

WILDSTORM

TM



CHAPTER

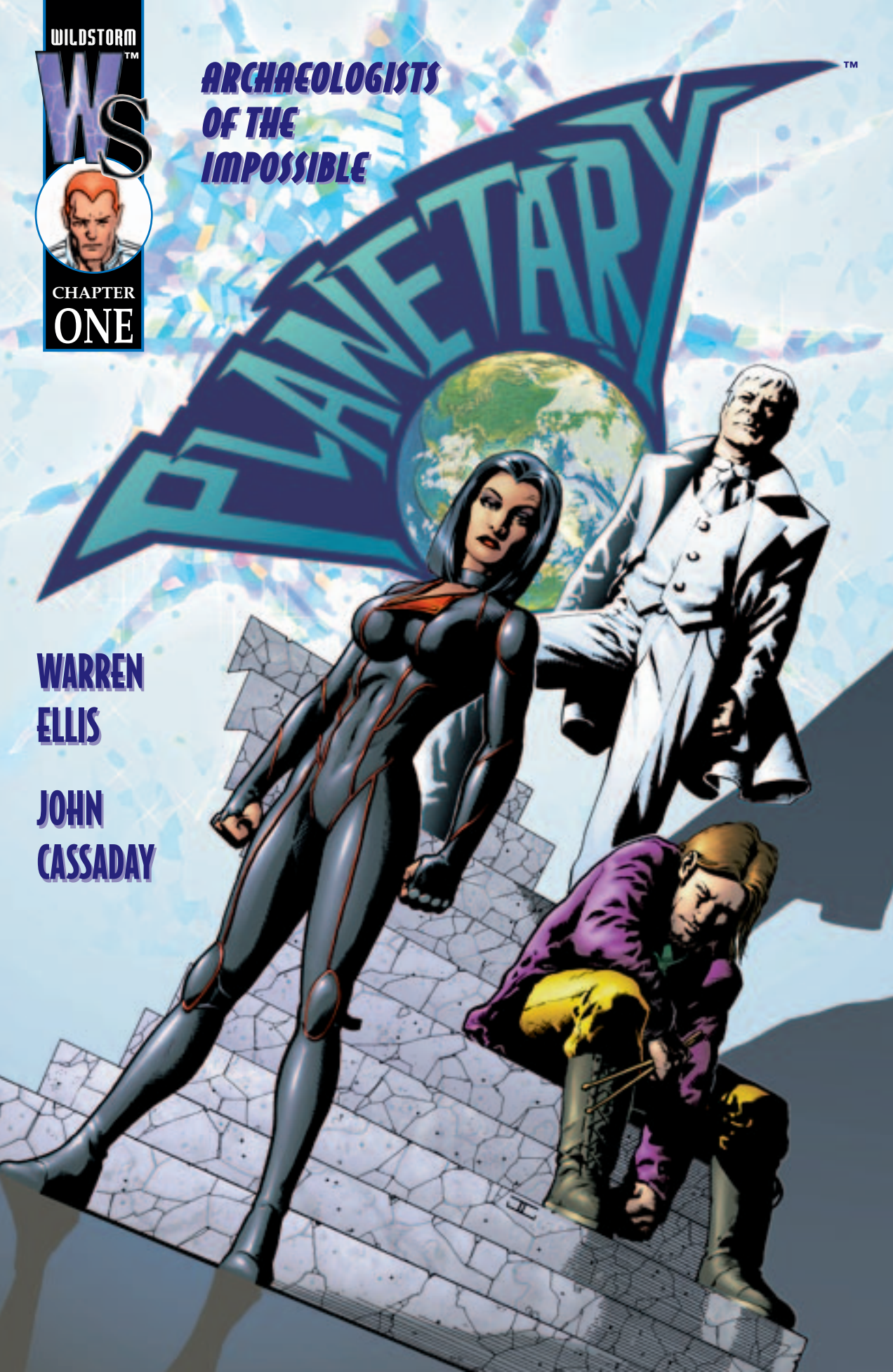
ONE

ARCHAEOLOGISTS OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

TM

WARREN
ELLIS

JOHN
CASSADAY

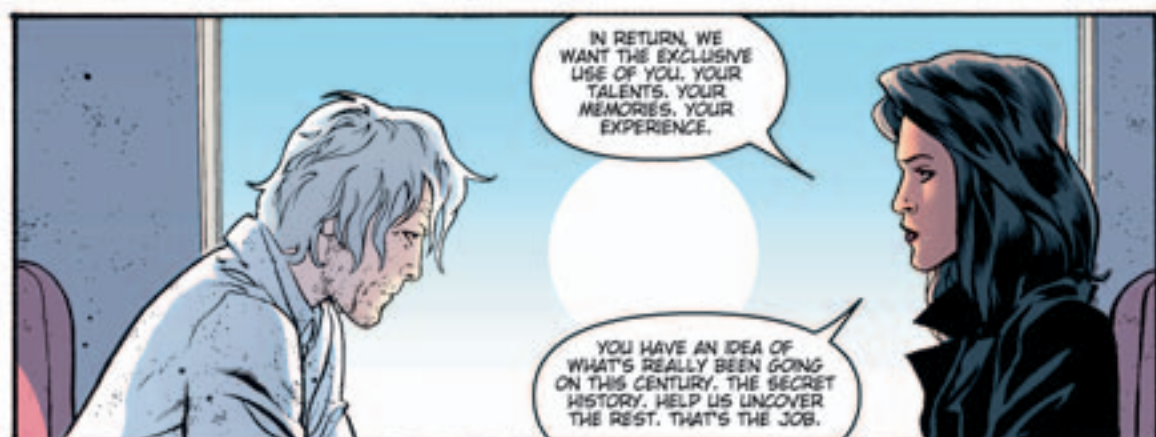






ALL OVER THE WORLD





IN RETURN, WE
WANT THE EXCLUSIVE
USE OF YOU. YOUR
TALENTS. YOUR
MEMORIES. YOUR
EXPERIENCE.

YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF
WHAT'S REALLY BEEN GOING
ON THIS CENTURY. THE SECRET
HISTORY. HELP US UNCOVER
