

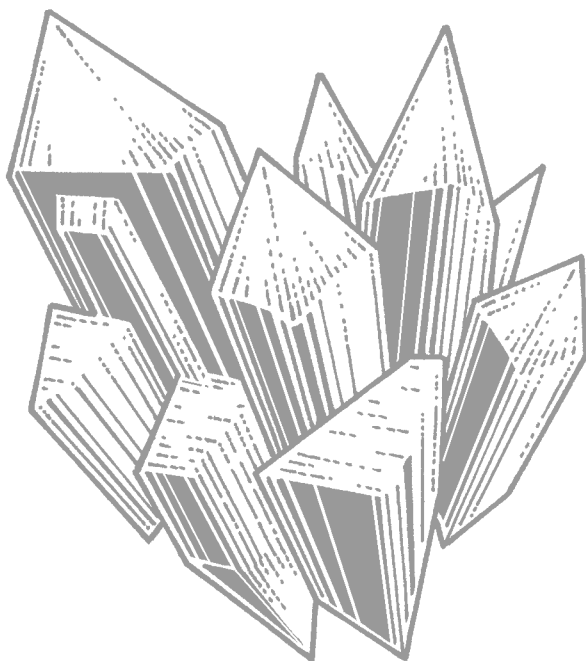
# MYRIAD THREAT

a graphic novel by  
**MATT HOWARTH**



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[SanguineGames.com](http://SanguineGames.com)

# MYRIAD THREAT

book 2 of the Myriad trilogy

story & art © 2016 MATT HOWARTH

based on the universe found in the MYRIAD SONG Game  
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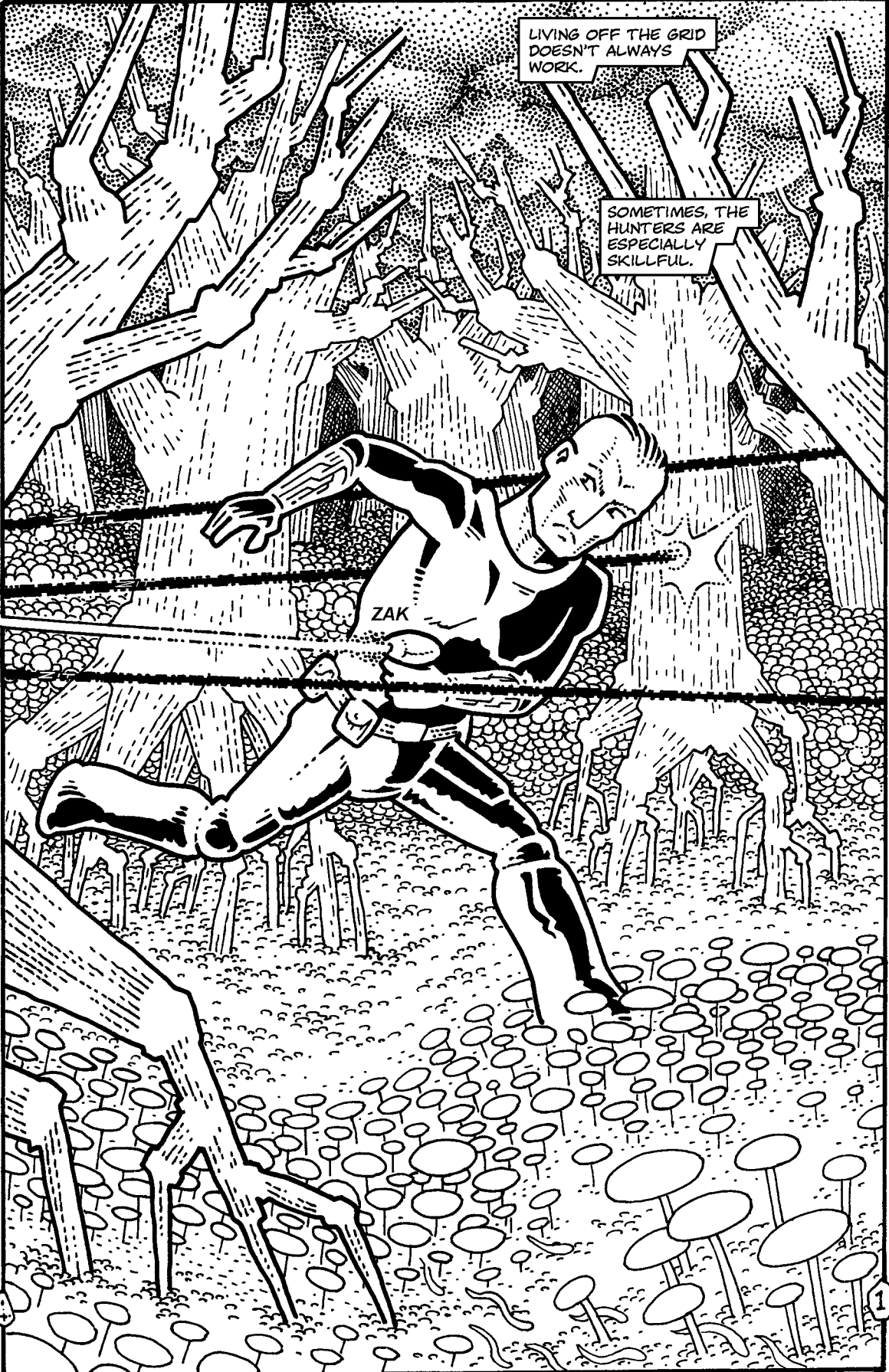
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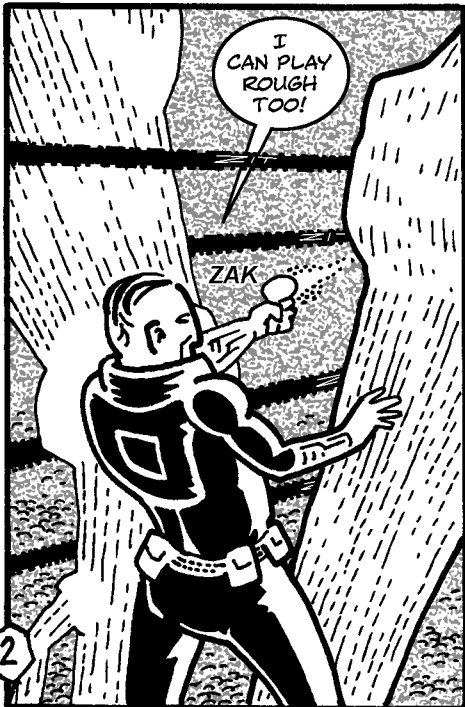
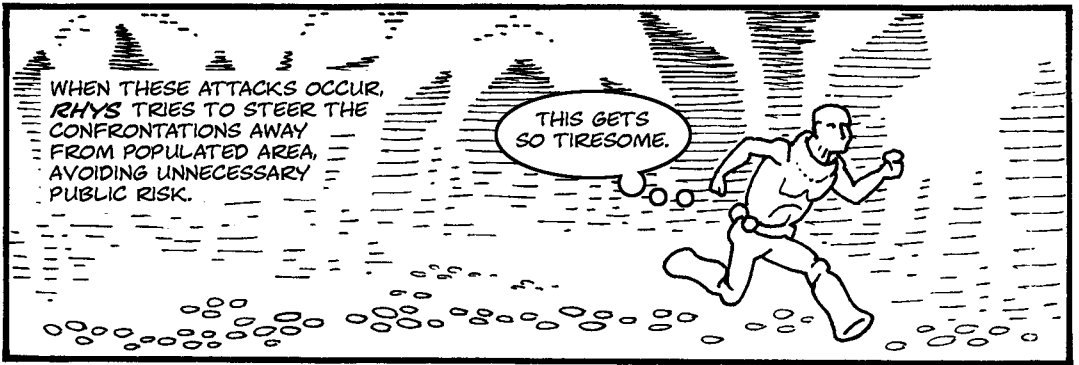
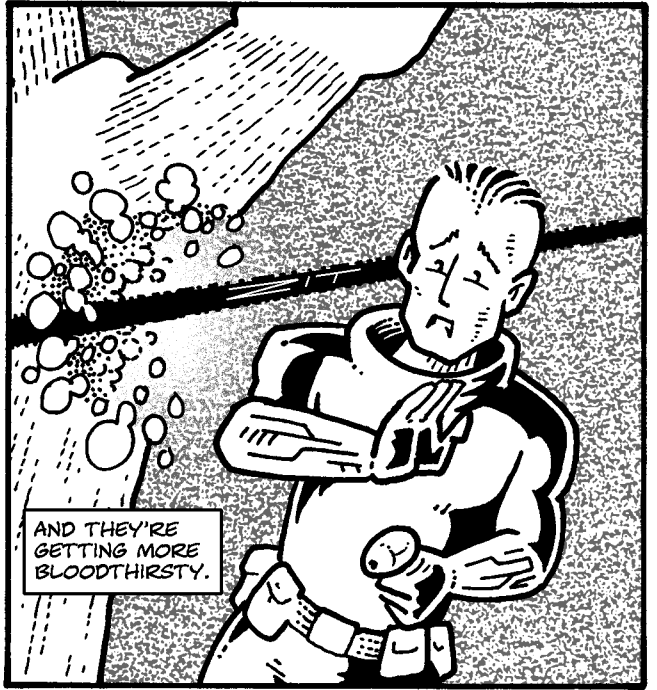
Matt would like to dedicate this graphic novel to his Muse, who (in her divine way) was primarily in charge of things this time.

LIVING OFF THE GRID  
DOESN'T ALWAYS  
WORK.

SOMETIMES, THE  
HUNTERS ARE  
ESPECIALLY  
SKILLFUL.

ZAK

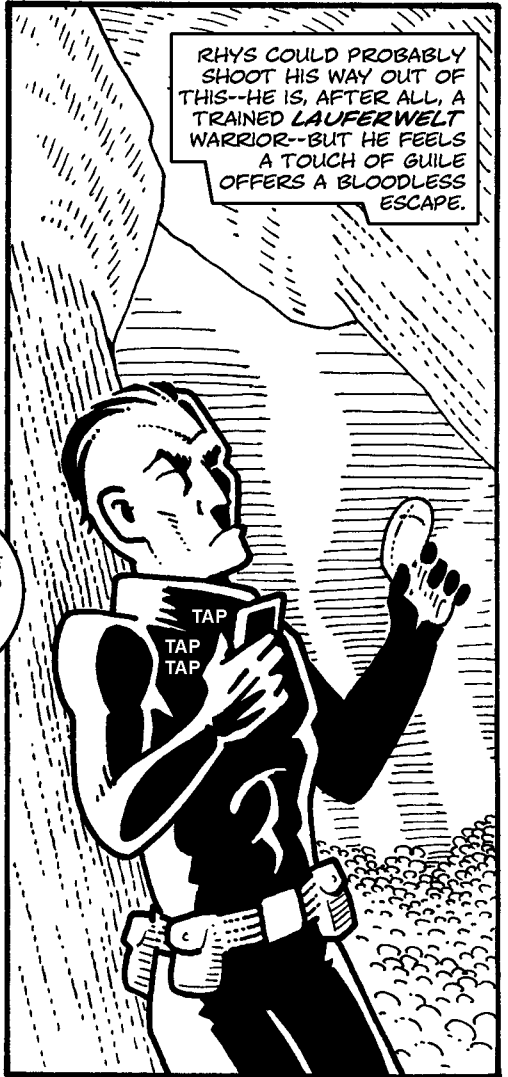




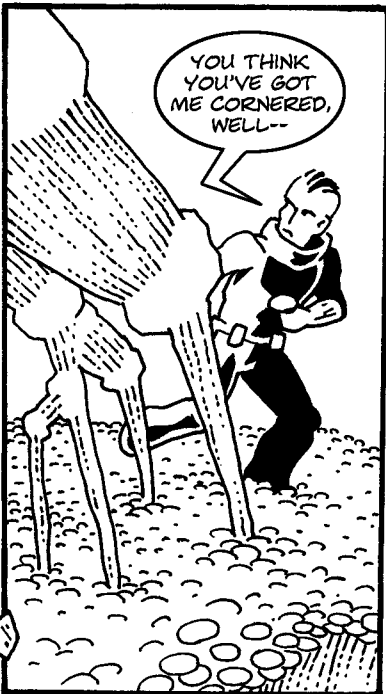
DROZANS ARE EXPERT TRACKERS AND THIS ONE IS CLEARLY HUNGRY FOR THE BOUNTY ON RHY'S HEAD.



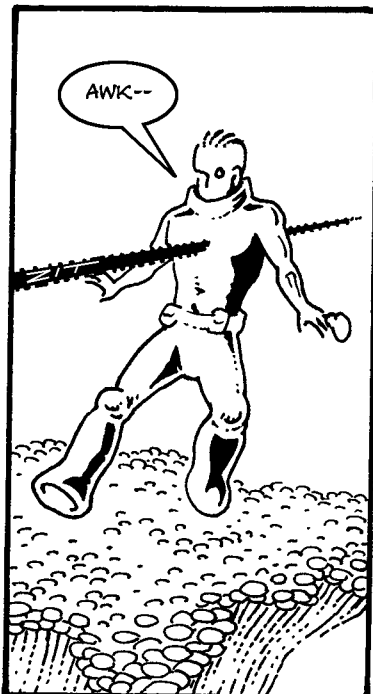
SURRENDER AND THIS ONE PROMISES TO DELIVER YOUR PELT INTACT.



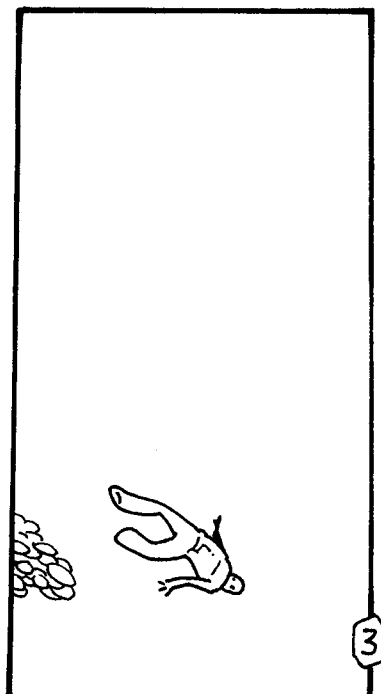
RHYS COULD PROBABLY SHOOT HIS WAY OUT OF THIS--HE IS, AFTER ALL, A TRAINED LAUFERWELT WARRIOR--BUT HE FEELS A TOUCH OF GUILT OFFERS A BLOODLESS ESCAPE.

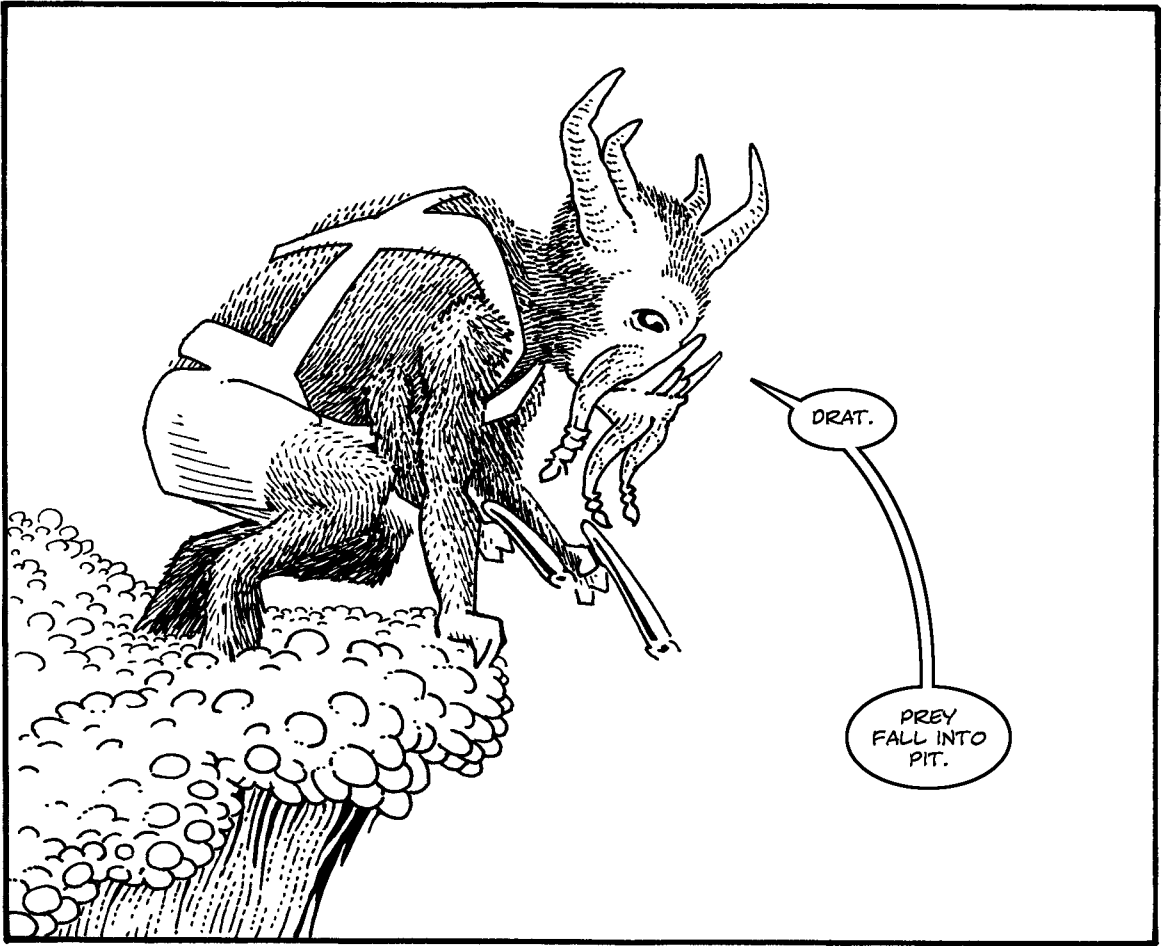


YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT ME CORNERED, WELL--



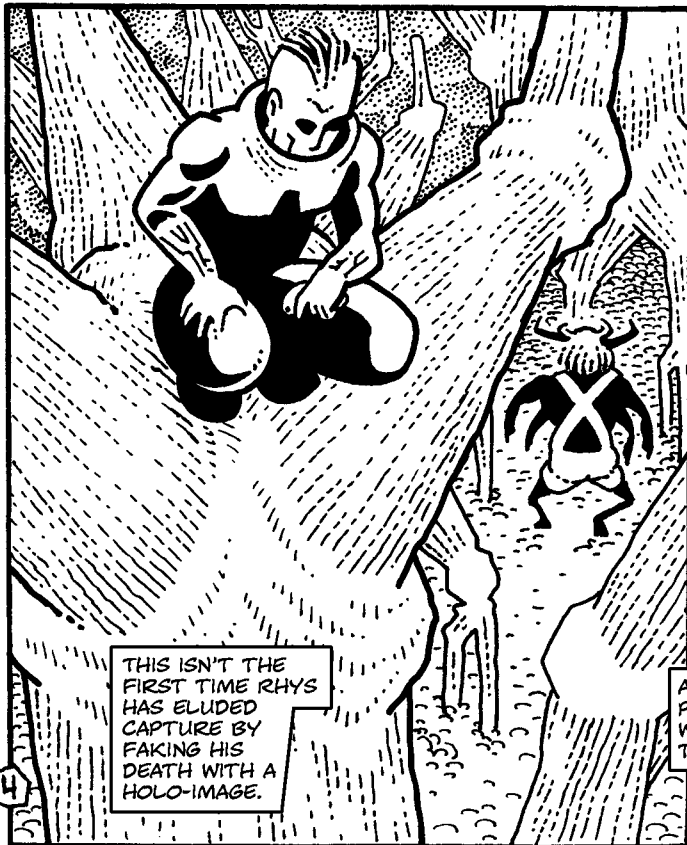
AWK--





DRAT.

PREY  
FALL INTO  
PIT.



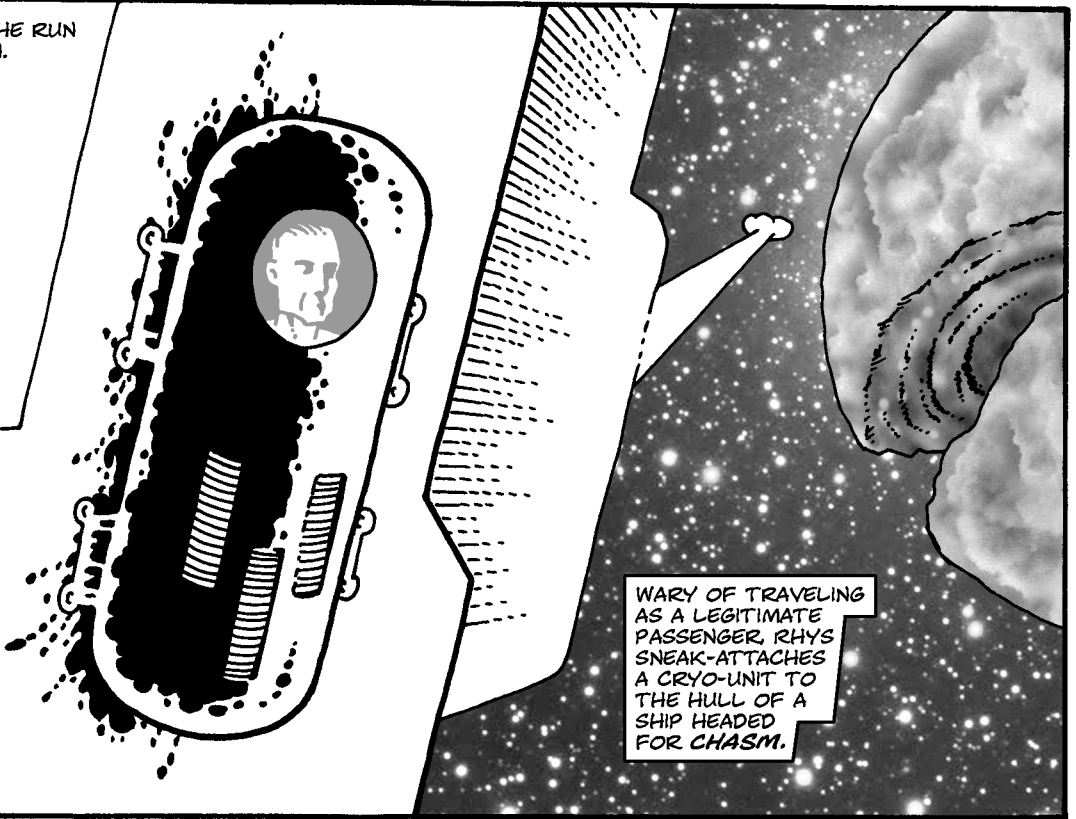
THIS ISN'T THE  
FIRST TIME RHY'S  
HAS ELUDED  
CAPTURE BY  
FAKING HIS  
DEATH WITH A  
HOLO-IMAGE.



IT'S  
NO  
LONGER  
SAFE  
HERE.

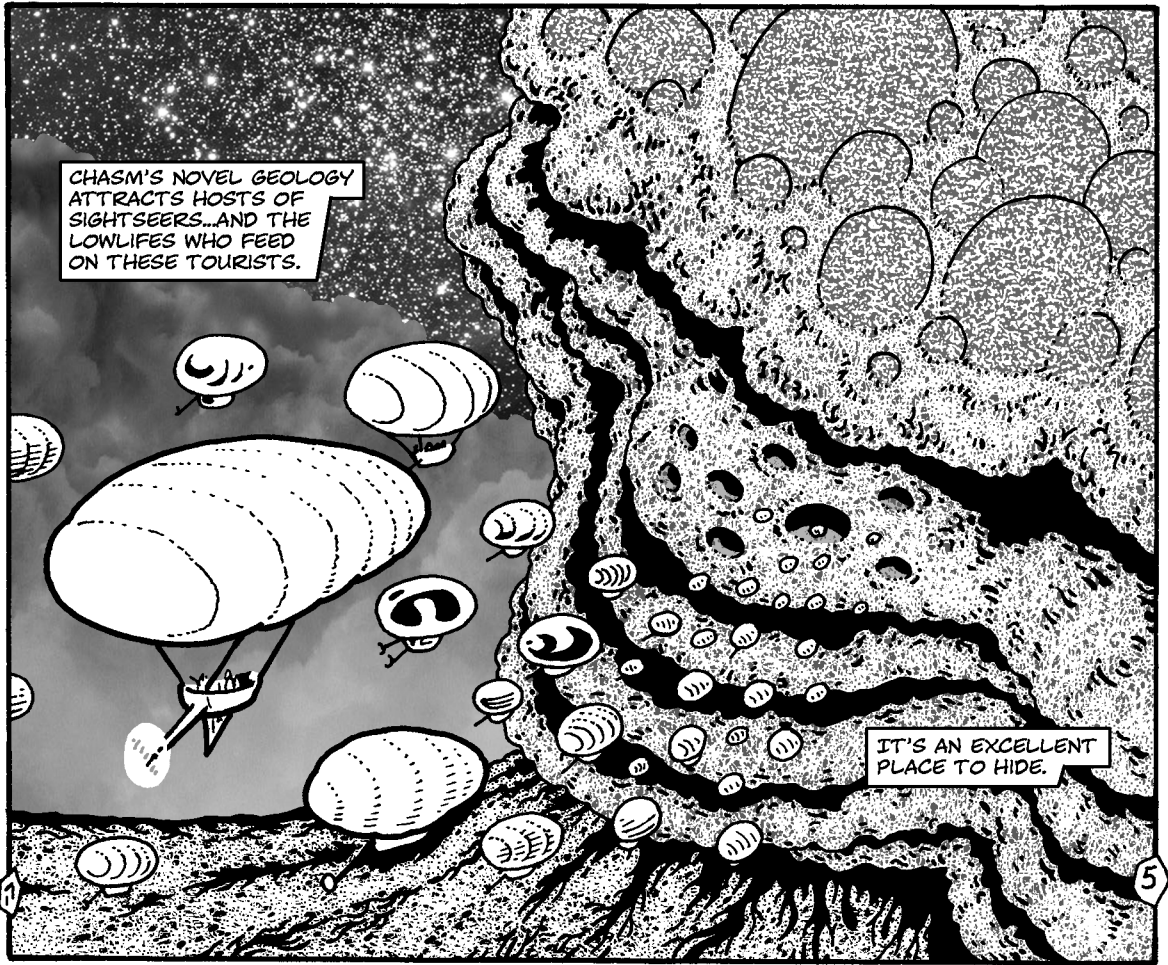
AND IT  
PROBABLY  
WON'T BE  
THE LAST.

