

A number of years ago Devil's Due Productions asked me to reboot the cartoon series *Voltron* in comic book form. This scene comes from Issue #1 of Volume 2, in which Sven Holgersson, formerly one of the pilots of the enormous robots that collectively make up Voltron, is not dealing with his situation very well.

PAGE ONE: seven panels

Panel 1

OUTER SPACE: establishing shot of Arus.

1 CAPTION: Planet Arus. A border world officially held by neither the Galactic Union nor the Drule Supremacy.

Panel 2

CUT TO: SVEN'S QUARTERS. This is a room in the Castle of Lions, similar in layout to Allura's room, but very sparsely (and masculinely) decorated. POV is from near the ceiling, looking down on SVEN himself. He's in bed, ASLEEP – though it's obviously a very TROUBLED sleep. Sven is frowning, sweating, and clutching the sheets in his fists.

2 SVEN: *Nnnh... no...*

Panel 3

CLOSER on Sven, as whatever nightmare he's having INTENSIFIES; he's even more disturbed, CLENCHING his TEETH and FURROWING his brow...

3 SVEN: *No... I don't...*

4 SVEN: *No... I...*

Panel 4

...and then he STARTS AWAKE, sitting BOLT UPRIGHT in bed. He looks exactly like a guy who's just jolted out of a HORRIBLE nightmare.

5 SVEN (shouting): NO!

Panel 5

Different angle on Sven, as he sits on the edge of his bed for a few moments, his head bowed, trying to regain his composure.

6 SVEN (small): *uunhhh...*

Panel 6

CUT TO: a few minutes later, as Sven is LEAVING HIS ROOM; he's now fully dressed, stepping out into the corridor outside. This is a pretty standard corridor; it could fit in anywhere in the Castle. He looks pretty somber (as usual).

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Panel 7

We FOLLOW SVEN; he's now CLIMBING a STAIRCASE that goes up through a slightly ragged HOLE in the ceiling of a Castle corridor. This is clearly a recent addition; it's all METAL, quickly BOLTED TOGETHER, and while it looks a little sloppy, it also looks very sturdy. At the TOP of the staircase is a DOOR, and around the edges of it we can see DAYLIGHT.

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PAGE FOUR: four panels**Panel 1**

Sven approaches Pidge, who's talking to the two Arusian villagers.

- 1 PIDGE: Y'know, once we get the new Castle of Lions completed, our sensor capabilities'll be off the charts.
- 2 PIDGE: The whole thing's going to be one huge antenna, not to mention having mind-blowing structural integrity.
- 3 VILLAGER: So we won't have to calibrate the sensors by hand every day?
- 4 PIDGE: *Heh*. Right. And readings won't be so hit or miss. Speaking of which, would you guys mind setting the northeast array for me?

Panel 2

Pidge turns to greet Sven as the villagers move away, talking to each other.

- 5 PIDGE: Sven! Hi!
- 6 PIDGE: You look a little pale – did you sleep okay?
- 7 SVEN: Fine. I'm fine.

Panel 3

New angle on Pidge and Sven, as they turn and WALK side by side, talking. Beyond them, TWO ARUSIAN GIRLS are approaching; one looks about Pidge's age (her name is SURYN), and the other is about twenty or twenty-one (this is BEXA).

- 8 PIDGE: So, hey, now that the gun emplacements are done, what are you going to work on next?
- 9 SVEN: Evacuation plans, most likely.
- 10 SVEN: I still say it's beyond folly to build a gigantic target like this. There's a reason the first Castle was bombed to the foundation.

Panel 4

New angle on Pidge and Sven; Sven has seen the girls (who are both GRINNING) approaching, and FROWNS at them. Pidge hasn't seen them yet.

- 11 PIDGE: Yeah... well... the people wanted a symbol. A permanent symbol.
- 12 PIDGE: Besides which, we haven't seen any Drule activity at all in four months.
- 13 PIDGE: Maybe King Zarkon got the message.

PAGE FIVE: five panels**Panel 1**

New angle on the four people: Sven, Pidge, and the girls. Suryn and Bexa have gotten Pidge's attention, and he's turning toward them, returning their grin – and starting to BLUSH NOTICEABLY. Sven has taken a STEP BACK from the other three, and is FROWNING even more DEEPLY now, annoyed at what he obviously considers frivolity.

- 1 GIRLS (in unison): Good morning!
 2 PIDGE: Whah! Uh...
 3 PIDGE: Hi, Bexa! Hi...Suryn.
 4 SURYN: We've put together a very nice noon meal today, Pidge.

Panel 2

Sven STALKS AWAY from Pidge and the girls, SCOWLING. Behind him, Pidge is obviously a little flustered.

- 5 SURYN: I was wondering if you'd like to join us...
 6 BEXA: ...and invite Hunk along...
 7 SURYN: ...and maybe have a picnic?
 8 PIDGE: Oh, well... well sure, that'd be great, uh...
 9 PIDGE: Let me just get Hunk on the comm here...

Panel 3

Still with Sven: he's gotten near one of the other gun emplacements, and a couple of villager men are jogging up, clearly eager to talk to him.

