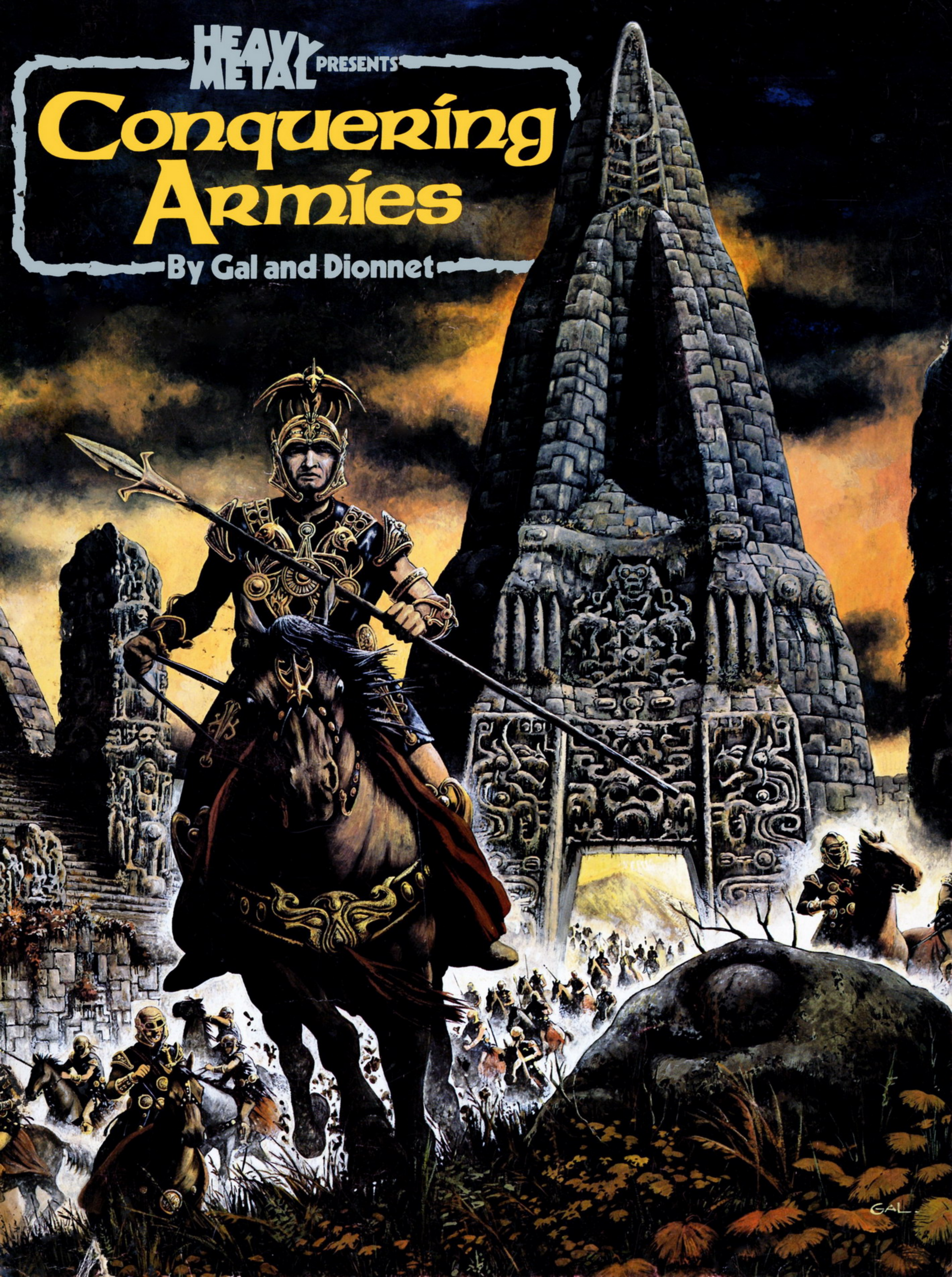


HEAVY METAL PRESENTS

Conquering Armies

By Gal and Dionnet



Dionnet and Gal

CONQUERING ARMIES

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*Long ago, conquering armies set out to
vanquish the world...*



*No one knew who they were or
whence they came, only that one day
they would be there.*



*Sometimes they were halted,
sometimes they even retreated,
but they
always
reappeared.*

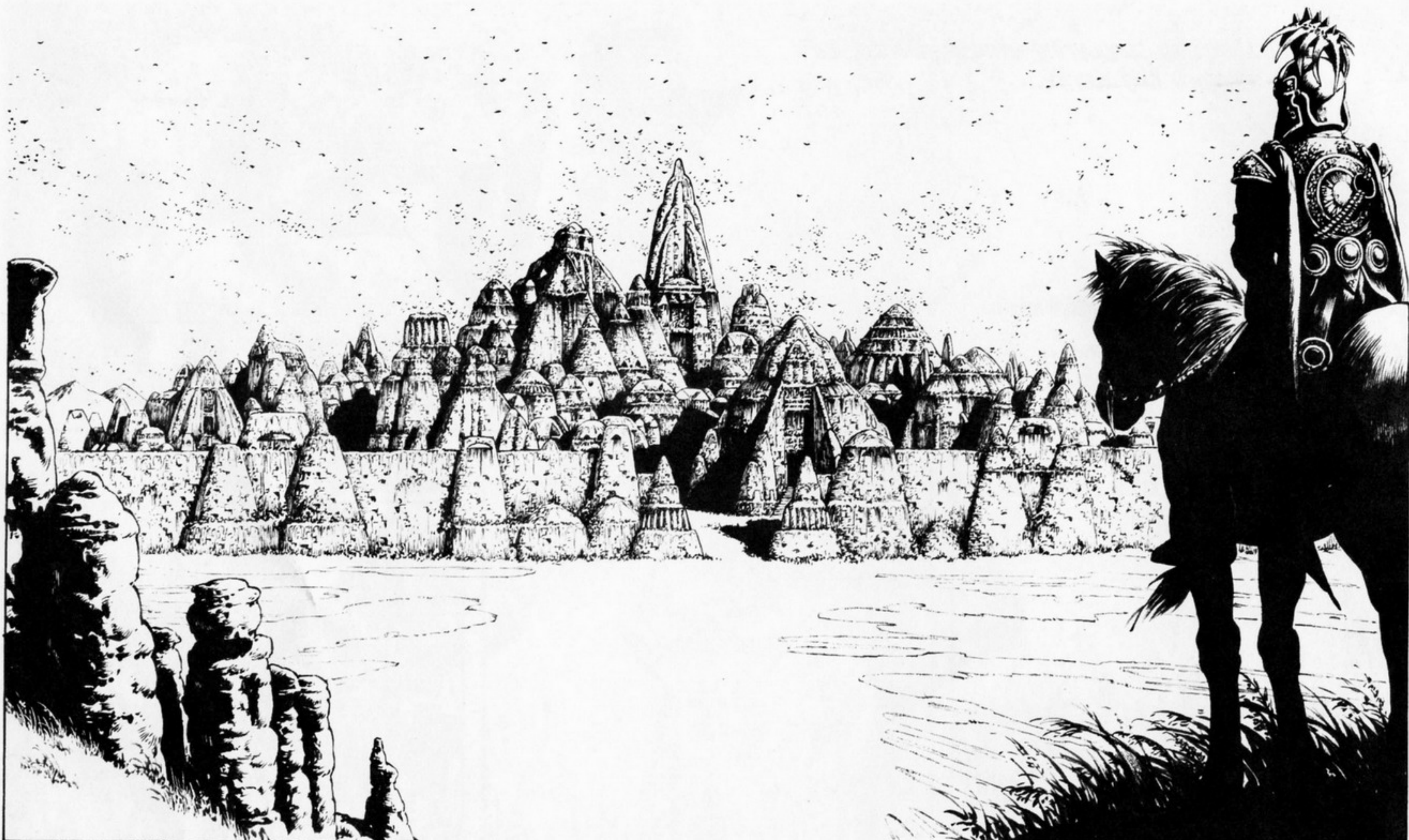


*And those they conquered
swelled their ranks.*



One day, the vanguard of the second army arrived before an inland city...





NO ONE, NOT EVEN A
SENTRY WHO MIGHT SIGNAL
OUR ADVANCE...STILL, THIS
TELLS ME NOTHING OF
THEIR PROWESS!




NOR I: THE CITY IS
STRONG, AND THEY COULD
HOLD US IN CHECK...A
TRAP, PERHAPS?



WE
SHALL
SEE...