ON THE RUN  
AGAIN.



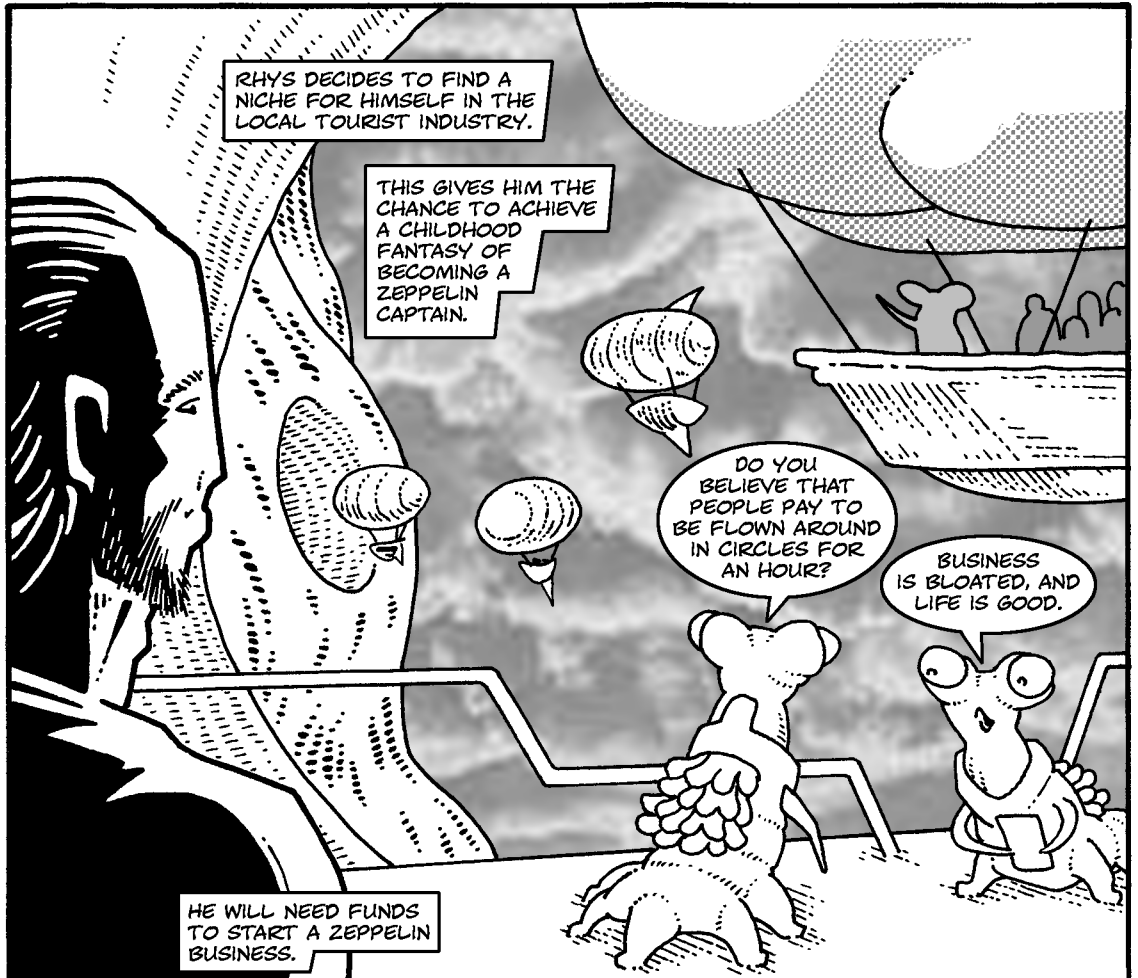
WARY OF TRAVELING  
AS A LEGITIMATE  
PASSENGER, RHYS  
SNEAK-ATTACHES  
A CRYO-UNIT TO  
THE HULL OF A  
SHIP HEADED  
FOR CHASM.

CHASM'S NOVEL GEOLOGY  
ATTRACTS HOSTS OF  
SIGHTSEERS...AND THE  
LOWLIFES WHO FEED  
ON THESE TOURISTS.



IT'S AN EXCELLENT  
PLACE TO HIDE.





RHYS DECIDES TO FIND A NICHE FOR HIMSELF IN THE LOCAL TOURIST INDUSTRY.

THIS GIVES HIM THE CHANCE TO ACHIEVE A CHILDHOOD FANTASY OF BECOMING A ZEPPELIN CAPTAIN.

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE PAY TO BE FLOWN AROUND IN CIRCLES FOR AN HOUR?

BUSINESS IS BLOATED, AND LIFE IS GOOD.

HE WILL NEED FUNDS TO START A ZEPPELIN BUSINESS.



WHILE RELATIVELY PENNILESS WHEN HE ARRIVES ON CHASM, RHYS TAKES ADVANTAGE OF SUBTERRANEAN CARD GAMES TO TURN A HANDFUL OF CASH INTO A HEALTHY STAKE.



AFTERWARD, RHYS' OPPONENT CATCHES HIM OUTSIDE AND TRIES TO ROB HIM...

?!?

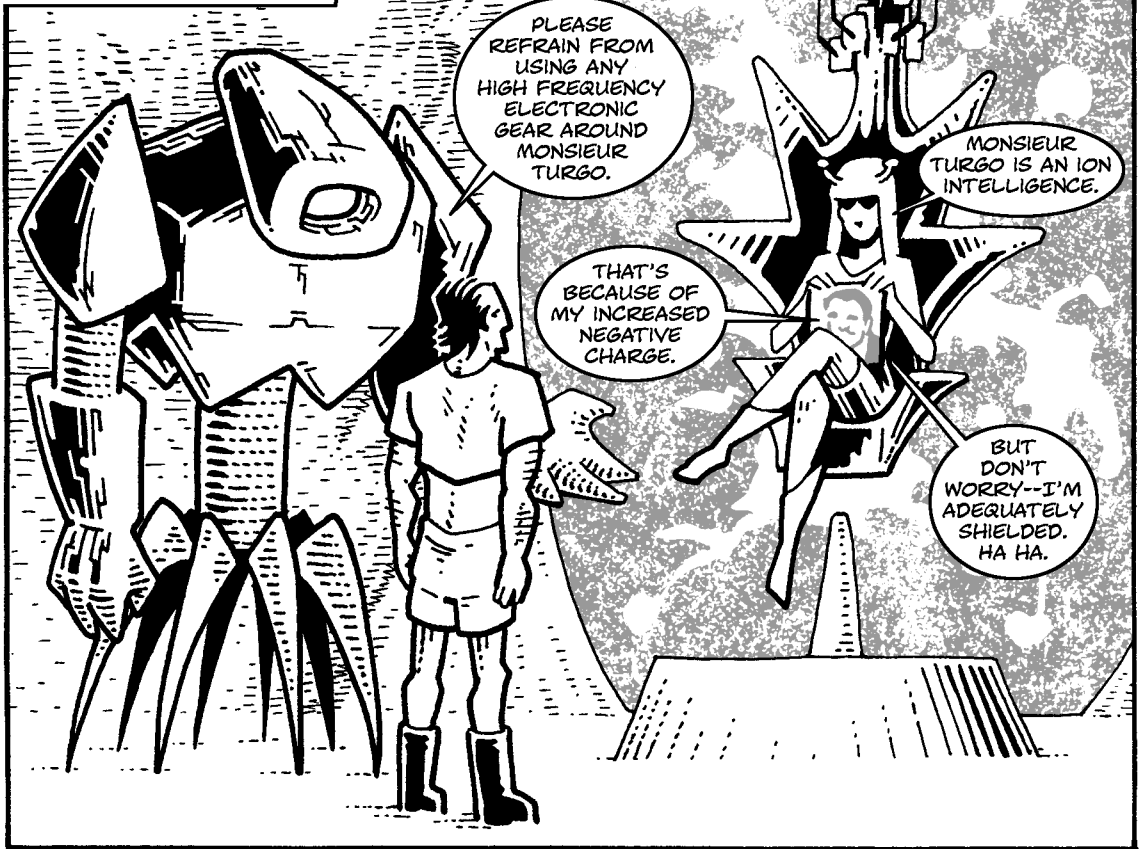
CHEATER!



HE USES THE OPPORTUNITY TO SET THE PRECEDENT HOW UNWISE IT IS TO MESS WITH HIM.

UGG...

EVENTUALLY, RHYNS MUST MEET WITH CERTAIN LOCAL DIGNITARIES.



THAT'S  
RIGHT, MR ELECTRIC  
--I'M YOUNG AND  
AMBITIOUS AND  
IMPATIENT.

SO LET'S  
DISPENSE WITH  
THE CIVILITIES  
AND TALK  
DIRTY.

I'M ALWAYS  
INTERESTED IN SPICY  
DISCUSSIONS.

I'M A  
NORMAL  
SAP WHO  
WANTS TO  
START A  
BUSINESS  
IN YOUR  
TURF.

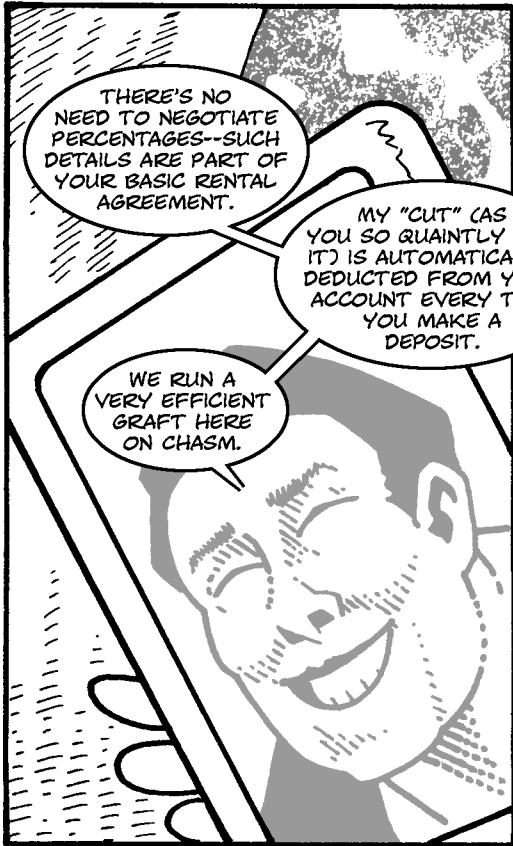
YOU'RE  
THE LOCAL  
CRIME-BOSS, SO  
I GOTTA PAY YOU  
SOME KIND OF  
TRIBUTE.

YOU  
WERE SO  
POLITE A  
MOMENT  
AGO...

BUT NOW  
YOU'RE BEING  
DISRESPECTFUL  
TO MONSIEUR  
TURGO.

SO...

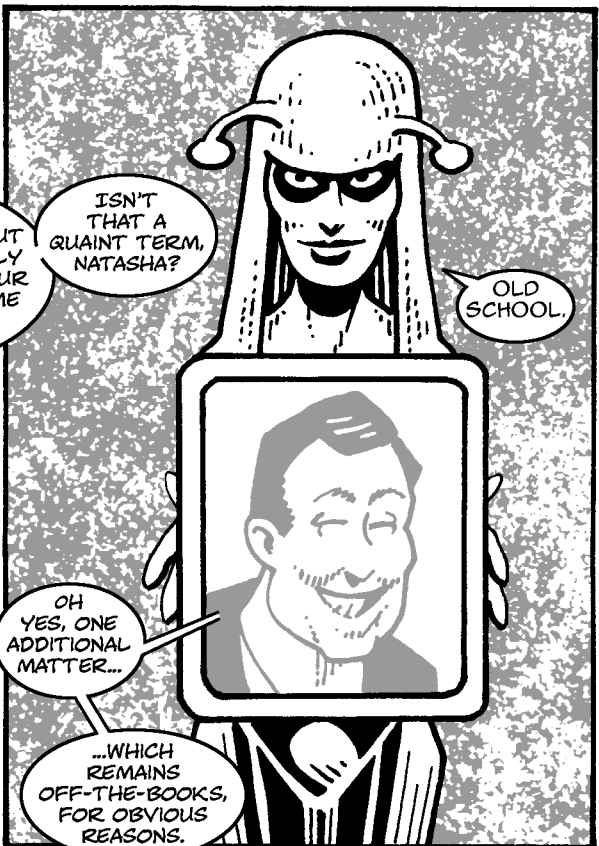
WHAT KIND  
OF CUT OF MY  
INCOME DO YOU  
EXPECT TO  
GET?



THERE'S NO NEED TO NEGOTIATE PERCENTAGES--SUCH DETAILS ARE PART OF YOUR BASIC RENTAL AGREEMENT.

MY "CUT" (AS YOU SO QUAINLY PUT IT) IS AUTOMATICALLY DEDUCTED FROM YOUR ACCOUNT EVERY TIME YOU MAKE A DEPOSIT.

WE RUN A VERY EFFICIENT GRAFT HERE ON CHASM.



ISN'T THAT A QUAIN TERM, NATASHA?

OLD SCHOOL.

OH YES, ONE ADDITIONAL MATTER...

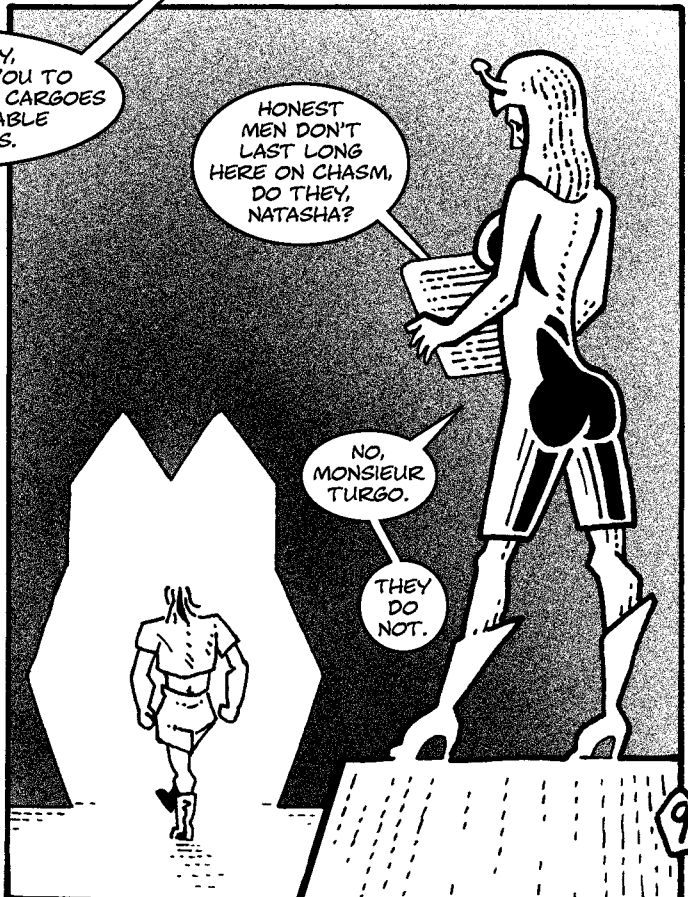
...WHICH REMAINS OFF-THE-BOOKS, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS.



PERIODICALLY, I WILL REQUIRE YOU TO TRANSPORT CERTAIN CARGOES TO UNMENTIONABLE DESTINATIONS.

YOU CAN HAVE YOUR PERCENTAGE, BUT NO SMUGGLING.

I PLAN TO BE AN HONEST ZEPPELIN CAPTAIN.

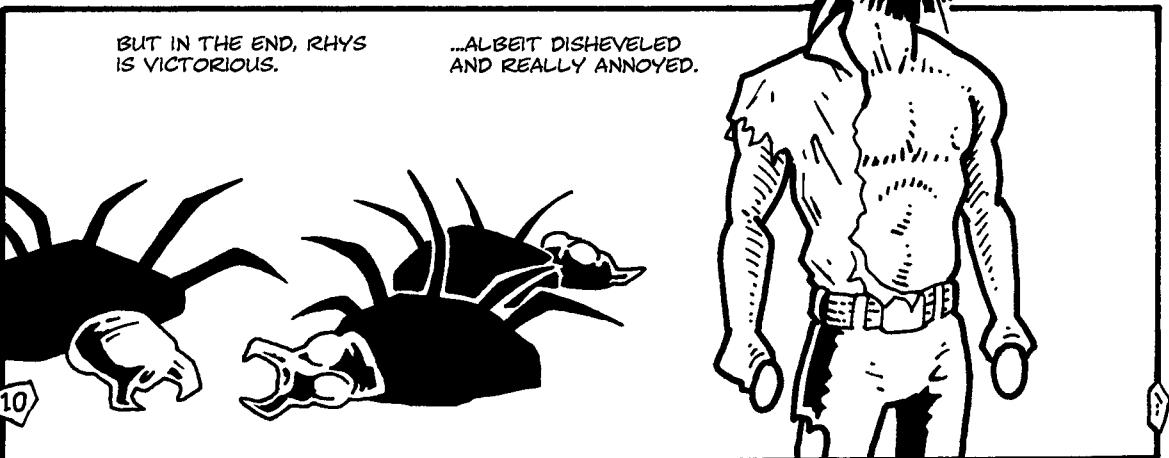
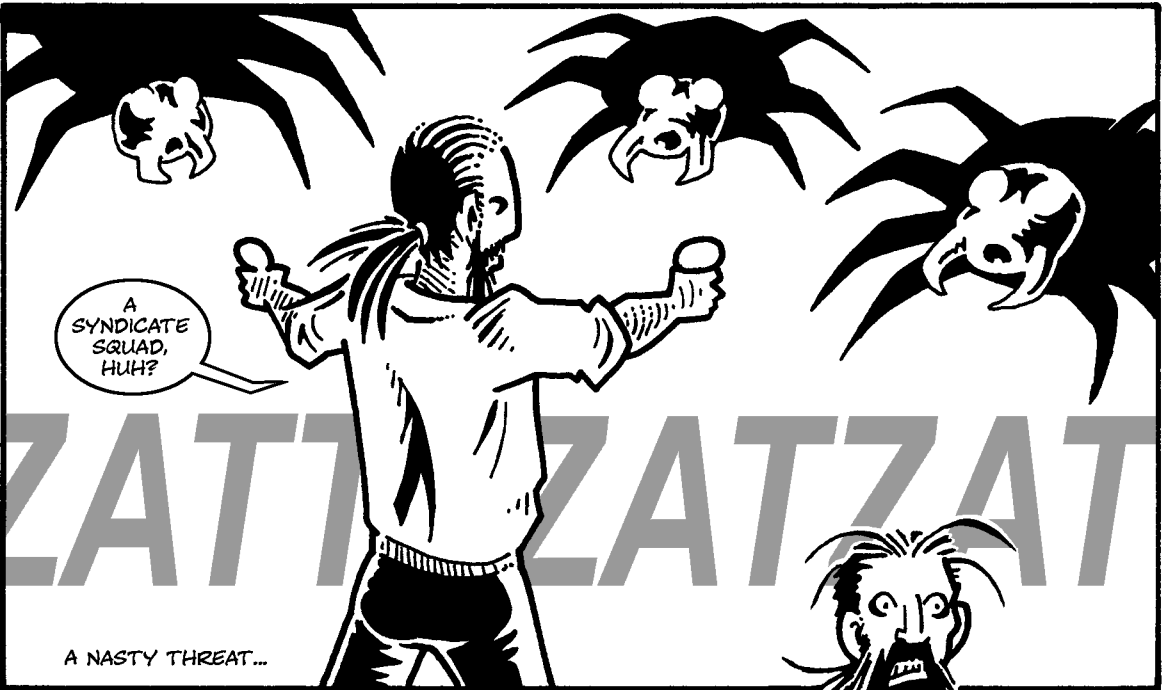
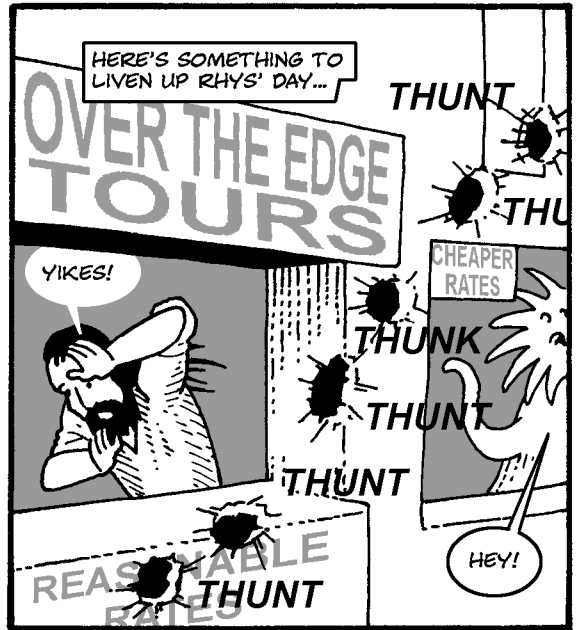
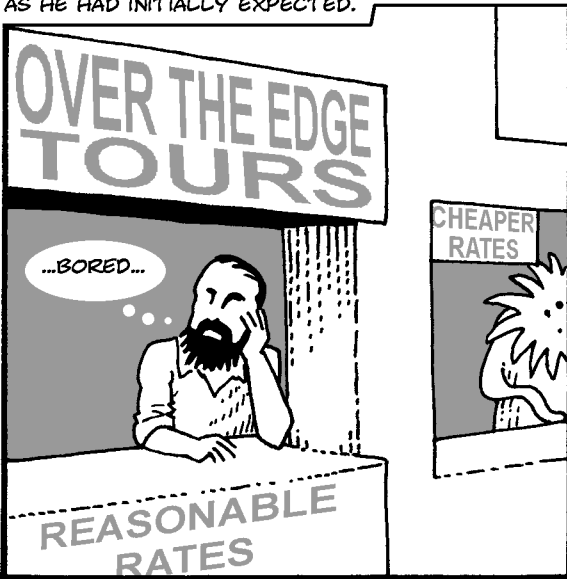


HONEST MEN DON'T LAST LONG HERE ON CHASM, DO THEY, NATASHA?

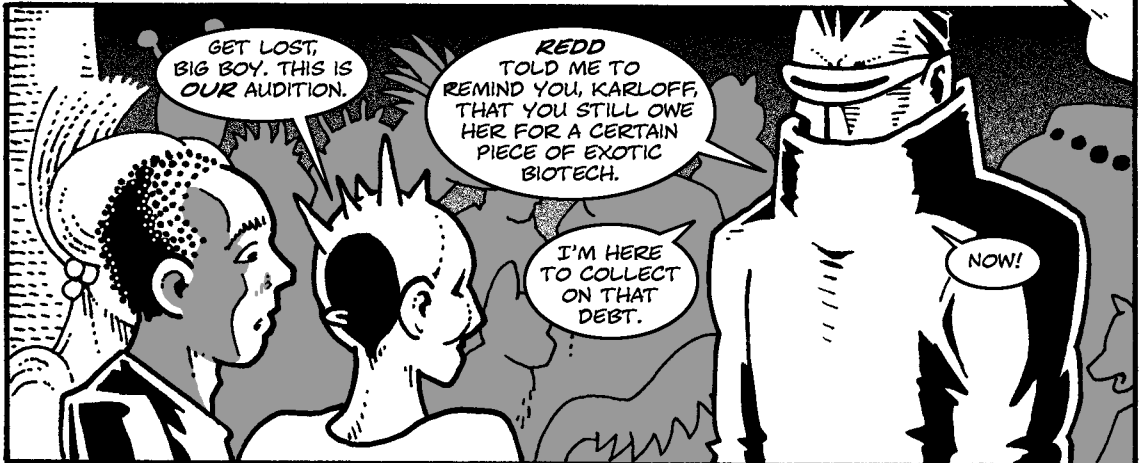
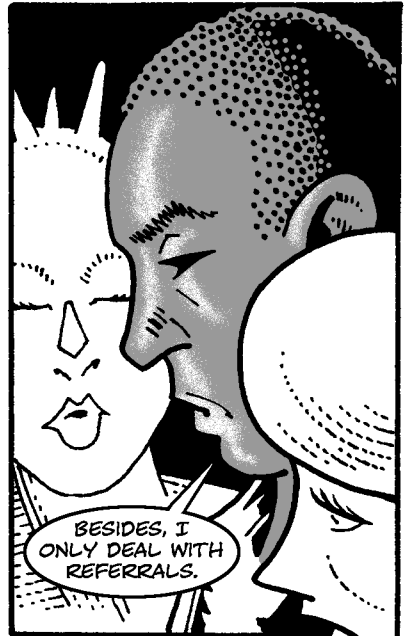
NO, MONSIEUR TURGO.

THEY DO NOT.

UNFORTUNATELY, RHY'S DISCOVERS THAT LIFE AS A FREELANCE ZEPPELIN CAPTAIN IS NOT AS THRILLING AS HE HAD INITIALLY EXPECTED.







THE GENE-JUGGLER TAKES RHY'S BACK TO HIS CLANDESTINE LAIR.

I'M IN THE MARKET FOR A NEW FACE.

OF COURSE YOU ARE.

YOU NEED TO LOSE ALL THAT HAIR.

I'D EVEN SETTLE FOR A DIFFERENT ANATOMY.

FINE.

THERE'S DEP-CREAM IN THE BATHROOM.



IF KARLOFF LIVES UP TO HIS REPUTATION, I'LL BECOME UNTRACEABLE.

MY DAYS OF RUNNING COULD BE OVER...

AWW...

