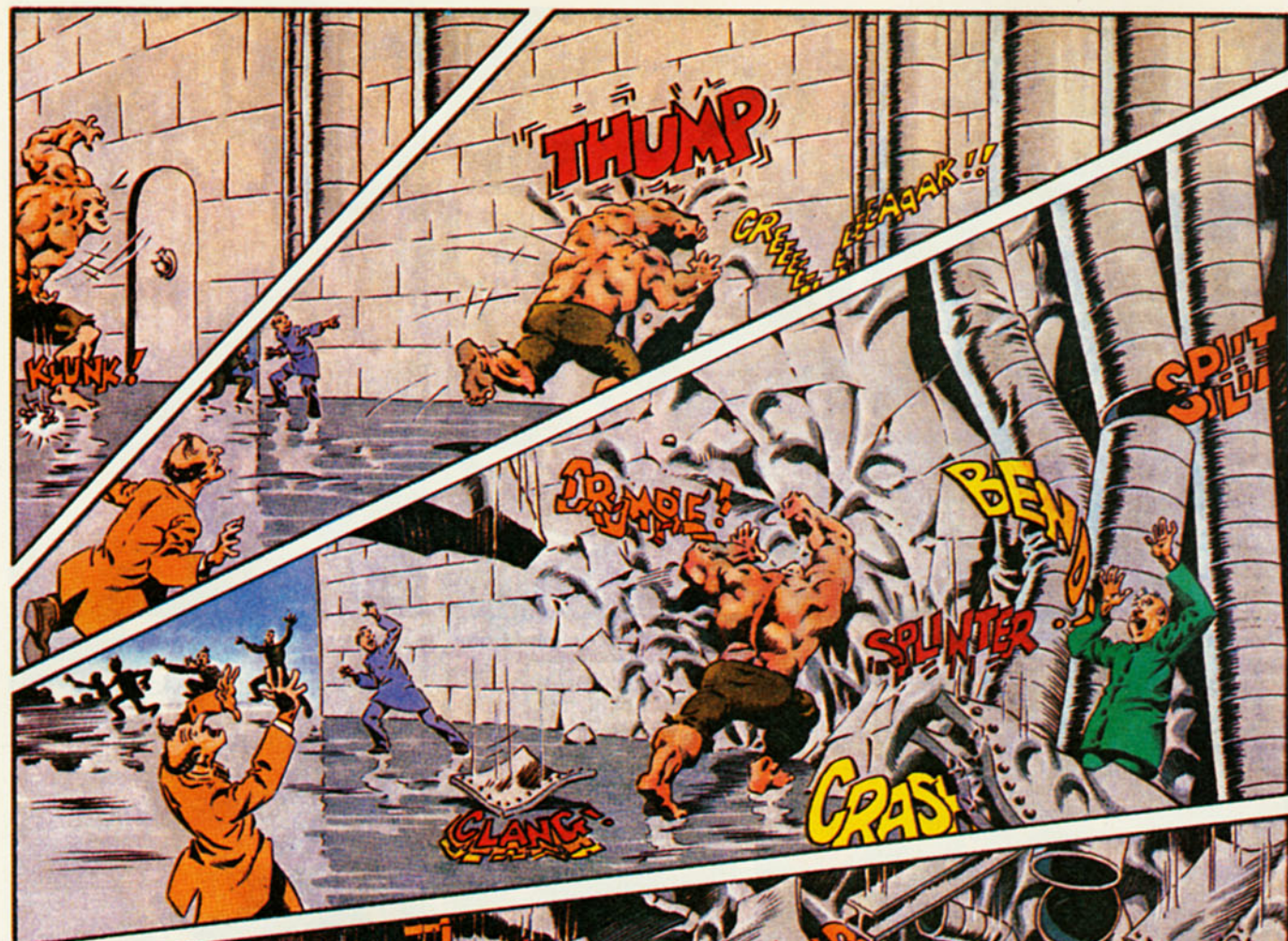


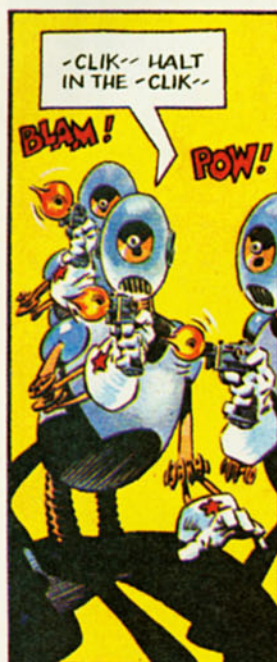
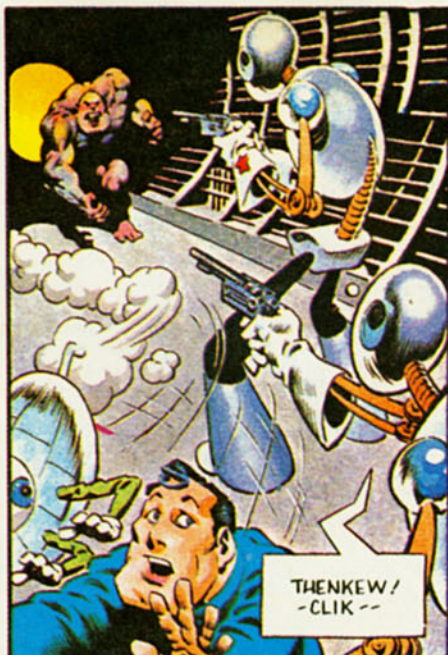
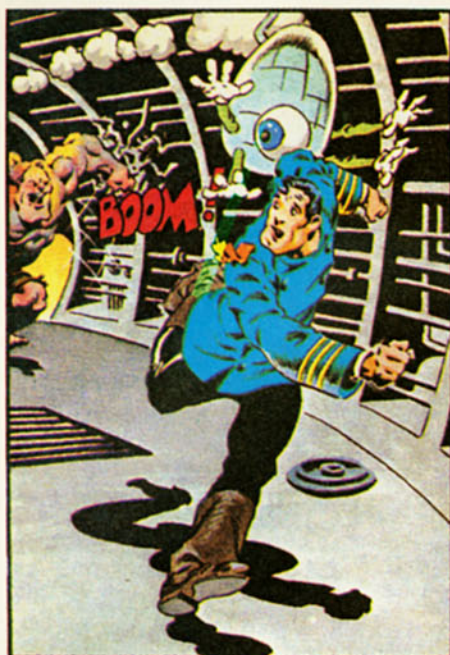


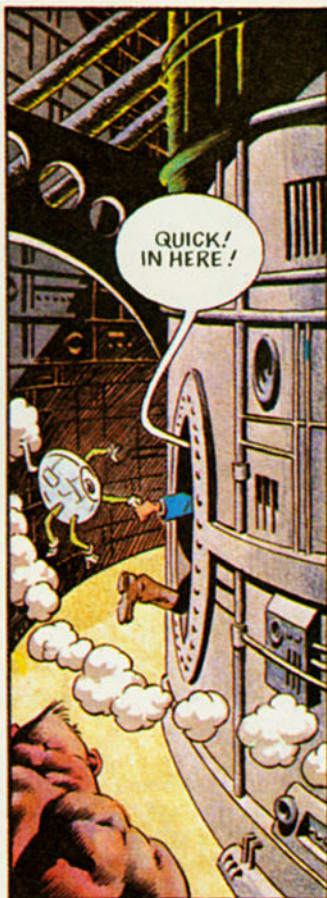


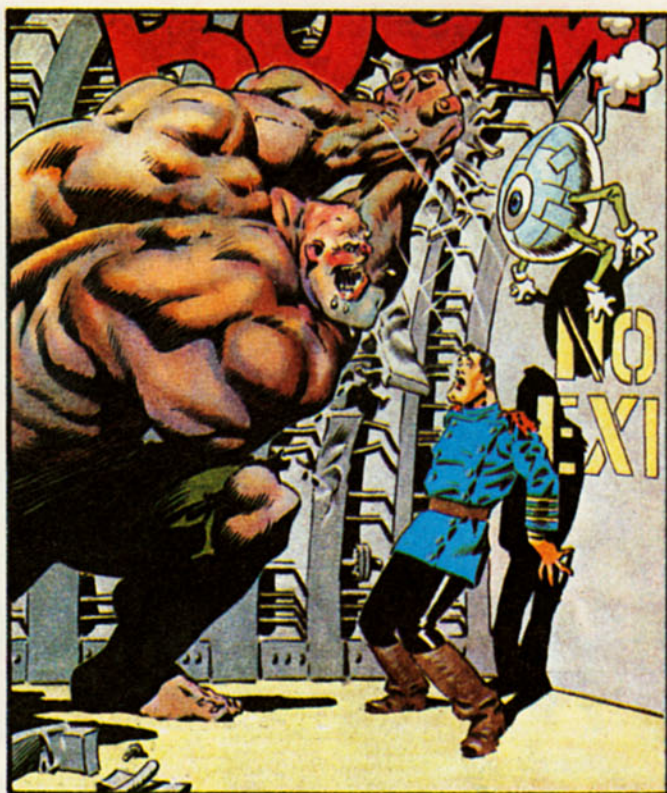








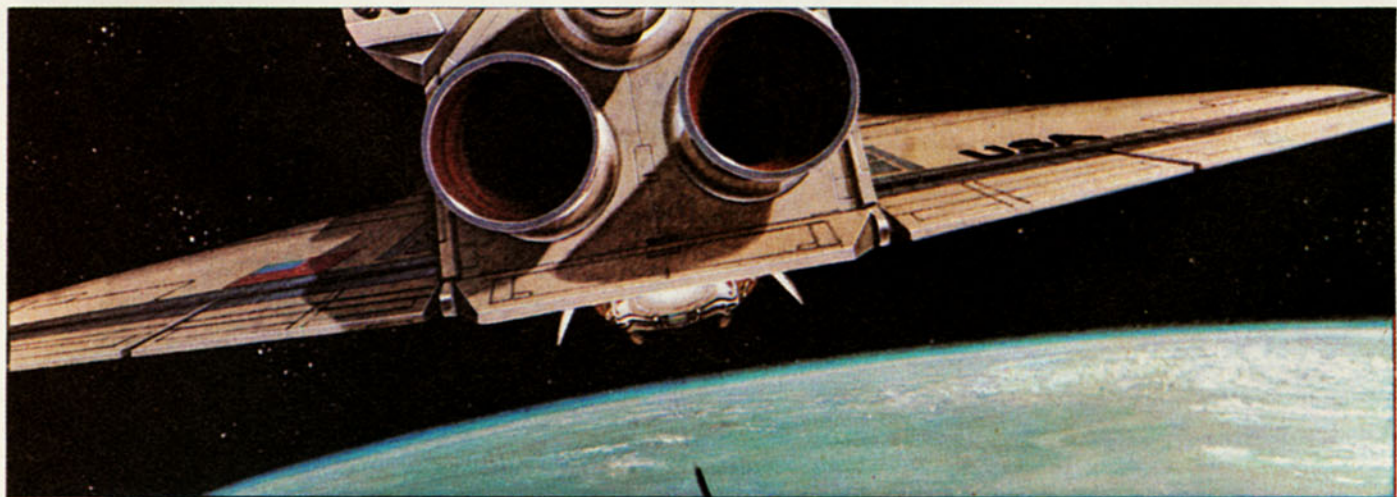
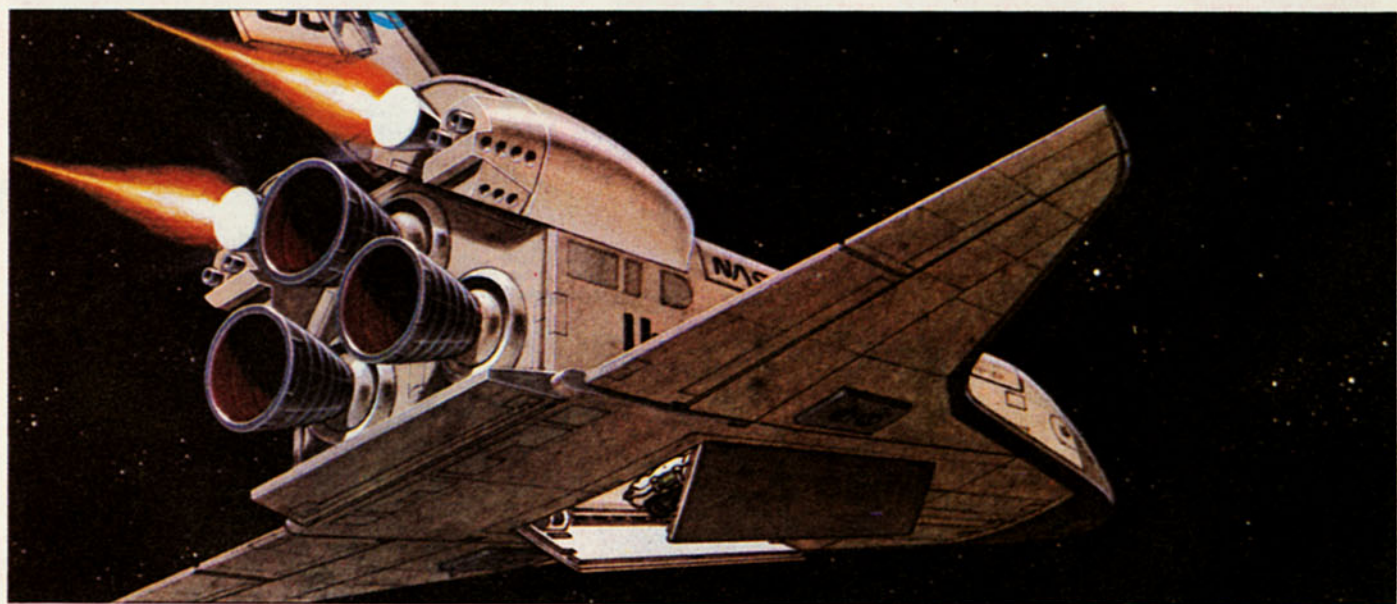


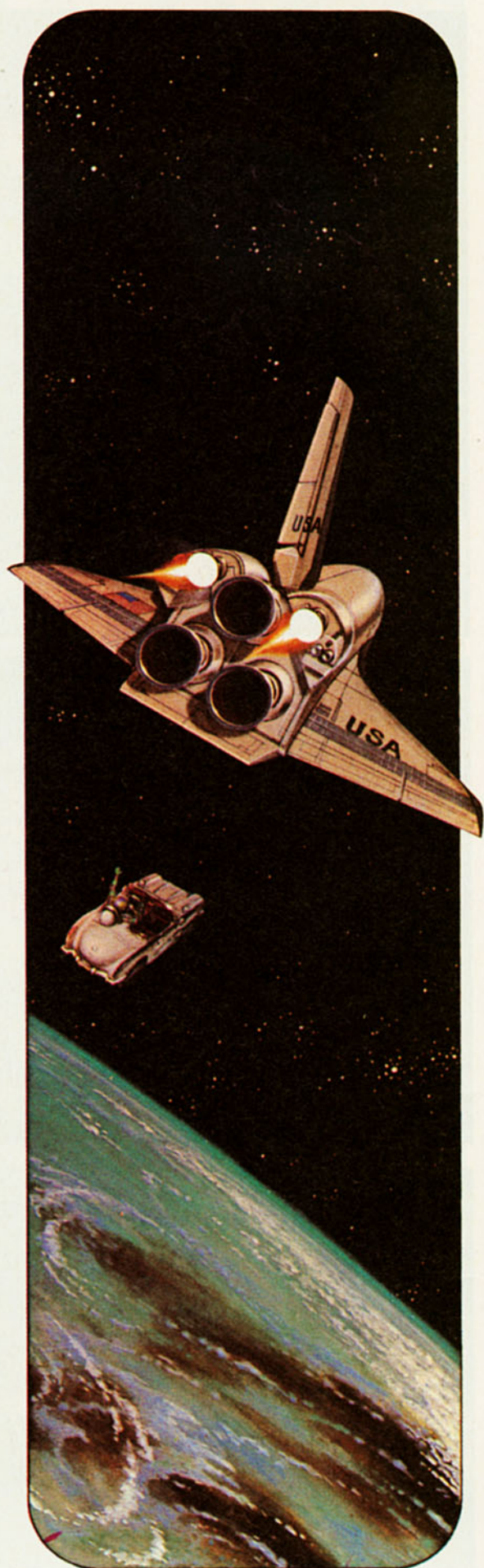
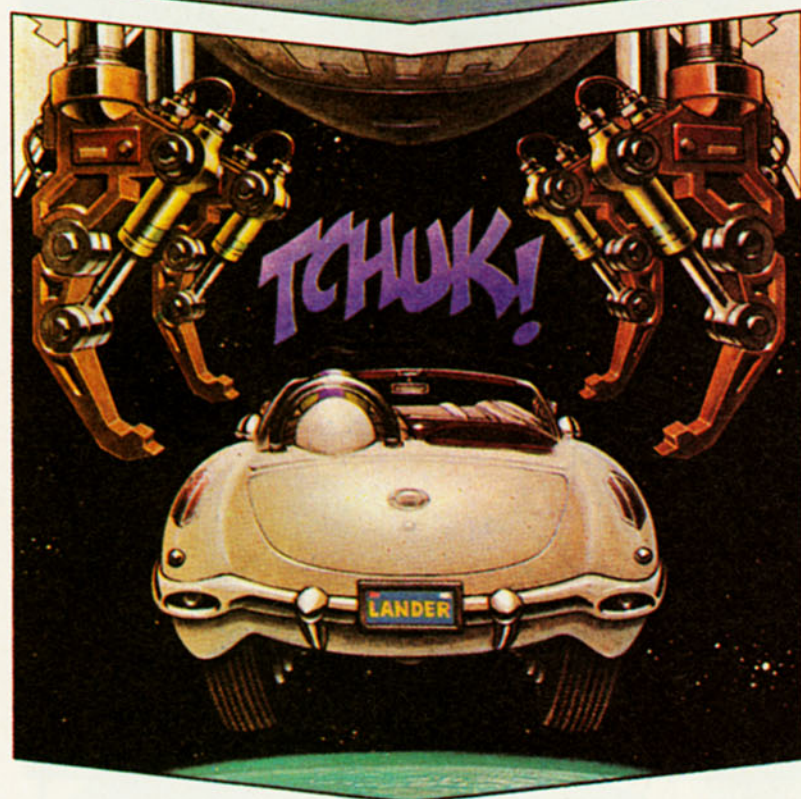
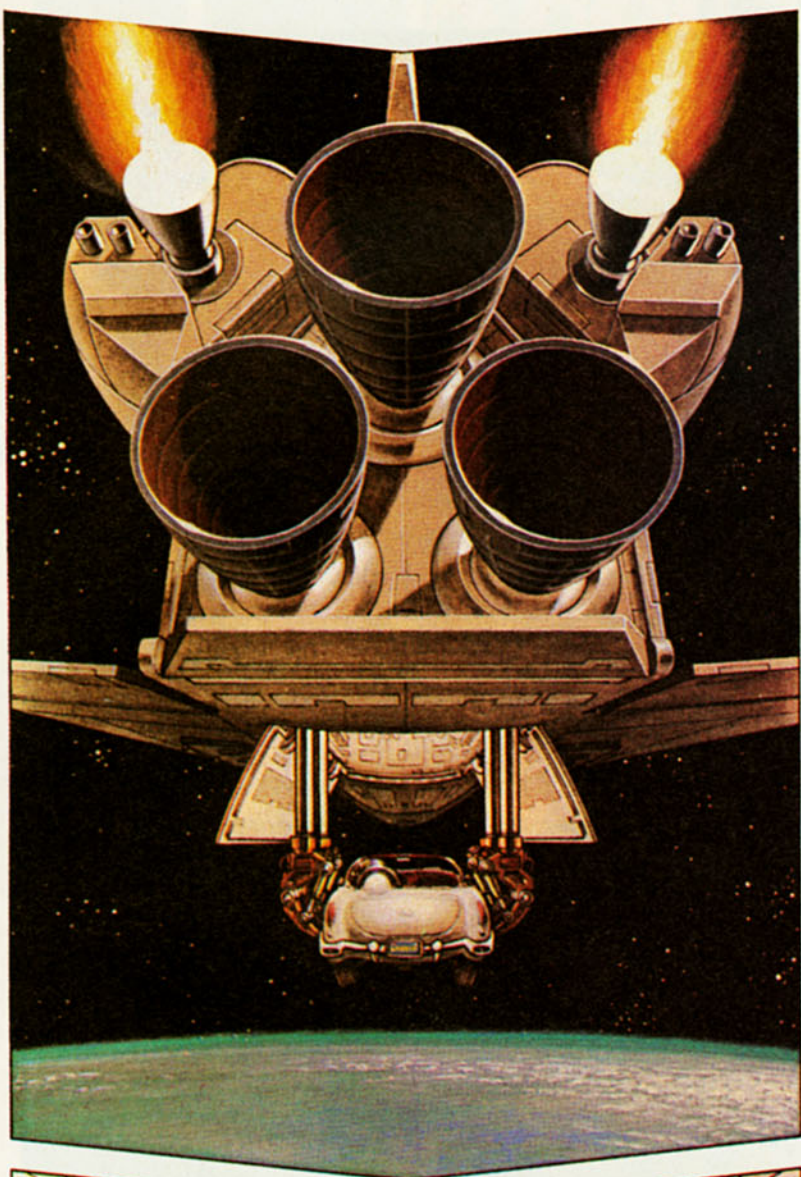


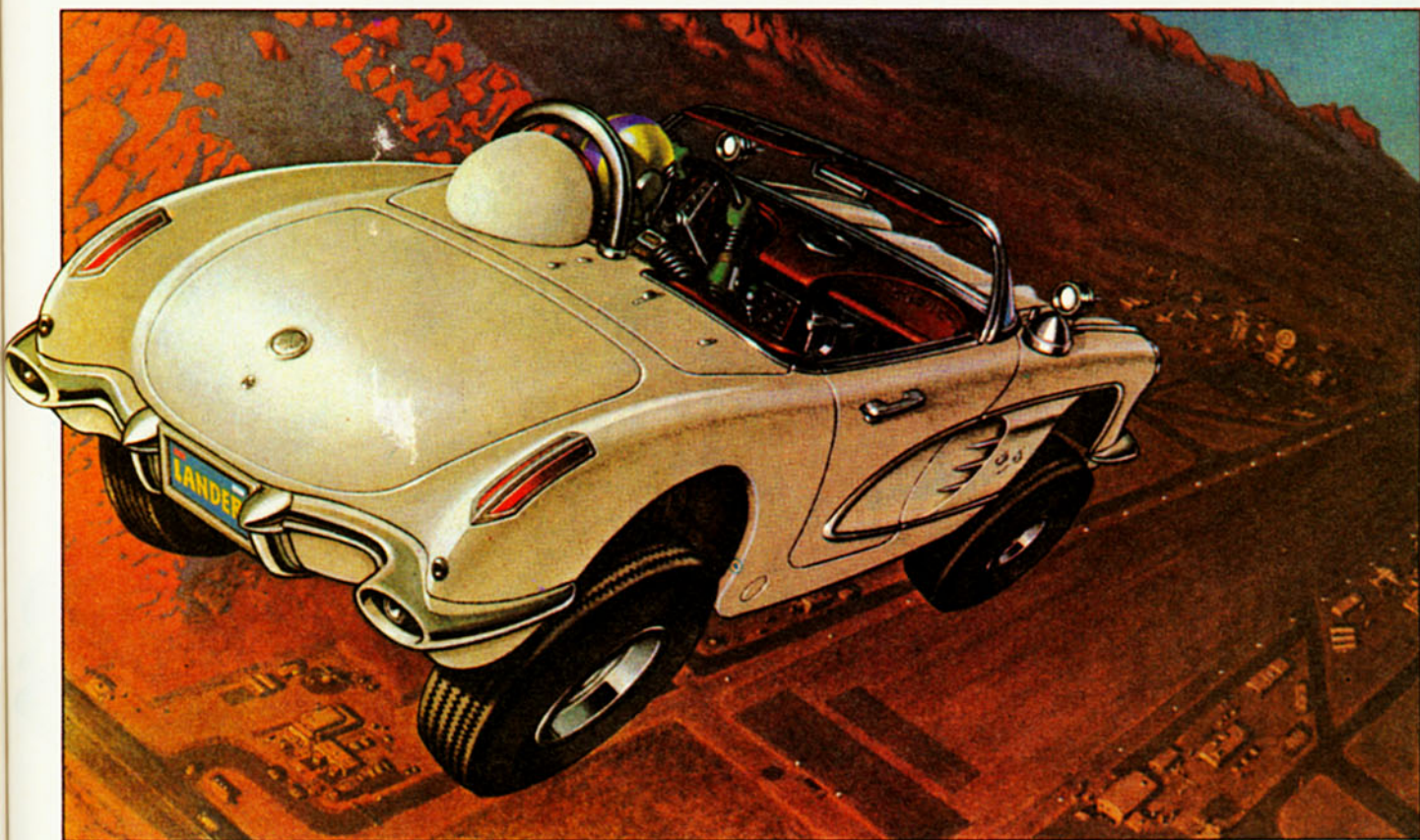
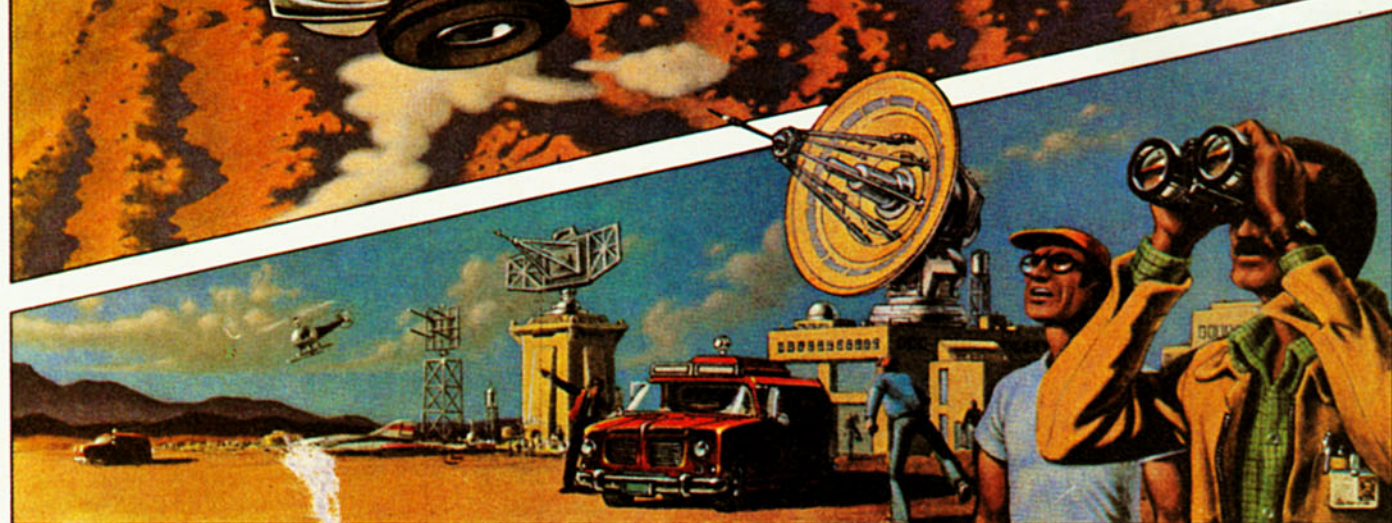
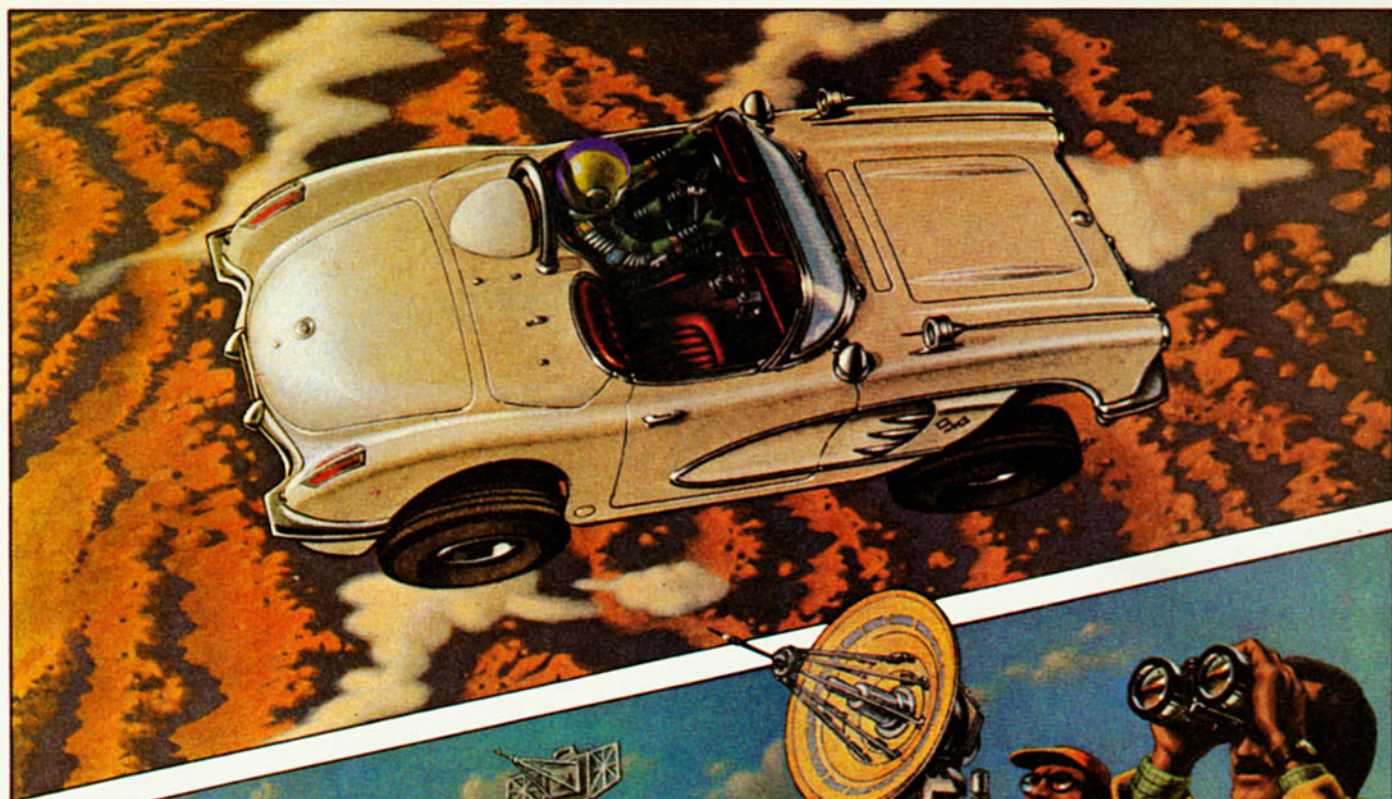
SOFT LANDING

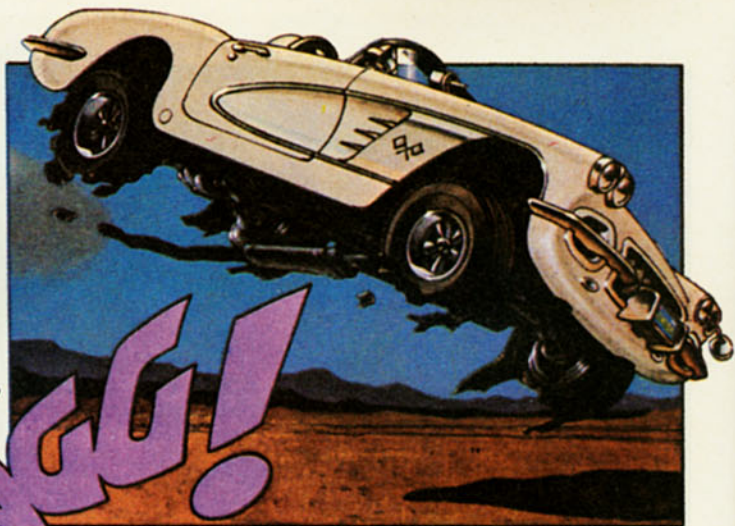
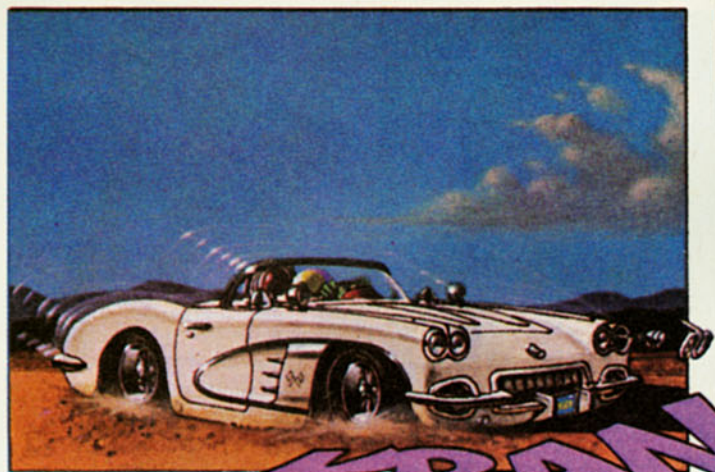
Concept: Dan O'Bannon
Art: Thomas Warkentin

Copyright 1979 Dan O'Bannon & Thomas Warkentin

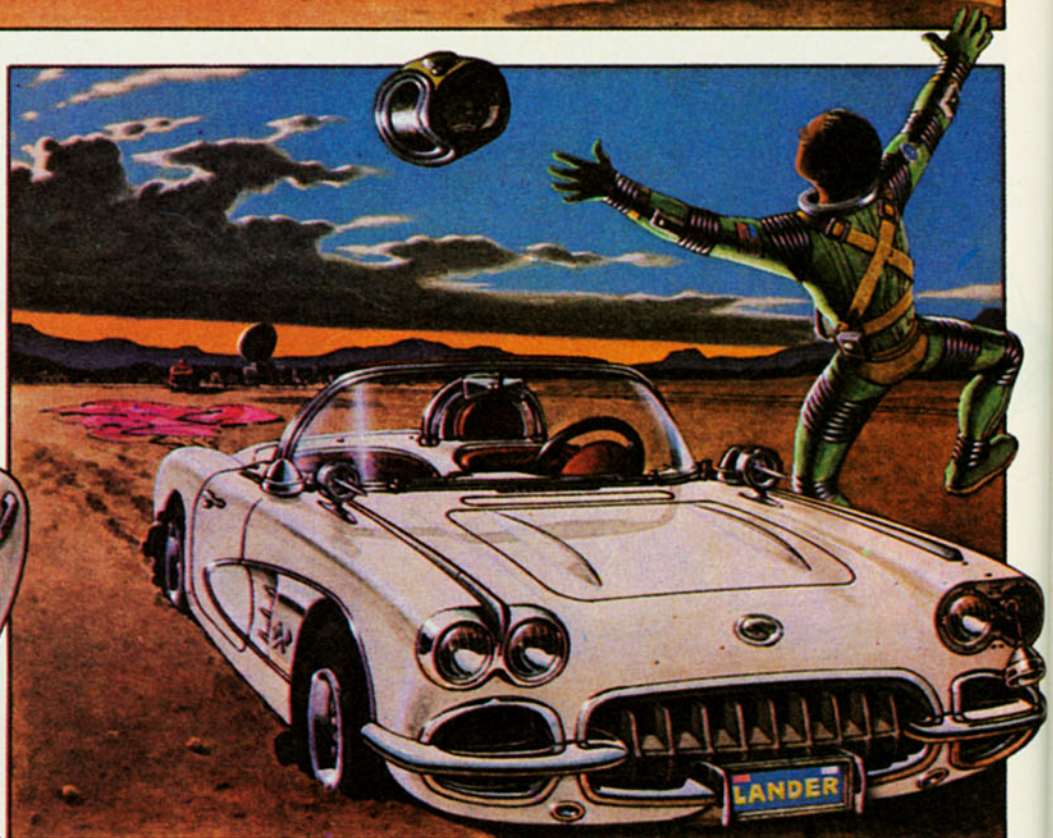
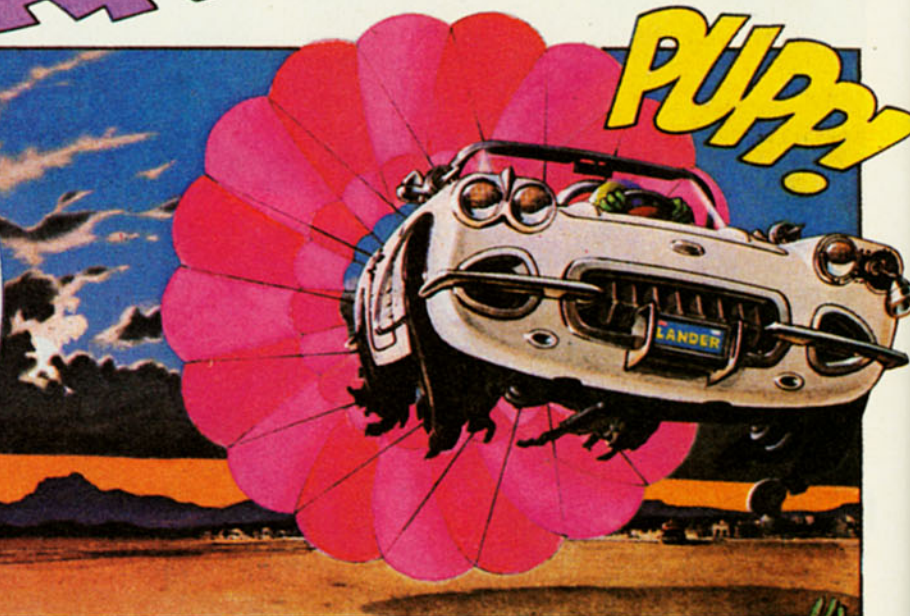








KRANK!



