

# INFINITE DARK

ISSUE 1



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# INFINITE DARK

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Routine simulation  
therapy session  
number thirty-nine.

Subject, Security  
Director DEVA  
KARRELL.



Are you  
COMFORTABLE?

NO.



BUT  
LET'S GO  
ANYWAY.

Very well.  
Picking up  
where we  
left off --

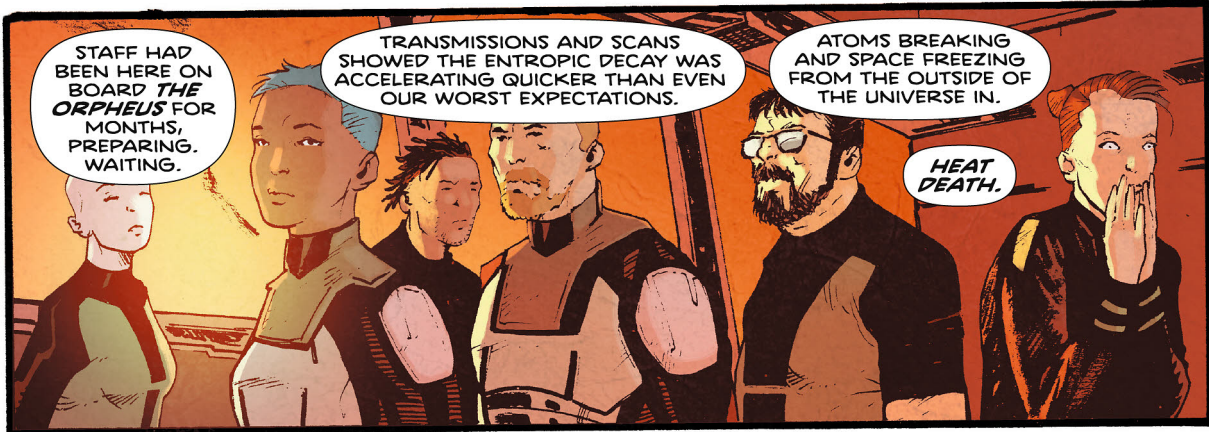
What memories  
are at the  
forefront of  
your mind?



THE  
END OF THE  
UNIVERSE.

I'm afraid you'll  
have to be more  
specific.





STAFF HAD BEEN HERE ON BOARD *THE ORPHEUS* FOR MONTHS, PREPARING. WAITING.

TRANSMISSIONS AND SCANS SHOWED THE ENTROPIC DECAY WAS ACCELERATING QUICKER THAN EVEN OUR WORST EXPECTATIONS.

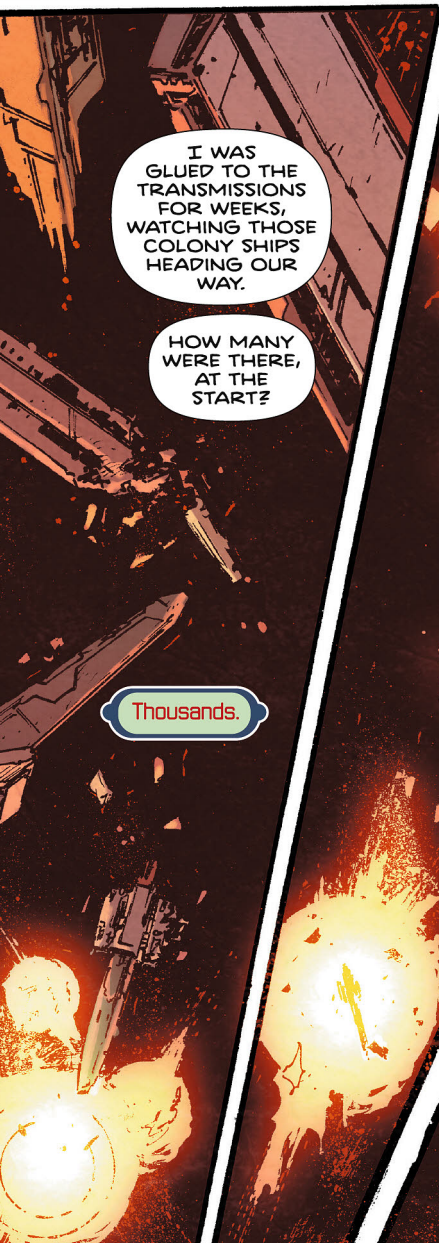
ATOMS BREAKING AND SPACE FREEZING FROM THE OUTSIDE OF THE UNIVERSE IN.

HEAT DEATH.

BUT HERE THEY'D BE SAFE, RIGHT?



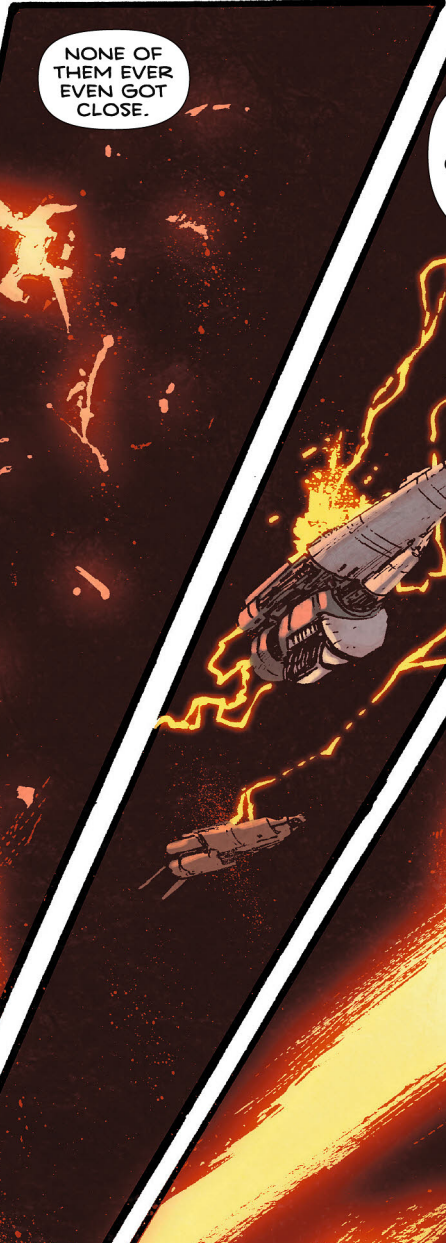
WE COULD PROTECT THEM FROM THE *COLD BLACK*.



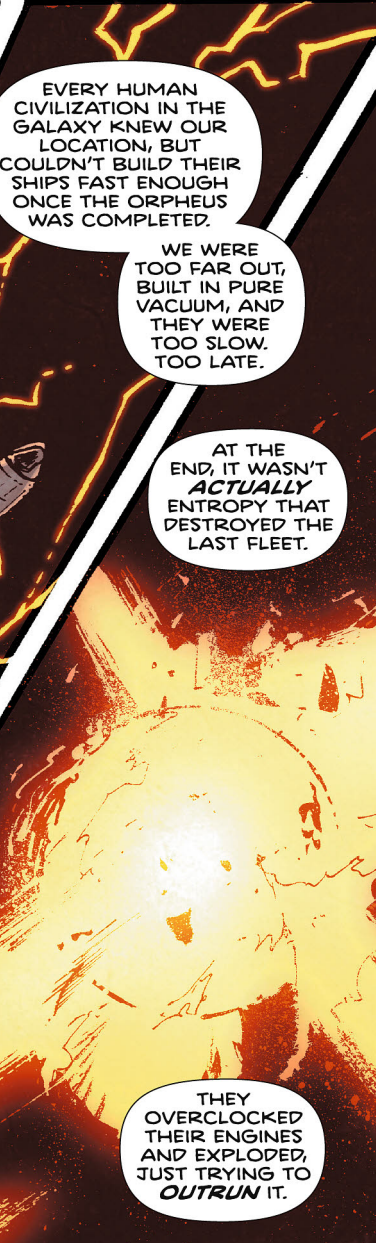
I WAS GLUED TO THE TRANSMISSIONS FOR WEEKS, WATCHING THOSE COLONY SHIPS HEADING OUR WAY.

