

GIRL GENIUS[®]

AGATHA HETERODYNE

THE SLEEPING CITY

A Gaslamp Fantasy
with
ADVENTURE, ROMANCE & MAD SCIENCE



Story by Kaja & Phil Foglio
Drawings by Phil Foglio
Colors by Cheyenne Wright





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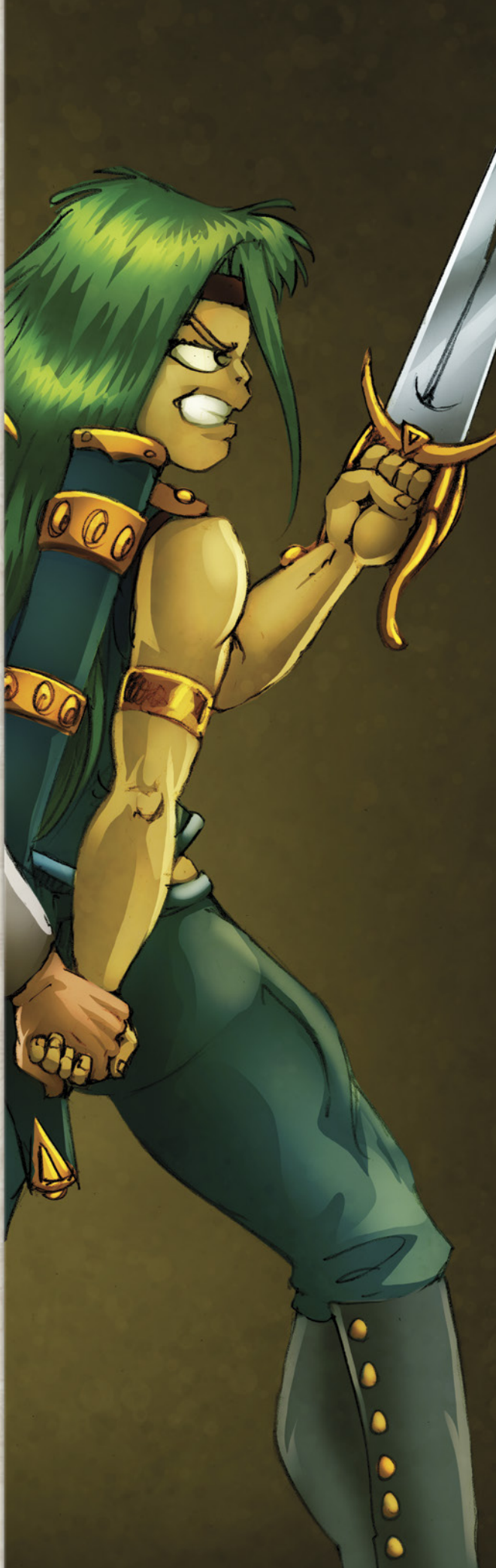
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• THE STORY SO FAR •

Agatha Clay was an unlucky student at Transylvania Polygnostic University, until an accident revealed her hidden “spark:” a capacity for mad science beyond the reach of all but the most gifted. This alone would have been enough to bring her to the attention of Baron Wulfenbach, the powerful Spark who holds the fractious ruling houses of Europa under his thumb, but Agatha is *also* the last of the famous Heterodyne family—beloved folk heroes who disappeared many years ago. In addition, the Baron now has excellent reason to believe that Agatha is actually a malevolent entity known as “The Other,” who almost destroyed Europa twenty years before. He isn’t entirely wrong, either. While held prisoner in the town of Sturmhalten, the personality of the “Other,” actually Agatha’s long-missing mother, took over Agatha’s body. Agatha has managed to regain control, but the “Other” is still there, currently held in check by a clever device.

After many adventures, Agatha made her way across Europa to Mechanicsburg, the ancestral home of the Heterodyne family. There, she reclaimed Castle Heterodyne—the town’s self-aware mechanical fortress—and was accepted by both the Castle and town as heir to the ruling Heterodyne family.

Immediately afterward, Mechanicsburg faced a storm of attacks—from the small, bizarre armies of ambitious Sparks to a massive siege by the great Wulfenbach Empire itself.

Now, with things looking grim, Agatha believes she has found a way to restore the Castle’s legendary defensive power...



MY GOODNESS!
THE LIGHTNING
JUST *KEEPS*
STRIKING!

HMM. YUP.
THAT SHOULD
DO IT.

DO *WHAT?*
WHAT WILL IT
DO?

THAT'S A
GOOD
QUESTION.

WHAT
WILL IT
DO?

WELL, UM...
IDEALLY, THE CASTLE
WILL BE REVITALIZED
AND TAKE CONTROL OF
THE TOWN'S
DEFENSES.

...AGATHA?

OOOH!

AAAAH!

YEAH, I'VE
BEEN WONDERING
ABOUT THAT.

HOW MUCH DO
YOU PEOPLE KNOW
ABOUT EVERYTHING IT
CAN REALLY *DO*?



OH, WELL, I'M
NOT SURE,
REALLY.

EARLIER
TODAY, IT WAS
COLLAPSING
STREETS AND
ACTIVATING
BRIDGES AND
TRAPS...

THINGS
LIKE THAT.

BUT SO
MUCH HAS
BEEN *LOST*...



sigh. I WAS
AFRAID OF
THAT...

AFRAID—
WHY?!

HOW LONG
DID IT TAKE TO
BUILD THE
CASTLE?

THE PRESENT
VERSION?
AH—ABOUT TEN
YEARS, I THINK.



—AND THE BARON
HAS BEEN KEEPING A
SERIES OF THE MOST
WHACKED-OUT SPARKS IN
EUROPA LOCKED UP IN
THERE FOR *OVER*
FIFTEEN.

THEY'VE BEEN
REPLACING AND
REPAIRING AND
IMPROVING—

FOLLOWING
THE CASTLE'S
ORDERS WITH *NO*
QUESTIONS—



IT'S BEEN
OPERATING ON
NOTHING BUT THE
DREGS OF ITS
BACK-UP
POWER.

AND IT WAS
STILL ABLE TO
CONTROL ALL
THAT STUFF IN
TOWN?



THERE...
THERE'S NO
PLACE WE COULD
POSSIBLY RUN
TO, IS THERE?

...FIGURED
YOU GUYS WERE
USED TO THAT
SORT OF THING
BY NOW.



AGATHA! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

ARE YOU TRYING TO GET YOURSELF KILLED?!



OF COURSE NOT!

GIL-YOU'VE SEEN WHAT I CAN DO!

HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY UNDERESTIMATE ME LIKE THIS?

I'M KEEPING MYSELF ALIVE!

I'M KEEPING US ALL ALIVE-

ANY WAY I CAN!



CLAK!

I'M STARTING
TO BE AFRAID IT
MAY BE **TOO LATE**
FOR THAT!

**LISTEN TO
YOURSELF!**

YOU'RE OUT
OF CONTROL!

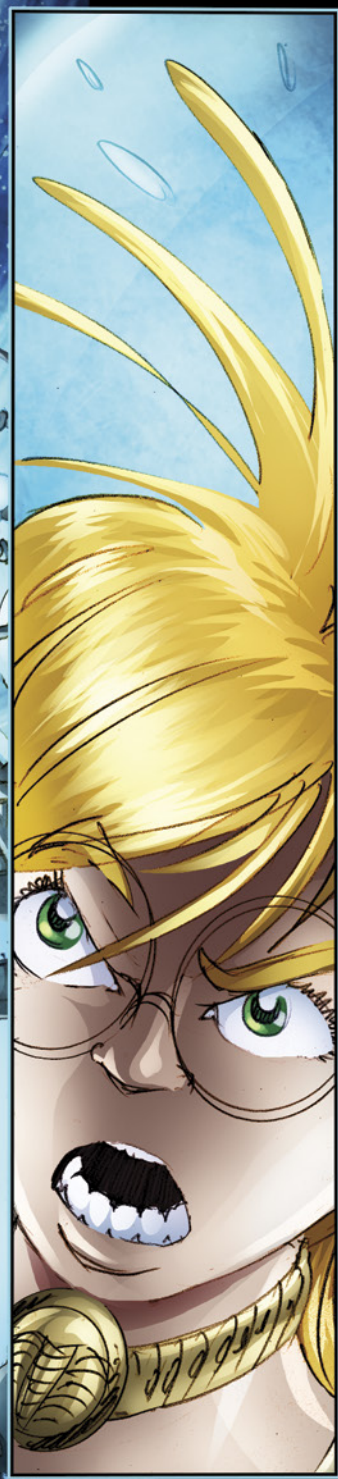
WHAT IF THE
OTHER HAS
ALREADY GOT YOU,
AND YOU HAVEN'T
EVEN **NOTICED?**

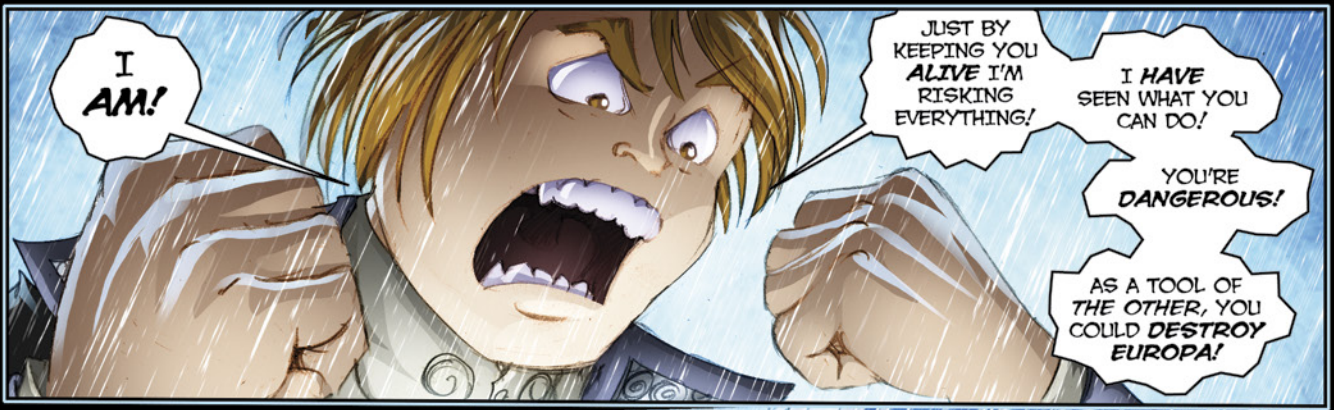
YOU CAN'T RUN
FREE! NOT LIKE
THIS!

MY FATHER
WILL NEVER RISK A
FULL RETURN OF THE
OTHER—OR ANYONE
LIKE HER!

OH? AND
WHAT ABOUT
YOU?

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
PREPARED TO RISK
ANYTHING.





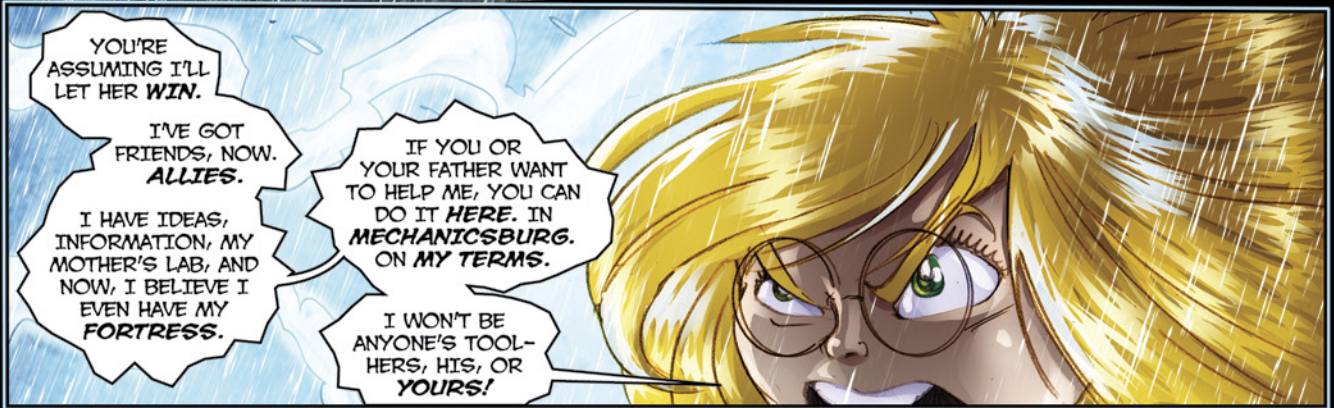
I AM!

JUST BY KEEPING YOU ALIVE I'M RISKING EVERYTHING!

I HAVE SEEN WHAT YOU CAN DO!

YOU'RE DANGEROUS!

AS A TOOL OF THE OTHER, YOU COULD DESTROY EUROPA!



YOU'RE ASSUMING I'LL LET HER WIN.

I'VE GOT FRIENDS, NOW. ALLIES.

I HAVE IDEAS, INFORMATION, MY MOTHER'S LAB, AND NOW, I BELIEVE I EVEN HAVE MY FORTRESS.

IF YOU OR YOUR FATHER WANT TO HELP ME, YOU CAN DO IT HERE. IN MECHANICSBURG. ON MY TERMS.

I WON'T BE ANYONE'S TOOL—HERS, HIS, OR YOURS!



WE'RE ALL TOOLS.



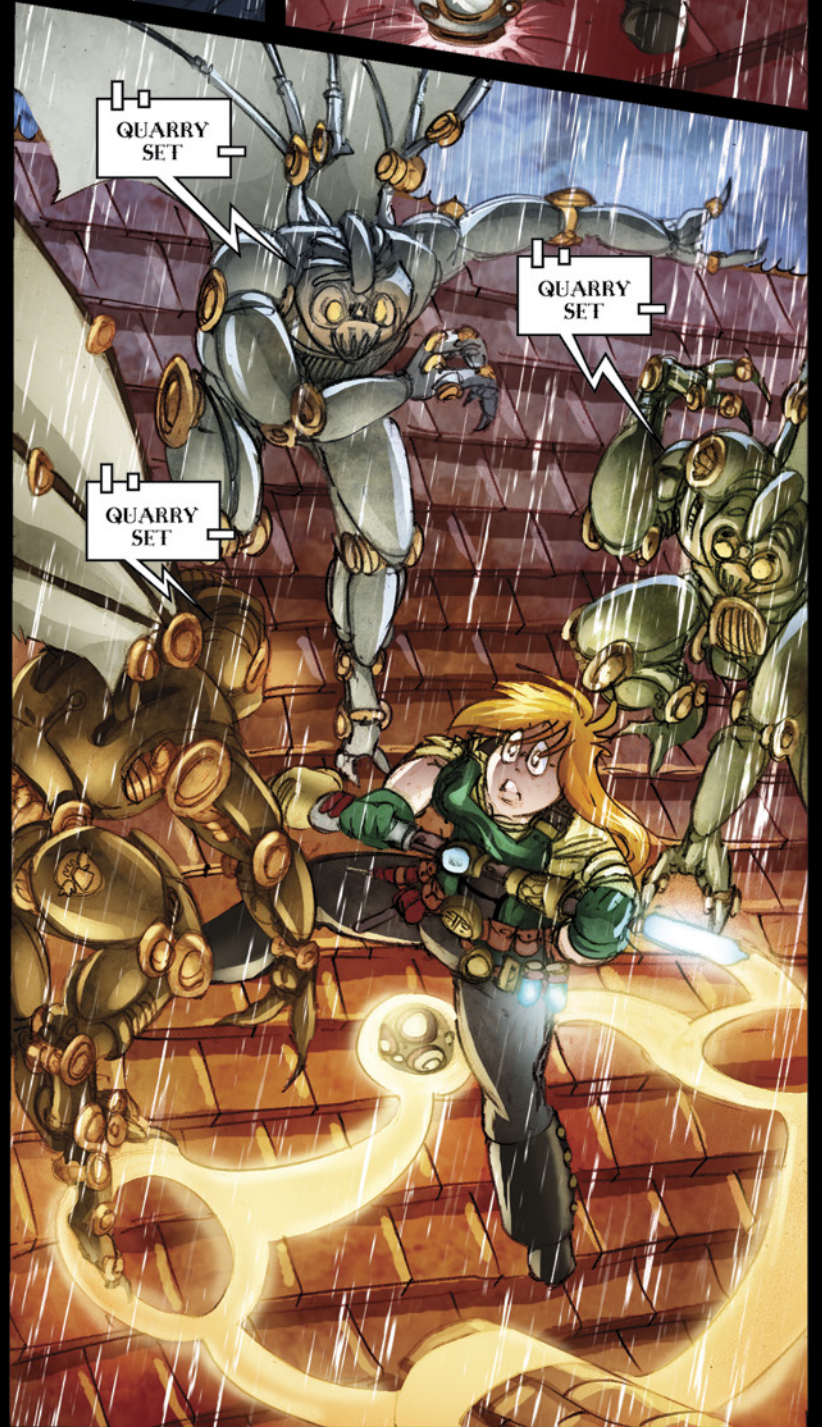
YOU'LL GET USED TO IT.



Spak!



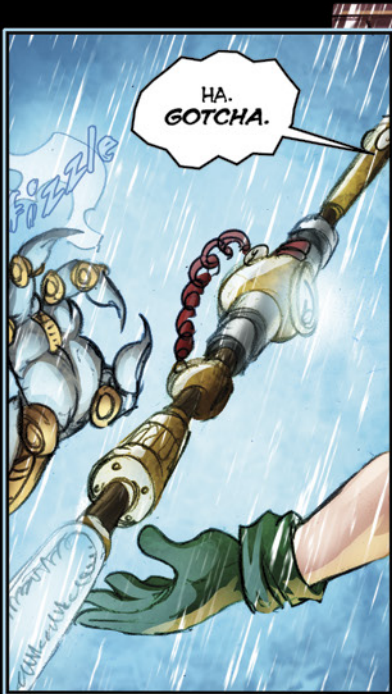
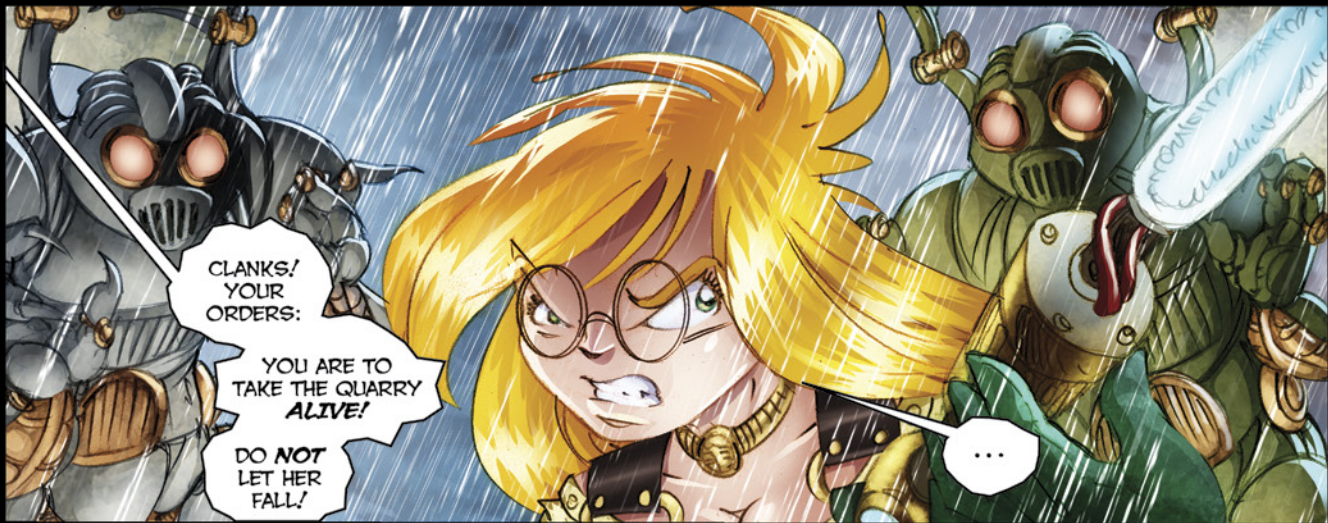
HUNT MODE ACTIVE

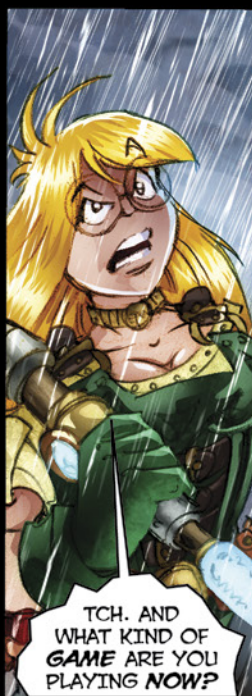
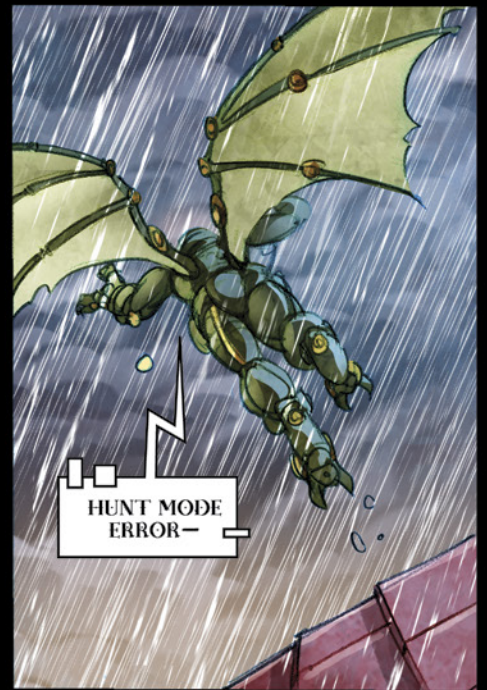


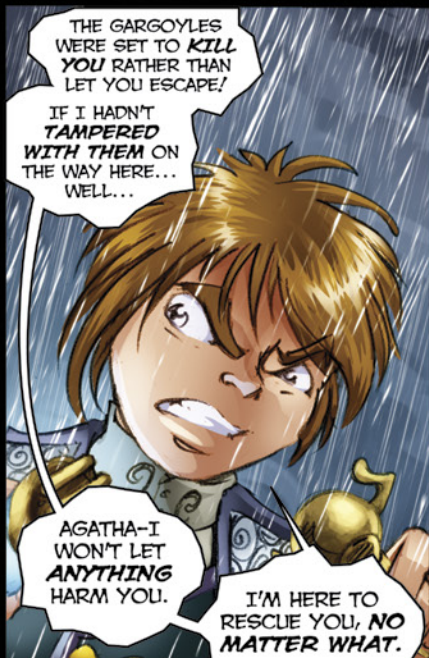
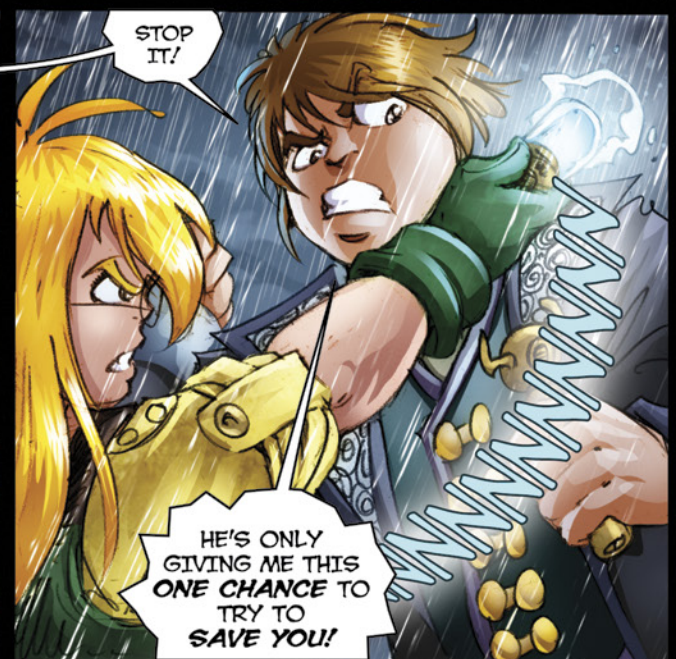
QUARRY SET

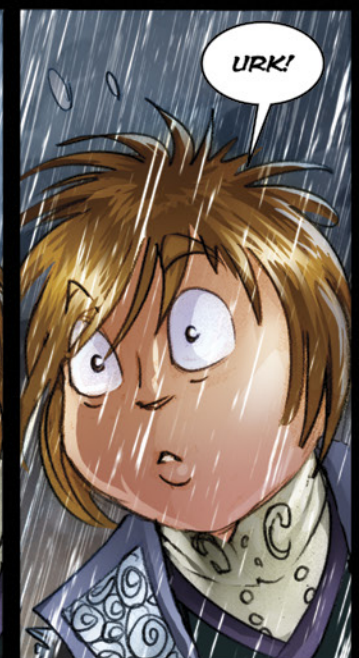
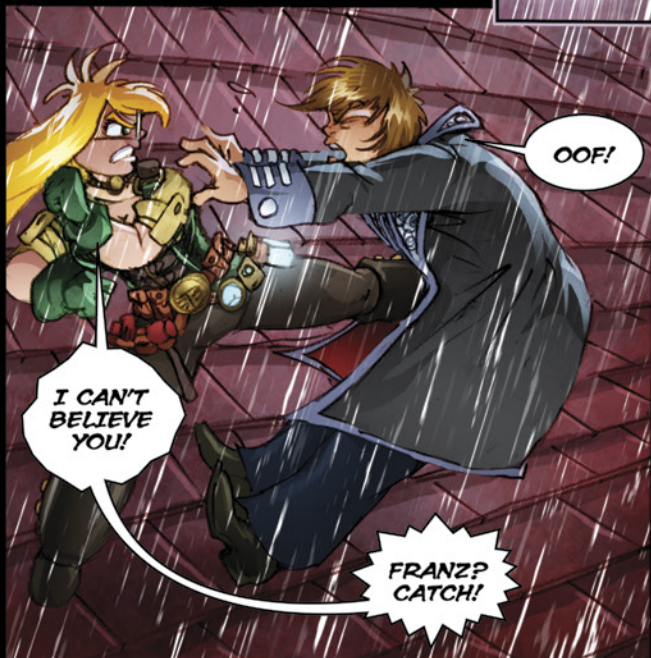
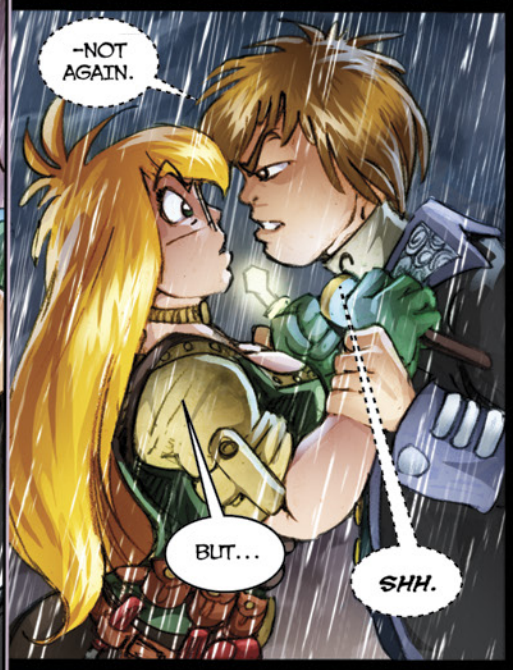
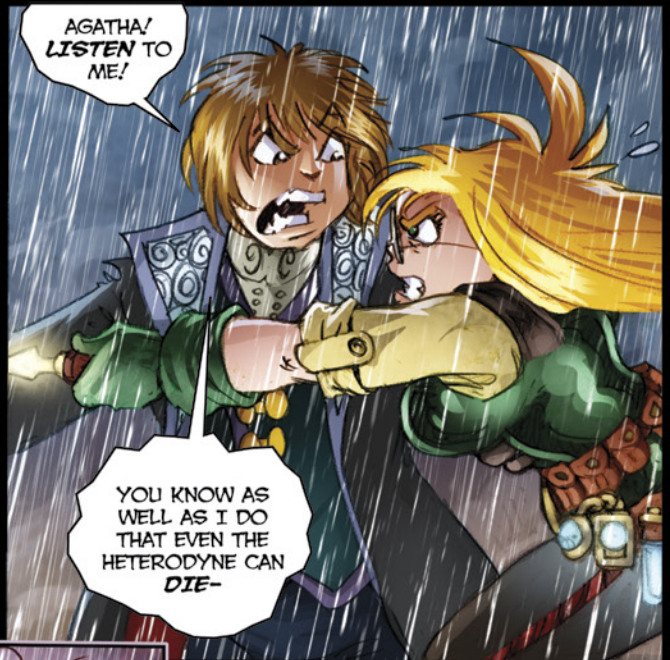
QUARRY SET

QUARRY SET











SO, KID-I DON'T THINK WE'VE BEEN PROPERLY INTRODUCED.

WHO THE HELL D'YOU THINK YOU ARE?

AH. SO SORRY.

GIL, THIS IS FRANZ.

FRANZ IS THE GREAT DRAGON OF MECHANICSBURG.

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN HIM ON THE TOWN ARMS.



FRANZ, THIS IS GILGAMESH WULFENBACH- SON OF BARON WULFENBACH, AND HEIR TO THE WULFENBACH EMPIRE. DESPITE THIS LITTLE SCENE-

I AM SOMEWHAT IN LOVE WITH HIM,



SO GET HIM OUT OF MY TOWN RIGHT NOW, BEFORE I UTTERLY DESTROY HIM!



HO HO! WITH PLEASURE, MISTRESS.

Zip

RRRGH!



AH, MISTRESS! THERE YOU ARE! ... AND SCREAMING DEFIANCE FROM THE HIGHEST TOWER, JUST AS I PREDICTED!

CASTLE! ARE YOU... ALL RIGHT?



OOOH, MY, YOU KNOW, I RATHER THINK I AM!

HEH HEH HEH...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ME PROVE IT?

YES! YES! YESYESYES YESYES YES!



THE STREETS OF MECHANICSBURG—

AW—AWRIGHT, BACK TO ATTENTION!

'THINK YOU ZOMBIES'D NEVER SEEN LIGHTNING BEFORE!

NOT LIKE THAT, I AIN'T!



SO WHATTA YA WORRIED ABOUT?

YER ALREADY DEAD, AINCHAP?

YEAH, AND I WANNA STAY THAT WAY!

WELL THEN, LET'S JUST DO OUR JOB, AWRIGHT?



WE'RE GONNA OVERRUN THIS TOWN, STOP THAT HETERODYNE GIRL, AND THEN WE'RE ALL—

WHAT THE—?!

WHOA! EARTHQUAKE!

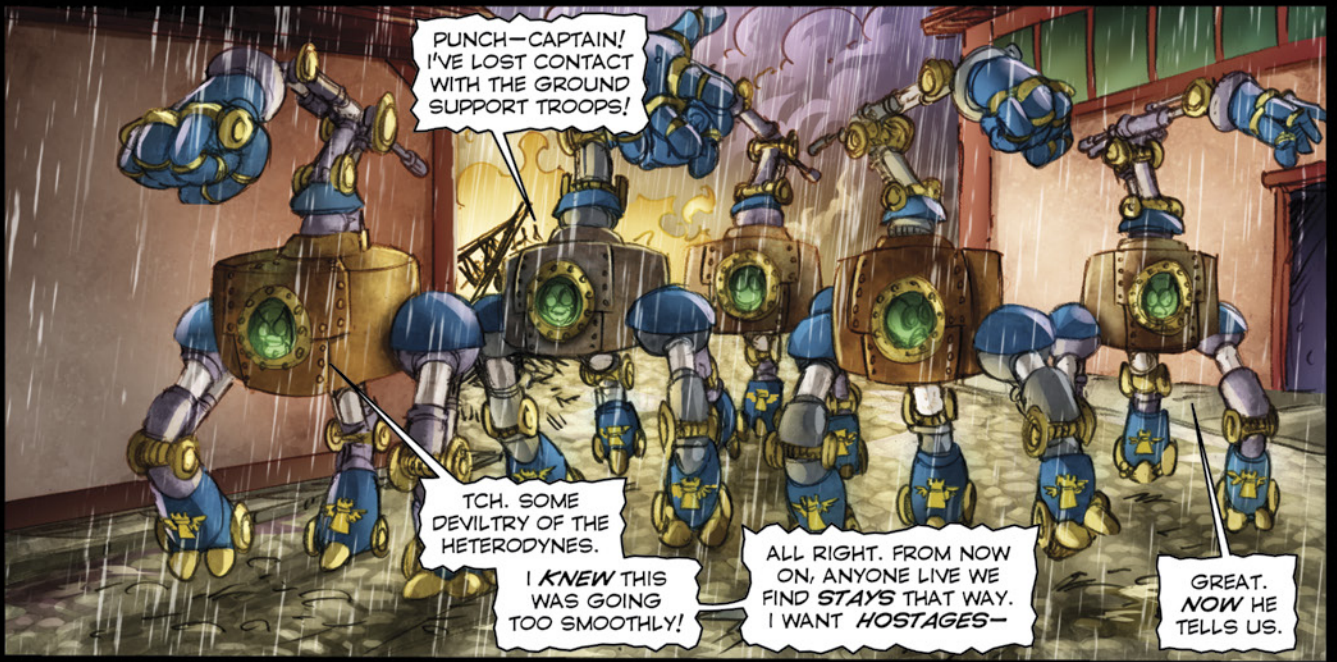


SIR?

EVERYBODY STAY CLOSE! UH—



AAAAA! AAAAA! AAAAA!



PUNCH-CAPTAIN!
I'VE LOST CONTACT
WITH THE GROUND
SUPPORT TROOPS!

TCH. SOME
DEVILRY OF THE
HETERODYNES.

I *KNEW* THIS
WAS GOING
TOO SMOOTHLY!

ALL RIGHT. FROM NOW
ON, ANYONE LIVE WE
FIND *STAYS* THAT WAY.
I WANT *HOSTAGES*—

GREAT.
NOW HE
TELLS US.



AND I WANT
US OUT OF
THE OPEN.

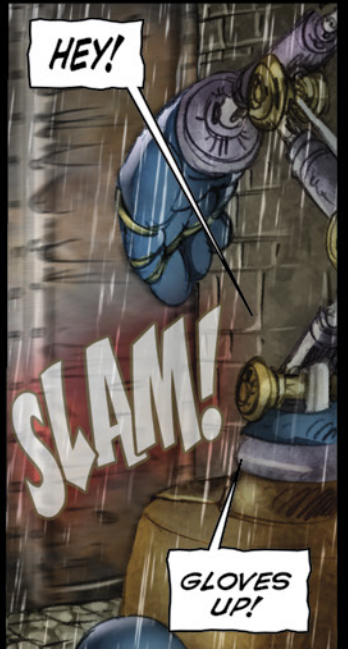
THERE'S AN ALLEY
STRAIGHT AHEAD,
PUNCH-CAPTAIN!

NO WINDOWS...
OVERHANGING
EAVES...
LOOKS
GOOD.



FORWARD!

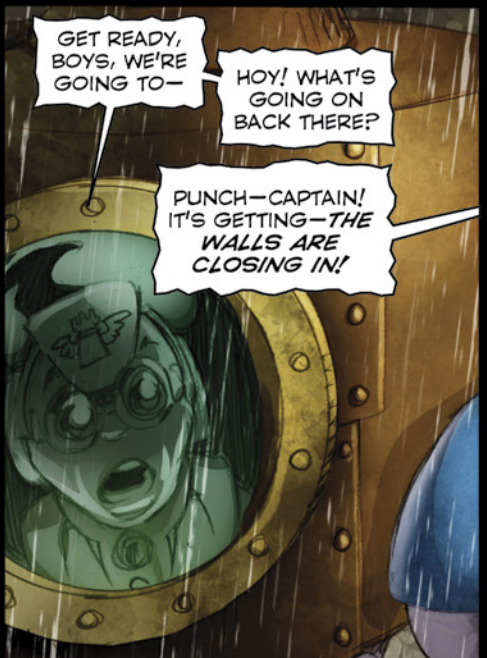
THOOMB! THOOMB! THOOMB! THOOMB!



HEY!

SLAM!

GLOVES
UP!



GET READY,
BOYS, WE'RE
GOING TO—

HOY! WHAT'S
GOING ON
BACK THERE?

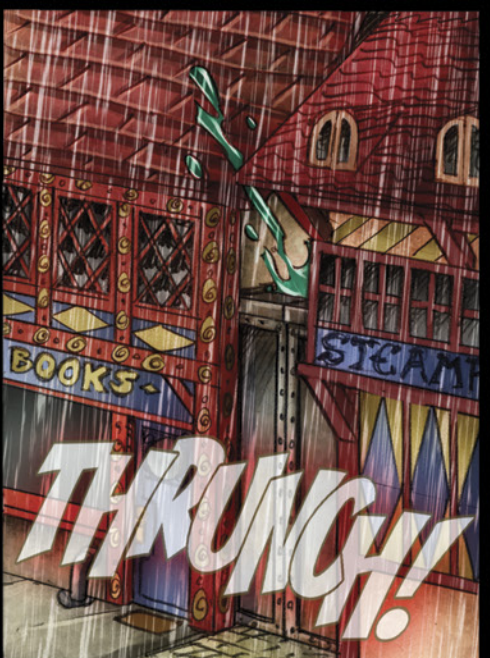
PUNCH-CAPTAIN!
IT'S GETTING—*THE
WALLS ARE
CLOSING IN!*



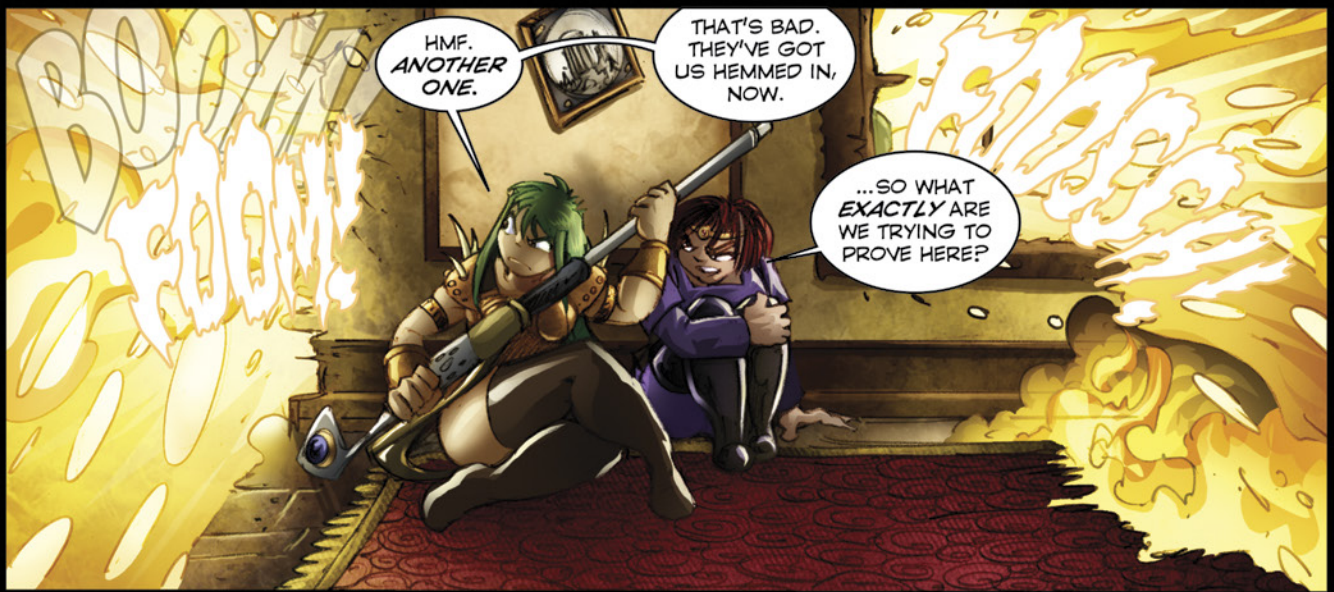
CLANG

BY THE
DEVIL AND
HIS HAT!
SPIKES?!

