

ATHENAIX™ #1

RYAN CADY • PHILLIP SEVY • JEREMY COLWELL



www.topcow.com

P.C.V.
Colwell



A close-up portrait of a man with light blue eyes and dark hair, wearing a dark hoodie. The text is overlaid on his face.

OUR
DEMOCRACY
HAS BEEN
HACKED

MR. ROBOT 6/24 

WhosMrRobot.com

ATHENA IX™

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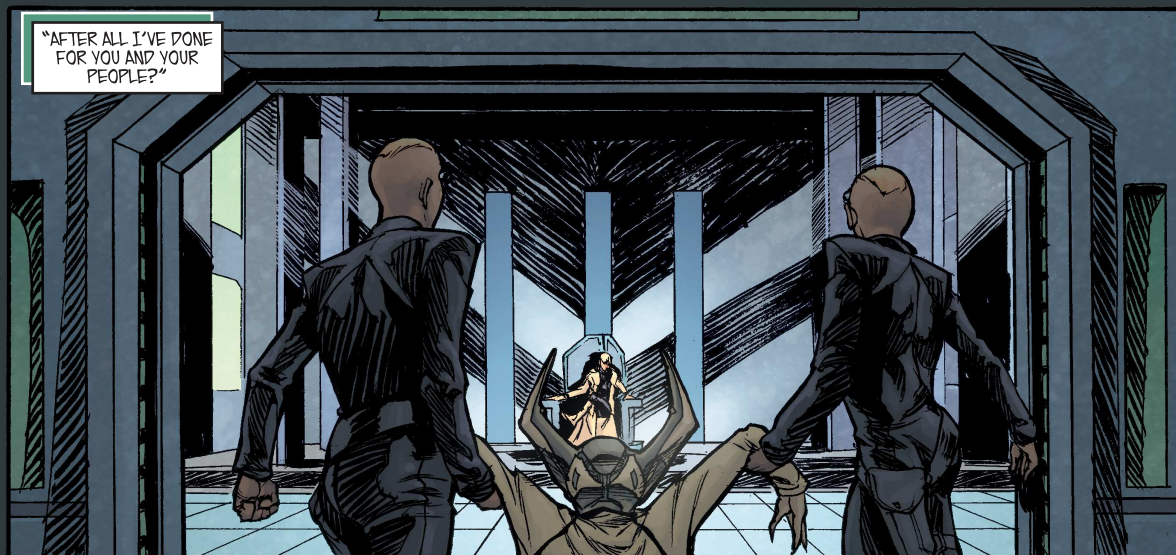
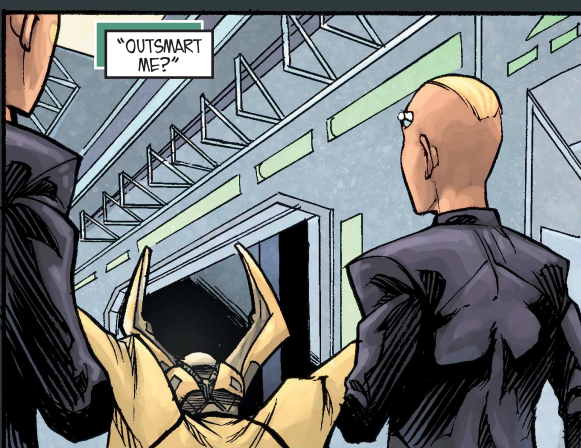
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The Aphrodite Protocol was initiated in the late 20th Century in an attempt to save humanity from a predicted extinction level event that became reality in the year 2102 AD.

The Protocol successfully engineered and evolved humans into new species that survived in this new world via technological singularity and genetic enhancement.

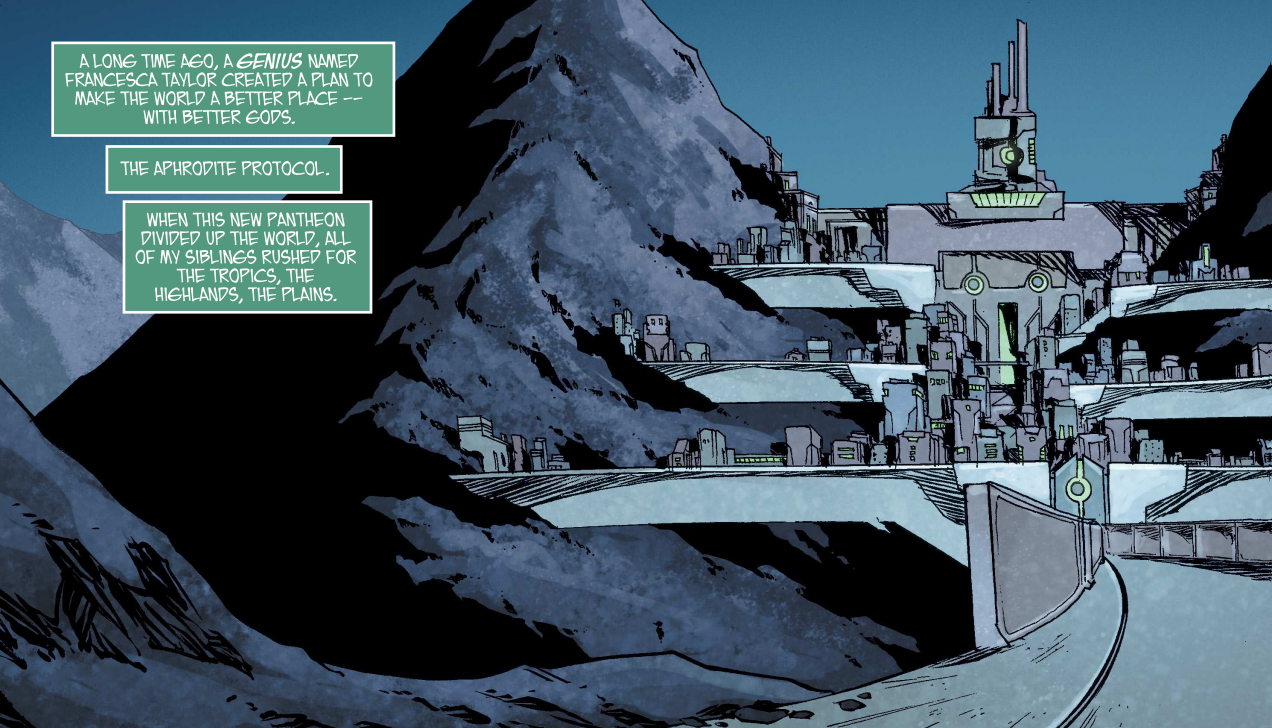
The architect of the Protocol created nine heirs to rule over this new world. They were placed in hibernation for seven hundred years to be activated in what became known as the ASCENSION; the year 2802, when the self-proclaimed Gods of the IXth Generation took control.



A LONG TIME AGO, A *GENIUS* NAMED FRANCESCA TAYLOR CREATED A PLAN TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE -- WITH BETTER GODS.

THE APHRODITE PROTOCOL.

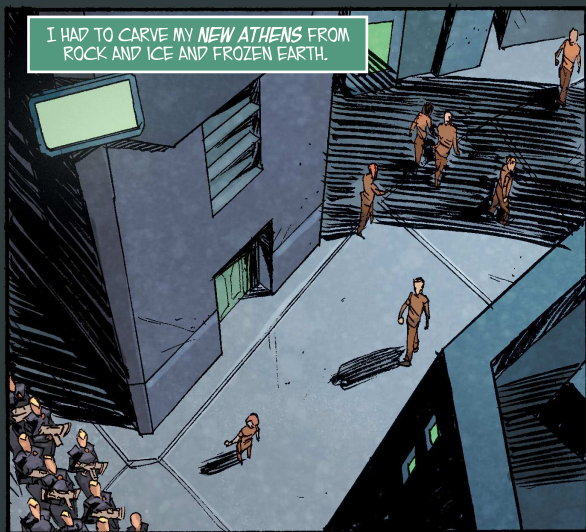
WHEN THIS NEW PANTHEON DIVIDED UP THE WORLD, ALL OF MY SIBLINGS RUSHED FOR THE TROPICS, THE HIGHLANDS, THE PLAINS.



ONLY APHRODITE AND I CHOSE LESS HOSPITABLE REGIONS.



