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R Y A L L • G A G E • M E S S I N A

ROM



THE PLANET ELONIA, 200 YEARS AGO.



A WORLD AT PEACE, ALBEIT A TRANQUILITY REINFORCED BY AN IMPENETRABLE ENERGY SPHERE.

NO WARY EYES NEED BE CAST UPWARD AT AN UNCERTAIN SKY. THEY CAN GET OUT IF NEED BE; ALIEN LIFEFORMS CANNOT GET IN.

ADVANCES IN FARMING AND ABUNDANT RESOURCES HAVE LED, RESPECTIVELY, TO PLENTIFUL FOODSTUFFS AND LITTLE, IF ANY, CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR.



ON ELONIA...

...AND AT THE HOME OF THE K'ATSEMA FAMILY: BENNA AND SHAH ARE MOTHERS TO TWO BOYS, UNIVERSITY STUDENT ROM, AND HIS YOUNGER BROTHER REYN.

THEY'RE STILL SMOLDERING.

A COLLECTIVE NEAR THE THRAIL MOUNTAIN RANGE.



I'M GONNA GO COLLECT THE ROCKS!

REYN, DO NOT TOUCH THEM, THEY MIGHT STILL BE—OH, THAT BOY NEVER LISTENS.

NOT TO US, ANYWAY. BUT HE'D LISTEN TO ROM, IF HE WEREN'T OFF WITH HIS CLASSMATES AGAIN.

PITY. ROM'S LOVE OF GEOLOGY WOULD SERVE US WELL TODAY.





MAYBE HE COULD PUZZLE OUT HOW THESE METEORS PENETRATED THE SHIELD.

...EXPERTS THE WORLD OVER WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE AS RADAR SYSTEMS AND THE SHIELD ITSELF WERE OVERTAXED BY-

-THE SHEER NUMBER OF METEORIDS RAINING DOWN ON THE PLANET AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THEY BELIEVE THERE IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM-



SURE, THEY'RE NOT WORRIED-IT'S NOT THEIR HOME THAT GOT HOLES PUNCHED IN IT.

WE'RE DEFINITELY GOING TO NEED ROW'S MUSCLE TO HELP DIG THIS ONE OUT; IT'S REALLY WEDGED IN.

C'MERE, YOU...



SHOULD I HOLO-MESSAGE HIM?

POK

MAYBE SO, HE'D NEVER FORGIVE US IF SOMEONE ELSE GOT THEIR HANDS ON IT FIRST.



I GOT ONE, I GOT ONE!

OF COURSE YOU DID. JUST LIKE YOUR BROTHER, YOU CAN'T RESIST PULLING STONES FROM THE GROUND.

THESE ARE SPECIAL! LOOK, THIS ONE STARTED GLOWING WHEN I TOUCHED IT...





...TO HAVE
PIERCED THE
SHIELD, THEY MUST
HAVE UNIQUE QUALITIES.
VIBRATIONAL, MINERAL...
THINK OF THE
POSSIBILITIES!

WE HAVEN'T
EVEN SEEN
ONE YET, ROM.
LET'S NOT SET
OURSELVES UP FOR
DISAPPOINTMENT.

HE CAN'T HELP
IT, FY-LAA. ROM
ALWAYS THINKS A
WORLD-CHANGING
DISCOVERY IS UNDER
THE NEXT ROCK.

I JUST THINK
IT'S FUNNY THAT
WHILE WE'RE OFF
DIGGING FOR RARE
MINERALS, A BUNCH
LAND RIGHT IN
HIS YARD.

*TWO MINUTES EARLIER,
ATOP MT. THRAIL.*



HURRY, BEFORE MY
BROTHER DAMAGES
THEM.

IF I KNOW
REYN, HE'S
DOWN THERE
PLAYING WITH
THE ROCKS—



—RIGHT
NOW...

LATER.

BAD BAD
BAD BAD

TRACE ENERGY IS
CONSISTENT WITH
OTHER WORLDS,
SIR.

