

SHAKARA

THE AVENGER

ROBBIE MORRISON ★ HENRY FLINT



SHAKARA

THE AVENGER

SHAKARA CREATED BY ROBBIE MORRISON & HENRY FLINT

SHAKARA

THE AVENGER

ROBBIE MORRISON

Writer

HENRY FLINT

Artist



Creative Director and CEO: Jason Kingsley

Chief Technical Officer: Chris Kingsley

2000 AD Editor in Chief: Matt Smith

Graphic Design: Simon Parr & Luke Preece

Marketing and PR: Keith Richardson

Repro Assistant: Kathryn Symes

Graphic Novels Editor: Jonathan Oliver

Designer: Simon Parr

Original Commissioning Editor: Matt Smith

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INTRODUCTION

Robbie has the whole *Shakara* plot in his head – all the following books right to the end! I'm itching to know what happens, but don't want to destroy his vision by talking about 'possible endings'... so I keep my mouth firmly shut. I'm like the reader in this relationship – I'm reading and drawing, and getting to the end of the episode wanting to read and draw more. I find out something about Shakara's past, or a plot twist happens, and I think: 'No way!'.

Robbie writes enthusiastically about Shakara's burning red eyes looking straight out at the reader, and I can see them looking. Is it the burning pain of revenge, or is Shakara asking questions with those eyes? You can feel them searching. Robbie knows the answers... who Shakara is, and what's behind those red eyes.

Henry Flint
September 2008

“SHAKARA!” “SHAKARA!” “SHAKARA!” “SHAKARA!” “SHAKARA!” “SHAKARA!”

I was tempted to write this introduction in the persona of Shakara itself, and just repeat the same word over and over again in a relentless, mind-bending mantra, which – considering the nature of the series – might be appropriate. In the end, I figured that would be a wee bit too cheeky.

When I delivered the first script of *Shakara* Book III, I received an email from Henry Flint, saying: 'It's bonkers! I love it!' I took this as a huge compliment because Henry is easily the most bonkers artist I know, and because going for the craziest, most over-the-top concepts, characters and storylines has always been the approach with *Shakara*.

My earliest memories of *2000 AD* are of how in-your-face and full of attitude it was, traits that it shared with the comic *Action*, also edited by Pat Mills, which had been banned after getting Mary Whitehouse's knickers in a twist or something like that.

The characters were bold and bombastic, the stories wildly inventive and anarchic, thanks to writers like Pat, John Wagner and Alan Grant, and artists such as Massimmo Belardinelli, Brian Bolland, Carlos Ezquerra, Mick McMahon, Brendan McCarthy, Kevin O'Neill, and many more.

The power and energy these creators packed into their stories was explosive, as was the impact *2000 AD* had on late 1970's British childhoods. Over the years, the comic has grown with its audience, the storylines becoming more ambitious, and storytelling techniques more sophisticated, but it's always the things you read as a child that have the strongest impact and influence.

In many ways, *Shakara* is an attempt to recreate that kind of child-like thrill, but still fuse it with the more modern sensibilities of the comic today. Also, around the time I was developing the initial idea, there seemed to be a lot of near-future series in the comic, realistic in tone and nature, and focusing on human beings. I wanted to get away from that with something that was not only unmistakably science-fiction,

but that could maybe only appear in the pages of *2000 AD*. Destroying Earth in the first panel of the first page seemed like a good place to start!

For *Shakara*, I wanted a lead character so bizarre that we wouldn't know who or what it was. I wanted walking, talking sentient galaxies, a race of telepaths with floating eyeballs for heads, world-devouring starships, countless alien worlds and beings, and spectacular interstellar phenomena. For all of those things, and more, call Henry Flint.

Henry's an explosion of creativity, very much in the unique and original vein of the classic *2000 AD* artists mentioned above. He had been producing fantastic work on *Judge Dredd*, *Rogue Trooper*, and the *ABC Warriors*, but I really wanted to see him given the freedom to cut loose and create his own characters and worlds, instead of interpreting ones that were long established. Henry was the first and only choice of artist for *Shakara*.

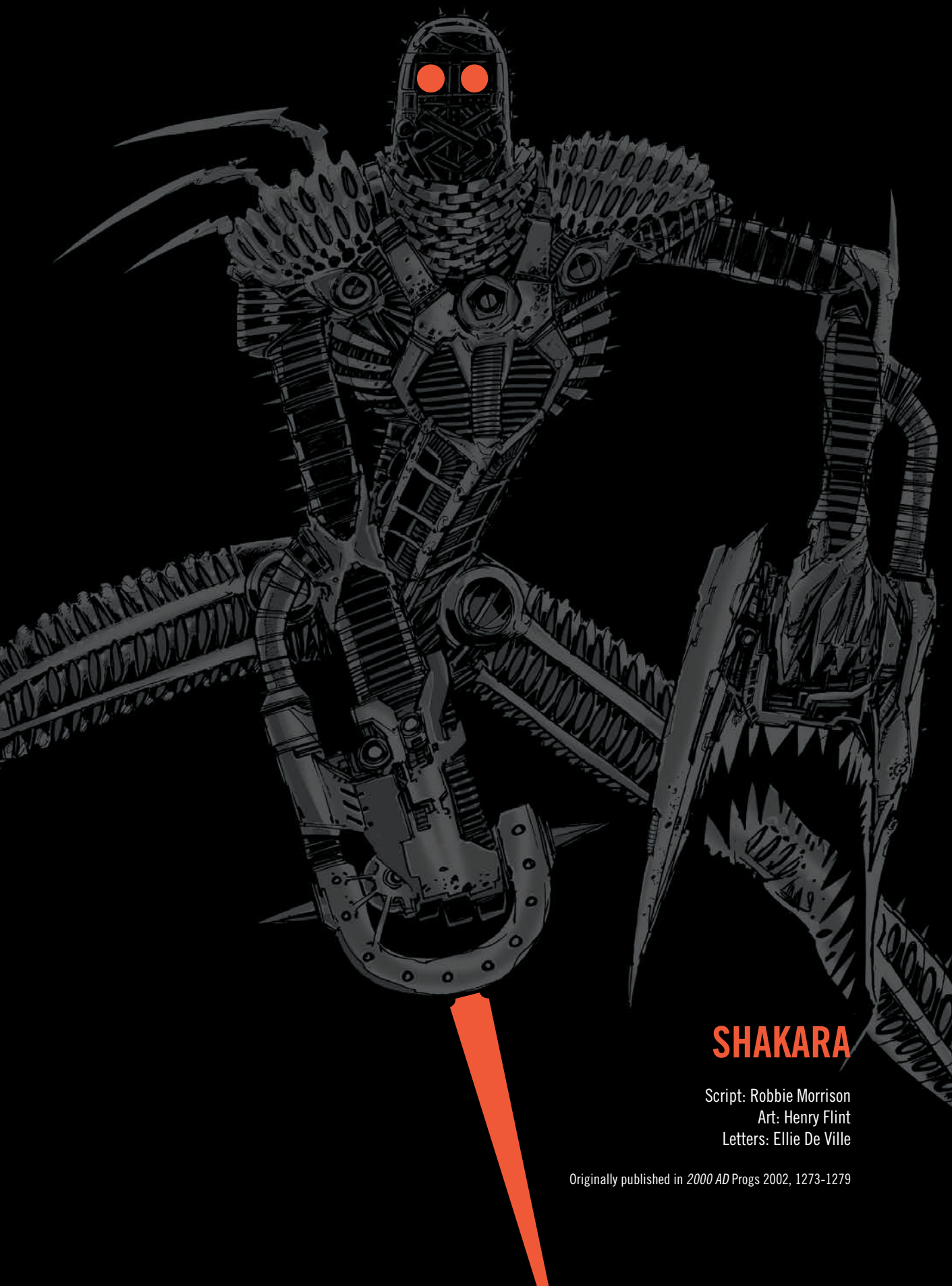
As I said, with *Shakara*, I always go for the wildest idea I can come up with, partly because I want to see how much crazier it becomes when it's visualized by Henry. When his artwork arrives, it never fails to put an enormous grin on my face, the same sort of grin I used to get when I read *2000 AD* as a kid in Scotland all those years ago.

I'm looking forward to doing more *Shakara* with Henry, and when we finish the series, I hope we can collaborate on something even more bizarre and over the top.

Of course, all that might be bollocks! Maybe all I wanted to do was save myself some work by writing a character who only ever says a single word of dialogue.

“SHAKARA!”

Robbie Morrison
September 2008



SHAKARA

Script: Robbie Morrison

Art: Henry Flint

Letters: Ellie De Ville

Originally published in *2000 AD Progs* 2002, 1273-1279

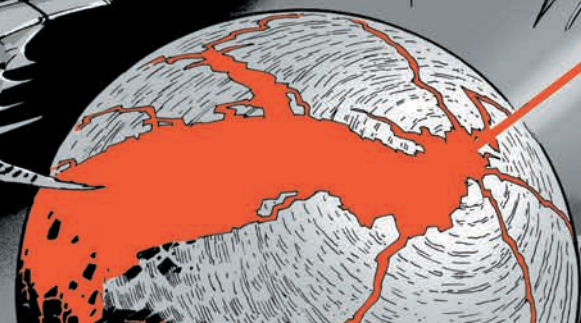


'THEY APPEARED FROM NOWHERE,
AS IF THEY TORE A HOLE IN SPACE
ITSELF TO ENTER OUR GALAXY...

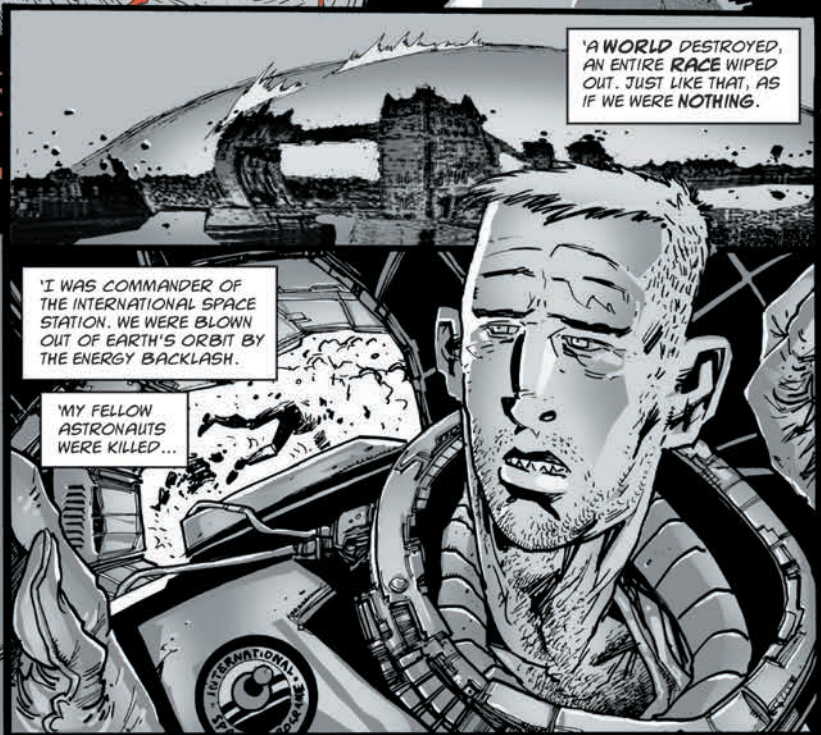
'THERE WAS NO COMMUNICATION,
THEY JUST OPENED FIRE,
BOMBARDED THE PLANET WITH
ENERGIES OUR SENSORS COULDN'T
EVEN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND.

'GOD KNOWS WHAT IT
WAS LIKE DOWN THERE...
ON THE SURFACE.

'THEY DIDN'T HAVE LONG
TO SUFFER, THOUGH. IT
WAS ALL OVER IN LESS
THAN TEN MINUTES...

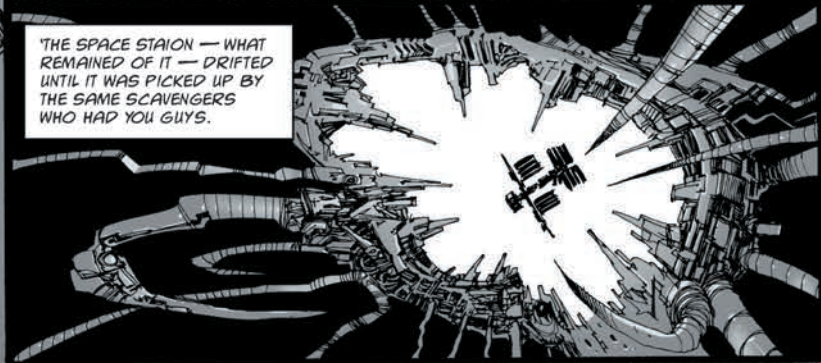


'A WORLD DESTROYED,
AN ENTIRE RACE WIPED
OUT. JUST LIKE THAT, AS
IF WE WERE NOTHING.



'I WAS COMMANDER OF
THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE
STATION. WE WERE BLOWN
OUT OF EARTH'S ORBIT BY
THE ENERGY BACKLASH.

'MY FELLOW
ASTRONAUTS
WERE KILLED...



'THE SPACE STATION — WHAT
REMAINED OF IT — DRIFTED
UNTIL IT WAS PICKED UP BY
THE SAME SCAVENGERS
WHO HAD YOU GUYS.

'CONSIDERING WHAT HAD JUST HAPPENED, TELLING THEM I CAME IN PEACE WAS PROBABLY A LITTLE NAIVE.'

SLAVE ARENA.
PLANET OBIDOS.

GUESS THE
UNIVERSE ISN'T
BIG ON
PEACE...

HARD TO BELIEVE
I'M THE ONLY
ONE LEFT.

THE
LAST
HUMAN
BEING.

SURPRISING, THAT.
THE SUCCUBI ARE
USUALLY MORE
THOROUGH.

SINCE THE GREAT
TERROR, THE SUCCUBI HAVE
BEEN FREE TO SUCK DRY ALL THE
BACKWATER WORLDS IN EXISTENCE...

BACKWATER? THAT'S
EARTH YOU'RE TALKING
ABOUT, GODDAMNIT!
THE HUMAN RACE!
WE WALKED ON
THE MOON!

EARTH? YOU
NAMED YOUR PLANET
AFTER DIRT AND YOU'VE
ONLY FLOWN TO YOUR
OWN MOON?

YOU MUST
BE BACKWARD
AS WELL AS
BACKWATER!

MY FELLOW SENTIENTS, FOR
THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVEN'T
VISITED MY INTERGALACTICALLY
RENOWNED MARKET BEFORE, I AM
RANCOUR, SLAVEMASTER
EXTRAORDINAIRE.

SERVANTS, LABOURERS,
GLADIATORS OR LOVERS —
WE HAVE CREATURES TO SUIT ALL
POSSIBLE REQUIREMENTS.

FEEL FREE TO
INSPECT THE MERCHANDISE,
THE AUCTION'LL START
SHORTLY...



PRICELESS SPECIMEN.

PRIME STOCK FOR THE BENE GESSERACT STUD FARM.

YOU MIGHT HAVE TO BID AGAINST ME, SISTER...



... ESPECIALLY IF THE REST ARE AS PUNY AS THIS!

WHATEVER IT IS...

THERE'S A SAYING BACK WHERE I COME FROM, BUDDY — SIZE DOESN'T MATTER.

THE BIGGER YOU ARE, THE HARDER YOU FALL!



MMMPH!

TOLD HIM TO KEEP QUIET.

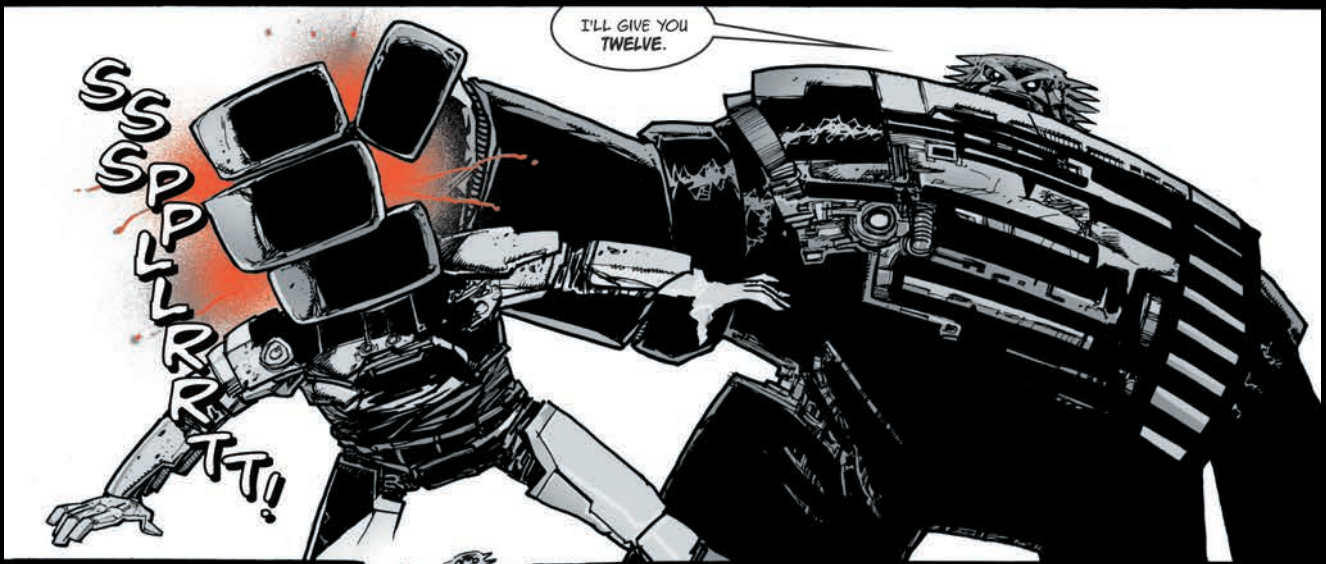
SURE DID. NO ONE TO BLAME BUT HIMSELF.



YOU'RE INTERESTED IN THE HUMAN, MAJOR THORN? WE ONLY INCLUDED HIM FOR NOVELTY VALUE. SAYS HE'S THE LAST OF HIS RACE.

LAST OF HIS RACE? HOW MUCH?

FOR YOU, SEVENTEEN CENTARI.



I'LL GIVE YOU TWELVE.



HHMMM...

SMELLS SWEET. WONDER WHAT HE TASTES LIKE...

SSSKREEE! GGGNNHH!

UUURRKK!

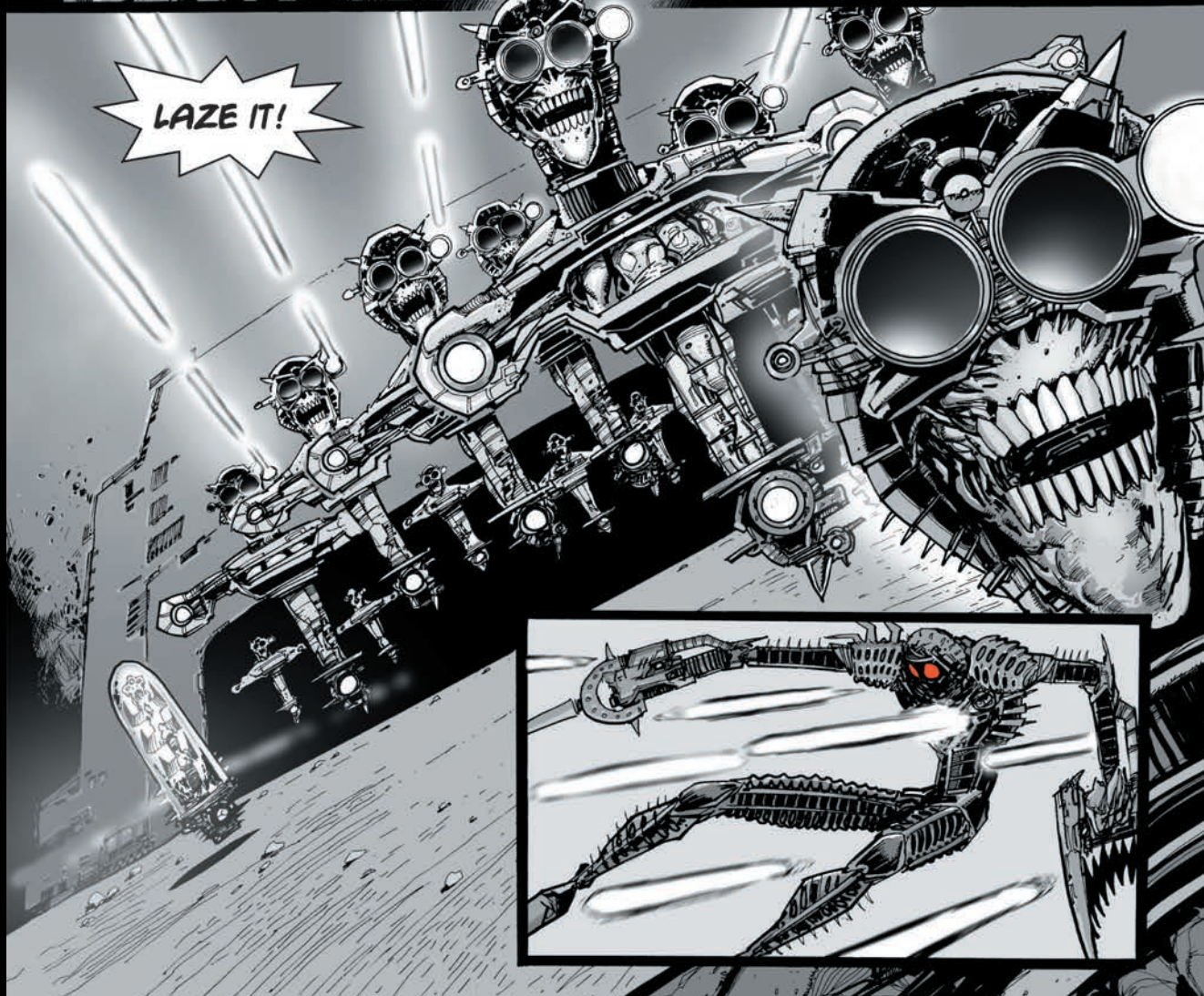
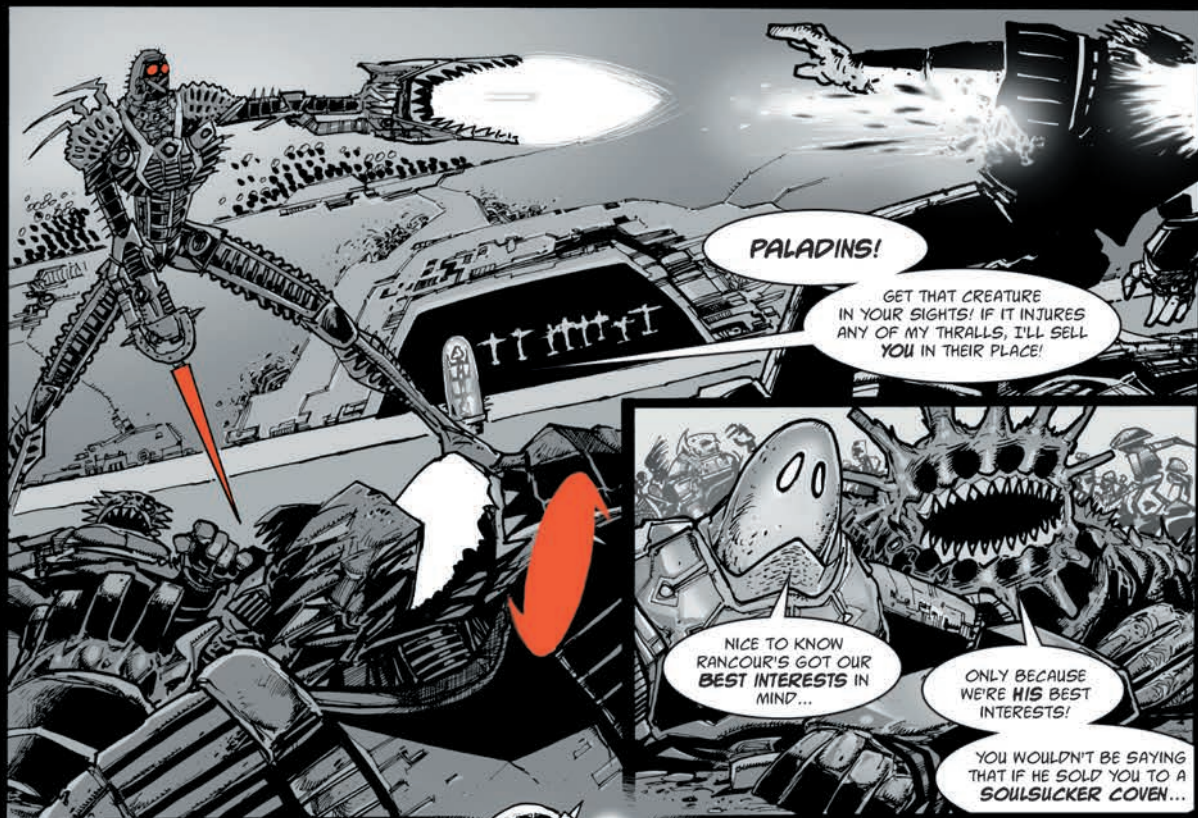
ABOVE US!

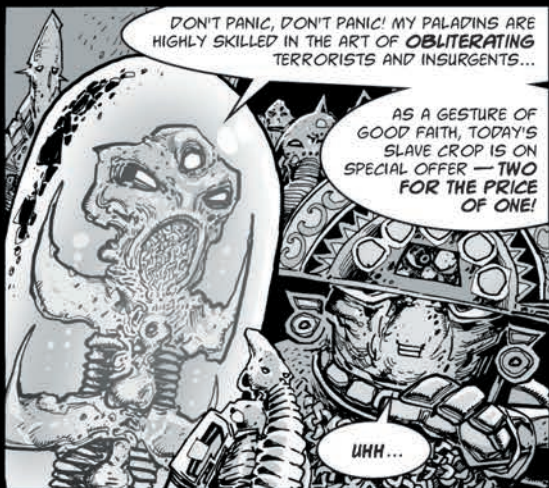
SOMETHING'S
BREACHED THE
FORCESHIELD!





SHAKARA!







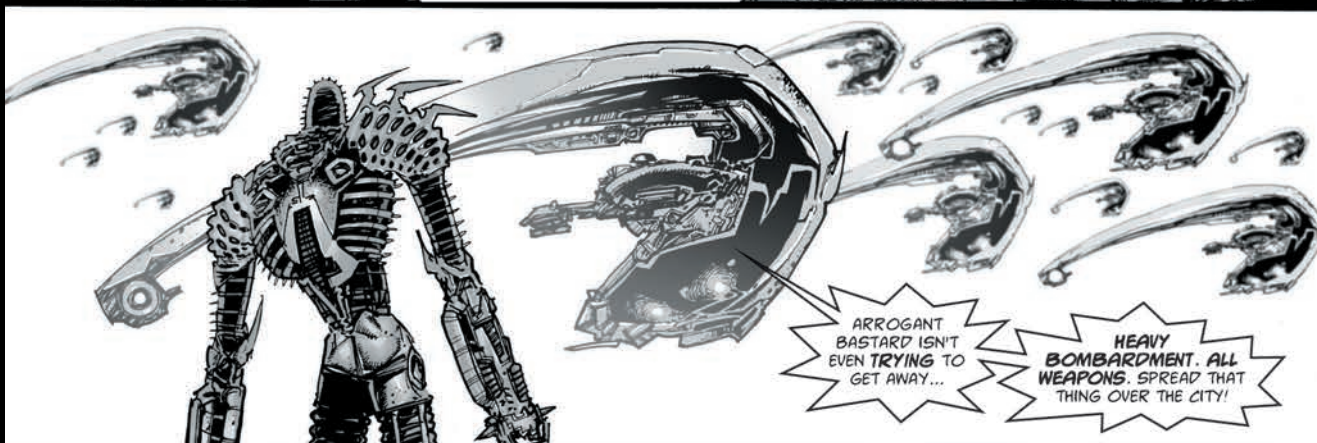
RANCOUR TO
GUNSHIPS...



MAXIMUM
FIREPOWER!

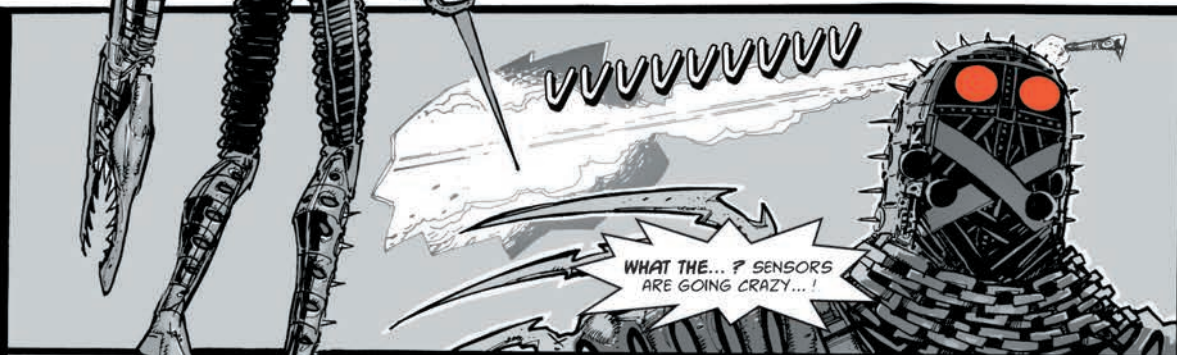
MAX? WE'LL LEVEL
HALF THE ARENA...

IT'LL BE WORTH A LITTLE
RENOVATION TO WIPE OUT THAT
WALKING SLAUGHTERHOUSE...

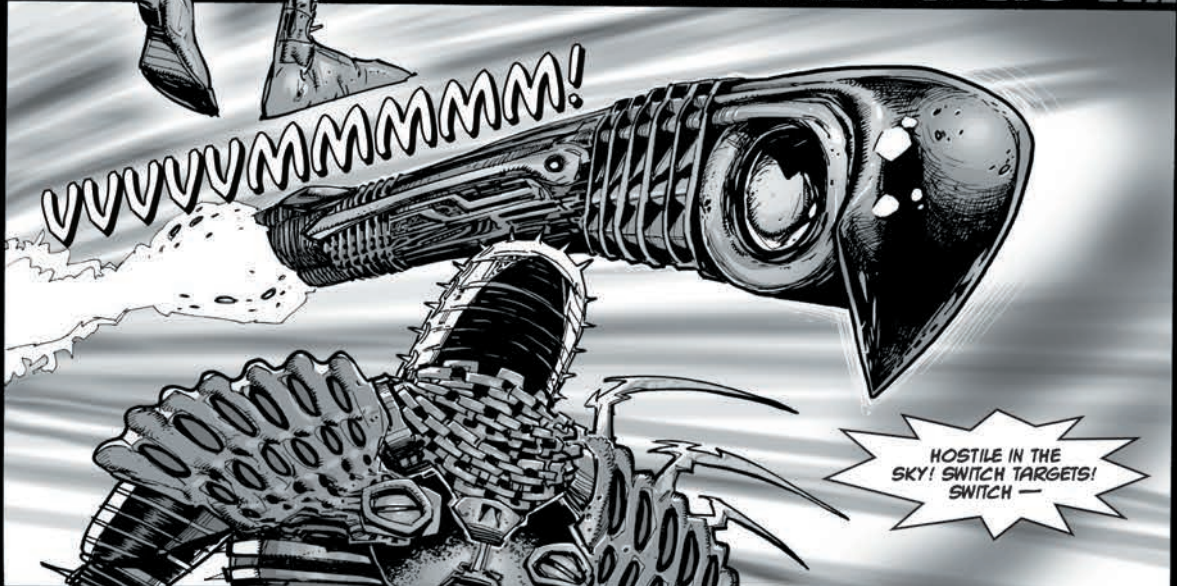


ARROGANT
BASTARD ISN'T
EVEN TRYING TO
GET AWAY...

HEAVY
BOMBARDMENT. ALL
WEAPONS. SPREAD THAT
THING OVER THE CITY!



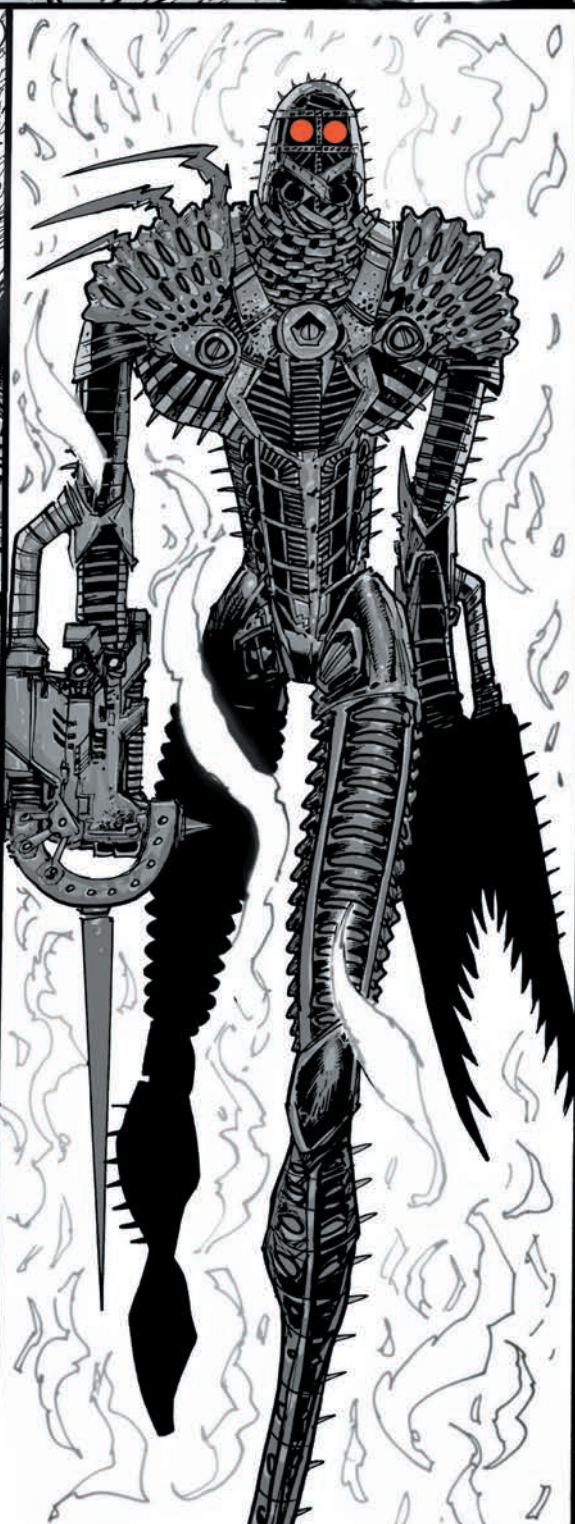
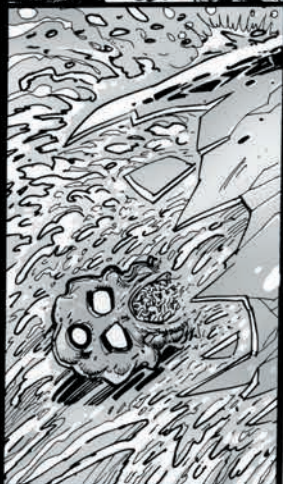
WHAT THE... ? SENSORS
ARE GOING CRAZY...!



HOSTILE IN THE
SKY! SWITCH TARGETS!
SWITCH —



HHNNGGHH!



FALL, DAMN YOU!

FALL!



THE SILARIANS HAD KNOWN THEIR SUN WAS GOING TO DESTROY ITSELF FOR TWO CENTURIES.

'UNFORTUNATELY, NOT BEING THE **BRIGHTEST** STARS IN THE UNIVERSE, IT TOOK THEM ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINE YEARS TO DEVELOP THE TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED FOR MASS INTERGALACTIC EVACUATION...

'AND A FURTHER TWELVE MONTHS TO BUILD ENOUGH SHIPS.

'TEN YEARS EARLIER, THE SILARIANS HAD NEGOTIATED SAFE PASSAGE OUT OF THE GALAXY WITH THE KRULLS, WHO CONTROLLED WORMHOLE TECHNOLOGY IN THAT QUADRANT.

'AS THE SILARIAN REFUGEE FLEET NEARED THE WORMHOLE, THE SUN APPROACHING SUPERNOVA BEHIND THEM, THE KRULLS DECIDED TO RENEGOTIATE.

'STAGGERINGLY CRUEL AND HEARTLESS, PERHAPS, BUT ALSO EXCELLENT BUSINESS SENSE.' — SLEEKIT PRIME, PSICO ENFORCER.



ENSIGN...

HOW... HOW MANY?

THOUSANDS. MOSTLY CLANS TRAVELLING TOGETHER.

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, SIR. THEY RAN THE BLOCKADE AGAINST YOUR ORDERS.

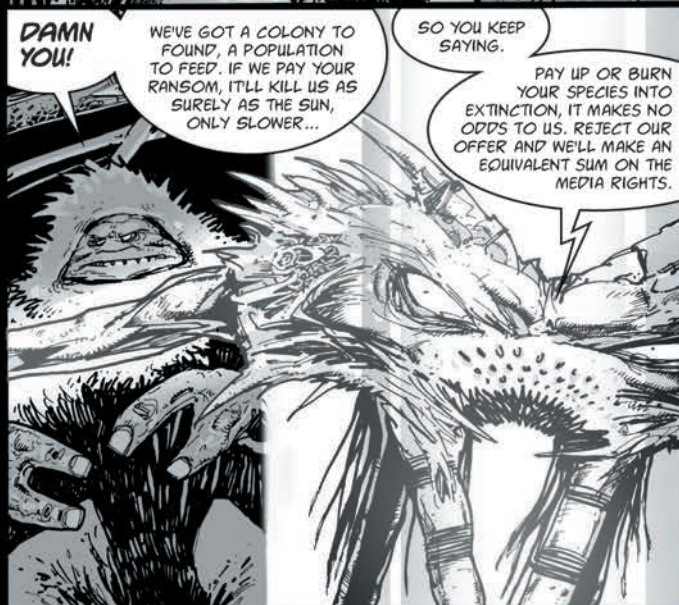


PRESIDENT ARCHELAUS.



THAT HOPELESSLY INEPT ATTEMPT AT CIRCUMNAVIGATING US JUST ADDED ANOTHER **BILLION CENTARI** TO OUR DEMANDS.

SUPERNOVA IS IN **THIRTY MINUTES**. WE DEACTIVATE THE GATE IN **TWENTY**.



DAMN YOU!

WE'VE GOT A COLONY TO FOUND, A POPULATION TO FEED. IF WE PAY YOUR RANSOM, IT'LL KILL US AS SURELY AS THE SUN, ONLY SLOWER...

SO YOU KEEP SAYING.

PAY UP OR BURN YOUR SPECIES INTO EXTINCTION, IT MAKES NO ODDS TO US. REJECT OUR OFFER AND WE'LL MAKE AN EQUIVALENT SUM ON THE MEDIA RIGHTS.



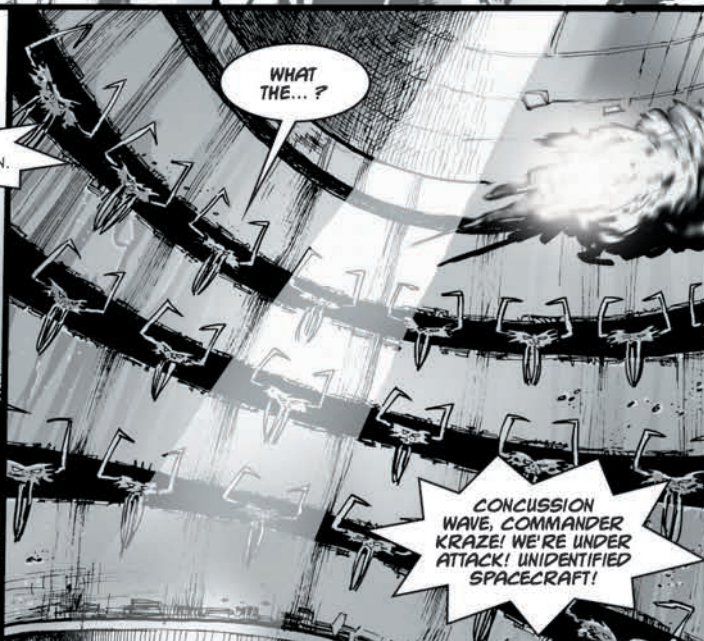
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE **POPULARITY** OF AN INTERGALACTIC DISASTER.

YOU KNOW, MR PRESIDENT, I COULD ALMOST FEEL **SORRY** FOR YOU...



... IF WE KRULLS SUFFERED FROM THAT **PATHETIC** PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPT KNOWN AS A **CONSCIENCE**!

END HOLO-TRANSMISSION.



WHAT THE... ?

CONCUSSION WAVE, COMMANDER KRAZE! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK! UNIDENTIFIED SPACECRAFT!

'NO DOUBT YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE A MINOR INCIDENT IN A FAR-FLUNG CORNER OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE COULD BE TO THE PSICO HIERARCHY...

'ONE WORD — A WORD WE THOUGHT WE'D NEVER HEAR AGAIN --

'SHAKARA!'

THE STRANGER'S DECIMATED HALF THEIR FIGHTERS, SIR...

GIVE THE ORDER, ENSIGN — FULL SPEED AHEAD!

IT'S TIME TO RUN THE GAUNTLET!

COMMANDER, THE SILARIANS ARE ESCAPING!

PURSUE?

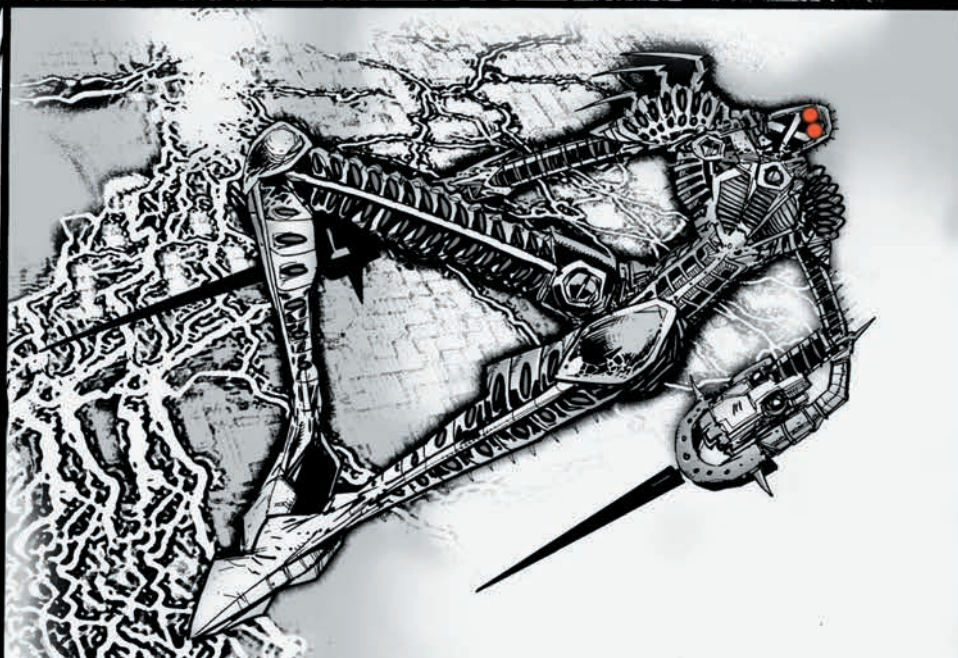
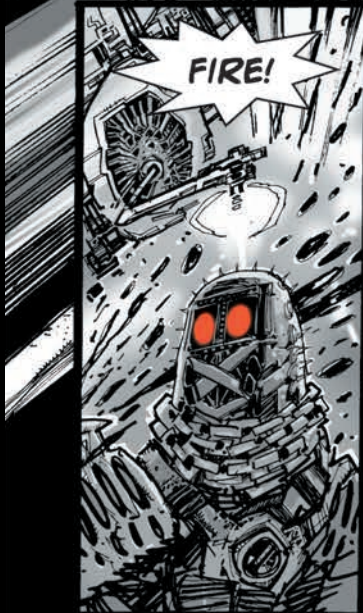
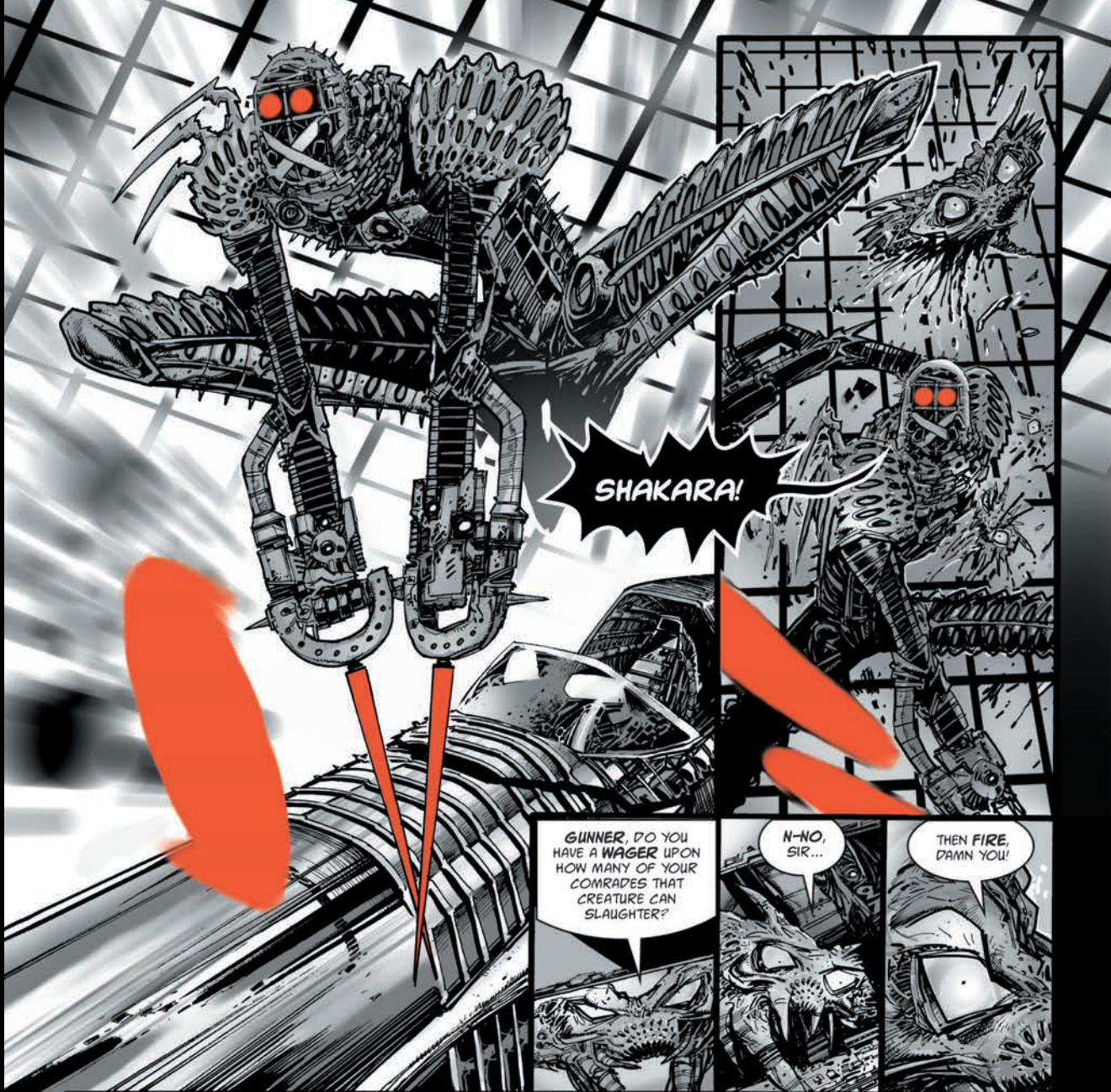
ENGAGE THE
INTRUDER.

WE'LL USE THE
SILARIANS FOR
TARGET PRACTICE
LATER...

HE'S EVADED THE
PLASMA-BARRAGE,
STAYING CLOSE —

HELLFIRE! HE'S
HEADING FOR THE
DOCKING BAY!

ACTIVATE
THE ENTRAPMENT
WEB!

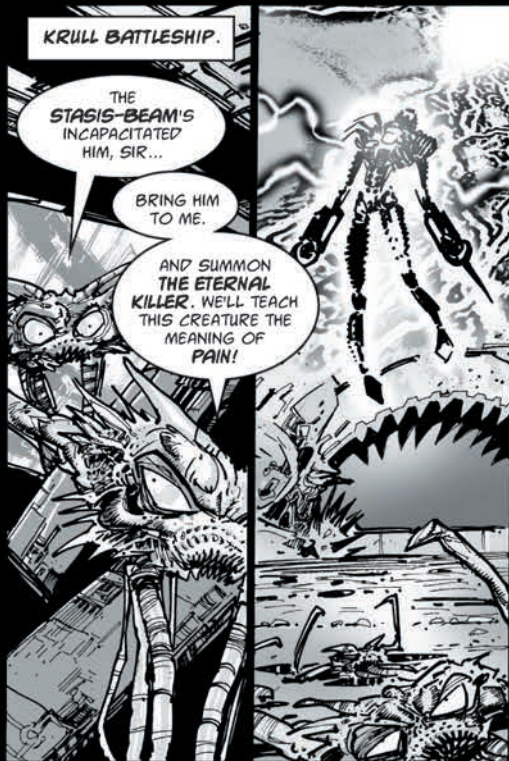


KRULL BATTLESHIP.

THE
STASIS-BEAM'S
INCAPACITATED
HIM, SIR...

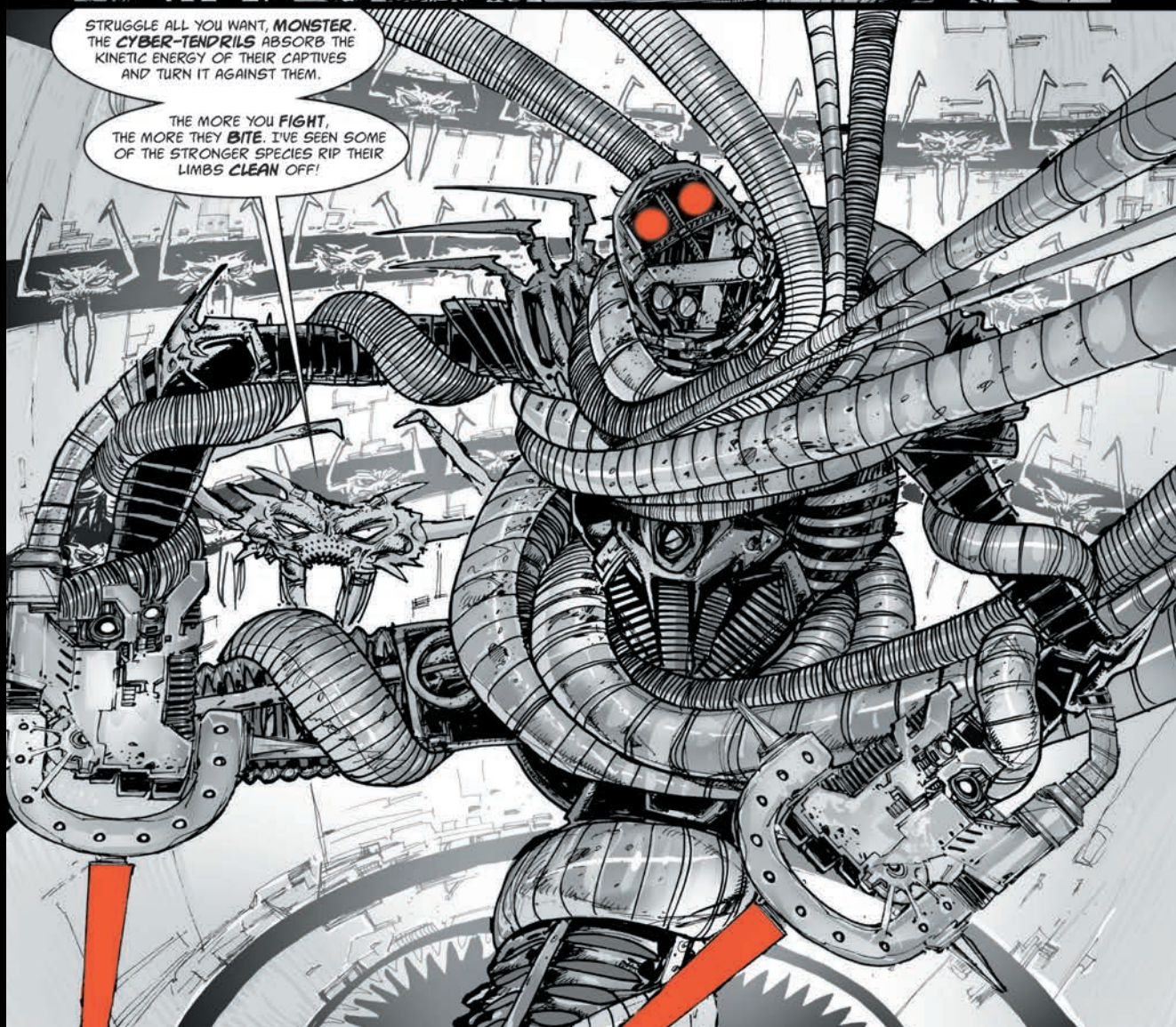
BRING HIM
TO ME.

AND SUMMON
THE **ETERNAL**
KILLER. WE'LL TEACH
THIS CREATURE THE
MEANING OF
PAIN!



STRUGGLE ALL YOU WANT, MONSTER.
THE **CYBER-TENDRILS** ABSORB THE
KINETIC ENERGY OF THEIR CAPTIVES
AND TURN IT AGAINST THEM.

THE MORE YOU **FIGHT**,
THE MORE THEY **BITE**. I'VE SEEN SOME
OF THE STRONGER SPECIES RIP THEIR
LIMBS **CLEAN OFF!**



YOU DESTROYED HALF MY FIGHTERS
AND LOST US THE RICHES OF THE
SILARIAN FLEET.

I'M GOING TO MAKE
YOUR DEATH LAST A
LIFETIME...

I TRUST YOU'RE FAMILIAR
WITH THE CONCEPT OF
THE **ETERNAL KILLERS**
AND THE ANCIENT
KRULL PUNISHMENT OF
ETERNAL DEATH...

