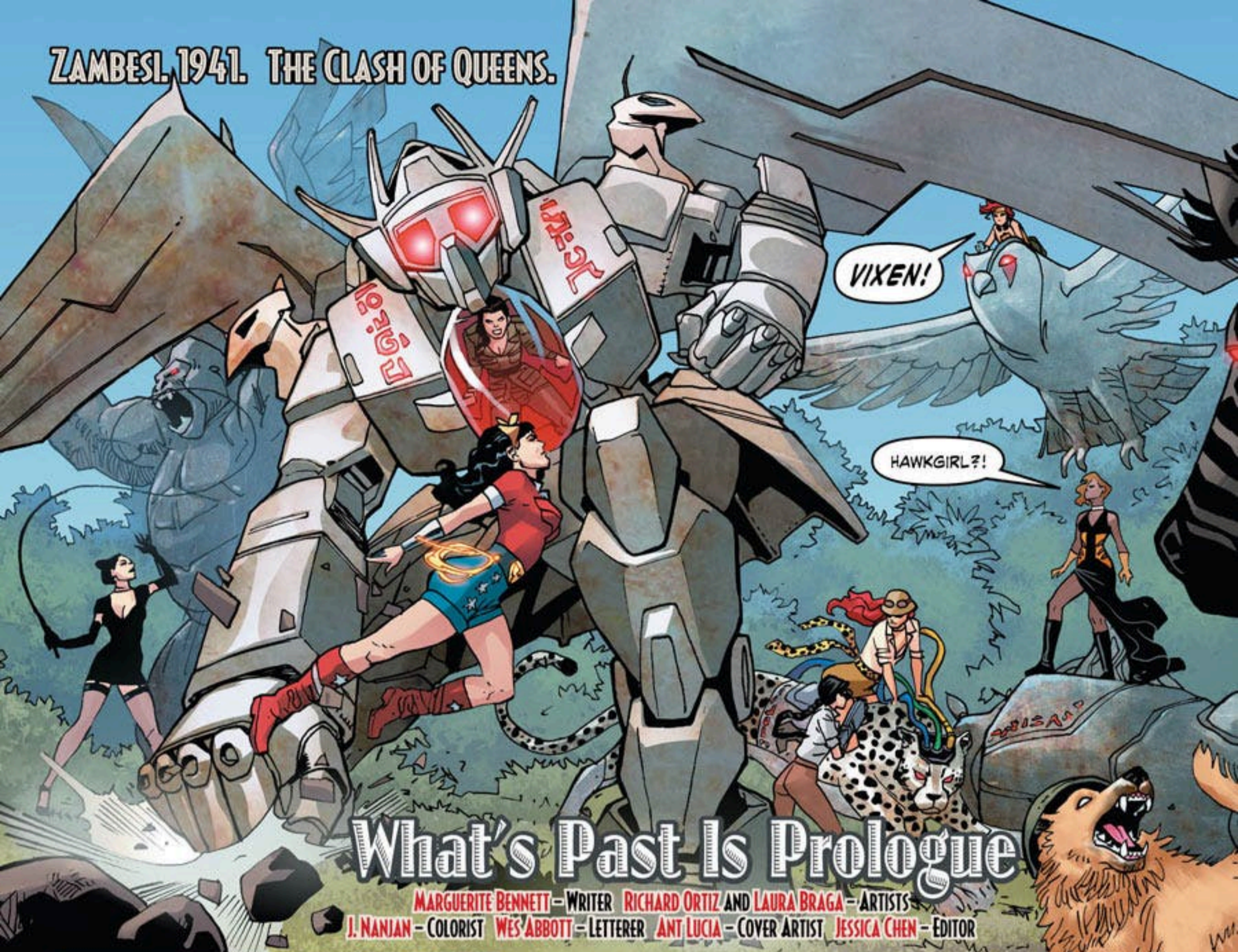


# ZAMBESI, 1941. THE CLASH OF QUEENS.



## What's Past Is Prologue

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MY QUEEN.

I'VE BEEN DEEPER INTO THE DARK THAN I EVER RECKONED.

AND I HAVE BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING BETTER THAN A MALTESE FALCON, I HOPE.



\*THESE MECHANICAL GODS ARE NOT GODS FROM A LOST KINGDOM!

