

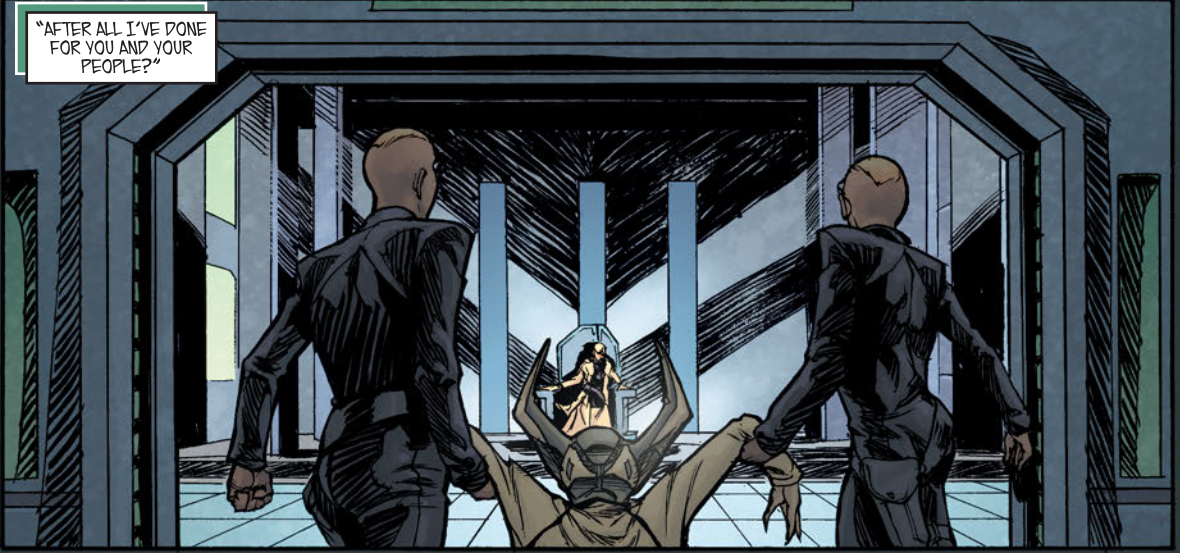


"COUNCIL-WOMAN
ARIANA."

"YOU THOUGHT
YOU COULD TEACH
ME A LESSON?"



"OUTSMART
ME?"



"AFTER ALL I'VE DONE
FOR YOU AND YOUR
PEOPLE?"



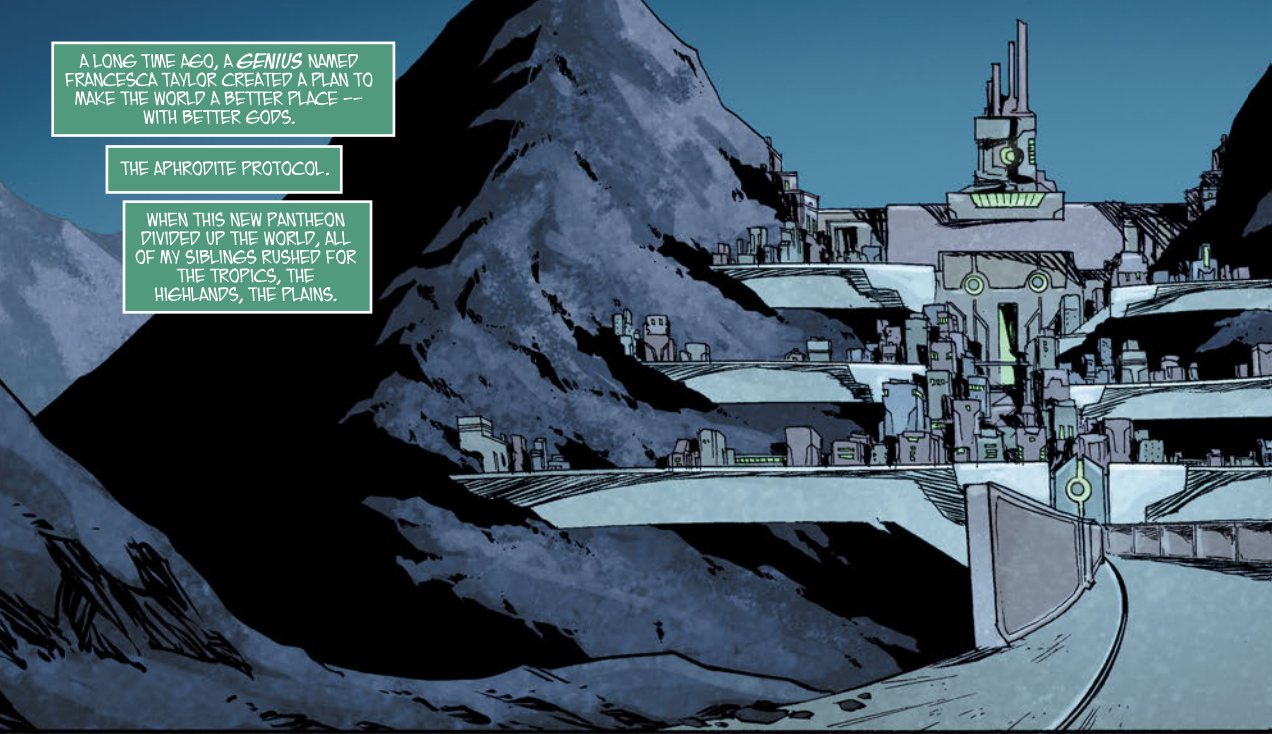
WELL?
SPEAK UP.

