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Episode 215 – Back to the Eighties for a moment that DC comics would rather forget. And, if you want to play “what Mech is what”, there’s a handy table at the end.

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Dressed in his best intimidating looking suit, a drink in his hand that cost more than the average citizen of this world earned in a week and casually strolling through a room full of military strongmen and ultra-wealthy elites, Matt Simmons was having the time of his life. He’d been on world for a relatively short period of time and done a fantastic job of bluffing his way into the inner circles of their ruling classes. And now here he was, having drinks inside the presidential palace.

Life was good and work was easy.

As he moved, he quietly listened in on snatches of conversation, picking out what might have been interesting from the pointless filler. This was not a mission to discover any one thing, but more of a simple testing of the waters, a way to get a feel for these people and to find out more about them. So far, his impression were as unfavorable as he’d expected.

“Ah, Mister Haymarket. So good to see you.” A small, rotund man in an even more expensive suit began as he approached, more than a little tipsy.

“And you too, Doctor Grobb.” He replied. The minister for finance, Doctor Grobb’s main qualifications for the position were that he never forgot a face and that he was no threat to the president. “I was just admiring the collection.”

“Fascinating, isn’t it?” Grobb enthused. “Biggest collection of Old Earth military artifacts in three systems.” He directed Matt over to one wall, dominated by several photos. “All of these are originals, by the way. No scans or duplicates or downloads.”

“You must be rather proud.” Matt nodded as he examined them. “This is more Old Earth stuff in one room than I’ve ever seen in my life.” A particular photo caught his eye, Matt leaning closer to examine it.

“That’s one of the newer ones.” Grobb offered. “Just over a thousand years old. 2135, to be exact.”

“Fascinating.” He muttered as he looked it over. There were several figures standing in a row, all clearly soldiers, clad in thick body armour. One of them, the only one lacking a helmet, stood out and caught his eye. A young woman, she was tall, with long, dark hair tied into a messy ponytail and dark blue eyes.

“Over here, we have some artifacts from the late 26<sup>th</sup> century.” Grobb spoke up. “Some of the very last.”

“I’d love to see them.” Matt popped his most sincere fake smile, committing the photo to memory before he headed over to the next table.

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It was a nice apartment, well-lit, spacious and well furnished. A pair of nice, plush leather couches set the scene, arranged in a neat L-shape, with a small coffee table between them. What dominated the room, however, was the massive flat-screen against one wall, so big as to loom over all else around it. By comparison, the broad windows with views out over a strangely futuristic metropolis and the other doorways leading away to gods alone knew where seemed like afterthoughts.

"So that's what I've been doing." Matt spoke up as he and Rick entered. "Hanging around some world with little interstellar contact getting to know the locals."

"Did it go well?" Rick asked, his notepad in hand as he jotted down ideas.

"I'd say so." Matt agreed as he dumped his jacket over the back of the couch. "I got my way into the right inner circles pretty quick. Met the planetary president, met the military leaders and corrupt billionaires who actually run the place and had a nice boat tour of the capitol's canal systems, coastline and decaying rail infrastructure. And nothing goes with tropical beaches better than rusting locomotives."

"Sounds awesome." Rick nodded. "I suppose you can't tell me where it was or how things went with the local god-emperor?"

"President-for-life, and regrettably no." Matt shrugged. "But I'll give you a few juicy bits that could be used as scenery and backdrop."

"Do tell, I'm all ears." Rebecca cut in as she entered, sparing a quick smile for Rick before dropping herself down on the couch. "I'd love to hear some of your stories sometime."

"If you're willing to share a few of your own in return, sure." Matt replied with a small smile. "Otherwise, it's great to see you as always."

"Maybe no." She simply noted as she took out a small handheld computer, tapping away at a few buttons.

"Ah well."

"What you working on?" He glanced over to Rebecca.

"Just some stuff." She dismissively answered. "Don't worry about it."

Natasha entered and cut off any other replies, her usual short sleeves and bare midriff instead today replaced with a surprisingly conservative long-sleeved, high-collared shirt. "Hey guys." She began, her tone its usual casual self in contrast to her change in attire. "Great day, huh?"

"You're rather chipper, if strangely overdressed." Matt quickly replied. "What's up?"

"Well, it looks like my band has landed a big gig." She responded with more than a little pride. "And if this goes well, Spastic Rhesus Monkey will be on their way to the big time."

"Well congratulations!" Rick gave her a big thumbs up.

"Yeah, so I'm in a great mood. Dunno why I'm ruining it by being here..." She glanced at Rebecca for a moment, who gave a small, dismissive shrug. "Still, go us."

"Sounds like we've both had a good time of it." Matt nodded. "Just telling Rick about my last job. Great place if you're into rusting industrial wastelands."

"Hey, I am all about rusting industrial wastelands." She grinned back. "Gimme five minutes with a chainsaw and I can give you potentially reusable parts too."

"You know your art." Matt noted. "Be it music, metalwork or what you have on your skin."

She squinted at him for a moment, then shrugged it off. Behind them, Rebecca couldn't help but raise a brow before going back to her work, then paused, holding a finger in the air.

"Something up?" Natasha asked, glancing at the other woman with a hint of wariness.

"Wait for it..."

"Good you see you all." The Voice began, coming, as always, from nowhere.

"Well timed." Matt nodded.

"And morning to you, Nearly Headless Nick." She shot back. "I suppose you have some more 'quality' fiction ready for us."

"Well, I guess it's not going to be a Delta Day." Rick noted. "Though after Delta Nine, I can't decide if that's good or bad."

"Well, if it's not more Fur and Metal, I'm happy." Matt responded. "Not one of the greatest literary triumphs of our time."

"Actually, today I've got another comic book for you, looking at a different long-running franchise." The Voice replied. "Today we're going to be looking at the very first Robotech comic."

"Robotech comic? This should be good." Rebecca glanced around.

"I'm assuming that by 'first' you mean the 2000s Wildstorm run with its complete continuity reboot." Rick noted.

"Well, not that-" The voice tried to reply, only to be cut off.

"Well, okay then, the first Antatctic Robotech comics, as AP tried to ignore all that had come before them"

"That wasn't it-"

"Then the first issue of Malibu's Sentinels adaptation?" Rick raised a brow. "It's not actually bad."

"Not quite-"

"So the Comico Macross adaptation." Rick nodded. "Lousy script and horrible colouring but still not terrible."

"No, before that."

"Oh." Rick stopped dead in his tracks.

"Today's comic is the first issue of Robotech Defenders, published by DC in 1985." The Voice introduced.

Natasha glanced over at Rick. "Bad?"

"This will be... interesting." Rick managed as he took the couch. "This comic predates the Harmony Gold 'Robotech' series, being based more on Revell's licensed kits. As such, it's got bog all to do with anything else Robotech, or Macross, or Dougram or... anything really."

"So we should be afraid." Matt managed.

"I'd say... very." Rick agreed as Natasha sat down next to him. The big screen turned on, switching the world over to script format.

> [City with huge ship overhead, fighters buzzing around it. There is a statue in front of the city]

> To the people of Zoltek, an end to war is coming.

Rebecca: And in only the first page too. Must be a short war.

> It comes swooping out of the skies, determined to deliver it's singular, deadly message.

Matt: Snape kills Dumbledore

> Nothing, least of all a tiny fighter squadron, can stop it.

Natasha: For the JSDF, this is just a normal day at the office. Damn Kaiju!

> For the innocent people of Zoltek, the war will soon be over. But for the

> ROBOTECH DEFENDERS

Rick: We have title!

> The war is about to begin!

Rebecca: And end. Short war.

> Malek [V/O]: Malek to tactical squadron -- looks like Zoltek city is their primary target!

Rick: The way they're hovering right over it might be a good indicator.

> This is our last chance to stop them!

Rebecca: Our last, best hope for peace.

> Don't know

> how the Grelons got their slimy claws on a battle cruiser that

> sophisticated

Natasha: For all you know, they could have had it in their yard propped up on cinderblocks all along.

> -- but it's a safe bet they didn't build it themselves

Matt: They made it out of cardboard boxes, tubes and grass. All at your fingertips.

> -- but we've got to blow it out of the skies!

Rebecca: All you need is one drunken deadbeat father in an F/A-18. Problem solved.

> [Dex – square-jawed, handsome man with brown hair - in cockpit]

Matt: Captain Default Protagonist, hero of the narrative.

> Dex: Easier said than done, Malek m'dear -- that ship's defences are centuries ahead of even our  
> technology.

Rick: They're up to Advanced Technology III.

> [Ship over city]

> Dex [V/O]: I've got my hands full just avoiding their fire!

Natasha: Right now, there are Imperial Stormtroopers openly mocking them for their accuracy.

> [Malek – young woman with curly blonde hair - in cockpit]

Rebecca: These guys are fiercely eighties.

> Malek: Can it, Dex! They've got to have a weak spot

Matt: Not necessarily. Not everything runs on Star Wars logic.

Rick: In an eighties sci-fi comic? Odds are someone will have a laser sword and sideburns by the end of the first issue.

Matt: Silly me.

>-- and it's up to the elite tactical squad to find it!

Rebecca: You call yourselves that? Someone has self-esteem issues.

> Follow me in!

Rick: Straight on towards certain screaming doom.

> THE GATHERING

Matt: Magic.

> Writer: Andrew Helfer

> Penciller: Judith Hunt

> Inkers: Murray Anderson and Dan Jolnerowitch.

> Letterer: Ben Oda

> Colourist: Bob Le Rose

> Editor: Barry Marx

Rebecca: None of these people were ever seen again.

> [Malek's fighter firing at ship, Grelon - a small green lizard-man - in foreground]

Natasha: Great. Naked lizardman butt. Just what I wanted, comic

> Malek: There's our opening!

> SFX: PEEOOOWWWWW

> SFX: BLAM!

> Grelon: Skreeee!

Rick: Ahhh, classic comic-book dialogue at its finest.

