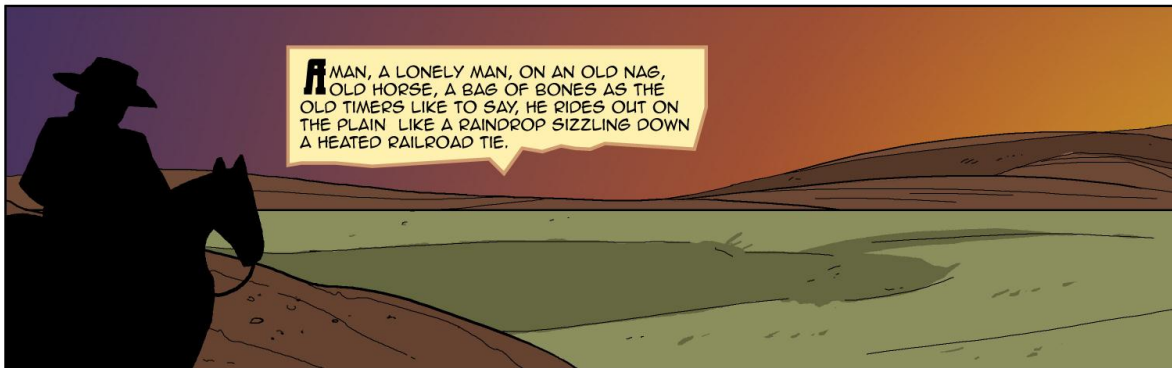


[THE WORLD AS YOU KNOW IT: WASTELANDS]

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A MAN, A LONELY MAN, ON AN OLD NAG,
OLD HORSE, A BAG OF BONES AS THE
OLD TIMERS LIKE TO SAY, HE RIDES OUT ON
THE PLAIN LIKE A RAINDROP SIZZLING DOWN
A HEATED RAILROAD TIE.



LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, THIS MAN
HAS A PLACE TO BE.



TIME IS OUT OF HIS REACH.



THE 409... EVERYONE ELSE IS HEADED
TO CALIFORNIA, BUT THIS MAN HAS TO
MAKE HIS WAY TO THE EAST.

THE 409 IS THE ONLY
ONE GOING EAST.



THERE ARE NO JOBS WAITING
FOR HIM, THERE ARE NO FAMILY
OR FRIENDS WAITING FOR HIM.





DID YOU REMEMBER TO TAKE THAT SHOVEL BACK TO THE FLAT?

I KEPT IT.



I WANTED TO MAKE SURE WE HAD SOMETHING TO FEND OFF THE COYOTES.

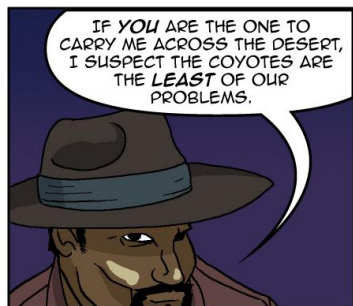
IF WE DO RUN INTO ANY COYOTES, THEY'LL MOST LIKELY PASS US BY WITH NO NEVERMIND.

THERE AIN'T MUCH MEAT ON OUR BONES TO GET THEIR ATTENTION.



THANKS, BUT I'M FINE.

YOU GOT TO KEEP UP YOUR STRENGTH. I DON'T AIM TO CARRY YOU ACROSS THE DESERT IF YOU LOSE TIME BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T EAT.



IF YOU ARE THE ONE TO CARRY ME ACROSS THE DESERT, I SUSPECT THE COYOTES ARE THE **LEAST** OF OUR PROBLEMS.



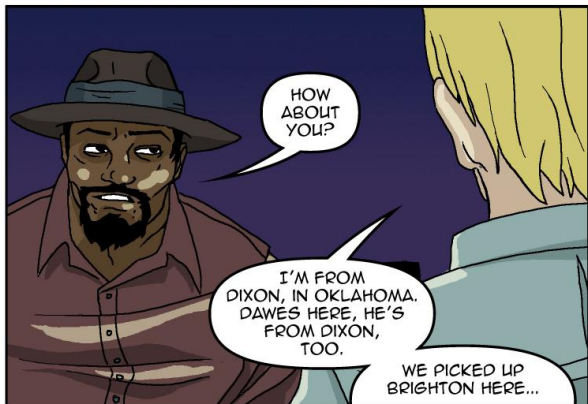
WHERE YOU FROM, SIR?

NEW MEXICO. A SMALL PLACE CALLED COBURN'S CREEK.



