

"THE MAN WHO LAUGHS!"

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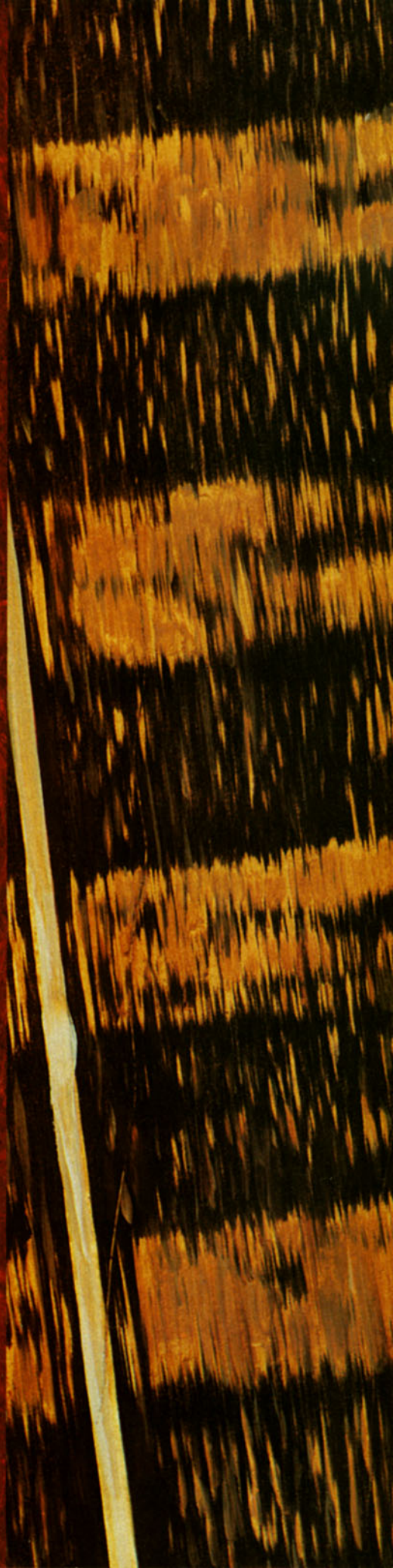
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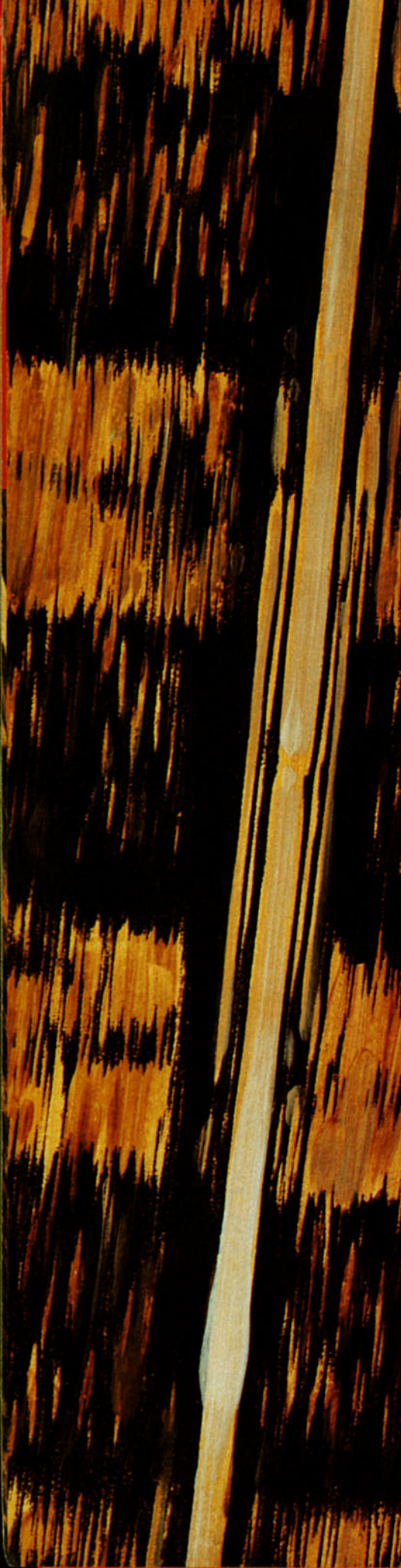
EVERY

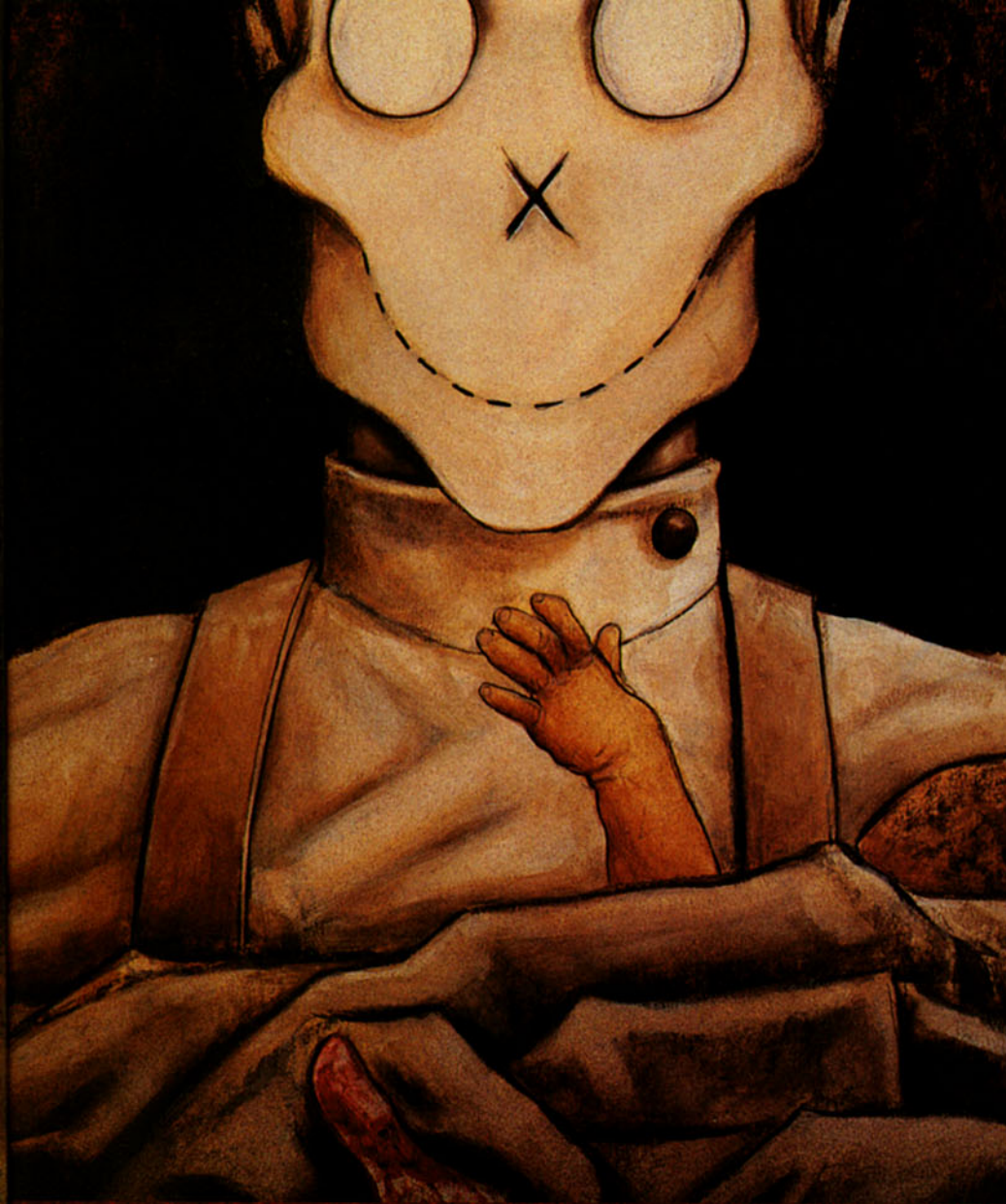


FROM INSIDE









JOHN BERGIN

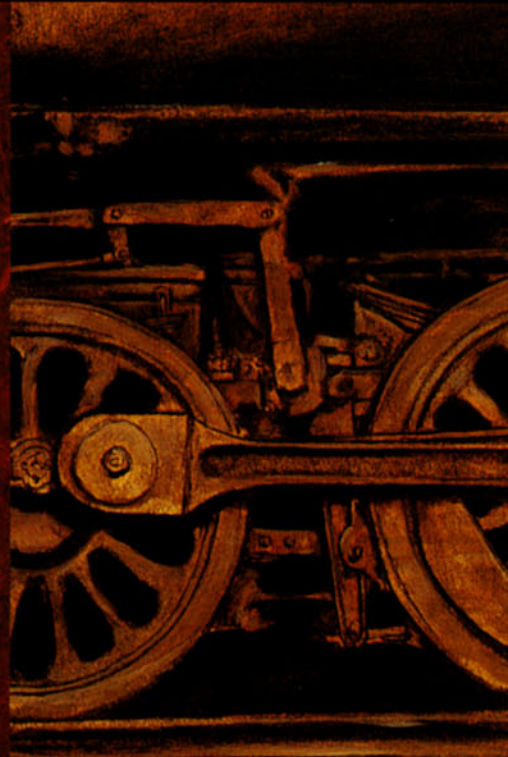
has created an atmosphere of perpetual darkness and droning ambience. His artistry lies not so much in his ability to maintain this consistently dark vision (which he does with a vengeance), but in his ability to build a rich and complex world inside this singular dimension. He has an uncanny ability to dance right on the edge of suffocating nihilism, while providing just enough oxygen to sustain life. While the beauty of his art is uplifting, its devastating message sends out a crushing blow.

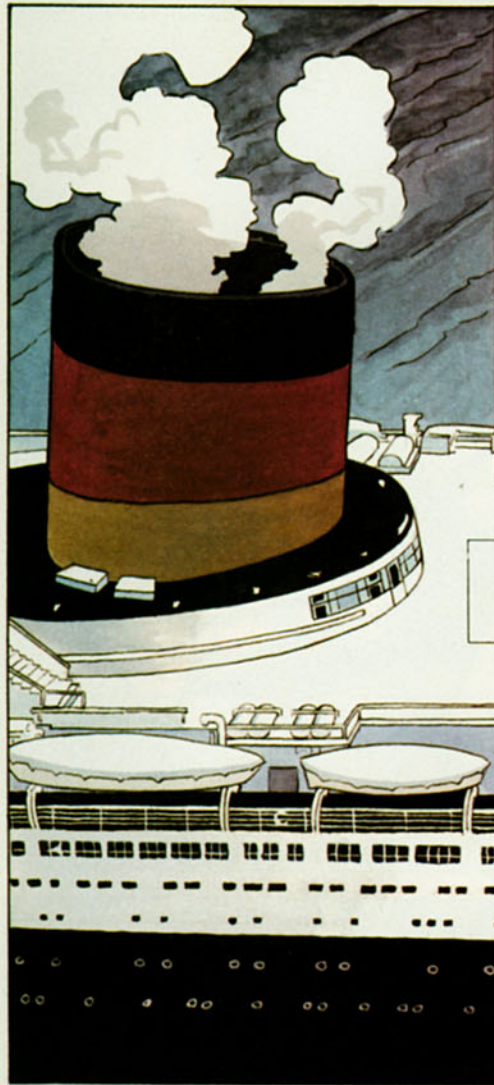
FROM INSIDE is an apocalyptic tale of a young woman who wakes up in a world of nightmares within nightmares. She finds herself on a long train making her way across landscapes of desolation and despair. Rivers of blood, collapsed structures, mountains of snow, and a plague of death threaten the train's passengers, while the young woman contends with these and various internal struggles such as hunger, the memories of her lost husband, and her biggest internal "threat", the imminent birth of her baby. The complexities of her deep personal dilemma (Is there anything left of the world for her baby to be born into?) and the dark surrealism of her world force her to make significant discoveries and decisions concerning her life and the life of her unborn child.

John Henry Bergin was born on April 6, 1966. He is married to Carolyn.

They currently reside in Kansas City, Missouri.

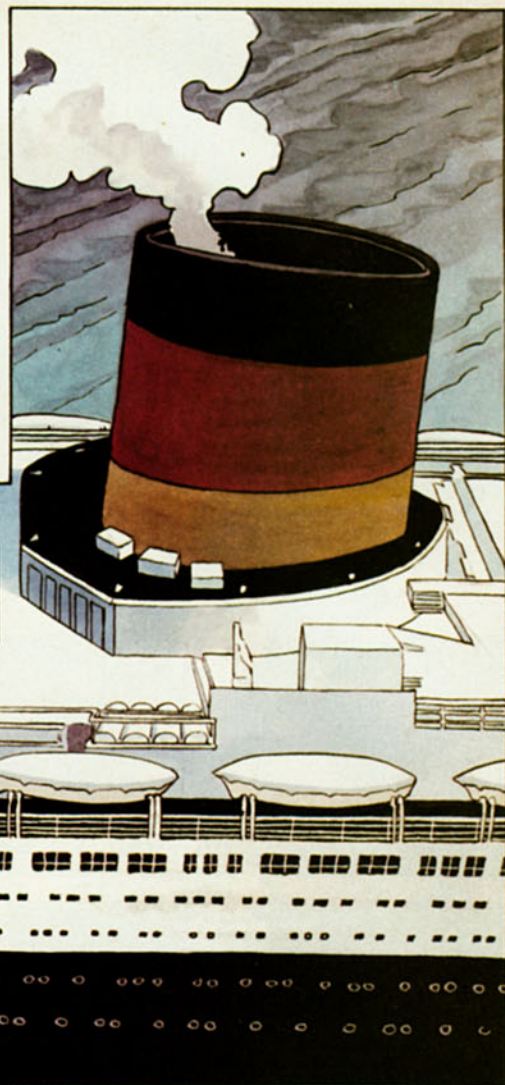
FROM INSIDE is published by Kitchen Sink Press.





THERE WAS ONCE
A RICH SHIPOWNER
WHO WAS EXTREMELY
BORED. HE HAD
TRAVELED ALL OVER
THE WORLD ON HIS
COMPANY'S SHIPS
WHICH HE HAD
INHERITED FROM HIS
FATHER. HIS FORTUNE
INCREASED EVERY
TIME HE WENT
ON A TRIP, YET
EVEN THIS FAILED
TO BRING HIM
PLEASURE.

PARTNERS & **COMPANY**



MAX DECIDED
TO THROW HIMSELF
INTO THE CONQUEST
OF WOMEN TO FEEL THE
THRILL OF ADVENTURE
ONCE AGAIN...UNTIL THE
DAY HE MET ANNETTE.





HE MARRIED THAT SIREN ONE EVENING. BUT THEN AGAIN, IN SPITE OF ALL HER BEST EFFORTS, AFTER A WHILE, HE BEGAN TO WHISTLE TO HIMSELF, A SURE SIGN OF HIS GREAT MORAL LASSITUDE.



ONE DAY ANNETTE DECIDED TO DISCOVER WHAT WENT ON BELOW THE GOLD AND WHITE STATE ROOMS OF THE SHIP.

WHEN SHE DANCED HER SIREN DANCE, SHE OFTEN THOUGHT ABOUT THE MEN WHO WORKED DOWN THERE. MAYBE SHE WAS REMEMBERING THE SAILORS SHE HAD MET IN PORT, BEFORE THAT VERY REFINED PARTY WHERE SHE HAD MET AND DAZZLED THE RICH SHIPOWNER.





MAX: DO YOU LIKE HIM? YOU CAN HAVE HIM. HE IS MY EMPLOYEE, AFTER ALL!
 ANNETTE: HIS TATTOOS ARE DIFFERENT FROM YOURS, IT MIGHT BE A NICE CHANGE FOR ME. WE'LL SEE MY DEAR...



MAX: YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ME, MY DEAR: THAT WAS AN ORDER!



ANNETTE: DID YOU LIKE THAT, MAX?
 MAX: A LITTLE TOO FAST AND HIS SKIN LOOKS TOO NAKED... WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CHANGE THAT, MY DEAR BOY!



SAILOR: TAKE IT EASY! IT'S VERY EXPENSIVE!
 MAX: NO PROBLEM! I'M A PATRON OF THE ARTS!



MAX: VERY NICE!...THE TATTOO ARTIST DID AN EXCELLENT JOB OF EXECUTING MY DESIGN.



MAX: I WOULD LIKE TO TRY THIS IN A MORE UNUSUAL PLACE. WHAT ABOUT DOING IT IN A LIFEBOAT NEXT TIME?



SAILOR: IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN?
 ANNETTE: AS IF WE WERE SHIPWRECKED?
 MAX: THEY'LL BE ABLE TO FIND US, I
 PROMISE YOU. I HAVEN'T GONE
 COMPLETELY MAD!

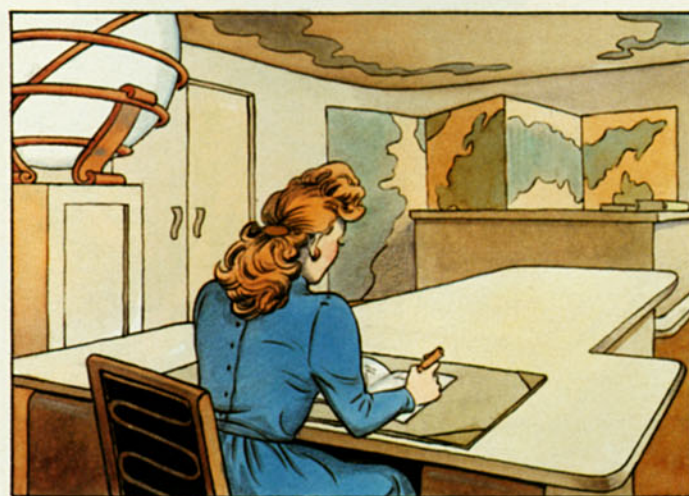


ANNETTE: I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR DIRTY
 GAMES. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN
 TO TAKE OFF YOUR PANTS!

MAX: ???
 SAILOR: ???



ANNETTE: MAX, REMEMBER YOUR YEARS
 AT THE JESUIT COLLEGE! AND
 YOU, SAILOR, SURPRISE ME
 FOR ONCE!



