

KINGDOM



THE PROMISED LAND

DAN ABNETT ★ RICHARD ELSON

DEDICATIONS

DAN ABNETT

For Mike Conroy

RICHARD ELSON

For Richard Burton and Alan McKenzie.

Thanks for the break.



KINGDOM

THE PROMISED LAND

KINGDOM CREATED BY DAN ABNETT & RICHARD ELSON

KINGDOM

THE PROMISED LAND

DAN ABNETT

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RICHARD ELSON

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Published by Rebellion, Riverside House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES, UK.
www.rebellion.co.uk

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

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INTRODUCTION

Once in a while, to my immense gratification, an idea just pops up. I would imagine (I can't say for certain) that I'm typical of most freelance writers in that I spend a good deal of my time deliberately working up ideas and crafting concepts. It's an active process. You can't expect to have all the notions you're going to need for a day's work just delivered to your head, ready for use, by some kind of divine FedEx. You have to work for them. You have to go looking for them. You have to dig them up and concoct them. You have to plan and invent. This is why freelance writing is classified as a 'job' rather than as 'fun'. It's not all velvet smoking jackets and flashbulbs, I can tell you.

But every now and then, an idea may, as it were, come looking for you. It arrives without warning or effort. It *is* delivered by some kind of divine FedEx.

This has happened to me, with any degree of significance, perhaps a half dozen times in the last twenty years. Hmmm... possibly less than that, even. Anyway, *Kingdom* was one of those times. I have no idea what started the idea off. I have no memory of the spark. All I can recall is that one minute I had nothing and the next – *pop!* – there was *Kingdom*, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and the stork was asking me to sign for it.

As is always the case in such circumstances, there was no sender's address. *Kingdom* may have been born out of my ambitions to write a heroic fantasy story, full of blades and beasts and bloody swathes and mighty thews. It may have originated in my love of the post-event survival genre, especially the books of John Wyndham. It may have stemmed from Bruce Chatwin's book about the native Australian story-telling tradition, *The Songlines*. Or 1950's atomic monster movies. Or too much cheese at bedtime.

I really can't honestly say. I was just delighted to see it, and excited by it from the word go. To me (and I'm really not the person who should be judging this, but, hey...) it had something of the feel – the simple, dynamic feel – of the classic *2000 AD* strips that had inspired me to write in the first place. The concept and the main character were robust and easy to grasp, the excuses for action plentiful, the opportunity for catchphrases numerous, and the whole endeavor wasn't a million miles shy of satire. If not biting satire, then at least growling, whining satire.

Of course, even when so complete an idea turns up at your house, it's nothing without its realisation. Richard Elson and I had worked together before, most notably on the *Atavar* series, a process we'd both enjoyed a great deal. *Kingdom* took us to a new high. Rich's contribution in terms of both design and storytelling (not to mention, you know, colour) was fabulous. I don't believe he's produced better work, but I do believe that sentence should always appear with a 'yet' on the end.

By the time we got to book two, 'The Promised Land', which is also anthologised in this volume, we had become slightly more deliberate in our ideas. Our high concept was 'M. Night Shyamalan directs a simultaneous remake of *Witness* and *Them* from the storyboards of Frank Frazetta.

No, I'm kidding. I don't know where book two came from either.

Dan Abnett

Maidstone, September 2008.



KINGDOM

Script: Dan Abnett
Art: Richard Elson
Letters: Ellie De Ville

Originally published in *2000 AD* Progs 2007, 1518-1525



THEY HAD BEEN OUT FOR EIGHT MONTHS. LONGEST WALK-AROUND THEY'D EVER DONE.

FURTHEST, TOO. THEY WERE NORTH OF BIG HILLS, NORTH OF EMPTY VALLEY, RIGHT ON THE SHORE OF THE SEA ITSELF.

THEY WERE TIRED AND THEY WERE COLD. THEY WERE LIVING OFF BODY FAT AND THE LAST OF THE FOOD BRICKS.



THEY WONDERED WHY THEY WERE BEING PUSHED SO FAR.



BUT EVERY DAY AT DAWN AND AT DUSK, THE URGINGS CAME, GUIDING THEM ON.



FAINT NOW, AT SUCH A DISTANCE, URGINGS ONLY THEY COULD HEAR, BUT CLEAR ENOUGH. THE MASTERS WANTED THEM TO GO ON.



AND THEY OBEYED BECAUSE THEY WERE A PACK, AND EVERY PACK WAS TRAINED TO OBEY.

THE PACK. THEY WERE ALL VETERANS, BLOODIED SOLDIERS. JACK SO WILD, RUN RUN SHAW, TOD OF MUCH SLAUGHTER, MARYAN FAITHFUL, LOUEY ARMSTRONG, OLD MAN GARY, GINNY WOOLF...

... AND GENE, WHO WAS THEIR LEADER. ALPHA MALE GENE THE HACKMAN.

suff
suff

NO MORE LAND. PACK GO BACK NOW, GENE?

NO. ON, JACK, ON.

BUT THERE IS NO MORE LAND, URGINGS OR NO URGINGS.

NO.

THERE IS LAND. MORE LAND. SEE, JACK, SEE.

THAT IS NOT RIGHT LAND, GENE. THAT IS LAND WHERE THERE SHOULDN'T BE LAND.

OLD MAN! TELL GENE THIS IS NOT RIGHT!

OLD MAN GARY WAS THE **OLDEST** OF THEM BY TWENTY YEARS. HE WAS WEAK IN SCRAPPING, BUT THEY KEPT HIM ON BECAUSE HE **KNEW**.

HE GAVE IT THE NAME.

LAND BRIDGE.

THEM MUSTA BUILT IT.

THEM. THIS IS **THEM'S** WORK.

THEM?

THIS IS WHY THE MASTERS URGED US HERE. TO SEE **THIS**.

LET US SEE IT.

SMOOTH, LIKE... **NOT-ROCK**.

I DO NOT LIKE IT, GENE. MAKE US GO BACK.

I HAVE NO WORD FOR IT **EITHER**, MARYAN.

SCENT!

SCENT, GENE!

GROUND SOUNDS TOO.

GET WHET.



AND THEM CAME. A SKIRMISH PARTY, BUT ENOUGH TO KEEP A PACK IN WORK.



LOUEY ARMSTRONG DID NOT LIVE ANOTHER SUNSET.



NEITHER DID RUN RUN.



AND THEN THEM TOOK GINNY WOOLF TOO.

SHE HAD BEEN GENE'S LIFEMATE. FIVE YEARS THEY HAD ACHED AND LOVED.

THE MASTERS HAD PROMISED THEM LICENSE TO BREED.



NOW SHE WAS DEAD.

AND GENE, IN HIS WRATH, BECAME HIS NAME.



A HACKMAN.

AND THAT WAS
THE SCRAPPING
OF THAT DAY.



AND, AFTERWARDS,
THEY LIT A FIRE,
AND SAT AND ATE.

TELL US
THE TALE, OLD
MAN.

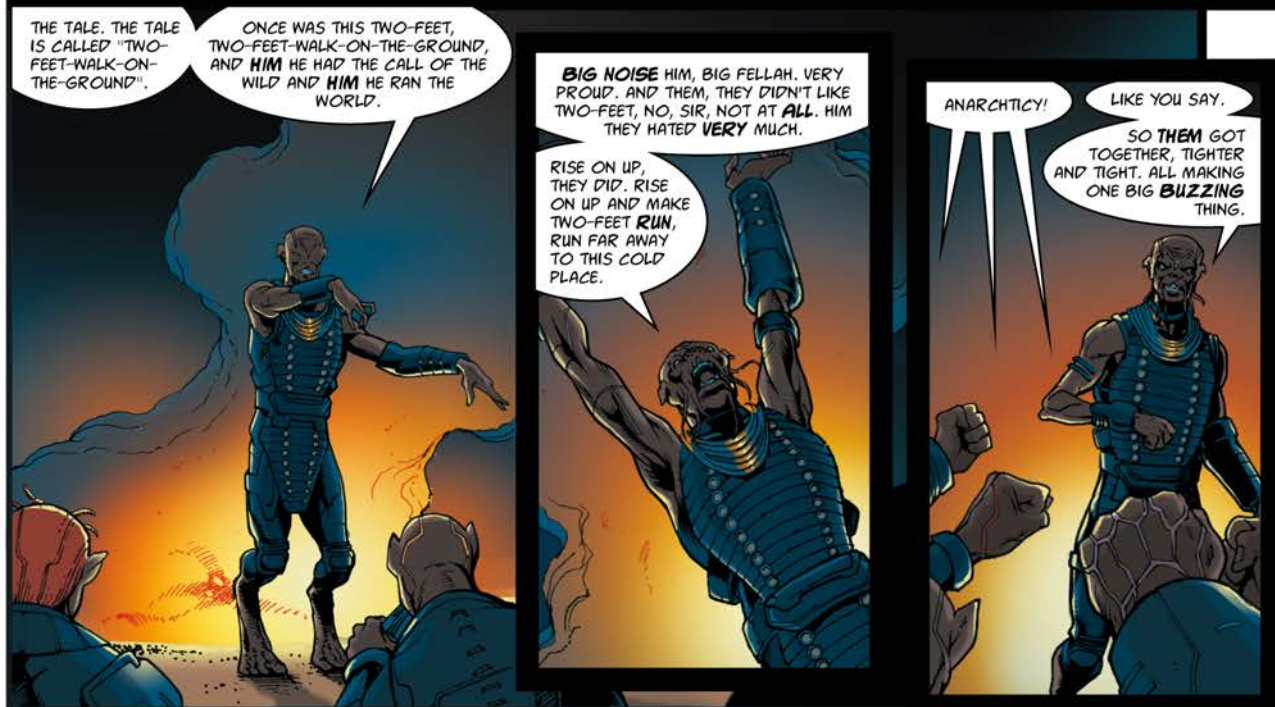
YES, TELL US
THE TALE!

GENE? IS THIS
PROPER TIME FOR
THE TALE?



GO ON AND
TELL IT.

THERE WAS ONLY **ONE**
TALE, AND OLD MAN
KNEW IT BEST.



THE TALE. THE TALE
IS CALLED "TWO-
FEET-WALK-ON-
THE-GROUND".

ONCE WAS THIS TWO-FEET,
TWO-FEET-WALK-ON-THE-GROUND,
AND **HIM** HE HAD THE CALL OF THE
WILD AND **HIM** HE RAN THE
WORLD.

BIG NOISE HIM, BIG FELLAH. VERY
PROUD. AND THEM, THEY DIDN'T LIKE
TWO-FEET, NO, SIR, NOT AT **ALL**. HIM
THEY HATED **VERY** MUCH.

RISE ON UP,
THEY DID. RISE
ON UP AND MAKE
TWO-FEET **RUN**,
RUN FAR AWAY
TO THIS COLD
PLACE.

ANARCHICY!

LIKE YOU SAY.

SO **THEM** GOT
TOGETHER, TIGHTER
AND TIGHT. ALL MAKING
ONE BIG **BUZZING**
THING.

AND THEM THEY EAT UP
THE WORLD AND OWN
IT, LEFT AND RIGHT, UP
AND DOWN, EAST
AND WEST.



AND
NORTH!

AND NORTH, MARYAN,
BUT NOT SOUTH. NOT THIS
COLD PLACE. NOT
ANARCHTICY.



SO, TWO-FEET, HE COME HERE
PRONTO, AND HE HIDES HERE, AND HE
MAKE US, MAKE US SHARP AND TRUE.
TOUGHER THAN TWO-FEET WE ARE,
TOUGHER AND TOUGH.

HE
MAKE US
GOOD WITH
HIS CLEVER
STUFF, TO
KEEP THEM
AT BAY.



GOOD JOB, WE SAY. **GOOD JOB**, TWO-FEET.
PACK AND PACK, WE DO WALK-AROUND, KEEP THE
COLD PLACE CLEAN. TWO-FEET HE SLEEPS LONG
TIME, BUT HE TELL US, **KEEP THEM
OFFA MY LAWN!**

YES, HE
DOES.

WHAT IS
LAWN, OLD
MAN?

I DUNNO.
PART OF THE
TALE, SO IT'S
RIGHT.



HUSH YOU!
GROUND
SOUNDS.



GET WHET.



THEM CAME DOWN ALONG
THE LAND-MEETS-SEA, OUT
OF THE NIGHT.

THEM CAME SCUTTLING DOWN
THE LAST PIECE OF THE WORLD
THEY HAD NOT YET ATE UP.



NO ONE KNEW IF THEM COULD HEAR
OR TASTE OR SMELL OR EVEN SEE.

NO ONE HAD EVER FOUND OUT. THE
MASTERS, THEY PROBABLY KNEW,
BUT THEY HAD NEVER TOLD ANYBODY.

EVEN IF THEY COULDN'T
HEAR OR TASTE OR
SMELL OR EVEN SEE,
THEM ALWAYS FOUND
THINGS SURE ENOUGH.



AND GENE, HE KNEW THE
ONE THING THEM ALWAYS
FOUND THE QUICKEST.

THE ONE THING AS
ALWAYS DREW THEM.





GET WHET!



FOLLOW ME!
SCRAP THEM!

GENE KNEW THE CLEVER
STUFF BECAUSE GENE
WAS ALPHA MALE.



SCRAP THEM
DEAD!

HE WAS
TOUGHER
AND TOUGH.



HE LED THE PACK ON
THE WALK-AROUND,
TO KEEP THE COLD
PLACE CLEAN.



TO KEEP ANARCHTICY
CLEAN, FOR THE MASTERS.

TO KEEP THEM OFFA
THE MASTERS' LAWN.



AND WHEREVER GENE
WENT WALK-AROUND...



... THE PACK
ALWAYS FOLLOWED.

TOUGHER AND TOUGH.
SHARP AND TRUE.

I GOT IT,
GENE!



JACK SO WILD, THE
EAGER THREE-YEARLING.

SEE ME **SCRAP**,
GENE?

GOOD, JACK,
GOOD.



TOD OF MUCH SLAUGHTER, WHO WAS BETA MALE TO GENE'S ALPHA.

YOU BIT,
GENE? YOU TAKEN
A HURTING?



MARYAN FAITHFUL,
THE PACK DAM.

IF GENE'S
BIT, HE'LL HEAL.
HE'S GENE. HE'S
STRONG.



AND OLD MAN GARY,
LAST AND OLDEST.

OLD MAN WAS OLD, AND
WEAK IN SCRAPPING.



HE HAD SEEN TWENTY YEARS
MORE THAN ANY OF THEM,
THIRTY MORE THAN JACK.

BUT HE HAD NOT LIVED THOSE
YEARS WITHOUT LEARNING.

HIS MUSCLES WERE IN HIS
HEAD, GENE ALWAYS SAID.

BUT THE PACK WAS NOT AS STRONG AS IT HAD BEEN THAT MORNING PREVIOUS.

IN THE LAST SCRAP, THEY HAD LOST THREE, ONE OF THEM GINNY, GENE'S LIFEMATE.

TOO MANY, GENE! PACK GO NOW?

THE LOSS STILL STABBED HIM, MADE HIM **SCRAP-HAPPY** TO PILE THEM UP DEAD.

MADE HIM HIS NAMESAKE. A **HACKMAN**.

NO, JACK, NO. PLENTY WORK HERE STILL.

TOO MANY MANY! GENE! GENE!

GAH! ENOUGH THEN.

RUN, JACK, RUN!

RUN, PACK, RUN! RUN ALL!



AND THAT WAS
THE SCRAPPING
OF THAT NIGHT.



WHEN THEY HAD RUN FAR
ENOUGH, THEY DROPPED
DOWN TO SLEEP. BONE
TIRED, THEY WERE.



THEY HUDDLED IN. MARYAN CAME TO
GENE'S SIDE. NOW GINNY WAS GONE,
SHE SAW A CHANCE TO CLAIM HER
PLACE AS THE ALPHA MALE'S MATE.

BUT HIS ARM
HURT, AND
HIS HEART
HURT MORE.

NO.



NO, GENE? NO?

NO.



GENE HEARD HER GO TO
TOD INSTEAD. TOD DID
NOT SEND HER AWAY.

HE KNEW, IN A DAY OR LESS,
TOD WOULD CHALLENGE HIM
FOR ALPHA MALE. TOD HAD
A FEMALE NOW. AND HE WAS
TOUGHER AND TOUGH.



GENE THOUGHT THAT
WOULD BE THE
PROBLEM THE NEW SUN
BROUGHT FOR HIM.

HE WAS
WRONG.



THE SUN CAME UP AND BROUGHT
THE DAWN WITH HIM, AND THE
PACK ROSE WITH THEM BOTH,
WAITING FOR THE URGINGS.



THEY HAD BEEN OUT FOR EIGHT
MONTHS, THE LONGEST WALK-
AROUND THEY'D EVER DONE.

EVERY DAY, AT DAWN AND
DUSK, THE URGINGS HAD
COME, GUIDING THEM ON.



BUT NOT THAT DAWN.

HNNH.



TROUBLED THE
PACK WAS
THEN. OLD MAN
GARY

... MARYAN
FAITHFUL....

... GENE THE
HACKMAN...

... JACK
SO WILD...

... AND TOD OF
MUCH SLAUGHTER.

WHERE ARE
THE URGINGS?

WHY ARE THE
MASTERS QUIET? HAVE WE
DISPLEASED THEM, GENE?



HUSH, JACK,
HUSH.

GENE WAS **ALPHA MALE**, SO
HE KNEW THE CLEVER STUFF,
BUT HE HAD NO ANSWERS.



OLD MAN? DO YOU KNOW WHY THE DAWN IS QUIET?

NO, GENE, I MUSTA SEEN THIRTY YEARS OF SCRAPPING.

NEVER IN THEM THIRTY YEARS HAVE THE URGINGS NOT COME.

WE MUSTA BEEN **BAD**! WE MUSTA DONE A **BAD THING** SOMEHOW, AND THE MASTERS ARE **ANGRY** AT US!

WHAT DID WE DO THAT WAS **BAD**? WHAT DID WE DO?

SHUT YOUR YAPPING, PUP. THIS IS A SIMPLE THING TO FIND A REASON FOR.

YEAH, TOD?

WE'RE ALL **DUMB-HEADS**, ARE WE, TOD? TELL US, THEN. TELL US, **CLEVER TOD**.

YEAH, GENE. ONLY A **DUMB-HEAD** WOULD NOT SEE IT.



THE MASTERS DON'T NEED TO URGE US TODAY BECAUSE NOTHING'S CHANGED.

THE MASTERS WANT US TO DO WHAT WE DID YESTERDAY, AND THE YESTERDAY BEFORE, AND THE YESTERDAY BEFORE.

WE DO THE WALK-AROUND AND KEEP THE COLD PLACE CLEAN.

THEY'VE **TOLD** US WHAT TO DO. THEY DON'T **NEED** TO TELL US AGAIN.



NO.

'NO'?



SOMETHING'S **WRONG**.
NO MORE LAND, NO
MORE URGINGS.

WE SHOULD GO
BACK NOW. BACK
HOME.

PACK GO **BACK**,
GENE? PACK GO
BACK, **NOW**?



YES, JACK, PACK GO BACK.
TELL THE MASTERS WHAT WE'VE
SEEN. TELL THE MASTERS ABOUT
THE **LAND BRIDGE** THEM'S
BUILT.

TELL THE MASTERS
ANARCHTICY AIN'T **SAFE**
NO MORE.

WRONG. YOUR
MOUTH IS **FULL** OF
WRONG.

WE KEEP GOING.
WE KEEP GOING WALK-
AROUND SO THE MASTERS,
THEY TELL US 'GOOD
JOB'.



MY CHOICE. MY
PACK. MY RULES.
NOT YOURS.

GENE HAD ANTICIPATED THIS. HE
KNEW TOD WOULD CHALLENGE
HIM, SOONER OR LATER.

CONTEST HIM FOR
ALPHA MALE, TOUGHER
AND TOUGH.



MAYBE THE PACK
SHOULD **NOT** BE
YOURS. MAYBE **MY**
RULES ARE
BETTER.



MAYBE YOU EAT SHIT AND **DIE**.
MAYBE YOU ARE IN **LOVE** WITH
ME AND WANT TO BE MY
BITCH-BOY.

MY PACK. **MY** RULES.

UNLESS YOU
GOT THE **BONE** TO
DISAGREE.



I GOT THE
BONE.









THEM HAD
FOUND THE PACK.



BUT THEM HAD
FOUND SOMETHING
ELSE AS WELL.



THEM HAD FOUND GENE
THE HACKMAN. THEM HAD
FOUND WHETTED DEATH.



