

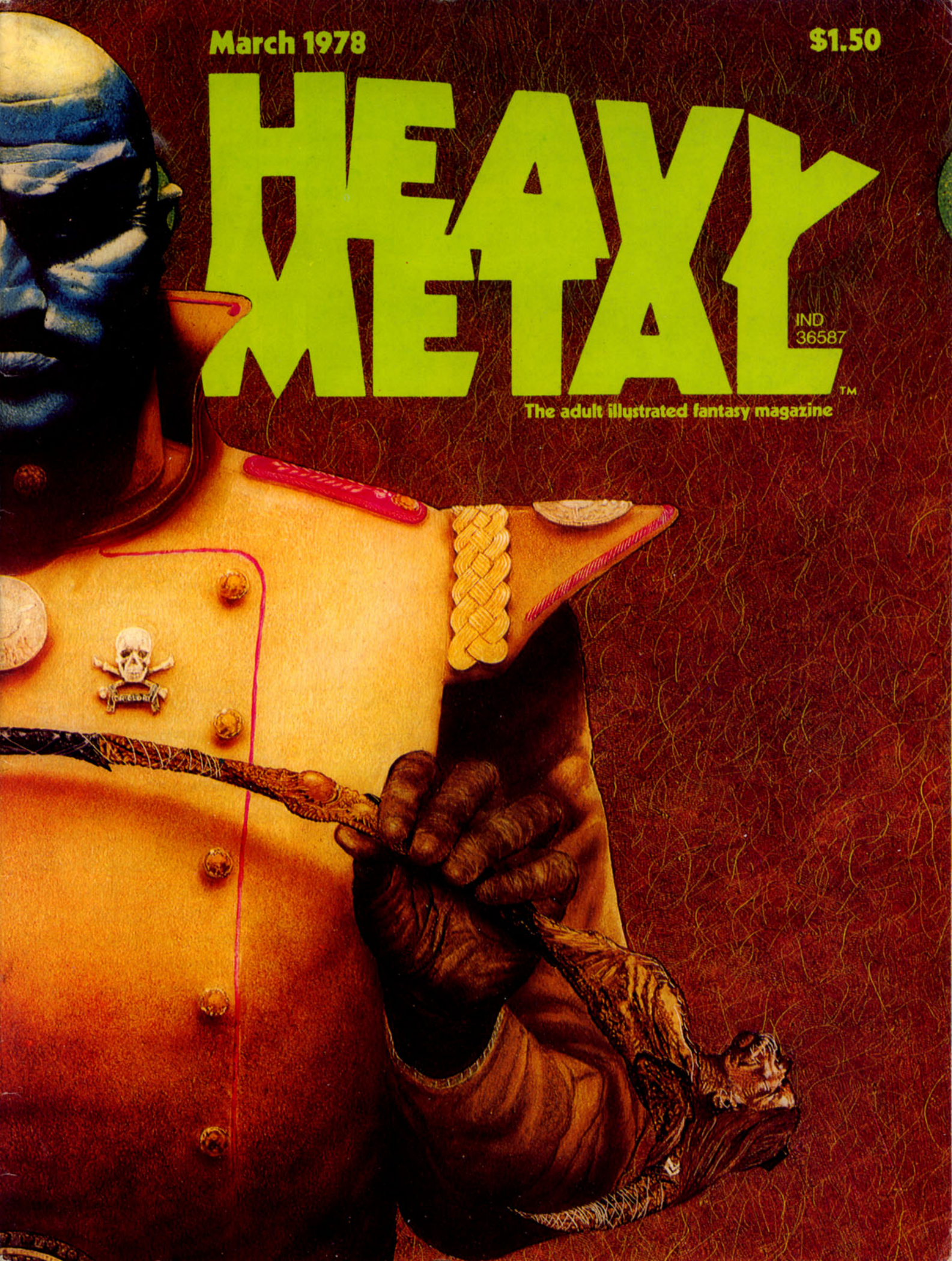
March 1978

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HEAVY METAL

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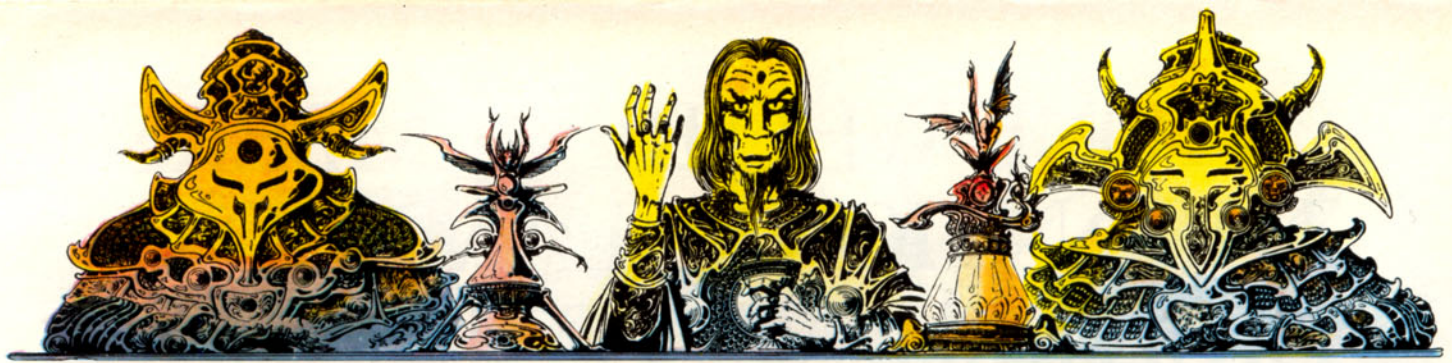
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Heavy Metal

Vol. I, No. 12

March 1978

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Once a month, regular as es-tragon, one of us scubas into the great pile of manuscripts in Julie's office, wielding letter opener like oyster knife, pearl diving amidst the unsolicited manillas. This time, emerged dripping and triumphant with a painting & story we liked, & which (all praise the principle of indeterminacy) fit together perfectly. Hence story & picture *The Ruse*, to furnish our famous fiction section.

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DEN



G-Great Uluhtc,
h-here is your
sacrifice.

Bring Kath
forward and
throw her.

©1977 RICHARD CORBEN



DEN!



What are you doing? No, no! DEN...



STOP!
You're ruining everything.

I'll kill you with a blast of the Locnar's energy.



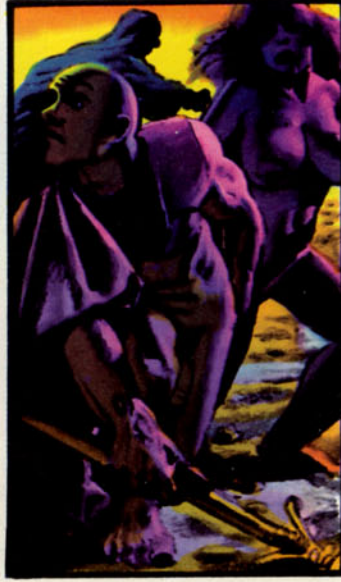
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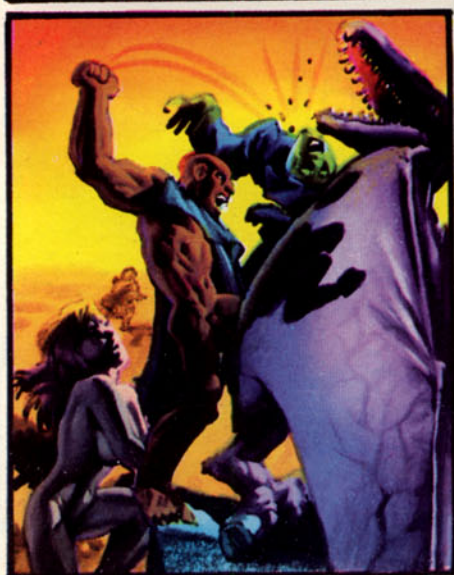


Give me that, you!

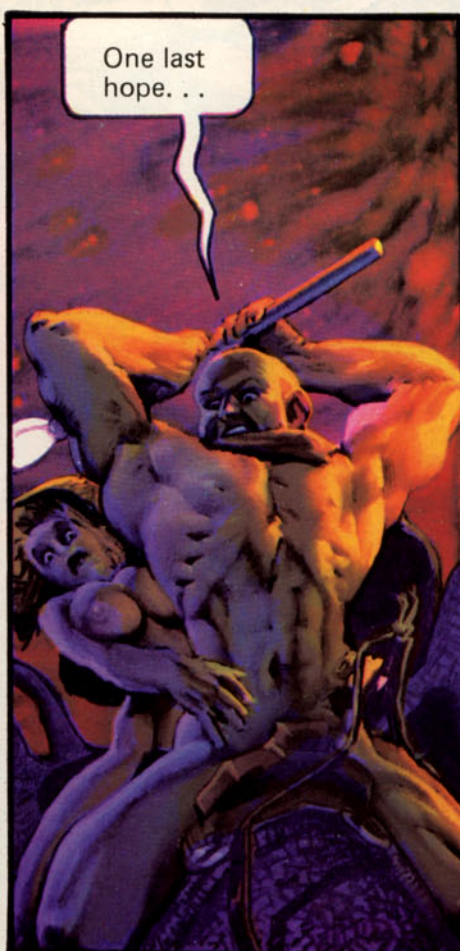


UNH! NO!





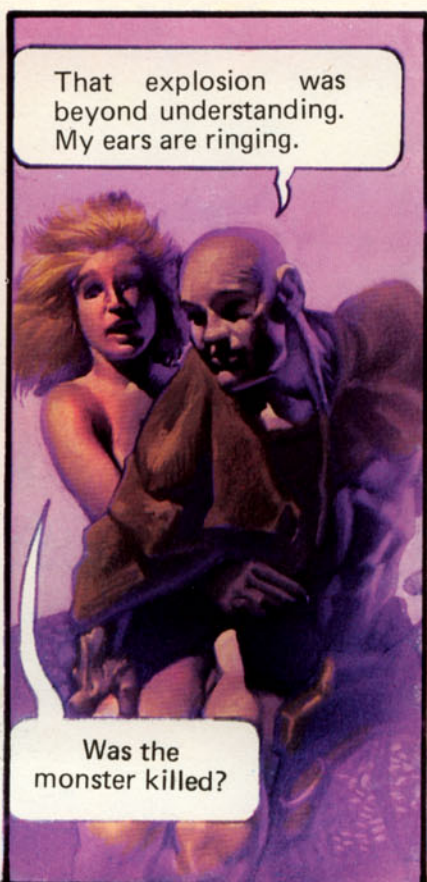








Ooh. I can't see. What happened?



That explosion was beyond understanding. My ears are ringing.

Was the monster killed?



I'm not sure it can be killed... nor Ard either. But they're gone from this world.



What about the Queen?

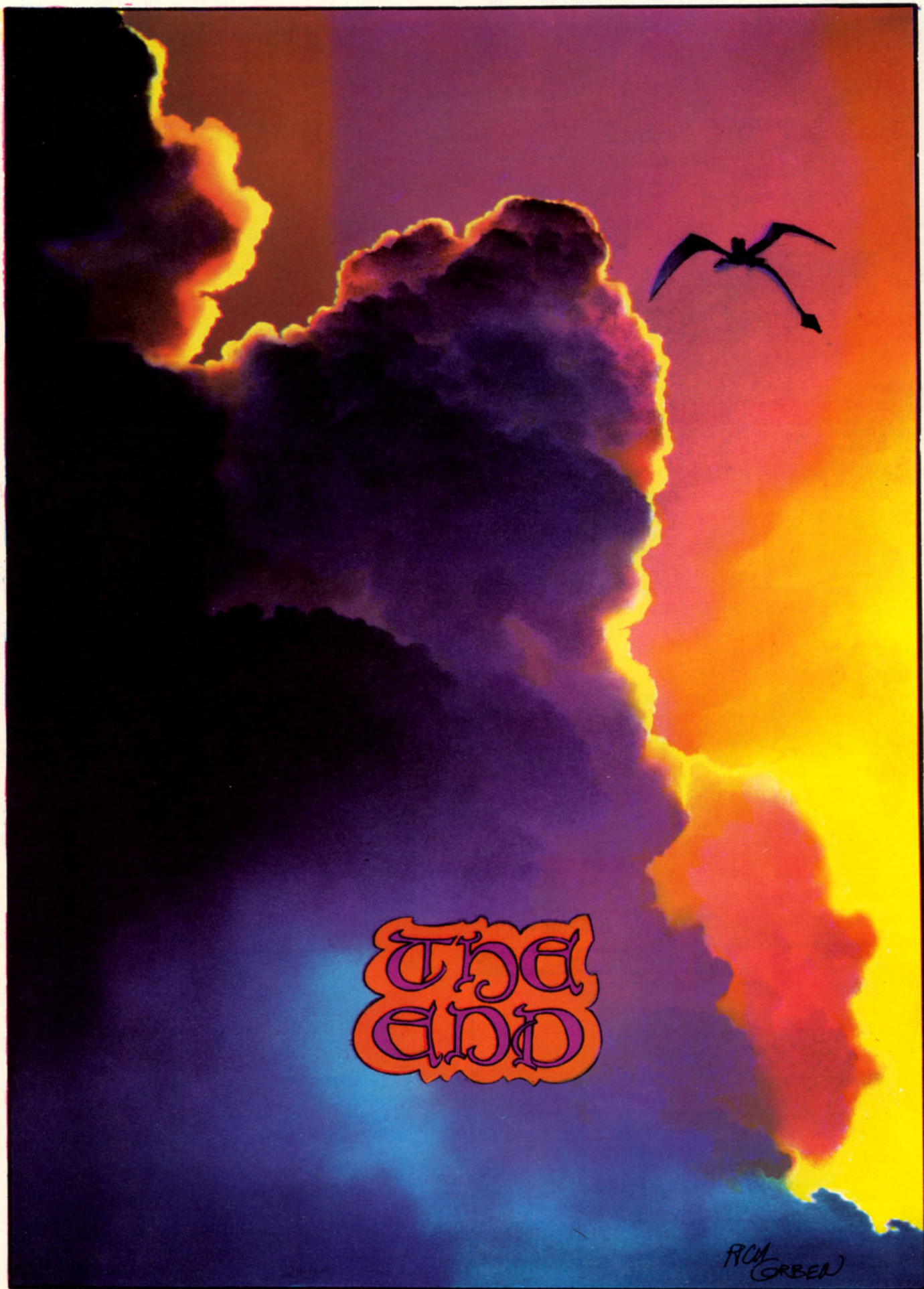
She is probably dead.



I thought I saw her mount a flyer.



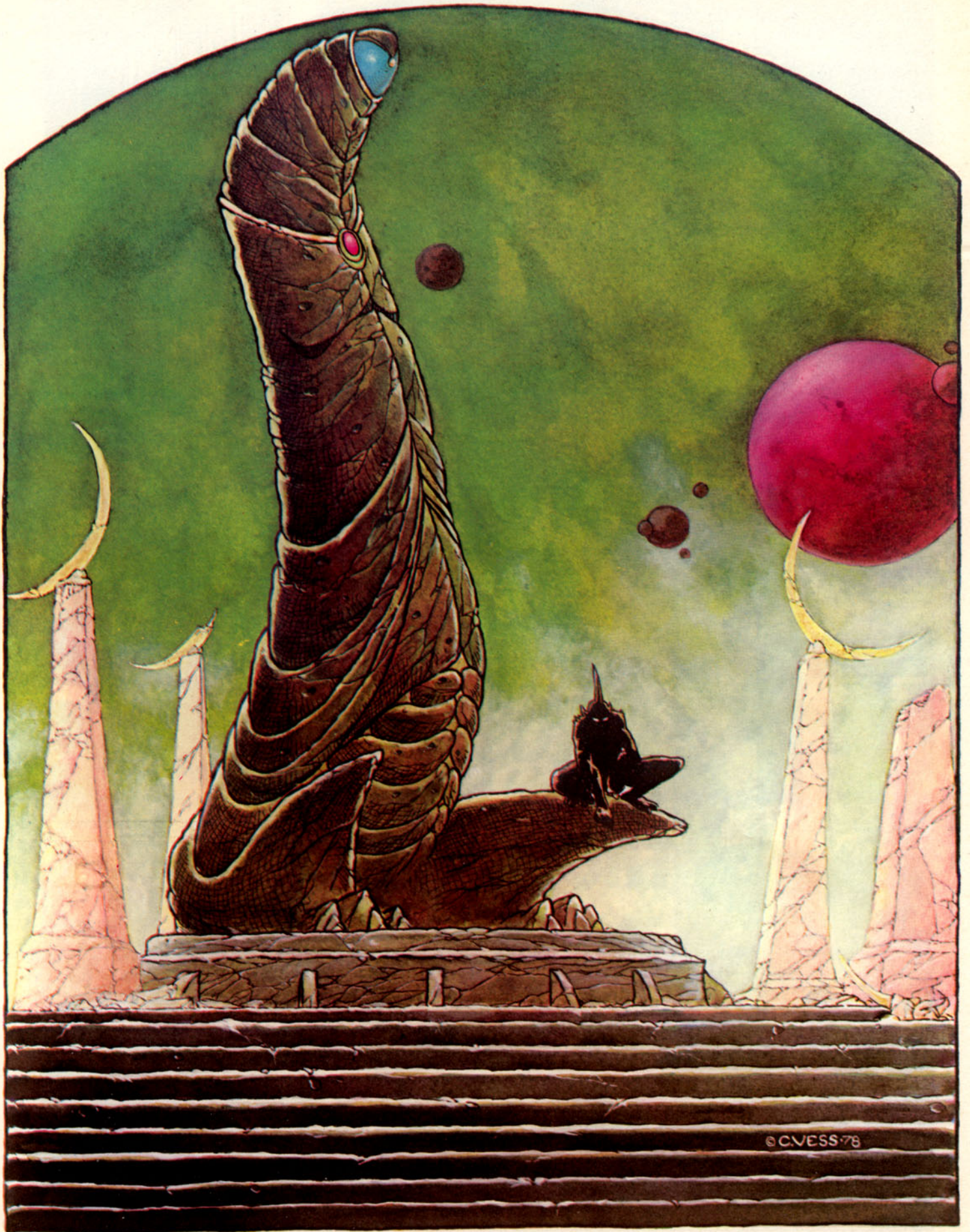
We are alive and well. That's all I care about for now.



by Thomas Bridges

The father and beautiful son (which was how the father always thought of this adventurous child—although there were other sons and daughters who were fine in their own right) were two days from their village into the thick decay of the old hardwood forest in the east. Starvation had driven them beyond the fragrant pines and into the rot to look for small game. Already, the father's gun had killed two fleshy

He was certainly unusual, this small boy. Mutant, some said, because he could sensitize completely—he was capable of drifting into the essence of other life, in order to view his surroundings quite differently. Now he was the thick, shapeless gray creature that lay cautiously still off to their right, and as he perceived himself and his father as whiffs of acidic flavor and crackly noise, he realized that the creature was blind.



Back into himself, he wondered about his father's mind, though he never entered into it. He had never been told not to, but, of course, they did not fully understand his capabilities. He didn't understand them himself, although his special sensitivity had been with him since birth.

Suddenly, his father's hand halted him. There was too much quiet in the forest.

"Down!" the father said, as he threw himself and the boy to the leafy forest floor. "A Ruse! Be absolutely quiet!"

The boy was desperate to look, and still too afraid to sensitize. The ferocity of the Ruse was legendary. And who had ever really come upon a Ruse? Their teeth hung only from the necks of magic men, his grandfather had told him. But his grandfather had never really seen one. Certainly, there had been more of them once than now, like everything else. In his father's childhood, he knew, there were still remains of protective walls surrounding villages, which had been built to keep the foraging creatures out. Only his father—who had once hunted for the rich—was said to have seen a Ruse—and that was many years ago. (And his father was too full of stories for the boy to really believe him.) Once, his father claimed to have eaten some flesh reputed to be Ruse, and he spoke of the strength it gave him.

But now, the father slowly eased himself and the boy behind the protectiveness of a roarer bush, and, tenderly shielding his son's underdeveloped vision from the dangerous brilliance of light, directed the boy's squinting eyes to the openness of the rocky clearing up ahead.

There was the Ruse—its large head so barren of fiber, its rubbery skin so grotesquely smooth. Stretching its enormous bulk in the sun without fear of the light that could scorch the skin of both father and son in seconds, the Ruse's brown and blue muscular body vibrated softly as it shrieked its pleasure under the warming light. Finally, stretching itself into full view, it widened its fleshy mouth with large gulps of breath, showing its black throat and the three rows of magical, large spindle teeth.

Uncontrollably, father and son's breath pulsed; as suddenly, the Ruse perked, rising on awkward hinds to become offensively tall, broadening its sensitivity in all directions.

The small underbrush that surrounded them crackled and oozed from impulses, but the bitter aura of the roarer bush (to which only forest people are immune) forced the Ruse to draw back its sensors, and salivate with pain. Protective stink soon permeated the air, causing both father and son to vomit uncontrollably, until breezes carried the nauseating odor away. Now, certain that the bush would protect them, father and son blended their personal scent with the pungency of the thick forest air.

And soon, the Ruse was again shrieking in its pleasure. Almost comically, it would twist its lumbering body, suddenly perk and sensitize, and flip its tail across the ground. Then, warmed and glossed by the light, it would become sluggishly comfortable and less cautious.

In a whisper, the father explained to the boy that it was doubtless the Ruse's youth that allowed it to be lured into the open, where a mature Ruse would never linger alone. Light was known to dull their movements, causing them to sleep dangerously unprotected. Still, no Ruse was ever known to have been taken outright. Because of their size and ferocity, they had been trapped in deep pits and left to deteriorate before they were killed and their flesh stripped.

And the boy's consciousness drifted back to the days when there had been more than forest to live in. Now, only the rich lived outside the forest—in shelters, and out of the light. The presence of Ruse made him think about every-

thing wonderful he had never known. It was better than the most fanciful dream he had ever imagined.

Of course, that was years ago, the father was saying, as the boy started to listen again. He doubted whether a Ruse had even been seen since then. And he was sure that no one had ever had as clear a view as they had now. Still, he would wait until the beast was near sleep before attempting a shot. They had no reason to fear, he said, but he reminded the boy that they would have to stuff their ears with something, for the screech of a dying Ruse would penetrate the soul of even the most insensitive human. He could remember, he said, even to this moment, the echo of its cry after that killing so long ago.

By now, the boy had new thoughts about his father. There was even admiration in his pale eyes. Yes, he believed that his father had truly seen a Ruse before. He had been there at a kill. And, leaning close against his father's body, he was again tempted to see into his father's mind. But now he was more cautious. His father's new strength left his own abilities in doubt. He would wait, he thought.

While they waited in silence, the itchiness of staying still made the boy's sensors wander—often, of course, it was uncontrollable. He would simply phase out, and suddenly take on a new perspective. Sometimes, it was that of a tiny silent creature on a distant tree limb, viewing moving things below with complete detachment. Sometimes, it was some frantic mindless creature like that one in the nearby rocks, sensing every presence with fear. Even the sweet, colorless hanging flowers intoxicated his senses. Or he felt the tingling smoothness of slime on a nameless crawling creature and the curious electric impulses from a rounded fluff of body far away. The boy had long since realized how easily he could be any one of things.

His father, realizing his son was drifting, interrupted his play, reminding him to stay alert. And, although he said it was not yet time to attempt a shot, he stuffed his ears and the boy's with soft moss, for fear he would forget to do it later.

Silent and still again, the boy struggled to remain alert, but the temptation to let his sensors wander at will was great. There in a tree limb quite close to the Ruse, a curious slink moved to the edge of a branch. The boy sensitized and discovered that the creature was not in the least afraid of the Ruse, although it certainly recognized the awful odor.

Back in himself, the boy's attention was now fully upon the Ruse, who had become so sluggish and sleepy that it could barely flip its tail to scatter the small black things zipping in and out of the rocks and over its body. Its shrieks turned to murmurs as it entered sleep.

And the curious boy wondered about the essence of the Ruse. How marvelous, how legendary this creature was! And would he ever have another chance? It was certainly one of the last of its kind. And now it lay so passive—its great, shiny brown and blue bulk at ease in the light.

Slowly the boy sensitized and filled himself of the Ruse. He felt the most incredibly wondrous thing: warmth—something he had never before felt, because of the dangerous light. It made him tingle and float in joyous pleasure. He was the sleeping beast. And he had never known—nor would he ever again know—the experience of dissolving in the essence of pure, warm light.

Because suddenly a roar blasted the Ruse's brains into fragments, and his own mind exploded at the same moment. Only that hideous scream remained until he died, hours later, mindless and foaming at the mouth, in his father's stiffened arms.

CHAPTER TWO: THE WINTER OF THE LAST COMBAT

BY MORA AND GARCIA

THE WOLVES HOWL WHILE THE SNOW FALLS. THE FIRE WARMS THE HEART, DOESN'T IT, LITTLE ONE? BUT YOU NEVER SPEAK... YOU ONLY SMILE... A WITCH YOU MAY BE, BUT YOU SLEEP LIKE AN ANGEL...

HAVING SEALED OFF THE ENTRANCE, I CAN NOW ALLOW MYSELF TO REST AS WELL. I BELIEVE THERE IS ONLY ONE DANGER WHICH CAN THREATEN ME TONIGHT... FEVER! I AM TREMBLING ALL OVER...



ELEANOR! ELEANOR! I'M COMING TO YOU, MY LOVE, MY BELOVED... NOTHING HAS CHANGED... SORROW AND THE BLACK DEATH HAVE SPARED US... WE WILL BE HAPPY AGAIN...



WHAT... WHAT IS THAT LAUGHTER?
ELEANOR! ELEANOR!!!



A BEING WANDERING ACROSS SPACE AND TIME IN SEARCH OF HIS IDENTITY. NOW HE IS A CRUSADER RETURNING FROM THE HOLY LAND, DISGUSTED BY MEN AND THE GOD IN WHOSE NAME THEY PILLAGE AND MURDER. TOGETHER WITH A CHILD HE HAS SAVED FROM THE STAKE, HE IS ON HIS WAY TO FIND THE LADY HE LEFT BEHIND...

"YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD SEEN EVERYTHING, SIR KNIGHT... BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU MISSED!"

**NOOOO!
NOOOO!**

IT WAS...THE CURSED FEVER...
ELEANOR WAS DEAD...
THE CHATEAU IN RUINS...IT WAS THE CURSED FEVER...

SHE LISTENED TO MY FEARS...SHE NEVER SPOKE...SHE SIMPLY PUT HER COOL HAND ON MY BROW...AND I FELL BACK TO SLEEP, WATCHING HER SMILE.



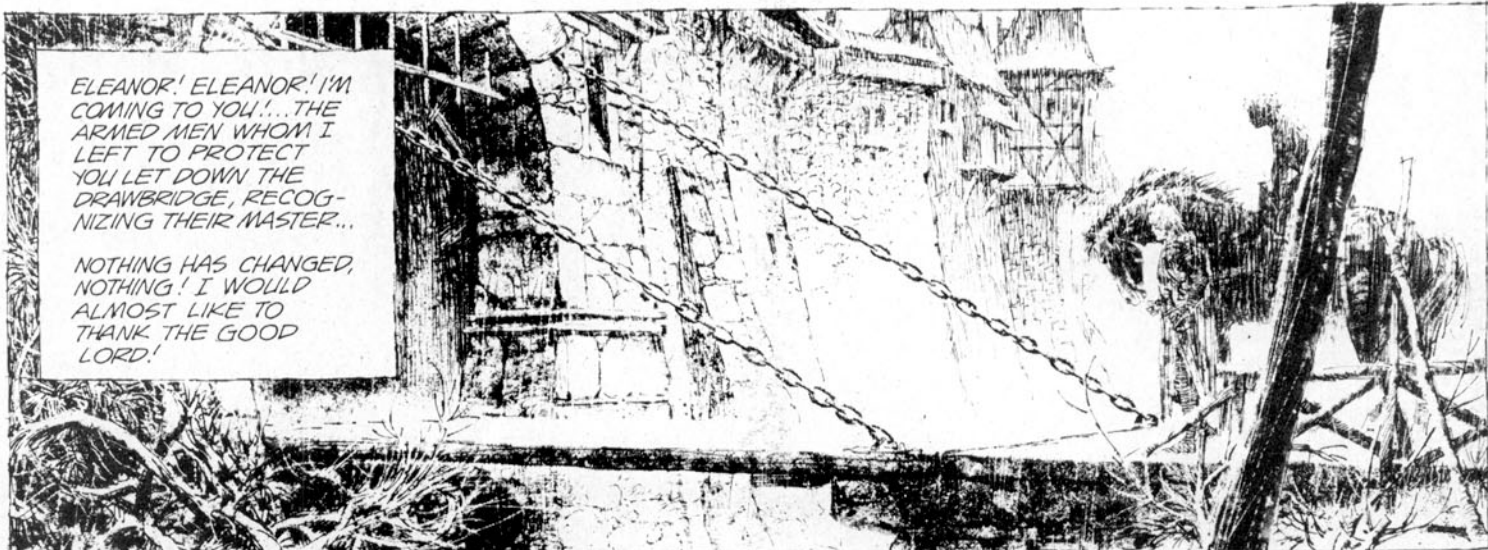
THEN THE MORNING CAME. I WAS IMPATIENT TO GET TO THE CHATEAU. AND SO WE LEFT.

SATAN! WITCHES! A PLAYFUL CHILD IS WHAT I HAVE BROUGHT WITH ME!...AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST YOU SUDDENLY COVERED MY EYES WITH YOUR GENTLE HANDS...AND I HEARD SOMETHING WHICH I HAD NOT HEARD FOR A LONG TIME: MY SELF LAUGHING!



ELEANOR! ELEANOR! I'M
COMING TO YOU!...THE
ARMED MEN WHOM I
LEFT TO PROTECT
YOU LET DOWN THE
DRAWBRIDGE, RECOG-
NIZING THEIR MASTER...

NOTHING HAS CHANGED,
NOTHING! I WOULD
ALMOST LIKE TO
THANK THE GOOD
LORD!



MY LOVE, MY BELOVED, NOTHING HAS
CHANGED: SORROW AND THE BLACK
DEATH HAVE SPARED US; WE WILL BE
HAPPY AGAIN...



IT'S...IT'S
JUST AS IT WAS
IN MY BAD DREAM...
BUT NOW IT IS YOU,
ELEANOR!...IT
IS YOU, MY
OWN TRUE
LOVE!



ONCE AGAIN, MY BODY NEXT TO
YOURS, MY LIPS TOUCHING YOURS...
ONCE AGAIN, LIKE A FLASH OF
LIGHTNING, OUR YEARS OF
YOUTH, OUR LOVE THEN AND OUR
LOVE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE
ARE LIKE AN ETERNITY OF
HAPPINESS HELD WITHIN A FEW
SECONDS! I HAVE NEVER
FELT ANYTHING SO WONDERFUL...
HOW IS IT POSSIBLE? WHAT IS
HAPPENING?



THERE WAS A TERRIBLE
SCREAM! AND THEN SOMETHING
SMASHED AGAINST MY HEAD...



ELEANOR!
WHERE...
WHERE ARE
YOU?
WHERE
AM I?

I HAD NEVER SEEN THIS
GRAVESTONE BEFORE... I
SWEEPED THE SNOW OFF
THE STONE... AND I READ
THERE WHAT I FEARED!



AN ILLUSION! YET ANOTHER DREADFUL EFFECT OF THE FEVER!... AFTER MY DELIRIOUS FIT, I STOOD FOR SEVERAL MINUTES WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING, BEFORE THAT GRAVESTONE, AMONG THE RUINS WHICH THE CROWS SURVEYED... THEN I REMEMBERED THAT TERRIBLE SCREAM. AND I RAN.



POOR CHILD! HER FACE WAS UNTOUCHED... AND SHE STILL HAD THE SAME SMILE... NOT EVEN DEATH HAD MANAGED TO ERASE IT!



AS IF UNAWARE OF WHAT I DID, I CLIMBED ONTO MY HORSE AND FOLLOWED THE TRACKS OF THE ASSASSINS ACROSS THE FIELD... THE ASSASSINS OF A POOR, INNOCENT CHILD...



SATAN! WITCHES! THERE IS NOTHING EXCEPT MAN, MAN BATTLING AGAINST HIMSELF, AGAINST OTHERS, AGAINST THE WORLD... MAN QUESTIONING HIMSELF ETERNALLY ABOUT WHAT IT ALL MEANS...



I WAS GOING TO KILL THEM! I WAS GOING TO KILL THEM AND ALL THE WHILE I WOULD FORGET THE DEATH OF MY DEARLY BELOVED, THE DEATH OF GOD, MY OWN DEATH, MY WHOLE LIFE'S DEFEAT...



THE TRACES DISAPPEARED IN THE BLIZZARD.
I WAS PEERING INTO THE SNOW WHEN
SUDDENLY SOMETHING MOVED--MY HORSE
WHINNIED WITH FEAR...



I UNDERSTOOD THEN WHAT
HAD HAPPENED TO THE
ASSASSINS...WHAT MY OWN
END WOULD BE...AND I
KNEW THAT I WAS NOW
GOING TO FIGHT MY
LAST BATTLE!

UNTIL THE END, I WAS A TRUE KNIGHT!
THEN, HAVING SUBMITTED SO
BRIEFLY TO HIS PARTICULAR
DESTINY, I LEFT HIM...



A WITNESS, WATCHFUL AND PASSIVE, I HAD SURELY
ENRICHED MY EXPERIENCE BY THIS END WHICH HAD
BEEN AS UNKNOWN TO ME AS IT WAS TO YOU...
AND I BECAME YET AGAIN PART OF THE FABRIC
OF DREAMS, THE DREAMS OF WHICH HUMAN LIFE IS
MADE...WHAT WILL I BE...WHERE WILL I BE NEXT?