*Of course, the jury found me innocent. I
 looked so pale when they found me after six
 days of drifting on the ocean. Well, all that
 is left now are a few unpleasant memories.*



MATHILDE: MADAM, YOUR LAMPS WERE
 JUST DELIVERED.
 ANNETTE: THANK YOU, MATHILDE. PLEASE
 PUT ONE ON EACH SIDE OF
 MY DESK.

HEAVY METAL 12

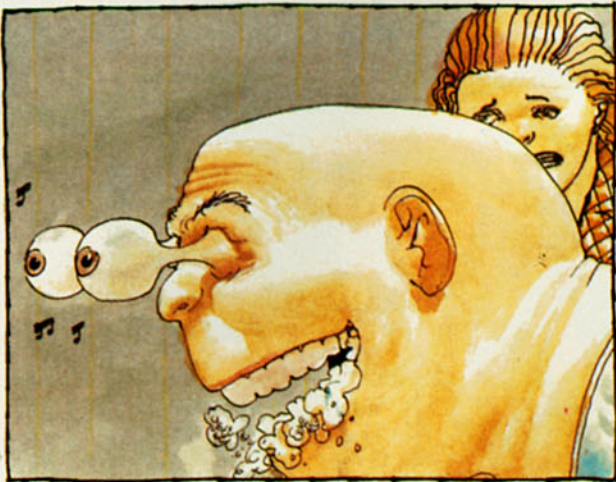
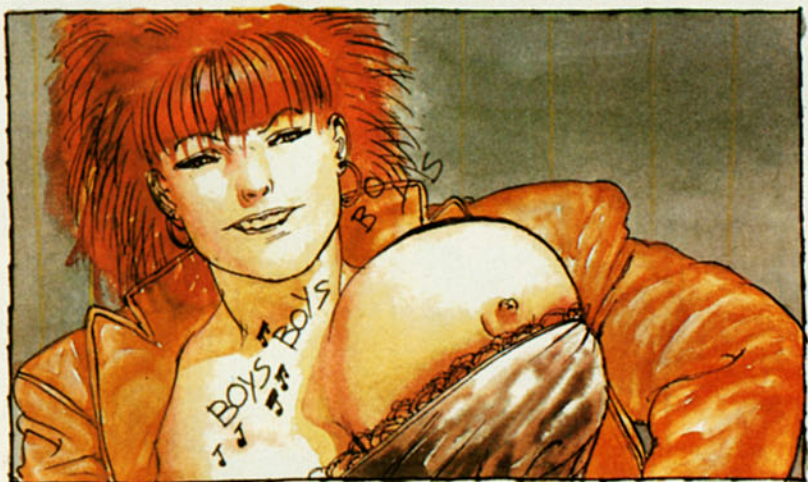
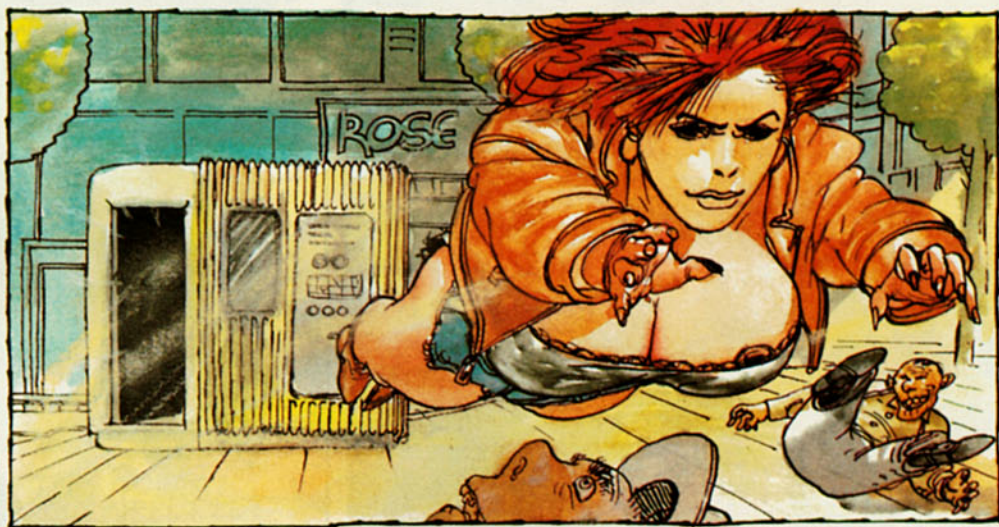
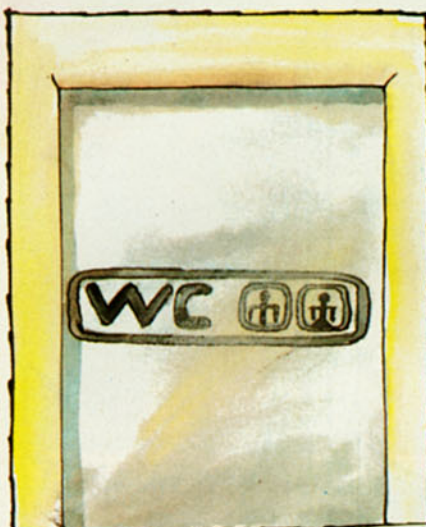


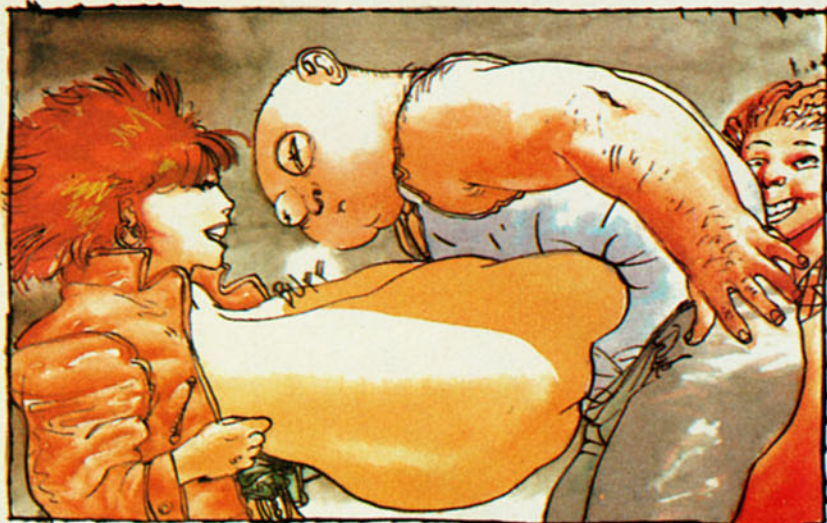
ANNETTE: WHAT A LOVELY SOFT LIGHT...
 IT'S PERFECT FOR THE FIRST
 BOARD MEETING OF MY NEW
 COMPANY.

THE END

SUPERCHECK







STOP
SCOLDING
HER.

I DON'T WANT
TO HEAR ANYMORE
YELLING IN THIS
HOUSE.



WAIT, CAN
I GET YOU
ANYTHING?

NO, THANKS.
I'VE GOT
TO FLY.



IS IT A SPACE
SHIP?

A
HOT AIR
BALLOON?

NO, IT'S
SUPERCHICK!



I'M BACK.
DID YOU GET
THEM?

YES, BUT I DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT SIZE.
SEE IF THEY FIT.



PERFECT. YOU'VE
GOT THE MAKING
OF A GREAT
GYNECOLOGIST.

STRANGE! EVERYTIME
THAT SUPERCHICK
APPEARS, LUISA EXCUSES
HERSELF AND SLIPS
AWAY... COULD LUISA BE
SUPERCHICK? NO, IT
COULDN'T BE. SHE'S
MUCH TOO FRUMPY!

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

NIGHT AND THE SEA

1

BLUE CLOUDS ARE WORSE THAN
BLACK CLOUDS...THEY BRING SNOW.

WE'RE LOST...

IT'S BETTER TO DROWN THAN
TO BE HANGED.


GOD HAS CHOSEN OUR FATE...

IS THERE ANYTHING LEFT TO
GIVE TO THE OCEAN?

YES...

...OUR CRIME.





LET'S CLEANSE OUR CONSCIENCE. MAY
GOD HAVE MERCY ON OUR SOULS.

WE SHOULD HAVE
DROWNED HIM IN A WELL...

AS IT IS, WE HARMED HIM ENOUGH.

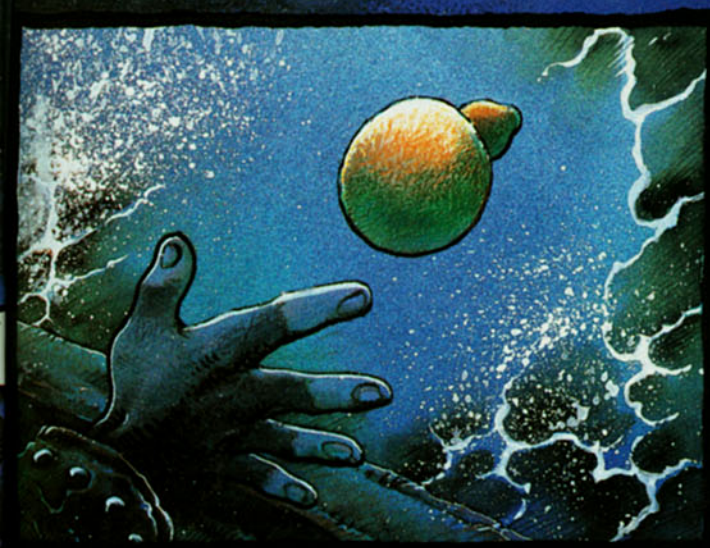
THE NIGHT WILL HIDE OUR SINS...

THIS IS HARDGUANONNE'S
GOURD...

OUR REPENTANCE WILL BE
PRESERVED IN HIS GOURD.

YOU MEAN, THE DUTCHMAN
IN THE TOWER?

HE KNEW...



THE DEED IS DONE...

SO BE IT...



IF THE BOY SURVIVES US, MAY
GOD HELP HIM...IF HE DIES,
MAY HE FORGIVE US.

IT'S TIME TO DIE...



TIME TO GO ON TO THE SPIRIT
WORLD...



THE SEA...

THE SEA HAS SWALLOWED
THEM UP...



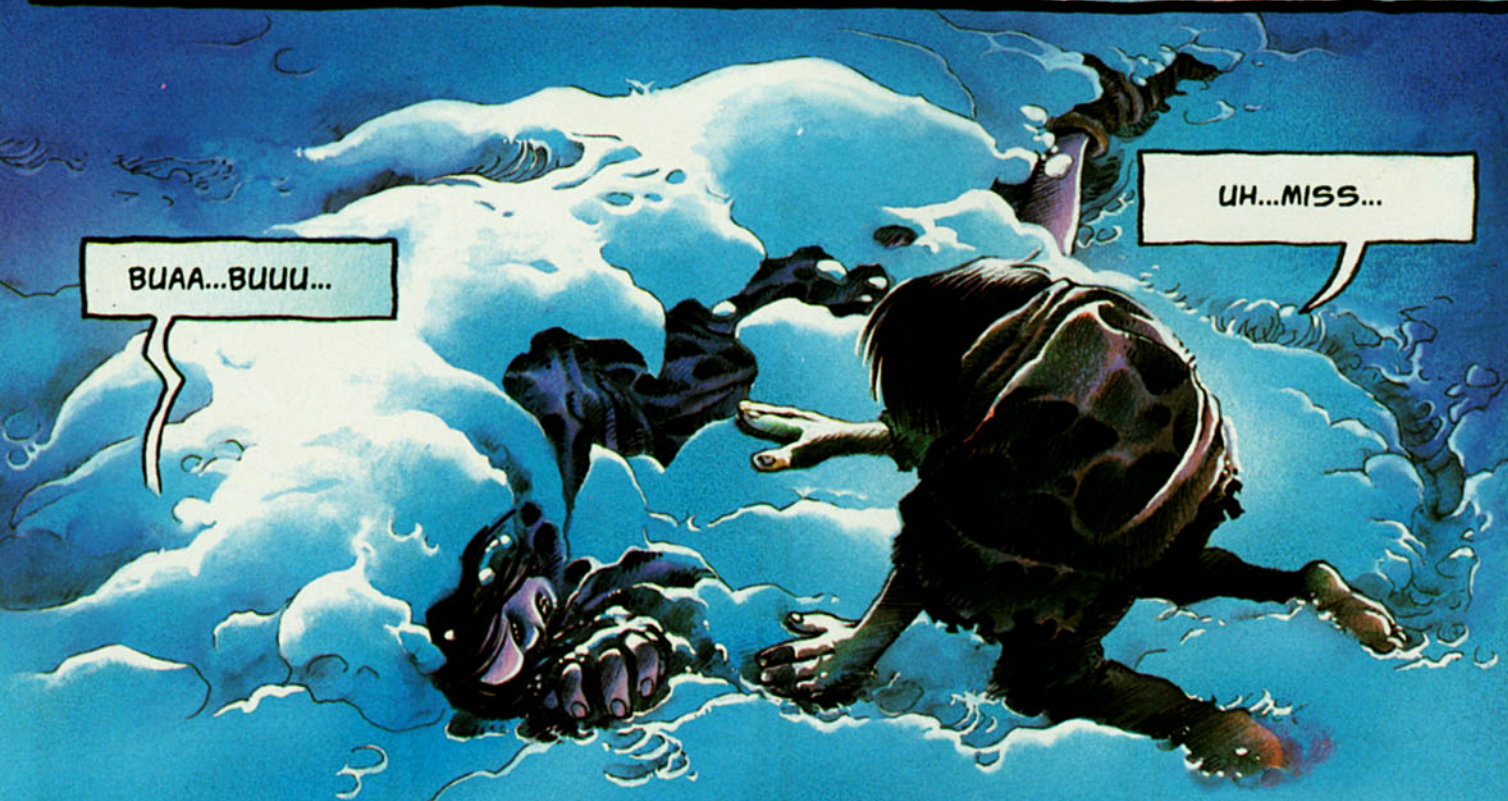
THE VILLAGE... I MUST
FIND THE VILLAGE...







BUAAAA...



UH...MISS...

BUAA...BUUU...



BEUUUU...

MISS?



BEUUUU...

THE PLAGUE...SHE'S
GOT THE PLAGUE.



BUAAAA...



BUAAA...BUAA...

BUUU...BUUA...

GOOD GOD...

BUAAAAA...BUUU?...

BUUU?


HEY, GWYNPLANE. LET YOUR FRIENDS,
THE MANDRAKES, TAKE CARE OF THE
LITTLE ONE.

WHO KNOWS...MAYBE SHE
HAS THE PLAGUE TOO?
DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES.


BREAK HER NECK...THAT'LL
STOP HER WAILING...

KILL HER GWYNPLANE...
KILL THE LITTLE BITCH...


OR WE'LL EAT YOU.



DON'T WORRY, LITTLE ONE.



THE MANDRAKES DON'T EXIST...



IT'S COLD. I'LL KEEP YOU
WARM WITH MY CLOAK.

WE'LL FIND A
VILLAGE. YOU'LL SEE...

DID YOU HEAR THE SON
OF A BITCH?

IF WE'D TORN HIS EYES OUT,
WE WOULDN'T BE SO HUNGRY.

WE'RE REALLY SCREWED LIVING UNDER THE
GALLOWES. NO ONE COMES ROUND HERE.

END

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

THE UNFATHOMABLE

2

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

THAT WAILING IS THE BABIES
IN LIMBO.

THESE ARE BAD TIMES FOR
THE WEAK.

THIS IS THE CRUELEST
WINTER I CAN REMEMBER.

I'VE HEARD THAT IN SOME
PLACES THE FAMISHED
ARE EATING...

...HUMAN FLESH.

YOU'VE NEVER TRIED IT. HAVE
YOU ?...

YOU SHOULD
WATCH OVER ME...

WATCH OVER YOUR FRIEND
URSUS. IN CASE SOME
MADMAN WANTS ME
FOR HIS DINNER...



QUIET. OMO...DID YOU HEAR
SOMETHING?

YES...



WHO IS IT?

I'M DYING OF
EXHAUSTION.

WHAT TIME IS IT? YOU'RE
INTERRUPTING MY MEAGER DINNER.



I'M COLD...AND
HUNGRY.

WE CAN'T ALL BE
COMFORTABLE.



COME IN! DON'T BE STUPID AND COME
IN. IF YOU'RE COLD.



I SAID, "COME IN" YOU FOOL!

DOWN, OMO...

WHY ARE YOU HOLDING
THOSE RAGS LIKE THAT?
THEY'RE NOT GOLD!

HERE'S SOME DRY
CLOTHES...

GOOD. YOU'RE NOT
FROSTBITTEN.

THE COLD HASN'T
CRIPPLED YOU THIS
TIME, GWYNPLANE!

MY NAME IS GWYN...
GWYNPLANE...

MY GOD, THIS YOUNG MAN ISN'T
JUST HUNGRY. HE'S RAVENOUS!

YOU DON'T HAVE THE PLAGUE, DO
YOU? IF YOU INFECTION MY WOLF...

GRUMB
GRUMB
GRUMB

IT'S SICKENING TO SEE HOW PEOPLE EAT WHEN
THEY'RE STARVING, OMO. IT'S A PLEASURE
TO SEE A LORD EAT. I'VE SEEN DUKES EATING.
NOW THAT'S DINING GRACEFULLY!

EAT, EAT TILL
YOU EXPLODE. I'LL
DRINK THE MILK...

...BUAAAA...

DAMN YOU! WHY ARE
YOU SCREAMING NOW?

BEUUU...BUUU...

GRUMB?

BUUUUAAA...

WHAT'S THAT?

DAMN IT! ANOTHER ONE!

BUAAHHH...

THE SMELL OF FOOD IS MAKING
IT HUNGRY...GIVE ME THE MILK.

IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE
I'LL GET DINNER TONIGHT

ARE YOU ORPHANS?

WHO IS SHE?

AND YOU RESCUED HER?

NO. HER MOTHER WAS
DEAD. THE DARKNESS
KILLED HER...

SHE'S NOT MY SISTER.

I FOUND HER.

YES...NEAR THE
COAST...

SHE'S BEEN ABANDONED?

LIE DOWN NEXT TO HER. IF SHE CRIES, GIVE HER
THE REST OF THE MILK.

WHERE ARE YOU
GOING?

TO LOOK FOR HER MOTHER...AND TO BURY HER, IF
NECESSARY.

