

Star Seed #10
November 1996

The Word
by Jim Shooter

The doctor told me I'd never walk again. Rheumatoid arthritis. I was twenty-one. I took it calmly. In fact, I took it so calmly that it worried me. In fact, it made me suspicious. The next time the nurse showed up with the pills the lying bastards had told me were antibiotics, I didn't take them. Then, my head cleared, and I knew they'd been feeding me trunks all along, so that when they gave me the bad news, which they'd known all along, I'd take it calmly.

If I could have gotten up at that point I'd have made them all very glad that they were already conveniently in a hospital.

They were *wrong*, by the way.

Liars. People who decide things for you "for your own good." People who want to take care of you, like rich Democrats. Feh.

Xolus Cor, the Star Seed, is not happy to find himself lied to, decided for and taken care of.

He's nobody's poster child.

"It's the End of the World as We Know It," Part 6, was laid out by Joseph A. James, drawn by John Ross, inked by Art Nichols, painted by MADA Design, Inc. under JayJay's supervision and lettered by Rod Ollerenshaw. I limped through the script. Debbie Fix managed the editorial process. Funding was provided by rich Democrats who know we're doing something subversive with the money, but they're okay with that.

Title **It's the End of the World As We Know It — Part 6**

Credits Created by **Broadway Comics**
Written **Jim Shooter**
Drawn by **John Ross**
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Painted/Colored by
Lettered by **Rod Ollerenshaw**

Important Note to the Artist:

Since you are working from a full script, it should be understood that it is part of your job to place all balloons, to make sure that the sizes of the images accommodate the copy and to ensure that the character placement conforms to the requirements of the dialogue, i.e., first person speaking in a panel should generally be placed on the left, etc. Indicate all balloon placements on the originals, in pencil. If you have questions about, or problems with how a panel can be laid out to satisfy the panel description and/or accommodate the copy, call us immediately before committing to the final pencils. Pages without proper balloon placement will be returned to you for correction.

Page One

Panel 1 (2/3 page)

*Long shot, high angle (camera well above eye level), small figures. Establish a pristine beach, lapped by the gentle waves of a calm sea, and bounded by lush, alien foliage. The horizon is hazy and indistinct. The sky is clear. Cor, who is entirely healed and whole, is stretched out on an anti-grav beach recliner. It's his father's people's technology, so be consistent with the motif you've previously established. Cor wears a simple boxer-style bathing suit. Charlotte is walking along the beach near Cor. She's wearing a simple bikini. **Note:** Charlotte, in prior issues, was supposed to have been drawn as a slightly over-voluptuous, big-haired bimchette who was gradually mutating into a bulky, powerlifter type like Gina, due to the disease. I suspect that concept never got effectively communicated to you. In any case, at this point, she's completely healed, whole, and restored to her natural self. Her natural self is not the idealized, trim, comic book woman's body. She's overly curvy (which is not to say she's huge-bosomed!). She has big, curvy hips and a plush butt. She's a little heavy, though shapely, in the legs. The result should be a distinctive physiotype that's very sexy in a real-world way. Despite the wrong precedents established (none your fault) let's get her right from now on.*

Caption A point in space-time corresponding to January 11, 1995, 3:30 PM, EST, on Earth.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Pull in, show both, but favor Cor (that is have him play to the camera the most directly, which does not mean he's necessarily in the foreground. Here, he'd probably be the background character).

Charlotte Hiya, Cor.

Cor Charlotte. What are you doing here?

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Reverse the previous shot, favor Charlotte, looking around.

Charlotte I dunno. But it's nice, huh?

Cor Geez, I...remember asking about you...

Panel 4 (1/9 page)

Reverse the angle again. If these three ninths could be gradually closer and closer on the two, that would be good. Charlotte looks thoughtful, musing in that dim way.

Cor ...but I don't remember who I was talking to.

Cor I was worried. Weren't you...hurt or something?

Charlotte Hmm...it's hard to think about bad stuff in such a wonderful place.

Page Two

Panel 1 (1/9 page)

Another angle. Throughout this sequence, including the previous panels, strive to use Charlotte's languid sexiness to advantage. No cheesecake, no heavy-handed stuff, just make her delicious. Cor is thinking hard, staring at his right hand.

Charlotte You asked about me? That's sweet.

Cor I was hurt, too...but...I guess everything's okay, now.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Cor relaxes. Charlotte sits on a corner of his lounge, touching his leg in a very friendly way.

Charlotte Yeah. Everything's fine. Wanna make love?

Cor Huh?

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Close up of Charlotte, sultry.

