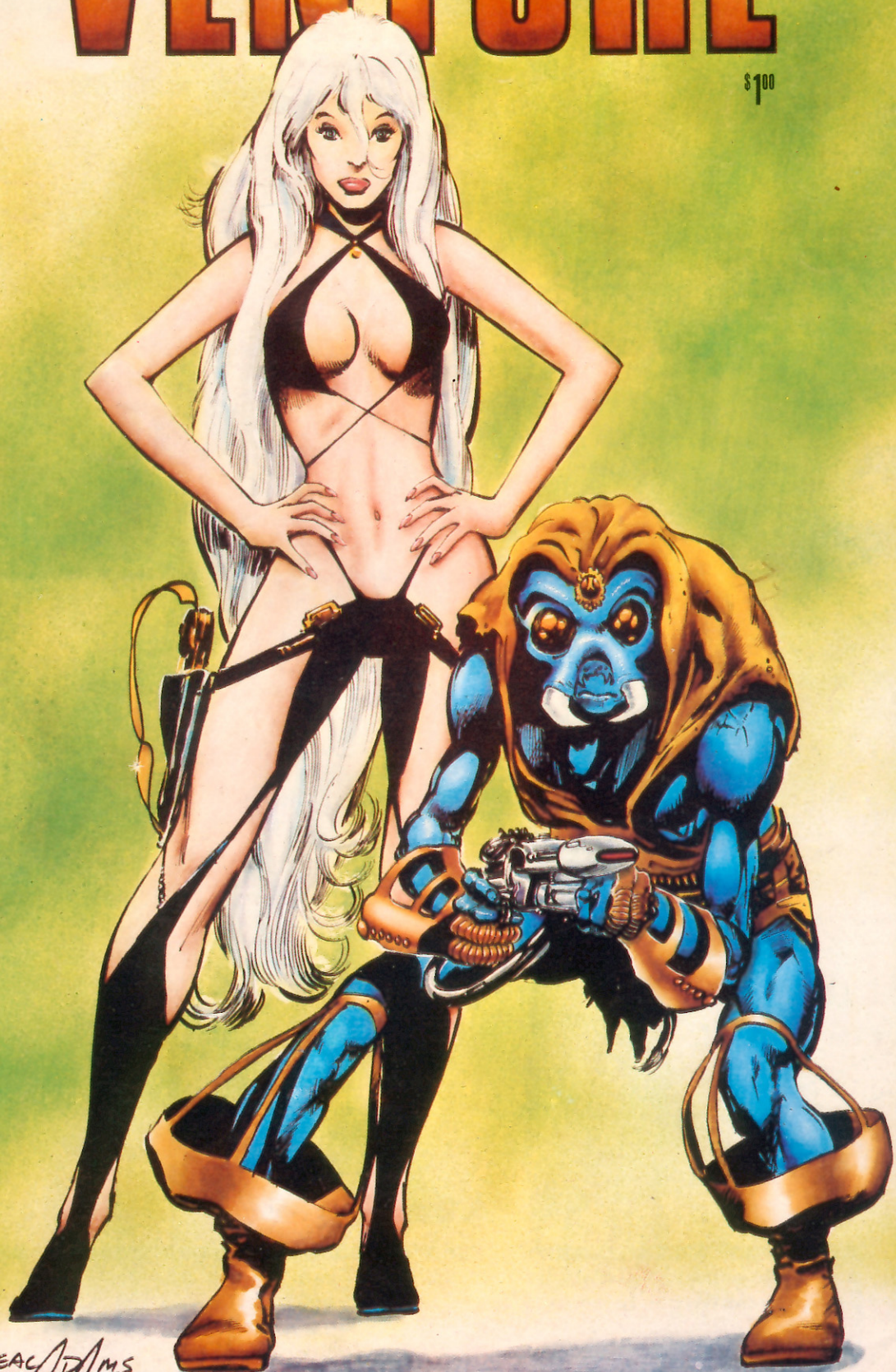


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VENTURE 5

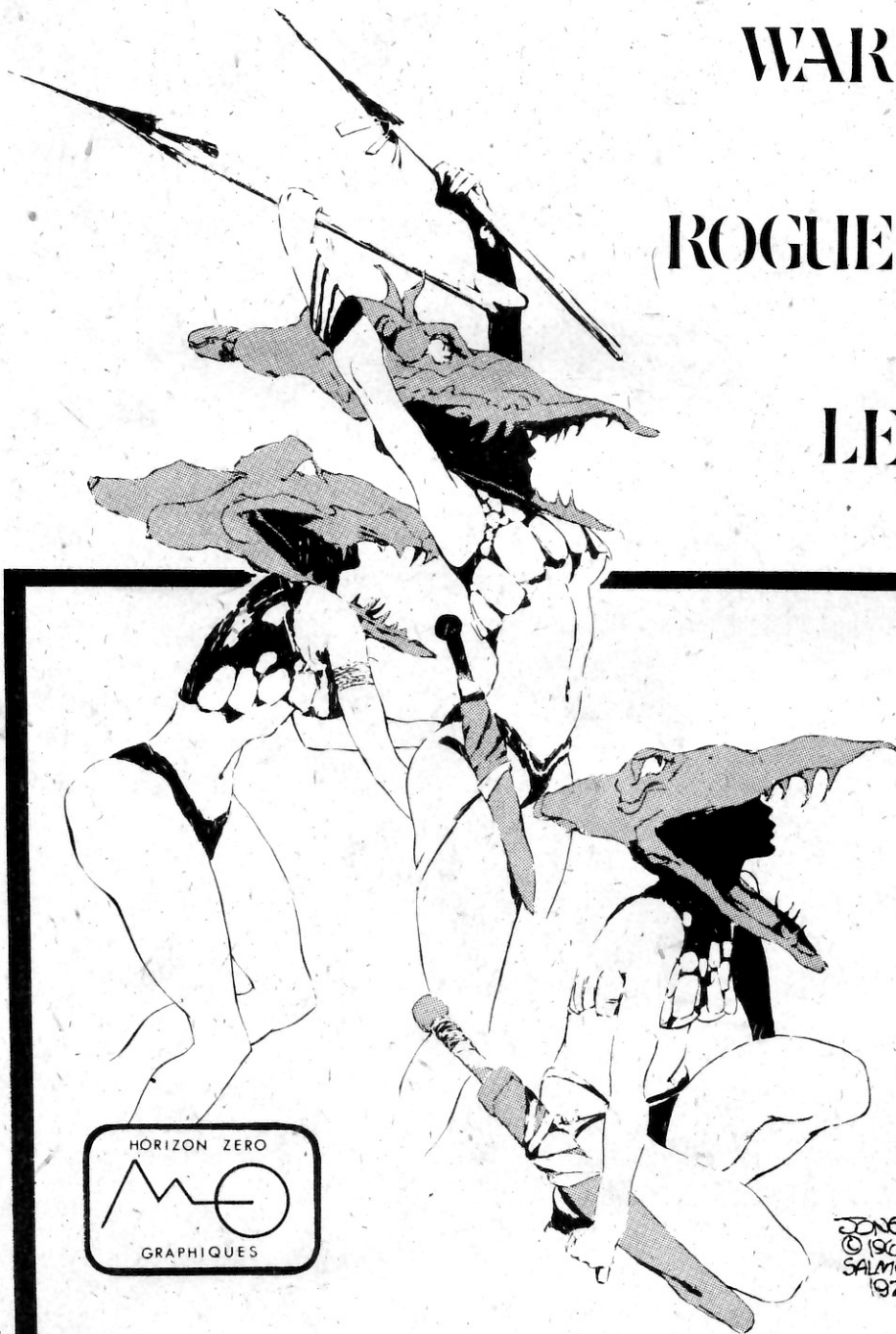


GARY
WINNICK-76

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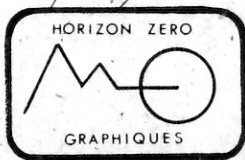
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by
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JONES
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1975

PROLOGUE

SOMEHOW IT FOUND ITS WAY TO THIS PAGAN WORLD LONG AGO.

IGNORANT OF ITS TRUE VALUE, THE ORZIAN'S WORSHIPPED IT FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS...



... ITS SUPERFICIAL BEAUTY, PERHAPS.



BUT ITS BEAUTY HELD NO INTEREST FOR THIS PAIR. A PRICE HAD BEEN BID, AND THESE ROGUES HAD ASSURED THEIR EMPLOYER QUICK AND SAFE DELIVERY.

THE ORB!!

HOWEVER, AS THIS ONE COULD TELL YOU, THERE IS NO HONOR AMONG THIEVES, ONLY AN INSATIBLE HUNGER FOR POWER.

WITH THE FIRST ORB IN THEIR POSSESSION, THE THIEVES SLIPPED SILENTLY THROUGH FILTH-RIDDEN STREETS AND MADE THEIR ESCAPE UNHAMPERED UNTIL...

CITIZEN, MAY I BORROW A MOMENT ---

OUT OF THE WAY, OLD MAN!

SIR, JUST A FEW COINS FOR A POOR---

BEGGAR, I SAID, OUT OF THE WAY!

CLOUT!!

MINUTES LATER THEY REACHED THE WATER'S EDGE AND CHOSE THE SPOT WHERE THEIR PRIZE WOULD BE HIDDEN.

NEARING THE END OF THIS PRIMITIVE MASQUERADE, ROHN GAZED OUT OVER THE SPARKLING, MOONLIT WATERS, SCANNING THE HORIZON FOR THE GLIMMERING SAIL.

THE SWITCH MADE, A PSEUDO-ORB NOW RESTED IN THE CLOTH SACK: A SIMULATED FAKERY THAT WOULD WITHSTAND THE CLOSEST INSPECTION, AND WOULD WIN THEM THE TWO REMAINING ORBS.

AS THEY WAITED FOR THE SHIP, JAHNA THOUGHT OF THE POWER THEY WOULD SOON WIELD WITH THE LEGENDARY ORBS. THE POWER OF A GOD... THE POWER OF...

© FRANK CIOCCO '76

THE TRIAD



ROW QUICKLY, ROHN. THEY WILL NOT WAIT BUT A FEW MINUTES.