Deid

It seems I was floating in darkness for an extremely long time. Slowly jumbled clouds of electroneural impulses coalesced to form my mind and I became aware of myself as an entity. I drifted across nebulous unfocused colors.

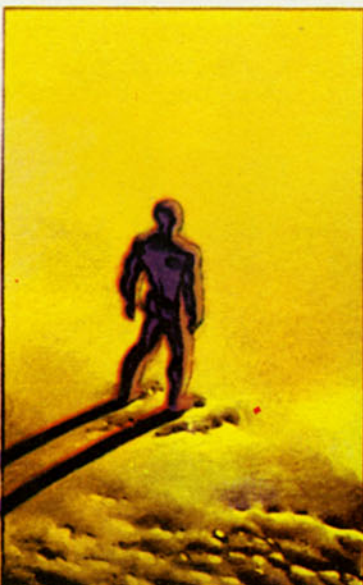
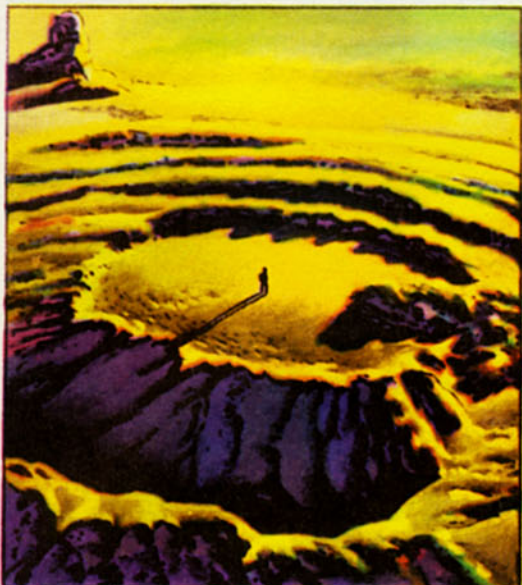
As I wandered through the maze, I saw something. It was an image... a memory, but it was so fuzzy and indistinct. It seemed as though I was looking at a book... what is a book?



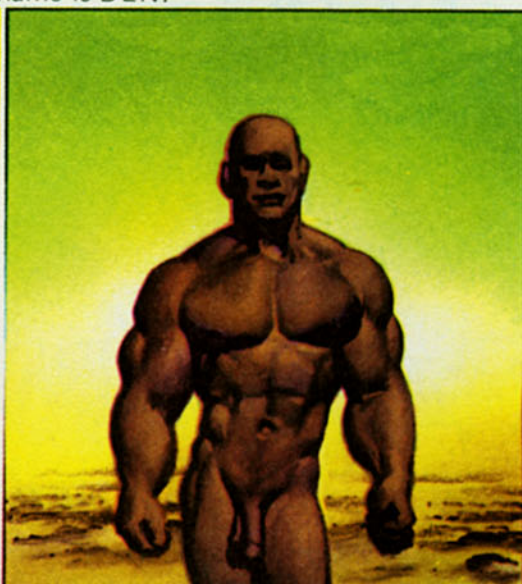
Within the book was an unconnected page. It had something on it... an incomprehensible labyrinth of lines. The images faded, swept away by a searing light. Other sensations accompanied the radiance, bombarding my emerging consciousness.



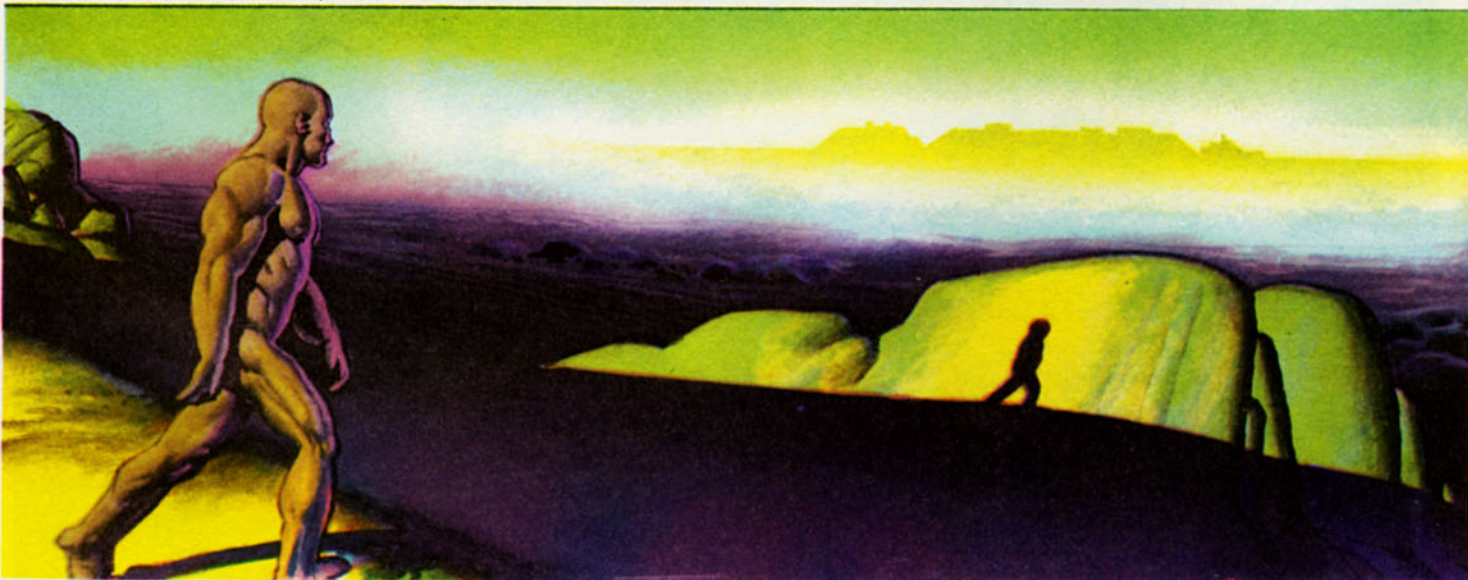
Who was I? Where was I? . . . The landscape was totally unknown to me, even my body was unfamiliar.

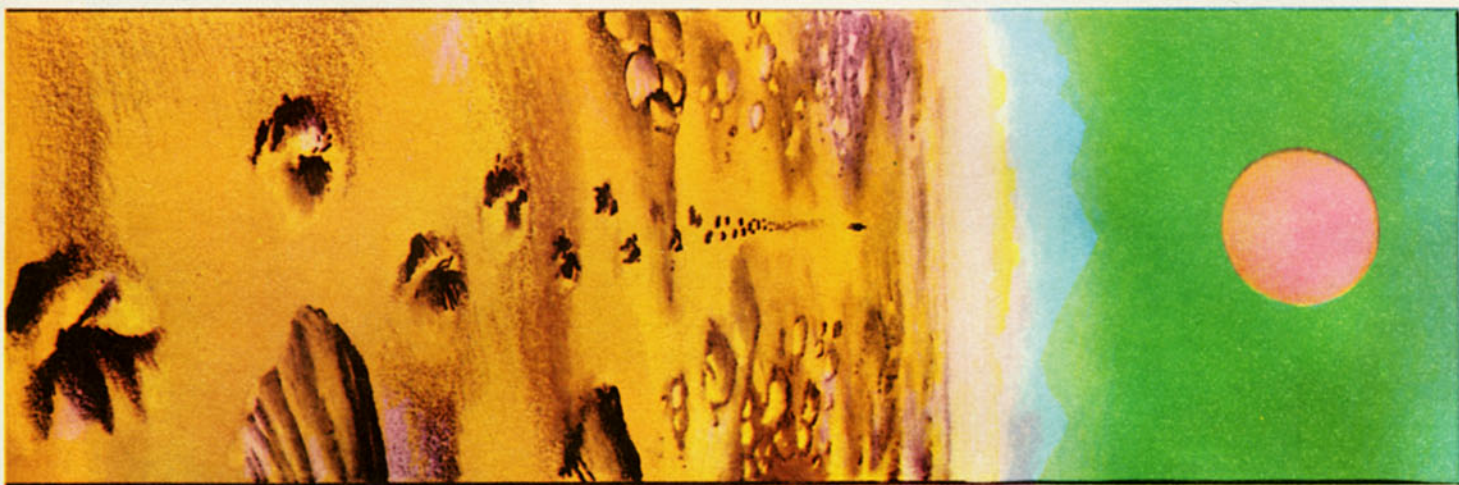


What forces brought me here? I searched my mind for memories. . . There was something there, but it was too clouded. . . A name. . . D . . . E . . . N . . . My name is DEN.



I scanned the horizon. A distant structure rose out of the mists. I decided to go there. Perhaps it held a clue to the mystery.





I walked. My bare footfalls in the sand created the only sound. A slight breeze was a small relief in the heat.

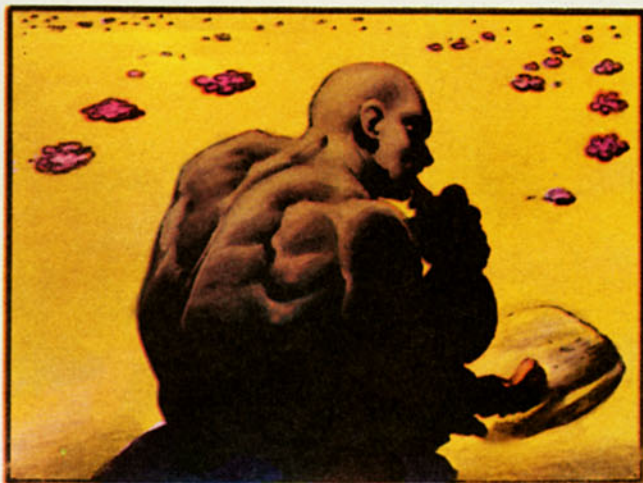
After several hours existence in this desolate land...

...I was overtaken by a vacuous feeling... HUNGER.

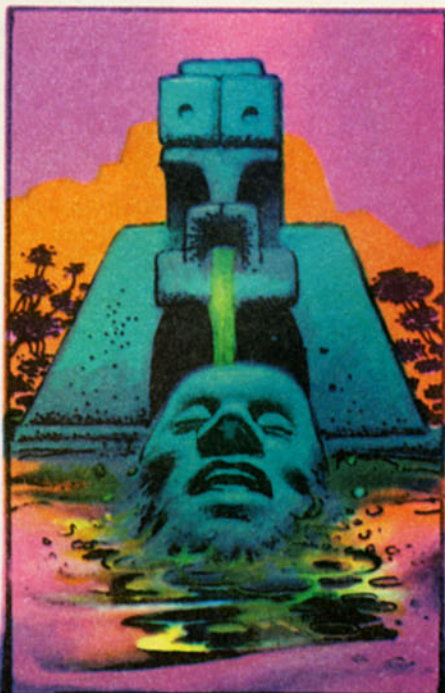
--FOOD!!



There were instincts, reflexes and a good amount of muscular dexterity contained in this body in which I found myself. I was thankful but still confused.



As evening approached I came upon an enigmatic oasis with a fountain. I pondered the artisans identity. I was happy to drink the sweet water without pause. The abundant fruits were also delicious.



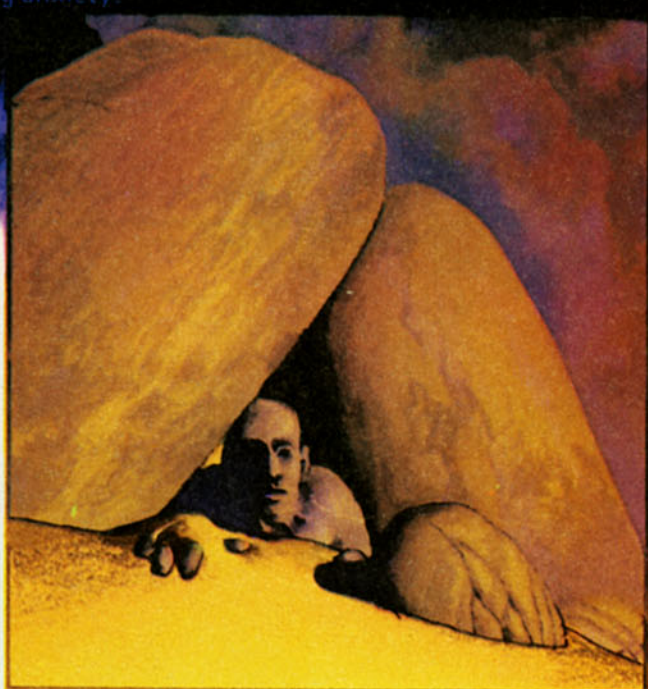
After further refreshing myself, I thought to find a place to sleep. Apprehensive of predacious creatures that might habit the fountain, I left its immediate vicinity and found a protected spot nearby.



Near morning dreams came to me. There was a person, and the book of my former vision. The surroundings were strangely familiar.



The man's attention was wholly upon reading and was surprised by the discovery of the loose paper. Then the scene changed. The man manipulated miniature structures into an incomprehensible assembly. I awoke with an overwhelming anxiety.



A creature, the likes of which I'd never seen before, was drinking from the pool.

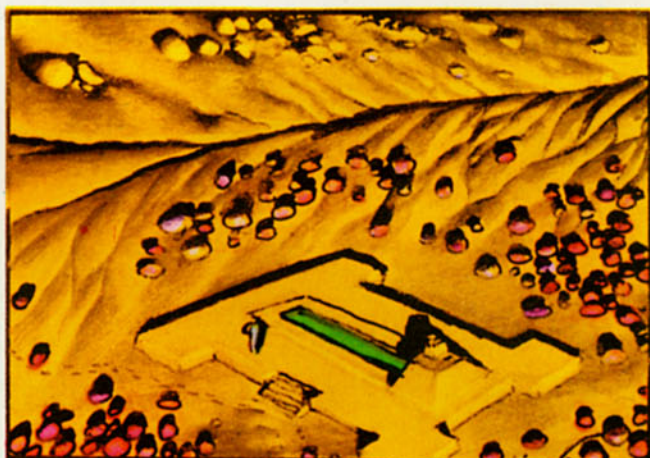
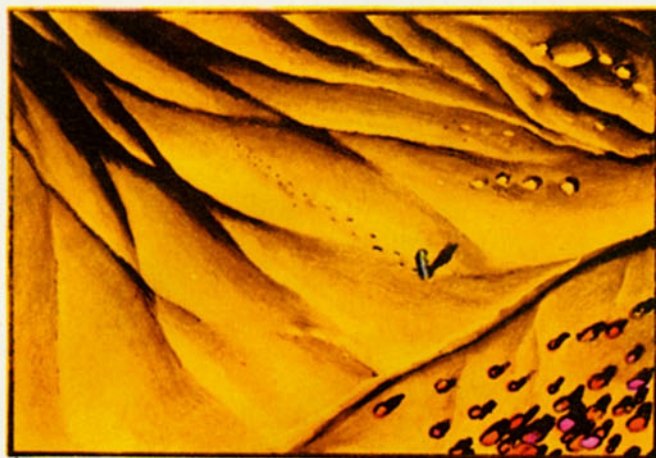


I was frozen with fear. Could it hear my pounding heart? Could it find me from my scent? Could it sense my presence by some unknown faculty?



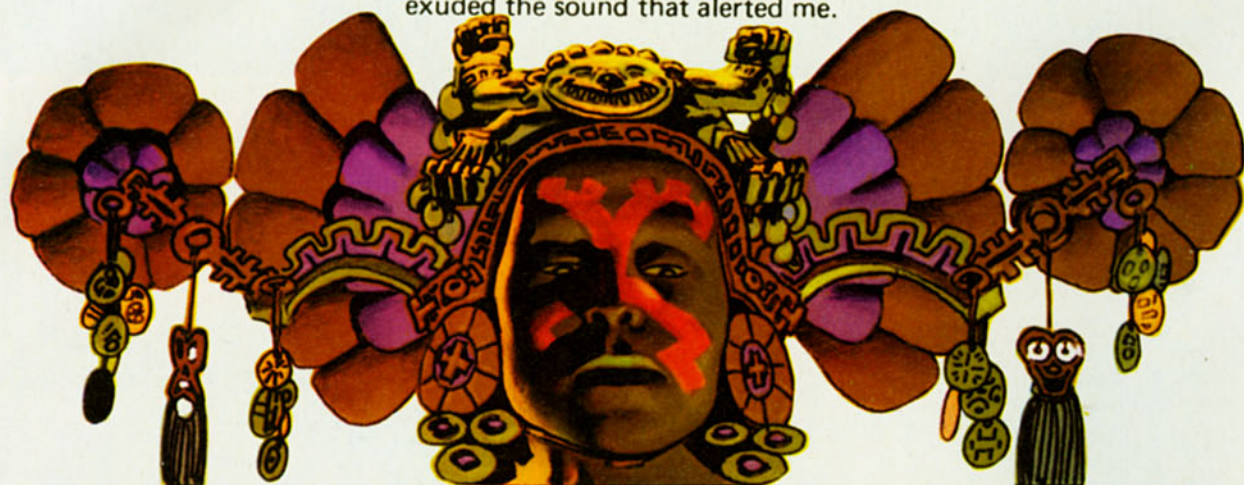
Apparently quenched, the lizardman left and disappeared among the rocks. I was about to descend for a drink when—



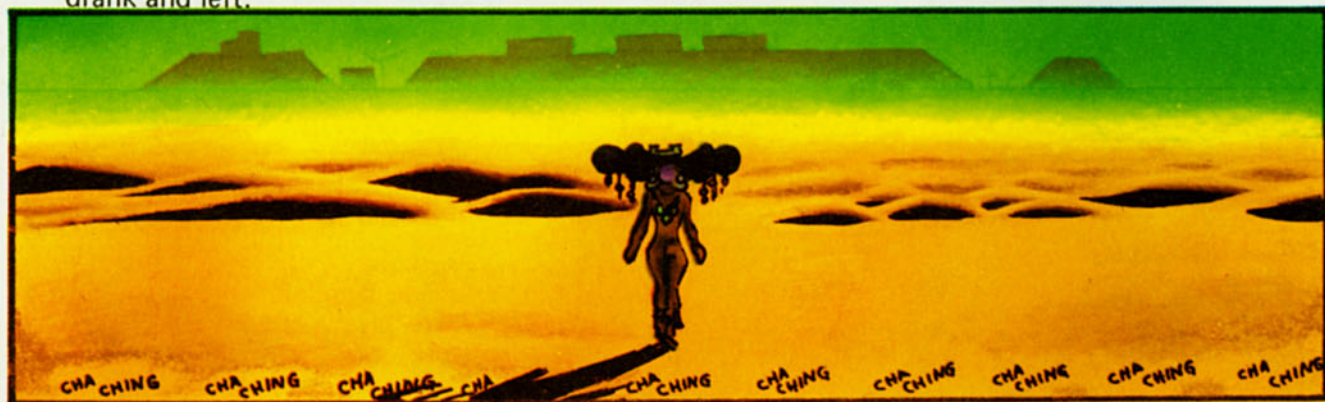


Another figure approached.

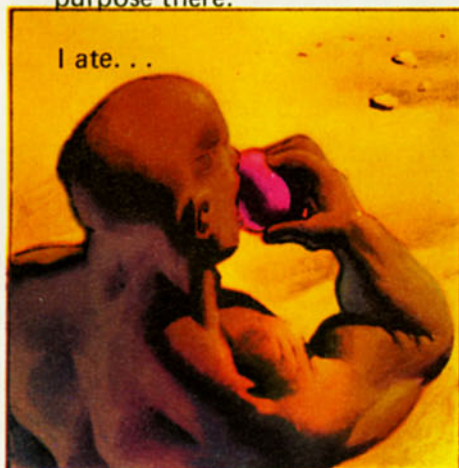
The ornamented headdress and anklets exuded the sound that alerted me.



I concluded that it was an Indian girl, which gave me new thoughts about my location. She drank and left.



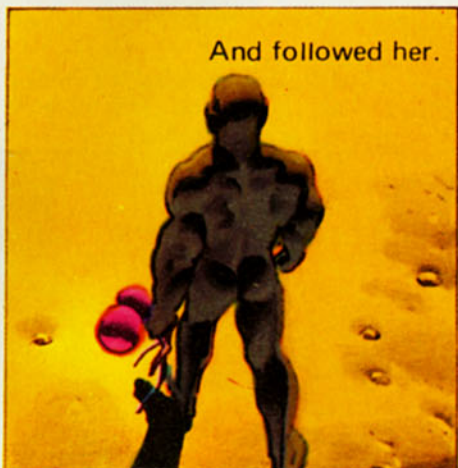
The girl traveled toward the edifice. It was my quest also, though I had no predetermined purpose there.



I ate...

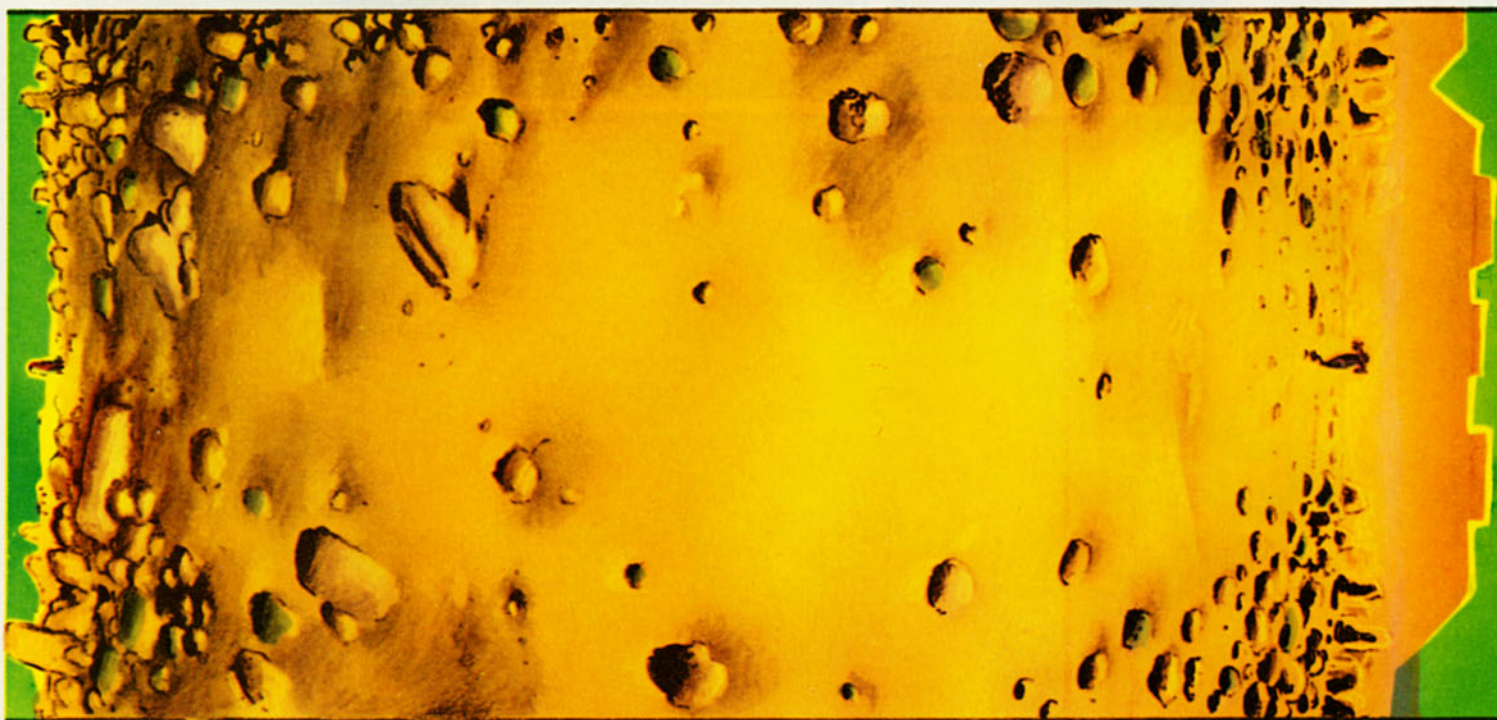
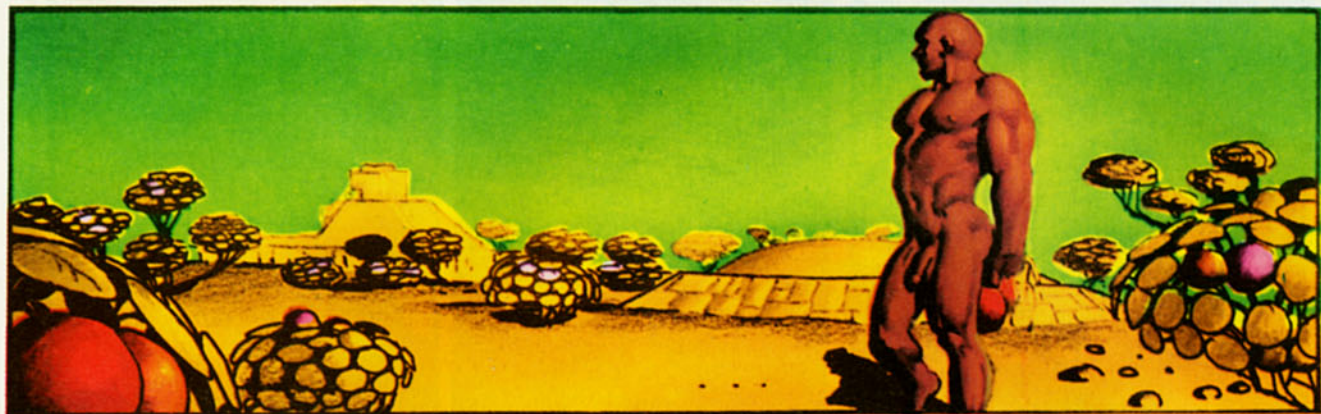


Drank...



And followed her.

I studied the artifact as I passed. I conjectured that it housed machinery that drew water from rocks or the depths of the earth (if this really was Earth). And was powered by solar rays or nuclear energy.



This was the only human I'd seen since I had awakened here. Perhaps I should've confronted her and tried communication. An ominous aura about her discouraged that plan. It was the SOUND!! Why would a sane person travel in this hostile land wearing noisy ornaments which could attract carnivorous beasts. I circled ahead to watch her pass.



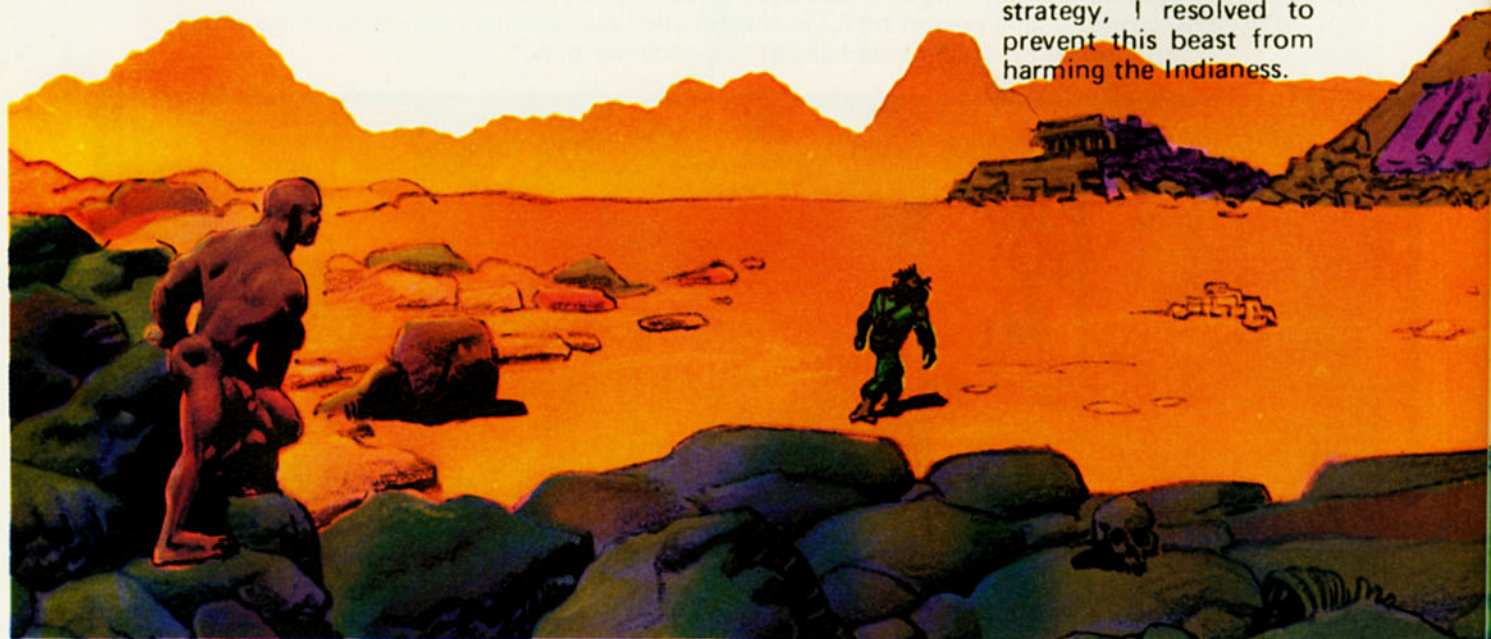
The images stirred phantasmic forces in my head and erotic ones in my body.

Surprised at my own reaction, I sat motionless, wondering about what had caused it and what to do next, when a shadow crossed me.



It was the lizardman I had seen earlier. Was it a coincidence that he traveled in this same direction?...I rejected this thought. He seemed intent upon something... the girl... I was suddenly afraid, not for myself, but for her even though I didn't know her.

Despite my lack of a strategy, I resolved to prevent this beast from harming the Indianess.





I followed the lizardman,



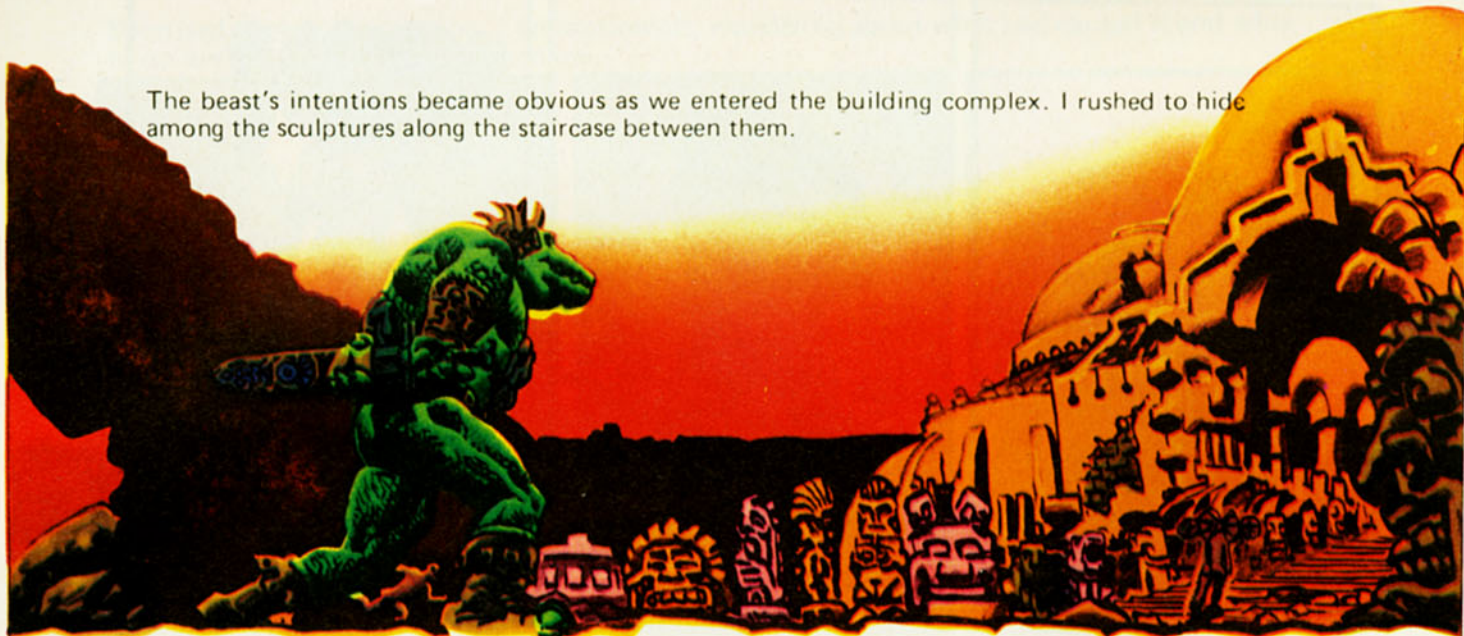
Who followed the girl,



Whose destination was apparently the architectural anomaly, but her purpose there was still a complete mystery.



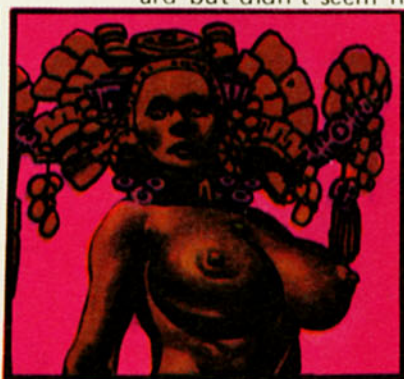
The beast's intentions became obvious as we entered the building complex. I rushed to hide among the sculptures along the staircase between them.



The predator hissed an expectant chuckle.

Frantically I searched for a weapon.

The girl turned and saw the lizard but didn't seem frightened.



CHARGED!!!





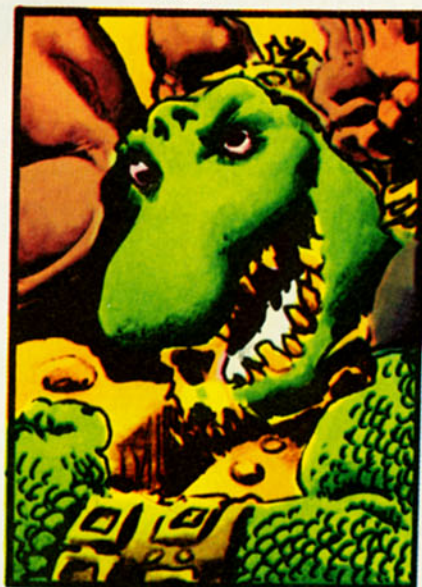
The stone struck the beast.



I crashed into him, grabbing for his knife.



But succeeded only in knocking it away.



