

"Brings shades of the cosmic imagination of Jack Vance, Jack Kirby, and Samuel Delany and Howard Chaykin's great lost *Empire*."

—Jonathan Lethem

AUBREY SITTERSON

JED DOUGHERTY

ASTONE

ESPOSITO

FREE PLANET NET

**VOL
2**



The Interplanetary Development Alliance's embargo on Lutheria--imposed to penalize the planet's contumacious restrictions on orchaleum exports--dramatically intensified challenges that had plagued the new government even prior to the trade crisis.

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PRIORITY

With its orchaleum-based mono-economy, every aspect of Luthieran life was impacted by the embargo. With no domestic manufacturing industry to speak of, already scarce medical supplies, munitions and technological components became even more elusive.

Starvation Effects on the Human Body (Noncomprehensive)

Impaired mental function, listlessness, irritability.

Slowed heart rate, reduced blood pressure.

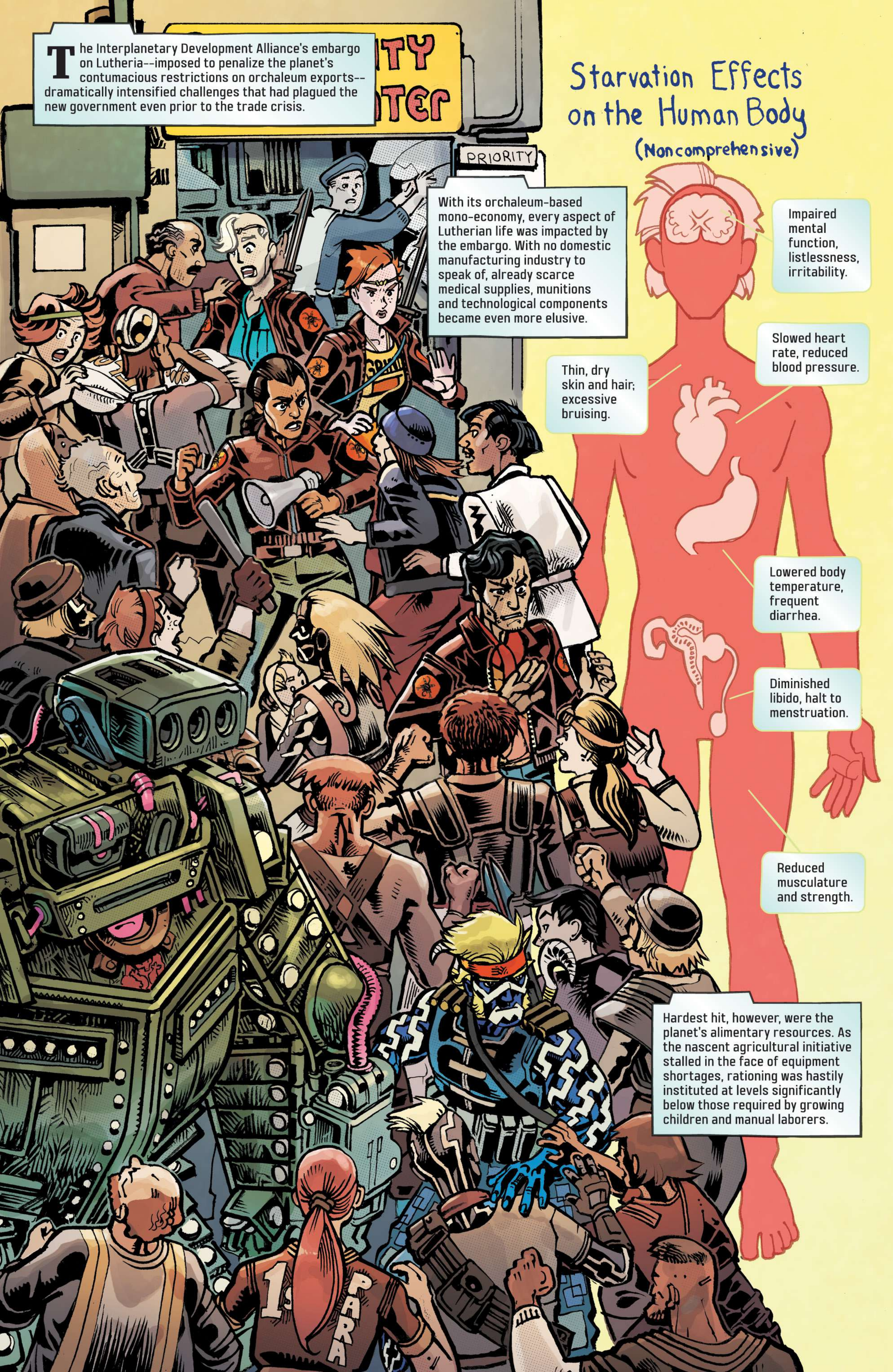
Thin, dry skin and hair; excessive bruising.