Charlotte I just want to. No strings. It's just so beautiful here...it would feel really good.

Charlotte I've never done it with a boy like you. You know...someone nice.

Panel 4 (1/9 page)

Two shot again. Cor looks a little shy.

Cor I've never done it with anyone.

Panel 5 (1/9 page)

Closer. Charlotte is putting her arms around Cor, romantically looking into his eyes.

Charlotte Do you want to...with me?

Cor I don't know...for some reason, I don't think I should...
but...

Panel 6 (1/9 page)

Charlotte leads Cor back toward a small beach house at the edge of the beach. It might be a sort of open air shelter, alien design. Charlotte is leading, but Cor is going willingly.

Charlotte Let's go inside.

Panel 7 (1/3 page)

It's a long time later. Charlotte is lying on her back, probably wishing for a cigarette. Cor is propped up on one elbow beside her, his down arm under her, holding her, his free hand caressing her affectionately. She's in mellow ecstasy. He is too, but something is sticking in his craw. They're on a floating bed, naked, but contrive to cover essential parts while still making this very romantic/sexy. There could be a light cover or sheet, but try to make everything look alien. The lights are low.

Caption Much later.

Charlotte (small whisper) So strong...so gentle...so sweet...so strong...

Charlotte (small whisper) Your girlfriend doesn't know what she's missing.

Page Three

Panel 1 (1/9 page)

Cor sits up a bit, thinking. Charlotte's still aglow and content.

Cor My girlfriend. Marnie.

Charlotte It's okay. Just don't tell her.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Charlotte comforts/cuddles Cor, but he's not really upset. He's bearing down, fighting the fog in his head.

Charlotte Every guy forgets he has a girlfriend once in a while...y'know?

Cor I didn't forget. It just didn't matter.

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Cor is struggling to focus. Charlotte keeps cuddling, she's smiling.

Charlotte Hey, that's the spirit. C'mon...do me again.

Cor It should have mattered. Why didn't it?

Cor What's going on here?

Panel 4 (1/6 page)

*Cor is up and getting dressed. He has pants on (not his gravity vector suit—just pants, alien please, no Levi's.) He's putting on a shirt. Charlotte sits on the bed, still mellow, aglow, seductive. This apparent rejection **doesn't** trouble her. Nothing does. They're both being tranked, but Cor's starting to fight through it.*

Cor Feel like I'm in a fog, or...or a dream. Nothing matters. It's like...we're being drugged.

Charlotte Cool.

Panel 5 (1/6 page)

Cor leads Charlotte out into the lush jungle outside—sort of an alien Hawaiian forest, lots of flowers, etc. Charlotte is wrapped in the bed sheet.

Cor C'mon.

Charlotte Aww...

Panel 6 (1/3 page)

Only the first layer of jungle is real. The rest of the jungle is a holographic projection. Here, Cor, and Charlotte (being pulled along, not roughly) are striding right through phantom plants and vines, and arriving at an interior wall of the mothership. There's a door in the wall. This is just an ordinary door, not a vault-type hatch.

Cor Huh. Just the first layer of jungle is real.

Cor I think we're inside a mothership—a big spaceship. My father's people...

Charlotte Wow. Alien abduction. No offense...

Page Four

Panel 1

Cor slams a hammer fist into the door, which buckles.

Cor Oh, I'm offended, all right. By them...

Panel 2

Cor battering-rams his way through the door. Charlotte is following, but still mellow. I'd shoot this from outside and angle so that we can see Charlotte through the now-broken door.

Cor ...and I can't wait to tell them.

Cor Urrh!

Panel 3

Establish the area Cor and Charlotte have broken into. It's a restaurant—multi-tiered, anti-grav, posh. Cor and Charlotte have entered on some upper tier. Cor wasn't expecting this, but he's angry and ready for anything. Charlotte's still bemused, mellow. The customers, all dressed in alien style, which I see as being similar to Russ Manning's North Am residents in Magnus Robot Fighter. If you're not familiar, their clothes were sexy and revealing, but decorative and somewhat ornate—i.e., a woman's tunic with some filigree and accessories, but sleeveless and with armholes sufficiently large to make the tunic essentially sideless, revealing a bit of the side of the breast. The waiters are machines—nothing remotely anthropomorphic, please. They probably create food right on the spot. The customers are reacting to this intrusion—probably the way guests at Maxim's would react to a runaway gorilla.

Charlotte Smells good in here.

Charlotte Wow. Have I got the munchies.

Cor Stay close.

Panel 4

Cor seizes one of the terrified diners. Others, if seen, react. Cor's line is humorous, but he's dead serious, angry, grim, as he jacks the guy up, threateningly.

