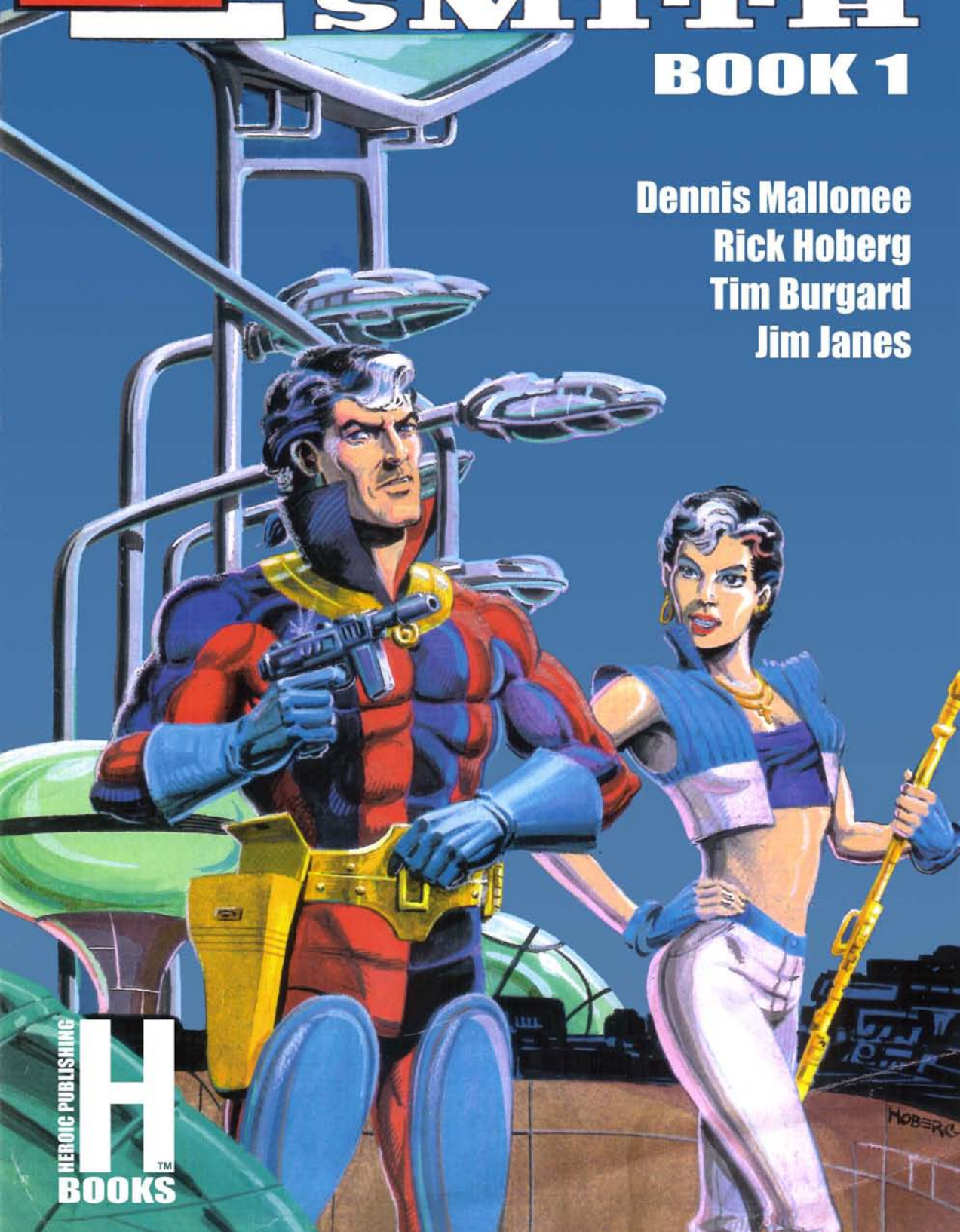


ETERNITY

SMITH

BOOK 1

Dennis Mallonee
Rick Hoberg
Tim Burgard
Jim Janes



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THE SAGA OF ETERNITY SMITH

a foreword by Dennis Mallonee

I need to be brief. We've packed so much story material into this 176-page volume, that there just isn't enough space to go into great detail about how Eternity Smith, his lovely superspy daughter Skylark, and her talented Crew came to be. We'll have to save that for Book 2.

For the moment, suffice it to say that

even after twenty-five years, the basic storyline Rick Hoberg came up with during our first plotting session more than a quarter of a century ago holds up extremely well. It's a story that could as easily have taken place today, involving as it does futuristic super-science, and a time-traveling hero on a desperate mission to deal with an international terrorist threat that might well evolve into a threat to the very survival of humanity.

Understand this: When *Eternity Smith* first appeared, in the summer of 1986, the events of 9/11 were still fifteen years and a few months away. And the *Terminator* franchise had only barely begun. It remains, as a point of interest, rather fascinating to me just how many plot elements contained in the second *Terminator* movie, which was released long after *Eternity Smith* saw print, mirror what Rick and I came up with.

But that's neither here nor there. When dealing with similar themes and concepts, there are bound to be a few striking coincidences.

The bottom line is that the story you're about to read works, not only as an adventure tale, not only as science fiction adventure, but also as a quest combined with a personal coming-of-age story.

And the real hero of this adventure isn't necessarily our nominal title character. This isn't really the story of Ethan Caldwell (Eternity) Smith. His story, the story of his adventures in the world of the future, is a story that in truth has yet to be told.

This, at its root, was always conceptually a story about Eternity Smith's daughter, Skylark. She was always our prime mover. She was always our hero. The title of the series, *Eternity Smith*, was always the name we gave to the challenge Skylark Smith had to face.

Read this story with that in mind, and you'll see what's really going on.

And rest assured that even after all this time, there are a few surprises still in store for you.

Dennis Mallonee
March 2013

RICK HOBERG

Rick Hoberg began working for Russ Manning in 1975, penciling *Tarzan* stories for overseas distribution. He then hooked up with Marvel Comics in the late 1970's and got his big break drawing covers of a few of the original *STAR WARS* comics, and issues of *Kull*, *What If*, and *Savage Sword of Conan*. He also began his animation work during this period, learning the craft of storyboarding from the great Doug Wildey at Hanna Barbera. After that, he began working for Lucasfilm, where he was the inker for Russ Manning's *STAR WARS* comic strip. These days, Rick is probably best known for his storyboard work in animation.



TIM BURGARD

Tim Burgard is California born and bred. He graduated from the Art Center College of Design, for no apparent reason since while there all he did was keep on drawing the same silly stuff he'd always drawn. Eventually, he did have to find a way to make a living at it, and after a few years in the comic book industry as a penciller, inker, and writer, he began working in animation. Within a few years, he was a storyboard artist on dozens of shows, including 'Gargoyles,' 'Men in Black,' 'The Simpsons,' 'Stargate,' 'Mars Attacks,' and 'Ali.' He also does pretty good doodles of cute girls, and is currently working on a *Tarzan* graphic novel.



JIM JAMES

For the past fifteen years, Jim James has worked primarily in the animation industry as a storyboard, model, and sometimes background artist. He has also penciled and inked many comic book titles and posters. His storyboard work has included *Voltron*, *Roswell Conspiracies*, *Spider-Man*, *X-Men*, *Batman the Animated Series*, *Gargoyles*, *Hulk*, *Avengers*, *Sherlock Holmes 2000*, *Mummies*, *Ace Ventura*, *Fantastic Four*, and a host of others. The comic books he's worked on have included *Vampirella*, *Legion of Super-Heroes*, *Moon Knight*, *The Rook*, *House of Mystery*, *Rose and the Thorn*, *House of Mystery*, *True Romance*, and many more. He's also worked as a music producer and manager, memorably auditioning 500 lovely young ladies for the Pop, R&B female vocal group, *SX4*.



DENNIS MALLONEE

Dennis Mallonee is the driving force behind Heroic Publishing, and the creator of such characters as Doctor Arcane, Lady Arcane, the Black Enchantress, the Tigress, Chrissie Claus, Britannia, the Golden Warrior, Giant, G-Girl, Nemesis Girl, and many more. When he's not doing comic books, he also provides web-based programming and custom database access tools to a wide variety of corporate clients. Dennis is a graduate of the California Institute of Technology (BS '76) with a degree in Economics, and currently lives in Long Beach CA.





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ETERNITY

SMITH™



©1986 by Dennis Mallonee and Rick Hoberg

SKYLARK SMITH

From the files of the Federal Intelligence Services Team



CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 5 November 1985

Subject: Skylark Smith

Height: 5'2"

Weight: 105 lbs.

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Dark brown

Complexion: Ivory

Age: 25 years

Known relatives: Dr. Ethan Caldwell Smith (father; missing, presumed dead); Dr. Jasmine W. Smith (mother)

Appearance: Subject is a petite, well-proportioned young woman of mixed Oriental and Caucasian background. Subject wears her hair short, and puts a blonde streak in her forelock. She is fond of jewelry, and invariably wears a small Christian cross that was given to her by her mother.

Temperament: Subject often displays irrational bursts of temper in non-critical situations, but is cool and analytical under stress. Subject has not been observed to display fear under any circumstances, but neither does she seem to be inclined toward foolhardiness.

Intelligence: Subject is highly intelligent, rating *above* top-of-scale by measure of every aptitude test administered to her by this agency.

Education: Through her mother's academic contacts, subject has had the opportunity to learn at the feet of many prominent academicians and scientists, and thus has a wide background in many different physical and social sciences. Subject holds Master's degrees in Physics and Chemistry, and is qualified for several different doctorates, but has never taken time to pursue a thesis.

Combat training: Subject is a natural athlete, and maintains herself in superb physical condition. Subject lacks formal combat training, but does have a working knowledge of martial arts.

Motivation: Subject has expressed a desire to work with the Federal Intelligence Services Team as a special field agent. Subject proposes to operate under cover as the lead singer of the rock band, "Skylark and the Crew." Subject has indicated that this band will comprise a support team for counter-espionage and anti-terrorist operations.

Recommendation: Qualified approval of application, pending background checks on members of subject's proposed support team. Subject *will* be required to undertake formal combat training prior to service in the field.

BOOMER BORG

From the files of the Federal Intelligence Services Team



CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 16 November 1985

Subject: Jackson "Boomer" Borg

Height: 6'

Weight: 180 lbs.

Eyes: Blue

Hair: Sandy-blond

Complexion: Ruddy

Age: 28 years

Known relatives: None

Appearance: Subject is tall and well-muscled. He wears his hair short-cut and choppy. He usually wears a long, heavy all-weather coat which conceals many gadget-filled pockets. Subject has a proud bearing and a very long stride.

Temperament: Subject is easy-going, but impatient with delays. He is fond of the practical joke, and will often make an effort to loosen up a tense situation. He is fond of working-model toys, robot marionettes, and puppets of all kinds.

Intelligence: Subject pretends to be, as he puts it, a "dumb of street punk," but this act masks a keen and incisive intellect, and a *genius* for working with machinery of all types.

Education: Subject did not attend college. He completed high school, and took a smattering of mail-order courses in engineering and technical training.

Combat training: Subject is amazingly strong, and knows how to use his fists. He evidently *did* grow up as a "street punk" in Dallas, Texas; he says that he *had* to learn how to fight.

Motivation: Subject displays a strong sense of justice. His moral sense runs to black-and-white, and seems not to allow for shades of gray. He is interested in working for the Federal Intelligence Services Team *only* if that means he will be working with Skylark Smith as a member of her "Crew." Evidence indicates that subject is emotionally attached to Miss Smith, though she seems not to have perceived it.

Caveat: Subject is hesitant to discuss his personal history. There are indications that he may have tenuous connections with organized crime, though what the precise nature of those connections may be remains unknown.

Recommendation: Assignment to the anti-terrorist group to be code-named, *Skylark and the Crew*. Assignment tentative, pending further investigation.

LOS ANGELES, 1986.

IT FLASHES FOR ONLY A MOMENT IN THE EVENING SKY--A KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOR SHIMMERING AGAINST THE DEEP BLUE-BLACK OF A RARE AND SMOGLess NIGHT.

YOU MIGHT HAVE SEEN IT HAD YOU LOOKED TO THE HEAVENS IN THAT BRIEF INSTANT.

BUT, EVEN SO, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN, ON THE STREET BELOW, TOO FAR AWAY TO SEE THIS MAN--THIS HERO--BRIDGE A GAP BETWEEN SPACE AND TIME, TO COME HURLING BACK TO A LIFE HE THOUGHT HE WOULD NEVER LIVE AGAIN.

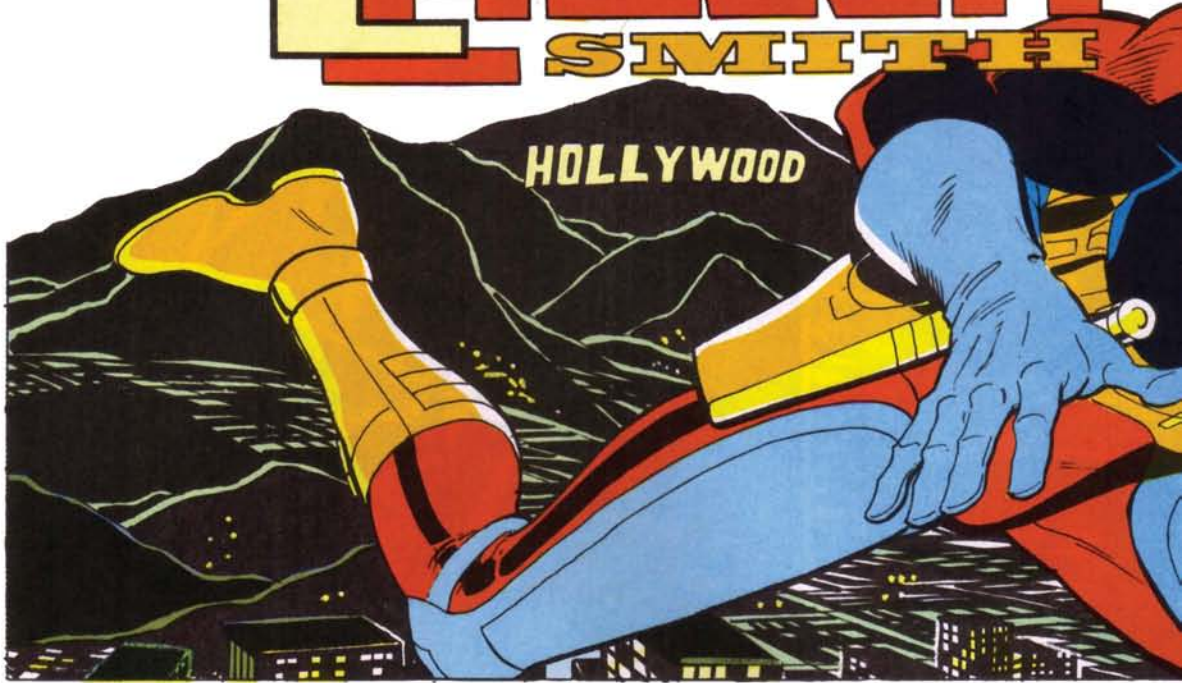


FOR US, TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THIS MAN LAST SHARED OUR DESTINY. HE HAS AGED ONLY TEN, FIGHTING A WAR IN A NIGHTMARE WORLD HE HAS SWORN MUST NEVER BE ALLOWED TO EXIST.

HE IS THE GUARDIAN OF MANKIND'S FUTURE.

HE IS

ETERNITY SMITH





o o o I THINK, JUST MAYBE...

YES!

WE DID IT! I'M HOME!

You are cordially invited to the birth of a comic book legend!

Story by DENNIS MALONEE Artwork by RICK HOBERG
Renderings: TIM BURGARD
Letters: DAVID CODY WEISS
Colors: JANICE COHEN



IF YOU CANNOT, OR WILL NOT BE OF ASSISTANCE TO ME, I'LL BE ON MY WAY.



AT MY BEST GUESS, TIME IS SHORT, AND I DON'T HAVE ANY FURTHER TO SPEND IN FRUITLESS CONVERSATION.

HEY!

WAIT! HOW DO YOU DO THAT?



NUTS.

AIN'T NOBODY GONNA BELIEVE OL' ARNIE ON THIS ONE.

SHOULDA HIT 'IM UP FER SOME CASH.

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, LATER THAT SAME NIGHT.

HER NAME IS SKYLARK.

IT'S HER REAL NAME, NOT JUST A STAGE NAME, AND SHE LAUGHS ABOUT IT WHEN SHE'S ASKED.



HER DADDY, IT SEEMS, WAS QUITE A SCIENCE-FICTION BUFF, AND HER MOTHER ALWAYS LET HIM HAVE HIS WAY.

IT'S A GOOD NAME FOR A SINGER.



SINGING ISN'T ALL SHE DOES, OF COURSE-- SHE IS HER FATHER'S CHILD.



BUT IT'S ONE OF THE THINGS SHE DOES BEST.

HER VOICE IS AS COMPELLING AS THE REST OF HER. "LISTEN TO ME," SHE SINGS. AND THE PEOPLE DO.



"HEART OF DARKNESS," LYRICS © 1986 BY SKYLARK SMITH.

"I HAVE SEEN THE HEART OF DARKNESS IN A LOST AND LONELY SOUL. A LOVING FACE, A WARM EMBRACE, A CHANCE TO BE MADE WHOLE."



WHETHER TOGETHER...

"BUT DARKNESS NEVER WARMED A HEART. THE EMPTINESS WITHIN MAKES PAIN OF LIFE AND LOVE, AND MAKES A KINDNESS SEEM A SIN."



...OR ALONE...

...THE PEOPLE RESPOND TO SKYLARK SMITH. HER VOICE IS BEGINNING TO MAKE HER FAMOUS.

AND THAT, SHE REALIZES, COULD END UP BEING A MIXED BLESSING AT BEST.



STILL, SHE GLORIES IN THE RAW EMOTION OF THE SONG.

AND, ONCE ON STAGE, SHE LOSES HERSELF IN IT, AND IN THE ADULATION OF THE THRONG.



IT'S THE COMING DOWN THAT HURTS.

THE APPLAUSE DOESN'T LAST FOREVER.



FANTASTIC! YOU WERE FANTASTIC OUT THERE TONIGHT, SKY! THEY LOVED YOU!

ABEL. MAKE IT ABEL.

MR. TRENT...

BUT YOU CAN'T ESCAPE IT. YOU'RE TOO GOOD.

MR. TRENT, I'VE TOLD YOU I DON'T WANT TO BE A STAR. I JUST WANT TO SING. I LIKE TO SING.

I PROMISED YOU WE'D MAKE A STAR OF YOU, AND A STAR YOU WILL BE!



IF YOU'RE GOING TO SING, SKY, YOU'RE GOING TO BE A STAR WHETHER YOU WANT IT OR NOT.

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THIS AGAIN.



NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME, SKYLARK SMITH! LAS VEGAS IS ONLY ONE STEP ALONG THE PATH TO SUCCESS. I CAN LINE UP THE TONIGHT SHOW...

GO AWAY!

PROBLEM, Mr. TRENT?

A MINOR ONE, PERHAPS, ANNIE. YOUR LITTLE SONGBIRD'S LAPSED INTO RELUCTANCE AGAIN.

I CONFESS I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE GIRL. SHE BLOWS HOT WITH AMBITION THE ONE DAY, AND IS AS COLD AS ICE THE NEXT.

THEN MAYBE YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO HER SONGS, Mr. TRENT.

OR DID IT NEVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT SHE SINGS ABOUT HERSELF?

THE THOUGHT HAD CROSSED MY MIND, I ADMIT.

I THINK I PREFERRED TO IGNORE THE IMPLICATIONS.

WELL, DON'T. IF YOU'RE GOING TO WORK WITH US, YOU'LL HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THE DEMONS THAT DRIVE HER.

Miss you
Terri
Kevin

"AND THE FIRST THING YOU'D BETTER LEARN IS THAT SHE'S NEVER HAD ANY ROOM IN HER HEART FOR LOVE!"



I'M SORRY, KEVIN.

I TRIED. I TRULY DID. BUT IT NEVER SEEMS TO BE ENOUGH.

SKYLARK.



CAN YOU SPARE ME A MOMENT? WE NEED TO TALK.

WHO IN THE...?



LISTEN, MISTER! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT INTO MY DRESSING ROOM, BUT...!:-

Oh, my sweet lord...

D-daddy?



MEMORIES.

THAT'S ALL SHE'S HAD FOR THE LAST TWO DECADES OF HER LIFE...

MEMORIES OF A STRONG AND HANDSOME MAN, LARGER THAN LIFE TO A FIVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO DID LOVE HIM WITH EVERY FIBRE OF HER BEING.



AND NOW, TO SEE HIM AGAIN, SO UNCHANGED AFTER SO LONG A TIME...



IT IS YOU, ISN'T IT?

YES. OF COURSE.

...SOMETHING SNAPS.



SMEX

YOU BASTARD!



HOW DARE YOU WALK BACK INTO MY LIFE, NOW OF ALL TIMES! JUST WHEN I'M BEGINNING TO MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF!

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS?

YOU NEVER WROTE! YOU NEVER PHONED!

SKYLARK! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!



EXCUSE ME.

IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE?

I COULDN'T HELP OVERHEARING...



THIS SPANKING-NEW EDIFICE OF STEEL AND GLASS IS THE CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS OF THORNE INDUSTRIES, INTERNATIONAL.

IN THE TEN YEARS THAT HAVE PASSED SINCE HE FIRST APPEARED ON THE FINANCIAL SCENE, JASON THORNE, PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THORNE INDUSTRIES, HAS AMASSED A CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL FORTUNE.

HIS COMPANY IS BY NO MEANS THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD, OR EVEN IN COLORADO. BUT IT IS GROWING, AND HEAVEN HELP THOSE WHO STAND IN ITS WAY.



YOU'VE RUINED ME, THORNE! I CAME TO YOU FOR HELP, AND YOU'VE SOLD ME TO THE SHARKS!

CALM YOURSELF, MR. KELLER.

DID I OR DID I NOT ADVANCE YOU THE MONEY YOU REQUESTED?



HAVE YOU WASTED IT, THEN?

YOU KNOW DAMN WELL I DIDN'T "WASTE" IT! ALL I NEEDED WAS A LITTLE MORE TIME!



TIME IS A LUXURY, MR. KELLER, THAT'S NOT MINE TO GIVE!

NO, THE FACT IS THAT YOUR VENTURE HAS FAILED, AS IT WAS DESTINED TO FAIL, AND YOU SEEK A SCAPEGOAT TO BLAME FOR YOUR OWN INADEQUACIES.



I WILL NOT SERVE YOU IN THAT REGARD.

WHY YOU HEARTLESS, BLOOD-SUCKING...

YOU SOLD THOSE NOTES TO YOUR OWN SUBSIDIARIES, THORNE!



YOU CALLED THEM DUE! NO ONE ELSE!



YOU MEAN TO KILL ME, THEN.

WHY NOT? I'M ONLY YOUR LATEST VICTIM. IF I DON'T STOP YOU, WHO KNOWS HOW MANY MORE THERE'LL BE?





YOU MAY ATTEND TO HIM IF YOU LIKE, MISS SHAW, BUT HIS NEEDS MIGHT BE BETTER SERVED WITH MEDICAL AND PSYCHIATRIC CARE.

my hand!
you've crushed
my hand!



YES, I REALIZE THAT YOUR CONCERN IS FOR YOUR SINGER. I AM CONCERNED FOR HER AS WELL. MERELY KEEP ME APPRISED OF DEVELOPMENTS. AND THANK YOU FOR CALLING.



HE HAS ARRIVED, THEN. WILL TIA BE NEEDED?

NOT YET.

CALL MY WIFE AND INFORM HER THAT I'LL BE EVEN LATER THAN I'D ANTICIPATED.



FIRST, WE WILL TEST HIS METTLE.

HE WILL HAVE ALLIES. THAT MUCH IS KNOWN TO ME. WE WILL NEED TO CALL IN ALLIES OF OUR OWN.



LATER...

YOU MAKE A GOOD CUP OF COFFEE, SKY. IT'S BEEN... A LONG TIME, MAYBE THREE YEARS SINCE I'VE HAD ANY.

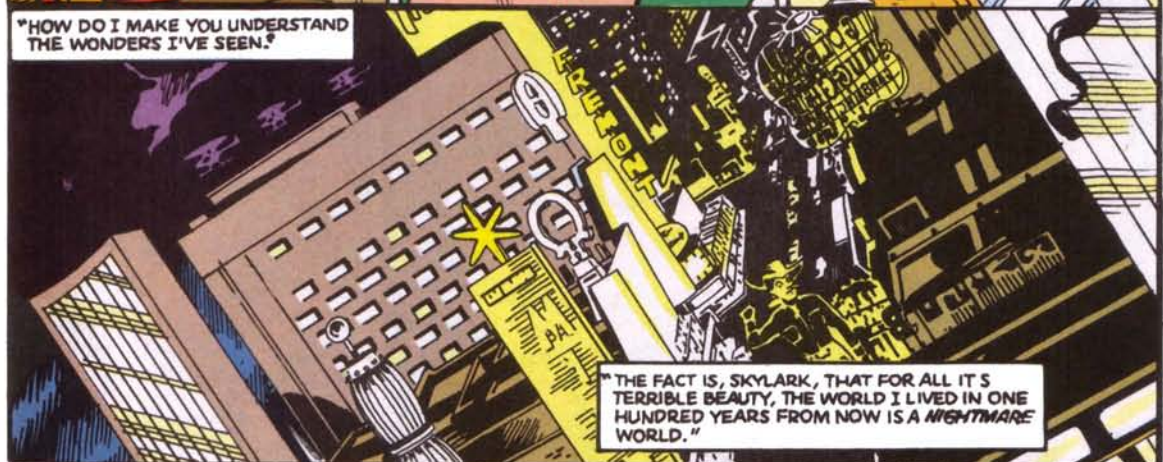
YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT? WHERE COULD YOU HAVE BEEN THAT YOU COULDN'T GET COFFEE?

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD YOU.

TRY ME.



"HOW DO I MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND THE WONDERS I'VE SEEN?"



"IT'S A WORLD OF SILENT TERROR, FILLED WITH DEATH AND THE PROMISE OF DEATH."



*EVEN TO SURVIVE TO SEE A NEW MOON IS... WAS... WILL BE A CHALLENGE TO THOSE OF US WHO STRUGGLE ON THE FRONT LINES.

"I'VE BEEN SENT BACK FOR A REASON."



"UNLESS I CAN STOP IT, THE MADNESS BEGINS TODAY!"

ASSUMING FOR A MOMENT THAT YOU'RE NOT A MADMAN, DADDY, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT FROM ME?



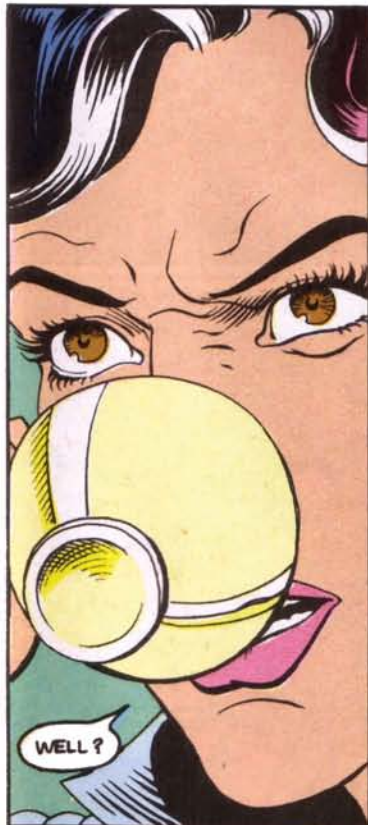
YOUR HELP. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT I LOCATE YOUR MOTHER.



I SEE.

SUPPOSE I DO HELP YOU FIND HER, THEN, WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?



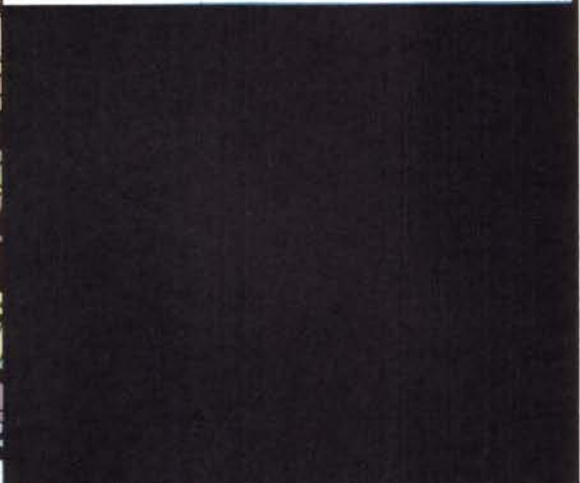


THEY SAY THE LIGHTS NEVER DIM IN A LAS VEGAS CASINO. IF YOU LIKE, YOU CAN SPEND THE NIGHT, AND SLEEP IN THE DAY.