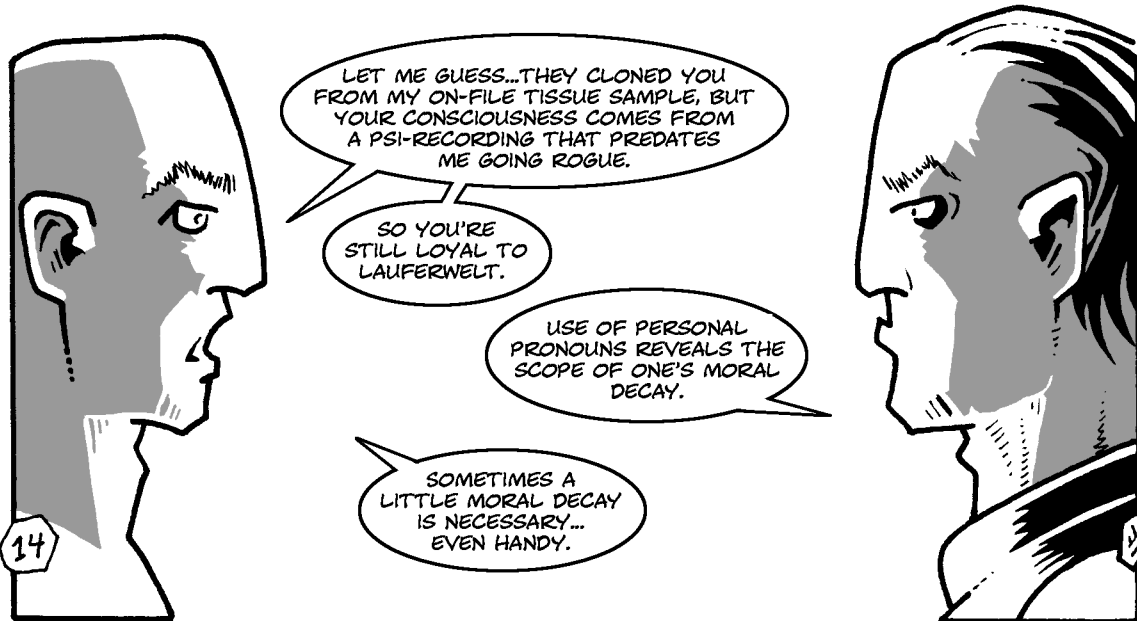




SO--

I SEE HIGH COMMAND FINALLY GOT TIRED OF RELYING ON MERCENARIES AND DECIDED TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT FINDING ME.

THEY THINK THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN CATCH ME IS ME.

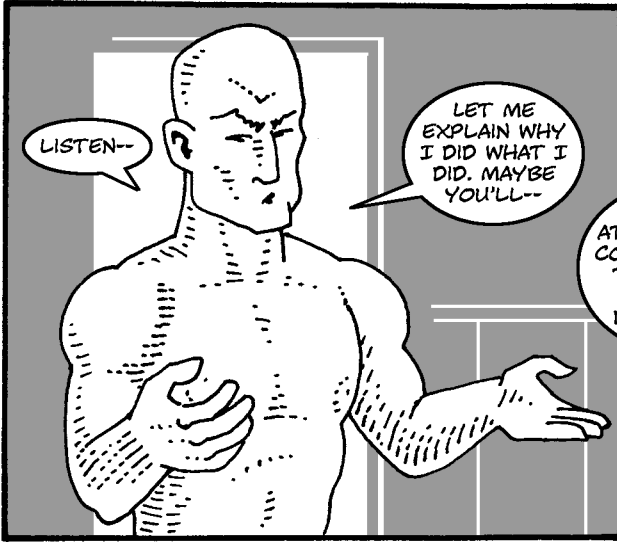


LET ME GUESS...THEY CLONED YOU FROM MY ON-FILE TISSUE SAMPLE, BUT YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS COMES FROM A PSI-RECORDING THAT PREDATES ME GOING ROGUE.

SO YOU'RE STILL LOYAL TO LAUFERWELT.

USE OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS REVEALS THE SCOPE OF ONE'S MORAL DECAY.

SOMETIMES A LITTLE MORAL DECAY IS NECESSARY... EVEN HANDY.

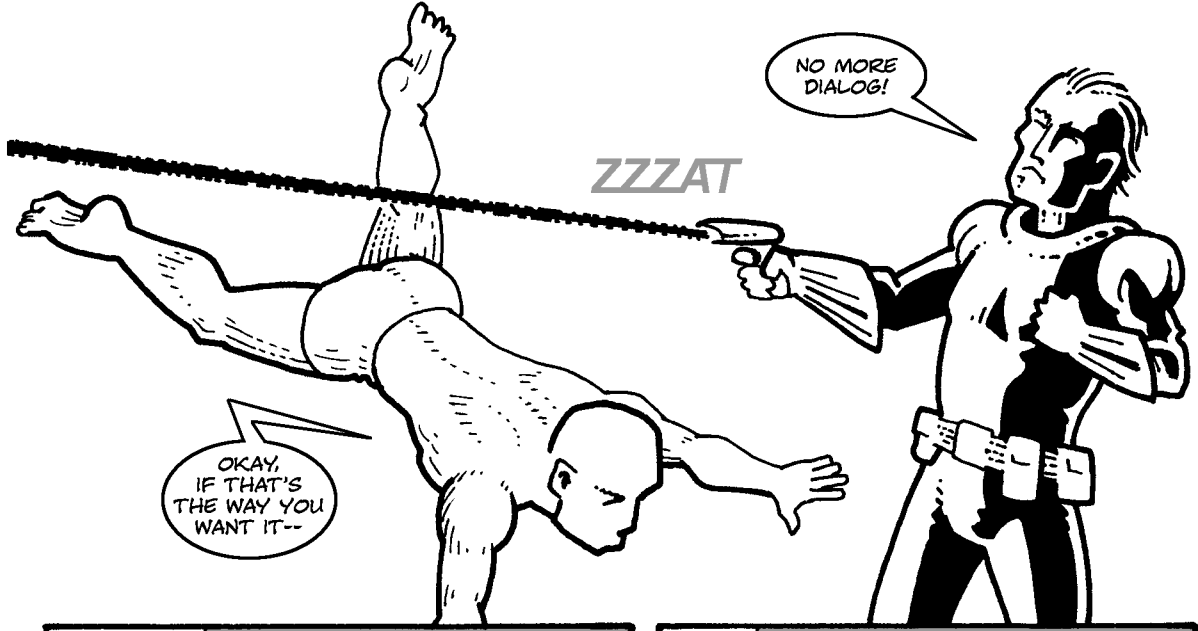


LISTEN--

LET ME EXPLAIN WHY I DID WHAT I DID. MAYBE YOU'LL--



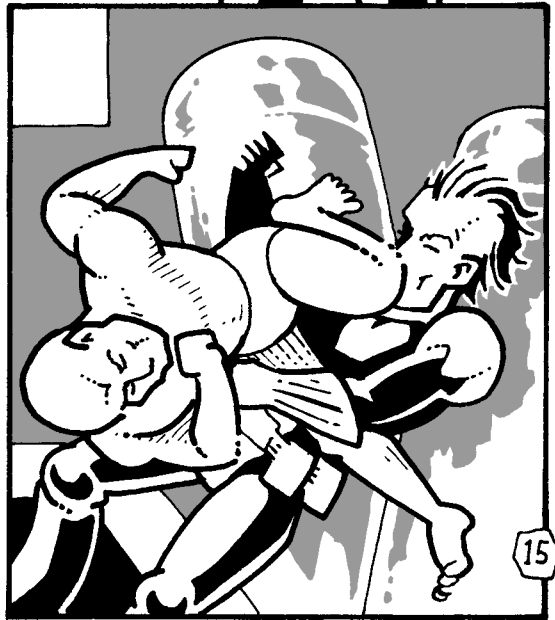
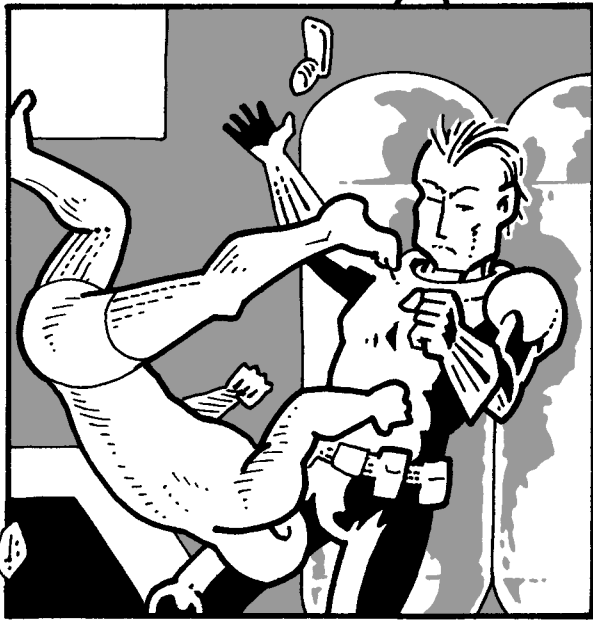
DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONTAMINATE THIS SELF WITH ANY DEMENTIA.

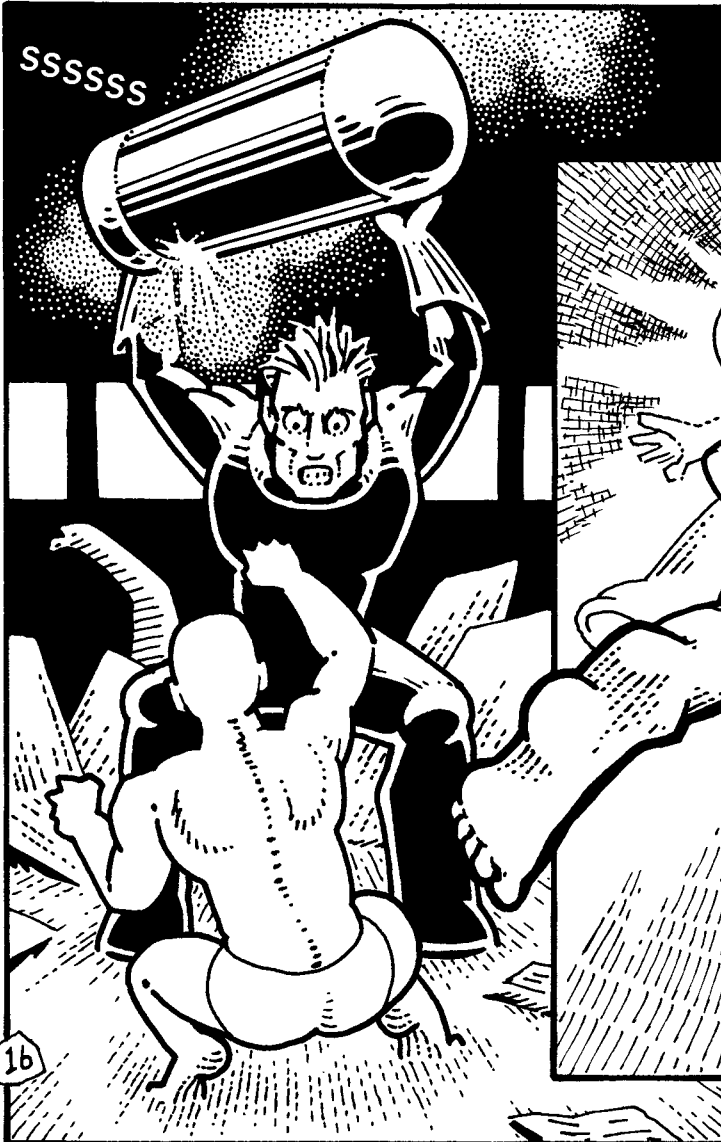
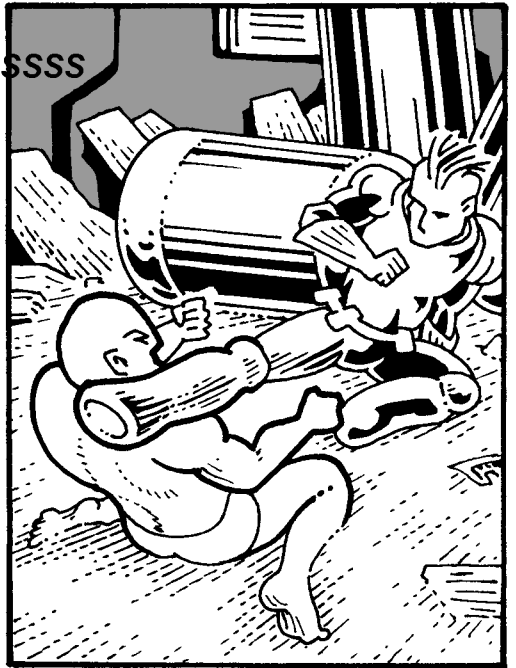
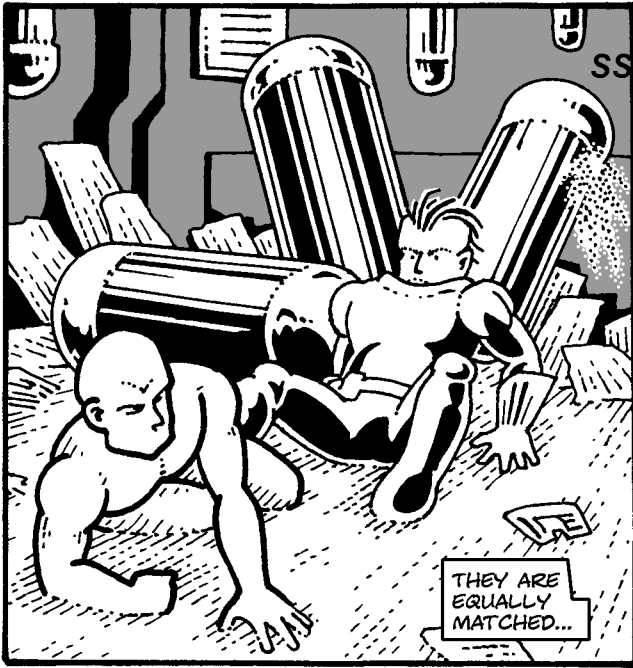


NO MORE DIALOG!

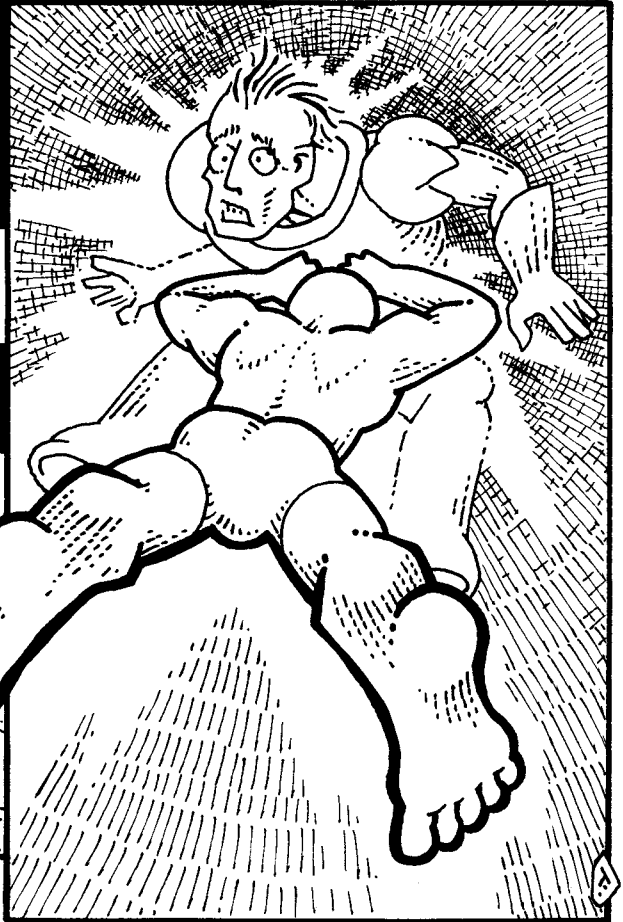
ZZZAT

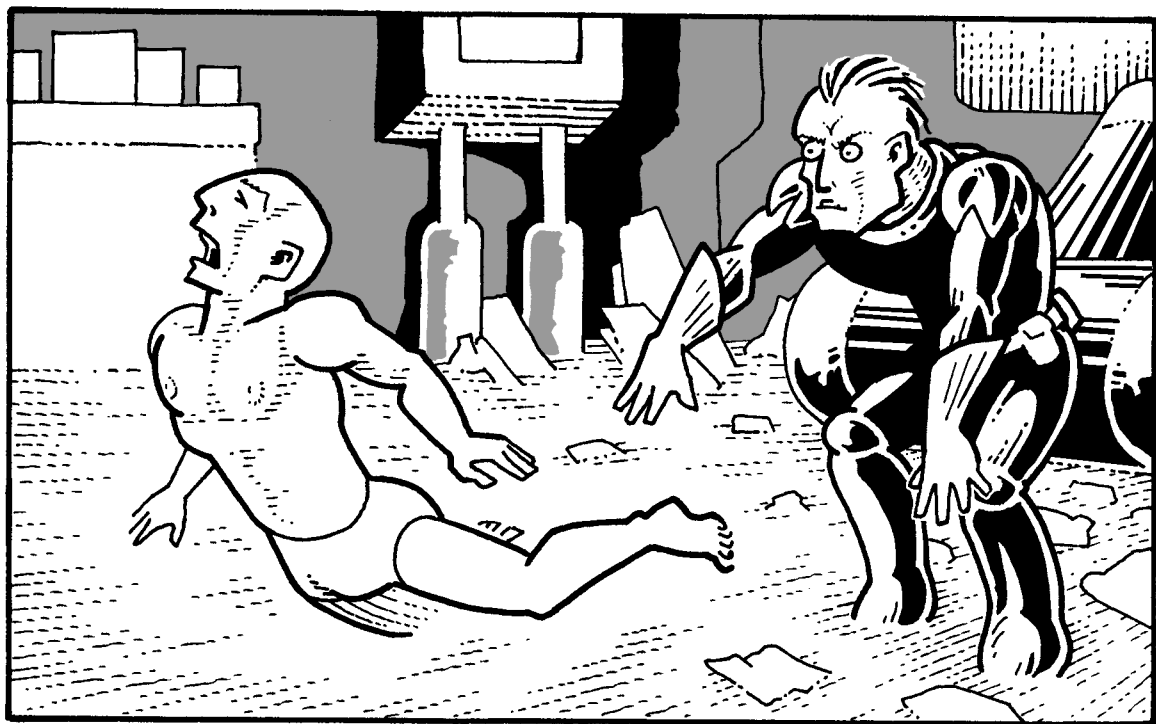
OKAY, IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT--



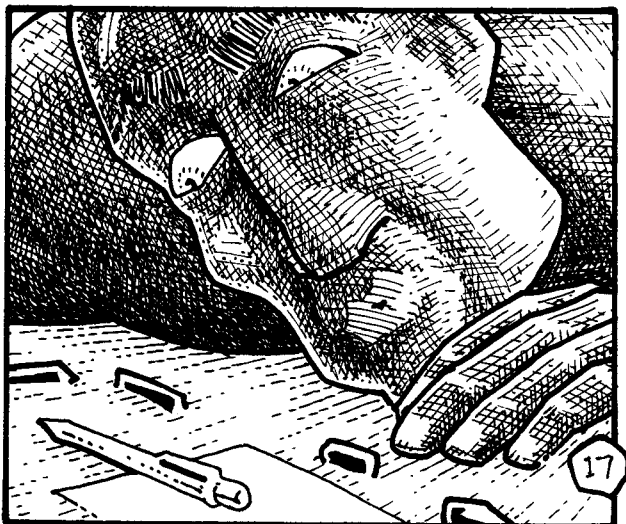


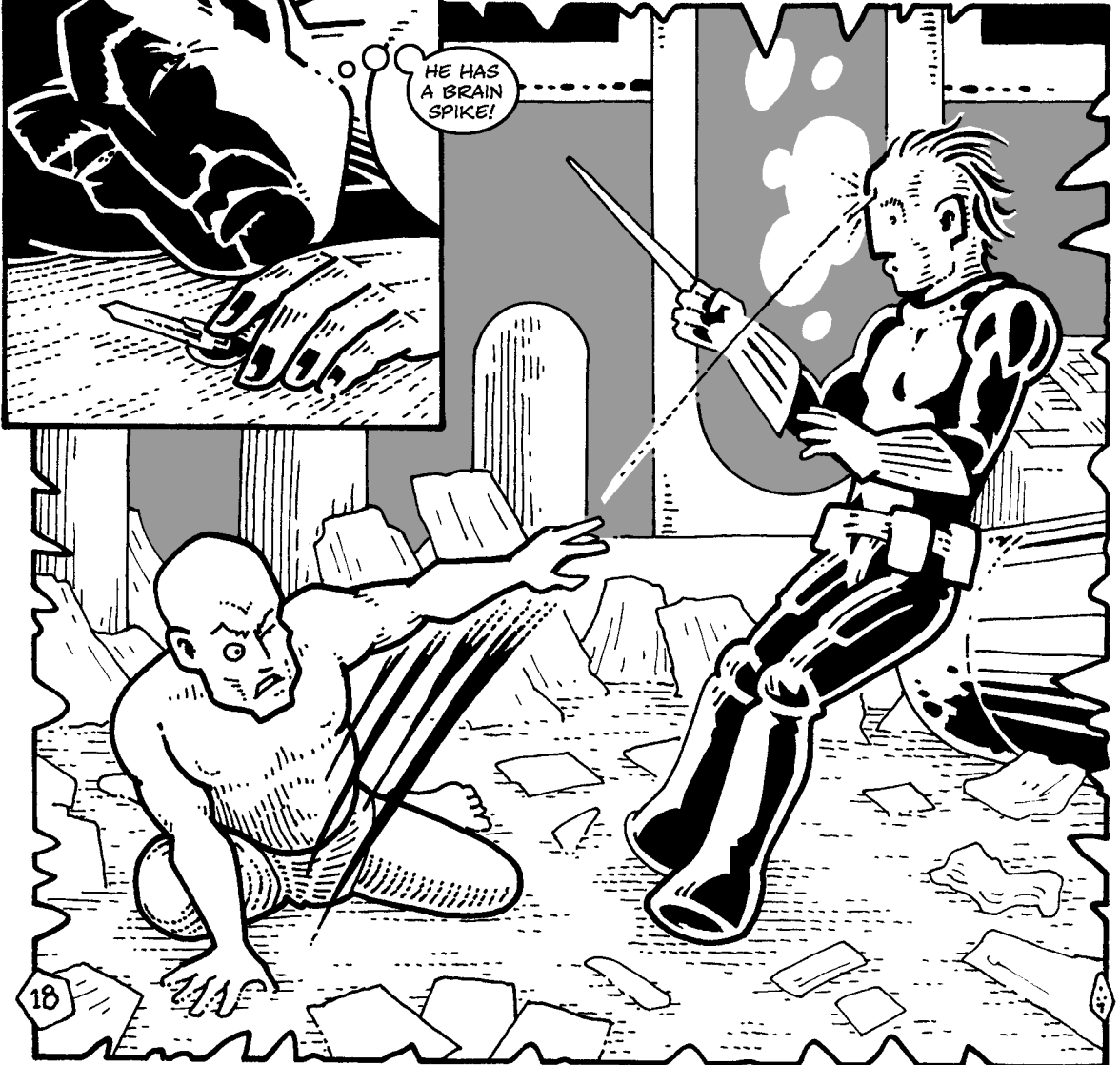
...BECAUSE THEY ARE THE SAME PERSON.

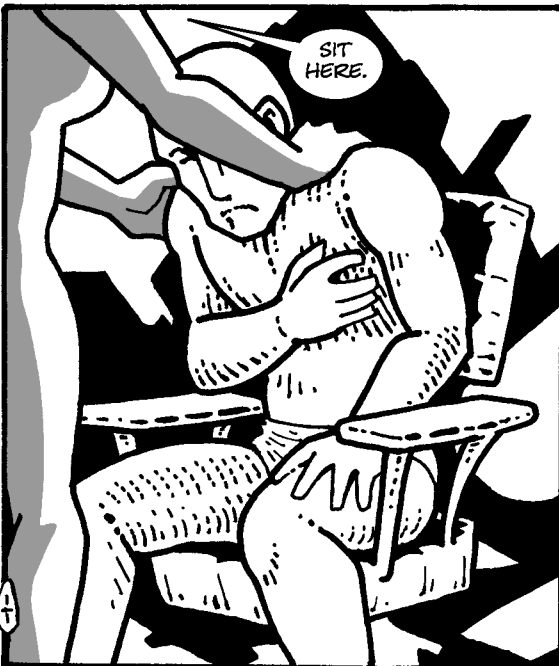
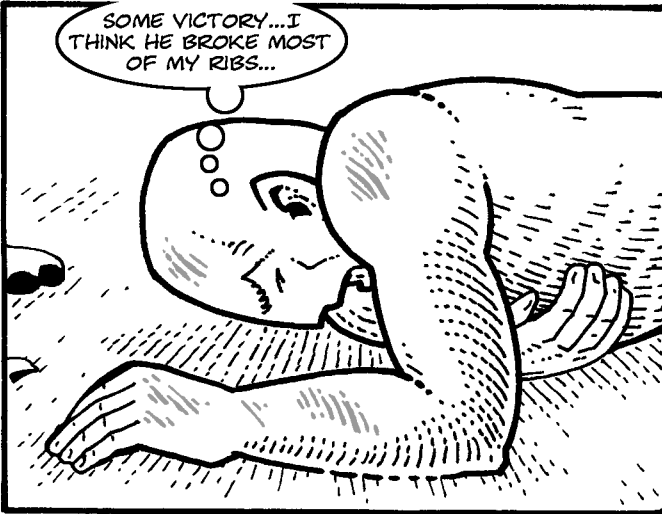
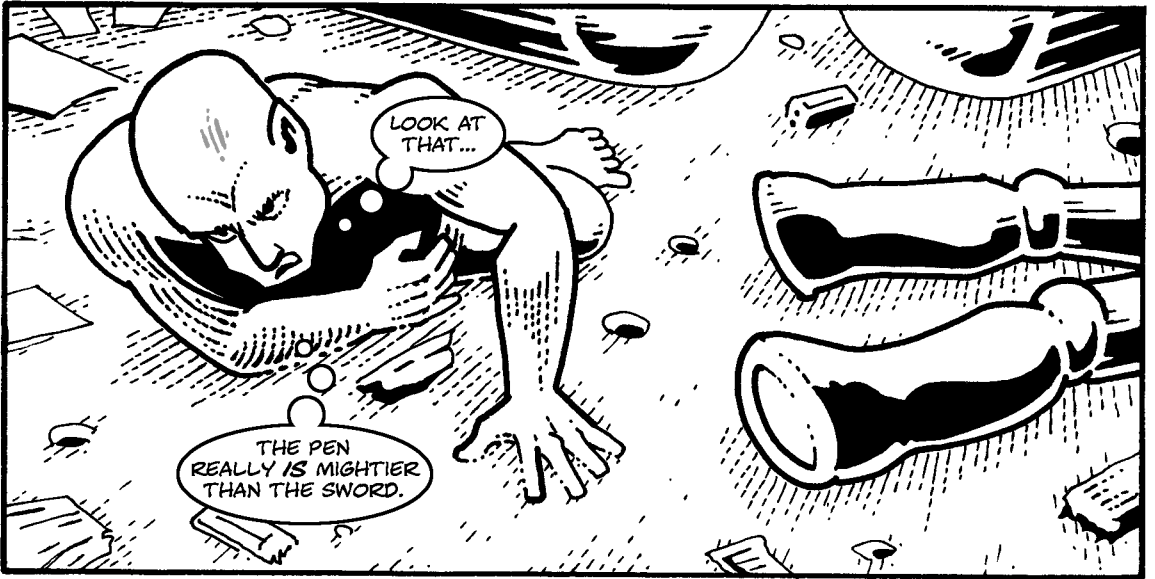




IT'S THE POWERSUIT THAT  
GIVES HIS ADVERSARY THE  
PHYSICAL ADVANTAGE.