HOW MANY WERE THERE, AT THE START?

Thousands.



NONE OF THEM EVER EVEN GOT CLOSE.



EVERY HUMAN CIVILIZATION IN THE GALAXY KNEW OUR LOCATION, BUT COULDN'T BUILD THEIR SHIPS FAST ENOUGH ONCE THE ORPHEUS WAS COMPLETED.

WE WERE TOO FAR OUT, BUILT IN PURE VACUUM, AND THEY WERE TOO SLOW. TOO LATE.

AT THE END, IT WASN'T *ACTUALLY* ENTROPY THAT DESTROYED THE LAST FLEET.

THEY OVERCLOCKED THEIR ENGINES AND EXPLODED, JUST TRYING TO *OUTRUN* IT.




A FEW SESSIONS AGO, YOU ASKED ME IF I HAD A **FAITH**.

I SAID I WASN'T RELIGIOUS, AND THAT'S TRUE. BUT BEFORE THIS, I USED TO BELIEVE IN **US**.

One might argue that our very location – a means of surviving the end of reality itself – is the pinnacle of human achievement.

Isn't that worth putting faith into?



WE BUILT THIS PLACE TO SAVE HUMAN LIVES, BUT WE COULDN'T EVEN **GET THEM** HERE.

I WATCHED THE TRANSMISSIONS OF THOSE COLONY SHIPS EXPLODING, AND I IMAGINED THE PEOPLE ON BOARD...



A LITTLE GIRL.



OR AN OLD MAN.



OR SOME WOMAN, JUST LIKE ME. EVERY ONE OF THEM-- LOST.

THIS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE AN ACHIEVEMENT TO ME. IT FEELS LIKE A TOMBSTONE.

I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M BEING SO #@&%ING MAUDLIN.

WE'RE FAILURES, NOT SAVIORS.

Begging your pardon, director, but in the two years since you've been in charge of this station's security, you've yet to result in anything I would consider FAILURE.

THANK YOU, SMITH.

YOU'RE KIND, FOR A VIRTUAL INTELLIGENCE WHO'S PROBABLY FOCUSED ON TWENTY OTHER THINGS WHILE WE TALK.

TWENTY-SEVEN. And I've passed this session's report on to Dr. Chalos.

USUALLY YOU DON'T LIKE ME TO CUT THINGS THIS EARLY.

BIWEEKLY THERAPY IN THE SIMULATION CHAMBER, MANDATORY FOR EVERY STAFF MEMBER ON BOARD.

TWO HOURS A MONTH I HAVE TO FACE A WHOLE UNIVERSE'S WORTH OF IRRATIONAL SURVIVOR'S GUILT.

MAYBE THAT'S THE POINT. UNLOAD ON THE A.I. AND NOT MY SUBORDINATES.

SEBASTIAN.

SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING, DIRECTOR.

In this case, it seemed necessary. We have company.



AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE ON BREAK?

YOU SAID I'M IN CHARGE WHEN YOU'RE OFF THE CLOCK.

I WAS PLAYING A SIM, BUT...

I THINK SEBASTIAN CLINGS TO THE JOB BECAUSE IT MAKES SENSE WHEN NOTHING ELSE DOES.

DIRECTOR, SOMETHING'S... HAPPENED.

I WAS A COP FOR NEAR A DECADE BEFORE LAUNCH.

AS QUIET AS IT IS HERE, THE WORK IS A WAY TO RECLAIM SOME NORMALCY. KEEP THE DARKNESS AT BAY.

YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD.

AS SOON AS SMITH PASSED THE ALERT ON TO ME, I GATHERED THE REST OF THE SECURITY FORCE.

DIRECTOR... DEVA--

THIS IS ABOVE MY PAY GRADE, YOU KNOW?

HE'S MAKING ME NERVOUS. OUR TIME SINCE LAUNCH HAS BEEN VERY QUIET.

A HANDFUL OF ARRESTS, NONE OF THEM *VIOLENT*.

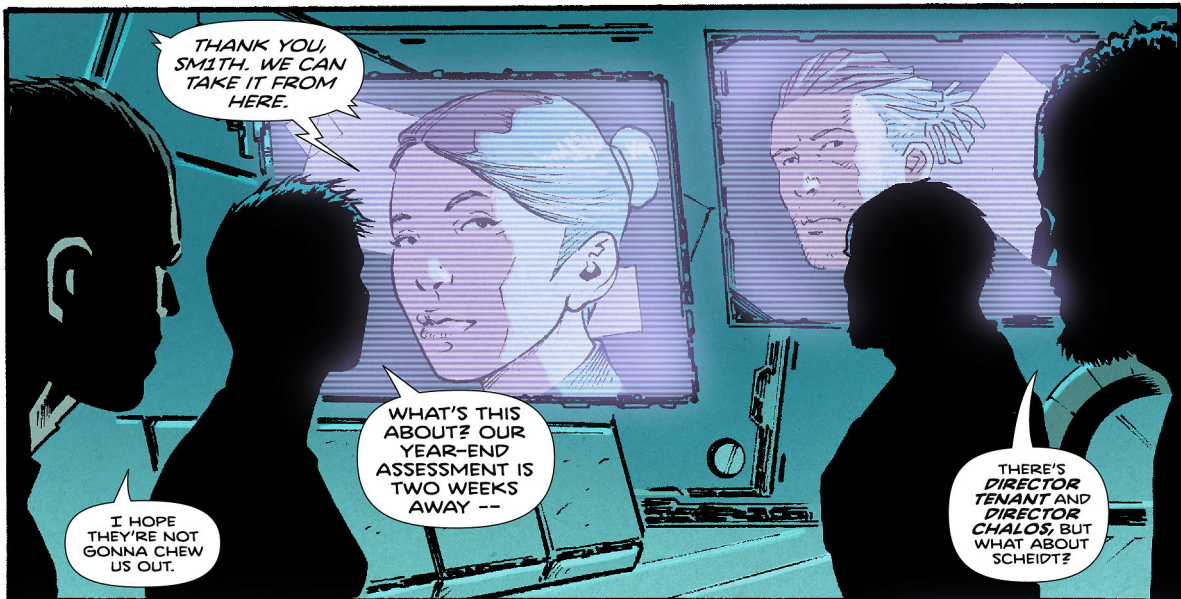
It's one of the other twenty-six things I was focused on during your therapy, Director Karrel.

WILL SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

The board of directors will explain everything.

They need to speak with you right away.



THANK YOU, SMITH. WE CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE.

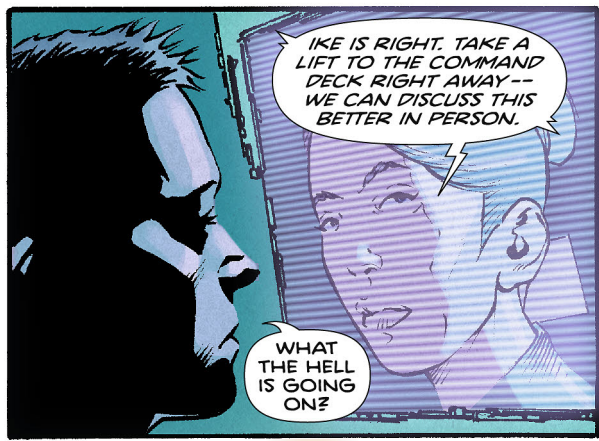
I HOPE THEY'RE NOT GONNA CHEW US OUT.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT? OUR YEAR-END ASSESSMENT IS TWO WEEKS AWAY --

THERE'S DIRECTOR TENANT AND DIRECTOR CHALOS. BUT WHAT ABOUT SCHEIDT?



DIRECTOR TENANT, AH, PERHAPS IT'D BE BEST IF THIS WASN'T DONE IN THE MIDDLE OF A LOCKER ROOM.



IKE IS RIGHT. TAKE A LIFT TO THE COMMAND DECK RIGHT AWAY -- WE CAN DISCUSS THIS BETTER IN PERSON.