ASSUME
BRACE
FORMATION!



THROUGH!



HMF. ANOTHER ONE.

THAT'S BAD. THEY'VE GOT US HEMMED IN, NOW.

...SO WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE TRYING TO PROVE HERE?



THE BARON IS ATTACKING AGATHA'S TOWN.

WE'RE STOPPING HIM.

ONE MONSTER AT A TIME?

...WITH SOMETHING YOU RIPPED OFF A CLANK?



WELL... THAT HIGGS TOOK MY SWORDS...

STUPID! STUPID!

OH, COME ON. I'M NOT DOING SO BAD—

DID YOU SEE THAT LAST GUY'S FACE WHEN I—

NOT YOU, ME!



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!

YOUR COUNT IS WHAT? TWENTY-THREE?

TWENTY-FOUR IF YOU COUNT THAT BIG BLOATWALKER!

WHY AM I HERE? I'M NOT COOL LIKE YOU!

YOU'RE A REAL WARRIOR! YOU'RE GOOD AT THIS, AND YOU'RE FIGHTING FOR YOUR FRIEND—



YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE OUT HERE LIKE A COMPLETE IDIOT—

JUST TO... TO SHOW OFF FOR SOME GUY YOU HARDLY EVEN KNOW!



...YEAH, THAT'D BE THE STUPIDEST WAY TO DIE EVER.

COME ON. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE.

THAT'S AN OPTION?!



SOON—

I TOLD YOU IT WASN'T AN OPTION!

WE WEREN'T SURROUNDED WHEN WE CAME IN!

WELL, WE ARE NOW! WE'RE TRAPPED!

OKAY, THE FIRST THING YOU HAVE TO DO IS THINK POSITIVE!



OKAY. GOOD START. ...



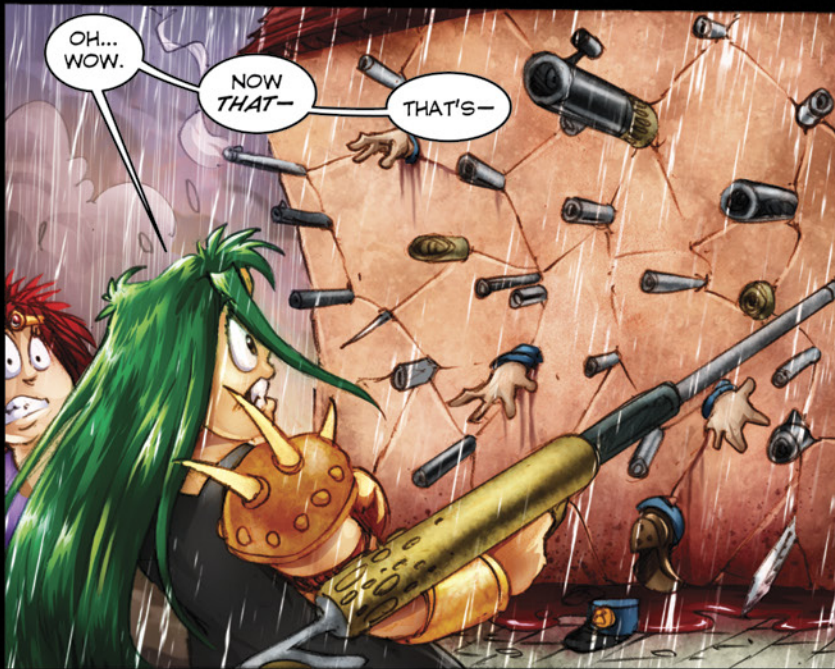
...BUT... BUT WHERE ARE THEY?

THERE WERE AT LEAST TWENTY OF THOSE CANNON-HAT GUYS BLOCKING THIS STREET!

THEY WERE JUST SHOOTING AT US!

THEY CAN'T HAVE DISAPPEARED COMPLETELY!

...THEY DIDN'T! LOOK!



OH... WOW.

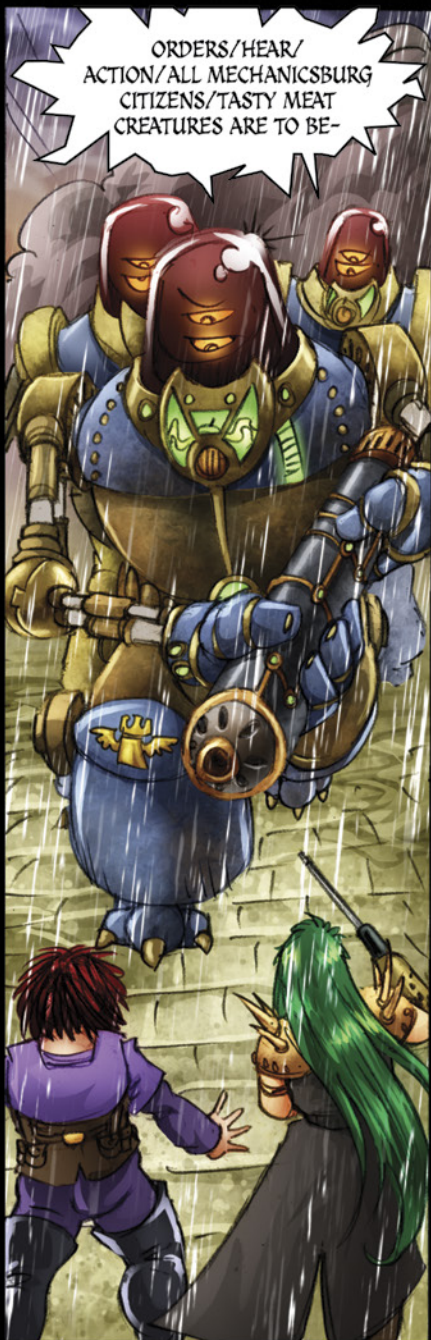
NOW THAT—

THAT'S—



THAT'S SOMETHING I'D EXPECT THE CASTLE TO DO!

HELLO, LADIES!





HOY! IZ MIZ ZEETHA!

HELLO DERE, POINTY GURL!

VE VOS! BUT DEN DE KESTLE TELLS US TO KNOCK IT OFF AND COME UP HERE, FAST-LIKE.

GUYS! HEY! YOU'RE SLACKING OFF!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE BUSY SOMEWHERE KILLING THINGS!

DUN KNOW VY-



I...GUESS THE CASTLE LIKES YOU.

HY TINK IT CONSIDERS US PART OV DE FURNITURE.

UND HY IZ OKEH VIT DOT!



VOT IZ HYU DOINK OUT OV BED?

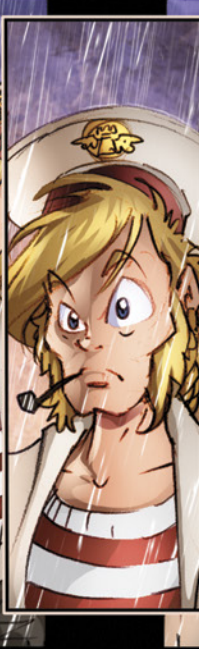
MAMMA SAID DOT-

THAT IS MAMMA'S OPINION.

I FEEL FINE!

HMM...UND HY TINK MEESTER HIGGS VOS VANTING DOT HYU LEESTEN TO HER?

DON'T TELL HIM!





HOLD ON—

WHY AM I RUNNING AWAY?



SO I'M UP HELPING DEFEND THE TOWN. SO WHAT?

UM—HALT?

I AM ZEETHA! DAUGHTER OF CHUMP!

WHAT'S HE GOING TO DO, SPANK ME?



HO! I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM TRY!

SMACK!

SHOULD I—A ROYAL PRINCESS OF SKIFANDER—

COWER IN MY BED WHILE MY FRIENDS FIGHT FOR THEIR LIVES? NEVER!



AND...AND WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS, ANYWAY?



I'M GOING TO GO BACK THERE—RIGHT NOW—AND TELL HIM WHAT I THINK OF HIS...HIS RIDICULOUS INTERFERENCE!



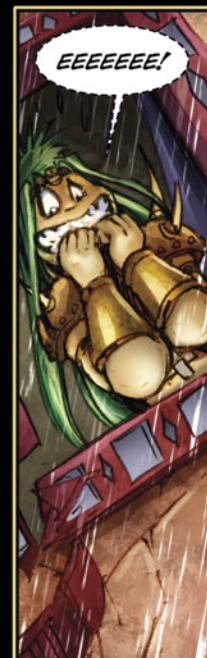
OH, JUST LOOK AT HIM, COMING AFTER ME LIKE HE HAS SOME KIND OF...OF RIGHT TO TELL ME—



RHAAAAAR!



WHOMP!



EEEEEEE!





WOW! BUT—I WONDER—*IS* HE COMING AFTER *ME*?



OH, MY. YES. OF COURSE HE IS.

I DO BELIEVE HE RATHER *LIKES* YOU, ACTUALLY.

ASTONISHING!

AH! YOU AGAIN!



ME AGAIN!

HE DOESN'T WANT TO ADMIT IT, YOU KNOW.

HEH HEH. HE'S *ALWAYS* BEEN A *STUBBORN* ONE.

BUT... HOW DO YOU—



OKAY. INTERESTING. I *KNOW* THERE'S SOMETHING *STRANGE* ABOUT HIM...

HM... PERHAPS I SHOULD *TELL* YOU...

BUT... IF I MAY INQUIRE—

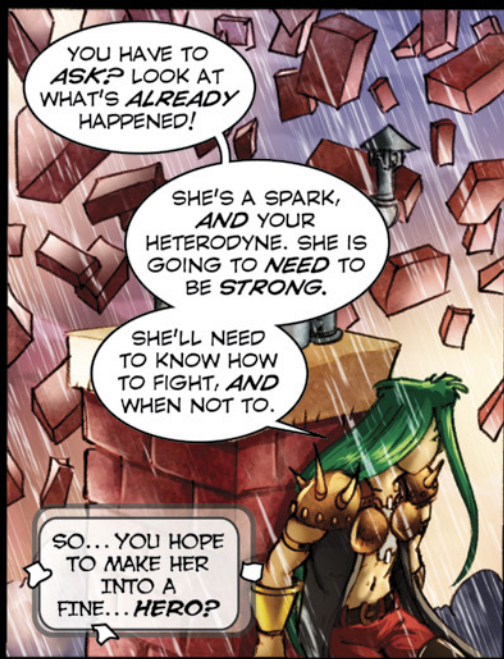
WHAT IS *YOUR* INTEREST IN THE LADY HETERODYNE?



... SHE IS MY *FRIEND*.

—AND SHE SAVED ME FROM DESPAIR, HERE IN THIS STRANGE LAND.

AND YET YOU TRAIN HER TO *FIGHT*. WHY?



YOU HAVE TO *ASK*? LOOK AT WHAT'S *ALREADY* HAPPENED!

SHE'S A SPARK, *AND* YOUR HETERODYNE. SHE IS GOING TO *NEED* TO BE *STRONG*.

SHE'LL NEED TO KNOW HOW TO *FIGHT*, *AND* WHEN NOT TO.

SO... YOU HOPE TO MAKE HER INTO A *FINE... HERO*?



A *WHAT*?! DON'T BE *STUPID*!

SHE'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO DO JUST KEEPING *THIS PLACE* IN LINE!

ALL I'M TRYING TO DO IS KEEP HER *ALIVE*!

...I SEE.



WELL THEN, I WILL *NOT* TELL YOU ALL ABOUT MISTER HIGGS, *AFTER ALL*—



WHAT? BUT—

IF I DID, HE WOULD HAVE TO KILL YOU. HE WOULDN'T *LIKE THAT*.

...OH.



A PITY—IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AMUSING... BUT I MUST CONSIDER THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE FAMILY...

AW, BUT...

COULDN'T YOU JUST TELL ME *SOMETHING*?

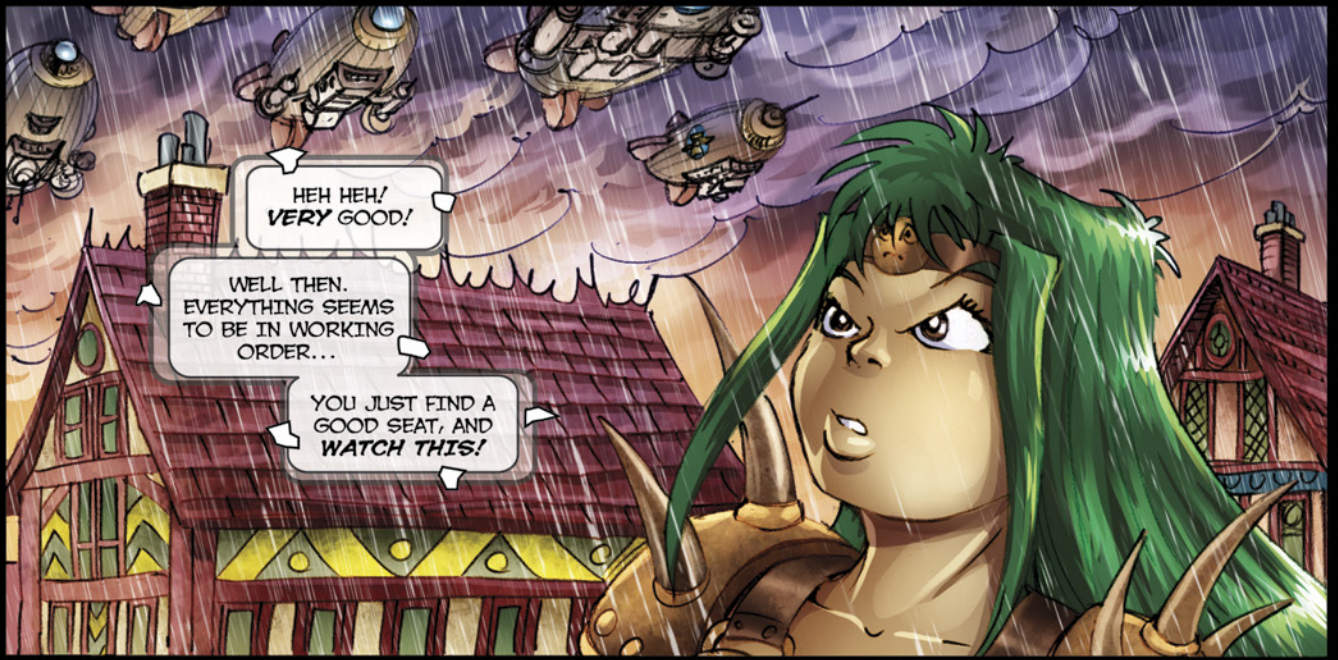
I MEAN, MAYBE JUST ENOUGH SO HE'D ONLY HAVE TO TRY TO *WOUND* ME A LITTLE?



HEHEHEH! I BELIEVE I LIKE YOU, TOO. YOU'RE *FUN*.

I KNOW! WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HIM *FIGHT*?

OH! YEAH!



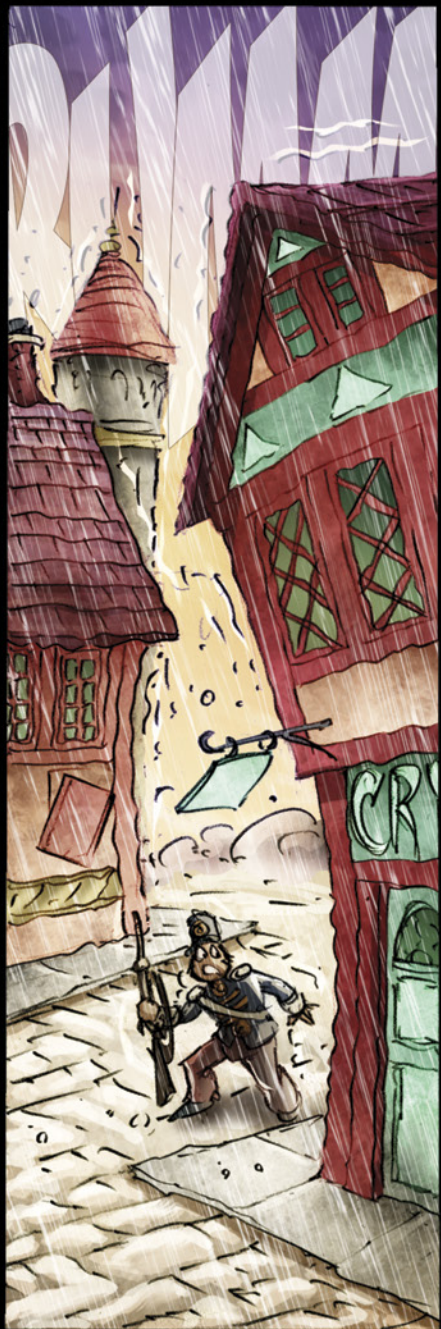
HEH HEH!
VERY GOOD!

WELL THEN.
EVERYTHING SEEMS
TO BE IN WORKING
ORDER...

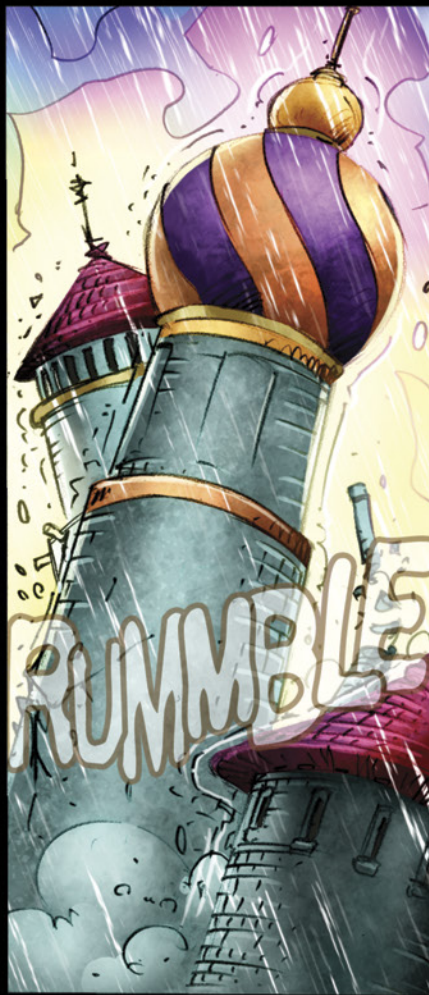
YOU JUST FIND A
GOOD SEAT, AND
WATCH THIS!

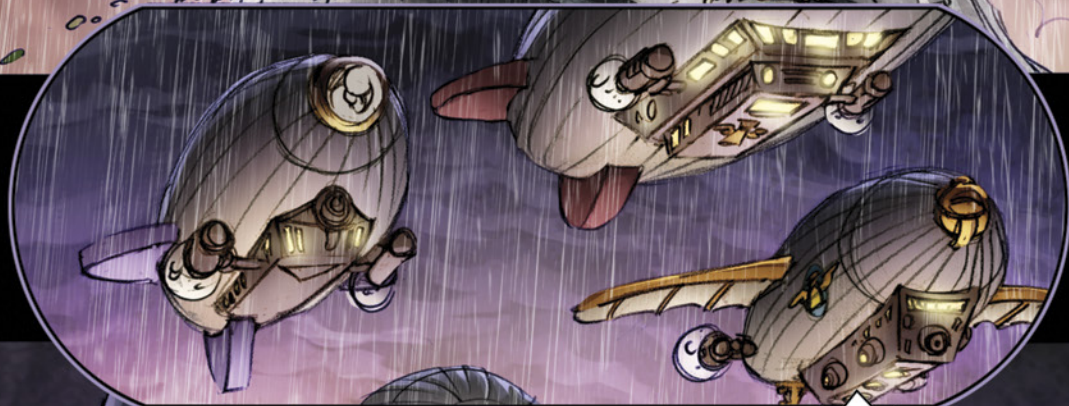


AH!









WHAT THE—

COM! SEND AN URGENT ALERT ON ALL BANDS!

ALL WULFENBACH SHIPS *PREPARE* FOR IMPACT!

REPEAT: *PREPARE* FOR—

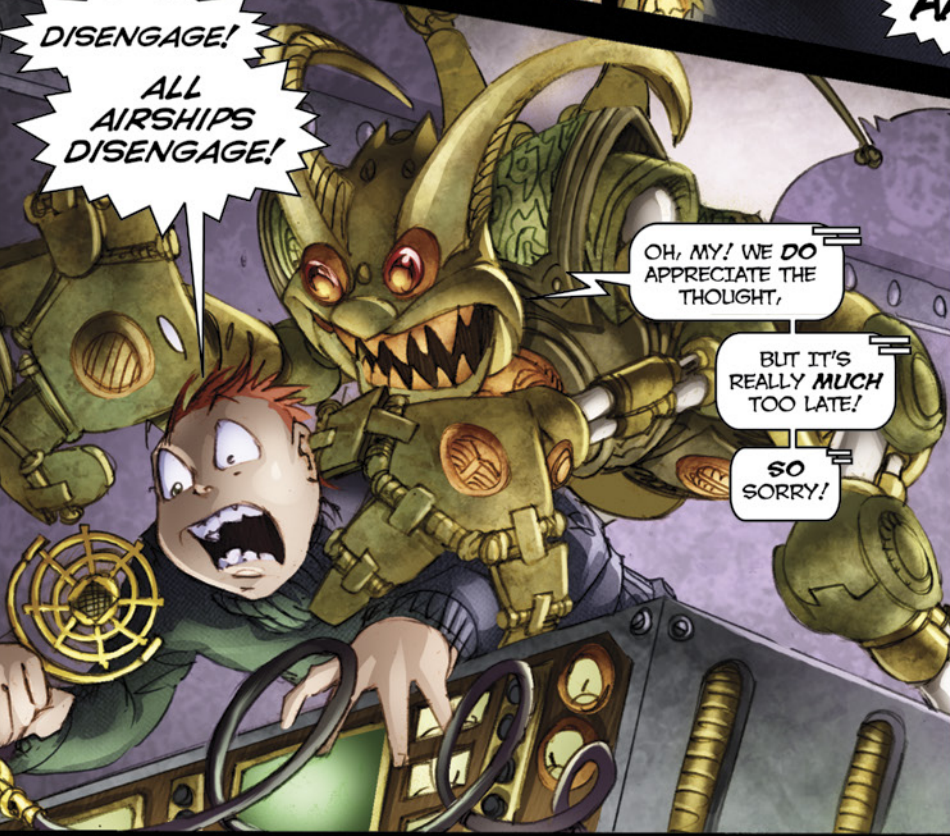


THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING IN MECHANICSBURG!



AAAH!

DISENGAGE!
ALL AIRSHIPS
DISENGAGE!



OH, MY! WE DO APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT,

BUT IT'S REALLY *MUCH* TOO LATE!

SO SORRY!



FAR BELOW, ON THE GROUND—

WHAT IN CRACKTHUNDER IS GOING ON UP THERE?



HOY! YOU WORRY 'BOUT YER OWN GUN!

YESSIR, MASTER SERGEANT SIR!



HEH. STILL, I GOTTA SAY, I BEEN WATCHIN' THEM CLOUD JOCKEYS SAIL CLEAN OVER THE REAL FIGHTIN' FOR TWENTY YEARS—

AND NOW THEY'S DOIN' THE FIGHTIN', AND WE'RE UNTOUCHED.

CAN'T SAY I MIND THAT.



YEAH...SAY— AIN'T THERE SOME KINDA FANCY PANTS WORD FOR THAT?

Y'KNOW, FOR SOMEBODY ELSE DOIN' WORSE'N US?

UM— UNNATURAL, SIR?

LET'S FIGHT!



WHAT THE--?
WHERE DID THAT
COME FROM!

IT WAS
BURIED IN THE GROUND! IT WAS
IN THE
GROUND!

THERE'S A
BUNCH OF THEM
COMING UP!
FALL BACK!



CHOK

CHOK



AAAAAAAAAH!



...

ALMOST THERE, BOYS! JUST—

OY! LOOK OUT!



URRRRRRRR...

AAAAAAH!

RUN!



BY JANUS, WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS DOING?

WHOSE SIDE ARE THEY ON?

TCH. MECHANICS. THEY'RE A BUNCH OF LOONIES. ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.

FIRST THEY USE OUR OWN DROPWALLS AGAINST US,

THEN THEY KNOCK THEM DOWN?

OVERCONFIDENT FOOLS.

THIS PLACE MAY HAVE BEEN AN IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED.



STILL, ALL THE BETTER FOR US.

NOW WE CAN—

UH—

RRUMBLE!





MEANWHILE, ON CASTLE WULFENBACH—

STATUS!

AT LEAST ONE *THIRD* OF THE FLEET IS LOST OR TOO DAMAGED TO FIGHT!

THE SMOKE IS GETTING WORSE, AND THERE'S SOMETHING *WEIRD* ABOUT IT.

IT'S INTERFERING WITH OUR *INSTRUMENTS*—

THE SHIPS WE'VE STILL GOT UP ARE *FLYING BLIND!*

WHATEVER THAT STUFF ON THE HULL IS, IT'S CONTINUING TO SPREAD.

THE BALLOONJACKS SAY THAT THE ONLY THING THAT WORKS IS *FIRE*. HE...HEHEH—

THE COMMUNICATION UNITS WE HAVE LEFT ARE IN CHAOS—
HALF OF THEM ARE REPORTING... *THINGS...COMING* OUT OF THE GROUND—ALL OVER THE VALLEY!

THE OTHER HALF ARE JUST... *LAUGHING*.

EVEN THE LONG-RANGE WEAPONS UNITS ARE BEING *OVERRUN!*

FOCUS!

...RIGHT, RIGHT. SORRY, HERR BARON.

Um...ENGINE ROOM TWELVE IS LOST. THERE ARE *RUST SPIDERS EVERYWHERE*.

WE...WE'VE MANAGED TO *CONTAIN* THEM, FOR NOW.

TCH.



JUST HOW FAR AWAY ARE WE TALKING?

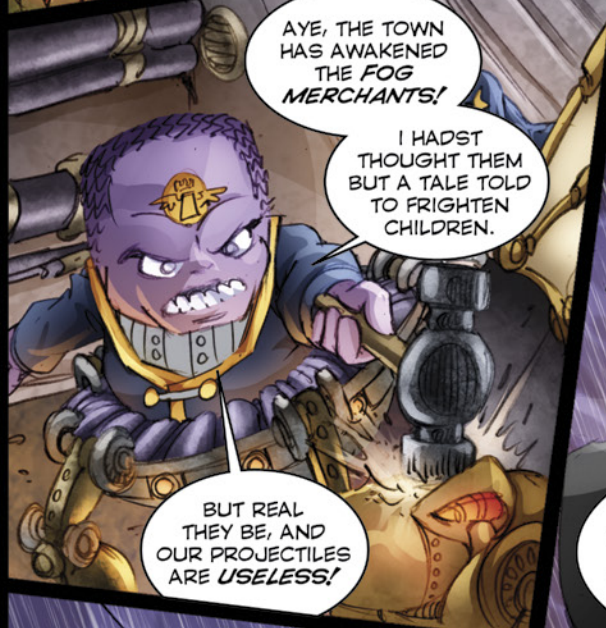
THE ZEN BOOMERS WERE POSITIONED TWENTY KILOMETERS TO THE EAST, HERR BARON.

THEIR LAST TRANSMISSION SAID SOMETHING ABOUT ICE BATS.



WHERE IS THE ENERGY DIVISION? THE HELIOTROPE AIR FLEET THE SUN DOGS?

THERE IS TOO MUCH SMOKE AND MIASMA.



AYE, THE TOWN HAS AWAKENED THE FOG MERCHANTS!

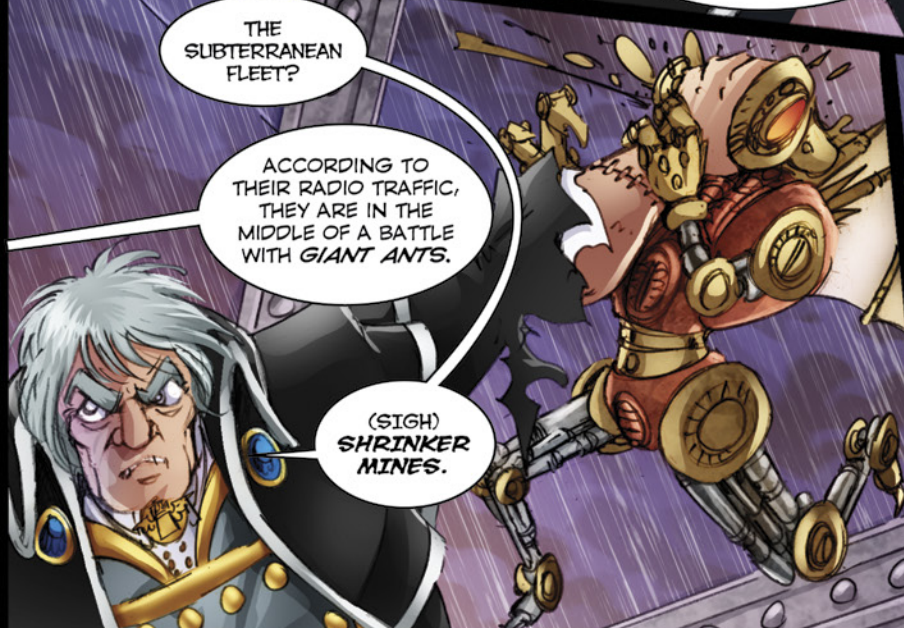
I HADST THOUGHT THEM BUT A TALE TOLD TO FRIGHTEN CHILDREN.

BUT REAL THEY BE, AND OUR PROJECTILES ARE USELESS!



THE SCREAMER GUNS PANICKED ALL OF OUR CALVARY AND MOUNTED UNITS. THE OLIPHANTS ARE STILL RUNNING.

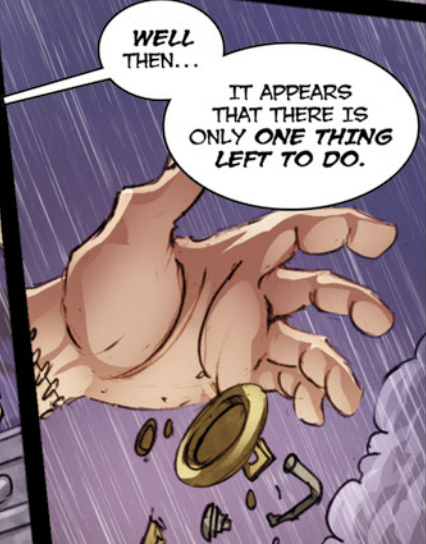
THE MECHANIZED CAVALRY WAS SWALLOWED BY SOME KIND OF QUICKSAND. THEY COULDN'T AVOID IT—IT WAS LIKE IT WAS FOLLOWING THEM!



THE SUBTERRANEAN FLEET?

ACCORDING TO THEIR RADIO TRAFFIC, THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE WITH GIANT ANTS.

(SIGH) SHRINKER MINES.



WELL THEN...

IT APPEARS THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO DO.



I WANT MY PERSONAL SET OF DROP-ARMOR PREPPED AND WAITING IN BAY TWO HUNDRED.

TELL THE GUARDS OF THE CENTRAL VAULT THAT I WILL BE THERE—PERSONALLY—TO COLLECT A BLACK-LEVEL ITEM IN TEN MINUTES.

AND THEN I AM GOING INTO MECHANICSBURG TO DEAL WITH THIS MYSELF!



OH DEAR! DO TELL ME HE'S SERIOUS!



HOY.

THIS IS EMPIRE BUSINESS, BOYO.



HERR BARON!
WHAT ARE YOU—
YOU WANT TO GO IN ALONE?!

HM. I SUPPOSE I COULD TAKE SUN...





-BUT HERR BARON!

THE LAD HAS BEEN WASPED!

JUST TO ALLOW HIM TO RUN LOOSE IS RASH ENOUGH!
BUT TO CEDE HIM THE EMPIRE? MADNESS!

THERE ARE VERY FEW OF YOU WHO KNOW THAT.



I HAVE TAKEN... STEPS TO RENDER HIM HARMLESS-



ENOUGH SO THAT IF *NEED* BE, HE WILL SERVE YOU WELL AS A *FIGUREHEAD*.

"TAKEN STEPS," HERR BARON?



THERE ARE *MANY* FORMS OF MIND CONTROL.

THEY ARE... LESS *ELEGANT* THAN LUCREZIA'S, BUT THEY ARE *EFFECTIVE*.

I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED MORE *TIME*-TO WORK WITH MORE *FINESSE*-

BUT IT IS DONE. HE NOW SERVES *THE EMPIRE* INSTEAD OF *THE OTHER*.



AND YOU HAVE DONE THIS TO YOUR OWN SON?!

MONSTROUS!

BUT...HE CAN BE *CURED*?



WITH *TIME*, PERHAPS.

BUT, IF NOT, HE IS AT LEAST CONTROLLED...

AND *ALIVE*.



SEND A FIRST PRIORITY MESSAGE TO ALL UNITS IN THE FIELD-

I WANT A FULL RETREAT. DISENGAGE FROM ALL MECHANICSBURG FORCES.

WHAT?! RETREAT? CRAVEN, IGNOBLE RETREAT?

ALL THE WAY BACK TO STURMHALTEN.

THIS IS MADNESS, HERR BARON! MADNESS, I SAY!



IT IS ONLY TEMPORARY.



BORIS WILL WANT A LIST OF ALL THE UNITS STILL TRAPPED INSIDE MECHANICSBURG-

OH, THAT'S EASY, HERR BARON-

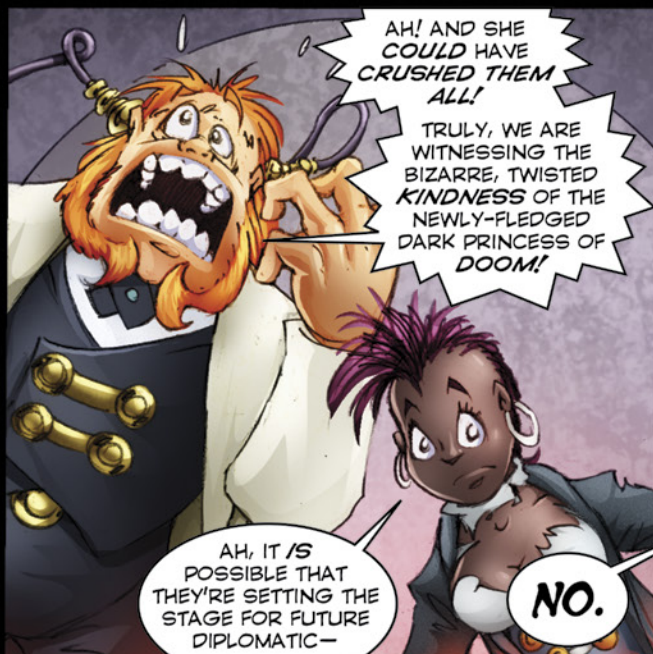
THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY.



WHAT?! BUT THE THORN WALL-

THERE'S STILL A GAP NEAR THE GATES-

AND IT APPEARS THAT ALL THE TROOPS STILL IN THE CITY ARE BEING HERDED OUT.



AH! AND SHE COULD HAVE CRUSHED THEM ALL!

TRULY, WE ARE WITNESSING THE BIZARRE, TWISTED KINDNESS OF THE NEWLY-FLEDGED DARK PRINCESS OF DOOM!

AH, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY'RE SETTING THE STAGE FOR FUTURE DIPLOMATIC-

NO.



IT IS MECHANICSBURG. NOTHING IS EVER AS IT SEEMS- AND EVERYTHING IS A SICK JOKE.



MEANWHILE, IN *MECHANICSBURG*—





HELLOOO "MISTER HIGGS!"

AH. SHOULD'VE KNOWN.

LOOK WHAT I'VE BROUGHT YOU!

UH-HUH. NICE.



OH, DON'T BE LIKE THAT...

GO AHEAD AND FIGHT THEM. **FIGHT THEM!**

NOW, DON'T BE STUPID. WHY WOULD I DO THAT?

I'M ONE OF THEM, REMEMBER?

JUST ANOTHER WULFENBACH MAN JOINING IN THE RETREAT.



TCH. YOU ARE NOTHING OF THE SORT. GO ON, TOSS A FEW OF THEM AROUND!

AS IF I'D BLOW MY COVER JUST SO YOU CAN HAVE SOME KIND OF POINTLESS JOKE...

NO-WAIT... THERE'S ALWAYS A POINT, ISN'T THERE?

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, ANYWAY?

WHY, TO SEE YOU FIGHT! IT'S ALWAYS SO IMPRESSIVE-



WHY WOULD YOU-

OH. SHE'S WATCHING, ISN'T SHE?

HEE HEE, MAYBE!

KNEW SHE WOULDN'T STAY IN BED...

NOW, WHY SHOULD A WILD YOUNG LADY LIKE HER LISTEN TO YOU?



AH, BUT IF YOU FOUGHT... EVEN JUST A FEW OF THEM...

I'M SURE SHE'D SEE A COMPLETELY NEW SIDE OF YOU...

NOT LISTENING!

YOU'LL BE TRAMPLED IF YOU DON'T...

...

BEEN TRAMPLED BEFORE...



WHOO! COME ON, FLYBOY!

TIME TO LEAVE CRAZY TOWN!

AK!



OH, YEAH—
SORRY ABOUT
ALL THIS—

WHAT? THESE
GUYS? HOW IS
THIS YOUR
FAULT?



WELL, THE
CASTLE ASKED IF
I WANTED TO SEE
YOU FIGHT—

THE CASTLE?!
SO, NOT ONLY ARE
YOU STILL INJURED AND
OUT OF BED AGAINST
DOCTOR'S
ORDERS—

HALT,
MAMMALS!

GENERAL
SICLEE REQUIRES
THIS MOUNT!



YAAAA!
DESTROY
THEM!

YOU'RE ALSO
RUNNING
AROUND THE
STREETS IN BAD
COMPANY!

WELL, I KIND
OF WANTED TO
SEE IT, OKAY?



YOU ARE NOT
TREATING THIS
SERIOUSLY AT ALL!
IT'S NOT SOME KIND
OF GAME—

TCH.

AND DON'T
"TCH" ME, THAT'S
WHAT GOT YOU A
SWORD THROUGH
YOU!

NYARG!

HISSS!



ARE YOU
STILL GOING ON
ABOUT THAT?

I TOLD YOU,
THERE ARE PEOPLE
HERE WHO—WHO
NEED YOU!

AW, COME ON.
I'LL BE FINE! AND
BESIDES, AGATHA'S
GOT—



ME! ME! NOT
THE LADY
HETERODYNE—

ME!

I NEED
YOU!

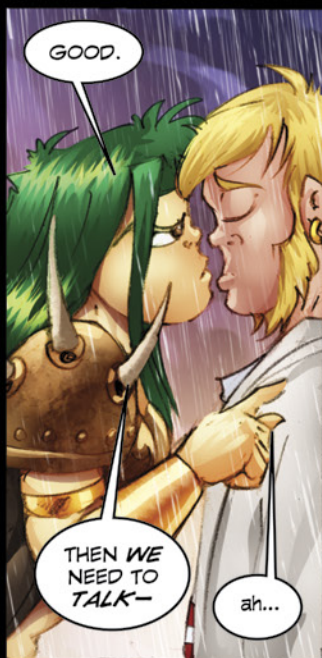


CASTLE! ARE YOU STILL... UH... THERE?

OH, I WOULDN'T MISS THIS FOR THE WORLD!

...AND YOU'RE SURE? AGATHA'S ALL RIGHT?