BUT...WHAT ABOUT THE MANDRAKES?

MANDRAKES? YOU MUST HAVE FOUND HER NEAR
WHERE JANSEN, "THE MADMAN," WAS HANGED.

JANSEN, "THE MADMAN"?

HE WAS A POOR, UN-
HAPPY, HALF-CRAZED
BOY. HE USED TO GO
ROUND THE TAVERNS
RECITING POEMS FOR
A FEW COINS.

WHEN HE WAS DRUNK,
HE BECAME TERRIBLY
SAD. HE WOULD WEEP
AND CRY...

...ABOUT A YOUNG
WOMAN WHO HAD DIED
OF THE PLAGUE...THEN
ONE DAY, HE ATTACKED
A NOBLEMAN...

...AND KILLED HIM.
THE NOBLEMAN HAD
LAUGHED AT HIS
MISFORTUNES...SO
HE KILLED HIM.



BUT DON'T BE FRIGHTENED. HE
WAS HANGED A MONTH AGO.
HE'S GOOD AND DEAD BY NOW.

HIS GHOST WON'T
HAUNT YOU...

YOU MUST'VE SEEN HIS BODY.
DON'T WORRY AND LOOK
AFTER THE LITTLE ONE.

...WE'LL BE BACK SOON.



AH, OMO, YOU CAN SEE BETTER
WITH YOUR NOSE THAN
DIOGENES WITH HIS LANTERN.

SHE'S DEAD...
STONE DEAD.



SHE WAS SO COLD! I CAN'T
UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN
DIE WHEN YOU HAVE A BABY...

WELL, OMO, I'LL BE THEIR FATHER
AND YOU'LL BE THEIR UNCLE. I'LL
ADOPT THEM. THERE'S NOTHING
MORE TO BE SAID.

WOOF!

WHY ARE YOU
LAUGHING?

I'M NOT LAUGHING...

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE
NOT LAUGHING?

BUT YOU SEEM...

THAT'S JUST MY
MOUTH...

NO, I AM NOT.

WH..WHO DID
THAT TO YOU?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN
...I'VE ALWAYS BEEN LIKE THIS..

FOREVER...

I...I DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE COULD
BECOME SO DISFIGURED.

HERE...HERE IT IS.

...*"BUCCA FISSA USQUE AD AUARES.
GENCIVIS DESNUDATIS, MASOQUE
MUDRIDATO, MASCA ERIS. ET
RIDEBIS SEMPER."*

YES, THAT'S IT...
POOR THING...

LAUGH, LITTLE ONE, LAUGH...

POOR BABY...SHE'S AS LOVELY AS A GODDESS,
BUT SHE HAS THE UGLIEST WET NURSE...EVEN
IN THE MOONLIGHT HE'S AS UGLY AS SIN.

WE'LL CALL YOU DEA.
DEA THE...

BUT...

SHE'S BLIND! THE COLD NIGHT
HAS TAKEN HER MOTHER AND
HER SIGHT.

GOD!

END
CHAPTER 2

THE UNICORN'S REFLECTION



WE LEFT
IT ALL BEHIND BY
RETURNING TO VENICE,
WHERE LAND AND SEA
BECOME A DREAM
HORIZON...

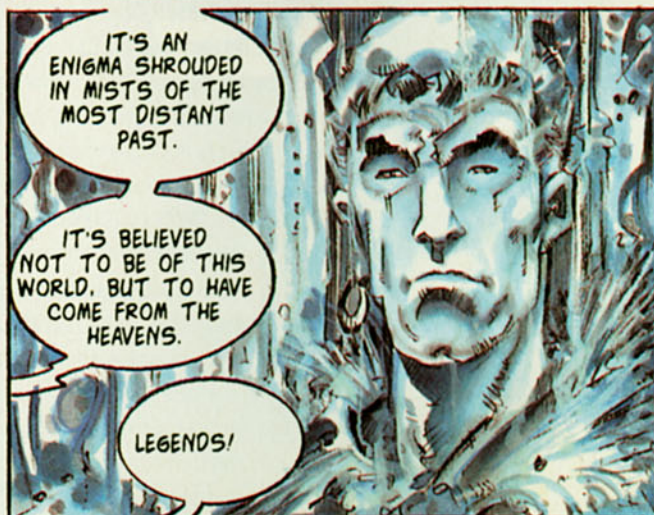
WE
ALREADY
HAVE EXCESS
CARGO.

IT'S
BY ORDER OF
THE EMPEROR,
MARCO.



IT'S
BEAUTIFUL.

AND EVIL.



IT'S AN
ENIGMA SHROUDED
IN MISTS OF THE
MOST DISTANT
PAST.

IT'S BELIEVED
NOT TO BE OF THIS
WORLD, BUT TO HAVE
COME FROM THE
HEAVENS.

LEGENDS!



IT IS SAID
THAT IN IT THERE
IS SOMETHING WHICH
AWAKENS IN ONE VISIONS
OF BLOOD, AND GIVES ONE
HIS MOST LONGED
FOR DREAMS.



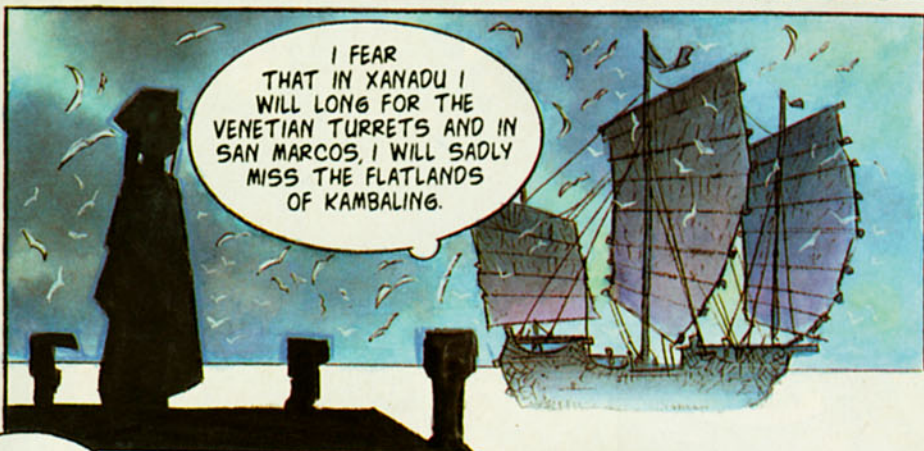
KUBLAI SENDS HIS GRAND-DAUGHTER TO THE KHAN OF PERSIA. MARCO POLO WILL BE HER CUSTODIAN DURING THIS LONG VOYAGE OF MORE THAN A YEAR.



THE YEARS HAVE BOUGHT TRIBUTE. KAILING. WOMEN ARE ORNAMENTS. NOT AN OBSESSION.



DO NOT SPEAK OF TRIBUTES UNTIL YOU SEE THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE PRINCESS.



I FEAR THAT IN XANADU I WILL LONG FOR THE VENETIAN TURRETS AND IN SAN MARCOS, I WILL SADLY MISS THE FLATLANDS OF KAMBALING.



BUT A VOYAGE IS ALWAYS A DOOR INTO THE UNKNOWN.



MAY I COME IN, HIGHNESS?

I HAVE BEEN HOPING FOR THIS VISIT FOR A LONG TIME.



THOSE WHO HAVE PRAISED YOUR BEAUTY HAVE FALLEN SHORT, HIGHNESS.

TRULY? YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME, MARCO?



DURING THE YEARS THAT HAVE MADE ME A WOMAN, I REMEMBER A GIRL HOPING A MAN WOULD TAKE A FANCY TO HER.

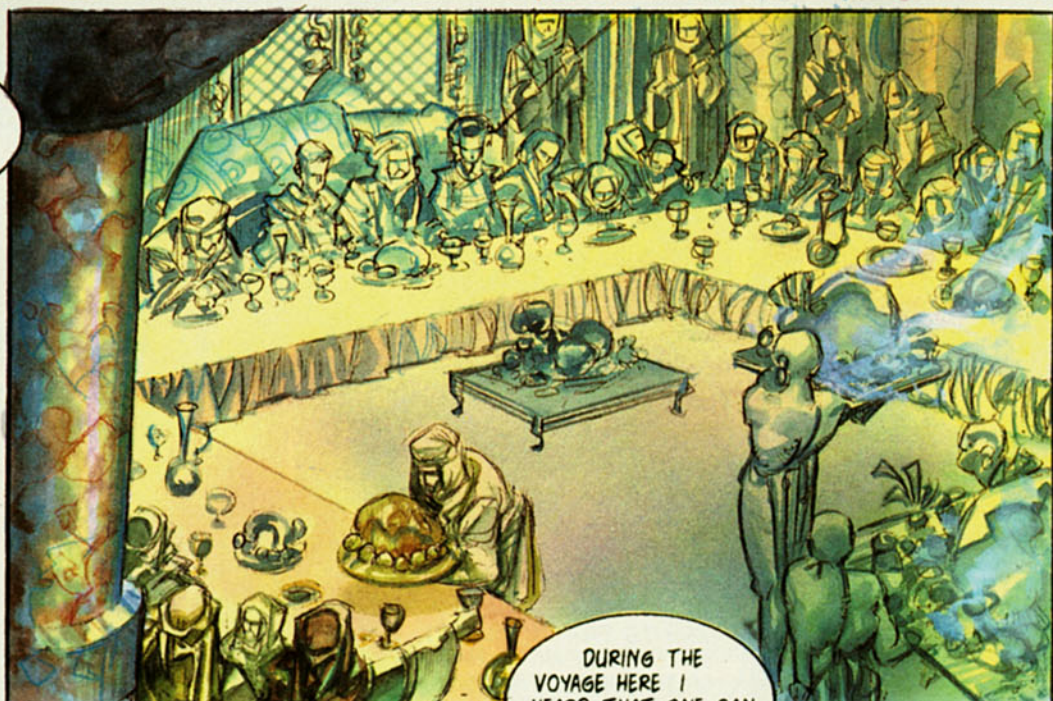


MEN ARE A DECEPTION, INCLUDING THOSE WORTH THE TROUBLE. STILL DON'T REMEMBER?













HIGHNESS,
THERE IS STILL
TIME TO DESIST IN
THIS MADNESS.

NO ONE
CAN DEFEY THE
GRANDDAUGHTER OF
KUBLAI KHAN.



I AM
SURELY NOT.
I WOULD NOT
DARE.

DON'T WORRY.
I WISH TO KNOW.
DON'T DARE
TO ASK.

BUT YOU'RE
GAMBLING WITH
YOUR LIFE.



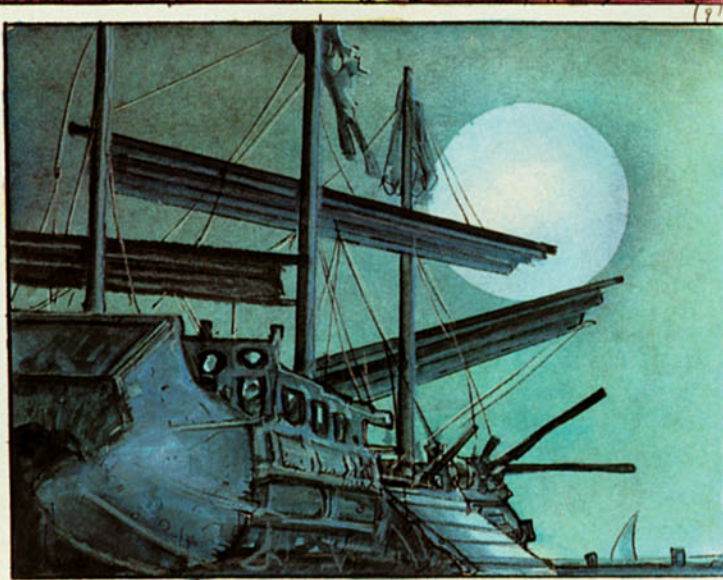
IT'S COMING!
IT'S COMING!

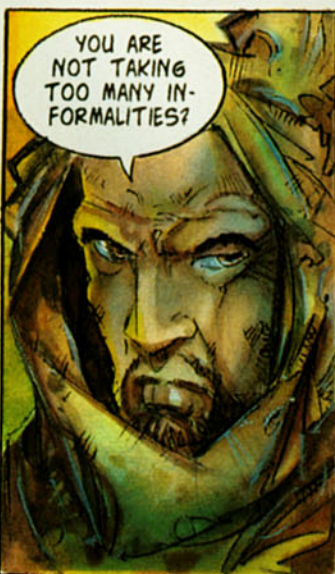


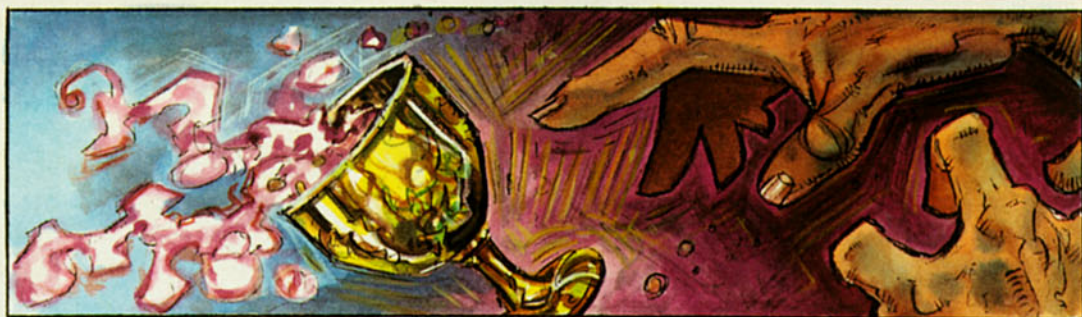
QUIET!
DON'T MOVE!



WHAT
IS THIS
HORROR?









THEREFORE,
IT WAS NO
ACCIDENT.

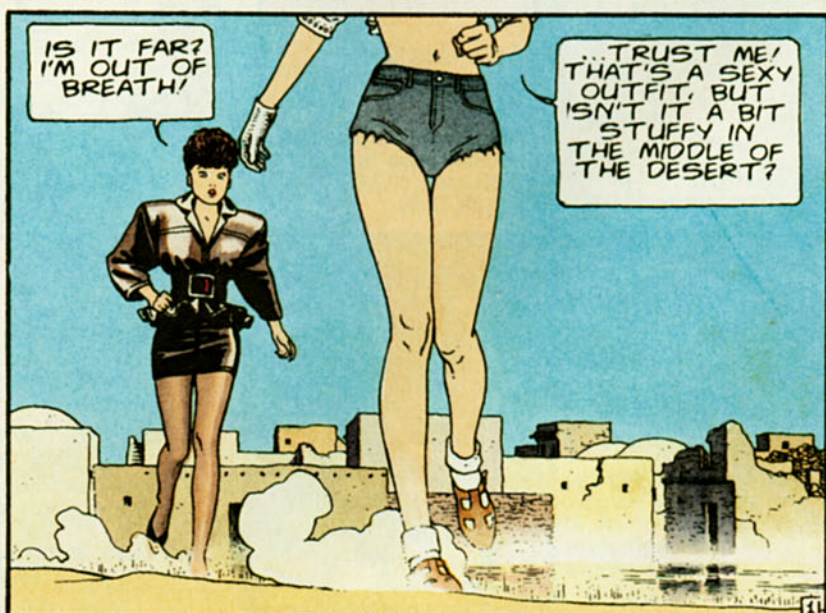
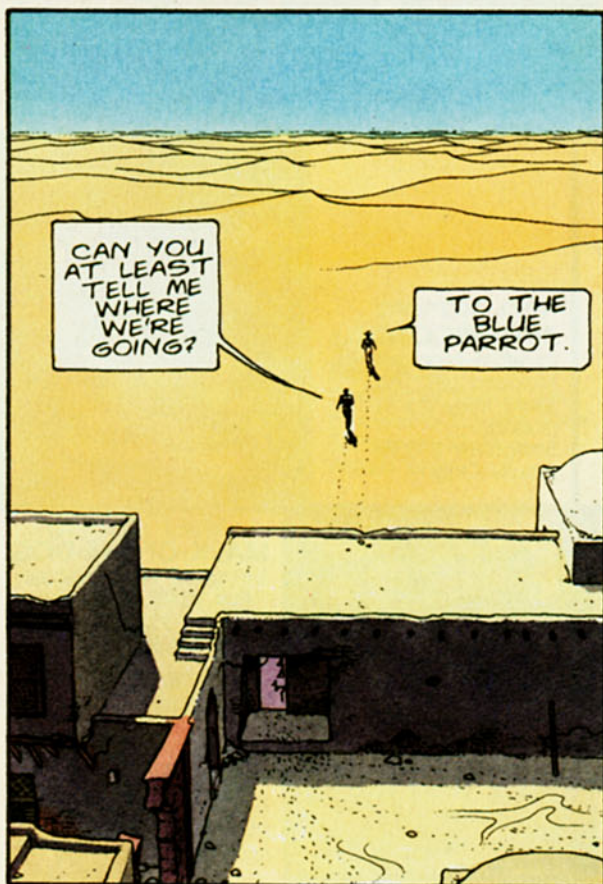
HE WAS AN
ACCIDENT.