YOU MIGHT AS WELL SLEEP THEN. LAS VEGAS IS A DESERT CITY, AND IT GETS TOO HOT TO DO MUCH OF ANYTHING ELSE.

OF COURSE, WHEN THE LIGHTS DO GO OUT, NO ONE REALLY EXPECTS THINGS TO HEAT UP THEN.



I LOVED YOU, DADDY!
I LOVED YOU, AND
I TRUSTED YOU.

YOU WERE ALWAYS
THERE FOR ME WHEN
I NEEDED YOU.



YOU WERE ALWAYS
THERE FOR ME WHEN
I CRIED.



SKY...

JUST
SHUT UP,
OKAY?

THIS IS HARD
ENOUGH FOR ME
WITHOUT HAVING
TO LISTEN TO MORE
OF YOUR LUNATIC
RAVINGS.



SKY, I'M
SORRY.

MOMMA NEVER KNEW
WHERE YOU'D GONE,
NEVER KNEW WHAT
HAD HAPPENED TO
YOU...

WE HOPED YOU
WERE DEAD!

SHE NEVER
REMARRIED,
DID YOU KNOW
THAT?



SKY, ALL I CAN HOPE FOR
IS THAT IN THE END I PROVE
MYSELF WORTHY OF
HER LOVE.





NOW SEE HERE, YOU... YOU... HOODLUMS!

YOU OVERSTEP YOUR AUTHORITY, AGENT Z, BUT THE STRATEGY IS SOUND.



KILL HIM!

WITH PLEASURE, SIR!

NO!

BRATTA
TATTA-TATTA

THAT WAS THE FLOOR MANAGER! THIS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE! WHAT ARE THESE PEOPLE DOING HERE?

KILLING INNOCENTS, IT WOULD SEEM.

HOW MUCH INFORMATION ON THEM DID YOU GET, SKY?

I DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE, WHO THEY'RE WORKING FOR, OR WHY THEY'RE HERE!

NOT ENOUGH. ALL MY SOURCE SAID WAS THAT SOMETHING MIGHT HAPPEN THIS WEEKEND, AND THAT WE SHOULD BOOK OURSELVES HERE IN CASE IT DID!



YOUR SOURCE MUST BE A PROPHECY, SKY.

THESE MEN ARE HERE FOR ME.



LOOK, MY CREW AND I GET RAID TO DO THIS SORT OF THING. IT DOESN'T INVOLVE YOU, SO WHY DON'T YOU STAY BACK HERE WHERE IT'S REASONABLY SAFE?

YOU, DADDY? AM I TO ADD PARANOID DELUSIONS TO THE LIST?



SORRY, SKY.







THERE WILL BE NO ENTESBE--NO DARING RESCUE! YOU ARE ALL DOOMED TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF THE FORCE FIVE ELITE!

EXCUSE ME.

Hah?



LET'S GO!

BOOMER! TO MY LEFT! KNIGHTSHADE! TO MY RIGHT!

I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DOES THAT VANISHING TRICK, BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO BE ENOUGH TO KEEP HIM FROM GETTING HIMSELF PLUGGED!

AS YOU SAY, SKYLARK!



MAYBE NOT. BUT FROM WHERE I STAND, IT LOOKS LIKE HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING!



YOUR PARDON, SIR. THIS MUST INDEED BE A HEAVY BURDEN TO BEAR.

CREEP!

ANNIE! GET A GUN!

Ha-Ha! VERY FUNNY!



HI! I'M BREEZE! YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE LINK OVER THERE. HE'S NOT MUCH OF A FIGHTER.

SKY! DON'T FORGET THE HOSTAGES! WE'LL TAKE THE SECURITY ROOM!



WHAT IN BLAZES? WHO ARE THOSE KIDS?

THEY DON'T WORRY ME. I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE GUY IN THE SUIT!



AW, NO! LOOK OUT, HARRY!

YOU ARE VERMIN! ALL OF YOU!



FLING



I'D SAY YOU WEREN'T FIT TO LIVE, BUT THAT WOULD LOWER ME TO YOUR LEVEL, AND I WON'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN.

IT'S ENOUGH TO STOP YOU, I THINK.



GET HIM! HE'S ONLY ONE MAN!



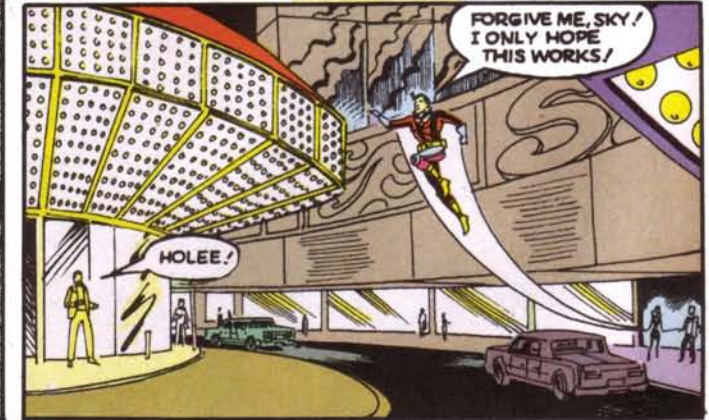
WOW! YOUR OLD MAN'S REALLY SOMETHIN'!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS! HOW CAN HE BE DOING THAT?

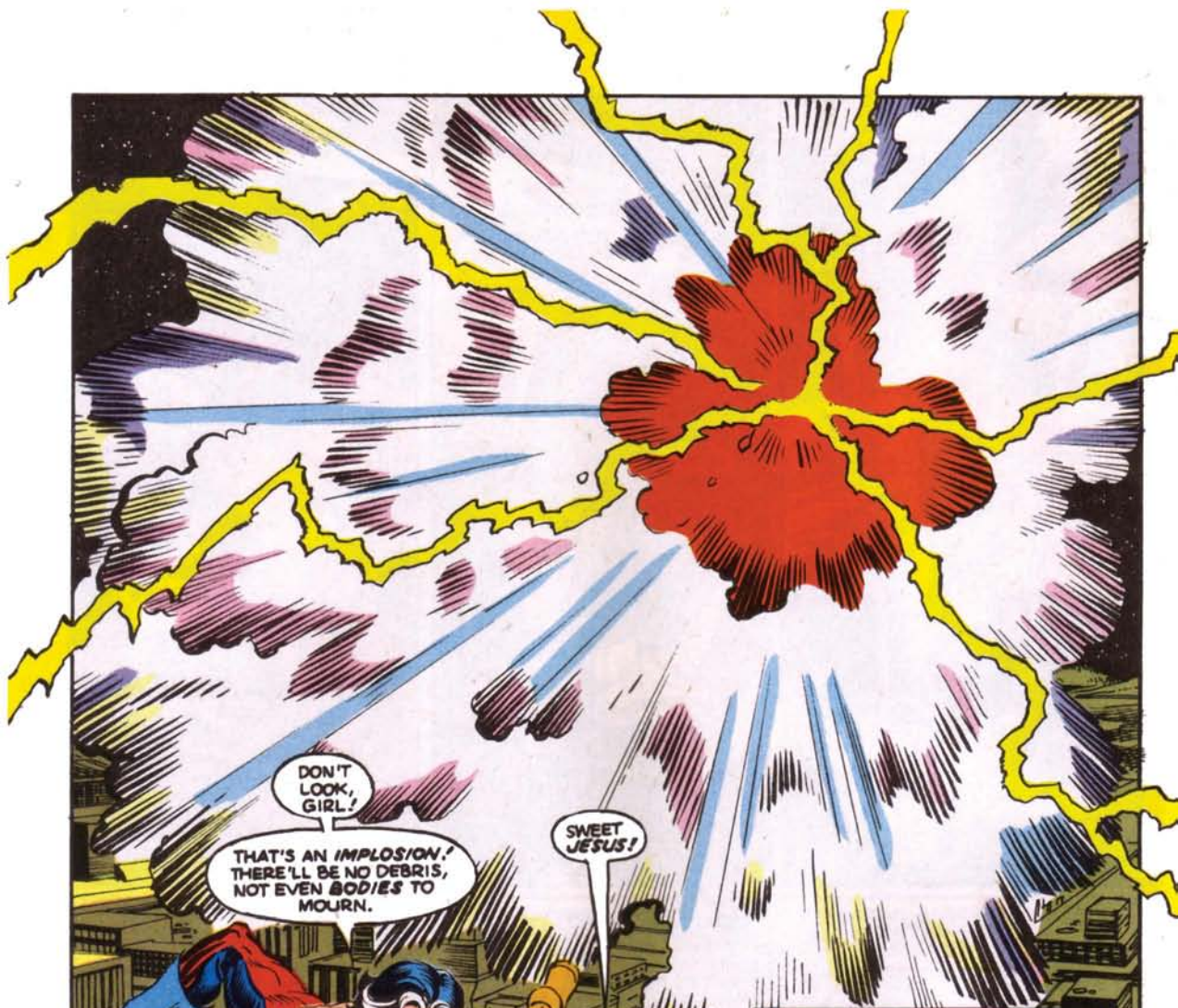


HECK! DON'T LOOK AT ME FOR AN EXPLANATION! I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A DUMB OL' STREET PUNK, REMEMBER?









DON'T
LOOK,
GIRL!

THAT'S AN *IMPLOSION!*
THERE'LL BE NO DEBRIS,
NOT EVEN *BODIES* TO
MOURN.

SWEET
JESUS!



I COULDN'T
LET THEM HURT
YOU, SKY.

I LOVE YOU
TOO MUCH
FOR THAT.



AND THAT, MY FRIENDS, IS THE GIST OF IT.

YOU'LL FORGIVE ME, DOC, IF I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DIGEST.

IT IS A DIFFICULT CONCEPT.



NOT THAT DIFFICULT, LINK.

I CAN'T CHANGE MY OWN PAST. WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME HAS ALREADY HAPPENED.



BUT FOR YOU, THE FUTURE IS YET TO COME.

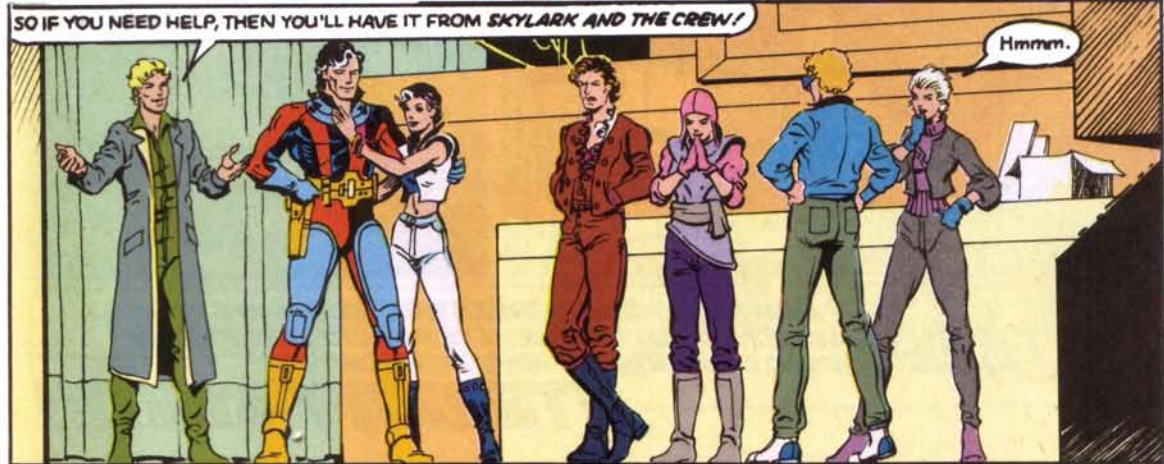
I CAN CHANGE THAT, AND I WILL.



ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU GIVE ME YOUR HELP. I WILL NEED ALLIES.

I'M STILL NOT SURE I BELIEVE YOU, DADDY. BUT YOU DID SAVE MY LIFE.

I OWE YOU ONE.



SO IF YOU NEED HELP, THEN YOU'LL HAVE IT FROM SKYLARK AND THE CREW!

Hmmm.

EPILOG!

IT IS NOW ONE MOMENT BEFORE DAWN.

NOW WHAT?

YOU ARE ARNOLD SCHWARTZ!

SMITH HAS ERRED. YOU ARE A WILD CARD AND MUST BE ELIMINATED FROM THE DECK.

WH-WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO?

THIS.

ZZZZTTT!

IF YOU LIVE, ARNOLD SCHWARTZ, YOU WILL REMEMBER NOTHING OF THESE EVENTS.

AND THAT IS HOW IT SHOULD BE.

"AND IN THE SHADOW, THE HEART OF DARKNESS WALKS."
--SKYLARK SMITH,
18 MARCH 1986

NEXT ISSUE:

AN ABANDONED HOUSE, GENERATION FIVE, AND A CYBORG ASSASSIN NAMED TIK! BE HERE IN SIXTY DAYS FOR THE SECOND CHAPTER IN THE ADVENTURES OF

ETERNITY SMITH!





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ETERNITY

SMITH™



**SHADOWS OF
FUTURE PAST!**

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KNIGHTSHADE

From the files of the Federal Intelligence Services Team



CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 16 November 1985

Subject: Daniel S. Knight, aka "Knightshade"

Height: 5'10"

Weight: 150 lbs.

Eyes: Dark brown

Hair: Black

Complexion: Swarthy

Age: 25 years

Known relatives: David Knight (father); Marie Cantrell (mother)

Appearance: Subject has aqualine features, with high cheekbone and narrow nose, and very full lips. His posture is relaxed but erect. His manner of clothing tends toward the flashy; he often wears Victorian-era garments.

Temperament: Subject is quiet and self-assured. He does not often make casual conversation, but can be charming. He occasionally displays a devastating wit.

Education: Subject attended military school until the age of 16, when he chose to live with his mother in Paris, where he attended an artist's school.

Background: Subject's father is a

career military officer, currently the highest-ranking black officer in the U.S. Air Force. Subject's mother is a Parisian cabaret singer. Subject has, accordingly dabbled in military strategy, poetry, and song lyrics. He displays a strong sense of morality, laced with a touch of romanticism. He believes firmly in free will, and has shown difficulty in reconciling himself to the widely varying influences his parents have had on his character.

Combat skills: Subject has been trained in the art of *la savate*, and would be of value in the physical training of other prospective members of the Crew.

Caveats: Subject is a perfectionist, and tends to blame himself for failures, whether real or perceived. Subject also enjoys the company of women, and has been known to take inordinate personal risks in order to please members of the opposite sex.

Recommendation: Assignment to the anti-terrorist group to be code-named, *Skylark and the Crew*.

C. BREEZE

From the files of the Federal Intelligence Services Team



CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 16 November 1985

Subject: Catherine "Catalina" Breeze

Height: 5'

Weight: 90 lbs.

Eyes: Brown

Hair: Black

Complexion: Olive

Age: 24 years

Known relatives: James Kotake (uncle)

Appearance: Subject has small Asian features. Movements are disciplined and exacting. Subject favors outrageous styles of dress that reflect her current passion for aeronautics; she often dons WWII-style aviatrix garb.

Temperament: Subject is tough and scrappy, but has a tendency to shirk responsibility, and rarely finishes any task that ends up taking longer than she thought it would.

Intelligence: Subject is highly competent, and remarkably intelligent, but seems to have a very limited attention span. She maintains extreme enthusiasm for any given project only up to a point, at which time she will lose interest altogether in what she's been doing.

Education: Subject completed an

undergraduate program at Caltech in two years, and went to M.I.T. for graduate work at the age of 18. She took a consulting job with NASA before completing her doctorate, and has not completed her thesis.

Combat training: Subject is thoroughly knowledgeable in a wide variety of martial arts disciplines. She attributes this to being raised by her uncle, James Kotake (see related documents, *Code-Name: Indigo*).

Motivation: Subject fancies that she was samurai in a previous "incarnation," and wants to live up to her conception of what a samurai should be. Subject also indicates that she would like to work with Skylark Smith as a member of her "Crew."

Caveat: Subject should be watched closely during her period of service for indications that she may be losing interest in her work. Also, evidence of strong personal attachments between subject and Miss Smith may indicate caution in following through with the recommendation below.

Recommendation: Assignment to the anti-terrorist group to be code-named, *Skylark and the Crew*.



THIS IS JASON THORNE -- PRESIDENT, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THORNE INDUSTRIES.

HIS EXPRESSION IS A STUDY IN MIXED EMOTION.

HE HAS KNOWN FOR TEN YEARS THAT THIS DAY MIGHT COME, AND NOW THAT IT HAS, HE FEELS A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT IN THE ANTICIPATION OF POSSIBILITIES, OF UNCERTAINTY IN THE FACE OF THE UNKNOWN, AND OF SATISFACTION IN THE OPPORTUNITY THAT HAS PRESENTED ITSELF FOR REVENGE.

TO BE SURE, HE HAS AGED. HE IS NO LONGER YOUNG.

IN HIS YOUTH, HE WOULD HAVE TAKEN A DIRECT HAND IN THE MATTER THAT CONCERNS HIM NOW. BUT HE CAN NO LONGER DO THAT. HE MUST RELY, TO SOME GREAT EXTENT, ON HIS SURROGATES.

THE KNOWLEDGE GALLS HIM.

NETWORK SCAN COMPLETE
SECURITY CODE ACKNOWLEDGED.
VISUAL FILE ACCESSSED:
CODE "ECS."

THIS ROOM IS HIS SANCTUARY. IT IS A VERY PRIVATE PLACE, WHERE HE COMES TO MEDITATE, AND TO REMEMBER.

DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS, HIS KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS TO COME HAS SERVED HIM WELL. HE HAS AMASSED A CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL FORTUNE, AND HE SEES NO REASON NOT TO INDULGE HIMSELF IN THE LUXURIES OF WEALTH.

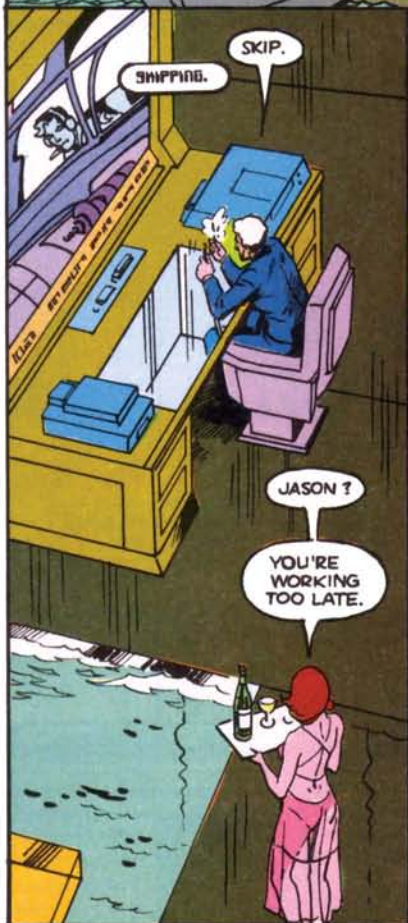
CONSIDERING THE PRICE HE HAS ALREADY PAID FOR HIS KNOWLEDGE, HAVING SOME SMALL LUXURIES IN THIS AGE OF RAMPANT BARBARISM SEEMS SMALL COMPENSATION, INDEED.

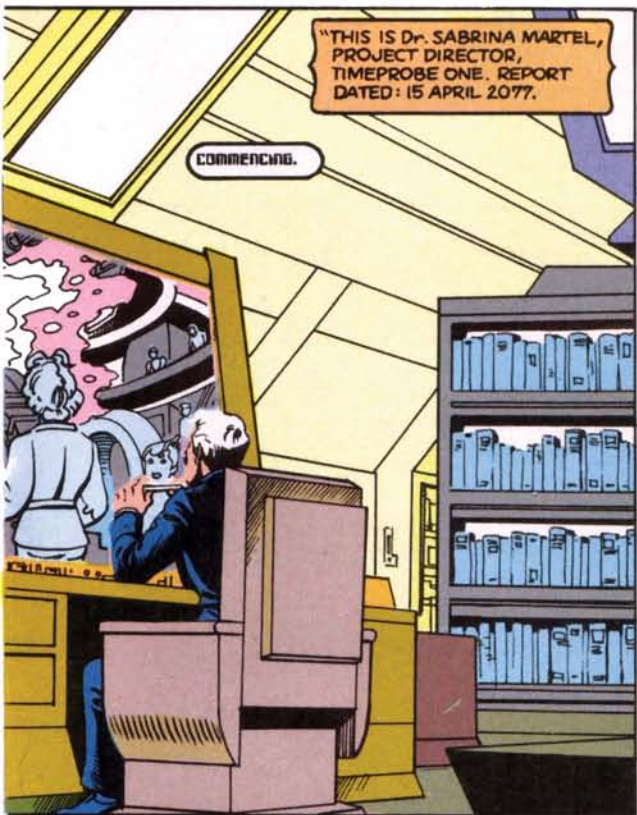
INFORMATION REGARDING
SUBJECT: ETHAN
CALDWELL SMITH.

TIMEPROBE ONE; ANALYSIS
INDICATES TEST SUBJECT REMAINS
KEY CHRONOFOCAL ELEMENT
DESPITE REMOVAL FROM SUBJECTIVE
TIME STREAM. IMPACT VARIABLE
ERROR ESTIMATE REVISED TO +90 %

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY
CLOSED. ESTIMATED
DURATION: 320 CYCLES.

NARRATIVE,
PLEASE.





"THIS IS Dr. SABRINA MARTEL, PROJECT DIRECTOR, TIMEPROBE ONE. REPORT DATED: 15 APRIL 2077.

COMMENCING.



"DESPITE INITIAL BEWILDERMENT AND HOSTILITY, Dr. SMITH SEEMS TO HAVE ACCEPTED HIS SITUATION, AND HAS EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE FOR THE DURATION OF HIS STAY.

"TO THAT END, EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN PROVIDED.

"I MUST ADMIT THAT I FIND HIM IN PERSON TO BE NO LESS COMPELLING THAN HE SEEMED FROM THE HISTORICAL RECORD. IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT THIS MAN IS, HOWEVER INDIRECTLY, HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SITUATION IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES. FURTHER ANALYSIS IS INDICATED.



I COULD NEVER WEARY OF YOU, MY DEAR.



THEN PROVE IT TO ME AGAIN, JASON THORNE.

YOU GIVE ME SO LITTLE TIME THESE DAYS, THAT I'LL TAKE YOU WHEN I CAN.



I CHERISH EVERY MOMENT WE HAVE TOGETHER.

AND, IF I COULD, I WOULD GIVE YOU ALL MY LOVE.

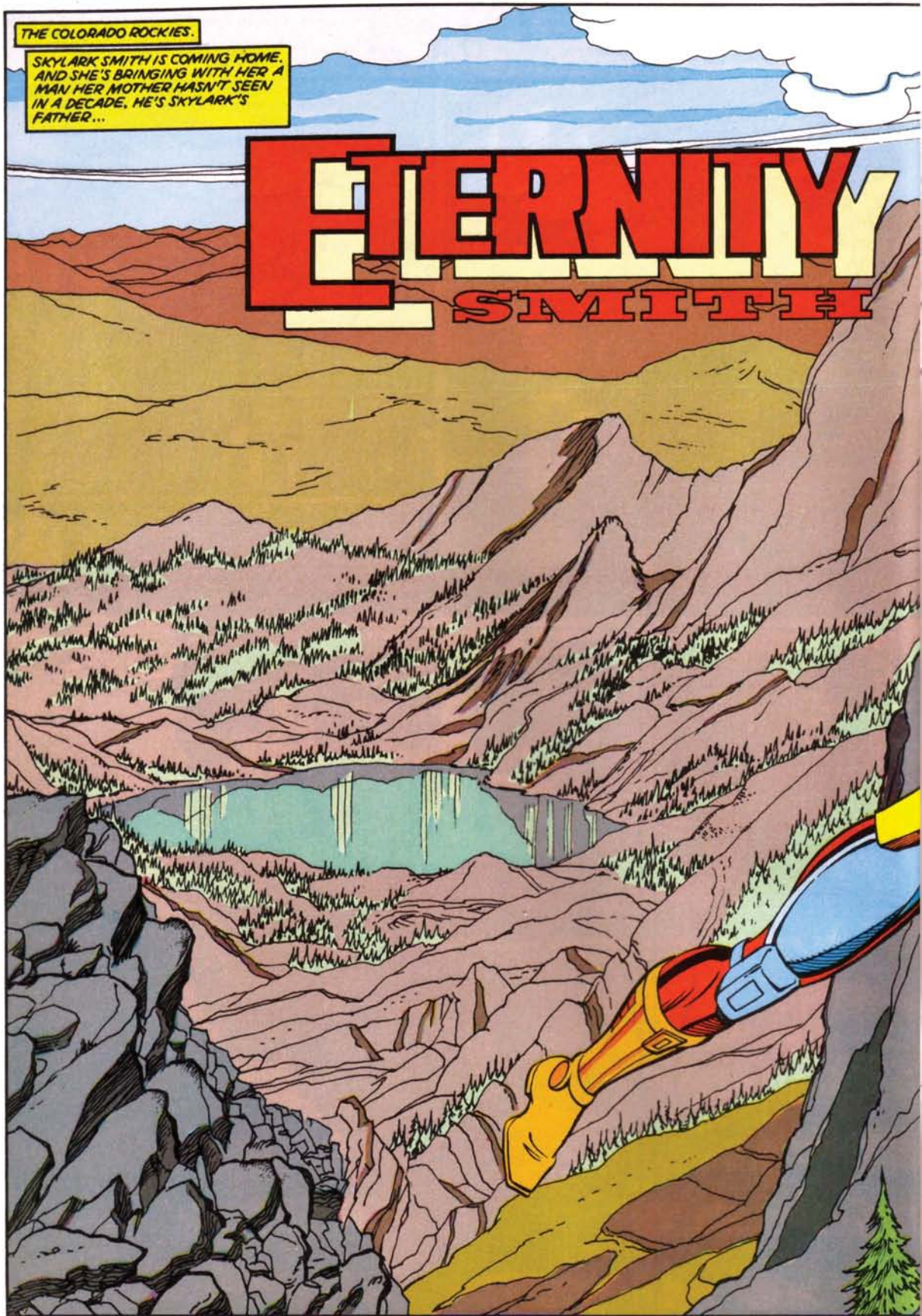


THE COLORADO ROCKIES.

SKYLARK SMITH IS COMING HOME,
AND SHE'S BRINGING WITH HER A
MAN HER MOTHER HASN'T SEEN
IN A DECADE. HE'S SKYLARK'S
FATHER...

ETERNITY

SMITH



YOU CONTINUE TO
AMAZE ME, DADDY.
YOU ACTUALLY
MADE THIS THING
WORK!

YOUR FRIEND BUILT IT
ON SOUND PRINCIPLES, SKY.
ALL THAT WAS LACKING WAS
A COMPACT POWER SOURCE,
AND I PROVIDED THAT.

THE SHADOWS OF FUTURE'S PAST

DENNIS MALLONEE
STORY

CO-
CREATORS

RICK HOBERG
ART

TIM BURGARD
RENDERINGS

DAVID CODY WEISS
LETTERS

JANICE COHEN
COLORS





Feh.

IF IT'S NOT ONE THING,
IT'S ANOTHER.

**BEEP!
BEEP!
BEEP!
BEEP!
BEEP!**



WE GOT A SIGNAL FROM 1503,
MR. KUNG. YOU WANT I
SHOULD CALL IT IN TO THE
POLICE ?



NO, MR. STYLES. SIMPLY SHUT
DOWN THE SYSTEM. IT WILL
BE ATTENDED TO.



AND IN THIS CASE, I
THINK MR. THORNE
HIMSELF WILL REQUIRE
NOTIFICATION.



DARLING ?

BEEP BEEP BEEP



THIS WILL BE AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE,
JANICE. I WILL HAVE TO TAKE IT.

IS THERE ANYTHING
I CAN DO?

NO.



YOU'RE
CERTAIN!
ALREADY!

VERY WELL THEN.
ANTICIPATE MY
ARRIVAL SHORTLY.

I HAVE HAD
A FULL NIGHT'S
SLEEP.



"AND I AM REFRESHED, AND
EAGER TO PROCEED."

LAS VEGAS.

"THIS IS LORNA JAMES REPORTING FOR EYEWITNESS NEWS. IN THE AFTERMATH OF LAST NIGHT'S LOCAL BLACKOUT AND ABORTIVE TERRORIST ASSAULT ON A LAS VEGAS HOTEL, THERE ARE STILL SEVERAL UNANSWERED QUESTIONS."



"POLICE EITHER WILL NOT OR ARE UNABLE TO COMMENT ON REPORTS THAT A PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATION CALLING ITSELF THE FORCE FIVE ELITE STAGED AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO TAKE AN ENTIRE CASINO FULL OF PEOPLE HOSTAGE."

"LAST ISSUE. -- Dennis."

