

A comic book panel depicting a volcanic landscape. The scene is dominated by bright orange and red lava flows that are bubbling and spilling upwards. In the background, a mountain peak is visible under a cloudy sky. On the left side of the panel, a portion of a classical-style building with columns and windows is visible. The overall atmosphere is one of intense heat and destruction.

"WHEN WE WERE INITIATED —  
GIVEN *FORM* — MUCH OF EARTH  
WAS *UNINHABITABLE*.

"THE PLAINS, THESE HILLS, ALL  
WAS BLANKETED IN *RAW, SEETHING*  
*ENERGY*. ALL BUT THE HIGHEST *PEAKS*.

"BUT EARTH WAS  
*NOT LIFELESS* —"

We're  
approaching —  
approaching —

Goddammit, hold  
it *together* — !



# SAILORS ON A SEA of FIRE

by  
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**A M U N K R A S T**

**T**hey came across the burning oceans from lands unknown and unheralded. They came after the end of all, to begin anew.

They did not curse, and they did not waver. Though their coracle was tiny, and instant death heaved and swelled around them, they had great purpose, and their purpose gave them calm. Calm, and a quiet intent.

They did not thirst, nor did they hunger, though their ship's biscuit was long since eaten and their water drained, and there'd been scant rations of each even when they set out. But they had mighty spells protecting them. From fire, starvation, all manner of cruel fate.

And so they sailed, in their fragile craft, tossed and spun by burning waves. And they grew weak and faint, their flesh shriveling on their bones, their throats parched and swollen with need. But they did not pause. They did not cry out. They did not sleep.

"We forge on," they whispered, low and sand-voiced. "For we have mighty magicks to do, a world to shape. We forge on. Do you see it? Do you see it yet?" Dull-eyed, they peered forward, in hope of a horizon.

And then one day, the cry came. "Land! Land ho!"

It was not loud, for the lookout had lost all strength. But all heard her, with their hearts if not their ears.

And there it was, jutting above the flames...

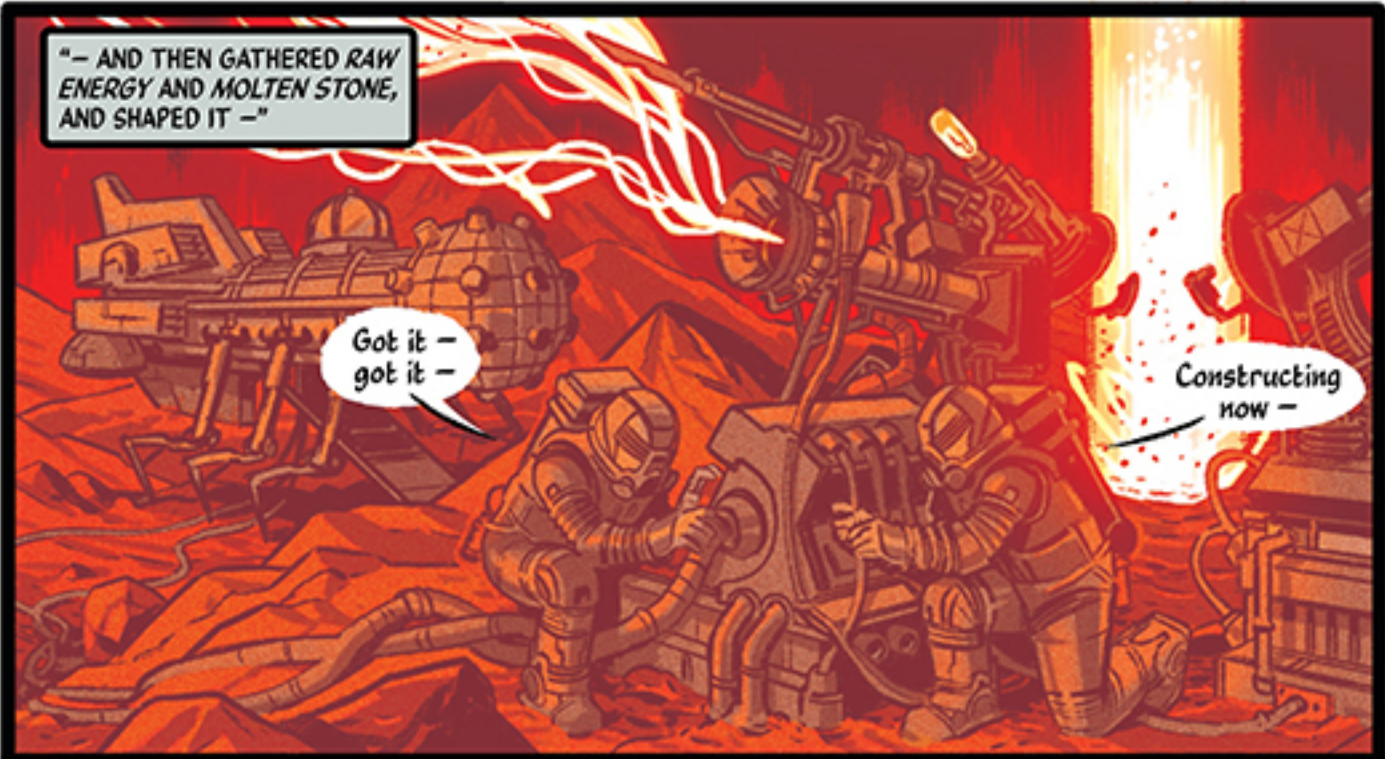


"THEY CAME, THE MASTERS,  
TO THIS VERY PEAK.



"THEY CAME AND BUILT  
GREAT MACHINES -

"- AND THEN GATHERED RAW  
ENERGY AND MOLTEN STONE,  
AND SHAPED IT -"



Got it -  
got it -

Constructing  
now -

How's  
this?

Functional,  
but really? You  
want to watch  
that lumbering  
around?



Okay, okay.  
We can make  
'em look like  
whatever we  
want, so -

Children's  
toys? Did you  
ever grow  
up?

Here, give  
me that -



Ah! Now we're talking!  
Hm? Hm?

Pierson, you  
have a one-track  
mind.

What? It's  
classical!

