

Sláine



WARRIOR'S DAWN

PAT MILLS ★ MASSIMO BELARDINELLI ★ ANGIE KINCAID ★ MIKE McMAHON



Sláine

WARRIOR'S DAWN

SLÁINE CREATED BY PAT MILLS AND ANGIE KINCAID

Sláine

WARRIOR'S DAWN

PAT MILLS

Writer

ANGIE KINCAID ★ MASSIMO BELARDINELLI ★ MIKE McMAHON

Artists

MIKE McMAHON

Cover Artist

REBELLION®

Creative Director and CEO: Jason Kingsley

Chief Technical Officer: Chris Kingsley

2000 AD Editor in Chief: Matt Smith

Graphic Design: Simon Parr & Luke Preece

Marketing and PR: Keith Richardson

Repro Assistant: Kathryn Symes

Graphic Novels Editor: Jonathan Oliver

Designer: Luke Preece

Original Commissioning Editor: Steve MacManus

Originally serialised in *2000 AD* Progs 330, 331-360. Copyright ©1983,1984, 2008 Rebellion A/S. All Rights Reserved. Sláine and all related characters, their distinctive likenesses and related elements featured in this publication are trademarks of Rebellion A/S. *2000 AD* is a registered trademark. The stories, characters and incidents featured in this publication are entirely fictional.

Published by Rebellion, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN.
www.rebellion.co.uk

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

For information on other *2000 AD* graphic novels, or if you have any comments on this book, please email books@2000ADonline.com

To find out more about *2000 AD*, visit www.2000ADonline.com

INTRODUCTION

Looking back after all these years, I am still bowled over by all three of the Sláine artists in this collection. Here are some statistics from those early days concerning the readers' response to the stories.

Angie's episode

Mainstream readers (voting in readers' polls): 10/10 Fandom: 0/10

Belardinelli's episodes

Mainstream readers: 8/10 Fandom: 2/10

Mike McMahon's episodes

Mainstream readers: 3/10 Fandom: 10/10

Probable circulation of 2000 AD: 180, 000 copies a week.

Mainstream readers = 80% of readers

Fans = 20% of readers (maximum)

Confusing, eh? Imagine what it was like for us then!

Let me shed a little more light on all three artists. First: Angie Kincaid. I gave Angie as her visual role model for Sláine, the gorgeous French series *Conquering Armies* by Dionnet and Gal. British fandom then, and probably now, imbued with American comic thinking, disliked *Conquering Armies* for being stiff and over-detailed. Mainstream readers and I disagreed and back then we were the prevailing voice. Consequently, Angie's episode was the first story to ever beat Judge Dredd in the polls; an astonishing achievement given that it was her *first ever comic strip*. This tells comicdom things it *cannot* afford to hear and thus ignores: not least that an illustrative style which owes nothing to America or fandom, no matter how imperfect, was often *preferred* by a majority of less fan-orientated readers. Dismayed by the lack of encouragement and the covert hostility from the all-male comic industry and overwhelmed by my demands in the script, Angie returned to young children's books where she is highly successful and her efforts are more appreciated. And I must take some personal responsibility for her leaving, too. After all, believing 2000 AD heroes must wear a helmet, it was only after Angie had spent a week or so designing some absolutely *brilliant* helmets that I said, "You know what? Maybe he'd look better *without* a helmet". The picture she drew directly afterwards where Sláine says, "Kiss my axe" sums up her entirely appropriate response and also defines the character for all time. It may have been unfortunate, but it was a 'Eureka!' moment. Indeed all the key elements in Sláine – especially the Drune Lords – were designed by Angie alone; because I knew fandom desperately wanted to 'take over' Sláine and I wanted to make damn certain that could never, *ever* happen. She is the *sole* artist creator of

the character; consequently it is a mainstream character to this day, accessible to people who know nothing of comics as well as mainstream readers and fans.

This was also why I turned down for the job at least two American-orientated famous comic artists who were fan favourites. Instead, I chose Bellardinelli with his illustrative style to follow Angie. I liked his approach and any shortfalls in his anatomy never bothered me initially. This was the readers' feeling, too; they *loved* his work. If you are puzzled as to why, look at that waterfall scene. That is what mainstream readers and I love about comics and Bellardinelli. There is not one fan favourite artist around even today who could come *near* portraying such beauty. Or one fan favourite artist who could design the warp spasm, for which Bellardinelli is the sole creator. But, to my dismay, Titan Books would never albumise Bellardinelli's work because they felt he wouldn't appeal to their American-orientated fan base. It seemed to me that this was the tail wagging the dog, and that the majority of 2000 AD readers were being deprived of a great collection by the wishes of a minority, as interpreted by one organization.

Then we come to Mike's Sláine. Used to dramatic and successful switches in styles on Dredd in 'The Cursed Earth', it never occurred to me it would be a problem when Mike took over. If viewers can adjust to very different James Bonds or Doctor Whos, what's the big deal in comics? But it *was* a big deal. The contrast *was* too much for everyone. I recall showing Mike's work to Angie and asking her opinion, as it was so different to my mental template of *Conquering Armies*. She showed a generosity of spirit that she never received herself, appreciating as an artist the supreme qualities of Mike's work and rating it very highly indeed. "This is really fantastic," she exclaimed. Her judgement, as Sláine co-creator, was good enough for me, but mainstream readers were not so easily persuaded, even though it was – rightly – a smash hit with fandom and was quickly albumised by Titan. Mike poured his heart into 'Sky Chariots' and it shows. His storytelling and use of sequential art sequences and multiple pics are of the very highest standard – the *European* standard.

Nowadays, everyone is a little more easy-going about all three artists, but back then the *ferocity* of the reader reactions caused all of them a great deal of distress, which was unfair and undeserved as they *all* clearly gave of their best *and then some*. This first Sláine book stands as a tribute to their huge contribution to the character.

Pat Mills – August 07

Sláine

A GUIDE TO HIS WORLD

CARNUN

The Horned God, Lord of The Beasts.

CROM-CRUACH

The Worm God, Lord of The Mounds.

DANU

The Earth Goddess.

DRUIDS

Priests of The Northern Tribes.

DRUNE LORDS

Evil Priest-Kings of the Southern tribes.

EARTH-POWER

The spiral force that runs through the *Weird Stones* (Megaliths). It can be used for good or evil. Also known as *The Earth Serpent*.

HALF-DEAD

Warriors killed but trapped between the worlds.

HERO-HARNESS

Worn by warped-warriors, so their clothes don't rip during a spasm.

LUG

The Sun God. The Sun and Earth are worshipped by the Northern tribes.

OGHAMS

Early form of writing. Also a sign language.