"IT'S OUR HOPE THAT AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED WILL SPREAD SOME LIGHT ON THE SORDID DETAILS."



Mr. TRENT...

ABEL TRENT, MY DEAR.

ABEL...

IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT A NUMBER OF SO-CALLED "HOSTAGES" ACTUALLY LASHED OUT AT THE TERRORISTS, AND SUCCEEDED IN DRIVING THEM OFF.

QUITE CORRECT! IN FACT, IT WAS MY OWN LITTLE SKYLARK AND HER CREW WHO TURNED THE TABLES ON THOSE HOODLUMS.



SKYLARK SMITH? THE SINGER?

WELL, YES. THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS...

COME NOW, Mr. TRENT. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN GIVING YOU FREE PUBLICITY! THIS IS NOT A LIVE BROADCAST, AND WHAT YOU SAY WILL BE EDITED.

THERE WERE REPORTS OF A FLYING MAN! THAT'S WHAT I'M INTERESTED IN! DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, OR DON'T YOU?

Hm. WELL NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

YES, I DO KNOW A LITTLE SOMETHING ABOUT HIM. AND WHAT I KNOW IS NOT UNRELATED TO MY SINGER. YOU SEE...



Ahem!



LISTEN, LADY! YOU WANNA FIND A HERO, TALK TO BOOMER, HERE. THE MAN TOOK A BULLET MEANT FOR ME!

LINK, I DON'T THINK...



YOU ACTUALLY FOUGHT THEM?

C'MON, MR. TRENT.

THAT'S ODD! I WASN'T AWARE BOOMER HAD BEEN INJURED!

WELL, YEAH, THAT'S TRUE.



HE WASN'T.

YEAH! AND THAT SORT OF PUBLICITY'S NOT WHAT SKYLARK WANTS!

WHAT?! I WAS GETTING SOME GOOD PUBLICITY, THERE!



YOU LISTEN, TRENT, AND YOU LISTEN GOOD! YOU WERE HIRED AS A ROAD MANAGER, AND THAT'S ALL YOU DO!

IF YOU PUBLICIZE US, YOU PUBLICIZE US AS MUSICIANS! WHAT WE DO ON OUR OWN TIME IS NOT YOUR CONCERN!

I BEG TO DIFFER!

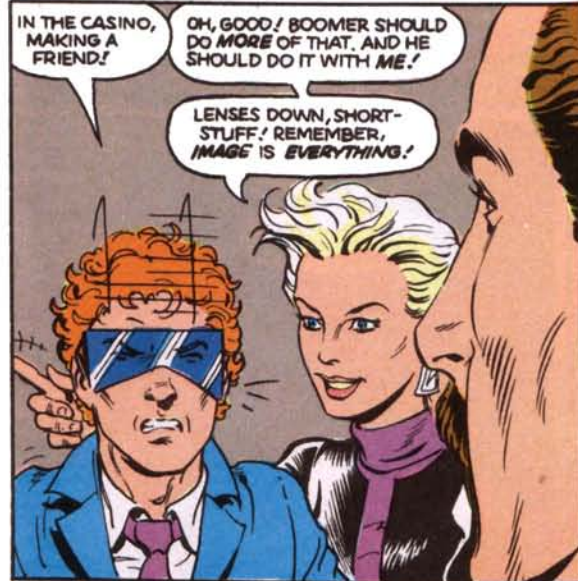


WHEN YOU GO INTO SHOW BUSINESS, YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR "OWN TIME," AS YOU PUT IT. ANY PUBLICITY IS GOOD PUBLICITY, AND AS LONG AS I'VE BEEN HIRED TO REPRESENT YOU, I WILL DO MY JOB AS I SEE FIT.

HOW DO I GET THROUGH TO YOU?

LINCOLN! HI!

WHERE'S BOOMER?



IN THE CASINO, MAKING A FRIEND!

OH, GOOD! BOOMER SHOULD DO MORE OF THAT, AND HE SHOULD DO IT WITH ME!

LENSES DOWN, SHORT-STUFF! REMEMBER, IMAGE IS EVERYTHING!



MY POINT EXACTLY, TRENT. YOUR JOB IS TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT OUR IMAGE IS THAT OF A SIMPLE ROCK BAND.

THAT, AND NOTHING MORE.

LATER...

THIS IS WHY I'LL HAVE TO RELY ON YOU, SKY. I'VE BEEN GONE SO LONG, YOUR MOTHER'S PRACTICALLY A STRANGER TO ME. I WOULDN'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN TO LOOK FOR CLUES.

Ah-ha!

YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING?

IT'S PROBABLY NOT WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR.

BUT IT IS IMPORTANT.

AT LEAST, IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME.

WHAT IS IT?

"MOMMA WAS METICULOUS, PUTTING THESE TOGETHER, DADDY.

"SHE NEVER KNEW WHY YOU'D ABANDONED HER, SHE NEVER KNEW IF YOU'D BE COMING BACK. BUT SHE MEANT TO HAVE THIS WAITING FOR YOU, IF YOU DID."

OH, SKY...

I THINK SHE MEANT IT AS A PUNISHMENT OF SORTS.

BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN IT THAT WAY.

THERE ARE TWENTY YEARS OF MEMORIES BOUND UP IN THESE VOLUMES, DADDY.

WHATEVER YOUR REASONS FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO SHARE THOSE MEMORIES WITH ME, I WANT YOU TO BE A PART OF THEM NOW.



THORNE INDUSTRIES, MONDAY
MORNING, 9:30 a.m.

OPERATIONS

GOOD MORNING,
Mr.
THORNE.

WELL, NOW
THERE'S
SOMETHING
YOU DON'T
SEE EVERY
DAY...

Hmm.

I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT
AS A GENERAL RULE,
Mr. THORNE DOESN'T
ARRIVE IN THE
OFFICE UNTIL 11:00
OR SO. I'D
SUGGEST...OH!

GOOD
MORNING,
MISS
SHAW.

I EXPECT TO BE
OCCUPIED FOR THE
BETTER PART OF
THE DAY.

UNLESS MY WIFE
TRIES TO CONTACT ME,
PLEASE HOLD MY CALLS
UNTIL I TELL YOU
OTHERWISE.

BUT Mr. THORNE,
THERE'S A MAN
WHO SAYS HE'S...

SLAM!

Oh,
pooh.

NOW, THEN, TO
BUSINESS, Mr.
KUNG.

HOW MUCH TIME
WOULD YOU SAY
WE HAVE?

I'M SORRY, SIR, Mr. THORNE
IS IN, BUT HE'S NOT IN, IF YOU
KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

IT MAY BE THAT
HE WON'T BE IN AT ALL
TODAY. I HOPE THAT'S
NOT TOO MUCH OF AN
INCONVENIENCE.



NEVERTHELESS, MISS SHAW, WAS IT? YOU MAY INFORM YOUR EMPLOYER THAT MY DAUGHTER AND I WILL BE ARRIVING WITHIN THE HOUR.

THE NAME IS SMITH. DOCTOR ETHAN CALDWELL SMITH.

TELL HIM THAT DR. JASMINE SMITH IS MY WIFE!

DADDY...



YOU'RE CERTAIN YOUR MOTHER WAS DOING RESEARCH FOR THIS "GENERATION FIVE" FIRM WHEN YOU SAW HER LAST CHRISTMAS?

YES.

MOMMA WAS CERTAIN THAT THORNE INDUSTRIES WAS ABOUT TO CLOSE OUT ITS LOANS AND TAKE OVER THE COMPANY, BEFORE WE STARTED ARGUING ABOUT MY EX-BOYFRIEND SHE GAVE ME JASON THORNE'S PRIVATE NUMBER TO CALL IN AN EMERGENCY.



BUT SHE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR I WAS NEVER TO CALL, EXCEPT ON A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!

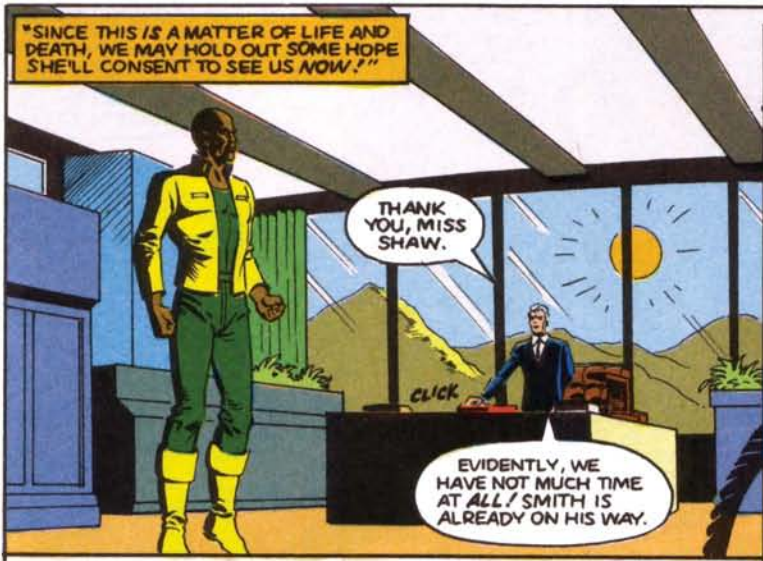
SHE WASN'T VERY HAPPY WITH ME, I'M AFRAID.



YOUR MOTHER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A VERY STUBBORN WOMAN.

AND HEADSTRONG, LIKE ME.

BUT SHE ALWAYS GAVE IN WHEN I GAVE HER REASON TO BELIEVE IT WAS IMPORTANT TO ME!



"SINCE THIS IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH, WE MAY HOLD OUT SOME HOPE SHE'LL CONSENT TO SEE US NOW!"

THANK YOU, MISS SHAW.

EVIDENTLY, WE HAVE NOT MUCH TIME AT ALL! SMITH IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY.



GOOD. I LOOK FORWARD TO AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THIS MAN, THIS "ETERNITY" SMITH!



THEN YOU ARE A FOOL, Mr. KUNG.

I KNOW THIS MAN, THIS ETERNITY SMITH. HE IS A HERO!

NOTHING SHORT OF DEATH WILL PREVENT HIM FROM LOCATING HIS WIFE.



BUT IF HE DOES THAT, THE FUTURE MAY NEVER BE!

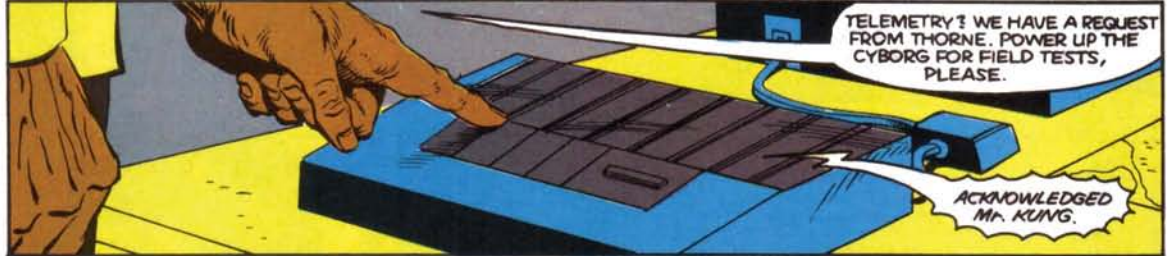
HE MUST BE STOPPED.

TIK, THEN?



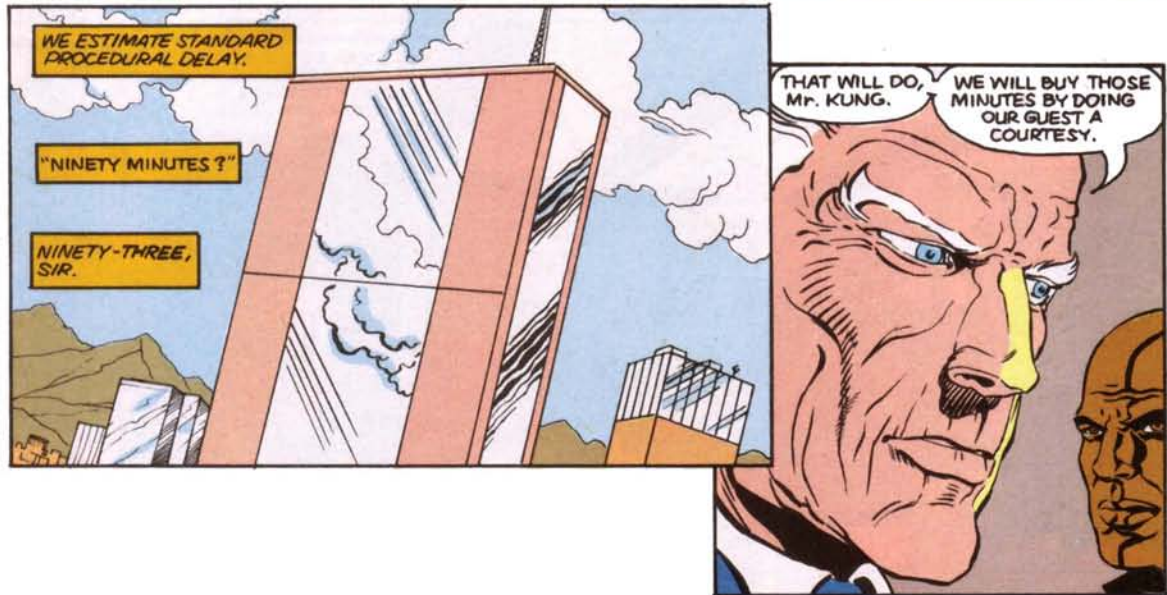
YES. I THINK SO.

HOW MUCH TIME TO FULL SYSTEMS OPERATION?



TELEMETRY? WE HAVE A REQUEST FROM THORNE. POWER UP THE CYBORG FOR FIELD TESTS, PLEASE.

ACKNOWLEDGED Mr. KUNG.



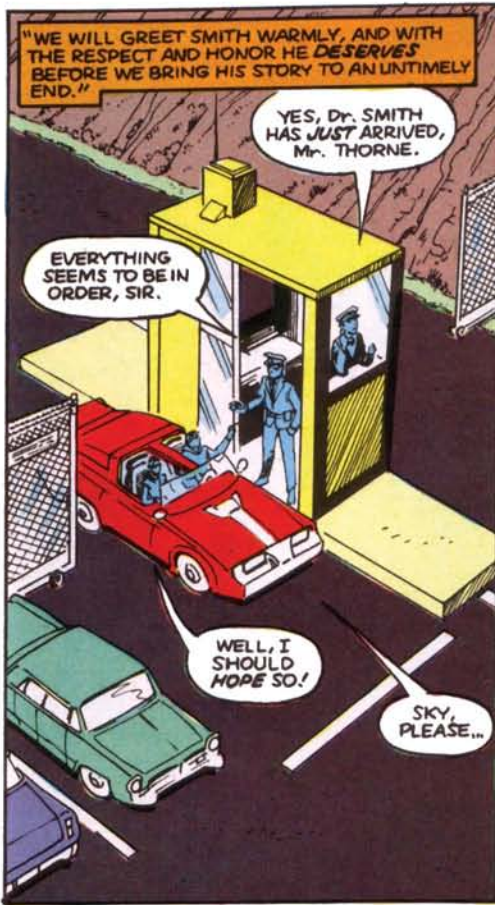
WE ESTIMATE STANDARD PROCEDURAL DELAY.

"NINETY MINUTES?"

NINETY-THREE, SIR.

THAT WILL DO, Mr. KUNG.

WE WILL BUY THOSE MINUTES BY DOING OUR GUEST A COURTESY.





I'LL REQUIRE A CLOSER VIEW, OF COURSE. BUT FROM HERE I SEE NOTHING TO CAUSE YOU SO GREAT A CONCERN.

HE IS ONLY A MAN...



... AND MEN CAN BE BROKEN.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE HIM.

OR HIS DAUGHTER

IF THEY ARE TOGETHER IN THIS...



JASON! DARLING!

THAT IS NOT SMITH!

JANICE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



YOU RAN OUT SO QUICKLY THIS MORNING THAT WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO DISCUSS WHAT WE'LL DO FOR LUNCH!

LUNCH...?



JANICE! MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO BE WITH YOU, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR LUNCH TODAY!

NO?

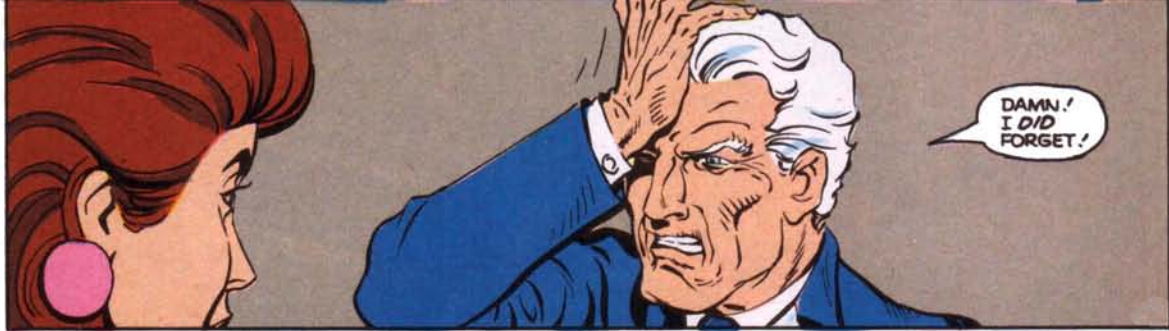


BUT YOU PROMISED ME LUNCH WITH YOU TODAY.

DID I?

YES. LAST THURSDAY WHEN YOU HAD TO SKIP THE FASHION SHOW, YOU SAID YOU'D MAKE IT UP TO ME WITH LUNCH TODAY!

DID YOU FORGET?



DAMN! I DID FORGET!







I SHARE YOUR CONCERN, SKYLARK, AND I WILL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FATHER FIND HER. UNFORTUNATELY I CANNOT PROMISE YOU ANYTHING.

AS I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE, DOCTOR SMITH, YOUR WIFE HAS ALWAYS, IN MY EXPERIENCE, BEEN INDEPENDENTLY MINDED.

Mr. KUNG? WILL YOU FETCH THE APPROPRIATE GENERATION FIVE PERSONNEL FOLDER?

AT ONCE, Mr. THORNE.



I HAVE KNOWN HER AND YOUR DAUGHTER FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS. NOT WELL, I GRANT YOU, BUT WELL ENOUGH TO DEVELOP A LIKING FOR THEM BOTH. THEY ARE BOTH WOMEN OF HIGH PRINCIPLE!

UNFORTUNATELY, JASMINE DID NOT APPROVE OF THE METHODS I USED TO ACQUIRE CONTROL OF Mr. KELLER'S COMPANY.



WAIT A MINUTE! ARE YOU SAYING WHAT I THINK YOU'RE ABOUT TO SAY?

I'M AFRAID SO. Dr. JASMINE SMITH NO LONGER WORKS FOR GENERATION FIVE, AND HAS NOT WORKED THERE IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS.

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, Mr. THORNE.



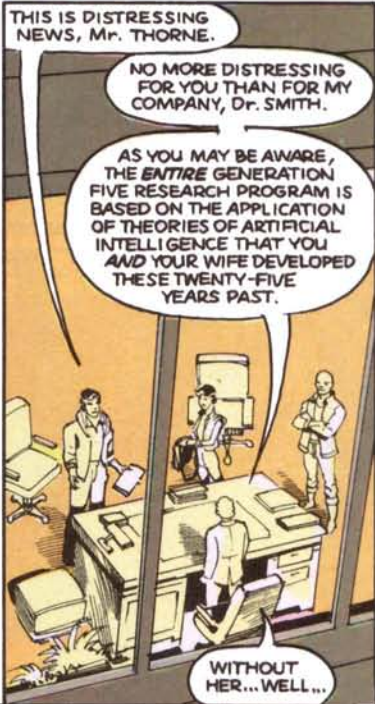
*SHE HAS NOT ONLY CEASED TO BE EMPLOYED HERE, SHE SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED ENTIRELY FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH!

*I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL YOU, OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT WE OURSELVES HAVE SPARED NO EFFORT TO FIND HER.



*BUT NO LEADS HAVE THUS FAR PROVEN FRUITFUL. THE FORWARDING ADDRESS SHE PROVIDED FOR OUR FILES TURNS OUT NOT TO EXIST.

WE HAVE MONITORED HER MOUNTAIN RETREAT, BUT SHE HAS NOT EVEN RETURNED THERE.

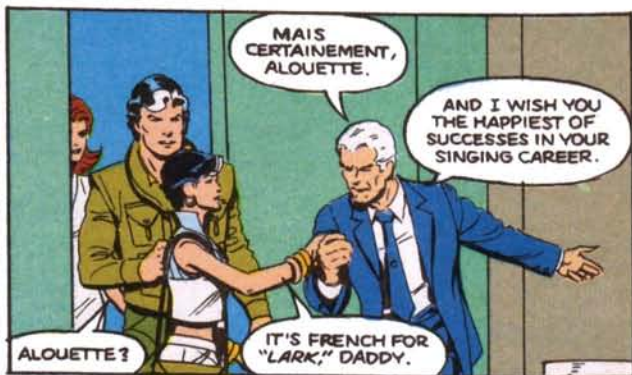


THIS IS DISTRESSING NEWS, Mr. THORNE.

NO MORE DISTRESSING FOR YOU THAN FOR MY COMPANY, Dr. SMITH.

AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, THE ENTIRE GENERATION FIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM IS BASED ON THE APPLICATION OF THEORIES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE THAT YOU AND YOUR WIFE DEVELOPED THESE TWENTY-FIVE YEARS PAST.

WITHOUT HER... WELL...



FORGIVE MY IMPATIENCE! BUT I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT YOU CAN MAKE IT READY.

I'LL BE DOWN SHORTLY.

Hmph.

THE MAN IS IMPOSSIBLE, GREGORY. I FIND HIM DUPLICITOUS BY NATURE, AND HIS MOTIVES REMAIN UNFATHOMABLE.

BUT HE IS PROVIDING THE FUNDING YOU NEED, JASMINE!

AND KELLER COULD NOT, THAT'S TRUE ENOUGH.

BUT I FEEL THAT I AM NO LONGER IN CONTROL, AND I WONDER WHAT HIDDEN COSTS REMAIN TO BE PAID.

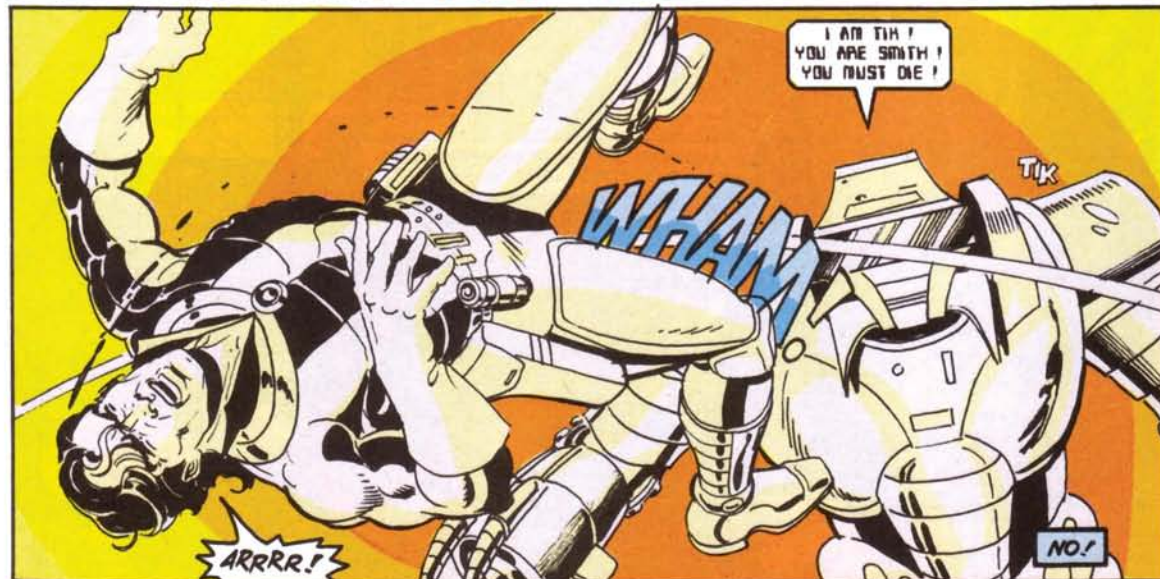
STILL...

WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF A SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH THAT COULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF HUMAN HISTORY, AND NOTHING MUST BE ALLOWED TO STAND IN THE WAY.

SO IF THORNE THINKS HE NEEDS OUR TELEMETRIC INFORMATIONAL KILLER, THEN HE SHALL HAVE IT.

"AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON THE SOULS OF THOSE WHO STAND IN ITS WAY."

HE WAS LYING TO US. I COULD FEEL IT.





IT BEGINS AGAIN! AND I SEE MYSELF FROZEN, FOR THE BRIEFEST OF INSTANTS, IN A STATE OF UNCOMPREHENDING HORROR.



"WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?" I REMEMBER THINKING THAT, ALMOST AS IF I EXPECTED AN ANSWER TO COME.

BUT IT DID NOT, OF COURSE. AND IN THAT INSTANT, A WARRIOR'S INSTINCT TOOK OVER FOR ME, AS IT DID FOR MY FATHER.



WE ARE TWO OF A KIND, HE AND I. I REALIZE THAT NOW.

WE WERE NEVER MEANT TO ACCEPT THE INEVITABLE, BUT TO STRUGGLE AGAINST IT.



AND TO FIND A WAY TO WIN!



GUNSHOTS.

TIK



YES. I REMEMBER NOW. I HAD A WEAPON IN MY PURSE.

AH, TO SEE THORNE'S FACE, WATCHING HIS SYSTEMS STATUS DISPLAYS.



ONE OF THOSE PELLET'S DID NOT BOUNCE OFF!



MY FATHER HAS FOUGHT THESE TYPES OF THINGS BEFORE, GRANTED, THE FIGHT WAS RARELY HAND-TO-HAND...

BUT HE KNOWS THEIR WEAKNESSES...



JUST AS THEY CAN PERCEIVE HIS!



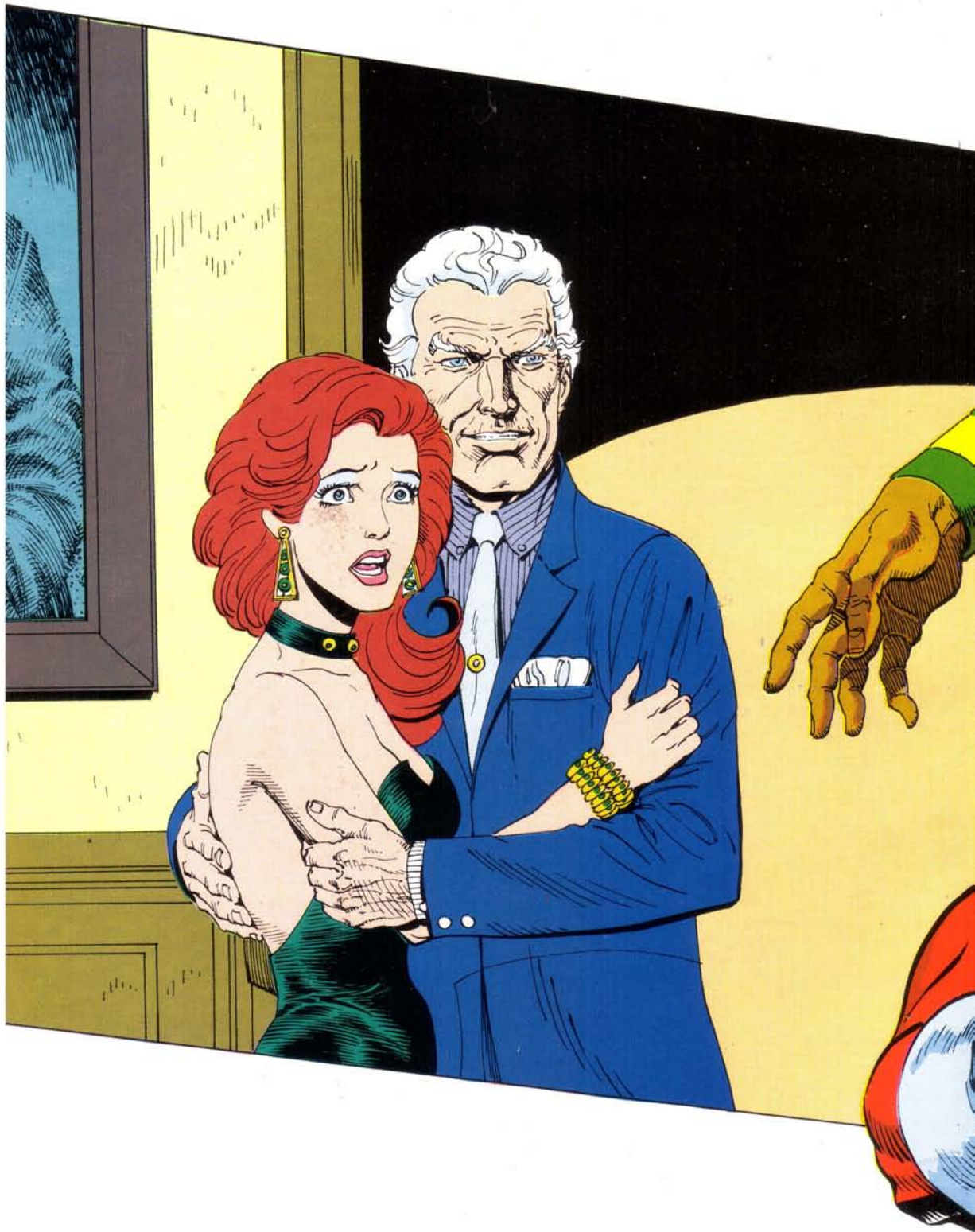


SECRETS ARE REVEALED, BUT THE
MYSTERY DEEPENS IN:

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY!

