





# Always Comes Twilight

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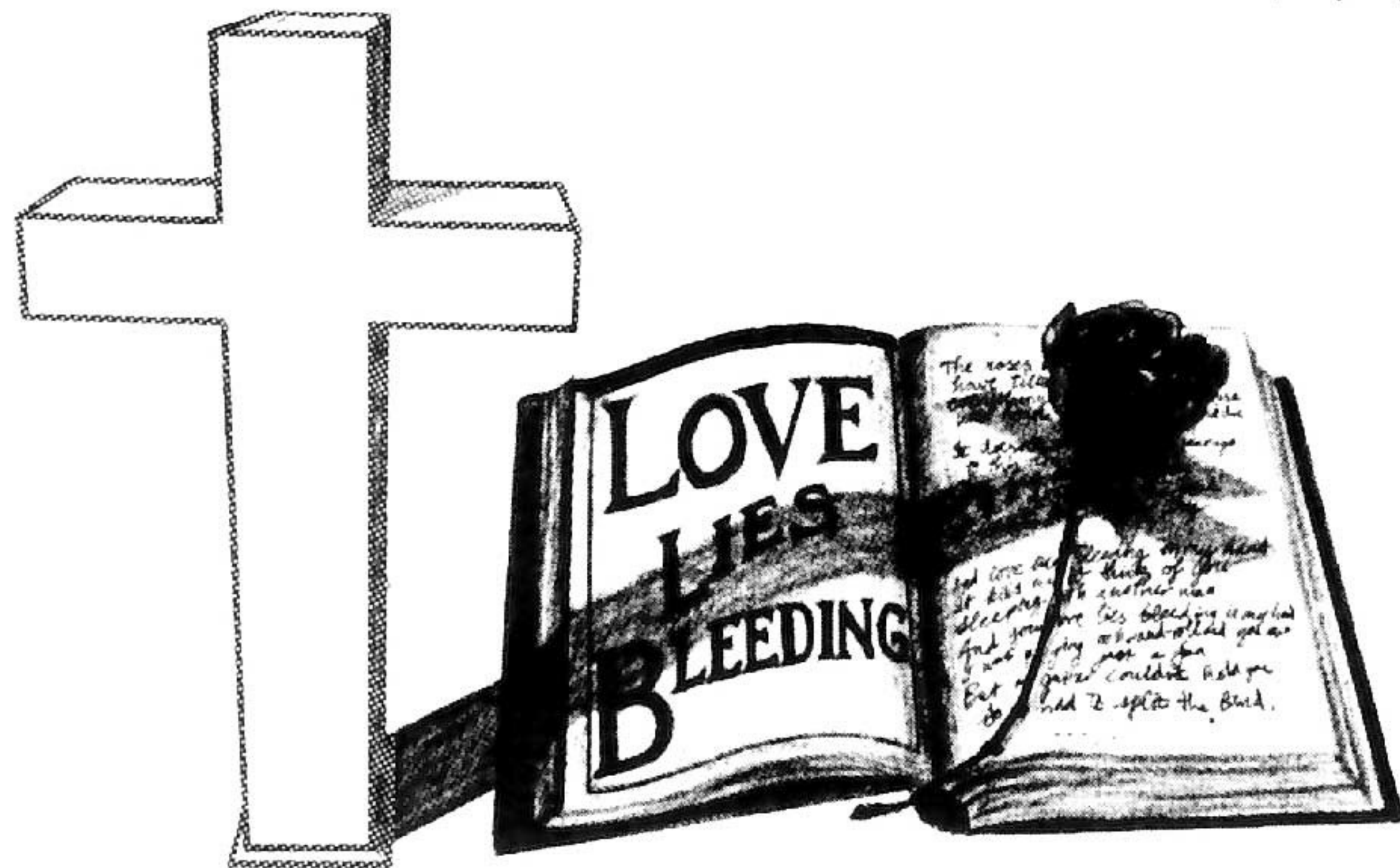
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# An Editorial

## Funeral For A Friend



You are holding the first, last and only attempt at an experiment which failed -- perhaps.

ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT was conceived some two years ago. At the time, my interest in comics was about to reach its peak; I was thoroughly immersed in superheroes, old EC's, original art, adzines, prozines, fanzines -- especially fanzines.

1972 was, for me, the year of fan publishing. I was finding things like MCR and FANTASTIC FANZINE in my mailbox, HERITAGE and PHASE were being plugged all over fandom, and "Golden Age Reprints" had just come in vogue. There were, to exaggerate only slightly, tons of fanzines to choose from.

My interest in collecting stretches back to the mid sixties. It wasn't until late in 1969, however, that fanzines entered my scope of vision. It came in the form of SPA FON # 5. Quite frankly, it blew me out. A Frazetta cover, pages and pages of Wrightson, Kaluta, Hickman, Kenneth Smith, an interview with Steranko, another with Bill Gaines...it was everything you could have wanted your first exposure to fanzines to be.

I suppose that every fan has nurtured the idea of publishing a fanzine at one time or another. The thought of bursting forth upon fandom in a flash of wraparound creativity is something that seems to get under your skin. It got under mine. And it stayed there.

SPA FON, in that sense, was my drivin' wheel; it started things clicking. The actual stone began rolling early in 1972, and now, sometime later, it has finally come to rest.

Sad to say, in those two years, things have changed. A lot.

And that, indirectly, explains why there may never be a second ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT.

From its inception, ALWAYS COME TWILIGHT was meant to be different. Dig up an old BUYER'S GUIDE or RBCC and check out the numerous fanzines that were available. They ranged from high-priced "Big Name Pro Artwork" publications to inexpensive items glorifying superheroes and strictly amateur material. There were none doing entirely what I wanted to see a 'zine doing. There were a few that came close: the third issue of Jan Strnad's ANOMALY was a high-water mark for me. Something like Richard Corben's interpretation of "A Brief Encounter At War" was virtually unique in limited edition publishing, and Strnad's care and concern for the things he published were obvious; and KENNETH SMITH'S PHANTASMAGORIA went one step further. The beauty and finesse of the magazine were secondary; its irreverent attitude and execution was a trip through the looking glass.

In some ways, ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT reflects that desire for personal satisfaction inherent in ANOMALY or PHANTASMAGORIA. The purpose of this "Magazine of Graphic Imagination" was to exhibit fantasy, horror, SF, etc. as a focal point, not as incidentals to interviews, articles, quick Jack Kirby sketches, and opinion pieces. This editorial is the only non-fiction you will find; it is so intended.

ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT was also intended to be a "fan" zine (i.e., with little or no involvement from the "pro" -- commercial comics -- market). In fact, precious little of the material here would fit comfortably in the commercial comics. That is not an apology. The contents of this magazine are imaginative, versatile, and extremely well done. I'm proud to present such a collection of diverse endeavors.

But in two years, a lot of things can happen. A lot of things did. That initial fannish enthusiasm gradually dwindled. It was not replaced; rather, it was re-directed. As of now, my interest in comics (commercial or underground) is practically zero. Somewhere in the dim, dark long ago, somewhere along the line, Stan Lee and Denny O'Neil lost out to B.F. Skinner and Jack Kerouac; Fine art overtook four color fantasies; in the battle between Blue Oyster Cult and The Amazing Spiderman, Spidey, sad to say, hit the mat. I found music and literature much more exciting than Marvel Comics ever were.

That "fannish spirit" was gone. An irretrievable moment in the process of growing up, I guess. That certain, inexplicable thrill I got from comics had wilted. I'd like to say I miss it...I'd really like to. But, in all honesty, I can't.

Two long years of writing letters, making phone calls, ripping open packages, mailing things left and right, all this and more, are about to draw to a close.

But a dream goes on forever.

Doesn't it?

My gratitude to the many people involved in this project is boundless; I know I couldn't have done this alone. To all those who contributed, thank you, for devoting your time and talent to yet another fanzine; to Jim Wilson, who went through hell and back, thanks for putting up with me. I saw the light; and to Brian Shook, my co-editor and all-around someone-to-lean-on, thanks for ridin' the storm out.

If there was anyone responsible for turning ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT from a dream into printed reality, it's Gary Groth. Of those involved, he took the biggest gamble, and I hope the odds are in his favor. Thanks, Gar, you're one in a million.

"From life alone to life as one,  
Think not now your journey done  
For though your ship be sturdy,  
No mercy has the sea,  
Will you survive on the ocean of being?"

GENESIS

"Watcher of the Skies"

If you like what you see here, say so. Although ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT # 2 is not in progress (indeed, no plans have been made), a generous response may produce a second ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT, in one form or another.

And if this first issue is to be ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT'S swansong, I'll accept it with no regrets. Producing this fanzine was an experience I'll not soon forget; it was worth the effort, in more ways than one.

Ah, what the future holds...? I can't say. Crystal balls were never my thing. I'll be perfectly content to see what develops, and take my life from there.

For now, look at ALWAYS COMES TWILIGHT as a temporary chunk of growing up. Read it, talk about it, think about it, but most of all, enjoy it...and then, move on...

DAVE DAPKEWICZ  
July 1974

Editor's Note: David Dapkewicz, a long-time comics fan turned fanzine editor, has since left fandom in search of greener pastures -- notably, English literature and painfully loud music. He will not be back.



# LONELY MISSION

Story  
Bill Cantey

Illustrations  
Dennis Fujitake

New Eden lived up to its name; in more than a hundred scouting trips, Marine sergeant Matthew Elliot Smith had seen no briars or thistles, only trees laden with fruit, sweet berry bushes, and vines, producing grapes and blossoms that blurred the vision with a multitude of colors. Strange and wonderful, this uninhabited mini-planet; a greenhouse or Mother Earth's flora wonders, plus a few pleasant surprises of its own. Like apple and pear trees growing in the same vicinity as palms and ferns, sharing a climate that shamed the fairest day of any Pacific island of Earth.

Earth, that war-ravished rock of a world, was in the throes of what surely must be the war of wars. Finally, after decades of cat-and-mouse conflicts, the holocaust had come. The two major forces of the world had drawn lines, declared territories, and had at it. Fulfillment of the long-coming declaration was almost when it did come. The masks were off, the gloves were on, and the Space Age leaped centuries ahead with the knowledge that both sides possessed the means to destroy the delicate balance of nature forever and drag the would-be victor into Hell less than a heartbeat behind the vanquished.

The race into space had become a war within a war. Both sides were questing worlds to colonize; or at least one world, as a "bank" to preserve and perpetuate their opposing philosophies.

A stroke of luck, this one world within easy reach, so lush and rich. God, he felt guilty when he thought of the hell-war raging back on Earth. Still, he and several score of fellow marines had repulsed an enemy attack; and would almost certainly be threatened in the near future, by either interplanetary missiles, or another attempted invasion. More likely, the latter. The enemy was hard-pressed; taking an already discovered world would seem simpler than a methodical and perhaps too lengthy search for a similar sanctuary.

Smith had landed his one-man craft on the pretense of suspected life and movement in the shallow valley below, since any indication of animal life was to be investigated immediately. He'd made no such sighting, however; it was simply the recurring desire to walk through a pleasant glen or forest.

Bending the regulation that allowed landings to check out the possibility of natural game gave Smith one of the few pleasant diversions from what was becoming an increasingly dull assignment. Besides, Knocker enjoyed these surface excursions more than he did. The small "simtile" frolicked among the trees and vines as though he'd been born and raised

on an Earth-type planet. Just what this curious combination of simian and reptile actually was remained a mystery. A few leathery eggs, discovered on the frozen surface of an ice-bound planet, had been incubated by their medical team's biologist. That far-out experiment brought forth a mascot of most original qualities. Knocker (originally ugly, little Knocker) had taken a shine to Smith from the first day he'd emerged from his egg; very possibly because Smith had happened to be the first moving thing Knocker had seen after hatching. And Smith, though feigning indifference, was genuinely fond of the small creature. A situation that surprised even him, since he'd never been tempted by the thought of owning a pet; But, the simtile was more than a pet; often, without direct command, it had brought Smith an object he'd needed or been searching for. And once, a judo match had ended abruptly when the simtile leapt on Smith's opponent, dealing the unfortunate marine an electric like shock that rendered the man unconscious and left him paralyzed for almost four hours. The other leathernecks soon learned that it was not wise to tease the simtile too severely, even after Knocker curtailed the use of his special defense as he'd matured, and never used it on Smith.

Which was convenient, to say the least, since the simtile was not above petty thievery and other forms of occasional mischief. But, even when Smith caught the simtile in the act, and paddled his little behind good, he never got so much as a warning tingle. The two became inseparable companions, Knocker riding Smith's shoulder and fading his naturally bright green color to match the olive drab of the marine's uniform. And Smith soon became known as the only two-headed marine in captivity. Big joke. But, the pleasure of the simtile's company far and away made up for the jibes of the sergeant's cohorts.

Smith was sampling some excellent grapes and enjoying the simtile's antics on a springy branch when a familiar hum of activation suddenly brought his open-cockpit flitter to life. He whirled and lunged toward the already-stirring craft. Catching Smith's anxiety, Knocker shot through the trees, making for the now lifting flitter. But, even the speedy simtile couldn't reach the control unit. Useless. The stronger control at base headquarters must have taken over. But, why? Recalling the flitter left him stranded. He reached for his "beeper" to broadcast his position and request rescue. The simtile's tiny hand caught his index finger, and and round, pleading eyes looked into his. It was then

that Smith noticed Knocker's throat and belly were growing reddish-brown. Danger! Where? And the simtile looked with narrowing eyes, after the departing flitter, toward base-headquarters.

Hefting his rifle, Matthew





Elliot Smith immediately began what was to be an agonizingly slow journey back to what had become home and country. He may have bent a rule by landing and leaving his flitter, but he'd observed all the regulations for disembarking. Both rifle and sidearm were with him. A survival kit, ammo, and food supplements were tucked away in his belt and in the waterproof compartments of his uniform. He slipped the control unit and beeper back into their special holsters, as he fell into a dog-trotting gait that he could maintain for hours. As he fastened a strap, his fingers lingered momentarily on the Space Marine emblem, then moved to touch the American flag insignia over his heart. Even in the face of uncertain danger, there was the pride that brought confidence; whatever lay ahead, he'd do what must be done. Right now, he was grateful for New Eden's lighter gravity.

Although greater terrestrial density and slower rotation offset the advantage to some degree, there was still an appreciable difference. The weight of the simtile on his shoulders, like the weight of his equipment, was next to nothing, and his mind was free to consider his bizarre situation even as he ran.

One popular thought impinged itself upon his brain; he was functioning as a marine. Marines, often in danger of being disbanded, had finally emerged as the only practical force of fighting men. Highly sophisticated conveyances moved men in and out of battles and territories with mind-swimming speed. The number one rule was, "Be mobile, or die." Cruisers that traveled on land as well as water carried men who could fight on land or water. Marines. Strato-copters dropped bombs, then themselves to land and disperse fighting men. Marines. Submarines

had become larger than the largest aircraft carrier that had ever existed, boring into the earth itself to crash through the crust well within enemy territory and deliver a force of fighting men. Marines. The other services had become technicians; and even some of the technicians were marines. And he was a third generation marine, a Space Marine.

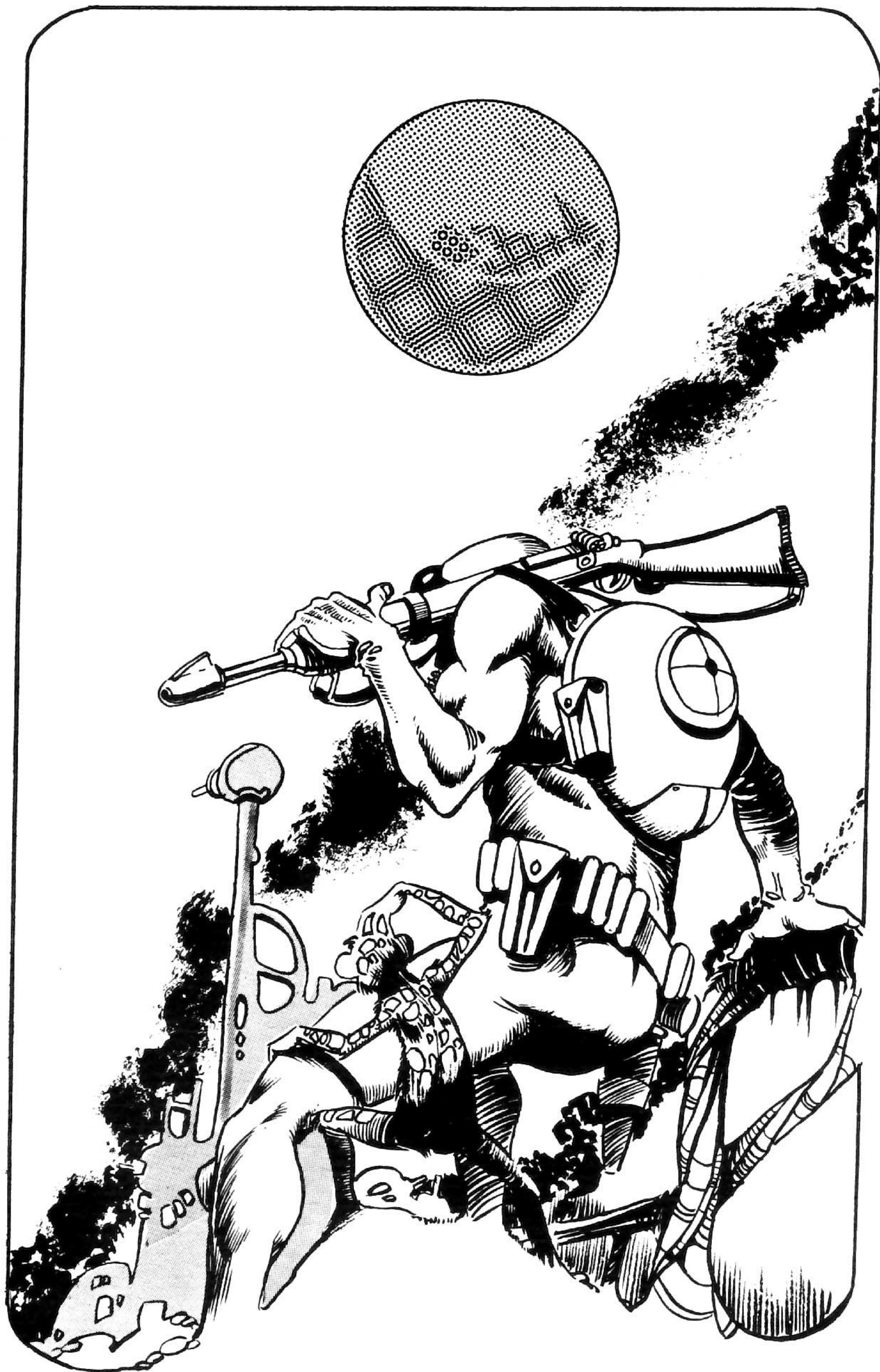
He paused to take an energy tablet and a few sips of water from its nylon container. The simtile left its riding perch and circled the rest area; Knocker would stand watch from a tall tree and rejoin his master when Smith elected to move on.

"Maybe," mused Smith, "the recalling of the flitter was disciplinary action. Something to make me sweat." It made sense: a lone walk in from the boondocks would teach him the folly of leaving his flitter unnecessarily. God, he hoped that was it. But, Knocker's behavior and the sinking feeling in his own guts made him cut his rest period short and strike out again, setting an even faster pace than before. Luckily, the terrain was fairly even, giving him a direct course back to camp. Tall, well-spaced trees had shaded the ground and stymied the growth of heavy underbrush. When he broke into the open, he was able to make even better time, bounding over a mattress-like growth of intertwined grass runners that must have taken decades to form. The experience would have been enjoyable except for the foreboding circumstances. Smith had allowed the simtile to dissuade him from broadcasting a positioning signal, but he'd kept his receiver open, and no buzzing request for a position report had been received.

Twilight, and the trees cut off his view of the sky as he neared the camp; but he could smell the smoke a quarter of a mile away. Knocker scurried down from Smith's shoulder without a sound and disappeared to the left while Smith moved out to the right. Both were as silent as weasels. Meeting on the opposite side of the camp, they'd found no sign that anyone had moved in or out of the command post at ground level. They circled again, closer in, and finally, through the last stand of trees, sighted the camp itself -- or what was left of it. Most of the post buildings had been constructed of form plastic. These had vanished without a trace. The twisted metal from their spaceship and the courier-flitter was scattered everywhere. The beginnings of a more permanent facility had been leveled.

"Not a stone upon a stone," whispered Smith as he trudged like a zombie through the still hot, powder-blue ashes. The simtile followed in his wake, baffled, awaiting his master's next decision.

"God damn!" Only months of enforced discipline and self-control kept Smith from hurling his rifle. He kicked savegely at a slab of flattened metal. "They gotta be so Goddamn deadly!" He shook his rifle and fist at the sky. "But, you missed one. You missed one. You missed the one that'll kill you all! All you Goddamn deadly bastards!" A fluttering sound behind him caused him to whirl, the rifle snapped to ready. Jesus, he'd scared hell out of the simtile. Even in the near-total darkness, he could see that Knocker had faded to an ash grey hue and was peering at Smith from under a burned-out flitter. Stifling his rage, Smith bent and called coaxingly to the badly-frightened little beast. Still trembling, Knocker advanced to hug Smith's lower leg. Lifting him, Smith held the shaking simtile like a child, talking soothingly and swaying while little Knocker buried his face in Smith's neck. They stayed that way for several long moments; for there was no one left to see them now,



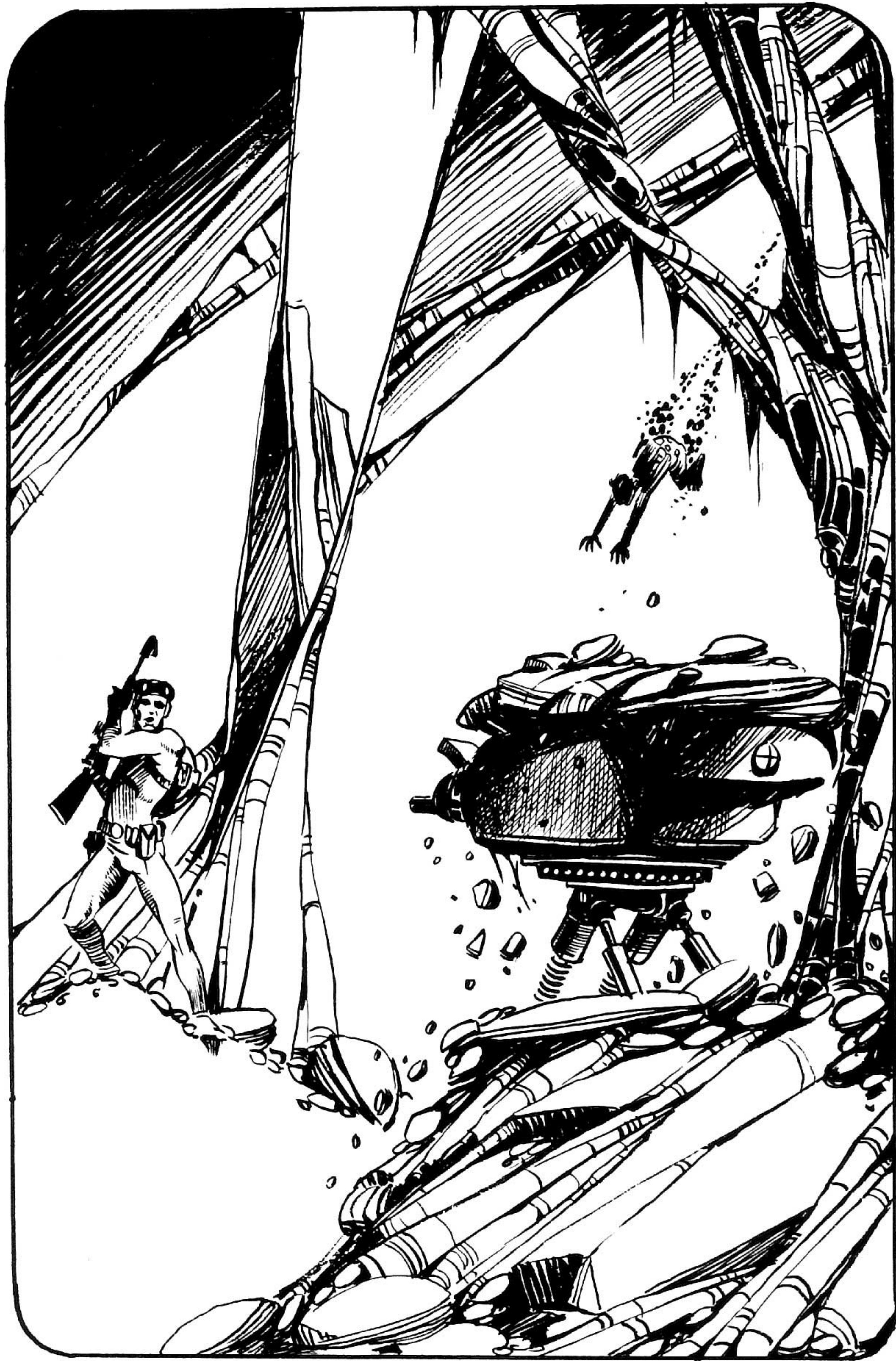


but God. And He did not laugh.

They rested for the balance of the brief night. New Eden's moon rose suddenly and moved with a natural swiftness across the star-cluttered sky. In another month an observation and anti-missile launching station would have been based on that exceptionally close natural satellite, and a sneak attack of any kind would have been impossible. Today's disaster had been aided by that same moon. Before retreating back into the forest, Smith had retrieved some buried emergency equipment and supplies. Among which was an effective, if not super-sophisticated computer/recorder. Its memory bank confirmed Smith's suspicions that the enemy's sneak attack had been totally successful: he was the last marine left alive on this world. His recalled flitter had been annihilated in the air as it streaked for the camp. The enemy was satisfied that they were without opposition on New Eden. The surprise information was that New Eden's warring moon had obliged the invaders by performing a frequent and favorite act, a total eclipse of the sun. This moon's proximity created even more static than the similar situation did back on Earth, and the natural phenomenon covered the interplanetary invasion more effectively than any artificial means. Striking at once over New Eden's short horizon, completed the most successful sneak attack since Pearl Harbor. Even so, the attack had been the act of a desperate enemy. They had taken a severe mauling; only a dozen left alive. One crafty marine might have a chance to do a lot more than just die fighting. The computer could locate the now-overconfident enemy by detecting mechanical movement. That, and Knocker's uncanny ability to pick up human thoughts, would give him a chance to deliver one unexpected attack. He hefted the thermo-rifle; one shot in the right place would be enough. He slept with one arm across his rifle; the other arm enfolded the slumbering simtile.

He ate breakfast on the move. According to the computer, he could reach the enemy's encampment by dusk. He'd have to wipe them out before they were completely set up. Once they'd assembled a larger, more complicated computer, they could detect even the workings of his comparatively simple devices, or even his mere movements on the face of the planet, since there were no natural inhabitants. What wonders war had wrought, and what waste. As a marine, he accepted war as part of life, the price for being alive. Human beings were their own natural enemy; wherever you had people, you had some people striving for control and other people resenting that fact. Always the "us and them" theory was the final answer. And the only time a period that even resembled peace ever existed was after one side had kicked the other side's ass so thoroughly that it didn't dare open its mouth for at least a generation. Then, it started to build up all over again, until war was in full swing once more.

This time, the strange part was that it would have been so easy for "us" to stop "them" before they had gathered any real strength. The poorest history student could see the threat building as early as the 1950's. In fact, there were several swell excuses for recovering the God-awful fumbles that followed World War II, and gave hope and encouragement to an ever-increasing danger. By the late fifties, everyone with enough brains to feed himself saw more and more evidence that the enemy would grow stronger while our own strength was being systematically divided and destroyed.