TO ARMS, SOLDIERS
OF THE CONQUEROR,
AND ADVANCE!



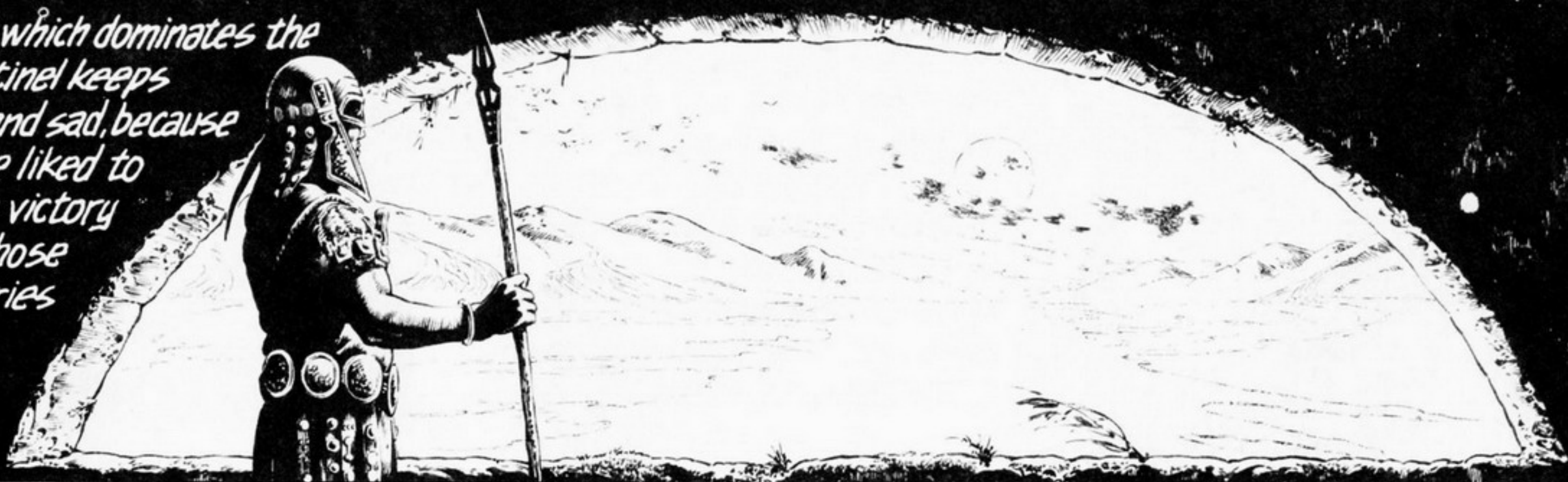
GREETINGS, PRINCE,
WE HAVE TAKEN FOR THEE, WITHOUT BATTLE,
THE CITY WHICH IS CALLED JERIM BY ITS
INHABITANTS. AT OUR APPROACH, THERE
WAS NEITHER SIGNAL NOR ALARM. THE
RAMPARTS REMAINED EMPTY AND THE
GATES OPENED BEFORE US. IT TOOK
LITTLE TIME TO SURROUND THE PLACE.

THEN THE NATIVES LEFT THEIR HOMES AND
CAME TO YIELD TO ME, YOUR ENVOY.

WE SHALL PASS THE WINTER HERE,
AWAITING YOUR ARRIVAL. THE MESSENGER
MAY TELL YOU MORE, UPON YOUR REQUEST.

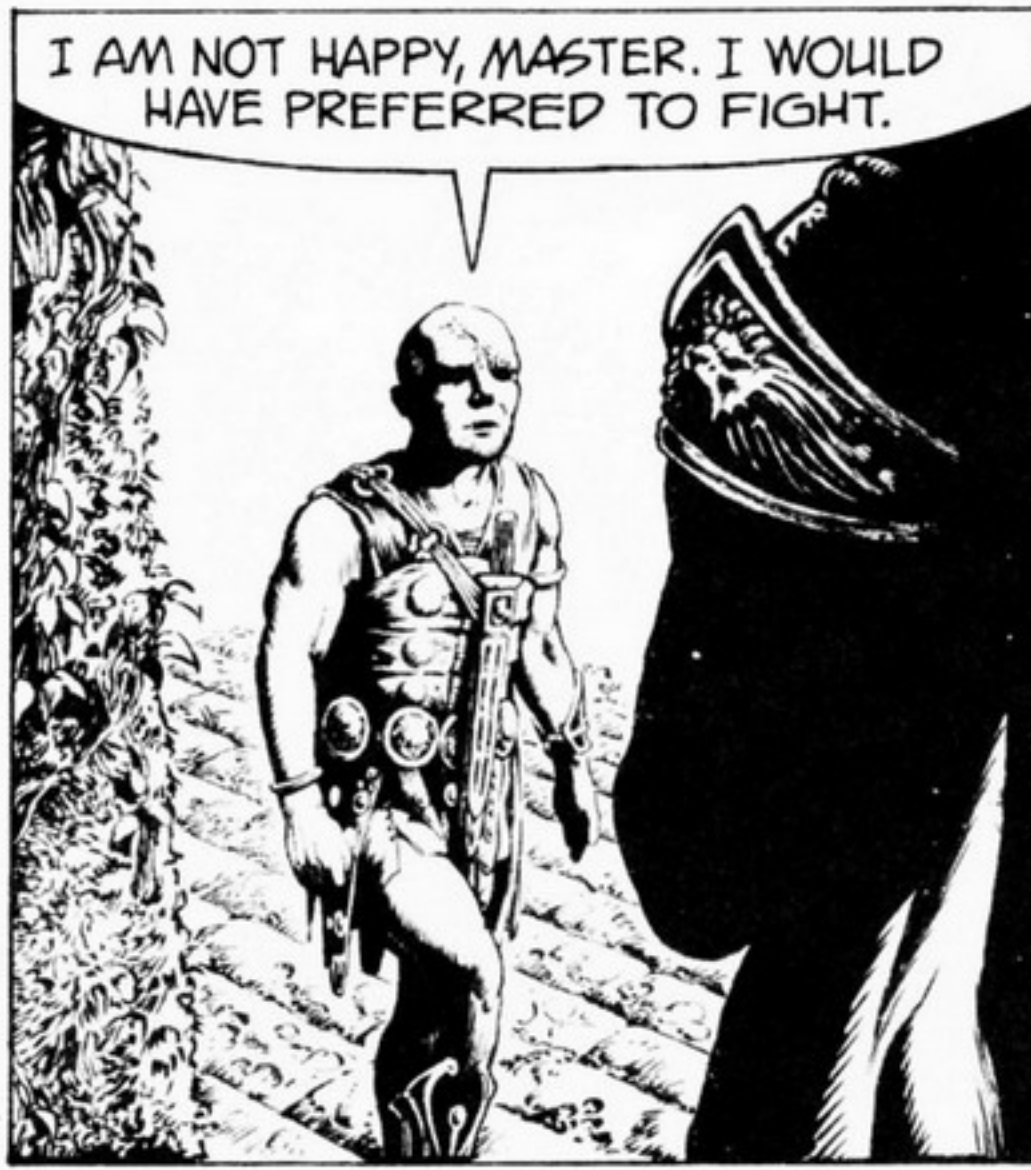


Upon the wall which dominates the plain, the sentinel keeps guard, stiff and sad, because he would have liked to celebrate the victory with those whose shouts and cries he hears below...





AND YOU, SOLDIER,
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING
ABOUT? YOU
SEEM SAD...
SPEAK FREELY.



I AM NOT HAPPY, MASTER. I WOULD
HAVE PREFERRED TO FIGHT.