ON SALE IN SIXTY DAYS!
BE THERE!

**NEXT
ISSUE:**



Renegade Press PRESENTS

FULL-COLOR ACTION!

3

JAN

\$1.50

\$2 Canada

ETERNITY

SMITH™



HOBERG
BURGARD

WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

From the files of the Federal Intelligence Services Team



Date: 23 February 1986
Subject: Lincoln Banning, a.k.a. "Link"
Height: 5'6"
Weight: 140 lbs.
Eyes: Gray
Hair: Ash blond
Complexion: Fair
Age: 23 years
Known relatives: None
Appearance: Subject is slight, but well built, with short-cut curly hair. He wears suits and loose-tied ties; always wears sunglasses, even indoors. He affects a sloppy appearance, belieing the keenness of his mind.
Temperament: Subject has a laid-back, stereotypically Californian approach to life. He sees humor even in the most serious of situations, and is always ready with a wry remark.
Background: Subject attended the California Institute of Technology, and hired on at Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory after graduation, where he designed communications systems for one of this agency's projects.
Skills: Subject is not only a com-

munications expert, he is also knowledgeable in several different scientific disciplines. He is known to enjoy games that involve intellectual conflict, and is particularly fond of war games. He plays the electric guitar, and so should have no difficulty meeting the specific requirements established by Skylark Smith for prospective members of her Crew.
Combat training: None. Subject is, however, in good physical condition despite the fact that he doesn't spend a time maintaining his fitness.
Caveats: Subject possesses an overriding curiosity which has occasionally gotten him into trouble. Subject also seemed to be quite taken with Miss Smith when he was presented to her as a prospective member of her Crew; it is possible that unreciprocated emotional attachments may develop.
Recommendation: Assignment to the anti-terrorist group to be code-named, *Skylark and the Crew*. Subject will be required to undergo combat training prior to active service.

CONFIDENTIAL

ANNIE

From the files of the Federal Intelligence Services Team

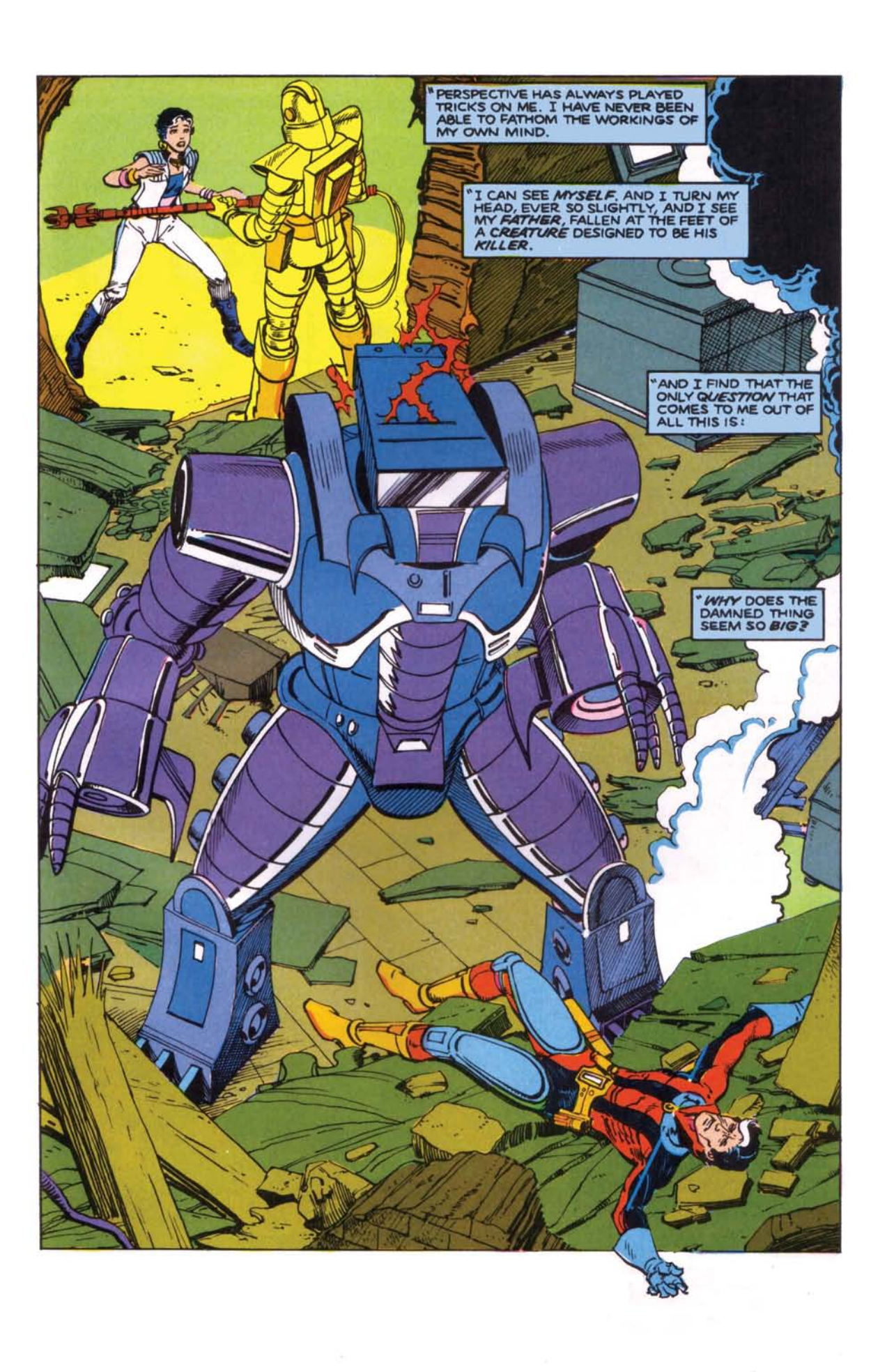
Subject: Angela Geary



Height: 5'8"
Weight: 120 lbs.
Eyes: Green
Hair: Naturally reddish-blond, but subject prefers to dye the red out.
Complexion: Naturally freckled, but subject prefers to cover her freckles.
Age: 22
Appearance: Subject's hair is usually worn short, slicked back or brushed in an upward sweep. Subject is long-boned and angular, with a narrow face set off by high cheekbones. Subject favors jackets, suits, and slacks; does not usually wear dresses. Posture is stiff and erect, due to training in gymnastics and modeling.
Temperament: Subject is ambitious, argumentative, and competitive. Subject's sense of humor tends to irony; she rarely laughs, and takes most things extremely seriously.
Background: Subject is of German-Irish heritage. She was raised in

Boston, and still has a trace of an accent. Subject's family has been wealthy for several generations, but subject will not have control of her share of the family trust until her 25th birthday.
Education: Subject has a doctorate in computer sciences from M.I.T.
Observation: Subject is extremely intelligent and aggressive, and prefers to dominate her personal relationships. She has displayed a keen interest in the opposite sex, and currently seems to favor "Boomer" Borg, despite the fact that Boomer clearly has a crush on Skylark Smith (see accompanying files re: Mr. Borg and Ms. Smith).
Physical training: Though she no longer competes in gymnastics, subject maintains a daily regiment of exercise designed to maintain her athletic trim. Subject is extremely agile, and may be double-jointed.
Recommendation: Continued assignment to the anti-terrorist group code-named *Skylark and the Crew*.

CONFIDENTIAL



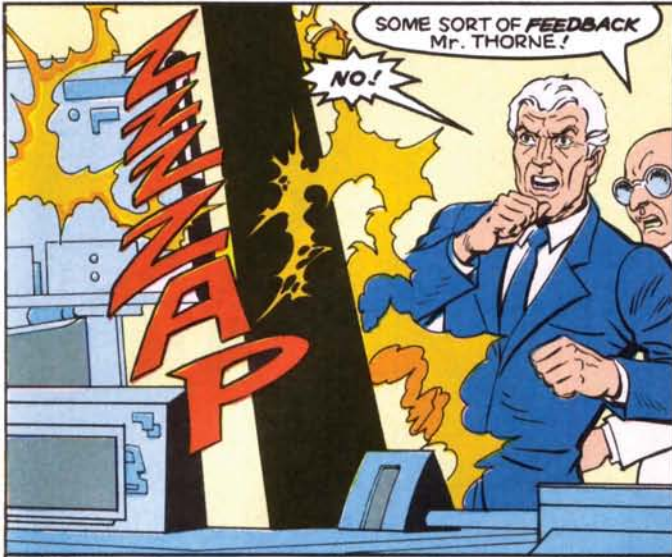
"PERSPECTIVE HAS ALWAYS PLAYED TRICKS ON ME. I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FATHOM THE WORKINGS OF MY OWN MIND.

"I CAN SEE *MYSELF*, AND I TURN MY HEAD, EVER SO SLIGHTLY, AND I SEE MY *FATHER*, FALLEN AT THE FEET OF A CREATURE DESIGNED TO BE HIS KILLER.

"AND I FIND THAT THE ONLY QUESTION THAT COMES TO ME OUT OF ALL THIS IS:

"WHY DOES THE DAMNED THING SEEM SO BIG?"





SOME SORT OF **FEEDBACK** Mr. THORNE!

NO!



WE HAVE A SYSTEMS **DISRUPTION!** SOMETHING'S INTERFERED WITH OUR **REMOTE** TELEMETRIC CONTROL!



"THE ONLY THING THE CREATURE CAN DO NOW..."



...IS DIE.

DADDY!



IT'S ALL RIGHT, SKY!

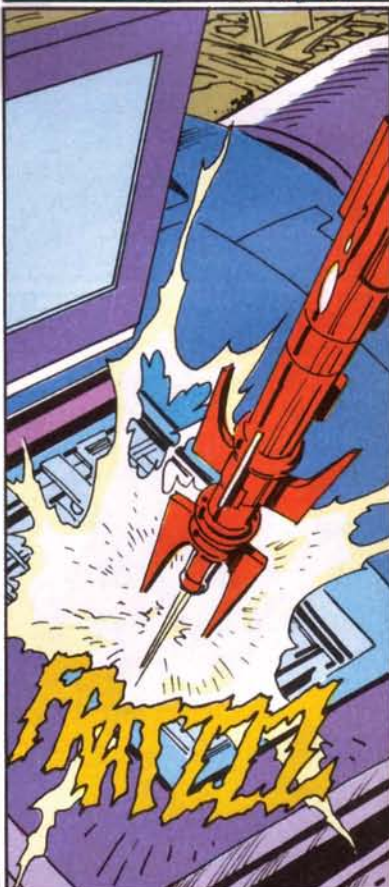
I WAS SO SCARED FOR YOU! I WANTED TO HELP!

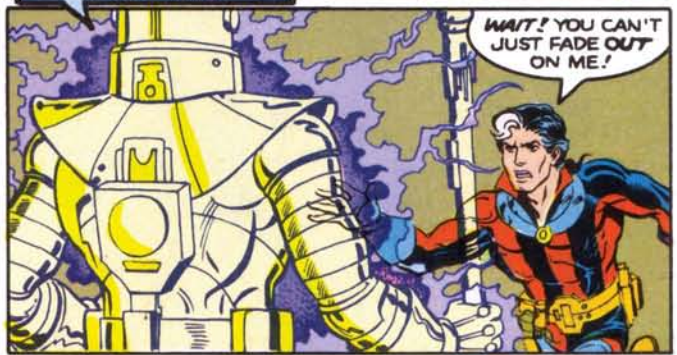
YOU DID.

YOU DID HELP ME.



AND AS FOR YOU, MY ARMORED FRIEND, I DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHY YOU FOLLOWED ME TO THIS CENTURY...





IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU **UNDERSTAND** WHAT IT IS WE'RE FIGHTING!

THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS THAT WE HAVE TO **PREVENT!**

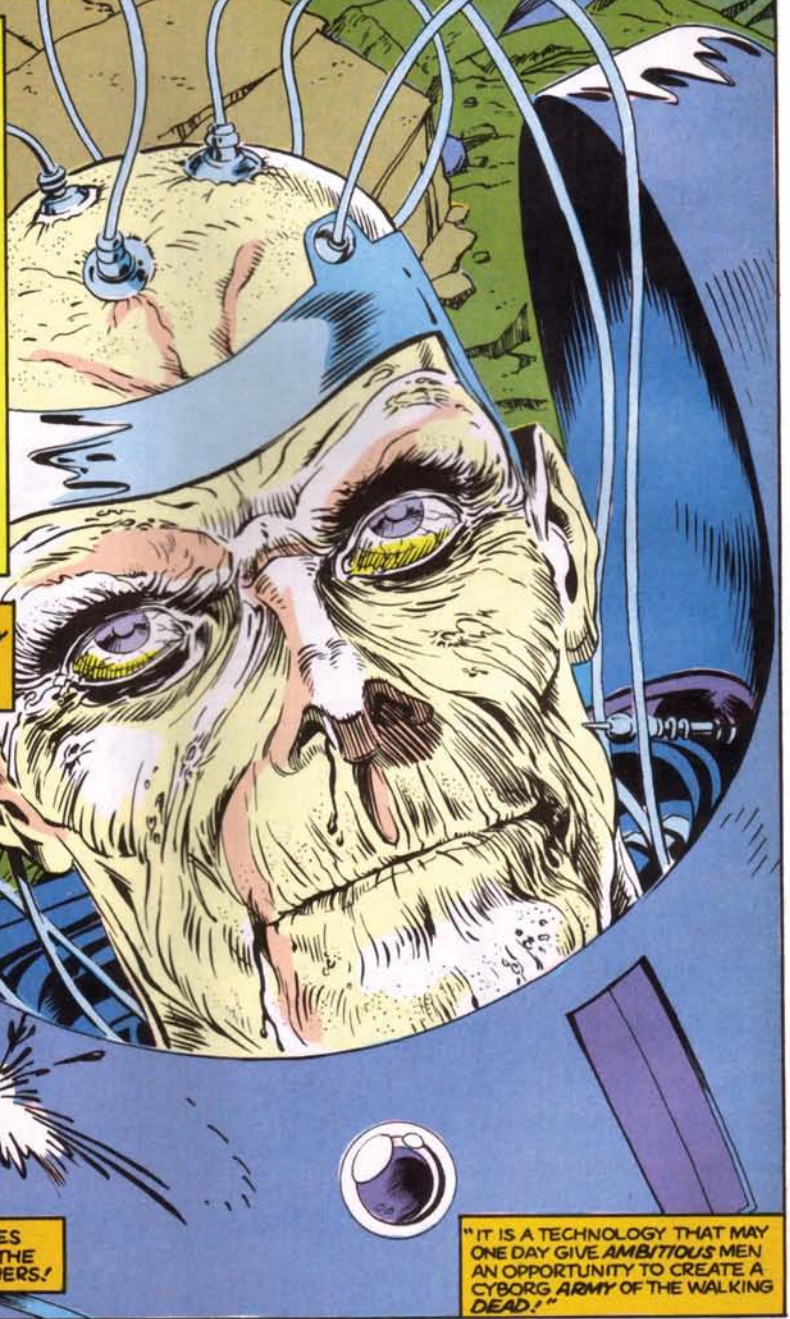


"THIS IS THE TECHNOLOGY THAT THREATENS **HUMANITY** IN THE WORLD OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM TODAY!"

"IT IS A TECHNOLOGY THAT MAKES MAN A **SLAVE** TO HIS MACHINES!"

"A TECHNOLOGY THAT GIVES **EVIL MEN** POWER OVER THE MINDS AND WILLS OF OTHERS!"

"IT IS A TECHNOLOGY THAT MAY ONE DAY GIVE **AMBITIOUS** MEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A **CYBORG** ARMY OF THE WALKING DEAD!"





I HAVE NO IDEA WHO THAT MAN MAY HAVE BEEN IN LIFE.

I HAVE NO WAY TO KNOW IF HE WAS EVEN GIVEN A CHOICE.

IT'S HORRIBLE... THAT POOR MAN...



WHOEVER HE MAY HAVE BEEN, FROM THE INSTANT HE WAS PLUGGED INTO THAT ARMOR, HIS LIFE WAS NO LONGER HIS OWN.

HE WAS AS GOOD AS DEAD.



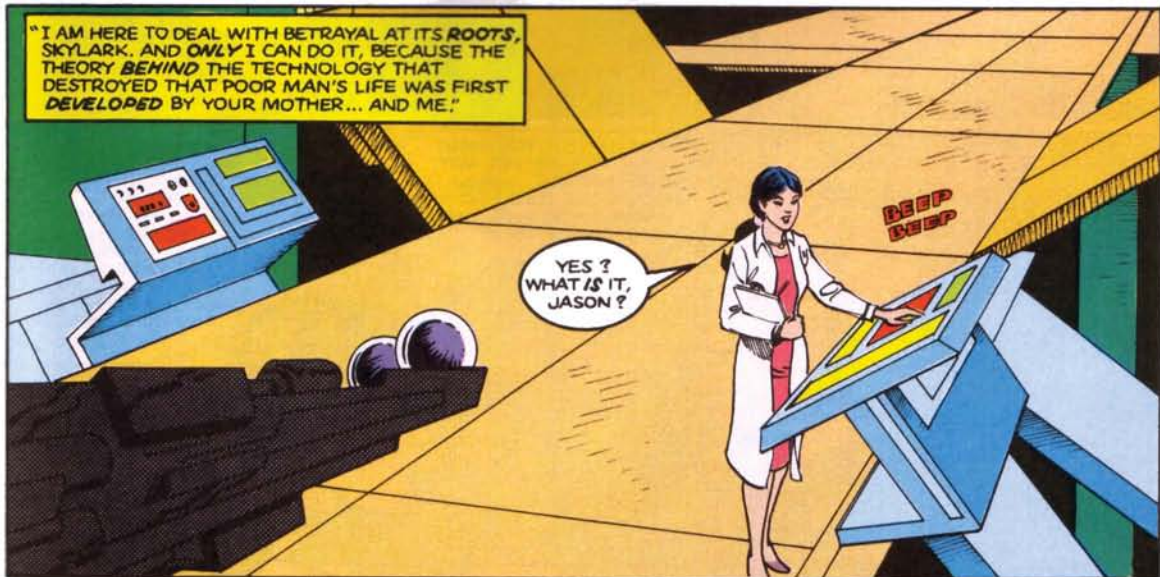
BUT DON'T MISINTERPRET WHAT I'M SAYING. THE TECHNOLOGY ITSELF IS NOT THE EVIL HERE.

TECHNOLOGY IS NEITHER GOOD NOR EVIL. TECHNOLOGY SIMPLY IS.



IT IS THE USE TO WHICH MAN PUTS HIS KNOWLEDGE THAT MATTERS.

THE FUTURE IS BOTH BRIGHT WITH THE PROMISE OF AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, AND DARK WITH THE LEGACY OF THAT PROMISE BETRAYED.



"I AM HERE TO DEAL WITH BETRAYAL AT ITS ROOTS, SKYLARK, AND ONLY I CAN DO IT, BECAUSE THE THEORY BEHIND THE TECHNOLOGY THAT DESTROYED THAT POOR MAN'S LIFE WAS FIRST DEVELOPED BY YOUR MOTHER... AND ME."

YES? WHAT IS IT, JASON?

BEEP BEEP



YOUR CYBORG FAILED, DOCTOR SMITH!

MY CYBORG?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DEMANDED THAT I WASTE TIME WITH THAT... THAT... THING!



I AM NOT INTERESTED IN YOUR PETTY GAMES OF POWER, JASON THORNE!



I DON'T EVEN CARE TO KNOW WHY THE GOVERNMENT GAVE YOU A CONTRACT TO PRODUCE A CYBORG ASSASSIN.

IF IT FAILED, IT'S YOUR PROBLEM, NOT MINE! YOUR TOY WAS ONLY A MINOR ASPECT OF MY WORK!

I'LL THANK YOU, WOMAN, TO WATCH THE TONE OF YOUR VOICE!



AS MY DAUGHTER WOULD SAY... STUFF IT, JASON!

BE PATIENT, PROJECT INTER-FACE COMES TO FRUITION TOMORROW. I WILL PRODUCE YOUR FIFTH-GENERATION COMPUTER. YOU WILL HAVE YOUR THINKING MACHINE!



I KNOW YOU WILL SUCCEED, JASMINE, BUT TIME IS RUNNING SHORT, AND I WONDER IF YOU MIGHT BE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS.



SO WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM ME? YOU ARE NOT UNATTRACTIVE, JASON. BUT AS I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE, YOU AND I ARE NOT COMPATIBLE.

YOU LOVE YOUR WIFE? I LOVED MY HUSBAND! AND I AM DEVOTED TO MY WORK!

IN TWENTY YEARS I HAVEN'T FOUND A MAN WHO COULD MAKE ME FORGET MY HUSBAND'S TOUCH. AND IF THERE IS SUCH A MAN, HE CERTAINLY ISN'T YOU!

YOU WOUND ME, MY DEAR.

YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL. AND EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT, AND THERE ARE MANY MEN WHO WOULD SELL THEIR SOULS FOR YOUR FAVOR.

AS YOU HAVE OBSERVED, I LOVE MY WIFE.

Hmp.

BUT I AM NOT ONE OF THEM.

RATHER, WHAT I WANT FROM YOU NOW IS TO PREPARE THE SECOND SUIT OF ARMOR.

WHAT!?

I DON'T HAVE ANOTHER VOLUNTEER!

ONE WILL BE PROVIDED.

VERY WELL THEN. SINCE YOU ASK SO SWEETLY.

BUT I MUST REMIND YOU OF MY CONDITIONS. IF A VOLUNTEER IS FOUND, HE MUST BE FULLY AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES. AND HIS PHYSICAL CONDITION MUST BE SUCH THAT HE WOULD NOT LONG SURVIVE IF HE WERE NOT HOOKED INTO THE ARMOR.

I THINK, DEAR JASMINE, THAT THE TEST SUBJECT I HAVE IN MIND WILL MEET THOSE CONDITIONS PERFECTLY.

OH, DADDY...

SKY...?

ETERNITY SMITH™

Words
**DENNIS
MALLONEE**

Co-Creators

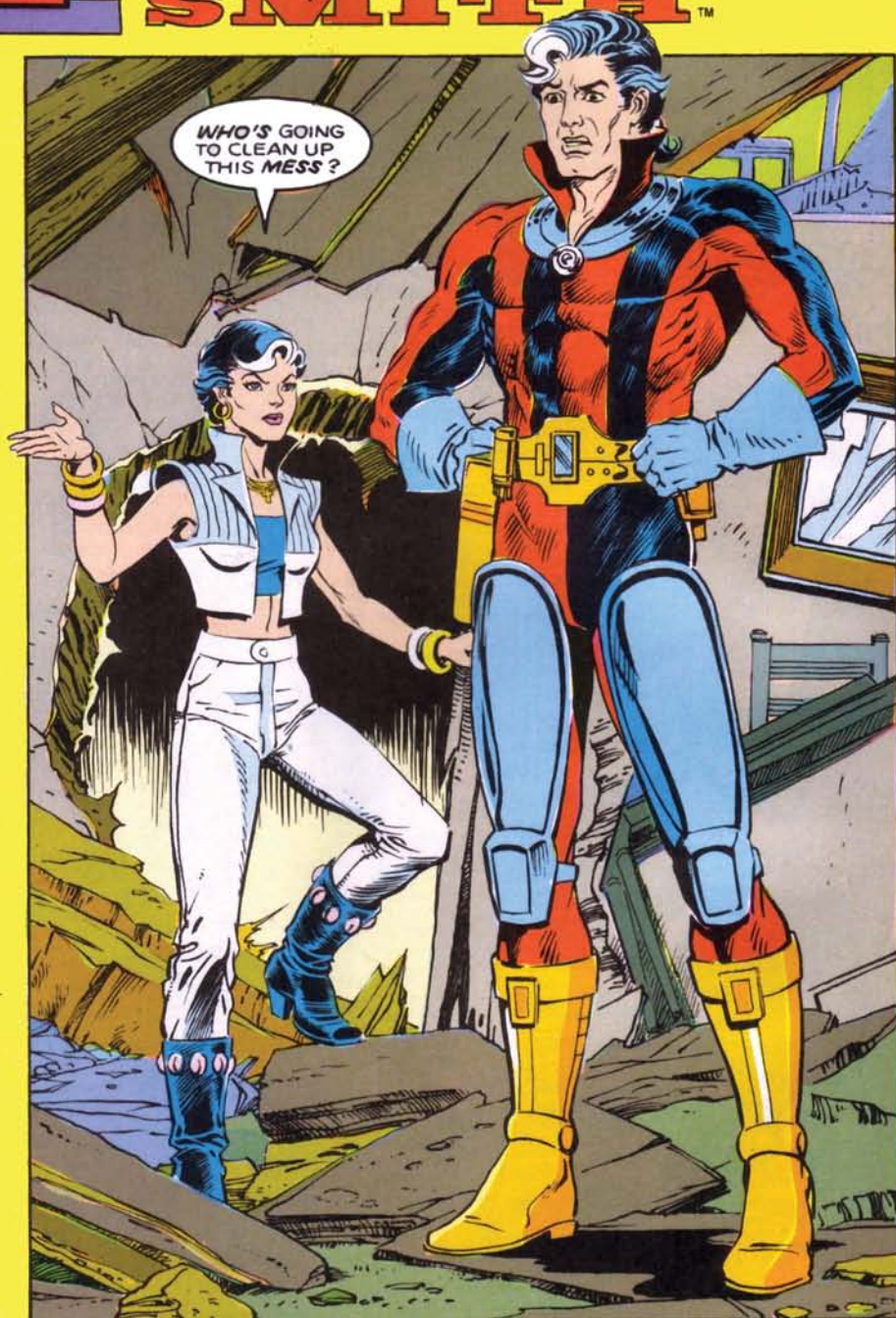
**RICK
HOBERG**
Pictures

**C
R
E
D
I
T**

**TIM
BURGARD**
Embellishment

DAVID C. WEISS
Letters

JANICE COHEN
Colors



WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY



I'M NOT GOING TO.

THERE ARE TOO MANY MEMORIES HERE. AND I'M TOO ANGRY TO SIT DOWN AND CRY.

SKY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

THEN DON'T SAY ANYTHING!



THERE'S NO REASON THIS SHOULDN'T BE WORKING.

SO I'LL MAKE A CALL.



AND WE SHALL SEE WHAT WE SHALL SEE.



SKYLARK? I'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH YOU.

EVERYTHING'S SETTLED HERE. WE'VE BOOKED A FLIGHT TO DENVER FOR TONIGHT. WILL THAT BE SOON ENOUGH?

NO! IT WON'T BE! I WANT INFORMATION NOW!



I DON'T CARE HOW YOU DO IT, OR WHAT STRINGS YOU HAVE TO PULL, YOU HOOK ME INTO THE FEDERAL DATA RETRIEVAL SYSTEM!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?



IT COULD BE DONE, I SUPPOSE, BUT WE'RE NOT CLEARED FOR...



JUST DO IT!



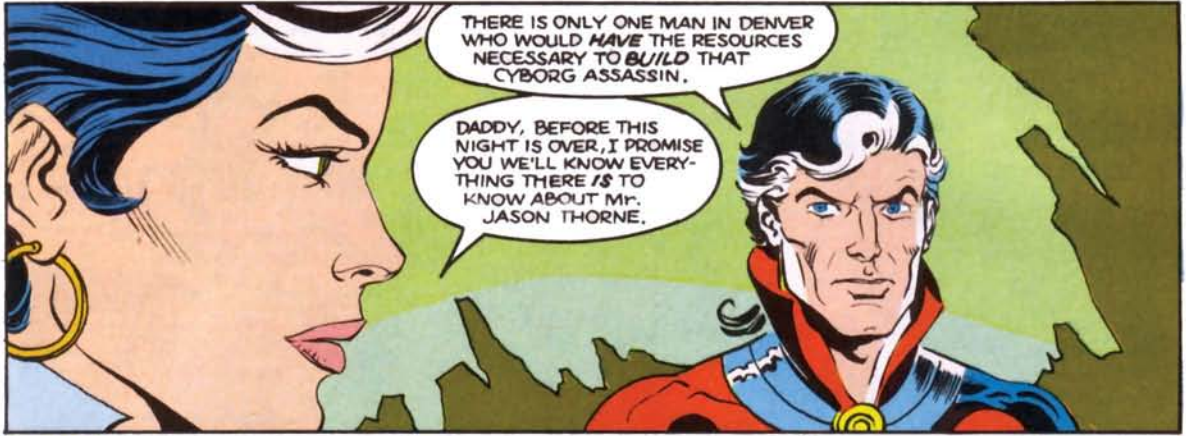
LINK'S A DEAR, DADDY. IF ANYONE CAN DO IT, HE WILL.