Lowered body temperature, frequent diarrhea.

Diminished libido, halt to menstruation.

Reduced musculature and strength.

Hardest hit, however, were the planet's alimentary resources. As the nascent agricultural initiative stalled in the face of equipment shortages, rationing was hastily instituted at levels significantly below those required by growing children and manual laborers.



The Alliance embargo also intensified Luthera's acute exigency vis-a-vis the raw materials and technological components vital to upgrading its overtaxed infrastructure, which had been designed for but a single purpose: The extraction and exportation of orchaleum.

Warp Steering Fins

Sensor Deck

Astragation and Warp Prognostication Computers

Warp Wheel

SO WE SHOULD JUST PRAY THAT THEY LEAVE US ALONE?

IT'S A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES, KATJA! ABOUT LUTHERIA'S FUTURE!

IF THE OROURANS OVERRUN US, LUTHERIA WON'T HAVE A FUTURE.

AND WHAT HAPPENS IF THE ENTIRE PLANET STARVES TO DEATH?!

Maneuvering Engines

Drop Capsule Bay

Conduits

Rocket Cannons

Command Tower

Sensor Turret

Bridge Chapel

Crew Quarters

Pressure Control Room

Marine Barracks

Torpedo Room

Fighter Hangar

Launch Bay + Catapult

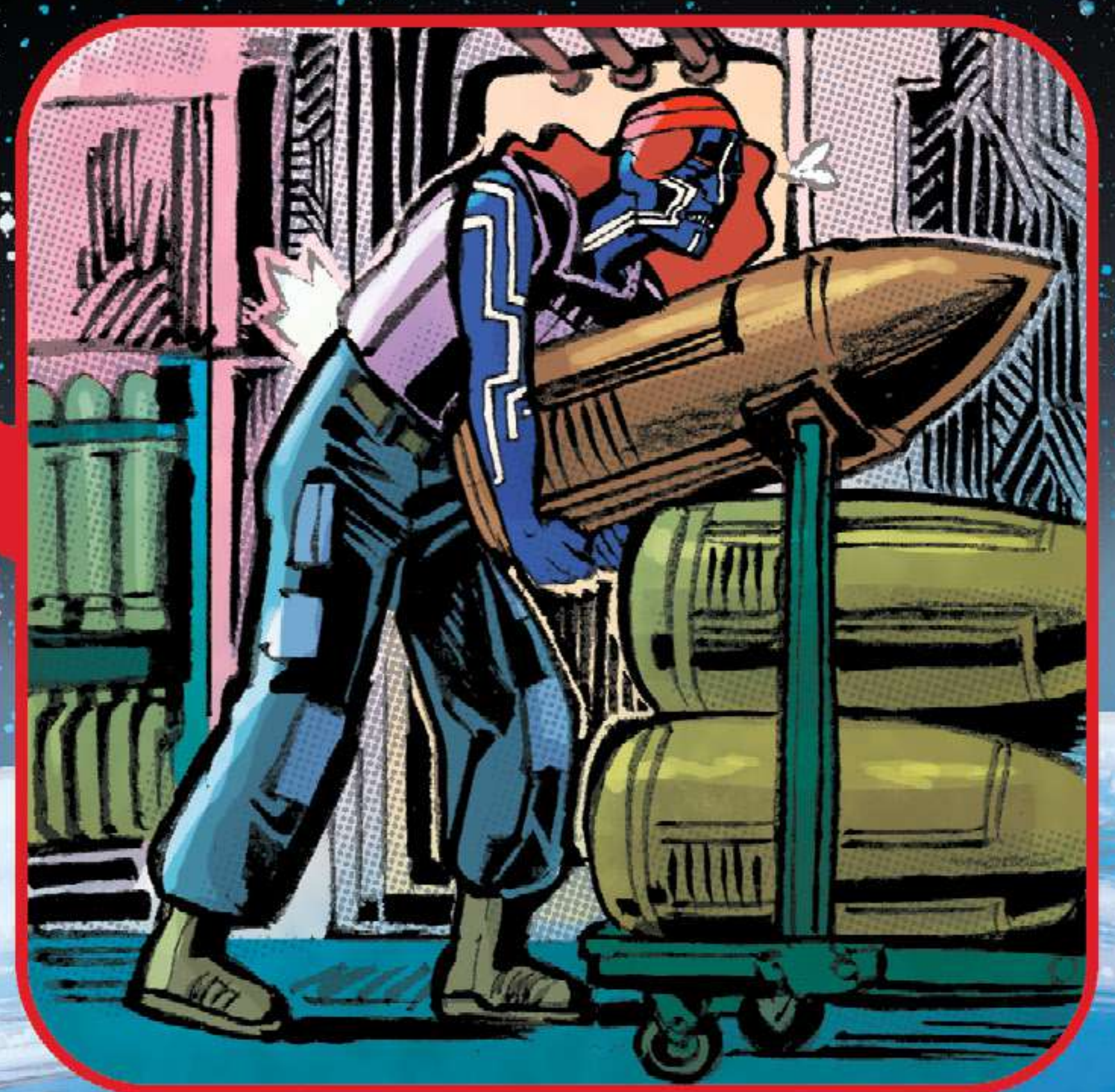
Main Cannon

Armory

Torpedo Tubes

Mechanics' Quarters

Lift



When salvageable materials were available, their optimal allocation was a matter of heated debate. Should priority be given to terraforming capacity, defense capabilities, the development of industry, or the multifarious, competing demands of Luthera's largely autonomous poleis?





YES, MY CHILD, OF COURSE.

BUT WITH REGARD TO THE DREADNOUGHT... WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU FOUND?



NOTHING THAT WILL HELP.

I'VE REFINED OUR TERRAFORMING DESIGNS BUT--

MY SWEET GIRL; I MEANT MUNITIONS.



MUNITIONS? YOUR EXCELLENCY, PEOPLE ARE STARVING.

WE HAVE TO HELP THEM!



THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE CHURCH IS TRYING TO DO, HORA.

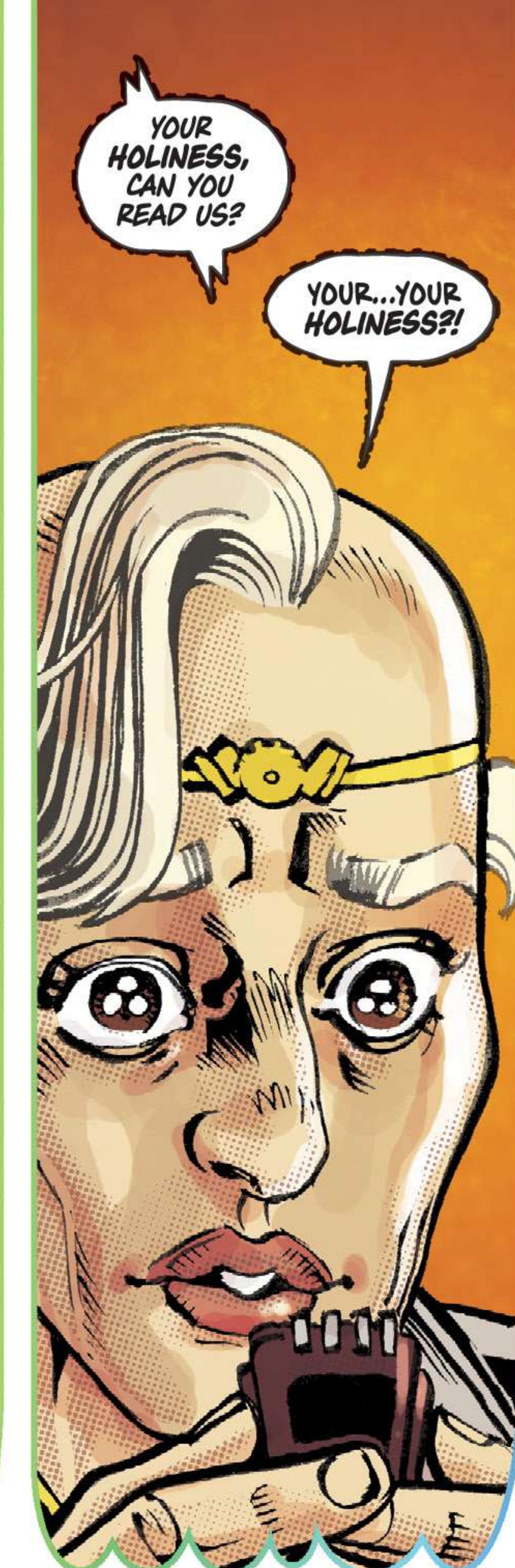
REMEMBER THE WANDERING COGWHEEL...



...SOMETIMES THE REBELLIOUS MUST BE FORCED BACK INTO PLACE...