OH, YES! IT'S ALL OVER BUT THE MOPPING UP AT THIS POINT.



AHEM, YOU CHILDREN DO REALIZE THAT YOU'RE LEAVING TOWN, DON'T YOU?

UM... HELLO?

OH, WELL, NEVER MIND--

DO TRY TO BE HOME BY MIDNIGHT, AT LEAST...



AND—THAT'S THE LAST OF THEM.

OH, YES—WITH ALL THE JÄGERS IN HOT PURSUIT.

IT'LL BE... INTERESTING... HAVING THEM AROUND TOWN FROM NOW ON.



BUT...WE REALLY DID IT, DIDN'T WE?

WE REALLY DID.
WE WON.

AND BY "WON", I MEAN "DIDN'T GET CRUSHED BY THE EMPIRE."

I LIKE THE NOT GETTING CRUSHED PART...

—YET.

sigh—I WAS GETTING THERE.

THE BARON WON'T LET THIS STAND—

BUT AT LEAST IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL ALL LIVE TO SEE WHAT HE SENDS NEXT.

HMF.



THE QUESTION IS, WILL HE SEND AN ENVOY, OR ANOTHER ARMY?

WELL, IT'LL HAVE TO BE A CRASHING GOOD ONE TO TAKE THIS PLACE NOW.

HE'S MORE LIKELY TO USE TRICKERY, SOMEHOW—TRY TO CATCH US BY SURPRISE—



SURPRISE!



AGATHA!



TARVEK!

WE DID IT!
WE DID IT!

THE
CASTLE'S
FIXED!

THAT I
AM!

-AND NOT A
MOMENT
TOO SOON!

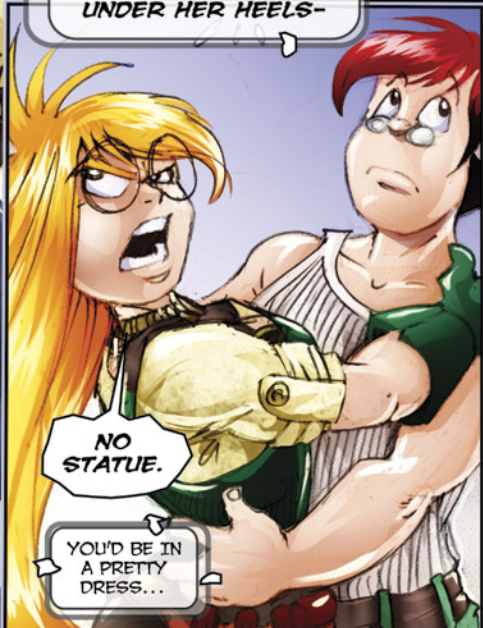
THE STATE OF THE
ARCHITECTURE IN
THIS TOWN-SIMPLY
SHOCKING!



HARDLY A PROPER SCENE
FOR MECHANICSBURG'S
RENAISSANCE OF
TERROR!

BUT NEVER FEAR! I
CAN FIX THAT! IN
FACT, I HAVE
ALREADY BEGUN!

HM... PERHAPS A
COLOSSAL STATUE OF
MY DREAD MISTRESS,
CRUSHING THE BARON
UNDER HER HEELS-



NO
STATUE.

YOU'D BE IN
A PRETTY
DRESS...



PITY. THE
TOURISTS
WOULD
LOVE IT.

I DON'T THINK
WE'RE GOING TO
HAVE TO DEAL WITH
TOURISTS FOR
QUITE A WHILE.



OH, NO...! I
SUPPOSE
NOT.

TARVEK,
I... I SAW
GIL.

...SAY, WHO
ARE YOU
AGAIN?

OH, NOW,
JUST DON'T
START.

GILP!
YOU SAW
HIM?

WHERE
IS HE?



UM, WELL, I'M NOT SURE...

WHAT HAPPENED?

WELL, I-



IT'S JUST... HE WAS BEING COMPLETELY INSUFFERABLE, AND...

AND... I WAS SO ANGRY, I WAS TRYING TO WORK, AND HE WAS GETTING IN MY WAY-

ORDERING ME AROUND-

TRYING TO STOP ME-

TRYING TO STOP YOU?!

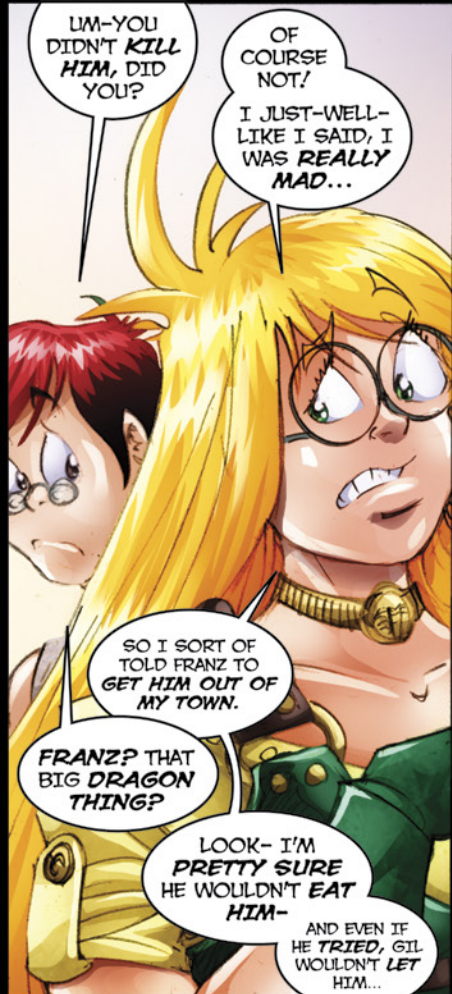
AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE WE WENT THROUGH TO-



OH, WELL, OF COURSE.

OF COURSE THEY'VE GOT TO HIM.

BUT... HE HAD MY NOTES. HE SHOULD BE...



UM-YOU DIDN'T KILL HIM, DID YOU?

OF COURSE NOT!

I JUST-WELL-LIKE I SAID, I WAS REALLY MAD...

SO I SORT OF TOLD FRANZ TO GET HIM OUT OF MY TOWN.

FRANZ? THAT BIG DRAGON THING?

LOOK- I'M PRETTY SURE HE WOULDN'T EAT HIM-

AND EVEN IF HE TRIED, GIL WOULDN'T LET HIM...



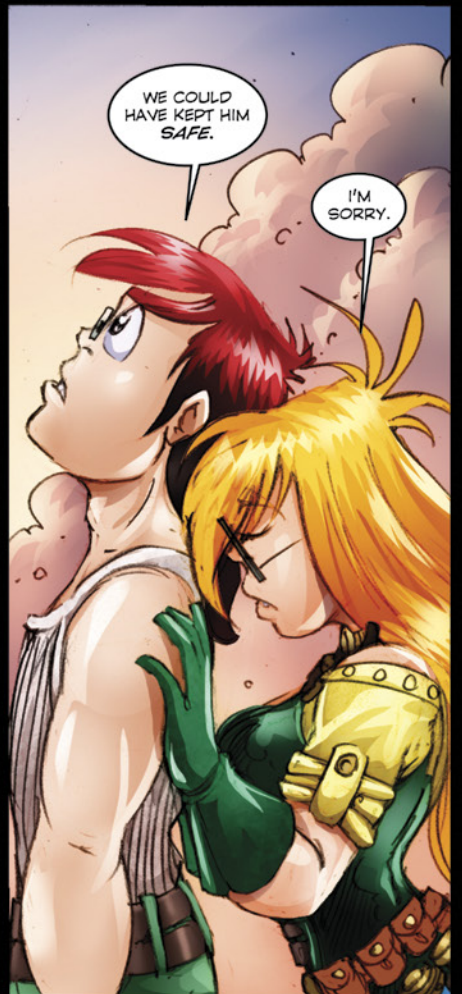
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WAS HERE, AND YOU LET HIM GET AWAY!

WE COULD HAVE... HAVE... KEPT HIM PRISONER!

WE COULD HAVE USED HIM AS A HOSTAGE!

A BARGAINING CHIP!

WE COULD HAVE... WE COULD HAVE...



WE COULD HAVE KEPT HIM SAFE.

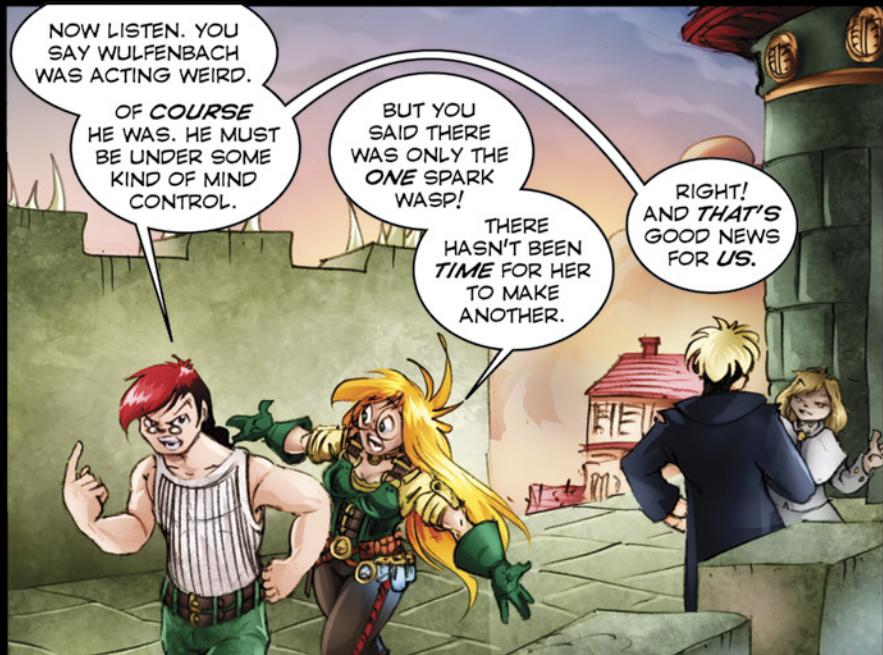
I'M SORRY.



WELL, *FINE*. WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO TRUST IN HIS NATURAL, *ANNOYING* ABILITY TO COME UP SMELLING LIKE A ROSE AFTER *EVERY SINGLE STUPID* PREDICAMENT HE GETS HIMSELF INTO.

OH?

I JUST WONDER HOW I'LL WIND UP LOOKING LIKE A FOOL AFTER *THIS ONE*.



NOW LISTEN. YOU SAY WULFENBACH WAS ACTING WEIRD.

OF *COURSE* HE WAS. HE MUST BE UNDER SOME KIND OF MIND CONTROL.

BUT YOU SAID THERE WAS ONLY THE *ONE* SPARK WASP!

THERE HASN'T BEEN *TIME* FOR HER TO MAKE ANOTHER.

RIGHT! AND *THAT'S* GOOD NEWS FOR US.



"THE BARON HAS BEEN STUDYING THE WORK OF CONQUERED SPARKS FOR YEARS.

HE MUST HAVE ACCESS TO *LOTS* OF WAYS TO ENSLAVE SOMEONE'S MIND.

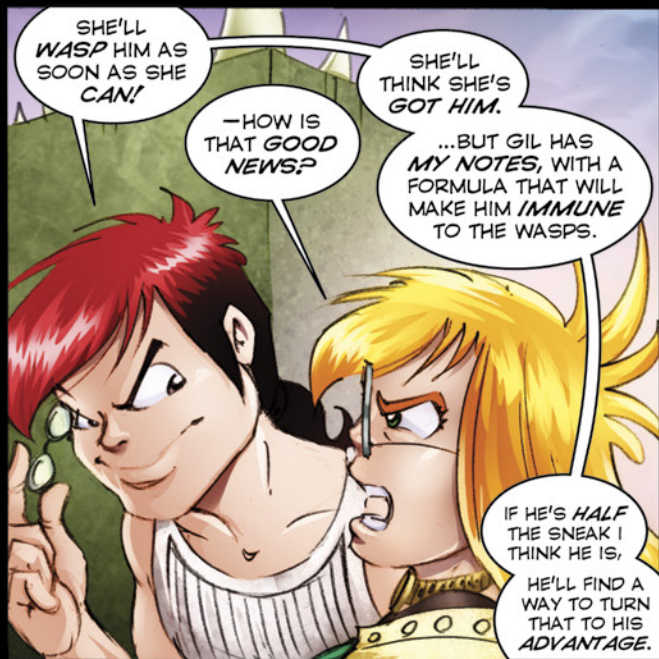
THEY'LL HAVE USED ONE OF *THOSE* ON GIL.

...BUT LUCREZIA IS A FIRST-CLASS MEGALOMANIAC—

(EVEN FOR A SPARK—)

SHE'S *SURE* HER SLAVER WASPS ARE *BETTER*, AND TO BE FAIR, SHE'S *RIGHT*."

NEURO-SYNAPTIC ENSLAVEMENT
NOTE TO SELF: NEEDS MORE SUBTLE TITLE
AND IN CONCLUSION: MUAHAHAHAHA! ETC.



SHE'LL WASP HIM AS SOON AS SHE CAN!

SHE'LL THINK SHE'S GOT HIM.

—HOW IS THAT *GOOD NEWS*?

...BUT GIL HAS *MY* NOTES, WITH A FORMULA THAT WILL MAKE HIM *IMMUNE* TO THE WASPS.

IF HE'S *HALF* THE SNEAK I THINK HE IS, HE'LL FIND A WAY TO TURN THAT TO HIS *ADVANTAGE*.



WELL...*IF* HE HAD TIME TO MAKE IT...

IF HE *TOOK* IT...

IF HE—



WELL, IF HE *TRUSTED* ME.

THERE ARE A WORRYING AMOUNT OF "IFS..."

WELL, I TRUST YOU. I TRUST *BOTH* OF YOU.

AND THEY MAY HAVE HIM *NOW*—



BUT THEY WON'T KEEP HIM LONG.

WE WON'T LET THEM.

YEAH. AGATHA, I...



GAH!



SQUEE!

AAH!
WEASELS!

SKREE!

SKEEK!



...AND YOU! WEREN'T YOU HORRIBLY INJURED?

YEP.

SO WHAT? SOMEONE'S TRYING TO WIPE US OUT. STOP OUR WORK.

WE'VE GOT TO CHECK OUT THIS TOWN YOU'VE BROUGHT US TO RIGHT AWAY.

SNIFF
SNIFF

SNIFF
SNURF

SNOFF

-SEE HOW INFESTED IT IS.

INFESTED?! WE DON'T HAVE ANY REVENANTS HERE!



YEAH. THAT SEEMS TO BE THE CASE.

WE'RE STILL CHECKING EVERYBODY,

BUT AS FAR AS I KNOW, THE ONLY ONES WE'VE FOUND ARE A COUPLE OF TOURISTS.



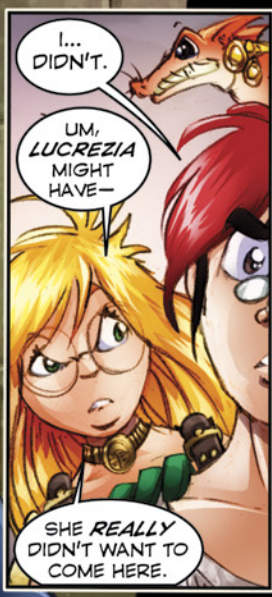
WHAT? NONE OF THE LOCALS? REALLY?

BUT...HOW IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?

STATISTICALLY, THE SPREAD ACROSS THE EMPIRE SHOULD BE-

THAT'S WHY IT'S WEIRD.

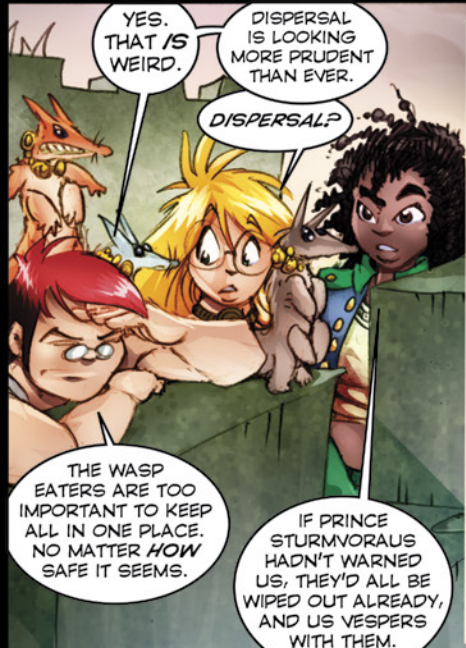
SO HOW DID YOU KNOW?



I... DIDN'T.

UM, LUCREZIA MIGHT HAVE-

SHE REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO COME HERE.



YES. THAT IS WEIRD.

DISPERSAL IS LOOKING MORE PRUDENT THAN EVER.

DISPERSAL?

THE WASP EATERS ARE TOO IMPORTANT TO KEEP ALL IN ONE PLACE. NO MATTER HOW SAFE IT SEEMS.

IF PRINCE STURMVORAU HADN'T WARNED US, THEY'D ALL BE WIPE OUT ALREADY, AND US VESPER WITH THEM.



"SO SOME OF OUR PEOPLE HAVE LEFT WITH THE RETREAT.

THEY'LL MAKE THEIR WAY OUT OF THE EMPIRE-

AND SET UP RESEARCH LABS IN PARIS, ISTANBUL, MAYBE EVEN ENGLAND."



ALL REPORTING TO ME.

tch. AND I WONDER WHOSE IDEA THAT WAS.

OH, HE DIDN'T WANT TO!

WE INSISTED!



HONK!
♥

AW! YOU'VE
MADE A
FRIEND!

ER...ARE
YOU
SURE?

OKAY, SO,
WHAT'S
GOING TO HIT
US NEXT?

tch. REALLY,
VIOLETTA, YOU
HAVE TO ASK?

THE
EMPIRE IS
IN CHAOS,
THE TOWN
IS HALF-
RUINED,

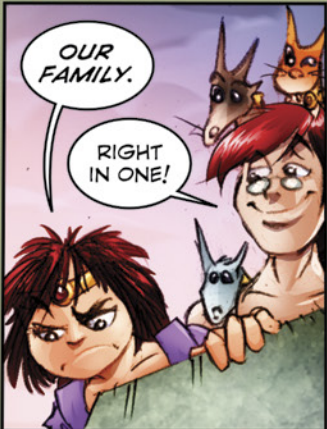
AGATHA IS
UNRECOGNIZED BY
THE OUTSIDE WORLD,
AND THUS NOT YET
COMPLETELY
SECURE—



"WHERE DO YOU
THINK OUR NEXT
TROUBLES WILL
COME FROM?"

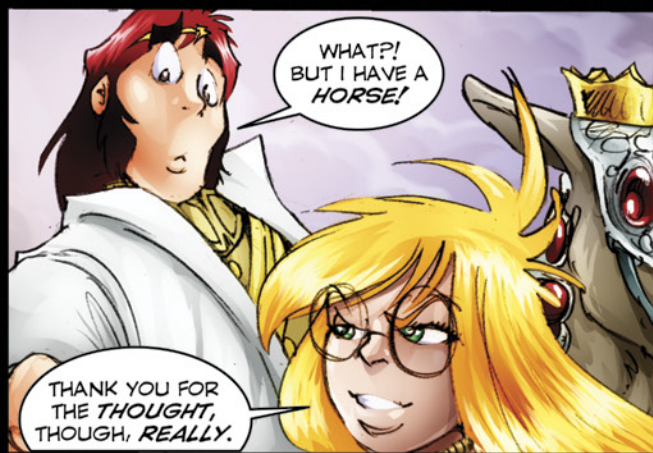
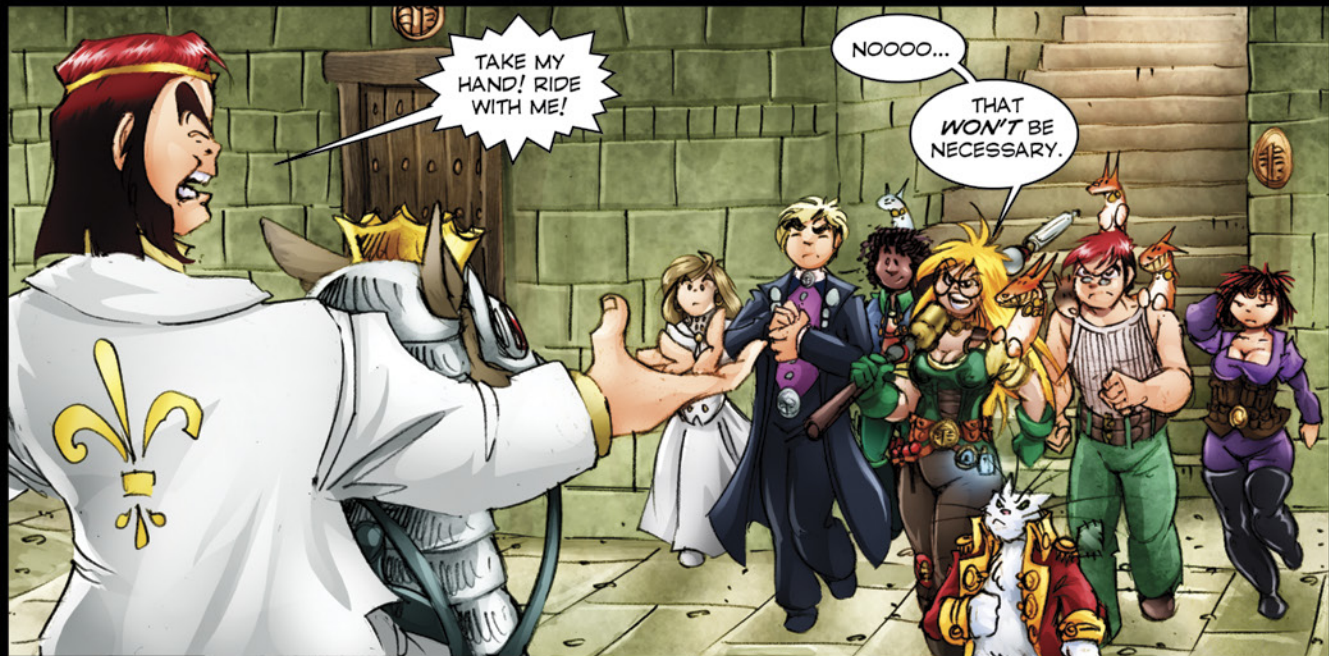
LADY
HETERODYNE!
THERE YOU
ARE!

COME! WE ARE
VICTORIOUS, AND YOUR
SUBJECTS AWAIT YOU!
ALLOW *ME* THE HONOR OF
ESCORTING YOU TO THE
CATHEDRAL SQUARE!



OUR
FAMILY.

RIGHT
IN ONE!





AND YET WE'RE STILL FOLLOWING THIS IDIOT? WHY?!

BECAUSE THE IDIOT IS RIGHT. THERE ARE... *IMPORTANT THINGS* THAT NEED TO BE DONE AT THE CATHEDRAL.

...WHAT KINDS OF THINGS?

WELL, *MOSTLY CEREMONIAL STUFF...*

CEREMONIAL-?!

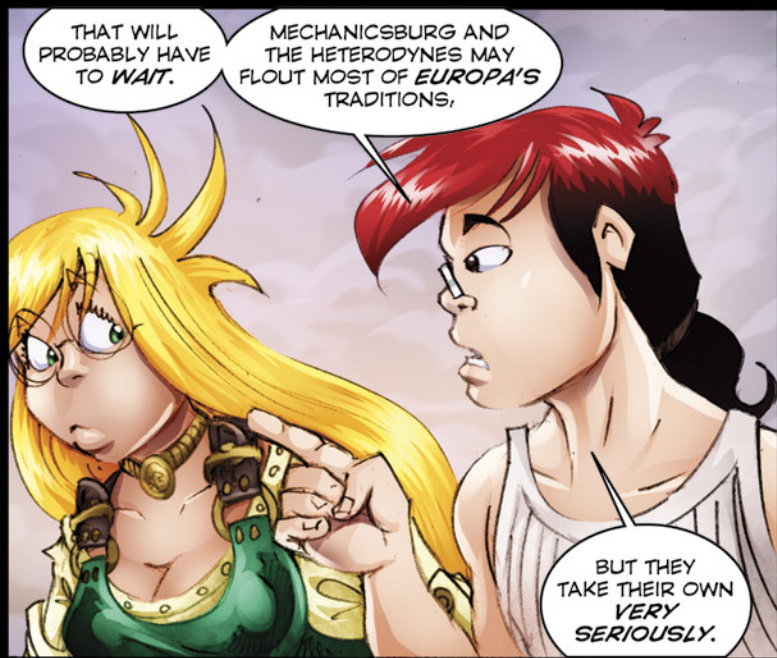
WE'VE JUST FOUGHT A *HUGE BATTLE!*

EVERYTHING IS IN CHAOS! PEOPLE ARE *HURT!*

I SHOULD BE CLEANING THIS PLACE UP!

...AND...AND GETTING SOMETHING TO EAT!

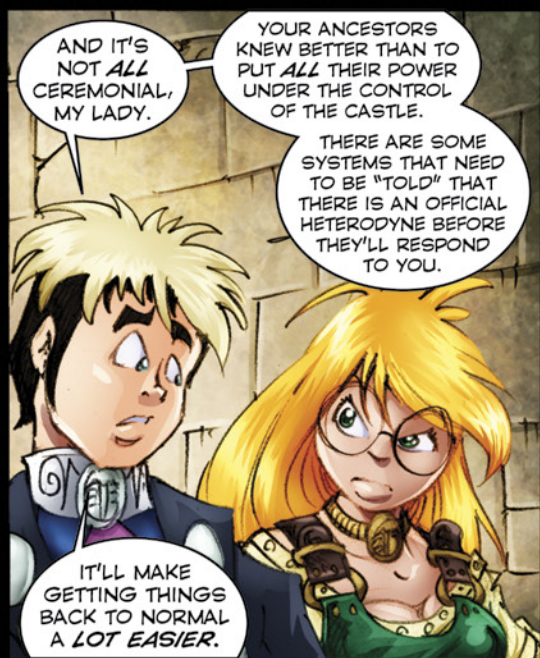
...AND *MAYBE EVEN SLEEPING!*



THAT WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO *WAIT.*

MECHANICSBURG AND THE HETERODYNES MAY FLOUT MOST OF *EUROPA'S* TRADITIONS,

BUT THEY TAKE THEIR OWN *VERY SERIOUSLY.*



AND IT'S NOT *ALL CEREMONIAL,* MY LADY.

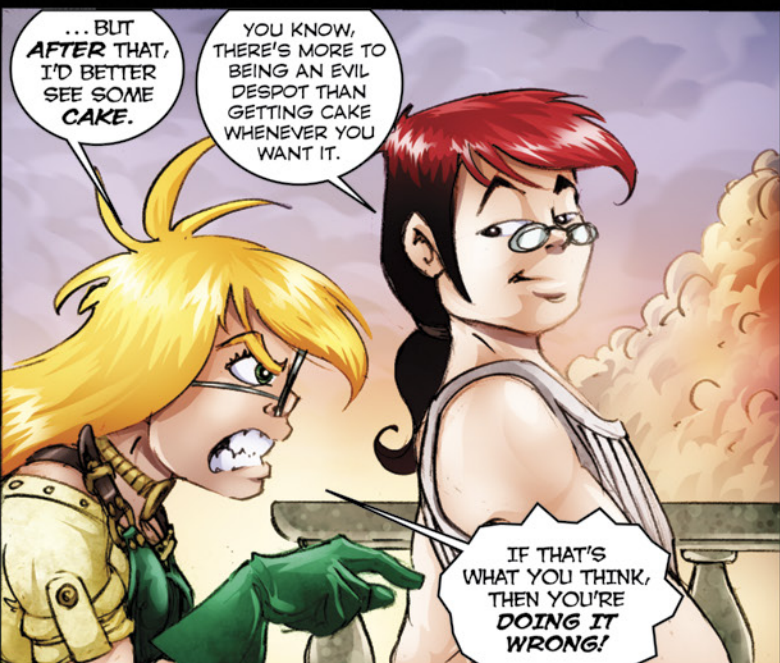
YOUR ANCESTORS KNEW BETTER THAN TO PUT *ALL* THEIR POWER UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CASTLE.

THERE ARE SOME SYSTEMS THAT NEED TO BE "TOLD" THAT THERE IS AN OFFICIAL HETERODYNE BEFORE THEY'LL RESPOND TO YOU.

IT'LL MAKE GETTING THINGS BACK TO NORMAL A *LOT EASIER.*



ALL RIGHT, FINE! YOU'VE CONVINCED ME! WE'LL GO TAKE CARE OF ALL THE BORING PAPERWORK AND STUFF SO I CAN OFFICIALLY RULE MECHANICSBURG WITH AN *IRON FIST.*



... BUT *AFTER THAT,* I'D BETTER SEE SOME *CAKE.*

YOU KNOW, THERE'S MORE TO BEING AN EVIL DESPOT THAN GETTING CAKE WHENEVER YOU WANT IT.

IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, THEN YOU'RE *DOING IT WRONG!*



I...FEEL FOOLISH BEING THE ONLY ONE RIDING.

YOU CAN GET DOWN AND WALK IF YOU WANT TO.

NOT THAT FOOLISH.

...SO, YOU'RE GOOD FRIENDS WITH THE ABBESS, ARE YOU?



AH, YES! THE ABBESS! WONDERFUL WOMAN!

SHE'S THE ONE WHO CALLED ME TO YOUR AID, YOU KNOW!



SHE TRIED TO TAKE ME PRISONER, AND WE HAD TO KNOCK HER OUT.

AH. WELL. I WON'T SAY SHE ISN'T A BIT BRASH...



WE'LL DISCUSS THIS LATER.

YES, I SUPPOSE WE WILL.

AND NOW, YOU REALLY SHOULD GET OFF YOUR HORSE.

BUT...
UM...OKAY.



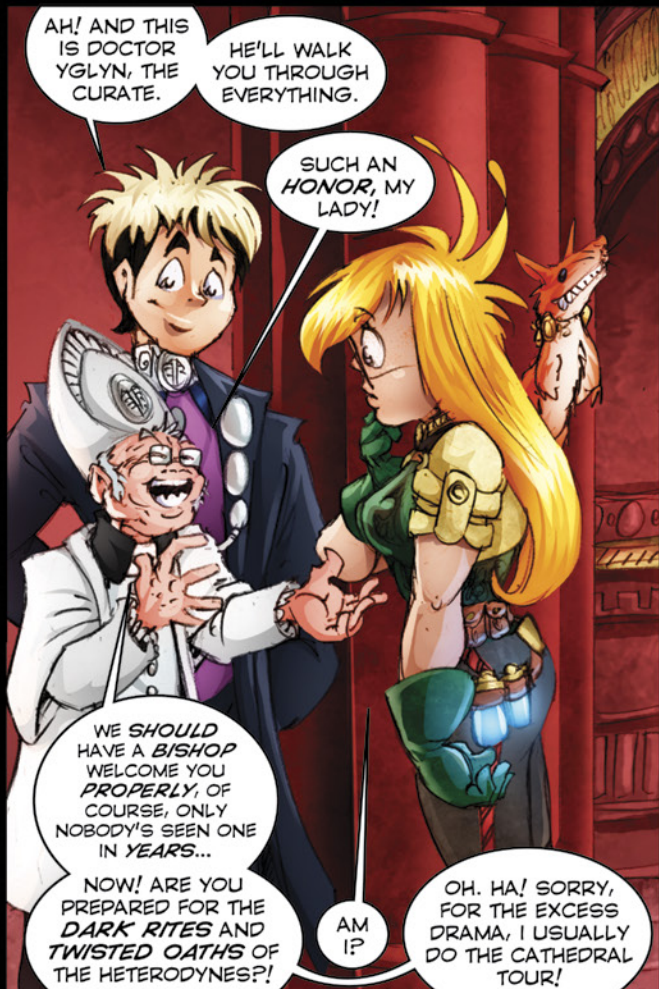
YOU KNOW, WITH EVERYTHING I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE OLD HETERODYNES—

ACTUALLY HAVING A CATHEDRAL HERE SEEMS A BIT...ODD.

WELL, ONE OF YOUR ANCESTORS ONCE MADE A BET WITH THE PRINCE OF STURMHALTEN, AND—

LADY HETERODYNE! WELCOME!

welcome!



AH! AND THIS IS DOCTOR YGLYN, THE CURATE.

HE'LL WALK YOU THROUGH EVERYTHING.

SUCH AN HONOR, MY LADY!

WE SHOULD HAVE A BISHOP WELCOME YOU PROPERLY, OF COURSE, ONLY NOBODY'S SEEN ONE IN YEARS...

NOW! ARE YOU PREPARED FOR THE DARK RITES AND TWISTED OATHS OF THE HETERODYNES?!

AM I?

OH. HA! SORRY, FOR THE EXCESS DRAMA, I USUALLY DO THE CATHEDRAL TOUR!



SO...DARK RITES?

OH, MY, YES! THEY ACCUMULATE, YOU KNOW!

SOME ARE PURELY CEREMONIAL.

BUT SOME UTILIZE MYSTERIOUS LOST SCIENCES TO HOLD BACK HIDEOUS EXTRADIMENSIONAL BEINGS THAT WOULD RAVAGE OUR WORLD!

WELL, I GUESS WE'D BETTER AT LEAST DO THOSE...

OOOOH! YOU CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE?! WONDERFUL!



RIGHT.

NOW FIRST, I STAB YOU WITH THE CEREMONIAL KNIFE OF WISDOM!

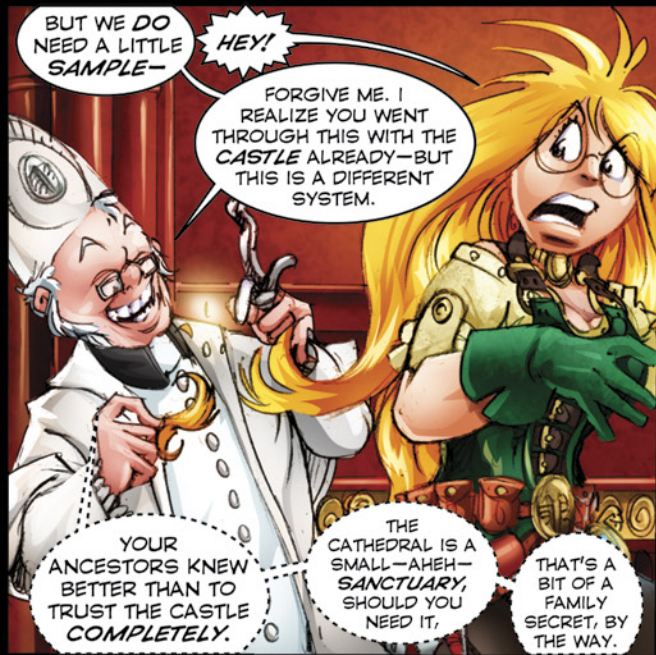
NO, YOU CERTAINLY DO NOT!

HEE HEE! VERY GOOD!

NO TRUE HETERODYNE HAS EVER ALLOWED IT!

...AND YOU'VE TRIED THIS CEREMONY ON THE HETERODYNES MORE THAN ONCE?

NOT TO WORRY, THESE ARE MY CEREMONIAL TEETH!



BUT WE DO NEED A LITTLE SAMPLE—

HEY!

FORGIVE ME. I REALIZE YOU WENT THROUGH THIS WITH THE CASTLE ALREADY—BUT THIS IS A DIFFERENT SYSTEM.

YOUR ANCESTORS KNEW BETTER THAN TO TRUST THE CASTLE COMPLETELY.

THE CATHEDRAL IS A SMALL—AHEH—SANCTUARY, SHOULD YOU NEED IT.

THAT'S A BIT OF A FAMILY SECRET, BY THE WAY.



SAY, YOU THINK THERE'S ANY MICE IN HERE?

THEY HAVE KNIVES.

JUST TAKE A NAP OR SOMETHING. WE'LL EAT AFTERWARD.

TWEEDLE, YOU CAN'T JUST REPLACE ME.

I'M THE LEGITIMATE HEIR, AND YOU KNOW IT.

YOU ARE ENTIRELY TOO CAUGHT UP IN YOUR OWN RIDICULOUS WORLDVIEW.

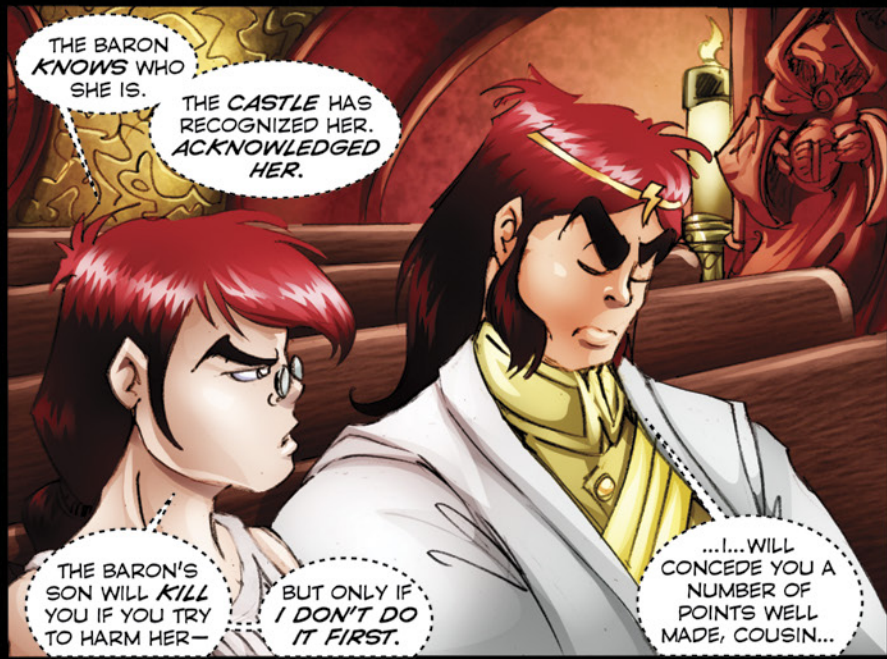


ANYONE WITH SENSE WOULD HAVE HAD THIS GIRL SHOT BEFORE SHE HAD THE CHANCE TO CAUSE ALL THIS TROUBLE.

BUT I SUPPOSE YOU FOUND IT "ROMANTIC" THAT SHE WAS AN ACTUAL DESCENDANT—

DON'T YOU DARE TRY TO REPLACE HER NOW.

AGATHA IS A SPARK. A STRONG ONE.



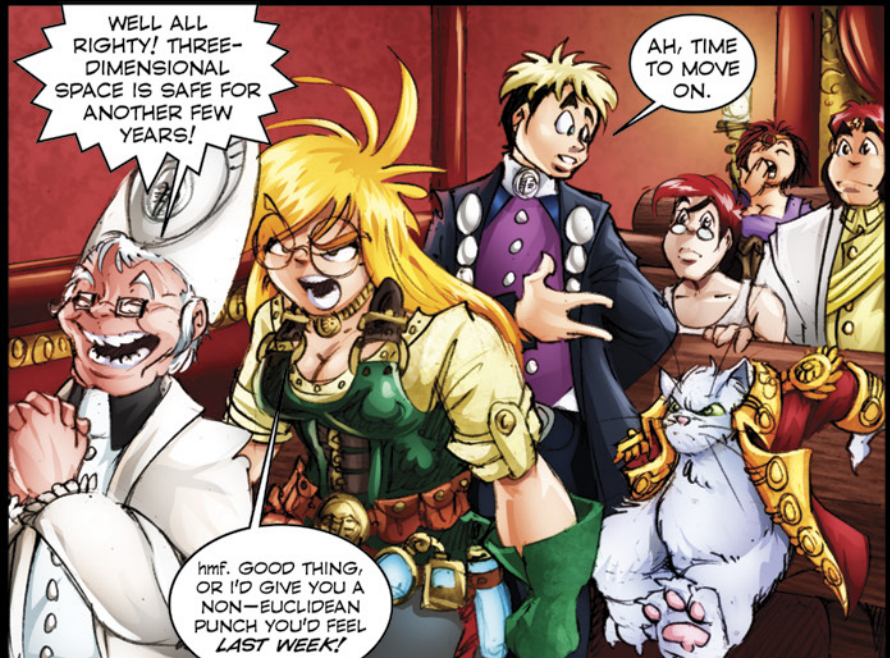
THE BARON KNOWS WHO SHE IS.