ARE YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING?

PROBABLY.



CLACK



THERE IS ONLY ONE MAN IN DENVER WHO WOULD HAVE THE RESOURCES NECESSARY TO BUILD THAT CYBORG ASSASSIN.

DADDY, BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS OVER, I PROMISE YOU WE'LL KNOW EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT MR. JASON THORNE.



LATER...

I I SUPPOSE WE CAN THANK OUR LUCKY STARS THAT THE ELECTRICITY'S STILL WORKING, TOO. IF IT WEREN'T, WE ...

OH, MY GOODNESS. NOW THIS I DON'T BELIEVE.

WHAT ?



WHOEVER TAMPHERED WITH THESE RECORDS DID A VERY THOROUGH JOB.

Hmm.

I CAN'T FIND ANY EVIDENCE THAT JASON THORNE EVEN EXISTED PRIOR TO 1976. HIS SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, HIS FIRST TAX RETURN, EVERYTHING DATES BACK ONLY TO TEN YEARS AGO.



WHICH IS WHEN I SHOULD HAVE ARRIVED.

WHAT WAS THAT ?



THERE ARE ONLY SO MANY WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE IN THE STRUCTURE OF TIME, SKY.

HERE, LET ME DO THAT.

DADDY, PLEASE!

CLICK TAK TAK

"SOMETHING WAS BLOCKING THE WINDOW THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE INTO 1976."

Data Correlation-- Subject: JASON THORNE	
SOCIAL SECURITY DOCUMENTATION	June 7, 1976
INTERNAL REVENUE DOCUMENTATION	January 5, 1976
BUSINESS LICENSE DOCUMENTATION	June 7, 1976
DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY DOCUMENT	May 19, 1976
BIRTHDATE DOCUMENTATION	Not Available
COLORADO DRIVERS LICENSE DOCUM	June 17, 1976

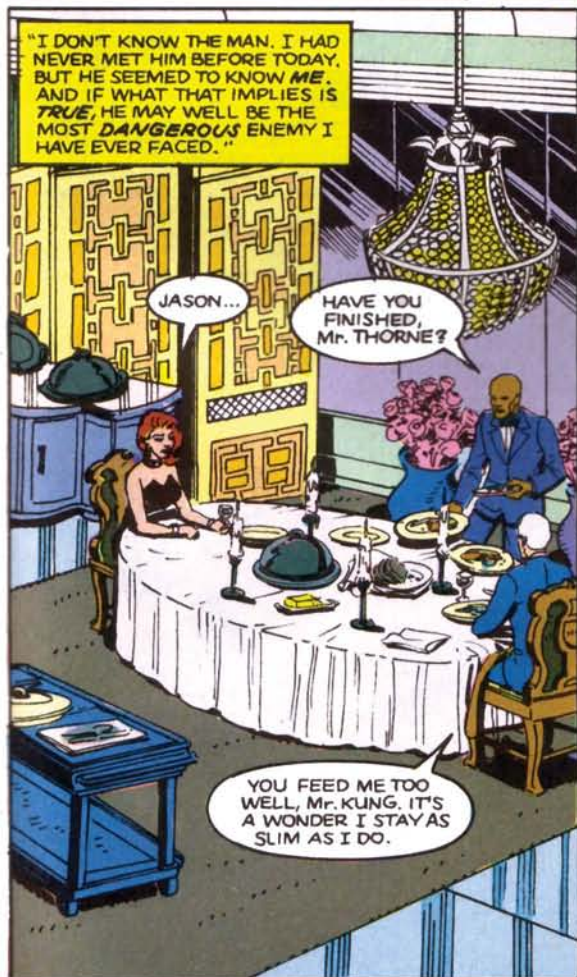


WHICH MEANS WHAT, DADDY?



WHICH MEANS, THAT WHOEVER HE IS, AND FOR WHATEVER REASON HE HAS BEEN SENT HERE, JASON THORNE HAS HAD THOSE TEN YEARS TO PREPARE FOR MY ARRIVAL.

ohhh.



"I DON'T KNOW THE MAN. I HAD NEVER MET HIM BEFORE TODAY, BUT HE SEEMED TO KNOW ME. AND IF WHAT THAT IMPLIES IS TRUE, HE MAY WELL BE THE MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY I HAVE EVER FACED."

JASON...

HAVE YOU FINISHED, MR. THORNE?

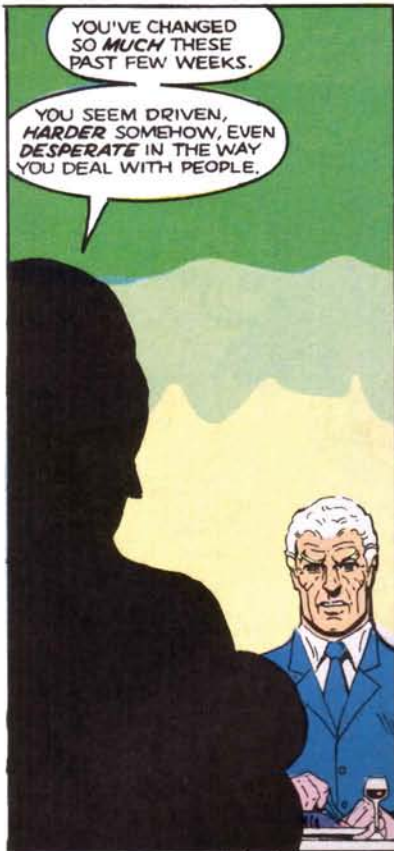
YOU FEED ME TOO WELL, MR. KUNG. IT'S A WONDER I STAY AS SLIM AS I DO.



WHAT IS IT, JANICE? THERE IS SOMETHING TROUBLING YOU, ISN'T THERE? I CAN SENSE IT.

I DON'T KNOW, JASON. MAYBE IT'S NOTHING.

MAYBE IT'S A LOT OF THINGS.



YOU'VE CHANGED SO MUCH THESE PAST FEW WEEKS.

YOU SEEM DRIVEN, HARDER SOMEHOW, EVEN DESPERATE IN THE WAY YOU DEAL WITH PEOPLE.



YOU'RE NOT THE MAN I MARRIED. I DON'T LIKE THE MAN YOU'RE BECOMING.



YOU'RE RIGHT. I APOLOGIZE.



I HAVE PROMISED TO MAKE IT UP TO YOU, AND I SHALL.

I WILL FIND A WAY.



YOU ARE THE LIGHT THAT BRIGHTENS MY TWILIGHT YEARS, Mrs. THORNE.

OH, JASON...

I WOULD HAVE TRAVELED HERE TO MEET YOU, THOUGH TIME ITSELF WOULD BAR THE WAY!



WE WERE MEANT FOR EACH OTHER, YOU AND I.

I KNOW WE WERE. I KNEW IT FROM THE FIRST MOMENT WE TOUCHED.

THAT SPARK BETWEEN US WILL NEVER DIM, MY LOVE. IT WILL LAST FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES.



OH YES,
JASON! YES!
YES I WILL!

BE MY
LOVE, Mrs.
THORNE!

FOR WITH YOU
AT MY SIDE, I CAN
ALMOST *CONVINCE*
MYSELF THAT *TOMORROW*
NEED NEVER COME!

"THERE'S MAGIC
IN A KISS."

"GLAMOUR IN A WARM
EMBRACE."
LYRICS © 1986 BY
SKYLARK SMITH.





YOUR ARRIVAL HAS BEEN ANTICIPATED. NOT SO SOON, PERHAPS, AND NOT UNINVITED...

MY APOLOGIES FOR THAT. THE MATTER WOULDN'T WAIT.

THANK YOU.

OF COURSE. IF YOU'LL STEP THIS WAY, I AM CERTAIN MR. THORNE WILL WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHAT WITH YOU.



OH, JASON!

DOCTOR SMITH / ALONE THIS TIME, I SEE.

SKYLARK IS OCCUPIED ELSEWHERE. WE NEED TO SPEAK FRANKLY, JASON THORNE.



I'VE SEEN THAT COSTUME BEFORE. WHY IS DOCTOR SMITH...?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, JANICE. I KNOW THIS MAN FAR BETTER THAN HE KNOWS ME. HE'S COME TO TALK. NOTHING MORE.



SO, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US, WE'LL SEE IF THIS MATTER BETWEEN US CAN'T BE SETTLED AMICABLY WITHOUT FURTHER VIOLENCE.

FURTHER VIOLENCE...?

I HOPE YOU'LL FORGIVE THIS INTRUSION, Mrs. THORNE.



I WISH I COULD HAVE BEEN A GUEST IN YOUR HOME UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES.



SO DO I, DOCTOR SMITH.



"TOO SAFE! TOO MUCH, AND NOT ENOUGH!"

SO DO I...





ARE YOU SERIOUSLY SUGGESTING THAT YOU WOULD *PREFER* A WORLD IN WHICH *WAR* IS A WAY OF *LIFE*? A WORLD IN WHICH MANKIND SERVES AS *FODDER* FOR THE GROWTH OF A WORLD-DEVOURING MILITARY *MACHINE*?



AND WHO ARE *YOU* TO PASS JUDGEMENT ON THE WAY THINGS MUST *BE*?



WHO ARE *YOU* TO DECIDE WHO WILL *LIVE* AND WHO WILL *DIE*?

I STRUGGLE TO PRESERVE THE WORLD I *KNOW*! YOU WOULD CHANGE IT WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHAT ELSE MIGHT *COME*!



I KNOW WHAT I'VE LIVED THROUGH, JASON THORNE.

WHAT I'VE LIVED THROUGH IS *WRONG*.



SO YOU SAY.

SO I *KNOW*.



I'LL NOT DEBATE THE ISSUE WITH YOU FURTHER, SMITH. OUR POSITIONS ARE CLEAR.

WE ARE ENEMIES, YOU AND I, AS WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN, AS WE SHALL ALWAYS BE.



"I CAN BREAK FREE."

OH, JASON...

"I WILL."



BUT I'M BEING *OBTUSE* AM I NOT? THERE'S *ANOTHER* REASON YOU'RE HERE.



YOU THINK I *LIED* TO YOU THIS MORNING WHEN I SAID I KNEW *NOTHING* OF THE WHEREABOUTS OF YOUR WIFE!

AND *DID* YOU?

THAT, DOCTOR SMITH, IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.



IF YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS, THORNE, THEN I DEMAND TO SEE HER. I *AM* HER HUSBAND. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO KEEP ME *FROM* HER.



MY DEAR DOCTOR, I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT JASMINE HAS MADE IT *QUITE* CLEAR TO ME THAT SHE WANTS *NOTHING* TO DO WITH YOU IN *ANY* CAPACITY.

IN FACT, SHE HAS COMMENTED ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION THAT SHE RATHER HOPED YOU WERE *DEAD*!

"AT LAST, I AM DONE WITH ANTICIPATION."

"I HAVE STUDIED SMITH. I HAVE SEEN THORNE'S FILMS. I KNOW HOW SMITH MOVES. I AM FAMILIAR WITH HIS COMBAT TECHNIQUE."

CHUNK!

"HE IS NOT FAMILIAR WITH MINE."

"HE WILL UNDERESTIMATE ME. AND TO FURTHER THAT PERCEPTION, I ALLOW HIM THE FIRST BLOW."

"IT HURTS. BUT NOT GREATLY."

"I AM STRONGER THAN SMITH."

THWACK!

"WHEN I HIT HIM, THOUGH MY FIST NEVER TOUCHES FLESH, HE WINCES IN PAIN!"

ARRR!

CRACK!

"HE IS NIMBLE, AND HE IS QUICK!"

"THAT MUCH I WILL CONCEDE TO HIM."

"BUT I AM NIMBLE, TOO. AND I AM QUICK."

"AND I AM STRONG!"

"HE WILL UNDERESTIMATE ME. I AM NOT THE SORT OF OPPONENT HE IS USED TO FIGHTING."

HAIEEE!

"I AM NOT A CREATURE OF SYNTHETIC FLESH, OF METALLIC BONE!"

"I AM MORE THAN THAT!"

Uh...?

WHAT...?

"I... AM... A... MAN!"

FLING!







"HE'S RIGHT, CURSE HIS EYES! THIS MAN IS NOT STUPID! HE HAS HAD TIME TO TAKE MY MEASURE. AND IF I LET UP FOR EVEN A MOMENT, I CAN BELIEVE HE WILL FIND A WAY TO WIN!"



"THIS MAN, MY ENEMY, BURNS WITH AN INNER FIRE THAT GIVES HIM STRENGTH OF WILL TO MATCH THE STRENGTH OF MY ARM! HE IS NO COWARD. I LIED WHEN I SAID THAT. HE IS ALTOGETHER ADMIRABLE!"



"HE TAKES PUNISHMENT THAT WOULD LONG SINCE HAVE DRIVEN ANY NORMAL MAN WEeping TO HIS KNEES! THIS MAN, AS JASON THORNE HAS TRULY OBSERVED, IS A HERO! ALMOST, I WISH WE COULD HAVE MET UNDER DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES."

JANICE! HOW LONG WERE YOU LISTENING?

JASON! WHAT ARE YOU...?

I THOUGHT I COULD TRUST YOU. I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME. BUT YOUR ACTIONS, YOUR EMOTIONS MAKE IT EVIDENT YOU'VE BEEN LIVING A LIE!



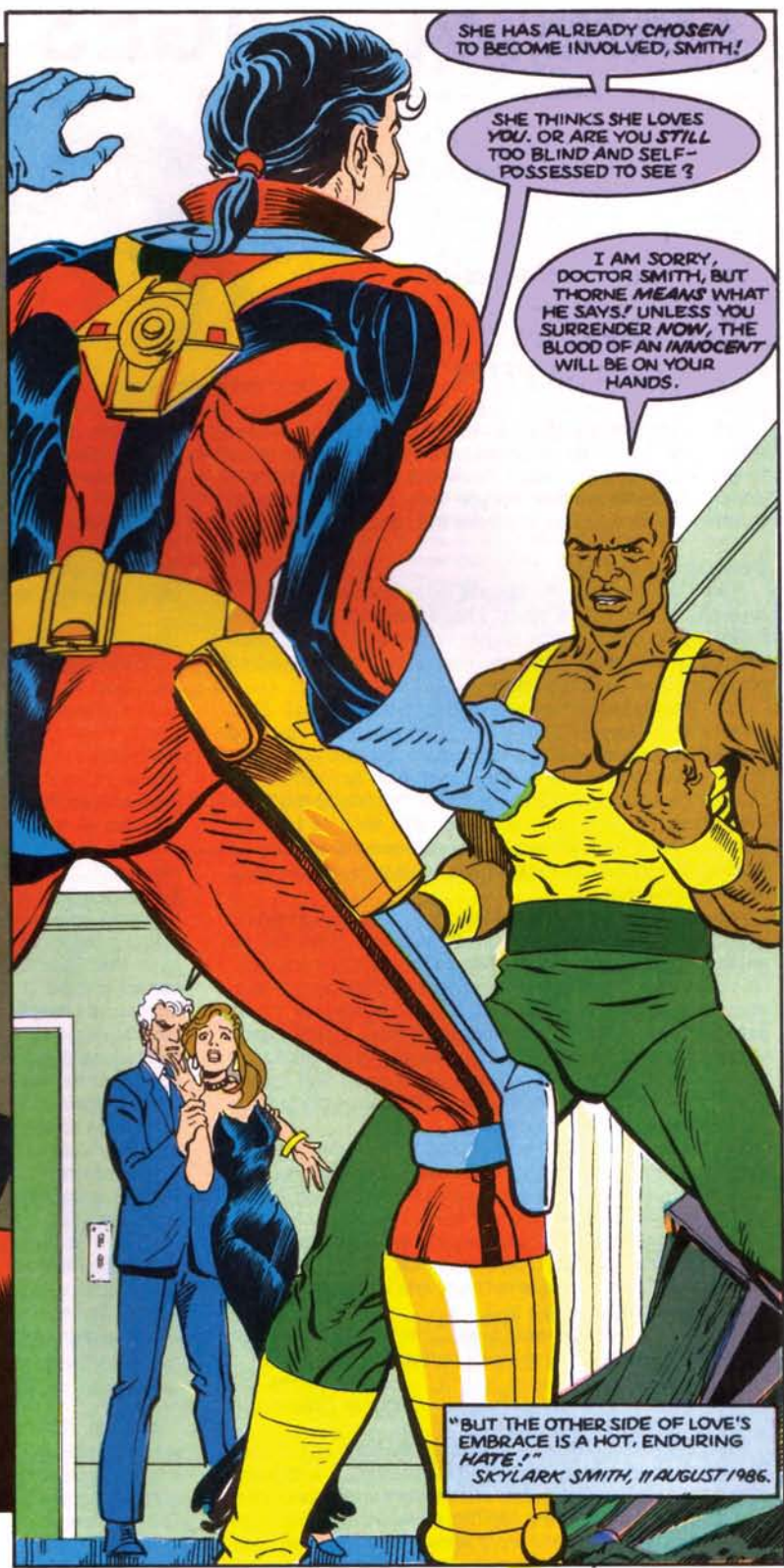
IT WAS NOT PASSION FOR ME THAT MADE YOU MY BRIDE! IT WAS PASSION FOR MY POWER, FOR MY STRENGTH!

SO YOU MAY TELL YOUR HANDSOME DOCTOR SMITH THAT, IF NEED BE, I SHALL USE MY STRENGTH TO BREAK YOUR PRETTY NECK!



JANICE!

LEAVE HER OUT OF THIS, THORNE.



SHE HAS ALREADY CHOSEN TO BECOME INVOLVED, SMITH!

SHE THINKS SHE LOVES YOU. OR ARE YOU STILL TOO BLIND AND SELF-POSSESSED TO SEE?

I AM SORRY, DOCTOR SMITH, BUT THORNE MEANS WHAT HE SAYS! UNLESS YOU SURRENDER NOW, THE BLOOD OF AN INNOCENT WILL BE ON YOUR HANDS.

"BUT THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE'S EMBRACE IS A HOT, ENDURING HATE!"
SKYLARK SMITH, 11 AUGUST 1986.

NEXT ISSUE:

DEATH COMES SOFTLY KNOCKING...



Renegade
Press

PRESENTS

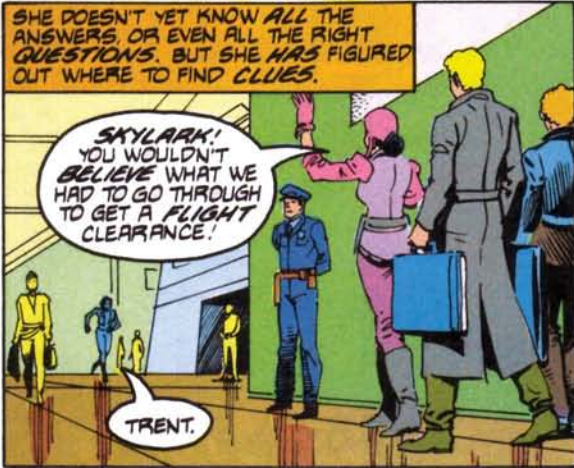
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ETERNITY

SMITH



AND **DEATH**
COMES SOFTLY
KNOCKING



ETERNITY SMITH

AND DEATH COMES SOFTLY KNOCKING

DENNIS MALLONEE
WORDS
CO-CREATORS

RICK HOBERG
PICTURES

TIM BURGARD
INKS

CARRIE SPIEGLE
LETTERS

JANICE COHEN
COLORS

THE PLACE: THORNE MANSION.
THE TIME: TWO HOURS AGO.



GIVE IT UP,
SMITH! IT'S HOPELESS!
YOU KNOW IT'S
HOPELESS!

YOU'VE SPENT
A DECADE OF YOUR LIFE
IN THE FUTURE! YOU KNOW
WHAT MUST COME TO PASS,
AND THERE IS NOTHING YOU
CAN DO TO CHANGE IT!

YOU'RE WRONG,
THORNE! IN THIS WORLD,
THE FUTURE HASN'T
HAPPENED
YET!



I LIVED THROUGH TEN YEARS OF HELL, AND WORSE THAN HELL. AND I WILL BE DAMNED BEFORE I'LL LET YOUR INSANE NOTION OF DESTINY RULE MANKIND'S FUTURE.

SO TAKE YOUR WIFE HOSTAGE IF YOU MUST. CALL HER AN "INNOCENT," IF YOU LIKE. IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME. IF I'VE LEARNED ONE THING IN THE PAST TEN YEARS..



IT'S THAT THERE IS NO "INNOCENCE" IN WAR!

AIEEE!

GARUNCH



DAMN HIS EYES!

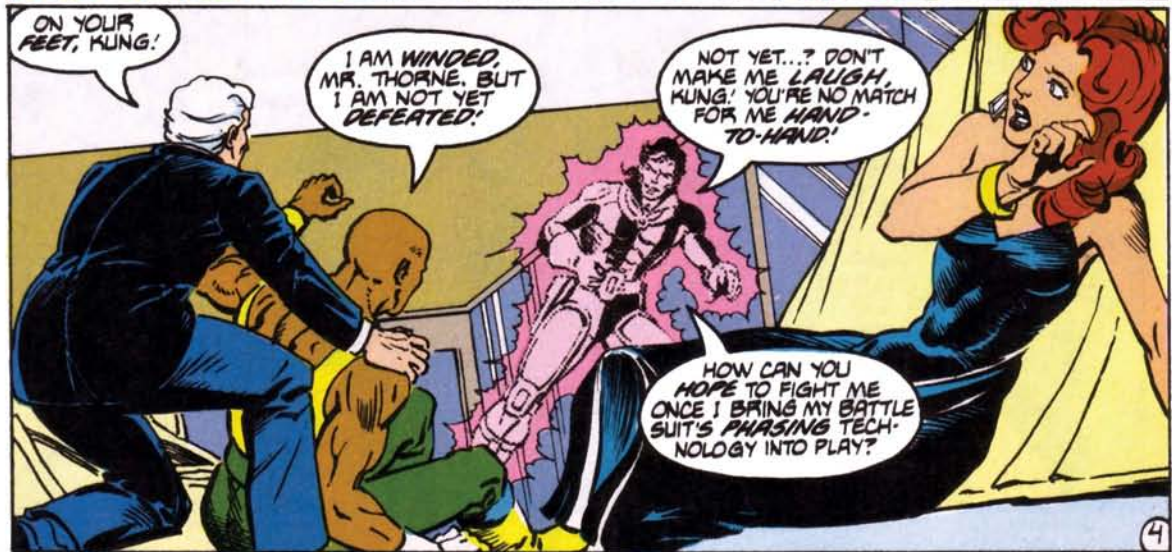
GET OUT OF HERE, WOMAN! YOU'RE OF NO USE TO ME NOW!

JASON!



EVERY MAN HAS A WEAKNESS, THORNE! BUT DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU'D FOUND MINE?

NOT LIKELY. IF YOU CLAIM TO KNOW ME, YOU SHOULD KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT.



ON YOUR FEET, KUNG!

I AM WINDED, MR. THORNE, BUT I AM NOT YET DEFEATED!

NOT YET...? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, KUNG! YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME HAND-TO-HAND!

HOW CAN YOU HOPE TO FIGHT ME ONCE I BRING MY BATTLE SUIT'S PHASING TECHNOLOGY INTO PLAY?



OVERCONFIDENCE IS YOUR WEAKNESS, SMITH! IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN. IT ALWAYS WILL BE!

KUNG! AS WE DISCUSSED!

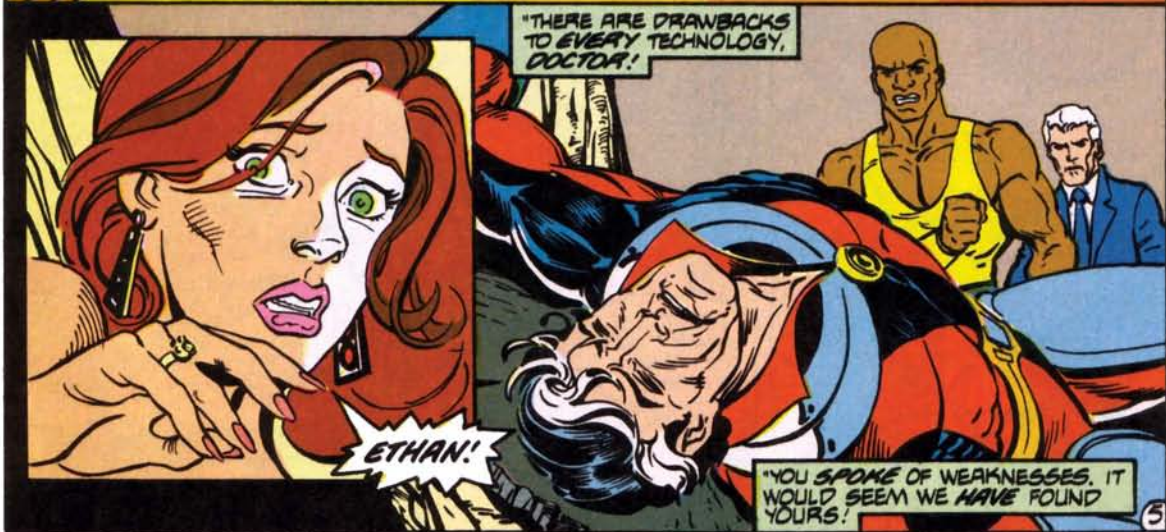
NOW!

"I DID NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD WORK, WHEN THORNE DESCRIBED THE EFFECT TO ME. I WAS NOT CERTAIN I COULD EVEN PERCEIVE IT.



"BUT IT IS THERE, A FAINT SHIMMERING IN THE AIR! AND WHEN SMITH FOLLOWS, MATERIALIZING IN A PLACE WHERE THIS DINNER CART SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN...

WHIZZ



"THERE ARE DRAWBACKS TO EVERY TECHNOLOGY, DOCTOR!"

ETHAN!

"YOU SPEAK OF WEAKNESSES. IT WOULD SEEM WE HAVE FOUND YOURS!"

DOWNTOWN DENVER.

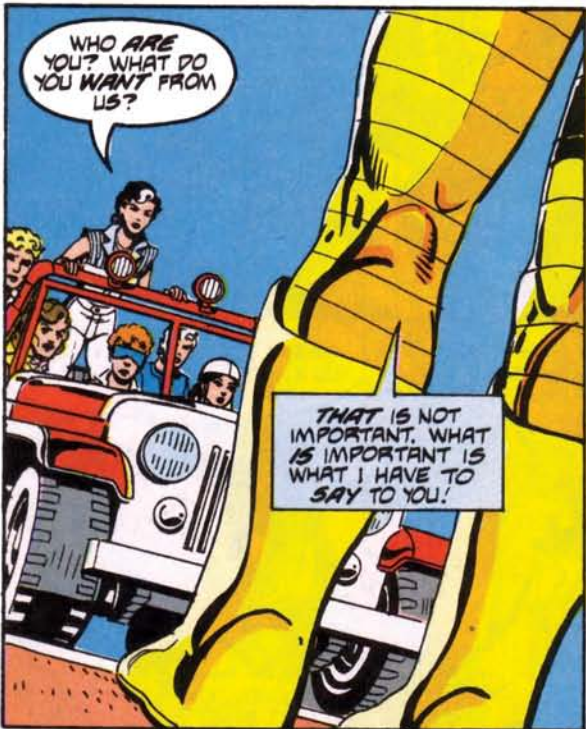
IT WASN'T ALL THAT LONG AGO THAT AUTOMOBILES HAD RUNNING BOARDS. PERHAPS YOU'VE SEEN THEM ON SOME CLASSIC DESIGNS. IN ANOTHER ERA, THE RUNNING BOARD WOULD HAVE BEEN WHERE SKYLARK SMITH IS STANDING. AS IT IS, SHE IS FORCED TO BE AMONG, RATHER THAN APART FROM HER CREW.

DON'T YOU THINK YOU WERE A BIT ROUGH ON MR. TRENT, SKY?

AFTER ALL, HE THOUGHT HE WAS LOOKING AFTER YOUR INTERESTS!









GONE AGAIN.

WHO WAS THAT?

I DON'T KNOW.

WHOEVER IT WAS, THAT WAS GOOD ADVICE!

