



THAT WAS A PLEASANT EVENING, BARON KERUSKENDI.

BUT I MUST BE GOING.

GOING, BARBARELLA?



NO. I'M AFRAID THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

KUK

IN FACT--



SHUNK

--YOU ARE DESTINED NEVER TO LEAVE THIS ROOM.



THESE ARE **VUSSIX 6** LASER CANNONS. AN ECCENTRIC CHOICE, FOR BEDROOM FURNITURE.

ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.



I SEE.

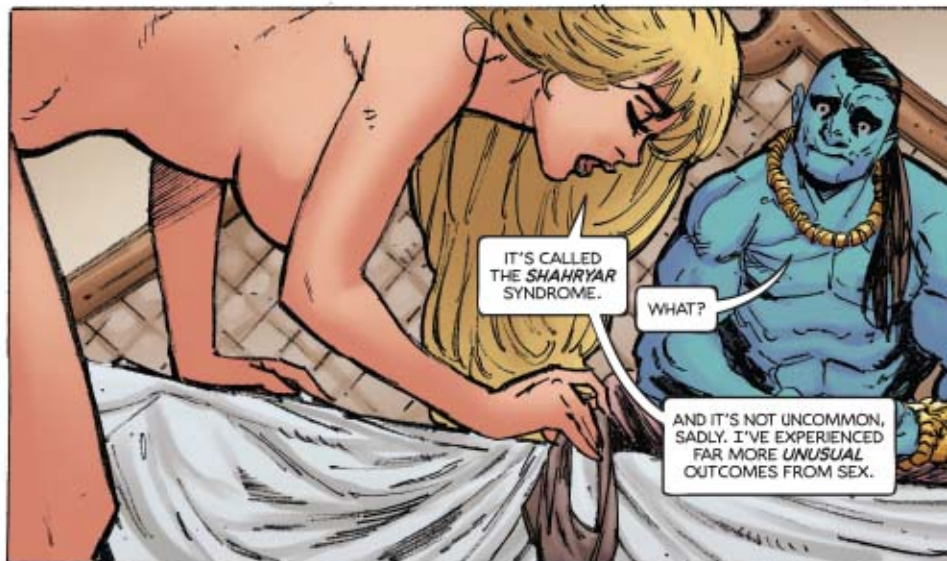
THE WOMAN I LOVED ABOVE ALL OTHERS WAS **UNFAITHFUL** TO ME.

AND I **SWORE** I WOULD NEVER BE DECEIVED AGAIN.



ACCORDINGLY, I NOW **EXECUTE** MY SEXUAL PARTNERS AFTER A SINGLE NIGHT OF INTIMACY.

ENSURING THAT THEY NEVER **BETRAY** ME, OR ANY OTHER MAN.



IT'S CALLED THE **SHAHRYAR** SYNDROME.

WHAT?

AND IT'S NOT UNCOMMON, SADLY. I'VE EXPERIENCED FAR MORE **UNUSUAL** OUTCOMES FROM SEX.



THAT SEEMS **UNLIKELY**.

NO, IT'S TRUE. **THREE**, AT LEAST.

THREE MORE **UNUSUAL** OUTCOMES THAN BEING KILLED?

