

Star Gazer, Book 1

by
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Chapter One – "(You're the) Devil In Disguise"

PAGE 1

PANEL 1

Detail shot of the exterior entrance of a spacecraft sitting inside a wide-space shipping container (Think X-Wing entrance/one-seater; ultimate design up for artist interpretation).

The craft is a faded grey with blue stripes. On one blue stripe we see a name in silver: "Pacific-1"

PANEL 2

We see the back of a woman's head from a window-side train seat. The train is filled with passengers (two column, double seats), all of whom are alien (though we see no defining features/everyone else is out of focus). The back of the woman's head is the only human one in sight.

Red smoke rises from before her--she's smoking something.

She has a buzz cut all around the sides, and wavy, short blond hair on top, with a single wisp curling from above her small quaff, like Superman.

PANEL 3

Detail shot of an active radar screen before another spacecraft yoke. Gloved, six-fingered hands grip the handles, and on one wrist we see an out-of-focus pirate symbol: an alien jolly roger (four eyes, jagged teeth, curved, scythe-like X of bones behind the skull) behind a cage/jail cell.

The radar shows a red arrow on a green screen, with four red dots surrounding it, at the bottom of the radar. They approach the very basic outline of a train, with gold asterisks (*) sitting in spaced-out train cars.

It appears the pirates are heading straight for the train in a T-bone approach.

PANEL 4

Detail shot. A slender, white blaster gun strapped to a leg/side. It has a short, golden bayonet beneath the muzzle, and looks like it can transform (it can, into a small sword). There's a small strip of red fabric tied and hanging around the grip.

It's a thicker, magnum looking blaster. There are faded blue highlights, a black underside, and a red dot sight.

PANEL 5

Two sets of robotic legs stand in the foreground of a train car, facing us. We see the muzzles of laser rifles hanging just above them, presumably held in the security's arms.

Behind them, in focus, is a floating, diamond-shaped, red gemstone. It's held between two anti-gravity containers, keeping it afloat midair.

PAGE 2 & 3PANEL 1

Spread Page.

We see a spread of stars--millions--across a canvas of space. Some are closer than others.

PANEL 2

On Page 3, at the right-side of the page, a single, square panel. In it, we see the close-up grin of the human woman from her profile view.

A hand-rolled cigarette lolls in her mouth. She's got a defined jawline, with straight, white teeth.

She seems excited.

PAGE 4 & 5PANEL 1

Spread page.

Same shot as before, only now a massive space-train barrels through. Every train car says: "BeltLoop - Your Fast Pass Through the Asteroids!"

The train is shaped much like a regular train, only with three floors, massive train cars, and engines on the tops and sides of every third car. There are wings/fins on the tops/sides, and a gravity base on the bottom of the whole train to keep it on a steady axis (seen as a blue plasma-like energy).

Golden lights come from every window. In the middle of the left page, middle floor of a train car, we see our woman grinning still. However, a small asteroid floating by blocks our view of her upper face.

NOTE: in the top right of the right page, have a small text-box addendum reading: "All Text Translated From Universal Base Language "Code" for Your Convenience!"

PAGE 6PANEL 1

Inside one of the train car levels, the whole thing shakes, and every resident jumps/panics.

We see more clearly now that there are aliens of every kind, here. Different colors, textures, eyes, hands, noses, etc., etc.

PASSENGER #1

Jox! What was that?

PASSENGER #2

Bad turbulence. We must be going through an asteroid belt.

PANEL 2

Same shot. Now from a speaker/terminal on the ceiling comes a message.

PIRATE #1

(Off-panel, speaker)

Scum! Slugs! And high-class wretches! I, Poppi of the Jakkar Family regret to inform you that you've all been surrounded.

PANEL 3

Outside the train, we see the pirate spacecraft from before (shaped a bit like StarFox ships, painted black and red) have tethered/hooked/cabled themselves to the sides of train cars all across the massive strip. One literally sits on top of the front car.

PIRATE #1

(Off-panel, speaker)

In the name of Jakkar, I take this Belter and its belongings! We have you out-gunned and out-classed, so don't try anything stupid.

PAGE 7PANEL 1

In the cockpit, we see PIRATE #1 (a green, ogre-like creature) in leather-like clothing, with long, sharp teeth and red goggles/specs on, and white face-paint striped along his head.

He holds a small, three-pronged blade to the neck of the driver. The driver looks terrified. He begrudgingly/shakily holds the mic closer to the Pirate's mouth for him.

PIRATE #1
Stay in your seats, and allow us to take
the Carb-Nara Ores.

PANEL 2

Train car doors open, rushing air out as more, similarly dressed pirates (though of varying races) swing inside from their tethers/hooks.

Many of the passengers clench their eyes shut, covering their orifices as they hold their breath.

PIRATE #1
(Off-panel, speaker)
And please, hold your breath.

PANEL 3

Wide shot.

From across the crowded train car, we see a profile view of the robot security (lanky and wiry) firing their rifles at the pirates, who fire back with blaster pistols of their own.

The passengers all duck and scream.

PAGE 8

PANEL 1

In our woman's train car, no violence occurs, but the passengers all look up at the ceiling, where sounds of gunfire go off. They look scared.

PASSENGER #3
Did they say they were from the Jakkar
Family?

PASSENGER #4
The one time I take Belter over
Intershell, I swear...

PASSENGER #5
I heard about them! They say that Jakkar
collects rare species and minerals!

PANEL 2

Our woman scoots past the person sitting next to him, and we catch a glimpse of her outfit. She wears a short red scarf over a blue and gold detailed vest, and a white, henley-like shirt under that (more scaly texture). Her blaster is strapped to her left leg, and she wears a brown weapons belt with pouches, over a set of crimson pants.

Although we can't quite make them out, she also wears black combat boots.

We see her hands are busy by her face (off-panel), and a strand of white fabric with a gold outline (like medical bandages) droops from just below it. Her hands are also wrapped in said fabric, more loosely.

PASSENGER #6 is sitting next to our woman.

PASSENGER #6

Has anyone tried calling the Galactic Scouts?

PANEL 3

Medium shot. We follow our woman from behind, seeing as her head hangs low, tying the wraps around her lower face. She walks down the aisle, heading for the stairs at the back of the train.

Other passengers still talk, and some look at our woman, curious. Above them, we still see/hear fighting.

PASSENGER #7

I can't get a signal!

PASSENGER #8

Oh Jox, I'm gonna have a panic attack.
Mar, get me a bag!

PAGE 9PANEL 1

We see our woman's lower half as she walks up the stairs. A sizzling hole in the wall where a laser blasted just before sits behind her.

In the foreground, we see her holding a small, oblong key fob. She taps it twice with a "TING-TING".

PANEL 2

Back with the Pacific-1, we get a full view of it now in the cargo car, as it hums to life, its lights turning on and the hatch beneath it slowly opening up, revealing a slit of space.

On the windshield reads an electronic message: "FUEL CANISTERS LOW"

PANEL 3

Back to our woman. She stands at the top of the stairs--the back of the train car's third level. With her right hand, she slides it into her pocket. With her left, she hangs it just above her blaster, like a western.

OUR WOMAN
(Whistles)
Phwwwwwwhht!

PAGE 10

PANEL 1

From the back of the train car where the shoot-out took place between the pirates and the robot security, we now see the pirates all the way at the other end of the aisle, bagging the diamond Carb-Nara ore.

They turn around, confused, as do many of the passengers.

PIRATE #2
Who's getting brave?!

PANEL 2

Closer on the Pirates. Some look angry now. Some look scared.

PIRATE #2
Oh, great...

PANEL 3

Closer still. The Pirates all fall, each hit three times--once in the head, and once on either side of the torso--by a thin laser blast. We see the smoke, the fallout, but no action.

One of the Pirates drops the bag as he falls.

PANEL 4

Detail shot. We see Our Woman's foot step onto the Carb-Nara that rolled just outside of the bag.

PANEL 5

Same shot. She crushes the ore into fragments beneath her boot.

PAGE 11

PANEL 1

Outside the stalled train, a pirate sits in his spacecraft, smirking out the window toward the chaos.

Behind him, through the other window (his left), we see the Pacific-1 rise up, facing him.

On the radar before him/on the dash, we see a message in red reading: "Threat In Proximity! Photon Weapons Detected!"

PANEL 2

Same shot, now the pirate ship is blown up, fire expelling everywhere. We see a hint of the pirate, dying/in shock.

PANEL 3

Wide panel. Pacific-1 flies around the train, shooting down the tethered pirate ships.

We see the Pacific "moving" in after-images of its travel, with the pirate ships blowing up around it, most too slow to react.

PANEL 4

Wide panel below panel 3. From outside the train, on the top-level of the train cars, we see our woman (face masked by commotion/debris) walking through the cars.