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?



DEVA, THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR ANOTHER SPIRITED DEBATE. THIS IS... THIS IS DIFFERENT.

AND MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO SEND A TEAM OUT TO HOUSING SECTOR SEVEN. APARTMENT 19.



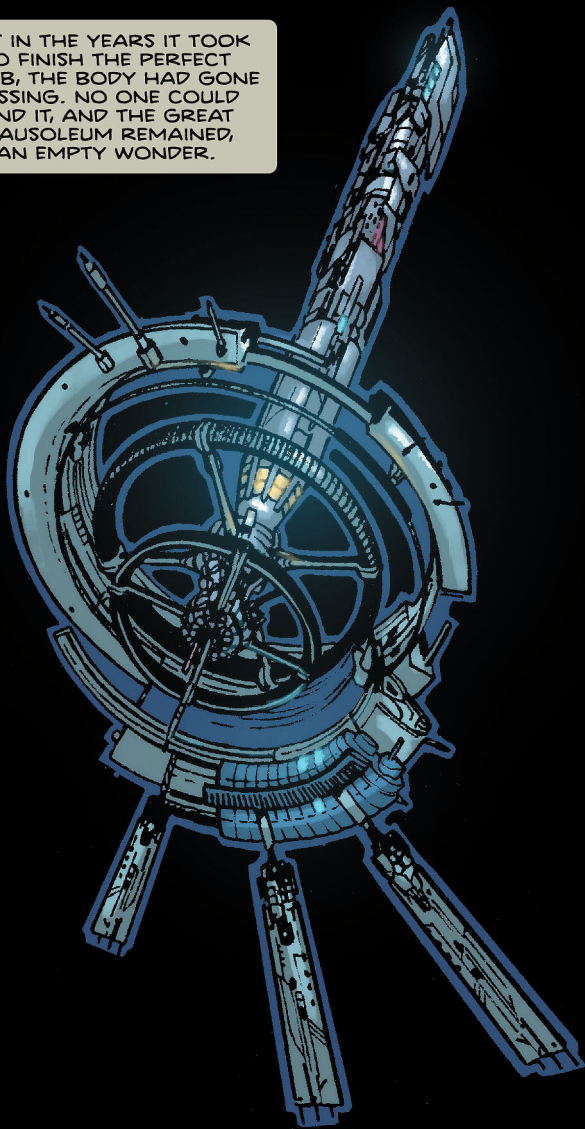
19? THAT'S... SEBASTIAN, TAKE A SQUAD. I'LL GRAB A LIFT.

I READ ABOUT A MONUMENT BUILT LONG AGO -- BACK ON EARTH, WHERE WE CAME FROM.

THERE WAS A MAN WHOSE WIFE DIED, AND IN HER HONOR, HE WANTED TO BUILD THE GRANDEST TOMB IN HISTORY.

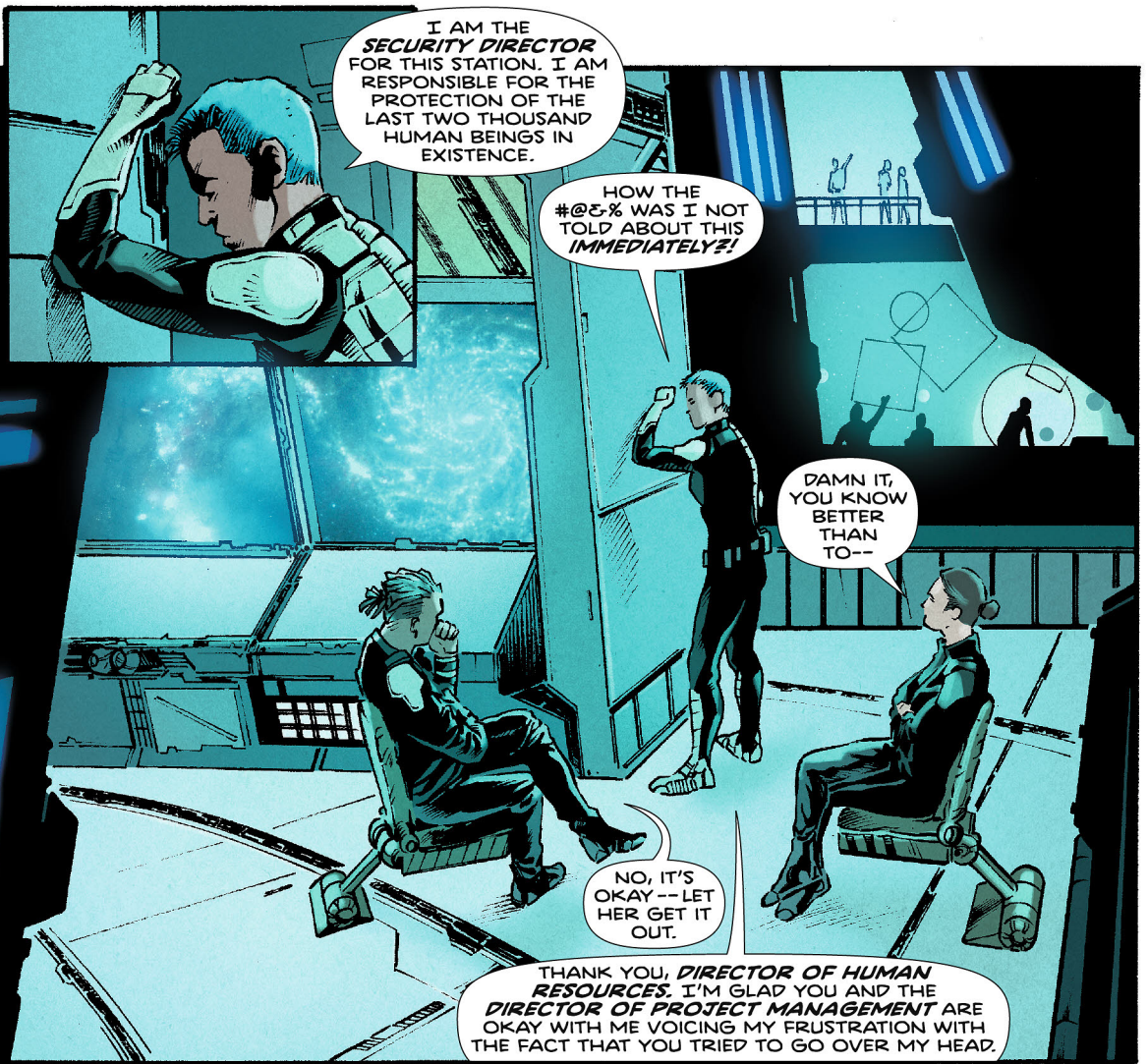
AND HE DID.

BUT IN THE YEARS IT TOOK TO FINISH THE PERFECT TOMB, THE BODY HAD GONE MISSING. NO ONE COULD FIND IT, AND THE GREAT MAUSOLEUM REMAINED, AN EMPTY WONDER.



THAT'S WHAT THE ORPHEUS FEELS LIKE -- HUMANITY'S PERFECT TOMB, OUTWITTING THE END OF ALL THINGS, THE ULTIMATE HABITAT...

BUT NO ONE ON BOARD BUT THE PEOPLE WHO **BUILT** IT LEFT TO APPRECIATE THE DAMN THING.



I AM THE **SECURITY DIRECTOR** FOR THIS STATION. I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE LAST TWO THOUSAND HUMAN BEINGS IN EXISTENCE.

HOW THE #@&% WAS I NOT TOLD ABOUT THIS **IMMEDIATELY?!**

DAMN IT, YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO--

NO, IT'S OKAY -- LET HER GET IT OUT.