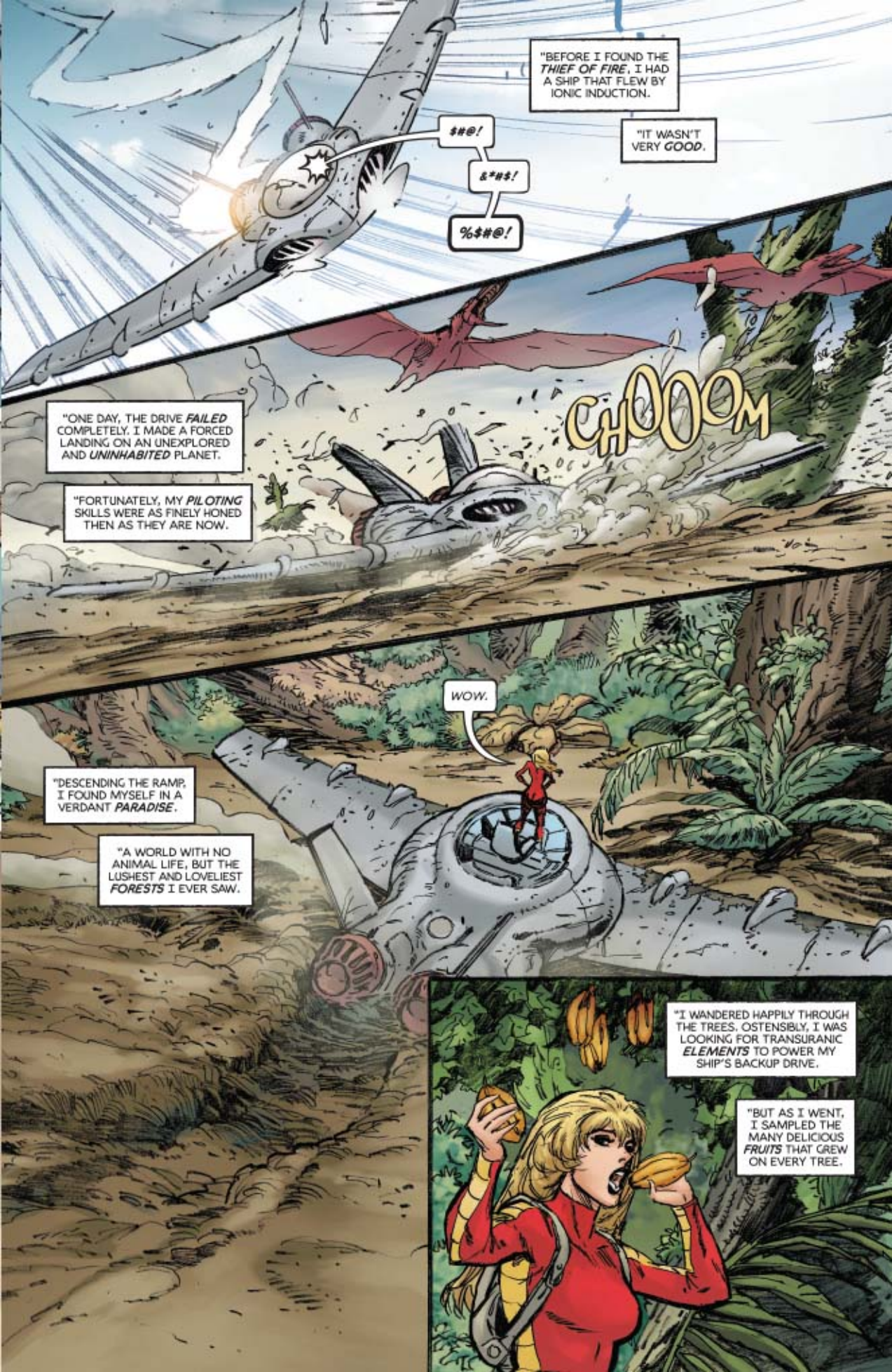
YES.

WHAT WAS THE **MOST** UNUSUAL?



I'LL TELL YOU. BUT I'LL GET **DRESSED** AS I DO IT, IF YOU DON'T MIND.

I DON'T INTEND TO **STAY** VERY LONG.



"BEFORE I FOUND THE THIEF OF FIRE, I HAD A SHIP THAT FLEW BY IONIC INDUCTION.

"IT WASN'T VERY GOOD.

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"ONE DAY, THE DRIVE **FAILED** COMPLETELY. I MADE A FORCED LANDING ON AN UNEXPLORED AND **UNINHABITED** PLANET.

CHOOOM

"FORTUNATELY, MY **PILOTING** SKILLS WERE AS FINELY HONED THEN AS THEY ARE NOW.

WOW.

"DESCENDING THE RAMP, I FOUND MYSELF IN A VERDANT **PARADISE**.

"A WORLD WITH NO ANIMAL LIFE, BUT THE LUSHEST AND LOVELIEST **FORESTS** I EVER SAW.

"I WANDERED HAPPILY THROUGH THE TREES. OSTENSIBLY, I WAS LOOKING FOR **TRANSURANIC ELEMENTS** TO POWER MY SHIP'S BACKUP DRIVE.

"BUT AS I WENT, I SAMPLED THE MANY DELICIOUS **FRUITS** THAT GREW ON EVERY TREE.