Pirates from inside fall dead and lasers fly in our woman's direction, always missing.

Civilians duck in their seats.

PAGE 12PANEL 1

In the driver's car, Pirate #1 begins to look concerned as he holds the driver at gunpoint.

He speaks into the comms with a nervous smile.

PIRATE #1
How we looking, boys? If you've got any
trouble, take some hostages! You know
Jakkar's policy!

PANEL 2

Behind Pirate #1 and the driver, we see the car door "WRAP-WRAP".

Pirate #1 still stares ahead, talking (but to himself/the driver). The driver looks over his shoulder hopefully.

PIRATE #1
We know you've got the package. Mind
telling us where it is? Or are we gonna
keep pretending this is a civilian
Belter?

DRIVER
I...I think someone's at the door.

PANEL 3

Pirate #1 turns around, grinning as he shoves the Driver to the floor. He approaches the door.

PIRATE #1
Scabbar! Is that you, brother?

PAGE 13

PANEL 1

Pirate #1 draws closer to the door.

Behind him, the driver presses an emergency button beneath the controls.

PIRATE #1
I told the lot, if anyone was gonna find
the package, it'd be you!

PANEL 2

Pirate #1 presses a button to open the door. It slides apart just a crack.

PIRATE #1
I heard some ruckus outside. What's all
that about?

PANEL 3

Close up on Pirate #1. He looks shocked.

RIVER
That'd be my ship. Sorry about that.
She's big on... theatrics.

PAGE 14

PANEL 1

Splash page.

We get a full-body view of our woman, aka RIVER (25, female, short, wavy blonde hair, average height, slender; looks like River Phoenix/young Johnny Depp). She wears the white-gold bandage wraps around her face, covering her face up to the bridge of her nose. Her eyes are visible, and she has white pupils with blue irises.

She holds her blaster in its sword form (a short, white and gold blade with a black hilt, like *Percy Jackson's* "Riptide") out toward Pirate #1 casually.

Beside her, on the wall, is a splash of text that reads: "River: Homo Sapiens Sapiens; Last of Its Kind; Wanted in 7.5 Sectors"

RIVER

I'm a little more cut and dry.

PAGE 15PANEL 1

Pirate #1 backs away as River steps forward with the sword, his hands up.

PIRATE #1

Wh-Who are you?! Where are my brothers?!
My sisters?!

RIVER

I don't know. Stealing rocks? Eating dirt?

PANEL 2

Pirate #1 falls back onto the control board of the train, and it starts moving forward again (as we see by signals/the stars starting to blur in the windshield).

River has the sword up against his chest.

RIVER

This belter still headed for Tarnus?
That's where I was headed.

PANEL 3

Pirate #1 smirks deviously, grabbing something from behind him.

PIRATE #1

Fat chance... This belter and everything
on it's going to be debris!

PANEL 4

Pirate #1 turns back to River, blasting her back with a propulsion gun (looks like a megaphone).

River looks stunned, but not terribly injured. The driver is still ducking down, terrified.

We see that River is turning her sword back into a blaster as she falls.

PANEL 5

Fifty-fifty shot. River hits the ground and fires three times, hitting Pirate #1 right in the head and sides of the torso. The blasts go clean through, leaving smoke trails behind.

The driver looks shocked.

PAGE 16PANEL 1

River dusts herself off as she walks toward the driver, looking at the Pirate's body. She gestures so-so with a hand/shrug in response to the driver. The other hand spins the blaster back into its holster

DRIVER
You...You killed him!

RIVER
Eh. I've killed a lot of them. Brain,
heart, lungs... gets em down before they
feel the pain.

PANEL 2

River leans over the control board, moving the trajectory with one hand while squinting out the window.

We can see the Pacific-1 soaring by, blasting its photon cannons at an off-screen pirate ship.

The driver stands now, holding himself awkwardly.

NOTE: small text bubble reads: "Dopplers: a galactic currency, named for how fast it comes and goes."

RIVER
We are still headed for Tarnus, right?
I've gotta fuel up. Used the last of my
dopplers on Crymure.

DRIVER

Y-Yes, it should be...
 (New bubble)
 Excuse me, but do you know what the
 package is that they're looking for?

PANEL 3

Medium shot on River as she adjusts the trajectory.

The driver stands in the background, out of focus. We see a
 "CLICK-VRMMM" come from them.

RIVER

No. I wouldn't worry about it. Whatever
 it is, I'll probably scare them off
 before they can grab anything worthwhile.

DRIVER

No, sorry... I wasn't asking you.

PAGE 17

PANEL 1

Splash page.

The driver holds their own small blaster (imagine a snub-nosed
 pistol) at River's back. River hasn't turned around, and still
 has her hands on the control board. She looks annoyed, not
 concerned.

DRIVER

You're the package.

PAGE 18

PANEL 1

Medium shot on the driver. His hands shake, and he looks unsure,
 but still aims at River (at us).

DRIVER

I know what you are. Human... Last of
 your kind, right? Your name is River.
 Named after the blood spilled on your
 home planet.

RIVER

(Off-panel)
 Pretty sure it was just a strip of water.

PANEL 2

Shot on the remaining Pirate ships outside of the Belter. Debris from other ships spiral through space, and the Pacific-1 barrel-rolls through them, firing away and dodging shots/hooks.

DIVER

(Off-panel)

Your kind decimated your own planet,
sapped it of its resources.

PANEL 3

Shot inside a train car, where all the alien inhabitants cower and hide from the robot security vs pirate gunfight.

DIVER

(Off-panel)

You waged war on the stars for a new
home, killed millions. It took the galaxy
centuries to recover communications. Some
races are still isolated. More still
endangered.

PANEL 4

Close up on River's shrouded face. She looks serious, grave.
Hurt.

DIVER

(Off-panel)

Because of your kind. Your selfish,
savage nature nearly sent us all back in
time.

PANEL 5

Fifty-fifty shot, with the driver on the left, and River on the right.

River is still leaning over the console. She looks down as if she hasn't heard a word.

DIVER

Jakkar, the Scouts... Whoever's buying,
you're the catch of the millennia. S-So
I'm sending you to the Scouts. They're
waiting at Tarnus with a 2.3 billion
doppler reward.

PANEL 1

Close up on River's glowing eyes. She looks down, somber. Serious. Ready.

RIVER
You done talking?

PANEL 2

Close up on the Driver. They look scared. Sweat beads on their face. They still hold the gun.

DRIVER
Mhm.

PANEL 3

Back to River. She closes her eyes.

RIVER
Mhm. You know what I heard once, about aiming down a weapon?

PAGE 20PANEL 1

Close up. We see River tug down her wraps, but the blur of motion covers her face.

PANEL 2

Detail shot. River pulls her blaster from its holster, and it's already transforming back into a sword.

PANEL 3

Wide shot. From outside the main car (in space), we see a standoff between the Driver and River. A smudge on the window blocks River's whole face, but the Driver cowers at the sight of it.

RIVER
The moment you do, no matter who or what you are, you load it with your life.

DRIVER
H...Hu...Hu...!

PANEL 4

Extreme close up on River's lower face. She looks gravely serious.

RIVER

You know who told me that?

PANEL 5

Medium shot on the driver. The pistol drops from their hands, and they try to protect their face as they scream.

River's shadow looms over them, and her sword tip points at their chest.

DRIVER

HUMAN!!!

PAGE 21PANEL 1

Splash page.

From the control board/console, we look back at the train car. The driver lays dead, beside Pirate #1, a slash in their chest and green blood pooling out. River walks away from us, back turned, her wraps dangling in one hand. They sparkle and glow.

We see peeping faces from the train car directly behind staring at her in disgust, shock, awe, etc.

RIVER

You guessed it.

PAGE 22PANEL 1

Splash page.

River pilots one of the pirate ships, with the Pacific-1 hooked up from behind. On its front windshield reads an electronic message: "FUEL CANISTERS EMPTY".

In the background, we see the stalled-out belter behind River, and all the debris of the destroyed pirate fleet.

END OF CHAPTER ONE.

Chapter Two – "With a Big Iron"

PAGE 23

PANEL 1

Splash page.

River sleeps, sitting upright, on a bench beside a brick road. On it is an Americana strip of shops and banners between light posts, filled with human beings walking through town.

They hold bags of popcorn, streamers, drinks, etc., and all dress in bright, summer clothes.

We hear a bell tolling "DONG...DONG...DONG..." in the distance.

The banner just above River reads: "Welcome to Earth's Final Centennial!" with "Is Your Interstellar Passport Up to Date?" In smaller text below it.

PAGE 24

PANEL 1

Medium shot. River sleeps on the right side of the bench, her head dipped, her hands dangling between her legs.