THE CASTLE HAS RECOGNIZED HER. ACKNOWLEDGED HER.

THE BARON'S SON WILL KILL YOU IF YOU TRY TO HARM HER—

BUT ONLY IF I DON'T DO IT FIRST.

...I... WILL CONCEDE YOU A NUMBER OF POINTS WELL MADE, COUSIN...



WELL ALL RIGHTY! THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE IS SAFE FOR ANOTHER FEW YEARS!

AH, TIME TO MOVE ON.

hmf. GOOD THING, OR I'D GIVE YOU A NON-EUCLIDEAN PUNCH YOU'D FEEL LAST WEEK!



AND DON'T WORRY. I REALIZE THAT THE TIME FOR REPLACING HER IS LONG PAST.



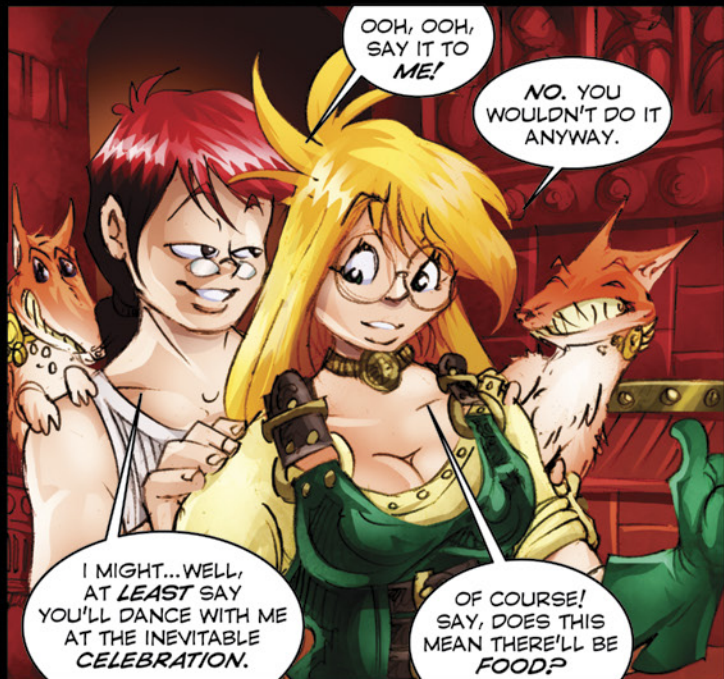
CONGRATULATIONS, LADY HETERODYNE! ALLOW ME TO BE THE FIRST OF *MANY* TO CRINGE FOR MERCY!

...THANK YOU.

...WELL?

OH. OF COURSE. TREMBLE AND OBEY.

HEE HEE!



OOH, OOH, SAY IT TO ME!

NO. YOU WOULDN'T DO IT ANYWAY.

I MIGHT...WELL, AT LEAST SAY YOU'LL DANCE WITH ME AT THE INEVITABLE CELEBRATION.

OF COURSE! SAY, DOES THIS MEAN THERE'LL BE FOOD?



OH, YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL THE PARTIES START!

THERE ARE A THOUSAND AND ONE THINGS THE CHEFS OF MECHANICSBURG CAN DO WITH SNAILS, YOU KNOW!

OKAY, I'M HUNGRY ENOUGH THAT EVEN SNAILS SOUND GOOD...

JUST WAIT UNTIL YOU TRY THE SNAIL GELATO!

OH DEAR. I MUST BE STARVING TO DEATH.



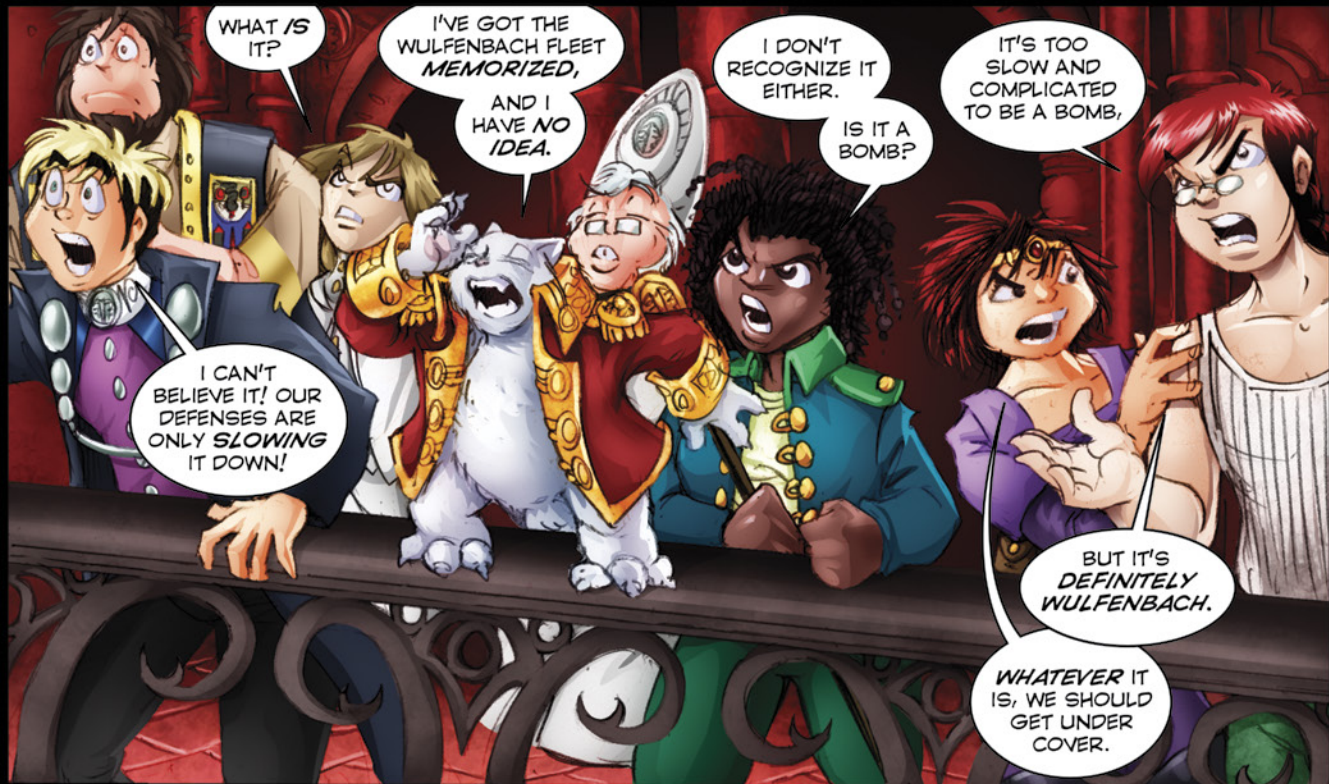
VAN! LADY HETERODYNE!

SOMETHING'S COMING!



UP THERE!

IT'S COMING IN FAST, AND FIGHTING OFF EVERYTHING THE CASTLE'S SENDING AGAINST IT!



WHAT IS IT?

I'VE GOT THE WULFENBACH FLEET MEMORIZED,

AND I HAVE NO IDEA.

I DON'T RECOGNIZE IT EITHER.

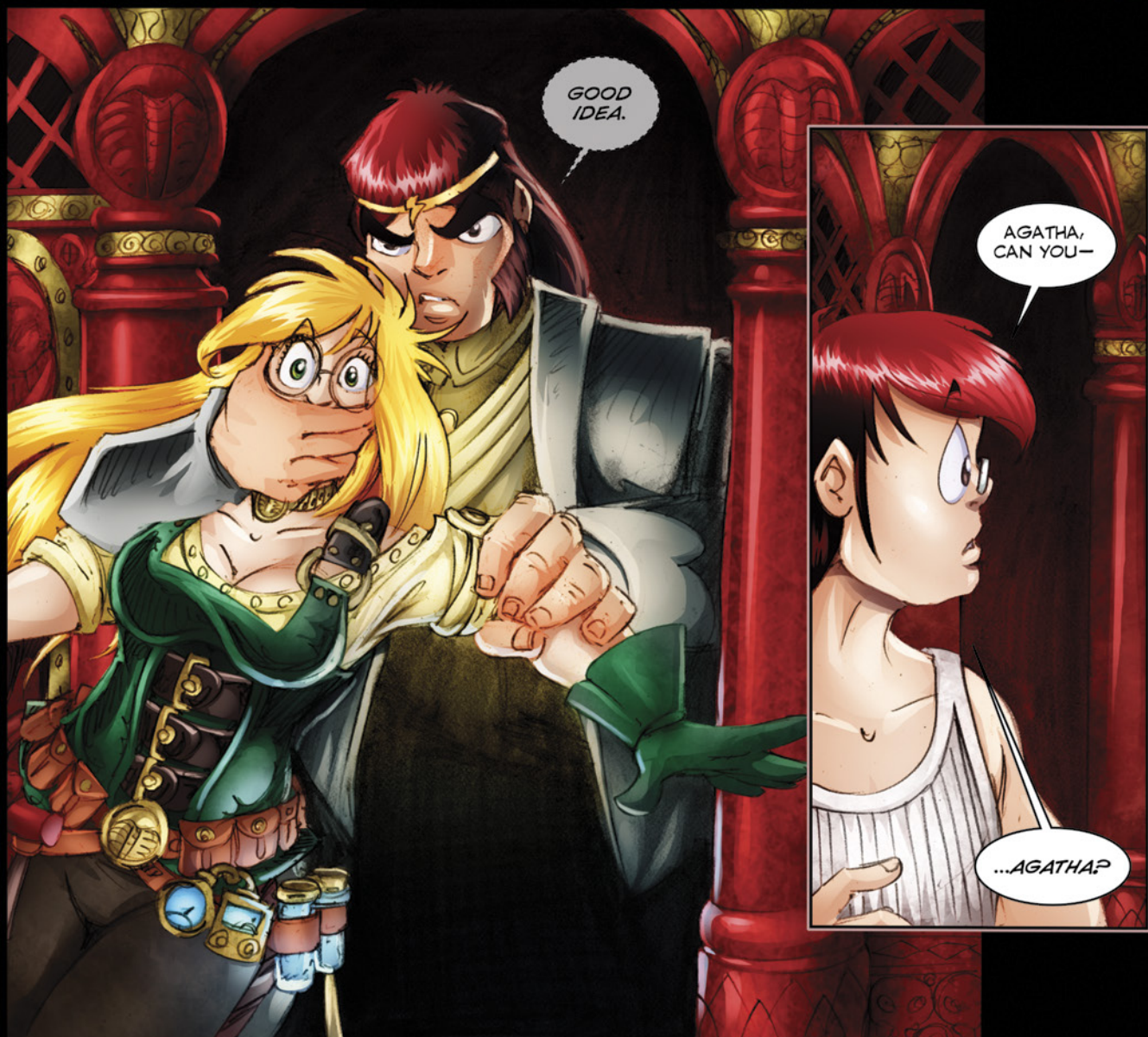
IS IT A BOMB?

IT'S TOO SLOW AND COMPLICATED TO BE A BOMB,

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! OUR DEFENSES ARE ONLY SLOWING IT DOWN!

BUT IT'S DEFINITELY WULFENBACH.

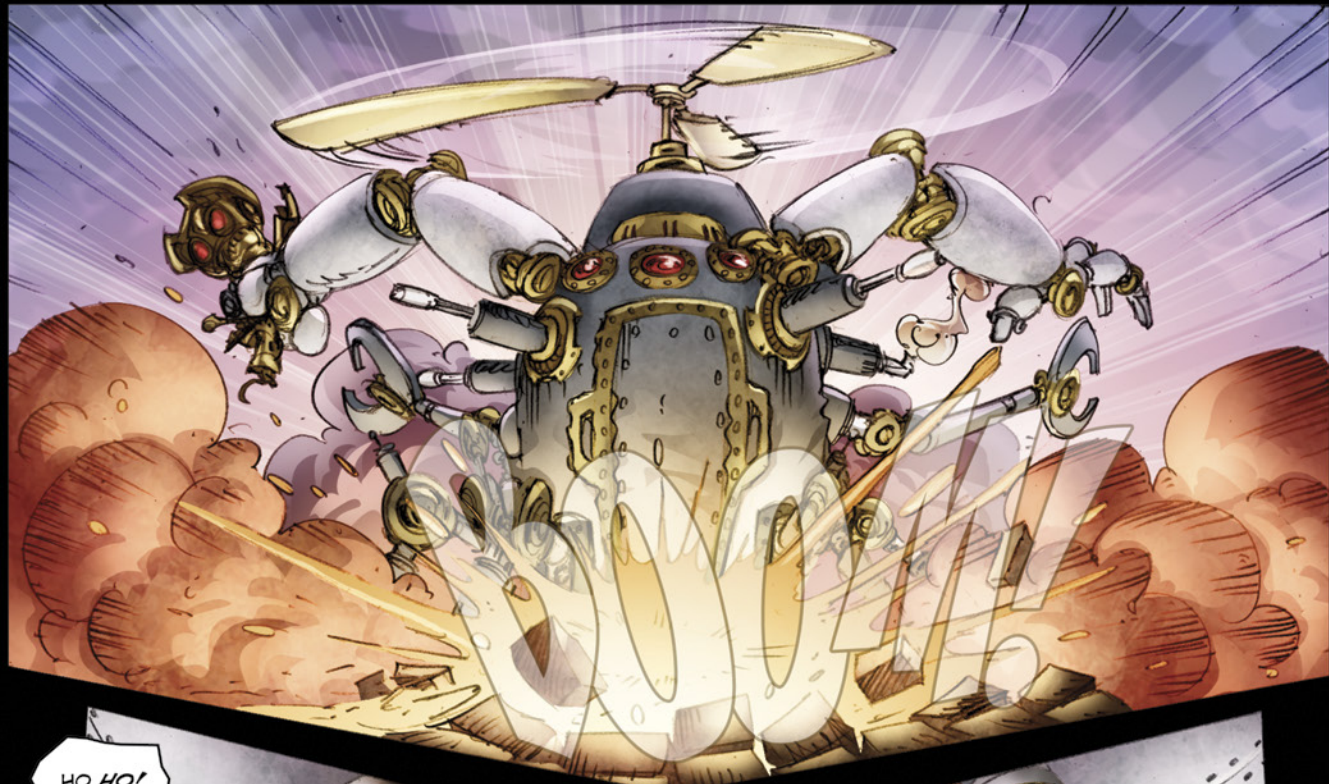
WHATEVER IT IS, WE SHOULD GET UNDER COVER.



GOOD IDEA.

AGATHA, CAN YOU—

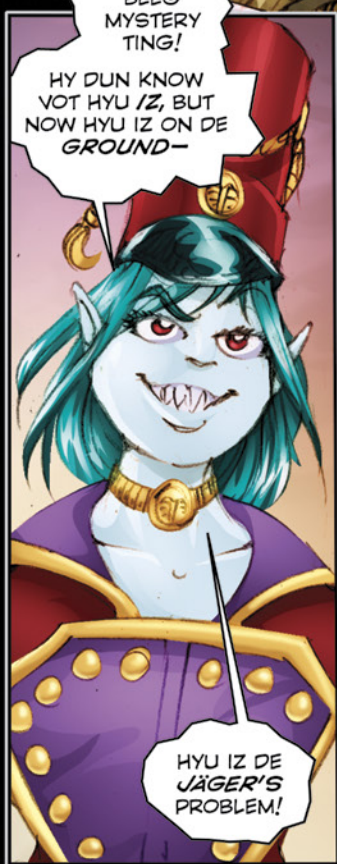
...AGATHA?



HO HO!

VELCOME,
BEEG
MYSTERY
TING!

HY DUN KNOW
VOT HYU IZ, BUT
NOW HYU IZ ON DE
GROUND—



HYU IZ DE
JÄGER'S
PROBLEM!



WHOA!
EFFRYVUN!
ATTACK!

ATTACK VIT
EFFRYTING VE
GOTS!

CLONG



I MUST SAY, COUSIN TARVEK REALLY IS A **SHARP** ONE WHEN IT COMES TO THE PLOTTING AND INTRIGUE...

AND HE WAS OBVIOUSLY RIGHT ABOUT YOU AS WELL.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW ANNOYING THAT IS?



ELEVEN... TWELVE...

AH. HERE WE ARE. GOOD.

YOU! I AM GOING TO HAVE YOU **PICKLED**, YOU-

HOLD!
You May Not Enter Here-



TCH. DELAYS.

TWEEDLE! STOP!



WHAT DO YOU-

OH, FOR PITY'S SAKE-



...

THERE! NOT A TOTAL LOSS, AFTER ALL!

KLAUS!

AH. GKIKA.
HELLO.

**SURRENDER!
NOW!**

OF COURSE.

...VOT?

I HAVE
ALREADY
ACHIEVED MY
PURPOSE.

I SURRENDER
UNCONDITION-
ALLY.

...DO YOU
HAVE ANY
TEAP?

WHEEEROWWWPH
POK



PRINCE STURMVORAUSS!

SUCK IT UP, LOSER! YOU'VE HAD WORSE!



OW! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

STOP THAT!

PUT ME DOWN—NOW!

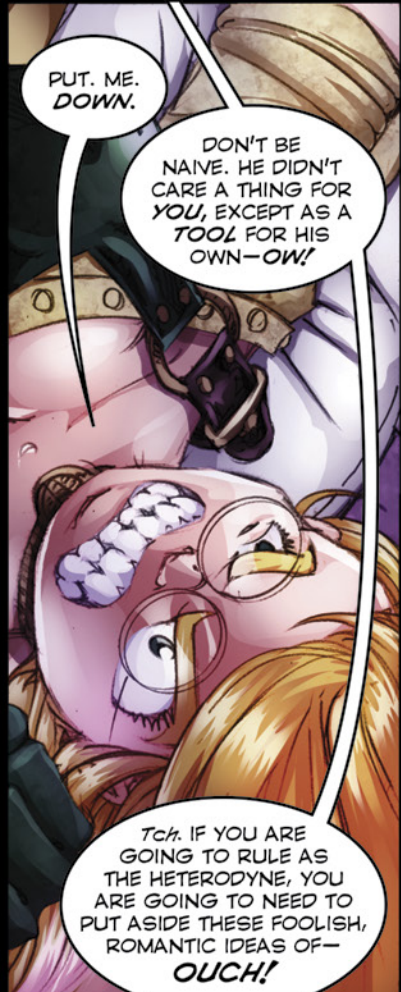
WHAT, DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE UPSET ABOUT TARVEK?



DON'T WORRY, HE IS NO LONGER OF ANY USE TO YOU—OUCH!

OW! I TOLD YOU TO STOP THAT!

...OR CAN IT BE THAT YOU ACTUALLY CARED FOR HIM?



PUT ME DOWN.

DON'T BE NAIVE. HE DIDN'T CARE A THING FOR YOU, EXCEPT AS A TOOL FOR HIS OWN—OW!

Tch. IF YOU ARE GOING TO RULE AS THE HETERODYNE, YOU ARE GOING TO NEED TO PUT ASIDE THESE FOOLISH, ROMANTIC IDEAS OF—OUCH!



WILL YOU STOP THAT?!

I AM RESCUING YOU, YOU KNOW—

DON'T BE AN IDIOT! IN MY OWN TOWN?!

AND WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, ANYWAY?



AH! RATIONAL THOUGHT, AT LAST—

AND, IN FACT, HERE WE ARE.

THERE YOU ARE!

IT TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH.

THE BARON IS HERE.

WE LEAVE NOW.

YOU KNOW, I DON'T THINK I LIKE YOU, LADY.

mromf!



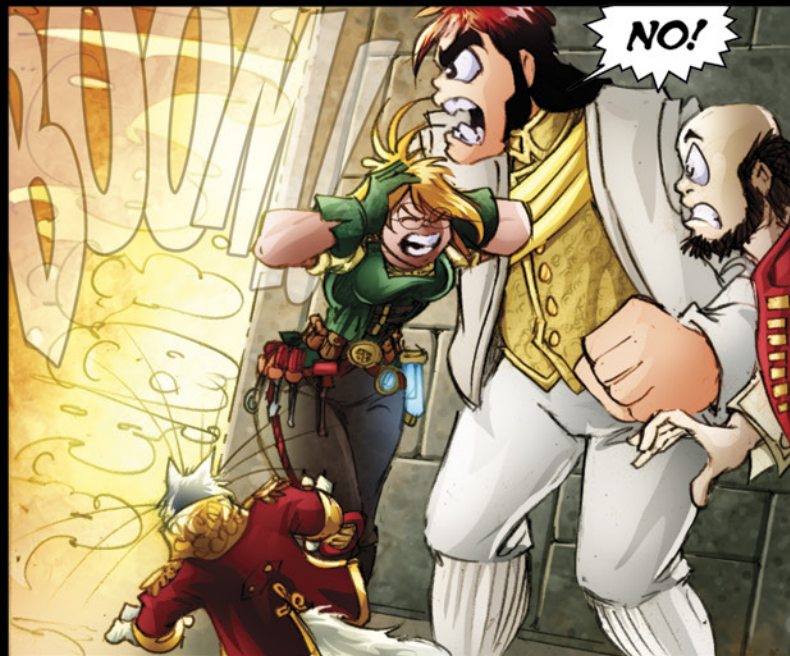




OOF!

FWUMP!





NO!



UNBELIEVABLE! YOU-

BORISLAV, YOUR HIGHNESS!

I DID NOT ASK.

OH...

WHERE IS EVERYONE?



SMASH!



PLEASE. STOP THAT. NOW.



WELL?

BUT, YOUR HIGHNESS! WE-



SMASH!



BORISLAV, WAS IT?

HOLD THAT THOUGHT.



LADY HETERODYNE. PLEASE DO STOP ATTACKING ME.

WHY SHOULD I?

I AM... EXTREMELY UNHAPPY WITH YOU.
SO... UM... SO HITTING YOU SEEMS LIKE A FINE IDEA...

BECAUSE IT HAS TO BE DAYS SINCE YOU'VE ACTUALLY SLEPT, OR EATEN PROPERLY—



HO! LOOK OUT!

AH!

catch

catch



THUNK

THUNK



WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!

AG... GURGLE...



...

UGH. NEVER MIND. I CAN GUESS.



THEY WERE TRYING FOR BOTH OF US, MY LADY, SO I SUGGEST YOU WORK WITH ME FOR NOW.

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HIT ME MUCH HARDER ONCE YOU'VE HAD SOME REST AND—



UM...

SNORZZZ...



AH. PERFECT.



WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU?!

DON'T SLEEP NOW, YOU FOOL!

snort—SHUT UP. DON' NEED SLEEP OR FOOD.

'M A SPARK.

OH, NO. REALLY?

THAT'S THE HETERODYNE GIRL?

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I TRULY WAS EXPECTING SOMETHING MORE IMPRESSIVE—

FROM BOTH OF YOU.

HIGHNESS, DON'T TALK TO HIM!

JUST LET US KILL HIM!

LEOPOLD.

SEE? THEY DON' LIKE YOU EITHER.



tch. PLENTY OF TIME FOR THAT, MY—



DRGL—



NOW THEN. YOU SEEM SMART—

WHICH APPEARS TO BE IN *VERY* SHORT SUPPLY AROUND HERE.

AH—I SWEAR ALL MY FEALTY TO YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.

GOOD START.



AND WHOM WERE YOU CALLING "MAJESTY" FIVE MINUTES AGO, EH?

SURELY THE ORDER HASN'T SWITCHED BACK TO COUSIN TARVEK?

URK—NO, YOUR MAJESTY!

OH, COME NOW. YOU CALLED DEAR LEOPOLD "HIGHNESS" JUST NOW, SO IT WASN'T HIM... WHO—

'M GONNA 'SCAPE NOW, OKEH?

BYE.



NO ONE!

THERE *IS* NO STORM KING!

OH?

WASN'T! WASN'T! UNTIL NOW, YOUR MAJESTY!

BETTER—

WE'VE BEEN IN DEEP HIDING! WULFENBACH—



YOU'RE LYING. WULFENBACH DOESN'T KNOW WE EXIST.

HE DID! HE HUNTED US!

IT WAS HORRIBLE!



AND—AND WE THOUGHT YOU WERE LOST!

LIKE EVERYONE IN MECHANICSBURG!



WHAT?
WHAT HAPPENED TO MECHANICSBURG?

URGH, WE—



AURGH!

JAB!



GUNCH!



YOU **KILLED** HER!

I KILL A LOT OF PEOPLE. YOUR POINT?

I WAS TALKING TO HER!



WELL, TOO BAD. I'M IN A HURRY NOW.

I'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT EVERYTHING SHE JUST **POISONED** ME WITH, NEUTRALIZE IT AND SLEEP IT OFF,

AND I HAVE TO DO IT SOMEWHERE THAT NOBODY CAN STAB ME IN THE BACK WHILE I WORK.



COME ON. I HAVE A LAB NEARBY.

I AM **NOT** ON YOUR SIDE!

WELL, THEY'RE CERTAINLY NOT ON YOURS—

AND YOU NEED TO REST, TOO.

YOU'RE A MESS.



URG-
WHERE
ARE WE,
ANYWAY?

THE
REFUGE OF
STORMS.

THE ORDER'S
MOST *SECURE*
FORTRESS-AND I
CONTROL IT.

-OR I
DID.

HERE-PUSH
THAT GARGOYLE'S
NOSE AND PULL ITS
EARS.



OH.

SECRET
PASSAGE. OF
COURSE.



WE'LL BE
SAFE HERE.

WOW. LOOKS
LIKE NOBODY'S
BEEN HERE IN A
LONG TIME.

YES. I SET
THIS UP MYSELF.
NO MINIONS.

REALLY?
-THOUGHT
YOU'D JUST
KILL 'EM.



DEATH
KEEPS VERY
FEW *SECRETS*
HERE.

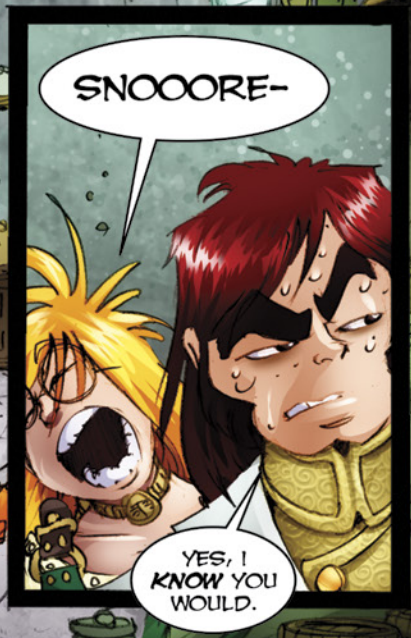
AH. GOOD.
ENOUGH
PROVISIONS
FOR A
MONTH.

WHAT?!



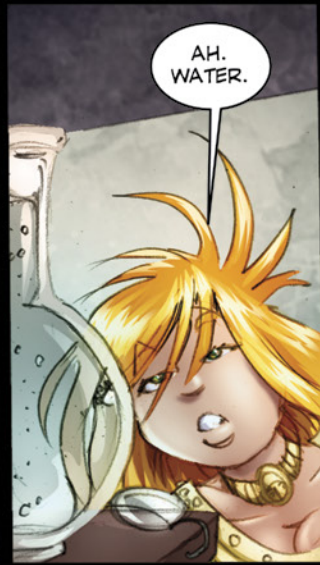
I'M *NOT*
STAYIN' HERE
WITH YOU.

ESCAPIN'
THE *MINUTE*
YOU-



SNOOOORE-

YES, I
KNOW YOU
WOULD.





OF COURSE WE WORK WELL TOGETHER!

SHRIEK!

I KNOW HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE!

I'M NOT A LUNATIC WHO GOES AROUND **KNIFING** EVERYONE I SEE!



AH. YOU'RE **STILL** ANGRY ABOUT **TARVEK**.

TCH. HE REALLY WAS A GENIUS—

ALWAYS HAD THE TOUCH.

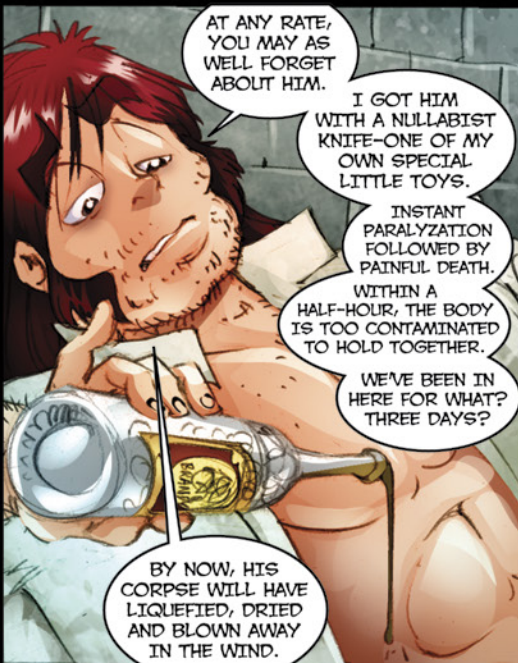
DON'T BE SO SURE ABOUT THAT "WAS," YOU—



SILENCE. I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU. HE WAS ONLY **USING** YOU.

OH? AND ARE **YOU** ANY BETTER?

OF COURSE NOT. BUT **I'LL** BE **HONEST** WITH YOU ABOUT IT, WHICH I CAN SEE **HE** NEVER WAS.



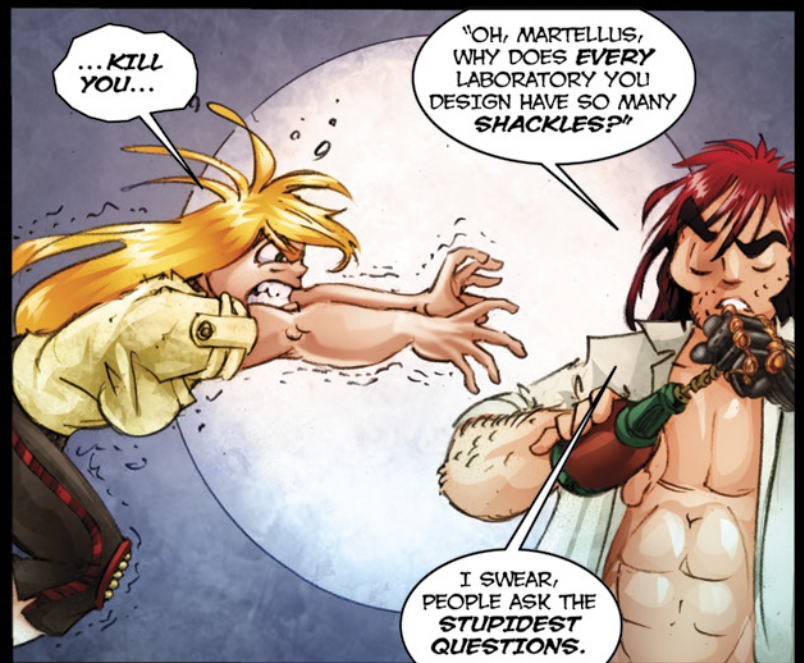
AT ANY RATE, YOU MAY AS WELL FORGET ABOUT HIM.

I GOT HIM WITH A NULLABIST KNIFE—ONE OF MY OWN SPECIAL LITTLE TOYS.

INSTANT PARALYZATION FOLLOWED BY PAINFUL DEATH. WITHIN A HALF-HOUR, THE BODY IS TOO CONTAMINATED TO HOLD TOGETHER.

WE'VE BEEN IN HERE FOR WHAT? THREE DAYS?

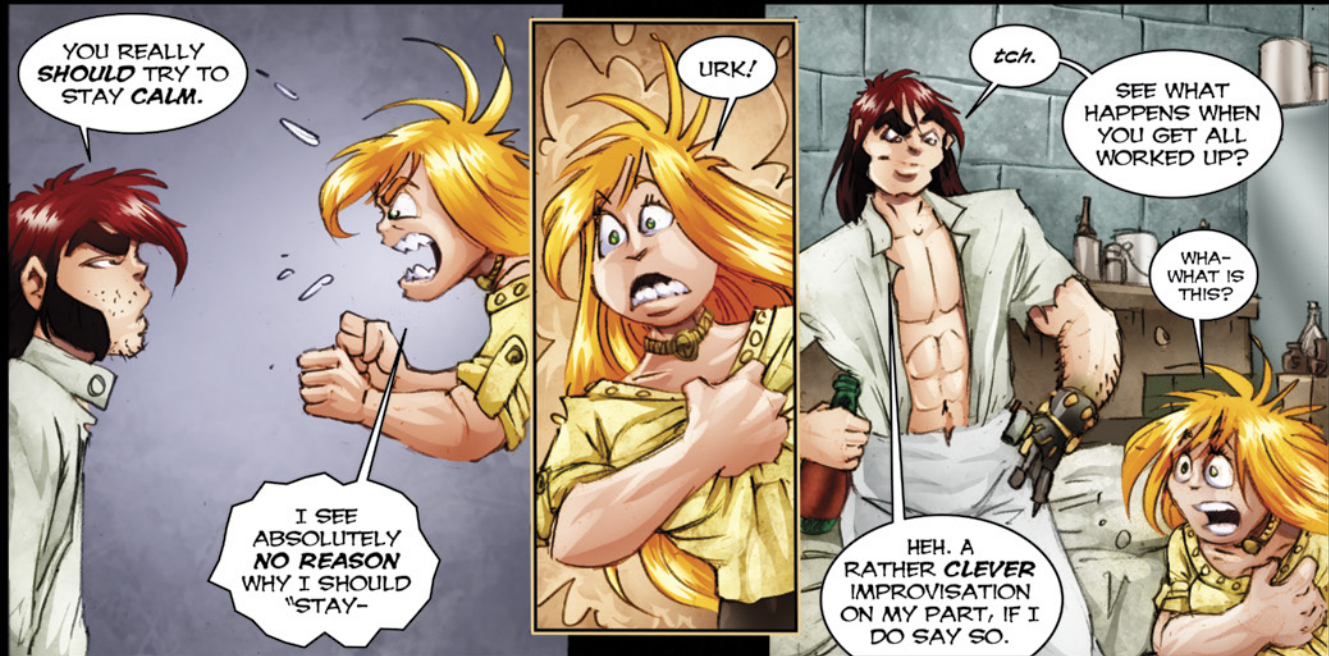
BY NOW, HIS CORPSE WILL HAVE LIQUEFIED, DRIED AND BLOWN AWAY IN THE WIND.



...**KILL** YOU...

"OH, MARTELLUS, WHY DOES **EVERY** LABORATORY YOU DESIGN HAVE SO MANY **SHACKLES**?"

I SWEAR, PEOPLE ASK THE **STUPIDEST** QUESTIONS.



YOU REALLY SHOULD TRY TO STAY CALM.

URK!

tch.

SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET ALL WORKED UP?

WHA-WHAT IS THIS?

I SEE ABSOLUTELY NO REASON WHY I SHOULD "STAY-

HEH. A RATHER *CLEVER* IMPROVISATION ON MY PART, IF I DO SAY SO.



I WON'T BORE YOU WITH THE CHEMISTRY,

BUT IF YOU GET TOO FAR FROM ME FOR TOO LONG,

YOU'LL DIE.



I WAS GOING TO USE AN INTERESTING CONCOCTION GREAT-AUNT RAPPACCINI DEVELOPED.

YOU'D HAVE BECOME MY ADORING SLAVE-



BUT IT WOULD HAVE MADE YOU UNBEARABLY IMBECILIC-

AND I FIND THAT KEEPING YOU *SMART* WILL BE USEFUL.



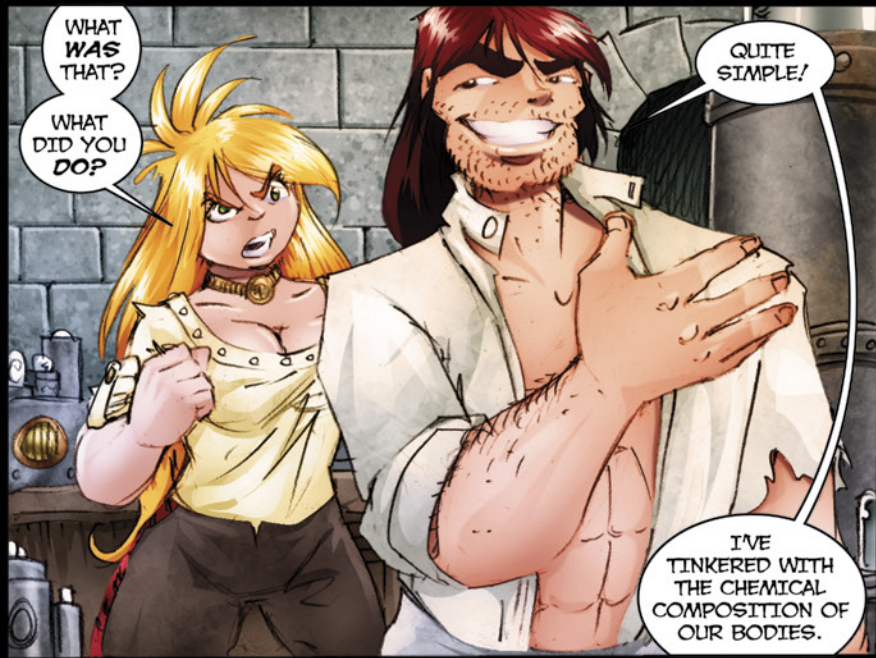
THERE YOU GO. "THE TOUCH OF THE KING," AND ALL THAT, EH?

AAH!



WAIT... WHAT?

NOW THERE ARE *TWO* SMART PEOPLE WHO NEED ME ALIVE, FREE AND IN CONTROL.



WHAT WAS THAT?

WHAT DID YOU DO?

QUITE SIMPLE!

I'VE TINKERED WITH THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF OUR BODIES.

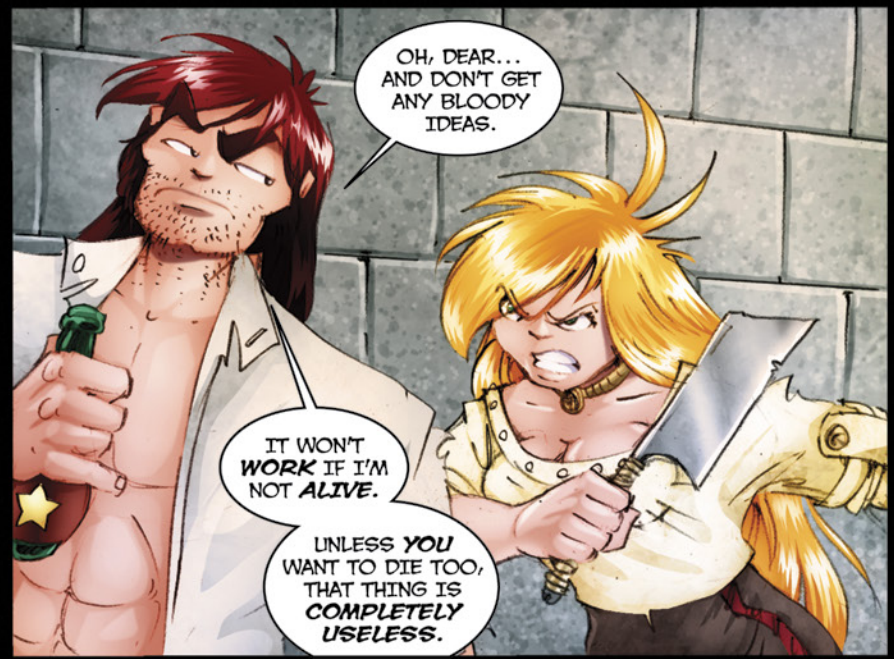


I'VE MADE IT SO YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT ME!