\*THEY ARE WEAPONS, LEFT HERE BY AN ALIEN RACE.

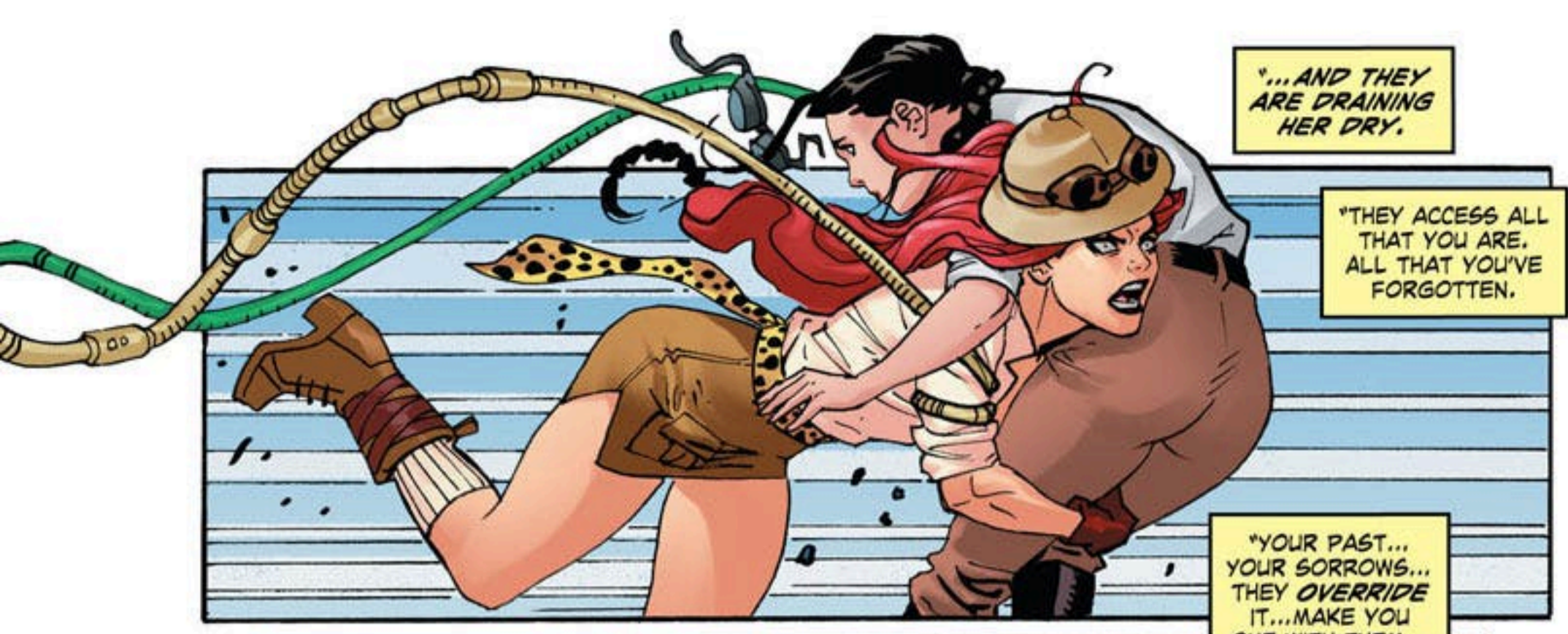
\*TANKS, PLANES, SPIES--

\*THEY'RE LOOKING FOR SACRIFICES!



\*THEY'RE NOT USING CHEETAH AS A GUIDE OR A VOICE...