WE'VE NEVER SEEN
THIS PARTICULAR
MODE OF ATTACK,
BLT...

RECORD,
DON'T
EDITORIALIZE,
WHRRR.

THE BLAST
RESIDUE?

WHRRR.
SOLSTAR ORDER
EVIDENCE
RECORDER.

DIAYOD,
SOLSTAR ORDER
LIEUTENANT.

ORPHION,
SOLSTAR ORDER
COMMANDING
OFFICER.



THE *WRAITHS*. I
THOUGHT ELONIA
WAS SAFE.

WE ALL
DID.

LHM,
SIR?



SIR, THERE'S
SOMETHING YOU
SHOULD SEE.



THIS IS THE
MOTHER?

ONE—WE'RE
NOT SURE
WHICH... MY
READINGS ARE
STRANGE, BUT...



HH

GODS
OF ELONIA,
SHE'S STILL
ALIVE.



H-H-HELLPPP~

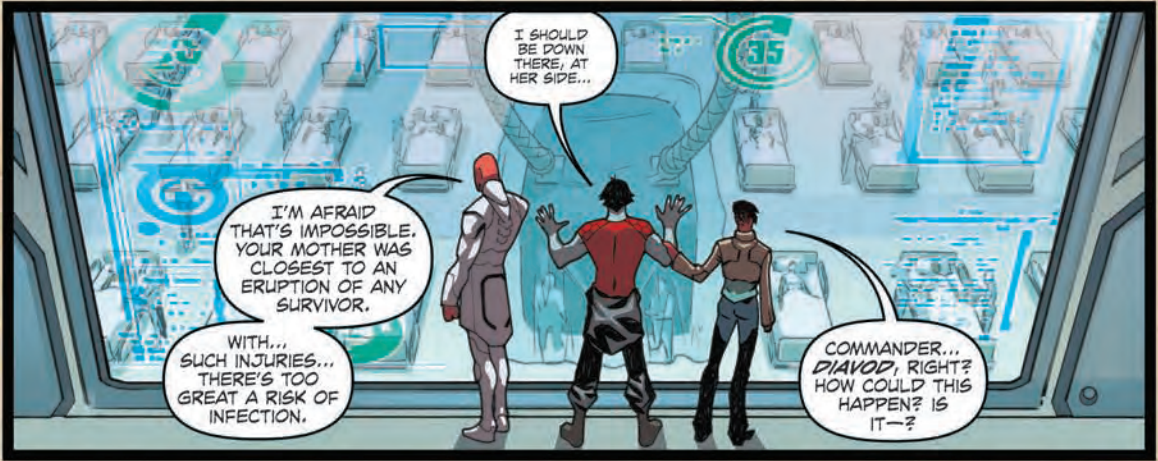




I ASSURE YOU, SHE IS RECEIVING THE BEST POSSIBLE CARE.

THE SOLSTAR ORDER HAS ACCESS TO ADVANCED MEDICAL TECHNIQUES FROM ALL MEMBER WORLDS.

THE SOLSTAR ACADEMY MEDICAL CENTER. ONE DAY LATER.



I SHOULD BE DOWN THERE, AT HER SIDE...

I'M AFRAID THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. YOUR MOTHER WAS CLOSEST TO AN ERUPTION OF ANY SURVIVOR.

WITH... SUCH INJURIES... THERE'S TOO GREAT A RISK OF INFECTION.

COMMANDER... DIAVOD, RIGHT? HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN? IS IT--?



AN ATTACK. IT HAD TO BE.

HE KEEPS SAYING THAT. IS HE RIGHT?



THE METEORS ONLY LANDED NEAR SETTLEMENTS. THIS WAS NOT RANDOM CHANCE.

WHO KILLED MY FAMILY?

I...



I VOW TO YOU THE ORDER WILL FIND OUT. FOR NOW...

I HAVE NO PERSONAL FAITH IN ANY OF THE HIGHER DEITIES. BUT IF YOU DO... I WOULD ENCOURAGE PRAYER FOR YOUR MOTHER.

