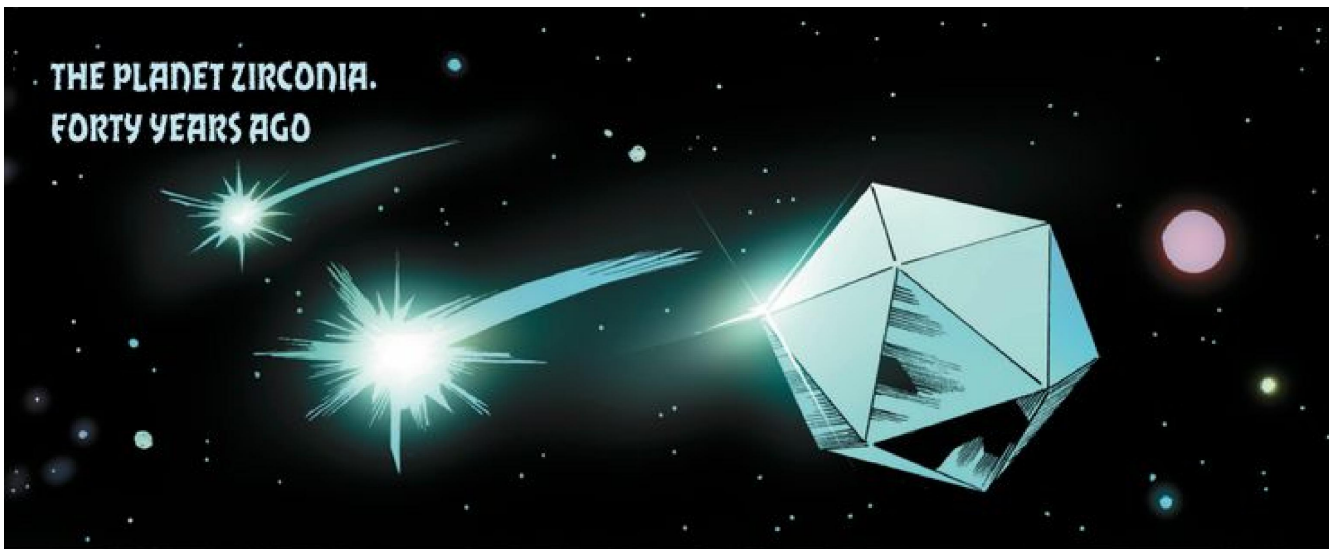


THE PLANET ZIRCONIA.
FORTY YEARS AGO



CRYSTALLUS,
CAPITAL CITY OF ZIRCONIA.



JUST ANOTHER EVENING,
LIKE ANY OTHER.



VOLDOR RETURNS HOME FROM HIS
JOB AT THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE.





VOLDOR?
WHAT'S WRONG?

NOTHING,
ZOLDANA.



IT'S *TOO LATE* TO LIE
TO ME. I KNEW SOMETHING
WAS *WRONG* THE MOMENT
YOU WALKED IN THE
DOOR.

TRUST ME,
YOU *DON'T* WANT
TO KNOW.



LOOK. WE *BOTH* KNOW
HOW THIS ENDS.

WE'LL FIGHT, YOU'LL
MAKE FUN OF MY ROWING
MACHINE, I'LL CRY, AND THEN
YOU'LL TELL ME. SO WHY NOT
JUST CUT TO THE CHASE?

ALL RIGHT!
YOU *REALLY* WANT
TO KNOW?!



I JUST CAME BACK FROM THE MINISTRY
OF SCIENCE. THE PLANET ZIRCONIA
IS GOING TO *EXPLODE!*

WE'RE ALL
GOING TO *DIE*
SCREAMING.



WOW. I *DO*
KIND OF WISH I DIDN'T
KNOW THAT.

BUT, I MEAN... THAT'S JUST A THEORY, RIGHT? YOU DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW THAT WE'RE DOOMED, DO YOU?!

I'M THE *GREATEST SCIENTIST* ON ZIRCONIA. I THINK I KNOW WHEN A PLANET IS GOING TO EXPLODE, ZOLDANA!

WE'VE BEEN CRYSTAL-MINING THE PLANET'S CORE FOR MILLENNIA. THE ENTIRE SURFACE IS ONE MASSIVE CALDERA. WHEN IT COLLAPSES... YOU, ME, AND EVERYONE ON THE PLANET WILL BE CONSUMED IN LAVA.

HOW IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?!

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE?! LOOK AROUND!

EVERYTHING HERE IS MADE OUT OF FUCKING CRYSTAL!



WHEN WILL IT, YOU KNOW... HAPPEN?

9PM.



TONIGHT?!

MAYBE 9:15.

THE WORLD CAN'T END TONIGHT! IT JUST CAN'T!

OH? AND WHY NOT?



WELL, FOR ONE THING... WE'RE HAVING PEOPLE OVER!

WHAT?! WHO?

GORDO AND VERA.

AND KABOOM! GORDO CLOSES ANOTHER DEAL!

I LOVE YOU, PLUM-PLUM.

GORDO?! THE TIME SHARE GUY?

IT'S THE LAST NIGHT OF MY LIFE AND I HAVE TO SPEND IT TALKING ABOUT REAL ESTATE!