PERHAPS YOU, YOURSELF, WHO READ THE LAST
WORD OF THIS STORY!

FIN

CHAIN MAIL

Dear Sean:

Re: Mike Wagner's "personal complaint" (Chain Mail. *HM* #10) about the "brutal mutilation of Vaughn Bodé's 'Sunpot,'" I, as colorist, would like to submit a plea of "not guilty." It may surprise "Mr." Wagner, but Vaughn Bodé is *dead*! No one can replace him, and since he didn't color "Sunpot" before he died, the job had to be given to someone else. Those familiar with Bodé's later work will understand why "Sunpot" had to be colored. As for my part, I'm not Vaughn Bodé, but I came closer to capturing the coloring he used than anyone else so far. It should also be pointed out that whereas Bodé hand-colored his originals with dry marks on bristol board, I was given third generation photostats to color with Dr. Martin's dyes, which would explain some of the technical differences. Finally, I would like to state that most of the color choices were actually taken from Bodé's "Bodé Erotica" in *Cavalier*, of which I have quite a collection.

Sincerely,
Bruce D. Patterson

Sirs:

Has the winter's cold affected all of us? I speak of your December issue with sixty overlong pages of M. (Mlle.?) Druillet's ink drawings—has creative torpor set in with the sub-zero temperatures? Two pages of Moebius and sixty of a lesser talent? Your premier issues were fantastic, but the flow of ingenuity seems to have been shut off to the merest trickle.

You have drawings by Solé; is it possible to include some of his writings? Are you licensed to print Mandryka or Götlied or Petillot?

Heavy Metal is anxiously awaited each month at my house. Please don't let our longing turn to bitterness.

P.S. Is it possible to receive subscription information for *Metal Hurlant* and *L'Echo des Savanes* through you, inasmuch as the publications are allied with Les Humanoïdes Associés?

With relish,
R. Gomez

Dear R.: You can reach *MH* c/o Bud Plant, P.O. Box 1886, Grass Valley, Calif., *Echo* at 11 rue Portefoin 75003 Paris.—Eds.

COLLECTOR'S ITEMS

HM #1/APRIL, 1977: With Space Punks, the first chapters of Corben's Den and Bode's Sunpot, an excerpt from the best-selling fantasy novel *The Sword of Shannara*, Harzak, and more. \$4.00

HM #2/MAY, 1977: Introducing Roger, the paranoid puppet, Virgo, the cosmic maiden, Russian astronauts, Conquering Armies, the ultimate rock festival, while Harzak, Sunpot, and Den continue. (\$4.00)

HM #3/JUNE, 1977: Features *Night Images*, poetry by Conan's creator, Robert E. Howard, with illustrations by Corben; Macedo's Rockblitz, the highly praised Shells, the first chapter of Davis's World Apart, more Den, Sunpot, and Harzak. (\$3.00)

HM #4/JULY, 1977: Is a must for Moebius fans, with 12 pages of Harzak and his s/f spy saga, The Long Tomorrow, also the end of Sunpot, further adventures of Den, the psychic Nep Simo, and the horrible Gold Queen. (\$3.00)

HM #5/AUGUST, 1977: In which the saga of Polonius begins, The Long Tomorrow concludes, World Apart and Den continue, all amidst talking plants, samurai, puppets, sex, and violence. (\$3.00)

HM #6/SEPTEMBER, 1977: Galactic aztecs, cosmic cowboys, hysterical shrubbery, chemically-induced sanity, a Moebius space opera, more World Apart, Den, and Polonius, plus a Roger Zelazny short story. (\$3.00)

HM #7/OCTOBER, 1977: Packed with knights, ladies, jet pilots; insanity, reincarnation, and other harmless pastimes; 10 pages of color Moebius; the Airtight Garage, Den and Polonius re-

dux; and fiction by Theodore Sturgeon. (\$3.00)

HM #8/NOVEMBER, 1977: With nine color pages by Moebius and Rimbaud, the conclusions of both Polonius and World Apart, ex-pugs, intellectual mollusks, birth and death stars, and a great new Harlan Ellison story — the heaviest *Heavy Metal* yet! (\$2.00)

HM #9/DECEMBER, 1977: This time, went up to 104 pages to bring you the complete saga of Druillet's anti-hero, Vuzz, a chapter from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and Fortune's Fool by Chaykin and Wein, in addition to full color contributions from regulars Corben, Macedo, Claveloux, and Moebius. (\$2.00)

HM #10/JANUARY, 1978: We got Morrow to illustrate Zelazny, we got Lob and Pichard to update Ulysses, we got Meehan to do a *Heavy Metal* calendar girl, we concluded Conquering Armies, and continued Den. Of course, you knew about the Incas, fog lights, and the time warp. (\$2.00)

HM #11/FEBRUARY, 1978: Wherein begin the new adventures of Barbarella, naked to her enemies and nude to her friends, and of Urm the Fool in his quest for revenge. Wraparound cover and center spread by Nino. A trip to Venus, the Crusader and the Witch, and Moebius down the rabbit hole. With the usual unusual, like Den. (\$2.00)

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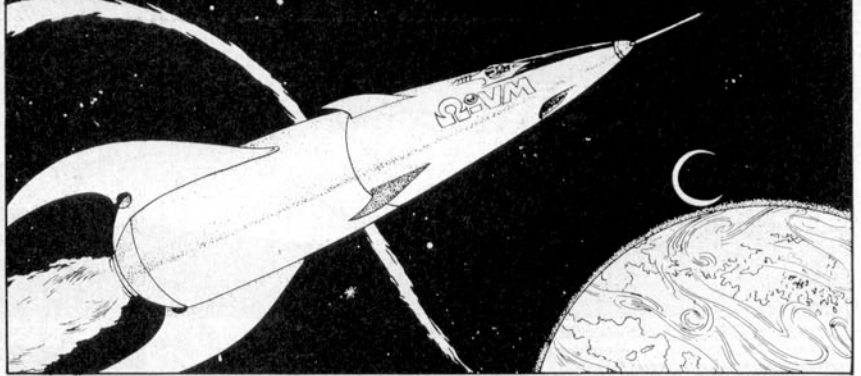
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DIABOLICAL PLANET

PART 2

SUMMARY:
MORRIS WHITE HAS JUST LEFT THE EARTH ON HIS WAY TO THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET WHERE HE VERY MUCH HOPES TO FIND HIS SWEET FIANCEE AGAIN, THANKS TO THE NECKLACE OF MAGNETIC PEARLS WHOSE BEAMS HE CAN PICK UP ON HIS RADAR BRACELET!!

CAPTAIN WHITE'S ROCKET RAPIDLY DRAWS AWAY FROM THE EARTH'S PULL, AND STEERS ITSELF AUTOMATICALLY TOWARDS ITS TARGET.



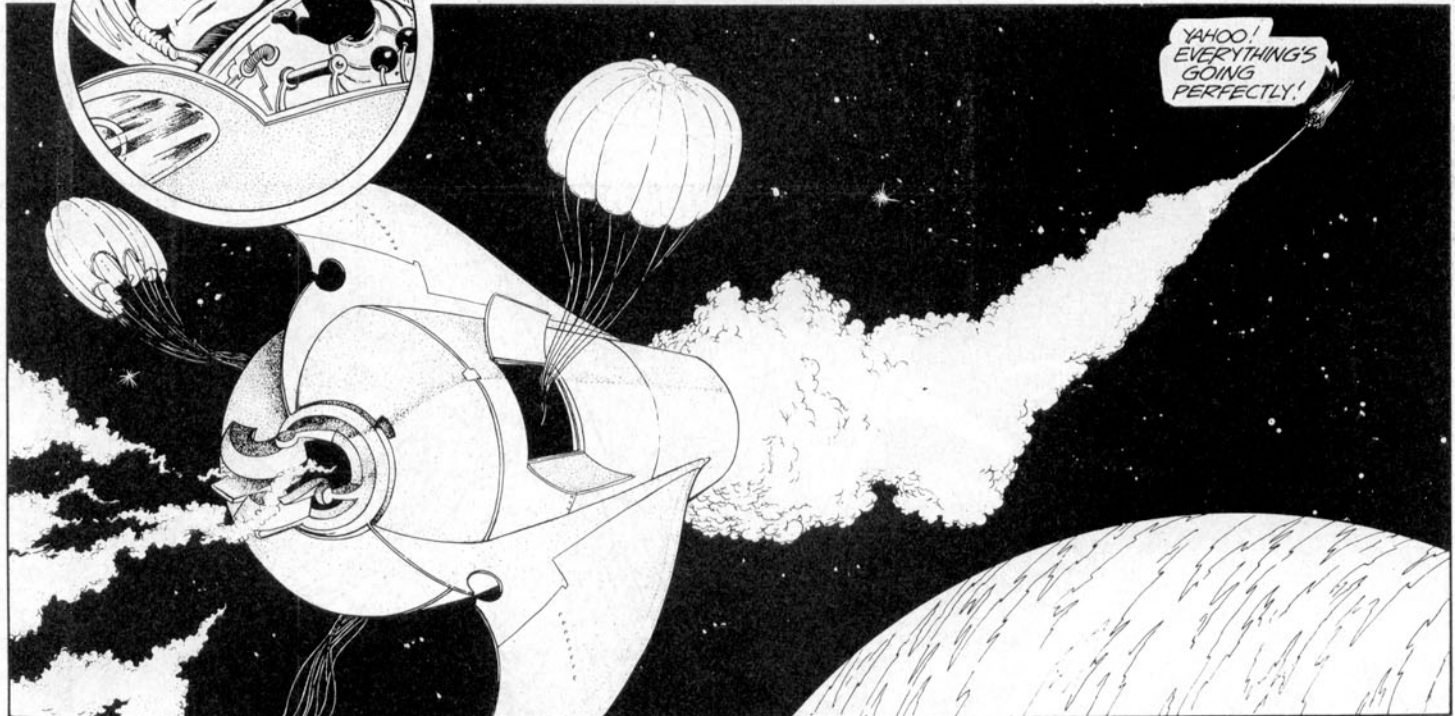
THE FIRST PART OF THE INTERPLANETARY TRIP PASSES WITHOUT MAJOR INCIDENT...

HERE I AM BENEATH MERCURY, THE LAST OF THE EARTH'S COLONIES.

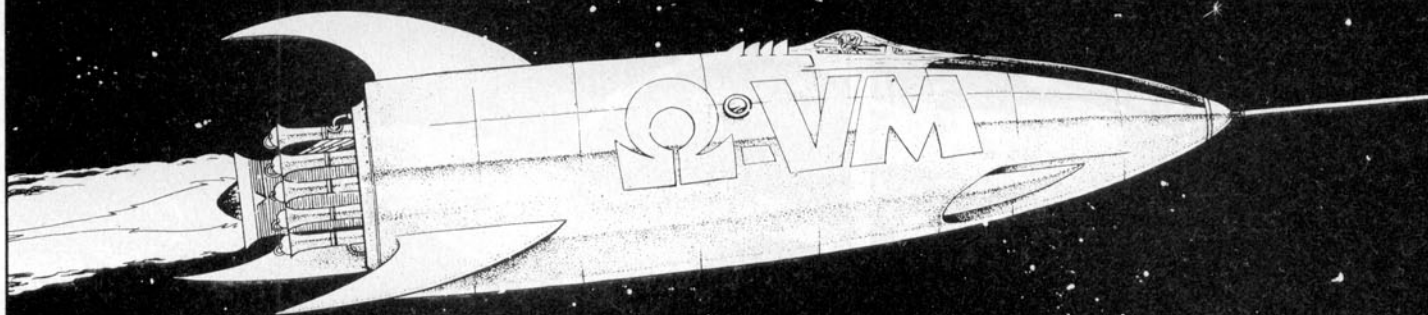
WAIT! HERE'S WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO LET GO OF THE FIRST STAGE!!



YAHOO! EVERYTHING'S GOING PERFECTLY!



...SO MORRIS BRAVELY FOLLOWS HIS MAD COURSE ACROSS THE FROZEN WASTES OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.



...CONSIDERABLE TIME HAVING PASSED, THE AWAITED MOMENT ARRIVES!!!

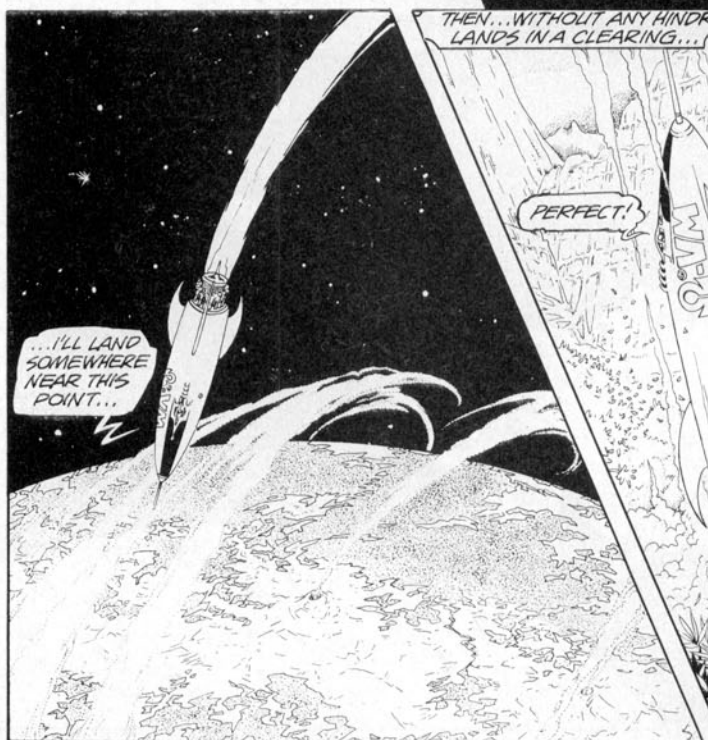


SO THIS IS THE FAMOUS PLANET! LET'S SEE IF THE RADAR BRACELET WORKS...

CAPTAIN WHITE'S VESSEL ORBITS AT A HIGH ALTITUDE!



GOOD...AT THIS PRECISE MOMENT, THE SOUND SYSTEM OF MY RADAR IS THE MOST INTENSE...



...I'LL LAND SOMEWHERE NEAR THIS POINT...

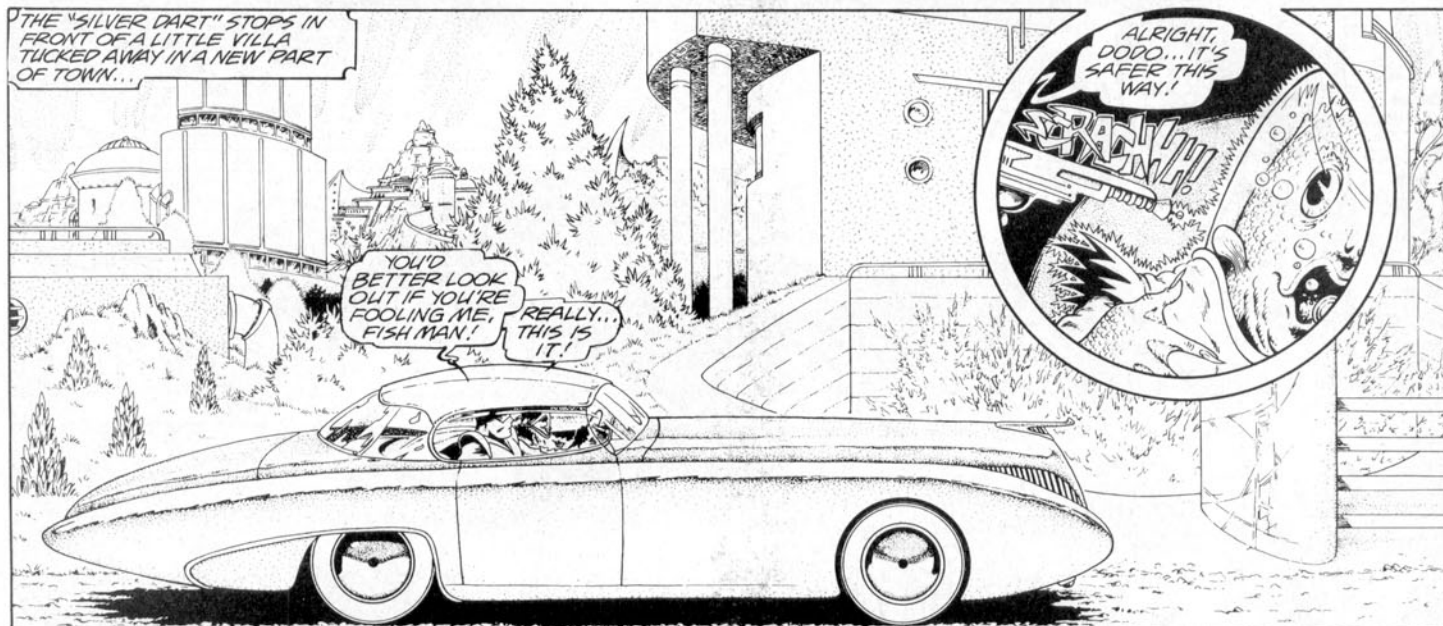
THEN...WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE TO HIS ROCKET, HE LANDS IN A CLEARING...

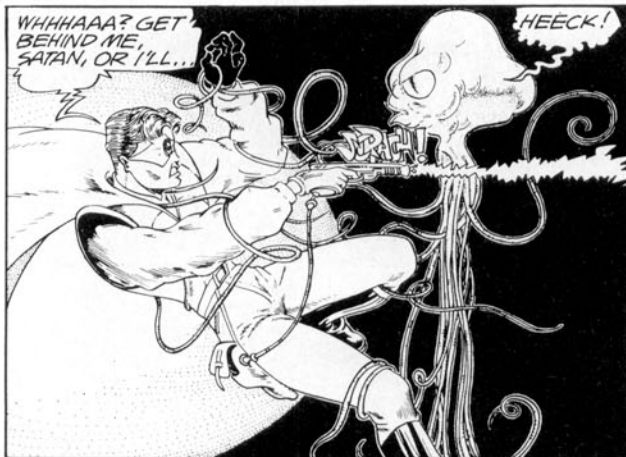
PERFECT!

QUICKLY, THE CAPTAIN LEAVES HIS SPACESHIP, HIS EYES GUARDED BY SPECIAL GALACTIC GLASSES!!



THE ECOLOGICAL STATE OF THIS PLANET DOESN'T SEEM TOO ADVANCED TO ME. I DON'T KNOW WHERE AND HOW I'M GOING TO FIND MY FIANCEE!!!







WHO AM I?...
OOOH! YES,
I GUESS THESE
GLASSES HIDE
MY FACE... I
AM...

MORRIS!
MY CAPTAIN...
YOU'VE COME
TO SAVE
ME!



HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT,
MY POOR SWEET LOVE? EVER
SINCE THAT EXPEDITION WHEN
VON RICKTUS MADE ME SUBMIT
TO HIM, I CAN ONLY BREATHE
IN WATER... LIKE A FISH!!!

A FIS... FISH!!!
OOH! MY SWEET
THING, WHY?



I DIDN'T
WANT TO
BETRAY
OUR LOVE...
DO YOU
UNDER-
STAND?

UGH!! YES,
CERTAINLY...
WAIT, I'M
THINKING...
I THINK...



HURRY THEN, VON
RICKTUS COULD RETURN
ANY MINUTE.

...THAT
I KNOW
HOW TO
GET YOU
OUT OF
HERE! I'LL
BE RIGHT
BACK!



CAPTAIN WHITE DASHES FROM THE VILLA, RUNS
TO THE CAR AND...

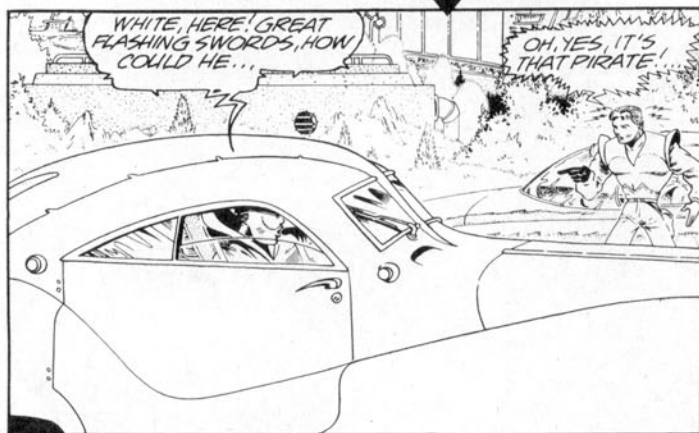
WEARING THIS HELMALLING
OF A FISH MAN, SHE MIGHT
BE ABLE, LIKE HIM, TO
LIVE OUT OF WATER...

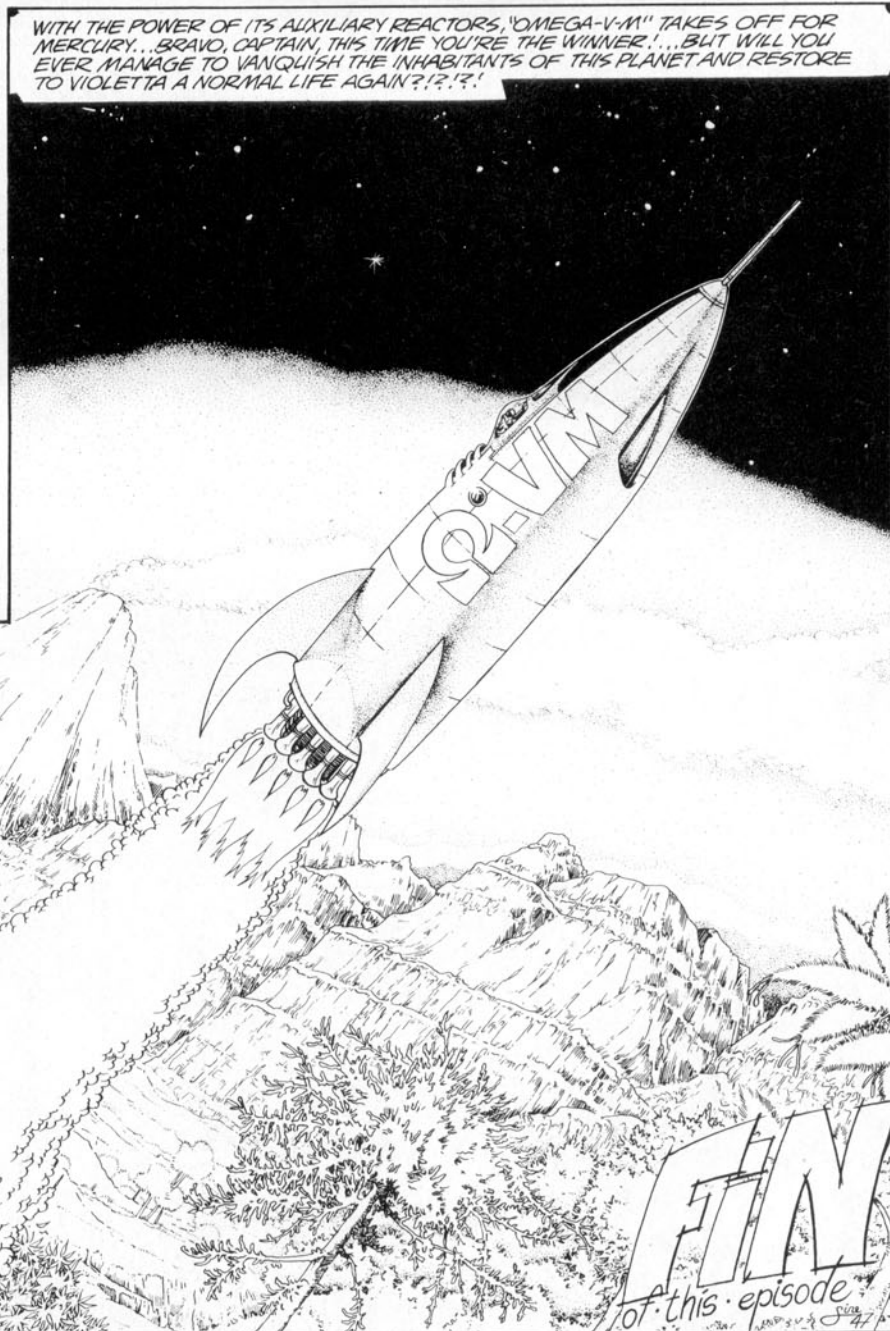
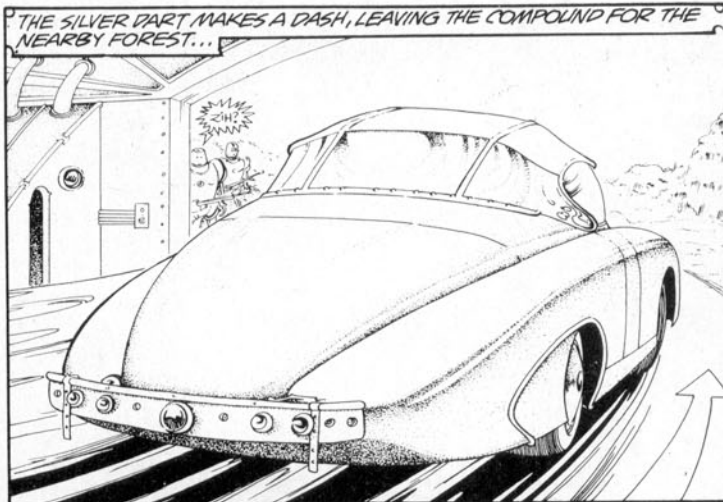
...WATER...
WA...

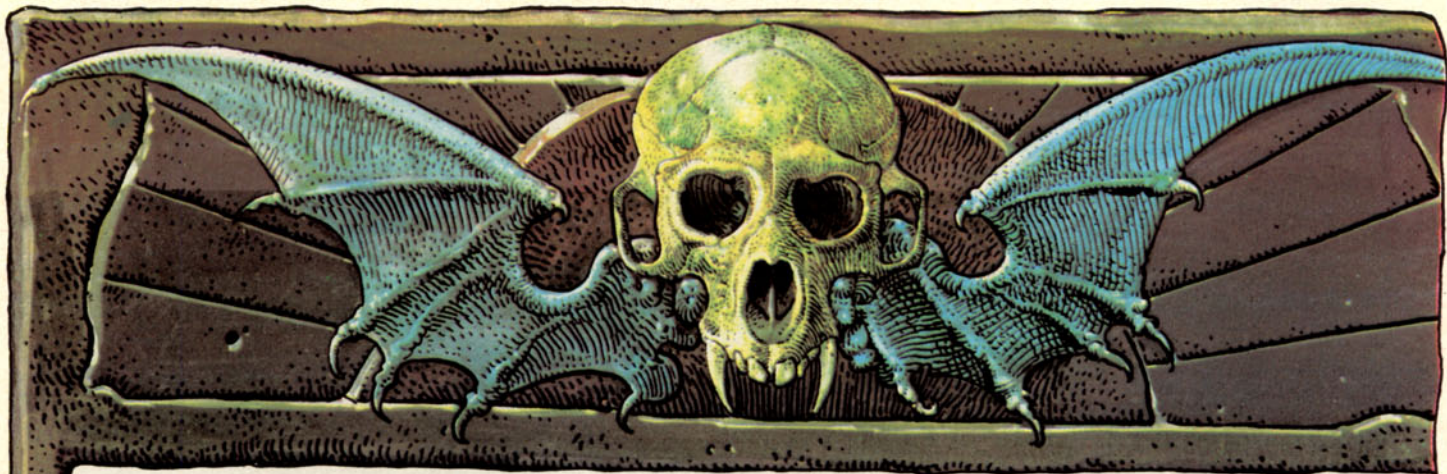


HURRY,
SWEETHEART,
PULL ON THIS
HELMALLING,
AND YOU CAN
LEAVE THIS
PRISON!

YES!
HURRY!!!