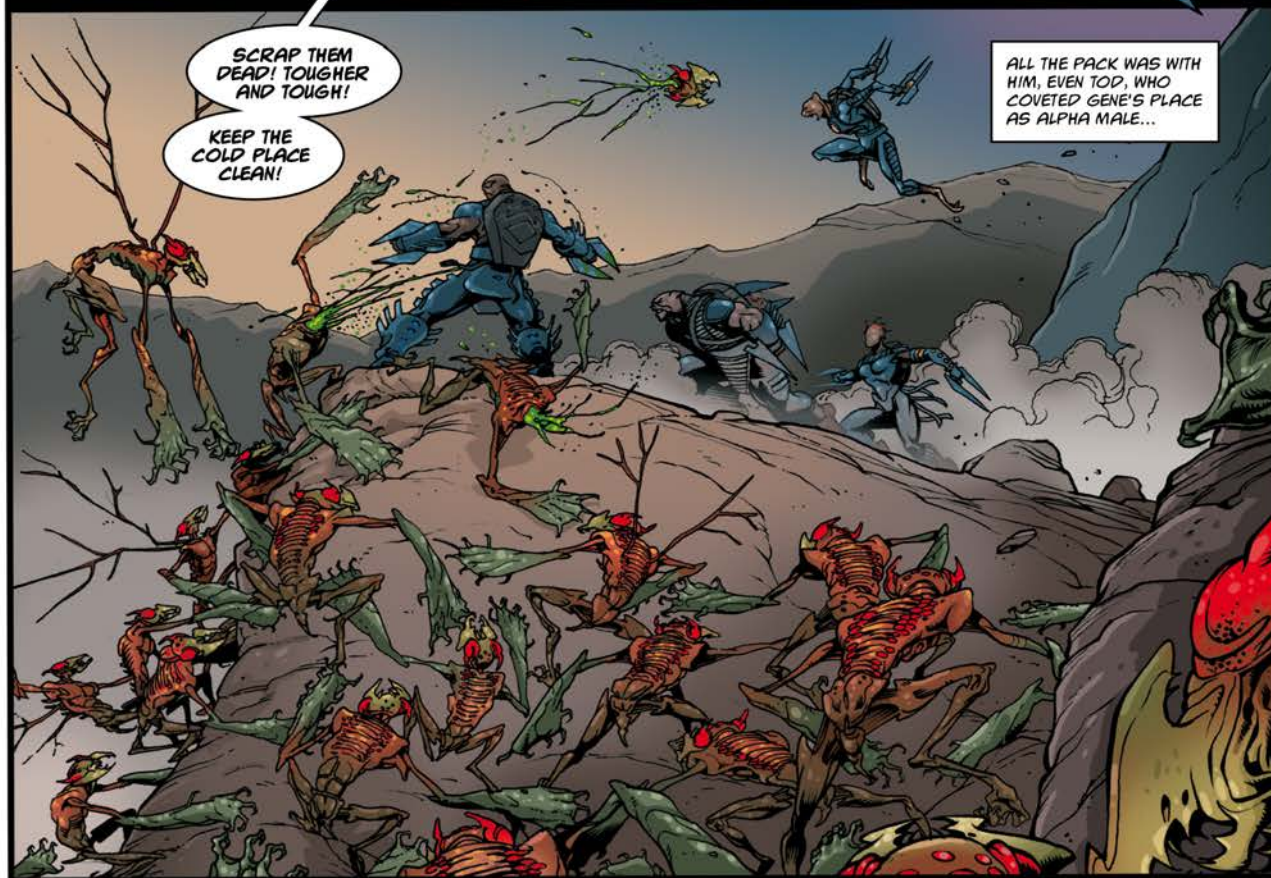
THEM HAD FOUND
A SCRAP.



SCRAP THEM
DEAD! TOUGHER
AND TOUGH!

KEEP THE
COLD PLACE
CLEAN!

ALL THE PACK WAS WITH
HIM, EVEN TOD, WHO
COVETED GENE'S PLACE
AS ALPHA MALE...





OLD MAN FELT THE
GROUND SOUNDS AND
THE TREMBLE OF THE
ROCK SHELF CAREFULLY.

HE KNEW.

BREAK OFF! BREAK
OFF, PACK, AND
COME HELP THE
OLD MAN!

NOW, YOU
PUPS!

OLD
MAN?

HELP ME
ROLL THIS
ROCK OVER,
GENE! GHH!
HELP ME!

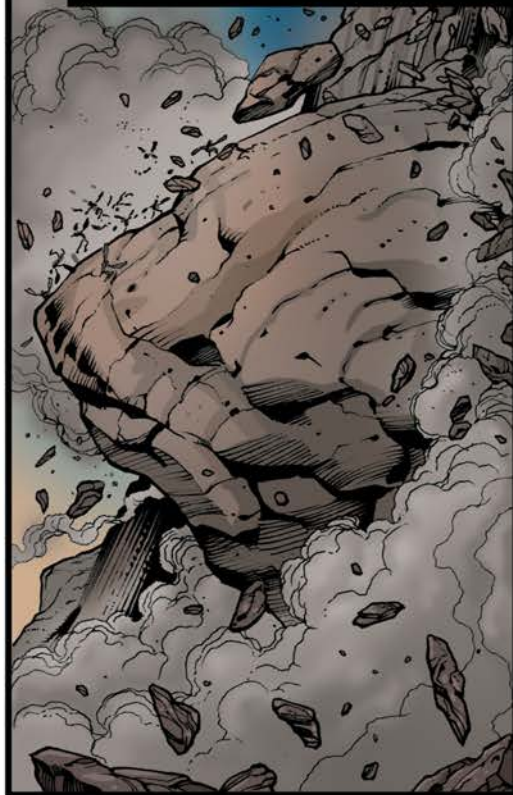
BUT ONE
ROCK WILL ONLY
SQUASH ONE OF
THEM.

WRONG, TOD, YOUR
MOUTH IS FULL OF
WRONG.

NGHHHH!

NNHHHH!

GNNAHHH!





TOUGHER
AND TOUGH...



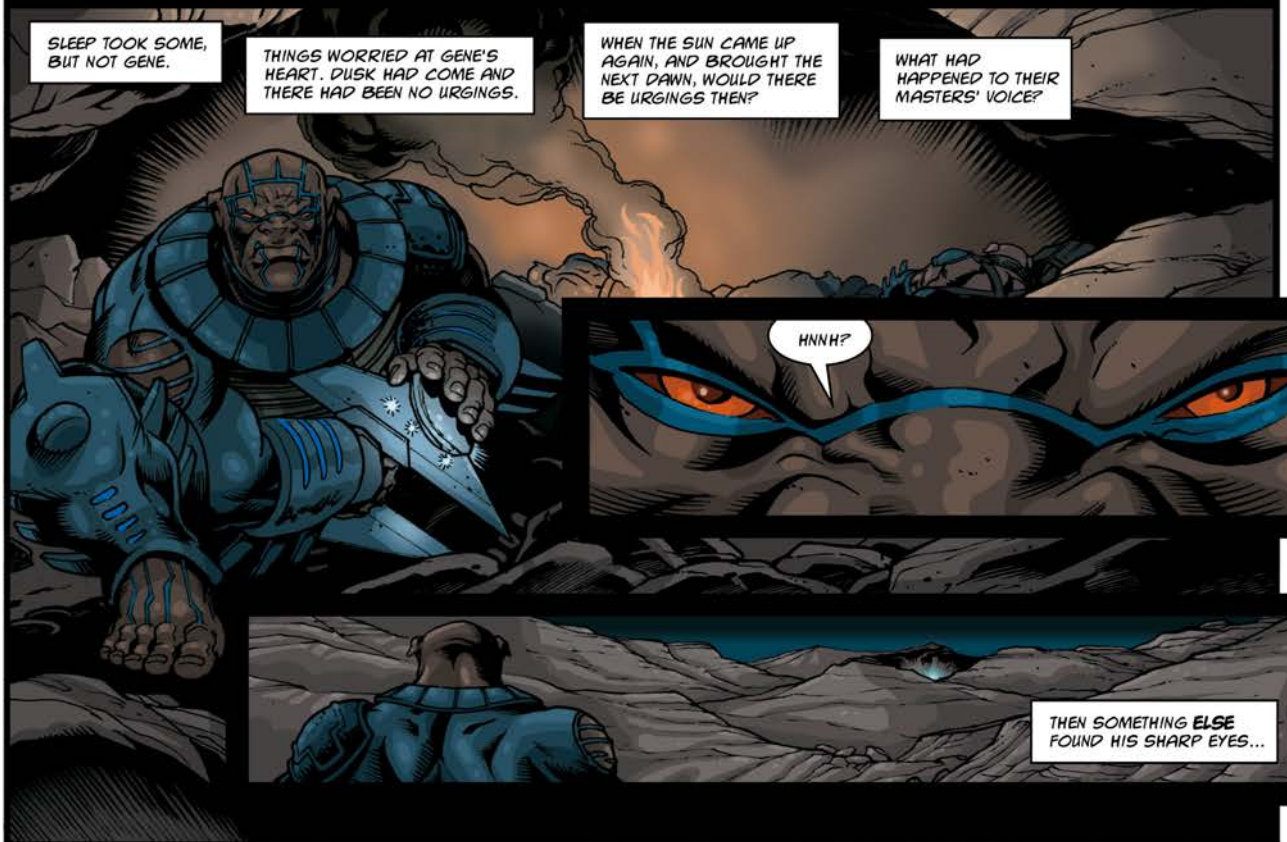
... MUSCLES IN
YOUR HEAD, OLD
MAN. SMART, OLD
MAN, SMART.

HEH.



AND THAT WAS
THE SCRAPPING
OF THAT DAY.

THE PACK WENT ON UP
INTO THE BIG HILLS,
AND THEN NIGHT CAME
AND THEY RESTED.



SLEEP TOOK SOME,
BUT NOT GENE.

THINGS WORRIED AT GENE'S
HEART. DUSK HAD COME AND
THERE HAD BEEN NO URGINGS.

WHEN THE SUN CAME UP
AGAIN, AND BROUGHT THE
NEXT DAWN, WOULD THERE
BE URGINGS THEN?

WHAT HAD
HAPPENED TO THEIR
MASTERS' VOICE?

HNNH?

THEN SOMETHING ELSE
FOUND HIS SHARP EYES...

THE NEXT SUN-COME-UP WAS ANOTHER
SUN-COME-UP **WITHOUT** URGINGS.

SO THE PACK STRUCK
OUT FOR HOME.



KEEP UP! CLOSE
UP, PACK!

THEY HAD BEEN OUT FOR EIGHT
MONTHS, THE LONGEST WALK-
AROUND THEY'D **EVER** DONE.

NOW THEY WERE GOING **HOME**
AGAIN, TO TELL THE MASTERS
WHAT THEY HAD FOUND.

AND TO BE TOLD, IN TURN, 'GOOD
JOB, PACK, **GOOD JOB.**'



GOING HOME WAS **GENE'S**
DECISION, AND HE WAS ALPHA
MALE, THE LEADER OF THE PACK.

HE WAS A **HACKMAN.**



THEY WERE TIRED AND THEY WERE COLD.
THEY HAD BEEN OUT SO **LONG** ON THE
WALK-AROUND, THEY WERE LIVING OFF BODY
FAT AND THE LAST OF THE FOOD BRICKS.

JACK-SO-WILD, THE LEAST IN
YEARS, WAS HAPPY TO TURN BACK.



PACK GO
BACK, **GENE**?
PACK GO
BACK?

YES, **JACK**,
LIKE I **TOLD** YOU,
PACK GO ALL-A-
WAY HOME.

TOD OF MUCH SLAUGHTER WAS **LESS**
HAPPY. ALREADY, HE HAD GOT THE BONE
ENOUGH TO CHALLENGE **GENE** AS ALPHA.

GENE!

YOU CALL
MY NAME,
TOD?







MY PACK.
MY RULES. YOU
GOT THE **BONE**
AGAIN, TOD?

NO! NO MORE
SCRAPPING! **NO
MORE!**



BE **QUIET**, OLD MAN, I
AIN'T GONNA SCRAP WITH
GENE NO MORE. GENE, HE'S
ALPHA MALE, **TOUGHER
AND TOUGH.**

AIN'T THAT
RIGHT, GENE THE
HACKMAN?

YEAH.



YOU GO FIND YOUR
LIGHT, ALPHA. ME, I'M
GOING ALL-A-WAY
HOME.

WHO'S WITH ME?

MARYAN WAS,
OF COURSE. SHE
WAS TOD'S MATE.
AS FOR OLD
MAN GARY...



PACK IS THE PACK IS THE
PACK. I DO WALK-AROUND
WITH GENE. WHERE GENE
GOES, THERE I AM.



JACK?

JACK SO WILD **SO** WANTED
TO GO BACK. HE WAS YOUNG,
AND HE MISSED HOME.

BUT GENE WAS GENE,
SHARP AND TRUE.

I... I GO
WITH GENE.
WHERE GENE
GOES, THERE
I AM.



GOOD, JACK,
GOOD.



UH-HUH. SO THAT'S THE WAY IT'LL BE, THEN.

SO LONG, GENE.



GENE TURNED HIS BACK, BUT JACK WATCHED UNTIL TOD AND MARYAN WERE OUT OF SIGHT.

HE WOULD NEVER SEE THEM AGAIN.



SO LONG, TOD... SO LONG, MARYAN...



THE DAY GOT LATER, AND THE SUN GOT HEAVIER. NIGHT WAS GETTING READY FOR HIS WALK-AROUND THE SKY.

THE LIGHT, GENE? WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

LIKE A LIGHT, OLD MAN. ARE THERE TYPES?



OH YEAH. ONE LIGHT IS LIKE THE SUN, ONE IS LIKE THE LIGHTNING, ONE IS LIKE THE STARS-AT-NIGHT, ONE IS LIKE A REST-FIRE —

LIKE A STAR, THEN, OLD MAN. LIKE A STAR-AT-NIGHT, BUT ON AND OFF.

COULD IT BE A STAR-AT-NIGHT THAT HAS FALLEN DOWN ON ANARCHY?

DO THEY FALL DOWN? WHAT HOLDS THEM UP? WILL IT BE HOT?



HEH HEH HEH! PUP-QUESTIONS! YOU HEAR 'EM, GENE? YOU HEAR THE QUESTIONS THE LITTLE FELLAH ASK?

GENE?

THEY HAD BEEN DEAD LONG TIME. DRY-DEAD LIKE PAPER IN THE COLD OF THE COLD PLACE.

THEY HAD BEEN A PACK TOO, ONCE.



DEADER AND DEAD.

YOU KNOW 'EM, OLD MAN?

HIM, THAT'S RIP AND TORN. HE WAS ALPHA.

THAT WOULD BE BAZ WRATHBONE, AND THAT... MAYBE... I DUNNO, GENE. THE FACE IS ALL GONE.



W-WHAT KILLED THEM, GENE? WHAT KILLED THEM?

ANARCHTICY.

RAW BONES, JACK. STARVED, THEY DID.

WILL WE STARVE, OLD MAN?

NO, JACK. GENE WILL LOOK AFTER US, TOUGHER AND TOUGH.



OH, WE WON'T STARVE.

WE'LL BE TOO BUSY RUNNING.



THEM CAME DOWN THE VALLEY,
FASTER AND FAST. NONE OF
THEM, NOT EVEN OLD MAN, HAD
SEEN THEM LIKE THAT BEFORE.

NEW KIND. NEW
BREED. FAST KIND.

THEM HAD SENT NEW BREEDS
ACROSS THE LAND BRIDGE
INTO THE COLD PLACE.



NEW BREEDS THAT A PACK
COULD NOT OUTRUN...



... OR OUTFIGHT.



UHHH!
GENE! GENE!



GENE!



JACK!

NO, GENE, NO!

JACK SO WILD
HAD FALLEN.

THERE WAS NO WAY HE
COULD RUN ANYMORE, NOT
WITH A SNAPPED ANKLE.

LOOKING UP, HE SAW
THEM COMING FOR HIM.



A WHOLE NEW BREED
OF THEM, COMING IN
SKITTLE-SCUTTLE FAST.

FEAR TURNED JACK'S
BLOOD TO SLUDGE, AND
HIS LIMBS TO LEAD.

NO, GENE,
NO!

JACK! RUN,
JACK, RUN!

BUT GENE WAS TOO
SLOW THIS TIME.

GENE WAS COMING BACK FOR HIM,
IGNORING OLD MAN'S YELLING. GENE
HAD ALWAYS LOOKED OUT FOR
JACK-PUP, TOUGHER AND TOUGH.



THEM GOT TO JACK
FIRST AND BIT HIM UP,
AND THAT WAS HIS END.

ALL GENE HAD
LEFT THEN...





... WAS HIS WRATH.

RRRAAAARHHH!

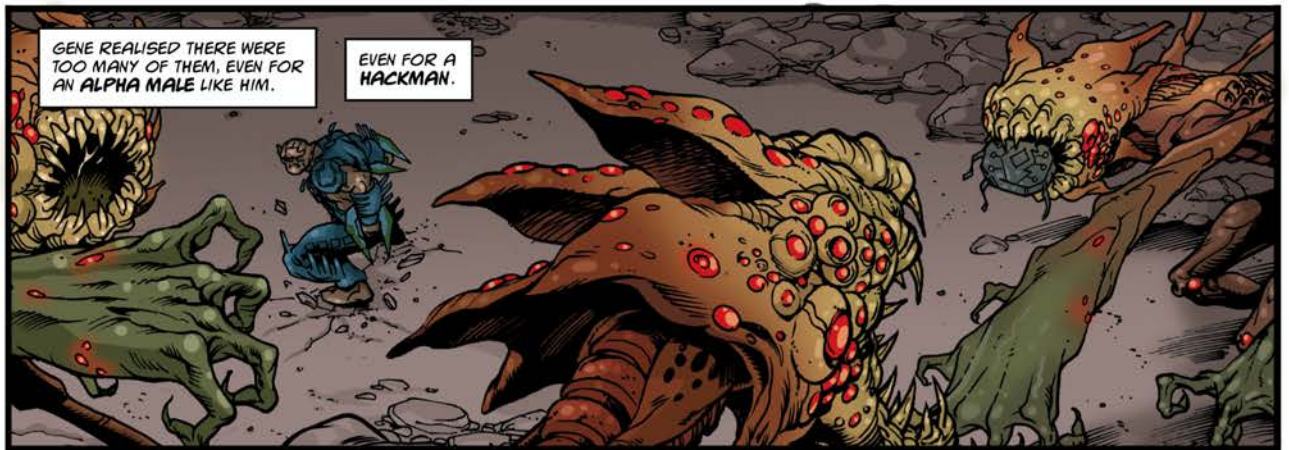


SCRAP-HAPPY WRATH.
VENGEANCE WRATH.



YOU WANT
A TASTE?





NHH! NHHHHH!
NHHH!

VABB00000MM!

GNNHH!

VADD0000M!

VADD0000M!

AND THAT WAS THE
SCRAPPING OF THAT DAY.



OLD MAN?
OLD MAN?

GENE HAD NOT SEEN OLD
MAN GARY SINCE THE
START OF THE SCRAP.

HE HOPED OLD MAN HAD
RUN, OR HID, OR **BOTH**.

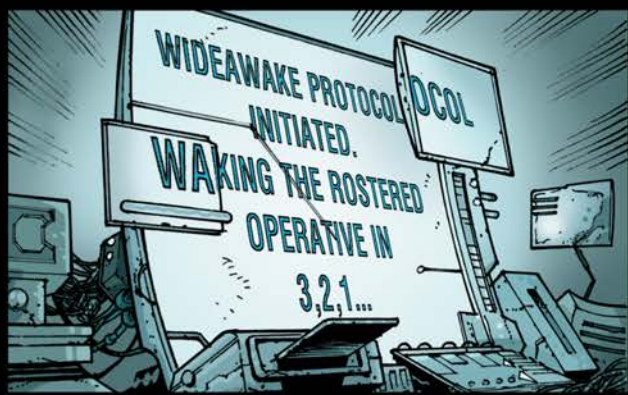


MAYBE OLD MAN HAD HID IN THIS
PLACE. MAYBE THIS PLACE WAS
WHERE THE LIGHT HAD COME FROM.

MAYBE THESE GATE POSTS
HAD KILLED THEM WITH THE
BURNING BEAMS.



GENE WASN'T SURE. HE'D
TAKEN A BAD HURTING AND
LOST BLOOD, SO HE WASN'T
SURE OF **ANYTHING** MUCH...





JESUS
BLOODY
HELL...

WHY THE HELL
HAVE I BEEN
WOKEN?

I FEEL LIKE SHIT,
YOU KNOW THAT?
LIKE SHIT.

HEL-LO? ARE
YOU FRIGGING
LISTENING?

OUTPOST
COMCON IS
MONITORING YOUR
VERBALISATION. THE
TONE WAS
PRESUMED TO BE
RHETORICAL.

DO YOU
HAVE A SPECIFIC
QUESTION?

YES, COMCON. I HAVE A SPECIFIC BLOODY
QUESTION. WHY HAVE I BEEN WOKEN UP? IS
IT THE FIFTY-YEAR CHECK? IT'S THE
FIFTY-YEAR CHECK, RIGHT?

WASN'T IT GRIFFIN'S TURN,
THE NEXT FIFTY-YEAR CHECK? WHY
ISN'T HE HAULING HIS FROSTBITTEN
ARSE OUT OF CRYO?

IT IS NOT
THE FIFTY-YEAR
CHECK.





IT'S NOT?
REALLY?

THE LAST FIFTY-YEAR
CHECK WAS CONDUCTED BY
OPERATIVE GRIFFIN THIRTY-
SEVEN YEARS AGO. YOU
HAVE NOT BEEN AWAKE FOR
EIGHTY-SEVEN YEARS.



CHRIST, NO
WONDER I FEEL
LIKE SHIT...

THE BODY CAN'T TAKE IT,
YOU KNOW? NOT **THIS** LONG
IN CRYO. IT WAS NEVER
SUPPOSED TO LAST
THIS LONG.

TOOK A YEAR'S
SUPPLY OF STIMS JUST TO
STOP MY ORGANS FROM
PACKING UP WHEN YOU
BROUGHT ME ROUND.

DON'T DENY IT.
I KNOW. I **READ**
THE MED-CONSOLE EVERY
WIDEAWAKE. MORE DETOX
PURGES, BLOOD-SCRUBS,
TRANSPLANTS FROM THE
ORGAN BANK...



I'M **THIRTY-TWO**,
COMCON. IN
'AWAKE' YEARS.
THIRTY-BLOODY-
TWO. LOOK AT ME,
HOW OLD AM I? IN
REAL MONEY,
I MEAN?

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
AND FIFTY-THREE
YEARS OLD.



EIGHTEEN
HUN...?

JESUS CHRIST. I'D
LOST COUNT. EIGHTEEN
HUNDRED?

AND FIFTY-
THREE.

YEAH,
LET'S NOT FORGET
THOSE.

THIS IS NO KIND
OF LIFE FOR A MAN. I'D
WEEP IF MY TEAR DUCTS
WEREN'T PACKED WITH
PERMAFROST.



A FEW DECADES,
TOPS, THAT WAS
ALL IT WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE.
A FEW FRIGGING
DECADES.