YOU'VE ALREADY FELT THE INITIAL WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS, NASTY, YES?



... BUT DON'T WORRY. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS HANG DECORATIVELY ON MY ARM, AND YOU'LL BE FINE.



OH, DEAR... AND DON'T GET ANY BLOODY IDEAS.

IT WON'T WORK IF I'M NOT ALIVE.

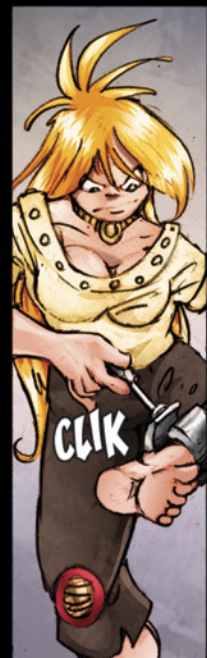
UNLESS YOU WANT TO DIE TOO, THAT THING IS COMPLETELY USELESS.



WHUMP!



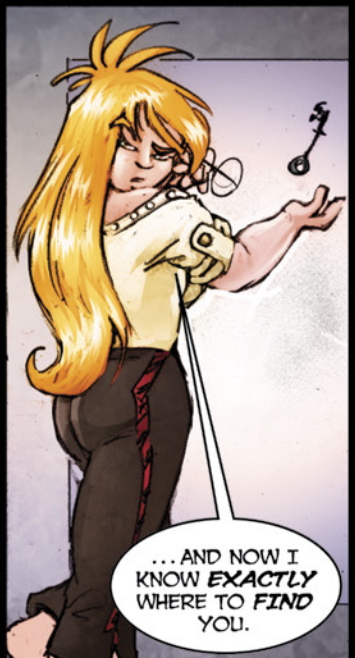
IT'S NOT USELESS IF I USE THE BLUNT EDGE.



CLIK



CLAK!



... AND NOW I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO FIND YOU.

SOON—

I'M BACK.

GREAT. DID YOU GET ANYTHING TO EAT?

I'M STARVING.

NAH. THEY'RE STILL GOING CRAZY LOOKING FOR BLITZENGARD—

AND THEY'RE GUARDING ALL THE FOOD.

YOU SOUND PRETTY CALM ABOUT THAT.

YOU WERE GETTING PRETTY FRANTIC A WHILE AGO...

WELL, OF COURSE THEY FED ME,

I'M ADORABLE.

ANY LUCK?

NO! I'VE LOOKED AND LOOKED!

ARE YOU SURE—?

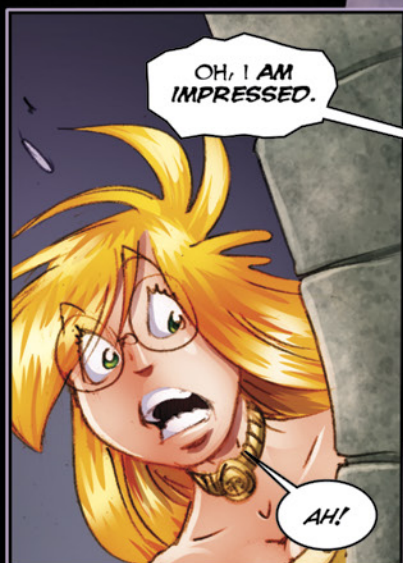
YES! HER TRACK ENDS HERE!

AHA!

I THOUGHT I HEARD YOU!

COME WITH ME, QUICKLY!

I CAN USE YOUR HELP!





MY LADY—IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU *NEED* IN HERE—

GET READY TO *GRAB* IT.



TOO LATE, VIOLETTA—

THIS CREATURE *DIES*—

CRICK



NOW?

CRACK



HISSES!

FWOOSH!

GO!



COUGH COUGH

CURSE THAT GIRL!



SHE'S IMPROVED.

SHE WAS *NEVER* THIS GOOD BEFORE.



SOON—

... YOU PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE GOOD AT THIS SORT OF THING!

YES, YOUR GRACE.

HE'S KILLED SEVEN OF YOU AND YOU HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN HIM!

YES, YOUR GRACE.

DON'T "YES-YOUR-GRACE" ME, FIND THEM!

IT'S BEEN THREE BLOODY DAYS!



YOUR GRACE, WITH ALL RESPECT, VON BLITZENGARD IS GOOD AT THIS SORT OF THING.

BETTER THAN ANY OF US.

IT'S ONE OF THE REASONS HE WAS ABLE TO MAKE HIS CLAIM TO THE TITLE STICK.



THAT'S RIGHT—

SO LISTEN CAREFULLY.

I AM HERE—

I AM THE STORM KING—

AND I AM EXTREMELY DISPLEASED.

SLAM!

I DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR WHATEVER GAMES YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING! THE HETERODYNE GIRL IS LOOSE AND IS BEING INFURIATINGLY UNREASONABLE.

SHE IS NOT ALONE. SHE IS BEING AIDED BY MY TRAITOROUS COUSIN VIOLETTA.

TAKE CARE YOU DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE EITHER OF THEM.

YOU WILL FIND THEM AND RESTRAIN THEM, AND THUS PROVE TO ME THAT YOU ARE WORTHY TO SERVE ME—AND KEEP YOUR MISERABLE LIVES.

DO ANY OF YOU FORESEE ANY TROUBLE WITH THIS SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT?



WHAT ARE YOU ALL DOING?!

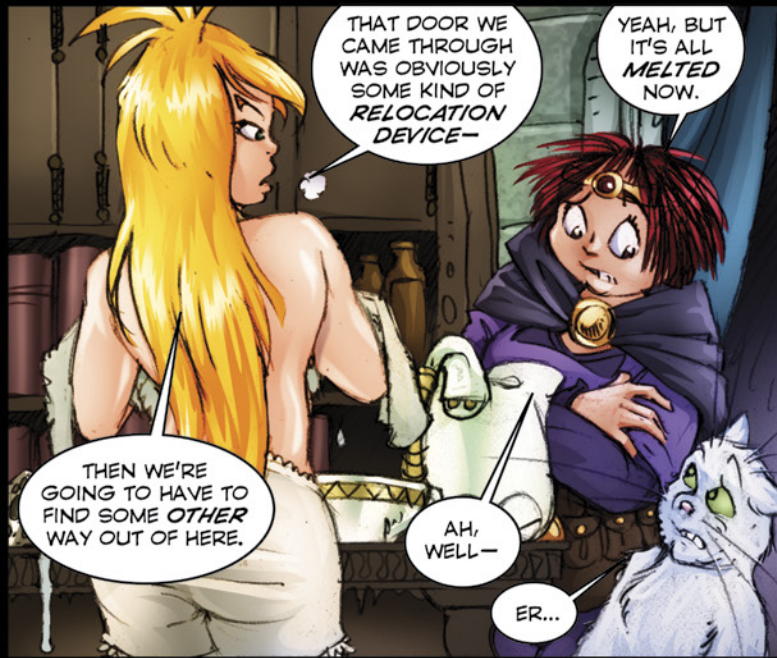
KILL HIM! QUICKLY!



STAB



NO TROUBLE WHATSOEVER, YOUR MAJESTY.



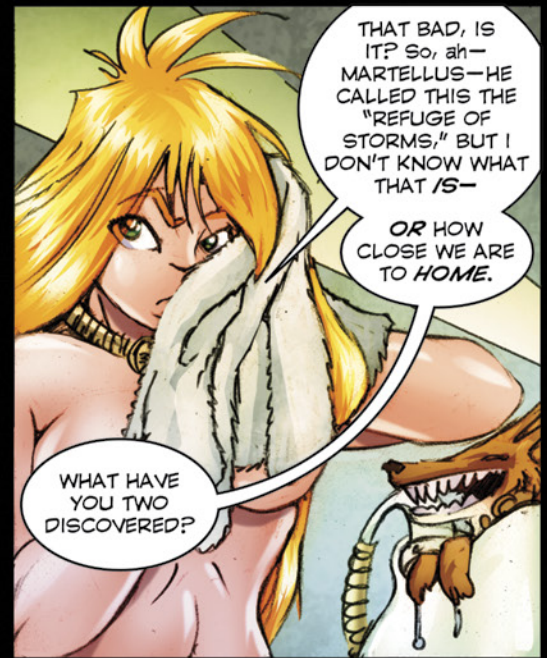
THAT DOOR WE CAME THROUGH WAS OBVIOUSLY SOME KIND OF **RELOCATION DEVICE**—

YEAH, BUT IT'S ALL **MELTED** NOW.

THEN WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIND SOME **OTHER** WAY OUT OF HERE.

AH, WELL—

ER...



THAT BAD, IS IT? So, ah—**MARTELLUS**—HE CALLED THIS THE "**REFUGE OF STORMS**," BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT IS—

OR HOW CLOSE WE ARE TO **HOME**.

WHAT HAVE YOU TWO DISCOVERED?

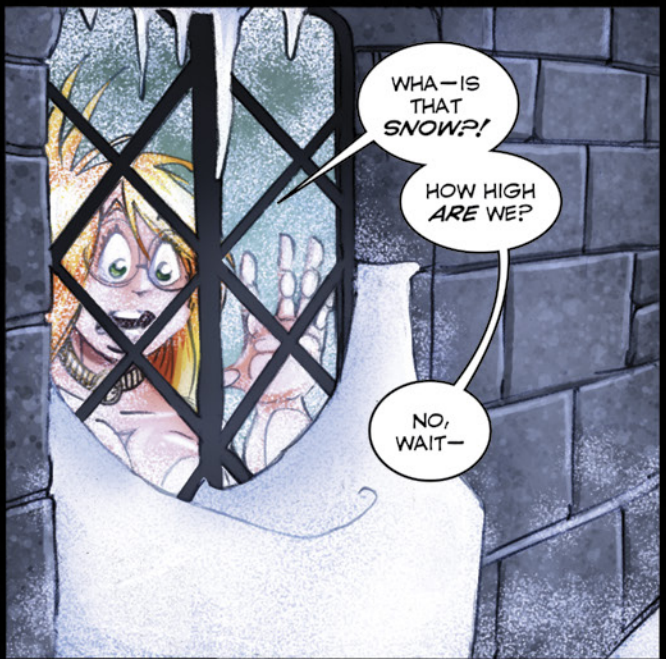


THE **REFUGE OF STORMS**—ABOUT A HUNDRED KILOMETERS FROM **MECHANICSBURG**.

IT'S PART OF THE SAME DEFENSIVE RING AS **STURMHALTEN**— BUT IT'S DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS, RATHER THAN ON A PASS.

WE FOUND AN ENTIRE **SUBTERRANEAN HANGAR COMPLEX!**

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY WHERE ALL THOSE **GIANT CLANKS** CAME FROM.



WHA—IS THAT **SNOW?!**

HOW HIGH ARE WE?

NO, WAIT—



THIS ISN'T JUST ALTITUDE,

THIS IS **DEEP WINTER**.

THAT DOOR— WE WENT FROM **MECHANICSBURG** TO—HERE—IN NO TIME AT ALL.

I'VE NEVER EVEN **HEARD** OF SOMETHING THAT CAN DO THAT.



WHAT WAS THAT THING?

...HOW LONG DID IT **REALLY** TAKE TO MOVE US FROM THERE TO HERE?



ALL RIGHT, OUT WITH IT. WE'VE LOST WHAT? **SIX MONTHS?**

NO.

WHAT? BUT IT'S **OBVIOUS** THAT—

TWO AND A HALF **YEARS**.



TWO—

AND A HALF YEARS. YEAH. WE'RE PRETTY SURE ABOUT THAT.

HOW—HOW ARE YOU SURE?

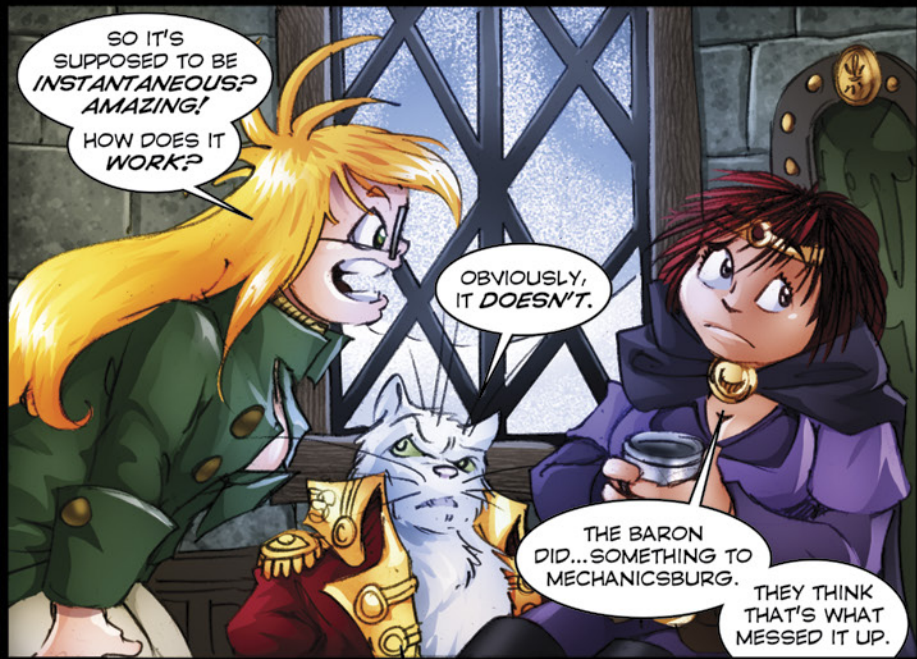


THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT IT A LOT.

TWEEDLE WAS SUPPOSED TO GRAB YOU AND BRING YOU BACK HERE—

BUT HE NEVER CAME THROUGH. THEY THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD.

THEN SUDDENLY—BANG! HE'S BACK, STICKING KNIVES IN EVERYBODY.



SO IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE INSTANTANEOUS? AMAZING!

HOW DOES IT WORK?

OBVIOUSLY, IT DOESN'T.

THE BARON DID... SOMETHING TO MECHANICSBURG.

THEY THINK THAT'S WHAT MESSED IT UP.



BUT WHAT?

WHAT DID HE DO TO MECHANICSBURG?



WE DON'T REALLY KNOW.

...BUT IF THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT IT A LOT...

ISN'T SURREPTITIOUS INFORMATION GATHERING ONE OF THE THINGS YOU WERE CREATED FOR?



CAN YOU BELIEVE MARTELLUS IS BACK?

I THOUGHT AFTER WHAT THE BARON DID TO MECHANICSBURG—

YEAH, YEAH—WHAT I CAN'T BELIEVE IS HOW MUCH THIS CAT CAN EAT!

I MEAN, LOOK AT THIS GUY GO!



...WELL, I CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH.



FINE. SO WE DON'T KNOW—

BUT IT'S MY TOWN. *MINE.*



... AND GIL— IT'S BEEN OVER **TWO YEARS?**

IS *HE* ALL RIGHT?

MARTELLUS SAID **TARVEK** IS DEAD—

BUT WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE ANYTHING *HE* SAYS?

I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!



I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT.

I'VE GOT TO RETURN TO MECHANICSBURG. **NOW.**

HOW? IT'S THE MIDDLE OF WINTER!

WE HAVE NO TRANSPORT!

EVERYONE HERE WANTS US DEAD!



I'M GETTING USED TO THAT LAST ONE.



VIOLETTA.

THAT HANGAR YOU MENTIONED.

TAKE ME THERE.





WHAT. WAS. THAT?!

THAT WAS A SPARKHOUND!
A BIG ONE!

MARTELLUS—
IN HIS NOTES—

THERE WAS STUFF ABOUT SPARKHOUNDS.



THOSE ARE TWEEDLE'S.P BUT HE WAS ALWAYS—I MEAN—

HE MADE THESE LITTLE BEAR THINGS.

THEY... THEY SANG.

WELL, IF THAT THING SINGS, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT.



UGH. YEAH. BUT TWEEDLE...
Jeez...

MY FAMILY...

YEAH. ME TOO.

IN THE HETERODYNE STORIES—

DOCTOR MONGFISH USED SPARKHOUNDS—

AND I GUESS HE'D BE MY GRANDFATHER.



"...BUT I THOUGHT THEY WERE BRED TO HUNT SPARKS. THAT ONE IGNORED YOU AND WENT FOR THE SMOKE KNIGHT."

"I... THINK THEY'RE REALLY SMART. MARTELLUS IS PROBABLY USING THEM TO PUT DOWN THIS REBELLION."



...AND HE FEELS CONFIDENT ENOUGH THAT HE CAN SAVE US FOR LATER.

HE'S THAT SURE THAT THERE'S NO WAY TO ESCAPE?

COME ON, LET'S PROVE HIM WRONG.



UNCLE JULIUS.

AG!



MARTELLUS—

STOP.

BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER... ARE YOU HE?

WHAT?

THIS ENTIRE PYRAMID OF IDIOCY AND TREASON I'VE BEEN FORCED TO HACK MY WAY UP.

ARE YOU THE MAN AT THE TOP?



EVERY SINGLE TIME I THINK I HAVE KILLED THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR USURPING MY COMMAND,

I FIND THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE HIGHER UP, STILL FIGHTING ME.



NOW, DON'T GET ME WRONG, I CAN KILL FAMILY MEMBERS ALL DAY AND *KNOW* I'M MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE—

BUT SMOKE KNIGHTS TAKE TIME AND MONEY TO TRAIN—

AND I'D RATHER NOT WASTE TOO MANY OF THEM.

SO, WILL KILLING YOU SOLVE MY PROBLEM, OR—

NO! NO! IT'S NOT ME!



TCH. OH, MARTELLUS—

OH.



YOU'VE LET YOUR *FILTHY* DOGS INTO THE HOUSE AGAIN.

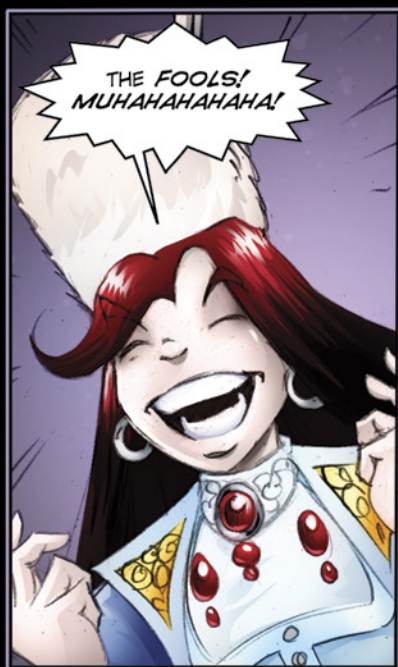
XERXSEPHNIA.



IT REALLY *IS* YOU! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

...AND LET ME GUESS—THEY'VE BEEN TRYING TO KILL YOU BEFORE I RETURNED.

BECAUSE *OBVIOUSLY*, I'D NEVER FIND OUT.



THE FOOLS! MUHAHAHAHAHA!



EEEE! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE ALIVE!

YOU'RE MY FAVORITE BROTHER!

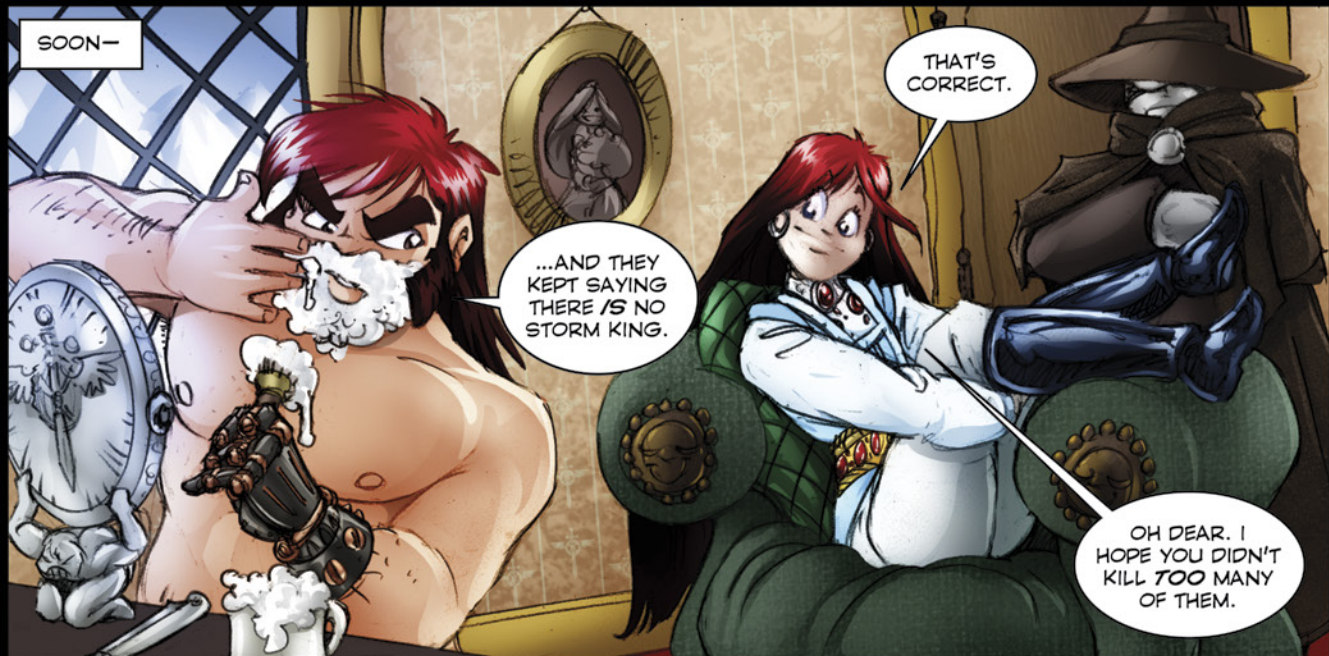
AW... SEFFIE—



I'VE MISSED THAT CREEPY LAUGH OF YOURS.

HEE HEE! ISN'T IT GOOD?!

...BUT I'M STILL WORKING ON THE HARMONICS.



SOON—

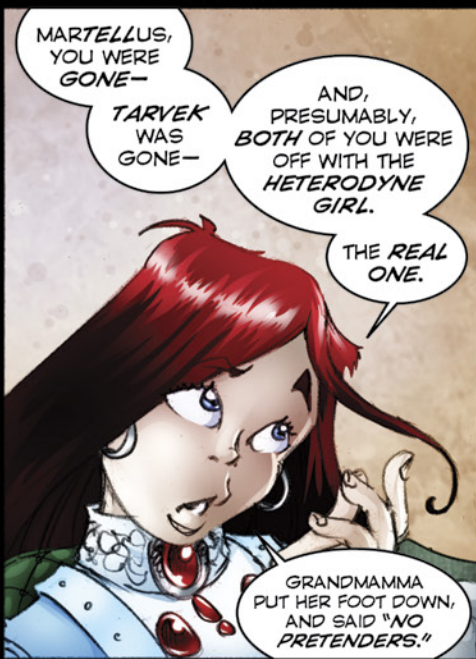
THAT'S CORRECT.

...AND THEY KEPT SAYING THERE IS NO STORM KING.

OH DEAR. I HOPE YOU DIDN'T KILL TOO MANY OF THEM.



WHAT? NO. SOMEONE MUST HAVE—



MARTELLUS, YOU WERE GONE—

TARVEK WAS GONE—

AND, PRESUMABLY, BOTH OF YOU WERE OFF WITH THE HETERODYNE GIRL.

THE REAL ONE.

GRANDMAMMA PUT HER FOOT DOWN, AND SAID "NO PRETENDERS."



SHE SAID IF EITHER OF YOU CAME BACK, YOU WERE A BETTER BET THAN ANYONE ELSE,

AND IF YOU DIDN'T, WELL, THERE WAS NO HETERODYNE GIRL FOR YOU TO MARRY ANYWAY.

WHAT ABOUT ZOLAP? THEY WORKED HARD ON HER...

NO. A FAKE IS NO LONGER AN OPTION.



ALL RIGHT THEN, SO WHAT IS THE PLAN?

...AND DON'T TELL ME THERE ISN'T ONE—

THE ORDER SPENT YEARS CREATING A STORM KING SHAPED HOLE IN THE WORLD.

WHAT ARE THEY PLANNING TO FILL IT WITH?



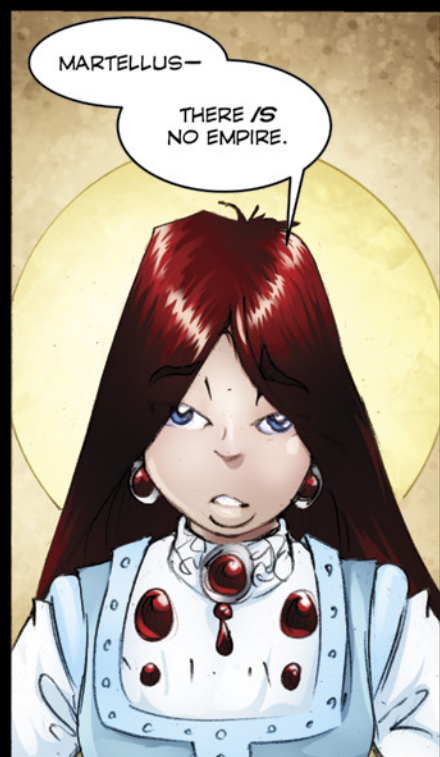
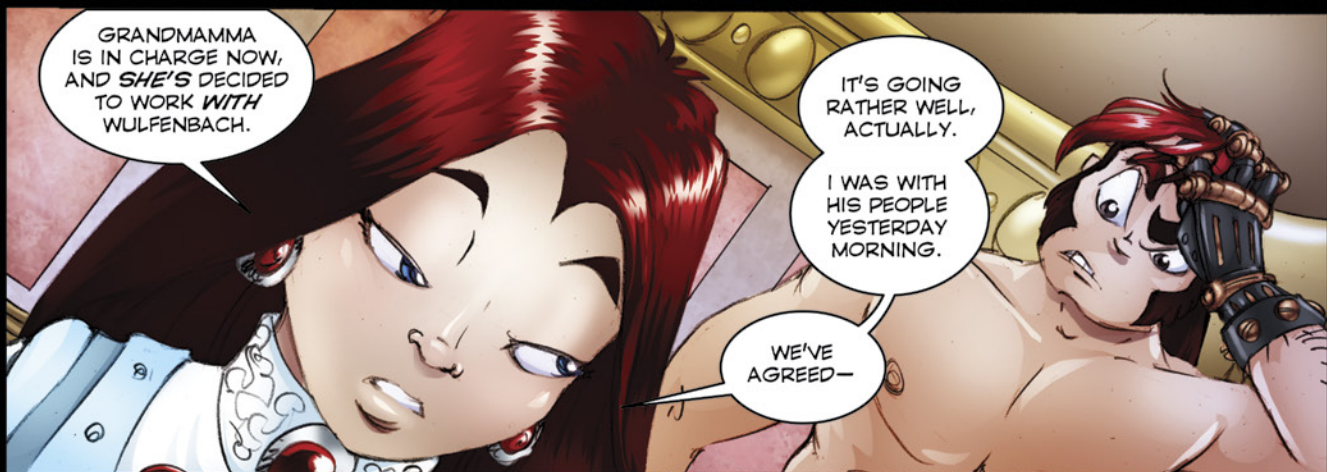
...YOU WON'T LIKE IT.

HA! TRY ME.



GILGAMESH WULFENBACH.

OW!



MEANWHILE—

...LOOKS LIKE WE'RE HERE.

YEAH. CREEPY, HUH? IT'S *EASILY* AS DEEP AS THOSE CAVES UNDER STURMHALTEN—

AND IT STILL SEEMS TOTALLY *DESERTED*. I DON'T LIKE IT.

WELL, THIS IS OBVIOUSLY WHERE THEY BUILT THOSE GIANT KNIGHT CLANKS MARTELLUS BROUGHT TO MECHANICSBURG.

I GUESS AFTER MARTELLUS WAS GONE,

THEY HAD *OTHER THINGS* TO WORRY ABOUT.

WE'RE JUST LUCKY THEY LEFT ALL THIS EQUIPMENT IN PLACE.

YEAH. LUCKY...

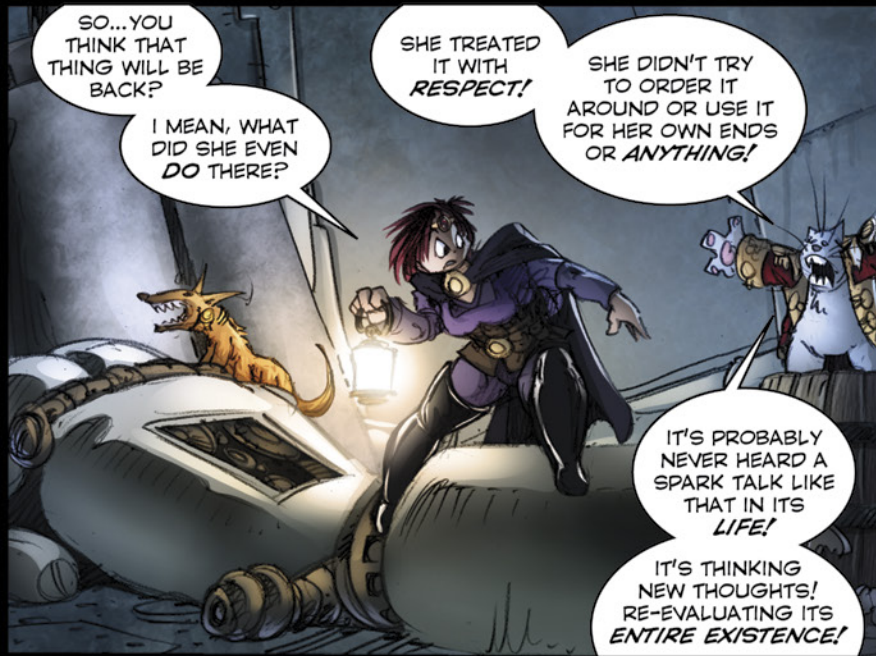
...BUT IT'S WEIRD. THESE PEOPLE HAVE LOTS OF SPARKS... YOU'D THINK THEY'D BE WORKING ON SOMETHING *ELSE* IN HERE BY NOW.

HM... THAT'S TRUE... SO *WHY*—

GRAAAAH!

OH.





SO... YOU THINK THAT THING WILL BE BACK?

I MEAN, WHAT DID SHE EVEN DO THERE?

SHE TREATED IT WITH **RESPECT!**

SHE DIDN'T TRY TO ORDER IT AROUND OR USE IT FOR HER OWN ENDS OR **ANYTHING!**

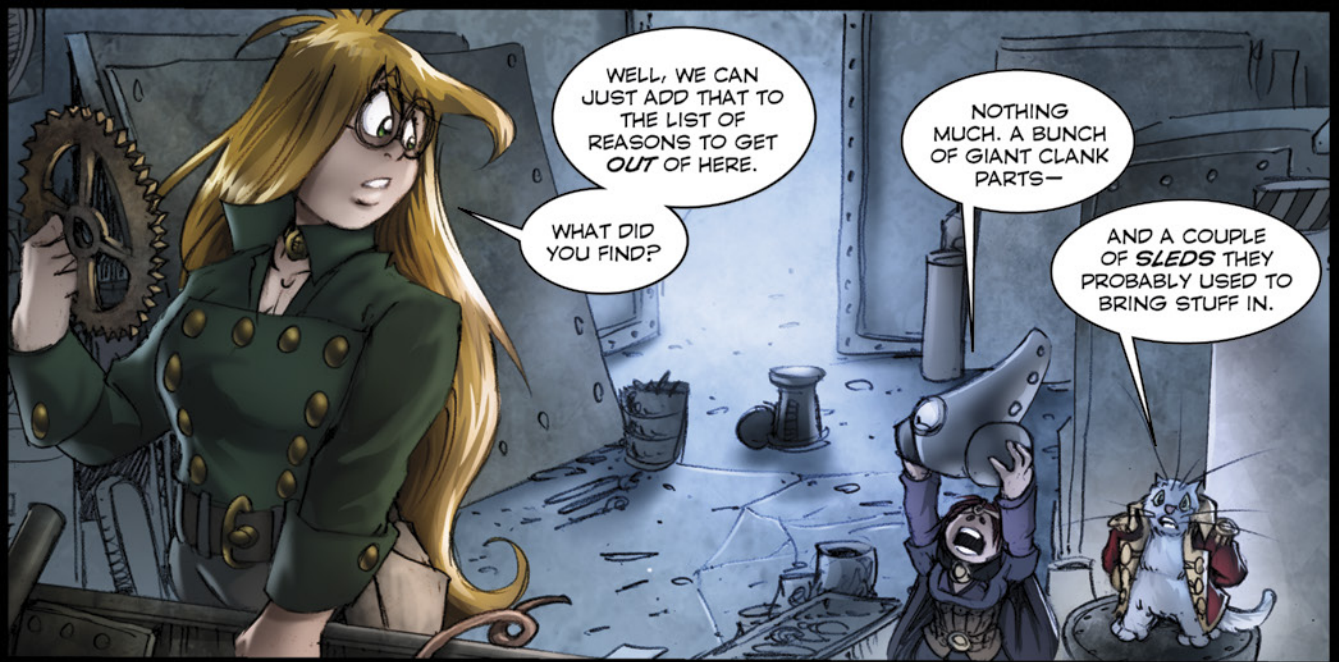
IT'S PROBABLY NEVER HEARD A SPARK TALK LIKE THAT IN ITS **LIFE!**

IT'S THINKING NEW THOUGHTS! RE-EVALUATING ITS **ENTIRE EXISTENCE!**



OH. SO—

SO IT WON'T BE BACK UNTIL IT'S **HUNGRY.**

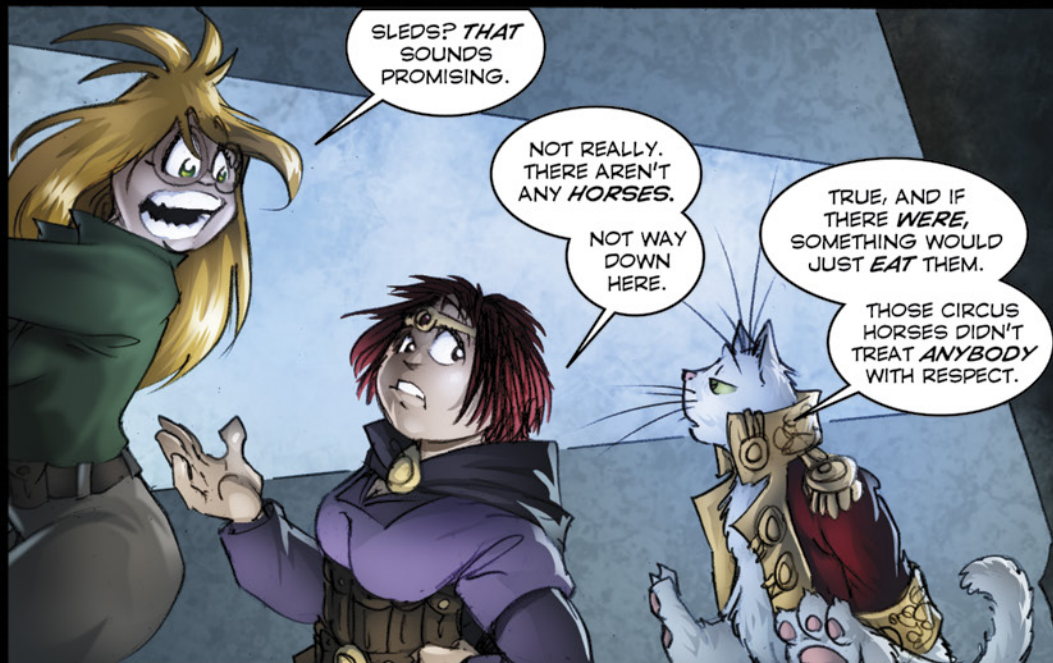


WELL, WE CAN JUST ADD THAT TO THE LIST OF REASONS TO GET **OUT** OF HERE.

WHAT DID YOU FIND?

NOTHING MUCH. A BUNCH OF GIANT CLANK PARTS—

AND A COUPLE OF **SLEDS** THEY PROBABLY USED TO BRING STUFF IN.



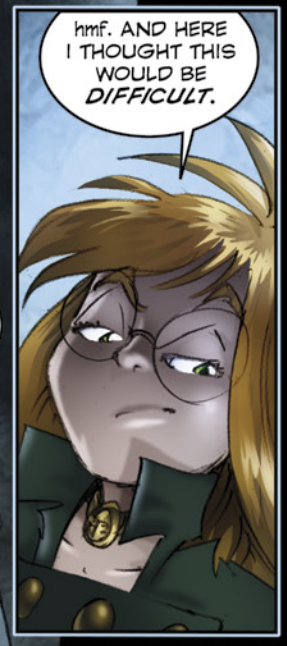
SLEDS? **THAT** SOUNDS PROMISING.

NOT REALLY. THERE AREN'T ANY **HORSES.**

NOT WAY DOWN HERE.

TRUE, AND IF THERE **WERE,** SOMETHING WOULD JUST **EAT** THEM.

THOSE CIRCUS HORSES DIDN'T TREAT **ANYBODY** WITH RESPECT.



hmf. AND HERE I THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE **DIFFICULT.**



...BUT HOW WILL YOU—

NO! DON'T ASK!

HA! I'M GLAD YOU ASKED!

OH NOW YOU'VE DONE IT.



LOOK AROUND! WE HAVE SO MUCH TO WORK WITH!

SO MANY DIFFERENT THINGS—THINGS THAT NO ONE WOULD DREAM OF PUTTING TOGETHER!

WE CANNOT HELP BUT DO SOMETHING NEW! SOMETHING INTERESTING!



... WHEN THINGS ARE PUT INTO CONJUNCTION IN A WAY NEVER BEFORE SEEN... YES...

THAT IS WHEN ONE CAN TRULY GLIMPSE THE MECHANICS OF THE UNIVERSE!



... THE RESULTS OF LOGIC—OF "NATURAL PROGRESSION?"

BORING!

