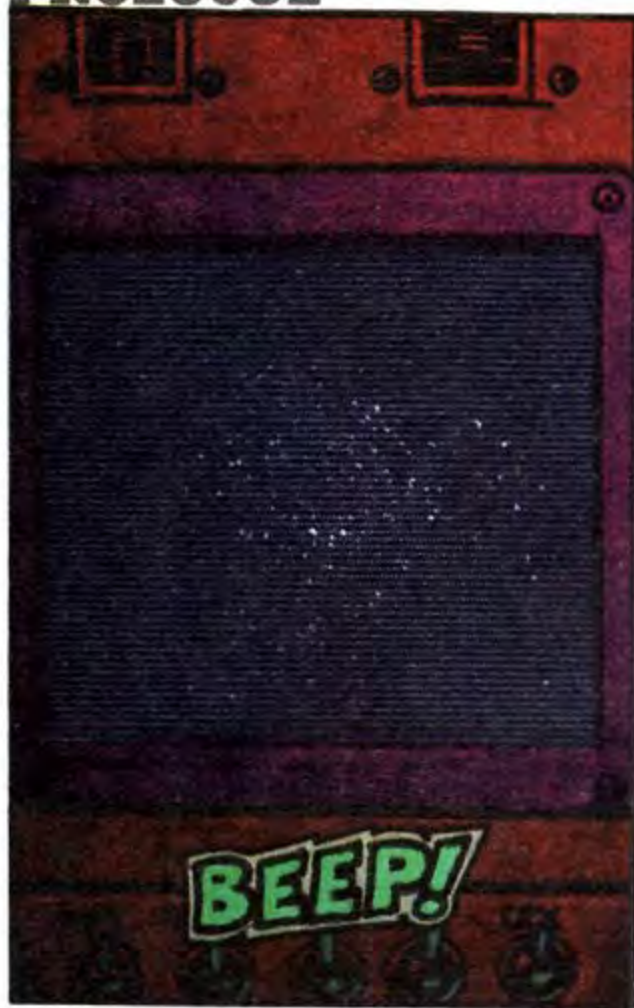


PROLOGUE



HIGHLORD!
THE PLUNDERING OF
THE HIVE-NESTS NEARS
CULMINATION!

THE CAPTURED HONEY
WILL PROVIDE EXCELLENT
LUBRICATION FOR OUR
MECHO-FORMS!

GOOD!



PREPARE TO
DEBARK THIS
RAVAGED
WORLD!

THE NEXT PLANET
DESTINED TO FALL
BEFORE THE YHAN
IS EARTH!

AS YOU
WISH, YOUR
HIGHLORDSHIP!



BEEP!



The Wichita Daily News April 2, 1986
**ST JOHN PREPARES
EARTH'S LAST STAND**

CALLED HERO BY WORLD

LT. ROBERT ST JOHN SITS HUNCHED OVER AN EVER-FLICKERING VISI-SCREEN! THE PICTURE IS BLEAK-GRIM!

THERE ARE WARSHIPS...THOUSANDS OF THEM... STREAKING DIRECTLY TOWARD EMERALD EARTH!

THE SOLAR CORPS OFFICER KNOWS HE IS THE ONLY MAN ALIVE WHO CAN STOP THEM! UNFORTUNATELY, FATE HAS CHOSEN HIM TO PLAY THE ROLE OF...

JUDAS

WHAT ARE THE LAST LONELY THOUGHTS OF AN ISOLATED HUMAN WITH MERE MINUTES TO LIVE? WE SHALL NEVER KNOW... UNTIL WE CONFRONT DEATH'S COLD VISAGE!



BUT LT. ST JOHN KNOWS... KNOWS ALL TOO WELL!