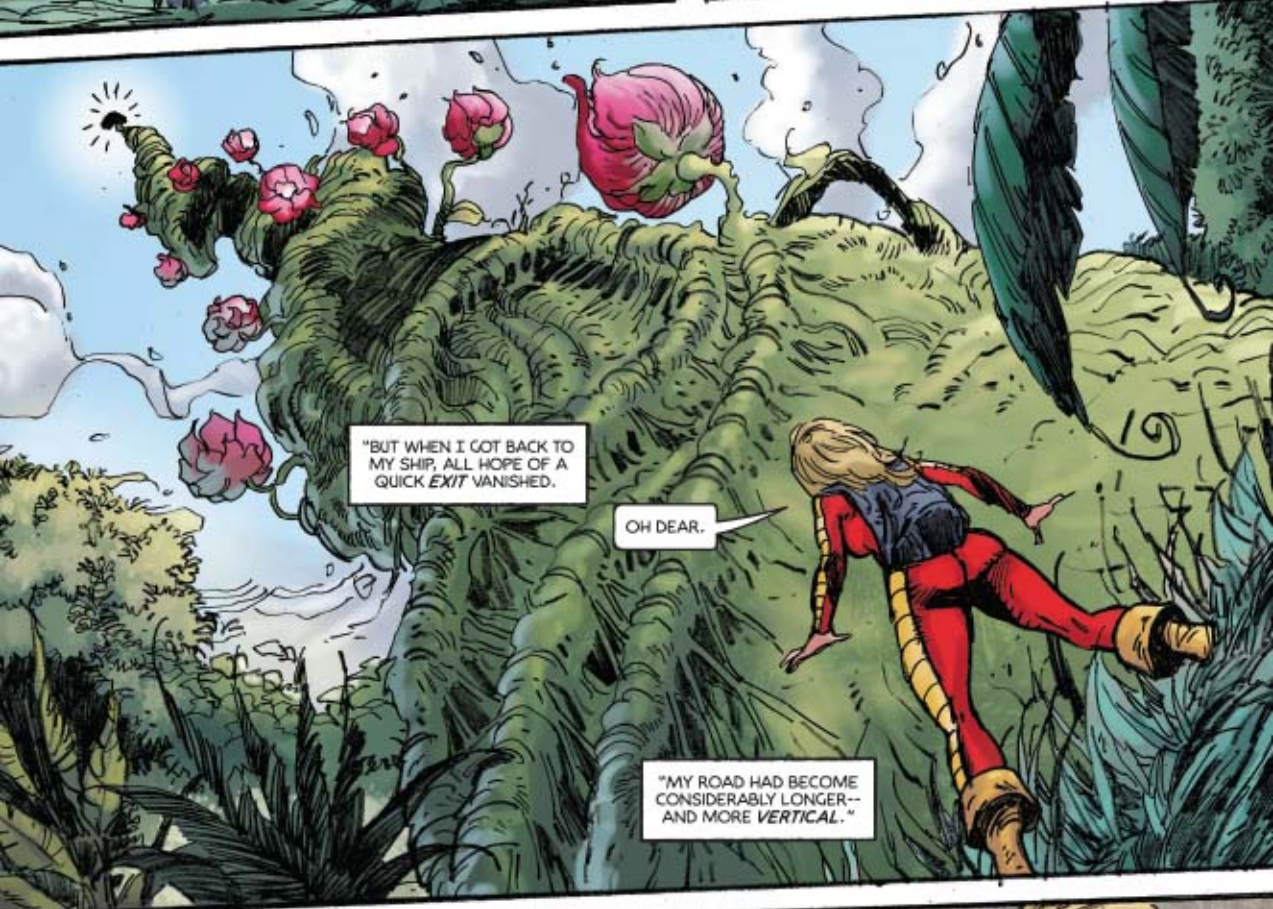
"I UNCOVERED A SEAM OF ALLOTROPIC *PROTACTINIUM*, AND FILLED MY PANNER WITH HIGH-GRADE ORE....

"IGNORING THE SEMI-SENTIENT *VINES* THAT NUDED AND NUZZLED AND OCCASIONALLY KIBITZED.



"WITH MY BAG FULL AT LAST, I RETRACED MY STEPS.

"I HAD COME TO FEEL THAT MY PRESENCE HERE WAS AN *INTRUSION*. THAT I WAS A *TRESPASSER* IN A KIND OF *UTOPIA*."



"BUT WHEN I GOT BACK TO MY SHIP, ALL HOPE OF A QUICK *EXIT* VANISHED.

OH DEAR.


"MY ROAD HAD BECOME CONSIDERABLY LONGER-- AND MORE *VERTICAL*."



A BEANSTALK?


I'M NO BOTANIST. BUT I COULD SEE THIS WAS A CURIOUS PLANT. FOR ONE THING, IT WAS IN *FLOWER* WHEN EVERY OTHER THING I'D SEEN HAD BORNE FRUIT.

ALSO, IT WAS VERY *BIG*.