I HAD TO CARVE MY NEW ATHENS FROM ROCK AND ICE AND FROZEN EARTH.



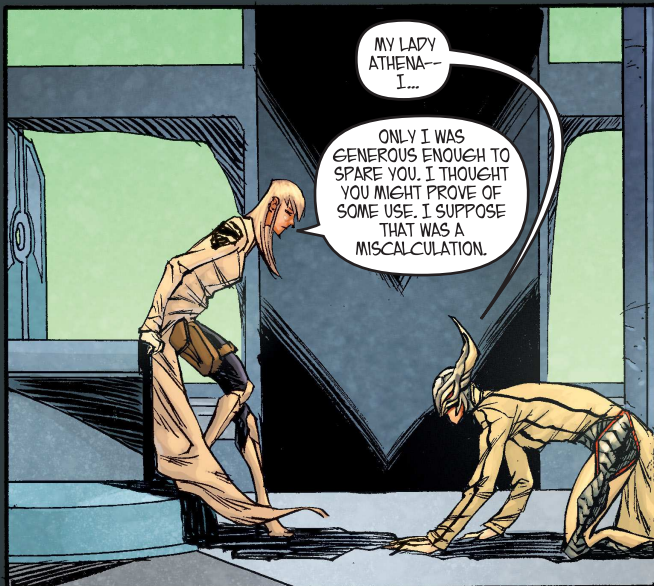
WHEN WE FIRST LIBERATED SPEROS CITY AND ANNIHILATED THE GEN, MY SIBLINGS WANTED TO HAVE YOU COUNCILMEMBERS EXECUTED ON THE SPOT. PUBLICLY.

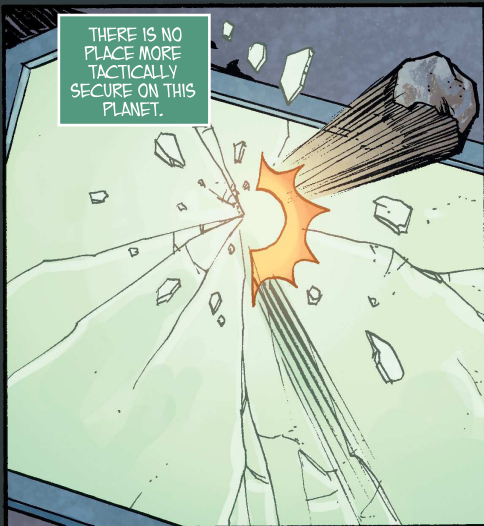


EDITOR'S NOTE:
SEE APHRODITE IX: REBIRTH VOL. 2!

MY LADY ATHENA--
I...

ONLY I WAS GENEROUS ENOUGH TO SPARE YOU. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT PROVE OF SOME USE. I SUPPOSE THAT WAS A MISCALCULATION.





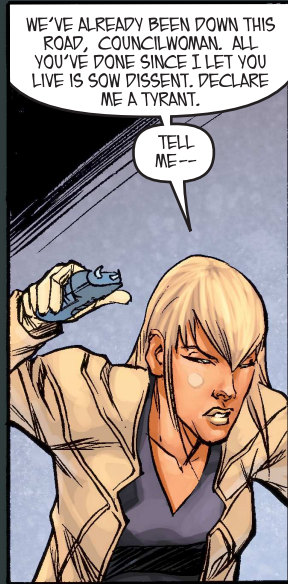
THERE IS NO
PLACE MORE
TACTICALLY
SECURE ON THIS
PLANET.



THERE IS NO
PLACE MORE
SAFE.



WAIT! I KNOW
THINGS! I KNOW
ABOUT THE GEN!
I KNOW WHERE WE
HID EXECUTOR
CHRONOS!



WE'VE ALREADY BEEN DOWN THIS
ROAD, COUNCILWOMAN. ALL
YOU'VE DONE SINCE I LET YOU
LIVE IS SOW DISSENT. DECLARE
ME A TYRANT.

TELL
ME--



DOES
MY RULE
SEEM SO
HARSH?



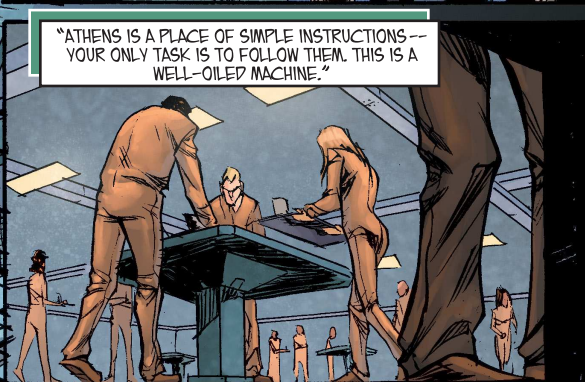
"YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR IF YOU OBEY."



"MINE IS A RULE OF LAW -- SUPERIOR TO YOUR OLD SPEROS IN EVERY WAY."



"FROM BIRTH YOU ARE TESTED. GIVEN A ROLE AND A PURPOSE."



"ATHENS IS A PLACE OF SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS -- YOUR ONLY TASK IS TO FOLLOW THEM. THIS IS A WELL-OILED MACHINE."



"THIS IS JUST."

"I EVEN HAD MY XVS OUTFITTED WITH EMOTIONAL DAMPENERS, SO THEY WOULD TREAT YOU ALL FAIRLY, UNBIASED."



TELL ME--HOW COULD YOU IMPROVE UPON MY DESIGN? I HAVE STUDIED EVERY CIVILIZATION IN RECORDED HISTORY. I DO NOT **BRAG** WHEN I CLAIM THAT MINE IS THE MOST EFFICIENT.

WHAT ABOUT FREEDOM?



FREEDOM?

PEFFT



DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, TRYING TO RULE YOU PEOPLE AND FEND OFF MY SIBLINGS ALL AT ONCE?