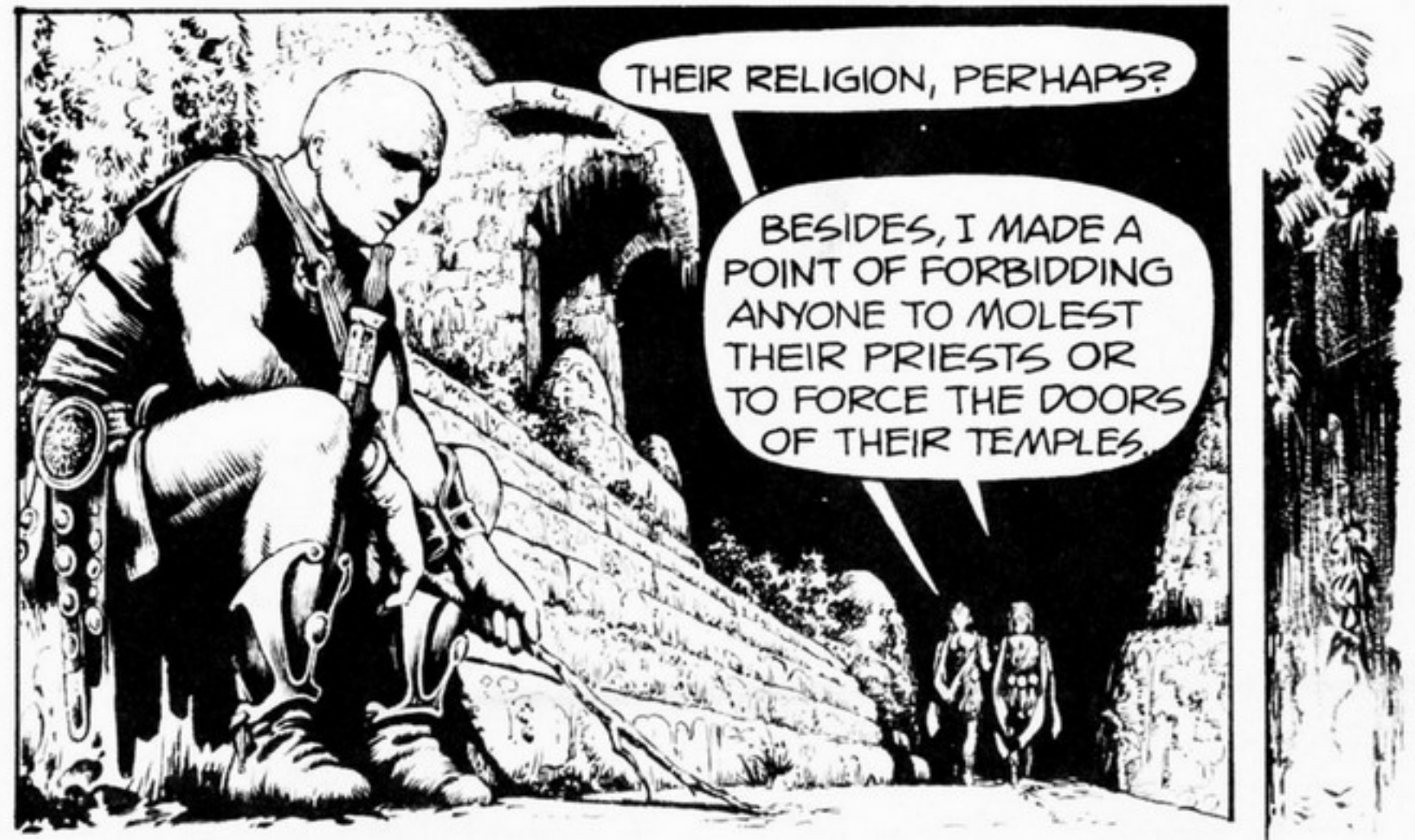


THIS RING--I TOOK IT FROM A CORPSE
WHEN WE ENTERED KALETH: ALL THE
ABLE-BODIED MEN WERE DEAD. HERE
THEY DON'T SAY ANYTHING. THEY LOOK AT
US AND THEY OBEY US.



I JUST DON'T
LIKE IT,...

HE'S RIGHT.
THE PEOPLE
SHOULD HAVE
RESISTED US.



THEIR RELIGION, PERHAPS?

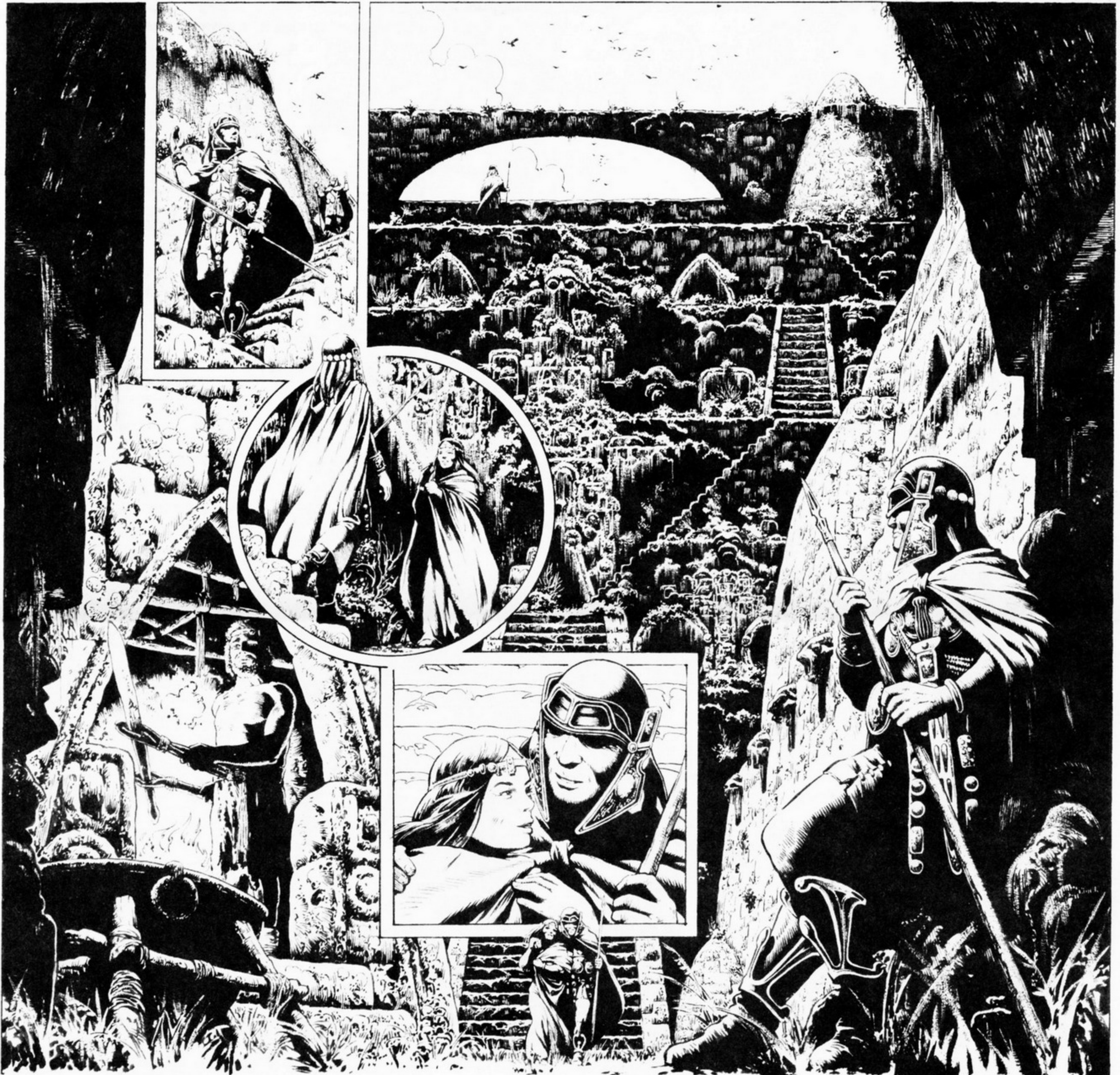
BESIDES, I MADE A
POINT OF FORBIDDING
ANYONE TO MOLEST
THEIR PRIESTS OR
TO FORCE THE DOORS
OF THEIR TEMPLES.




BUT I HAVE
DOUBLED THE GUARD,
ALL THE SAME.


*Weeks passed...
winter came...*

*Some of the soldiers fell into a
stupor. Others doggedly sought out
new pleasures...still others
became aware of the evil
of the place...*







DO YOU PLUNGE THE IRON RIGHT INTO THE WATER? DOESN'T THAT SHATTER IT?



I WAS ONCE A BLACK-SMITH MYSELF. WHERE I COME FROM WE DON'T DO IT LIKE THAT...



COME IN, I'LL SHOW YOU.