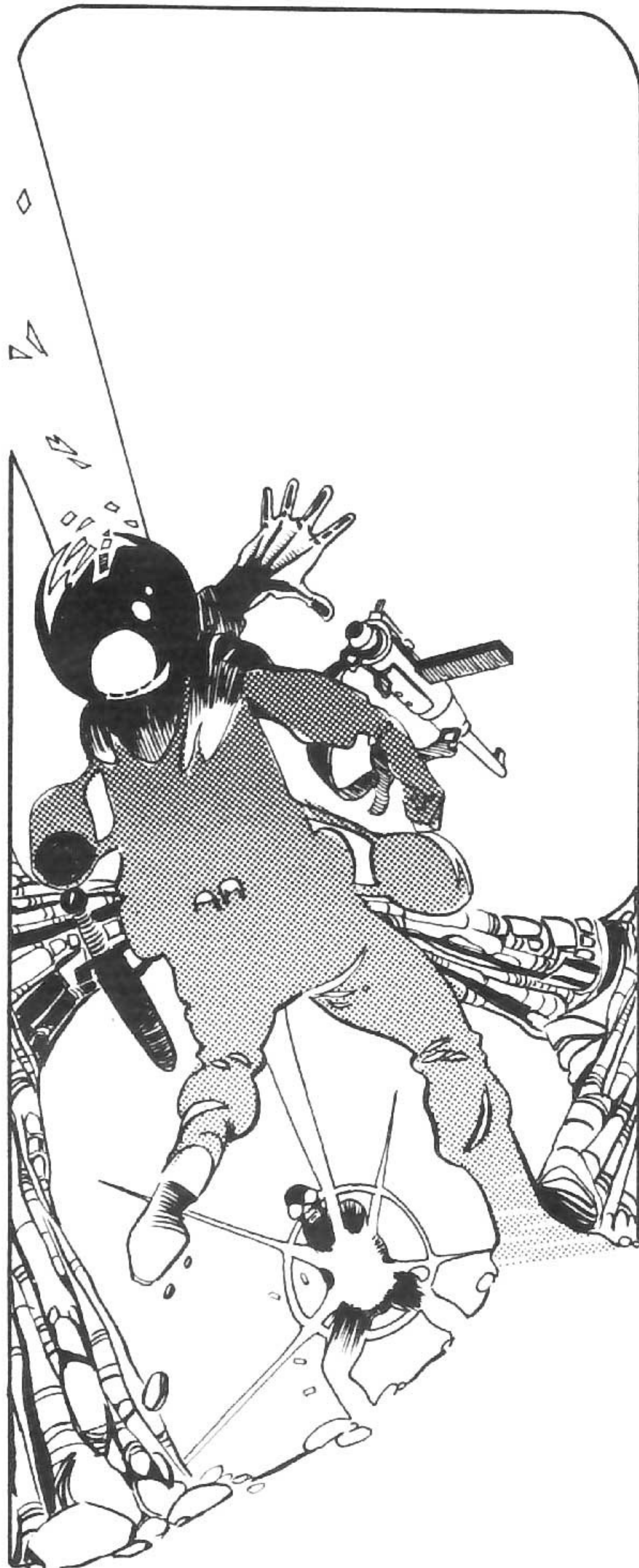
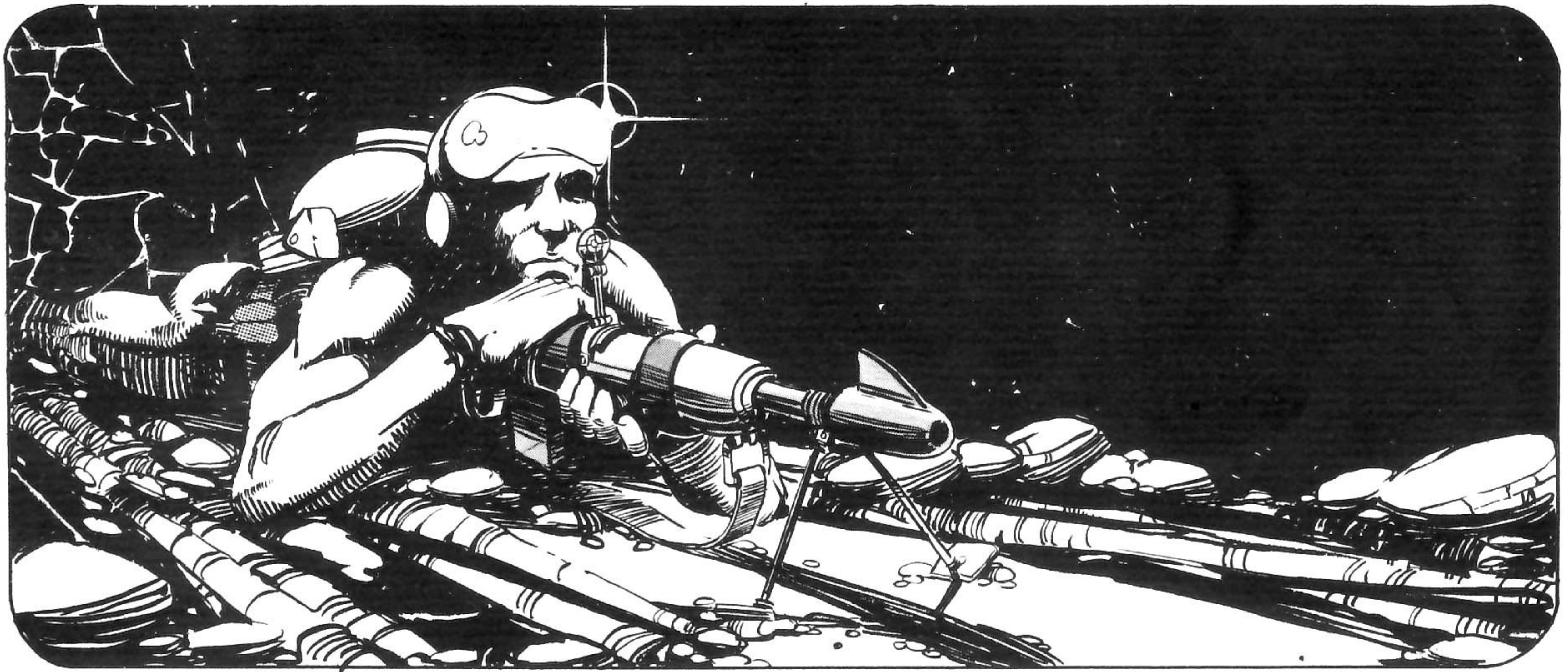
The 1960's, and the enemy surfaced in our universities, in our churches, and even in the unelected facets of higher government. Groups that would have gained nothing but contempt from the genuinely human, were now demanding more consideration from that same humanity's government by promising anti-social behavior which ranged from mild civil disobedience to riots involving death and destruction.

The 1970's, and they got what they wanted. Using a highly favored minority group as a front, they forced a situation wherein conscience ran rampant over logic. Favorable laws were passed and unfavorable laws declared unconstitutional. They were really rolling now. Any nit-wit organization that could produce enough trouble-making free loaders to immobilize a large city would convince the government to declare the will of the majority null and void when opposed to the higher interests of humanity. It was emotional

slight-of-hand, and in the shuffle, the right not to associate had been lost. Weird organizations with destruction doctrines had always been around, and always been shunned by the majority of the citizenries of the world. Like fires, they'd spread across the land unchecked. The logical assumption that less capable people would always be found in less desirable surroundings was attacked as an inhuman idea. Neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and even private clubs were required by law to contain a certain percentage of trashy troublemakers. Up the people. Any attempt to reverse the trend resulted in a direct confrontation with U.S. Marshalls and weekend warriors. The rewards of the productive citizen diminished while the temptation to become "free" at someone else's expense grew and grew.

The 1980's. A loose federation of every dissension group that felt "down-





trodden" claimed to represent the will of the people. Power to the People! The time was right; the world population was massive. The revolution was international; when the real enemy publicly declared itself and rallied its troops, the effect was staggering. Fragmentation of every existing country's population occurred almost overnight. Governments of both orders were astounded by the sudden side-changers. The threat of a holocaust initially encouraged a peaceful division of land masses. But, a truly effective settlement can only be achieved after one side has kicked the other's ass so thoroughly that it won't open its mouth for at least a generation. Kickoff!

And so it had gone, for as long as anyone now living could recall. The war of wars, reaching from the inner mind into outer space in its desperate quest for final absolution.

Smith ran like a robot, his legs working like pistons. Lost in thought, the enemy still far away, he scarcely noticed Knocker's departure from his shoulder. The first hint of danger was a sudden displacement of the earth before him, and the pinging warning of the displacement of the pocket computer's alarm system. Daisy cutter! An anti-personnel weapon, left over from the first encounter. Its turret had risen from the ground and swung in his direction. A steady stream of explosive pellets would spew from its maw. The marine tried to bring his blaster into play, but his position was hopeless. Then, a small blood-red form shot from the trees and lit atop the turret. Knocker's eyes blazed like living flame, orange and blue sparks fell from his mouth like saliva.

"No! Knocker! Noooo!" The explosion was devoid of shrapnel and the heat was not unbearable. However the marine was lifted and thrown backwards more than a dozen yards. Though conscious and uninjured, he lay still for almost half an hour. Gone. Knocker was gone. His comrades were gone. If his mission succeeded the enemy would be gone. The war on Earth could destroy the Earth. Then what would

he do? Raise the flag every morning, sing the National Anthem, and drill for the rest of the day? What a ridiculous existence for a planet's only living creature.

He could surrender.

But, what if Earth didn't die? What if the next spaceship contained *marines*? He rolled to his feet and retrieved his rifle. The deadliest weapon in the universe is a Space Marine and his thermo-rifle.

It had taken him longer to travel the last hundred yards than the rest of the journey combined. His quest had taken him into one of New Eden's few desolate areas. The terrain had grown increasingly rocky, and now no sign of vegetation was visible. These jagged formations were probably formed during some early age when the small planet had held a high content of surface water. That rapid, close moon had whipped a massive water supply the length and breadth of this barren rectangle. Further, the craggy hills held a high content of magnetic metal, another condition that enabled the enemy to keep its second invasion secret.

Their camp was in sight; the center of a high plateau gradually formed a shallow cup-like enclosure a few hundred yards wide. The enemy's disguised spaceship and main facilities were in that cup. With luck, he'd turn it into a devil's cauldron. He was well situated now. Lying prone on a rocky knoll, almost level with the slightly lower enemy camp. The blaster was mounted on its tripod with sights adjusted for the two thousand yard shot. He would expend almost the entire charge with a single blast. There could be only one surprise attack; if that failed, he'd likely exhaust the rifle covering his retreat. Then, he'd fall back on his side-arm. Either way, if the next space craft was theirs, he'd have to ditch all mechanical paraphernalia to escape detection, and live like Tarzan in the forests. But, he would never stop fighting; it was no accident that he'd been spared. The recall of his flitter had been deliberate, not the malfunction of some



ruined control device. In a time when a warrior's power pack held enough energy to destroy a small city, it was standard strategy to deploy a slow scout, an undetectable man on foot as an ace-in-the-hole to cover the narrow margin of error that often contained the elements of victory or defeat.

Matthew Elliot Smith squinted through his scope for the umpteenth time. The enemy camp was a beehive of activity. Dusk was rapidly becoming full night, and any outside work assignments requiring light had to be completed within the next half-hour. His computer had indicated that twelve of the enemy survived the battle that destroyed the marine camp. He'd counted ten within the low perimeter. They had eight flitters left; six were being checked and refueled. The other two had been called in. They had made three mistakes; they had assumed all marines were destroyed; they had broken radio silence and confirmed his computer's information; and they had gathered all their forces in one place.

A flitter appeared, coming in low over a bluff opposite his position. Another, slightly higher, passed almost directly overhead. He huddled down and slipped the safety off his blaster. Almost totally dark now. The first flitter had landed and the other had descended to within twenty feet of the ground. Donning his night visor, the marine sighted in for the final time. The scene below appeared as bright as day. A second later, it was even brighter. Their entire fuel supply went up in one solid explosion. He had lined up his shot to strike their fuel dump first, then the atmosphere-scorching spaceship beyond. A large amount of the flaming fuel was carried into the open ports of the ship by the rushing force of the charge. A second, even larger explosion followed on the heels of the first. The marine grimly watched (and felt) the fireball balloon fill his entire field of vision, then shrink to a steadily-burning hell, punctuated by smaller explosions as the flitters and ammo supplies blew up. He stood on the ridge and watched the smoldering scene for a long time. He hadn't really expected to be so successful; their faulty philosophy was only exceeded by their hit-or-miss military strategy. They should have covered and guarded the camp more carefully until they had the time to assemble and program computer-sentries to comb the area for possible survivor-snipers. They probably felt fat and lazy after their brilliant victory; overconfident and invincible, they'd made themselves an easy target.

Like he was doing right now. Standing straight and tall, out-lined against the sky from two directions! What if one of the last two enemy flitters had been under remote control?

He dropped from the ridge as this last thought struck him -- and avoided the rifle blast that would have. Slow scout, standard procedure. He started angling upward, following the ridge he'd just quitted. Then, on a sudden inspiration, he reversed his tactics. The enemy scout would also parallel his last disclosed position in a race for higher ground. If he could strike directly across, he should cut that deadly bastard's trail from the rear, then parallel the scout's progress from the opposite -- and unexpected -- side.

It was a good plan, based on a logical action, and Smith was delighted to find a quick passage under a natural rock-bridge formation. But not so delighted to find the enemy scout attempting the same strategy. In the face-to-face encounter that followed, the

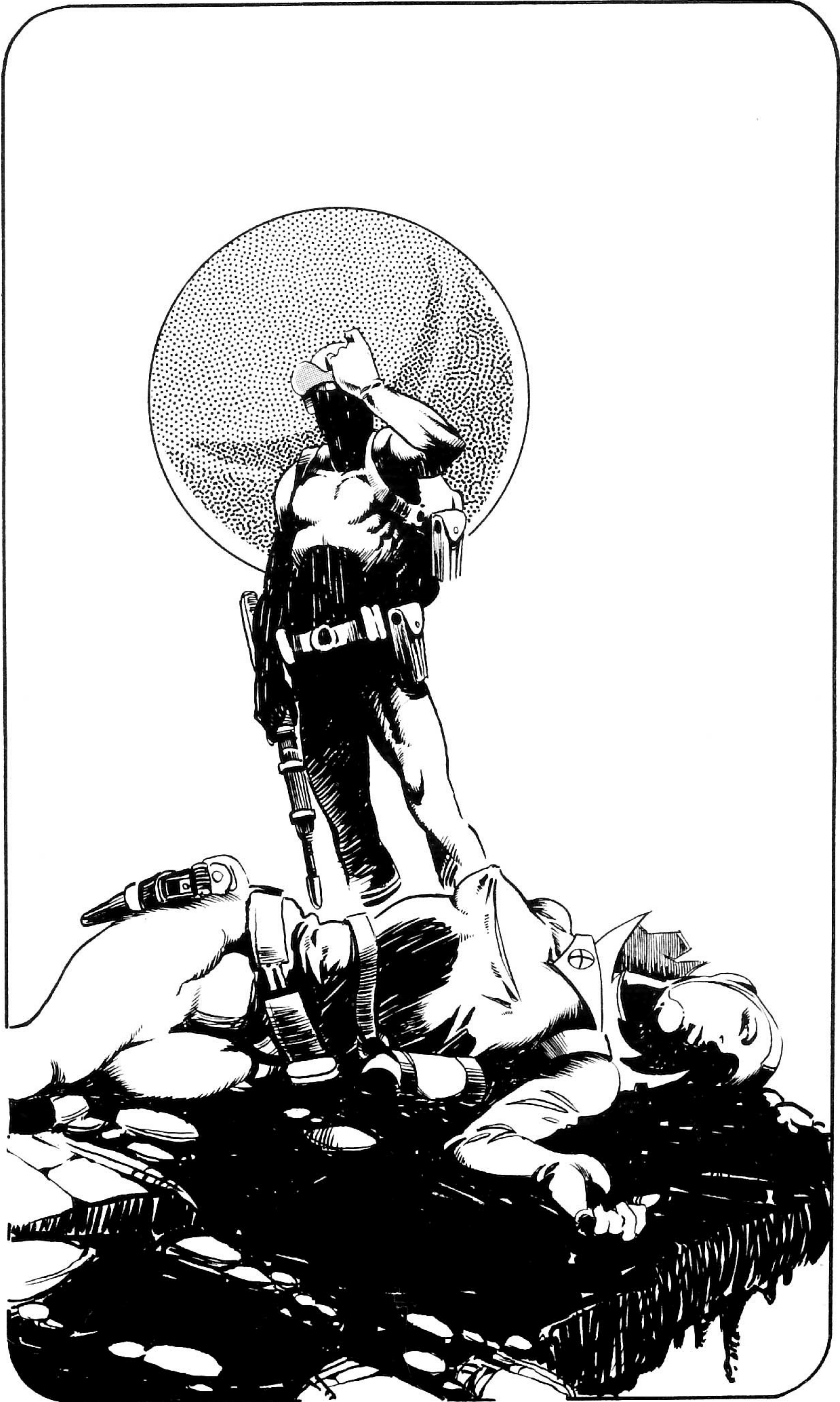
marine fired instinctively, so quickly that the killing hit might have seemed a lucky accident. But, the deadliest weapon in the universe is a Space Marine and his thermo-rifle. The charge of the rifle had almost been exhausted and actual damage to the enemy's body had been slight. For this reason, the marine was required to advance and closely examine the corpse.

Matthew Elliot Smith lifted his night visor and the New Eden moon bounded into view to briefly illuminate

the grim tableau. The dead scout's helmet had been smashed and the young face was uncovered and undamaged. The corpse lay on its burned side, the small hands and feet seeming even smaller in death. The rounded hips and breasts were accentuated by its position on the uneven ground. And her tiny waist...

What a waste. What a war.

In the bright moonlight, the inevitable slogan on her armband was clearly visible: "INVINCIBLE WOMAN --- DEADLIER THAN THE MALE."

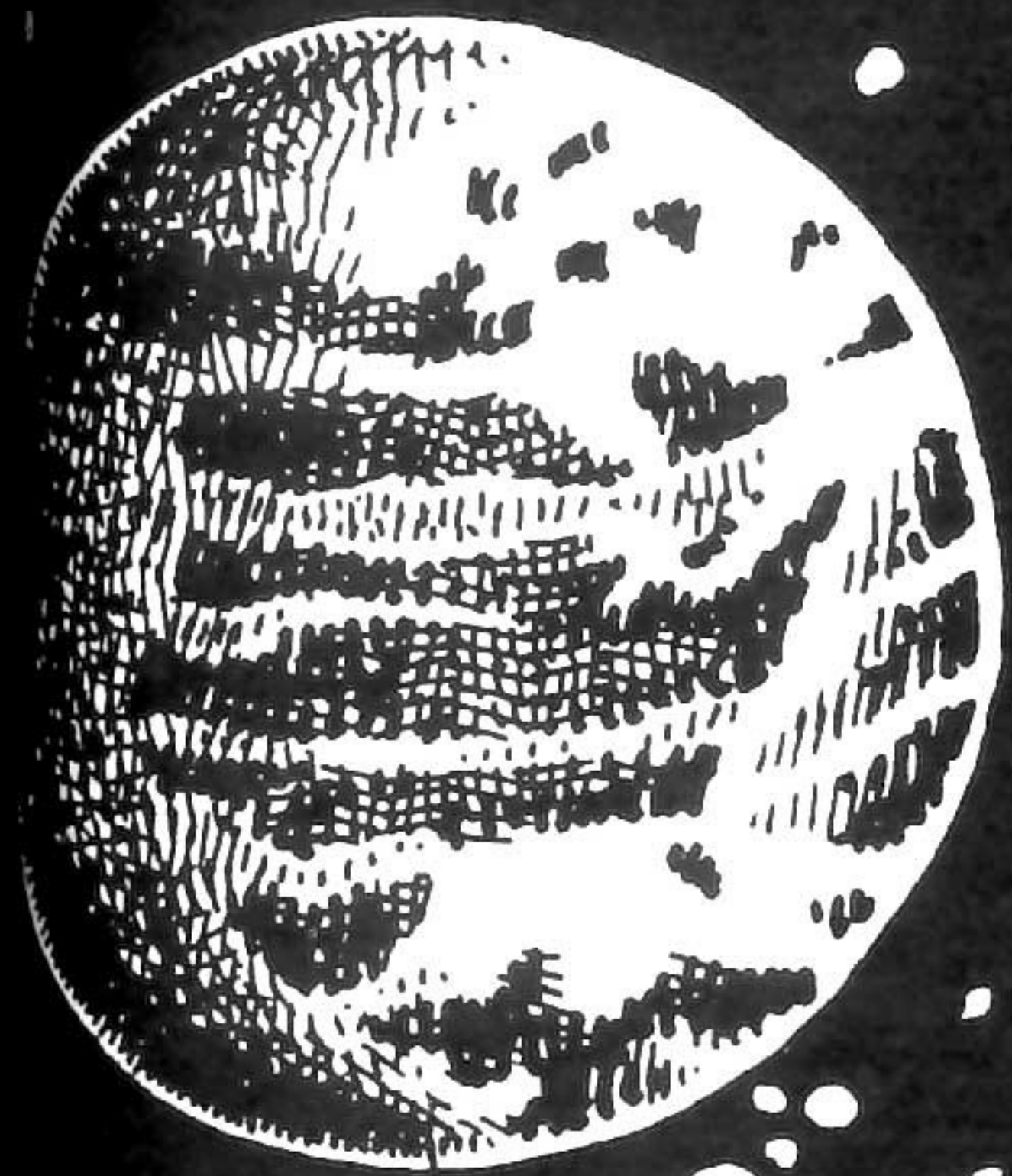






WILBER  
1976.





*On the side of a hill in a land called Somewhere  
A little boy lies asleep in the earth;  
While down in the valley a cruel war rages,  
And people forget what a child's life is worth*

—Paul Simon,  
*A Land Called Somewhere*

# CONTROLLED EXPERIMENT

WRITTEN BY JIM WILSON

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD WILBUR & JOHN MC LAUGHLIN

Lardav heard Anghin's voice coming from aft even before he'd finished readjusting the psychscan vernier. "Lardav! Haven't you found anything on that goddamn scanner yet—?"

He slumped in his seat, sighed, turned to gace his partner who had just entered the control room. "It's a big planet, baby."

Anghin frowned and snorted. Irritated, Lardav added, "But I'll find us a nice heavy situation that we can sink our academic teeth into if you'll just *shut up and let me!*" He winces, realized he'd yelled the last phrase.

"Yeah," replied Anghin, equally annoyed. "You'll just sit there and scan the whole goddamn planet while that bastard Marlang and his flunky publish *their* paper, and before you know it, *they* have our positions at the University!

Lardav said evenly, "I am *trying* to find us a situation that's unique, one



that hasn't been published by fifty hacks before us."

"Well, the Board of Trustees isn't going to wait forever, you know. And Marlang and Rupayn are drooling over the department heads' positions right now."

Lardav leaned back further, watching the video screen on the scanner console, the flashing patterns of color playing across its surface. "This whole thing is absurd. I was hired to teach. Instead, I'm sitting in a StarRover on the other side of the galactic arm, scanning cultural patterns every freshman knows by the second week of his first quarter, just to get experimental proof to support a paper I don't want to prepare --!"

"Don't complain to me, Professor Lardav! It's the Dean and the fucking Board of Trustees who are so all-fired hot on faculty members doing research work in the field."

It was Lardav's turn to snort. "The term is 'publish or perish,' Professor Anghin, and it stinks! My forte is teaching child development in relation to cultural theory, not --"

Anghin smiled. "Well, then... imagine Marlang sitting in your office, at your desk, writing a lecture on that idiotic auto-regression theory of his for your students."

Lardav paused. Oh, god damn it. He turned back to the psychscan console, hit a control. "I'm scanning. I'm scanning."

Wanda Russell looked at the looming

structure whose Victorian face jeered back at her as she walked across the parking lot. The school was quite old, and its ancient brick surface seemed to be covered with factory soot, and grime of at least a half-century's accumulation. *The medieval castle syndrome*, she thought, smiling inwardly.

Had she been concentrating more on her environment, she would have observed a fascinating three-dimensional portrait of Inner City life: vivid details ranging from the weathered brownstone factory buildings to the nearby shabby frame houses with their clothesline-and-weed-infested yards to the old newspapers and garbage that the wind occasionally blew through the area: but Wanda Russell was oblivious to the things around her. Indeed, she did not even care about the appearance of the school she was walking to. For it was not the building that was important; it was who was within the building: her children.

*Her children!* Wanda smiled, the expression reflecting her excitement. She was as excited as one could expect a brand-new fifth-grade teacher on her first teaching assignment to be. There was a sudden burst of wind from the overcast sky; newspapers flew and Wanda shivered -- not entirely from the cold. It was a harmless way of releasing nervous energy, she thought. *Better to shake in the parking lot than in the classroom...*

The school seemed older inside than outside. Wanda noticed it, but again, attached no great importance to it. She walked down the dingy, brown main cor-

ridor and into the office area, which consisted of little more than a desk for the secretary, a larger desk for the principal, a table with an old hand-crank spirit duplicator, and bulletin boards filled with statements and schedules. The principal looked up as she entered, turned to greet her. "Miss Russell! Good morning. All ready to begin?"

She nodded.

And ten minutes later, wished quite strongly that she hadn't.

The voice from the maser-beamer sounded like metal grating metal. "...And he had seniority, so we had to..."

Anghin hit the transmit key savagely. "Don't tell me about Marlang's seniority! If his father hadn't been on the Board of Trustees they'd have literally thrown him out of grad school! He doesn't know the difference between nueral channels and television channels!"

Enraged, he switched off without waiting for a reply and stormed aft to find Lardav looking at the scanner screen with a rather satisfied grin. "Guess who's acting chairman of the psychology department?"

Lardav's smirk grew wider. "Marlang. I heard you ranting on the blower."

Anghin was stunned by Lardav's apparent lack of interest. "Lar! If we don't do something, we'll both be little more than a couple of goddamn exam proctors!"

Lardav turned around slowly to face Anghin and said in as sweet and unctuous





a voice as he could manage, "I've found our test case."

Anghin's face changed color rapidly. "Law! You did it! Great! Let's see what-cha got!"

"I've put the sensory patterns on the remote storage scanner. I'll play the psychscan back through our own sense projectors."

From the polysensory tape library, Park Century University, Linear North Quadrant, Deneva:

INITIAL SENSORY PATTERN  
TEST CASE

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT L3-D4D  
DR. LARDAV 7 Su.D. and DR. ANGHIN 14 Su.D

Sad.

The aura of the entire school could be summed up by that word. Wanda Russell sensed the feeling, sensed that it prevailed everywhere: her room, other rooms, the whole thing. But especially her room.

Her room: small and old. Wood floor saturated with oil to hold down dust. Thirty restless and curious and cautious and suspicious children sit in thirty old desks with carvings over their tops. And, somehow, the kids look defeated.

Move on through the room. Big windows were designed to admit lots of light. But the factory smoke and accumulated dirt has reduced the amount of light which can filter through. Paint peels on their frames. A large split runs from top to bottom of the chalkboard, faded green. On the bookshelves are textbooks, most looking as dingy as the windows, if not more so. Recognition? The reader is the same book Wanda used fourteen years before. The rest seem as old. On the wall above her desk is a painting of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Interesting, how it seemed to be done in varying shades of brown, to match everything else. (In totality, the room reminded Wanda of a photograph she had once seen in a book; a grainy, high-contrast bleak-light photo of an old-fashioned mental hospital).