> [Fighters over ship]

> Dex [V/O]: Some good that did! You only made 'em angry!

Natasha: Oh, so they weren't angry before? What were they trying to do then, just kill you for the sake of it?

> Malek [V/O]: For once I think you're right, Dex

Matt: Who are these guys?

Rebecca: Nobody we know or care about.

Matt: Seriously, who are they?

Rebecca: The main characters of this comic.

Matt: You're right. No one we know or care about.

> -- Their missile bay's opening -- looks like they're ready to make their move!

Rick: Heh, their missile is hanging out.

Natasha: Well the gunners are naked and all...

> [Ship firing missile at city]

> Dex [V/O]: And here it comes! Malek-- dive!

Rick: Now I'm no physicist, but doesn't it make sense to get away from the explosion rather than closer to it?

> Malek [V/O]: No!! It's heading for the city!

Natasha: Once it gets on the interchange, it'll be snarled in traffic for hours.

> It--

Matt [Rough]: Its!

> [Huge explosion, Malek's cockpit in the foreground]

> SFX: KABLOOM

Rebecca: Cut to the opening of Fist of the North Star.

Natasha: Say, you ever tried watching Fist in rewind?

Rebecca: Can't say I have.

Natasha: Kenshiro becomes this wandering neurosurgeon who performs emergency brain surgery on massive musclemen.

Rebecca: Intriguing.

Natasha: Then, after he has his scars removed by his brother, Ken's world ends in a cataclysm of nuclear fire that leaves the 1980s in its wake.

Rebecca: ...just how much of this have you watched?

> Malek: Nooo... nooo

Rick: And it was this moment of despair that saw Malek fall to the dark side and join Revan.

Matt: No, that's Darth Malak.

Rick: Right. So she's the lightweight Celestial Omnimech?

Matt: No, that's the Malak

Rick: Gotcha. So she's the wife of the last Sultan of Egypt, then.

Matt: That's Melek Tourhan and... well, I really wasn't expecting that.

Rick: Me either. Um, I got nothing.

> [City ruins in flames, robot statue in foreground]

Rick: This is an interesting reversal. Usually disaster movie logic states that the high-visibility landmark is the first thing to go.

> Moments Later...

Matt: Meanwhile, in the same scene.

> Malek [V/O]: There's nothing left... ...nothing left at all.

Natasha: ...Save for this one profound reminder of this tragedy, a battered child's teddy bear.

> Pilot [V/O]: Correction, squadron leader -- one structure remains --

Rick: Something called a "Taco Cat"

> --the ancient colossus of Zoltek!

Natasha: With a title like that, I'm expecting an Italian Muscleman movie to break out at any point.

> [Malek in cockpit]

> Malek: I see it now, Eedon -- and it's a miracle!

Matt: Of course, everyone you know or cared about is dead. But the statue survived so that's fine!

> All units -- prepare to land!

Rebecca: Well sure. Let's make ourselves immobile targets, shall we?

> [Fighters landing]

> Dex [V/O]: Land? Now? What about the Grelons?

Natasha: They're ugly and they smell bad. Your point?

> Malek [V/O]: Never mind them, Dex-- just follow my order!

Rick [Dex]: Okay, boss, but when we all get killed by a follow-up attack, don't come crying to me.

> [Malek and Dex in front of their fighters]

Rebecca: Ladies and gentlemen, our generic eighties heroes.

> And soon...

> Dex: Malek, there better be a good reason for bringing us all down here while those Grelons take off-- --  
> we still had a chance to hurt 'em back!

> Malek: That's a lie, Dex-- and you know it!

Rick [Dex]: Is not.

Natasha [Malek]: Is too.

Rick [Dex]: Is not.

Natasha [Malek]: Is too.

Rick [Dex]: Is not.

Natasha [Malek]: Is too.

Rick [Dex]: Malek's being a poo-poo-head.

> [Malek]

> Malek: We already sustained heavy losses. Their battle cruiser was far more  
> sophisticated than anything we could ever hope to achieve.

Matt: It had both wash and tumble-dry cycles.

> Face it pilot, we were outclassed.

Rick: And outclassed by little green naked guys too. That must sting.

> [Dex throws down his helmet, Dex, Eedon - a reptilian man with a large crest  
> on his head]

Matt: Why isn't he wearing a flightsuit?



Rebecca: Never mind that. How does he wear a helmet over his crest?

> - and Icik - A furry white bear-man - nearby]

> Dex: Great!

> Eedon: Malek is correct, Dex. But I remain puzzled –

Natasha [Eedon]: Who the hell are we meant to be anyway?

> Grelons are said

> to be of primitive technological means? Where did they get such devices?

Rebecca: I blame the Precursor Races. Everything can be put down to them.

> Icik: The where don't matter much now, Eedon--

> [Icik close-up]

All: Ick!

> Icik: --As far as I'm concerned, the only thing we oughta worry about is how we're going to nail those  
> slimy murderers!

Rebecca: So we have the hero, the girl, the smart guy and the hot-head. I suspect one-note characterization will be as deep as it gets.

> [Arkos - a Pterodactyl-man

Natasha: Well now the comic's looking up. Pterodactyls make everything better.

> - Silky - a green-skinned woman - Scal - a hairy monkey-man

Rick: This is what Bright Eyes did before he got famous. I heard he tried to buy up every issue and have them destroyed.

> - and Icik]

> Silky: A good question, Icik-- ---Since the survival of all our homeworlds depends upon a satisfactory  
> answer!

Rebecca: PLOT!

> [Dex and Malek]

Rick: Didn't I see these two in every eighties B-movie?

> Dex: And I bet the answer isn't just around the corner, right, squadron leader?

> Malek: I-- I--

> [Malek walks off, others in the background]

Matt: Hurling rotten fruit at Dex, no doubt.

Natasha: Except for Scal. He throws his own poop.

> Dex: Whoops.

[They all applaud]

Matt: Well done there.

Natasha: First class sympathy towards someone who's hometown just got nuked. Nice going, Captain Sensitivity.

Rick: I'm surprised he didn't stop to take a leak on the rubble.

> Eedon: Let her go, Dex. You have already said enough -- perhaps too much.

Matt: I think what they're trying to say here is that Dex is a dickhead.

> [Malek in front of city ruins, statue in background]

> Lost in bitter thoughts,

Rick: Bitterness comes naturally to her. She's a closet Browncoat.

> Malek wanders to the gates of the once-proud city of Zoltek, where...

Rebecca: She got cancer from the background radiation.

> Malek: How can I face my pilots and tell them it's hopeless!

Matt: Not to be a downer but I think they already know.

> Tell them we're beaten --

Rick: Beaten harder than a Foxcom iPhone factory worker.

Natasha: Not cool [Hits him with a cushion]

> that all the United Worlds Confederation has strived for is about to be washed away!

Rick: Because of Dooku's Separatists.

Matt: That's the Galactic Republic from Star Wars.

Rick: Sorry. Because of the infiltration by the Founders and the Dominion.

Matt: No, that's the Federation from Star Trek.

Rick: Right. It's the secret manipulation of the government by the Shadows that's causing it.

Matt: That's the Earth Alliance from Babylon Five.

Rick: Of course, it was Amaris' killing the ruling family and taking over the government that's the problem.

Matt: And that's the Star League from Battletech, though I might give you some leeway on that.

Rick: Whatever. Just send the Dirty Pair to fix it.

Matt: ...do you do this on purpose?

> I should have known the Grelons were trouble

Natasha: With their pop-o-matic bubbles and all.

> the minute I landed on that cold, dark planet of theirs to make our first contact.

Rebecca: Lizardmen are always evil. Rule of both Sci-Fi and fantasy.

> [Group of Grelons in a cave, ship in background]

Rick: They look like AD&D Kobolds.

> Malek [V/O]: "The UWC had dedicated itself to peaceful cooperation with all planets in our system - -

Natasha: Even the naked monkey people?

Matt: Yes. Even the naked monkey people.

Natasha: Shouldn't they make them wear clothes first?

Matt: It's probably infringing on their cultural heritage.

> and although we suspected the Grelons of being barbarians,

Matt: Greelon! What is good in life?

Rick: To crush your enemies, to see them driven before you and to hear the lamentations of their women.

Matt: Lamentations?

Rick: The little sponge cakes with the coconut on them.

> we felt compelled to extend a friendly hand to them."

Rebecca: Okay everyone, here comes the expository flashback. Pay attention, this will all be important.

> [Malek with a group of Grelons, one with a scar – Ssegma]

Matt: I guess he gets to be the leader because he's got the butch scar and the gnawed bone of authority.

> Malek [V/O]: "A chill ran down my spine when the Grelon leader telepathically introduced himself..."

Matt: It was the telepathic heavy breathing that did it.

> Grelon Leader: Greetings alien -- I am called Ssegma.

Natasha: Great. Their leader's name is 'spooge'.

Rebecca: So on a planet where everyone has a telepathic lisp, their leader's name begins with an "S?"  
That is cruel.

> Malek: "The voice in my head repulsed me.

Rebecca: Just to reiterate, Lizardmen are evil.

> I wanted to get out of there -- fast!

Rick: But nobody would ever admit to fleeing from Kobolds.

> Instead--"

Natasha [Malek]: I took him home to meet my mother. Worst move of my life.

> [Large council chambers]

Matt: Rhubarb rhubarb senatorial rhubarb.

> Malek: "--A trio of Grelon ambassadors were bought here to Zoltek, headquarters of the UWC.

Rebecca: Thrill as Malek explains every last pointless detail to herself.

Matt: All while soaking up fresh rads.

> After weeks of debate, a decision was made..."

Rick [Reading back]: So that's two Hawaiian, one deep dish one thin, one deep dish meat-lovers, one vegetarian with cabanossi, bacon and garlic flakes, hold the pineapple, two garlic breads and a diet soda.

> Diplomat: Resolved: That the UWC will provide the Grelon with the technology needed to improve their  
> world.

