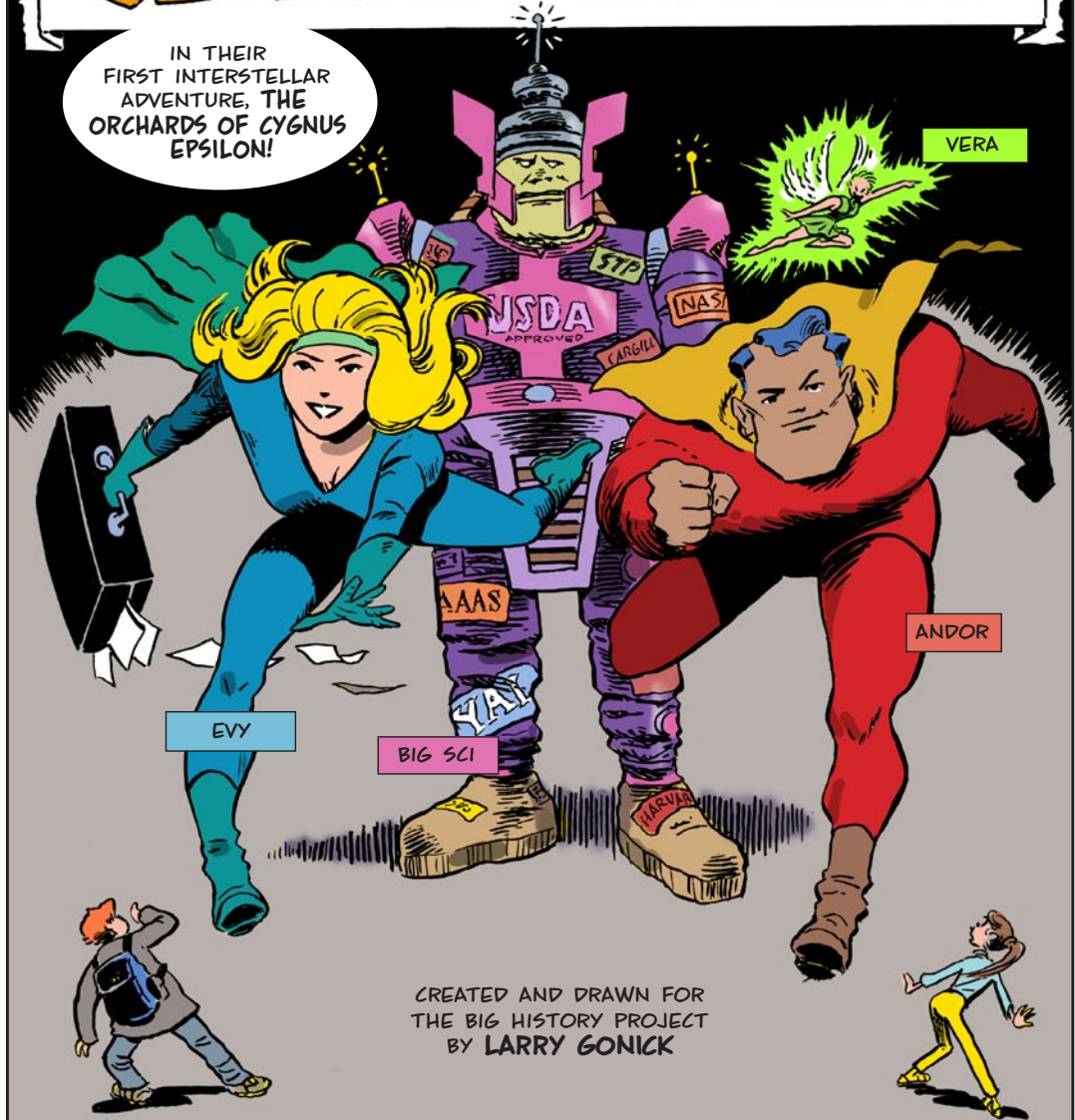


OVERWHELMED BY QUESTIONS? BEDEVILED BY DOUBTS? DON'T KNOW WHERE TO TURN IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH? HOW CAN YOU KNOW? WHOM DO YOU CALL? WELL, HERE'S WHOM! CALL THE