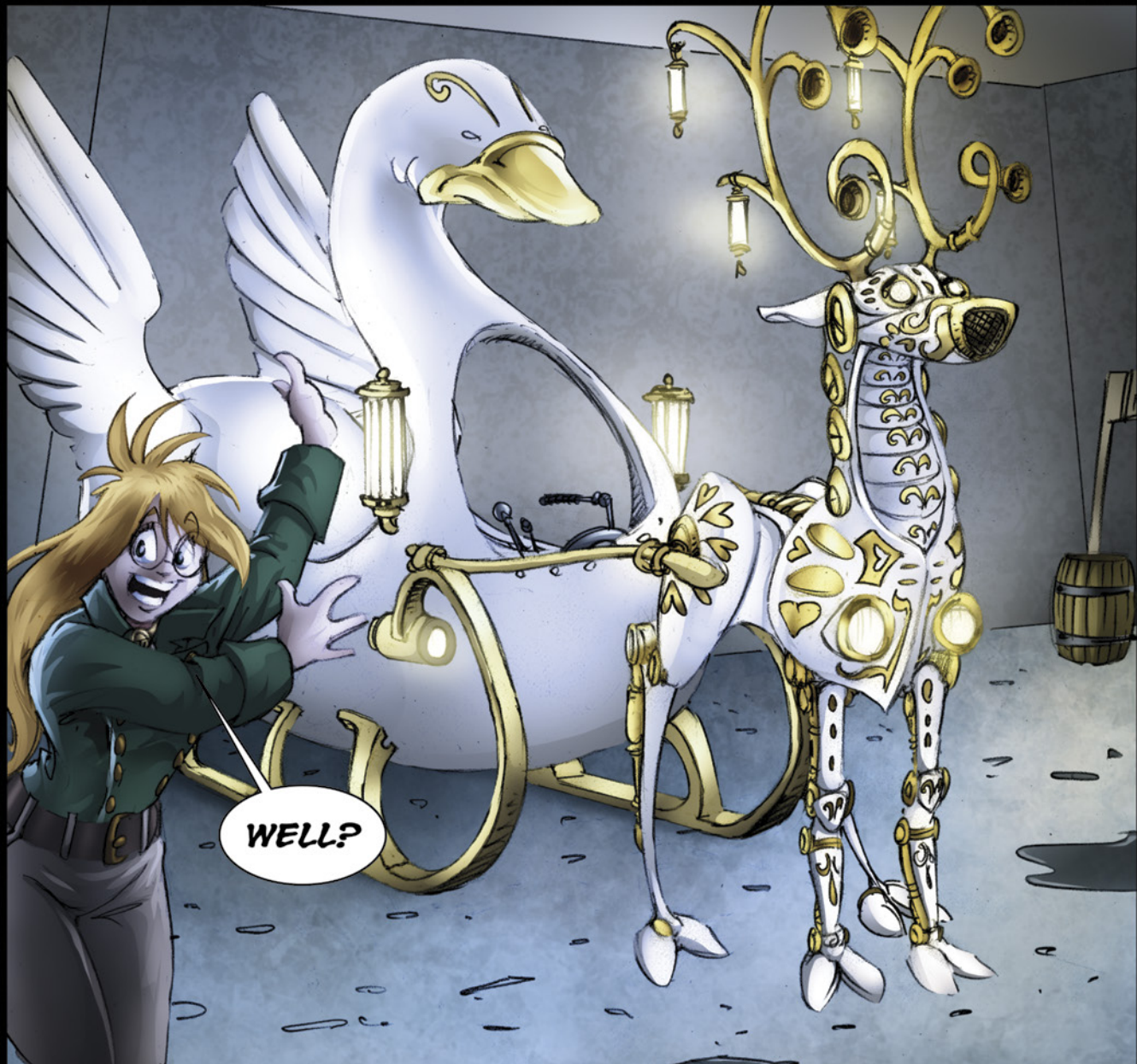
AN "EXPECTED RESULT?" **DULL!**

AN "OBVIOUS NEXT STEP?" **PFUI!** WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT?

WE WANT TO SEE THE UNEXPECTED! THE STRANGE AND TERRIBLE! A DREAM MERELY SOOTHES—BUT OUR NIGHTMARES MAKE US RUN!



BEHOLD!



WELL?



HUH.
I...um...I
GUESS I SORT OF
THOUGHT YOU'D
MAKE SOMETHING
A LITTLE MORE...

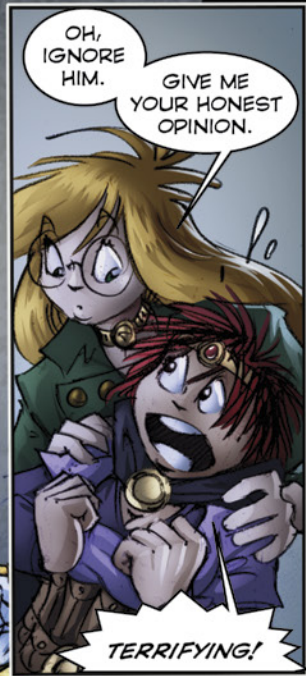
AAAH!
NO! SHUT
UP!



DO YOU DARE
CHALLENGE THE
MISTRESS' DESIGN
AESTHETIC?

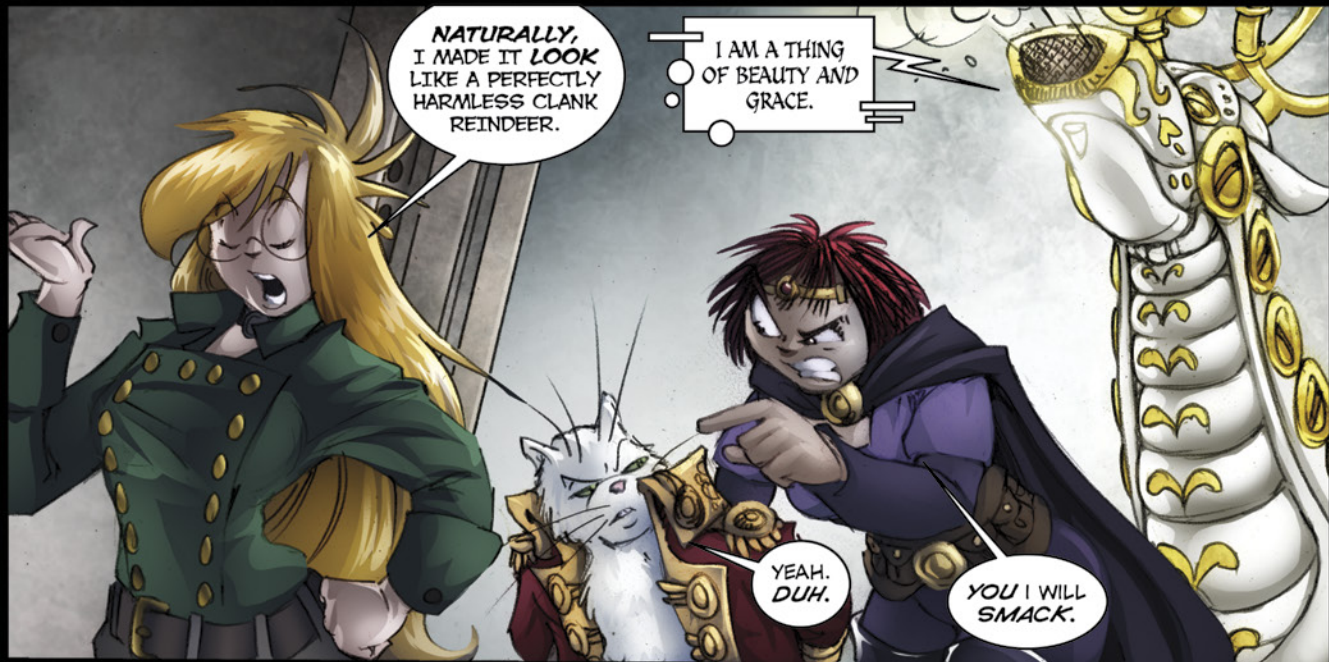
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
CLIK
CLAK!

NO!



OH,
IGNORE
HIM.
GIVE ME
YOUR HONEST
OPINION.

TERRIFYING!



NATURALLY, I MADE IT LOOK LIKE A PERFECTLY HARMLESS CLANK REINDEER.

I AM A THING OF BEAUTY AND GRACE.

YEAH. DUH.

YOU I WILL SMACK.



BUT IT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN HOW WE'RE GOING TO GET OUT OF HERE!

ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? THIS IS WHERE THEY BUILT ALL THOSE GIANT CLANKS!

YEAH, BUT WE'RE SO FAR UNDERGROUND, THEY MUST HAVE FLOWN THEM OUT SOMEHOW!



UH... THAT THING CAN'T FLY... CAN IT?

OF COURSE NOT.



... THAT'S WHAT THESE SCHWEINCOPTERS ARE FOR.

GROINK!



YOU KNOW WHAT?
FINE.
VIVE LA WEIRD. LET'S GO.



HOW CAN SHE NOT CARE?! THIS IS SCIENCE!

'S JUST MENTAL FATIGUE. SHE'LL BE INTERESTED LATER.
YOU KNOW, IF WE LIVE...

...AND IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, I'VE GOT-

BEYOND CARING NOW! LET'S GO!



HMF.

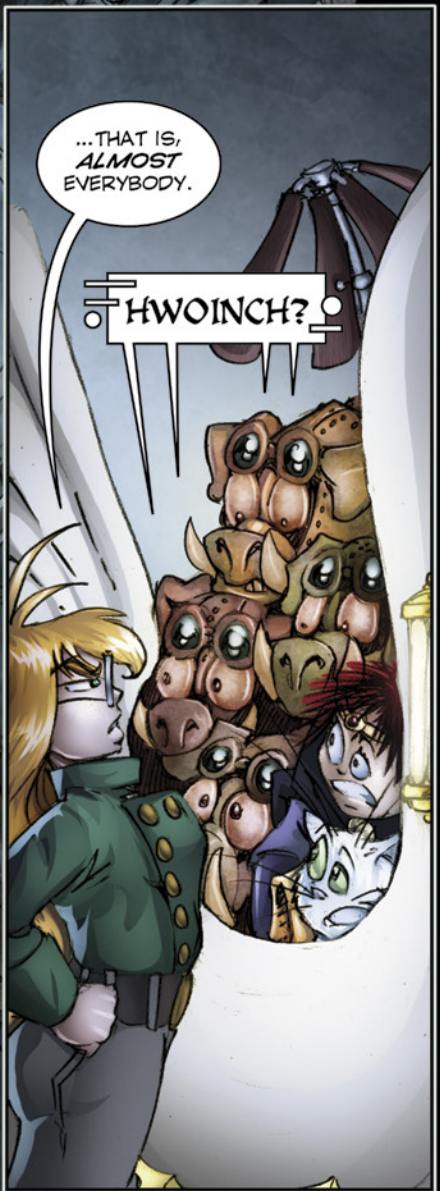


OH. WELL, ALL RIGHT, THEN.

AH! THIS MUST BE ONE OF THE LAUNCH SILOS. YES, THIS IS PERFECT!

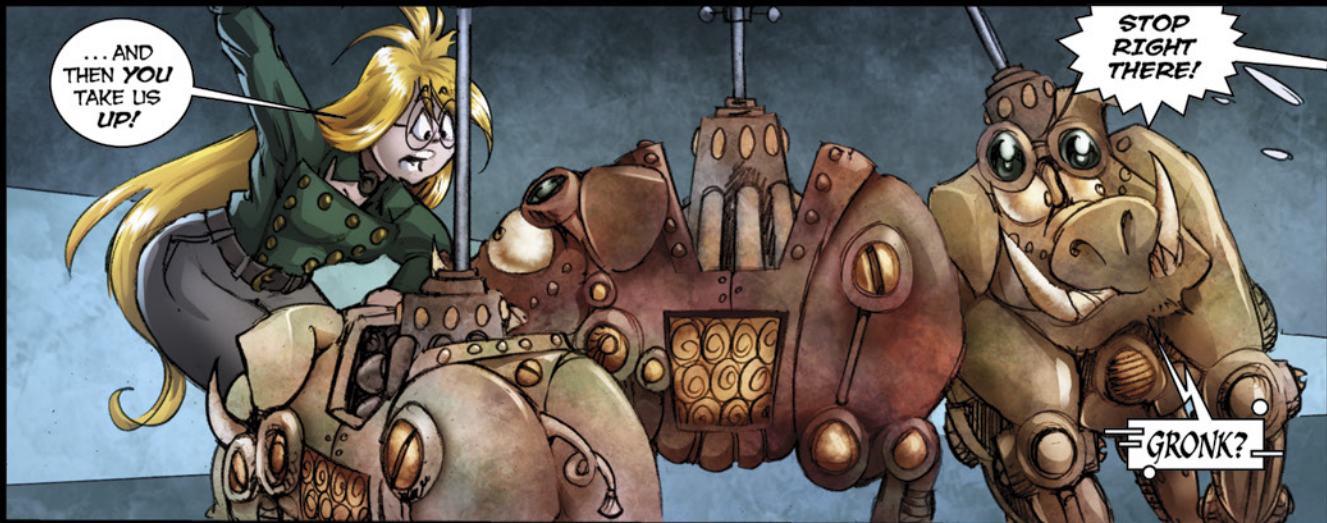
ONCE WE GET THE CEILING CAP OPEN, WE'LL BE UP AND AWAY!

EVERYBODY INTO THE SLEIGH!



...THAT IS, ALMOST EVERYBODY.

HWOINCH?



... AND THEN YOU TAKE US UP!

STOP RIGHT THERE!

GRONK?



HA HA! LADY HETERODYNE! SUCH AN HONOR!

YOU MUST TELL ME HOW YOU OVERCAME MY MUCOSAPEDALIAN GUARD-SLIME!



WHAT? THAT GUARD SLIME?

GRAAAAH!



HOW DARE YOU!

I AM YOUR CREATOR!
YOU WERE CREATED TO SERVE ME!

NOW, OBEY ME, AND CRUSH MY ENEMIES!



GRAAAARG!

Rip
SNAP!
glomph!

YOU SEE? RESPECT IS—

GET US OUT OF HERE!

THIS IS GOING TO DRIVE ME *INSANE!*

I HAVE A PACK OF SPARKHUNDS, A CADRE OF OVER-TRAINED SMOKE KNIGHTS, A VERITABLE CLOWN-CARRIAGE OF COWED RELATIVES—

ALL RUNNING AROUND MY CASTLE LIKE A SWARM OF ANTS ON FIRE—

AND THEY *STILL* CAN'T FIND TWO WOMEN AND A BLASTED CAT WEARING A COAT!

NO *WONDER* EVERYTHING HAS GONE TO HELL AND BACK!

THESE FOOLS ARE ENOUGH TO MAKE ME TOSS IT ALL AND OPEN THAT DESIGNER PET SHOP IN *PARIS!*

tch. HAVE ANOTHER CUP OF TEA, DEAR. YOU'RE *RANTING.*

I'VE HAD *ENOUGH* TEA!

... AND DON'T YOU SIT THERE BEING ALL *CONDESCENDING—*

YOU HAVE *NO IDEA* WHAT THIS GIRL IS CAPABLE OF!

...BUT MARTELLUS, THIS IS *REAL LIFE.* IT'S NOT AS IF SHE'S IN HER OWN LAB—

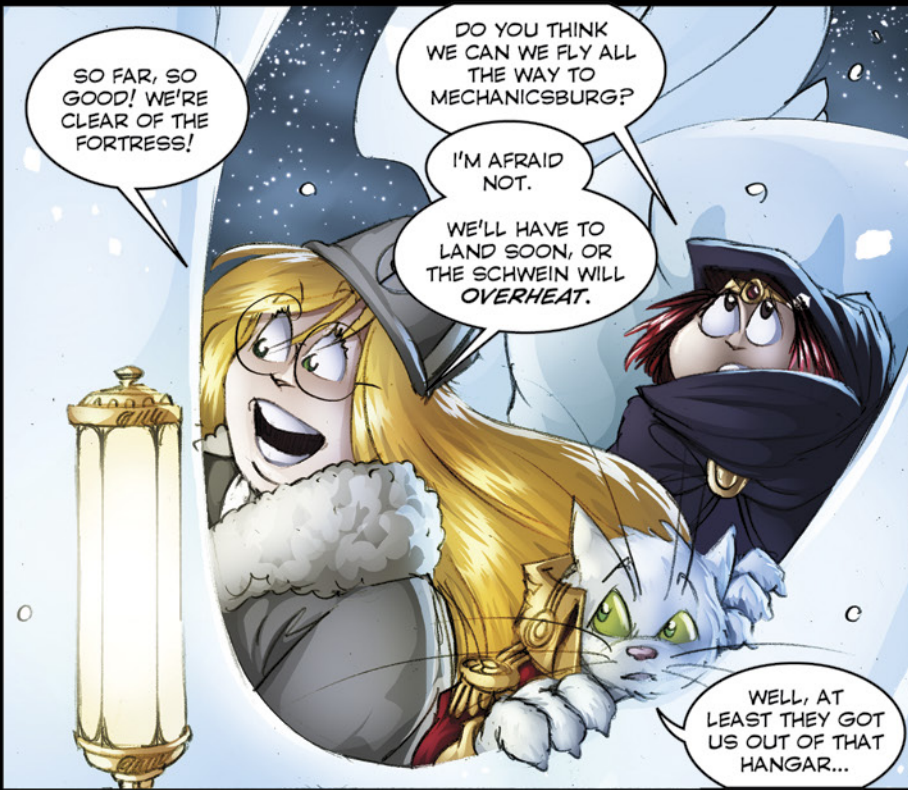
OR EVEN IN HER OWN TOWN.

SHE'S *KILOMETERS* FROM MECHANICSBURG—TRAPPED IN *OUR* FORTRESS—IN THE DEAD OF WINTER.

WHAT CAN SHE DO?

...
AND *WHY* DO YOU HAVE THAT *IDiotic* LOOK ON YOUR FACE?





SO FAR, SO GOOD! WE'RE CLEAR OF THE FORTRESS!

DO YOU THINK WE CAN WE FLY ALL THE WAY TO MECHANICSBURG?

I'M AFRAID NOT.

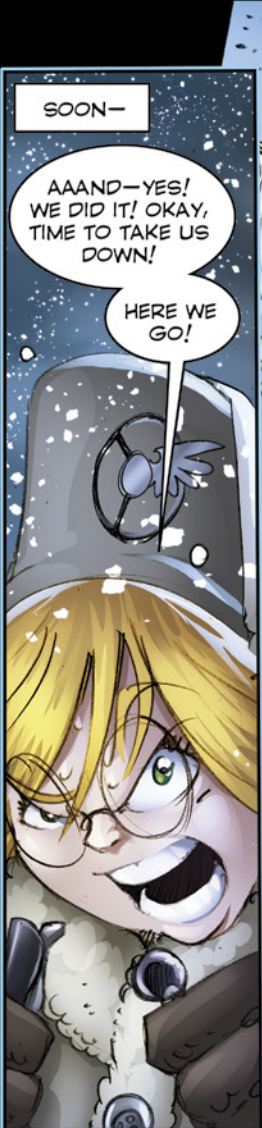
WE'LL HAVE TO LAND SOON, OR THE SCHWEIN WILL OVERHEAT.

WELL, AT LEAST THEY GOT US OUT OF THAT HANGAR...



YEAH.

JUST A LITTLE FARTHER... I WANT TO GET US PAST THOSE PEAKS.



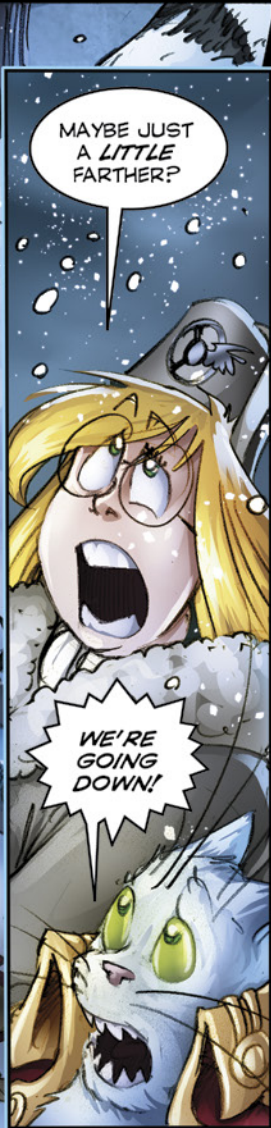
SOON—

AAAND—YES! WE DID IT! OKAY, TIME TO TAKE US DOWN!

HERE WE GO!



WURFF?



MAYBE JUST A LITTLE FARTHER?

WE'RE GOING DOWN!



ISHTVAN!
ISHTVAN! WHAT
IS THAT...
THING?

DO NOT
KNOW,
ZOGOK.

WE CHASE?
WE CHASE?



THE HORN
CALL!

MASTER'S
HORN CALL!



IS FAR AWAY,
BUT IS
MASTER'S
HORN!

MASTER!

MASTER IS
BACK!

CAN...CAN IT
REALLY BE—



"MASTER IS
HUNTING!"



FLYING THING!
MASTER HUNTS FLYING THING!

HE'S BACK REALLY?
WE'VE GOT TO FIND HIM. WE'LL FOLLOW THE HORN CALL AND—



BUT FLYING THING WILL GET AWAY!

WE'VE GOT TO CHECK THIS OUT. IF IT REALLY IS THE MASTER—



BUT...FLYING THING...



NO.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

NO!
SAID NO!



ISHTVAN DRYNOSE IS...IS WRONG!

ISHTVAN FIND MASTER!
ISHTVAN ALONE!

TELL MASTER WE HUNT WITH HIM.

BUT—

I...ZOGOK AM PACK LEADER, AND I SAY—



WE GO!



SKRONKI!



WE'VE BLOWN THE FORE STARBOARD HOG!

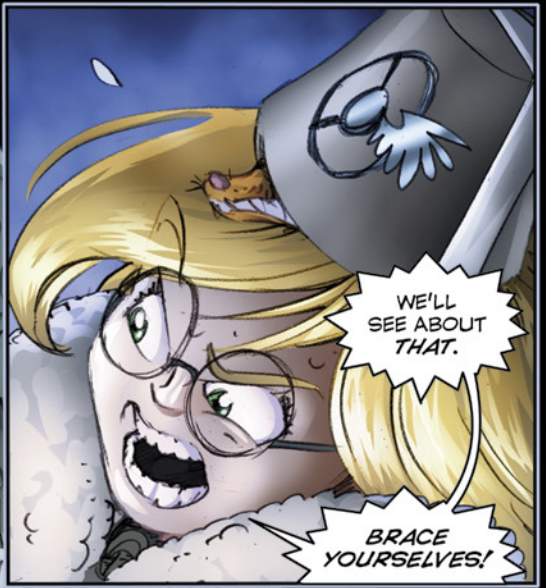
AT LEAST WE'VE GAINED A COUPLE OF KILOMETERS...



THAT WON'T HELP MUCH!

THIS IS OPEN COUNTRY, NO BARRIERS OR CLIFFS—

THOSE THINGS WILL CATCH UP WITH US IN NO TIME!



WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT.

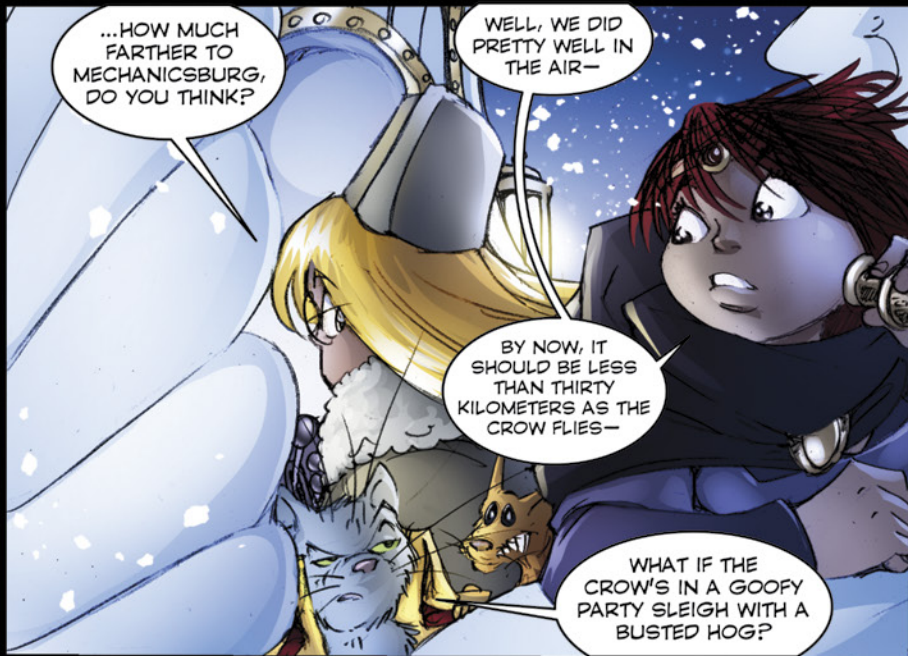
BRACE YOURSELVES!



OEIRNK!

NOT THE FACE!

AAAAAAA!

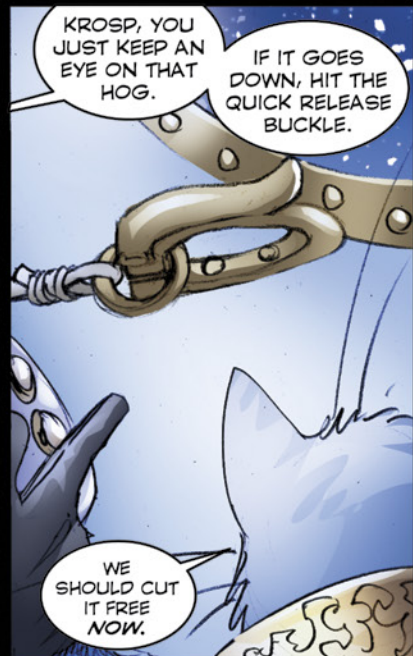


...HOW MUCH FARTHER TO MECHANICSBURG, DO YOU THINK?

WELL, WE DID PRETTY WELL IN THE AIR—

BY NOW, IT SHOULD BE LESS THAN THIRTY KILOMETERS AS THE CROW FLIES—

WHAT IF THE CROW'S IN A GOOFY PARTY SLEIGH WITH A BUSTED HOG?



KROSP, YOU JUST KEEP AN EYE ON THAT HOG.

IF IT GOES DOWN, HIT THE QUICK RELEASE BUCKLE.

WE SHOULD CUT IT FREE NOW.



NO. IT CAN STILL PULL—I WANT IT UNTIL WE'RE OVER THIS RIDGE, AT LEAST.

OH, PERFECT.

HERE THEY COME.





UGH. WHAT YOU THINK WE'LL ACCOMPLISH BY CHARGING AROUND BLINDLY—

DON'T BE TIRESOME.



I'VE HUNTED EVERY METER OF THESE MOUNTAINS.

I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING.

IF SHE'S HEADED FOR THE MECHANICSBURG ROAD, SHE HAS TO GO THROUGH THE BLACKRIDGE GAP.



VIOLETTA WILL KNOW THIS.

MARTELLUS, COMPANY.

SHALL I TAKE HIM OUT?



HOLD, SEFFIE. THIS IS ISHTVAN DRYNO—um—NYIREGYHAZ,

ONE OF MY HOUNDMASTERS.

GREAT STARRY BEARS ABOVE! MY LORD! IT REALLY /S YOU!

INDEED IT IS! WHERE IS YOUR PACK?



WE SAW A—I SWEAR, SIR—WE SAW A FLYING SLEIGH AND THE PACK LEADER INSISTED ON CHASING IT.

I'M SORRY, MY LORD, I...I COULDN'T HOLD THEM.

THEY'RE HEADED FOR BLACKRIDGE GAP.



HO HO! WONDERFUL!

ALL HOUNDS TO BLACKRIDGE GAP!

RUN! RUN LIKE YOUR TAILS ARE ON FIRE!

AH! OBSERVE
MY GRACEFUL
LEAP!

EVEN FLEEING
FROM BARBAROUS
FIENDS, I AM
PERFECTION!

EYEOIKI!

AAAH!
KROSP! CUT
THE HOG!

GOT
IT!

THERE! SEE
THAT ROAD?
FOLLOW THAT!

HEY! CAN
WE GO ANY
FASTER?

CAT!

CAT!
CAT!
CAT!

CAT!

CAT!

CAAAAT!

...BUT I
DON'T THINK
I'LL LIKE IT!

IT'LL GET US
THROUGH THE
MOUNTAINS AND
STRAIGHT TO
MECHANICSBURG.

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT'LL HAPPEN
WHEN THESE
THINGS CATCH
US—



MARTELLUS, WAIT.

WHAT? WHY?!



BECAUSE I'M GETTING OFF HERE.

HERE?!



YOU. PREPARE YOUR SPARE HORSE FOR ME.

AT ONCE, MY LADY.



DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL GO FASTER WITHOUT ME, AND I'LL BE THERE DIRECTLY.

WHO IS A NASTY DOGGIE? WHO?

...BUT WHY ARE WE SPLITTING UP?

WAIT—I KNOW THIS ONE—

OOH! IT'S MEEEEEE!



BECAUSE, MY DEAR, YOU'VE BEEN BOORISH, TYRANNICAL, AND AN ALL-AROUND BEAST, AND NOW SHE DOESN'T LIKE YOU.

IF I SHOW UP WITH YOU, SHE WON'T LIKE ME, EITHER—

AND THINGS WILL BE SO MUCH EASIER IF SHE LIKES ME.



YOU'RE SO SMART! YOU'RE THE BEST SISTER EVER!

...AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT.



COME ON, ISHTVAN! WE'RE TAKING MY FAVORITE SHORT CUT!

NOT TOPPLE RIDGE?

BUT...

ERG... YES, MY LORD.



IT SHOULD BE AROUND THIS LAST BEND...

RIGHT! TAKE A HARD RIGHT!

NOW!

UP AHEAD— IS THAT A GLOW? WHAT—



HA HA! FOUND YOU!

YOU THOUGHT YOU'D GET AWAY THAT EASILY?!

HA!

OH, WELL DONE, MY LORD!

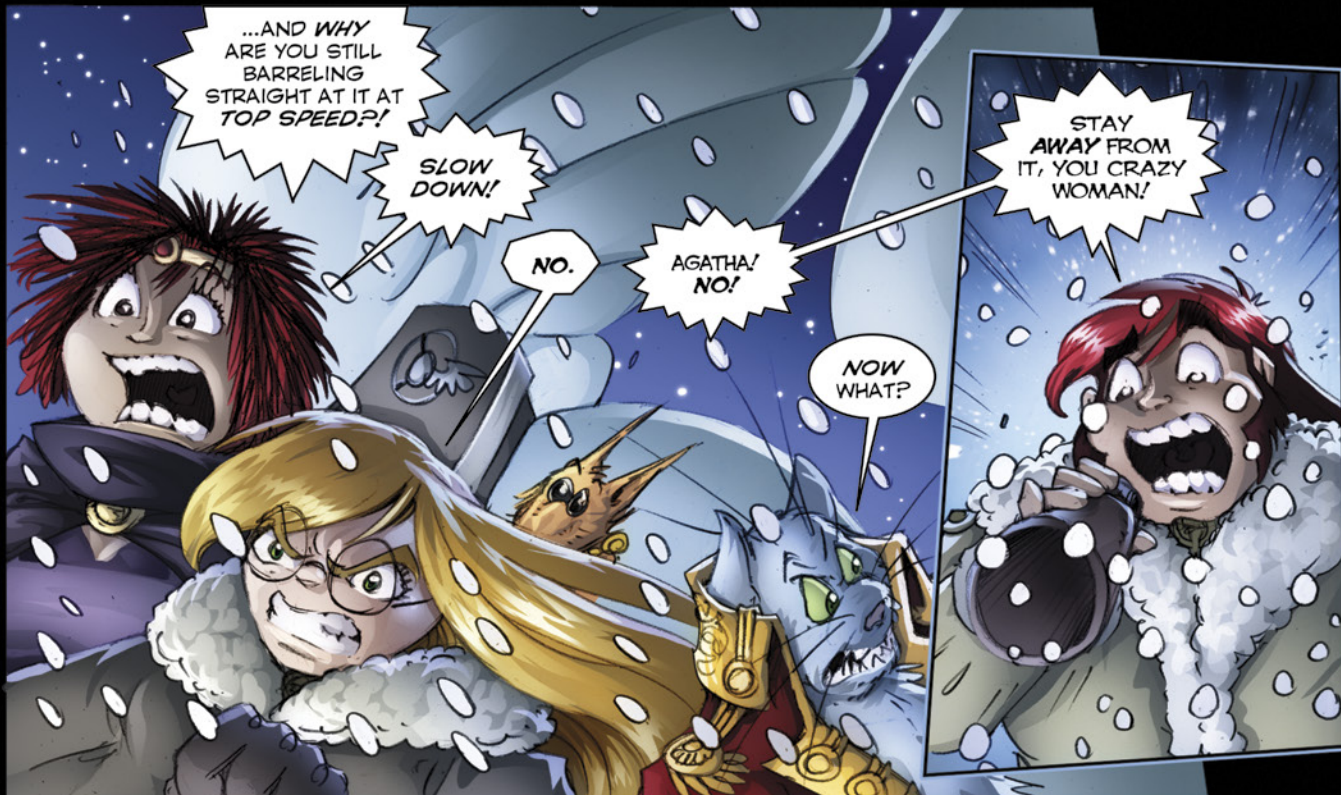
THEY'RE TRAPPED BETWEEN US AND THE GATE!

... WHAT "GATE"?



OH, MARVELLOUS!
WHAT NOW?

I MEAN, WHAT HAS EVERYONE BEEN *DOING* WHILE WE'VE BEEN GONE?!



...AND WHY ARE YOU STILL BARRELING STRAIGHT AT IT AT TOP SPEED?!

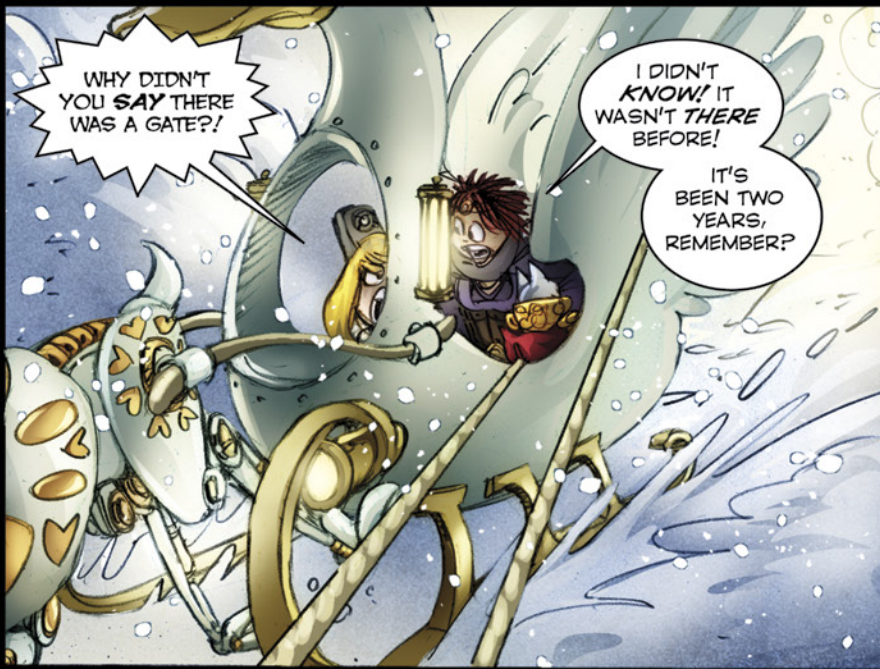
SLOW DOWN!

NO.

AGATHA!
NO!

NOW WHAT?

STAY AWAY FROM IT, YOU CRAZY WOMAN!



WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY THERE WAS A GATE?!

I DIDN'T KNOW! IT WASN'T THERE BEFORE!

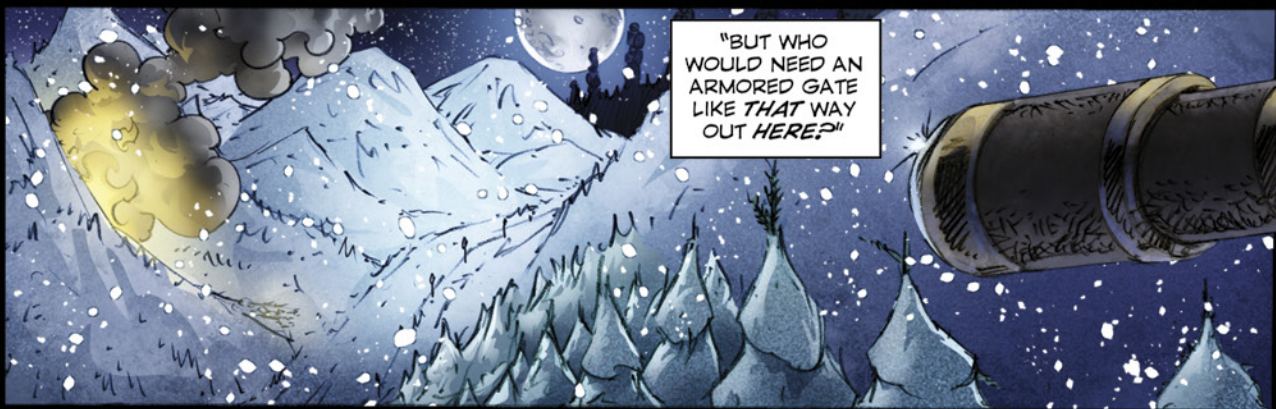
IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS, REMEMBER?



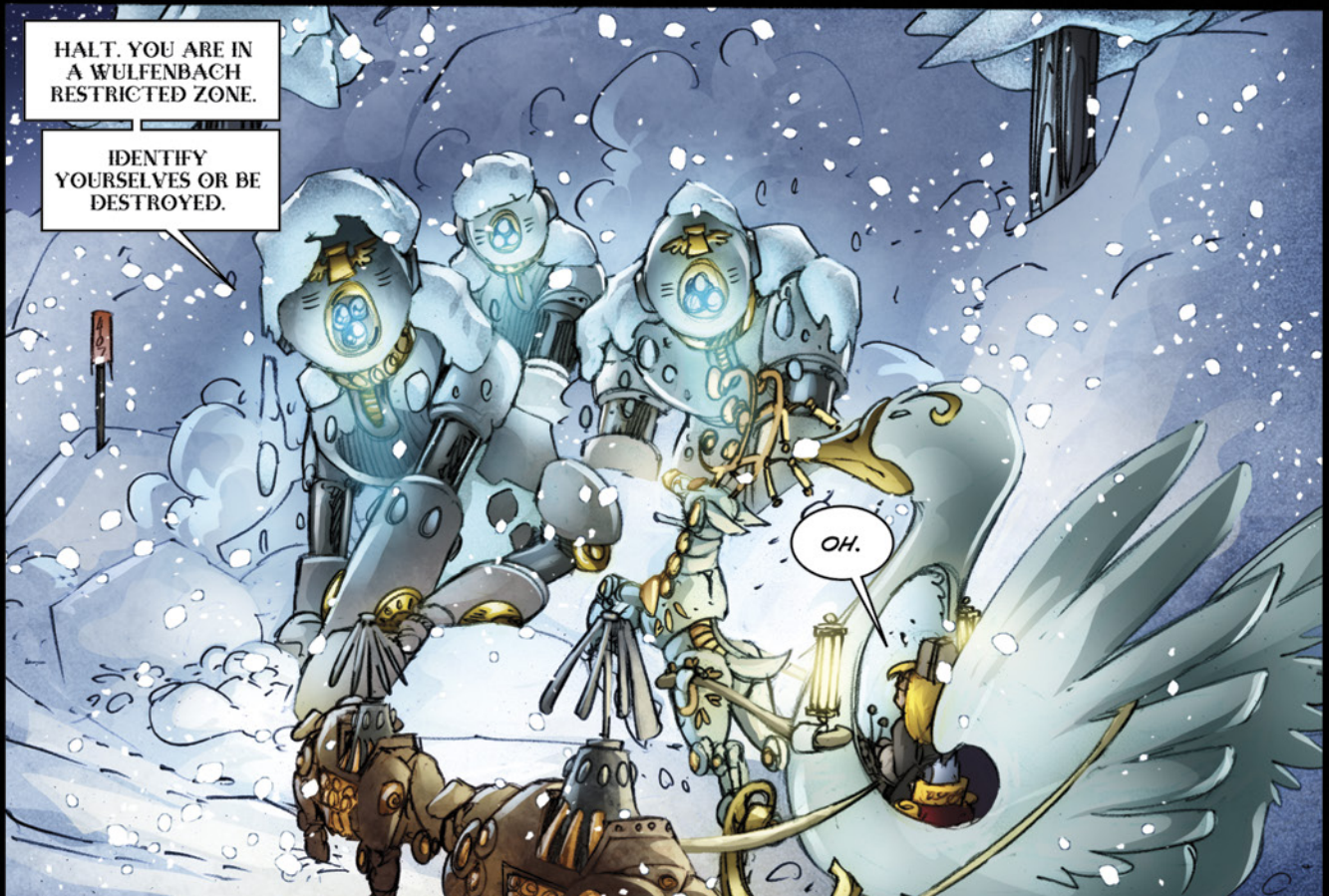
WE'LL PROBABLY FIND A LOT OF THINGS HAVE CHANGED— ESPECIALLY AROUND MECHANICSBURG.