She wears a black vest over a faded blue and white striped shirt, with a loose red ascot, and brown pants, black boots (inspired by Booker Dewitt of *Bioshock Infinite*).

Her wraps are fully around her face, completely masking it, unlike in Issue 1 where it was on either the top or bottom.

PANEL 2

Same shot. Now, a man in a white polo shirt and khakis sits down beside her. He has spectacles, a pen in his breast pocket, slicked-back brown hair. This is OAK/MICHAEL (50s, short brown-grey hair, brown eyes).

OAK
Wake up. You're dreaming.

PANEL 3

Over Oak's shoulder, we see River startle awake, looking over at him.

RIVER
Hmm...? Oak. What is it?

OAK

As a reminder, you can't hear me, and I can't see you.

(New bubble)

Also, please stick to Michael. You're named after remnants of Earth. I was named after my grandfather. It still feels too weird to be referred to as a tree.

PAGE 25

PANEL 1

Reverse shot, now over River's shoulder.

Oak keeps his hands placed firmly on his lap, and looks determined.

OAK

How are things outside?

RIVER

Same as ever. Looking for fuel.

PANEL 2

Wide shot. As we look back out on the street, we see a parade walk by in front of River and Oak, and they watch.

OAK

Going well, I hope.

(New bubble)

Now, time for a new lesson. This was called a parade. This was the last we had on Earth. Lots of junk food, cheap drinks. The instruments you see are—

RIVER

A band. Right. Percussion, wind. Seems nice.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Oak and River. Oak looks misty eyed as he watches. River seems almost disinterested.

RIVER

Were you actually here?

OAK

Note that it wasn't this sunny out, at the time of this event. More dust, less color. This was the spirit of it, though.

(New bubble)
 These were held on holidays, often.
 Fourth of July in America, St. Patrick's
 Day in America and Ireland. Thanksgiving.
 New Years. Sometimes Christmas.

(New bubble)
 They were nice. There was something...
pure about them. Just for fun.

PANEL 4

Close up on Oak. Tears roll down his cheeks. He smiles.

OAK
 I know the others will teach you about
 the darker sides of Earth. They're
 important too, but...

PANEL 5

Close up on River. She watches Oak, looking sad now.

OAK
 (Off-panel)
 Never forget the beauty of our home. The
 best of it. Whatever you hear of us, if
 anything... Never forget the beauty.

PAGES 26 & 27

PANEL 1

Double spread page.

On the left side of the panel (Page 4) River jolts awake in her seat, her legs slung across the dashboard of the Pirate Ship. The wraps are fully around her face.

On the right side, we see the windshield is like a H.U.D., showing the design of the Pacific-1 behind it and it's status (Fuel Canisters Empty, Photon Cannons Nominal, etc.), the Pirate ships own status, the distance to the nearest fueling station, etc.

The inside of the Pirate ship is a mess, filled with hanging bones, graffiti, trash, etc.

There's a poster behind River of Jakkar, although it's hard to make out his finer features. We see he has seven arms, and is sitting at a desk adorned with vials/jars of small creatures. He points at the viewer enthusiastically with one hand, while gesturing to the vials with the others. The text reads: "Find a New Exhibit, or Become One!"

To the right of the panel (Page 5) we see a spread of stars, magnificent and spacious on a canvas of space.

PAGE 28

PANEL 1

River pulls the wraps away from her eyes down to the bridge of her nose. She blinks away misty-eyed tears.

RIVER
Ugh... I hate it when that happens.
Propaganda at its finest.

PANEL 2

Detail shot. River's hand taps the screen, reading: "Phalco System — 4.32Ly away"

RIVER
Phalco... Any fuel stops?

PANEL 3

Extreme wide shot. From outside the pirate ship (with Pacific-1 in tow) we see the solar system up close. There are planets close and far, all varying colors and builds (rocky, cloudy, green, maroon, yellow, etc.).

The second-closest planet to River has a textbox/sign above it, reading: "Punnet — the Lonely Planet (Now With Fuel Stops!)" It's a yellow planet, with water and land masses.

PANEL 4

River flies the pirate ship convoy toward the planet. It now appears massive in the panel before us.

PAGE 29

PANEL 1

In the sky of Punnet, we see the ships making their way down. The planet is always in a state of golden hue (see *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* for inspiration/color palette).

In the foreground, we see a sign, but cannot read what it says as it faces River. We can also see what looks like an upside-down, translucent cup hanging atop one of the sign posts.

There is tall grass rising from the ground, and two suns in the distance. She's landing in a valley.

We see a mountain range in the distance behind her.

PANEL 2

Wide shot. On the left, River lands both ships. On the right of the panel, we see the sign. The words are punched through the sign (holes), and through the cast shadow behind it, in rays of light, we see the words, reading: "Punnet Valley - Population 106. We Got Storm Shacks!"

There is an old, western-style town sitting behind the sign. One large stretch of stone road cutting through the tall grass, small, smooth, circular buildings on either side with cylindrical light poles and communications shacks.

No one appears to be out and about.

PANEL 3

River walks toward the sign through the tall grass, her hand outstretched toward the upside down cup. We can see it (the cup) has "The Moggus Boys" crudely written on it in spray paint.

The Pirate ship hatch is still open behind her. We can see the Jakkar poster.

A text box above River says "M.A.S.S. - Motion Activated Storm Sensor"

RIVER
Population of 106, and they've got a
high-end M.A.S.S.? Why...?

PANEL 4

Detail shot. River sticks her hand up in the M.A.S.S. and rotates her wrist, as though turning a doorknob.

We see a "HUMMMMM" reverberate around it.

RIVER
(Off-panel)
Does it even work?

PAGE 30PANEL 1

Splash page.

Extreme wide shot. We see the whole town erupt with sound, and River covers her ears in the bottom left of the panel.

We can see people beginning to pour out of the buildings.

PAGE 31

PANEL 1

Wide shot. The alarm dies down, and River removes her hands from her ears. She looks toward the town.

PANEL 2

Suddenly, all the members of the town come out with bags and bowls full of supplies. Food, clothing, even fuel canisters.

They walk with their heads down, avoiding eye contact and keeping a low profile. They come toward River.

They are TIMARANS (bipeds, red and/or blue skin, with black hair and large black eyes, sometimes three, often two).

PANEL 3

River steps back, her hands out. The Timarans kneel before her, and present her with their offerings above their heads.

TIMARAN #1

Please, let Jakkar know we truly are giving him all we have.

RIVER

(Whispers)

Him again...?

(New bubble)

N-No, I'm not...

PANEL 4

Detail shot. A golden bullet whizzes through the air with a "CRACKOW" and flies past the community.

PANEL 5

Wide shot on River. She stands in a defensive pose, blocking the bullet with her blaster in its sword form. The bullet bounces off it and into the sky.

She looks pissed.

RIVER

What the hell?!

PAGE 32

PANEL 1

Wide shot of ALLOY PAINE (30, grey skin, two yellow/golden eyes, long, bunned, black hair) standing with her blaster out and pointed up. It looks like a large, old-timey magnum, and black smoke rises from the barrel.

She wears a long brown duster with red details and chromatic, metal arms/sleeves. She also has a cowboy hat (brown, red horizontal stripe), wine red pants, and a black shirt with a dodecahedron-shaped badge of silver on her chest. She has a black glove on her left hand.

On the wall of the nearest building, in large text, we see:
"Alloy Paine: Timaran; Constable of Punnet Valley"

ALLOY

Deal is once a week, pirate. I don't care
if you're Jakkar's first brother, a
deal's a deal and you don't break it.

PANEL 2

Medium shot on River. She puts her blaster down defensively, holding up a free hand in defense.

RIVER

Listen, I am not a pirate. I'm not with
Jakkar, or the... Moggus Boys.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Alloy. She moves through the crowd of kneeling Timarans, some of whom look up confusedly.

NOTE: Textbox above Alloy reads: "Scav: shorthand for 'scavenger.' A degrading term for pirates and thieves on Punnet."

ALLOY

You're not much for lying, are you? You
see the ship you rode in on, scav? It's
branded by the Jakkar family.

TIMARAN #2

Ain't that his poster behind you?

PAGE 33PANEL 1

River sighs, putting an exhausted hand on her head.

RIVER

Waste of my time...

PANEL 2

Same shot, River begins to pull the wraps from her face, and we see her eyes.

RIVER

I'm not a pirate. And I'm definitely not with Jakkar...

PANEL 3

Over River's shoulder, we see the Timarans all see her face, and turn to shock and fear. Many of the kneeling Timarans fall backward, or start to run away.

Even Alloy looks shocked.

ALLOY

You're...Y-You're...

PAGE 34PANEL 1

Splash page.