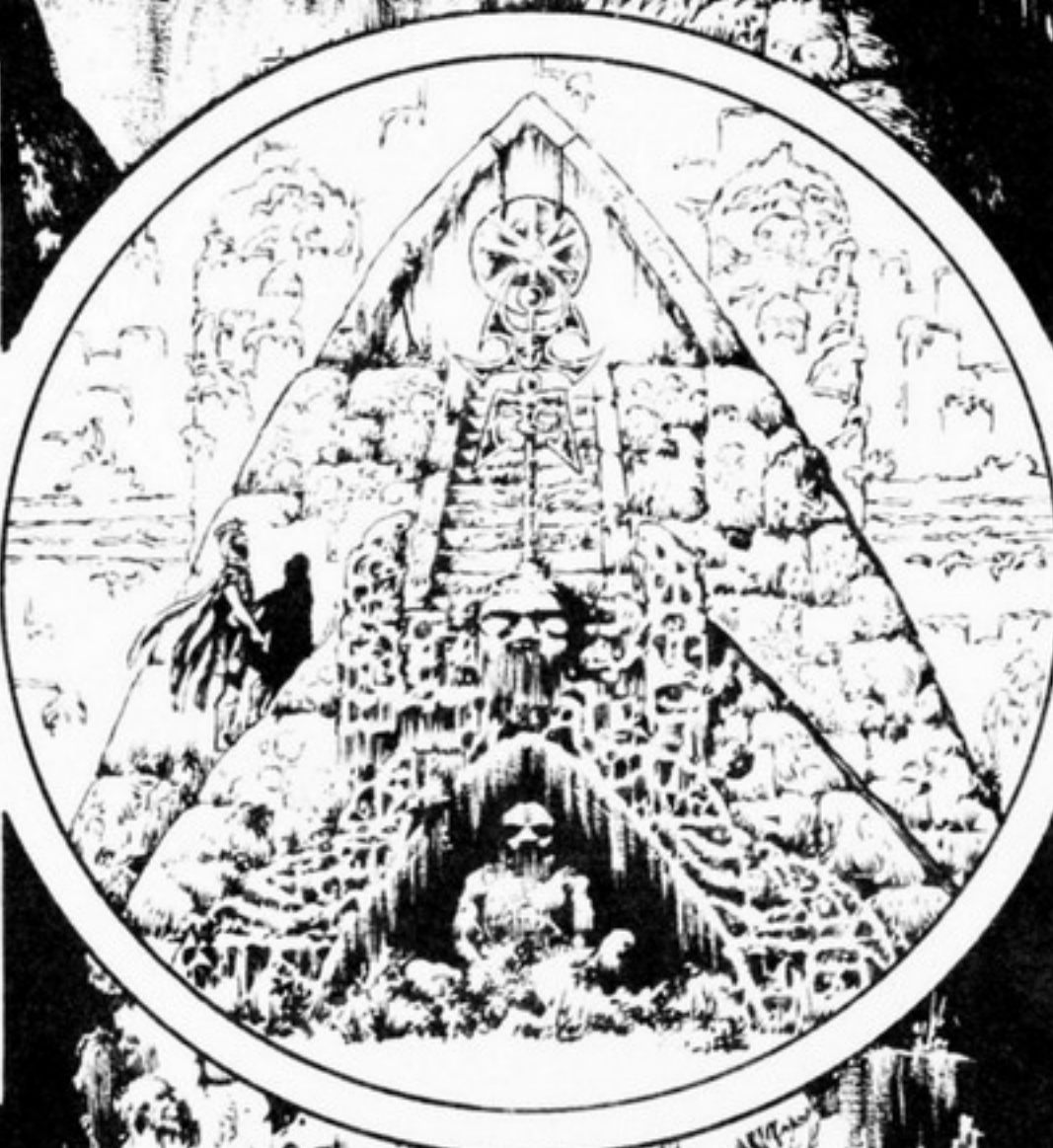


WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? I GAVE ORDERS THAT THIS DOOR BE GUARDED AT ALL TIMES, AND THERE ISN'T ANYONE HERE!



I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT, SIR...









DIE, TRAITOR!

DIE!

DIE!

DIE!

CITY!

YOU WILL NOT GET ME! YOU
WILL NOT GET ANOTHER PERSON.
I WILL GO TO MEET THE
ARMY TO PREVENT THIS!...

About four leagues from the city, the second army discovered four corpses drawn up along the road.



One of them was an officer...



Fearing a trap, the army charged into the city, swords drawn.



Long ago, conquering armies set out to vanquish the world...



No one knew who they were or whence they came, only that one day they would be there.



*Sometimes they were halted. Sometimes they even retreated, but they always **reappeared**.*



And those they conquered swelled their ranks.



One night, the battalion camped at the foot of the mountains; the men rested before returning to combat.





"WE HAD GONE HUNTING..."

QUIET, I...

LOOK OUT!





AND THAT IS HOW MY BROTHER,
OLMAR, SAVED MY LIFE...

AND I... THAT
WAS HOW I LOST
MY FINGERS!

WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

I OWE HIM MORE THAN I
REALIZED. I THOUGHT THAT HE HAD
GROWN USED TO IT, WITH TIME.



IT'S MY FAULT. I WAS QUESTIONING HIM...BUT NOT WITHOUT REASON. A PRISONER TOLD ME THAT IN BACK OF THE HILLS, IN THE RUINED TOWER, HE SAW AN OLD MAN WHO KNEW HOW TO HEAL THE MOST GRIEVOUS WOUNDS...AND EVEN MAKE SEVERED LIMBS GROW AGAIN.



WHAT?

LET ME GO, FRIEND!

YOU STAND GUARD IN MY PLACE.



I WILL RETURN BEFORE DAWN.



AH, THOSE TWO!

Later, in the healer's den...

HA, YOU FILTHY BEAST!
WHAT A PLIGHT YOU HAVE
GOTTEN ME INTO! YOU KNOW
VERY WELL WHAT'S GOING TO
HAPPEN TO YOU WHEN I'M
FINISHED WITH HIM.

GRRRR...







IS SOMEONE THERE?
SHOW YOURSELF!



DON'T TRY TO HIDE
YOURSELF! I KNOW YOU
ARE THERE!

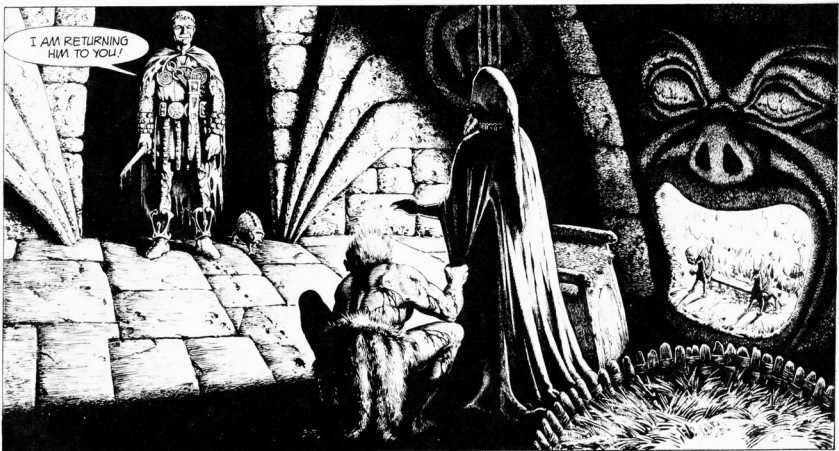


SO...YOU DO NOT WISH TO LEAVE!
VERY WELL, YOU SHALL SEE!



YOU SHALL SEE!
HI/HI/HI/HI/HI!









HALT! WHO
GOES THERE?

IT'S ALL RIGHT!
IT'S ME!



YOU SEE, I
WASN'T LONG. DO
YOU KNOW WHERE
MY BROTHER IS?

YOUR BROTHER? DIDN'T YOU
MEET UP WITH HIM?



MEET HIM?



YES... A SOLDIER
SPOKE TO HIM AS WELL
ABOUT THE HEALER
BEYOND HILLS... WHEN
HE LEFT US HE WENT
TO SEE...

An hour later, Karl returned to combat.

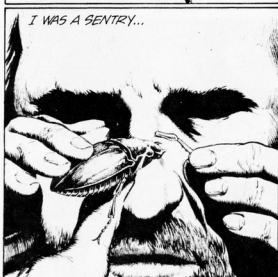
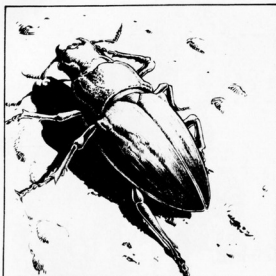
*He never saw the tower again, nor the healer, nor
his brother.*

The years passed, but he did not forget.