THE REST. THAT'S THE JOB.



ANYTHIN'?



YEAH.
GET HER A
COFFEE.

ONE JUST
LIKE MINE.

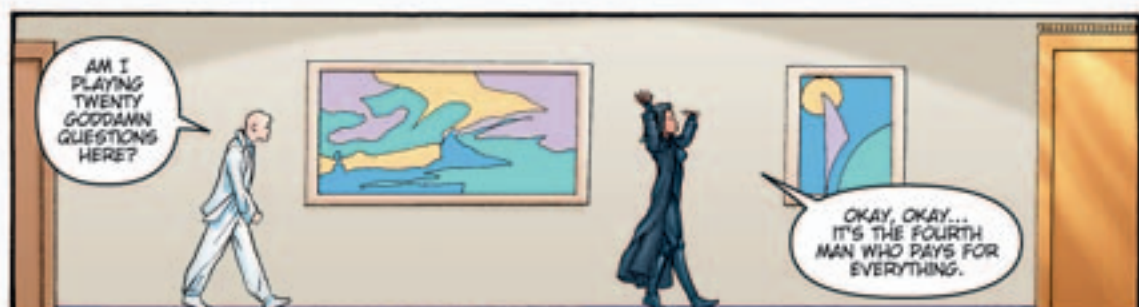


I HAVE NO
IDEA WHY I'M DOING
THIS. I'VE GOT NO
PROOF YOU'RE GOING
TO DO ANYTHING YOU
SAID YOU WOULD.

WELL, I
FIGURE YOU COULD
WALK BACK TO THAT
DINER AND DRINK THAT
SWILL AND EAT THAT
CRAP UNTIL YOU
EVENTUALLY DIE OF
RENAL FAILURE AND
FLATULENCE --











ADIRONDACKS. BIG MOUNTAINS. SOME IDIOT OR OTHER PLANNING TO PUT TUNNELS, ROADS AND STUFF, THROUGH 'EM.