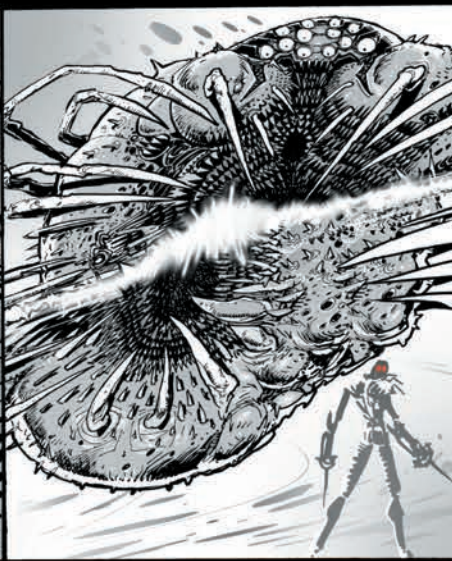
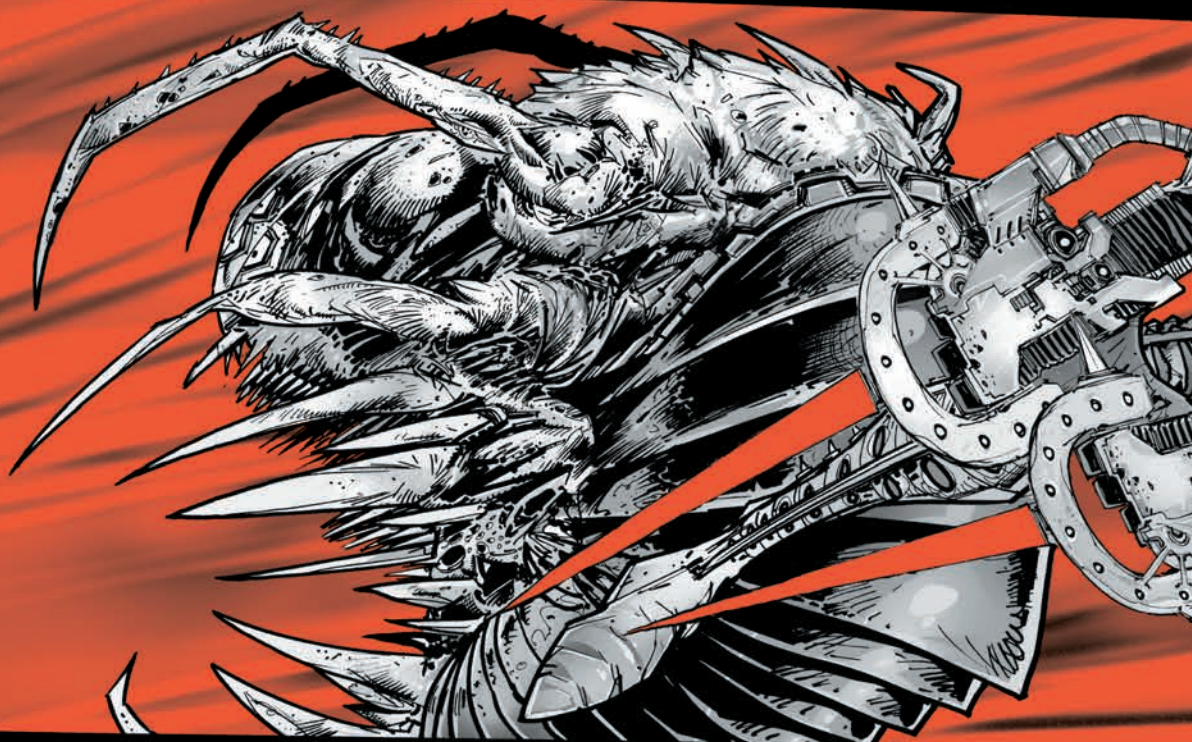
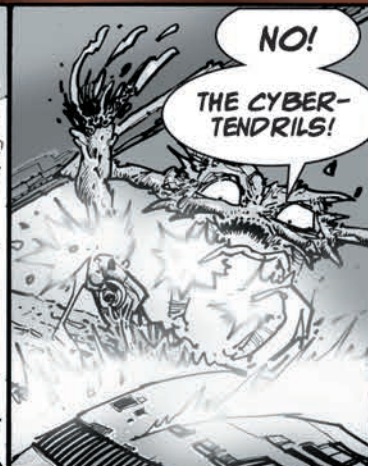
THE FINE **ART** OF KEEPING
A VICTIM ON THE ABYSS FOR
DECADES — SOMETIME **CENTURIES** —
THROUGH A COMBINATION OF
HEALING TECHNIQUES AND
AGONISING TORTURE.

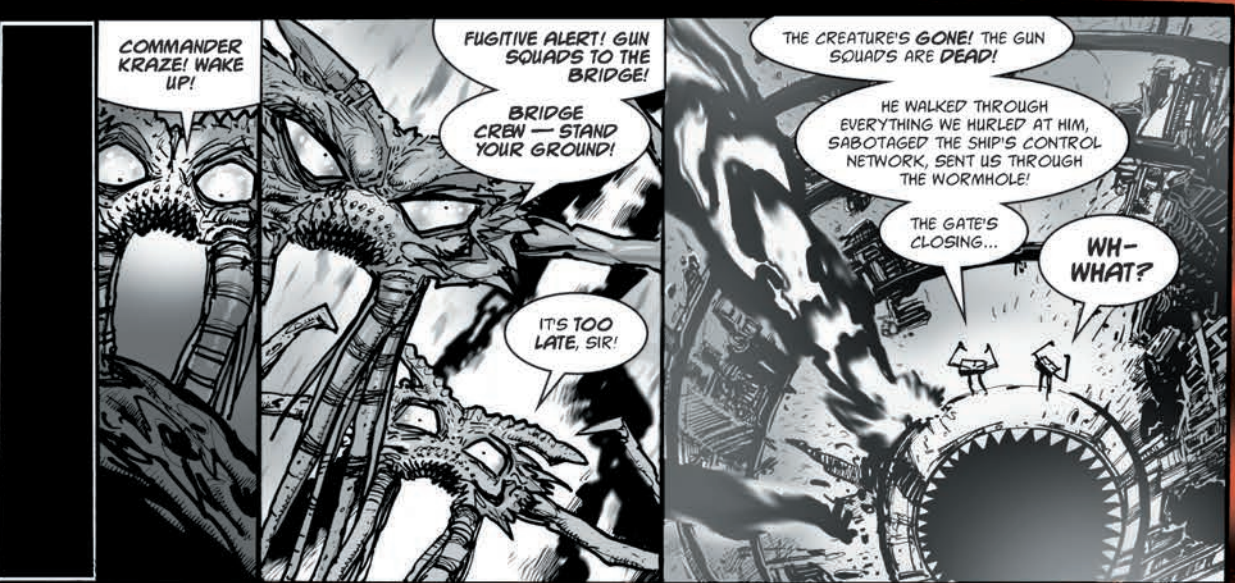
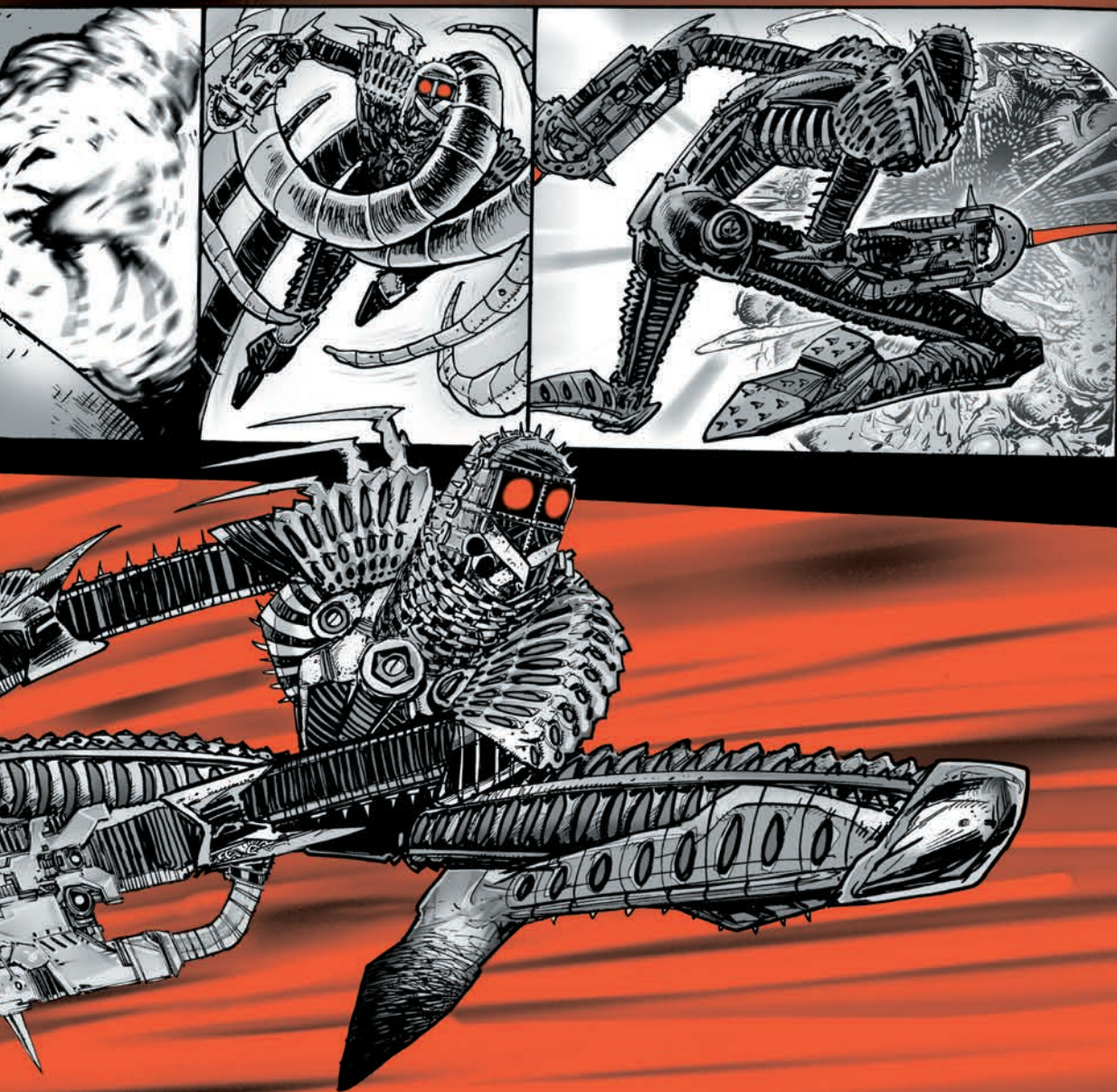
AS ONE WOUND
CLOSES, ANOTHER
ONE OPENS...

I MIGHT EVEN KEEP YOU
AS AN **ORNAMENT** BACK ON THE
HOMEWORLD — ONCE YOUR **VOCAL**
CORDS HAVE SHREDDED AND YOU
CAN'T **SCREAM** ANYMORE.

LET ME HAVE
FIRST BLOOD,
COMMANDER...

I'LL CARVE YOUR
NAME INTO ITS FLESH
IN HONOUR OF YOUR
VICTORY...





COMMANDER
KRAZE! WAKE
UP!

FUGITIVE ALERT! GUN
SQUADS TO THE
BRIDGE!

BRIDGE
CREW — STAND
YOUR GROUND!

IT'S TOO
LATE, SIR!

THE CREATURE'S GONE! THE GUN
SQUADS ARE DEAD!

HE WALKED THROUGH
EVERYTHING WE HURLED AT HIM,
SABOTAGED THE SHIP'S CONTROL
NETWORK, SENT US THROUGH
THE WORMHOLE!

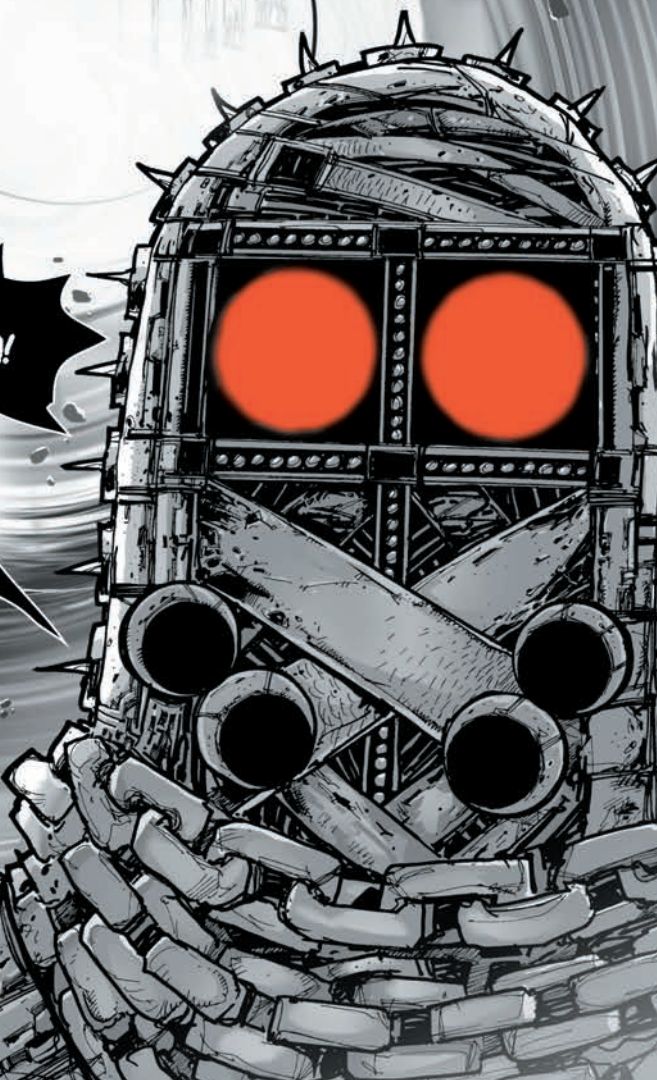
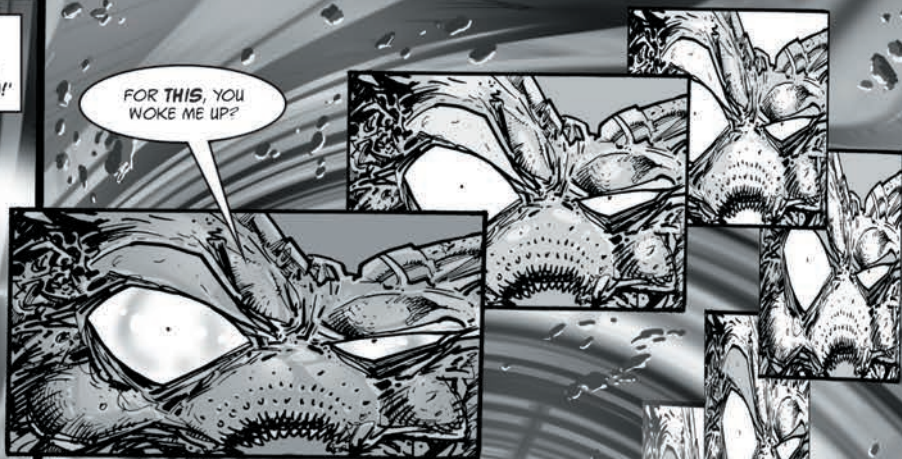
THE GATE'S
CLOSING...

WH—
WHAT?

"WE'RE TRAPPED ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE
WORMHOLE, SIR! THE SUN'S
ABOUT TO GO SUPERNOVA!"

FOR THIS, YOU
WOKE ME UP?

SHAKARA!



LIFE IS HARD UPON
THE BODY...

...SCAVENGING THE FLESH
FIELDS, RISKING THE DANGERS
OF THE PUBIC DEPTHS, WHERE
THE DEVIL-CRABS LIE IN WAIT,
READY TO DEVOUR US.

OUR NUMBERS
GROW LESS.

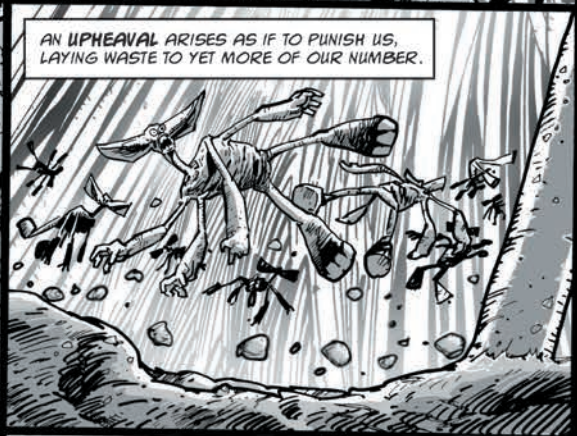
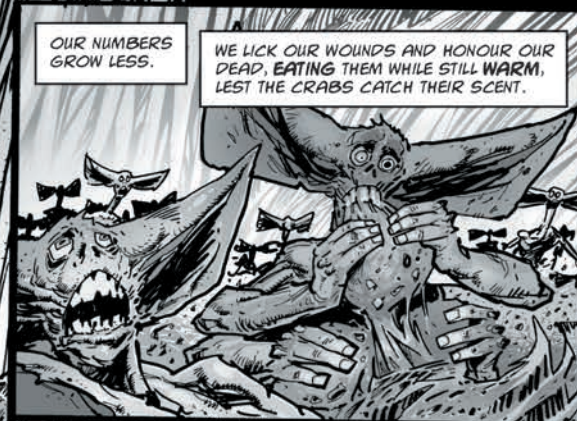
WE LICK OUR WOUNDS AND HONOUR OUR
DEAD, EATING THEM WHILE STILL WARM,
LEST THE CRABS CATCH THEIR SCENT.

I URGE THE TRIBE TO HEAR
MY THEORIES ABOUT
BODIES BEYOND OUR OWN,
PARADISES THAT COULD
SUSTAIN US FOREVER.

THEY LAUGH AND JEER
AND DISMISS ME AS
NOTHING MORE THAN A
TELLER OF TALES.

AN UPHEAVAL ARISES AS IF TO PUNISH US,
LAYING WASTE TO YET MORE OF OUR NUMBER.

I STARE INTO THE BEYOND
AS THE TREMORS
SUBSIDE, YELLING CURSES,
TRYING IN VAIN TO MAKE
MY VOICE HEARD...





FOR FRUK'S
SAKE, TERRY...

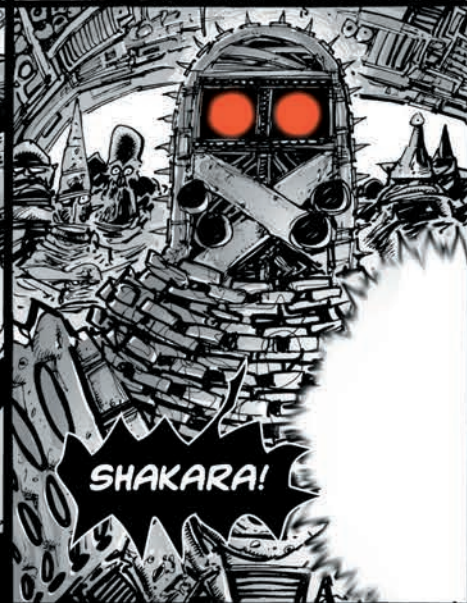
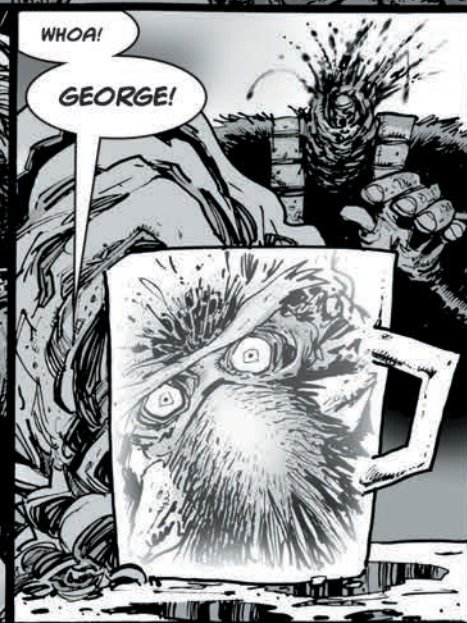
WHERE'S FRUKKIN'
GEORGE WITH THE DRINKS?
I'M DRIER THAN A FREMEN'S
COCK-STIRRUP...

PROBABLY
GUZZLIN' A PITCHER ALL
TO HIMSELF, KNOWIN'
GEORGE...

STOP
SCRATCHIN'!

CAN'T
BLEEDIN' 'ELP IT,
ARTHUR...

FRUKKIN' GRUBBERS
ARE ITCHIER THAN A
DEEP-DOWN DOSE OF
THE SHAGNASTIES!





THE CATAclySM RIPPLES
THROUGH THE BODY, REMINDING
US ONCE MORE OF THE
FRAGILITY OF OUR EXISTENCE.

MIGHTY WINDS
THREATEN TO HURL US
INTO THE BEYOND...



LIFE GROWS HARDER
AS THE BODY DIES
AROUND US...



THE HEAT WHICH ONCE
WARMED US FADES. THE
FLESH FIELDS GROW
HARD AND COLD. THE
NOURISHING FLUIDS
BENEATH THEM NO
LONGER FLOW.



NOW, THE TRIBE URGES
ME TO TELL THEM OF
OTHER BODIES.

THEY STARE AT ME WITH AWE AND —
DESPERATE TO LIVE — BEG ME TO LEAD
THEM TO THESE BRAVE NEW LANDS.



THE QUEST
BEGINS...

EVERYTHING WE
KNOW DISAPPEARS
AS WE VENTURE INTO
THE BEYOND.



MY HEART LEAPS WITH JOY AS I
SEE OTHER BODIES SURROUNDING
WHAT WAS ONCE OUR HOME...

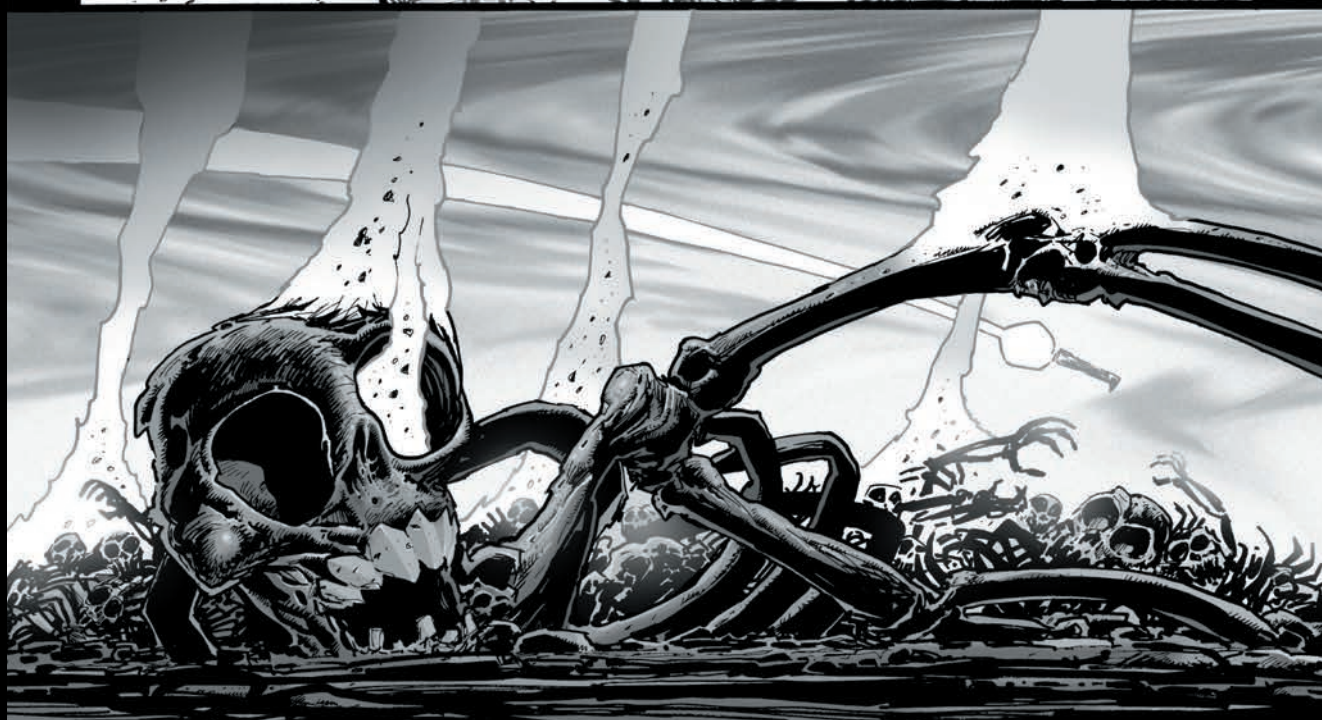
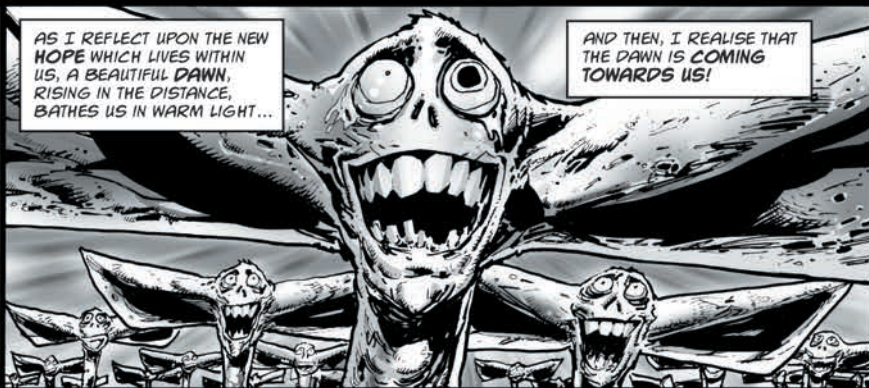
... THOUGH THEY TOO NOW
SEEM INCAPABLE OF
SUSTAINING OUR LIVES.

THE JOURNEY IS LONG
AND TREACHEROUS,
YET NONE FALTER.

IT IS AS IF WE ARE
DRIVEN TOWARDS A NEW
HOME BY SOMETHING
STRONG INSIDE...

AS I REFLECT UPON THE NEW
HOPE WHICH LIVES WITHIN
US, A BEAUTIFUL DAWN,
RISING IN THE DISTANCE,
BATHES US IN WARM LIGHT...

AND THEN, I REALISE THAT
THE DAWN IS COMING
TOWARDS US!





NEURON THIRTEEN, PSICO EMBASSY
ON THE WORLD CITY OF TITANAIA.

ONCE UPON A TIME, THE
UNIVERSE WAS A PLACE OF
**LIGHT AND LOVE AND
FREEDOM. GOODNESS**
FLOWED FROM EVERY
SENTIENT HEART.

THEN CAME
**THE GREAT
TERROR...**

DARKNESS ENGULFED THE LIGHT.
LOVE WAS STRIPPED AWAY UNTIL
ONLY **LUST** REMAINED. **GOOD**
HEARTS WERE **TORN**, STILL
BEATING, FROM NOBLE
BREASTS.

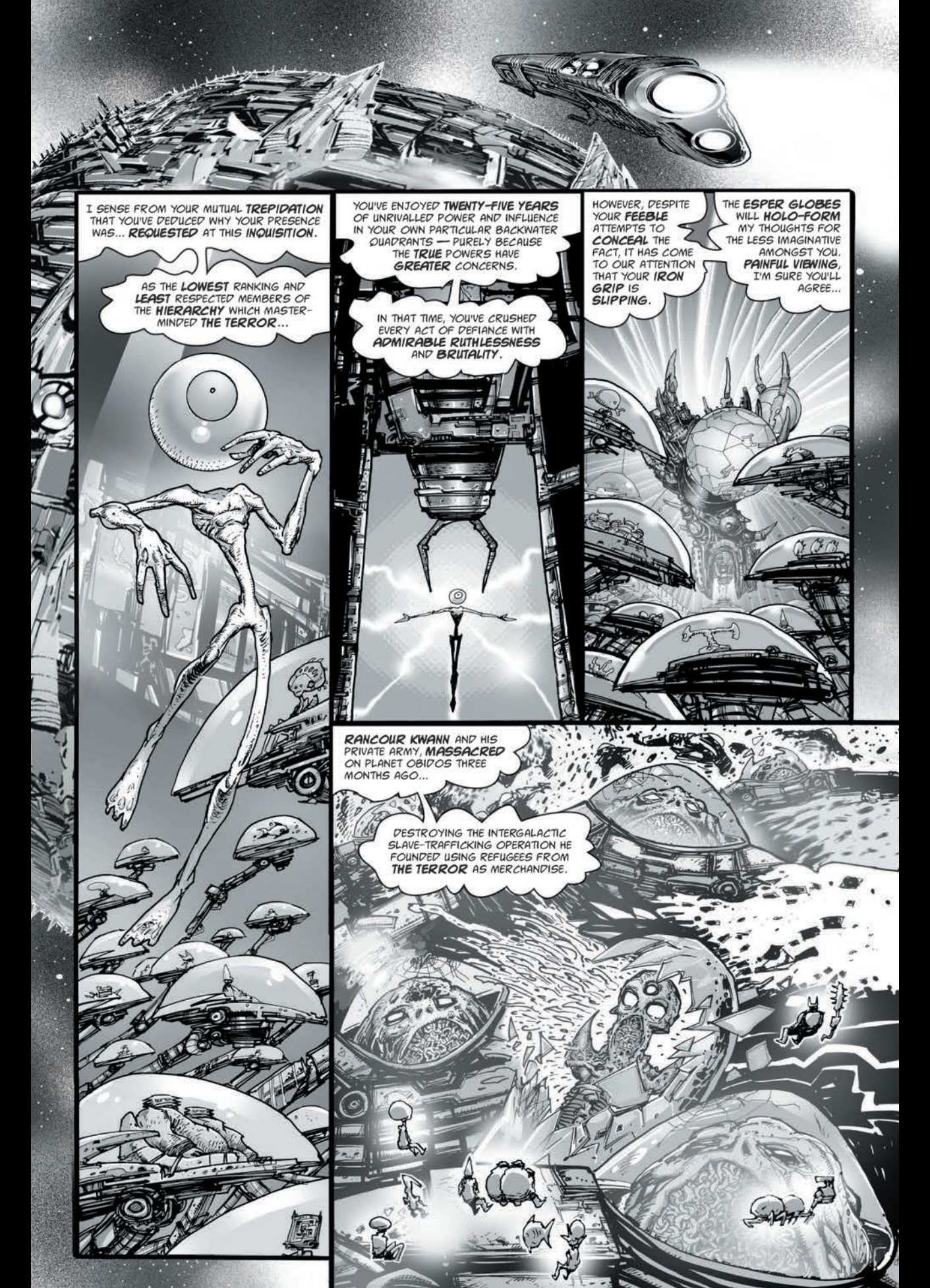
THE UNIVERSE BECAME
A PLACE OF **FEAR AND
OPPRESSION**. THE
FORCES OF **EVIL** RULED
SUPREME.

AT LEAST, THAT'S HOW THE **ROMANTIC
POETS** PORTRAYED EVENTS BEFORE WE
HAD THEM **EXECUTED**. WE VIEW IT IN
A RATHER MORE **REALISTIC** LIGHT.

BUT THEN, WE
ARE AMONGST THE
INSTIGATORS OF '**THE
GREAT TERROR**'. OR,
AS I PREFER TO CALL
IT, **PARTY-TIME**.

THAT, GENTLE
SENTIENTS,
WAS A
**HUMOROUS
ASIDE**.

YOU HAVE MY
PERMISSION
TO EXPRESS
AMUSEMENT.



I SENSE FROM YOUR MUTUAL TREPIDATION
THAT YOU'VE DEDUCED WHY YOUR PRESENCE
WAS... REQUESTED AT THIS INQUISITION.

AS THE LOWEST RANKING AND
LEAST RESPECTED MEMBERS OF
THE HIERARCHY WHICH MASTER-
MINDED THE TERROR...

YOU'VE ENJOYED TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
OF UNRIVALLED POWER AND INFLUENCE
IN YOUR OWN PARTICULAR BACKWATER
QUADRANTS — PURELY BECAUSE
THE TRUE POWERS HAVE
GREATER CONCERNS.

IN THAT TIME, YOU'VE CRUSHED
EVERY ACT OF DEFIANCE WITH
ADMIRABLE RUTHLESSNESS
AND BRUTALITY.

HOWEVER, DESPITE
YOUR FEEBLE
ATTEMPTS TO
CONCEAL THE
FACT, IT HAS COME
TO OUR ATTENTION
THAT YOUR IRON
GRIP IS
SLIPPING.

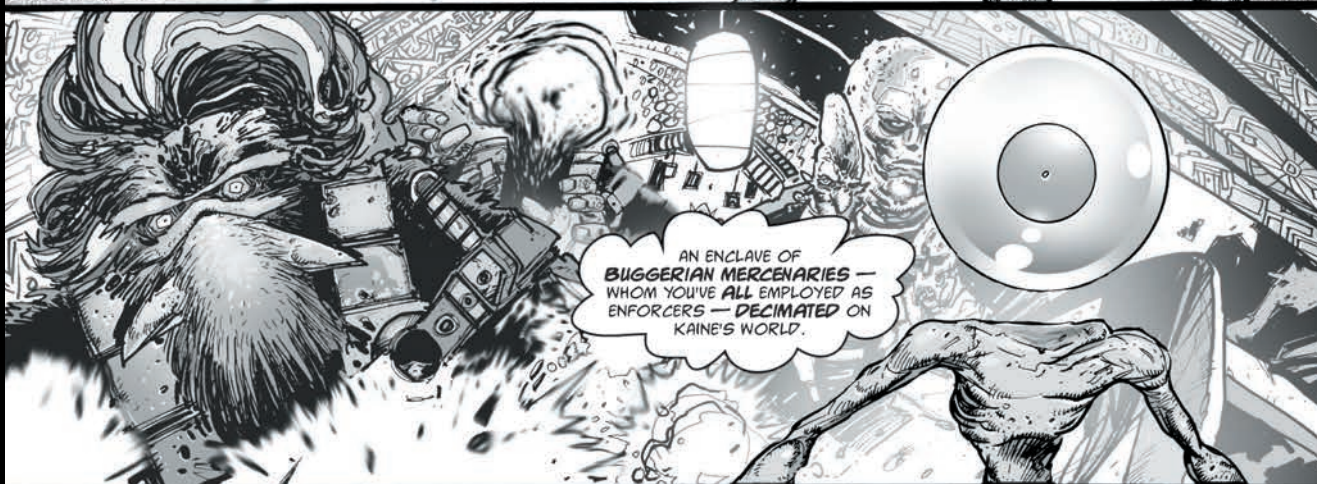
THE ESPER GLOBES
WILL HOLO-FORM
MY THOUGHTS FOR
THE LESS IMAGINATIVE
AMONGST YOU.
PAINFUL VIEWING,
I'M SURE YOU'LL
AGREE...

RANCOUR KWANN AND HIS
PRIVATE ARMY, MASSACRED
ON PLANET OBIDOS THREE
MONTHS AGO...

DESTROYING THE INTERGALACTIC
SLAVE-TRAFFICKING OPERATION HE
FOUNDED USING REFUGEES FROM
THE TERROR AS MERCHANDISE.



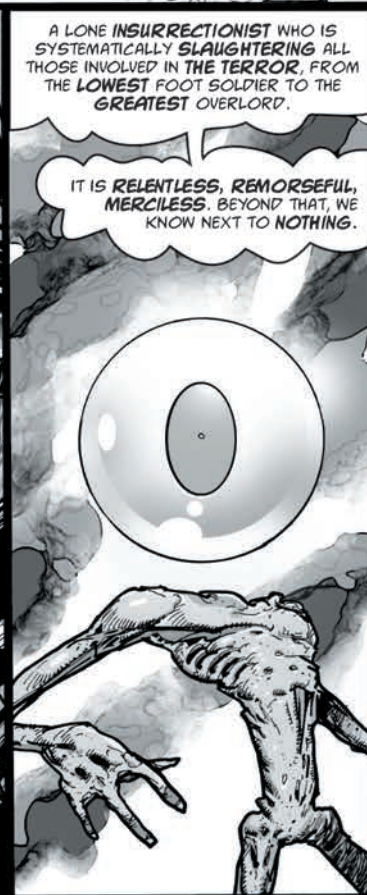
A KRULL BATTLESHIP,
SABOTAGED AND SENT HURTLING
INTO A SUPERNOVA, BREAKING
THE MONOPOLY ON WORMHOLE
TRAVEL THAT THE HIERARCHY
GRANTED THE KRULLS IN THE
WAKE OF THE TERROR.



AN ENCLAVE OF
BUGGERIAN MERCENARIES —
WHOM YOU'VE ALL EMPLOYED AS
ENFORCERS — DECIMATED ON
KAINE'S WORLD.



THE PERPETRATOR OF
THESE APOCALYPTIC
ACTS WAS A SINGLE
CREATURE OF AN
UNIDENTIFIABLE RACE...



A LONE INSURRECTIONIST WHO IS
SYSTEMATICALLY SLAUGHTERING ALL
THOSE INVOLVED IN THE TERROR, FROM
THE LOWEST FOOT SOLDIER TO THE
GREATEST OVERLORD.

IT IS RELENTLESS, REMORSEFUL,
MERCILESS. BEYOND THAT, WE
KNOW NEXT TO NOTHING.



THIS MIND-MOULD IMAGE OF OUR ENEMY WAS
FORCIBLY EXTRAPOLATED FROM THE MINDS OF
WITNESSES TO THE MASSACRE UPON OBIDOS.

BEAR IN MIND THAT
IT IS A COMPOSITE,
AND REFLECTS THE
DIFFERENT SENSORIAL
PERCEPTIONS OF THE
VARIOUS SPECIES ON
SALE IN THE SLAVE
ARENA...

THE ONLY THING THE WITNESSES DO AGREE UPON IS THAT THE CREATURE MAKES NO SOUND UNTIL IT DISPATCHES ITS VICTIMS.

AND THEN IT UTTERS ONLY A SINGLE WORD...

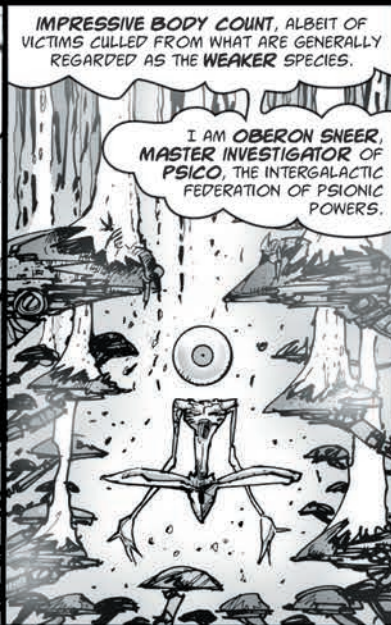
A GHOST FROM THE PAST...

A NAME WE ALL THOUGHT WE'D NEVER HEAR —

SHAKARA!

AAAIIIEEE!

AARRGGHHH!



IMPRESSIVE BODY COUNT, ALBEIT OF VICTIMS CULLED FROM WHAT ARE GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE WEAKER SPECIES.

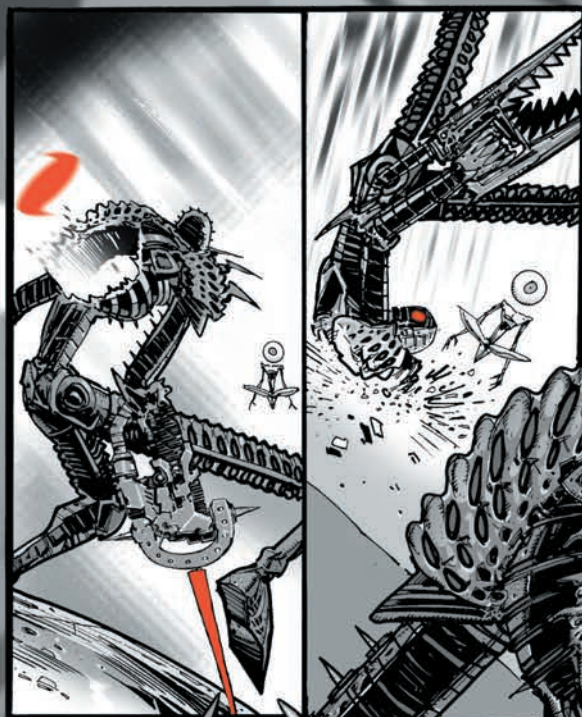
I AM OBERON SNEER, MASTER INVESTIGATOR OF PSICO, THE INTERGALACTIC FEDERATION OF PSIONIC POWERS.

SHAKARA!

SO YOU KEEP SAYING.

THOUGH I PROMISE YOU...

THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME THE UNIVERSE EVER HEARS THAT NAME!

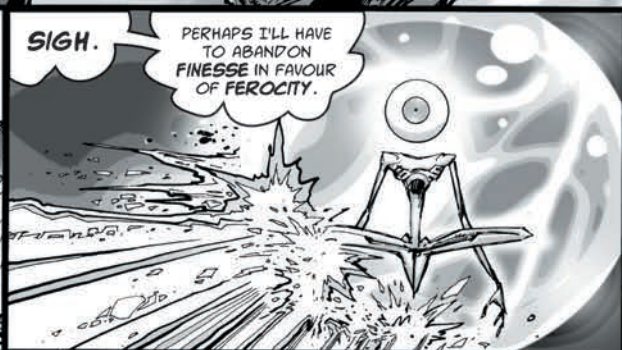


INTERESTING...

I PSI-DIRECTED THE LASER-SHURIKEN STRAIGHT THROUGH YOUR HEART — OR AT LEAST WHERE THE HEART SHOULD BE IN A CREATURE OF YOUR PHYSIOLOGY.

SIGH.

PERHAPS I'LL HAVE TO ABANDON FINESSE IN FAVOUR OF FEROCITY.





I DO HOPE THE PLASMA-BARRAGE HASN'T LEFT YOU COMPLETELY **BRAIN-DEAD**.

I'D STILL LIKE THE **PLEASURE** OF TEARING YOUR MIND APART...

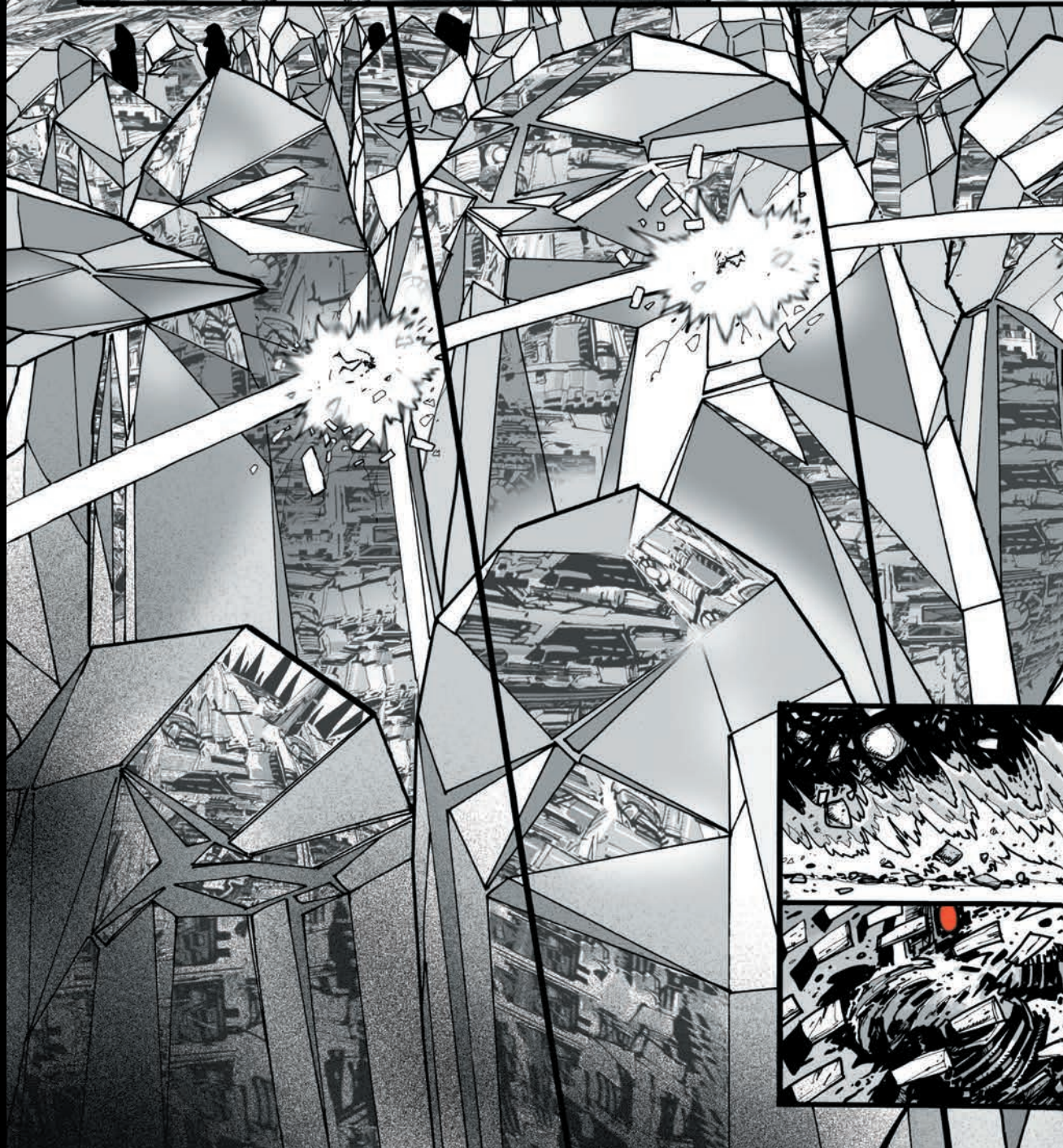


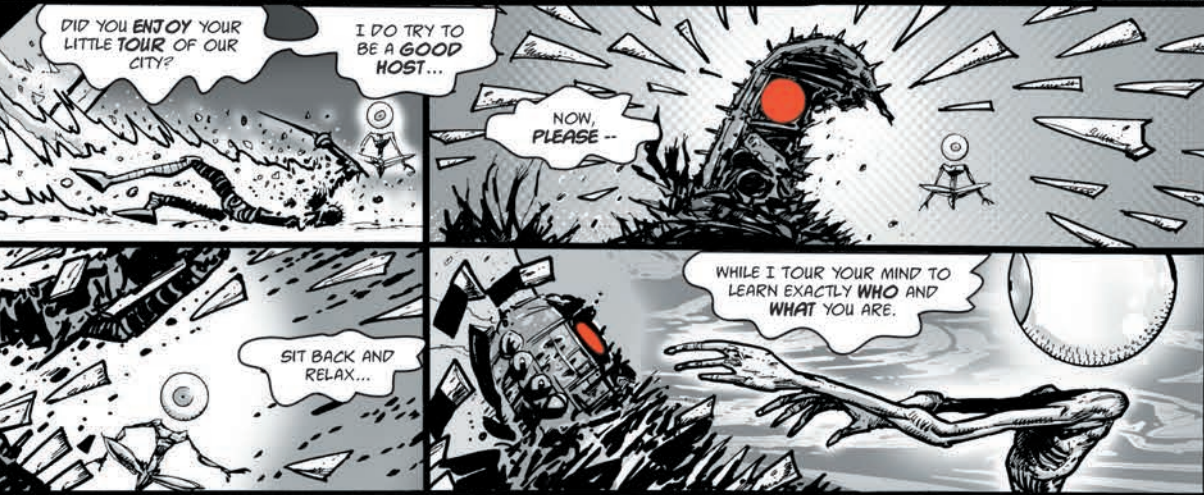
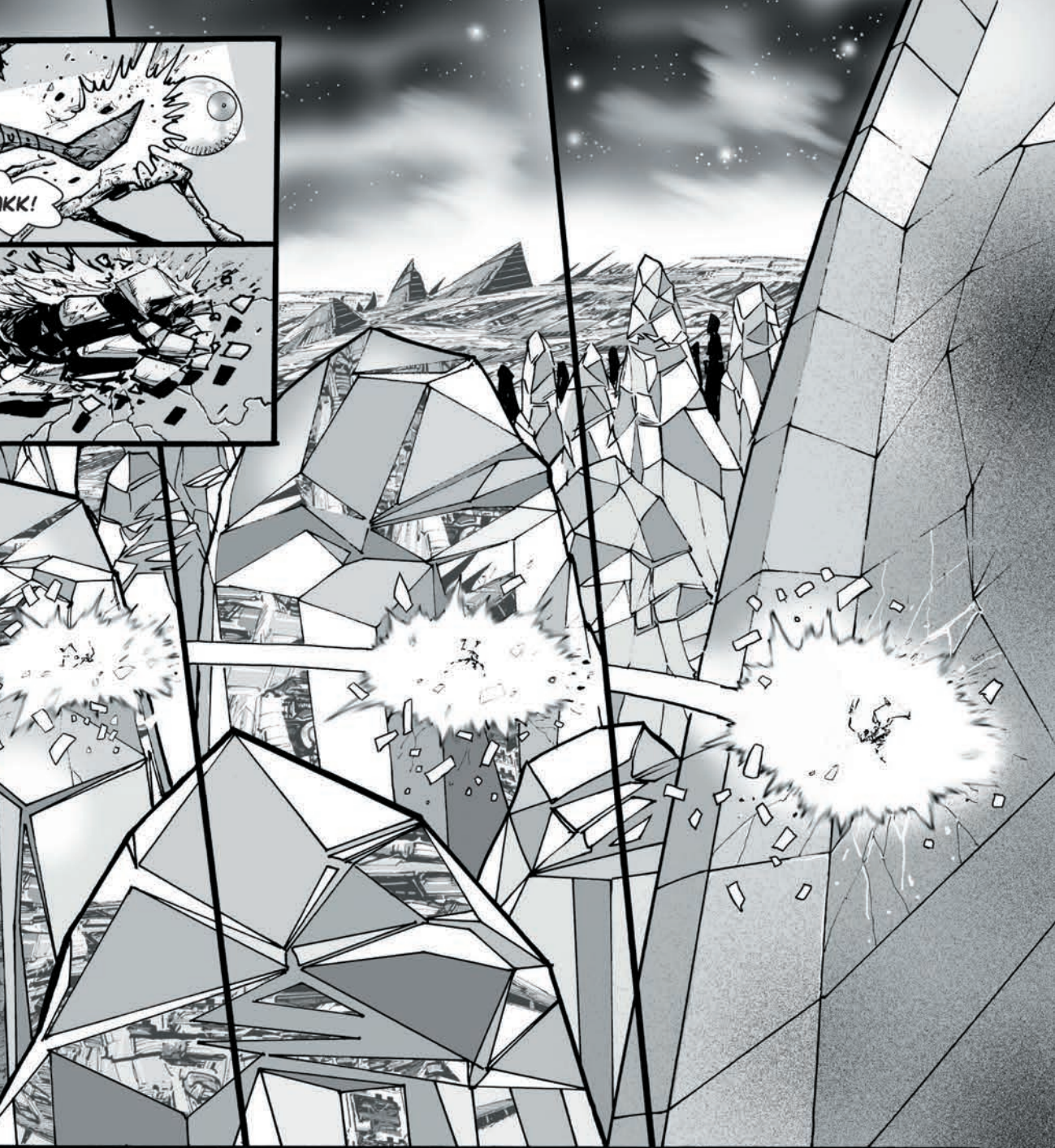
HHRRRAAA

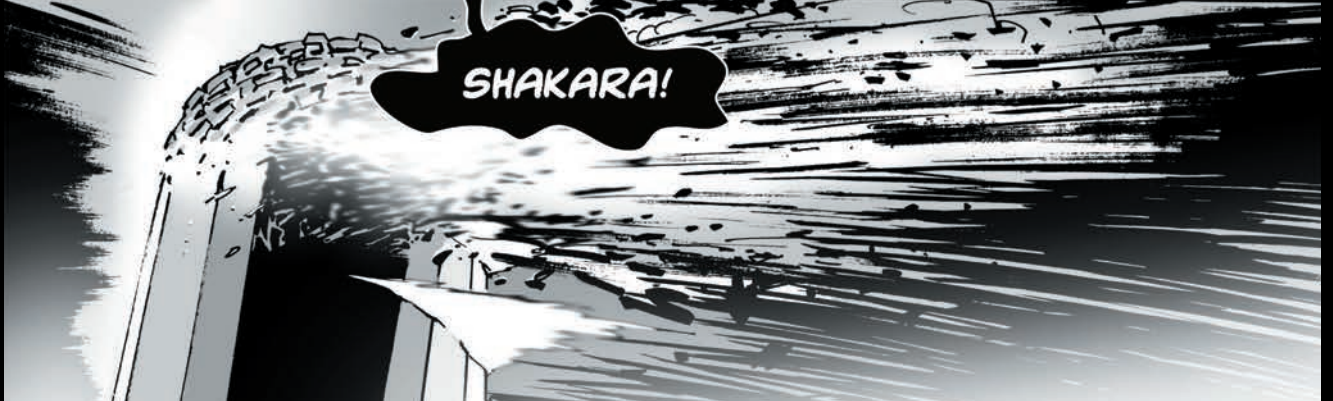


MONSTER!

I HAVEN'T SUFFERED THE **HUMILIATION** OF PHYSICAL CONTACT FOR OVER HALF A CENTURY!







'MASTER INVESTIGATOR SNEER'S
PSI-SCREAM INCAPACITATED EVERY
PSIONIC INDIVIDUAL ON TITANIA.

'WE ALERTED ALL PSICO PERSONNEL IN THE
QUADRANT, BUT WHEN WE ARRIVED AT THE
EMBASSY, THE CREATURE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE ASSAULT WAS LONG GONE.

'WE FOUND INVESTIGATOR SNEER
IN A STATE OF CATATONIA, HIS
MINDSCAPE A WASTELAND,
BLASTED CLEAN APART FROM
A SINGLE THOUGHT...

'A NAME WHICH HE REPEATED
OVER AND OVER AGAIN...'
— MASTER INVESTIGATOR
KARNAK BLEED, COMMANDER,
TASKFORCE: SHAKARA.

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

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SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

SHAKARA...

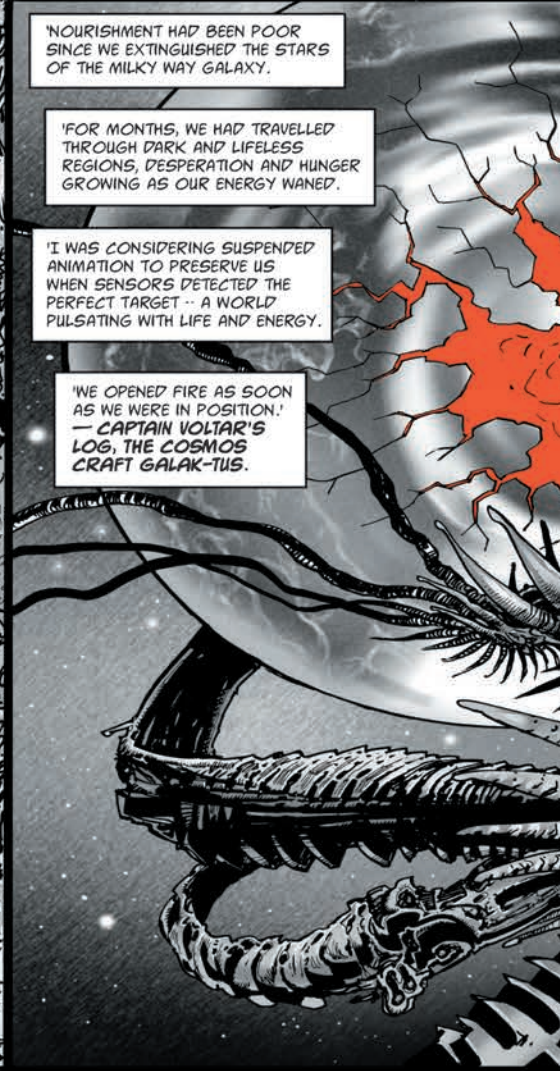


'NOURISHMENT HAD BEEN POOR SINCE WE EXTINGUISHED THE STARS OF THE MILKY WAY GALAXY.

'FOR MONTHS, WE HAD TRAVELLED THROUGH DARK AND LIFELESS REGIONS, DESPERATION AND HUNGER GROWING AS OUR ENERGY WANED.

'I WAS CONSIDERING SUSPENDED ANIMATION TO PRESERVE US WHEN SENSORS DETECTED THE PERFECT TARGET -- A WORLD PULSATING WITH LIFE AND ENERGY.

'WE OPENED FIRE AS SOON AS WE WERE IN POSITION.'
— CAPTAIN VOLTAR'S LOG, THE COSMOS CRAFT GALAK-TUS.





CARNAGE
SUCCESSFULLY
INITIATED,
CAPTAIN.