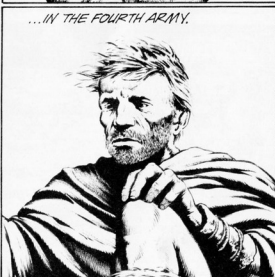
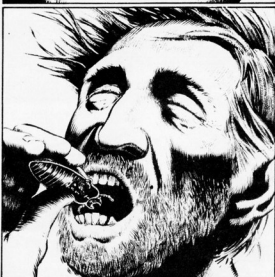
*And certain nights he woke up
screaming
because of an image:*



*His brother in chains in the care of the dog-man.
His right hand nailed to the block.
His fingers growing interminably...
...and the healer, with his hatchet,
cutting them down to size, and
chuckling.*



I WAS A SENTRY...



...IN THE FOURTH ARMY.

*WE HAD COME
A LONG WAY...*





...AND WE HAD NOTHING LEFT TO EAT.

IT WAS THEN THAT THE
COMMANDER DECIDED TO
LEAVE SENTRIES BEHIND TO
WATCH THE ROAD...



THE ROAD! WHAT ROAD?



IN TRUTH, WE WERE SO MANY LESS
MOUTHS TO FEED.



SOME DESPERATE FELLOWS
SURVIVED FOR A WHILE BY THEIR
WITS...



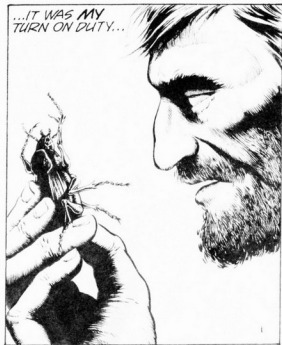
...BEFORE DYING OF HUNGER.



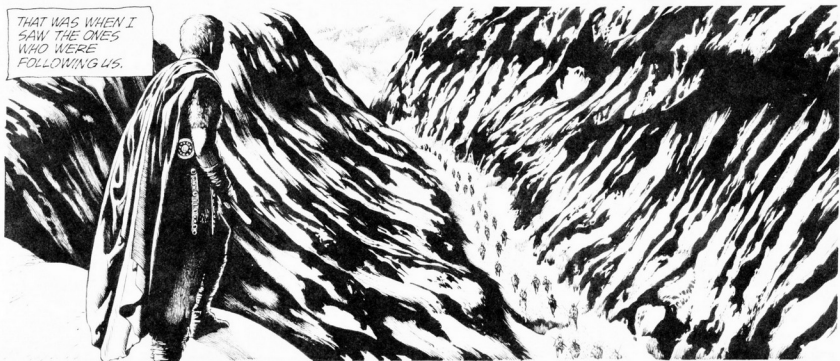
AND ONE DAY...



...IT WAS MY
TURN ON DUTY...



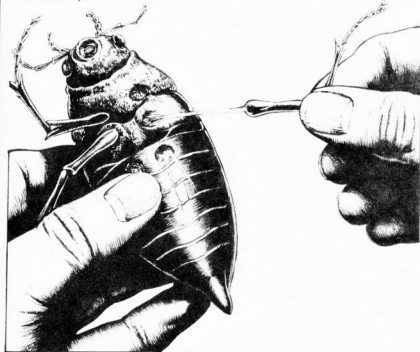
THAT WAS WHEN I
SAW THE ONES
WHO WERE
FOLLOWING US.



THEY ATTACKED IN THE NIGHT, AND I COULD HEAR
THE NOISE OF BATTLE.



CERTAINLY, I COULD HAVE PREVENTED IT...





BUT HE NEEDN'T
HAVE CHOSEN ME...

THE BASTARD!

Long ago, conquering armies set out to vanquish the world...they seemed invincible until there appeared against them a simple mountain man who had become a war chief out of vengeance. His name was Olric.

For four months, Olric held the first army at bay. Gradually, the rebels and the malcontents from the neighboring lands gathered to him. He ended up thinking he was invulnerable.

...and he made the terrible mistake of advancing into open country. Well-armed professional soldiers against disorganized peasants.


The outcome of the battle was inevitable.



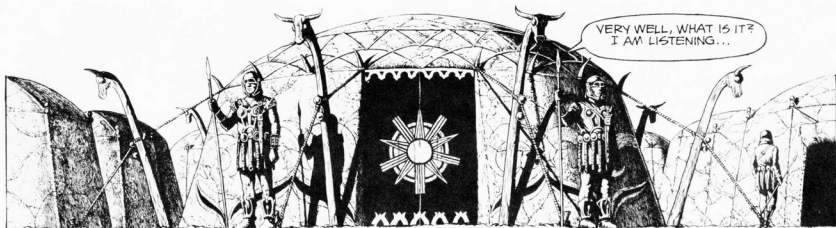


GOOD.
THE CAVALRY
RETURN TO THE
CAMP AND TELL
THE HERALD THAT
I'M COMING.

BUT THE BATTLE?



THE BATTLE?
IT'S OVER... YOU
MAY BRING THIS
OLRIC TO MY TENT.
I WOULD LIKE TO
SEE HIS
FACE.



VERY WELL, WHAT IS IT?
I AM LISTENING...



YOU MAY SPEAK WITHOUT
FEAR. MY GUARDS ARE DE-
VOTED TO ME.

IT HAS COME TO PASS AS WAS FORESEEN:
THAT RECENT BLUNDER OF THEIRS HAS
PLAYED IN OUR FAVOR. AND THERE IS
BETTER STILL...



DON'T KEEP
ME ON TENTER-
HOOKS...



SOGAR IS WITH US.



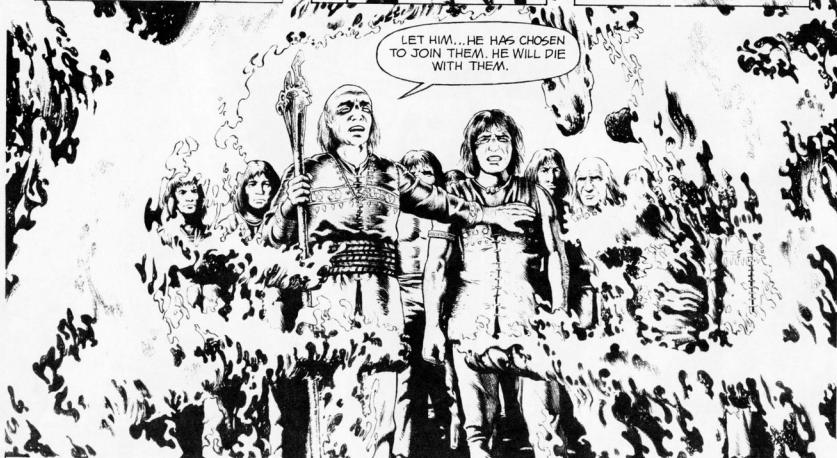
SOGAR! THEN
OUR TROUBLES ARE OVER!
WITHIN A FORTNIGHT, THE
CONQUEROR WILL BE
DEAD, AND I WILL
ASSUME THE
THRONE!



Meanwhile...









GO, CALM YOURSELF...
I AM PLEASED. I WILL
TAKE THE
RESPONSIBILITY.

OH, MY
LORD, THANK
YOU!

YOU ARE REALLY
LIKE A FATHER TO
THEM.

STRING UP
THE BODIES OF
THE REBELS TO A
HORSE AND FOLD
UP THE TENTS!

YOU SEE,
THERE'S SOMEONE UP
THERE...WATCHING
US...

YES, IT
MUST BE A
SHEPHERD.





STAY
AWAY!

SHE IS MY SISTER...

SHE IS BURNT.
SHE MUST BE
TAKEN CARE OF..



GO AWAY!



YES, GET
OUT!

GO!

TAKE THE
SICK GIRL AWAY!