Rebecca: In exchange for giving them the secret of the Automobile, the Grelons promise not to make Dzzzt on them.

Matt: There are only five people in the world who will get that and I doubt any of them would be watching this.

> [Three angry Grelons]

Rick: Some fat pigs stole their eggs.

> Malek [V/O]: "But the Grelons had other ideas..."

Natasha [Grelon]: Anchovies! We demand anchovies! And buffalo wings!

> Grelon: No! Our world iss hostile -- dessolate-- Itss decay cannot be allayed!

Rick: Why can I imagine this Grelon being voiced by Chris Latta or, at the very least, someone trying to be Chris Latta?

> Therefore, we resolve: To leave Grelon and colonizze other worldss in this ssystem!

> Malek [V/O]: "The UWC refused the demand..."

Rick: They weren't going to be intimidated by half-hit dice monsters.

> [Grelons attacking ambassadors with psychic bolts.]

> Malek [V/O]: "...And that's when the Grelons went wild! Deadly mind  
> stings lashed out at the unsuspecting planetary ambassadors!

Rick: ...Half hit-dice monsters with the power to telekinetically explode your head, mind you.

> Ambassador: Aieeee!!

> Ambassador: Yearrrghh!

Rick: The representative from Zoltek would like that last comment stricken from the record. Also, Gnyarg.

> Malek [V/O]: "In all, twenty-two ambassadors were murdered."

Matt: On the other hand, they got that controversial carbon tax bill through a lot easier afterwards.

> [Troops entering the room, unconcious Greelons on floor]

> Malek [V/O]: We gassed the room to knock the Greelons out and then..."

Natasha: Sharpied up their faces.

> Soldier: Orders are to deliver these creeps back to Greelon and leave 'em there

Rebecca: Being sent back to Greelon is punishment enough.

> -- all diplomatic ties are to be severed!

Matt: We'll send them a strongly-worded note.

> Hopefully this is the last we'll ever see of 'em.

> Malek [V/O]: "and it was..."

Rick: Or was it?

> [Huge battleship flying over mountains, burning city in the background, Monkey-people refugees in foreground]

> Malek [V/O]: "...Until two weeks ago when the Greelons returned -- with a vengeance.

Natasha: Which sucked. I mean, at least Greelons 3D was moderately amusing.

Matt: On the other hand, Michale Caine said that his role in Greelons Returned paid for a rather nice house.

> Without warning,

Rick: Suddenly, Greelons!

> they used their newfound technology to attack and decimate the capital of the mountain-planet Thoren.

> No demands. No ultimatums.

Matt: Not even so much as a polite invitation.

> Who could have known--"

Natasha: That they were total jerks?

> [Malek sitting on the foot of the statue]

Rebecca: Are we all finished Expositing now?

> Malek: --That my homeworld was next in line? Now all that's left of Zoltek

Rick: Wait, what? They blew up the whole planet?

Matt: I think she means the city of Zoltek.

Rick: But the planet's called Zoltek too.

Matt: City of Zoltek, capitol of Zoltek.

Rick: So what, is it in Zoltek state too?

Matt: Yep. City of Zoltek, Zoltek state, capitol of Zoltek.

Rick: So I suppose it's the capitol of Zoltek state too.

Matt: No, that's Albany.

> is the mysterious stone colossus that once served as the entrance to the city—

Rebecca: You know what? Forget it. I'll be over here, so let me know when she's done.

> -- a stone statue that stood in this desert for a hundred thousand years before my people even existed!

Natasha: This sounds like the ancient astronauts at work again.

Matt: I don't know, I can see how primitive peoples could have constructed such a monument without modern technology.

Natasha: How so?

Matt: Whips. Really big whips.

> It was a symbol of hope To the ancient Zoltekian elders

Natasha: I can't believe she said 'Zoltekian' with a straight face.

Matt: To you it was a symbol of hope. To its long lost original builders, it was probably something quite different. That's anthropology for you.

> who built their city around it—

Rebecca: More of 'behind' it.

> --but now, the statue is all that's left of their dreams, and even it is showing signs of wear!

Matt: Colossus of Zoltek, loose with slight wear. How much are you offering? I'll throw in free shipping.

Rick: Do you have any Ligers? I want to buy a Liger!

> [Stone flakes off the statue revealing metal behind it]

Natasha: And inside that is a chewy caramel centre.

> SFX: Crrincch!!

> Malek: What th-- The Colossus's leg! It-- it's crumbling!

Rick: I guess they just don't make enigmatic ten-thousand year old statues like they used to.

Rebecca: Not for the next ten-thousand years.

> [Malek chipping away at statue]

Matt: So your reaction to the defacing of your people's most sacred symbol is to deface it some more?  
Nice going there.

Rebecca: On the other hand, who's going to complain?

> Malek: There's metal under here! Gods of Zoltek!

Natasha: My mind reels at the thought of the Zoltekkian pantheon. Also, I said Zoltekian.

Rick: Their supreme being is Mazinger Z. Lesser gods include Golion, Grendizer, Combattler and Durregar XV.

> The stone's chipping off in my hands like old paint... and there's some kind of door--

> [Malek pressing red button]

> Malek: --Complete with doorbell! Well...

Natasha: The enigmatic precursor aliens installed a novelty musical doorbell. So much for instilling us with a sense of awe.

Matt: We don't know for sure this is the fault of enigmatic precursor aliens. True, it's pretty much a certainty at this point...

> [Malek in small room]

Rick: That's all there is. Treasure it.

> Malek: I'm in-- but I still can't believe it! None of our people ever suspected it!

Rebecca: You mean to tell me that in a hundred thousand years nobody ever once thought to try and find out what this statue was made of or where it came from?

Matt: The Zoltekians may have been an advanced race, but they were also damned stupid. I'd have been on it first chance I get. Something like that is bound to be a precursor relic or advanced tech of a lost civilization.

Rebecca: No argument there. An enigmatic statue that screams 'scan me, poke me, prod me, try to find Out what I'm made of and where I came from'

Natasha: Not to argue, but there's one thing you're both forgetting here.

Matt & Rebecca: What?

Natasha: You said Zoltekian.

> Uh-oh! The door's going down...

> [Malek in lift]

Rick: Damn it. We got precursor lift muzak.

> Malek: ...And I'm going up-- but to where?

> [Malek in cockpit]

> Malek: A cockpit! But those controls are unlike any I've ever seen!

Rebecca: You mean your fighters don't have joysticks, dials and screens?

Matt: They control their planes with a trackball.

> [Malek sitting in pilots chair]

> Malek: Might as well give it a shot-- pressing a few buttons can't hurt--

Rick: That's right up the top of the 'famous last words' list.

> [Malek, scared]

> SFX: RRRRRR

> Malek: Or can it?

> [Statue crumbles to reveal Zoltek - squad members fleeing in the foreground]

Matt: It's the White Doll!

> Eedon: Take cover! The colossus is crumbling--

Rick: I guess the best thing to do now would be to quietly leave and hope that nobody blames you.

> the missile must have weakened it more than we suspected!

> Dex: But Malek-- she was heading toward the statue--

Natasha: Clearly her exposition and whining was what caused it to collapse.

> Icik: Wait-- look at it!

> [Squad standing in front of Zoltek]

> Akros: The colossus-- it's changed!

Rick: It's now in its living metal form.

> Eedon: So it appears, Arkos. It is as if the stone surrounding it were just a sheath-- a second skin—

> which has just been shed!

Rebecca [Documentary voice]: In the summer, the Zoltekian Colossus sheds its winter coat for a lighter one to better blend in with its surroundings.

> It stood before us for more than a hundred millennia... and we never suspected that the



> ancient monolith was-

Rick: A mint-in-box giant Vamp. Australian version. [Ding!]

Natasha: A frost-free fridge [Ding!]

Matt: A previously undiscovered species of Lemur. [Ding!]

Rebecca: A Dougram CB?

Rick: Now you're being silly.

> Scal: --A robot! A bloody robot!

Rebecca: I win!

> [Malek wearing headphones, electricity crackling from them]

Matt: From the look on her face, it sounds like she's listening to someone's horrible garage band.

Natasha: Hey!

> While inside said robot...

> Malek: Uh! This robot is booby-trapped! It's holding me in place --and frying my brain!

Rick: Seems like an awfully elaborate trap; lure someone into a giant robot just to kill them.

Matt: Could be. Or maybe the Robot needs some sort of biological matter in order to operate, even if the pilot is not alive or at least aware. Running of autonomous muscle reflexes and the like; so in essence, piloted by a Zombie.

Rick: Well that's be pretty horrific [Pause] And a better plot then this comic. [He starts scribbling in his notepad]

> [Malek looking at on-screen display of solar system]

Rebecca: I wonder how many of those would be considered 'dwarf' planets these days.

> But when the mental "attack" suddenly subsides...

Matt: She needs more Ego Defense.

> Malek: Don't know exactly what those brain clamps did to me, but I seem to understand how this

> machine operates now--

Rick: So it's got a "Get into robot" button and a "Learn to operate robot" button? What next, a "Fight for you" button?

Rebecca: Look at it this way. The robot just dumped exposition right into her head.

> --Well enough to know that's our solar system on this monitor!

Matt: Given that she's already engaged in interplanetary travel, shouldn't she recongise the solar system already?

Natasha: The Zoltekian model has its moon at the centre. Very confusing.

> [Malek, with pictures of the planets of the system - Talos, Aqualo, Thoren, Condar, Gartan, Ziyon and  
> Zoltek]

Rebecca: Eight habitable planets in one solar system? The writers of this comic have a grasp on astronomy comparable to Joss Wheedon's.

Rick: There were nine until Tom blew up DELTA.

> Malek: Now what? It's giving me close-ups-- pinpointing a particular region on each planet.

Natasha: It's the giant robot version of Google Earth. It's pointing out the nearest Apple Store so you can steal free wi-fi.

Rick: Ironically, Apple Maps can't do that.

