

The Ballad of

HALO JONES

Volume 3



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Published by Rebellion, Riverside House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, UK
www.rebellion.co.uk

ISBN: 978-1-78108-637-7

Printed in the UK
Manufactured in the EU by Stanton Book Services,
Wellingborough NN8 3PJ, UK.

1st Printing: June 2018

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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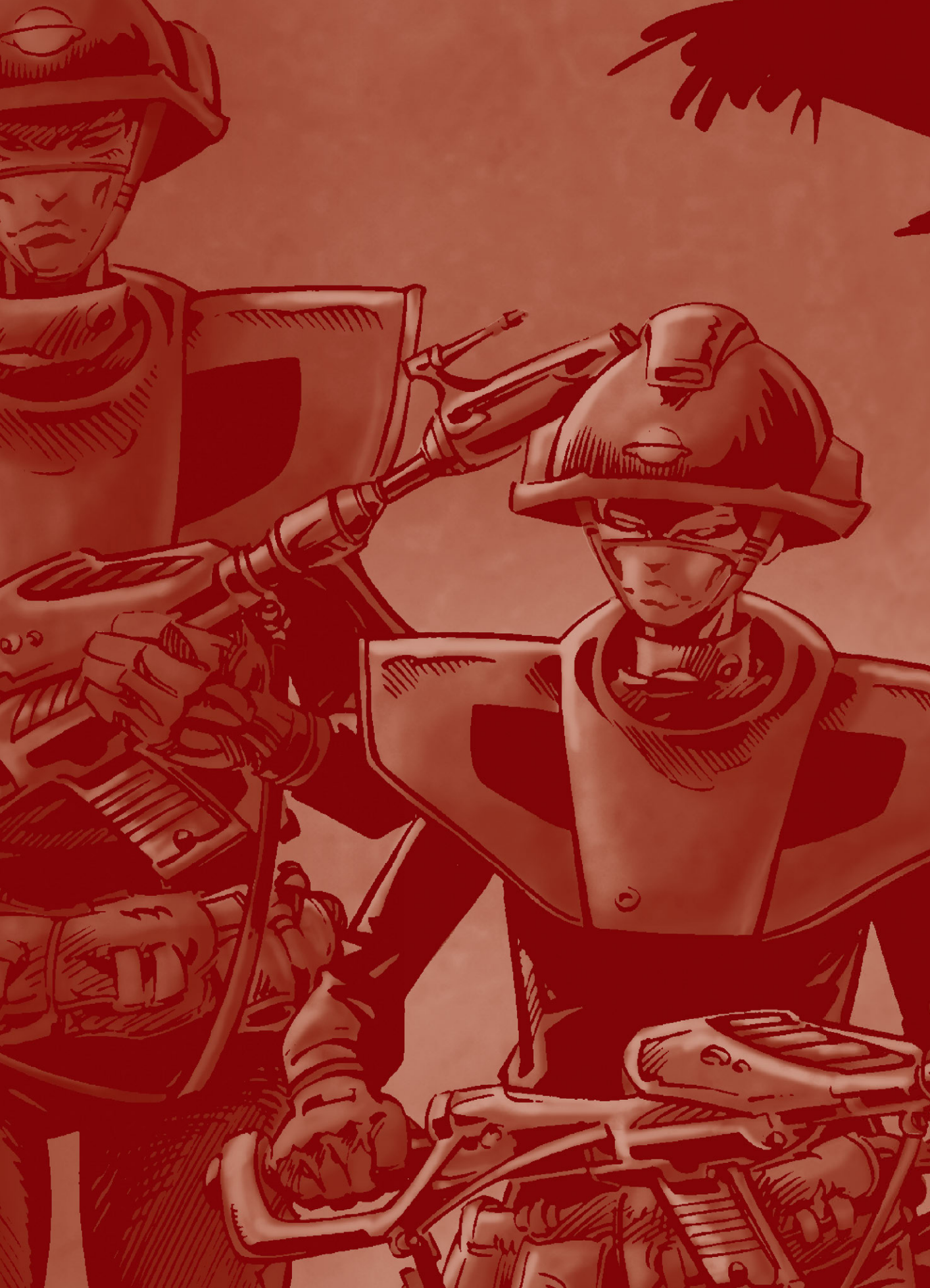
“exponentially cooler than knock-offs like *Tank Girl*, mostly because she remains a fed-up real person amid the wild space opera of her universe”
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HALO

JONES

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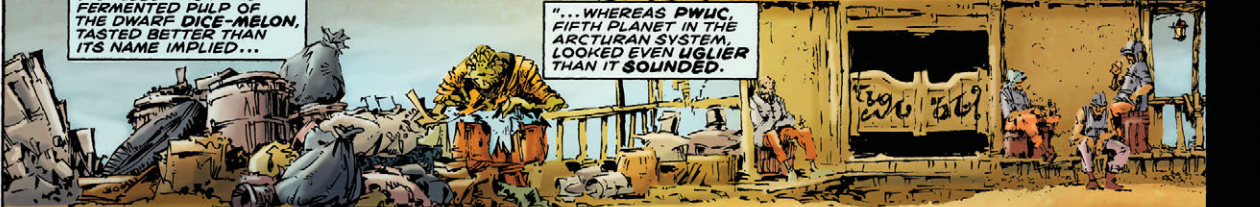
"ON PWUC, THE CATSBLOOD NEVER RAN DRY."



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SCRIPT: ROBOT
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"CATSBLOOD, ACTUALLY DISTILLED FROM THE FERMENTED PULP OF THE DWARF DICE-MELON, TASTED BETTER THAN ITS NAME IMPLIED..."

"...WHEREAS PWUC, FIFTH PLANET IN THE ARCTURAN SYSTEM, LOOKED EVEN UGLIER THAN IT SOUNDED."



"ONCE A PROSPEROUS SPACEPORT, PWUC BEGAN TO ROT WHEN NEW SHIPPING LANES OPENED UP, BYPASSING IT COMPLETELY."

"IT BECAME A GHOSTWORLD, WHERE MEN WITH BOARDED-UP EYES LOITERED OUTSIDE THE BOARDED-UP SOUVENIR SHOPS."



"UNDER OPPRESSIVE GUNMETAL SKIES THE PLANET WAITED MOROSELY FOR DEATH. IT WAS NOT A WORLD THAT PEOPLE WENT TO. IT WAS A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE ENDED UP."

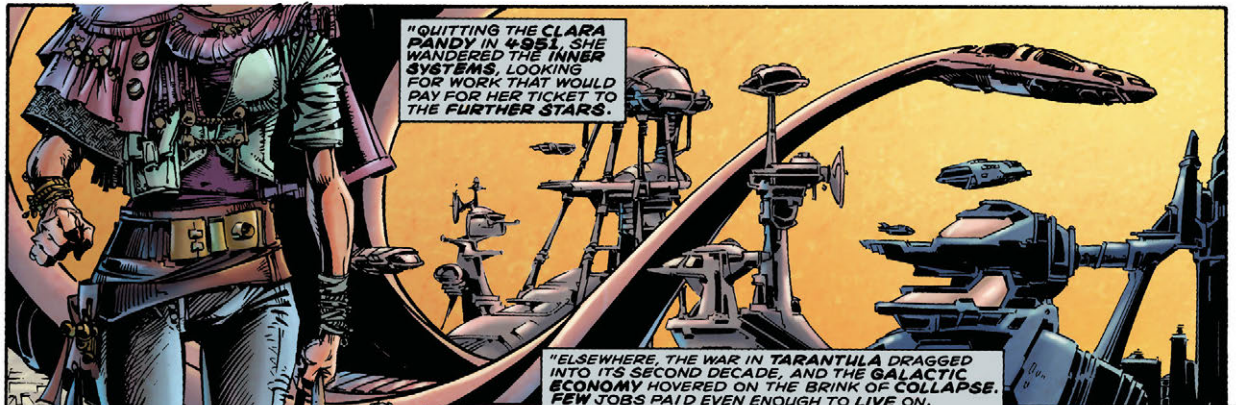


"IN 4960, HALO JONES ENDED UP ON PWUC."

The Ballad Of **PROLOGUE**

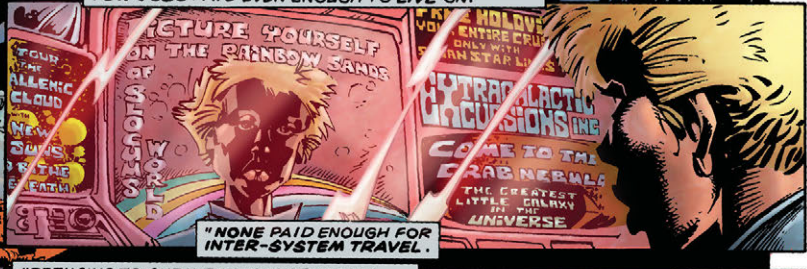
HALO JONES



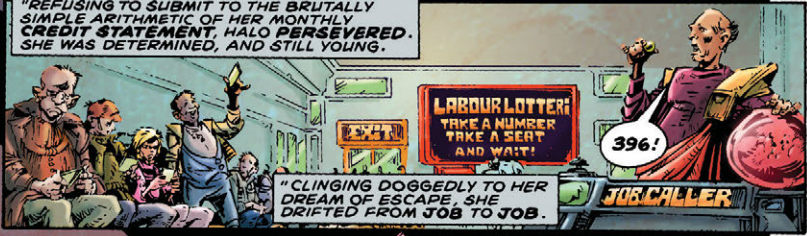


"QUITTING THE CLARA PANDY IN 4951, SHE WANDERED THE INNER SYSTEMS, LOOKING FOR WORK THAT WOULD PAY FOR HER TICKET TO THE FURTHER STARS."

"ELSEWHERE, THE WAR IN TARANTULA DRAGGED INTO ITS SECOND DECADE, AND THE GALACTIC ECONOMY HOVERED ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE. FEW JOBS PAID EVEN ENOUGH TO LIVE ON."



"NONE PAID ENOUGH FOR INTER-SYSTEM TRAVEL."



"REFUSING TO SUBMIT TO THE BRUTALLY SIMPLE ARITHMETIC OF HER MONTHLY CREDIT STATEMENT, HALO PERSEVERED. SHE WAS DETERMINED, AND STILL YOUNG."

"CLINGING DOGBEDDLY TO HER DREAM OF ESCAPE, SHE DRIFTED FROM JOB TO JOB."



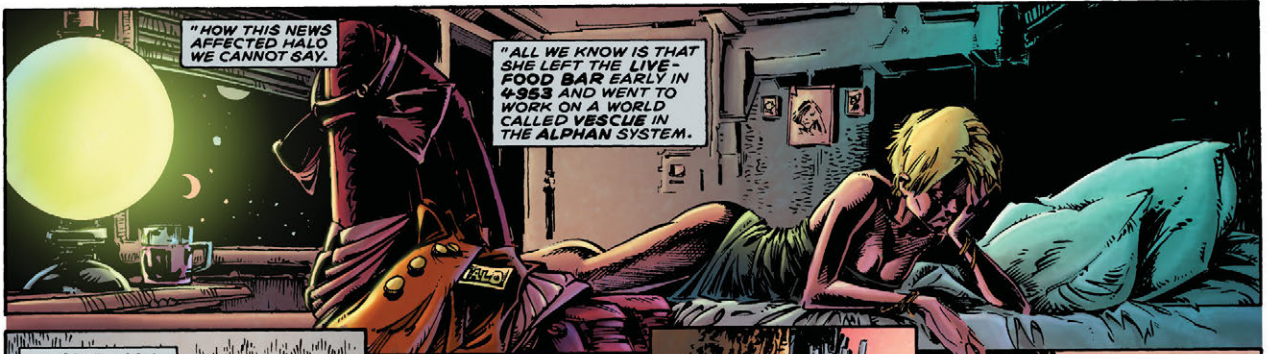
"DURING 4952, SURVIVING RECORDS INDICATE THAT SHE WORKED IN A LIVEFOOD BAR ON PROXIMA IV."

"PRESUMABLY, HALO WAS THUS EMPLOYED WHEN SHE LEARNED OF THE SLAUGHTER BACK ON EARTH."



"IT BECAME KNOWN AS THE RED WEDNESDAY MASSACRE."

"ENRAGED BY A MINOR INCIDENT, TWO THOUSAND MEMBERS OF THE MANHATTAN RESIDENTS' PROTECTION ARMY HAD STORMED THE HOOP ARMED WITH ELECTROFLAILS AND BUNT-GUNS."



"HOW THIS NEWS AFFECTED HALO WE CANNOT SAY.

"ALL WE KNOW IS THAT SHE LEFT THE LIVE-FOOD BAR EARLY IN 4-953 AND WENT TO WORK ON A WORLD CALLED VESQUE IN THE ALPHAN SYSTEM.



"VESQUE WAS A WOODWORLD, BLANKETED IN FORESTS FROM POLE TO POLE, SAVE FOR THE UGLY HOLES THAT TIMBER COMPANIES HAD EATEN INTO ITS GREEN QUILT OVER THE CENTURIES.



"NEVER HAVING SEEN ANY TREES ON EARTH, HALO JONES MUST HAVE BEEN DOUBLY UNPREPARED FOR HER JOB LEVELLING THE TUNGLES OF VESQUE.

"ON VESQUE, THE TREES HAD FACES. AND THEY SCREAMED.



"WHILE NOT INTELLIGENT, THE TREES HAD LEARNED A SURVIVAL TRICK OVER THE CENTURIES OF THEIR ABUSE BY MANKIND.

"FIRSTLY, THEY'D LEARNED HOW TO FORM THEIR BARK INTO A RECOGNIZABLE PARODY OF A HUMAN FACE.



"SECONDLY, BY CHANNELING WIND DOWN THEIR HOLLOW UPPER BRANCHES AND OVER CRUDE VEGETABLE VOCAL CHORDS, THEY SHRIEKED LIKE CHILDREN AS THEY WERE CUT DOWN.



"PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THE TRICK WORKED. FEW LUMBERTACKS, EVEN HARDENED ONES, COULD STAND THAT TERRIBLE, DEPRESSING ATMOSPHERE FOR MORE THAN A MONTH.

"HALO JONES QUIT AFTER ONLY THREE DAYS.

"RECORDS OF HER MOVEMENTS OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS ARE INCOMPLETE, YET REVEAL A PATTERN OF INCREASING DESPERATION... AS IF SHE WERE PACING THE GALAXY, TRYING TO GET OUT.

"IN 4955, ONE "H. JONES" WAS QUESTIONED BY THE SIRIAN AUTHORITIES REGARDING AN ICEBERG SMUGGLING OFFENCE.

"BY '55, SIX YEARS AFTER THE STEERSMAN'S LODGE HALTED EARTH'S WATER EXPORTS, ICEBERG SMUGGLING WAS COMMONPLACE. NO CHARGES WERE BROUGHT.

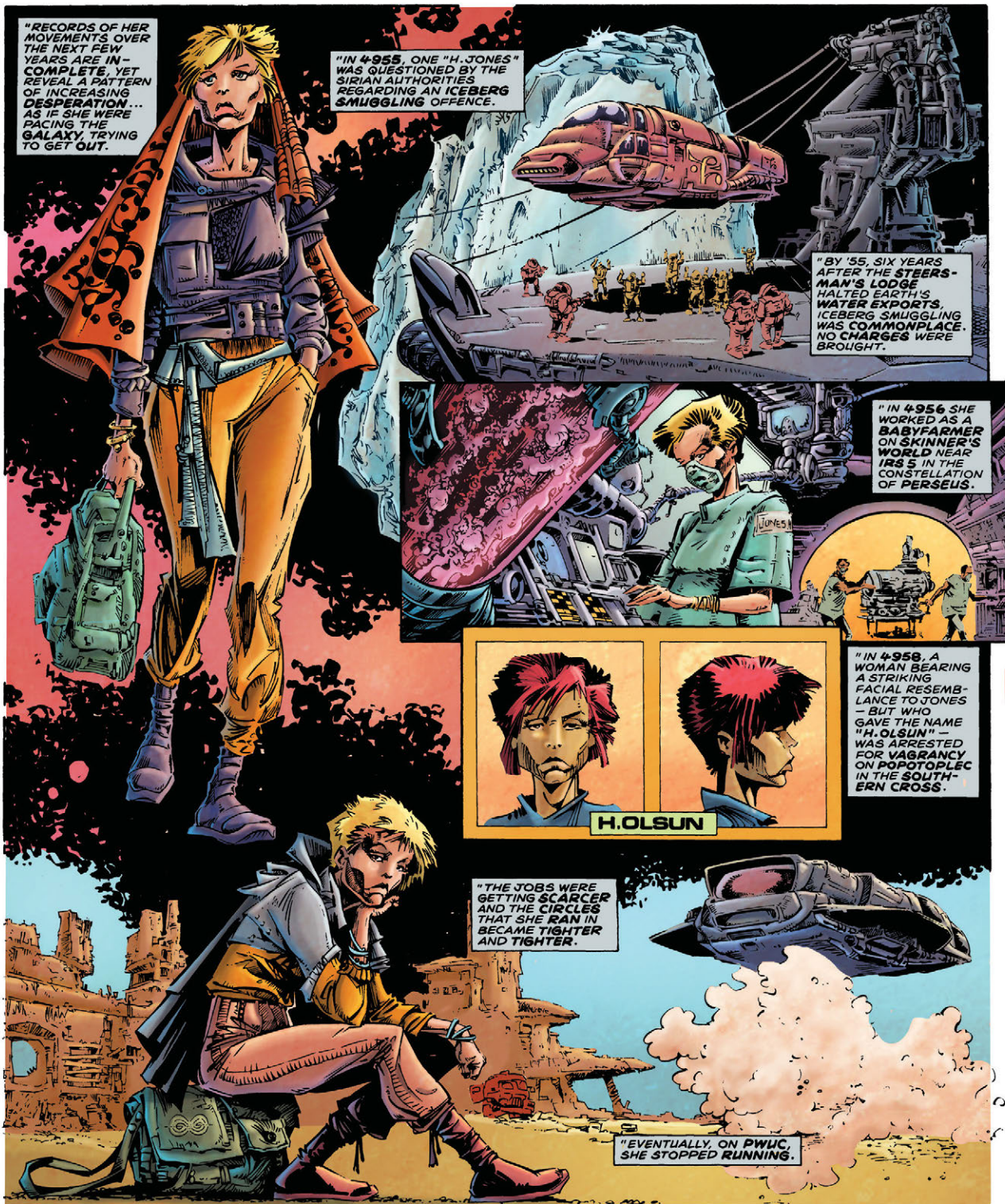
"IN 4956 SHE WORKED AS A BABYFARMER ON SKINNER'S WORLD NEAR IRS 5 IN THE CONSTELLATION OF PERSEUS.

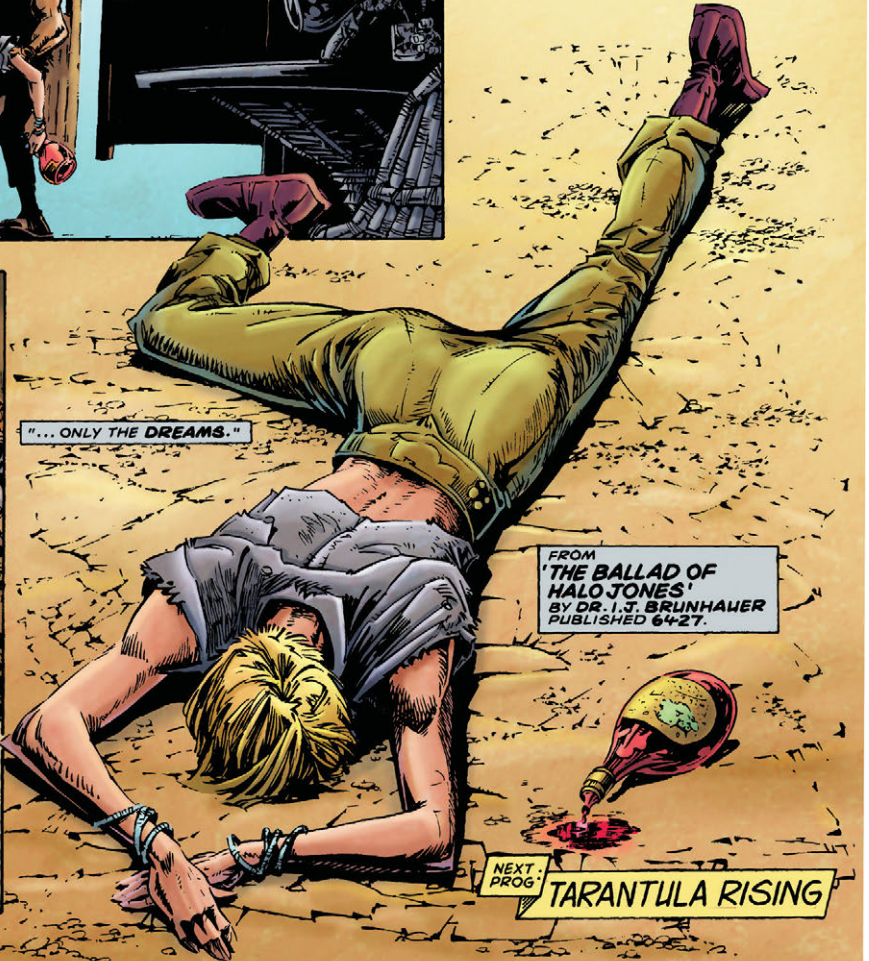
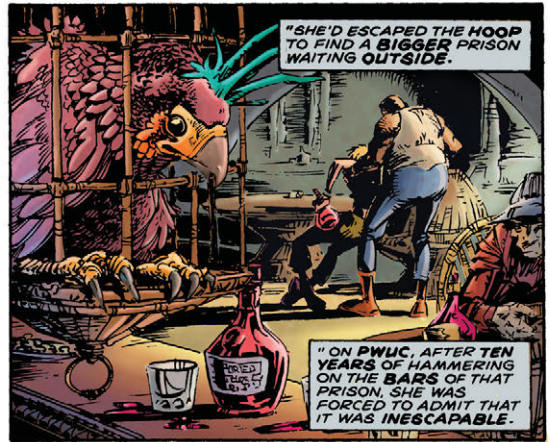
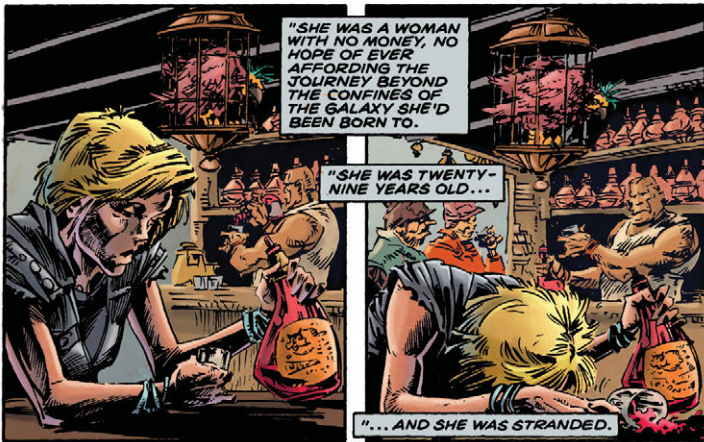
"IN 4958, A WOMAN BEARING A STRIKING FACIAL RESEMBLANCE TO JONES - BUT WHO GAVE THE NAME "H. OLSUN" - WAS ARRESTED FOR VAGRANCY ON POPOTOPLEC IN THE SOUTHERN CROSS.

"THE JOBS WERE GETTING SCARCER AND THE CIRCLES THAT SHE RAN IN BECAME TIGHTER AND TIGHTER.

"EVENTUALLY, ON PWUC, SHE STOPPED RUNNING.

H. OLSUN





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DUDUDUM..DUM..DUM..



DUDUDUM..DUM..DUM..

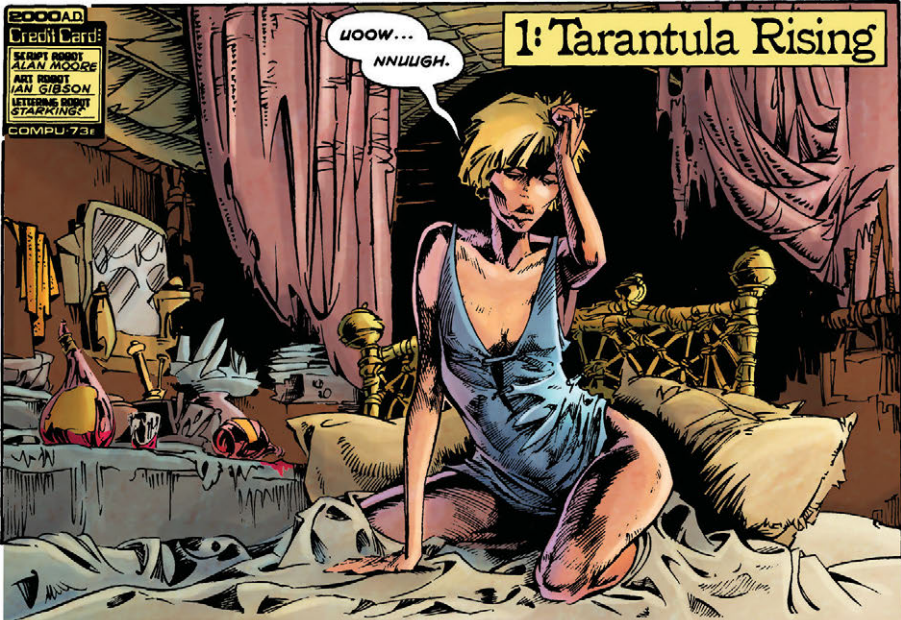


DUDUDUM..DUM..DUM..

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ART: ROBERT
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LETTERING: ROBERT
STARKING
COMPU 73

1: Tarantula Rising

The Ballad Of HALO JONES



WOOW...
NNWUGH.

DUDUDUM..DUM..DUM..



HOY!
WILL YOU SHUT
UP THE NOISE?
WHASS GOIN' ON
OUT THERE?

oouh



IS GLORY-
BARGE, COME FOR
GIVE JOBS TO
MANYSELF!
RUN
QUICK, OR
ALL GONE!



GLORY-BARGE?
WHAT IN THE BURNED
WORLDS IS...?

UH...

DID
YOU SAY
'JOBS'?



DUDUDUM..DUM..DUM..



GATHER CLOSER, FRIENDS. DON'T BE SHY!

COME ON! I WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOU ...

DUDU DUM.. DUM.. DUM!



I WANT TO SEE IF YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO RIDE THE GLORY-BARGE!

THIS GRAND OPPORTUNITY ISN'T FOR EVERY-ONE ...

A LIFE IN THE MODERN MILITARY NEEDS COURAGE!

IT NEEDS IRON IN YOUR BACK, AND THUNDER IN YOUR HEART!



YOU, SIR! DO YOU HAVE THUNDER IN YOUR HEART?

UH... YEAH, YEAH, SURE.



THEN IMAGINE YOURSELF IN THIS UNIFORM - AGAINST THE COLOURFUL BACKDROP OF AN OFFICER'S BAR ON TERHUNE.

VERY POPULAR, ESPECIALLY WITH THE LADIES.



AND SPEAKING OF YOU LADIES, THERE'S NO NEED TO FEEL LEFT OUT.

JUST LOOK AT THIS RECENT RECRUIT, WEARING A DRESS UNIFORM DESIGNED WITH THE FIGHTING FEMALE IN MIND!

STEP FORWARD, PRIVATE. LET THEM SEE YOU...



CHOP'S TEETH! SHE'S A GIANT!

HOW DID THEY GET A UNIFORM TO FIT HER?

TOY?



TOY!

NOT TWO WEEKS AGO, SHE WAS AN ORDINARY CIVILIAN, AS BORED AND AS LACKING IN DIRECTION AS ANY ONE OF YOU! BUT JUST LOOK AT HER NOW...

HALO?



EEEEEEEE!

HALO JONES!
EEEEEEEE!

SHE HAS PURPOSE!
SHE HAS DISCIPLINE!
SHE HAS A SMART UNIFORM!
SHE...



SHE HAS EARNED A MOMENT'S RELAXATION: ONE OF MANY ALLOWED UNDER OUR GENEROUS LEAVE AND RECREATION PROGRAMME...

HALO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! ANYPLACE HERE WE CAN GET A CELEBRATORY DRINK?



WELL, SURE, BUT WON'T THAT OFFICER MIND OR ANYTHING?

MIND? HOW COULD HE? HE'S A RECRUITING ANDROID, THE REAL OFFICERS ARE SORT OF GRAY, BORING LITTLE GUYS. C'MON, WHAT'S YOUR TOXIN?



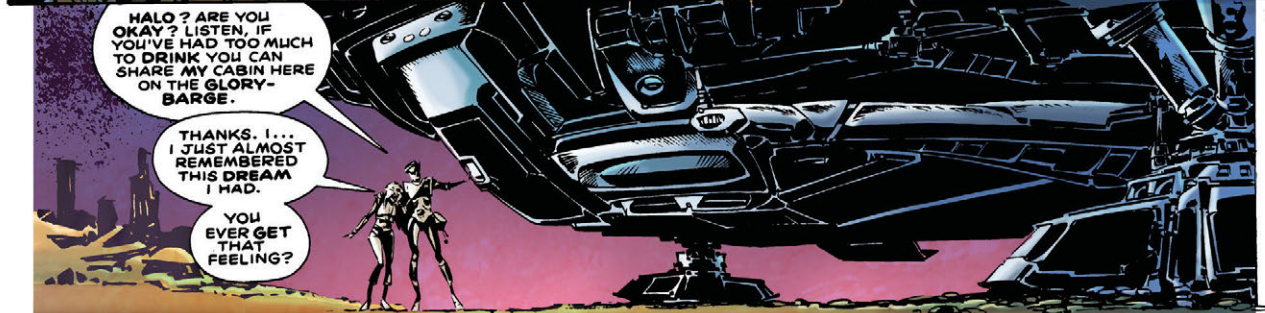
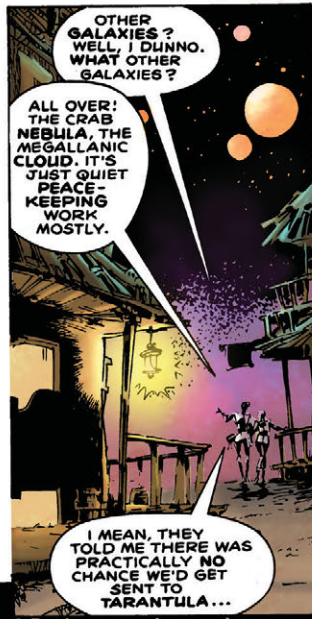
WELL, THERE'S THIS LOCAL STUFF CALLED CATS-BLOOD THAT'S PRETTY GOOD, BUT I HAD A LOT OF IT LAST NIGHT, SO JUST GET ME ONE SMALL GLASS...

OH, SURE, ME TOO, JUST ONE SMALL GLASS.
HOY! BARMAN!



LATER:
SO, UH, HOW DID YOU LOSE YOUR EAR?

AAH, GOT IN A FIGHT WITH THIS WOMAN, SHE BIT IT OFF. BUT THIS LITTLE IMPLANT'S REALLY MAMMOTH - I CAN PICK UP ALL THE AUDIO-SOAPS ON IT!





"GIRLS... ARE YOU LONELY? IS YOUR LIFE LACKING IN PURPOSE?"

"IN TODAY'S ARMED FORCES, YOU'LL FIND A GREAT BIG HAPPY, SLAPPY FAMILY OF CARING PEOPLE, SHARING PEOPLE..."



"PEOPLE LIKE YOU!"

