

INCE SCIATA'S SKILL WITH A BLADE WAS THE STUFF OF SLIGHTLY QUEASY LEGEND.



AND ON MOST KILLS, SHE TENDED TO USE AT LEAST SIX.

REDBEARD ROOK WAS ABLE TO ALTER LOCAL GRAVITY FIELDS BY VIRTUE OF THE CHUNK OF NEUTRON-DEGENERATE MATTER EMBEDDED IN HIS CHEST.



HIS VERY TOUCH WAS DEATH.

ALA C9C ALA HAD LEARNED THE ARMED AND UNARMED COMBAT SYSTEMS OF SEVENTEEN WORLDS AND ELEVEN ORBITAL HABITATS.



THERE WAS LITERALLY NOTHING IN THE KNOWN UNIVERSE HE COULDN'T KILL YOU WITH.

TO SEND ALL THREE OF THESE EXQUISITELY QUALIFIED MURDERERS ON THE SAME ASSIGNMENT HAD TO COUNT AS A RIDICULOUS AMOUNT OF OVERKILL.



BUT WHEN THEIR PROFIT MARGINS HAD TAKEN A BEATING, THE F.A.C.E. CORPORATION* TENDED TO THINK THAT OVERKILL WAS JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF KILL TO GO FOR.

AND AFTER ALL, YOU NEVER KNEW WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN THE COURSE OF A HIT. ALL IT TAKES IS ONE RANDOM FACTOR--



*REMEMBER THEM FROM IDW #47



--TO THROW EVERYTHING OFF TRACK.

HEY.

HEY THERE.

EXCUSE ME.



I'M REALLY SORRY TO *DISTURB* YOU, BUT I'M DOING A SURVEY ON HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE. ARE YOU *AWARE* OF ANY?

WHAT?! NO!

REALLY? NOT A SINGLE *ONE*?

NO! GO AWAY!



BECAUSE I CAN'T HELP NOTICING THAT *SKIZZ-NOVAK* GRAV-MANIPULATOR YOU'RE WEARING ON YOUR CHEST THERE.

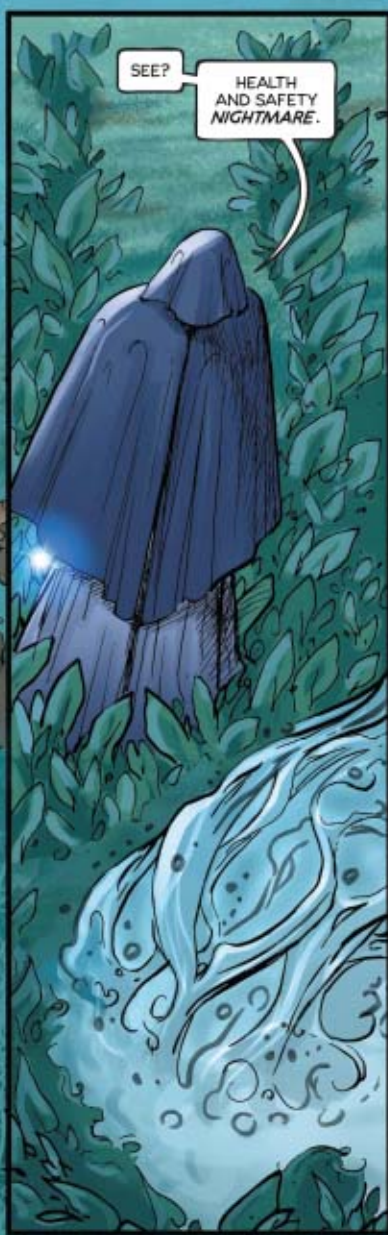
DO YOU KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF SOMEONE HACKED INTO IT WITH AN OVERRIDE?

LIKE *THIS*?

CLICK



GAAAAAAAAAH!



SEE?

HEALTH AND SAFETY NIGHTMARE.



WHO'S THERE?

SHOW YOURSELF!

WHO? SHOW!



DON'T WORRY, BARBARELLA. I'M ON YOUR SIDE.

THEN YOU WON'T MIND TAKING OFF THAT HOOD.

NOT AT ALL.



KISS ME LIKE YOU MISSED ME, BABE.



JURY! JURY QUIRE!

IN THE FLESH.

FORGIVE ME, I'LL HAVE TO VERIFY THAT.

GO RIGHT AHEAD.



WE SHOULD MOVE INSIDE.

SOMEONE WAS FOLLOWING ME A FEW HOURS AGO.

YEAH. CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.



MMM. XUMIC PETAL TEA. YOU CAN'T EVEN GET THIS ON EARTH.

WHY ARE YOU HERE, JURY?

TO SEE YOU, OF COURSE.

AND?

TO RECRUIT YOU, I HOPE. THERE'S A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS BREWING IN THE FIRU FENZU SYSTEM.

THERE'S A TANGLE OF TREATIES. EARTH CAN'T ACT DIRECTLY. BUT YOU'RE... YOU KNOW. DELECTABLY DENIABLE.

I'VE SEEN HOW EARTH CONDUCTS ITS POLITICS. I'M NOT INTERESTED.

THIS ISN'T POLITICS, BARBARELLA.

AND I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO TRUST EARTHGOV. JUST TO HEAR US OUT.

VERY WELL. I'M LISTENING.

BUT THE LAST I HEARD, THAT STAR SYSTEM WASN'T EVEN INHABITED.

THE PLANETS ARE UNINHABITED.

THE CRISIS IS IN THE SUN.



STAR-DWELLERS.

EXACTLY. IN TWO DIFFERENT FLAVORS.

THE RUA LIVE IN THE SOLAR CORONA. THE ESSEVERINE IN FIRU FENZU'S CORE.



THE RUA ARE A *NOMADIC* RACE, AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW. FIRU FENZU IS ONE OF DOZENS OF SYSTEMS WHERE THEY'VE SET UP COMMUNITIES.

AND AS THEY ALWAYS DO, THEY HIT THE GROUND *RUNNING*. LET ME TURN UP THE MAGNIFICATION A LITTLE.



THESE ARE RUA FACTORY PLATFORMS, MINING *NEUTRONIUM* FOR THE FALLADIM SHIPYARDS.

IT'S A VIBRANT INDUSTRY, AND THEY'RE DRILLING EVER *DEEPER* INTO THE CORE IN SEARCH OF RICHER SEAMS.

WHICH HAS HAD *TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES* FOR THE ESSEVERINE.



WHAT *KIND* OF CONSEQUENCES, EXACTLY?

QUARTAIN *PLAGUE*. THE ESSEVERINE ARE A RECLUSIVE RACE, AND THEY HAVE NO DEFENSE AGAINST THE *PATHOGENS* THE RUA BROUGHT WITH THEM.

MOREOVER, THE RUA ARE NOW RUNNING A *BLOCKADE*. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET MEDICINES IN.



I'LL HELP IF I CAN, BUT WE'LL NEED TO *WAIT* A DAY OR SO.

I'M CLEANING OUT THE *THIEF OF FIRE'S* FUEL TANKS.



YOU CAN TRAVEL IN *MY* SHIP.

THAT WAY YOU CAN DO YOUR *HOMEWORK* WHILE WE'RE IN TRANSIT.