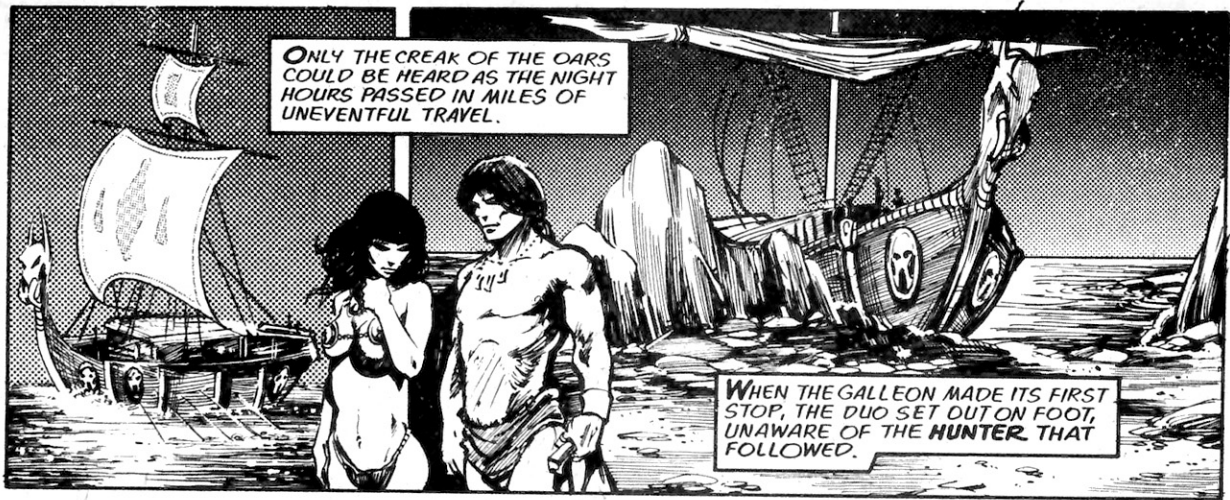
ESPECIALLY IF THEY KNOW THE CARGO WE CARRY.

THE BRIGANDS PULL THEIR SMALL BOAT ALONGSIDE THE HUGE CRAFT, AND CLIMBED ABOARD THE WOODEN DECK AS THE SWARTHY CREW SILENTLY WELCOMED THEM.



AS THE NEW PASSENGERS MADE THEIR WAY TO AN UNOCCUPIED CORNER OF THE PIRATE GALLEON, THEY DID NOT GO UNOBSERVED.





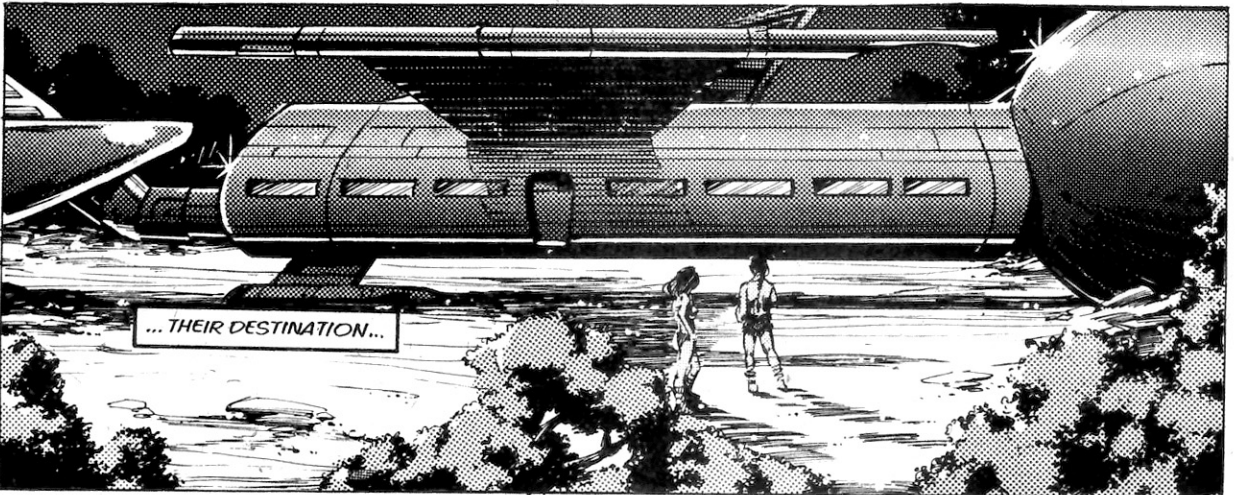
ONLY THE CREAK OF THE OARS
COULD BE HEARD AS THE NIGHT
HOURS PASSED IN MILES OF
UNEVENTFUL TRAVEL.

WHEN THE GALLEON MADE ITS FIRST
STOP, THE DUO SET OUT ON FOOT,
UNAWARE OF THE HUNTER THAT
FOLLOWED.



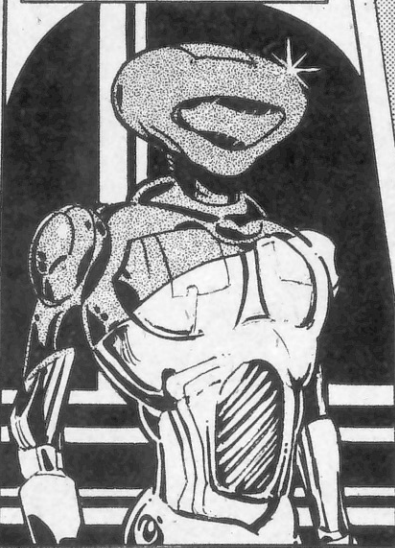
THE DARK FOREST CLOSED
AROUND THEM AS THEY
RETRACED THEIR FOOTSTEPS
OF THE PREVIOUS DAY.

DEEP INTO THE FOREST
ROHN CLUTCHED THE
BAG CLOSER, ASSURED
BY THE WEIGHT OF ITS
BOGUS CONTENTS. THE
TREES THINNED SLIGHTLY,
ALLOWING BLUE MOON-
LIGHT TO FILTER DOWN
AND ILLUMINATE...



... THEIR DESTINATION...

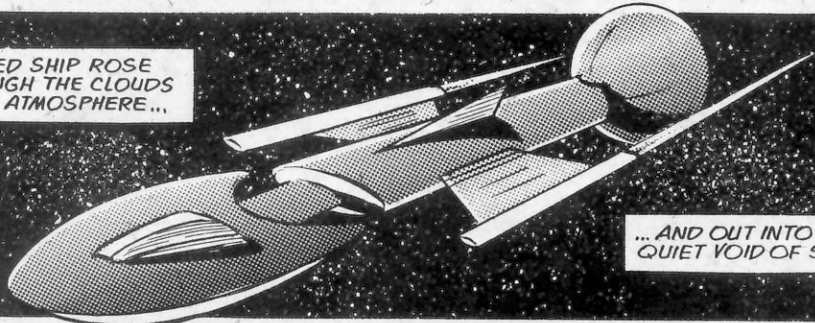
... AND ITS SOLE OPERATOR!



APPREHENSIVELY, THE ORZIAN SLIPPED ABOARD THE STRANGE CRAFT BEFORE ITS METALLIC DOORS CLICKED SHUT.



THE STREAMLINED SHIP ROSE SILENTLY THROUGH THE CLOUDS OF THE ORZIAN ATMOSPHERE...



... AND OUT INTO THE QUIET VOID OF SPACE.

VEILED BY SHADOWS, THE HUNTER WITNESSED A STRANGE ENCOUNTER...

BY THE GODS! THIS IS THE LAIR OF A ONE-EYED DEMON!



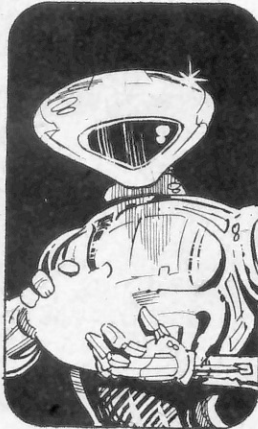
IT FEELS GOOD TO BE RID OF THOSE UNCOMFORTABLE GUISES. NOW LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS, CHATTERBOX...

THE SILENT MACHINE GAZED AT THE ORB... TRANSFIXED.

THESE PAWNS HAVE DONE THEIR JOB WELL... WITH THIS THIRD ORB IN MY POSSESSION...



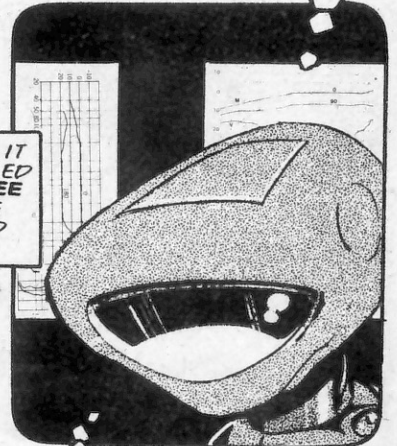
HERE'S THE ORB.



IT HAD SEARCHED THE CORNERS OF THE UNIVERSE, JUST WAITING FOR THIS DAY.

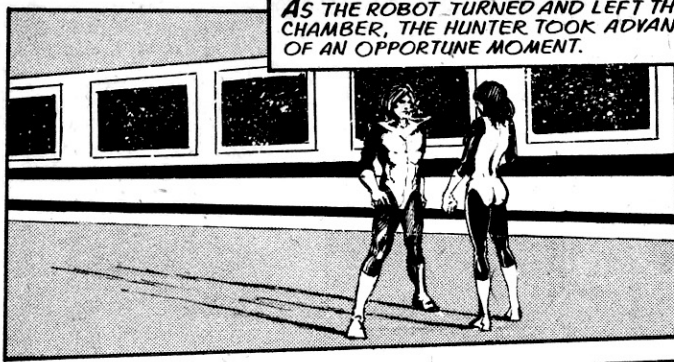


THIS DAY IT POSSESSED ALL THREE OF THE SACRED ORBS.



IT IS TIME THEY REAP THEIR DUE REWARD... THE SOUTUDE OF DEATH!