BUT THAT'S KARLOFF THERE. HE'S DEAD.

GENE-JUGGLERS ARE HARD TO KILL.

IN THE EVENT OF MY DEMISE, A DEATH RATTLE TRIGGERS THE WAKING OF A CLONE IMPLANTED WITH MY LAST MEMORY RECORDING.

BUT-- YOU LOOK DIFFERENT.



I'M FAR TOO SMART TO WEAR THE SAME BODY TWICE.



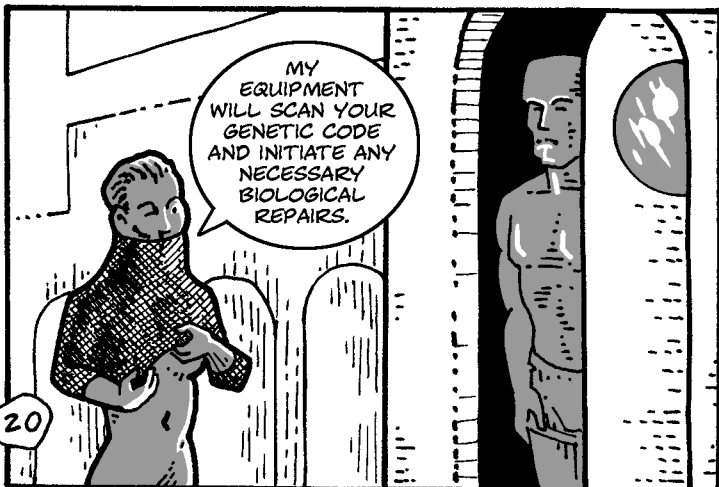
YOU'VE SUSTAINED EXTENSIVE INTERNAL INJURIES.

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU KILLED MY MURDERER... SO I GUESS I OWE YOU.



I'M SORRY WE TRASHED YOUR LAB.

STEP INTO THE CUBICLE.



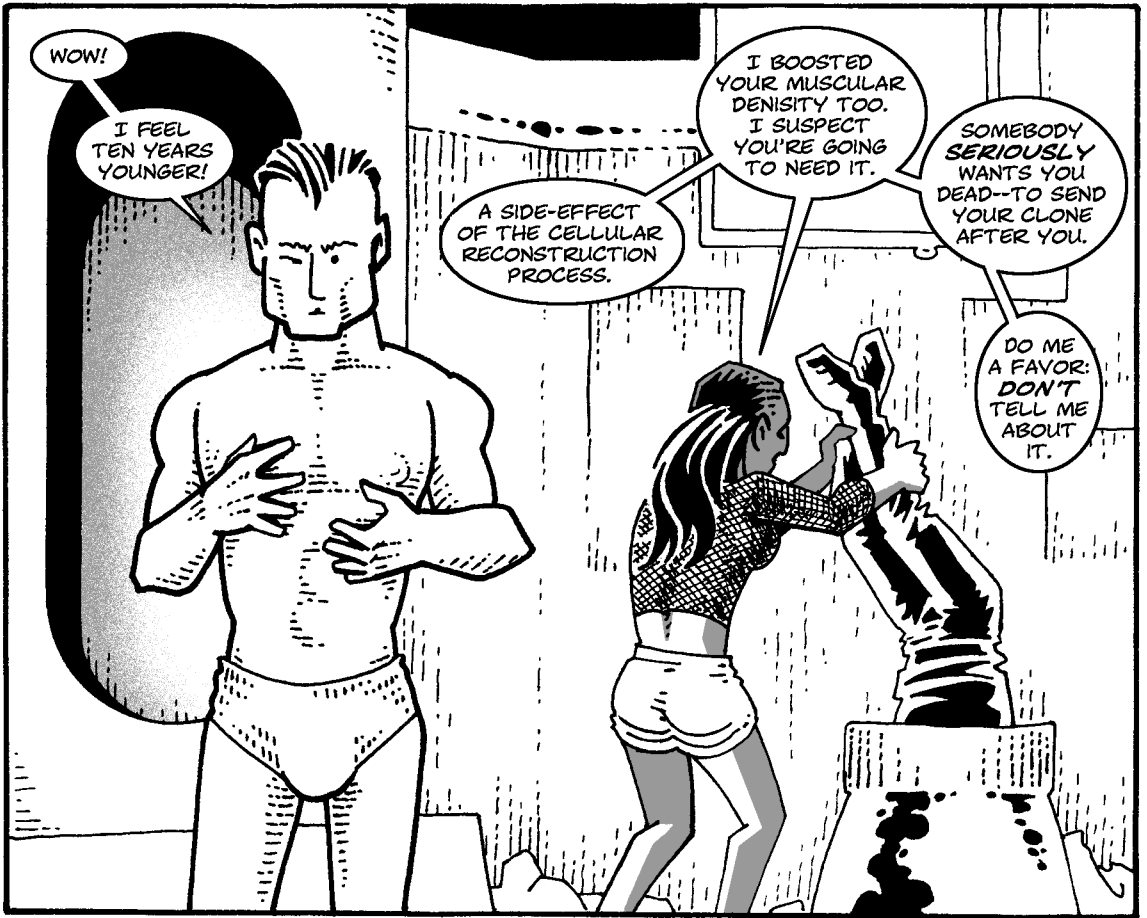
MY EQUIPMENT WILL SCAN YOUR GENETIC CODE AND INITIATE ANY NECESSARY BIOLOGICAL REPAIRS.

20



IS MY LUCK FINALLY CHANGING?

5



WOW!

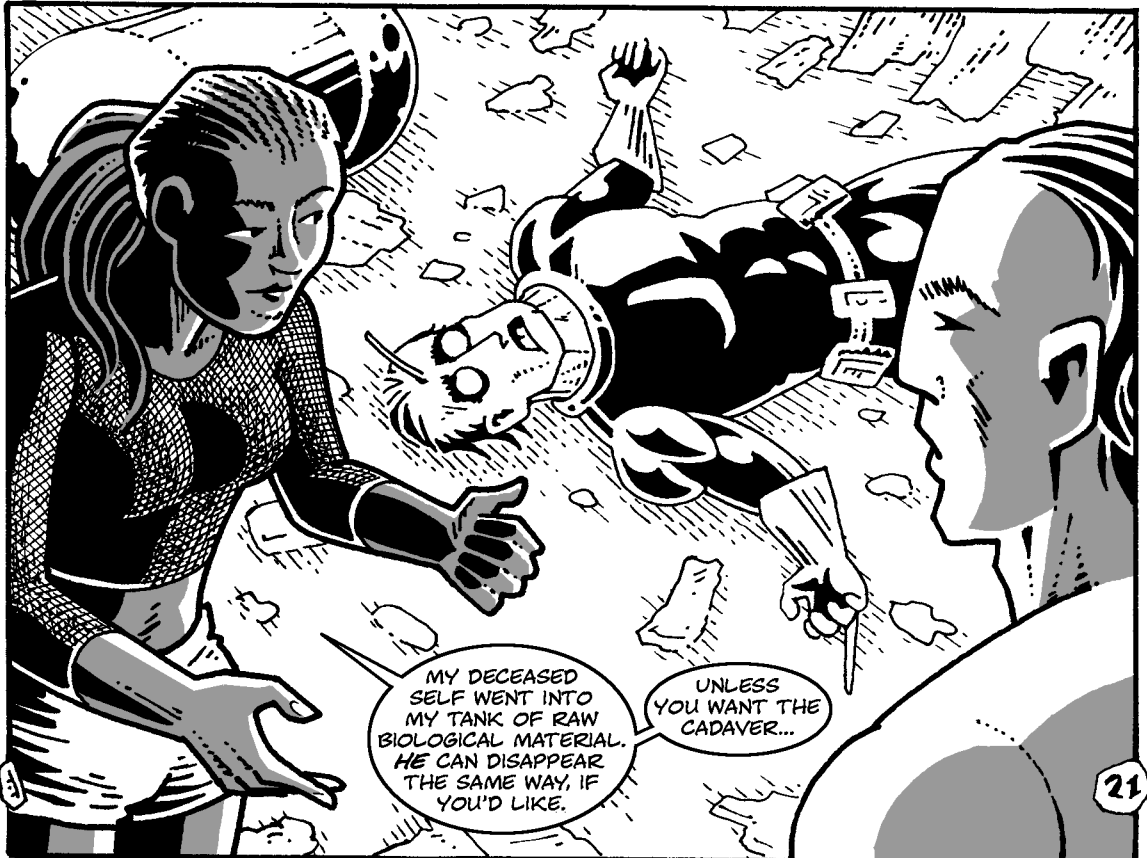
I FEEL  
TEN YEARS  
YOUNGER!

A SIDE-EFFECT  
OF THE CELLULAR  
RECONSTRUCTION  
PROCESS.

I BOOSTED  
YOUR MUSCULAR  
DENSITY TOO.  
I SUSPECT  
YOU'RE GOING  
TO NEED IT.

SOMEBODY  
SERIOUSLY  
WANTS YOU  
DEAD--TO SEND  
YOUR CLONE  
AFTER YOU.

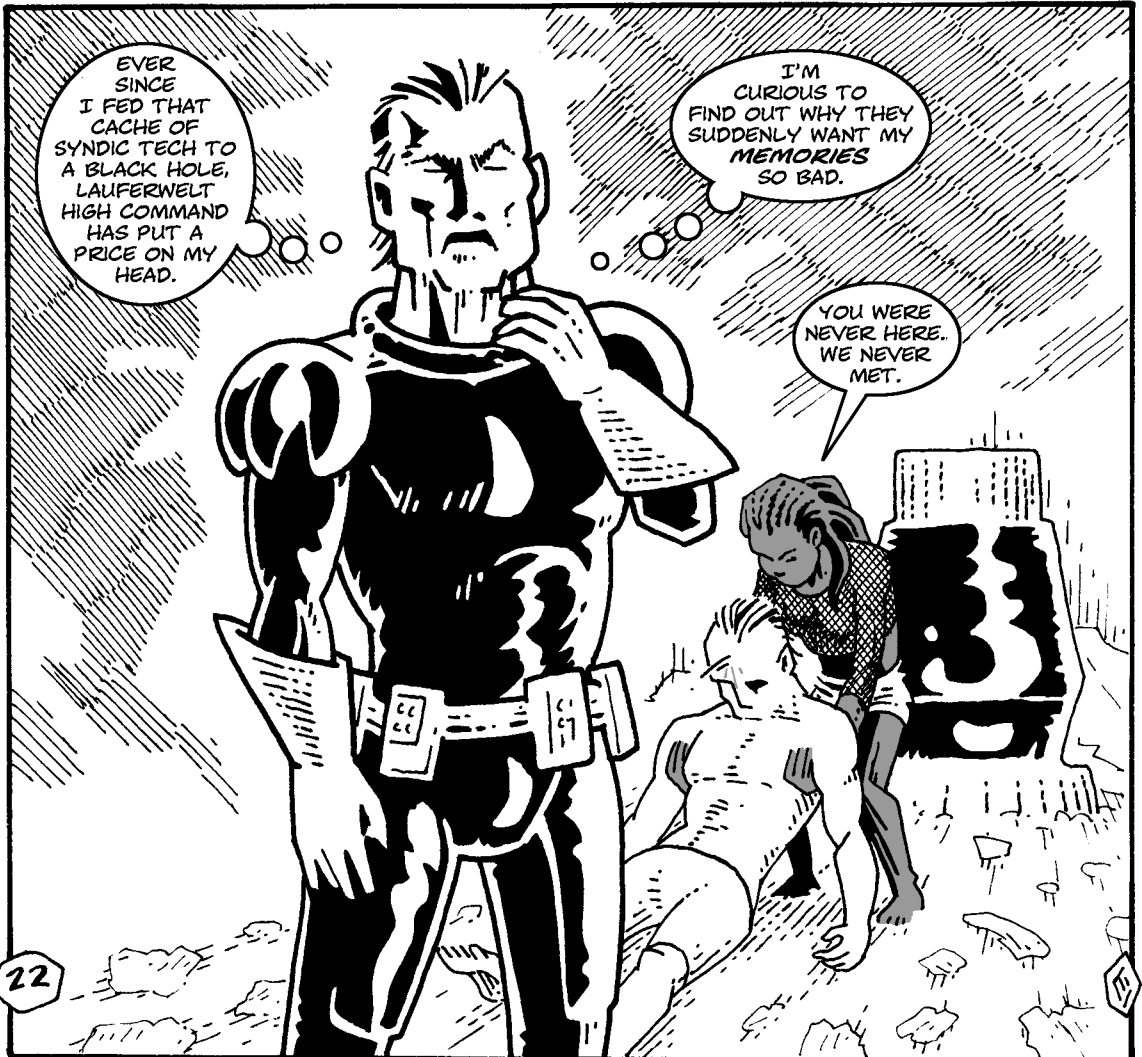
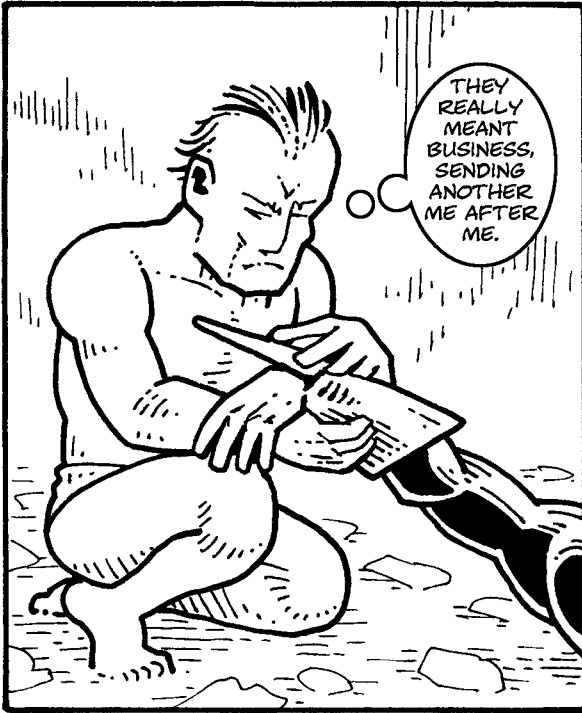
DO ME  
A FAVOR:  
DON'T  
TELL ME  
ABOUT  
IT.

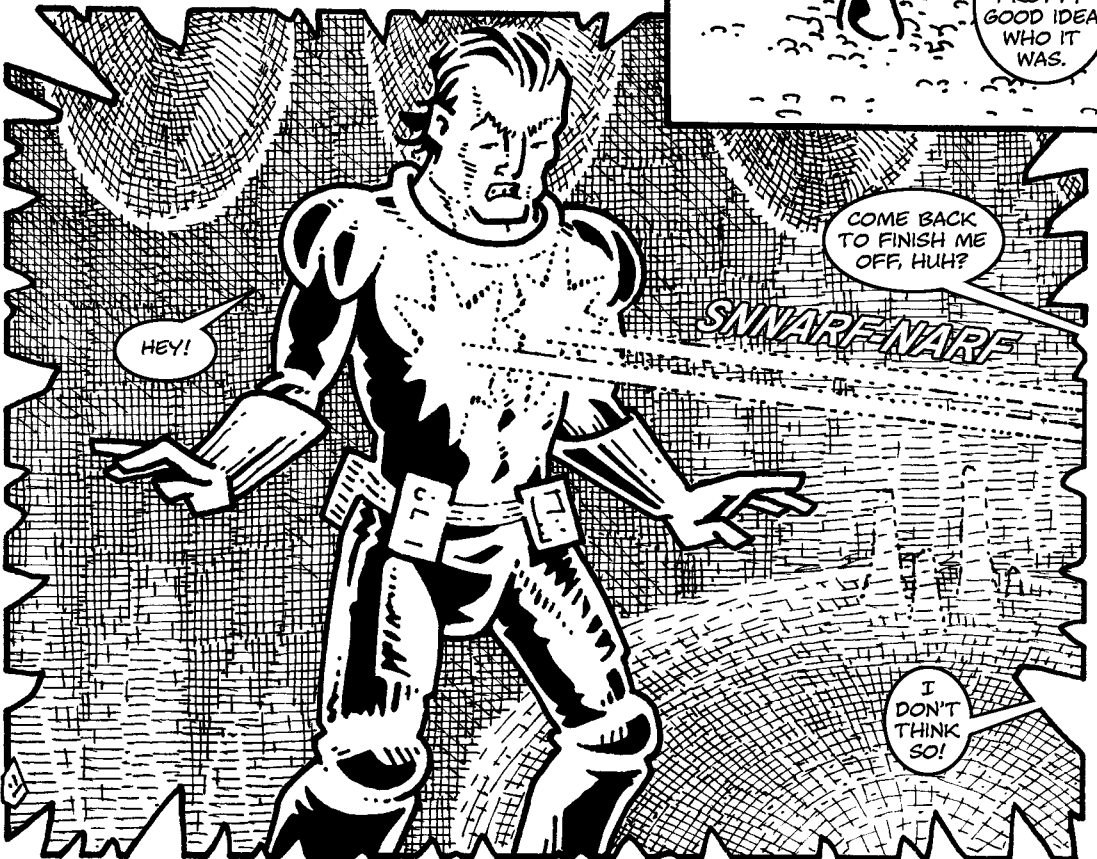
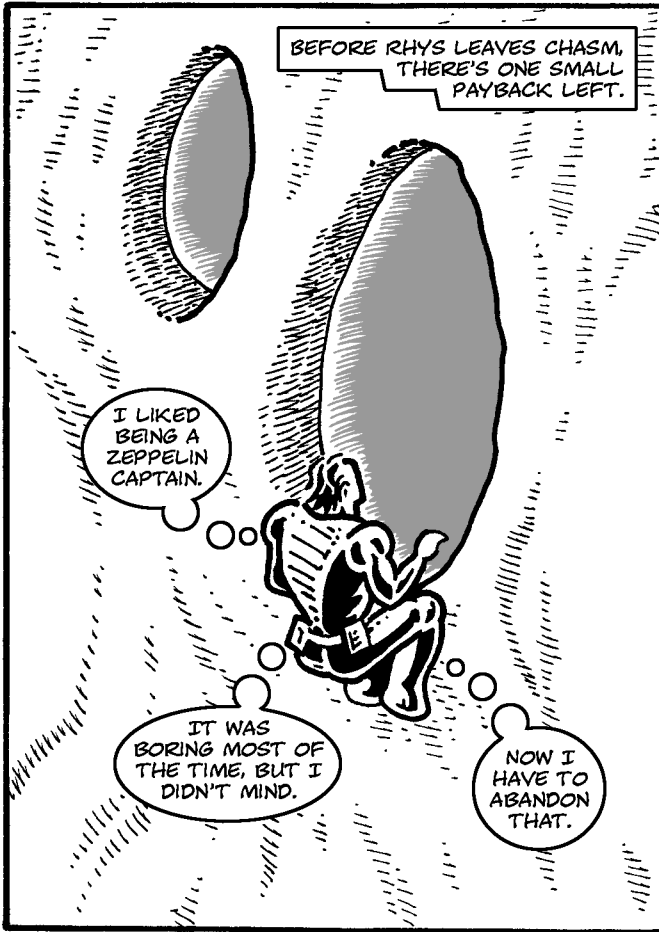


MY DECEASED  
SELF WENT INTO  
MY TANK OF RAW  
BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.  
HE CAN DISAPPEAR  
THE SAME WAY, IF  
YOU'D LIKE.

UNLESS  
YOU WANT THE  
CADAVER...









WO!  
CHILL  
OUT,  
GIRL.

YOUR  
NAME  
WAS  
NATASHA,  
RIGHT?

DAMN  
YOUR  
BATTLE  
ARMOR!

CHILL  
OUT,  
NATASHA.  
I'M  
NOT  
HERE  
TO  
HASSLE  
YOU.  
I'M  
HERE  
FOR  
TURGO.



WHY?

HAVEN'T  
YOU  
ALREADY  
DONE  
ENOUGH?

24



YOU  
SLAUGHTERED  
THE  
BUTLER.

AND  
NOW  
YOU'VE  
COME  
BACK  
TO  
FINISH  
ME  
OFF.

THEN  
YOU  
KILLED  
MONSIEUR  
TURGO  
WITH  
A  
POSI-CHARGE.

25



SOMEONE WHO LOOKED LIKE ME ALREADY VISITED TURGO? THAT WASN'T ME.

THAT WAS A CLONE LAUFERWELT SENT TO KILL ME.

SO...TURGO DIDN'T SELL ME OUT...THE CLONE BRAIN SPIKED MY LOCATION OUT OF MR ELECTRIC.

YOU HAVE MY SYMPATHIES.



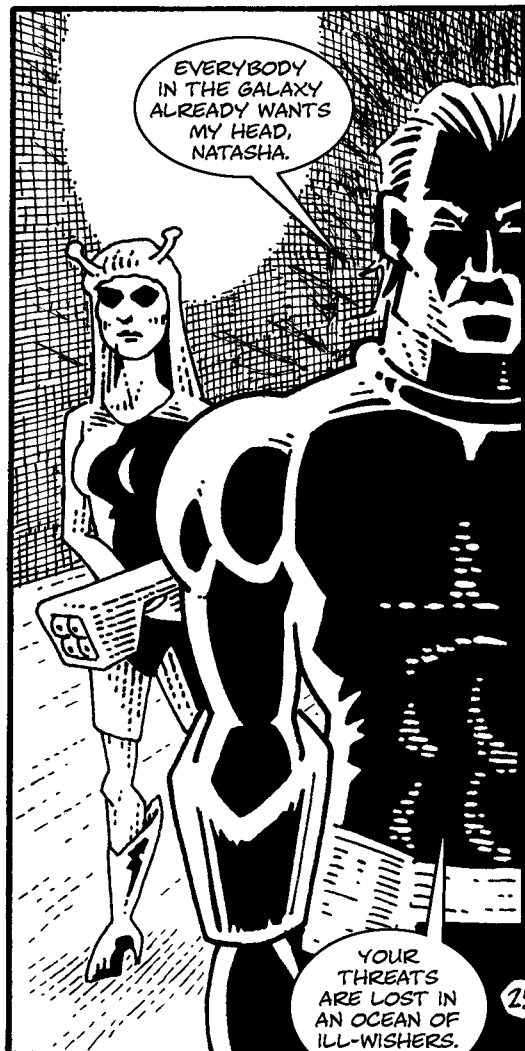
YOU MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE ONE WHO MURDERED MONSIEUR TURGO...

BUT YOU'RE THE REASON IT HAPPENED.



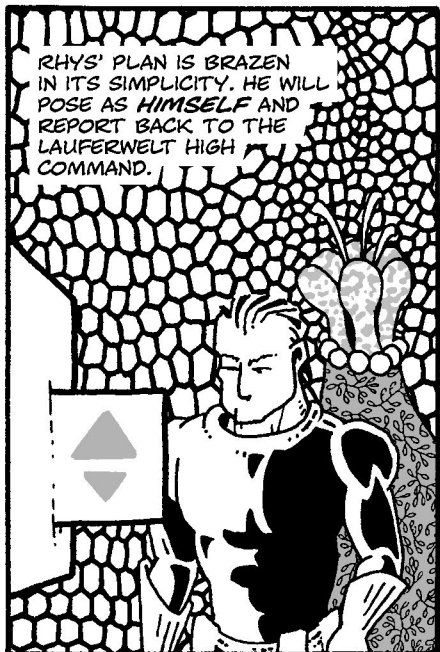
BE WARNED, RHYSER MARTIN.

I WILL HUNT YOU DOWN AND EXTERMINATE YOU FOR THIS!



EVERYBODY IN THE GALAXY ALREADY WANTS MY HEAD, NATASHA.

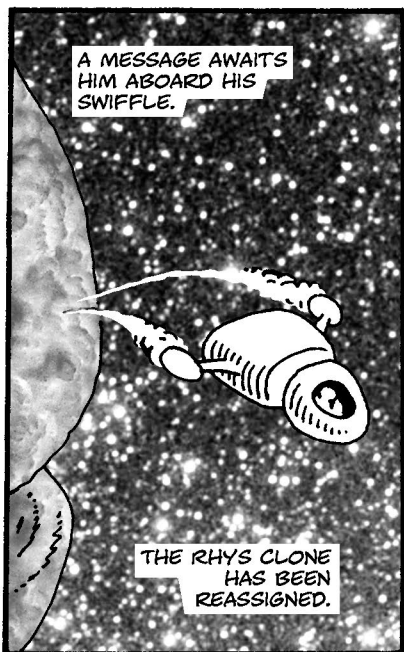
YOUR THREATS ARE LOST IN AN OCEAN OF ILL-WISHERS.



RHYS' PLAN IS BRAZEN IN ITS SIMPLICITY. HE WILL POSE AS HIMSELF AND REPORT BACK TO THE LAUFERWELT HIGH COMMAND.