CATAclysmic
upheavals all
across the target
world. The first
release of energy
is imminent.

ACTIVATE THE
APOCALYPSE
CORE.



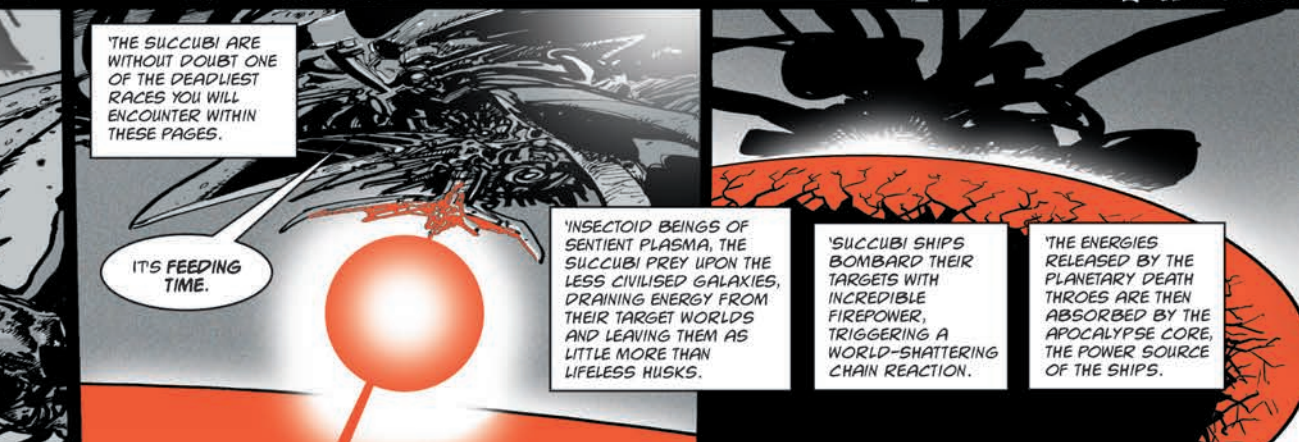
'THE SUCCUBI ARE
WITHOUT DOUBT ONE
OF THE DEADLIEST
RACES YOU WILL
ENCOUNTER WITHIN
THESE PAGES.

IT'S FEEDING
TIME.

'INSECTOID BEINGS OF
SENTIENT PLASMA, THE
SUCCUBI PREY UPON THE
LESS CIVILISED GALAXIES,
DRAINING ENERGY FROM
THEIR TARGET WORLDS
AND LEAVING THEM AS
LITTLE MORE THAN
LIFELESS HUSKS.

'SUCCUBI SHIPS
BOMBARD THEIR
TARGETS WITH
INCREDIBLE
FIREPOWER,
TRIGGERING A
WORLD-SHATTERING
CHAIN REACTION.

'THE ENERGIES
RELEASED BY THE
PLANETARY DEATH
THROES ARE THEN
ABSORBED BY THE
APOCALYPSE CORE,
THE POWER SOURCE
OF THE SHIPS.



'THE SUCCUBI, BIO-LINKED DIRECTLY TO THE MAINFRAME OF THEIR SHIPS, FEED UPON THE TRAPPED ENERGY LIKE VAMPIRES UPON A GUSHING CORPSE.'
— ENCYCLOPEDIA INTERGALACTICA, EDITION 2000.

SSSKKRREEE!

CORE OVERLOAD,
HELM?

NEGATIVE,
SIRE.

Y-YOU WON'T
BELIEVE THIS,
BUT WE APPEAR
TO BE UNDER
ATTACK!

'IMPOSSIBLE!

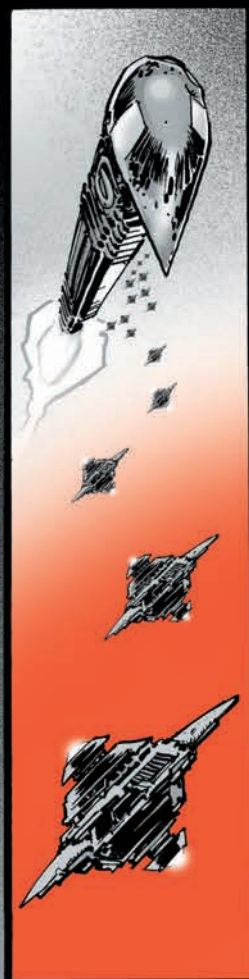
'NOTHING IN THE KNOWN
UNIVERSE WOULD BE
THAT INSANE!'

SHAKARA!

HMPH.

AN INSECT.
IT'S BENEATH OUR
NOTICE. LET THE
AUTO-DEFENCES
ERADICATE IT...

WE HAVE
A WORLD TO
RAVAGE.



CAPTAIN -- THE HOSTILE HAS
LAUNCHED AN ARRAY OF
SPATIAL MINES INTO THE
ENERGY-CHANNEL...

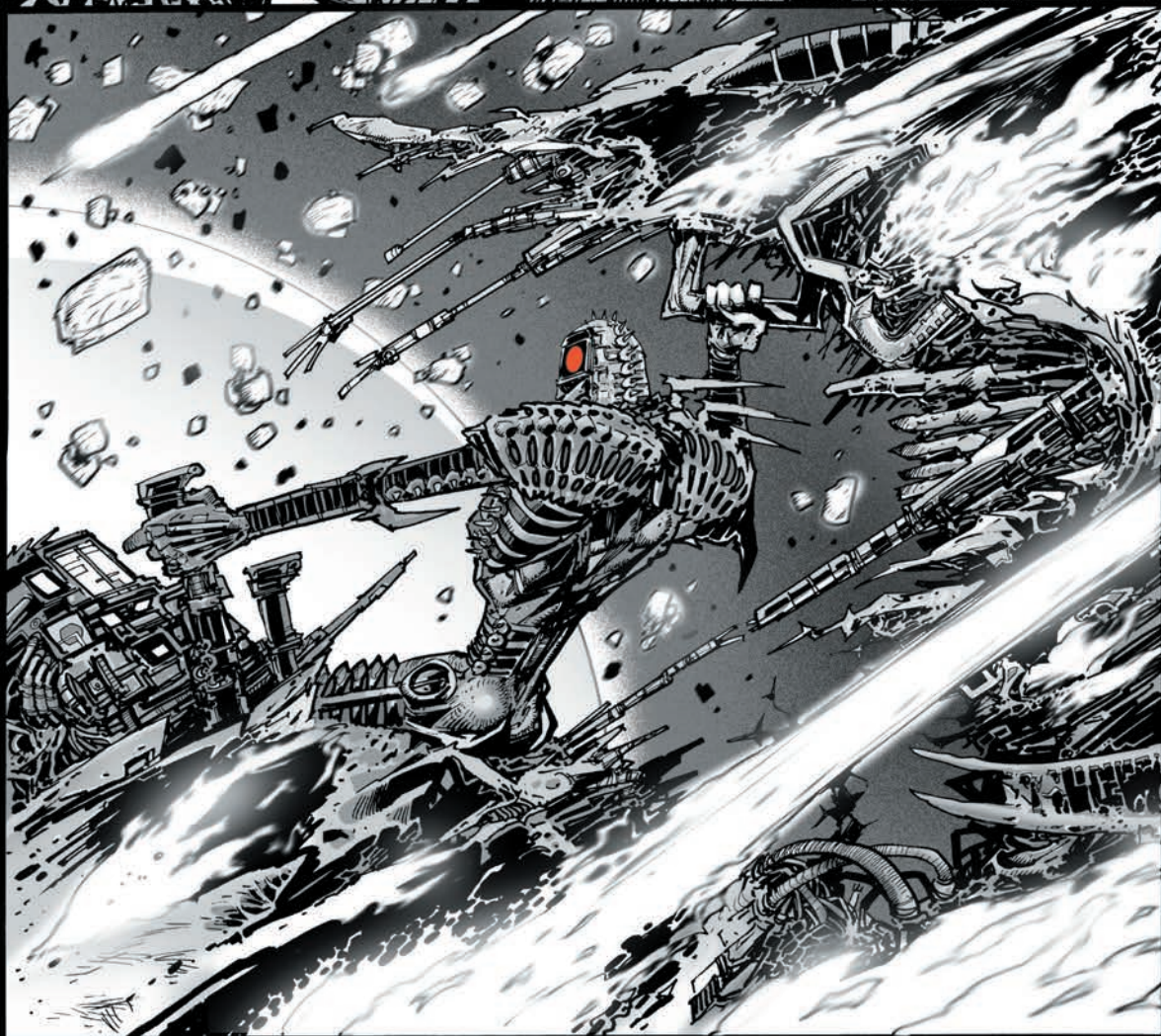
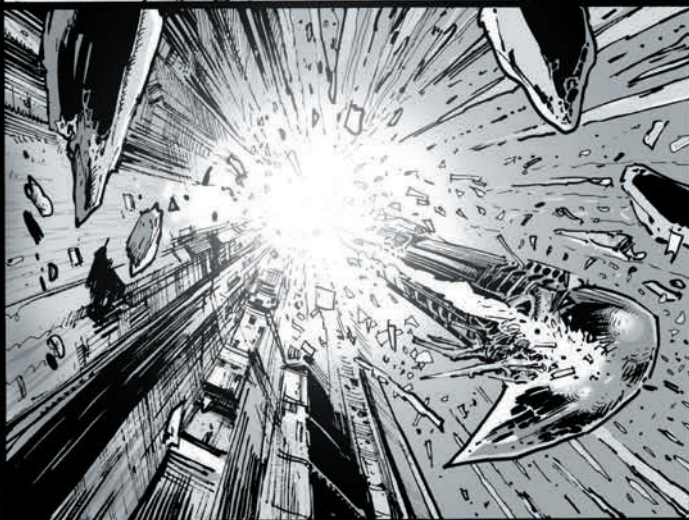
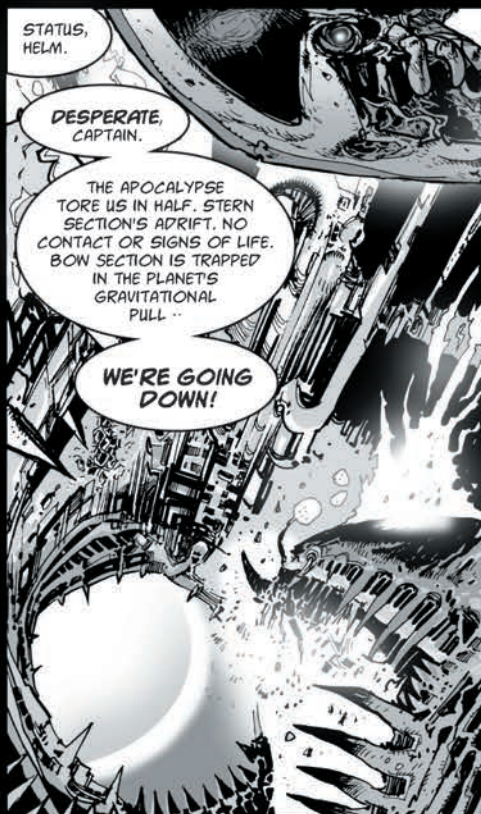
FRUCKING
HELL! THEY'RE FIELD-
DISRUPTORS!



THE CORE'S
BEEN
BREACHED!

APOCALYPSE
ALERT! REPEAT,
APOCALYPSE
ALERT!



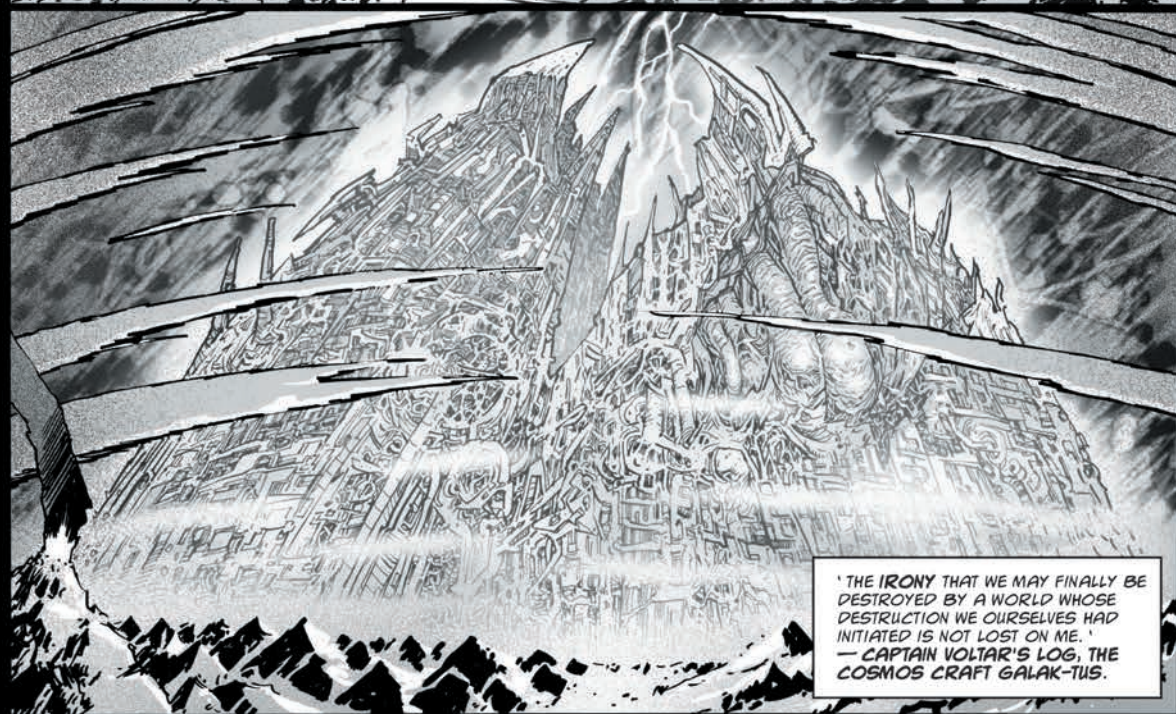
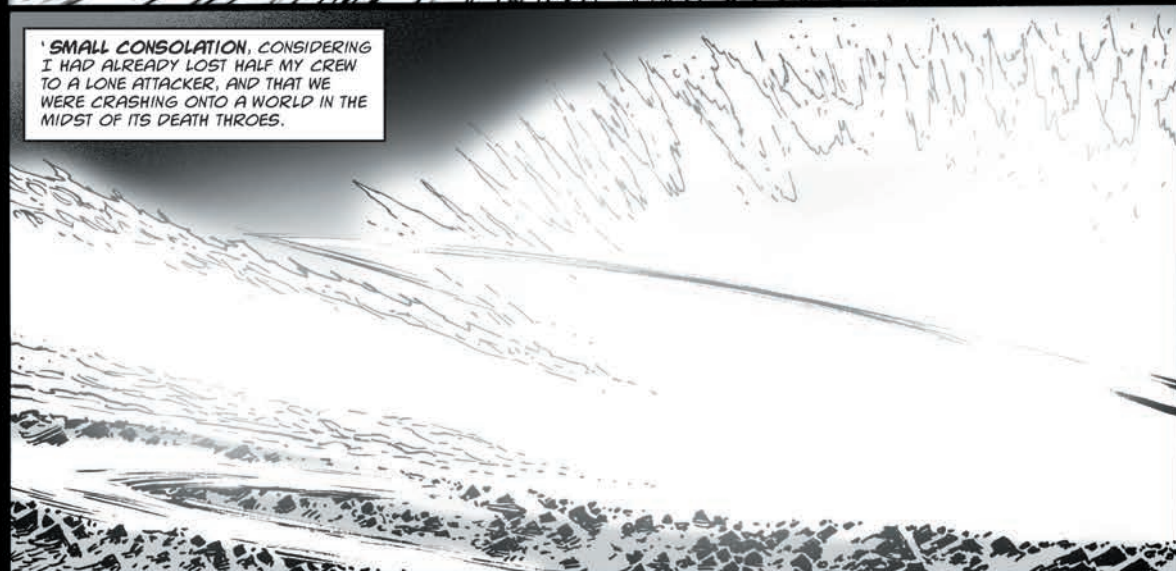




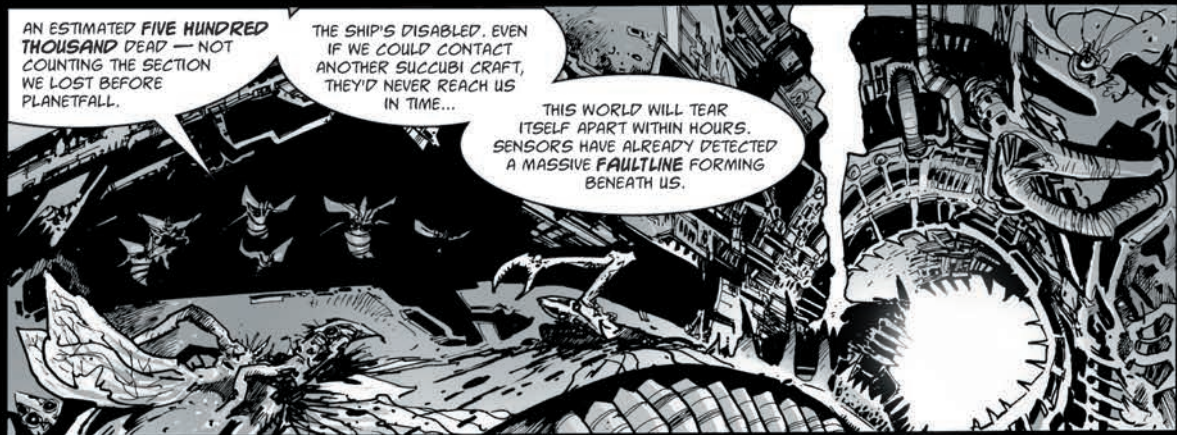
'WE MANAGED TO ABSORB MOST OF THE FIERY ENERGY GENERATED AS WE ENTERED THE TARGET-WORLD'S ATMOSPHERE, ALLOWING US TO CONTROL OUR DESCENTS SLIGHTLY.



'SMALL CONSOLATION, CONSIDERING I HAD ALREADY LOST HALF MY CREW TO A LONE ATTACKER, AND THAT WE WERE CRASHING ONTO A WORLD IN THE MIDST OF ITS DEATH THROES.



'THE IRONY THAT WE MAY FINALLY BE DESTROYED BY A WORLD WHOSE DESTRUCTION WE OURSELVES HAD INITIATED IS NOT LOST ON ME.'
— CAPTAIN VOLTAR'S LOG, THE COSMOS CRAFT GALAK-TUS.



AN ESTIMATED FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DEAD — NOT COUNTING THE SECTION WE LOST BEFORE PLANETFALL.

THE SHIP'S DISABLED. EVEN IF WE COULD CONTACT ANOTHER SUCCUBI CRAFT, THEY'D NEVER REACH US IN TIME...

THIS WORLD WILL TEAR ITSELF APART WITHIN HOURS. SENSORS HAVE ALREADY DETECTED A MASSIVE FAULTLINE FORMING BENEATH US.

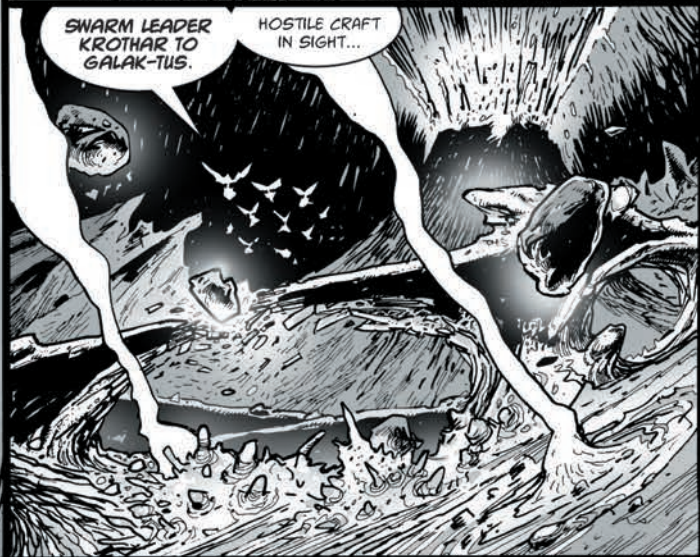


SIRE... ?



FIND THE CREATURE THAT BROUGHT US TO THIS. BRING IT HERE.

ITS DEATH IS ALL WE HAVE TO LIVE FOR.



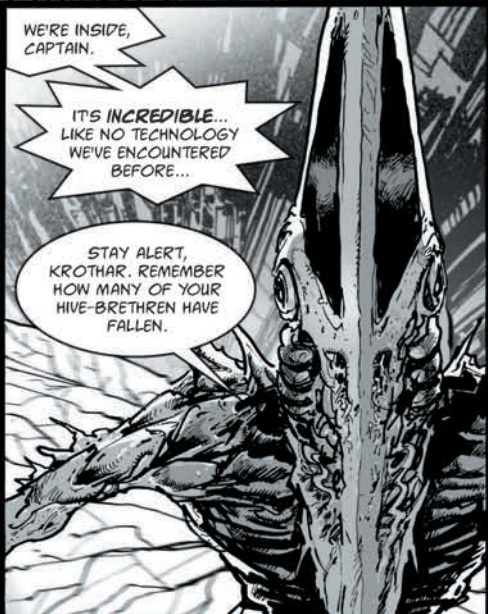
SWARM LEADER KROTHAR TO GALAK-TUS.

HOSTILE CRAFT IN SIGHT...



THOUGH IF THERE'S ANYTHING MORE THAN CORPSES ONBOARD, IT'LL BE A MIRACLE.

LOOKS LIKE IT HAD A WORSE LANDING THAN WE DID.



WE'RE INSIDE, CAPTAIN.

IT'S INCREDIBLE... LIKE NO TECHNOLOGY WE'VE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE...

STAY ALERT, KROTHAR. REMEMBER HOW MANY OF YOUR HIVE-BRETHREN HAVE FALLEN.

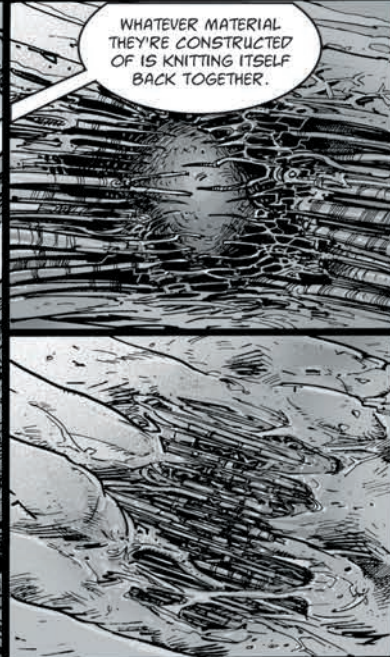


IT'S AS IF WE'RE INSIDE
ANOTHER **ORGANISM**, A **LIVING**
BEING. THERE ARE FLUIDS THAT
LOOK LIKE **BLOOD**...

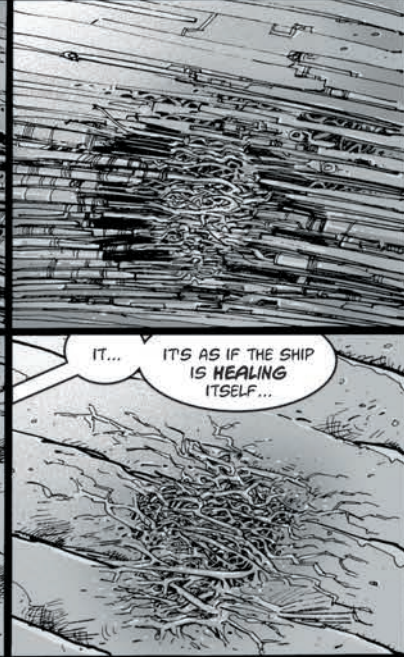
THE WHOLE SHIP
STINKS... LIKE **DEAD**
FLESH, A **FESTERING**
WOUND.



THE WALLS SEEM TO BE
REBUILDING THEMSELVES
AROUND US...



WHATEVER MATERIAL
THEY'RE CONSTRUCTED
OF IS **KNITTING ITSELF**
BACK TOGETHER.



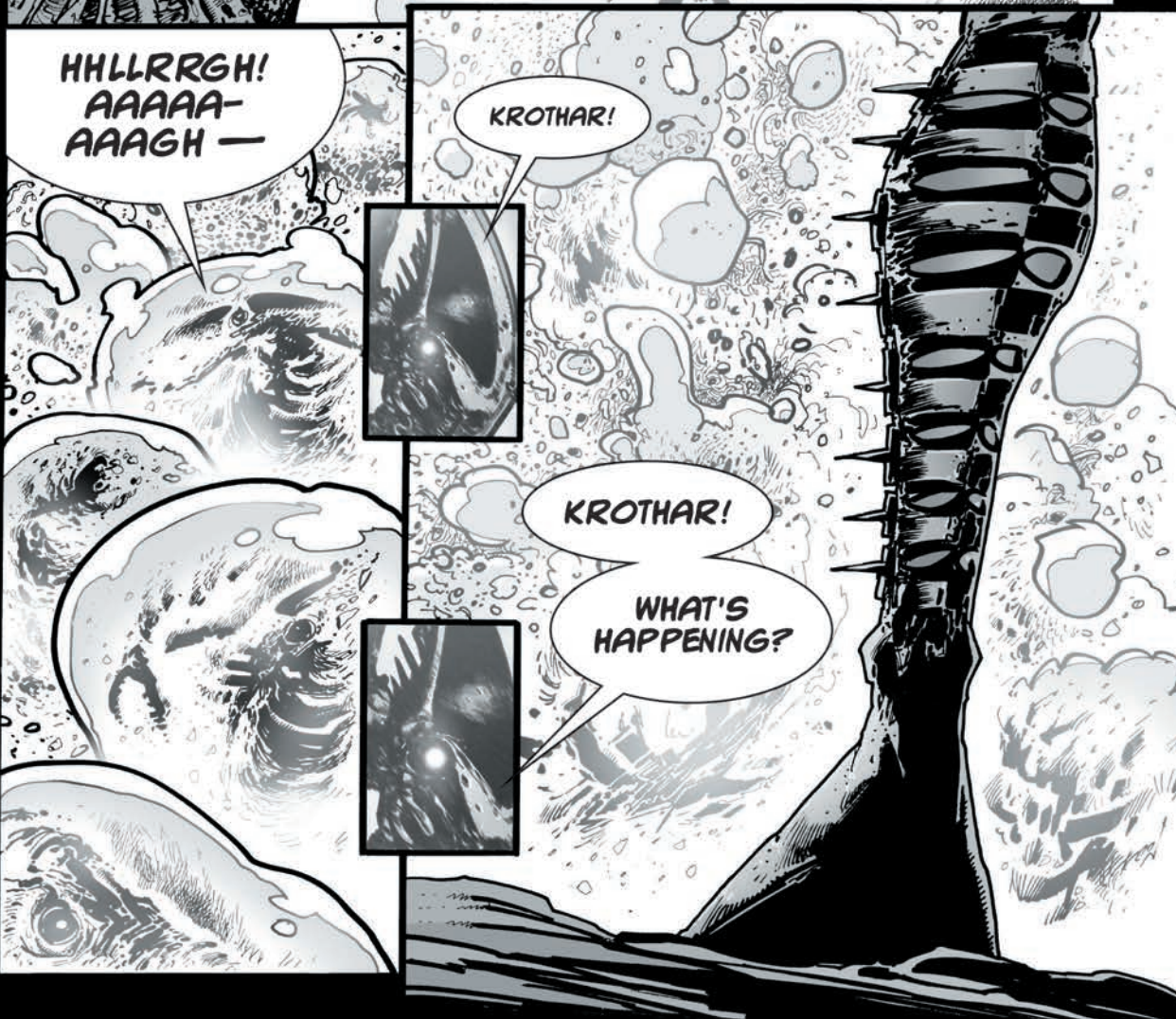
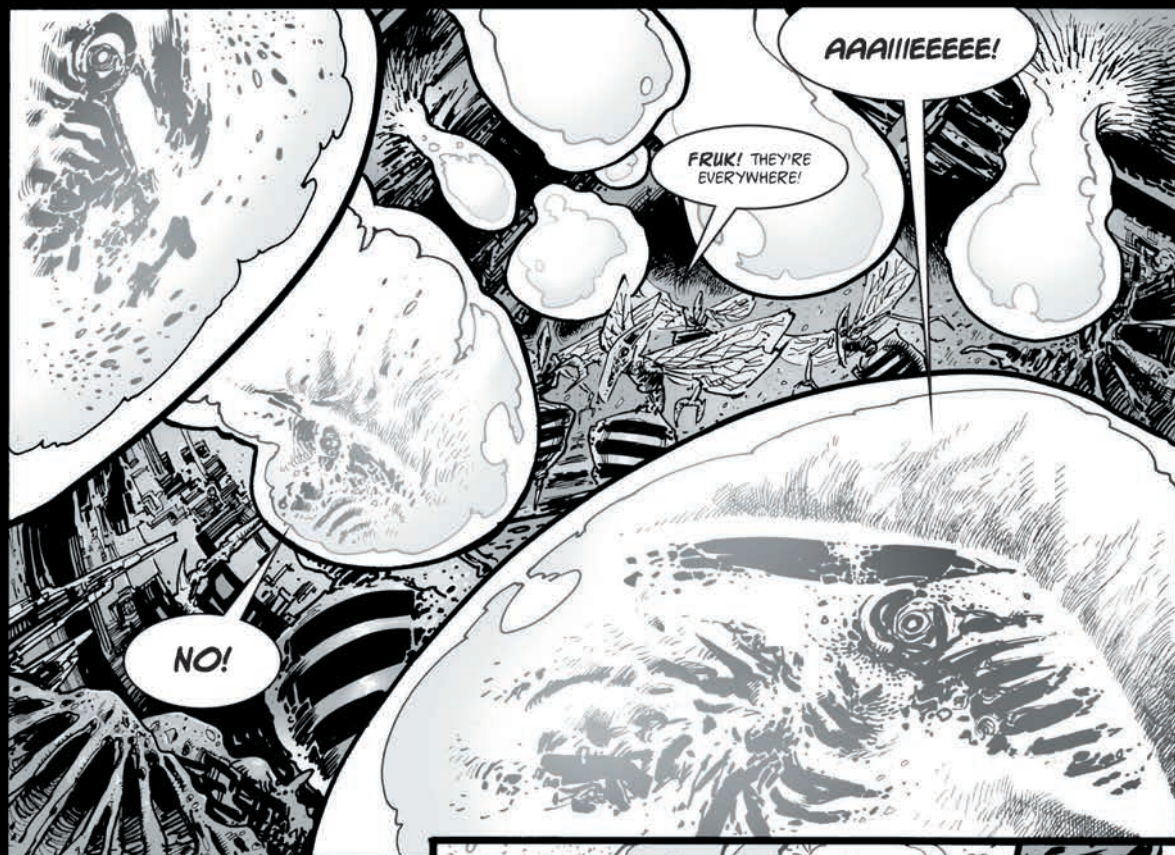
IT... IT'S AS IF THE SHIP
IS **HEALING**
ITSELF...

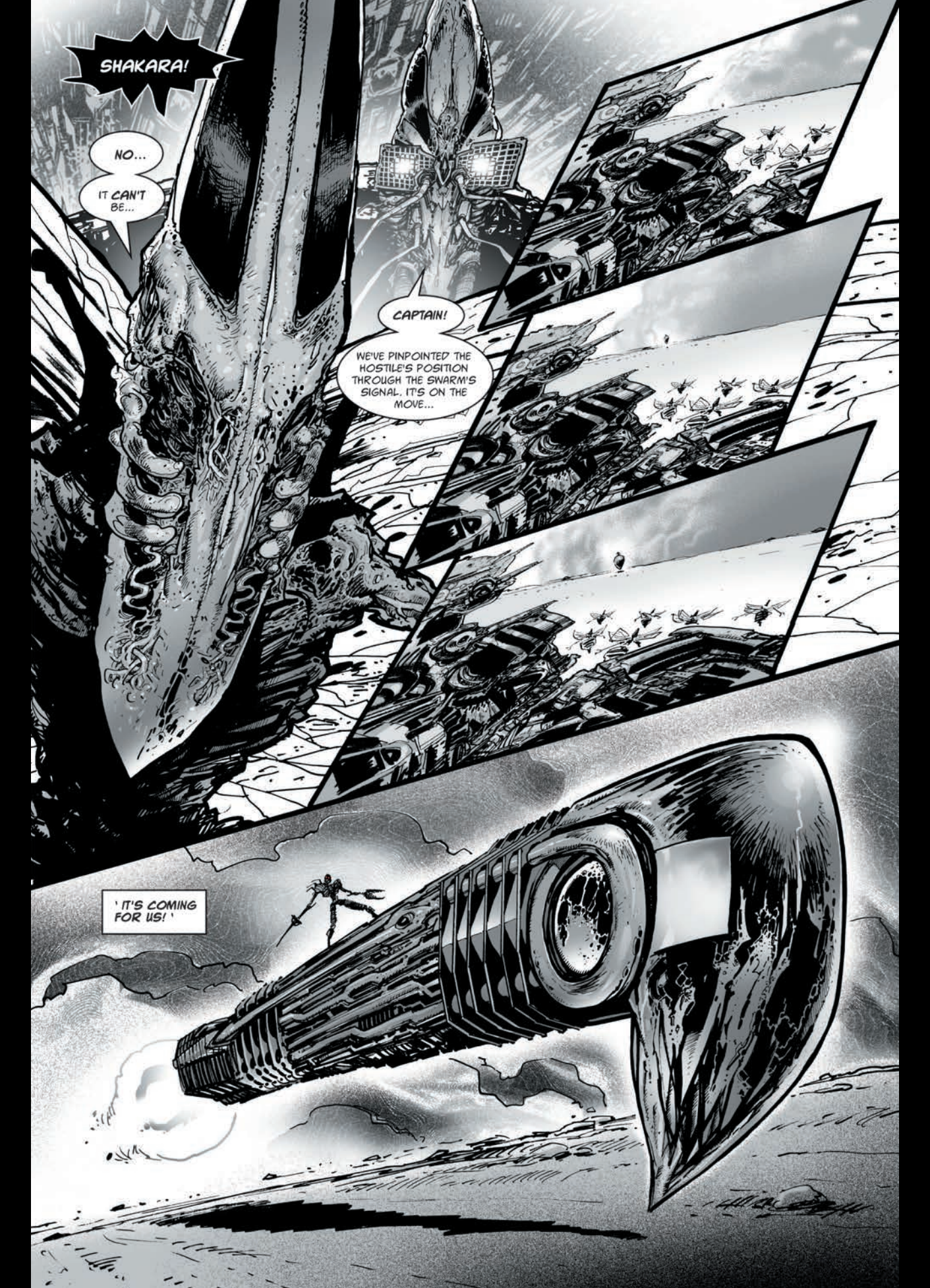


IT'S REACTING TO
OUR PRESENCE...
PRODUCING SOME
SORT OF
SECRETION...



AAAAHHHHH!





SHAKARA!

NO...

IT CAN'T
BE...

CAPTAIN!

WE'VE PINPOINTED THE
HOSTILE'S POSITION
THROUGH THE SWARM'S
SIGNAL. IT'S ON THE
MOVE...

'IT'S COMING
FOR US!'

' THIS NAMELESS WORLD UPON WHICH WE ARE TRAPPED WILL DESTROY ITSELF WITHIN THE HOUR.

' THE BEING WHICH BROUGHT DOWN MY SHIP AND SLAUGHTERED MY CREW WILL BE UPON US WITHIN MINUTES.

' THE SWARM HAS TAKEN TO THE SKIES TO MEET THE MONSTER.

BLAST IT!

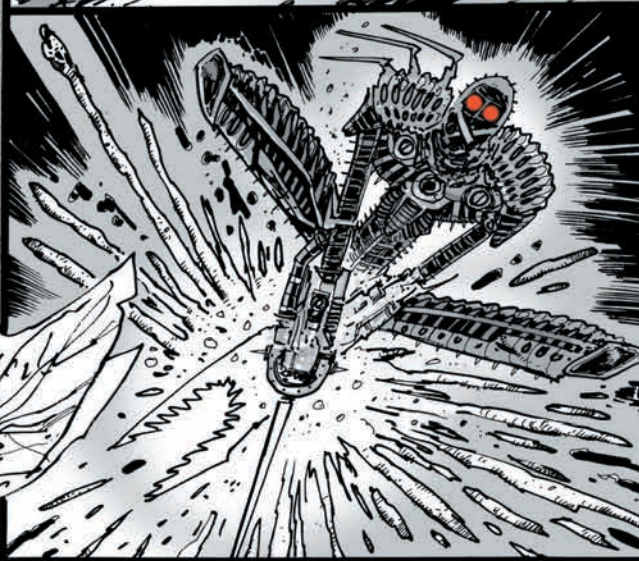
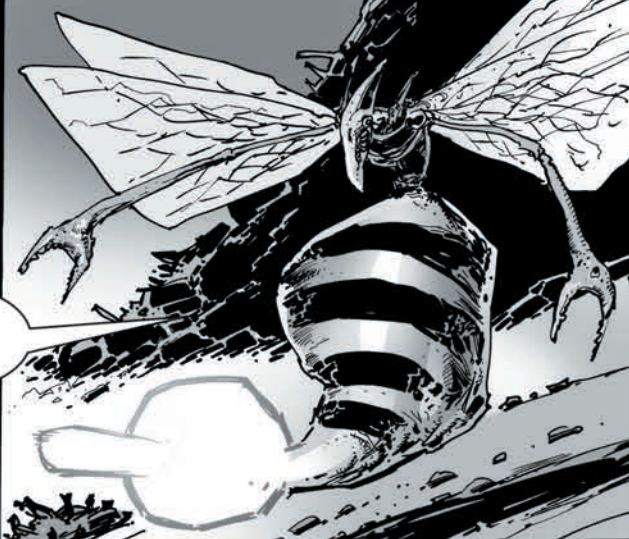
' I WILL JOIN THEM ONCE I HAVE SEALED THIS COMMUNICATION WITHIN A SOLAR POD AND SENT IT TO THE STARS.



'WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE,
SALUTE YOU.' — CAPTAIN
VOLTAR'S LOG, THE
COSMIC CRAFT
GALAK-TUS. FINAL ENTRY.

DIE, YOU
FRUCKER!

DIE!



EEEEAGH-
KKK!



SAY SOMETHING,
DAMN YOU...



I HAVE NO
VOICE.

MY VOICE IS
THEIR VOICE.



A DEATH-SCREAM
THAT NEVER ENDS.



WHO ARE
YOU?

WHAT ARE
YOU?



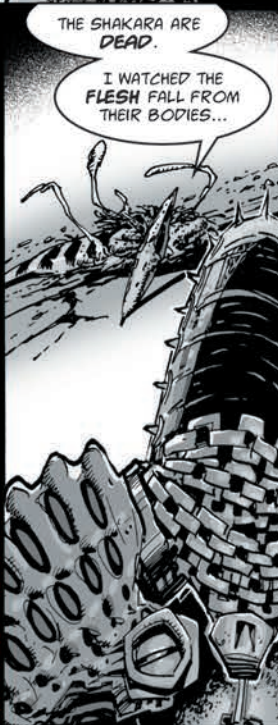
I HAVE NO
NAME.



MY NAME IS
THEIR NAME.



SHAKARA.



THE SHAKARA ARE
DEAD.

I WATCHED THE
FLESH FALL FROM
THEIR BODIES...



SAW THEM **DROWN**
IN A SEA OF THEIR
OWN BLOOD.



AND AFTER THEY HAD
FALLEN, WE SUCKED
THE LIFE FROM THE
CORE OF THEIR
WORLD.



THE SHAKARA
ARE DEAD...



I AM THE
DEAD WHO
WILL NOT DIE.

I AM
SHAKARA.

THE
AVENGER.



N-NO!

AAAAAIIIEEE!



SHAKARA: THE ASSASSIN

Script: Robbie Morrison

Art: Henry Flint

Letters: Annie Parkhouse

Originally published in 2000 AD Progs 1441-1449

WORLD WAR
INCORPORATED
PROMO FILM:

WAR!

WHAT
IS IT GOOD
FOR?

ABSOLUTELY
EVERYTHING!

SAY IT
AGAIN!

WHAT'S
THAT? HEY, I
HEAR WHAT YOU'RE
SAYING, AND I AGREE
ONE HUNDRED
PERCENT.

WAR IS
HELL, AND SHOULDN'T
BE GLAMORISED
OR EXPLOITED FOR
SHALLOW COMMERCIAL
PURPOSES.

BUT YOU
GOTTA ADMIT, THIS
UNIVERSE ONLY GOT TO
ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF
SOPHISTICATION AND
STABILITY THROUGH
COMBAT AND
CARNAGE.

I MEAN,
BLESSED ARE THE
PEACEMAKERS, BUT
IF YOU'VE GOT A STICKY
PROBLEM TO SOLVE, I'D
CALL IN THE ASS-
KICKERS!

THE MAIN
HASSLES WITH
WARFARE ARE
DAMAGE TO PROPERTY
AND CIVILIAN CASUALTIES.
IN YOUR CONVENTIONAL
WAR, EVEN THE WINNERS
AREN'T REALLY WINNERS -
THEY'VE JUST GOT TO
START REBUILDING
EVERYTHING
AGAIN.

WORLD
WAR INCORPORATED
ALLOWS YOU TO AVOID
THOSE WARTIME
WOES!

HERE IN
THE ARIES SYSTEM,
WE'VE REMODELLED
TWENTY-ONE
MOONS AND PLANETS
TO CREATE WAR
WORLDS...

...BATTLEFIELD
ENVIRONMENTS THAT
WARRING SPECIES CAN
RENT BY THE CONTINENT,
ALLOWING THEM TO SETTLE
DISPUTES WITHOUT HAVING
TO RAVAGE THEIR OWN
HOMELANDS IN THE
PROCESS!

AVAILABLE
ON THREE-, SIX- AND
TWELVE-MONTH LEASES!
PREFERENTIAL RATES
FOR LONGER
CONFLICTS!

SO, IF
YOU'RE A GLOBAL
LEADER WHO COVETS A
NEIGHBOURING WORLD'S
ENERGY SOURCE, OR A
GENOCIDAL DICTATOR WITH
AN ETHNIC GRUDGE
AGAINST ANOTHER
SPECIES, BUY YOURSELF
A BATTLEFIELD
TODAY!

WAR...
WHAT IS IT GOOD
FOR? ABSOLUTELY
EVERYTHING!

AND,
IF YOU STILL
NEED CONVINCING,
REMEMBER, THE
LADIES LOVE A
WARRIOR!





TOP OF
THE MORNING
TO YOU!

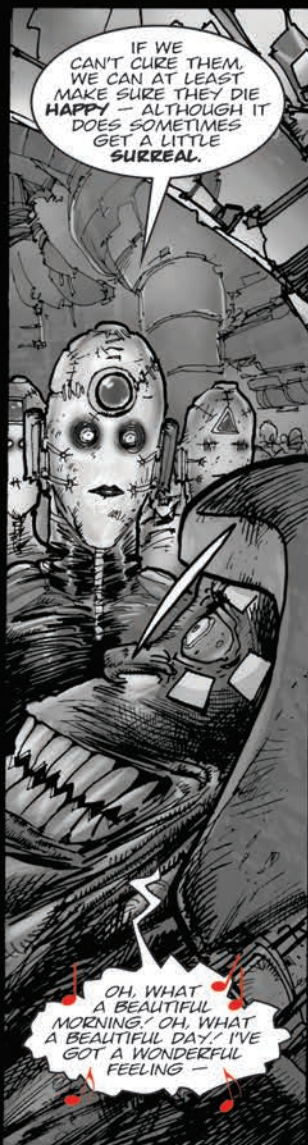
THEY TELL
ME IT'S **WORSE**
THAN IT LOOKS, BUT
DON'T WORRY, I FEEL
GREAT! HONEST!
IN FACT...



...I
FEEL A **SONG**
COMING
ON!

THE
WOUND WAS
CAUSED BY A
ROUND FROM A
STORMBRINGER
CANNON.

NOTHING
WE CAN DO
EXCEPT PUMP HIM
WITH ENOUGH PAINKILLERS TO
CATAPULT HIM INTO A
STATE OF ABSOLUTE
EUPHORIA.



IF WE
CAN'T CURE THEM,
WE CAN AT LEAST
MAKE SURE THEY DIE
HAPPY - ALTHOUGH IT
DOES SOMETIMES
GET A LITTLE
SURREAL.

OH, WHAT
A BEAUTIFUL
MORNING! OH, WHAT
A BEAUTIFUL DAY! I'VE
GOT A WONDERFUL
FEELING -



THE
SKARAZIANS
AND **DRAGANIANS**
ARE
ANCIENT ENEMIES, BUT
THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS
OF THEIR WAR AREN'T
FOR US TO
JUDGE.

WE ARE
AN IMPARTIAL FIELD
HOSPITAL FOR AN
INTERGALACTIC CHARITY.
WE CARE FOR THE
WOUNDED OF **BOTH** SIDES.
THE SURVIVAL RATE
IS THIRTEEN PER
CENT...



...AND
BELIEVE ME,
IN A CONFLICT OF
THIS INTENSITY, THAT
PRETTY MUCH MAKES
US **MIRACLE**
WORKERS.

**THE DRAGANIAN
WAR ROOM:**

GENERAL
BRAGG! AN UNIDENTIFIED
SHIP JUST ENTERED THE
ATMOSPHERE - HEADED
STRAIGHT FOR THIS
WARZONE!

NO
TROOP MOVEMENTS
SCHEDULED FOR TODAY.
IT MUST BE ONE OF
THEIRS...

**THE SKAZARIAN
HIGH COMMAND:**

NO RESPONSE
TO COMMUNICATIONS.
MAJOR DODG. IT'S NOT
ONE OF OURS.

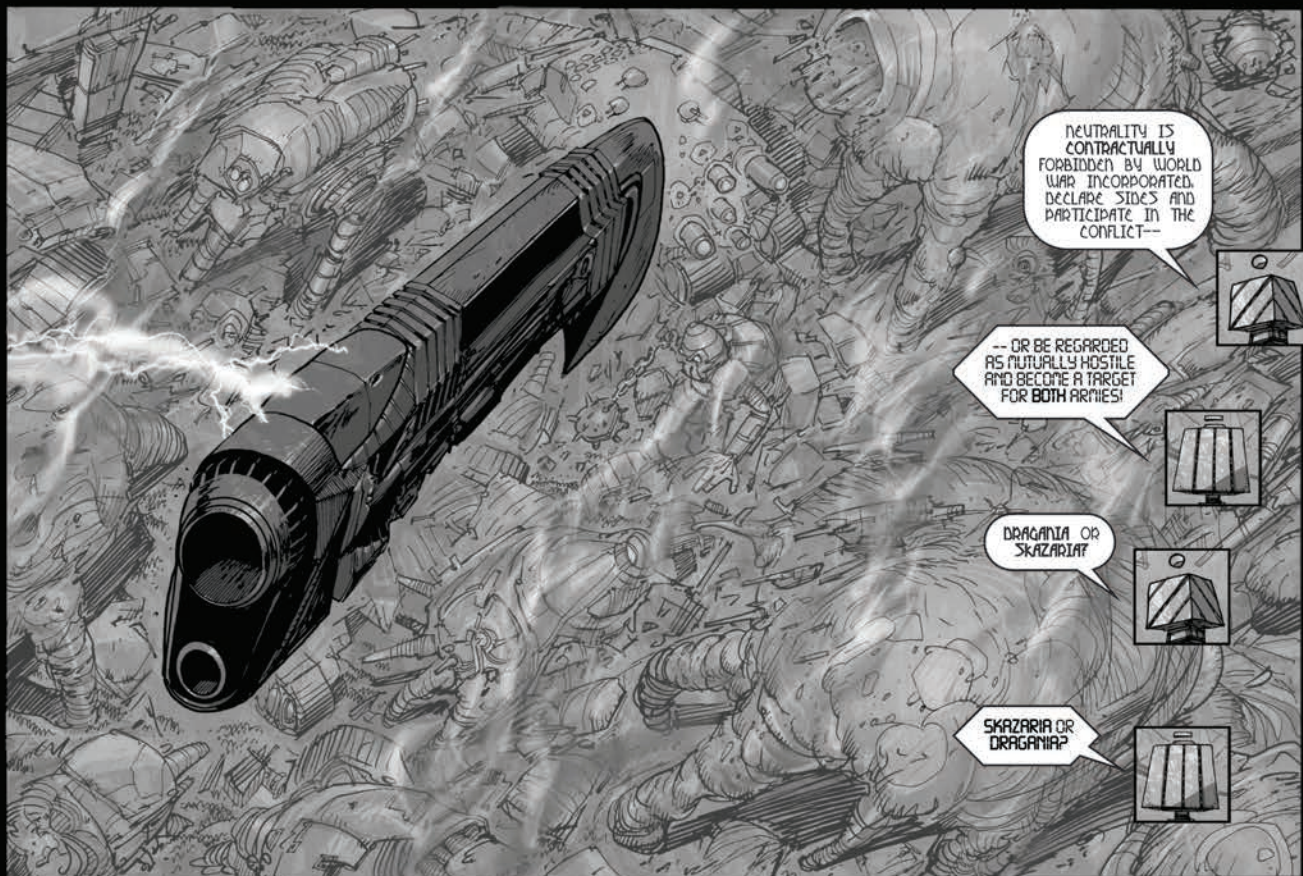
ALERT ALL FORCES.
PREPARE TO REPEL AN
AERIAL ASSAULT.

STILL NO
RESPONSE, SIR!
IT'S ALMOST ON
TOP OF US!

THIS IS
GENERAL BRAGG OF THE
DRAGANIAN DOMINION.
IDENTIFY YOURSELF
IMMEDIATELY...

...OR FACE THE
CONSEQUENCES!

THIS IS A LEGALLY
AUTHORISED WARZONE TO DECIDE
THE OUTCOME OF AN INTERSTELLAR
DISPUTE BETWEEN THE DRAGANIAN
DOMINION AND THE SKAZARIAN
EMPIRE.

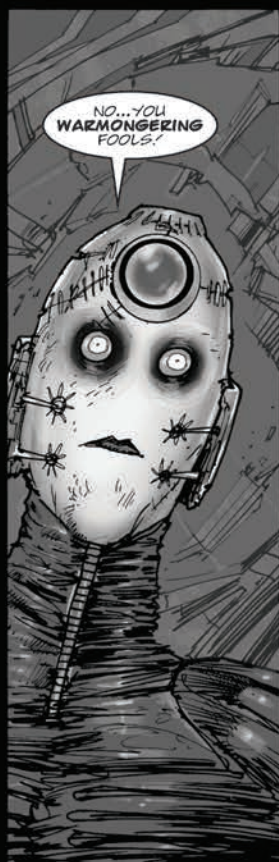


NEUTRALITY IS CONTRACTUALLY FORBIDDEN BY WORLD WAR INCORPORATED. DECLARE SIDES AND PARTICIPATE IN THE CONFLICT--

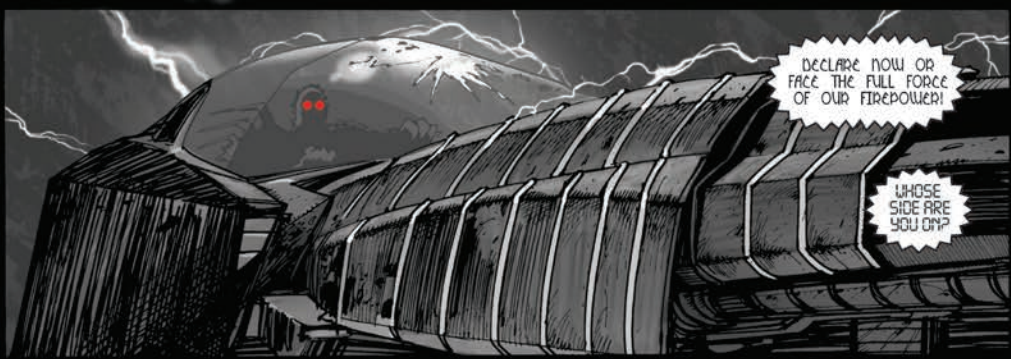
-- OR BE REGARDED AS NATURALLY HOSTILE AND BECOME A TARGET FOR BOTH ARMIES!

DRAGANIA OR SKAZADIA?

SKAZARIA OR DRAGANIA?

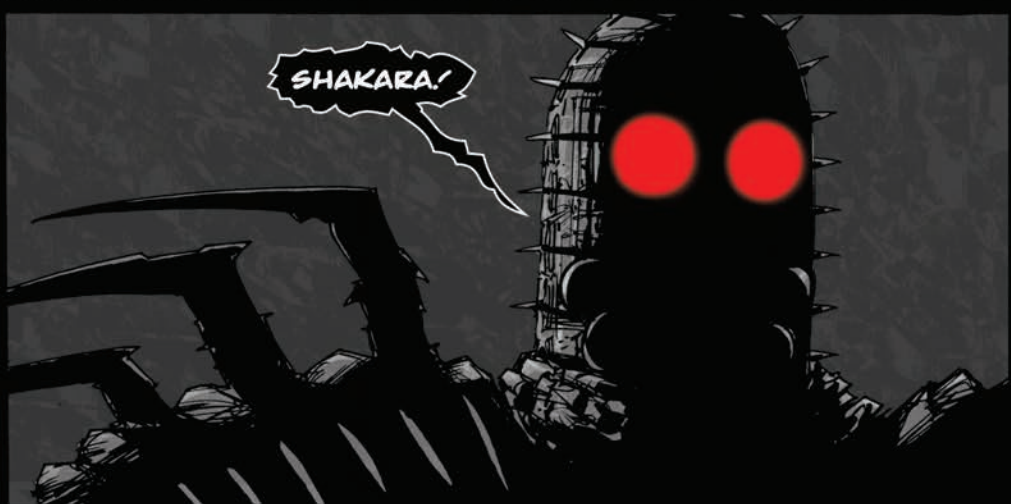


NO...YOU WARMONGERING FOOLS!

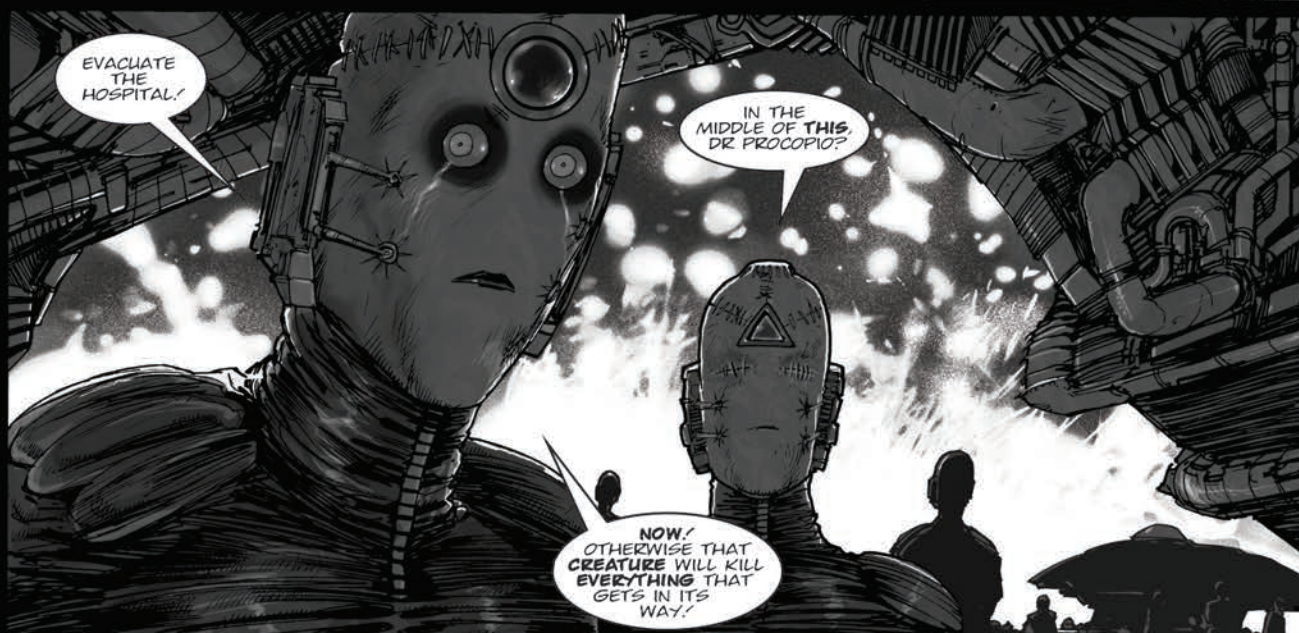
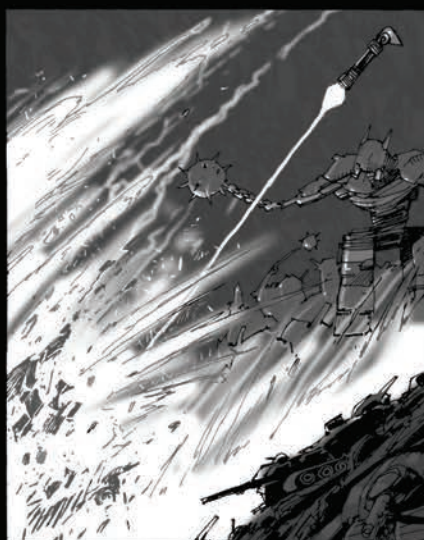


DECLARE NOW OR FACE THE FULL FORCE OF OUR FIREPOWER!