I'M ALL
EARS.

A LONG TIME AGO, A *GENIUS* NAMED FRANCESCA TAYLOR CREATED A PLAN TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE -- WITH BETTER GODS.

THE APHRODITE PROTOCOL.

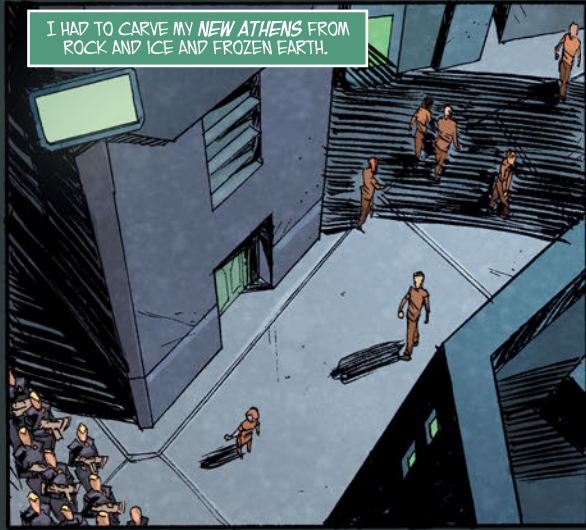
WHEN THIS NEW PANTHEON DIVIDED UP THE WORLD, ALL OF MY SIBLINGS RUSHED FOR THE TROPICS, THE HIGHLANDS, THE PLAINS.



ONLY APHRODITE AND I CHOSE LESS HOSPITABLE REGIONS.



I HAD TO CARVE MY NEW ATHENS FROM ROCK AND ICE AND FROZEN EARTH.



WHEN WE FIRST LIBERATED SPEROS CITY AND ANNIHILATED THE GEN, MY SIBLINGS WANTED TO HAVE YOU COUNCILMEMBERS EXECUTED ON THE SPOT. PUBLICLY.



MY LADY ATHENA-- I...

ONLY I WAS GENEROUS ENOUGH TO SPARE YOU. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT PROVE OF SOME USE. I SUPPOSE THAT WAS A MISCALCULATION.



EDITOR'S NOTE:
SEE APHRODITE IX: REBIRTH VOL. 2!



THERE IS NO PLACE MORE TACTICALLY SECURE ON THIS PLANET.



THERE IS NO PLACE MORE SAFE.



WAIT! I KNOW THINGS! I KNOW ABOUT THE GEN! I KNOW WHERE WE HID EXECUTOR CHRONOS!



WE'VE ALREADY BEEN DOWN THIS ROAD, COUNCILWOMAN. ALL YOU'VE DONE SINCE I LET YOU LIVE IS SOW DISSENT. DECLARE ME A TYRANT.

TELL ME--



KZZT


DOES MY RULE SEEM SO HARSH?



"YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR IF YOU OBEY."




"MINE IS A RULE OF LAW -- SUPERIOR TO YOUR OLD SPEROS IN EVERY WAY."



"FROM BIRTH YOU ARE TESTED, GIVEN A ROLE AND A PURPOSE."



"ATHENS IS A PLACE OF SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS -- YOUR ONLY TASK IS TO FOLLOW THEM. THIS IS A WELL-OILED MACHINE."



"THIS IS JUST."

"I EVEN HAD MY XVS OUTFITTED WITH EMOTIONAL DAMPENERS, SO THEY WOULD TREAT YOU ALL FAIRLY, UNBIASED."

