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 **AVATAR™**

IGNITION

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CITY™

#2 of 5



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Let's start with his body, Gayle.

Recyc.

Recyc?



The island's mostly bedrock with a thin scum of mud on top. Can't dig deep enough for a good grave.

So... bodies get recycled for water and minerals.

The freak who runs the boarding-house sold his remains on to the crabs to recoup his rent money.



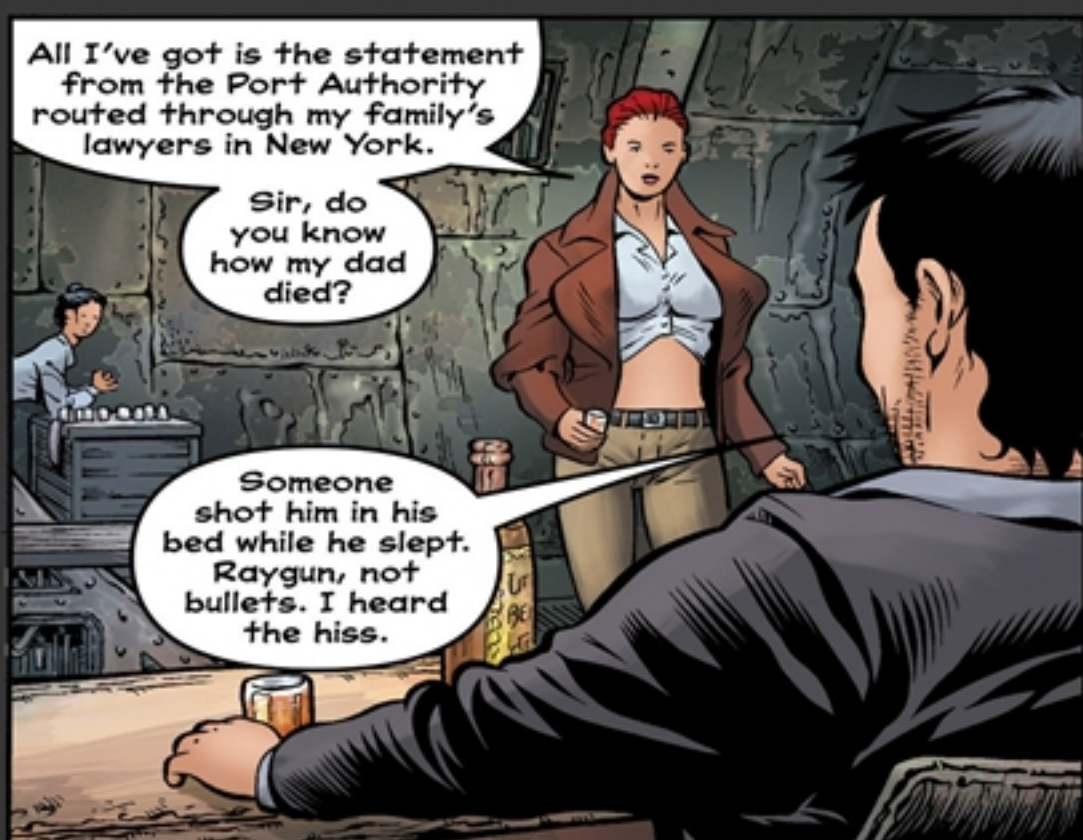
Ungh. Did he sell dad's stuff too?

There was a single suitcase, Bronco said.

Bronco? You said Rock had a case?



Yeah. Bryant couldn't open it, so it got slung in his office.



All I've got is the statement from the Port Authority routed through my family's lawyers in New York.

Sir, do you know how my dad died?

Someone shot him in his bed while he slept. Raygun, not bullets. I heard the hiss.



And you didn't get up to find out?

You don't know me, miss.

You're right. You didn't get up to see who was shooting people in their beds?



I don't carry arms. And it's not my time to die yet.



You think it was my dad's time to die?

Hey, now, honey, don't be--

You think it was my dad's time to have his shot body shoved in a recycler by some jumped-up shitbox attendant for a few dollars of rent money?



That's enough now. You got good reason to be angry, but not at him.

You tell me where I can find this boarding house.

And you tell me where I can buy a gun.



The boarding house is fifty yards south, on your left there.

You don't want a gun.

They took my gun from me at the port. But I see outside that people in the interior don't have trouble getting hold of arms.

So there's going to be gun dealers here in the settlement.





No, seriously-- **Lightning Bowman** can't get a ship offworld? You three were the first humans in space!

Honey, who do you think got the blame for every space attack since 1930?

Him, me, Doc Vukovic. Lightning kind of lost it when he got disavowed by the US government and labelled a "person of concern" by the UN.