THOUGH GOD KNOWS WHAT PEOPLE THINK THEY'RE IN THE WAY OF.

DID RESONANCE SCANNING, THERMAL IMAGING, ALL THAT KIND OF STUFF. LOOKING FOR STRESSES IN THE MOUNTAINS,

THEY FOUND A COMPLEX OF CAVES INSIDE A MOUNTAIN. A VERY DESIGNED-LOOKING COMPLEX.

MAN-MADE.

AND, Y'KNOW, NO ONE CAN SEE AN ENTRANCE INTO THIS SYSTEM -- BUT SCANNING SHOWS IT'S THERE.


WE GOT A MOLE IN THAT CORPORATION WHO THROWS THIS TO US. WE BUY SOME TIME ON A SPY SATELLITE.

GODDAMN IF THE ENTRANCE ISN'T MASKED BY A HOLOGRAM.

NOW, ALL THIS WOULD BE WEIRD ENOUGH. BUT DO YOU REMEMBER THOSE DIARIES WE STOLE FROM THE OLD KGB VAULTS TWO YEARS BACK, JAKITA?

THE ADIRONDACKS.

RIGHT. THE ADIRONDACKS WERE THE LAST KNOWN DESTINATION OF DOC BRASS.



WHAT WE
KNOW ABOUT DOCTOR
AXEL BRASS IS
LIMITED, TO SAY THE
LEAST.

HE WAS BORN ON
JANUARY ONE, 1900, WHICH
GOT OUR ATTENTION. SAME
BIRTH DATE AS SEVERAL
OTHER UNUSUAL INDIVIDUALS.
DISAPPEARED JANUARY
ONE, 1945.

BY THE THIRTIES, HE WAS YOUR
GENUINE RENAISSANCE MAN: GREAT
SCIENTIST, GIFTED INVENTOR,
SOMETHING OF A VISIONARY.

THE DIARIES WE OBTAINED
WERE KEPT BY AN APPARENT ASSOCIATE
OF BRASS', WHO DIED IN BERLIN DURING
VE-DAY 1945.

HIS CORPSE WAS
EVIDENTLY RANSACKED
BY A RUSSIAN OFFICER.
THE BOOKS EVENTUALLY
PASSED INTO THE HANDS
OF THE KGB --

-- WHO
SEALED THEM
IN THEIR VAULT
OF FORBIDDEN
KNOWLEDGE.

WE'D NEVER HEARD OF BRASS UNTIL WE
READ THE BOOKS. TURNS OUT BRASS
WAS ALSO AN ADVENTURER.

ALSO, THERE'S
EVIDENCE THAT HE'D RETARDED
HIS OWN AGING, AND POSSIBLY
NO LONGER NEEDED TO EAT.



HE DEALT
WITH THINGS THAT
NO ONE OUTSIDE HIS
GROUP KNEW ABOUT.
THINGS HISTORY NEVER
RECORDED.

THINGS WE
SHOULD KNOW
ABOUT.

IT'S AMAZING
HOW YOU CAN TALK
FOR AGES BUT NOT
ACTUALLY SAY ONE
GODDAMN THING I
UNDERSTAND. HOW
DO YOU DO THAT?



DON'T PISS HER OFF, MAN.

WHY?

BECAUSE SHE CAN DROPKICK A RHINO OVER THE GRAND CANYON.



AND I CAN SHOVE THESE 60 FAR UP YOUR BUTT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TASTE THEM WHEN YOU COUGH.

NO WONDER YOU'VE SPENT MOST OF YOUR LIFE ON YOUR OWN, MAN.

ONLY WAY I CAN BE GUARANTEED A USEFUL CONVERSATION.



OKAY, SNOW. TIME TO EARN YOUR PAY, WE'RE GOING IN.