SO, SPILL. WHY AM I
AWAKE IF IT'S NOT
THE FIFTY-YEAR
CHECK?

PROCEED TO
THE REPAIR
SUITE.

THE REPAIR
SUITE? WHY? WE
NEVER USE IT.

PROCEED
TO THE REPAIR
SUITE. THERE HAS
BEEN A PERIMETER
INFRACTION.



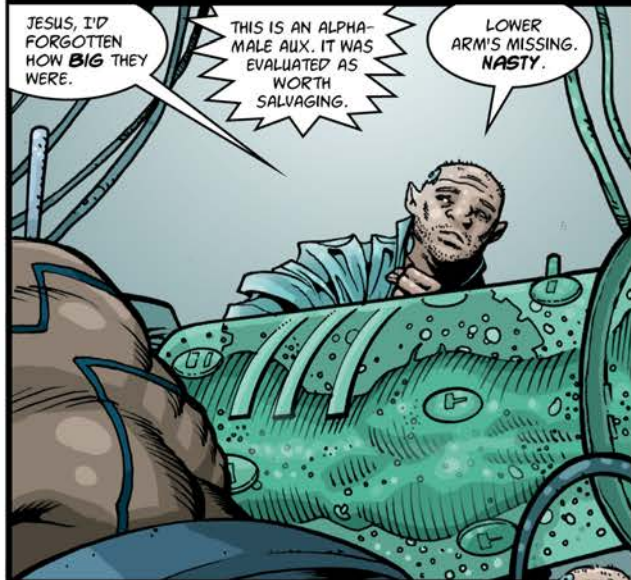
A PERIMETER
INFRACTION? OH
JESUS BLOODY
HELL...



WHAT'S **THAT** DOING IN HERE? WHAT THE **HELL** IS **THAT** DOING IN HERE?

COMCON, WHY THE **HELL** DID YOU LET IT IN?

THE AUX WAS IN DISTRESS. IT HAD SUSTAINED MASSIVE INJURY.



JESUS, I'D FORGOTTEN HOW **BIG** THEY WERE.

THIS IS AN ALPHA-MALE AUX. IT WAS EVALUATED AS WORTH SALVAGING.

LOWER ARM'S MISSING. **NASTY.**



IT HAD BEEN BITTEN OFF.

BITTEN? JESUS **CRAP!** THE **BUGS** ARE HERE?

MULTIPLE XENOPTERA FORMS WERE IDENTIFIED AND ELIMINATED BY THE SENTRY BATTERIES. THE AUTO SYSTEMS LOCATED THIS AUX AND BROUGHT IT INSIDE FOR GROW-PAIR THERAPY.



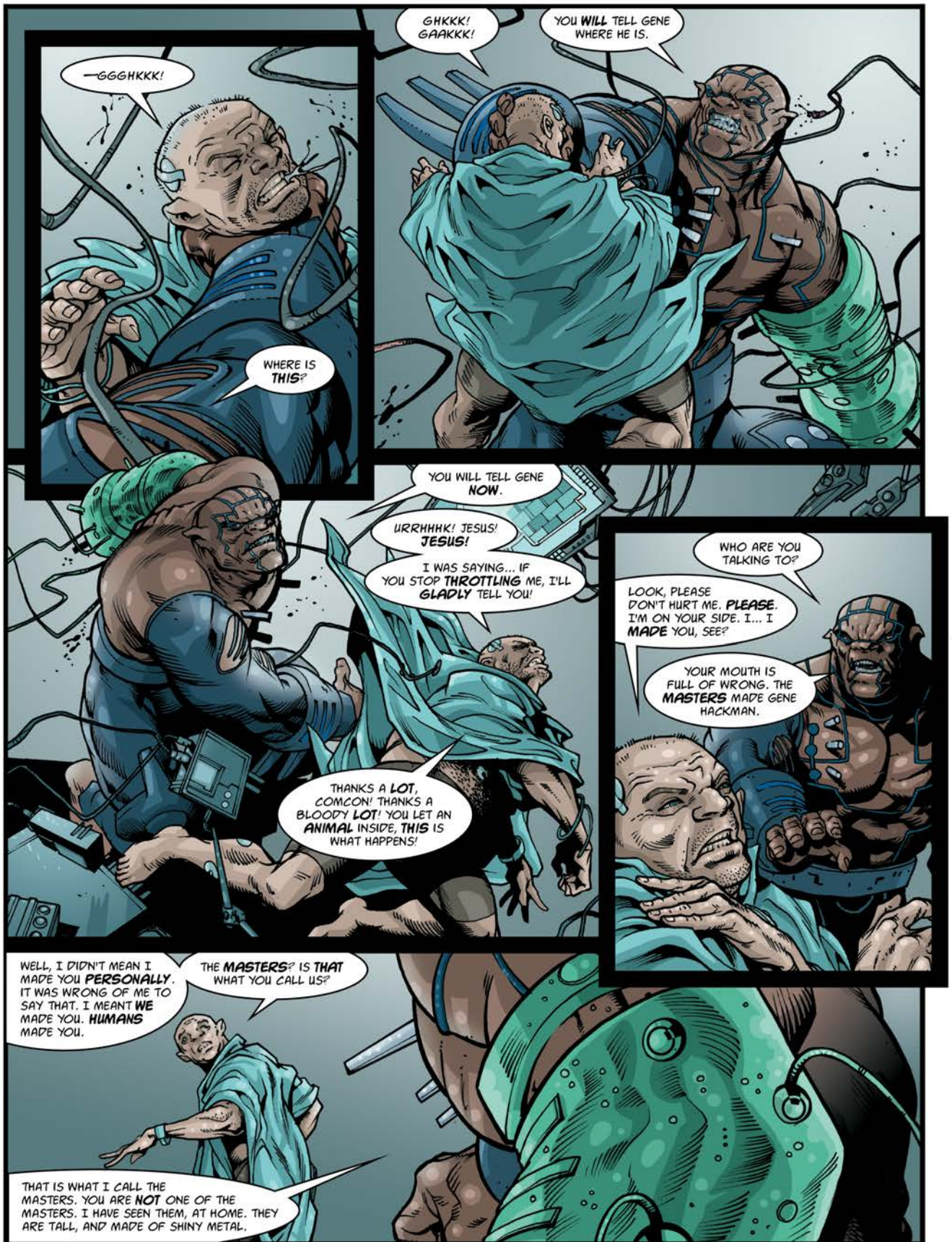
SHIT...

OKAY, YOU WERE RIGHT TO WAKE ME. WE NEED TO RUN A FULL-AREA SCAN, AND WORK OUT WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON OUTSIDE.

WE'D BETTER CONTACT THE **OTHER** OUTPOSTS IN THE ZONE AND GET THEM WIDEAWAKE TOO.

MESSAGES HAVE BEEN SENT. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPLIES.

NO REPLIES? BUT—



—GGGHHKKK!

WHERE IS THIS?

GHHKK! GAAKKK!

YOU WILL TELL GENE WHERE HE IS.

YOU WILL TELL GENE NOW.

URRRHHK! JESUS! JESUS!

I WAS SAYING... IF YOU STOP THROTTLING ME, I'LL GLADLY TELL YOU!

THANKS A LOT, COMCON! THANKS A BLOODY LOT! YOU LET AN ANIMAL INSIDE, THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS!

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

LOOK, PLEASE DON'T HURT ME. PLEASE. I'M ON YOUR SIDE. I... I MADE YOU, SEE?

YOUR MOUTH IS FULL OF WRONG. THE MASTERS MADE GENE HACKMAN.

WELL, I DIDN'T MEAN I MADE YOU PERSONALLY. IT WAS WRONG OF ME TO SAY THAT. I MEANT WE MADE YOU. HUMANS MADE YOU.

THE MASTERS? IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL US?

THAT IS WHAT I CALL THE MASTERS. YOU ARE NOT ONE OF THE MASTERS. I HAVE SEEN THEM, AT HOME. THEY ARE TALL, AND MADE OF SHINY METAL.



OH, YOU MEAN THE SERVITOR ROBOTS. THEY'RE NOT THE MASTERS. **CHRIST**, NO. THEY JUST DO THE WORK FOR US WHILE WE'RE IN CRYO.

SO WHERE IS HOME? YOUR **BASE STATION**, YEAH? DO YOU COME FROM ONE OF THE AUX PLANTS IN ANTARCTICA CENTRAL?

WHAT IS AN AUX PLANT?

HUH? WHAT IS **THIS** ON ME?



OH, CAREFUL! DON'T TOUCH THAT! IT'S A **GROW-PAIR SHEATH**. IT'S REBUILDING YOUR LIMB.

REBUILDING?

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. **GENE**, WAS IT? THAT'S RIGHT, **GENE**, IT'S MAKING YOU ALL BETTER.



ARE YOU...

ARE YOU **REALLY** TWO-FEET-WALK-ON-THE-GROUND?

I GUESS I AM.

YOU ARE SMALL AND **SICKLY**.



WHAT CAN I SAY? EIGHTEEN **HUNDRED** FRIGGING YEARS OLD, I'M NOT THE MAN I WAS.

WHO IS, THESE DAYS?



IF YOU ARE ONE OF THE MASTERS, YOU WILL KNOW THINGS. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE **URGINGS**?

ALSO, WHERE IS OLD MAN **GARY**?



I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT URGINGS ARE, SUNSHINE. SORRY.

COMCON, DID WE PICK UP ANOTHER AUX?

AFFIRMATIVE.

GAH! WHAT IS THAT VOICE?



RELAX, THAT'S JUST COMCON, THE OUTPOST'S A.I. SYSTEM.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS **OTHER** AUX THEN, COMCON?

IT WAS OLD AND WEAK. IT WAS EVALUATED AS OBSOLETE AND NOT WORTH SALVAGING. IT WAS TAKEN TO SECTION EIGHTEEN FOR—



OKAY, OKAY! THAT'S FINE, COMCON! THANKS. I'XNAY, OKAY?

WHAT DID IT SAY? WHERE IS OLD MAN?



HE'S FINE. HE'S... HE'S JUST **FINE**. EVERYTHING'S OKAY, WE THOUGHT HE... UH, **DESERVED** A GOOD OLD REST, AFTER ALL HIS EFFORTS...

SO WE... UH, WE SENT HIM TO A LOVELY **FARM** IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, WHERE HE... HE CAN LIVE THE REST OF HIS LIFE IN PEACE. IT'S LOVELY THERE. HE'LL ENJOY IT.

HE **DESERVED** A REST, DIDN'T HE? HE WAS OLD, SO THAT'S **NICE**, REALLY, ISN'T IT?



IT IS GOOD. OLD MAN GARY **DID** DESERVE A REST. HE **WAS** OLD. HE WAS MY FRIEND, SO I AM **HAPPY** FOR HIM.

THIS... FARM. IT IS A NICE PLACE?

IT'S **FABULOUS**. HONESTLY. I'VE SEEN PICTURES.

SO, GENE, TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.



I AM GENE. I AM HACKMAN. MY PACK IS GONE. THAT IS ALL THERE IS ABOUT ME.

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THE LAND BRIDGE.

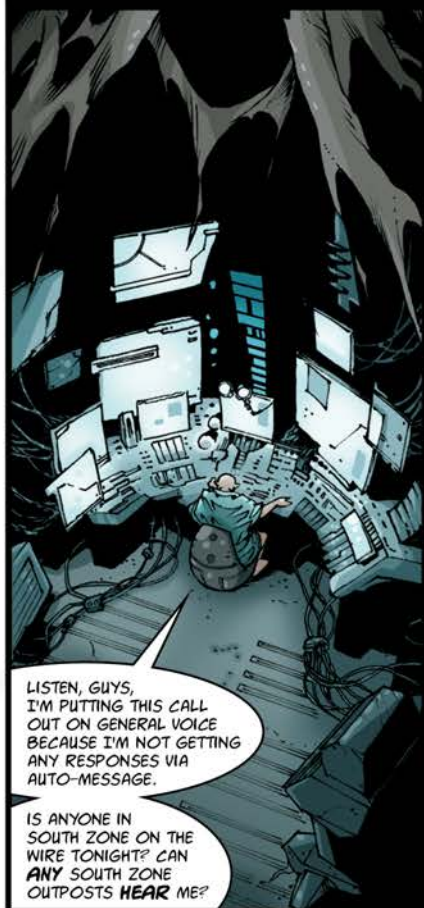


THE... WHAT?



AHEM. H-HELLO?
HELLO? THIS IS OPERATIVE
SYMONS CALLING FROM THE
SOUTH EIGHT OUTPOST.

ANYONE OUT
THERE? ANYONE
AWAKE OUT THERE?



LISTEN, GUYS,
I'M PUTTING THIS CALL
OUT ON GENERAL VOICE
BECAUSE I'M NOT GETTING
ANY RESPONSES VIA
AUTO-MESSAGE.

IS ANYONE IN
SOUTH ZONE ON THE
WIRE TONIGHT? CAN
ANY SOUTH ZONE
OUTPOSTS **HEAR** ME?



LOOK, THIS **IS**
PRETTY IMPORTANT, GUYS.
IS ANYONE OUT THERE ON
WIDEAWAKE LIKE **YOURS**
TRULY?

HOW ABOUT A
COMCON, THEN?
ANYONE?



IT'S PRETTY BLOODY
CREEPY **NONE** OF YOU IS
ANSWERING, GUYS, LET ME
TELL YOU. **BIG TIME**
CREEPY.

ON THE **PLUS**
SIDE. CHEESE AND
ONION SNACKIOS.



OKAY, I'LL GET TO IT. MY COMCON'S
PULLED ME OUT OF CRYO BECAUSE WE'VE
GOT BUGS HERE.

REPEAT, I AM
CONFIRMING XENOPTERA CONTACT
AT SOUTH EIGHT.

SENTRY BATTERIES FRIED THEM,
BUT THERE MAY BE MORE, SO CONSIDER
THIS **NOTICE**. ANY COMCONS HEARING THIS
MAY WANT TO WIDEAWAKE A **DUTY**
OPERATIVE ASAP.



WE, UH, WE HAD A **PERIMETER INFRACTION** TONIGHT. TOOK IN AN INJURED AUX, A BIG ALPHA-MALE. THE AUX **CONFIRMED** THE BUG ACTIVITY.

AND THAT'S NOT **ALL**. THE AUX SAYS THERE'S A **LAND BRIDGE**. THE BUGS HAVE BUILT A LAND BRIDGE.

THEY'RE ON THE **LAWN**, PEOPLE.



WELL, SO, UH, I LOOK FORWARD TO GETTING A CALL BACK SOON, OKAY? I'M A BIT **FREAKED** WE CAN'T RAISE ANY OF YOU GUYS. DO YOU THINK THERE MIGHT BE A COM PROBLEM? I **HOPE** IT'S JUST A COM PROBLEM, I REALLY DO.



OKAY, THIS IS SYMONS AT EIGHT. ATOMIC CLOCK SAYS IT'S JUNE FIFTEEN, 3965 ANNO FRIGGING DOMINI. CAN YOU BELIEVE **THAT**? WHERE DOES THE TIME GO, EH?

SO, I'M JUST WAFFLING NOW. SOMEONE GET BACK TO ME, OKAY? **SOON**, OKAY? I THINK...



... I THINK WE COULD BE IN **BIG BLOODY TROUBLE** HERE.

SOUTH EIGHT OUTPOST OUT.



WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

JESUS!

FRIG, GENE! I THOUGHT YOU WERE ASLEEP, FELLAH!

SNEAKING UP ON ME LIKE THAT...



WHO WERE YOU TALKING TO?

I WAS, UH, I WAS TRYING TO RAISE THE **OTHER** OUTPOSTS. ON THE **RADIO**, YEAH?



RAY-DE-OH.



GIVE THE DUDE
A PRIZE.

TROUBLE IS, NO ONE
SEEMS TO BE LISTENING.
THAT'S NOT GOOD. MAKES
ME **WORRIED**.

IT'S TOO
DAMN QUIET, YOU
KNOW? "IT'S TOO DAMN
QUIET." YEAH, LIKE IN
THE **MOVIES**?



GENE
DOESN'T KNOW
WHAT **MOO-FEES**
IS.



RIGHT, RIGHT.
WHICH IS ODD, 'CAUSE I
ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE
GREAT IN THE FRENCH
CONNECTION.

OKAY, BEFORE YOUR
TIME. THEY NAMED YOU ALL
AFTER **STARS**, YOU KNOW?



STARS?

MOVIE STARS,
WRITERS, POP CULTURE,
STUFF LIKE THAT. I DUNNO
WHY, SO DON'T ASK.
PROBABLY SEEMED LIKE
A GOOD IDEA, LIKE
NAMING PETS.

THEN AGAIN, HIDING IN
ANTARCTICA SEEMED LIKE
A GOOD IDEA TOO, SO GO
FRIGGING FIGURE.



ANARCHTICY.

HUH?

ANARCHTICY. THAT
IS WHAT THE **COLD** PLACE
IS CALLED. NOT WHAT
YOU SAID.



OH, OKAY, **SURE**, WHY NOT? LIKE I'M GONNA ARGUE WITH YOU.

HOW'S THAT ARM?

IT WAS AN ARM AND THEN IT WASN'T. NOW IT IS AGAIN.

IT IS GOOD. MAYBE YOU **ARE** WHAT YOU SAY YOU ARE. A **MASTER**. YOU HAVE MADE THIS ARM. MAYBE YOU **DID** MAKE ME.

WELL, GROW-PAIR TECHNOLOGY IS JUST AN EXTENSION OF THE **GENE-BREEDING TECH** WE DEVELOPED WHEN THE WAR BEGAN. I MEAN, WE NEEDED TROOPS. DOG SOLDIERS. OKAY, **LOUSY** PUN, I KNOW, BUT **SERIOUSLY**.

WE NEEDED INEXPENSIVE FRONTLINE TROOPS TO KEEP THE BUGS AT BAY WHILE WE PREPPED FOR THE **BIG SLEEP**.

I ALWAYS WONDERED, WERE WE **KIDDING** OURSELVES BACK THEN? KIDDING OURSELVES THAT WE **COULD** JUST CRYO AWAY AND WAIT FOR THE BUGS TO DIE BACK?

I MEAN, THE BUGS HAD CONQUERED **EVERYWHERE** BY THEN. WE WERE ON THE ROPES. SIX MILLION HUMANS REDUCED TO **FORTY THOUSAND**.

I GUESS WE WOULD HAVE TRIED **ANYTHING**.

MAN, I ALWAYS REMEMBER THIS...

WHEN I WAS A KID IN HIGH SCHOOL, I HAD THIS SCIENCE TEACHER, MR PLIMPTON. FUNNY, I REMEMBER IT LIKE IT WAS **YESTERDAY**. HE SAID WE WERE JUST **TENANTS**, RENTING THE PLANET. THE **INSECTS** WOULD RULE THE WORLD ONE DAY.



ANTS, TERMITES, WHATEVER. THEY WERE THE **INHERITORS**, HE SAID, HEIRS IN WAITING. THEY'D RULE THE WORLD, CONQUER IT **COMPLETELY**, AND REIGN LIKE THE DINOSAURS DID, FOR A HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILLION YEARS.

MAMMALS WERE JUST AN **ABERRATION**, A BRIEF **PASSING** PHASE IN MR PLIMPTON'S OPINION. **OPPORTUNISTS**, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A TINY HIATUS BETWEEN DYNASTIES.

WE ALL LAUGHED, THE WHOLE CLASS. MR PLIMPTON SIMPLY SHOOK HIS HEAD.



MAN,
WAS **HE** EVER
RIGHT.

THIS MEANS NOTHING
TO YOU, DOES IT,
GENE?

YOUR
MOUTH IS FULL
OF STRANGE.

I BET.

STILL, NO
WONDER WE LAUGHED.
NO BLOODY **WONDER**. IT WAS
THE NINETEEN EIGHTIES, WE HAD
EVERYTHING. **MORK AND MINDY**.
VHS, DEPECHE MODE. LIVE AID.
KINGS OF THE WORLD. WE
WERE, AND WE WEREN'T
GOING ANYWHERE.



WHAT ARE
DOGS?

DOGS? **JESUS**, THAT'S FUNNY. **DOGS** WERE
MAMMALS. TOUGH, ROBUST, LOYAL.
FAITHFUL TO THE LAST.

WITH OUR OWN GENE-POOL
RUNNING OUT FAST, BECAUSE OF THE
WAR, WE LOOKED TO ANOTHER SPECIES
FOR TROOP-BREEDING. WE—

REALLY, THIS
MEANS **NOTHING**
TO YOU, DOES IT?

COME WITH ME.
I WANT TO SHOW YOU
SOMETHING...



THIS IS THE ARMOURY.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT
LIKE IT.

DEATH
TOYS MADE FOR
HACKMAN. VERY
NICE.



TREAT YOURSELF. THEY WERE BUILT FOR YOUR KIND. FRIG KNOWS, A BLOKE LIKE ME CAN BARELY LIFT SOME OF THOSE BLADES.

GOOD. GOOD. TOUGHER AND TOUGH.

YEAH. I MIGHT NEED YOU TO BE TOUGHER AND TOUGH BEFORE LONG.



WHAT IS THIS?

THAT? OH GENE, YOU'RE GONNA LOVE THAT.

ATTENTION, ATTENTION. PERIMETER INFRACTION. MULTIPLE CONTACTS.

COMCON? WHY CAN'T I HEAR THE SENTRY BATTERIES?

THE SENTRY BATTERIES ARE OFF-LINE.



WHAT? THEY'RE FRIGGING WHAT?

OH JESUS, WE ARE SO DEAD.

GENE? LET ME SHOW YOU HOW THIS WORKS...