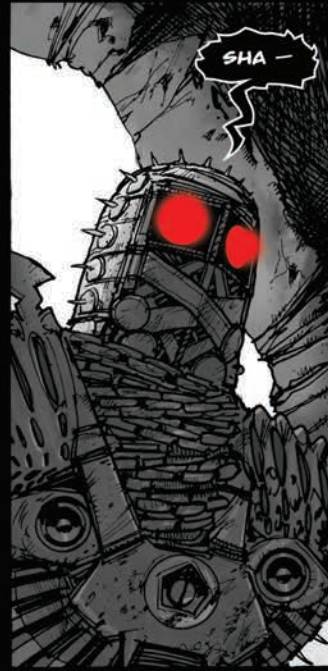
WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?



SHAKARA!







SHA —

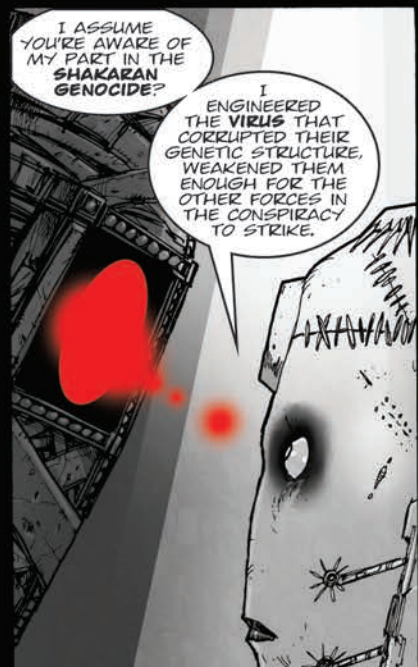


SHAKARA.
I KNOW.



I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT SOMEONE LIKE YOU WOULD COME FOR ME. WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THE OTHER KILLINGS, I FIGURED IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.

THE DEATH SENTENCE HAD BEGUN.



I ASSUME YOU'RE AWARE OF MY PART IN THE SHAKARAN GENOCIDE?

I ENGINEERED THE VIRUS THAT CORRUPTED THEIR GENETIC STRUCTURE, WEAKENED THEM ENOUGH FOR THE OTHER FORCES IN THE CONSPIRACY TO STRIKE.

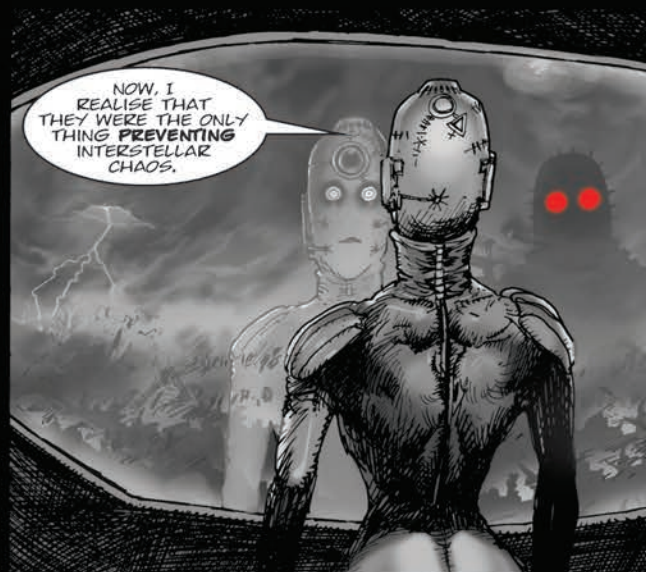


IF IT WASN'T FOR ME, I DOUBT THEY COULD EVER HAVE BEEN DEFEATED.

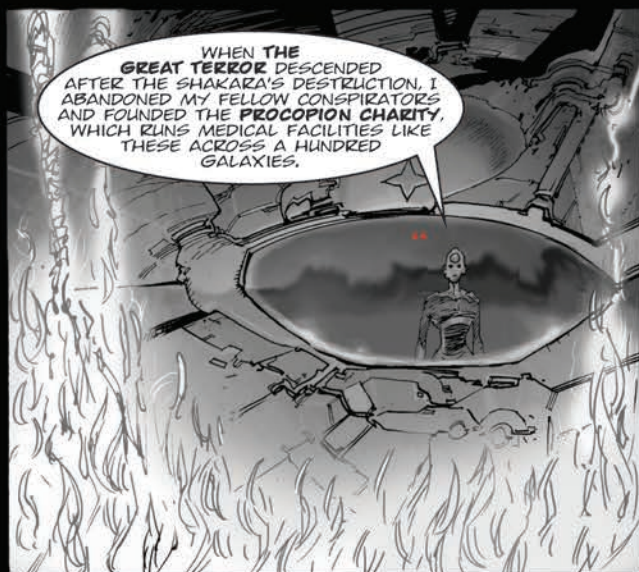


I DON'T KNOW IF I WAS MORE OR LESS IDEALISTIC BACK THEN, BUT I **TRULY** BELIEVED I WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING.

I THOUGHT THE SHAKARA WERE **TYRANTS**, SUPPRESSING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSE, FORCING ALL OTHER SENTIENT SPECIES TO CONFORM TO THEIR LAWS ON PAIN OF DEATH.



NOW, I REALISE THAT THEY WERE THE ONLY THING **PREVENTING** INTERSTELLAR CHAOS.



WHEN THE **GREAT TERROR** DESCENDED AFTER THE SHAKARA'S DESTRUCTION, I ABANDONED MY FELLOW CONSPIRATORS AND FOUNDED THE **PROCOPION CHARITY**, WHICH RUNS MEDICAL FACILITIES LIKE THESE ACROSS A HUNDRED GALAXIES.



SINCE THE GENOCIDE, I'VE DEVOTED EVERY WAKING MOMENT TO **SAVING LIVES**, ADVANCING DEVELOPING WORLDS, CREATING NEW MEDICINES AND BENEVOLENT TECHNOLOGIES.



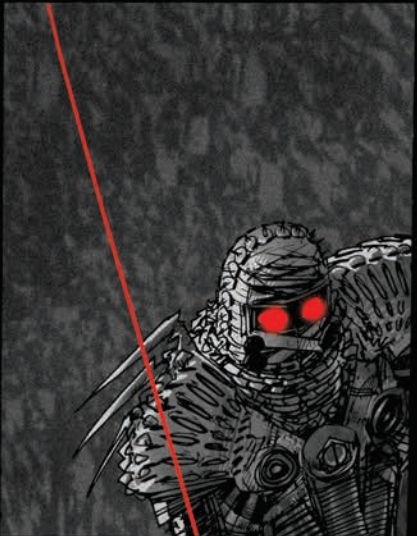
NO MATTER HOW MANY MEDALS AND HONOURS I RECEIVE, HOW MUCH PRAISE AND GRATITUDE IS HEAPED UPON ME...

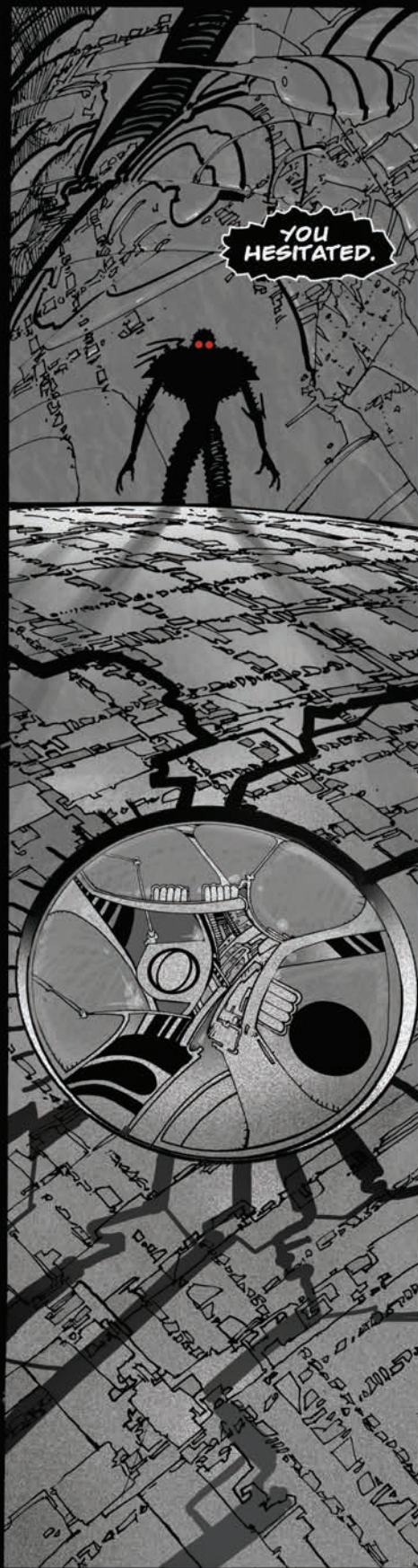
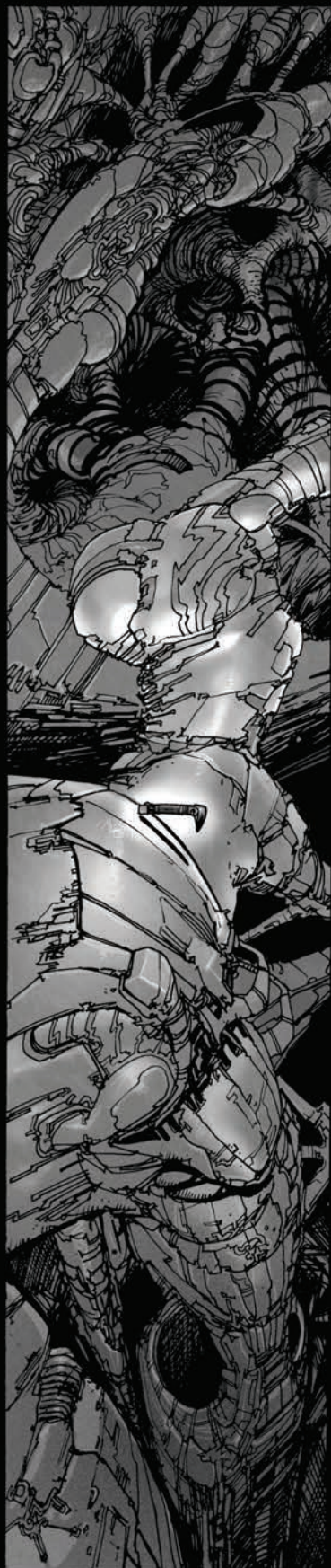
...WHEN I'M ALONE, ALL I HEAR IS THE **DEATH SCREAM** OF A MURDERED RACE.



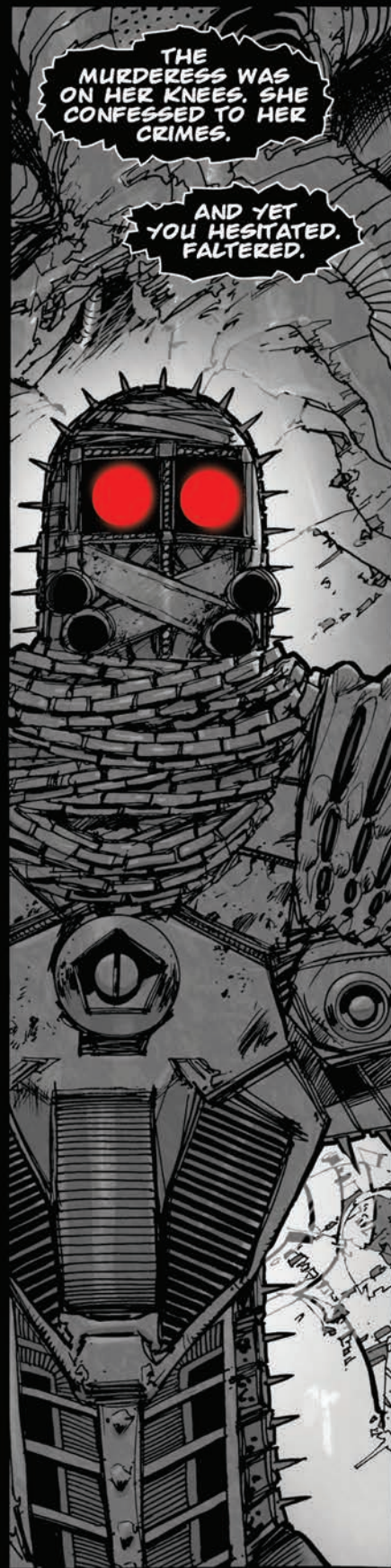
PLEASE DON'T THINK THAT MY ACTIONS HAVE BEEN AN ATTEMPT TO EARN **REDEMPTION**. OR THAT WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU IS A PLEA FOR **MERCY**.

I **DESERVE** TO DIE.





YOU
HESITATED.



THE
MURDERESS WAS
ON HER KNEES. SHE
CONFESSED TO HER
CRIMES.

AND YET
YOU HESITATED.
FALTERED.



WHY?
WHY? WHY?
WHY? WHY?
WHY?



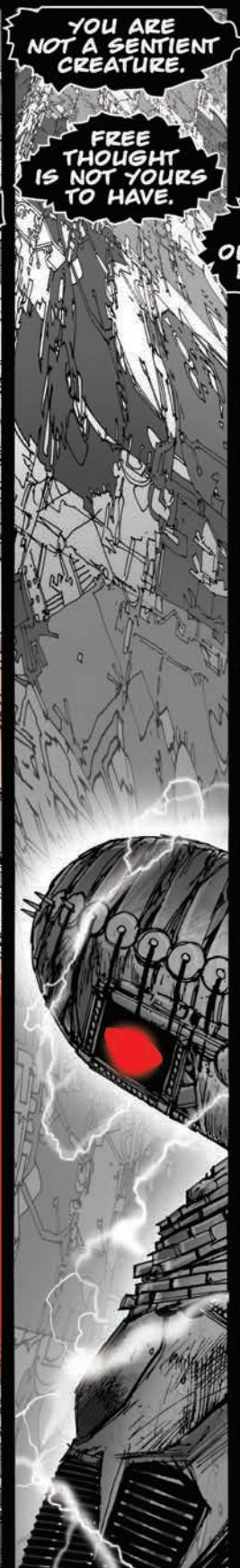
YOU WERE
TOUCHED BY
HER.

BECAUSE
SHE SHOWED
REMORSE?
REGRET?



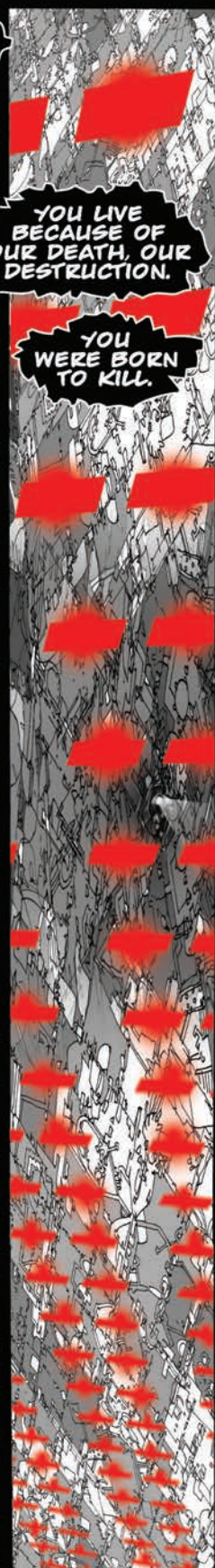
YOU ARE
BEYOND THESE
THINGS.

THEY
ARE ALIEN TO
YOU.



YOU ARE
NOT A SENTIENT
CREATURE.

FREE
THOUGHT
IS NOT YOURS
TO HAVE.



YOU LIVE
BECAUSE OF
OUR DEATH, OUR
DESTRUCTION.

YOU
WERE BORN
TO KILL.



YOU ARE
VENGEANCE.

YOU ARE
DEATH.

YOU ARE
SHAKARA.



WHAT
ARE
YOU?



WHAT
ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE
YOU?

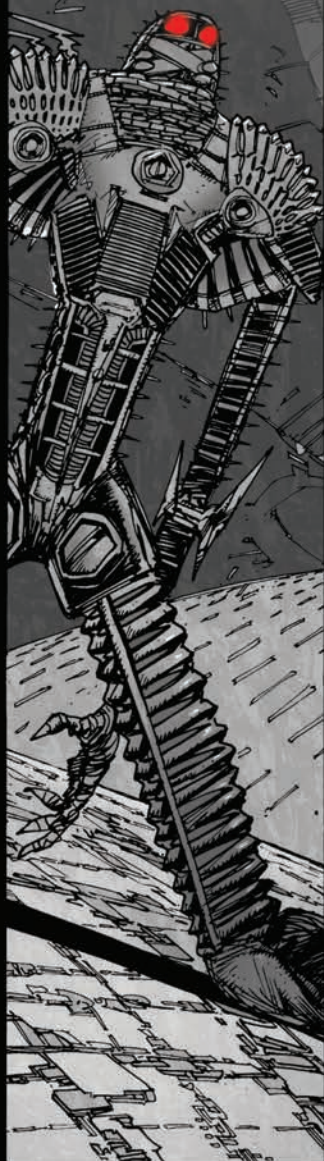


SHAKARA.

**WHAT
ARE
YOU?**

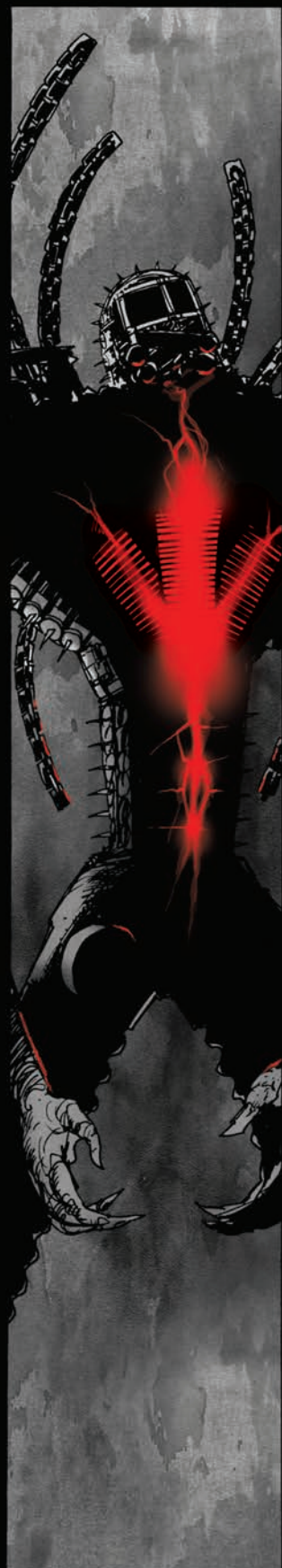


SHAKARA!



GOOD.

**REST
NOW. YOU
HAVE MANY
MORE TO
KILL.**





THE MEMOIRS OF
VALENTINE DEATH.
CHAPTER NINE:
BEDROOM ACTION.

I took aim and fired in
the direction of the continent
my target was currently
touring, sensing the path
of the bullet as it streaked
through the skies.

Katya the Insatiable - another
challenge to be overcome. I
thought to myself - had
finished grooming and stretched
her shapely form across my bed.

The room crackled
with sexual tension
as I slipped off
my robe and strode
towards her.

It was a wild
night, though I
was coughing
up furballs for
weeks to come!

Afterwards,
when she had
recovered from
her rapture,
she said:

AT THE
RISK OF MIXING
BUSINESS WITH
PLEASURE, THE FIRST
HALF OF YOUR FEE HAS
BEEN TRANSFERRED
TO YOUR ACCOUNT.
WHEN ARE YOU
GOING TO DO
THE JOB?

RIGHT
ABOUT NOW,
ACTUALLY.



"Psionic ammunition,"
I explained to her.

"I fired the shot when
I stepped out onto the
balcony earlier tonight.



"Bang! Right between the
eyes! Check Uni-News if
you don't believe me.



...REPEAT.
THE GROWLLIAN
PRESIDENT HAS BEEN
ASSASSINATED! A STATE
OF EMERGENCY HAS
BEEN -

THE
BULLET WAS
PSIONICALLY ATTUNED
TO MY MIND, ALLOWING ME
TO DIRECT ITS FLIGHT
DURING OUR LITTLE
GAME.

ALMOST LOST
MY CONCENTRATION A
COUPLE OF TIMES, LUCKY
FOR YOU, I'M A
PROFESSIONAL...



YOU
CERTAINLY ARE, A
DANGEROUS ONE
AT THAT.

TOO
DANGEROUS
TO LET
LIVE!



I sighed wearily as Katya's
Strike Squad beamed into the
room, aiming a multitude of
weapons at me. Never get
involved with a femme fatale
- no matter how much she's
paying you.

SORRY,
VALENTINE...



...IF IT
COMES TO LIGHT THAT
WE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR
THIS MURDER, IT'LL CAUSE AN
INTER-SPECIES WAR. WE HAVE
TO WIPE OUT ANYTHING
THAT CONNECTS US
TO IT.

IN
OTHER WORDS:
YOU.

FIRE!



"This is a weapons-free zone," I said, "slowly rising to my feet," so I guess it's all down to tooth and claw."



I smiled dangerously. Let's see if that 'nine lives' story is true...

THE 'NINE LIVES' ONE-LINER IS RATHER OBVIOUS, NOT TO MENTION WEAK.

AND AS FOR YOU BEING TOO DANGEROUS TO LET LIVE... WELL, I'VE ONLY HEARD THAT A MILLION TIMES OR SO.

REALLY, VALENTINE, I EXPECTED BETTER.

YOU DIDN'T COME HERE TO BLESS ME WITH YOUR EDITORIAL WISDOM, KARNAK BLEED.



NO, BUT AS MASTER INQUISITOR FOR THE FEDERATION OF PSIONIC POWERS, I CAN'T RESIST COMMENTING ON THE INTELLECTUAL ENDEAVOURS OF LESS ADVANCED MINDS.

WHO CLAIMED IT WAS INTELLECTUAL? IT MIGHT BE AN ARTISTIC STATEMENT.

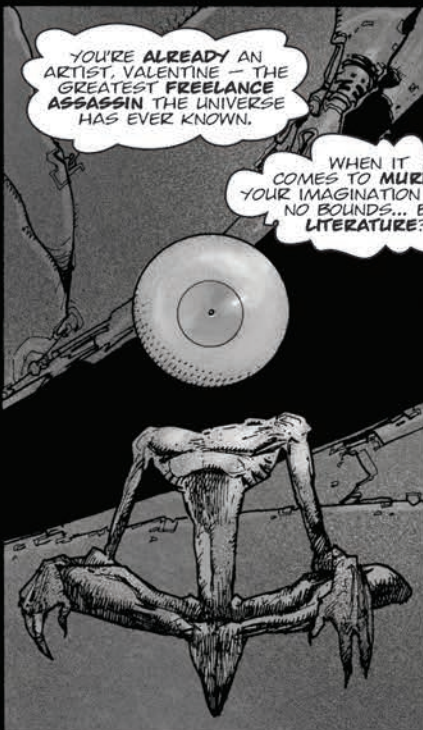
YOU'RE ALREADY AN ARTIST, VALENTINE - THE GREATEST FREELANCE ASSASSIN THE UNIVERSE HAS EVER KNOWN.

WHEN IT COMES TO MURDER, YOUR IMAGINATION KNOWS NO BOUNDS... BUT LITERATURE?

RETIRING TO WRITE YOUR MEMOIRS IS A FANCIFUL NOTION AT BEST.

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT'S THE WAY IT IS, SO STOP TRYING TO GET ME BACK FOR ONE LAST JOB!

I'VE HEARD THAT ONE ABOUT A MILLION TIMES...

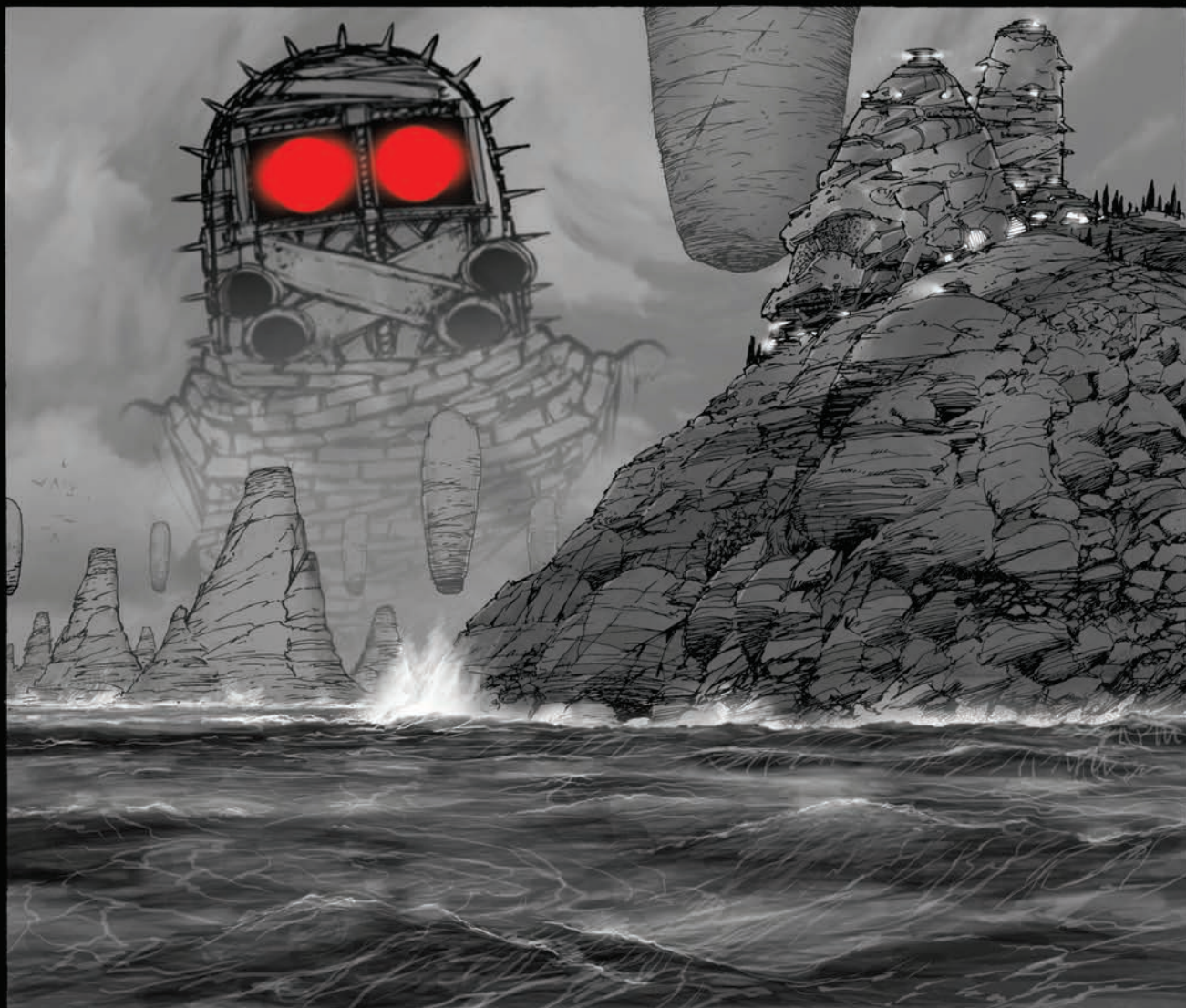




I'M
BORED WITH
ASSASSINATION,
BLEED.

THERE'S
NO ONE
INTERESTING
LEFT TO
KILL.

I'M SURE I
COULD CONVINCE YOU
OTHERWISE. LOOK AT
ONE LITTLE **PSI-IMAGE**,
THAT'S ALL I'M
ASKING...



GUESS
THERE **IS** SUCH
A THING AS AN
OFFER YOU **CAN'T**
REFUSE...

AZAKI 12, A FEUDAL SOCIETY IN WHICH RIVAL WARLORDS ENGAGE IN CONSTANT WARFARE TO INCREASE THEIR SHARE OF POWER —



TO THE DEFENCES! THEY'RE ATTACKING AGAIN!

FIRE AT WILL! BLOW IT AWAY!

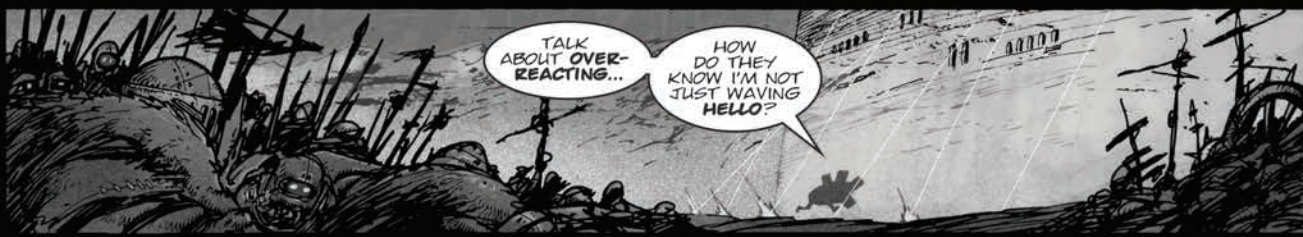


"WHATEVER THE HELL IT IS,"



TALK ABOUT OVER-REACTING...

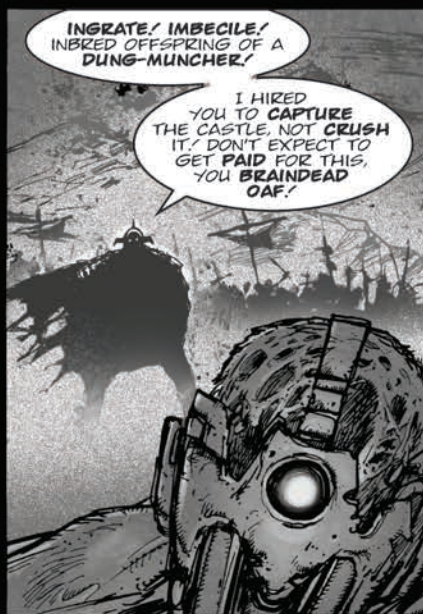
HOW DO THEY KNOW I'M NOT JUST WAVING HELLO?



H'OKAY! TIME TO BRING THE HOUSE DOWN!

WITH A WHAM AND A BAM AND A —







...and looking up a few old accomplices to help me out.

THE LAST TIME WE WORKED TOGETHER...

...FOUR OF ME GOT KILLED...

...BECAUSE YOU DISRUPTED THE TIMETABLE BY SEDUCING BARONESS GROZNY BEFORE ASSASSINATING HER.



Phase is a *Shifter*, able to call upon infinite versions of herself from alternate realities to create a vast army...

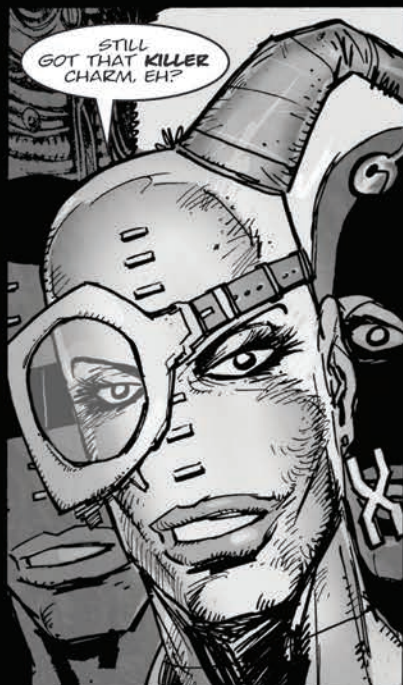
A MOMENTARY LAPSE IN JUDGEMENT, I ADMIT. BUT, COME ON, PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE...

...THERE'S PLENTY MORE OF YOU TO GO AROUND.

SO WHAT'VE YOU SAID ABOUT ME IN YOUR MEMOIRS?



THE BEST SEX I EVER HAD?



STILL GOT THAT KILLER CHARM, EH?

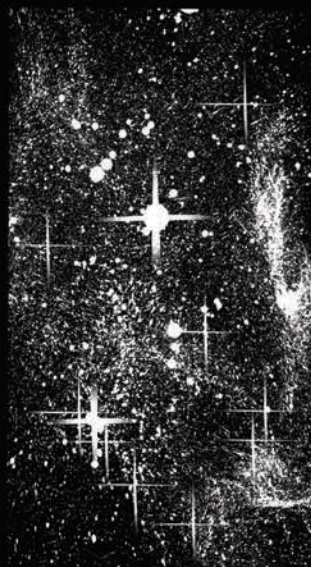


We used to be lovers, but it was too much - even for me. *Infinity* really does go on forever!

ME NEXT!

I WAS CLOSER!

SAYS WHO?



WORK WITH YOU AGAIN? I'D SOONER DEVELOP A SEVERE CASE OF **BLACK HOLE** AND GET SUCKED UP MY OWN ASS!

And this is Void, a sentient Dwarf Galaxy, one of only three in existence...



IN FACT, GIMME ONE GOOD REASON WHY I SHOULDN'T **SUPERNOVA** YOU RIGHT NOW!



...and easily the most psychotic creature I've ever encountered.



HOW ABOUT THIS?

THE DISC CONTAINS DETAILS OF ALL MY FINANCIAL HOLDINGS THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE - AN **ASTRONOMICAL** AMOUNT. IF YOU'LL EXCUSE THE PUN.



For a stellar constellation, however, he's addicted to every vice going - especially gambling.

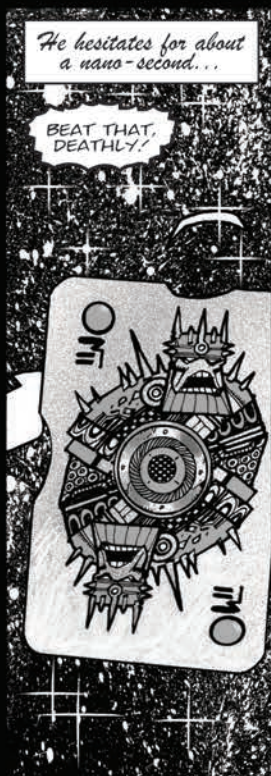


WE CUT THE CARDS, SIMPLE AS THAT.

YOU WIN, YOU GET EVERYTHING I OWN AND I WON'T RESIST IF YOU WANT TO KILL ME.

I WIN, AND YOU DO THIS JOB FOR ME.







INDIO COSTONES — DEVIL-
MAY-CARE EXPERT ON
THE OCCULT, ACQUIRER OF
INTERSTELLAR ANTIQUITIES
AND TWO-FISTED
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ADVENTURER.

ZARA CROSS — VAMP, TOMB
RAIDER, TREASURE HUNTER
AND MOUTHWATERING
OBJECT OF DESIRE
THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.

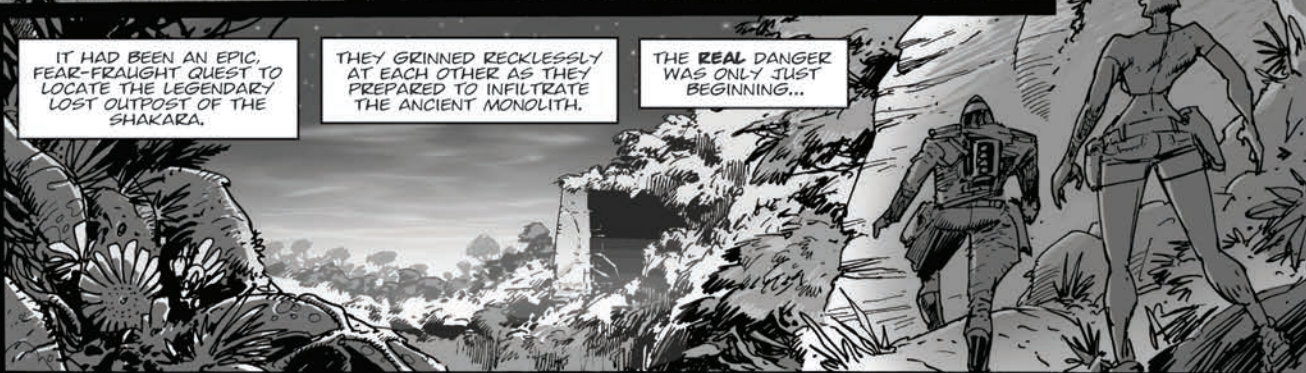
ONLY ONE THING COULD
BRING THESE FIERCEST
OF RIVALS TOGETHER —

**THE TREASURE OF
THE SHAKARA!**

IT HAD BEEN AN EPIC,
FEAR-FRAUGHT QUEST TO
LOCATE THE LEGENDARY
LOST OUTPOST OF THE
SHAKARA.

THEY GRINNED RECKLESSLY
AT EACH OTHER AS THEY
PREPARED TO INFILTRATE
THE ANCIENT MONOLITH.

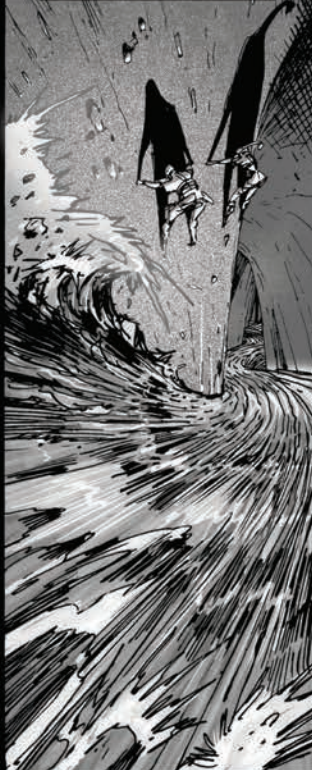
THE REAL DANGER
WAS ONLY JUST
BEGINNING...



DEATH TRAPS AWAIT THEM AT EVERY STAGE, FROM THE SEARING BEAMS OF A LASER MAZE...



...TO THE CHURNING, BURNING TIDAL WAVE OF AN ACID FLOOD...

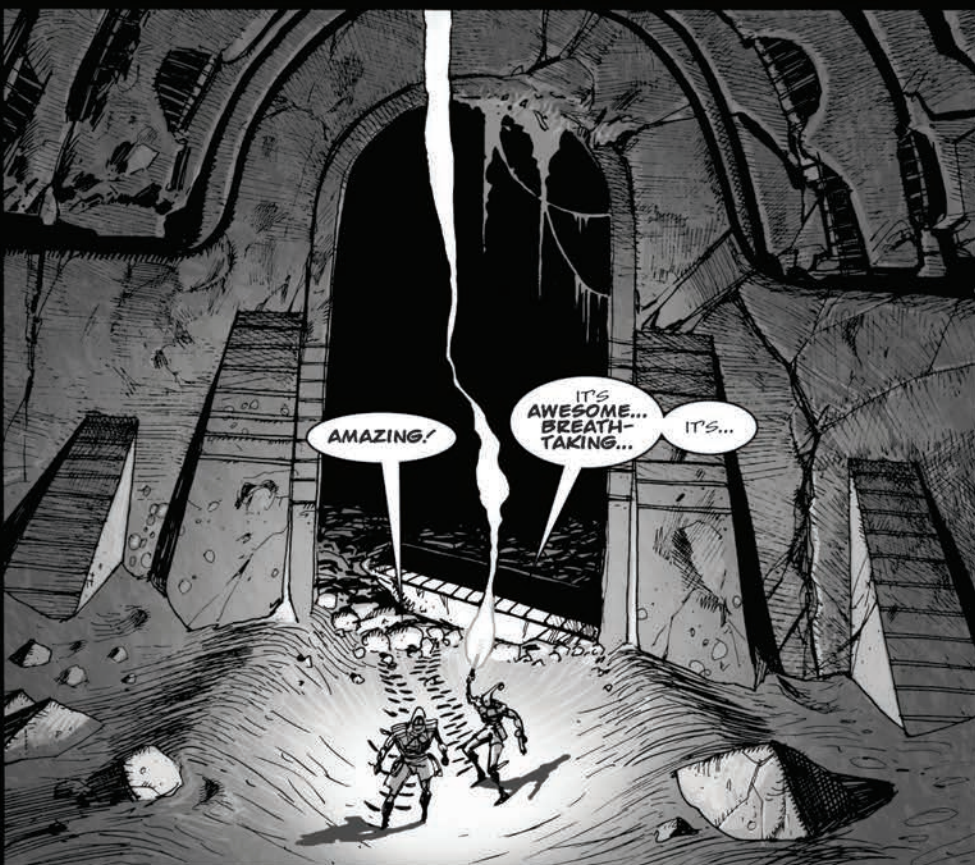
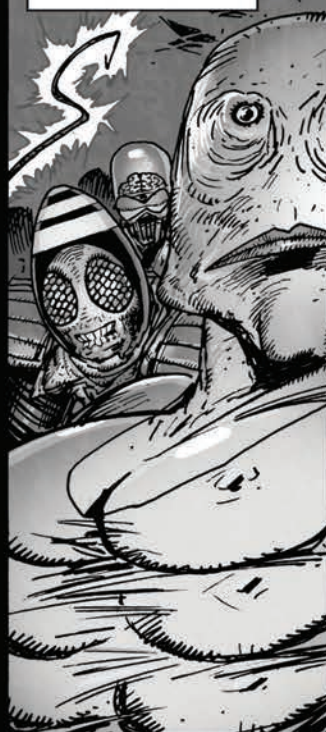


...AND THE SLICING PINCERS OF A MANTEK SWARM.

ONLY THEIR LIGHTNING REFLEXES AND YEARS OF ADVENTURING EXPERIENCE SAVED THEM...



...THOUGH COJONES WAS MORE THAN ONCE DISTRACTED BY THE THOUGHT OF OTHER UNEARTHED TREASURES!



AMAZING!

IT'S AWESOME... BREATH-TAKING...

IT'S...



WHAT IS IT?

IT'S A BRIDGE TO THE PAST, A MESSAGE FROM A LONG-DEAD CIVILIZATION — A RACE OF GODS, WHO FELL FROM GRACE.



IT'S EVERYTHING THAT FASCINATES US ABOUT INTERSTELLAR ARCHAEOLOGY. IT'S WHAT MAKES YOU AND ME WHO WE ARE.

AND IT'S WORTH A FORTUNE.

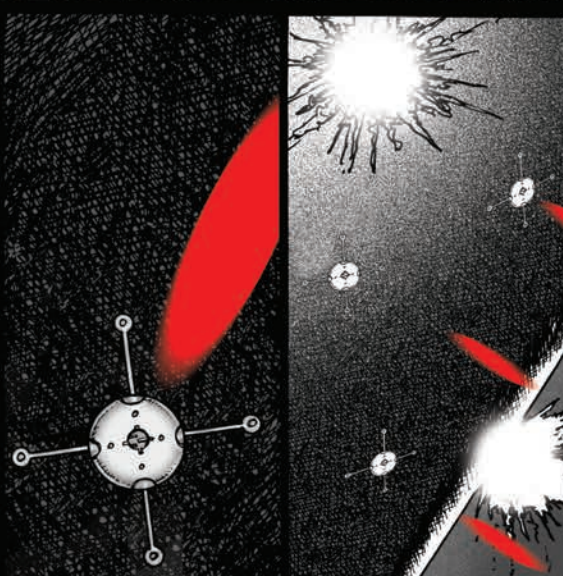
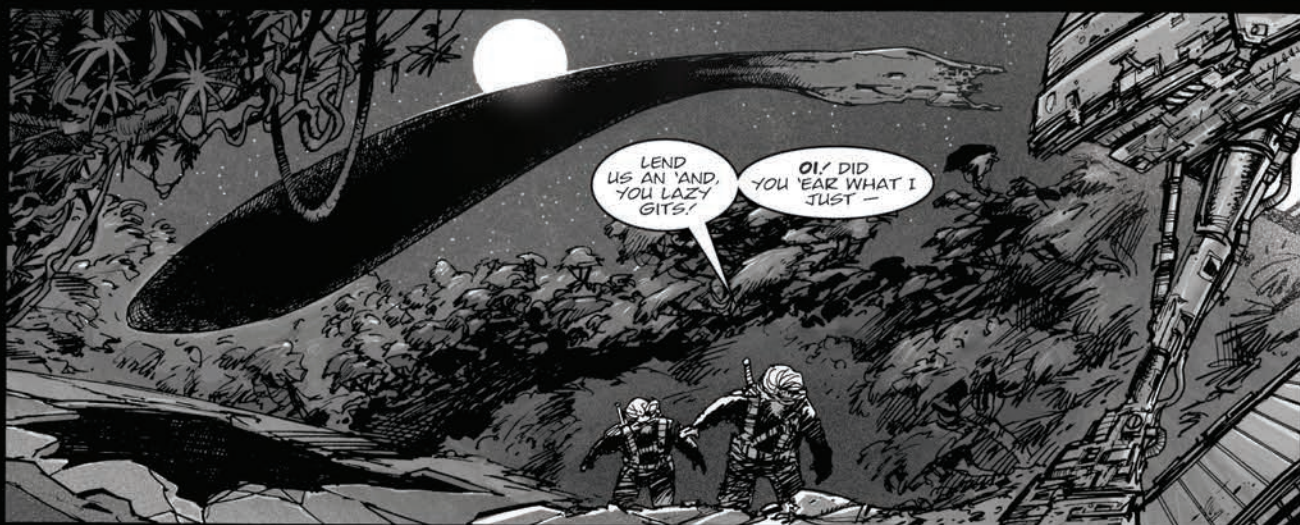


TRILLIONS, BABY! KAZILLIONS!

ARE YOU AS TURNED ON AS I AM?

I WANT YOU IN MY ARMS! NOW!









"LISTEN, I CAN APPRECIATE YOU WANTING A SLAM-BANG, ALL-ACTION FINAL CHAPTER FOR YOUR MEMOIRS..."

"...BUT I DON'T APPRECIATE YOU BRINGING ME ALONG AS CANNON FODDER."

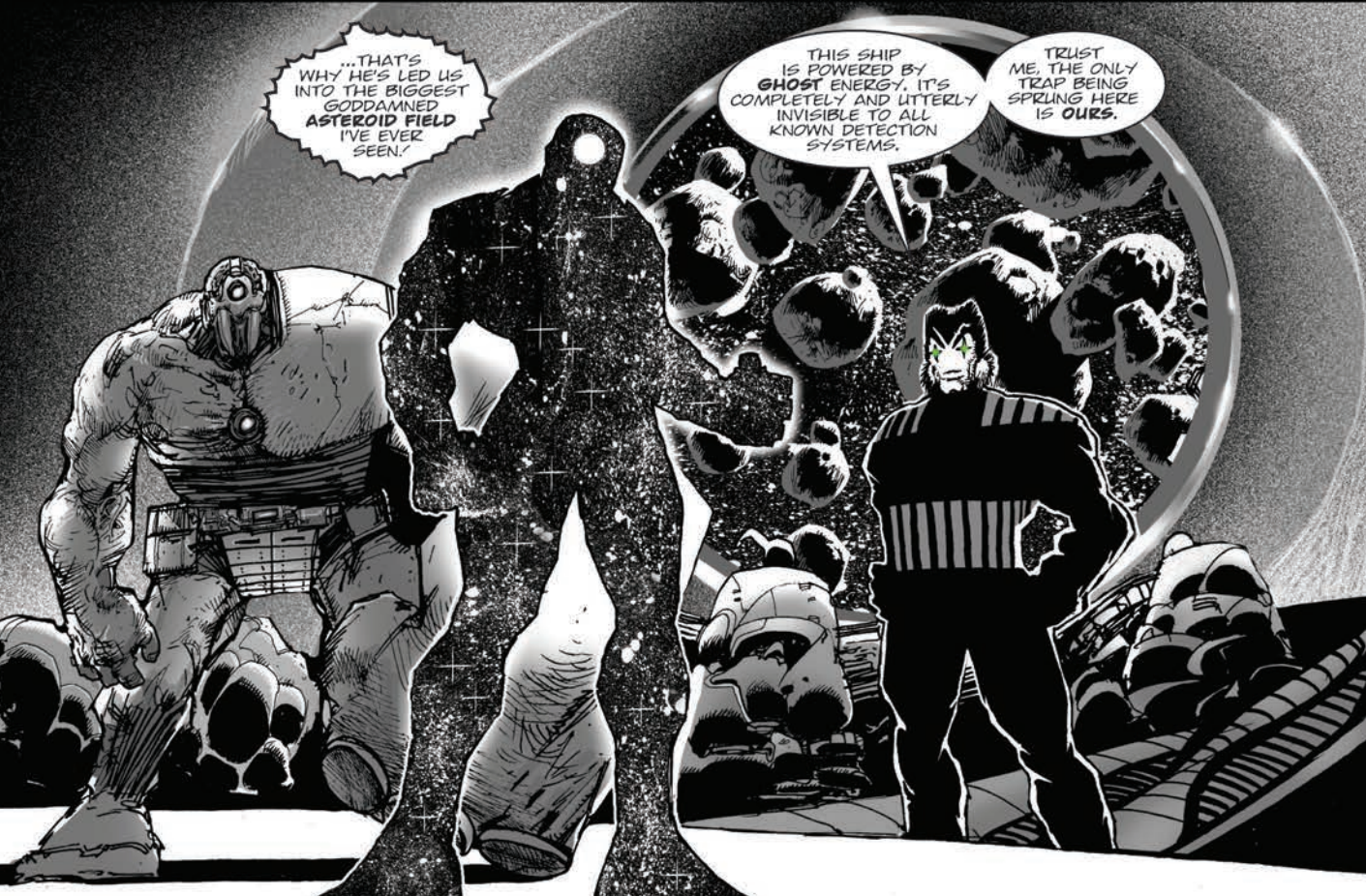


"RELAX, VOID. HE'S ALREADY WIPED OUT THE MERCENARIES WE SENT AFTER THE ARTEFACT AS DECOYS."

"HE HAS NO REASON TO BELIEVE ANYTHING ELSE IS STALKING HIM."



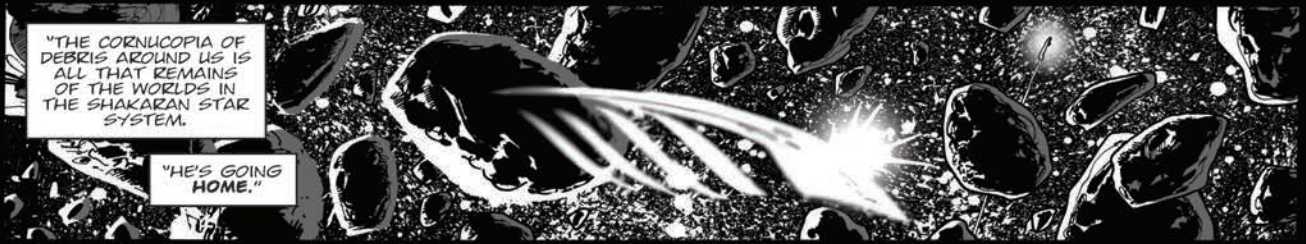
"YEAH, RIGHT..."



"...THAT'S WHY HE'S LED US INTO THE BIGGEST GODDAMNED ASTEROID FIELD I'VE EVER SEEN."

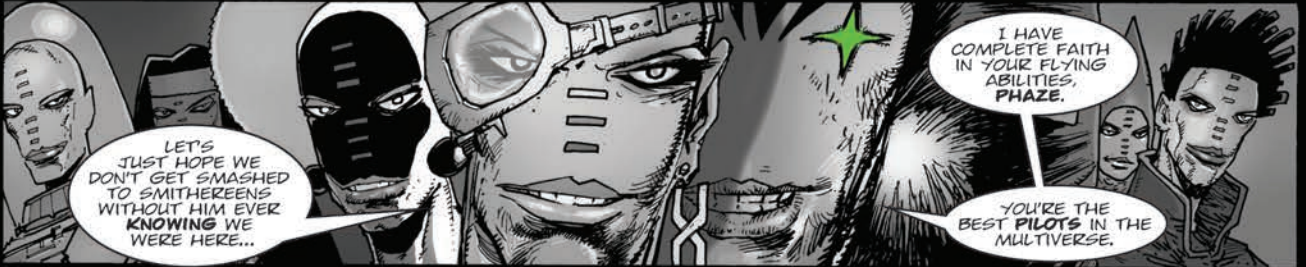
"THIS SHIP IS POWERED BY GHOST ENERGY. IT'S COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY INVISIBLE TO ALL KNOWN DETECTION SYSTEMS."

"TRUST ME, THE ONLY TRAP BEING SPRUNG HERE IS OURS."



"THE CORNUCOPIA OF DEBRIS AROUND US IS ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE WORLDS IN THE SHAKARAN STAR SYSTEM."

"HE'S GOING HOME."



LET'S JUST HOPE WE DON'T GET SMASHED TO SMITHEREENS WITHOUT HIM EVER KNOWING WE WERE HERE...

I HAVE COMPLETE FAITH IN YOUR FLYING ABILITIES, PHAZE.

YOU'RE THE BEST PILOTS IN THE MULTIVERSE.



"HE'S HEADING INTO ONE OF THE ASTEROIDS."

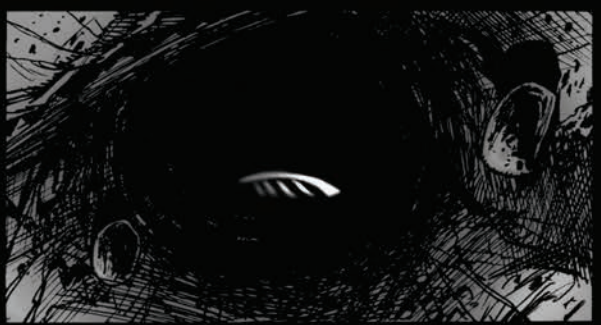
"FOLLOW HIM."

"YOU DON'T WANT TO LAUNCH A RECONNAISSANCE PROBE?"



I'VE BEEN ASSASSINATING SENTIENT BEINGS IN EVER-MORE IMAGINATIVE WAYS FOR NEARLY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

IT'S A LITTLE LATE TO START PLAYING IT SAFE...



IT'S AN
INVERTED
WORLD!

A 360
DEGREE ECO-SYSTEM
- ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY,
HABITABLE ATMOSPHERE, CITIES,
FORESTS... CENTURIES OLD,
BUT STILL HIGHLY
ADVANCED.