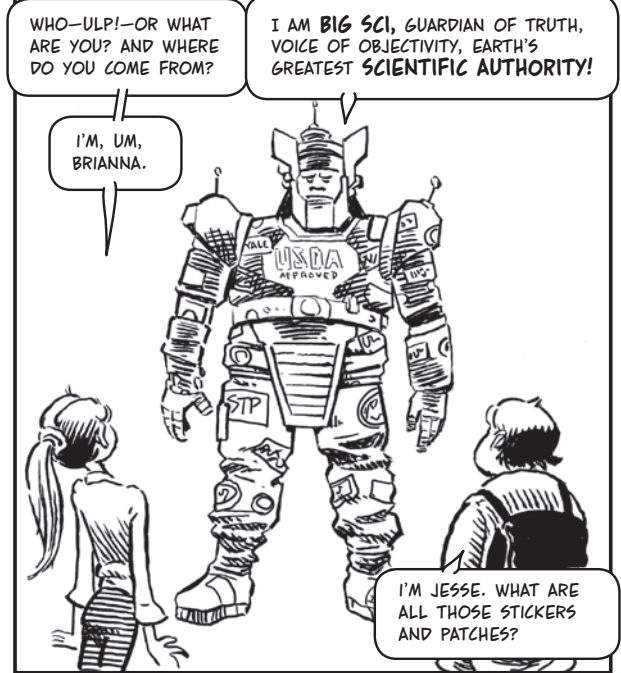
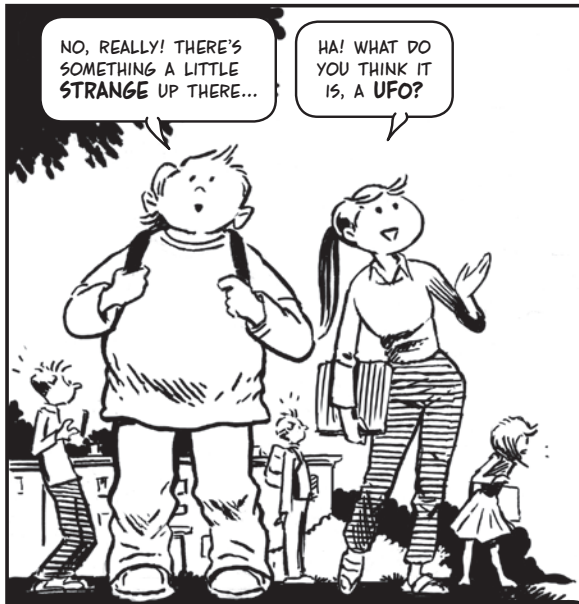
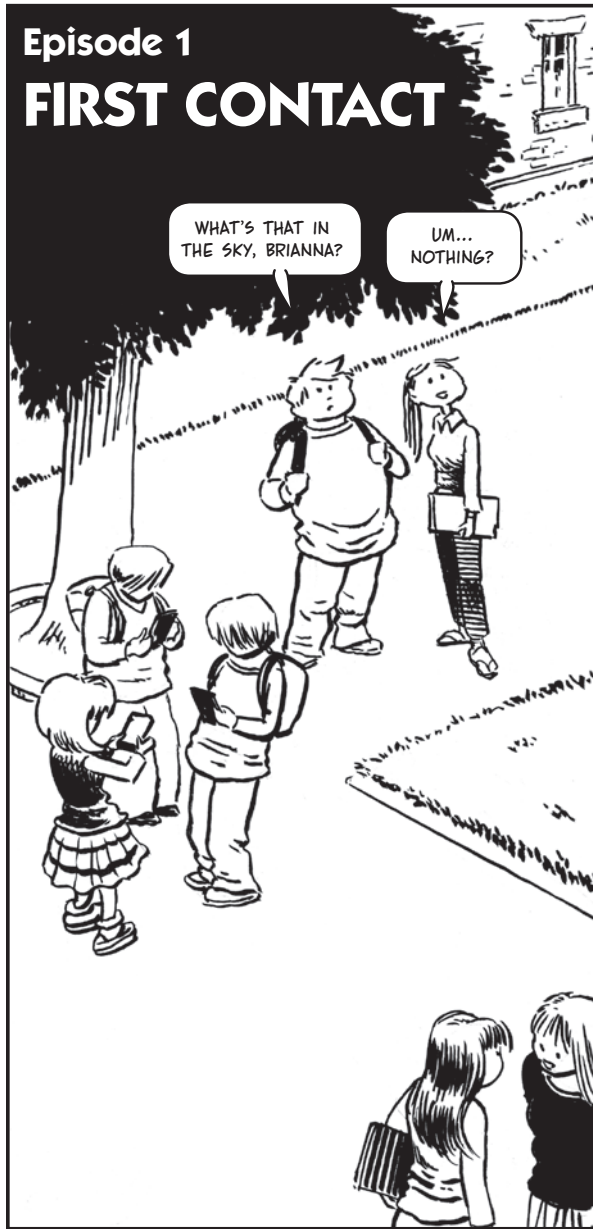
CLAIM TESTERS