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HM 378

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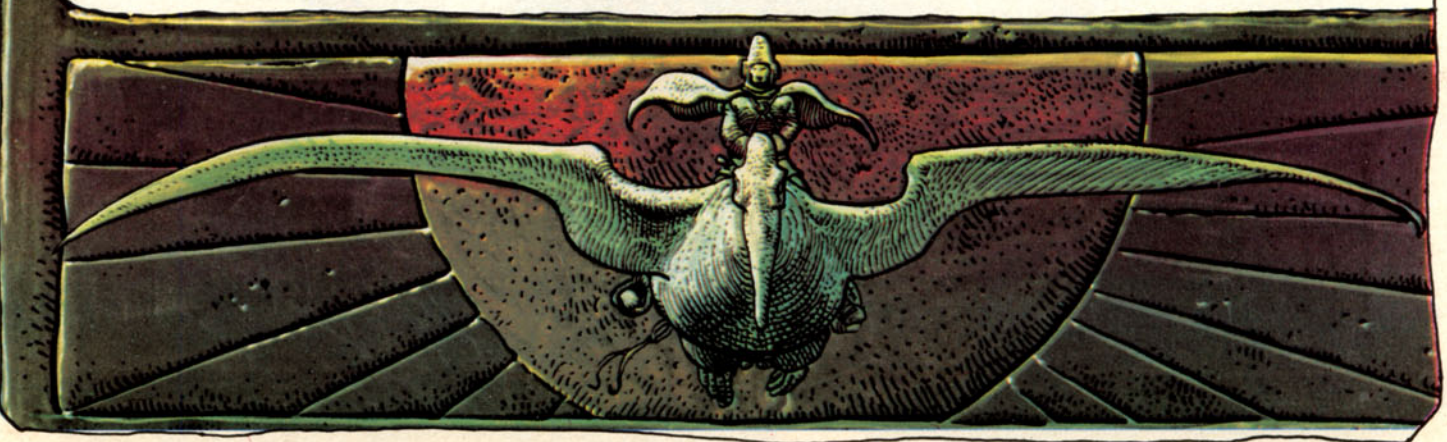
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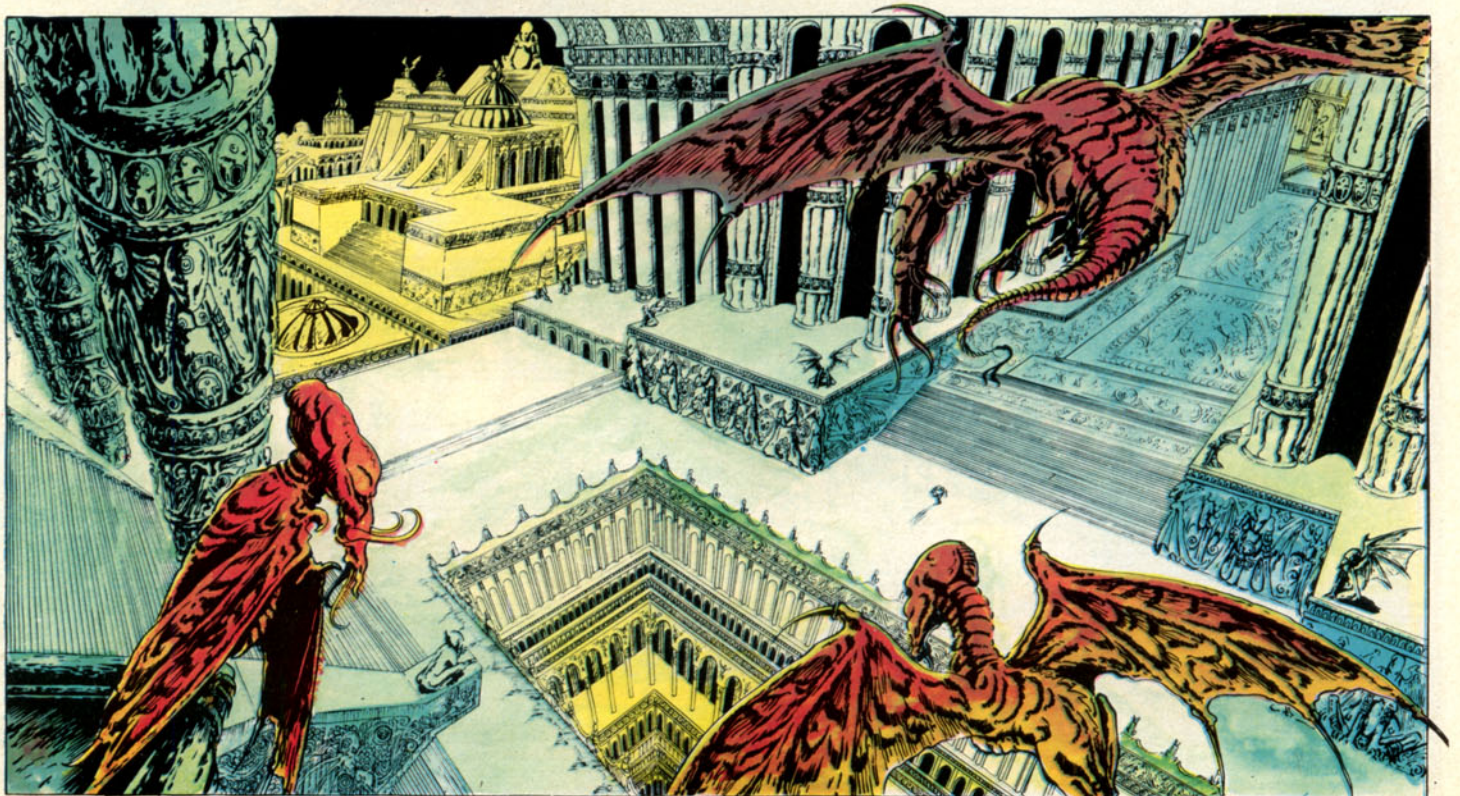
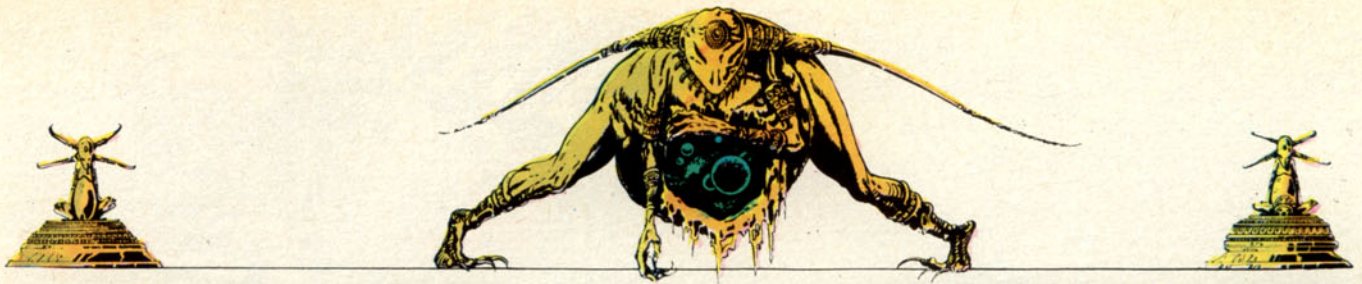
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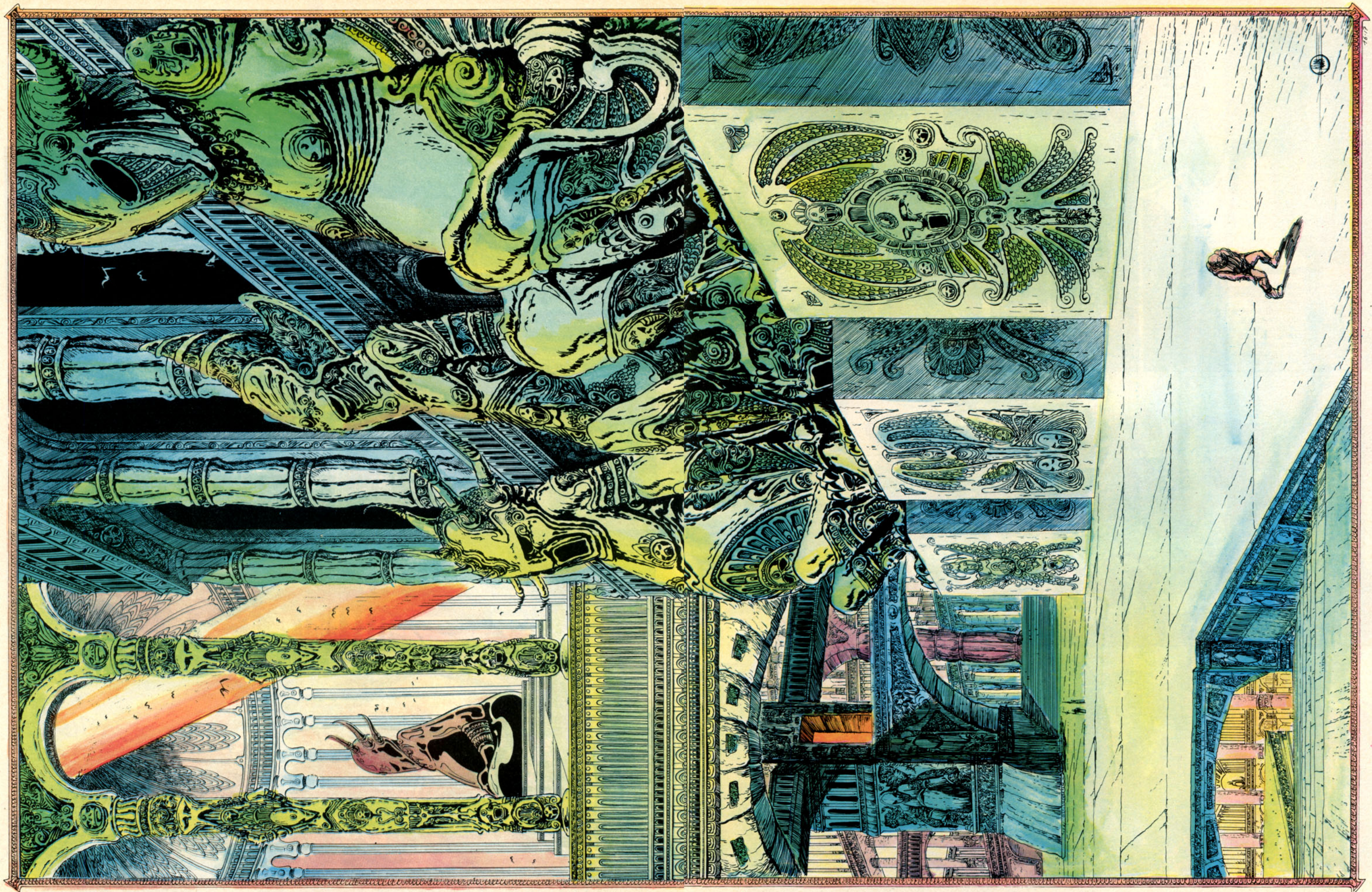
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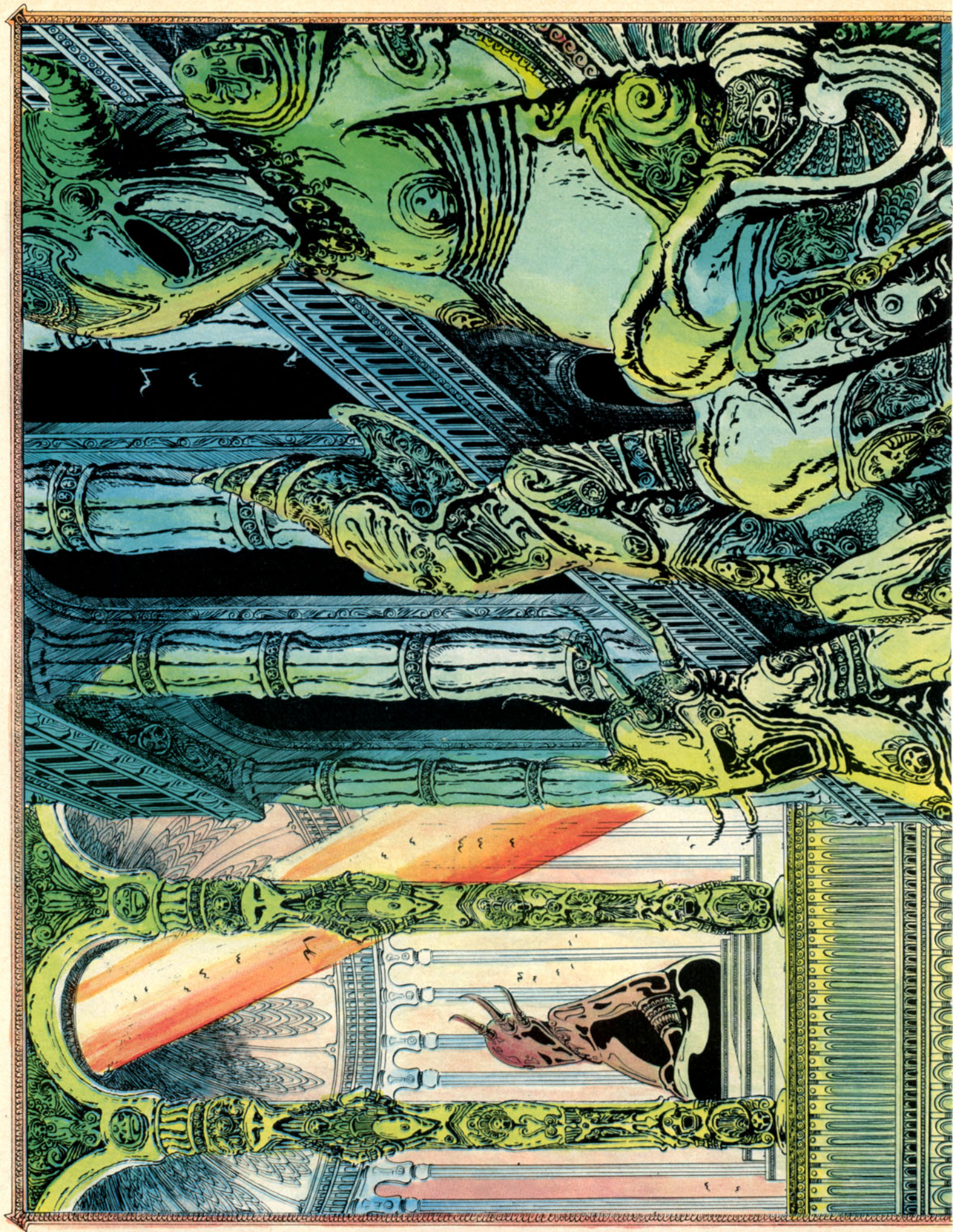
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UNLESS MY EARS DECEIVE ME--THESE GRATING RASPS AND HORRIBLE LAUGHS ARE OBVIOUSLY THE SOUNDS OF MY CRAZY MASTER'S FESTIVITIES!!



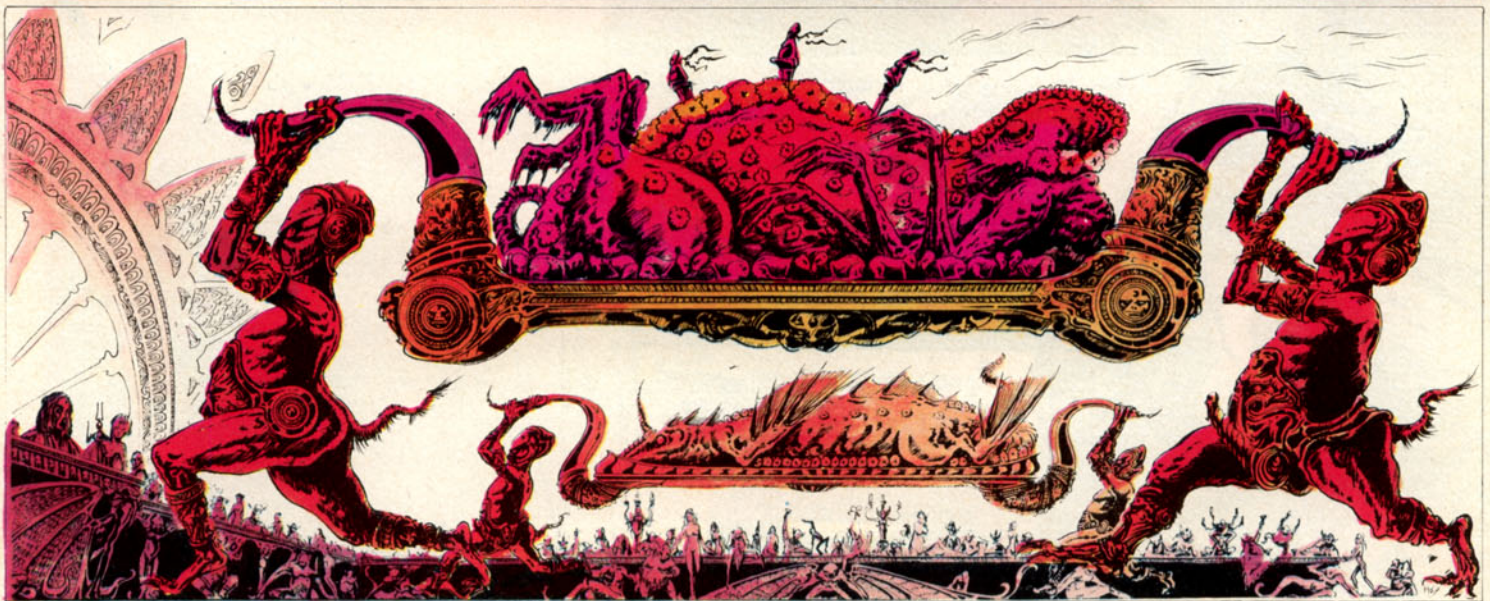
THE FEAST--YOUR EARS ARE VERY SENSITIVE, UR/M, YOU HANDSOME FELLOW!



COME WITH ME

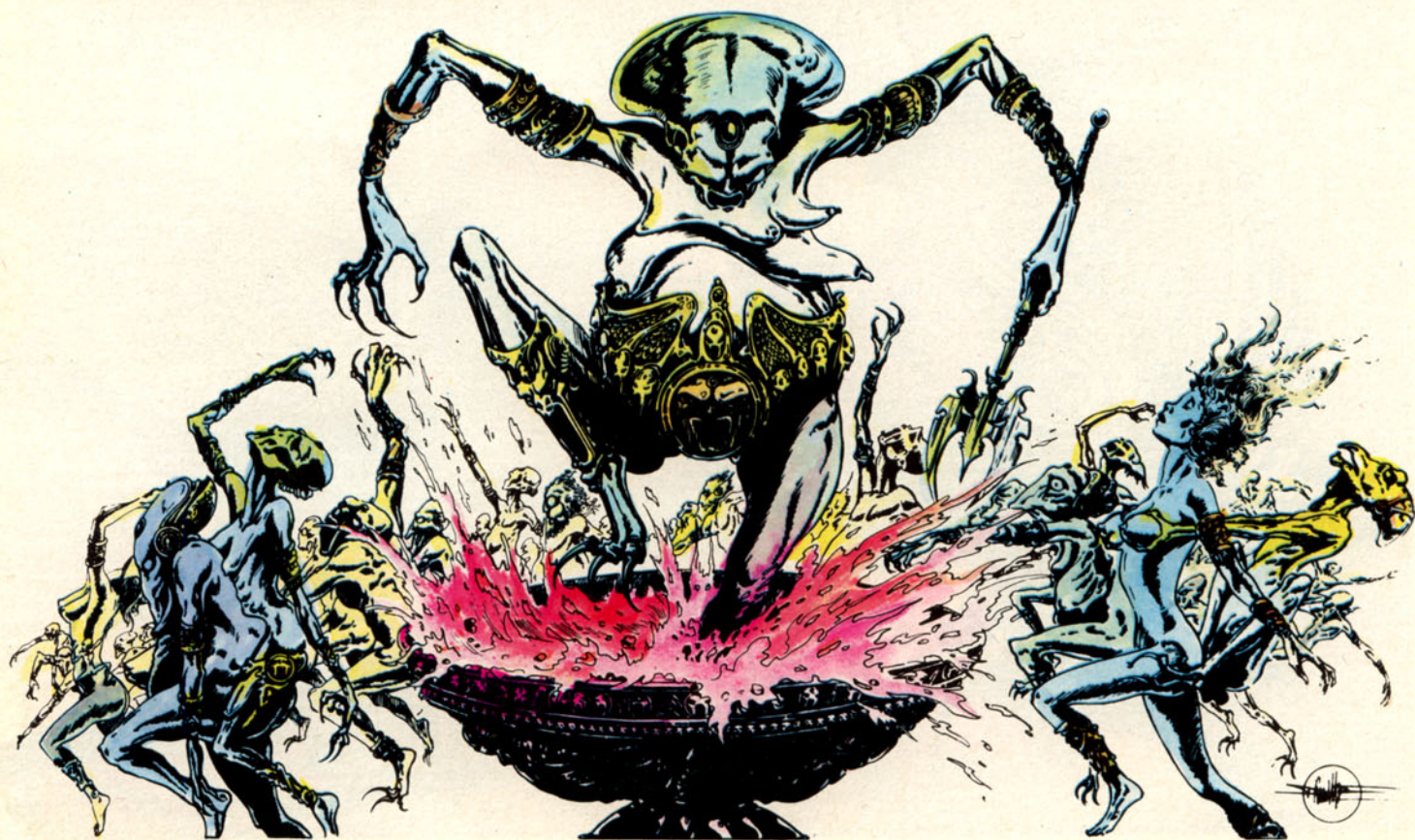


COME REJOICE WITH US



GREETINGS, OH DIVINE PRINCE...



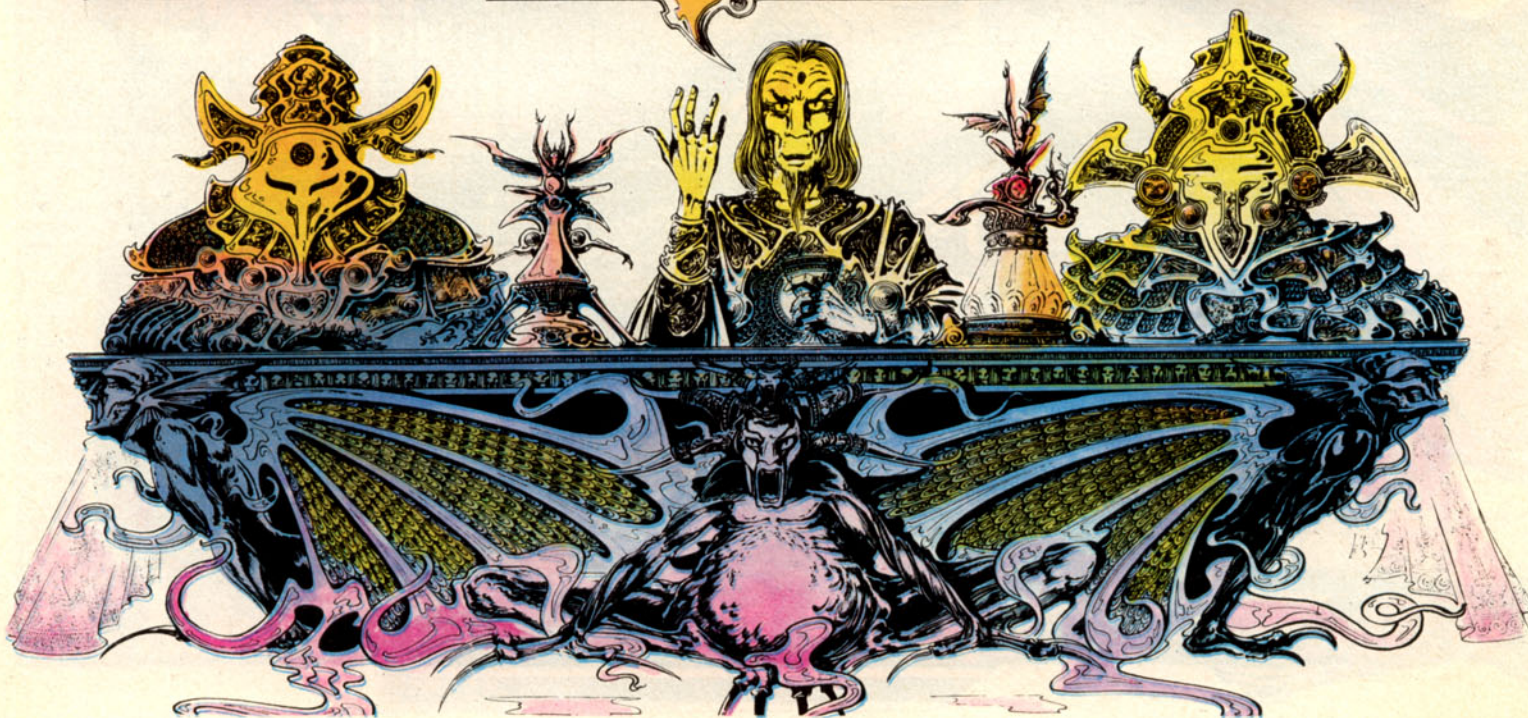
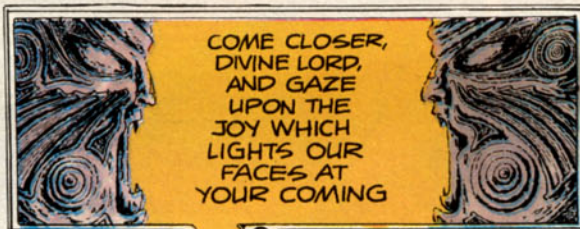
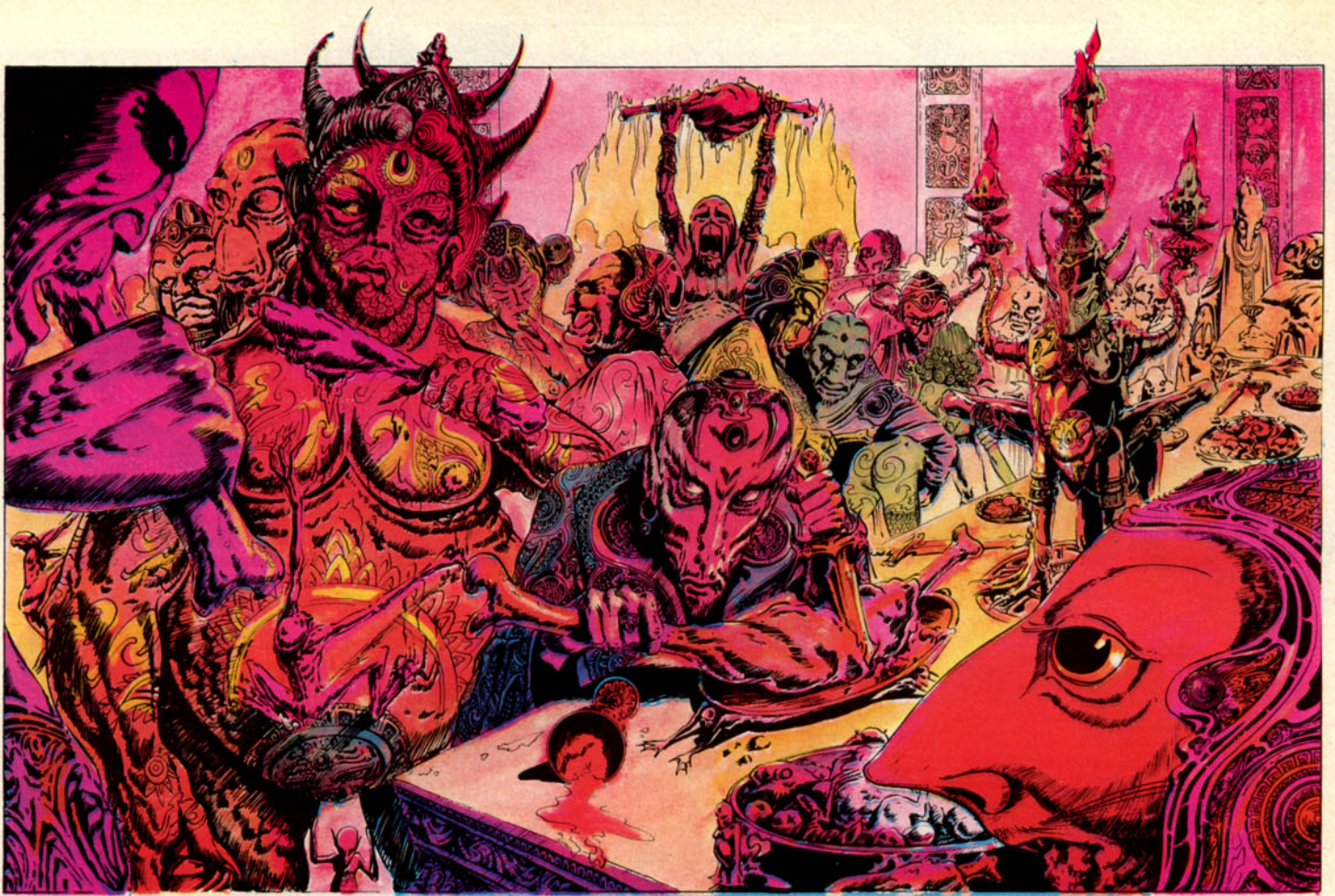


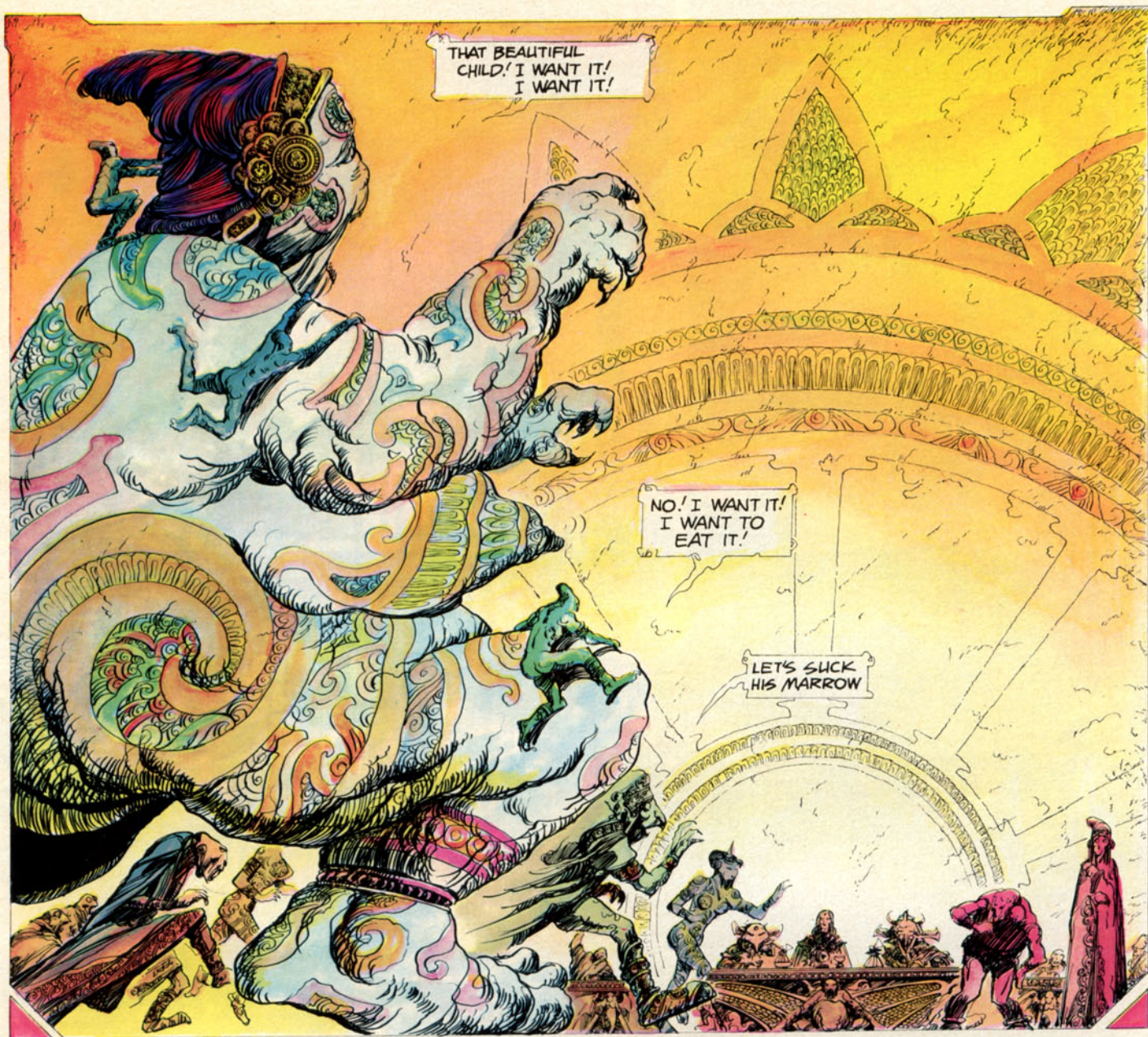




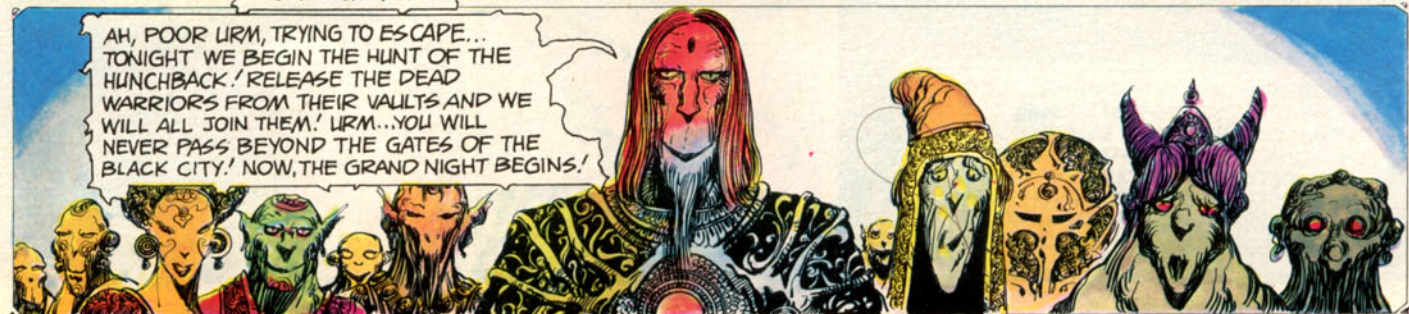


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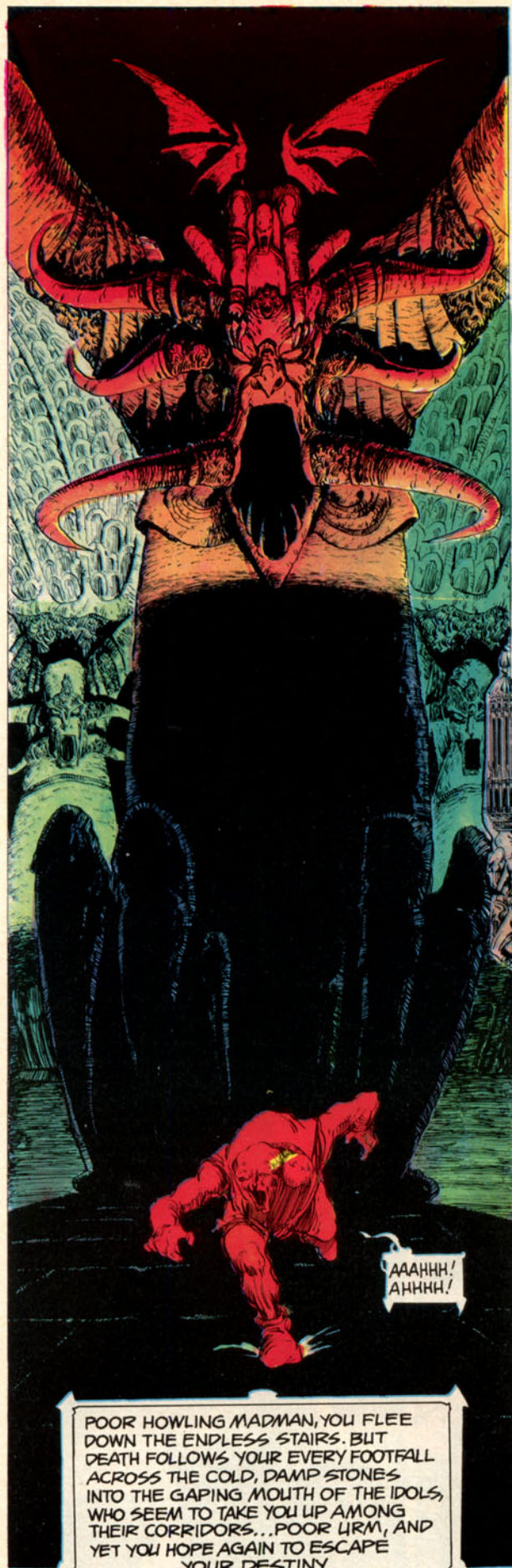




AS YOU CAN SEE,
WE ARE MOST
APPRECIATIVE OF
YOUR COMPANY.

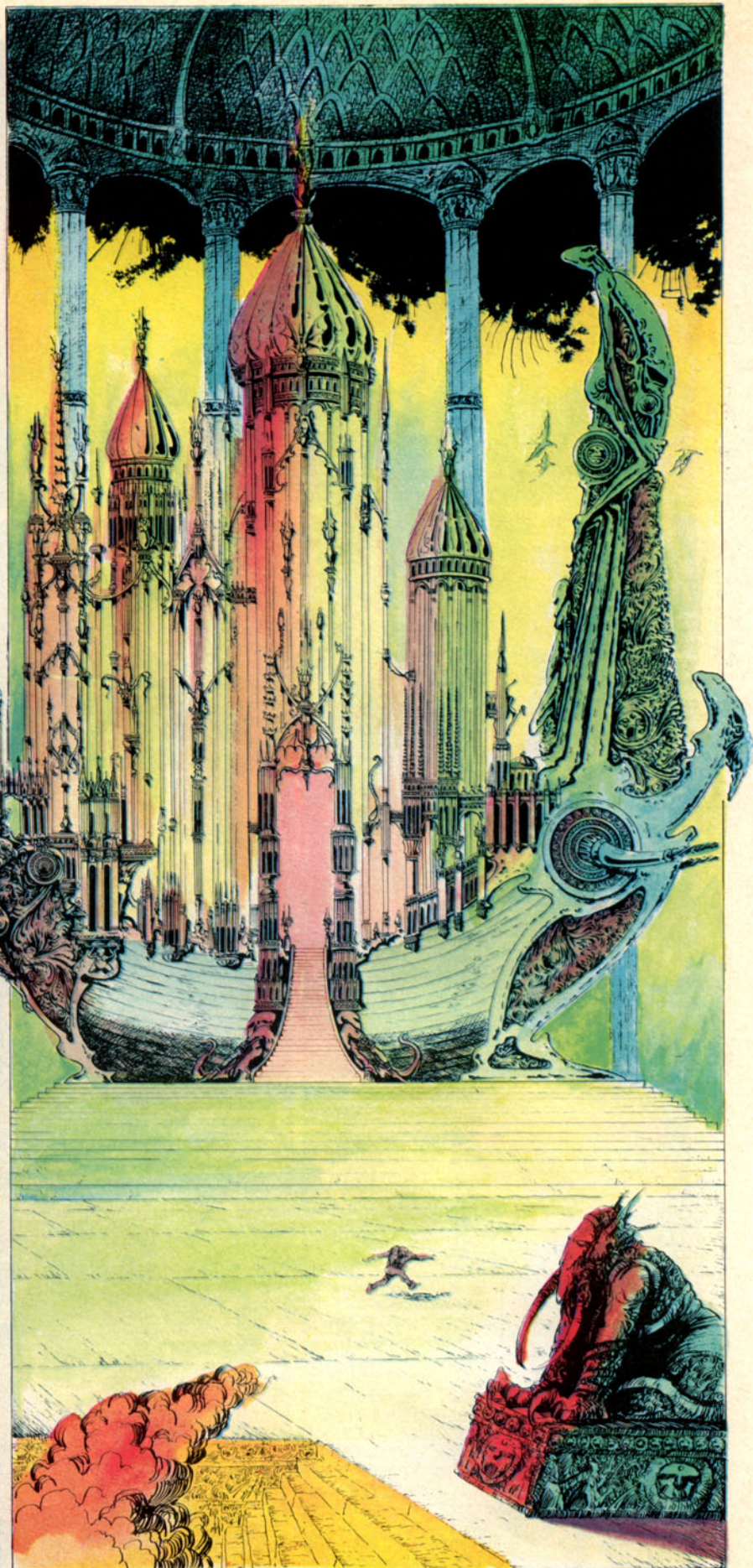


AH, POOR URM, TRYING TO ESCAPE...
TONIGHT WE BEGIN THE HUNT OF THE
HUNCHBACK. RELEASE THE DEAD
WARRIORS FROM THEIR VAULTS AND WE
WILL ALL JOIN THEM. URM...YOU WILL
NEVER PASS BEYOND THE GATES OF THE
BLACK CITY. NOW, THE GRAND NIGHT BEGINS!