I'M
READING A
NETWORK OF ENERGY
FIELDS IN OPERATION, BUT
IT'S ALMOST A BACKGROUND
HUM, JUST ENOUGH TO
KEEP THINGS FALLING
APART.

PLANT
AND ANIMAL LIFE
ON A LOW EVOLUTIONARY
SCALE, BUT NOTHING
ELSE.

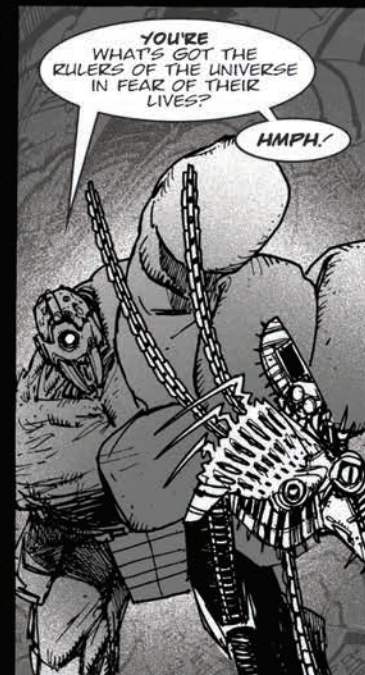
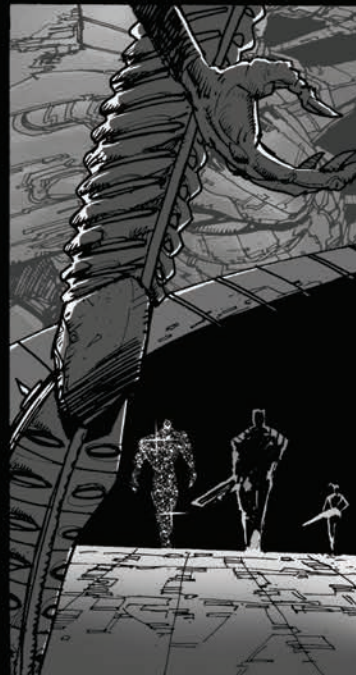
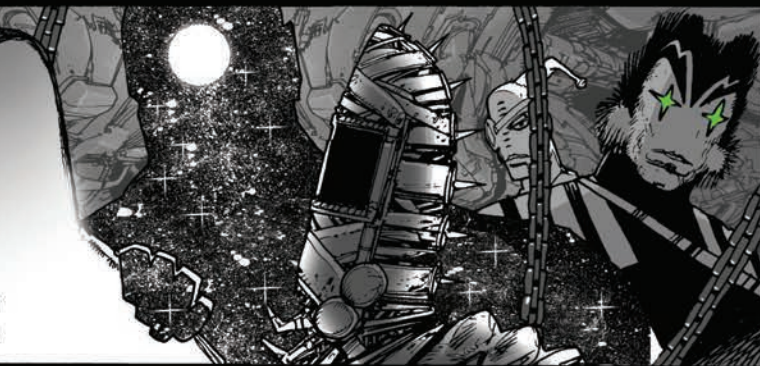
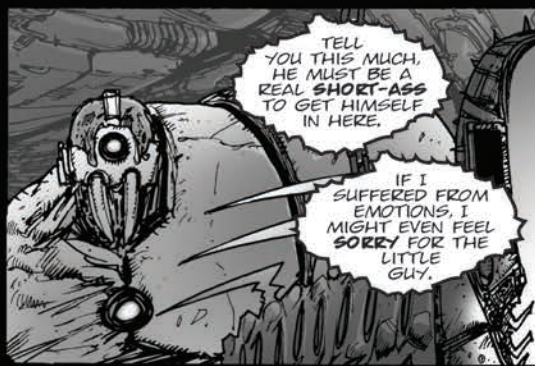
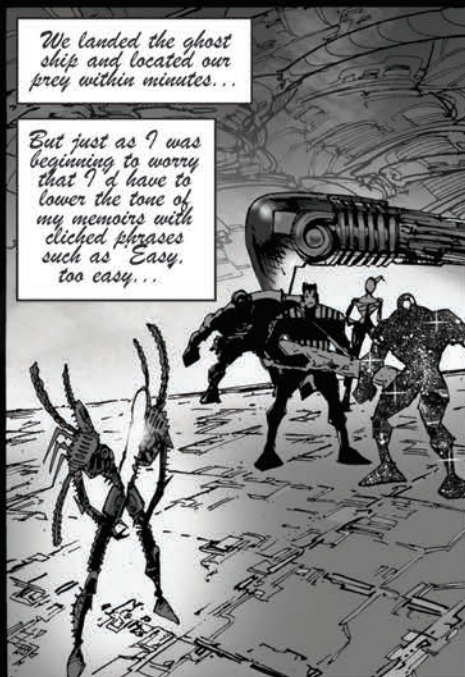
IT'S A
GHOST WORLD...A
MAUSOLEUM...

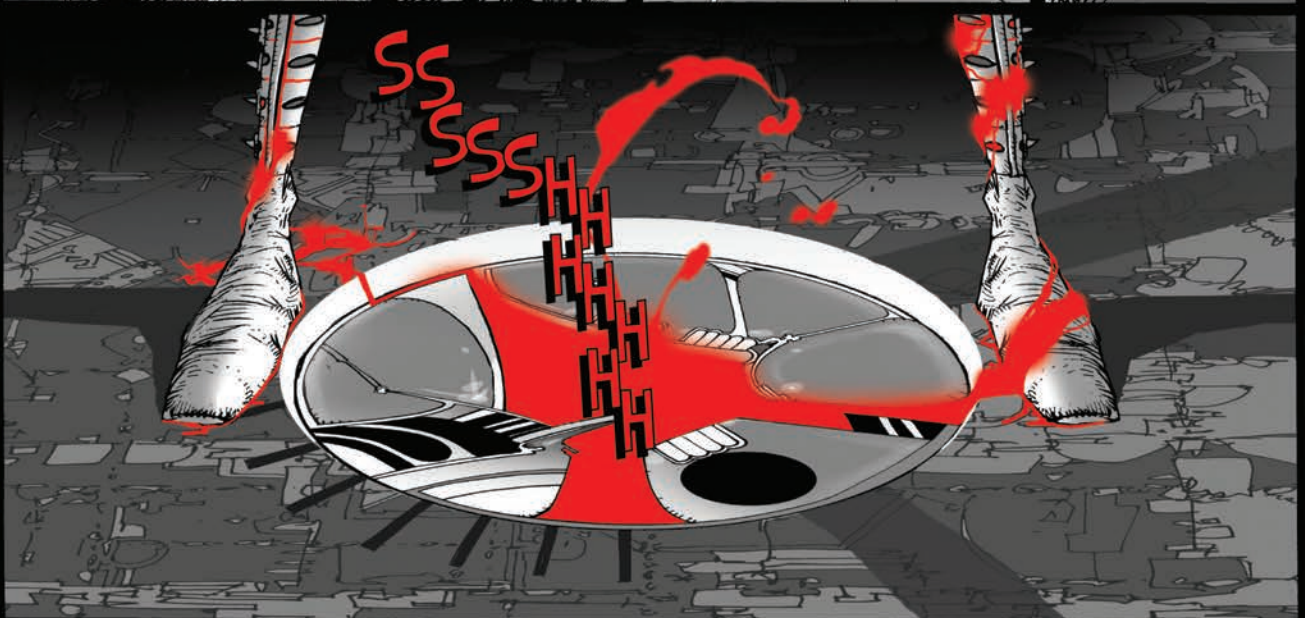


EXCELLENT.

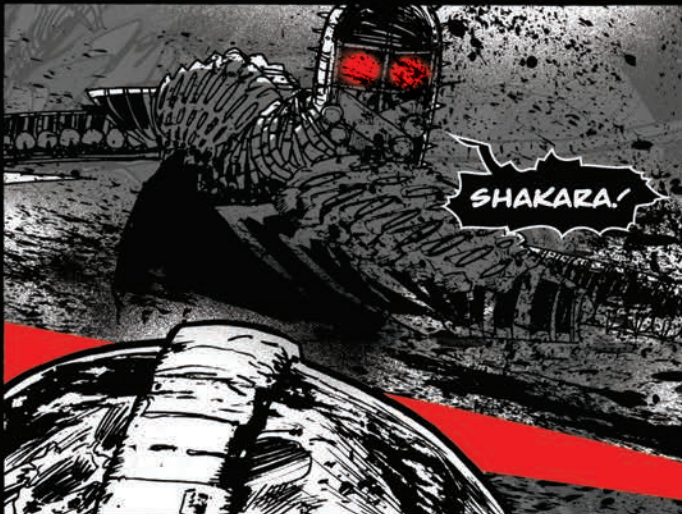
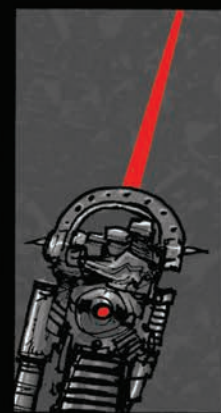
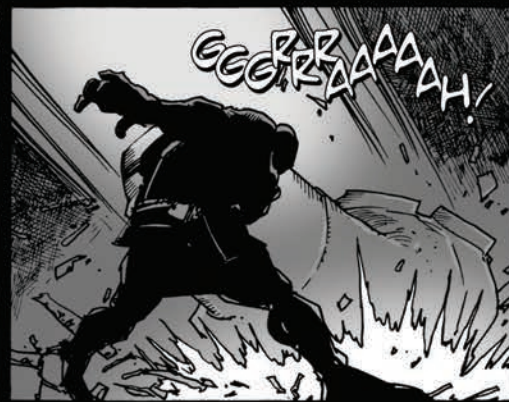
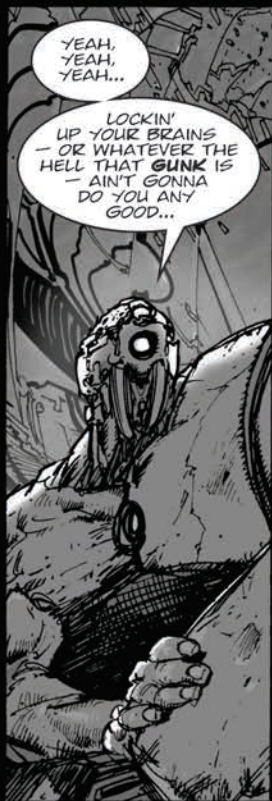
A
READY-MADE
TOMB FOR HIS CORPSE
ONCE WE'RE
FINISHED!











AAAAAIIIEEEEEEE!

*Radiotelepathic implants
are the perfect way for an
assassination squad to
communicate
during a hit...*

*...right up
until one of
your colleagues
receives an
agonising
wound.*

*Fortunately, it
pays to develop
a high pain
threshold in our
line of work.*

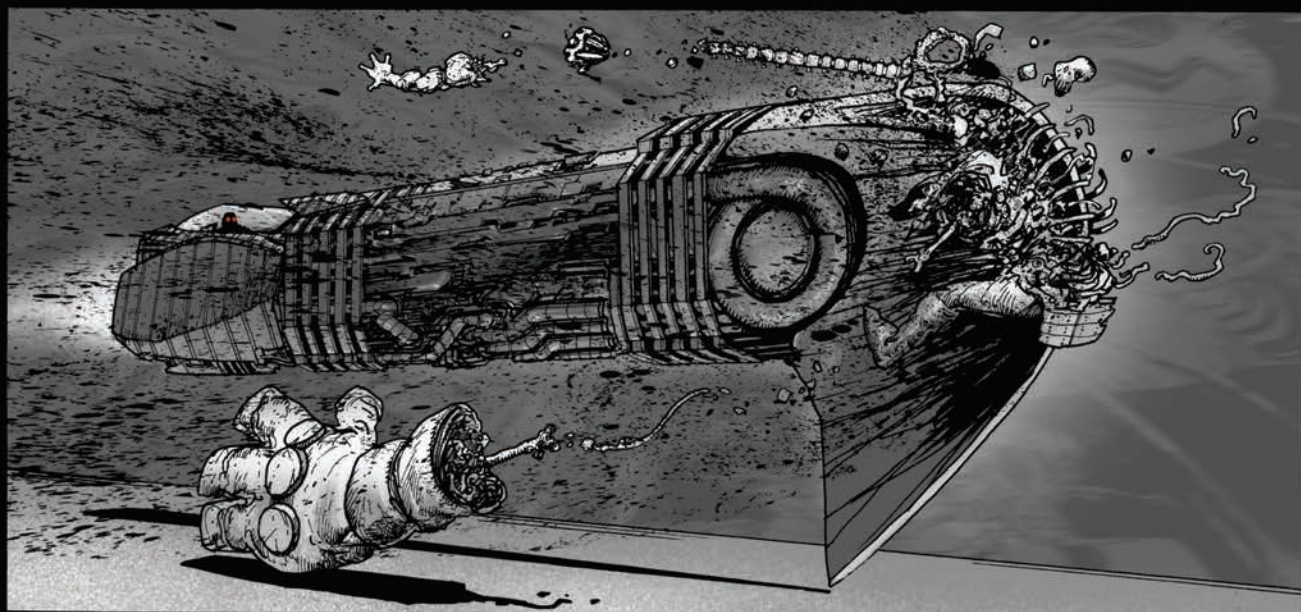
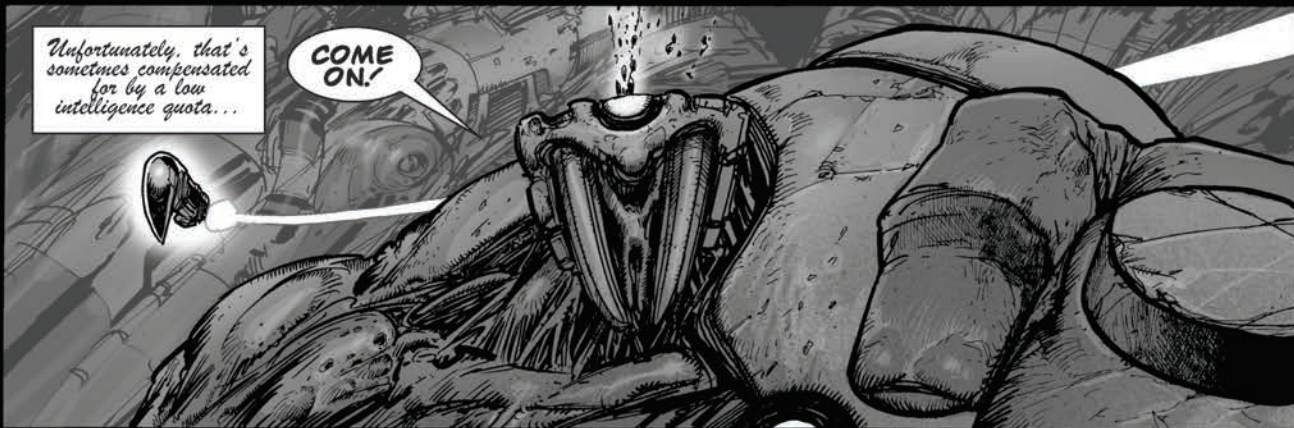
BASTARD!

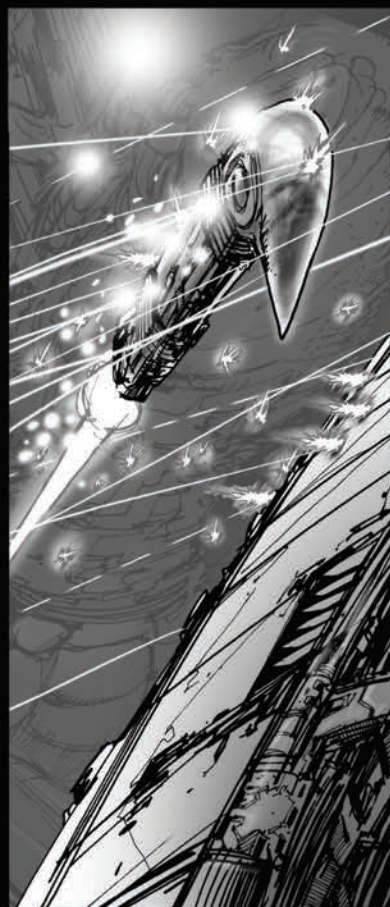
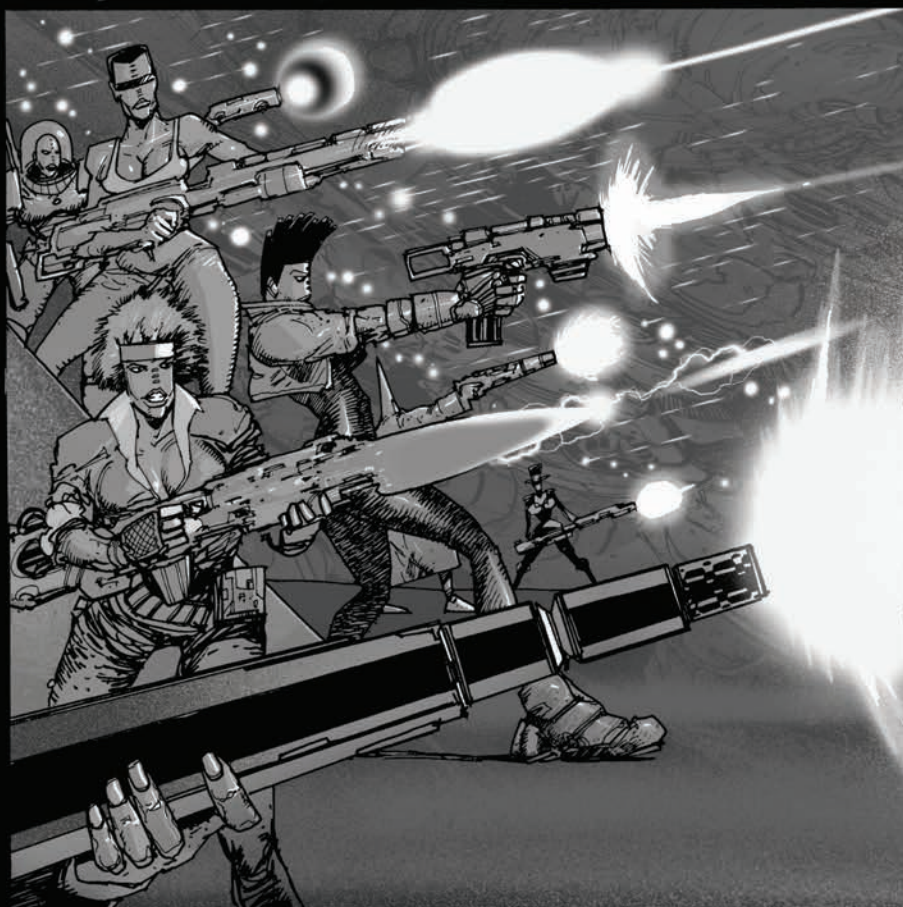
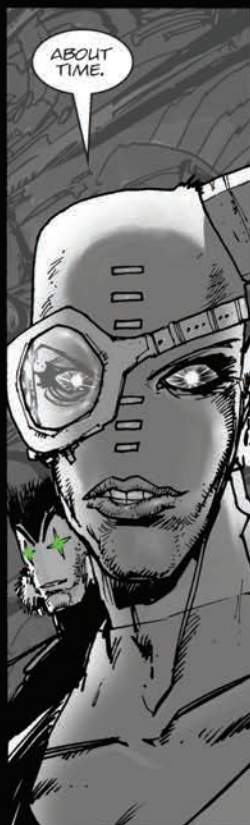
I'LL
BRING THIS
LITTLE WORLD
DOWN ON YOUR
HEAD!

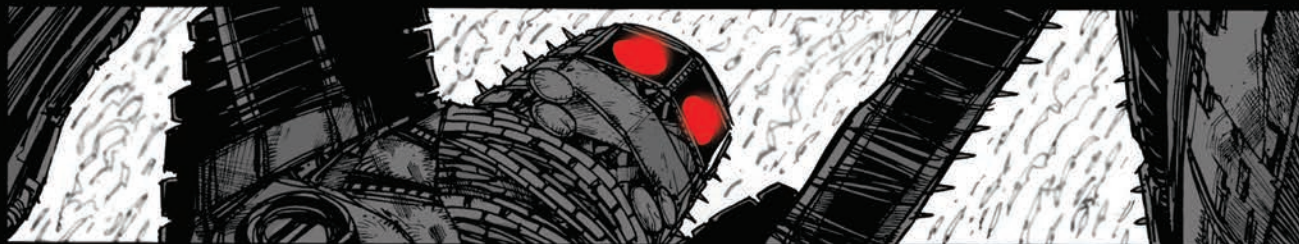
WHO
NEEDS
EYES?

ONE
PUNCH IS
ALL IT'LL
TAKE!

COME
ON, YOU SPINDLY
RUSTBUCKET!







It was an awesome sight - hundreds of scantily clad versions of the same heartbreakingly beautiful female, simultaneously opening fire with weapons from a thousand different universes...

...and all under my command.



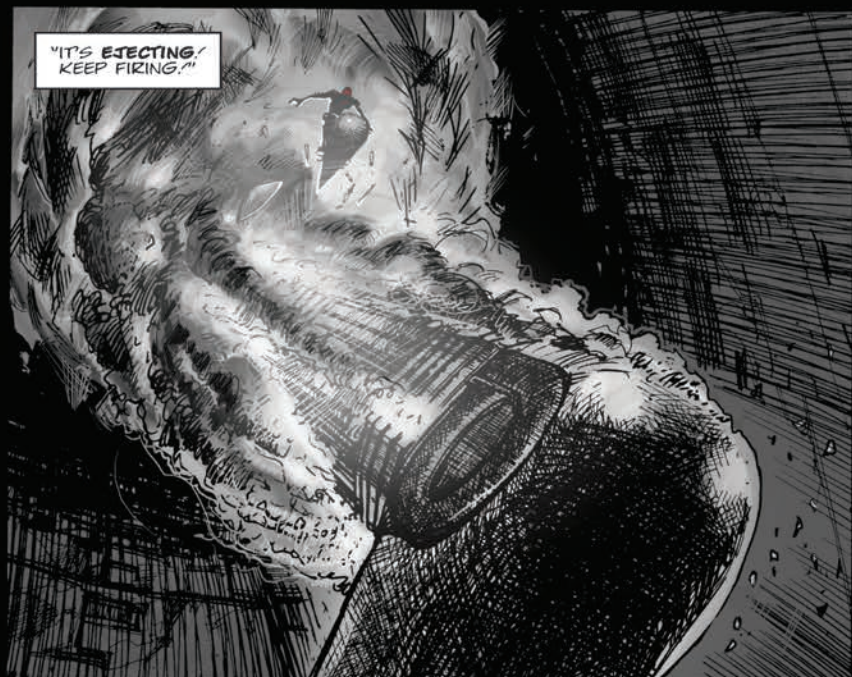
How could I possibly give all this up?

SIGH...

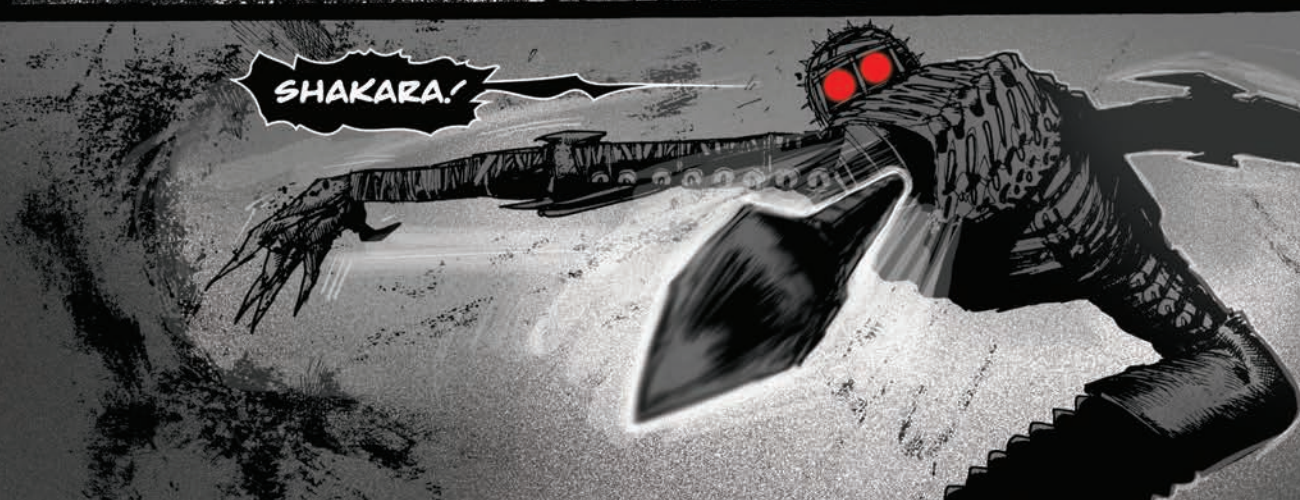
YOU'RE STILL THE SEXIEST SHOOTER IN THE UNIVERSE, PHAZE.



"IT'S EJECTING! KEEP FIRING!"

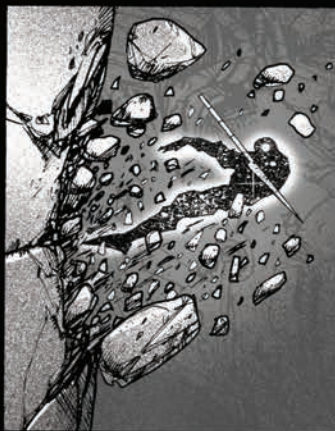








AAAAIIIIIEEE!



VOID!

STAY
BACK! IT'S
A GRAVITY
SPEAR!

THE
SHAKARA USED
THEM FOR SHIP-TO-
SHIP COMBAT. ON
IMPACT, THEY DISRUPT
THE ARTIFICIAL
GRAVITY OF A
STARSHIP.

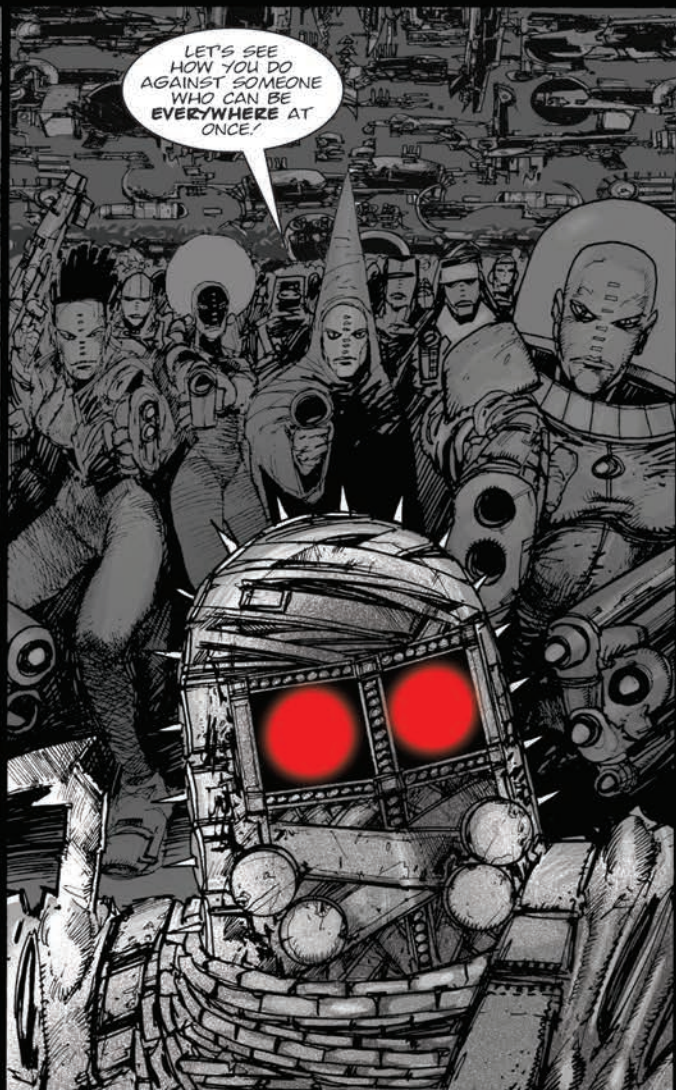


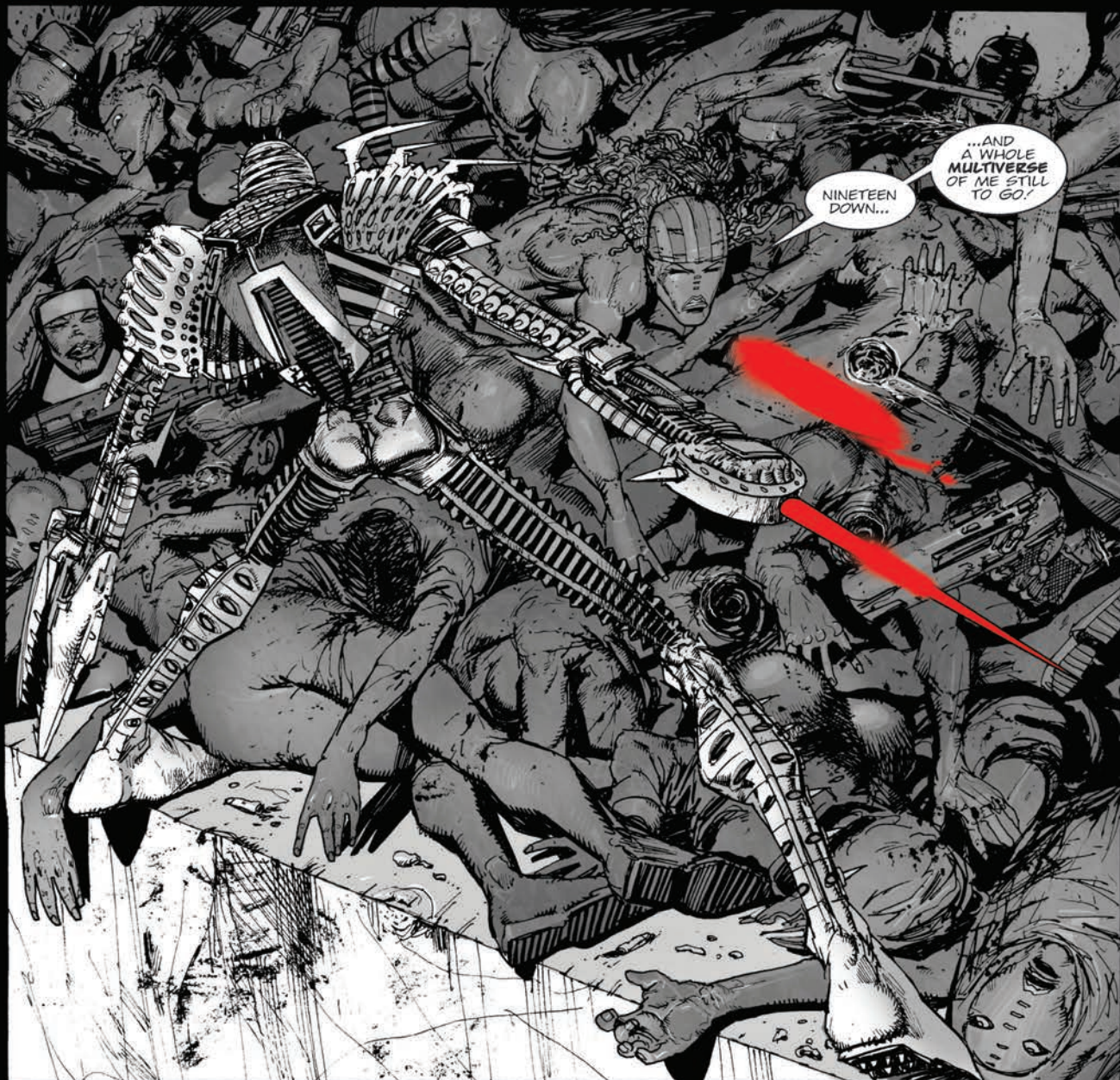
VOID'S A
SENTIENT DWARF
GALAXY, HELD TOGETHER
BY THE GRAVITATIONAL
FIELDS OF THE STARS
AND WORLDS WITHIN
HIM.

THE
SPEAR'S
TEARING HIM
APART!



"HE'S
DISCOMBOBULATING!"

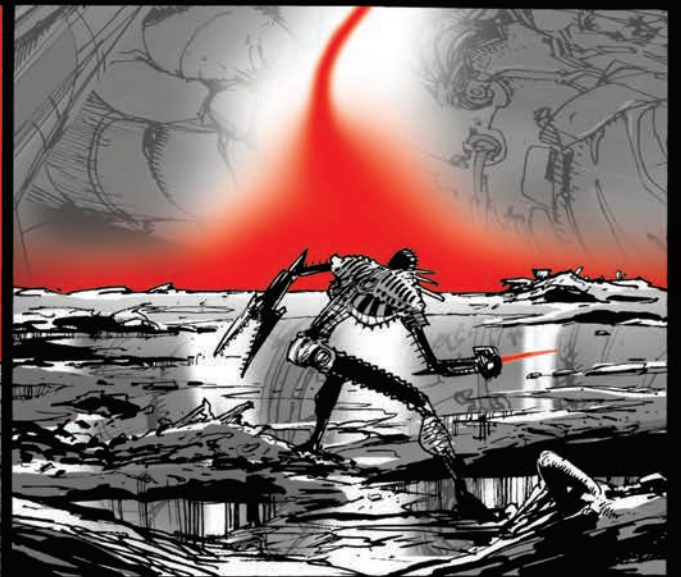


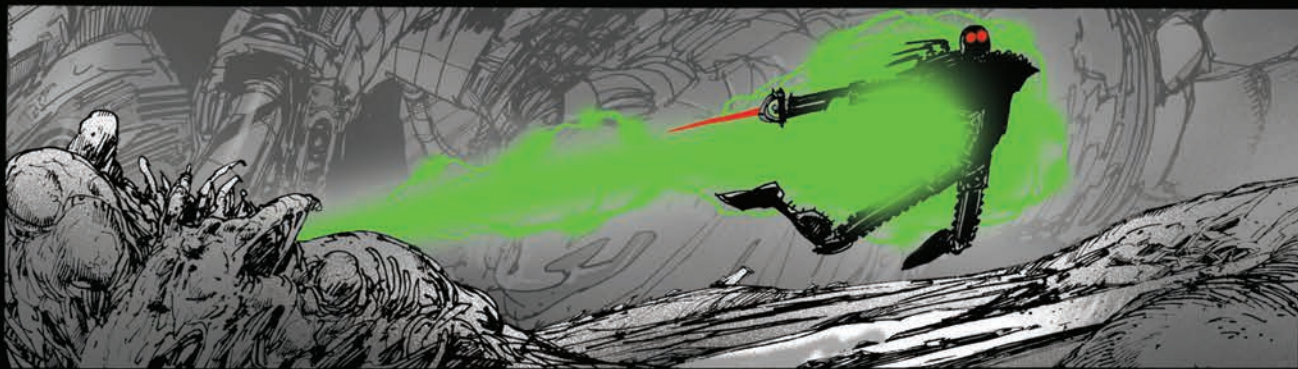






AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!





THE
RED DEATH. THE
PLAGUE THAT HELPED
TO WIFE OUT THE
SHAKARA.

I EVEN
HAD A BRIEF
DALLIANCE WITH THE
LADY WHO CREATED IT
— BACK BEFORE SHE
BECAME A
SAINT.

POOR
PHAZE.

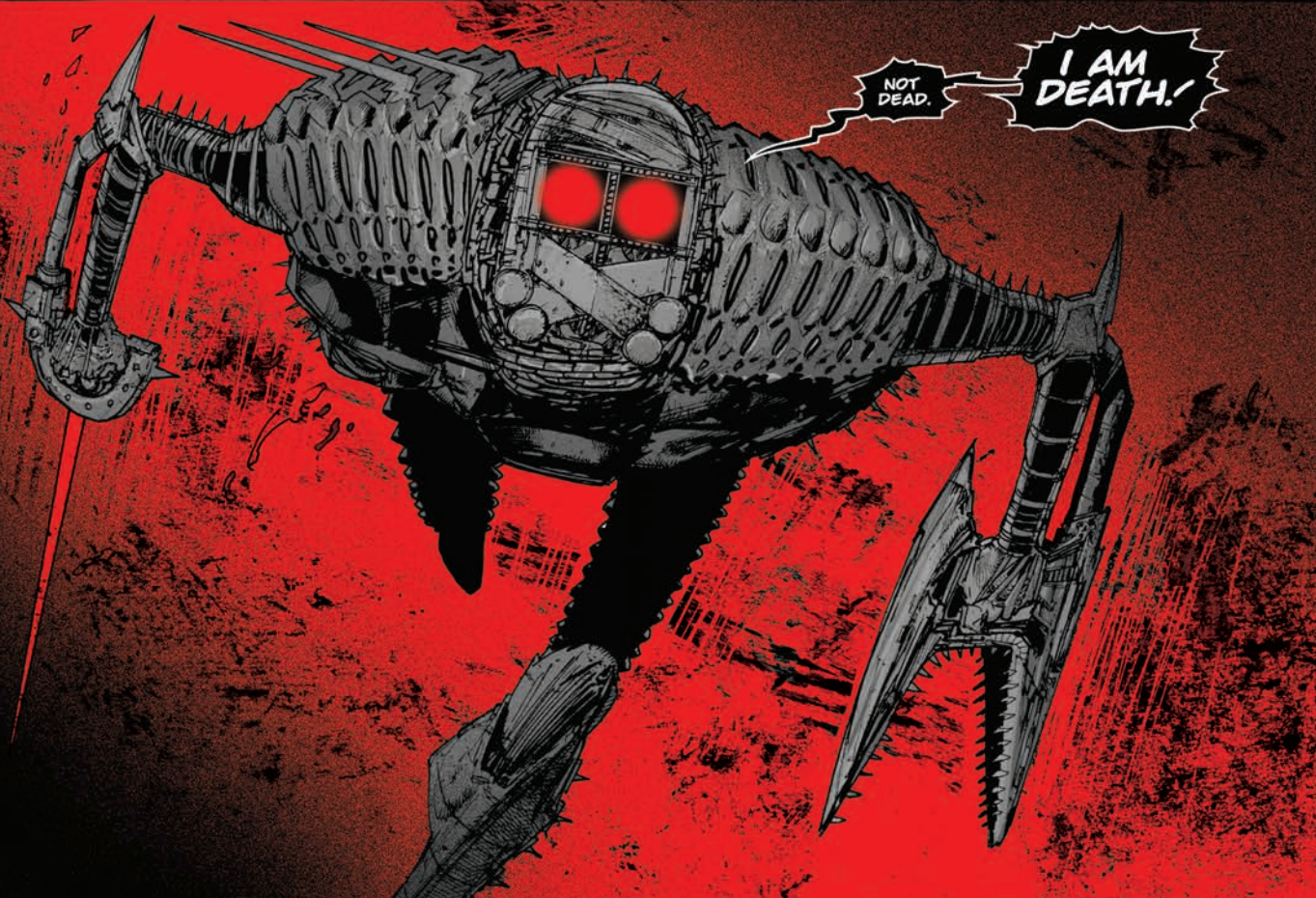
AND SHE
WAS ALWAYS SO
PROUD OF HER
LOOKS...

UNFORTUNATELY
FOR YOU, I IMMUNISE
MYSELF EACH MORNING
AGAINST ALL KNOWN FORMS OF
BIOLOGICAL AND GENETIC
WEAPONRY.



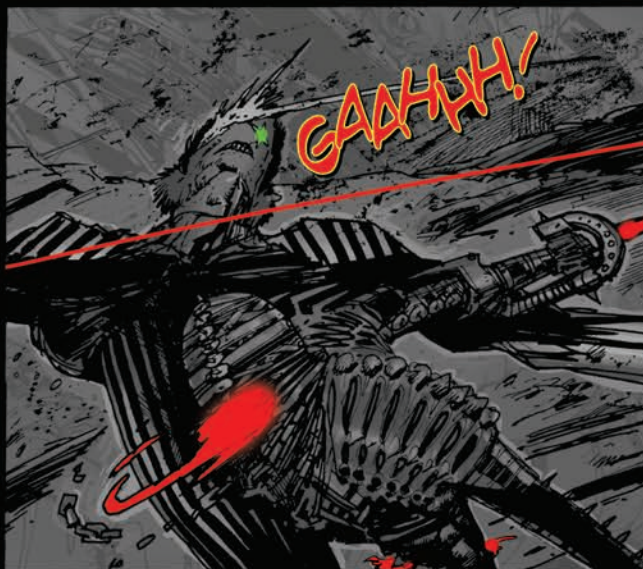
THE NAME'S
D'EATH. VALENTINE
D'EATH.

I CAME OUT
OF RETIREMENT TO HUNT
YOU DOWN. WOULDN'T HAVE
BOTHERED IF I'D KNOWN
WHAT YOU REALLY
WERE...



SHAKARA!





QUITE
THE KILLING
MACHINE, AREN'T
YOU?

REMORSELESS,
RELENTLESS, BRUTAL,
DEADLY...

THE
PROBLEM IS,
YOU'VE GOT NO
STYLE, NO
PANACHE.

I MEAN,
WHERE'S THE WIT, THE
REPARTEE, THE GALLOWS
HUMOUR, THE DOUBLE
ENTENDRES?

I WAS
BROUGHT UP TO
TREAT MY VICTIMS WITH
RESPECT, TO MAKE EVERY
SINGLE ONE OF THEM
FEEL **SPECIAL...**
UNIQUE.

A
CUTTING
ONE-LINER HERE,
AN ESPECIALLY
IMAGINATIVE
MURDER
THERE...

...AND I ALWAYS **SEDUCED** MY FEMALE TARGETS — THE PASSABLY ATTRACTIVE ONES, AT LEAST — BEFORE KILLING THEM.

AFTER A NIGHT WITH ME, THE REST OF THEIR LIVES WOULD'VE BEEN A MASSIVE ANTI-CLIMAX, SO REALLY I WAS DOING THEM A **FAVOUR**.



MY PARENTS WERE THE GREATEST ASSASSINS OF THEIR DAY — UNTIL THEY ACCEPTED CONTRACTS ON EACH OTHER.

NATURALLY, THEY WANTED ME TO CARRY ON THE FAMILY TRADITION. THEY PUT ME THROUGH A GENETIC ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME, DESIGNED TO CREATE A **LIVING WEAPON**.

A SKELETAL STRUCTURE THAT CAN BECOME ANYTHING FROM **ARMOUR** TO **RETRACTABLE CLAWS**, THE ABILITY TO GENERATE ENOUGH **BIO-ELECTRICITY** TO POWER A STARSHIP...

VEINS THAT CAN BE TURNED INTO **GARROTTES**...



I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS **SENSITIVE** TO A VICTIM'S NEEDS...

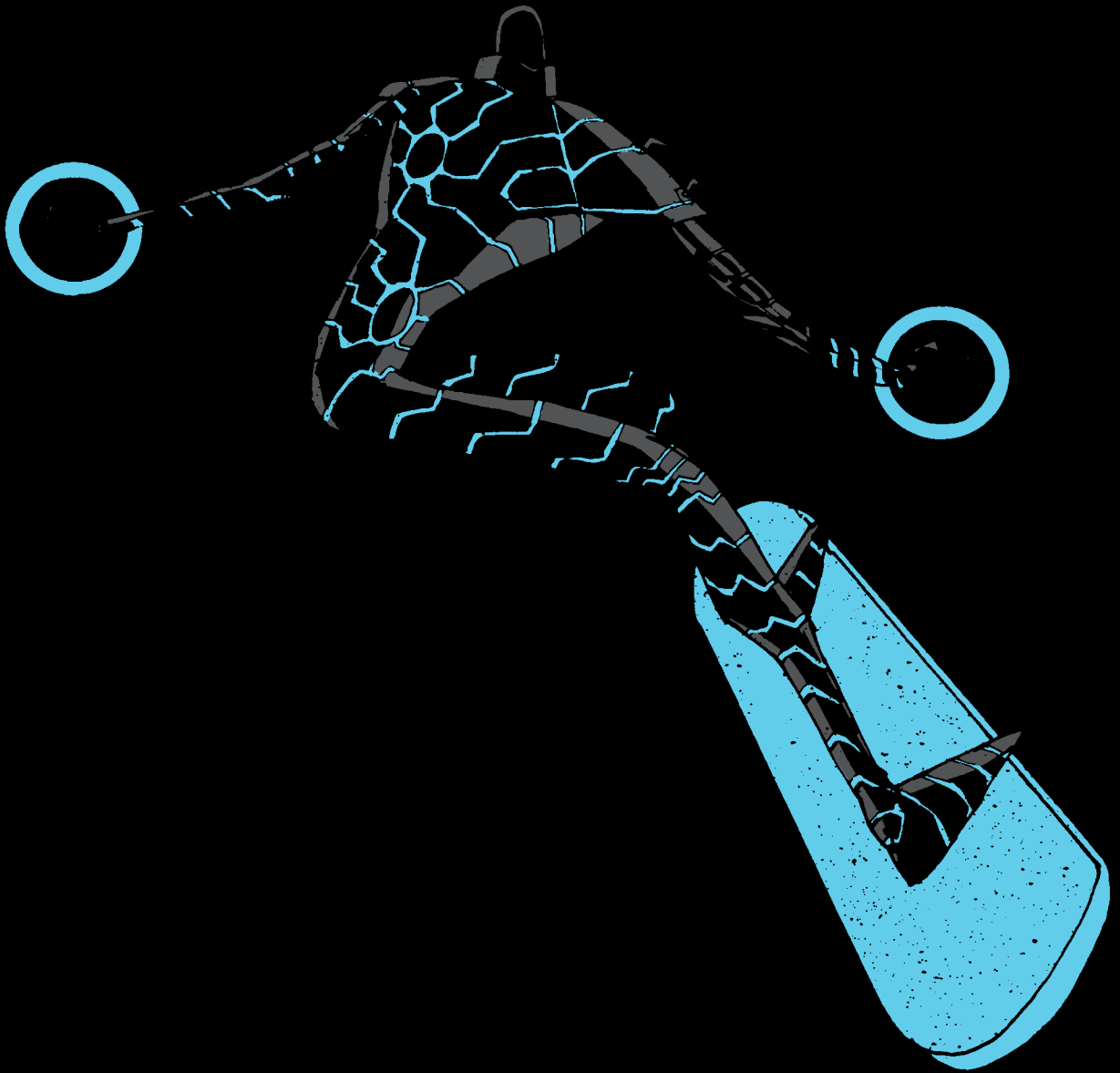


...A **COMPASSIONATE KILLER**.









SHAKARA: THE DEFIANT

Script: Robbie Morrison

Art: Henry Flint

Letters: Annie Parkhouse

Originally published in *2000 AD* Progs 2008, 1567-1573

'I FEARED THAT
WAS WHAT YOU
WERE GOING TO
ASK ME, CHILD.

'NO ONE SPEAKS OF
THEM, NOT NOW. TO
EVEN SAY THE NAME
IS A DEATH SENTENCE.

'BUT IT WAS
NOT ALWAYS
SO.

'BEFORE THE GREAT
TERROR, THEIR NAME
RANG PROUD AND
TRUE THROUGHOUT
THE COSMOS...

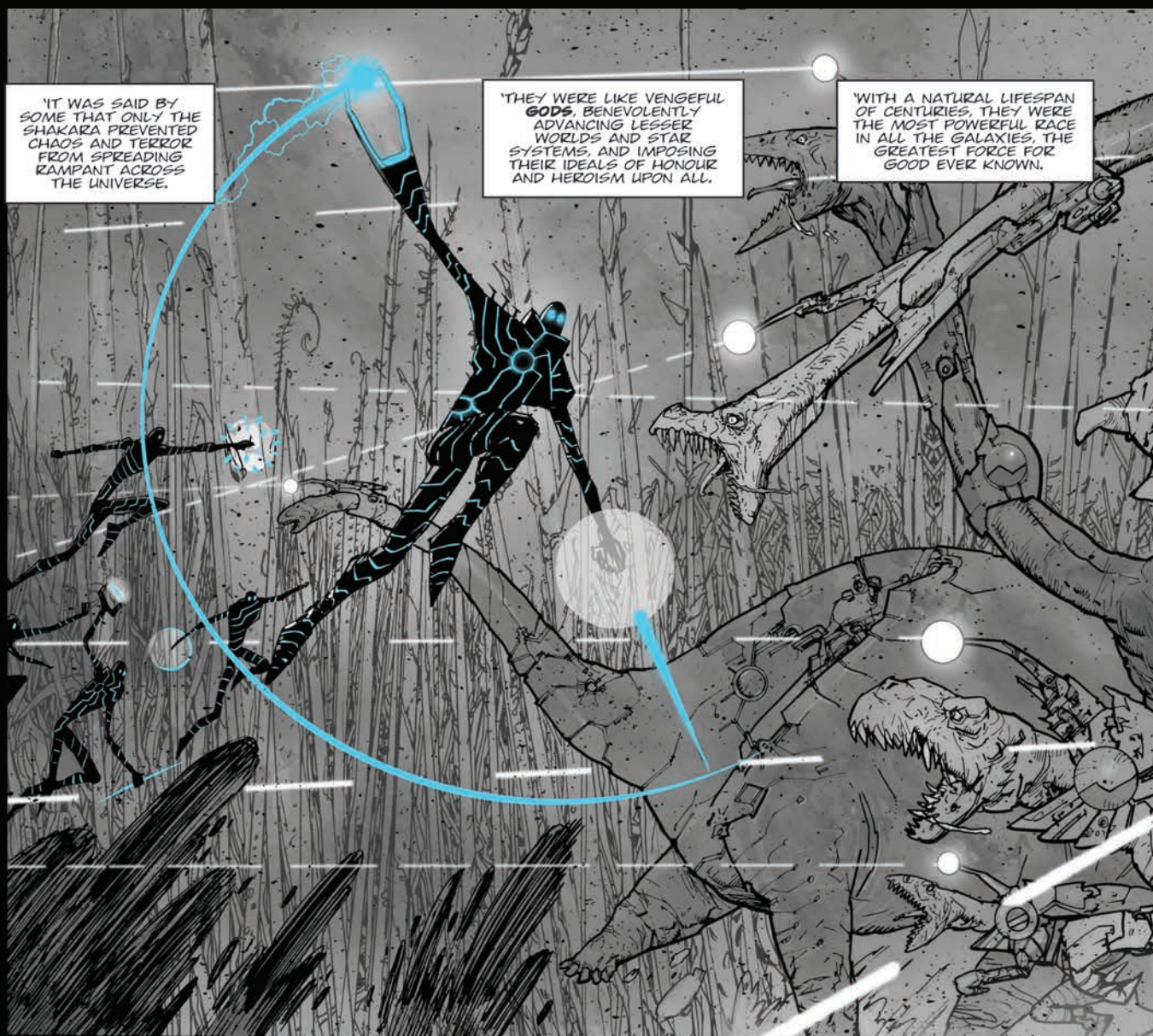
SHAKARA!



'IT WAS SAID BY SOME THAT ONLY THE SHAKARA PREVENTED CHAOS AND TERROR FROM SPREADING RAMPANT ACROSS THE UNIVERSE.

'THEY WERE LIKE VENGEFUL GODS, BENEVOLENTLY ADVANCING LESSER WORLDS AND STAR SYSTEMS, AND IMPOSING THEIR IDEALS OF HONOUR AND HEROISM UPON ALL.

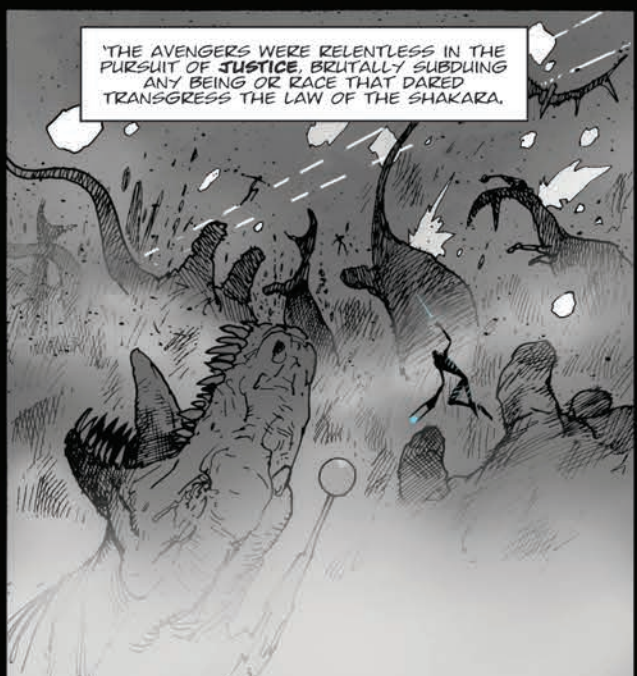
'WITH A NATURAL LIFESPAN OF CENTURIES, THEY WERE THE MOST POWERFUL RACE IN ALL THE GALAXIES, THE GREATEST FORCE FOR GOOD EVER KNOWN.

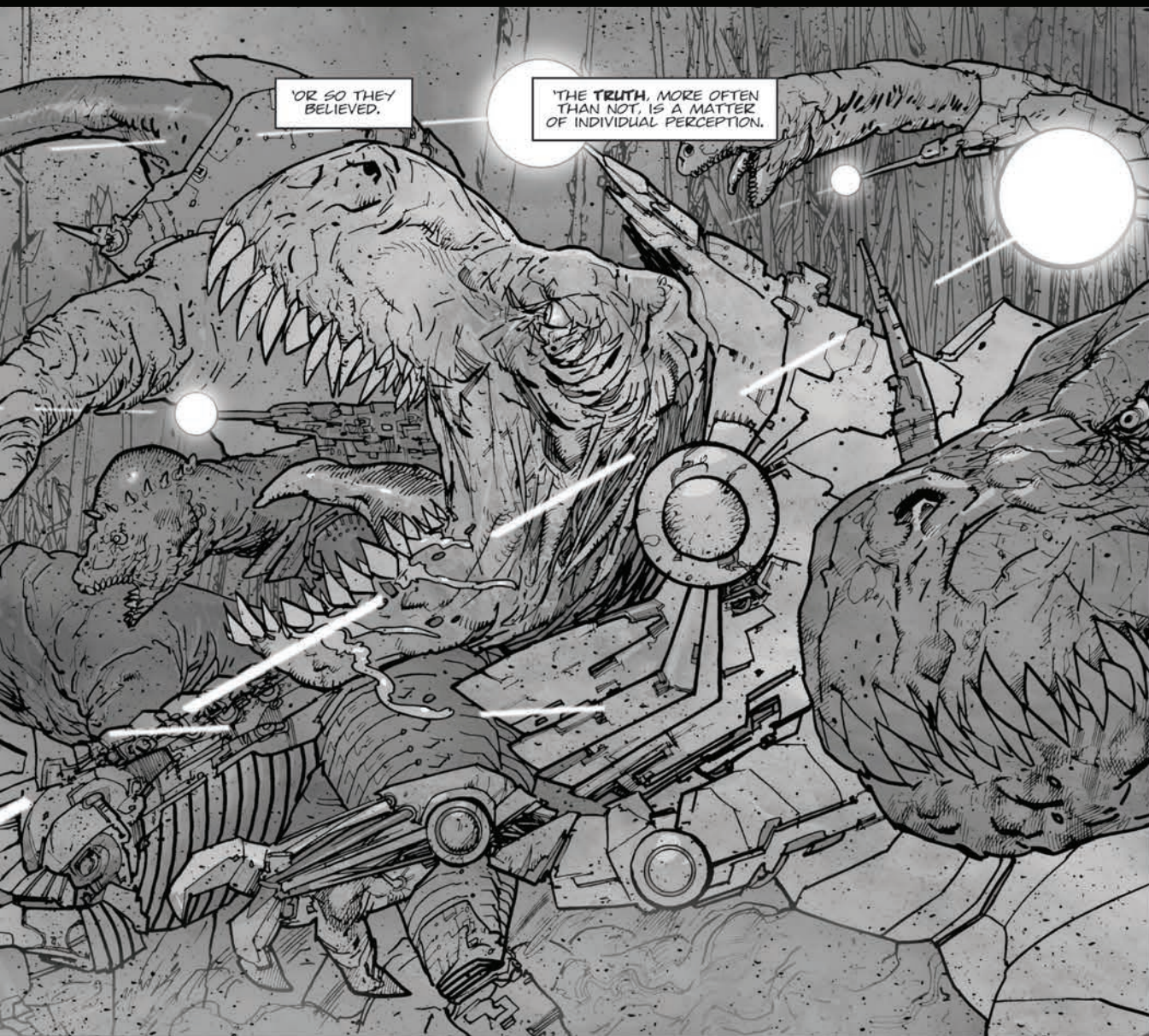


'THE SHAKARAN AVENGERS WERE THE MOST FEARED WEAPONS OF THE SHAKARAN WAR MACHINE.