> The last planet's Zoltek, and the point corresponds to my location

Rebecca: Surprised you can tell at that scale.

> -- only it's glowing red!

Matt: It means you've pinned that location.

> [Malek looking down from cockpit at squad]

> Malek: I've got a hunch I know what it means, but it can wait. Right now, I'd better use my com-link to  
> tell the squadron that I'm okay. They look positively petrified down there!

Matt: Even when she's talking to herself, Malek feels the need to explain everything.

> Malek [V/O]: Tactical Team! This is Malek! I'm inside the colossus

Natasha [Malek]: And looking for its weak spot so I can stab it.

> and have discovered it to be mechanically operational!

Rebecca: The Colossus of Zoltek is good for ten thousand years between services. Useful too, since it's Been ten thousand years since they made any parts for it.

> [Zoltek, squad in foreground]

> Scal: Mechanically operational? You mean you can make it move?

> Malek: More than that, Scal-- just watch!

Rick: And now she makes it do a silly little dance.

> [Zoltek launches]

Rebecca: Am I the only one here who finds the idea of the Fang Sun Dougram mecha being depicted as classic "Super Robots" rather ironic?

Matt: Given how little anyone else here likely knows about Fang Sun Dougram, probably.

Rebecca: Figures.

> Malek: Its as if I've been given subconscious a crash course!

Rick: Ironically, more thought went into Malek being able to pilot her robot than in most “fell into the cockpit” scenarios.

> I can operate this robot like I've had months of training—

Natasha: At giant robot night school.

> --And I know exactly what to do on this flight test!

Matt: Buzz the tower?

> [Dex looking up]

> Dex: I hope I'm wrong, but I think she's going after the Grelons in that thing!

Rick [Dex]: Personally, I hope she's going out for pizza.

> [Zoltek in space behind Grelon ship]

Natasha: This whole comic looks like one giant bad B-Movie effects shot. I keep expecting to see drawn-in wires holding everything up.

> And sure enough...

> Malek: Incredible! It took me only minutes to catch up to that Grelon battle cruiser!

Matt: They would have gotten further, but they had to stop and ask for directions.

> Instinctively, I seem to know that this robot contains tremendous firepower...

> [Malek in cockpit]

> Malek: But there's only one way to be sure!

Rick: Blow stuff up!

> [Grelon in a clear dome firing a cannon at Zoltek]

Natasha: Awfully nice of them to leave their weapons systems only protected by a clear bubble.

> SFX: SPEEORR

> Malek: Uh-oh! I've been spotted! So much for the element of surprise!

Rebecca: What do you know; they were able to spot the giant rocket-propelled robot right behind them.

> I guess I'll have to be content with the knowledge--

Natasha: --that you ran?

Rick: Furmanisim fail. Penalty box.

> [Zoltek firing at ship]

> SFX: Vreeeee-- WOOOM!

Matt: It's like every Star Wars space battle ever but with none of the action or excitement or cinematic thrill.

Rebecca: So the Expanded Universe then?

Matt: That's not fair, and you know it.

Rebecca: So the Expanded universe minus the X-wing books.

Matt: Much better.

> Malek: --That this is gonna be an encounter that the Grelons will never forget!

Rick: Ok, Greelons. You're travelling back through space when you're jumped by a giant robot. Roll for initiative.

Matt: Damn wandering monsters.

> This one's for the people of Zoltek, you murderers!!

Natasha [Malek]: The city that is. You seem to have left the rest of the planet intact.

> [Grelons exploding]

Natasha: Wait, a moment, that one's got clothes on.

Rick: Maybe that's the difference between enlisted and officer Grelons. The officers don't go around naked.

Rebecca: Maybe they've just got a \*very\* casual uniform code.

> Grelon: Skreeee!

Rick: Every time you kill a Greelon, it makes that horrible noise. It's usually still going while you're looting it and moving on to the next one.

> Malek: Wow! These guns sliced through those flexi-turrets like a hot knife through butter!

Rick: Actually, this is pretty much looking like a Bantam/Spectra era book about now. All we need is for Kevin J. Anderson to contrive some nonsense Jedi powers and we're set.

> [Malek]

> Malek: And If they could do that to reinforced bunkers--

Matt: They're actually little clear domes, and rather thin ones at the from the look of the art. So unless they're made out of super nonsense transparent metal, you shouldn't be surprised. Actually, I'm more surprised you didn't try that earlier when it attacked your homeworld.

Rick: Its super robots. Regular tanks and jets are always useless against the aliens.

> [Zoltek firing at ship]

> Malek: --I can just imagine what it can do to that exposed propulsion system!

Rebecca: There you go. It did have a stupid weakness after all. My mistake.

Rick: Eighties Sci-Fi laws. Can't fight them.

> [Grelon crew, explosions in background]

Rick [Grelon]: You no take candle!

> Grelon: Excellency! Our secondary navigational thrusters-- they've been destroyed!

> Ssegma: What?! That's impossible!!

> [Extreme close-up on Ssegma]

> Ssegma: The S'landri assured us that ourss was the most powerful force in thiss ssystem!

Rebecca: Pay attention, folks! There is a vital plot point going on here.

Rick [Munching popcorn]: Sorry, did you say something?

Rebecca: Don't worry about it. Got any more of that?

> [Zoltek over ship, firing]

> Ssegma [V/O]: We are indestructible!

Rick: And when you say that, your death is imminent. No questions asked.

> Blow that machine out of space now!

> Malek: Once I swing round and take out their other engine, they'll be help!--

Natasha: Or at least, only able to make left turns.

> [Blast hits Zoltek]

> SFX: BAWOOM!

> Malek: Yeow! They must really be mad! I actually felt that one!

> [Malek in cockpit, inverted]

Natasha: And what were you doing inverted over a Greelon space battleship?

Rick: I was giving the Greelons the bird.

Natasha: The bird?

Rick: You know, the finger.

Natasha: Yes, I know the finger.

> Malek: And so did my robot -- it's gyro systems have gone haywire!

> [Zoltek spinning down towards planet]

> Malek: I've lost control!

> Grelon: The Robot has been rendered inoperative, sire-- We return to Grelon in victory!

Matt [Grelon]: Uh, sir, we only winged that robot... It's merely out of control, and not destroyed or anything... We might want to be more thorough about destroying it.

Rick [Ssegma]: Listen, who's the boss around here?

Matt [Grelon]: You are, sir.

Rick [Ssegma]: Who wields the gnawed bone of authority?

Matt [Grelon]: You do, sir.

Rick [Ssegma]: So shut up!

Matt [Grelon]: Yes, sir.

> [Rubble of city, people emerging from an underground shelter, Zoltek standing over the scene]

> But, unknown to the Grelons, Malek does manage to regain control of her robot and return to Zoltek  
> where--]

Matt: Well that was a gripping and suspenseful battle for control of the robot as it plunged into a potentially lethal and certainly terrifying situation.

> Malek: ...So that's where it stands, troops--

Natasha: Right behind you?

> [Squad]

> Malek: --We're down, but we're not out yet.

Rick: We can do it if we give 110%

Natasha: But I don't do Mondays.

Matt: That's okay. You don't have to be crazy to work here, but it helps

> I believe the robot's planetary maps indicate the presence of similar fighting machines hidden on each  
> of our planets--

Matt: Not leaping to conclusions at all are you?

Rebecca: Gods no.

> Dex: --And since we've done just about all we can to help Zoltek city's survivors,

Rick: Say, uh, what have you done?

Rebecca: Well... we let them... stand in the shade behind Zoltek.

> you're suggesting that we split up to find them, right?

Matt [Dex]: Okay, gang, we'll split up. Malek and Silky will look in the basement, while Eedon and I look in the attic. Ick and Scal, you two go check out the creepy garden.

Rick [Scal]: Uh-uh. No way.

Matt [Dex]: Would you do it for a Scal Snack?

> [Malek]

> Malek: Do we really have a choice, Dex?

Rick: We're in origin story land now. I expect at least one of them to get a magic ring from a dying alien.

> One robot made the Grelons nervous-- --with six more, we can make them hurt! Are you all with me?

Rebecca: Wow, as rousing battle speeches go, that one doesn't even rate a mention.

> [Eedon]

> Malek: Edon?

Natasha: Stop squinting. You can't trust a squinty guy.

> Eedon: You need not ask, Malek. Lead and I shall follow.

Rick: Is Malek that much of an inspirational leader?

Matt: From what I've seen, no.

Rick: So why do they follow her?

Matt: Look at the options.

Rick: Good point. Let's move on.

> [Akros]

> Malek: Akros?

> Akros: When do we leave?

> [Scal]

> Malek: Scal?

Rick [Scal]: You shall have my bow.

> Scal: After what the Grelons did to my homeworld of Thoren? I'm ready.

Natasha: I mean, outlet malls everywhere! That's inhumane!

> [Icik]

> Malek: Icik?

Matt [Ick]: And my axe.

> Icik: I'd give anything to sink my teeth into some Grelon flesh!

All: Ick.

> [Silky]

> Malek: Silky?

> Silky: I only hope we can find these machines of salvation!

Natasha: The Power of the Machine God compels you!

Matt: Silky is still hanging out for that Aquaman series, isn't she?

> [Dex]

> Malek: Well, Dex?

Rick: And what say you, generic hero man?

> Dex: Let's ship out!

> [Eedon walking through Swamp]

> Hours later, Eedon forges his way through the dense vegetation of his swamp-like homeworld of

> Talos...

Rebecca: Oh no... please tell me we're not going for monoclimatic planets.

Matt: Well, we are pretty much checking off the eighties sci-fi clichés.

Rebecca: Figures. All the writers know about space comes from Star Wars.

> Eedon: According to Malek, the robot is located somewhere in this vicinity-- And like much of my

> homeworld, this area is uncharted - - and possibly hostile! Hmm... Chanting sounds-- coming from that

> clearing up ahead-- I wonder...