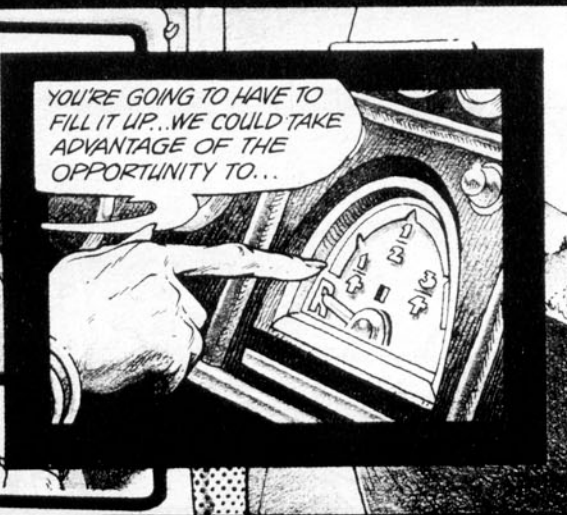
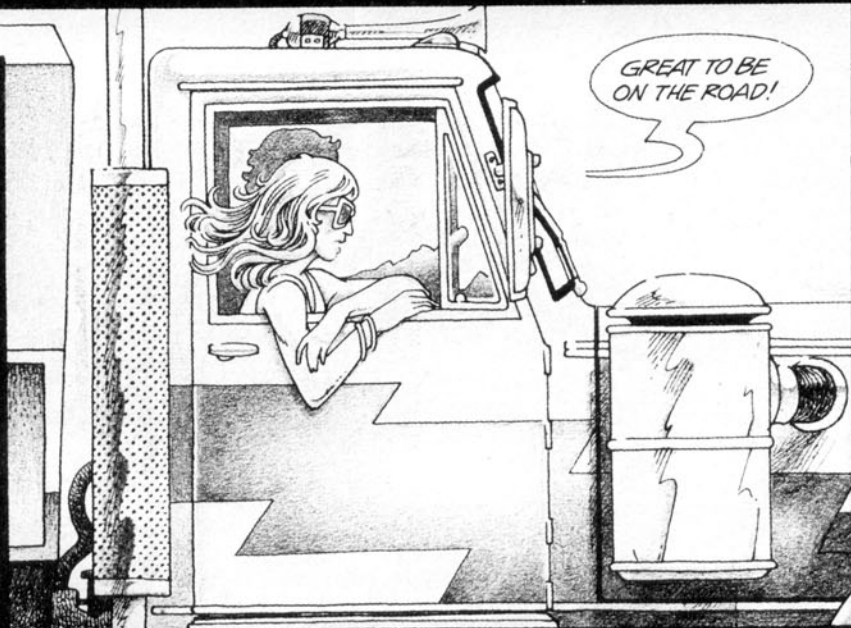
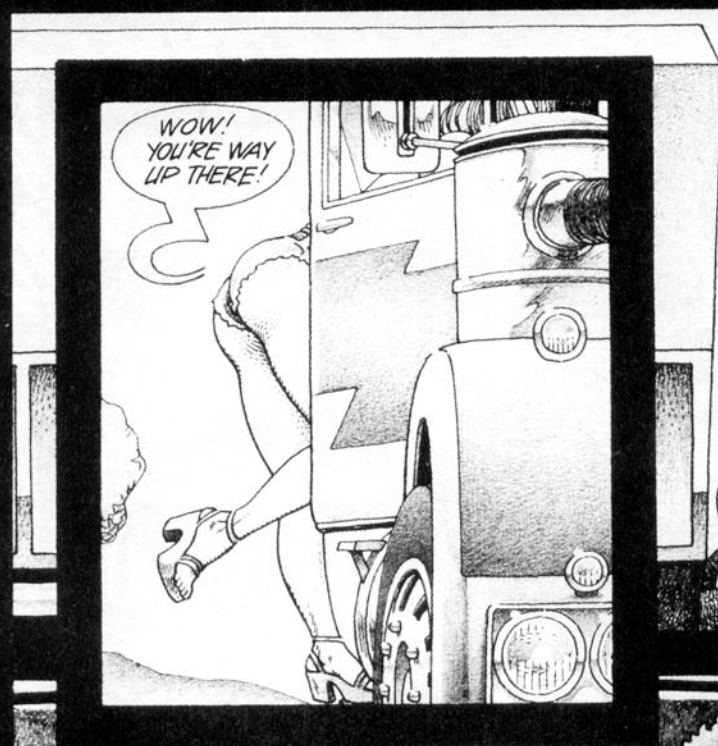
AAAHHH!
AHHHH!

POOR HOWLING MADMAN, YOU FLEE
DOWN THE ENDLESS STAIRS. BUT
DEATH FOLLOWS YOUR EVERY FOOTFALL
ACROSS THE COLD, DAMP STONES
INTO THE GAPING MOUTH OF THE IDOLS,
WHO SEEM TO TAKE YOU UP AMONG
THEIR CORRIDORS... POOR URM, AND
YET YOU HOPE AGAIN TO ESCAPE
YOUR DESTINY...



TO BE CONTINUED...

HITCHHIKE



YOU SHY, OR
WHAT?

MAYBE YOU DON'T
LIKE GIRLS, HUH? YOU
A FRUIT?

IF I PUT MY HAND
THERE, WHAT'LL YOU
DO THEN, HUH?



YOU'RE
NOT HUMAN!

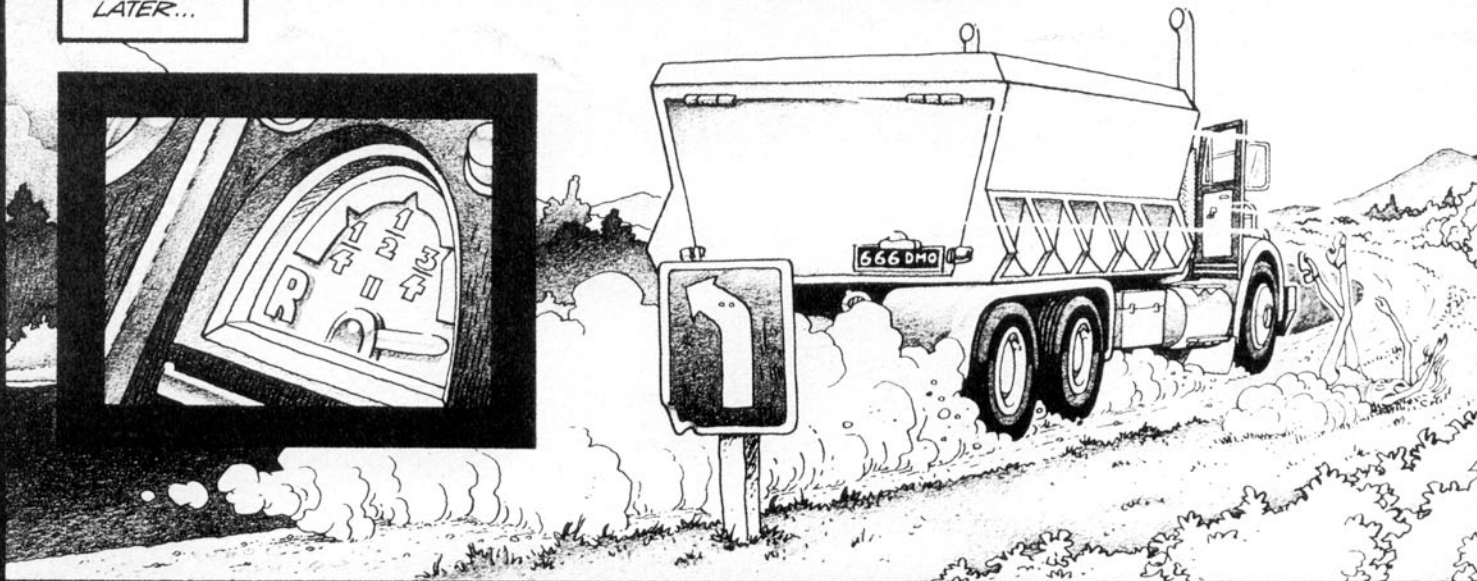
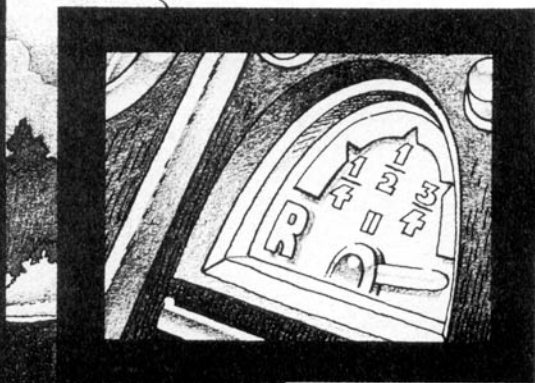
YOU AND THE
TRUCK ARE...
AAHHH!



...THE SAME
MACHINE...



LATER...



FURTHER ON...

OOOHHHH! I'M
SO FED UP! BEEN
WAITIN' HERE A WHOLE
HOUR... AND NO ONE'S
STOPPED!

HEY! A
TRUCK...



ETCETERA...

TALUS IV

*Zoological Wonder
at the Edge of the Galaxy*

A Federation bio-collector filled with the spoils of its voyage hovers over marshy, cloud-covered Talus IV.

Baiting its feeder with heaps of food, the ship soon earns the confidence of the ray-like animals, which are seen here ripping loose bits of bait with their hooked tails. When they alight, the operator of the feeder platform will ingest live samples for transfer to the home planet.

The man-like beast in the foreground is actually the light sensitive end of a massive, segmented worm whose body descends into a deep water-filled crevice. The worms come to shore at nightfall to feed on glowing jell plants that dot the landscape. They rarely see light as brilliant as the Levilon beam, which is actually quite dim.

The red root-snakes, whose flexible bodies can extend to great lengths exhibit curiosity about the bio-collector. They appear to communicate with each other, exist in pairs, and seem to have a collective life cycle. Although firmly anchored to the wet ground, they move together at the end of their life cycle to form large rock-hard structures which become homes for lesser life forms. Scientists believe the root-snakes to have a high degree of intelligence, and have instructed the bio-collector not to collect samples until more can be learned about life in this remote system.

*From the Stellar Journals of
KARL B. KOFOED*



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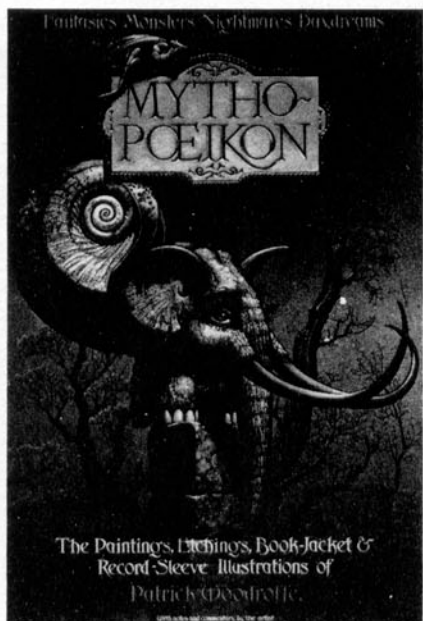


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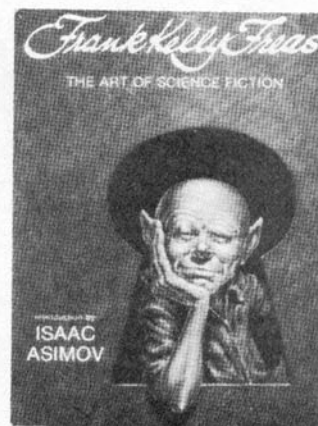
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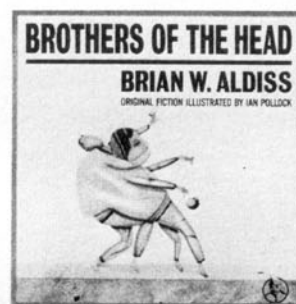
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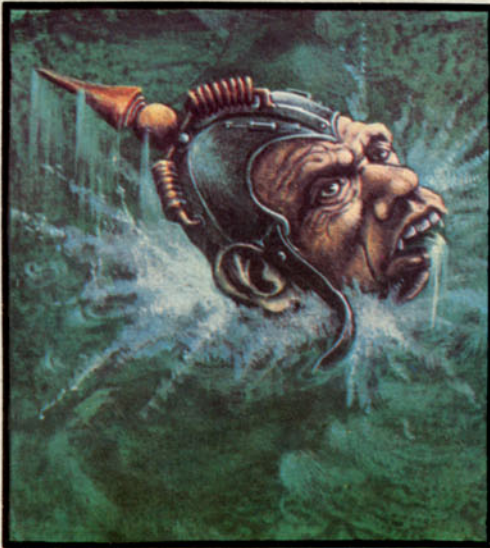
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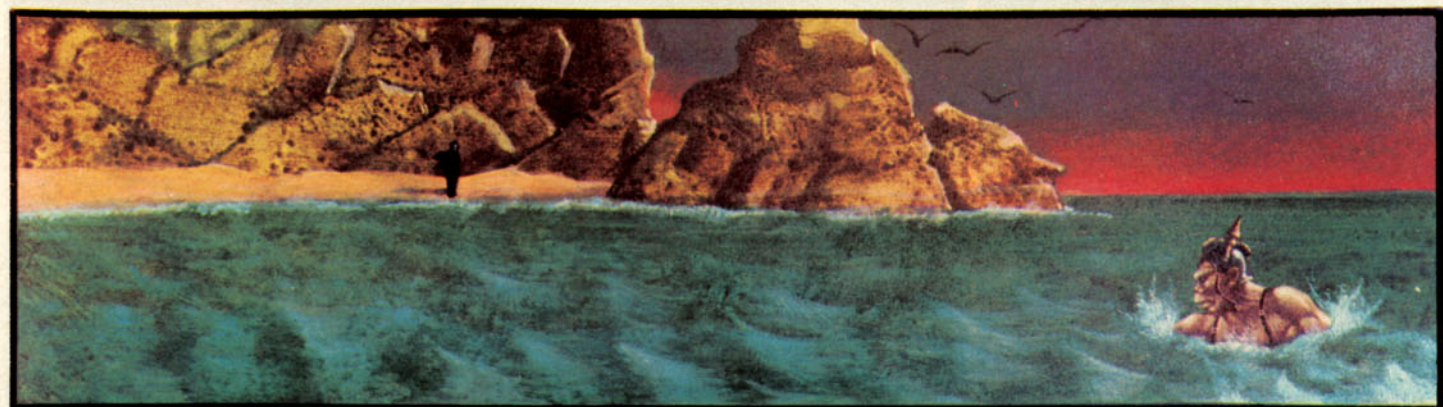
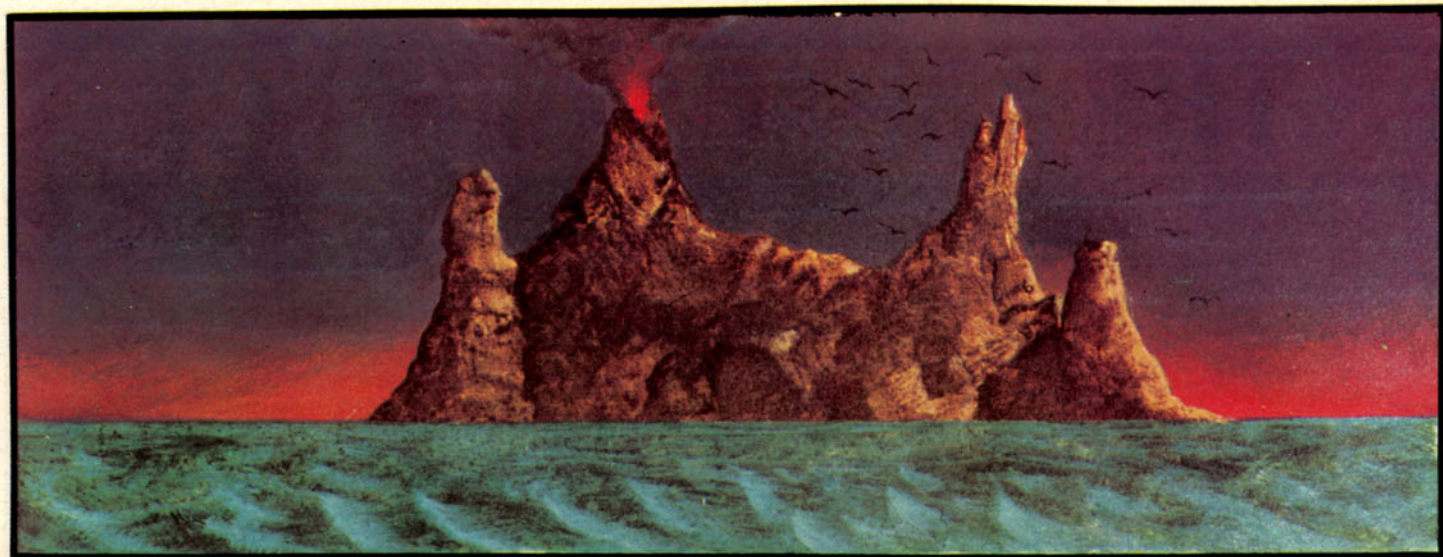
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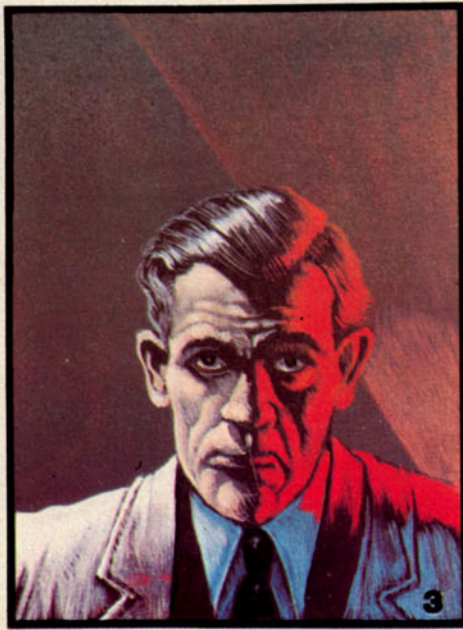
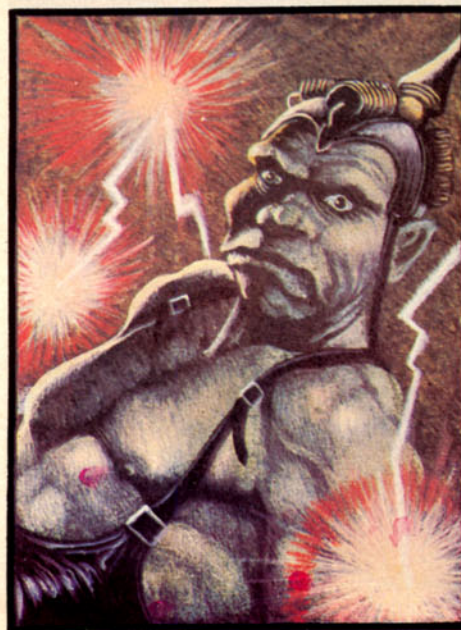
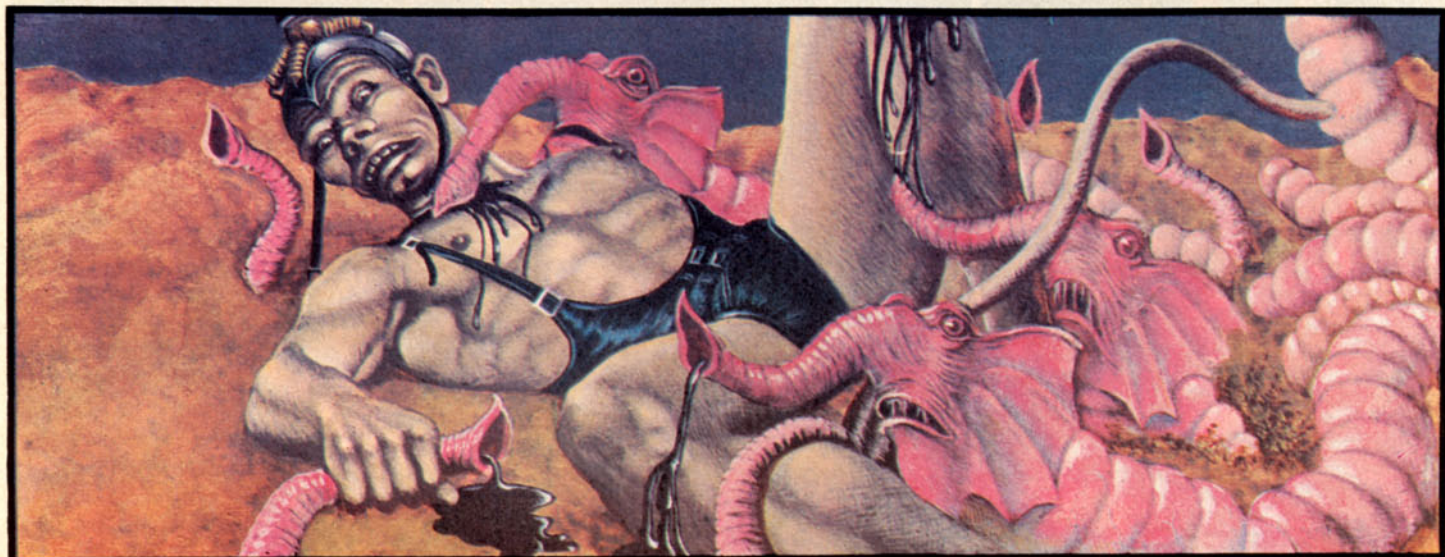


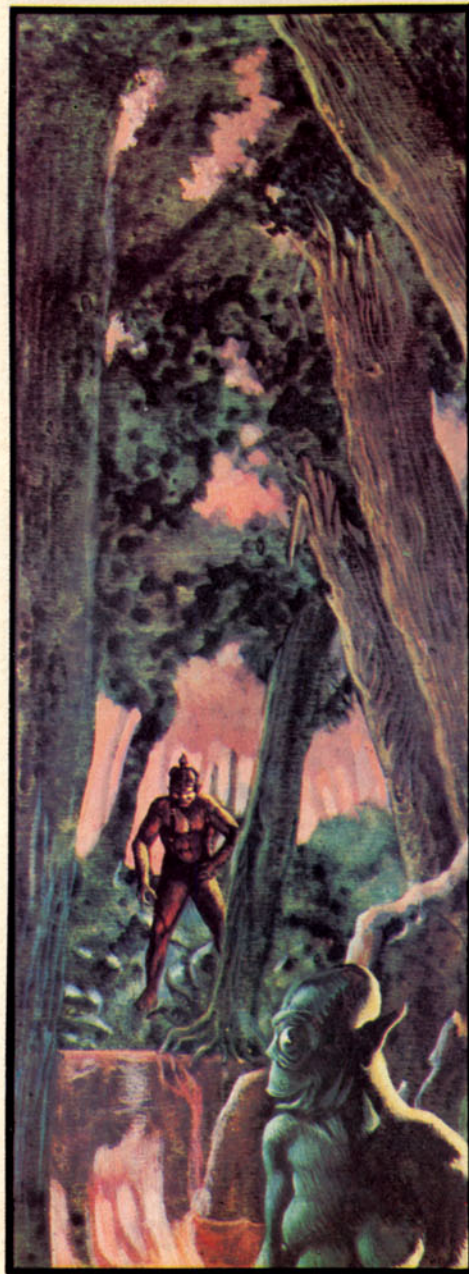
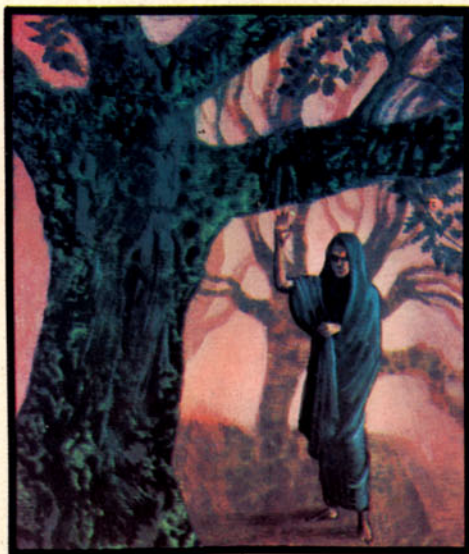
THRUST SUDDENLY INTO A UNIVERSE...

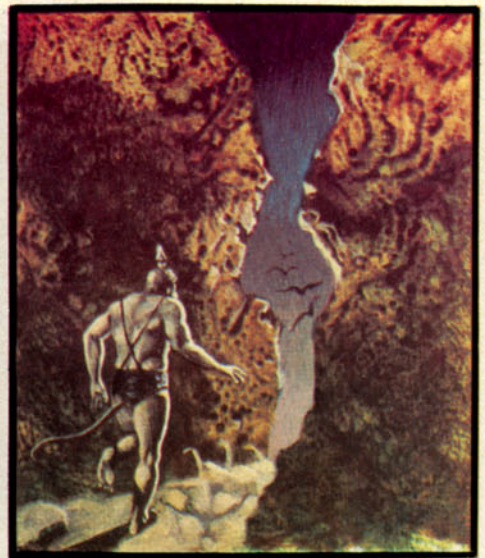
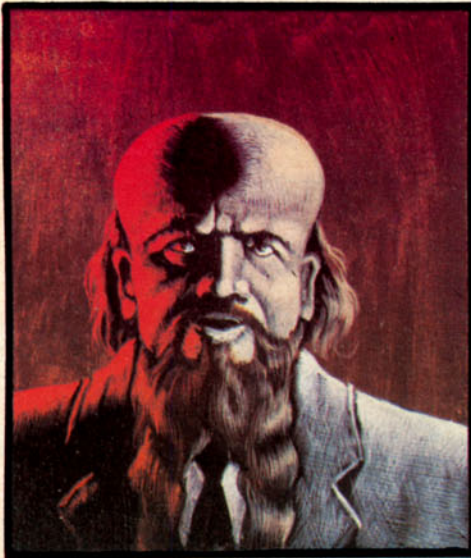


AND THE SEA PARTS.

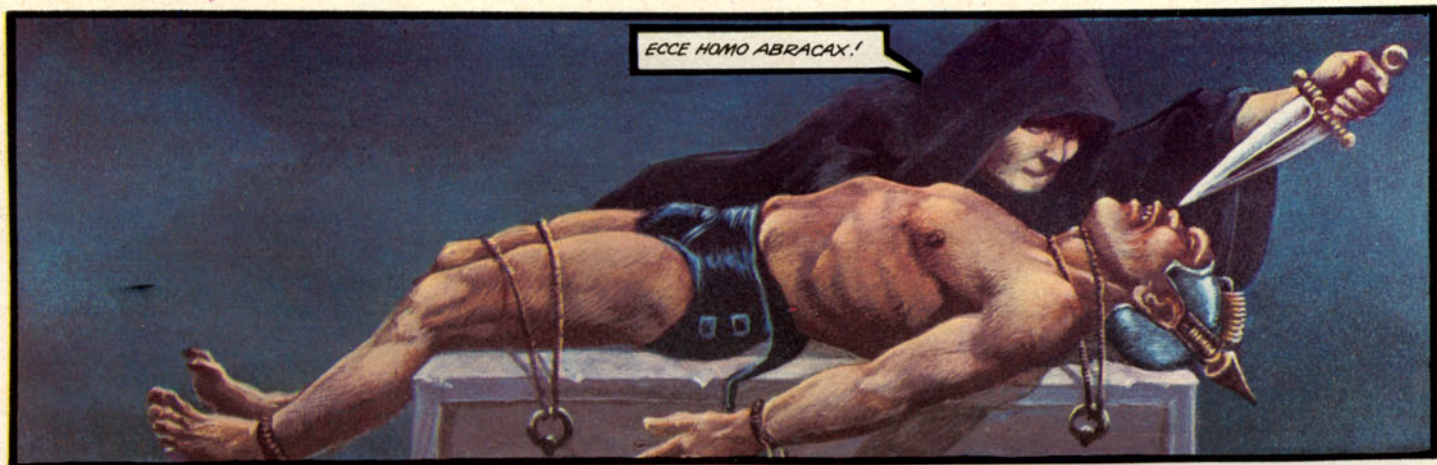


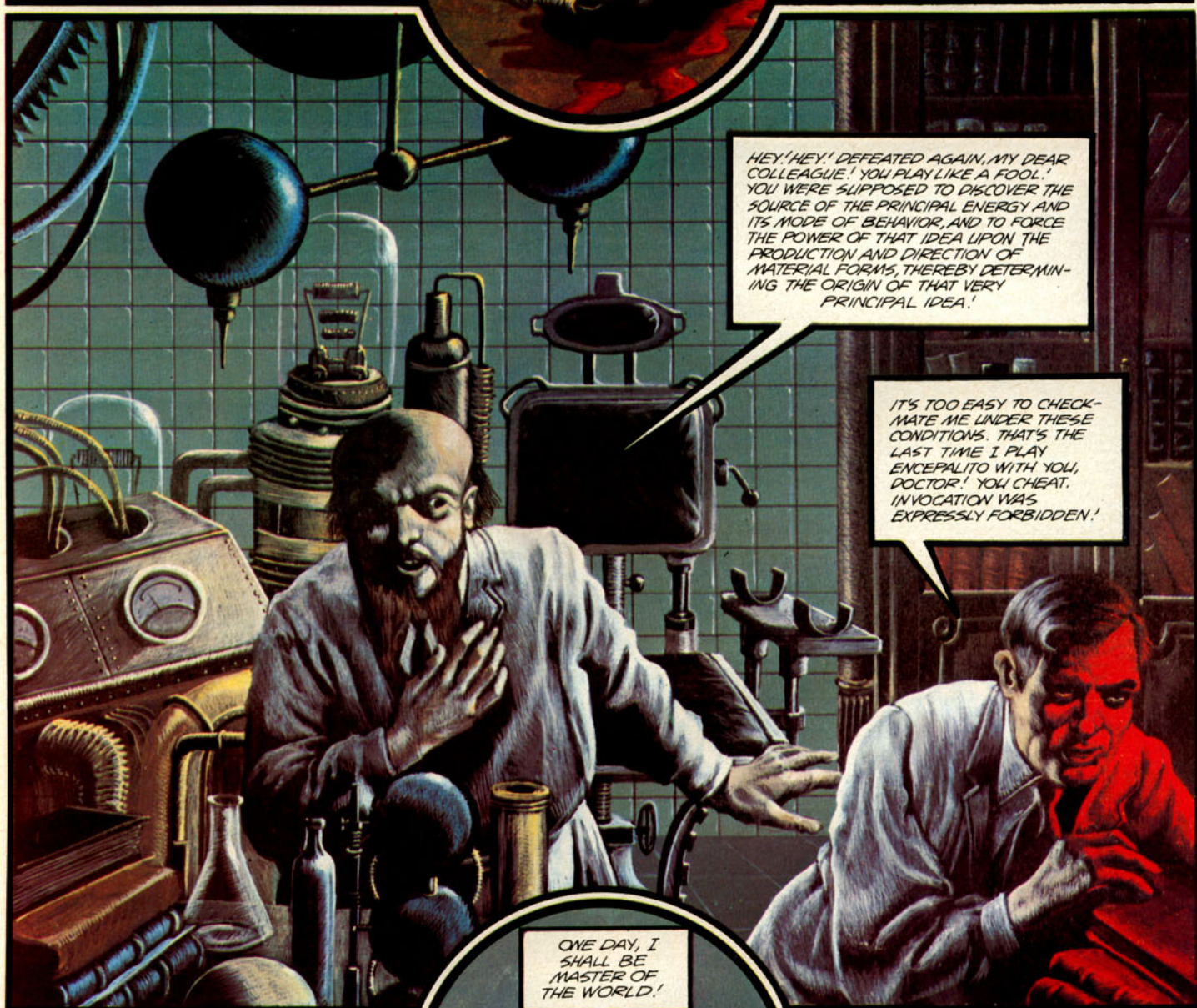












HEY! HEY! DEFEATED AGAIN, MY DEAR COLLEAGUE! YOU PLAY LIKE A FOOL! YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO DISCOVER THE SOURCE OF THE PRINCIPAL ENERGY AND ITS MODE OF BEHAVIOR, AND TO FORCE THE POWER OF THAT IDEA UPON THE PRODUCTION AND DIRECTION OF MATERIAL FORMS, THEREBY DETERMINING THE ORIGIN OF THAT VERY PRINCIPAL IDEA!