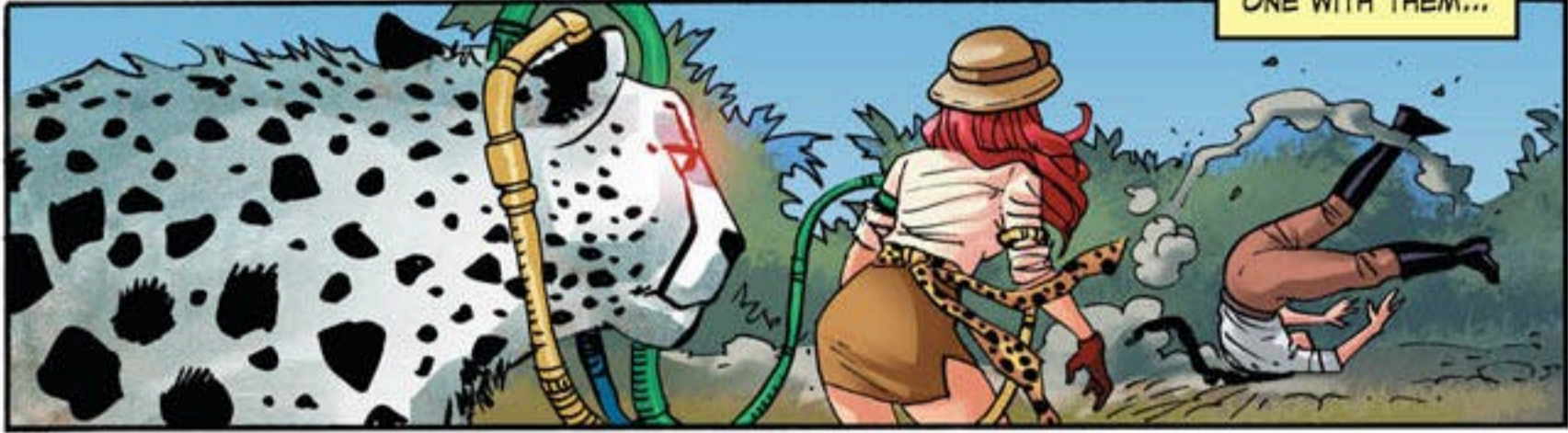
\*...THEY'RE USING HER AS A BATTERY...



"... AND THEY ARE DRAINING HER DRY.

"THEY ACCESS ALL THAT YOU ARE. ALL THAT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN.

"YOUR PAST... YOUR SORROWS... THEY *OVERRIDE* IT... MAKE YOU ONE WITH THEM...