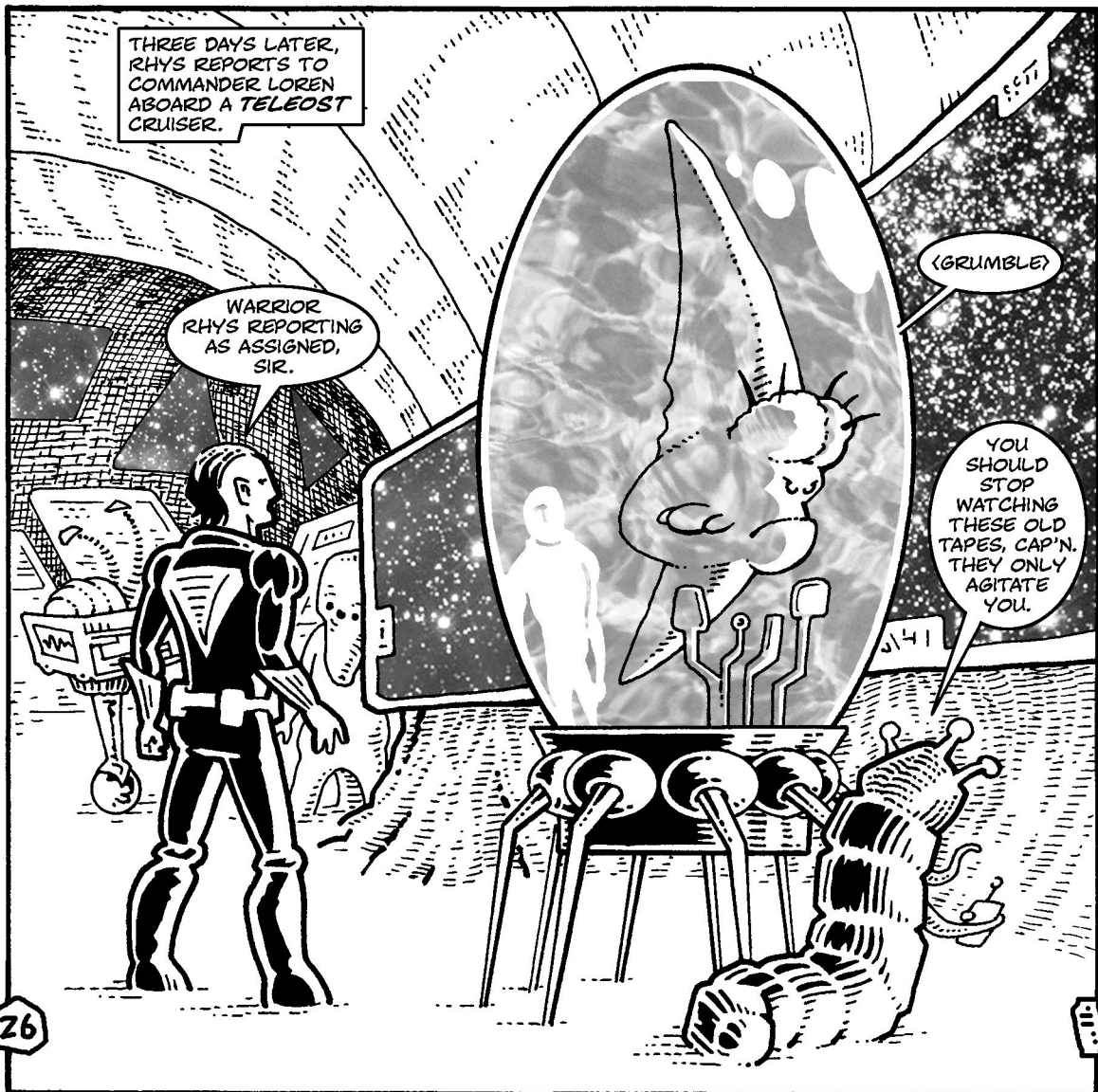


RETINAL SCAN IDENTIFIES HIM AS HIMSELF.



A MESSAGE AWAITS HIM ABOARD HIS SWIFFLE.

THE RHYS CLONE HAS BEEN REASSIGNED.

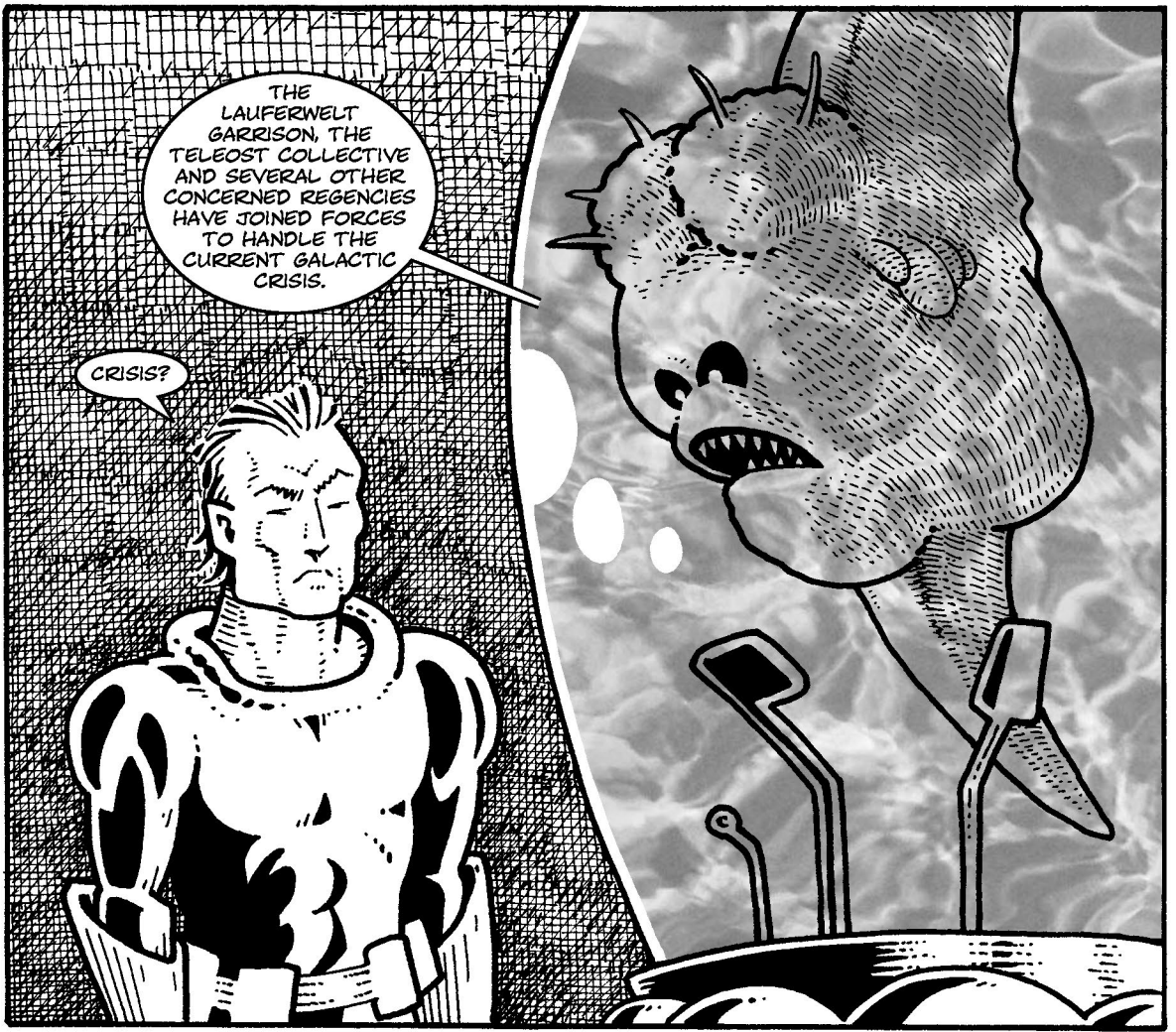


THREE DAYS LATER, RHYS REPORTS TO COMMANDER LOREN ABOARD A TELEOST CRUISER.

WARRIOR RHYS REPORTING AS ASSIGNED, SIR.

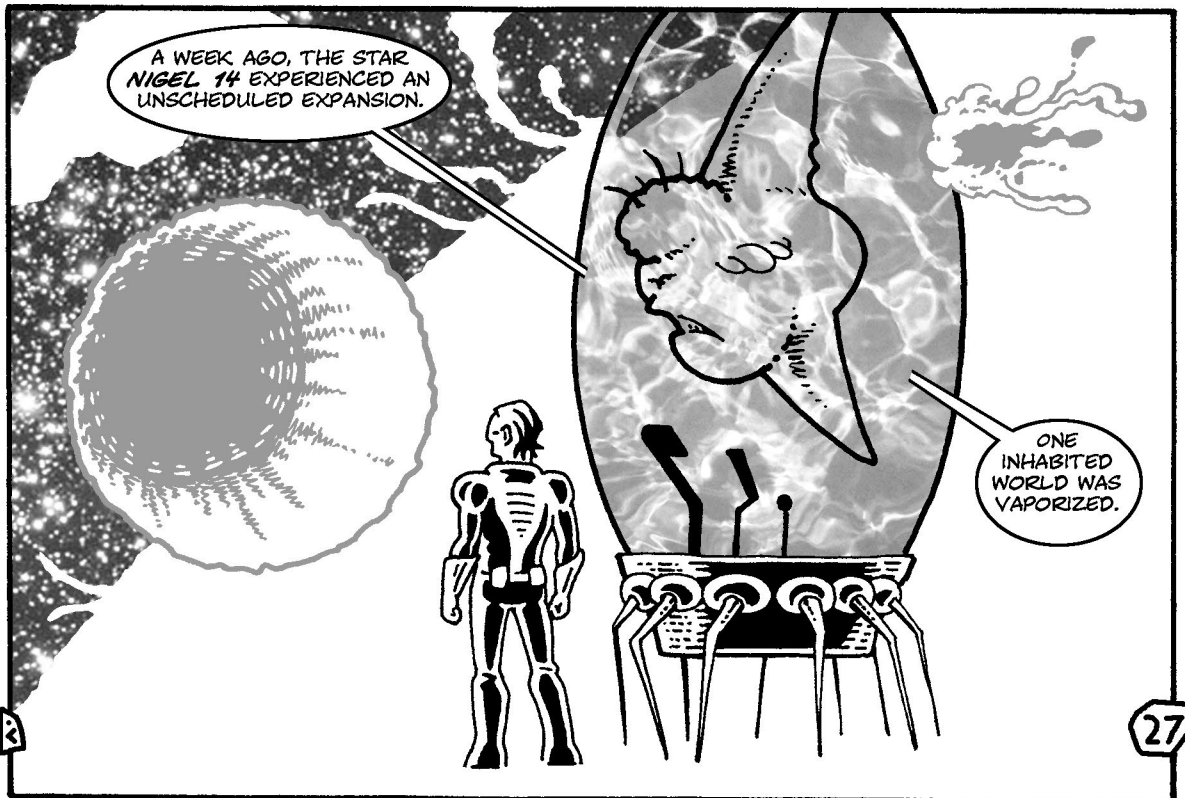
(GRUMBLE)

YOU SHOULD STOP WATCHING THESE OLD TAPES, CAP'N. THEY ONLY AGITATE YOU.



THE LAUFERNWELT GARRISON, THE TELEOST COLLECTIVE AND SEVERAL OTHER CONCERNED REGENCIES HAVE JOINED FORCES TO HANDLE THE CURRENT GALACTIC CRISIS.

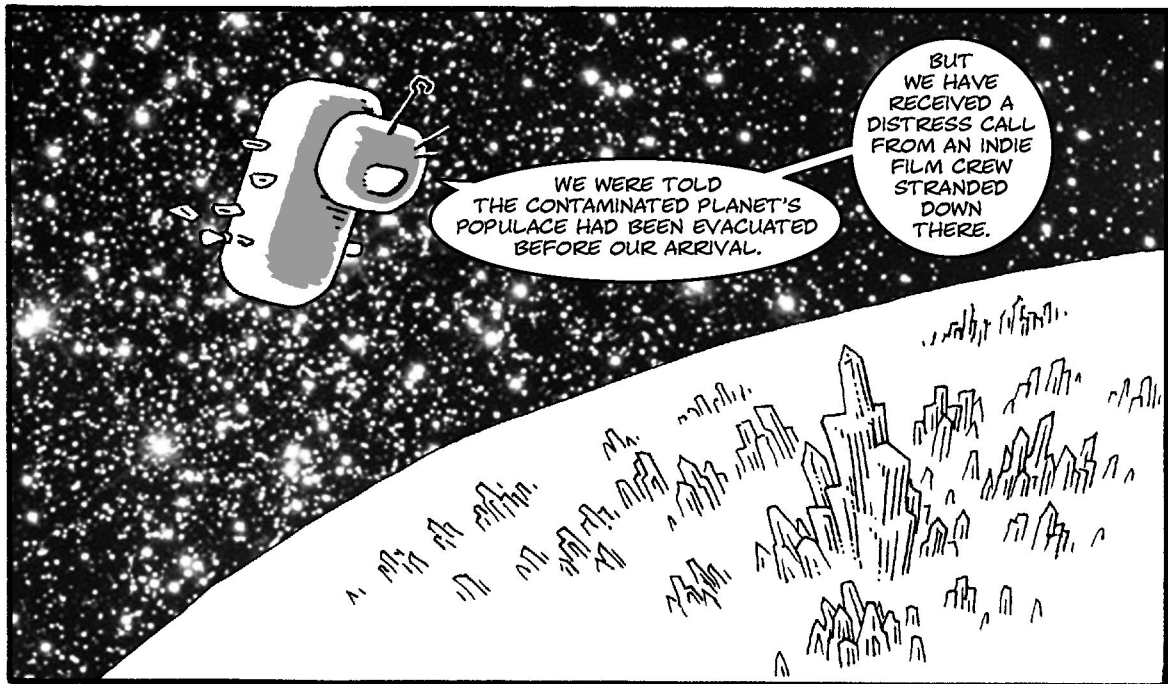
CRISIS?



A WEEK AGO, THE STAR NIGEL 14 EXPERIENCED AN UNSCHEDULED EXPANSION.

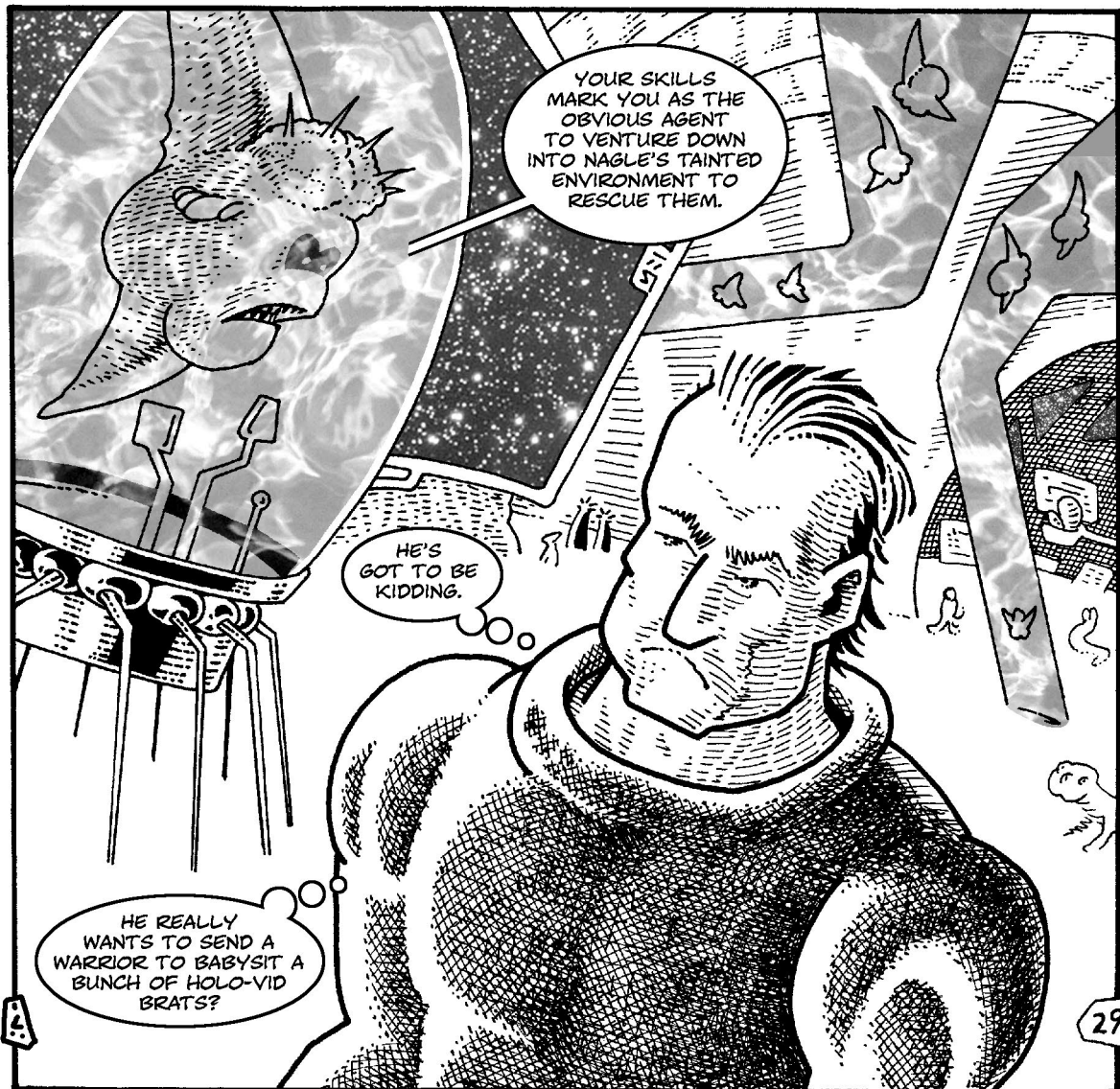
ONE INHABITED WORLD WAS VAPORIZED.





WE WERE TOLD THE CONTAMINATED PLANET'S POPULACE HAD BEEN EVACUATED BEFORE OUR ARRIVAL.

BUT WE HAVE RECEIVED A DISTRESS CALL FROM AN INDIE FILM CREW STRANDED DOWN THERE.



YOUR SKILLS MARK YOU AS THE OBVIOUS AGENT TO VENTURE DOWN INTO NAGLE'S TAINTED ENVIRONMENT TO RESCUE THEM.

HE'S GOT TO BE KIDDING.

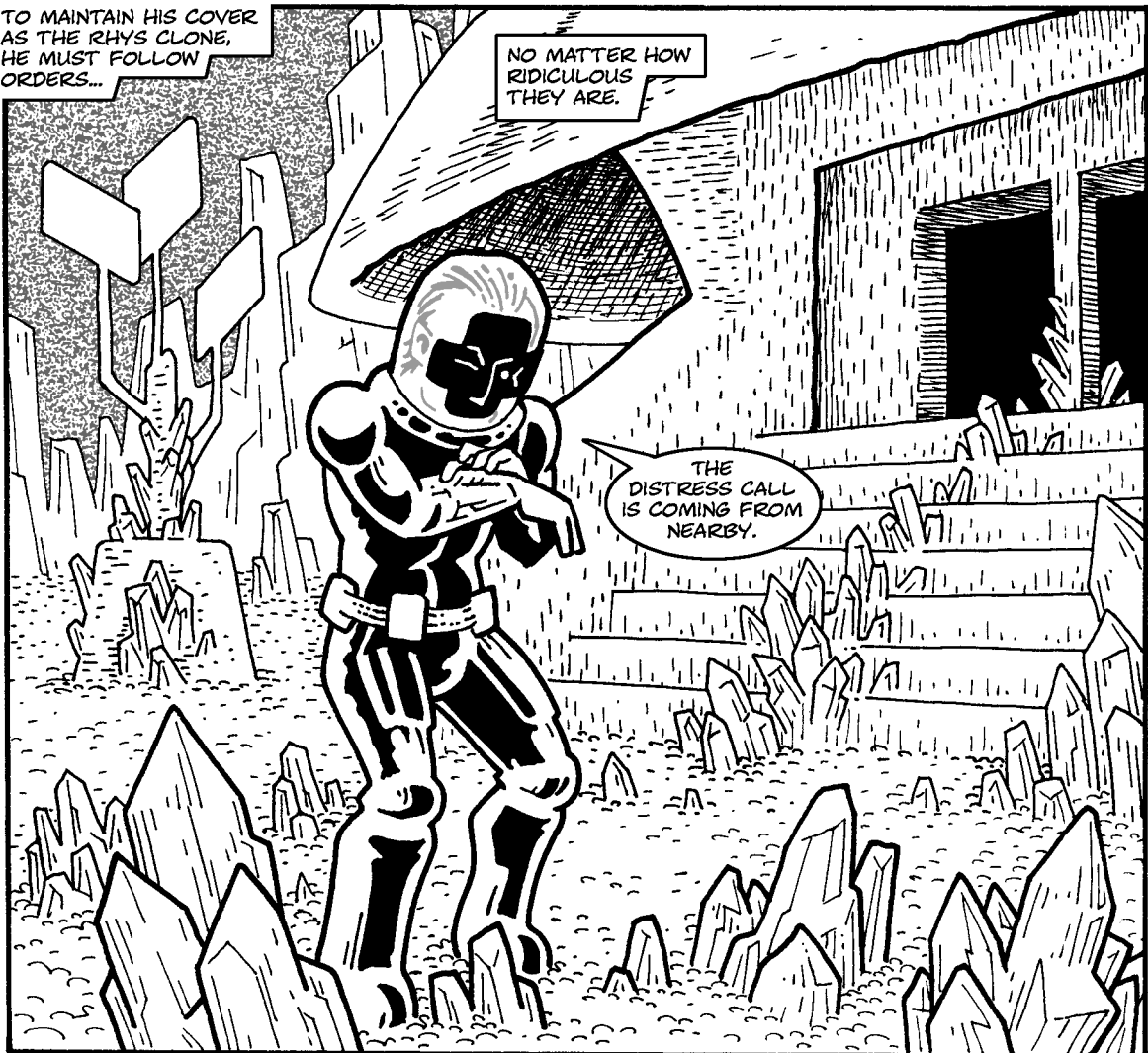
HE REALLY WANTS TO SEND A WARRIOR TO BABYSIT A BUNCH OF HOLO-VID BRATS?



TO MAINTAIN HIS COVER AS THE RHYNS CLONE, HE MUST FOLLOW ORDERS...

NO MATTER HOW RIDICULOUS THEY ARE.

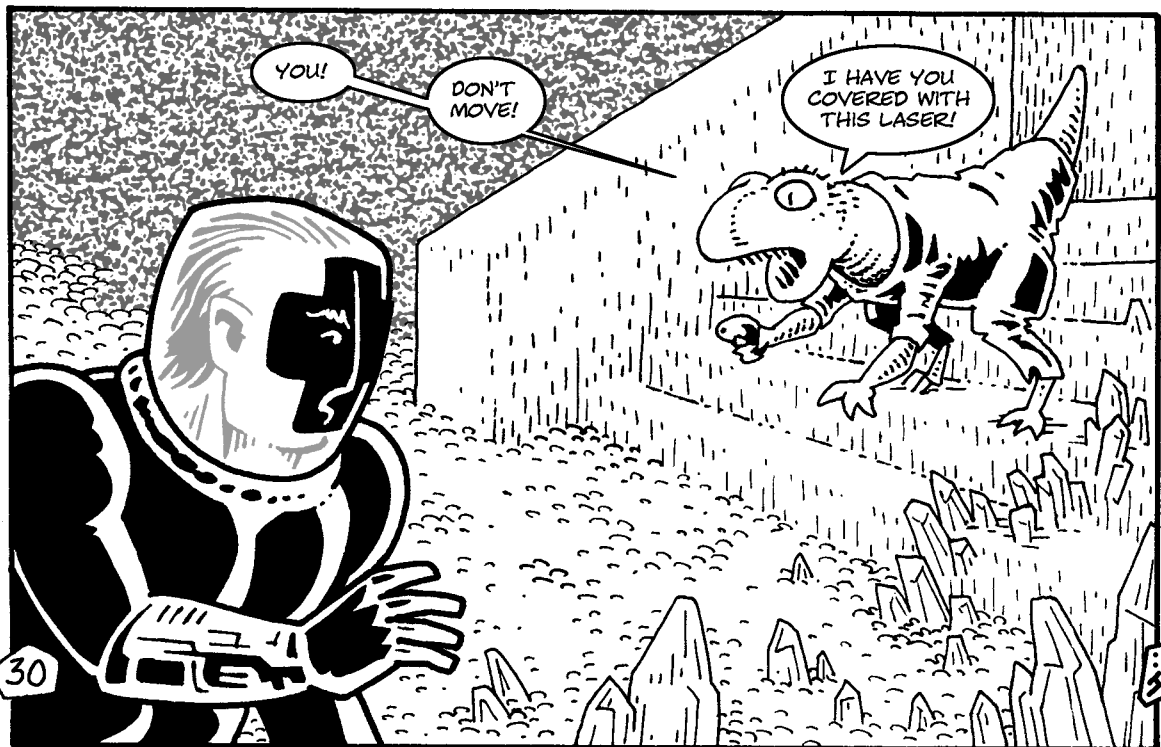
THE DISTRESS CALL IS COMING FROM NEARBY.

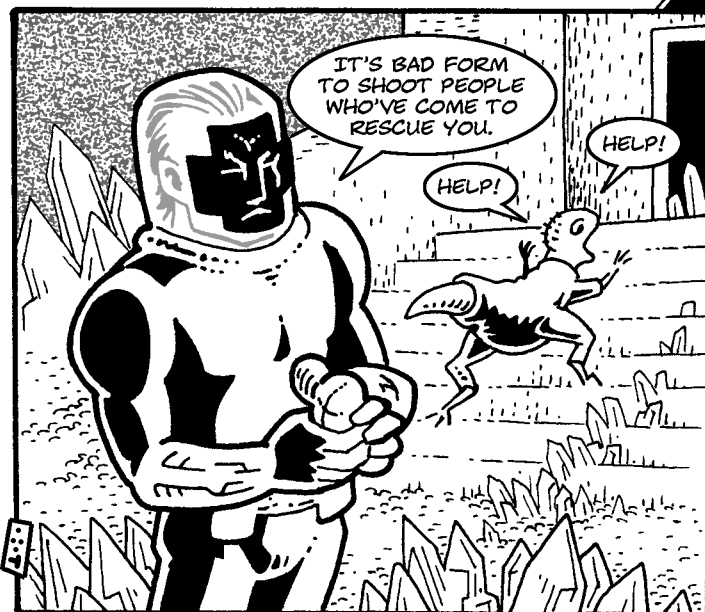
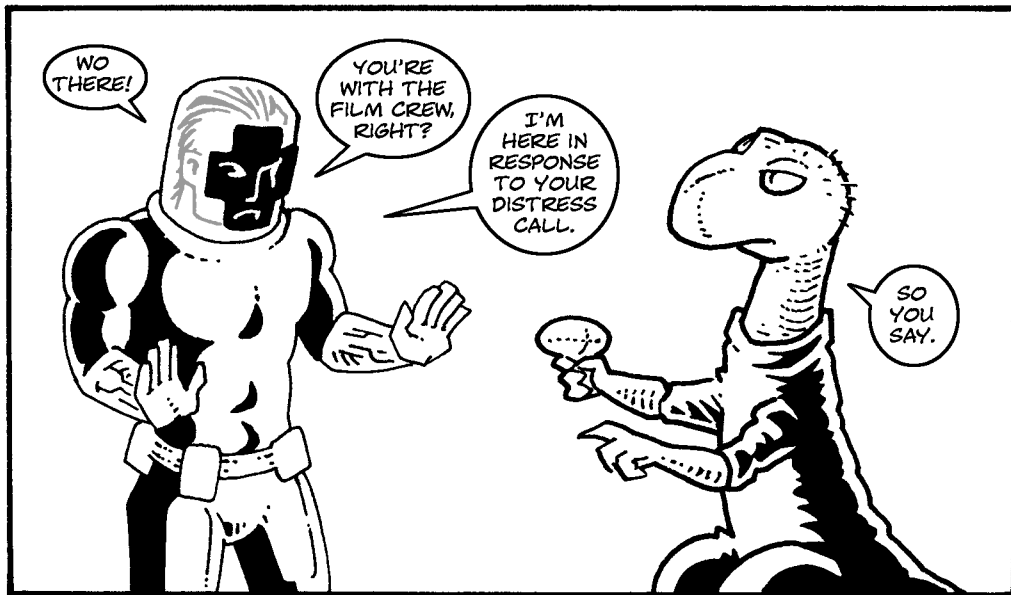


YOU!