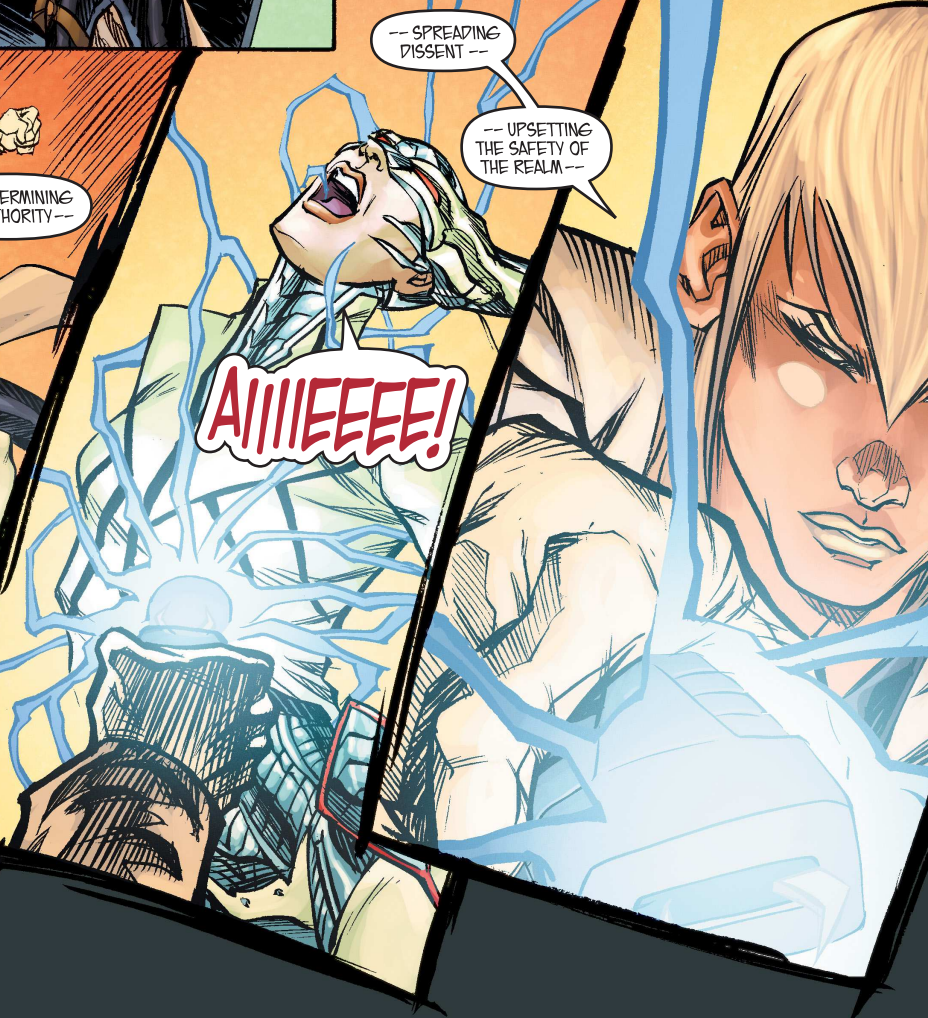
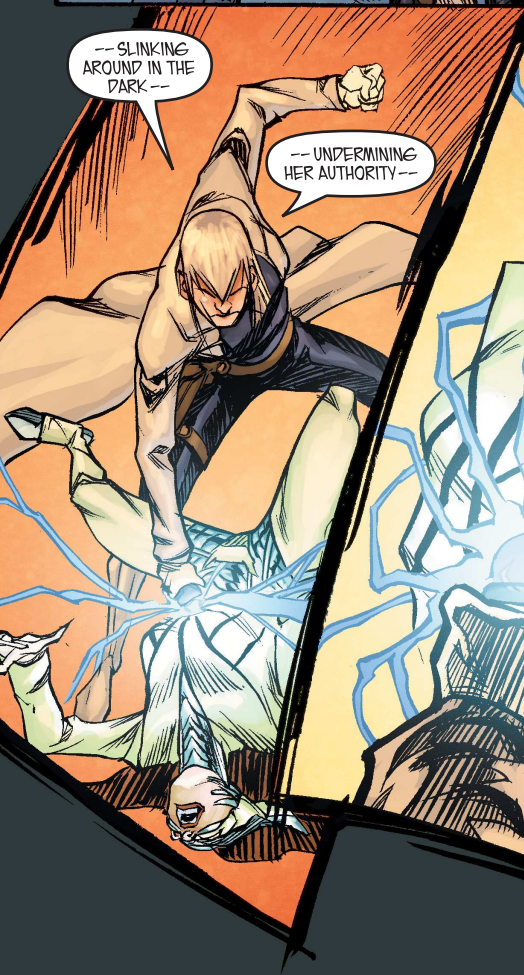
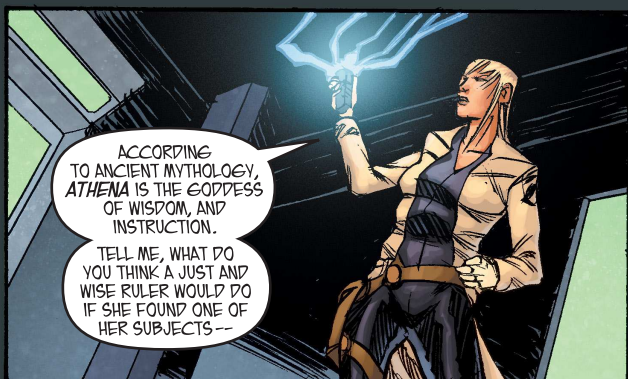
IT'S LIKE PLAYING CHESS, BUT INSTEAD OF **GAMEPIECES** I'M FORCED TO USE **COCKROACHES**.



WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?



THAT'S A MUCH BETTER ATTITUDE. **BEG FOR A LESSON.**

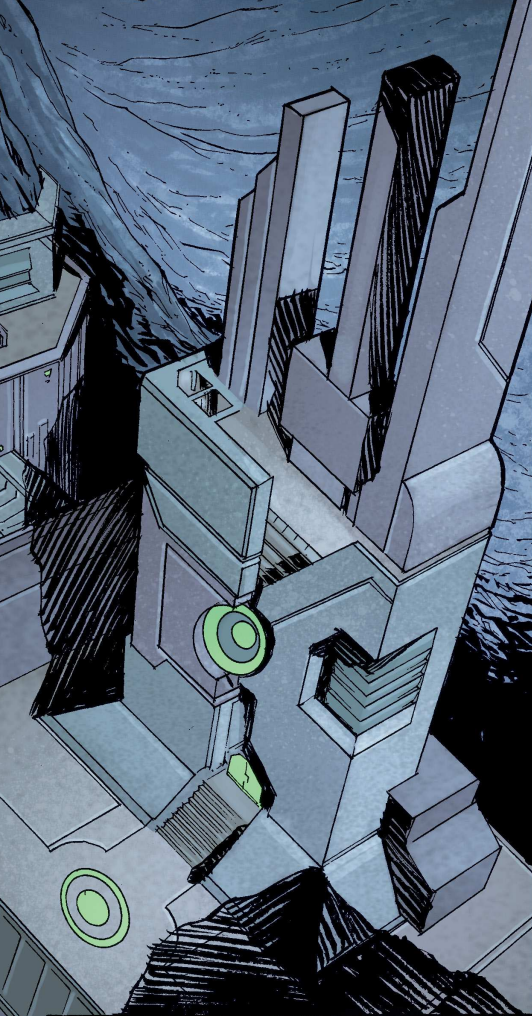


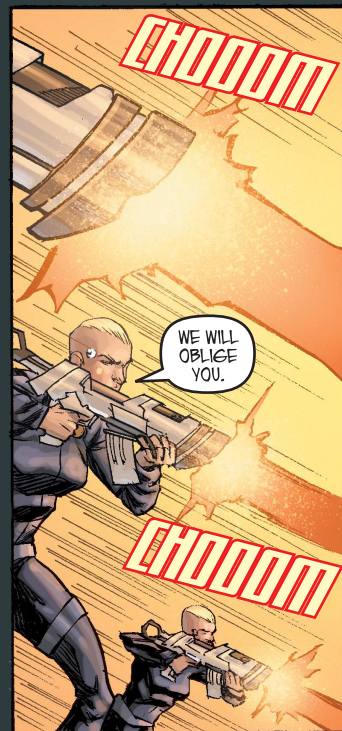
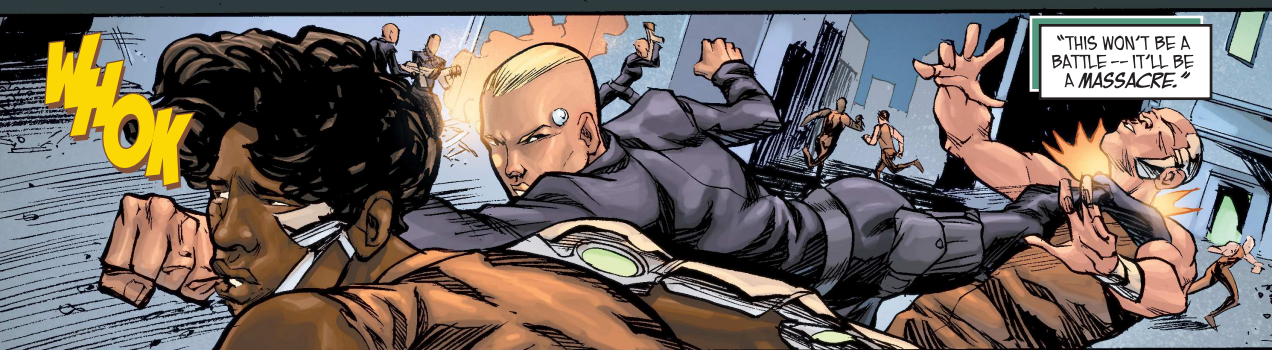
BREEETBREEETBREEEEETBREEET



"SHE'S STARTED
AN UPRISING."







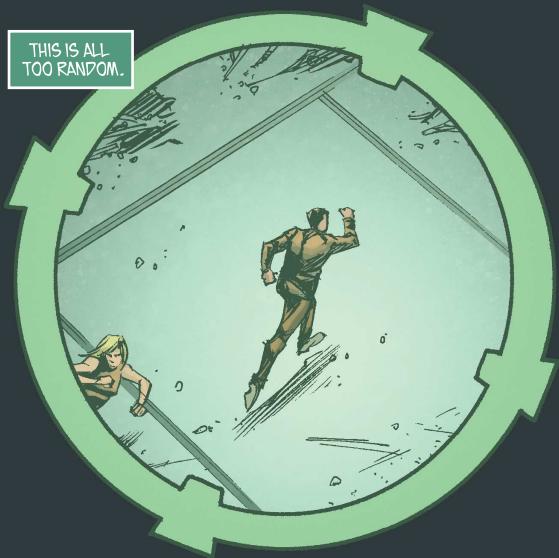
LAO TZU ONCE WROTE THAT
ALL GOOD WEAPONS ARE
INSTRUMENTS OF FEAR.