RED BRANCH

Sláine's tribe's greatest warriors.

SALMON-LEAP

Jumping your own height. A Sessair battle-skill – like shield-jumping and spear-catching.

SESSAIR

Sláine's tribe.

SKULL SWORDS

Drune soldiers

SLOUGH

Drune leader who has shed (sloughed) his skin.

SOURLAND

Land warped by sorcery.

THE LORD WEIRD SLOUGH FEG

Supreme Drune, thousands of years old.

TIR-NAN-OG

The Land of the Young.

TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS

The legendary Northern tribes, including the *Sessair*.

WARP-SPASM

A strange and terrifying battle-frenzy, much worse than a Berserker fury. Caused by *Earth Power* which some warriors can warp through their bodies.





THE TIME MONSTER

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Angie Kincaid (credited as A. Mills)
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 330

Sláine

AND SO IT BEGINS... THE SAGA OF SLÁINE MAC ROTH OF THE SESSAIR - MERCENARY, CATTLE-RUSTLER AND BATTLE-SMITER, WHO ROSE TO BECOME A LEGENDARY KING OF THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS.

IT STARTS IN THE REALM OF THE DRUNE LORDS WHOSE DARK SORCERY HAD CAST A SHADOW OVER THE LAND OF THE YOUNG, AND WHOSE USE OF THE WEIRD STONES WARPED TIME ITSELF.

IT IS I WHO WILL TELL HIS STORY, FOR IT'S I WHO CAN, UKKO THE DWARF, HIS FRIEND AND BUSINESS-PARTNER ON MANY STRANGE AND SAVAGE ADVENTURES. . .

**KILL SLÁINE !
KILL SLÁINE !**

...LIKE THE FIGHT I ARRANGED BETWEEN SLÁINE AND
THE TIME-MONSTER!

SCRIPT:
P. MILLS
ART:
A. MILLS
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME



WHILE SLAINE DID HIS PART OF THE JOB...

TREAD ON HIS HEAD!



I DID THE REALLY IMPORTANT WORK - COLLECTING MONEY FROM THE AUDIENCE...

NO WAY THAT LAD CAN KILL A TIME-MONSTER.

BUT I DON'T LIKE THE GRIN ON HIS PARTNER'S FACE... THAT SCHEMING LITTLE RAT UKKO!



SLAINE NEEDED SOMEONE WHO'D KEEP HIM OUT OF TROUBLE... SOMEONE WHO'D BE A GOOD INFLUENCE ON HIM... SOMEONE LIKE... ME.

NOW, SLAINE! REMEMBER MY PLAN... THROW THE TOAD!



FOR WHEN A TOAD IS SWALLOWED...



IT INFLATES ITSELF...

AND STICKS IN AN ATTACKER'S THROAT.





SWORDS SLASHED, HARD BLOWS STRUCK, BUT SLAINE LEAPT HIS GREAT SALMON LEAP AND, OH! THE DAMAGE DONE BY THAT AXE!

I COULD KILL A HUNDRED LIKE YOU AND NOT THINK IT TOO MANY!

THEY DIDN'T REALISE SLAINE WAS A 'WARPED' WARRIOR OF THE RED BRANCH - HIS TRIBE'S MIGHTIEST HEROES. I FELT A LITTLE SORRY FOR THEM -

THAT'S IT, SLAINE!

TONIGHT YOU'LL BE LYING UNDER THE PAWS OF WOLVES!

THIS ONE WILL CLOSE YOUR EYES!

AND THE MEAT SIZZLED IN THE POT THAT NIGHT...

SLAINE! LOOK OUT!

AND HE DID HIS SPEAR-CATCHING FEAT - ONE OF THE GREAT BATTLE SKILLS OF THE GESSAIR.

THIS WOUND WON'T WHITEN.

SOTH!

AAAGH!



SOTH, INDEED!

NO! MERCY...!

SUFFERING FROM
'SWORD-SAG' EH?
YOU'D BETTER
EAT THIS.



EAT IT. EAT IT
ALL UP!



LORD! I HEAR SKULL-SWORDS'
HOOVES! TIME WE LEFT
GABALA!



WE'RE LOOKING FOR A BARBARIAN
AND HIS DWARF! THEY COMMITTED
SACRILEGE - THEY KILLED A
TIME-MONSTER!



THE SKULL-SWORDS WORE
HAIR BREATH-MASKS TO
PROTECT THEM FROM THEIR
MASTER'S FOUL FUMES.

GET THEIR HEADS - OR
SLOUGH FEG WILL HAVE OURS!



THERE!

THROUGH HERE,
LORD...



...WHERE
THEIR
HORSES
CAN'T
FOLLOW!



INTO THE DUNG-BOATS!
EVEN THE SKULL-SWORDS
NEVER CHECK
THEM.

I'M NOT
SURPRISED.



AND SO WE HEADED NORTH THROUGH THE LAND OF THE
YOUNG - SO CALLED BECAUSE FEW GREW TO BE OLD..

YOU SEE, SLAINE -
WE NEED EACH OTHER.
WE'RE A TEAM!

NEXT PROG: **SLAINE'S CRIME.**



THE BEAST IN THE BROCH

Script: Pat Mills

Art: Massimo Belardinelli

Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 331-334

Sláine

THE BEAST IN THE BROCH - 1.

AFTER ESCAPING FROM GABALA WITH THE GOLD, SLÁINE AND I, HIS FAITHFUL DWARF UKKO, HEADED NORTH. WHILE I VISITED A NEARBY VILLAGE, SLÁINE CAUGHT OUR DINNER...

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLIS
ART:
M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME

SLÁINE RECALLED
HIS PAST...

NOW THE KING'S DEAD
I CAN RETURN TO MY
TRIBE AND NIAMH...



NIAMH WAS THE KING'S CHOSEN BRIDE.



NO OTHER MAN WAS ALLOWED TO SEE HER.

THE KING BROUGHT HER UP IN A HUT IN THE FOREST - WITH GUARDS AT THE FRONT AND A FAST-FLOWING RIVER AT THE BACK.



CURIOUS, YOUNG SLÁINE FORDED THE RIVER...



CARRYING A HUGE BOULDER SO THE CURRENT DIDN'T CARRY HIM AWAY.

WHO ARE YOU ?
WHAT ARE YOU ?

SLÁINE
MAC ROTH.



I'VE HEARD
OF YOU,
THEY CALL
YOU 'THE
WARPED
ONE'.

I HAD MY FIRST 'WARP-SPASM' WHEN
I WAS TWELVE. IT WAS A GIFT FROM
OUR MOTHER THE EARTH.