On the planet Tarnus, we see a platoon of Galactic Scouts (various species) standing by the parked and landed Belter. The civilians are being escorted out by lower-level scouts.

They walk out on a landing with the large text "Welcome to Tarnus! The Planet of 2.3 Million Shops (And Location of the Planned Capture of River the Human)" plastered up as though it was a massive sign.

Higher-level scouts surround their Admiral, PHAAL TAURICEN (Large, red, bumpy exoskeleton, looks like Atrocitus of DC). He wears a white coat with white pants, black boots, maroon stripes on the clothes. He crushes River's cigarette from Issue One in his massive hand.

TAURICEN

The HUMAN!

PAGE 35PANEL 1

Tauricen punches the front train car with his massive fist, denting it and making it tip over.

Behind him, the other Scouts recoil. One lower ranking member, who talks to the civilians, turns around and glances at the admiral. The low-ranking member also wraps a blanket around a shell-shocked civilian.

TAURICEN

How does one human take an entire Belter hostage, only to abscond before it reaches Tarnus? Look at all the damage it did! Where are all my robots?!

PANEL 2

The lower ranking member walks toward Tauricen, an electronic, holographic tablet in his hand. This is YOV REGA (20s, faded primarily blue skin with white lines/details, white eyes, short, quaffed, silver hair). He wears a white combat vest with a red undershirt, white pants with no lines, combat boots. He's slender--imagine Flick from *A Bug's Life*.

He has a blaster by his side, and an attachment for his tablet on his waist. His pants are filled with pockets and gadgets.

Tauricen takes a breath, staring at the Belter in annoyance.

TAURICEN

It even killed my informant...

YOV

Uh... sir? Sir!

PANEL 3

Yov pushes through the higher-ups and gets to Tauricen. Taur turns around to face Yov, and towers over him.

YOV

Sir, the civies on the Belter all said it was a raid by the Jakkar family. They took out most of the security detail.

TAURICEN

And what about the human, cadet?

PANEL 4

Close up on Yov. He looks down at his tablet, seeming somewhat bashful.

YOV

Well, they said it left them alone. Took out a few pirates and took a ship and... left.

PANEL 5

Close up on Tauricen looking down at Yov. He smiles, but it's unclear whether or not this is devious or caring.

TAURICEN
Is that so, eh?

PAGE 36

PANEL 1

Tauricen claps Yov Rega on the back and smiles, looking at the higher-ups. Yov looks confused, and the other scouts are a mix of annoyed and confused.

TAURICEN
Have I told you or haven't I? My nephew's got the blood of a scout. It's in our genes.

YOV
We don't actually share the same genes, sir, but...

PANEL 2

From the crowd of civilians, some who watch Tauricen and Yov, and some who talk amongst themselves, we see the massive Tauricen point out toward them in the distance, while Yov scratches his head.

TAURICEN
Any of them tell you where it went, cadet?

YOV
N-No, not quite, but I figure if we check the logs, we might get a sense of it.

PANEL 3

Yov points at the tipped over front train car. Tauricen scratches the back of his head, now, smiling abashedly.

YOV
Cameras are shot out in every car the human walked through. I can pull the data from the front console, if uh...

TAURICEN
Oh! Yes. Right. Sorry, nephew. The human brings out my violent delights.

PANEL 4

Inside the front train car, we see Yov walking with gravity manipulating boots as Tauricen (seen from the window) picks it up and puts it back on its side.

Yov walks on the wall as the train is set in a diagonal state (in motion). He moves toward the opposite wall, where a console sits in the wall.

PANEL 5

Detail shot. With the console door exposed, we see a number of screens with outlets next to them. They read things like "Audio Recording, One Day Old", "Belter Diagnostics, One Day Old", etc.

Yov plugs into the "Audio Recording" outlet with a wire attached to his tablet.

The wire has its own small display, reading "STENOGRAPHY IN PROGRESS"

PAGE 37

PANEL 1

Detail shot on the tablet. Text unfurls on the screen.

We see River's dialogue from the previous issue appear, with the headline, SPEAKER 3:

RIVER

(Text)

We are still headed for Tarnus, right?
I've gotta fuel up. Used the last of my
dopplers on Crymure.

PANEL 2

Looking up at Yov, we see Tauricen lurching inside behind him.

Yov looks down at the tablet, seeming unhappy/disturbed.

TAURICEN

How goes it, cadet? Any leads?

YOV

Hmm... I-I mean, yes. Yes, sir. I believe
so.

PANEL 3

Over Tauricen's shoulder, we see Yov turn toward him, still looking down at the tablet.

YOV

If it was looking for fuel, the closest
stop from where we found the Belter would
have been Punnet, in the Phalco system.

TAURICEN

Punnet, eh? I think I know the place.
Mining planet, prone to gold dust storms.
Small community, upstanding people. Must
have been a millennia since I last
visited...

PANEL 4

Close up on Tauricen's face, looking to the right. He sees the
turmoil in Yov's face (Panel 5). Taur looks concerned.

TAURICEN

What's wrong, cadet?

PANEL 5

Close up on Yov's face, looking to the left (at Tauricen). He
looks nervous.

YOV

Nothing, sir. I just...

PAGE 38

PANEL 1

Splash page.

Detail shot on the tablet. We see a number of new audio lines
from "SPEAKER 2" (Driver from Issue One).

DRIVER

(Text)

Your kind decimated your own planet,
sapped it of its resources.

(New line)

You waged war on the stars for a new
home, killed millions. It took the galaxy
centuries to recover communications. Some
races are still isolated. More still
endangered.

(New line)

Because of your kind. Your selfish,
savage nature nearly sent us all back in
time.

(New line)

Jakkar, the Scouts... Whoever's buying,
you're the catch of the century. S-So I'm
sending you to the Scouts. They're
waiting at Tarnus with a 2.3 billion
doppler reward.

YOV
 (Off-panel)
 I guess I feel pity for the creature.

PAGE 39

PANEL 1

Medium shot. Tauricen puts a hand on Yov's shoulder. With the other, he pins a badge to Yov's chest. Taur looks stern, now.

TAURICEN
 You and that heart... Like your mother,
 bless her.
 (New bubble)
 I'll tell you what. Go to Punnet, and
 investigate the location of the human.
 I'll even assign you a small platoon of
 scouts.

PANEL 2

Medium shot on the higher-ups. They all watch with disgust and anger. This is unfair treatment.

TAURICEN
 (Off-panel)
 Find the human, and I guarantee you,
 you'll find a trail of blood. Bring it
 in, and you'll find a promotion in your
 future.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Yov, looking uncertain. Tauricen pulls his hand away, revealing the badge.

It's a simple sun design (12 rays of sun coming off a circle), with "G.S. Cadet" on it, as well as an I.D. number.

NOTE: Text box in the corner reads: "Plo-Tu: Homeworld of the Galactic Scouts!"

TAURICEN
 I'll want a report back in no less than
 three Plo-Tu days. Understood?

PAGE 40

PANEL 1

A close up of mouths. Multiple pirates are lined up, facing the right side of the panel, shouting.

PIRATES

YES SIR!!

PANEL 2

Wide shot. Shrouded in shadow, we see JAKKAR (black skin, two devil horns, boney/exoskeleton, fit, large-sized, yellow eyes, jagged, three-pointed chin) from the mouth down. He wears baggy brown pants, and pointed boots. No shirt, as his upper half is covered and padded by an exoskeleton. He smiles.

He sits on a large, blocky throne in a dining hall. We see all the other Jakkar Pirates standing from their dining hall seats, filing out. A large feast has just ended.

At the walls of the hall are caged creatures. Some appear wild, others sentient. Servants are chained by the neck down into the floor, which allows them to move on a specific trajectory (up and down the hall, to provide food). No two are the same species.

JAKKAR

I want the human here no later than tomorrow, eh? I don't care if you have to rip her from the Scouts' dead hands.

PANEL 3

A servant walks over from behind Jakkar, laying down by his side. She wears very "Slave Leia" inspired clothing, covered in patches of quills, with teal skin, and a long, bird-like beak. She too is chained up by the neck.

We still cannot see Jakkar's full face.

SERVANT #1

Her? Are you saving another beloved, my love?

PAGE 41PANEL 1

Close up on Jakkar's eyes. They stare ahead through the shadow with a determined, if not playful gaze.

JAKKAR

I may yet, pet.

PANEL 2

Close up on Jakkar's mouth. He smiles, revealing a set of sharp, chrome teeth.

JAKKAR

A human is perhaps the rarest game of all. They're the ones who started this wicked game of collections and trade after destroying the HyperLynk.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on the servant laying by Jakkar. She cuddles with his leg, and he puts a hand on her head.

His hand is massive, with long nails and six fingers.