THAT ALL CREATURES ABHOR
THEM, AND WISE MEN WOULD
NEVER USE THEM.

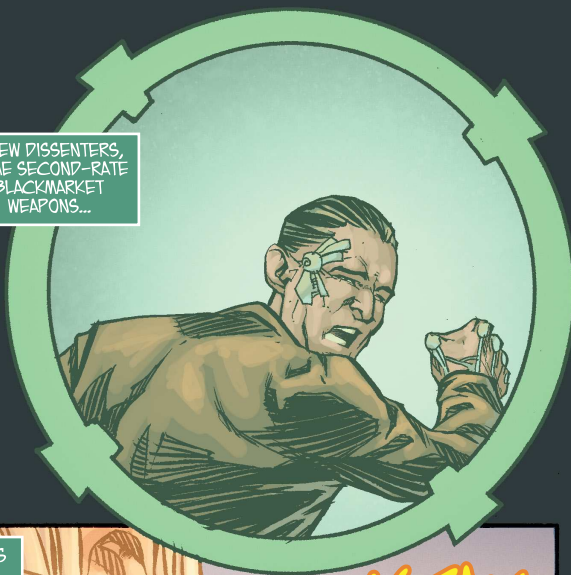
LAO TZU WAS
WEAK.

WAIT A MINUTE.
SOMETHING IS
WRONG HERE.

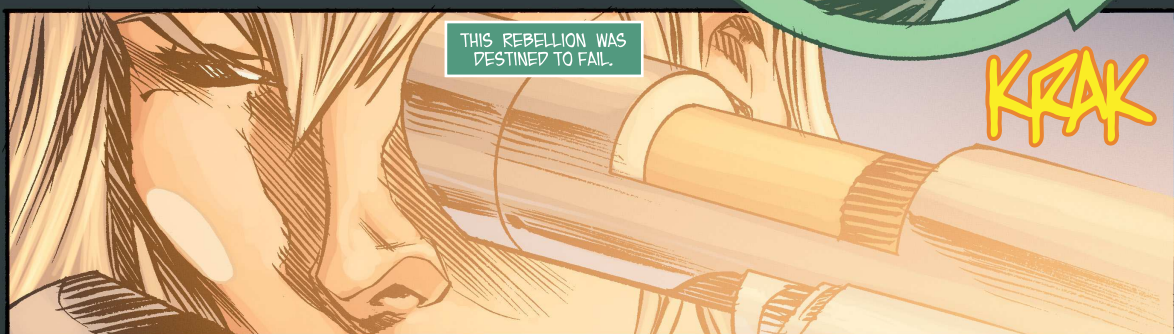
THIS IS ALL
TOO RANDOM.



A FEW DISSENTERS,
SOME SECOND-RATE
BLACKMARKET
WEAPONS...



THIS REBELLION WAS
DESTINED TO FAIL.

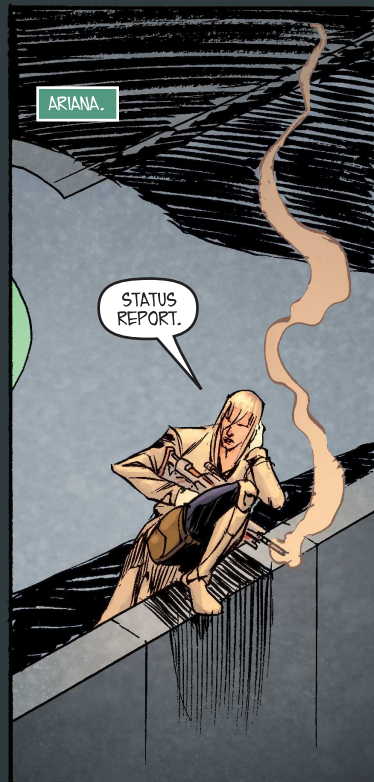


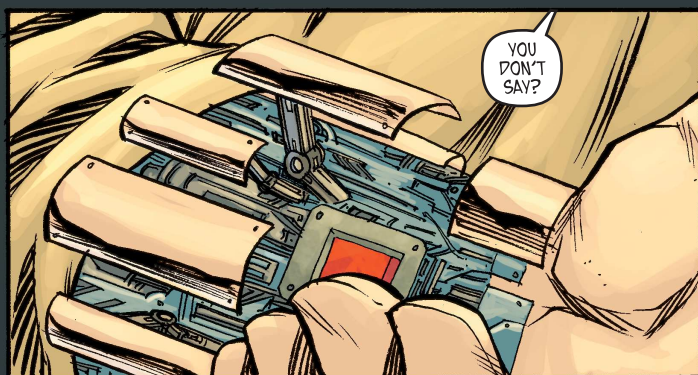
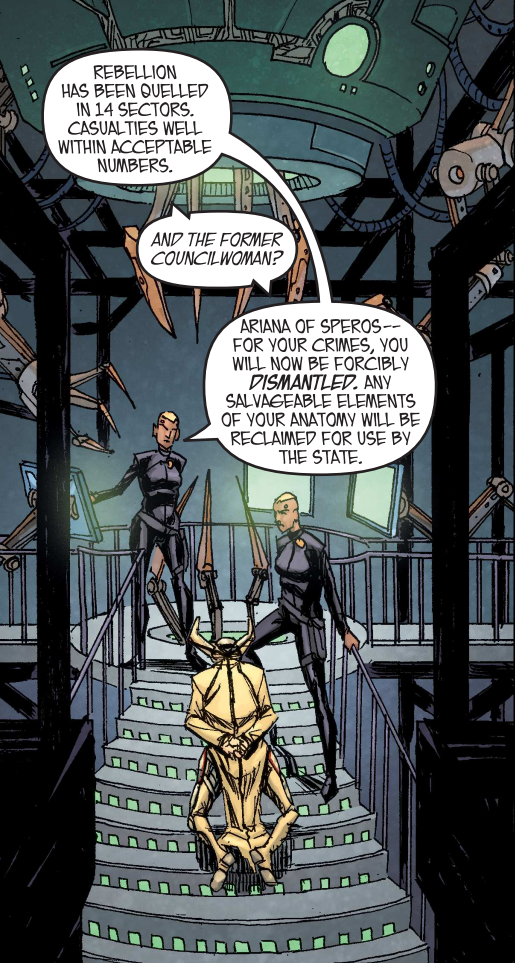
WHICH MEANS THAT
SOMEONE MEANT IT
TO FAIL.