AFTER SEVERAL VISITS THEY WERE DISCOVERED...

YOU YOUNG WHPEL!
WAIT TILL THE KING
RETURNS FROM
HIS HUNT.

HE'LL NAIL YOUR
HEAD TO THE
DOOR POST !



I PREFER YOU
TO FAT KING
GRUDNEW.

I SEE WHY
HE KEEPS YOU
LOCKED UP !







AND WANDERED SOUTH FOR THREE YEARS. HERE THE DRUNES CONTROLLED THE POWER - USING IT FOR EVIL...



SLÁINE WAS NOW NINETEEN...

SLÁINE! I'VE JUST BOUGHT THE BARGAIN OF THE YEAR - A PRISON!

WHAT'S A PRISON?

HE NEEDED ME TO INSTRUCT HIM AND KEEP HIM AWAY FROM EVIL INFLUENCES. . .

A PLACE YOU LOCK CRIMINALS IN UNTIL THEY PAY THEIR FINES! IF THEY DON'T, WE TORTURE THEM! GOOD, EH?

YOU DIRTY LITTLE DWARF!



SPEND YOUR GOLD ON IT IF YOU LIKE. I'M GOING BACK TO MY TRIBE TO CLAIM NIAMH.

AH... THERE'S ONE SMALL PROBLEM, LORD.

NOW DON'T HAVE ONE OF YOUR WARP-SPASMS, BUT... I USED YOUR SHARE OF THE GOLD, TOO!



WHY ARE YOU TAKING ME BEHIND THAT ROCK?





Sláine

THE BEAST IN THE BROCH - 2

SLÁINE OF THE SESSAIR AND I, HIS FAITHFUL DWARF UKKO, HAD BOUGHT A BROCH - A PRISON TOWER - FROM SCENB THE JAILER. NOW SCENB WAS IN A HURRY TO LEAVE. . .

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME

IT WOULD TAKE ALL THE GOLD IN TIR-NAN-OG TO MAKE ME SPEND ANOTHER NIGHT IN THE BROCH !

OUR SERVANT NUDD CAME WITH THE PRISON. . .

MORE BEER, NUDD.

YES... 'MASTER'.

WE'LL MAKE A FORTUNE, SLÁINE. THAT JAILER WAS A RICH MAN.

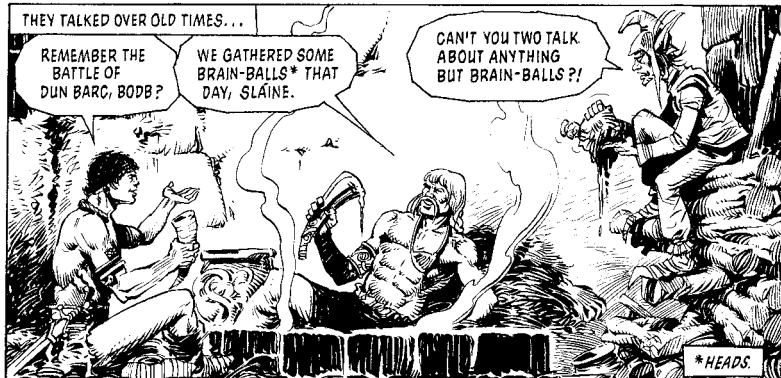
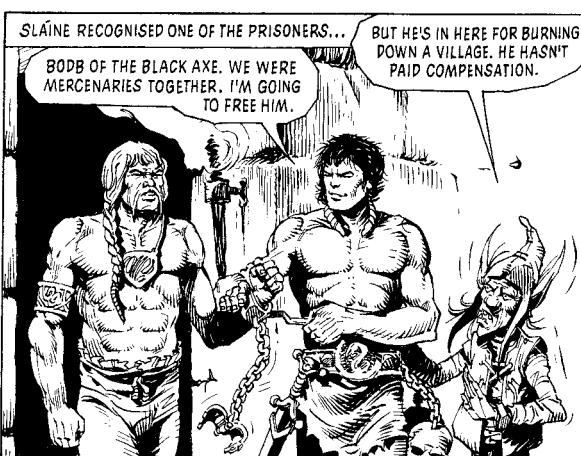
AYE, ON MY GOLD.

I DID THE ACCOUNTS. . .

BREGA THE BLOODSPILLER HAS PAID HIS FINE: THREE CHICKENS, FOUR IRON BARS AND A PIG. WE CAN RELEASE HIM TOMORROW.

I DON'T LIKE THIS JOB - LOCKING PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE SUN AND THE EARTH.





THEN THE EARTH
POWER WARPED
THROUGH SLÁINE...
AND HE SHOOK
WITH A MIGHTY
WARP-SPASM,
GREATER THAN
ANY BERSERKER
FURY !

YOU WON'T BE
AROUND TO
SEE YOUR
COWS CALVE !



AND HE SWELLED UP INTO A
SHAPELESS MONSTROUS
CREATURE... HORRIBLE
TO LOOK AT!



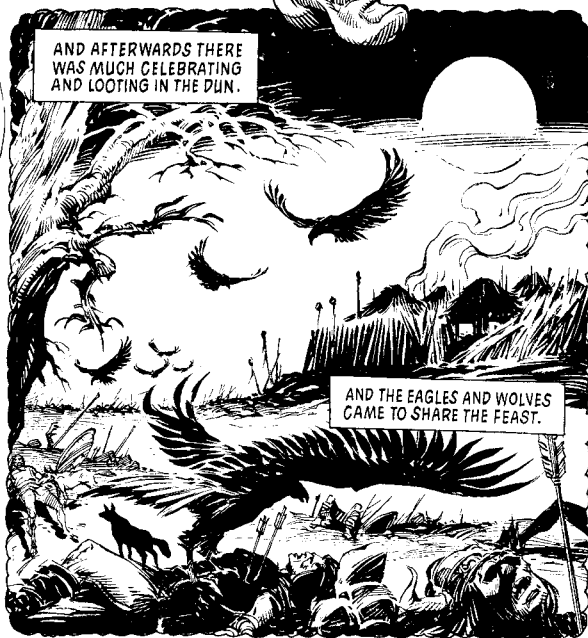
IT'S THE WARPED ONE!

AND HIS AXE 'BRAIN-BITER'
DID MUCH WORK.