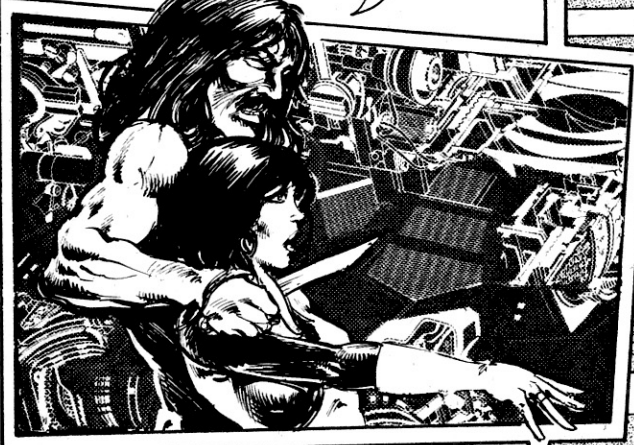
AS THE ROBOT TURNED AND LEFT THE CHAMBER, THE HUNTER TOOK ADVANTAGE OF AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT.



STAND AWAY, THIEF, OR I'LL SLIT HER THROAT!

I HAVE COME FOR THE SACRED JEWEL YOU STOLE FROM OUR TEMPLE!

SILENCE! YOU WILL GET THE JEWEL NOW, AND WE WILL RETURN TO THE CITY.



WHO-



YOU FOOL, DON'T YOU KNOW WHERE THE HELL YOU ARE?!

TAKE A LOOK OUTSIDE, SAVAGE!

OUTSIDE--?



outside...

"I MUST... FIND THE JEWEL... ESCAPE THIS DEMON'S PIT..."



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, JAHNA?

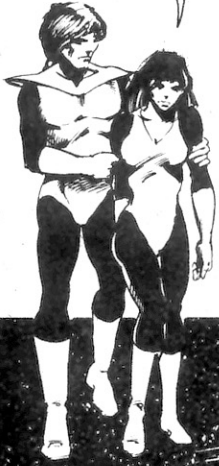
YES, BUT HOW DID THAT BASTARD GET IN HERE?!

HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN IN WHEN WE BOARDED BACK ON HIS PLANET.

SOMEHOW, HE FOUND OUT WE STOLE THE ORB, AND FOLLOWED US... BUT HOW?

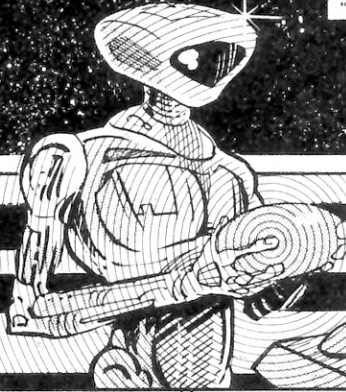
LET'S NOT WORRY ABOUT HIM RIGHT NOW. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?

NOT QUITE THREE MINUTES. IT SHOULD GO OFF...



"... ANY SECOND NOW!"

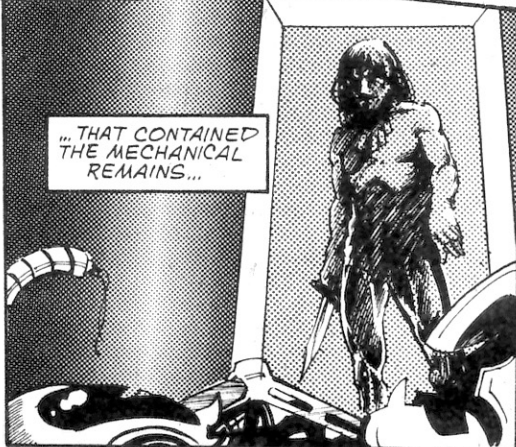
IN ANOTHER CHAMBER OF THE SHIP, AS THE ROBOT SLOWLY SET THE THIRD 'COMPONENT' INTO PLACE...



FOLLOWING THE ECHOES OF THE EXPLOSION, THE ORZIAN STUMBLED INTO THE ROOM...



"... THAT CONTAINED THE MECHANICAL REMAINS..."



"... AND WHAT HIS MADNESS SOUGHT!"





THE ORB OF REASON TUCKED SAFELY UNDER HIS ARM, THE CRAZED ORZIAN FLED DOWN THE LABYRINTH OF CORRIDORS...

... DETERMINED TO FIND AN EXIT, SOME SIGN OF LIGHT.



ALL HE FOUND WAS THE COLD DARKNESS OF SPACE.



SCAVENGING THROUGH THE AFTERMATH OF THE DISASTER, THE PAIR BEGIN TO SEARCH FOR THE MISSING ORB OF REASON.

DO YOU THINK HE COULD HAVE PUT THE DAMN THING SOMEWHERE ELSE ON THE SHIP?

IMPOSSIBLE. WE SAW THEM BOTH IN THIS ROOM BEFORE WE BEGAN OUR MISSION.

SO WHERE THE HELL IS IT?

HERE ON THE SHIP SOMEWHERE, BUT I WISH I KNEW WHERE. ITS GOTTA BE CLOSE BY.



THEIR SEARCH CONTINUED AS THE ORB THEY SOUGHT DRIFTED, IRONICALLY, JUST OUTSIDE...

... WITH ITS LIFELESS RESCUER FLOATING NEARBY.

HE HAD TAKEN THE ORB WHICH CONTAINED THE POWER OF REASON... AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION THAT FAILED HIM WHEN HE NEEDED IT MOST.



WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE ORBITING SHIP...

ONLY ONE ORB IS HERE, AND THE SECOND IS HIDDEN ON THE ORZITE PLANET. THE THIRD ONE HAS GOT TO BE HERE--

--WE'RE TOO CLOSE TO LOSE IT NOW!



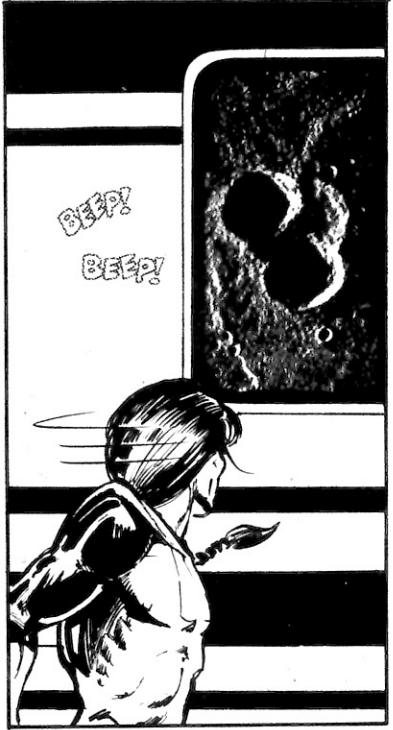
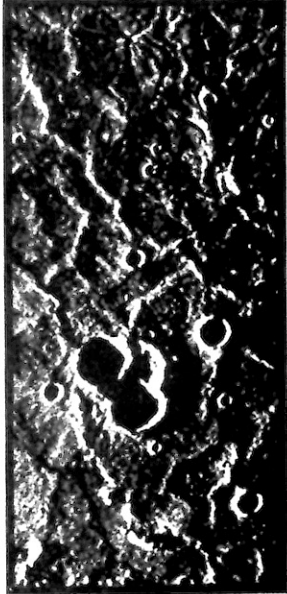
WE'VE COME SO FAR!

SO FAR, IN FACT, THAT THE UNPILOTED SHIP WAS BEING PULLED DIRECTLY INTO THE PLANET BELOW!

THIS DANGER WENT UNNOTICED BY THE PREOCCUPIED TRAVELERS...



...UNTIL THE PLANET'S FACE FILLED THE SHIP'S SCREEN. BUT BY THEN, IT WAS TOO LATE...



BEEP!
BEEP!

CRASH!

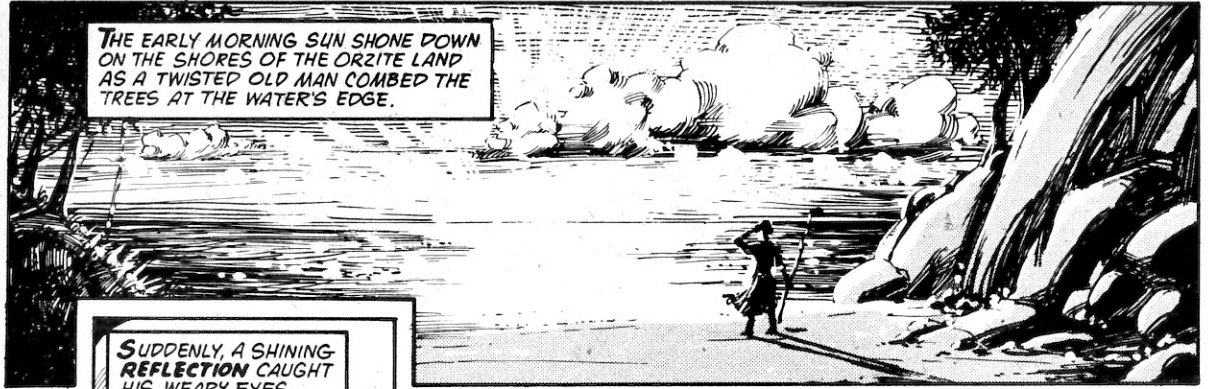


... FOR ALTHOUGH THEY POSSESSED THE ORB OF GENIUS, ALL THE POWER IT CONTAINED WAS ULTIMATELY USELESS...

...TO A SHIP OF FOOLS!

END

THE EARLY MORNING SUN SHONE DOWN ON THE SHORES OF THE ORZITE LAND AS A TWISTED OLD MAN COMBED THE TREES AT THE WATER'S EDGE.



SUDDENLY, A SHINING REFLECTION CAUGHT HIS WEARY EYES.



HE MOVED CLOSER TO INSPECT THE STRANGE SIGHT AND DISCOVERED A QUITE UNIQUE AND MUCH SOUGHT-AFTER BAUBLE.



THIS POOR BEGGAR HAD NO WAY OF REALIZING...

PERPLEXED, HE LIFTED THE ORB TO THE SUNLIGHT.



AS HE HELD THE JEWEL, HE FELT HIS BACK STRAIGHTEN AND THE WRINKLES ON HIS FACE BEGIN TO FADE.

HIS LIFE WAS NOT YET COMPLETE. IN FACT, IT WAS JUST BEGINNING... BUT HE HAD YET TO FORM A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING.



... THAT HE WOULD SOON BECOME A KING!

BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST SAVAGE, NATURAL FIGHTER'S IN THE GALAXY, WHEN THREE CLOSE-KNIT VETS ARE AVAILABLE, YOU HIRE THEM TO HELP YOUR CAUSE! IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

WAR AFFAIR

STORY:
ERIC TOYE
ART:
BRENT ANDERSON
LETTERING:
THE BENJE

YOU GUYS READY?

YEAH, BUT WHAT IS OUR JOB IN THIS FRACAS?

IF YA D'INT LISSEN, BLIPP, THEN KEEP YER EYES ON US AND WE'LL CUE YOU!

THAT'S IT! KEEP IT UP AND WE WON'T LIVE TA SEE TOMORROW!

COM-LINK, CHECK!

POWER CIRCUITS TO TORP-RIFLES, CHECK!



THE PRAETOR WANTS US TA SHOOT DOWN THESE BOOGERS!

...CLIPPIN' HOVER-BIRDS?!



ONE!?! MAN, THEM BOYS UP TOP SURE GIVE US A LOT OF CREDIT, DON'T THEY!

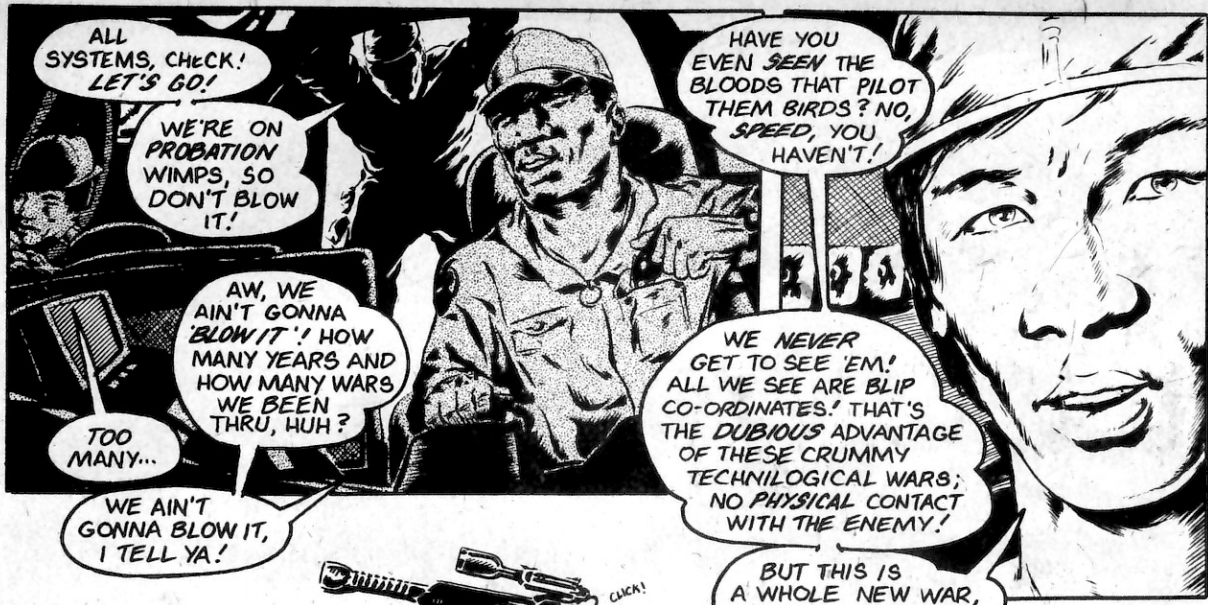
JUST ONE. TA SEE HOW WE DO---

OKAY, IF THAT'S ALL HE WANTS--- HOW MANY TODAY?



ONE LOUSY---

ALL RIGHT, I KNOW, BUT THAT'S THE WAY IT IS! WE'RE HIRED TA FOLLOW ORDERS, SO WE FOLLOW 'EM AS BEST WE CAN!



ALL SYSTEMS, CHECK!
LET'S GO!

WE'RE ON PROBATION WIMPS, SO DON'T BLOW IT!

AW, WE AIN'T GONNA BLOW IT! HOW MANY YEARS AND HOW MANY WARS WE BEEN THRU, HUH?

TOO MANY...

WE AIN'T GONNA BLOW IT, I TELL YA!

HAVE YOU EVEN SEEN THE BLOODS THAT PILOT THEM BIRDS? NO, SPEED, YOU HAVEN'T!

WE NEVER GET TO SEE 'EM! ALL WE SEE ARE BLIP CO-ORDINATES! THAT'S THE DUBIOUS ADVANTAGE OF THESE CRUMMY TECHNOLOGICAL WARS; NO PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY!

BUT THIS IS A WHOLE NEW WAR, SO WE'VE GOTTA BE CAREFUL!



BLIPP'S RIGHT. WE GOTTA TAKE THIS SERIOUS! KEEP YER EYES OPEN AND YER SAFTYS OFF!

HEY!! WE GOT COMPANY, GUYS!



WE'D BETTER HOOK!

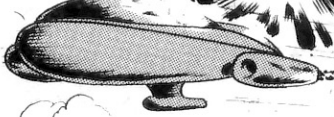
BOOGIE @ 15°
SOUTH-SOUTHWEST;
ACUTE HYP-ANGLE
COMPRESSION AT
SIX VELS!

I'VE GOT 'IM
TRACED, NOW JUST
GIT THIS CRATE UNDER
'IM IN SOME SORT
OF CLEARING!

I DON'T
WANNA TAKE OUT
HALF THIS FOREST'S
CANOPY BEFORE I
PEG 'IM.



YASSUH,
BOSS!



GOT
HIS
ASS!



THAT'S ALL
YOU GOT;
HIS ASS!

THE REST OF
IT JUST SET DOWN
TWO KILOMETERS
FROM HERE; POSSIBLY
REPAIRABLE!

WHICH
MEANS WE STILL
HAVE A JOB TO
DO!





FINDING A CRIPPLED CRAFT IS NO TRICK FOR A MACHINE THAT CAN TRACK A MICROBE THRU THE DENSE, WINDSWEPT ATMOSPHERE OF VENUS, SO IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE---

THERE'S THE PILOT!

HE MUST'VE BEEN THROWN CLEAR!

WHATTA WE DO, GUNNER?

IT'S IN AGONY AND THOSE SQUEALS ARE ENOUGH TO WAKE THE DEAD!

GOD IS HE TORN UP!!

SPEED---



CALL THE BASE CO-ORDINATOR!

GET HIM UP HERE!



KNIGHTS-ERRANT ONE TO B.C., OVER!---

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THE BASE COORDINATOR TO ARRIVE IN HIS HOVER-CRAFT, BUT WHEN HE DID SHOW UP, HE WAS MAD!!

WHY HAVEN'T YOU MEN MADE A DATA REPORT??

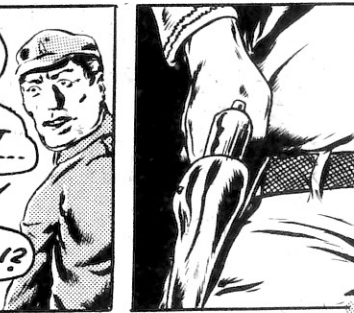
AND WHAT THE HELL IS ALL THAT RACKET!!?



IT'S-- IT'S THE ALIEN, SIR. IT'S WOUNDED!

WE WEREN'T SURE OF EXACT PROCEDURE---

'EXACT PROCEDURE'!?



WHAT A HELLUVA WAY TO MAKE A LIVING!



FIN

PROLOGUE

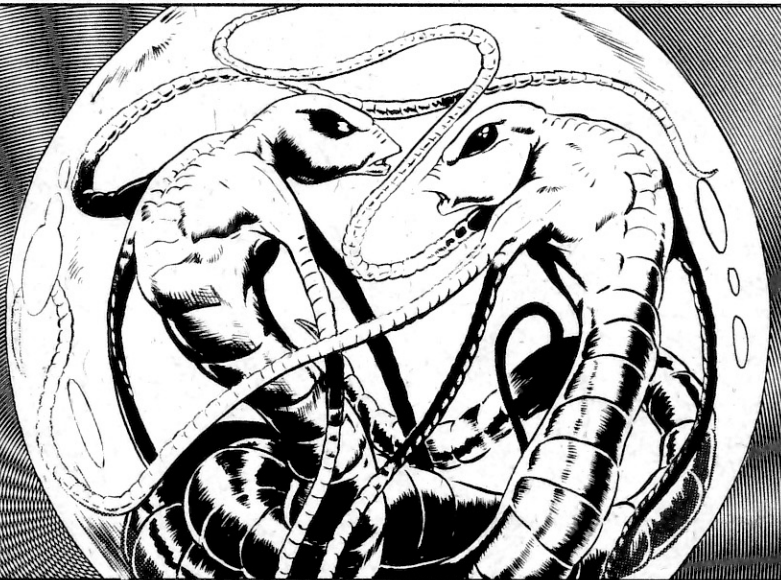


"HOW MUCH LONGER MUST WE WAIT BEFORE WE ARE FREE TO FULFILL OUR AMBITIONS? WE HAVE ALREADY WAITED A CONSIDERABLE TIME AND MY ANTICIPATION IS BECOMING **UNBEARABLE.**"