THAT'S MY KAROBIX RATION, AND MY TOFU-BURGER, AND IF YOU DON'T GIVE THEM BACK I'LL RIP YOUR LIPS OFF!

The Ballad Of HALO JONES

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SCRIPT ROBOT ALAN MOORE
ART ROBOT IAN GIBSON
LETTERS ROBOT STARKINGS
COMPU-73

2: With Your Musket, Fife And Drum



WE'RE JONES AND MOLTO. WE'RE LOOKING FOR BETA PLATOON, BUT THIS CAN'T BE...

C-COME IN! THIS IS B-BETA PLATOON. Y-YOU MUST BE PRETTY SPECIAL IF THEY'VE A-A-ASSIGNED YOU TO US!

SPIT IT OUT! IT'S MINE!



SPECIAL? REALLY?

DON'T SWALLOW! DON'T SWALLOW!

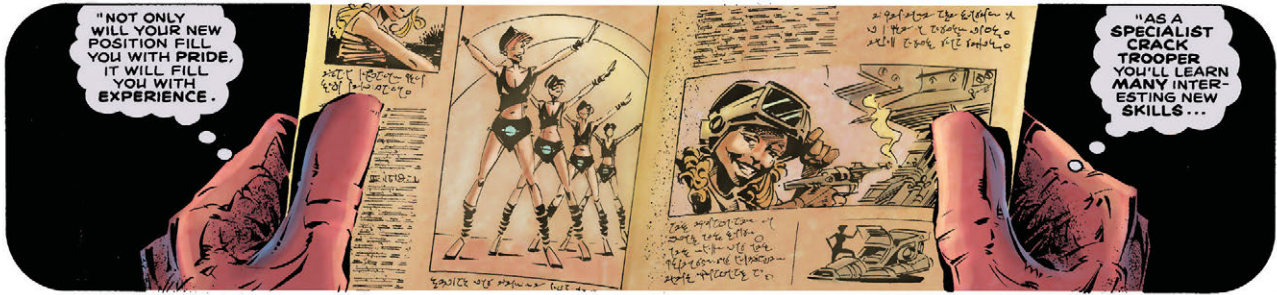
O-OH YES! WE'RE ALL SPECIAL IN BETA PLATOON. I'M M-MONA. DOWN THERE, TH-THAT'S BEKTI AND DITTO.



S-SO ANYWAY...

WH-WHAT SORT OF D-DEFECTS DO YOU TWO HAVE?

AAARRGH! YOU SWALLOWED IT! DON'T DIGEST!



"NOT ONLY WILL YOUR NEW POSITION FILL YOU WITH PRIDE. IT WILL FILL YOU WITH EXPERIENCE."

"AS A SPECIALIST CRACK TROOPER YOU'LL LEARN MANY INTERESTING NEW SKILLS..."



"...WHICH WILL SURPRISE AND IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS IN LATER LIFE."

THAT'S IT! LOCATE THE MARKOV POINT IN YOUR ENEMY SOLDIER'S HARD LIGHT SCREEN, THEN PUNCH YOUR ELECTROPIC DOWN THROUGH HER DIRTY TERRORIST SKULL!

AAGH!?



MONA, THAT HURT!

W-WELL I'M SORRY! I WAS ORDERED TO PLUNGE AN ELECTRIFIED D-DAGGER INTO YOUR L-LIVING BRAIN AND IF IT HURTS THAT'S N-NOT MY FAULT!

OKAY, YOU WOMEN: ON WITH THE ASSAULT COURSE...



JONES? WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING? YOU JUST RECEIVED 800 VOLTS THROUGH YOUR CEREBRAL CORTEX. YOU'RE DEAD. YOU HAVE TO STAY HERE.

THE REST OF YOU, WATCH OUT FOR ENEMY HATCH-SNATCHERS!



HI, TOY. ARE YOU DEAD TOO? I GOT MY BRAIN FRIED.

THAT'S NOTHING. I GOT TURNED INTO AN UNIDENTIFIABLE BONELESS MASS BY A VIBRO-MINE.

I'M SICK OF MANOEUVRES. I ALWAYS GET KILLED AND END UP SITTING HERE, DEAD.



NEVER MIND. MAYBE BEING DEAD IS A SKILL THAT WILL COME IN HANDY IN LATER LIFE.



"ALSO, LET US NOT FORGET THE OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAVEL AND ENCOUNTER INTERESTING NEW RACES!"

"IN TODAY'S ARMED SERVICES, WE TELL YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR COUSINS OUT THERE BEYOND THE MILKY WAY..."

AN EXCITING NEW WORLD OF EXPERIENCES IN TODAY'S ARMED FORCES.

"...THEIR WAY OF LIFE AND THEIR PICTURE-ESQUE CUSTOMS."



LOOK AT HER!

THIS DEGENERATE SUB-HUMAN SHE-DEVIL LIVES IN A FILTHY UNDERGROUND WARREN AND EATS THE CON-GEALED MAMMARY FLUIDS OF ANIMALS!

SOCIALLY BACKWARD, THESE PRIMITIVES PRODUCE HUGE FAMILIES WITH TWO OR EVEN THREE CHILDREN. THEY HAVE ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN COMMON WITH TRUE HUMANS.



TOY? DID YOU SEE HER NECK-LACE?

SHH! I'M RECEIVING 'SATELLITE OF SIN' ON MY IMPLANT.



THEY WORSHIP A TREE! THEY ARE TOTALLY UNABLE TO APPRECIATE THE ADVANCED CULTURE WE BRING THEM!

SEE, TESS TESSERACT IS HAVING A LONG OVERDUE CHAT WITH BLYTHA ABOUT HER RELATIONSHIP WITH CAPTAIN RINK.



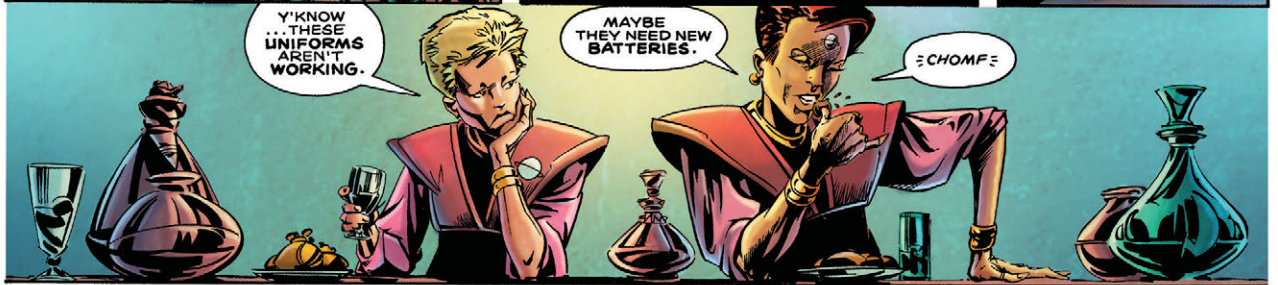
THEY ONLY UNDERSTAND FORCE! YOU CAN'T TALK TO THEM!

DON'T LISTEN TO HER, TESS! SHE'S LYING! BLYTHA'S BEEN SEEING CAPTAIN RINK BEHIND YOUR BACK SINCE EPISODE NINE!

TOY...



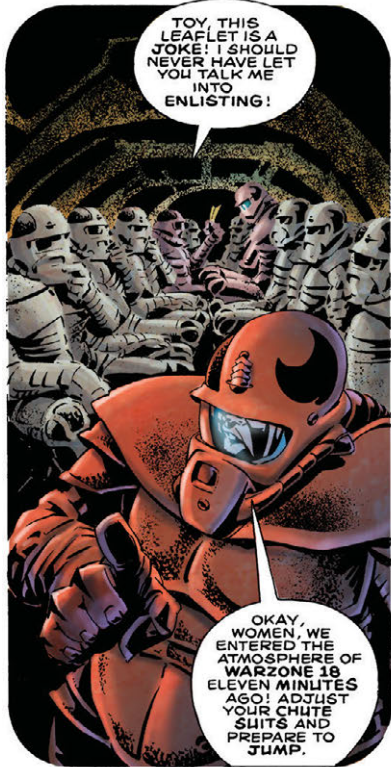
OOPS.





"... AND ABOVE ALL, DON'T LET AN EXAGGERATED FEAR OF THE DANGERS INVOLVED PUT YOU OFF. OVER FORTY PER CENT OF ENTRANTS NEVER SEE ACTIVE SERVICE."

HAH!



TOY, THIS LEAFLET IS A JOKE! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LET YOU TALK ME INTO ENLISTING!

OKAY, WOMEN, WE ENTERED THE ATMOSPHERE OF WARZONE 19 ELEVEN MINUTES AGO! ADJUST YOUR CHUTE SUITS AND PREPARE TO JUMP.



SARGE, I DON'T LIKE THIS.

I THINK SOMEBODY'S BEEN JESTERING WITH US. HOW COME WE'VE BEEN SENT TO A WARZONE SO SOON? IT SAYS HERE FORTY PER CENT NEVER SEE COMBAT!

THOSE FIGURES ARE PERFECTLY ACCURATE, JONES.



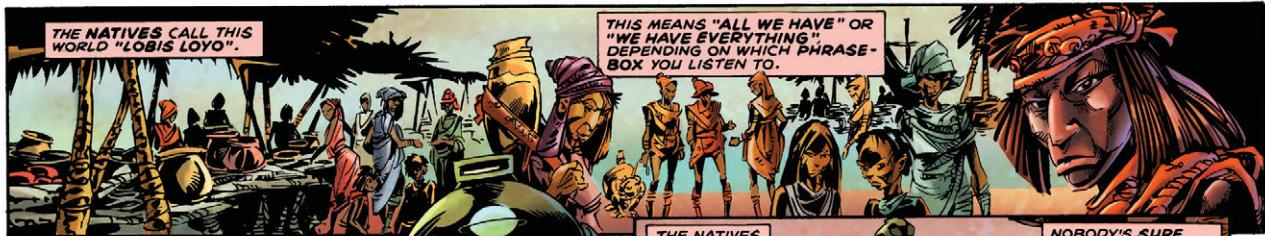
BUT DON'T WORRY...

MAYBE YOU'LL BE ONE OF THE LUCKY SIXTY PER CENT WHOSE CHUTE SUIT ACTUALLY OPENS.



WHAT DID SHE JUST SAY?

NEXT PROG OCCUPATIONS.



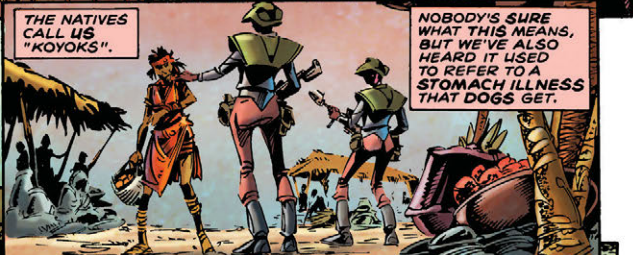
THE NATIVES CALL THIS WORLD "LOBIS LOYO".

THIS MEANS "ALL WE HAVE" OR "WE HAVE EVERYTHING", DEPENDING ON WHICH PHRASE-BOX YOU LISTEN TO.



WE CALL IT WARZONE 18.

THIS MEANS THAT THERE ARE 17 COLONIZED WORLDS IN THE WHOLE TARANTULA NEBULA CAUSING EARTH MORE TROUBLE THAN THIS ONE IS.



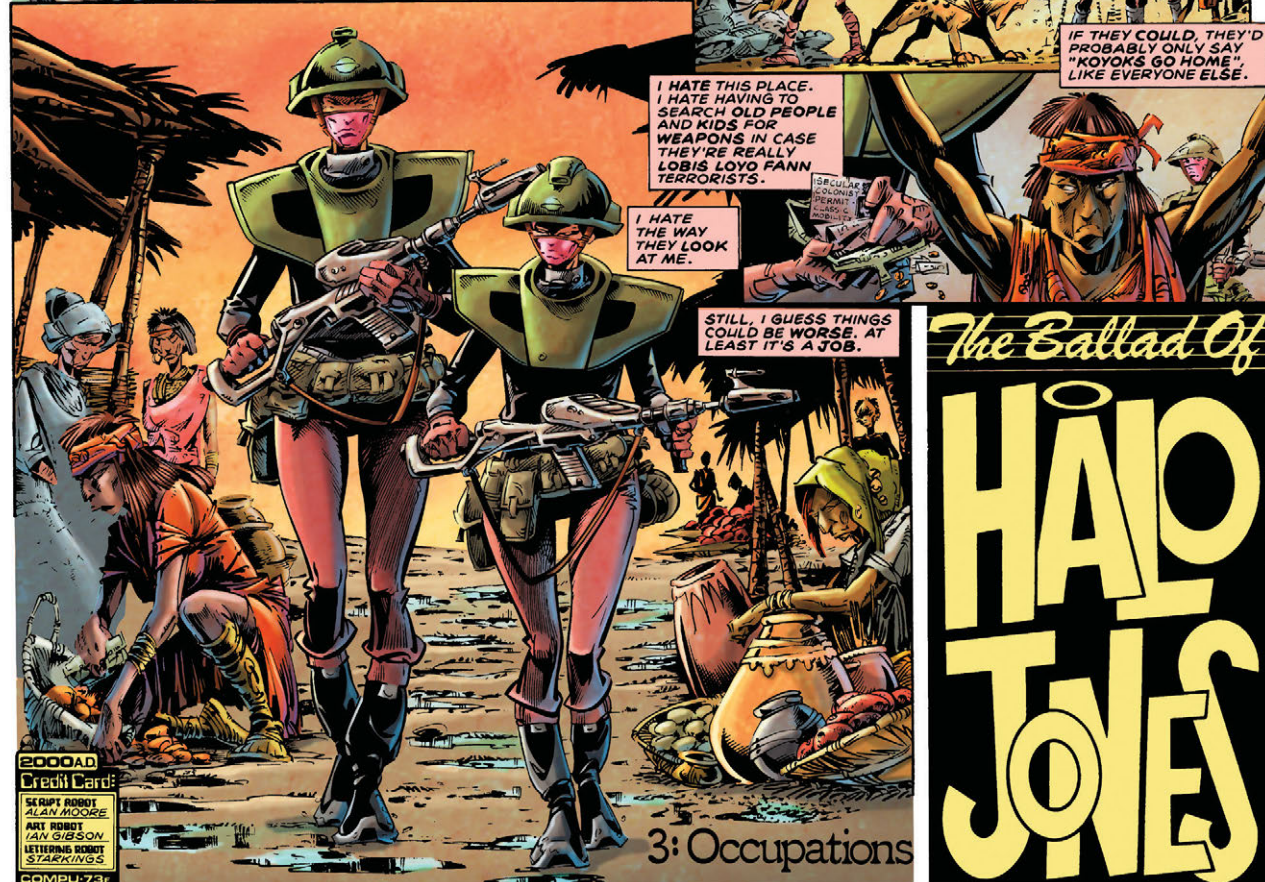
THE NATIVES CALL US "KOYOKS".

NOBODY'S SURE WHAT THIS MEANS, BUT WE'VE ALSO HEARD IT USED TO REFER TO A STOMACH ILLNESS THAT DOGS GET.



I'D NEVER SEEN REAL DOGS BEFORE, AND I WAS SURPRISED TO LEARN THEY CAN'T EVEN TALK.

IF THEY COULD, THEY'D PROBABLY ONLY SAY "KOYOKS GO HOME", LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.



I HATE THIS PLACE. I HATE HAVING TO SEARCH OLD PEOPLE AND KIDS FOR WEAPONS IN CASE THEY'RE REALLY LOBIS LOYO FANN TERRORISTS.

I HATE THE WAY THEY LOOK AT ME.

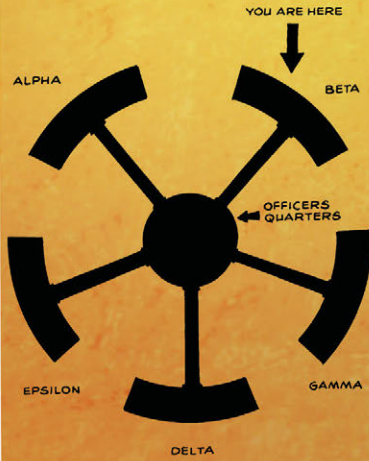
STILL, I GUESS THINGS COULD BE WORSE. AT LEAST IT'S A JOB.

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ART ROBOT
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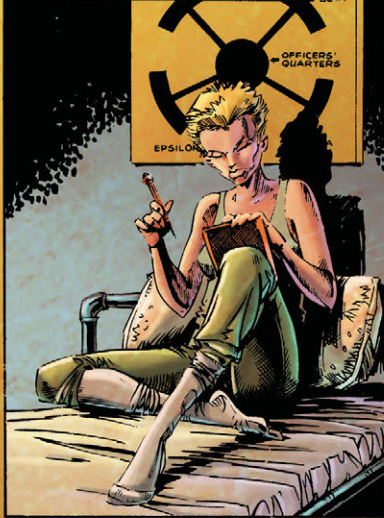
3: Occupations

The Ballad Of HALO JONES

OUR CAMP IS AT ROLTIIP DHIM, WHICH IS A SORT OF TOWN ON THE EDGE OF THE PETRIFIED JUNGLE. THE PETRIFIED JUNGLE IS WHERE THE LOBIS LOYO FANN GUERRILLAS ARE HIDING.



BETA PLATOON'S BARRACKS GET HUMID AT NIGHTS, AND THERE'S NOT MUCH TO DO EXCEPT WORRY, WHICH IS WHY I'VE STARTED WRITING AGAIN. (FIRST TIME SINCE THE HOOP.)



THERE'S NO OTHER RECREATION FACILITIES, SO WE HAVE TO MAKE OUR OWN ENTERTAINMENT...

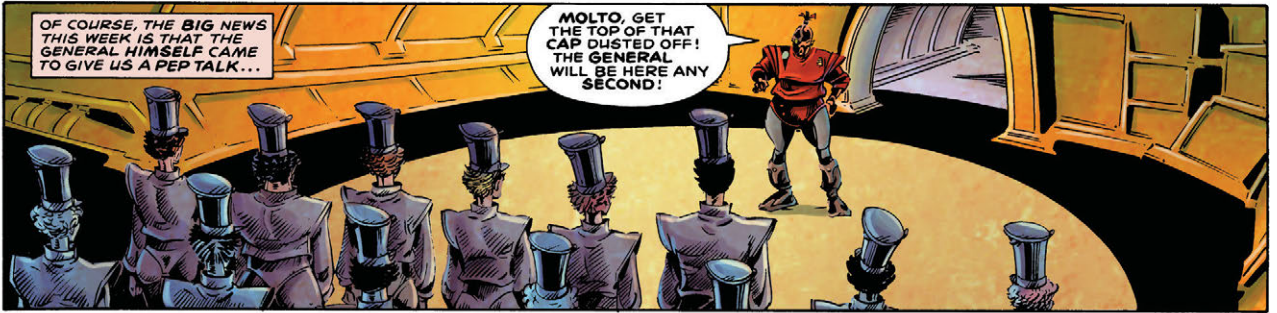


I'M GETTING TO KNOW THE OTHER WOMEN BETTER. MONA'S ABOUT THE NICEST, ALTHOUGH SHE'S TERRIBLY NERVOUS.



SOME OF THE WOMEN IN THE OTHER PLATOONS ARE VERY WEIRD. THERE'S ONE CALLED 'LIFE SENTENCE' WHO REFUSED TO LEAVE TARANTULA WHEN HER TOUR WAS UP.







I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, GENERAL. SHE MUST HAVE BEEN SO EXCITED ABOUT YOUR VISIT...

DON'T PATRONIZE ME, SERGEANT. SHE SAW A GIANT WITH TUSKS AND SHE FAINTED.

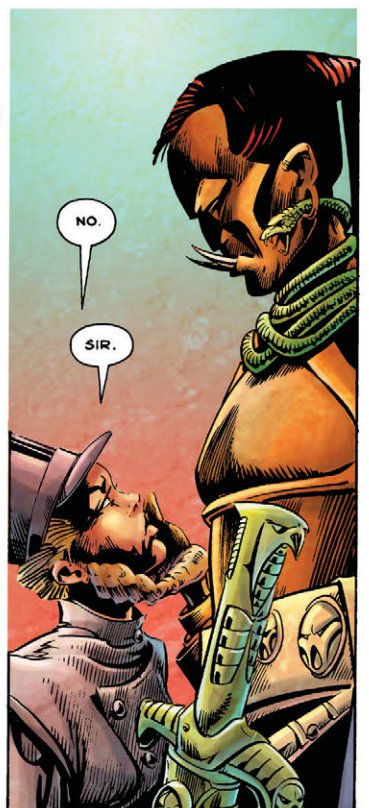
PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE, ALTHOUGH I'M NOT REALLY THAT TERRIFYING, AM I?



YOU ... WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

J-JONES, SIR.

JONES. AND DOES PRIVATE JONES FIND ME TERRIFYING?



NO.

SIR.



GOOD. THAT PLEASURES ME.

AS FOR THE WAR HERE, THAT PLEASES ME LESS SO. THE LOBIS LOYO FANN ARE GAINING GROUND.

WE MUST INTENSIFY SEARCH AND BURN MISSIONS WITHIN THE PETRIFIED JUNGLE.

THIS WORLD IS YOUR TRAINING GROUND BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE MORE DANGEROUS WARZONES.

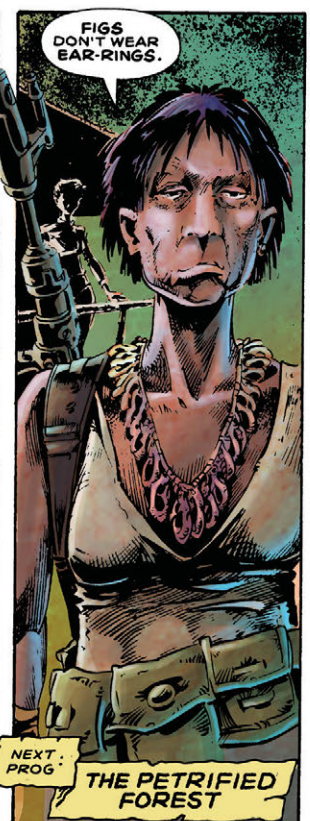
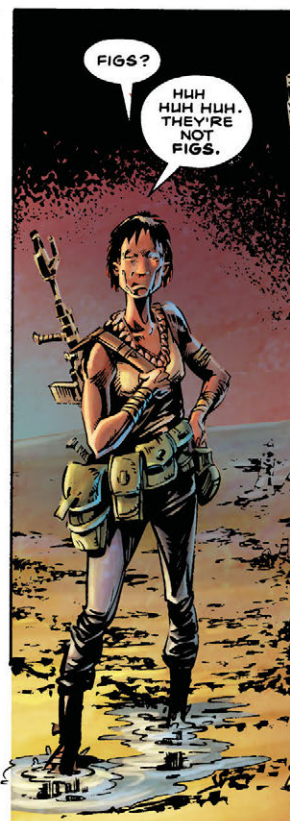
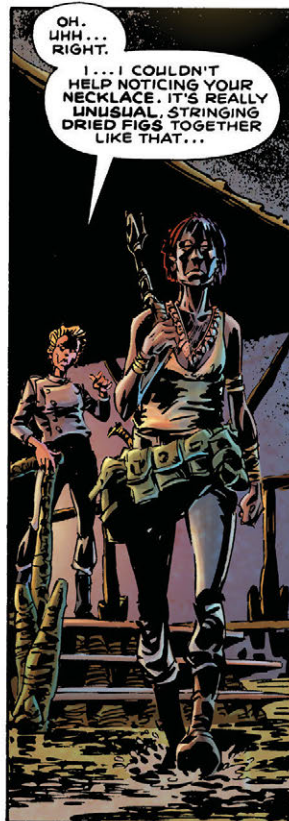
TREAT ANY OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN COMBAT EXPERIENCE AS A PRECIOUS GIFT. YOUR LIFE WILL DEPEND UPON IT.

THAT WILL BE ALL.



...AND THAT WAS THAT. HE JUST TURNED AND LEFT. AND THE SERGEANT WOKE MONA SO SHE COULD YELL AT HER.

FUNNY ... WHEN HE TOUCHED ME, HIS FINGERS WERE WARM. I THOUGHT THEY'D BE ICY.





TODAY WE WENT OUT ON JUNGLE PATROL, AND I SAW SOMETHING STRANGE.

I SAW SOMEONE GET OLDER AFTER THEY WERE DEAD.



I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT WHEN THINGS DIED, THEY STOPPED AGING. IF I THINK OF BRINNA, SHE'S THE AGE SHE WAS WHEN LAST I SAW HER ALIVE.



AND THE TREES, IN THE FOREST TODAY... THEY WERE ALL TURNED TO STONE BY A KAPPA BOMB EXPLOSION EIGHT YEARS AGO.

THEY'VE STAYED THE SAME EVER SINCE. HAVEN'T CHANGED, HAVEN'T GROWN...

IT'S LIKE THE FLASH OF THAT K-BOMB TRAPPED THEM IN A SOLID HOLD-SNAP FREEZING THE IMAGE AT THE MOMENT OF DESTRUCTION.

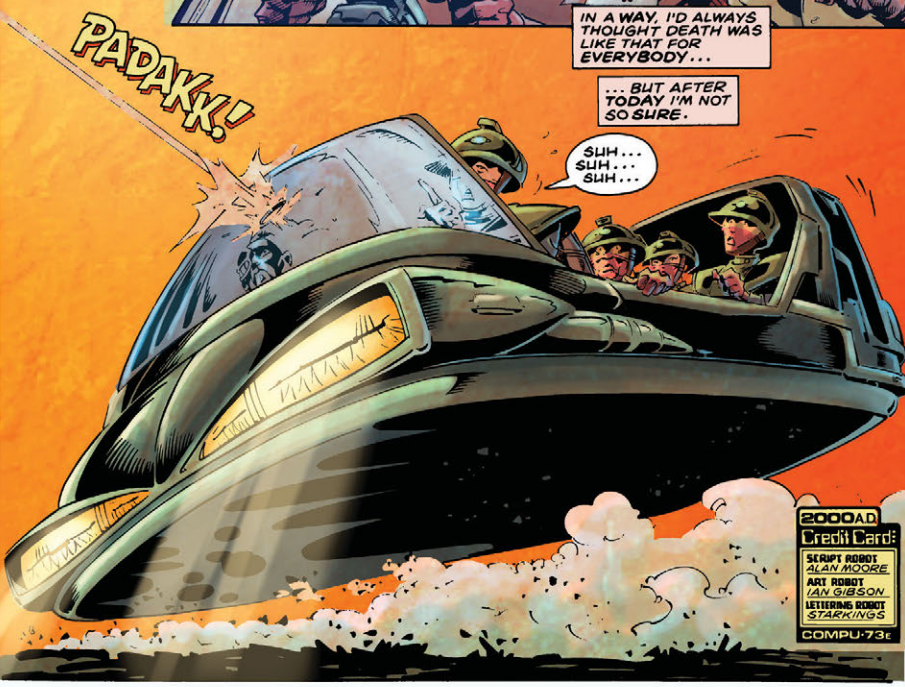


SUH... SUH... SUH...

IN A WAY, I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT DEATH WAS LIKE THAT FOR EVERYBODY...

... BUT AFTER TODAY I'M NOT SO SURE.

SUH... SUH... SUH...



PADAKK!

The Ballad Of HALO JONES

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4: Petrified Forest



WHERE'D IT COME FROM?
WHERE'D IT COME FROM?

WU CN HI!

AAK!

SUH...
SUH...



... SUH
... SUH...
SNIPER!

SURE. THANKS, MONA.
IS EVERYBODY
OKAY?

KEEP
BEHIND THE
SWEEPJEEP.
SHE'S UP IN
THE TREES
ON THE LEFT...



WE COULD BRING
THE TREE DOWN WITH
A TREMBLE-BOMB, BUT
WE'RE WAY OUT OF
THROWING RANGE.

WHERE'S A SNIPER? I
CAN'T SEE NO
SNIPER...

TOY!
GET DOWN!



SPENG!

YARK!

I
TOLD
YOU...

WH-WHAT
ARE WE GOING
TO DUH-DO?
THAT'S A LOBIS
LOYO F-FANN
TERRORIST
UP THERE!



LISTEN, CAN SOMEBODY
GET AROUND BEHIND THAT
TREE, CLOSE ENOUGH TO
THROW THE TREMBLER? IF
WE HIT IT THIS SIDE, IT'LL
FALL TOWARD US...

SURE. ME
AND HALO
CAN DO
THAT.

WHAT?



IT'LL BE
EASY! JUST FOLLOW
ME AND AVOID ALL
THE BULLETS!

MUH-HALO? IF YOU
GET K-KILLED, CAN I
HAVE YOUR KUH-KARO-
BIX RATION?

UH... YEAH.
YEAH, SURE...



THEN TOY STARTED TO RUN FOR THE NEAREST COVER, AND LIKE A COMPLETE GLOMBIE I JUST FOLLOWED HER.

NATURALLY, HER LEGS ARE LONGER THAN MINE, SO SHE WAS ACROSS THE CLEARING BEFORE I WAS HALF-WAY.

POUK! **POUK!** **POUK!** **POUK!**



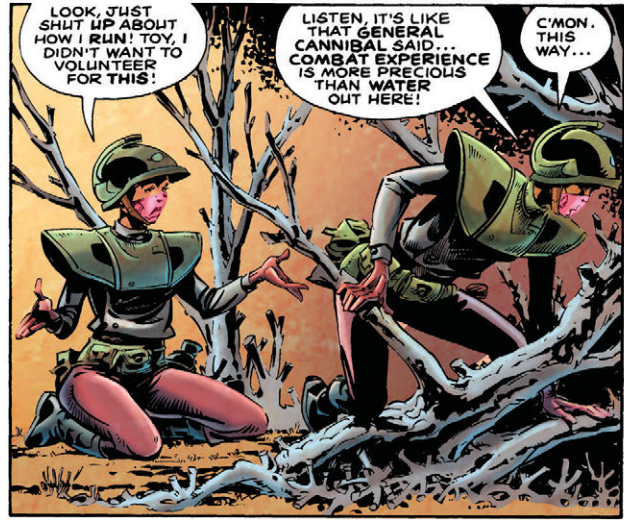
IT HARDLY SEEMED REAL. SOMETHING KEPT TAKING BITES FROM THE GRAVEL AT MY FEET, AND ABOVE THE GUNFIRE I COULD HEAR A WOMAN SCREAMING "ANWO KOYOK GA!"

THE BULLETS WERE ALL THE TRANSLATION I NEEDED.

ANWO KOYOK GA!

GET DOWN HERE! Y'KNOW, YOU RUN LIKE A PROXIMAN. IT LOOKS AWFUL!

POUK!



LOOK, JUST SHUT UP ABOUT HOW I RUN! TOY, I DIDN'T WANT TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS!

LISTEN, IT'S LIKE THAT GENERAL CANNIBAL SAID... COMBAT EXPERIENCE IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN WATER OUT HERE!

C'MON, THIS WAY...



WELL, THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. COMBAT IS WHAT'S MOST LIKELY TO GET YOU KILLED, ISN'T IT?

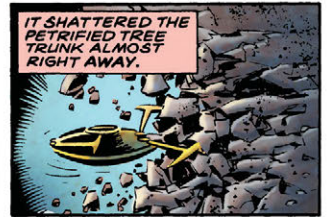
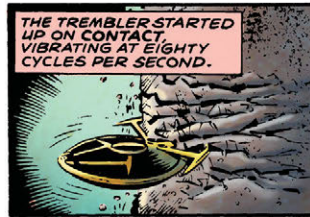
I MEAN, IS WHAT WE'RE DOING NOW COMBAT OR JUST COMBAT EXPERIENCE? HOW CAN YOU TELL?