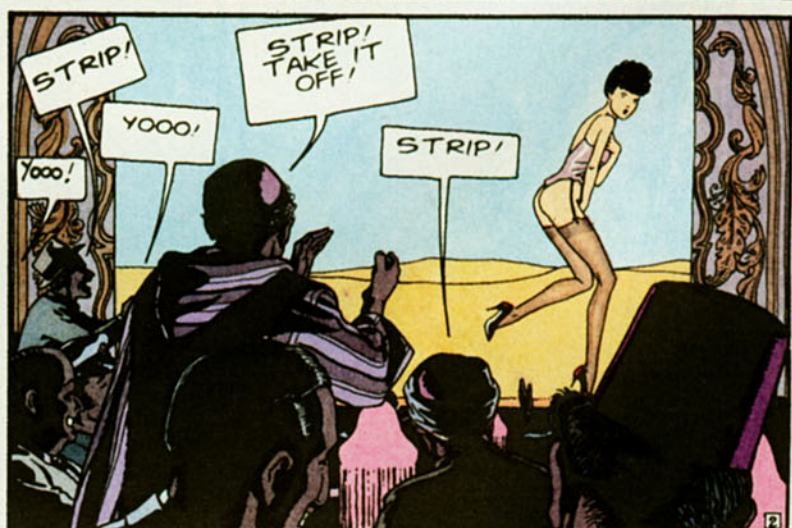
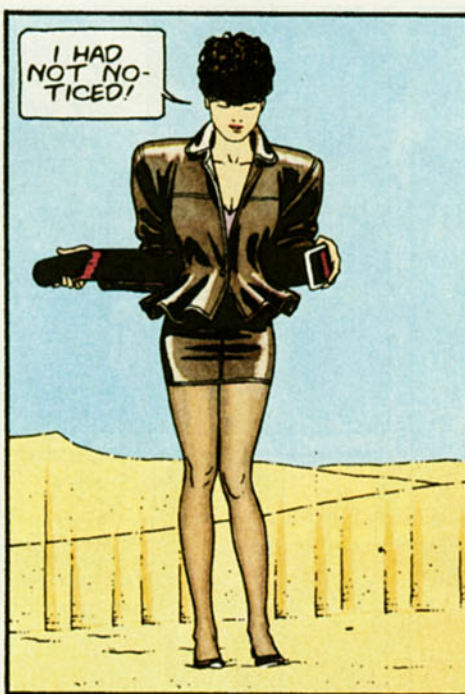
LEAVING HAS ALWAYS
BEEN A VEHEMENT DESIRE.
THE VOYAGE HAS BEEN
LIFE AND NOW I FEAR THAT
MY ARRIVAL WILL
BE A GOOD-BYE.

AZPÍRÍ & DE BLAS

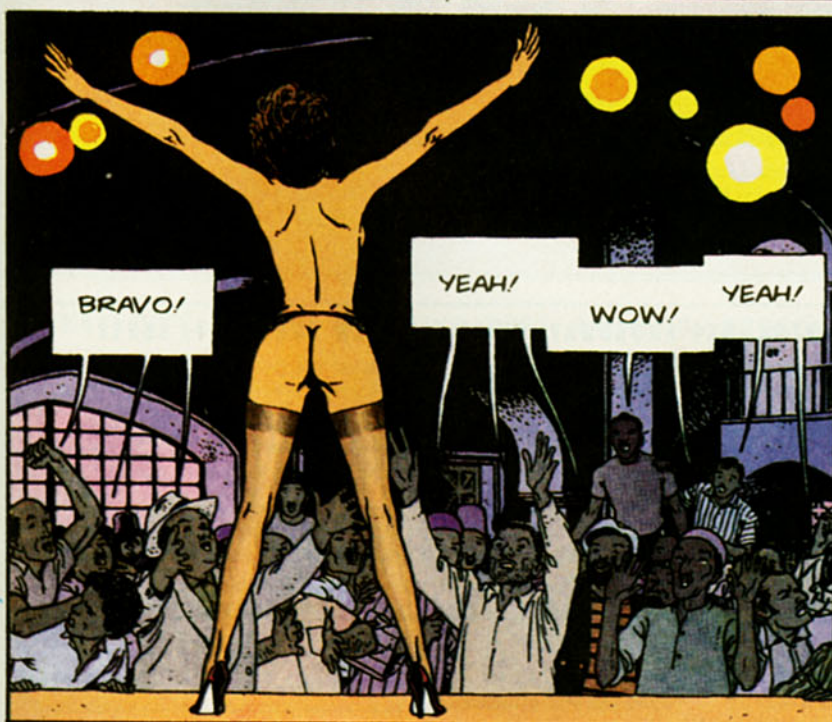
THE END

45 HEAVY METAL









PRIVADO: BELOW ZERO

FINALLY IN NEW YORK.
FRESH SNOW...SINCE
GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, I'VE
LEFT 900 MILES OF
INTERSTATE BEHIND...



TAKING INTO ACCOUNT TWO DAYS
...TWO MORE FOR GOING AND ONE IN
GAINESVILLE TO FIX THE CAR MAKES
FIVE...FIVE DAYS ARE ENOUGH FOR...



...THE PERFECT
ALIBI...

THIS
IS IT...



NOW AN PLEASANT SMILE TO THE
DOORMAN...A GOOD MORNING AND
STRAIGHT UP TO THE APARTMENT...



JOHN
LYOTTTA?

HUH?



YOU'RE UNDER
ARREST FOR
THE MURDER
OF YOUR WIFE...

WHAT!?



MY WIFE
MURDERED!/?
WHAT ARE
YOU SAYING?!

DON'T SCREW WITH
ME, PAL...WE'VE GOT
A MOUNTAIN OF
EVIDENCE AGAINST
YOU...

THAT'S A LIE!!
I'M INNOCENT!
I'M INNOCENT!

...CAN BE HELD
AGAINST YOU IN
A COURT OF LAW...

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT
TO REMAIN SILENT. TO
AN ATTORNEY. TO
A TELEPHONE CALL...
ANYTHING YOU SAY...

WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
WHAT? A MOUNTAIN
OF EVIDENCE?

WHAT EVIDENCE!/? YOU
CAN'T HAVE ONE BIT!!
NOT ONE!! NOT ONE!!

THEY'RE BLUFFING. I
KNOW THAT I DIDN'T
MAKE ONE MISTAKE...

NOT ONE MISTAKE, SINCE
IT ALL BEGAN, FIVE DAYS
AGO...

I'M
AFRAID,
JOHNNY...

NO, NO...! I'VE
THOUGHT OF
EVERYTHING.

BUT IT'S
MURDER...

IT'S HER LIFE OR OURS! LISA IS
CATHOLIC. SHE WON'T HEAR ANYTHING
ABOUT DIVORCE BESIDES...

SHE WOULD GET EVERYTHING.
THE APARTMENT, THE
HOUSE IN LAKE PLACID, MY
OFFICE IN MANHATTAN...



AND SHE'D NEVER STOP HARASSING US...I KNOW HER TOO WELL.

WHAT IF THE POLICE FIND OUT?



DON'T FORGET THAT I'M A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR...THAT I'VE STUDIED CRIMINOLOGY. I KNOW HOW TO MAKE TRACKS AND HOW TO ERASE THEM. I'VE PLANNED...



...THE PERFECT CRIME...

I BELIEVE IN YOU, JOHNNY...



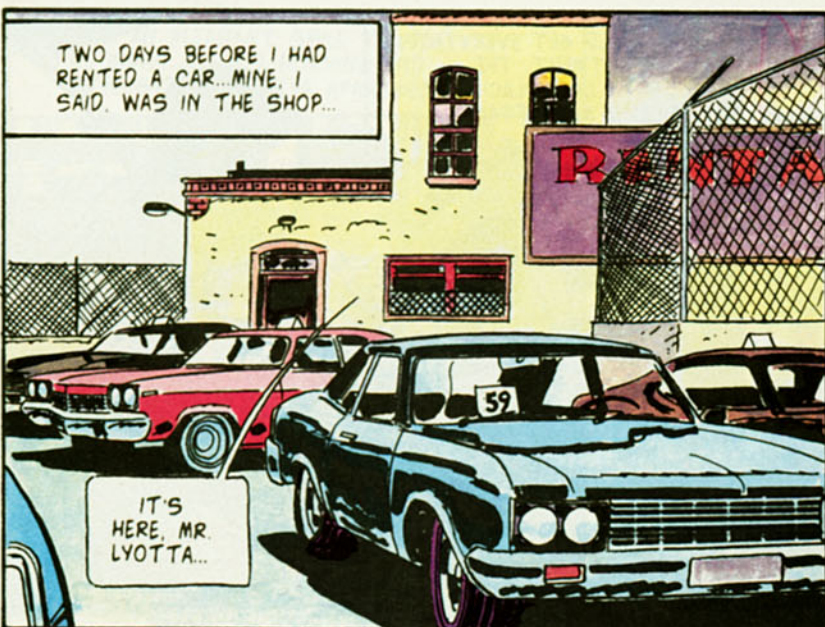
IN A FEW DAYS IT WILL ALL BE OVER...



THE COLD WAS BRUTAL IN THE STREET. AND ACCORDING TO THE WEATHER REPORTS, THE COLD WOULD CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME...



I COULDN'T HELP SMILING: THE COLD WOULD BE MY ACCOMPLICE IN THE CRIME...THE POLICE COULD INTERROGATE ME AS MUCH AS THEY WANTED...



TWO DAYS BEFORE I HAD RENTED A CAR...MINE, I SAID, WAS IN THE SHOP...

IT'S HERE, MR. LYOTTA...



BUT I HAD ANOTHER REASON. WITH A RENTED CAR, I'D HAVE RECORDED PROOF OF THE MILEAGE...

YOU'RE SO LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO GO TO FLORIDA, MR. LYOTTA...

...OF MY NAME. THE DAY. OF THE EXACT TIME...

BUT IT'S SO FAR! I'D TAKE A PLANE...

VERY GOOD. BLONDIE, REMEMBER WELL WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU NOW...

I NEVER FLY. I'D LIKE TO...IT'S NOT FEAR, BUT PANIC...

WHAT'S MORE. I LOVE DRIVING.

HOPE YOU ENJOY THE TRIP, MR. LYOTTA!

ONE HOUR LATER I HANDED THE CAR OVER TO A PROFESSIONAL DRIVER.

HERE'S THE MONEY AND THE RENTAL PAPERS. TAKE TWO DAYS TO GET TO GAINESVILLE...

...ONCE YOU GET THERE, LEAVE THE CAR IN A PARKING LOT AND GIVE THE KEYS TO THE ATTENDANT, THEN CALL THIS NUMBER IN MANHATTAN...

...TO TELL ME WHERE THE CAR IS AND WHAT HAPPENED ON THE TRIP...AT THE LOCAL AIRPORT, NOMAD AIRLINES HAS A RETURN TICKET IN YOUR NAME...

GOT IT.

ALL THIS TOOK TWO DAYS...TWO DAYS DURING WHICH MY WIFE THOUGHT I WASN'T IN NEW YORK. BUT ON A TRIP IN GAINESVILLE. TRACKING DOWN LEADS IN A CASE...TWO DAYS WHICH I PASSED IN SECRET...

BEFORE GETTING THE CALL FROM THE DRIVER, I WAITED UNTIL KEATON, THE DOORMAN, GOT OUT OF THE WAY, SO I COULD GET PAST HIM WITHOUT SEEING ME...



OPENING THE DOOR TO THE APARTMENT, WITHOUT MAKING A SOUND, I COULD HEAR THE TV IN THE LIVING ROOM...



INSIDE, THE HEAT WAS TURNED UP WAY TOO HIGH. JUST HOW SHE LIKED IT...



THE FIREPLACE WAS FAKE, WITH PLASTIC LOGS AND ELECTRIC FLAMES...BUT THE POKER WAS REAL...



CRASH!



THERE... IT'S DONE.



I PROCEEDED TO TURN OVER THE DRAWERS AND CLOSETS, FAKING A ROBBERY...



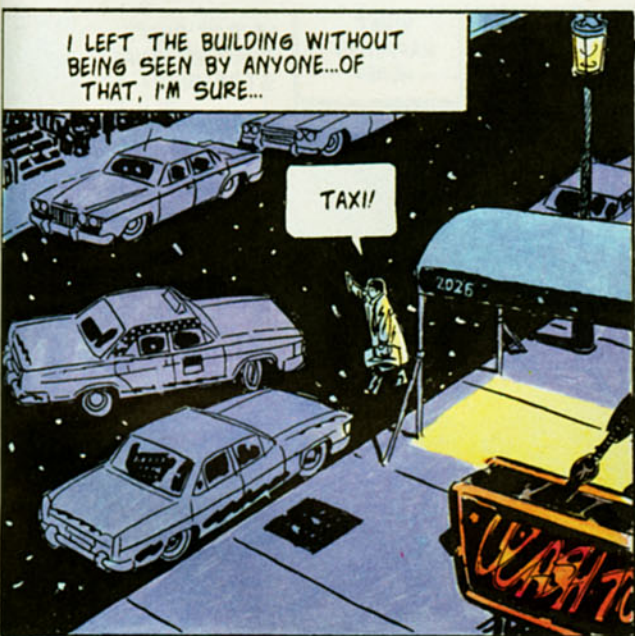
...SHUT OFF THE HEAT, DISCREETLY OPENED SOME WINDOWS, HOOKED UP THE AIR CONDITIONER AND TURNED IT UP TO THE MAX...



AFTER A LITTLE WHILE, THE APARTMENT TURNED ITSELF INTO A WORKING ICEBOX...

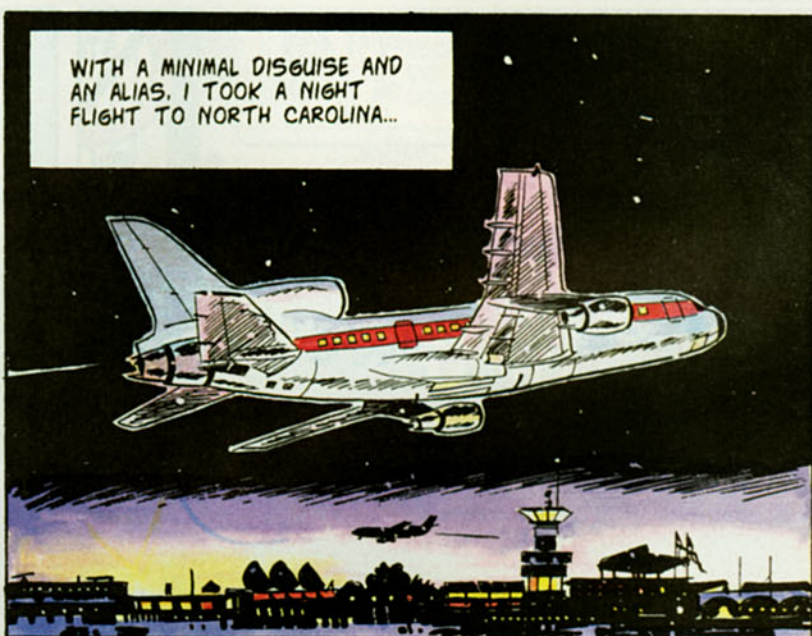


I LEFT THE BUILDING WITHOUT BEING SEEN BY ANYONE...OF THAT, I'M SURE...



TAXI!

WITH A MINIMAL DISGUISE AND AN ALIAS, I TOOK A NIGHT FLIGHT TO NORTH CAROLINA...



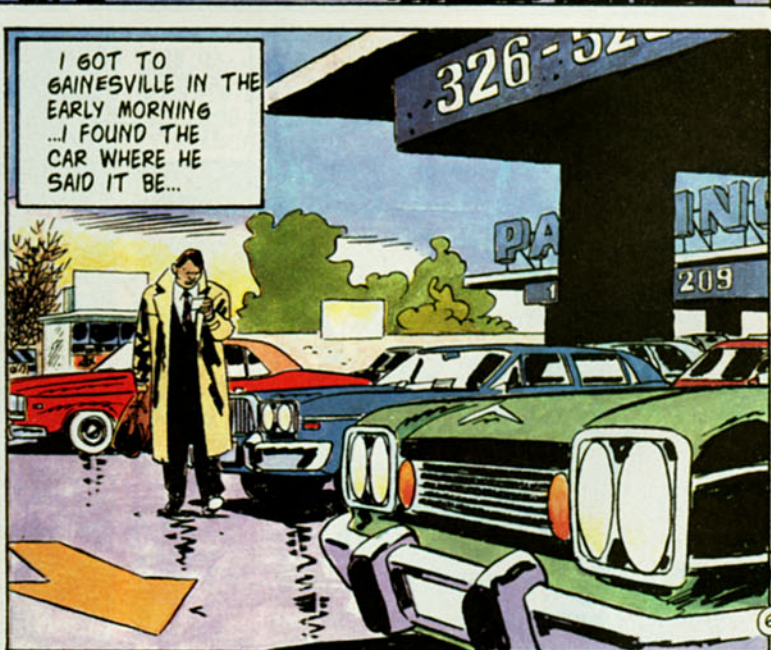
WAITING FOR ME THERE WAS A PRE-ARRANGED FLIGHT TO FLORIDA...

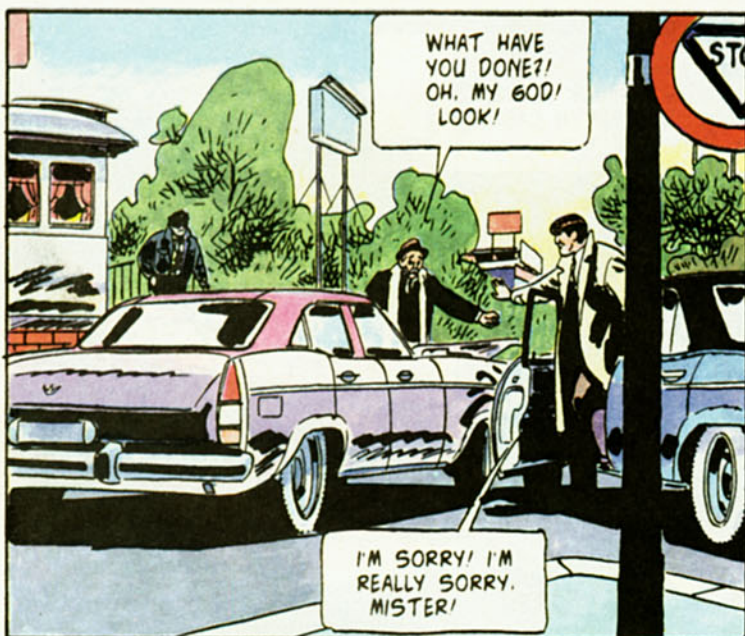
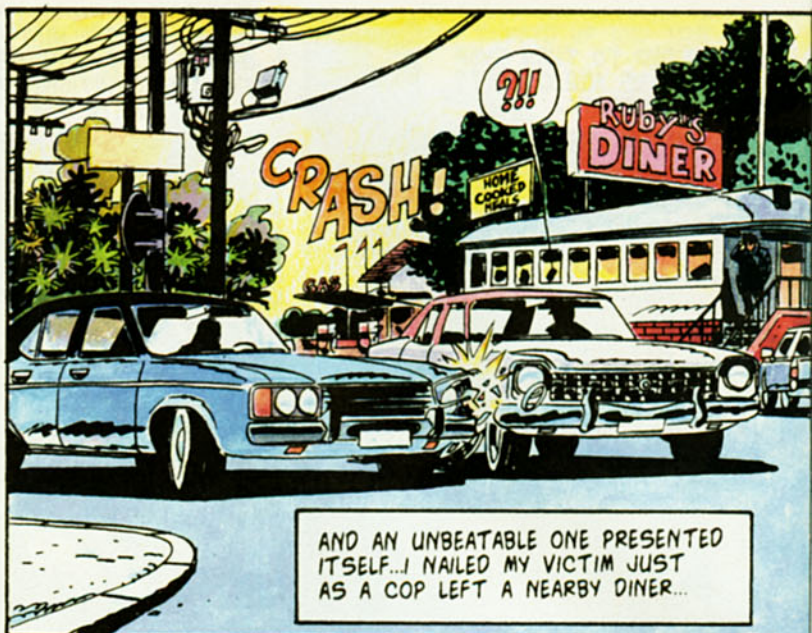


HERE'S YOUR BOARDING PASS, MR. CHRISTELL...