DON'T MOVE!

I HAVE YOU COVERED WITH THIS LASER!









WE CAME TO NAGLE TO SCOUT LOCATIONS FOR MY NEXT PROJECT, A 6-D SEQUEL TO "CITIZEN KANE."

AND THIS CRYSTAL OUTBREAK HAPPENED.



YOU SHOULD HAVE LEFT WITH THE MAIN EVACUATION.

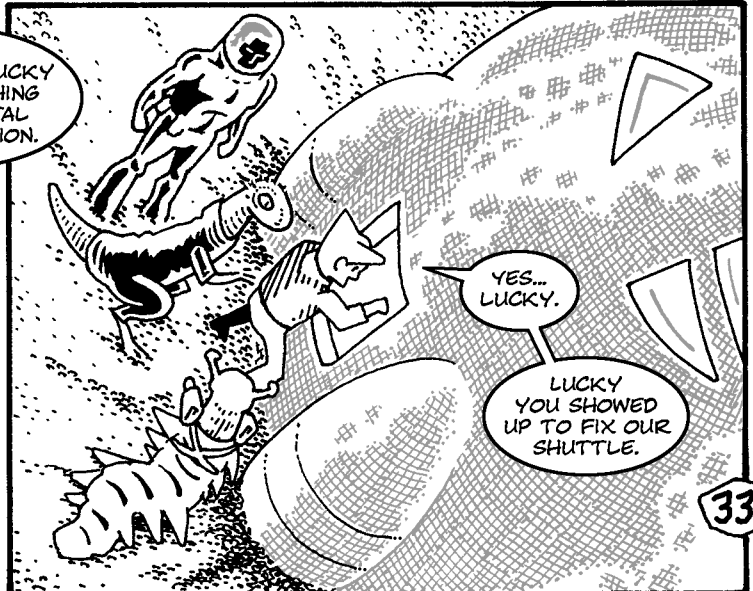


WE HAVE OUR OWN SHUTTLE...

--BUT IT BROKE DOWN.

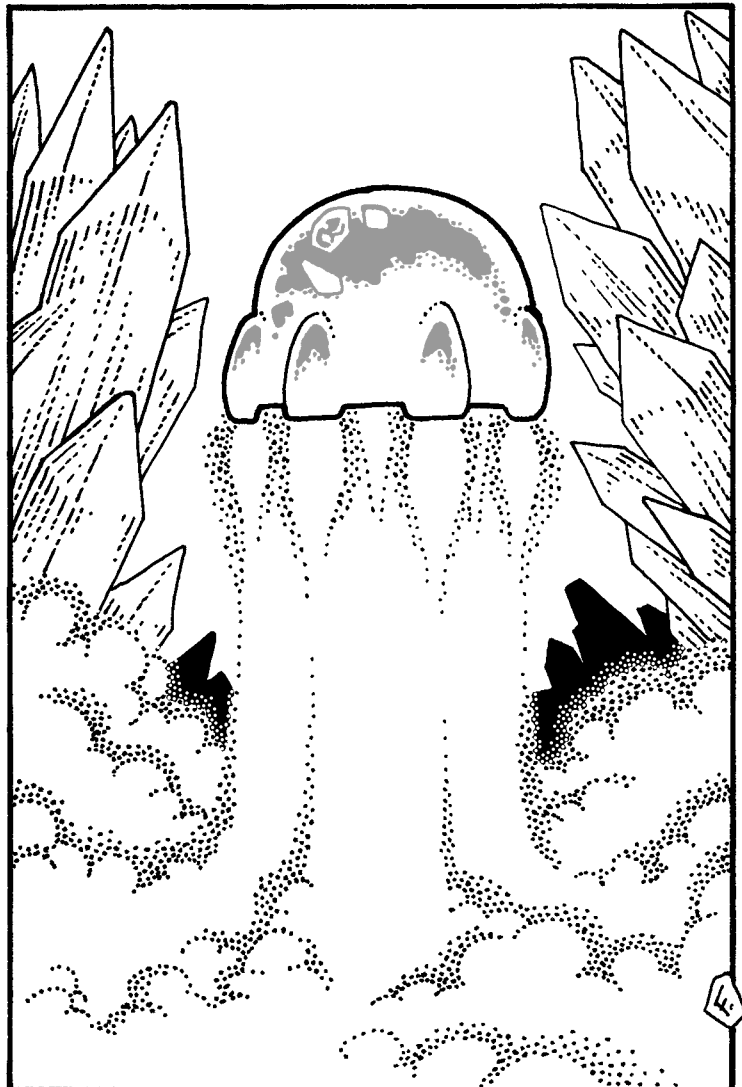
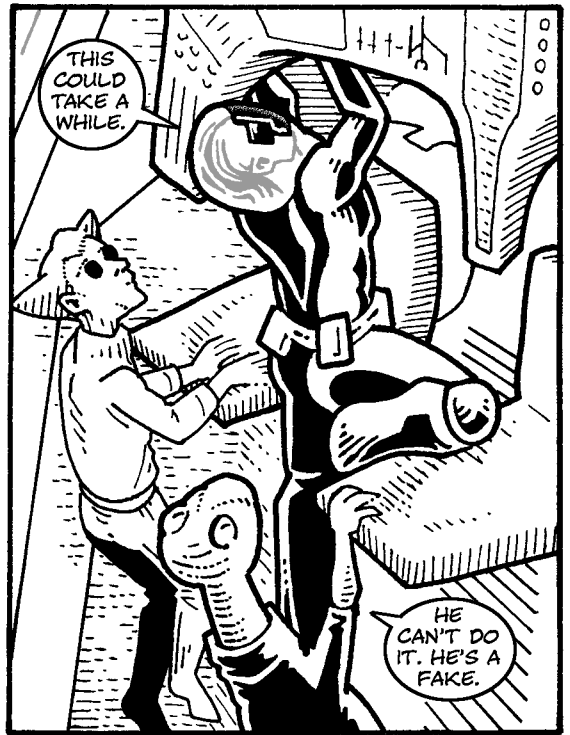


YOU'VE BEEN VERY LUCKY --NOT CATCHING THIS CRYSTAL CONTAMINATION.



YES... LUCKY.

LUCKY YOU SHOWED UP TO FIX OUR SHUTTLE.





I'LL HEAD FOR THE TELEOST CRUISER.

DON'T BOTHER, SOLDIER-BOY. GANTRY'S SPACE YACHT IS PARKED IN ORBIT.



YOU WANT HELP WITH THAT?

HUH?

AH, NO, IT'S...UH... JUST...

--SOME SPECIAL VID GEAR WE CAN HANDLE IT.

I THOUGHT LESTER WAS WEARING YOUR VID GEAR...



AH--ONE QUESTION TOO MANY, SOLDIER-BOY.

AWWK!

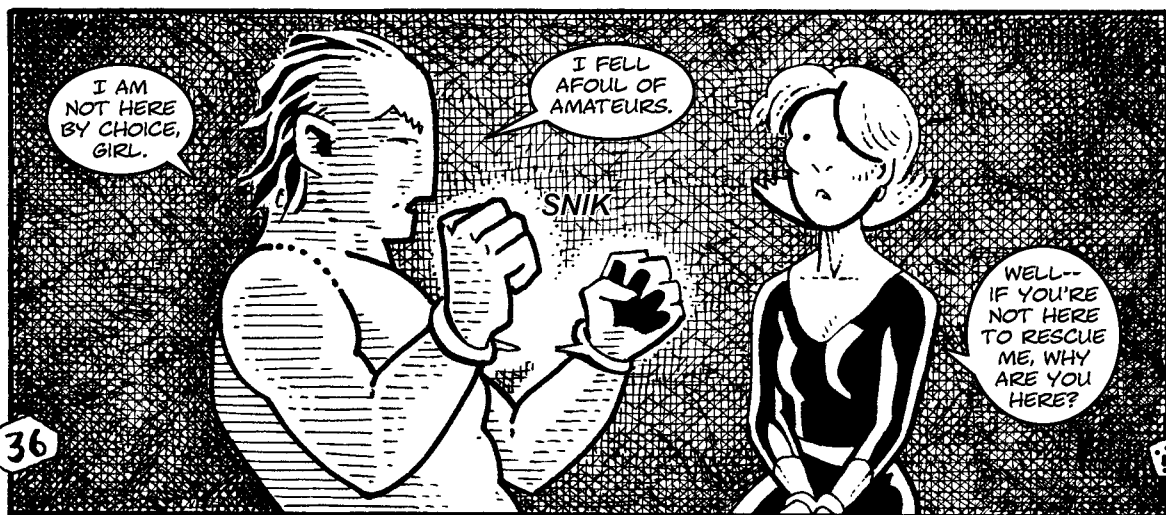
THANKS FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE, BUT THE LEAGUE DOESN'T NEED YOU ANY-MORE.

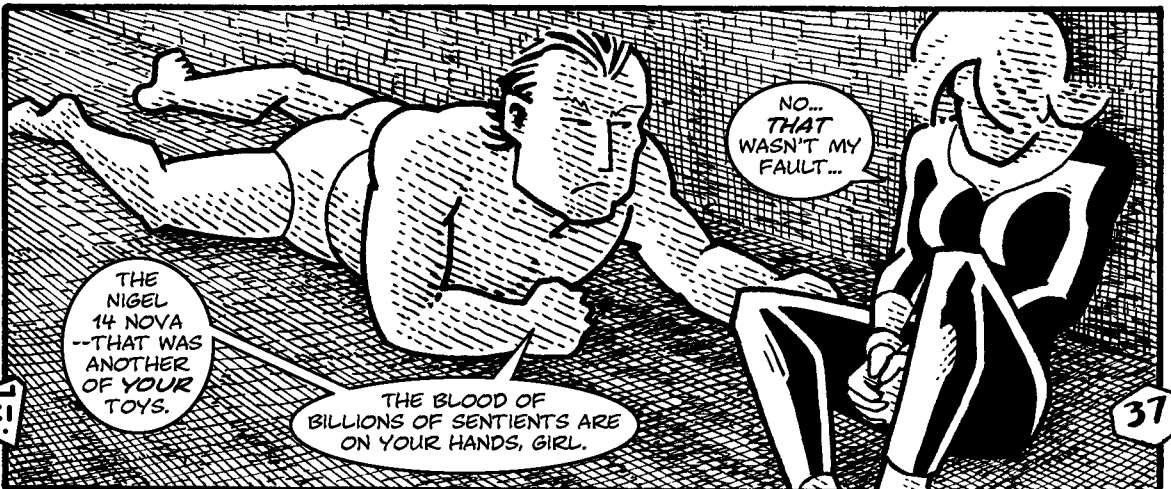
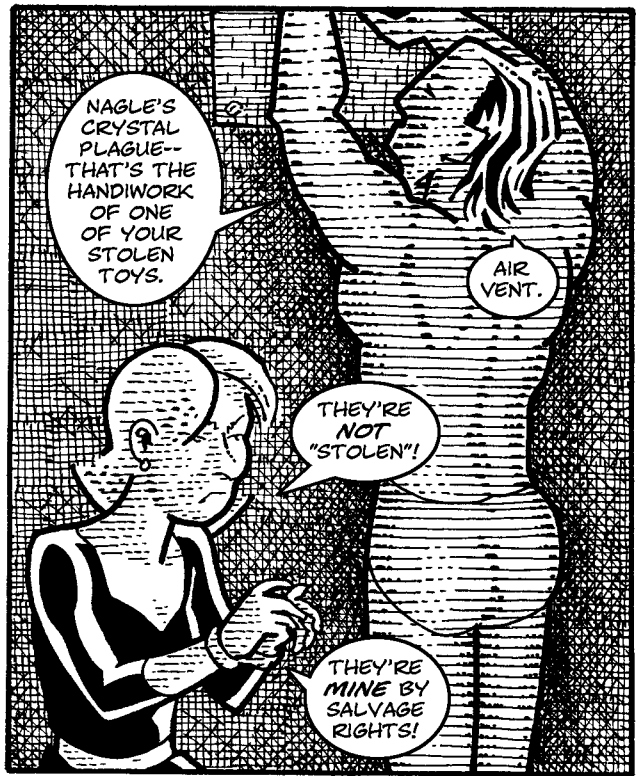
RHYS BECOMES SUSPICIOUS...

...TOO LATE.

AS RHYS LOSES CONSCIOUSNESS, HE CURSES HIMSELF FOR LETTING GANTRY CHARM HIM.

AND HE WAKES UP TO MORE UNPLEASANTRIES...









GANTRY STOLE MY SYNDIC CACHE. HE FORCED ME TO SHOW HIM HOW TO OPERATE THE DEVICES...THEN HE LOCKED ME IN THAT JANITORIAL CLOSET.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH GANTRY? WHO IS HE, ANYWAY?

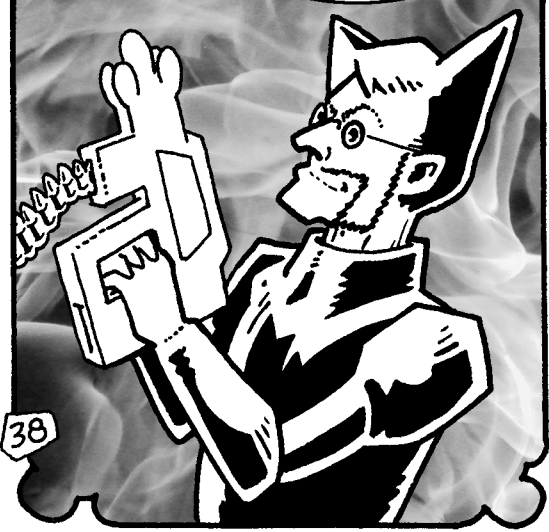
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW WHO HE IS?

HE'S A FAMOUS ACTOR.

HE'S BEST KNOWN FOR HIS "GOTCHA" SERIES OF ACTION FILMS.

HE'S AN INTERSTELLAR HEART-THROB.

EVERYBODY LOVES HIM.





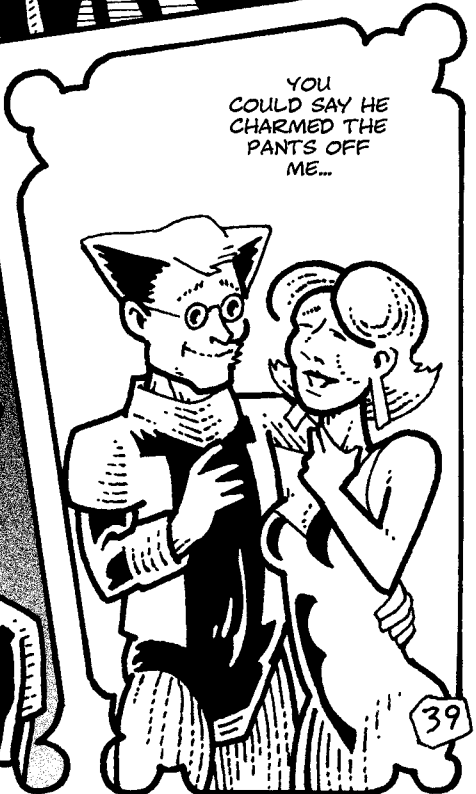
BEFORE I MET GANTRY...

I USED SOME OF THE DEVICES TO BUILD MYSELF A NICE LITTLE FORTUNE.

WHICH BOUGHT ME MEMBERSHIP IN OTHERWISE EXCLUSIVE SOCIAL CIRCLES.



ONE EVENING, A LOKI NEST ADMINISTRATOR WITH ECCENTRIC DATING HABITS INTRODUCED ME TO GANTRY.



YOU COULD SAY HE CHARMED THE PANTS OFF ME...



HE WAS REALLY--

GIRL, I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO INTEREST IN YOUR CARNAL EXPLOITS.

YOU WERE ALWAYS MEAN TO ME.

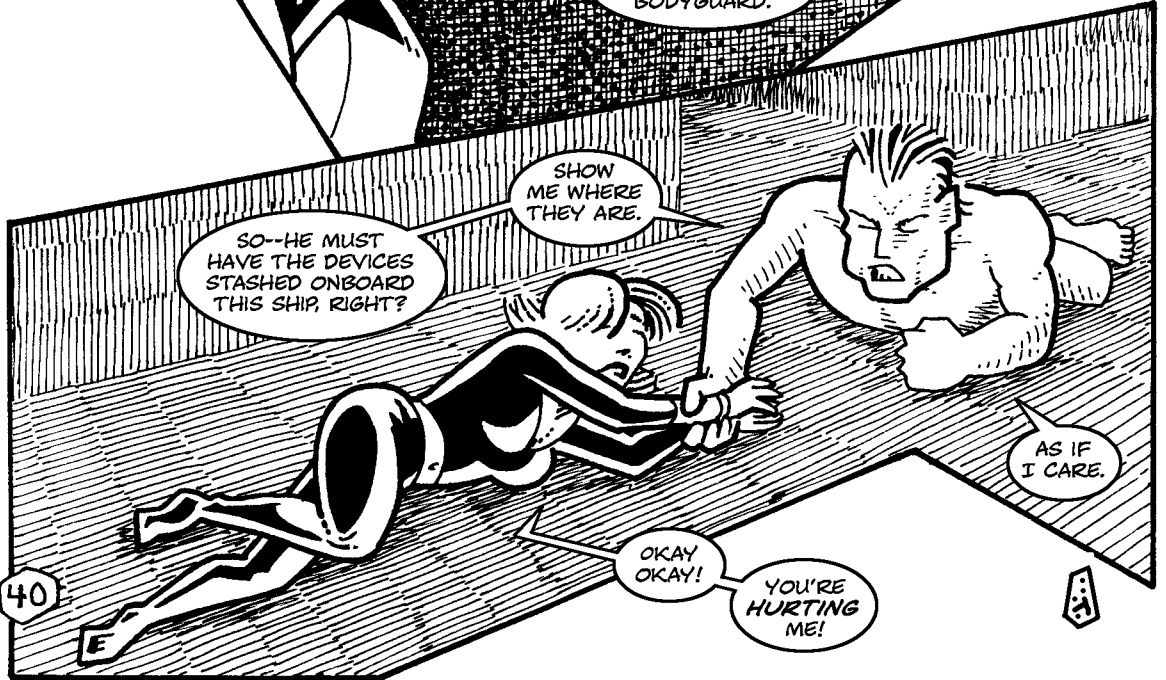
YOU'RE AN OPPORTUNIST WITH A DISHONEST STREAK.

CIRCUMSTANCE FORCED US INTO A RELUCTANT PARTNERSHIP ON A QUEST FOR A TREASURE THAT TURNED OUT TO BE TOO DANGEROUS TO KEEP.



THE DEVICES WEREN'T DANGEROUS IN MY HANDS. GANTRY WAS THE ONE WHO MISUSED THEM.

HIM AND HIS SADISTIC BODYGUARD.



SO--HE MUST HAVE THE DEVICES STASHED ONBOARD THIS SHIP, RIGHT?

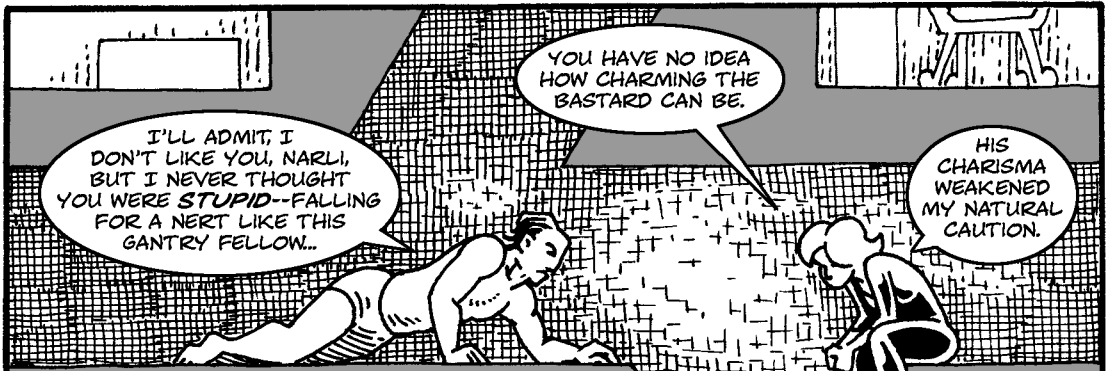
SHOW ME WHERE THEY ARE.

AS IF I CARE.

OKAY OKAY!

YOU'RE HURTING ME!

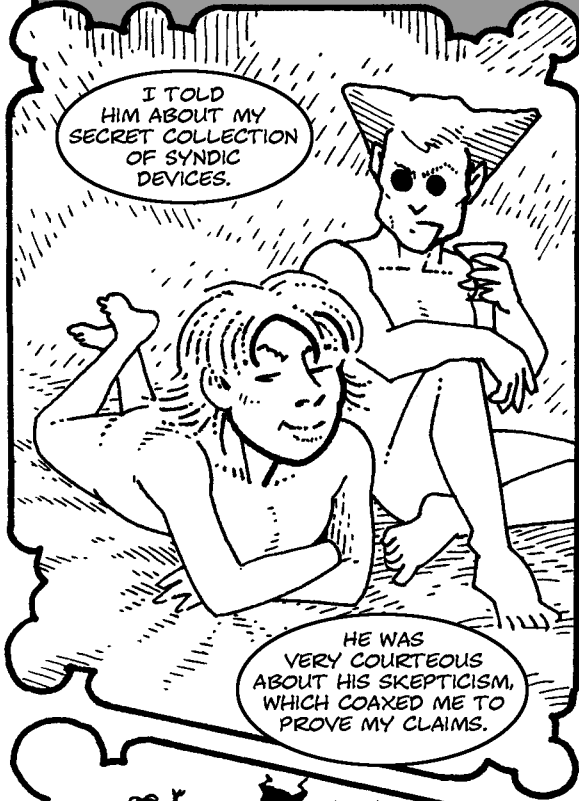




I'LL ADMIT, I DON'T LIKE YOU, NARLI, BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE **STUPID**--FALLING FOR A NERT LIKE THIS GANTRY FELLOW...

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW CHARMING THE BASTARD CAN BE.

HIS CHARISMA WEAKENED MY NATURAL CAUTION.



I TOLD HIM ABOUT MY SECRET COLLECTION OF SYNDIC DEVICES.

HE WAS VERY COURTEOUS ABOUT HIS SKEPTICISM, WHICH COAXED ME TO PROVE MY CLAIMS.



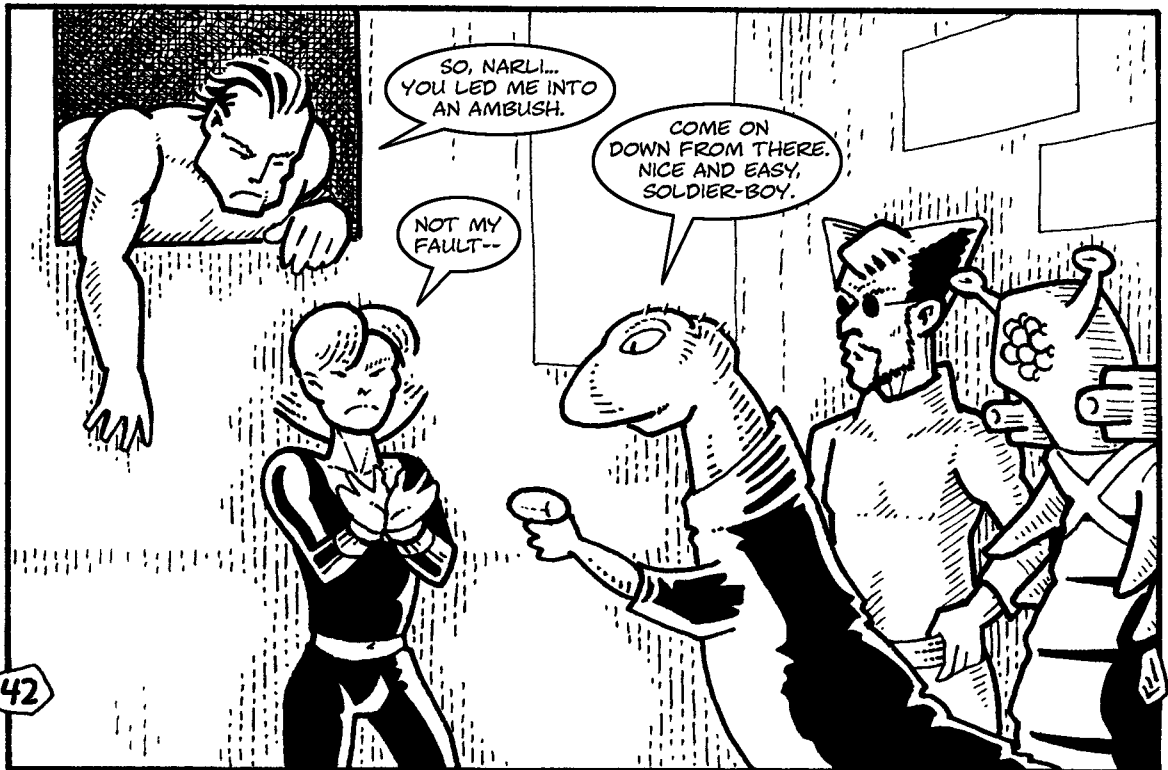
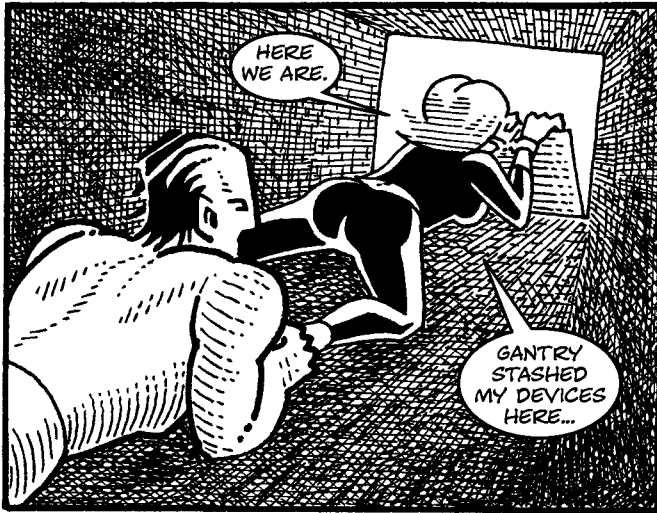
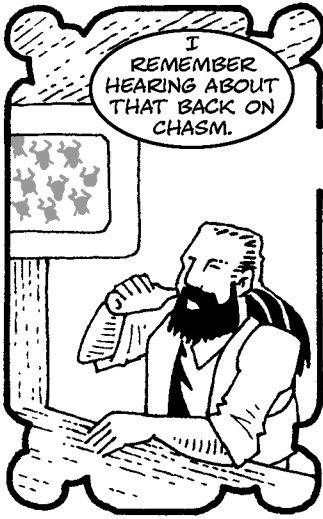
THAT APPEAL OF HIS IS ARTIFICIAL. THOSE GLASSES HE WEARS ARE MEZMO-SPEX.

