

THIS MISSION SUCKS. RUN AWAY FROM A FIGHT, CRAWL THROUGH SOME DUSTY TUNNELS...

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE EGOS!

I INVENTED THE EGOS, GIRL. IN A DIRTY BAR ON MARSPOET.

THAT'S NOT THE WAY ESPERO TELLS IT.

ESPERO? HE WAS HAMMERED THAT NIGHT. NEXT MORNING, HE TOOK CREDIT FOR EVERYTHING.

DOOR'S JAMMED AGAIN.

SAMIR! ASHA! CAN YOU HEAR ME IN THERE?

I'M STARVING.

IF THERE'S FOOD ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT DOOR, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.

SHARA! NO!

GIRL HAS A POINT.

THIS IS YOUR SECRET PLAN? A CRIPPLED WOMAN, A HOLE IN THE GROUND, AND A STUCK DOOR?

SHUT UP, STONER. IF I WANTED EARTHGOV'S OPINION, I'D STICK A FINGER UP MY [REDACTED] AND SEE WHAT--

CREE-EE-EEEEKK



HEY,  
FROSTY.  
THIS  
GIRL BELONG  
TO YOU?

SHE'S  
ON LOAN.



COME ON IN,  
EGOS. PIXEL, STONER,  
ROBOT GUY...



...MEET THE  
CUBERS.



DON'T YOU GUYS WANT SOME?

WE CAN'T, LITTLE ONE.

BUT EAT UP. FROSTLINE TOLD US YOU'D BE COMING, SO WE STOCKED UP A BIT.

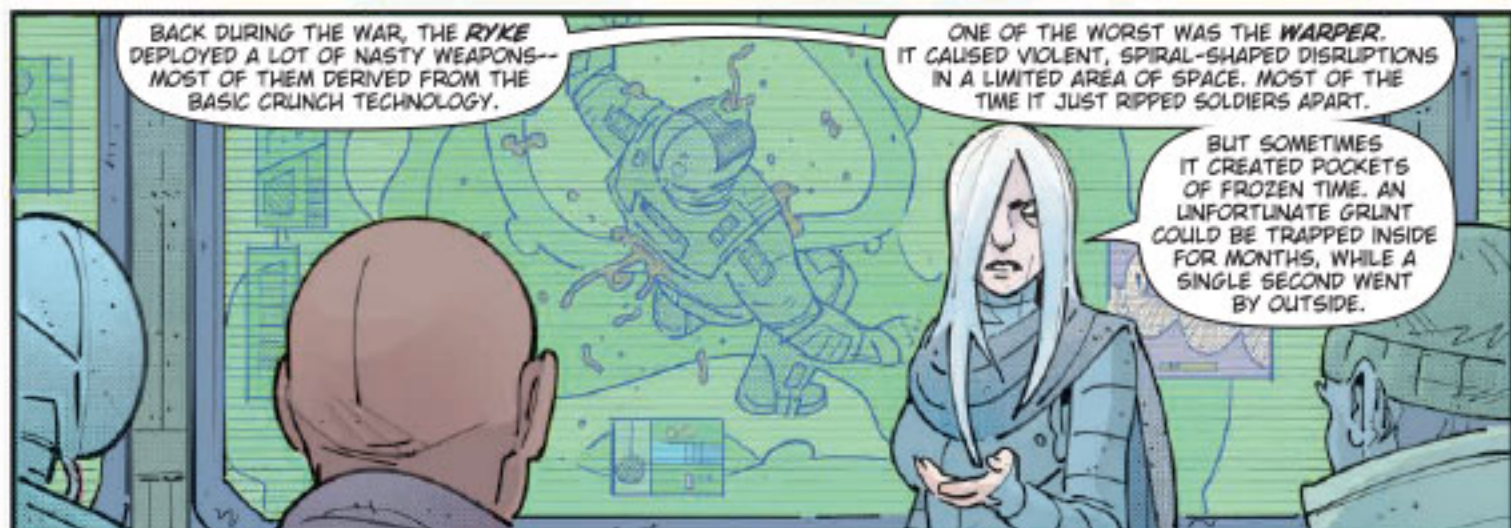


CUBERS -

I KNOW THAT TERM

I DON'T.