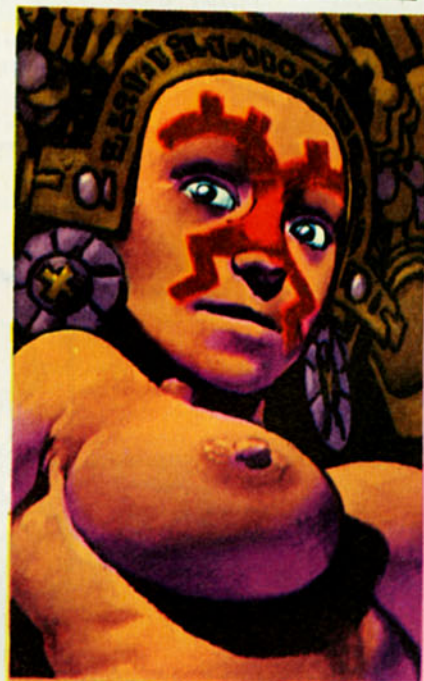
The blow should've killed him. He was hardly stunned.



I didn't want to give him a chance to think.



The girl remained, watching.



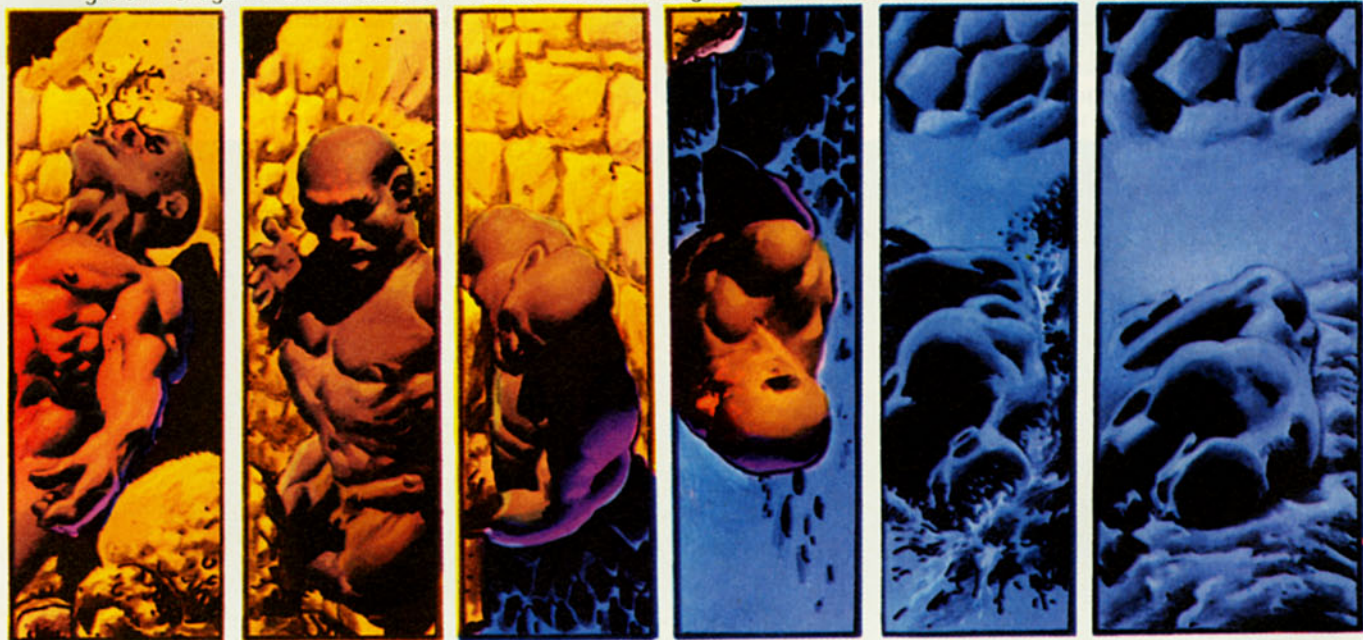


My body made movements unfamiliar to my conscious mind. It was though it had been highly trained and was under the control of another part of my brain.





The lizard's strongest blow caught me unprepared. I guess I thought he was going to close in and grab me again. Unconscious I was thrown among the stone works and fell below the staircase.



Then it came to me. My name is. . . was David Ellis Norman. I was mourning my Uncle Daniel's death. They had never found him but now, after seven years it was legal. Some of his belongings had come into my possession including his collection of Burroughs fantasy novels. In the back of one was a piece of paper with an electronic schematic drawn on it. . .

There was also a letter. . . addressed to me.

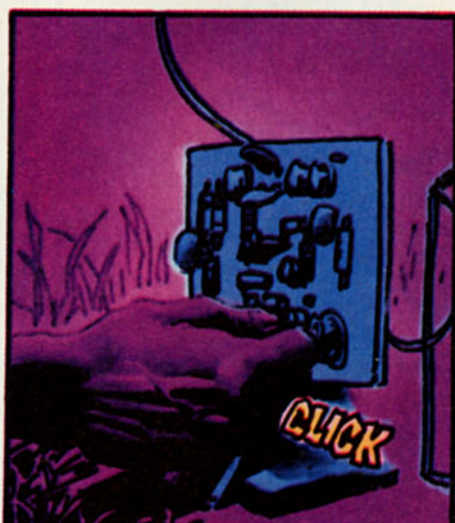
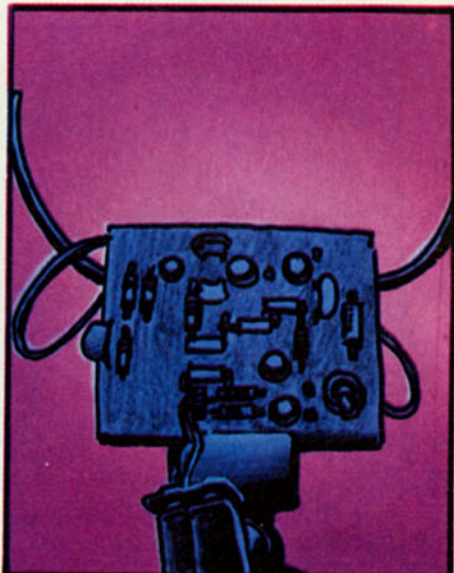


Dear David,
I foresee you reading this
some years after my dis-
appearance. It is because
we shared so many interests
and a kinship that went
beyond our common blood,
that I write. I may be
dead as you read, I
have no way of knowing
what lies ahead for me
in that other world. This
much is certain: my
chances are better here,

despite the dangers, than
here, facing certain slow
death. You weren't aware
of my withering illness.
I am slowly losing
life; it begins in the
limbs and crawls slowly,
relentlessly, to finish
in the heart. So I bid
you farewell and leave
while I have the strength
and resolution.

Goodbye,
Dan

I knew the schematic was a clue. I decided to build it.



An electrical field was created. It was a gateway. . . into another universe. I don't know how the diagram came into my uncle's hands but he had built a machine like this one and entered into. . . where?. . . never will I completely understand what has happened.

I had to find my uncle. I stepped into the swirling light. . .and lost consciousness.



I reawakened among decayed stonework. I had not found my uncle but there were more urgent matters at hand.

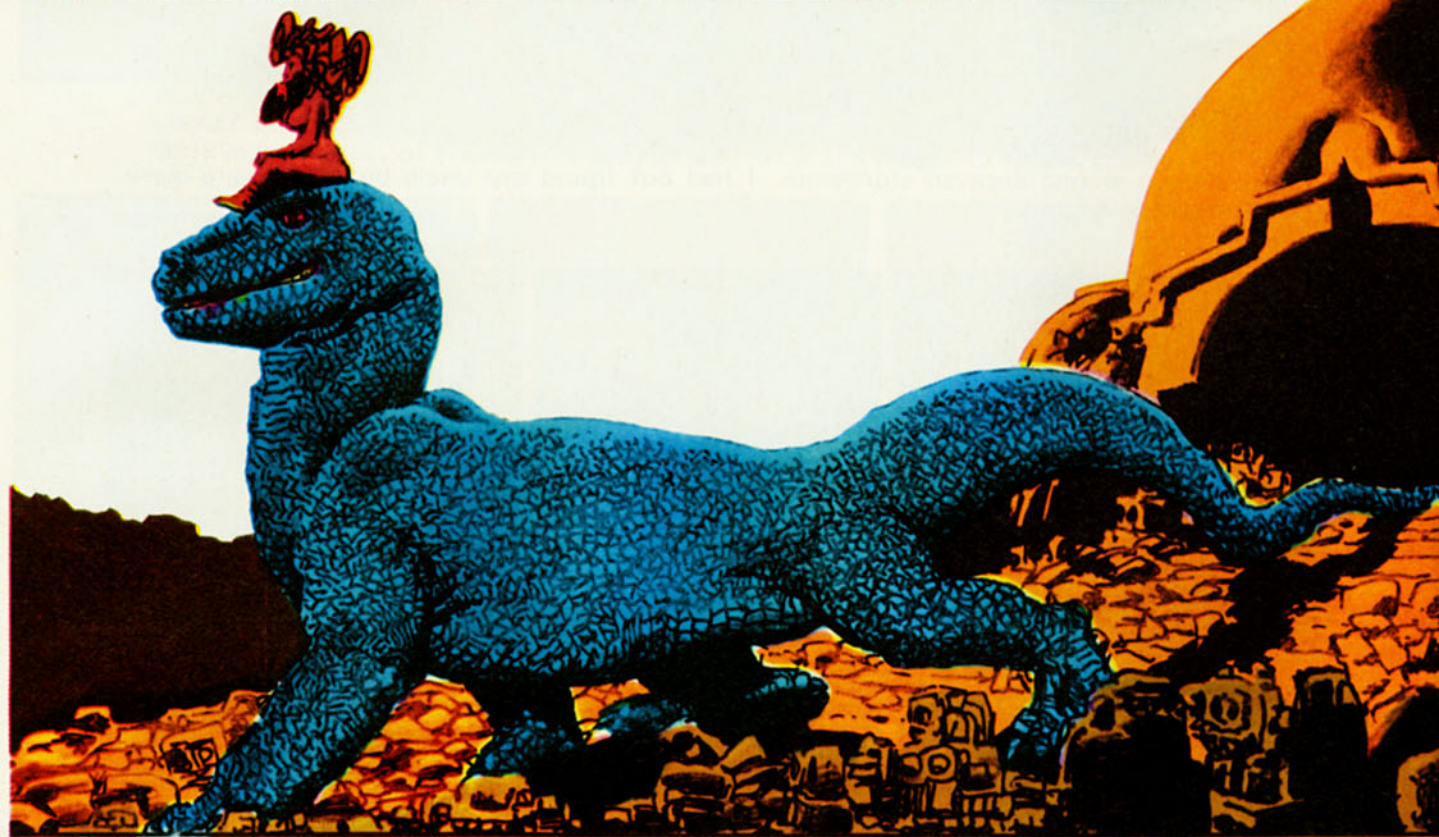
I peered out expecting to see the girl or the lizardman.



The stone porch area was empty. . . Then inhuman sounds shattered the silence.



I was ill prepared for the sight that followed.



A DRAGON and the Indian girl. They were friends and chewing on the lizard man's carcass. It was a symbiotic relationship; she lured the prev. the dragon did the bloody work.



No sign of Uncle Dan. Did I make the machine right? Have other forces changed since he made his machine? . . . Will I ever get back? . . . Do I WANT to return? . . . I guess I'll have to look around and see. . .

SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO DANGEROUS

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS MAN HAS WONDERED WHETHER HE IS **ALONE** IN THE UNIVERSE

PING

THE PARAMETERS AND UNCERTAINTIES INVOLVED IN CALCULATING THE PROBABILITY OF ADVANCED TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS ARE DEMONSTRATED IN A SIMPLE APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM DEVISED BY U.S. ASTROPHYSICIST F.D. DRAKE

THE NUMBER N OF EXTANT TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE GALAXY CAN BE EXPRESSED BY THE FOLLOWING EQUATION, THE SO-CALLED **GREEN BANK FORMULA**..

$$N = R_* f_p n_e f_i f_c L$$

WHERE R_* IS THE AVERAGE RATE OF STAR FORMATION OVER THE LIFETIME OF THE GALAXY. f_p IS THE FRACTION OF STARS WITH PLANETARY SYSTEMS.

n_e IS THE MEAN NUMBER OF PLANETS PER STAR THAT ARE ECOLOGICALLY ABLE TO SUSTAIN LIFE. f_i IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH LIFE ARISES

f_i IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH INTELLIGENT LIFE EVOLVES

f_c IS THE FRACTION OF SUCH PLANETS ON WHICH TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION DEVELOPS AND L IS THE MEAN LIFETIME OF A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION

THERE ARE ABOUT 2×10^{11} STARS IN THE GALAXY AND THE AGE OF THE GALAXY IS ABOUT 10^{10} YEARS

THEREFORE, A VALUE OF $R_* = 10$ STARS PER YEAR IS PROBABLY RELIABLE. THROUGH MEASUREMENT OF SLIGHT GRAVITATIONAL PERTURBATIONS IN THE PROPER MOTIONS OF STARS WE KNOW THAT ABOUT HALF OF THE NEAREST STARS HAVE **DARK COMPANIONS**

THE NEAREST OF THESE ORBITS BARNARD'S STAR SIX LIGHT-YEARS FROM THE SUN

THE DISTRIBUTION OF PLANETS IN ALIEN SYSTEMS MAY BE IRREGULAR, BUT CONSIDERING THE WIDE RANGE OF TEMPERATURES COMPATIBLE WITH LIFE WE CAN TENTATIVELY CONCLUDE THAT $f_p n_e$ IS ABOUT ONE

BECAUSE OF THE RAPIDITY OF THE ORIGIN OF LIFE ON EARTH AS IMPLIED BY THE FOSSIL RECORD AND THE EASE WITH WHICH THE RELEVANT ORGANIC MOLECULES CAN BE PRODUCED IN SIMULATION EXPERIMENTS, THE LIKELIHOOD OF LIFE ORIGINATING OVER BILLIONS OF YEARS SEEMS QUITE HIGH

FOR THE QUANTITIES f_i AND f_c THE PARAMETERS ARE EVEN MORE UNCERTAIN

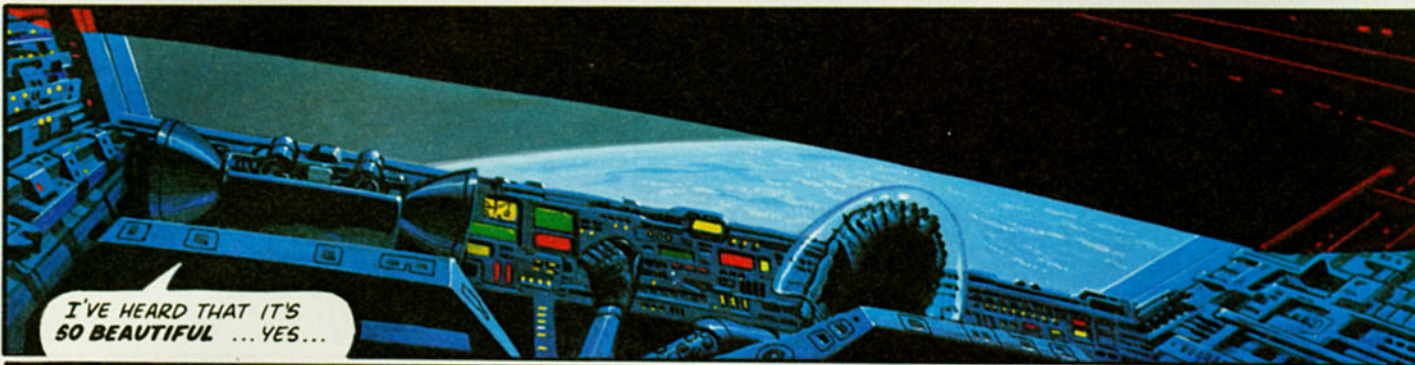
AND SO MANY SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THAT THE APPROPRIATE VALUE FOR f_i IS ALSO ABOUT ONE

IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE THE VAGARIES OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH LED TO MAMMALS ON EARTH **EVER** RECURRING ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE..



OKAY, TITAN. WE'RE IN ORBIT.
SET THE INERTIAL GUIDANCE
AND WITHDRAW THE SHIELDS

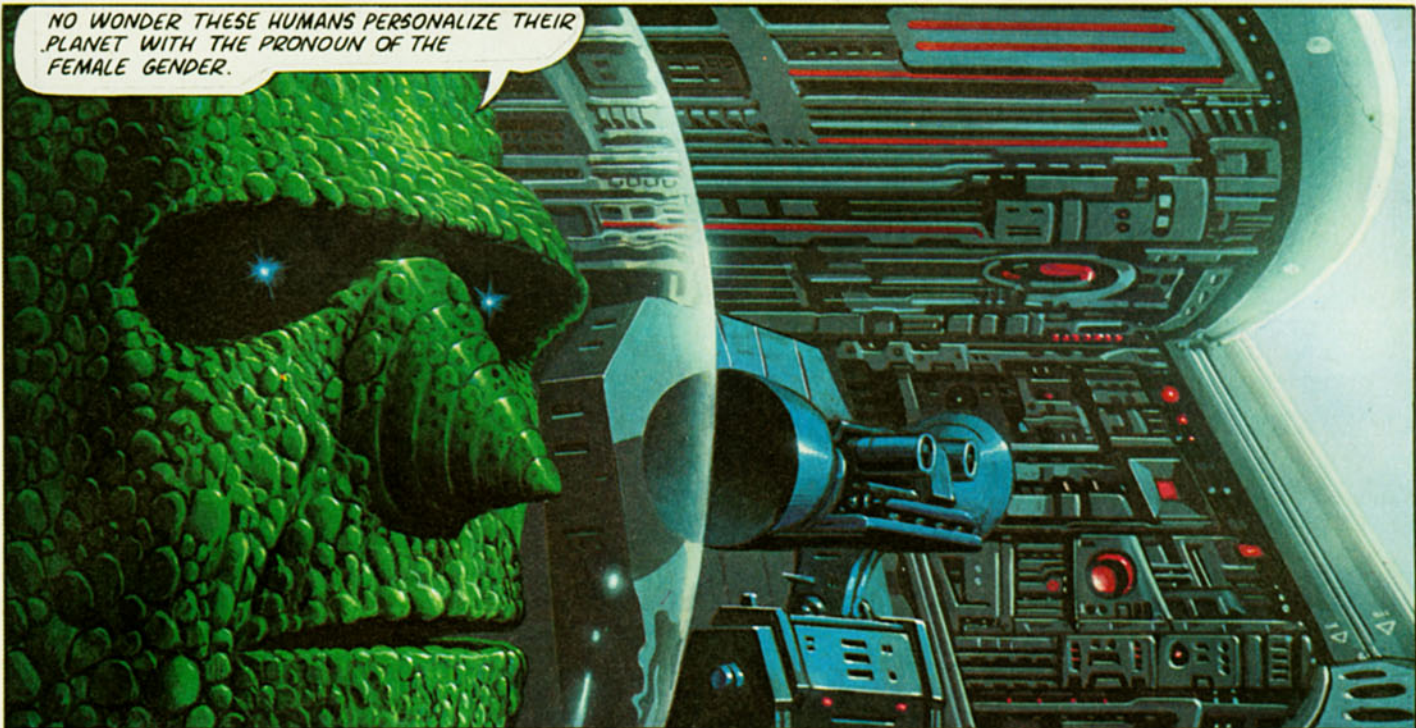
LET'S HAVE A LOOK
AT THIS **LEGENDARY**
PLANET EARTH



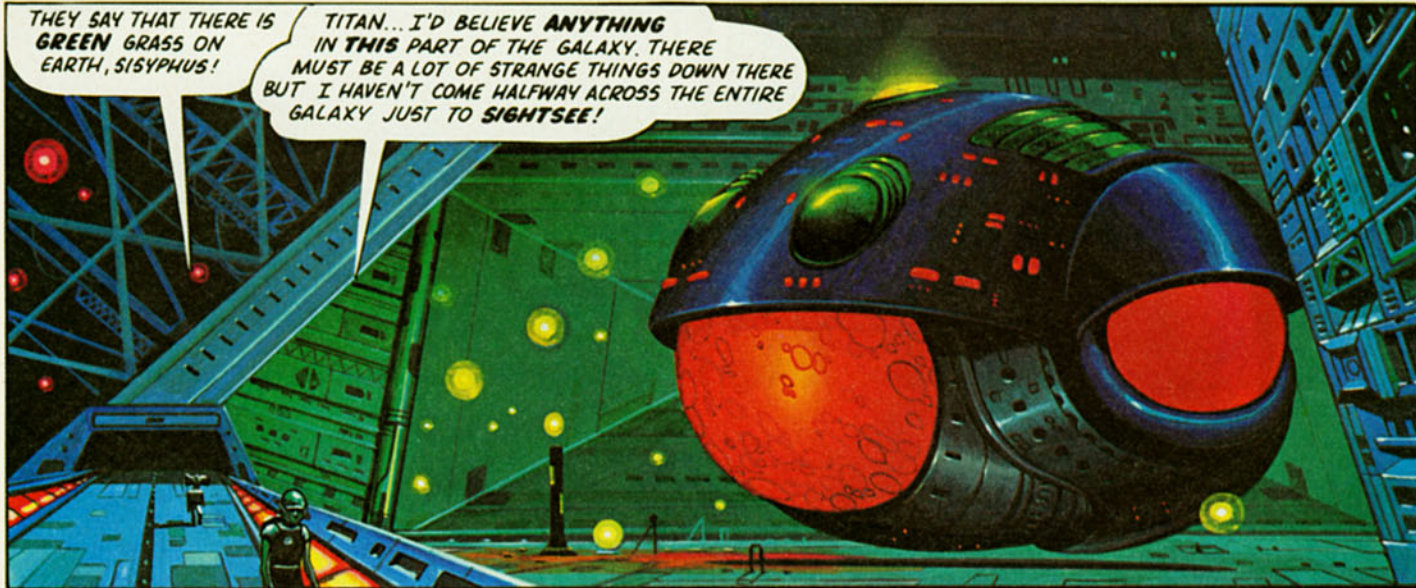
I'VE HEARD THAT IT'S
SO BEAUTIFUL ... YES...

SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO DANGEROUS



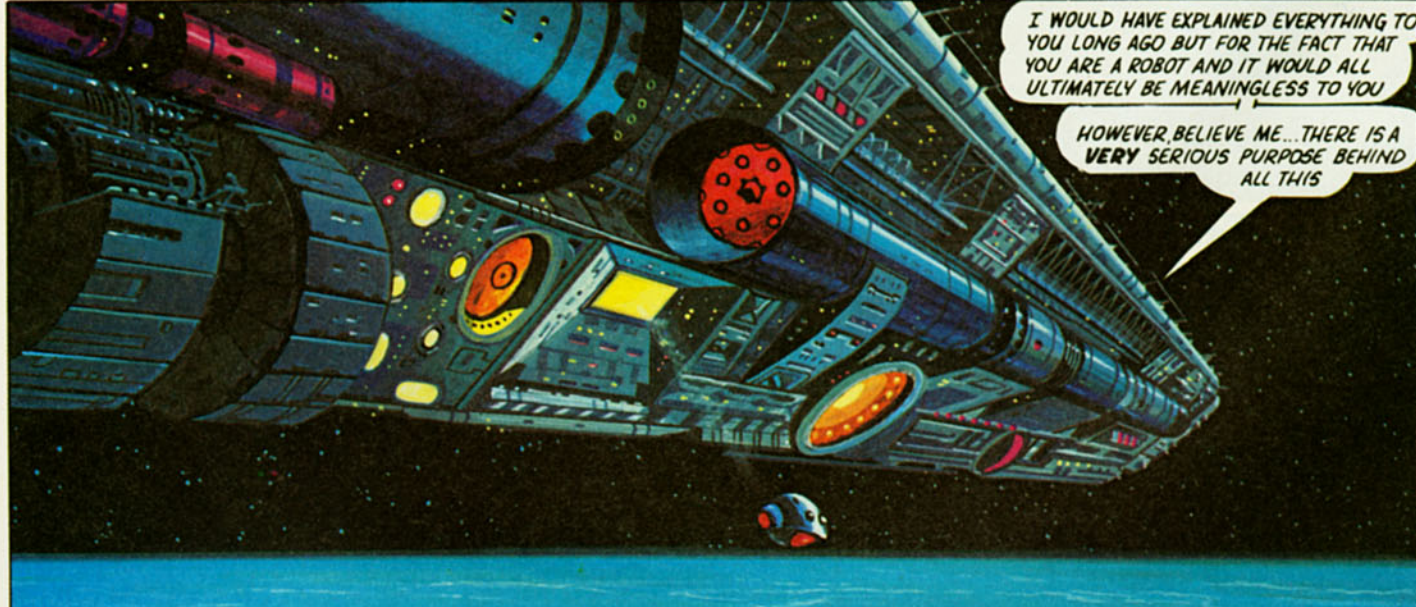


NO WONDER THESE HUMANS PERSONALIZE THEIR PLANET WITH THE PRONOUN OF THE FEMALE GENDER.



THEY SAY THAT THERE IS **GREEN** GRASS ON EARTH, SISYPHUS!

TITAN... I'D BELIEVE **ANYTHING** IN **THIS** PART OF THE GALAXY. THERE MUST BE A LOT OF STRANGE THINGS DOWN THERE BUT I HAVEN'T COME HALFWAY ACROSS THE ENTIRE GALAXY JUST TO **SIGHTSEE!**



I WOULD HAVE EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO YOU LONG AGO BUT FOR THE FACT THAT YOU ARE A ROBOT AND IT WOULD ALL ULTIMATELY BE MEANINGLESS TO YOU

HOWEVER, BELIEVE ME... THERE IS A **VERY** SERIOUS PURPOSE BEHIND ALL THIS

I INHERITED MY INTEREST IN EARTH FROM MY FATHER. HE STUDIED FOR MANY YEARS ACTUALLY **LIVING** ON EARTH, TRYING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING

INCREDIBLE!

SINCE MY YOUTH I HAVE MADE AN EXTENSIVE STUDY OF EARTH LITERATURE BY VIRTUE OF **ELECTROMAGNETISM**.

YOU KNOW... I THINK YOU'LL BE SOMETHING OF A **SURPRISE** TO THESE PEOPLE. YOU'RE A VERY WELL-READ ALIEN

BUZZ LEVEL FOUR TITAN. I PROMISED AN ALARM CALL FOR THAT TRAVELING THEATER GROUP THAT HITCHED A RIDE BACK ON TARO*

PLUTO

SISYPHUS... I'M PICKING UP A CURIOUS HIGH FREQUENCY WAVEFORM... SYNCHRONIZED PULSES OF ANALOG INFORMATION PULSED FROM FIFTY TO FIFTEEN THOUSAND BEEZASS*

* 1 BEEZASS IS APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO 1 HERTZ

THE ANALOG IS ENCODED VISUAL AND AUDITORY STIMULI TITAN. IT'S CALLED **TEE-VEE**. PUT IT THROUGH THE RELAYS, I'VE BEEN DYING TO SEE IT ALTHOUGH I KNOW MY FATHER WOULD **NEVER** HAVE APPROVED.

ZZZ SKRRRK... IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE THE VAGARIES OF THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH LED TO MAMMALS ON EARTH **EVER** RECURRING ELSEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE....



ON THE OTHER HAND, INTELLIGENCE NEED NOT BE RESTRICTED TO ONLY THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH WHICH OCCURRED ON EARTH AND CLEARLY HAS GREAT SELECTIVE ADVANTAGES TO BOTH PREDATOR AND PREY

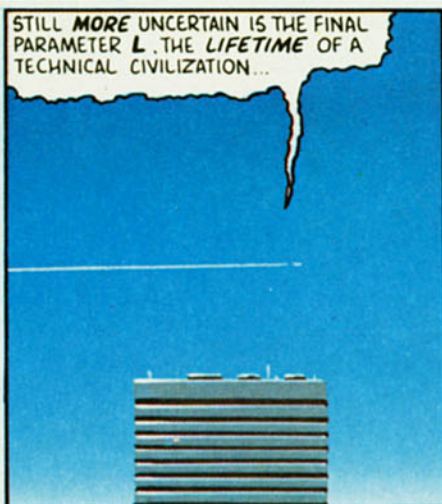


SIMILAR ARGUMENTS CAN BE MADE FOR THE ADAPTIVE VALUE OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS. INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION, HOWEVER, ARE CLEARLY **NOT** THE SAME THING. DOLPHINS ARE APPARENTLY VERY INTELLIGENT BUT THEIR LACK OF MANIPULATIVE ORGANS HAS LIMITED THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE

CROSS REFERENCE ON THIS SIGNAL, TITAN. I WANT TO KNOW THE EXACT TRANSMISSION POINT



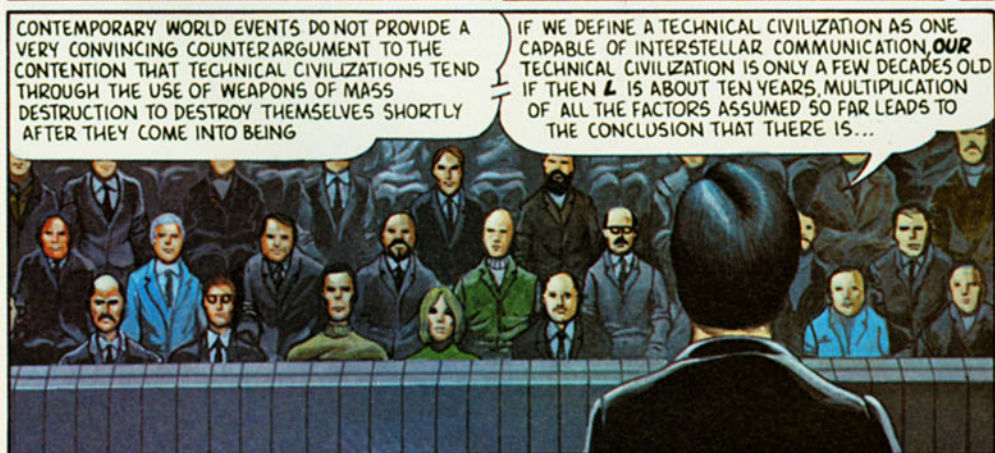
SOME, THOUGH BY NO MEANS **ALL**, EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGISTS WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THE PRODUCT $f_i f_e$ TAKEN AS 10^{-2} IS A FAIRLY CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE



STILL **MORE** UNCERTAIN IS THE FINAL PARAMETER **L**, THE **LIFETIME** OF A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION...



HERE THERE IS NOT EVEN **ONE** EXAMPLE

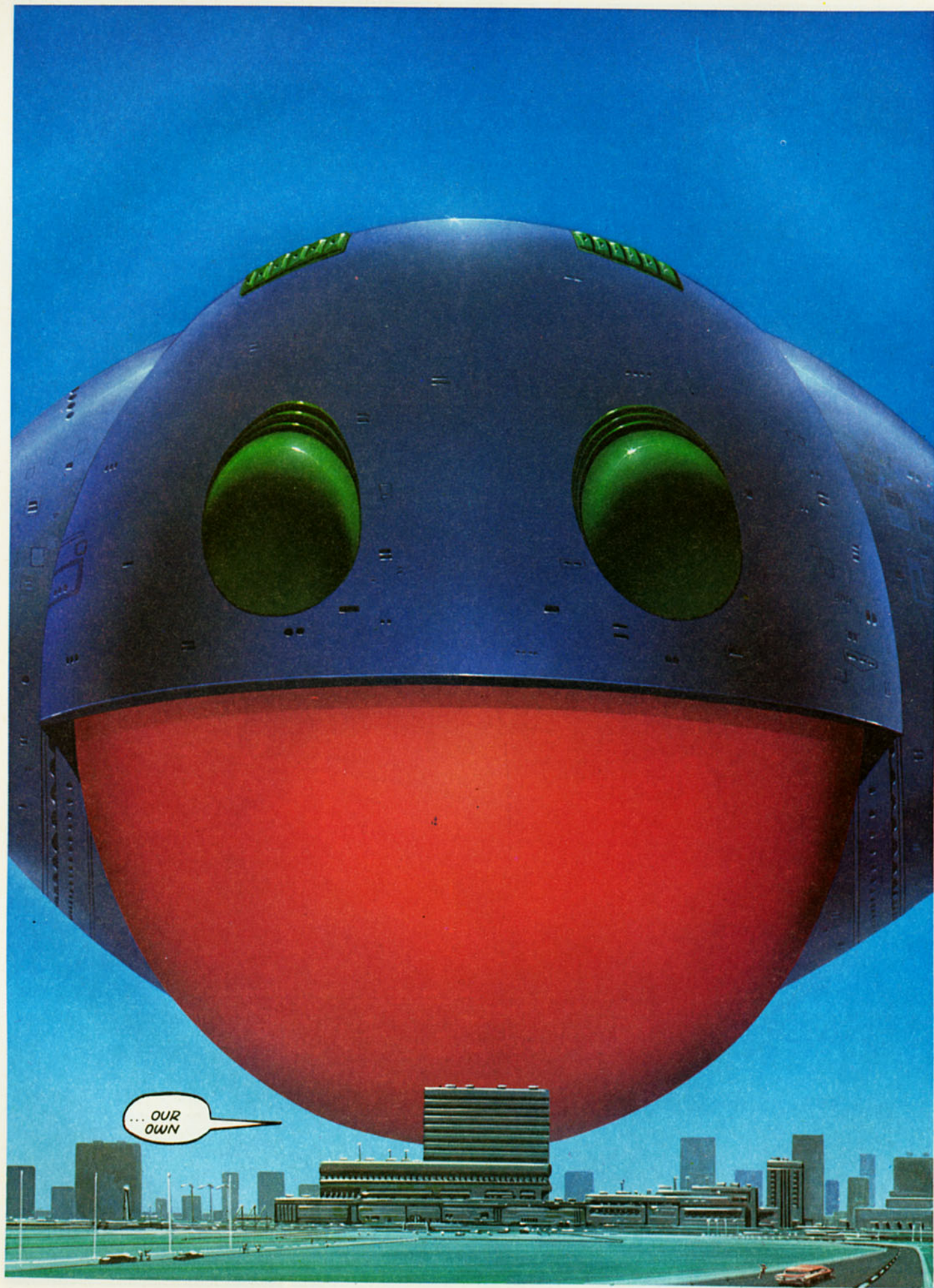


CONTEMPORARY WORLD EVENTS DO NOT PROVIDE A VERY CONVINCING COUNTERARGUMENT TO THE CONTENTION THAT TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS TEND THROUGH THE USE OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION TO DESTROY THEMSELVES SHORTLY AFTER THEY COME INTO BEING

IF WE DEFINE A TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION AS ONE CAPABLE OF INTERSTELLAR COMMUNICATION, **OUR** TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION IS ONLY A FEW DECADES OLD IF THEN **L** IS ABOUT TEN YEARS, MULTIPLICATION OF ALL THE FACTORS ASSUMED SO FAR LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS...



...IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, ONLY **ONE** TECHNICAL CIVILIZATION IN THE GALAXY ...AND **THAT** IS...

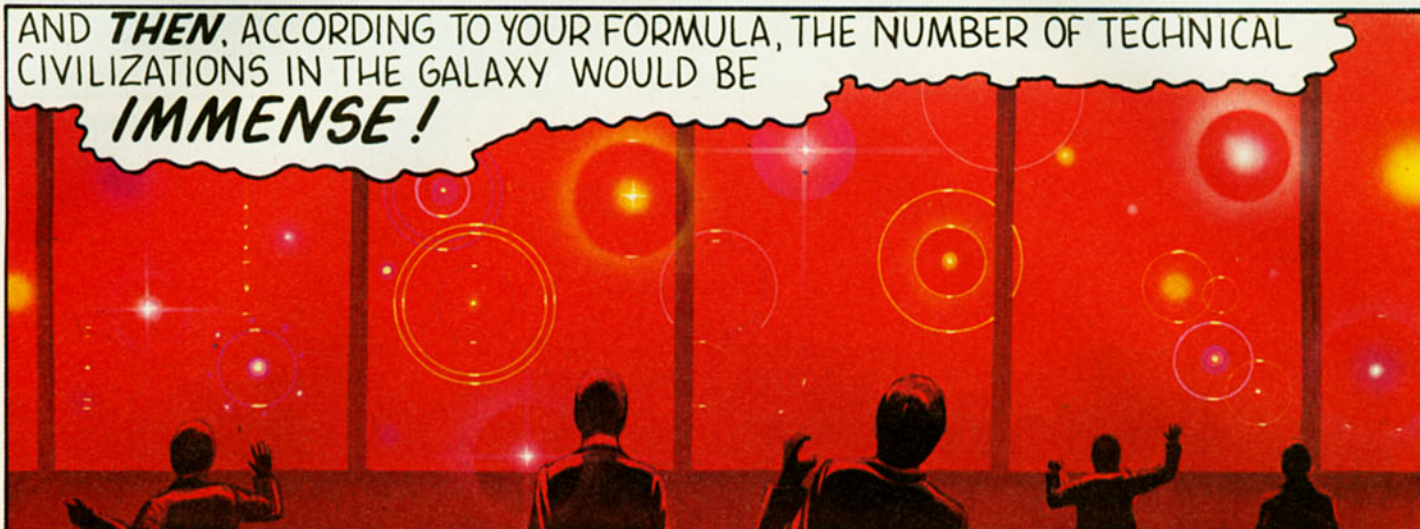


... OUR
OWN

AH!...BUT IF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS **AVOID** SELF-ANNIHILATION, **THEN...** THEIR LIFETIMES MAY BE VERY **LONG** IN THE GEOLOGICAL OR STELLAR EVOLUTIONARY TIME SCALE...