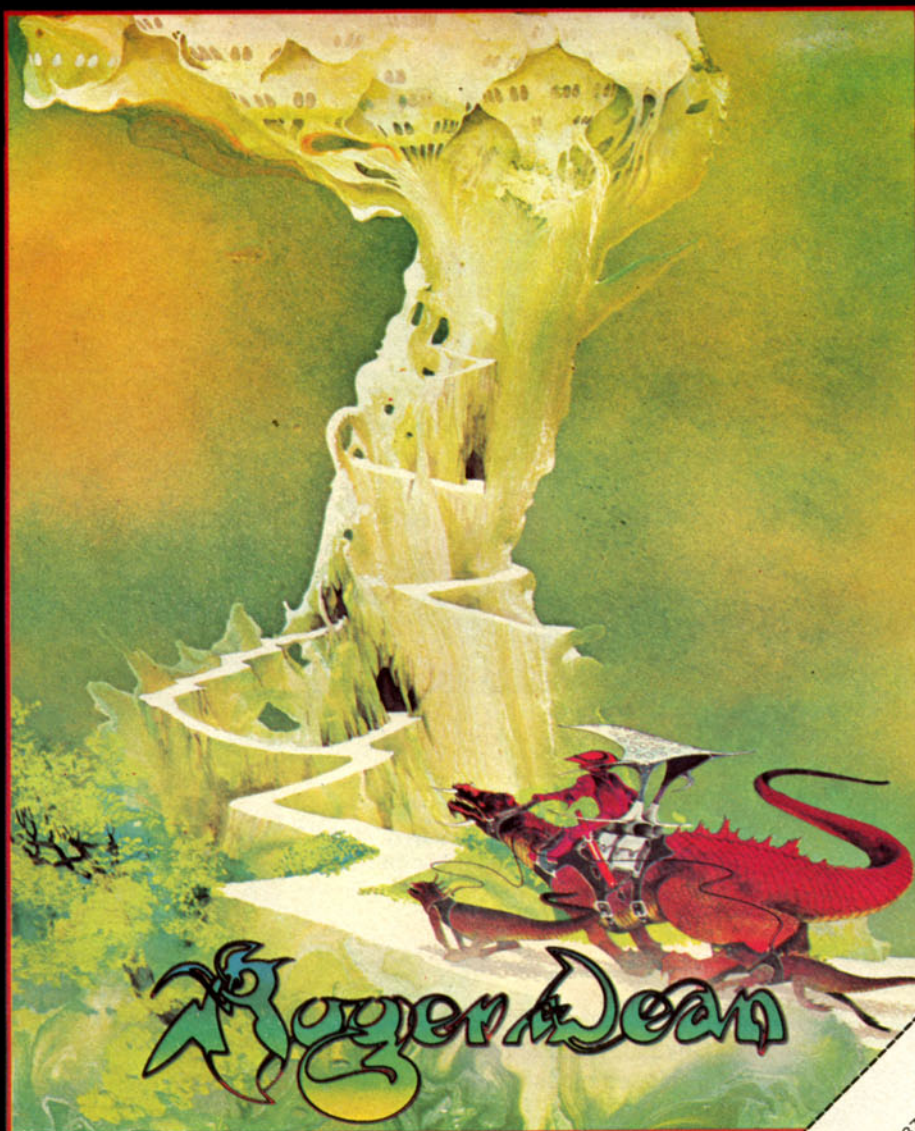
IT'S TOO EASY TO CHECK-MATE ME UNDER THESE CONDITIONS. THAT'S THE LAST TIME I PLAY ENCEPALITO WITH YOU, DOCTOR! YOU CHEAT. INVOCATION WAS EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN!



ONE DAY, I SHALL BE MASTER OF THE WORLD!

Dean

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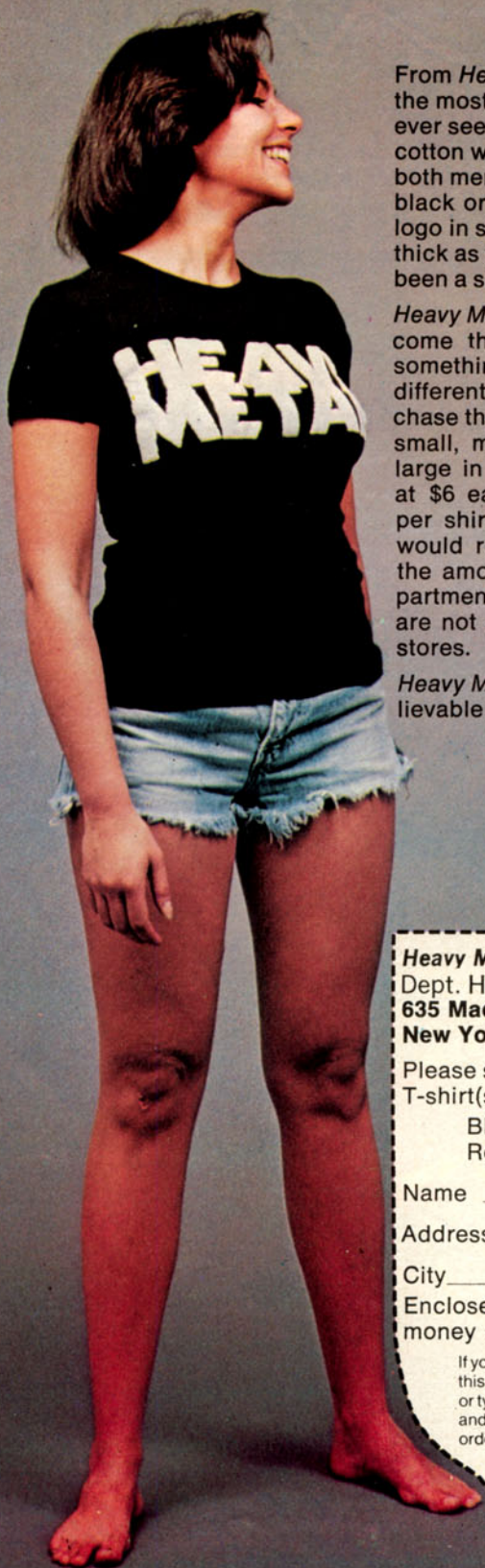
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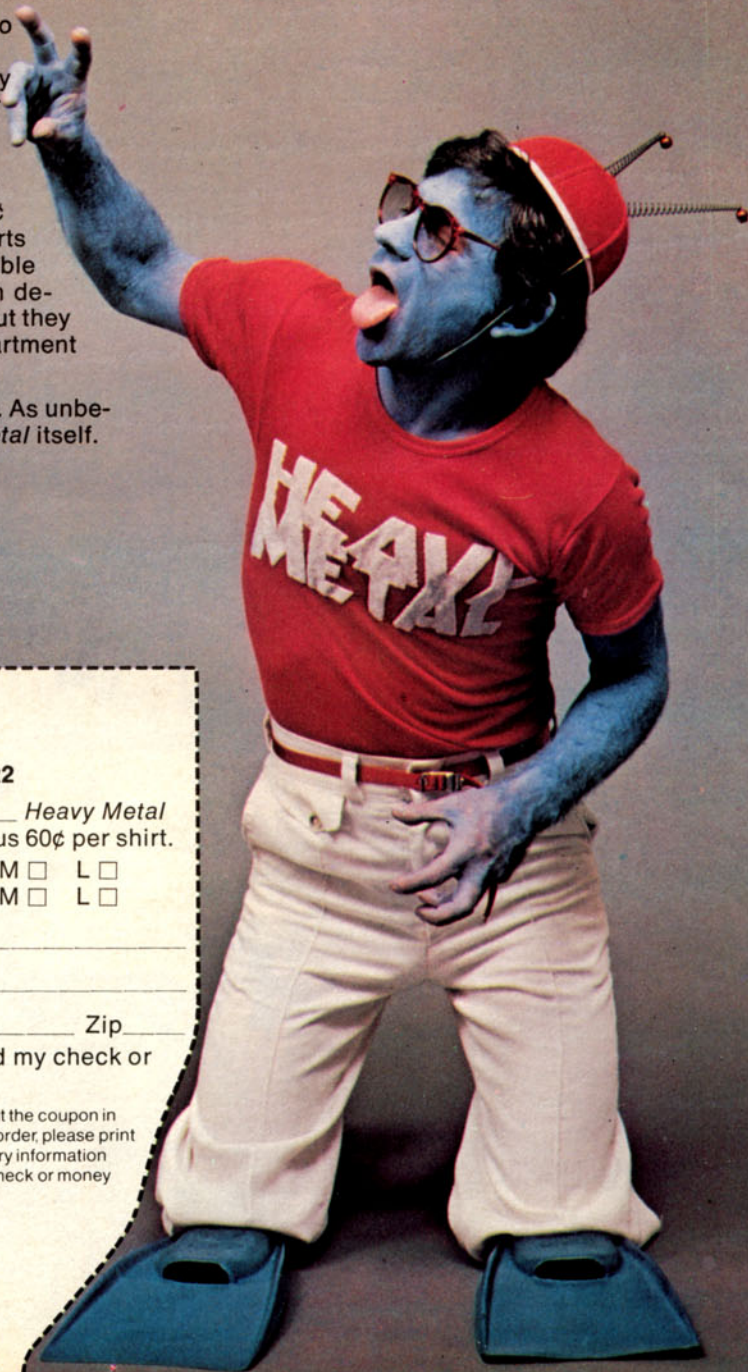
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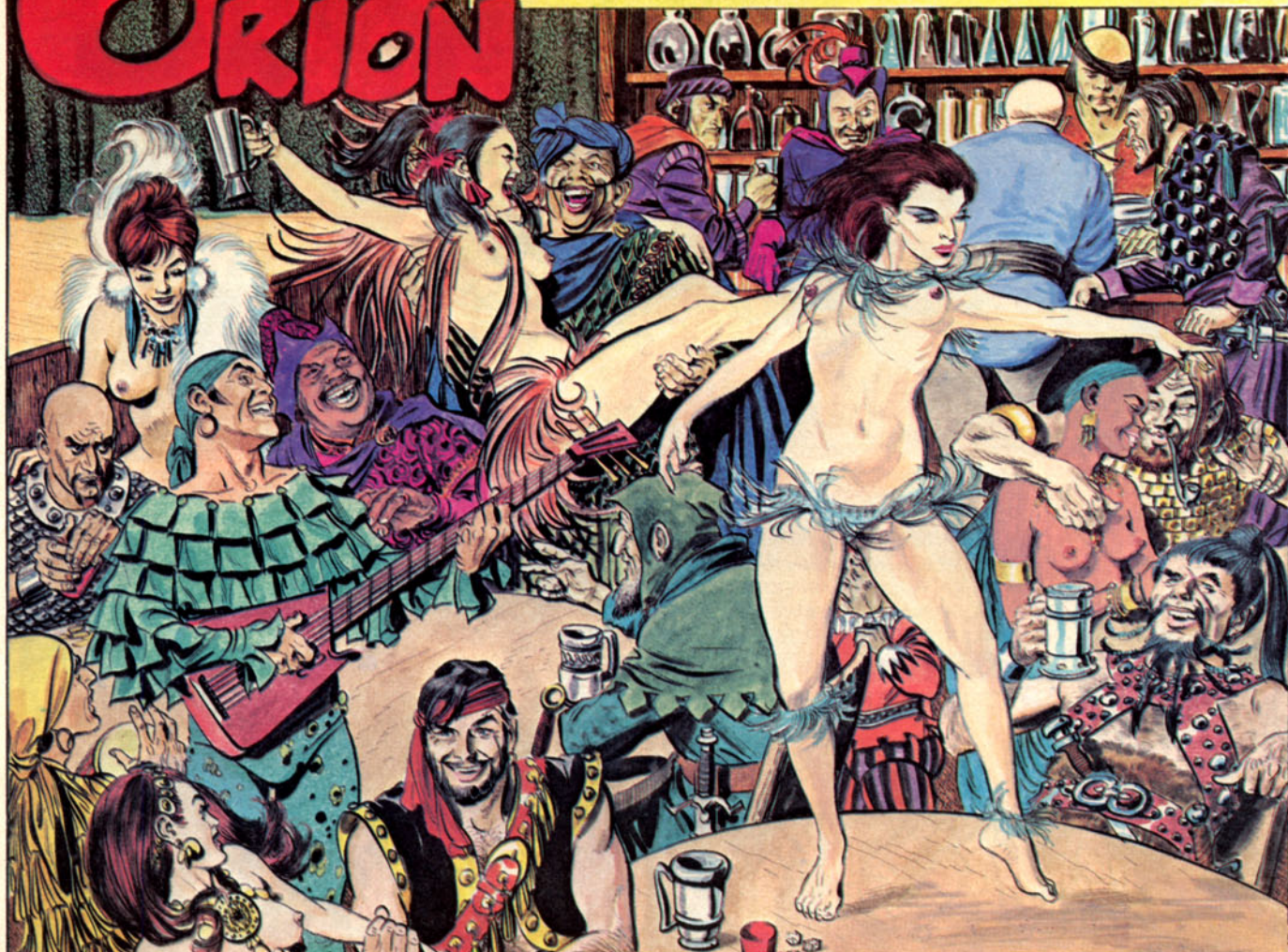
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ORION

ORION'S WORLD IS NOT OUR WORLD BUT ONE OF WHICH THE STUFF OF FANTASIES AND LEGENDS ARE MADE. HIS ENEMIES AND CONFLICTS ARE WROUGHT OF DEMONS AND SORCERIES, MORE PALPABLE HERE THAN COMPETITORS OR TENSION AND FRUSTRATION. HERE POWERFUL DARK GODS COMMAND MEN'S OBEISANCE AND MASK THEIR BELIEFS. THE SECRETS OF SCIENCE ARE PRIVY TO BUT A FEW..... AND EVERYONE KNOWS THEY ARE QUITE MAD.



ORION'S NEVER-ENDING QUEST FOR THE SEVEN PORTALS TO THE SEVEN BRIDGES TO THE SEVEN STARS TO WHICH HIS FABULOUS SWORD, THORBOLT IS THE KEY BRINGS HIM TO ISHANDRIA AND THE RED HORSE INN....(A MYTHICAL BEAST TO ISHANDRIANS.)

THE STORIES OF YOUR TRAVELS ARE ALL LIES OF COURSE, ORION. BUT MARVELOUS LIES, NONETHELESS. WHERE WILL YOU GO FROM HERE BREAKING MY POOR HEART?

YOUR LIES ARE PRETIER YET THAN MINE, ASRA. THOUGH I'D MUCH LIKE TO BELIEVE YOU'D BE JUST A LITTLE SAD TO SEE ME GO, WHEN I LEAVE FOR BALIMODRA TONIGHT.





THE MAID'S ATTITUDE MUST HAVE GIVEN YOU THE CLUE... AH NO, I SEE YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND. BALIMODRA IS A DREAD LAND HARBORING NAMELESS TERRORS, RULED OVER BY MASTERS OF DARK ARTS AND VISITED ONLY BY OTHERS OF THAT SINISTER PERSUASION. YOUR FRIEND MISTOOK YOU FOR A WARLOCK!

OH, I DO NOT SO MALIGN YOU, GOOD SIR. AS TO YOUR BUSINESS THERE I DO NOT INQUIRE, I MERELY PETITION YOU FOR PROTECTION AS FAR AS MY DESTINATION, FOR WHICH OF COURSE I WILL PAY HANDSOMELY,

A CUSTOM MORE VENERABLE EVEN THAN YOURSELF DOES NOT PERMIT REFUSAL OF SUCH A PETITION AMONG TRAVELERS, OLD ONE. MEET ME WITHIN THE HOUR AT THE STABLE BEHIND THE INN AND WE RIDE FOR BALIMODRA.



SOMETIME LATER, AS ORION HEADS FOR THE STABLES AND HIS APPOINTMENT WITH LAMONTHOS....

ORION BEWARE!
IT'S A TRAP!!



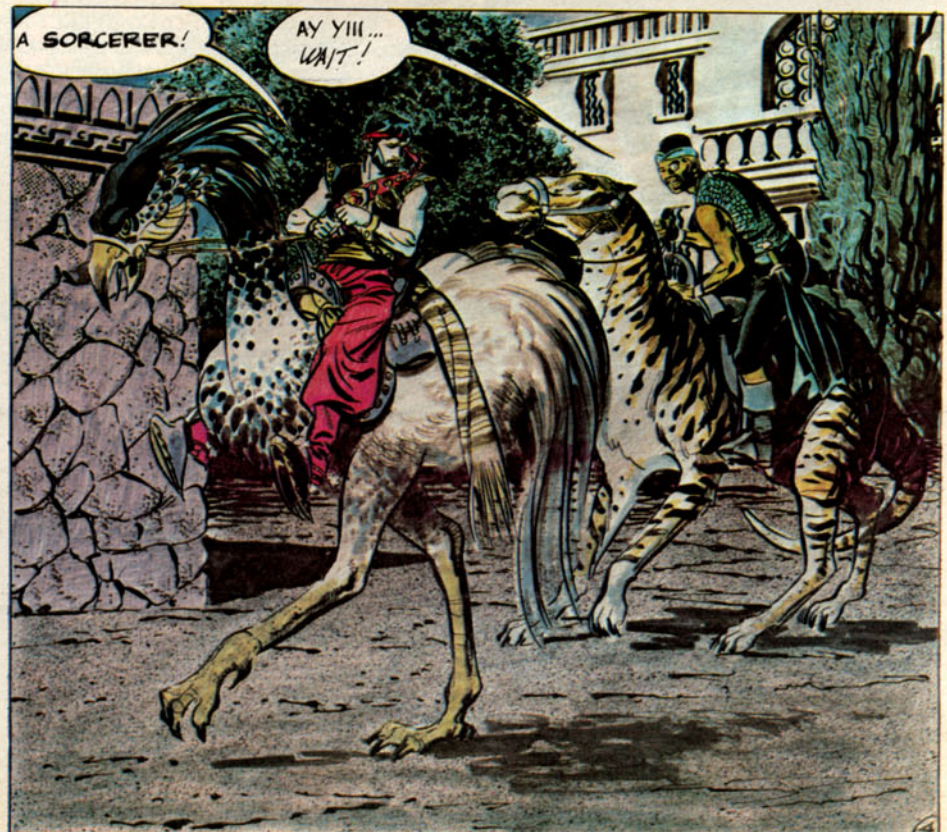
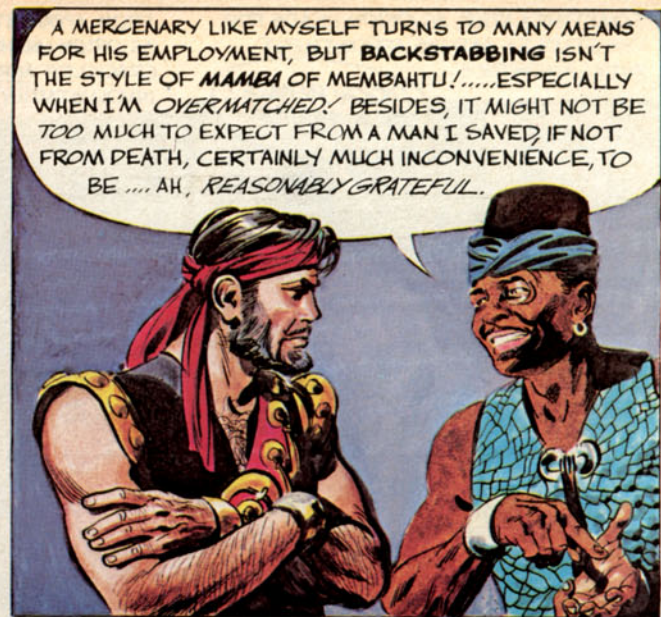
FROM APPARENTLY INNOCENT SHADOWS MENACING FORMS SUDDENLY MATERIALIZE. AS ORION UNSHEATHES THORBOLT A BROODING RUMBLE AS OF DISTANT THUNDER CRACKLES ACROSS THE ELECTRIC TENSION, CAUSING THE ATTACKERS TO PAUSE INVOLUNTARILY, SOMEHOW LESS CONFIDENT NOW OF THEIR PREY.

THEN THE FLICKERING SHIMMERING STAB OF SUMMER LIGHTNING ENGAGES STEEL AND THE BATTLE IS JOINED.



COLD STEEL PROVES TO BE NO MATCH FOR THE FLAMING BLADE OF ORION AND THE REMAINING ASSAILANTS, UNMANNED BY THEIR FRIGHT, BOLT IN ABJECT TERROR.





WELL, NOW THAT YOU'VE COLLECTED ONCE TO TAKE MY LIFE AND ONCE TO SAVE IT, YOU OUGHT TO BE A TWICE-HAPPY MAN.

I'LL BE A **THRICE**-HAPPY ONE TO PUT SOME **MILES** BETWEEN ME AND THAT SORCERER. THEY HAVE UNPLEASANTLY IMAGINATIVE WAYS OF REPAYING A BAD TURN!



WELL, GOOD LUCK AND—

HOLD!



AH, MY DEAR ORION! CAN IT BE THAT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN OUR AGREEMENT, SIR?

YOU'VE VOIDED ANY CONTRACT BETWEEN US, OLD ONE. STAND ASIDE!



AS LAMONTHOS GESTURES OMINOUSLY, ORION CUES HIS MOUNT AND THE BEAST LEAPS, CLAWS FLAILING.....



AH ME, IT APPEARS THIS SCURRILOUS RASCAL HAS POISONED YOUR MIND AGAINST ME. DEPENDABLE KNAVES ARE SO HARD TO GET THESE DAYS. I'LL HAVE TO TAKE MATTERS INTO MY **OWN** HANDS.



THE RENDING TALONS SHRED HARMLESS PLUMES OF SMOKE AS LAMONTHOS MAKES A HASTY AND UNCONVENTIONAL EXIT.....



ORION AND MAMBA PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM — SELVES AND THE SCENE OF THEIR ENCOUNTER WITH THE MAGICIAN BUT.....

WE HAVEN'T SEEN THE LAST OF HIM, I FEAR.

OOOOWEE! LOOK WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I TRY TO BE A GOOD SAMARITAN. NOW I CAN'T GO BACK AND IT'S SUICIDE TO GO FORWARD.



I'M SURPRISED YOU HAVEN'T DEVISED A WAY TO COLLECT YOUR OWN REWARD

THE SOLDIERS WON'T FOLLOW ME TO BALIMODRA BUT LAMONTHOS IS SURE TO HOUND US BOTH. BETTER THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE BLACK RANGES BEFORE US THAN THE SURETY OF THE COMBINED FURIES OF THE CUCKOLDED COMMANDER AND HIS SCORNFUL WIFE, I THINK. WHAT SAY YOU ORION, TO A CONTINUANCE OF OUR CHANCE ALLIANCE?

WHY?

I DESERTED FROM THE ARMY POST AT BASARAK. FOOD WAS BAD AND PAY WAS WORSE. THE COMMANDER'S WIFE HATED TO SEE ME GO. I SUSPECT THE COMMANDER SUFFERED MIXED EMOTIONS. THEY'LL HAVE PLANKETED THE AREA WITH SEARCHERS AND REWARD OFFERS. THE ONLY WAY IN OR OUT OF ISHANDRIA FROM HERE IS THE ROAD LEADING TO BALIMODRA AND BASARAK GUARDS THE PASS.



AND SO IT WAS THAT ORION THE WANDERER AND MAMBA THE MERCENARY MET AND BEGAN THEIR STRANGE ADVENTURES ON THAT FATEFUL NIGHT AT THE RIM OF BALIMODRA BLEAK, BROODING BALIMODRA WHERE MAMBA AND ORION FACE — AH, BUT THEN THAT IS YET **ANOTHER** TALE.....

...WHICH BEGINS HERE,
IN THE SHADOWED
VALLEY OF XANSRA...



AHHHH, SEE, MY
PRETTIES.... I PROMISED
YOU DIVERSION, DID I
NOT?



THREE FOOLS
IN CONFLICT OVER THE
KEY TO THE UNIVERSE. A
BRIGAND, A ROGUE AND A
SORCERER WHOSE ARTS
PERHAPS RIVAL MY OWN.
THE POOL DOES NOT SHOW
THE OUTCOME... ONLY THAT
IT WILL BE RESOLVED HERE,
IN THIS VALLEY OF ETERNAL
NIGHT, AND THAT.....



.....MANY WILL DIE! I THINK THAT I SHALL
LOOK FORWARD TO THE COMING OF.....

...ORION!



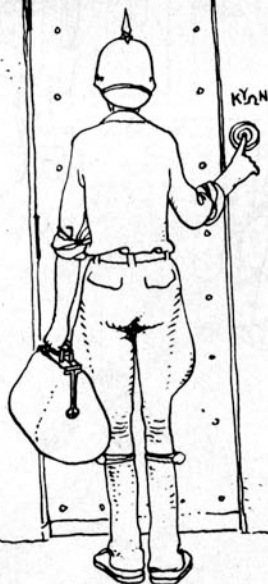
THE AIRTIGHT GARAGE

OF JERRY CORNELIUS • A NEW EPISODE

BY
MOEBIUS

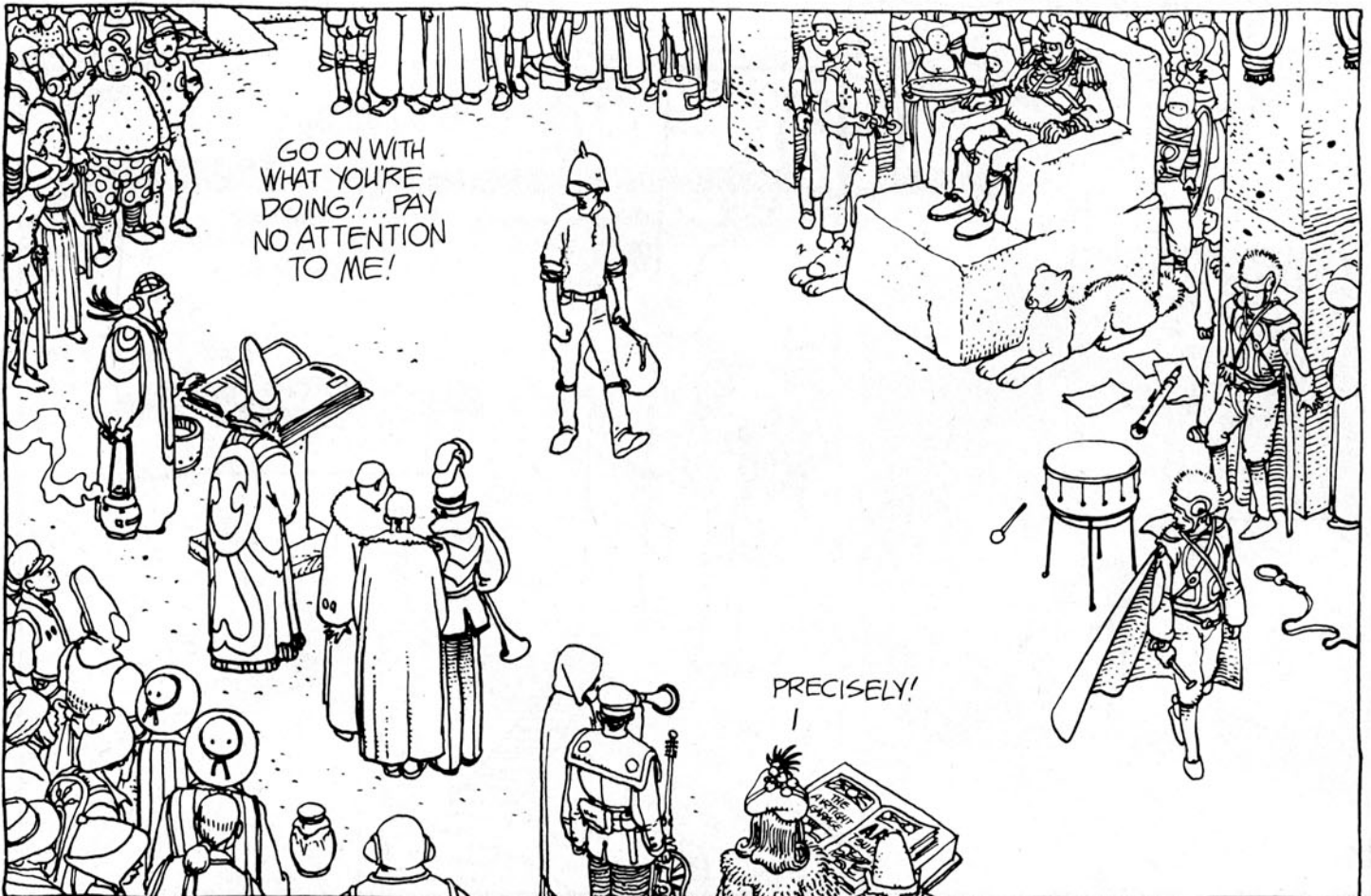
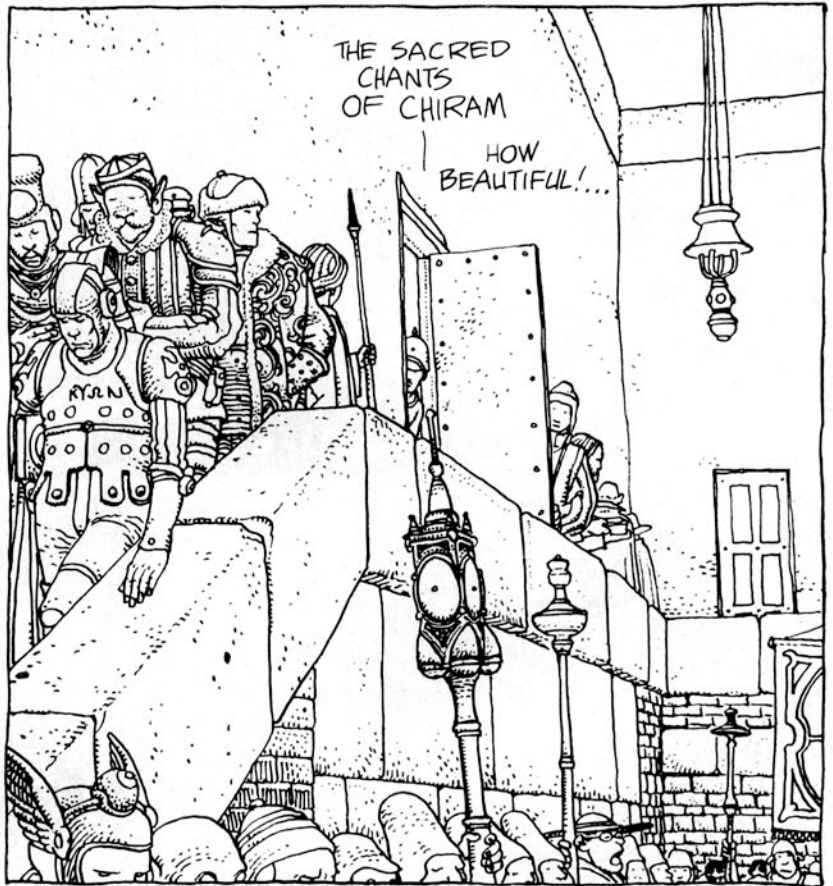
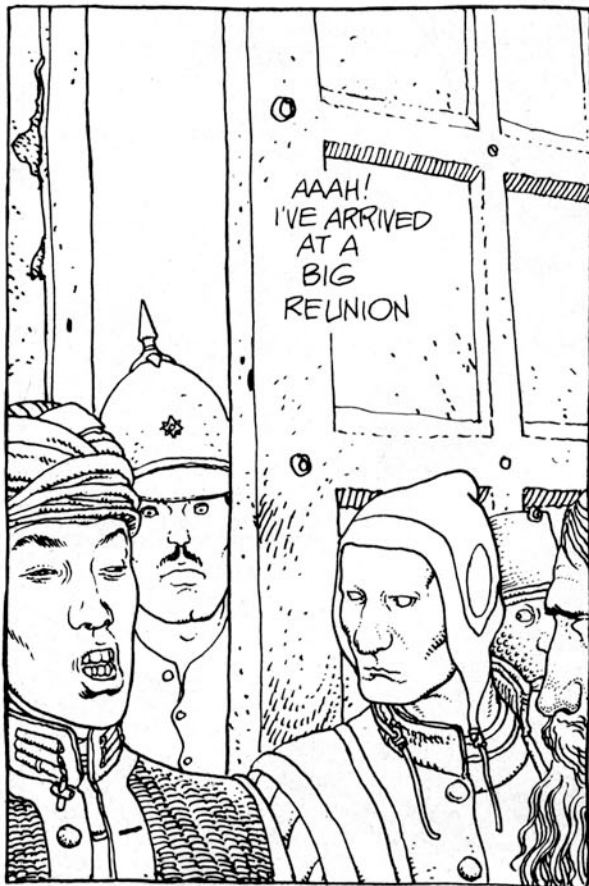
SUMMARY
OF PREVIOUS
EPISODES:

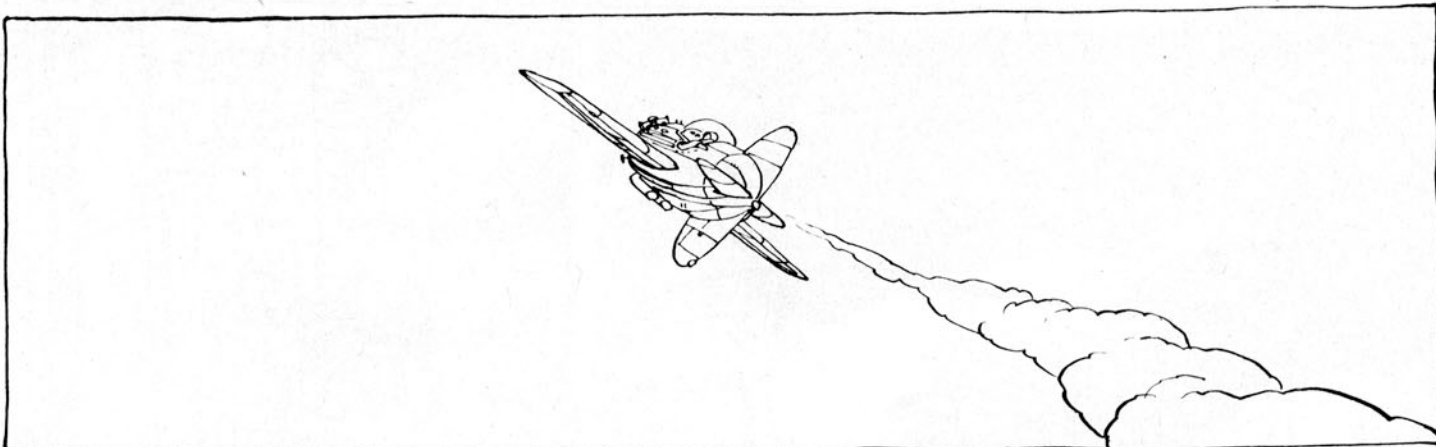
MAJOR
GRUBERT HAS
DECIDED
TO CHANGE
LEVELS

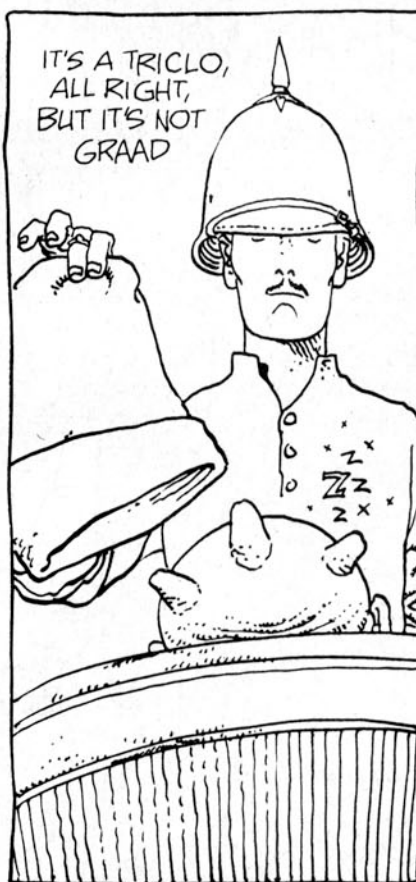
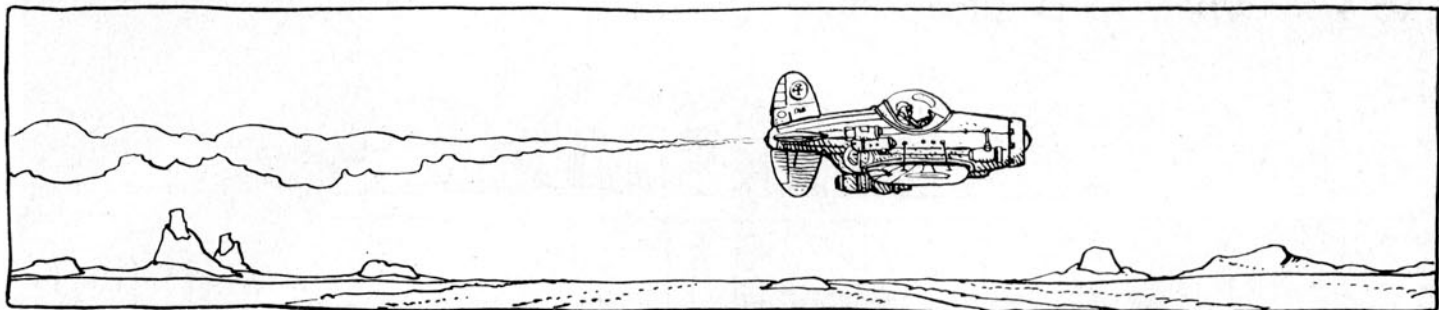
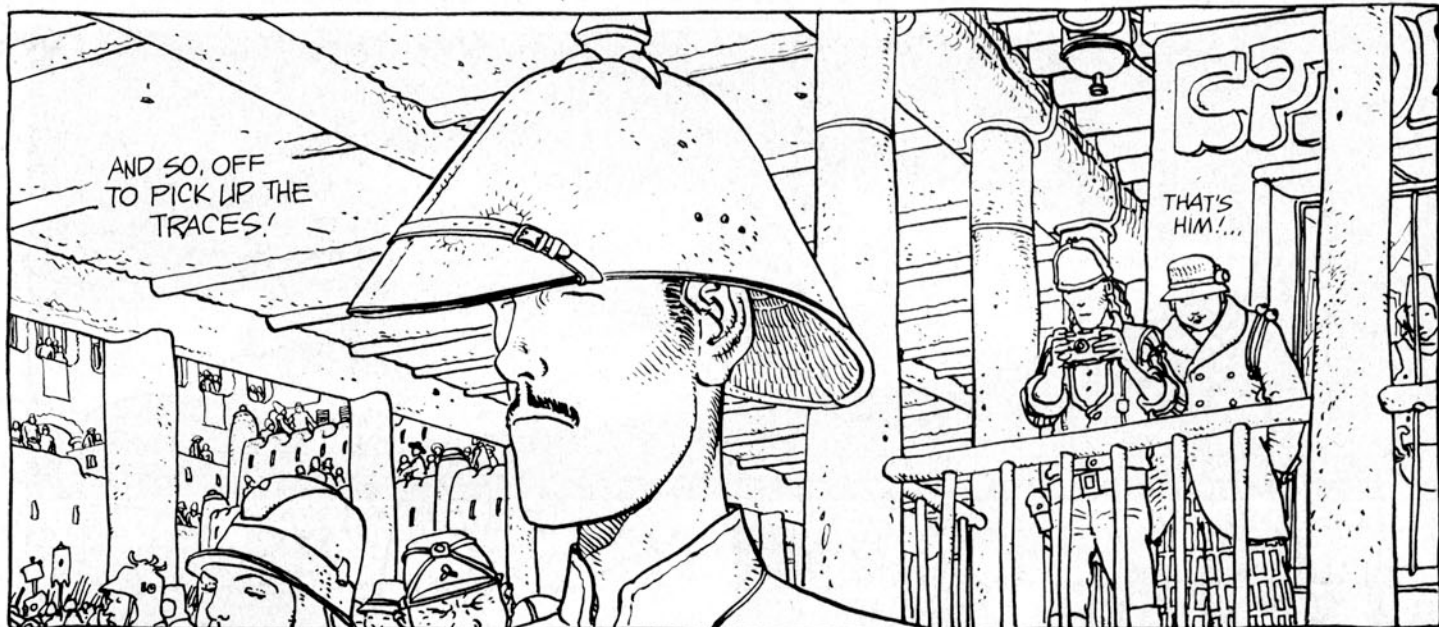


SUMMARY
OF UPCOMING
EPISODES:

A FEW
GAGS...THE
MYSTERY WILL
DEEPEN...





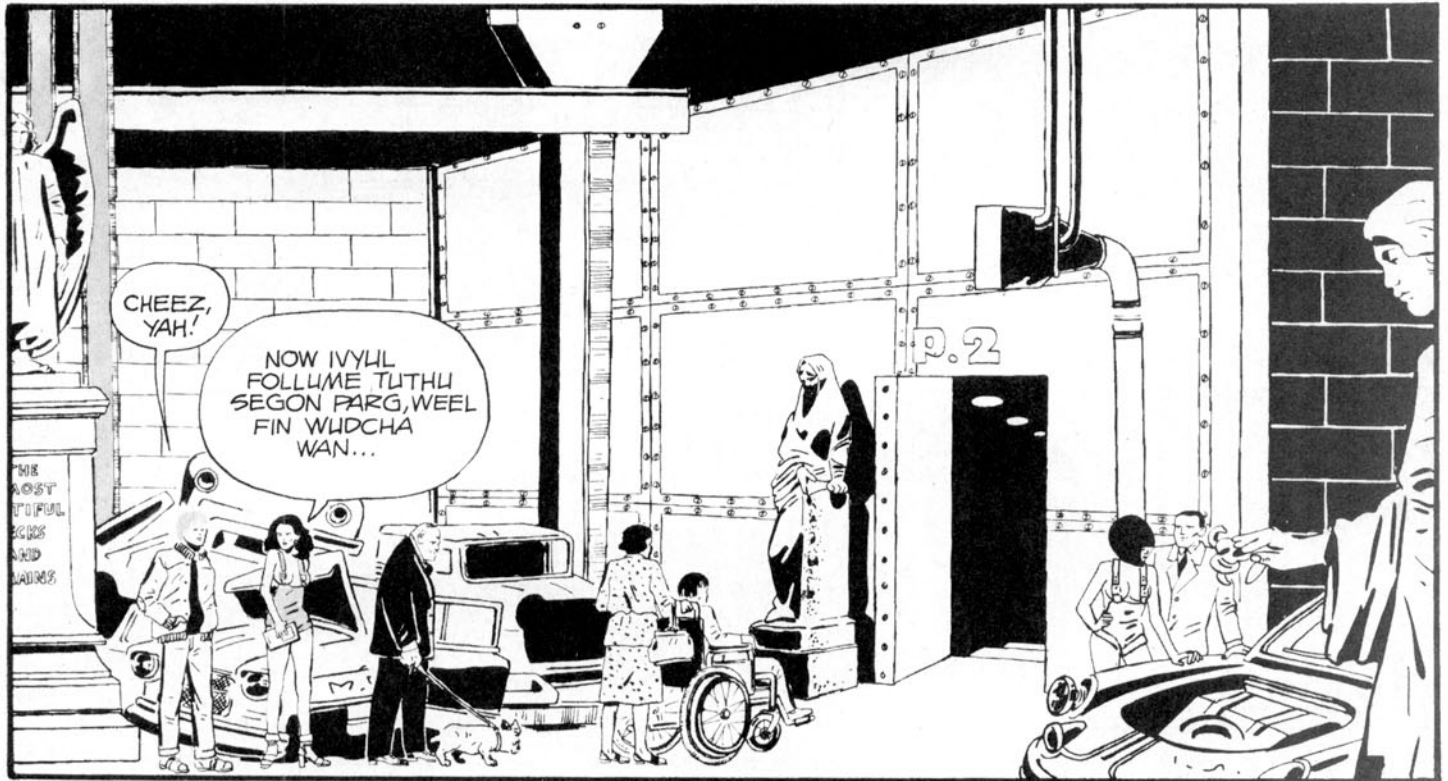


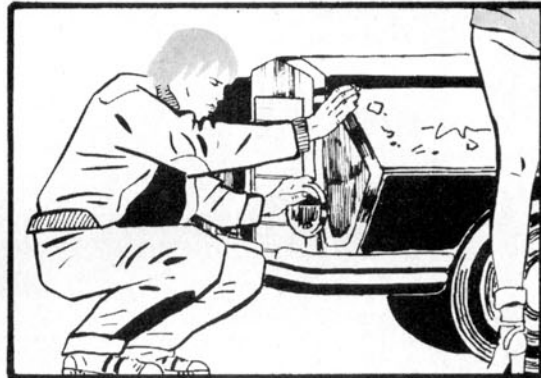
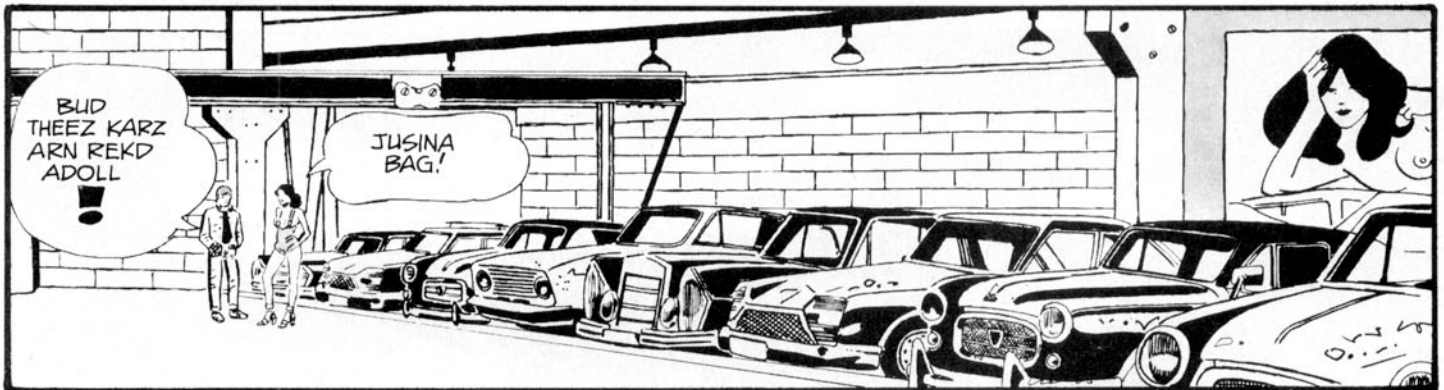
TO BE CONTINUED...

1996



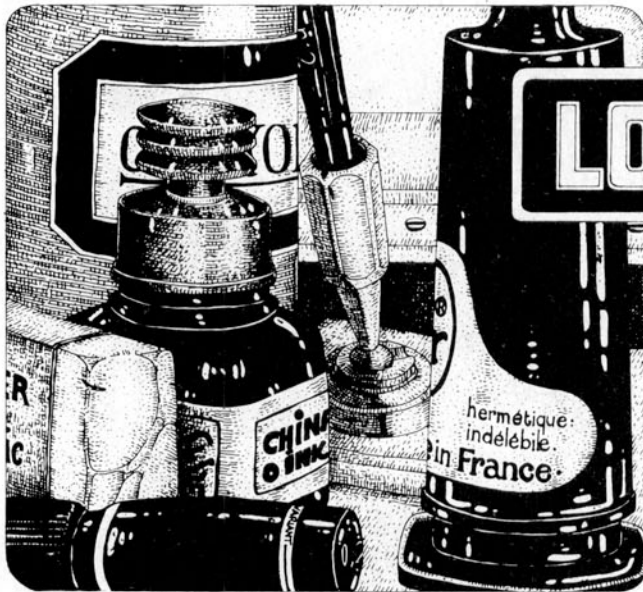








TO BE CONTINUED...



YES, SIR, MR. EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, SIR, I KNOW I'M A LITTLE LATE, BUT...WAIT! WHAT'S THAT? SMELLS LIKE BURNING METAL...

NO, I'M NOT TRYING TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT...



WHAT A STRANGE AND CURIOUS UNIVERSE. 'THE VEGETATION'S QUITE BIZARRE.' UNUSUAL AND QUITE UNREALISTIC!



BUT...BUT...JUST A SECOND... WHAT'S GOING ON?

NOW, LISTEN, IF THOSE PAGES AREN'T ON MY DESK TOMORROW, YOUR ASS IS GRASS. UNDER- STAND, DUMMYY?



GOOD GRIEF! A MONSTER!



OW! MY HAND! MY HAND!

WHAT ABOUT YOUR HAND?

THERE'S A LITTLE MARTIAN HERE, SHOOTING AT ME! MY HANDS ALL BLOODY! AAIIIEE!



WHAT LITTLE MARTIAN? LISTEN, JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE WORKING FOR A SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, THAT'S NO REASON TO EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE...

NO, I'M TELLING YOU, THERE'S A LITTLE SPACEMAN ON MY DRAWING BOARD, AND...

THAT'S A PRETTY PATHETIC EXCUSE FOR BEING LATE WITH THOSE BOARDS. NOW, I'M TELLING YOU, I WANT TO SEE THEM TOMORROW, OR ELSE. A MARTIAN! SURE!



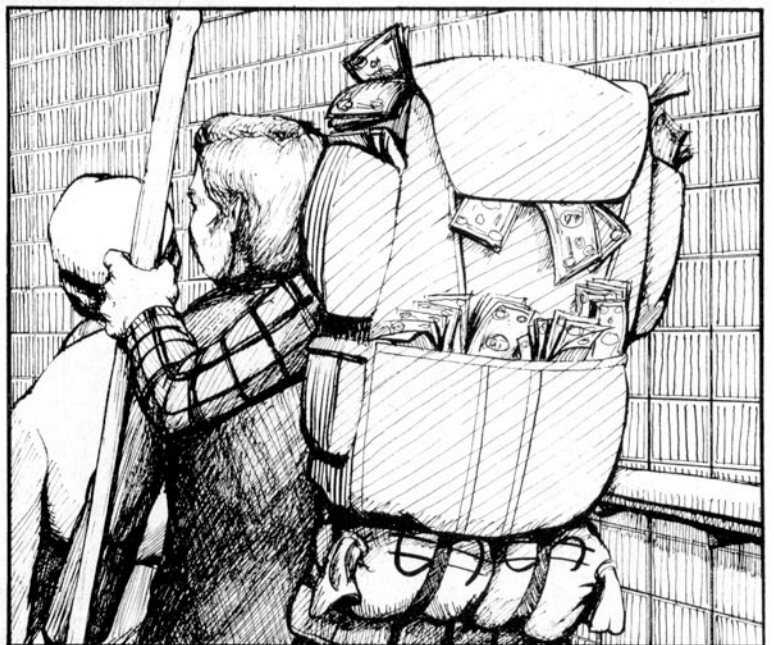
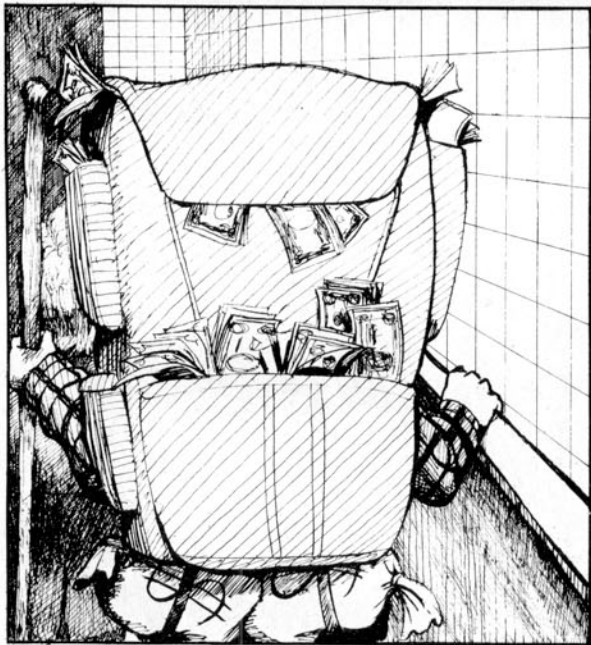
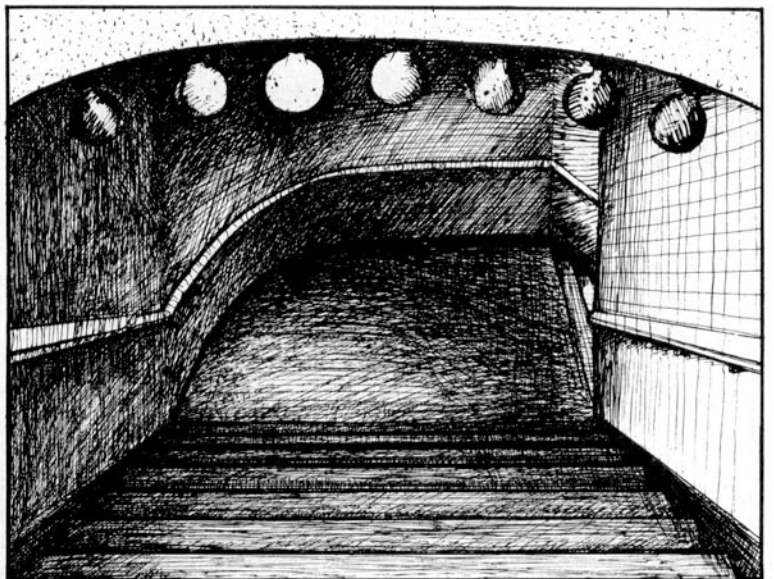
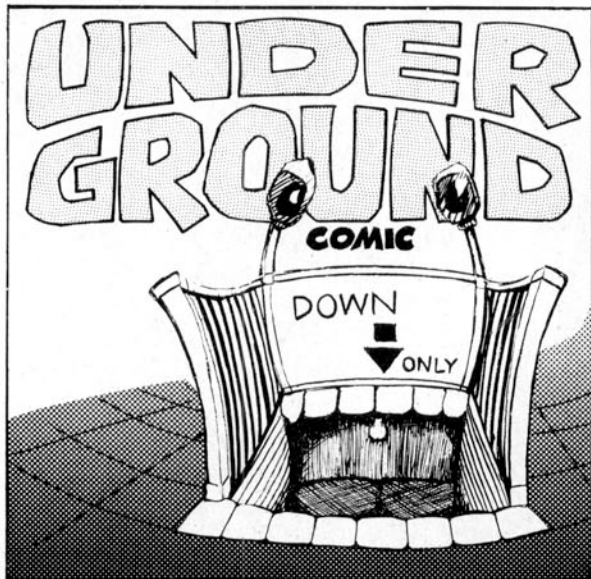
BUT I...CLICK! BZZZZZZZZZZ

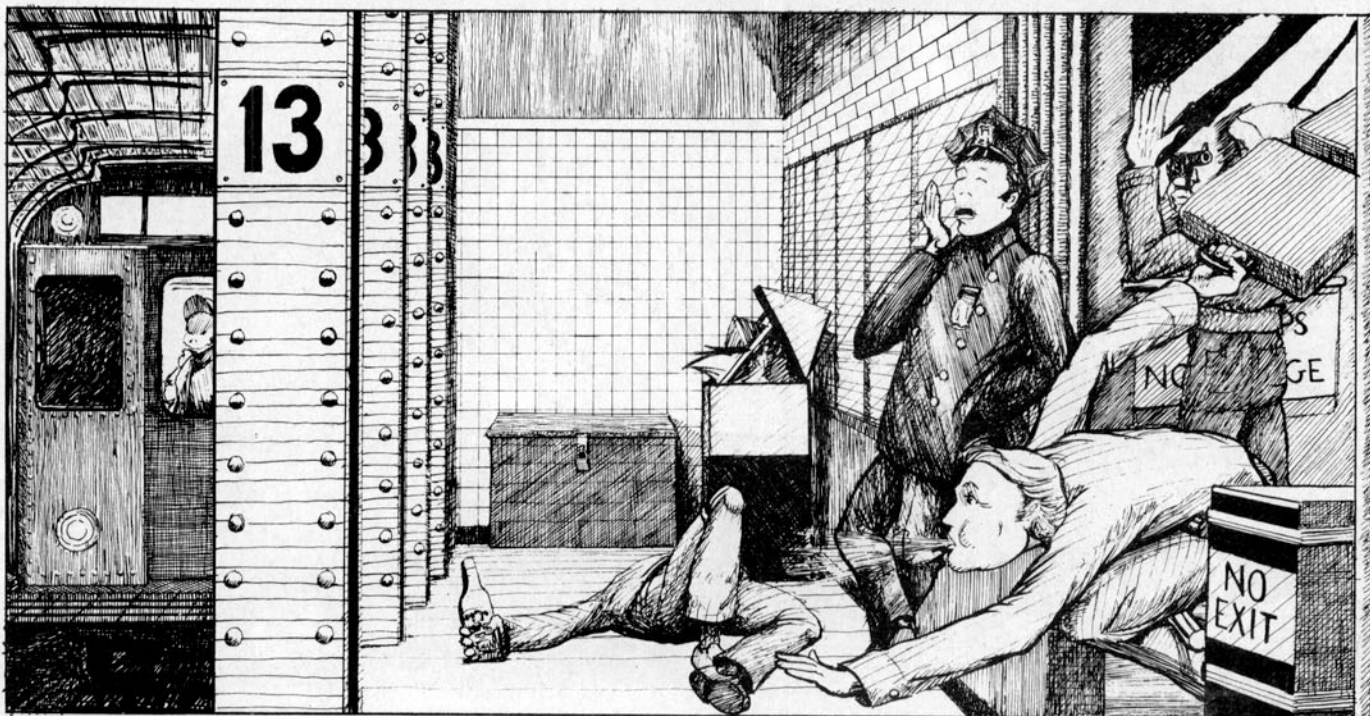
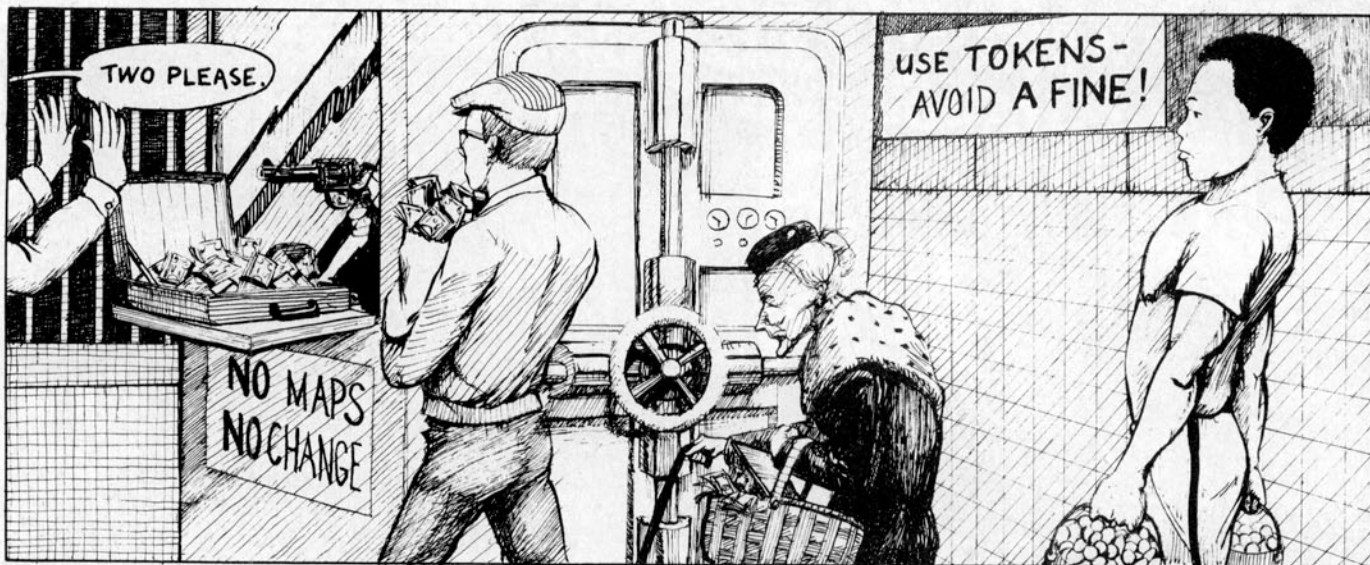


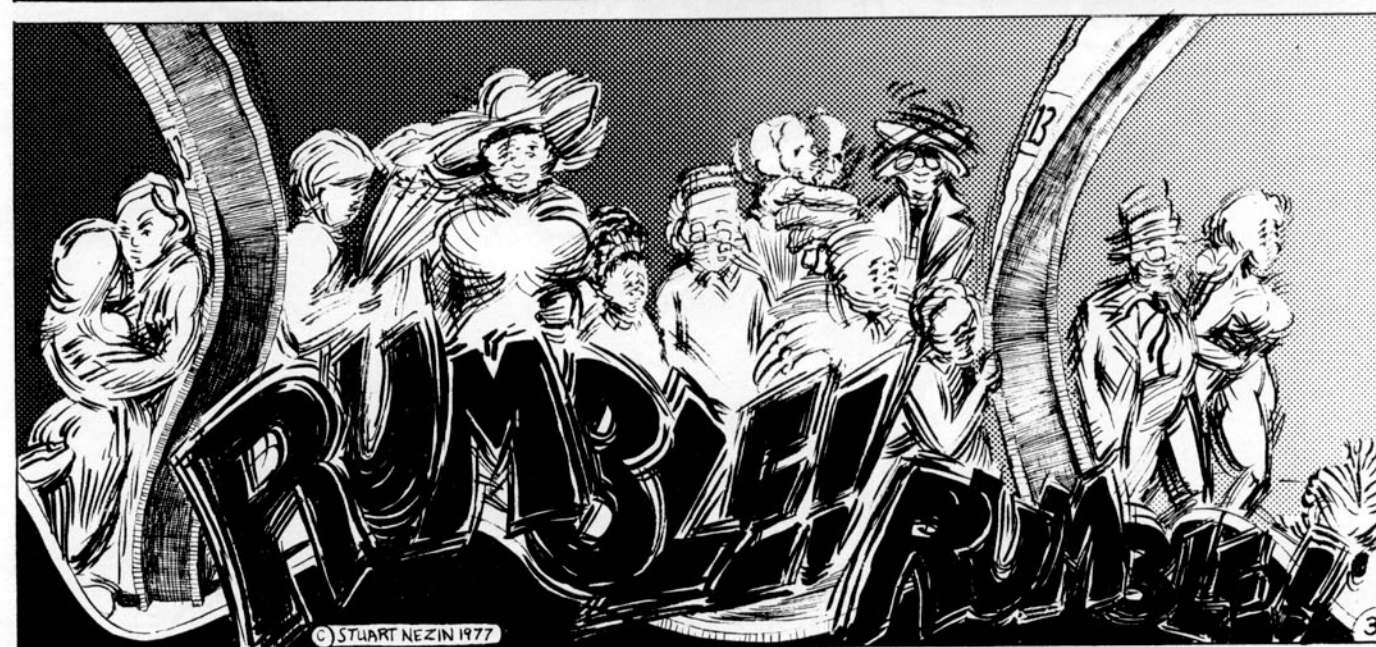
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! THIS PLACE IS NUTS!