SHUT UP, BOOMER!

OH? WELL, I NOTICE YOU'RE BUCKLING UP.

I SAID SHUT UP!

'GET MOVING, BREEZE! I KNOW WHERE MY FATHER WAS GOING.' AND IF I'M RIGHT ABOUT WHY I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HIM IN THE PAST FEW HOURS, HE'S GOING TO NEED OUR HELP!

HOW ODD THAT IT SHOULD END NOW, MY FRIEND, BEFORE IT TRULY BEGINS.



I WAS YOUNG, AND YOU WERE OLD.

NOW, IT SEEMS, OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER SHALL ALSO BE OUR LAST.

BUT YOU BEAT ME ALL THE SAME.

WE WILL BE LEAVING, MRS. THORNE. YOU WILL REMAIN HERE WHERE IT'S SAFE.

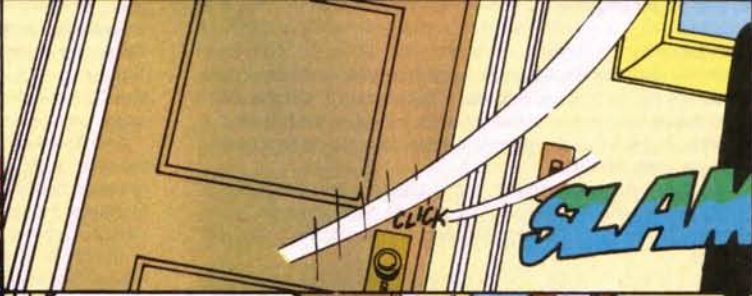
YOU'VE COST ME MUCH OVER THE YEARS, ETHAN SMITH! THE LOVE OF MY WIFE IS ONLY ONE THING MORE.



OUR SITUATIONS WERE REVERSED, ONCE UPON A TIME, BUT YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER THAT, WOULD YOU? FOR YOU, IT HADN'T HAPPENED YET.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE. THE DOG HAS ALREADY BEEN RELEASED.

YOU CAN'T DO THIS!



BLAST YOU, KUNG! LET ME OUT OF HERE!

I'M STILL JASON THORNE'S WIFE! I WILL NOT BE TREATED LIKE BAGGAGE!



IT'S LATE SEPTEMBER, 1960, ON THE CAMPUS OF THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.

REGISTRATION IS MONDAY. CLASSES START TUESDAY, AND THESE UPPERCLASSMEN ARE GOING TO *STUDY* THE WEEKEND BEFORE THEY HAVE TO BUCKLE DOWN TO THE FIRST-QUARTER GRIND.

EVEN IN 1960, THE HYPOCRISY OF THE "STUDENT-ATHLETE" EXISTED. BUT THIS YOUNG MAN IS NO HYPOCRITE.

WHEN HE COMPETES, HE COMPETES INFORMALLY.

HE TURNED DOWN FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIPS FROM USC, MICHIGAN, AND NOTRE DAME, SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WANTED TO *STUDY* AT CALTECH.

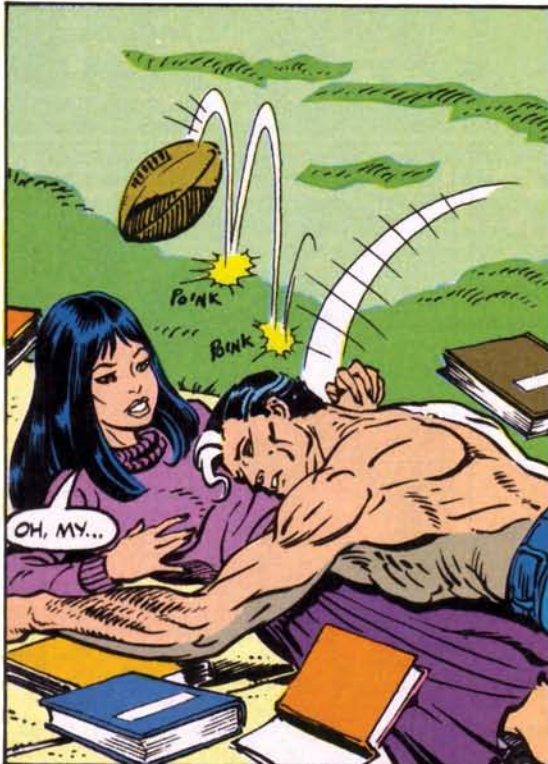
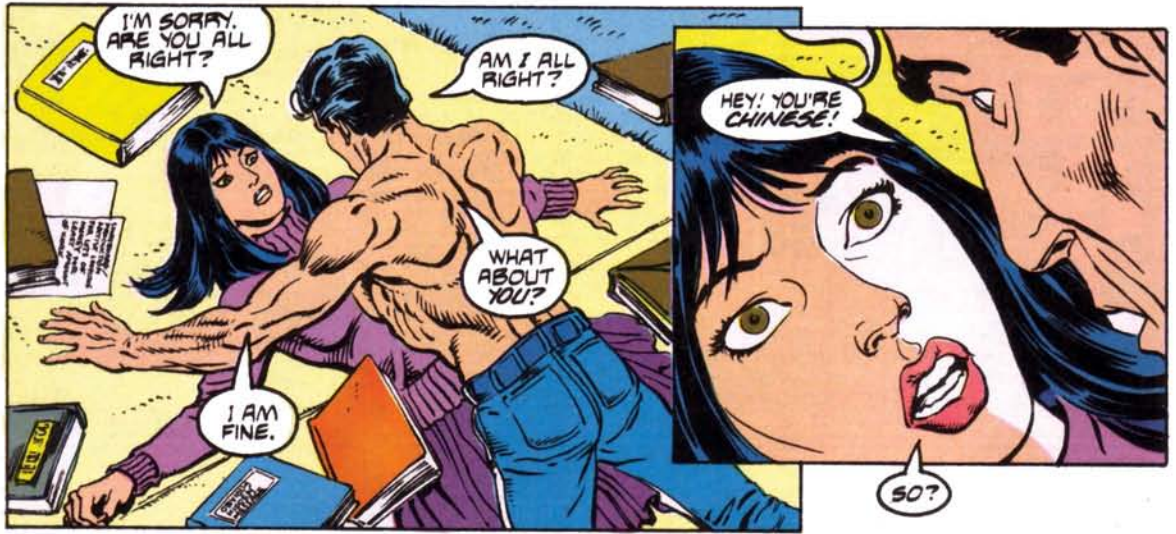
HE PLAYS BECAUSE HE LOVES THE GAME!

IN MOST RESPECTS, CALTECH IS A CLOISTERED LITTLE MAN'S WORLD IN 1960. THERE ARE NO CO-EDS. THE FIRST WOMAN STUDENTS ARE STILL YEARS AWAY.

SHE'S FROM OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE--AN "OXY-DOLL," AS THE TEACHERS ARE WONT TO SAY.

BUT THERE ARE WOMEN ON CAMPUS. AND STUDENTS OFTEN COME FROM OTHER COLLEGES TO MAKE USE OF THE CALTECH LIBRARIES.

THIS MEETING WILL CHANGE HER LIFE.





HURT? SMITTY? NOT LIKELY, M'DEAR. DIDN'T IT HIT HIM ON THE HEAD?

YES, BUT...

GAAAN...



"BUT" NOTHING! SMITTY'S HEAD'S AS HARD AS A ROCK.

I GUESS NOT.

OH, YOU'RE MAKING A JOKE. PLEASE, IT'S NOT FUNNY.



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I THINK SO.



I AM SORRY IF I HURT YOU. I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CAREFUL. I WOULD NEVER WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO HURT YOU.

SMITTY!



THINK YOU CAN HANDLE TWO PASSES AT ONCE?



TWO PASSES? WHAT DOES HE MEAN?

BILL LIKES TO MAKE JOKES.

OH, I NOTICED THAT.



SO WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

JASMINE.



MY NAME IS JASMINE WU.

NOW IT IS 1986. THE WOMAN'S NAME HAS CHANGED ONLY SLIGHTLY. LITTLE ELSE ABOUT HER REMAINS THE SAME.

OUR VISITOR AWAKENS!

WHAT IN BLAZES...?

LASER-OPTICS SIMULATION MATRICES SCAN PERFECTLY, DOCTOR SMITH.



ARE YOU AMAZED, ETHAN, AT WHAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH WITHOUT YOU?

I CONFESS TO A CERTAIN PRIDE IN MY WORK HERE, THE THEORIES, OF COURSE, WERE OURS, BUT ALL OF THIS IS MINE!

WE HAVE A COMPLETE SYSTEMS CHECK ANALYSIS AVAILABLE, DOCTOR SMITH.

ENERGY FLUX STABILIZATION COMPLETE, DOCTOR SMITH.

WILL YOU BE NEEDING ME FURTHER, DOCTOR SMITH?

BUT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN IDLE, EITHER, HAVE YOU? I AM *VERY* DISTURBED BY THE ADVANCED MICROCIRCUITRY YOU'VE INCORPORATED INTO THE ...HARDWARE... WE REMOVED FROM YOU.

I CONFESS THAT THE TECHNOLOGY IS LIGHTYEARS BEYOND ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN.

BUT EVEN IF YOU'VE GIVEN YOUR *SOVIET* MASTERS A TECHNOLOGICAL JUMP ON US WITH GADGETS LIKE *THIS*--HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS WHAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO DO--THAT WILL CHANGE WITH THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF *PROJECT INTERFACE*.

SOVIETS? IS *RUSSIA* WHERE YOU THINK I'VE BEEN ALL THESE YEARS? JASMINE, LISTEN TO ME! WHATEVER JASON THORNE HAS BEEN TELLING YOU IS A LIE!

DAMN IT, WOMAN LISTEN TO ME!

GREGORY? DO YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE TIME TO TAKE ANOTHER GO AT ANALYZING THIS?

I COULD GIVE IT A SHOT...

YOU'RE WALKING INTO A *TRAP*! A TECHNOLOGICAL *DEAD-END*!

YOU THINK I DON'T!

NOTHING GOOD WILL COME OF IT. BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL YOU, I KNOW ALL ABOUT *PROJECT INTERFACE*!

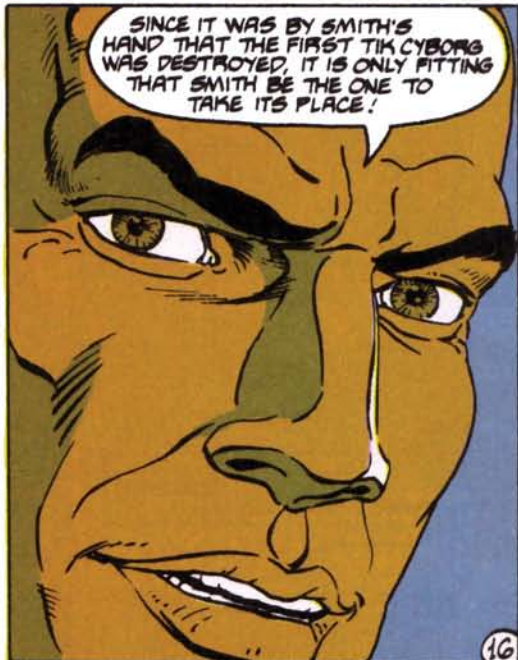
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN PATRONIZING, ETHAN SMITH! WELL, BY HEAVEN, I DON'T HAVE TO PUT UP WITH IT ANY LONGER!

WE MAY HAVE DEVELOPED OUR THEORIES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOGETHER, BUT I TELL YOU AGAIN, THE APPLICATIONS OF IT ARE *MINE ALONE*!

I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU'VE BEEN THESE PAST TWENTY YEARS. BUT I CAN GUESS.

HOW ELSE COULD YOU *VANISH* SO COMPLETELY --UNLESS YOU WERE HOLED UP SOMEWHERE IN THE UKRAINE, PLAYING LAP-DOG TO YOUR GODLESS *SOVIET* MASTERS!

JASMINE...



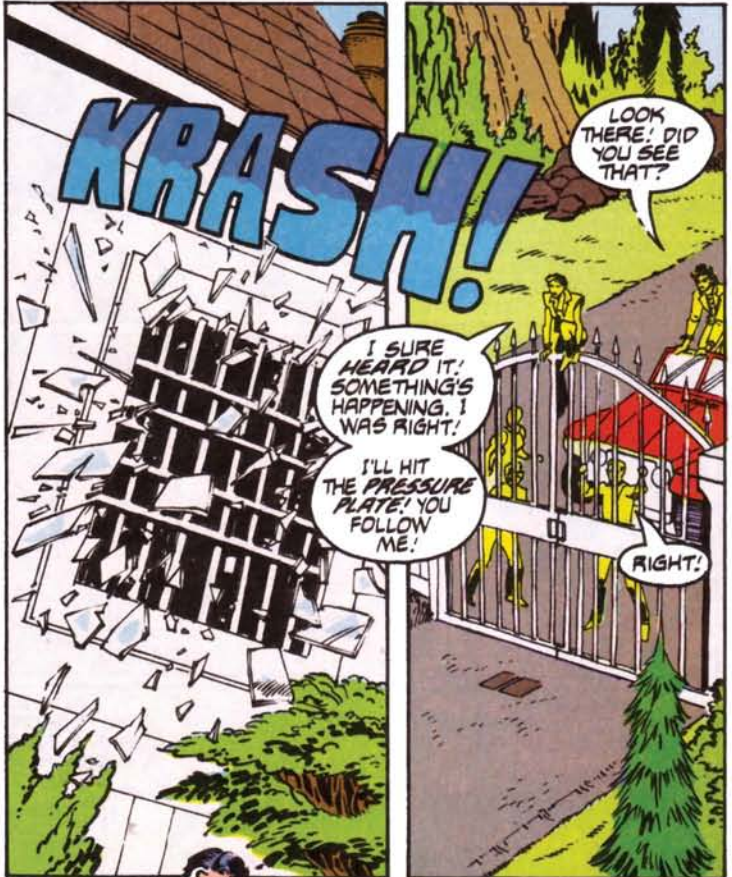
THORNE MANSION.

JANICE KELLOGG THORNE IS NOT, AND NEVER HAS BEEN A PASSIVE ACTOR IN THE DRAMA OF LIFE. SHE HAS NEVER ENJOYED RESTRICTIONS, NOT WHEN HER PARENTS PLACED THEM ON HER, CERTAINLY NOT NOW!

AND SHE IS STRONGER, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND OF CHARACTER, THAN SHE LOOKS!



AT THE MOMENT, SHE WISHES THAT THIS WINDOW WERE HER HUSBAND'S HEAD!



KRASH!

LOOK THERE! DID YOU SEE THAT?

I SURE HEARD IT! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING. I WAS RIGHT!

I'LL HIT THE PRESSURE PLATE! YOU FOLLOW ME!

RIGHT!

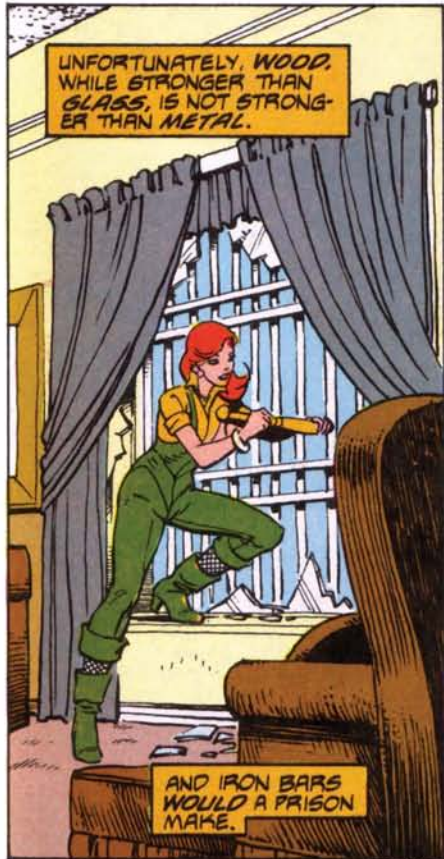
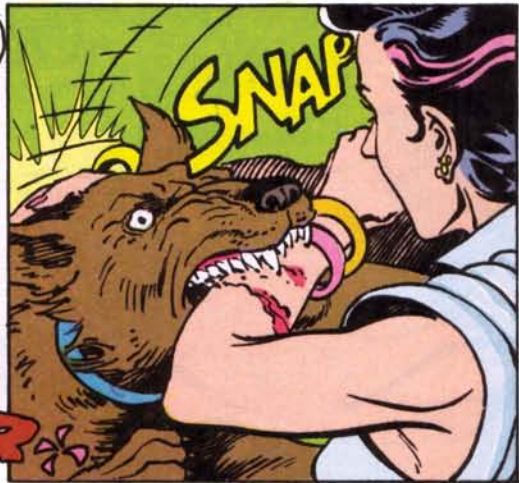


SKY! WAIT FOR US! YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING BY...



SKY! LOOK OUT!

RRRRRRRR







I'D ADVISE YOU TO RECONSIDER, KUNG. THORNE SHOULD AT LEAST BE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY IRREVOCABLE STEPS ARE TAKEN.

AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME, MY FRIEND, I AM NOT ALL THAT CONCERNED ABOUT THORNE.

DO YOU NOT YET UNDERSTAND THAT I DO NOT WORK FOR JASON THORNE? WHAT HE WANTS IS IRRELEVANT.



MY MASTERS ARE NOW CONVINCED THAT YOU ARE TOO DANGEROUS TO BE ALLOWED ANY SENSE OF FREEDOM. I AGREE WITH THE ANALYSIS.

YOUR MASTERS?

WHAT? DO YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THAT THERE ARE GAPS IN YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF EVENTS? THAT IS MOST INTERESTING NEWS.



"BUT, IN THE END, THE QUESTION OF HOW MUCH DANGER YOU POSE TO OUR PLANS BECOMES MOOT.

"YOUR WEAPONS HAVE BEEN STRIPPED FROM YOU. YOU ARE POWERLESS. GOODBYE, DOCTOR SMITH. YOU MAY SPEND YOUR LAST FEW MOMENTS OF FREE WILL WITH UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ON YOUR...EH?"

CRACK

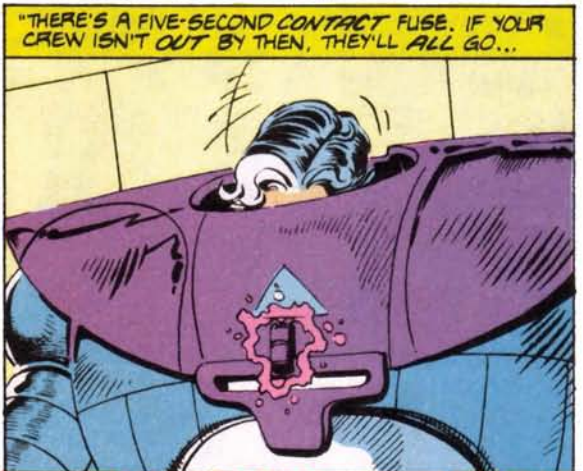
SSSSSSSSSSSS



WHAT TREACHERY IS THIS?

FWOOSH

SKAFF SKAFF SKAFF



AND BY THE TIME THE SMOKE CLEARS...

A BIT DRABSTIC, PERHAPS, BUT THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT FOR...

OH, DADDY!

I WAS SO FRIGHTENED FOR YOU!

SKYLARK! PLEASE!

I APPRECIATE THE SENTIMENT, BUT DON'T YOU THINK IT'S A BIT MISPLACED? I AM YOUR FATHER, AFTER ALL!

S-SORRY.

JUST FILL ME IN ON WHAT I'VE MISSED!

...AND THAT'S ABOUT IT. MRS. THORNE GOT US INTO FACILITY, BUT WE HAD TO WORRY OUR WAY DOWN THIS FAR.

YOU'VE DONE WELL, ALL OF YOU. AS I KNEW YOU WOULD.

"THE CRITICAL MOMENTS ARE UPON US NOW. WE HAVE TO CHANGE WHAT WOULD OTHERWISE COME TO BE!"

SMITH HAS ESCAPED!

WHAT?

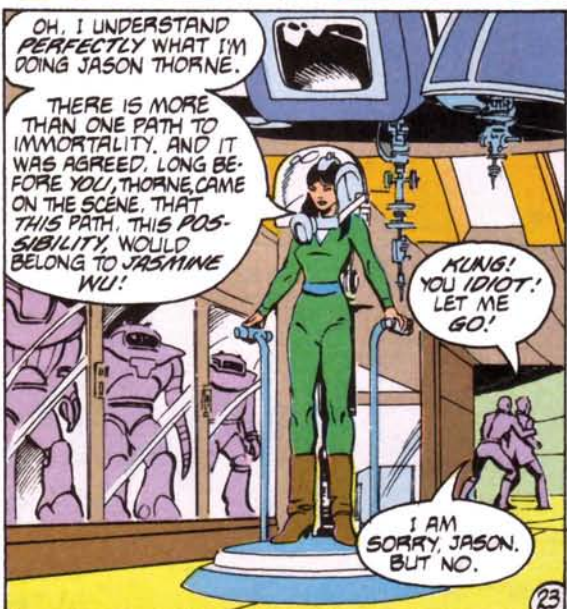
HIS DAUGHTER...

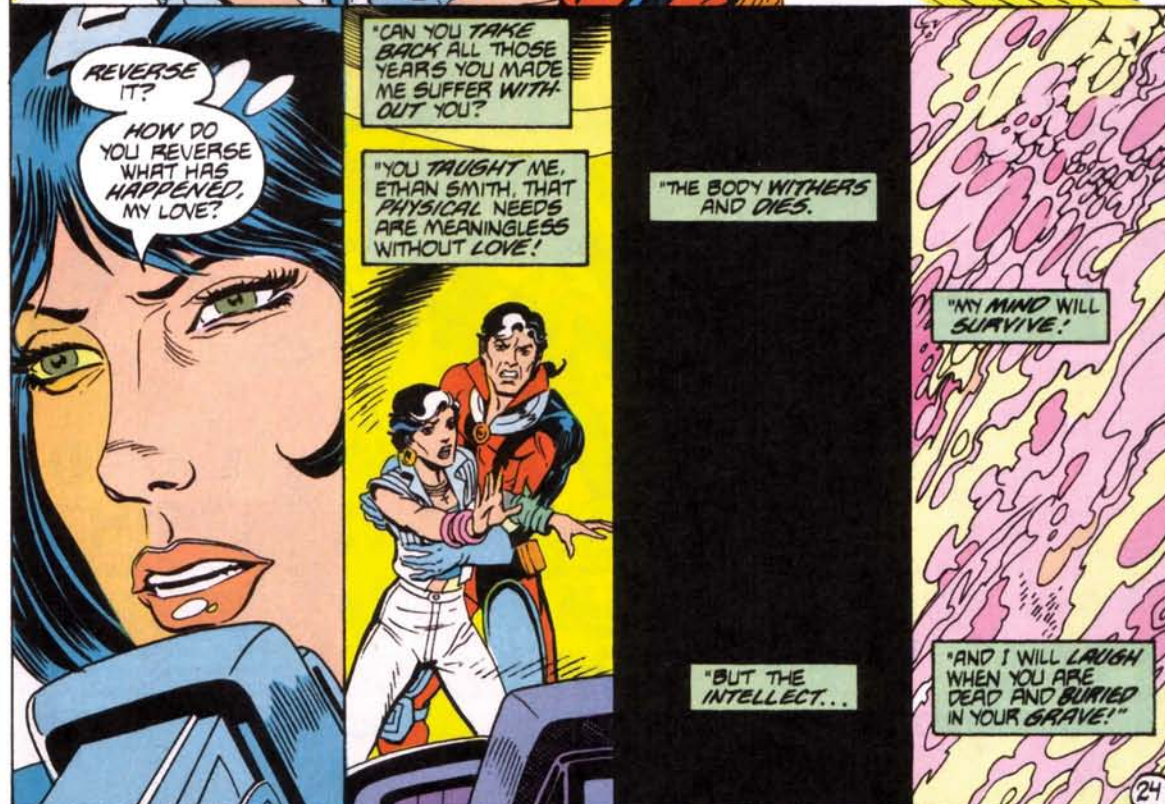
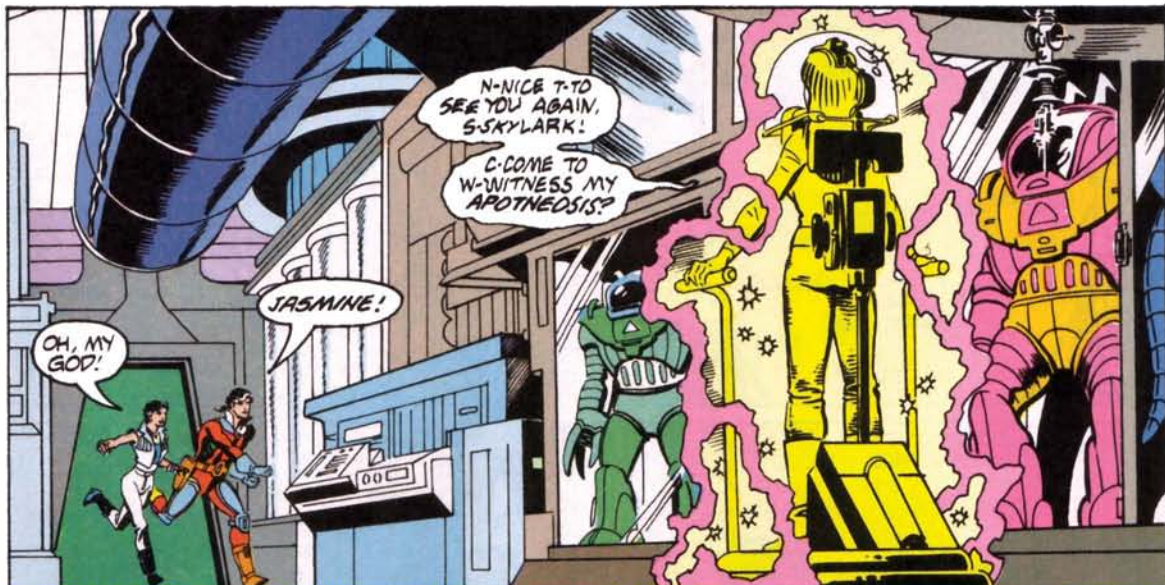
SKYLARK, TOO?

WELL, DAMN THE GIRL, THEN! TO HELL WITH THE BOTH OF THEM!

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, MY DEAR, PERHAPS IT MIGHT BE BEST TO ABANDON THIS FACILITY FOR THE MOMENT, TO LEAD THEM AWAY FROM THE CRITICAL EQUIPMENT.

ABSOLUTELY NOT!





OH, MY GOD!

JASMINE!

N-NICE T-TO SEE YOU AGAIN, S-SKYLARK!

C-COME TO W-WITNESS MY APO-TNE-SIS?

SKYLARK! YOU CAN'T HELP HER THIS WAY. YOU CAN'T EVEN TOUCH HER! YOU'RE NOT PROTECTED! THE ENERGY FLUX WOULD KILL YOU!

ALL WE CAN DO IS TRY TO REVERSE THE PROCESS!

MOMMA: NO!

WHAT IS SHE DOING?

REVERSE IT?

HOW DO YOU REVERSE WHAT HAS HAPPENED, MY LOVE?

"CAN YOU TAKE BACK ALL THOSE YEARS YOU MADE ME SUFFER WITH OUT YOU?"

"YOU TAUGHT ME, ETHAN SMITH, THAT PHYSICAL NEEDS ARE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT LOVE!"

"THE BODY WITHERS AND DIES."

"MY MIND WILL SURVIVE!"

"BUT THE INTELLECT..."

"AND I WILL LAUGH WHEN YOU ARE DEAD AND BURIED IN YOUR GRAVE!"



MOMMA?



SKYLARK...

MOMMA, DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT. SAY SOMETHING!

DOCTOR SMITH... WE MAY NOT HAVE TIME FOR THAT.

I'LL HAVE TO GO IN AFTER HER! WHICH OF YOU IS THE COMPUTER EXPERT?



LOOK! THEY'RE MOVING!

DAMN!

OF COURSE THEY'D BE MOVING!



"THEY'D BE SLAVED TO THE MASTER COMPUTER. THEY WOULDN'T NEED TO BE PROGRAMMED INDEPENDENTLY."

TIK

TIK

TIK

TIK



THIS IS INSANE!

BATTLE FORMATION, CREW!

NICE WORKMANSHIP, THOUGH!

JASMINE! I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, BUT YOU CAN'T DO THIS! THERE ARE CHILDREN! THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THEY'RE FIGHTING!