- 10 GUY 1: Sir! Sir? Excuse us! Sir!
 11 GUY 2: Sven, we've drawn up some preliminary plans for new hangars for the Five Lions.
 12 SVEN: Yes? So?
 13 GUY 1: We want to make them as secure as possible, so we hoped you might advise us on a few architectural concerns...

Panel 4

Sven turns and YELLS at the two men, his expression FURIOUS and UGLY. They're both taken completely OFF-GUARD.

- 14 SVEN: Advise you? Why would I advise you?
 15 SVEN: That's obviously a matter for the Lions' pilots.
 16 SVEN: Go talk to them!

Panel 5

The two villager men are in the foreground, their backs to us, WATCHING SVEN LEAVE; Sven's in the background stalking away from us, and it's clear from his body language that he's still angry.

- 17 GUY 1 (small): ...What brought that on?

PAGE SIX: five panels**Panel 1**

CUT TO: an establishing shot of the UNDERGROUND VILLAGE we saw in Issue 4 of "Revelations." Life seems to be going on as usual there.

1 CAPTION: Torela. The first of the underground Arusian cities established after the global devastation of thirteen years ago.

Panel 2

We now ZOOM IN on one of the TERRACES; we're too far away to make out figures in detail, but it's clear there's a CLASS being TAUGHT. Twenty or so CHILDREN are seated in rows, facing a LARGER FIGURE (NANNY) at the front of the group who has a CHALKBOARD set up.

2 NANNY: And who can tell me the answer? Hmmm?

Panel 3

Now we're down at the class, getting a good look at the kids; they're all native Arusians, about ten years old. Each of them is seated on a small WOODEN STOOL, and has what amounts to a LAP DESK across their knees, taking notes on RAGGED PAPER with FOUNTAIN PENS. Three or four of them are raising their hands.

3 NANNY (off): Good, good!

Panel 4

...and now we swing POV around to get a good look at their TEACHER. It's the ROBOT NANNY, and she's pointing with a regular wooden pointer at the chalkboard, on which has been drawn, in chalk, a diagram of the ARUSIAN SOLAR SYSTEM (which has five or six other planets in it besides Arus).

4 NANNY: I see some of you have been paying attention.

5 NANNY: Fedar, if you will? In order from the sun, please.

Panel 5

New angle, as we now see that KEITH and ALLURA are standing over to one side, WATCHING the class in progress. They're comfortably close to each other, but they're NOT TOUCHING and NOT LOOKING AT EACH OTHER.

6 CHILD (off, diminishing): The planets in our solar system are Sindia, Arus, Gorau, Besseth...

7 ALLURA: This is the highest attendance at lessons in--

8 ALLURA: --well, as long as I can remember. Possibly ever.

PAGE SEVEN: five panels**Panel 1**

CLOSER on Keith and Allura. She's turned her head to LOOK UP at KEITH – and it's not an unfriendly look. He's still watching the class.

- 1 ALLURA: Arus has begun to rebuild, for the first time since the Drules took everything away.
- 2 ALLURA: You know... Keith... I wish you could -- would -- let yourself feel the same things I feel. The happiness. The joy.
- 3 KEITH: I'm every bit as pleased as you are at the progress we're making, Allura.

Panel 2

CLOSER STILL on the two of them, as Keith now turns to look down at Allura. Their faces are close enough so that if he simply leaned down, he could kiss her. Keith's expression isn't quite neutral, but GOD does this guy have a hard time showing emotion.

- 4 KEITH: But... even with the connection that we all feel... in a lot of ways I'm still a stranger to Arus.
- 5 KEITH: If I find it difficult... if I need to take some time to demonstrate how... how pleased I am...
- 6 ALLURA: A stranger? Keith, I'm sorry, but that's just an excuse.
- 7 ALLURA: After what you've gone through, what you've accomplished? You're no more a stranger to Arus than I am.

Panel 3

PULL BACK to a broader shot, as both Keith and Allura look up at LANCE, who's just walking up. Allura looks slightly EMBARRASSED; Keith's face goes back to utterly neutral. Lance SMILES CHARMINGLY at Allura.

- 8 ALLURA: I only wish you could see th—
- 9 LANCE: Hi guys!
- 10 ALLURA: Oh! Lance! You startled me!
- 11 LANCE: Well, hey, I sure didn't mean to. And may I say, you look fantastic this morning.
- 12 LANCE: Ready to go over those agricultural plans?

Panel 4

New angle on Allura and Lance as they start to WALK AWAY TOGETHER, leaving Keith standing where he was. Keith watches them go, and there's the smallest of FROWNS on his face.

- 13 ALLURA: Yes... yes, I'm not busy. Also, I've scheduled a meeting for later today with a dozen of our most highly-skilled farmers.
- 14 ALLURA: I'd like to place each of them in charge of developing a different region of the surrounding countryside.
- 15 LANCE: Huh. All right, then, I'll see how much of my upbringing in corn country I remember.
- 16 ALLURA: "Corn country?"

MORE

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Panel 5

On Allura, as she LOOKS OVER HER SHOULDER at Keith. It's subtle but clear – she'd rather be with him.