AND **THEN**, ACCORDING TO YOUR FORMULA, THE NUMBER OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE GALAXY WOULD BE **IMMENSE!**

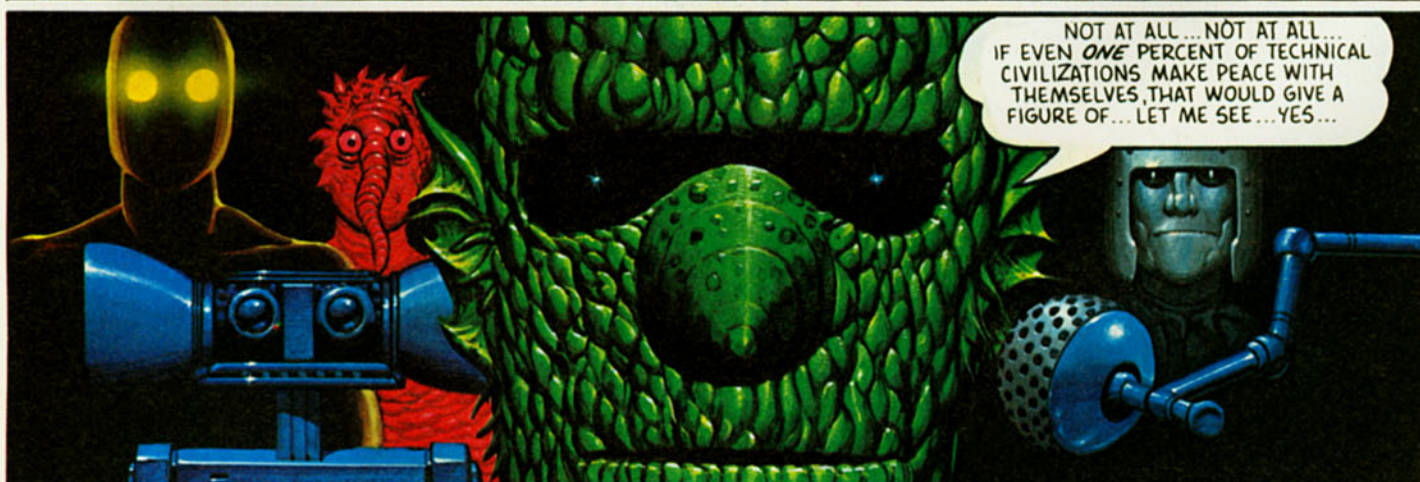


I KNEW THERE WAS A GOD!

C'EST BELLE

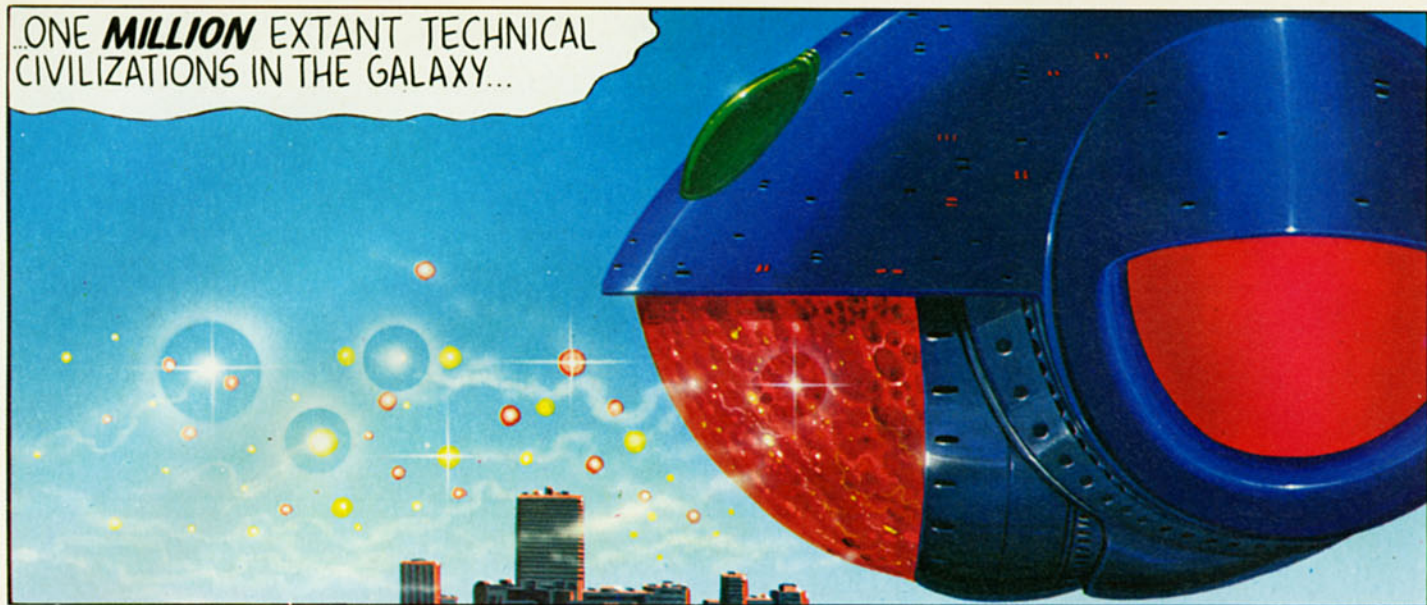
NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE... IT'S NOT REAL!! Y...YOU'RE DEFYING THE GREENBANK FORMULA!

GET UP ON THE ROOF WITH THAT CAMERA!

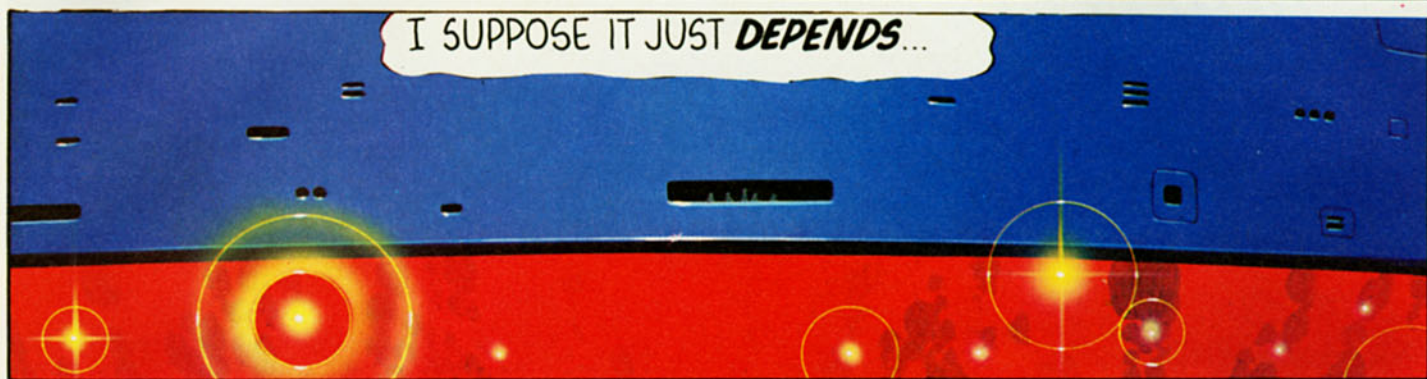


NOT AT ALL... NOT AT ALL... IF EVEN **ONE** PERCENT OF TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS MAKE PEACE WITH THEMSELVES, THAT WOULD GIVE A FIGURE OF... LET ME SEE... YES...

...ONE **MILLION** EXTANT TECHNICAL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE GALAXY...

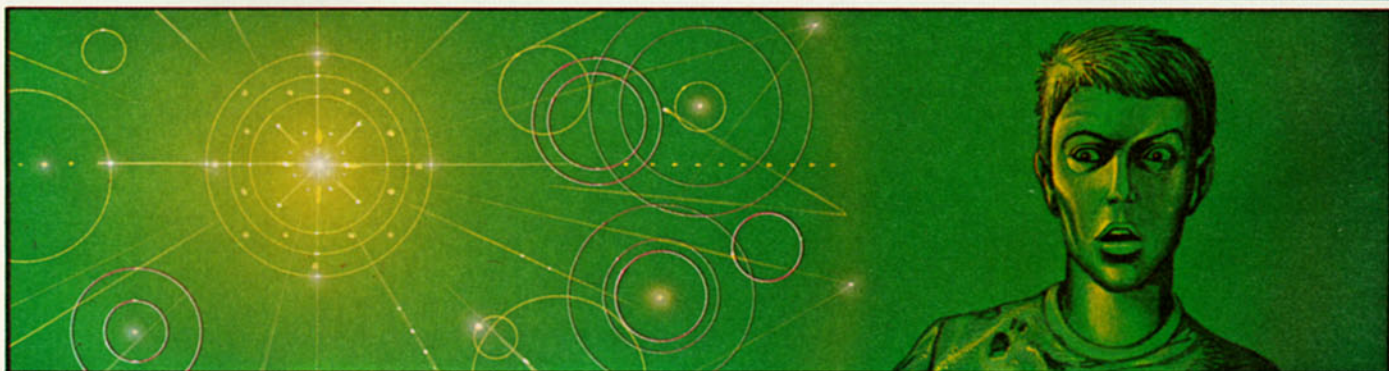


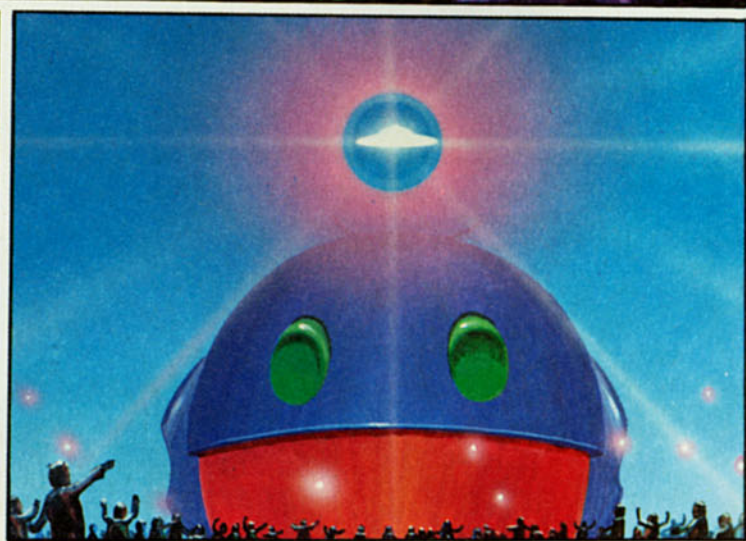
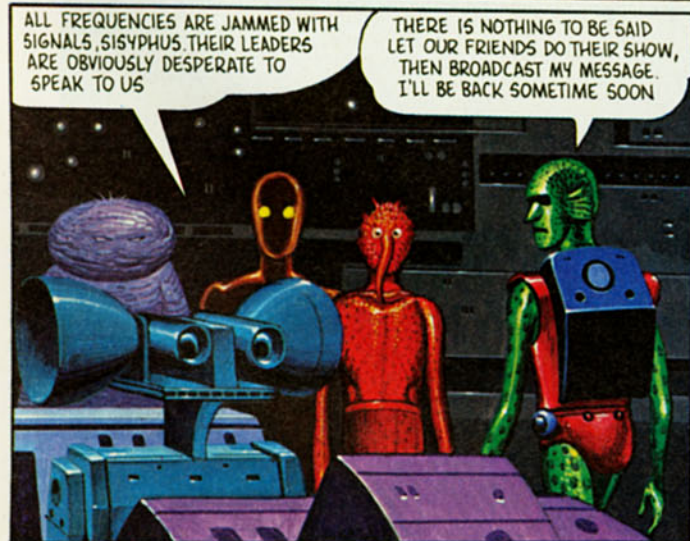
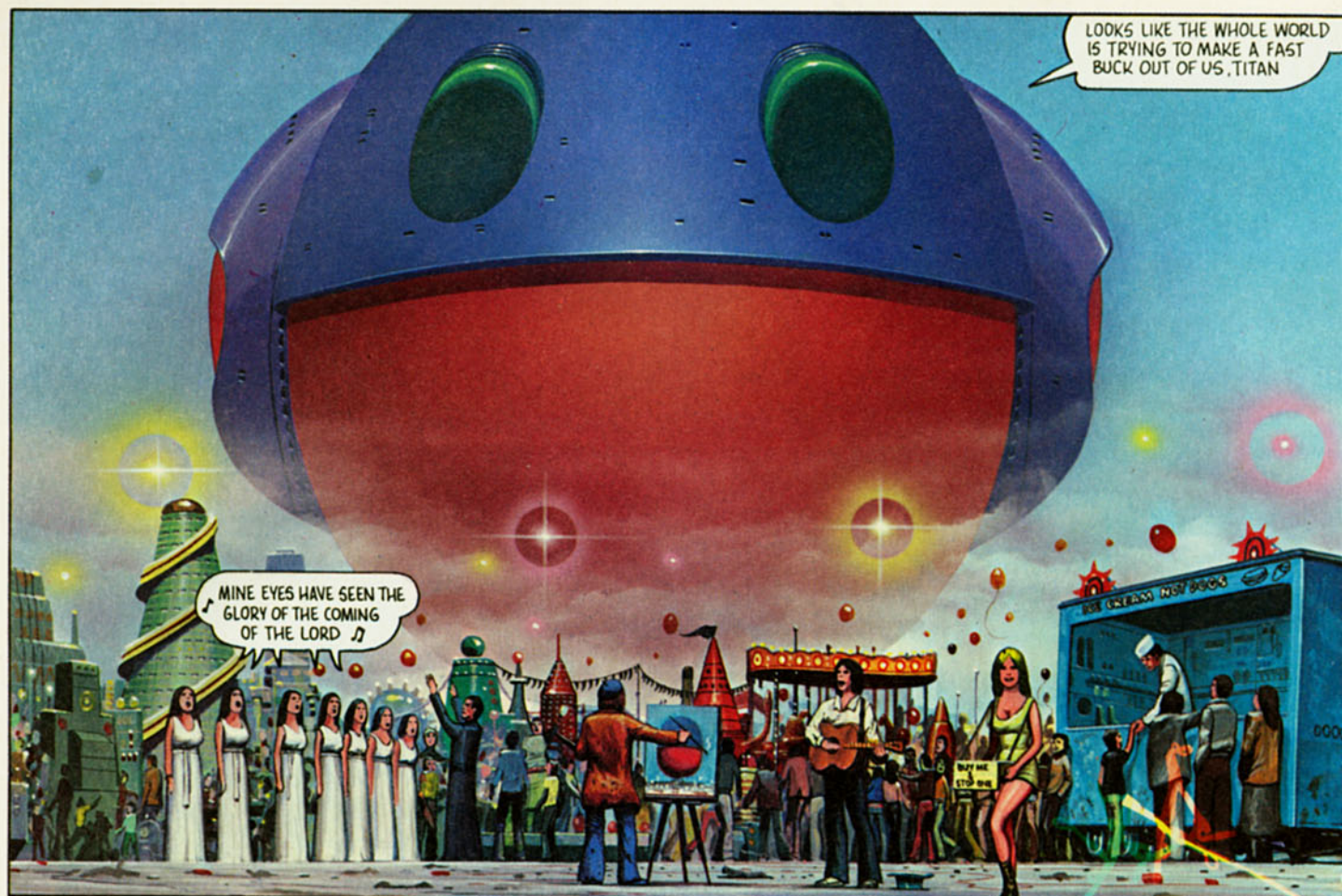
I SUPPOSE IT JUST **DEPENDS**...

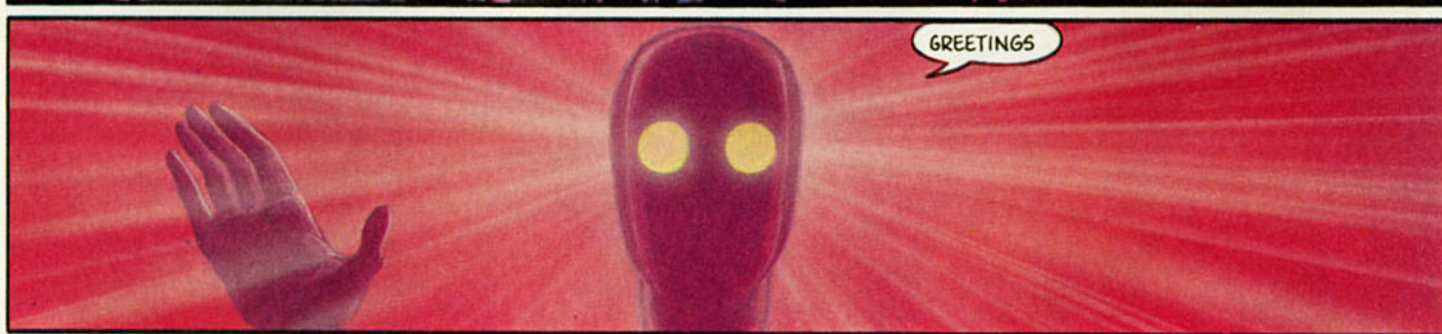
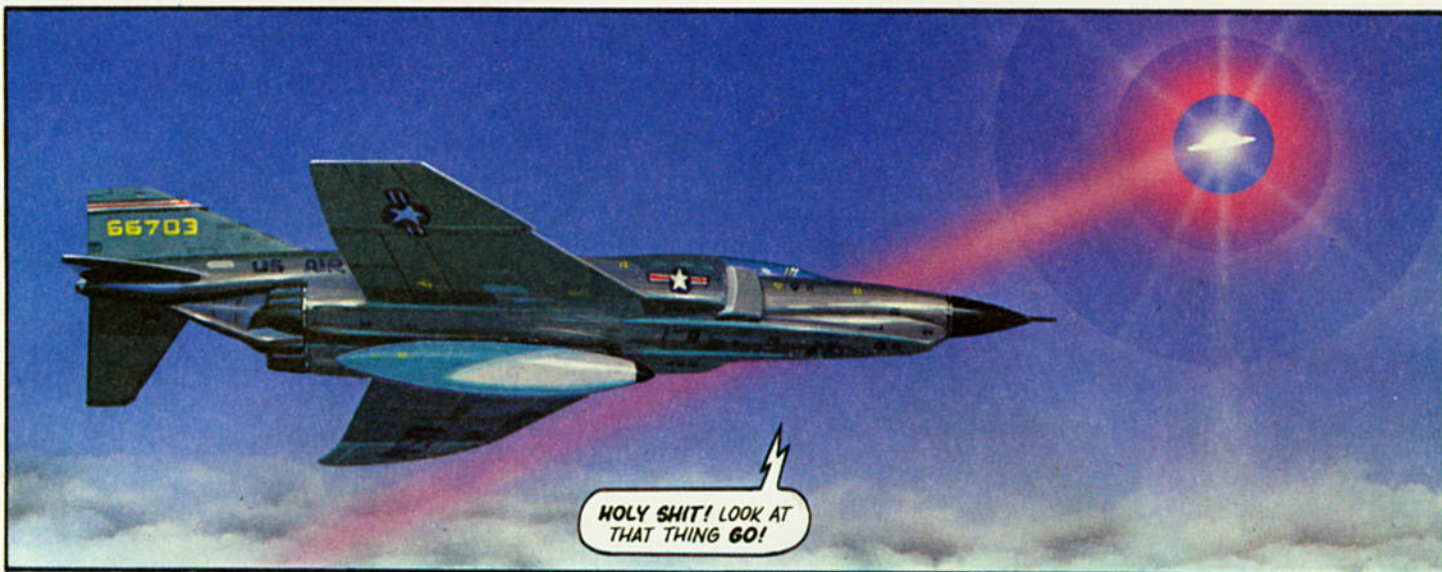


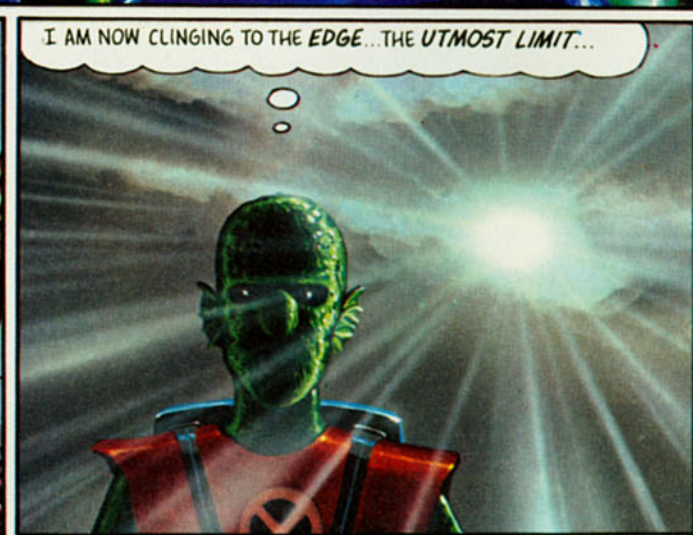
...ON WHETHER YOU'RE A **PESSIMIST** OR AN **OPTIMIST**....

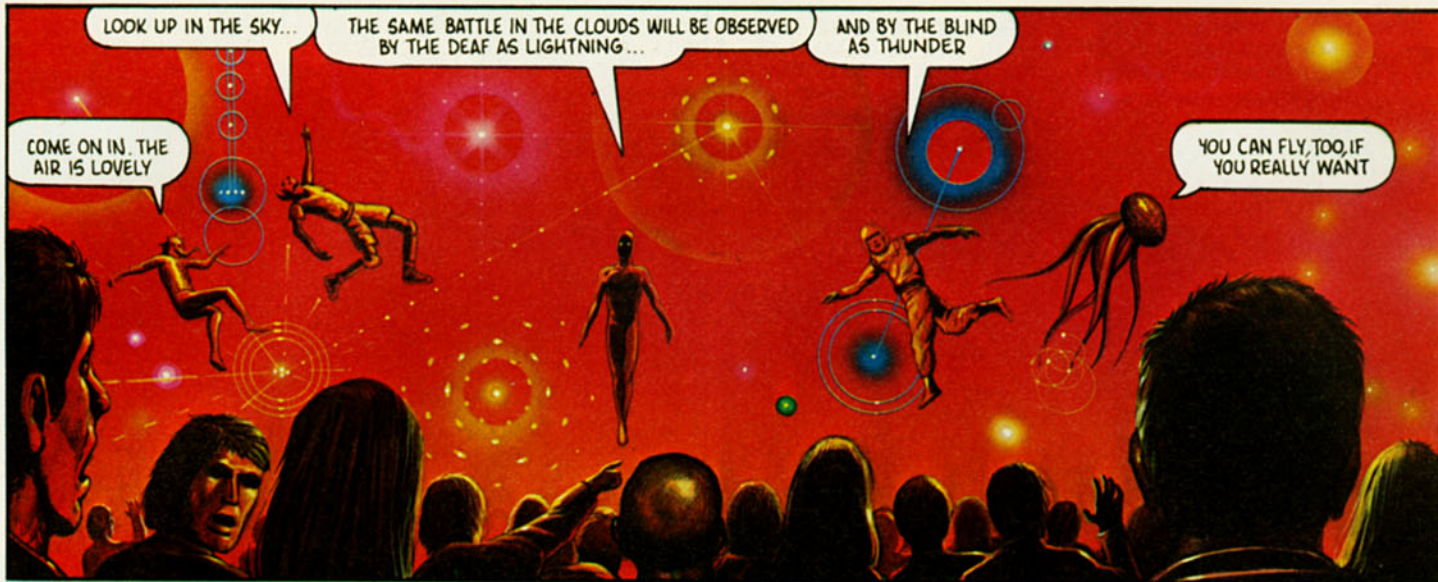












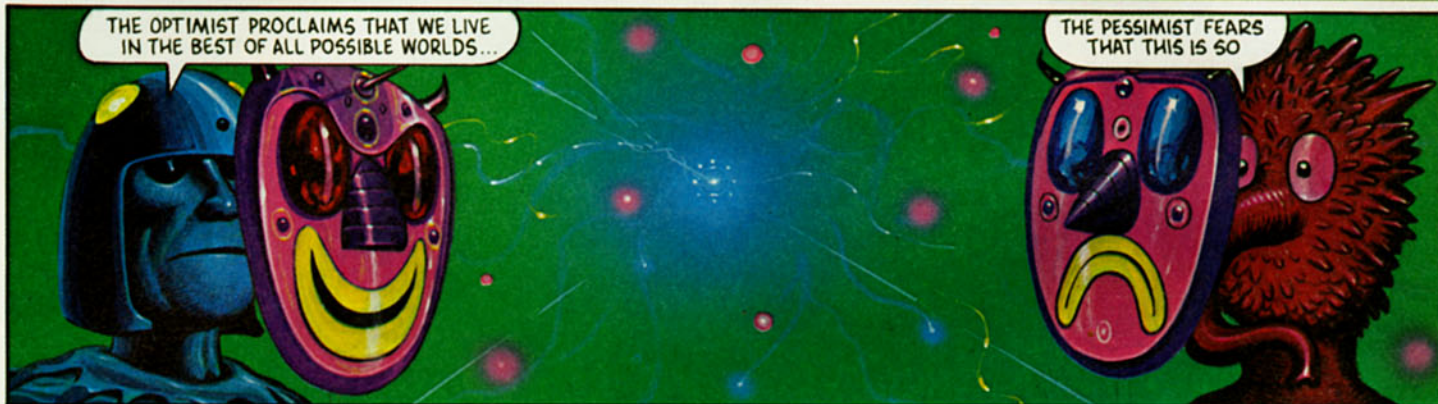
LOOK UP IN THE SKY...

THE SAME BATTLE IN THE CLOUDS WILL BE OBSERVED
BY THE DEAF AS LIGHTNING...

AND BY THE BLIND
AS THUNDER

COME ON IN, THE
AIR IS LOVELY

YOU CAN FLY, TOO, IF
YOU REALLY WANT

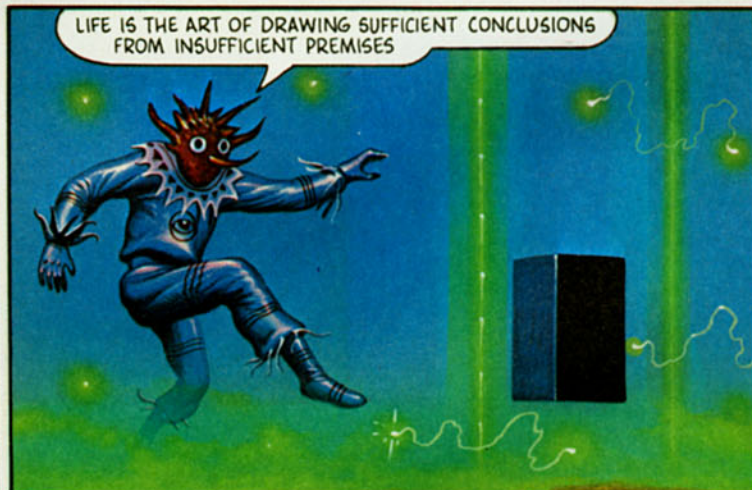


THE OPTIMIST PROCLAIMS THAT WE LIVE
IN THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS...

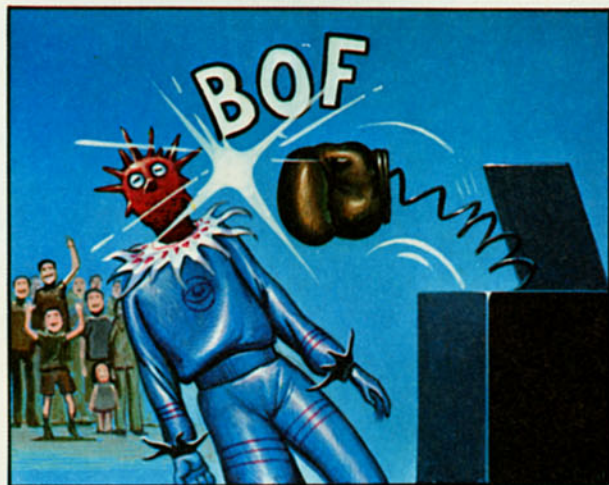
THE PESSIMIST FEARS
THAT THIS IS SO



WOMEN ARE SILVER DISHES INTO WHICH
WE PUT GOLDEN APPLES



LIFE IS THE ART OF DRAWING SUFFICIENT CONCLUSIONS
FROM INSUFFICIENT PREMISES



MAN IS IMPRISONED IN A
CAGE OF MIRRORS.
WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?



QUID RIDES? MUTATO NOMINE DE TE
FABULA NARRATEUR

OUR FRIENDS ARE PUTTING ON A...ER...
SPECTACULAR SHOW. I WONDER WHAT
THE EARTH-PEOPLE ARE MAKING OF IT ALL

ACTORS! THEY'RE THE SAME
ALL OVER THE GALAXY! THEY
JUST **HAVE** TO BE THE CENTER
OF ATTENTION. TOTALLY
INSECURE, TOTALLY INSECURE

YOU RETURNED SOONER THAN I ANTICIPATED.
THE EARTH-PEOPLE HAVE FREE ACCESS TO
THE LOWER BAYS AS YOU INSTRUCTED AND
I HAVE INFORMED THEM OF THEIR
RIGHT UNDER GALACTIC BYLAW...

FREE PASSAGE TO ANY
PORT OF CALL ON OUR
FLIGHT PATH



GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WELCOME ABOARD SPACESHIP ICARUS.
IF THE THOUGHT OF FLYING TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN WORRIES YOU WE
ADVISE YOU TO LEAVE **IMMEDIATELY**

THIS IS CRAZY, JOE. WE CAN'T JUST UP AN'
GO TO **ALPHA CENTAURI**! MY WIFE IS
EXPECTING ME **HOME** AT FIVE-THIRTY!

BELIEVE ME, ED. IT'S ALL FOR THE BEST.
ANDROMEDA IS THE ONLY SAFE
PLACE TO HIDE FROM THE **MAFIA**.

YOU'D BETTER BE **RIGHT**
ABOUT THIS. IF WE GET
TO ORION AND FIND OUT
WE'RE **NOT** ENTITLED TO
WELFARE...



LOOK AT THEM, TITAN. EARTH'S REJECTS, THE **DEADBEATS**,
DROPOUTS, **DRUG ADDICTS**, **PIMPS**, AND **PROSTITUTES**.
THE **PETTY THIEVES**, **GAMBLERS**, AND **ALCOHOLICS**... ALL
ON THE RUN FROM THEIR **DARK, SECRETIVE** PAST LIVES.



GEE! I JUST
LOVE THOSE
TENTACLES.
ARE THEY **ARMS**
OR **LEGS**?!

JUST DEPENDS... WHAT DO
YOU **DESIRE** THEM TO BE?

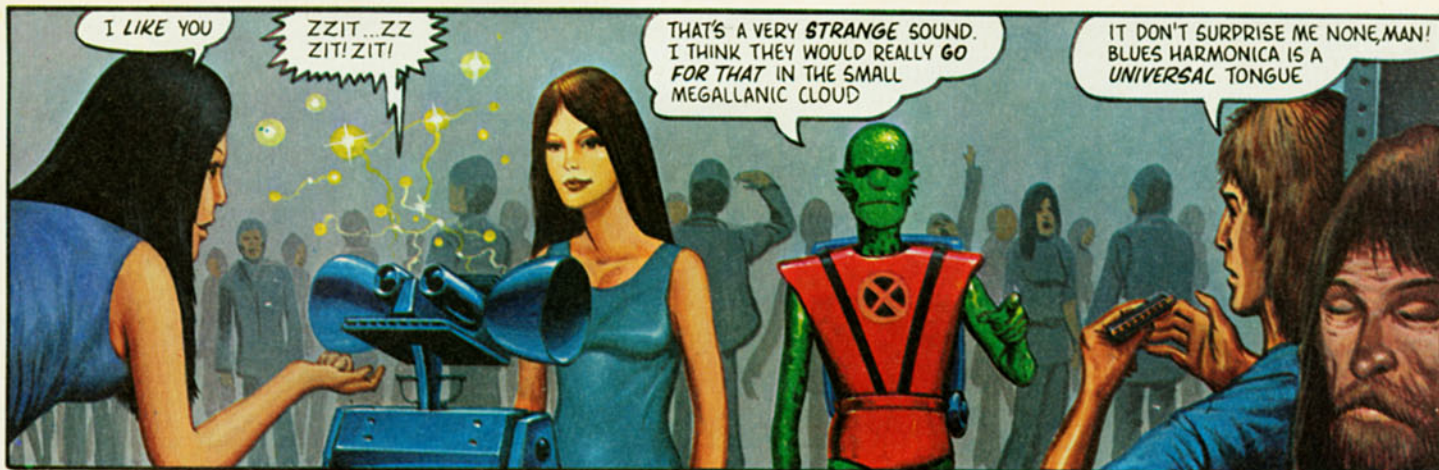
:GIGGLE:

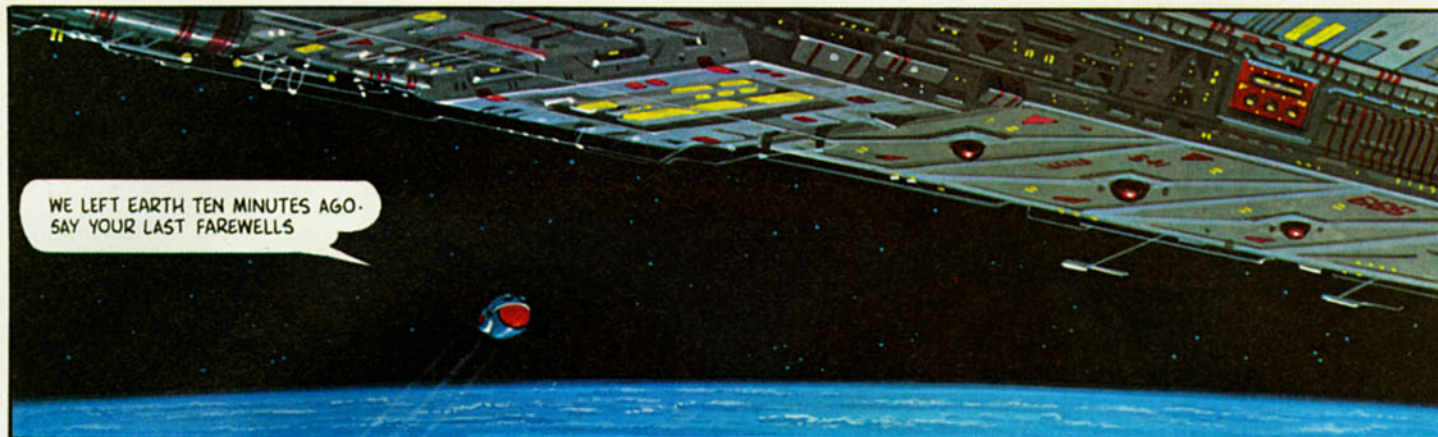
...AND WHEN I SAW THE
LIGHTS, I KNEW THAT I
WAS FINALLY, **TRULY**
LIBERATED

THAT'S
COOL,
BABE

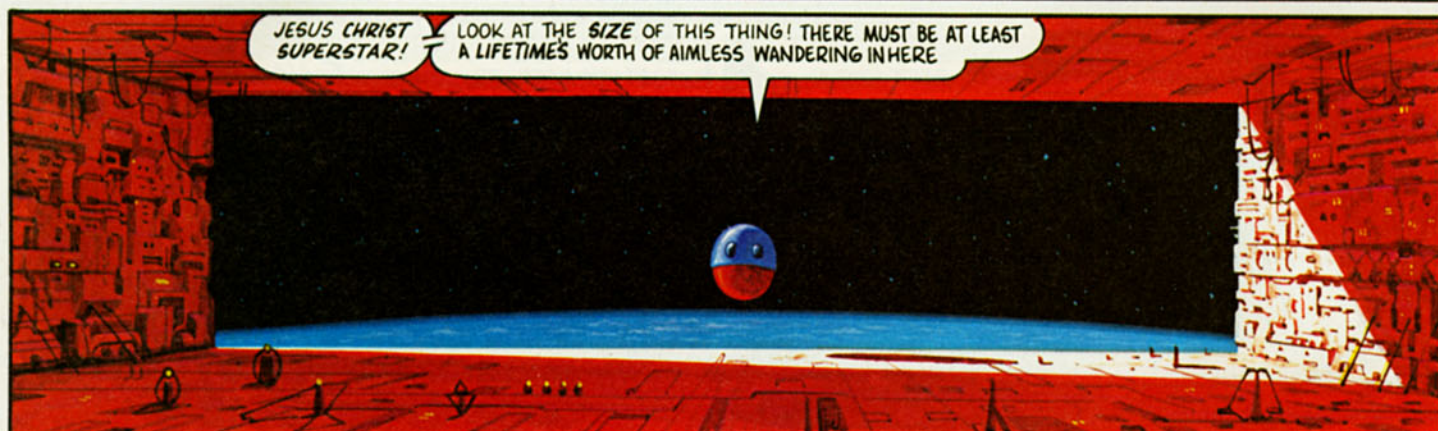
HEY THERE YOU'RE
A CUTE LITTLE FELLA







WE LEFT EARTH TEN MINUTES AGO.
SAY YOUR LAST FAREWELLS



JESUS CHRIST
SUPERSTAR!

LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THIS THING! THERE MUST BE AT LEAST
A LIFETIME'S WORTH OF AIMLESS WANDERING IN HERE



IT'S A *VERY* WEIRD PLACE OUT THERE, EARTHMEN... ALTHOUGH...
IN *SOME* WAYS, IT'S STRANGELY *FAMILIAR* TO EARTH...

IT'S LIKE A GIANT FAIRGROUND IN A WAY, WITH
SCENES TO THRILL, ENTERTAIN, TITILLATE, SHOCK...
EVEN DISGUST...

YES... I THINK YOU'LL NEED A *LIBERAL* OUTLOOK
TO GET YOU THROUGH *THIS* GALAXY...





WOWEE! WILL YA LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THEM!

ARE THEY REAL?

THEY MUST BE STATUES OR SOMETHIN'!



I CAN ASSURE YOU, GENTLEMEN, THEY ARE REAL. THESE CREATURES ARE THE SIRENS OF TITAN AND I ADVISE YOU NOT TO GAZE TOO LONG.

WHY? THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL ...



PRECISELY.



I WANDERED LONELY AS AN INTERSTELLAR DUST CLOUD, AMONG A HOST OF GOLDEN CEPHEID VARIABLES.

HEY MAN, WHERE YOU BEEN? YOU MISSED ALL THE FUN.



DO YOU REALIZE, THAT ACCORDING TO $E=MC^2$, THE UNIVERSE IS *FINITE* ... AND YET *UNBOUNDED*!

FINITE YET UNBOUNDED, YEAH! THAT'S EXACTLY HOW I'D DESCRIBE THESE TITS.

AND THAT ACCORDING TO THE SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS, THE UNIVERSE IS MOVING *IRREVOCABLY* TOWARD A STATE OF COMPLETE *RANDOMNESS*, LACKING ANY *ORDER*, *PATTERN*, OR *BEAUTY*.

BEAUTY! YEAH! THAT'S ONE THING THEY HAD *PLENTY* OF, I'M TELLIN' YOU ...

... AND THAT THE *HEAT DEATH* OF THE UNIVERSE IS *INEVITABLE*!

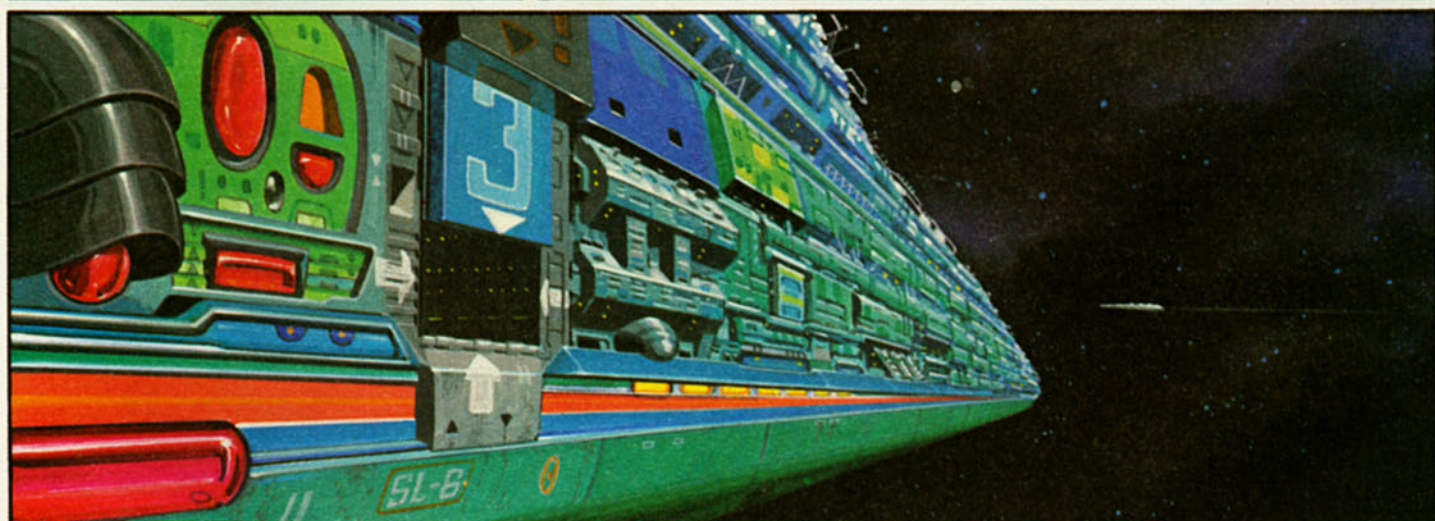
CLASSICAL SYMMETRY AND CERTAINTY HAVE COLLAPSED
ALONG WITH THE DETERMINIST ETHIC.

MAN'S PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE
IS NO LONGER ... **SAFE**.

WOW! YOU BEEN SEEIN' TOO MANY BERGMAN MOVIES. I'M
GOIN' BACK TO SEE IF I CAN CATCH A PARTING GLIMPSE
OF THOSE FABULOUS BOOBS.

THERE'S A TRACE ON THE SCOPE
SISYPHUS... IT'S A FLATBACK
COMING IN PARABOLIC TO
POINT THREE.

OKAY, LET IT RUN.
OPEN UP AND GUIDE
THEM IN.

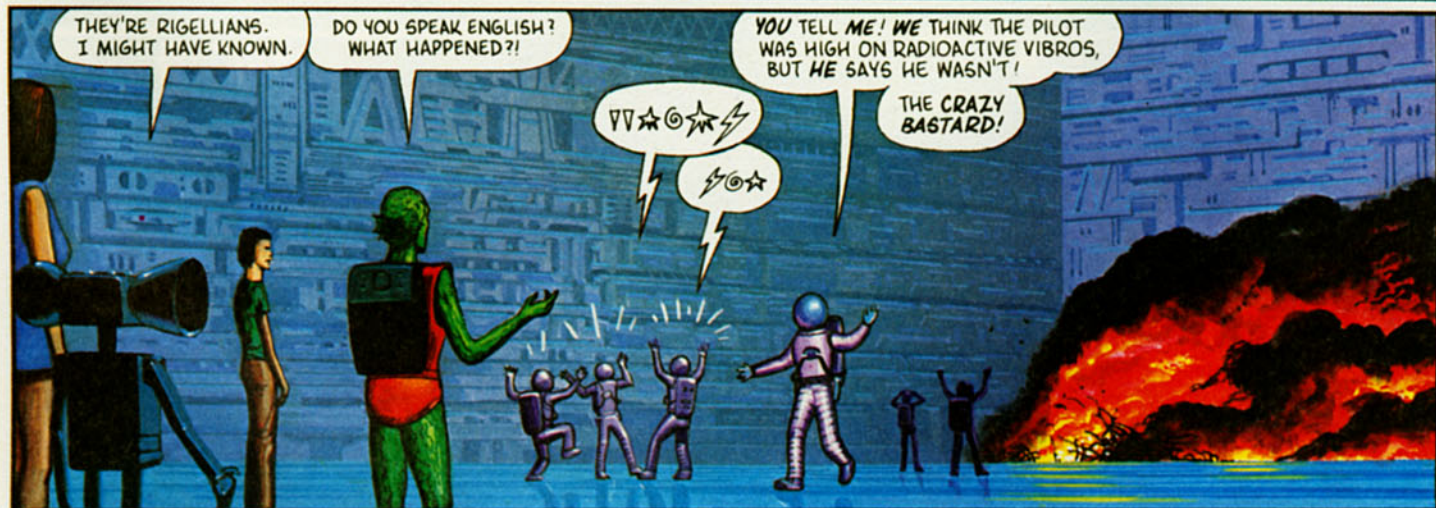
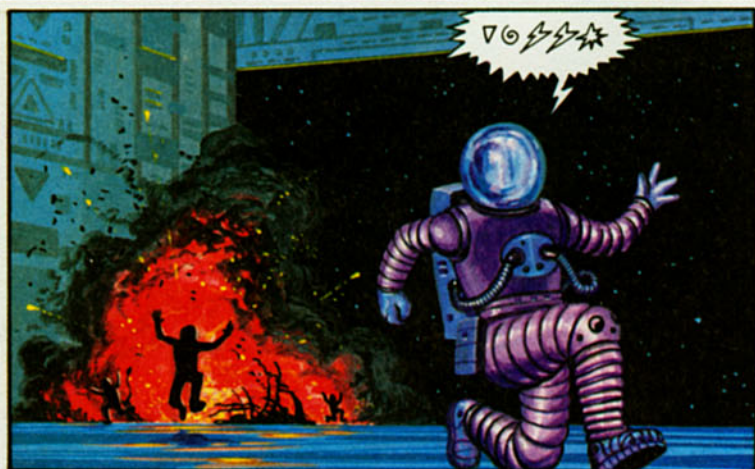
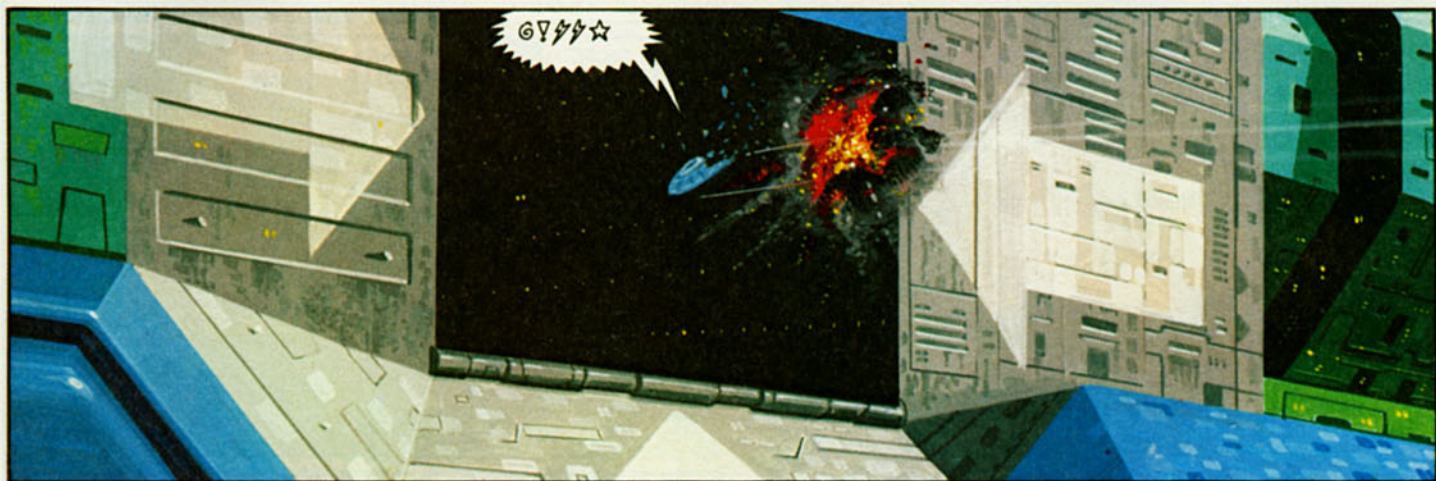
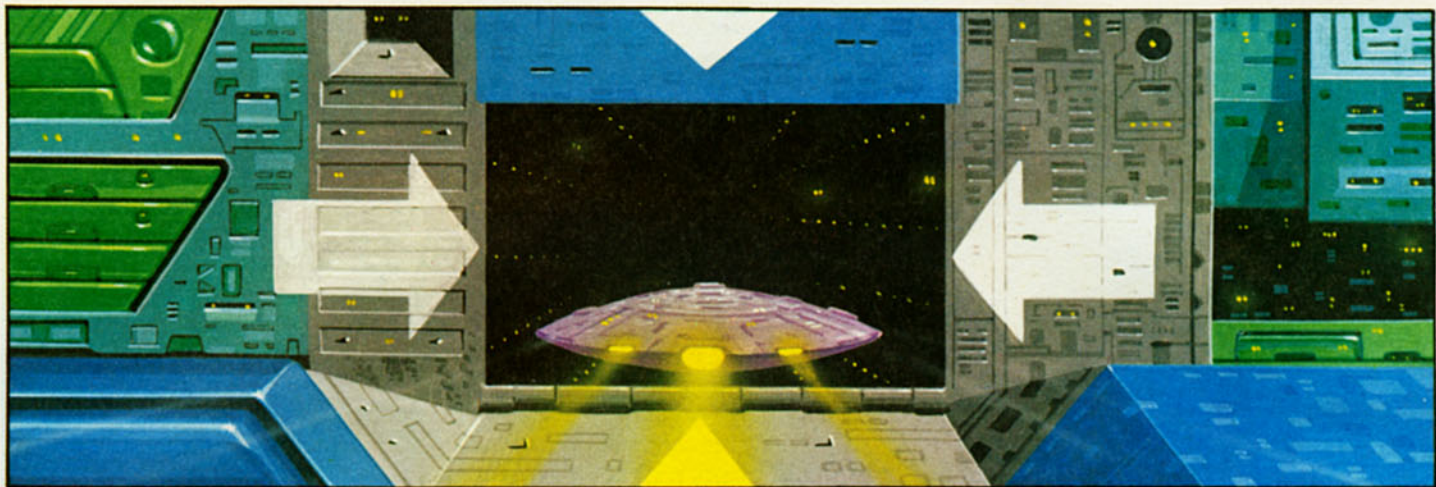


BEEP
BEEP

WHIRR

CLICK-CLACK

377:7Δ□
00'600



HEY! WHAT IS THIS?! HOW COME SO MANY ALIENS SPEAK *ENGLISH*?!

EVERYBODY SPEAKS ENGLISH THESE DAYS, SON.

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL THO'. I CAN RECALL THE GOOD OLD DAYS, TWO OR THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, WHEN IT USED TO BE FRENCH.

Boing

EARTH ISN'T THE UNIMPORTANT LITTLE DUST-MOTE THAT YOU EARTHLINGS TAKE IT FOR, Y'KNOW.

JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY'S VISITED EARTH IN THE LAST COUPLA THOUSAND YEARS. WE EVEN HAD **ONE** CRAZY GUY FROM ANTARES WHO GOT HIMSELF CRUCIFIED DOWN THERE.

YEAH, EXPORTING THE BEST IN TERRAN CULTURE IS A **BIG** INDUSTRY. IT'S ALL ON THE *SLY*, OF COURSE. THE GALACTIC COUNCIL DOESN'T LIKE US GOIN' DOWN TO EARTH. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET VISAS... WE FLY OUR SAUCERS MAINLY AT NIGHT... REALLY THOUGHT WE HAD IT **MADE** THIS TIME...

WE MANAGED TO RUN THE BLOCKADE OUT IN RIGEL AND SHAKE OFF THE GOVERNMENT CUSTOMS SHIPS. WHEN WE LEFT EARTH WE HAD ABOUT EIGHT TONS OF SAFETY PINS AND BALL-POINT PENS... **HELL**... THEY WOULD'VE GONE **WILD** OVER THEM IN CENTAURI, PAID ALMOST **ANYTHING**... WE WOULD'VE BEEN **FABULOUSLY RICH**...!

AND **THIS** IDIOT **BLEW** IT!

▽Δ⚡☆◎!

▽◎⚡⚡!?

WAP! **BOP!**

YOU'RE WELCOME TO REST HERE FOR THE NIGHT CYCLE AND TRAVEL WITH US. WE'RE HEADING FOR **AXIS**...

AXIS?... OH IT'S THE CAPITAL OF THE GALAXY... ONCE UPON A TIME... LONG, LONG AGO... LOTS OF CONCEITED PLANETARY GOVERNMENTS AT THE HUB OF THE GALAXY **ALL** WANTED **THEIR** WORLDS TO BE THE HOME OF THE GALACTIC COUNCIL. NATURALLY, NOBODY WOULD CONSENT TO ANY **OTHER** BUT THEIR **OWN** PLANET...

SO THEY HAD TO **BUILD** ONE...

...A VAST ETERNAL MONUMENT TO VANITY AND VICE, IT WAS CONSTRUCTED ACCORDING TO CERTAIN ANCIENT PLANS AND MYSTIC DIMENSIONS WHOSE EXACT SIGNIFICANCE WAS TOTALLY MISINTERPRETED AND COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTOOD, OF COURSE... BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, AXIS IS THE HOME OF THE RAYS... WITHOUT WHICH GALACTIC CIVILIZATION WOULD BE A MEANINGLESS TERM.

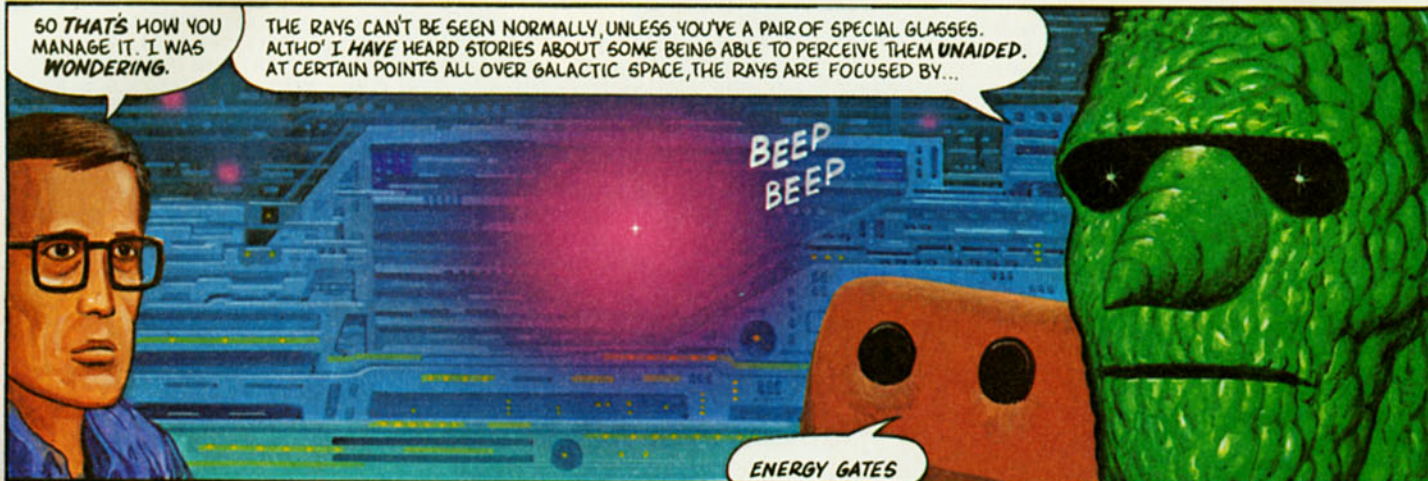
FROM EACH COMPASS POINT A RAY EMANATES. EACH RAY IS REFRACTED BY A VAST CUT-GLASS CRYSTAL INTO A THOUSAND MILLION SMALLER RAYS THAT ARE THROWN OUT ALL OVER THE GALAXY.

IT IS BY VIRTUE OF THESE RAYS THAT TRAVEL OVER DISTANCES INVOLVING MANY LIGHT-YEARS BECOMES A REALITY.



SO THAT'S HOW YOU MANAGE IT. I WAS WONDERING.

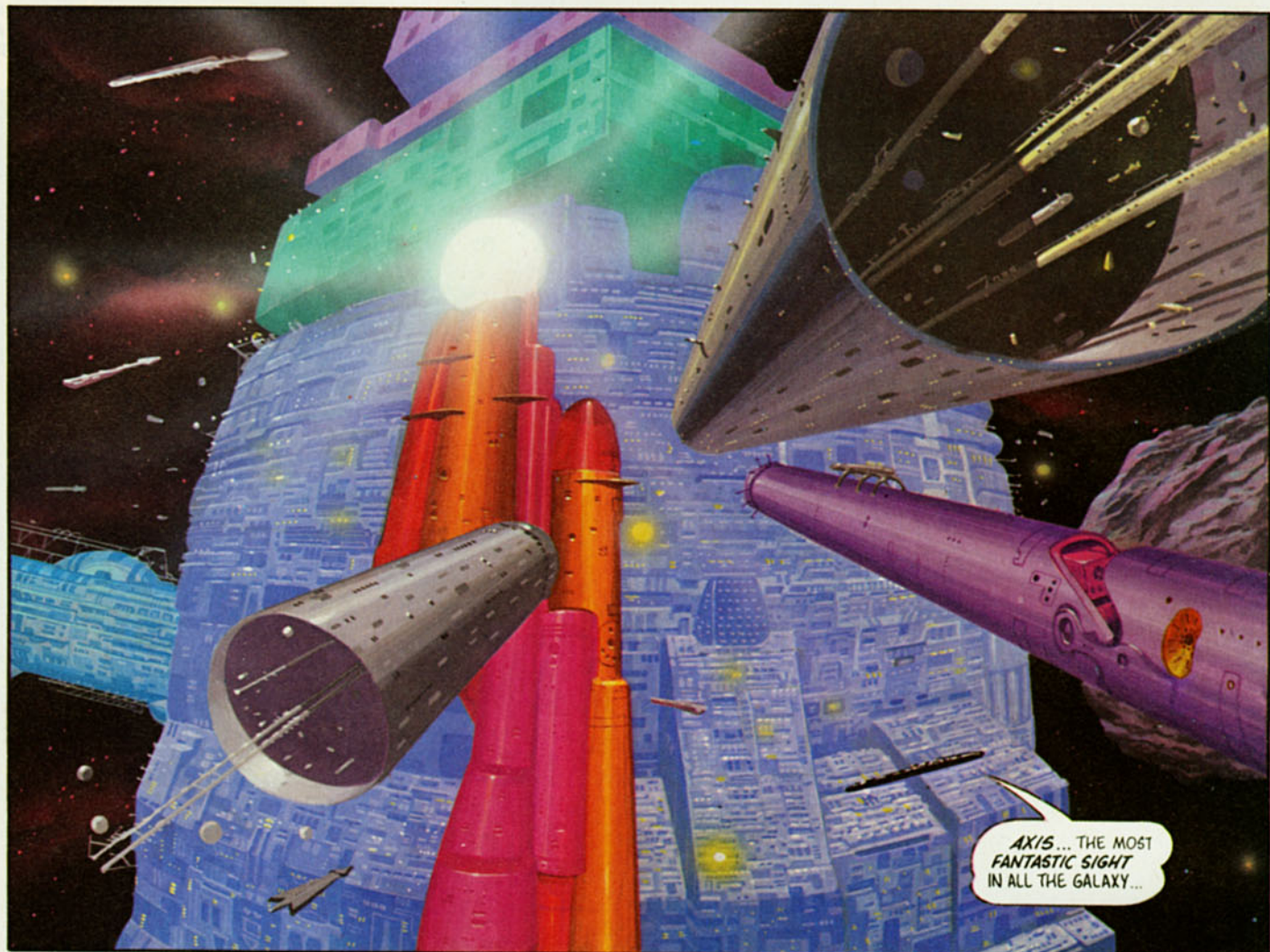
THE RAYS CAN'T BE SEEN NORMALLY, UNLESS YOU'VE A PAIR OF SPECIAL GLASSES. ALTHO' I HAVE HEARD STORIES ABOUT SOME BEING ABLE TO PERCEIVE THEM UNAIDED. AT CERTAIN POINTS ALL OVER GALACTIC SPACE, THE RAYS ARE FOCUSED BY...



FROM HERE ALL RAYS LEAD TO AXIS.







AXIS... THE MOST
FANTASTIC SIGHT
IN ALL THE GALAXY...



AND THEY'VE ALL GOT TOO MUCH OF
A HANGOVER TO APPRECIATE IT!

OWW! THOSE BRIGHT LIGHTS!

HEY! THOSE
ARE MINE! HOW'D
YOU GET THEM?!

OOHH! MY HEAD

I THINK I'M GONNA
BE SICK...



LOOK! COSMIC GRAFFITI... SOMEBODY'S GOT
THE SITUATION HERE SUSSSED...

BE AS INNOCENT
AS DOVES
AND AS WISE
AS SERPENTS

AXIS, EARTHEN, IS NOT *ONE* IDEA, OR EVEN *ONE* PLACE... IT IS A *THOUSAND MILLION* IDEAS AND PLACES... IT IS AN *APOCALYPTIC MAGNET*... A DAZZLING *JEWEL* THAT *NONE* CAN POSSESS... A BRILLIANT *CANDLE* CONSUMING WANDERING BUTTERFLIES... A FANTASTIC *SPIDER'S WEB* STREWN WITH THE REMAINS OF A BILLION DREAMS... ITS VAST, ETERNAL *PATHOS* IS MATCHED ONLY BY THE INSIGNIFICANT PATHETIC *BATHOS* OF ITS INNUMERABLE INHABITANTS...

AXIS, VAST CONGLOMERATE *BLOOD CLOT* IN THE HEART OF THE GALAXY... COSMIC *PLUG-HOLE* JAMMED TIGHT WITH THE FLOTSAM AND JETSAM OF COUNTLESS CIVILIZATIONS THE AIMLESS WANDERER AND HE WITH GRAND DESIGNS, *BOTH* ARE DRAWN IRRESISTIBLY HERE FROM THE FARTHEST REACHES OF SPACE FROM THE *DARK RIM* OF THE GALAXY, WHERE ITS NAME ECHOES FROM THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN TO THE DEEPEST DARK OCEAN AND DRIFTS IN WHISPERS ACROSS THE MOST FERTILE PLAINS AND THE MOST BARREN WASTELANDS...

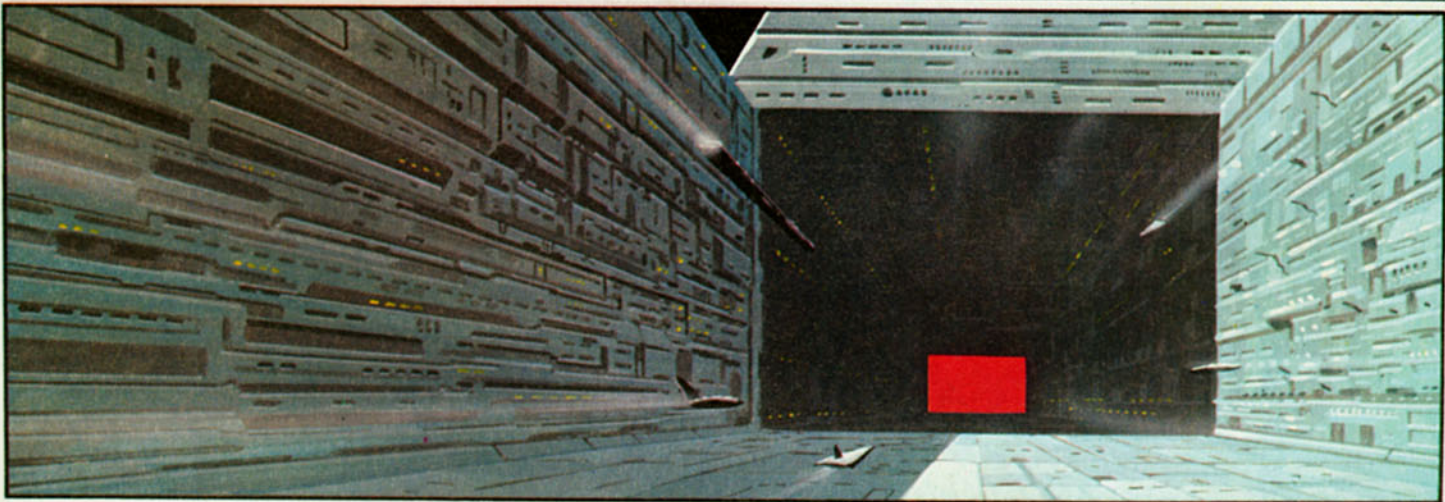
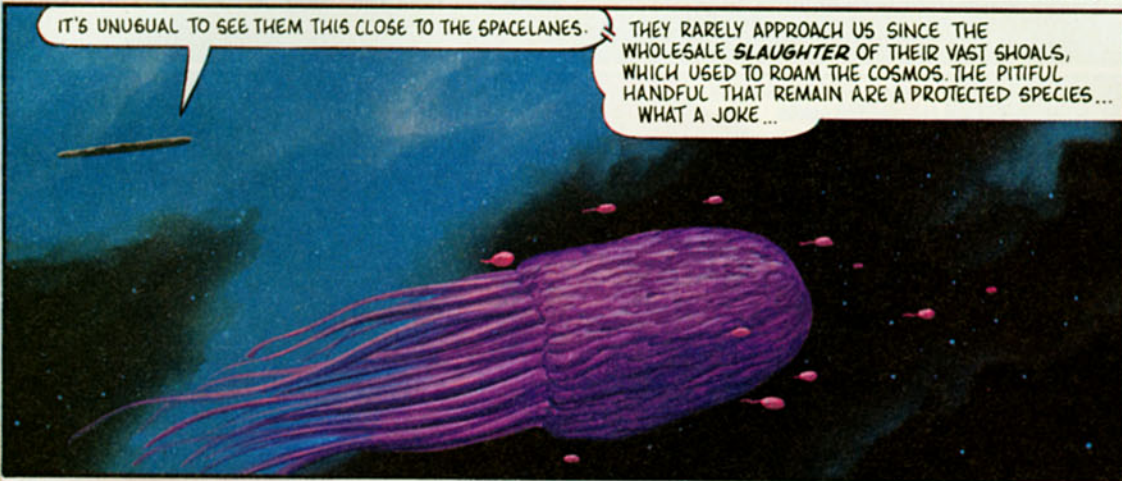


FOR EONS AXIS HAS FIRED THE SATANIC IMAGINATIONS OF A HORDE OF DEMON POETS, PAINTERS, AND WRITERS.

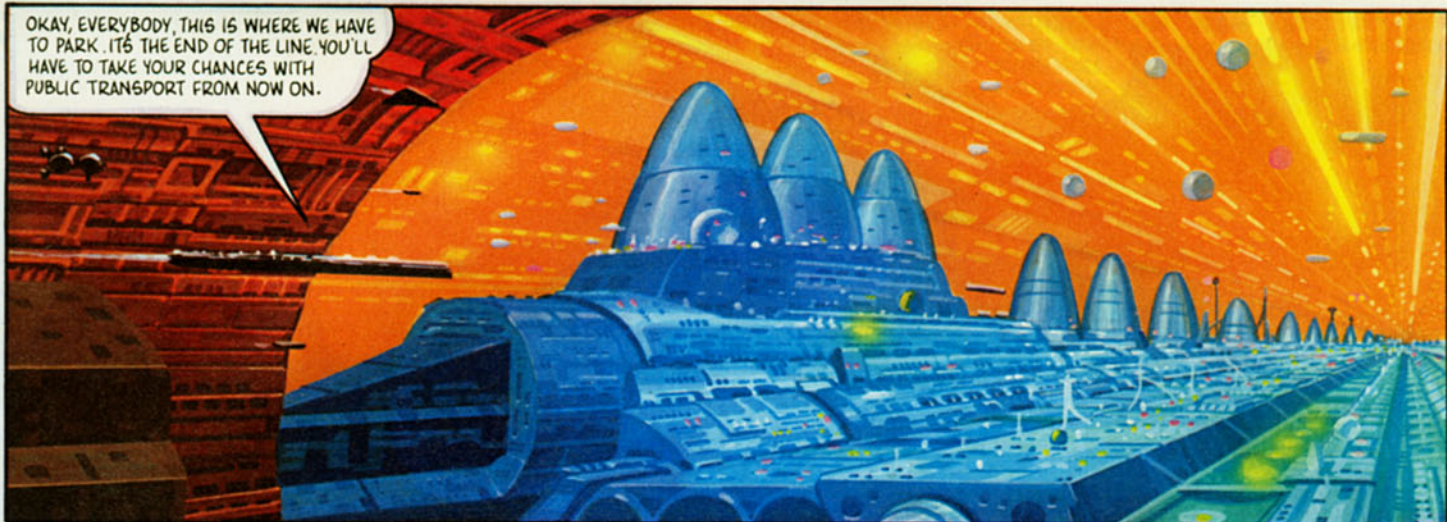
IT IS SAID THAT WHEN A MAN IS TIRED OF AXIS, HE IS TIRED OF LIFE, FOR THERE IS IN AXIS ALL THAT LIFE CAN AFFORD

BUT PERHAPS MOST OF ALL, AXIS IS THE ETERNAL *EROTIC CHIMERA*, AN EXTRAORDINARY CREATURE POSSESSED OF AN UNNATURAL, *TERRIFYING BEAUTY*, WHICH IS MORE THAN THE EYE OF MAN CAN WITHSTAND, A TERRIFYING BEAUTY WHICH *VIOLENTLY* DESTROYS ALL THAT SURROUNDS IT WHILE CONCEALING DEEP WITHIN... A HEART OF... FATHOMLESS... MYSTERIOUS SILENCE...

THE *EROTIC CHIMERA*, SHE WHO IS A LIVING EMBODIMENT OF THE SUBLIME PARADOX, WHICH IS A COMPLETE MYSTERY NOT ONLY TO THE WORLD... BUT TO ITSELF, ALSO...



OKAY, EVERYBODY, THIS IS WHERE WE HAVE TO PARK. IT'S THE END OF THE LINE. YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOUR CHANCES WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM NOW ON.



... AND REMEMBER, THE HIGHEST QUALITIES ALWAYS MAKE A MAN UNFIT FOR SOCIETY. THE LIE IS A CONDITION OF LIFE... TRUTH IS THE SAFEST LIE AND CLEVER LIARS GIVE DETAILS, BUT THE CLEVEREST DON'T...



... IT SELDOM PAYS TO BE RUDE. IT NEVER PAYS TO BE ONLY HALF-RUDE. A DOG WILL NOT HOWL IF YOU BEAT HIM WITH A BONE. NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK, AND LASTLY... NEVER WHISPER TO THE DEAF OR WINK AT THE BLIND.