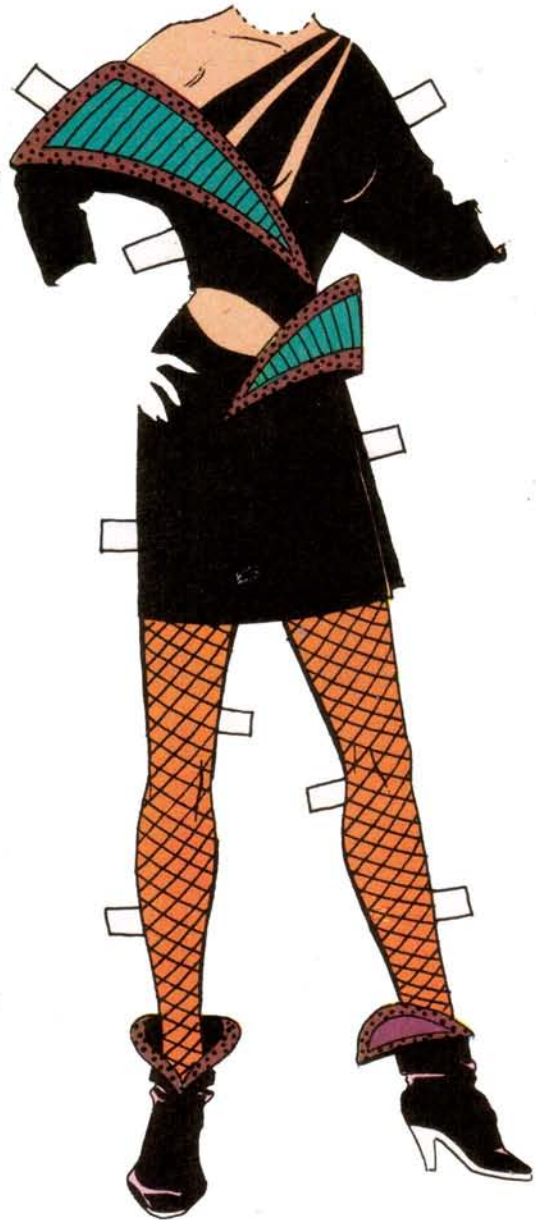
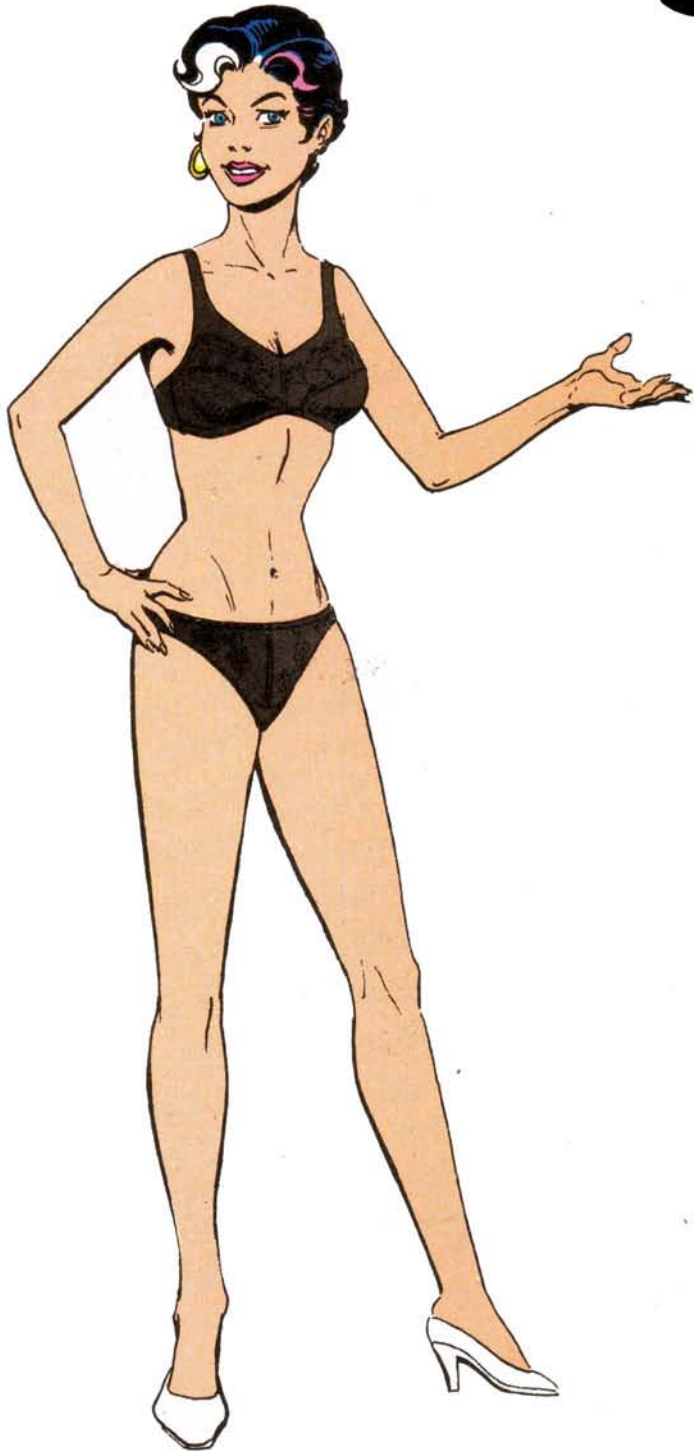
DADDY? WHY ISN'T SHE BREATHING?

OH MY GOD! I THINK MY MOMMA'S DEAD!

NOT DEAD. NOT YET, MY OTHER SELF! BUT SOON...

NEXT ISSUE: "FAILURES of SALVATION" ON SALE IN 60 DAYS!

SKYLARK'S STYLE



SHOW OUTFIT
FOR PERFORMANCE



FULL-COLOR ACTION!

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ETERNITY

SMITH

PARENTS: This comic
contains some nudity.



**“FAILURES
of Salvation”**

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PAPER DOLLS

ALL DESIGNS CREATED
BY EVELYN A-R GABAI,
(INFACT THAT'S EVELYN'S
GOWN SKY BORROWED)
THANKS ALOT, EV!



ADVENTURE GEAR



DRESS GOWN
FOR OCCASIONS

1963.



STOOPID MR. BEAR.

WE'RE ON THE WRONG TRACK, JASMINE.

HOW CAN YOU SAY SUCH A THING? WE'RE MAKING EFFICIENT USE OF BOOLEAN LOGIC.



BUT WE'RE STILL TIEING OUR HYPOTHETICAL COMPUTER DOWN TO HARD-WIRED PATHS!

THAT'S NOT HOW THE HUMAN BRAIN FUNCTIONS.



PERHAPS IF WE OVERLAID SEVERAL ALTERNATIVE PATHS?

THE OPTIONS WOULD STILL BE FINITE.



THE PROBLEM IS THAT ONLY PART OF THE BRAIN IS HARD-WIRED. THE REST OF WHAT IT DOES IS LEARNED!

MEMORY TRACES ARE FIRED ACROSS SYNAPSES, NOT CARRIED THROUGH BIOLOGICAL "WIRING." THE PATTERNS ARE IMPORTANT.

WE NEED TO FIND SOMETHING THAT CAN CARRY INFORMATION TO SPECIFIC SPOTS WITHOUT BEING TIED TO A SPECIFIC PATH. BUT WHAT?



I KNOW, DADDY!

THIS MAKES PRETTY SPOTS ANYWHERE!

CLICK



SKYLARK! PUT THAT DOWN!

JASMINE... SHE'S RIGHT...

WHEEEE!



RIGHT? WHAT DO YOU...? OH! OF COURSE SHE IS! BUT HOW...?

THE HOW OF IT DOESN'T MATTER! NOT TO THE THEORY!

ALL WE NEED TO DO IS POSTULATE SOME SORT OF INFORMATION CARRIER. WE'LL HAVE OUR INFINITY OF POSSIBLE PATHS! THE DETAILS WE CAN LEAVE TO THE ENGINEERS!

HMPH.

ETERNITY
SMITH
STARRING IN
FAILURES OF SALVATION

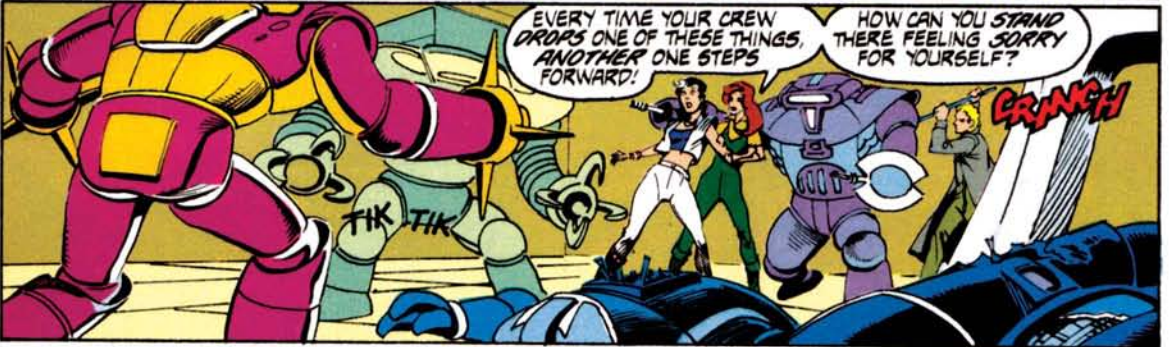
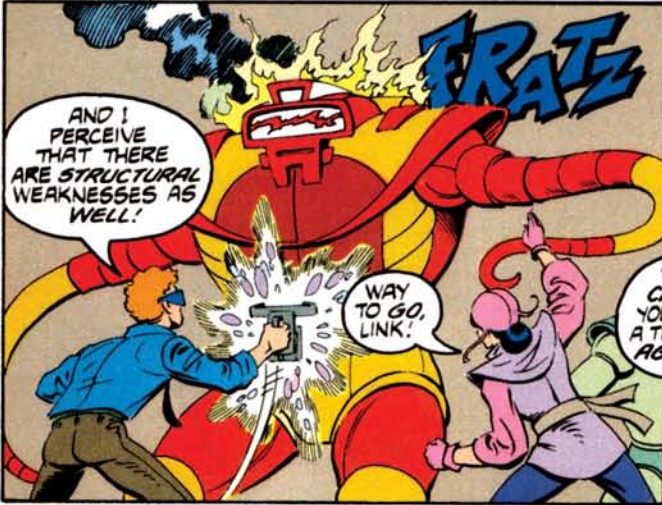


I THINK WE HAVE A PROBLEM, DOC!

DENNIS MALLONÉE - WORDS
CO-CREATORS
RICK HOBERG - PICTURES
BURGARD & JANES - INKS
CARRIE SPIEGLE - LETTERS
JANICE COHEN - COLORS







ELSEWHERE IN THE THORNE INDUSTRIES COMPLEX...



JANICE HAS BETRAYED YOU, JASON.

LET ME GO, KUNG! MY WIFE IS BACK THERE!

WHO DO YOU THINK LED YOUR ENEMIES HERE?



I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT!

YOU SPEAK OF BETRAYAL! WHAT OF YOU?



YOU ARE MISTAKEN, JASON. I HAVE NOT BETRAYED YOU. I HAVE NEVER SERVED YOU.

IT WAS MY MIND THAT WAS TO HAVE MERGED WITH OUR "THINKING" COMPUTER! I WAS TO HAVE GAINED THE POWER!

BECAUSE OF YOUR IDIOTCY, IT IS JASMINE SMITH WHO HAS PASSED BEYOND THE LIMITS OF HUMAN FLESH!



DON'T ARGUE SEMANTICS WITH ME, KUNG! YOUR MASTERS AND I MADE AN AGREEMENT!

I LIVED UP TO THE BARGAIN! I EXPECT THEM TO DO THE SAME!



I WILL TAKE YOU TO THEM, JASON.

THE EXPERIMENT IS FINISHED. THERE IS NO FURTHER NEED OF YOU HERE.



MY PATIENCE IS REWARDED. I SEE THE OTHER ENTRANCE.

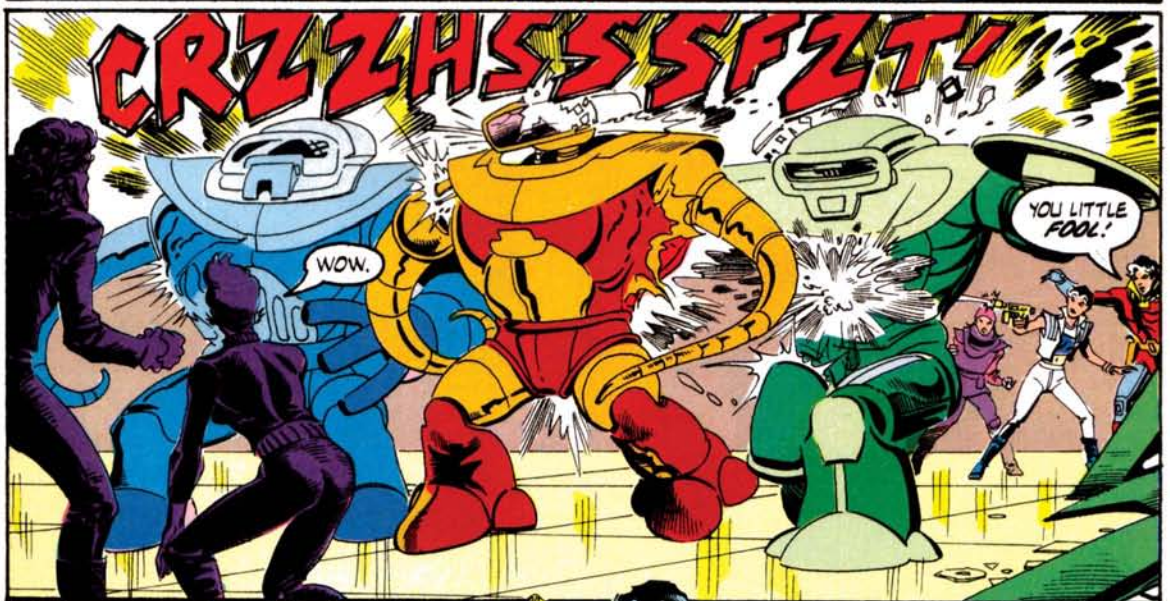
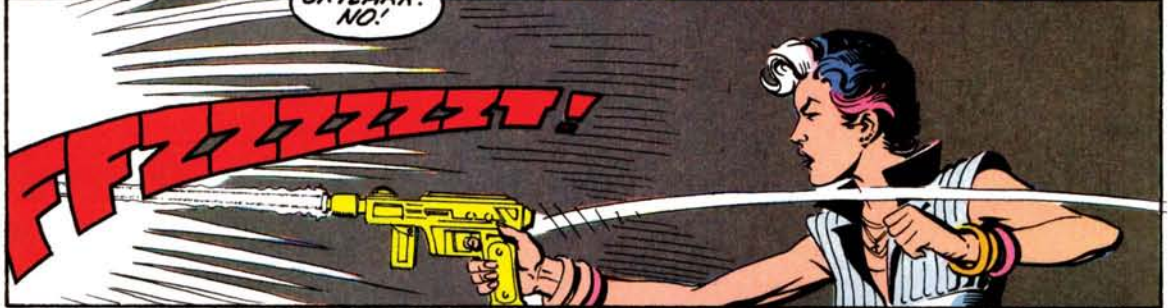
I DID NOT MEET MYSELF BEFORE. I MUST NOT MEET MYSELF NOW.



BUT THE MOMENT IS ALMOST UPON ME. I MUST BE PREPARED FOR IT.

THERE CAN BE NO MERCY.

MY PARENT MUST DIE.









I DO NOT CARE!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT'S LIKE, ETHAN SMITH! I HAVE NO INTENTION OF EVER GOING BACK!



MY AWARENESS IS HEIGHTENED. THE SPEED WITH WHICH I CAN PROCESS INFORMATION IS BEYOND BELIEF.

PLEASE, ANNIE. SHE CAN'T BE DEAD.



THERE'S NO PULSE, SKY.

I'M SORRY. IF I UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE, YOUR MOTHER'S OPTIONS ARE ALREADY CLOSED.



YOU CAN KEEP THE BODY, ETHAN. IT WAS ALL YOU EVER WANTED FROM ME, ANYWAY!

PERHAPS YOU'LL FIND A USE FOR IT!

I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS, JASMINE!



HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO STOP ME?

I COULD DESTROY YOU AND YOUR YOUNG FRIENDS AT ANY TIME!

MY ROBOTS ARE AN EXTENSION OF ME, AND THEIR NUMBERS ARE NEARLY LIMITLESS! YOU COULD NOT DESTROY THEM ALL!



BUT THAT WOULD NOT BE SATISFYING!

I WANT YOU, ETHAN SMITH. JOIN ME HERE, AND I'LL SPARE THESE CHILDREN'S LIVES.



DADDY, NO!

ETHAN! YOU CAN'T!

VERY WELL. I AGREE.



ETHAN...

I AM GROWING IMPATIENT, GIRL!

IT'S ALMOST HOOKED UP AGAIN, MRS. SMITH!

YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, LINK?

WE THINK SO, DR. SMITH.

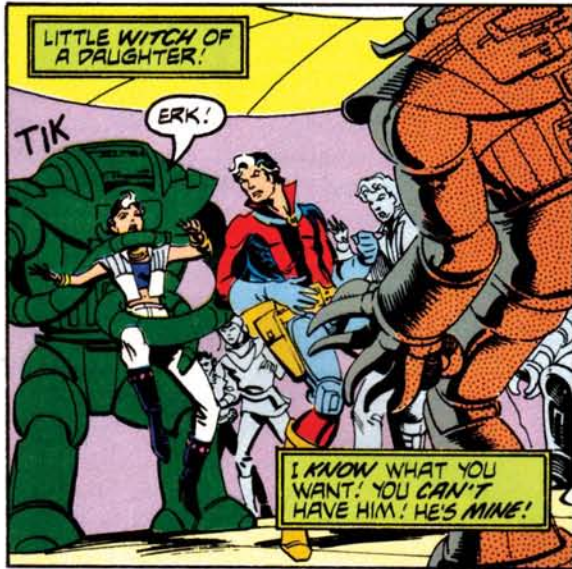
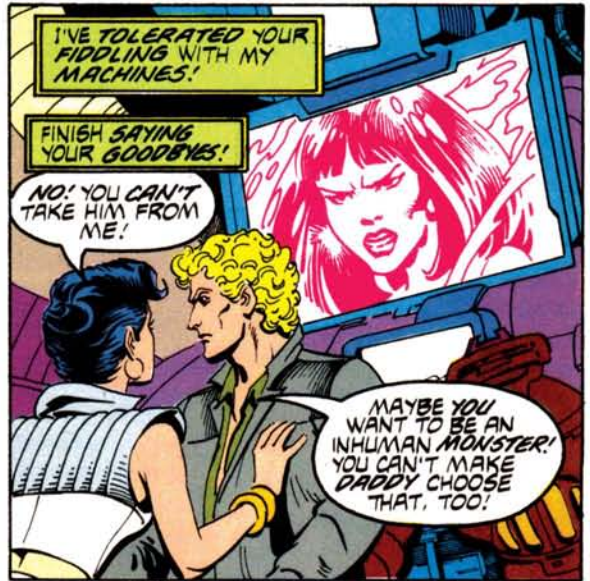
NO TELEPHONES, NO MICROWAVE RELAYS, NO COMMUNICATIONS COMING INTO OR OUT OF THIS FACILITY.

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT, SKY.

OH, BOOMER! I DON'T WANT TO LOSE HIM AGAIN...

TIK

TIK





BLACKNESS.

NO LESS THAN
I EXPECTED.



I HAVE DONE THIS
TWICE BEFORE,
AND I AM NOT
AFRAID.

I KNOW WHAT
SHOULD HAPPEN.



THERE SHE IS.



ETHAN, MY
DARLING!

I LOVE
YOU! I HAVE
ALWAYS LOVED
YOU!

TOGETHER,
WE CAN RESHAPE
THE WORLD!

SMASH

STUPID
ROBOTS!



NO THOUGHT!
NO ACTION!

YOU'RE NOT
REAL!



SKYLARK!
THERE ARE TWO
DISTINCT PATTERNS
SHOWING UP!

HE'S IN
THERE SOME-
WHERE!



AND HE'S
STILL
ALIVE!

HELP ME
PROP HIM UP
UNDER THE HEAD-
PIECE, MRS.
THORNE!



"WE HAVE TO LEAVE HIM A WAY TO RETURN!"

THERE'S NO GOING BACK, ETHAN!

OH, I SAW WHAT YOU WERE DOING, AND I WAS AMAZED THAT THE MODIFICATIONS YOU HAD THAT GIRL MAKE HAD NEVER OCCURED TO ME.



BUT YOU ARE MINE NOW, MY LOVE!

COME, LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT I'VE DONE!

DADDY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!



DO YOU SEE?

ALL OF THIS IS ME!

ALL THE TRACES OF MY MEMORY, HERE ARRAGED BEFORE US, REPLICATED IN AN INFINITY OF DREAMS!



OH, MY...

THIS ONE, FOR EXAMPLE



THEY ARE AS VIVID AS THE MOMENT! FIRST EXPERIENCED THEM.

AND MY CAPACITY TO RELIVE THEM IS LIMITLESS!



THIS TIME, MY HUSBAND, LIVE MY LIFE WITH ME!

I HAVE NEVER STOPPED LOVING YOU.

BUT IT WAS HARD TO EXPLAIN TO A SIX-YEAR-OLD CHILD THAT HER FATHER MIGHT NEVER BE COMING HOME.



WE CAN CHANGE THAT, ETHAN.



EVERY MOMENT OF OUR PASTS IS MUTABLE HERE.



ALL IT REQUIRES IS THE WILL TO MAKE THINGS OVER, AS THEY OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN!



DADDY!



SKYLARK...

BUT THIS ISN'T REAL, JASMINE. YOU KNOW IT'S NOT REAL.



IT'S AS REAL AS I CHOOSE TO MAKE IT! IN THIS WORLD, MY WILL RULES!



CAN YOU DENY THAT YOU FEEL OUR DAUGHTER IN YOUR ARMS?

CERTAINLY IT FEELS REAL, JASMINE. SENSORY INPUT ALWAYS FEELS REAL.



I LOVE YOU, DADDY!







ALREADY, YOU'RE PLAYING GAMES! DON'T YOU SEE?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU WEARY OF PLAYING THE GAMES BY YOURSELF? WHEN YOU WEARY OF PLAYING THEM WITH ME?

AND EVEN IF YOU CAN RESTRAIN YOURSELF, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OTHERS WHO ARE LESS RESTRAINED FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS?



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OTHERS BEGIN PLAYING GAMES WITH THE WORLD?

IS THIS DEVASTATION THE FUTURE YOU WANT TO GIVE TO OUR CHILD?



NOOOO!

SKYLARK?

WHAT IS IT, LOVE?



FOR A SECOND, I THOUGHT...

I'M ALL RIGHT, BREEZE. I MUST HAVE DOZED OFF ON MY FEET FOR A MOMENT. I'M SORRY.

IT'S OKAY, SKY, WE'RE ALL A LITTLE TENSE.



BUT IT SEEMED SO REAL...

DADDY...



IF THAT'S THE WORLD YOU CAME FROM...

YOU HAVE TO COME BACK TO ME!



DO YOU HEAR OUR DAUGHTER, JASMINE? SHE DOES NOT WANT THIS FUTURE ANY MORE THAN I DO.

I JUST WANT YOU, DADDY!





I'M ALL RIGHT! I JUST HAVE TO THINK! THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING HERE!

ANNIE! WE HAVE TO SHUT DOWN THE COMPUTER!



STUPID MAN! WOULD YOU SEEK CONFLICT NOW?

DO THAT, AND YOU OPEN YOURSELF TO ME!

THINK! HAVE TO CONCENTRATE...



IN THIS WORLD, MY WILL IS SUPREME!

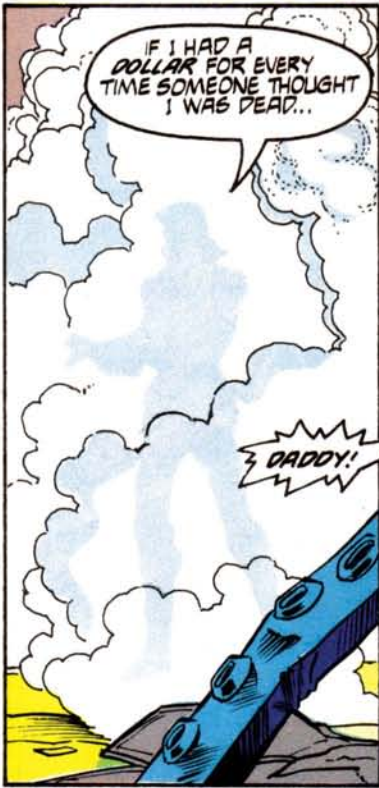
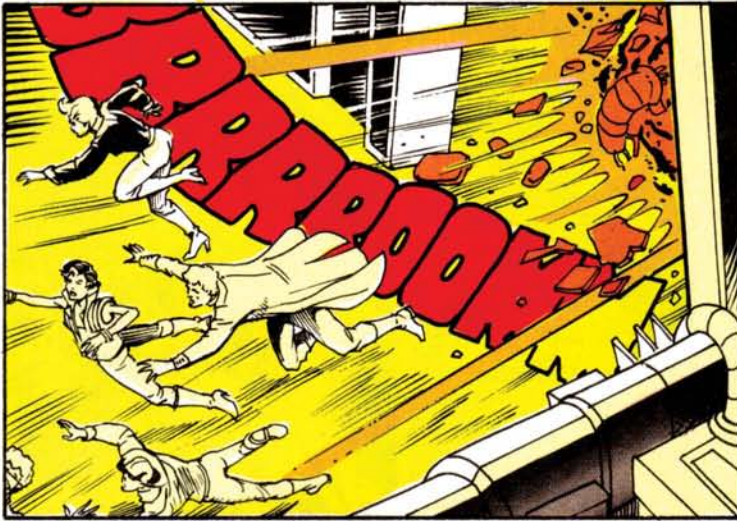
FIGHT ME, AND PASSIVITY WILL NO LONGER PROTECT YOU!

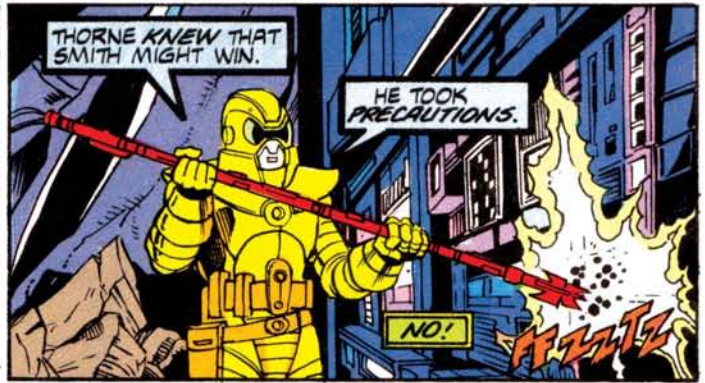
I HAVE TO...











NEXT ISSUE: SHOWDOWN

ETERNITY's BATTLE GEAR!



Many of you have asked about the equipment that I use.

Skylark's persuaded me to tell you a little bit about it.

ITEM A: The answer to the question, "Can I fly?" is an unqualified "No!" Actually, my battle gear allows me to ride the lines of Earth's magnetic field—something rather like magnetic hydroplaning. Hidden discs in my boots and gloves act as stabilizers, allowing me to follow the lines of force I choose.