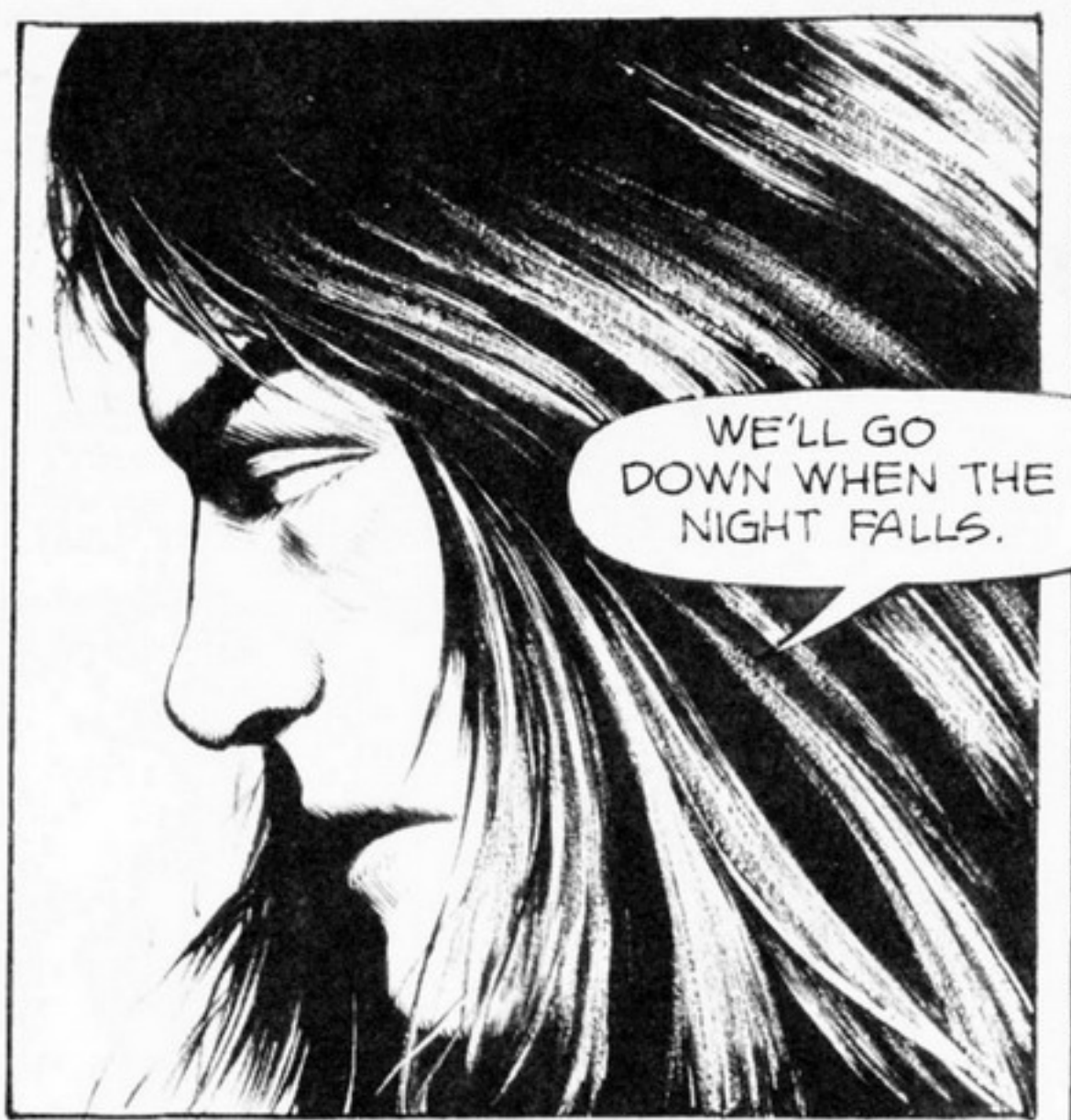
GET AWAY!



AN
ARMY...

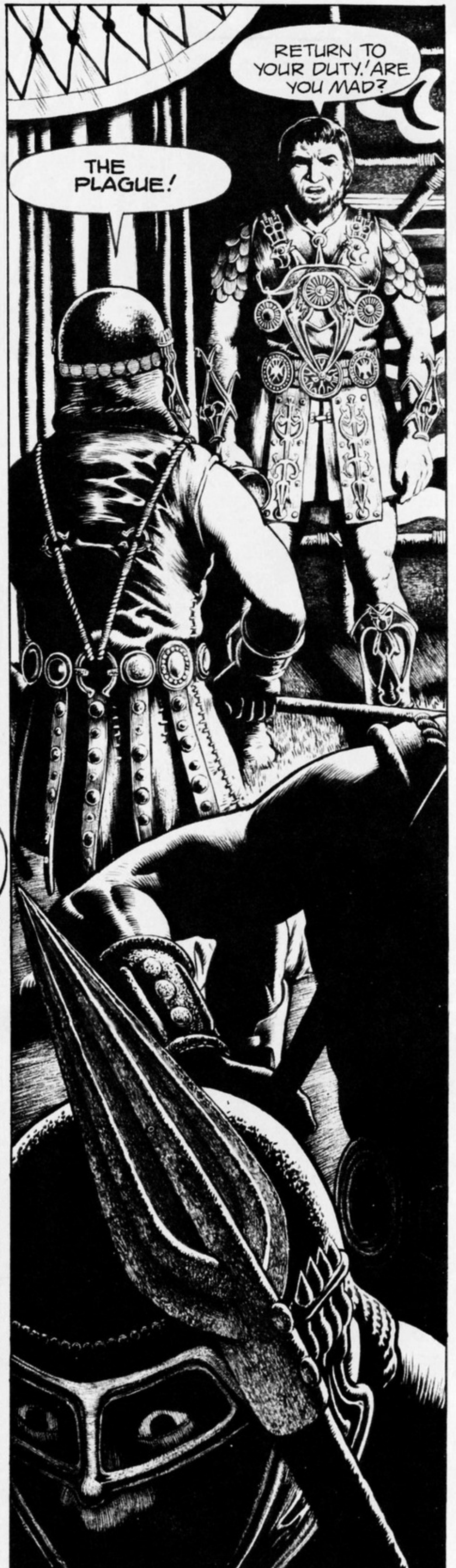


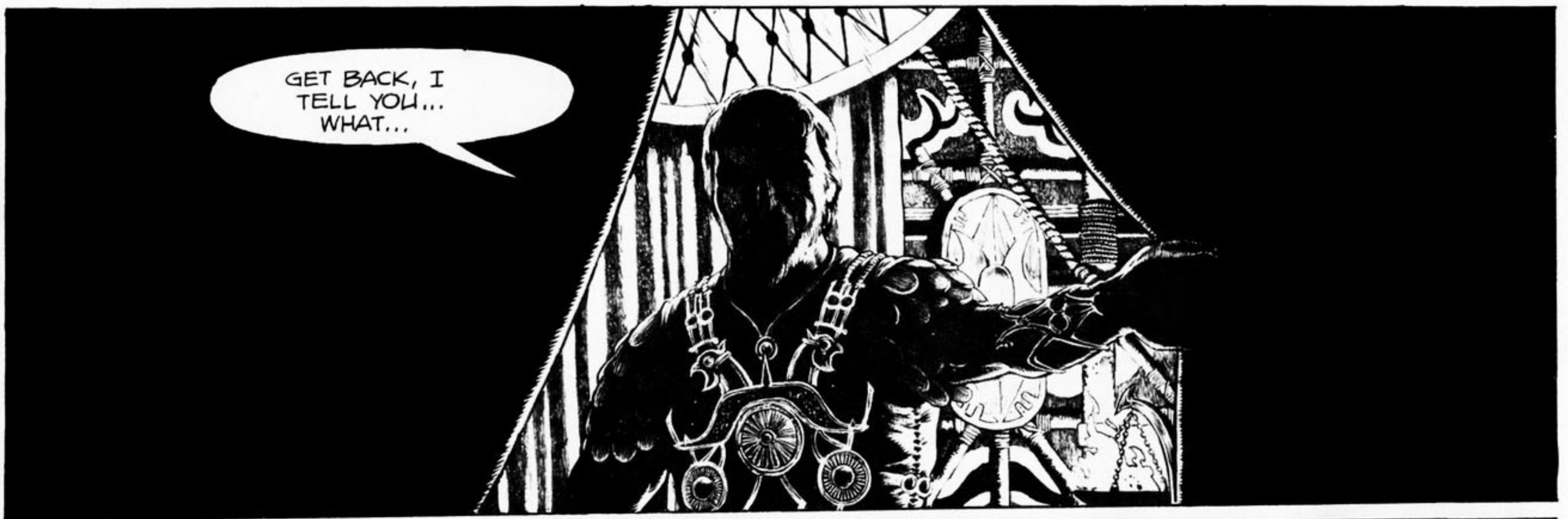
LITTLE SISTER, WE
ARE SAVED! THERE
MUST BE A DOCTOR
AMONGST THEM.



WE'LL GO
DOWN WHEN THE
NIGHT FALLS.







It came to pass that the conquering armies reached the sea.

They took the fortified peninsula of Acadel. They occupied Saragho in two hours and they razed Fagola because of a bantering song which displeased the prince.

But they had never attacked Lamas.

Lamas, that imperishable port city, whose origin remained unknown...

Lamas, with its bizarre markets, where now and then strange things were sold...

Lamas, whose scornful fishermen were proud to be the only men who dared to go beyond the horizon...