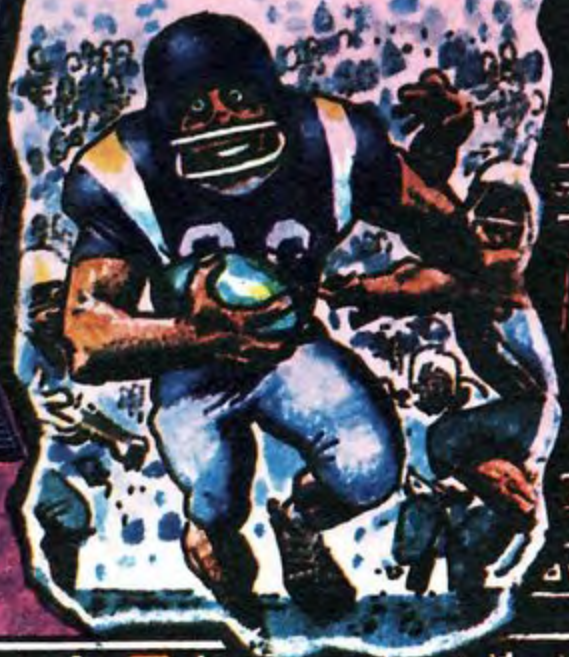
ST JOHN! DEEP SPACE PROBES INDICATE WE ARE UNDER IMMINENT THREAT OF INVASION!

THE UN HAS CHOSEN COL. IVAN GORGOVICH TO HEAD EARTH'S LAST HOPE... PROJECT OMEGA!

YOU WILL BE BACK-UP MAN FOR THIS VITAL OPERATION!

ONLY ONE GOAL RANKS WITH PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE ...WINNING!

ST JOHN'S ENTIRE EXISTENCE HAS BEEN DEVOTED TO SAVORING THE UNBRIDLED JOYS OF FAR-FLUNG FAME AND FORTUNE...



BEEP!

STORY: RICH MARGOPOUDOS / ART: RICH CORBEN

REAR 678

START A CYCLE

...AND HE WAS WILLING TO STOP AT NOTHING TO ACHIEVE IT...



...INCLUDING MURDER!

I'VE CROSSED THE MAIN POWER TERMINALS OF THE FLIGHT SIMULATOR!

WHEN THE GOOD COLONEL ACTIVATES THE UNIT HE'LL BE...



INCINERATED! THAT WAS THE ONLY WORD ST JOHN COULD THINK OF WHEN HE HEARD THE COSMONAUT'S SEARING SCREAM, AND SMELLED THE NOISOME FOULNESS OF SCORCHED FLESH!

BEEP!

SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG... DANGEROUSLY, DRASTICALLY AWRY!

YESSIR!

WE'VE NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE, ST JOHN ... YOU MUST HEAD PROJECT OMEGA!



HISTORY! HE WAS MAKING HISTORY! AT LAST HE WAS CLAIMING THE ELUSIVE DESTINY THAT WAS RIGHTFULLY HIS!

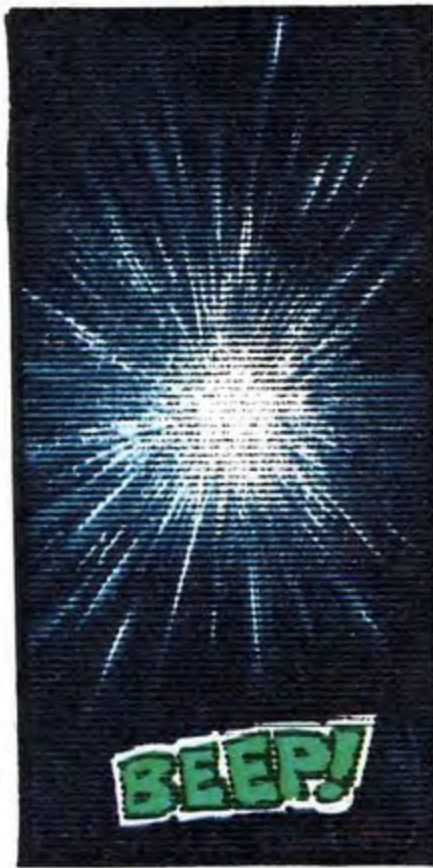


YET, THE SENSATION WAS SOMEHOW EMPTY... MEANINGLESS! IT WAS NOT THE GRAND EUPHORIA HE WAS SO DESPERATELY SEEKING...!