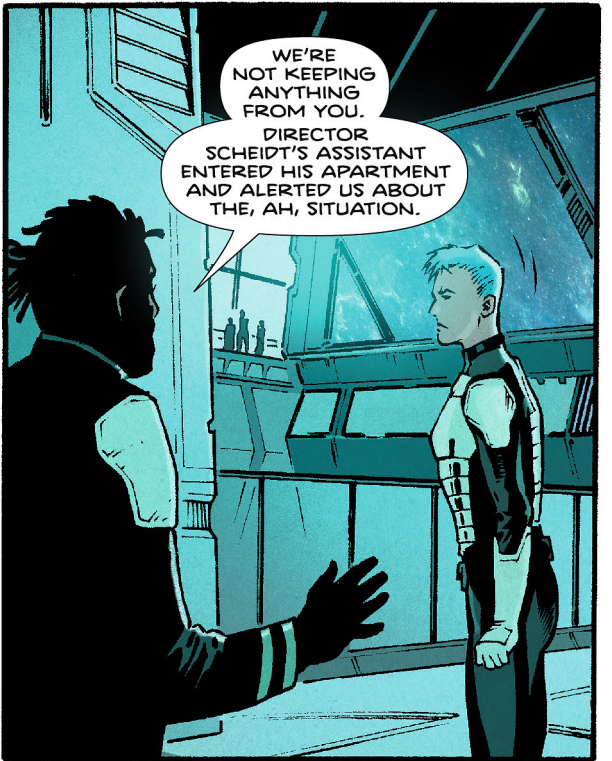
THANK YOU, **DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**. I'M GLAD YOU AND THE **DIRECTOR OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT** ARE OKAY WITH ME VOICING MY FRUSTRATION WITH THE FACT THAT YOU TRIED TO GO OVER MY HEAD.



WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO ACCEPT THAT WE'RE A TEAM, DEVA? A **BOARD**.

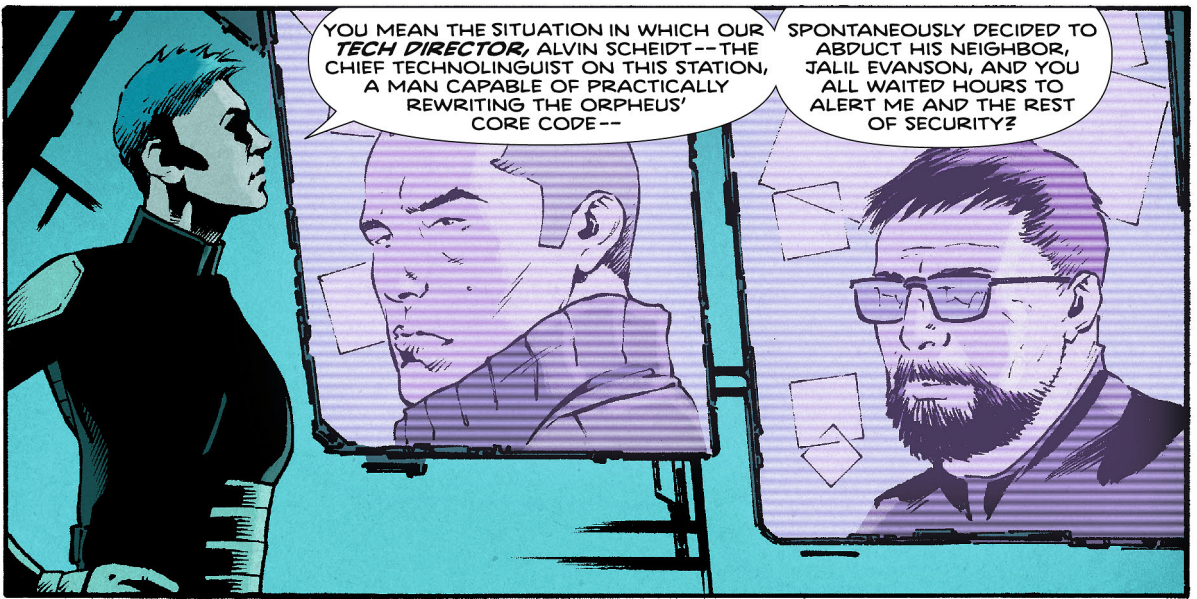
IKE AND I AREN'T CONSPIRING AGAINST YOU. YOU WERE IN THERAPY. WE TOLD YOU AS SOON AS WE COULD.

COULD'VE FOOLED ME. WHEN'S THE LAST TIME I WASN'T OUTVOTED **THREE TO ONE** IN A BOARD DECISION?



WE'RE NOT KEEPING ANYTHING FROM YOU.

**DIRECTOR SCHEIDT'S ASSISTANT** ENTERED HIS APARTMENT AND ALERTED US ABOUT THE, AH, SITUATION.



YOU MEAN THE SITUATION IN WHICH OUR **TECH DIRECTOR**, ALVIN SCHEIDT--THE CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST ON THIS STATION, A MAN CAPABLE OF PRACTICALLY REWRITING THE ORPHEUS' CORE CODE--

SPONTANEOUSLY DECIDED TO ABDUCT HIS NEIGHBOR, JALIL EVANSON, AND YOU ALL WAITED HOURS TO ALERT ME AND THE REST OF SECURITY?



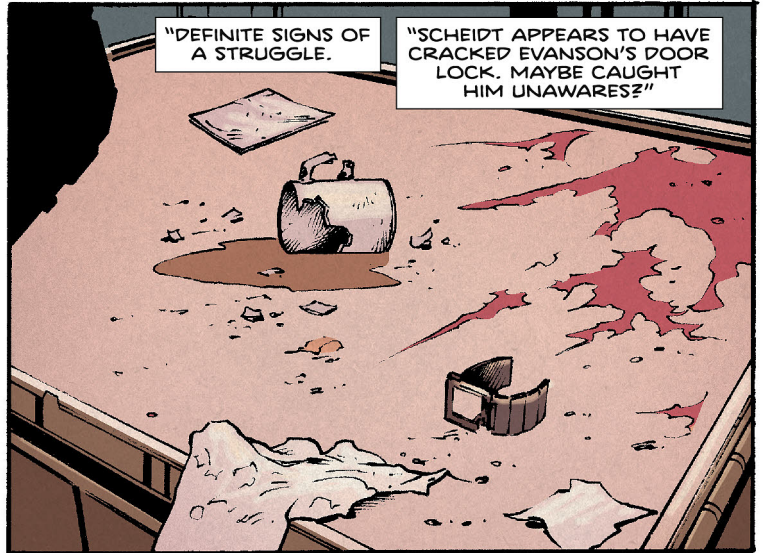
IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S GOT ANYWHERE TO RUN. I'M SURE YOUR TEAM HAS--

LET'S SEE.



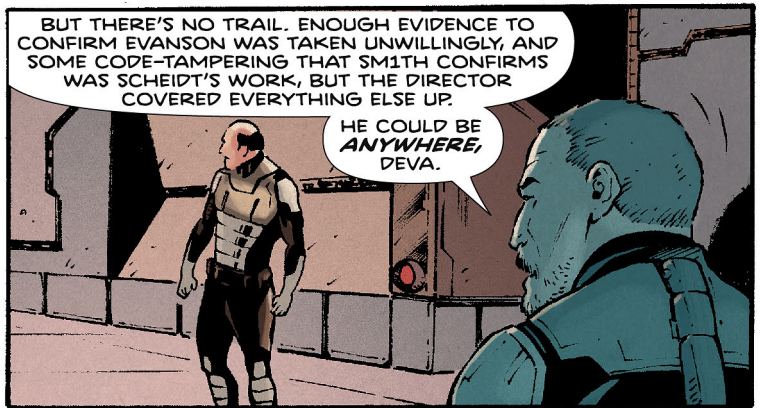
SEBASTIAN?