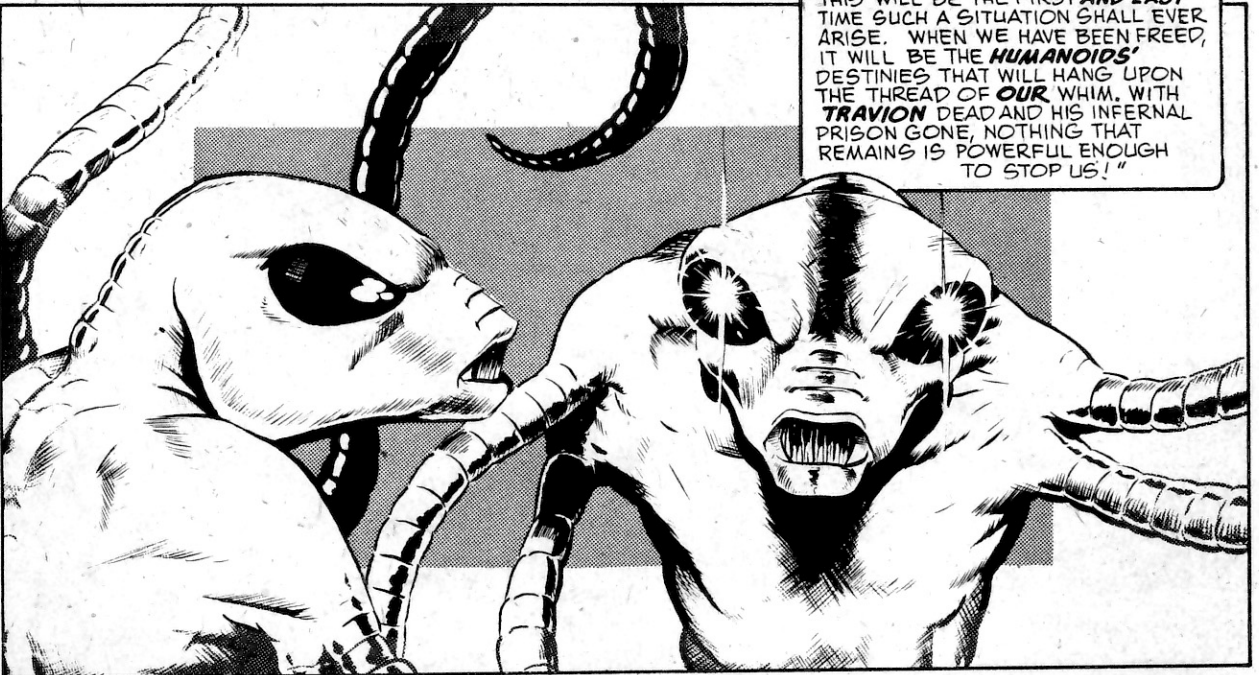
"IT SHOULD NOT BE LONG NOW. WE MUST BE PATIENT. OUR **CONTACT** HAS ALREADY SENT AN EMISSARY WITH A DEVICE TO FREE US FROM THIS ACCURSED PRISON."

"BEING **HUMANOID**, IT HAS A VERY LIMITED LIFE SPAN. I TRUST THAT IT'S FRAIL **BODY** CAN EXIST FOR THE LENGTH OF TIME IT WILL TAKE TO REACH US."

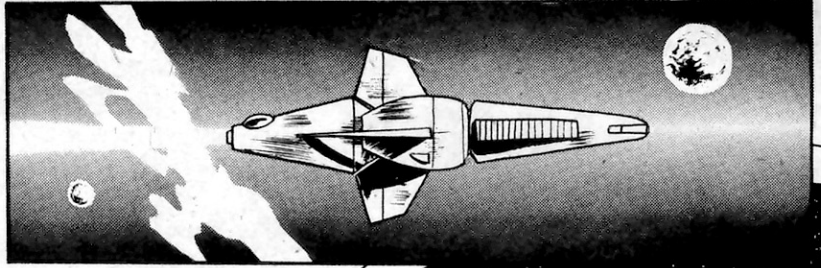
"WHY MUST **OUR** DESTINY HANG UPON THE THIN THREAD OF THIS **HUMANOID'S** LIFE? IT IS A PITIFUL STATE INDEED WHEN THE FRUITION OF OUR GOAL MUST DEPEND UPON SUCH AN **INADEQUATE** BEING."



"THIS WILL BE THE FIRST **AND LAST** TIME SUCH A SITUATION SHALL EVER ARISE. WHEN WE HAVE BEEN FREED, IT WILL BE THE **HUMANOID'S'** DESTINIES THAT WILL HANG UPON THE THREAD OF **OUR** WHIM. WITH **TRAVION** DEAD AND HIS INFERNAL PRISON GONE, NOTHING THAT REMAINS IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STOP US!"



IT IS STRANGE THAT A
VIABLE SET OF CIRCUM-
STANCES CAN THRUST
TOGETHER TWO BEINGS
FROM SUCH DIVERSE
AND OPPOSING RACES.



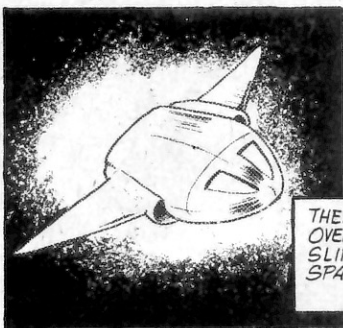
DALAEN, AN AMBASSADOR FROM THE PLANET
KORBUN, HAS AN UNOFFICIAL APPOINTMENT
TO KEEP ON HIS HOMEWORLD.

KYRA, THE DAUGHTER OF
A WEALTHY MERCHANT,
NOW TRAVELS ABOARD
HER FATHER'S FULLY
AUTOMATED CARGO
SHUTTLE AS ITS ONLY
OTHER PASSENGER.

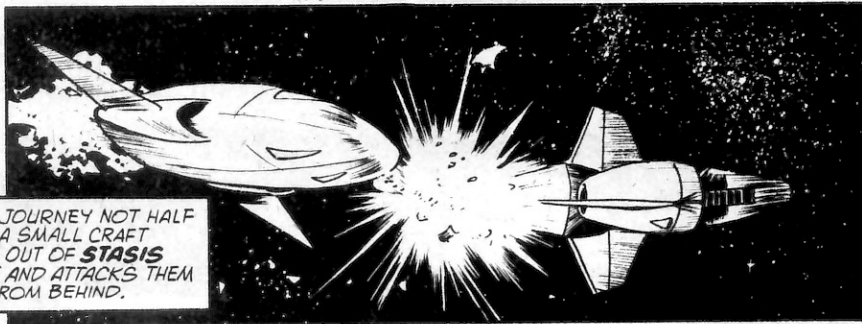


story-pencils
GARY WINNICK
story-inks
BRENT ANDERSON
lettering
TOM ORZECZOWSKI

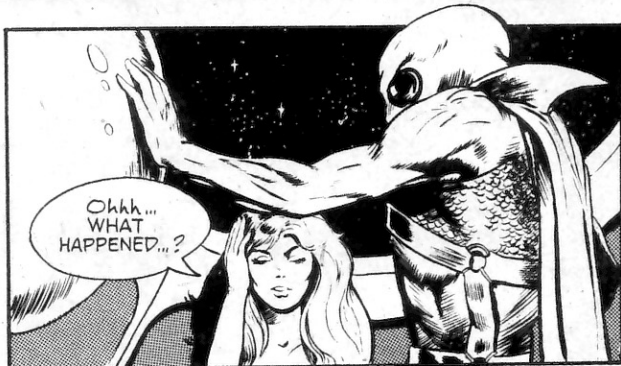




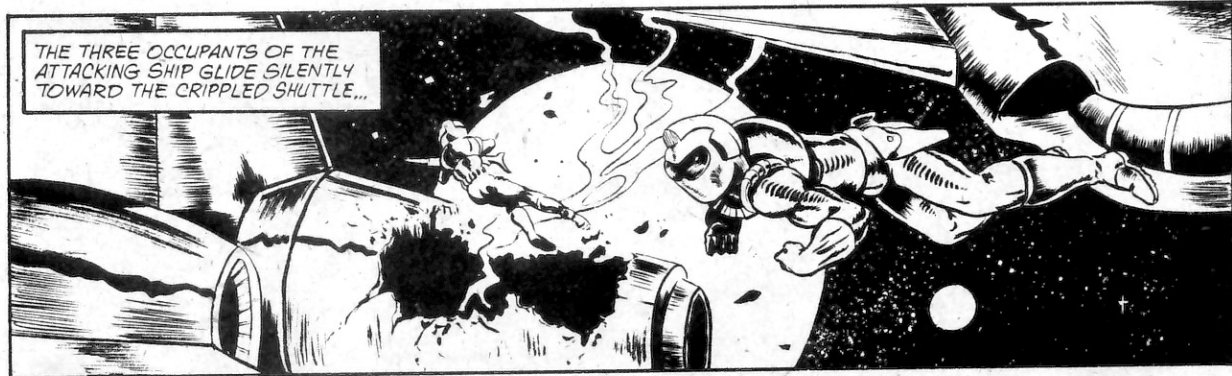
THEIR JOURNEY NOT HALF OVER, A SMALL CRAFT SLIPS OUT OF **STASIS** SPACE AND ATTACKS THEM FROM BEHIND.



DIRECT HIT!



Ohhh... WHAT HAPPENED...?



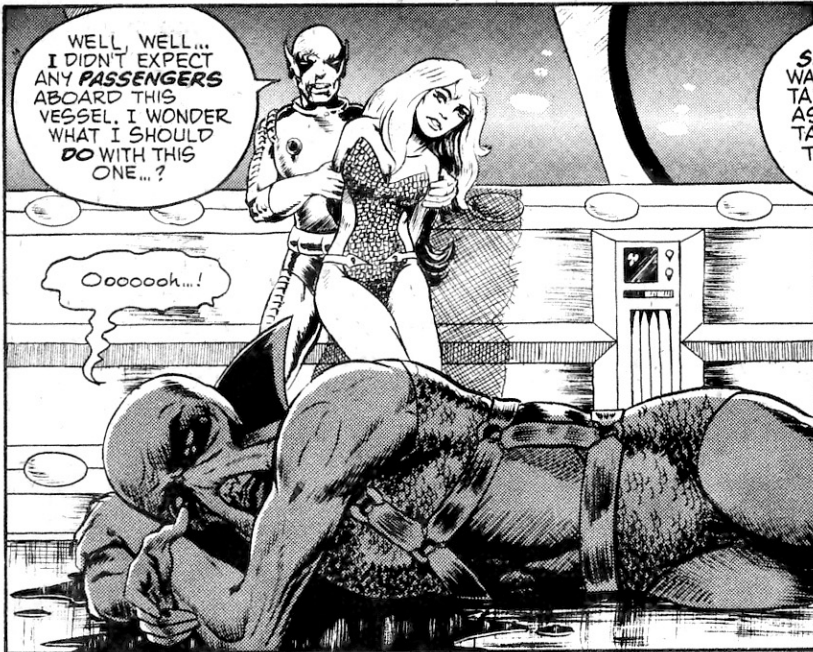
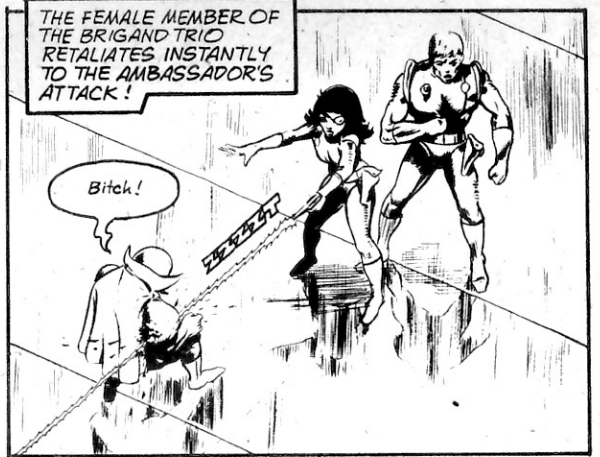
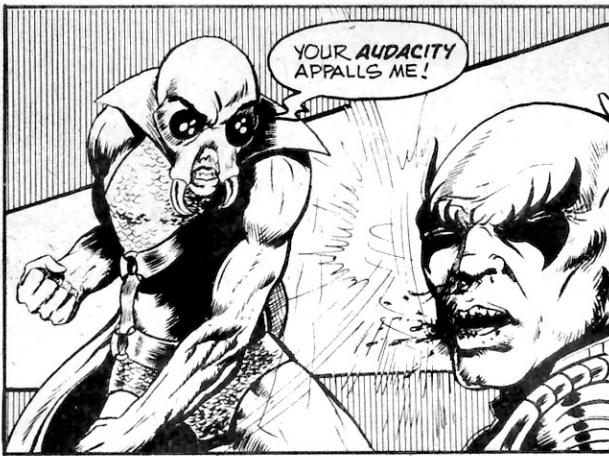
THE THREE OCCUPANTS OF THE ATTACKING SHIP GLIDE SILENTLY TOWARD THE CRIPPLED SHUTTLE...