YOU HEARD HER, GET UP, YOU LITTLE BASTARD.

I AIN'T GOING ANYWHERE. WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM, NUTS?

OUT YOU GO, GRANDPA.





HAVEN'T TRIED A STUNT LIKE THIS SINCE THE SAIGON BUG-OUT... YOU FOLLOWING ME DOWN, WAGNER?



NO.



COME ON, COME ON... THE ENTRANCE IS THAT WAY, AND I WANT TO GET THERE BEFORE I RETIRE.

CAN YOU REALLY DROPKICK A RHINO ACROSS THE GRAND CANYON?

TRIED IT WITH AN OLD MAN WHO IRRITATED THE CRAP OUT OF ME AND IT WORKED. MIGHT WORK WITH A RHINO.



HOW LONG'S PLANETARY BEEN GOING?

I HAVE NO IDEA. I JOINED FOUR YEARS AGO. WHETHER IT WAS AROUND BEFORE THAT, I DON'T KNOW. NOBODY'S SAID SO.

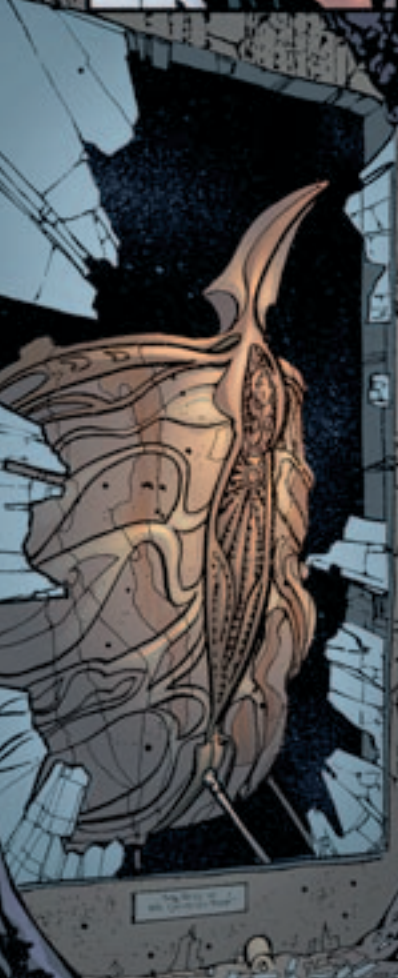
WHY'D YOU JOIN? THE MONEY OR THE SECRETY YOUR FOURTH MAN CAN BUY?



NEITHER.

I GET BORED EASILY.

PLANETARY STOPS ME GETTING BORED.





I'M AXEL
BRASS.

YOU DAMN
WELL BETTER
BE THE GOOD
GUYS.



PLEASE. YOUR
GUNS ARE USELESS
ON ME. WE'RE
HERE TO HELP.

YOU
WANT TO HELP?
SHUT UP AND
LISTEN.

CHRIST...



FOR GOD'S SAKE, MAN, YOU'RE
WOUNDED AND YOU'VE BEEN
HERE SINCE --

-- SINCE 1945,
BOY. I ELIMINATED
MY NEED FOR
FOOD AND SLEEP
IN 1942 --

-- STOPPED
AGING IN '43,
AND LEARNED TO
CLOSE WOUNDS
WITH THE POWER
OF MY MIND
IN '44.

SO SHUT
UP AND
LISTEN. THIS
IS IMPORTANT
AND WE HAVE
NO TIME.



YOU HAVE TO
UNDERSTAND. YOU
HAVE TO LISTEN. OR
ELSE IT'S ALL BEEN
FOR NOTHING.

THEY CALLED
ME HERE IN JANUARY '45.
WE BUILT THIS PLACE TEN
YEARS EARLIER. A SECRET
HEADQUARTERS FOR GOD'S
SAKE, BECAUSE WE DIDN'T
FEEL SAFE MEETING ANY
OTHER WAY.