IT'S COLD HERE, DIRECTOR. SPOKE TO THE ASSISTANT WHO FOUND THE SCENE--



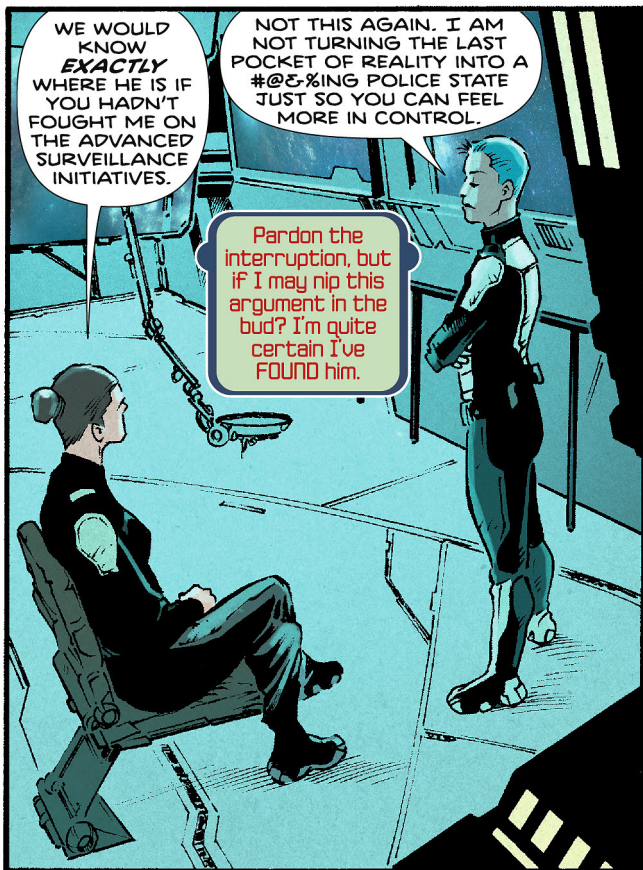
"DEFINITE SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE."

"SCHEIDT APPEARS TO HAVE CRACKED EVANSON'S DOOR LOCK. MAYBE CAUGHT HIM UNAWARES?"



BUT THERE'S NO TRAIL. ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM EVANSON WAS TAKEN UNWILLINGLY, AND SOME CODE-TAMPERING THAT SMITH CONFIRMS WAS SCHEIDT'S WORK, BUT THE DIRECTOR COVERED EVERYTHING ELSE UP.

HE COULD BE ANYWHERE, DEVA.



WE WOULD KNOW **EXACTLY** WHERE HE IS IF YOU HADN'T FOUGHT ME ON THE ADVANCED SURVEILLANCE INITIATIVES.

NOT THIS AGAIN. I AM NOT TURNING THE LAST POCKET OF REALITY INTO A #@&%ING POLICE STATE JUST SO YOU CAN FEEL MORE IN CONTROL.

Pardon the interruption, but if I may nip this argument in the bud? I'm quite certain I've **FOUND** him.



Director Scheidt was clever enough to eliminate his travel records from my memory as he made off with poor Mr. Evanson...

But he can't mask the small amount of power that's currently being siphoned to **THIS** sector - not now that I'm actively searching.



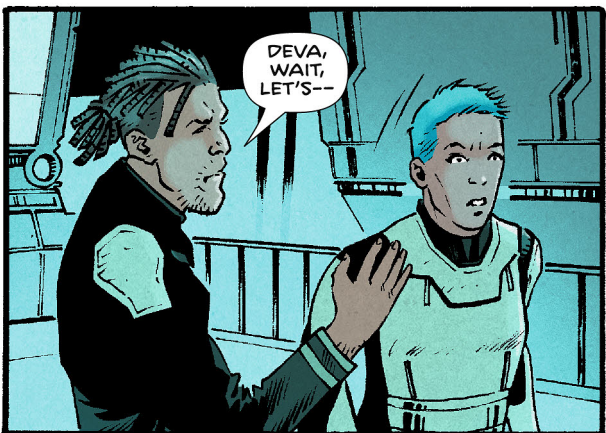
A perfect hiding place - and it's possible he's been sneaking off under our noses for some time.

**CLEVER MAN.**



NO WONDER. WITH NO LIFT RECORDS... BUT WHAT'S HE UP TO DOWN THERE? AND WHY TAKE EVANSON?

I'M TAKING A TEAM AND HEADING THERE MYSELF.



DEVA, WAIT, LET'S--



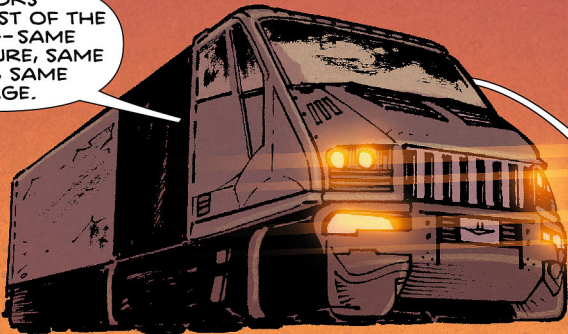
SEBASTIAN, WE'RE GOING AFTER SCHEIDT. GRAB A LIFT AND MEET ME.

**WHERE??**

THE ONLY PLACE LEFT TO HIDE IN EXISTENCE.

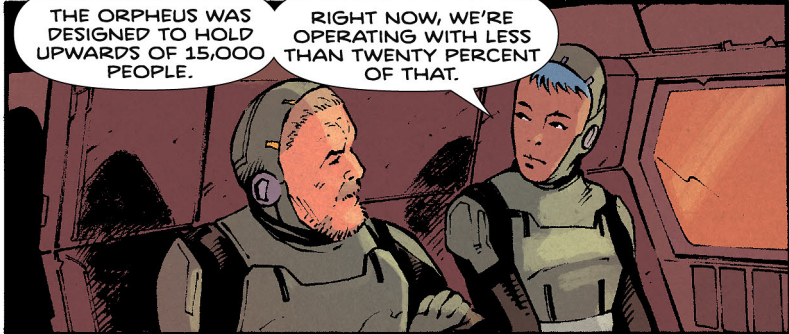


"THE DARK SECTOR."



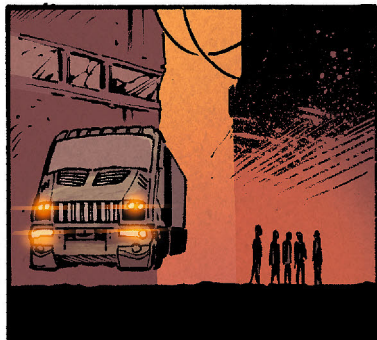
IT LOOKS LIKE THE REST OF THE STATION -- SAME ARCHITECTURE, SAME PHYSICS, SAME FOLIAGE.

WHY SHOULD IT LOOK ANY DIFFERENT? WE **CALL** IT THE 'DARK SECTOR' AND SEAL IT OFF ONLY BECAUSE THERE'S NO POINT IN RUNNING POWER AND RESOURCES TO PARTS OF THE STATION WITH NO PEOPLE LIVING IN THEM.



THE ORPHEUS WAS DESIGNED TO HOLD UPWARDS OF 15,000 PEOPLE.

RIGHT NOW, WE'RE OPERATING WITH LESS THAN TWENTY PERCENT OF THAT.

