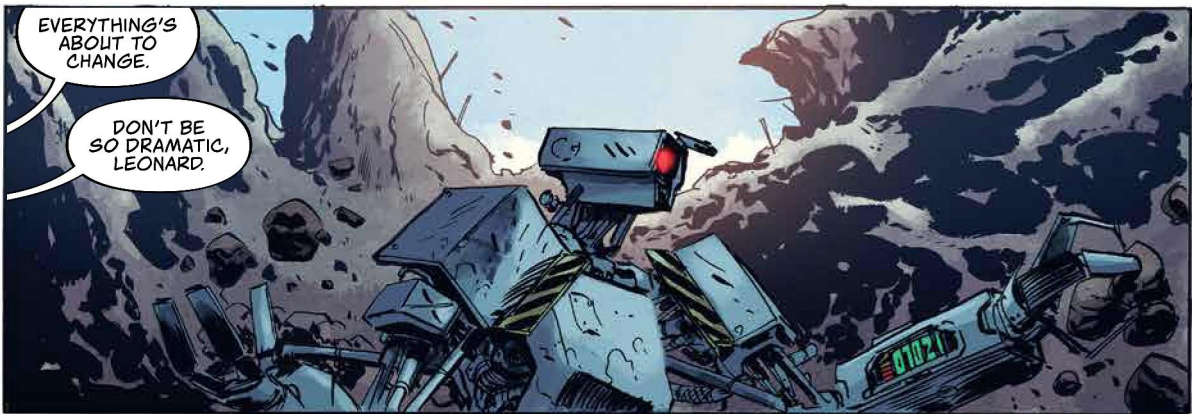


Chapter One

The 'Verse in Flux



EVERYTHING'S ABOUT TO CHANGE.

DON'T BE SO DRAMATIC, LEONARD.



I'M SERIOUS, JAYNE. LOOK AT THOSE THINGS.

EVERYTHING YOU LOVE?

SPACE, FREEDOM, INFINITE POSSIBILITY?

THEY'RE TYING IT UP, SMOOTHING IT OVER.



THE PIRATE'S A POET?

ISN'T HE ADORABLE?

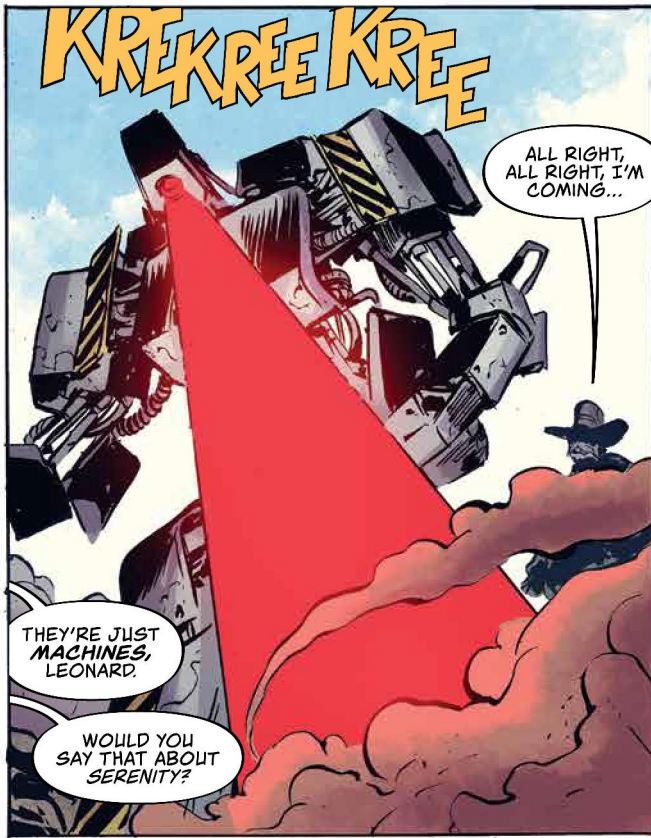
OF COURSE I AM, KAYLEE...



ZZT

ZZZZT

...BUT DON'T THEY SCARE YOU JUST A BIT?



KREKREE KREE

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I'M COMING...

THEY'RE JUST MACHINES, LEONARD.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT ABOUT SERENITY?



AW, SERENITY'S SOMETHING SPECIAL.

MADE FOR FLYING.

MADE TO CARRY US.

SHE'S OUR FRIEND, OUR MOMMA BIRD.



WHO'S THE ROET NOW?

UGGGHHH.



BUT THOSE THINGS DOWN THERE?

LOOK HOW CLUNKY THEY ARE. THEY CAN'T FLY. THEY CAN BARELY WALK.

THEY AIN'T GONNA REPLACE US ANY TIME SOON.



ALL RIGHT, BUT STILL...



...THE SOONER WE GET OUT OF HERE THE BETTER.



OOH. SHINY.





AW,
MAN!



BS3, THIS IS
BS435, DO YOU
READ?
SSSKKKKKK
SSSSKK
DAMMIT.



THREE HOURS
LATER.
NEW MAGISTRAR.



I WOULD
HAVE CALLED
EARLIER!

BUT AS
USUAL, I COULDN'T
GET A DAMN
SIGNAL!

ALL RIGHT,
ALL RIGHT, WE'LL
CHECK IT OUT.

THE
IMPORTANT
THING...



...IS THAT YOU
PROTECTED THE
PRODUCT.



YEAH, WELL,
NO THANKS TO
THE DANG
BOTS.

THEY'RE
SUPPOSED
TO DOUBLE AS
SECURITY,
RIGHT?

THOSE
PIRATES JUST
SHORTED
'EM OUT IN
SECONDS!



WELL, WE
ALL KNOW THE
LIMITATIONS OF
THE CURRENT
GENERATION.



BUT THAT'S
EXACTLY WHY
YOUR WORK IS SO
APPRECIATED.



I ASSURE
YOU, SUPERVISOR
LEANDRI...