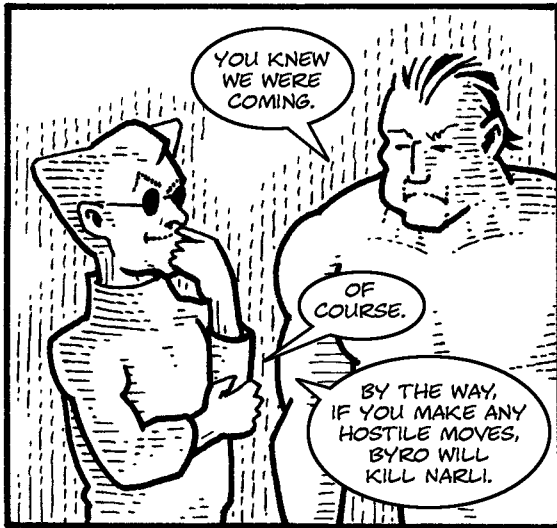
SO I SHOWED HIM ONE OF THE DEVICES.



I SHOWED HIM WHAT IT COULD DO.

IT MADE IT RAIN FROGS.

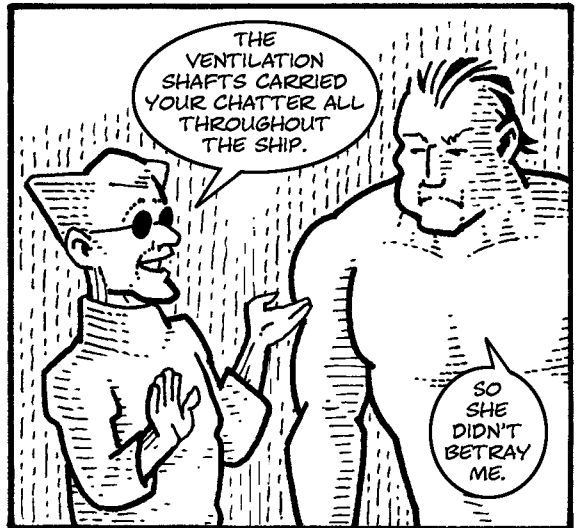




YOU KNEW WE WERE COMING.

OF COURSE.

BY THE WAY, IF YOU MAKE ANY HOSTILE MOVES, BYRO WILL KILL NARLI.



THE VENTILATION SHAFTS CARRIED YOUR CHATTER ALL THROUGHOUT THE SHIP.

SO SHE DIDN'T BETRAY ME.



I WARNED YOU THIS PESKY FEMALE COULD NOT BE TRUSTED.

LET ME KILL HER, GANTRY.

IN GOOD TIME, BYRO.

NARLI IS MOST DEFINITELY NOT ONE OF US.

SHE DISAPPROVES OF MY AGENDA.

WHICH IS?

WHY-- TO USE THE MACHINES TO CREATE A GALACTIC MENACE...



THEN LESTER WILL VIDEO MY BRAVE BATTLE TO DEFEAT THE TERRORISTS.

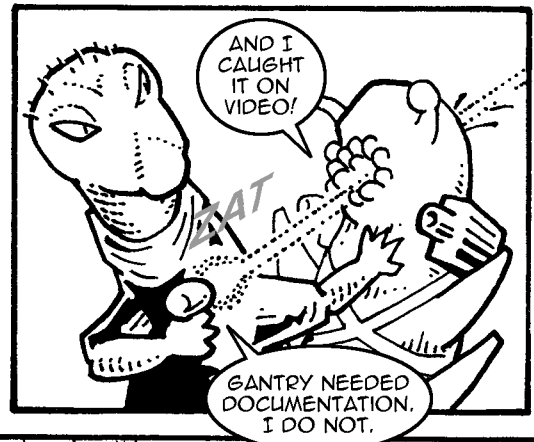
I'VE PLAYED THE HERO IN SO MANY MOVIES...

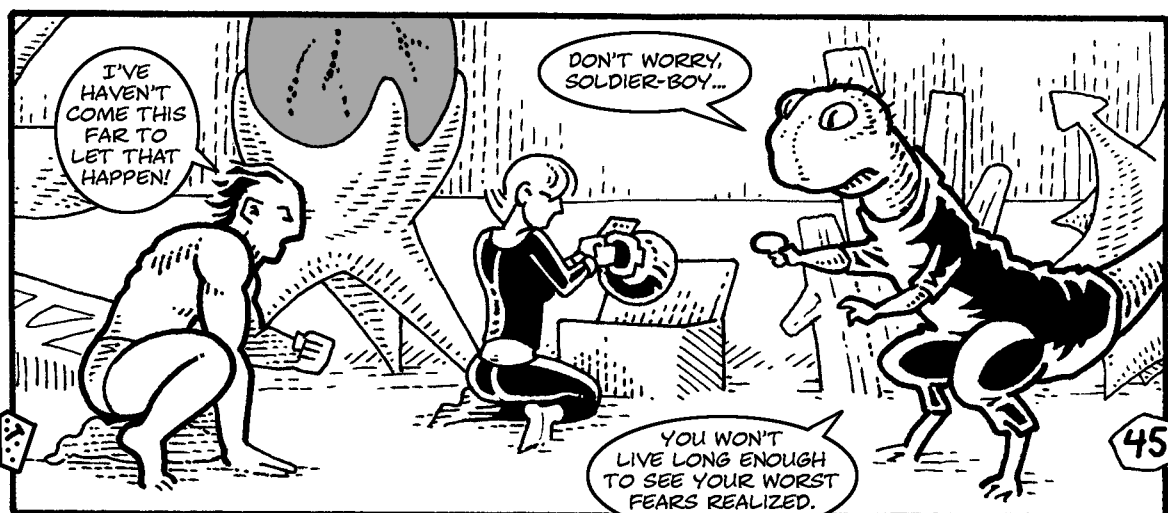
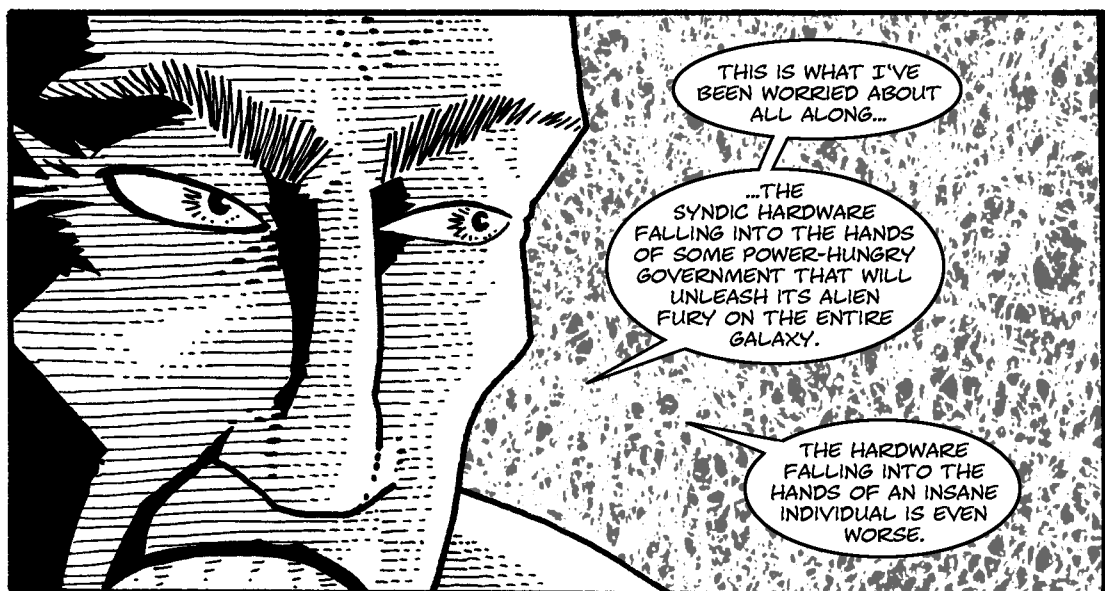
NOW I'LL FINALLY GET TO BE A HERO IN REAL LIFE!



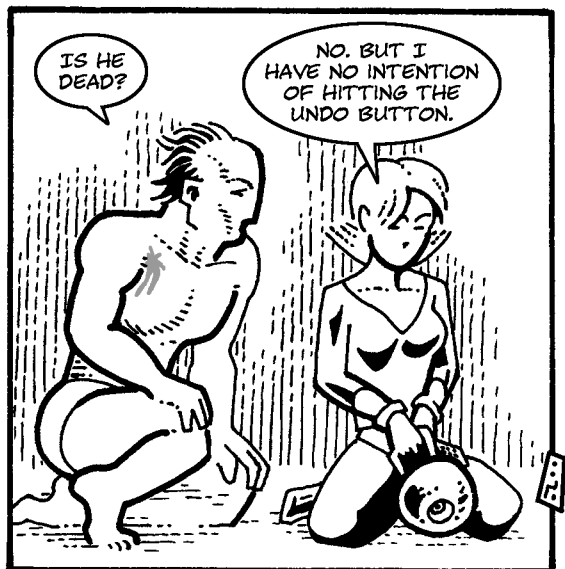
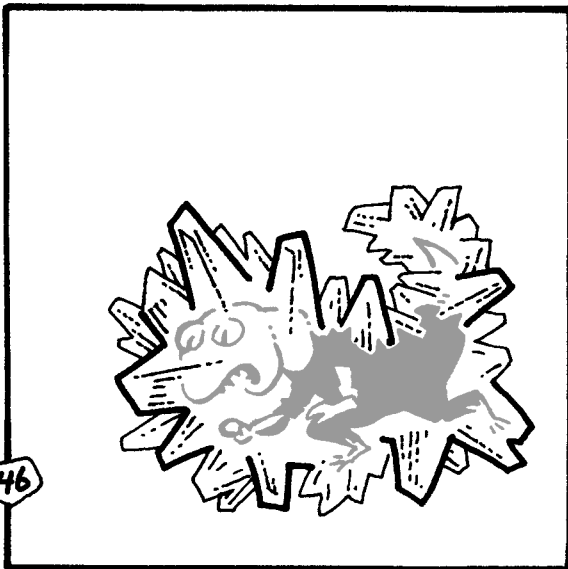
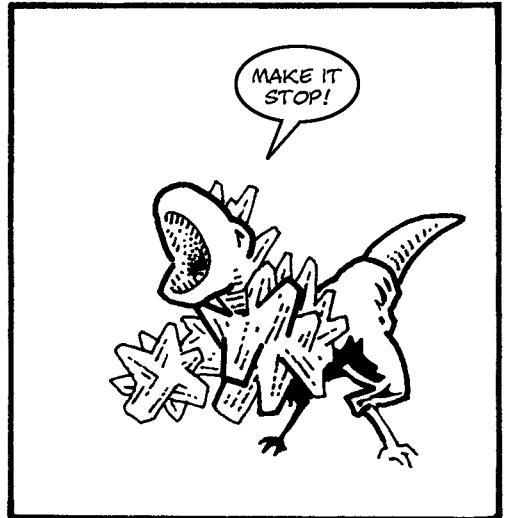
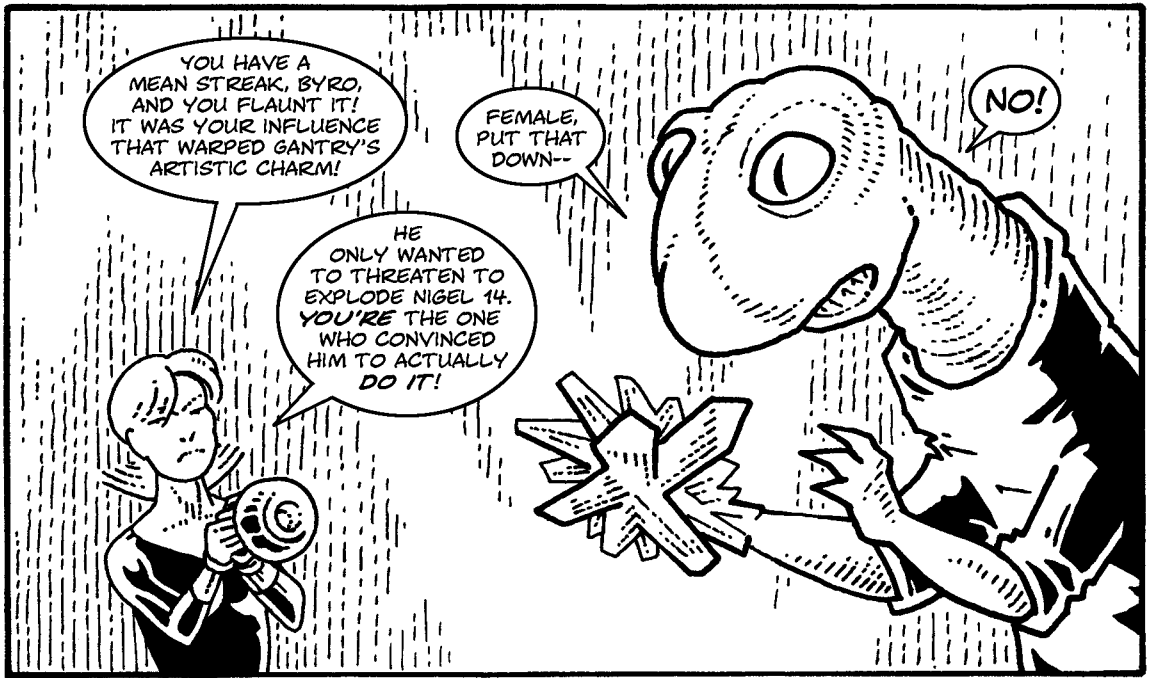
YOU BELIEVE THAT JUSTIFIES THE SLAUGHTER OF BILLIONS OF SENTIENTS?

YOU'RE INSANE!











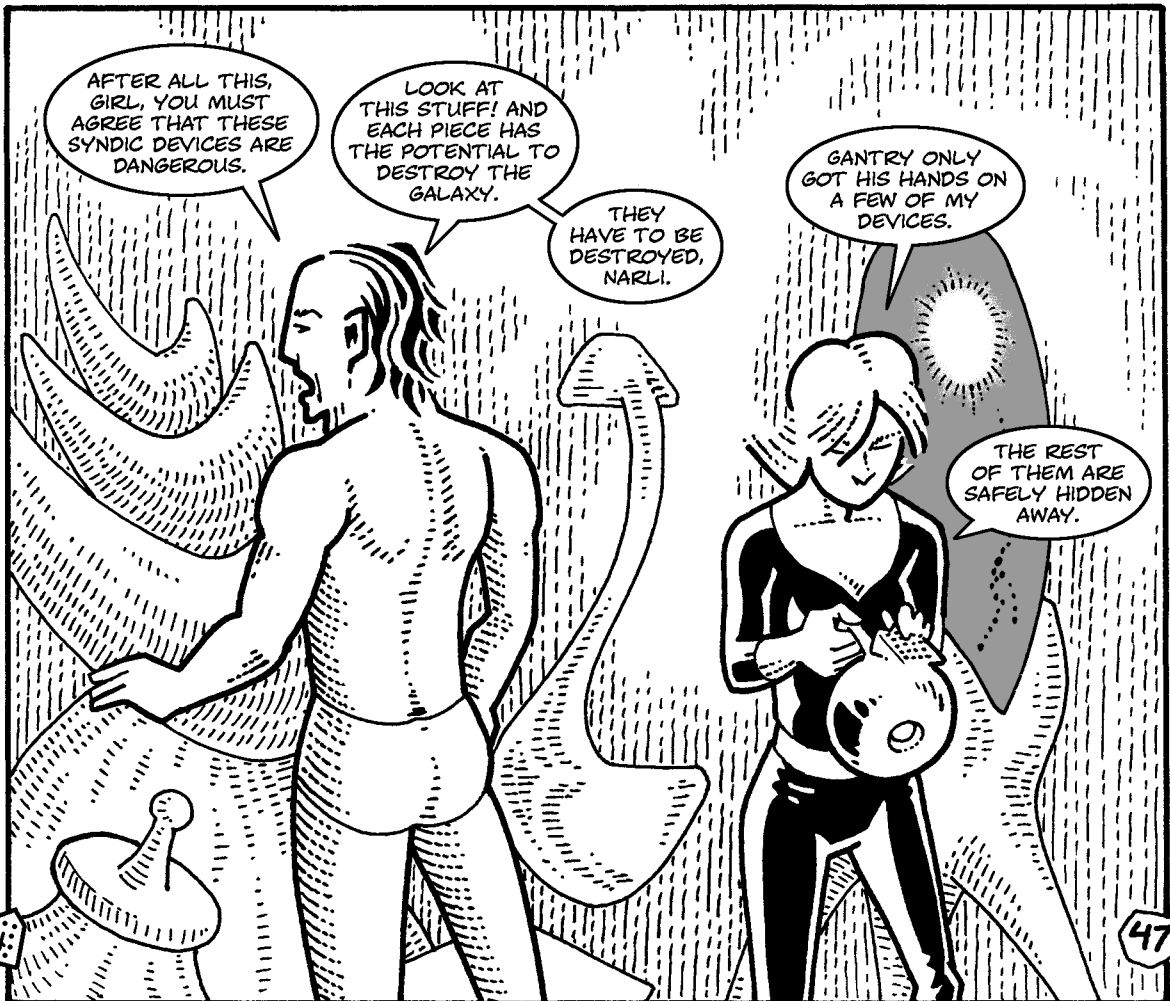
THAT'S THE DEVICE THEY USED TO UNLEASH THE CRYSTAL PLAGUE ON NAGLE, ISN'T IT?

I SAVED YOUR LIFE, RHYS.



THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS REMOVE MY CUFFS NOW.

SIGH... FINE.



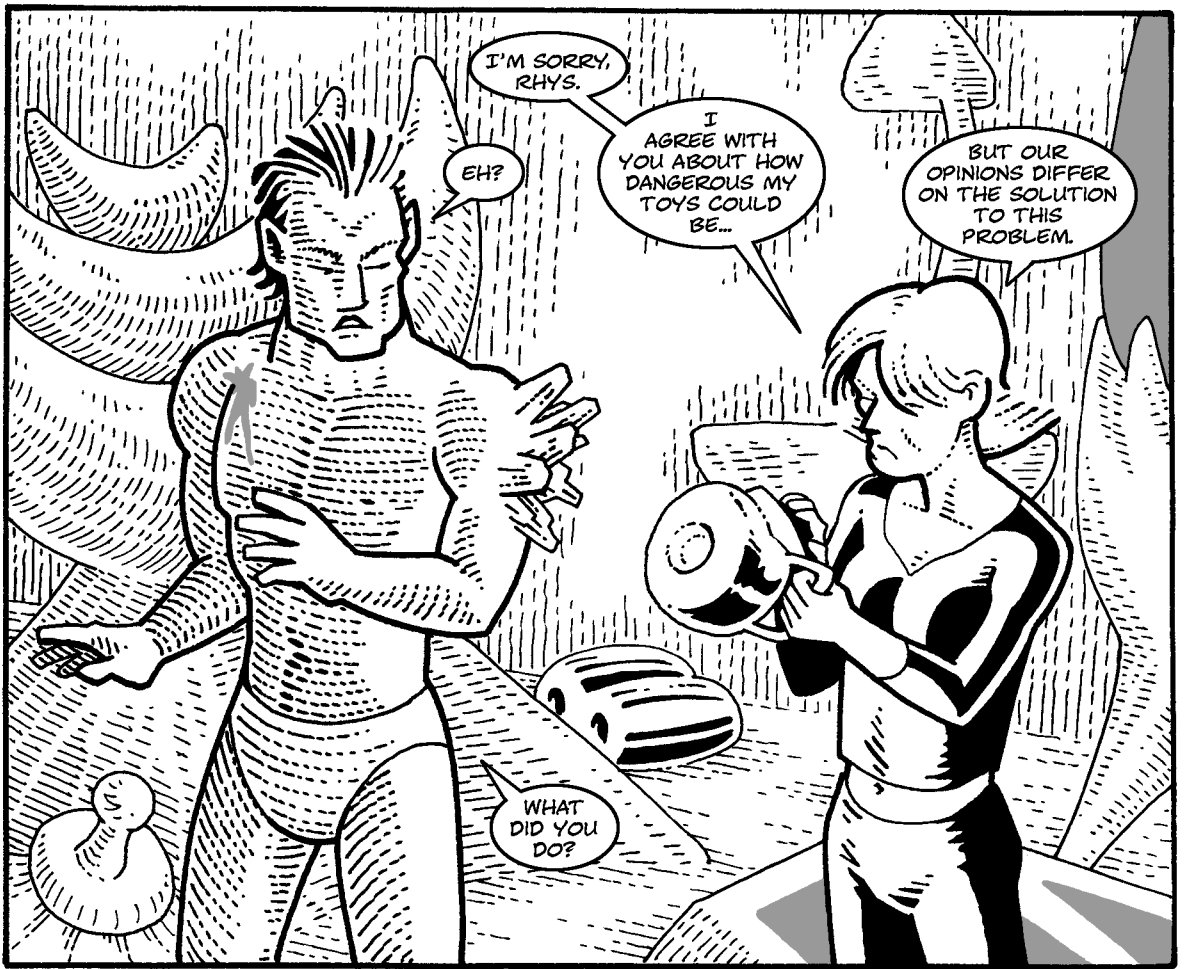
AFTER ALL THIS, GIRL, YOU MUST AGREE THAT THESE SYNDIC DEVICES ARE DANGEROUS.

LOOK AT THIS STUFF! AND EACH PIECE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DESTROY THE GALAXY.

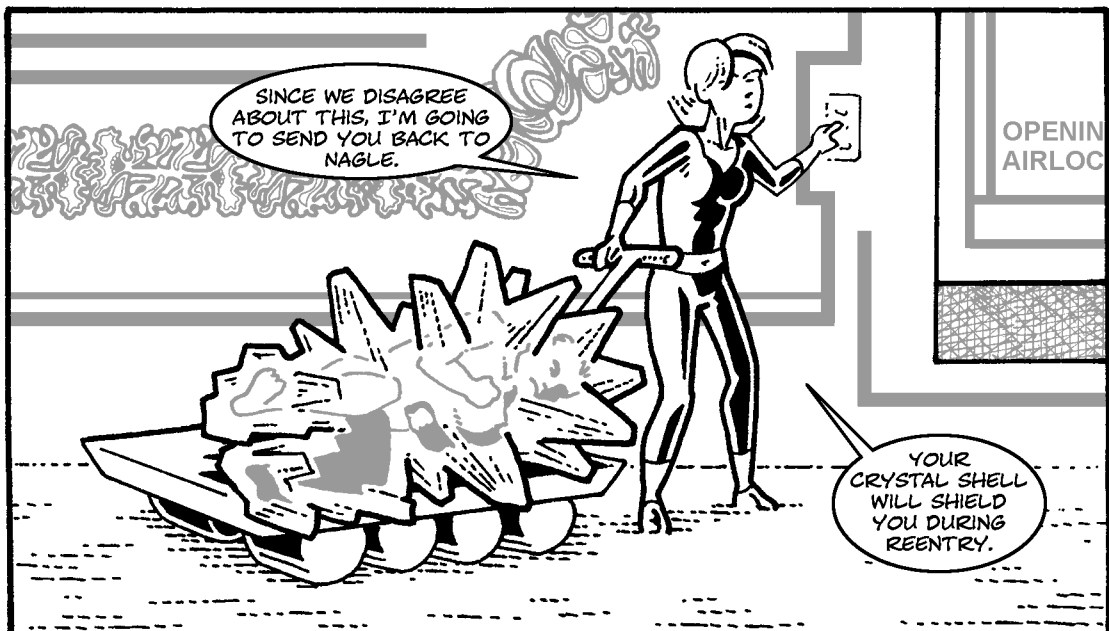
THEY HAVE TO BE DESTROYED, NARLI.

GANTRY ONLY GOT HIS HANDS ON A FEW OF MY DEVICES.

THE REST OF THEM ARE SAFELY HIDDEN AWAY.