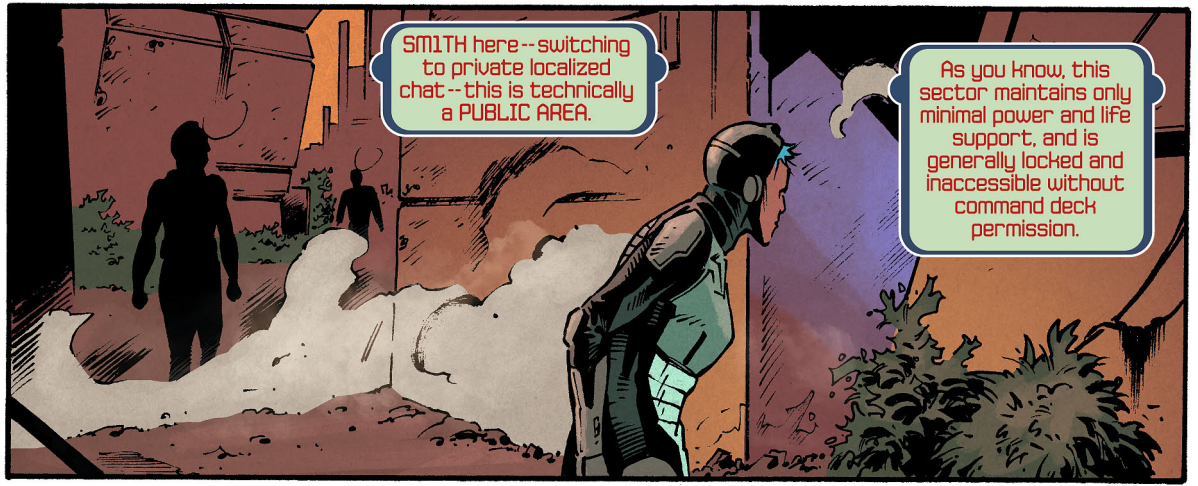


IT'S THE SAME AS THE REST OF THE STATION --



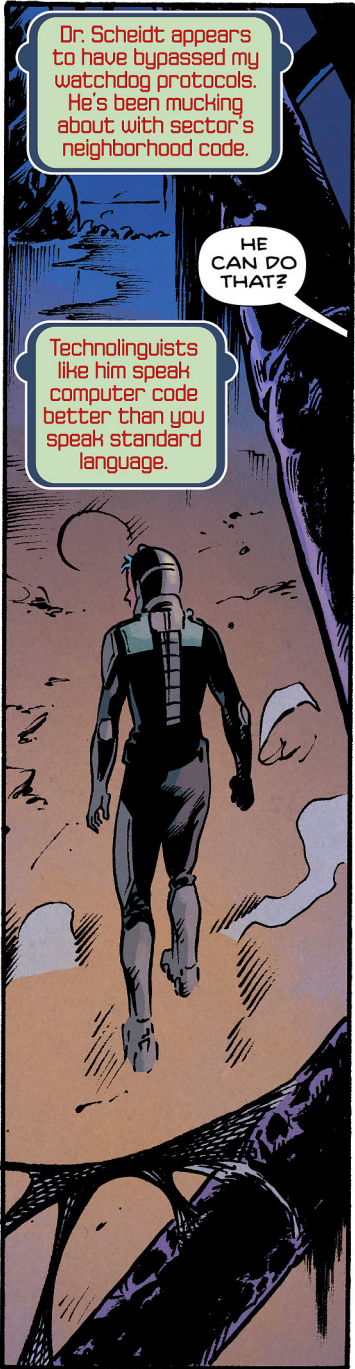
A GHOST TOWN.





SMITH here--switching to private localized chat--this is technically a PUBLIC AREA.

As you know, this sector maintains only minimal power and life support, and is generally locked and inaccessible without command deck permission.



Dr. Scheidt appears to have bypassed my watchdog protocols. He's been mucking about with sector's neighborhood code.

HE CAN DO THAT?

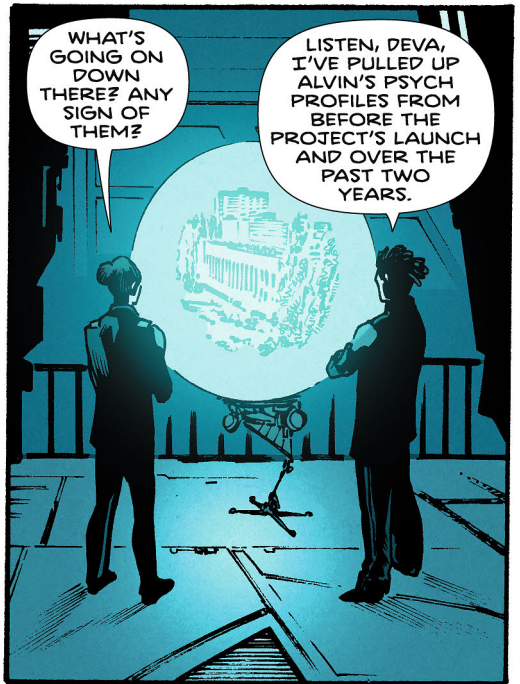
Technologists like him speak computer code better than you speak standard language.



What he's doing is telling me a very convincing LIE...

Apologies, Director Karrel, but the command deck would like a word.

OF COURSE THEY WOULD.



WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE? ANY SIGN OF THEM?

LISTEN, DEVA, I'VE PULLED UP ALVIN'S PSYCH PROFILES FROM BEFORE THE PROJECT'S LAUNCH AND OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS.



THE THING IS, HE SEEMS TO BE PERFECTLY HEALTHY, SO--

I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THAT...



WE JUST FOUND JALIL EVANSON.



TWO YEARS.

CLACK



THAT WRITING...

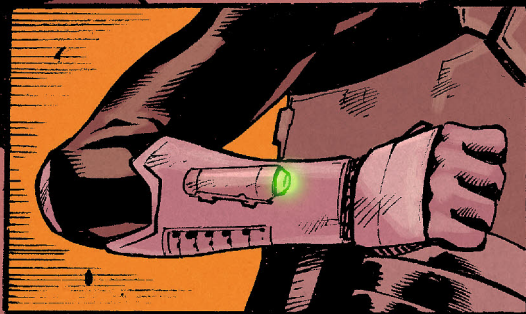
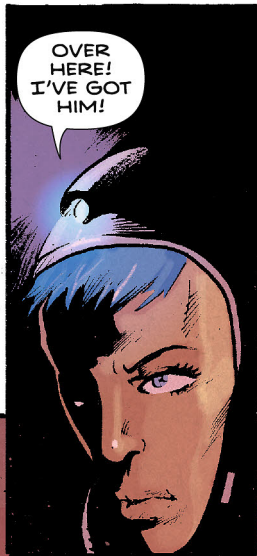
IS THAT SOME KIND OF ALIEN LANGUAGE?



THERE'S NO SUCH--

FITTMP  
FITTMP  
FITTMP

WHAT WAS THAT?





STAND DOWN, ALVIN!



YOU JUST CAN'T SEE! YOU'D BE DOING IT TOO IF YOU COULD SEE!



HAVE TO SHOW YOU... MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND, LIKE IT MADE ME UNDERSTAND. MAKE YOU SEE.



MY HEART IS BEATING OUT A SNARE DRUM PACE.

I *HAVE* TO CATCH HIM.



Director Harrell, I'd advise against pursuing further.

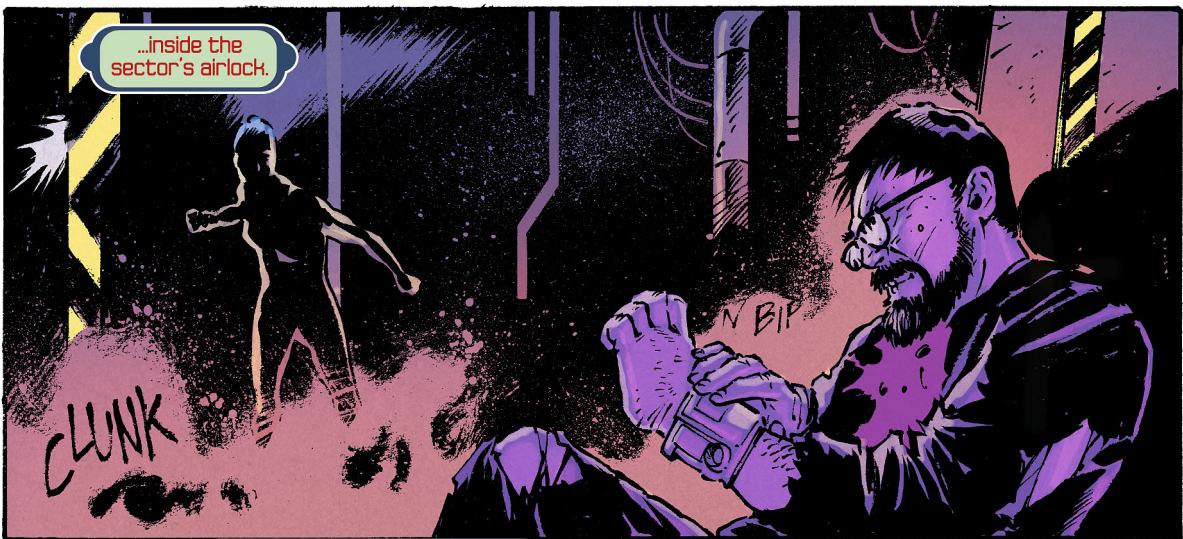
WE'RE ALL THAT'S LEFT, FLOATING OUT HERE ALONE IN THE INFINITE DARK.