POCHUK!



WELL THAT'S OBVIOUS! IF WE'RE STILL ALIVE AFTERWARDS, IT WAS JUST COMBAT EXPERIENCE.

NOW KEEP QUIET. WE OUGHT TO BE AROUND BEHIND THAT TREE BY NOW, ACCORDING TO WHERE HER VOICE WAS COMING FROM...





HA HA HA!
I WHACKED HER!
Y'SEE THAT? JUST
BLEW THAT DIRTY
RATGASH OUT OF
HER TREE!

HA HA
HA!



NICE WORK. OKAY, THE ONLY WAY YOU EVER GET CLOSE ENOUGH FOR A GOOD LOOK AT A LOBIS LOYO FANN GUERRILLA IS IF YOU'RE DEAD OR SHE IS, SO HERE'S YOUR CHANCE.

TUH -
TURN HER
OVER...



AW.
AWW, WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT?

TOY?
SHE... SHE CAN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THAN ELEVEN YEARS OLD...



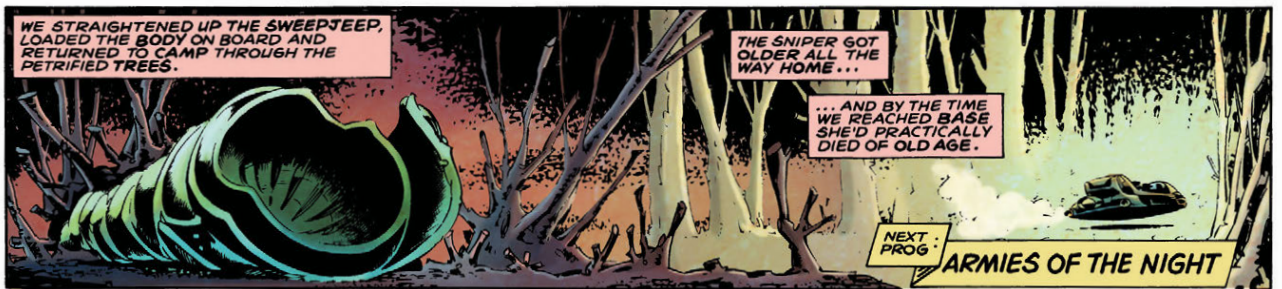
E-ELEVEN? NAH!
NO CHANCE! NO CHANCE, GIRL! THESE GUERRILLA WOMEN, THEY, THEY LOOK YOUNG 'CUZ THEY'RE SMALL...

SHE'S EIGHTEEN EASY.

SHE CUH-COULD BE EVEN OLDER... THAT CUH-CAMOUFLAGE MUD THEY USE HIDES THE WRINKLES...

PRIVATE JUKES IS RIGHT. SHE COULD BE TWENTY-FIVE UNDER THAT GUNK...

HUH!
MORE LIKE THIRTY...



WE STRAIGHTENED UP THE SWEEPTEEP, LOADED THE BODY ON BOARD AND RETURNED TO CAMP THROUGH THE PETRIFIED TREES.

THE SNIPER GOT OLDER ALL THE WAY HOME...

... AND BY THE TIME WE REACHED BASE SHE'D PRACTICALLY DIED OF OLD AGE.

NEXT
PROG

ARMIES OF THE NIGHT



The Ballad Of HALO JONES



OHH! CHEESES, THIS HURTS. IS THIS WORKING? IF THE LIGHT'S ON, DOES THAT MEAN IT'S WORKING?

WILL ONE OF YOU TRAMPS ANSWER ME?

OH CHEESES. OKAY. OKAY...

THIS, UH... THIS IS THE BLACKBALL RECORDER OF SST. VERNA KRAUSE, BETA PLATOON, STATIONED WARZONE EIGHTEEN, TARANTULA NEBULA.

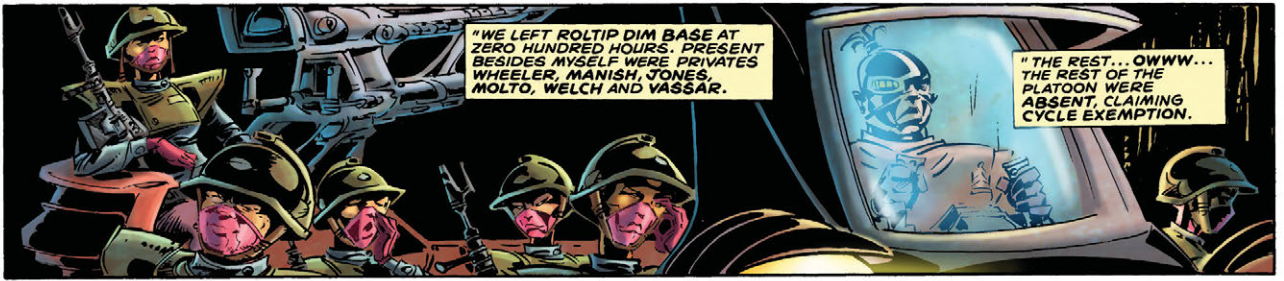
MY...OWW ... MY REPORT FOLLOWS...

"THIS EVENING - UH, THAT IS, DAY FOUR, MONTH SIXTEEN LOCAL TIME - I TOOK BETA PLATOON ON THEIR FIRST NIGHT RECONNAISSANCE.

"THEY'VE BEEN HERE SIX WEEKS. I... I THOUGHT THEY WERE READY."

ANWOL KOTOK CIA

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"WE LEFT ROLTIP DIM BASE AT ZERO HUNDRED HOURS. PRESENT BESIDES MYSELF WERE PRIVATES WHEELER, MANISH, JONES, MOLTO, WELCH AND VASSAR.

"THE REST... OWWWW... THE REST OF THE PLATOON WERE ABSENT, CLAIMING CYCLE EXEMPTION.



"BY ZERO ZERO SEVENTY HOURS WE HAD PENETRATED THE PETRIFIED JUNGLE TO A DEPTH OF FIVE... OWWWW... FIVE KILOMETRES. MORALE WAS HIGH."

THIRTY MINUTES TO ONE! MY IMPLANT'S RECEIVING "TRANS-SOLAR DENTIST"!

THAT'S MONA'S FAVOURITE!

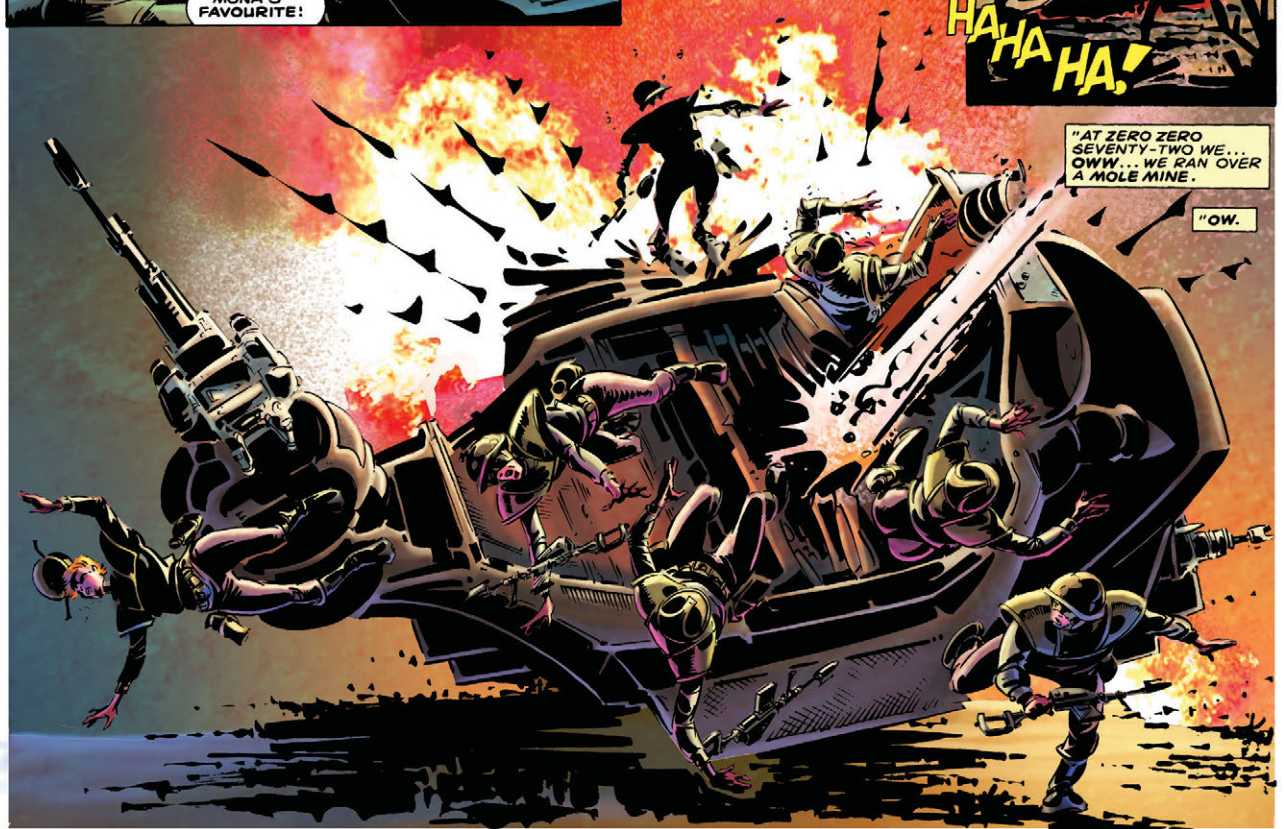


TOO BAD SHE IS NOT HERE TO LISTEN TO IT. C'MON, MOLTO, WHAT'S HAPPENING?

UH-OH. IT LOOKS BAD. NURSE CHAVETTE'S TEST WAS POSITIVE, AND LITTLE LOANNE NEEDS A MOLAR CAPPED!

LOANNE? AIN'T SHE THE LITTLE KID WITH THE AWFUL LISPY VOICE WHO'S DYIN' O' SOME DISEASE? I'D LIKE TO CAP HER MOLARS WITH A GRAVITY WRENCH!

HA HA HA HA HA!



"AT ZERO ZERO SEVENTY-TWO WE... OWWWW... WE RAN OVER A MOLE MINE."

"OW."

"PRIVATE WHEELER, RIDING SHOTGUN, DIED INSTANTLY. THE DRIVE CYLINDER WAS SMASHED UP THROUGH THE FLOOR OF THE TRANSPORTER, INJURING PRIVATE MOLTO AND MYSELF.

"I THINK THE REST WERE THROWN CLEAR AS THE VEHICLE WENT OVER.

"I... UHHH... I BLACKED OUT FOR A SECOND. WHEN I CAME TO I WAS UNDER THE VEHICLE. I COULD HEAR SCREAMING AND GUNFIRE...

"I CAN SEE 'EM! I CAN..."

!!!EEEEEEEGH!

UG...

"A GROUP OF LOBIS LOYO FANN GUERRILLAS... TWO MEN, ONE WOMAN, TWO FEMALE CHILDREN... WERE FIRING ON US FROM COVER. WE'D BEEN AMBUSHED."

"DITTO'S BURNT! SHE'S ALL BURNT UP!"

"I SAW PRIVATE BEKTI VASSAR GUNNED DOWN, AND THEN I THINK PRIVATE MANISH THREW A SPLASHLIGHT IN THE UNDERGROWTH... UHHH..."

"TWO GUERRILLAS BROKE COVER, BURNING AND SCREAMING."

"AS THE PETRIFIED BRACKEN CAUGHT FIRE, THE... UHHH... THE REST FOLLOWED, DISCHARGING THEIR WEAPONS RANDOMLY, IN PANIC."

" PRIVATES SHAHI MANISH AND LYNCEIE WELCH FATALLY WOUNDED TWO MORE GUERRILLAS BEFORE BEING HIT THEMSELVES. I... EHHHHH... DON'T KNOW IF THEIR WOUNDS WERE FATAL."

" THE FINAL TERRORIST... A GIRL OF AROUND SEVEN ... RAN AWAY."

NOW IT'S QUIET. I'M UNDER THE VEHICLE RECORDING THIS AND NOBODY ANSWERED WHEN I SPOKE. ARE THEY ALL DEAD?

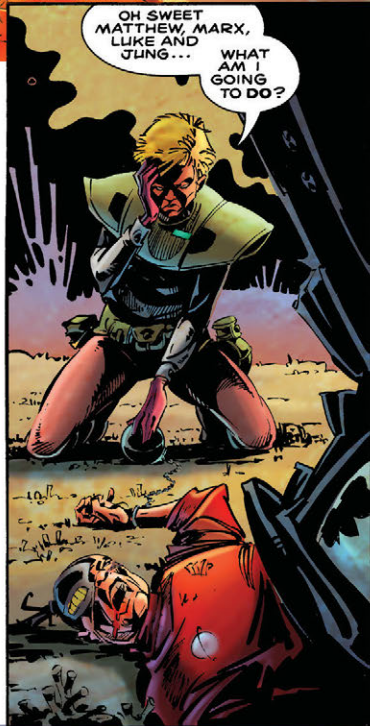
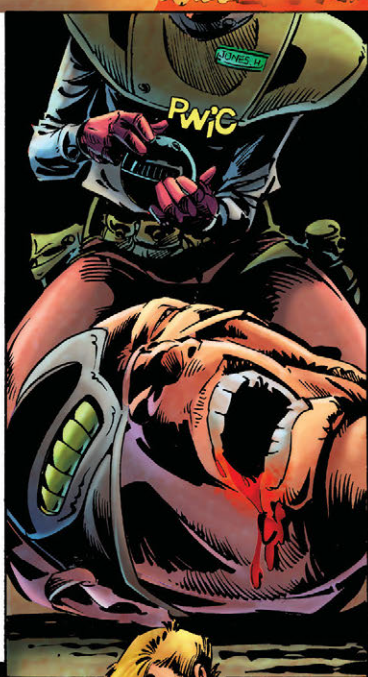
OH, OH THIS HURTS! I'M GOING TO TRY TO MOVE FROM UNDER HERE... SEE HOW MUCH I'VE DAMAGED MY LEGS...

LHHNK. OUGHHH... WHERE..?

WH-WHERE ARE THEY?

WHERE ARE MY...

OH SWEET MATTHEW, MARX, LUKE AND JUNG... WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?



I DUNNO.

HEARD ANY GOOD JOKES?



TOY! OH, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT! I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.

DON'T BE STUPID. I'VE NEVER BEEN DEAD IN MY LIFE! HELP ME OUT FROM UNDER THIS THING. WHAT HAPPENED, ANYWAY?



WE RAN OVER A MINE. I MUST HAVE HIT MY HEAD, BECAUSE WHEN I CAME ROUND, EVERYBODY ELSE WAS D...

TOY? WHAT'S UP WITH YOUR FOOT?

AHH, IT'S NOTHING. JUST A FLESH-AND-BLOOD WOUND.



FLESH-AND-BLOOD WOUND?

T-TOY? ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OKAY? MAYBE I CAN MAKE SOMETHING TO DRAG YOU BACK TO BASE ON...

YEAH... YEAH, MAYBE. I... I FEEL KINDA SHAKY. IT'S LIKE... IT'S LIKE...



I... I DUNNO...

I... I CAN HEAR A VOICE TALKING TO ME...

TOY? TOY, C'MON... YOU'RE SCARING ME! YOU CAN'T HEAR A VOICE!



I CAN. I CAN HEAR IT DISTINCTLY...

TOY? I-IS IT CALLING TO YOU? WHAT'S IT SAYING?

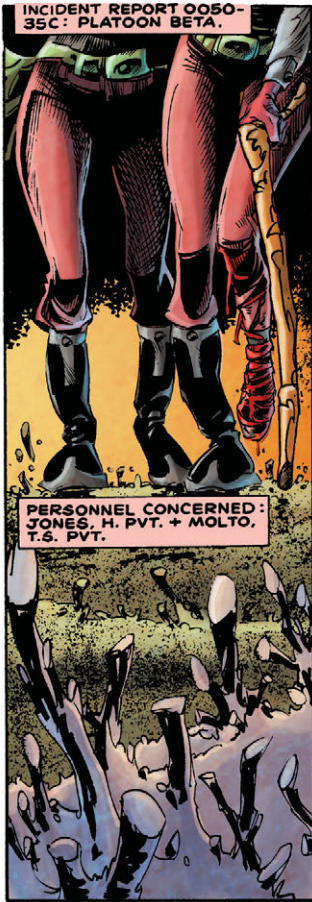


IT... IT'S SAYING...

IT'S SAYING THAT LITTLE LOANNE IS PROBABLY GOING TO LOSE THAT LOWER RIGHT MOLAR.

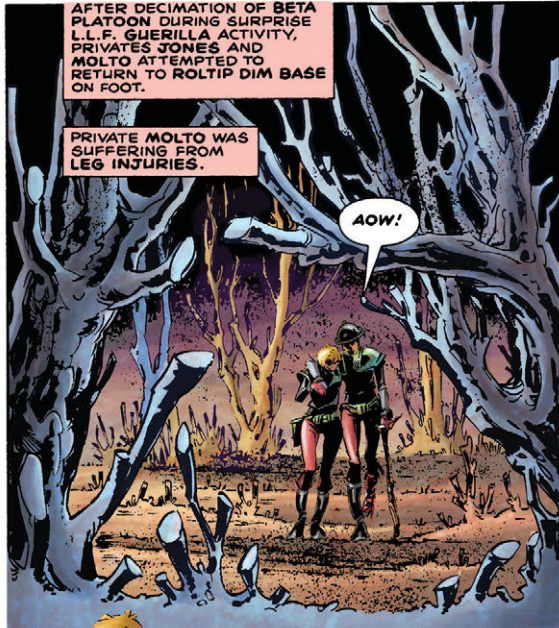
NEXT PROG:

A SOLDIER'S THINGS



INCIDENT REPORT 0050-35C: PLATOON BETA.

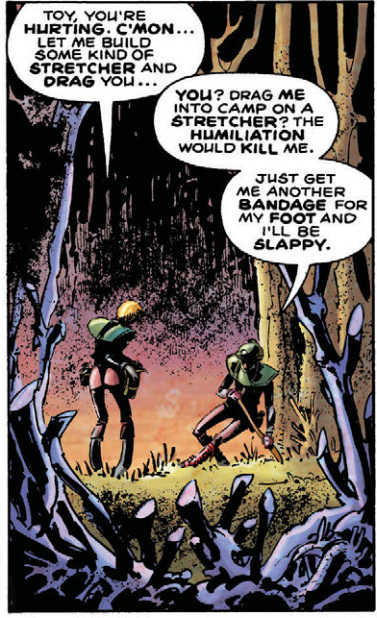
PERSONNEL CONCERNED: JONES, H. PVT. + MOLTO, T.S. PVT.



AFTER DECIMATION OF BETA PLATOON DURING SURPRISE L.L.F. GUERRILLA ACTIVITY, PRIVATES JONES AND MOLTO ATTEMPTED TO RETURN TO ROLTIP DIM BASE ON FOOT.

PRIVATE MOLTO WAS SUFFERING FROM LEG INJURIES.

AOW!



TOY, YOU'RE HURTING. C'MON... LET ME BUILD SOME KIND OF STRETCHER AND DRAG YOU...

YOU? DRAG ME INTO CAMP ON A STRETCHER? THE HUMILIATION WOULD KILL ME.

JUST GET ME ANOTHER BANDAGE FOR MY FOOT AND I'LL BE SLAPPY.



KAROB SLAB... PHRASEBOX... NULCEPT... NO BANDAGES. I'LL HAVE TO USE ANOTHER ABSORBEX PAD.

FINE. I DON'T SUPPOSE THERE'S ONE OF THOSE GADGETS IN THERE FOR GETTING YOU OUT OF ANY TROUBLE WHATSOEVER, MASSAGING YOUR BACK AND FIXING YOU A DRINK?



UH... NO...

AND I THINK THE KAROB'S MELTED ALL OVER THE PHRASE-BOX.

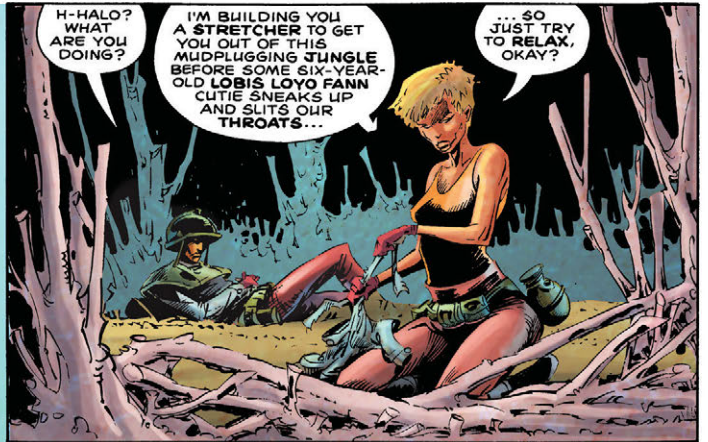
6-A Soldier's Things

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The Ballad Of HALO JONES

WHILE CHANGING PVT. MOLTO'S DRESSING, PVT. JONES NOTICED THAT THE FOOT WOUND WAS BECOMING INFECTED. SHE CLEANED THE WOUND, BUT HAD NO STERILISED DRESSING.

AFTER ANOTHER HOUR'S WALKING, MOLTO WAS TOO ILL TO CONTINUE.



H-HALO? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I'M BUILDING YOU A STRETCHER TO GET YOU OUT OF THIS MUDPLUGGING JUNGLE BEFORE SOME SIX-YEAR-OLD LOBIS LOYO FANN CUTIE SNEAKS UP AND SLITS OUR THROATS...

... SO JUST TRY TO RELAX, OKAY?



Y'KNOW... THIS FEELS FUNNY. BEING LAID UP LIKE THIS. I FEEL... I DUNNO. I FEEL LIKE THERE'S STUFF I SHOULD BE SAYING...

STUFF YOU DON'T TALK ABOUT EXCEPT WHEN YOU'RE LIKE THIS.

WHAT KIND OF STUFF?



I... I DUNNO. I THINK I'M SOMETIMES NOT A VERY HONEST PERSON. I MEAN, I... I SHOW OFF A LOT AND ACT TOUGH...

TOY, I'VE NEVER THOUGHT YOU...

SHUT UP. I KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING.



I'M BIG, AND I'M LOUD, AND I NEVER LET ANYBODY KNOW WHAT I'M FEELING. SOMETIMES IT'S SO DIFFICULT...

I... I REALLY LIKE YOU, HALO.

WELL SURE, I LIKE YOU TOO, TOY. YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND.



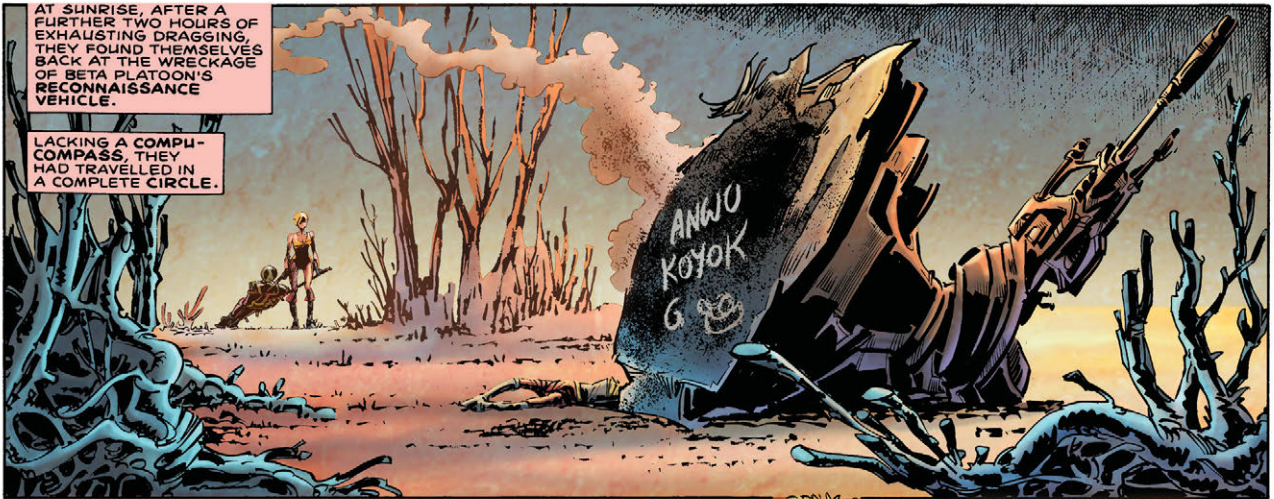
SURE.

BEST FRIENDS. THAT'S WHAT I MEANT.

LASHING TOGETHER BRANCHES WITH STRIPS OF CLOTH, PVT. JONES CONSTRUCTED A CRUDE STRETCHER, AND THE PAIR CONTINUED THROUGH THE PETRIFIED JUNGLE.

AT SUNRISE, AFTER A FURTHER TWO HOURS OF EXHAUSTING DRAGGING, THEY FOUND THEMSELVES BACK AT THE WRECKAGE OF BETA PLATOON'S RECONNAISSANCE VEHICLE.

LACKING A COMPU-COMPASS, THEY HAD TRAVELLED IN A COMPLETE CIRCLE.



PVT. JONES NOTED THAT DURING THE NIGHT, LOBIS LOYO FANN CORPSE-MONGERS HAD STRIPPED THEIR COMRADES' BODIES OF WEAPONS AND VALUABLES.



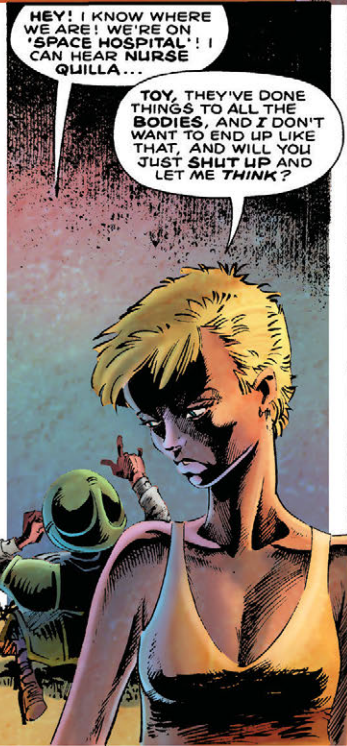
FURTHERMORE, BODIES HAD BEEN... TAMPERED WITH... AND ANTI-TERRAN MESSAGES SPRAYED ON THE WRECKAGE.



HALO...? I CAN SMELL BURNING - IT MUST BE THE ROBOT DOG, STILL ALIVE INSIDE THE FURNACE.

WH-WHAT? TOY, YOU'RE DRIFTING. THAT WAS YEARS AGO, ON THE CLARA PANDY...

TOY, LISTEN. WE'RE BACK AT THE WRECKAGE. I'M LOST.



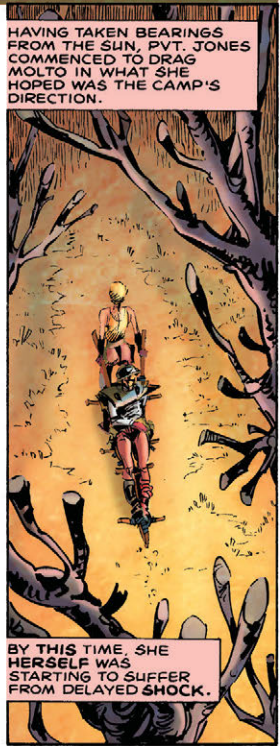
HEY! I KNOW WHERE WE ARE! WE'RE ON 'SPACE HOSPITAL'! I CAN HEAR NURSE QUILLA...

TOY, THEY'VE DONE THINGS TO ALL THE BODIES, AND I DON'T WANT TO END UP LIKE THAT, AND WILL YOU JUST SHUT UP AND LET ME THINK?



WAIT. WAIT... THE SUN'S UP NOW, SO THAT'S EAST OVER THERE. WE HAVE TO GO THE OTHER WAY... FOLLOW THE VEHICLE TRACKS BACK TO BASE...

NURSE QUILLA'S TALKING TO DR. ZAR ABOUT ME. SHE SOUNDS CONFIDENT.



HAVING TAKEN BEARINGS FROM THE SUN, PVT. JONES COMMENCED TO DRAG MOLTO IN WHAT SHE HOPED WAS THE CAMP'S DIRECTION.

BY THIS TIME, SHE HERSELF WAS STARTING TO SUFFER FROM DELAYED SHOCK.



TOY? I KNOW WE'RE GOING THE RIGHT WAY. I CAN SEE THE TRACKS REALLY CLEARLY, LIKE THEY'RE PAINTED ON THE GROUND...

"IGNORE IT, YOU'RE DOIN' FINE."

DO YOU THINK I AM? I FEEL SO DISTANT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN SCARED OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENING TO ME, BUT NOW IT'S HERE AND I'M JUST COPING WITH IT.



"IT'S GOOD COMBAT EXPERIENCE, HALO."



HOY... THAT'S RIGHT! GENERAL CANNIBAL SAID THAT COMBAT EXPERIENCE WAS MORE PRECIOUS THAN WATER OUT HERE.

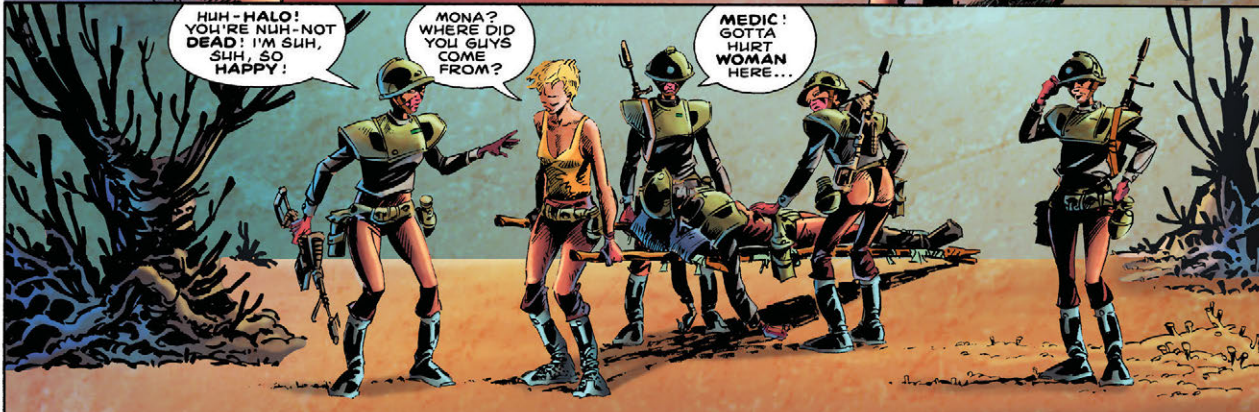
"THAT'S WHAT HE SAID, ALL RIGHT. YOU LIKED HIM, DIDN'T YOU, HALO?"



NO! NO, I DIDN'T LIKE HIM! THOSE TUGKS...

ANYWAY, LISTEN, ARE YOU TRYING TO INSINUATE SOMETHING? HUH? BECAUSE IF YOU ARE...

HOY! I FOUND 'EM! IT'S JONES AND MOLTO!



HUH-HALO! YOU'RE NUH-NOT DEAD! I'M SUH, SUH, SO HAPPY!

MONA? WHERE DID YOU GLYS COME FROM?

MEDIC! GOTTA HURT WOMAN HERE...



WE'VE BEEN SUH-SEARCHING FOR YOU, ARE YOU WUH-WOUNDED?

BUT I HAD TO DRAG TOY ON A STRETCHER.