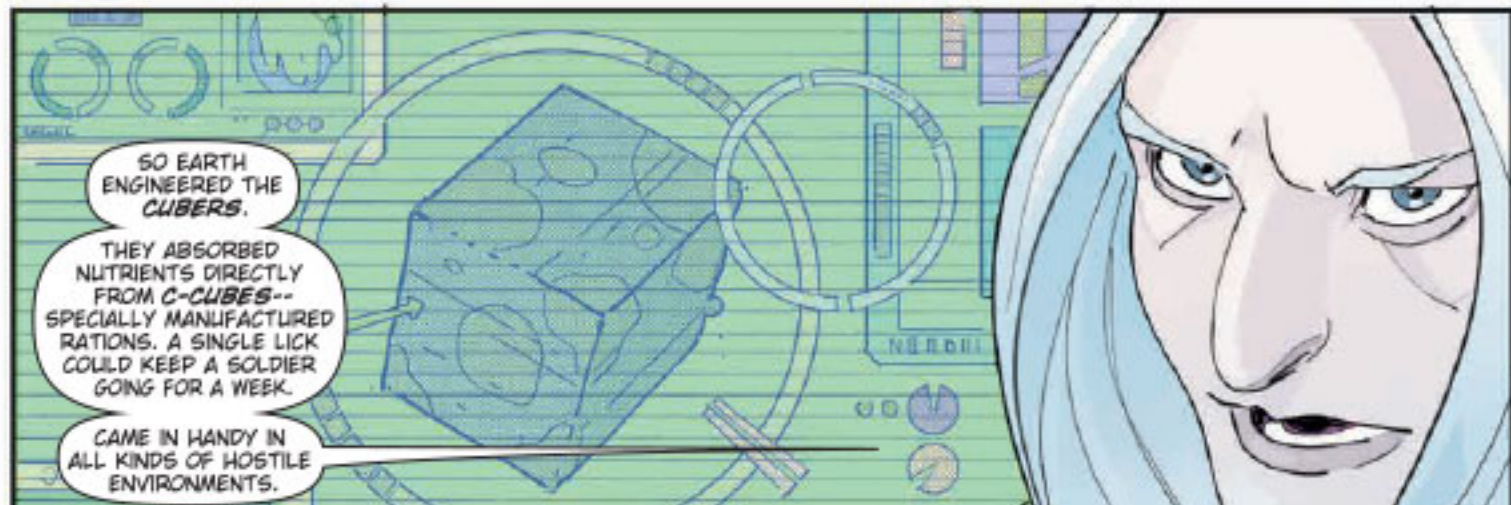
THAT'S NOT SURPRISING. EARTHGOV WOULD PREFER IT IF EVERYONE FORGOT ABOUT THEM.



BACK DURING THE WAR, THE RYKE DEPLOYED A LOT OF NASTY WEAPONS-- MOST OF THEM DERIVED FROM THE BASIC CRUNCH TECHNOLOGY.

ONE OF THE WORST WAS THE **WARTER**. IT CAUSED VIOLENT, SPIRAL-SHAPED DISRUPTIONS IN A LIMITED AREA OF SPACE. MOST OF THE TIME IT JUST RIPPED SOLDIERS APART.

BUT SOMETIMES IT CREATED POCKETS OF FROZEN TIME. AN UNFORTUNATE GRUNT COULD BE TRAPPED INSIDE FOR MONTHS, WHILE A SINGLE SECOND WENT BY OUTSIDE.



SO EARTH ENGINEERED THE **CUBERS**.

THEY ABSORBED NUTRIENTS DIRECTLY FROM **C-CUBES**-- SPECIALLY MANUFACTURED RATIONS. A SINGLE LICK COULD KEEP A SOLDIER GOING FOR A WEEK.

CAME IN HANDY IN ALL KINDS OF HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS.



TROUBLE IS, THEY CAN'T EAT ANYTHING ELSE.



I REMEMBER HEARING ABOUT THIS. DIDN'T EARTHGOV PROVIDE THESE SOLDIERS WITH C-CUBES AFTER THE WAR?

SURE.

FOR A WHILE.

BUT THE LAST MANUFACTURER STOPPED MAKING THEM A COUPLE YEARS AGO. NOT ENOUGH CUSTOMERS LEFT ALIVE; IT WASN'T FINANCIALLY VIABLE ANYMORE.

PLUS, YOU KNOW. NOBODY LIKES TO SHIP TO TORTUGA.



I'M SURE IF EARTHGOV KNEW ABOUT THIS--

YOU THINK I HAVEN'T TALKED TO THEM, KID?

EARTHGOV WON'T ACKNOWLEDGE THE PROBLEM ANYMORE. AND THE CUBERS ARE TOO OLD AND FRAIL TO LEAVE THIS PLANET.

*SOON RATS* HERE LIVED TWO YEARS INSIDE A WARPED BREACH.

*ALISON'S STORY* IS WORSE. SHE KEPT AN ENEMY PINNED DOWN INSIDE ONE, UNDER ORDERS, UNTIL HE FROZE TO DEATH.



*SAMIR AND ASHA* HAD A BABY LAST YEAR. SOMEHOW.

IT'D BE A MIRACLE, IF THE KID WEREN'T SLOWLY DYING OF MALNUTRITION.



A FEW OF THE CUBERS HAVE ALREADY STARVED TO DEATH.

ON A PLANET FULL OF FOOD.