... AND GAIN ACCESS THROUGH AN AIRLOCK..



PIRATES!

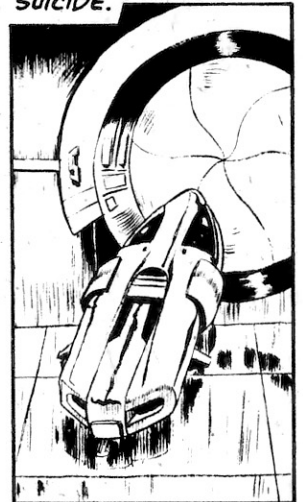
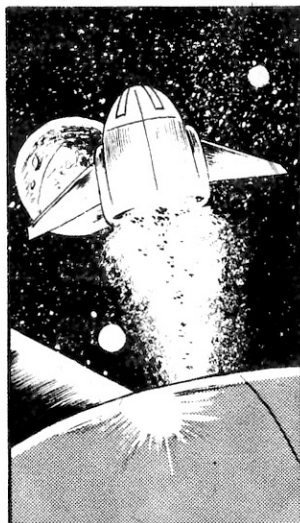


KYRA IS DRAGGED TO A DARK CORNER WHERE SKUL'S LIPS CUT INTO HERS IN A VIOLENT KISS. AS HE THROWS HER TO THE DECK, HE RIPS HER GARMENT AND SAVAGELY SATISFIES HIS APPETITE.

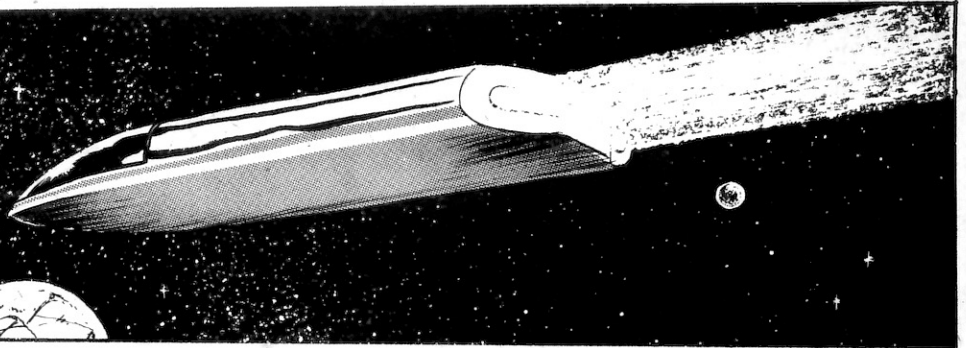
IT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY BEFORE KYRA HEARS RECEDING FOOTSTEPS FOLLOWED BY THE CLANG OF THE AIRLOCK DOOR. SHE KNOWS THE PIRATES ARE GONE.

RETURNING TO DALAEN'S INERT FIGURE, KYRA DRAGS HIM THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF THE CRIPPLED SHIP TO THE HANGER DECK.

FINDING A LONE LIFEBOAT IN ITS BERTH, THE ABASHED GIRL PULLS THE WOUNDED AMBASSADOR ABOARD. NEITHER KNOWS THE FUNDAMENTALS OF NAVIGATION IN SPACE, BUT TO REMAIN ABOARD THE SHUTTLE IS SUICIDE.



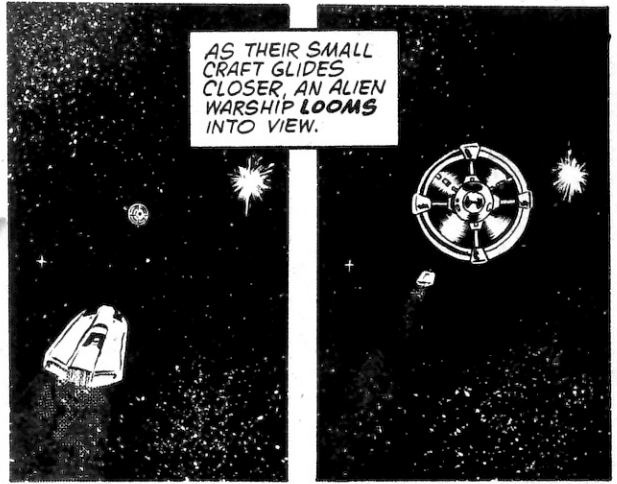
SOMETIME LATER,
WITH PROVISIONS
AND FUEL RUNNING
LOW, KYRA
DETECTS A MASSIVE
ENERGY SOURCE.



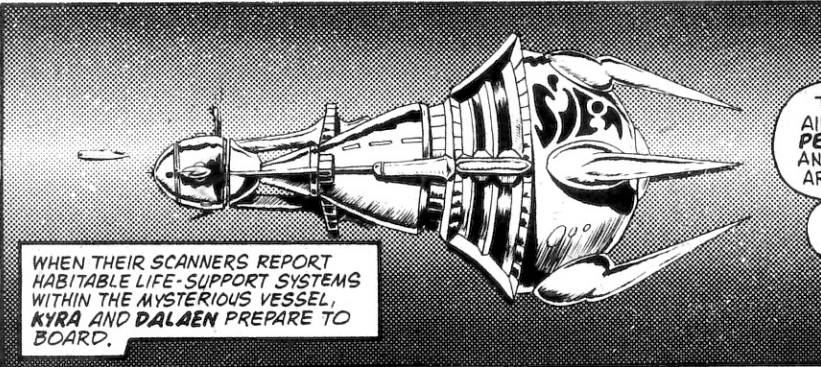
SENSORS ARE
PICKING UP
SOMETHING
OUT THERE.



AS THEIR SMALL
CRAFT GLIDES
CLOSER, AN ALIEN
WARSHIP LOOMS
INTO VIEW.



WHEN THEIR SCANNERS REPORT
HABITABLE LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEMS
WITHIN THE MYSTERIOUS VESSEL,
KYRA AND DALAEN PREPARE TO
BOARD.



THE DOCKING
AIRLOCK SEAL IS A
PERFECT FIT. AIR
AND LIFE SUPPORT
ARE FUNCTIONING.

LET'S GO
ACROSS.



KYRA, COME LOOK
AT THIS. IT SEEMS
TO HAVE A LIFE
OF ITS OWN.



THIS MACHINERY LOOKS
FAMILIAR TO ME SOME-
HOW. I'D WAGER I COULD
PILOT THIS CRAFT...



MORE THAN HALF AN EARTH-YEAR LATER, ON A LAWLESS REFUGE PLANET, BRIGANDS AND CUTTHROATS CAROUSE AMID THE RUINS OF A FALLEN ALIEN CIVILIZATION... A CIVILIZATION SUPPOSEDLY RICH IN WEALTH. TREASURE-SEEKING HOPEFULS FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE GALAXY COME TO SIFT THROUGH THE PLANET-WIDE RUINS. THESE ARE THE COLONISTS OF THE GALAXY AND THEY'VE CREATED A NEW AND DANGEROUS FRONTIER: THE PIRATE PLANET KNOWN AS **ROGUE WORLD.**

KYRA AND DALAEN HAVE GONE FROM ONE LAWLESS PLANET TO ANOTHER IN AN ENDEAVOR TO FIND THEIR THREE ATTACKERS. USING MONIES OBTAINED THROUGH THE SALVAGE OF THE ALIEN STARSHIP, THEY HAD BEGUN THEIR FRANTIC SEARCH FOR REVENGE. BUT IN SO DOING, EACH HAD GIVEN UP AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THEMSELVES. **DALAEN** HAD ABANDONED HIS AMBASSADORIAL DUTIES, AND **KYRA** HAD RELENGISHED THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF HOME AND FAMILY. THE ONLY COMMODITIES THEY HAD RETAINED WERE THE CRYSTALLINE PYRAMID AND THEIR THIRST FOR REVENGE. THEIR SEARCH HAS LED THEM HERE.

ROGUE WORLD PART 2



THE TWO **PIRATE-HUNTERS** HAVE FREQUENTED THE DECADENT SPACEPORT CITY TAVERNS FOR SEVERAL WEEKS TO NO AVAIL, UNTIL ON ONE PARTICULAR DAY THEY FIND **SKUL**, THE LEADER OF THE PIRATE TRIO. HE SITS STEEPED AND SMUG IN THE SECURITY OF HIS NARCOTIC BEVERAGE, UNAWARE THAT TWO PAIRS OF BURNING EYES WATCH HIM FROM A DARK CORNER OF THE ROOM.

FOR SEVERAL DAYS THEY HAVE OBSERVED HIM, AND HAVING DISCERNED A PATTERN IN HIS DAILY ROUTINE, THEY PREPARE TO INITIATE THEIR **PLAN**.