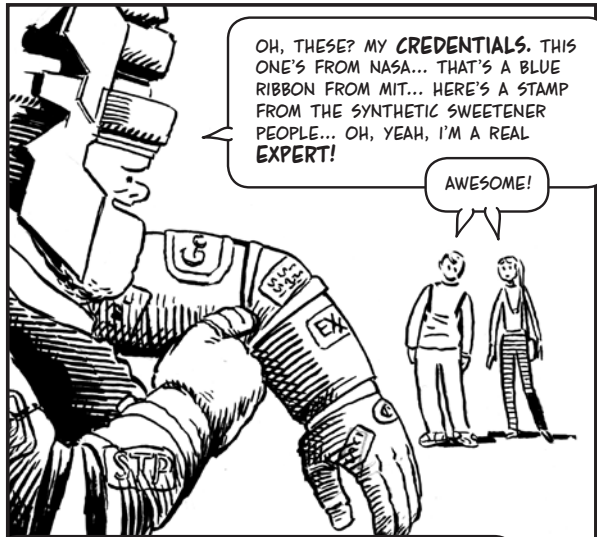
IN THEIR FIRST INTERSTELLAR ADVENTURE, THE ORCHARDS OF CYGNUS EPSILON!



CREATED AND DRAWN FOR THE BIG HISTORY PROJECT BY LARRY GONICK

Episode 1 FIRST CONTACT





OH, THESE? MY CREDENTIALS. THIS ONE'S FROM NASA... THAT'S A BLUE RIBBON FROM MIT... HERE'S A STAMP FROM THE SYNTHETIC SWEETENER PEOPLE... OH, YEAH, I'M A REAL EXPERT!

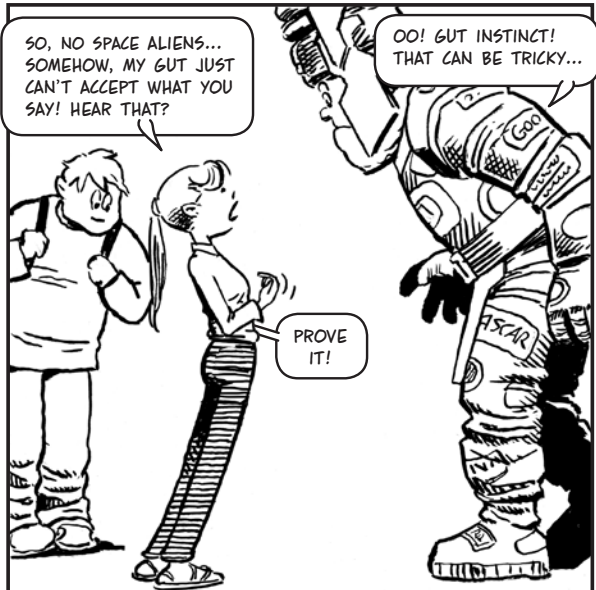
AWESOME!