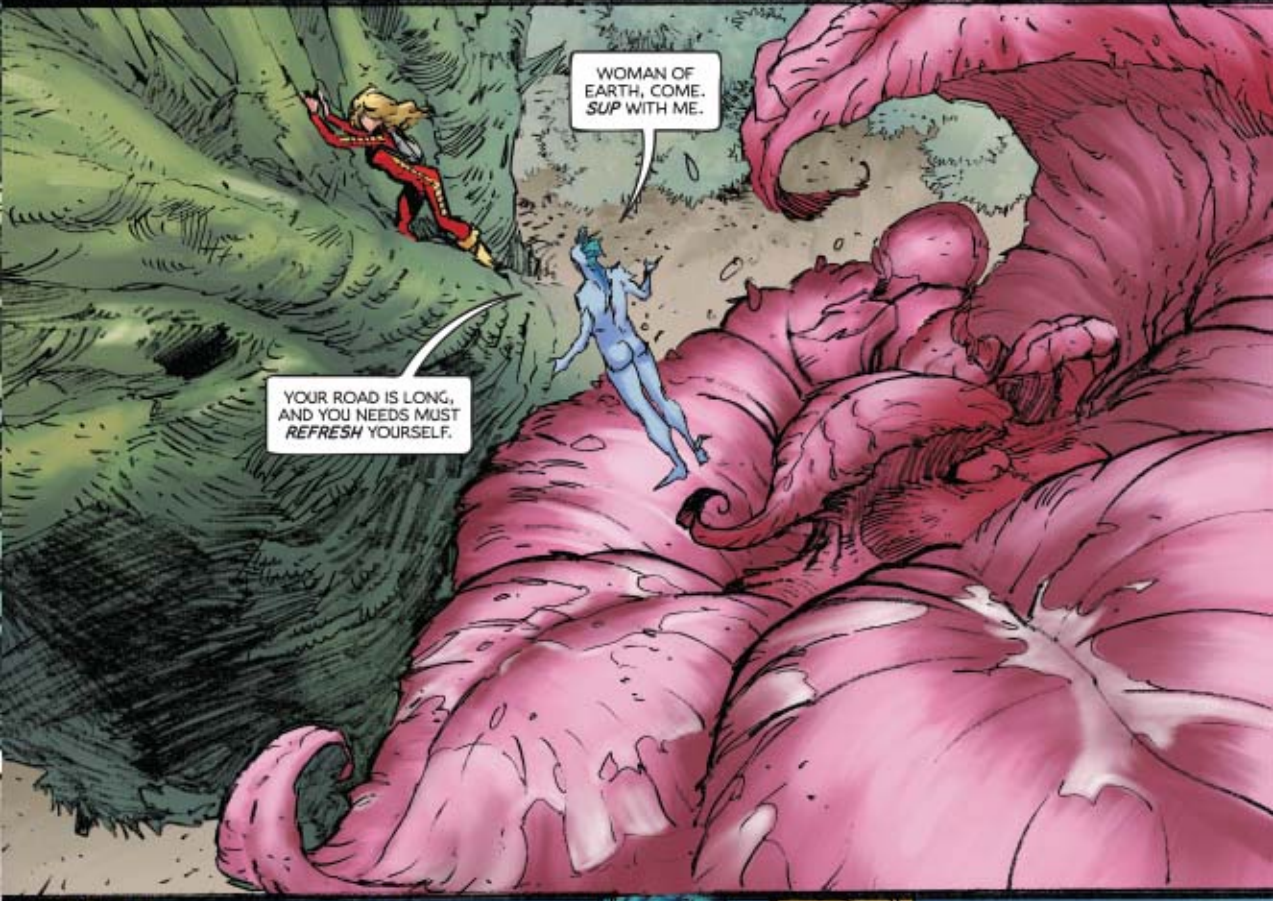
"I SET MYSELF TO CLIMB. IT WASN'T HARD. THERE WERE FOOTHOLDS AND HANDHOLDS IN PLENTY.

"THE TITANIC BLOOMS PROFFERED A HEADY, DROWSY PERFUME.



"THEN ONE OF THEM--

--PROFFERED SOMETHING ELSE."



WOMAN OF EARTH, COME. SUP WITH ME.

YOUR ROAD IS LONG, AND YOU NEEDS MUST REFRESH YOURSELF.



NEEDS MUST IT?

THE CHOICE IS YOURS, SWEET LADY.

BUT THERE IS MUCH HERE TO DELIGHT BOTH THE EYE AND THE PALETTE.

"I CHEWED THAT PROPOSITION OVER FOR A WHILE, WEIGHING THE PROS AND CONS. LIKE I SAID, I'M NO BOTANIST.

"BUT, YOU KNOW..."