


... THE SURFACE.

HOO HOO HOO HOO

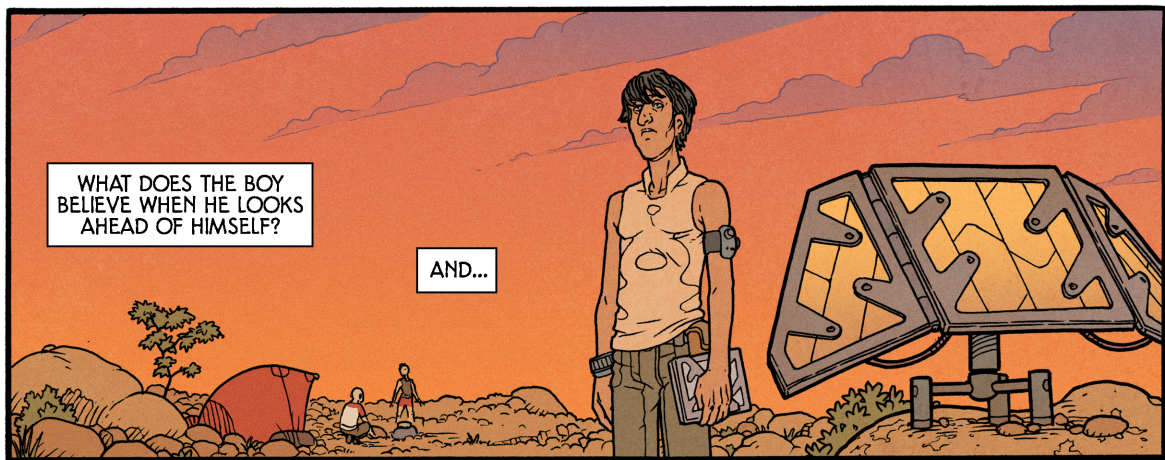
DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA.
TIME: UNCERTAIN.



BUT THIS ISN'T THE SURFACE, IS IT?*

THIS IS THE CAPITAL OF TANZANIA...
A PLACE WHERE THE CHINESE AND
THE SAUDIS FOUGHT FOR CONTROL
OF RESOURCES SO LONG THAT
THEY EVENTUALLY AGREED TO
WORK TOGETHER.

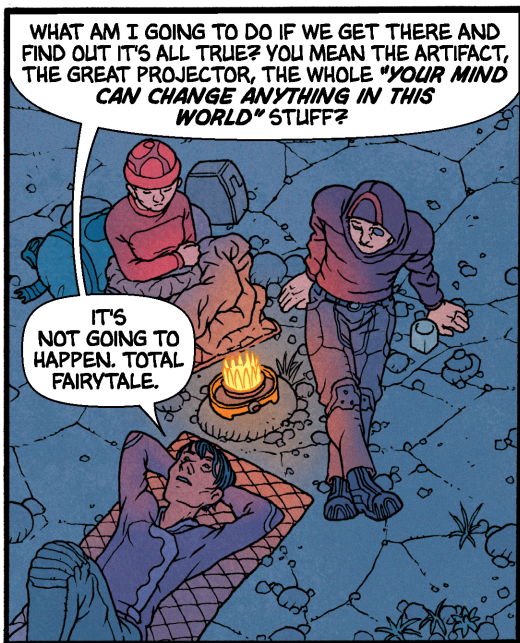
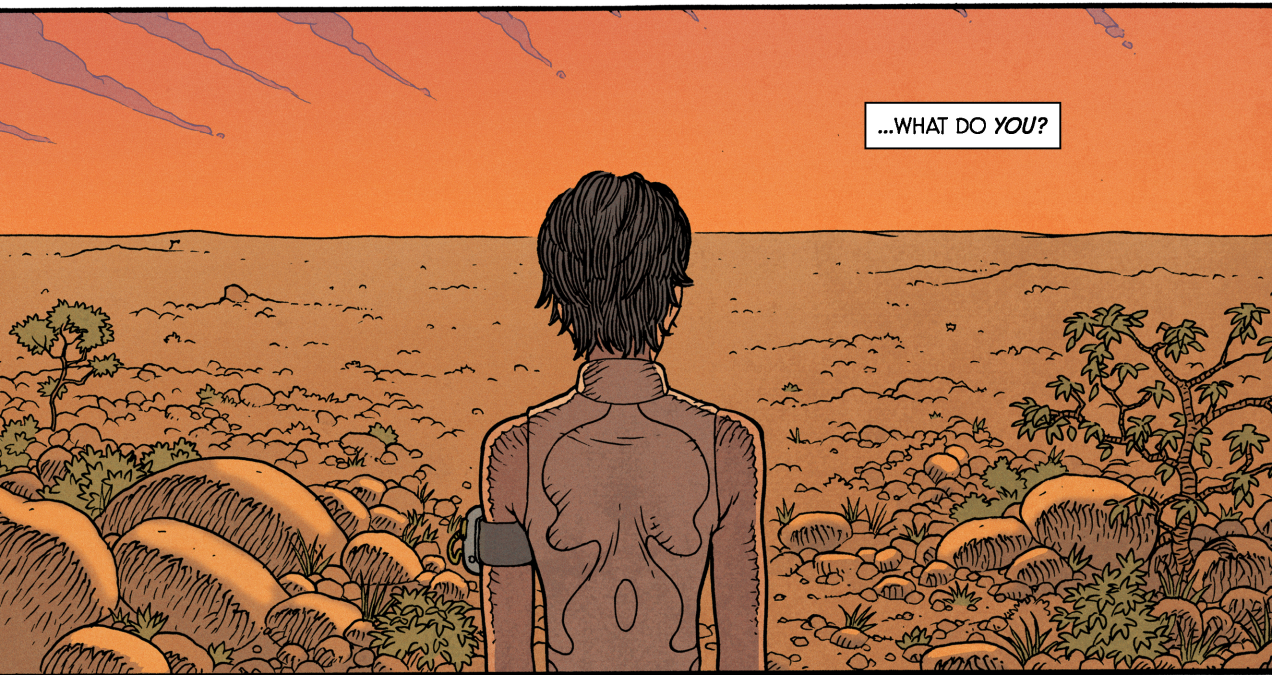
*BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THIS IS ALSO A CLUE.