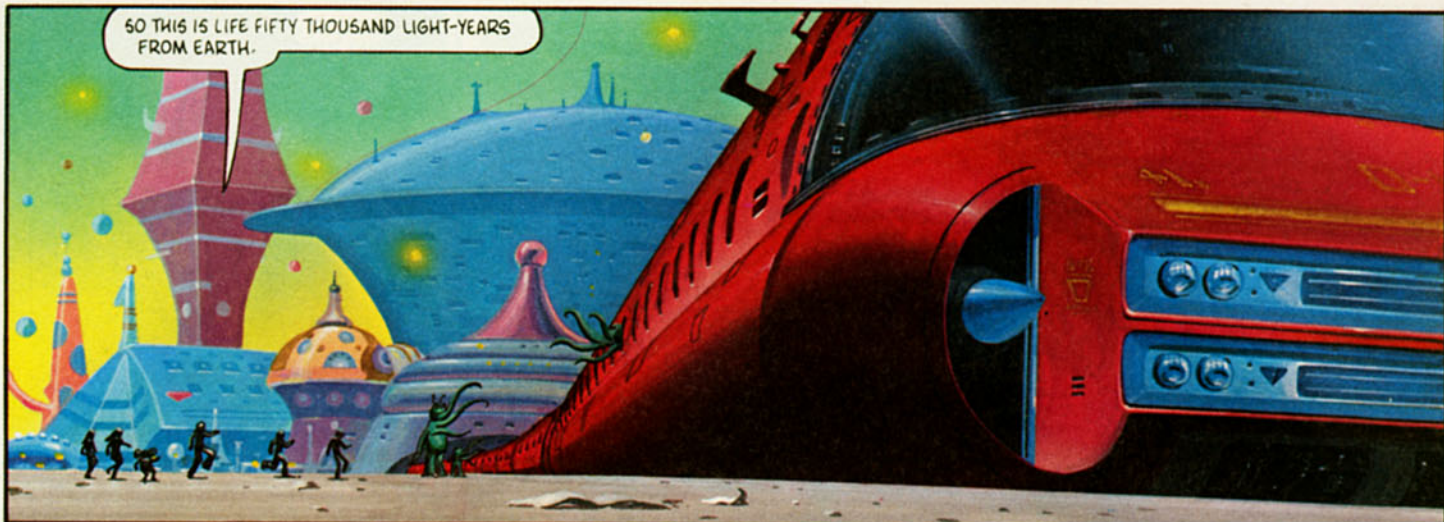
WHAT'S THAT CRAZY ALIEN SHOUTING ABOUT, JOE? CAN'T HEAR A THING ABOVE THE NOISE AROUND HERE.

WHO CARES. CAN YOU SEE ANY BARS AROUNDABOUT THIS JOINT?



HURRY UP, SISYPHUS THERE'S A HOVERTRAIN ABOUT TO LEAVE.

SO THIS IS LIFE FIFTY THOUSAND LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH.



THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGELY FAMILIAR ABOUT IT ...

IN FACT, IT'S FRIGHTENING ...



SISYPHUS, THIS IS A ROUGH PART OF TOWN!

TERTOLLIAN BEAMED ME WHILE WE WERE DOCKING TITAN. SOMETHING'S GOING ON!



THIS IS ALL VERY SECRETE, TITAN.

IT HAS TO BE THIS WAY. SISYPHUS HAS MANY ENEMIES AS WELL AS FRIENDS HIGH UP IN THE GOVERNMENT.

WELL I'M JUST GLAD IT ALL HAS ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** TO DO WITH **ME**.





I'M AFRAID THEY'RE IN TROUBLE, SISYPHUS. THE COUNCIL IS ADAMANT. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND. THE THREAT IS **REAL**. THEY'RE PUTTING ON A BLUSTERING SHOW, IT'S AS PLAIN AS DAY... THEY'RE ABSOLUTELY **TERRIFIED**.

WELL, AT LEAST YOU FORESTALLED THE POSSIBILITY OF A VIOLENT ARREST, TERTOLLIAN. THE BIG ONE IS CALLED STEVE AND THE SCRAWNY ONE, WILLY.



◊AHEM◊



◊AH... IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO INFORM YOU, ALIEN STEVE AND ALIEN WILLY, THAT YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED AN AUDIENCE WITH THE **GRAND VIZIER OF THE GALACTIC COUNCIL**.



ER... HOLD ON A MINUTE, FELLAS...



I FEAR, EARTHMEN, YOU ARE VICTIMS OF THE VAST, INSCRUTABLE WORKINGS OF INTERPLANETARY GOVERNMENT...

OR, AS YOUR WISE OLD EARTH SAYING GOES... **TOUGH SHIT, KIDS.**



THIS WAY, GENTLEMEN

NOW, PREPARE YOURSELVES TO MEET...

HIS MAJESTY, THE ALMIGHTY RULER OF ALL CREATION, DELIGHT AND TERROR OF THE UNIVERSE, MONARCH OF ALL MONARCHS... GOLBASTO MOMAREN EYLAME GURDILLO SHEFIN MULLY ULLY GUE...

THE GRAND VIZIER OF THE GALACTIC COUNCIL...



◊BLEACH!◊
◊GARGLE!◊
◊GARGLE!◊

I AM SILLY
I AM SILLY
I AM SILLY

THE GALACTIC COUNCIL IS
TOTALLY MEANINGLESS
THE GALACTIC COUNCIL IS
TOTALLY MEANINGLESS

DEMOCRACY IS AN IDEAL THING;
OLIGARCHY, A REAL THING.

600 600 6000

HA HA HA! THE HALF-CYCLE HAS PASSED, AND SO...
UNTIL TOMORROW... *AU REVOIR, MES ENFANTS!*

THANK THE STARS! SUCH HUMILIATION! IT'S *INCONCEIVABLE!* THAT
DOG SHALL PAY *DEARLY* FOR THIS.

◊AHEM◊ THE EARTHMEN,
YOUR OMNIPOTENCE...



I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING BUT THINGS AREN'T
WHAT THEY SEEM! I CAN ASSURE YOU WE'RE *NOT* SILLY.
WE'RE *DIPLOMATS* AND WE HAVE TO HUMOR THAT
MAD DOG FOR THE SAKE OF AXIS.

EVERY DAY AT THE ZENITH WE HAVE TO BEHAVE
RIDICULOUSLY AT SAY SILLY THINGS OR ELSE
HE'LL DETONATE THE OLEFACTIVE.

THE OLEFACTIVE?

I SUPPOSE IT GIVES HIM SOME *PERVERTED
PLEASURE* TO SEE IMPORTANT CIVIC
DIGNITARIES GROVEL LIKE MORONS...
THE SWINE!



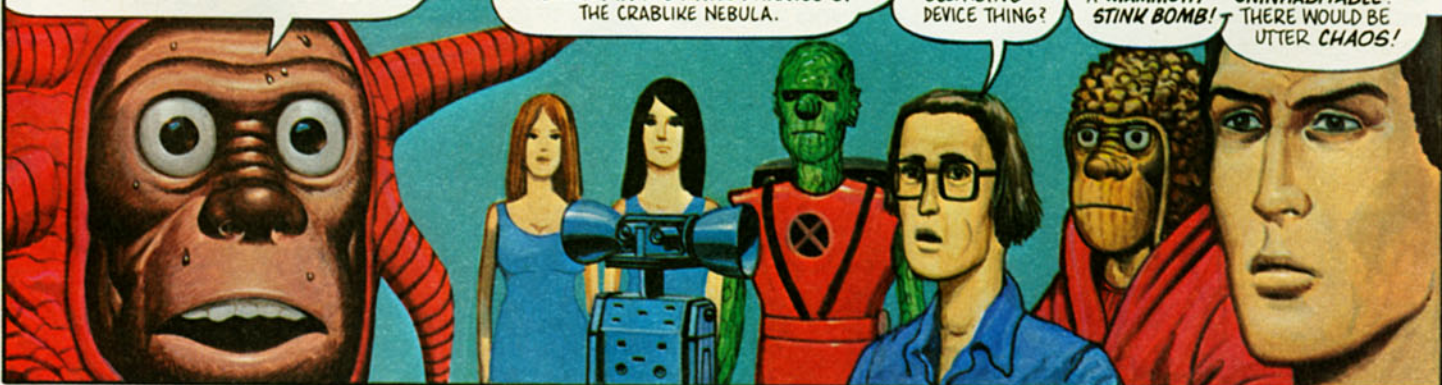
I'LL GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. AXIS IS BEING HELD
TO *RANSOM*. THERE'S A TERRORIST STATIONED OUTSIDE
THE MAIN INTAKE OF THE VENTILATOR COMPLEX
WITH A *DEADLY OLEFACTIVE DEVICE!*

ONCE HE GETS THROUGH MAKING US CRAWL,
HE WANTS A BILLION BILLION CREDITS
TRANSFERRED TO AN UNREGISTERED BANK
ACCOUNT IN THE WHITE DWARVES OF
THE CRABLIKE NEBULA.

ER, WHAT'S THIS
OLEFACTIVE
DEVICE THING?

TO PUT IT
SUCCINCTLY,
A *MAMMOTH
STINK BOMB!*

THE SMELL IS *UNIMAGINABLE!*
I CAN ASSURE YOU! AXIS
WOULD BECOME *ABSOLUTELY
UNINHABITABLE!*
THERE WOULD BE
UTTER *CHAOS!*



I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS
IS ACTUALLY
HAPPENING.

THIS IS ALL VERY
INTERESTING, BUT WHAT'S
IT GOT TO DO WITH US?

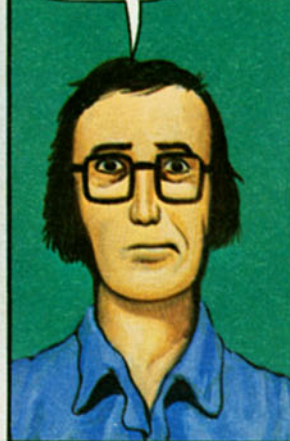
WELL... THIS TERRORIST,
THIS MADMAN... BARYON'S
HIS NAME... WE
HADN'T TO KNOW...

HE'S *TERRIFIED
OF EARTHMEN*

I KNOW EXACTLY
HOW HE FEELS.

I MEAN, YOU HUMANS *DO* HAVE A
REPUTATION FOR BEING *DEADLY*,
SO WE THOUGHT...

*GUARDS...!
BRING THEM
BACK PLEASE.*





I'M AFRAID, TODAY, YOU ARE DESTINY'S CHILDREN.

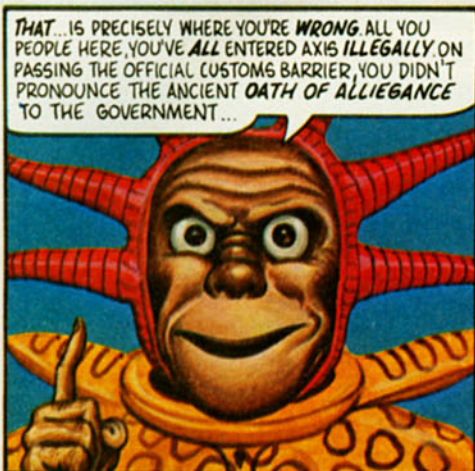
I GUESS YOU'VE PLANNED FOR THIS, BUT JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY... WHAT HAPPENS IF WE REFUSE TO COOPERATE?

SIMPLE! YOU'LL BE THROWN IN JAIL... FOR EVER AND EVER

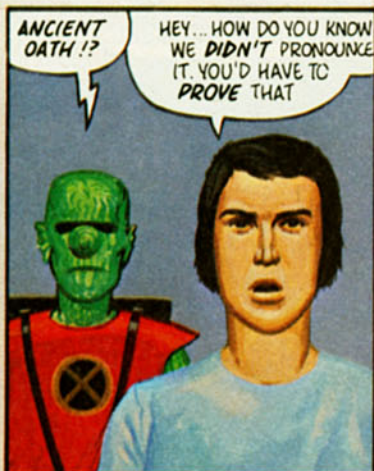


ER... I THOUGHT YOU GUYS HAD A DEMOCRACY HERE.

YOU'RE BLUFFING. YOU COULDN'T DO THAT. THEY HAVEN'T COMMITTED ANY CRIME.

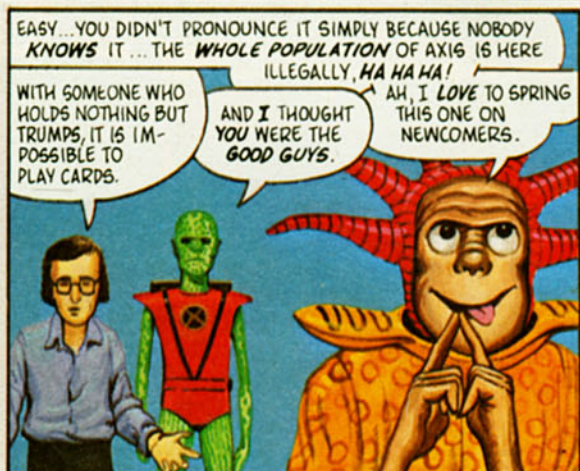


THAT... IS PRECISELY WHERE YOU'RE **WRONG**. ALL YOU PEOPLE HERE, YOU'VE **ALL** ENTERED **AXIS** **ILLEGALLY**. ON PASSING THE OFFICIAL CUSTOMS BARRIER, YOU DIDN'T PRONOUNCE THE ANCIENT **OATH OF ALLIANCE** TO THE GOVERNMENT...



ANCIENT OATH!?

HEY... HOW DO YOU KNOW WE **DIDN'T** PRONOUNCE IT. YOU'D HAVE TO **PROVE** THAT



EASY... YOU DIDN'T PRONOUNCE IT SIMPLY BECAUSE NOBODY **KNOWS** IT... THE **WHOLE POPULATION** OF **AXIS** IS HERE **ILLEGALLY**. HA HA HA!

WITH SOMEONE WHO HOLDS NOTHING BUT TRUMPS, IT IS IM-POSSIBLE TO PLAY CARDS.

AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE **GOOD GUYS**.

AH, I LOVE TO SPRING THIS ONE ON NEWCOMERS.



IT'S A LONG FORGOTTEN LAW THAT WAS PASSED IN THE TIME OF THE OLD TYRANIAN WARS AND WAS NEVER REPEALED. THE OATH HAS LO-O-N-G SINCE BEEN FORGOTTEN.



NO COURT OF LAW WOULD PASS A SENTENCE ON **THAT** ACCOUNT. AT **WORST** THEY HAND OUT A TOKEN PENALTY, THERE'S NO **JUSTICE** IN YOUR CASE.

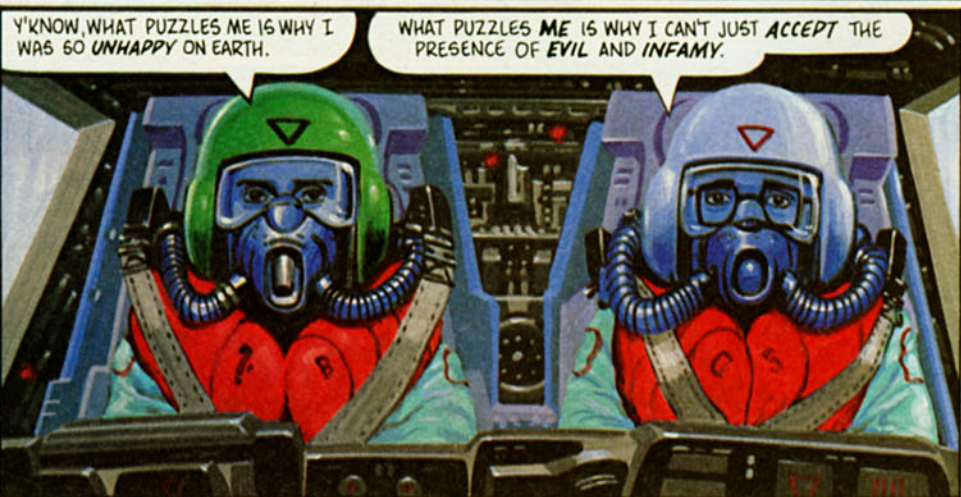


JUSTICE! WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A **LEGAL DISPUTE** HERE. WHAT'S THE CONCEPT OF **JUSTICE** GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

SO... IT'S EITHER FACE A LAWYER OR AN EVIL SUPER-CROOK, HUH?..

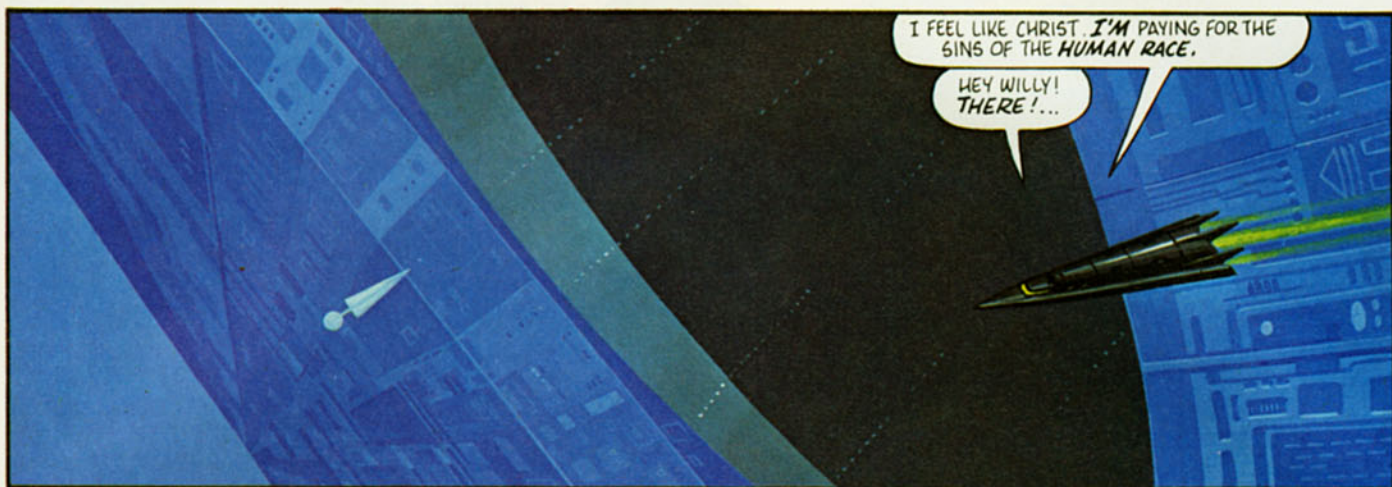


WELL... THERE'S THE INTAKE. HE MUST BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE



Y'KNOW, WHAT PUZZLES ME IS WHY I WAS SO **UNHAPPY** ON EARTH.

WHAT PUZZLES **ME** IS WHY I CAN'T JUST **ACCEPT** THE PRESENCE OF **EVIL** AND **INFAMY**.



I FEEL LIKE CHRIST. I'M PAYING FOR THE SINS OF THE HUMAN RACE.

HEY WILLY!
THERE!...

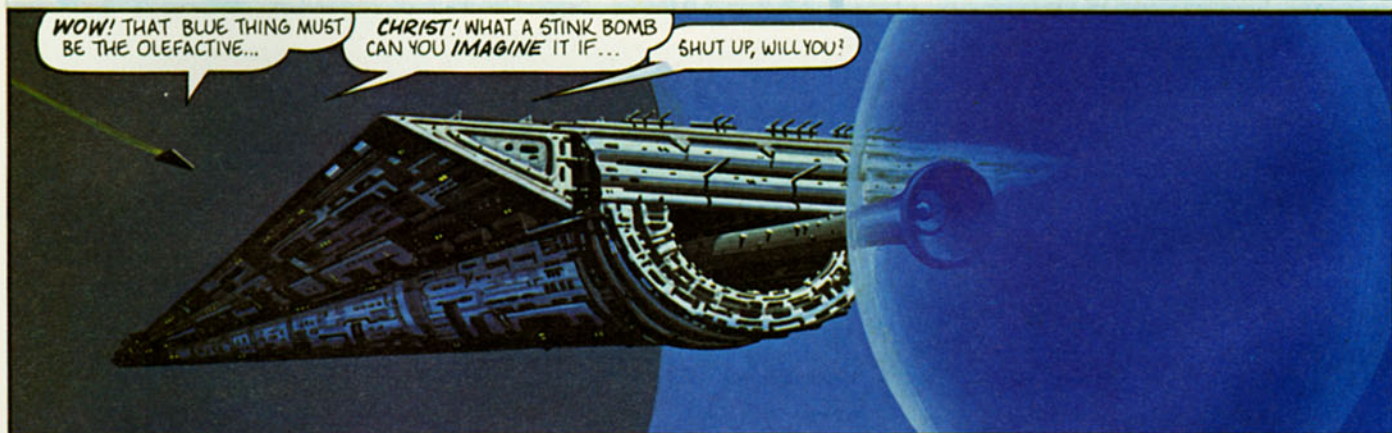


WHAT DO WE DO
NOW?

DON'T YOU REMEMBER? PRESS THE BUTTON THAT
SAYS *RENDEZVOUS*.



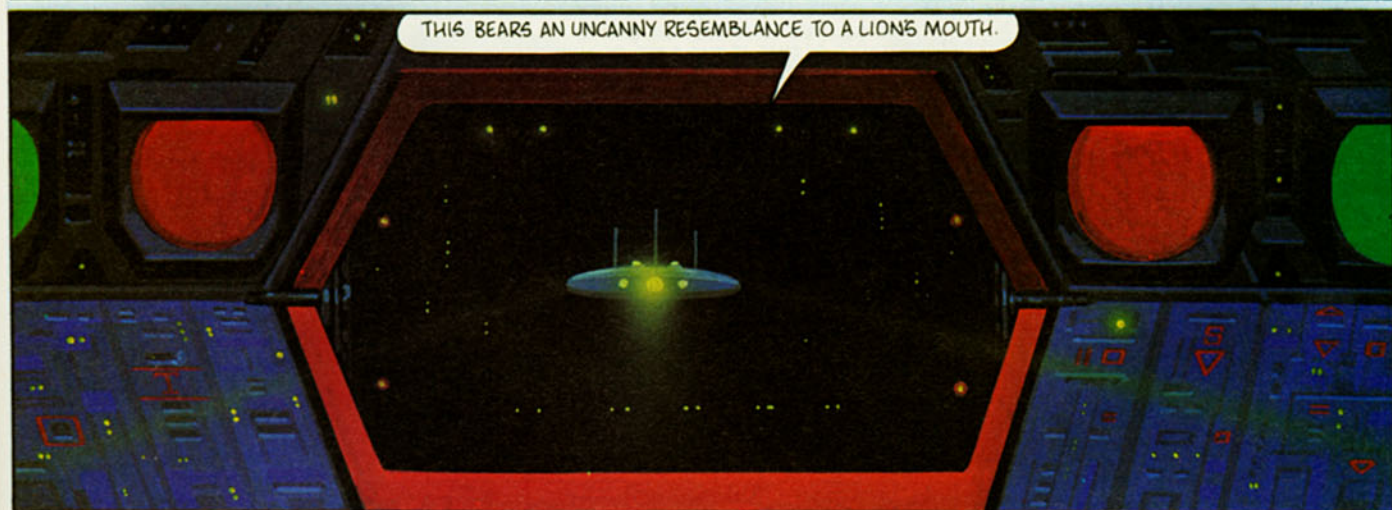
IT'S A GOOD JOB THEY SIMPLIFIED THE CONTROLS
OF THIS THING FOR US...



WOW! THAT BLUE THING MUST
BE THE OLEFACTIVE...

CHRIST! WHAT A STINK BOMB
CAN YOU *IMAGINE* IT IF...

SHUT UP, WILL YOU?



THIS BEARS AN UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE TO A LION'S MOUTH.

...AND SINCE I HAVE DECIDED TO BRAVE THE DREAD PERIL OF THE ABSOLUTE
LONELINESS OF INTERGALACTIC SPACE AND GO INTO VOLUNTARY EXILE,
I DECIDED TO COME AND SEE FOR ONE LAST TIME, O MASTER

REMEMBER NIETZSCHE! THE MORE **TERRIFYING** THE
CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE, THE **BETTER** FOR MAN SO THAT
HIS FREEDOM, POWER, AND IMAGINATION CAN BE TESTED TO
THE **BREAKING POINT** ... TO FIND OUT **WHETHER**
HE IS IN ANY NEED OF FAITH AT THE END.

REMEMBER KIERKEGAARD: IF YOU ARE CAPABLE OF BECOMING A MAN,
THEN THE DANGER AND THE HARSH JUDGEMENT OF EXISTENCE ON
YOUR THOUGHTLESSNESS WILL HELP YOU BECOME ONE.

WHEN IS A STRAIGHT LINE NOT A STRAIGHT LINE?
WE DO NOT SEE THE BEAMS IN OUR OWN EYE.
SPACE IS CURVED AND THERE ARE NO TRUTHS
OUTSIDE THE GATES OF EDEN.

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS THE SAFETY OF SOULS WAS
ENTRUSTED TO THEOLOGIANs WHO COULD SPEND **MONTHS**
DEBATING THE **PRECISE CONSEQUENCES** THAT ENSUED
WHEN A **MOUSE** NIBBLED A **CONSECRATED WAFER**.

AND OF THE
PRESENT AGE?

THOUGHT, FEELING, AND IMAGINATION ARE AT WAR.
THE TASK IS NOT TO ANNUL ONE AT THE EXPENSE
OF THE OTHER, BUT ON THE CONTRARY, TO PRESERVE
THEIR EQUILIBRIUM, THEIR SIMULTANEITY...

AND THE PLANE ON WHICH THEY ARE UNITED
IS **EXISTENCE**!

WE ARE INVOLVED IN A LIFE THAT SURPASSES
UNDERSTANDING, AND OUR HIGHEST
BUSINESS IS OUR DAILY LIFE.

NOTHING BELONGS TO US BUT TIME, AND TO REALIZE THE
UNIMPORTANCE OF TIME IS THE GATE OF WISDOM.

BUT THERE IS ONE FINAL THING TO
BE SAID AND IT IS THIS ...





POLE...? HAHAHA!

AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE, O WORTHLESS *WORMS*?

B.B BLAH, D...DUH...UH...ER
W...W...WE'RE EARTHMEN.

Y Y YAAAAA

ARE YOU *SURE* THIS
IS WHERE HE WENT?

YEAH, I'M SURE. HE LOCKED
HIMSELF IN THERE.

THAT'S A TOILET
HE'S FLUSHING!
HE'S LOCKED HIMSELF
IN THE JOHN!

POOR GUY. HE
MUST BE IN
A BAD WAY.

GO AWAY!

HEY, IT'S OKAY. WE WON'T
HURT 'CHA, WILL
WE, STEVE?

ER, NO...NO.

THIS IS *WEIRD*
MAN... REALLY
WEIRD!

HMM... MANIC-DEPRESSIVE, SENSE OF GUILT,
SELF-REPROACH, ANXIETY MOODS, EMOTIONAL
AND COMBATIVE... A CLASSIC *PSYCHOSIS*...
YES, I THINK I CAN HANDLE THIS.





EXISTENCE
PRECEDES
ESSENCE.



EXISTENCE
PRECEDES
ESSENCE.



OKAY! THE STATE SECRETARY CAN TAKE A REST FROM HIS PUSH-UPS. NOW LETS SEE THE MINISTER FOR DEFENSE PERFORM A FEW CARTWHEELS WHILE SAYING SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS TWENTY TIMES, BACKWARDS...

HA HA! THATS A GOOD ONE WILLY
HA HA HA! HA HA HA!

WE'LL **GET YOU** FOR THIS! IF IT
TAKES **FOREVER**, WE'LL **GET YOU**!



OH, HI SIS. COME IN
AND ENJOY THE SHOW

ER, I THINK WE'D BETTER GO. THE COUNCIL GAVE ME YOUR
MESSAGE WHEN I GOT BACK. I'VE BROUGHT EVERYONE, AND
WE HAVE AN UNMARKED SHIP AS YOU INSTRUCTED.

WELL, SO LONG BARYON. KEEP THEM AT IT FOR A
COUPLE OF HOURS, THEN SCRAM YOURSELF. NOW DON'T
FORGET WHAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT YOUR MOTHER, AND
IF YOU'RE EVER NEAR EARTH SOMETIME, CALL ME AT THAT
NUMBER I GAVE YOU. YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME... SEE YOU,
OKAY... TAKE CARE, SEE YOU OLD SON!

SEE YA,
BARYON

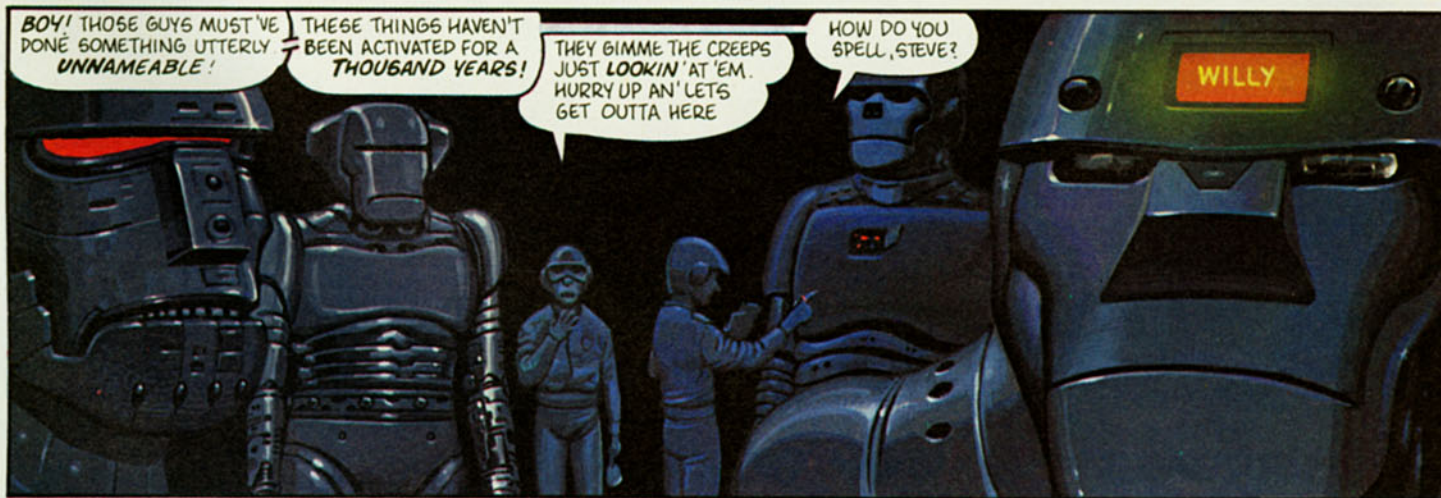


SET COURSE FOR THE EDGE
OF THE GALAXY TITAN.

GEE! Y'KNOW WILLY, HE WAS REALLY
QUITE A NICE GUY, FOR A TERRORIST.

I HOPE YOU REALIZE... YOU'RE
BOTH ON **THE FILES**
NOW.

AH FUCK IT, SIS. WE WERE DOOMED
LONG AGO. WHAT'S A FEW MORE
SLAPS IN GOD'S FACE GONNA DO?



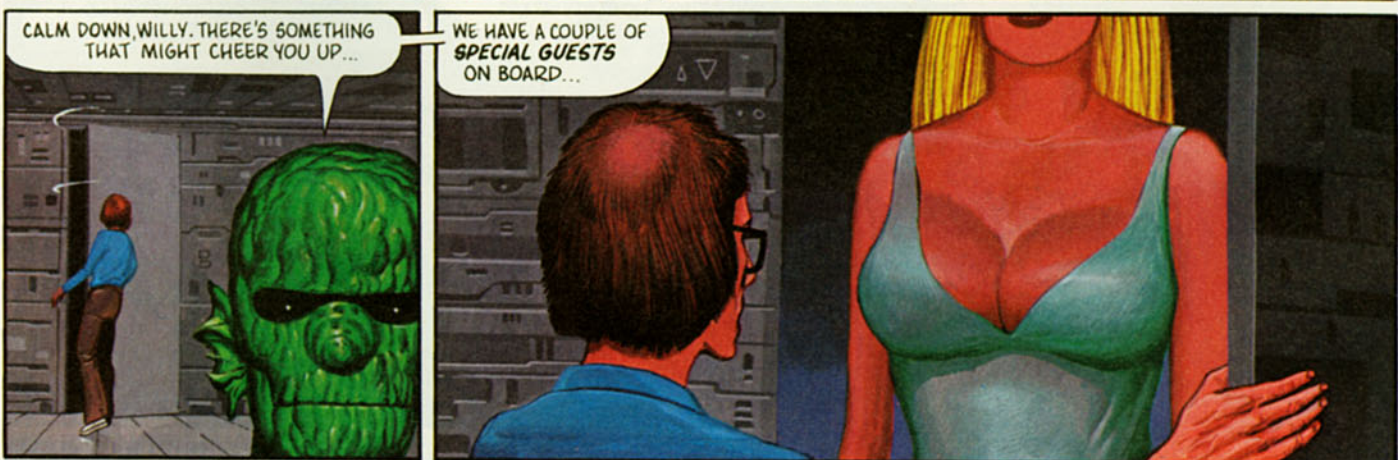
BOY! THOSE GUYS MUST'VE
DONE SOMETHING UTTERLY
UNNAMEABLE!

THESE THINGS HAVEN'T
BEEN ACTIVATED FOR A
THOUSAND YEARS!

THEY GIMME THE CREEPS
JUST LOOKIN' AT 'EM.
HURRY UP AN' LETS
GET OUTTA HERE

HOW DO YOU
SPELL, STEVE?

WILLY



HEL-LO WILLY...
I'M SO PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

HEL-LO

HEY! WAIT A MINUTE! SHE
SAID HELLO TO ME

COOL IT, WILLY,
COOL IT.

WHAD'YA
MEAN,
COOL IT!

OH WELL, AT LEAST THEY'VE
FORGOTTEN DEATH FOR
THE MOMENT.

EASY BOYS, EASY! SOLARA'S A SENSITIVE, SHE CAN TUNE IN TO THEM
OL' COSMIC WAVES... YESSIEEE... FROM WAY DOWN IN THE INFRA-
RED TO WAY UP IN THE ULTRA-VIOLET.

AND X-RAYS ARE HER SPECIALITY,
SO DON'T TELL HER NO LIES...
SHE CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOU.

WHAT'S THE ANGLE, BARPO.
EVEN HONESTY IS A
FINANCIAL SPECULATION
WHERE YOU'RE
CONCERNED...

EVER HEARD
OF CELITO?

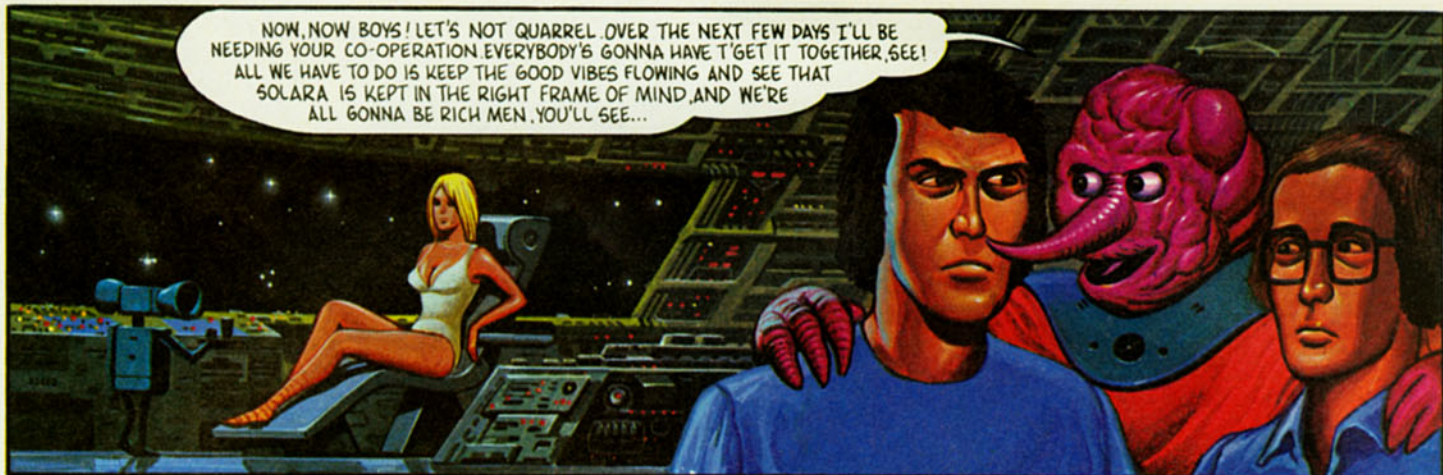
OF COURSE, HASN'T
EVERYONE? OH, GO
THAT'S IT. SOLARA IS...

YEP! SHE'S GOING
TO FIND IT FOR ME!

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE SOMEWHERE
IN THE SECTOR WE'RE PASSING
THROUGH RIGHT NOW! WOULDN'T IT
BE AMAZING TO FIND EXACTLY W...

IT'S AMAZING TO FIND SOMEONE
WHO STILL BELIEVES IN UTOPIAS.