THIS WAS
OUR PLACE, WHERE WE RESTED,
PLANNED, CELEBRATED VICTORIES
AND ADMIRER OUR TROPHIES. THERE
WERE MONSTERS ABOARD IN THE WORLD,
THINGS THE WORLD DIDN'T NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT. WE WERE DIFFERENT. SPECIAL.
GREATER. WE TOOK THAT RESPONSIBILITY
UPON OURSELVES. JANUARY OF '45, IT ALL
CHANGED. I LEFT MY ASSOCIATES IN NEW
YORK, AND CAME HERE FOR OUR MOST
IMPORTANT MEET.





BETWEEN US, WE'VE COME UP WITH AN EXTRAPOLATION OF THE COMPUTER THAT'S... WELL, IT'S KIND OF FRIGHTENING.

THE WORLD ISN'T BLACK AND WHITE, ON OR OFF. IT'S MADE OF OF SITUATIONS THAT STAND IN ALL POINTS *BETWEEN* ON OR OFF. SHADES OF GREY.

IN FACT, I THINK THE *UNIVERSE* IS LIKE THAT -- IT OCCUPIES ALL POSSIBLE POSITIONS AT ONCE.



A MULTITUDE OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES, NONE OF THEM QUITE REAL, ALL OF THEM CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE ACTUAL REALITY.

A CALCULATING DEVICE ALONG THESE LINES COULD PERFORM ITS OPERATIONS SIMULTANEOUSLY, NOT SERIALLY AS IN THIS BINARY TECHNOLOGY.



WE'D HAVE A MECHANICAL BRAIN, GENTLEMEN -- BUT UNLIKE ANY WE EVER IMAGINED.



THIS QUANTUM BRAIN WOULD PERFORM EACH CALCULATION ACROSS UNIVERSES, EACH POSSIBLE ANSWER BEING PROCESSED IN A DIFFERENT WORLD --

-- EACH ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSE VANISHING, ONE BY ONE, UNTIL THE ANSWER MADE ITSELF REAL.



LOOK.



THIS IS
THE SHAPE OF
REALITY.

A THEORETICAL
SNOWFLAKE EXISTING
IN 196,833 DIMENSIONAL
SPACE.

THE SNOWFLAKE
ROTATES. EACH ELEMENT
OF THE SNOWFLAKE
ROTATES. EACH ROTATION
DESCRIBES AN ENTIRELY
NEW UNIVERSE.

THE TOTAL
NUMBER OF
ROTATIONS ARE EQUAL
TO THE NUMBER OF
ATOMS MAKING UP
THE EARTH.

EACH
ROTATION MAKES
A NEW EARTH.

THIS IS THE
MULTIVERSE.





THE OTHERS
WERE BEHIND US.
WE HAD THE
AGREEMENT WE
SOUGHT.

WE BARELY
UNDERSTOOD
EVEN THE SIDE
EFFECTS OPERATING
THE MACHINE COULD
HAVE.

THERE WAS A
SLIM CHANCE THAT A
SOLVED EQUATION COULD
REWRITE THE ENTIRE
PLANET'S REALITY, MAKING
ITS MATHEMATICAL
ANSWER AN OBJECTIVE
TRUTH.



BUT
WE DID IT
ANYWAY.



HARK'S
ELABORATE SUPERHUMAN
MATHEMATICS ENCODED
GEOLOGICS, PSYCHOLOGY,
WEATHER SYSTEMS,
THE PROCESSION
OF STARS --

-- AS WE
ATTEMPTED TO END
THE SECOND WORLD
WAR FROM OUR
ARMCHAIRS.



IT WAS
1945. THE ATOMIC
BOMB HADN'T YET
BEEN DROPPED --
BUT WE KNEW IT
WOULD BE.

WE'D DELIBERATELY
NOT ENTERED THE WAR, YOU
SEE. WE KNEW ENOUGH TO
UNDERSTAND HOW COMPLEX
SHIFTING THE DIRECTION
OF CIVILIZATION WAS.