Cor I'm only going to ask politely once...

Cor Take me to your leader.

Diner Azh Tah! Azh Tah! (italics, or alien looking lettering)

Page Five

Panel 1

Security troops arrive, about half a dozen men and women. They wear uniforms, but nothing very militaristic. This is a peaceful society, and they probably don't see much action/violence, but like everyone else they are beautiful, well-formed and in excellent shape (and strong like Cor). They're flying in from a high or overhead portal (with gravity vector technology built into their suits). Along with them are two beach-ball sized spherical devices, which we'll see, in subsequent panels are security devices.

Diner (italics) Azh Tah Nenan!

Charlotte Cor!

Cor I see 'em.

Panel 2

Cor lets go of the terrified diner, who's scrambling away. Other diners, by now, have fled, or moved away fearfully. The first security guy is grabbing Cor with one hand, but making a calm-down gesture with the other. Charlotte, shrinks back, takes cover.

Security 1 (italics) Pasana voh!

Panel 3

Cor belts the Security guy, sending him flying. Think about how this would really look, John, and what the body language would really be. At the same time, other security types are closing in. A woman is closest to Cor. The spherical units circle menacingly.

Panel 4

The woman kicks Cor—hitting his body, perhaps partially blocked by his arm—using an alien martial arts technique. Good luck there. Cor is knocked back enough to bump into an abandoned table, sending dishes flying, but isn't too hurt.

Cor Ow!

Cor What, E.T. Kung-fu...?

Panel 5

*Cor whacks the woman with a metal platter, clearly hurting her enough to put her out of the fight. Make sure that this action logically follows the previous panel! (For that matter, in any situation of continuing action, always make sure that the body language, stage dress and blocking allow the reader to **easily** imagine the "in-betweens" i.e. show the platter, make sure it's in easy reach for Cor, and arrange Cor's body so that it's clear that he **could** grab the platter, whirl and whack the woman).*

Cor Platter-fu you

Page Six

Panel 1

The spherical units start to deploy, per sketch. The most-deployed one is firing a beam at Cor, grazing him as he ducks. The beam shatters something behind Cor.

Panel 2

The units are projecting solid light, trying to close Cor in a box. Cor is pressing against one of the quickly-closing walls, demonstrating to the reader that it's solid.

Cor Uh-oh...

Panel 3

Vaulting off a table or some such, Cor leaps out of the prison before it closes, toward one unit.

Panel 4

Cor slams into one of the units, knocking it back, shattering part of it.

Panel 5

Cor wraps a piece of metal around his right hand as unit #2 advances menacingly.

Page Seven

Panel 1 (1/3 page)

Cor utterly smashes the second unit with a big hit. You can go a little super-hero on this one, John.

Panel 2 (2/9 page)

Amid the debris, Cor stands ready to continue fighting, but the remaining security types are backing off, scared. Charlotte is cautiously coming out from her hiding place. From the background, a beautiful woman (all Nobyl's people are beautiful) is approaching Cor. Her name is Omo.

Charlotte Wow.

Omo Fighting isn't necessary. Please calm down.

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Omo stands before Cor, bravely. Charlotte sort of stays close behind Cor, timidly.

Cor Take me to whoever's in charge of this ship. Now.

Omo Please listen. My name is Omo. I've been assigned as your counsel. I can help you if you let me.

Panel 4 (1/6 page)

Two shot of grim, menacing Cor and brave-but-probably-scared Omo. Favor her.

Omo Come with me. Let's talk. If I can't convince you of the wisdom of a more rational course, you can always resort to violence again.

Cor Hmh.

Panel 5 (1/6 page)

Cor and Charlotte follow Omo. Cor is looking around warily, Charlotte looks timid, spooked.

Charlotte Um...can we get me some clothes?

Page Eight

Panel 1 (1/3 page)

Establish Omo's office, different from previous locales, but in keeping with our established alien motifs. It should not be an office in the Earth sense. No desk or papers—maybe comfy anti-grav seats with several of those service tentacles and data screens handy. Charlotte is coming out from behind a screen, now dressed in sexy alien clothes. Show the sheet she was wearing, draped over the screen. Cor looks intense and impatient.

Caption Soon.

Charlotte ...but if this is really a spaceship, and you're from Mars or somewhere, how come you speak English?

Omo After I got this assignment, I learned. We have methods of learning things quickly.

Omo I assumed that your father hadn't taught you much of our language, Cor.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Cor questions Omo. He's thinking hard, trying to recall.

Cor Omo, first I want a few things cleared up...