HOW CAN YOU KNOW THAT, UNDERSTAND THAT, AND STILL TAKE A HUMAN LIFE?

HE'S DOWN, SMITH!

Yes, but he's gone down...



...inside the sector's airlock.

CLUNK

DAMN IT, SMITH! GET THESE OPEN, NOW!

I'm hard at it, director, but his workarounds are quite specific. I may need another minute.

I UNDERSTOOD IT. SO I HAD TO...SHOW YOU ALL. IT'S OUT THERE.

DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU. DON'T MAKE ME SHOOT YOU AGAIN, ALVIN-- THERE'S ALREADY ONE DEAD MAN ON THIS SHIP.

THERE IS NO "IT." THERE IS NOTHING BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE ORPHEUS. THE UNIVERSE HAS ENDED.



YES, BUT THERE IT IS. FROM BEYOND, IT WANTS US ALL--



THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE, DAMN IT!

IT'S TOO EASY FOR ME TO SHOOT HIM AGAIN.



I'M SEEING RED, AND I DON'T REGRET THE SHOT.

EVEN WHEN HE BLOWS THE AIRLOCK AND DOOMS US BOTH.

JUST WANT YOU TO SEEEEEEEE--

Director, I'll have the  
airlock closed in a  
second. Hold on, please.  
*Don't worry.*

ALVIN STARTS TO  
FLOAT AWAY--  
AND SO DOES  
ALL MY RAGE.

AND THE FEAR  
RUSHES IN.

I HAVE TO REPEAT  
TO MYSELF, LIKE A  
MANTRA--

THERE'S  
**NOTHING**  
OUT THERE.

NO  
STARS.

NO  
PLANETS.

NO  
ATOMS.

JUST THE  
**BLACK.**



ISN'T THAT  
ENOUGH TO BE  
AFRAID OF?

JUST  
WANT

YOU  
TO

SEE

ME

CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE

# INFINITE DARK

ISSUE 2





# DISPATCHES FROM THE VOID

Horror can be a comfort.

It sounds strange, but even reading this final proof of this first issue, I find my anxieties about its launch – the maddening impostor syndrome that so many creators struggle with – taking a back seat. In the wake of a dead universe, in the face of a brutal murder in a shadowy space station, as a silhouette from the beyond the stars reaches out a hand to threaten the last human souls in existence... It's all too easy to lose myself in those big, primal terrors and let the day-to-day human problems fade away, for a little while.

I started writing INFINITE DARK in June 2017, at that point in the midst of the worst depression of my life. I'd moved to New York City for reasons that felt all wrong, and I was feeling more and more like I'd made choices that were dooming me to feeling miserable and low and terrified of everything every day. I didn't know what to do or how to get out of it, but I knew that I needed to escape the cold, miserable feeling, and moreso that I needed to survive. So I worked on it, and I made some dramatic changes... and all the while, I was plugging away at this series.

I got better, of course. Not all the way, but better.

And helping me along the way wasn't just this project, but my old frightful friends – the *Alien* franchise, Stephen King novels, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, the *Outlast* games, and every spine-tingling, nightmare-inducing slice of spooky media I could get my hands on. I hope bits of them made it in here, too, even as they helped coax me out of my own rock bottom. Hopefully I've been able to show that strange comfort in INFINITE DARK – the knife edge between terror and wonder that something truly horrifying can bring. The fascination we have when facing down something that must not be merely endured or defeated but survived.

When we first meet Deva in this issue, she's in a bleak place – many of the residents on this void-ship are. She's carrying tons of irrational survivor's guilt. She lashes out at her friends and coworkers and berates herself later, lives with the day-to-day paranoia of maddening anxiety, and outside of every wall and window is the black, that void composed of pure entropy reminding her what's at stake, what she's outlived and enduring but is still there waiting for her should she fail.

And then along comes an Entity.

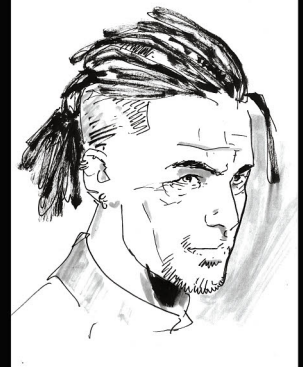
DEVA KARREL

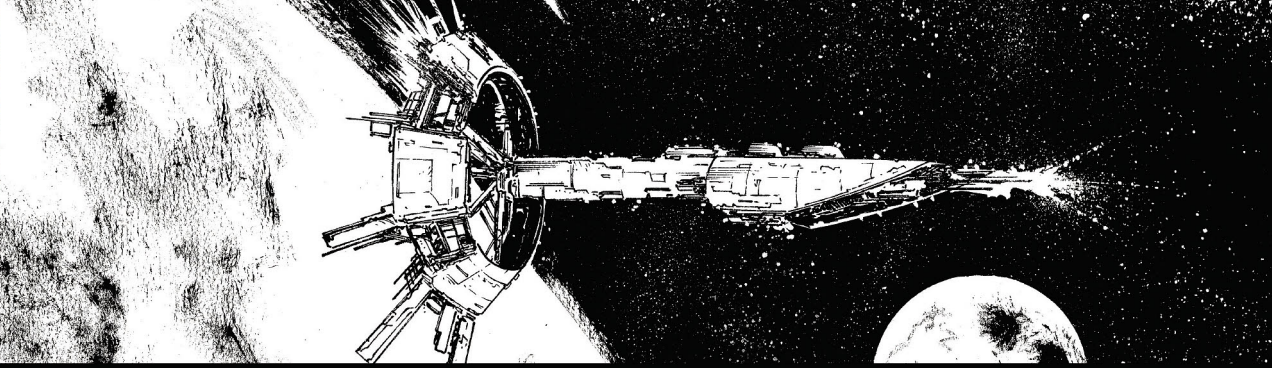


ALVIN SHEIDT



DR IKE CHALOS





That was all a bit rambly, but what I'm trying to get across with this section is not just that working on this book was transformative for me when I was in a dark place – although it very much was – but moreso that for some of us, horror as a genre is a kind of balm for our wounded psyches.

For so many of my friends who live or die by the genre, we can readily think of times where some film or fiction with a monster or a murderer has helped us find new perspective on our depression, or give a strange face to our anxiety, or even just give us some blessedly big distraction when it seems like our own brains are more threatening than anything on the screen could be.

I've done my best to try and make that somewhat tangible for the characters in INFINITE DARK, and nothing would please me more than to hear that someone was helped or distracted by my spooky little book.

But this section – what I'm calling “Dispatches from the Void” – is for testimonials a little more in the abstract, a little rambly. Here some of the brightest and best horror writers and readers I know are going to talk about the two big themes at play in this book – Horror as a Genre, and Mental Health as a Monster – and how they've intersected in their own lives. And, in all likelihood, they'll do a much better job than I have.

So keep an eye on this space, and if you have your own thoughts on the matter, or just want to say something about the book in general, email [submissions@topcow.com](mailto:submissions@topcow.com) with “Dispatches from the Void” in the subject line, marked okay to print.

Thanks for reading, and I'll leave you with this comforting thought – one day, the universe will run out of time, and all reactions will stop as energy dwindles and all atoms freeze and crack. That is Heat Death, and it is inevitable and terrifying. But, lucky for you, you will be long, long dead before that happens.