ST JOHN HAS TASTED *SUCCESS* IN IT'S MANY FORMS... BUT NOW FINDS THEM ALL *HOLLOW*... *LACKING!*



LOOMING *DEATH* CAN DO THAT TO A MAN,,, BUILD A WALL AROUND HIM,,, MAKE HIM FEEL *SEPARATED* AND *ALONE!*



SOLAR CORPS LIEUTENANT *ROBERT ST JOHN* WAS ROCKETED ALOFT TODAY ABOARD A SPECIALLY DESIGNED, CAMOUFLAGED *SPACE CAPSULE*... WHERE HE'LL REMAIN IN ORBIT FOR SIX MONTHS WAITING TO INTERCEPT AN *ARMADA* OF UNKNOWN, *ALIEN ATTACKERS!*

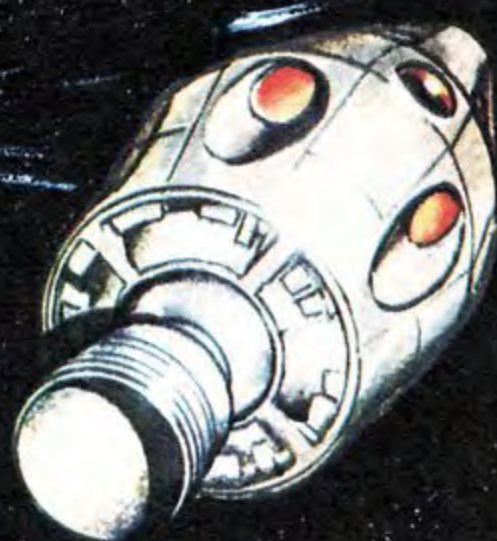
THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD HAVE *UNITED* IN A COMMON CAUSE OF BUILDING THE VERY FIRST *COBALT BOMB!* THE AMERICAN ASTRONAUT ACTING LIKE A PROVERBIAL *TROJAN HORSE* WILL *DETONATE* THE *DOOMSDAY* WEAPON WHEN THE *INVADERS* COME WITHIN RANGE!

AND NOW, THE LOCAL SCENE! *RIOT POLICE* AGAIN FIRED TEAR GAS AT *MOBS* *PROTESTING* BEFORE THE *WHITE HOUSE!* THE *DEMONSTRATORS* CLAIMED WASHINGTON IS NOT FUNDING SUFFICIENT *MEDICAL AID* TO THE *POOR!*

MORE ON *THIS* AND OTHER *TOP HEADLINES*, AFTER A WORD FROM OUR *SPONSOR*...!

ANXIETY! A *DREAD* EMOTION THAT MAKES MEN *SWEAT!* IT'S A *GODLESS* FEELING TO *DIE ALONE!* DON'T YOU *AGREE*, LIEUTENANT?

DON'T YOU...?





GENERAL! MY SCREEN DETECTS UN-CALCULABLE POWER LEVELS EMANATING FROM A NEAR-BY PLANETOID!



SCAN IT AT ONCE, WITH ALL AVAILABLE WAVELENGTHS!