Cor I remember...I was in my father's shuttle craft...I had just taken it back from the pirates who'd stolen it...

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Another angle, favor Omo

Cor The next thing I know, I'm lying on a beach.

Omo We brought the shuttle craft aboard. You were sedated and treated for your injuries...

Panel 4 (1/9 page)

Another angle, favor Cor, whose agitation is growing.

Cor What about the others on the shuttle?

Omo Yes, the pirates, as you call them...

Omo One was deceased. The other two are recovering.

Panel 5 (1/9 page)

Another angle. Include Charlotte, who's preening in front of a reflective surface.

Charlotte Anybody got gum?

Cor Charlotte wasn't on the shuttle. How'd she get here?

Omo Everyone involved in the...struggles over your father's shuttle craft has been gathered aboard this vessel.

Panel 6 (1/9 page)

Cor is restraining rage.

Cor My parents? Marnie?

Omo Everyone

Cor Why?!

Panel 7 (1/9 page)

Favor Omo. Perhaps crop Cor, showing only his clenched fist. If shown, Charlotte looks scared by all this.

Omo There will be a hearing to decide what to do with all of you. As I said, I'm your counsel. You will all be judged by the Magistrate, and...

Cor We'll see about that.

Page Nine

Panel 1 (2/9 page)

Establish an alien chalet overlooking beautiful (alien) mountains and valleys. Waterfalls, forests, whatever. Marnie sits on the porch of the chalet serenely enjoying the view. She's wearing a form fitting body suit and hiking boots. Over the body suit she's wearing an (alien) bolero length jacket or similar length puffy alien sweater. Remember, Marnie is petite and slim. She has narrow hips, a boyish butt and nice legs—sexy in that subtle-curves/young girl/sylph kind of way.

Caption Moments later.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Cor steps right through the holographic, illusory mountains, approaching Marnie. Marnie is tranquilized.

Cor Marnie? Time to go.

Marnie Cor?

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Cut to outside Marnie's recovery chamber. Cor is leading Marnie out. Marnie looks a little dazed. Omo and Charlotte are waiting.

Cor All right. Now let's find my parents.

Omo Very well. None of you are prisoners, Cor, but...

Omo ...if you're thinking of...doing something...crazy...

Panel 4 (2/9 page)

Cut to outside a modest, old, but nice-looking Earthly suburban home. Cor is striding toward the house right through the illusory picket fence and shrubs or trees.

Caption Shortly.

Panel 5 (1/9 page)

Cor is at the door, which is being answered by his Mother. She's delighted to see him. She wears simple but Earthly-looking housewife clothes.

Linette Cor! I'm so glad to see you--! Come in! Come on in!

Cor Okay, Mom, but...

Panel 6 (2/9 page)

Inside this very Earthly home, Nobyl is rising from where he and Linette were sitting, on the couch. The needlepoint Linette was working on is visible. Nobyl has a cup of coffee. He's wearing casual clothes—sort of simple replicas of Earth-style corduroy pants and a sweater. He's thrilled to see Cor.

Linette Nobyl, look who's here!

Nobyl Cor! I've been waiting so very long for this moment!

Cor Hi, Dad.

Page Ten

Panel 1

Dad and Cor embrace. Mom is close by, smiling.

Nobyl My son...my son...! All those long years...

Cor Dad...I--I love you, but...

Panel 2

Linette brings coffee. Nobyl is motioning for Cor to sit and is about to settle back into his own seat. Cor is reluctant.

Linette Here's some coffee, and I put another pot on.

Nobyl Thanks, Linette.

Nobyl Sit down, son. We have so much catching up to do!

Cor Dad...Dad, listen...!

Panel 3

Close up of grim Cor, shooting past sad, but resolute Nobyl.

Cor We've got to get out of here...get home, to Earth. This isn't real...

Nobyl I know, son...

Panel 4

Reverse the previous angle, favor Nobyl.

Cor Listen. They plan to have a hearing to decide what to do with us--well, I'm not letting anyone...

Panel 5

Pull in very close on sad, wise, strong, resolute Nobyl.

Nobyl These are my people, from my world. A lot of things went wrong during my time on Earth...

Nobyl They have a right to...review it all...and...figure out what to do about the mess I made.

Panel 6

Pull back to full figures, all three.

Nobyl You're a man, now, I can't tell you what to do...

NobyI

...but I ask you...please...don't interfere.

Page Eleven

Panel 1

Cor, Marnie and Charlotte sit around the living room of the suite that has been given them as quarters.

Caption Later.

Cor ...so, we'll wait and see how this hearing turns out...

Cor ...then...decide what to do.

Charlotte Uh-huh. Do you think they got any Stoli here?