The conqueror used to say that one day he would doubtless have need of them, and he wanted to win them over without resorting to force.

He sent his soldiers to spend their gold in Lamas.



LOOK, WE'RE ALMOST THERE,
ALPHAN. IT'S JUST AROUND
THE CORNER.

YOU'VE BEEN
TELLING ME THAT
FOR THE PAST
HOUR,
DANATIAN!

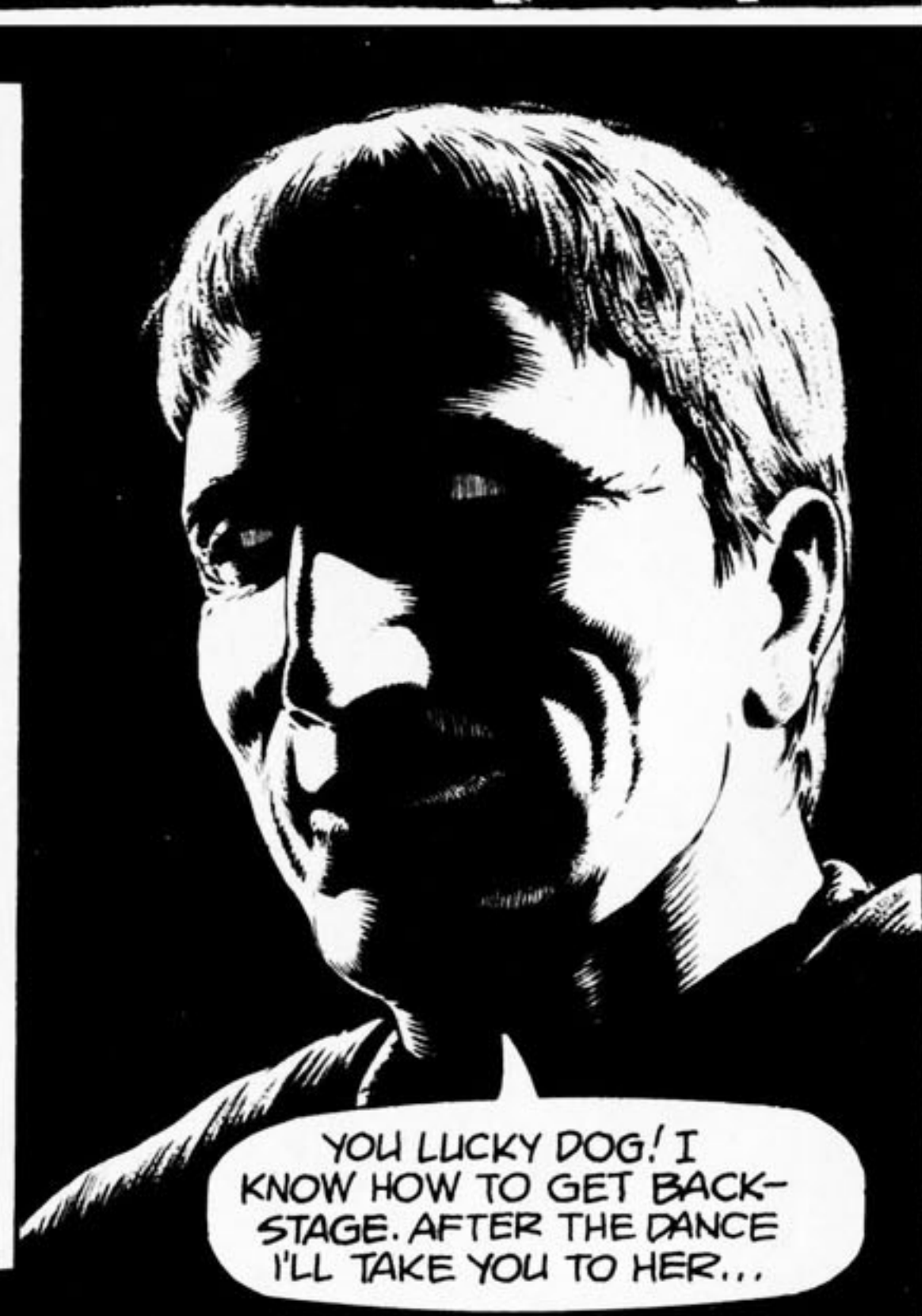
HERE, LOOK! THIS
IS IT: "THE DANCING
BEARS," THE MOST
CONGENIAL SPOT
IN LAMAS!

YES. THIS
WILL BE FINE.

YOU'LL SEE...
YOU'LL SEE...
SHE'S REALLY...

SSHH!
THERE SHE
IS.







CAREFUL
OF THE STEPS!

I'M GLAD YOU'RE
HERE. WITHOUT YOU
I WOULD NEVER
BE ABLE TO FIND
MY WAY THROUGH
THIS MAZE!



LOOK,
THERE SHE IS!



HELLO, YOU
BEAUTIFUL MAN!



YOU EXAG-
GERATE. I'M
REALLY JUST...



THERE, AS PROMISED.

YOU
DIDN'T REALLY
HURT HIM, DID
YOU? HE REALLY
IS A GOOD
FRIEND...

WITH THIS MASTER-
MARINER'S MARK AND
UNIFORM, THERE'S A BETTER
CHANCE THESE FELLOWS
WILL THINK I'M ONE OF
THEM, AND NOT SOME
OUTLANDER!



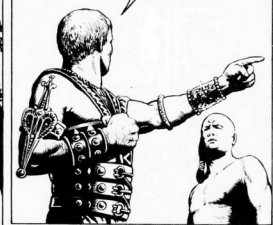
HEY,
SAILOR! COME
HERE!



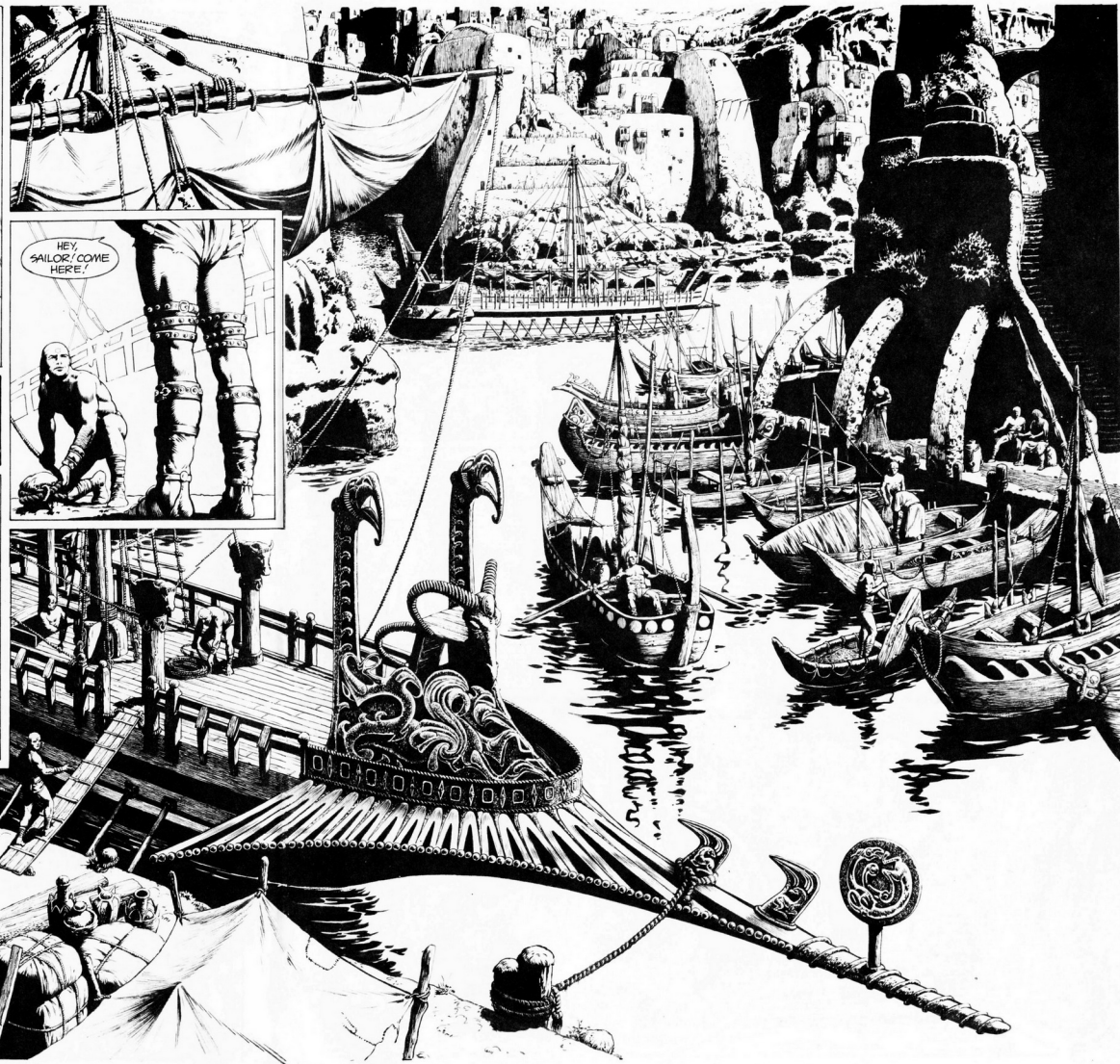
YES,
STRANGER?