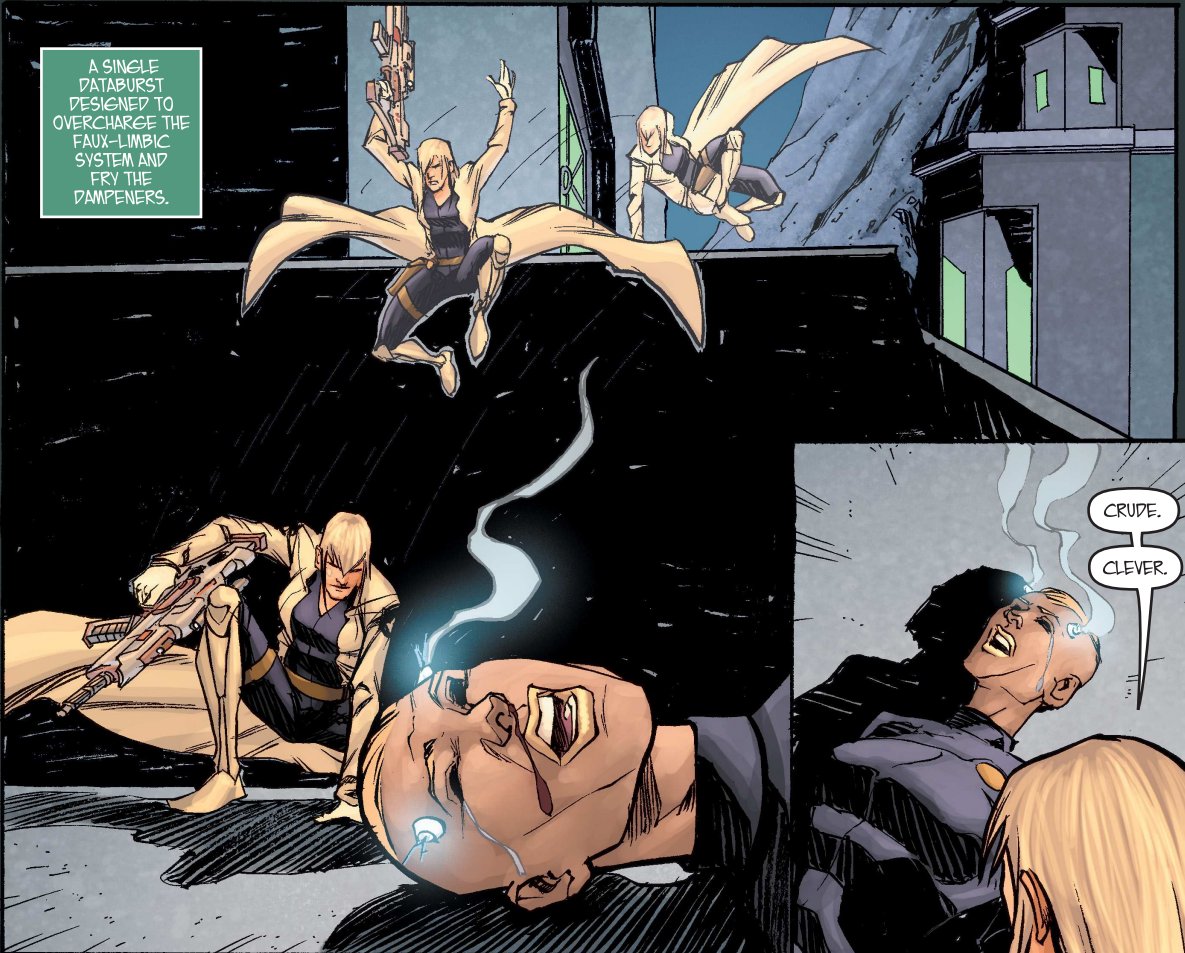
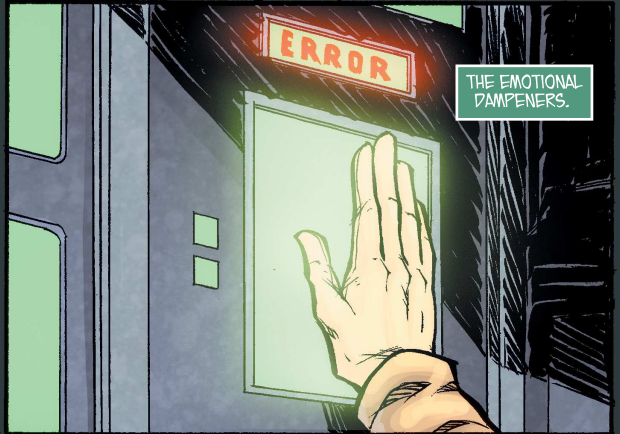
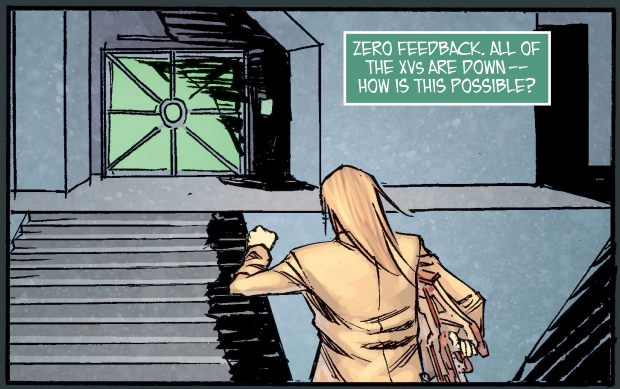


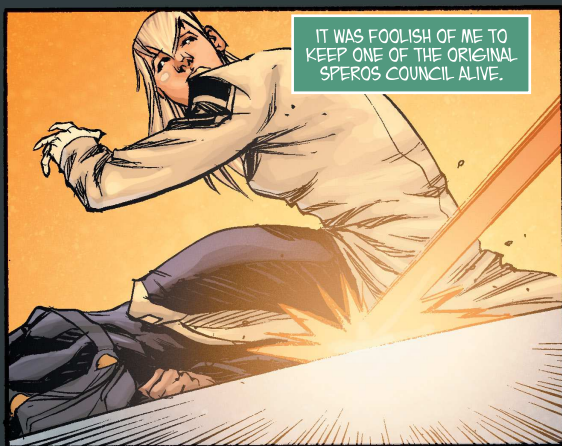
ARIANA.

STATUS
REPORT.

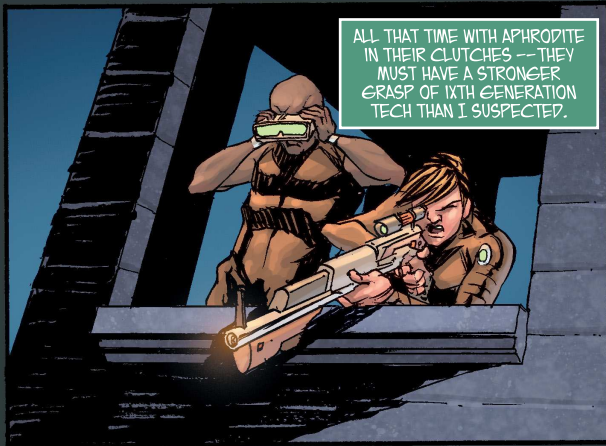




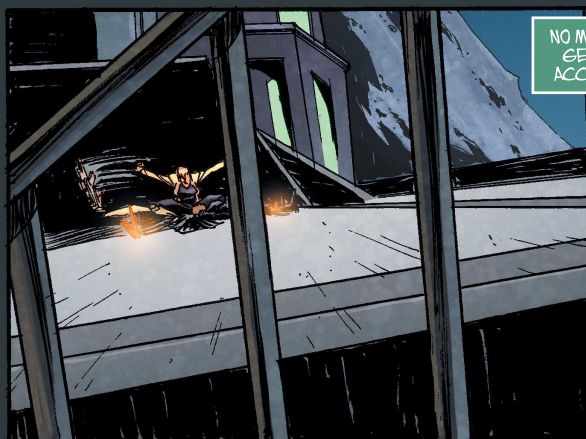




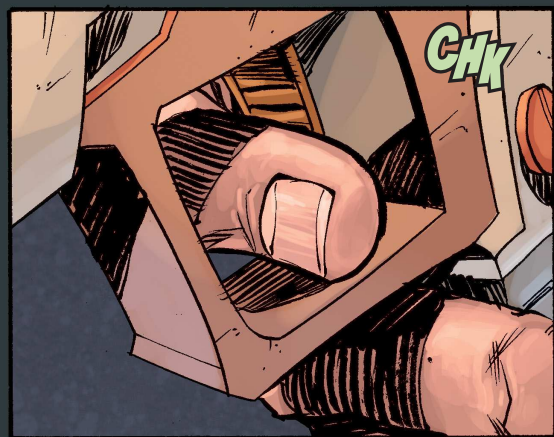
IT WAS FOOLISH OF ME TO
KEEP ONE OF THE ORIGINAL
SPEROS COUNCIL ALIVE.



ALL THAT TIME WITH APHRODITE
IN THEIR CLUTCHES -- THEY
MUST HAVE A STRONGER
GRASP OF 10TH GENERATION
TECH THAN I SUSPECTED.