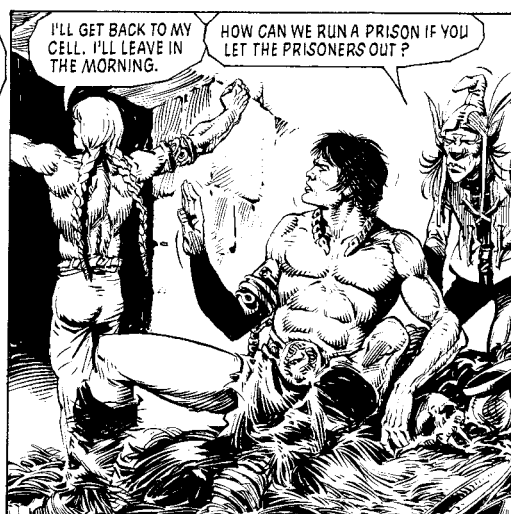
IT WON'T IMPRESS
ME TO LAY YOU ALL
OUT!



AND AFTERWARDS THERE
WAS MUCH CELEBRATING
AND LOOTING IN THE DUN.



AND THE EAGLES AND WOLVES
CAME TO SHARE THE FEAST.





IN THE NEXT CELL -

WHAT DID THIS
TO YOU, BOBB?

DON'T TORTURE ME
FURTHER. YOU KNOW,
SLAINE... OH,
YOU KNOW!

I'VE DONE EVIL THINGS AND I DESERVE PUNISHMENT...
BUT TO PROMISE ME FREEDOM - THEN LET THAT
FOUL CREATURE IN MY CELL...

I CURSE YOU, SLAINE MAC ROTH!
I CURSE YOU TO EVERLASTING
PAIN!



A SHRIEK OF EVIL LAUGHTER ECHOED FROM BELOW -
COMING
FROM THE
DUNGEON!
WE'VE BOUGHT A PRISON WITH A
MONSTER IN ITS DEPTHS! YOU'VE
BEEN OUT-CHEATED, UKKO!



STAND ASIDE,
NUDD!

THERE IS
NOTHING
DOWN
HERE.



I SAID
STAND
ASIDE!

DON'T OPEN THAT
DOOR! THE PRISONER
MEANT NO HARM...
NUDD SWEAR IT.



AS SLAINE TRIED THE KEYS,
THE HORROR INSIDE THE
DUNGEON GIGGLED TO ITSELF...

NONE FIT!



LOOK OUT,
LORD!

NEXT PROG: **THE BEAST
REVEALED.**

Sláine

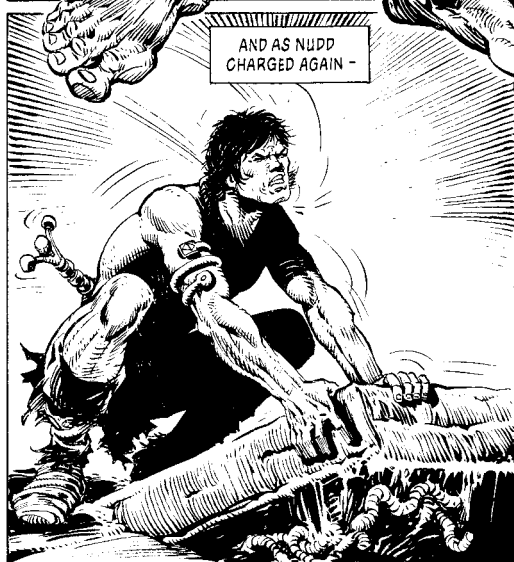
THE BEAST IN THE BROCH - 3.

SLÁINE OF THE SESSAIR AND I, UKKO, HIS FAITHFUL DWARF, HAD BOUGHT A BROCH - A VALUABLE PRISON TOWER. TOO LATE WE DISCOVERED A NAMELESS HORROR LURKED THERE WHICH SUCKED THE VERY SOULS OF THE PRISONERS. AS WE WENT TO INVESTIGATE, NUDD - OUR SUB-HUMAN ASSISTANT - SEIZED SLÁINE'S AXE, AND...



SLÁINE LEAPT THE SALMON-LEAP TO THE HEIGHT OF HIS OWN FOREHEAD.

AND AS NUDD CHARGED AGAIN -



HERE'S HAVOC ON YOUR HEAD!



THE BLOOD OF THE SESSAIR - ONE OF THE GREAT TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS - SEETHED IN HIS VEINS.



BUT IN THE DUNGEON WAS NO HIDEOUS BEAST...



BLATHNAID!

SLÁINE MAC ROTH! IS THIS ANY WAY TO ENTER A LADY'S CHAMBER?



AND I THOUGHT THIS CELL HID SOME UNCANNY SECRET! INSTEAD I FIND MY OLD FRIEND BLATHNAID - THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THIEF TO EVER CUT A PURSE!

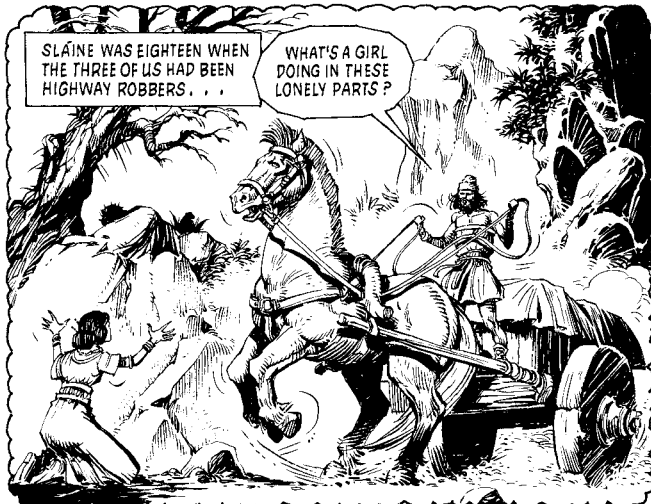


YOU'VE NO NEED TO FEAR ME! UKKO! HOW ARE YOU?

CAN'T GRUMBLE, DEAR.

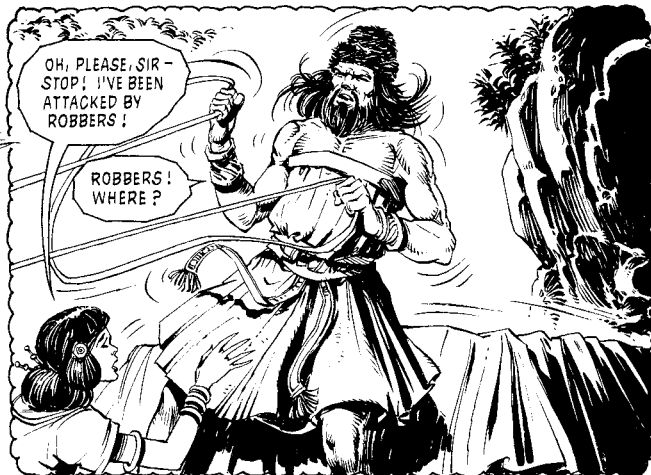
SLÁINE WAS EIGHTEEN WHEN THE THREE OF US HAD BEEN HIGHWAY ROBBERS...