'THE AVENGERS WERE RELENTLESS IN THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE, BRUTALLY SUBDUING ANY BEING OR RACE THAT DARED TRANSGRESS THE LAW OF THE SHAKARA.





'OR SO THEY BELIEVED.

'THE TRUTH, MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, IS A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL PERCEPTION.



'AND NONE WAS MORE FEARED THAN THE WARRIOR WHO LED THEM...



'CINNIBAR BRENNKA, THE CHAMPION OF THE SHAKARA, WHOSE OWN QUEST FOR JUSTICE HAD CREATED AN INTERGALACTIC EMPIRE.

SHAKARA!

'THE SHAKARA WERE NOT ALWAYS SO HIGH AND MIGHTY, HOWEVER...

'MILLENNIA AGO, THE SHAKARAN HOMELAND WAS RAVAGED BY EXTREMES OF CLIMATE AND VOLCANIC UPEHAVAL.

'A WILD, PREDATORY ENVIRONMENT, WHERE EVERY FORM OF LIFE HAD TO FIGHT TO SURVIVE...

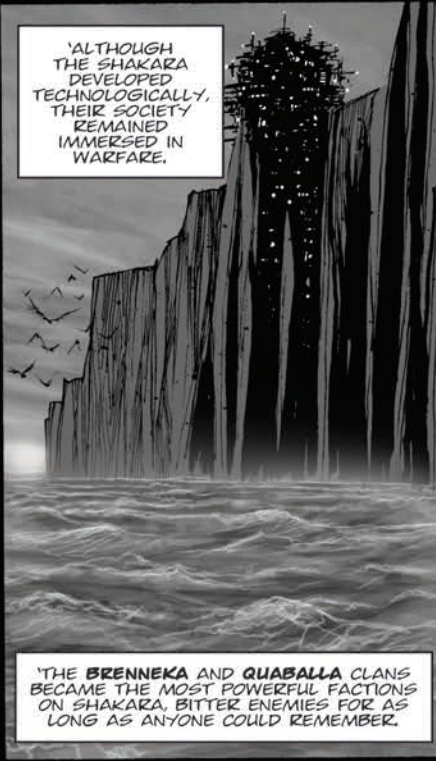
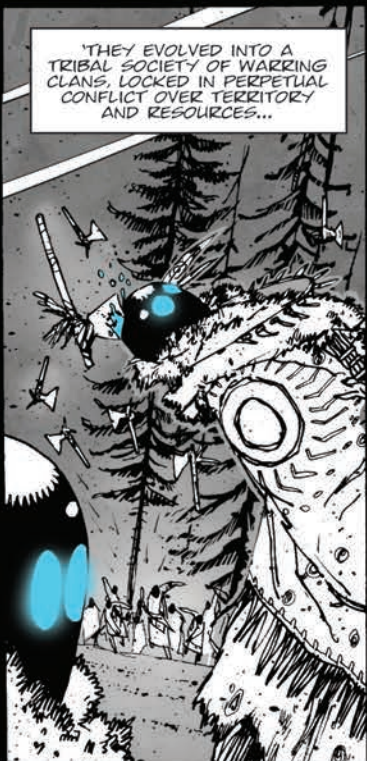
'THE SHAKARA WERE THE DOMINANT SPECIES, A BARBARIC WARRIOR-RACE ACCORDING TO THE INITIAL REPORTS OF DARING EXPLORERS WHO WERE SUBSEQUENTLY NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN.



'THEY EVOLVED INTO A TRIBAL SOCIETY OF WARRING CLANS, LOCKED IN PERPETUAL CONFLICT OVER TERRITORY AND RESOURCES...

'A REMORSELESS CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AND VENDETTA THAT ONLY GREW WORSE AS THE CENTURIES PASSED.

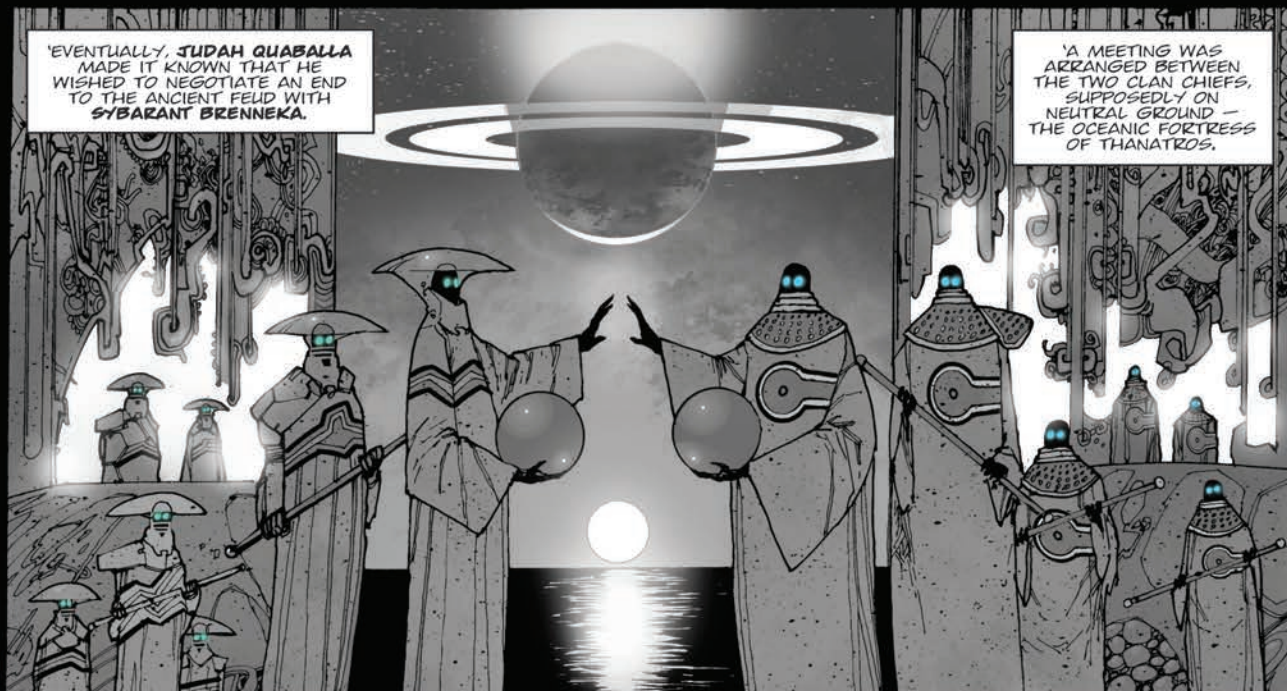
'ALTHOUGH THE SHAKARA DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGICALLY, THEIR SOCIETY REMAINED IMMERSSED IN WARFARE.



'THE BRENNKA AND QUABALLA CLANS BECAME THE MOST POWERFUL FACTIONS ON SHAKARA, BITTER ENEMIES FOR AS LONG AS ANYONE COULD REMEMBER.

'EVENTUALLY, JUDAH QUABALLA MADE IT KNOWN THAT HE WISHED TO NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE ANCIENT FEUD WITH SYBARANT BRENNKA.

'A MEETING WAS ARRANGED BETWEEN THE TWO CLAN CHIEFS, SUPPOSEDLY ON NEUTRAL GROUND — THE OCEANIC FORTRESS OF THANATROS.



'IT WAS A TRAP.

'QUABALLA, BREAKING ALL CODES OF CONDUCT, UNLEASHED A SWARM OF SPECIALLY BRED SHARD-SNAKES UPON SYBARANT AND HIS MEN.

'CINNIBAR BRENNKA FOUGHT LIKE A DEVIL TO REACH HIS FATHER, BUT THE SNAKE-STORM WAS TOO FIERCE, A MAELSTROM OF FANGS AND RAZOR-HIDES.

'HE WAS FORCED TO LEAP FROM THE FORTRESS INTO THE RAGING SEAS BELOW, THE DEATH-SCREAMS OF HIS CLAN WRITHING IN HIS SOUL.



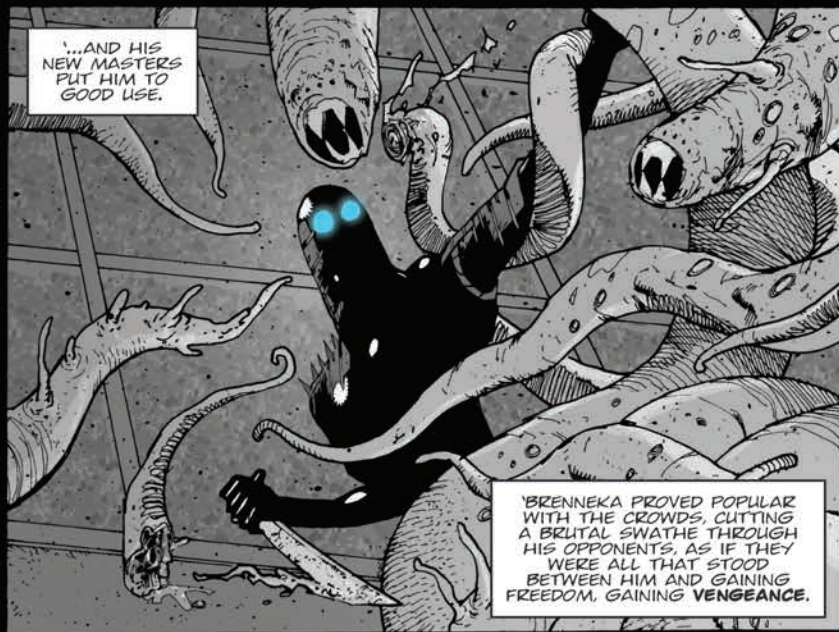
'CINNIBAR FLED OFFWORLD, PLANNING TO STAGE A COUNTER-ATTACK, BUT HIS SHIP WAS INTERCEPTED BY SLAVE-TRAFFICKERS AND HE WAS TAKEN CAPTIVE.



'ALTHOUGH THEY RARELY LEFT THEIR HOMEWORLD, THE SHAKARANS' WARRIOR REPUTATION WAS LEGENDARY EVEN THEN.

'HE WAS TAKEN TO THE SLAVE MARKET ON PLANET OBIDOS. BIDDING WAS FIERCE. HE WAS SOLD INTO GLADIATORIAL SERVICE FOR AN EXORBITANT SUM...

'...AND HIS NEW MASTERS PUT HIM TO GOOD USE.



'BRENNIKA PROVED POPULAR WITH THE CROWDS, CUTTING A BRUTAL SWATH THROUGH HIS OPPONENTS, AS IF THEY WERE ALL THAT STOOD BETWEEN HIM AND GAINING FREEDOM. GAINING VENGEANCE.

SHAKARA!



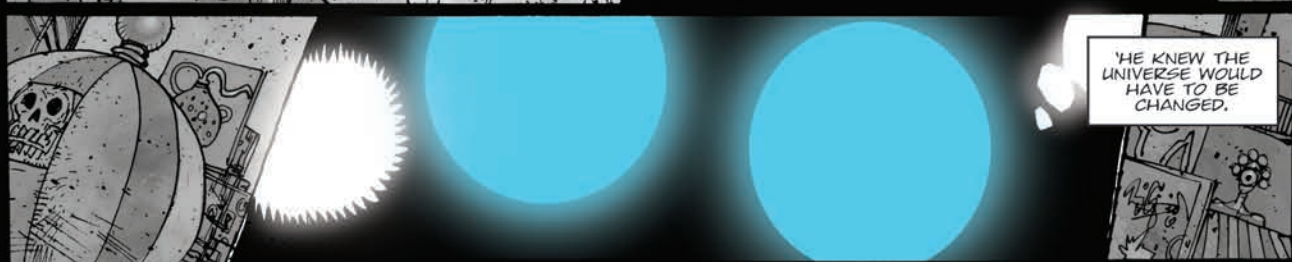
'AS HIS FAME SPREAD, BRENNIKA'S MASTERS SENT HIM ON AN INTERGALACTIC COMBAT TOUR, ALLOWING HIM TO EXPERIENCE THE UNIVERSE IN ALL ITS DARK DIVERSITY.

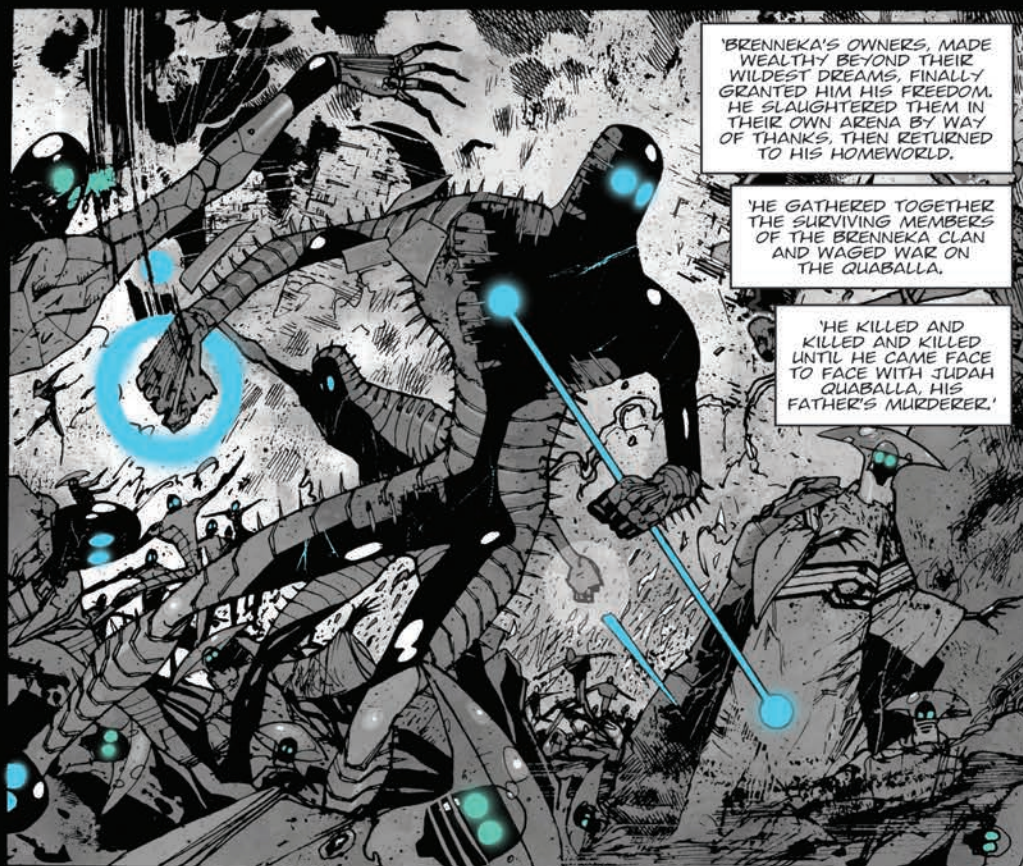
'EVERYWHERE HE WENT, HIS SENSES WERE ASSAULTED BY VICE AND CRIME, THE STENCH OF BOUGHT SEX AND BLOODY MURDER, THE SIGHT OF THE STRONG PREYING ON THE WEAK...



'ACTIONS EVERY BIT AS DEPRAVED AS THOSE OF THE QUABALLA CLAN.

'HE KNEW THE UNIVERSE WOULD HAVE TO BE CHANGED.





'BRENNKA'S OWNERS, MADE WEALTHY BEYOND THEIR WILDEST DREAMS, FINALLY GRANTED HIM HIS FREEDOM. HE SLAUGHTERED THEM IN THEIR OWN ARENA BY WAY OF THANKS, THEN RETURNED TO HIS HOMETOWN.'

'HE GATHERED TOGETHER THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE BRENNKA CLAN AND WAGED WAR ON THE QUABALLA.'

'HE KILLED AND KILLED AND KILLED UNTIL HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH JUDAH QUABALLA, HIS FATHER'S MURDERER.'



SHAKARA!



'AFTERWARDS, BRENNKA REBUILT SHAKARAN SOCIETY, INTRODUCING THE STRICTEST CODES OF HONOUR AND JUSTICE EVER SEEN.'

'IT WAS NOT ENOUGH, NOT WHEN THE WORLDS BEYOND REMAINED IN TURMOIL.'

'HE FORMED THE SHAKARAN AVENGERS, AND BROUGHT THE LAW OF THE SHAKARA TO THE UNIVERSE.'

'WITHIN A CENTURY, THE DEVELOPED WORLDS OF TWENTY-SEVEN GALAXIES WERE UNDER SHAKARAN DOMINATION.'

'A GOLDEN ERA OF PEACE DESCENDED, AND BRENNKA CEDED CONTROL TO A DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL OF ELDERS.'

'IN HIS EYES, HE WAS NOT A LEADER. HE WAS AN AVENGER.'



'INCREASINGLY, BRENNKA FELT LIKE AN OUTSIDER, AN ANACHRONISM, AND HE LEFT HIS HOMEWORLD ONCE AGAIN, PURSUING WHISPERED RUMOURS OF A POWERFUL CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE EMPIRE HE HAD BUILT.

'WITHOUT HIM, THE SHAKARANS GREW SOFT AND ARROGANT. GREED AND CORRUPTION BLOSSOMED AMONGST THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE DAYS OF JUDAH QUABALLA.

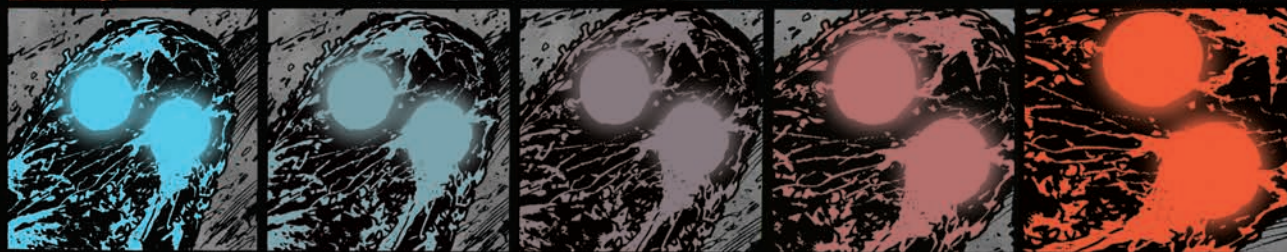
'THE RUMOURS PROVED ALL TOO TRUE.

'THE SURVIVING FORCES OF THE TYRANNICAL REGIMES AND CRIMINAL ORGANISATIONS THAT THE AVENGERS HAD DESTROYED FORGED AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE AGAINST THE SHAKARA.

'ALONE, SEPARATED FROM HIS BELOVED AVENGERS, CINNIBAR BRENNKA FOUGHT A BATTLE THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, HE COULD NOT HOPE TO WIN.

'AND SO THE GREAT TERROR BEGAN...

'THE RED DEATH, A
SPECIALLY ENGINEERED
VIRUS, WAS UNLEASHED
UPON THE SHAKARANS,
CORRUPTING THE GENETIC
STRUCTURE OF THE
ENTIRE RACE, MAKING
IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR
THEM TO RESIST...



'THE SUCCUBI, THE
WORLD-EATERS, FED UPON
SHAKARA, LEAVING THE
PLANET LITTLE MORE
THAN A LIFELESS HUSK...



'AND THEN
THE ARMADA
OPENED FIRE...



'...BLASTING
WHATEVER
REMAINED OUT
OF EXISTENCE.'





AND THAT, CHILD, IS THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SHAKARAN EMPIRE.

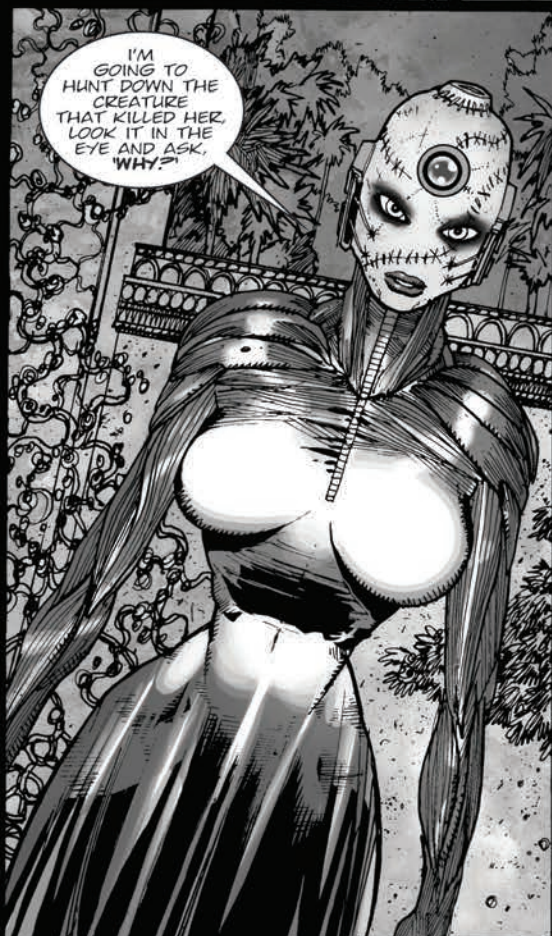
ALL TRACE OF THEM HAS BEEN WIPED FROM THE HISTORY BOOKS, AND EVEN NOW, AFTER ALL THIS TIME, THE STORY IS PAINFUL FOR ME TO TELL.



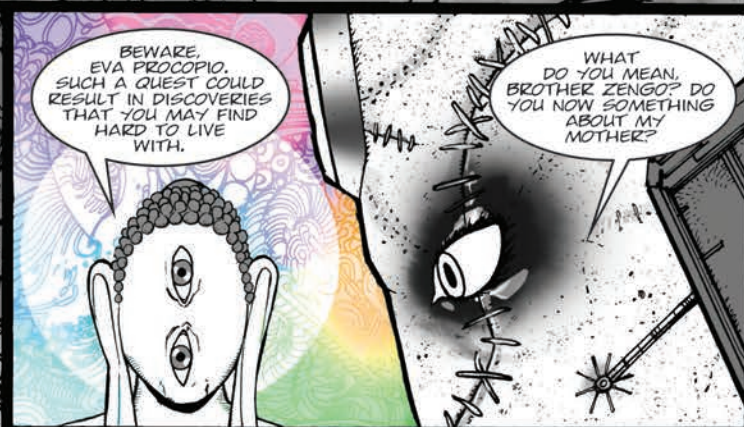
WHY DO YOU WISH TO KNOW OF THEM?

A CREATURE CALLING ITSELF SHAKARA MURDERED MY MOTHER IN THE ARES SYSTEM LAST YEAR.

SHE DEVOTED HERSELF TO SAVING LIVES, BETTERING THE UNIVERSE, SHE RAISED ME TO BELIEVE IN THE SAME IDEALS, THOUGH I HAVE DIFFICULTY IN THINKING THAT WAY NOW.

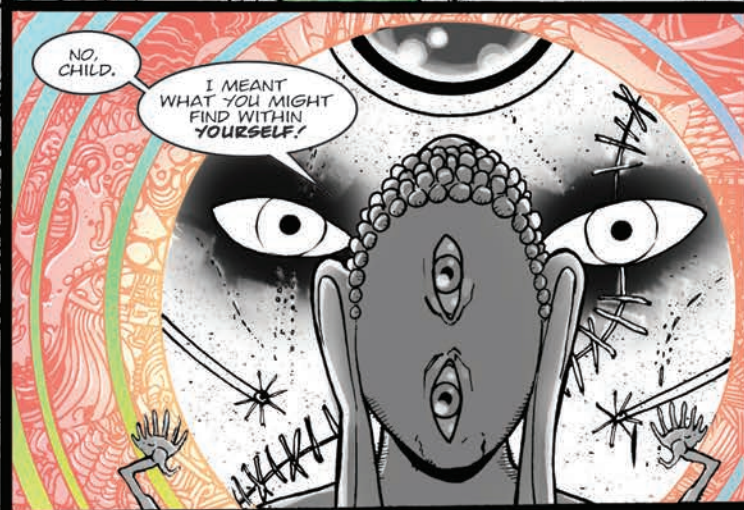


I'M GOING TO HUNT DOWN THE CREATURE THAT KILLED HER. LOOK IT IN THE EYE AND ASK, 'WHY?'



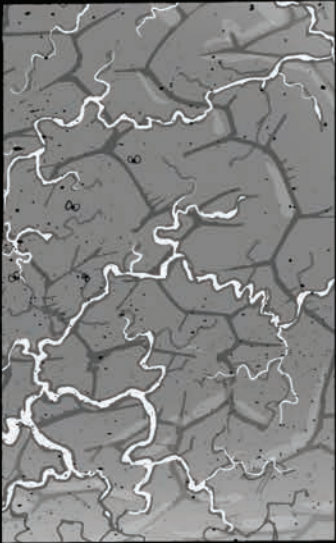
BEWARE, EVA PROCOPIO. SUCH A QUEST COULD RESULT IN DISCOVERIES THAT YOU MAY FIND HARD TO LIVE WITH.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, BROTHER ZENGO? DO YOU NOW SOMETHING ABOUT MY MOTHER?

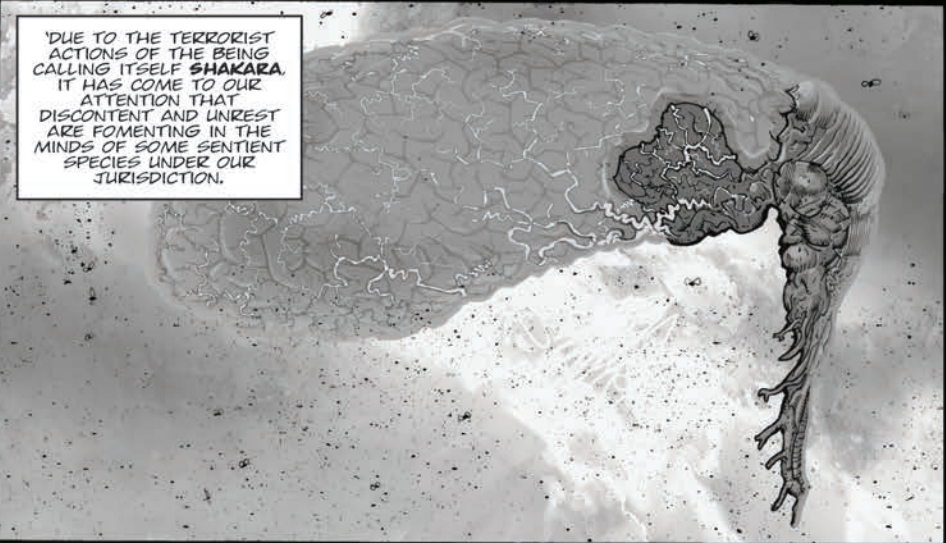


NO, CHILD.

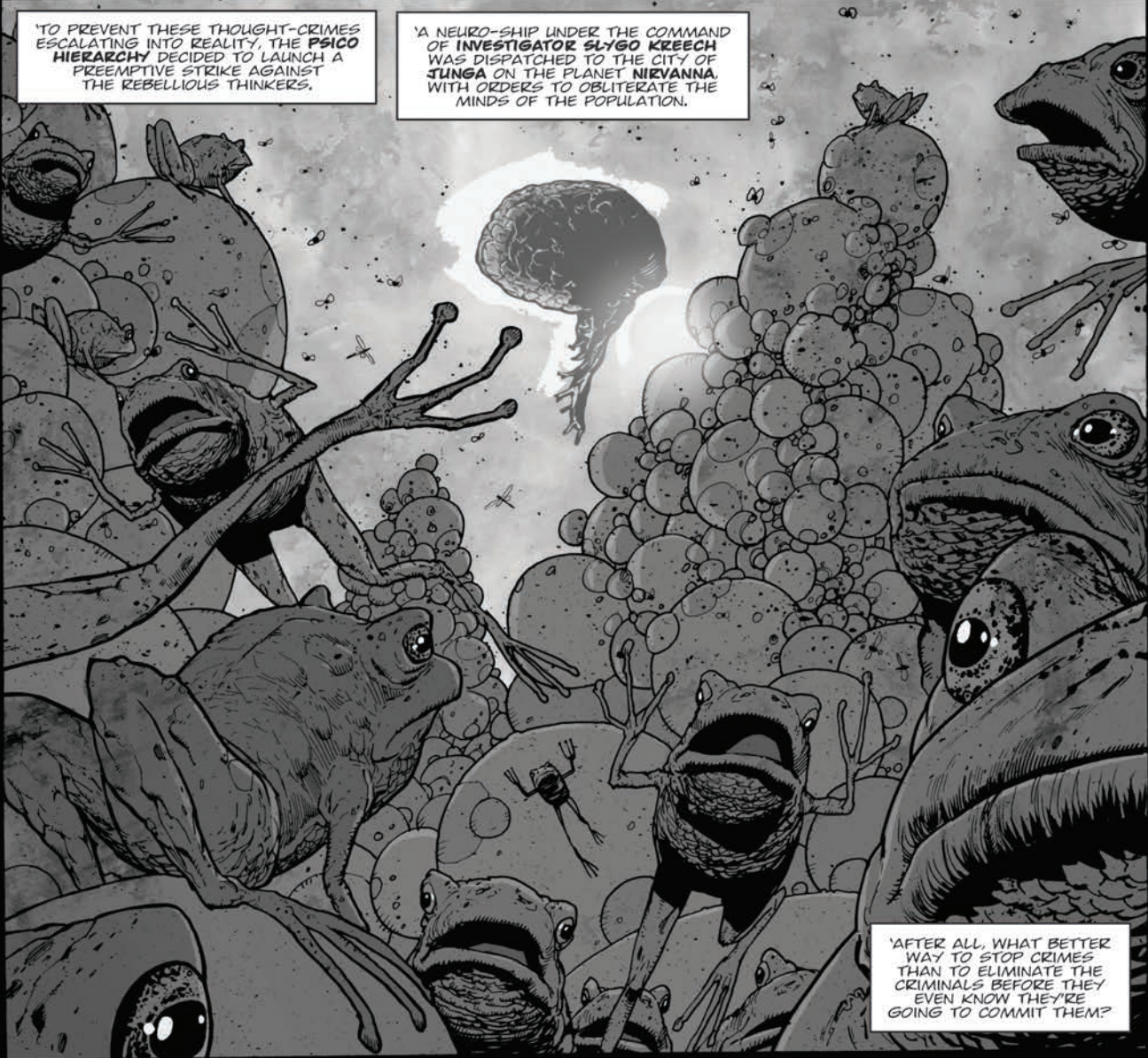
I MEANT WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND WITHIN YOURSELF!



'DUE TO THE TERRORIST
ACTIONS OF THE BEING
CALLING ITSELF **SHAKARA**,
IT HAS COME TO OUR
ATTENTION THAT
DISCONTENT AND UNREST
ARE FOMENTING IN THE
MINDS OF SOME SENTIENT
SPECIES UNDER OUR
JURISDICTION.



'A NEURO-SHIP UNDER THE COMMAND
OF INVESTIGATOR **SLYGO KREECH**
WAS DISPATCHED TO THE CITY OF
JUNGA ON THE PLANET **NIRVANNA**,
WITH ORDERS TO OBLITERATE THE
MINDS OF THE POPULATION.



'TO PREVENT THESE THOUGHT-CRIMES
ESCALATING INTO REALITY, THE **PSICO**
HIERARCHY DECIDED TO LAUNCH A
PREEMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST
THE REBELLIOUS THINKERS.

'AFTER ALL, WHAT BETTER
WAY TO STOP CRIMES
THAN TO ELIMINATE THE
CRIMINALS BEFORE THEY
EVEN KNOW THEY'RE
GOING TO COMMIT THEM?

'MAYOR SIGMUND NOVA
MADE A PATHETIC ATTEMPT
TO NEGOTIATE A REPRIEVE
FOR HIS PEOPLE.' — KARNAK
BLEED, MASTER
INVESTIGATOR OF PSICO, THE
INTERGALACTIC FEDERATION
OF PSONIC POWERS.

'YOU
CAN'T CONDEMN AN
ENTIRE RACE BECAUSE
OF WHAT THEY'RE
THINKING.' IF THOUGHTS
DON'T BECOME ACTIONS,
THEN THERE'S NO
CRIME.'

IT'S
PREDICTED THAT, IF YOUR
CURRENT NEGATIVE MINDSET
CONTINUES UNCHECKED, YOU'LL
BE ENGAGING IN VIOLENT
PROTEST WITHIN 99
YEARS.

THAT
SORT OF
THING HAS TO
BE NIPPED IN
THE BUD.

BESIDES,
WE'RE NOT GOING TO
KILL YOU...

...WE'RE
ONLY GOING TO
REMOVE YOUR FREE
WILL AND TURN YOU INTO
A MINDLESS ARMY THAT
WILL THEN IMPOSE
OUR WILL ON THE
REST OF YOUR
WORLD.

IT'S SO
SIMPLE, IT'S ALMOST
POETIC.

NO GREAT
LOSS TO THE UNIVERSE,
EITHER. YOU NIRVANNANS
AREN'T EXACTLY
RENOWNED FOR YOUR
INTELLECT.

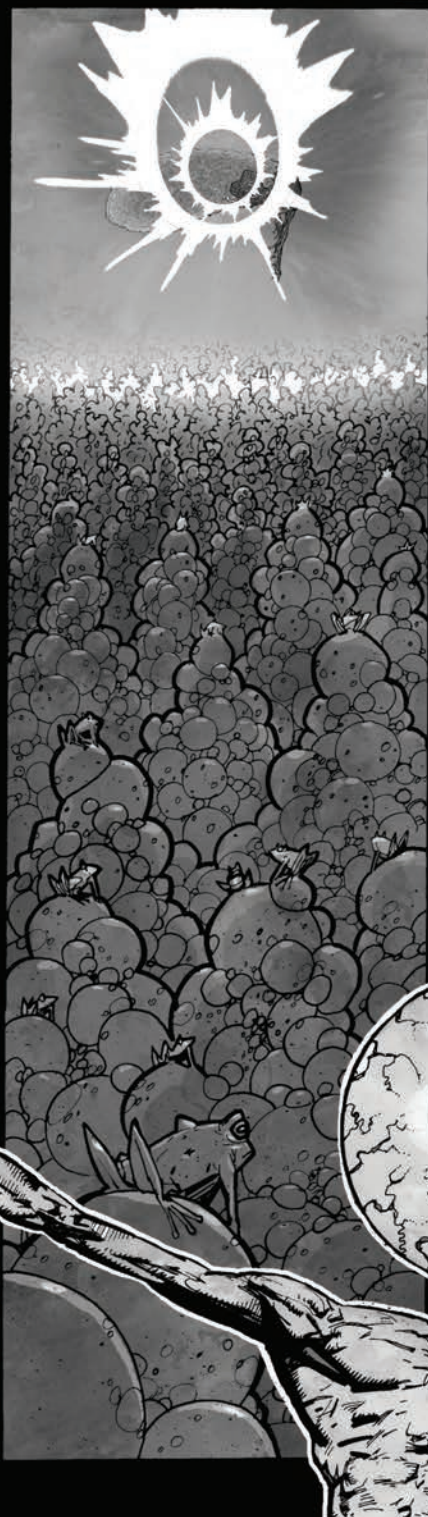
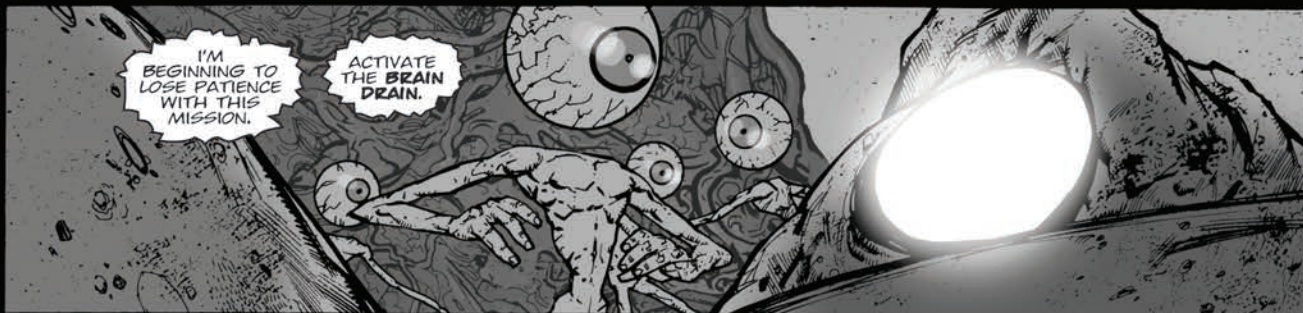
IN FACT,
YOU SHOULD BE
GRATEFUL...

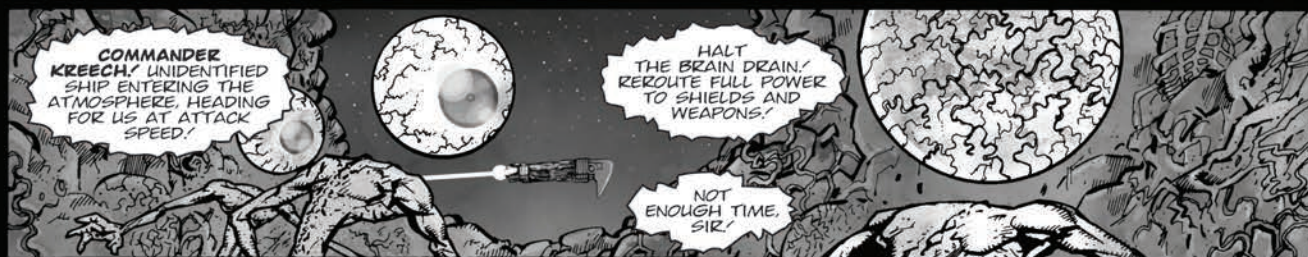
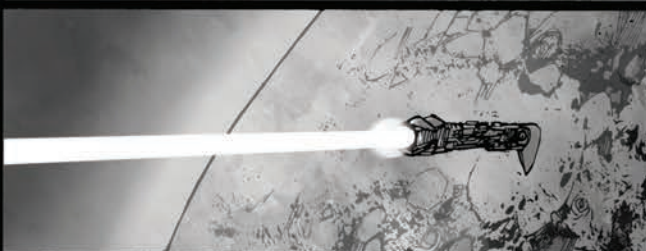
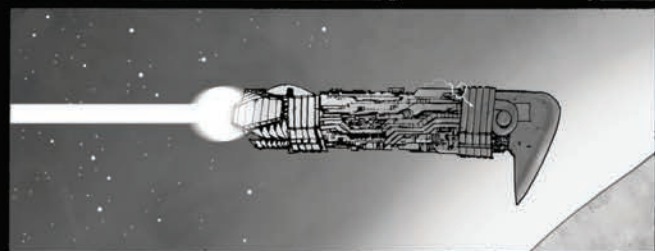
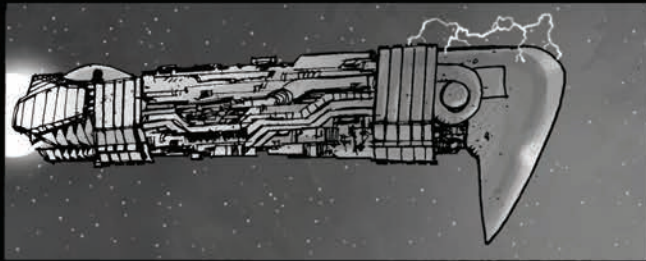
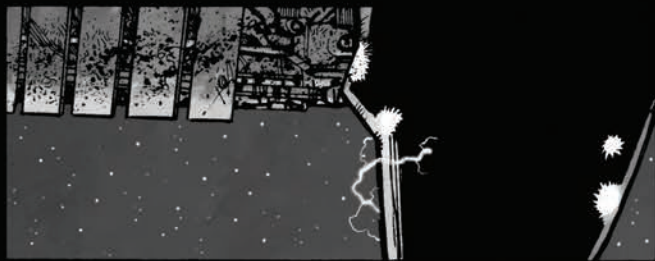
...YOU'LL
FIND LIFE IS SO MUCH
EASIER WHEN WE'RE
DOING YOUR THINKING
FOR YOU.'

AAAAARRRGH!

EEEEAAAAA







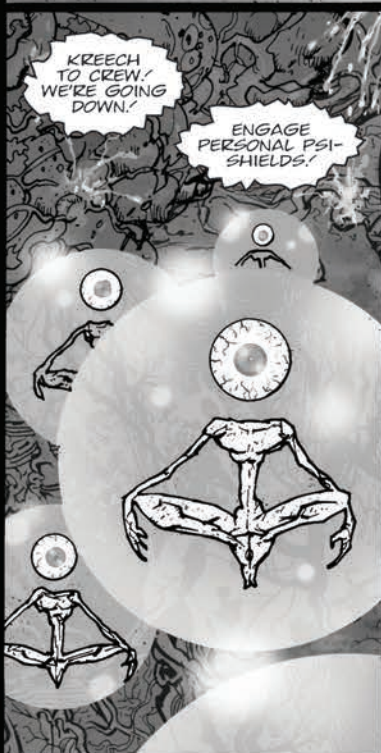
COMMANDER
KREECH: UNIDENTIFIED
SHIP ENTERING THE
ATMOSPHERE, HEADING
FOR US AT ATTACK
SPEED.

HALT
THE BRAIN DRAIN!
REROUTE FULL POWER
TO SHIELDS AND
WEAPONS.

NOT
ENOUGH TIME,
SIR.

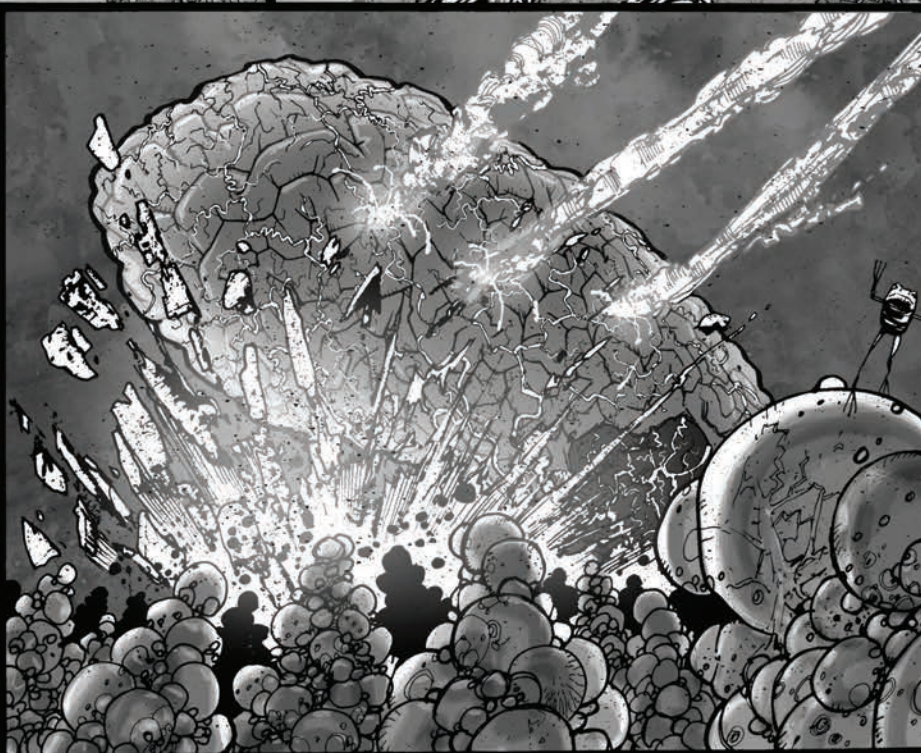


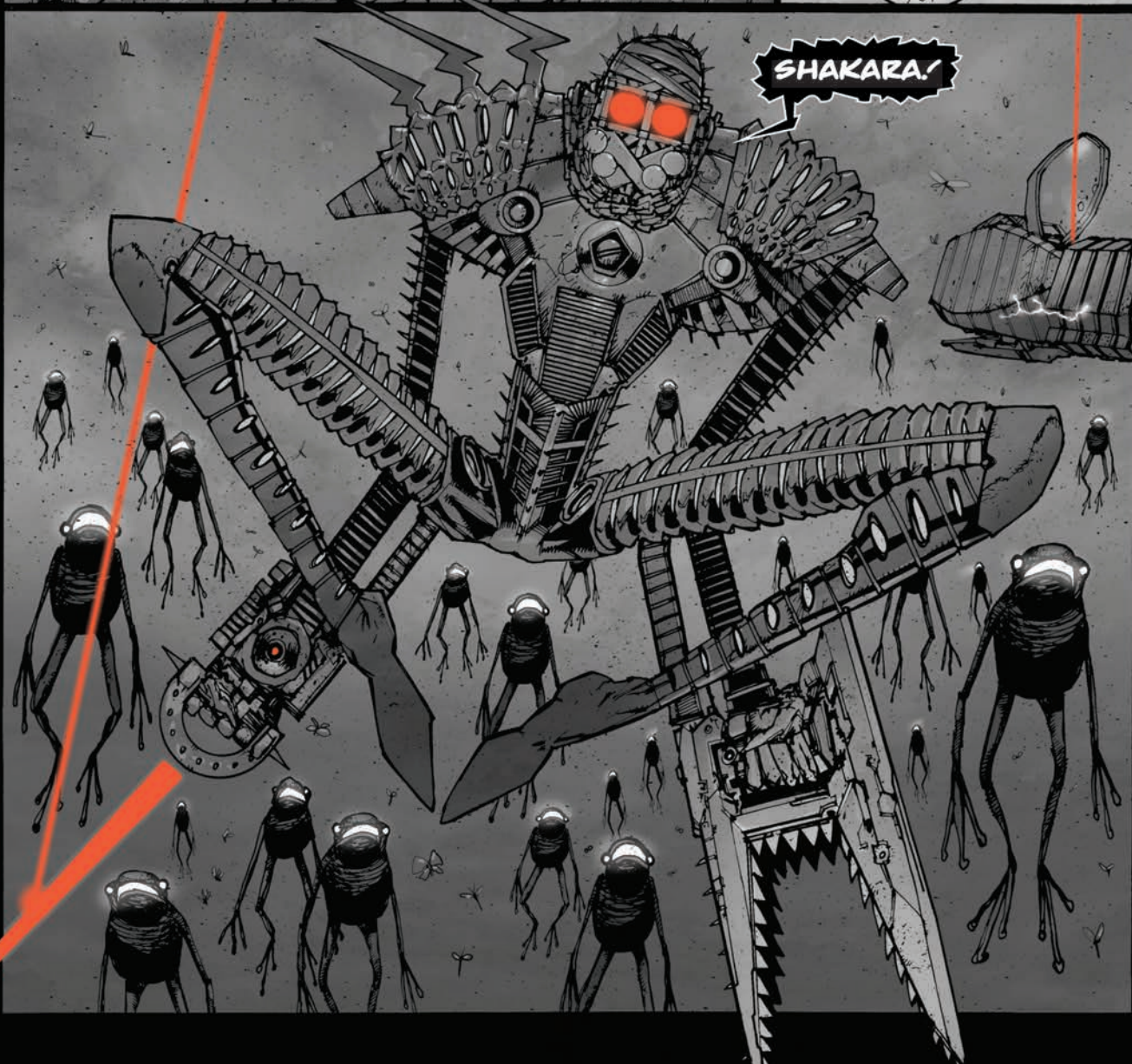
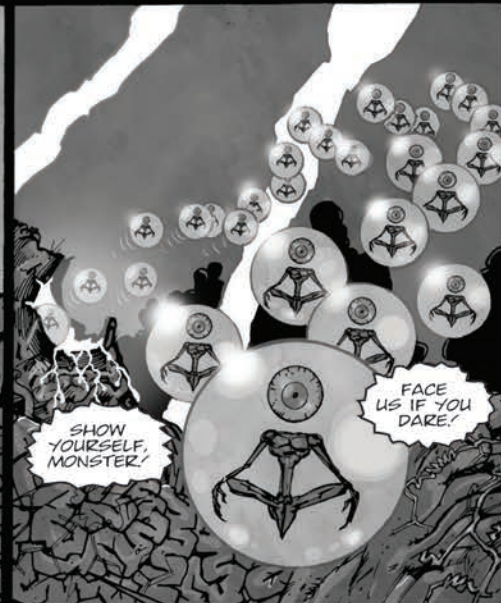
"WE'RE VIRTUALLY
DEFENCELESS."

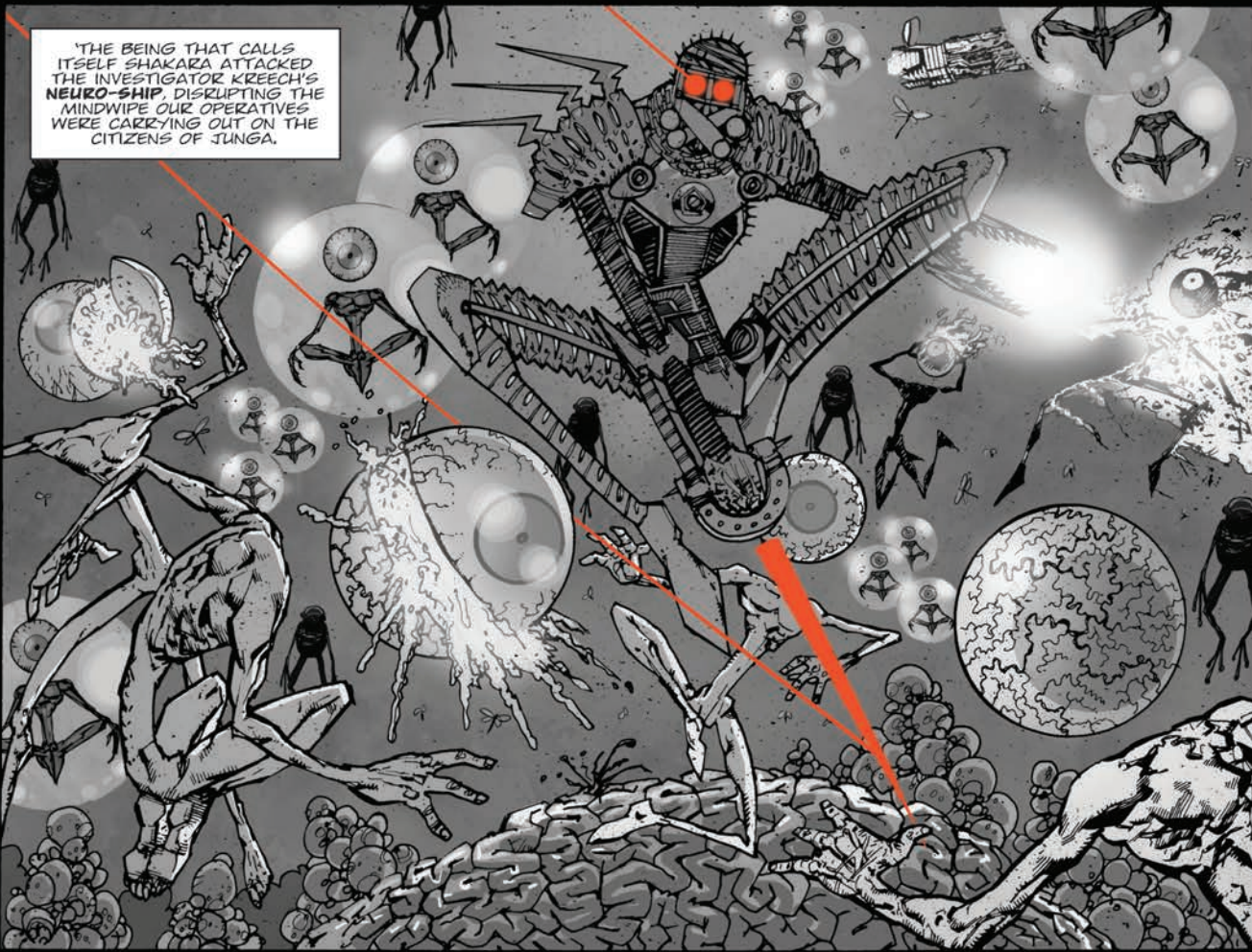


KREECH
TO CREW!
WE'RE GOING
DOWN!

ENGAGE
PERSONAL PSI-
SHIELDS!





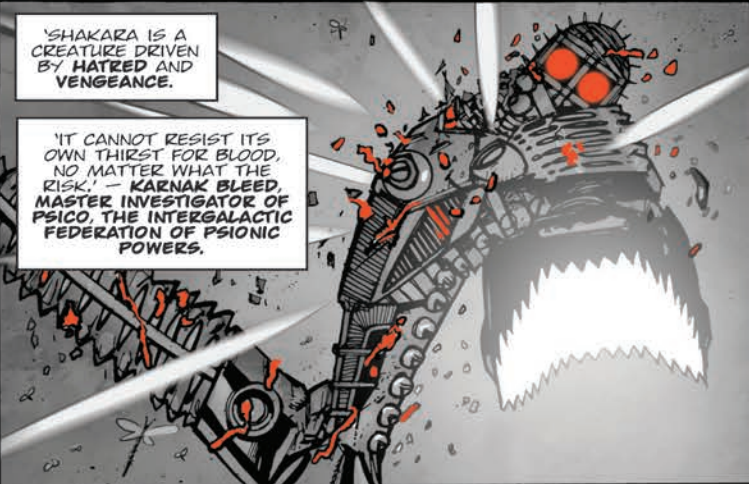


'THE BEING THAT CALLS ITSELF SHAKARA ATTACKED THE INVESTIGATOR KREECH'S NEURO-SHIP, DISRUPTING THE MINDWIFE OUR OPERATIVES WERE CARRYING OUT ON THE CITIZENS OF JUNGA.



'IT THEN EMERGED FROM ITS SHIP TO ENGAGE KREECH AND HIS WARRIORS IN PERSONAL COMBAT, REVEALING WHAT, IF MANIPULATED CORRECTLY, COULD BE A FATAL PSYCHOLOGICAL FLAW.

SHRED THE MONSTER'S MIND WITH PSIONIC SPEARS!