We're not here because we lost space, honey. We're here because we lost our planet.



And when I realised there was nothing he wouldn't do to get back into space...

Well.

So he sells guns now. How does that law work?



There's a law against bringing guns into Ignition City. No law against finding them once you're here.

That makes no sense.

Welcome to the interior.



You don't need a gun, kid. You need to get your daddy's things and go home.

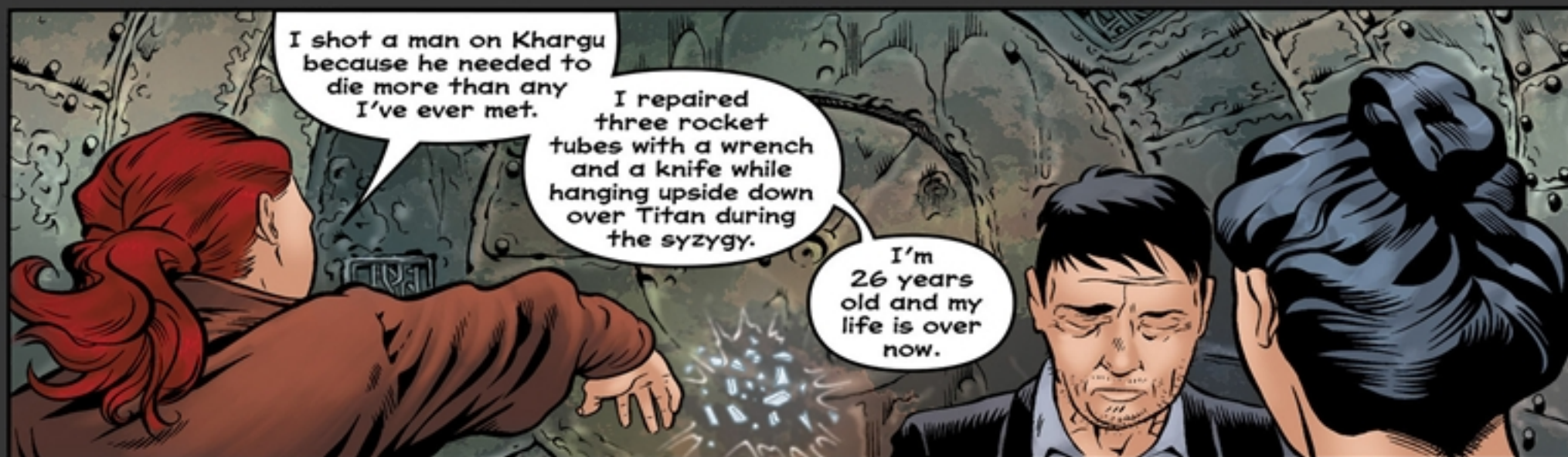
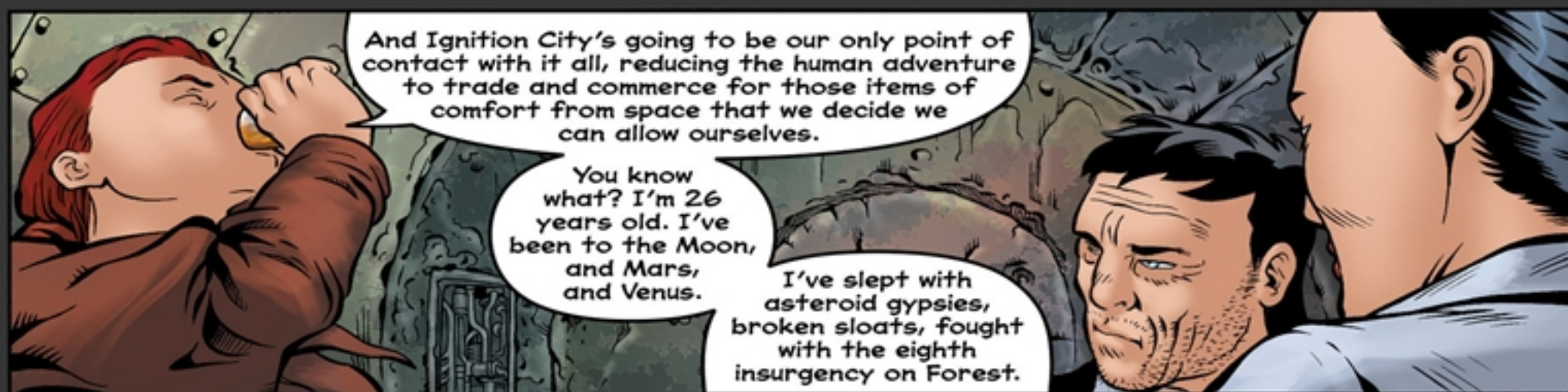
Go back to the world. There's nothing for a girl like you in Ignition City.