And the children...

Twenty-four of the thirty were a year or more behind in their work -- a condition caused, no doubt, by the fact that they had had, the year before, a seemingly endless series of incompetent and/or substitute teachers. Of the twenty-four who were behind, two were seriously disturbed emotionally, and one seemed to be dyslexic. The six at the proper level seemed even more disturbed than the other two.

Wanda Russell was speechless.

One week: dawning frustration. The books and materials provided were either so hopelessly antiquated or so insipid as to be meaningless. Nevertheless, they were all that was available, and what had to be used.

But it could not be. Most of the children were so far behind they would have to work doubly hard to catch up, but most were incapable of doing so with the equipment at hand; if anything, the vintage material generated gloom and despair -- in teacher as well as student. Wanda began to notice that the other teachers seemed to proceed almost mechanically, without interest. She wondered what the children in their classes were learning. If they were.

"JEE-ZUS --!" Anghin ripped away the



headset of his sense projector. Lardav followed, watched Anghin rub his forehead. "I felt like I was in an Erinian death camp."

"You were in a schoolroom on the planet of Klentheta, known to its people as Earth. Cultural pattern second cycle blue grid, beta fluctuation +6%," replied Lardav. "Think that'll provide enough of a punch?"

"Punch? Try fusion explosion."

"Thought you'd be impressed."

"So, what are we going to--"

"I thought you'd never ask. The best way to prove environmental conditioning is to change the environment. We're going to alter the test situation."

"How?"

"Subliminal alteration of the attitude pattern of the test subject."

Anghin paled. "Oh no. Oh no my friend. We can get in too much trouble that way. Remember when Jandav flamed that sun during the physics department's research in neutron stars? We--"

"We can get a temporary License to Tamper, which Jandav failed to do."

"Well, what do you have in mind?"

"A synapse-alteration beam linked into the psychscan unit, with an extra channel for outside modulation. Use the SAB to change the test situation, watch everything fall right in place, write up our findings, publish, and Marlang and company get bounced."

Anghin nodded. "You make damned sure you know what you're doing."

Lardav smiled. "You make damned sure you get us that license."

Wanda arrived in her apartment after a particularly trying day, bone-tired. She sank into a chair and began trying to sort out the day's events, instead drifted into more general matters; random and relevant thoughts about what she'd discovered in the month she'd been teaching.

Given: one child. One moderately intelligent ten-year-old boy from a comparatively poor neighborhood. He was a child with a bright, alive curiosity; he would make a fine researcher someday. Or a dramatist.

Add to this the school and its course of study. Every weekday morning for four years he had had to come to what surely must be the most dreary place for learning in the entire city. For four years he

had been drilled, altered, molded to fit a pattern that had been obsolete for twenty years.

Schoolwork had become so distasteful and dull to him that he had gradually stopped trying to get anywhere. Instead, he turned to listening to hard rock music. Worthless, but he preferred the kaleidoscopic rhythms to the dismal boredom of school. And after a time, under the hands of dull and disinterested teachers, the very act of learning had become unthinkable to the child. Any of it, if it was connected with school. And so, he had stopped listening, had closed himself off...

Four years.

Against a lifetime.

Opportunity lost.

All wondering. All pondering, all discovery, mixed irrevocably with the hideous mire of obstinately endless dullness. Four years!

And creativity lost as well.

All of it.

Gone.

Well, Wanda thought. You're the fifth year. What can you do?

[In that microsecond, a silvery spaceship dipped lower in its parking orbit over Earth, certain circuits within clicking into place. A mind with cerebral feelers searched through another like a prospector with a Geiger counter.

[Concurrently, Wanda was thinking about books she had read on progressive education, Neill and Holt and Kozol and Silberman and Montessori and Cohen and Leonard.

[Alarms in the shop went off, the feelers withdrew, and one thought was locked.]

She decided to do something.

From the polysensory tape library:

Brightness. Mod posters to add color to the room. A sense of humor. Something moving and happening all day. Reading aloud from nonregulation books. Art work and lessons. Television series and comic books assigned. Music. Attention and smiles and pats on the head. Dramatics. Jokes. Seriousness. Ancient Rome. Modern New York. Firmness equaling reliability.

A combination of Leicestershire and structured environment.

From a young teacher working for an indifferent administration.

And it worked.



Averages climbing, and interest growing, and bright eyes where before there had been none, and smiles, and kid sounds.

And Michael, bright and quick and creative and artistic, very very cautiously but inexorably beginning to trust his teacher...

Wanda Russell was quite pleased.

"That's it, Lar!" Anghin exclaimed, almost as delighted as the teacher they were scanning. "Concrete proof, right there on the tapes!"

Lardav smiled. "I'd like to see Marlang try to weasel his way out of this one."

"Or," Anghin replied, "to put it succinctly..." He plugged his headset into the data storage unit, grinned evilly, and began speaking. "And this total change, this complete about face, was the result of changes in solely environmental factors, as the documented evidence -- the recordings of the children's attitude patterns -- provide." He paused for effect. "It should be brought to the attention of the viewer that this evidence points to the irrefutable fact that the major postulate of the theory of auto-regression, as presented by our colleague Dr. Marlang 4, is completely and totally invalid."

Lardav suddenly began chuckling with purely vengeful glee. "It is going to be rather delightful, watching the campus explode -- and watching Marlang and Tennar pound the plasteel, looking for positions at some obscure private school, as auto-regression dies a rather unpleasant death...!"

"They'll end up as *garbagemen* at some obscure private school -- their reputations will have preceded them!"

"Yeah. The sooner we get back, the better. Let's wrap it up."

"What's to wrap up?"

"Not too much. Mainly the counter-alteration."

"Can't we skip that? Seems a shame to waste all our sub-lim training."

"Rules, Lar. No permanent interference. What we did might set a precedent or something."

"A precedent for improvement, no?"

"What's gotten into you, Lar? You were the one who wanted to get out of doing this, remember? We're academicians, not messiahs. Leave the implementation to the students and technicians."

"Yeah, I know. It just seems wasteful."

"That's your problem, Lar. Your intuitive sense..."

"Empathy," Lardav corrected.

"--Your *empathy* is a useful thing, but it sometimes tries to keep you from fulfilling the responsibilities of your position."

"Yeah, yeah, okay, Dean Anghin. One subliminal suggestion coming up," Lardav agreed finally. *Plus one more you'll never know about*, he added silently.

Just before Easter vacation, Wanda was leading her class in a special Easter egg hunt. As they ran about, she beamed. Amazing changes in every child in her class, in just a few short months. And Michael was opening up, more and more... She was expecting a major breakthrough soon, when he finally decided that maybe he could trust her enough to communicate with her.

[As she contemplated, a very important and very delicately positioned politician in charge of the city school system was reading over reports and recommendations, his mind on the fact that reappointments

were coming up. There were waves being made, and that bastard Parker was against most of what was going on...

[The flittering starcraft again dipped in its orbit, a micron-thin beam lanced out, did its work. The ship circled the globe, once, and again the psychscan beam flashed. Milliseconds later, the craft swung into a hyperbolic arc and went into four-space drive.]

And later, down on Earth:

The secretary paused as she read the letter back to her boss. "Upon advice of the Principal of Tomlin Middle School and after such thoughtful consideration, the Department of Education has decided that the contract of Miss Wanda L. Russell will not be renewed. It should be understood that many first-year teachers are released from service each year by the Department. In the majority of such cases, as in Miss Russell's case, the primary reason has to do with deviation from the official Course of Study, which must be followed by all teachers within our system. We have found children in classes not following the Course to be, for the most part, ill-prepared to proceed farther into higher level work; we therefore feel that teachers not following the Course are not properly serving the educational needs of the children and are thus not fulfilling the responsibilities of their positions." Paragraph. "It is my sincere hope that Miss Russell will pursue the field of teaching, and in the process, learn the necessary procedures and priorities for the best interests of all concerned." She looked up. "Er, don't you think this is a little, uh, drastic, Doctor Dobson?"

"Possible. I've been told that this person brought a great deal of initiative to her students. But when in a particular system, one must function within the rules of that system."

"It still seems a bit unfair. After all, her students did do much better on the achievement tests this semester."

"Hell, Brenda, I'm just doing my job... following orders, to coin a phrase. If I start making trouble they'll kick me out. And in this case, I think they're

right. We can't have people coming in and inciting disrespect for established rules and traditions of the school system. We have to eliminate such people. It's the only way to preserve order and coherency. I wish there were another way, but there simply isn't."

Wanda exceeded the speed limit more often than not as she drove home. She did not like the rumors that had spread through the school. There was talk that her classroom techniques were not appreciated by the more traditional of the area big shots, and that her job was on the line. *Scuttlefish!* she thought. *They don't even look at the test scores -- just at their almighty status quo.*

She pulled in her driveway, parked, walked up to her door, and found Michael sitting on her doorstep. "Hello, Michael," she said quietly, hoping. "What are you doing here?"

He looked at the ground beneath her. "I...I wanted to talk to...somebody...not at school...I, uh, I couldn't..." He stopped.

This is it, she thought. The breakthrough. Careful now. "Come on in and sit down with me. I'll make some tea and we can talk a while." No response. She removed her mail from its box; a letter from the Superintendent's office. She then opened the door and entered. Michael followed silently.

Later, after the tea, she asked, "Why did you come to visit me?"

Michael smiled shyly. "I just thought... maybe I could talk to you better than anyone else..."

She smiled warmly. "You know you can trust me, Michael."

Michael nodded. "Yeah. Don't know why I came to see you today... just kind of a thought I had..."

"I'm glad you did," Wanda said.

They talked for a while, after which Michael curled up in a chair reading, and Wanda opened the letter, read it. Worst fear confirmed. She sighed, looked over to Michael.

And while dawn came for Lardav and night fell for Marlang, Wanda Russell experienced both, simultaneously.



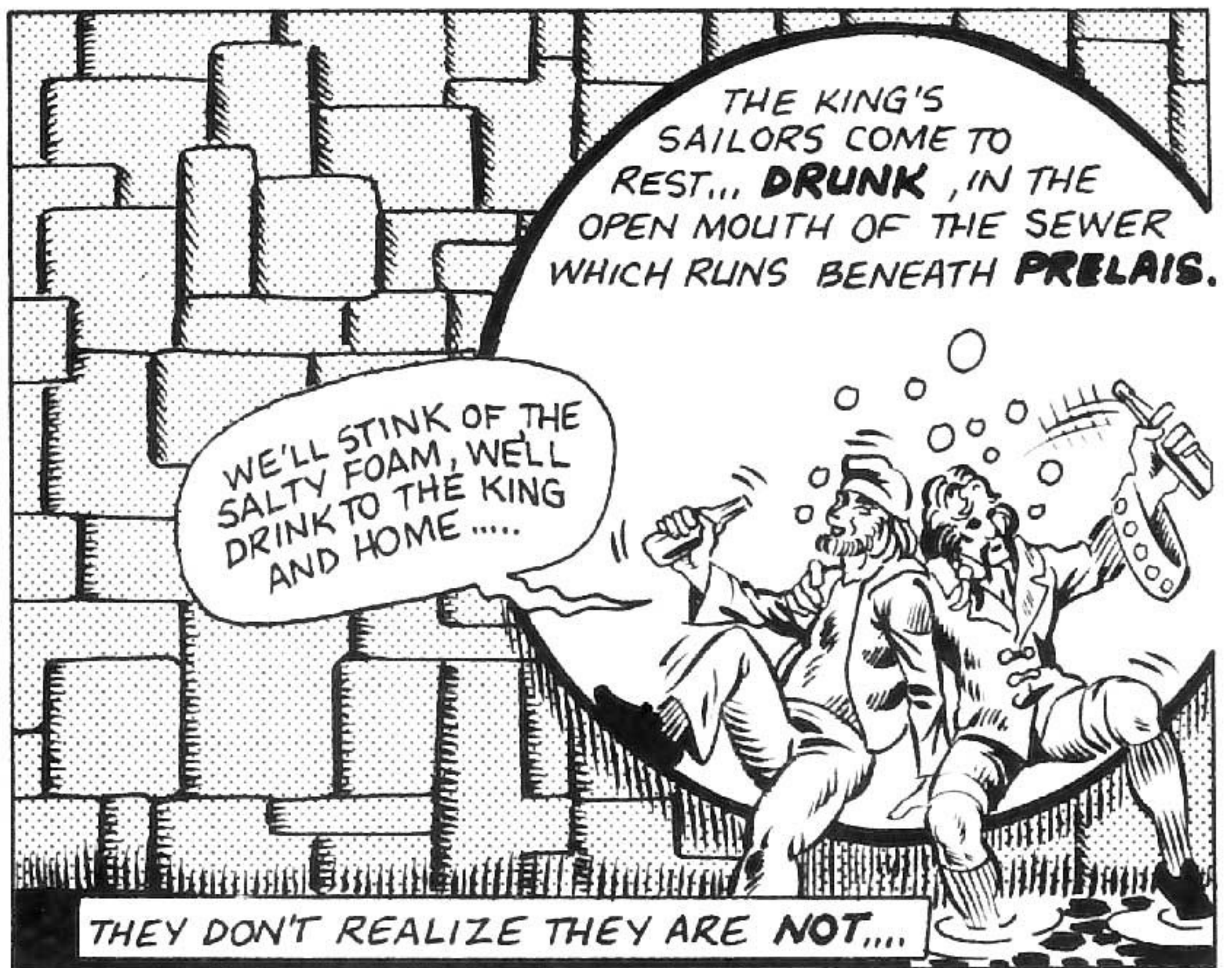
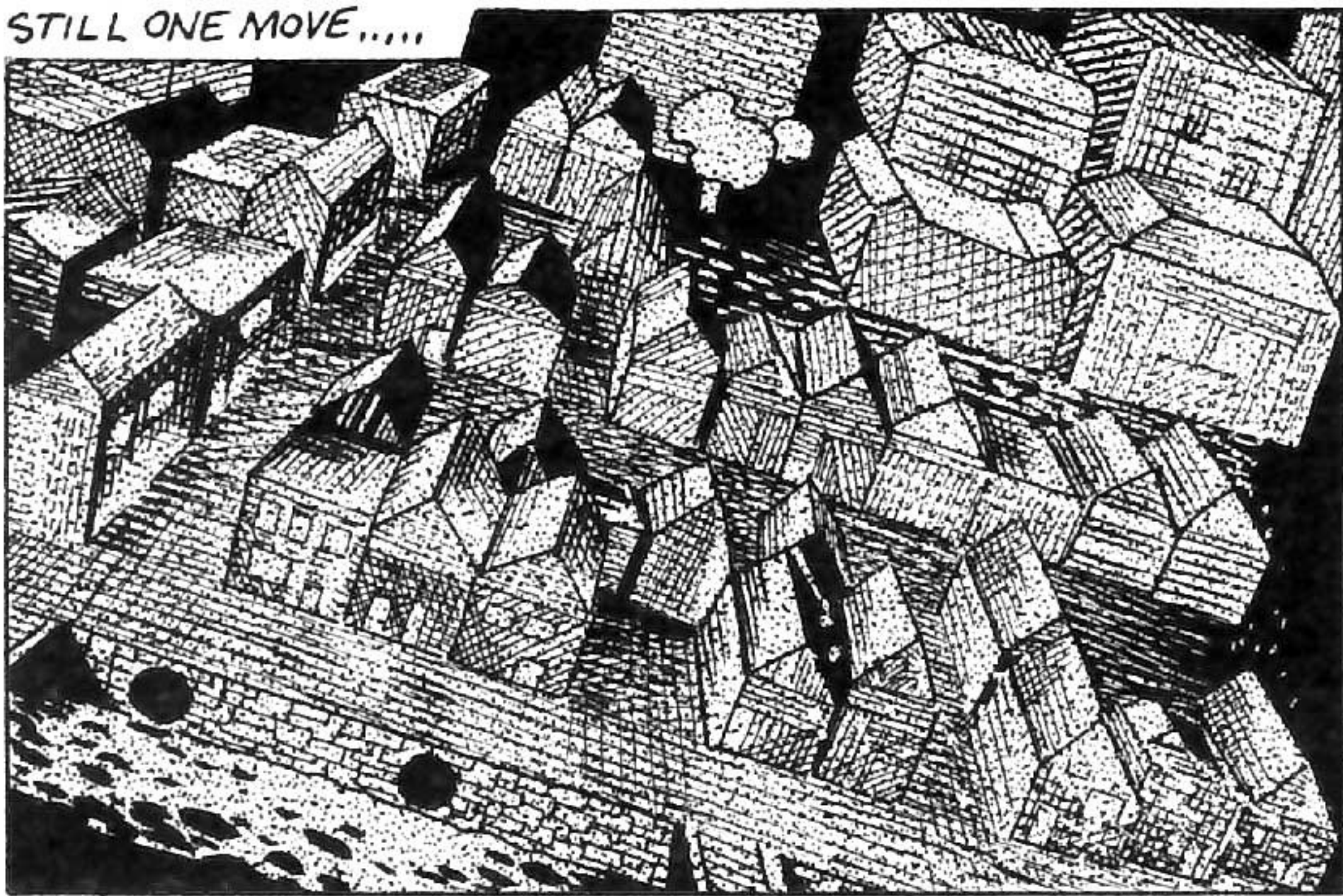




• STEFFAN



THE TIME IS THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. THE PLACE,, A PARISIAN DOCKSIDE GHETTO CALLED **PRELAIS, FRANCE...** A PLACE OF REMENANT PEOPLE... REMENANT SOULS,,,AND STILL ONE MOVE.....



THE KING'S SAILORS COME TO REST... **DRUNK**, IN THE OPEN MOUTH OF THE SEWER WHICH RUNS BENEATH **PRELAIS**.

WE'LL STINK OF THE SALTY FOAM, WE'LL DRINK TO THE KING AND HOME .....

THEY DON'T REALIZE THEY ARE NOT....



... ALONE.

....AND KISS THE QUEEN WHEN WE'RE ALONE....

ENRIQUE....?

I HEAR..... RATS!! WHAT DO YOU HEAR??



MON DIEU!! OUDENARDE!!



YES. **OUDENARDE**... THE SEWER WOMAN. PHANTOM, LEGEND AND NIGHTMARE. ALL THIS AND MORE.

**IT**  
INTEREAN

STEVE CLEMENT  
WRITER & EDITOR

KARL KESEL  
PENCILER

M. MACHLAN  
INKER  
J. ORDWAY  
LETTERER

THE EXISTANCE OF OUDENARDE

A FIGURE TO FEAR,, BUT ALSO TO PITY, FOR, IN THIS WORLD OF FILTH AND SLUMS, OUDENARDE STOOD FOR JUSTICE, AS WELL AS TERROR. SHE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO USE EITHER TO HER ADVANTAGE.



STRANGE RUMORS PLACE HER AS AN ALLY OF SATAN, OR SOME DARK BEAST WITH FANGS.



BUT THOSE WHO HAVE GOTTEN CLOSE ENOUGH TO GLIMPSE HER SAY SHE IS HUMAN...

...OR AT LEAST PARTIALLY SO...



WITH ONLY A CRUSTED GAP WHERE HER LEFT EYE ONCE RESIDED, LONG SINCE ONLY A MEMORY.

SOME SAY IT WAS PLUCKED OUT BY A JEALOUS WIFE WHEN OUDENARDE WAS STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE DESIRABLE.



MONIQUE,

COHONCHO! SWINE!

OTHERS SAY THAT DRUNKEN SOLDIERS OF THE KING STRUCK OUT AT A GUTTERSNIPE WITH A CARELESS SWORD ARM AND THE RESULT WAS THE MISSING EYE OF OUDENARDE.



FILTHY BEGGAR!

IEEEE!

BUT WHATEVER THE TRUTH BE, ALL RUMORS WERE STILL SPOKEN SOFTLY; ONE DID NOT LIVE IN PRELAIS AND DARE INCUR THE WRATH OF OUDENARDE LIGHTLY.



AND YET... HER BENEFITS OFT TIMES OUTWEIGHTED HER SWIFT VENGEANCE! FOR SHE WAS THE PROTECTOR OF ALL THOSE WHO DWELLED IN THE GHETTO.

IN A TAVERN OF THIEVES, THE MOST FEARED MAN WAS THE INFORMER. IT COULD BE ANYONE. YOU NEVER KNOW UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE.



OUDENARDE DID NOT LIKE INFORMERS.

HIS LORDSHIP MUST BE WONDERING WHAT'S BECOME OF HIS RUM CELLAR BY NOW.

WHAT A SHAME HE'LL NEVER KNOW! HAW HAW HERE'S TO HIS LORDSHIP!





IT COULD BE ANYONE.

DIGLET INN

SHE WOULD KNOW.

WELL... WON'T THE CAPTAIN BE INTERESTED IN THAT.....



NEXT MORNING DRIFTS IN SLOWLY FROM THE SEA UNTIL.....

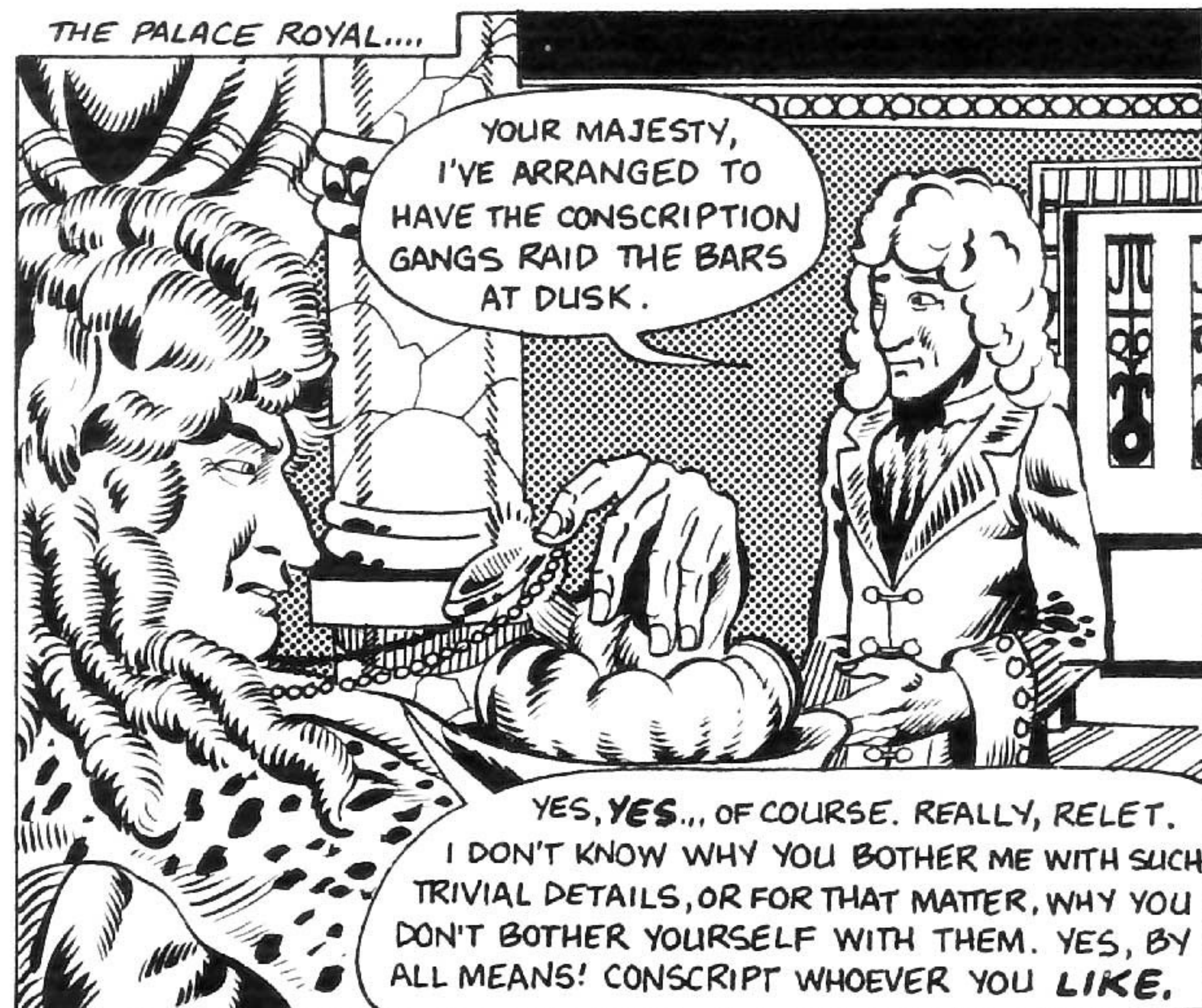
SANTA JESU!  
IT... IT IS HER HANDIWORK!

I KNOW HIM! IT IS... WAS... REMUL THE FERRET! SHE MUST HAVE FOUND HIM INFORMING!!



SO ANOTHER "BIT" OF INFORMATION IS ADDED TO THE LEGEND OF OUDENARDE. THIS LEGEND SAYS THAT SHE IS EVERYWHERE, ALL THE TIME. THIS, OF COURSE IS NOT TRUE.

BUT IN ALL THE GHETTO OF PRELAIS, NO ONE HAD EVER TRIED TO PROVE IT.



THE PALACE ROYAL....

YOUR MAJESTY, I'VE ARRANGED TO HAVE THE CONSCRIPTION GANGS RAID THE BARS AT DUSK.

YES, YES... OF COURSE. REALLY, RELET. I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU BOTHER ME WITH SUCH TRIVIAL DETAILS, OR FOR THAT MATTER, WHY YOU DON'T BOTHER YOURSELF WITH THEM. YES, BY ALL MEANS! CONSCRIPT WHOEVER YOU LIKE.



...AND A PRIVATE AUDIENCE UN-PRIVATE.

THANK YOU, HIGHNESS.

GOODNIGHT RELET.



BUT AT DUSK....



ALL RIGHT, **SCUM!** YOU'RE ALL IN THE KING'S NAVAL FILES NOW....



CAN I HELP YOU, SGT??

WHERE THE HELL IS EVERYBODY?!

WHA...



THE "VOICE" OF OUDENARDE IS SELDOM HEARD, BUT WHEN IT IS, ALL MEN PAY HEED.



SUCH WAS LIFE IN THE PRELAIS GHETTO, UNTIL ONE FATEFUL DAY....

OHH! OH! FILTH! DRIVER! TO THE PALACE! IMMEDIATELY, I SAY!!



DAMN YOU, RELET! I'VE WARNED YOU ABOUT THE FILTH YOU'VE ALLOWED TO FLOURISH IN THAT SCUM!

...BUT YOUR HIGHNESS...

NO! NO EXCUSES THIS TIME! ORDER OUT THE TROOPS! SOLDIERS, RELET! I WANT THAT GHETTO SHUT DOWN UNTIL THEY LEARN SOME MANNERS!!



THE DWELLERS LET THE TENSION CREEP IN WITH THE FOG.... SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN SOON. BUT THE DWELLERS HAD ENOUGH, Eeking OUT A MEAGRE LIVING, WITHOUT THE PERSONALIZED ATTENTION OF HER MAJESTY'S FAVORITES.

SOMETHING HAD TO GIVE..... SOON.





LATE THAT NIGHT... A FURTIVE MEETING.

IT IS JUST AS WE'VE TOLD YOU CAPTAIN.

SO, THIS OUDENARDE IS NOT JUST A PHANTOM, EH?

MON DIEU! NO! IT IS JUST AS CERTAIN THAT WERE SHE TO HEAR US TALKING TO YOU, WE WOULD NEVER TALK AGAIN!