YEAH. I JUST WISH WE HAD TIME TO FIND OUT WHAT BEFORE WE RUN RIGHT TOWARD IT LIKE THIS.

YOU BUILD A GATE FOR A REASON—



"BUT WHO WOULD NEED AN ARMORED GATE LIKE THAT WAY OUT HERE?"



HALT. YOU ARE IN A WULFENBACH RESTRICTED ZONE.

IDENTIFY YOURSELVES OR BE DESTROYED.

OH.



—AND WHAT ARE THOSE?!

WULFENBACH SENTINELS. THEY PATROL THE ROADS.

CAN'T SAY I'M SURPRISED TO SEE THEM CAMPED HERE.



WAIT—YOU'RE SAYING NO ONE CAN USE THE ROAD TO MECHANICSBURG?

NOT UNLESS THEY'RE SUICIDAL.

WELL, THAT'S IT, MY LORD. SHE'S LOST TO US NOW.



LOST?!

HE'S GOT HER.

YOU CAN'T GO AGAINST WULFENBACH.

HE RULES THIS WHOLE AREA LIKE THE DEVIL RULES HELL.



FOOL! IMBICILE!

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?



"GOING AGAINST WULFENBACH" WAS THE WHOLE POINT!

THE REST OF YOU SPINELESS SCUM CAN COWER LIKE SLAVES—



BUT THE CROWN OF THE STORM KING... AND THAT GIRL... ARE MINE!

AND I WILL TAKE THEM!



I AM AGATHA HETERODYNE.

I AND MY COMPANIONS ARE RETURNING TO MECHANICSBURG.



DO NOT MOVE.

WORKING...



YOU GAVE IT YOUR REAL NAME!

WHY NOT?

I DON'T KNOW! BUT...

SHH. NEITHER DO I. LET'S FIND OUT.



DEEP CORE SCENARIO 0101 CONDITIONS MET. ENGAGE MESSAGE...

AGATHA- I... I DOUBT YOU'LL EVER REALLY HEAR THIS...

BUT... IF IT IS YOU...



PLEASE-YOU MUST-PLEASE GO WITH THESE CLANKS.

I NEED TO-

IT'S GIL'S VOICE!

YEAH, BUT... DOESN'T HE SOUND A LITTLE-



POW!

SHREEEEEEEE!



RUN, GIRL!

I'M HERE TO SAVE YOU!

ELSEWHERE—

HELLO, BOHRLAIKHA. IS THE MASTER IN?

HE IS.

ZWOOT! I JUST NOTICED THE TIME. I DON'T WANT TO WAKE HIM.

NO FEAR OF THAT, DOCTOR.

HE NO LONGER SLEEPS.

WHAT?! FOR HOW LONG?

WEEKS? MONTHS? I DO NOT KNOW.

RIDICULOUS! THAT'S DANGEROUS! ONE CAN GO MAD!

HOW WOULD WE KNOW?

BOHRLAIKHA!

AAH!

GET READY TO MOVE!

NEAR MECHANICSBURG— THE CLANKS—

THEY'VE FOUND SOMEONE CLAIMING TO BE AGATHA!





YOU MUST
COME
WITH US.

BLORT



MOVE!
DON'T LET THEM
CATCH YOU!

I
KNOW!



WHOA!

POF!

ZING!

POF!

YIPE!



YOU MUST
COME
WITH US.

NO, I
DON'T THINK
SO.

THERE IS
DEFINITELY
STILL SOMETHING
WRONG WITH
GIL.



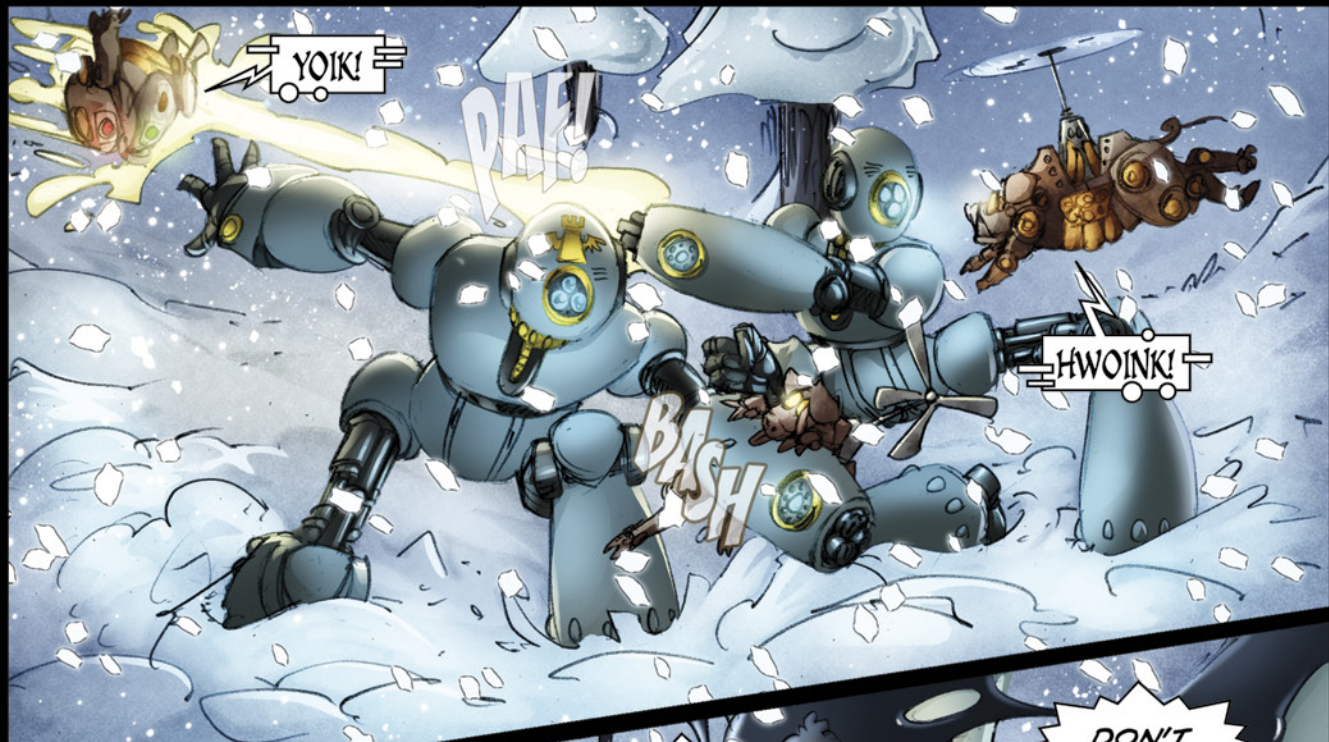
SHREEONKI!

CRASH!

GROINK!

SLAM!

HWOINCH!



YOIKI!

RAA!

BASH

HWOINK!



VIOLETTA!
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?!

DON'T
TOUCH IT!

OF COURSE I'M
ALL RIGHT! IT'S
WULFENBACH!

HE WANTS TO
CATCH YOU,
NOT KILL YOU!

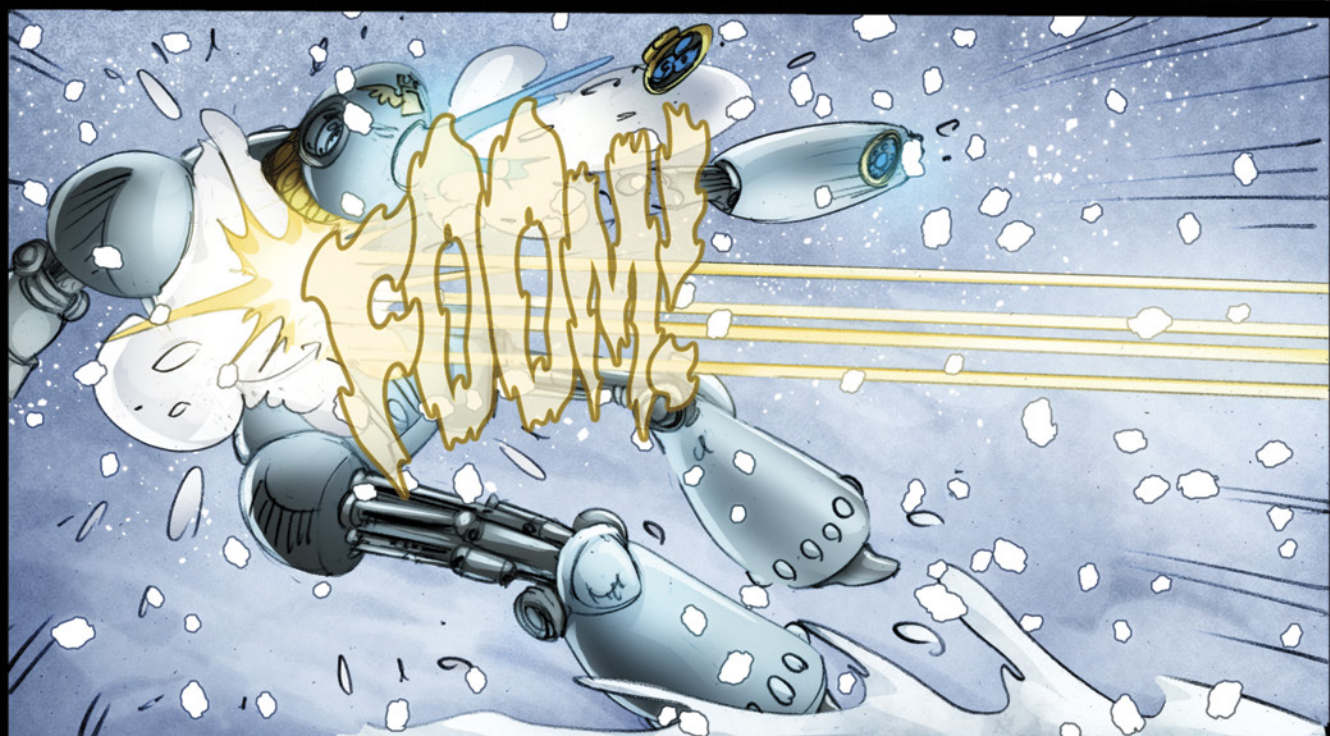
I'LL BE
FINE, SO
RUN!



KILL
EVERYONE
ELSE IF YOU
MUST-

BUT GET ME
THE HETERODYNE
GIRL-

ALIVE!





HA!
MISSED!



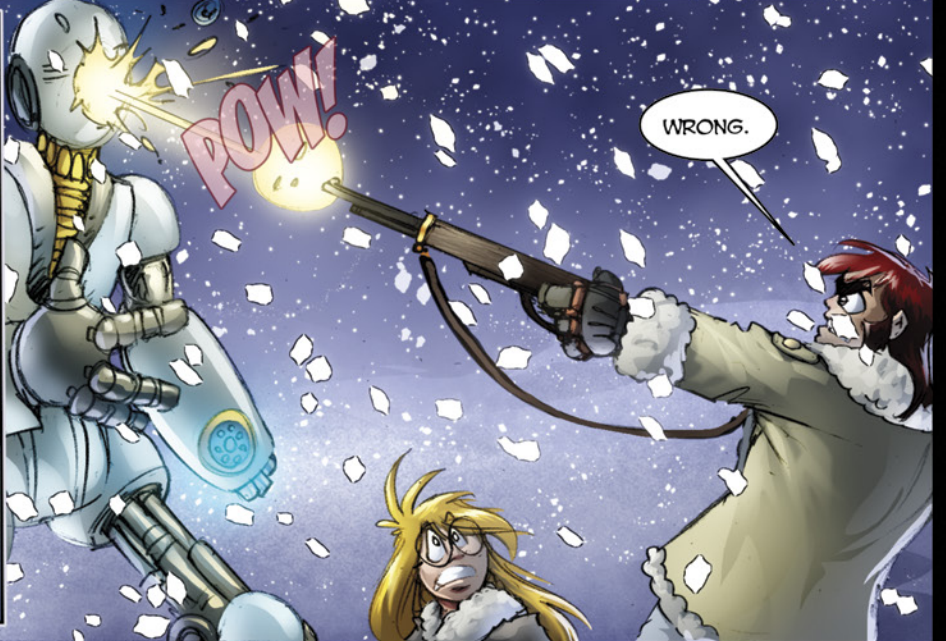
UH-



WHUMP!



YOU MUST
COME
WITH US.



WRONG.

POW!



LET'S
GO.

BUT
I'M-



HOIK!

STUCK!





ARGH!

AH! HE'S HIT!

GREAT! HE TOOK OUT THAT LAST CLANK!

HERE! SHOOT HIM! QUICK!



I DON'T THINK SO.

LET ME CUT HIM LOOSE.



WHY NOT? YOU SHOULD SHOOT HIM!

YOU'LL BE SORRY IF YOU DON'T!

HURRY UP YOU GUYS!

THERE'S MORE ON THE WAY!

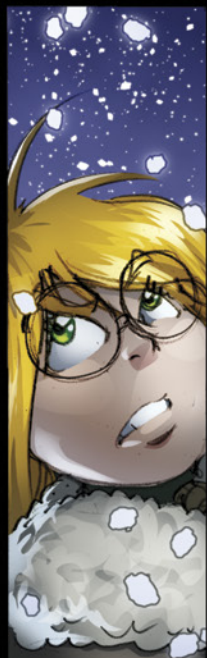


I'M NOT GOING TO JUST SHOOT HIM.

BUT I WILL LEAVE HIM FOR GIL-



OOF!



THIS IS STUPID.

HEY, AT LEAST HE'S WARM!





XERXSEPHNIA!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?!

VIOLETTA!
SHOW SOME
RESPECT,
VASSAL.

FEH. I'LL
SHOW YOU
RESPECT ON A
COLD DAY IN THE
WAXWORKS, AND I
AM *NOT* YOUR
VASSAL!



NO, YOU'RE
NOT, ARE YOU?
I'VE *HEARD*
ABOUT YOU.

FINE.



YOU SERVE
THE LADY
HETERODYNE
NOW?

THEN *DO*
YOUR
JOB.

WHAT?



YOU DRAW THE
CLANKS AWAY. I'LL
GET YOUR LADY AWAY
ALONG PATHS *THEY*
CAN'T GO.

BE ASSURED, I
HAVE MY OWN
REASONS FOR
KEEPING HER ALIVE
AND FREE.

URG...I'LL JUST
BET YOU DO...BUT
WE'RE *STUCK*.



JEEZ, SEFFIE, I
HATE IT WHEN
YOU'RE RIGHT...

VIOLETTA?

QUIET,
YOU.

THESE
WULFENBACH
CLANKS ARE STUPID,
BUT THEY'LL FOLLOW
US IF THEY NOTICE
YOU'VE CHANGED
MOUNTS.



...AND
JUST WHO
IS *"US"*?

OH. UH...I AM
XERXSEPHNIA VON
BLITZENGAARD.

SO YOU'RE
RELATED TO THAT
BIG CHUMP BACK
THERE?



MY
BROTHER.
YES.

YOU'VE PRETTY
MUCH JUST SENT
HIM OFF TO
WULFENBACH, YOU
KNOW.

YOUR FAMILY
MEMBERS REALLY
ARE *MY KIND*
OF PEOPLE.

...I'M TOLD
THAT'S *NOT A*
COMPLIMENT.



YOU MUST COME WITH US.

YOU MUST COME WITH US.

ARGH! HERE, AS WELL!

THIS MAY PROVE MORE DIFFICULT THAN I HAD THOUGHT—

HOW MANY OF THESE THINGS ARE THERE?



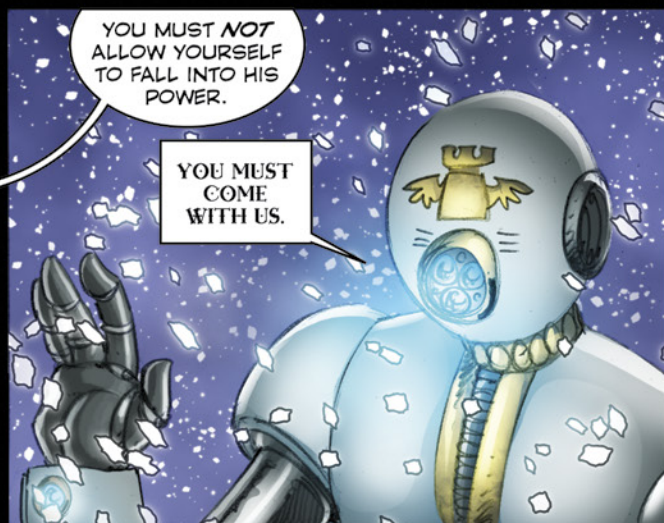
THE LAST TIME I SAW GIL, HE WAS UNREASONABLE. SURELY HE'S CALMED DOWN A BIT.

HA!

YOU REALLY DO KNOW NOTHING! HE IS WORSE! MUCH WORSE—

AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU!

WHAT'S WORSE THAN STUPID?



YOU MUST NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO FALL INTO HIS POWER.

YOU MUST COME WITH US.



LADY, I DON'T THINK WE HAVE A CHOICE.



YOU MUST COME WITH US.

AH...IF YOU HAVE ANY HETERODYNE SCIENCE TRICKS YOU'VE KEPT HIDDEN...

ER...NOT AS SUCH...

THEN I...HOPE HE CARES FOR YOU AS MUCH AS HE CLAIMS.



YES. BUT-

BUT THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM HE WAS...WRONG...

NO. THERE MUST BE A WAY OUT-

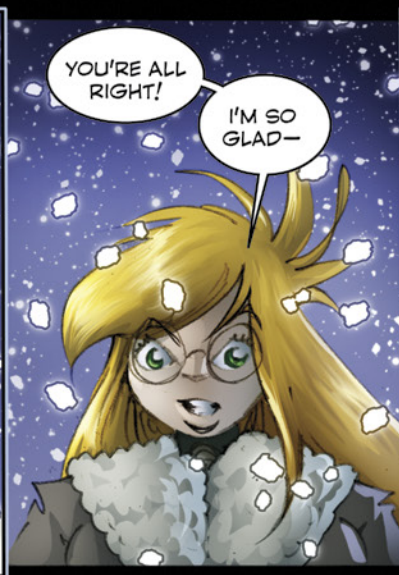


HYU GOTS IT, SVEETHOT!

WHAT-



WE HUNT!







DIMO!

HOY!

LOOK AT HYU!

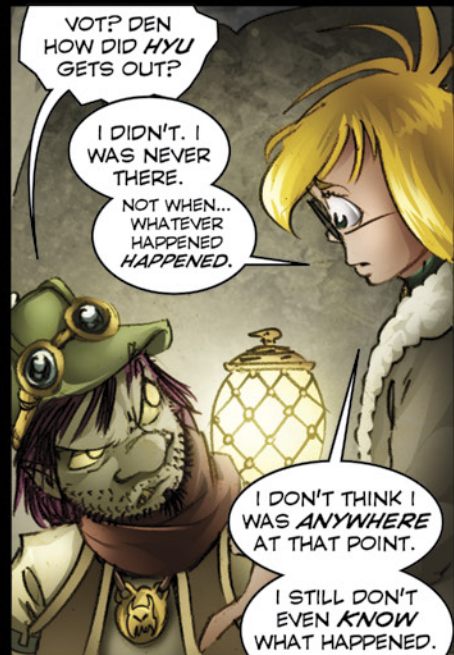
HY *KNEW* HYU WOULD GETS DE TOWN FREE IF VE WAITED LONG ENUF!



HO. THENK GOOTNESS.

DOSE EEDIOTS NEFFER TELLS ME ANYTING.

I... I DON'T THINK THE TOWN *IS* FREE.



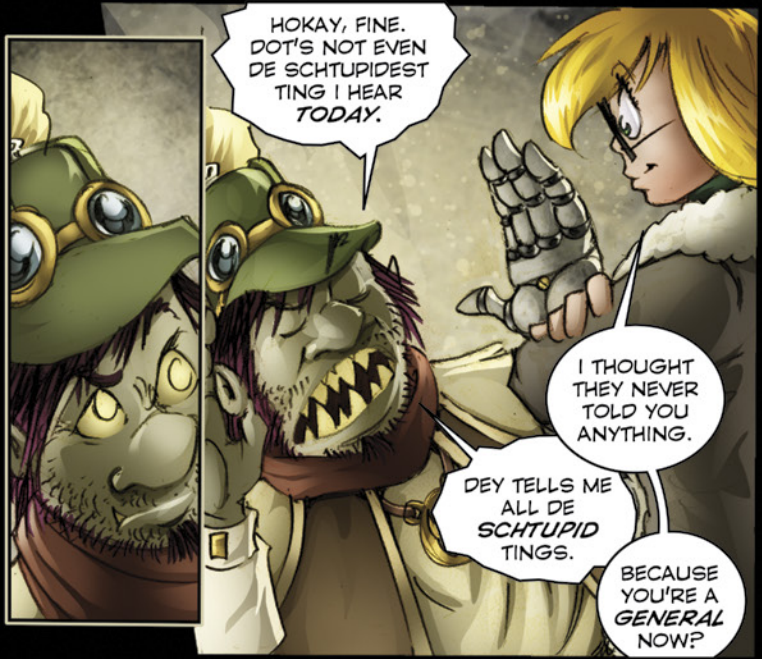
VOT? DEN HOW DID *HYU* GETS OUT?

I DIDN'T. I WAS NEVER THERE.

NOT WHEN... WHATEVER HAPPENED HAPPENED.

I DON'T THINK I WAS *ANYWHERE* AT THAT POINT.

I STILL DON'T EVEN *KNOW* WHAT HAPPENED.



HOKAY, FINE. DOT'S NOT EVEN DE SHTUPIDEST TING I HEAR TODAY.

I THOUGHT THEY NEVER TOLD YOU ANYTHING.

DEY TELLS ME ALL DE SHTUPID TINGS.

BECAUSE YOU'RE A GENERAL NOW?



HY GOTTS TO BE A GENERAL NOW.

ALL DE ODDER VUNS IZ IN *MECHANICSBURG*.

MOST OV US JÄGERS... VELL, VE DIN'T JOIN UP FOR DE *THINKINK*, HYU KNOW?

SO *SOMEBODY* GOTTS TO BE DE SCHMOT GUY.



HANGINK AROUND VIT MAXIM AND OGGIE... VELL, HY GOT USED TO BEINK DE SCHMOT GUY.

BIG JOKE ON ME, YAH?

...BUT NOW *HYU* IZ BECK—HY KEN SHTOP ALL DOT ITCHY *TINKING SHTUFF*—

YAH, HY KEN *FEEL* ALL DOT RESPONSIBILITY DRAININK AWAY. IZ *VERRA NIZE*...



DON'T YOU *DARE*...

HEE HEE. JUST *KEEDINK*. SO VAT DO HYU WANT TO KNOW, MISTRESS?



MECHANICSBURG.
WHAT
HAPPENED.?

HO. DOT
BARON—HE VENT
UND *DID*
SOMETING.

MADE A BEEG
BUBBLE, KIND
OV.

HE IZ IN DERE,
TOO. AT THE
CENTER OV IT
ALL.



BUT HE FIX
TINGS SO *TIME*
DUN VORK IN
DERE NO
MORE—

ZO NOW
EFFRYTING IZ
STOPPED, UND HE IZ
TRAPPED IN DERE
VIT EFFRYBODY
ELSE.



VE ALWAYS
THOT *HYU* VOS
IN DERE, TOO.

A CONTAINED
AREA WHERE
TIME IS
STOPPED.?

HOW?
HOW DID HE
DO IT?!



*VOT DE
HECK HOW
YOULD I
KNOW?*

DOT'S
*KREZY
TALK!*

...BUT IT'S
AMAZING!

FASCINATING!

I'VE
GOT TO
SEE IT!



VELL,
DOT VE
KEN DO.

COME
VIT ME.



WHAT'S THIS?
PEOPLE *LIVE*
DOWN HERE?

OV CAUZE! VE
GOTS LOTS OF CAVERNS
IN DESE MOUNTAINS, UND
HYU MEESTER GIL VILL
NEFFER FIND DEM *ALL*. VE GOTS A
BUNCH OV
PIPPLE DOWN
HERE.

JÄGERS,
MOSTLY, UND A
FEW ODDERS WHO
SHOW UP AFTER DE
TOWN GOT
SEALED.

SHOWED UP?
WHAT KIND OF
OTHERS?



OH, PIPPLE
DOT VOS AWAY
FROM HOME VEN
IT HAPPEN—

HYU KNOW,
MERCHANTS,
HUNTERS—

ESCAPED
WULFENBACH
PRISONERS—

PRISONERS—

HO YEZ!
LIKE DIS
GUY.



HOY!
MEESTER
PONCH!

HY GOTS
SOMEVUN TO
SEE HYU!



ADAM!



I...BUT...GIL DID SAY HE'D... UH...BROUGHT YOU BACK, BUT... BUT...



AGATHA! THANK VULCAN! YOU'RE ALL RIGHT!



AAAAH! IT'S NOT HIM!
HOY! MISTRESS! NO! IZ HOKAY!



...BUT ADAM COULDN'T TALK! EVER!
IZ HOKAY! HYU BOYFRIEND FIX HIM OP REAL GOOT!



YES. AS MUCH AS I LOVED AND RESPECTED YOUR FATHER AND UNCLE,
I CAN'T DENY THAT LILITH AND I WERE NOT THEIR BEST WORK. WE'RE JUVENILIA, REALLY,
PUT TOGETHER IN A VERY...DARE I SAY...SLAPDASH FASHION.
TO BE FAIR, IN LATER YEARS THEY DID OFFER TO TRY TO CORRECT OUR DEFICIENCIES—
BUT THEY COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT THE PROCESS WOULD ALLOW LILITH AND ME TO FULLY RETAIN OUR MEMORIES.



NOW, WHEN YOUNG WULFENBACH PUT US BACK TOGETHER, IT WAS APPARENTLY TOUCH-AND-GO FOR A WHILE, BUT HE IS VERY GOOD.
—AND DID YOU KNOW, THEY HAVE DEVELOPED SOME REVOLUTIONARY NEW TECHNIQUES IN ZAGREB THAT—
IN FECT, IT KEN BE KIND OV HARD TO GETS HEEM TO SHOT OP.



OH ADAM!
IT'S SO GOOD
TO SEE YOU
AGAIN!

I'M SORRY TO BE
SUSPICIOUS...
EVERYTHING IS JUST
SO STRANGE...



OH! IS LILITH
HERE, TOO?

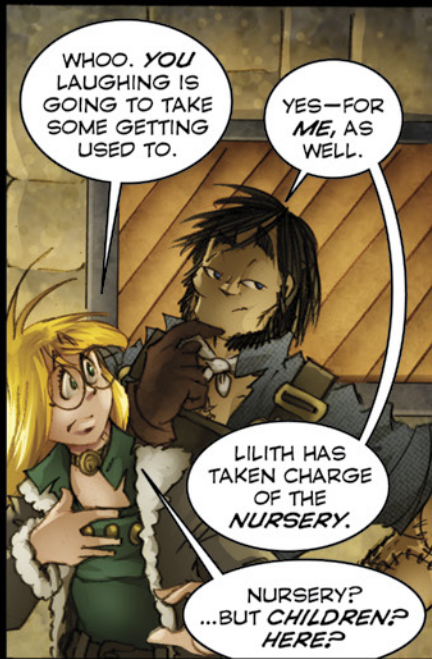
DIS PLACE IZ
FOR VATCHING.
FRAU LILITH IZ MUCH
BETTER HIDDEN—IN A
NIZE SAFE PLACE.



WHAT? YOU GOT
LILITH TO HIDE
SOMEWHERE
SAFE?

DID YOU
HAVE TO LOCK
HER UP?!

HA
HA!

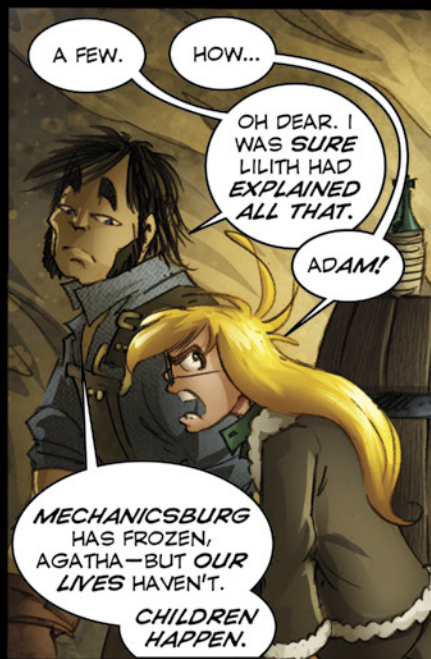


WHOO. YOU
LAUGHING IS
GOING TO TAKE
SOME GETTING
USED TO.

YES—FOR
ME, AS
WELL.

LILITH HAS
TAKEN CHARGE
OF THE
NURSERY.

NURSERY?
...BUT CHILDREN?
HERE?



A FEW.

HOW...

OH DEAR. I
WAS SURE
LILITH HAD
EXPLAINED
ALL THAT.

ADAM!

MECHANICSBURG
HAS FROZEN,
AGATHA—BUT OUR
LIVES HAVEN'T.

CHILDREN
HAPPEN.



...AND...AND
THEN THEY
GROW UP.

JUST LOOK AT
YOU. YOU GREW
SO FAST...

LADY
HETERODYNE!
AMAZING!



MISTER
WOOSTER!

SO IT'S
TRUE!
YOU'RE
HERE!

YES. BUT...WELL,
I'M SURPRISED TO
SEE YOU HERE.



AH. ER...
ACCORDING TO
MY SUPERIORS, I'VE
MADE A COMPLETE
HASH OF THINGS...

COVER BLOWN,
NETWORK EXPOSED,
TARGET LOST, EUROPA
DESTABILIZED AND
ALL THAT...

BUT NONE
OF THAT
WAS YOUR
FAULT!

NEVERTHELESS,
I'M RATHER IN
DISGRACE...



NO HYU IZN'T!
HYU IZ IN DIS
CAVE VIT US!

AND I'VE BEEN
ASSIGNED HERE
TO KEEP AN EYE
ON THINGS.

SO...RATHER
A LOT OF
DISGRACE,
REALLY.

SOON—

...AND THAT HAD SPLIT THE WHOLE "STORM KING" CONSPIRACY INTO SEVERAL FACTIONS.

SO, WHEN YOU APPEARED AND THE BARON WAS INJURED—

SEVERAL OF THEM WENT INTO ACTION WITHOUT CONSULTING THE OTHERS.

THEN, THOSE OTHERS WENT ON THE ATTACK, JUST TO KEEP UP WITH THEIR RIVALS.

"IT WORKED *PRETTY WELL* FOR THEM AT FIRST, BUT THEY *ALL* OVERPLAYED THEIR HANDS."

"WITH THE BARON BUSY IN MECHANICSBURG, *MINOR* REBELLIONS GREW INTO *MAJOR* ONES!"

AND SUDDENLY *EVERYONE* WANTED IN ON THE ACT—NOT JUST THE STORM KING LOYALISTS.

IT SEEMS LIKE NEARLY EVERY POWER IN EUROPA CHOSE THAT MOMENT TO WREAK HAVOC.

OF COURSE THAT COMPLETELY TANGLED THE CONSPIRATORS' PLANS,

AND IT COMPLETELY *SHATTERED* THE GRIP OF THE EMPIRE.

IT'S ASTONISHING, REALLY, HOW QUICKLY THINGS WENT TO HELL.

THEY WERE *PUSHED*, OF COURSE, BUT STILL...

AND *NOW?* HOW BAD IS IT?

AND WHAT ABOUT GIL?

AH. WELL, HE'S BEEN BUSY, BUT EVEN FOR HIM, REBUILDING WILL TAKE MORE THAN *TWO YEARS*—

AND HIS FOCUS IS PERHAPS LESS...ER... *WIDESPREAD* THAN HIS FATHER'S.

URK.

"BAD. THE BARON—HIS PAX TRANSYLVANIA—IT ALL SEEMS OUT OF SOME *LOST GOLDEN AGE OF ANTIQUITY*—INSTEAD OF JUST TWO YEARS AGO.

IT'S LIKE THE LONG WAR *NEVER ENDED.*"

HERE VE GOES, KEEDS! BEHOLD: DE CENTER OV DE MODERN VULFENBACH EMPIRE!



THAT—THAT'S
MECHANICSBURG?!

SURE IZ,
SVEETHOT!

GIL—HE—
**WHAT HAS HE
DONE TO MY
TOWN!?**

THOSE
THORNS—

HO, HE DIN' DO
DOT. DOT VOS A
SCHMOT IDEA VUN OV
HYU GREAT-GREAT
GRANDPOPPAS COME
OP VIT!

MEESTER
GILGAMESH KENT
EVEN GET CLOSE IN
'CAUSE OV DEM.

HE GOTS
PIPPLE CUTTINK
IT BECK **ALL DE
TIME.**

AND THOSE
STATUES—

VERRA NIZE,
HEY? DEY IZ OVER
VUN HUNNERT UND
FIFTY METERS TALL!

UND DOT'S
NOTTING! VAIT TIL
HYU SEES DE VUNS
DOT GUARD DE GATES
IN UND OUT OV DE
VALLEY!

EFFRYBODY
KNOWS HOW HE
FEELS ABOUT
HYU, HO YEZ!

HEE HEE!

I...I AM
GOING TO
KILL HIM.





THE VALLEY IS A SEALED FORTRESS. EVEN MORE SO THAN UNDER THE OLD HETERODYNES.

THIS SYSTEM IS AMAZING. IT'S LIKE THE CASTLE MAP IN THE LIBRARY, BUT—

HO HO! IZ GEN-U-INE HETERODYNE SCHNEEKY STOFF!
...UND IZ EAZY PEAZY TO RUN!

VE KEN SEE ALL KINDS OV TINGS!



HOY!
SOMETHING GOING ON IN DE SNORTING VALLEY—
OH! LADY HETERODYNE!



HOKAY, LET'S SEE...DE SNORTING VALLEY...

HY TINK DOT'S TREE CLICKS ON DE RED DIAL UND TWO SPINS ON DE—

CLIK

ah. THENK HYU, MEESTER PONCH.



IT'S VIOLETTA AND MARTELLUS!

HY WANTS TO KNOW VY DEY IZ RUNNINK.
LEZZ SEE, TO CHANGE DE DEPTH OV FIELD HY TINK IT'S PULL D/S ROD, UND—

CLIK

ah. THENK HYU, MEESTER PONCH.



WHAT IS THAT?!

ONE OF THE LAST OF THE GREAT SKY WURMS. MASTER GIL USES IT—

GIL IS ON THAT THING?

OH, YES. THE FIRST BIG CHALLENGE TO THE NEW BARON CAME FROM THE POLAR ICE LORDS.

IT CAN ONLY FLY AT THIS LATITUDE BECAUSE IT'S WINTER...

BUT THEY'RE EXCELLENT HUNTERS, SO—

HUNTERS?!





WAIT FOR US, YOU IDIOT!

AGATHA!



VIOLETTA!

YOU'RE OUT! WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

WHERE IS AGATHA?

... STURMVORAUSS?

THEO AND SLEIPNIR?

...MY FATHER?



OH. UH-LADY HETERODYNE, SHE-UM-

AND TARVEK. HE'S, WELL-

UM- HE'S...



WHAT ABOUT THEM? WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

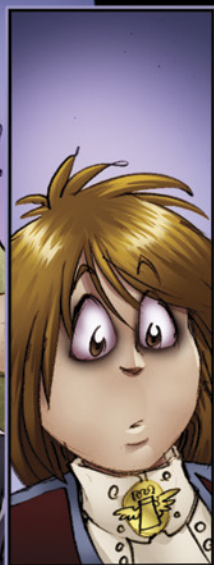
AAH! CALM DOWN! IT'S FINE! THEY'RE... THEY'RE FINE! MOSTLY...



UNHAND HER, YOU CHURL.

WAK!

WITH ANY LUCK, THE LADY HETERODYNE IS BEYOND YOUR REACH-FOREVER.



POW!



STOMP STOMP STOMP



IF HE SAYS ANOTHER WORD, CUT OFF HIS HEAD AND PACK IT IN SNOW.



VIOLETTA, YOU'RE AFRAID OF ME.

WHY?



I WISH WE COULD HEAR WHAT THEY'RE SAYING.

THERE AREN'T ANY SOUND CONTROLS.

WELL, CAN YOU MAKE IT ANY LARGER?

I'M AFRAID NOT. IT'S STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT ALREADY.

TOO TRUE. IT MAKES IT **BLURRY**.

WHO IS THAT PERSON MASTER GIL JUST KICKED?



OH. THAT'S MARTELLUS VON BLITZENGAARD.

HO! DOT GUY?
SMEK HEEM SUM MORE!

YOU KNOW HIM.



SURE. WHO DUN LIKE TO GOSSIP 'BOUT DE NEIGHBORS?

WELL, GIL CAN KEEP HIM, BUT I'VE GOT TO GET VIOLETTA OUT OF THERE.



VELL, IT VON'T BE EAZY, BUT VE COULD TRY TO—

GOOD. LET'S GET GOING. I'LL—



URK.

WHOA! VOT'S DE MATTER?



I NEED...MY WEASEL...

YIKE!

OH, THAT TAKES ME BACK!
OF COURSE, IT USED TO BE A STUFFED CLANK NAMED PRINCESS STOMPY BOOTS—



SHREE!

VOT'S DOT?



AAH. THERE YOU ARE!

SNEE!



THERE YOU ARE!

KROSP!

THE JÄGERS TOOK FOREVER, ERASING YOUR TRACKS.

IS— IS THAT A WASP EATER?

SERIOUSLY. YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP BETTER TRACK OF THAT THING!



OH. YES. WHY?

I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE UP CLOSE.

SNURF?



IT'S SMALLER THAN I THOUGHT.

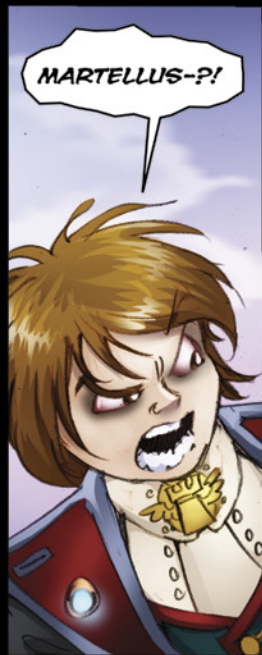
HEY— SOMETHING'S HAPPENING.

ARE THOSE WOLVES?



WHAT THE-
WHAT ARE THEY
DOING HERE?

THEY'RE
MARTELLUS'
SPARKUS'
HOUNDS!



MARTELLUS-?!



THAT'S
RIGHT-

BAH. SO YOU
ARE THE
UNSTOPPABLE
TYRANT THEY ALL
FEAR?

PATHETIC.

AH.



AND YOU ARE
THE BUFFOON WHO
THOUGHT HE COULD RIDE
IN AT THE LAST MINUTE
AND "RESCUE" AGATHA.



AND I
DID IT,
TOO.