NO MATTER -- IF I CAN
GET TO A CENTRAL
ACCESS TERMINAL --



CHK



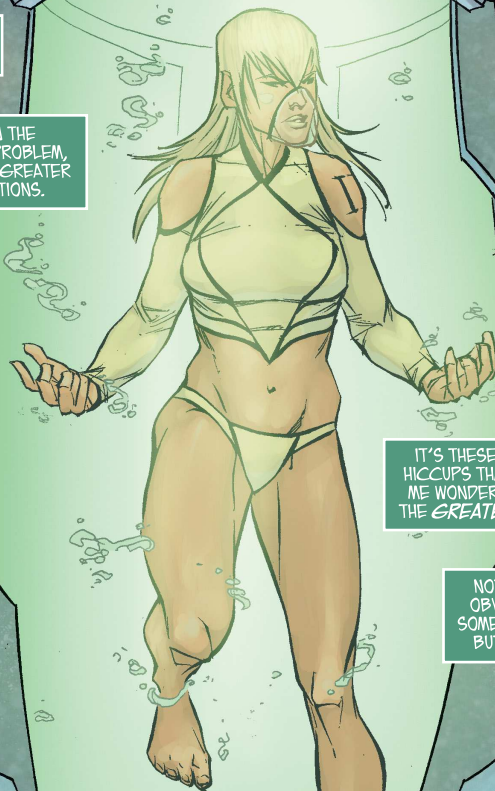
MY CONSCIOUSNESS IS
DOWNLOADED INTO A NEW BODY
BEFORE I EVEN REGISTER THE
FACT THAT I'VE BEEN KILLED.



THE STASIS CHAMBER
BEGINS TO VENT
FLUID AND PREPARES
FOR MY RELEASE.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO
PAUSE AND REFLECT.

NOT ON THE
CURRENT PROBLEM,
BUT ON ITS GREATER
IMPLICATIONS.



IT'S THESE LITTLE
HICCUPS THAT MAKE
ME WONDER ABOUT
THE *GREATER* PLAN.

NOT MY PLAN, MIND YOU--
OBVIOUSLY THAT STILL HAS
SOME KINKS TO WORK OUT --
BUT MY *MOTHER'S* PLAN.

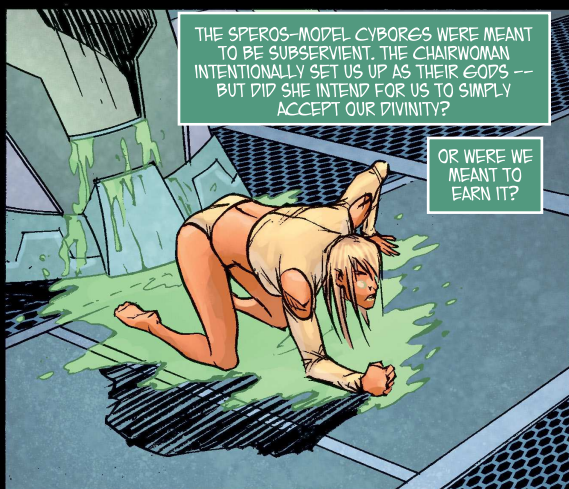
THE CHAIRWOMAN,
FRANCESCA
TAYLOR.

THIS ENTIRE WORLD IS HER
DESIGN. SHE IMAGINED EVERY
CONTINGENCY -- SURELY, SHE
CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY
OF A REBELLION.

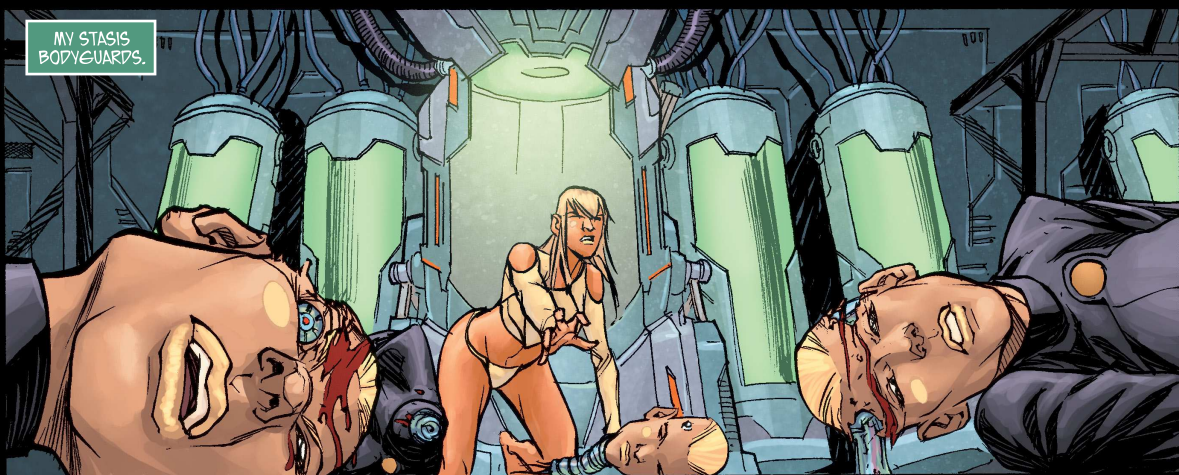


THE SPEROS-MODEL CYBORGES WERE MEANT
TO BE SUBSERVIENT. THE CHAIRWOMAN
INTENTIONALLY SET US UP AS THEIR GODS --
BUT DID SHE INTEND FOR US TO SIMPLY
ACCEPT OUR DIVINITY?

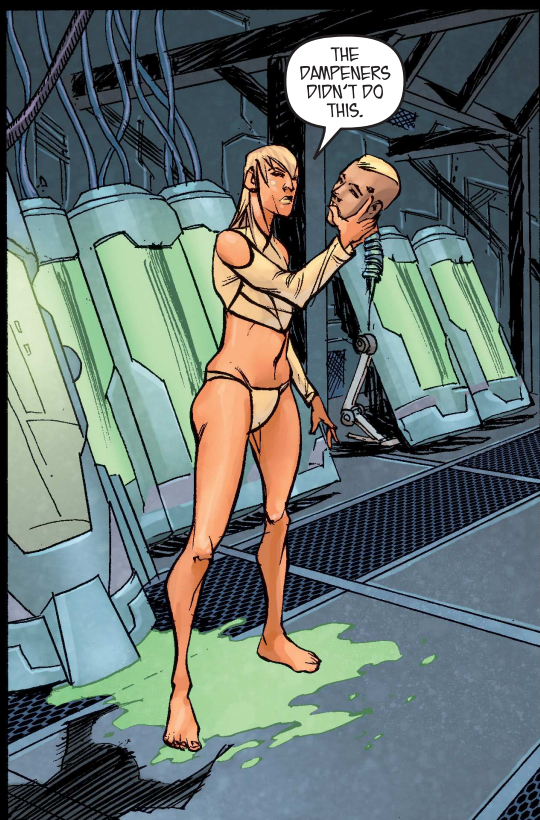
OR WERE WE
MEANT TO
EARN IT?



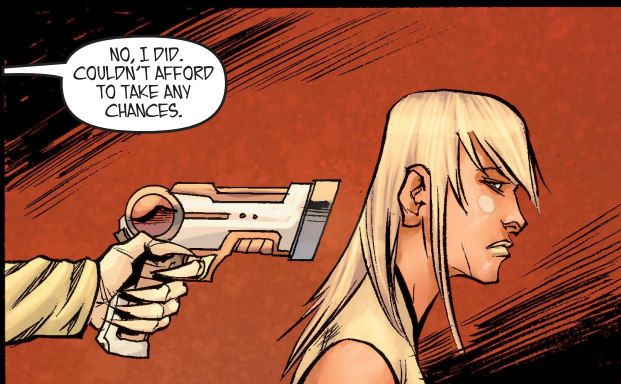
MY STASIS
BODYGUARDS.



THE
DAMPENERS
DIDN'T DO
THIS.



NO, I DID.
COULDN'T AFFORD
TO TAKE ANY
CHANCES.