TOO MANY
VARIABLES. WE COULD
NEVER JUGGLE ALL THE
MYRIAD POSSIBILITIES
OUR ACTIONS COULD
SET IN MOTION.



BUT
THE **BRAIN**
COULD.

IT COULD FURNISH US
WITH A SOLVED EQUATION THAT
CONSTITUTED THE PERFECT PLAN
TO END THE WAR AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE, WITH A MINIMUM DEATH,
CREATING THE BEST POSSIBLE
WORLD SOCIETY AS A RESULT.



HARK'S MATH WAS ENTERED
INTO THE BRAIN BY EDISON,
AS I MOVED THE MACHINE
INTO LIFE...AND IT
BEGAN.

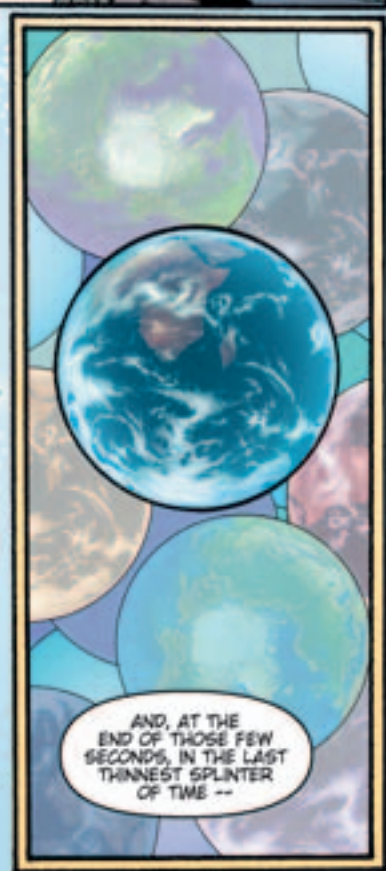
WAGNER, THE
FLOOR -- THE ENTIRE
ROOM -- IT'S THE
"BRAIN". WE'RE
SITTING INSIDE A
COMPUTER...

AND THE
SINGLE, TERRIBLE
FLAW IN MY IMAGINATION
WAS THE RUIN OF US ALL.



THE SNOWFLAKE
GREW. UNIVERSES SPUN
INTO LIFE, THEIR SPANS
MEASURED IN SECONDS --
BY OUR RECKONING

BUT TIME MOVED
DIFFERENTLY IN THERE.
WITHIN EACH NEWBORN
UNIVERSE, BILLIONS OF
YEARS SPAN OUT IN
THOSE FEW SECONDS
WE PERCEIVED.



AND, AT THE
END OF THOSE FEW
SECONDS, IN THE LAST
THINNEST SPLINTER
OF TIME --

-- A GROUP OF PEOPLE
IN A MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY
LOOKED ACROSS THAT
GULF OF REALITIES AT
US, KNOWING THAT THEIR
UNIVERSE WAS ON THE
VERGE OF DECOHERENCE,
DESTRUCTION --



-- AND
WENT FOR
US.







I THINK HE'LL BE OKAY. WE HAVE HOSPITALS WHERE HE CAN BE TAKEN CARE OF. HE CAN FINALLY REST.

NOW I SEE WHY THREE CHOPPERS. ONE FOR US, ONE FOR THE MEDICS. WHAT'S IN THE THIRD?

NOT TELLING.



AWAKE FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS. POOR BASTARD...