HMM. THAT'S TOUGH. HOW LONG AGO DID SHE DIE?

NO. NO, I'M FINE...

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO, BUT I MADE HER.



WHAT?



I SAID, HOW LONG AGO DID SHE DIE? LOOKS LIKE THIS POISONED FOOT IS WHAT TOOK HER OUT ...

DON'T BE STUPID! SHE'S NOT DEAD! I WAS JUST TALKING TO HER!



OH.

OH, POOR HALO...

DON'T YOU KNOW YOUR JOB? WHAT KINDA MEDIC ARE YOU? SHE'S FINE! ANYBODY CAN SEE THAT!



STAY AWAY FROM HER!
YOU STAY AWAY FROM HER, YOU USELESS INCOMPETENT PIECE OF TRASH!

HEY, PRIVATE, EASY...



UH-OH. PSYCH-OUT. BETTER GIVE HER THE TRANXPIKE.



JUST RELAX. THIS WON'T HURT...

TOY?
TOY, COME ON! THEY DON'T REALISE YOU'RE JESTERING! JUST OPEN YOUR EYES, YOU IDIOT!



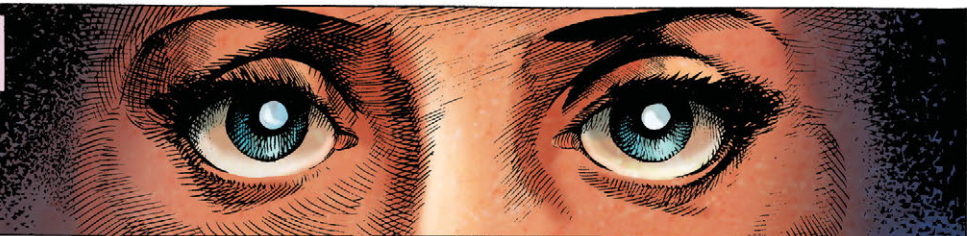
FINAL ANALYSIS: PVT. MOLTO KILLED IN ACTION - PVT. JONES STILL UNDER SEDATION. PVT. MOLTO'S EFFECTS (1 PAIR WRIST EXPANDERS, 1 COPY 'THIS SEASON'S SOAPS' HOLOGUIDE) HAVE BEEN SIGNED OVER TO PVT. JONES.

NEXT PROG:

LEAVETAKING

REPORT ENDS.

... AND THEN I WAKE UP, AND IT WAS ALL A TERRIBLE DREAM.



TOY!
YOU'RE ALIVE!

I DREAMED YOU WERE DEAD! WE WERE AMBUSHED, AND YOU WERE HURT, AND WHEN I GOT YOU BACK TO BASE YOU WERE ALREADY DEAD!

BASE? WHAT BASE? WHAT WE'RE ABOARD THE CLARA PANDY, ON CHARLEMAGNE.

THE CLARA PANDY? BUT... I WAS OLDER. WE WERE IN THE ARMY... IT WAS ALL SO REAL...

HUH! SAME OLD JONES. ALWAYS DAYDREAMIN' ABOUT SOMETHIN'.

R-RODICE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

WE AGREED TO MEET ON CHARLEMAGNE. DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

I AM SO HAPPY, RODICE IS HERE! SHE MADE IT! WE ALL DANCE AROUND IN A CIRCLE...

... AND THEN I WAKE UP.

AND TOY IS DEAD.

AND I CRY MY GUTS OUT.

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7: Leavetaking

The Ballad Of

HALO JONES



AFTER THE TEARS STOP I KEEP MAKING BIG, LIGLY, WOUNDED NOISES IN MY CHEST.

I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

I REMEMBER SCREAMING AND SCRATCHING AND BITING UNTIL THEY TRANQUILIZED ME AND PUT ME INTO A RESTRAINING VEST.

I WAS SHOUTING "I WANT OUT! I WANT OUT!" ... OVER AND OVER AGAIN.



AFTER THE TRANQUILIZERS TOOK HOLD I WAS MORE REASONABLE, BUT I STILL WANTED OUT OF THE ARMY. I COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.

WHILE I WAS SIGNING MY RELEASE PAPERS, GENERAL CANNIBAL CAME IN.



HE ASKED ME TO STAY IN THE ARMY, AND PUT ONE MASSIVE HAND UPON MY SHOULDER.

I SHOOK MY HEAD AND COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING. EVENTUALLY HE LEFT ME ALONE.



I TOLD THE WOMAN BEHIND THE RELEASE DESK THAT I WAS THROUGH...

THROUGH? GIRLY, YOU'RE NOT THROUGH! YOU'RE JUST ON LEAVE. IT MIGHT BE SIX DAYS OR SIX WEEKS OR SIX MONTHS, BUT IT'S LEAVE...

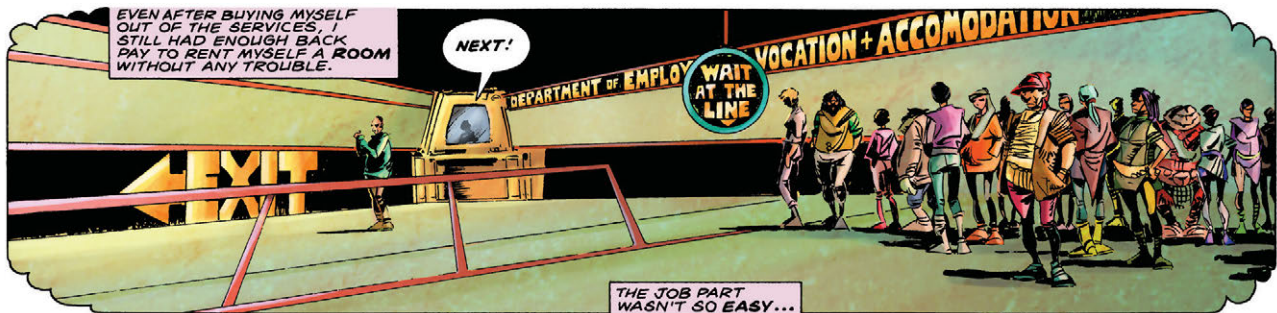
... AND THAT'S ALL IT IS.



I WAS STILL WONDERING WHAT SHE MEANT EIGHT HOURS LATER WHEN THE TRANQUILIZERS WORE OFF, AND I FOUND MYSELF ON A STREETCORNER OF THE PLANET HISPIUS.

WITHOUT A HOME.

WITHOUT A JOB.



EVEN AFTER BUYING MYSELF OUT OF THE SERVICES, I STILL HAD ENOUGH BACK PAY TO RENT MYSELF A ROOM WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE.

NEXT!

WAIT AT THE LINE

THE JOB PART WASN'T SO EASY...



LET'S SEE... JONES, HALO, 28 YEARS, LEFT LAST EMPLOYMENT OF OWN FREE WILL...

IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD, I'M AFRAID. DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL SKILLS THAT YOU'VE ACQUIRED?



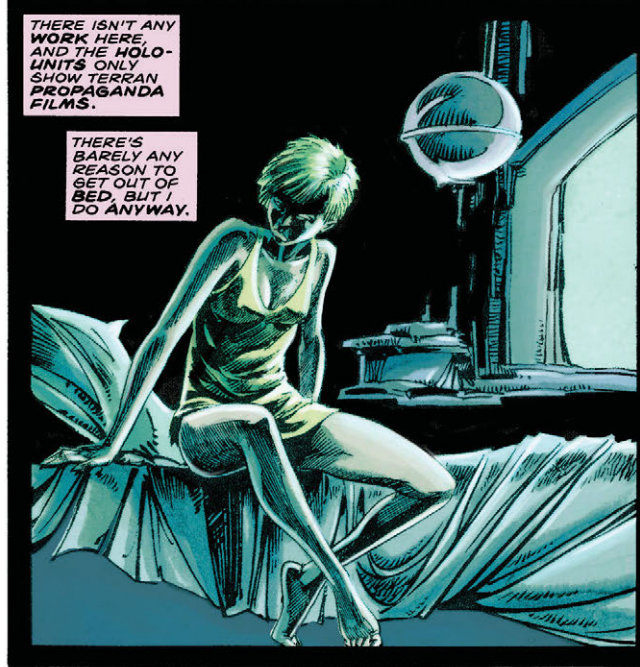
WELL, I CAN LOCATE THE MARKOV POINT IN AN ENEMY'S HARD LIGHT SCREEN AND PUNCH AN ELECTROPIC DOWN THROUGH IT INTO HER LIVING BRAIN.

ALSO, I CAN BLIND PEOPLE WITH MY THUMBS.



HMMM.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE ARMY?



THERE ISN'T ANY WORK HERE AND THE HOLO-UNITS ONLY SHOW TERRAN PROPAGANDA FILMS.

THERE'S BARELY ANY REASON TO GET OUT OF BED, BUT I DO ANYWAY.



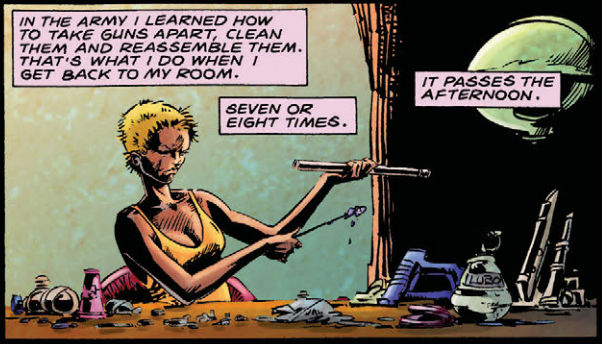
AFTER BREAKFAST, I CHOP OFF ALL MY HAIR WITH A BLUNT KNIFE. I JUST FEEL LIKE DOING SOMETHING UGLY AND PAINFUL AND STUPID.

I WONDER IF THEY SELL CATSBLOOD ON HISPUS?



I GO OUT AND BUY A GUN, SECOND-HAND. I TELL MYSELF IT'S FOR SELF-DEFENCE, BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE.

IT'S BECAUSE I'M BORED.



IN THE ARMY I LEARNED HOW TO TAKE GUNS APART, CLEAN THEM AND REASSEMBLE THEM. THAT'S WHAT I DO WHEN I GET BACK TO MY ROOM.

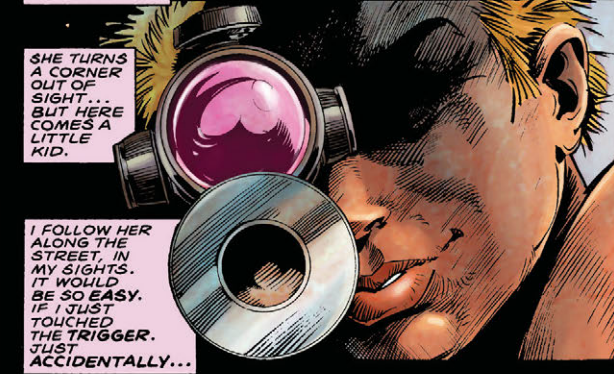
SEVEN OR EIGHT TIMES.

IT PASSES THE AFTERNOON.



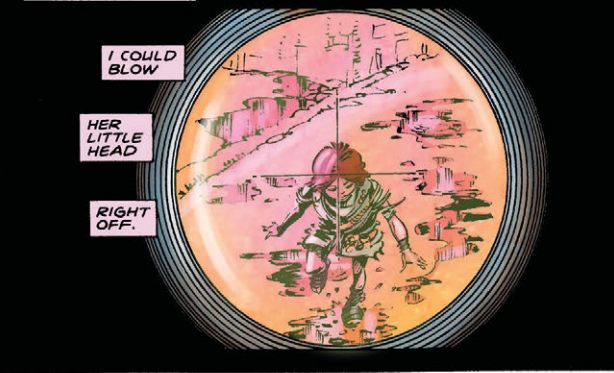
WHEN I GET BORED WITH THAT, I TAKE THE GUN AND GO SIT BY THE WINDOW.

THERE'S AN OLD WOMAN IN THE STREET BELOW. I SIGHT THE CROSS-HAIRS UPON HER... JUST IN FLIN.



SHE TURNS A CORNER OUT OF SIGHT... BUT HERE COMES A LITTLE KID.

I FOLLOW HER ALONG THE STREET, IN MY SIGHTS. IT WOULD BE SO EASY. IF I JUST TOUCHED THE TRIGGER. JUST ACCIDENTALLY...



I COULD BLOW

HER LITTLE HEAD

RIGHT OFF.



UUUUUUUGH!
NO!

NO!!

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? I'M GOING CRAZY, AND I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE...



... BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE I CAN GO.

OKAY, WHO'S NEXT FOR ENLISTMENT? LET'S HAVE YOUR NAME AND PAPERS, PLEASE.

IT'S A WOMAN'S LIFE IN THE MODERN ARMY!



HALO...
WHAT? C'MON, SPIT IT OUT. I DON'T HAVE ALL DAY...



JONES.

HALO JONES.



OH...
SO LEAVE'S OVER, HUH?
YOU SHOULDN'T FEEL SO BAD, GIRLY...

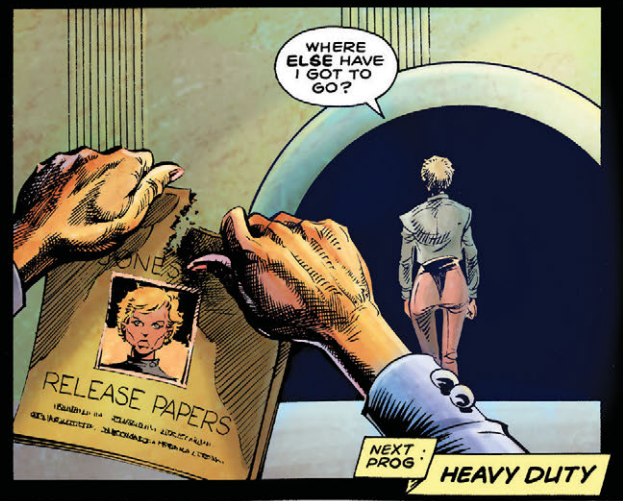
IT'S A WOMAN'S LIFE IN THE MODERN ARMY!



AFTER ALL, YOU'RE NOT ALONE. OVER 90% OF PEOPLE WHO LEAVE THE SERVICES PREMATURELY RE-ENLIST. WHERE ELSE HAVE THEY GOT TO GO?

NOW, ARE YOU GOING TO RUN ALONG AND COLLECT YOUR UNIFORM?

OF COURSE.



WHERE ELSE HAVE I GOT TO GO?

NEXT PROG. **HEAVY DUTY**

AHH... PRIVATE JONES. I HEAR YOU LEFT THEN RE-ENLISTED. WELL, OKAY... IT HAPPENS. WELCOME BACK TO BETA PLATOON.

YOU DON'T KNOW ME... I'M SERGEANT JUNO MYRMIDON, REPLACING THE LATE SERGEANT KRAUSE AS UNIT COMMANDER.

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Credit Card!
SCRIPT ROBOT ALAN MOORE
ART ROBOT IAN GIBSON
LETTERING ROBOT STARKINGS
COMPU-73f

YOU'LL FIND A FEW NEW FACES AROUND HERE...

MOST OF GAMMA GOT WIPED OUT IN LOBIS LOYO FANN SHELLING AND THE SURVIVORS HAVE BEEN PLACED WITH BETA, REPLACING OUR OWN CASUALTIES. IT'S THROUGH HERE...

YEAH. I KNOW.

H-HALO! YOU'RE B-BACK! TH-THEY SAID YOU WERE CUH-COMING, BUT I WUH-WASN'T SURE... OH, IT'S SO G-GOOD TO S-SEE YOU!

HELLO MONA.

I CUT IT.

UH... W-WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAIR?

OH, W-WELL, IT'S V-VERY NICE.

YOU'RE BACK J-JUST IN TIME.

BETA P-P-PLATOON'S BEING M-MOVED FROM WARZONE EIGHTEEN TO THE P-PLANET MOAB...

GREAT. I COULD LIKE THE BREAK.

HOW DOES MOAB RATE? IS IT WARZONE NINETEEN, TWENTY, SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

M-MOAB? OH GOOD G-GRAVITY, NO!

MOAB'S WUH-WARZONE ONE.

KRAI!

TISSH!

The Ballad Of

HALO JONES

8: Heavy Duty

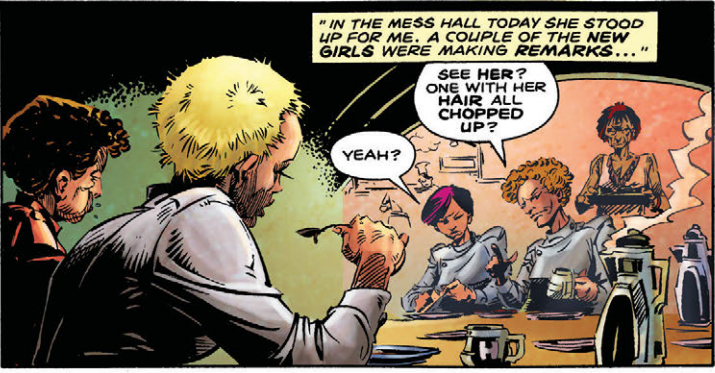
"WARZONE ONE. MOAB. THE MOST BATTLE-BUSTED WORLD IN THE WHOLE OF TARANTULA. THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING."

"WELCOME BACK TO BETA PLATOON, HALO JONES. (BIG JOKE. HA HA.)"



"THE PLATOON'S CHANGED WHILE I WAS AWAY. 'LIFE SENTENCE' IS ONE OF THE WOMEN FROM GAMMA PLATOON WHO'VE BEEN MOVED TO BETA."

"SHE STILL WEARS HER NECKLACE."



"IN THE MESS HALL TODAY SHE STOOD UP FOR ME. A COUPLE OF THE NEW GIRLS WERE MAKING REMARKS..."

"SEE HER? ONE WITH HER HAIR ALL CHOPPED UP?"

"YEAH?"



"THAT'S JONES. WENT COMBAT CRAZY AND SCALPED HERSELF. DISGRACE TO THE UNIFORM. SOME-BODY OUGHTA..."

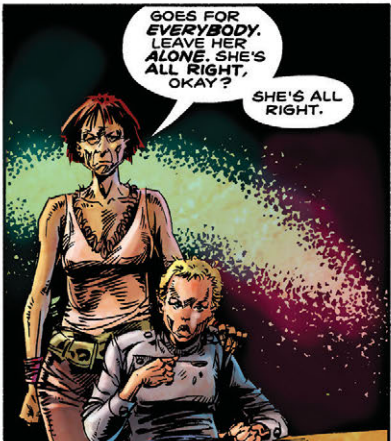
"UHH..."

"WHAT DO YOU WANT?"



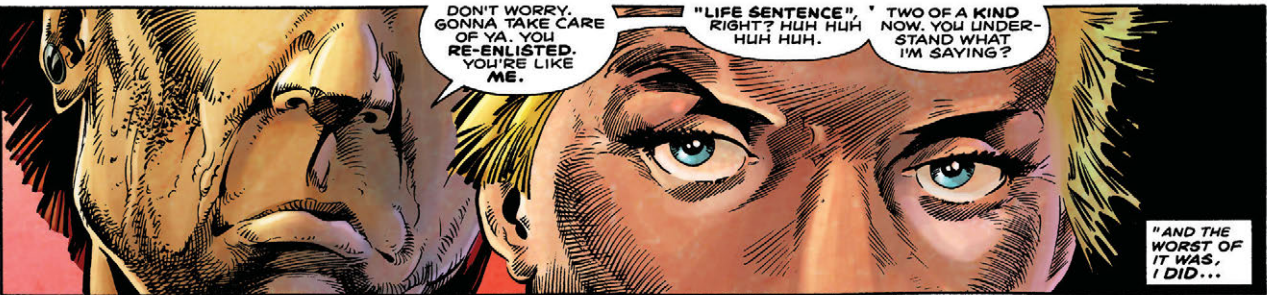
"I WANT YOU TO SHUT YOUR MOUTHS."

AAAAA



"GOES FOR EVERYBODY. LEAVE HER ALONE. SHE'S ALL RIGHT, OKAY?"

"SHE'S ALL RIGHT."



"DON'T WORRY. GONNA TAKE CARE OF YA. YOU RE-ENLISTED. YOU'RE LIKE ME."

"LIFE SENTENCE" RIGHT? HUH HUH HUH HUH.

"TWO OF A KIND NOW. YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING?"

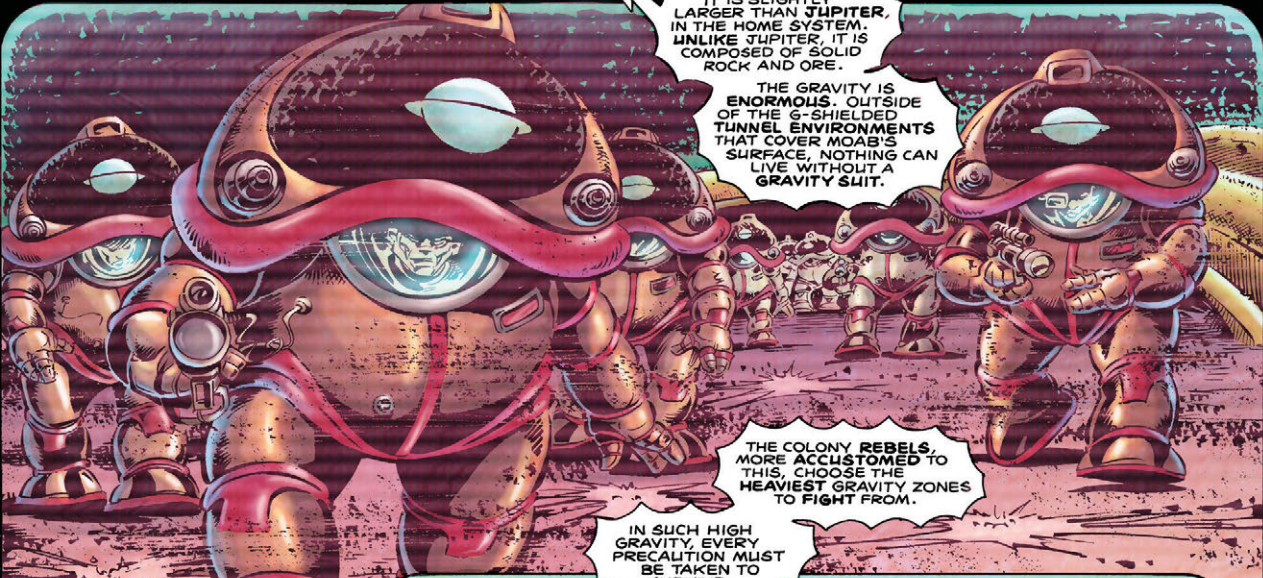
"AND THE WORST OF IT WAS, I DID..."

"... BUT I STILL DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT MOAB. NOT EVEN AFTER THE HOLO-REEL THEY SHOWED US."

MOAB, WAR-ZONE ONE, IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST NON-GASEOUS PLANET SO FAR ENCOUNTERED BY HUMANITY.



MOAB
THE BIGGER
THEY ARE
THEY FALL



IT IS SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN JUPITER, IN THE HOME SYSTEM. UNLIKE JUPITER, IT IS COMPOSED OF SOLID ROCK AND ORE.

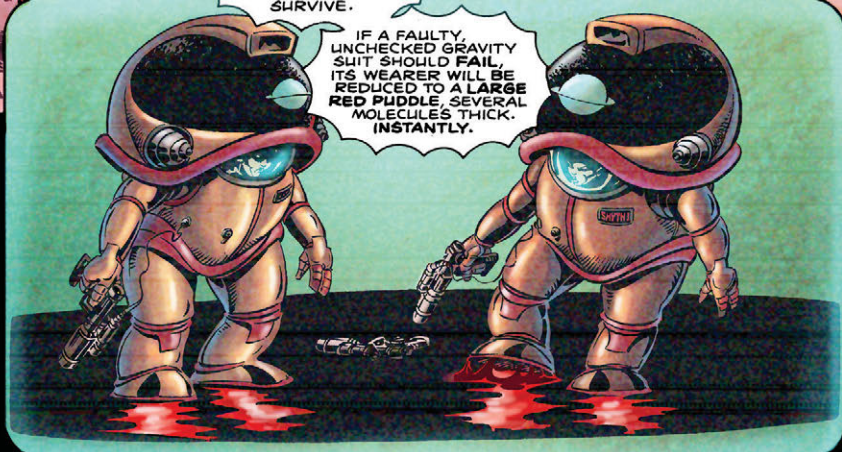
THE GRAVITY IS ENORMOUS. OUTSIDE OF THE G-SHIELDED TUNNEL ENVIRONMENTS THAT COVER MOAB'S SURFACE, NOTHING CAN LIVE, WITHOUT A GRAVITY SUIT.

THE COLONY REBELS, MORE ACCUSTOMED TO THIS, CHOSE THE HEAVIEST GRAVITY ZONES TO FIGHT FROM.

IN SUCH HIGH GRAVITY, EVERY PRECAUTION MUST BE TAKEN TO SURVIVE.

BUT THE MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF MOAB'S GRAVITY IS ITS EFFECT ON TIME. ACCORDING TO BOTH EINSTEIN AND KLEMPERER, TIME IS A PRODUCT OF GRAVITY. THEREFORE...

"THAT WAS AROUND THE POINT WHERE I STOPPED LISTENING."



IF A FAULTY, UNCHECKED GRAVITY SUIT SHOULD FAIL, ITS WEARER WILL BE REDUCED TO A LARGE RED PUDDLE, SEVERAL MOLECULES THICK. INSTANTLY.

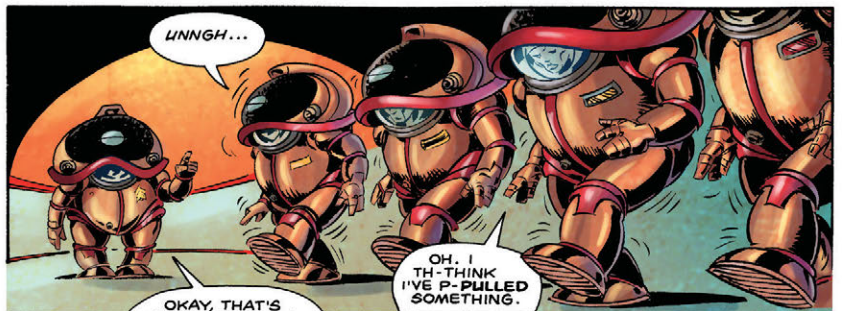
"SCIENCE. WHO NEEDS IT?"





"TWO DAYS LATER NOW, THIS MORNING THEY LET US TRY OUT THE GRAVITY SUITS, READY FOR MOAB..."

OKAY, WOMEN. FIRST, LIFT YOUR LEFT FEET...



LUNNGH...

OH, I TH-THINK I'VE P-PULLED SOMETHING.

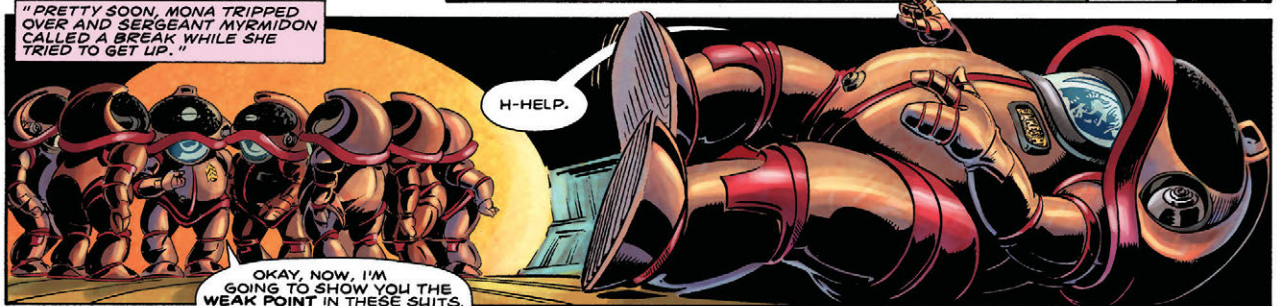


OKAY, THAT'S VERY GOOD. NOW PUT THEM DOWN IN FRONT OF YOU.

FINE, YOU'VE TAKEN A STEP.

NOW LIFT YOUR RIGHT FEET...

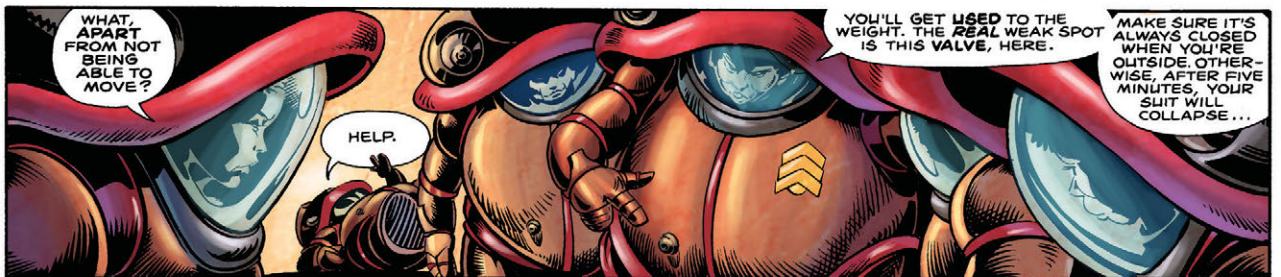
KLUNNNNG



"PRETTY SOON, MONA TRIPPED OVER AND SERGEANT MYRMIDON CALLED A BREAK WHILE SHE TRIED TO GET UP."

H-HELP.

OKAY, NOW, I'M GOING TO SHOW YOU THE WEAK POINT IN THESE SUITS.



WHAT, APART FROM NOT BEING ABLE TO MOVE?

HELP.

YOU'LL GET USED TO THE WEIGHT. THE REAL WEAK SPOT IS THIS VALVE, HERE.

MAKE SURE IT'S ALWAYS CLOSED WHEN YOU'RE OUTSIDE. OTHERWISE, AFTER FIVE MINUTES, YOUR SUIT WILL COLLAPSE...



... AND THEY'LL SEND YOU HOME TO MOTHER ON A SHEET OF BLOTTING PAPER.

H-HELP!

"ACCORDING TO SERGEANT MYRMIDON, ON MOAB I'LL WEIGH SEVERAL HUNDRED TONS, SO I SKIPPED DESSERT TODAY, TO COMPENSATE ..."



"TOMORROW WE LEAVE WARZONE EIGHTEEN FOR MOAB. GENERAL CANNIBAL HAS BEEN HERE TODAY, SUPERVISING THINGS."

"I MET HIM THIS EVENING AS I HEADED OUT FOR A LAST DRINK AT THE BAR IN ROLTIP DHIM..."



GOOD EVENING, PRIVATE JONES. IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, SUCH AN UNUSUAL NAME. I SEE YOU'VE DECIDED TO RE-ENLIST, BUT TELL ME...

WHY HAVE YOU CUT OFF YOUR HAIR?

BECAUSE I WANTED TO MAKE MYSELF LOOK UGLY.



UGLY? BUT WHY SHOULD YOU WISH TO LOOK UGLY?