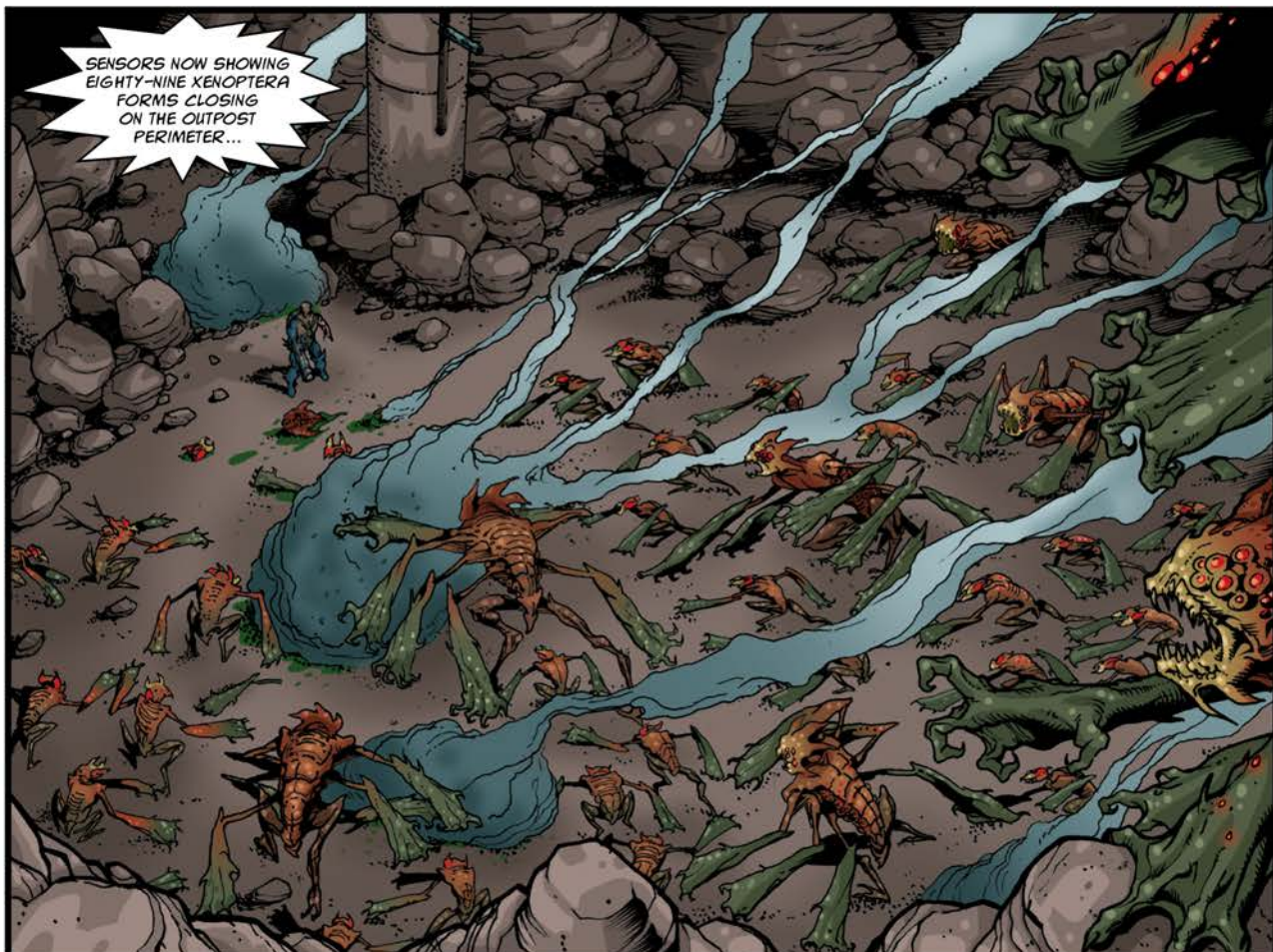


THE MASTER HAD
ALSO GIVEN GENE
A NEW DEATH TOY.

GENE HAD DECIDED THAT,
IN RETURN FOR THESE
TREATS, HE OUGHT TO GET
THEM **OFFA** THE LAWN.







SENSORS NOW SHOWING
EIGHTY-NINE XENOPTERA
FORMS CLOSING
ON THE OUTPOST
PERIMETER...

EIGHTY-
NINE? OH
JESUS.

ESTIMATE
THEY WILL TAKE TWELVE
PERCENT CASUALTIES
BEFORE THEY OVERRUN
THE GATE.

JUST
TWELVE?
TWELVE?
WHY, COM-
CON?

THE STANDARD M77 MUNITION CLIP CONTAINS
THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY ROUNDS OF
EXPLOSIVE FLECHETTE.

DID YOU PROVIDE
THE AUX WITH SPARE CLIPS?
DID YOU TEACH HIM HOW TO
CHANGE CLIPS?

OH
CRAP.

OH CRAP
CRAP CRAP! I
SHOULDN'T
BE LEFT IN
CHARGE OF
ANYTHING,
YOU KNOW
THAT?

I RE-
OWWWWWW!

OPERATOR?
ARE YOU IN
DISTRESS?

OWW! J-JESUS!
G-G-GET ME SOME
STIMS!

S-SOMETHING!
COMCON! I—

AAAAHHH!

OPERATOR?
OPERATOR?



HNNH?
BAD TOY!



THE DEATH TOY HAD BEEN
SWEET UNTIL IT **BROKE**.

BUT GENE HAD NOT BECOME
ALPHA-MALE WITHOUT EXCELLING
AT THE OLD BASICS...



GET WHET.



RAARARRGGHHH!



THERE WERE A LOT OF THEM, PERHAPS TOO MANY, EVEN FOR AN ALPHA-MALE HACKMAN LIKE GENE.

BUT GENE DID NOT CARE. HE WAS HIS NAMESAKE AND THERE WAS NO FINER WAY OF DYING THAN KEEPING THE COLD PLACE CLEAN.



SHARP AND TRUE TO THE LAST, AS THE PACK USED TO SAY.

SCRAP YOU ALL DEAD! I WILL—



UHH?

BBRRRAAHHHH!



SPRAY THEM.





VAL KILMORE, ME.
ALPHA-MALE. THIS IS
MY PACK.

YOU?



GENE.

OMEGA-
MALE.

SHAKK

IT WAS HARD FOR
GENE TO SAY IT.
OMEGA-MALE. IT
MEANT A MALE WHO
HAD NO PACK.



IT WAS THE FIRST
TIME GENE HAD
TRULY REALISED
THAT WAS WHAT
HE HAD BECOME.

VAL.

GENE.

YOU SEE
ACTION, GENE?
YOU WALK-
AROUND?



LONGEST WALK-AROUND WE EVER
DID. EIGHT MONTH. LOST MY
PACK, ONE BY ONE.

CAME HERE.
THIS PLACE.

YOU?



SENT OUT
FROM HOME SIX
WEEKS BACK. TOLD
THERE WAS THEM
TROUBLES.

SEEMS
WE FOUND
IT.



THEM IS HERE.

THEM'S BEEN HERE **BEFORE**.
THAT'S WHY WE DO THE
WALK-AROUND.

NO, VAL KILMORE.
THEM'S HERE MORE THAN **EVER**
BEFORE. MANY **TIMES**. MANY
MORE THAN THE FINGERS AND
TOES OF A **WHOLE** PACK.

TOUGHER
AND TOUGH **TOO**.
THEM HAS A LAND
BRIDGE NOW.



A **WHAT**, GENE-
OMEGA?

WHAT **IS** THIS
ONE SAYING, VAL? HIS
MOUTH IS **FULL** OF
STRANGE.



HUSH, MOLL. GENE
KNOWS THE **CLEVER**
STUFF.



TELL US, GENE, TELL
US. WHAT IS 'LAND
BRIDGE'?

A BRIDGE
ACROSS THE **SEA** TO
ANARCHTICY. THEM BUILT
IT. SO THAT THEY CAN
COME HERE AND TAKE THE
LAST PIECE OF THE WORLD
THEY HAVE NOT YET
ATE UP.



A BRIDGE? NO,
NO. THE MASTERS
WOULDA TOLD US
OF THIS.

THE MASTERS DON'T
KNOW IT. THE MASTER
HERE, **HE** DIDN'T
KNOW IT.

THERE IS A
MASTER **HERE**?



YEAH. COME
SEE HIM. **HE'LL**
TELL YOU GENE IS
RIGHT.



THIS A MASTER, GENE? THIS A MASTER?

NO, GENE, NO. NOT A MASTER, THIS.



DEAD AND COLD ANYWAY, VAL.

THE MASTERS ARE TALL AND MADE OF SHINY M—

NOT THE REAL MASTERS.



YOU DONE THE WALK-AROUND **TOO LONG**, GENE-OMEGA. THE COLD PLACE HAS GOT INTO YOUR HEAD. FUNNY THINGS YOU SAY.

GENE SPEAKS THE TRUTH.

GENE IS **OMEGA**. EVERY PACK KNOWS OMEGAS ARE **DUMB-HEADS**.



SHOW **RESPECT**. GENE WAS **ALPHA** ONCE.



GENE, MY PACK GO ALL-A-WAY **HOME** NOW, TELL THE MASTERS WHAT WE FOUND, SO THEY CAN TELL US 'GOOD JOB'.

YOU COME WITH US?

NO.



NO, GENE? WHERE WILL YOU GO, THEN, OMEGA?

I'LL GO... I'LL GO PROVE I'M RIGHT.

YOU GOT THE BONE FOR THAT?

YEAH... I GOT THE BONE.

ONE THING...



TEACH GENE HOW THE TOYS WORK.



AND THE SUN CAME DOWN HEAVY, AND THE NIGHT DID HIS WALK- AROUND, THEN THE NEXT SUN-COME-UP. VAL KILMORE'S PACK STARTED OUT TO GO ALL-A-WAY HOME.

SO LONG, GENE-OMEGA.

VAL WILL DO THAT MUCH, AT LEAST.

AND THAT WAS THE LEAVE-TAKING OF THAT DAY.

SO LONG. TELL THE MASTERS WHAT I SAID, EVEN IF YOU **DO** THINK MY MOUTH IS FULL OF WRONG.



GENE THE HACKMAN, WHO HAD GONE FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA, WALKED A-WAYS SOUTH.

THE SUN CAME UP AND WENT DOWN. GENE SLEPT IN COLD BURROWS, AND ATE THE FOOD BRICKS HE'D GOT FROM THE OUTPOST.



HE WALKED DOWN THROUGH BIG HILLS ALL THE WAY TO THE LAND-MEETS-SEA. HE WALKED UNTIL THERE WAS NO MORE LAND.



THERE WERE NO URGINGS. GENE HADN'T EXPECTED ANY. HE HAD BEEN BRED TO OBEY, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO OBEY ANY MORE EXCEPT HIS OWN URGE.

NIGHT CAME DOWN, AND HE SAW THE STARS. HE NODDED UP AT THEM.



GENE GOT NAMED AFTER ONE OF YOU.



SNFF
SNFF

THEM? GENE'S COMING. TOUGHER AND TOUGH.

YOU'D BETTER GET WHET.



AND THAT WAS THE TALE OF HOW GENE THE HACKMAN WALKED A-WAYS OUT OF ANARCHTICY.



THE PROMISED LAND

Script: Dan Abnett

Art: Richard Elson

Letters: Simon Bowland

Originally published in *2000 AD Progs* 2008, 1567-1576



THIS IS THE TALE OF HOW
GENE THE HACKMAN FOUND
THE PROMISED LAND.

ONCE, GENE HAD BEEN ALPHA MALE,
TOUGHER AND TOUGH, LEADING HIS
PACK ON THE WALK-AROUND TO KEEP
THE COLD PLACE CLEAN.

TO KEEP THEM OUT
OF THE COLD PLACE
WHERE THE MASTERS
SLEPT, LONG TIME.

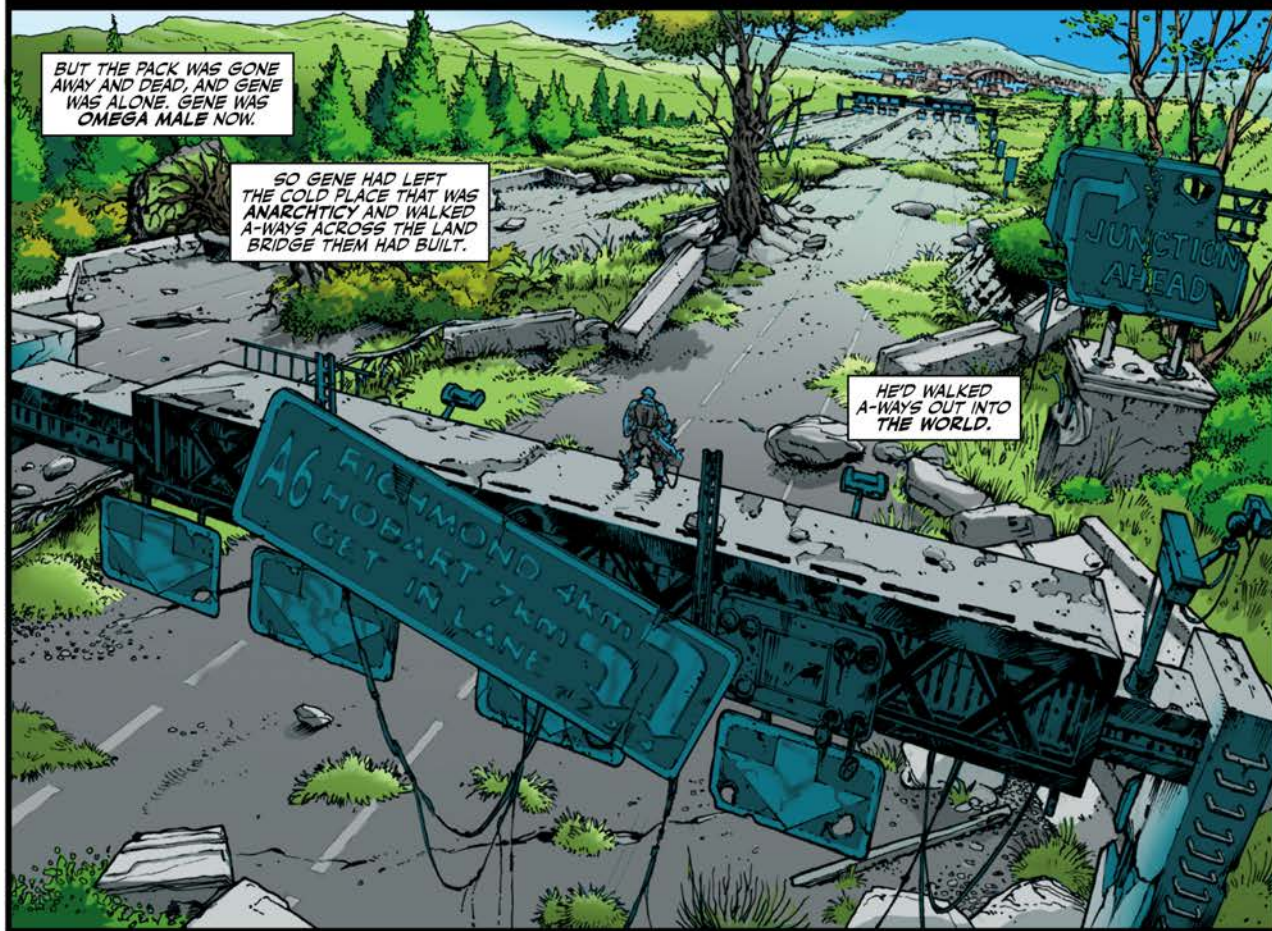
SNFF
SNFF



BUT THE PACK WAS GONE
AWAY AND DEAD, AND GENE
WAS ALONE. GENE WAS
OMEGA MALE NOW.

SO GENE HAD LEFT
THE COLD PLACE THAT WAS
ANARCHTICY AND WALKED
A-WAYS ACROSS THE LAND
BRIDGE THEM HAD BUILT.

HE'D WALKED
A-WAYS OUT INTO
THE WORLD.



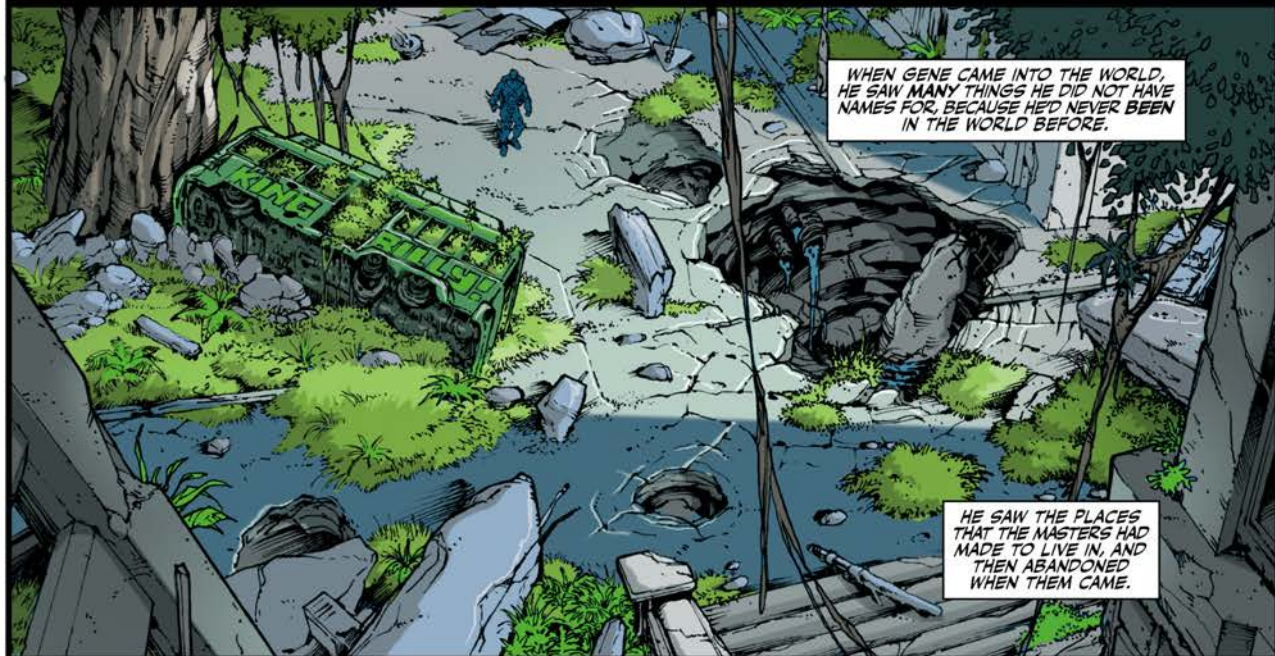
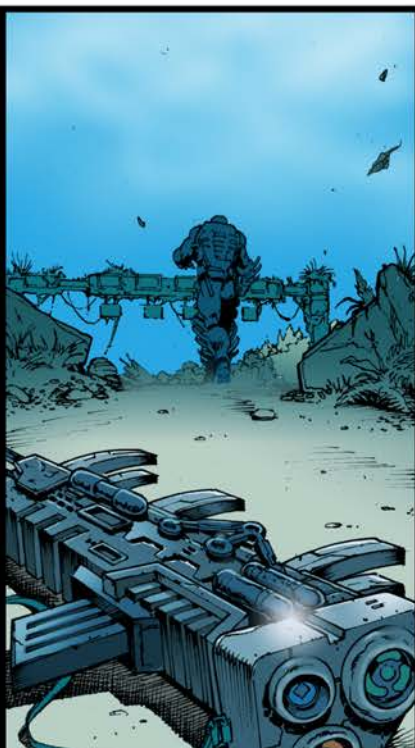


LONG TIME HE HAD WALKED,
AND MANY TIMES HE'D HAD TO
GET WHET AND SCRAP WITH
THEM THAT HE MET ON THE WAY.

BUT GENE WAS A
HACKMAN, TOUGHER
AND TOUGHER.



EVEN WHEN HIS
DEATH TOY BROKE
AND WAS NO GOOD
NO MORE.

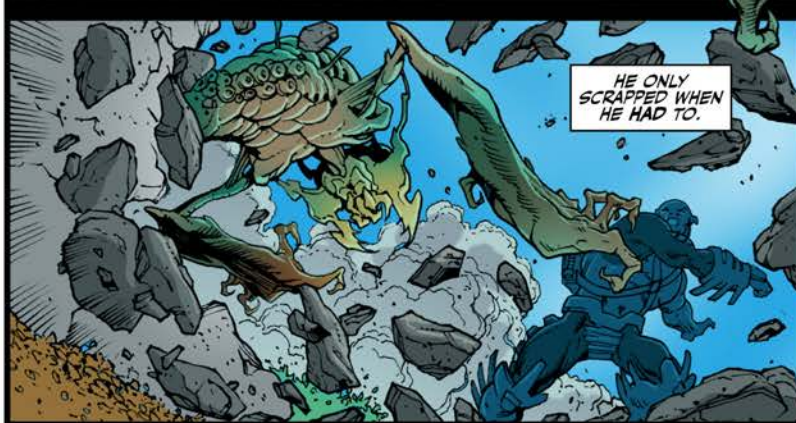


WHEN GENE CAME INTO THE WORLD,
HE SAW MANY THINGS HE DID NOT HAVE
NAMES FOR, BECAUSE HE'D NEVER BEEN
IN THE WORLD BEFORE.

HE SAW THE PLACES
THAT THE MASTERS HAD
MADE TO LIVE IN, AND
THEN ABANDONED
WHEN THEY CAME.