THANKS.

I GOT TO GAINESVILLE IN THE EARLY MORNING ...I FOUND THE CAR WHERE HE SAID IT BE...





WHAT REMAINED WAS FOR HIM TO TAKE DOWN THE NAMES. THE PLACE. THE DATE AND TIME OF THE INCIDENT...



I CAN'T GET BACK TO NEW YORK WITH THE CAR LIKE THIS...CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND A NEARBY REPAIR SHOP?

TURN AT THE INTERSECTION AND GO SIX MILES TOWARDS OCALA...

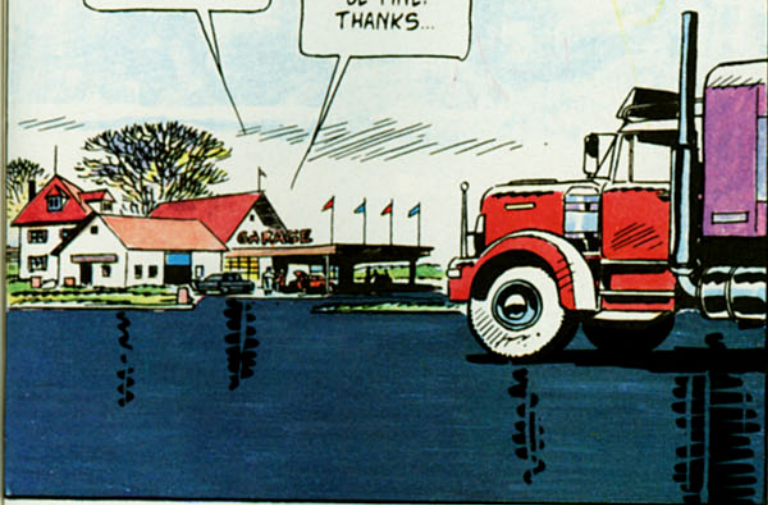


EVERYTHING WENT BETTER THAN I EXPECTED...



IT'LL BE READY FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.

THAT'LL BE FINE. THANKS...



I RENTED A ROOM IN A DISCREET HOTEL IN THE CENTER OF TOWN. AND WENT BACK TO THE AIRPORT IN MY LIGHT DISGUISE.



IN THE LATE AFTERNOON I RETURNED TO NEW YORK AS BILL KELLY. TRAVELING BUSINESS CLASS...



WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO CONNECT ME, JOHN LYOTTA, PRIVATE DETECTIVE, STUCK IN GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, BECAUSE OF A LITTLE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT, WHICH THE LOCAL POLICE WOULD SWEAR TO...?



AGAIN IN THE APARTMENT, I CLOSED THE WINDOWS, SHUT OFF THE AIR-CONDITIONING, AS SET THE HEAT HOW LINDA LOVED IT...



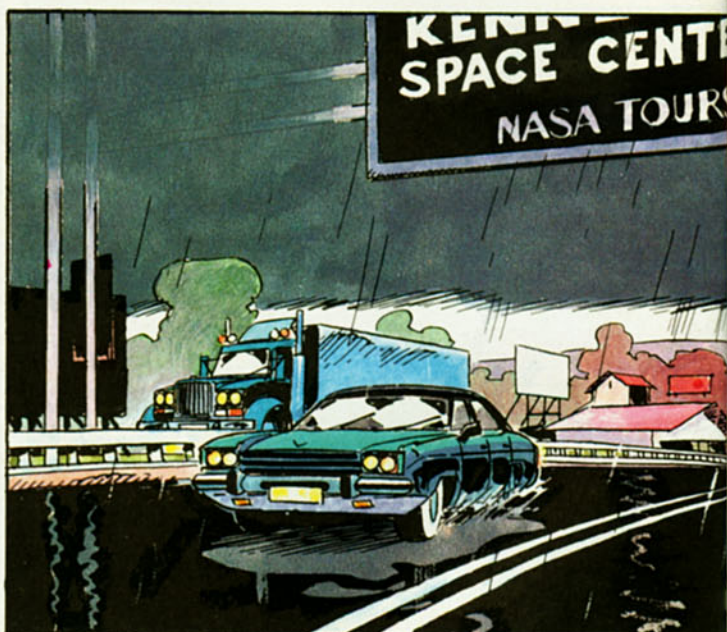
THE FORENSIC ANALYSIS DONE ON THE BODY WOULD ACCIDENTALLY MISCALCULATE THE TIME OF DEATH...DUE TO THE APPARENT HEAT IN THE ROOM.



NOT KNOWING THE COLD SHE HAS BEEN IN, THE CORONER WOULD PLACE THE TIME OF DEATH AT THE PRECISE TIME OF MY ACCIDENT IN GAINESVILLE...



DURING THE NIGHT I REPEATED THE TRIP TO FLORIDA. I ARRIVED IN TIME TO SLEEP A COUPLE OF HOURS IN MY HOTEL.



NO, NO, I DIDN'T MAKE ONE MISTAKE! NOT ONE! I'M SURE OF IT! AND WITHOUT CAUSE, I'VE BEEN ARRESTED!

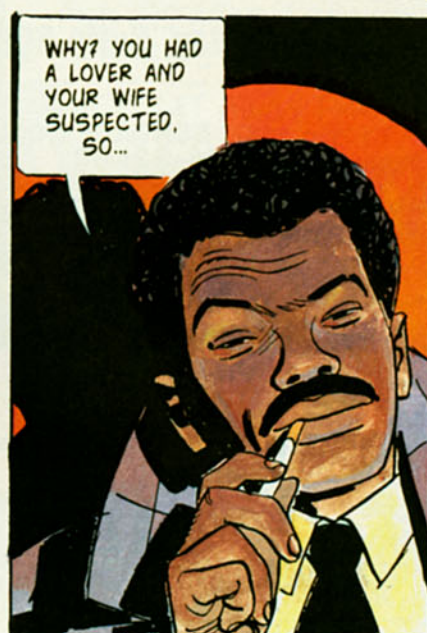
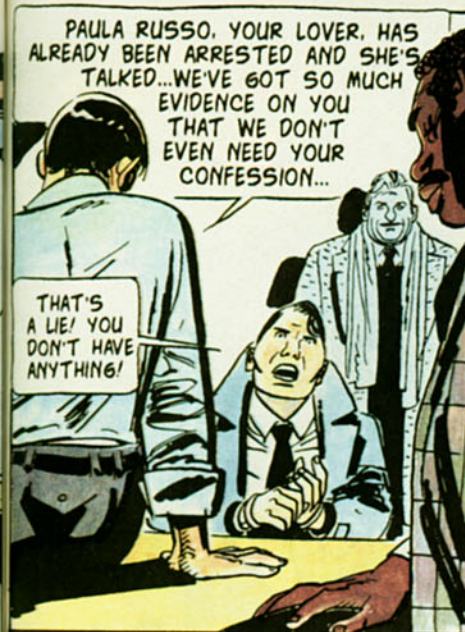


THE POLICE CAN'T HAVE ONE BIT OF EVIDENCE AGAINST ME! NOTHING!



YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE! I WASN'T EVEN IN NEW YORK! I CAN PROVE IT! I'M INNOCENT!





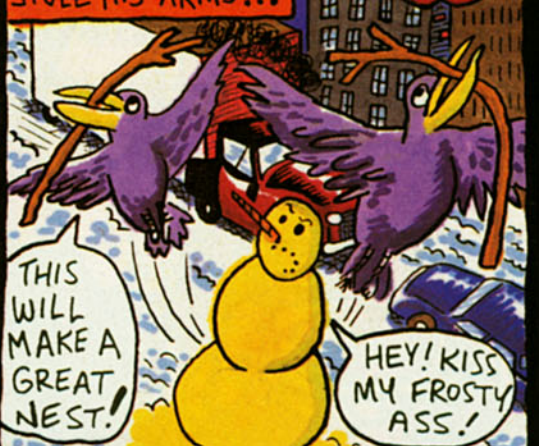


SAUNDY THE NEW YORK CITY SNOWMAN

FIRST, A DRUNKEN BUM TOOK HIS HAT...

THEN, SOME MOCKINGBIRDS STOLE HIS ARMS...

IN "THE VERY BAD DAY"



WEIRD WALLY

©'94 Roy Tompkins
in the Super
Weiners!



...THESE SUCKERS
PLUMP-UP LIKE
A PREGNANT HIPPO
IN THE OVEN, KIDS!!

DUDE!
WOW!!
COOL!



NEXT DAY...

OVERNITE
PACKAGE
4 WEIRD
WALLY!



GOOD GOD! DA SHEER
BEAUTY OVI! LOOKIT DESE
I...I KIN H-HARDLY KEEP
MYSELF FROM WEEPIN'!!

#BROOKLYN?!



AH-SO! COOK IN ROOMMATE
HEADBUTT'S MICROWAVE!
VELLY INTEESTING!

*WHAT THE
HELL...JAPANESE?!!

COOK
EIGHT
SECONDS
ON HIGH!



BZZZZZZZZZZZZ
KA-PLUMP!



OH...OH...NOOOOOO!
H-HEADBUTT WILL KILL
ME, I'VE RUINED HIS
MICROWAVE! I...I BEST
GET THEE RID OF THESE
ACURSED SUPER WEINERS!



SOON:

YO! WEIRD
WALLY I
YAM HOME!

GULP! I HOPE
HEADBUTT DON'T
NOTICE HOW I
REPAIRED HIS
MICROWAVE OVEN
WITH THIS DUCT
TAPE !!

I'M INNA
KITCHEN,
HEADBUTT!



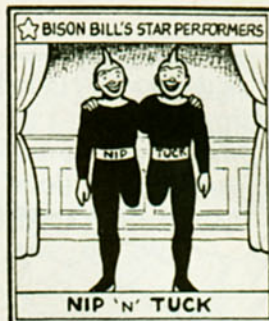
YO! CHECK ME OUT, WEIRD WALLY!
SOME DOPEY JERK TOSSED
OUT THESE FRESH SUPER
WEINERS IN OUR
TRASH CAN! THIS IS
MY LUCKY DAY. HOLMES!!



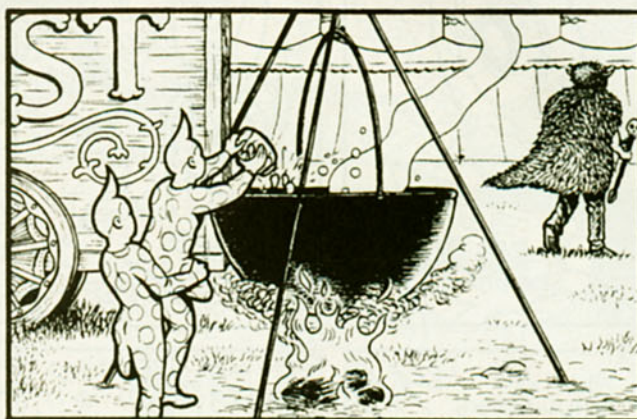
the End of ANOTHER
ADVENTURE!

BISON BILL'S WEIRD WEST SHOW

BY MACK WHITE



1. Crazy Water is busily brewing a batch of Bison Bill's Cactus Tonic™. Three bottles daily of this amazing drug will counteract the effects of neuralthermia, hyperaphasia, retriulitis, and mogombo-on-the-lower-strombogo. Buy some today and you'll feel ten years younger!



2. Uh-oh! Look who's shown up! It's Nip and Tuck, those One-Legged Daredevil Twins of the Highwire—and they're up to no good as usual! While Crazy Water's back is turned, they add their own ingredient to the recipe: an entire jar of *diablo peppers*, the hottest peppers on Earth!



3. Later, in his tent, Col. William F. "Bison Bill" Codeine tests the batch of Cactus Tonic™. Though it is not easy, the Colonel insists upon performing this important task himself every day, so that he may personally be assured of the safety and efficacy of this product which bears his name.



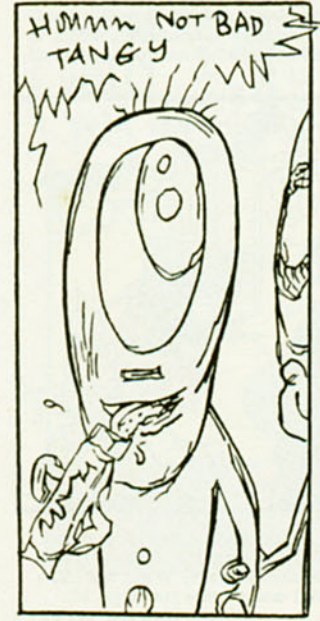
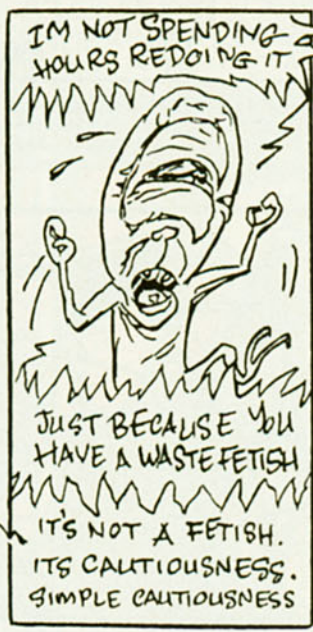
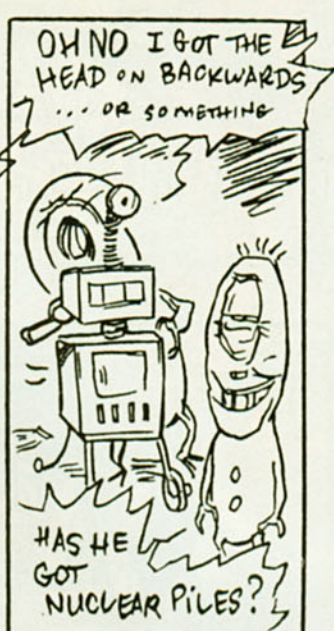
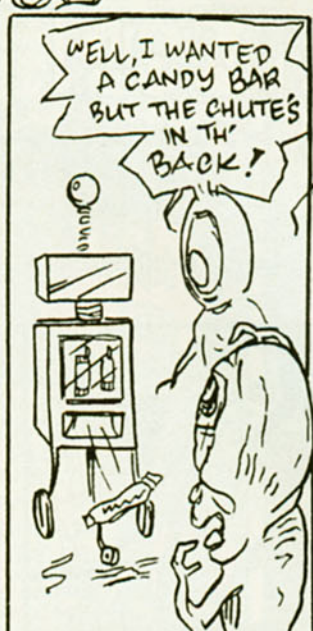
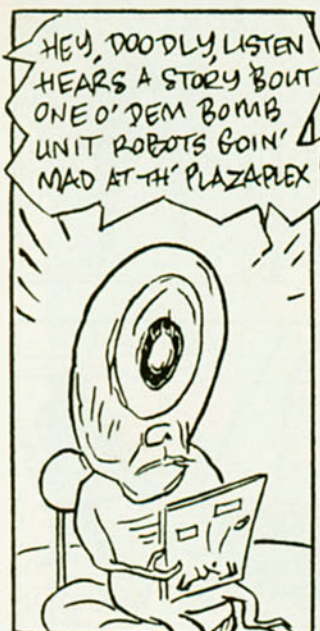
4. The Grand Entry begins, and—wouldn't you know it?—that's when Bison Bill's intestines start to churn and burn, as those dastardly diablo peppers go to work. The Great Scout twists and squirms in his saddle, in a valiant effort to keep this south-of-the-border rebellion from exploding.



5. But his efforts are in vain! Feeling his sphincter loosen its grip, Bison Bill wheels his horse around and makes a mad dash for the safety of the nearest latrine. Not since the time he escaped the Iguana People of Mexico has Bison Bill had to ride so fast!



6. As soon as Bison Bill sits down, flame shoots out of his posterior, causing a terrible methane explosion which splinters the latrine and sends him high over the circus grounds! Meanwhile, Crazy Water has had a vision telling him what Nip and Tuck did—and are they gonna get it!



Inflation LAND

BY
MARK
MARTIN
©94

IF I GO HOME TO
GET 4 MILLION MORE,
WHAT WILL THE PRICE
BE BY THE TIME
I GET BACK

TWENTY
MILLION

BUT I ONLY
HAVE 12 MILLION.
GIVE ME A
BREAK!

NO CAN
DO! MY RENT
JUST WENT
UP TO \$5
TRILLION A
WEEK!



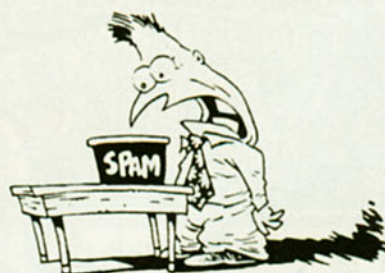
LOOK, FRIEND, THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
WE'RE ALL STABBING EACH OTHER
IN THE BACK AND FOR **WHAT??**
SO THE "MAN" CAN FLY FIRST
CLASS?? COME ON, I AIN'T NO
SQUARE, LET ME IN ON A LITTLE
OF THAT **UNDERGROUND
ECONOMY!**

OKAY, TELL
YA WHAT:
YOU LET ME
SCREW YER
WIFE AND
I'LL GIVE
YOU A
**WHOLE
HAM!**

DEAL!



I COULDA
SWORE HE
SAID
HAM!