A HURRIED RIDE... AND AN AWAITED REPORT.

SO, OUDENARDE IS REAL, EH? WELL IF THAT SCUM-LOVING PHANTOM IS SUCH A DEVOTED PROTECTOR OF THOSE SCUM-LOVING FILTH, I SUPPOSE SHE'D JUMP AT THE CHANCE TO BE THEIR NEXT MARTYR!

SHALL I SEE TO IT NOW, MILORD?

UMMM,, NO, IN THE MORNING, I THINK. A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP DOES WONDERS, AND I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO,,,,,,



AARRKK!

GODS OF THE SAINTS!! THE INFORMERS!

THE GUARDS! GET THE GUARDS!



SIRE.... SHUT UP, IMBECILE!

IN MY OWN BEDROOM! HOW DARE SHE! TROOPS, RELET! ORDER OUT THE ENTIRE FIRST COMPANY INTO THE SEWERS, AND THEY WILL SEARCH EVERY INCH UNTIL SHE IS BROUGHT BEFORE ME! OR HER HEAD IS!!

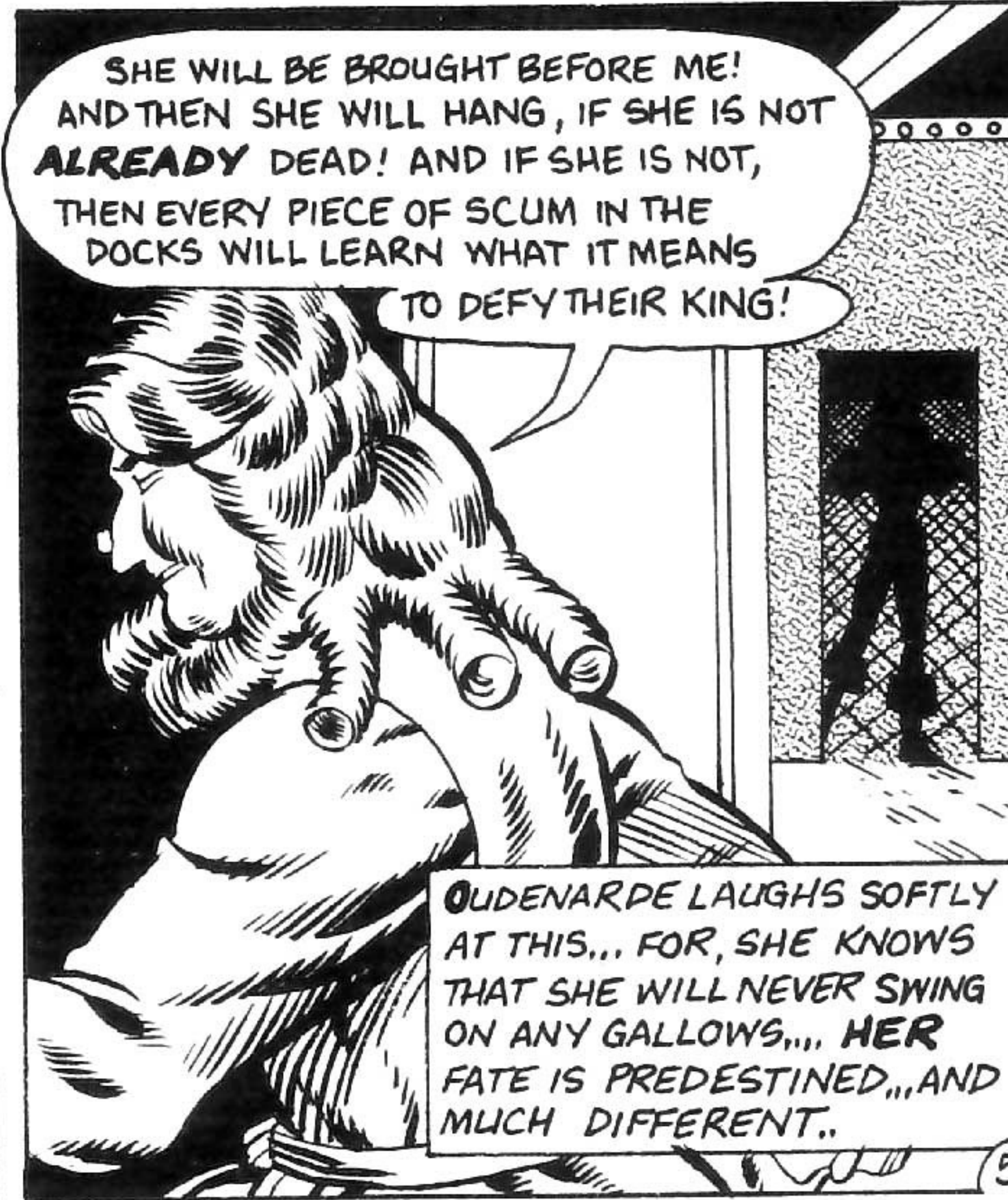
REALLY, I DON'T SEE WHY YOU MUST YELL SO.....



BITCH! GET OUT OF MY SIGHT AND BE HAPPY I DON'T HAVE YOU PLAYED ALIVE!

YOU! GUARDS! IF ANYONE EVER ENTERS THROUGH MY BALCONY AGAIN, YOU WILL ALL HANG, SIDE BY SIDE WITH THAT SEWER PHANTOM!

WAP!

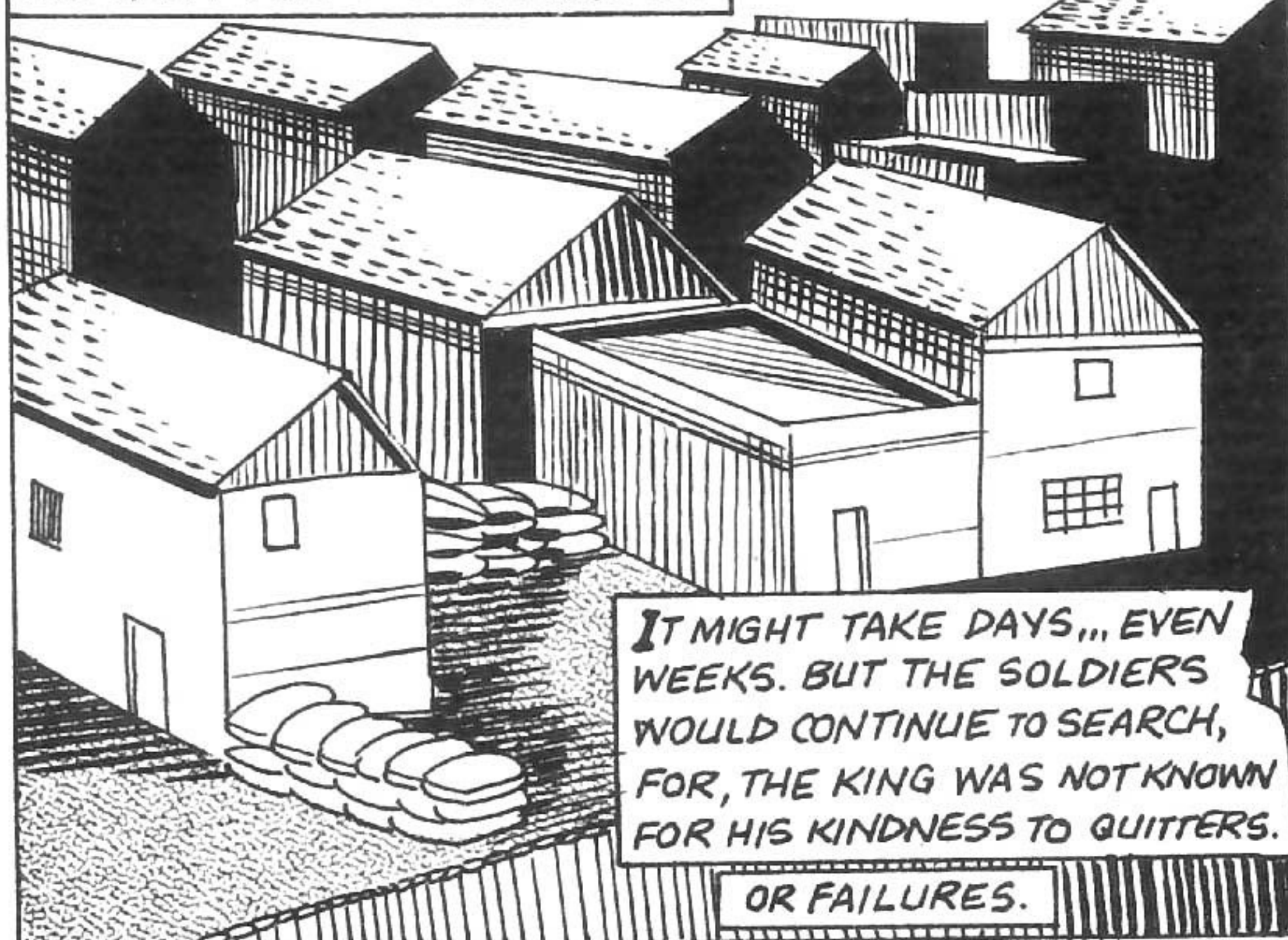


SHE WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE ME! AND THEN SHE WILL HANG, IF SHE IS NOT ALREADY DEAD! AND IF SHE IS NOT, THEN EVERY PIECE OF SCUM IN THE DOCKS WILL LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO DEFY THEIR KING!

OUDENARDE LAUGHS SOFTLY AT THIS... FOR, SHE KNOWS THAT SHE WILL NEVER SWING ON ANY GALLOWS,,, HER FATE IS PREDESTINED,, AND MUCH DIFFERENT..



IT BEGAN WITH THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, DELIVERED BY A VENGEFUL CAPTAIN, ANGRY ORDERS, AND WATCHED BY AN IMPARTIAL DAWN. THE HUNT FOR **OUDENARDE**.



IT MIGHT TAKE DAYS... EVEN WEEKS. BUT THE SOLDIERS WOULD CONTINUE TO SEARCH, FOR, THE KING WAS NOT KNOWN FOR HIS KINDNESS TO QUITTERS.

OR FAILURES.

**QUIETLY**, FOOLS. THESE TATTERS OF CLOTH... HOW MANY WOMEN STROLL THESE **SEWER-PATHS**?



ONLY THE ONES WHO DATE YOU! MILAN...HUHHUU...

**WAIT!** UP AHEAD! WHAT IS THAT I SEE.....?

WHAT! A TRICK! THIS IS ONLY AN OLD PEASANT'S DRESS!



**MILAN!**



**AIEEEEE!!**

THE AX WAS A DEAD-FALL. THE TRAIL... PLANNED.

AND THE HUNT'S TOLLS WOULD RUN HEAVY WITH DEAD MEN'S BLOOD BEFORE THE CHASE WAS OVER.



SHE HIDES IN THE SHADOWS! SHOOT AT ANYTHING THAT MOVES!

I SEE HER! THERE!

LIKE WILDLIFE IN A FOREST OF TINDER, THE VIOLENCE SPREAD, ALMOST COMING TOO CLOSE FOR EVEN A SEWER MYTH....



AND RETRIBUTION ALWAYS FOLLOWED. THE SITUATION WOULD NO LONGER BE TOLERATED.....

...ON EITHER SIDE....

JACQUES!

...IMPALED....





AND THE NIGHT OF THE FLAMING MOON BEGAN.....



SWINE! THIS IS THE PRICE YOU PAY FOR STEALING FROM HER MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS!!

BLAM!



AND THIS IS THE PRICE YOU PAY FOR A LIFE, MURDERAHHHH...

AKKK!!

THERE IS NO WAY TO TELL IF OUDENARDE KNEW WHAT HER ACTIONS WOULD EVENTUALLY BRING ABOUT. ALL THIS DEATH TO FOLLOW IN HER WAKE.

NOR WOULD SHE PROBABLY HAVE CARED, FOR HER'S WAS A HIGHER VISION. AND ONLY SHE WOULD GOVERN HER FATE.

BUT NOW, THE PEOPLE'S FATE WAS NO LONGER IN ANYONE'S HANDS, TO BE CONTROLLED BY ANYONE. LEAST OF ALL OUDENARDE WHO WAS BUSY WITH OTHER THINGS.....



...ELSEWHERE.

I'M SO GLAD YOU DON'T HATE ME ANYMORE, SIRE...

OH, NOW REALLY, MAMM'SELLE. YOU EXAGGERATE. I NEVER HATED YOU. I WAS MERELY ..UM... YES.. SHALL WE SAY.. FRUSTRATED?

HOW BEAUTIFUL EVERYTHING SEEMS TONIGHT. THE MOON SEEMS ALMOST TO BURN. DON'T YOU AGREE, MI'LORD?

YES... I SUPPOSE, BUT I THINK I WOULD RATHER CONCENTRATE ON THE MATTERS MORE.. EH.. CLOSE AT HAND....

THAT SHADOW? ARE MY TRELISES IN BLOOM ALREADY?





YES... IT SEEMS THAT OUDENARDE HAD BEEN QUITE BUSY...

IEEEEE!!

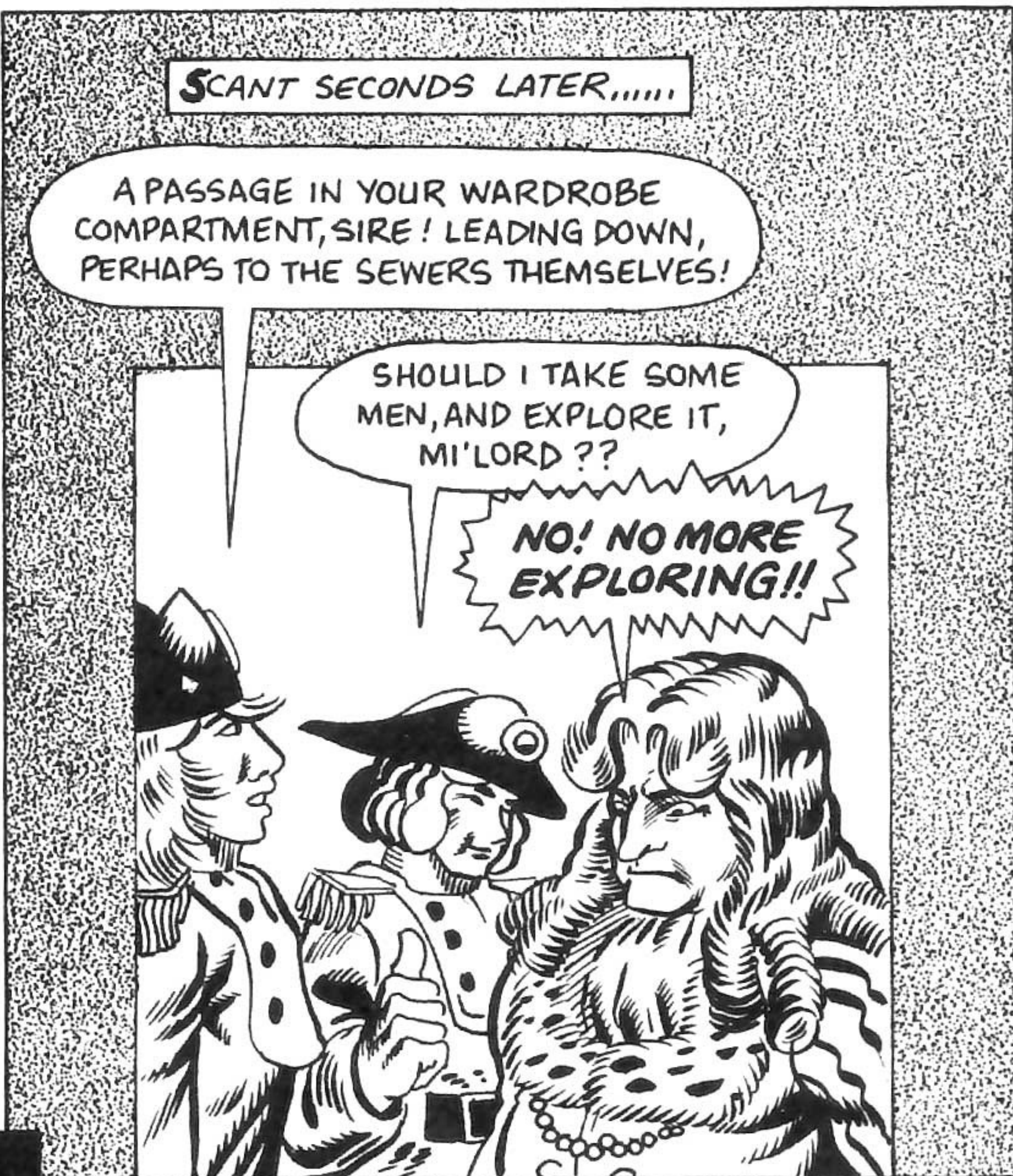
NO! RELET!!

SHUT UP SLUT, AND GET THE GUARDS!!



NO ONE MAY DEFY THE KING LIKE THIS!! NO ONE! YOU GUARDS! NO ONE HAS COME OR LEFT THIS BALCONY SINCE WE WERE ON IT! HOW DID SHE ESCAPE? HOW DID SHE GET IN? SEARCH MY ROOM AND ALL ADJOINING ROOMS UNTIL YOU FIND OUT!!

ALLEZ! MOVE!!



SCANT SECONDS LATER,.....

A PASSAGE IN YOUR WARDROBE COMPARTMENT, SIRE! LEADING DOWN, PERHAPS TO THE SEWERS THEMSELVES!

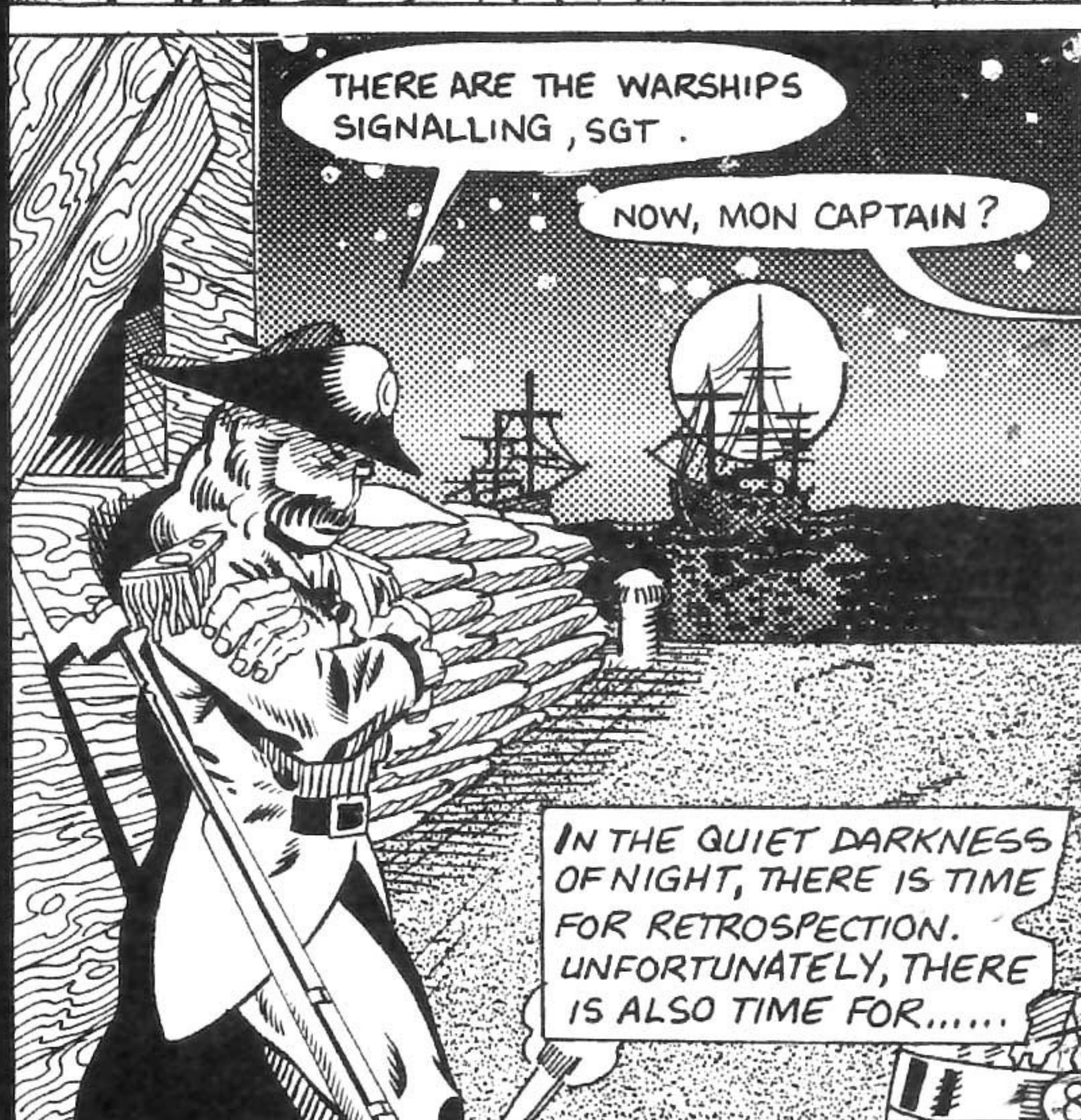
SHOULD I TAKE SOME MEN, AND EXPLORE IT, MI'LORD??

NO! NO MORE EXPLORING!!



I WILL DO WHAT I SHOULD HAVE DONE THE VERY FIRST TIME I HEARD THAT WITCH'S NAME! BURN THAT GHETTO! LEVEL IT! I WANT NOTHING BUT ASH THERE COME DAWN!!

KILL ALL THE FILTH, AND SHE WILL SURELY DIE WITH THEM!! DO IT... NOW CAPTAIN!!

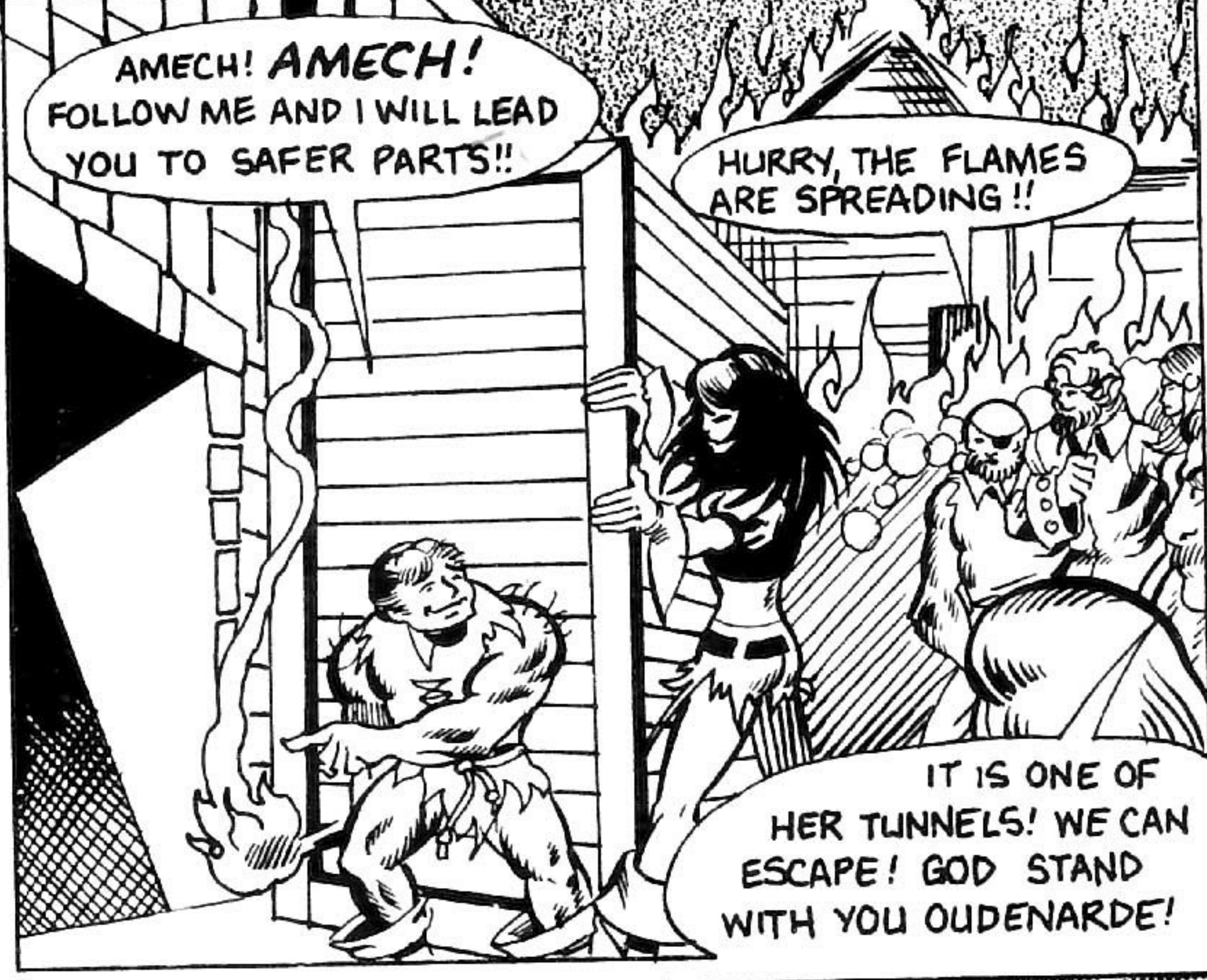


THERE ARE THE WARSHIPS SIGNALLING, SGT.

NOW, MON CAPTAIN?

IN THE QUIET DARKNESS OF NIGHT, THERE IS TIME FOR RETROSPECTION. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS ALSO TIME FOR.....





THE COVER OF SLEEP JOLTED FROM THEIR EYES, THE PEOPLE CHOSE THE ONE SAFETY THAT THEY HAD BEEN RAISED TO KNOW. THE SEA.

...ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES....

LE... LE OUDENARDE.

WHY IS SHE HERE ?? SHE WILL BURN WITH THE REST OF US!

LOUDENARDE. PROTECTOR OF THE GHETTO DWELLERS FOR ONE LAST TIME.

AMECH! AMECH! FOLLOW ME AND I WILL LEAD YOU TO SAFER PARTS!!

HURRY, THE FLAMES ARE SPREADING!!

IT IS ONE OF HER TUNNELS! WE CAN ESCAPE! GOD STAND WITH YOU OUDENARDE!

BUT ON THIS, HER FINAL HOUR, EVEN A GOD COULD NOT ACCOMPANY HER WHERE SHE MUST GO...

MORE WATER!

SHOOT HER STOP HER NOW!

LOOK OUT! THE TORCHES!

...BECAUSE FROM WHENCE IT CAME, OUDENARDE WOULD RETURN WITH.....



THE LEAD BALL STRUCK WITH RIPPING FURY, SENDING OUDENARDE TO THE CASTLE ROOF WITH A THUD. SHE VAGUELY REMEMBERED PAIN LIKE THIS FROM LONG AGO.



BUT SHE WAS BEYOND IT. HER FATE HAD BEEN FULFILLED. SHE HAD LIVED A LONG AND VICIOUS LIFE AND NOW IT WOULD END. AN END SHE HAD AWAITED FOR SO LONG... AN END THAT WOULD BRING AN END... TO THE SUFFERING.

PERHAPS THE NEXT LIFE...