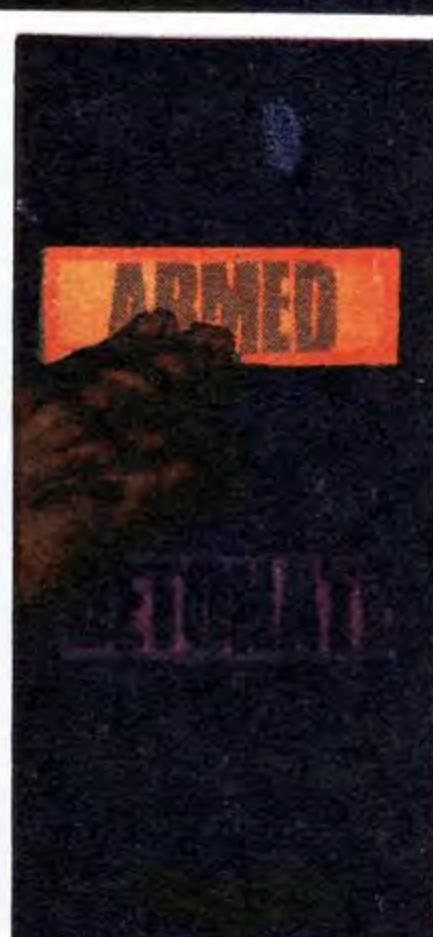
THIS COULD SPELL DOOM... IMPERIL THE ENTIRE FLEET!



MONITORS REGISTER FUSION ENERGY... ENOUGH TO DECIMATE OUR FORCES!

NO!

A TRAP... SO CHILDISHLY SIMPLE... YET INESCAPABLY LETHAL!



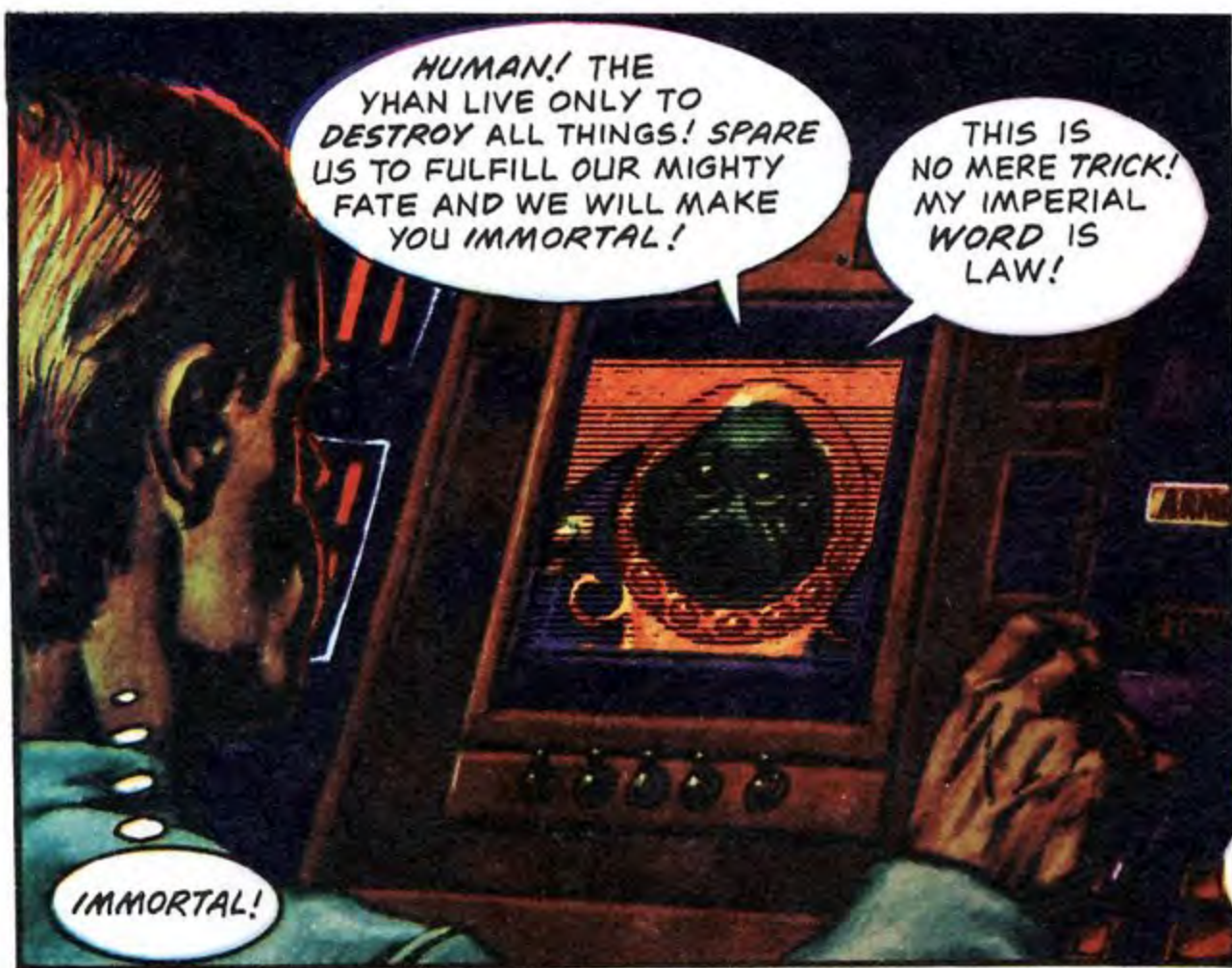
WE'RE SO CLOSE... I WON'T CONCEDE VICTORY!