WHAT'S A GIRL DOING IN THESE LONELY PARTS?



OH, PLEASE, SIR - STOP! I'VE BEEN ATTACKED BY ROBBERS!

ROBBERS! WHERE?









BUT HE CALLED YOU 'PRINCESS'. WHY?

HE WORSHIPPED ME. HE'D DO ANYTHING I COMMANDED.





HE LET ME DRAIN THE PRISONERS... SO I COULD SURVIVE IN THIS WORLD!



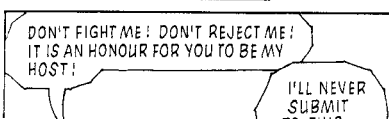
I CAME UP THROUGH THE SOURLAND... WHERE THE DRUNES WARPED THE EARTH WITH THEIR WEIRDSTONES...

AND MY WORLD MEETS YOURS!



I TELL YOU, HUMAN, FOR I SENSE YOU, TOO, HAVE THE WARP-POWER AND...

I NEED A NEW NEST!

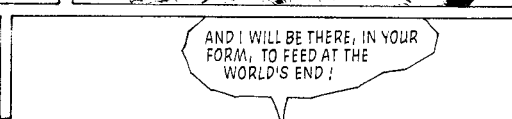


DON'T FIGHT ME! DON'T REJECT ME! IT IS AN HONOUR FOR YOU TO BE MY HOST!

I'LL NEVER SUBMIT TO THIS FOULNESS!



YOU WILL, SLAINE! THIS WORLD'S TIME IS SHORT! SOON THE FLOOD WILL DROWN IT!



AND I WILL BE THERE, IN YOUR FORM, TO FEED AT THE WORLD'S END!



SCRIPT: PAT HILLS
DIB: M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING: TOMI FRAME



NEXT PROG. **ON HELL'S EDGE.**

Sláine

THE BEAST OF THE BROCH - 4.

SLÁINE OF THE SESSAIR AND I, UKKO, HIS DWARF, HAD BOUGHT A BROCH - A VALUABLE PRISON TOWER. BUT A SERPENT FROM THE SOURLAND LURKED WITHIN AND HAD TAKEN OVER THE BODY OF OUR OLD FRIEND BLATHNAID, A BEAUTIFUL THIEF. . .

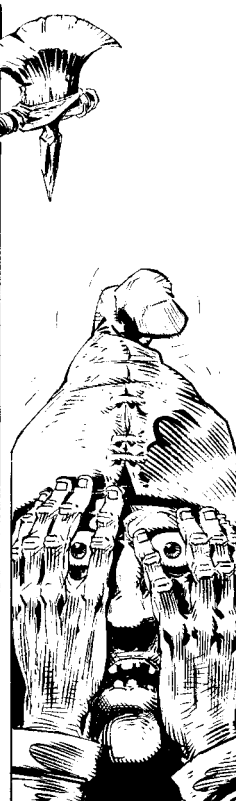
THE DRUNES HAVE WARPED FORCES BEYOND THEIR CONTROL! MY WORLD WILL OVERWHELM THE LAND OF THE YOUNG!



THE WORLD SOME HUMANS CALL...
HEL!



SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME



...ONLY A CASING FOR
A FOULNESS THAT HAD
TO BE DESTROYED.



POOR BLATHNAID.

SLÁINE! THERE'S A
MOB COMING!



A VILLAGER HAD HEARD THE SCREAMS...

THERE ARE DEAD MEN WITHIN...
KILLED BY SOME DARK FORCE!

THE STRANGERS ARE
RESPONSIBLE! THEY
MUST DIE!



OUT THE BACK! I TOOK
THE PRECAUTION OF
ARRANGING...



...A QUICK
GETAWAY!



INTO THE
SOURLAND!

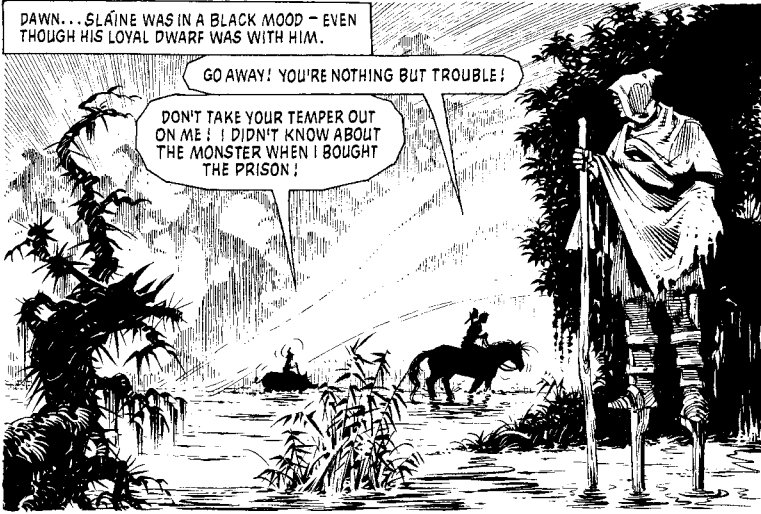


... THE EVIL WILDERNESS WHERE THE DRUNES HAD
DRAINED THE POWER FROM THE LAND.

DAWN... SLÁINE WAS IN A BLACK MOOD - EVEN
THOUGH HIS LOYAL DWARF WAS WITH HIM.

GO AWAY! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT TROUBLE!

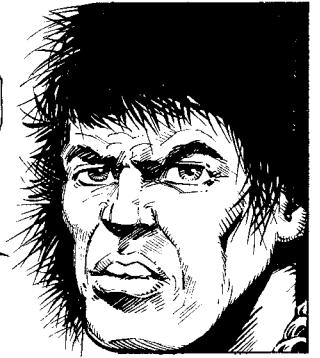
DON'T TAKE YOUR TEMPER OUT
ON ME! I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT
THE MONSTER WHEN I BOUGHT
THE PRISON!



IT'S NEARLY
SAMAIN* -
SUMMER'S END.
I SHOULD BE OUT
FIGHTING WITH MY
FELLOW
WARRIORS OF THE
RED BRANCH...

NOT GOING
ROUND WITH
A FOOL OF A
DWARF.

*HALLOWEEN.



SLÁINE WAS FIFTEEN WHEN HE COMPLETED HIS
TRAINING AND BECAME A MEMBER OF THE RED
BRANCH... HIS TRIBE'S GREATEST HEROES.