SO YOU CAN BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY FORGET ABOUT IT... NOBODY'S TRAVELING BETWEEN STAR SYSTEMS, DESPITE WHAT YOU SEE IN MOVIES AND COMIC STRIPS. THE DISTANCES ARE JUST TOO HUGE...



BY THE WAY, WHERE DID EVERYBODY GO?

SCIENCE SCARES SOME PEOPLE OFF, I GUESS...



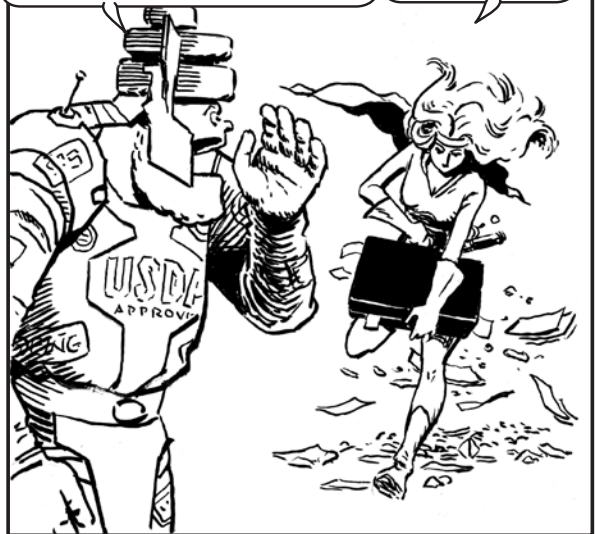
SO, NO SPACE ALIENS... SOMEHOW, MY GUT JUST CAN'T ACCEPT WHAT YOU SAY! HEAR THAT?

OO! GUT INSTINCT! THAT CAN BE TRICKY...

PROVE IT!

DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, THEN! LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE YOURSELVES! EVY, HELP ME OUT HERE!

DON'T RUSH ME! I HAVE AN ARMLOAD!



I'M EVY, THE EVIDENCE KEEPER... IN THIS BRIEFCASE, I HAVE ALL THE PICTURES AND MEASUREMENTS EVER MADE OF THE COSMOS, AND A LOT OF OTHER STUFF BESIDES...

I USE TELESCOPES, SPECTROSCOPES, CAMERAS, ANTENNAS, MRI MACHINES, PENCILS, PENS, WHATEVER DOES THE JOB!

HERE'S SOME EVIDENCE ABOUT THE DISTANCE FROM EARTH TO THE STARS!

IT LOOKS LIKE NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF PICTURES AND SCRIBBLES!





I DON'T SEE ANYTHING HERE ABOUT DISTANCE!

WELL, YOU NEED TO **INTERPRET** IT, DON'T YOU? THAT'S WHERE MY PARTNER **ANDOR** COMES IN... OH, **AAAND-ORRRR!!** WHERE ARE **YOOUUUU?**

I MUST BE HERE, BECAUSE I'M NOT ANYWHERE ELSE!

OH, MANN... ANOTHER ONE?!

IF! IF!



THIS IS **ANDOR**, MASTER OF **LOGIC**, REASONER, SEPARATOR OF TRUTH FROM FALSEHOOD, DRAWER OF CONCLUSIONS!

NO FACT STANDS ON ITS OWN! WE HAVE TO FIND ITS **MEANING**, TO COMBINE IT WITH WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW! THAT'S WHERE I COME IN...

EVY HAS TONS OF PICTURES AND MEASUREMENTS, BUT YOU HAVE TO **THINK** AND **CALCULATE** TO MAKE SENSE OF THEM!

USING LOGIC AND MATH, WE CAN TRANSLATE **PARALLAX** DATA, **CEPHEID VARIABLE BRIGHTNESS**, AND **RED-SHIFTED LIGHT SPECTRA** TO FIND THE DISTANCE OF JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING UP THERE! UM... WHAT'S 2+2?

FOUR. WELL, HOW FAR IS IT?