COMMUNICATIONS! CONTACT THE BIO-ORGANISM! PERHAPS WE CAN MAKE A DEAL WITH THE HUMAN!



YOU'RE GROWING UP FAST, BOBBIE! THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS YOU HAVE TO LEARN!

LIFE ISN'T EASY! IT'S BRUTAL... DOG EAT DOG! DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE OTHER GUY... AS LONG AS YOU COME OUT ON TOP!



HUMAN! THE YHAN LIVE ONLY TO DESTROY ALL THINGS! SPARE US TO FULFILL OUR MIGHTY FATE AND WE WILL MAKE YOU IMMORTAL!

THIS IS NO MERE TRICK! MY IMPERIAL WORD IS LAW!

IMMORTAL!



HOW COULD YOU AGREE TO VOLUNTEER, BOB? WHAT ABOUT ME AND THE BABY? DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT US?

SURE I DO, SUZZIE! IT'S JUST THAT PROJECT OMEGA IS MORE IMPORTANT... BIGGER THAN ALL OF US!

DON'T YOU KNOW THAT?

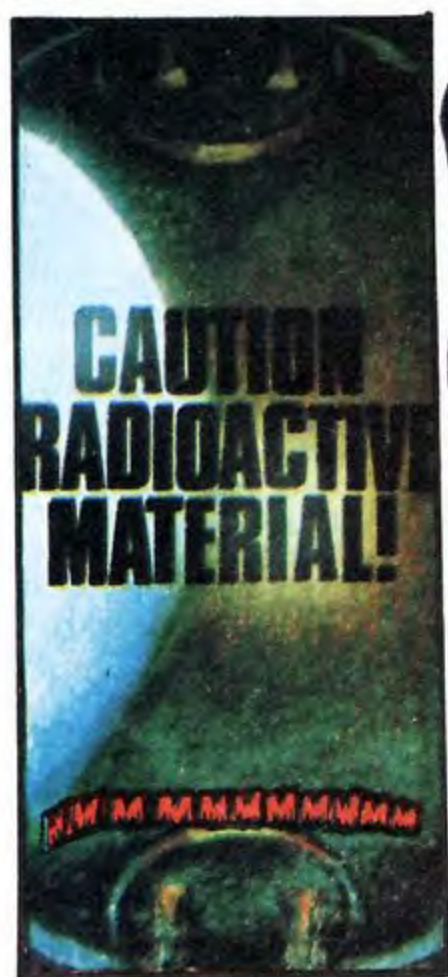


I AWAIT YOUR DECISION!



I ONLY KNOW I'M MARRIED TO A STRANGER! YOU'RE SO BUSY ACTING COLD AND UNLOVING YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE A MAN! YOU'RE A MACHINE!

IT ISN'T THAT I HATE YOU! IT'S JUST THAT I SUDDENLY REALIZE THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANYTHING REALLY BETWEEN US!