SWFT
SWFT

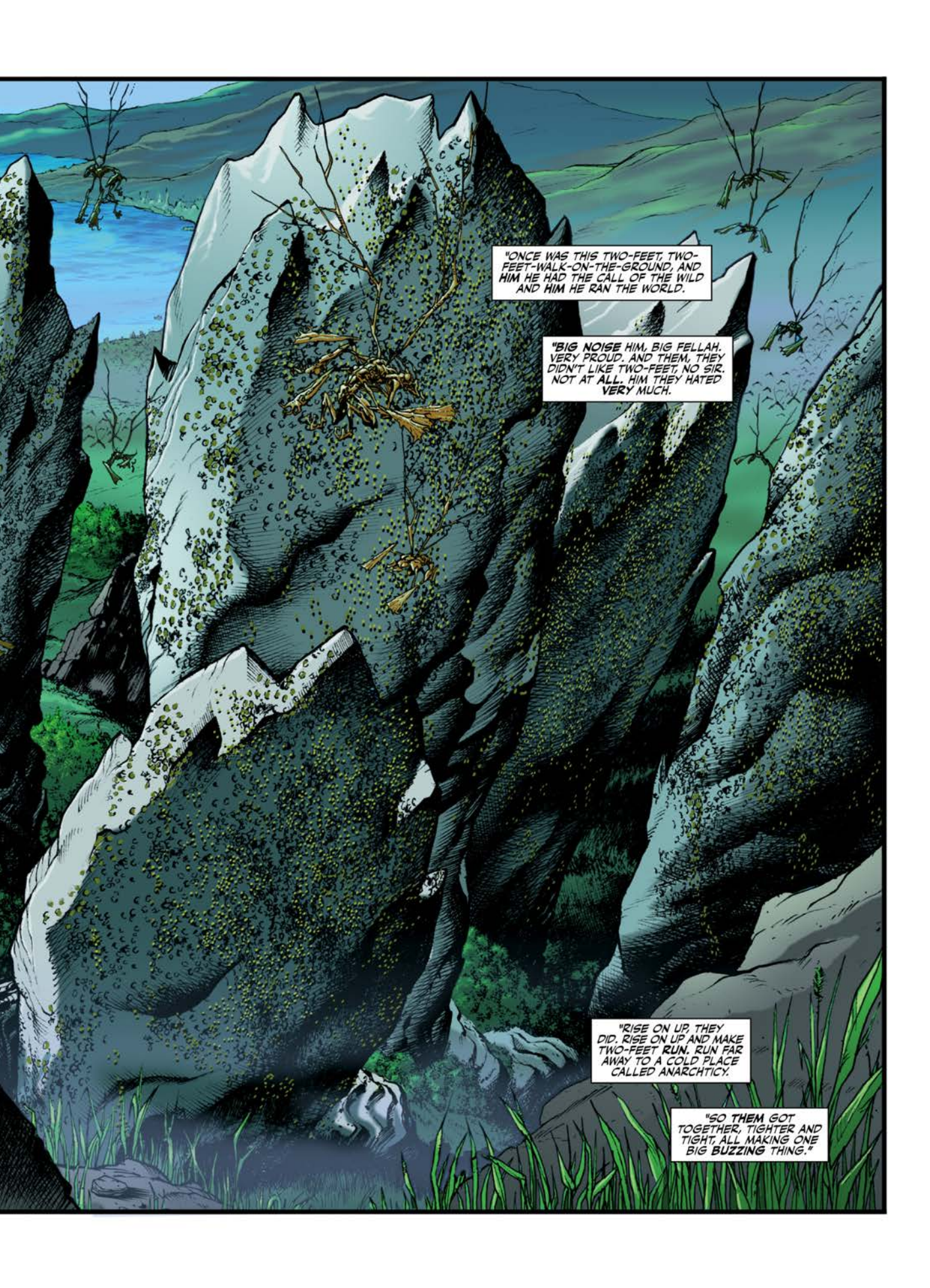




ONE SUN-COME-UP, NEAR
THE PLACE WHERE THE
MASTERS HAD ONCE LIVED,
GENE SAW THE NEST.

IT WAS A
NEST OF THEM.

IT MADE GENE REMEMBER
THE TALE OLD MAN HAD USED
TO TELL. THE TALE WAS CALLED
"TWO-FEET-WALK-ON-THE-
GROUND". IT WENT--



"ONCE WAS THIS TWO-FEET, TWO-
FEET-WALK-ON-THE-GROUND, AND
HIM HE HAD THE CALL OF THE WILD
AND HIM HE RAN THE WORLD."

"BIG NOISE HIM, BIG FELLAH.
VERY PROUD. AND THEM, THEY
DIDN'T LIKE TWO-FEET, NO SIR.
NOT AT ALL, HIM THEY HATED
VERY MUCH."

"RISE ON UP, THEY
DID. RISE ON UP AND MAKE
TWO-FEET RUN. RUN FAR
AWAY TO A COLD PLACE
CALLED ANARCHTICY."

"SO THEM GOT
TOGETHER, TIGHTER AND
TIGHT, ALL MAKING ONE
BIG BUZZING THING."

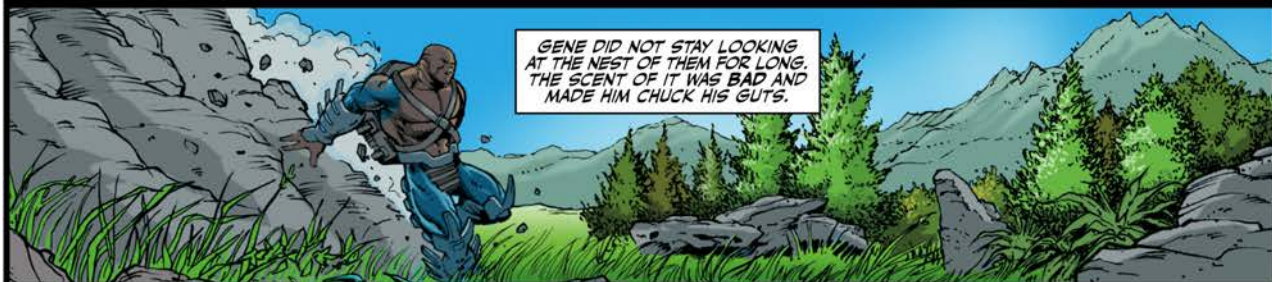
THINKING OF THE TALE
MADE GENE HAPPY AND SAD,
ALL TOGETHER. "EVERY
DOG HAS A TALE," OLD
MAN USED TO SAY.

GENE MISSED OLD
MAN. OLD MAN HAD HIS
MUSCLES IN HIS HEAD.

OLD MAN HAD GONE TO A
FARM IN THE COUNTRY. GENE
HOPED TO FIND THE FARM
ONE DAY AND LIVE THERE
WITH OLD MAN.

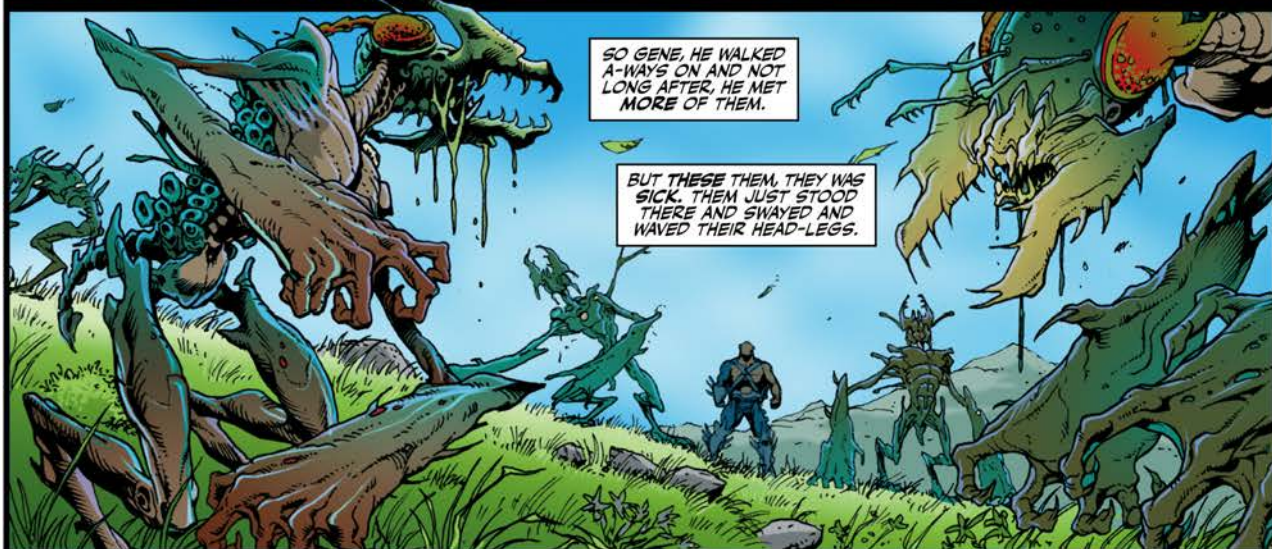


GENE DID NOT STAY LOOKING
AT THE NEST OF THEM FOR LONG.
THE SCENT OF IT WAS BAD AND
MADE HIM CHUCK HIS GUTS.



SO GENE, HE WALKED
A-WAYS ON AND NOT
LONG AFTER, HE MET
MORE OF THEM.

BUT THESE THEM, THEY WAS
SICK. THEM JUST STOOD
THERE AND SWAYED AND
WAVED THEIR HEAD-LEGS.

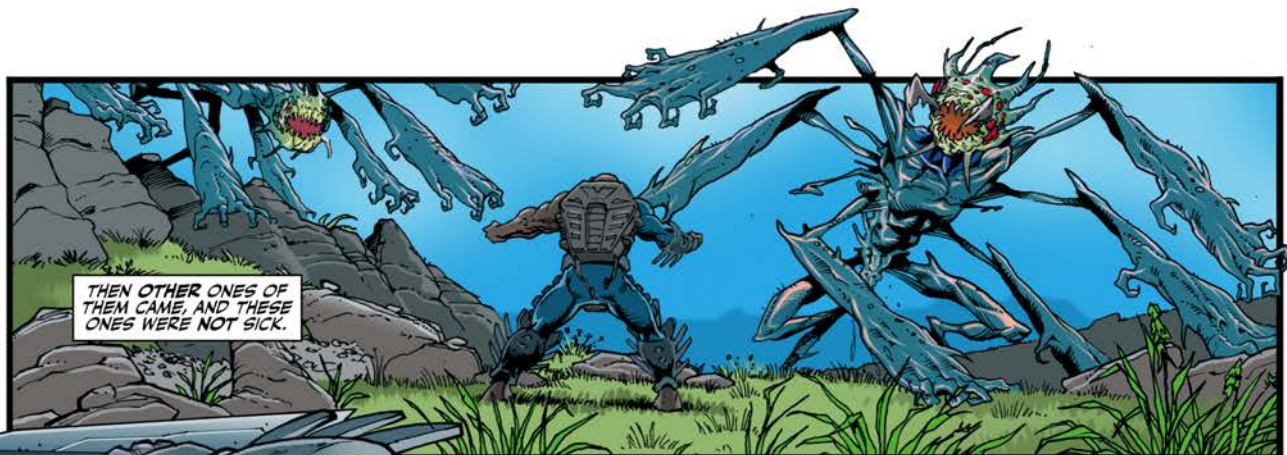


GENE WALKED A-WAYS
RIGHT THROUGH THEM
AND THEM DIDN'T CARE.



GENE SAW THERE WERE
THINGS LIVING ON THEM,
LIKE TICKS ON FURRY HIDE.
THE TICK THINGS WERE
MAKING THEM SICK.





THEN OTHER ONES OF
THEM CAME, AND THESE
ONES WERE NOT SICK.



AND GENE HAD
TO SCRAP.

GET
WHET.

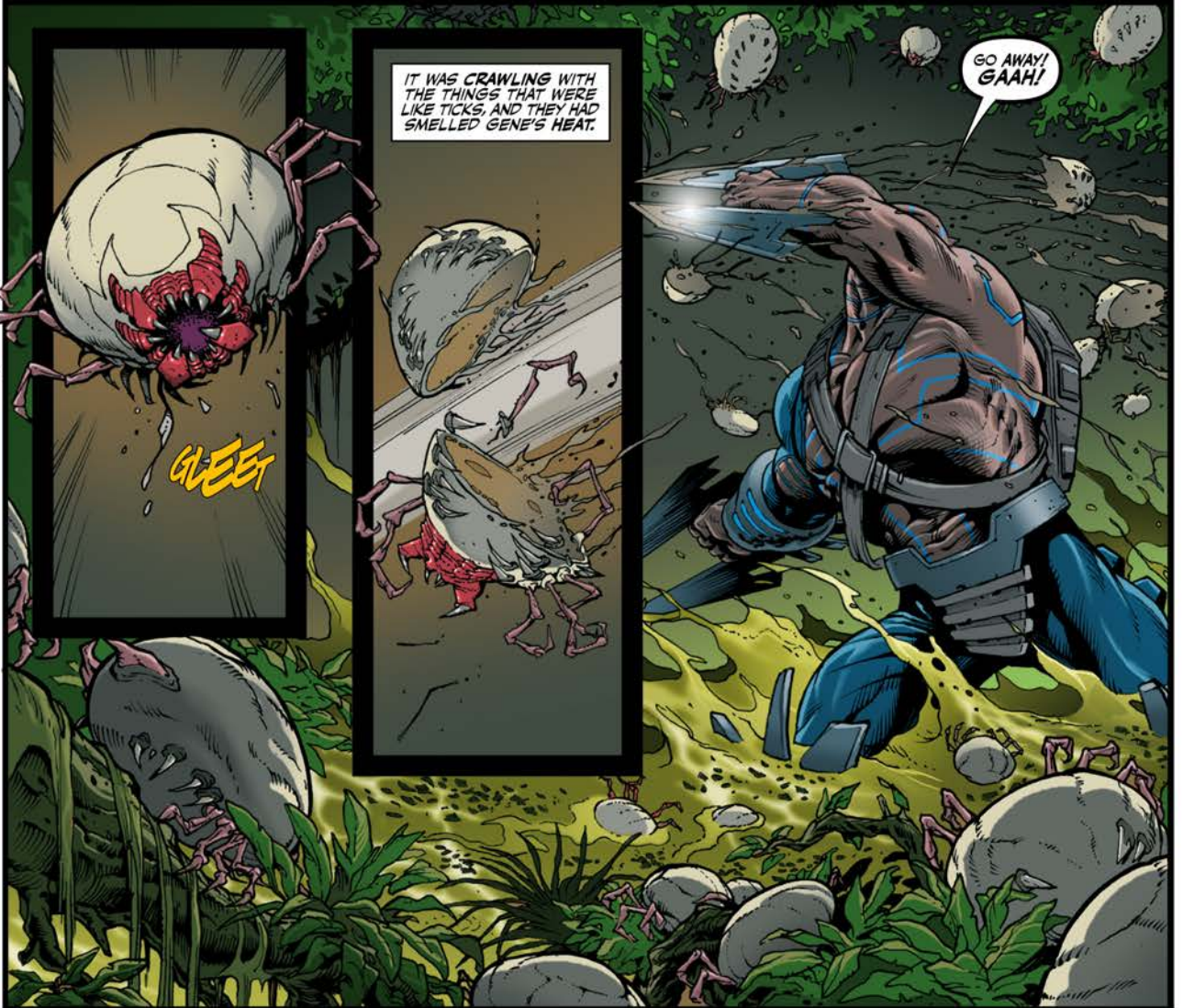


GRAAAH!



NHH!









YAAAAHHH!



GRAAAARHH!



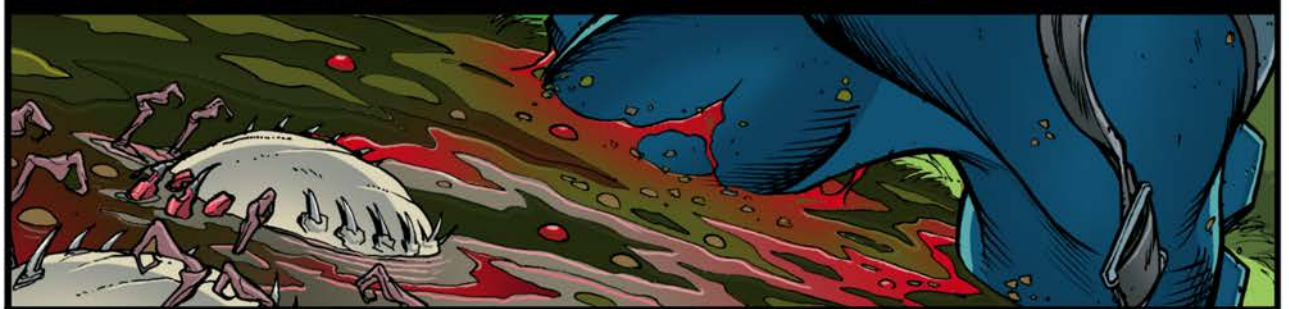
THE TICK THINGS BIT GENE,
AND HE HAD TO PULL THEM
OUT OF HIS HIDE.

THEY HURT.



GENE KEPT MOVING
UNTIL HE SMELLED
SUNLIGHT AGAIN.

GENE GOT OUT OF THE
WET-STINK PLACE, AND
GOT THE THINGS OUT
OF HIS BODY.



BUT GENE HAD TO REST.
HE FELT THE BURN OF
DIRT IN HIS VEINS--

--THE SPIT OF THE TICK
THINGS, WHERE THEY BIT
HIM, MINGLING WITH HIS
BLOOD.

HE FELT THE
FEVER ON HIM,
AND HE LET HIS
BODY FIGHT IT.

NNHHH...





GAAAAHHH!



WHEN GENE WOKE WITH THE NEXT SUN, HIS FEVER HAD BROKE AND GONE.

THE MEMORY OF THE FEVER-DREAM HAD NOT.



BUT THERE WERE OTHER THINGS TO CONCERN GENE...

GENE.

HUH?

GENE.



WHAT IS TALKING TO GENE?

WHO IS TALKING TO GENE?

SHOW GENE YOUR FACE!



BE CALM, GENE. YOU KNOW WHO WE ARE. YOU JUST HAVEN'T HEARD US IN A LONG WHILE.

YOU... YOU...



...YOU ARE THE URGINGS.

YES, GENE. AND WE'VE BEEN SILENT FOR TOO LONG.

WE HAVEN'T BEEN WITH YOU FOR A WHILE. WE HAVEN'T BEEN TELLING YOU WHAT YOU SHOULD DO.



GENE THOUGHT YOU WERE TIRED OF HIM. GENE THOUGHT YOU'D GIVEN UP ON HIM.

YOU STOP SPEAKING TO THE PACK. YOU STOPPED LEADING US.

WE KNOW. WE'RE SORRY, GENE. WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE ABANDONED YOU.

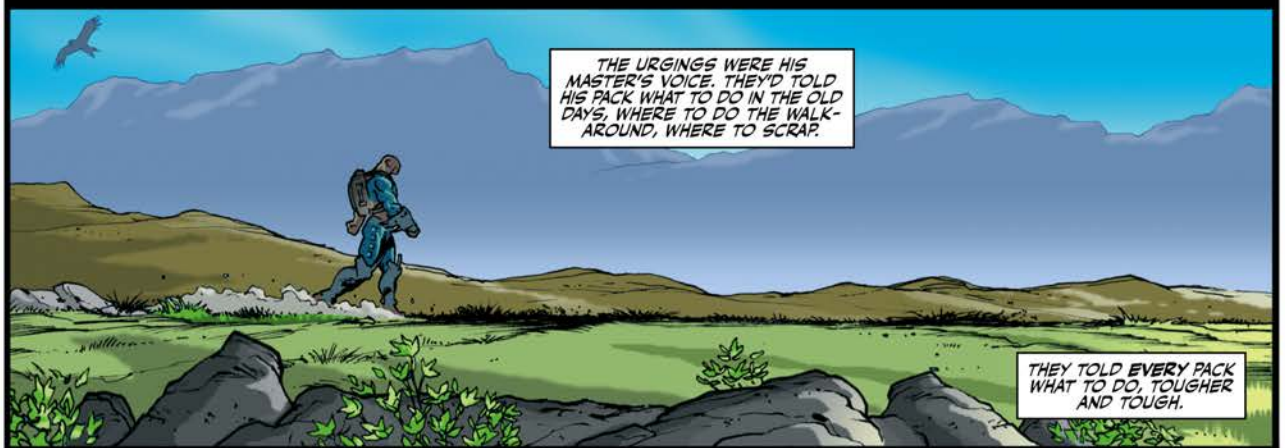


BUT WE'RE HERE NOW. HERE TO LEAD YOU, GENE.

HNH. WHERE TO?



GENE WAS WARY, BUT HE HAD LONG MISSED THE URGINGS AND THE CALM INSTRUCTIONS THEY GAVE, EVERY DAWN AND DUSK.



THE URGINGS WERE HIS MASTER'S VOICE. THEY'D TOLD HIS PACK WHAT TO DO IN THE OLD DAYS, WHERE TO DO THE WALK-AROUND, WHERE TO SCRAP.

THEY TOLD EVERY PACK WHAT TO DO, TOUGHER AND TOUGH.

NOW THEY WERE LEADING GENE AGAIN,
AND GIVING HIM PURPOSE, EVEN THOUGH
HE WAS ONLY OMEGA MALE. GENE WAS
GLAD IN HIS HEART.