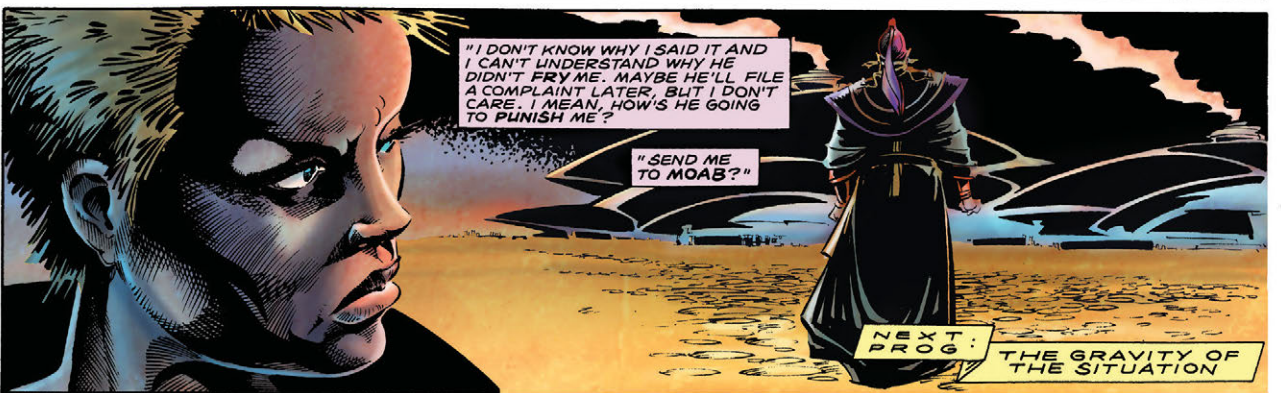
WELL, YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE IMPLANTED THINGS. YOU TELL ME!



HA HA HA HA HA HA!

VERY GOOD. SPLENDID. PERHAPS I WILL TELL YOU, ONE OF THESE DAYS.

GOOD NIGHT, PRIVATE JONES. I SHALL SEE YOU ON MOAB. HA HA HA HA!



"I DON'T KNOW WHY I SAID IT AND I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE DIDN'T FRY ME. MAYBE HE'LL FILE A COMPLAINT LATER, BUT I DON'T CARE. I MEAN, HOW'S HE GOING TO PUNISH ME?"

"SEND ME TO MOAB?"

NEXT PROG: THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION

THE LANDING SHIPS WERE BIG, PADDED THINGS: TWO-THIRDS SHOCK ABSORBER. THIS IS BECAUSE ON MOAB, YOU DON'T MAKE SOFT LANDINGS. IT'S A GIANT PLANET.



YOU ONLY HAVE TO GET WITHIN REACH OF IT...



... AND THE GIANT HUGS YOU TO ITS BREAST HARD ENOUGH TO DRIVE THE WIND FROM YOUR LUNGS.

DESPITE THE IMPACT, OUR LANDING WAS SILENT. SOUND WAVES AREN'T FAST ENOUGH TO ESCAPE THE GRAVITY HERE.



A HUGE G-SHIELDED SURFACE CRAWLER CAME AND FERRIED US TO THE TUNNEL-SYSTEMS ENTRANCE.



IT WAS FUNNY... EVERYBODY'S CLOCKS AND WATCHES HAD STOPPED. WE FIGURED IT WAS THE LANDING IMPACT (WHICH BROKE MONA'S BIG TOE).



ON THE CRAWLER WE MET OUR FIRST MOABITE FRIENDLIES. THEY'RE ALL SORT OF PEAR-SHAPED, AS IF THEIR BODY FAT HAS SETTLED.

ALSO, THEY ALL BELONG TO AN ANCIENT TERRESTRIAL PURITAN CULT THAT FORBIDS EVERYTHING.



THIS PLACE REALLY LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE A WHOLE LOT OF FUN.

The Ballad Of HALO JONES

9: The Gravity Of The Situation

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SCRIPT ROBOT
ALAN MOORE
ART ROBOT
IAN GIBSON
LETTERING ROBOT
STARRINGS
COMPU-73c



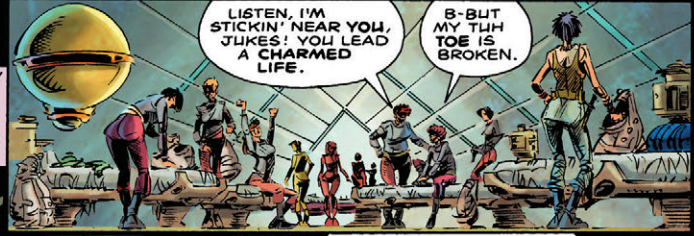
OBVIOUSLY, THE RELIGION ON MOAB ARRIVED WITH THE COLONISTS. THEY ALL CARRY THIS "BLACK BOOK" THING FULL OF VIOLENT, FRIGHTENING STORIES, LONG SINCE BANNED ON EARTH.

APPARENTLY, THEY TAKE THEIR NAME FROM SOME ANCIENT TRIBE.

THIS TRIBE WERE DESCENDANTS OF LOT. LOT WAS SOME GUY WHOSE WIFE TURNED INTO A PILLAR OF SALT BECAUSE SHE LOOKED BACK AT SOMETHING OR OTHER.

I GUESS EVERYBODY HAS TO BELIEVE SOMETHING.

AROUND OUR NEW BARRACKS. A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE STARTED BELIEVING IN MONA JUKE'S, OF ALL PEOPLE...



LISTEN, I'M STICKIN' NEAR YOU, JUKE'S! YOU LEAD A CHARMED LIFE.

B-BUT MY TUH TOE IS BROKEN.



WHO CARES? LISTEN... ON LOBIS LOYO, YOU SURVIVED A SNIPER, AND REPORTED SICK THE NIGHT YOUR PLATOON GOT DECIMATED!

YOU'RE THE SORT WHO COMES OUT OF WARS UNSCATHED. YOU'RE NATURALLY LUCKY!



I-I AM?

SURE YOU ARE. I DUNNO... YOU JUST SORTA RADIATE GOOD FOR-TUNE...

HOY, YOU GUYS! I JUST BEEN THROUGH THE MESS COMPLEX, AN' THEY GOT MEN SERVING HERE ON MOAB!

MEN? CHEESES, I REMEMBER THOSE!



W-W-WAIT! I C-CAN'T WALK. SOMEBODY G-GIVE ME A HAND.

D-DON'T LEAVE ME BEHIND. I'M N-NATURALLY LUCKY!

MONA NEEDN'T HAVE WORRIED. MOAB'S PASSAGeways ARE SO COMPLICATED, FINDING THE MESS COMPLEX TOOK FOREVER, EVEN WITHOUT A BROKEN TOE.

A TUNNEL SOCIETY, SHUT AWAY FROM THE LIGHT, IT REMINDS ME OF THE HOOP.



REALLY, WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THERE'D BE MEN HERE. THIS IS WARZONE ONE. THEY NEED EVERYBODY.

IT'S THE KEY PLANET IN EARTH'S CAMPAIGN. IF MOAB FALLS TO EARTH, SO DOES THE WHOLE TARANTULA NEBULA ...



... WHEREUPON WE CAN MINE AND EXPORT TARANTULA'S MINERAL WEALTH INSTEAD OF EARTH'S WATER, WHICH THE DOLPHIN STEERSMEN SAY WE CAN'T SELL ANYMORE.

AFTER THAT, GALACTIC ECONOMY RECOVERS AND EVERYBODY'S HAPPY. AT LEAST, THAT'S THE THEORY.



SO ANYWAY, THAT'S WHY WE NEED MEN ON MOAB. (AND BELIEVE ME, HAVING SEEN THE MEN IN QUESTION, THAT'S THE ONLY REASON!)

HUH! Z'BUNCHA WIMMEN.

HUH. SAY, O' YOUZE WIMMEN BRING ANY NEAT WEAPONS WIT YA?



HUH. SEE DIS FACE? ALL DESE SCARS? I MUSTA BEEN IN TWO-HUNNED FIFTY FIGHTS, EASY.

YEAH, WELL, DON'T GET DIS-COURAGED. NOBODY LOSES ALL THE TIME.

THE MALE SOLDIERS WERE SLABS ... SPECIAL LABOUR AUXILIARY, BIO-ENGINEERED.



I'D SEEN THE REGULAR WORKER-SLABS BEFORE, BUT THE MILITARY MODEL WAS NEW ON ME. I CAN'T SAY I CARE FOR IT.



LIKEWISE THE TARANTULAN FOOD, WITH ALL THAT CONGEALED MAMMARY FLUID CHEESE STUFF. UGGH.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IF I HADN'T BEEN SO DISGUSTED WITH THE FOOD, I WOULDN'T BE WRITING THIS NOW...



WHAT ARE THESE?

EGGS, FRIED. YOU WANT SOME?

EGGS? WHAT, YOU MEAN, FROM OUT OF SOME ANIMAL'S OVARIES? YOU MEAN... TO EAT?

ARE YOU JESTERING ME?

NO JOKE. SEE... EGGS OVER THERE. NOW, YOU WANT SOME OR NOT?



NO! OF COURSE I DON'T! WHAT DO YOU THINK I...?

UH... ARE THEY ALL SUPPOSED TO BE CRACKED LIKE THAT?



CRACKED? ARE YOU CRAZY? THOSE EGGS AREN'T...
...CRACKED...



GET OUT! EVERYBODY GET OUT! THE GRAVITY SHIELDS ARE FAILING!



AW NO. AW NO. LEMME OLUDDA HERE!

I KNEW IT! I STARTED TO GET A HEADACHE AND I KNEW IT!



THE SIRENS STARTED AS EVERYBODY RAN FOR THE EXIT. I FELT A TERRIBLE PRESSURE, IN MY HEAD, ON MY BODY...

BEHIND ME, AS THE GRAVITY SHIELDS FAILED, THE EGGS STARTED EXPLODING.



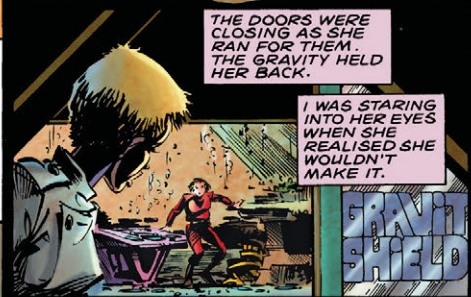


IT WAS LIKE A NIGHTMARE OF RUNNING WITH HEAVY LEGS. EVERYBODY WAS TRYING TO REACH THE EXIT BEFORE THE SHIELDED DOORS SEALED THE FAULT AREA OFF.



WE MET MONA, JUST ARRIVING.

THERE WAS ONE SOLDIER STUCK AT THE REAR ... A WOMAN I DIDN'T KNOW.

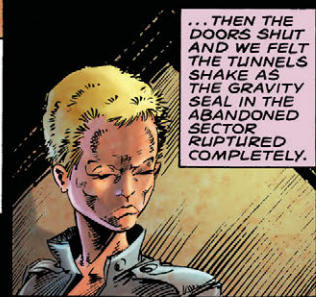


THE DOORS WERE CLOSING AS SHE RAN FOR THEM. THE GRAVITY HELD HER BACK.

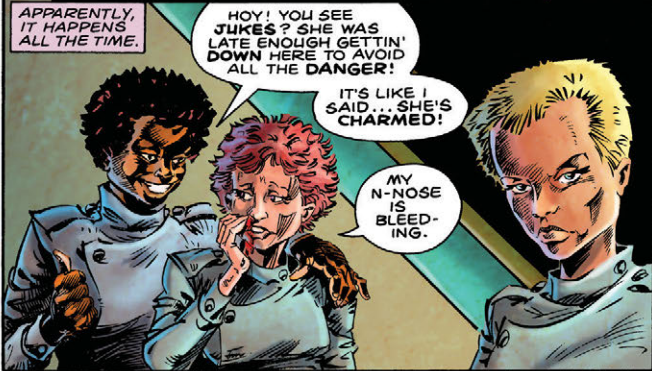
I WAS STARING INTO HER EYES WHEN SHE REALISED SHE WOULDN'T MAKE IT.



SHE TURNED AWAY FROM ME, TO WATCH THE EGGS EXPLODING...



... THEN THE DOORS SHUT AND WE FELT THE TUNNELS SHAKE AS THE GRAVITY SEAL IN THE ABANDONED SECTOR RUPTURED COMPLETELY.



APPARENTLY, IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.

HOY! YOU SEE JUKES? SHE WAS LATE ENOUGH GETTIN' DOWN HERE TO AVOID ALL THE DANGER!

IT'S LIKE I SAID... SHE'S CHARMED!

MY N-NOSE IS BLEEDING.



AS I HELPED MONA BACK TO THE BARRACKS WE PASSED LOT'S WIFE, LOOKING BACK AND TURNING TO SALT. AND I THOUGHT OF THE SOLDIER (SOMEONE ELSE'S WIFE?) TURNING BACK TO LOOK AT THE EGGS.



I WONDERED IF SOMEBODY WOULD START A RELIGION AROUND HER SOMEDAY. I GUESS NOT.

YOU CAN'T BUILD THE STATUE OF A SMEAR.

NEXT PROG THE CRUSH

The Ballad Of HALO JONES

10: The Crush

WARZONE ONE, MOAB. CURRICULUM OF DUTY, WEEK ONE: TUNNEL COMBAT (BASIC).

OKAY, WOMEN... THESE PASSAGEWAYS ARE NEUTRAL TERRITORY, BUT THEY'RE SHIELDED, SO WE DON'T NEED GRAVITY SUITS.

USING ELECTROMAPS, DOUBLE UP AND SEARCH THE TUNNELS FOR FREE MOABITE ARMY TERRORISTS. WE'LL RENDEZVOUS AT THE NEXT INTERSECTION.

JUKES, I'M GONNA DOUBLE UP WITH YOU! YOU'RE MY LUCKY MASCOT!

TH-TH-THAT'S NICE...

ME AN' JONES'LL TAKE THE SOUTH-WEST PASSAGES. OKAY, JONES?

UHH, SURE...

HOPIN' FOR SOME ACTION, JONES? MAYBE WE RUN INTO SOME F.M.A. TERRORISTS. HUH? WONDER WHAT KIND OF EARS THEY GOT.

SEE, I UNDERSTAND YOU, JONES. YOU NEEDED ACTION, LIKE ME, SO YOU RE-ENLISTED.

CIVILIAN LIFE AIN'T FOR US NO MORE. WE CAN'T TAKE ALL THE INACTION, ALL THE SILENCE. WE...

BADDAM!

WHAT...?

SARGE, I'M SORRY. I MET JUKES SUDDENLY IN THE TUNNELS. THOUGHT SHE WAS A TERRORIST AND SHOT HER.

ONLY IN THE FOOT, FORTUNATELY. WE'LL RETURN TO BARRACKS EARLY FOR MEDICATION.

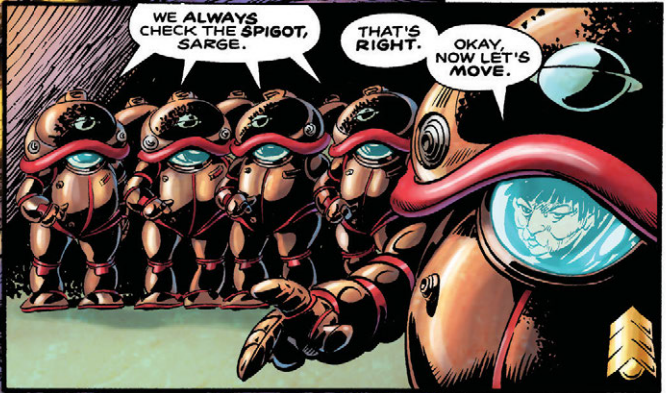
BOY! WHAT A STROKE OF LUCK!

2000AD
Credit Card:
 SCRIPT ROBERT ALAN MOORE
 ART ROBERT IAN GIBSON
 LETTERING ROBERT STARKINGS
 COMPU-73E

WEEK TWO: TUNNEL COMBAT (ADVANCED).

ALL RIGHT... THIS NEXT STRETCH OF TUNNEL HAS SOME BROKEN G-SHIELDS, SO WE NEED SUITS.

WHAT DO WE ALWAYS DO WHEN WE WEAR OUR G-SUITS?



WE ALWAYS CHECK THE SPIGOT, SARGE.

THAT'S RIGHT.

OKAY, NOW LET'S MOVE.



I SAID LET'S MOVE!

WE'RE T-T-TRYING!

YNNGH



NOW, IN THIS SECTION THERE'S NOTHING BETWEEN US AND MOAB'S NAKED GRAVITY.

NOTICE THE LARGE STAIN ON THE GROUND HERE. THIS WAS ONCE A SOLDIER, EITHER OURS OR THEIRS, WHOSE SUIT FAILED.

YURRGH.



SARGE, I FEEL SORT OF FUNNY. EVERYTHING SEEMS WEIRD AND SLOW AND UNREAL.

THAT'S THE TIME DILATION EFFECT. YOU'LL ADJUST TO IT, GIVEN ENOUGH OF THESE TRAINING EXERCISES.

AND AS FOR THIS PLACE BEING WEIRD...



JUST YOU WAIT TILL YOU'VE BEEN IN THE CRUSH.

JUST YOU WAIT.

WEEK THREE: EXTERNAL RECONNAISSANCE (BASIC).

WELL, AS YOU SEE, EVERYTHING'S PRETTY FLAT UP HERE.

THIS HOLE IN THE GROUND OVER HERE IS THE CRATER LEFT WHEN OUR MESS COMPLEX IMPLoded LAST MONTH.



SLAPPY, A HOLE IN THE GROUND. WHEN ARE WE GOING TO SEE OUR FIRST TERRORISTS? THIS PLACE IS BORING.



OH, I D-DON'T KNOW... SOME M-MOABITES EXPLAINED THEIR RUH RELIGION TO ME. IT'S V-VERY INTERESTING...

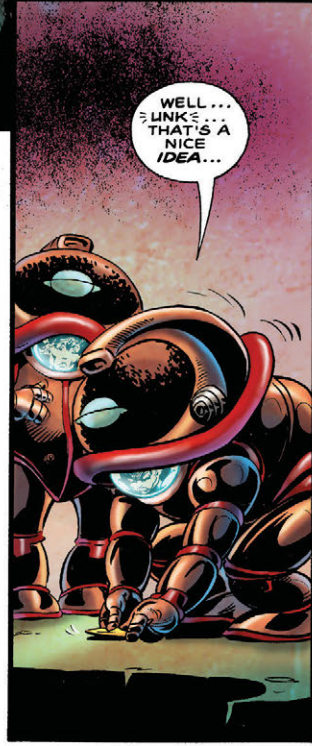
APPARENTLY THERE'S THIS G-G-GOD, AND WHEN YOU DIE, IF YOU'RE GUH GOOD, YOU F-FLOAT UP TO HIS REST RESORT IN THE SKY.

IF YOU'RE B-B-BAD, YOU SINK D-DOWN TO A T-TERRIBLE PLACE UNDER THE GROUND.

HMM.



WELL... I UNKE... THAT'S A NICE IDEA...



... BUT I CAN THINK OF BETTER PLACES TO TRY IT OUT.



WEEK FOUR: HEAVY GRAVITY ZONE ORIENTATION.

THERE ARE MORE THAN TWO DOZEN FLUKE HEAVY-GRAVITY ZONES ON MOAB, AND THE ONE NEAREST HERE IS THE WORST...

WE CALL IT THE CRUSH.



EINSTEIN PROVED THAT IN MANY WAYS, TIME IS A PRODUCT OF GRAVITY, AND IS AFFECTED BY IT.

YOU'VE SEEN HOW THE SUPER-GRAVITY HERE CRUSHES BUILDINGS AND PEOPLE...

WELL, IT CRUSHES TIME, TOO.



IS THAT WHY IT F-FEELS SO STRANGE IN THE UN-SHIELDED AREAS?

MY CHRONOMETER AIN'T WORKED RIGHT SINCE WE GOT HERE.



BOTH THESE PHENOMENA ARE LINKED TO THE CRUSH EFFECT, BUT ONLY IN ITS MILD FORMS.

MILDER FORMS? YOU MEAN THERE'S WORSE?

IN THE CRUSH, TIME FRACTURES COMPLETELY... WHICH IS WHY THE NATIVE MOABITE TERRORISTS CHOSE TO MAKE THEIR STAND THERE.



S'NO GOOD. I STILL CAN'T IMAGINE IT.

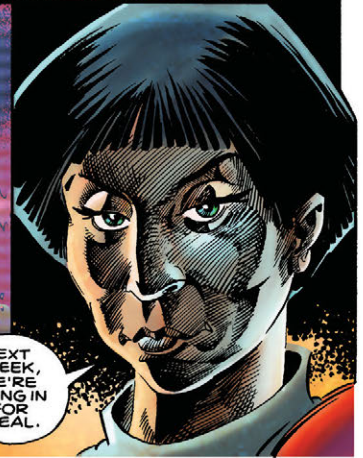
WELL, PERHAPS IT WOULD HELP IF I EXPLAINED THAT THIS STILL HOLO-SHOT BEHIND ME ISN'T A STILL AT ALL.

IT'S A MOVING HOLO-REEL OF SOLDIERS FIGHTING INSIDE THE CRUSH, AS SEEN FROM OUTSIDE.



AND IF YOU STILL CAN'T IMAGINE IT, DON'T WORRY, YOU WON'T HAVE TO.

NEXT WEEK, WE'RE GOING IN FOR REAL.



WEEK FIVE: EXTERNAL COMBAT (ADVANCED; THE CRUSH).

ONE MINUTE TO GO AND COUNTING. IS EVERYBODY READY?

JUKES, HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR SPIGOT?

OH! N-NO, I FUH FORGOT. I'LL DO IT NOW.

WELL, HURRY! THE SHIELD DOORS INTO THE CRUSH ARE ABOUT TO OPEN.

FORM A LINE AND GET READY TO MOVE, YOU WOMEN.

WORRIED, JONES?

NAH. AFTER ALL THIS SITTING AROUND, GETTING SOME ACTION WILL BE A RELIEF. I CAN HARDLY REMEMBER WHAT FIGHTING'S LIKE!

DOORS OPENING NOW! GO! GO! GO!

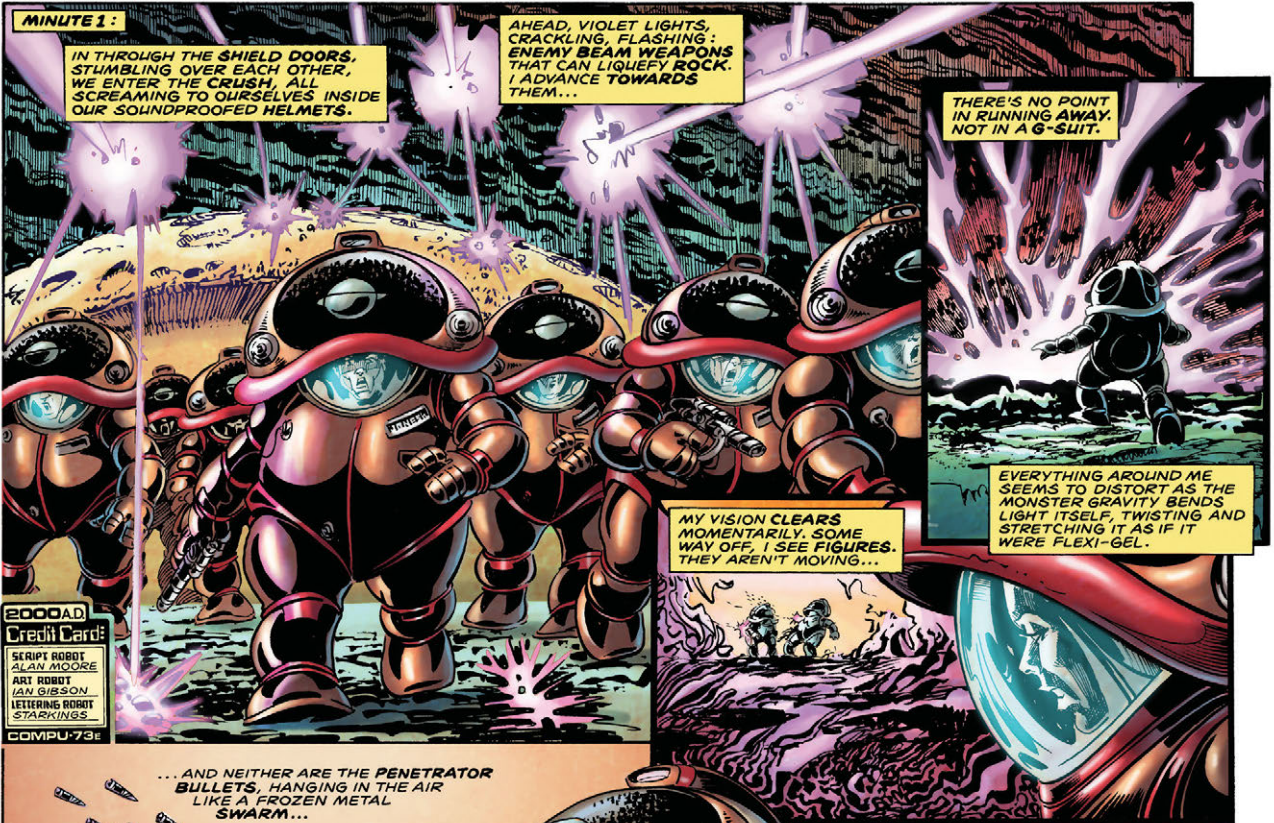
OH.
OH YEAH.
NOW I REMEMBER.

ZAMM!

ZAMM!

ZAMM!

NEXT PROG: SLOW DEATH



MINUTE 1:

IN THROUGH THE SHIELD DOORS, STUMBLING OVER EACH OTHER, WE ENTER THE CRUSH, ALL SCREAMING TO OURSELVES INSIDE OUR SOUNDPROOFED HELMETS.

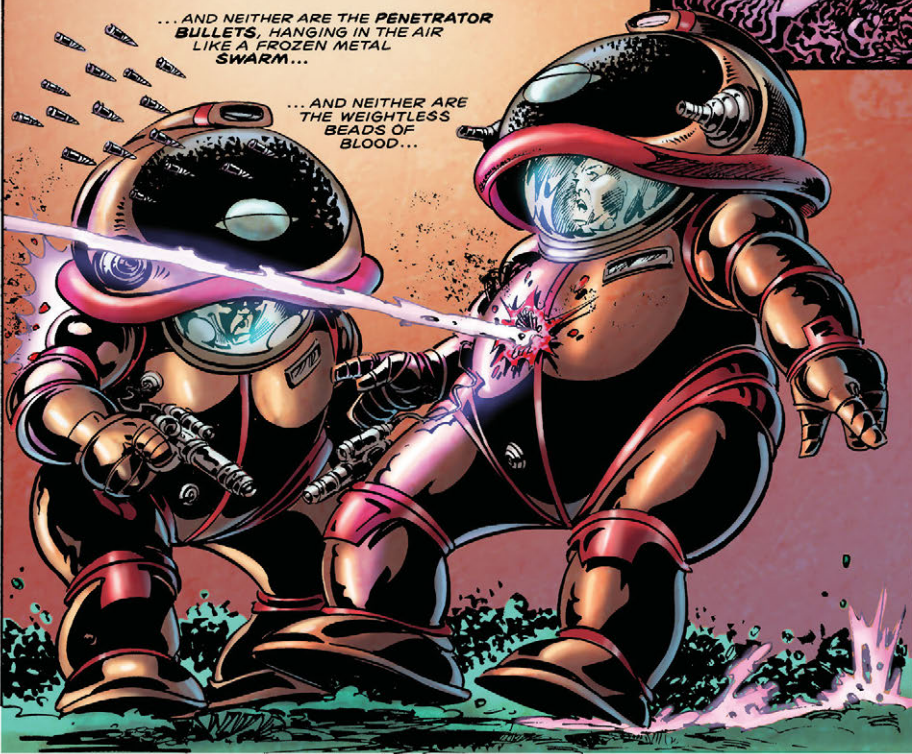
AHEAD, VIOLET LIGHTS, CRACKLING, FLASHING: ENEMY BEAM WEAPONS THAT CAN LIQUEFY ROCK. I ADVANCE TOWARDS THEM...

THERE'S NO POINT IN RUNNING AWAY. NOT IN A G-SUIT.

MY VISION CLEARS MOMENTARILY. SOME WAY OFF, I SEE FIGURES. THEY AREN'T MOVING...

EVERYTHING AROUND ME SEEMS TO DISTORT AS THE MONSTER GRAVITY BENDS LIGHT ITSELF, TWISTING AND STRETCHING IT AS IF IT WERE FLEXI-GEL.

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... AND NEITHER ARE THE PENETRATOR BULLETS, HANGING IN THE AIR LIKE A FROZEN METAL SWARM...

... AND NEITHER ARE THE WEIGHTLESS BEADS OF BLOOD...

The Ballad Of
HALO JONES

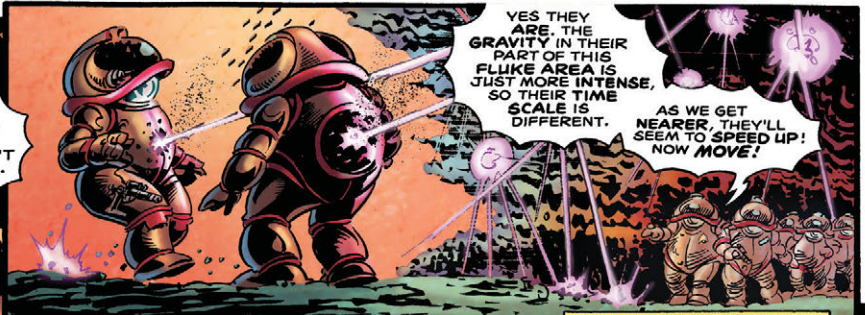
11: Slow Death



MINUTE 2:

JONES! COME ON! DON'T FREEZE UP OR THE THREADLIGHTS WILL GET A FIX ON YOU!

SARGE? TH-THOSE PEOPLE... THEY AREN'T MOVING...



YES THEY ARE. THE GRAVITY IN THEIR PART OF THIS FLUKE AREA IS JUST MORE INTENSE, SO THEIR TIME SCALE IS DIFFERENT.

AS WE GET NEARER, THEY'LL SEEM TO SPEED UP! NOW MOVE!



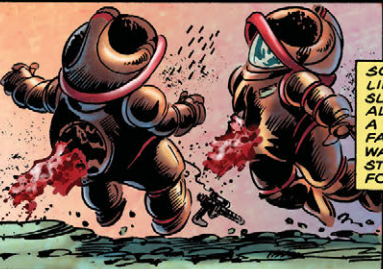
IT'S TRUE. WE'RE RUNNING TOWARDS THE STATUE-PEOPLE IN OUR CLUMSY SUITS, AND EVERYTHING'S STARTING TO MOVE...

THE BULLETS INCH FORWARDS. THE SPRAY OF ARTERIAL CRIMSON DESCENDS GRADUALLY - A SLOW, HIDEOUS DEW...

THE GAP BETWEEN US NARROWS. TEN METRES. NINE METRES.

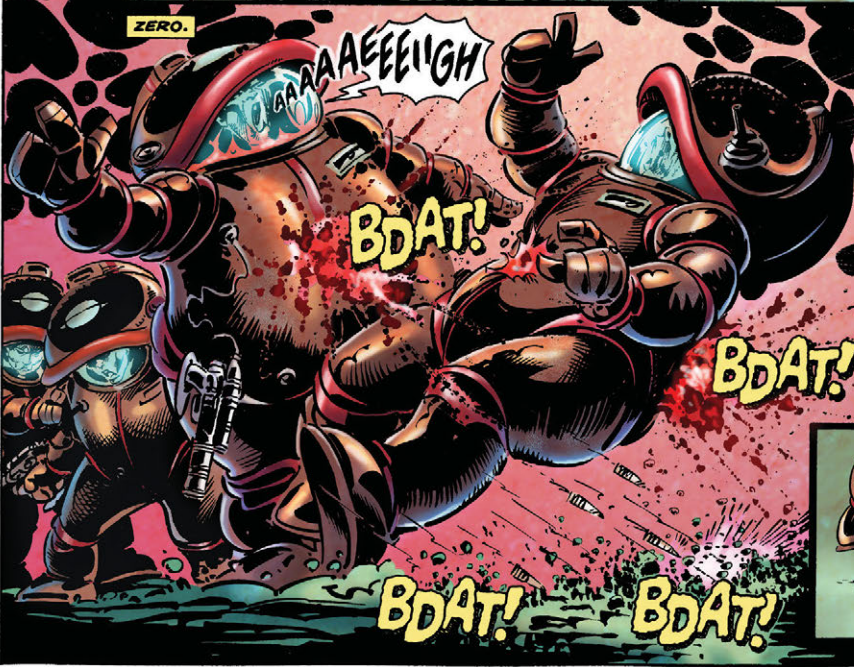


THE BULLETS ARE MOVING FASTER NOW. SEVEN METRES.