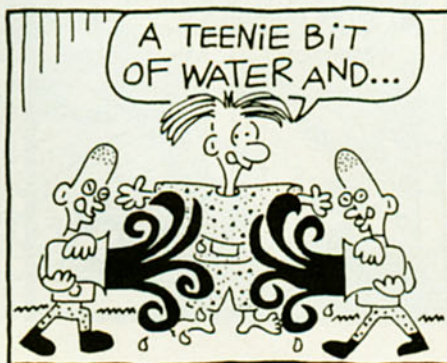


SLUG BUCKET

MY OWN DESIGN!
THE FIRST EVER
SPONGE OUTFIT!



A TEENIE BIT
OF WATER AND...



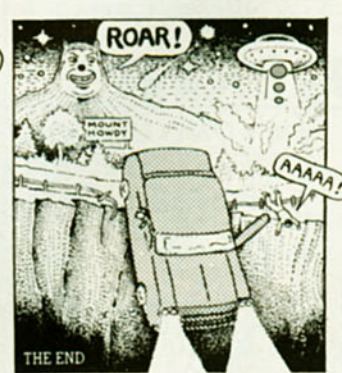
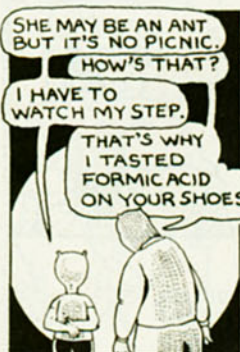
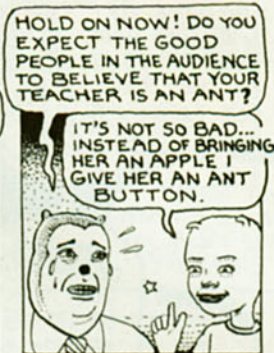
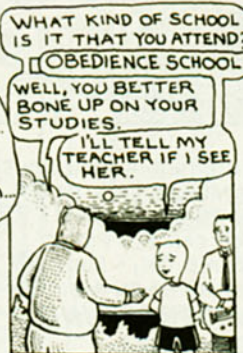
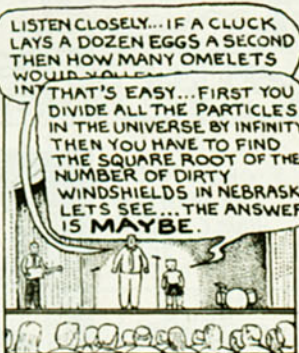
LET ME
BE YOUR **SEXY!**
LOVE WIPER!



EMPTY SKULL COMICS

TOGETHER WE FALL

A COMEDY

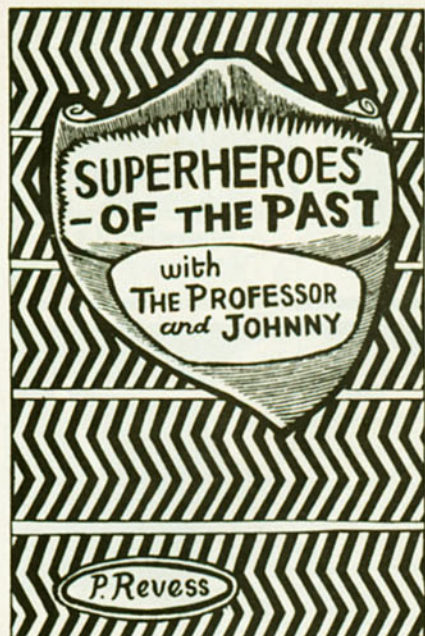




Join Dr.
McGillicuddy as
he prepares for
his first actual
live brain
operation!

The End

71 HEAVY METAL



JOHNNY, THESE DAYS YOU HAVE ALL THESE "FAR-OUT" COMIC BOOK SUPERHEROES WITH SPECIAL POWERS, LIKE THE, UH... WHAT ARE THOSE... THOSE NEUROTIC KARATE ELVES!

MUTANT NINJA TURTLES!

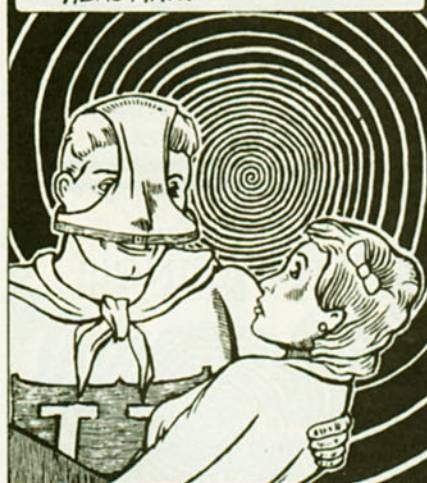
YES! BUT BACK IN MY DAY WE DIDN'T HAVE SUCH COMPLICATED HEROES -



...HEROES BACK THEN WERE SIMPLER, BEFORE THEY GOT ALL THEIR FANCY GIMMICKS! LIKE CAPTAIN PUNCH-IN-THE-FACE! THAT'S ALL HE DID - PUNCH PEOPLE IN THE FACE!!



...BACK DURING THE DEPRESSION, A LOT OF HEROES HAD REAL SIMPLE COSTUMES! LIKE UNDERPANTS-ON-HIS-HEAD-MAN!



...JOHNNY RAMPAGE, THE "CROSS-EYED LUNATIC WITH A LIT STICK OF DYNAMITE IN EACH HAND!!" HE STOOD UP TO THE MIXED SEAFOOD GANG!



...PROFESSOR GASTROPOD, THE HUMAN SNAIL!!! GANGSTERS GOT "STUCK UP" IN HIS GLUEY TRAIL!



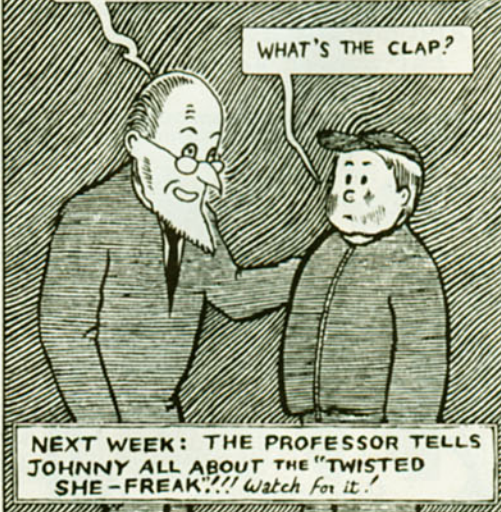
...HEAVILY BANDAGED BUDDY - HIS FRAIL APPEARANCE SEVERELY INTIMIDATED GANGSTERS NERVOUS OF LAWSUITS!



...CIGARETTE GIRL!! SHE'D BRING YOU A FRESH PACK OF CIGARETTES OR CIGARS! I SAW HER ONCE IN NEW YORK CITY!



OH, AND V.D. WOMAN - SHE FOILED THE PLANS OF NAZI AGENTS BY GIVING THEM ALL THE CLAP! SHE WAS MY FAVORITE.



a KILLER like YOU and ME



FORTY
SECOND AND
SEVENTH



FLYING...

AH, I CAN SEE YOU'RE INTO CRIME NOVELS
AND THAT WHOLE GENRE...



YEAH,
YEAH...



WELL,
TODAY'S YOUR
LUCKY DAY, I'M
A SPECIALIZED
KILLER...

UH,
HUH...





SERIOUSLY,
PAL...ALL BY
MYSELF. I'VE
KNOCKED OFF,
AT THE VERY
LEAST, A
HALF DOZEN
PEOPLE...

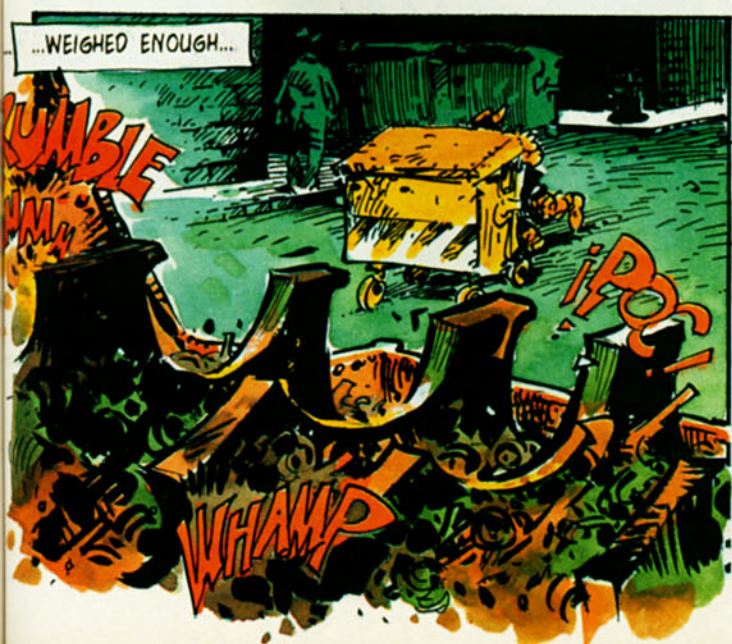


...LOOK, WHEN I CAME WITH NOTHING
TO THE BIG APPLE, ONE OF THE
FIRST JOBS THAT I HAD...

...WAS AS A SANITATION DEPARTMENT WORKER...WHAT
THE HELL, A GARBAGE MAN...



WHAT HAPPENED WAS, ONE NIGHT, TWO MONTHS AFTER I
STARTED THE JOB...THOSE FUCKING DUMPSTERS ALREADY...



...WEIGHED ENOUGH...



...BUT WHEN I SAW WHAT HAD MADE
THIS ONE SO HEAVY IT WAS ALREADY
TOO LATE...



WHAT
THE
HELL!

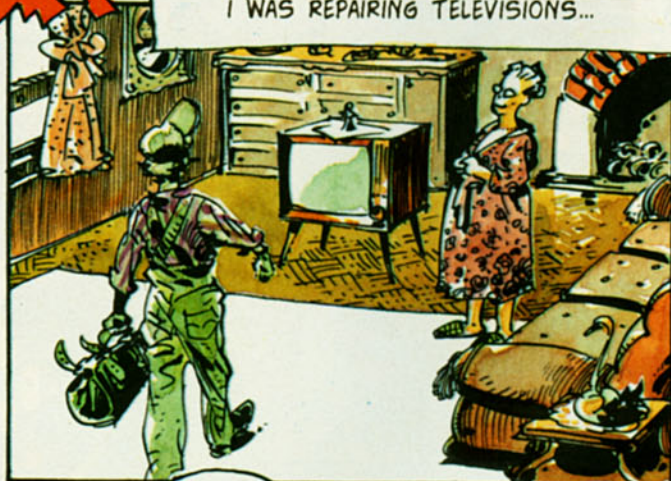
...AND THAT OLD DRUNK WAS EASILY CRUSHED INTO BITS.



MY NEXT JOB WASN'T SO BAD...

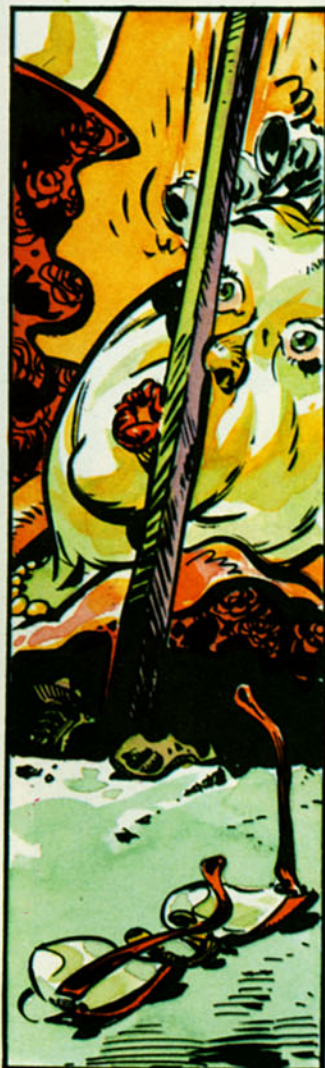
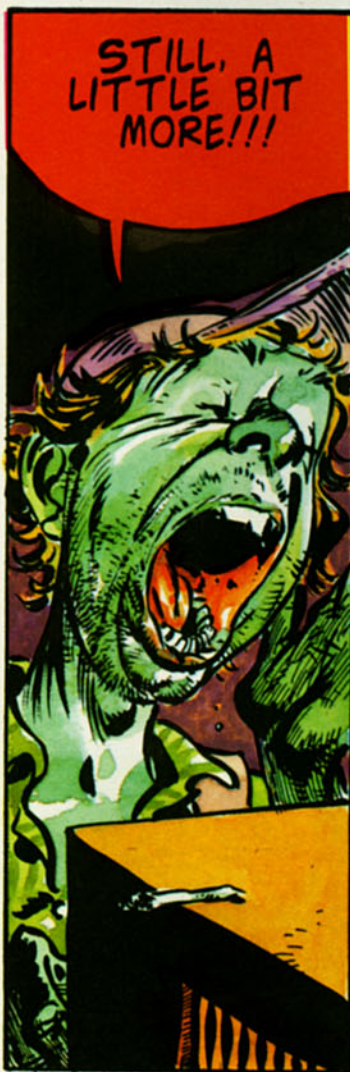


I WAS REPAIRING TELEVISIONS...



I
COULD
USE A HAND,
LADY!





AFTER THAT, I LEARNED THE ART OF MASONRY
...IN OTHER WORDS: I BECAME A BRICKLAYER.

PHIL!
PHIL!

WHERE
THE DEVIL
IS HE?

I CAN'T FIND PHIL ANYWHERE.
I'M PUTTING YOU IN
CHARGE OF
FILLING THE
HOLES.

...THIS WAS THE THIRD TIME, AND THE TRUTH
IS THAT I HAD ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA, I SWEAR...

HELLLLLLPPPP!

HOLY...

PHIL...PHIL!

AND THE LAST JOB I HAD BEFORE BECOMING A TAXI DRIVER WAS WORKING IN THE SUBWAY.

Whooooo

...STARTED OUT SELLING TICKETS, BUT I WORKED MY WAY UP TO CONDUCTOR...



I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING, SIR, I HAVE TO CONFESS.
THAT THIS TIME, I WAS BEGINNING TO ENJOY
IT-IN FACT...



I SWORE I DID...



FORTY
SECOND AND
SEVENTH.
TEN-FIFTY,
MISTER.



YEAH,
IT WAS
SO HORRIBLE
TO ACCEPT WHAT
WAS HAPPENING.
BUT YET IT
WAS SO EASY...

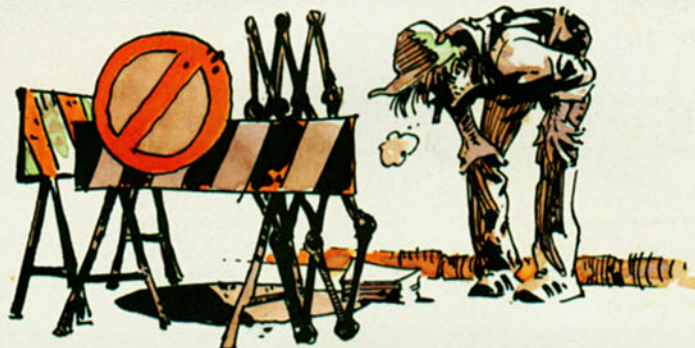
...WHEN YOU GET USED TO
IT, KILLING ISN'T ANYTHING
OUT OF THIS WORLD.
I'M TELLING YOU...



...TO ACTUALLY KNOCK
PEOPLE OFF. AND I'LL
TELL YOU SOMETHING
ELSE, PAL...



...I SENT FOUR OF THEM TO THEIR GRAVES
THAT I KNOW OF...MAYBE THERE ARE
MORE OUT THERE THAT I DON'T
EVEN KNOW ABOUT...



THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

ETERNAL REQUITAL

3

MERCY! SPARE US OUR
LIVES!

YOU'VE COMMITTED A HORRENDOUS
CRIME...

IT'S BEEN A TERRIBLE YEAR! OUR
FAMILIES ARE STARVING TO DEATH! THE
PLAGUE HAS DEVASTATED THE LAND!!!

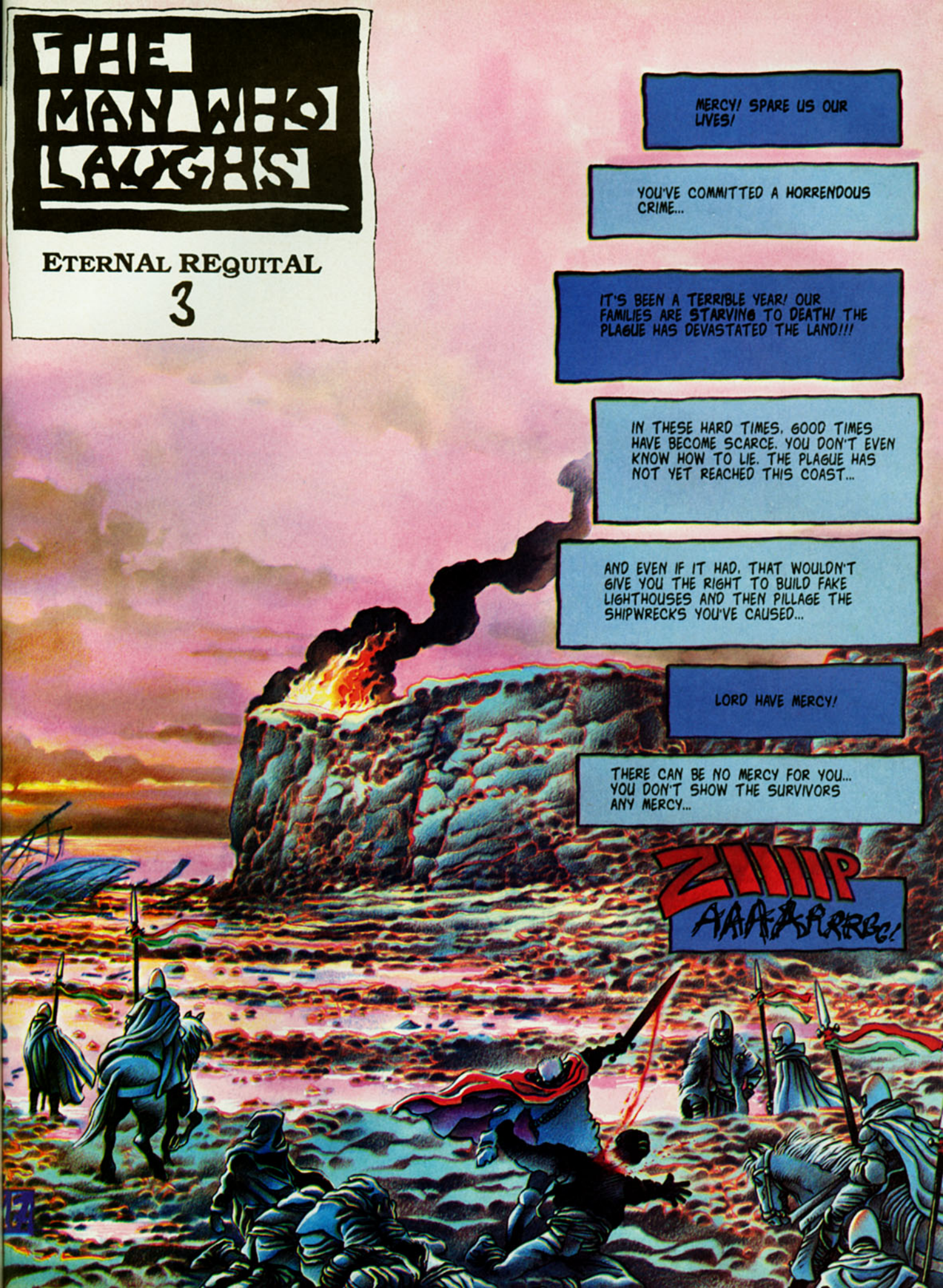
IN THESE HARD TIMES, GOOD TIMES
HAVE BECOME SCARCE. YOU DON'T EVEN
KNOW HOW TO LIE. THE PLAGUE HAS
NOT YET REACHED THIS COAST...