Panel 2

Closer on the three.

Charlotte Or maybe, like, another dose of that tranquilizer stuff? That was cool.

Cor I think we may all need clear heads. Why don't you girls go to bed? You must be tired.

Panel 3

Feature Marnie, looking a little troubled, suspicious, perhaps glancing back away from the others toward the bedrooms.

Marnie I, uh...wonder why, when they brought us here, they showed you and Charlotte to the same bedroom...

Marnie ...and put me in another one by myself.

Cor Who knows?

Panel 4

Cor is walking out of the room, into an adjoining room—sort of a den, or library, but of course the aliens don't have books. Screens, holoprojectors, etc. Charlotte looks a little smug, and Marnie still looks troubled, suspicious.

Cor It doesn't matter anyway. I'm not going to bed. You know I don't need much sleep...

Panel 5

In the other room, Cor is looking at a screen full of alien writing, and perhaps a picture of something alien.

Panel 6

Cor is studying the screen futilely. Marnie enters, looking very troubled, down.

Marnie Cor...?

Cor Hmh. I thought I might find some useful information, but it's all in...you know, alien language.

Page Twelve

Panel 1

Marnie is standing beside Cor, who is still looking at the screen, busy trying to avoid her eyes. Guilt, guilt, guilt.

Cor This...datathingie is cool. I think I even got an extraterrestrial sitcom on it a while ago...

Marnie You, uh...asked for Charlotte while you were recovering, huh?

Panel 2

Close two shot. Now Cor turns and faces Marnie.

Cor I asked about her. She was wounded, you know. Shot.

Marnie Uh-huh. And I only had my throat cut...

Panel 3

Another angle. Marnie leaves. Cor looks shot through the heart.

Panel 4

Cor looks up at a door (to the outside hall) from which a voice (the door's) is coming. One doesn't knock on doors—one merely speaks. The door transmits requests, but probably no other sounds. maybe there's a screen on which we can see Omo.

Door Omo requests admittance.

Panel 5

Omo enters. Cor looks desolate, still, from the Marnie thing. Omo carries a package large enough to hold a wristwatch (Snoopy).

Cor Hi.

Omo Hello. My, you look unhappy.

Panel 6

Cor confronts Omo in that pour-out-your-heart kind of way.

Cor Why did your assistants put Charlotte and me in the same bedroom?

Omo Well, from our observations during your convalescence, we thought that would please you. Doesn't it?

Panel 7

Another angle. Omo is sympathetic, Cor is in pain.

Cor Jeezus.

Cor Marnie is my girlfriend. Charlotte is just...I mean she helped me when I was fighting, and...my god--you were watching?!

Omo I...think I understand...

Panel 8

Another angle on this heart-to-heart.

Omo In the course of learning your language, inevitably, I learned quite a bit about the peculiar nature of Earthly relationships...

Panel 9

Another angle.

Omo You are so possessive, so frantic to find and hold on to another...

Omo We live for many thousands of your years, so those things seem less... urgent. Less important.

Page Thirteen

Panel 1 (1/9 page)

Another angle.

Cor Huh. What if you really find someone who's...you know, your one?

Omo Our word for that translates roughly as "ever-mates". It is rare, very rare, for two people to find such love, such oneness.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Another angle. Omo looks doubtful.

Cor My parents are like that.

Omo Oh? Well...ah, the reason I came here was to return something to you...

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Omo has opened her package here, and is handing Snoopy to Cor.

Snoopy Hello, Cor.

Cor Snoopy!

Omo Data from this unit's memory will be used as evidence...

Panel 4 (1/9 page)

Shoot past Cor's wrist, as he puts Snoopy on, to see Omo at bust depth, smiling.

Omo ...but I convinced the Magistrate to have its memory copied into the court's datafile, and to allow..."Snoopy" to be returned to you. I told him you had a sentimental attachment.

Cor Thanks.

Panel 5 (1/9 page)

Another angle, full figures, as Omo leaves, smiling.

Cor Uh, Omo...I'm going along with this hearing thing because my father asked me to, but...what do you think the verdict will be?

Omo It will be fair, wise and just. I have to go prepare, now. Good peace, Cor.

Panel 6 (1/9 page)

Closer on Cor and Snoopy.

Cor For being my counsel, she sure doesn't clue me in much.

Snoopy Your father's people don't have adversary trials, Cor. The counselors are essentially all neutral...

Panel 7 (1/9 page)

Feature Snoopy.

Snoopy They'll present the evidence and discuss all aspects of the case to make sure the Magistrate knows the whole truth and every consideration before he makes any decisions.