SCREAMING LIKE A SLOWED-DOWN AUDIO-TAPE, A WOMAN FALLS BACKWARDS IN STOP-MOTION. FOUR. THREE.

ZERO.



BDAT!

BDAT!

BDAT!

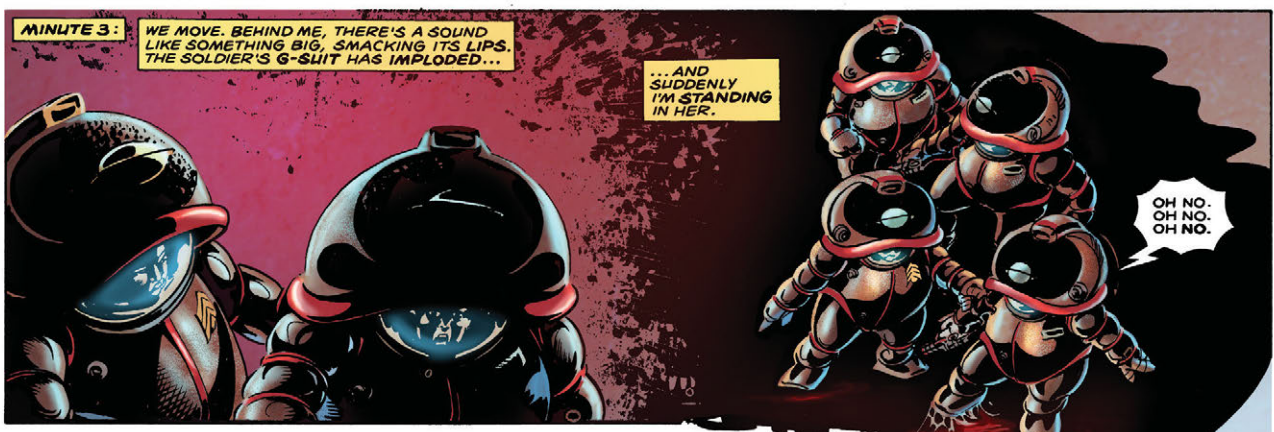
BDAT!

THE DEAD WOMAN IS SCREAMING. I AM SCREAMING. I AM SCREAMING. SERGEANT MYRMIDON IS SCREAMING...

KEEP MOVING! HER SUIT'S PENETRATED. THE SHIELDS WILL FAIL ANY SECOND!

MOOOOOOVE!!

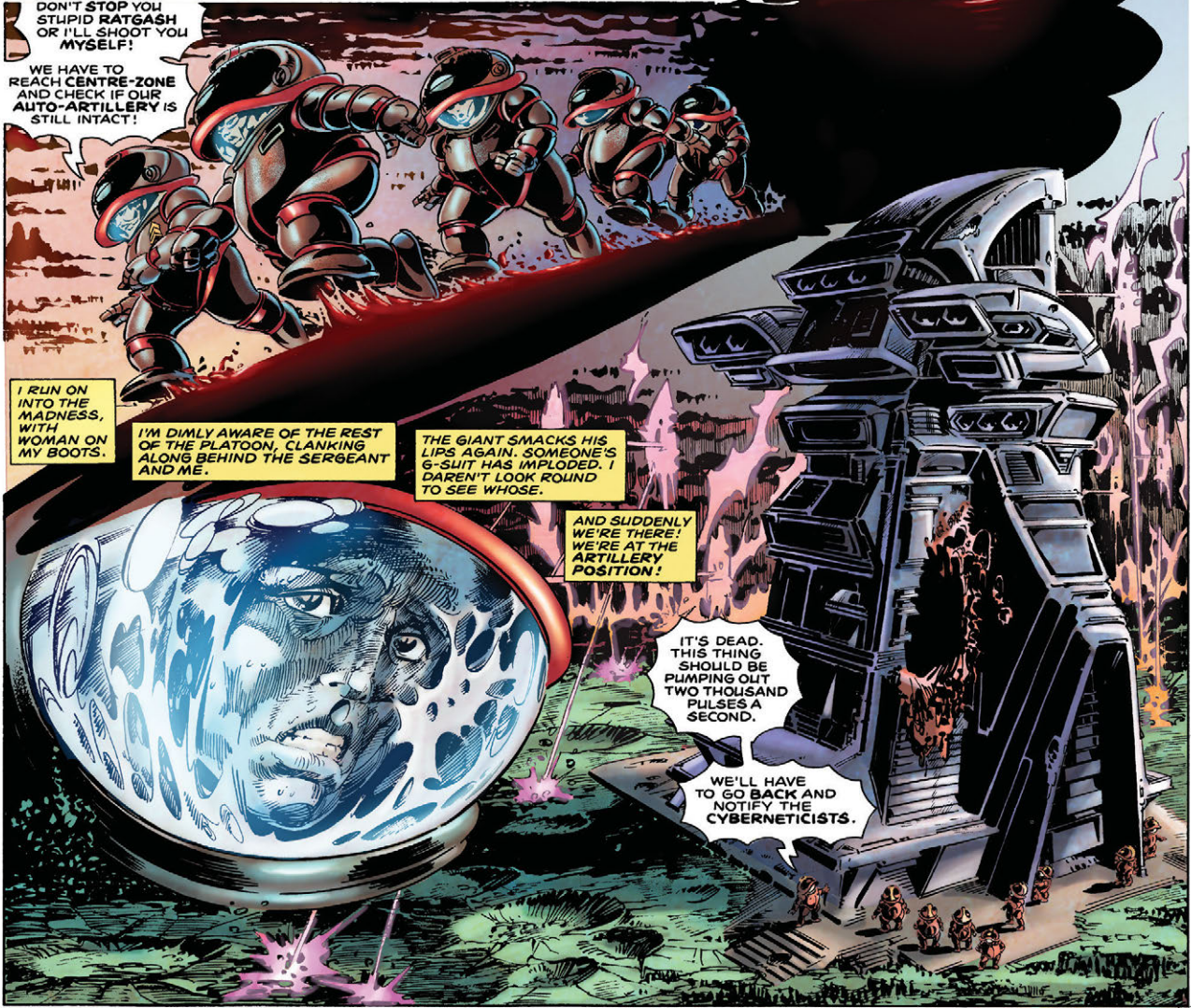




MINUTE 3: WE MOVE. BEHIND ME, THERE'S A SOUND LIKE SOMETHING BIG, SMACKING ITS LIPS. THE SOLDIER'S G-SUIT HAS IMPLoded...

... AND SUDDENLY I'M STANDING IN HER.

OH NO. OH NO. OH NO.



DON'T STOP YOU STUPID RATGASH OR I'LL SHOOT YOU MYSELF!

WE HAVE TO REACH CENTRE-ZONE AND CHECK IF OUR AUTO-ARTILLERY IS STILL INTACT!

I RUN ON INTO THE MADNESS, WITH WOMAN ON MY BOOTS.

I'M DIMLY AWARE OF THE REST OF THE PLATOON, CLANKING ALONG BEHIND THE SERGEANT AND ME.

THE GIANT SMACKS HIS LIPS AGAIN. SOMEONE'S G-SUIT HAS IMPLoded. I DAREN'T LOOK ROUND TO SEE WHOSE.

AND SUDDENLY WE'RE THERE! WE'RE AT THE ARTILLERY POSITION!

IT'S DEAD. THIS THING SHOULD BE PUMPING OUT TWO THOUSAND PULSES A SECOND.

WE'LL HAVE TO GO BACK AND NOTIFY THE CYBERNETICISTS.

MINUTE 4:

GO BACK. WE HAVE TO GO BACK. THIS WHOLE THING IS SO STUPID AND IT'S MAKING ME SO FRIGHTENED. I TURN AND COLLIDE WITH MONA, WHO'S RIGHT BEHIND ME.

WHAT ARE YOU? AN IMBECILE? GET OUT OF MY WAY! IF WE GET KNOCKED OVER IN THESE SUITS WE'LL NEVER GET UP!

INSIDE HER HELMET, SHE'S CRYING. WHY AM I SHOUTING AT HER?

I JUST WANT TO LIVE IS ALL.

OH, I WANT TO LIVE SO MUCH...

WE'RE RUNNING BACK TOWARDS THE SHIELD DOORS, SPLASHING THROUGH PINK PUDDLES THAT ONCE HAD NAMES, WITHOUT EVEN NOTICING.

SERGEANT MYRMIDON IS BEHIND ME. AHEAD, THE SHIELD DOORS ARE OPENING.

OH NO. THE WEIGHT OF THIS SUIT... THE MOMENTUM... I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH IT! I'LL TRIP OVER BEFORE I REACH THE DOOR!

IT'S NO USE. I DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO...

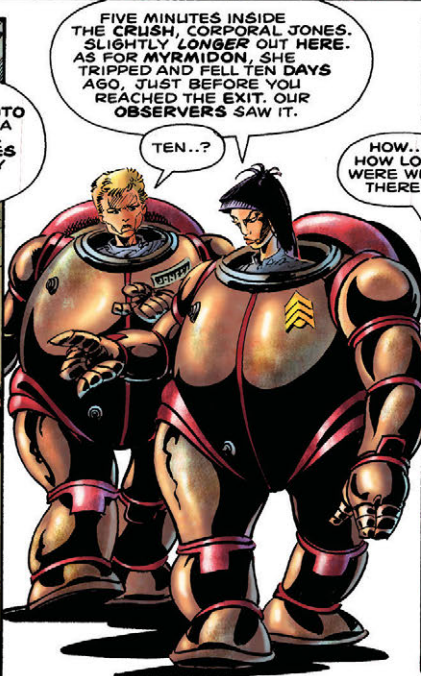
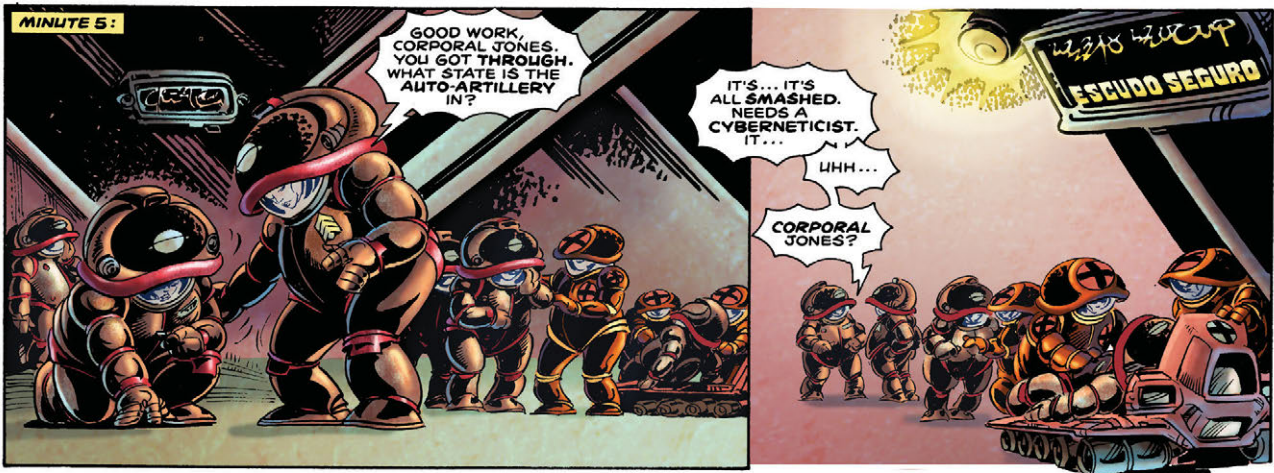
ESCUDO ABIERTO

MAKE

IT.

DOORS OPEN!

UUWAAH!





I'VE BEEN FIGHTING IN THE CRUSH FOR TWO DAYS NOW.

I'VE BEEN FIGHTING IN THE CRUSH FOR SIX MONTHS.

WE GO THROUGH THE SHIELD DOORS, SCREAM AND RUN AROUND AND SHOOT THINGS FOR FIVE MINUTES, THEN COME OUT TO FIND A MONTH HAS ELAPSED OUTSIDE.

LIKE SERGEANT WO SAYS, IT PASSES THE TIME.

MY BODY-CLOCK FEELS MESSED UP, PLUS EVERY TIME WE COME OUT IT SEEMS TO BE TIME FOR BREAKFAST. I'VE HAD SIX GREASY BREAKFASTS IN TWO DAYS...

...OR IS THAT ONE GREASY BREAKFAST A MONTH?

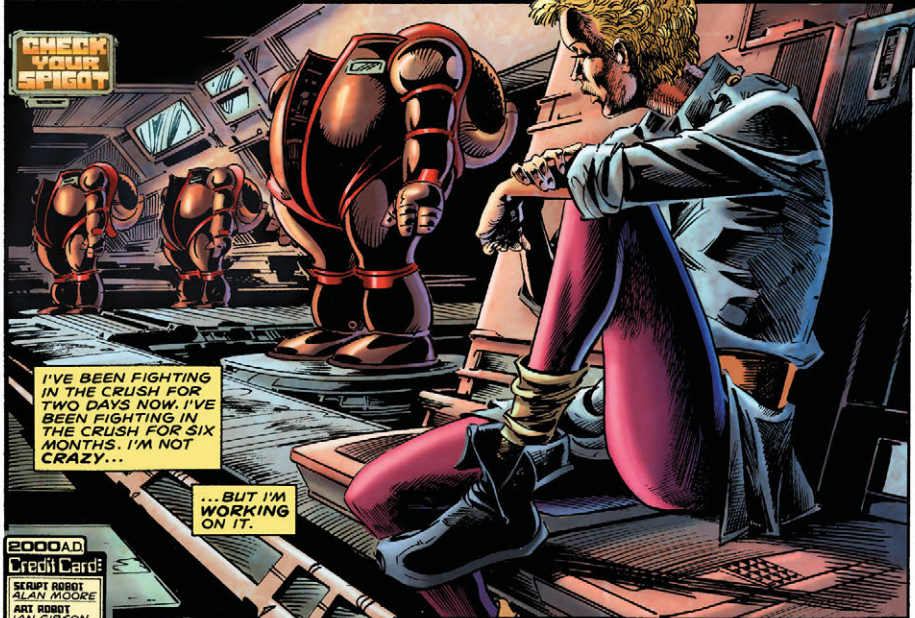
G-SUITS ONLY BEYOND THIS POINT

G-SUITS ONLY BEYOND THIS POINT



THE WORST THING WAS EMERGING TO FIND I'D MISSED MY BIRTHDAY, BY TWO WEEKS. I'M THIRTY NOW, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER IT HAPPENING.

NEVER MIND. MAYBE I'LL HAVE BETTER LUCK WHEN I'M THIRTY-ONE, IN THREE DAYS' TIME.



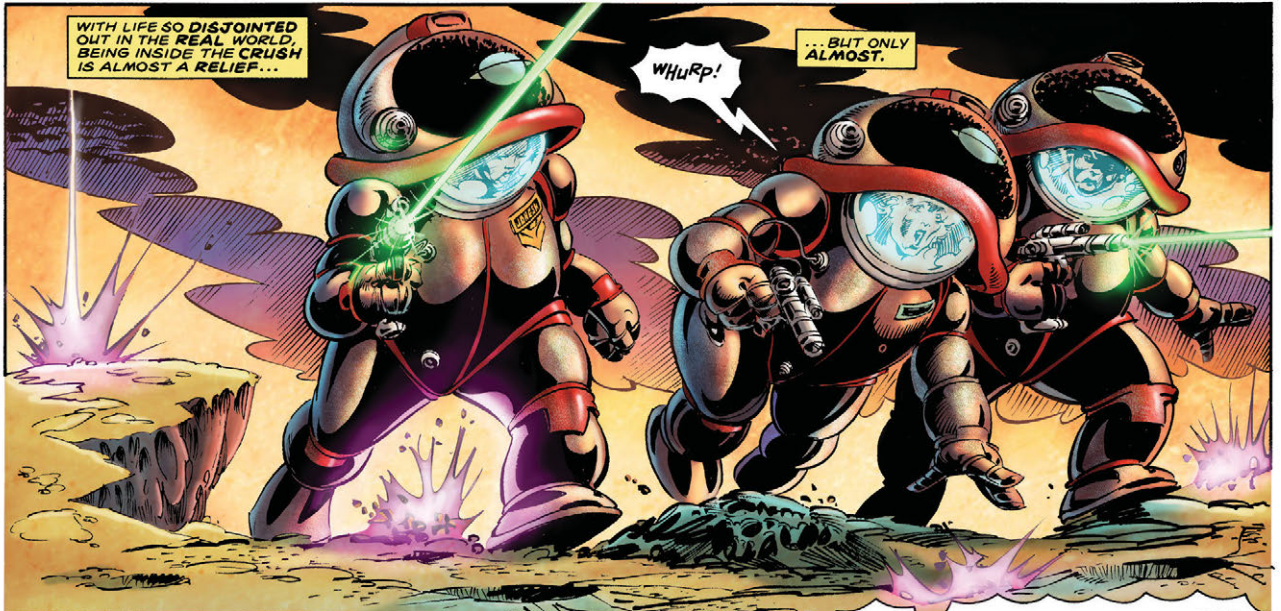
I'VE BEEN FIGHTING IN THE CRUSH FOR TWO DAYS NOW. I'VE BEEN FIGHTING IN THE CRUSH FOR SIX MONTHS. I'M NOT CRAZY...

...BUT I'M WORKING ON IT.

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12: The Fast Forward War

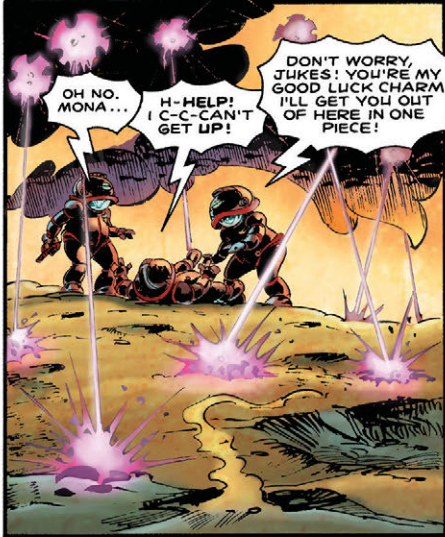
The Ballad Of
HALO JONES



WITH LIFE SO DISJOINTED OUT IN THE REAL WORLD, BEING INSIDE THE CRUSH IS ALMOST A RELIEF...

WHURP!

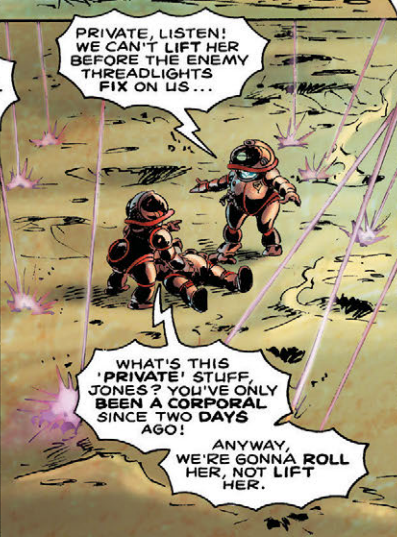
... BUT ONLY ALMOST.



OH NO. MONA...

H-HELP! I C-C-CAN'T GET UP!

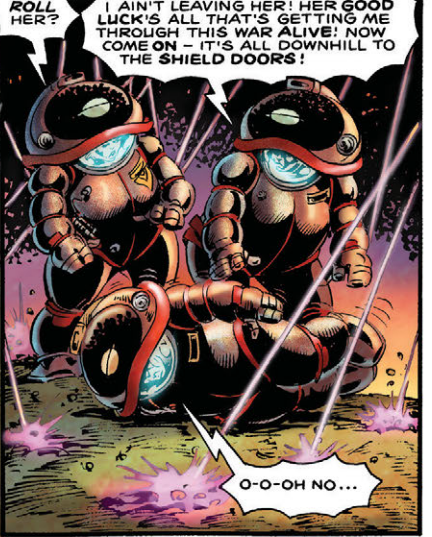
DON'T WORRY, JUKES! YOU'RE MY GOOD LUCK CHARM. I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE IN ONE PIECE!



PRIVATE, LISTEN! WE CAN'T LIFT HER BEFORE THE ENEMY THREADLIGHTS FIX ON US...

WHAT'S THIS 'PRIVATE' STUFF, JONES? YOU'VE ONLY BEEN A CORPORAL SINCE TWO DAYS AGO!

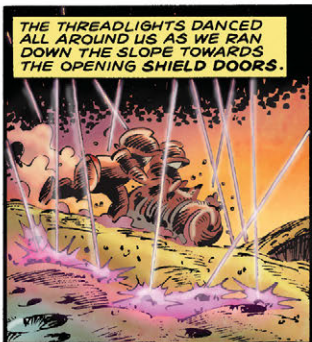
ANYWAY, WE'RE GONNA ROLL HER, NOT LIFT HER.



ROLL HER?

I AIN'T LEAVING HER! HER GOOD LUCK'S ALL THAT'S GETTING ME THROUGH THIS WAR ALIVE! NOW COME ON - IT'S ALL DOWNHILL TO THE SHIELD DOORS!

O-O-OH NO...



THE THREADLIGHTS DANCED ALL AROUND US AS WE RAN DOWN THE SLOPE TOWARDS THE OPENING SHIELD DOORS.



AS MONA ROLLED THROUGH WITHOUT TOUCHING THE SIDES I HEARD A WET, SMACKING SOUND BEHIND ME...



... AND THEN I STUMBLED THROUGH THE DOORS AFTER MONA...



... AND PRIVATE EXXON FOLLOWED RIGHT BEHIND ME.



PRIVATE EXXON?

YEAH. THAT WAS TOO BAD, THE THREADLIGHTS GETTIN' HER LIKE THAT. I CRIED WHEN IT HAPPENED BUT I'M OVER IT NOW.

OOOHH...

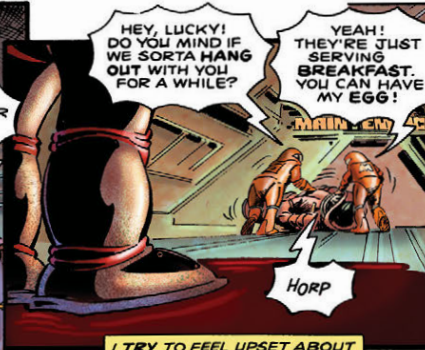


BUT HEY, DID YOU SEE JUKES HERE? SHE MUST BE THE FIRST PERSON EVER TO FALL DOWN IN THE CRUSH AND GET OUT ALIVE!

NO WONDER THEY CALL HER 'LUCKY' JUKES!

P-PLEASE, S-SOMEBODY... I'VE BEEN SICK IN HERE...

REX-THIRD



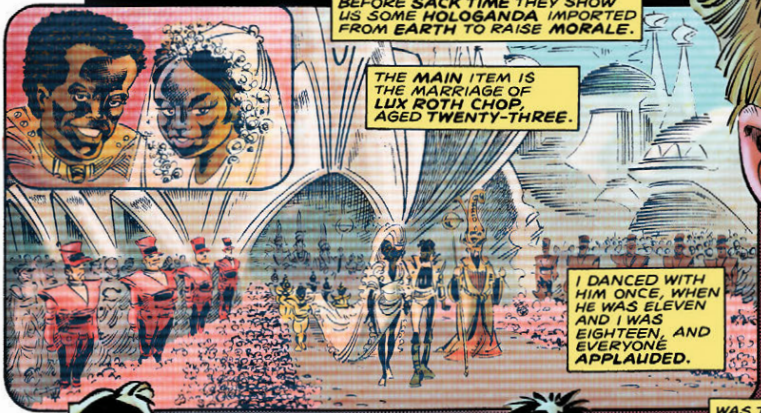
HEY, LUCKY! DO YOU MIND IF WE SORTA HANG OUT WITH YOU FOR A WHILE?

YEAH! THEY'RE JUST SERVING BREAKFAST. YOU CAN HAVE MY EGG!

HORP

I TRY TO FEEL UPSET ABOUT PRIVATE EXXON'S DEATH, BUT I JUST END UP FEELING EMPTY AND CONFUSED.

I MEAN, IN REAL TIME SHE'S BEEN DEAD FOR A WEEK. THAT MAKES IT ALL SO DISTANT SOMEHOW.



BEFORE SACK TIME THEY SHOW US SOME HOLOGANDA IMPORTED FROM EARTH TO RAISE MORALE.

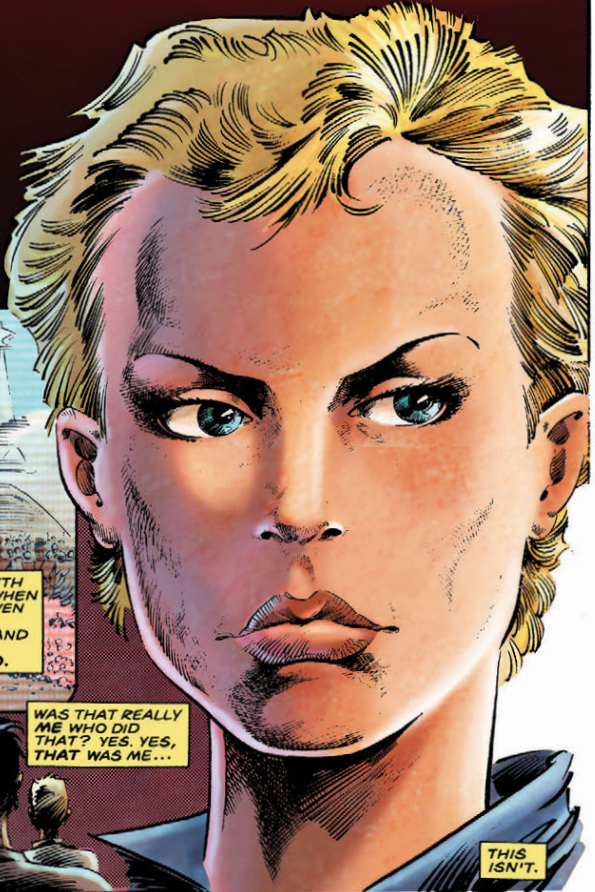
THE MAIN ITEM IS THE MARRIAGE OF LUX ROTH CHOP, AGED TWENTY-THREE.

I DANCED WITH HIM ONCE, WHEN HE WAS ELEVEN AND I WAS EIGHTEEN, AND EVERYONE APPLAUDED.

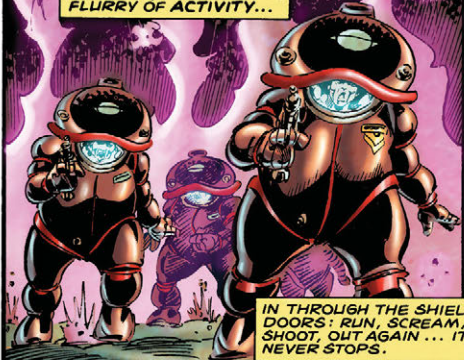


WAS THAT REALLY ME WHO DID THAT? YES, YES, THAT WAS ME...

THIS ISN'T.



ON DAY FIVE WE'RE TOLD THAT EARTH IS WINNING THE WAR IN TARANTULA, AND I MISS MY 32ND BIRTHDAY IN THE USUAL FLURRY OF ACTIVITY...



IN THROUGH THE SHIELD DOORS: RUN, SCREAM, SHOOT, OUT AGAIN ... IT NEVER STOPS.

ON DAY TEN, AGED THIRTY-THREE NOW, I'M PROMOTED TO SERGEANT WHILE SERGEANT WO BECOMES A LIEUTENANT. THEY TELL US VICTORY IS ONLY DAYS AWAY ...



DO THEY MEAN THEIR DAYS OR OURS?

IT NEVER STOPS.

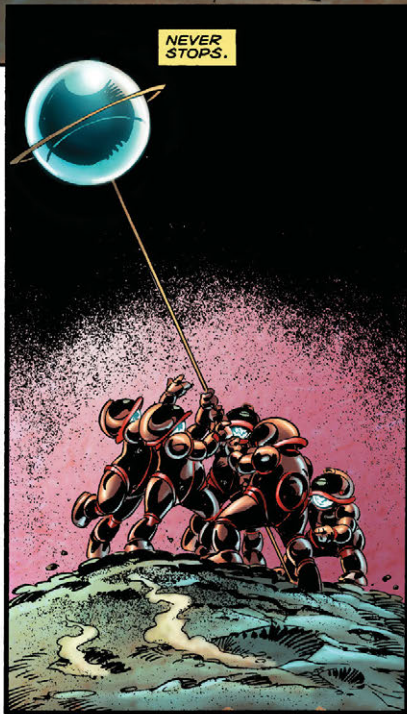
THE RUNNING, THE SCREAMING, THE SHOOTING...



THE THREADLIGHTS THAT TURN MEN AND WOMEN INTO BLOTS...

NEVER ...

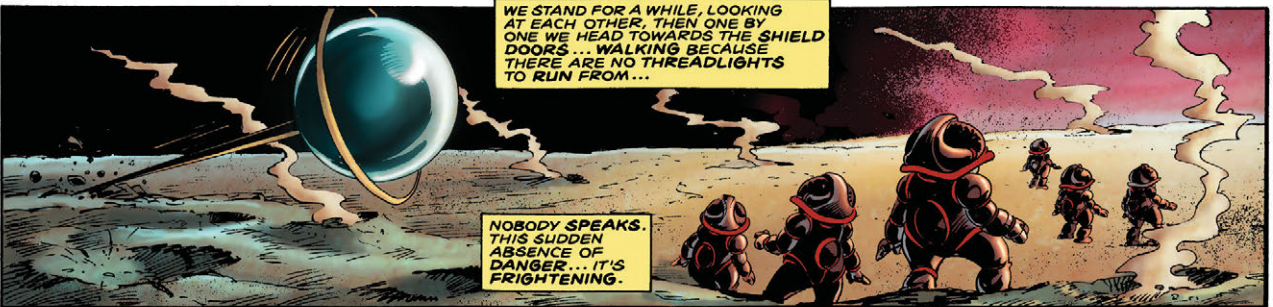
NEVER STOPS.



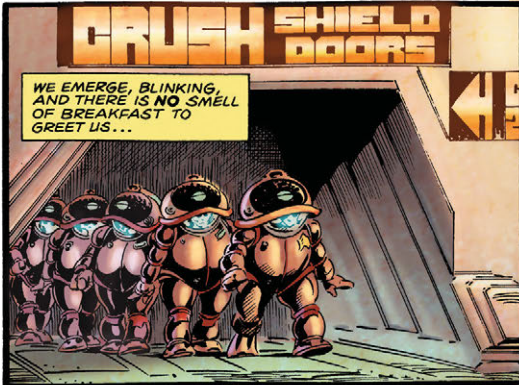
UH, HEY, IT... UH...

IT'S STOPPED.

WE STAND FOR A WHILE, LOOKING AT EACH OTHER, THEN ONE BY ONE WE HEAD TOWARDS THE SHIELD DOORS ... WALKING BECAUSE THERE ARE NO THREADLIGHTS TO RUN FROM...