SKUL RISES, DONS HIS CLOAK, AND EXITS INTO THE DECAYING STREETS, WHERE HE IS CONFRONTED BY **KYRA** IN HER SKIMPY LEATHER ATTIRE.

INTERESTED IN SOMETHING MORE THAN DRINK THIS DAY?



WELL, WELL... I COULD...



ZOPP!



SKUL AWAKENS TO FIND HIMSELF CHAINED TO THE WALL OF A DINGY ROOM FACING THE GIRL WHO HAD CONFRONTED HIM EARLIER.

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?! I HAVE DONE NOTHING...





DON'T YOU REMEMBER US? OBVIOUSLY YOUR MEMORY IS AS SMALL AS YOUR INTELLIGENCE. WHERE ARE YOUR TWO ACCOMPLICES?



SILENCE WILL GET YOU NOWHERE. DALAEN...!

TALK, YOU MISCREAT!



ALRIGHT... DON'T HIT ME AGAIN. I'LL TELL YOU. THEY'RE ON A MINING RUN IN THE RUINS OF THE FIFTH TIER... I... UHHHHH...



DEAD.

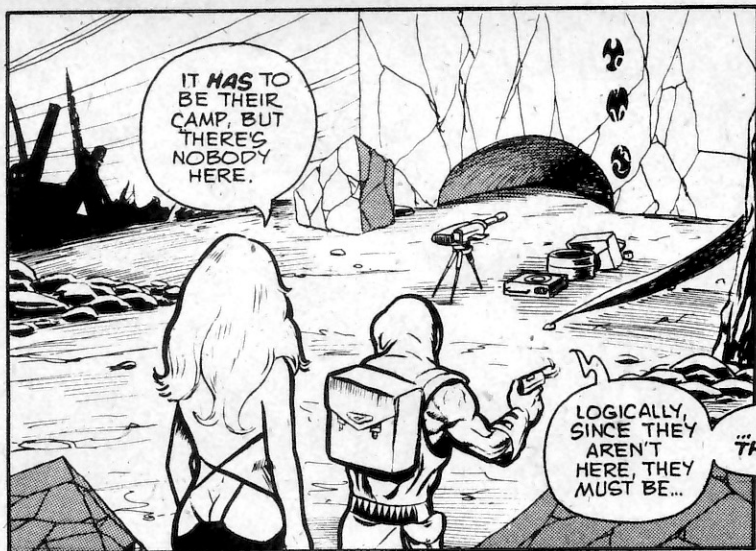
TRACES OF DYANIDE IN SKUL'S MOUTH REVEALED THE CAUSE OF HIS DEATH. NOT WANTING TO FACE TORTURE, HE HAD TAKEN THE COWARD'S WAY OUT. KYRA WAS ONLY SORRY THAT HE HAD DIED WITHOUT PAIN-- BUT HE HAD DOUBLE-CROSSED HIS COMPANIONS WITH HIS DYING BREATH. THE NEXT DAY, KYRA AND DALAEN TREK TO THE RUINS: A DANGEROUS PLACE, INHABITED BY SCAVENGERS AND PIRATES, EACH SEEKING THE TREASURE OF A LOST CIVILIZATION.

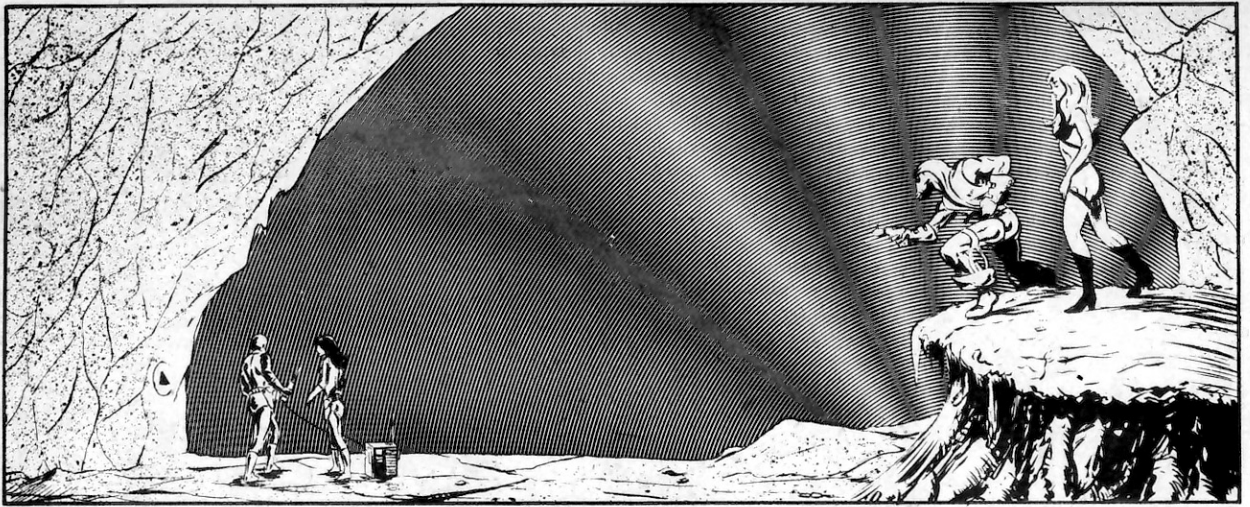


WE ARE NEARLY THERE.



LOOK... WHAT'S THAT OVER THERE?

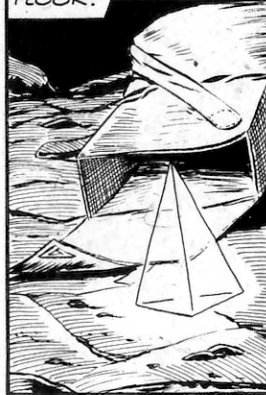




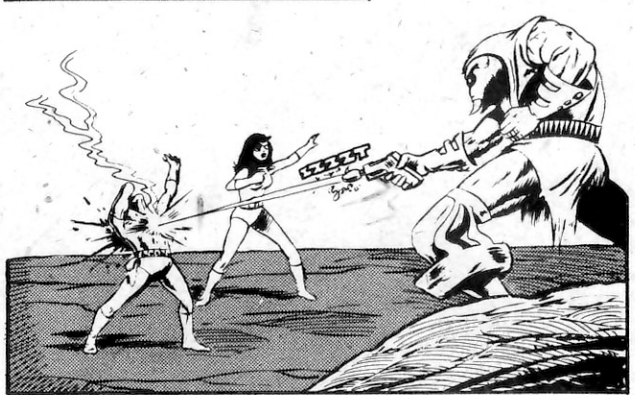
SENSING THE INTRUDERS, THE PIRATES CEASE PROBING THE **ENERGY FIELD** AND DRAW THEIR WEAPONS.



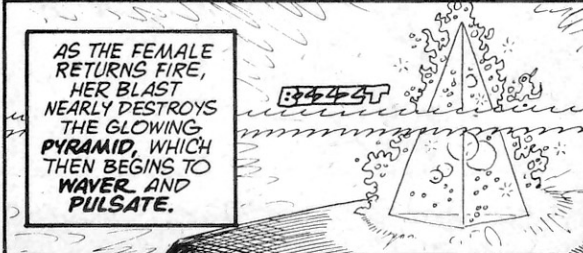
BEFORE FIRING HIS HAND WEAPON, **DALAEEN** DROPS HIS BACK PACK, SPILLING ITS CONTENTS TO THE CAVERN'S ROCK FLOOR.



WITHOUT A THOUGHT, **DALAEEN** FLICKS A THIN BEAM OF VIBRANT ENERGY FROM HIS PISTOL THAT MELTS THE MALE PIRATE'S CHEST.



AS THE FEMALE RETURNS FIRE, HER BLAST NEARLY DESTROYS THE **GLOWING PYRAMID**, WHICH THEN BEGINS TO WAVER AND PULSATE.



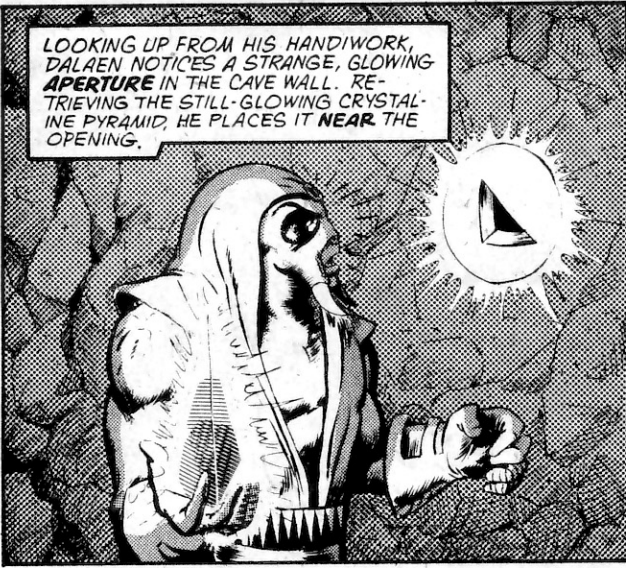
WITH THE ACRID STENCH OF SMOULDERING FLESH FILLING THE CHAMBER, **DALAEEN** AND **KYRA** APPROACH THE TWO CHARRED BODIES. SMILES OF **INSANE SATISFACTION** SPREAD ACROSS THEIR FACES.



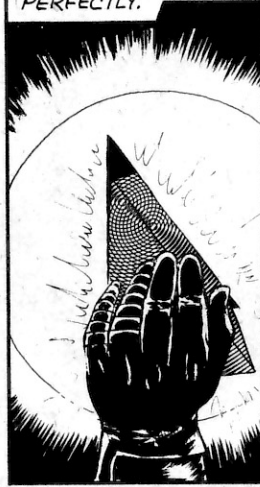
INEXPLICABLY, HER WEAPON CEASES TO FUNCTION...



LOOKING UP FROM HIS HANDWORK, DALAEN NOTICES A STRANGE, GLOWING APERTURE IN THE CAVE WALL. RETRIEVING THE STILL-GLOWING CRYSTALLINE PYRAMID, HE PLACES IT NEAR THE OPENING.