Cor Huh. Waiting around for some bozo's "decisions" sucks.

Panel 8 (1/9 page)

Feature Cor, grim.

Cor Y'know, I punched out a couple of their security people. They probably think I'm a violent criminal...

Cor ...but, then, why would they give you back? Why allow me to have a reconnaissance unit?

Panel 9 (1/9 page)

Pull back, reset the room.

Snoopy Your father used to say, "Honest people are often too trusting." Of course, your enemies are enjoying the same trust.

Cor Oh, c'mon, Snoop...

Page Fourteen

Panel 1 (1/9 page)

Another angle.

Cor ...anybody can tell they're scum.

Snoopy Cor, all humanoid peoples in the galaxy spring from the same ancient rootstock...

Snoopy ...but don't count on your father's people to judge things by Earthly standards.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Another angle. Cor is grimly pondering.

Cor Hm.

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Close up of Cor.

Cor Then...let's talk about what we're going to do...

Cor ...if I don't like the verdict.

Panel 4

Cut to the courtroom. It's a large, comfortable room. If possible, make it distinct from other rooms we've seen by making it somewhat more formal/official-looking. Around the room are several hologram projectors like the one last issue, but bigger. They're currently inactive. This is not at all like Earth courtrooms. It's more like a living room, very comfy. The Magistrate sits facing the others—Nobyl and Linette, sitting together, Ajax and Cyrus, sitting near each other, and Cor, Charlotte and Marnie sitting near each other. Marnie looks a bit stand-offish, Charlotte is trying to cozy up to Cor, but he's cold and disgruntled. There are three counselors present, standing. They are Omo, Marachal (a man) and Cofax (a woman). The counselors and Magistrate wear appropriate (ornate/sensuous/Magnus type) clothing. The rest wear simpler but alien stuff, including Ajax—no costume, please.

Caption High Court

Magistrate ...therefore, this hearing will be conducted in the Earthworlders' language, English.

Omo Thank you, Magistrate.

Panel 5

Focus on the Magistrate.

Magistrate We are gathered to review the serious and disturbing developments that occurred on an unenlightened planet called Earth...

Magistrate ...while one of our kind, Xolus Nobyl sojourned there...

Panel 6

Angle, if possible, to see the Magistrate (from behind?) Cor and Nobyl. Cor looks grim, Nobyl resolute.

Magistrate ...and to decide what must be done.

Magistrate Counselor Marachal, please begin.

Page Fifteen

Panel 1

Marachal introduces Nobyl.

Marachal Magistrate, this is Xolus Nobyl.

Nobyl I am an artist. I went to Earth to work there two hundred and two years ago.

Panel 2

Feature Nobyl.

Nobyl Earth was, and is, beautiful in many ways, though primitive and savage.

Nobyl As is our way, I was discreet and careful not to interfere...

Panel 3

Cofax takes over. Show Cyrus.

Cofax That is true, Magistrate, at first. For twenty-five Earth years Nobyl relied mainly on remote observation of the natives...

Cofax ...and then he chanced upon this man...Cyrus Benjamin.

Panel 4

Cofax continues.

Cofax Cyrus was a practitioner of a barbaric trade called trapping.

Cofax When Nobyl came across you Cyrus, what was your condition?

Panel 5

Favor Cyrus.

Cyrus Well, Miss Cofax, I'd been partially devoured by a grizzly bear...

Cyrus ...and the scavengers had begun to dine on the rest of my carcass.

Panel 6

Back to Marachal.

Marachal Nobyl had become somewhat accustomed to the violence rife on Earth...

Marachal ...but seeing Cyrus helpless and in agony, being eaten alive...

Panel 7

Favor Cyrus.

Cyrus Blinding light seemed to burst from his hand. It scared the beasts off.

Cyrus I reckoned him for an angel, wielding the lord's own lightning. Later, I learned he'd done it with the tool he used to make sculptures of light.

Panel 8

Cyrus again.

Cyrus He took me in and dosed me with that medicine ye got that cures all.

Cyrus For a while, he kept me ignorant of his true nature...

Panel 9

Close up of Cyrus, smiling with a hint of evil.

Cyrus ...but during the four months it took for the medicine to make me whole, I gained his trust. He confided in me...

Cyrus ...and allowed me to stay on as an assistant, a companion...a friend.

Page Sixteen

Panel 1 (1/9 page)

Cyrus and Cofax.

Cofax But you betrayed that trust.

Cyrus Yes, Miss Cofax, I did. At first opportunity, I stole enough of his medicine to keep me alive and well for centuries, and ran off.