I WANT TO RENT THIS BOAT, TAKE ME
TO THE CAPTAIN AND DON'T CALL ME
STRANGER--CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I'M
WEARING THE MARK OF YOUR PRO-
FESSION?



THIS WAY,
STRANGER.





WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR TO PUT OUT TO SEA?

FOR THE WIND TO RISE, MASTER DANATIAN...

I'M SO EAGER TO BE OFF...

VERY WELL, CAPTAIN.

TO THE GALLEY! WE'LL LEAVE THE PORT BY ROWING OUT!

FASTER, YOU DOGS!



The voyage was long, the winds were not very favorable, and on the sixth day, while Danatian was sleeping...



ME? SURELY NOT! I'VE ALWAYS BEEN DEEPLY REVOLTED BY...

HEY, STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH ME?

LOOK!





BRING HIM TO ME!



ALPHAN!

DANATIAN!...
WHAT A NICE
SURPRISE!

WELL, I SURE
AM GLAD TO SEE YOU
AGAIN, YOU KNOW... I'M...
I'M **REALLY SORRY**...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT
CAME OVER ME...



I UNDERSTAND, OLD
FRIEND, AND I FORGIVE
YOU. I REMEMBER THE
OLD DAYS, BUT...

...I'M AFRAID MY COMPANIONS
AREN'T GOING TO ALLOW THEMSELVES
TO FORGET YOUR REGRETTABLE DEEDS--
BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU, OLD
FRIEND...



...AND I'LL
PERSONALLY SEE TO
YOUR COMFORT.



**BONG
BONG**

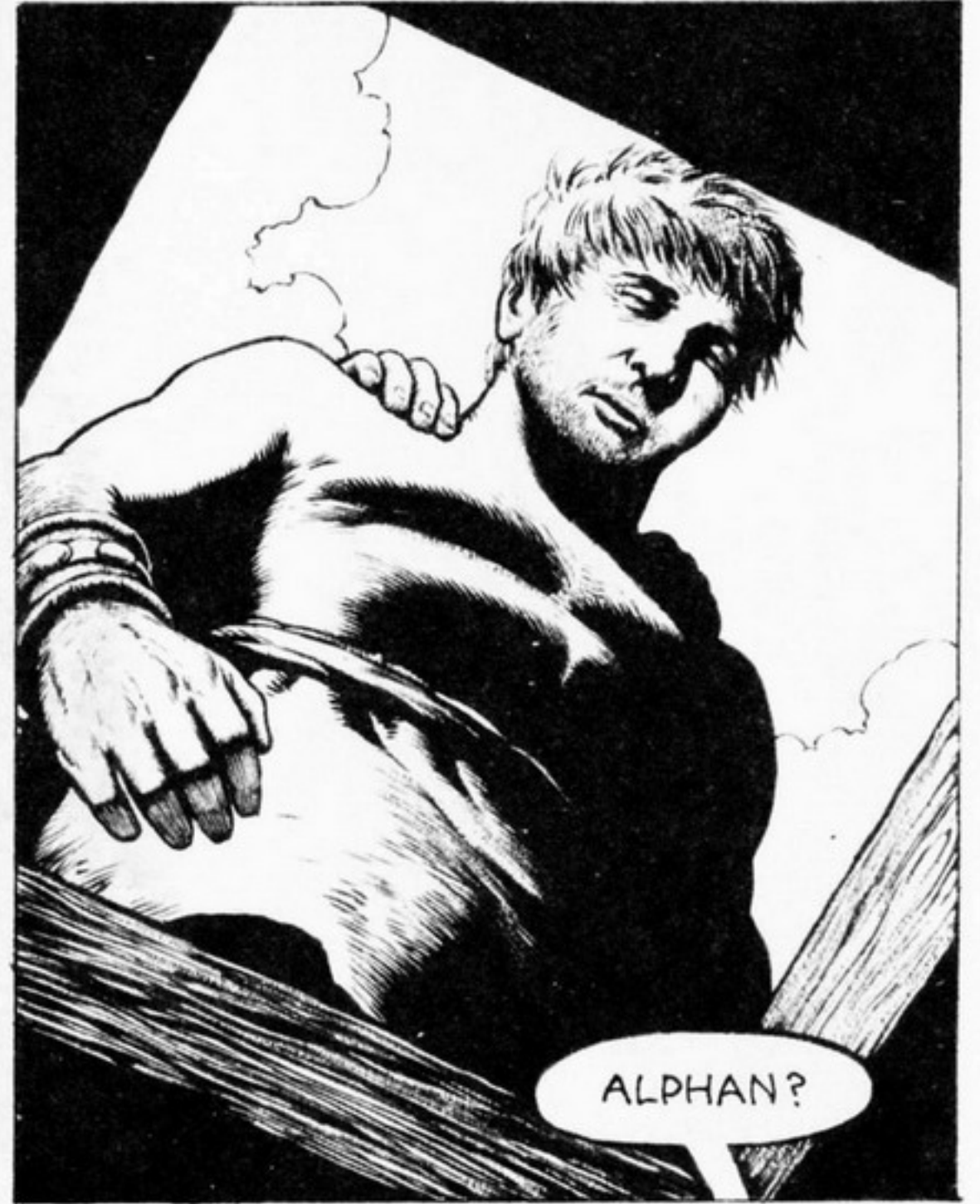
FOOD, FOR
PITY'S SAKE! FOOD...
OR...AT LEAST...A
LITTLE WATER...



CLACK



ALPHAN!
YOU'VE COME TO
FREE ME AT
LAST!



ALPHAN?



YOUR FRIEND HAS
COME TO PAY YOU A
VISIT!



YOUR MUTINY
WOULD HAVE
SUCCEEDED, YOU
PIG, BUT THE NEW
CAPTAIN DOESN'T
LIKE IT VERY MUCH
WHEN SOMEONE
TRIES TO TREAD
ON HIS TOES!



MAYBE I'M GOING
TO DIE OF HUNGER,
BUT NOT BEFORE
YOU WAKE UP, YOU
PIECE OF SHIT!



YOU'RE GOING TO
SUFFER, ALPHAN!



GOOD LUCK,
GUYS! I'M SURE
YOU WON'T BE
BORED!
HA! HA! HA!

*The port of Lubina, on the other side of
the sea...*



Lubine with its slave markets...



AND NOW, TWO
MAGNIFICENT
WARRIORS, A
LITTLE THIN, BUT
DON'T WORRY
ABOUT THAT...

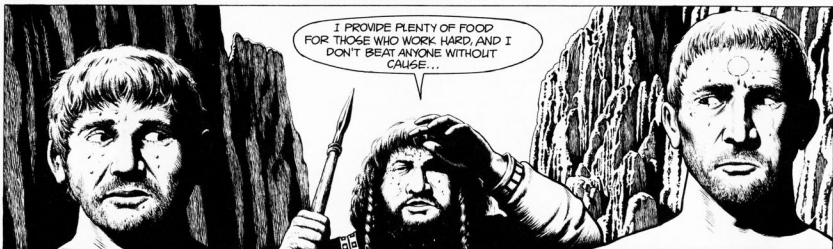


'A COUPLE OF DAYS'
WORK IN THE FIELD
WILL SPRUCE THEM
UP, HA, HA!

JUST REMEMBER TO KEEP
THEM SEPARATED FROM EACH
OTHER--THEY DON'T LIKE
EACH OTHER VERY MUCH...

THE BIDDING BEGINS AT TEN
THOUSAND SHADES BUT YOU
CAN, IN SPITE OF THE CUSTOM,
OFFER LESS...

...THAN TEN
THOUSAND SHADES! SOLD
TO THIS GENTLEMAN!





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