THE CLOSEST KNOWN STAR WITH PLANETS IS 10.5 LIGHT YEARS AWAY... EVEN GOING A **MILLION MILES AN HOUR**, THE TRIP WOULD TAKE ABOUT **FIFTEEN CENTURIES...**

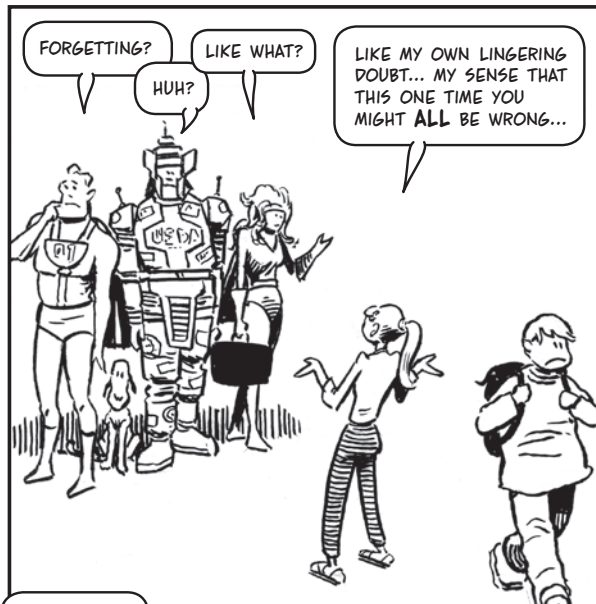
THE ASTRONAUTS WOULD STARVE... RUN OUT OF FUEL...

THERE ARE NO GAS STATIONS IN OUTER SPACE!

THAT'S AWFUL! WHERE WOULD YOU PEE?

SO YOU SEE—WHEN YOU HEAR A CLAIM—ABOUT ALIENS OR ANYTHING ELSE—ISN'T IT HELPFUL TO REFER THAT CLAIM TO US, THE **CLAIM TESTERS: AUTHORITY, EVIDENCE, AND LOGIC?**

YES... BUT AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING?



FORGETTING?

LIKE WHAT?

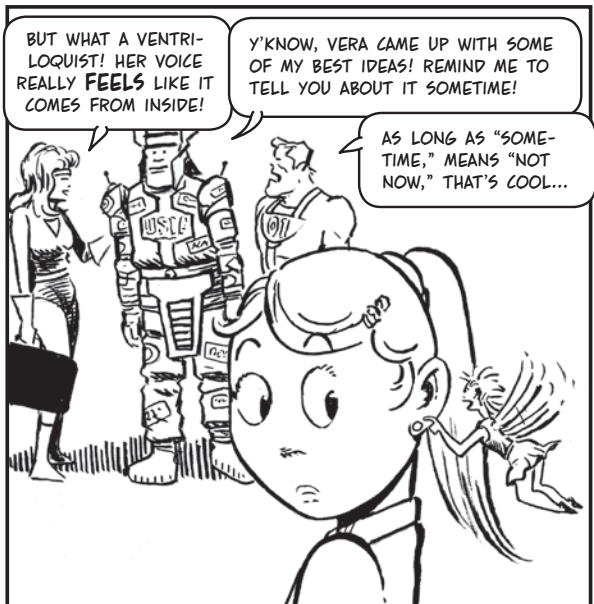
HUH?

LIKE MY OWN LINGERING DOUBT... MY SENSE THAT THIS ONE TIME YOU MIGHT **ALL** BE WRONG...

OH, YES, OF COURSE! **INTUITION**, THE INNER VOICE!

HERE'S VERA NOW!