JAKKAR

All accounts say she's a wily one. And, most importantly, the last.

(New bubble)

She can't be trusted by anyone. And I like the sound of that...

PAGE 42

PANEL 1

Splash page.

Back to River. She sits in Alloy's office, which has a title on the desk: "Mayor Spectrum", as well as a portrait of the late mayor. He's a larger, blue-skinned man with a comically large mustache, wearing suspenders and a button down shirt. He has a cowboy hat on.

Alloy has her legs up on the desk, her arms crossed--her blaster still in her hand. She stares at River with disgust.

River, her back to us, has her hands out pleadingly. Her blaster is on the desk, turned away from either of them.

RIVER

Trust me. I'm just trying to fuel up my starship. As soon as I do, I'm out of here.

ALLOY

I can't trust you for dust with a face like that. Put the wraps back on.

PAGE 43

PANEL 1

Fifty-fifty shot. River sighs, and we see as she finishes with putting the glowing wraps around her face.

RIVER

Do you at least believe that I'm not a pirate?

ALLOY

I think it's unlikely. Most pirates don't make such a dumb face when being gifted.

PANEL 2

From outside the window beside River, we see her look out at it. In red spray paint is the Jakkar family jolly roger (from Issue One). The window is cracked, with a shoddy tape job.

We can also see Alloy taking her legs off the desk and beginning to stand.

RIVER

They come 'round often?

ALLOY

More often than any of us would like.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Alloy, now leaning over the front desk toward us.

ALLOY

We lost our mayor for coming up short last transaction. Fat guy in the portrait, there. Hasn't been a week, so everyone's on edge.

PANEL 4

River crosses her arms, crossing one leg over the other.

RIVER

Why do they come here so often? Why you?

PANEL 5

Alloy glances over her shoulder at the window behind her. We can see a hazy image of children playing around in the grass, swinging on what looks like a tire swing (the tire is massive).

ALLOY

Small population? Enough ore beneath our feet to build a golden planet? Lack of starships and communications with the Scouts or other worlds?

(New bubble)

Thanks for that by the way.

PAGE 44PANEL 1

River rolls her eyes.

ALLOY
(Off-panel)
Your guess is as good as mine.
(Off-panel, new bubble)
Hey, look...

PANEL 2

Alloy reaches out her hand across the table.

ALLOY
We really can't afford any bloodshed. I know what your type was like. So I'm begging you. If we give you the fuel, will you get out of here?

PANEL 3

River stands, looking disappointed, but outreaching her hand from her crossed arms.

RIVER
I'm not looking for trouble, or a place to call home. Sounds like a deal to me.

PAGE 45PANEL 1

River and Alloy walk down the small stretch of town. We watch them from an alley between two buildings.

In the foreground, a child in dirty clothes holds a nugget of gold close to his chest. He glances over his shoulder at River and Alloy in the background.

RIVER
So you've been running this place for all of a week?

ALLOY
I'd prefer we keep talking to a minimum, Terran, if it's all the same.
(New bubble)
Yes.

PANEL 2

Medium shot. River and Alloy walk toward us. River looks down. Alloy glares ahead.

PANEL 3

Same shot. Now River looks over at Alloy

RIVER

Have an image to uphold? I imagine you've got a lot to live up to, after that mayor of yours.

(New bubble)

How'd he end up, anyhow?

ALLOY

Dead ain't enough for you?

PANEL 4

Close up on River. She looks playful.

RIVER

Death comes in all shapes and sizes, Constable.

PANEL 5

Medium shot on Alloy. She puts her hands on her hips, and looks up. A shadow casts over her in the shape of a hanging body.

ALLOY

Maybe out in the stars. Around here it's pretty cut and dry.

PAGE 46PANEL 1

Splash page.

The deceased Mayor Spectrum hangs from the town square fountain. It lets out steaming, liquid gold from three layers of rusted metal.

River and Alloy look up at him. Alloy is unmoved, but River looks concerned, her hands out and stepping backward.

The mayor is hanging by a short noose by his neck. He also has a number of knives, axes, and such jabbed into his torso and limbs. On his chest, pierced in by a specific knife, is a paper with the words: "HE STOCKED WHILE YOU STARVED" written on it. A small Jakkar jolly roger is on the bottom of the paper.

PAGE 47PANEL 1

Profile view of River looking up and to the left, as though at Page 24. We can see Alloy behind her, glancing at River with a smirk as she lights a cigarette.

RIVER

That'd do it...

PANEL 2

From over the dead mayor's shoulder (from which, we can see fly-like-creatures swarming him), we see River and Alloy looking up at him, Alloy now smoking.

We see a mother (red-skinned) with her children walking up behind them. The mother wears a bonnet, a dress, the whole nine-yards of a good, God-fearing country woman. But she's an alien.

RIVER

This was over a lack of supplies?

ALLOY

More or less. Spectrum withheld three day's worth of goods in his estate. We ran low on a gifting last week, Jakkar investigates... Here we are.

PANEL 3

Medium shot. The mother and her two children pass River and Alloy. The family spit on the ground, glaring at Alloy.

River looks at them, puzzled.

MOTHER

Grayskin.

PAGE 48PANEL 1

River and Alloy are at a bar outside, sort of like an ice cream shack. River sits on a bar stool, while Alloy stands, her back leaned against the bar.

RIVER

I take it you're not exactly beloved?

ALLOY

Guess we have that in common.

PANEL 2

Close up on River. She looks at Alloy, somewhat concerned/genuine.

RIVER

She called you "grayskin." Why? You got speciesism on Punnet?

PANEL 3

Close up on Alloy. She still smokes. She looks down, as if she can't bring herself to look at River. She forces a smirk.

ALLOY

As much as any other colony. I'm still Timaran, though.

PANEL 4

Detail shot. Alloy removes the glove on her left hand. We see patches of blue skin on her hand, which seem to crawl up her arm.

We also see steam releasing from her sleeve, which appears to have been tightly pressed to the glove.

ALLOY

Just... not quite how I used to be.

PAGE 49PANEL 1

Medium. River looks confused, about to speak. A large, portly Timaran comes out with two big keg-looking objects. They read: "RLO-17" on them in paint.

Alloy slides her glove back on.

RIVER

Huh? How did that—?

JUPP

Here you go, Constable. Not sure why you don't have the freak use the pirate's canisters.

ALLOY

Thanks, Jupp. I owe you. But don't call me that. We're cousins. And I hate it when people call me Constable.

PANEL 2

Alloy grabs the canisters herself, looking stern/serious. River leans over the bar, pointing a finger at Jupp the bartender.

Jupp just rolls his eyes, beginning to turn away.

JUPP

If you say so, cousin. Not sure why you let Jakkar appoint you constable if you didn't want it, though.

RIVER

Also, you yokel, most pirate ships use stolen Scout canisters. ARK-311.

(New bubble)

Not only would that tear up the Pacific's insides, it would add another charge to my sheet. I'm trying to keep it down.

JUPP

Dust away, Terran.

MOTHER

(Off-panel)

CONSTABLE!

PANEL 3

The Mother we just saw spit at Alloy comes running, looking panicked, and somewhat roughed up.

Over Alloy and River's shoulders (between them, on the bar) we see her come our way.

MOTHER

Oh, Constable, you have to help me.
Please!

PAGE 50PANEL 1

Medium shot on the mother. She looks distressed as she explains.

MOTHER

I-It's...It's my... T-They said they would...That I needed to give up the-

PANEL 2

Same shot. We see/hear Alloy release an "Ach-tooey!" Of spit. It lands on the mother's chest.

She stands there, shocked, her mouth agape.

PANEL 3

Alloy walks away from the bar. She relights her cigarette, looking down at it. The canisters are on the ground beside River, who watches.

Jupp, the bartender, also watches, looking somewhat disappointed in Alloy. The mother is distraught.

PANEL 4

Medium shot. The Mother clutches River's arm. River recoils.

MOTHER

Oh, please! Please help me! They...They want you. They said they want the town to give you up, or my children will... they'll...!

PANEL 5

From the canisters' eye-level, we look up at River on the stool, being gripped by the Mother. She glances down at the canisters wantingly.

RIVER

Um... I've got to be heading out. Local law enforcement's not really my thing...

PAGE 51PANEL 1

Splash page. Fifty-Fifty shot.

The Mother (on the right, facing left) gets shot through the chest with a blaster. The laser cuts through her from the back and hits the bar. She's dead.

River dives to the ground. Jupp ducks beneath the bar.

A voice comes from the direction of the blast.

MOGGUS #1

(Off-panel)

Well, howdy!

PANEL 2

In the corner of the splash page, we see a medium-close-up on River. She looks up, shocked, and reaching for her blaster.

PAGE 52

PANEL 1

Splash page.