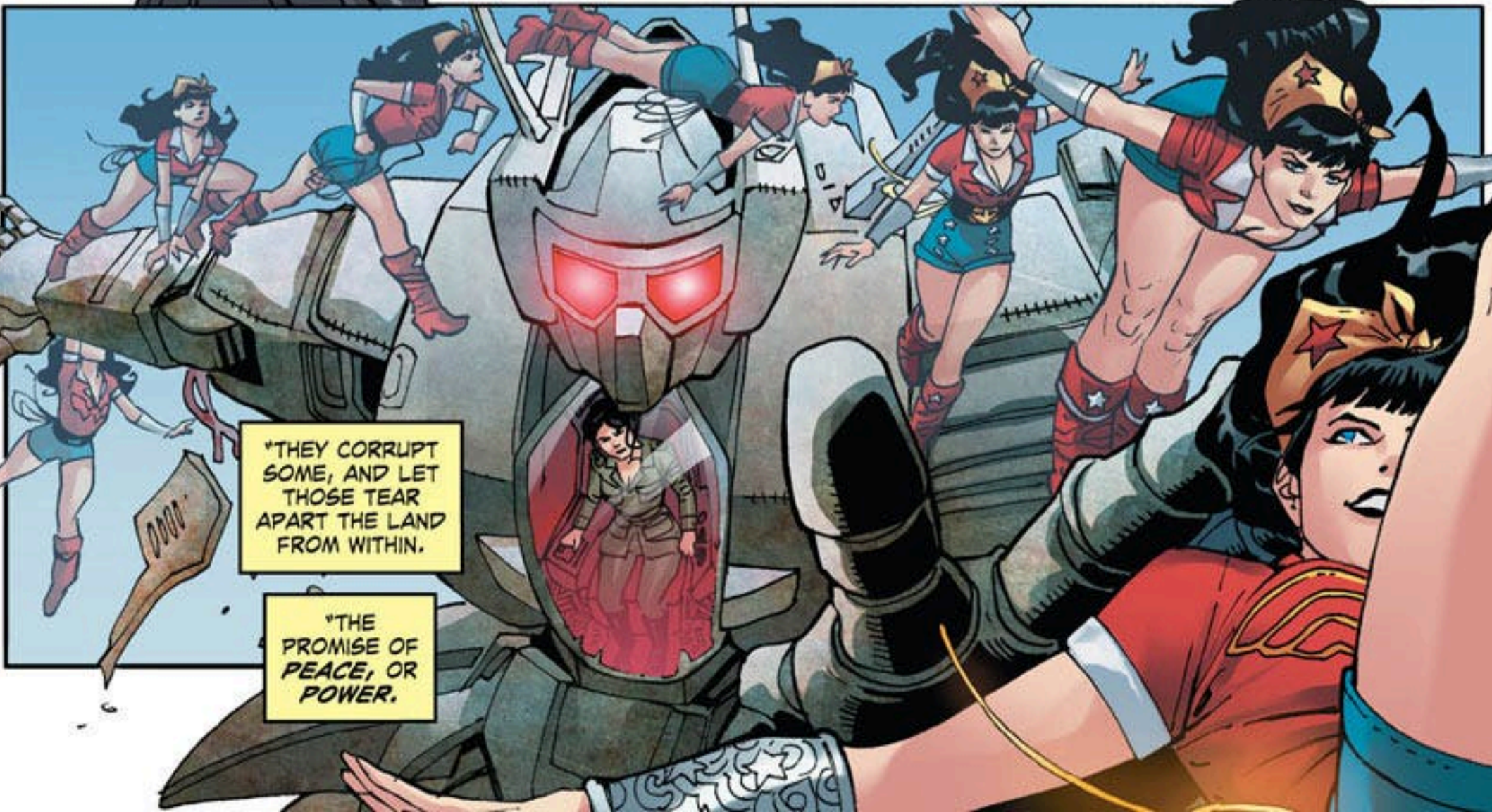


"MAKE YOU BELONG.



"THIS IS THE GREAT THANAGARIAN CONQUEST.

"A PLAGUE ON THE GALAXY.