SOME WERE WARPED
LIKE SLÁINE AND WORE
A HERO HARNESS, A
SPECIAL TUNIC
FASTENED WITH
STRINGS AND STRAPS...



...SO IF A MIGHTY
WARP-SPASM TOOK
THEM, THEY WOULDN'T
RUIN THEIR CLOTHES
BURSTING OUT OF
THEM.

IT WAS AT SAMAIN WHEN SLÁINE FIRST FOUGHT IN THE RED BRANCH...

SLÁINE WAS IN THE THICK OF THE FIGHTING.

THEY RAIDED AN ENEMY TRIBE'S CATTLE - TO STOCK UP WITH FOOD FOR THE WINTER.

THEY RETURNED TO THEIR DUN READY TO CELEBRATE SAMAIN... A LAST FLING BEFORE THE SUN FADED AND THE POWER OF DARKNESS GREW.

THEY FEASTED IN THE ROUND HALL - DESIGNED SO ALL THE HEROES OF THE RED BRANCH WERE EQUAL.

AND THEY ARGUED OVER WHO SHOULD HAVE THE 'CHAMPION'S PORTION' - COMPARING 'BRAIN-BALLS' AND COUNTING TONGUES OF MEN THEY'D KILLED.

IT'LL TAKE ME DAYS TO GET MY SPEARS CLEAN. I HAVE THE RIGHT. I'LL CARVE THE PIG!

HERE THEY KEPT THE HEADS OF THEIR GREATEST ENEMIES AND DRANK FROM GOLD-PLATED SKULLS.



THEN IT WAS GOBHAN MAC TADG'S TURN...

LEAVE THAT PIG!
IT'S ME WHO'S
CARVING.

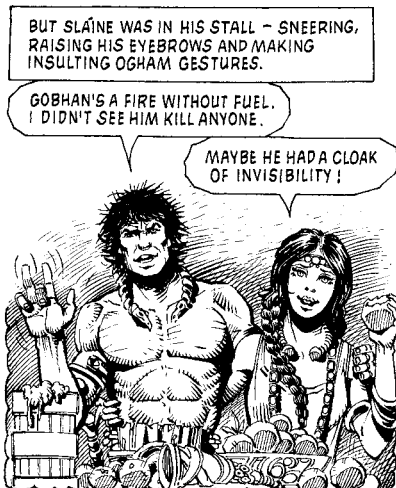
I'VE A SACK OF HEADS AND ANOTHER
OF TONGUES - FOR I COULDN'T CARRY
THEM ALL FROM THE BATTLE!



THE RED BRANCH GASPED...

I KILLED FIFTY MEN TODAY AND I DIDN'T THINK IT TOO
MANY! IT'S NO DISGRACE TO LET ME CARVE, FOR
I'M BRAVEST OF ALL...

I CLAIM THE
CHAMPION'S PORTION!



BUT SLÁINE WAS IN HIS STALL - SNEERING,
RAISING HIS EYEBROWS AND MAKING
INSULTING OGHAM GESTURES.

GOBHAN'S A FIRE WITHOUT FUEL.
I DIDN'T SEE HIM KILL ANYONE.

MAYBE HE HAD A CLOAK
OF INVISIBILITY!



YOU TAKING THE MIRTH? I'LL SEPARATE
YOUR HEAD FROM YOU IF YOU DON'T
STOP SNEERING.

IT'LL BE THE FIRST
YOU'VE HAD TODAY.



SO WHERE
ARE YOURS...
BOY?

I WAS TOO BUSY
ROUNDING UP CATTLE
TO COLLECT THEM.



THIS PUP HAS NO RIGHT IN THE ROUND HALL!
HE SHOULD BE IN THE KITCHENS WITH THE
BOND-WOMEN - SALTING MEAT FOR WINTER!



WHERE YOU'VE BEEN.
THESE ARE CATTLE
TONGUES IN YOUR
BAG!

AND I BET YOU SCAVENGED THE
BATTLEFIELD FOR THE HEADS!

AYE! GUILT'S ON
GOBHAN'S FACE!



I'LL DO SOME CARVING NOW!



YOU WANT TO DRINK WITH
THE MEN, BOY - I'LL GIVE
YOU A DRINK OF
DEATH!

I CAN'T WASTE
TIME TALKING
TO YOU...



I'LL STOP
THAT MOUTH
WITH STEEL!



YOU'VE GOT
A HEAD
NOW, LAD!

YOU'VE PROVED
YOURSELF
WORTHY OF THE
RED BRANCH!



NOW... NO PLACE FOR YOU, DWARF, WHEN
I TAKE MY STALL IN THE ROUND
HALL AGAIN! CLEAR OFF - I DON'T WANT
YOU HANGING ROUND ME ANYMORE!

I'LL BE A GOOD DWARF IN
FUTURE, LORD: DON'T
LEAVE ME! NOT AT
SAMAIN!



IT'S THE
HOLIDAY
OF THE
DEAD!

NEXT
PROG

WARRIOR'S DAWN.



WARRIOR'S DAWN

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Mike McMahon
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 335

Sláine

— WARRIOR'S DAWN. —

IT WAS NEARLY SAMAIN AS SLÁINE OF THE SESSAIR AND I, UKKO, HIS DWARF, RODE ON THROUGH THE SOURLAND — THE SWAMP WHERE THE DRUNES WARPED ALL THE POWER FROM THE EARTH — AND THE 'HALF-DEAD', TRAPPED BETWEEN THE WORLDS, LIE IN WAIT FOR THE UNWARY...

WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK TO THE BOG YOU CRAWLED OUT OF?

THAT'S VERY NICE! LEAVE ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SOURLAND! IT'S NOT MY FAULT YOU GOT KICKED OUT OF YOUR TRIBE!