Back the way River came, with the town square behind them, are the MOGGUS BOYS and their crew. The Moggus Boys are two identical brothers. Both slender and well-dressed (leather clothes, colors/accessories up to your discretion), covered in few bone decorations. They have three arms, three eyes, three legs. Their heads are triangular-shaped.

Behind them, crawling atop buildings and from around corners, are twenty to thirty Jakkar pirates.

Text beneath the two brothers, cast like their shadows reads:
"The Moggus Boys: Moggus & Moggus (49 & 48 Headshots)"

MOGGUS #1

You must be River. We're here to take you
to your new home.

END OF CHAPTER TWO.

Chapter Three – "My Pretty Fraulein"

PAGE 53

PANEL 1

Wide shot. Yov Rega sits strapped to a seat in a Galactic Scout freighter ship, headphones in, listening to music as he scans through his tablet. He hums to himself.

We see other scouts walking past him. This frigate is full of hustle and bustle. Almost like a submarine, or a small, moving base.

PANEL 2

Medium shot. Same angle, only closer.

Yov looks down, somewhat concerned at the tablet. His humming continues.

PANEL 3

Close up on Yov's face. The concern is obvious. The humming stops. He opens his mouth a bit in disdain.

YOV

Hmm. Seems... inaccurate.

PAGE 54PANEL 1

Splash page. Detail shot.

On the tablet, we see River's file in the Galactic Scout database.

Two side-by-side pictures in the top of the file show River, one as a photograph, with her wraps around her face, and the other a "Professional Interpretation" of what she looks like beneath them (a sketch).

Her skin is pale, her eyes flaming red, with razor sharp teeth and a sharp nose. She grins deviously, and has blood dripping from her mouth. Her face is also covered in scars and bruises.

Text beneath says:

"River; Human; Terran-30

Threat Level: White Dwarf

Multiple Charges for the Disturbance of Galactic Law

Wanted Alive – 2.3 Billion Dopplers"

PAGE 55PANEL 1

Yov walks down the hall, making his way to the large cockpit, similar in layout to the Star Trek front deck.

On the screen at the front windshield shows a list of wanted posters. We see River's somewhere in between. Jakkar has one as well, as do the Moggus Boys, and others we have yet to meet, such as MAKUSUS (pale green, rocky skin, a Vijoan), and other pirates of other families (Unless I come up with names myself, feel free to have creative liberty with appearances/names).

A higher-ranking Scout is sitting in the captains chair, looking bored out of his mind. This is OPALLO (Short, green hair, diamond-blue eyes, pink/red skin, fins on the arms/legs/neck, *Breath of the Wild* fish-man looking, he's got two scars running down one eye). He wears a more official Scout jacket with one vertical red line running down it.

Yov salutes him.

YOV

Commander Opallo, sir.

OPALLO

Huh? Oh, um... At ease, cadet.

PANEL 2

Medium shot. Yov relaxes, gesturing the tablet toward Opallo.

YOV

Sir. This may be a stupid question, but do we know exactly what makes the Terran so dangerous?

(New bubble)

I mean, threat level white dwarf? I've seen footage of her. She doesn't seem that bad.

OPALLO

Don't be fooled. It may not look like the sketch, but that's only because we've never been able to capture it. Humans are wily, destructive, and apathetic creatures, cadet.

PANEL 3

Medium shot. Yov turns back the way he came, facing us. Behind him, over his shoulder, we see Opallo waving him off, looking the other way (we see his back).

Yov looks uneasy.

OPALLO

Your uncle may have put you on point, but this is my ship. We need to be ready for anything. No room for sympathy. And no room for rookies, cadet.

(New bubble)

Trust my word. The human won't share your sympathy. Take a look outside, if you don't believe me.

PAGE 56 & 57PANEL 1

Double spread page.

As the Scout vessel moves through the stars, we see they move through the **MASSIVE** debris of what was once a galactic space station. Where there was once a moon-sized mall/hub, there is now only drifting pieces of metal, frozen bodies, ship parts, and old shop signs (all frozen over).

Some of the debris has spray-painted messages on it, saying things like: "The Pantheon Lives!", "Down with the Pantheon", "Humanity's Pantheon = Galactic Tyrants", "Remember the Fallen", etc.

Text looking like a shop sign in the bottom left of the panel (but sticking out, whether through a Scout spotlight or brighter text) reads: "Remnants of The Orbit – An Eons-Old Galactic Hub"

PAGE 58

PANEL 1

Back on Punnet, River and Alloy are pinned down behind the bar by the Moggus Boys and their band of pirates.

We see our hero and Alloy pinned against either side of the wall, their blasters ready. In the background, pirates shoot and swarm the area, in ships and on foot.

RIVER
This happen often?

ALLOY
About as often as we house Terrans.

RIVER
Sorry about that.

PANEL 2

Alloy and River both turn back to the wall, facing each other as they let their blasters cool down.

Alloy looks serious. River smirks cockily.

ALLOY
Ugh...! Can you reach your ship with the canisters? I can draw some of their fire, but you'll still be in their sights.

RIVER
Sure. I'll need to take out some of these goons, though. That alright with you?

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Alloy in the foreground. She looks over her shoulder, facing the edge again, ready to lean out and fire.

In the background, slightly out of focus, we see River stand up and walk toward the open area. She fiddles with the key fob to the Pacific-1.

ALLOY
Sure. By all means. Show me how it's done.

RIVER
'Kay.

PAGE 59

NOTE: In the gutters, golden flickers/glittering.

PANEL 1

Detail shot on the key fob. River presses down on it with a "Boooooowhip!"

RIVER
(Off-panel)
Don't have all my gear on me, but...One
second...

PANEL 2

At the Pacific-1, we see a "Boo-Beep!" as a small, tube-shaped projectile fires out from the hull into the air.

PANEL 3

From a bird's eye view, with the radar tube in the foreground, we see the pirates all highlighted in red throughout the town. We also see River highlighted in white, and Alloy in blue.

PANEL 4

Close up. River pulls her wraps over her eyes. They glisten and spark a golden color, as if activated.

RIVER
Alright...

PAGE 60PANEL 1

Splash page.

From just behind River, we see her in one place through a series of after images, as though she had multiple heads, arms, bodies, etc. As many as is your discretion, but let's say for example five.

Three fire in separate directions toward the pirates. Two block blasts with the sword function of the blaster.

We see lasers and blasts come from all directions as pirates fire from rooftops, on the ground, and out of buildings.

The pirates are all still highlighted in red.

PAGE 61

NOTE: All the pirates on this page should be highlighted in red, as the radar beacon showed us.

In the gutters/behind the panels, a close up shot of River's wrapped-up eyes shimmering gold.

PANEL 1

From inside a building, we see two pirates get shot from two separate blasts.

PANEL 2

From beside the fountain, we see a blast shoot the rope holding Mayor Spectrum. He falls into the steaming gold, splashing some onto two more pirates, who scream in agony, burned by it.

PANEL 3

A pirate is shot off a rooftop.

PANEL 4

A pirate in his ship is shot through the hatch.

PANEL 5

The Moggus Boys duck for cover inside a building.

PANEL 6

The shot pirate ship crashes into another in the air, falling into a building with a CHOO-BOOM.

PANEL 7

A grenade on the belt of a pirate is hit, setting it off and exploding.

PANEL 8

One of River's shots fire directly into the muzzle of another blaster, making it explode in the pirate's hand.

PANEL 9

A pirate hiding behind a bar is shot in the back of the head as a blast comes through a window, bounces off a metal plate/medal hung up on the wall, and ricochets through him.

PAGE 62

PANEL 1

Wide shot. River stands up, catching the beacon that flew out of the Pacific-1 with one hand, and holstering her blaster with the other.

She looks surprised/winded, but content.

Behind her, we see Alloy sneaking out behind cover, totally shocked.

RIVER
Whoo—! Alright. Not bad.

PANEL 2

With River in the foreground, facing us, she pulls her wraps down over her mouth/nose, revealing her eyes. Alloy walks out, looking at her in awe. She's impressed.

As a pirate crawls for help, Alloy shoots him with one hand, looking at River all the while. As if this is nothing.

ALLOY
Tyrex alive! Hey, you were... I-I mean
that was...!

PANEL 3

Fifty-fifty shot. River turns, holding her hand out expectantly. Alloy deflates, seeming disappointed.

RIVER
Canisters. C'mon.

ALLOY
I... Right. Should be back there.

PAGE 63PANEL 1

Wide shot. With the fountain in the foreground, now spilling gold onto the grass, we see River with her hands on her hips a ways behind it. She faces Alloy, even further in the background, reaching over the bar for the canisters.

In the windows of a building on the right, we see the Moggus Boys peaking out, looking at each other assuredly.