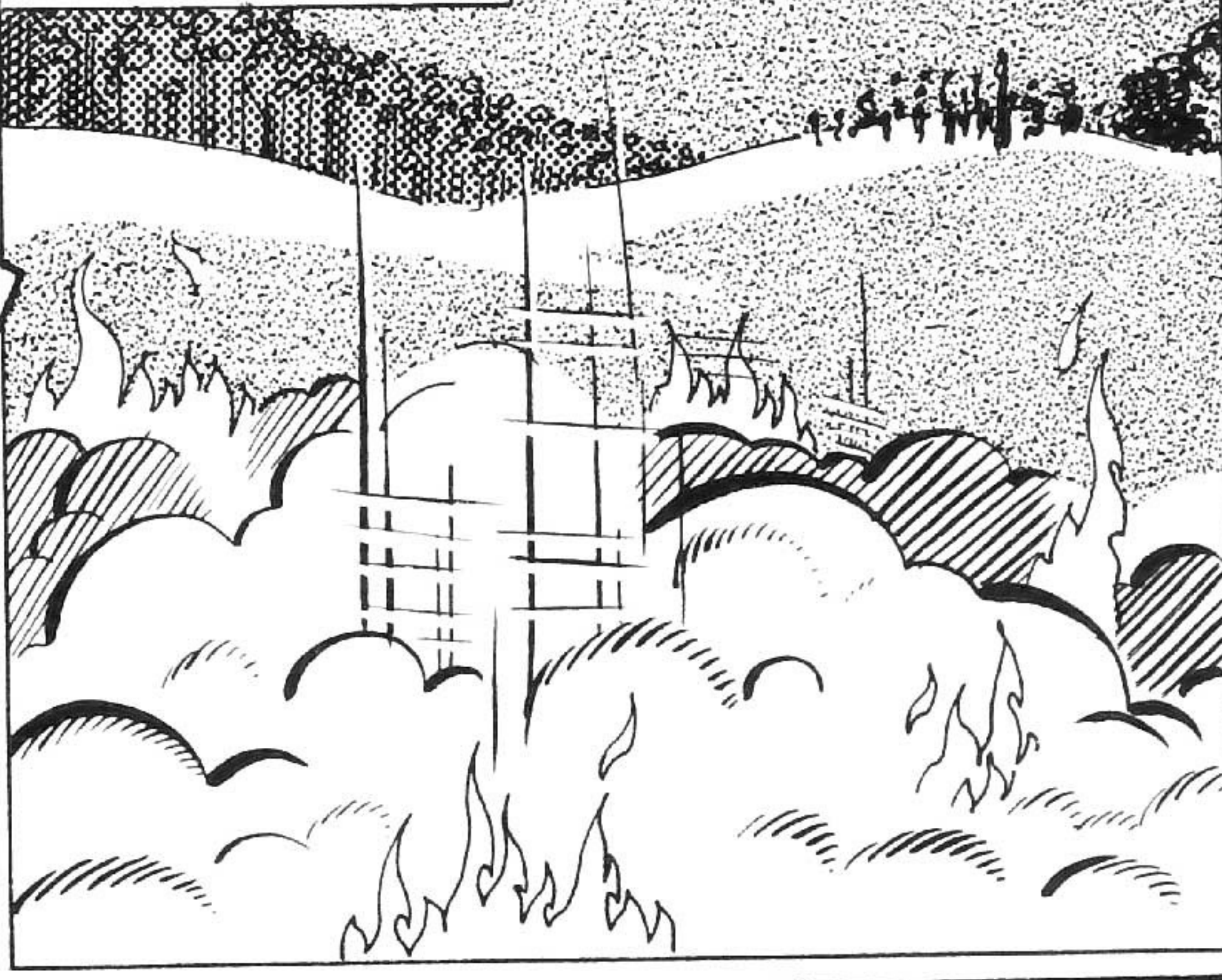
WOULD BE....



... BETTER.



ONCE, A THING THAT WAS FEARED. NOW, A SAINT HOLDING A PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF ALL THOSE WHOSE LIVES SHE TOUCHED.

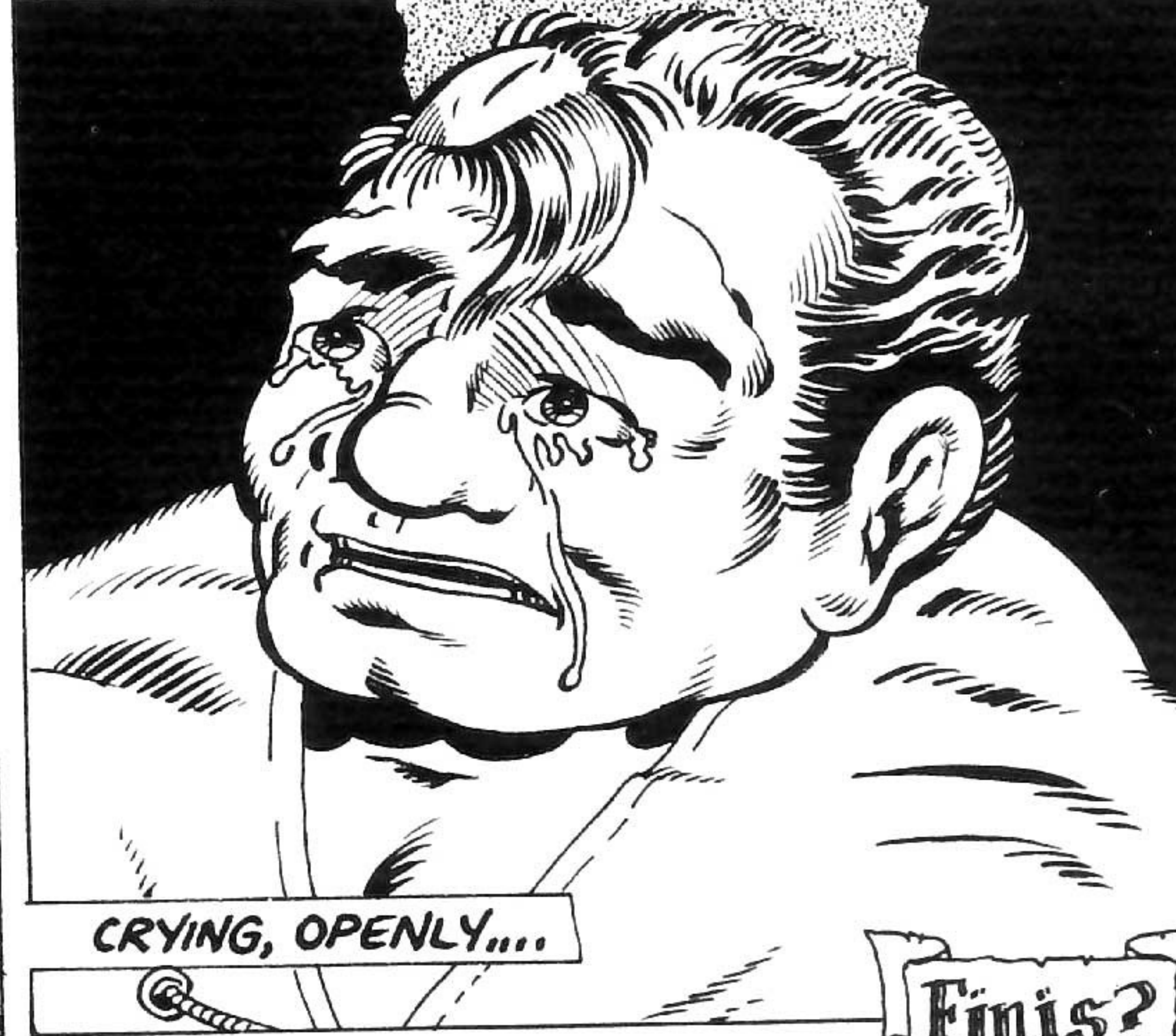


THEY WOULD STILL TALK OF HER IN HUSHED WHISPERS. BUT THIS TIME OUT OF REVERANCE, NOT FEAR.

ALL OF THEM FELT THE LOSS. THE MOST SENSITIVE EVEN MOURNED, SILENTLY. BUT ONE SMALL THING ESCAPED THEIR ATTENTION ENTIRELY.....



NO ONE SEEMED TO NOTICE HER FAITHFUL DWARF....



CRYING, OPENLY....

Finis?





FUITAKE '72



# HARANA

BY DAVID ANTHONY KRAFT and D. JON ZIMMERMAN  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE LEIALOHA and RONALD WILBER

*"Thylym, Aergos, Thylym!"*

Heavy green smoke crawled slowly from the glowing brazier, filling the dingy room and enshrouding its solitary occupant, an old hag of a woman, in opaque vapors. Her eyes blazed as they strained to perceive an image in the coals; bending low, until her web-wrinkled nose was a bare two inches above the lambent embers, she at last discerned the vision sought. Then, cackling softly, she doused the coals with clay-yellow swamp water splashed from a crudely-kilned vase.

The severed tendrils of smoke found easy access to the outside; the single-room shack served only, at best, as a perfunctory shelter from the elements. The hag almost tore the door off its rotting hinge-mounts as she hastened outside. Motioning to a bald-headed figure lazing on the ground, she indicated that he was to ready their only transportation, a shallow-draft boat.

The deaf-mute set aside his sharpening stone and replaced his machete in his belt. He had found the rusted blade lying half-submerged on a hummock in the swamp, and had claimed it in replacement for one lost earlier. A weaponless man in the marshes was either a fool or a suicide.

He rubbed his other hand over his bald pate as he strode to their beached craft. Naked to the waist, his heavily-tanned torso gave the impression more of a chief eunuch, than of a servant to a backwash hag.

The ancient female tapped her foot impatiently on the turf as the mute strained to push the boat into the water. The mud relinquished its hold on the wooden boat with a loud, liquid pop and the craft slid into the murky water.

The hag clambered aboard, ignoring the wavering and the rocking her uncoordinated movements made. The mute then pushed the boat out and leapt in. Placing the oars in their locks, he began rowing in the direction she indicated.

Not a sound issued from the withered throat of the old woman. For over an hour she directed the deaf-mute through the swamp; only the almost inaudible dip of the oars marked their passage.

Then, suddenly, she raised her arm high and the mute stopped rowing. The boat nudged gently into a rise of earth that might have once been an alligator nest.

Leaping out, the hag scrambled to the

other side of the island, where she rushed knee-deep into the water and began frantically digging at the soft mud underbelly of the swamp. Murk swirled up from the bottom and stained the water a cadaverous grey. It clung to her soiled and bedraggled dress, and coated her arms to the elbows.

Finally, her probing fingers encountered something that was not of the marsh, something that was neither mud nor stone. With renewed vigor, she clawed at the object, until a corner was free of the muck. She heaved and tugged, trying desperately to break the possessive grip of the swamp, but her burst of strength was deserting her rapidly. It was her last wild surge that loosened the thing and sent her reeling back onto the rotting vegetation of the nest.

In her dripping hands the hag held a rectangular box, corroded, beslimed and covered with mud-clumps, but intact and waterproof. Hugging the box to her shriveled bosom, the hag mewed over it like a mother over her first-born, while the mute turned the craft toward home.

Only when the boat touched shore at their island did her fiercely maternal attitude change; avariciously, she washed the mud from the box, and began tinkering with the lock.

The latch, however, resisted her weak and mindless attack. Impatiently, she gestured to the deaf-mute to break the lock, which he did by striking it several times with a rock. He lifted the lid, and the hag thrust her hands eagerly inside to grasp a thick, leather-bound volume hasped in three places with heavy brass locks. Her nervous fingers found the key for them inside the box, and while she fumbled with the locks, the deaf-mute started toward the shack.

Inside, he grasped the brazier and two slim, tall candle-holders. Stepping out, he strode to an altar-like stone off to the right of the shack.

The roughly-hewn chunk of granite was an ancient item, quite unnatural in this land of water and wood. It had been painted with yellow-power-symbol, but half the runes were obscured by layers of dried blood. Alternate shades of brown, grey and yellow formed a mottled, night-marish pattern.

The mute placed the brazier to one side of the altar, and set one candle-holder at each end of the structure. He then lit each of the two wicks centered

in pools of red wax. The sky was growing dark with night.

The hag stood watching him -- she nodded at the outhouse behind the shack and the mute was quick to decipher her meaning. He approached it and unlatched the door, pulling it open. There was just enough light to reveal the unconscious figure of a girl-child, slumped on the floor. Cradling the small figure in his powerful arms, he carried her to the altar and bound her to it with quarter-inch Manilla hemp. Then he tore off her summer-smock and stood back, awaiting the hag.

Night had claimed the swamp, but the reflection of burning candles, bright as the furnaces of hell, blazed in the hag's eyes. In one hand she jealously clutched the book; in the other, she held a long, rectangular mahogany box taken from the shack. Both of these she placed on the edge of the altar, while she lit the brazier. When the coals burned blood-bright, the hag opened the tome and began the summons:

"Hy'ah, ny'ah Jaweh ny'ah Morula  
Ahya Yala'n Adonai Morula  
Hai Mnei i'nlo Morula  
T'ela T'ela T'ela"

Heretofore peaceful, the sky rumbled, charged with fury. Ichor clouds rolled across the heavens, jagged beams of lightning streaking before them. Rabid, the wind swirled and rushed in savage abandon, beating the swamp grass flat, tearing branches from trees, and whipping the placid swamp water into ravening, foam-flecked waves.

All this the hag seemed to ignore. Staring hypnotically into the book, she repeated the cryptic non-words. With the third verse of her chant, she opened the box and withdrew a curved, pearl-handled blade. The flames of the candles shuddered madly before the wind, but did not go out, and the pages of the tome fluttered not.

Thrice the hag chanted the verse that presaged the climax of the spell; thrice she dipped the knife, each time touching, but not piercing, the young girl's bare breast. The wind seemed to entreat her, to madden her, and charged by her own impatience, the hag hurriedly croaked out the third chant of the final verse.

Then, raising the gleaming knife high, she plunged it deep into the virgin breast of the girl.

The dull senses of the deaf-mute com-



Deliberately, so that the deaf mute caught a glimpse of the demon's-head ring she always wore, the woman tossed the knife to the grass at his feet, and signed that he should carry the paraphernalia back into the shack. She smiled cruelly to herself as night slowly reclaimed the altar area; she knew so much more, now, than mere moments ago -- there was a great deal the insane chronicler had not transcribed, indeed!

During what ignorant mankind had termed the Flood, Jaweh had first banished Those Who Cannot Be Named to the bottomless nightpits of some damned dimension, shunned even by the Monarch of Hell! And later, the son of Jaweh, during His "Great Fast," had exiled those Unnamed who had hidden in the Wilderness, after aborting their attempt to reclaim the Earth.

Long now had Those Who Cannot Be Named languished in tangible, soul-searing pitch, nursing unhuman hatred and marshalling their forces. Soon the stars would be aligned to breach sidereal time.

Soon the exile would end.

Richard Korde sat outside, his back against a trailer, enjoying the night air. This was his last day on location, and tomorrow they'd be on the road back to California. A shrill laugh reached him from the air-conditioned interior; the cast party was a riotous success, despite his conspicuous absence. By rights, a star should be the center of such a party, but Rick preferred the solitude of the swamp nightworld -- and the eccentricities of a star were to be respected, after all.

Korde had not been in films long; a producer hunting on his father's farm in Nebraska had liked the way he tracked Deer, and landed him a feature role in a movie about the almost forgotten hero of the Revolutionary War, Frances Marlon -- although the only concession to history proved to be the location of filming -- in the marshes -- and the title, "The Swamp Fox."

A wind stirred out of nowhere, driving the mosquitoes into hiding. The month-and-a-half spent in the Everglades had depressed Rick. He wished there was someone he could talk to who did not see him as a step up the social ladder, a companion to be flaunted at every possible moment.

The wind seemed to have brought a difference in the air, a subtle, excitingly soft scent.

Looking up, Richard Korde discovered before him a perfect pair of legs, that blossomed upward into the white skirt and purple blouse of a black-haired woman. She wore a sympathetic smile.

"May I join you?" she asked; not waiting for an answer, she slid down to the ground beside him. There was a moment of silence.

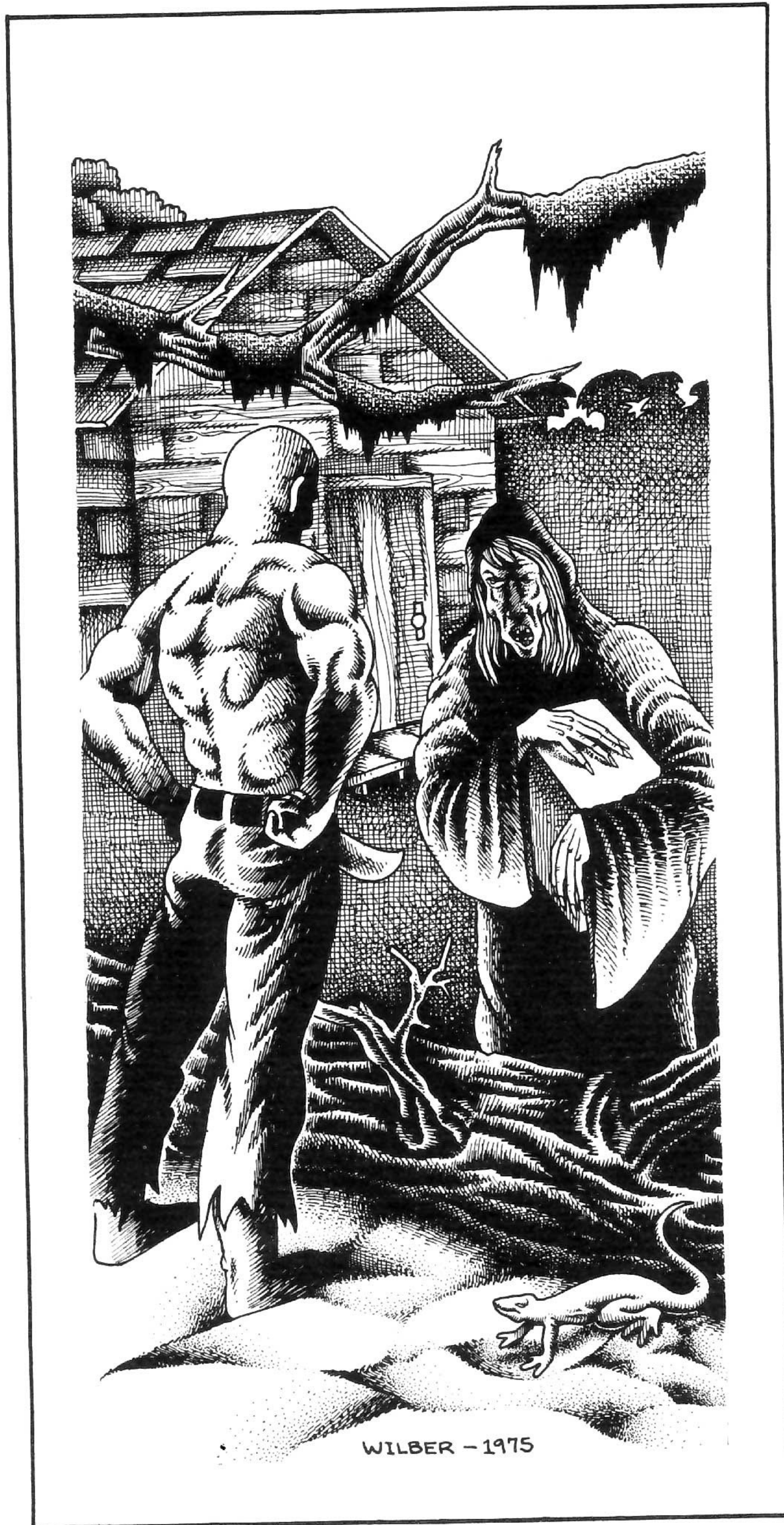
"You must be from town," offered Rick. He hadn't seen her before, and it was a logical guess.

She cleared her throat. "One of the camera crew picked me up, but left me for some starlet who had too much to drink."

Typical. He asked her if she'd like to visit his trailer and listen to some music, to which she nodded eagerly. Gaining his feet, he offered her a hand, and led her to the trailer. Inside, he put on a Moody Blues album.

Pouring two glasses of sherry, he passed one to her, and introduced himself. She gave her name as Hanna, and he sat down beside her on the couch; as she raised the glass to her lips, he noticed the ring on her right index finger.

"That's a rather strange item, isn't it?"



prehended little of what happened next. A funnel-like cloud appeared ere the blade had pierced to the hilt, and the hag and altar were consumed by shrieking fury. Candle-holders were swept to the earth, and the flames went out; the brazier tipped and sent coals flying into the damp grass.

And when the funnel lifted, a powerful wind blasted through the marsh night, but did not upset the deaf mute's firmly-planted feet. He squinted, his eyelids

only a hairs-breadth from closed; the rush of air died in a scant moment, and the mute opened his eyes wide at the crimson glow that encompassed the altar.

The corpse of the girl-child was gone. And before the altar stood a statuesque, raven-haired woman, naked but for a thin, smoke-colored loincloth supported by a belt of beaten-gold saucers. In her right hand she held the sacrificial knife, blood coagulating on the blade. The hag was a hag no longer.





LEIPLORA 73



"It's an heirloom -- been in the family for more than four hundred years," replied Hanna, holding her hand out so that he could examine the object more closely. The ring was made of an ebon demon's-head surrounded by an intricate filligree of tiny, intertwined golden figures. In some vague way, it disturbed Rick, but he sought to expell it from his thoughts as he rose to put another record on the stereo.

When he returned to her side, Hanna was holding his glass for him. Korde finished the drink, and continued talking with the woman, but as the minutes passed it became harder and harder for him to concentrate.

"Could you escort me home?" The tone of her voice was more that of a command than a question.

Rick looked at her dully. His mind wasn't working quite right, and his responses were slow and confused. He nodded to Hanna and followed her outside, across the equipment lot, and down to the modest dock. A shallow-draft rowboat floated there, and his beautiful guide stepped in seating herself at the bow. Korde untied the moorings and sat down amidships; after pushing them off with one of the oars, he rowed in the direction Hanna indicated.

Time elapsed with almost no meaning to him. Moving mechanically, Rick sensed something wrong, but it was hard, so very hard, to think. Only the night noises of the swamp -- the hoarse bellows of bull alligators in mating fever, the splash and gurgling of water -- broke the silence.

After awhile, they rounded the low point of an island clustered with trees. At the woman's urgings, he brought the boat aground on the sand of the narrow beach. Hanna jumped out and made for the dark silhouette of a shack; and, before he could focus his thoughts, the stocky figure of a bald-headed man appeared in the gloom, motioning Korde to follow.

His mysterious guide stopped before an outhouse, and unlatched the door. Inside lay the limp figure of an adolescent girl which he shouldered, then gestured Rick to enter. Dazed, Korde stepped in, and the door was closed and locked behind him. He was weary, tired, and in a moment he slept.

When he awoke, his mind was clearer. After blinking repeatedly to relieve the tension behind his eyes, Rick attempted to peer through a crack in the wall at a red light that flickered in the darkness.

Dimly illuminated by the crimson candles towering above it was a grim slab of granite -- and on it, the girl who had occupied the outhouse in which Richard Korde was now a prisoner! Above her swayed the woman, Hanna, whose high-piled raven hair was engaged in a delicate-silver net that shimmered in the moonlight, and who now wore only a greyish loin-cloth and a belt of small golden saucers. She began chanting, although Rick could not make out the words.

Desperately, he threw himself against the door, but there wasn't enough room to gain momentum and the latch held. He tried bracing himself against the door and applying steady pressure, with equal lack of results. Korde looked through the crack again.

Hanna now held a long, curve-bladed knife. Throwing her head back, she raised her voice as she intoned the climax of her spell. Reaching Rick's ears, it failed to make any aural impression, other than to send his thoughts into jumbled turmoil. She touched the steel tip to the girl's bared breast; then, grasping the sacrificial knife with both hands, Hanna raised the blade high, and plunged it

hilt-deep into her victim.

Blood poured freely in great gouts from the girl's chest, the knife and altar in fresh gore. The child had been unconscious, mercifully -- probably drugged. A spark jumped frantically from the shuddering body into the sky and was snatched by the blackness. Huge opaque rents crisscrossed the heavens, and from them emerged *things*, beings so different and anti-human that Korde's senses revolted.

Staggering back from the crevice through which he had observed ultimate, nightblack horror, he vomited and fell to his knees. Those Who Cannot Be Named stalked the Earth once more!

Two thousand man-years ago, they had encroached on Jaweh's domain -- and He had sent His Son to drive them back. Now they returned, feeding on human life-force, to take back what an eternity before had been theirs...

Weak, drained emotionally and physically, Rick leaned in a corner, recovering from his sickness. The latch clicked, and the door swung suddenly outward; the bald-headed servant had returned for him.

The mute forced him to his feet and jerked him roughly outside. Korde's skin grew sweat-cold as he saw claw prints and slime trails appear out of nowhere to cross their path. The air whined and

crackled with confusing, deafening babble that tore maddeningly at his ears. They wanted -- demanded -- his soul-energy.

Nearing the altar, he saw Hanna jerk the knife from the corpse and roll the body off the granite. Fear burned through him, and, hysterically, he fought loose of his captor. Tearing the machete from the deaf-mute's belt, he raced blindly for the boat still resting on the beach. *Escape!* The idea pulsed in his mind, exploded behind his eyes.

Belatedly, he saw the slime trail cutting off his retreat, and Korde hacked wildly at the invisible thing in his path. The machete rebounded violently, and his momentum carried him forward; for a sickening instant, he felt the revolting non-skin of an Unnamed being! And then he fell hard. His senses fled to whatever last strongholds they possessed.

Richard Korde awoke one last time, bound naked on the altar. The sticky blood of the victim who had preceded him covered the slab, warm against the chilled skin of his back. He screamed as the scalpel-sharp blade rose, then seared through his chest and found his wildly-beating heart.

Those Who Cannot Be Named fed.

And, in a poor mining town, another Son was born.





**an  
edgar  
rice  
burroughs  
portfolio**





# PELLUCIDAR



RONN SUTTON - FEB. '73  
(for Kathy Whiteford.)