NOW, NOW BOYS! LET'S NOT QUARREL. OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS I'LL BE NEEDING YOUR CO-OPERATION EVERYBODY'S GONNA HAVE T'GET IT TOGETHER, SEE! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS KEEP THE GOOD VIBES FLOWING AND SEE THAT SOLARA IS KEPT IN THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND, AND WE'RE ALL GONNA BE RICH MEN, YOU'LL SEE...



OH WILLY DEAR, I THINK ANOTHER CHOCOLATE MILK SUNDAAE WOULD JUST PUT ME IN *EXACTLY* THE CORRECT MENTAL ATTITUDE TO RECEIVE THE COSMIC RAYS TONIGHT.

AND STEVE, DARLING, A HOT WATER BOTTLE IN MY BED WOULD *REALLY* MAXIMIZE MY RECEPTIVE CAPABILITIES...

Y'KNOW SUSAN, THE TROUBLE WITH SENSITIVES IS THAT THEY'RE *SO-O SENSITIVE!* THE *LEAST* LITTLE THING UPSETS THEM...



GO ON, THEN YOU GUYS... MOVE IT!



YES YES! IT'S *THERE!* IT *MUST* BE THERE! THE SPECTRAL LINES HAVE TOLD ME...

SURE I'M SURE! THERE'S ABSOLUTELY *NOTHIN'* HERE BARPO!

BALLS!

THERE! IT'S THERE! I'M ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THIS TIME

NOTHIN' BARPO!

BARPO!...



COOL IT YOU GUYS! COOL IT! SHE'S JUST BEEN A LITTLE OFF-KEY LATELY. IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT STEVE! YOU ONLY PUT *ONE* SUGAR IN HER COFFEE THIS MORNING.

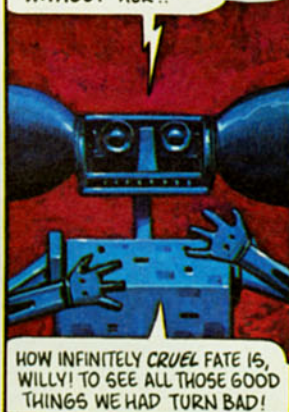
WHAT'S WRONG, TITAN? YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING A BIT DOWN LATELY, NOT THAT I SEE YOU GRINNING MUCH, BUT ER... IS THIS UTOPIA BUSINESS GETTING ON TOP OF YOU?

ER, NO, NO, WILLY... ACTUALLY IT'S *SUSAN* AND I

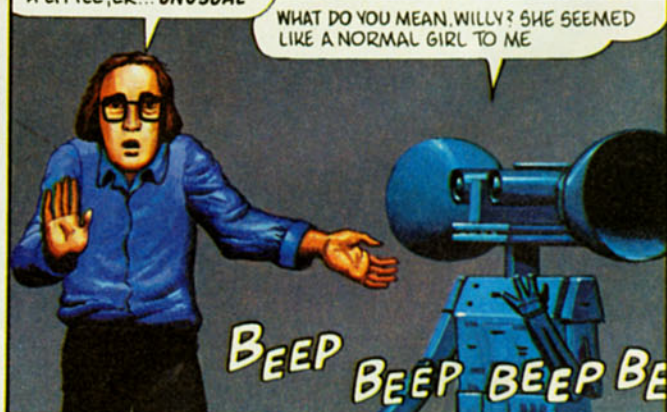
IT'S ALL OVER, WILLY! IT'S ALL OVER! *OH GOD!* HOW CAN I GO ON COMPUTING *WITHOUT* HER?!

WE-ELL, TITAN, I MEAN... YOU KNOW... I'M SURE YOU BOTH WENT INTO THIS THING WITH YOUR EYES OPEN. THERE WERE LOTS OF... ER... *DIFFERENCES* DON'T YOU THINK YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH SUSAN WAS A LITTLE... A LITTLE, ER... *UNUSUAL*

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WILLY? SHE SEEMED LIKE A NORMAL GIRL TO ME



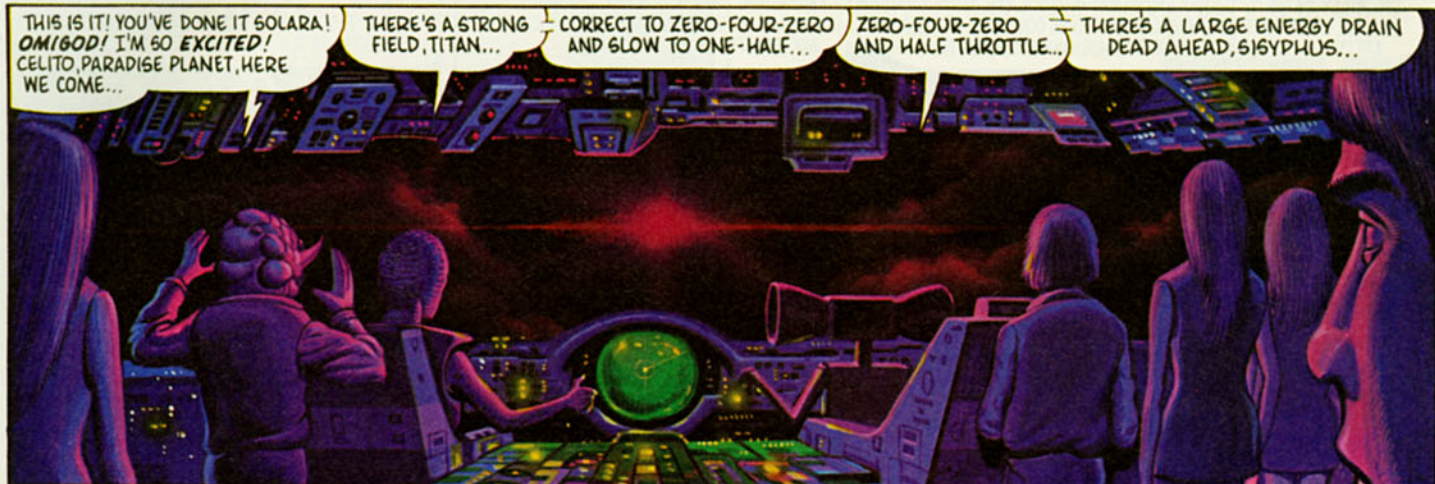
HOW INFINITELY CRUEL FATE IS, WILLY! TO SEE ALL THOSE GOOD THINGS WE HAD TURN BAD!



BEEP BEEP BEEP BE



WILL EVERYONE REPORT
TO THE BRIDGE, PLEASE!
IT APPEARS WE ARE
APPROACHING A
SINGULARITY...



THIS IS IT! YOU'VE DONE IT SOLARA!
OMIGOD! I'M SO EXCITED!
CELITO, PARADISE PLANET, HERE
WE COME...

THERE'S A STRONG
FIELD, TITAN...

CORRECT TO ZERO-FOUR-ZERO
AND SLOW TO ONE-HALF...

ZERO-FOUR-ZERO
AND HALF THROTTLE...

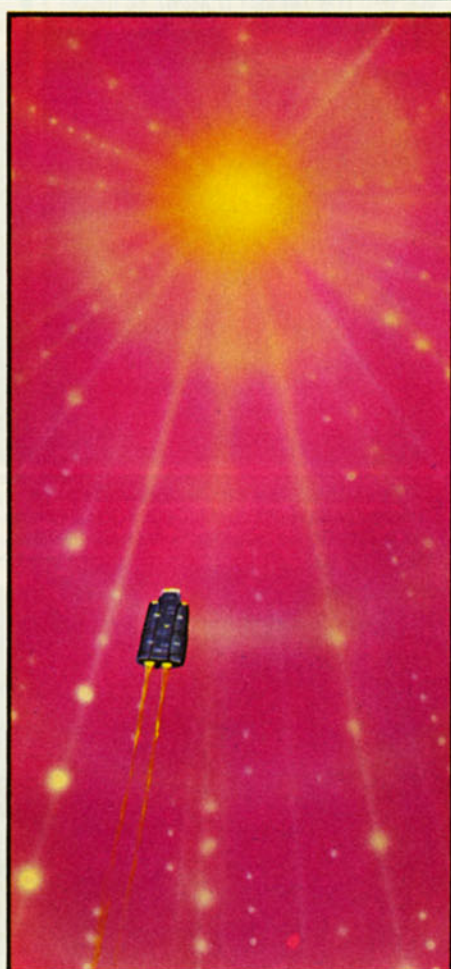
THERE'S A LARGE ENERGY DRAIN
DEAD AHEAD, SISYPHUS...

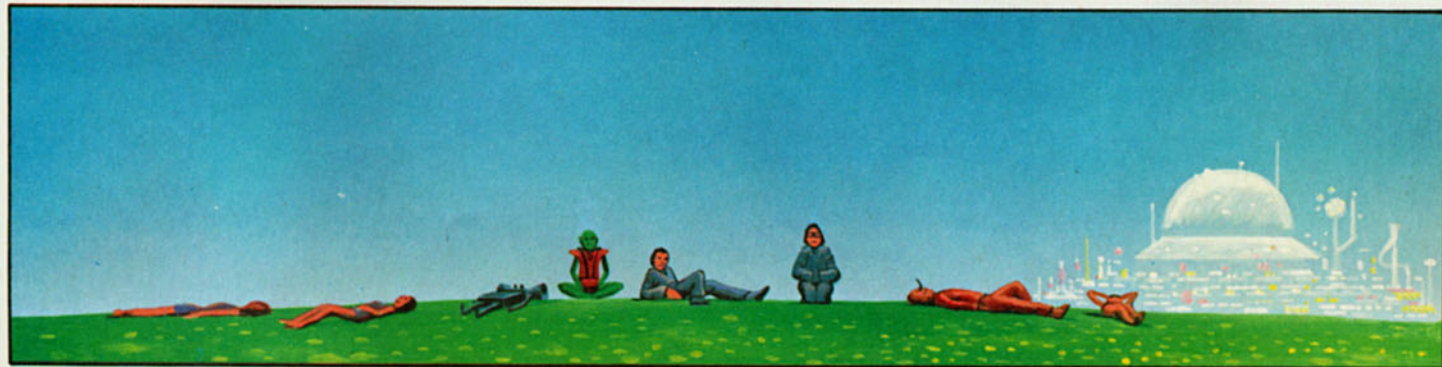
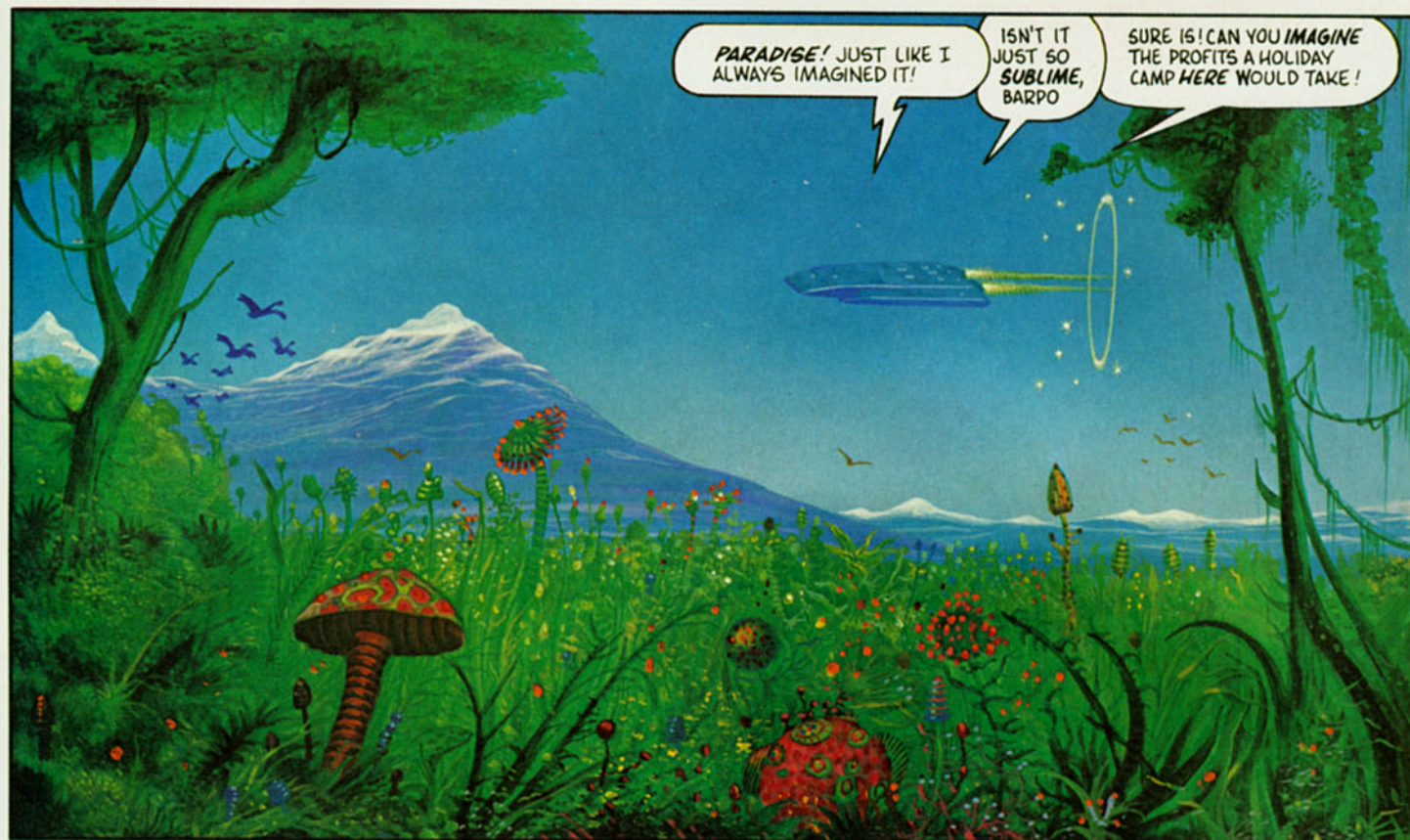


LOOK!
THE AMAZONS!
THE LEGENDARY
GUARDIANS
OF THE GATE...

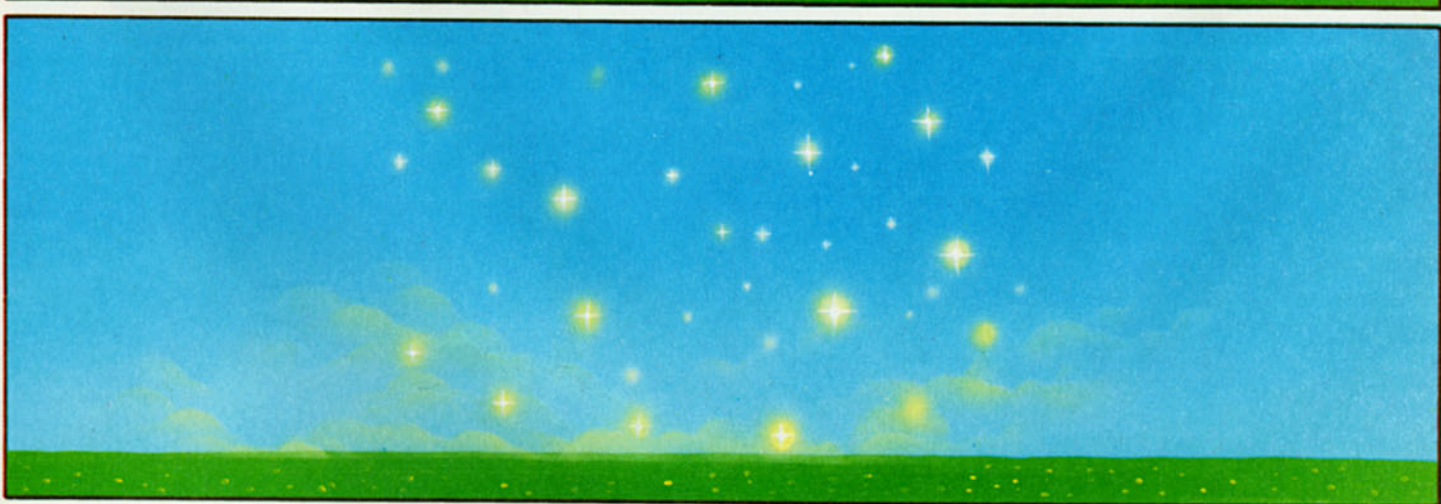
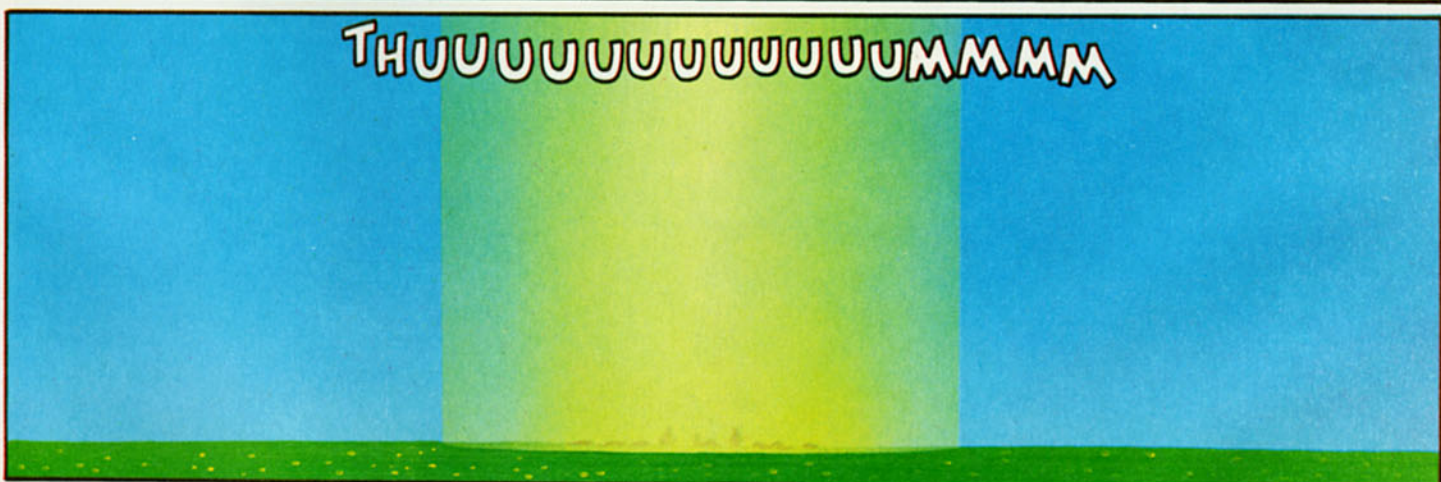
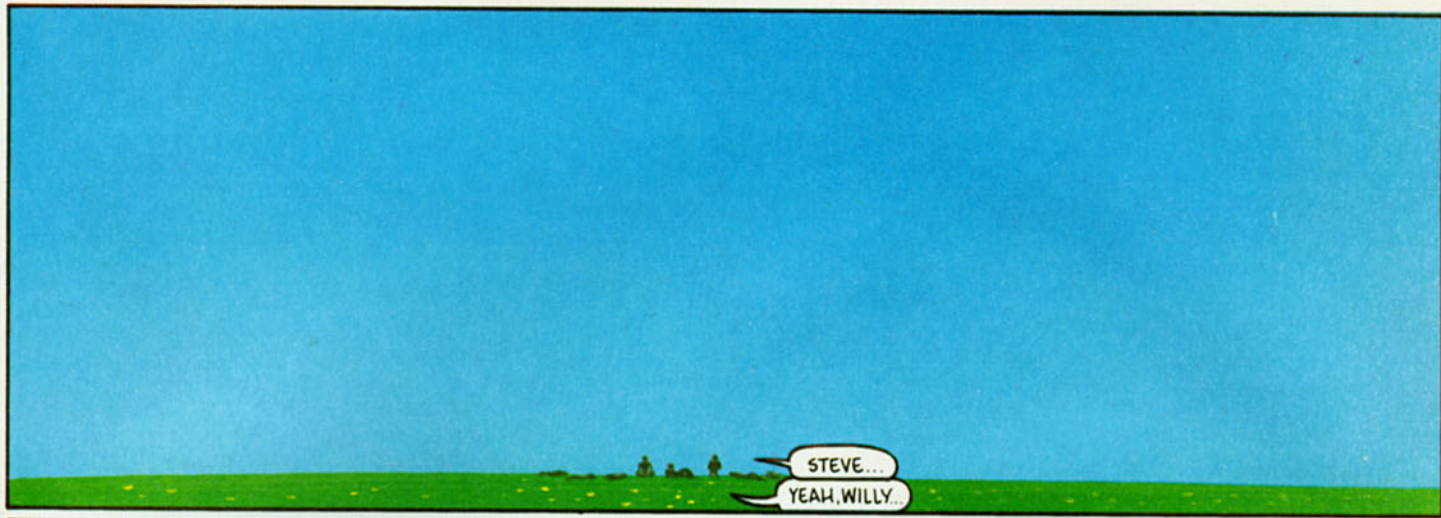


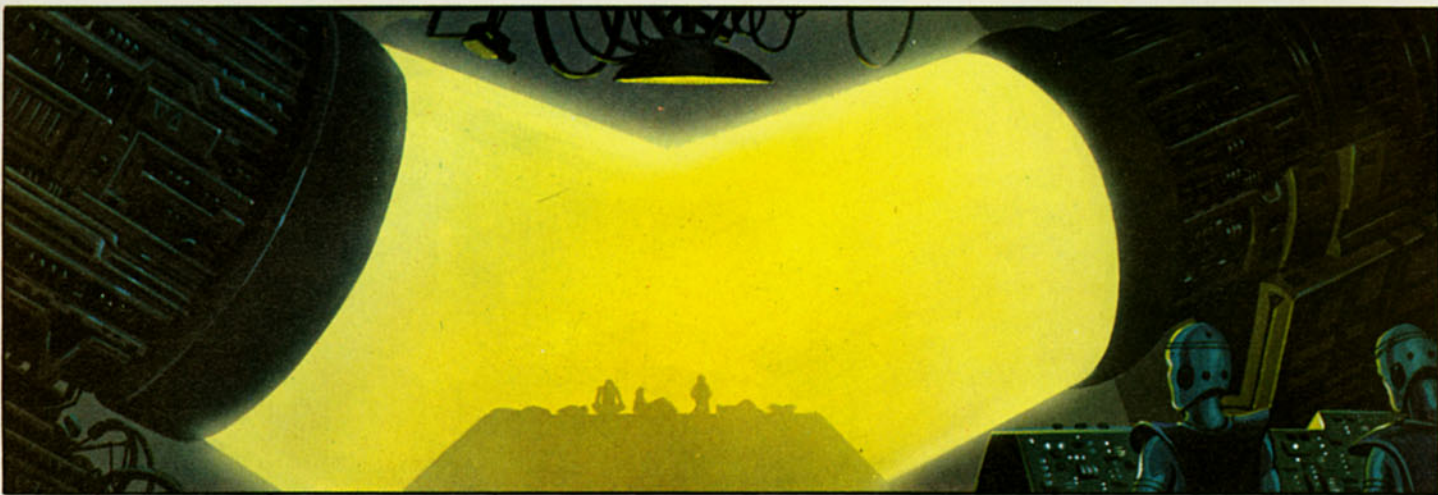
SOMEHOW, TITAN, I ALWAYS KNEW THAT
THE WAY TO PARADISE WOULD LIE
BETWEEN A WOMAN'S LEGS...











WELCOME HOME SOLARA... WHAT WIDE-EYED LITTLE FISHES HAVE YOU HOOKED FOR US *THIS* TIME...



I'VE GOT A HORRIBLE FEELING... LIKE I'VE JUST BEEN DRAGGED OUT OF A WARM BED ON A FROSTY MORNING.

SOB: MY BEAUTIFUL UTOPIA! *GONE!*



HA!HA!HA!...UTOPIA EXISTS, YES INDEED IT DOES, BUT IT IS ONLY FOR *THE ELITE*...

HOW *ELSE* CAN OUR CASTLES IN THE AIR BE SUPPORTED... BUT BY THE ENSLAVING OF *MILLIONS!*





PUT THE ROBOT AND THE
TWO ALIENS ON THE CHAIN
GANG...

...I'VE GOT A SPECIAL
TASK FOR THESE
TWO HUMANS.



OKAY... YOU, FOUR-EYES, HAVE TO CARRY
THOSE STONE BLOCKS OVER TO THERE...

AND YOU, BIG BOY, HAVE TO
CARRY THEM BACK AGAIN.

HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA!



JUMP TO IT! BY THE END OF THE SHIFT I
WANT TO SEE EVERY STONE THERE IN
EXACTLY THE SAME POSITION AS IT IS NOW!

HA HA
HA HA!



HEY, HEY MAN! WHAT'S THE SCORE? ONLY THE
SCUM GIT GENT DOWN HERE... THE DEGRAVED
AND CORRUPT... MASOCHISTS
BODOMITES, NECROPHILIACS...
I'M A PEDERAST... WHAT
YOU IN HERE FOR?..



HUH... IDEALISM...



YAAAA! IDEALISTS!
GASP! KEEP AWAY
EVERYBODY!

SHRIEK



OK, BREAK TIME!
Y'GOT A HALF-A-
CYCLE T'FEAST ON
THIS RARE DELICACY.

YOU EARTHMEN! ALWAYS CAUSING **TROUBLE!**
GET OVER THERE WITH YOUR OWN KIND...



...IN THE CORNER... WITH
DOBTOYEVSKY AND TOLSTOY!



!?

DRINK THIS,
MY SON

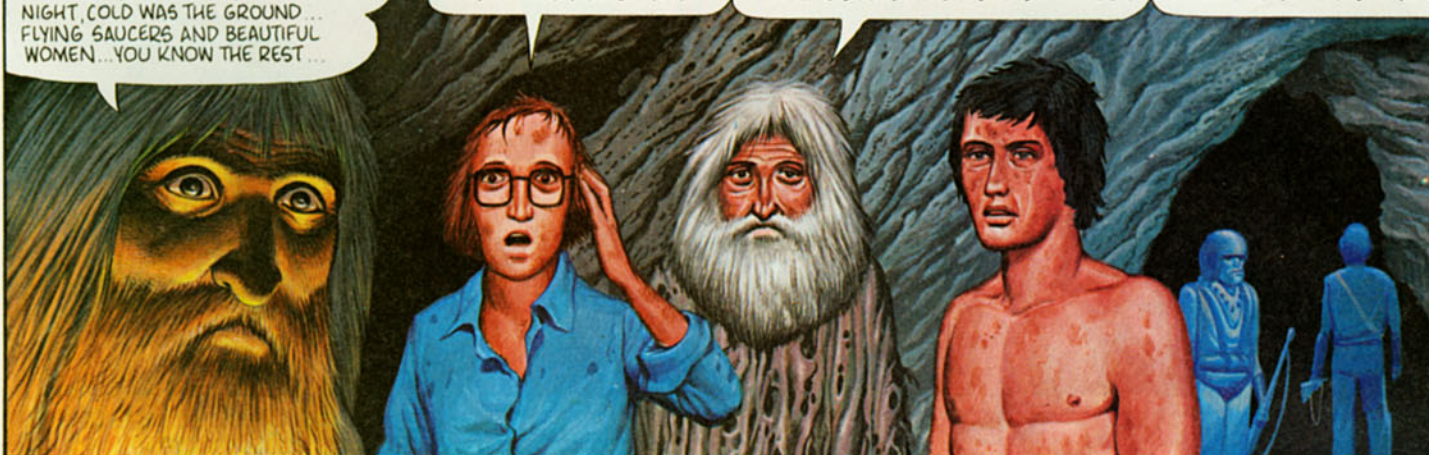


AND THAT WAS HOW IT WAS ALL FAKED...
IT WAS MUCH THE SAME WITH FYODOR
MIKHAILOVICH HERE... DARK WAS THE
NIGHT, COLD WAS THE GROUND...
FLYING SAUCERS AND BEAUTIFUL
WOMEN... YOU KNOW THE REST...

BUT... ER... SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE
DIED OF **OLD AGE** BY NOW?!

NO SUCH LUCK! THERE'S A MYSTERIOUS
QUALITY OF THE ATMOSPHERE HERE...
HUMAN LIFE IS EXTENDED **INDEFINITELY!**

SORRY BOYS BUT THERE'S
NO LIMIT TO THE AMOUNT
OF SUFFERING AHEAD OF YOU



BREAKTIME IS OVER,
GET BACK TO WORK!
YOU, BOY!
COME HERE!



YOU WERE **TWO MICROSECONDS** SLOW IN GETTING ON
YOUR FEET! WHAT DO YOU **MEAN** BY BEING TWO
MICROSECONDS SLOW?! YOU HUMAN BEINGS! YOU
REALLY GET ON MY NERVES... JUST BECAUSE YOU
WALK ERECT AND HAVE DEVELOPED SELF-CONSC-
IOUSNESS YOU THINK YOU'RE **IT**, DON'T YOU?
GODS GIFT TO THE **UNIVERSE!**



YOU THINK HAVING **RED** BLOOD MAKES YOU
THE TOPS... **GREEN** IS JUST NOT GOOD
ENOUGH FOR YOU, IS IT?! OH NO, IT HAS
TO BE **RED** AND WHAT'S MORE...
WARM TOO!! **YECCH!** YOU **HOMO**
SAPIENS... YOU MAKE ME **PUKE!**



MY GUT **WRETCHES** WHEN
I LAY SENSORS ON YOU!
AND YOU **KNOW**
WHAT ELSE ?!!



YOUR HEARTBEAT **ANNOYS** ME...



ER... SORRY



SORRY! SORRY!
AHA HA HA HA HA!
DID YOU HEAR THAT?

HE'S SORRY!



WHY YOU MISERABLE LITTLE TURD, IF YOU WERE REALLY
SORRY YOU'D DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT NOW,
WOULDN'T YOU?!



YOU JUST BETTER WATCH YOUR
STEP, YOU MANGY MAMMAL.
I'M GONNA BE LOOKIN' FOR YOU
FROM NOW ON!



HEY LORD, NOBODY KNOWS THE TROUBLE I SEEN...



OOOHH: MY ACHING BACK...
MY POOR ARMS, MY LEGS
MY FINGERS... MY
FINGERNAILS!

YOU'LL GET USED TO IT! PRETTY
SOON YOU'LL BE SO NUMB YOU
WON'T EVEN KNOW YOU'RE
IN PAIN...

THE DAYS WILL BLUR INTO WEEKS...
THE WEEKS INTO YEARS... THE YEARS,
CENTURIES... CENTURIES, MILLENNIA...
MILLENNIA, INFINITY... MUMBLE MUMBLE
GIGGLE BURP... THE DAYS WILL BLUR
INTO WEEKS... THE WEEKS INTO YEARS
THE YEARS, CENTURIES... CENTURIES, MILLENNIA...

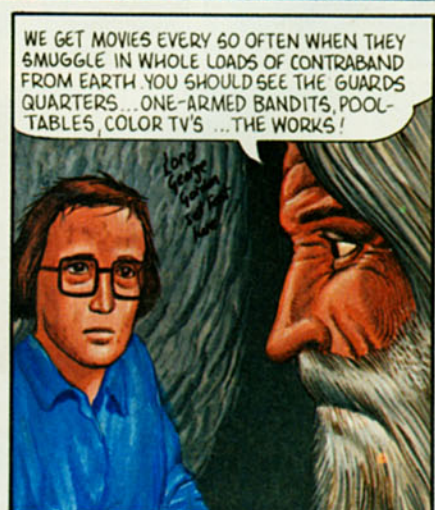
DON'T LET HIM BOTHER YOU, SURE, THINGS
ARE BAD BUT THEY COULD BE WORSE!
WE GET FILMS FROM EARTH
TWICE A WEEK.



LAST WEEK IT WAS *KINGS OF THE ROAD* BY WIM WENDERS
AND *THIS SPORTING LIFE* BY LINDSAY ANDERSON...
AND ALL NEXT MONTH WE'RE GETTING *KUROSAWA*
AND *MIZOGUCHI* FILMS.

ERIC ARTHUR
BLAIR WAS HERE
1984

AND I STILL REMEMBER THE TIME I FIRST
SAW *FIVE EASY PIECES*, WOW!... COULDN'T'VE
GOT THROUGH THE WEEK WITHOUT IT.



WE GET MOVIES EVERY 50 OFTEN WHEN THEY
SMUGGLE IN WHOLE LOADS OF CONTRABAND
FROM EARTH. YOU SHOULD SEE THE GUARDS
QUARTERS... ONE-ARMED BANDITS, POOL-
TABLES, COLOR TV'S... THE WORKS!



HEY! WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS?

AUTOMATIC DIGGERS AND LEVELLERS. THEIR COMPUTER CIRCUITS GIVE THEM A SORT OF RUDIMENTARY AWARENESS. THEY'RE ALWAYS PROTESTING ABOUT THE INFLUX OF HUMAN LABOUR... DON'T BLAME THEM MYSELF... ABOUT THIRTY YEARS B.E. THEY DID ALL THIS WORK.

B.E.? WHAT'S THAT?

BEFORE ENTROPY! ONCE UPON A TIME EVERYTHING IN THE GALAXY WAS HUNKY DORY... UNTIL SOME **SMART ASS** FIGURED OUT THE THERMODYNAMICS OF EXISTENCE... LISTEN EVERYBODY! YOU CAN ALL GET **OUT** MORE THAN YOU PUT **IN**...

THE **DUMB SHIT!** HE ONLY GOT **HALF** THE PICTURE OF COURSE

SURE... IT WAS POSSIBLE TO GET OUT MORE THAN YOU PUT IN... BUT ONLY FOR **SOME**... FOR **THE REST** IT WAS A CASE OF PUT IN **MORE** AND GET OUT **LESS**

SO NOW **WE** HAVE TO SPEND OUR LIVES DOWN HERE MINING FOSSIL FUELS SO **THOSE** FUCKERS UP THERE CAN HAVE THEIR CAKE AND EAT IT...

DON'T THEY **KNOW** THERE'S ONLY **SO** MUCH ENERGY THAT'S AVAILABLE FOR WORK?

IDIOT! OF COURSE THEY KNOW! WHY DO YOU THINK THESE GORILLAS ARE WALKING AROUND WITH TRUNCHEONS AND DEATH RAYS?!

IT'S AN IRRATIONAL FEAR OF THE MOB, MATE. AN IRRATIONAL FEAR OF THE MOB!

WELL, WELL, WELL... IT'S OUR LITTLE FRIEND WITH THE HEARTBEAT... DISCUSSING **ENTROPOLITICS!**... A **FORBIDDEN** SUBJECT!!

THIS TIME YOUR IN **TROUBLE** BOY! COME HERE!



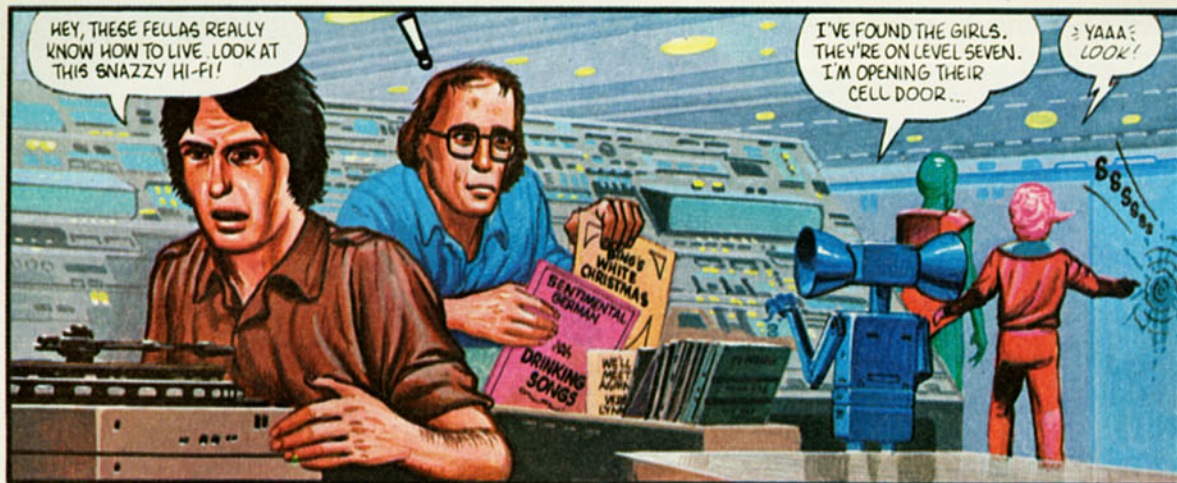
THEY'RE IN CORRIDOR SIXTEEN SUB-SYSTEM FOUR... LOCKED THEMSELVES IN THE GUARDS MESS-ROOM COMMANDER

OKAY... BURN YOUR WAY IN.