ALLOY
I guess I should have expected as much,
from a Terran. You're ruthless.

RIVER

Mhm. Guess I did expect as much from a Timaran. You're too sheltered.

ALLOY

Less than you'd think. Still, I've never seen such precision kills before. You human beings really were something else, huh?

PANEL 2

Close up on River. She looks toward Alloy, and we see a hint of sadness in her eyes.

RIVER

Maybe so. I wouldn't--

MOGGUS #1

(Off-panel)

Yoohoo!

PANEL 3

Medium shot. River is shot through the shoulder by a blaster, and recoils in shock.

MOGGUS #1

(Off-panel)

Ye thought we was done with ye's?!

PAGE 64

PANEL 1

Wide shot. The Moggus Boys hold the two children from Issue 2 in their arms. The smaller child is held up in the air on the left of the panel by one hand of a Moggus (Moggus #2).

The older child is held between the Moggus Boys with two of their arms each, holding an arm and a leg, each. She's "strung up" so to speak.

With the final, free arm of the Moggus (Moggus #1) on the right, he points a pistol at the older child's head.

More pirates come out of the woodwork, some injured, others fresh-faced.

MOGGUS #1

Move a muscle, Terran, and we blow these kiddos all the way to the Zozzart Cloud.

MOGGUS #2

Yeah, yeah move a muscle, and we blow 'em all the way to the Zozzart Cloud. The Zozzart Cloud!

PANEL 2

Now on the ground, River clenches her smoldering shoulder, and scowls.

RIVER

You fellas sure are some cunning businessmen. Anyway we can compromise, here? I'm only looking for fuel.

PANEL 3

Medium shot. Moggus #1 smiles a gross, toothy smile.

We can see the older child struggling to the side.

MOGGUS #1

Yeah? Well, shoot, we got us plenty of it! And we're gonna use it to take ye to Jakkar's Place.

MOGGUS #2

(Off-panel)

Yeah, yeah plenty of it. We's taking you to Jakkar's Place, yeah.

PANEL 4

Close up of the child in the middle. She's crying.

CHILD #1

Please...! Help us...!

PANEL 5

Close up on the younger child, being held by the neck. His face is turning purple, and he too is crying.

CHILD #2

Mommy...!

PAGE 65

PANEL 1

Wide shot. River stands up, clutching her shoulder, as Moggus #1 presses the gun closer to the girl's head.

MOGGUS #1
 Shut up, ya mutt!
 (New bubble)
 Don't get rascally on us, now, Terran!
 Stay where ye are, and my brother Moggus
 here'll cuff ye.

PANEL 2

From beside her blaster, now holstered, we see River looking down at it (at us). Weighing out her options.

Alien birds flock through the sky, making a crescent formation above her head.

MOGGUS #1
 (Off-panel)
 That's right. Steady, now. Hate to see
 these kiddos brains on the ground. The
 youths have such bright potential.

PANEL 3

Medium shot on River. Sweat rolls down her temple, dampening the wraps. She tries to look over her shoulder.

Alloy, in the distance, is peaking out over the bar, her gun aimed and ready.

PANEL 4

From just behind River, we see her hold a hand behind herself. Warning Alloy to wait.

PANEL 5

Wide shot. Moggus #2 still holds the boy up by the throat, choking him, while his other two hands get the cuffs ready for River. He's very close now, and laughing.

River is angry, staring at the child as they stare back helplessly. Her hand hovers over her blaster.

In the distance, we hear a... CRACK!

OPALLO
 (Off-panel)
 By the order of the Galactic Scouts, stop
 at once!

PANEL 1

Splash page. Opallo stands in full attire, blaster held up in the air and smoking. There are a number of lower-level Scouts flooding through the town behind him. All with blaster rifles and shields, etc, all in uniform.

Text on a hanging sign (with one hinge) says in big, bright letters: "Opallo — A Commander of the Galactic Scouts — Runner-Up to Admiral Tauricen"

OPALLO

Moggus and Moggus. You boys are under arrest by the order of the Galactic Scouts. Lay down your weapons or be eradicated.

(New bubble)

And you, Terran. I need not list your litany of crimes. You'll be coming with us, as well.

YOV

(Off-panel, through chest-comms)

Uh, Commander Opallo? Can I leave the ship, please? Admiral Tauricen did give this job to me.

OPALLO

No, cadet.

PAGE 67PANEL 1

Medium shot on River. She looks annoyed.

RIVER

Crap!

PANEL 2

Medium shot on Alloy. She's ducked below cover once more and has the canisters beside her.

ALLOY

Crap!

PANEL 3

Medium-close up on Moggus #1 in the foreground, shouting. Moggus #2, in the background a ways, is also shouting. They both face the Scouts, far back in the panel. They also both point blasters at them.

MOGGUS #1
 Ye wanna try and make a move on the
 Jakkar family? Go ahead! Make a move.

MOGGUS #2
 Yeah, yeah. Make a move!

PANEL 4

Same shot. Now Moggus #2 is blasted through the head, killing him instantly. He drops the boy to the ground as he himself falls limp.

Moggus #1 looks shocked, staring ahead. As do the rest of the pirates.

PANEL 5

Moggus #1 (now just Moggus) drops the girl, and pulls two more blasters out from his sides. Now holding three, he fires away at the Scouts.

The other pirates do the same.

MOGGUS
 Moggus! You killed my brother, ye
bastards!

PAGE 68

PANEL 1

Moggus takes fire against the Scouts, causing them all to duck for cover. He takes out a few of them, and the girl he held runs toward River. So does the boy.

River holds her arms out reluctantly. She looks annoyed.

CHILD #1
 Please help me!! Where's my mommy?

CHILD #2
 Mommy?! Mommy!!

RIVER
 Yeah, yeah...

PANEL 2

River has the boy on her back, and holds the girl in one arm while holding her blaster in it's sword-mode.

She looks around, blasts flying over her head, annoyed and impatient.

Behind her, we see Alloy sneaking away from the bar with the canisters in hand. She looks at River.

RIVER
Don't touch my hair, kid. That's the
golden rule.
(New bubble, sighs)
This is just my luck...

ALLOY
(Whispers)
Hey... Terran! Come on!

PANEL 3

River moves over to Alloy, and they press themselves behind a new building. On its walls are faded wanted posters.

Through windows from the back and front of the building, we see Moggus still firing wildly against the Scouts. Some approach him with an electrical net (literally lightning in a net-formation, with rubber balls on the ends to keep it together).

River hands Alloy the kids in a tradeoff for the canisters.

ALLOY
Here, take the canisters and get out of
here.
(New bubble)
It's okay, now, I've got you. I've got
you.

RIVER
Thanks.

PAGE 69

PANEL 1

River stands, holding the two canisters. Alloy stands with her, holding the boy in her arms as the girl clutches to her leg.

Through the window, we see Moggus get trapped under the net, and electrocuted into submission.

ALLOY
What do they want you for, anyway? I
mean, besides the obvious.

RIVER
Little of this. Bit of that. The imperial
tyranny of the human race probably did a
number on my sheet, too.

PANEL 2

River starts to run away behind the buildings, and stops as Alloy calls out to her.

RIVER

Well, anyway... Thanks for your help.

ALLOY

Wait!

PANEL 3

Medium shot on Alloy. She looks forlornly at River.

ALLOY

I don't... Thank you, too. For the assist.

(New bubble)

Don't think I ever got your name.

PANEL 4

Medium shot on River. She glances at the wall of wanted posters, and pulls one off the wall.

RIVER

Here.

PANEL 5

Detail shot. Drifting onto the grass is River's wanted poster. On it, like Yov saw earlier, she looks much more devilish/demonic.

The poster is eroded and covered in gold dust.

Her name is in large, all-caps font, with her 2.3 billion Doppler bounty below it, and "WANTED ALIVE" above the picture.

PAGE 70

Note: from pages 18-22, gold dust swirls through the gutters with increasing intensity by the page.

PANEL 1

Medium shot on Alloy. She picks up the poster, looking at it with disdain. Obviously, she doesn't agree with the depiction either.

Wind blows her (and the children's) hair forward. Sprinkles of glittering gold pass them by.

SCOUT #1
 (Off-panel)
 Where's the Terran? The human, dammit!
 Jox's sake, we need to find the beast!

PANEL 2

The girl pulls on Alloy's pant-leg, pointing behind them.

Alloy looks back with her

CHILD #1
 Grayskin--er, Constable...?

ALLOY
 What is it? Oh, no...

PANEL 3

Wide shot. Alloy and the children turn to look out at the valley behind them. The natural beauty is overtaken by a growing, incoming dust cloud of gold.

ALLOY
 The Scouts are not gonna be happy about this. Come on, you two.