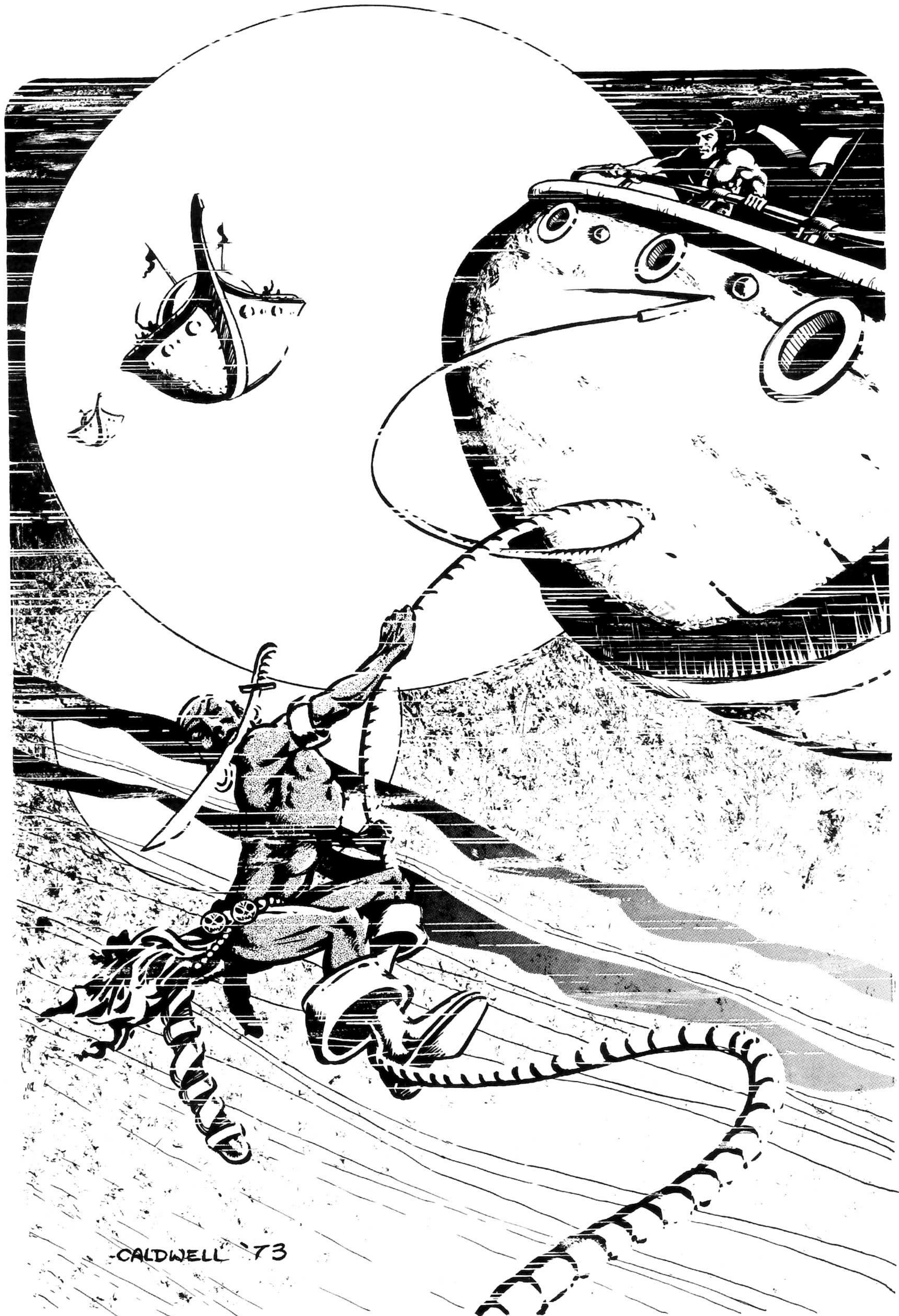


# VALLEY OF THE APES



CALDWELL '73





CALDWELL '73

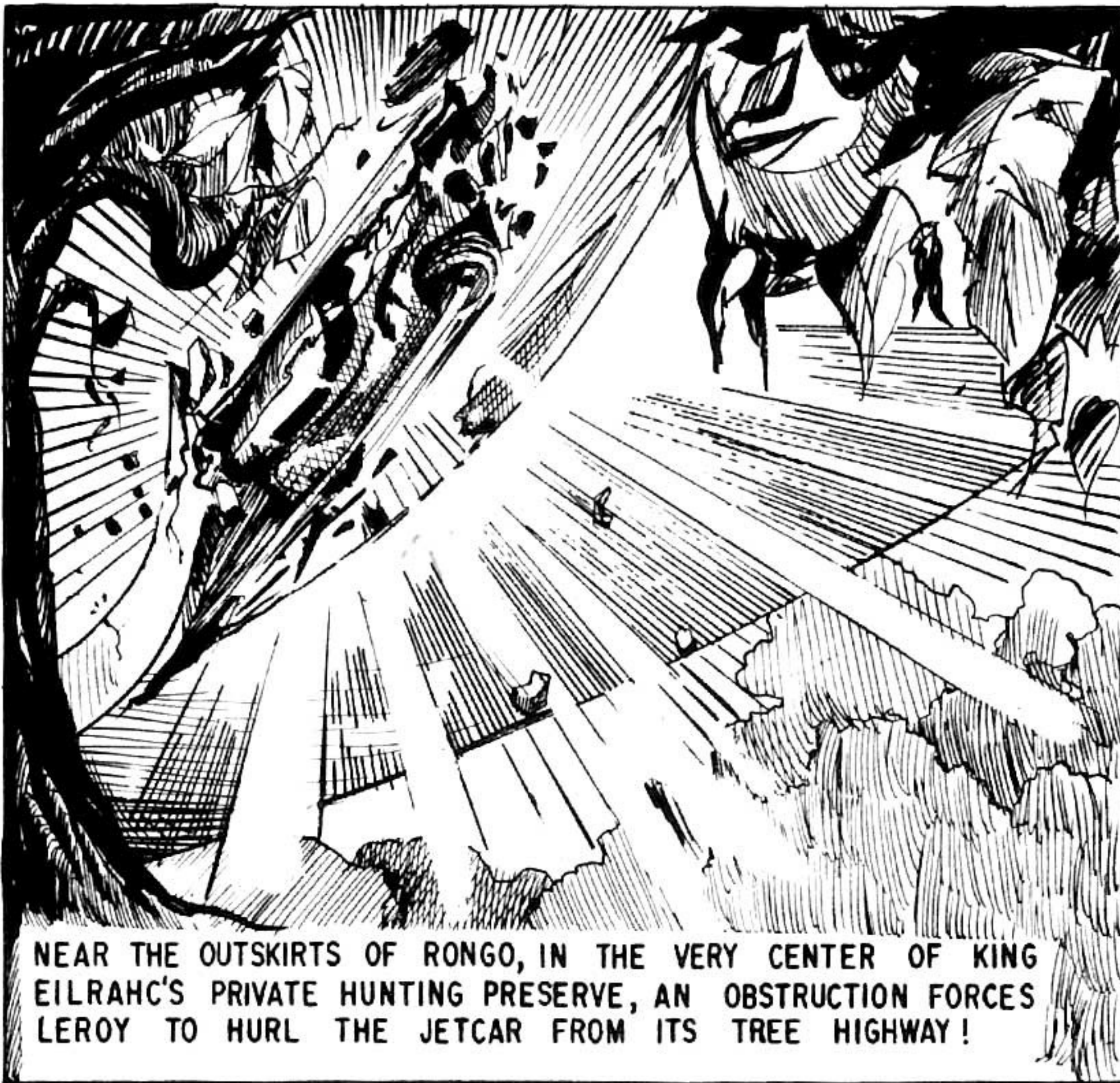




# RACE HARDUN



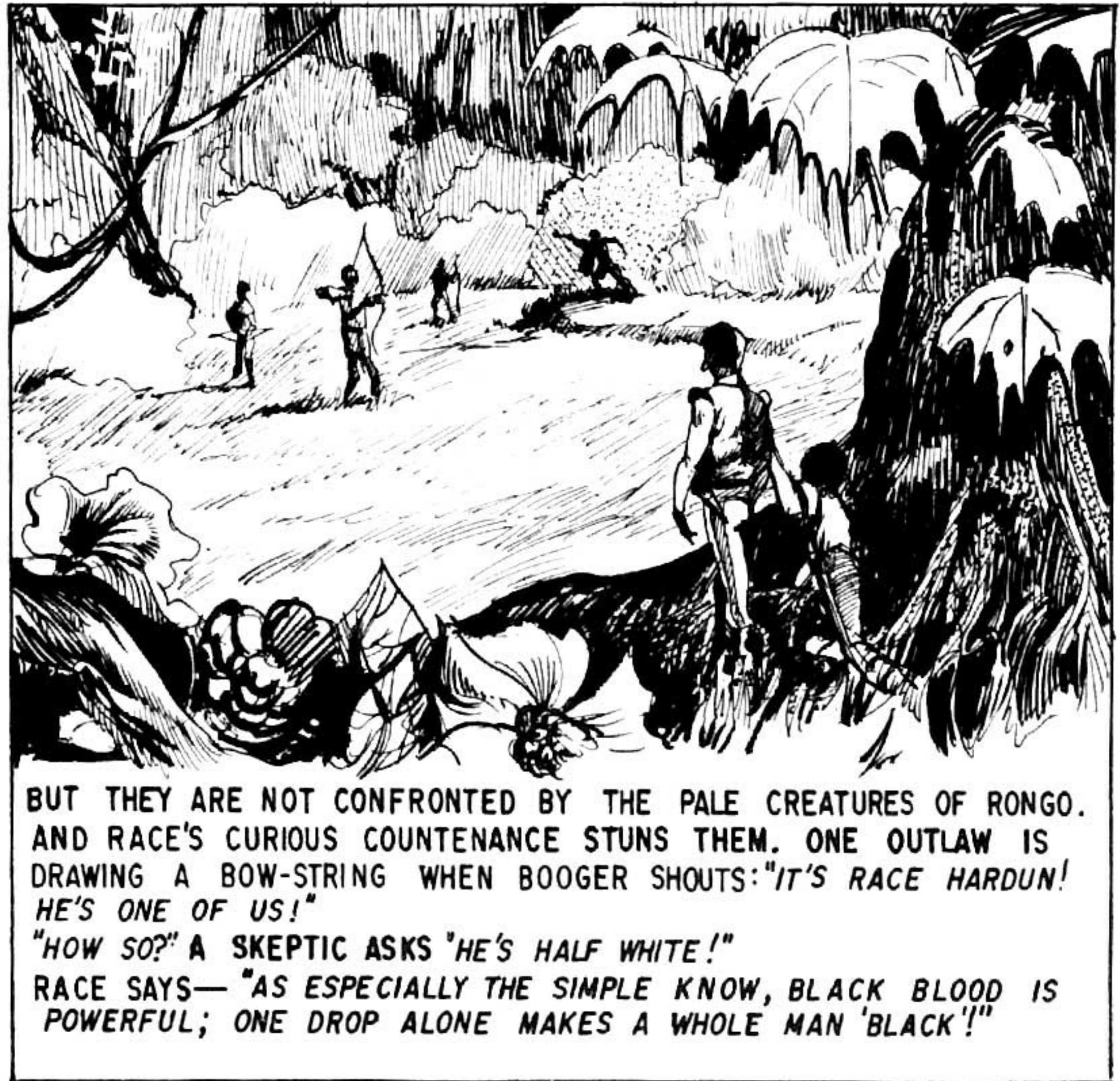
RACE'S NEW ALLY, DRIVER LEROY, SPEEDS HIM OUT OF THE ICY NORTH TOWARD WHITE RONGO TO RESCUE MINON NOIR —



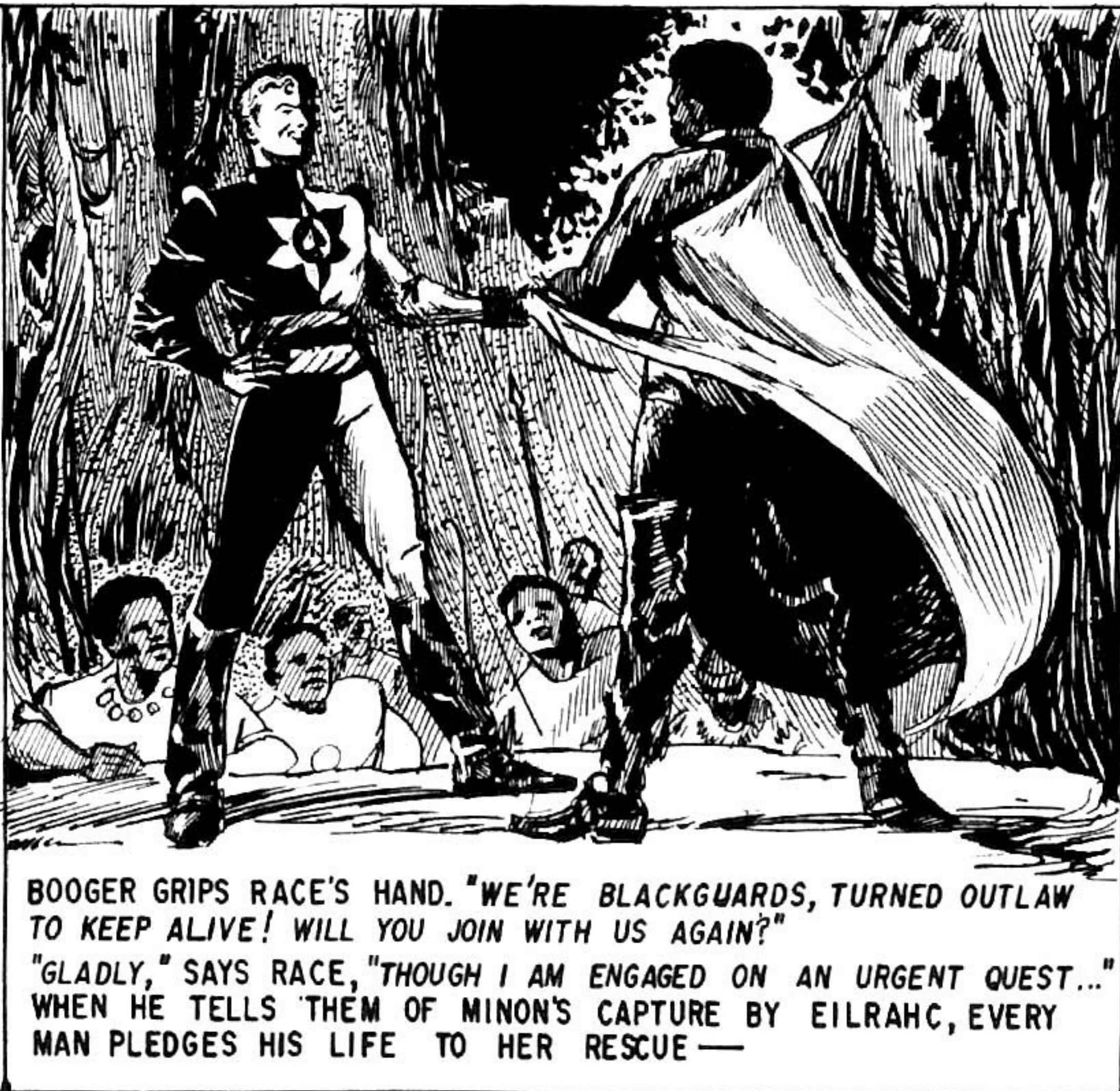
NEAR THE OUTSKIRTS OF RONGO, IN THE VERY CENTER OF KING EILRAHC'S PRIVATE HUNTING PRESERVE, AN OBSTRUCTION FORCES LEROY TO HURL THE JETCAR FROM ITS TREE HIGHWAY!



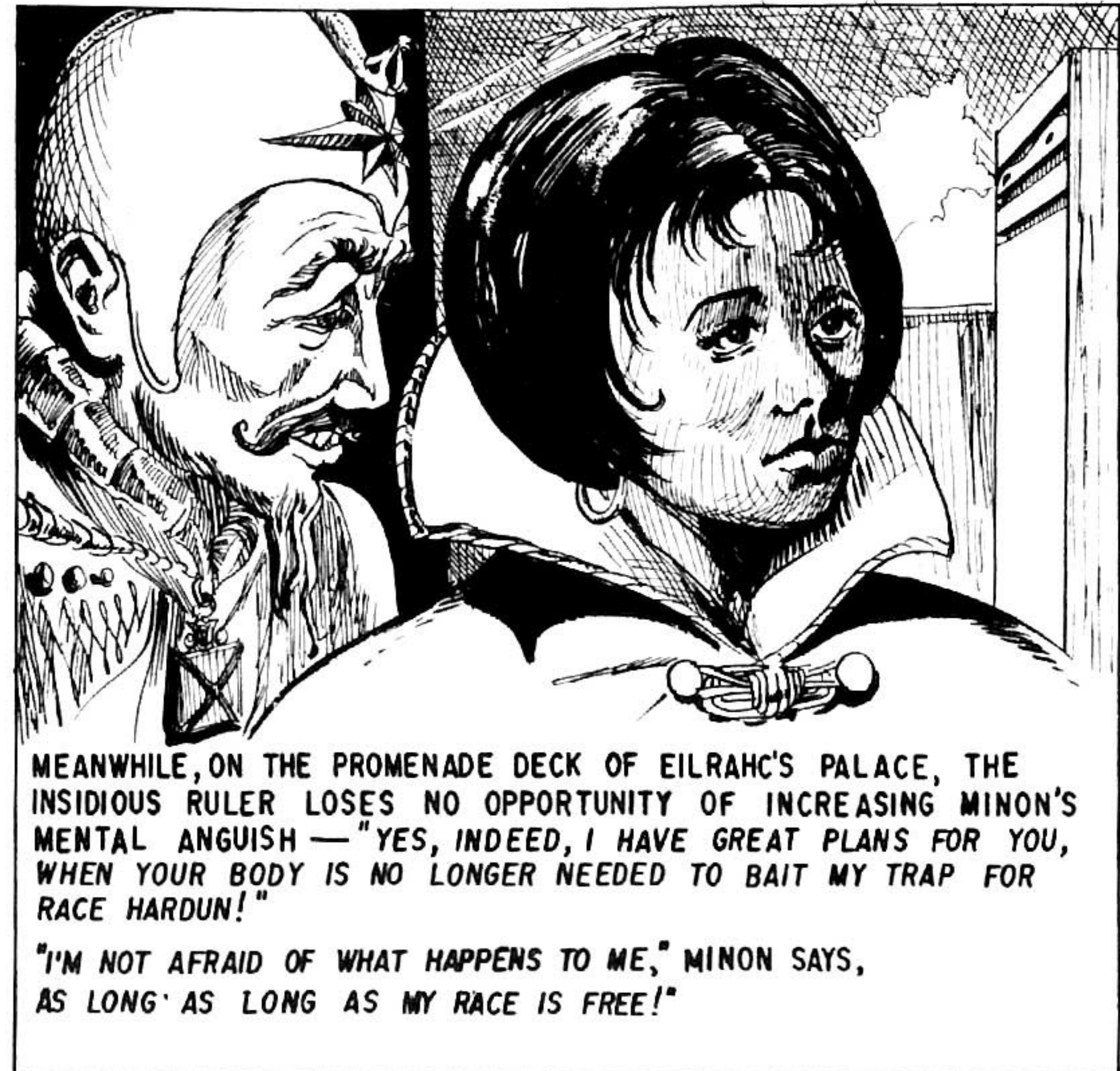
BOOGER FANON, LEADER OF AN OUT-LAW BAND, GRUNTS — "QUICK — SEIZE THEM FOR RANSOM!" "YEAH..." LEERS WEASLE TOM, "THOSE WHAT'S ALIVE!"



BUT THEY ARE NOT CONFRONTED BY THE PALE CREATURES OF RONGO. AND RACE'S CURIOUS COUNTENANCE STUNS THEM. ONE OUTLAW IS DRAWING A BOW-STRING WHEN BOOGER SHOUTS: "IT'S RACE HARDUN! HE'S ONE OF US!" "HOW SO?" A SKEPTIC ASKS "HE'S HALF WHITE!" RACE SAYS — "AS ESPECIALLY THE SIMPLE KNOW, BLACK BLOOD IS POWERFUL; ONE DROP ALONE MAKES A WHOLE MAN 'BLACK'!"



BOOGER GRIPS RACE'S HAND. "WE'RE BLACKGUARDS, TURNED OUTLAW TO KEEP ALIVE! WILL YOU JOIN WITH US AGAIN?" "GLADLY," SAYS RACE, "THOUGH I AM ENGAGED ON AN URGENT QUEST..." WHEN HE TELLS THEM OF MINON'S CAPTURE BY EILRAHC, EVERY MAN PLEDGES HIS LIFE TO HER RESCUE —



MEANWHILE, ON THE PROMENADE DECK OF EILRAHC'S PALACE, THE INSIDIOUS RULER LOSES NO OPPORTUNITY OF INCREASING MINON'S MENTAL ANGUISH — "YES, INDEED, I HAVE GREAT PLANS FOR YOU, WHEN YOUR BODY IS NO LONGER NEEDED TO BAIT MY TRAP FOR RACE HARDUN!"

"I'M NOT AFRAID OF WHAT HAPPENS TO ME," MINON SAYS, AS LONG AS LONG AS MY RACE IS FREE!"





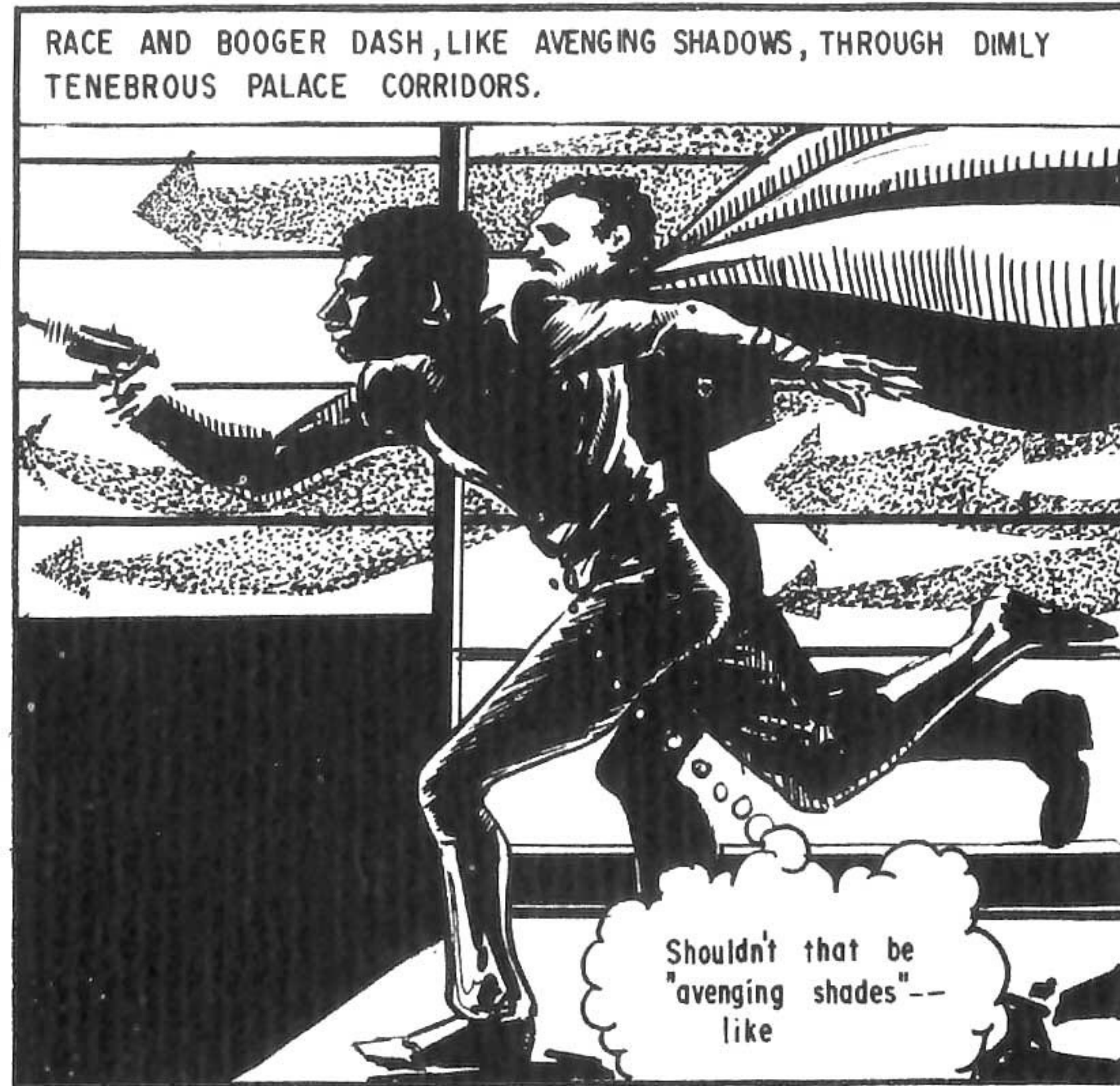
IF I KNOW RACE,  
HE'LL COME SOON—  
AND WHEN HE  
DOES...



SUDDEN BLACKNESS OVERCOMES THE PALACE!

**BLACKBLACK  
BLACKBLACK  
BLACKBLACK**

GUARDS! LANTERNS!  
SURROUND THIS TABLE!  
KILL ANY WHO TRY  
TO APPROACH!



RACE AND BOOGER DASH, LIKE AVENGING SHADOWS, THROUGH DIMLY TENEBOUS PALACE CORRIDORS.

Shouldn't that be  
"avenging shades"—  
like



MEANTIME, MOBS OF CRUELLY OPPRESSED CITIZENS BURST INTO INTO THE GLOOM-SHROUDED BUILDING!



PANDEMONIUM BREAKS LOOSE!

K!

WHA-?!

WAI---

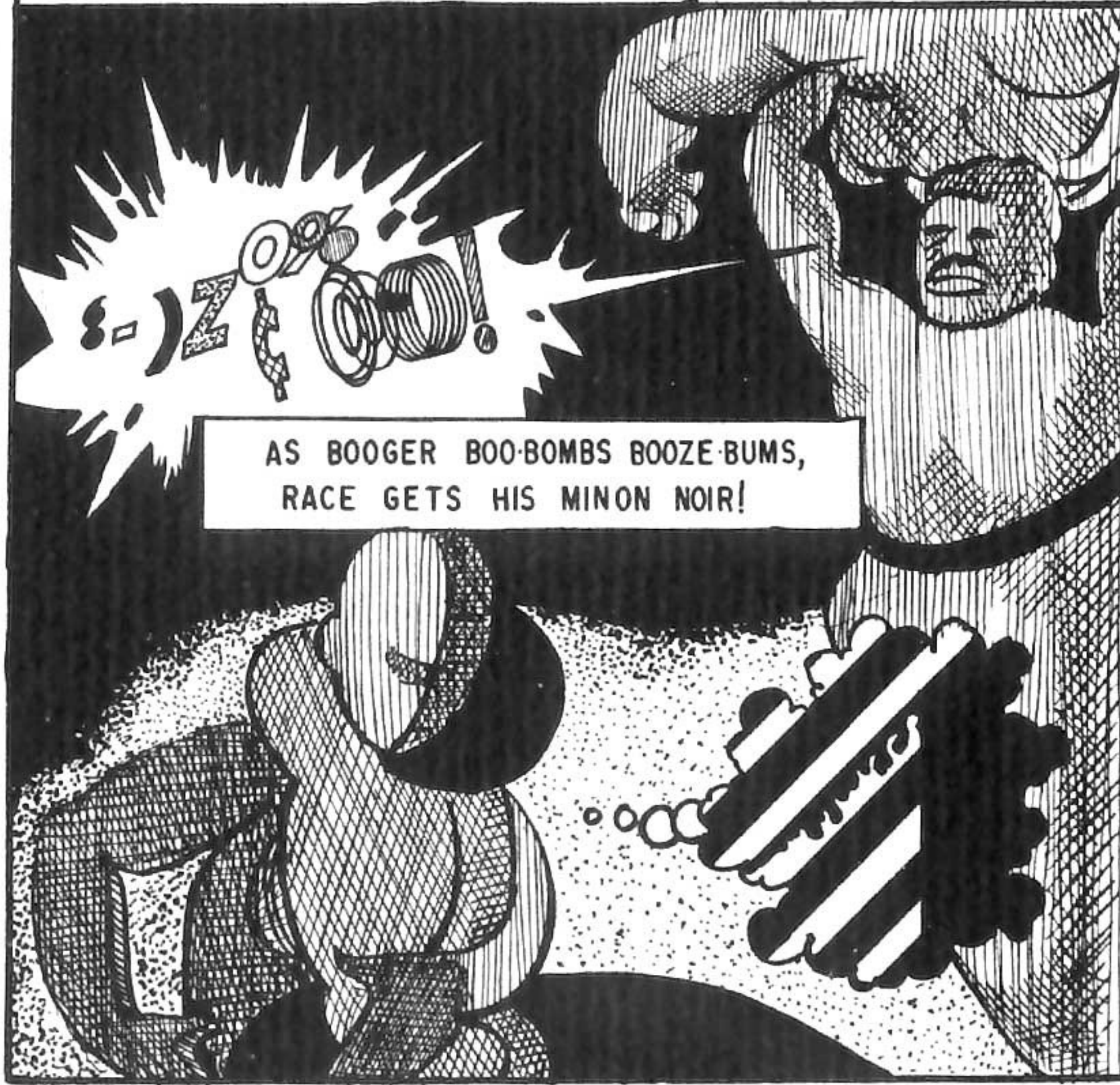
ORRK!