17 LANCE:

Don't worry about it. I'll tell you more than you ever wanted to know.

18 LANCE:

Catch you later, Keith!

PAGE EIGHT: five panels**Panel 1**

Keith WALKS AWAY in the OPPOSITE DIRECTION from where Allura and Lance were headed, still with the tiny frown.

1 KEITH: Hmh.

Panel 2

Following Keith as he walks down a stone ramp toward the floor of the cavern...

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Panel 3

...and then MEETS SVEN, who's coming out of a TUNNEL opening nearby. Sven looks only marginally less peeved than when we saw him last.

2 KEITH: Sven!

3 SVEN: Keith.

4 KEITH: Good grief, man. You look about as down as I feel. What's wrong?

Panel 4

Two-shot, as Sven and Keith talk for a moment...

5 SVEN: Nothing.

6 SVEN: Just another glorious day in the Bronze Age.

7 KEITH: Yeah...

8 KEITH: I know what you mean. All this primitive living is fun, but I'd give a couple of teeth for a news feed...

Panel 5

...and then a new, closer angle on them, as they both REACT to the muffled sound of an EXPLOSION from overhead.

9 KEITH: ...get caught up on Union affairs. Maybe we could--

10 SFX: **BAOOOOM**

11 SVEN: What the--?

12 KEITH: The main corridor! Move!

PAGE NINE: four panels**Panel 1**

CUT TO: a BROAD UP-SLOPING TUNNEL that's been carved out of the rock; this is the main point of access from the cavern-city to the CLIFF-TOP where the new Castle is being built. A number of smaller TUNNELS open off of this one. Sven and Keith are SPRINTING up the main corridor; Allura and Lance have just come out of one of the adjoining tunnels, running just as fast for the surface.

1 KEITH: What was that? What happened?
2 ALLURA: I don't know!
3 LANCE: It came from above-ground!

Panel 2

CUT TO: the cliff-top, a few hundred yards from the Castle construction site. Sven, Keith, Lance, and Allura are emerging onto the cliff-top from what appears to be little more than a wide crevice in the rock; this is the disguised opening to the large tunnel in Panel 1. Pidge and Hunk are there, WAITING FOR THEM; Hunk is POINTING up into the SKY.

4 KEITH: Hunk! Report!
5 HUNK: Up there.

Panel 3

And now we swing around and look UP at what Hunk was indicating: in the sky above the new Castle is a DRULE SHIP of a configuration we haven't seen before. It's BIGGER than the little FIGHTERS that Our Heroes hijacked last series, but it's SMALLER than the CRUISERS we've seen. It's also in obvious DISTRESS – it's GOING DOWN, and as we watch it's FADING and RE-APPEARING, so that we get sort of a BROKEN TRAIL of GHOST-IMAGES as it descends toward the planet's surface.

6 ALLURA: What's – what's it doing?
7 PIDGE: Looks like the ship's jump drive is damaged – she's fading in and out.
8 PIDGE: I can only imagine the strain that's putting on the propulsion systems...

Panel 4

As the group watches, the Drule ship – still GHOSTING – FALLS into a small BOX CANYON farther down and branching off of the main canyon where the old Castle of Lions was built. Basically, it plummets out of sight...

9 LANCE: Oh, man... that thing is going down and staying down.

PAGE TEN: five panels**Panel 1**

...but then, basically at the same angle as Panel 4 of Page Eleven, we can tell that the ship has IMPACTED the floor of the small canyon, as a huge EXPLOSION flares up out of it.

1 SFX: **THRAK-AK-KOOOM**

Panel 2

Back to the group on the cliff-top, watching; CORAN and several native men have come up to join them.

2 CORAN: We must dispatch the Lions at once! If there's a Drule threat--!

3 ALLURA: If there's a Drule threat we will not leave the Castle unprotected.

4 ALLURA: Pidge. Have any more Drule craft registered on your sensors?

5 PIDGE: Ah... no – no, they haven't. I think that one didn't only because its energy signature was so ragged.

Panel 3

New angle on the group, favoring Coran and Allura. She's extremely DETERMINED, and unwilling to listen to anyone else.

6 ALLURA: I'll take a small armed group to investigate the crash. The Lions stay here.

7 CORAN: Allura! That's a downed Drule warship! You can't mean --

8 ALLURA: "Downed" is right. We all saw it crash. Besides, the Lions are too big to fit in that box canyon.

Panel 4

Two-shot of Coran and Allura. As usual, Coran's not pleased with Allura's decision, and also as usual, she's not caring much.

9 CORAN: Now listen here, I know I was a member of the Castle staff all of your life, Allura, but before that I was a military combat instructor.

10 CORAN: This situation is unacceptable. I simply cannot allow you to --

11 ALLURA: Coran, I may have renounced my title...

12 ALLURA: ...but let's not forget who's in charge here. Sven – Keith – you're with me.

Panel 5

CUT TO: ALLURA, KEITH, and SVEN, all of them on ARUSIAN STEEDS, riding along the FLOOR of the great canyon, away from the Castle and toward the crash site.

13 ALLURA: "The rest of you stand ready near the Lions. We'll call if we need you."