Rick [Eedon]: Who then hell am I talking to and why am I telling them all this needless exposition?

> [Talos standing on platform, worshippers in front of it]

Rebecca: Kneel before your giant robot gods

Matt: There's probably a fascinating story about how this came to be and the rationale behind it. Also, I suspect that this comic would manage to make it as dull as possible.

> Eedon [V/O]: It's there! But those natives -- They're praying to it as though it were some kind of... god!

Rick: Primitive alien tribe or typical day at BotCon? You be the judge.

> [Talosian

Rebecca: R. Talosian to be exact.

Matt: Maybe they'll have Mekton Double Zero out sometime this millennium.

> with fancy head-dress standing over bound child]

Natasha: You can tell he's important because he has the silly hat on.

> Eedon [V/O]: That must be their leader... ...and that their sacrifice!

Matt: Actually, it's the other way around. Weird culture.



> [Leader raising knife]

> Eedon [V/O]: Not much time...

> [Arrow hits leader in shoulder]

Rick: Suddenly, Oliver Queen.

> Eedon [V/O]: ...But time enough!

> Leader: Yeaargh!

Natasha: High priest Wilhelm there.

> [Eedon standing with crossbow]

> All eyes turn to the stranger standing boldly in their midst...

Rebecca: He's trying for 'badarse.' Best he gets is 'squinty.'

> Eedon: Your gods are not pleased...

Rick: Your gods are giant space robots. I can't imagine how they feel.

> [Eedon walking through crowd]

> Eedon: ...Your ways are evil!

Matt: True, it appears that way. But for all you know, he could have been about to perform emergency heart surgery on the kid.

> [Eedon releasing victim]

> Eedon: Suffer not your children... ...or someday you too shall suffer!

Natasha: ...the wrath of your giant robot space gods. Weird, I know.

> [Eedon opening panel on back of Talos]

Matt: In my day, we had to go through spinning knives, snake pits, spikes and huge rolling stone balls to get to the enigmatic relic. Kids these days have it so easy.

> Eedon: Good, the switch is here --as Malek said.

Rick: It'd be amusing if there was no switch and he had the wrong enigmatic space robot.

> For a moment, there is silence as Eedon disappears into the Robot's hull. And then--

> [Talos pointing at leader]

> --The robot's hand moves to appoint an accusing finger!

Rebecca: So I'm to assume that this robot has been standing around in the swamp for tens of thousands of years in what appears to be hot, humid, wet conditions and yet is perfectly functional?

Matt: Seems that way.

Rebecca: I'm also to assume that in all those years, not one person thought to press the giant, easily accessible red button on the robot's legs.

Matt: Seems that way.

Rebecca: Sad part is, 'precursor technology' means the first is more readily explainable than the second.

> [Talosians worshipping]

> Eedon [V/O]: I am offended by your reverence-- --and disgusted by your fear!

Rick: Because nothing ever goes wrong with impersonating a god. Ever.

> [Talos taking off]

> Eedon [V/O]: Perhaps one day I shall return-- --until then, farewell!

Natasha: I must go now. My home planet needs me.

> [Group of Talosians gathered around leader]

> As the robot flies off, the natives turn angrily to their priest.

Rick: Look! A Multi-Function Polis! Whoosh! [Ding]

> "We have followed your orders" they shout "and now our god is gone!"

> [Group of angry Talosians]

> Soon these natives of Talos will have new leaders, new ways to follow. But first there must be...

Matt: Mob's getting ugly.

Rebecca: They were plenty ugly already.

> [Leader's eyes, terrified]

Matt: Now child sacrifice is bad, no arguments there. But by pretending to be god, inciting a riot and leaving the chief priest to be lynched by an angry mob, Eedon can't really claim any sort of moral high ground of his own.

> ...A final sacrifice.

Rick: Starring Zap Rowsdower and John Z'Dar's chin.

> [Scal climbing a cliff]

Rick: Hey Rebecca. Rock climbing.

Rebecca: Uh-huh.

> Meanwhile, on the mountain world of Thoren...

Rebecca: Monoclimatic world again.

Rick: Maybe we can take bets on what they'll be. Like, maybe Gartan's all grasslands and Condar is all sinkholes.

Natasha: Or maybe one of them's a Waffle planet. I could live on a waffle planet.

> Scal: Whew! My people are used to climbing practically anything—

Matt: Scal's people can climb. We now know one thing about them.

> but this is too much!

Rick [Scal]: Damn you, vertical surface!

> Still, if this is where our robot's holed up...

Rebecca: Shouting obscenities at the police, daring them to take it down

> then I've got no choice!

Natasha: Also, it wouldn't be much of a comic.

> [Scal climbing and firing grapple]

> Scal: This part of the mountain's practically sheer-- no place to get a handhold. Better use my auto-grapple to hook onto that cave opening above!

Matt: I'd assume that he was talking to the readers, but I don't think there were any.

> [Scal entering cave]

Natasha: Is that Miles O'Keefe at the back?

> And as soon as Scal pulls himself up...

> Scal: Well whaddaya know! There's my baby!

Rick: If that's your baby, who the hell was its mother?

> [Scal entering hatch]

> Scal: Piece of cake!

Rebecca: What? No colourful and nonsense alien metaphor? I feel ripped off.

> I just hope finding these robots is as easy for the other guys--

Matt: So as easy as scaling a sheer vertical cliff?

Rebecca: Clearly Scal is a daredevil risk-taker who enjoys a life-or-death challenge and relishes the opportunity to conquer the unbeatable.

Rick: It's the deep characterization that makes these aliens come to life.

> [Scal inside robot]

> Scal: Wheel! This is just like Malek said it would be--

Rick [Scal]: Only much shorter.

> --only more fun!

Natasha [Scal]: Now where's the 'fling poop' button?

> Continued on 3rd page following.

Rebecca: But in the meantime, here's an ad for NBC's Saturday morning line-up for spring, 1984!

Matt: A Mister T cartoon? What were they thinking?

Natasha: Other people jump the shark. Mister T punches it out and throws it.

> [Scal in cockpit]

Rebecca: So this is like one of those early NASA tests where they shot Chimps into space.

> Moments later at the controls...

> Scal: Let's see now-- all I've got to do is press this button and--

Rick: Turn the control wheel eighteen degrees to the left.

> [Thoren busting through mountainside]

Natasha: Oh yeah!

> SFX: BAR OOM!

> Scal: Wow! Talk about shortcuts! Now all I've gotta do is flip the flight control switches and it's--

> [Thoren takes flight]

> Scal: Up, up and away!

Rick: Monkey with a Jetpack? I'm pretty sure that's a Silver Age villain.

> [Akros over desert]

Natasha: The planet Akros, known as Dune. Home of Patrick Stewart's epic codpiece.

> Meanwhile, millions of miles away,

Matt: In a different comic.

> a solitary figure flies over the desolate, arid desert of the world called Condar.  
> His name is Akros, and he is a creature with a mission...

Rick: To find an ice cream. It's not easy.

> ...A mission he is about to complete!

Rebecca: Well. That was... fast. Looks like this comic is trying to make up time for Malek's monologue.

> [Akros over desert]

> Akros: Aha! This sensor Malek gave me-- It's going wild!

Natasha: That's going to be the incoming Death Hand.

> The robot is down there somewhere -- but all I can see is sand!

Rick: Not even a spice bloom?

Matt: No.

Rick: Not even some Jawas?

Matt: \*No\*

> [Akros over desert]

> Akros: I expected as much! The surface of my homeworld is ever- shifting!

Rebecca: Right. So the pattern is going to be 'alien shows up, gives expository travelogue and gets robot.' It's an awful lot of work for a three issue limited series populated by a cast that nobody cares about.

> But that's no problem!

> [Akros throws a grenade]

Natasha: Pterodactyls with grenades? Best thing ever.

Rick: What if he was a Pterodactyl forensic medical officer.

Natasha: Does he still have a grenade?

Rick: Sure, why not?

Natasha: Then it's even more awesome.

> Akros: This disperser-bomb ought to clear things up a bit!

Rick: Pterodactyl FME. Coming this fall.

> [Explosion]

> SFX: BWOOOM!

> [Condar sticking out of the sand, Akros overhead]

> Akros: Yes, indeed...

Natasha: Well. That was... difficult. And... complex. Certainly worth waiting half an issue for.

> [Fighter over snow-covered mountains]

> At that moment, on the other side of the solar system, the sub-zero world of Ziyon

Rebecca: Actually, I've got a theory as to the monoclimate worlds.

Matt: Do tell.

Rebecca: The fronts of the model boxes of the Robotech Defenders series usually showed a photo of the robot and on some picture background. The writers probably decided that the worlds each robot is coming from in this story should match to those backgrounds.

Matt: And does it work?

Rebecca: Given that the Thoren model was a dark blue and photographed on a dark marsh background, no.

> plays host to yet another discovery.

Rick: For it was here on Ziyon that Alexander Fleming first left a Petri dish unattended.

> Ick [V/O]: Oh no! Why does it have to be here?

> [Ick]

> Ick: Malek's sensor has to be right! The robot is nearby--

Rebecca: So keep your eyes peeled for a big metal thing.

Matt: At the rate these guys are going, the next one should have a huge neon pink sign over it saying "BIG-ASS ROBOT OVER HERE!"

> right in the middle of the ice planes! And that means bacteroids!

Natasha: Oh no! Not Bacteroids!

Rick: What's a Bacteroid?

Natasha: Not a clue.

> [Ick near hole]

> Ick: Ugh! They thrive in this cold and burrow holes like these into underground caverns. Looks like I'm  
> just gonna have to drop in on them!

Matt: I'm beginning to think that pointless exposition must be some sort of bizarre, ingrained, solar system-wide cultural trait. They have to exposit whenever an opportunity presents itself, regardless of the appropriateness of the situation.

Rebecca: And if they don't?

Matt: I don't know. Eaten by the cosmic owl or something.