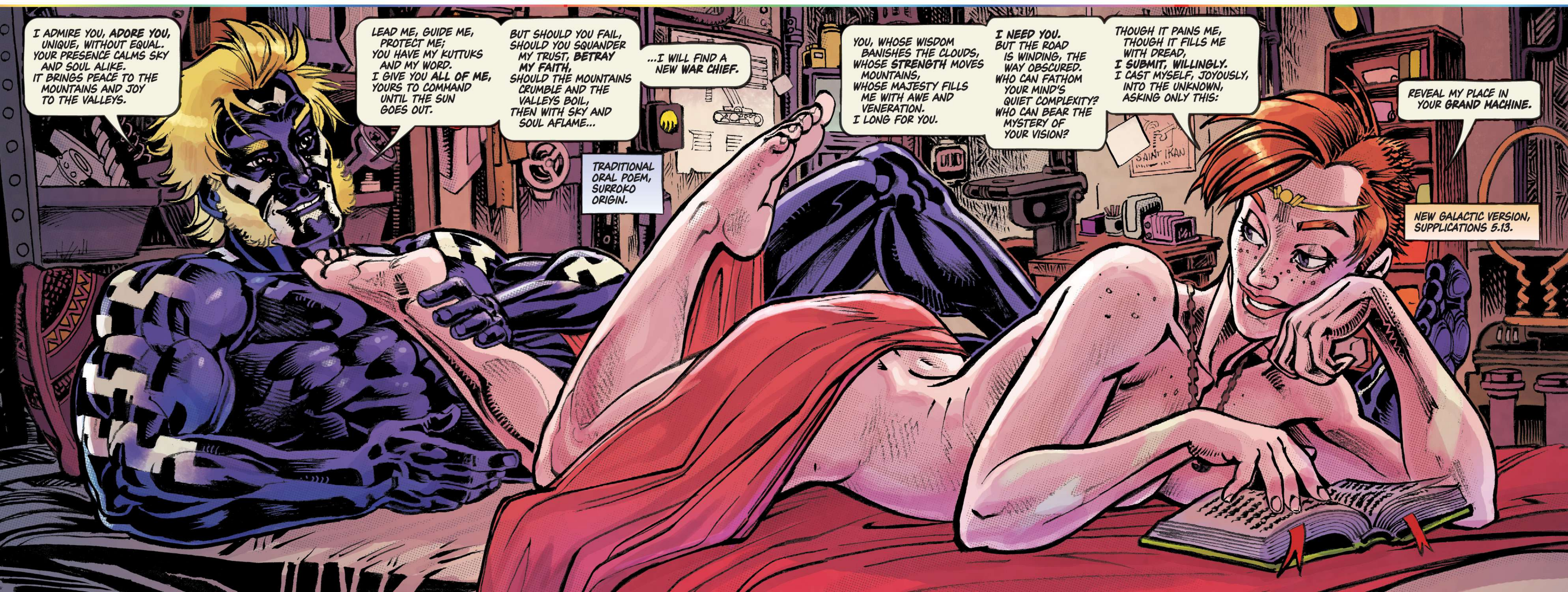
...AND HUNGER REMAINS A LEVER BOTH EFFECTIVE AND PEACEFUL.

BUT ENOUGH OF THAT; THERE'S SOMEONE WHO WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU...



YOUR HOLINESS, CAN YOU READ US?

YOUR...YOUR HOLINESS?!



I ADMIRE YOU, ADORE YOU, UNIQUE, WITHOUT EQUAL. YOUR PRESENCE CALMS SKY AND SOUL ALIKE. IT BRINGS PEACE TO THE MOUNTAINS AND JOY TO THE VALLEYS.

LEAD ME, GUIDE ME, PROTECT ME; YOU HAVE MY KUTTUKS AND MY WORD. I GIVE YOU ALL OF ME, YOURS TO COMMAND UNTIL THE SUN GOES OUT.

BUT SHOULD YOU FAIL, SHOULD YOU SQUANDER MY TRUST, BETRAY MY FAITH, SHOULD THE MOUNTAINS CRUMBLE AND THE VALLEYS BOIL, THEN WITH SKY AND SOUL AFLAME...

...I WILL FIND A NEW WAR CHIEF.

TRADITIONAL ORAL POEM, SURROKO ORIGIN.

YOU, WHOSE WISDOM BANISHES THE CLOUDS, WHOSE STRENGTH MOVES MOUNTAINS, WHOSE MAJESTY FILLS ME WITH AWE AND VENERATION. I LONG FOR YOU.

I NEED YOU. BUT THE ROAD IS WINDING, THE WAY OBSCURED. WHO CAN FATHOM YOUR MIND'S QUIET COMPLEXITY? WHO CAN BEAR THE MYSTERY OF YOUR VISION?

THOUGH IT PAINS ME, THOUGH IT FILLS ME WITH DREAD, I SUBMIT, WILLINGLY. I CAST MYSELF, JOYOUSLY, INTO THE UNKNOWN, ASKING ONLY THIS:

REVEAL MY PLACE IN YOUR GRAND MACHINE.

NEW GALACTIC VERSION, SUPPLICATIONS 5.13.