NOBODY SPEAKS. THIS SUDDEN ABSENCE OF DANGER ... IT'S FRIGHTENING.





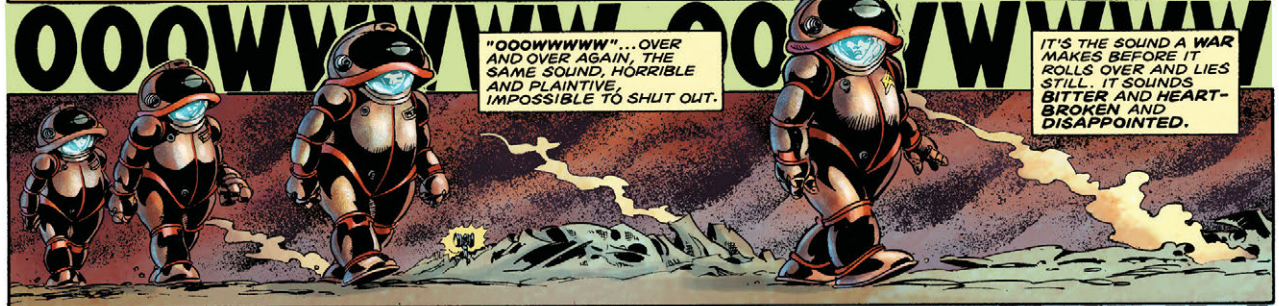
"OOOWWWW".

THAT'S WHAT THE SIRENS SOUND LIKE, MOANING THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF MOAB, ROLLING OUT ACROSS THE THREADLIGHT-SCARRED BATTLEFIELDS: "OOOWWWW".



THE SIRENS ARE TO TELL ANYONE WHO MAY NOT HAVE HEARD THAT IT'S SAFE TO COME OUT NOW. THE FIGHTING'S BEEN OVER FOR WEEKS.

NOBODY HAS TO DIE ANY MORE.



"OOOWWWW"... OVER AND OVER AGAIN, THE SAME SOUND, HORRIBLE AND PLAINITIVE, IMPOSSIBLE TO SHUT OUT.

IT'S THE SOUND A WAR MAKES BEFORE IT ROLLS OVER AND LIES STILL... IT SOUNDS BITTER AND HEART-BROKEN AND DISAPPOINTED.



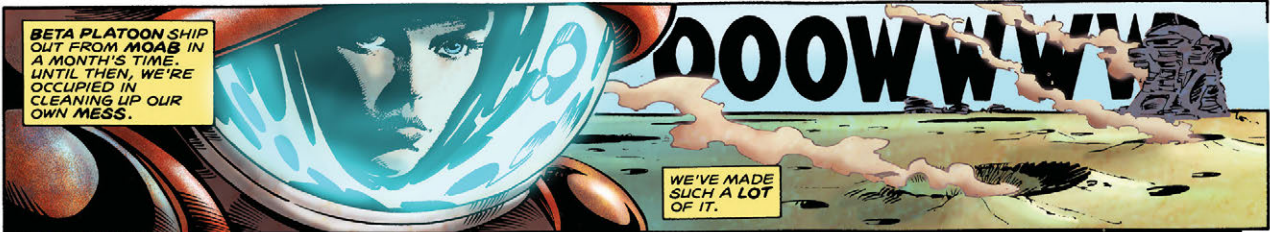
IT SOUNDS CHEATED.



13: When They Sound The Last All Clear...

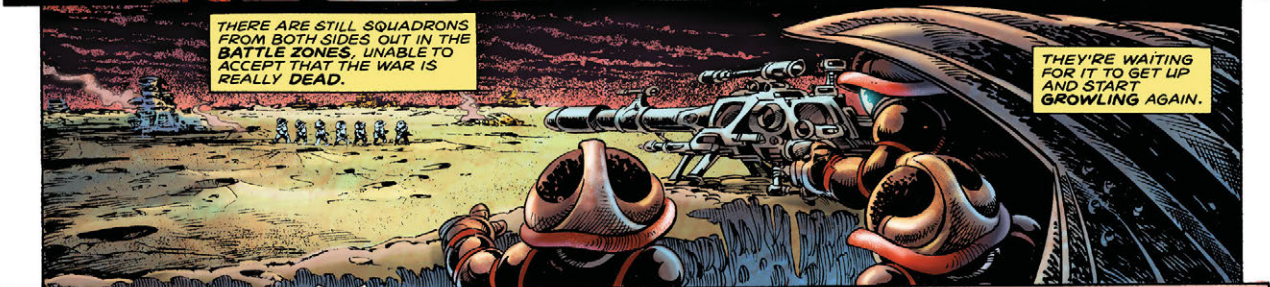
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STARRINGS
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The Ballad Of
HALO JONES



BETA PLATOON SHIP OUT FROM MOAB IN A MONTH'S TIME. UNTIL THEN, WE'RE OCCUPIED IN CLEANING UP OUR OWN MESS.

WE'VE MADE SUCH A LOT OF IT.



THERE ARE STILL SQUADRONS FROM BOTH SIDES OUT IN THE BATTLE ZONES, UNABLE TO ACCEPT THAT THE WAR IS REALLY DEAD.

THEY'RE WAITING FOR IT TO GET UP AND START GROWLING AGAIN.



DELTA PLATOON? THIS IS SERGEANT JONES, BETA PLATOON.

NICE TRY, EGG-SUCKER, BUT OUR ORDERS SAY DIFFERENT.

AAA! GET DOWN!

TALKING'S IMPOSSIBLE. THEY WON'T LISTEN. THEY COULD BE HOME WITH THEIR MEN, THEIR CHILDREN, BUT THEY'VE SOMEHOW GOT STUCK IN A WAR THAT DOESN'T EXIST ANYMORE.



LISTEN, THE WAR'S FINISHED, GUYS. EARTH REACHED A SETTLEMENT WITH TARANTULA. YOU CAN COME OUT.

NOW SICK ON THIS...

SOME OF THEM WILL BE OUT THERE FOR YEARS.



HOW DO WE CLEAN UP THAT KIND OF MESS? HOW DO WE CLEAN UP THE MESS IN PEOPLE'S HEADS, IN PEOPLE'S LIVES: ALL THAT LOSS AND PAIN?

"OOOWWWW"



I THINK MOST OF US WOULD RATHER FORGET THE MESS, JUST WALK AWAY AND LEAVE IT, BUT THE CETACEANS RUN EARTH NOW, AND THEY WON'T LET US.

PREPARE FOR INSPECTION BY THE NEW TERRAN MINISTER FOR PEACE...

... HER SERENITY, KIKIKITITI RIKRIKIKIKIT.

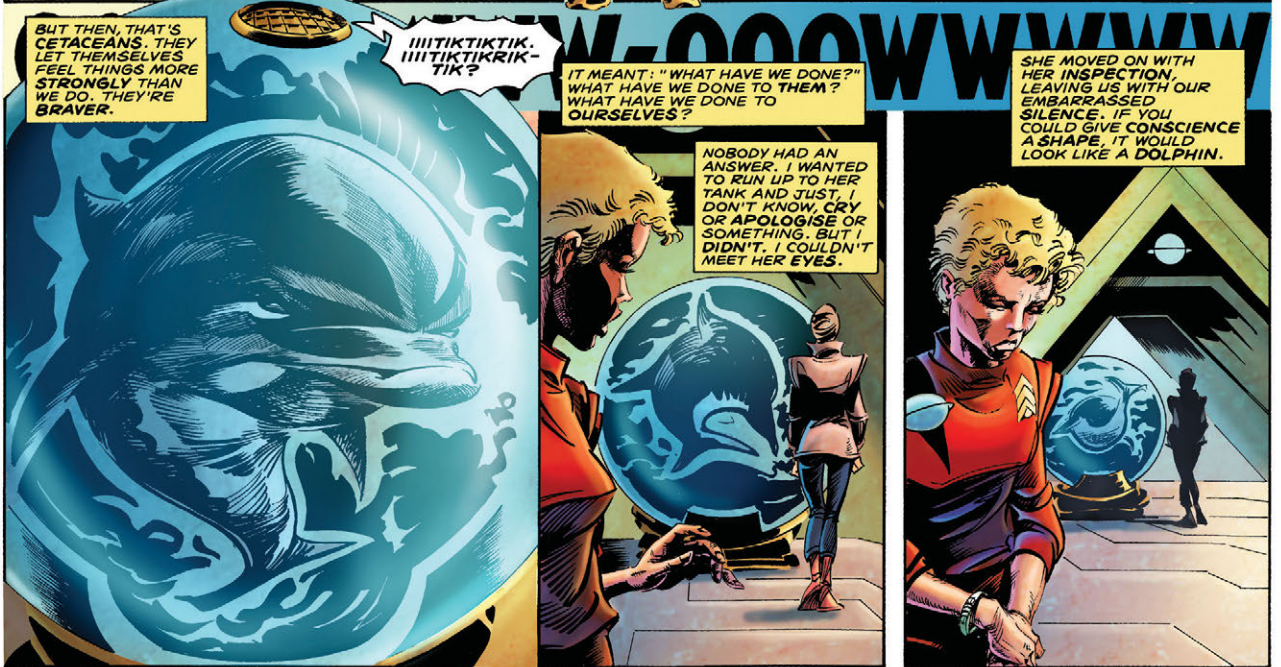
IKTITIKRIK RITIKTITIK-ITRIK?

THE MINISTER WISHES TO SEE THE STATE OF THE LOCAL NON-COMBATANT POPULATION.



WE SHOWED HER THE MOABITES, LIVING ON WHAT LITTLE FOOD THE WAR HAD LEFT THEM AMONGST THE RUINED ICONS OF THEIR FAITH.

FUNNY. I HADN'T THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT THEM BEFORE.



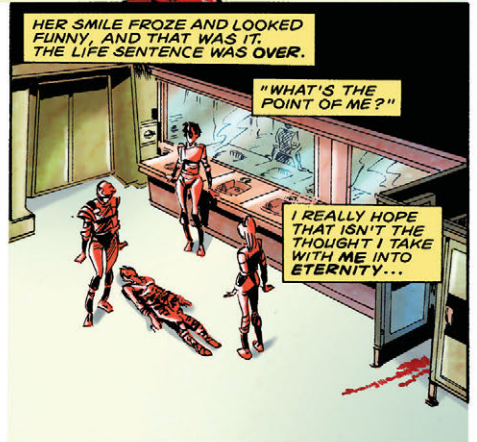
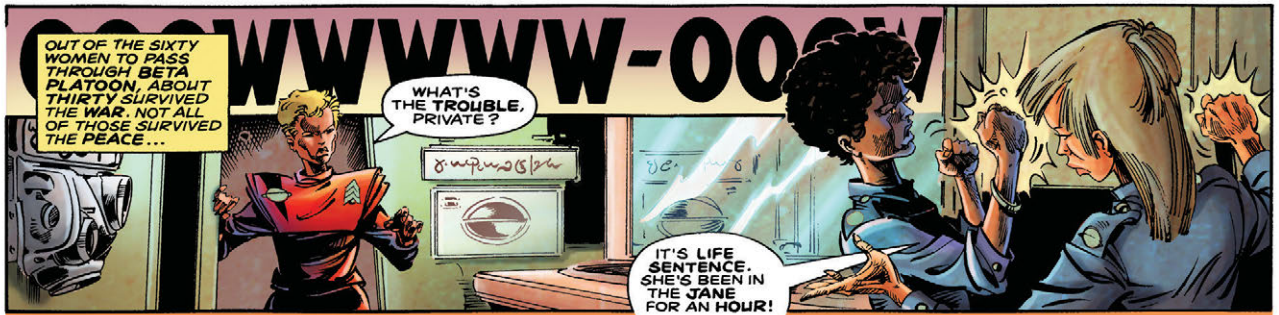
BUT THEN, THAT'S CETACEANS. THEY LET THEMSELVES FEEL THINGS MORE STRONGLY THAN WE DO. THEY'RE BRAVER.

IIIIITIKTIK. IIIITIKTIKRIK-TIK?

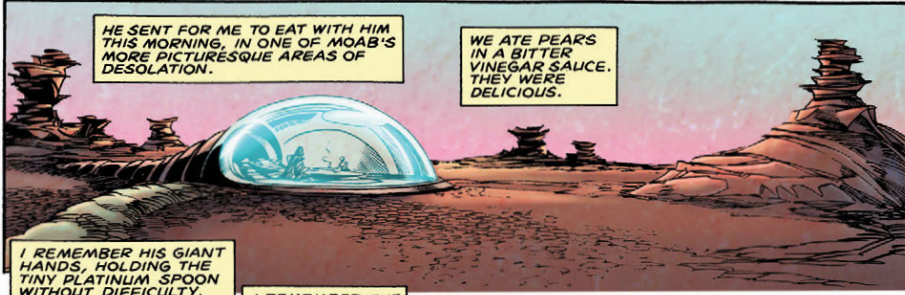
IT MEANT: "WHAT HAVE WE DONE?" WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO THEM? WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO OURSELVES?

NOBODY HAD AN ANSWER. I WANTED TO RUN UP TO HER TANK AND JUST, I DON'T KNOW, CRY OR APOLOGISE OR SOMETHING. BUT I DIDN'T. I COULDN'T MEET HER EYES.

SHE MOVED ON WITH HER INSPECTION, LEAVING US WITH OUR EMBARRASSED SILENCE. IF YOU COULD GIVE CONSCIENCE A SHAPE, IT WOULD LOOK LIKE A DOLPHIN.



The Ballad Of HALO JONES



HE SENT FOR ME TO EAT WITH HIM THIS MORNING, IN ONE OF MOAB'S MORE PICTURESQUE AREAS OF DESOLATION.

WE ATE PEARS IN A BITTER VINEGAR SAUCE. THEY WERE DELICIOUS.

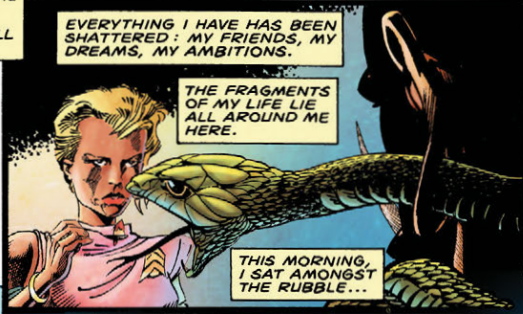
I REMEMBER HIS GIANT HANDS, HOLDING THE TINY PLATINUM SPOON WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, WORKING IT INTO THE FLESH OF THE PEARS.

I REMEMBER THE MURDERED PLANET STRETCHING ALL ABOUT US.

EVERYTHING I HAVE HAS BEEN SHATTERED: MY FRIENDS, MY DREAMS, MY AMBITIONS.

THE FRAGMENTS OF MY LIFE LIE ALL AROUND ME HERE.

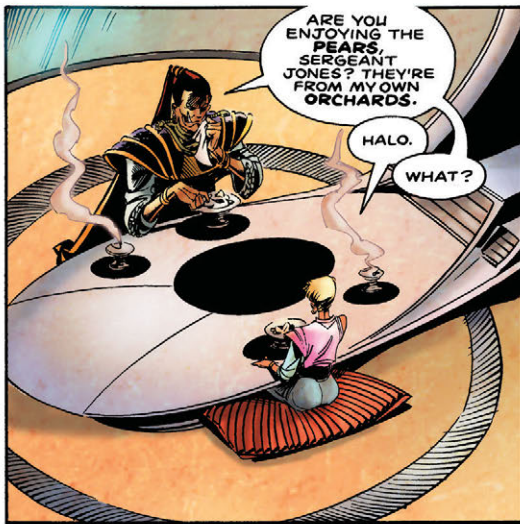
THIS MORNING, I SAT AMONGST THE RUBBLE...



... AND I ATE THE BEST MEAL OF MY LIFE.

14: Breakfast In The Ruins

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ARE YOU ENJOYING THE PEARS, SERGEANT JONES? THEY'RE FROM MY OWN ORCHARDS.

HALO.

WHAT?



MY NAME'S HALO. MY NAME'S NOT SERGEANT JONES, AND I WISH YOU'D STOP ALL THIS STUPID, FORMAL MESSING AROUND WHEN YOUR EYES ARE SAYING SOMETHING ELSE.

BUT YES, THE PEARS ARE GREAT.

SIR.



I SEE. AND WHAT ARE MY EYES SAYING?

OH LOOK, PLEASE, I'M TOO OLD FOR ALL THIS STUFF. YOU'RE ATTRACTED TO ME. THAT'S FINE. I'M ATTRACTED TO YOU, TOO.



YOU ARE?

WHY?



BECAUSE YOU SCARE ME.

BECAUSE YOU HAVE NICE HANDS.

I KNOW YOU'RE GOING TO BE BAD NEWS AND I WANT TO BE WITH YOU ANYWAY. YOU THINK THAT MEANS I'VE GOT AN UNHEALTHY ATTITUDE?



I THINK IT MEANS THAT WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

COME... LET US GO TO THE WESTERN HANGARS. THERE IS SOMETHING THERE THAT I SHOULD LIKE YOU TO SEE...

...HALO.

THE WESTERN HANGARS WERE SILENT, HUGE, MOSTLY EMPTY. THERE WERE PATTERNS LEFT IN THE DUST ON THE FLOOR WHERE THE WARSHIPS HAD BEEN HAILED AWAY...

THERE.
ISN'T SHE MAGNIFICENT?



OH, OH THAT'S INCREDIBLE! WHAT IS IT? THAT ISN'T A WARP ASSEMBLY THERE...

NO, IT'S A NEW SYSTEM WHEREBY FASTER THAN LIGHT PARTICLES ARE CREATED FROM NOTHING BY SUBATOMIC INTERACTIONS.

IT'S CALLED THE FREE LUNCH DRIVE.

WITH ITS POWER, A CABIN CRUISER IS CAPABLE OF TRAVELLING TO THE FAR SYSTEMS.

I COULD GO ANYWHERE IN IT.

WE COULD GO ANYWHERE IN IT.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I MEAN THAT THE WAR IS FINISHED HERE. WITH THE DOLPHINS RUNNING EARTH I FEAR WAR MAY BE FINISHED EVERYWHERE.

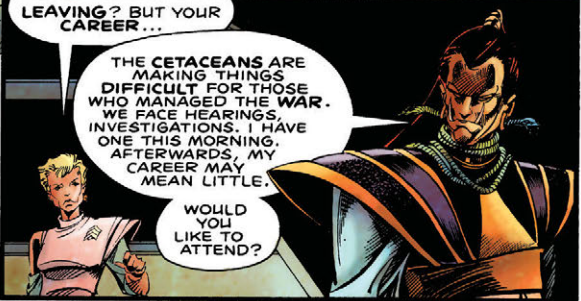
SOON, I SHALL LEAVE. I WANT YOU WITH ME.



LEAVING? BUT YOUR CAREER...

THE CETACEANS ARE MAKING THINGS DIFFICULT FOR THOSE WHO MANAGED THE WAR. WE FACE HEARINGS, INVESTIGATIONS. I HAVE ONE THIS MORNING. AFTERWARDS, MY CAREER MAY MEAN LITTLE.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEND?



I SAID I WOULD. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF INVESTIGATIONS HE MEANT, BUT I WANTED TO BE THERE WITH HIM.

AS MUCH AS ANYTHING, I WANTED TO HEAR HIM SPEAK, TO WATCH HIM PERFORM.





HE PERFORMED
MAGNIFICENTLY...

BUT THE
INTERROGATION
WAS BRUTAL,
AND MAGNIFICENCE
WASN'T ENOUGH.

ITITIKITITIRIK
RIKITITIKTI-
RIK?



HER SERENITY
WISHES TO KNOW
IF GENERAL
CANNIBAL WAS
AWARE OF TERRAN
ATTACKS ON THE
CIVILIAN
POPULATIONS
OF WARZONES
FOUR, TWELVE
AND
FIFTEEN.



IN MANAGING A
NEBULA - WIDE
CONFRONTATION,
WE CANNOT ALWAYS
ACCOUNT FOR EVERY
OFFICER, EVERY
PRIVATE ...

YOU AVOID
THE QUESTION,
GENERAL CANNIBAL.
WERE YOU AWARE
OF THE ATTACKS?



NO. I WAS
NOT.

THANK YOU, GENERAL.
HER SERENITY
HAS ALSO DIRECTED ME
TO ASK YOU WHY WARZONE
FIVE, THE PLANET CHARON,
HAS BEEN COMPLETELY
RAZED BY ATOMIC
FIRE.



AN ACCIDENT.
THERE WAS A
MASSIVE NUCLEAR
EXCURSION FROM A
MAJOR MUNITIONS
DUMP. THE
PLANET WAS
BURNED.



AN
ACCIDENT.
I SEE.

THANK YOU,
GENERAL.
THERE WILL BE
NO FURTHER
QUESTIONS.



THE PRELIMINARY
HEARING WAS
OVER, BUT THE
LAST QUESTION
HAD DRAWN
BLOOD.

HE STARED
MURDEROUSLY
AT THE DOLPHIN,
KNUCKLES BIG AS
BIRD SKULLS,
WHITE AND
CLENCHED ON THE
SIDES OF THE
WITNESS BOX.

AFTER THE HEARING, HE HAD WORK ELSEWHERE SO I REJOINED BETA PLATOON.

EVERYONE SEEMED DISTANT. I GUESS THEY KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING BETWEEN ME AND THE GENERAL, THOUGH EVEN I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.

THAT NIGHT WE DINED AGAIN. HE GAVE ME A COPY OF HIS CABIN CRUISER'S DRIVE KEYS, AND I LET HIM KISS ME.

LATER, BACK IN THE BARRACKS, I RAN MY FINGERTIP ALONG THE SCAR, WONDERING.

TO RUN AWAY WITH HIM... THE IDEA IS SO TEMPTING, AND OTHERWISE MY LIFE IS SUCH A MESS. WHAT DO I HAVE TO LOSE?

HIS TUSKS GRAZED MY SHOULDER, LEAVING A LONG SCRATCH.

I DRIFT OFF TO SLEEP WITH THAT THOUGHT RINGING AROUND MY MIND: "WHAT DO I HAVE TO LOSE?"

IN MY DREAMS, THE PASSAGeways ARE FILLED WITH COBWEBS AND CORPSES.

I STUMBLE THROUGH AN EXIT DOOR, FALLING INTO A TANGLE OF STICKY STRANDS.

I TELL MYSELF THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. THE WAR'S OVER. I'M NOT IN DANGER ANY MORE. UP ABOVE, SOMETHING BIG SHIFTS ITS WEIGHT...

... AND SUDDENLY I KNOW WHAT THERE IS TO WORRY ABOUT. I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO LOSE...

... BUT WHEN I WAKE UP I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING, ANYTHING EXCEPT THE TERROR.

NEXT PROG:

TARANTULA DESCENDING

EVERY NIGHT I DREAM OF SPIDERS.

EVERY NIGHT I STRUGGLE IN A WEB FULL OF CORPSES, UNABLE TO TWIST FREE. WHY? WHY SHOULD I DREAM OF BEING SO THREATENED WHEN THINGS ARE GOING SO WELL?

WE'LL BE GOING SOON, MY LOVE. AWAY TO THE DISTANT SYSTEMS.

I CAN'T GET OUT. EVERYONE I'VE LOST HANGS SILENT AROUND ME, NO LONGER STRUGGLING. SOON I'LL BE LIKE THEM.

THESE HEARINGS... THEY'RE LIKE WAR CRIME TRIALS. YOU SAID YOU'RE INNOCENT. WHY WON'T THEY BELIEVE YOU?

THE DOLPHINS HOUND ME, SEEKING A SCAPEGOAT FOR THE WAR, BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER. WE ARE TOGETHER. WE HAVE THIS SHIP.

SOON WE SHALL BE FREE.

DOWN THE WEB, SOMETHING HUNGRY AND HEARTLESS INCHES TOWARDS ME...

BECAUSE THEY ARE BLINKERED, SELF-RIGHTEOUS FOOLS. NO MATTER. AT LEAST YOU BELIEVE ME. AT LEAST I HAVE YOU.

IT'S GOT ME. SOMETHING SOFT AND DAMP BRUSHES MY CHEEK, ITS FUR MATTED TO STICKY POINTS. I STARE UP, TRANSFIXED, INTO TOO MANY EYES. THE SCREAMING BEGINS...

... AND THEN I WAKE...

... AND EVERYTHING'S JUST FINE.

15: Tarantula Descending

The Ballad Of HALO JONES

2000AD
Credit Card:
SCRIPT ROBOT
ALAN MOORE
ART ROBOT
IAN GIBSON
LETTERING ROBOT
RICH
COMPU:73e

THIS AFTERNOON, THERE WAS ANOTHER HEARING. THEY KEPT ASKING LUIZ ABOUT THE DEVASTATED WARZONE: A WHOLE PLANET ERASED BY FIRESTORMS.

A BURNED WORLD.

GENERAL CANNIBAL, HER SERENITY NOTES YOUR EXPLANATION CONCERNING A NUCLEAR ACCIDENT UPON THIS WORLD WITH INTEREST.

HOWEVER, SHE WISHES TO ASK WHY THE LAST REPORTS FROM THE DOOMED WORLD SPOKE OF CHOLERA AND BUBONIC PLAGUE.

WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING?

WE ARE IMPLYING, GENERAL, THAT SOMETHING ELSE MIGHT HAVE DESTROYED THIS WORLD BEFORE THE FIRESTORMS WERE USED TO ERADICATE THE EVIDENCE.

PERHAPS SOME METHOD FOR INDISCRIMINATELY SPREADING KILLER DISEASES AND SUFFERING AMONGST WHOLE GLOBAL POPULATIONS...

YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT RATWAR.

AT LAST, YES, GENERAL.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT RATWAR.

RATWAR: MILLIONS OF DISEASED, VICIOUS RATS, THEIR MOVEMENTS CONTROLLED BY MAN, FLOWING ACROSS A WORLD IN PREDETERMINED VECTORS CARRYING PLAGUE, MADNESS, DEATH...

NO FORM OF WARFARE IS MORE HORRIBLE. THEY BANNED IT A CENTURY AGO.

YOUR ALLEGATIONS ARE RIDICULOUS. FOR RATWAR, ONE NEEDS A RARE, SUPER-INTELLIGENT RAT TO ACT AS AN INTERMEDIARY.

DO YOU HAVE EVIDENCE THAT I HAVE OBTAINED SUCH A BEAST?

A RAT KING? NO. SADLY, WE DO NOT.

A RAT KING... SEVERAL RATS KNOTTED INTO ONE INTELLIGENCE. I'VE SEEN A RAT KING. THERE WAS ONE ON THE CLARA PANDY, BEING TAKEN TO TARANTULA.

I SAVED ITS LIFE.

I HAVE NEVER USED, NOR THOUGHT OF USING, RATWAR IN TARANTULA.

WITHOUT EVIDENCE TO BACK YOUR SLANDEROUS FANTASIES, I SUGGEST THESE HEARINGS ARE BOTH A FARCE AND AN INSULT.

GOOD DAY.

THE RATS WERE DROPPED UPON THE WARZONE.

THEY ATE THE WHOLE WORLD AND GNAWED ON THE BONES OF ITS CHILDREN.

MY FAULT. ALL MY FAULT.

I SAVED ITS LIFE.

OH, LUIZ...

LUIZ, YOU LIED.





"GOODBYE."

HE WALKS AWAY, SMUG, CONTENTED. WITHIN TEN MINUTES HE'LL BE A PUDDLE OF JELLY. HE DOESN'T KNOW IT YET, BUT HE'S DEAD.



HIM, TOY, BRINNA, LUDY, RODICE... ALL OF THEM GONE. EVEN ME, THE INNOCENT GIRL I THOUGHT I ONCE WAS. SHE'S GONE TOO. MY WHOLE PAST LIES STONE DEAD.

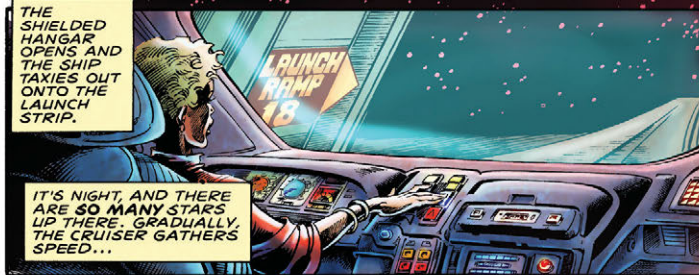
ALL I HAVE NOW IS MY FUTURE.



SERGEANT JONES, AS AUTHORIZED BY GENERAL CANNIBAL. I'M TAKING THE CRUISER FOR A TEST FLIGHT. I HAVE THE KEYS HERE.

FINE. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OUT.

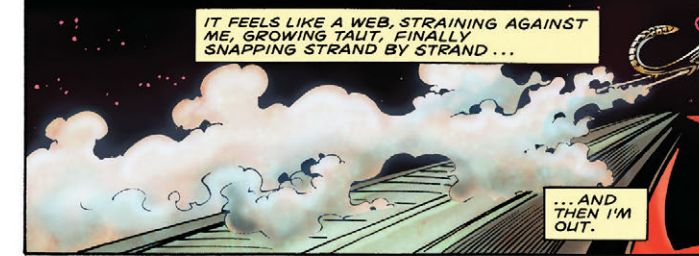


THE SHIELDED HANGAR OPENS AND THE SHIP TAXIES OUT ONTO THE LAUNCH STRIP.

IT'S NIGHT, AND THERE ARE SO MANY STARS UP THERE. GRADUALLY, THE CRUISER GATHERS SPEED...



THE NOSE LIFTS AS I PREPARE TO TEAR FREE OF MOAB'S GRAVITY.