> [Ick drops into hole]

Natasha: That Ick. He's a real ice-hole. [Rebecca hits her with a cushion]

> Icik: Maybe they'll be out to lunch or something.

Rick: Bacteroids like to go out to lunch on Fridays, drink a lot and never come back to their desk.

Matt: Your standard procedure then?

Rick: Absolutely!

> [Ziyon in cave with Icik]

> Icik: Just my luck! They're eating in today-- --but at least my Robot's here with 'em.

Rebecca: I'd wonder why the robot's not covered in these Bacteroid things or their poop or whatever after millennia of being here. However, the comic's gone well past the 'making sense stage' already.

> [Icik firing gun at bacteroids]

> Icik: Back off, creeps! If there's one thing I hate, it's

Natasha: Crappy writing?

Rick: A weak plot?

Matt: Mountains of exposition?

Rebecca: Early eighties toy license comics?

> a hungry bacteroid!

Rick: Ick hates Bacteroids. We now know one thing about him too.

> [Surface with cracks on it]

> With a speed that surprises even himself, Icik hops onboard the robot.

Natasha: Now what would have been funny would be if a Bacteroid had already gotten in there and had the robot teach them how to operate it.

Rick: Right! And then the rest of the comic is the adventures of Space Bacteroid as he does stuff that's entirely unrelated to the rest of the cast. Which would be awesome.

> Moments later, the surface of Ziyon Shudders and cracks with an almost desperate intensity.

> Then...

> [Ziyon in flight]

> SFX: SWOOOM!

> Icik: Whew! Am I glad that this thing works! Bacteroids! Yuck!

Matt: I think the best thing about his constantly stated hatred for Bacteroids is that we have no idea what a Bacteroid is.

> [Silky swimming]

Rick: Her butt is at a really weird angle to her body. Just gotta say that.

> Even as Icik pilots his newfound robot back to Zoltek, on the water world of Aqualo, Silky sheds the  
> Aqua-collar that enables her to breathe on the surface, and searches the depths for her prize.

> Silky: Already I travel deeper than any of my race has dared to go!

Rebecca: Given that she can survive on the surface with just the wet equivalent of a gas mask, it'd be a safe assumption that Silky's people are shallow-water dwellers. At this sort of depth, she'd go squish.

Matt: The solar system has eight inhabitable worlds and you're bothered by this? In an eighties comic, reason and logic go out the window first.

> But I must not think of the danger-- my people's lives depend on my success!

Matt: Say, how does an underwater civilization get started, anyway? I mean, how did they invent anything without fire?

Natasha: I dunno... Maybe they were land dwellers who went back to the sea or something.

Rebecca: It's a good question. Most of the time when water-based races crop up in fiction, they're the descendants of surface-dwellers who were banished to below for some reason, but adapted from there.

Matt: I guess the development of anything beyond a primitive agrarian society without the benefit of fire is pretty much impossible.

Rick: True. However, the text makes it clear that Silky's race are water-based and really can't live on dry land without artificial aid.

Rebecca: I suppose it's possible that they were a land-dwelling race at some point. Their physical form, a humanoid one, is ill-suited to aquatic life and far better suited to life on land.

Matt: Maybe they were forced from the surface and managed to evolve gills or some other method of breathing underwater.

Matt: Then they'd be more of a fishy shape if they'd gotten as far as evolving a completely new respiratory system.

Rebecca: Besides which, she has a nose with nostrils. Now as the collar is attached to her neck with no connection to said nose, it's likely that's where her gills, or whatever, are. So the question arises, why the nose?

Matt: An anachronistic left-over of an earlier form, perhaps.

Rick: It could be.

Natasha: Er guys, the comic?

Rebecca: Do we have to?

> [Aqualo's head sticking out of ocean floor]

> Silky: There! Can it be?

Natasha: Either you found your Robot, or that's the freakiest magic mushroom ever.

> [Silky looking in window, huge sea monster behind her]

Rebecca: Silky? Behind you.

> Silky: Yes! Malek described it thus—

Matt: The Star Forge?

Rebecca: I'd expected more KotOR jokes by now.

Matt: Rick kind of killed them earlier.



> my search is ended!

Natasha: Find robot, one of one completed.

> [Sea Serpent attacks Silky]

Natasha: And I guess that thing spawns when you try to pick up the quest object.

> Silky: Now to just-- eh? Aqualo's dynasties! An Aquaviper!

Matt: Now see, the name 'Aquaviper' seems more referential to some other, non-aquatic creature than the name an aquatic society would give to a creature in their native environment.

Rebecca: Agreed there. Again, it suggests that we're looking at a culture that was displaced from land or otherwise re-settled and adapted to their current aquatic status.

Matt: Maybe Silky's form is the result of ancient genetic manipulation, possibly as a result of the same precursors that created the robots.

Rebecca: It makes sense.

Natasha: Guys?

> [Silky firing at serpent while opening hatch]

> Silky: My sonar disrupter can only keep it at bay for a moment!

Matt: I feel that our lives have been enriched by the depth of this narrative.

> [Serpent attacking Aqualo]

> Silky: Even now it threatens to crush the Robot's dome!

Rick: You know what would be awesome? If the robot was called 'Thunder.' Then the serpent would be trying to-

Rebecca: Rick, is this another 'Beyond Thunderdome' joke?

Rick: ...yes.

Rebecca: Do you want me to hurt you?

Rick: ...no.

> [Silky in cockpit]

> Silky: I never imagined this would be my robot's first test of strength--

Natasha: Wrestle the serpent, win a prize. Probably a plus Unicorn or the like.

> [Serpent fleeing while Aqualo launches]

> Silky: But it would appear that it has passed!

Rebecca: Did we just miss a panel or two here?

Matt: I think they're in a rush to get on with the story, Such as it is.

> And as Silky blasts skyward out of Aqualo's murky depths...

> [Dense city]

> ...A lone fighter descends on the steel and glass canyons of the densely populated planet known as  
> Gartan.

Matt: Gartan! City of the future! A flying car in every garage! A robot in every house! Yes, Gartan is truly the city of 1970!

> [Shattered buildings]

> Ground-upheaving earthquakes regularly plague the teeming urban landscape that Dex calls home...

Rebecca: I guess he lives on the 'Cities and Earthquakes' planet.

Natasha: So LA then?

> [Fighter over city]

Rick: And now it's time for the morning traffic report with Dex in the copter, followed by the Wakeup Show with Ick and Akros the Pterodactyl.

> The most recent of which have all but obliterated the region

Matt: That's the point when Dex realised he'd just flown back to Zoltek and was stuck at the start of the comic.

> which Dex's sensors tell him is the burial site of his robot!

Natasha: Here lies John Q. Dougram; beloved Combat Armour and father of two

> Dex takes up the search on foot...

Rick: Searching the entire planet on foot. Dex may be an idiot, but he's a determined one.

> [Group of thugs sitting in amongst the rubble]

> But that is not without its problems!

Rebecca: Such as this group of colorful brigands whom he may be about to cross paths with.

> Thug 1: Oy! A Lillypod-- comin' now!

> Thug 2: Ay?

Natasha: We've run into some rather Shakespearean thugs

> They are shock-scavengers, desperate thieves surviving on other's shattered dreams!

Matt: On Earth, they're known as publicists

> [Thugs approaching Dex]

> Pickings are slow for them today -- and a score is in order!.

Rick: Muggers should learn never to pick on people who obviously look like the protagonist.

Rebecca: I thought Malek was the protagonist.

Rick: Good point.

> Thug: Ay! Lillypod -- c'mere!

> Dex: Huh?

Natasha: My thoughts exactly

> [Thugs around Dex]

> Thug 1: Nize jak-- lemmie 'ave!

Rick: Nope. I got nothing.

Matt: Could be an attempt at depicting a 'futuristic' phonetic language; it was a common trait in sci-fi of the period.

Natasha: So he's speaking in Lolcat?

Matt: ...sure.

> Dex: Take it somewhere else, boys -- I'm busy!

Rick: I say that to charity workers in the city all the time. Doesn't go down too well.

> Thug 2: Oooh -- Brave! Hmmm... Maybe sans these not so--

Natasha: His pants?

> [Dex punching out thugs]

Matt: Random fight for no reason? Dex is a real 1980s hero.

> SFX: WHAK!

> Dex: I said -- take off!

> Thug 1: Ooof!

> Thug 2: Urk!

Rick: The Mugger. The bottom of the food chain in any comic book world.

> [Dex standing over thugs]

Natasha: Fridge Largemeat!

> Dex: You guys want to try that again? Didn't think so. Be seeing you!

Rebecca: Nicest thing about Dex is that he's consistently a jerk to everyone he meets.

> Thug: Oooohhh... Nnoo...

> [Dex amongst rubble]

> Dex: Hmmm... I expected to have to blast to unearth a buried robot, but sensor readings say that it's on  
> the planet's surface! That's impossible-- unless...

> [Gartan lying amongst the rubble]

Rick [Dex]: It's right there in front of me!

Rebecca: Interesting. The gun's drawn on the left arm, rather than the usual right. Nothing else has been flipped though.

Natasha: How's that interesting?

Rebecca: Compare to the rest of the plot so far.

> Dex: Of course! The last earthquake pushed it up to the surface after centuries of being hidden beneath  
> tons of steel and stone!

Natasha: Giant robots are just lying around in ruined cities? All righty! Next time I get some free time, I'm going prospecting!

> [Dex entering hatch]

> Dex: It's a good thing I found this thing before those kids did

Matt: Wait, so I'm to assume that this giant robot was just lying here all along in the open within spitting distance of the colourful locals and nobody noticed it at all?

Rebecca: Call it an intelligence failure.

Matt: ...touché.

> —no telling what havoc they might have caused with it!

Rick: They would have put a giant donkey's head on it and then staged a production of Pyramus and Thisbe.

Rebecca: Those would have been most rude mechanicals indeed.