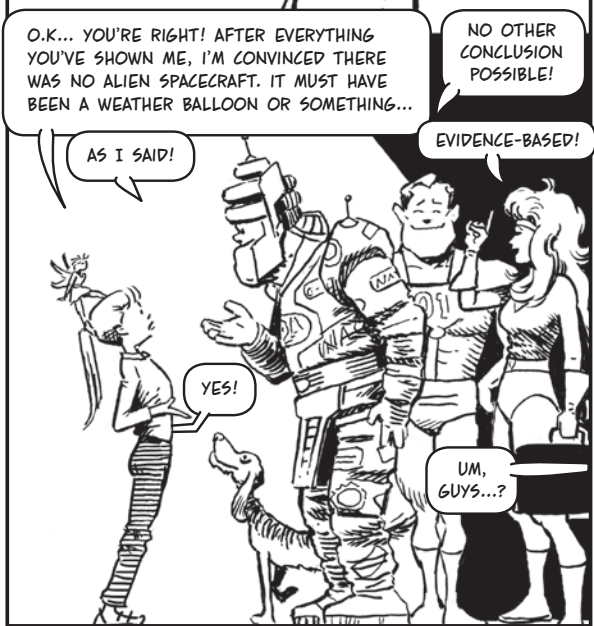
OF COURSE, VERA ISN'T COMPLETELY "INNER"... SHE RELIES ON A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCE TO FORM HER VIEWS!



BUT WHAT A VENTRILOQUIST! HER VOICE REALLY **FEELS** LIKE IT COMES FROM INSIDE!

Y'KNOW, VERA CAME UP WITH SOME OF MY BEST IDEAS! REMIND ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT SOMETIME!

AS LONG AS "SOME-TIME," MEANS "NOT NOW," THAT'S COOL...



O.K... YOU'RE RIGHT! AFTER EVERYTHING YOU'VE SHOWN ME, I'M CONVINCED THERE WAS NO ALIEN SPACECRAFT. IT MUST HAVE BEEN A WEATHER BALLOON OR SOMETHING...

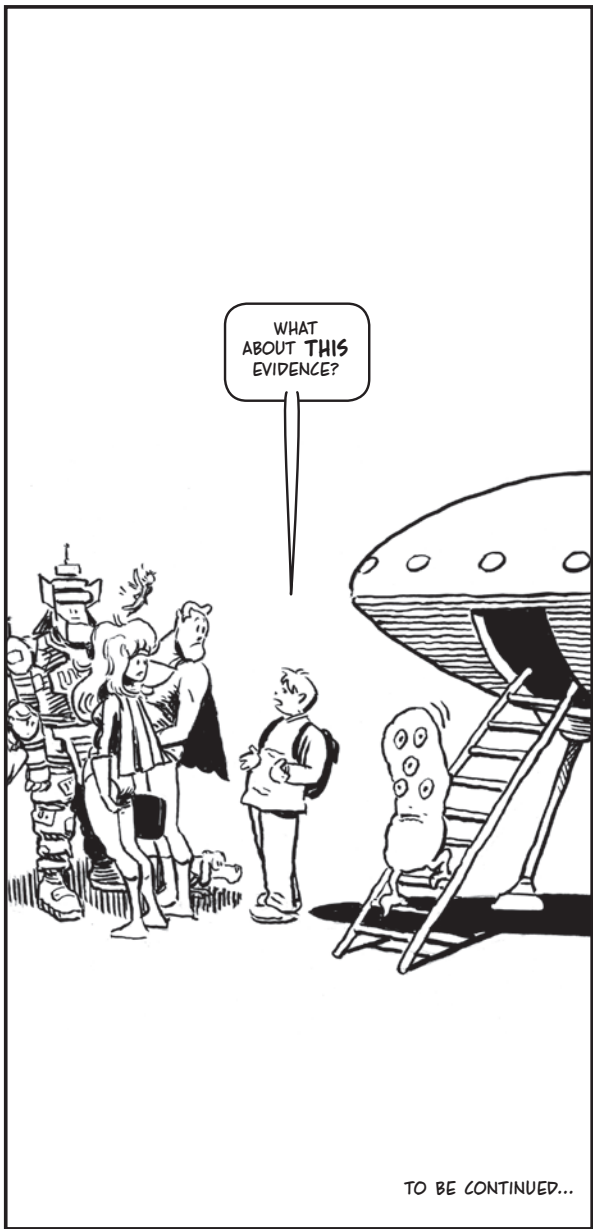
NO OTHER CONCLUSION POSSIBLE!

AS I SAID!

EVIDENCE-BASED!

YES!

UM, GUYS...?



WHAT ABOUT **THIS** EVIDENCE?

TO BE CONTINUED...