NEVER HEARD OF IT.

BECAUSE IT **BLEW AWAY** WHEN THE WINDS KICKED UP.



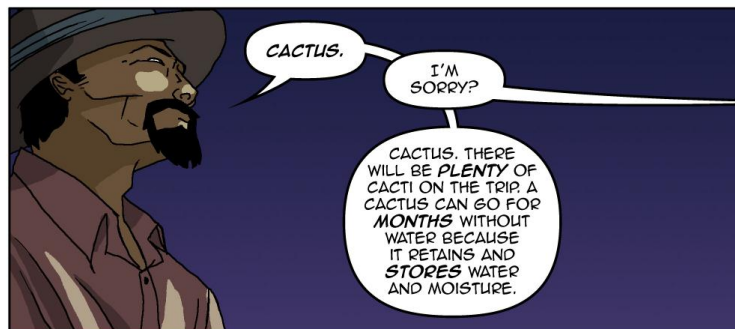
HOW ABOUT YOU?

I'M FROM DIXON, IN OKLAHOMA. DAWES HERE, HE'S FROM DIXON, TOO.

WE PICKED UP BRIGHTON HERE...



IN HOBBS, NEW MEXICO. I **HEARD** OF COBURN'S CREEK. NEVER BEEN THERE MYSELF THOUGH.







AND WE GOT
A WHOLE OTHER
APPLE TO GET
THROUGH.

IF YOU
LOOK TO
THE STARS
...



...YOU CAN SEE *QUITE*
A FEW OF THE PLANETS
IN THE EARTH'S SOLAR
SYSTEM WITH THE
NAKED EYE.



WHERE I AM FROM, YOU'D
NEED A TELESCOPE THE SIZE
OF THE TEXAS PANHANDLE
JUST TO CATCH A SPECK
OF MY HOME.



MY HOME, MUCH LIKE YOURS,
WAS IN A *BAD* WAY.

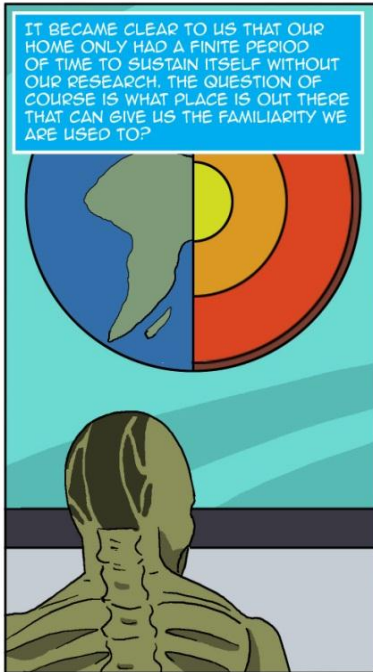


IT FELL UPON MYSELF AND A
PARTNER OF MINE TO FIND A WAY
TO *FIX* WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO
OUR HOME.



SUCH A TASK IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE. I MEAN, WHAT MAKES A HOME ANYWAY?

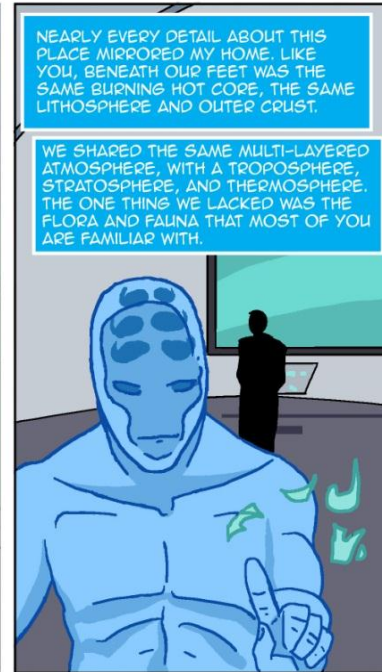
THE *LOCATION*? THE *ENVIRONMENT*? THE *NATIVE LIFE*? OR IS IT SOMETHING MORE *ABSTRACT*? THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BROTHERHOOD? THE *CONNECTIONS* YOU MAKE WITH THE WORLD AROUND YOU?



IT BECAME CLEAR TO US THAT OUR HOME ONLY HAD A FINITE PERIOD OF TIME TO SUSTAIN ITSELF WITHOUT OUR RESEARCH. THE QUESTION OF COURSE IS WHAT PLACE IS OUT THERE THAT CAN GIVE US THE FAMILIARITY WE ARE USED TO?