AND EVEN IF IT HAD, THAT WOULDN'T
GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO BUILD FAKE
LIGHTHOUSES AND THEN PILLAGE THE
SHIPWRECKS YOU'VE CAUSED...

LORD HAVE MERCY!

THERE CAN BE NO MERCY FOR YOU...
YOU DON'T SHOW THE SURVIVORS
ANY MERCY...

ZIIIIIP
AAAAARRRGH!



CAPTAIN! DESTROY THE
SCAVENGERS. DESTROY THEM ALL!

SIR...WE'VE FOUND SOMETHING...
IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BELONG
TO THE SHIPWRECK.

IT'S A GOURD...IT'S BEEN
SEALED WITH TAR.

COLLECT EVERYTHING OF
VALUE THAT YOU SEE...

SIR, THERE'S A MAN
THAT THOSE HYENAS
HAVEN'T FINISHED OFF...

INTERESTING. VERY INTEREST-
ING...AND VERY USEFUL.

I THINK THERE'S
SOMETHING IN IT...

JUSTICE AND WEALTH HAVE
COME TO MEET ME. I CAN'T
TURN MY BACK ON THEM.

THEN YOU DO IT. I
WANT NO WITNESSES.

FATE HAS OFFERED ME A
GLIMPSE OF THE PAST...

...CAPTAIN...

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE
NAME OF GWYNPLANE?

GWYNPLANE? OF COURSE...



HE IS KNOWN AS "THE MAN WHO LAUGHS".

ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO HE WAS ADOPTED BY URSUS, AN ACTOR WHO TRAVELS WITH A PET WOLF...

THERE'S ALSO A BLIND GIRL, DEA...IT'S A WRETCHED FAMILY.



I HEARD THEY WERE PERFORMING IN THE TAVERNS OF PORMOUTER...

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE THEY ARE?

THEY'RE PUTTING ON A PLAY THAT URSUS HIMSELF WROTE...

APPARENTLY IT'S PRETTY GOOD...

NOT MUCH OF AN AUDIENCE TONIGHT...THEY MUST ALL BE OUT LOOKING FOR THE BOY WHO KILLED HIS SISTER...

GO BACK TO THE CART WITH DEA. I HAVE TO TALK TO THE INNKEEPER ABOUT THE DEBT.

BE CAREFUL, OMO AND I WILL MEET YOU LATER.

CRIME SEEMS TO BE MORE POPULAR THAN THE THEATER...

WHATEVER YOU SAY, FATHER.

YOU'RE SHIVERING,
DEA.

NO. NO. THANKS, GWYN

ARE YOU SCARED?

IT'S THOSE THINGS I'VE HEARD
ABOUT THE MURDERER...

..VOICES..

DEAD ECHOLESS VOICES...

THEY'RE LOOK-
ING FOR ME.

BUT I'VE ALREADY DONE IT...

NOW SHE'S ALONE...

ABSOLUTELY ALONE

...AND HER WAX DOLL.

...IT'S NOT EASY TO HATE AS MUCH
AS I DO

IT HAS TO BE PART
OF YOU...

..WITH HER GREED

...AND...

I DON'T HATE HER.

I HATE HER BLOOD.

DON'T WORRY, DEA...I'D NEVER LET
ANYTHING HARM YOU.

I STILL HEAR
THE VOICES...

NO. NO THEY ARE NOT
LOOKING FOR ME.

THEY SEEM SO FRAGILE...I COULD STRIKE THEM WITH LIGHTNING. ZAP! ...NO, THEY'RE NOT LOOKING FOR ME...

NOT LAUGHING...

YOU'RE SO GOOD TO ME, GWYN...

DON'T SAY THAT...YOU DON'T KNOW HOW HORRIBLE I AM.

FATE BLINDED YOU, DEA.

NOBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO LOVE YOU...

NOBODY, DEA.

MY OWN BODY IS FILLED WITH HER DISGUSTING BLOOD.

WHEN I SPIT BLOOD, IT'S AS IF MY BODY...

WERE FIGHTING HER OFF...

LOVE DOES NOT NEED EYESIGHT...

SIGHT CAN HIDE THE TRUTH.

...AND REJECTING HER WITH DISGUST!

SHOULD I KILL THEM?

THEY SEEM SO FRAGILE..

AND SHE...

HER EYES...HER EYES REMIND ME...

YOU WERE BORN FOR ME, GWYN. I KNOW YOU'RE HANDSOME.

MY EARS HURT.

REMINDE ME OF MY MOTHER...MY MOTHER...

AND HER GREED

I REMEMBER MY MOTHER ...SHE WAS SO COLD...

BUT YOU...

LITTLE BY LITTLE, I REALIZED WHAT MY MOTHER WAS LIKE...

WHAT SHE IS LIKE...

IF SHE'S STILL ALIVE.

IT'S THAT DAMNED BLACK BLOOD THAT RUNS THROUGH MY VEINS...

PURIFY ME!

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN WITH YOU ...AND SO I SHALL REMAIN, FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE...

I MUST PURIFY MYSELF...BEFORE I KILL THEM.

GWYN!!

DEA!!

MY GOD!!

RAUUUUUUUU

YOU CAME SO CLOSE TO DEATH!

OMO FOUND HIM. HE'S THE MAN THEY WERE LOOKING FOR.

HE MUST HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE SOON AFTER WE GOT BACK.

NEITHER OMO OR I SAW HIM LAST NIGHT.

WHAT A GRUESOME RITUAL! HE CUT HIS WRISTS, AND THEN BURIED THEM...

WE'D BETTER GET RID OF THE BODY. THE LAW ALWAYS NEEDS A CULPRIT.

THAT'S ITS ONLY WEAKNESS.

WE'LL GO SHOPPING IN TOWN, THAT WAY WE WON'T RAISE ANY SUSPICIONS.


OMO WILL TAKE CARE OF DEA.

SOON YOU'LL BE WEALTHY ...YOU'LL BE ABLE TO MARRY DEA, AND HAVE FOUR OR FIVE PUPS.

YOU'RE FAMOUS AROUND HERE.

GOOD MORNING, "THE MAN WHO LAUGHS."


I HOPE THEY'RE BETTER LOOKING THAN YOU, AND LUCKIER THAN DEA...



I KNOW YOUR FAMILY IS AN HONORABLE ONE. NONE OF THEM HAVE EVER BEEN HANGED...


...BUT DON'T TELL ME THESE PRICES AREN'T A CRIME... I KNOW WHAT THINGS COST.

GWYNPLANE?



IN THE KING'S NAME! YOU! FOLLOW ME! THE REST OF YOU STAY HERE, AND KEEP SILENT!

URSUS?



DON'T WORRY, SON. IT'S WAPEN- TAKE. DO AS HE TELLS YOU.


DON'T TALK UNTIL THEY QUESTION YOU, OR YOU'LL BE LOST.

I'LL FOLLOW YOU FROM A DISTANCE AND SEE WHERE THEY TAKE YOU...

I'LL SPEAK TO THE MAGISTRATES. IT MUST BE A MISTAKE...

WE'LL ALL BE HOME WITH DEA AND OMO THIS EVENING.


YOU'LL SEE!



NO! NOT THE TOWER!

OPEN THAT DOOR!

IN HIS MAJESTY'S NAME!



MY POOR CHILD!

...HE COULD BE DEAD
BEFORE SUNRISE. POOR BOY!

NOW HE'S ALONE,
COMPLETELY ALONE...

THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

THE ABYSS

4

YOU'VE LOCKED YOURSELF
IN TOTAL SILENCE.

IF YOU DON'T ANSWER THE JUDGE,
YOU'LL BE ACCUSED OF THE
WORST CRIMES...

BY NOT SAYING ANYTHING,
YOU CONFESS TO EVERYTHING.

YOU CAN'T PRETEND YOU DON'T
EXIST JUST BECAUSE YOU
WANT TO REMAIN SILENT.

ACCORDING TO THE LAW, WE HAVE
TO GIVE YOU THE HARSHTEST
SENTENCE.

NO ONE WILL HELP YOU...

EVEN IF BLOOD IS FLOWING
FROM YOUR THROAT, YOUR
CHIN, AND YOUR ARMPITS...

...OR FROM EVERY
ORIFICE OF YOUR BODY.

SPEAK, WRETCH! THE LAW
ORDERS YOU TO SPEAK,
BEFORE WE EXTERMINATE YOU!

IF YOU PRETEND TO BE DUMB, THINK OF YOUR TOMB
WHICH IS ALSO SILENT.



IF YOU PRETEND TO BE DEAF, THINK OF YOUR SENTENCE...

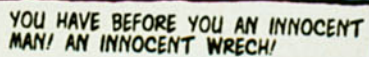
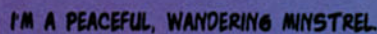


BRING THE YOUNG MAN CLOSER!



MOVE CLOSER!

HARDQUANONNE! NOW, DO YOU
WISH TO CONFESS YOUR CRIME?



WE HAVE BEFORE US LORD FERDINAND
CLANCHARLIE...

PEER OF ENGLAND.

CLERK...READ TO HIS HIGHNESS THE
DOCUMENT THAT RESTORES HIM
TO HIS STATION...

ON THIS DAY, JANUARY
29TH, 1350, ON THE
COAST OF PORTLAND,
A TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY...

WAS ABANDONED
AND LEFT TO DIE OF
COLD AND HUNGER...

AT THE AGE OF TWO,
THE CHILD HAD BEEN
SOLD BY MANDATE OF
HIS MAJESTY EDWARD III...

THAT CHILD WAS LORD
FERDINAND CLANCHARLIE,
THE ONLY LEGITIMATE
SON OF THE LATE LORD
LINEUS CLANCHARLIE...



HIS MAJESTY HAD HIM
KIDNAPPED, DISFIGURED AND
SOLD, FOR THE SOLE
REASON THAT HE WAS
HEIR TO HIS FATHER'S
TITLE AND RICHES...

HE WAS BROUGHT UP
AS AN ACROBAT IN A
TRAVELING CIRCUS...

IT WAS THE WRITER
OF THESE LINES WHO
TOOK THE CHILD TO BE
MUTILATED TO A DUTCHMAN
CALLED HARDQUANONNE...

IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE
CHILD'S FACE BE A MASK
THAT COULD NEVER STOP
LAUGHING, AND SURGERY
WAS PERFORMED...



THE ONLY MAN WHO KNOWS DOCTOR CONQUEST'S SECRETS AND PROCEDURES...

"BUCCA FISSA USQUE AD AURES." THE CHILD WAS TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER THE HORRIBLE OPERATION...

WE NAMED HIM GWYNPLANE. EVEN WHEN HE GREW OLD, HE COULD BE RECOGNIZED BY HIS "LAUGHING MASK".

EVEN AS I WRITE THIS, HARDQUANONNE IS IMPRISONED IN CHATHAM; ACCUSED OF ASSOCIATING WITH "CHILD-TRAFFICKERS."

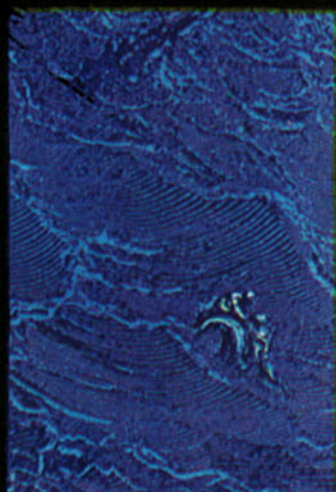
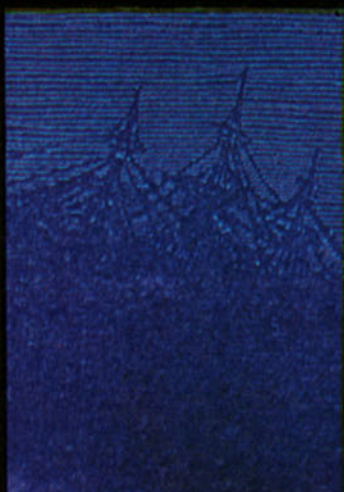


WE, WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE, AND HARDQUANONNE ARE THE ONLY ONES TO KNOW ABOUT THIS MOST SECRET AND DELICATE MATTER...

FOR EIGHT YEARS WE HAD MANAGED TO SURVIVE FROM OUR MACABRE TRANSACTION BUT TODAY, WE HAD TO FLEE FROM ENGLAND...

...OR FACE A FATE SIMILAR TO HARDQUANONNE'S. WE ABANDONED THE BOY TO HIS DESTINY AND ARE OURSELVES AT THE MERCY OF THE SEA...

WE SWORE TO THE KING THAT WE'D KEEP OUR SECRET, BUT NOT TO GOD. WE FACE DEATH IN THE FURY OF THE STORM WITH RESIGNATION AND REPENTANCE...



AND WE ENTRUST GOD WITH OUR SOULS. AS WE ENTRUST THE WAVES WITH THIS CONFESSION OF OUR SINS. MAY PROVIDENCE DO WITH IT AS IT WILL.

SIGNED BY GERHARDUS VAN HALT, PHYSICIAN, AND NINE OTHER CREW MEMBERS...

THIS CONFESSION HAS BEEN WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF THE ROYAL MANDATE ORDERING YOUR SALE.

THE DEPOSITION IS RECOGNIZED AS LEGAL.



SIR, YOU MAY TAKE POSSESSION
OF ALL YOUR RIGHTS.

I COME TO WAKE YOU, YOUR
LORDSHIP. YOU'VE SLEPT FOR
MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS,
DREAMING THAT YOU WERE
@WYNPLANE, BUT YOU
ARE A LORD...

...AND YOU WILL MARRY
A DUCHESS, A KING'S
DAUGHTER.

IT'S A NIGHTMARE! IT'S ONLY
A NIGHTMARE! WAKE ME!

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

IT MEANS THAT YOU'RE A LORD,
LAWMAKER, AND SUPREME JUDGE,
TO BE CLOTHED IN PURPLE
AND CROWNED AS A PEER
OF THE REALM...

THU

DEA...

OH, DEA...

HE FAINTED!

RUN TO THE COAST
AND LEAVE THE
COUNTRY. OR
THE LAW WILL
DESTROY YOU!

WE'RE ONLY FOLLOWING
WAPENTAKE'S ORDERS.
LEAVE TOWN TONIGHT...

I'VE NEVER DONE IT
WITH A BLIND WOMAN.

URSUS

GRRRR!!

WE'LL GO WHEN MY
SON GETS BACK...

HERE...I WAS TOLD TO
GIVE YOU THIS...BE
CAREFUL! IT STINKS!

THEY'RE HIS CLOTHES!

...AND...

AND

BLOOD!

BLOOD!!

FORGET IT...

GWYNPLANE?

MY GOD! THEY'VE KILLED HIM!!

...GWYN...
GWYN...

...BASTARDS!

THEY'VE...

...MURDERED...

...HIM.



THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

THE FALL
5

DID YOU FOLLOW MY ORDERS?

ABSOLUTELY, MY LORD...

DID THEY BELIEVE YOU?

THAT CRAZY OLD MAN
WEPT LIKE A CHILD...

...YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN
HIM HUGGING AND SQUEEZING
THE BLOODY RAGS...

THEY MUST DIE WITHIN THE WEEK,
IF MY PLANS ARE TO SUCCEED...

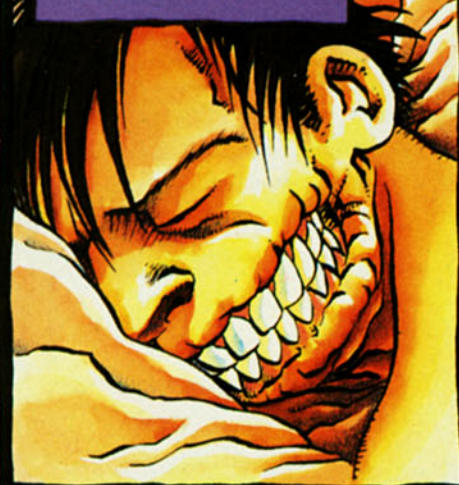
AND THE POOR WRETCH
MUST NEVER FIND OUT.

DON'T WORRY, LORD BELLEW...

GWYNPLANE WILL NEVER
BE ABLE TO FIND HIS
OLD "FAMILY"...

I SAW THEM BRINGING YOU HERE...

I SAW YOU AND I WANT YOU.



YOU'RE SO HIDEOUS...



YOU'RE MARVELOUS!



YOU'RE THE MONSTER OF MY DREAMS...

WHO ARE YOU?

I'M EVA...

EVA OF THE ABYSS...




YOU'RE THE APPLE OF HELL. LIKE MEDEA, I TOO WANT A LOVER.



I WANT TO BE DEGRADED WITH YOU... PROVOKE YOU...






SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK? DO YOU
LIKE SEEING ME WITH NO CLOTHES
ON? I'M GORGEOUS, AREN'T I?


YOU'LL BE MY
LOVER...