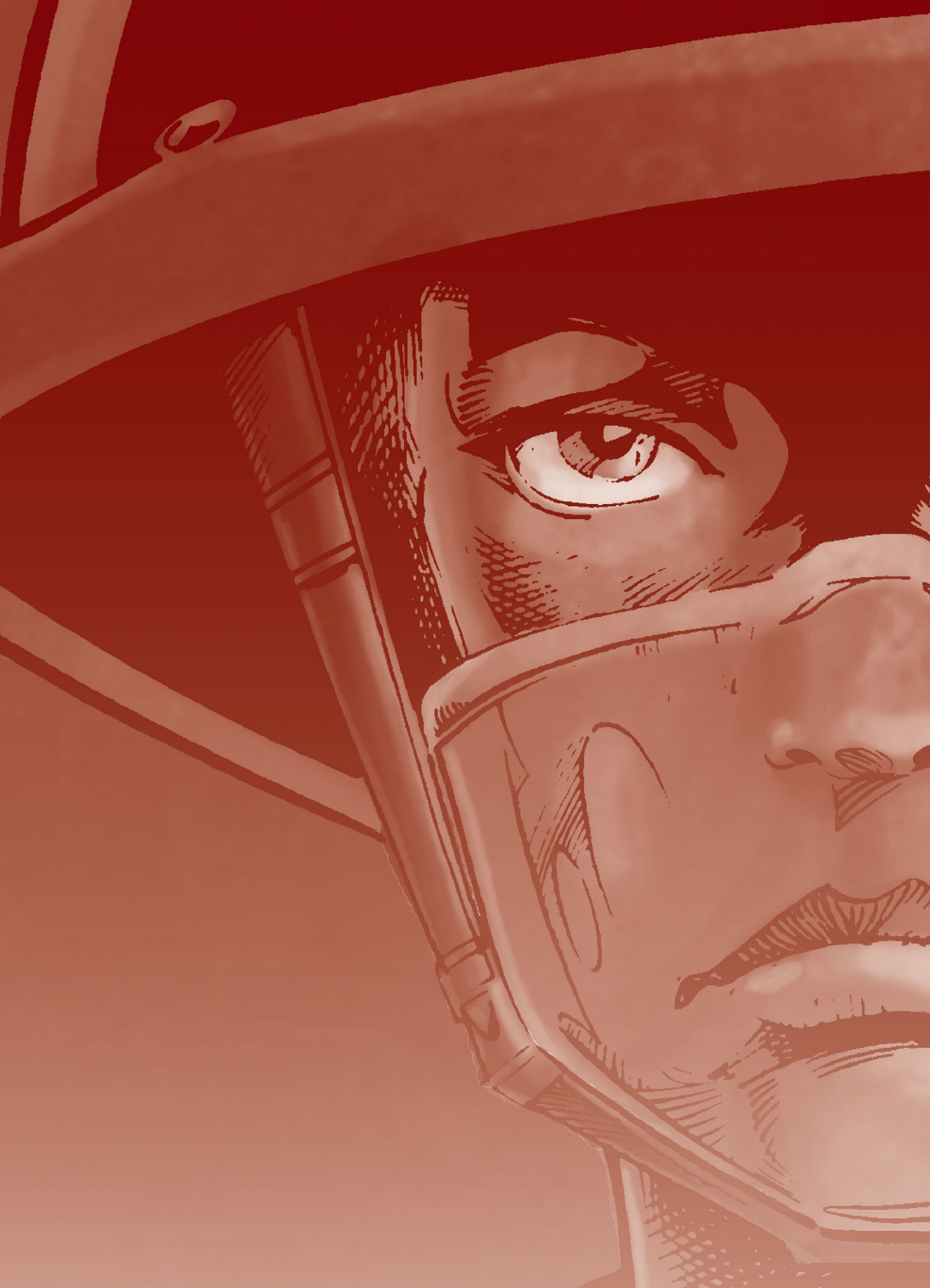
IT FEELS LIKE A WEB, STRAINING AGAINST ME, GROWING TAUT, FINALLY SNAPPING STRAND BY STRAND...

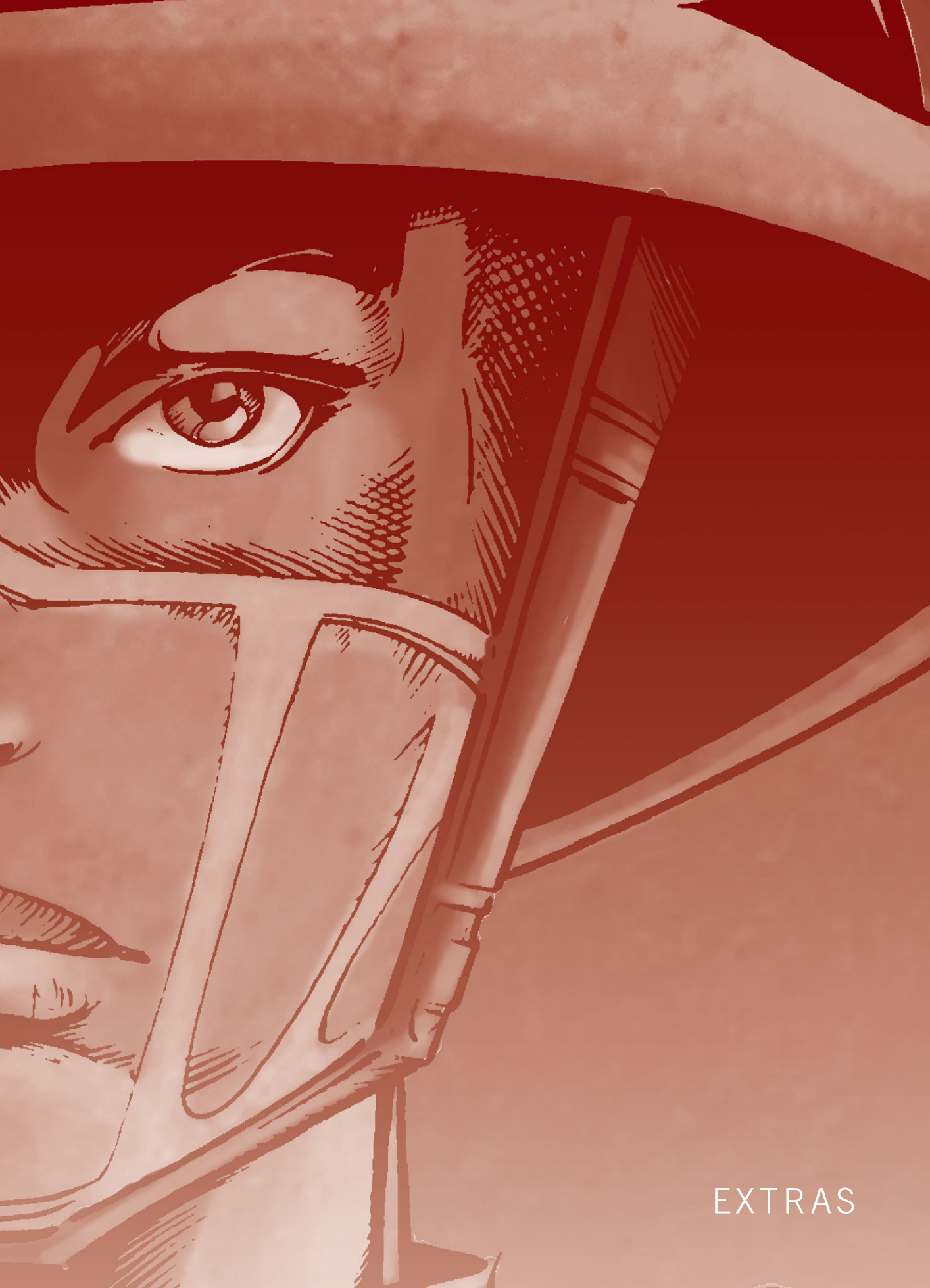
... AND THEN I'M OUT.

JUST OUT.

END OF BOOK THREE







EXTRAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

PROG 451
4 JAN 86

IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY

2000 AD

FEATURING **JUDGE DREDD**

24p
EARTH
MONEY

5180	Malaysia
70c	Australia
70c	New Zealand
85c	Mercury
210c	Venus
160c	Mars
10c	Asteroid Belt
110c	Saturn
2c	Pluto
429c	Neptune

IT'S A CATSBLOOD
KIND OF A
DAY!



The Ballad of
HALO JONES

THE PUBLIC HELL OF PRIVATE JONES!

PROG 453
78 JAN 86

2000 AD

FEATURING JUDGE DREDD

51.60 Malaysia
70c Australia
70c New Zealand
88p Mercury
210p Venus
66p Mars
10p Asteroid Belt
110p Saturn
2p Pluto
42p Neptune

24p
EARTH
MONEY

IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY



PROG 460
8 MAR 86

2000 AD

FEATURING **JUDGE DREDD**

\$1.60 Malaysia
70c Australia
70c New Zealand
88g Mercury
210g Venus
66g Mars
10g Asteroid Belt
110g Saturn
2g Pluto
429g Neptune

24p
EARTH
MONEY

IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY

I BEEN IN
250 FIGHTS !

DON'T WORRY...
NOBODY LOSES
ALL THE TIME.



**HARD
JOES**

2000 AD Prog 460: Cover by Ian Gibson

PROG 466
19 APR 86

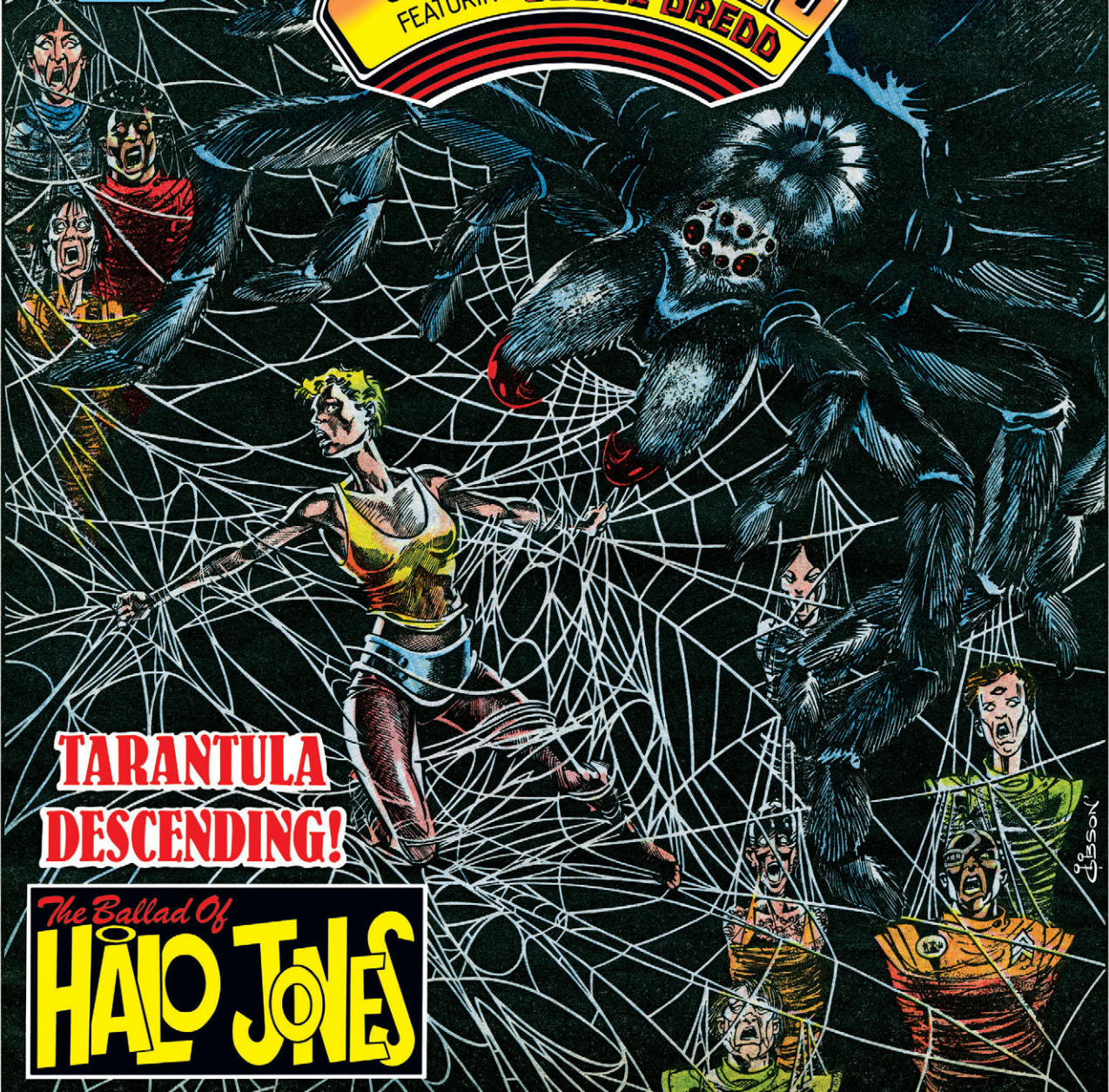
IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY

2000 AD

FEATURING JUDGE DREDD

\$1.60 Malaysia
70c Australia
70c New Zealand
89g Mercury
210g Venus
66g Mars
10g Asteroid Belt
110g Saturn
2g Pluto
42g Neptune

26p
EARTH
MONEY



**TARANTULA
DESCENDING!**

The Ballad Of
HALO JONES

Gibson

THE MIND OF MOORE

Pages of Alan Moore's original script for
Halo Jones, Book Three, Episode Two, With Your Musket, Fife And Drum

5 pages - Required

2/10/85

← H'MM, THAT'S TODAY, IAN!

ALAN MOORE

Ian, Flashback Sequences will need some thought to distinguish from present Panels, OR, vice versa -

2000 AD. THE BALLAD OF HALO JONES
BOOK THREE, EPISODE TWO.
'WITH YOUR MUSKET, FIFE AND DRUM'

1.

THE PANELS THAT OPEN EACH OF THIS EPISODE'S FIVE PAGES ARE ALL THE SAME SHAPE AND SIZE, AND ARE SEPARATE TO THE BULK OF THE REST OF THIS EPISODE'S NARRATIVE..MAYBE YOU CAN GIVE THEM A HEAVIER PANEL BORDER OR SOMETHING TO MAKE THEM MORE DISTINCTIVE AND SET THEM APART. IN THIS FIRST ONE, ALL WE SEE IS A REALLY TIGHT CLOSE UP OF HALO'S EYES. WE ARE LOOKING AT THEM THROUGH THE GLASS FACE-SHIELD OF SOME KIND OF SUIT HELMET, BUT WE ARE PROBABLY SO CLOSE TO HER THAT WE WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE FOR SURE THAT SHE'S WEARING A HELMET HERE. SHE IS SITTING SOMEWHERE WHERE ITS QUITE DARK WITH ONLY A FEW SMALL LIGHTS GLINTING OFF THE GLASS OF HER FACEPLATE, AND HER EYES ARE FROWNING CYNICALLY BEHIND THE GLASS, LOOKING DOWN AT A LEAFLET THAT SHE IS HOLDING (NOT VISIBLE TO US HERE) AND READING FROM IT.

HALO : "GIRLS...are you LONELY? Is your life lacking in PURPOSE?"

HALO : "In today's ARMED FORCES, you'll find a great big happy, slappy FAMILY of CARING people, SHARING people..."

2.

NOW WE HAVE THE BIGGEST PANEL ON THE PAGE, AND WE MOVE STRAIGHT INTO OUR FIRST FLASHBACK SEQUENCE, SHOWING HALO AND TOY'S FIRST COUPLE OF WEEKS AT THEIR BASIC TRAINING CAMP. IN THIS FIRST LARGE PANEL WE ARE INSIDE A FUTURISTIC BARRACK ROOM LOOKING TOWARDS THE OPEN DOOR. ON THE FLOOR IN THE FOREGROUND TWO WOMEN ARE FIGHTING. THE ONE ON TOP IS A VERY FAT AND PERPETUALLY HOSTILE LOOKING WOMAN CALLED BKTI. SHE IS FIGHTING WITH A WOMAN WITH A SHAVEN HEAD AND TATTOOS, WHO APPEARS TO HAVE STOLEN SOME FOOD FROM THE FAT WOMAN. LOOKING BEYOND THIS, FRAMED IN THE DOORWAY WE SEE HALO AND TOY WEARING BASIC SIMPLE MILITARY UNIFORMS THAT LOOKS FAIRLY CASUAL AND SLOPPY AND CARRYING SOME SORT OF KIT BAGS IN THEIR HANDS, MAKING IT CLEAR THEY'VE JUST ARRIVED. THEY STAND IN THE DOORWAY AND GAPE AT THE BIZARRE AND FURIOUS BATTLE GOING ON IN THE FOREGROUND, BOTH LOOKING UTTERLY UNCOMPREHENDING. LOUNGING AROUND IN THE B/G WE SEE VARIOUS OTHER MEMBERS OF BETA PLATOON, WHOSE BARRACKS THIS IS, DOING VARIOUS ODD THINGS. THE ONE STANDING NEAREST TO TOY AND HALO AS THEY ENTER IS A THIN, HIGHLY-STRUNG AND DELICATELY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN CALLED MONA. SHE GLANCES QUIZZICALLY AT THE NEW

2. (FROM OVER)

arrivals as they enter. The title goes somewhere near the bottom of the picture, along with the logo.

BOX : "PEOPLE LIKE YOU!"

BK II : THAT'S MY KAROHIX RATION, AND MY 'DFUBURGER, AND IF YOU DON'T GIVE THEM BACK I'LL RIP YOUR LIPS OFF!

LOGO : THE BALLAD OF HALO JONES, BOOK III

TITLE : 2: WITH YOUR MUSKET, FIFE AND DRUM

3.

Now we close in slightly, so that the struggle between Bk ti and Dit to (The woman with the tattoos) is going on largely off panel at the bottom of the picture with maybe just an odd arm or leg sticking up into the panel. Looking beyond these we can see Toy and Halo still standing staring down dumbstruck at the battle going on on the floor of the barrack room. Mona, the thin and nervous and beautiful woman we saw last panel, is smiling and nodding inanely as she welcomes them into the barrack room.

HALO : EXCUSE ME..WE'RE JONES AND MOL TO. WE'RE LOOKING FOR BETA PLATOON, BUT THIS CAN'T BE...

MONA : C-COME IN! THIS IS B-BETA PLATOON. Y-YOU MUST BE PRETTY SPECIAL IF THEY'VE A-A-ASSIGNED YOU TO US!

BK II : SPIT IT OUT! IT'S MINE!

4.

NOW A FLOOR LEVEL SHOT. IN THE FOREGROUND WE SEE BK II SITTING ON TOP OF DI TIO, WHO IS GAGGING AND SPLUTTERING AS THE FAT WOMAN'S HANDS WRAP ROUND HER THROAT, RSTTEING(?) HER SHAVEN HEAD ABOUT. LOOKING BEYOND THE TWO COMBATANTS WE SEE THE FEET OF HALO, TOY AND MONA AS MONA LEADS THEM INTO THE BARRACK ROOM. THEIR BALLOONS COME FROM OFF-PICTURE.

HALO : SPECIAL? REALLY?

MONA : O-OH YES! WE'RE ALL SPECIAL IN BETA PLATOON. I'M M-MONA. DOWN THERE, TH-THAT'S BK II AND DI TIO.

BK II : DON'T SWALLOW! DON'T SWALLOW!

5.

NOW HALO AND TOY HAVE THEIR BACKS TO US IN THE FOREGROUND SO THAT WE SEE THE HEAD

and shoulders, facing away from us in the foreground. Their heads are returned to look at each other here so that even though they have their backs to us we can see them both in profile as their eyes meet with the same bewildered and questioning glance. standing facing us beyond and between them, maybe half-figure, we can see Mona, who smiles innocently and naively and sweetly at them. Bk ti's enraged balloon issues from off pic at the bottom of the panel, where she still wrestles with Ditto on the floor.

MONA : S-SO ANYWAY...

MONA : WH-WHAT SORT OF D-DEFECTS DO YOU TWO HAVE?

OFF) BK II : AAARRGH! YOU SEEM! YOU SWALLOWED IT! DON'T DIGEST!

6.

TOP OF THE SECOND PAGE, AND WE OPEN WITH ANOTHER DISTINCTIVE AND MAYBE HEAVY BORDERED PANEL. HERE, WE ARE LOOKING THROUGH HALO'S EYES AS SHE ~~SITS~~ SITS THERE IN THE AS-YET-UNIDENTIFIABLE DARK PLACE. SINCE WE LOOK THROUGH HER EYES, ALL WE CAN SEE OF HER ARE HER HANDS. THEY ARE CLAD IN THICK AND BULKY PRESSURE-SEALED GLOVES, LIKE ASTRONAUT GLOVES, AND THEY ARE HOLDING A GLAMOROUS-LOOKING ARMY CAREER BROCHURE, WHICH IS WHAT HALO IS READING FROM IN THESE OPENING PANELS AT THE START OF EVERY PAGE. WE CAN SEE THE BROCHURE..OR AT LEAST THE SIDE HALO IS READING FROM. THERE ARE LOTS OF ATTRACTIVE PICTURES OF SMILING AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN UNIFORM DOING THE SORT OF THINGS THAT PEOPLE IN ARMY CAREER BROCHURES USUALLY SEEM TO BE DOING, AND THERE IS A LOT OF TEXT. IF WE CAN SEE ANYTHING OF THE BACKGROUND BEHIND AND BEYOND THE LEAFLET HALO IS READING FROM IT SHOULD BE PRIMARILY DARK WITH A FEW AMBIGUOUS SHAPES GLINTING IN THE DARKNESS OPPOSITE HALO AS SHE SITS READING.

FF) HALO : "NOT ONLY WILL YOUR NEW POSITION FILL YOU WITH PRIDE, IT WILL FILL YOU WITH EXPERIENCE .

FF) HALO : "AS A SPECIALIST CRACK TROOPER YOU'LL LEARN MANY INTERESTING NEW SKILLS....

7.

NOW INTO ANOTHER FLASHBACK. IT IS DAYTIME AND WE ARE OUT OF DOORS IN A SORT OF EXERCISE AREA-CUM ASSAULT COURSE, UPDATED TO SUIT FUTURE REQUIREMENTS AND STYLES. THERE ARE TWO SUNS IN THE SKY OVERHEAD. IN THE FOREGROUND, VISIBLE MAYBE HALF FIGURE AS THEY GO THROUGH A MOCK-BATTLE, ARE HALO AND MONA. MONA IS JUST BANGING SOMETHING THAT LOOKS LIKE A FLASHLIGHT DOWN ON TOP OF HALO'S HEAD. ITS QUITE HARD AND HALO WINCES IN PAIN. LOOKING BEYOND THEM, INTO THE BACKGROUND, WE CAN SEE SOME OF THE OTHER PLATOON MEMBERS LOOKING ON, DRESSED IN FIELD UNIFORMS AND HELMETS (AS ARE HALO AND MONA), ALONG

7. (FROM OVER)

with their sergeant, who is a large and powerfully built black woman who wears an eye-patch, unless there's some other design for a character you've been waiting to use, in which case she can look like whatever you want. She looks enthusiastic and excited as she urges Mona on. Mona has her tongue sticking out in infantile concentration as she smashes the dummy weapon down hard on top of halo's helmet.

BOX : "...WHICH WILL SURPRISE AND IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS IN LATER LIFE."

SERGEANT : THAT'S IT! LOCATE THE MARKOV POINT IN YOUR ENEMY SOLDIER'S HARD LIGHT SCREEN, THEN PUNCH YOUR ELECTROPIC DOWN THROUGH HER DIRTY TERRORIST SKULL!

F.X. : WOK!

HALO : AAGH!

8.

In the background, Halo sits looking pained and dazed on the ground, rubbing her head and glaring up reproachfully at Mona, who looks even more nervous and flustered and upset, waving her hands about distractedly. In the foreground, only partly visible, we see the sergeant gesturing to the rest of the squad (Invisible here) to move on.

HALO : MONA, THAT HURT!

MONA : W-WELL I'M SORRY! I WAS ORDERED TO FLUNGE AN ELECTRIFIED D-DAGGER INTO YOUR L-LIVING BRAIN AND IF IT HURTS THAT'S N-NOT MY FAULT!

SERGEANT : OKAY, YOU WOMEN! ON WITH THE ASSAULT COURSE...

9.

Now Halo is in the foreground, head and shoulders facing away from us towards the sergeant, who stands looking at us from the mid ground. Halo looks cowed and taken aback as the Sergeant suddenly bellows at her. Looking beyond the Sergeant we can see the other woman in the platoon stumbling off towards the next stage of the touch futuristic assault course.

SERGEANT : JONES? WHERE DO YOU THINK YOUR GOING? YOU JUST RECEIVED EIGHT HUNDRED VOLTS THROUGH YOUR CEREBRAL CORTEX. YOU'RE DEAD. YOU HAVE TO STAY HERE.

SERGEANT : THE REST OF YOU, WATCH OUT FOR ENEMY HATCHSNATCHERS!

10.

The Sergeant and rest of the platoon have gone, leaving Halo sitting bored on the ground, which is cratered and scarred exactly like a real battlefield. Glancing across the way a little she sees Toby lounging in boredom against some jutting lump of

. (FROM OVER)

shattered rock or other. Perhaps Toy is head and shoulders in the foreground, chewing a withered stem of grass and staring in boredom at nothing in particular. Looking past her we see Halo sitting some yards away, gazing across at her friend.

HALO : HI, TOY. ARE YOU DEAD TOO? I GOT MY BRAIN FRIED.

TOY : THAT'S NOTHING. I GOT TURNED INTO AN UNIDENTIFIABLE BONELESS MASS BY A VIBRO-MINE. I'M SICK OF MANOEUVRES. I ALWAYS GET KILLED AND END UP SITTING HERE, DEAD.

11.

Now we pull right back from the slight sort of hill upon which both women are sitting & that we see them maybe in silhouette as they sit atop the incline against a double-sunned alien sky. In the foreground, the Sergeant is directing the other women to crawl under razor-blade threaded wire in freezing alien mud. The Sergeant looks happy in her work.

HALO : NEVER MIND.

HALO : MAYBE BEING DEAD'S A SKILL THAT WILL COME IN HANDY IN LATER LIFE.

12.

Third page, and another distinctive, thick bordered (Or whatever) panel to open with. We are back in the dark and fairly confined place that Halo is sitting as she reads the Army leaflet. In this panel, we are behind the person who sits opposite Halo, facing her across a narrow aisle. The person is wearing a bulky helmet, connected by a pressure seal to an equally bulky suit. We can only see the head and shoulders of the suited figure as it faces away from us, so we can't see an awful lot of the suit here. Looking over the foreground figure's shoulder and across the narrow aisle we can see a little of Halo, sitting there in an identical pressure suit. Halo is holding up the leaflet in front of her as she reads from it, so that although we cannot see her face, we can see the front cover of the brochure, which has the words 'AN EXCITING NEW WORLD OF EXPERIENCE IN TODAY'S ARMED FORCES' on the front, along with a jingoistic picture of some sort, even if we can't read the words very well here. All we can really see of Halo, obscured as she is by the pamphlet, are her bulkily gloved hands holding the sides of the leaflet. The surroundings are still dark and cramped, and we can't really see much of them here.

HALO (BEHIND LEAFLET) : "ALSO, LET US NOT FORGET THE OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAVEL AND ENCOUNTER INTERESTING NEW RACES!"

ALAN MOORE

One of the most respected and well-known comic writers of the past few decades, Alan Moore created some of *2000 AD*'s most popular series, including *Abelard Snazz*, *The Ballad of Halo Jones*, *D.R. & Quinch* and *Skizz*. He has also worked on several other strips for *2000 AD*, most notably *Tharg's Futureshocks*.

Outside of the Galaxy's Greatest Comic, Moore is best known for his work on *Watchmen*, which redefined the superhero genre in 1986, but this is simply touching the surface of a career which has included *Batman*, *Captain Britain*, *From Hell*, *Glory*, *Green Lantern Corps*, *Lost Girls*, *Miracleman*, *A Small Killing*, *Swamp Thing*, *Superman*, *V For Vendetta*, *Promethea* and *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*.

More recently his latest novel, *Jerusalem*, was published to critical acclaim.

IAN GIBSON

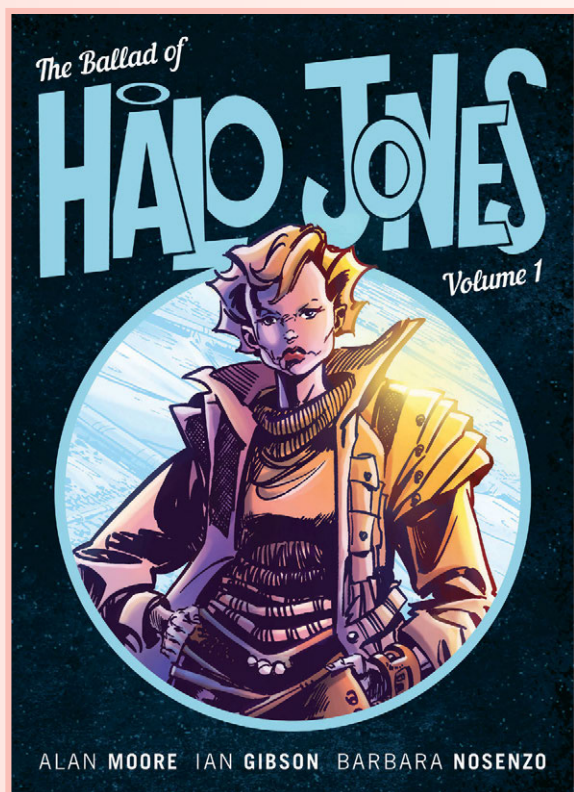
One of *2000 AD*'s best-loved and most honoured artists, Ian Gibson is responsible for the co-creation of *The Ballad of Halo Jones* (with Alan Moore), and created *Bella Bagley*, an unfortunate character in *Judge Dredd*'s world who fell head-over-heels in love with 'Old Stoney Face' himself! His work outside the Galaxy's Greatest Comic includes *Chronicles of Genghis Grimtoad*, *Star Wars: Boba Fett*, *X-Men Unlimited*, plus the designs for the TV series *Reboot*.

BARBARA NOSENZO

Born in 1983, Barbara Nosenzo graduated in Forensic Chemistry before starting work in comics with the Italian independent author collective 'La Compagnia del Fumetto', collaborating on over 20 comic books as author or illustrator before specialising as a colourist. She is known for her work on the creator owned series *The Ravenholme Chronicles* with the author Andrea Broccardo. In 2010 she was selected by the talent scout and future Marvel E-i-C CB Cebulski in a portfolio review and quickly started working with Italian publishers such as Lo Scarabeo Tarots, and ManFont Comics and international publishers including Titan Comics.

In 2017 Nosenzo was selected by *2000 AD* to colour John Ridgeway's cover for *Summer Magic: The Complete Journal of Luke Kirby*, which then led to her colour remastering of *The Ballad of Halo Jones*, Alan Moore and Ian Gibson's sci-fi masterpiece. Currently Nosenzo is working on more *2000 AD* projects, for US comics and on independent projects, as a digital and traditional colourist.

JOIN ALAN MOORE'S ORIGINAL SPACE HEROINE!



HALO JONES BOOK ONE

AVAILABLE NOW



HALO JONES BOOK TWO

AVAILABLE NOW

“still in comics-land very ahead of her time ... a cracking sci-fi adventure story”

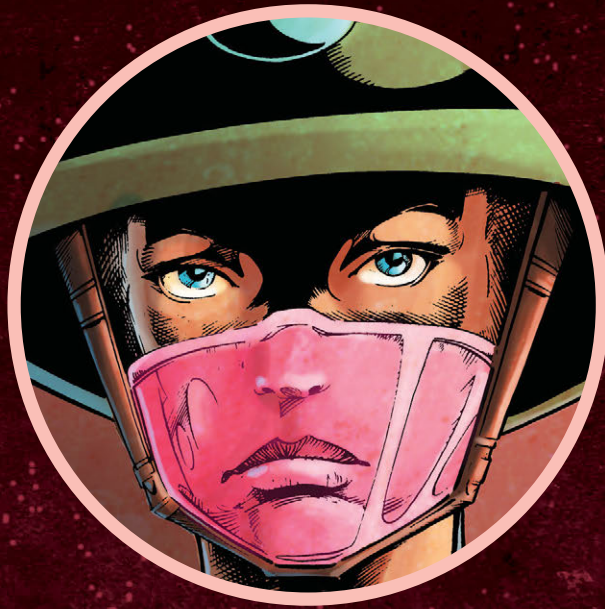
- Sci-Fi Now

“a complex, engaging tale that fans of Moore’s work shouldn’t pass up.”

- IGN

“Halo Jones is terrific comics”

- The Comics Journal



Caught in the Web

Her dreams of escape dashed, Halo has ended up on a decaying ghostworld, where the drink is the only thing that hasn't run dry. Having drifted from one dead-end job to another, her credits and hopes for the future have almost run out, but fortunately, the military is looking for new recruits. With no other way out, she enlists.

This third volume concludes Alan Moore and Ian Gibson's masterwork, coloured for the first time by Barbara Nosenzo.

“For some, *Halo Jones* is [Moore's] greatest creation... the themes – fears about AI, redundancy by robot, immigration and finding your way in an automated world, a religious world...are more current now than they were at the time...This beautifully coloured reissue should help introduce one of the greatest sci-fi characters to a fresh audience.” - New Scientist



ISBN 978-1-78108-637-7



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