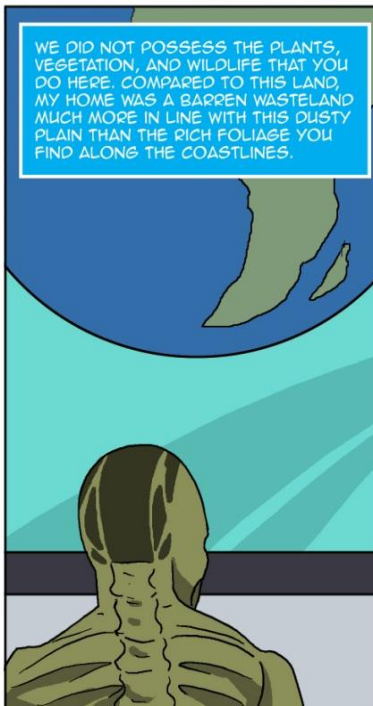


WHAT PLACE OUT THERE MOST CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE ONLY HOME WE HAD EVER KNOWN? WE CHOSE THIS PLACE BECAUSE IT MIRRORED OUR HOME IN MANY WAYS.

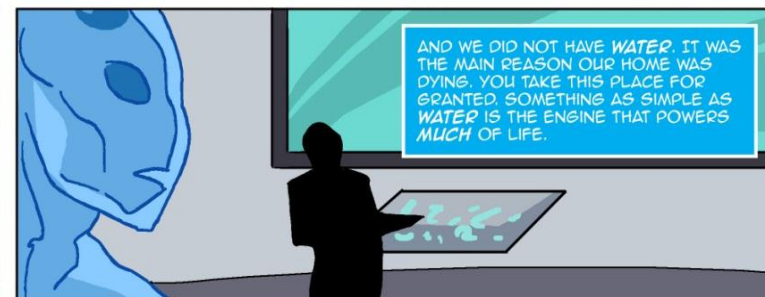


NEARLY EVERY DETAIL ABOUT THIS PLACE MIRRORED MY HOME. LIKE YOU, BENEATH OUR FEET WAS THE SAME BURNING HOT CORE, THE SAME LITHOSPHERE AND OUTER CRUST.

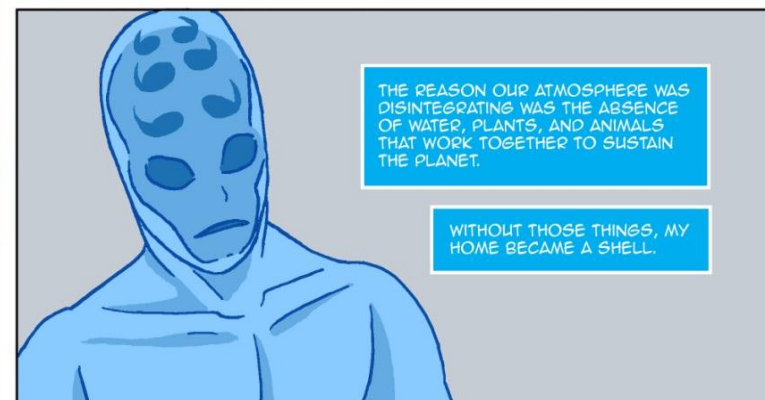
WE SHARED THE SAME MULTI-LAYERED ATMOSPHERE, WITH A TROPOSPHERE, STRATOSPHERE, AND THERMOSPHERE. THE ONE THING WE LACKED WAS THE FLORA AND FAUNA THAT MOST OF YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH.



WE DID NOT POSSESS THE PLANTS, VEGETATION, AND WILDLIFE THAT YOU DO HERE. COMPARED TO THIS LAND, MY HOME WAS A BARREN WASTELAND MUCH MORE IN LINE WITH THIS DUSTY PLAIN THAN THE RICH FOLIAGE YOU FIND ALONG THE COASTLINES.



AND WE DID NOT HAVE *WATER*. IT WAS THE MAIN REASON OUR HOME WAS DYING. YOU TAKE THIS PLACE FOR GRANTED. SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS *WATER* IS THE ENGINE THAT POWERS *MUCH* OF LIFE.



THE REASON OUR ATMOSPHERE WAS DISINTEGRATING WAS THE ABSENCE OF WATER, PLANTS, AND ANIMALS THAT WORK TOGETHER TO SUSTAIN THE PLANET.

WITHOUT THOSE THINGS, MY HOME BECAME A SHELL.