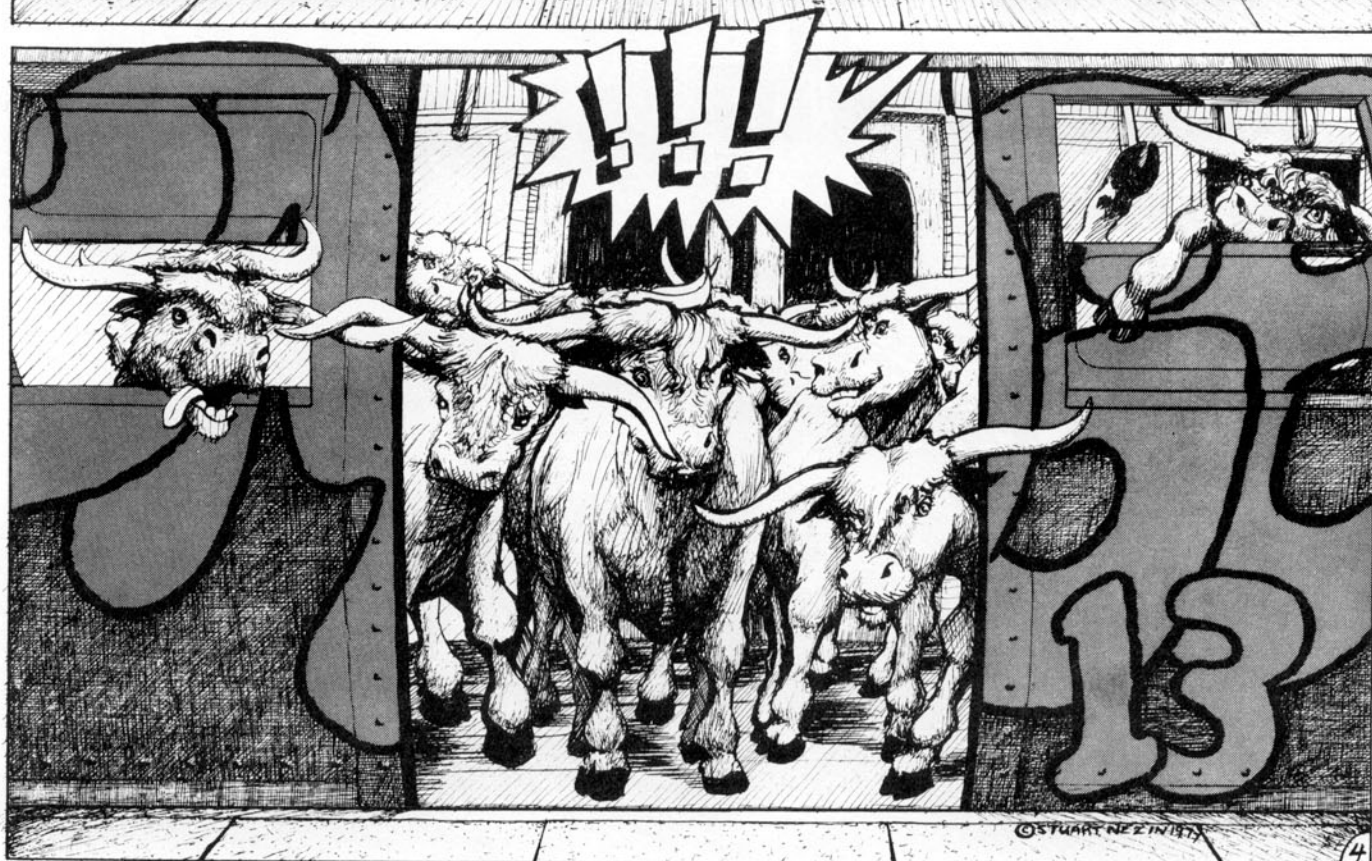
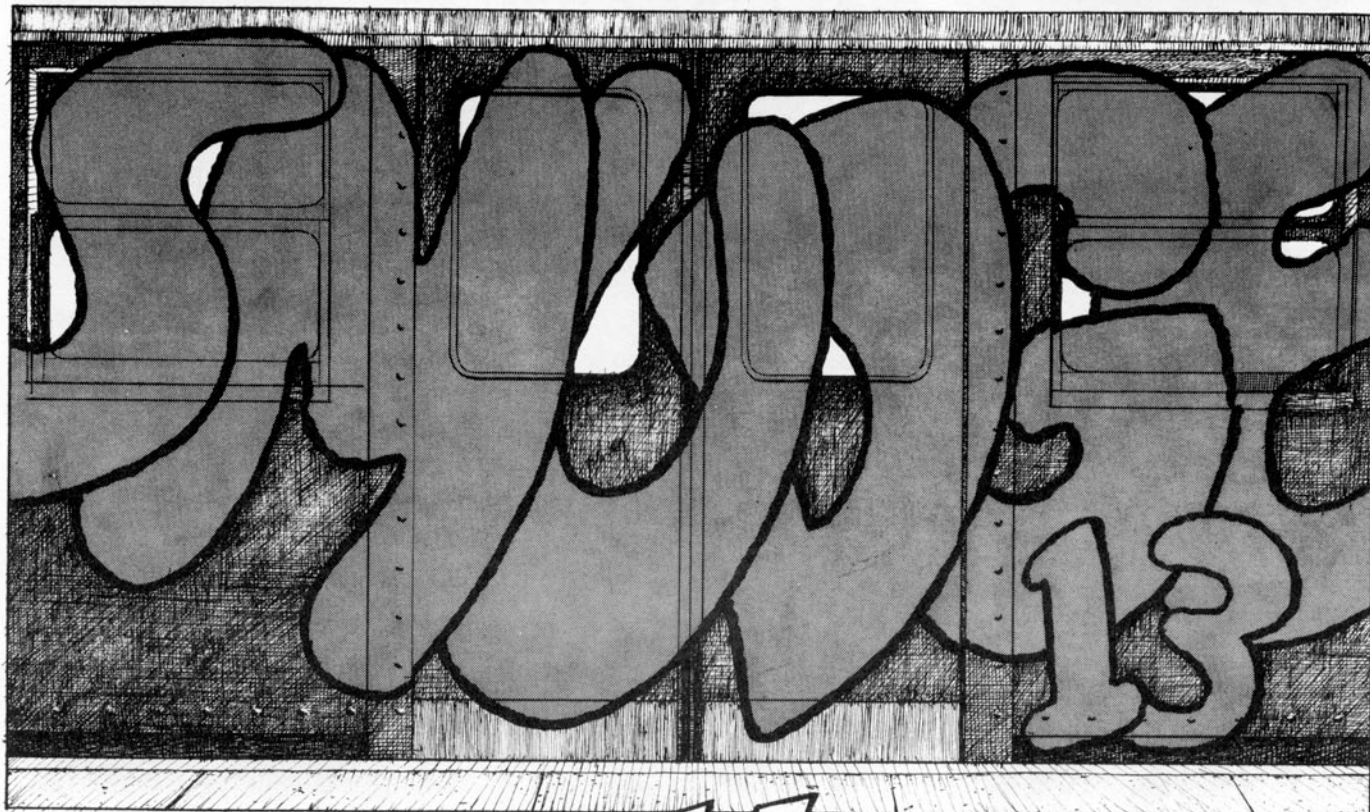
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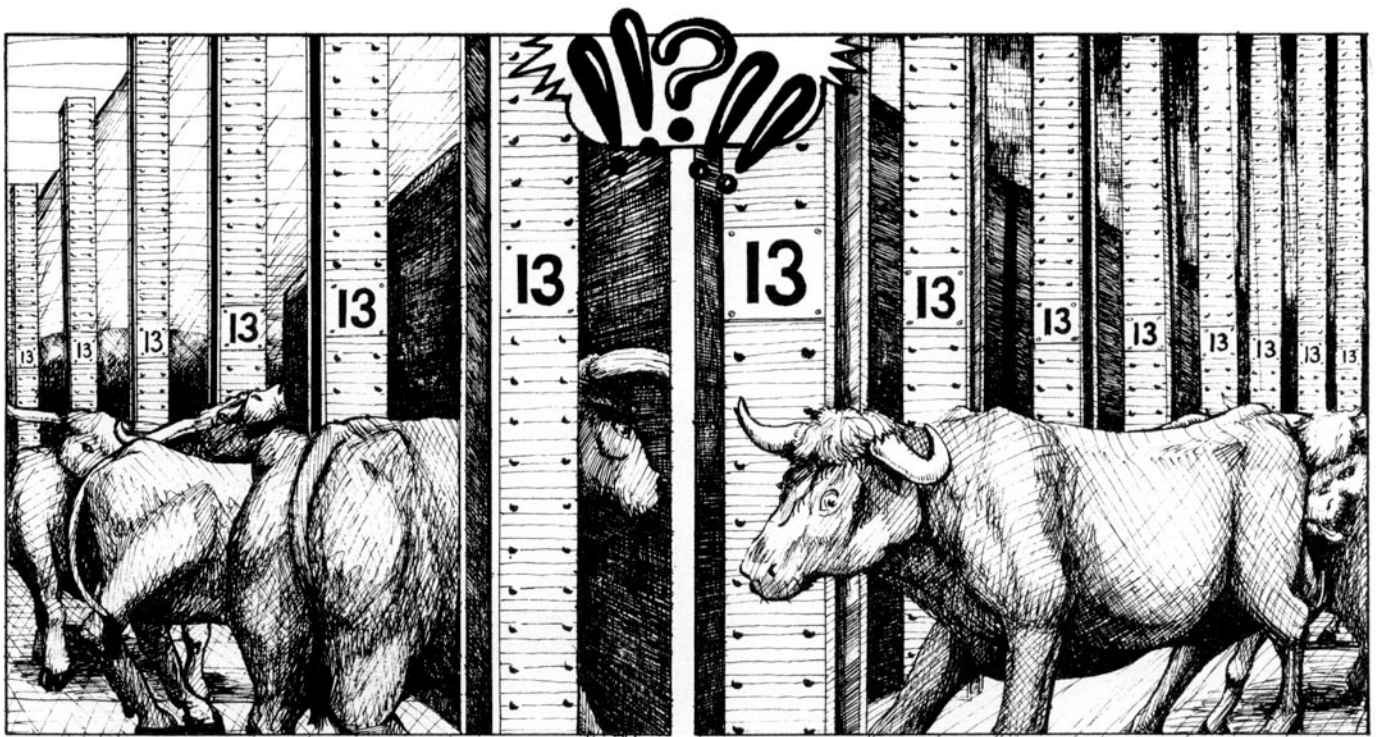
STORY AND ART - JEAN LOUIS TRIP

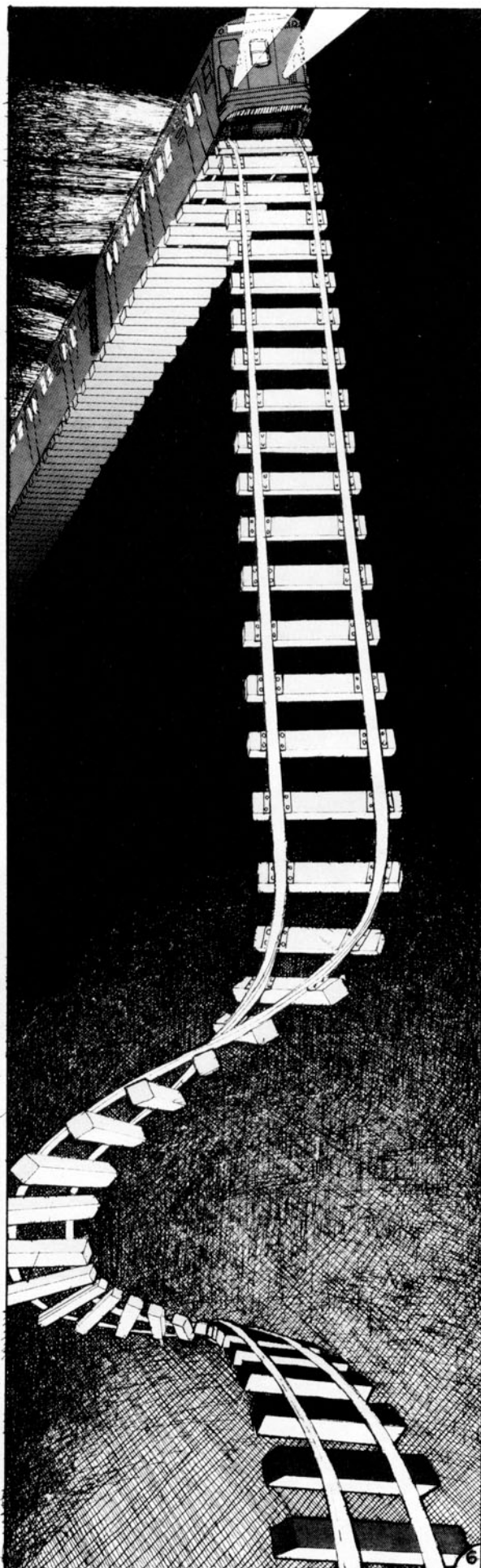


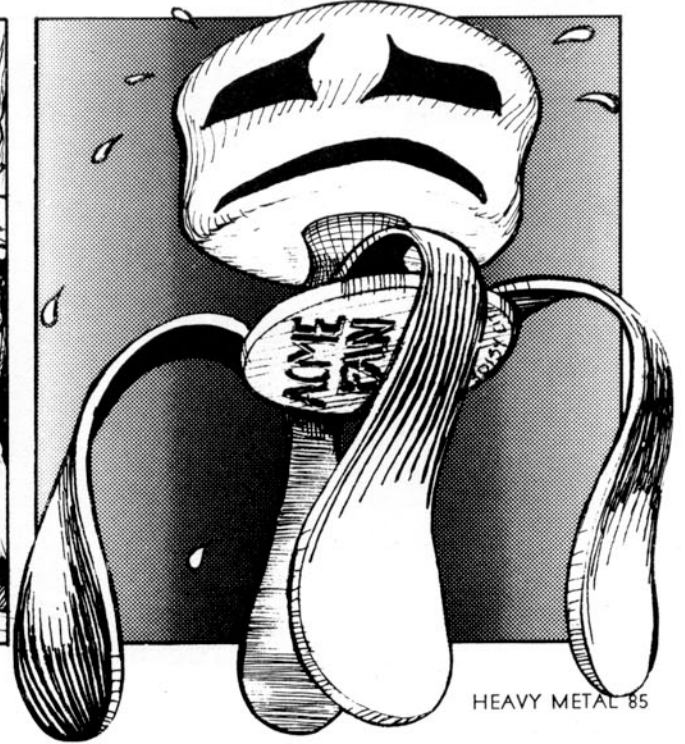


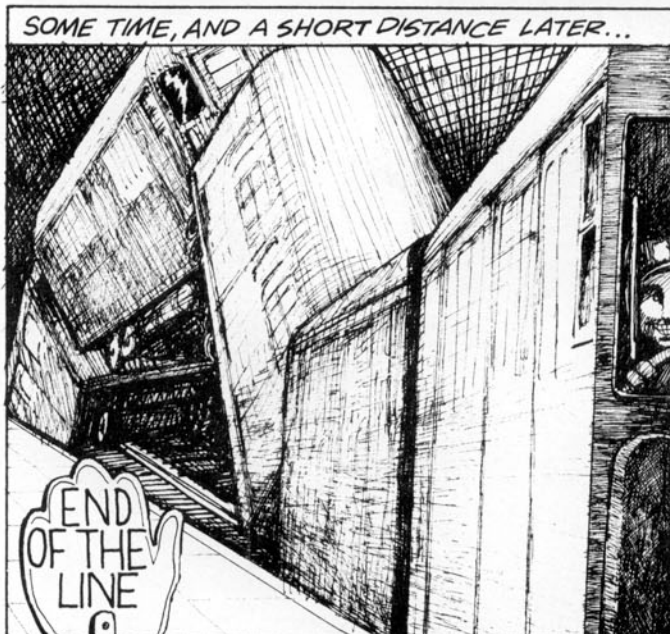
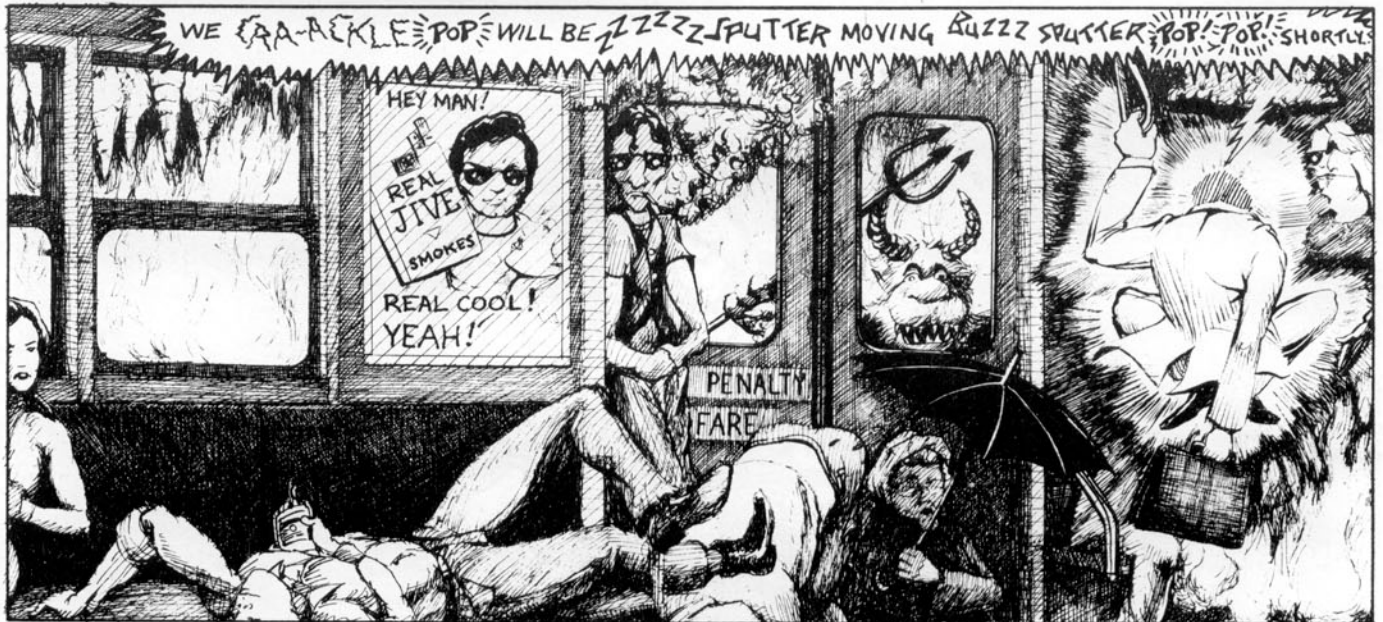
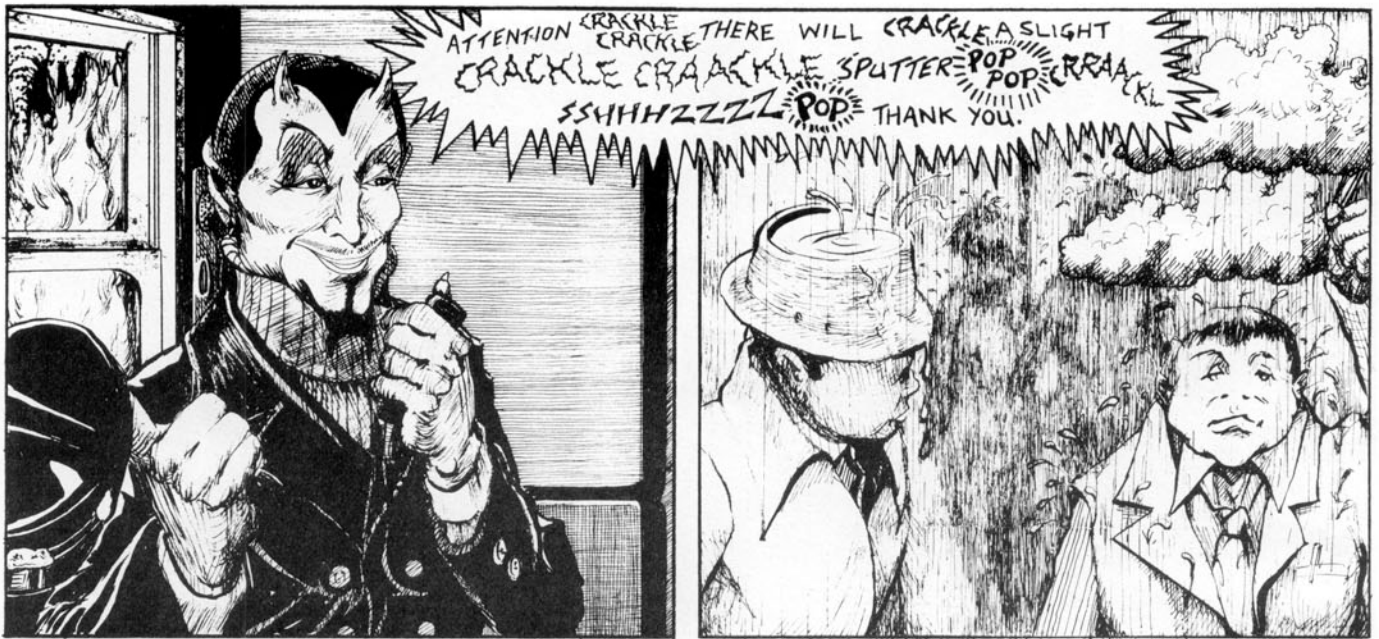


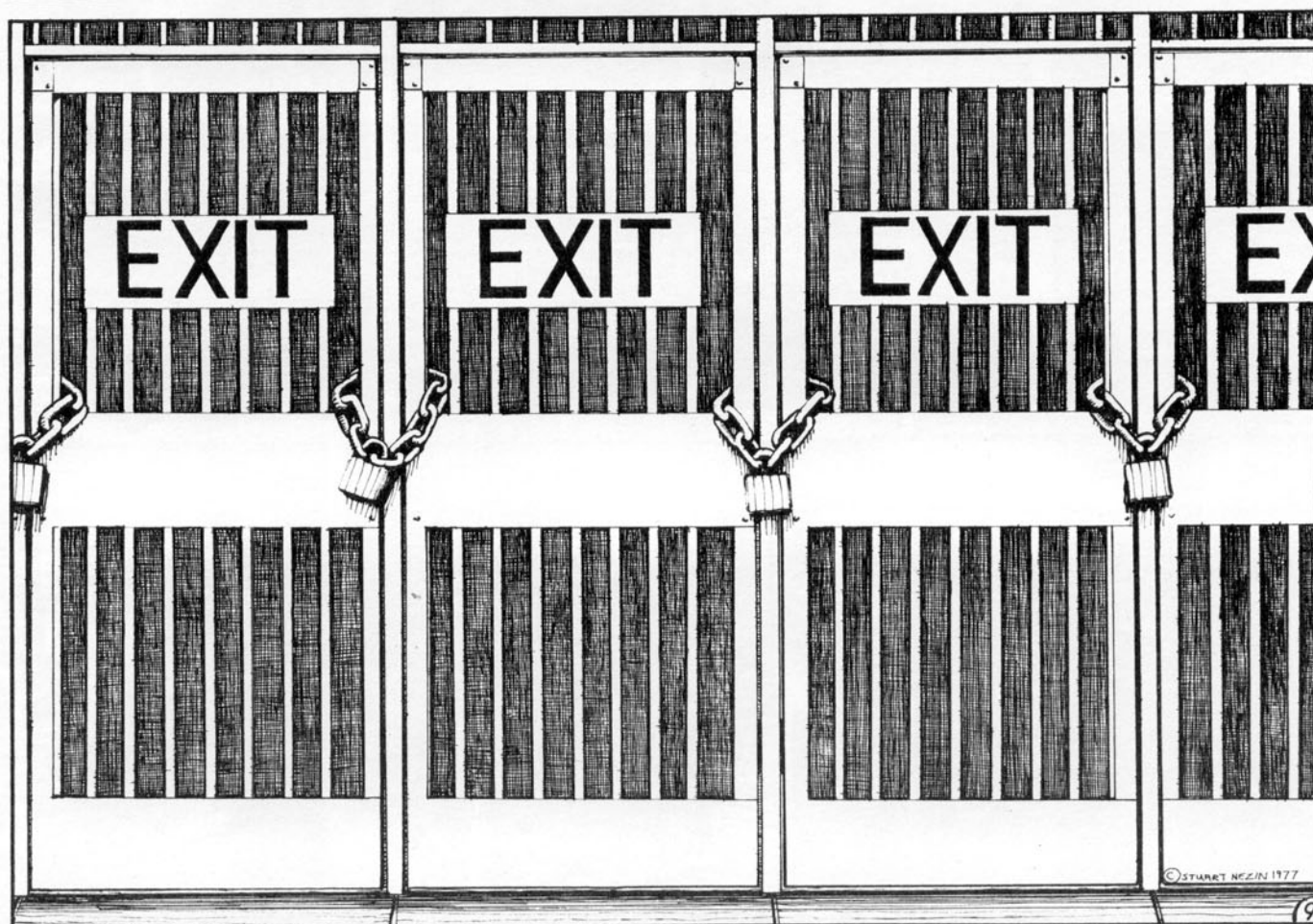
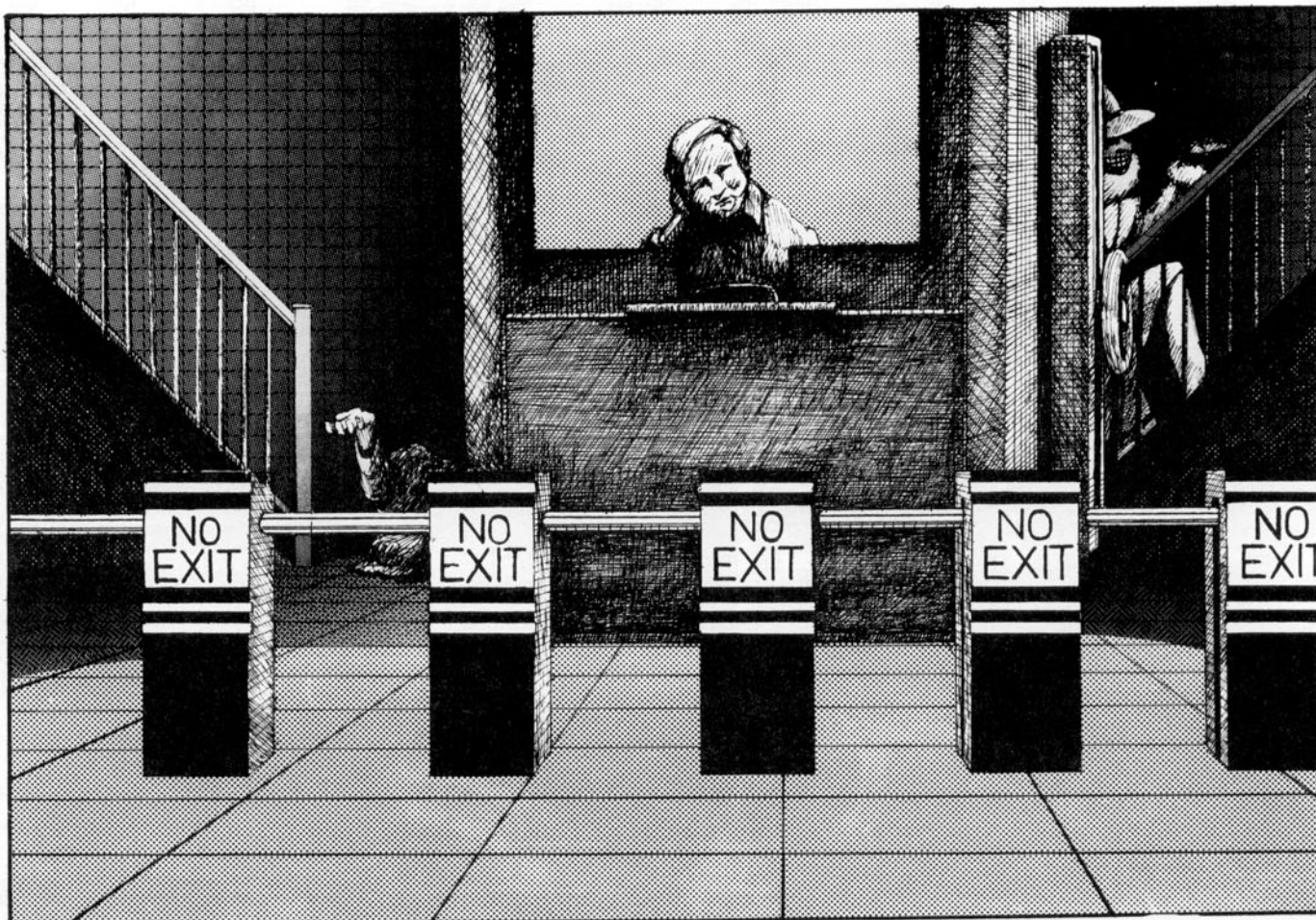




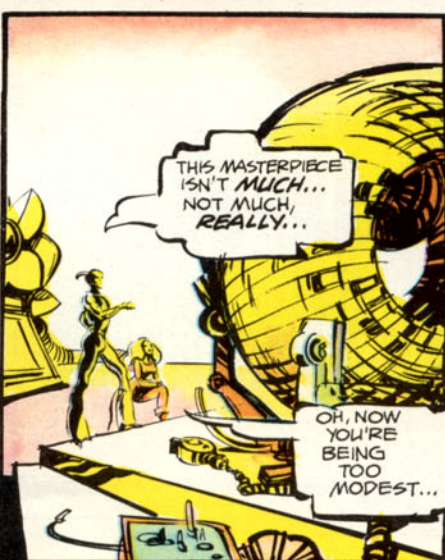
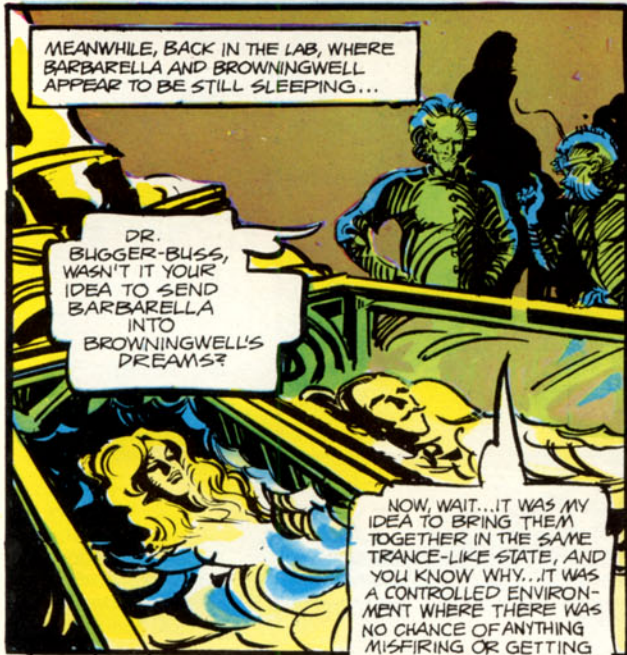








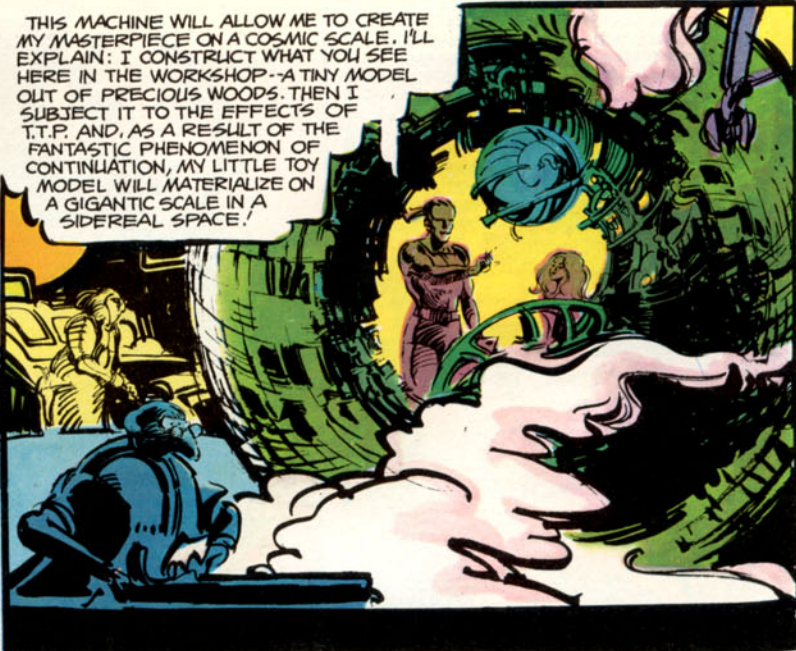
BARBARELLA



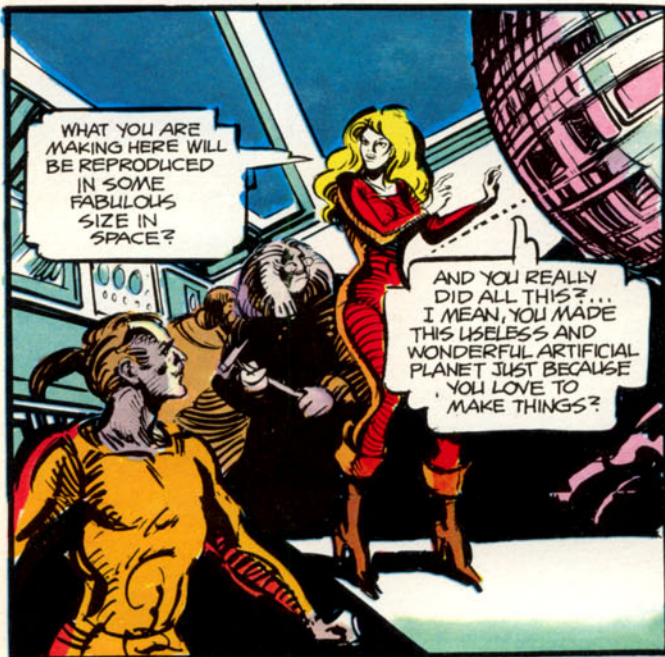


THIS MACHINE IS BASED ON THE **THING-MIBOB TRANSFER PRINCIPLE**... I BOUGHT THE PATENT FROM A VERY PLEASANT AND NEEDY EXTRATERRESTRIAL... IT WAS A GOOD DEAL!

SKIP THE ANECDOTES, AND JUST TELL ME THE BASICS!



THIS MACHINE WILL ALLOW ME TO CREATE MY MASTERPIECE ON A COSMIC SCALE. I'LL EXPLAIN: I CONSTRUCT WHAT YOU SEE HERE IN THE WORKSHOP--A TINY MODEL OUT OF PRECIOUS WOODS. THEN I SUBJECT IT TO THE EFFECTS OF T.T.P. AND, AS A RESULT OF THE FANTASTIC PHENOMENON OF CONTINUATION, MY LITTLE TOY MODEL WILL MATERIALIZE ON A GIGANTIC SCALE IN A SIDEREAL SPACE!



WHAT YOU ARE MAKING HERE WILL BE REPRODUCED IN SOME FABULOUS SIZE IN SPACE?

AND YOU REALLY DID ALL THIS?... I MEAN, YOU MADE THIS USELESS AND WONDERFUL ARTIFICIAL PLANET JUST BECAUSE YOU LOVE TO MAKE THINGS?



LISTEN, IF THE MASTER CRAFTSMEN, THE **COSMIC CHILDREN**, CHOSE ME TO MAKE THE TRADITIONAL MASTERPIECE IN COMPETITION AGAINST NEVIL LEVEL (WHO'S A CARPENTER FOR THAT DEMONIC GUILD)--THEN THE WORKING CRAFTSMEN, THE **CHILDREN OF THE UNIVERSE** DID SO FOR A REASON: THEY BELIEVED ME TO BE THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS. THIS COMPETITION IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT TO THE BROTHERHOOD!

SO IT'S A COMPETITION! AND WHAT'S THE PRIZE?

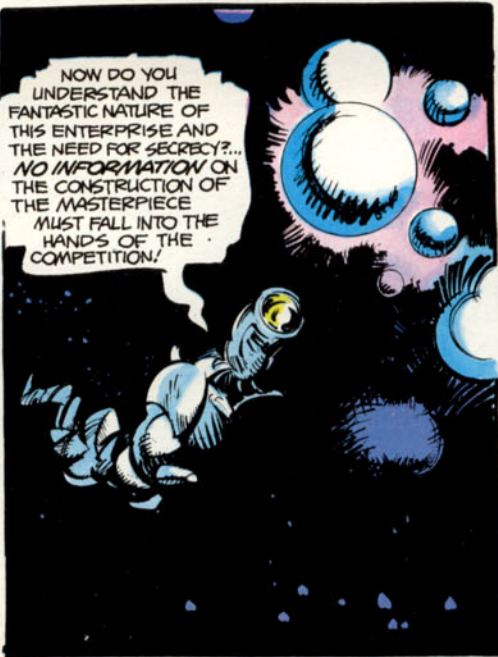


A PLANETARY SYSTEM!