You think?



France just outlawed spaceflight. Britain's going to go the same way, I hear.

We're just going to wrap ourselves up in a big kiddy blanket, say go 'way now to the universe, and go to sleep.







The wheel sticks. Give it a good twist.

You live in this thing?

Haven't had time to put in the porch and the picket fence yet.



You're Rock's little girl?

Mary.



Well, damn. He talked about you some, you know. Said you were a Belt pilot. He was real proud.

Thanks.



So you know your pop's dead?

Yeah.



You know how it happened?

Guy in a bar said he was murdered in his sleep.

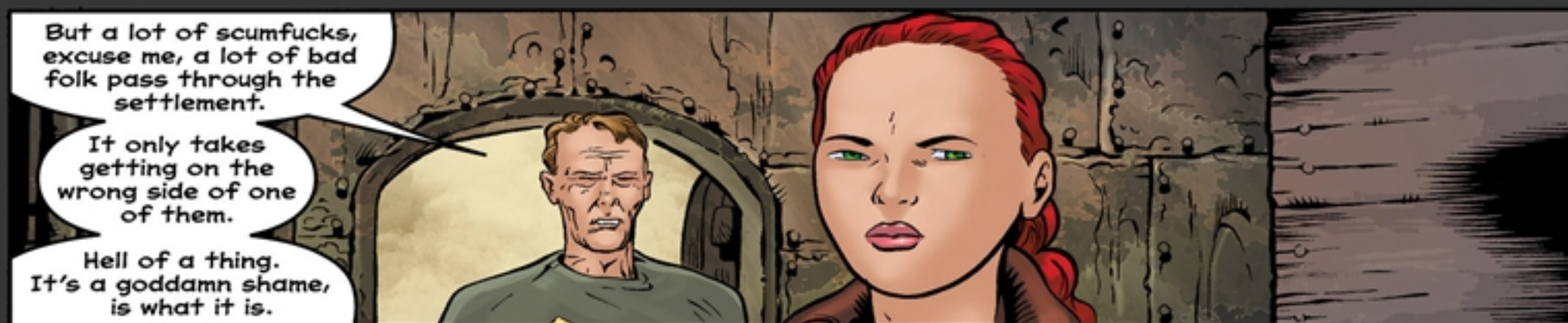
Yeah. Yeah. Hell of a thing.



Any idea who'd want to do that?

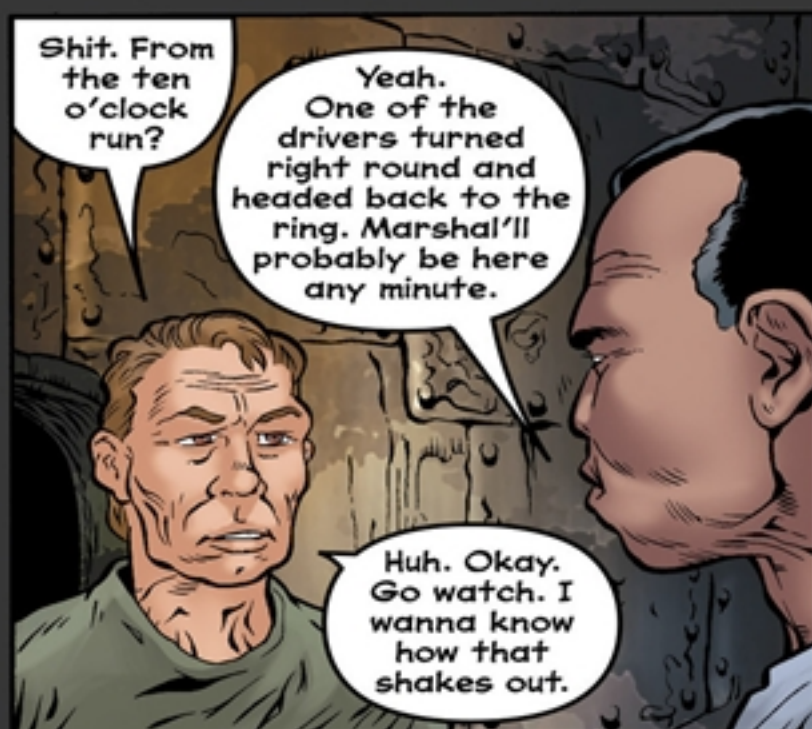
No clue. Your pop knew lots of people, you know? Color or dirt didn't mean a damn thing to him.