IT'S A FACT, SON... YOU HAVE TO BE A BACKSTABBER AT TIMES! REMEMBER THAT!

I WILL, DAD! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS... I'LL NEVER FORGET!

THAT'S A PROMISE!



YOUR ANSWER, HUMAN... I MUST HAVE IT...

...NOW!

WHAT I HAVE TO SAY PROBABLY DOESN'T MEAN MUCH... BUT MAYBE SOMEDAY YOU'LL REMEMBER IT AND THINK OF ME...

AT ONE TIME... I USED TO LOVE YOU, BOB... LOVE YOU VERY MUCH!

GOODBYE, DARLING! I HOPE YOU CAN FIND PEACE WITH YOURSELF!

ST JOHN SEES HIMSELF THE WAY HE REALLY IS! BEHIND THE HERO LURKS A BASE-BORN COWARD!



GOD HELP ME!

MY ANSWER IS... YES!

THE YOUNG ASTRONAUT WALKS LIKE A MAN IN A DREAM UP THE RAMP OF THE YHAN FLAGSHIP!



...A DREAM THAT IS SWIFTLY BROKEN... AS A ROARING SUIT-RADIO REPORTS AUTOMATIC ENGINES HAVE BLAZED INTO LIFE... FOREVER EXILING THE DREAD BOMB FROM THE SOLAR SYSTEM!



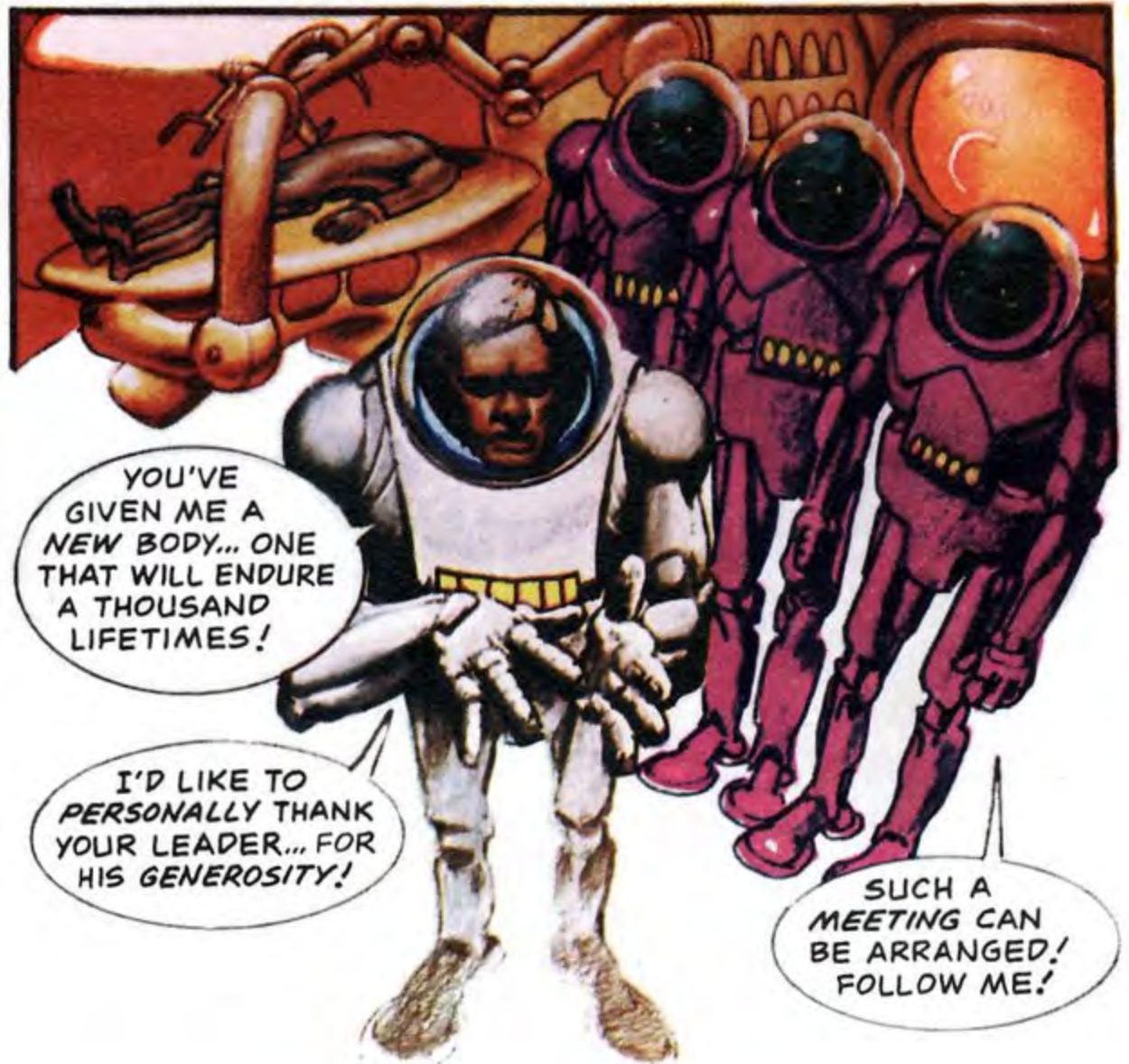
HE HAS KEPT HIS HALF OF THE BARGAIN! A TRIO OF GLISTENING METAL CREATURES ESCORTS HIM TO AN OPERATING CUBICLE... WHERE THEY WILL COMPLETE THE PACT!