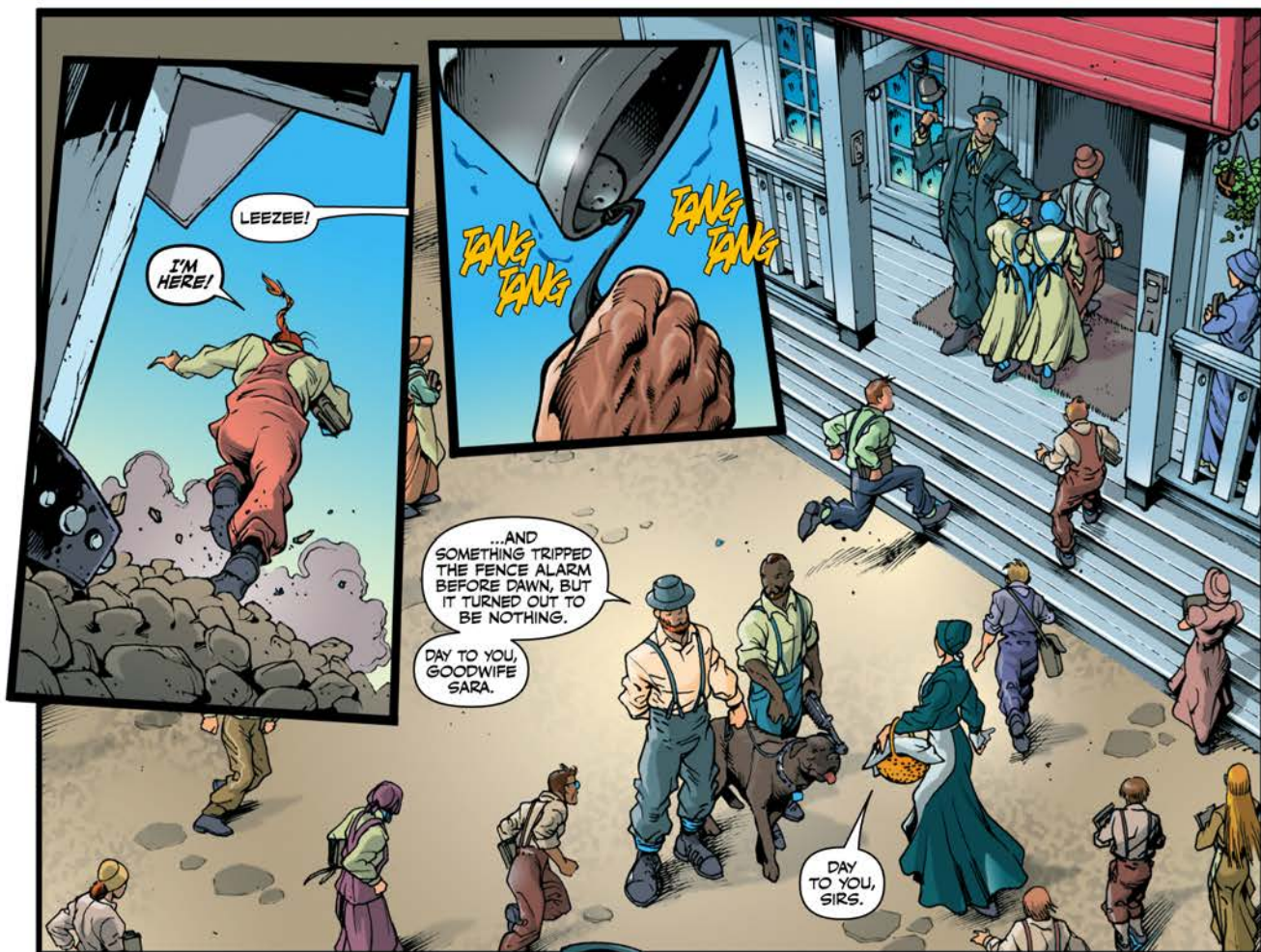
THE MASTERS HAD
NOT FORGOTTEN
GENE THE HACKMAN.

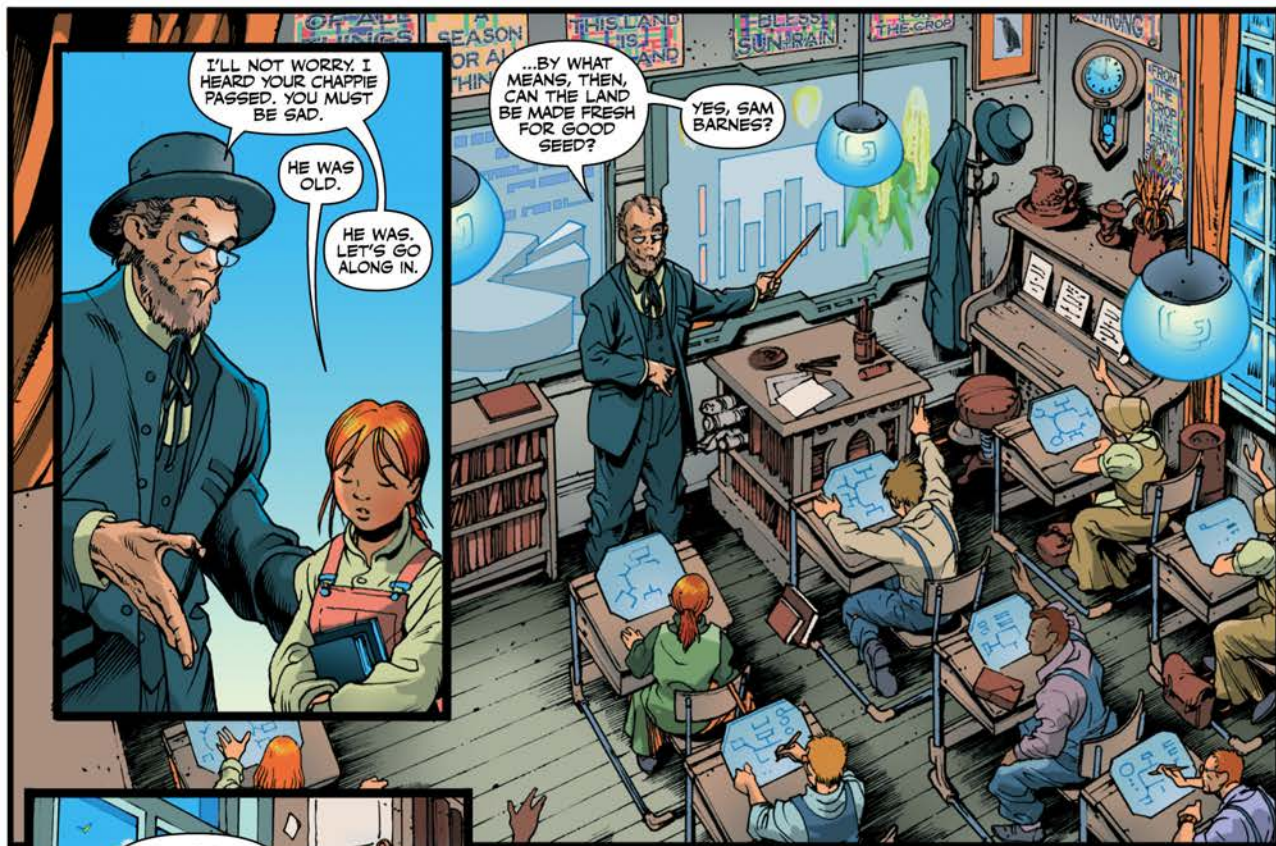


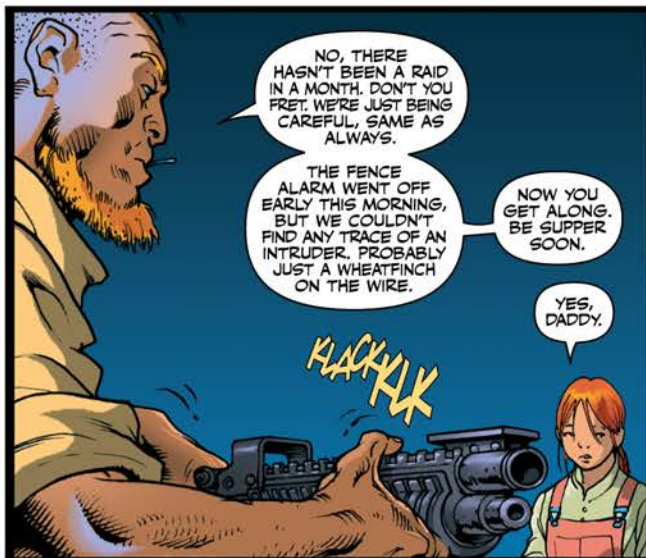
THE
PROMISED
LAND, GENE. THE
PROMISED
LAND.















LEEZEE?
LEEZEE GIRL?
WHAT'S KEEPING
YOU?

SUPPER'S
ON THE TABLE!
HAVEN'T YOU FED
THOSE DOGS
YET?



LEEZEE?
ARE YOU OUT
HERE?



OH,
PILLARS
OF FIRE!
LEEZEE!



IT'S ALL
RIGHT, DADDY.
HE WAS JUST
HUNGRY.



DADDY?
CAN
I KEEP
HIM?





IT WAS IN
THE WEST
BARN

I HEARD
SAY RALPH
SOWER'S CHILD
FOUND IT

WHAT CAN
IT MEAN?

BIG, THEY
SAID

HOW
DID IT GET
IN?

NEVER
KNOWN SUCH
A THING!



LEEZEE
SOWER
FOUND IT?

WHAT ARE
WE TO DO,
THOUGH?

WHO DOES
IT BELONG
TO?



HUSH,
NOW! HUSH
YOU ALL!

WE HAVE
A GUEST TO
WELCOME.

HEAVEN
HELP US!

IT'S A
MONSTER!

DON'T
LET YOUR
LEEZEE STAND
SO CLOSE TO
IT, RALPH!



HE
SAYS HIS NAME
IS GENE
HACKMAN.

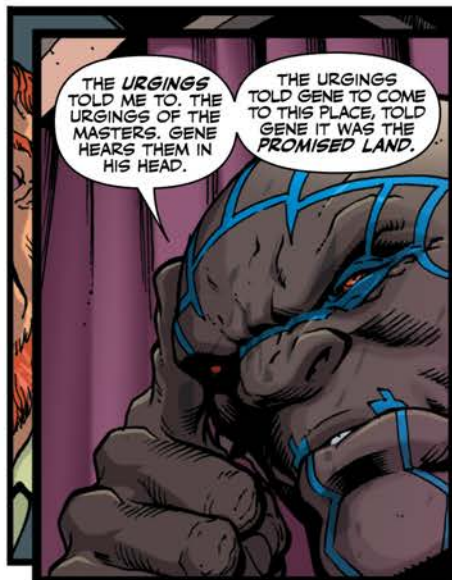
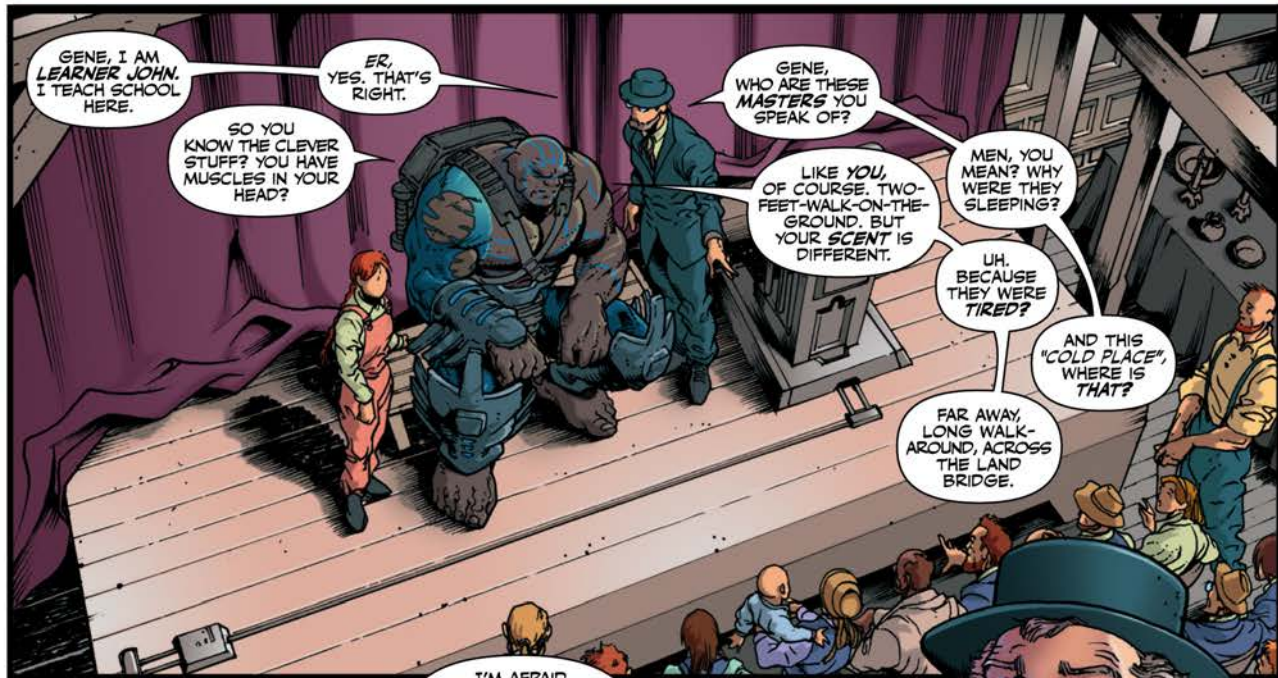
THAT'S NOT A
PROPER NAME! NO
ONE WOULD BE
CALLED THAT!

THAT'S
NOT A PROPER
PERSON!

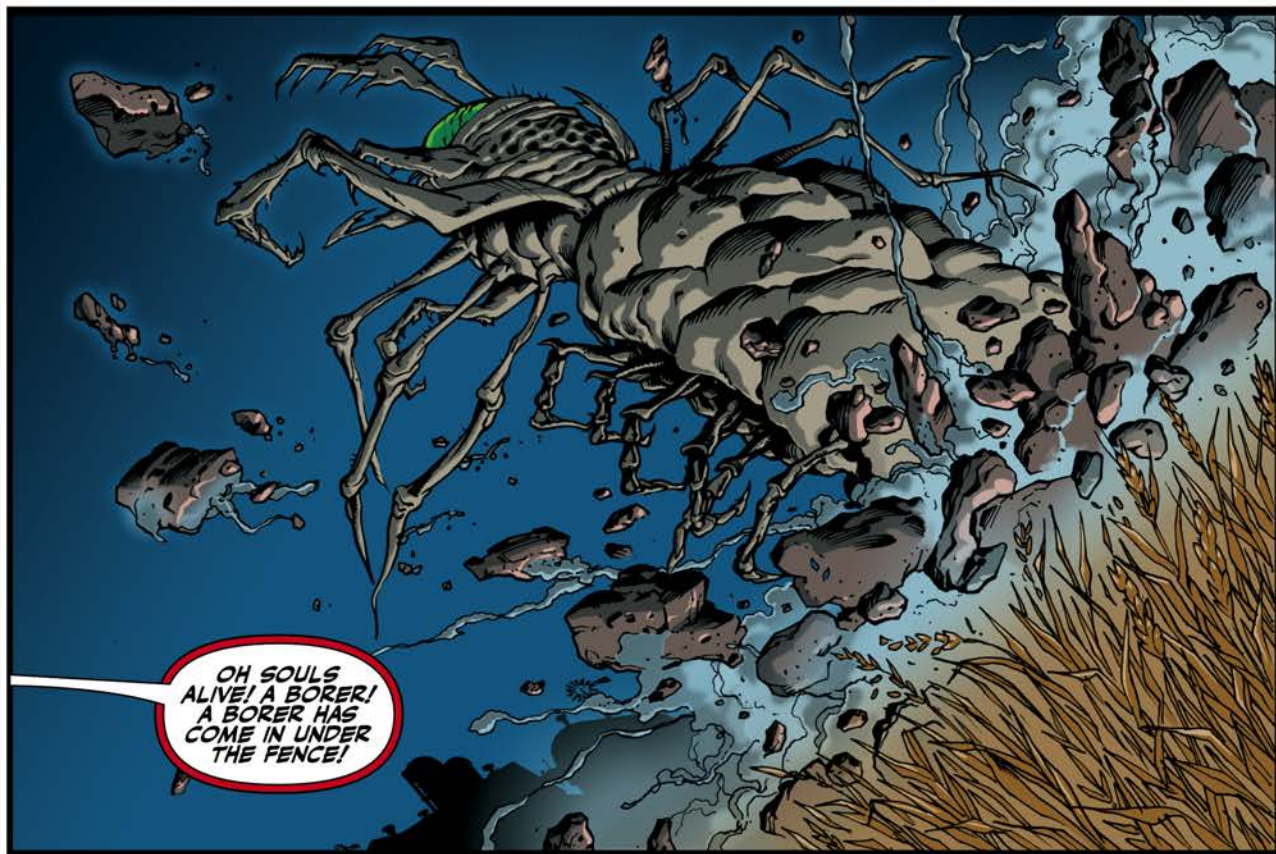
YOU SAYING
THAT THING CAN
TALK, RALPH
SOWER?



OF
COURSE GENE
CAN TALK. GENE
IS NOT SOME
ANIMAL.











LEEZEE SOWER
WAS RIGHT.



AND THAT WAS
THE SCRAPPING
OF THAT DAY.



GET FIRE.
BURN IT UP.
FILL IN THE
BURROW.

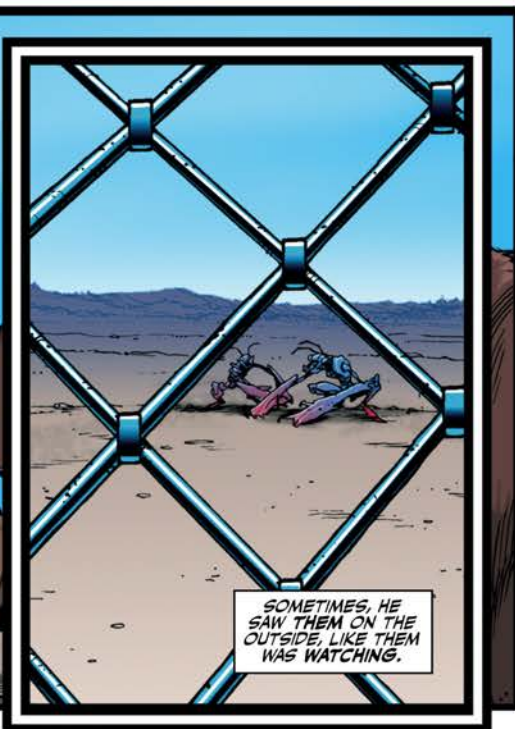
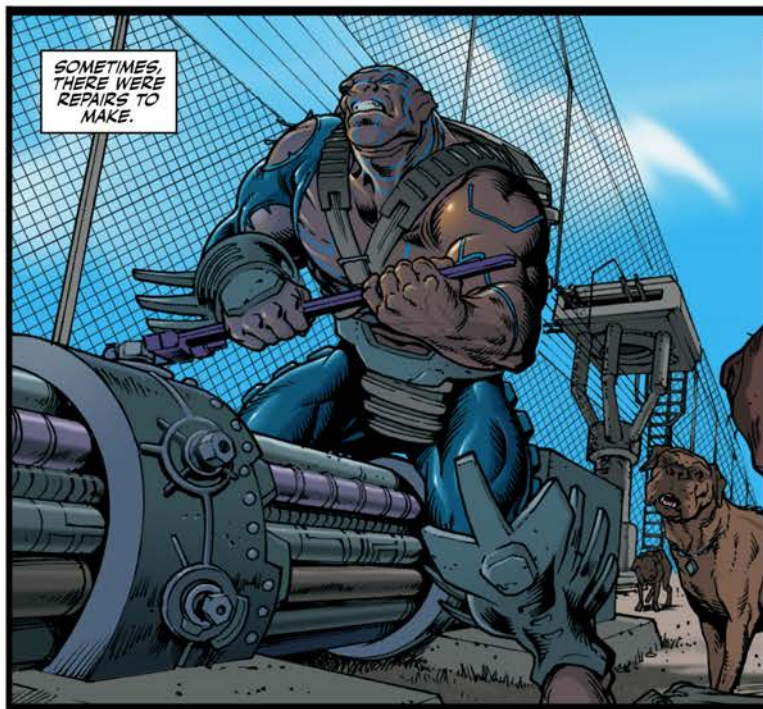
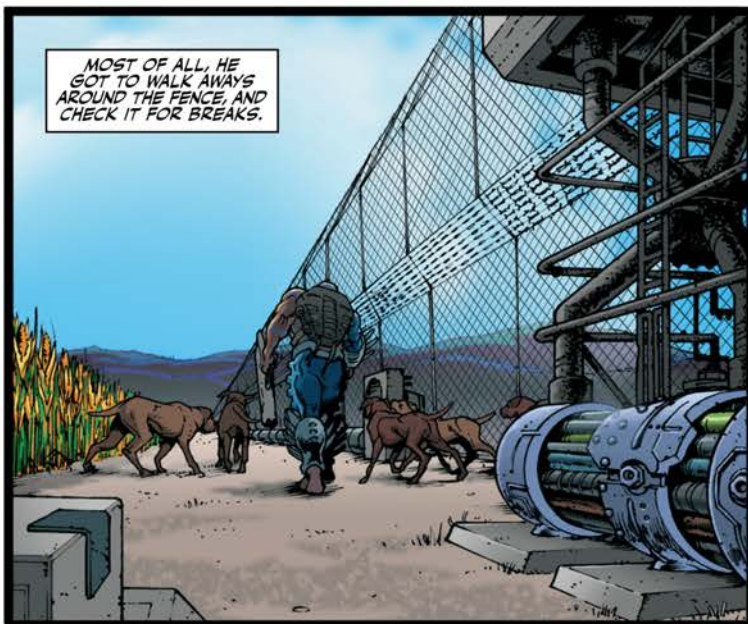


GENE! GENE! STAY
WITH US! STAY WITH
US AND GUARD
US!