MY GROTESQUE, REPUGNANT
LOVER TASTES SO GOOD..



LOOK! LOOK AT YOURSELF
IN MY EYES AS IN A MIRROR!


MY SOUL IS
YOUR TWIN...



YOU'RE MONSTROUS ON THE OUTSIDE.


JUST AS I AM ON THE INSIDE.

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE
HOW PERVERSE I AM.



I'M YOUR BITCH, BUT TO THE REST
OF THE WORLD I'M A SHE-WOLF. WOMAN
IS MADE OF CLAY...

BUT I'D LIKE TO BE MADE
OF SLIME.



WELL...IT SEEMS I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE
WHO KNOWS OF THIS PASSAGE WAY...

ISN'T THAT SO, LADY
JOSIANA?

LORD BELLEW! LEAVE THIS
ROOM IMMEDIATELY!

LEAVE ME ALONE WITH
MY LOVER, OH...!

DON'T FORGET THAT YOU'RE
THE BASTARD DAUGHTER
OF A KING.

BESIDES...THIS MAN CANNOT
BE YOUR LOVER...

...BECAUSE HE IS TO BECOME
YOUR HUSBAND...

MY HUSBAND?

PIUF

SINCE YOU WILL BE MY HUSBAND,
I'M LEAVING. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT
TO ENJOY MY COMPANY...

I'LL LOOK FOR A LOVER
SOMEWHERE ELSE...

YOU'LL GET USED TO
HER. DON'T WORRY...

NOW WE'LL DEAL WITH
SOMETHING WHICH
CONCERNS US BOTH...
YOUR PLACE IN COURT...

...AND THE RICHES WE'LL
BOTH REAP FROM THAT...

I...I MUST FIND URSUS
AND DEA...



LET'S SAY THEY WON'T BOTHER YOU ANY MORE.



ZIIIIIIIISS



YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DRESSED ME LIKE A NOBLEMAN.

THE POOR DON'T CARRY DAGGERS...



DAMNED IDIOT!

I'M THE ONE WHO FOUND THE GOULD...

AND I'M THE ONE WHO'S GIVEN YOUR PAST BACK TO YOU.

YOU'VE KILLED MY FAMILY... MY ONLY FAMILY...

YOU'VE GIVEN ME A PAST I DO NOT WANT...

I'LL DEPRIVE YOU YOUR FUTURE.



I'LL YANK YOUR DAMNED HEAD OFF!



AAABRGHHH!!

SCRA



...GOD...
GOD...

YOU'RE...



PLING

ARGH

SCROT

OH, GOD...MY ARM...
HELP ME, DAMN YOU!

ARGH...YOU'RE GOING
TO DESTROY EVERY-
THING WE...COULD'VE...

THE MAIL IS GET-
TING SOAKED....OH,
GOD....and ONLY...

YOU'LL SLOWLY BLEED
TO DEATH...

THE BUCKLES ON YOUR COAT OF ARMS HAVE BEEN MISSHAPEN BY THE BLOW. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO TAKE IT OFF TO STOP THE BLEEDING...

MAYBE YOUR MEN WILL
BE ABLE TO HELP YOU...

IF YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE DONE
TO MY FAMILY, I'LL CALL THEM.

OH, GOD...MY ARM...
HELP ME, DAMN YOU!

ARGH...YOU'RE GOING
TO DESTROY EVERY-
THING WE...COULD'VE...

THE MAIL IS GET-
TING SOAKED...OH,
600...I...I ONLY...

...TOLD MY SERVANTS TO
THREATEN THEM...SO THEY
WOULD LEAVE THE...COUNTRY...


IS THAT ALL?

IS THAT ALL?

THEY WERE GIVEN YOUR CLOTHES...THEY HAD BEEN SOAKED IN THE BLOOD OF A PLAGUE-RIDDEN DOG...



I COULDN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES...YOU'D HAVE GONE BACK TO THOSE LOUSY TRAMPS...



DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?...! DID IT FOR BOTH OF US!...

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?...
DID IT FOR BOTH OF US!...



YOU'RE...A KEY PART
OF MY PLANS...GOD
...CALL MY MEN...

...CALL...

GWYNPLANE?...

...CALL...

GWYNPLANE?....

YOU CAN'T LET ME DIE
LIKE THIS! @WYNPLANE!!

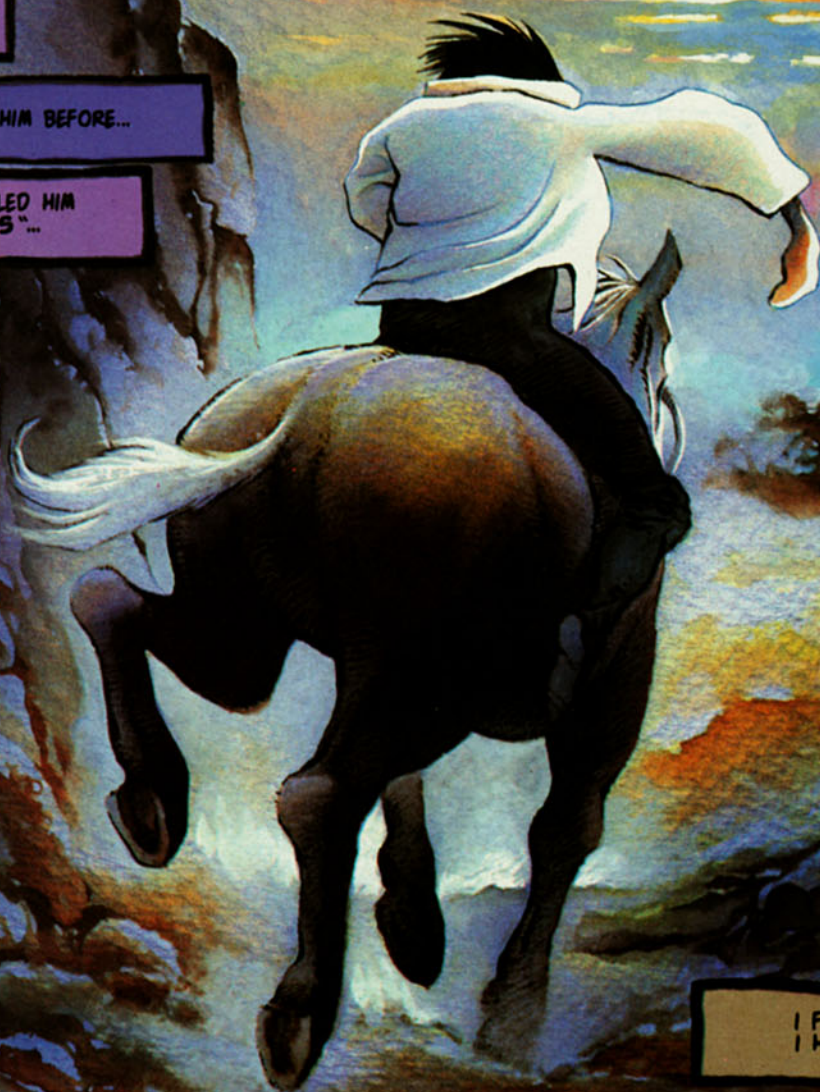


HAVE YOU SEEN THAT MADMAN?
HE'S GALLOPING AWAY AS IF
POSSESSED BY THE DEVIL.
WHO IS HE?

LORD FERDINAND
CLANCHARLIE...

I NEVER SAW HIM BEFORE...

I DID...WHEN THEY CALLED HIM
"THE MAN WHO LAUGHS"...



URSUS?

YES, DEA.

I FEEL ILL. I...I THINK
I HAVE A FEVER...

FIGHT IT OFF, CHILD. FIGHT IT
OFF...SOON WE'LL GET TO THE
SEA, AND WE'LL FIND A BOAT, AND
WE'LL LEAVE THIS DAMNED COUNTRY...

END

CHAPTER 5



THE MAN WHO LAUGHS

NIGHT AND THE SEA II

6

MY VOICE...

MY VOICE IS A SHADOW...

WE WON'T BE ABLE TO
LEAVE, OMO...

THE BOAT WILL COME...BUT WE
WON'T BE ABLE TO GET ON IT...

DEA IS DYING, OMO!

SHE'S DYING...

POOR PLAGUE-RIDDEN
CHILD...

YOUR FATE HAD ALREADY
BEEN SEALED WHEN
POOR OWYN FOUND YOU...

...OWYN...

WE USED TO BE FOUR...
NOW WE ARE ONLY THREE...

SOON THERE WILL BE
NONE LEFT...

DEA...

MY LITTLE DEA...

YES, I KNOW WHO YOU MEAN
...THEY WERE THROWN OUT
OF TOWN BY SOLDIERS.



ABOUT THREE DAYS AGO...
NO, THEY BURNT THE CART...



THEY STOPPED HERE. WE
GAVE THEM SOME FOOD, AND
THEY LEFT AT DAWN...



YES, I THINK THEY SAID THEY
WERE HEADING FOR THE SEA.



I'M STUPID TO KEEP TALKING
TO MYSELF, WITHOUT THINKING
THAT IT MAY WAKE HER...

POOR DEAR...I'M GOING TO
SEE HER DIE...

FIRST GWYN...AND
NOW YOU...HOW I'VE
LOVED YOU BOTH...

I'VE HAD SO MANY DREAMS...IT
MUST BE THE FEVER...OH, GOD!

OUR TIME ON THIS EARTH
HAS COME TO AN END...



YES, I KNOW WHO YOU MEAN
...THEY WERE THROWN OUT
OF TOWN BY SOLDIERS.



ABOUT THREE DAYS AGO...
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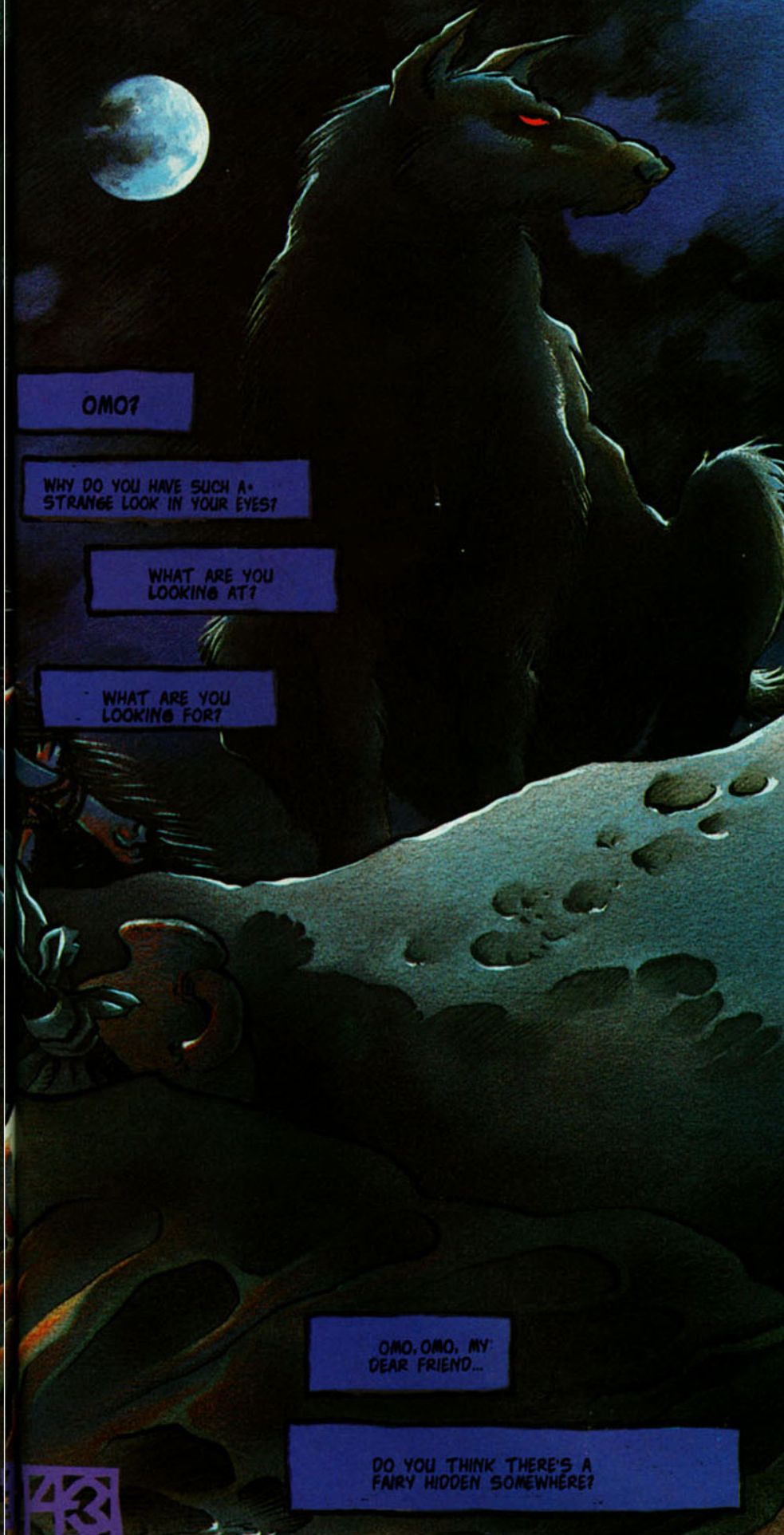


OMO?

WHY DO YOU HAVE SUCH A
STRANGE LOOK IN YOUR EYES?

WHAT ARE YOU
LOOKING AT?

WHAT ARE YOU
LOOKING FOR?



OMO, OMO, MY
DEAR FRIEND...

DO YOU THINK THERE'S A
FAIRY HIDDEN SOMEWHERE?

IF THE GIRL HAD THE FEVER
...THAT'S BAD...VERY BAD...



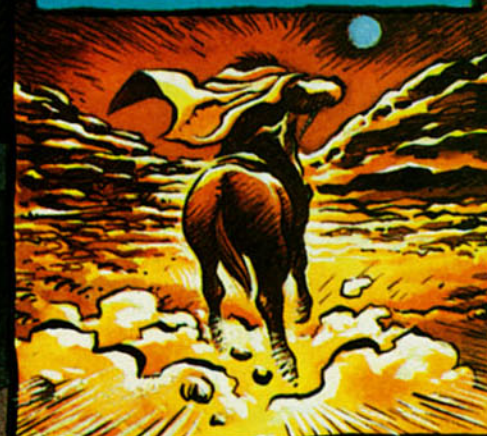
THEY TOOK THE ROAD TO THE
SHORE...THE DORMUTH ROAD.



YOU CAN'T GO AFTER THEM...
YOU'LL ONLY CATCH THE
PLAQUE. THERE'S NOTHING
YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THEM...



THEY MUST BE ALMOST
DEAD BY NOW.





OMO?

WHY DO YOU HAVE SUCH A
STRANGE LOOK IN YOUR EYES?

WHAT ARE YOU
LOOKING AT?

WHAT ARE YOU
LOOKING FOR?

OMO, OMO, MY
DEAR FRIEND...

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...THAT'S BAD...VERY BAD...

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SHORE...THE DORMUTH ROAD.

YOU CAN'T GO AFTER THEM...
YOU'LL ONLY CATCH THE
PLAGUE. THERE'S NOTHING
YOU CAN DO TO SAVE THEM...

THEY MUST BE ALMOST
DEAD BY NOW.



URSUS! DEA!

IT'S ME!

I'M ALIVE!!

I CAN'T TAKE ANY
MORE, OMO...I CAN'T
...I CAN'T WATCH..

THE LITTLE
ONE...

DIE.

FATHER?

MERCIFUL BARBERS
MAKE THE WORST
WOUNDS...

NO. OMO...I DON'T
BELIEVE IN GOD...BUT
WHAT DIFFERENCE
DOES THAT MAKE?

FATHER!!

FORGIVE ME, OMO
...FOR...FORGIVE ME
MY COWARDICE.

IT'S NOT HARD
TO DIE...

I...I LIVE IN DARKNESS
...BUT I DO MY BEST
TO SEE CLEARLY...



BURY ME OUTSIDE
THE CHURCH CEMETERY
...I DON'T CARE, OMO...

I HAVE THE RIGHT
TO CHOOSE MY...END
...GOD! THIS HURTS...

THERE WERE
FOUR OF US...

A LONG ROAD...
AND NO NOISE...

GWYN? IS THAT YOU,
GWYN?

FATHER...FATHER...WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE?

DEA!!

MY GOD!...IT'S YOU! I
KNEW IT, I KNEW IT!

HOW COULD YOU HAVE DIED? YOU
WERE SO ALIVE...AND YOU WERE
ALWAYS, ALWAYS WITH ME...

I COULD FEEL YOUR BREATH
ON MY CHEEKS...YOUR HANDS
IN MY HAIR...

ISN'T THAT TRUE?...I'M DYING...I
WANTED TO GO TO THE GRAVE,
IF YOU WERE THERE...MY GOD...

MY POOR SON...

...WITH HIS
LOOKS...

HE COULD ONLY BE A
CRIMINAL OR A PROPHET

I KEEP HEARING
HIS VOICE! GOD...

THIS...THIS IS...

THIS IS A LONG, UNENDING...

DEFEAT...

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO
YOU? I'M AN ENGLISH PEER. I'LL
MAKE THEM PAY FOR IT...

IT'S SO DARK.
...MY LIPS
ARE BURNING...

I KNOW
WHAT IT IS.

WILL YOU REMEMBER ME? REMEMBER
MY VOICE...DON'T FORGET THE
SOUND OF MY VOICE...AT NIGHT,
WHEN YOU'RE ASLEEP, I'LL COME
AND WHISPER IN YOUR EAR...

WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL
IF WE COULD STAY
TOGETHER FOR EVER?

LET'S LIVE, DEAR!

OH...DON'T LET ME GO!

I CAN SEE THE LIGHT...!

...THE...

...LIGHT...

NOOOOOOOOO!!!

SOON IT WILL BE DAYLIGHT...



NEVER TO WAKE AGAIN...

NEVER TO FEEL SWEET
DESIRE...



I'M COMING, DEA...



I'M WITH YOU...





THE LAUGHTER ETCHED
INTO MY FACE WAS
ETCHED BY A KING.
WERE SUCH LAUGHTER
SATAN'S, THEN GOD
WOULD BE GUILTY.

"THE MAN WHO LAUGHS"
VICTOR HUGO, 1869



END

F. DE PAMPE.