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# PLUNDER™

ISSUE THREE: AGAINST THE CURRENT

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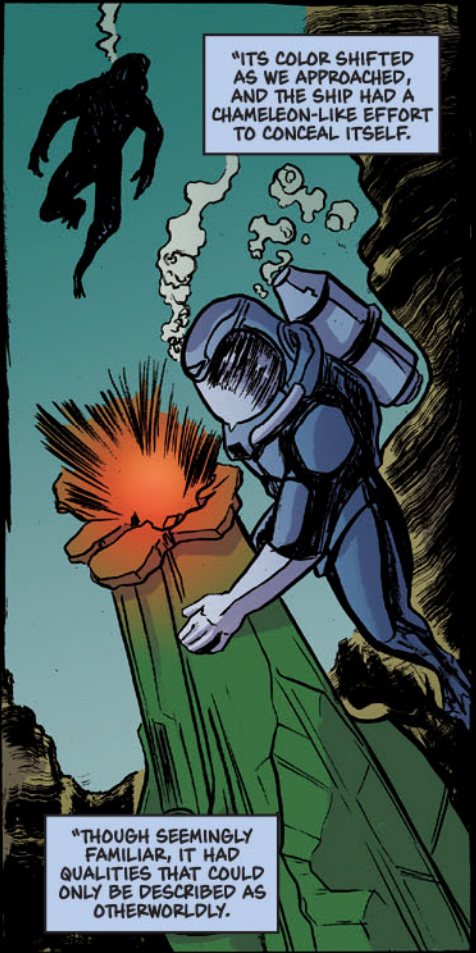
"FREDRICK LABESCO, A WEALTHY SOUTH-AFRICAN DIAMOND BARON, COMMISSIONED US TO STUDY WHAT WAS KILLING THE REEFS IN THE GULF OF ADAN.



"WE DOVE INTO THE DARKNESS, SEARCHING FOR HOW TO ELIMINATE THE TOXICITY...TO RESTORE THE BALANCE.

"THE CRAFT WE FOUND WAS BEYOND HUMAN ENGINEERING. IT WAS LIGHTER THAN GRAPHITE, BUT HAD A TENSILE STRENGTH GREATER THAN STEEL.

"ITS COLOR SHIFTED AS WE APPROACHED, AND THE SHIP HAD A CHAMELEON-LIKE EFFORT TO CONCEAL ITSELF.



"THOUGH SEEMINGLY FAMILIAR, IT HAD QUALITIES THAT COULD ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS OTHERWORLDLY.

"IT LOOKED LIKE A JELLYFISH. IT HAD NEMATOCYSTS, STINGING CELLS USED TO DEFEND AND FEED ON PREY."





"AND MUCH LIKE JELLYFISH, THIS CREATURE NEVER STOPPED GROWING. THERE WERE CHARACTERISTICS THAT WERE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. JELLYFISH ARE 95% WATER, AND THIS CREATURE WAS NEARLY 75% SOLID MASS.

"THERE WAS THE EXOSKELETON. ITS HIDE WAS LEATHERY AND TOUGH, CLOSER TO A RHINOCEROS THAN A WATER-BASED LIFE FORM.

"AND AN IMPOSSIBLE TRAIT: THE CREATURE HAD BILATERAL SYMMETRY, TWO EQUAL HALVES, LIKE A FROG--OR EVEN US, BUT IT WAS CAPABLE OF DIVIDING COMPLETELY...

DR. FRYE, YOU GOTTA SEE THIS.

"...OF FORMING SOMETHING NEW AND EQUALLY DANGEROUS WITHOUT ANY EXTERNAL STIMULI.

"THIS WAS NOT A DEFENSIVE MUSCULAR RESPONSE, LIKE SOME KIND OF REFLEX TEST--THIS WAS AN ACTION THAT CAME FROM THE IMPULSES OF A CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM.

"WHEN WE DISSECTED IT, THE FLAGELLA BECAME ITS OWN ORGANISM, LIKE A LIZARD'S TAIL WITH CONSCIOUSNESS. THIS CREATURE WAS SMART, AND IT SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ALL OF US."

DID YOU SEE THAT? IT'S NOT JUST RESPONDING TO STIMULI. IT'S LISTENING.