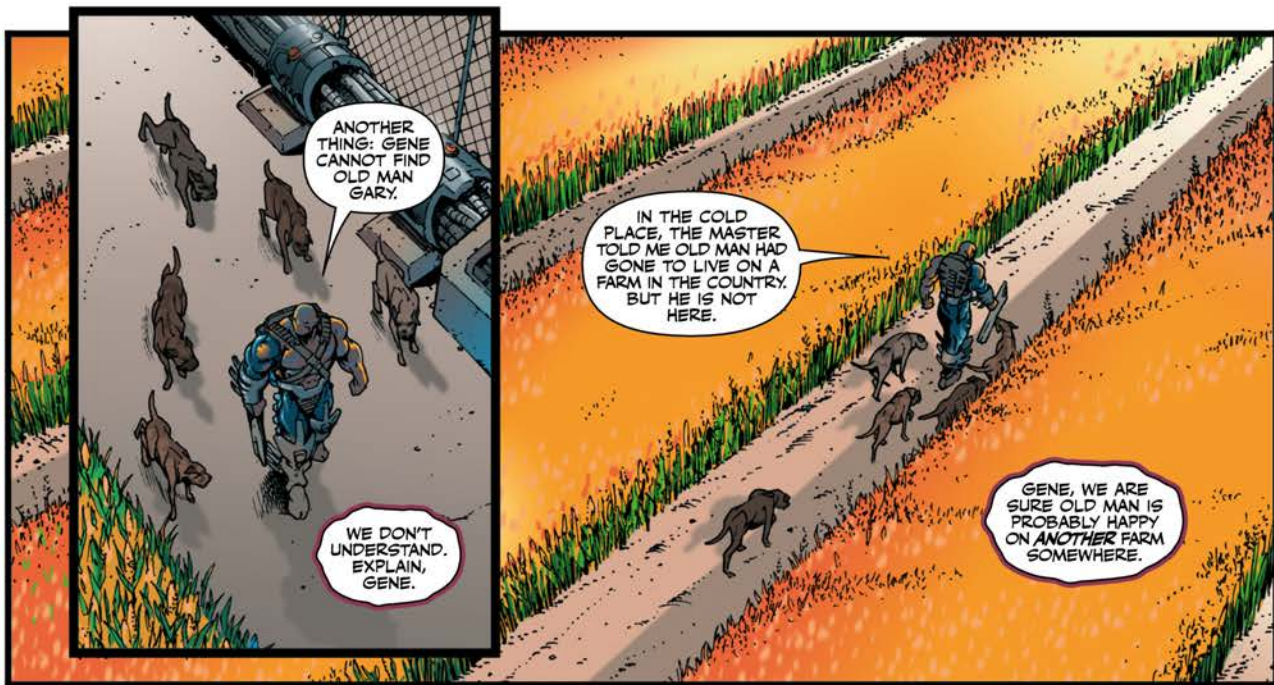
PLEASE?



YES.







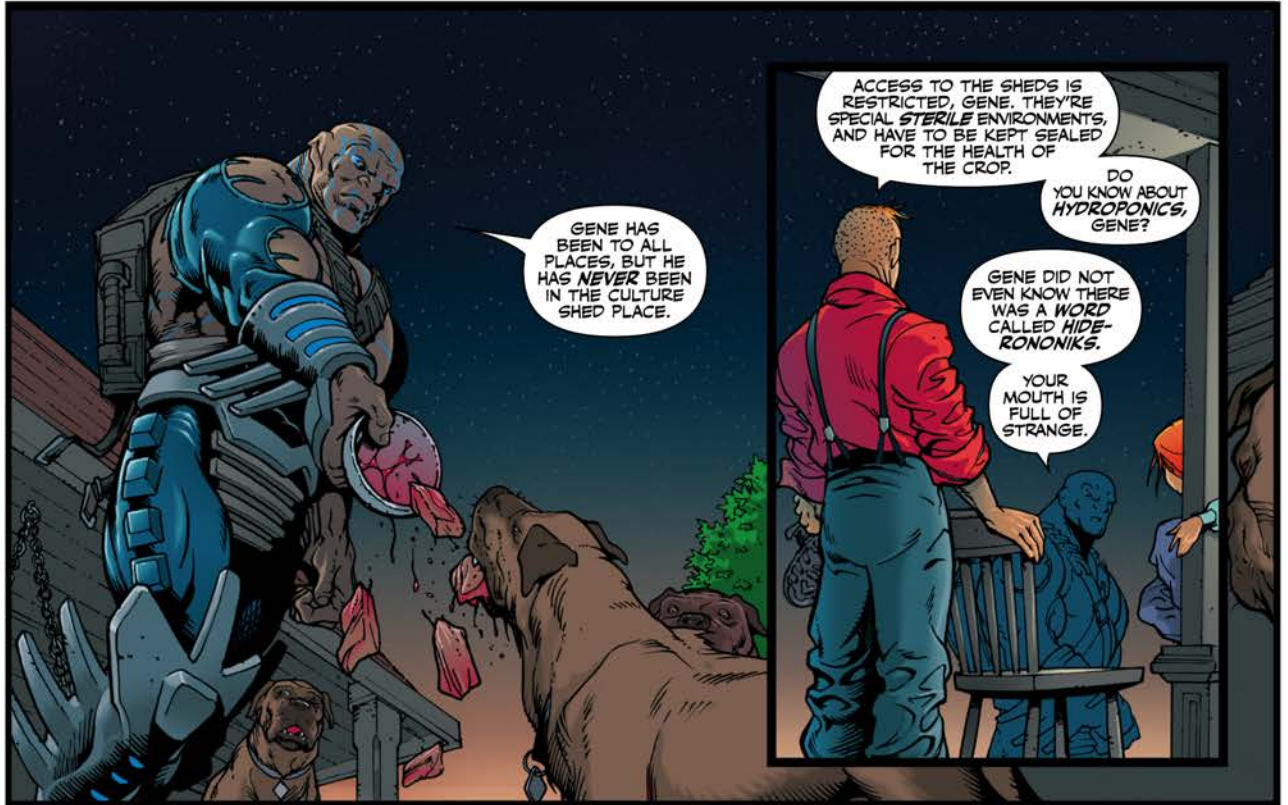


EVERY NIGHT, GENE FEEDS ON MEAT. THE DOGS TOO. THE FOLKS TOO.

BUT THERE ARE NO ANIMALS ON THE FARM.



OH, I THOUGHT YOU REALISED, GENE...OUR MEAT IS *SYNTHETIC*. WE GROW IT IN THE CULTURE SHEDS.



GENE HAS BEEN TO ALL PLACES, BUT HE HAS *NEVER* BEEN IN THE CULTURE SHED PLACE.

ACCESS TO THE SHEDS IS RESTRICTED, GENE. THEY'RE SPECIAL *STERILE* ENVIRONMENTS, AND HAVE TO BE KEPT SEALED FOR THE HEALTH OF THE CROP.

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT *HYDROPONICS*, GENE?

GENE DID NOT EVEN KNOW THERE WAS A WORD CALLED *HIDE-RONONIKS*.

YOUR MOUTH IS FULL OF STRANGE.

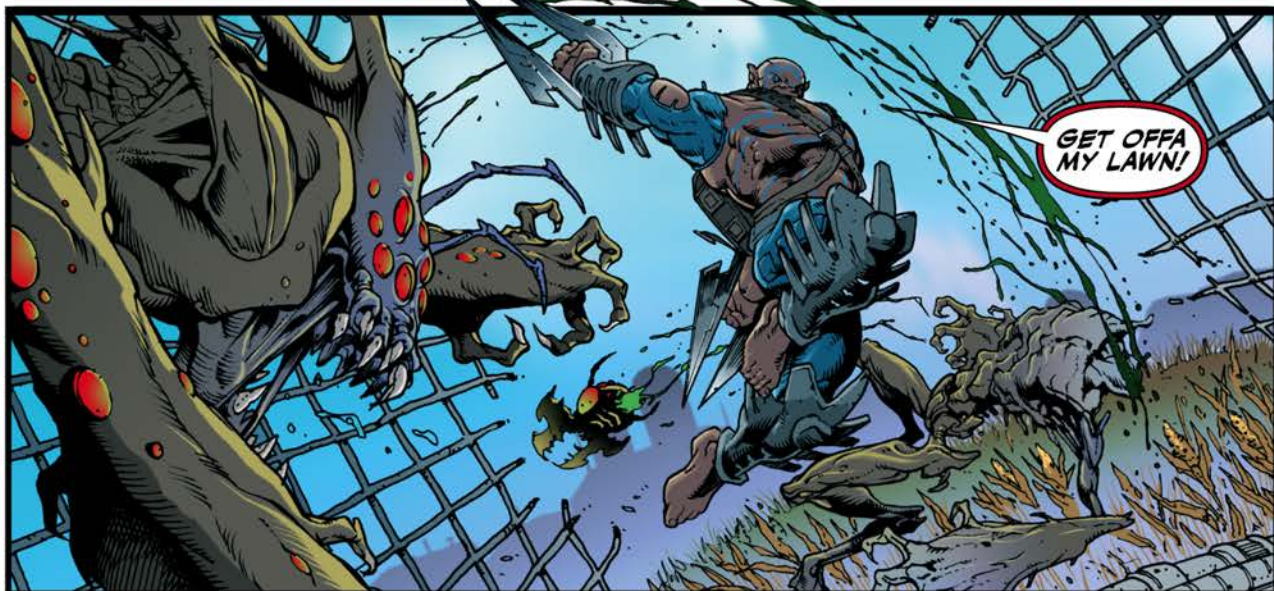


YOU NEED LEARNING LIKE ME, GENE! YOU SHOULD COME WITH ME TO THE *SCHOOLHOUSE*!

MAYBE GENE *WILL* DO THAT.

THAT WOULD BE *FUNNY*! CAN HE, DADDY?







GENE WAS THE FIRST
TO REACH THE FENCE.
THE FIRST TO MEET
THEM COMING IN.



HE HELD
THEM BACK--



--BUT THEM WERE TOO MANY.

QUICKLY!



HURRY!
BRING YOUR
DEATH TOYS!
THEM IS
HERE!

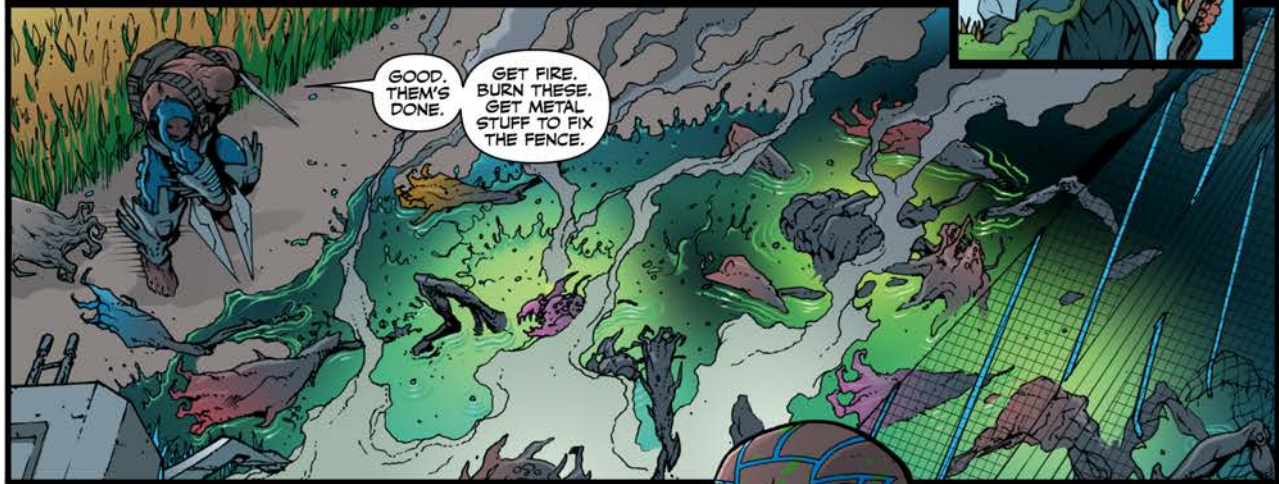


GENE! WE'RE
LOADED! GET
DOWN!



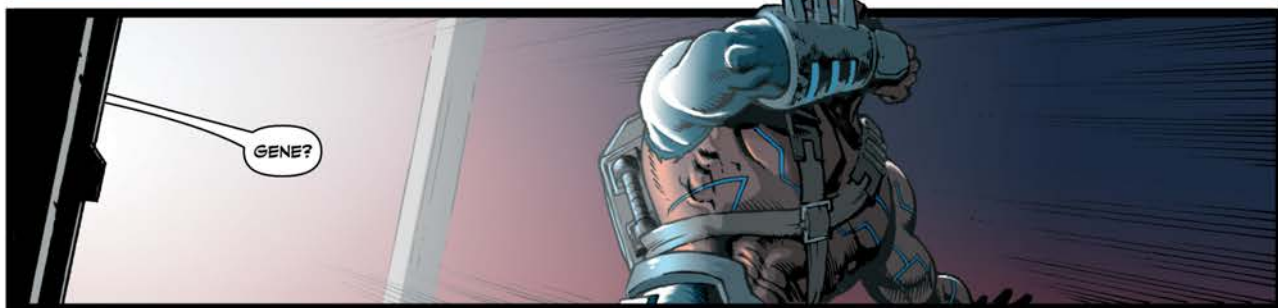
FIRE!

BRRRAAKKAAKKAACKKAAKKAACKK











WHY?

WHY IS THE
CROP TICK-
THINGS?

TELL
GENE *WHY* YOU
ARE GROWING
TICK-THINGS?



OH,
GENE.

THAT'S A QUESTION THAT WOULD NEVER
HAVE *NEEDED* AN ANSWER IF YOU HADN'T
COME POKING YOUR NOSE IN HERE.

YOU
WERE *TOLD* THE
CULTURE SHEDS
WERE FORBIDDEN,
GENE.



THAT DOESN'T
TELL GENE
WHY.

WHY,
RALPH SOWER? *WHY*,
LEARNER JOHN, WITH
YOUR HEAD FULL OF
MUSCLES?

YOU WOULDN'T
UNDERSTAND,
GENE.

NOW LET'S
JUST GO OUTSIDE
AND FORGET THIS
EV--



WHY?

PILLARS
OF FIRE!

WATCH
OUT!





IT IS
WRONG. DO
YOU NOT
SEE?

WE FEAR THAT'S SO,
GENE. THEY MAY WELL BE
RISING TO EXPUNGE
THIS CONCENTRATION
OF THEIR NATURAL
ENEMY.

IF THAT'S
SO, WE NEED
PROTECTION
MORE THAN
EVER.

THIS IS
WHY THEY ARE
GETTING BOLDER.
WHY THEY ARE
RAIDING MORE
AND MORE.

THEM ARE
BUILDING THEIR
STRENGTH TO
COME AND WIPE
THIS PLACE
OUT!



YOU WANT
GENE TO PROTECT
YOU? LET GENE BURN
THESE THINGS!
BURN THEM UP
GOOD!

BURN THEM
AND THEY
WILL LEAVE
YOU ALONE!



NO,
GENE.

YES! YOU
ARE MEANT TO
BE THE CLEVER
ONE, LEARNER
JOHN!

THE TICK-
THINGS ARE
EVIL! THEY ARE
AS BAD AS
THEM!

YOU SAID
YOURSELF, THESE
ARE THE EVIL
YOU SHUNT!



STOP IT,
GENE!

OUT OF GENE'S
WAY! GENE WILL
GET FIRE AND
BURN--

STOP
IT, GENE!
NOW!



DO NOT
TOUCH
GENE!

AAAAHHH!





BAD
DOG.



BAD DOG,
GENE.

LIFE WAS *GOOD*
HERE ON THE FARM,
BUT YOU HAD TO GO
AND *SPOIL* IT.



YOU WERE
WARNED. YOU
WERE *TOLD*. WE
TOLD YOU.

ONE *SIMPLE*
RULE, AND YOU
BROKE IT.



THAT'S
DISOBEDIENCE,
GENE.

NO...



GENE
HACKMAN,
BAD DOG.

NO! THEY
HAD *TICK-*
THINGS IN
THEM!

THEY WERE
NOT *MASTERS*
AT ALL!

LIFE WAS
GOOD, GENE.
ALL YOU HAD TO
DO WAS OBEY
THE RULES.



NOW
LOOK,
GENE...



SSHHING



GRRAAAGHH!



GENE.

GO AWAY.

GENE.



GO AWAY.

WHY, GENE? WHY DID YOU SPOIL EVERYTHING?

THE MASTERS WERE GOOD TO YOU.



THEY ARE NOT MASTERS!

THEY ARE TICK-THINGS BURIED IN MASTER-FLESH!



GNHH! GRRHHNN!

LIFE WAS GOOD, GENE. ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS OBEY THE RULES.



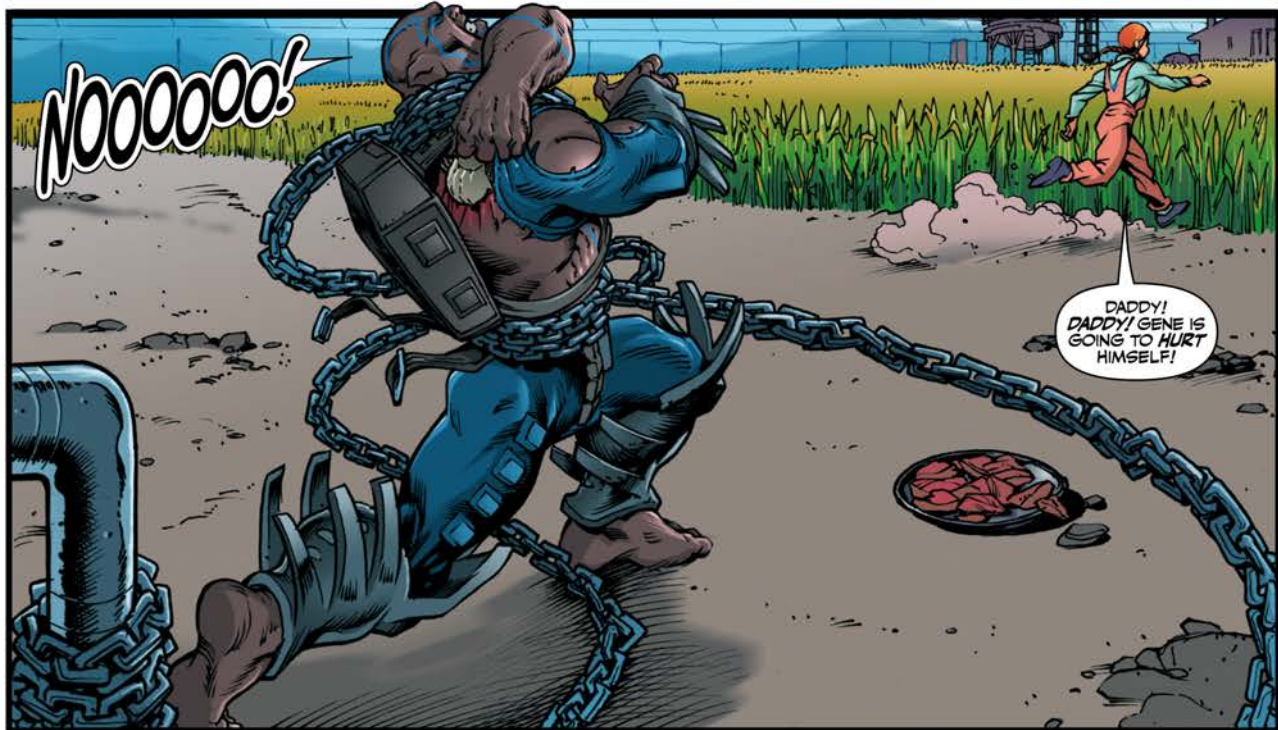
GENE NOT OBEY RULES OF TICK-THINGS!

WHY DID URGINGS LEAD GENE TO A PLACE FULL OF TICK-THINGS?

WHY?













GENE THOUGHT THE PAIN HAD
KILLED HIM. TOTAL PAIN WAS
THE LAST THING HE KNEW.

BUT IT HADN'T.



WHEN HE CAME ROUND, IT
WAS NIGHT. THE PAIN IN HIS BACK,
WHERE HE'D TORN THE TICK-THING
OUT, WAS A THREADY ACHE.

AND THE URGINGS
WERE NO LONGER
TALKING TO HIM.



THE URGINGS HADN'T BEEN
URGINGS. THEY HAD BEEN
THE TICK-THING TALKING
INSIDE HIS SKIN.

HE WAS GLAD IT WAS GONE,
BUT HE FELT STRANGELY
ALONE NOW IT WAS QUIET.

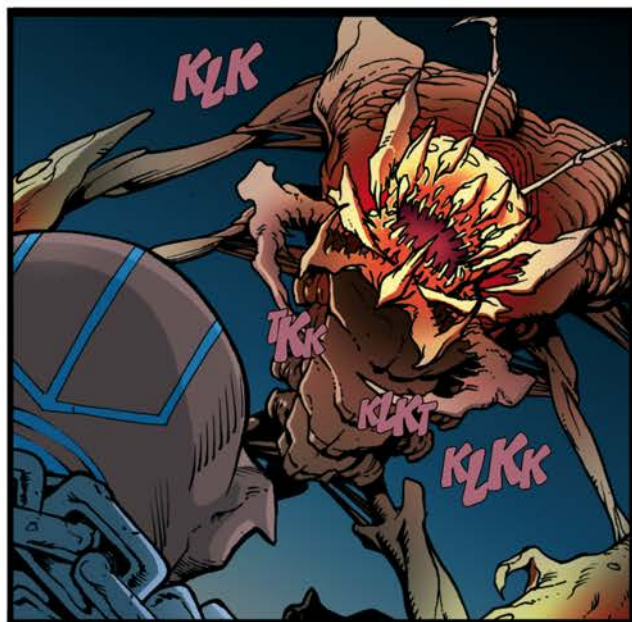


IT TURNED OUT HE
WASN'T ALONE AT ALL.



THEM HAD GOT THROUGH THE FENCE.

THEM HAD GOT INSIDE.



GO ON, THEN. KILL GENE. GENE IS WAITING. GENE CANNOT FIGHT.

KILL GENE LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO.



GENE COULD SMELL FIRE. HE COULD HEAR GUNFIRE AND SCREAMS.