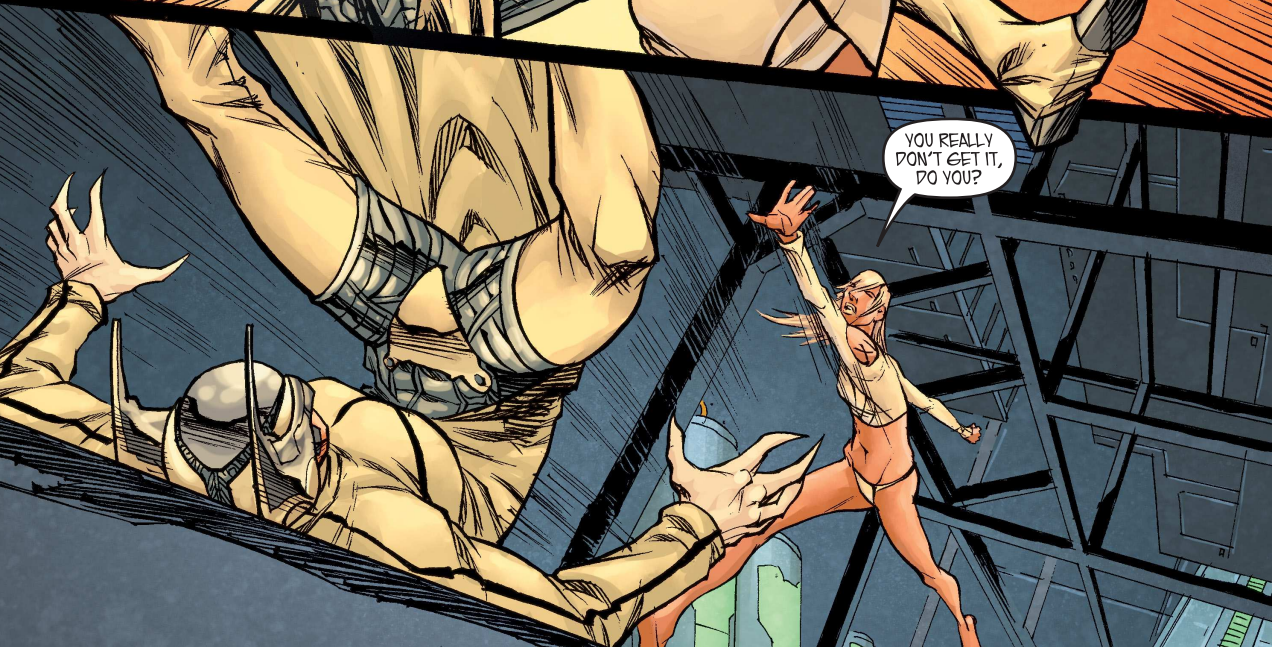
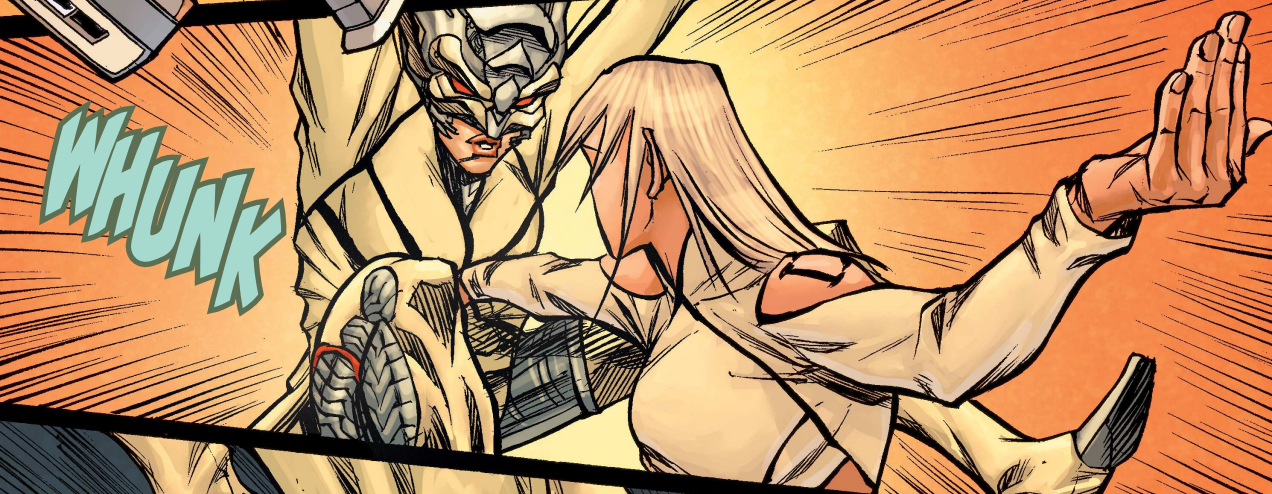
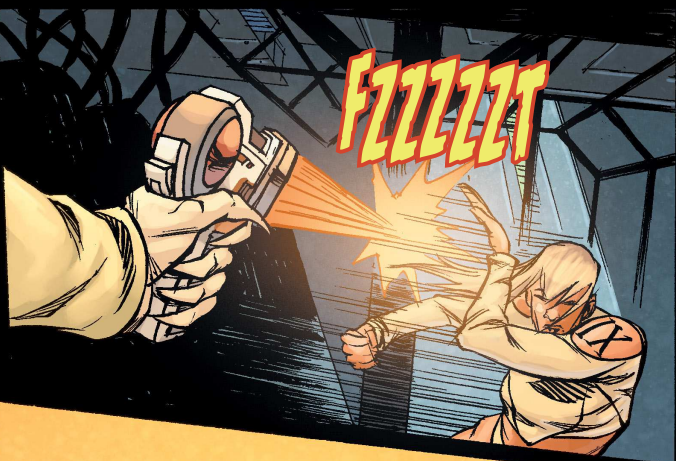
THIS TIME
I'LL FINISH THE JOB --
DESTROY YOU AND YOUR
CLONING FACILITY. THIS
WORLD WAS OURS, DAMN
YOU -- WE WERE MEANT TO
LIVE FOREVER. WE WERE
MEANT TO BE ITS RULERS,
AND WE'LL TAKE
IT BACK!



ANY LAST
WORDS?



ARE
YOU QUITE
FINISHED?



YOU REALLY
DON'T GET IT,
DO YOU?



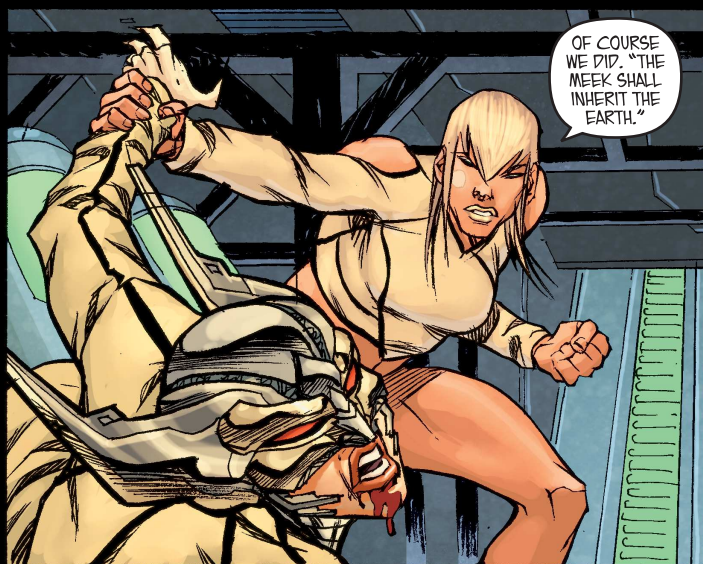
YOU
WEREN'T
MEANT TO
INHERIT THE
WORLD.



YOU WEREN'T THE
SUPERIOR RACE--- YOU
WERE ON A PATH TOWARD
EXTINCTION.



GASP
YOU...
YOU SAVED
US...



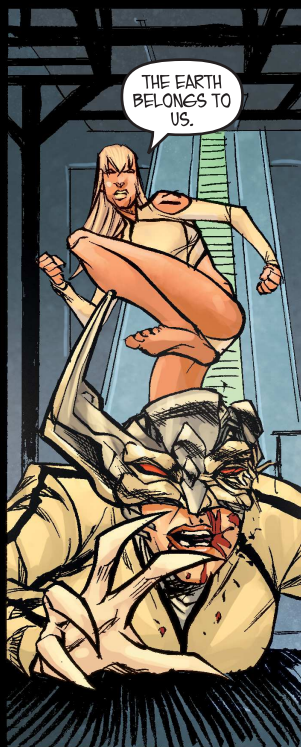
OF COURSE
WE DID. "THE
MEEK SHALL
INHERIT THE
EARTH."



MY
MOTHER'S
IDEA OF A
JOKE.



YOU INHERIT
NOTHING.