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
MIKE MCMAHON
LETTERS:
TOM FRAME



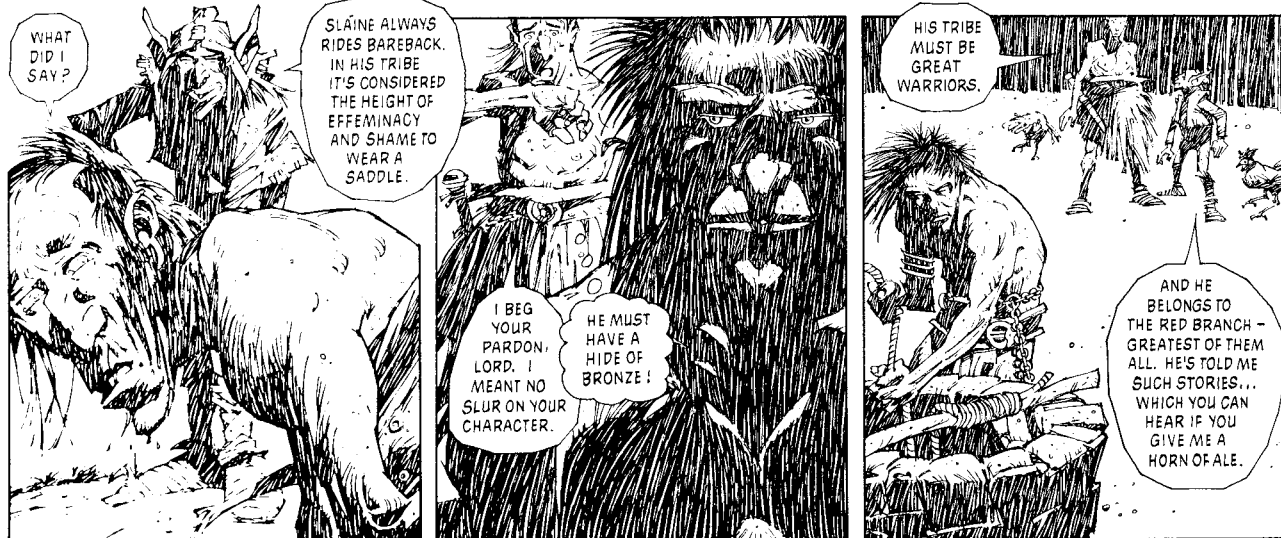
WE STOPPED
TO REST OUR
MOUNTS.

I THOUGHT
HAVING A
FOOL FOR A
COMPANION
WOULD BRING
ME LUCK.

EVERYTHING
I'VE DONE FOR
YOU - AND THAT'S
ALL THE GRATITUDE
I GET!



WOULD
YOU LIKE
TO BUY A
SADDLE,
SIR?



WHAT
DID I
SAY?

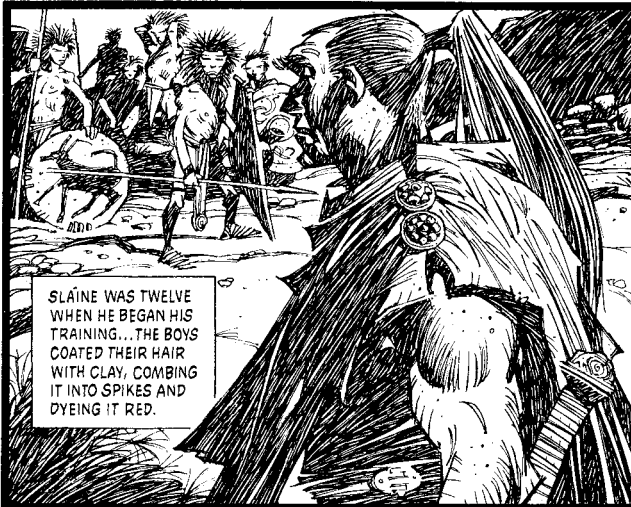
SLÁINE ALWAYS
RIDES BAREBACK.
IN HIS TRIBE
IT'S CONSIDERED
THE HEIGHT OF
EFFEMINACY
AND SHAME TO
WEAR A
SADDLE.

I BEG
YOUR
PARDON,
LORD. I
MEANT NO
SLUR ON YOUR
CHARACTER.

HE MUST
HAVE A
HIDE OF
BRONZE!

HIS TRIBE
MUST BE
GREAT
WARRIORS.

AND HE
BELONGS TO
THE RED BRANCH -
GREATEST OF THEM
ALL. HE'S TOLD ME
SUCH STORIES...
WHICH YOU CAN
HEAR IF YOU
GIVE ME A
HORN OF ALE.



SLÁINE WAS TWELVE WHEN HE BEGAN HIS TRAINING...THE BOYS COATED THEIR HAIR WITH CLAY, COMBING IT INTO SPIKES AND DYEING IT RED.



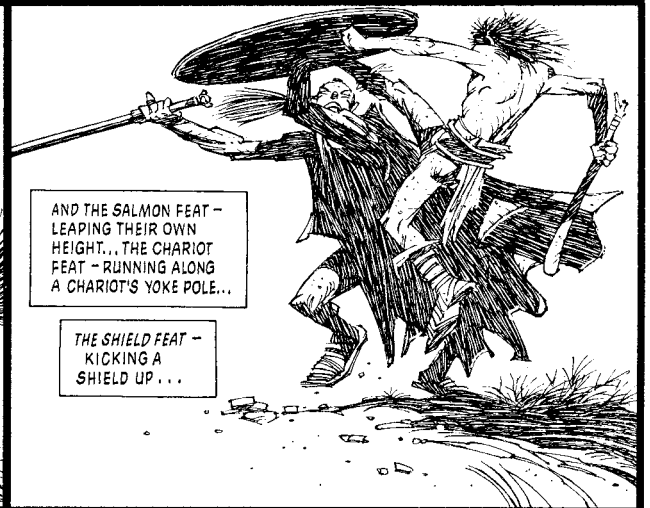
PAINTING THEIR BODIES WITH BLUE WOOL - SO THEY'D LOOK WARPED, LIKE THEIR FATHERS.

CALL THOSE SPIKES?

WAIT TILL I HAVE A WARP-SPASM - THEN WE'LL SEE WHOSE HAIR IS SPIKIEST, CULLEN OF THE WIDE MOUTH.

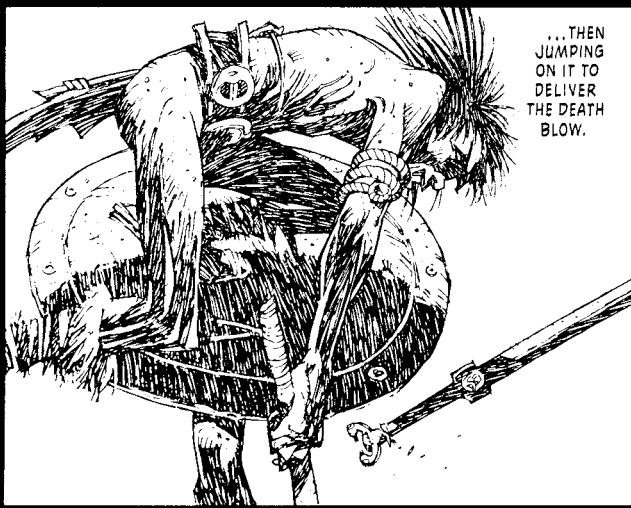


THEY WERE TAUGHT TO THROW A TATHLUM... A CONCRETE BALL MADE FROM THE BRAINS OF DEAD ENEMIES MIXED WITH BLOOD AND LIME.