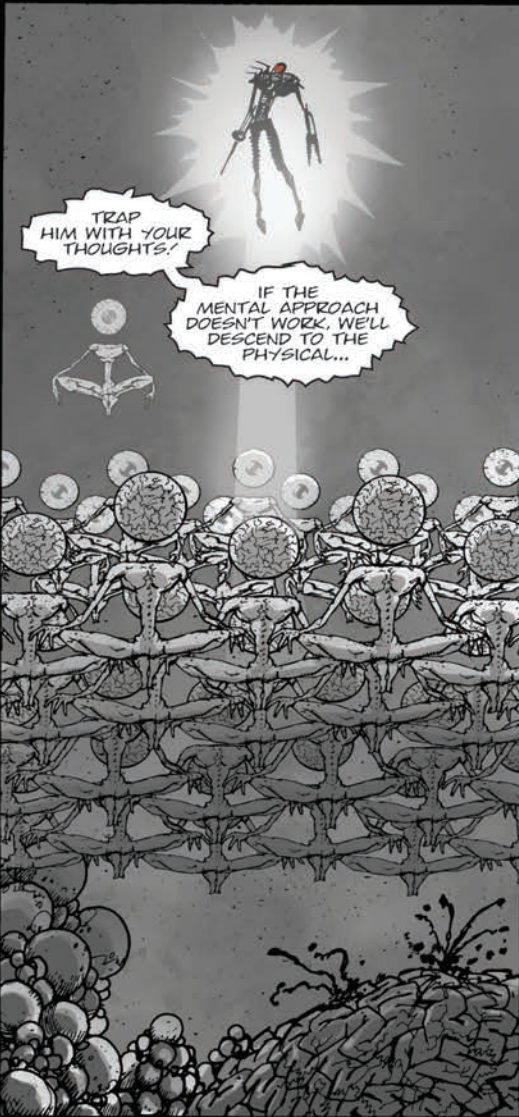


'SHAKARA IS A CREATURE DRIVEN BY HATRED AND VENGEANCE.

'IT CANNOT RESIST ITS OWN THIRST FOR BLOOD. NO MATTER WHAT THE RISK.' — KARNAK BLEED, MASTER INVESTIGATOR OF PSICO, THE INTERGALACTIC FEDERATION OF PSIONIC POWERS.

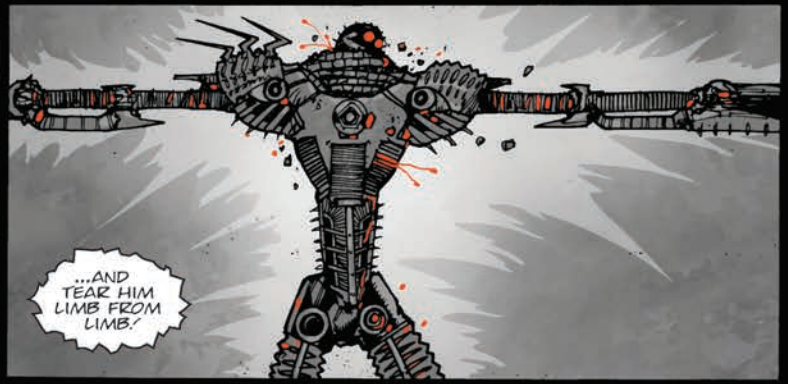
THE FORCE OF HIS HATRED IS SHIELDING HIM.

SWITCH TO TELEKINESIS!

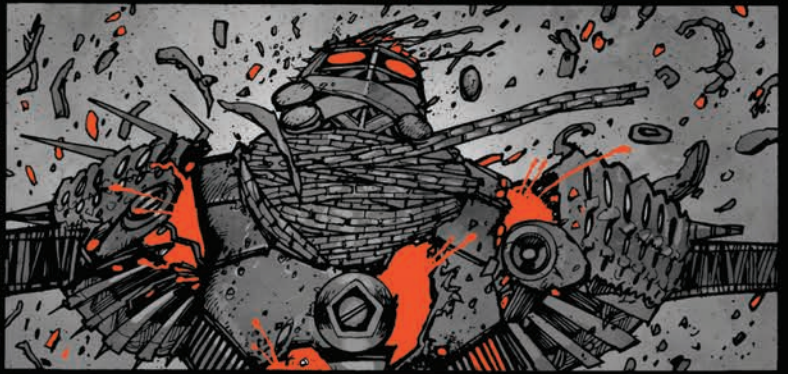


TRAP
HIM WITH YOUR
THOUGHTS!

IF THE
MENTAL APPROACH
DOESN'T WORK, WE'LL
DESCEND TO THE
PHYSICAL...



...AND
TEAR HIM
LIMB FROM
LIMB!



AAAAAIIIEEE!

WHO
DARES - ?



KILL
'EM!

GET THE
HEADFRUKKERS!

BURST
THEIR
BALLS!

DO
THEY HAVE
ANY?

THEIR
EYEBALLS,
STUPID!

TRAPPED BETWEEN TWO
OVERWHELMING FORCES,
INVESTIGATOR KREECH
WAS FORCED TO MAKE A
FATEFUL DECISION.

ABANDON
YOUR
BODIES!

IT'S
TIME FOR A
MEETING OF
MINDS...



THE
MINDMORPH!

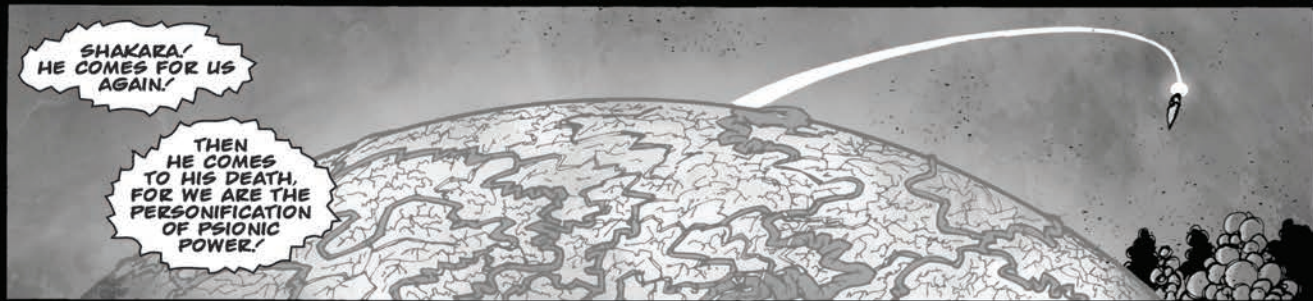
RUN, YOU
INTELLECTUALLY
STUNTED
DOLTS!

FLEE
BEFORE THE MENTAL
MIGHT OF THE
MINDMORPH!



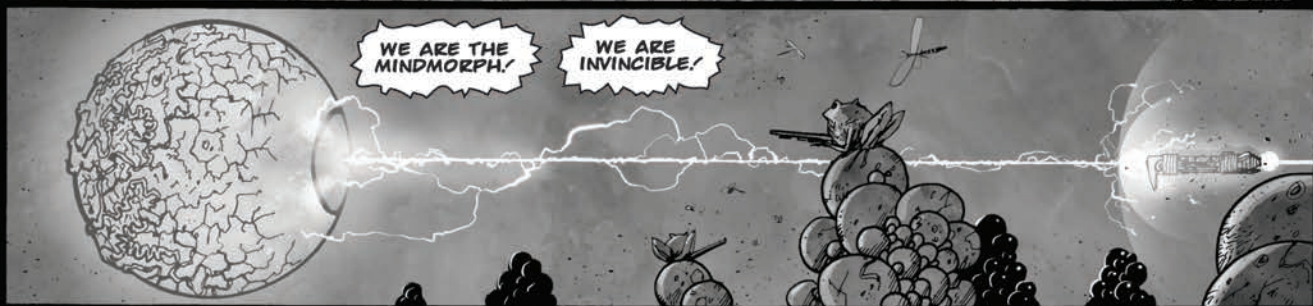
SHAKARA!
HE COMES FOR US
AGAIN!

THEN
HE COMES
TO HIS DEATH,
FOR WE ARE THE
PERSONIFICATION
OF PSIONIC
POWER!

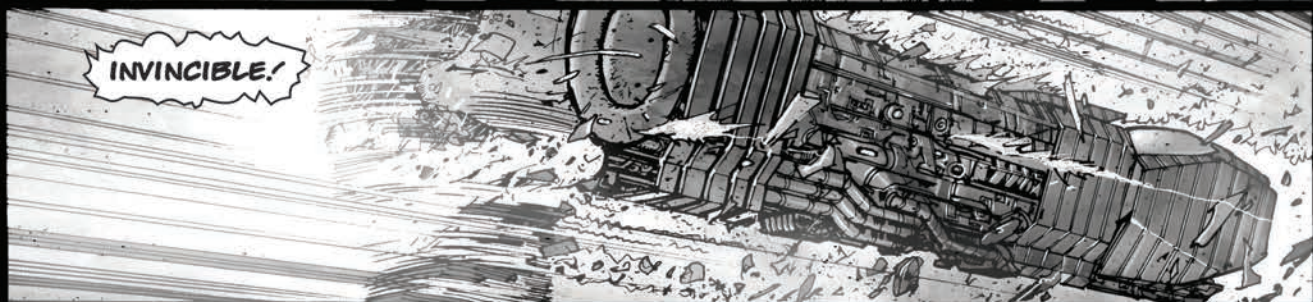


WE ARE THE
MINDMORPH!

WE ARE
INVINCIBLE!



INVINCIBLE!



STILL HE
COMES!

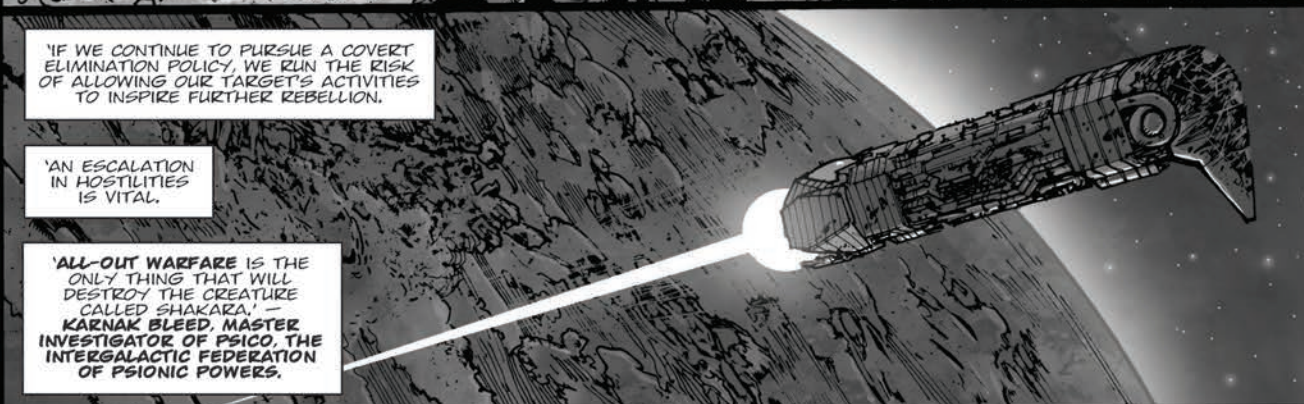
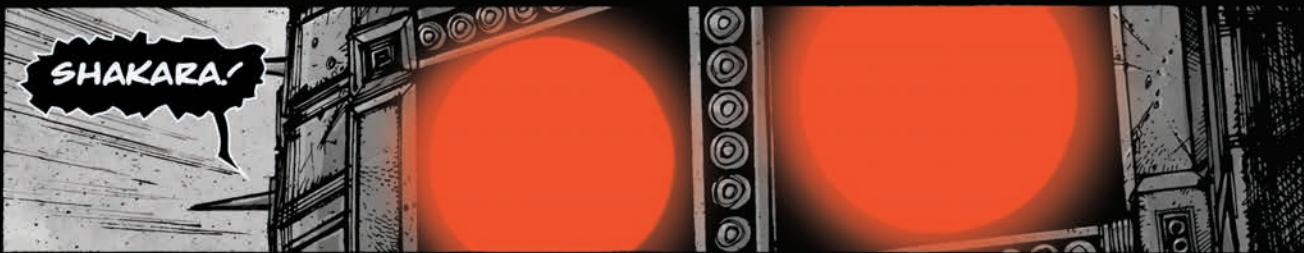
HE
WILL BREAK
BEFORE
US!

WE ARE
THE MINDMORPH!
WE ARE THE
MINDMO—



OH
FRUKK





'THE MOST ALARMING DEVELOPMENT TO ARISE FROM THE INCIDENT WAS THE NIRVANNANS' ATTACK ON OUR AGENTS, AN ACT OF DEFIANCE THAT WOULD, UNTIL RECENTLY, HAVE BEEN UNTHINKABLE.

SHA-KA-RA!

SHA-KA-RA!

SHA-KA-RA!

'IF WE CONTINUE TO PURSUE A COVERT ELIMINATION POLICY, WE RUN THE RISK OF ALLOWING OUR TARGET'S ACTIVITIES TO INSPIRE FURTHER REBELLION.

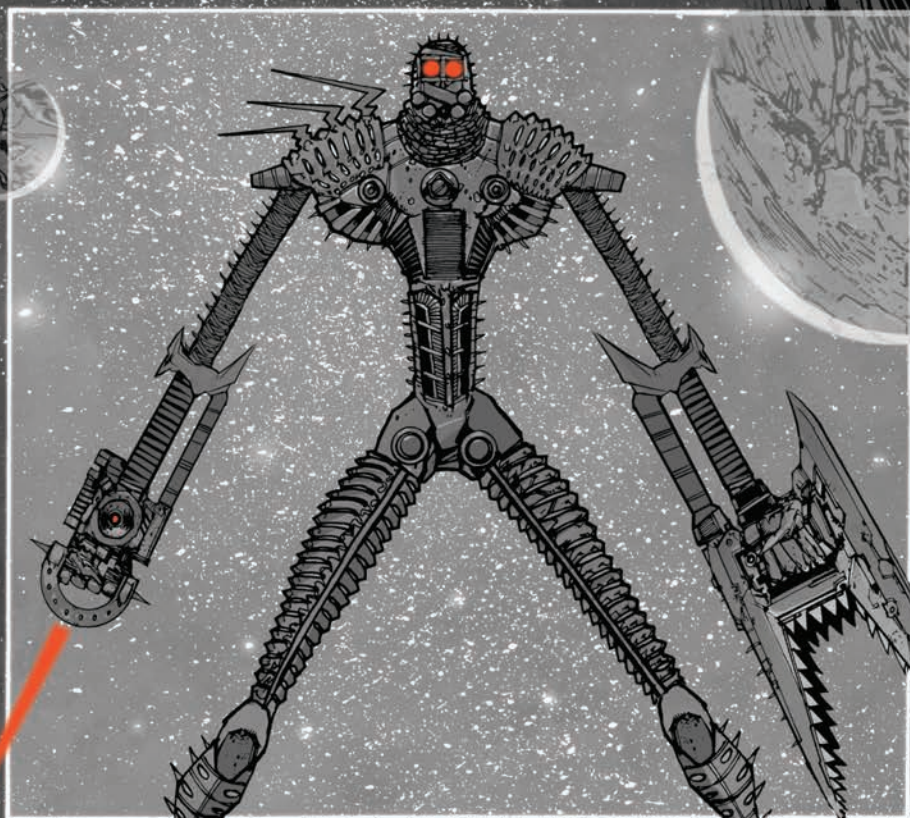
'AN ESCALATION IN HOSTILITIES IS VITAL.

'ALL-OUT WARFARE IS THE ONLY THING THAT WILL DESTROY THE CREATURE CALLED SHAKARA.' — KARNAK BLEED, MASTER INVESTIGATOR OF PSICO, THE INTERGALACTIC FEDERATION OF PSIONIC POWERS.

WANTED!

THE INTERGALACTIC CRIMINAL KNOWN AS

SHAKARA



CRIMES: TERRORISM, INSURGENCY, MASS MURDER,
INTERPLANETARY DEVASTATION AND OTHERS TOO
NUMEROUS TO LIST.

REWARD: A DEVELOPING GALAXY, TERRAFORMED TO
THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL OR
SPECIES THAT KILLS OR CAPTURES THE OUTLAW.

EVA PROCOPIO, THOUGHT JOURNAL:

THE HIERARCHY — THE ALLIANCE OF POWERS THAT HAVE CONTROLLED INTERPLANETARY AFFAIRS SINCE THE GREAT TERROR — FINALLY WENT PUBLIC ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF SHAKARA...

...PLACING CITY-SIZED 'WANTED' HOLOGRAMS IN ORBIT AROUND EVERY MAJOR WORLD AND WORMHOLE.

NOW, EVERY BOUNTY HUNTER AND MERCENARY MILITIA IN THE UNIVERSE WAS HUNTING THE CREATURE THAT KILLED MY MOTHER.

AFTER VISITING BROTHER ZENGO, I ARRANGED FOR THE PROCOPIO FOUNDATION TO REMAIN UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS...

...AND TOOK COMMAND OF THE PHOENIX, THE FLAGSHIP OF OUR INTERGALACTIC RESCUE FLEET, WHOSE WARPSPACE CAPABILITIES ALLOWED US TO RESPOND TO SHAKARA SIGHTINGS AS QUICKLY AS ANY MILITARY SPACECRAFT.

THE CREW BELIEVED WE WERE ENGAGED IN STANDARD SEARCH-AND-RESCUE MISSIONS. IT WAS SAFER FOR THEM THAT WAY, OR SO I THOUGHT...

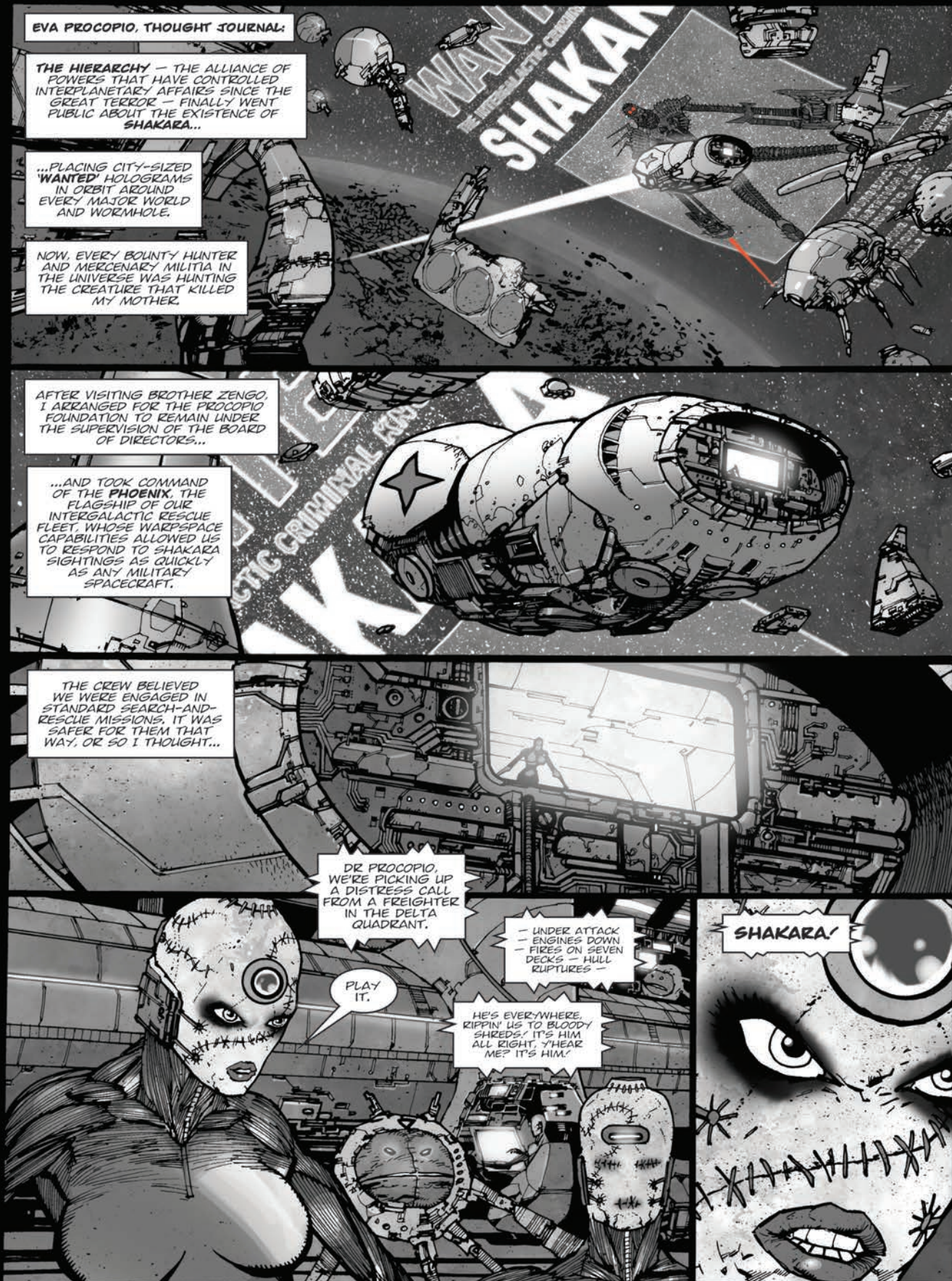
DR. PROCOPIO, WE'RE PICKING UP A DISTRESS CALL FROM A FREIGHTER IN THE DELTA QUADRANT.

PLAY IT.

HE'S EVERYWHERE, RIPPIN' US TO BLOODY SHREDS! IT'S HIM! ALL RIGHT, I'VE HEARD ME! IT'S HIM!

— UNDER ATTACK —
— ENGINES DOWN —
— FIRES ON SEVEN DECKS — HULL RUPTURES —

SHAKARA!



I LEFT THE BRIDGE AS THE WARPSPACE DRIVE ACTIVATED, SPACE/TIME BENDING AROUND US.

FOR A MOMENT, I IMAGINED I SAW IMAGES OF MY MOTHER IN THE REALITY SWIRLS AROUND THE SHIP...

I WAS STILL WIPING AWAY TEARS WHEN I REACHED MY QUARTERS AND FOUND ARION WAITING FOR ME.

YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ANYONE, EVA. WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

AND WHAT'S THAT, ARION?

LOOKING FOR VENGEANCE.

A PLAGUE OUTBREAK ON PLANET LAR. A POPULATION IN DESPERATE NEED OF MEDICAL AID - AND YOU ORDER US TO THE SITE OF ANOTHER SHAKARA KILLING?

THREE MILLION DISPLACED BY CLIMATIC UPHEAVAL ON PHOBOS 7 - AND YOU THINK IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS OF A STARSHIP CRASH CAUSED BY SHAKARA?

I SENT OTHER SHIPS TO HELP THOSE WORLDS.

WE WERE THE CLOSEST, EVA.

HOW MANY DO YOU THINK DIED BECAUSE OF THOSE DELAYS?

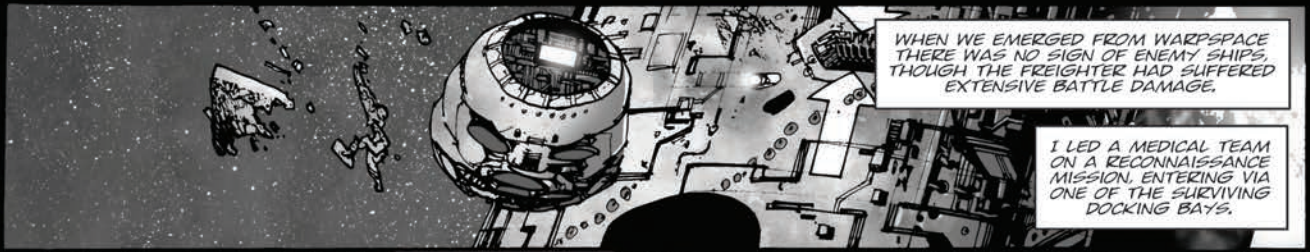
AND HOW MANY BEINGS DO YOU THINK WE'VE SAVED OVER THE YEARS?

NOT ENOUGH. NEVER ENOUGH. THAT'S WHAT LARA ALWAYS SAID.

LARA ISN'T HERE ANYMORE.

NO, BUT WHAT SHE STOOD FOR, WHAT SHE BELIEVED IN, STILL IS.

DON'T THROW ALL THAT AWAY BY BECOMING EVERYTHING SHE HATED...



WHEN WE EMERGED FROM WARPSPACE THERE WAS NO SIGN OF ENEMY SHIPS, THOUGH THE FREIGHTER HAD SUFFERED EXTENSIVE BATTLE DAMAGE.

I LED A MEDICAL TEAM ON A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION, ENTERING VIA ONE OF THE SURVIVING DOCKING BAYS.

WE WERE ALL EXPERIENCED BATTLEFIELD SURGEONS, BUT NOTHING COULD HAVE PREPARED US FOR WHAT WE FOUND INSIDE...

THIS IS NO ORDINARY FREIGHTER, EVA. LOOK AT THE BODIES...

THEY'RE BUGGERIAN MERCENARIES, NOT INNOCENT CIVILIANS. THAT MEANS THEY'RE MORE THAN LIKELY ENGAGED IN ILLEGAL OPERATIONS.

YOU'RE RISKING ALL OUR -

AAAGHKK!

TAKE COVER!

CEASE FIRE! CEASE FIRE!

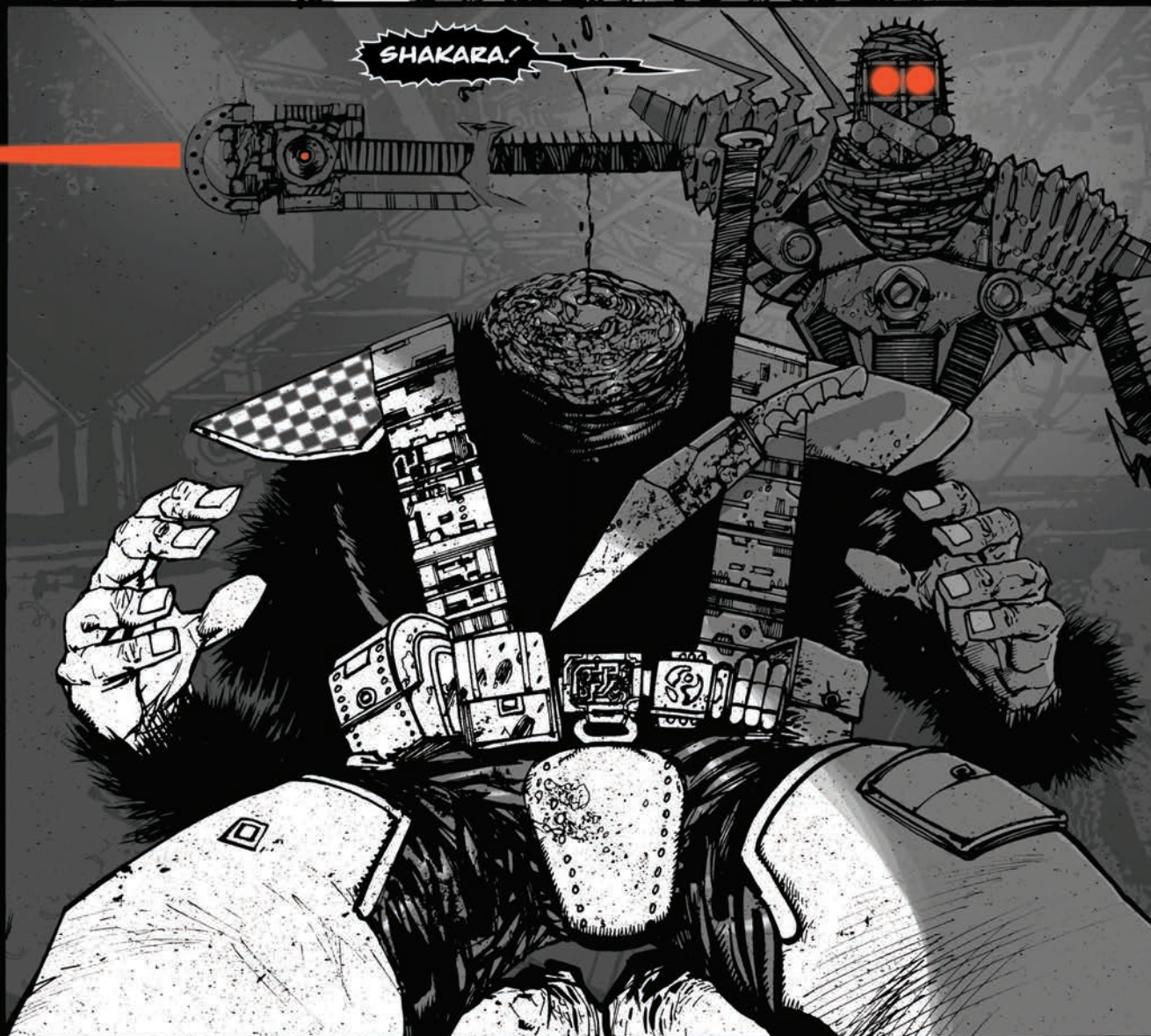
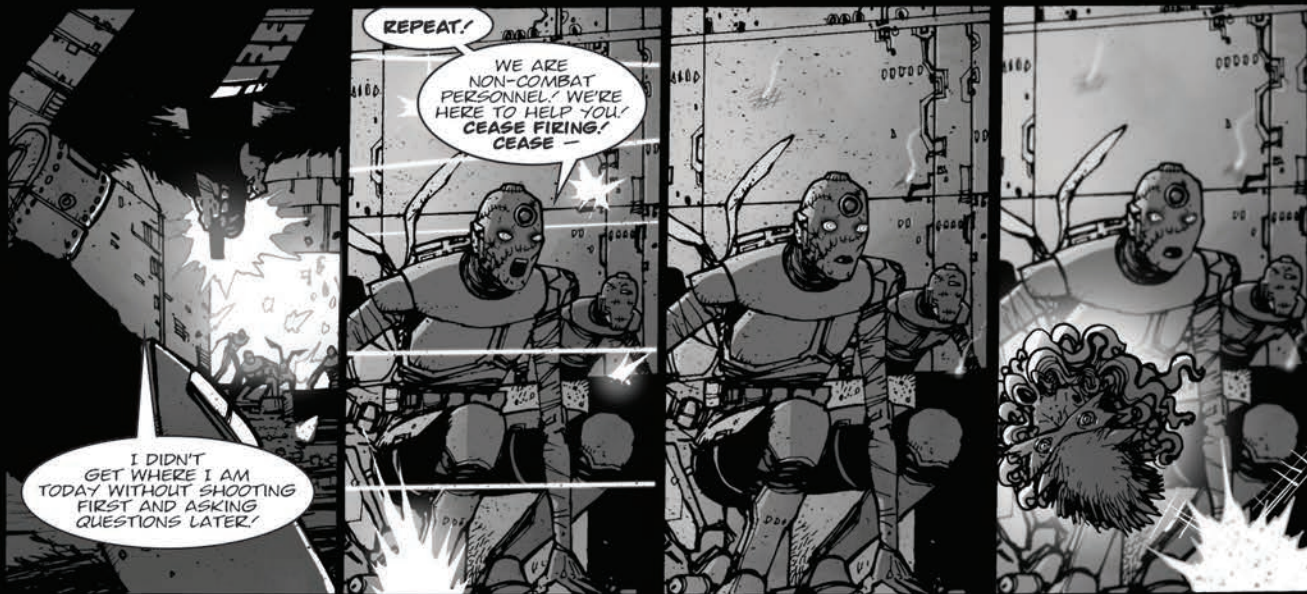
WE ARE A MEDICAL RESCUE TEAM FROM THE PROCOPIO FOUNDATION! WE'RE HERE TO HELP!



HEAR THAT, MICKEY? THEY'RE SAYING THAT THEY'RE MEDICAL TYPES.

SO BLOODY WHAT? WE AIN'T HURT!

KILL 'EM, STEAL THEIR SHIP AND GET THE FRUKK OUTTA HERE, THAT'S WHAT I SAY!







H-H-E'S
AFTER OUR
CARGO, EITHER
THAT OR HE'S
JUST A BAD
BASTARD...

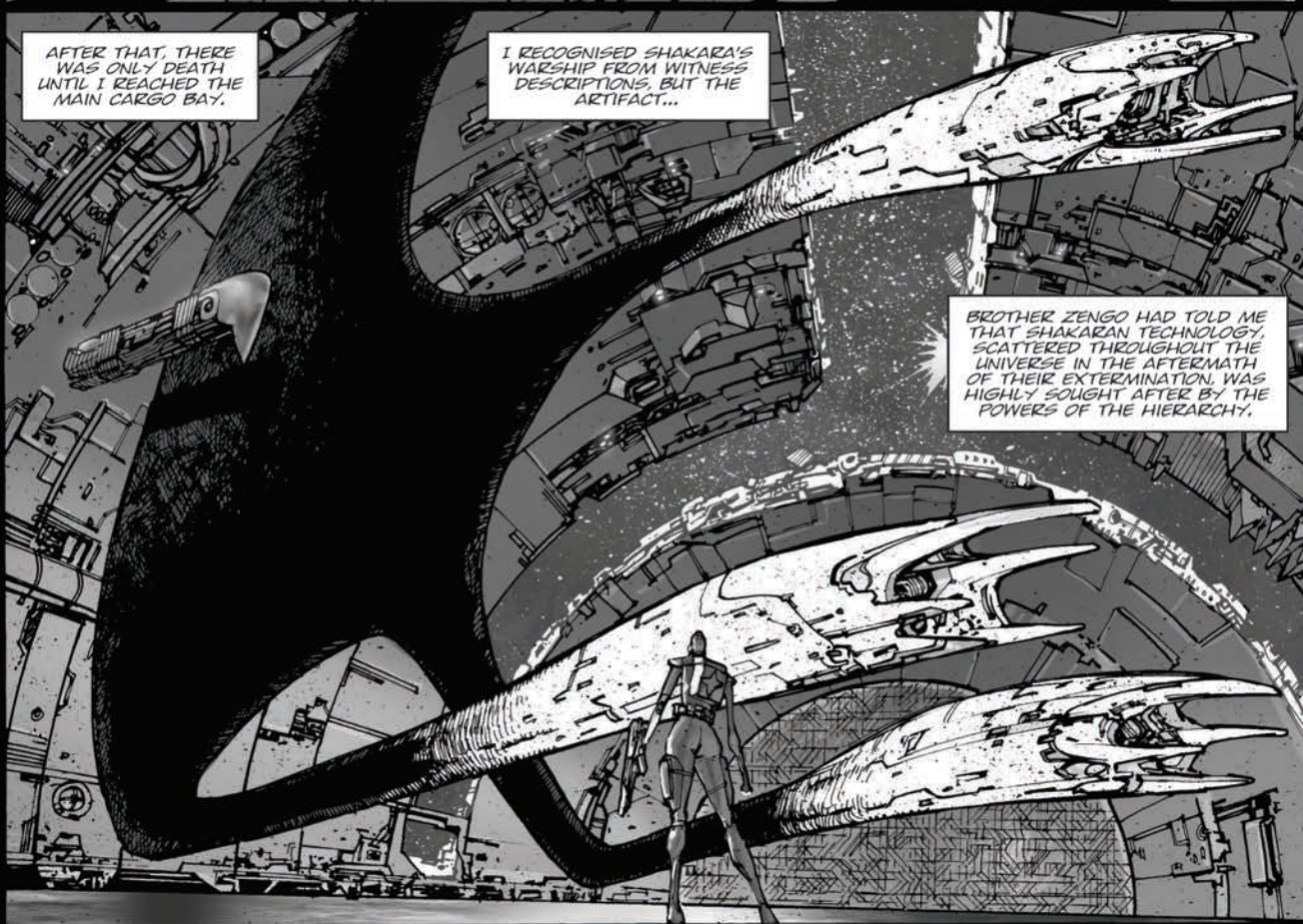
WHAT'RE YOU
CARRYING?

DUNNO...SOME
BIG BLOODY RELIC
THEY DUG UP SOMEWHERE
OR OTHER. W-WE WERE
ONLY HIRED TO PROVIDE
TRANSPORT AND
PROTECTION...



OH!
THAT'S MY
GUN!

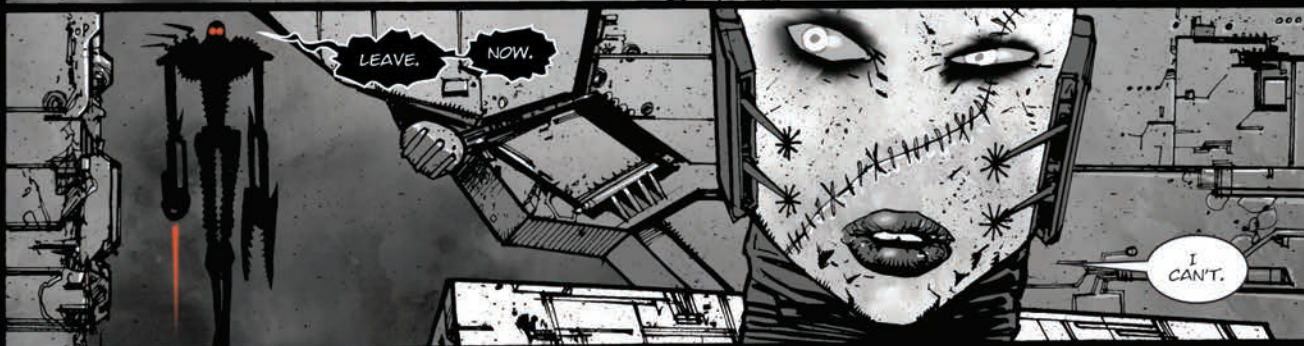
ROB
A DYING
BEING, WOULD
YOU? WHAT'S
THE UNIVERSE
COMING
TO?



AFTER THAT, THERE
WAS ONLY DEATH
UNTIL I REACHED THE
MAIN CARGO BAY.

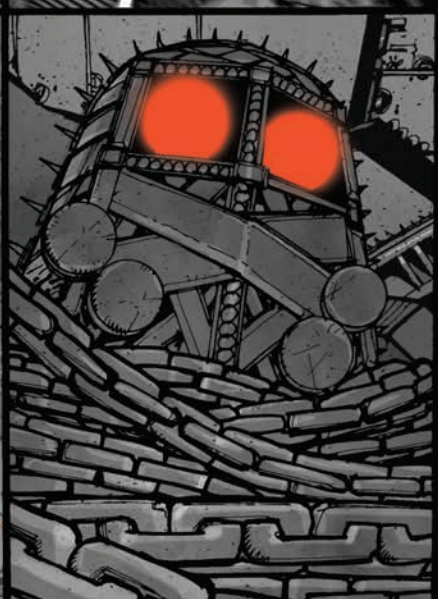
I RECOGNISED SHAKARA'S
WARSHIP FROM WITNESS
DESCRIPTIONS, BUT THE
ARTIFACT...

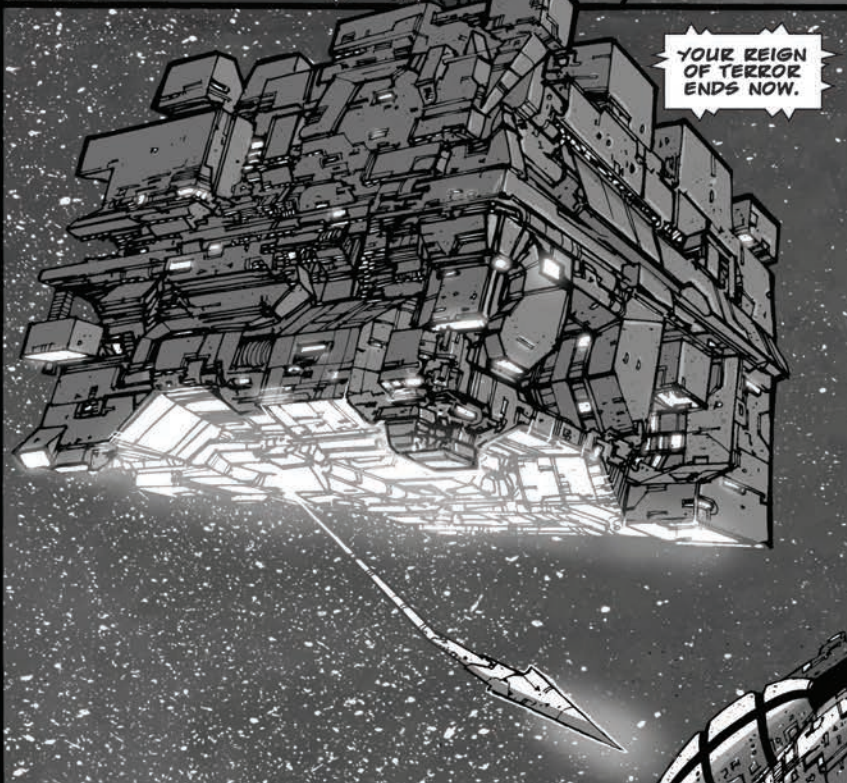
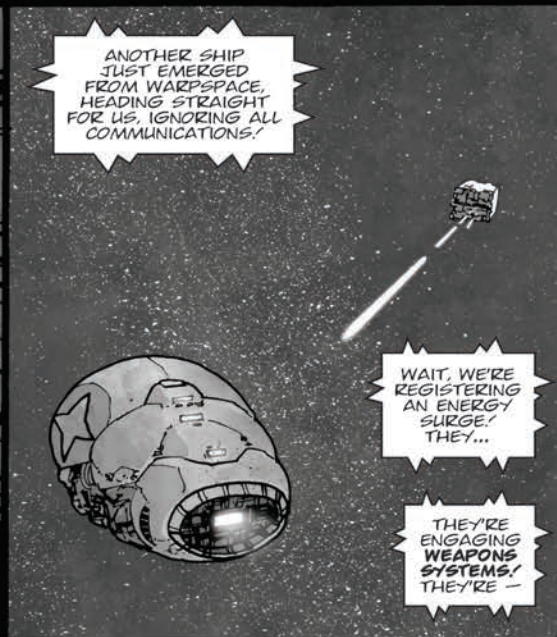
BROTHER ZENGO HAD TOLD ME
THAT SHAKARAN TECHNOLOGY,
SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE
UNIVERSE IN THE AFTERMATH
OF THEIR EXTERMINATION, WAS
HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER BY THE
POWERS OF THE HIERARCHY.



LEAVE.
NOW.

I
CAN'T.



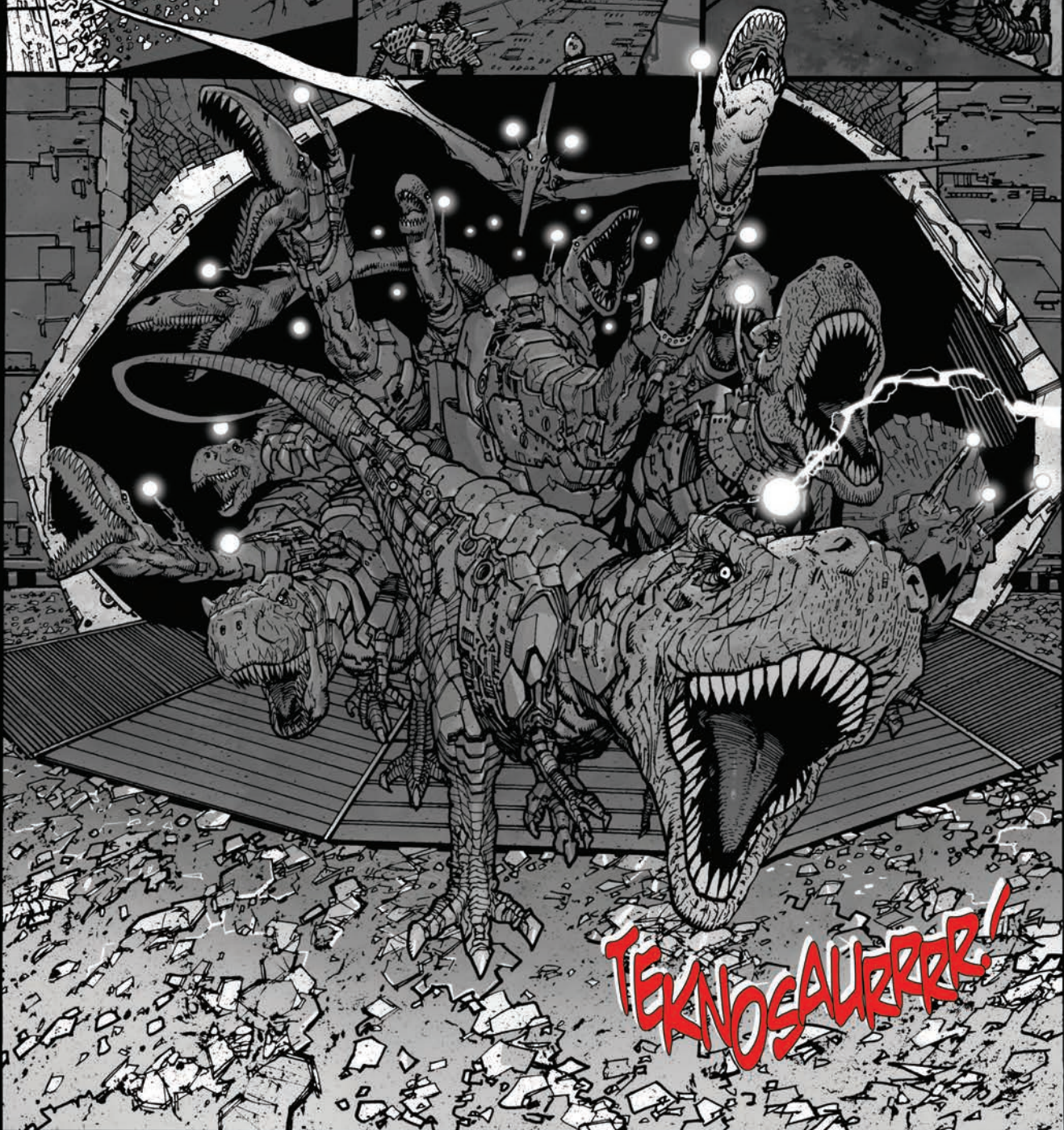


PREPARE TO BE
SLAUGHTERED
WITH SUPREME
SAVAGERY!

THERE WAS A CRACKLING IN THE AIR
AS THE ATTACKING SHIP GENERATED
AN ENERGY FIELD, SEALING THE
RUPTURED HULL OF THE FREIGHTER.

AND
THEN...

FROM
WHAT I'VE BEEN
TOLD YOU FAVOUR BRIEF
INTRODUCTIONS,
SO...



TEKNOSAURRRR!

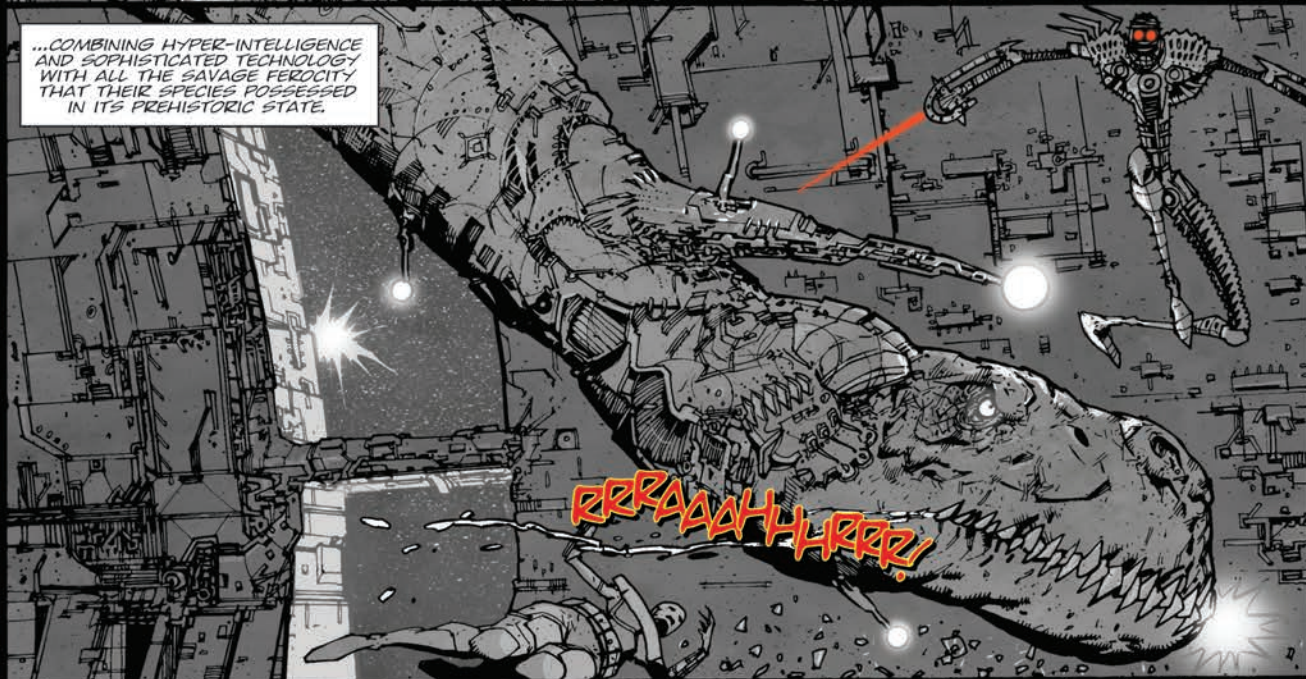


RUN.



EVA PROCOPIO,
THOUGHT
JOURNAL:

THE TEKNOZAURS
CONTROLLED THREE OF
THE TWENTY-SEVEN
MAJOR GALAXIES AND
WERE POSSIBLY THE
HIERARCHY'S MOST
FEARED STRIKEFORCE...

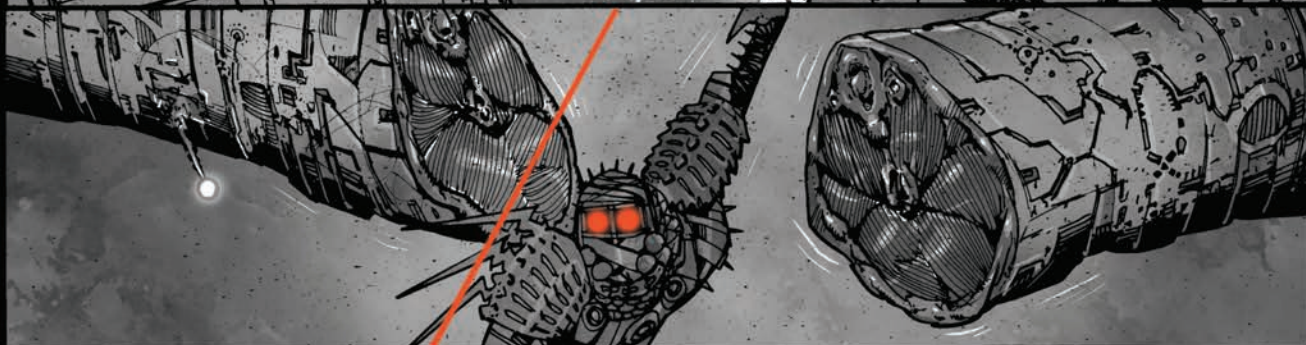


...COMBINING HYPER-INTELLIGENCE
AND SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY
WITH ALL THE SAVAGE FEROCITY
THAT THEIR SPECIES POSSESSED
IN ITS PREHISTORIC STATE.

RRRAAAHHHRRR!



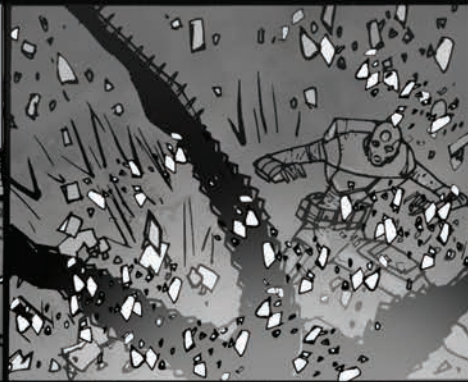
SHAKARA!





YOUR LIMITED
REPARTEE AGGRIEVES
ME IN THE
EXTREME.

I LONG TO
MEET AN ENEMY
WHO POSES AN
INTELLECTUAL
CHALLENGE IN
ADDITION TO
A PHYSICAL
ONE.



KEEP
FIRING!

DON'T
GIVE IT A
CHANCE TO
RUN!



NO!

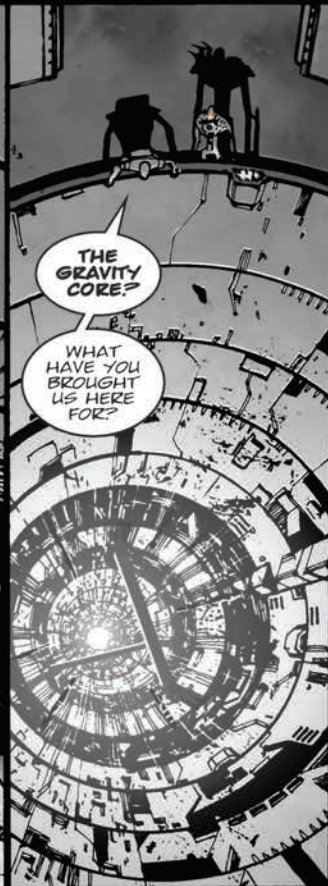
LET GO
OF ME! LET
GO!



GGGRRRRR!

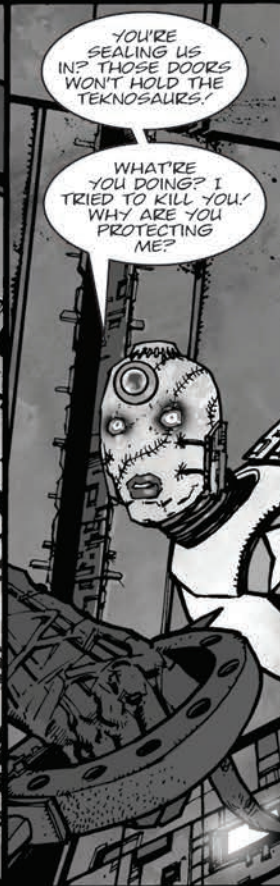
THIS ISN'T
A CLASS-12 SIZED
FREIGHTER! I SPECIFICALLY
ORDERED THEM TO HIRE
THE LARGEST SHIP
POSSIBLE!

MONEY-
GRABBING BUGGERIAN
BASTARDS! IF THEY
WEREN'T ALREADY DEAD,
I'D DEVOUR THEM
MYSELF!