I DIDN'T WANT TO INVITE THEM OVER. THEY JUST SORT OF CORNERED ME AT TRADER-ZOG'S!



CAN'T WE JUST CANCEL? TELL THEM YOU'VE GOT EXPLOSIVE DIARRHEA OR SOMETHING?

NO! THEY'LL JUST WEAR ME DOWN AGAIN. PLUS, I'VE SPENT THE WHOLE DAY MAKING EARTH-FOOD.

EARTH FOOD?

SOUP.



YOU BOIL THESE TINY PIECES OF FOOD IN LIQUID AND THEN YOU EAT IT USING THESE THINGS CALLED SPOONS.

WEIRD.



DID YOU REMEMBER TO PICK UP SOME CRACKERS ON THE WAY HOME?

YEAH, I REMEMBERED.



YOU SPENT FIFTEEN CREDITS ON CRACKERS?!

GUESS I WANTED TO GO OUT WITH A BANG.

WAAAH!



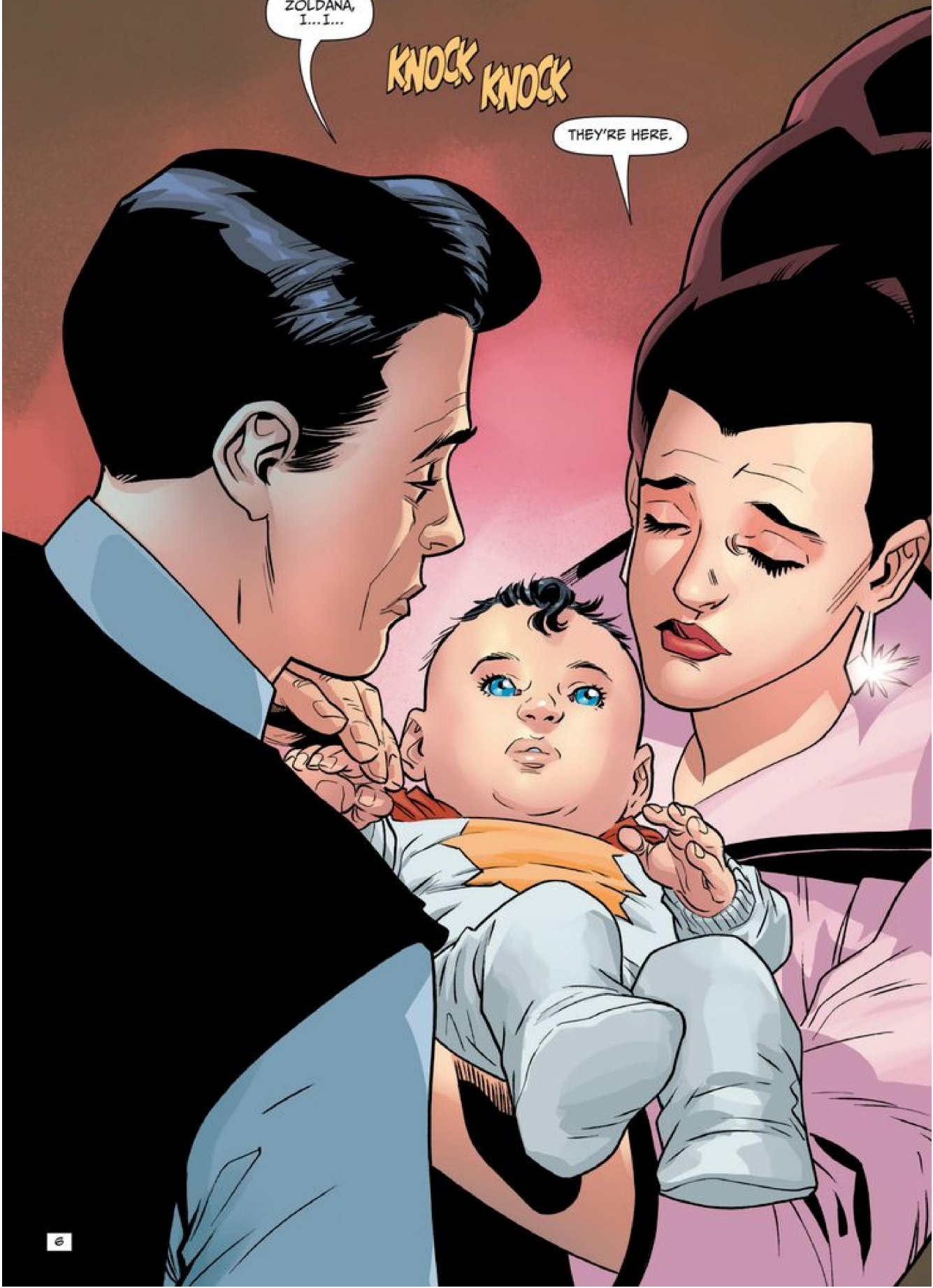
OH NO... I'D ALMOST FORGOT!

SUNSTAR! WHAT ABOUT LITTLE SUNSTAR?

ZOLDANA,
I...I...

KNOCK KNOCK

THEY'RE HERE.



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