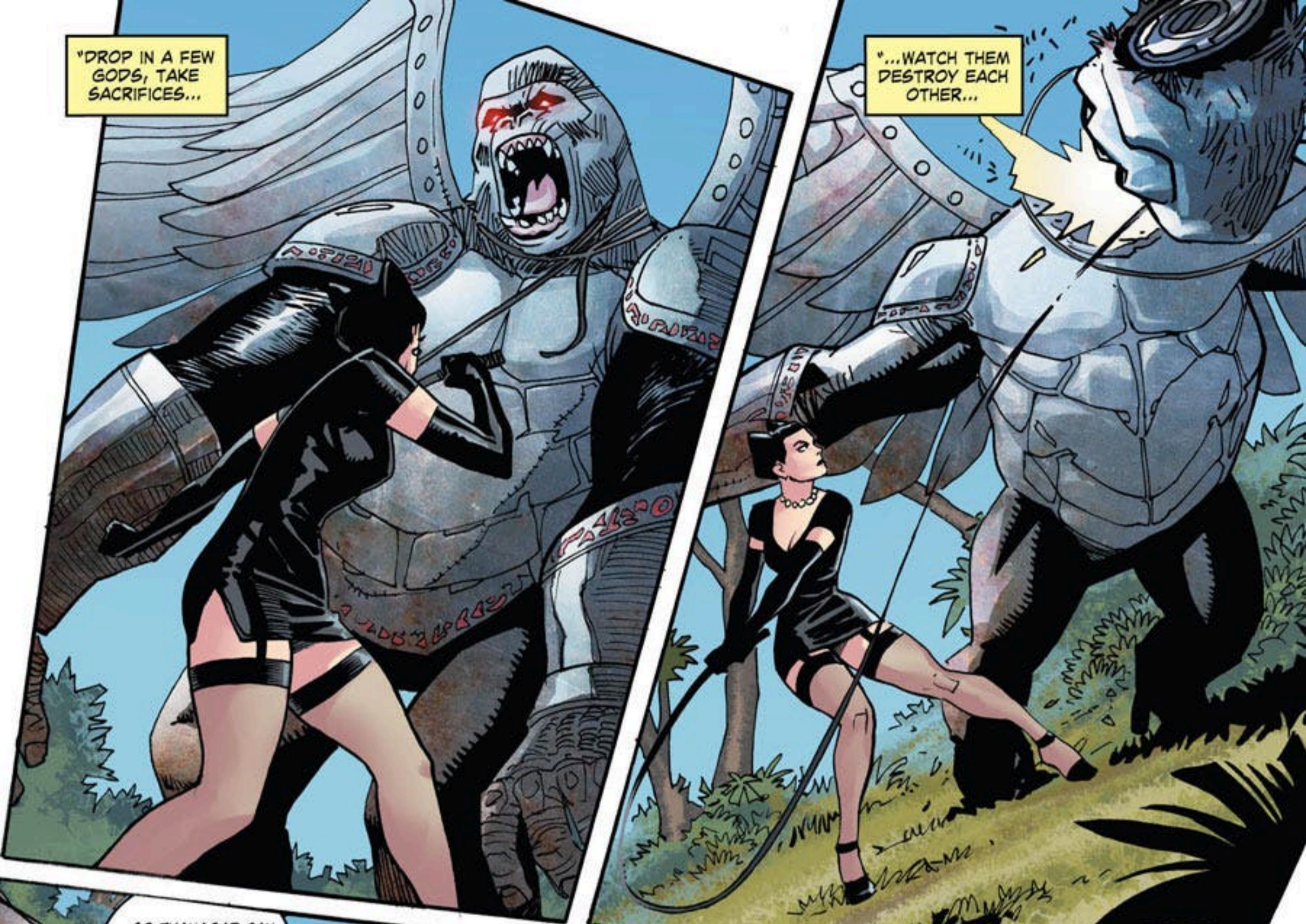


"THEY CORRUPT SOME, AND LET THOSE TEAR APART THE LAND FROM WITHIN.

"THE PROMISE OF PEACE, OR POWER.

"DROP IN A FEW GODS, TAKE SACRIFICES..."

"...WATCH THEM DESTROY EACH OTHER..."



...SO THANAGAR CAN SWOOP DOWN ON A CONQUERED, BROKEN PLANET.

WITH ALL RESPECT TO THIS ALIEN WORLD--



**POW**

BIGGER BASTARDS HAVE BROKEN THEIR NECKS.

AND BETTER INVASIONS HAVE TRIED.



WHAT DID YOU SEE, HAWKGIRL?

THESE MECHANICAL GODS HAVE REGENERATIVE POWERS...

...I TOOK SOMETHING FROM THIS ONE THAT CAN SHOW YOU WHAT YOU NEED.

A CROWN?

FOR THE ONLY TRUE QUEEN IN ZAMBESI, MY HEART OR ANYWHERE ELSE.



\*THANAGAR ATTEMPTED ITS FIRST CONQUEST OF EARTH TEN CENTURIES AGO...

\*...THEY LANDED IN ZAMBESI.



\*THEY SENT THE QUEEN A GIFT FROM THEIR OWN 'KINGDOM...'

\*...A GOD, AN ADVISOR, WHO PROMISED PEACE AMID THE MANY WARRING TRIBES...



\*...BUT THE QUEEN SENSED SOMETHING IN THE 'MAGIC' OF THESE STRANGERS...



\*...AND SHE STRUCK FIRST.



"THE 'PANTHEON' WAS STUDIED, CONTAINED..."

\*...AND THE QUEEN BUILT THE *FIRST* AMULET TO CONNECT HER WITH ALL LIFE IN THIS WORLD, TO DEFEND WHATEVER CAME TO INVADE FROM *BEYOND* IT.

"THE RARE METAL FROM WHICH THE SO-CALLED MECHANICAL GODS WERE BUILT WAS TOO STRONG, AND SO STRONG THAT NO FIRE BURNED HOT ENOUGH TO SEE THEM DESTROYED--

\*SO THEY WERE BURIED BENEATH THE EARTH.



\*THE QUEEN TOOK THE AMULETS, HID THEM IN TEMPLES, DEADLY AND GUARDED...

\*...AND IN THE END, HA...

\*...NO MATTER THE CRISIS...

\*...IT REALLY WASN'T MAGIC. AND IT WASN'T QUITE ALIENS, EITHER.

THE BEST OF WHAT WAS MADE CAME FROM HUMAN INGENUITY.

PEOPLE-- JUST PEOPLE-- FIGURED IT OUT.