THE WINNER OF THIS "COMPETITION" GETS THE RIGHTS TO AN ENTIRE PLANETARY SYSTEM--IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

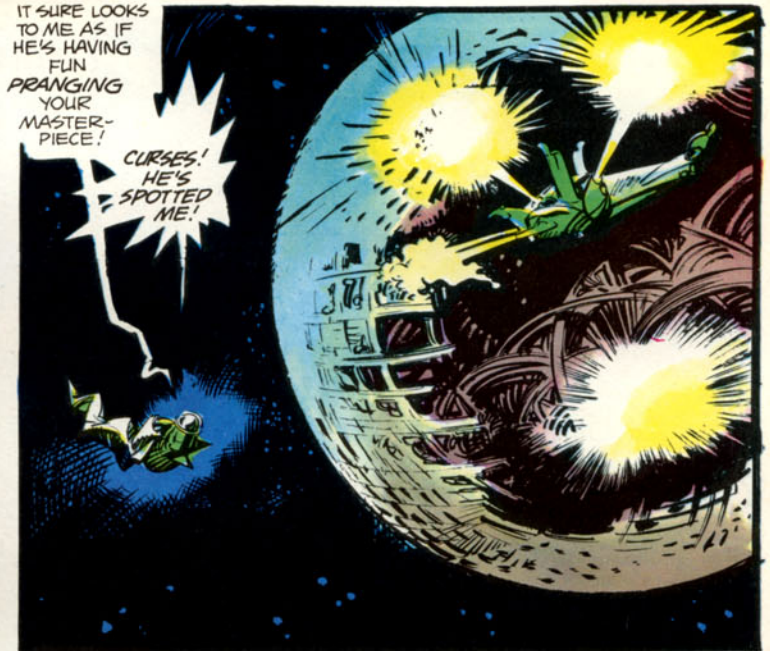
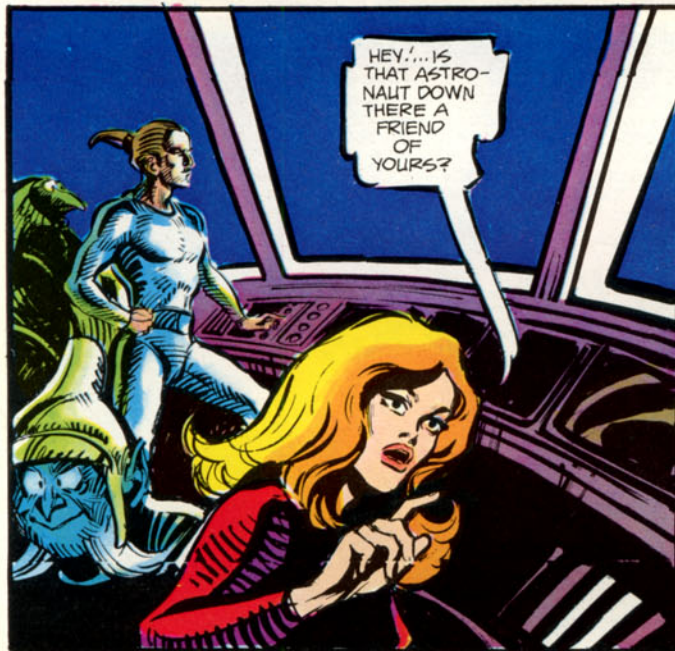
I WON'T TELL YOU WHICH ONE... BUT BELIEVE ME, WITH THE UNION OF THE PLANETS WHICH MAKE UP THIS SYSTEM, THE VICTORIOUS GROUP WILL TAKE OVER ALL THE DEALINGS OF ALL THE GUILDS IT REPRESENTS...



NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE FANTASTIC NATURE OF THIS ENTERPRISE AND THE NEED FOR SECRECY?... **NO INFORMATION** ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MASTERPIECE MUST FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMPETITION!



YEAH...I UNDERSTAND THAT HOWEVER MUCH YOU WANT TO MAKE THE WORLD BETTER, PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS DON'T CHANGE!





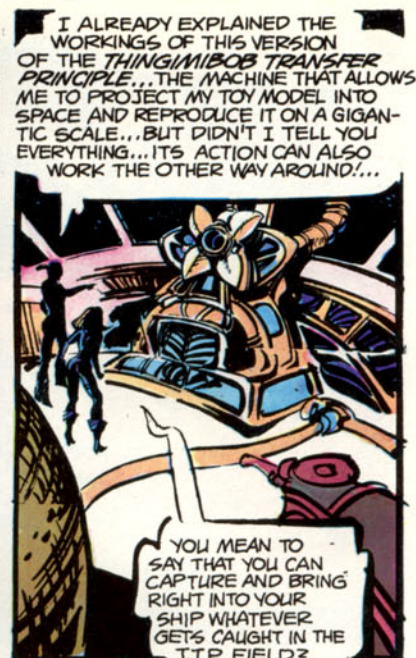
SO, BROWNINGWELL, THIS IS THE SO-CALLED CODE OF HONOR AND LOYALTY AMONG THE WORKERS OF THE UNIVERSE?

WHAT A STUPID THING TO SAY, BARBARELLA! WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE, YOU'VE GOT TO EXPECT SOME ROTTEN STUNTS... WHICH DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO LIKE IT... IN FACT, IT MAKES ME DAMN MAD...



SO NOW YOU'RE DAMN MAD, ARE YOU?

I'M STARTING TO BE... FOLLOW ME... I'LL TRY MY SECRET TRICK... IT'S NEVER FAILED ME YET!



I ALREADY EXPLAINED THE WORKINGS OF THIS VERSION OF THE THINGIMIBOB TRANSFER PRINCIPLE... THE MACHINE THAT ALLOWS ME TO PROJECT MY TOY MODEL INTO SPACE AND REPRODUCE IT ON A GIGANTIC SCALE... BUT DIDN'T I TELL YOU EVERYTHING... ITS ACTION CAN ALSO WORK THE OTHER WAY AROUND...

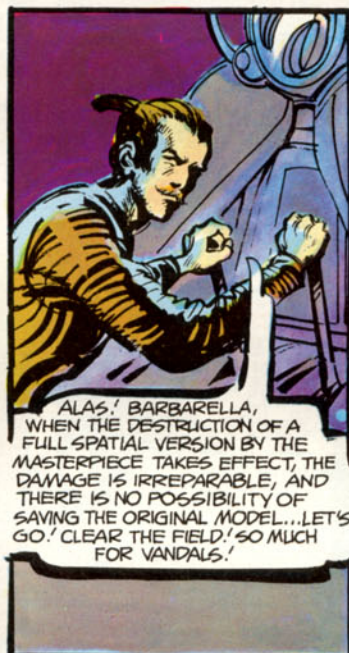
YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT YOU CAN CAPTURE AND BRING RIGHT INTO YOUR SHIP WHATEVER GETS CAUGHT IN THE T.T.P. FIELD?



EVERYTHING FOUND IN SPACE CAN BE REPRODUCED HERE, THANKS TO T.T.P. ...IN OR ON A SMALLER SCALE,

AMUSINGLY ENOUGH!

THEN EVERYTHING DESTROYED IN SPACE CAN ALSO BE DESTROYED HERE!



ALAS! BARBARELLA, WHEN THE DESTRUCTION OF A FULL SPATIAL VERSION BY THE MASTERPIECE TAKES EFFECT, THE DAMAGE IS IRREPARABLE, AND THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF SAVING THE ORIGINAL MODEL... LET'S GO! CLEAR THE FIELD! SO MUCH FOR VANDALS!



IT'S CHARLIE CHISEL! YOU'VE CAPTURED HIM!



HEY, BROWNINGWELL! IT'S GETTING PRETTY NOISY IN THERE! AND THEY'RE STILL DESTROYING YOUR MASTERPIECE... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH YOUR MACHINE NOW?

DON'T WORRY! THE T.T.P. IS STILL WORKING! AND THEY CAN'T GET OUT OF ITS MAGNETIC FIELD...



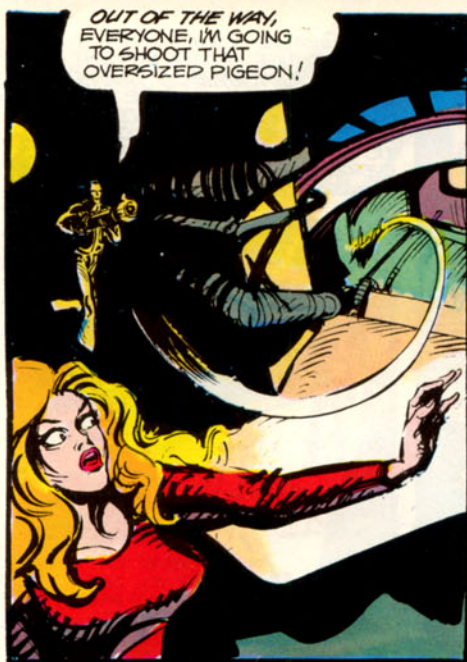
REALLY? THEN WHAT'S THAT?

CURSES! QUICK! SHUT THE DOOR!



ALERT! THIS IS BROWNINGWELL! SHUT THE AIRTIGHT COMPARTMENTS AND ISOLATE STAGE 6...

IF HE KEEPS THAT UP, HE'LL PIERCE THE WALLS AND MAKE YOUR SPACESHIP LOOK LIKE A PIECE OF SWISS CHEESE...



OUT OF THE WAY, EVERYONE, I'M GOING TO SHOOT THAT OVERSIZED PIGEON!



WELL?

BELIEVE ME--THIS WEAPON'LL DROP ANYTHING...IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO DESTROY ALL HUMAN LIFE, EVEN THROUGH THE THICKEST POSSIBLE ARMOR!

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!



LEAVE ME ALONE TO THINK...CHARLIE CHISEL, IN THIS SMALL MODEL, IS NOTHING BUT A REPLICA, A SPECTRAL DOUBLE...WITH A WEAK COEFFICIENT OF REALITY, WHICH MAKES HIM SLIGHTLY VULNERABLE...

...WE HAVE TO ATTACK THE ORIGINAL... THE ONE IN SPACE!



THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

JUST ONE?

LET'S START WITH THIS ONE! WHY DOESN'T CHARLIE CHISEL, THE REAL ONE, I MEAN, THE ONE IN SPACE, FLY AWAY, NOW THAT HE'S DONE HIS THING?



BECAUSE HIS REPLICA IS A PRISONER ON OUR SHIP, IN WHICH SPACE AND TIME ARE INDEPENDENT OF EXTERIOR TIME AND SPACE...AND AS FEEBLE AS THE COEFFICIENT OF REALITY OF THAT REPLICA MIGHT BE, IT'S ENOUGH TO TRAP THE ORIGINAL ASTRONAUT IN OUR UNIVERSE. UNDERSTAND?

NO!



HEY! LOOK! IT'S CHARLIE CHISEL...HE'S CRASHING INTO EVERYTHING... THE GUYS INSIDE MUST BE REALLY MAD!

HARRY, WE'VE GOT TO FINISH HIM OFF!... PREPARE TO FIRE THE KILLER TORP!

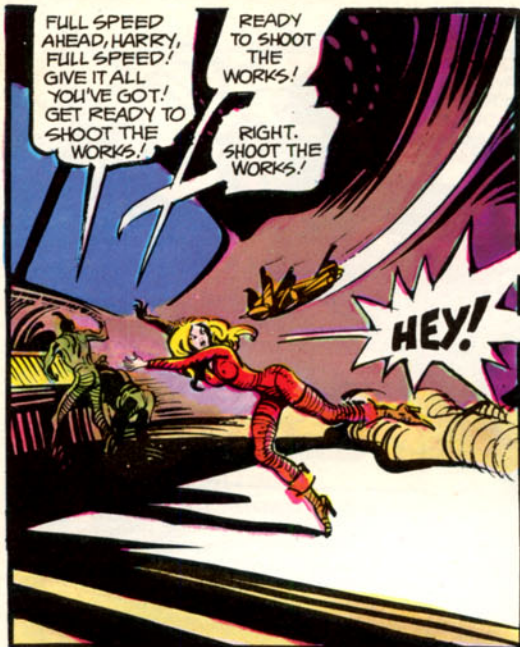


IT'S ALREADY DONE, MASTER!

PERFECT! TAKE THE FIELD, HEAVE HO, AND PASS THE AMMUNITION...I'M GOING TO BLAST THAT CHARLIE CHISEL...IT'S A PLEASURE I WOULDN'T LET ANYONE ELSE ENJOY!



OH, BROWNING-- WELL, BE CAREFUL!



FULL SPEED
AHEAD, HARRY,
FULL SPEED!
GIVE IT ALL
YOU'VE GOT!
GET READY TO
SHOOT THE
WORKS!

READY
TO SHOOT
THE
WORKS!

RIGHT.
SHOOT THE
WORKS!

HEY!

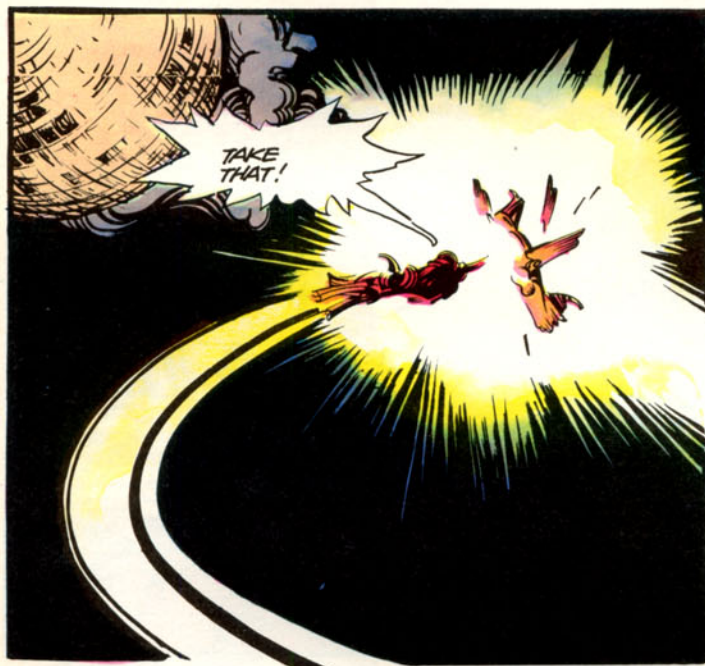


BROWN...
BROWNINGWELL,
D...DO
SOMETHING!

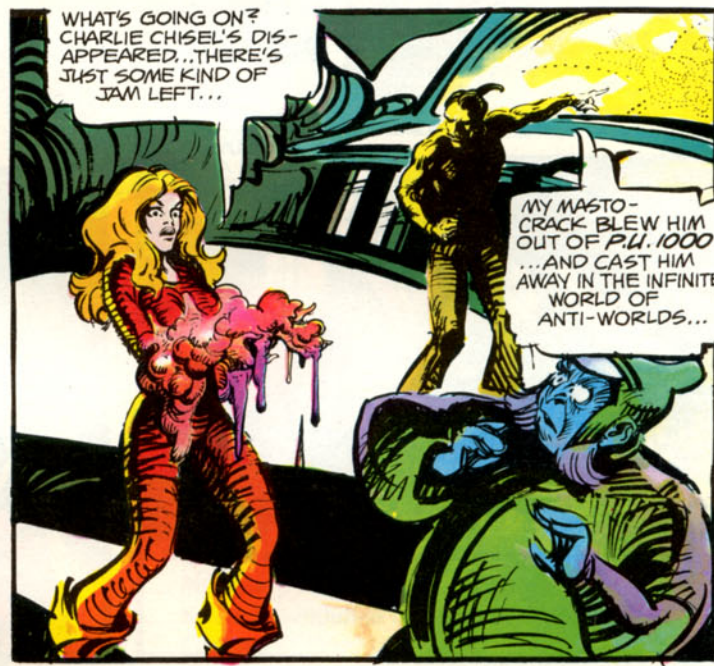
HOLD
TIGHT!
WE'VE
GOT HIM
IN THE
BAG!



HA! HA! HE
WASN'T EXPECTING
MY SHIP TO BE
EQUIPPED WITH A
MASTOCRACK!... MY
TORP IS COMPLETELY
PROTECTED BY ANTI-
MATTER, SO MY SWORD CAN
SLICE THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, TO
SMASH THE WHOLE DAMN UNIVERSE!



TAKE
THAT!



WHAT'S GOING ON?
CHARLIE CHISEL'S DIS-
APPEARED... THERE'S
JUST SOME KIND OF
JAM LEFT...

MY MASTO-
CRACK BLEW HIM
OUT OF P.L.U. 1000
...AND CAST HIM
AWAY IN THE INFINITE
WORLD OF
ANTI-WORLDS...



OH, MY POOR BROWNING-
WELL, YOUR MASTERPIECE
HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY
KNOCKED AROUND BY YOUR
ENEMIES... HOW MANY LIGHT
YEARS WILL IT TAKE YOU
TO FIX IT UP?

WELL, AT THIS POINT IT
WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO
REPAIR IT COMPLETELY,
BARBARELLA... BETTER TO
START OVER AGAIN! BUT
NEVIL LEVEL HAS SUCH A
HEAD START ON ME NOW
THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT
TO CATCH UP..



WHAT
A
SHAME!

WHAT
DO YOU
PLAN
TO DO?

TO GET BACK TO
WILLIAM IV, THE FLOATING
PLANET, AS SOON AS POSSI-
BLE-- THAT'S WHERE THE
COSMIC CHILDREN ARE
GATHERED... THERE, YOU CAN
SEE IT ALREADY, BECAUSE
FOR THE LAST SPATIAL HOUR
WE'VE BEEN TRAVELING
OUTSIDE THE TIME-SPACE
NEXUS, SO WE'VE TAKEN A
KIND OF SHORTCUT TO IT.



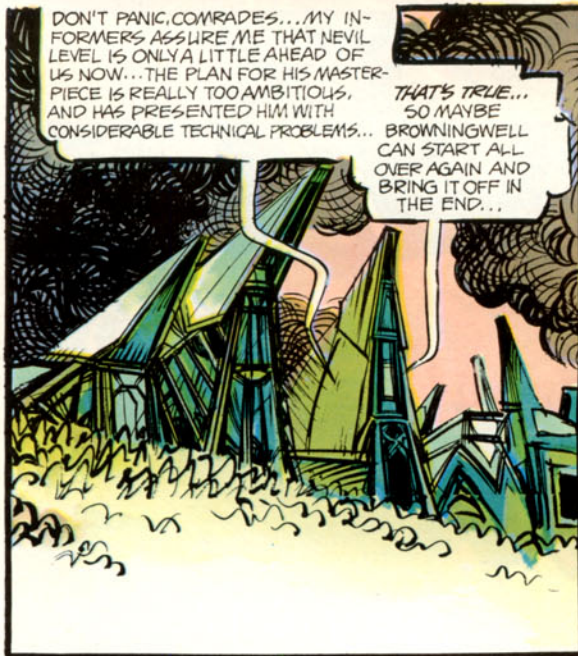
BROWNINGWELL'S UPSET-HE SEES HIS MASTERPIECE SHOT ALL TO PIECES... YEARS OF LABOR AND AMBITION CANCELLED DUE TO COMPETITION! BUT HE'S STILL GOT BARBARELLA, SO, LIKE ANY NORMAL FELLA, GUYS IN ANCIENT SONGS AND JOKES, HE TAKES HER HOME TO MEET THE FOLKS!



BROWNINGWELL, THE MASTER BUILDER, IS THE ONLY PERSON CAPABLE OF CONFRONTING NEVIL LEVEL... IF HE SAYS HE CAN'T DO IT, THOSE SO-CALLED CHILDREN OF THE UNIVERSE CAN SAY GOOD-BYE TO THEIR DREAMS OF PROSPERITY... OUR ENEMIES WILL END UP ESTABLISHING THEIR EMPIRE ON THE PLANETS OF SOME PATHETIC LITTLE SYSTEM!



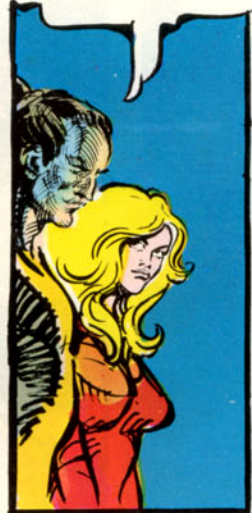
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! IT'S TRUE THAT THE CHILDREN OF THE UNIVERSE SURPASS US IN TREACHERY AND NASTINESS... MAY THE GREAT DESIGNER SMITE THEM WITH RUST AND FIRE... BUT THEIR CHAMPION IS CERTAINLY NOT THE EQUAL OF OUR BROWNINGWELL...



DON'T PANIC, COMRADES... MY INFORMERS ASSURE ME THAT NEVIL LEVEL IS ONLY A LITTLE AHEAD OF US NOW... THE PLAN FOR HIS MASTERPIECE IS REALLY TOO AMBITIOUS, AND HAS PRESENTED HIM WITH CONSIDERABLE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS...

THAT'S TRUE... SO MAYBE BROWNINGWELL CAN START ALL OVER AGAIN AND BRING IT OFF IN THE END...

BAH! I DON'T WANT TO WORK ANYMORE... I NEED ANOTHER IDEA... SOME WONDERFUL NEW IDEA TO GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO TAKE UP THE FIGHT AGAIN...



A WONDERFUL IDEA WOULD BE MOST WELCOME... FOR I, TOO, HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT NEVIL LEVEL'S MASTERPIECE... IT'S TRUE THAT HE'S NOT TOO FAR AHEAD, BUT THERE'S NO POINT CRITICIZING HIS PROJECT... CERTAIN PEOPLE MIGHT ONLY SEE MEGALOMANIAC DESIRE IN IT, BUT I, AT LEAST, CAN RECOGNIZE GRANDEUR AND GENIUS!



THE COMRADE OF THE GREAT ART IS RIGHT... SHOULD NEVIL LEVEL SUCCEED, HIS MASTERPIECE WILL BE MORE THAN AN EXERCISE IN STYLE--IT WILL BE ONE OF THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE!



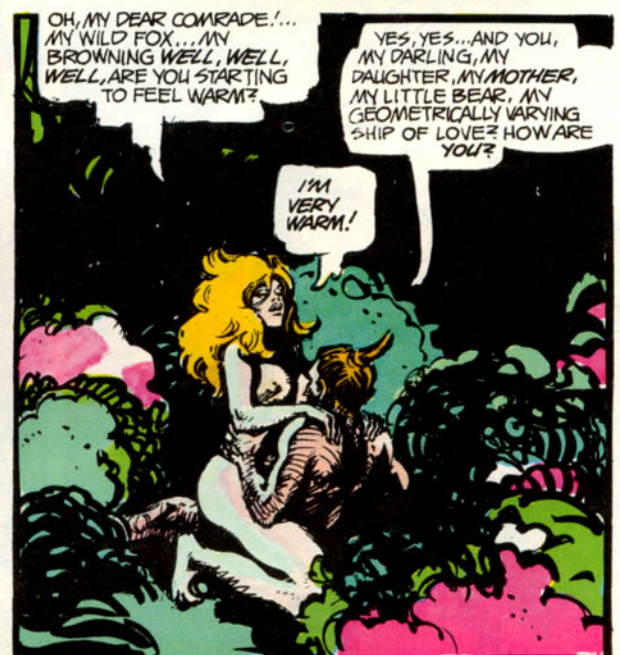
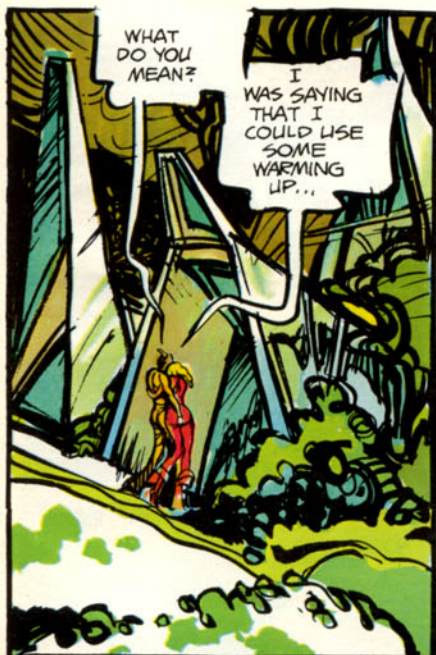
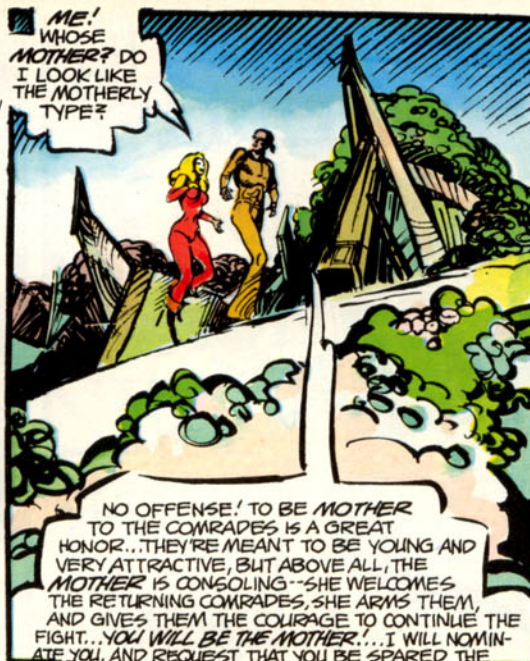
HE'S CERTAINLY LETTING THEM HAVE IT... BUT WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT, COMRADE?

ABOUT A CATHEDRALBANK!... A STRONGBOX OF A PLANET, MADE OF GLAZED EBONY... A WOOD HARDER THAN... THAN A GIRL'S HEAD!



WHAT KIND OF -HING IS THAT TO SAY?

SORRY... IT'S JUST AN EXPRESSION WE USE AROUND HERE...



AH, BARBARELLA!... WHAT GOOD ARE THE PLEASURES OF THE FLESH?... THEY ONLY CLOUD THE MIND WITH SMOKE, FOG, VAGUENESS... WHAT INJUSTICE IS MAN'S LOT! YOU SLEEP, WHILE I REMAIN AWAKE... MY BODY TOO WEAK TO STAND WHILE MY MIND IS OBSESSED WITH WORK!



AH, WOMEN! YOU'RE SO SHALLOW. WHAT SLEEPY, TORPID CREATURES YOU ARE!

ME, SLEEPY AND TORPID? CARE TO COME A LITTLE CLOSER AND FIND OUT?

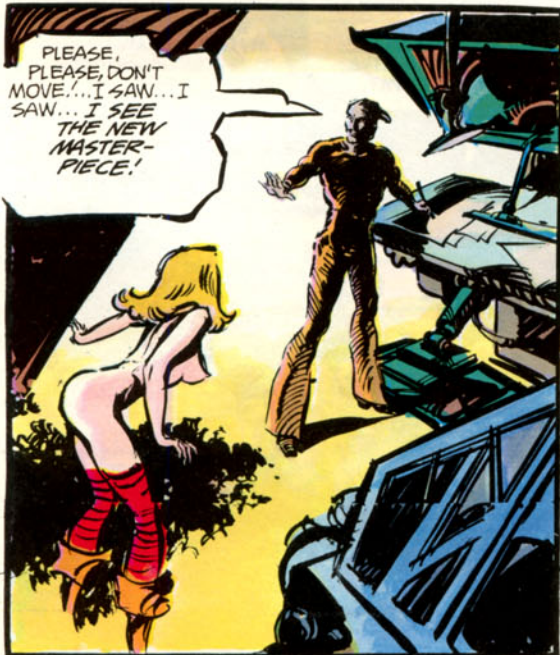


EXCUSE ME, BARBARELLA, BUT I HAVE A MEETING... MY COMRADES MUST HELP ME MOVE THE THINGIMBOB TRANSFER TO MY NEW WORKSHOP. WE HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL WITH IT!

FINE, I'LL WAIT HERE, UP TO MY ASS IN THE SAWDUST... NOT VERY PLEASANT, BUT IT'LL KEEP ME WARM... AND IT'S THE ONLY PLACE IN THE WORLD WHERE I'LL BE SURE TO FIND YOU AGAIN ONE DAY-- YOUR WORK-SHOP.



WAIT! DON'T MOVE!... DON'T BREATHE! AND ABOVE ALL DON'T SAY ANYTHING... MY MASTERPIECE... MY NEW MASTERPIECE!...



PLEASE, PLEASE, DON'T MOVE!... I SAW... I SAW... I SEE THE NEW MASTERPIECE!



PLEASE, BARBARELLA, GO AWAY, LEAVE ME... I NEED ABSOLUTE SECRECY FOR THIS PROJECT... YOU'LL UNDERSTAND LATER ON...

GOOD GOD! I SAID LEAVE!



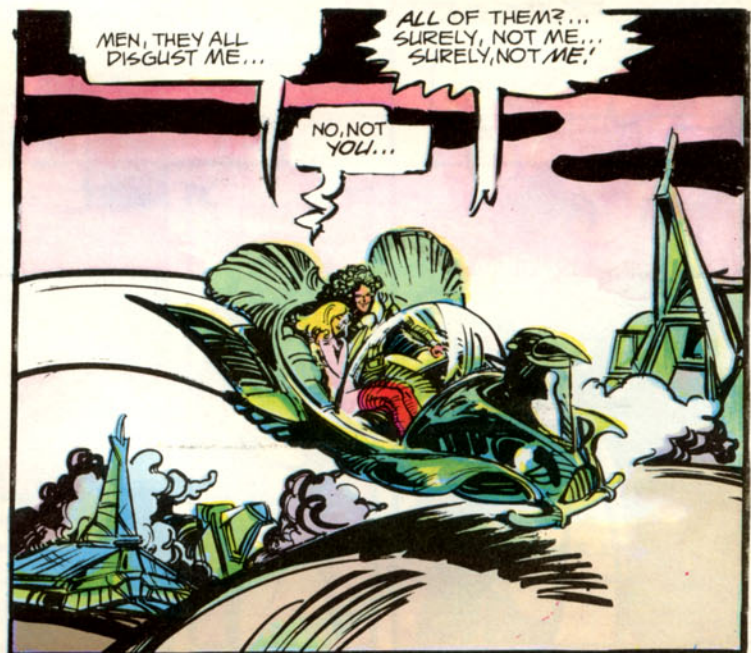
SOMETHING WRONG WITH SOMEONE, MISS?

YES, WITH ME!



COME ON, MY GLIDER ISN'T FAR OFF... AH, JUST AS I THOUGHT... YOU'RE NOT JUST ANY OLD WOMAN... YOU'VE GOT CLASS! YOU OUGHT TO BE A MOTHER... I MEAN, OUR MOTHER...

SOMEONE'S ALREADY PULLED THAT LINE ON ME!



MEN, THEY ALL DISGUST ME...

ALL OF THEM?... SURELY, NOT ME... SURELY, NOT ME!

NO, NOT YOU...

TO BE CONTINUED...

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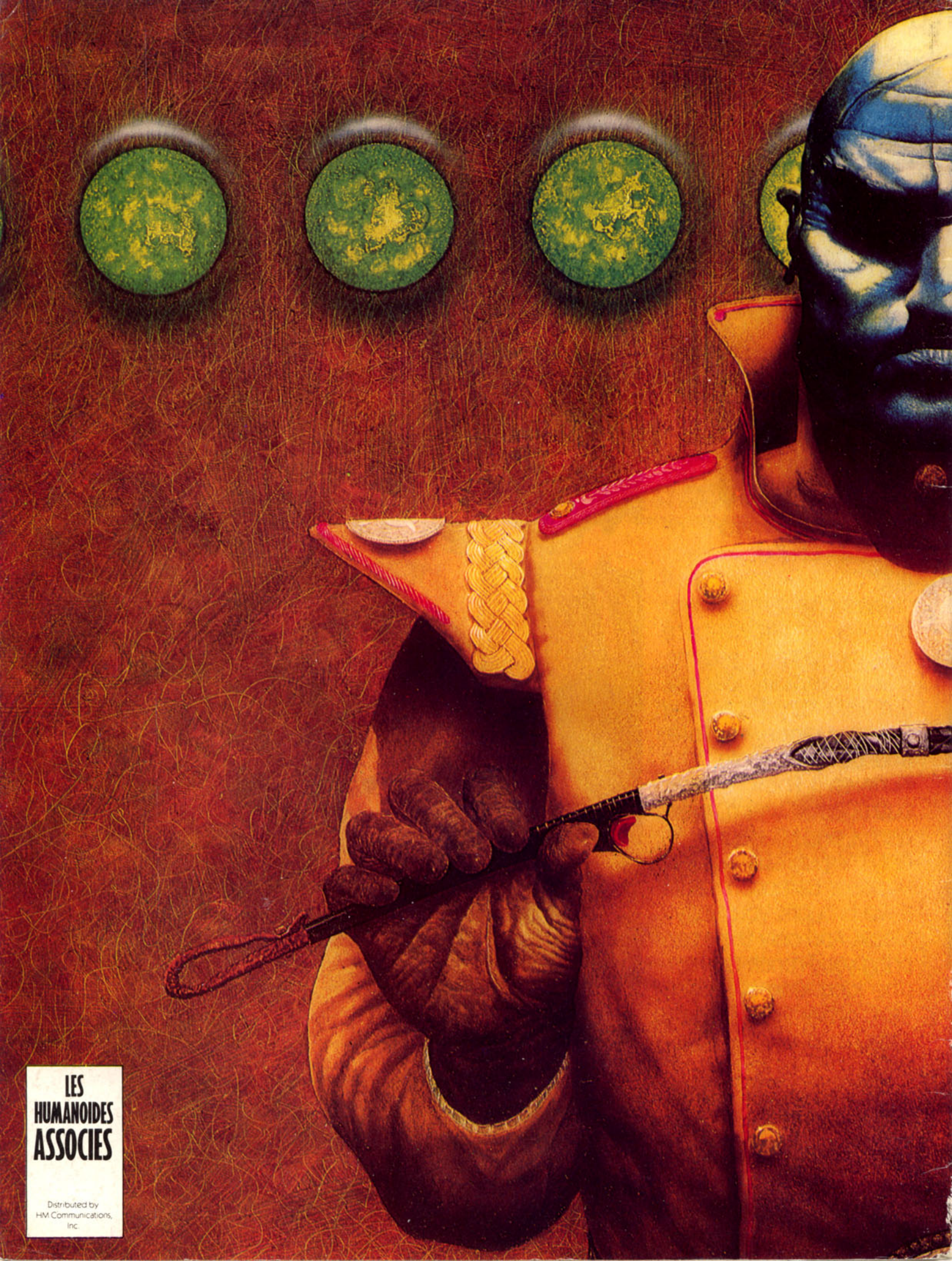
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