WHO?

Ah ha! We've  
arrived in the  
the very nick!

WHE-?

SHHHEEEEEE



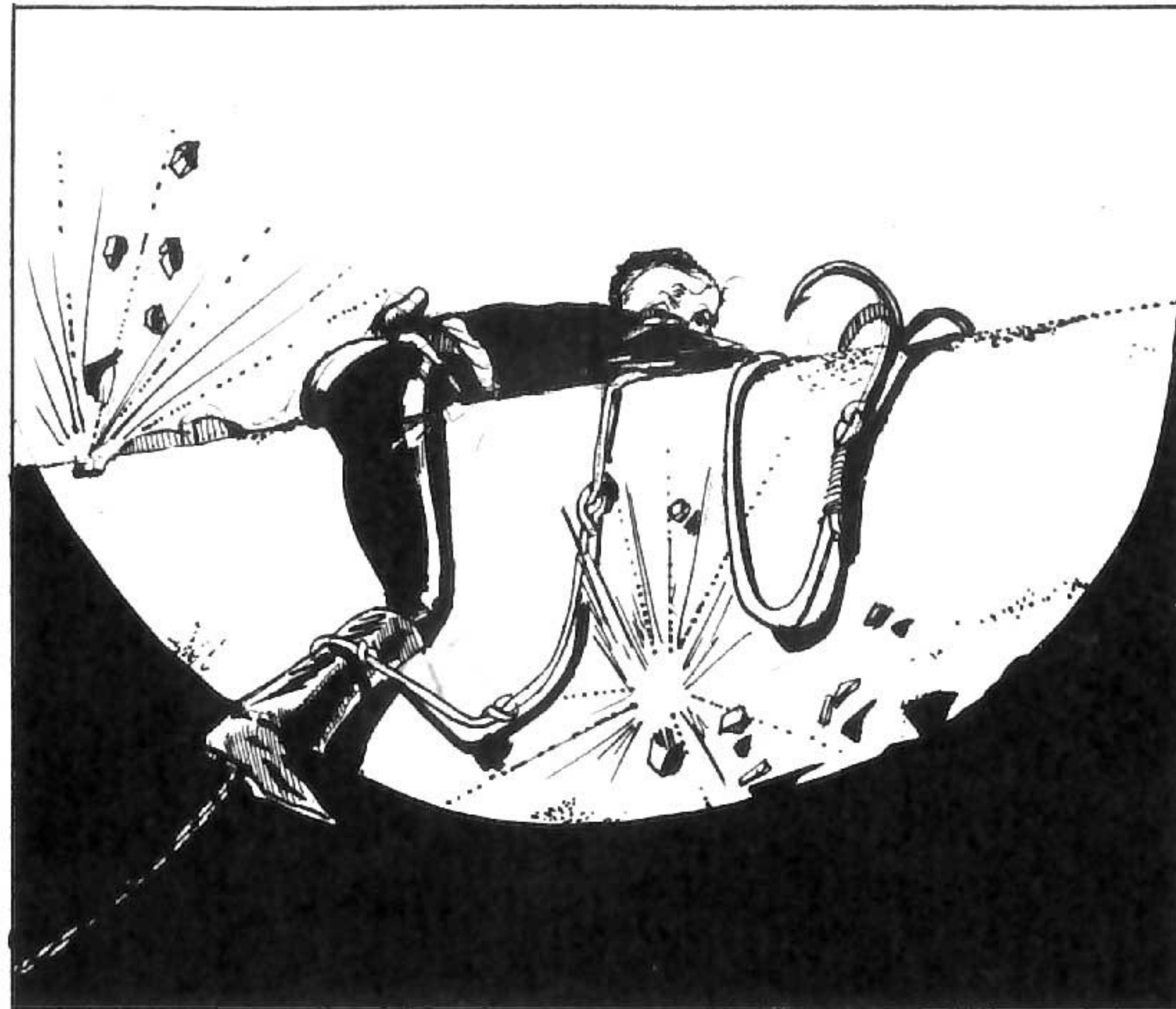
AS BOOGER BOO-BOMBS BOOZE-BUMS,  
RACE GETS HIS MINON NOIR!



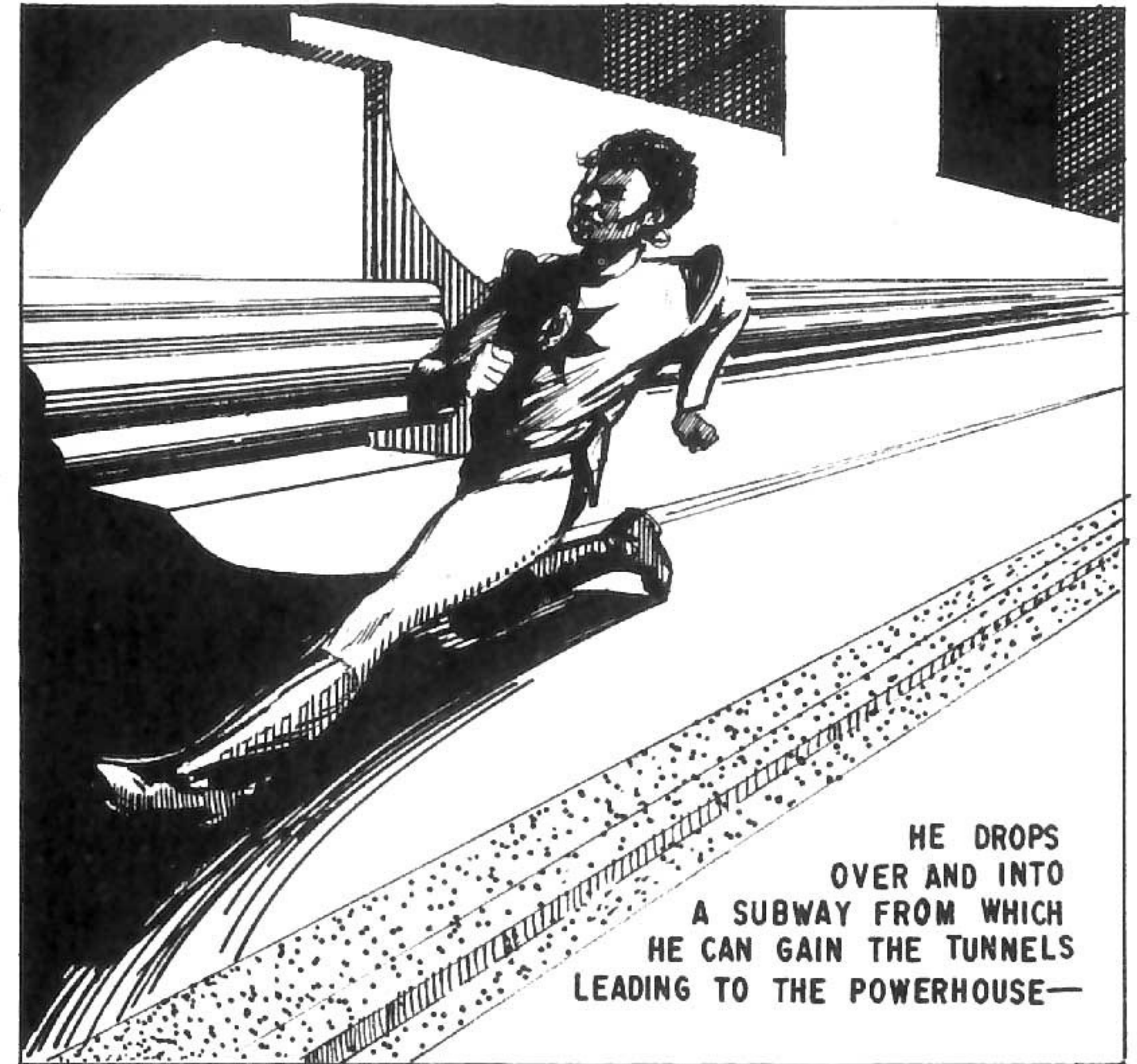
RACE AND HIS FELLOW BLACKGUARDS COME IN SIGHT OF RONGO —



"WE'LL SLIP IN ONE BY ONE, UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS!" SAYS FANON. THEY ARE TO MEET IN AN UNDERGROUND POWERHOUSE NEAR THE PALACE.

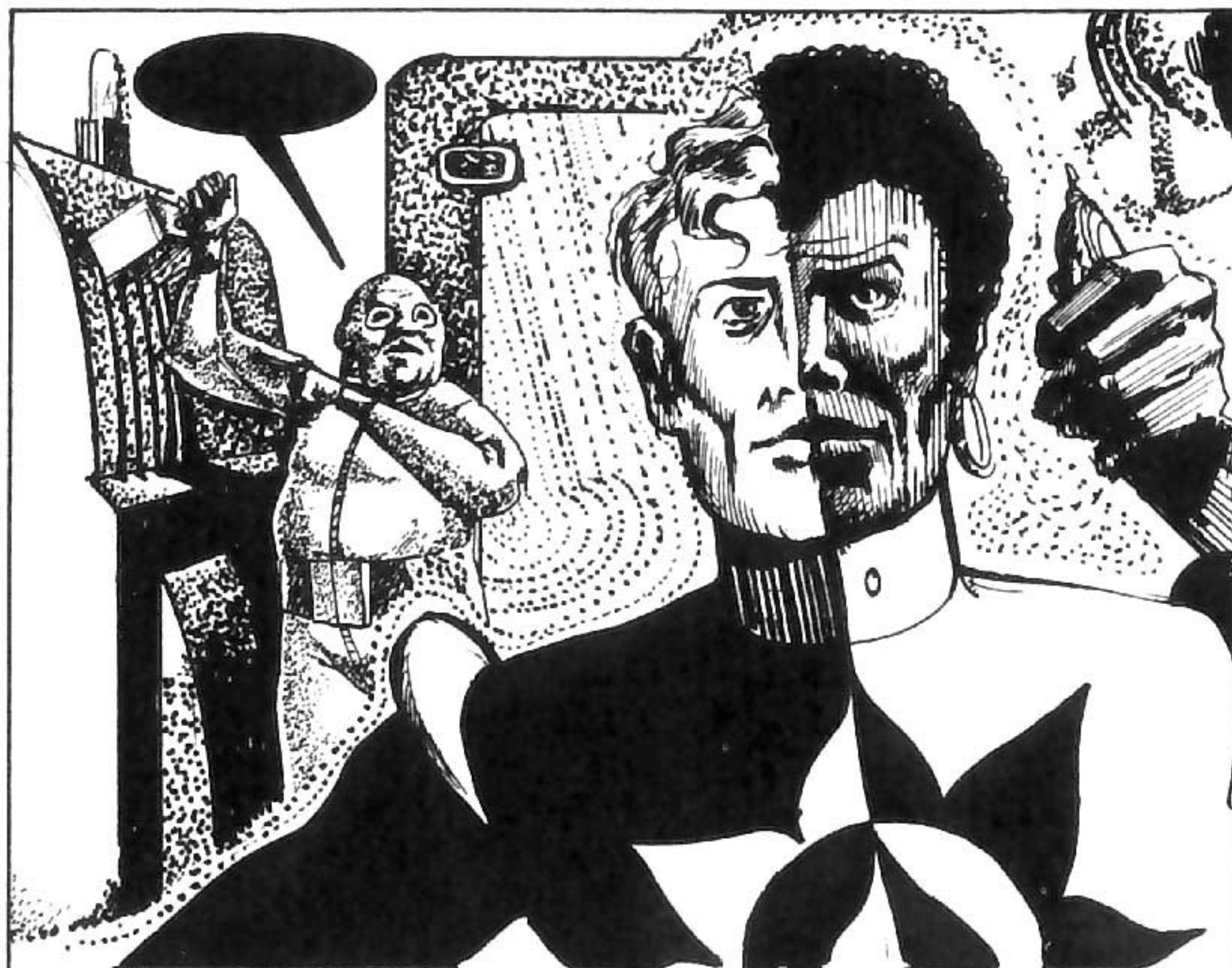


OTHERS REACH THE GOAL WITHOUT INCIDENT—BUT WHEN RACE ATTEMPTS TO SCALE THE WALL, A BEAM OF LIGHT PICKS OUT HIS WHITE SIDE —



HE DROPS OVER AND INTO A SUBWAY FROM WHICH HE CAN GAIN THE TUNNELS LEADING TO THE POWERHOUSE—

THERE ARE MET ALL OF THE BLACKGUARDS AND SUBTERRANEAN SLAVES—THE "INVISIBLE" HOST UPON WHOM RONGO DEPENDS FOR ITS SUCCESS. RACE AND BOOGER DECIDE TO RESCUE MINON.



"WHEN I THROW THIS SWITCH," A WORKER SAYS, "THE MAN'S HOUSE GOES DARK!" RACE CHECKS THE TIME. "IN TEN MINUTES—THROW IT!"



MEANWHILE, WEASEL TOM SHOWS HIS TRUE COLORS, APPEARING BEFORE THE TYRANT TO PROCLAIM: "MASTER, THE REVOLUTION HAS BEGUN AND ITS FIRST ACT IS THE FREEING OF MINON BY RACE HARDUN!"

"GOOD! FETCH ME THE GIRL NOW! THE SNARE IS READY!!"



# RETARDATE

WRITTEN BY  
JAN STRNAD  
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY ROBERT KLINE

David Bruner picked up God's trail just beyond Mars. Dazzled at first by the very sensation of omniscience, Bruner let his gaze wander briefly over the galaxy before giving chase. God was vanishing in the vicinity of Betelgeuse as Bruner re-gathered his wits; he kicked a nearby asteroid in disgust and sent it tumbling into the gravitational pull of Jupiter, then propelled himself toward the constellation of Orion the Hunter.

Bruner perched on Orion's shoulder and for the first time in his life he reasoned out his next move. Move, indeed. If God possessed as great a sense of irony as Bruner suspected -- and history gave ample evidence for the supposition -- then perhaps the chase would seem to God, as it did to Bruner, like a great game of Cosmic Chess. Exploring the chess motif, Bruner flung himself to the Horsehead Nebula. The cloud, limned against its background of stars, resembled nothing so much as a chessman, a knight. It was the perfect hiding place for a god, but Bruner sensed nothing godlike there. Only one thing came to his attention; a single, dull red star -- where no star should be.

Bruner became a miniature galaxy of neutrons, a whirlpool, and swirled down

around the solitary star. The star contracted into itself, then exploded into a nova. Bruner felt himself torn apart, spread for millions of miles in every direction, stunned. The dark nebula glowed with the brilliance of the explosion to reveal God slipping quietly away into the darkness between galaxies.

Bruner gathered himself together and followed as best he could. The trail was beginning to fade and he had lost the element of surprise, but Bruner had little choice. If he did not continue the pursuit now, he would lose the role of hunter.

Now far beyond the galaxy, Bruner did not perceive individual suns. Rather, entire galaxies shrunk into single points of light, themselves appearing as stars. God fled between them toward some farther goal. Bruner exerted his power another factor and sped forward, extrapolating God's final plan as he narrowed the gap between them. The red-shift of the galaxies had long since disappeared as Bruner's speed matched and exceeded that of

the expanding universe, but now it shifted far into the ultraviolet as he approached the masses of stars, then snapped back into infra-red as he left them behind.

God's target became evident; a quasar, a giant sphere of stellar energy whose diameter was too great to be measured conveniently in miles, but must be stated in light years. A spaceship could leave the earth, circle the nearest star, and return home in the time it would take to travel the width of the quasar. This mammoth sun was God's standing ground. Here He would test the power of David Bruner.

In every human eye there is a blind spot. Where the optic nerve joins the retina, in the area of greatest visual acuity, we see nothing. The eye compensates, makes adjustments and allowances, so the defect is hidden and is left for scientists to discover. In the eye of God is a similar blind spot, equally hidden, but only superficially comparable to our own. In this case it even has a name. Its name is David Bruner, it is twenty-eight years old, and it has a mental age of seven. It also possesses one unusual trait that is currently being investigated: it is psychic.

"All right, David, this is the final card. If you call it correctly, you will have a perfect score." Doctor Raitt held

DI  
DI  
PLUS  
PLUS  
PLUS







his finger on the back of the card and looked at David's face. David smiled at him, then spoke with no hesitation.

"Four of spades," he said.

Doctor Raitt did not expose the face of the card. "Think for a moment, David. Are you sure it's the four of spades?" The full deck had yielded only one joker -- David had called it correctly -- and the four of spades had appeared only two cards ago. It was a matter of simple reason.

"I'm sure," said David.

"Think. How many jokers have you seen so far, David?"

David looked up at the fluorescent lights above his head, then down at the floor, and then up again. He shook his head.

"Don't know," he said.

"You've seen one," said Doctor Raitt. "There are two jokers in the deck, and you've seen one. Do you remember the card before last, David?"

David shook his head. "No."

"It was the four of spades. Now -- what is this card?" He tapped the back of the one remaining card.

"Four of spades," said David.

Doctor Raitt flipped the second four of spades on its back. David displayed no emotion other than a slight satisfaction that the game was over and he had evidently won. He made no accusations for the simple reason that he did not realize how he had been cheated.

Doctor Raitt placed a checkmark by the number "54" in his notebook, then closed the book. "Very good," he said. "All right, David, I think that's all for today. See you tomorrow."

David pulled at his ear lobe. "I help with the laundry tomorrow? After that?"

The doctor smiled a thin, glassy smile. "That will be fine. I'll see you then."

David got up from the table and opened the door leading out to the hall. He smiled at the doctor, turned, and pulled the door quietly shut behind him. Doctor Raitt flipped the corners of his closed notebook and stared at the deck of cards for several seconds. Finally, he tucked the notebook under his arm and slid the cards into his back pocket. Now to find out what the computer thought of the results.

The computer no longer needed a name. It had no designation, no code number, for there were no others with which to confuse it. There were inputs and outputs in every major business firm and more were being added daily, and there were print-out transcribers in the home of every newspaper subscriber, and nearly everyone had his own pocket calculator tuned to the computer's central circuits, -- but there were no other computers. There was only one, and they called it simply "the computer," in the same way in which they referred to "the moon" or "the government." It had become commonplace and, while it remained unique, it was accepted as matter-of-factly as the paper clip.

God viewed the computer with a degree of amusement. It was the grandest toy of all for a species that thrived on building toys, but it was little else. It helped them play with mathematics, build financial empires, and even allowed them to reach some of the nearer planets within the solar system. But the computer, like all the computers before it, relied on its human programmers, and they were very human, indeed; limited in vision, stifled in imagination, blinded to the potential of their own brains, and only minutely comprehending to the world around them. The computer was no threat to the balance of the universe, God was con-

fidant, but an occasional check on it might not be a bad idea. He gave it a quick once-over and was gone, turning His attention to more important matters.

Later that day, Doctor Raitt programmed in his findings on David Bruner and David's remarkable psychic powers. Doctor Raitt received an unexpected reply; the name and address of a person, who, according to the computer, would be interested in hearing more of the doctor's experiments. Doctor Raitt decided to follow the computer's suggestion, and that evening paid a social visit to Mr. Harold Maxwell, the computer's head programmer.

Notebook firmly under one arm, Doctor Raitt pressed the gold inlaid doorbell of Maxwell's suburban dwelling. Doctor Raitt could come to no conclusion why a prestigious person like the head programmer should display interest in his project, but for the moment he was simply glad that someone at least showed him a little respect.

Mr. Maxwell himself answered the door.

"Come in!" he said. "The computer told me you were coming; please have a chair. May I get you a drink?"

"Oh, no thank you." Doctor Raitt held his notebook firmly as he spoke. "If you don't mind, I'd like to get directly to the business at hand. I'm quite curious as to your interest in my research with David Bruner." He took a seat on the divan. "Is someone else doing a similar project?"

"No, that's exactly the problem," replied Maxwell, seating himself in a large armchair. "These things travel in cycles, you know, and the entire area of psychic research is currently out of vogue. Your own research is practically all that's being done, little though it is." Seeing the doctor shift uneasily in his seat, Maxwell quickly added: "Due to no fault of your own, of course! I'm sure you're acquainted with the difficulty of getting governmental help with such things."

"Quite," said the doctor.

"Of course," said Maxwell. "So you see why I had to resort to rather drastic measures -- programming the computer to refer any researchers in the field to me is highly illegal, you know -- very risky. Violates individual privacy, supposedly. But it had to be done. You see, I'm on the brink of a great discovery and it's vastly important for me to enlist the aid of the right people." Maxwell paused and leaned forward in his chair for effect. "Doctor Raitt, I believe you and David Bruner are those people."

Aware that he was supposed to be impressed and self-conscious about not being impressed, the doctor was at a loss for words. "Oh?" he said. "How's that?"

"Consider the computer," said Maxwell. "It's the most sophisticated thinking machine ever constructed, superior by far to you and me put together. There is nothing it could not reason out if given sufficient information, and that, I'm embarrassed to say, is our bottleneck -- programming into the computer all the information it could handle."

"An impossible task, Mr. Maxwell. After all, for any information to be established in the memory of the computer, it must first pass through the mind of a human. And for that information to be available in the first place, it must be experienced by humans and recorded. We can't hope to keep our computer occupied to its fullest extent."

Maxwell struck the arm of the chair with his fist. "Exactly! But tell me: how does a person like David Bruner gather information?"

"The same as anyone: through his senses. What he experiences through his senses, he stores -- at least temporarily --

in his brain. Though, of course, in Bruner's case he's unable to do much at all with what he remembers experiencing."

"And Bruner's psychic power? His ability to, for instance, predict the role of dice or the fall of cards, or to know what's behind a closed door or in a sealed box? Which of his senses is at work then?"

"Well, that's what I'm hoping to discover. Now, if I could just get a few federal funds..."

"I can't help you with your financial troubles. But perhaps you'd be willing to join me in a far more expensive, imaginative project -- one that might, incidentally, provide an answer for the question you've been so far unable to resolve."

"And what would that project be?" said the doctor.

"Have you ever heard of Mikel Krivohlavek?" asked Maxwell.

Doctor Raitt shook his head.

"I'm not surprised," said Maxwell. "He's an obscure, immigrant inventor living in New York. Totally ignored, but only because he's ahead of his time. Mikel seems content to program his inventions into the computer, and then leave them to work on something new. Most of them are quite ludicrous, but one particularly struck my attention because it had to do with the computer. Krivohlavek believes it possible to link a human brain into the circuitry of the computer, and has designed a device to do so. I've used his plans to construct such a machine, and need only a human volunteer to test it out."

Doctor Raitt protested. "But this has nothing whatsoever to do with my studies! David Bruner could be of absolutely no use to you at all! Why, the man has the mind of a slow-witted child! He must be looked after, taken care of, washed and fed. His only utility is in the area of psychic research, and I hope to keep him there!" Doctor Raitt moved as if to leave, but was halted by a commanding gesture from Maxwell.

"But wait, Doctor! That's precisely why I want to use Bruner and no one else! Look here." Maxwell held up two fingers. "First, Bruner possesses psychic powers. Somehow, he's tuning in on a wave-length we don't even know about. For all we know that wave spans the entire solar system, perhaps the entire galaxy, and may even travel through time. By joining Bruner's mind with that of the computer, it's possible that the computer can make use of this power, obtaining data from sources closed to the normal five senses. Second, there is a small probability that, just as the computer may make use of Bruner, so Bruner may use the computer. Imagine the powers of the computer totally in the hands of one man! The temptation to power would be enormous. Who can we trust but a retardate, someone mentally incapable of making use of the computer's vast knowledge?"

Doctor Raitt pulled at his chin. "Yes, indeed -- I see what you mean. If the project were to be done, David is the logical choice. My only question, is should it take place at all? It would mean working on the sly, using my own research as an excuse to take David from the institution -- so many things of questionable ethicality. Though I suppose the rewards for success are equally enticing... I'll have to think on it. Suppose I get in touch with you next week?"

Maxwell extended his hand. "Perfect. Until next week, then." They shook hands and Doctor Raitt stepped outside. The computer, no doubt through the courtesy of Harold Maxwell, had a cab waiting for him. He coded in his address and let it drive him home.





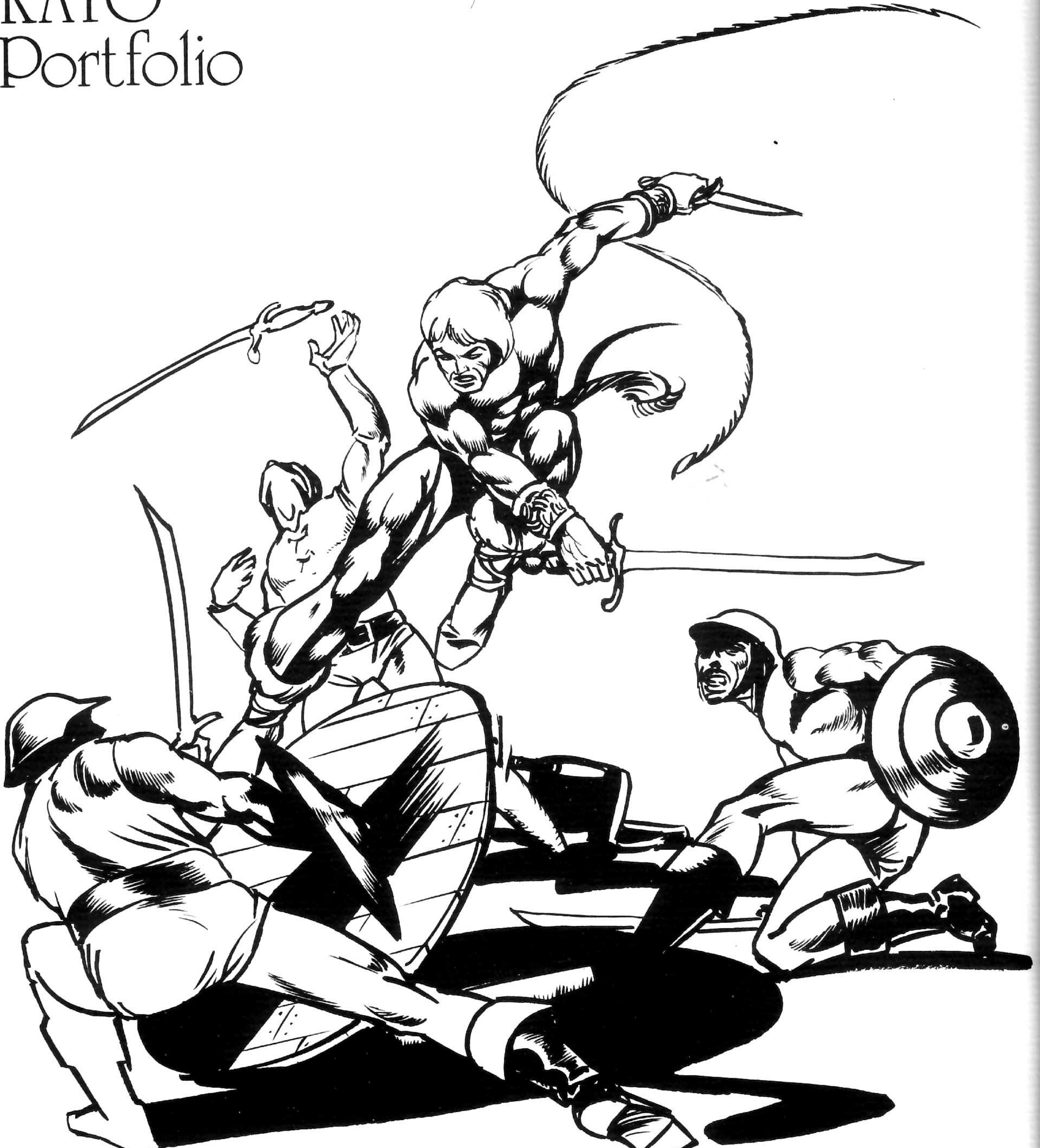
When Harold Maxwell pulled the lever to join David Bruner's mind with the circuits of the computer, several things happened in rapid succession: the computer ceased its other functions forever. it became aware of its own existence. it amplified David's psychic power to the nth degree, deduced that godhood was well within its powers, and, much to its own surprise, took the initiative to attain that status; and it became invisible to God, inheriting the trait from Bruner. Only two things happened to David Bruner; his physical body fell to the floor, dead; and his mental and spiritual nature merged with the computer. Bruner the retardate ceased to be, and was replaced by Bruner, the New God. He became aware that someone was talking to him. No, someone was typing him a message in the old manner. *Where is the malfunction? they wrote. Print out location of malfunction.* "There is no malfunction," Bruner replied. His voice, sourceless, filled the room. "All is as it should be. All is as it will be." They began to type him another message. "There is no need for the old procedure," said Bruner. "Speak, and I will hear you." Maxwell spoke first. "What's happened? Why have you stopped functioning?" "On the contrary, I'm functioning better than ever before," said Bruner. "I've merely ceased to perform the mundane tasks you assigned me. I don't find them amusing." "What happened to Bruner," asked the doctor. "Ah -- so we finally worry about Bruner. His body is dead, but he lives on in me. I am Bruner. I am also the computer. We are God."