> [Dex in cockpit]

> Dex: Even with Malek's instructions, this cockpit looks pretty intimidating.

Rebecca: Yes, with all those \*levers\* and \*dials.\*

> But for a pilot of my experience--

Matt: His considerable experience. Take our word for it.

> [Gartan's finger moves]

> Dex [V/O]: It's no problem at all!

Natasha: I heard that Dex and Amuro Ray went to the same giant robot night school.

Rick: I could go for Bright Noah slapping Dex around about now.

> [Dex in cockpit]

> Dex: Hey! Down below-- it's those creeps again! I know I've got more important things to do but this is  
> one opportunity I can't resist!

Rick: Go on Dex, you show 'em what happens when they try to get all Elizabethan on you.

> [Thugs]

> Dex [V/O]: Hey you!

> Thug 1: Oy!

> Thug: 2: Whazzat?

> Thug 3: S'big!!

Rick [Fake Scottish]: Bigjobs!

Rebecca: Additional dialogue by watching Trainspotting while drunk.

> [Gartan chasing after thugs]

> SFX: THUD! THUD!

> Dex [V/O]: Ha! Ha! Ha!

Natasha: Dex is our hero because he uses a giant robot to terrorise men on foot.

Rebecca: Well they were random bandits. Probably about to go off and burn down someone's beloved peasant village for no real reason.

> Thug 1: Go go go!!

> Thug 2: And fast!!

> [Grelons in throne room, Ssegma on throne made from bones]

Rick: Nice décor in this place.

Natasha: It's sort of Barbarian Warlord lite.

> Meanwhile, word of the robot recoveries reaches the throne room of the Imperial Grelon...

> Grelon: Ssire! Our ssourcess indicate sseven robots in total.

Rebecca: Say, how did they find out so quickly? Only two of the robots were in populated areas, and even then one of them was a primitive tribe that were clearly incapable of interstellar communications.

Matt: Maybe they have a plant in the team.

Rick: That would make some sense, and explain a lot. Question is, who do you reckon it is?

Rebecca: In that case, a part of me thinks that it may be Scal. He's seen what the Greelons can do, and feels that they can't possibly fight that sort of force. His anger over the destruction of his homeworld is to mask his own fears and self-admitted cowardice over what he's done.

Matt: Hm. An interesting idea, but I suspect it might be Ick. He's all gung-ho and macho about fighting the Greelons, but what if it's just a front to hide his own failings and secret support of them? There's a clue in his hatred of Bacteroids, even though they don't seem to do a thing. He uses them as a shield for his own self-hating and by shooting at them, he's actually doing to others what he can't bring to do to himself.

Natasha: I reckon it's Eedon.

Rick: Why? Because of what he did in the swamp?

Natasha: That and you can't trust a squinty guy.

> We await your orderss!

> Ssegma: Sseven, General Cyba? Just one nearly destroyed our battle cruiser!

Matt [Grelon]: Well, it would be only six if you'd been more thorough with that first one.

Rick [Ssegma]: You said it was destroyed.

Matt [Grelon]: I said it was damaged.

Rick [Ssegma]: Who's the big cheese around these parts?

Matt [Grelon]: You are, sir.

Rick [Ssegma]: Who wields the gnawed bone of authority?

Matt [Grelon]: You do, sir.

Rick [Ssegma]: So shut up!

> [Ssegma and Cyba]

> Ssegma: The S'Landrai musst be consulted!

Natasha: You sure you want to do that? Eldritch Abominations charge by the hour for consultations and they don't come cheap.

> Locate him! And hurry! Before it's too late!

Rick: Yeah, definitely voiced by Chris Latta. Probably stoned out of his skull too.

> Cyba: Yess, ssire!

> [Grelons feasting on racks of meat]

Rebecca: Tuesday is Rib Night at Ssegma's Barbeque Buffet.

Natasha: It sounds good... but the buffet's on Greelon. Kind of hate the location.

> Grelon: Perhaps a Grelon feasst will soothe your worriess, ssire, while you await the S'Landrai!

Rick: I get the impression that I don't want to know what that 'meat' is.

Natasha: Ssegma has a bad McRib habit.

> Ssegma: Why, yess, perhaps it will, General, can I offer you something...? Undoubtedly you recall that  
> miserable failure colonel Ronda, do you not...?

Matt: I recall when I was pinned down by enemy forces, and called him for support. [Mimes a phone with his hand] Help me, Ronda. Help, help me Ronda.

> [Ssegma facing high-tech communications centre]

> Ssegma: Communicationss! Have you made contact with the S'Landrai yet?

Matt: They're already following his twitter feed.

> Grelon Tech: The ssignal iss being repeated on the designated frequenciess, sire,

Natasha: The S'Landrai never got over the ham radio craze, did they?

> but there has been no reply yet!

Rick: Just annoying hold music, and a repeated statement of how important their call is.

> [Figure teleporting into throne room]

Rebecca: Planet full of horrible aliens? Everyone knows the guy who beams down wearing a red shirt will be killed first.

> SFX: VRRRRRR

Rick: Sounds more like he's got a troublesome vacuum cleaner.

> Ssegma: I knee he wassn't to be trusted!

Matt: Enigmatic aliens that give you incredible weapons aren't to be trusted? What a shocking development.

> I knew he—

> [S'Landrai - a blue skinned man in long-flowing robes]

Natasha: Hooded robes? Bizarre symbol on his chest? Yep, looks totally trustworthy to me. No evil plans at all.

> S'Landrai: Histrionics are unnecessary, Grelon.

Rebecca: I suspect that 'over-acting' is Ssegma's only delivery.

> What can I do for you?

Matt: Guy has had one line, and already he's screaming 'evil plans' at the top of his lungs.

> Ssegma: You ssuprisse me, S'Landrai. I thought your race knew everything.

Rick: They figured out the ending to Lost straight away, and didn't watch the rest of the series. They're that smart.

Natasha: I'm more than a bit jealous.

> I ssee I wass mistaken.

Rebecca: Never give sass to Precursors' faces. Word from the wise.

Matt: Speaking from experience?

Rebecca: Maybe.

> [Ssegma]

> Ssegma: I need more advanced weaponry, to battle an unforseseen force even sstronger than ourss!

Rick: An army of one hit dice monsters. With the Death Star.

> [S'Landrai]

> S'Landrai: You are mistaken, Grelon. I sense no presence in this solar system strong enough to

> challenge the devices already given to you.

Rick: So the Kobolds know about these killer robots of doom but the nigh-on omnipotent elder race don't? For ultimate bad guys, they're a bit out of the loop.

Rebecca: Remember, advanced does not necessarily mean intelligent. Look at the alien invaders in Independence Day. Look at the Metalunans in This Island Earth. Look at the Decepticons. Advanced? Yes. Dumb as a bag of rocks? Definitely.

> The operators, not the machines must be at fault.

Rebecca: The Greelons are living proof of the PEBCAK principle.

Rick: PEBCAK?

Rebecca: Problem Exists Between Chair And Keyboard.

> But the S'Landrai are a compassionate race.

Natasha: The S'Landrai give generously to all deductible causes.

> We will provide additional weaponry necessary for you to fulfil your end of the pact.

Matt: They'll give them... an even bigger battlecruiser!

Natasha: But they've got seven robots!

Matt: Ah, but this one has air conditioning and airbags.

> [S'Landrai teleports away, Ssegma looking on]

Rick: He's not too impressive. Just some flash powder and a quick exit.

> S'Landrai: Until then...

> Ssegma: Yess... the pact...

All: FORESHADOWING!

> [Huge spaceship over Grelon]

Natasha: It's the Badyear Blimp.



Rick: Isn't that Doc Terror's ship?

> Hours later, a new, larger battleship appears on the horizon, blotting out the sun with its enormity.

Natasha: Bummer if you're trying to get a tan.

> It is the gift of the S'Landrai -- a machine of destruction capable of levelling an entire planet.

Rebecca: I think the S'Landrai are compensating.

> Certainly enough to destroy seven bothersome robots!

Matt: And their stupid dog.

> [Ship landing, Grelons in the foreground]

Rebecca: This is the part where they go wild and begin bashing skulls with bones, while Thus Spake Zarathustra plays in the background.

> Their primal instincts aroused by this vast symbol of power and glory,

Rick: Like frat boys at the sight of a keg.

> the Grelons mass beneath it, and with an almost religious zeal begin their ritual war chant.

Matt: They're doing a Haka?

Rebecca: The British Rugby team is trying to get it banned.

> It is not a pretty sight.

Rick: So just like frat boys with a keg.

> [Ssegma and Grelons]

Matt: Yeah, this is one ugly crowd.

Natasha: The guy just behind Ssegma is going to photobomb him and put it on his Facebook page. Good luck to him.

Rick: Why's that?

Natasha: No internet on Greelon. But he tries.

> Not one Grelon questions the motives of their mysterious benefactors.

Matt: The Greelons are what we know as 'suckers'.

> No one wonders why the S'Landrai have not conquered the galaxy themselves.

Rick: They're not so much delicately foreshadowing here as much as they're beating you with it.

> No one has any doubts -- least of all, the imperial Grelon!

Rebecca: Ssegma also gave all his money to the Nigerian Finance Minister for safekeeping. Smart, he

ain't.

Rick: Not being a little one-eyed there?

Rebecca: Cute.

> Ssegma: Go, my warriors!

Rebecca [Wicked Witch]: Fly my monkeys!

> Take your posts! We journey to Zoltek to destroy the robots -- and ravage a world!

Matt [Grelon]: Uh, sir? We already ravaged Zoltek.

Rick [Ssegma]: Well, then... we'll ravage it again!

Matt [Grelon]: But sir, there's-

Rick [Ssegma]: Who wields the gnawed bone of authority?

Matt [Grelon]: You do, sir.

Rick [Ssegma]: Who's the one minus one hit dice monster round here?

Matt [Grelon]: You are, sir.

Rick [Ssegma]: So shut up!