Cyrus I knew his machines could make more, anyway.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Cyrus.

Cyrus I sold a single dram for a king's ransom to a rich man dying of consumption, and set out to live long and grand.

Cyrus But long life gives ye perspective...

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Cyrus.

Cyrus I realized that I'd been petty and selfish...I thought about what Nobyl's medicine could mean for all the world...!

Panel 4 (1/9 page)

Cyrus.

Cyrus And so, I devoted myself to finding Nobyl once more, to acquire from him the secret of his medicine--one way or the other.

Panel 5 (1/9 page)

Cofax, Marachal and Nobyl.

Cofax And so, Cyrus Benjamin began a search that lasted nearly a century...

Marachal And, Nobyl, how did you pass this time?

Nobyl I traveled all over the Earth, remaining hidden and apart, immersed in my work...

Panel 6 (1/9 page)

Nobyl, lovingly regarding Linette.

Nobyl Until I found Linette.

Nobyl I was fascinated by her...I found myself observing her constantly, sculpting her again and again...

Panel 7 (1/9 page)

Nobyl.

Marachal Though you knew it was forbidden, you went to her, and courted her in the manner of the natives...?

Nobyl Yes.

Panel 8 (1/9 page)

Marachal.

Marachal You...married her...and sired a son...in flagrant violation of our law...?

Nobyl Yes.

Panel 9 (1/9 page)

Cofax, indicating Cor.

Cofax This is Xolus Cor, son of Nobyl and the Earthwoman, Linette.

Cofax The union of such far-removed branches of our species has caused a curious genetic phenomenon--Cor is exceptionally strong, even by our standards...

Page Seventeen

Panel 1 (1/9 page)

Cofax foreground, holo of Cor's Cesarean birth BG.

Cofax ...which necessitated an unusual birth. At five months he had to be cut from his mother's womb before his kicking killed her.

Cofax Nobyl spirited mother and child away from the hospital immediately afterward.

Panel 2 (1/9 page)

Cyrus.

Cyrus Ah, but when I heard tell of this incident, I knew what'd happened!

Cyrus I sought out the attending physician...

Panel 3 (1/9 page)

Cyrus.

Cyrus I convinced him of the truth of my tale by using the medicine to cure his wife's multiple sclerosis...

Cyrus We became friends...partners in the quest...

Panel 4 (1/9 page)

Cyrus gets up, points accusingly at Cor. Cor rises, ready to fight.

Cyrus Doctor Jonathan Deskinn. He was such a good and righteous man...

Cyrus ...and that devilspawn murdered him!

Magistrate Control yourselves!

Panel 5 (1/9 page)

Close on Cyrus.

Cyrus Yes...yes, well...clues the good doctor provided enabled us to find our quarry. We captured Nobyl...

Cyrus ...but mother and child slipped through our fingers.

Panel 6 (1/9 page)

Favor the Magistrate.

Cyrus Just recently, we finally captured Linette--and found ourselves in a struggle to the death with her monstrous son...

Magistrate Thank you, Cyrus Benjamin.

Panel 7 (1/9 page)

Favor Cor.

Magistrate We are aware of the violence that followed. I don't think it merits discussion...

Cor What?!

Panel 8 (1/9 page)

Cor is outraged. Magistrate O.P.

Magistrate Please be silent, Cor.

Cor No, I don't think so. I think we need to talk about what they did...!

Panel 9 (1/9 page)

Linette is outraged, leaps up.

Linette I think so, too. Let your record show that Cyrus and his friend tortured my husband for years...

Nobyl Linette...!

Page Eighteen

Panel 1

Linette indicates Ajax.

Linette They forced Nobyl to father another child--this boy, called Ajax--and raised him to be a vicious cur they could use like a pit bull...

Panel 2

Linette.

Linette If it wasn't for your medicine, my son's girlfriend and...this other girl would be dead because of them.

Linette Me, they just beat up, sliced up and threatened!

Panel 3

Magistrate.

Magistrate Enough. The alleged crimes of Earthworlders are not my concern.

Magistrate One more question, Cyrus Benjamin--exactly what was your plan?

Panel 4

Cyrus and Marnie, who is rising to object.

Cyrus Why, we intended...

Marnie Wait a minute! Let me tell you their plan...!

Panel 5

Cyrus and Marnie.

Marnie They were going to pick out the people they thought deserved to live and keep them alive with your medicine...and kill the rest!

Cyrus We intended to remake our world into a utopia...!

Panel 6

Cyrus.

Cyrus Yes, there would have to be attrition, and population control.

Cyrus Death is common in our world. So are savagery, vulgarity and horror.