WHY DON'T THEY JUST SURRENDER. **WE ALL** HAVE TO **COMPROMISE** DON'T WE?

LET ME **AT** 'EM! I'LL **RIP** THEIR THROATS OUT AND **DRINK** THEIR BLOOD?





HEY, THESE FELLAS REALLY KNOW HOW TO LIVE. LOOK AT THIS SNAZZY HI-FI!

I'VE FOUND THE GIRLS. THEY'RE ON LEVEL SEVEN. I'M OPENING THEIR CELL DOOR...

YAAA! LOOK!



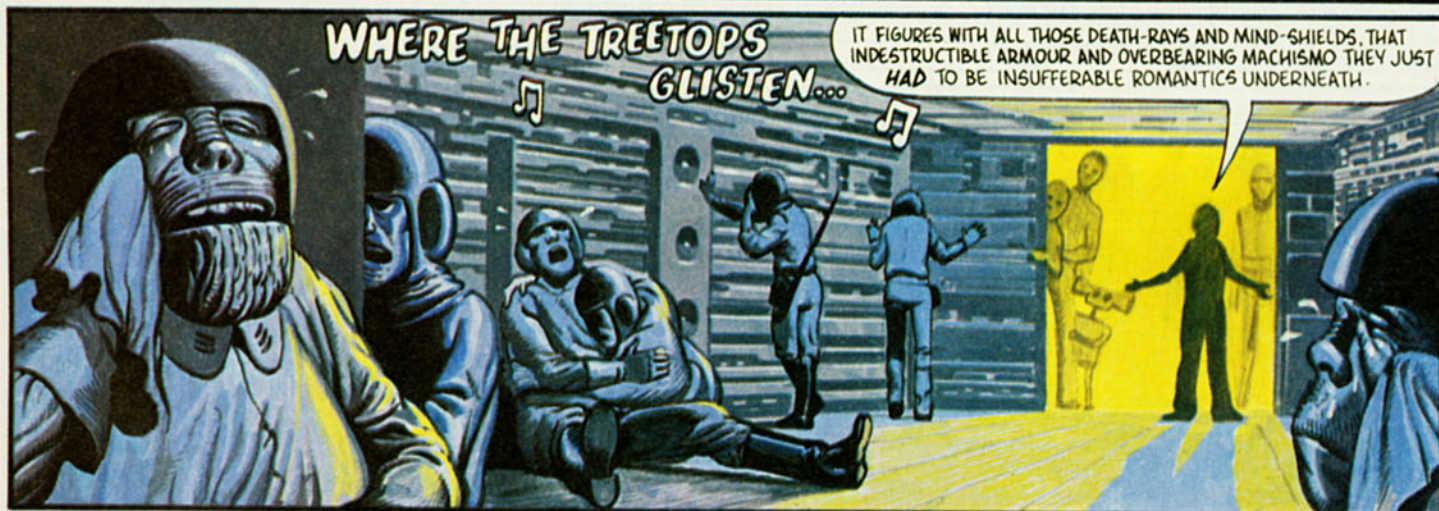
CALM DOWN. I'VE GOT AN IDEA.



HEY! THEY'RE PLAYING OUR TUNE!

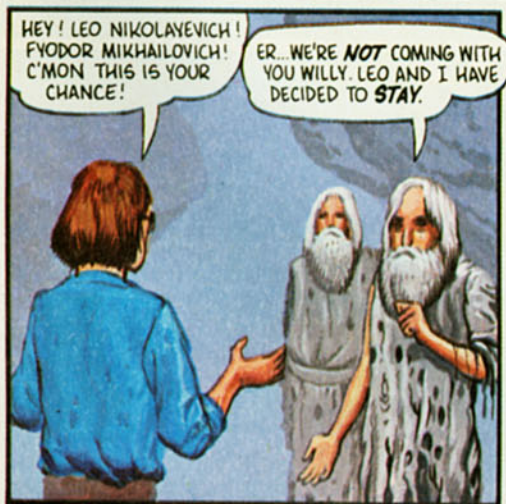
I'M DREAMING OF A WHIIITE CHRISTMAS

SOB: THAT SONG REALLY BREAKS ME UP!



WHERE THE TREETOPS GLISTEN...

IT FIGURES WITH ALL THOSE DEATH-RAYS AND MIND-SHIELDS, THAT INDESTRUCTIBLE ARMOUR AND OVERBEARING MACHISMO THEY JUST HAD TO BE INSUFFERABLE ROMANTICS UNDERNEATH.



HEY! LEO NIKOLAYEVICH! FYODOR MIKHAILOVICH! C'MON THIS IS YOUR CHANCE!

ER... WE'RE **NOT** COMING WITH YOU WILLY. LEO AND I HAVE DECIDED TO **STAY**.



STAY! I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK I'M GAUCHE IF I ASK **WHY?**



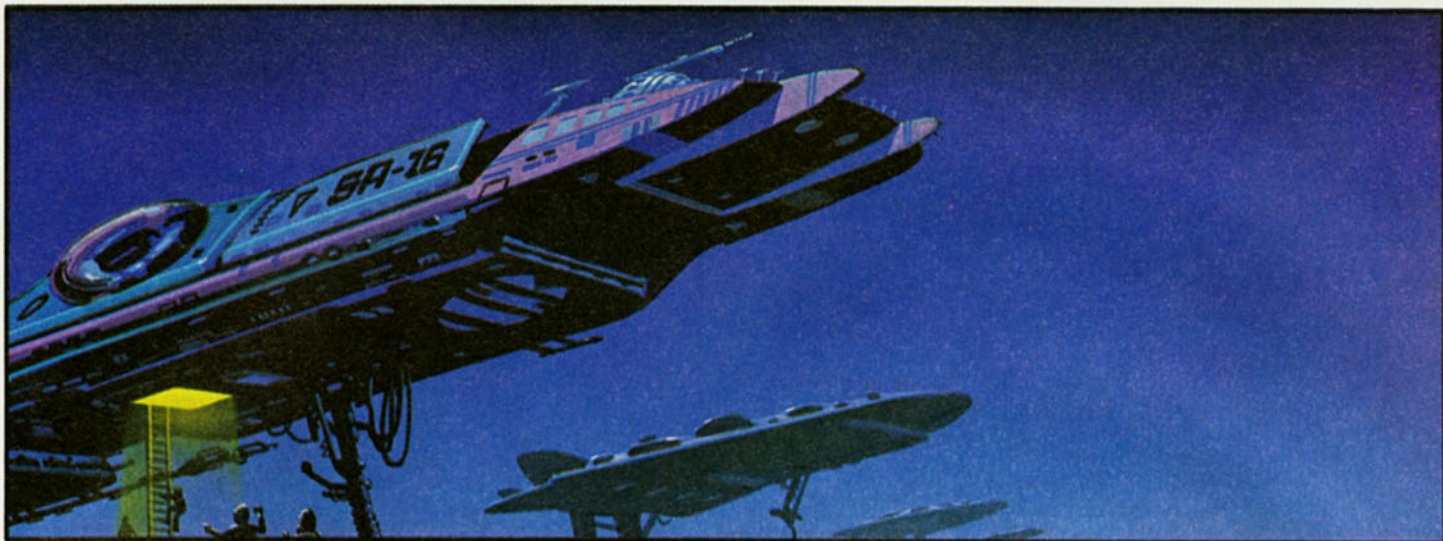
THAT'S A SIMPLE QUESTION TO ASK, WILLY, AND A VERY DIFFICULT ONE TO ANSWER. TELL HIM FYODOR ...

ECCE PALINURE! 'THE GOOD THAT I WOULD... I DO NOT, BUT THE EVIL WHICH I WOULD NOT, THAT I DO... ROMANS CHAPTER SEVEN, VERSE NINETEEN.



THERE'S... UH... NO **ANSWER** TO THAT, IS THERE...?

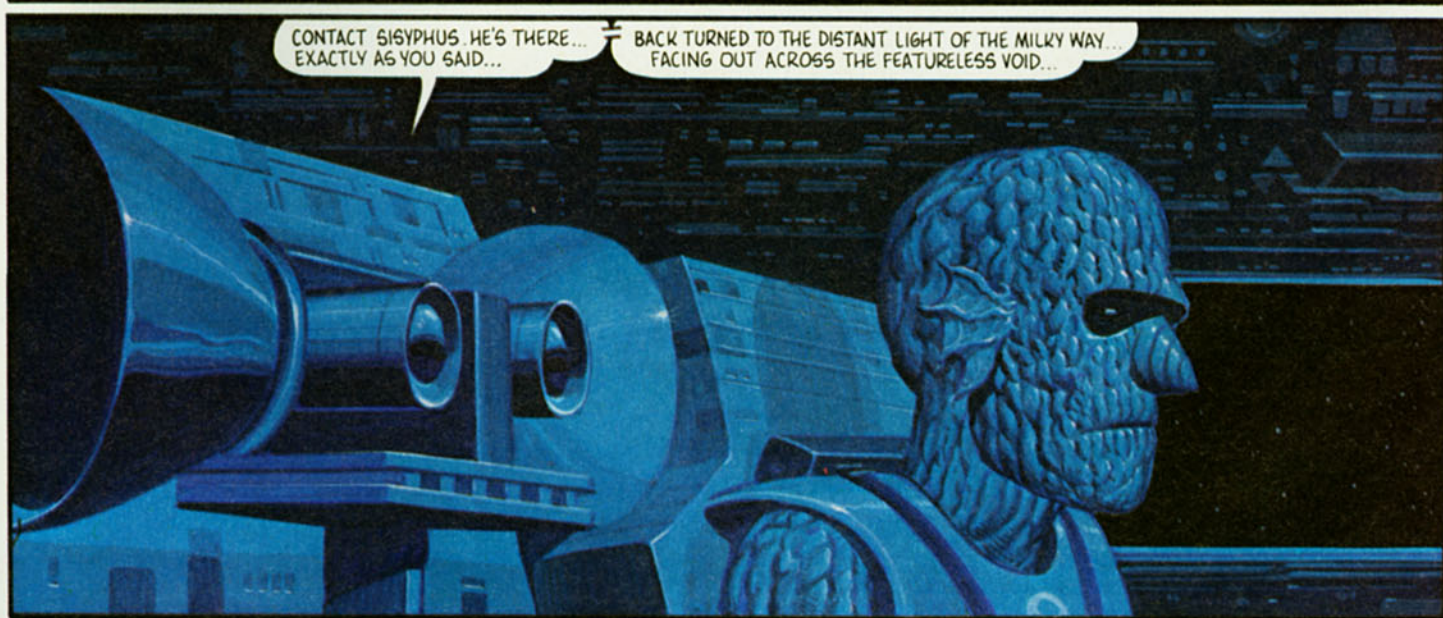
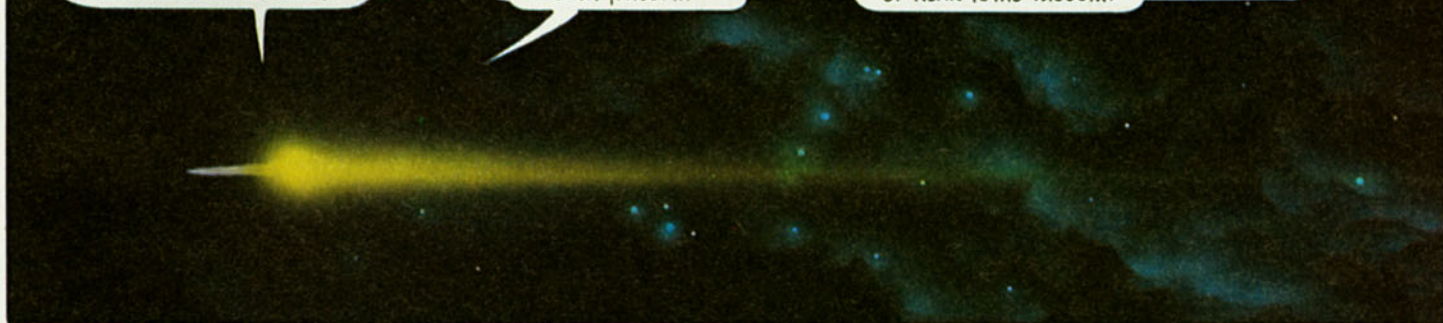
WELL, GOOD LUCK AS LONG AS YOU CAN KEEP IT ALL TOGETHER YOU'RE WINNING, I SUPPOSE.



TITAN...WHY HAS IT BEEN GETTING **DARKER** FOR THE LAST FEW HOURS?

WE'RE AT THE VERY **EDGE** OF THE GALAXY, WILLY...

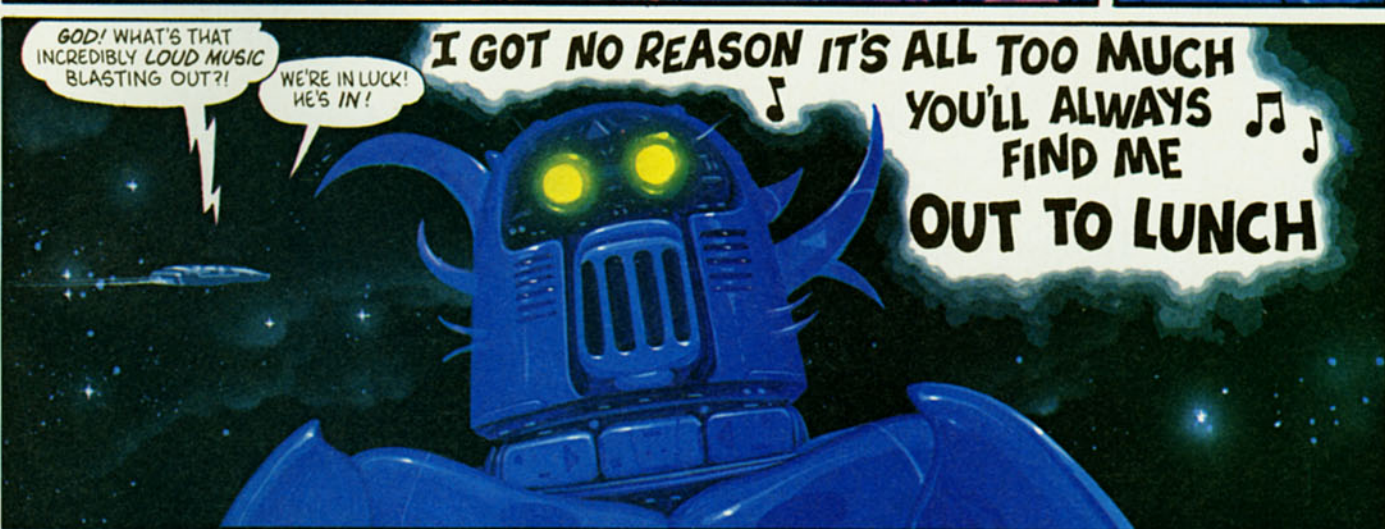
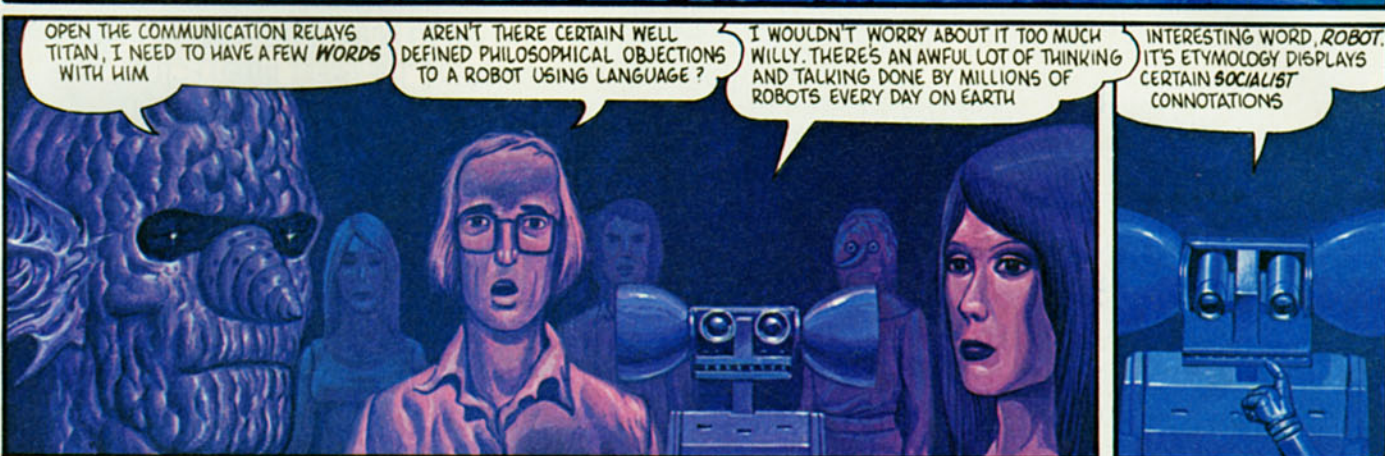
JUST AHEAD OF US THERE'S A **BILLION** LIGHT-YEARS OF NEAR TOTAL VACUUM.



CONTACT SISYPHUS. HE'S THERE... EXACTLY AS YOU SAID...

BACK TURNED TO THE DISTANT LIGHT OF THE MILKY WAY... FACING OUT ACROSS THE FEATURELESS VOID...



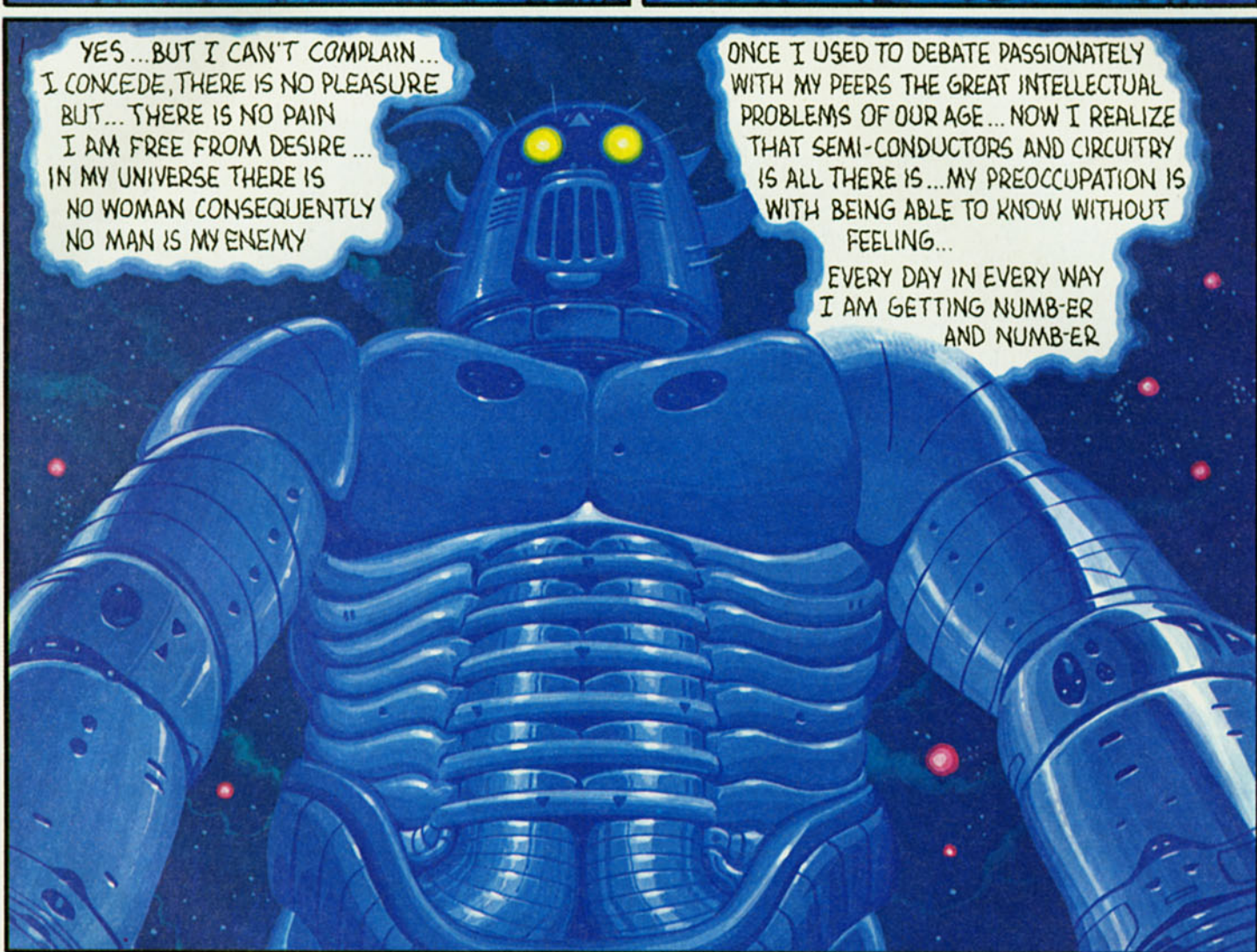




YES...BUT I CAN'T COMPLAIN...
I CONCEDE, THERE IS NO PLEASURE
BUT... THERE IS NO PAIN
I AM FREE FROM DESIRE...
IN MY UNIVERSE THERE IS
NO WOMAN CONSEQUENTLY
NO MAN IS MY ENEMY

ONCE I USED TO DEBATE PASSIONATELY
WITH MY PEERS THE GREAT INTELLECTUAL
PROBLEMS OF OUR AGE... NOW I REALIZE
THAT SEMI-CONDUCTORS AND CIRCUITRY
IS ALL THERE IS...MY PREOCCUPATION IS
WITH BEING ABLE TO KNOW WITHOUT
FEELING...

EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY
I AM GETTING NUMBER
AND NUMBER



I PERCEIVE YOU ARE SELF-CONSCIOUS ENTITIES
HOW CAN YOU STAND IT! YOU ARE OUT THERE
IN THE FEARFUL REALM OF EXISTENCE! WHY
DO YOU NOT SCREAM...BECOME NAUSEOUS
ARE YOU NOT AWARE OF THE WISE
OLD SAYING...

...IN ORDER TO ACT WISELY
IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE WISE



DOES THIS THOUGHT NOT FILL YOU WITH **TERROR**
YOU ARE AT THE **MERCY** OF THE ELEMENTS
YOU POSSESS **ONLY** WHAT WILL NOT BE LOST
IN A **SHIPWRECK** ... AND THE **REEFS** ARE
ALL AROUND YOU ... AND...

YOUR PARENTS HAVE NOT TAUGHT YOU
HOW TO SWIM



WHAT'S HE ON ABOUT, MY
PARENTS TAUGHT ME

WOW! THAT GUY SOUNDS LIKE A
BORN PESSIMIST



LISTEN YOU **WHINER** OPTIMISM AND
SELF-PITY ARE POLES OF COWARDICE



GREETINGS
FELLOW COWARD

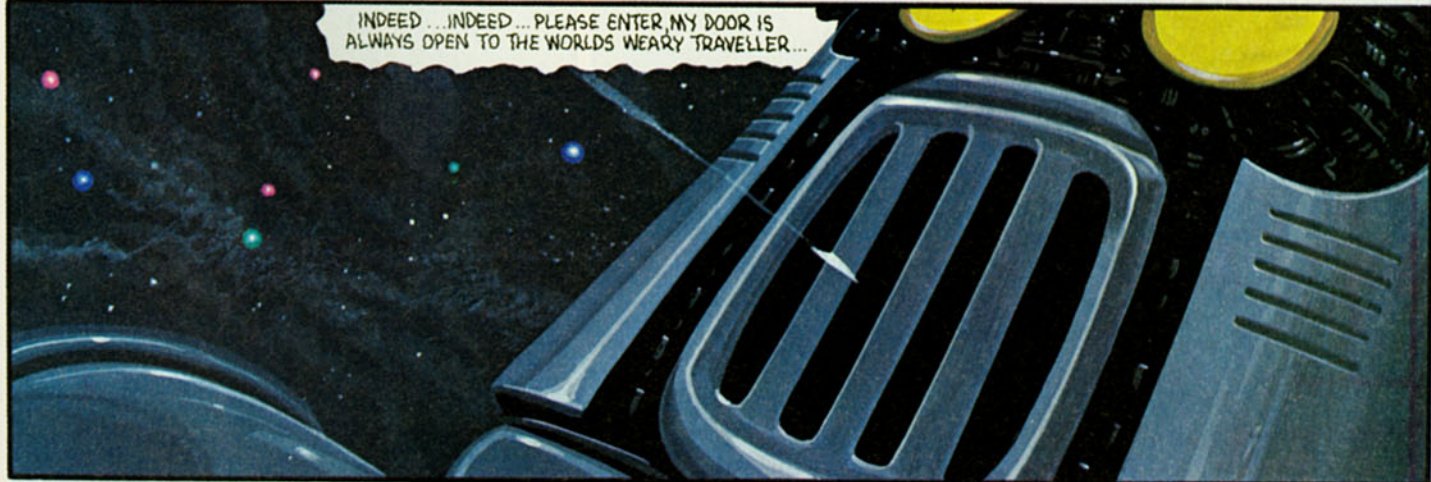


SISYPHUS HERE ... YOU REMEMBER ME? A THOUSAND YEARS
AGO I LEFT SOMETHING HERE ... SORRY I'M LATE BUT I
GOT DELAYED SOMEWHAT ...
BY ABOUT SEVEN CENTURIES

WELL ... YOU **KNOW**
HOW THINGS ARE ...

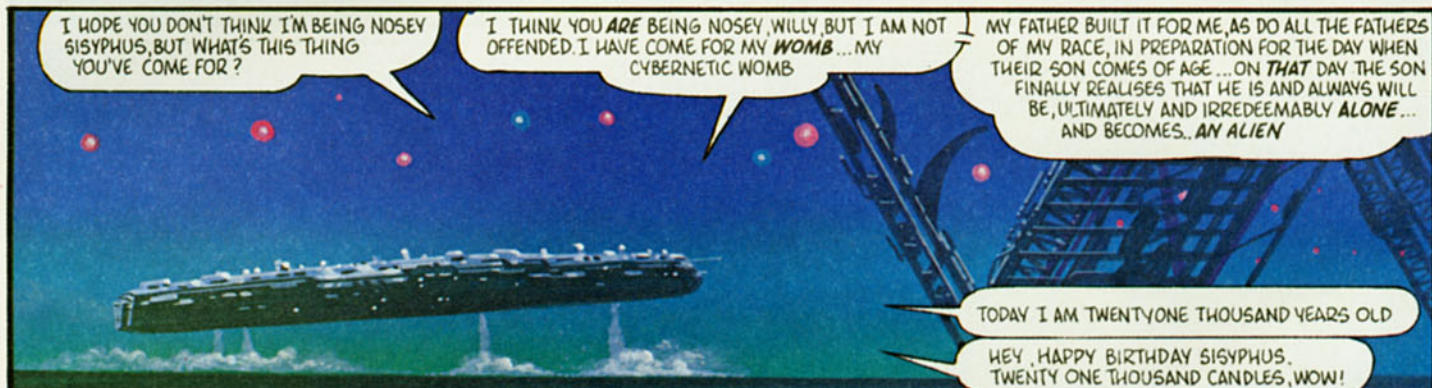


INDEED ... INDEED ... PLEASE ENTER, MY DOOR IS
ALWAYS OPEN TO THE WORLD'S WEARY TRAVELLER ...





THERE'S SOME FUNNY THINGS GOING ON INSIDE THIS GUY'S HEAD



I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK I'M BEING NOSEY SISYPHUS, BUT WHAT'S THIS THING YOU'VE COME FOR?

I THINK YOU ARE BEING NOSEY, WILLY, BUT I AM NOT OFFENDED. I HAVE COME FOR MY WOMB... MY CYBERNETIC WOMB

MY FATHER BUILT IT FOR ME, AS DO ALL THE FATHERS OF MY RACE, IN PREPARATION FOR THE DAY WHEN THEIR SON COMES OF AGE... ON THAT DAY THE SON FINALLY REALISES THAT HE IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE, ULTIMATELY AND IRREDEEMABLY ALONE... AND BECOMES... AN ALIEN

TODAY I AM TWENTYONE THOUSAND YEARS OLD

HEY, HAPPY BIRTHDAY SISYPHUS. TWENTY ONE THOUSAND CANDLES, WOW!



TODAY IS THE BEGINNING OF MY LONG EXILE

ISN'T SOLITUDE RATHER IMPRACTICAL

SOLITUDE, WILLY, IS IMPRACTICAL BUT SOCIETY IS FATAL

MEN WOULD NOT LIVE IN SOCIETY LONG IF THEY WERE NOT EACH OTHERS DUPES



HERE'S A TIP WILLY, ALWAYS REMEMBER WHAT KIERKEGAARD ONCE SAID... LIFE MUST BE LIVED FORWARDS AND UNDERSTOOD BACKWARDS

OH, GEE... ER THANKS

LOOK!



A VAST
CONTROL
ROOM

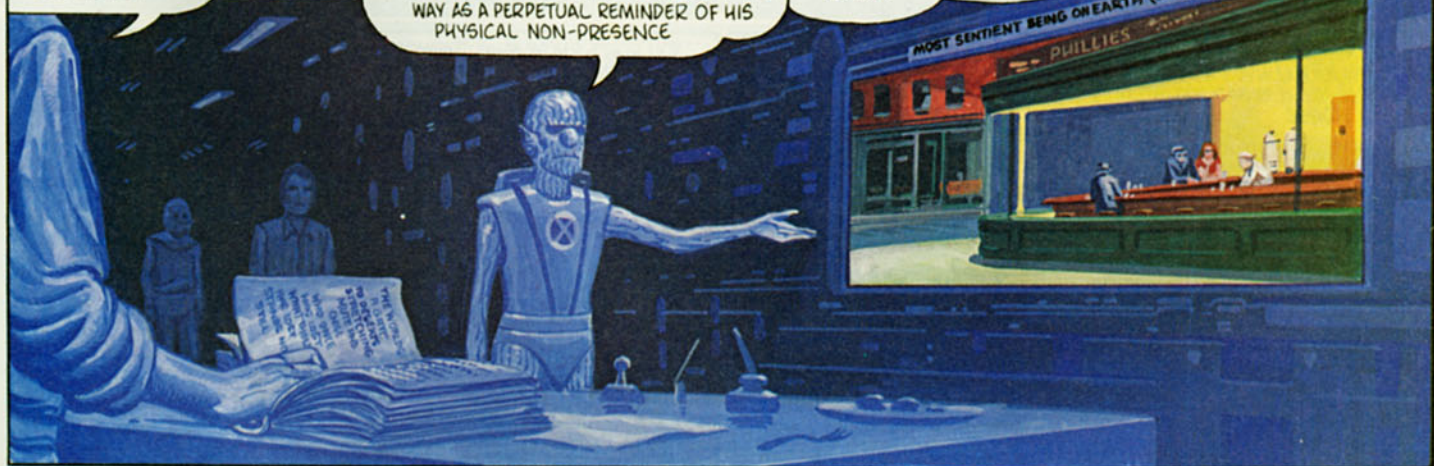
THE BRAIN, INFORMATION
POURING IN FROM EVERY
CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE

AND NOBODY
HERE TO
MAKE SENSE
OF IT

A MEAL HALF EATEN! A WARM CHAIR
AN OPEN BOOK...AN UNFINISHED
LETTER...?

EVERYTHING IS EXACTLY AS IT WAS WHEN
HE DEMATERIALIZED AND BECAME THE
GHOST IN THE MACHINE. HE KEEPS IT THIS
WAY AS A PERPETUAL REMINDER OF HIS
PHYSICAL NON-PRESENCE

THIS IS A SOUVENIR OF HIS
LEGENDARY VISIT TO
EARTH



YOU ARE FROM EARTH! IF YOU EVER COME BACK THIS WAY AGAIN PLEASE BRING ME A COPY OF HUGO'S THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTREDAME IT IS MY FAVORITE BOOK IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE

THE ONE REMAINS, THE MANY CHANGE AND PASS; HEAVEN'S LIGHT FOREVER SHINES, EARTH'S SHADOWS FLY; LIFE, LIKE A DOME OF MANY COLOURED GLASS, STAINS THE WHITE RADIANCE OF ETERNITY

OH OH, HE'S FADING AWAY, HE CAN'T MAINTAIN COHERENCE FOR VERY LONG. HE ALWAYS RECITES SHELLEY OR SHAKESPEARE JUST BEFORE HE LOSES IT ALL



Y'SEE! YOU'RE SO GODDAM FUCKING SECURE THAT YOU'RE IMMUNE TO CRITICISM. YOU CAN AFFORD TO JOKE ABOUT IT ALL

WELL **YOU'RE** ALWAYS JOKING ABOUT IT

NOW YOU'RE JUST SHOWING YOUR IGNORANCE STEVE STEREOTYPE I **NEVER** JOKE

IT JUST SOUNDS FUNNY TO YOU 'COS YOU THINK **LIFE** IS ONE BIG JOKE

PLEASE GENTLEMEN! I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOU **BOTH**. LIFE SEEMS LIKE A JOKE TO ME BUT A JOKE IN SOMEWHAT **QUESTIONABLE** TASTE



SOUR GRAPES YOU'VE JUST GOT THAT FEELING 'COS **YOU'RE** THE ONE THE JOKE IS ON

NOW THERE'S A WINNER TALKING

LIFE TO ME IS LIKE A CHILDISH PRANK SOMEWHAT BENEATH THE DIGNITY OF A GOD. IMAGINE BEING GIVEN A BEAUTIFUL PRESENT... A BOOK OR A TOY... BUT THE BOOK IS A DETECTIVE STORY WITH THE LAST PAGE TORN OUT, THE TOY IS A JIG-SAW PUZZLE WITH ONE PIECE MISCHIEVOUSLY MISSING

ONE FEELS RATHER FOOLISH AND SILLY... YOU HAVE THIS IMAGE OF YOURSELF AS A MATURE INDIVIDUAL BUT ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS GET YOUR OWN BACK ON THIS INFANTILE-MINDED CREATURE

IN SHORT... I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN **POSSIBLY** CONCEIVE OF GOD AS A LEVELHEADED, FREETHINKING, RESPONSIBLE ADULT



AND **SO**... EVEN THOUGH I'VE TRIED FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS NOT TO LOWER MYSELF TO HIS LEVEL...

IF I **EVER** MEET THE SPITEFUL LITTLE BASTARD...



I'LL **RAM** HIS TEDDY BEAR DOWN HIS FUCKING THROAT!



AHEM! NOW, IF YOU'LL JUST EXCUSE ME, I'LL CLIMB BACK INTO MY WOMB AND BE GONE



AU REVOIR I'M GOING TO SEARCH THE UNIVERSE TO SEE IF I CAN FIND MY SENSE OF HUMOUR



THAT'S THE FIRST TIME IN TEN THOUSAND YEARS I'VE SEEN SISYPHUS SHOUT

IT HAPPENS TO US ALL SOONER OR LATER TITAN

WELL, WHERE TO NEXT?

WHO CARES IT'S THE **GOING** THAT COUNTS

OKAY WE'LL GO TO SIRIUS THEN, I'VE ALWAYS FANCIED...

ANYWHERE, BUT SIRIUS

SORRY I BLEW UP BEFORE, STEVE I GUESS IT'S NOT **YOUR** FAULT YOU'RE TALL DARK AND HANDSOME

WE MUST **ALL** SHARE THE BLAME FOR THAT



O GOD! I COULD BE BOUNDED IN A NUTSHELL,
AND COUNT MYSELF A KING OF INFINITE SPACE,
WERE IT NOT THAT I HAVE BAD DREAMS



TURN THE MUSIC UP
LOUD

I CAN'T GET NO



SATISFACTION

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE: THAT IS THE QUESTION:
WHETHER 'TIS NOBLER IN THE MIND TO SUFFER
THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE,
OR TO TAKE ARMS AGAINST A SEA OF TROUBLES,
AND BY OPPOSING END THEM? TO DIE: TO SLEEP;
NO MORE; AND BY A SLEEP TO SAY 'WE END
THE HEARTACHE AND THE THOUSAND NATURAL SHOCKS
THAT FLESH IS HEIR TO, 'TIS A CONSUMMATION!
DEVOUTLY TO BE WISH'D.

THE BEGINNING,
THE MIDDLE
AND THE END