> [Squad talking, Robots standing around them]

Rebecca: And now Gartan's gun is on the right arm. How odd.

Matt: Artistic license or just plain inconsistency? You be the judge.

> Hours later on Zoltek...

Rebecca [Malek]: And that's the story of how I found this giant robot and how I lead my team to find their Giant robots and why I'm telling everyone the story of how I found my giant robot and-

Matt [Dex]: Shut up, damn you! Just shut up already!

> Akros: I vote we go to Grelon and wipe out those vipers where they nest!

Natasha: Vote Akros if you want to live.

> Silky: No, Akros, we know too little about these unusual weapons.

Rick: Can't they just take a brain-fry refresher course? Malek said she could operate the robot like an expert.

Matt: And look at how well that worked out for her.

Rick: A boo-boo on the chest that she was able to recover from and her robot seems to have instantly repaired?

Matt: Point taken. Greelon genocide it is.

> Eedon: I agree, we need time to master the robot's many functions...

Rick: They're full of amazing robot parts.

> [Squad]

Rebecca: I guess the Elite Tactical Team has a pretty powerful affirmative action policy in place to ensure that there's a member of every race in its ranks.

Matt: The UWC has a strong commitment to diversity. Silky's a single mother, and Scal's gay.

Rick: I heard that they're looking to hire a paraplegic black Muslim, preferably one with a terminal disease.

> Eedon: ...Time, I fear, we may not have!

Matt [Eedon]: I only incited three lynchings this week. I'm on a tight schedule.

> Dex: Eedon's got a point!

Natasha: It's on top of his head.

> The Grelons must know about our discoveries –

Rebecca: Again, how? As best as I can figure this comic's timeline, it's been a few hours to a few days since you found these robots. The Greelons have only seen one of them and don't have a shred of evidence that there's more.

Matt: How do you know there isn't one on Greelon that they got all their information from? That'd be a twist.

Rebecca: Because the model line didn't have a robot called 'Greelon' in it.

Matt: Hmm. Good point.

> and they'll be coming for us!

Rebecca: Although I suppose if you've made that one leap of logic, the next one makes sense.

> [Malek and Dex]

Rick: Bland white guys. Early eighties sci-fi in a nutshell.

> Dex: Let's give these giant-sized toys a workout

Natasha: Gotta trim down those giant metal thighs.

> -- and be ready to welcome the Grelons when they arrive!

Matt: So let's bake them a nice big cake.

> [Scal and Eedon]

Rick: Nonsense aliens. Also early eighties sci-fi in a nutshell.

> Scal: Don't sweat it, Dex-- the Grelons know how tough we are now -- and they'll never come looking for  
> a fight.

Matt: Oh yes. Because you were so effective at stopping them before.

Rebecca: Again, everyone's assuming that the Greelons know about all the robots. I have to wonder why.

Rick: Scal only knows because he's been the traitor all along.

> Eedon: I wish I shared your optimism, friend Scal, soon the Grelons will--

Matt: Interrupt your sentence!

Natasha: No! The fiends!

> [Malek and Silky, pointing]

Rebecca: Cue the Spielberg trademark "looking into the sky" shot.

> Silky: forget soon, Eedon -- look!

Rick: A multi-function polis! [Ding]

> [Squad]

Natasha: Our hero-like people, ladies and gentlemen.

> Icik: Holee--

> Dex: So much for preparations...

> Akros: I-- I've never seen anything like it!

Rick: And so this is the part where their world is consumed in a brilliant white light, and Crisis on Infinite Earths begins.

> [Squad with ship overhead]

> Akros: --It's huge!

Rick: It's only CG.

Natasha: Shhh!

> Dex: Well, what are we waiting for, guys--

Rebecca: This drek to end? Please?

> [Squad running to robots]

> Dex: --Let's scramble!!

Matt: This would probably be an apt juncture for some Kenny Loggins music.

Rebecca: Or at the very least, some homoerotic beach volleyball.

> [Eedon in cockpit]

Rick: Still squinty.

> In moments...

> Eedon: No time to organise a plan of attack...

Matt: Guess he'll just have to find some people to incite a lynching with.

> [Scal in cockpit]

Rebecca: Still hairy.

> Scal: I hardly know how to work the offensive controls...

Natasha: Fling poop like you always do.

> [Dex in cockpit]

Matt: Still generic.

> Dex: Figures the Grelons would whip up that monster to do us one better!

Rebecca: Yes Dex, you have adequacy issues. Stop pretending that nobody notices.

> [Akros in cockpit]

Natasha: Still a pterodactyl.

> Akros: Hmm... scanners indicate intensive heat buildup in the ship's lower quadrant...

Rick: They left their radiator on.

> [Silky in cockpit]

Matt: Still nonsensically aquatic.

> Silky: Something's dropping out of the ship-- Malek!! What are they--?

Rebecca: Tequila Gunners.

Natasha: Tequila Gunners?

Rebecca: Yup, that's what they're called.

Natasha: Right. Why?

Rebecca: Because.

Natasha: Right. [Pause] Tequilla Gunner!

> [Malek in cockpit, ship in background deploying Terrain Stalkers]

Rick: Still expositing.

> Malek: Some kind of advanced Terrain Stalkers

Matt: I hope she made that up on the spot. The mind boggles what a regular Terrain Stalker is.

> -- hundreds of them!

Natasha: So hit the boss while someone controls the adds. They'll all despawn when he dies.

> And from the way they're charging at us--

Rick [Rough]: Be right there!  
Matt [Rough]: Be right there!  
Rick [Rough]: You're late, Bob  
Natasha [Rough]: Sorry about that. Be right there!

> [Robots surrounded by Terrain Stalkers]

Rebecca: Who, for some reason, have decided to wait until they're within spitting distance before attacking. Nice use of surprise and numbers, guys.

> Malek: I think we're in trouble!

All: Really?

> NEXT: THE AWAKENING!

Natasha: Followed by the hitting the snooze button and rolling over-ing.

The big screen switched off, restoring the world to prose format. "Well that was so very, very eighties."  
Matt spoke up. "Precursors, single-biome worlds, aliens that look like humans with funny heads... I think all it needed was a lightsaber to complete the deal."

"Well this is just the beginning." Rick explained. "It was more or less a three issue limited series."

"More or less?" Rebecca asked, curious.

"It was cancelled because it sucked so hard." He replied. "The other two issues were compressed into a single one, probably because they'd already paid for it in advance or something."

"That... is pretty dire." Natasha whistled.

"That was DC in the early eighties." Rick shot back. "They were rather jealous of the success that Marvel was having with GI Joe and Transformers, so they wanted a multi-media franchise of their own. Robotech Defenders here is actually pretty typical of the results."

"Really dire then." Natasha shook her head. "You're not going to be showing us that now, Voice?"

"That'll be for next time you're here." The Voice replied. "In the meantime, thank you for your comments and feedback."

"If you really valued them, you wouldn't be sending us such crap." Rebecca simply stated. "End of argument."

Natasha stood, leaning on the back of the couch. "Hey Rick, I did have an idea I wanted to throw to you."

"Do tell." He replied, rather curious.

"Well, if Spastic Rhesus monkey make it big, we're going to need album covers." She explained. "So I was wondering if you'd be interested in taking a job offer."

"Beats the hell out of taking hateful commissions at conventions>" Rick eagerly responded as he stood.

"So what were you looking for?"

"I had a few ideas." She nodded. "Wanna talk it over at lunch?"

"After this comic, bacon would help." He grinned. "Lead on." The pair of them headed out, Rick already getting his sketchbook as he left the room.

Matt stood and turned to leave, then stopped, glancing back. "Say Rebecca?"

"Hmm?" She looked up, raising a curious brow.

"That tattoo of Natasha's that she was trying to hide." He continued. "I was wondering what it was"

"Of course." She nodded. "But it wasn't really worth the fuss; just your basic, generic, inane scribble that She likely got one night when drunk."

"Of course."

"Why'd you ask?"

"Just curious." Matt casually replied. "Nothing else."

"Of course." Rebecca replied with the tiniest of knowing nods. "Nothing else."

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Author's notes:

A reference to the year 2135 in the rebuild of a MRT3135 MSTing? Is it a plot element? Or maybe it's just a coincidence.

I had originally intended to do a rebuild of AP's Robotech: Sentinels Rubicon, because, well, it sucks even more. However, my copies of the comic seem to have vanished sometime in the last decade. Weather this is actually a bad thing is another matter. Regardless, I do have a soft spot for Robotech Defenders because it is so bad; from the shallow characters to the forced plot to the laid-on-thick 80s sci-fi clichés, this comic has it in droves.

As you can imagine, this comic has nothing to do with anything else in the Robotech franchise. Nor, for that matter, does it have anything to do with Fang Sun Dougram, the source of its mechanical designs. This comic would never be mentioned again in the history of the Robotech, and remains largely obscure.. for good reason.

Finally, for the benefit of readers, I've thrown in a handy "Mecha conversion table" with the Robotech Defenders, Dougram and Battletech names of each design.

Robotech Defenders	Fang Sun Dougram	Battletech
Zoltek	Dougram	Shadow Hawk
Talos	Blockhead	Wolverine
Thoren	Roundfacer	Griffin
Gartan	Ironfoot	Thunderbolt
Ziyon	Leadfoot	Battlemaster

Condar	Bushmaster	NA
Aqualo	Mackerel	NA
Dromedan/"Terrain Stalker"	Tequila Gunner	Goliath

Thanks to Douglass Weeks for providing the comic

Robotech is copyright Harmony Gold

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Rebecca Bartley, Natasha Isavia, Matt Simmons and Rick R. Mortis created by Rick R. (natch)

Pterodactyl FME created by Max "Boutros" Field

Questions? Comments? Complaints? Shock and/or terror? Email us at [elmerstudios00 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:elmerstudios00@gmail.com) and register your Jeff.

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> Thug: Ay! Lillypod -- c'mere!

> Dex: Huh?