LT. ST JOHN IS STRAPPED DOWN BY STAR-SURGEONS! A DRUG-GAS CAUSES THE HUMAN TO SLEEP!



THE ABSTRACT ELEMENT OF TIME PASSES. THE NOW-IMMORTAL MAN AWAKES TO DISCOVER HIS BRAIN HAS BEEN TRANSPLANTED INTO AN ALIEN MECO-FORM!

A PLAN QUICKLY TAKES SHAPE! PERHAPS THE LIEUTENANT CAN USE THESE STRANGELY HONOR-BOUND BEINGS TO SALVAGE HIS OWN SHATTERED EGO...!



YOU'VE GIVEN ME A NEW BODY... ONE THAT WILL ENDURE A THOUSAND LIFETIMES!

I'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY THANK YOUR LEADER... FOR HIS GENEROSITY!

SUCH A MEETING CAN BE ARRANGED! FOLLOW ME!

ST JOHN SOON FINDS HIMSELF IN THE
HIGHLORD'S PRIVATE QUARTERS...



GREETINGS,
NON-HUMAN!
I UNDERSTAND
THAT...

WAIT! WHY
DO YOU TURN
OFF YOUR AUDIO-
SENSORS?

BECAUSE I
DON'T WANT TO
HEAR YOUR
SCREAMS.



WHEN...



I...



KILL...



YOU!



ATTENTION! ALL
MEMBERS! THIS IS
YOUR NEW HIGHLORD!
I HAVE WON MY
TITLE IN
COMBAT!

MY WORD IS
IMPERIAL LAW!
CHANGE COURSE FOR YHAN
HOMEWORLD! I HAVE AN
EMPIRE TO
RULE!



EPILOGUE



WE'RE NOT SURE HOW
HE DID IT, MR. PRESIDENT...
BUT ST JOHN SOMEHOW
MANAGED TO BOARD A
WARSHIP AND DIVERT
THE ARMADA!

UNFORTUNATELY,
HIS BRAIN CELLS
WILL SOON START TO
DISINTEGRATE...
DUE TO PROLONGED
EXPOSURE TO
COBALT
RADIATION!



WE FELT THERE
WAS NO REASON TO
WARN HIM... SINCE HE
WAS ALREADY DOOMED
TO DIE IN THE BOMB
BLAST!

HIS DEATH
IS ONLY A
MATTER OF TIME...
BUT AT LEAST HE
WILL HAVE DIED
A HERO!