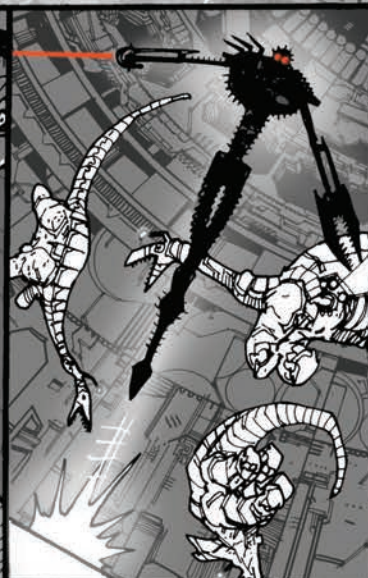
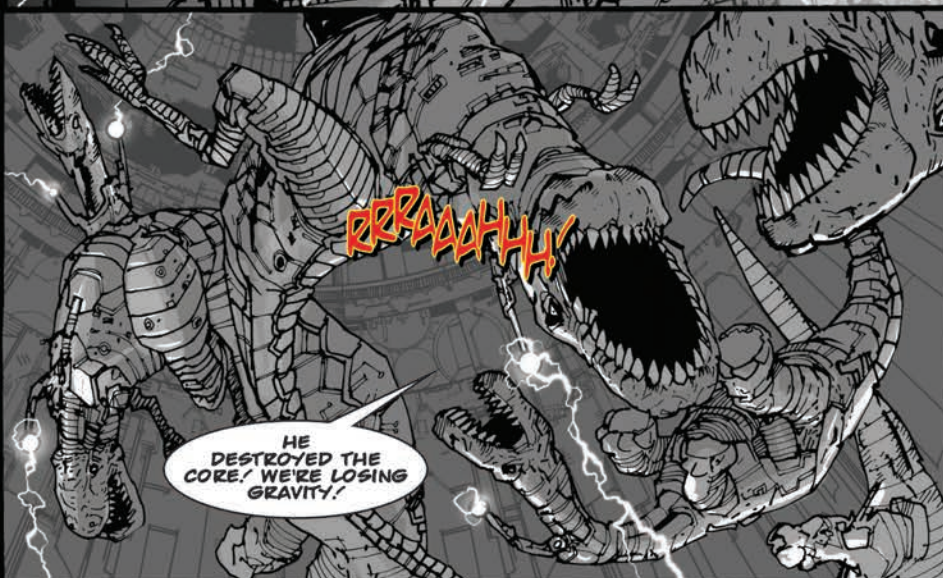
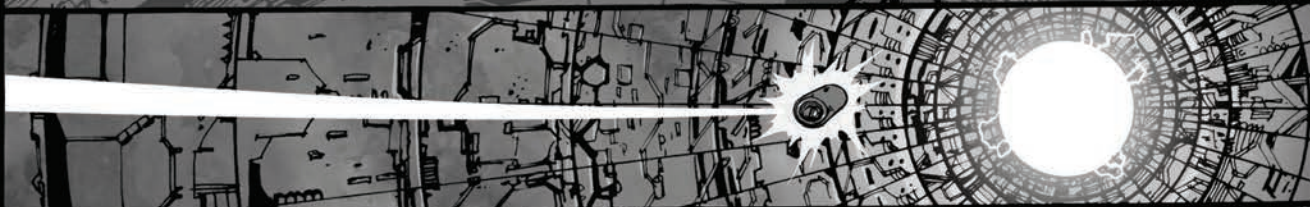
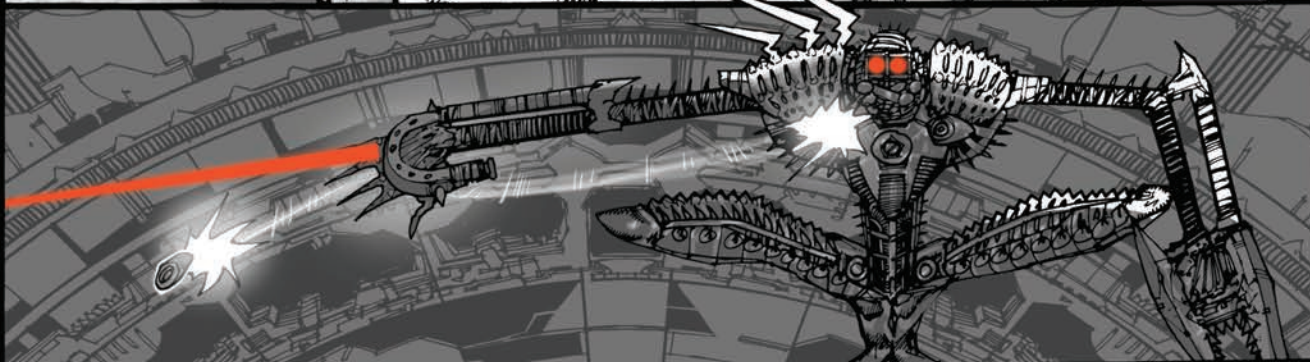
THE
GRAVITY
CORE?

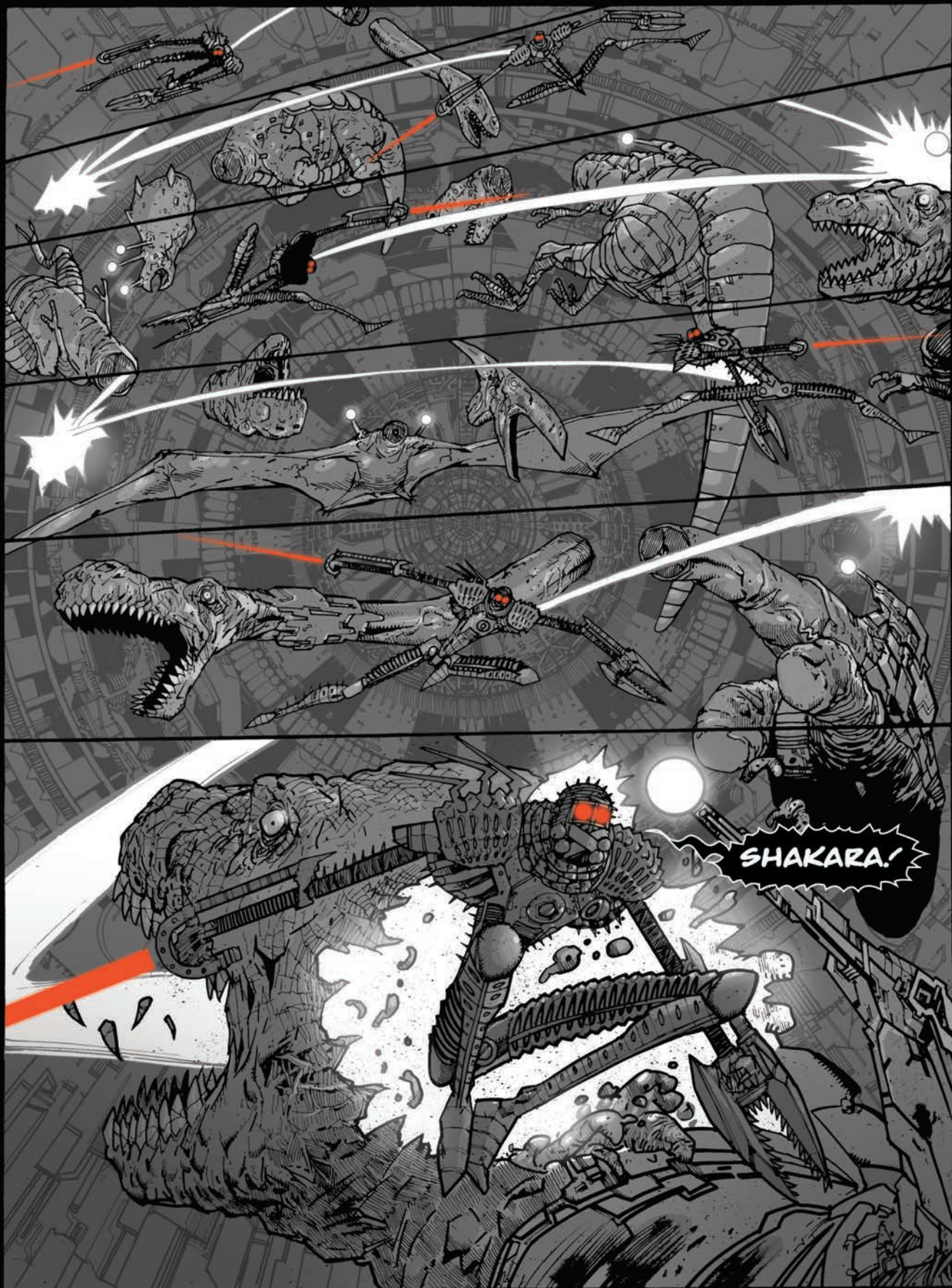
WHAT
HAVE YOU
BROUGHT
US HERE
FOR?



YOU'RE
SEALING US
IN? THOSE DOORS
WON'T HOLD THE
TEKNO-SAURS!

WHAT'RE
YOU DOING? I
TRIED TO KILL YOU!
WHY ARE YOU
PROTECTING
ME?







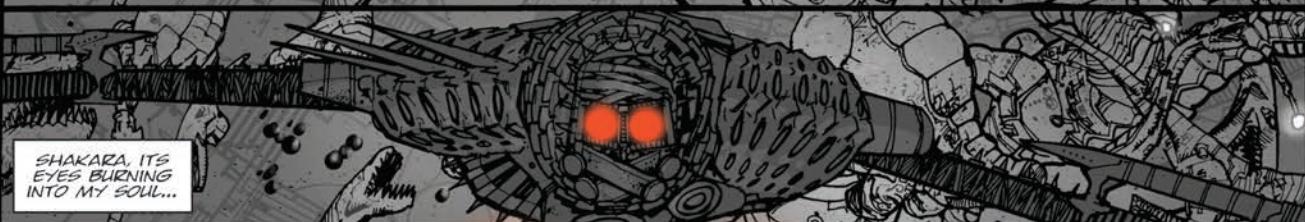
I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS SLOWLY, CLAWING MY WAY OUT OF A JAGGED, JARRING NIGHTMARE INTO AN EVEN MORE HORRIFIC REALITY...

...MY BLOOD FLOATING IN THE AIR, THE TEKNO-SAURS DRIFTING LIFELESSLY AROUND ME.

FOR A MOMENT, I WONDERED HOW ANYTHING COULD POSSIBLY KILL CREATURES LIKE THEM...

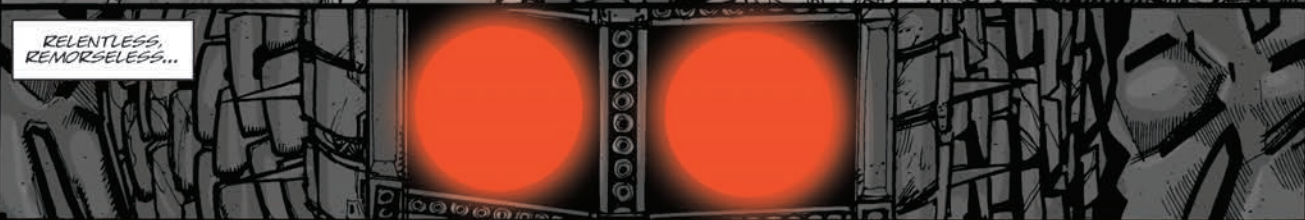


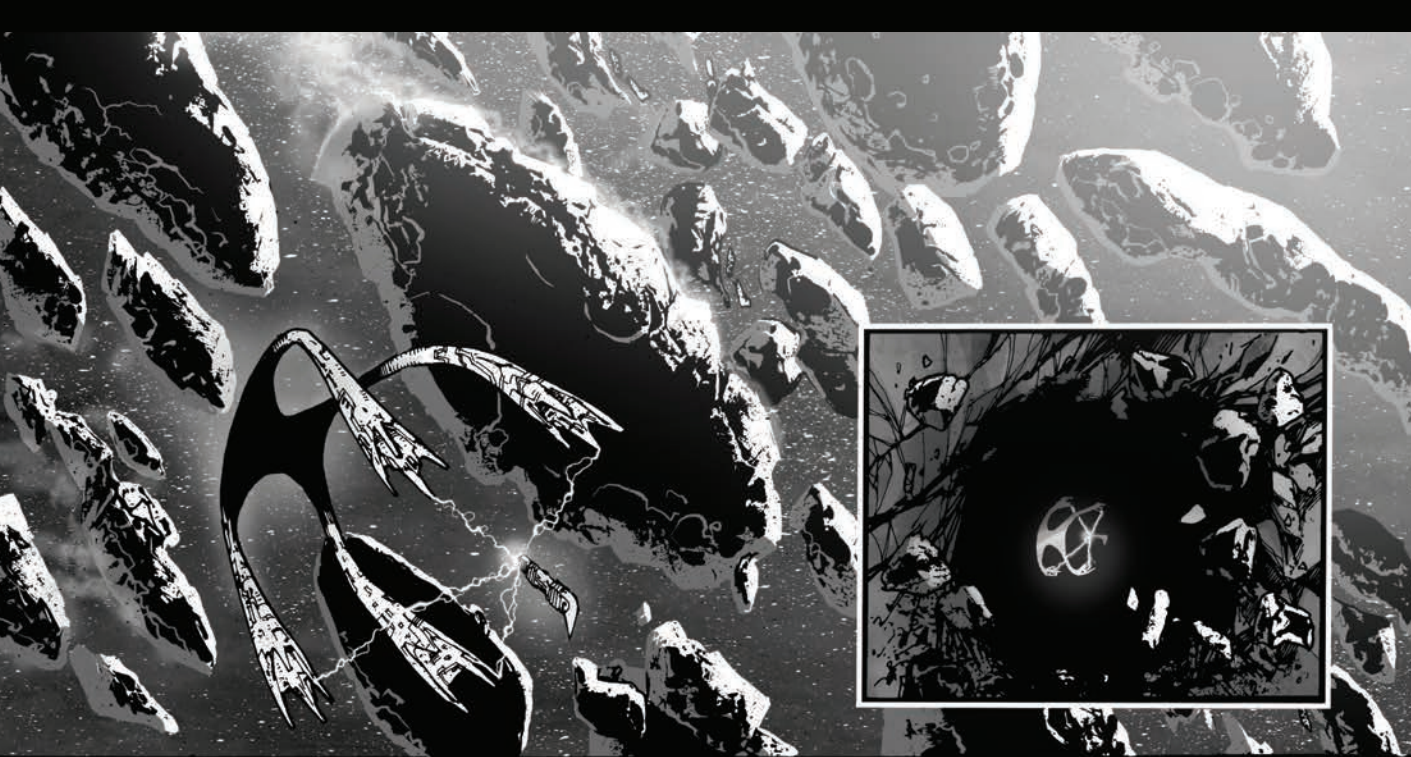
AND THEN I SAW IT, COMING FOR ME LIKE A SPECTRE OF DEATH...



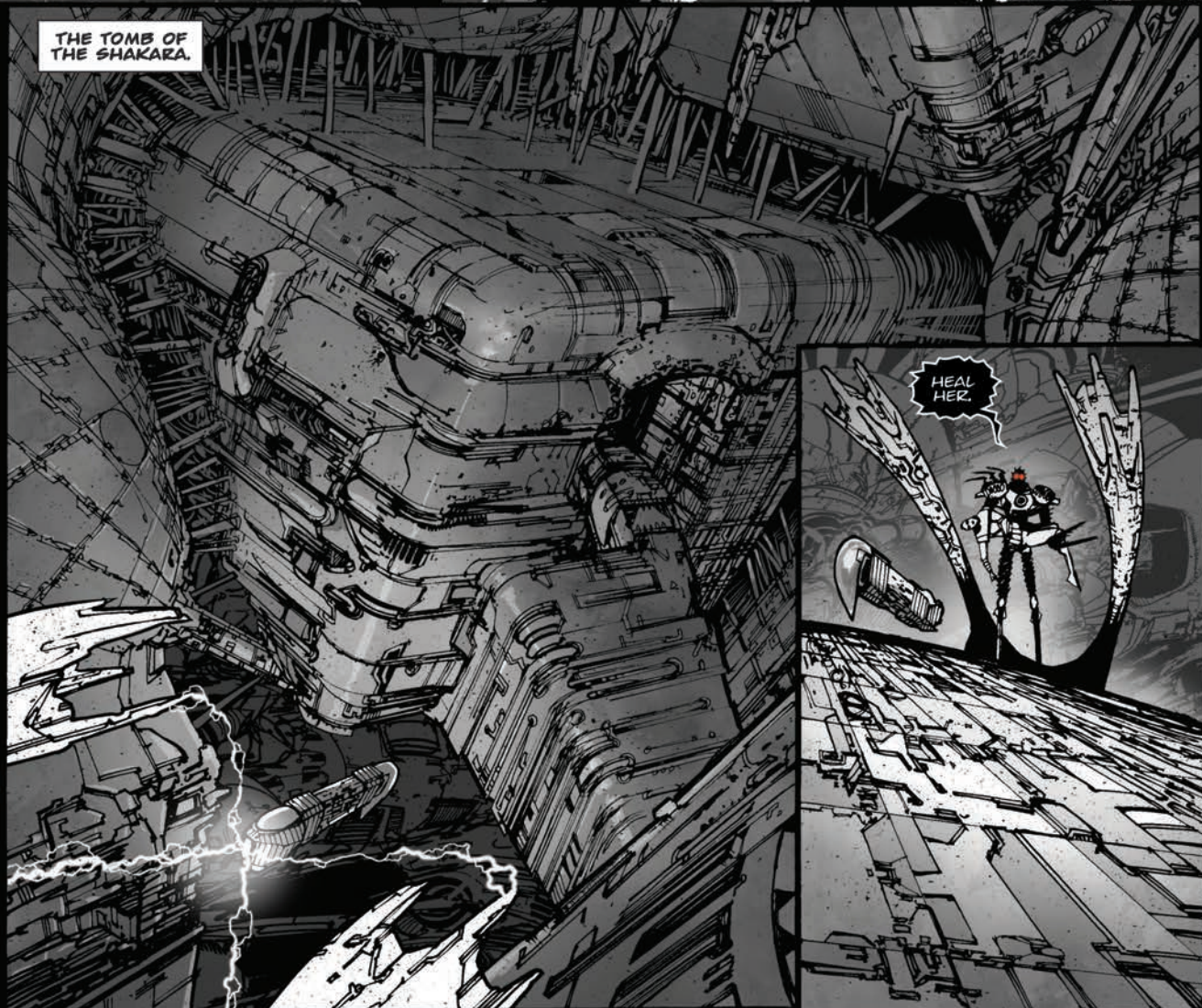
SHAKARA, ITS EYES BURNING INTO MY SOUL...

RELENTLESS, REMORSELESS...

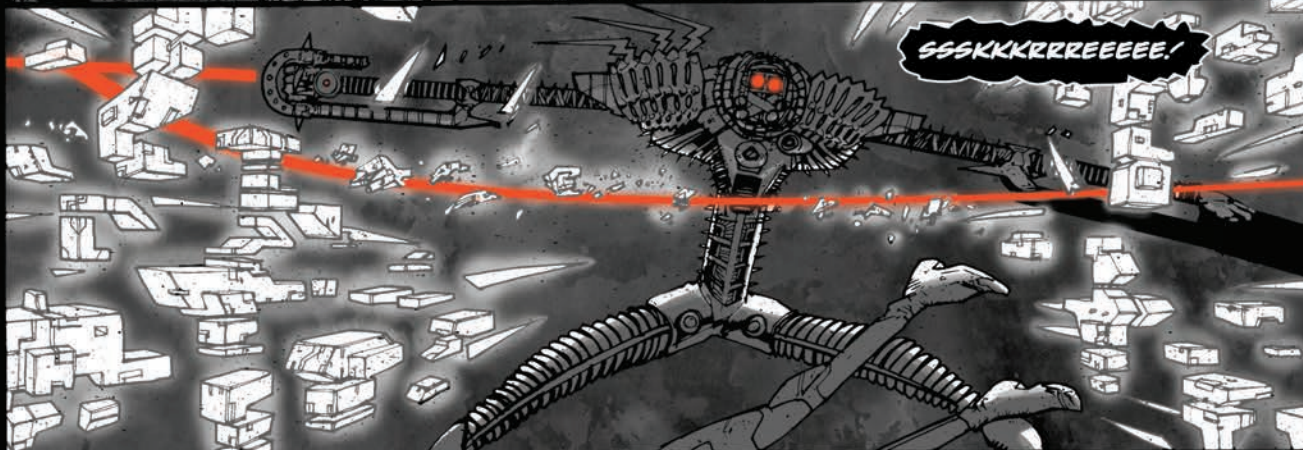
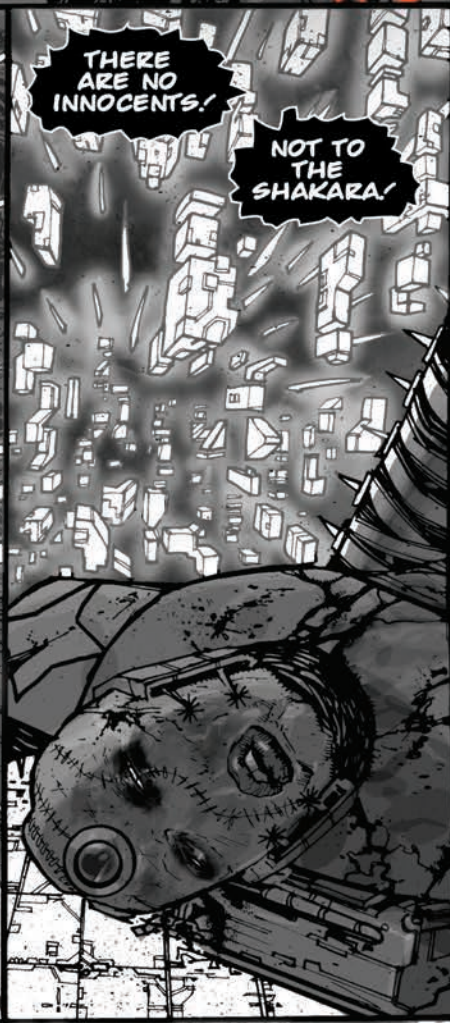
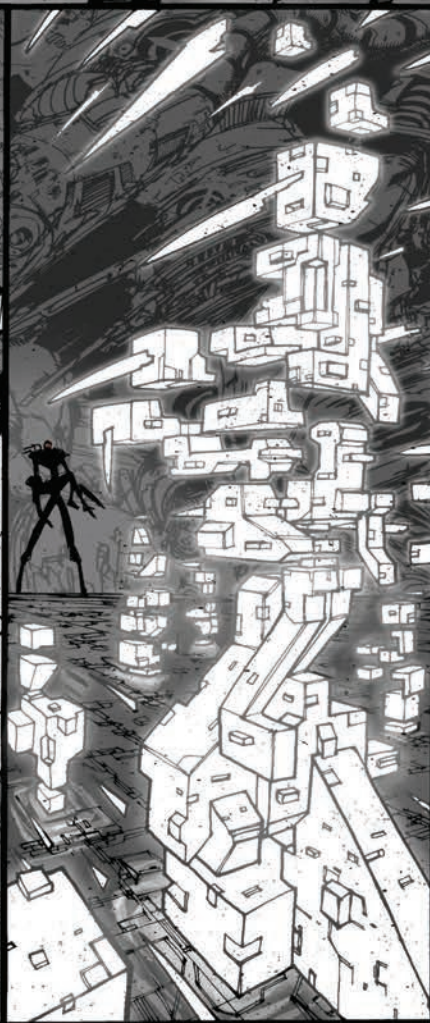


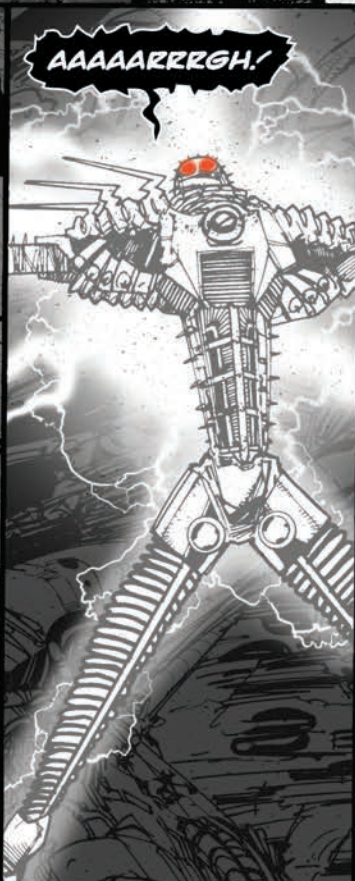
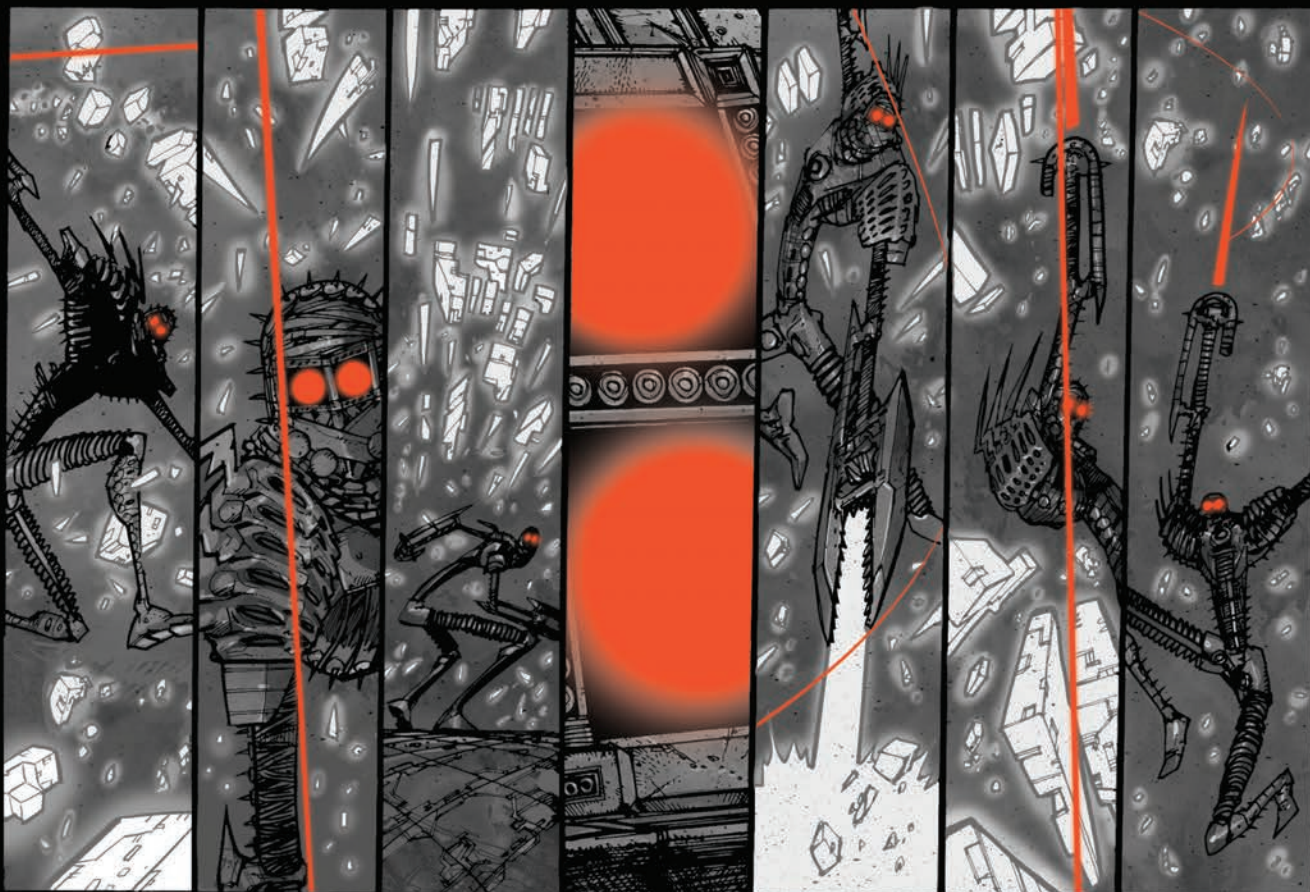


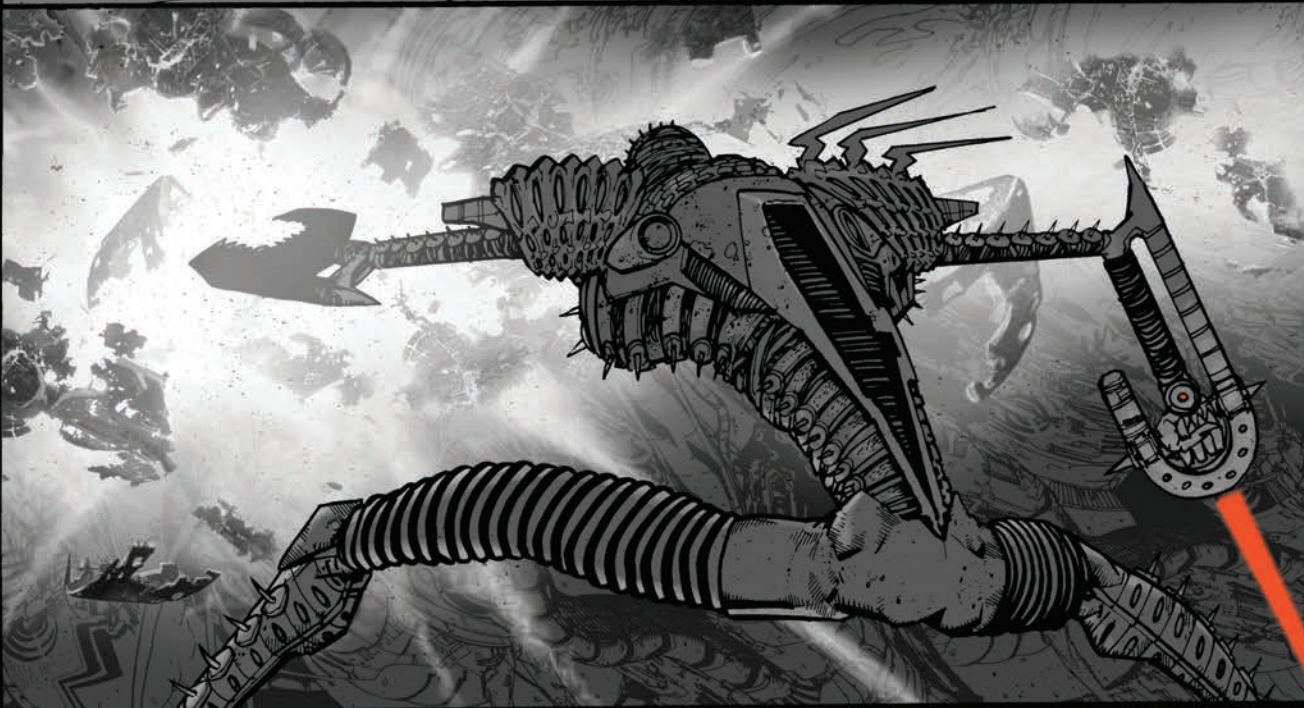
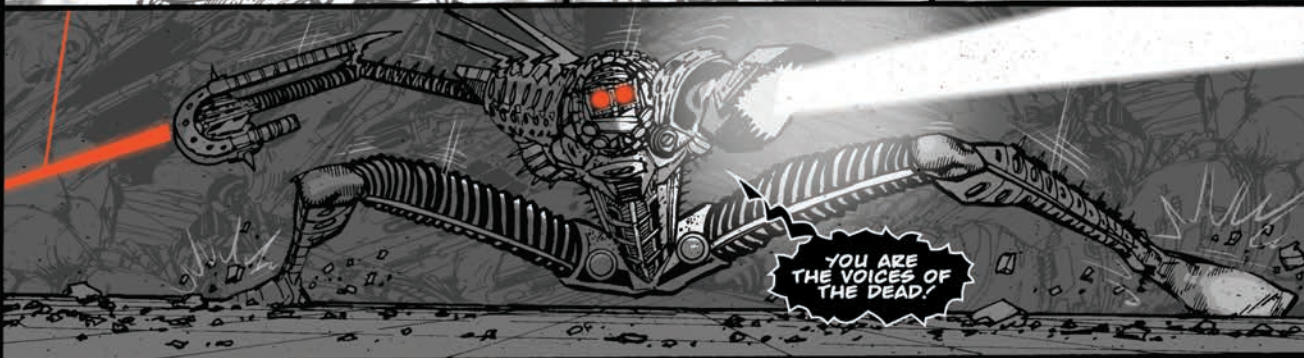
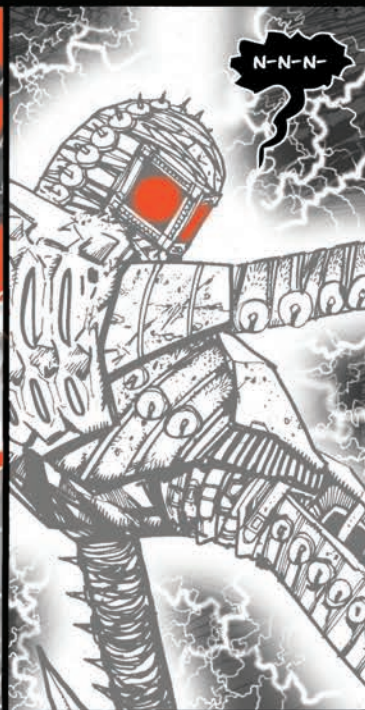
THE TOMB OF
THE SHAKARA.



HEAL
HER.





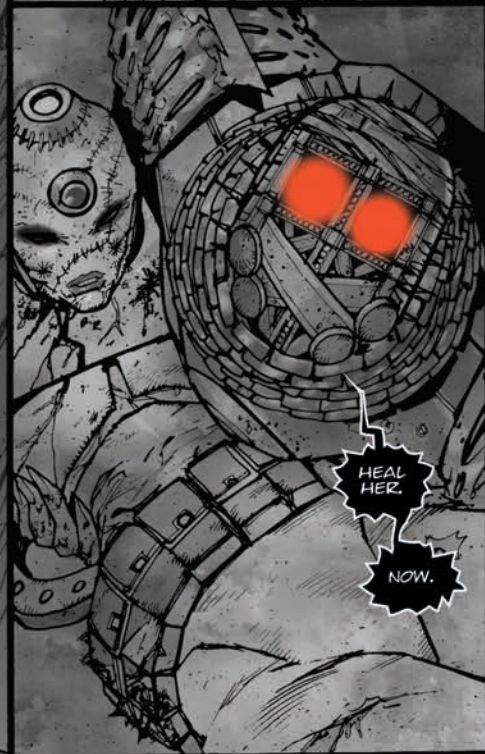




YOU ARE
GHOSTS!



I AM
SHAKARA!



HEAL
HER.

NOW.

THE TEMPLE OF HUMBLE ENLIGHTENMENT.

GREETINGS, I AM BROTHER ZENGO, SENSEI OF THE TEMPLE OF HUMBLE ENLIGHTENMENT.

WE BELIEVE IN PEACE, HUMILITY AND RESPECT FOR ALL FORMS OF EXISTENCE.

OURS IS A SIMPLE LIFE, DEVOTED TO STUDY, MEDITATION AND ABSTINENCE. WORLDLY GOODS AND POSSESSIONS HAVE NO PLACE HERE.

THE MIND MUST BE CLEAR, THE BODY HEALTHY AND THE SPIRIT PURE, PURGED OF ALL NEGATIVITY.

AFTER FIVE YEARS, YOU WILL BE ORDAINED AS A MONK OF HUMBLE ENLIGHTENMENT, THOUGH, IN TRUTH, ENLIGHTENMENT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS.

THE WISE BEING REALISES THAT HE OR SHE NEVER STOPS LEARNING.

FOLLOWING ORDINATION, YOU ARE FREE TO ROAM THE GALAXIES, SPREADING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING, AND INSPIRING ALL SENTIENT SPECIES TO LIVE PEACEFUL AND HARMONIOUS LIVES.

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH!

ENOUGH OF THE PEACE AND LOVE CRAP, WHAT ABOUT THE FIGHTING?

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO TEACH THE MOST BRUTAL MARTIAL ART IN THE BUSINESS!

AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM, WE DO COVER CERTAIN SELF-DEFENCE TECHNIQUES, BUT I PREFER TO THINK OF IT AS THE ART OF FIGHTING **WITHOUT** FIGHTING.

HOWEVER, YOUR AGGRESSION AND NEGATIVITY IS MOST UNBECOMING FOR A STUDENT OF HUMILITY. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO LEAVE, **NOW**, PLEASE.

YEAH? AND I'D LIKE TO STOMP YOUR FAT FRUKKIN' HEAD INTO THE GROUND!

HHAAAIII!

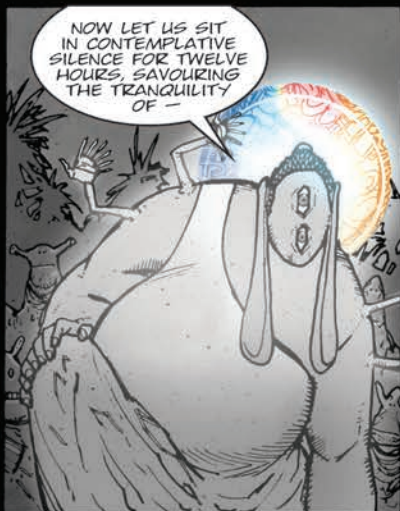
GGNNHURRGH!

AS I WAS SAYING...

...PART OF YOUR TUITION INCLUDES TRAINING IN **PSI-PHOO**, THE MENTAL MARTIAL ART OF FIGHTING WITHOUT FIGHTING.

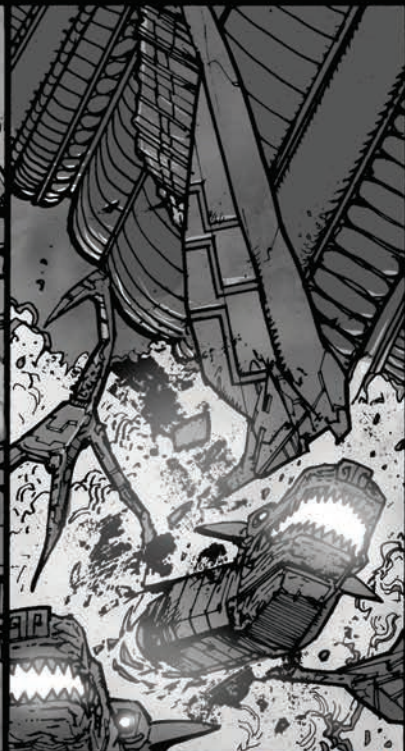
OUR ADVANCED MEDITATION TECHNIQUES ALLOW YOU TO ISOLATE YOUR RAGE AND FRUSTRATIONS AT THE PERPETUAL INJUSTICES OF THE UNIVERSE...

...AND THEN RELEASE IT WHEN NECESSARY IN CONTROLLED BLASTS OF PURE PSIONIC ENERGY.





HHAAAI!



YAAAAIII!



AAAAHHHH!



BROTHER ZENGO.

TEACHER, PHILOSOPHER, MENTAL MARTIAL ARTIST, CHAMPION OF PEACE, LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING, COLLECTOR OF SECRET HISTORIES, TELLER OF FANCIFUL STORIES...



THIS IS ONE TALE YOU WON'T LIVE TO TELL.

N-NO... NOT YOU... IT CAN'T BE...



**COVERS GALLERY &
HENRY FLINT'S SKETCHBOOK**









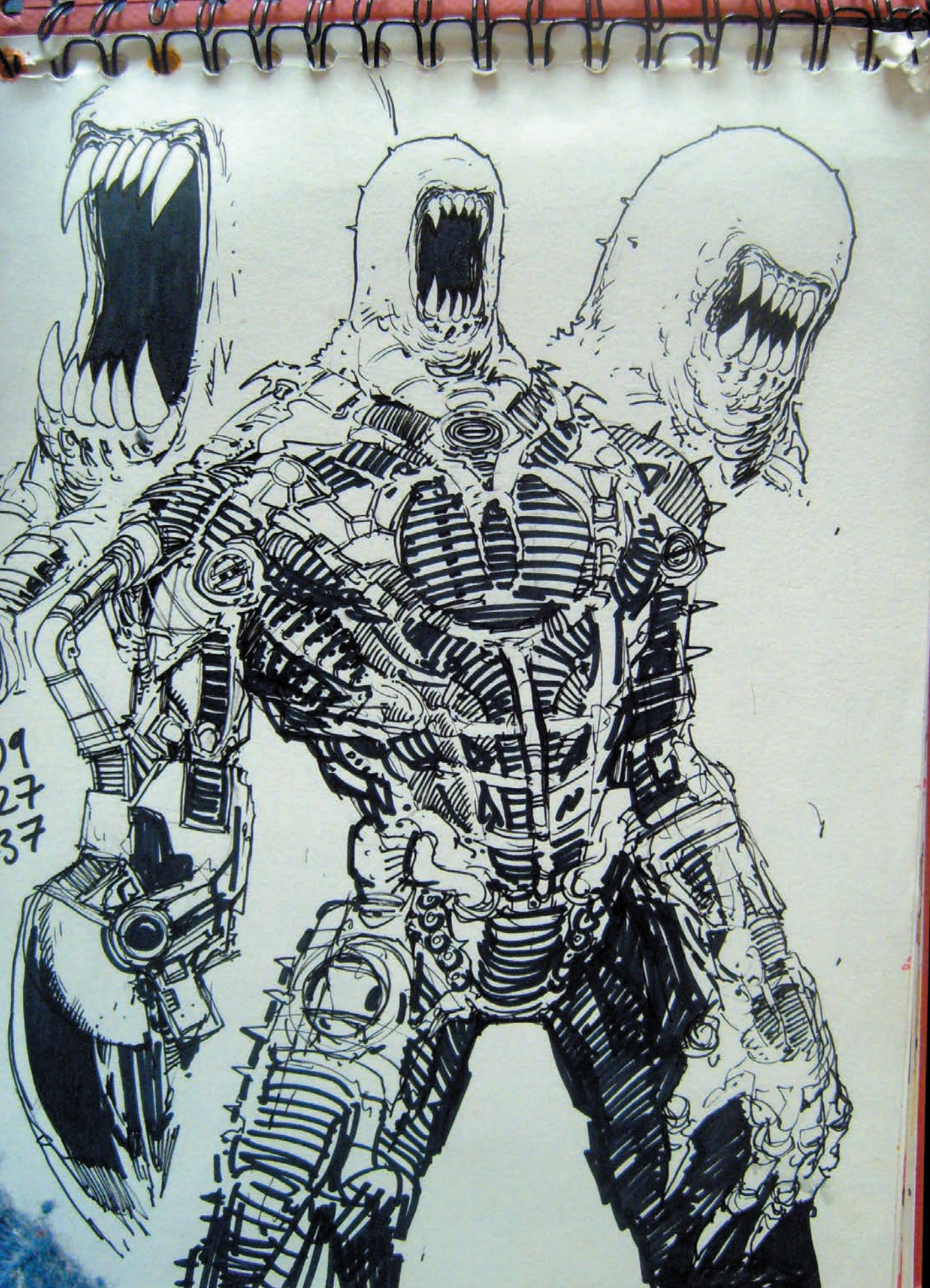
2000 AD Prog 1568: Cover by Nick Percival



McCarthy - Cook



Shakara Book 1: Cover by Henry Flint





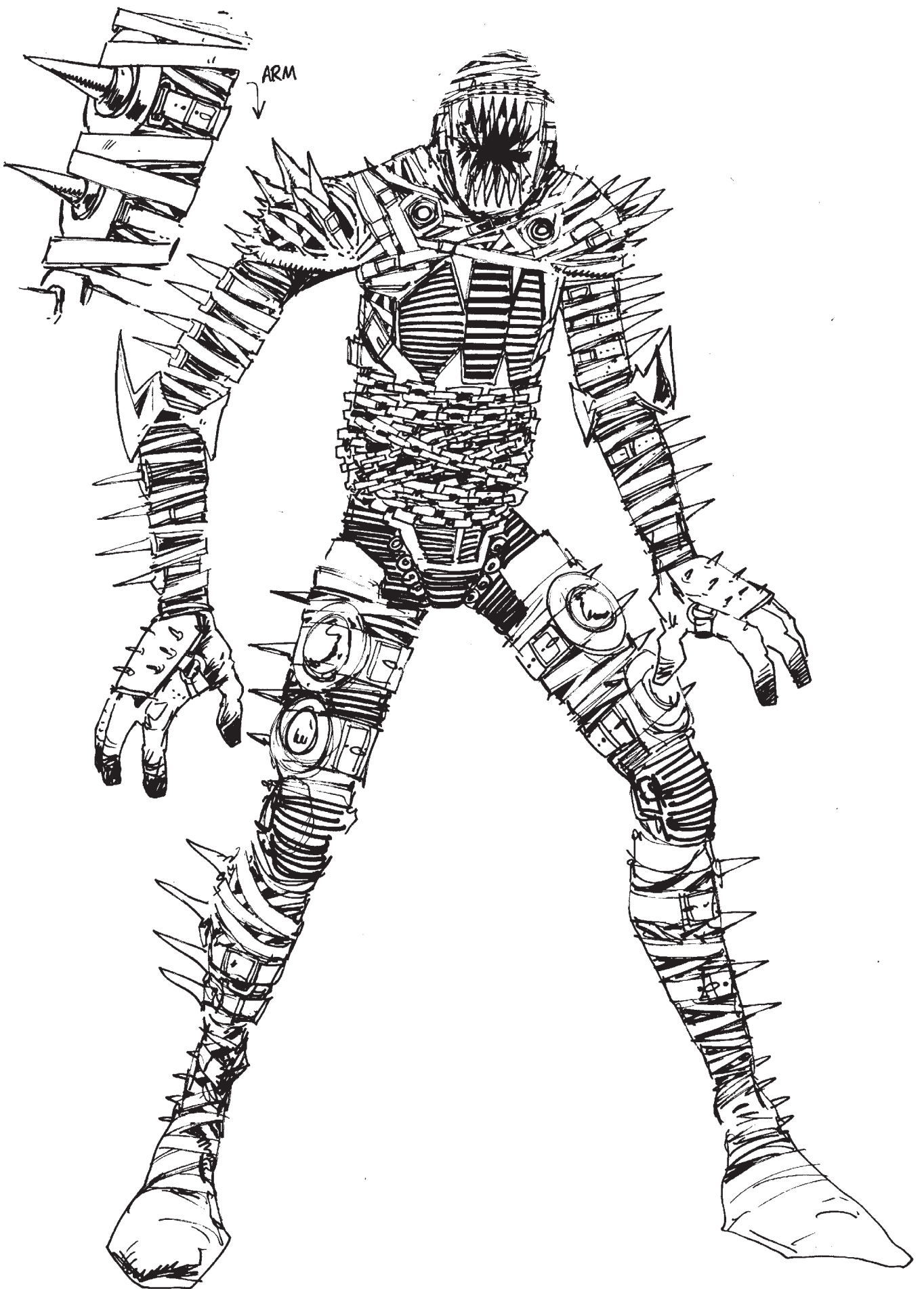
cockpit

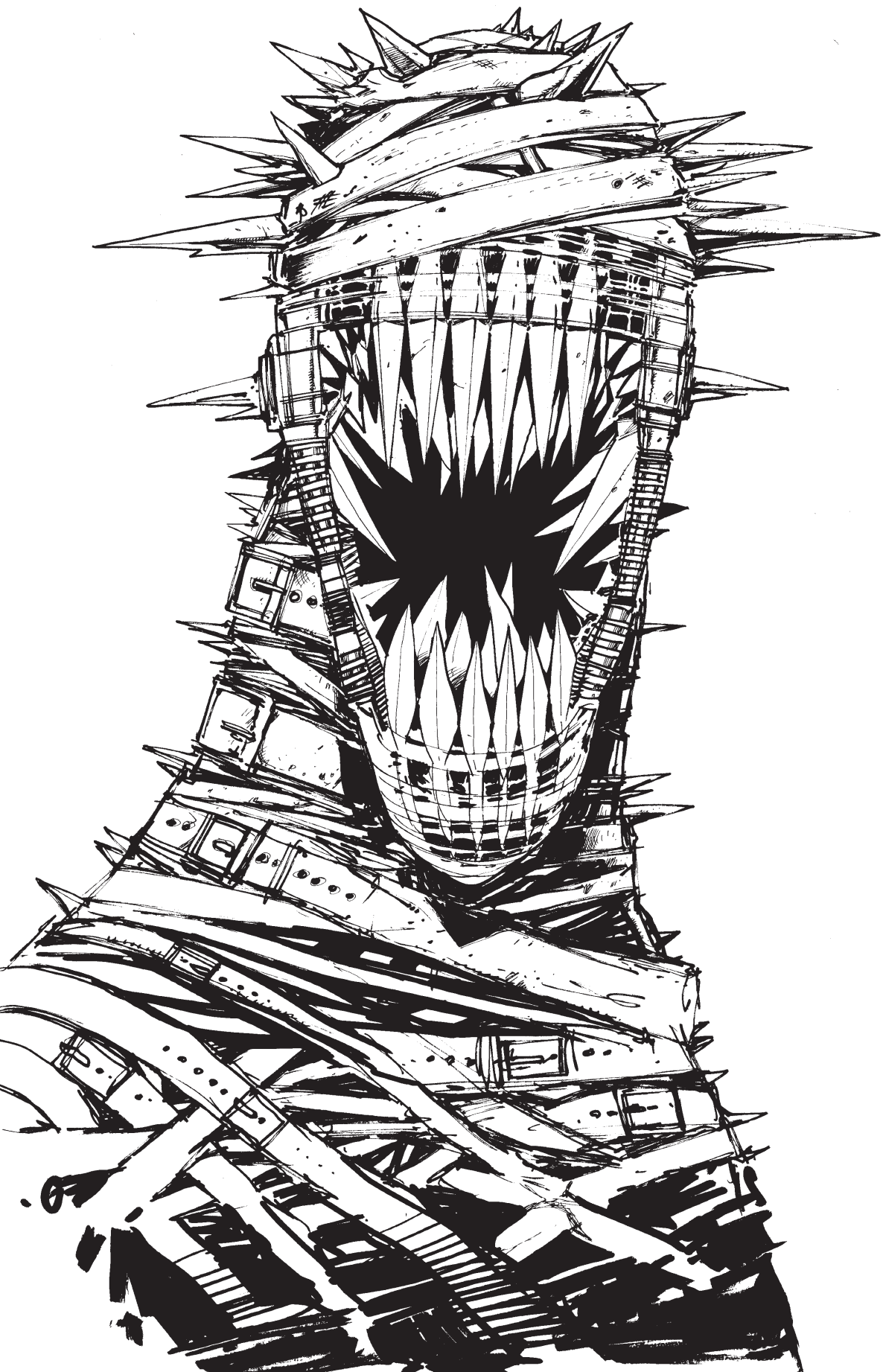
DIRECTION OF
FLIGHT

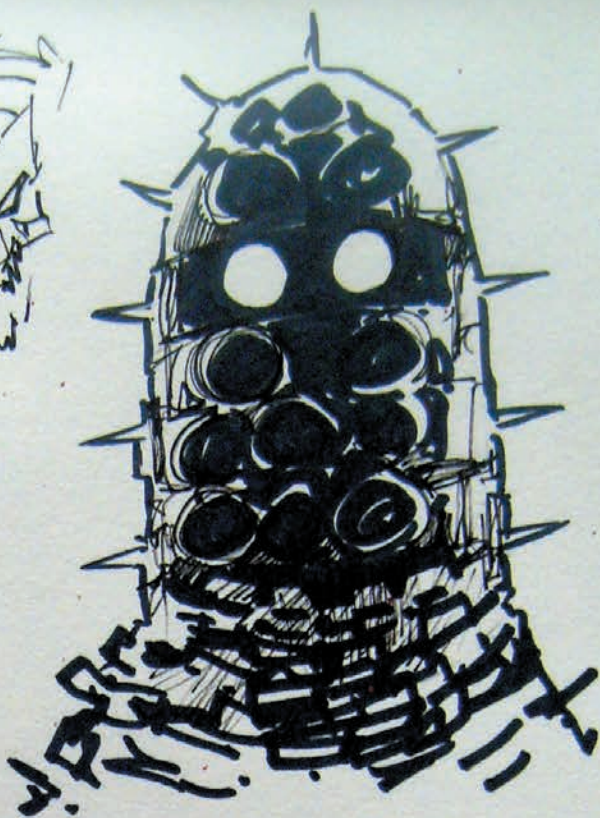
Rear view
Flight







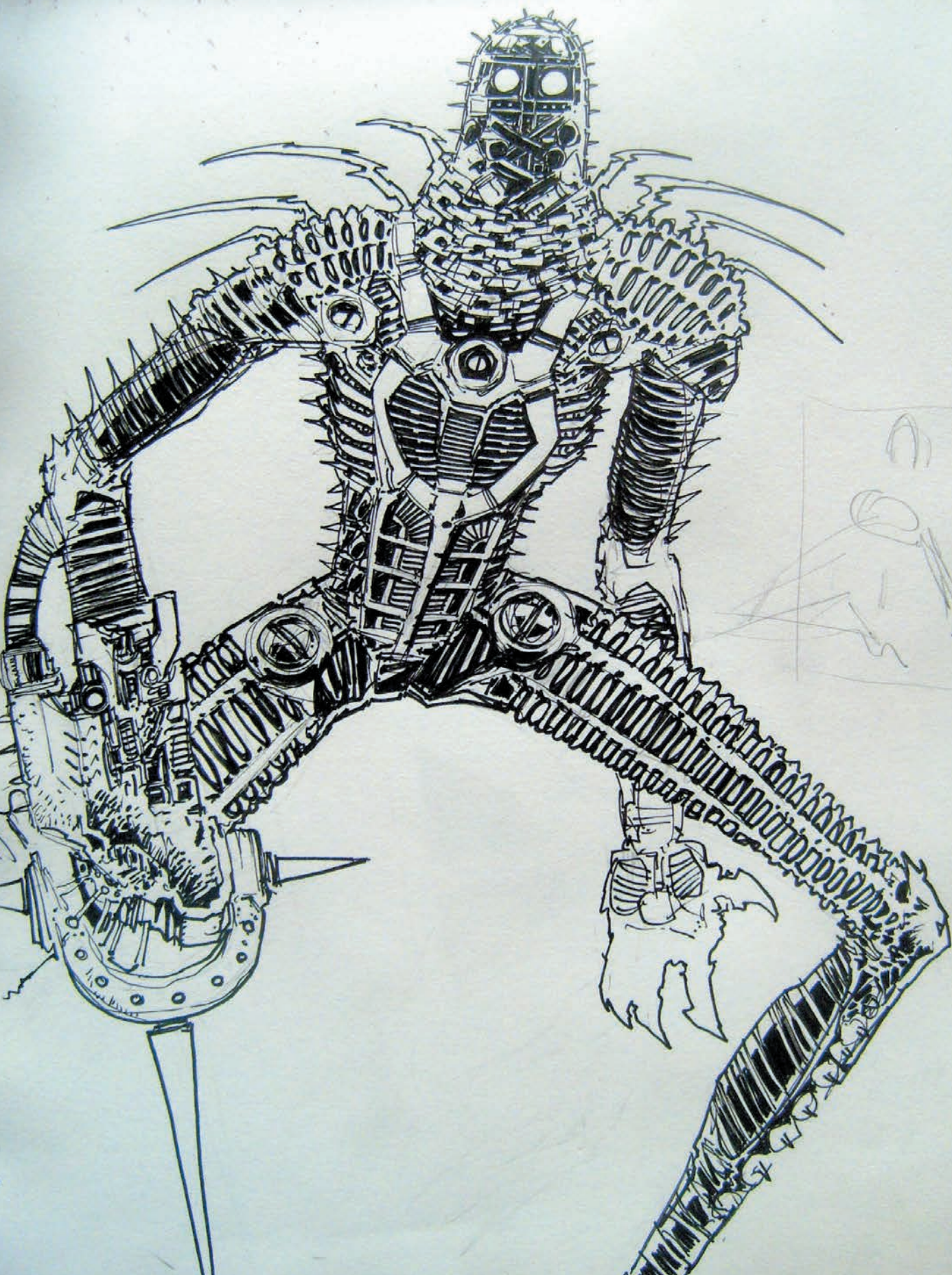












ROBBIE MORRISON

Robbie Morrison is one of *2000 AD*'s most popular writers, having co-created *The Bendatti Vendetta*, *Shakara*, *Shimura* and *Vanguard*, and has chronicled the adventures of *Judge Dredd* in *2000 AD* and the *Judge Dredd Magazine*. He is also co-creator of fan-favourite Russian rogue *Nikolai Dante*, which won an Eagle award for 'Best UK Character', beating *Judge Dredd* to this accolade for the first time in almost twenty years. In the US, he has written *Spider-Man's Tangled Web* for Marvel and *The Authority* for DC/WildStorm. His and artist Charlie Adlard's critically acclaimed graphic novel *White Death* has also been hugely successful in both Europe and the US.

HENRY FLINT

Henry Flint is one of the Galaxy's Greatest Comic's rising superstars. Co-creator of *Sancho Panzer* and *Shakara*, his incredibly versatile pencils have also graced *A.B.C. Warriors*, *Judge Dredd/Aliens*, *Bill Savage*, *Deadlock*, *Judge Dredd*, *Rogue Trooper*, *Missionary Man*, *Nemesis the Warlock*, *Nikolai Dante*, *Sinister Dexter*, *Tharg the Mighty*, *The V.C.'s*, *Vector 13* and *Venus Bluegenes*. He has even written a *Tharg's Alien Invasions* strip! He has also begun to establish himself in American comics. In 2004 Flint was the recipient of the award for best artist at the National Comic Awards.

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