PAGE 71

Note: In addition to gold dust in the gutters, River's hair/outfit is getting hit by intense winds on pages 19-21.

PANEL 1

We're back with River as she moves through the tall grass. Looking over it, she sees the Pacific-1, still attached to the pirate ship.

There is also a Scout-class freighter sitting in the field nearby, and a small handful of Scouts guarding her ship.

PANEL 2

River crouches down, scowling, and pulls out the key fob. She presses it with a "BLINK-KLINK".

PANEL 3

Surrounding the Pacific-1, we see an alarm erupt around it, and all the Scouts turn toward it with a start.

PACIFIC-1
(Speakers, electronic)
Warning! Warning! Self-Destruction
imminent. Self-Destruction imminent.

PAGE 72

PANEL 1

River stands from the tall grass and fires on the Scouts, flicking back the hammer of her blaster with one hand while pulling the trigger with the other.

PANEL 2

The Scouts all fall with smoking holes in their bodies.

PANEL 3

River rushes over, moving past the drawbridge of the freighter. We see Yov's figure silhouetted at the top of the ramp, gripping the door frame as if hiding behind it.

RIVER
Nice job, Pac. You really know how to
sell a fake-out

YOV
H-Hey...!

PANEL 4

River freezes. We see Pacific-1 right before her, the hatch open. She's so close.

YOV
(Off-panel)
Um... excuse me, ma'am.

PANEL 5

Yov Rega steps down the draw bridge, a tiny blaster in his shaking hand.

River slowly puts the canisters down, her hand hovering over her blaster.

RIVER
Get back inside, kid. Storm's coming.

PAGE 73

PANEL 1

Medium shot on Yov. He looks sad. Sympathetic. He still holds the gun at her.

YOV

I...I am sorry about the way everyone treats you. That's not fair. That's not justice.

PANEL 2

Medium shot on River. She eyes him like a predator. Waiting. Patient. Ready.

RIVER

That's great. Now put your money where your mouth is.

(New bubble)

Turn around. Let me go.

PANEL 3

Close up on Yov. He looks conflicted.

Text in the top left reads: "Slipsnake – an inter-dimensional space creature, long as a supergiant star's circumference."

YOV

I can't do that. You killed all these men. You...You killed the Belter driver. Your rap sheet's longer than a Slipsnake.

(New bubble)

P-Please... remove your wrappings. I know they're synthetic. They tie you to the ship.

(New bubble)

You've got to come with me. You need to be put to trial. Fairly judged for your crimes.

PANEL 4

Close up on River. She looks tired. She's undoing her wrappings.

RIVER

Nothing fair about it, kid. We both know that. I'm just trying to get a move on. Now. Get. Inside.

PAGES 74 & 75

PANEL 1

Spread page. Fifty-fifty shot. As the sun sets behind them, gold dust swirls around the grassy field, and their ships sit to either of their backs, Yov stands just above River, at the bottom of the ramp.

River holds her hand above her blaster. Yov holds his with two hands. Her wrappings drop to around her neck, flowing back behind her.

In the silhouettes of their figures, we can't make out River's finer features/face.

YOV

You don't look like your wanted poster...

RIVER

C'mon. I don't like shooting kids.

YOV

I'm not a kid. I'm a Galactic Scout. And I...I am ordering you, River, last of the Terrans, to lay down your weapons and—

PAGE 76

Note: Gutters filled with blood drops and gold dust.

PANEL 1

Detail shot. The grass, stained with golden speckles, now gets hit with splashes of blood.

We see a "SHLINK!" sound cut through the air.

PANEL 2

Fifty-fifty shot. Same as the pages 22+23 (obviously smaller), only now River pulls out her sword from Yov Rega's side. Yov is falling back toward the drawbridge. They're both still silhouettes.

Blood spills onto the ramp, and leaks onto the grass. The sky grows dark with clouds. The wind is wickedly intense.

PANEL 3

Medium shot. Yov is laid down on his back by River. He is in shock, looking at her in complete surprise. We can't see her face.

RIVER

You'll be alright. Just don't move. Put your hands on it, like this.

PAGE 77PANEL 1

River turns, and sees the giant gold dust storm overtaking the valley/town. Laser blasts highlight the cloud in bursts of blue and red.

We also see the shape of someone, running over through the dust...

Again, we only see River's back, not her face. The wrappings blow back like a scarf.

RIVER
For God's sake...

PANEL 2

Alloy runs over, now without the kids. She looks excited if not adrenaline-filled.

River sees her, confused. She's wrapping her face back up.

ALLOY
Hey, River!

RIVER
Uh, hi...?

PANEL 3

Alloy and River now move toward her ship Alloy detaches the pirate ship River flew in on from the Pacific-1 while River swaps the canisters on the side of the ship.

ALLOY
Figured you could use some help. And I don't like leaving an open tab. I owe you a favor.

RIVER
What favor'd I do you, killing pirates? I probably just bought you more trouble.

ALLOY
You bought us time for the Scouts to arrive. First time they've been in contact since the HyperLynk was destroyed. Now we can finally get some real law enforcement.

(New bubble)
Jakkar's not so cocky he'd storm into Scout-protected territory.

PANEL 4

River closes the canister hatch, and turns to Alloy, who now stands beside her.

RIVER
 Whatever you say.
 (New bubble)
 How bad's flying going to look out of
 this storm?

ALLOY
 Damn-near impossible. You can't see your
 own hands in a dust storm, and fist-sized
 chunks of gold'll damage your ship. But
 there's another way out.

PANEL 5

Close up on Alloy. She smirks.

ALLOY
 How good's the heat resistance on this
 junker?

PAGE 78PANEL 1

Splash page. River flies the Pacific-1 straight into a cave with a massive opening, the dust storm hot on her tail.

A sign curves around the top of the cave entrance, calling it "Slipsnake Path".

RIVER
 (Inside ship)
 You better not be lying about this,
 Constable!

PAGE 79PANEL 1

River's in the pilot's seat of the Pacific-1. It fits her perfectly, and is barely decorated on the inside. The seat is cushioned, with a rack for a cowboy hat and another for her wraps. She still wears them, now, however.

There's an intricate, well-made, handcrafted drawing of the ocean on the wall beside her. As well as some more low-quality/hand-drawn sea paraphernalia (trident, waves, fish, seaweed, etc.). The interior color scheme is white, red, and blue.

River looks annoyed, moving the wraps over her eyes again, revealing her mouth/nose.

ALLOY
(off-panel, comms)
On my mother. It goes right around the core of the planet. You just worry about avoiding liquid gold, crushing pressure, and heat that'll melt that ship to goo.

PANEL 2

Wide shot, behind the ship. We see it curve around a number of stalagmites/stalactites in a barrel-roll.

RIVER
That all?

PANEL 3

Profile shot. The ship soars between columns of falling/dripping liquid gold. Some drips onto the ship from the ceiling, sizzling on a wing.

PAGE 80

PANEL 1

River looks up through her windshield, past a message telling her "Pressure Levels Critical, Temperature Levels Critical, Hull Integrity Critical".

ALLOY
(Off-panel, comms)
Thanks again for your help, Terran. You may not be as rusted than they say.

PANEL 2

Wide shot. The Pacific-1 flies directly under a floating mass of stone. It looks like a brown moon with liquid gold and plumes of fire spitting out of its craters. This is the core of the planet (from a distance).

RIVER
Same to you, Grayskin. Thanks for saving my hide.

PANEL 3

From the other end of the cave--on the other side of the planet--River just about emerges.

ALLOY
(Off-panel, comms)
Don't mention it.

PAGE 81

PANEL 1

Back in the valley, Alloy is crouched inside a small a tent fixture, being blasted by the dust storm. She holds a communicator that looks like a square, retro microphone to her mouth.

She smiles faintly. She likes our outlaw.

ALLOY
Watch yourself out there, River.

PANEL 2

From behind River's head, we see through the windshield of the Pacific-1 hyper-speed is being initiated, pulling the sky at the seams.

RIVER
You too. Maybe I'll see you out there, sometime.

ALLOY
(Off-panel, comms)
Hah. May-be.

PANEL 3

Profile shot of River. She smiles faintly, as well.

RIVER
Never caught your name, either. You got one?

ALLOY
(Off-panel, comms)
Not sure I should tell an outlaw. I am supposed to be a constable, you know.

RIVER
I won't tell if you don't.

ALLOY
(Off-panel, comms)
Fine. My name is A-

PAGE 82

PANEL 1

Splash page. The Pacific-1 jumps into space, now sitting alone in a massive expanse of stars.

PACIFIC-1
(Speakers, electrical)
Communication Out of Range.

RIVER
(Sighs)
Huh...
(New bubble)
See you around, Constable.

END OF CHAPTER THREE.