Panel 7

Cyrus.

Cyrus I would remake it...at any cost. I would steal the means to remake it from God's own pocket.

Cyrus When I was a lad, at least, there was still some raw nature left...

Panel 8

Cyrus.

Cyrus ...but for two hundred years, I've watched it deteriorate.

Cyrus I watched it become ravaged, overcrowded, poisoned...and torn by such barbarism that the gentle cleansing we planned would be a mercy!

Panel 9

Cyrus.

Cyrus We appropriated your technology to bring us out of darkness...we claimed it by the righteousness of our cause.

Cyrus We are redeemers...!

Page Nineteen

Panel 1

Cyrus.

Cyrus We wanted only for our people to live in beauty, peace and prosperity, as your people do.

Cyrus I regret nothing.

Panel 2

Angle to include the Magistrate and Cor.

Magistrate I see. I have no more questions.

Cor I have one.

Panel 3

Cor.

Cor I had everything under control. If you're so disinterested in the crimes of Earth people, why did you interfere? Why did you even show up?

Magistrate Nobyl...summoned us.

Panel 4

Cor, shocked, and Nobyl, explaining.

Cor You...summoned them?

Nobyl Any of our kind who venture off-world are equipped with an implanted distress beacon, activated by thought.

Panel 5

Linette, in disbelief, and Nobyl.

Linette Then...you could have called for help anytime...buy you let them torture you for fifteen years...?

Nobyl I knew that if I summoned them they would probably take me home... and I'd never see you again.

Panel 6

Focus on Nobyl.

Nobyl As long as there was a chance, however small, to remain with you and my son...I would endure anything.

Nobyl But when they threatened you...! When it seemed certain that you would be killed if I didn't summon help...

Panel 7

Another angle on Nobyl.

Nobyl Magistrate, I ask only that, whatever is decided, Linette and I be allowed to remain together. We are ever-mates, your honor.

Panel 8

The Magistrate.

Magistrate She is...an Earthwoman, Xolus Nobyl...

Panel 9

Closer.

Magistrate I'm sorry, but...I have reached a decision.

Panel 1

Dramatic.

Magistrate It is our law not to interfere with the peoples of other worlds. The principles of this law extend to all circumstances.

Magistrate The Earthworlder Cyrus acquired, albeit by foul means, elements of our technology...

Panel 2

Another angle.

Magistrate Under our law, once such a thing occurs, it is *fait accompli*, and cannot be undone--for to do so would be to interfere further.

Panel 3

Another angle.

Magistrate It is decided further, that the sons of Xolus Nobyl are of our kind and subject to our laws.

Magistrate Therefore, Cor, you had no right to interfere in any way with Cyrus.

Panel 4

Another angle.

Magistrate And so, the shuttlecraft and all that Cyrus stole will be restored to him, and he will be allowed to return to Earth.

Magistrate By law, these things are now part of the nature of Earth, part of Earth's destiny.

Panel 5

Another angle.

Magistrate The women Charlotte, Marnie and Linette will be returned to Earth as well.

Panel 6

Dramatic—a payoff shot.

Magistrate Xolus Nobyl will remain with us to be chastised and rehabilitated.

Magistrate

Cor and Ajax will remain as well, to be educated and incorporated into our society.

Magistrate

This hearing is concluded.

Page Twenty-One

Panel 1

Angle on Cor, rising angrily.

Cor You're right about one thing, Magistrate. Enough "hearing." I've heard plenty.

Panel 2

Closer on Cor.

Cor I don't care what you think—I was born on Earth, and I'm going back there.

Panel 3

Closer, as Cor's determination rises.

Cor If any Earthman has claim to my father's things, it's me...

Panel 4

Cor looks to his father. Show Linette close to Nobyl, her arms around him.

Cor ...and, Dad, I never got to spend any time with you...I hardly know you...

Cor ...but I suspect, after all you've been through, you're not about to let them separate you and mom.

Panel 5

Favor the Magistrate.

Magistrate My decisions are final, Cor. We do not like violence, but we are not a weak people. We will enforce our verdict.

Cor Try.

Panel 6

Nobyl warns Cor.

Nobyl Cor, there are ten million of my people aboard this ship.

Cor Uh-huh. You with me?

Panel 7

Noby, resolute. Linette too. This is the moment to make the audience clench their fists and say, "YES!" Go for it, John.

Noby

Yes.

Page Twenty-two

Panel 1

Security pours in. Huge battle, Nobyl and Cor versus everybody, Linette, Charlotte (no longer strong, remember), and Marnie trying to help.

Next Issue: "It's the End of the World As We Know It" Concludes.