He hung out with longboys and crabs, humans and leadfeet alike. And not 'cause he had to, neither.













Sam Hitch?

No. No. Fucking sammich. Fucking baloney sammich.

All week I've been dreaming of a fucking baloney sammich. Fucking food pills are sewing my asshole up.



Excuse me.

Tt Ahrsees ki?

Hyah. Tshee spek Slip Lek?



Hyah. Tsis tablis?

Hyah goot. Tsis dur-took tablis ten sun. Wash?

Nyyy. Dur-took!



'Scuse me, ma'am. But what the fuck are you saying to the sammichless longboy here?

These are Highland Martians, off the Tharsis plain. They have a dialect specifically for talking to humans. And I'm going to buy some tablis from these people.

Can you ask them if they sell sammiches?



Dehx slatalohn quet twa catta bahk whek hwa catta mmal-mistrad condans. Ayda?

Um... what did you say?

I told them you wanted a slice of compressed meat from an unknown animal in two slices of bread. Fifty-fifty whether they'll laugh or throw up.



Ke ke ke ke ke

Avh slatalohn consam tablis. Edukat.

Kowt currens?

Nyyy. Frey tep cansyert rrspek spacegirl. Koombyy gen.



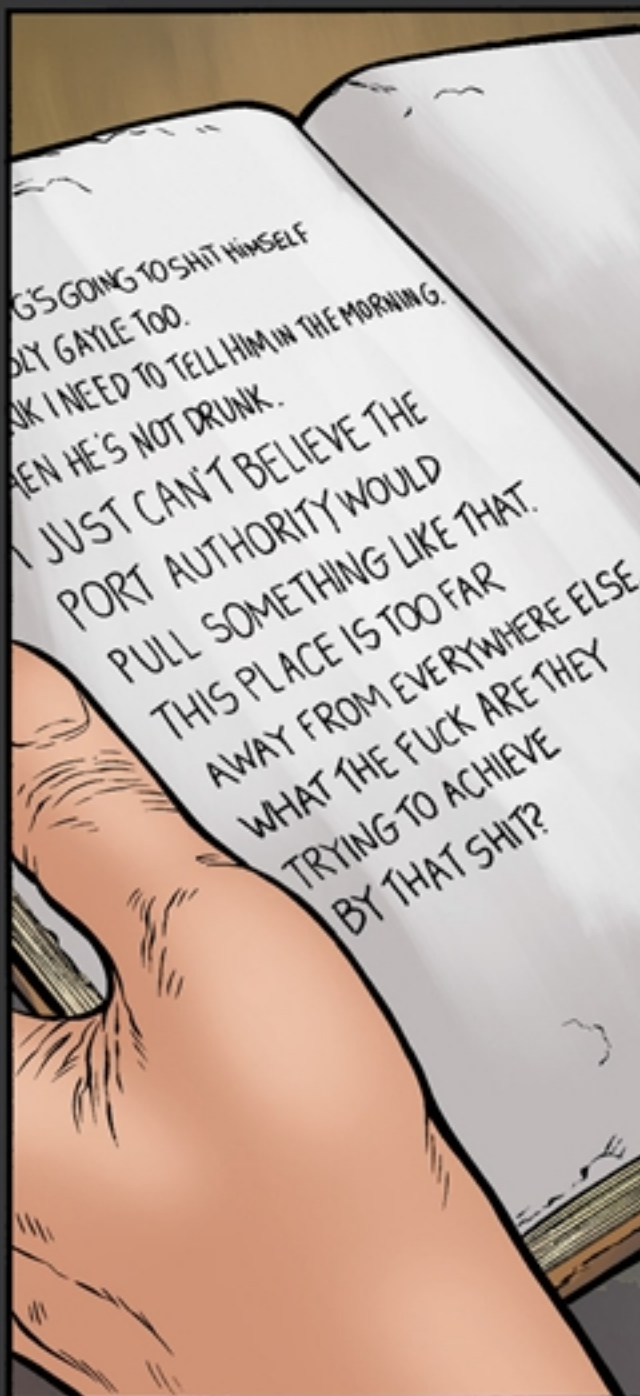














...the hell?

You couldn't pay your rent but you had a stash of American dollars?

...unless, of course, you were paying your rent just fine and you were stuffed in recyc for *another* good reason.



Thanks, Dad.



Is everything in order, Miss Raven?

Not yet. But it will be.



How did she open that fucking case?

Leadfoot whore.



She didn't have that gun before.

Old Lightning, he's gonna be pissed.

He's gonna be more than pissed. He's gonna be shitting himself.



We're gonna have to kill her.