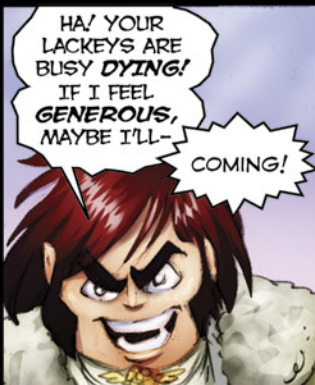
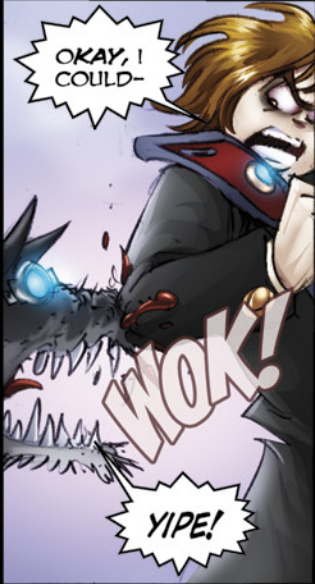


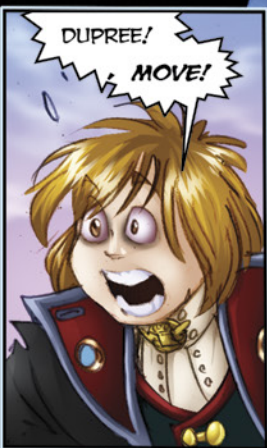
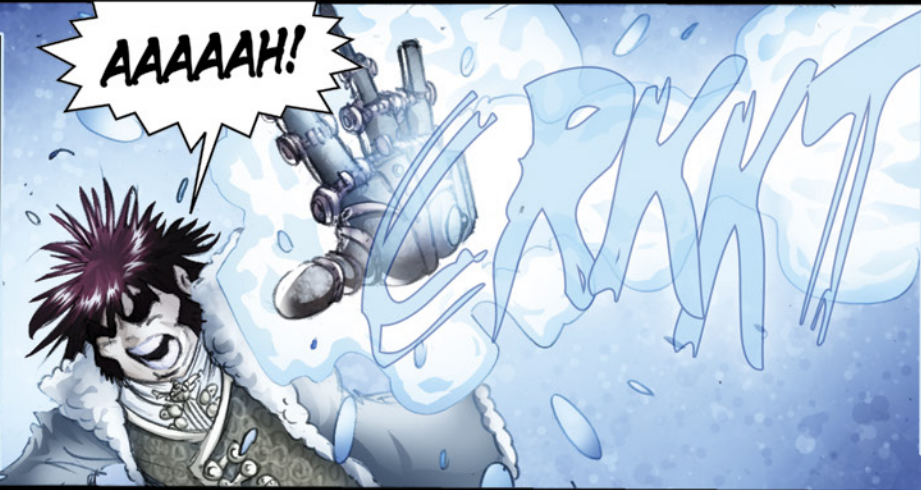
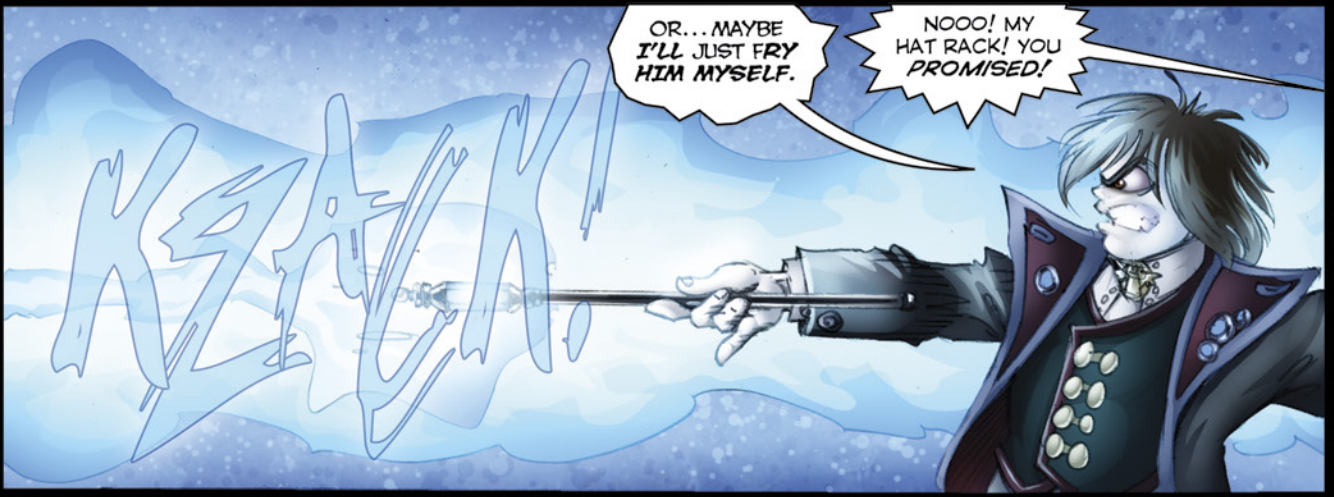
WHILE YOU'RE
JUST TRADING ON
YOUR FATHER'S
REPUTATION...

GOOD. TIME
FOR ME TO BUILD
UP MINE.



PACK-
RIP HIM
APART!









HOW IS HE?
KNOCKED
COLD?

MERELY
STUNNED.

HUH. TOO BAD.
HE COULD'VE
USED THE SLEEP.

I'VE GOT
THIS. YOU
GO KILL
THAT GUY.

YES.



HERE
HE IS!

YOUR
MAJESTY! WE
MUST GO!

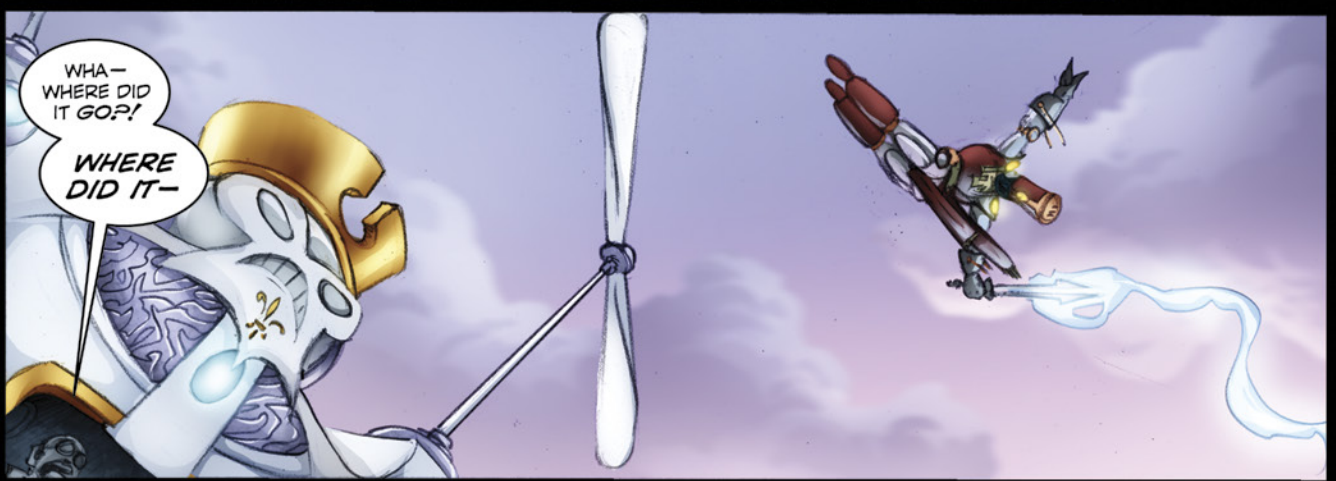
WHAT?!



NO! THIS IS
TOO GOOD AN
OPPORTUNITY!

FINISH
THEM
OFF!

KILL
WULFENBACH!





OW!

FINISH HIM!

stab
stab
stab

HEE HEE!
YOU WISH!



OW!

WHAT? NO!
NOT ME, YOU
FOOL!

OW!

HEY! YOU
STAY HERE,
HATRACK!

gunch!



HE CAN HANG
US LATER—

WE'VE GOT TEN
MINUTES UNTIL THIS
THING EXPLODES!
WE'RE LEAVING!



NOOO!

LET THEM
GO FOR
NOW.



WE WILL TAKE
THESE TWO BACK
FOR TREATMENT.

URP

EWWW,
GROSS!

NO. I NEED
TO FIND
VIOLETTA.
SHE WAS
JUST HERE—

I'LL GO
AFTER HER,
SIR.

BOHRLAIKA,
YOU TAKE 'EM
BACK.

SEE IF YOU
CAN MAKE 'EM
SLEEP.



I WILL NOT.
VIOLETTA WAS
WITH AGATHA. SHE
WILL KNOW—

YOU WILL
COME WITH ME.
THAT IS FINAL.



DON'T WORRY
SIR—I'M ON IT.



MEANWHILE—

HE...USED THE HAND TO BLOCK THE LIGHTNING... AND THEN SENT IT BACK?

HOW DID HE DO THAT?

DID I DO THAT?

HUM—IT SEEMS LIKE WULFENBACH'S OKAY...

AMAZING.

I CAN'T SAY I'M TOO SURPRISED...

IF ANYONE COULD TAKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING TO THE FACE, I'D EXPECT IT TO BE MASTER GIL.

YAH—DOT'S VY SHE LIKE HEEM, HEY?

SO...WHAT NOW?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN HIM—WHAT WILL YOU DO?

HINT: STAY AS FAR AWAY FROM HIM AS POSSIBLE. WULFENBACH IS TROUBLE.

WELL, THAT'S OBVIOUS. BUT...MISTER WOOSTER, I MAY NEED TO TAKE YOU UP ON YOUR EARLIER OFFER—

MY OFFER?

I MAY NEED TO VISIT ENGLAND—

AT LEAST FOR A WHILE.

TRICKY. BUT I WILL SEE WHAT I CAN DO. EXCUSE ME.

ENGLAND?

FOO. TINGS IZ GUN GET KREZY.

THINGS ARE ALREADY CRAZY—

AND I CAN'T HELP ANYBODY IF I STAY HERE HIDING.

OV CAUZE NOT. BUT... HY GOTS TO ASK—

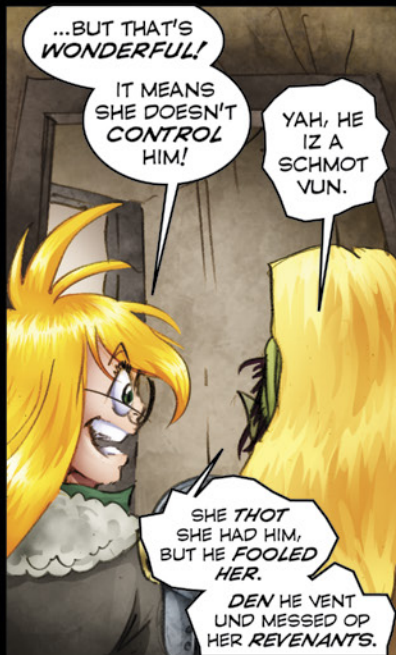
IZ HYU MAMMA SCHTILL IN HYU HEAD?

OH.

YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT.

YEZ. UND HYU GOTS TO BE VERRA CAREFUL.

WULFENBACH UND HYU MAMMA—DEY IZ AT VAR.



...BUT THAT'S **WONDERFUL!**

IT MEANS SHE DOESN'T **CONTROL** HIM!

YAH, HE IZ A **SCHMOT VUN.**

SHE **THOT** SHE HAD HIM, BUT HE **FOOLED** HER.

DEN HE VENT UND MESSED OP HER **REVENANTS.**



HE-HE DID **WHAT?!**

SHE TINKS SHE GOTS ALL DOSE **SLAVES** ON DE **KESTLE-** DEN HE MAKE DEM **STOP DOINK** VOT SHE SEZ...

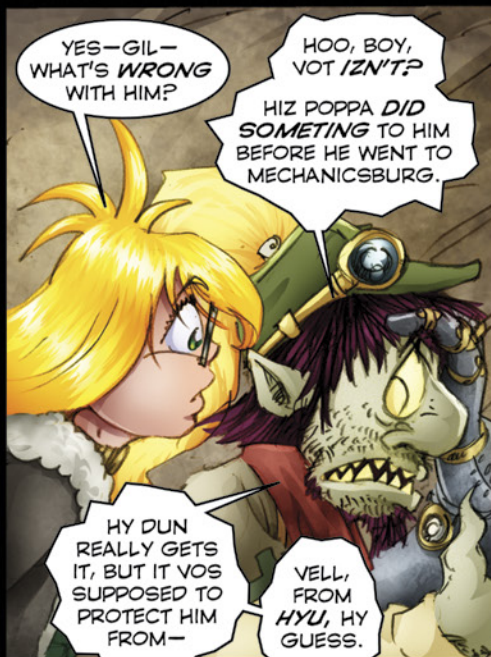
HO HO! SHE VOS SO **MAD!**



...BUT SHE IZ STILL **BEEG** TROUBLE-

NOT CHUST DOSE **WASPS-** SHE GOTS **LOTS** OV **TRICKS.**

UND **MEESTER GIL,** HE IZ-**VELL...**



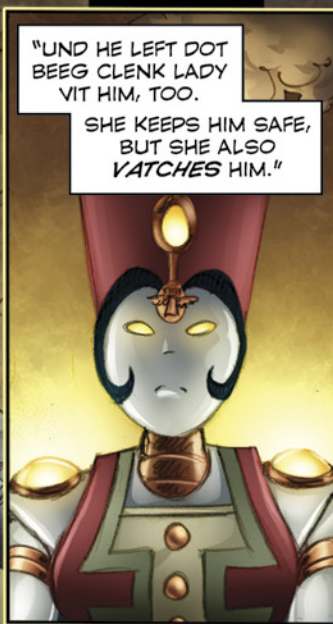
YES-GIL-**WHAT'S WRONG** WITH HIM?

HOO, BOY, VOT **IZN'T?**

HIZ **POPPA DID** SOMETHING TO HIM BEFORE HE WENT TO **MECHANICSBURG.**

HY DUN **REALLY GETS** IT, BUT IT VOS **SUPPOSED** TO **PROTECT** HIM FROM-

VELL, FROM **HYU,** HY **GUESS.**



"UND HE LEFT DOT **BEEG** **CLENK LADY** VIT HIM, TOO.

SHE **KEEPS** HIM **SAFE,** BUT SHE ALSO **VATCHES** HIM."



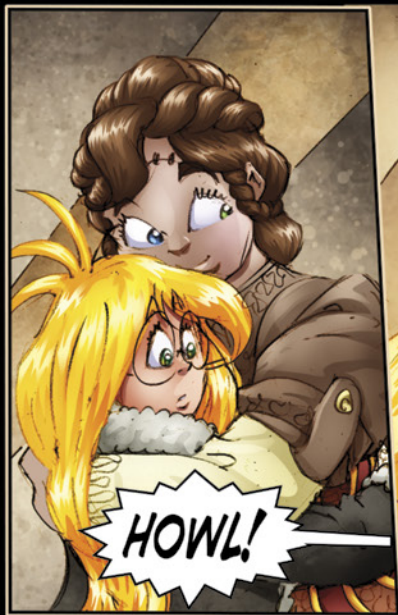
HYU **MEESTER GIL** IZ **TREPPED,** UND NOT ALL DE **VALLS** IZ **SOLID** VUNS.

AGATHA!

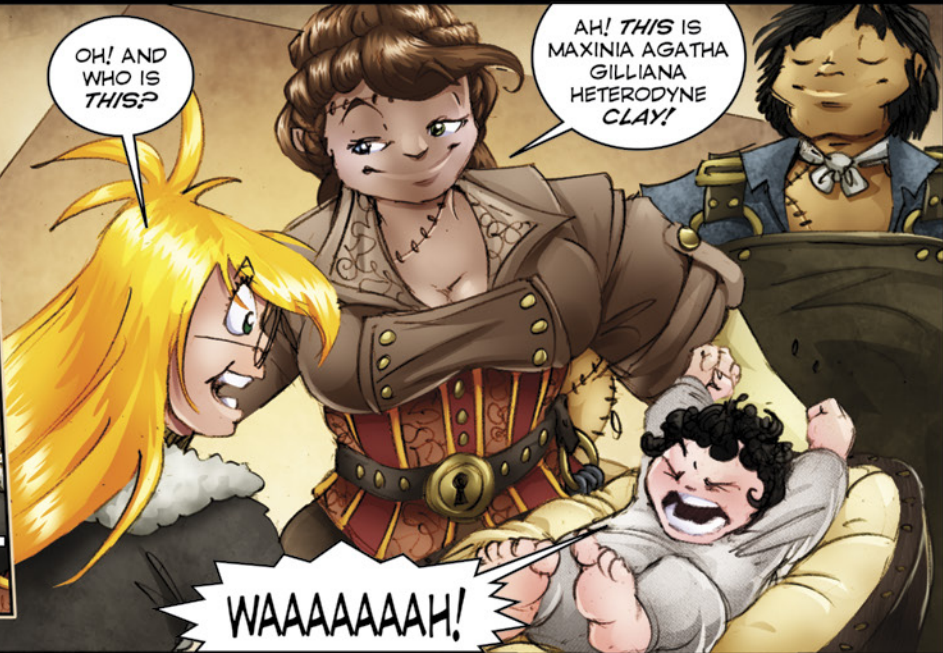
AH!



LILITH!



HOWL!



OH! AND WHO IS THIS?

AH! THIS IS MAXINIA AGATHA GILLIANA HETERODYNE CLAY!

WAAAAAAAAAH!

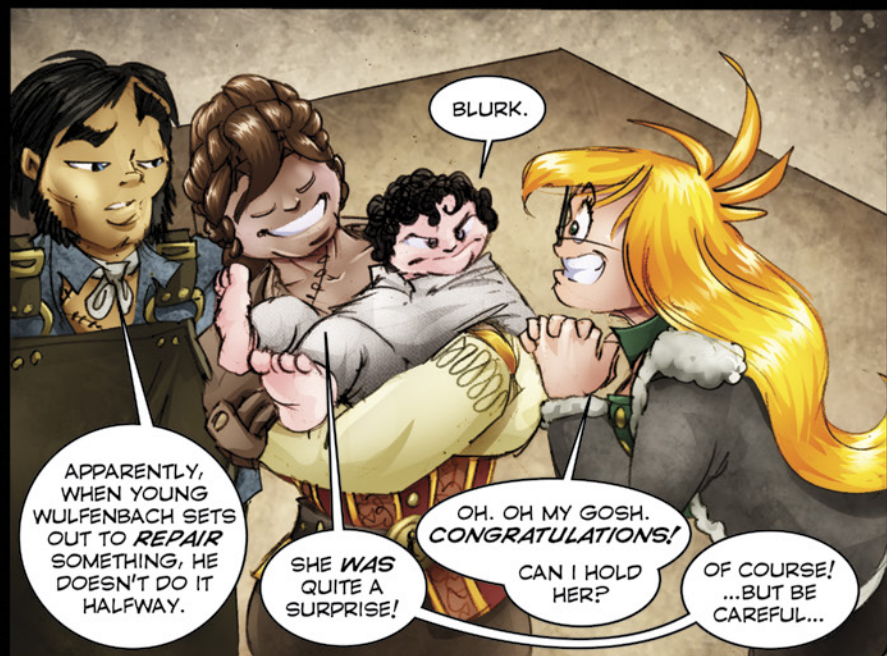


CLAY?! REALLY?!

BUT HOW—

OH, I KNOW WE TALKED ABOUT THAT—

BUT—



BLURK.

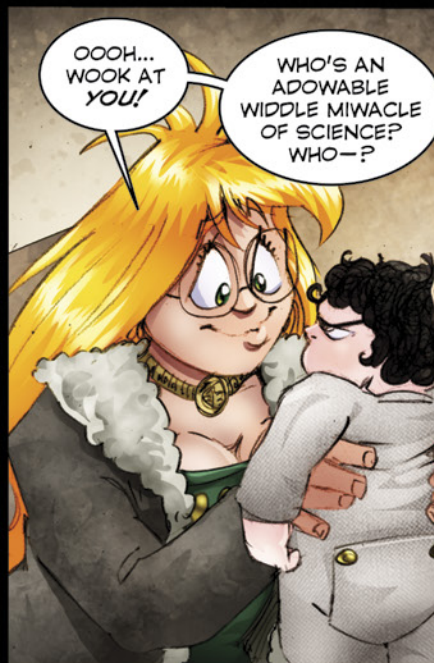
APPARENTLY, WHEN YOUNG WULFENBACH SETS OUT TO REPAIR SOMETHING, HE DOESN'T DO IT HALFWAY.

SHE WAS QUITE A SURPRISE!

OH. OH MY GOSH. CONGRATULATIONS!

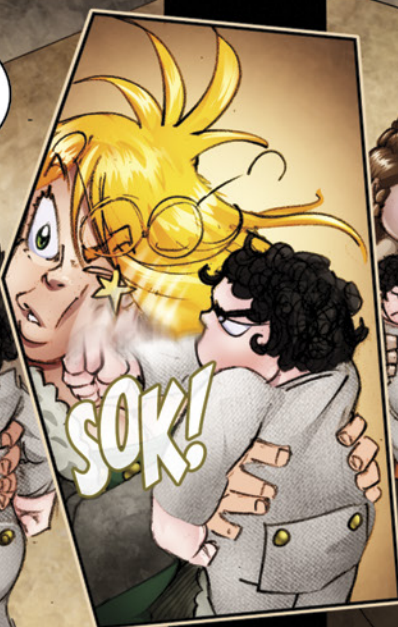
CAN I HOLD HER?

OF COURSE! ...BUT BE CAREFUL...



OOOH... WOOK AT YOU!

WHO'S AN ADOWABLE WIDDLE MIWACLE OF SCIENCE? WHO—?



SOK!

AH... SHE'S RATHER STRONG, AND SHE DOESN'T LIKE BABY TALK.

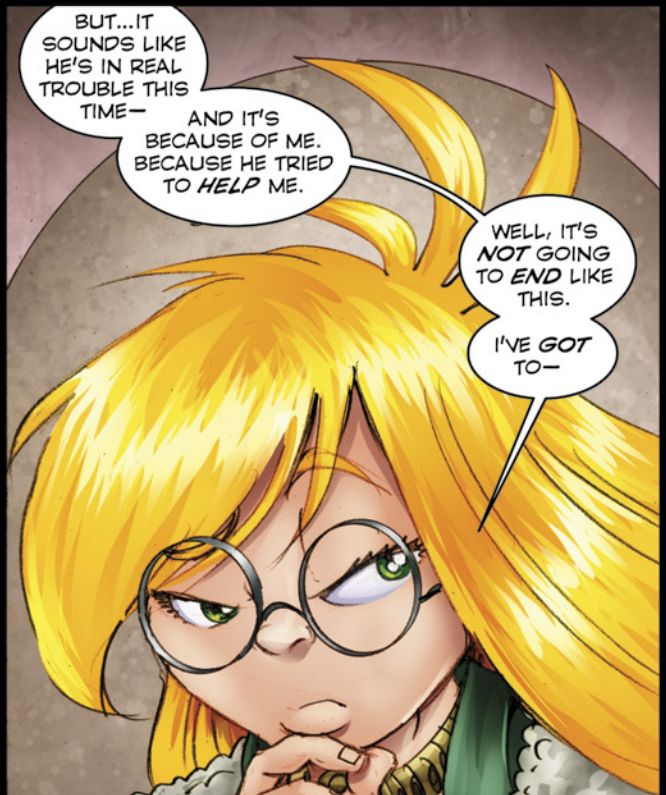
...SMART GIRL.



...BUT OH! I'M SO HAPPY!

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE YOU AGAIN, AND NOW, HERE YOU ARE--

GIL IS SO AMAZING...



BUT...IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S IN REAL TROUBLE THIS TIME--

AND IT'S BECAUSE OF ME. BECAUSE HE TRIED TO HELP ME.

WELL, IT'S NOT GOING TO END LIKE THIS.

I'VE GOT TO--



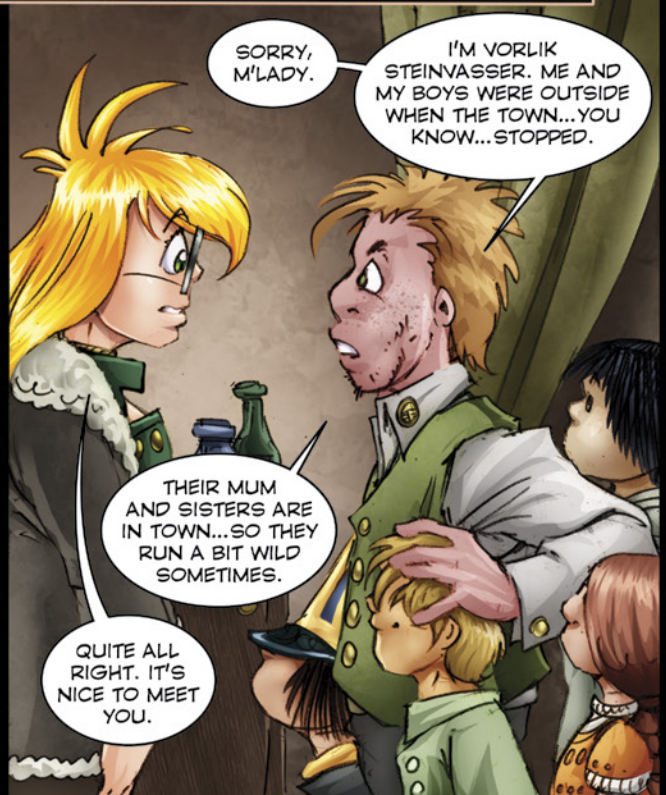
SHRIEK!

THAT'S MINE! GIVE IT BACK! DAAAAAD!



HOY! GARIK! HANDS OFF OTHER PEOPLE'S TOYS!

OH! OTHER KIDS?

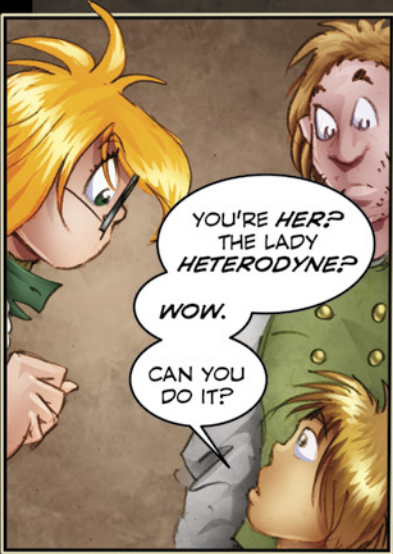


SORRY, M'LADY.

I'M VORLIK STEINVASSER. ME AND MY BOYS WERE OUTSIDE WHEN THE TOWN...YOU KNOW...STOPPED.

THEIR MUM AND SISTERS ARE IN TOWN...SO THEY RUN A BIT WILD SOMETIMES.

QUITE ALL RIGHT. IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU.



YOU'RE HER?
THE LADY
HETERODYNE?
WOW.
CAN YOU
DO IT?



CAN YOU
FREE THE
TOWN?



UM...



WELL, I AM
THE
HETERODYNE.



SO I GUESS
I'VE GOT TO
DO IT—
OR DIE
TRYING.



LATER—

blink

blink
blink



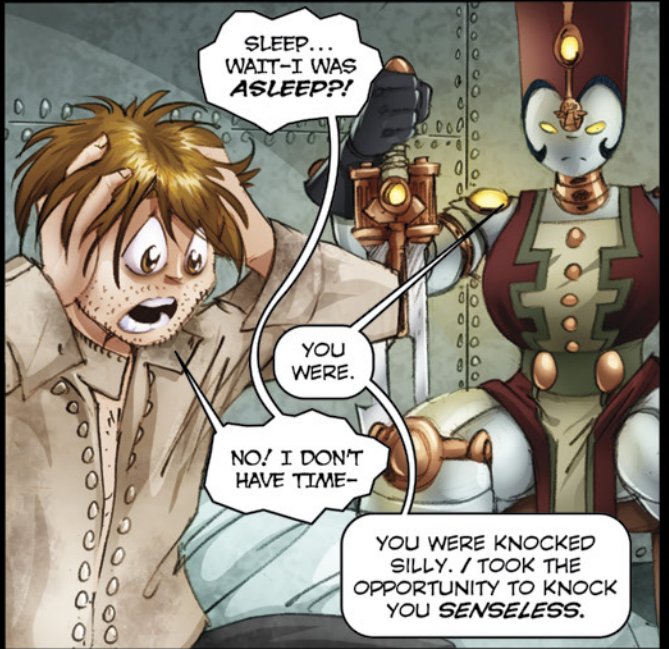
URGH...

WHA—



HEY, DUPREE—

YOU SHOULD ALLOW HER MORE SLEEP.



SLEEP... WAIT—I WAS ASLEEP??!

YOU WERE.

NO! I DON'T HAVE TIME—

YOU WERE KNOCKED SILLY. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOCK YOU *SENSELESS*.



HOW LONG?

THREE DAYS.

BOTH OF YOU.



WHAT? THREE DAYS? NO. WHY WOULD *DUPREE*—

SHE DOES HER BEST TO KEEP UP WITH *YOU*.

SHE HAS HAD VERY LITTLE SLEEP THESE LAST MONTHS.



WHAT?! DOESN'T SHE KNOW HOW *STUPIDLY DANGEROUS* THAT IS?

SHE—

UH—



WELL, ANYWAY, IT'S NOT... YOU KNOW... **HEALTHY.**

SHE SHOULDN'T DO THAT...

INDEED.

hmf? WHA—



THREE DAYS?

HM. I WONDER...

WHOA! NOT TODAY, CLANKETTE.

HE GETS TO BE AS LOOPY AS HE WANTS, AND YOU DON'T TOUCH HIM. GOT IT?

I MADE NO MOVE.



YEAH, SURE. THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY.

HEY! CRAZY BOY! SERIOUSLY, YOU SHOULD LET ME DISMANTLE YOUR NANNY HERE WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER!

HEY! ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?

NO. SHE IS USEFUL, AND HER PRESENCE REASSURES THE COURT.

NO, NOT TODAY.

BUT PERHAPS SOON.

TRY AND I'LL RIP YOUR BOLTS OFF.

COFFEE?

OH. YEAH. THANKS.



SO, YOUR STARK RAVING HIGHNESS, WHAT POINTLESS IDIOCY ARE YOU INFLICTING UPON YOUR EMPIRE TODAY?

IF AGATHA IS HERE, THE JÄGERS WILL HAVE FOUND HER, AND THEY WON'T SURRENDER HER WITHOUT A BLOODY FIGHT.

HIGGS!



HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO MAKE THAT SOUND LIKE NO FUN AT ALL?

IT WOULDN'T BE.



HEARD YOU WERE AWAKE, SIR.

AH. THERE YOU ARE. DID YOU CATCH VIOLETTA?



...NO SIR.



I WAS AFRAID OF THAT.

WHAT? YOU SCREWED UP? HOW IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?

-DIDN'T SCREW UP, JUST DIDN'T CATCH HER.



SAW MISS ZEETHA, THOUGH. AND SHE SAID—



OOOH—SO THAT'S WHY YOU DIDN'T CATCH HER!

YOU WERE OFF PLAYING KISSY-FACE WITH YOUR PRINCESS!

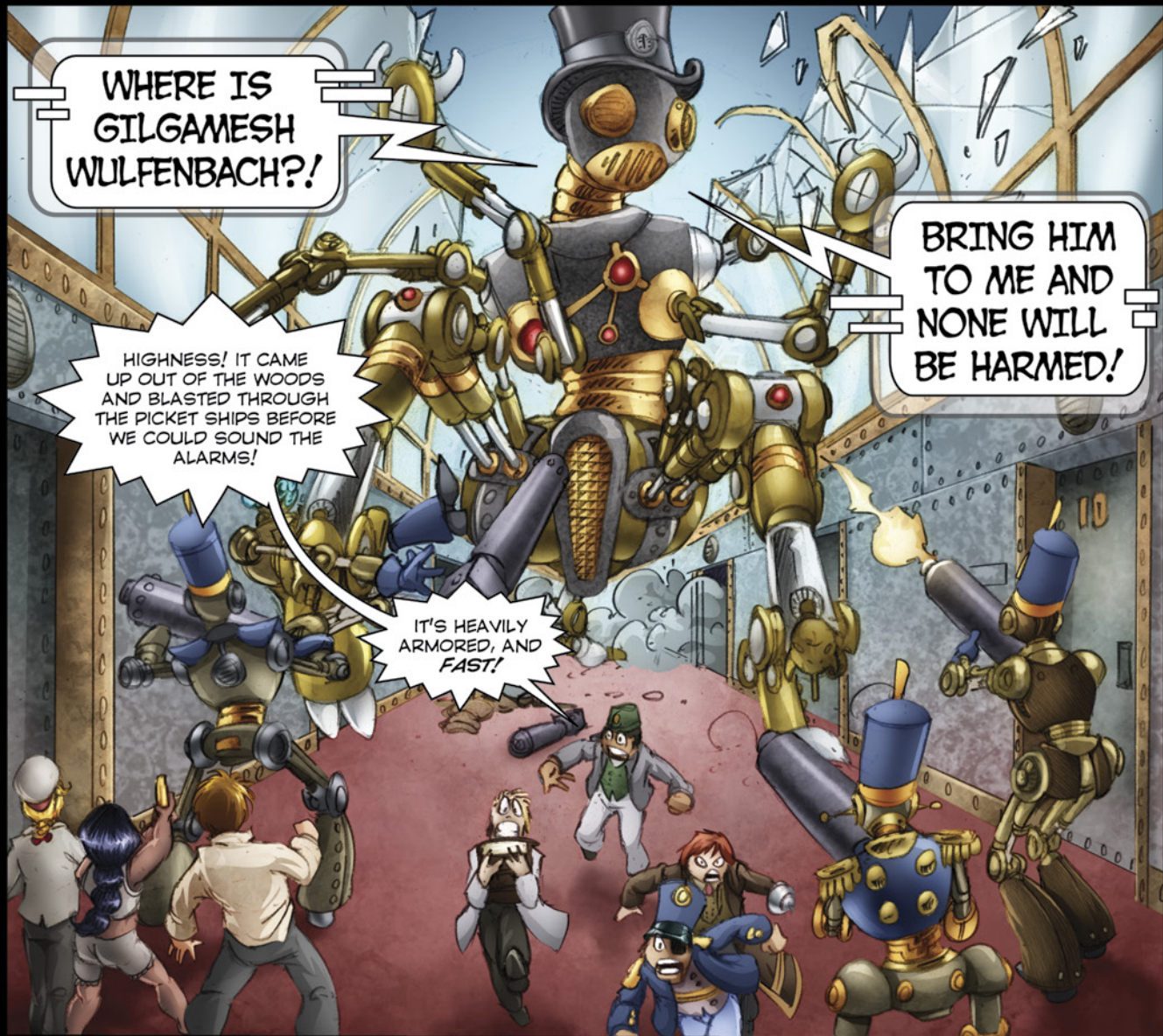
IT'S SO SWEET HOW SHE TRUSTS YOU SO MUCH.

SHE'LL BE SO SAD WHEN SHE FINDS OUT HOW YOU'RE USING HER...



OH. ANOTHER ATTACK.

GOOD!



WHERE IS GILGAMESH WULFENBACH?!

BRING HIM TO ME AND NONE WILL BE HARMED!

HIGHNESS! IT CAME UP OUT OF THE WOODS AND BLASTED THROUGH THE PICKET SHIPS BEFORE WE COULD SOUND THE ALARMS!

IT'S HEAVILY ARMORED, AND FAST!



PULL BACK ALL THE CLANKS!

YE—WHAT?!

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY FROM AGATHA!



SO LET'S GET IT!

YEAH!

CHOP
SSSS



WHERE IS
GILGAMESH
WULFENBACH?!

BRING HIM
TO ME AND
NONE WILL
BE-

I'M
HERE!



GILGAMESH
WULFENBACH...
LOCATED...

YOU HAVE ONE...
NEW...
MESSAGE...



GIL-AH...
FIRST OF ALL—I'M
SURE YOU ALREADY
KNOW BY NOW, BUT
I'M...*BACK*.

AGATHA! I
KNEW IT!

I'M *ALL* RIGHT,
DON'T WORRY—BUT
THERE'S A LOT YOU
NEED TO KNOW, SO
LISTEN.

JUST BEFORE
YOUR FATHER SEALED
MECHANICSBURG,
MARTELLUS DRAGGED ME
THROUGH SOME KIND OF
GATE IN THE CATHEDRAL.

I THINK SOMETHING
WENT WRONG, BECAUSE
IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW
DAYS FOR US, BUT FOR
YOU, IT'S BEEN ALL THIS
TIME...

YOU'VE GOT TO
WATCH OUT FOR
MARTELLUS.

I KNOW HE SEEMS
LIKE AN IDIOT, BUT HE'S
A STRONG SPARK AND
INTENDS TO SEIZE POWER
AS THE STORM KING.

HE GOT TARVEK WITH
SOME KIND OF POISON
JUST BEFORE WE WENT
THROUGH.

IF TIME *HAS*
REALLY STOPPED
INSIDE, THEN HE MIGHT
STILL BE ALIVE, BUT I
DON'T KNOW. I...STILL
HOPE WE CAN SAVE
HIM...

SO, PLEASE,
PLEASE REMEMBER...BE
VERY CAREFUL. HE'LL
TRY TO KILL YOU, TOO.

UM...THE
OTHER THING
IS...WELL,

I CAN'T COME
NEAR YOU RIGHT
NOW. I *WON'T*.

IT'S NOT
THAT I DON'T
CARE. I *DO*. YOU
KNOW I DO.

...BUT I HAVE
PEOPLE
DEPENDING ON
ME. *MY* PEOPLE.

I KNOW SOMETHING
IS WRONG WITH
YOU...THEY'VE...*DONE*
SOMETHING TO YOU, AND I
CAN'T RISK MY FREEDOM.
THERE'S TOO MUCH AT
STAKE.

BUT GIL-I
PROMISE-I
WON'T LEAVE IT AT
THIS. I *WILL* FIND
A WAY TO-

ENOUGH.

NOW
WHAT?

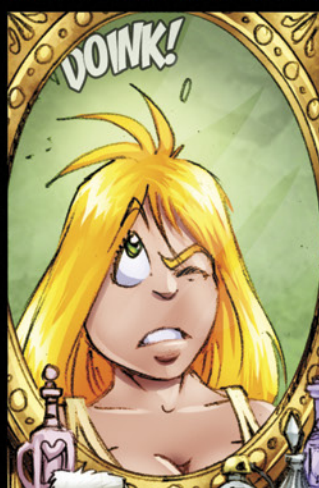
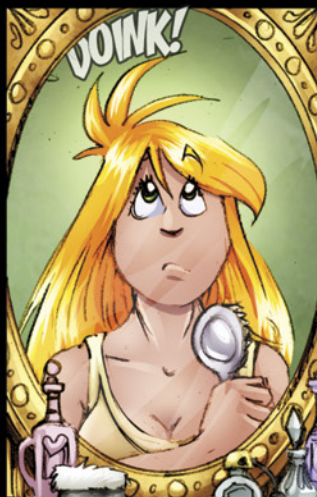
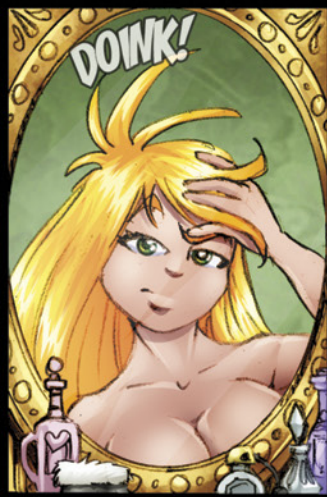
THE GIRL
IS STILL
DANGEROUS--

AND MY SON
IS STILL TOO
MUCH OF A FOOL
TO SEE IT.



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