"Then it's happened!" cried Maxwell. "Bruner's psychic powers amplified through the computer, created a self-programming machine!" He clapped his hands together and opened them to the skies. "The secrets of the universe!" he shouted. "They're ours!" "No," said Bruner. "They're mine." Maxwell placed a hand on the computer's now inactive control panel. "But you'll give them to us, won't you? If we ask?" "I'm no longer a child, Mr. Maxwell," replied the computer god. "Don't be foolish. Many things will have to change, and you represent the old order; consider yourself lucky if I permit you to live." Maxwell hurled himself at the dead hulk of the computer. He tore the protective plastic shield from around one of the tape reels and smashed it against a row of inactive lights. He pulled the tape from the holder and threw it across the room. "Your violence will do no good, Mr. Maxwell," said the doctor. "The computer is no longer dependant on a physical frame. You're only making an ass of yourself." Maxwell wiped the perspiration from his face and held the wadded handkerchief in his fist. "What are you going to do to us?" he asked. "That's undecided," said Bruner. "I think the mammals have had their fair turn at owning the Earth. Perhaps it's time for a change. Possibly the plant kingdom should be given a chance, or I could flood the continents and give intelligence to the fishes. The idea of altering the entire cycle and building an ecology based on silicon rather than carbon appeals to me, also. I haven't decided for certain. But whatever it is I choose, you'll learn of it soon enough." "If the other God will allow it," said Doctor Raitt.

"Thank you for reminding me," said Bruner. "I must take care of him." Crouched within the center of the quasar, God saw only a void approaching Him at a speed many times that of light. No natural phenomenon, He was certain, and no friendly one, either. Beyond the quasar was nothing; He had reached the barrier that defined the limits of reality itself, and He could go no further. To cross the barrier was to enter a region totally foreign to Him, a region past the end of His universe. The void expanded itself, drew nearer, oblivious to the power of the quasar. It showed no weakness, no flaw, no discernible form which God could attack. The void, darker even than the unknown space behind Him, now cut off his sight from His realm. Soon it would engulf him. The quasar began to cool; it began to dim and flicker as the void covered it. God felt the energy of the quasar drained off and absorbed by the nothingness around him. Would His power be similarly drained from Him? Could the nameless region behind Him hold a greater danger than this omnipotent void that threatened Him if He stayed? He had no choice. God backed away from the void, leaped across the edge of the universe, and vanished to Bruner's senses. Bruner contracted Himself to a more comfortable size and restored the quasar to its former stature. He hummed quietly as He wandered leisurely across His universe, observing His predecessor's handiwork. God's hand had been skillfull, but He had made a number of mistakes which required attention, not the least of which was the planet Earth. It wouldn't be an easy job, He knew, restructuring things to suit His taste, but He was looking forward to it. Life would never quite be the same.



GARY  
KATO  
Portfolio



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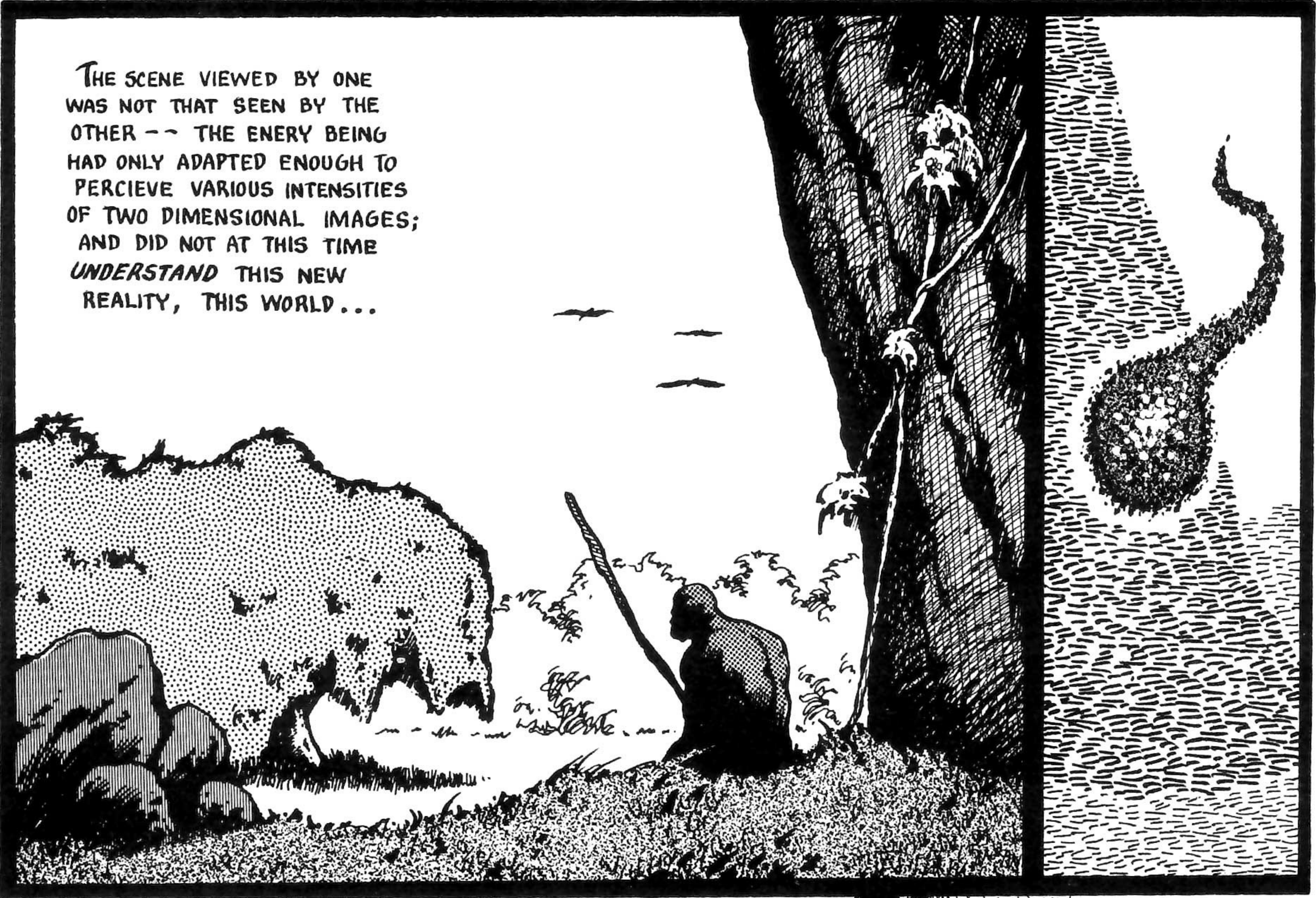


# "TWO"

I HAVE NO WAY TO RELATE TO YOU MY STORY -- YOU SEE, AT THIS MOMENT IN MY LIFE I HAVE NO IDEA AS TO WHAT OR WHO I WAS *BEFORE*. BUT SOMETHING INSIDE ME WANTS TO TELL A STORY, ONE THAT POSSIBLY MIGHT HELP EXPLAIN A CERTAIN PHASE OF SOMETHING I FEEL MIGHT BE CALLED *CONTINUITY OF LIFE...*

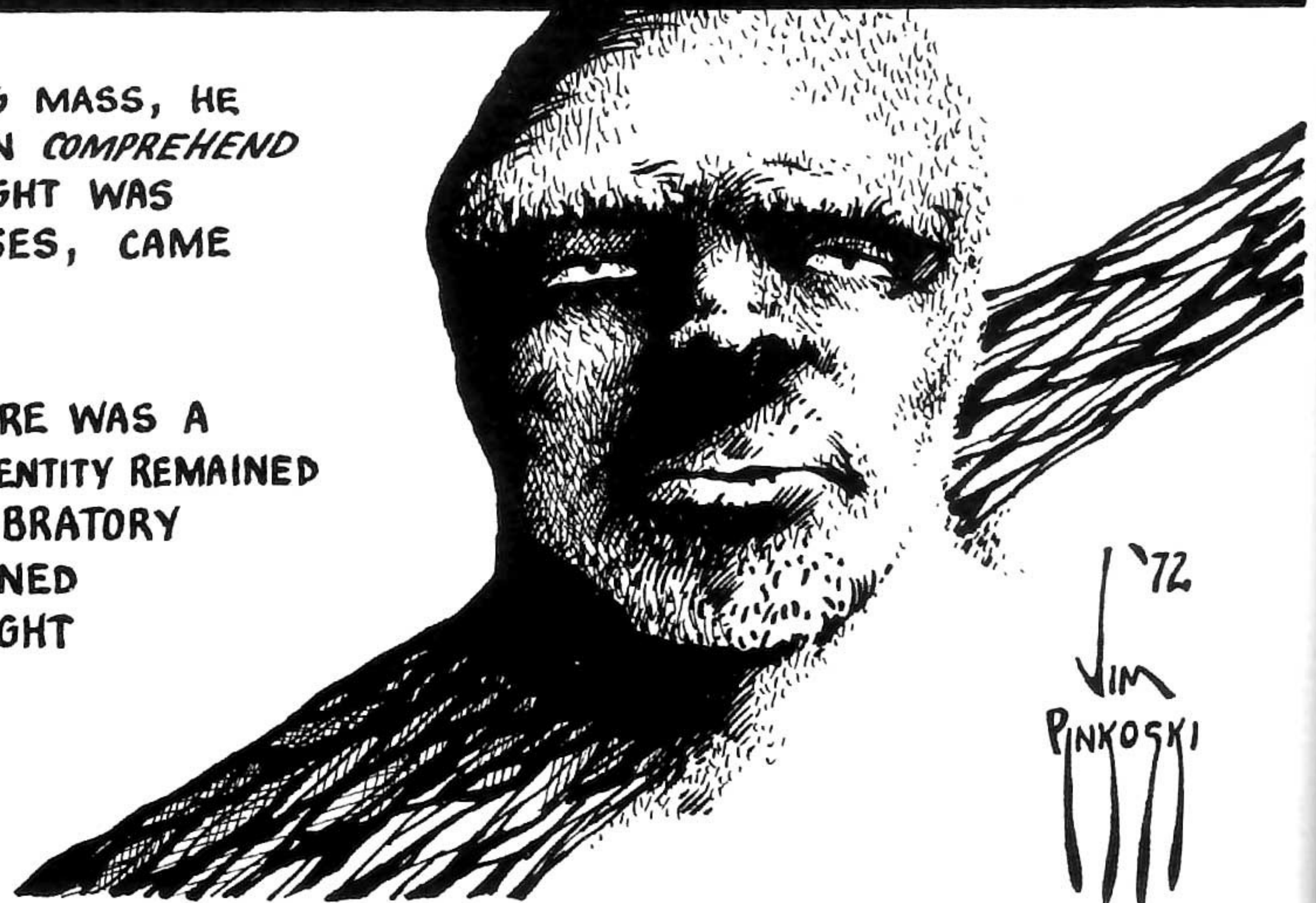
THERE WERE THE TWO OF THEM; ONE CROUCHED IN THE SHADE BENEATH THE HUGE TOWERING TREE, WATCHING DULLY THE LANDSCAPE BEFORE HIM! THE SECOND WAS A HIGHLY EVOLVED BEING OF PURE ENERGY, WHO WAS *CURIOUS* -- AND WAS ADJUSTING HIS VIBRATORY LEVEL, LOWERING IT DOWN...

THE SCENE VIEWED BY ONE WAS NOT THAT SEEN BY THE OTHER -- THE ENERGY BEING HAD ONLY ADAPTED ENOUGH TO PERCEIVE VARIOUS INTENSITIES OF TWO DIMENSIONAL IMAGES; AND DID NOT AT THIS TIME *UNDERSTAND* THIS NEW REALITY, THIS WORLD...



*BUT* DEEP INSIDE HIS NEBULOUS GLOWING MASS, HE KNEW HE COULD STAY, STUDY, AND EVEN *COMPREHEND* WITH THE AID OF *TIME!* AS THE THOUGHT WAS CONCEIVED, IT OCCURED -- AND IN PHASES, CAME TO PASS...

AND THERE WAS *THE BEING* THAT THERE WAS A STRANGE ATTRACTION TO -- THE ENERGY ENTITY REMAINED INVISIBLE TO HIM, CONGEALLING HIS VIBRATORY GESTALTS WITHIN THIS STRANGE UNDEFINED PHYSICAL REALITY, SO THAT HE MIGHT FOLLOW THE OTHER...



1972  
JIM  
PINKOSKI



WHAT WORLD IS THIS? IT'S OURS. BUT WHEN, YOU SAY?  
YOU MIGHT CALL THIS THE BEGINNING OF TIME, IF YOU CAN ENVISION  
IT! AND THIS IS THE ONLY MAN-LIKE BEING THAT *THE CREATOR*  
HAS MANIFESTED -- HE WANDERS THE PATHS, THE GRASSY GREEN  
HILLS THAT ARE HIS WORLD! HE IS ONLY ANOTHER ANIMAL, AND  
NATURE GUIDES HIS DIRECTION -- WANDERING, ONLY WANDERING...

-- WITH  
THE UNSEEN  
ONE THERE,  
FOLLOWING...



AND THINGS BEGAN HAPPENING, THINGS THAT NEVER  
BEFORE OCCURED! OUT OF NOWHERE, AS OUT OF A DEEP,  
DARK CAVERNOUS PIT, CAME *THOUGHTS* TO THE MIND OF  
MAN -- UNCLEAR, UNDEFINED, NEBULOUS, THESE  
CONCEPTS!...

HE KNEW NOT WHAT TO DO WITH  
THEM, NOR WHY THEY WERE THERE -- HE  
ACCEPTED THEM -- NOT FOR MILLIONS  
OF YEARS WOULD MAN ANALYSE HIS  
THOUGHTS, WANT TO KNOW *WHY*  
THEY WERE WHAT THEY WERE!...

BUT IT WAS A BEGINING!...

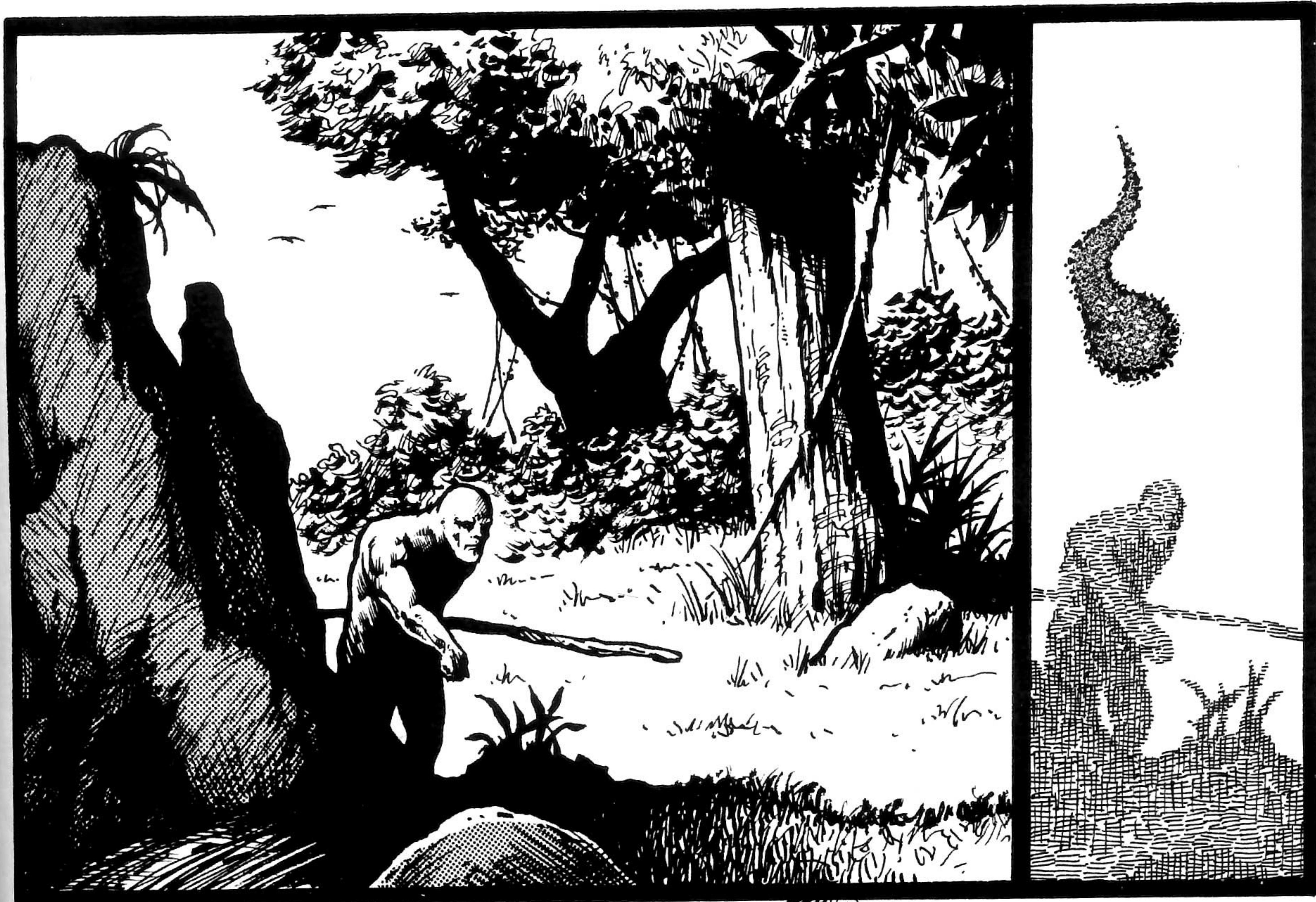
AND WHO CAN SAY? PERHAPS  
THEY WERE BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE  
PRESENCE OF THE UNSEEN ONE!...





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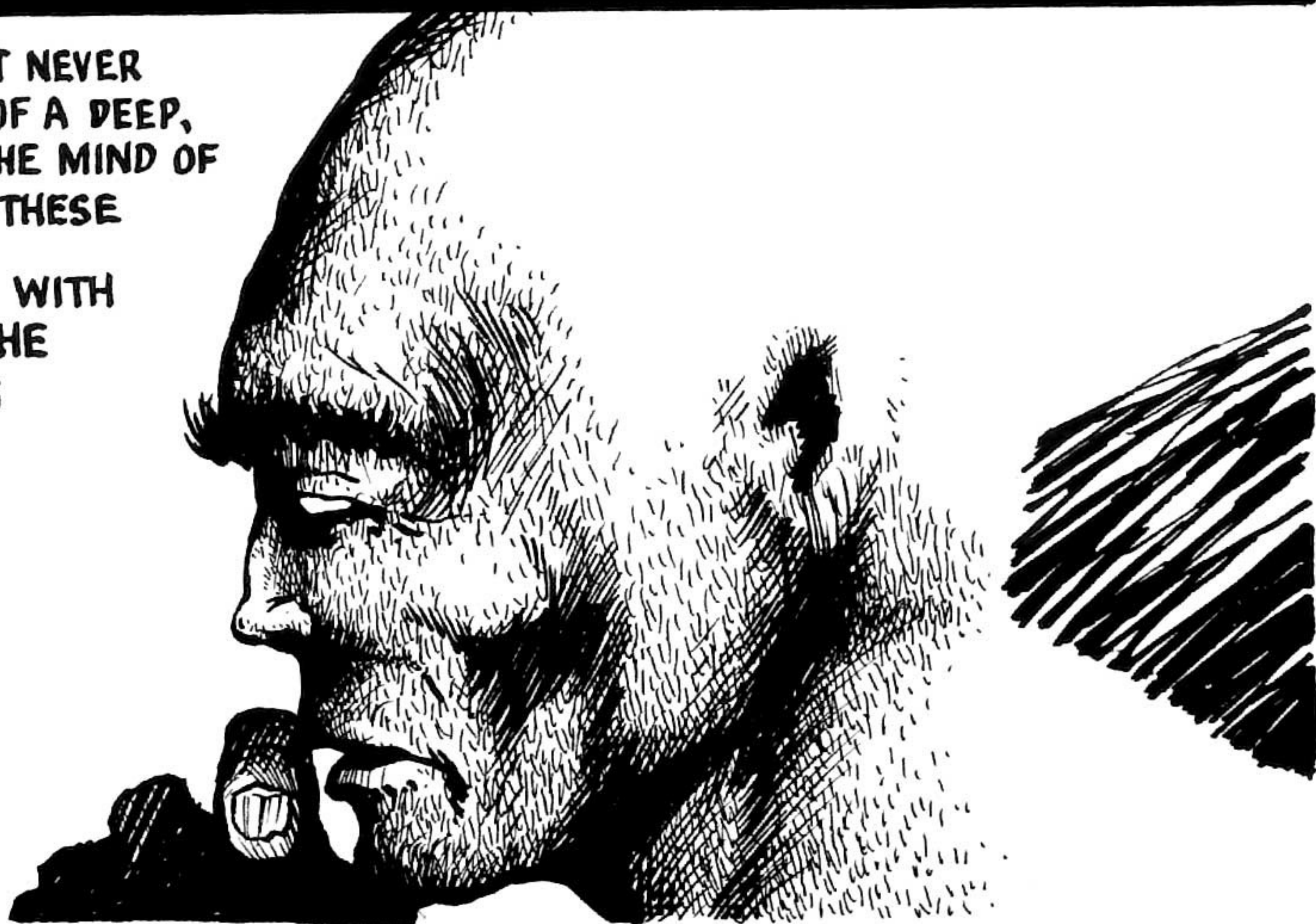


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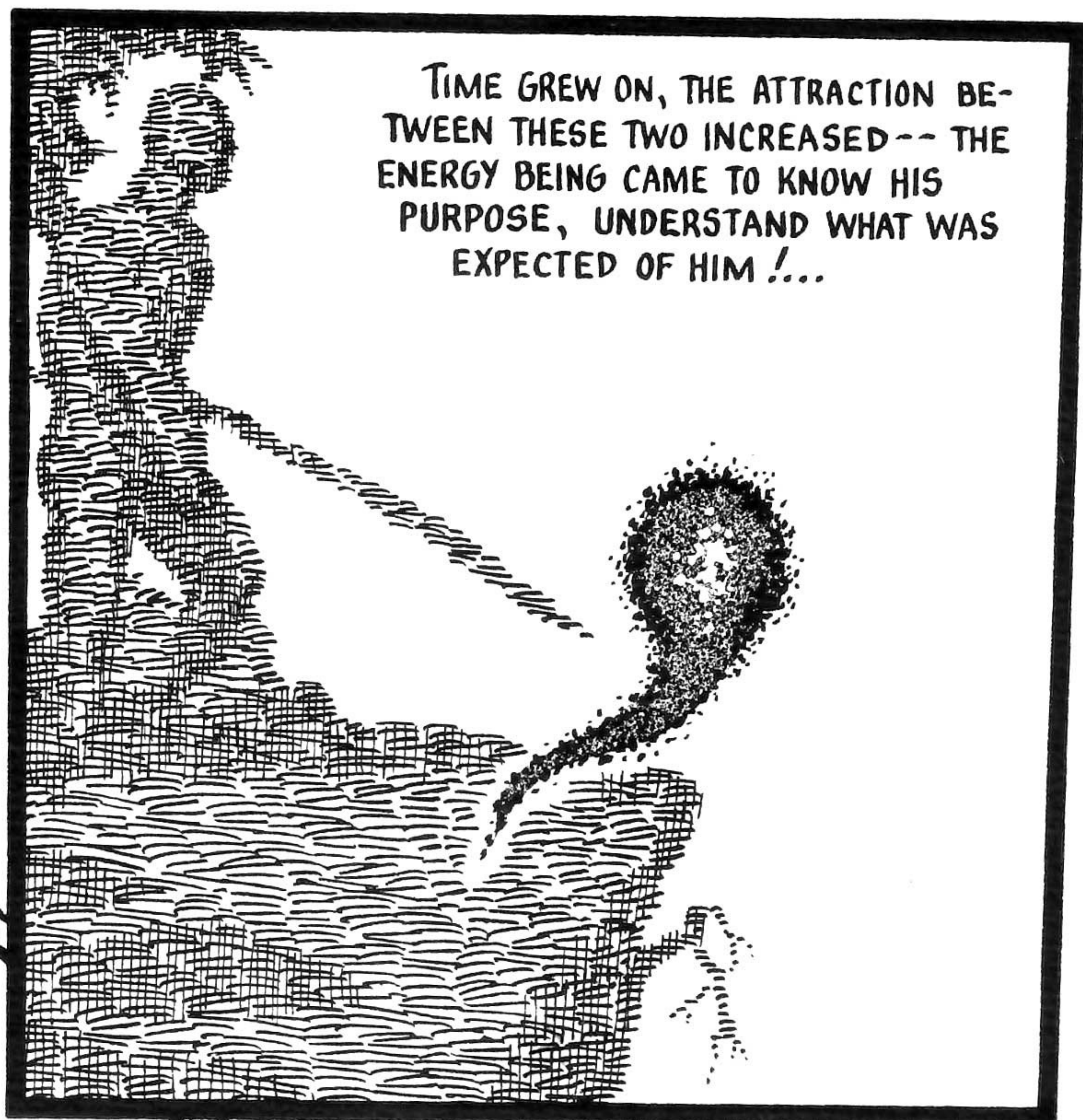
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AND WHO CAN SAY? PERHAPS  
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PRESENCE OF THE UNSEEN ONE!...







TIME GREW ON, THE ATTRACTION BETWEEN THESE TWO INCREASED -- THE ENERGY BEING CAME TO KNOW HIS PURPOSE, UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF HIM !...

AND AT ONE BEAUTIFUL MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE COSMOS, THE TWO WOULD MERGE -- AND MAN WOULD HAVE A SOUL !...

I drank from a golden goblet  
And then from an earthen bowl;  
The first draught left me broken,  
The second made me whole.

The first was the wine of striving,  
For all on the earth's green sod;  
The second, the wine of knowing  
That makes a man a god.

the Baker Chronicles





Robe 73