WE'LL DO WHAT WE CAN. BUT--

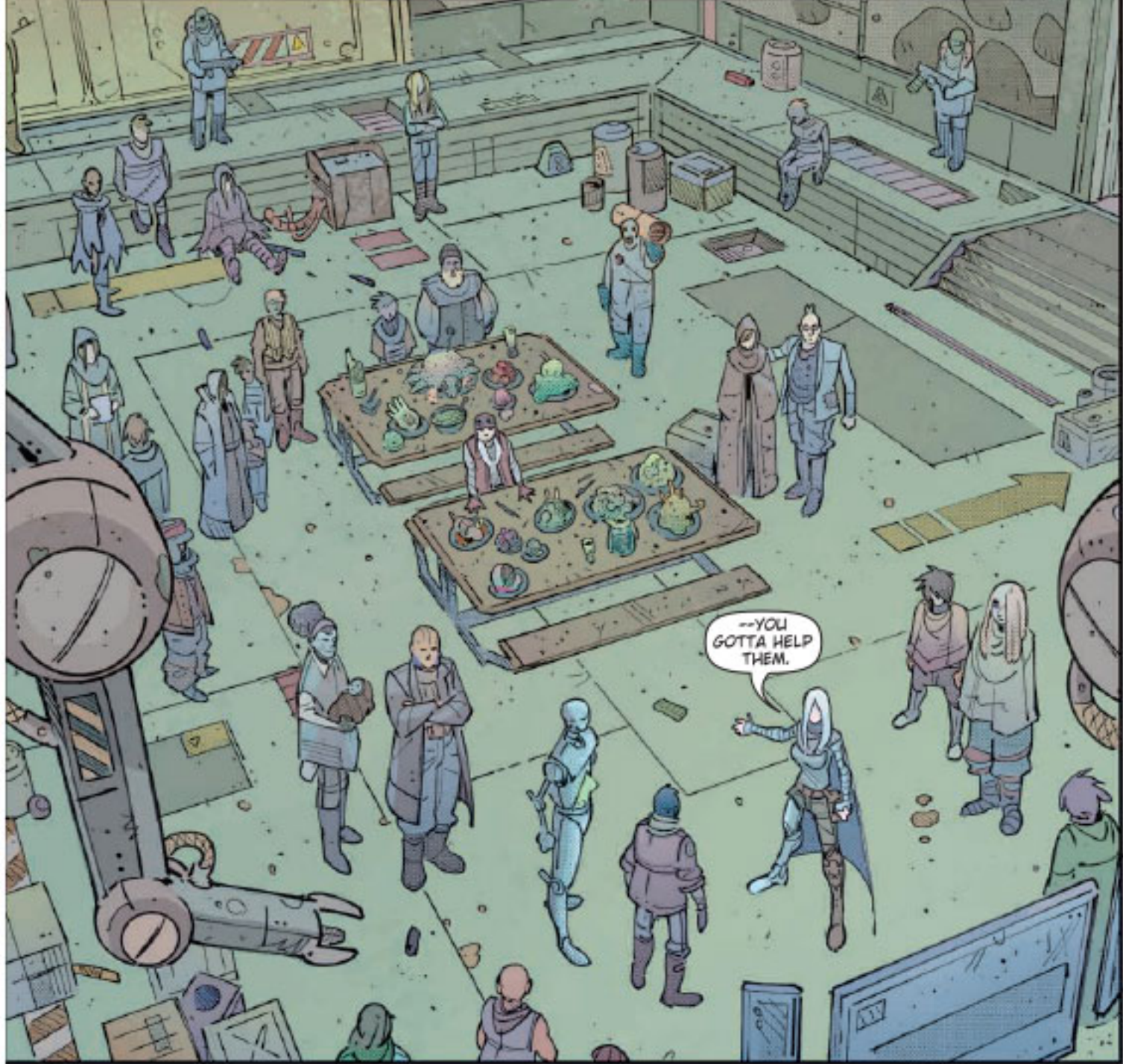
IT WAS ROUGH FOR ME, MIRI. AFTER I LOST THE LEG. YOU REMEMBER?

BUT TORTUGA'S MY HOME NOW. EVEN THE OLD MEN TRUST ME, BECAUSE OF MY SHANKER.



I KNOW YOU'RE TRACKING A GALACTIC CONSPIRACY. I CAN HOOK YOU UP WITH SOME PEOPLE; I'VE GOT EYES AND EARS ALL OVER THIS WORLD.

BUT THERE'S A PRICE. BEFORE I HELP YOU--



--YOU GOTTA HELP THEM.

MANY LIGHT-YEARS AWAY...  
IN THE QUIET HALLS OF EARTHGOV...

OKAY, TROOPS:  
IN CASE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN  
ONE BEFORE, THIS IS CALLED  
A SHANKER.

IT'S THE AK-47 OF ARTIFICIAL  
LIMBS. CHEAP, DURABLE, MASS-PRINTED,  
AND VERY COMMON ON THE PLANET TORTUGA,  
WHERE OUR LATE FRIEND PHILO WAS KNOWN  
TO SPEND HIS OFF-HOURS.

BUT THIS AIN'T NO OFF-  
THE-SHELF MODEL. SEE THE BLINKING  
LIGHT? THAT'S A QUANTUM 'CEIVER,  
SPECIALLY DESIGNED TO...

...TO...