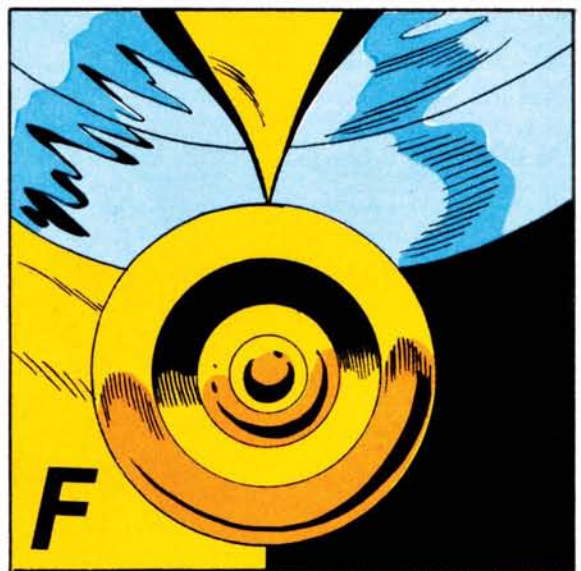
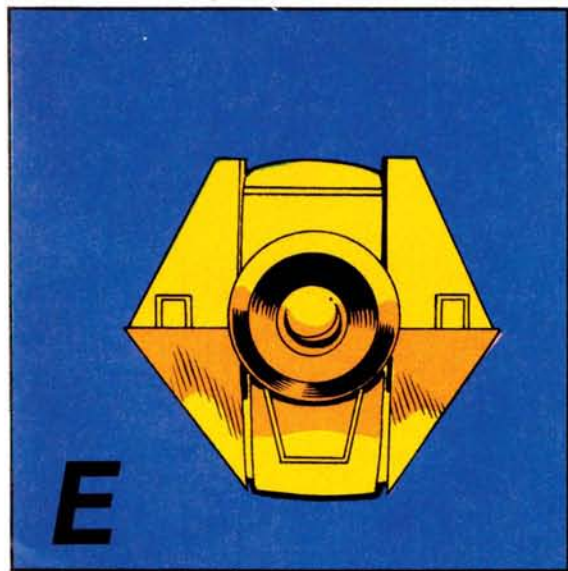
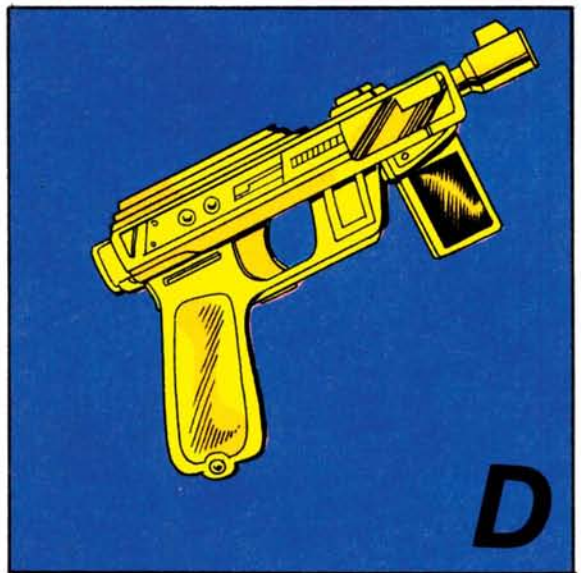
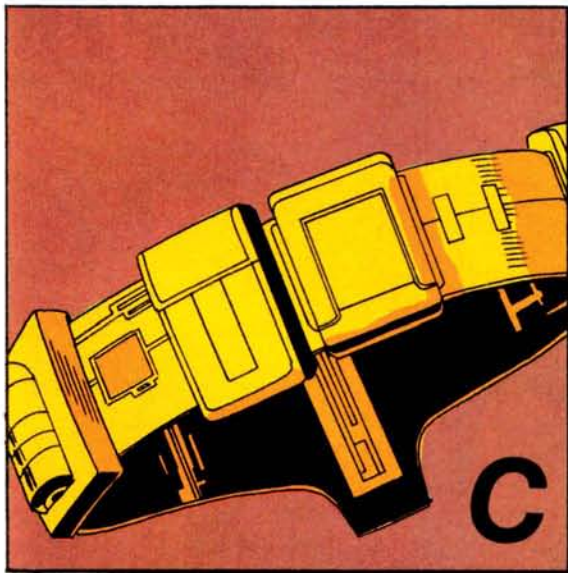
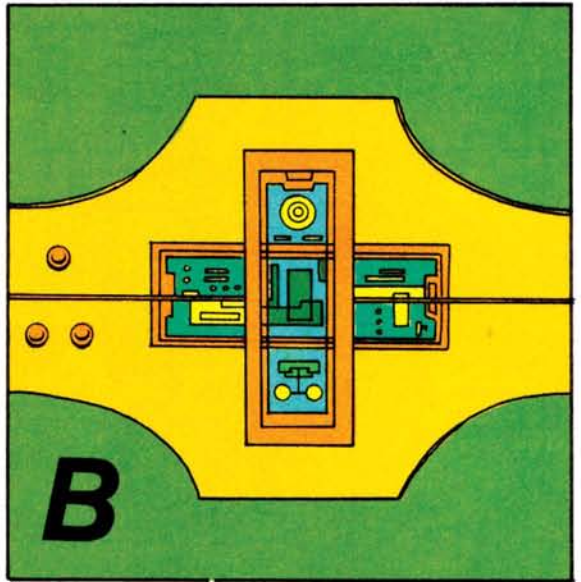
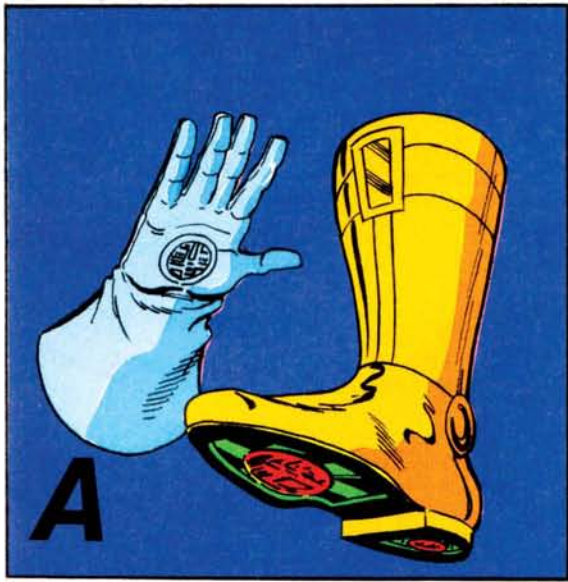
ITEM B: Many of the controls for the "phasing" technology built into my battle suit are located on the buckle of my belt. Through careful manipulation of these controls, I can achieve several different effects, including temporary invisibility, dematerialization, and even brief periods of "double-time."

ITEM C: Several different clip-on attachments can be carried on my belt. The specific weaponry available to me will vary, of course, depending on what I've chosen to carry. You've seen a cartridge containing a delayed-fuse explosive, for example. I can also carry ammunition for

ITEM D: My hand weapon is designed with only six built-in full-burst charges, but lesser applied "phasing" effects can be achieved without draining off those charges by inserting specially designed cartridges. Since I have no way to recharge the six full-power bursts here in this time period, I have to use them judiciously.

ITEM E: The magnetic inductor unit on the back of my suit taps into and harnesses the power of the Earth's magnetic field. Whenever the inductor cuts across a magnetic field line, a small amount of energy is generated. That energy accumulates, and is stored until needed.

ITEM F: Finally, hidden within my amulet is a complex web of directional circuitry which modulates and directs the energy flowing to every part of my battle suit. This unit is critical to controlling the invisible "anti-kinetic" energy field which protects me from point-impacts in battle.



AT LAST!

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN!
JASON THORNE vs ETERNITY SMITH!



And One Will Die in Search of . . .

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ETERNITY

SMITH™



Rick Hoberg 1987

**The New Age of
Heroes Begins!**

REVENGE!

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ETERNITY SMITH™

JASON THORNE!

DURING THE LAST SEVENTY-TWO HOURS, EVENTS HAVE OCCURRED WHICH CAUSE SOME OF US ON THIS COUNCIL TO QUESTION THE USEFULNESS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE WITH YOU.

WHY, YOU PRESUMPTUOUS PRIMITIVE!

I, FOR ONE, WOULD PREFER TO HEAR FROM YOU BEFORE PASSING ANY JUDGMENT! OTHERS ARE NOT SO INCLINED.

IF THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A JOKE, I AM NOT AMUSED! IT IS I WHO SHOULD BE QUESTIONING YOUR USEFULNESS TO ME!

DENNIS MALLONEE - WORDS
CO-CREATORS
RICK HOBERG - PICTURES
TIM BURGARD & JIM JANES - INKS
CARRIE SPIEGLE - LETTERS
MIKE WORLEY - COLORS

FINAL SHOWDOWN



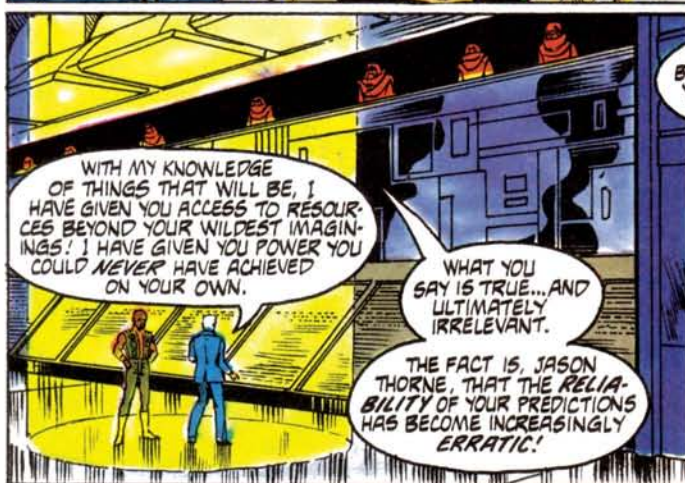
WE ARE NOT AMUSED, FRANKLY, BY YOUR INABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT THIS ETERNITY SMITH MAY ULTIMATELY POSE TO US!

LATELY, WE HAVE NOT SEEN ANY APPRECIABLE RETURN ON THE INVESTMENTS OF TIME AND RESOURCES WE HAVE PLACED WITH YOU. THE BILL IS COMING DUE.



HA!

IN THE PAST TEN YEARS, I HAVE RECOVERED YOUR INITIAL INVESTMENT FOR YOU TEN TIMES OVER!



WITH MY KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS THAT WILL BE, I HAVE GIVEN YOU ACCESS TO RESOURCES BEYOND YOUR WILDEST IMAGININGS! I HAVE GIVEN YOU POWER YOU COULD NEVER HAVE ACHIEVED ON YOUR OWN.

WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE... AND ULTIMATELY IRRELEVANT.

THE FACT IS, JASON THORNE, THAT THE RELIABILITY OF YOUR PREDICTIONS HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY ERRATIC!



THE QUESTION BECOMES: WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR US LATELY?

AND WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM YOU TOMORROW?



THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE! THE PAST IS IMMUTABLE! I KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN! IT MUST COME TO PASS!

NEVERTHELESS YOU HAVE ALWAYS ADMITTED THAT THERE ARE GAPS IN YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF EVENTS! OF LATE, THOSE GAPS SEEM TO BE GROWING!



I LOST A SMALL FORTUNE BETTING ON THE LOSER IN LAST YEAR'S WORLD SERIES! A PETTY MATTER TO BE CERTAIN, BUT ONE INDICATIVE OF YOUR RECENT FAILURES!



WOULD IT INTEREST YOU TO KNOW, JASON, THAT EVEN YOUR PRECIOUS PROJECT INTERFACE HAS FAILED?

WHAT? HOW CAN THAT BE? THE HISTORIES DID NOT SAY WHO WAS THE FIRST, BUT...



LISTEN TO ME! THE HISTORIES WERE CLEAR!

THE FIFTH-GENERATION COMPUTER EXISTS!



I AM NOT INTERESTED IN FAILED PROMISES! IT DOES NOT EXIST!

WHEN AGENTS WERE SENT TO FETCH IT FROM OUT OF THE RUBBLE, IT WAS NOT THERE!



TELL ME, JASON THORNE, IS THERE ANYONE WHO MIGHT HAVE TAKEN IT?

ANYONE WHO MIGHT HAVE KNOWN WHERE TO LOOK?

SMITH.

SMITH MUST HAVE IT!

MASTERS...



IT IS NOT RIGHT THAT JASON THORNE SHOULD BE BLAMED FOR THIS FAILURE.

IT WAS THE INTERVENTION OF THIS ETERNITY SMITH THAT CAUSED MY FRIEND'S KNOWLEDGE TO FAIL!

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, MR. KUNG, DOES THAT NOT *BEG* THE QUESTION BEFORE US?

IF, BECAUSE OF THIS SMITH, THE KNOWLEDGE YOUR FRIEND BEARS IS NO LONGER OF USE TO US, THEN OF WHAT USE IS THE BEARER?

HAD SMITH NOT BEEN THERE, THORNE'S PLAN WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED! I AM CERTAIN OF IT!







BUT IT WOULD SURE MAKE ME FEEL BETTER!

HEY!

KRAK

AND IF THIS MURDERING SWINE DOESN'T GIVE ME THE INFORMATION I WANT, ONE OF THE OTHER PEOPLE BEING HELD HERE WILL!

THERE'S NO REASON TO LET HIM LIVE!

THAT'S ENOUGH MISTER...

NO!

PLEASE...

DON'T YOU DARE PULL A GUN ON MY FATHER!

WHAP

STAY CALM, JERRY.

MISS SMITH...

THIS AGENCY HAS PUT UP WITH QUITE A BIT OF UNORTHODOX PROCEDURE THESE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS.

OUR PATIENCE IS WEARING THIN.



JERRY...

HOW DID YOU EVER GET TO BE SUCH A STUFFED SHIRT?

YOUR COSTUMED FRIEND MAY WELL BE YOUR FATHER! YOU CAN BE SURE I'LL CHECK THAT OUT!

YOU MAY TELL HIM FOR FUTURE REFERENCE THAT THINGS SIMPLY ARE NOT DONE THAT WAY!



THEIR BASE IS IN OKLAHOMA. I KNEW THAT! WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW WERE THE COORDINATES!

I HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED WITH YOURSELF.

I'M SATISFIED WITH THE INFORMATION!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION, AGENT CRANE. WE'RE DEALING WITH TERRORISTS, NOT COMMON CRIMINALS.



IF YOU CHECK WITH THE NRC, YOU'LL FIND THAT MORE THAN FIFTY POUNDS OF PLUTONIUM HAS GONE UNACCOUNTED FOR OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS!

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?

NO ONE IS SUPPOSED TO KNOW THAT.

SKYLARK AND I WILL HANDLE THE PROBLEM OURSELVES IF WE HAVE TO, BUT WE'D APPRECIATE IT IF A DIVERSION COULD BE ARRANGED.



THE FORCE FIVE ELITE HAS THE BOMB?

MORE THAN ONE, I'M AFRAID.



WHAT'S WRONG?

FIRST YOU TELL ME THERE'LL BE A FORCE OF AT LEAST FIVE HUNDRED PEOPLE TO FIGHT? NOW YOU TELL ME THEY HAVE THE BOMB?

BABY GIRL...



DADDY!!

WITH YOU AT MY SIDE, NOT FIVE HUNDRED THOU-SAND MEN, NOR ALL THE FIRES OF HELL COULD KEEP JASON THORNE SAFE FROM OUR VENGEANCE!



WHATEVER ELSE HAPPENS, WE'LL MAKE THORNE PAY FOR THE LIVES HE AND HIS PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN.

AND WE ARE NOT GOING TO FIGHT OUR WAY IN TO DO IT!

NOT FIGHT...

OF COURSE!

DID YOU FIND OUT ANYTHING?

HOW'D IT GO?

WE FOUND OUT ENOUGH, BREEZE.



WITHIN THE WEEK, WE WILL HAVE JASON THORNE! WE WILL HAVE HIM NO MATTER HOW MANY PEOPLE SKYLARK AND I HAVE TO AVOID TO GET HIM!

OKLAHOMA, FIVE DAYS LATER.

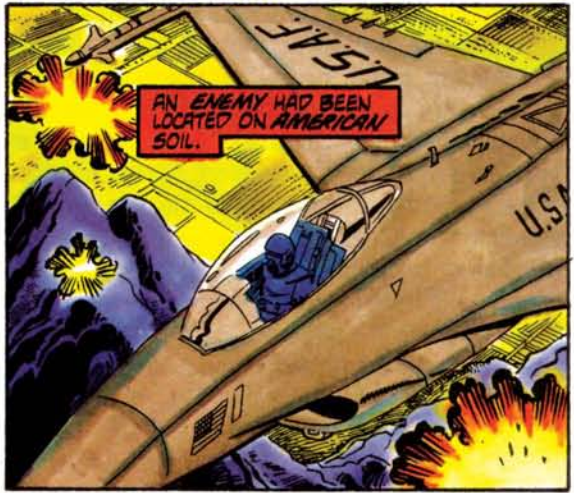
OFFICIALLY, THIS WAS NOTHING MORE THAN AN IMPROPTU TRAINING EXERCISE.



IN FACT, THOUGH NOT EVEN MOST OF THE SOLDIERS WERE TOLD THE TRUTH, THESE WARGAMES WERE DEADLY SERIOUS!



AN ENEMY HAD BEEN LOCATED ON AMERICAN SOIL.



AND A COORDINATED SHOW OF FORCE WAS DEEMED NECESSARY TO IMPRESS KNOWLEDGEABLE OBSERVERS WITH ONE SIMPLE TRUTH:



WHATEVER THE SOURCE, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, TERRORISM WILL BE FOUGHT WITH ALL THE RESOURCES AT THIS NATION'S COMMAND!



END CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER 2

YOU SURE YOU'RE UP TO THIS, SKY?

WE MAY HAVE TO KILL SOME PEOPLE BEFORE THIS IS OVER.

I'VE KILLED BEFORE.

NO GHOSTS HAVE COME BACK TO HAUNT ME YET.

YOU'RE COLDER THAN I AM, THEN.



NOT COLDER, ETHAN SMITH? I... OH.

SSH.

WE'RE TOO SOON. THEY'RE ONLY JUST NOW MOBILIZING!

WONDERFUL! SO NOW WE SIT AND WAIT TILL THEY GO?



NO.



HOLD TIGHT.

EYES FORWARD, AGENT NELSON! THERE IS NO TURNING BACK!

IF IT IS OUR DESTINY TO DIE, THEN WE WILL DIE WITH HONOR!



ETHAN...

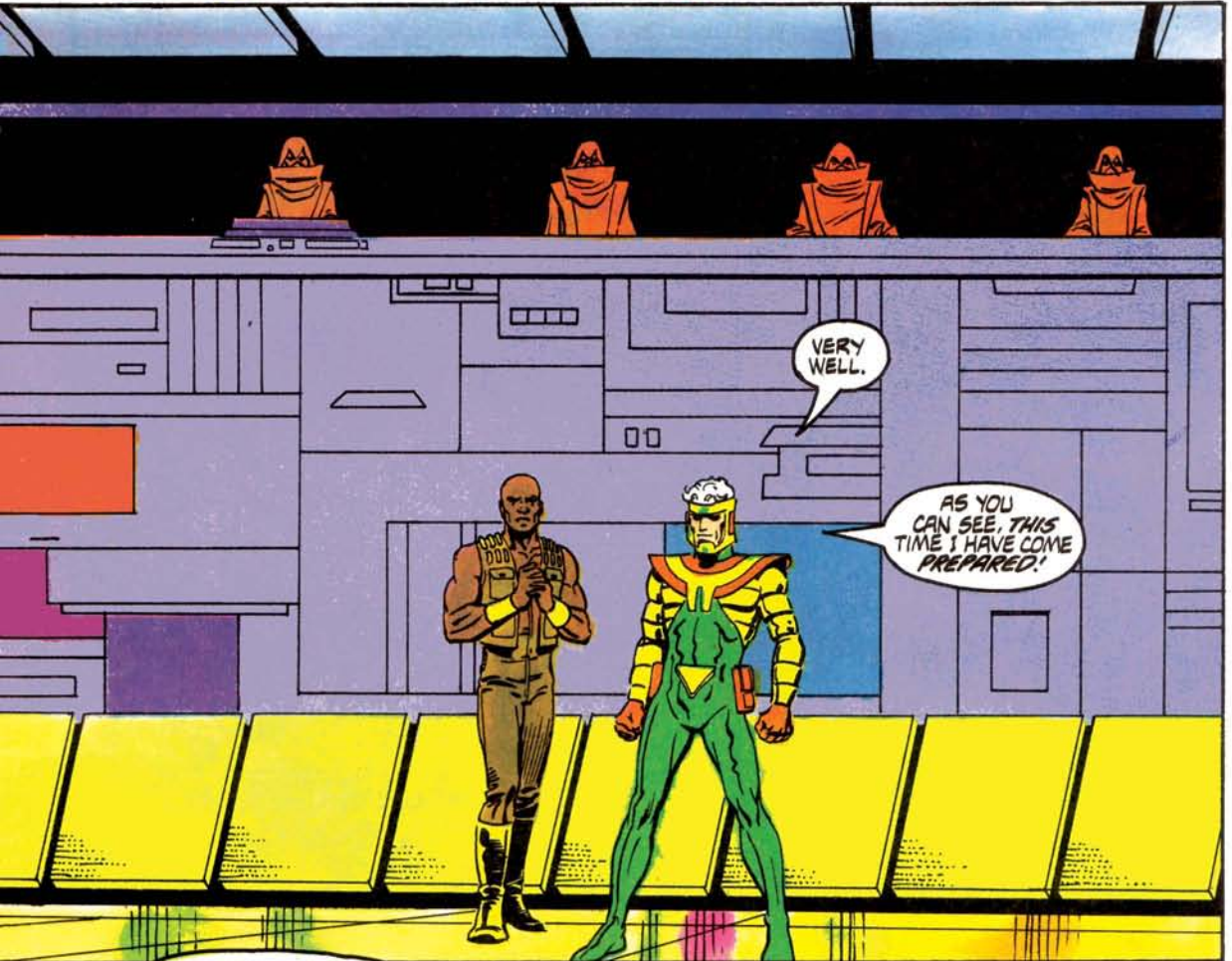
WE'RE GETTING CLOSER, SKY. I CAN FEEL IT!





WHO...?

SHOW YOURSELF, THORNE!
DON'T PLAY THE COWARD'S GAME!



VERY WELL.

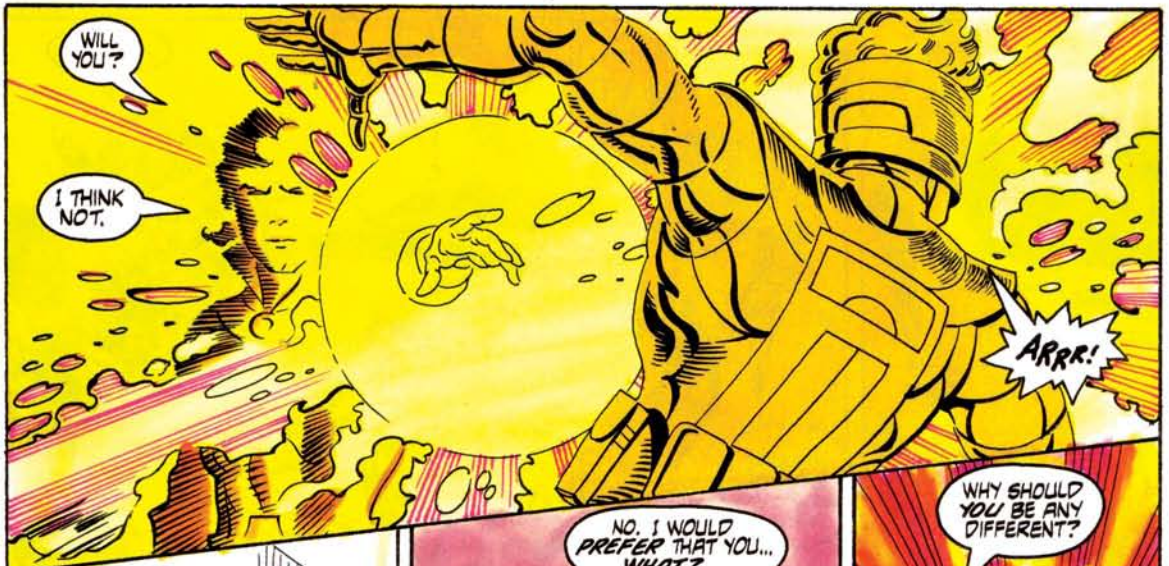
AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS TIME I HAVE COME PREPARED!



PERHAPS THAT'S AS IT SHOULD BE DOCTOR SMITH!
AS SCIENTISTS, WE BOTH KNOW THAT EVERY ANSWER LEADS TO A DOZEN MORE QUESTIONS, EH?

AND YOU DIDN'T REALLY COME HERE TO TALK, DID YOU?





WILL YOU?

I THINK NOT.

ARRR!



IF YOU FORCE ME TO FIGHT YOU, YOUR SEX WILL NOT SAVE YOU.

I WILL HURT YOU IF I HAVE TO!

YOU'D LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T YOU?



NO, I WOULD PREFER THAT YOU... WHAT?

WHOOSH

LIAR! EVERY MAN I'VE EVER KNOWN ENDED UP HURTING ME!



WHY SHOULD YOU BE ANY DIFFERENT?

CRUNCH



LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, THORNE.

WHAM



WHOEVER YOUR FRIENDS ARE UP THERE, THEY'RE NOT OFFERING ANY HELP!

WHOMEVER...?

KRAK











"IN *SIXTEEN* MINUTES, THERE WILL BE A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION!"



"YOU MUST *SUGGEST* THAT YOUR ARMY PULL BACK, SO THAT NO ADDITIONAL LIVES WILL BE LOST!"



TEEN MINUTES, SMITH.

IT'S OVER, THORNE. THERE'S NO POINT TO THIS.

WHY DO YOU PERSIST?



YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, WILL YOU?

YOU'LL DIE BEFORE ANY OF IT EVER HAPPENS!

NO.



THERE ARE NO PARADOXES, THORNE.

I INTEND TO SURVIVE!



NINE MINUTES.

I INTEND TO SEE THAT YOU DO NOT!

YOU WILL DO ME THE FAVOR OF DIVESTING YOURSELF OF YOUR GEAR.

VERY WELL.



FIVE MINUTES.

YOU'RE STALLING, SMITH! I KNOW YOU CAN MOVE MORE QUICKLY THAN THAT!

YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS, AREN'T YOU?



CALM DOWN! WE SHOULD BE SAFE HERE!

DADDY HIT ME!

FOUR MINUTES.

AT LEAST DO ME THE COURTESY OF TELLING ME WHY YOU HATE ME! WHAT DID I DO TO YOU?



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! I DON'T WANT TO BE SAFE! HE'S GOING TO KILL DADDY!

GOING TO...?



THREE MINUTES, SMITH.



BUT KING SAID...

BLAST WHAT KING SAID!

I WANT MY DADDY!



TWO MINUTES.



YOU CAN'T GO OUT THERE, SKY!

THE SHOCK WAVE WOULD KILL YOU!

ONE MINUTE.

BUT MY DADDY!



THAT'S LONG ENOUGH, I THINK!

WHAT? YOU SAID TWENTY! IT'S ONLY BEEN NINETEEN!

I KNOW YOU, SMITH! IF I GAVE YOU THE FULL TWENTY MINUTES, YOU WOULD THINK OF SOMETHING!

YOU WOULD SURVIVE!



I DON'T WANT THAT.

LEAPING FOR YOUR GEAR WON'T SAVE YOU, SMITH! TOO LATE FOR THAT!



LONG BEFORE YOU CAN DON IT, MY HAND WILL...EH?

WHAT IS THIS?



FORTY-FIVE SECONDS, THORNE!



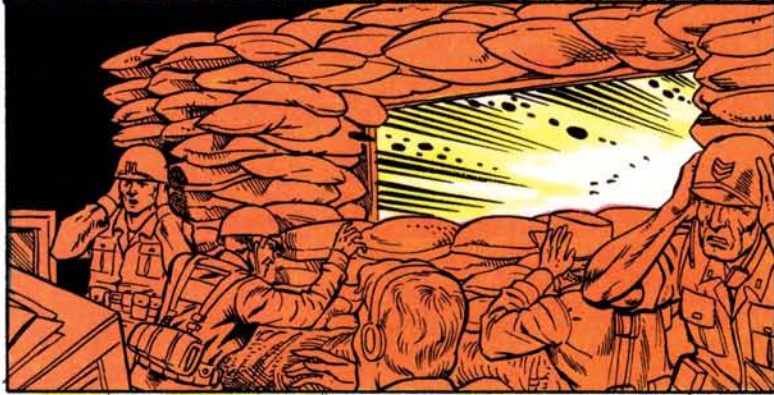
THAT'S ALL THE TIME I'LL NEED!

OH, BOOMER!



"HE'S GONE..."

BOOOOM!





I'M SURE HE WON'T GET FAR. SKY. THEY'LL CATCH HIM.

I KNOW. I JUST FEEL SO EMPTY INSIDE. I...

WHY SO GLUM? THINGS CAN'T BE THAT BAD, CAN THEY?

HEY!

DADDY!





"I STRAINED THE LIMITS OF MY SUIT, BUT IT TURNED OUT I ONLY NEEDED THIRTY OF THOSE EXTRA FORTY-FIVE SECONDS!"

"IT'S NOT SOMETHING I'D EVER WANT TO RISK AGAIN."



BUT IT WAS JASON THORNE WHO DIED, NOT I.

I GATHER THAT THE FORCE FIVE "ELITE" HAS BEEN DISPOSED OF AS WELL?

THE ARMY WRAPPED UP THAT FIGHT BEFORE WE WENT IN AFTER YOU!



GOOD.

BECAUSE THIS MAY SOUND TRITE, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ANY ENEMY, FROM WITHIN OR WITHOUT, WHO WOULD THINK TO CHALLENGE THIS NATION SHOULD LEARN.



REGARDLESS OF WHAT MISTAKES MAY BE MADE BY THE PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE IN CHARGE, THE LOVE OF LIBERTY THAT GAVE BIRTH TO OUR COUNTRY WILL NEVER DIE.

NOT TODAY, NOT ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM TODAY!



WHATEVER
THE CHALLENGE,
AMERICA WILL
ENDURE!

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