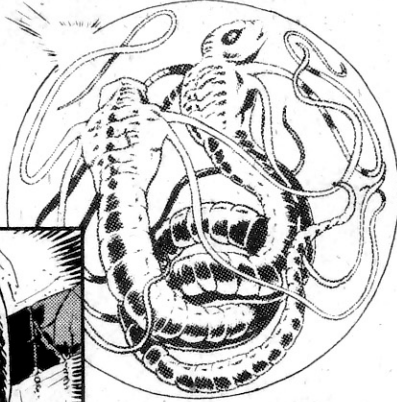
THE CRYSTAL FAIRLY LEAPS INTO THE ORIFICE AND THEY MATE PERFECTLY.



INSTANTANEOUSLY, THE ENERGY FIELD AND ITS 'KEY' BOTH DISSOLVE.



"AT LAST WE HAVE BEEN LIBERATED! THE CONVERSION OF THE GALAXY MAY NOW PROCEED...



"...UNCONTESTED!"



"BUT WHAT OF THESE TWO?"



"FOR THE SERVICES THEY HAVE RENDERED, THEIR LIVES WILL BE SPARED.



"BESIDES, THE EVIL OF THEIR REVENGE HAS ALREADY EARNED THEM A NICHE IN THE 'NEW WAY.'"



THE EVIL PLANET CALLED ROGUE WORLD WOULD VERY SOON BECOME THE CAPITOL FOR THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS!

END.



FRANK
CIROCCO
5-12-76

PROSE & CONS

Dear Frank and Gary,

I got the copies of VENTURE 4 a week ago or so. I consider it your best production, a delight to study and a welcome addition to my collection of better quality 'zines. I'm flattered that you felt my support was worth mentioning.

I should probably pick a few things to comment on at random, because I doubt that right now, after mailing out Phantasmagoria 4 subscriptions and getting portfolio 7 printed, I could organize my response all that well. First off, the thing that caught my eye was the Kaluta illo, which I think has been published before. (some issue of Realm?) The contents format, like the format of your past issue, is really well-done; in fact, I have got to say that the layout of at least one of your stories (SYNAPSE), is far and away superior to all but a few graphic stories I've seen in the past decade. Lovely stuff, and naturally the rendering of it all seems inspired to heights beyond that of many professionals. I hope HORIZON ZERO GRAPHIQUES becomes an institution.

All I can say critically is to confirm a note in Don Newton's letter: the zip or transfer texture is often bothersome, either for being too obtrusive - usually because of the size of the screen, as in Gary's BACKWORLD BRIGANDS - or else for dots rotting away in repro - for instance, SYNAPSE's last panel.

Also, I thought you were over-relying on solid blacks in the magazine: many of the pages- the covers, BRIGANDS, the centerfold, etc.- have areas of unrendered black that filled in repro. This is a vice for two reasons: one is that it's a kind of over-kill, which causes black to lose its power of emphasizing, etc. because it is overused; the other is for production reasons- solids show up as imperfections in printing and they also show through the back of a page rather distractingly. So now you know, and you can get back to work. Best wishes and regards to you all.

Best-
Kenneth Smith

Dear Frank,

Being sorta new at looking at fanzines, I wonder if I'm really qualified to make an intelligent comment. With that qualification my reaction to VENTURE #4 (the 1st issue that I've seen) is one of enthusiasm and admiration.

That cover drawing by Frank really knocked me out. (right now I'm getting into R.E. Howard as I'm working on the RED SONJA strip. Howard's stuff is an illustrators dream.) There's so much information blended into that costume! A good job Frank!

What fun the whole thing must be; putting the magazine together without the Code restrictions. I can't imagine it!

Keep at it Frank, Gary, and gang. If I were an editor, I'd find something for you to do straight off!

Sincerely-
Frank Thorne

Howdy Frank, Gary, and Brent,

Much thanks for the copy of VENTURE #4. You asked for a L.O.C., so here it is! First off, I'll talk about Frank's work. The cover was really nice. The inside front cover was very fine, also. Your chicks are getting a nice "Jonesish" feel to them. I was not particularly impressed with "Flasher". The nicest thing in that was the city background in the first panel. Most of the centerspread figures were good but the castle or stockade was weak. The general layout was good, but you need to work on perspective (as do I!). Your short text-panel story "Synapse" was the highlight of this ish. The story was nice and some fine things were happening in the artwork.

Gary's story was okay. There were some narration problems, though. His art has the same basic problems as Frank's; plus he must learn to lay out better. For Crom's sake, both of you please keep working. The "Grimmley" shorts were pretty nice. The first one might not have registered to those who haven't seen Grimmleys previous strips. They wouldn't know how much he wants to leave. Brent's Batman page showed again the same basic problems.

The Kenneth Smith stuff was great as was the Larry Todd illo. All in all, a really nice issue.

Carl Potts
Continuity Assoc.
New York, NY

Dear Frank,

I thoroughly enjoyed VENTURE #4. I especially enjoyed "Synapse"; beautiful art and the layout was a nice change from the continuous side-by-side panels which are so common. The front and back covers were great, as was the centerspread. And how about more of Gukus and Mara?

I could go on and on, but I don't really know what to praise next. I'm looking forward to the next issue, and I hope there will be many more.

Best-
Kenneth May
Norfolk, Va.

Dear Frank and Gary,

Although "fanzine" has become almost an epithet of late, in all honesty, VENTURE is a fine example of what a fan-produced 'zine can and should be. The strength of VENTURE lies in your "staff" artists, Frank Cirocco and Gary Winnick. Frank's cover was a gem of ornate splendor, and Gary's back cover reminded me of early Jeff Jones. To comment on each illo is a great temptation, but in an effort to keep this letter down to a manageable length, I'll resist that temptation. I will, however, mention the inside front cover (more illoes of ERB's Mars are definitely indicated), the centerspread (masterful), and the astronaut on page 2 (worthy of ANALOG).

"Backworld Brigands" was well-scripted given its length. The character of Gukus was handled with a fine light touch. The art, though a bit crude in spots, was good over-all.

Of the three Batman vignettes, "Flasher" was the most successful. Somebody ought to tell the Commissioner about his droll sense of humor. The "Grimmley's Tales" continue to be a light touch.

"Synapse" worked fairly well, though the personalities of the youths and the interaction between them could have been explored better. This could have been fruitfully contrasted with the route (sic) reactions of the adults. The illoes accompanying the tale were simply exquisite. Keep up the good work, fellas, the medium needs ya.

-Ed O'Reilly
Ada, Ohio

Dear Franks, Gary, and Brent,

Well, it's 1 a.m., Carson's off, and I've just finished a bowl of Sugar Smacks, so I thought I'd better start the LOC you asked for.

Seriously, VENTURE is constantly fleshing out into a real high-quality 'zine. And it is still a fanzine. Just because it's done by enthusiastic fans with seemingly unlimited talent that produce a pro-level fanzine doesn't change that, and I'm glad.

Well, on to VENTURE #4: Frank Cirocco started the issue with a tremendous bang with his super fantastic cover. Also high on the list was the inside front cover of the Thark and the girl. I've always been an avid ERB fan; I just wish you'd do more of his stuff in VENTURE.

Gary Winnick's contribution to VENTURE 4, "Backworld Brigands", was superb---artwise. The script, however, barely kept me interested. I did like the main characters, especially Gukus. He has a demonic face that easily lends itself to expressing emotions well. A different writer (or a more polished Winnick writing style), perhaps Frank Morant, and these characters would make an extremely interesting series.

Ah yes, now to able (sic) Brent Anderson's cute "Grimmley's Tales". I've loved every one of these so far, and am always glad to see more installments of this frustrated imp. My favorite of the issue was the last one, and I liked the inclusion of the HORIZON ZERO GRAPHIQUES robot. Grimmley does need some sort of companion, even if it's only a lamp. Hey, how about seeing a serious Anderson strip in VENTURE? I liked "The Incident" in issue one, but that's all I've seen! More Anderson!

Those little Batman vignettes scattered throughout the issue were all good, but I think I liked "Flasher" the most. I love Frank's version of Bats. Anderson's was great, too, but I'm afraid I didn't like Pinkoski's satire. I never have liked his art.

Thanks for the con report. Since I can never get to any cons, I really eat up any photos I can get my hands on. Hey, so now I know what the omnipotent Frank Cirocco looks like! They never live up to your expectations, do they? (Heh, just kiddin' you there, Frank.) while we're on the subject of Frank Cirocco, his centerfold was really fantastic! I'm a freak for detail, and you really let loose. The Potts illo on page 20 was interesting. He reminds me of Ed Romero.

Now to the high point of the whole issue; "Synapse"! This was, by far, the best literary contribution yet in VENTURE. Frank Morant I really loved that story! I'm not much of a story commentator, but I will say I loved it. Oh yeah, and Frank C. did a great job of illustrating it, also.

A haunting inside back cover of Vampi by Todd and a striking back cover by Winnick rounded out a fanzine that will stand out in fandom. I really believe I have run out of adjectives (although my use of them has always been a little repetitive)!

Well, I apologize (as I always do) for being so long-winded, but you asked for it!

Friends-

Ken Meyer Jr.
Hill AFB, Ut.

EDITORIAL

It may sound redundant, but we would again like to thank all the fans of fanzines and the comic media for making VENTURE the success it is. This success has enabled us to produce a much slicker magazine, complete with full processed color covers and a slightly altered format. Write to us and let us know what you think of this new format. Is it still a fanzine? Is it a prozine? Is it an underground? Or is it something different? Let us know. This time around we would like to thank Orvy Jundis for the back cover illustration by Alex Nino, and Brent Anderson for his co-editorial work. Unfortunately, along with the good news of VENTURE's success, there is a bit of bad news. This is the last issue of VENTURE, at least for a while. It has been an annual publication for the past five years, and we have enjoyed producing it year after year, but we now want to try out different genres in the medium. Kenneth Smith (PHANTASMAGORIA) expressed a hope that HORIZON ZERO GRAPHIQUES becomes an institution. Well, we hope he's right. Our intention is to produce an entire new series of comic magazines, but this is in the future. In the meantime, you have this issue and our trust that you respond favorably to the new format. It is your response on projects such as this issue that will determine when our new projects get underway. We hope it is very soon.

Thank you again -The Editors

REGARDE
Alex 9-21-72



UNRENDERING A CONCLUSION?





CIRROCCO
76