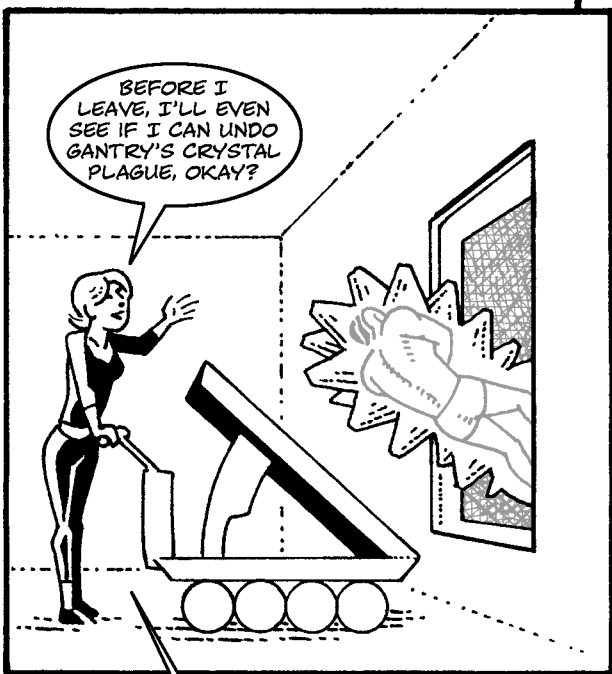


SINCE WE DISAGREE ABOUT THIS, I'M GOING TO SEND YOU BACK TO NAGLE.

YOUR CRYSTAL SHELL WILL SHIELD YOU DURING REENTRY.



BY THE TIME YOUR CRYSTAL DISSOLVES, I'LL BE LONG GONE.



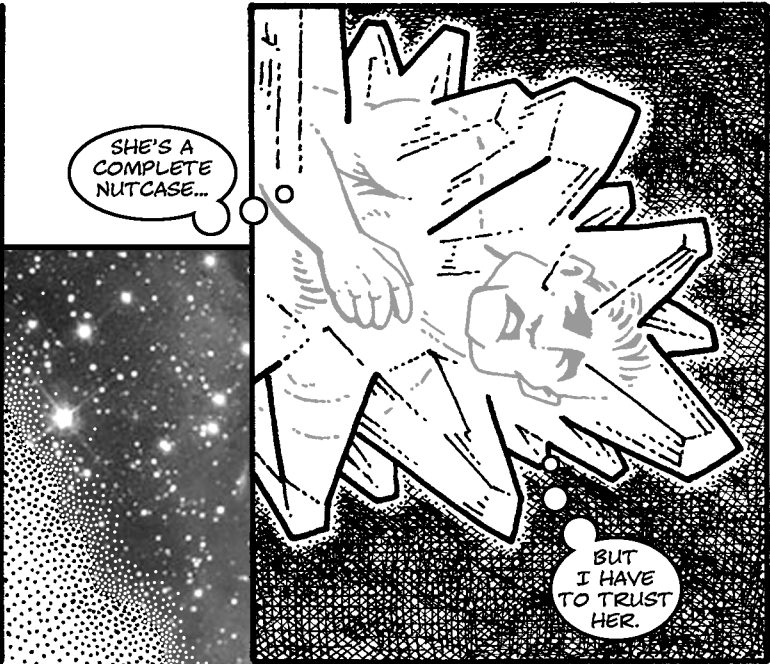
BEFORE I LEAVE, I'LL EVEN SEE IF I CAN UNDO GANTRY'S CRYSTAL PLAGUE, OKAY?



HAPPY LANDINGS.

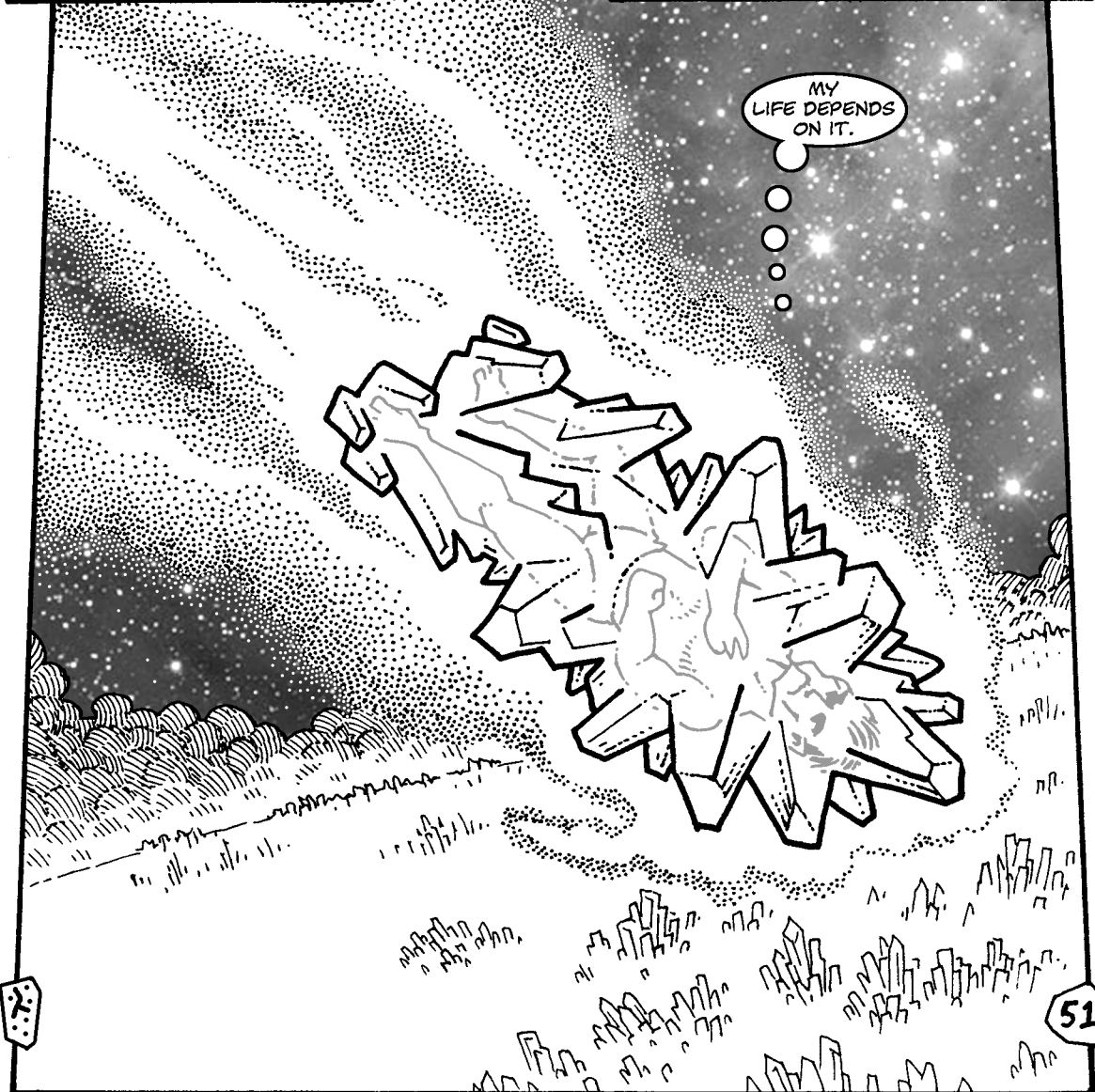


AW...I FORGOT TO THANK HIM FOR RESCUING ME.



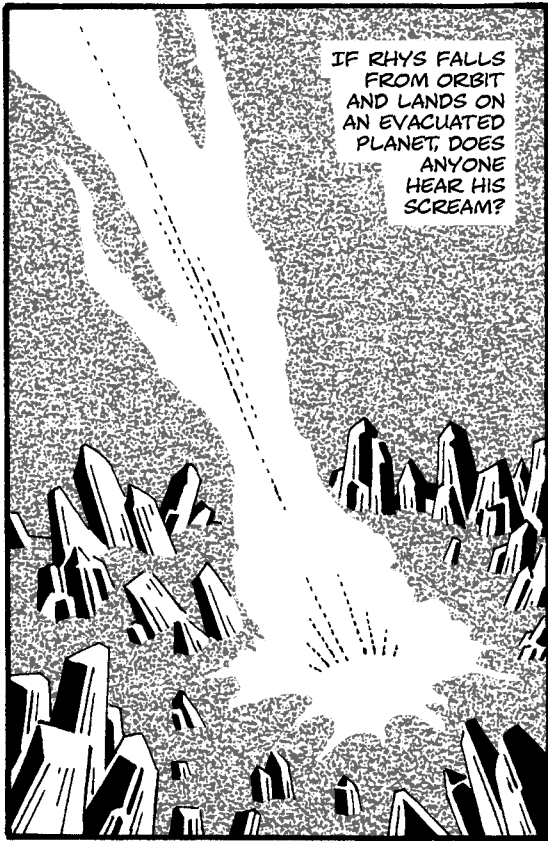
SHE'S A COMPLETE NUTCASE...

BUT I HAVE TO TRUST HER.



MY LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.





IF RHY'S FALLS FROM ORBIT AND LANDS ON AN EVACUATED PLANET, DOES ANYONE HEAR HIS SCREAM?



HUH--

HOW ABOUT THAT...

FOR ONCE, THAT LITTLE SCHEMER WAS TELLING THE TRUTH.



THE CRYSTAL PROTECTED ME FROM REENTRY BURN AND IMPACT... AND NOW IT'S DISSOLVING.





WOUNDED AND STRANDED IN HIS UNDERWEAR ON AN EMPTY WORLD...

WITH A PRICE STILL ON HIS HEAD...



ESCAPING THIS PLIGHT WILL BE DIFFICULT.



BUT RHY'S WILL ESCAPE.



HE'S A HUNTED MAN WITH A PURPOSE.



# NOTES FROM THE ATTIC

While working on the "Myriad Quest" graphic novel, notions of a sequel were percolating in the back of my brain. And by the time I started work of that sequel, "Myriad Threat," I knew it was going to end up a trilogy.

That said, let's sneak into the attic and have a peek at the creative process, eh?

The majority of work on "Myriad Threat" was completed nearly a month before the Kickstarter campaign to fund it. Hey, the Muse hit me, and I've learned to trust her instincts. I left several pages in rough pencil form, though. These featured characters (integral and incidental) that I intended to offer as pledge incentives in the Kickstarter campaign. (This practice was originally suggested to me by Norman Rafferty at Sanguine Games; it was, he pointed out, "a standard thing in these crowd-funding projects.") The process went very nicely with "Myriad Quest," so while doing "Myriad Threat" I actually left certain characters undefined throughout the story, to accommodate readers who wanted to get this involved.

In fact, one of these open characters got snatched up prior to the launch of the Kickstarter campaign. I was talking with Sid Sondergard (who had pledged for a character in "Myriad Quest"), and when I mentioned I was working on a sequel book, he immediately asked for one of the characters in the new book. I proceeded to describe what roles were open, and he eagerly picked Gantry, feeling it'd be fun to be a villain this time. (In "Myriad Quest," Sid played the role of Professor Yonder, a scholar who initially got Narli interested in the subject of hidden vaults of ancient Syndic hardware.)

The fun continued...

During the Kickstarter campaign, the two remaining integral character roles were snatched up by pledgers. Isaac McCool was the first to respond once the campaign was over, so he got first pick. It turned out that Isaac had pledged to get his wife, Yrene Otaiza Diaz, a role in the graphic novel. And he picked the second character.

A momentary digression... I thought I was being clever devising a situation in which I could offer the same character twice: Karloff the geneticist...and his clone that got activated once he was killed. I saw Karloff as a cunning individual who regularly dealt with the seedy underbelly of civilization. Clearly he anticipated that some clients might be disreputable enough to kill him once they had what they wanted. So...a cunning Karloff would have a supply of back-up clones ready to be activated by a death rattle circuit. A recent memory recording would be programmed into the new body's brain. But...if Karloff was really cunning, he'd set himself up in a different body, thereby helping him to hide from his murderer. (And thereby allowing me to treat Karloff as two separate characters.)

And here Isaac wanted the clone role for his wife! This literally accented Karloff's cunning. Not only was it a different body—that body was a different sex! (These are the kind of twists that

people expect in my stories—and here it had come about because of external factors. I love chaos theory.)

But it got weirder...

When I explained the scene (Karloff getting killed and coming back as a clone—which would be Yrene) to Isaac, he promptly asked if the role of the Karloff-who-gets-killed was open, for he was interested in it. This notion tickled my fancy—Isaac-as-Karloff gets killed and comes back in his wife's body. But...that role was supposed to go to Sean Mahan, the other pledger.

Contacting Sean, I explained what was going on. Would he have a problem relinquishing the role of the Karloff-who-gets-killed? I told him I would do a new scene with an open character for him. He agreed.

So I got to have Karloff not only switch bodies but also cross genders.

Meanwhile, now I had to come up with a new scene for Sean's character.

Now keep in mind: the majority of the graphic novel was already done. Finding a spot where I could add a scene was going to be problematic. Not only was the flow-of-the-story a consideration, but I had to maintain the left/right pagination of the pages. I endeavor to put surprise moments on the left, so you discover them when you turn the page. Understandably, I didn't want to spoil a "reveal" by switching it to the right side of the spread. This meant that any scene I injected into the story had to be an even number of pages, so that the following pages would retain their proper left/right alignment. (I'm sorry to bore you with physical pagination concerns, but you'll see that dealing with the matter at hand was severely limited by this overall pagination consideration.)

When I finally came up with a scene that worked (not only fitting into the flow but actually enhancing the storyline), I found that it ran three pages. It wouldn't comfortably fit in two pages, while I didn't want to stretch things out to four pages. Dilemma... counterbalanced by the discovery that this uneven insert bumped at few "reveal" scenes from right to left so that they worked better. Adapting to Murphy's Law has always been part of my creative process, so I went with the three page insert (being the scene in which Rhys first meets Monsieur Turgo and his lovely carry-girl Natasha).

For a while, I toyed with the notion of adding a single page of Rhys inside the gene-juggler's regeneration cubicle. But—what would happen? I didn't want to clutter things with more recap. Inspection? No, by this point Rhys' character was pretty well-defined. What about a flashback? Not to "Myriad Quest," but maybe something from his childhood...something he learned from his father? No, wait, Rhys was raised in a crèche. Frustration...

At this stage, the spots I could insert a new scene were fairly limited. If it wasn't going to be inside the regen cubicle, the only other place was after he left Karloff's lab, in which Rhys was leaving Chasm right away. What was there left for him to do before his departure?

Then I realized I was "remembering" the storyline prior to the introduction of Monsieur Turgo. The crime-boss was a potential loose thread—something I could handle in my one-page insert! Hurray!

Things continued to fluctuate, though...

For when I sat down to do this second scene with Turgo, the exchange I envisioned was way too

complicated to fit in just a single page. In fact, even if I expanded the scene to three pages (to preserve the book's intended pagination) it would still be a tight squeeze. By this point, I'd had enough of Fate's playful interference. I went with three pages and dropped an entire conversation tangent concerning Rhys' honesty (which I only mention to be able to cite one lost line I really like: "Honest men always have something to hide.").

It's kinda strange that this progression of extra scenes led to the creation of the Natasha character. You see, Sean supplied me with a batch of pictures of himself so I could learn to draw him as Monsieur Turgo. A number of those pix were of Sean and his wife, Sheila. When I decided that Turgo would be an Artificial Intelligence, I wanted to do something more interesting than have him appear on a screen or as a hologram. What about someone carrying a screen on which Turgo would appear? This made me smile, so I went with it. And hey, Turgo was a crime-boss, so why not give him a moll? A servant girl to carry his personal display screen. Each development made me smile anew. But...while scripting that first scene with Rhys, Turgo and Natasha, the lines I was giving her showed a depth of personality. As Natasha moved from a conceptually empty character to a servant to a carry-girl, she evolved...and then blossomed in the scripting into Turgo's partner (maybe even lover, definitely a confidante). When it came time to deal with Natasha's appearance, it seemed karmic to use Sean's wife as the model, for Natasha wouldn't even exist if I hadn't created a whole new scene to accommodate his displaced character role in the graphic novel.

Then, in the second Turgo scene, again my subconscious seasoned Natasha with extra depth, revealing that her affection for Turgo was so strong that she vowed vengeance against Rhys for indirectly causing his death.

We will see more of Natasha in "Myriad Doom," the trilogy's final chapter.

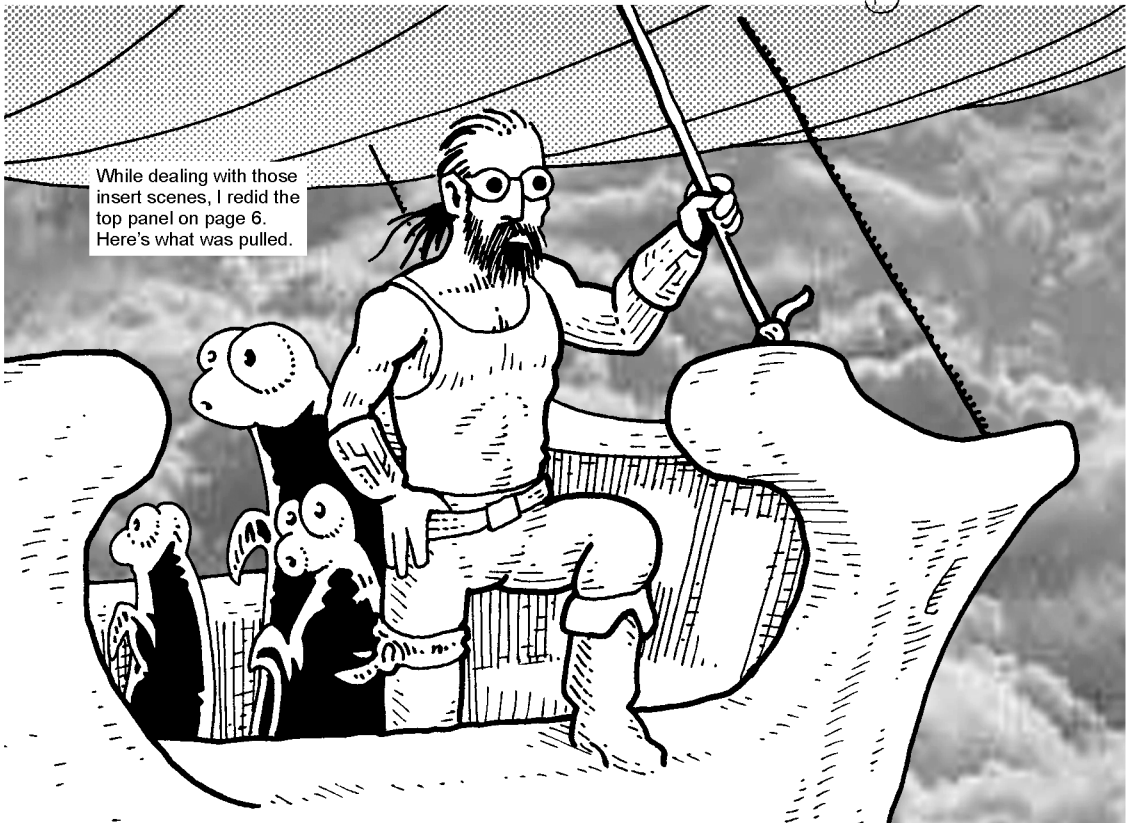
Meanwhile, we have a special cameo appearance by Norm Rafferty's father, Carl Holmgren, on page 11. He's the guy with the flask in the far right of the last panel.

Maintaining a strong connection with the "Myriad Song" RPG (which this trilogy was inspired by), several of the aliens who appeared in "Myriad Threat" were among the species from Sanguine's "Myriad Aliens" RPG (since many of the aliens in the latter were designed by myself at Sanguine's request), bringing things full circle. In fact, the Drozan bounty hunter's close-up in the first panel on page 3 was based on an unused sketch for the "Myriad Aliens" book. The Teleost species was designed for the same book, and I liked their look so much I made Commander Loren one.

In conclusion, I want to extend a special tip of the top hat to everyone who contributed to the Kickstarter campaign that funded this project. Your support is earnestly appreciated. Doing these Myriad graphic novels has given me the opportunity to flex my black-&-white skills in my favorite genre: deep space science fiction. I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed doing it.

That sounds so cliché—but it's no exaggeration. I REALLY enjoyed doing this graphic novel.

MATT Howard mach 11.15



## UNDERWRITERS

Sean Mahan  
Ike McCool  
Sid Sondergard

## RECIPIENTS OF THE CONFED AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN EXPEDITIONARY DIPLOMACY

Joe Crow  
James Redekop  
Carl Rigney  
Allan Rosenberg  
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Michael Manning  
Kevin J. "Womzilla" Maroney  
Karl Maurer  
SF Meacock  
Frankie Mundens  
Robert Ngan  
Frank Edward Nora  
David Pardoe  
Meg Phillips  
Steve Raiteri  
Carl Richter  
Paul Ripley  
Paul Schroeer-Hannemann  
Trip Space-Parasite  
John Stubbs  
Margaret Trauth  
Jason X

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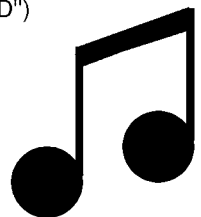
# SOUNDS in the ATTIC

As most of my readers know, eclectic music plays a vital role in my creative process.

While working on the basic story and raw pencils, I confined my sonic inspiration to the works of Van der Graaf Generator (with a few Peter Hammill albums thrown in).

From that point on, my musical selections became more varied. In most instances, I'd binge with numerous releases by a particular band, or return to their works days later. In some instances (\*) my listening was confined to live recordings. A few times, my choices were specific albums by certain bands (these are noted).

Astralasia  
Banco del Mutuo Soccorso  
BVdub  
Miles Davis \*  
Eat Static ("Dead Planet")  
Galactic Anthems ("Sinew & Lace")  
King Crimson \*  
Ligro ("Dictionary 3")  
Love & Rockets ("Seventh Dream of Teenage Heaven")  
Magazine ("Secondhand Daylight")  
Magma \*  
Mythos ("Jules Verne Forever")  
The Orb ("Moonbuilding 2703 AD")  
Premiata Fonia Marconi  
Terje Rypdal  
Klaus Schulze \*  
Yoch'ko Seffer  
Shylock  
Tangerine Dream \*  
Jannik Top  
Verto ("Krig Volubilis")  
Zao



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Perhaps best known as the writer/artist of the "Those Annoying Post Bros." comic book series, Matt Howarth has many outlets for his twisted creativity. And all of them are notoriously "strange"

During his career of four decades, Matt has authored and drawn a variety of unconventional comic books and graphic novels, and contributed graphic fiction to numerous publications in the fields of comics and science fiction...and music. For, among all of Matt's creative outlets, there runs the influence of alternative and electronic music. He has found several ways to achieve this crossover of diverse genres.

From 1987 to 1994, Matt did a comic book series called "Savage Henry" (about the wacky adventures of a guitarist from an alternate reality). Most issues of this series featured authorized guest appearances by real musicians; among them: the Residents, Hawkwind, Moby, Ash Ra Tempel, Klaus Schulze, Nash the Slash, Foetus, Yello, Wire, Steve Roach, Richard Pinhas, Ron Geesin, David Borden, and more. Conrad Schnitzler (an original member of Tangerine Dream and Kluster) was a regular guest in this series and several graphic novels.

In the early 1980s, Matt did a minicomic series entitled "The Comix of Two Cities", based on life-forms created by the Residents in the band's "Mark of the Mole" trilogy of albums. In the late 1990s, these stories were reprinted as a comic book series.

Perhaps one of his strangest creations is Matt's "Konny & Czu" series, chronicling the antics of a pair of interstellar con artists. Besides Matt's innovative storytelling and meticulous art, what makes these strips unique is that they feature absolutely no human beings or any remotely terrestrial lifeforms.

Another of Matt's sci-fi creations is the "Keif Llama: Xenotech" series, featuring the adventures of a plucky troubleshooter coping with problems between mankind and alien civilizations.

Since the early 1980s, Matt has been doing music reviews, first as a weekly comicstrip, and since 1998 as text reviews for his Sonic Curiosity website.

A culmination (in Matt's opinion) of his desire to merge comics with music has been a series of collaborations he's done with a variety of internationally renowned musicians: in which a comic strip by him comes as a PDF file on the CD, while the band's music is a loose soundtrack inspired by his story. So far, he has done this type of collab with: Arthur Brown, Michael Chocholak, German synthesists Fanger & Schonwalder, Galactic Anthems, ex-Soft Machine bassist Hugh Hopper, Legendary Pink Dots, Mental Anguish, Bill Nelson, Ozone Player, Quarkspace, Radio Massacre International, Conrad Schnitzler, Klaus Schulze, and Syndromeda, with more in the works. Matt has also written a collection of short stories (Enriched Visions) inspired by the ambient soundscapes of Robert Rich.

It is plainly evident that Matt Howarth is obsessed with strange music, and he is not about to stop incorporating such things into his creative efforts.

Among Matt's notable non-musically related works are: two issues of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (the adult edition); scripts for DC Comics' "Justice League of America"; doing comedy comics for the International Star Trek Conventions in the early 1970s (before the fans coined the term trekkies); doing illustrations for several novels by SF author Philip K. Dick; work on Harlan Ellison's "Dream Corridor" series; illustrations for Warren Ellis' "Transmetropolitan" series; an original graphic story collaboration in 1977 with SF Grand Master Hal Clement; numerous illustrations for the 1984 Dune Encyclopedia; "Tryxxx", an erotic SF graphic novel; strips for the SubGenius Church; work for Phil Foglio's "Xxenophile" series; Several adaptations of classic literature (by H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allen Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle, Jack London, and The Cabinet of Dr Caligari) for Graphic Classics; cover art and numerous interior illustrations for the textbook series "Strange Tales from Liaozhai" by ancient Chinese poet Pu Songling; graphic adaptations of stories by award winning authors Greg Bear and Vernor Vinge for the World Science Fiction Conventions; and--believe it or not--even more.

Since 2000, Matt has self-published over 100 digital publications, all of which are available from his online catalog.

It may stop, but it never ends.

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MATT'S ATTIC (main website)  
[www.matthowarth.com](http://www.matthowarth.com)  
BUGTOWN MALL (online catalog)  
[www.bugtownmall.com](http://www.bugtownmall.com)  
SONIC CURIOSITY (music reviews)  
[www.soniccuriosity.com](http://www.soniccuriosity.com)  
FACEBOOK PAGE  
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# EVERYBODY IN THE GALAXY WANTS HIM DEAD!

The alien masters of the Syndic ruled over the ten-thousand planets... until they were gone, leaving the Myriad Worlds to their own devices. Only the extremely brave or the terribly foolish would dare explore the mysteries that the Syndics left behind...

Warrior Rhys thought it was all over, once he'd destroyed that cache of Syndic hardware... But when he discovers galactic terrorists using that same forbidden technology, he makes it his mission to stop them.

Alien drive-bys, suns going nova, and a film crew shooting a very peculiar documentary can only be distractions from the true danger of the MYRIAD THREAT.