-Ryan Cady





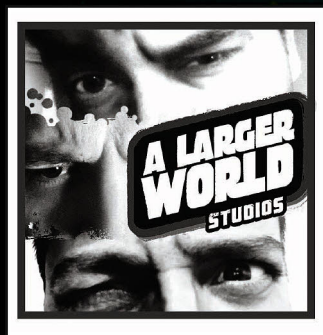
**RYAN CADBY** is a writer of comics and horror fiction based in Southern California. A graduate of the DC Comics Talent Development Workshop, he has written for such properties as WARFRAME, THE MAGDALENA and *The Punisher*, as well as a number of original short stories and creator-owned features. To this day, his early reviews of terrible fast food products for the OC Weekly remain his greatest creative triumph.



**ANDREA MUTTI** is an Italian artist who has worked in the comic book world for 25 years. He studied at the Comics School in Brescia and has worked with such US publishers as Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, Vertigo, IDW, BOOM! Studios, Dynamite, Stela, Adaptive and many more European publishers like Glenat, Casterman, Soleil, Dargaud and Titan. He lives in Italy and you can learn more about his career at his website [www.andrearedmutti.com](http://www.andrearedmutti.com).



**K. MICHAEL RUSSELL** has been working as a comic book color artist since 2011. His credits include Image series GLITTERBOMB with WAYWARD & *Thunderbolts* writer Jim Zub, HACK/SLASH, *Judge Dredd* and the Eisner and Harvey-nominated *In the Dark: A Horror Anthology*. He launched an online comic book coloring course in 2014 at [ColoringComics.com](http://ColoringComics.com) and maintains a YouTube channel dedicated to coloring tutorials. He lives on the coast in Long Beach, Mississippi, with his wife of sixteen years, Tina. They have two cats. One is a jerk. [@kmichaelrussell](https://twitter.com/kmichaelrussell)



**TROY PETERI**, Dave Lanphear and Joshua Cozine are collectively known as A Larger World Studios. They've lettered everything from *The Avengers*, *Iron Man*, *Wolverine*, *Amazing Spider-Man* and *X-Men* to more recent titles such as WITCHBLADE, CYBERFORCE, and *Batman/Wonder Woman: The Brave & The Bold*. They can be reached at [studio@alargerworld.com](mailto:studio@alargerworld.com) for your lettering and design needs. (Hooray, commerce!)



# *image+*

INTERVIEW



## INFINITE DARK

RYAN CADY AND ANDREA MUTTI

EXPLORE THE AFTERMATH OF NEAR-EXTINCTION

# WHISTLING IN THE ABYSS

BY JAKOB FREE

**BOTH PAGES:**  
concept art by series  
artist Andrea Mutti

The heat death of the universe scares the shit out of Ryan Cady. And why shouldn't it? It's *scary* stuff. "I imagined a galaxy, a universe populated by our descendants," he says. "And then I started researching entropy. And oh boy. A no-win situation. The collapse of all existence? That's bleak as hell."

The theory of universal heat death entails a complicated process—and apologies to any physicists reading—whereby the cosmos approaches a period of energy's even distribution, aka the point of "total thermodynamic entropy." In this moment, all energetic reactions throughout the universe cease, and the universe stops dead in its tracks.

In what could be viewed as a writer's version of self-medication, Cady and co-creator/artist Andrea Mutti conceived *Infinite Dark*, a new ongoing series published through the Top Cow imprint. The title also features K Michael Russell coloring, Troy Peteri on letters, and Alex Lu editing, and will allow its authors to combat this gargantuan cosmic fear. Or, at the very least, they'll be able to encourage themselves "by thinking about all the ways humanity can thrive in the centuries and millennia to come." It helps to not only have a partner who shares Cady's fears and outlook, but also his desire to ask questions about the future of humankind. "We know that the stars we see are just the reflection of something dead," says Mutti. "So the point is where are we going and why?"

The "why" in the immediate sense is to "survive." But in the moments right after the heat death of the universe, survival would seem like an impossibility—especially given the way Cady and Mutti have accelerated the cosmic apocalypse.

"I've played it fast and loose with the science here," Cady says. "I wanted to use

whatever I could to give the book as much looming horror as possible. I moved up the timeline quite a bit—we were wrong about entropy's pacing, and heat death begins to accelerate and occurs 10,000 or so years from now instead of billions of years from now."

To save themselves, an ingenious group of humans build the Orpheus station, inspired by the tragic character from Greek myth. The Orpheus is meant to weather the impending heat death and will serve as a life preserver for all of those that can make it to the station in time.

"Orpheus traversed the underworld—the outer darkness—and made it back out alive," says Cady. "The gods granted him a unique opportunity for a mortal, and that's what the builders of this station thought they had done. But much like how Orpheus' entire

quest revolved around rescuing his wife, the Orpheus' purpose was to carry tens of thousands of humans safely through oblivion. Orpheus looked back too soon, and his wife was sent back to the underworld—the station was built too far away—and too slowly—from the colony ships that needed to reach it, and they exploded in entropy."

Instead of the 15,000 souls that the Orpheus was built to rescue, the station becomes a tomb for the 2,000 or so humans who built it. As to whether or not those folks have any shot at restarting the human race: "Obviously there'd be a bottleneck with a population that small, but that's assuming a natural environment. The Orpheus was controlled, planned, and prepared. Their medical tech is advanced enough that they can combat almost any disease, prepare ideal parenting combinations, etc. And they're prepared for the long haul."



Even if humankind were able to hit the “restart” button, though, where would they go? Cady’s thought of this as well: “The Orpheus even has limited terraforming equipment on board. Time doesn’t really exist now that reality is collapsed, but presumably another Big Bang will happen (well, hopefully), and when that happens, the people on board were prepared to pick a planet, reforge it, and repopulate.”

Until then, the Orpheus, and the minuscule society that lives aboard, are run by a Board of Directors. “They are absolutely not democratically elected. Basically, there were lots of plans in place for how human society would run on board the Orpheus... and then most of the population didn’t make it. So, because it’s the power structure they’re comfortable with, something they could cling to, the staff on board the station just kept the same roles and officials they had while the station was being assembled and prepared.” The Board includes Lynn Tenant, the director of project management, essentially a chief administrator; Ike Chalos, the director of human resources, a counselor and personnel manager; Alvin Scheidt, chief technolinguist, the station’s number one programmer; and Deva Karrell, the security director, in charge of the security guards on site.

“And for the past two years, they’ve just sort of adapted those roles to fit the necessary leadership challenges that have arisen on the station... with arguable success,” Cady says. “You can only run a society like a company or a project for so long.”

As if the complete destruction of the universe wasn’t enough, Alvin Scheidt has gone off the reservation,

**“DEVA [IS] KIND OF A POWDER KEG, AND FOLLOWING THE EVENTS OF THE FIRST ISSUE... THE FUSE IS LIT.”**

Scheidt has seen something there that’s changed his behavior. Finding out what that something is and why it’s taken hold of Scheidt is up to Deva Karrell.

“Deva was a veteran cop before she took the security director job,” Cady says. “She considers herself, first and foremost, a protector. So it doesn’t really matter that there was no way she could’ve saved the rest of the universe—or even saved the colony ships that failed to reach the Orpheus—she still blames herself. Like many of us would, she runs through guilty fantasies and imagines ways she might’ve rescued those people. Coulda, shoulda, woulda. Deva [is] kind of a powder keg, and following the events of the first issue... the fuse is lit.”

Fear of cosmic destruction may have been the impetus of Cady and Mutti’s tale, but it’s not the only fear that Cady must contend with. Despite working on licensed projects for years, *Infinite Dark* represents his first major foray into creator-owned comics.

“With for-hire work, there’s always a target to aim for, a bullseye, and while you’re throwing a lot of yourself out there, you’ve got these people to please and these structures already in place. With creator-owned, it feels purer, more free for sure... But that also means that we’re only really answerable to ourselves.” ●

**“THE COLLAPSE OF ALL EXISTENCE? THAT’S BLEAK AS HELL.”**

**ABOVE:**  
series writer Ryan Cady and  
series artist Andrea Mutti

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# *INFINITE DARK*

ISSUE 1

RATED T+ / TEEN PLUS

**RYAN CADY**  
**ANDREA MUTTI**  
**K MICHAEL RUSSELL**

**CONVENTION EXCLUSIVE**