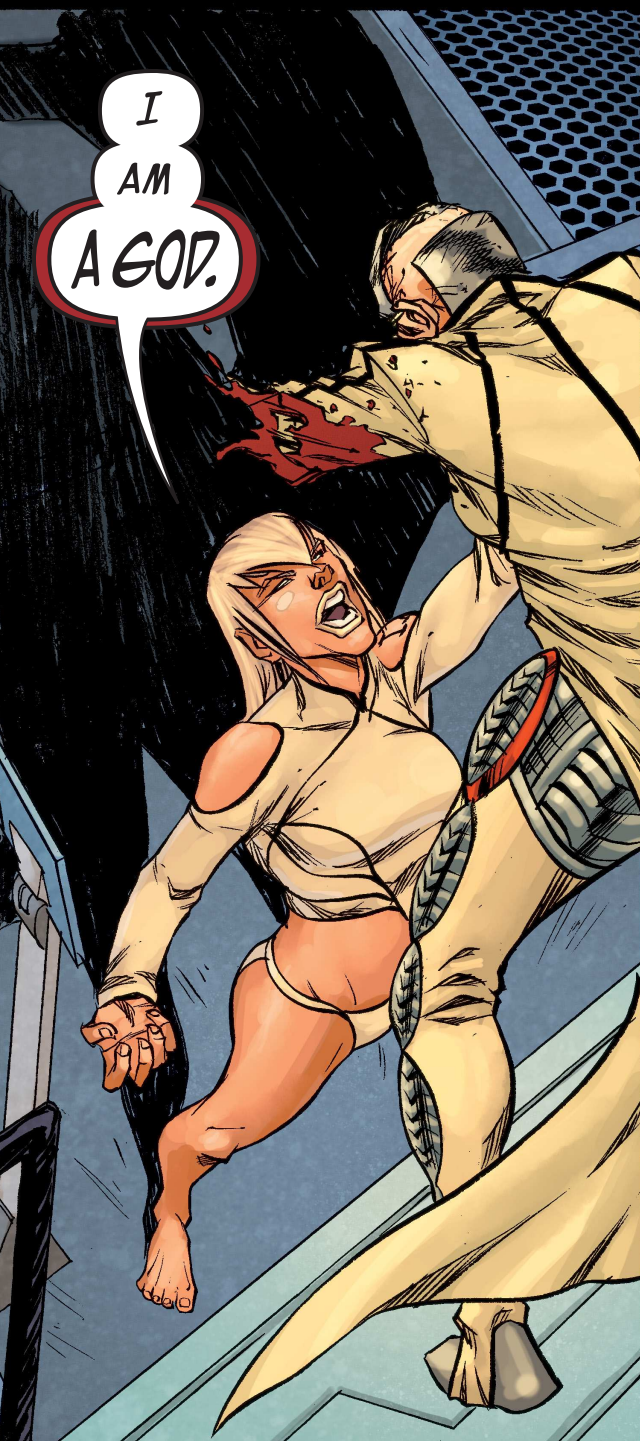


THE EARTH
BELONGS TO
US.

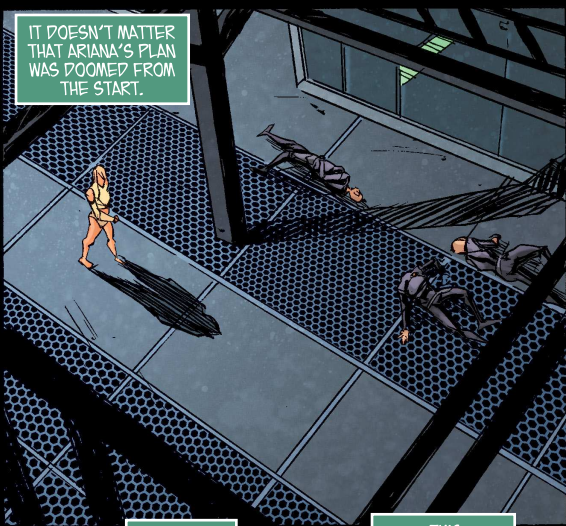


AND SO
DO YOU.

THROUGH



IT DOESN'T MATTER
THAT ARIANA'S PLAN
WAS DOOMED FROM
THE START.



THESE WERE
UNACCEPTABLE
LOSSES.



THESE
DAMAGES...



THIS
DESTRUCTION...



IT ALL COMES
DOWN TO AN
ERROR IN
JUDEMENT.

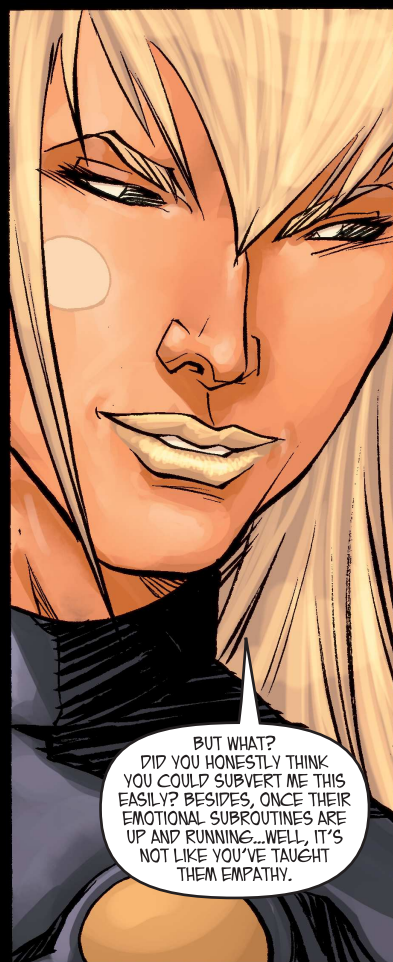
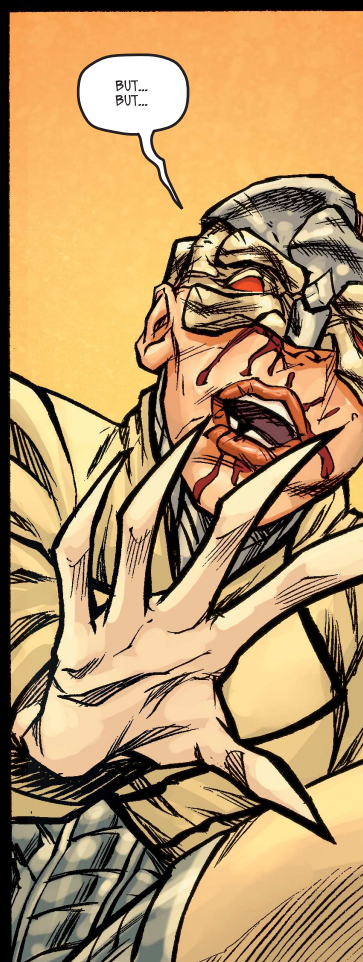


MY JUDEMENT.



LESSON
LEARNED.





"YOU'VE ONLY
TAUGHT THEM
HATE."



SHE LIED
TO US!

WAS
THIS A
TEST?
TO SEE
WHO WOULD
OBEY?



PLEASE -- HAVE
MERCY! I SHOULD
HAVE OBEYED, I
KNOW! PLEASE, I'M
SORRY!



NOT YET.
BUT YOU
WILL BE.



I REALLY SHOULD THANK YOU -- I PREFERRED MY ARMY TO BE UNFEELING MACHINES, BUT THEY NEVER *NEEDED* TO BE THAT WAY. THIS IS A TECHNICAL IMPROVEMENT. I WAS WRONG TO DISREGARD EMOTION SO COMPLETELY.



PERHAPS THAT'S THE REASON YOU SURVIVED UP UNTIL THIS POINT. PERHAPS THAT'S THE REASON YOU WERE BORN IN THE FIRST PLACE. IN THIS GRAND, ELEGANTLY DESIGNED WORLD, WHERE EVERYTHING HAS ITS PLACE, YOU'VE FULFILLED YOUR ONLY REAL PURPOSE.



AS A *DEBUGGING* EXERCISE.



NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, THE PEOPLE NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT *GOD* IS WATCHING.



BUT LET ME ONCE AGAIN OFFER YOU MY THANKS--



--FOR THE LESSON IN *RAGE*.

NEXT STORY

ARTEMIS IX TM #1

IN STORES AUGUST 5TH



EDEN, WYOMING.

IT'S FAR FROM
PARADISE.

Bryan Hill • Matt Hawkins • Isaac Goodhart

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save us

THE LAST SHIP



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OF THE PAST

WILL DETERMINE
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