WHAT DOES THE BOY BELIEVE WHEN HE LOOKS AHEAD OF HIMSELF?

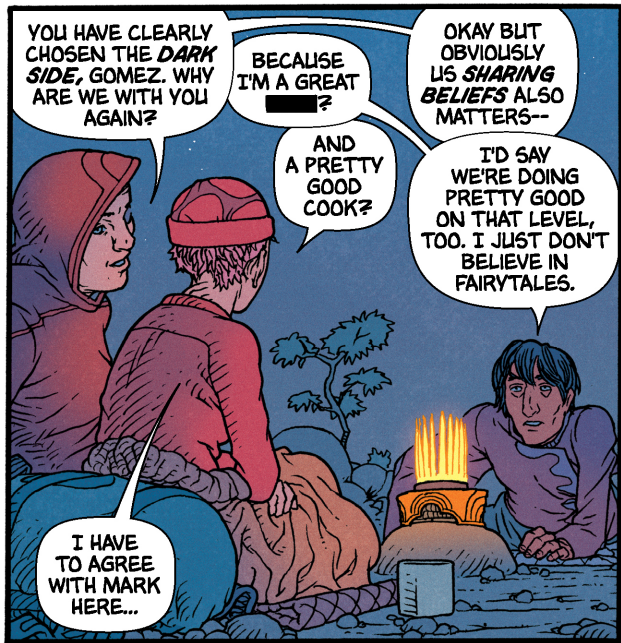
AND...

...WHAT DO YOU?



WHAT AM I GOING TO DO IF WE GET THERE AND FIND OUT IT'S ALL TRUE? YOU MEAN THE ARTIFACT, THE GREAT PROJECTOR, THE WHOLE "YOUR MIND CAN CHANGE ANYTHING IN THIS WORLD" STUFF?

IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. TOTAL FAIRYTALE.



YOU HAVE CLEARLY CHOSEN THE DARK SIDE, GOMEZ. WHY ARE WE WITH YOU AGAIN?

BECAUSE I'M A GREAT [REDACTED]?

OKAY BUT OBVIOUSLY US SHARING BELIEFS ALSO MATTERS--

AND A PRETTY GOOD COOK?

I'D SAY WE'RE DOING PRETTY GOOD ON THAT LEVEL, TOO. I JUST DON'T BELIEVE IN FAIRYTALES.

I HAVE TO AGREE WITH MARK HERE...

"...AND WHAT ELSE WE DON'T SEE?"

NASIA IS SUCH A BELIEVER.

WELL, PEOPLE FOUND THE SURFACE BEFORE. I KNOW YOU BELIEVE THEY'RE ALL SUFFERING FROM HALLUCINATIONS, BUT THEY ALL SAY THE SAME THING. THE UNIVERSE IS HOLOGRAPHIC...

...AND I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THIS UNIVERSE IS ABOUT.

I WANT A *FULL PERSPECTIVE*, NOT SOME SORT OF A THIRD-RATE PARTIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THIS REALITY.

I WANT TO *BLOW UP* ALL IDEAS THAT ARE NOT TRUE SO I CAN SEE WHAT'S UNDERNEATH AND *REAL*...

...SPEAKING OF, DO YOU KNOW THAT EVERY ATOM IN OUR BODIES CAME FROM A *STAR* THAT EXPLODED BILLIONS OF YEARS AGO?

THE ATOMS IN YOUR LEFT LEG ARE PROBABLY FROM A DIFFERENT STAR THAN THE ATOMS IN YOUR EYE...

THE ELEMENTS--CARBON, NITROGEN, OXYGEN, IRON...THEY ALL GOT INTO OUR BODIES BECAUSE THOSE STARS EXPLODED. WE'RE ALL HERE, CONSTANTLY CHANGING, BECAUSE STARS DIE, AND THERE'S SO MUCH WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT BUT PRETEND WE DO BECAUSE WE'RE SO AFRAID OF UNCERTAINTY...

...WE'RE ALL *STARDUST GHOSTS*.