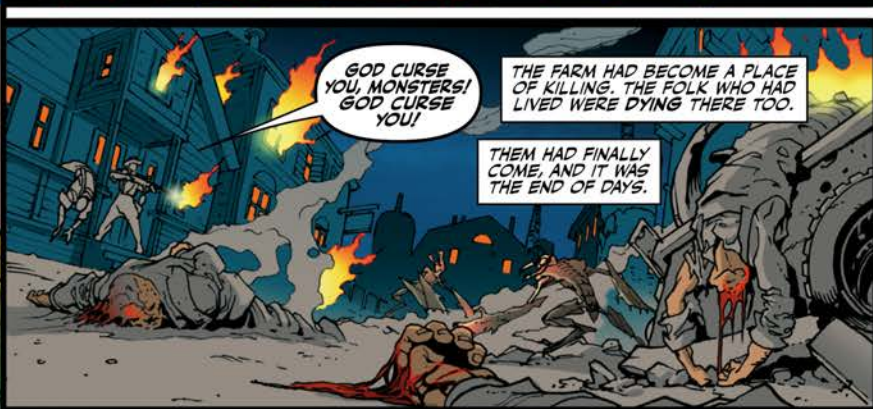
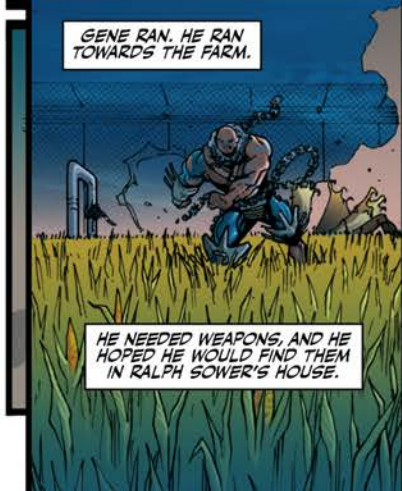
THE FARM AND THEM WERE SCRAPPING BITTERLY, AND GENE KNEW WHO WOULD WIN.



THE THEM AROUND HIM MOVED OFF TO JOIN THE SLAUGHTER.

ONE REMAINED. GENE KNEW IT HAD BEEN LEFT TO KILL HIM. AND KILL HIM SLOWLY BECAUSE HE WAS A HATED AUX.





AND IN ONE CORNER
OF THE DYING FARM...

**RAFF
RAFF**



No!

YOU'RE
HURTING MY
DOGS! I
HATE YOU!

THE
DOGS ARE MY
FRIENDS! GO
AWAY!

WHERE IS MY
DADDY? WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE TO
MY DADDY?



PLEASE,
GO AWAY,
HORRIBLE
THINGS!
I WANT MY
DADDY!

LEEZEE, HIDE
YOURSELF.



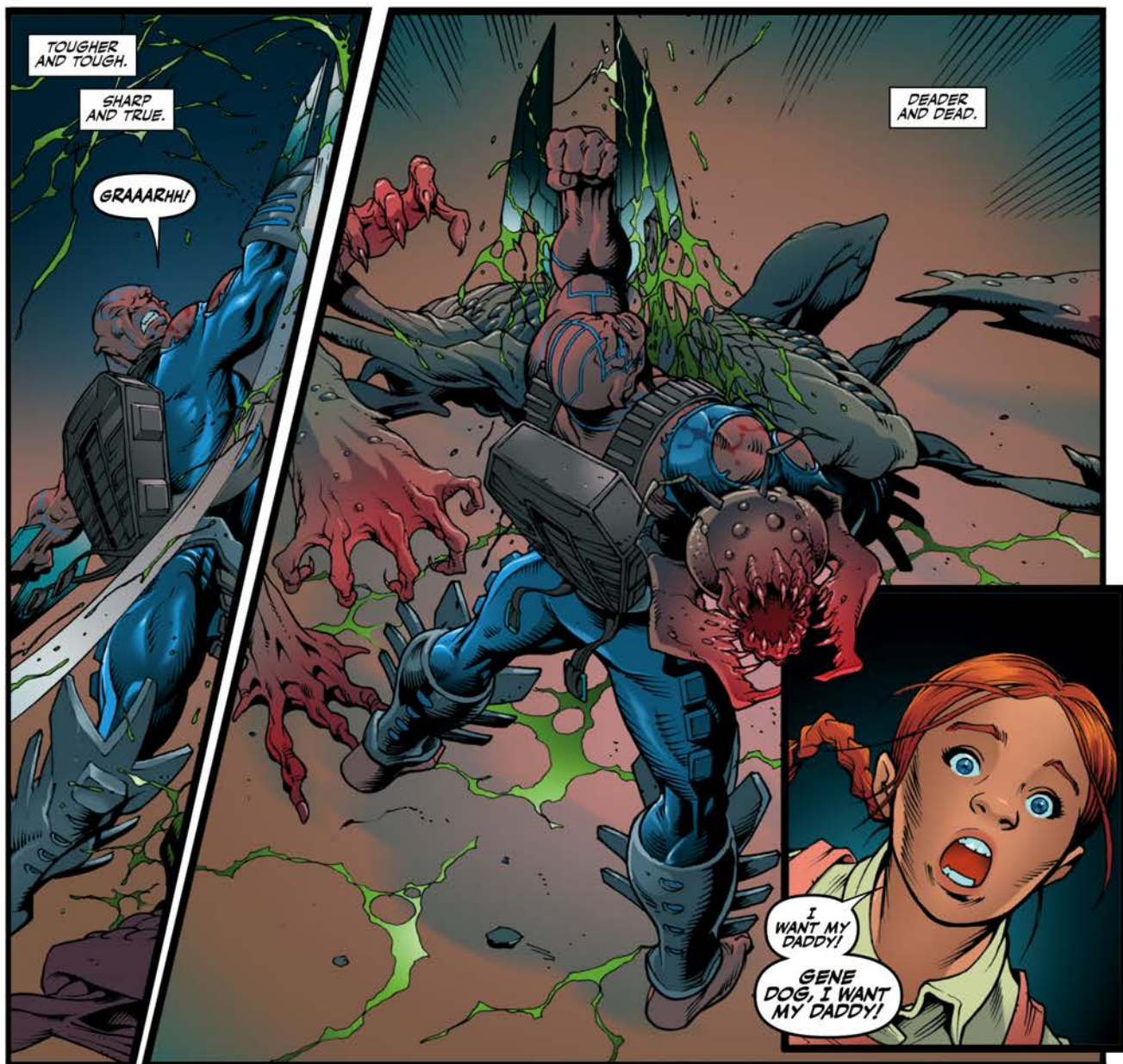
WHO
IS THAT
THERE?

OH!

HIDE
YOURSELF.
NOW.

**GET
WHET!**







GENE WAS TOO
SCRAP-HAPPY TO
HEED LEEZEE
SOWER'S CRIES.



BESIDES, GENE WAS
PRETTY SURE THE NIGHT
HAD ALREADY SEEN RALPH
SOWER'S END...



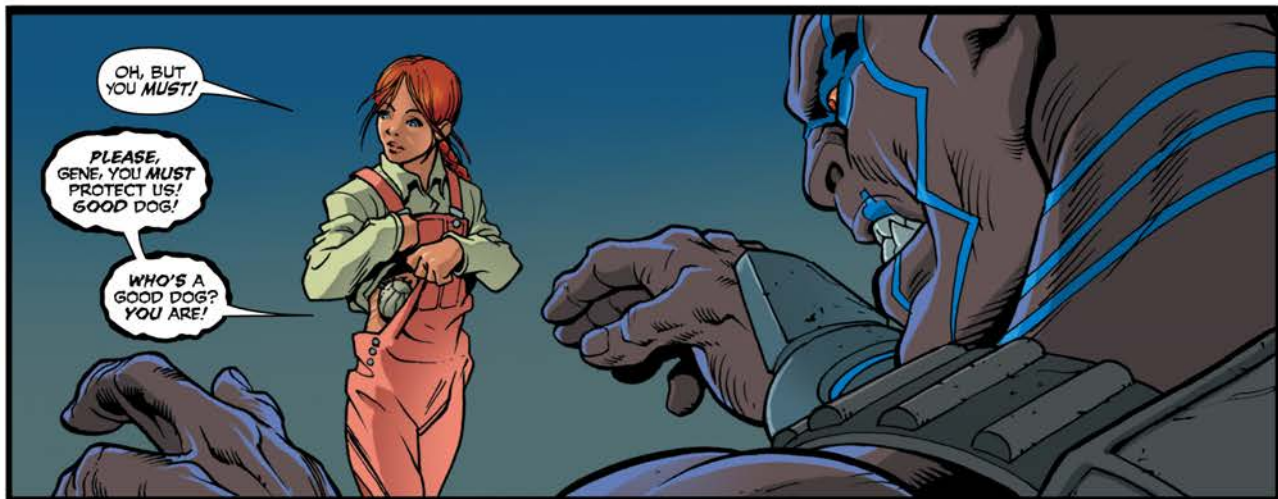
...GONE TO
THEM'S BITE.



WHO'S
NEXT?











THE SUN CAME UP, AND
SAW WHAT THE NIGHT
HAD DONE.

THE FARM WAS
ALL GONE.



GENE AND LEEZEE HID
AWAY FROM THE DAY AND
STAYED OUT OF SIGHT.

TIRED THEY WERE, AND
SCARED, BUT THEY DID
NOT DARE REST.



CAN WE
GO BACK,
GENE?



NOT
ANY MORE,
LEEZEE.

THERE
IS NO *BACK*
TO GO BACK
TO.



THEN
WHERE
WILL WE
GO?



WE WILL
GO WALK-
AROUND.

THEM HAD OVERRUN THE FARM, AND BROUGHT IT TO ITS END.

NOW THEY SPREAD OUT AND SEARCHED THE LAND, HUNTING FOR ANY THAT MIGHT HAVE GOT AWAY.



GENE AND LEEZEE STAYED IN THEIR HIDING PLACE FOR AS LONG AS IT TOOK THE SUN TO WALK AROUND THE SKY.



AND WHEN THE NIGHT CAME DOWN AGAIN, THEY RAN AWAY INTO IT.



I WANT MY DADDY...

GENE IS ALL YOU GOT LEFT, LEEZEE SOWER.



I DON'T WANT YOU! I WANT MY DADDY!
I WANT TO GO BACK! NOW!



THAT ISN'T LEEZEE TALKING, IS IT?

YOU'RE USING HER VOICE, BUT YOU AREN'T HER.



PLEASE, GENE. TAKE ME BACK.

I WANT TO BE WITH THE OTHERS.

NO OTHERS LEFT. ALL BURNED AWAY AND GONE.

YOU SHOULD BE GONE TOO.



NO, GENE!

NO, IT HURTS!

BETTER THIS WAY.



GENE PULLED THE TICK-THING OUT OF HIMSELF. HE'LL DO THE SAME THING FOR LEEZEE SOWER, AND SHE'LL BE BETTER.



YOUR MOUTH IS FULL OF WRONG, GENE HACKMAN.

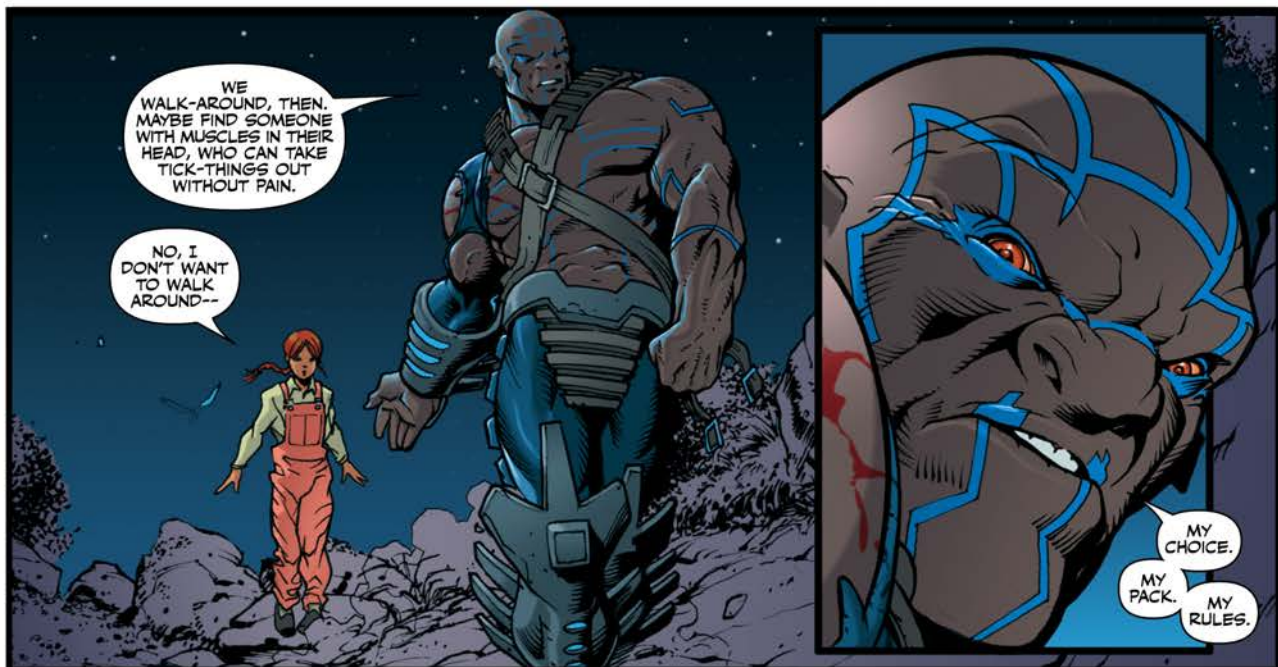
YOU ARE AN **AUX**, TOUGHER AND TOUGHER, AND THE PAIN OF SEPARATION ALMOST KILLED YOU.

THIS LITTLE GIRL WOULD NOT SURVIVE.



MAYBE.

GENE DOES NOT WANT TO HURT LEEZEE SOWER.



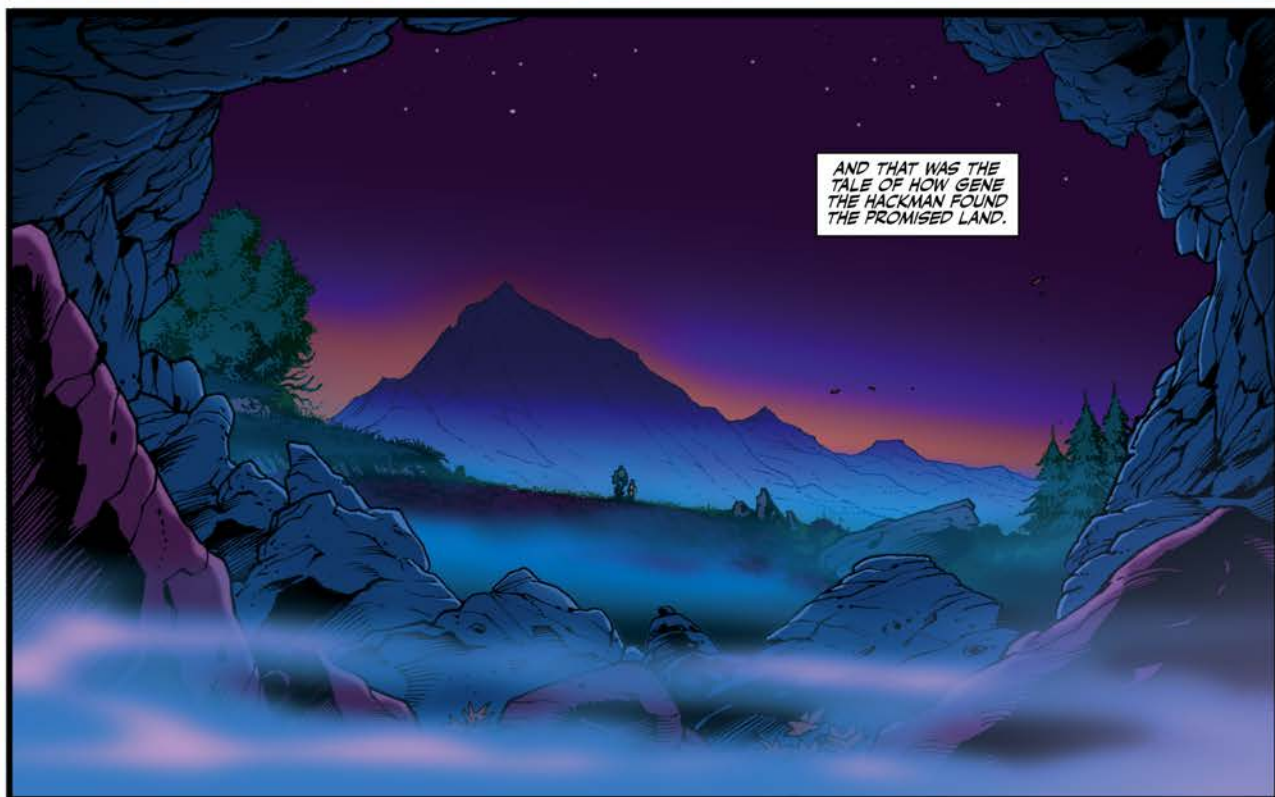
WE WALK-AROUND, THEN. MAYBE FIND SOMEONE WITH MUSCLES IN THEIR HEAD, WHO CAN TAKE TICK-THINGS OUT WITHOUT PAIN.

NO, I DON'T WANT TO WALK AROUND--

MY CHOICE.

MY PACK. MY RULES.





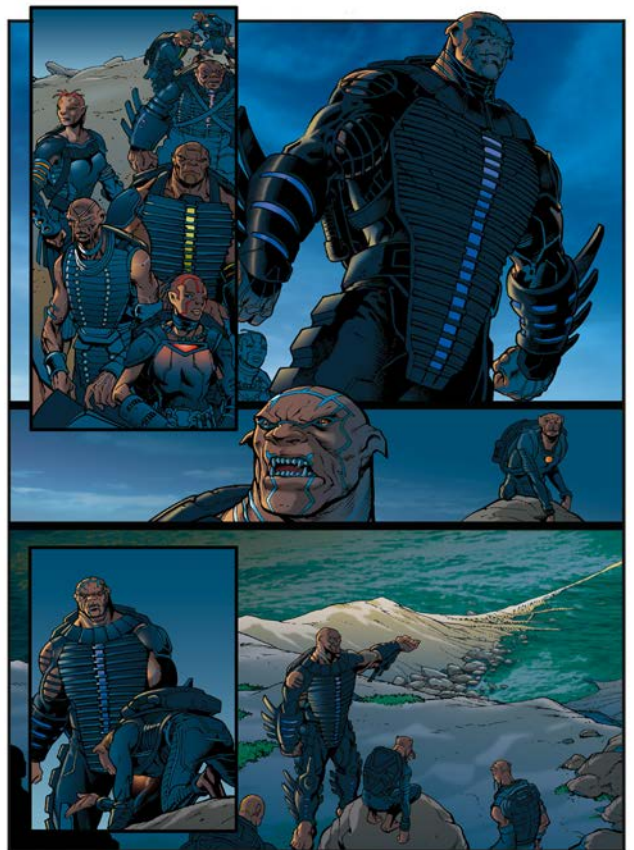
COVER GALLERY & SKETCHES







Various pencils from Episode 1



The creative process: Episode 1 page 2, from rough layout to pencils, inks and colour



The creative process: Episode 1 page 3, from rough layout to pencils, inks and colour

GENE



Seriously messed up face.
Difficult to tell where scars
end and seams begin.

Skin seams look like warpaint so I've tried for a
Native American look to the costume designs,
whilst incorporating Dan's ideas. The armour
will be more damaged in the actual strip.



Weapons will also be based on a
Native American Tomahawk/spear
design. The blades are stored
or fold into the shield-like
structure on the pack's backs.

LOUY



THEM

The insect-like THEM
have faces filled with razor sharp blades.
They are the insect equivalent to
a food blender.
Using their multi-bladed jaws to liquidize
anything in their path.



DAN ABNETT

Dan Abnett is the co-creator of *2000 AD* series *Atavar*, *Badlands*, *Sancho Panzer* and *Sinister Dexter*. He has also written *Black Light*, *Downlode Tales*, *Durham Red*, *Flesh*, *Future Shocks*, *Judge Dredd*, *Pulp Sci-Fi*, *Roadkill*, *Rogue Trooper*, *The VCs*, *Vector 13* and *Venus Bluegenes*, as well as *The Scarlet Apocrypha* and *Wardog* for the *Megazine*. A prolific creator, Abnett has also written for Marvel, Dark Horse and DC Comics. He is the author of twenty novels for the Black Library, including the bestselling *Gaunt's Ghosts* series. His most recent work outside the *Galaxy's Greatest Comic* is DC's *Legion* and *Superman*, and Wildstorm's *Mr Majestic*. Dan Abnett was voted Best Writer Now at the 2003 National Comic Awards.

RICHARD ELSON

Richard Elson's first *2000 AD* work was on a *Future Shock* way back in 1988, and since then he has pencilled *Judge Dredd*, *Time Twisters*, *Terror Tales* and *Tyranny Rex*, as well as the co-created strips *Atavar*, *Roadkill*, *Shadows*, *The Scrap*, *A.H.A.B.*, *Go-Machine* and *Kingdom*.



TOUGHER THAN TOUGH!

OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS THEY TREK, LED BY THE URGINGS FROM THEIR MASTERS, CHARGED WITH KEEPING *THEM* OFF OF HIS LAWN. The pack, led by Gene the Hackman, are strong, experienced soldiers – they don't know exactly what *Them* are, but they have their orders, and *Them* are to be scrapped at every opportunity. The Masters must be obeyed. But the The Masters are not all they appear to be and when Gene the Hackman's pack scatter he will come face to face with a world shattering truth!

Written by best-selling author Dan Abnett (*Durham Red*) with art by Richard Elson (*Judge Dredd*) this action-packed tale of earth's far future is not to be missed!



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