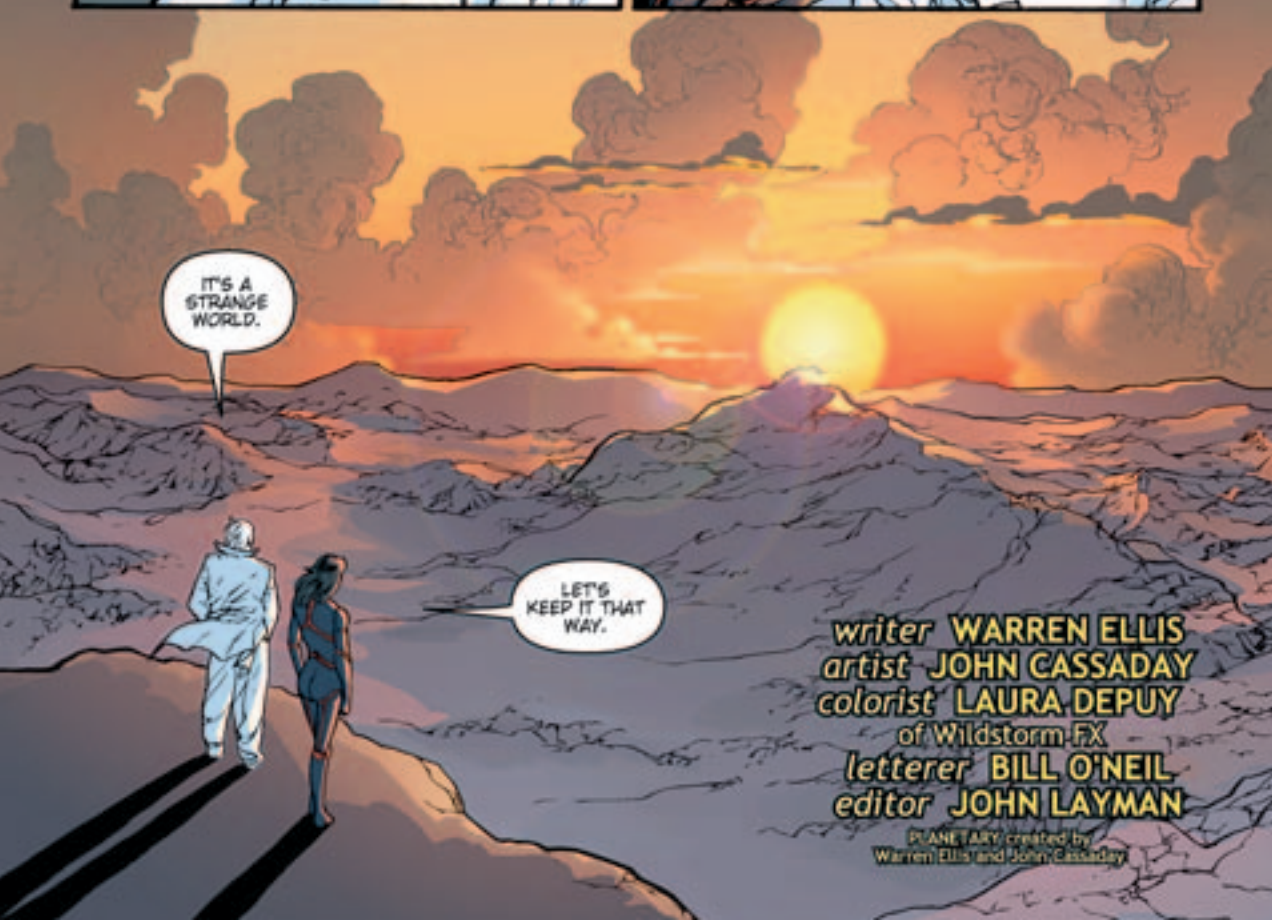
DID PLANETARY GET WHAT THEY WANTED OUT OF THIS, WAGNER?



I DON'T KNOW, DID WE?

WE DID OKAY.

A QUANTUM COMPUTER BUILT DURING WORLD WAR TWO BY A SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPERHEROES WHOM WE DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED, PLUS THEIR HIDDEN HEADQUARTERS.



IT'S A STRANGE WORLD.

LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.

writer **WARREN ELLIS**
artist **JOHN CASSADAY**
colorist **LAURA DEPUY**
of Wildstorm FX
letterer **BILL O'NEIL**
editor **JOHN LAYMAN**

PLANETARY created by
Warren Ellis and John Cassaday