AND THE SALMON FEAT - LEAPING THEIR OWN HEIGHT... THE CHARIOT FEAT - RUNNING ALONG A CHARIOT'S YOKE POLE...

THE SHIELD FEAT - KICKING A SHIELD UP...



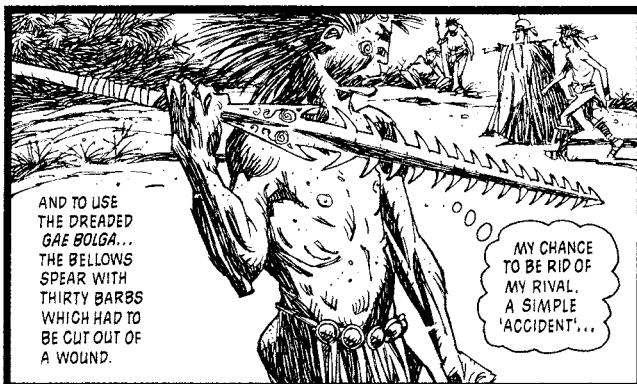
...THEN JUMPING ON IT TO DELIVER THE DEATH BLOW.



HOW - IF DEFEATED ON THE GROUND - TO THROW A SPEAR WITH THE FOOT...

QUICKER, CULLEN. WATCH SLÁINE.

IT'S STUCK BETWEEN MY TOES, SIR.



AND TO USE
THE DREADED
GAE BOLGA...
THE BELLOW
SPEAR WITH
THIRTY BARBS
WHICH HAD TO
BE CUT OUT OF
A WOUND.

MY CHANCE
TO BE RID OF
MY RIVAL.
A SIMPLE
'ACCIDENT'...



BUT
SLAINE
TURNED -
BY
LUG!



SOTH; ONLY
WOUNDED HIM. I'D
BETTER FINISH THE
JOB - AND FAST.



I'VE NO
WEAPON...



UNLESS...

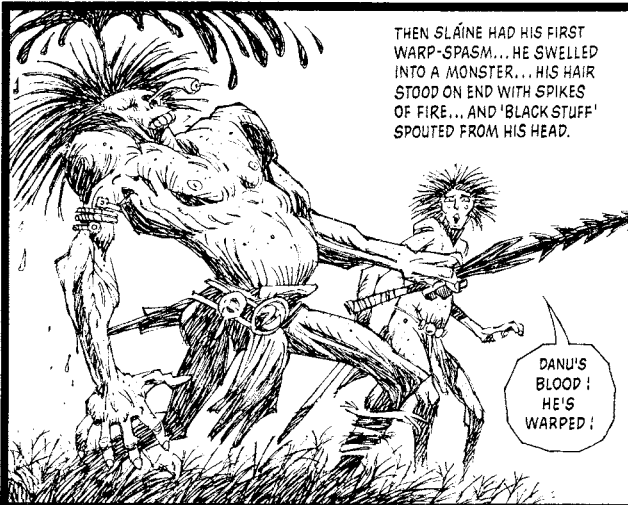


HE PULLED
HIS ARM TIGHT
TO
STOP THE
BLEEDING.



THAT'S A TERRIBLE
WOUND, SLAINE.
LET ME HELP YOU...

I'LL BATHE
MY BLADE
IN IT!



THEN SLÁINE HAD HIS FIRST WARP-SPASM... HE SWELLED INTO A MONSTER... HIS HAIR STOOD ON END WITH SPIKES OF FIRE... AND 'BLACK STUFF' SPOUTED FROM HIS HEAD.

DANU'S BLOOD!
HE'S WARPED!



KILL ME, SLÁINE,
AND MY FATHER WILL
REVENGE HIS SON!
REMEMBER HE'S CONN
OF A HUNDRED
BATTLES!



HE'S LOSING
A DAUGHTER!
NOT A SON!

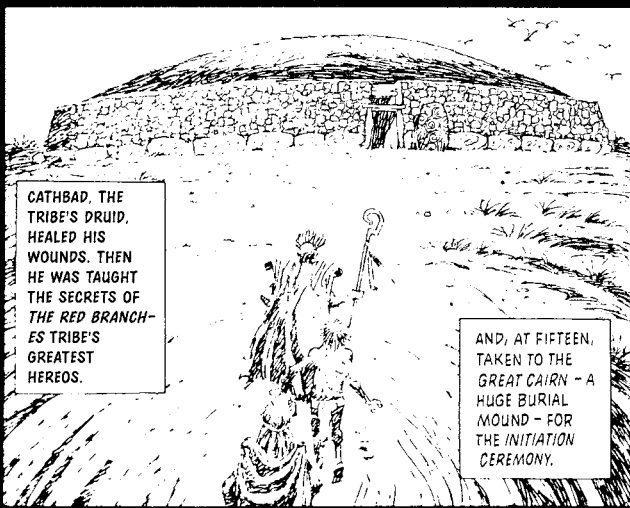


AND CONN OF
A HUNDRED
BATTLES CAME
AFTER SLÁINE...

YOU'LL PAY
FOR MY
BOY'S DEATH,
WARPED
ONE!

DON'T MAKE
HIS GRAVE TOO
NARROW, FOR
YOU'LL BE LYING
BESIDE HIM!

AND HE KILLED
CONN, AND LATER,
SEVEN OF CONN'S
KIN. AND HE DIDN'T
THINK IT TOO MANY.



CATHBAD, THE
TRIBE'S DRUID,
HEALED HIS
WOUNDS. THEN
HE WAS TAUGHT
THE SECRETS OF
THE RED BRANCH-
ES TRIBE'S
GREATEST
HEREOS.

AND, AT FIFTEEN,
TAKEN TO THE
GREAT CAIRN - A
HUGE BURIAL
MOUND - FOR
THE INITIATION
CEREMONY.



HE WOULD BE
LEFT CHAINED IN
THE DARKNESS
FOR THREE DAYS
AND NIGHTS UNTIL
THE MIDWINTER
SUNRISE...

ONLY THOSE WHO
WERE WARPED
COULD SURVIVE
WHAT WAS TO
BEFALL...



THOUGH HE WAS NOT ALONE... FOR HE WAS SURROUNDED BY HIGH HEROES OF THE PAST...

THOSE HEROES ARE CERTAINLY 'HIGH'!



AT LAST... CATHBAD REMOVED A CRYSTAL SLAB FROM THE ROOF...

SLÁINE IS VERY YOUNG TO BE WARPED. I HOPE HE CAN SURVIVE THIS...



AT EXACTLY MIDWINTER, A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT SHOT DOWN THE PASSAGE INTO THE CENTRAL CHAMBER... ITS RAYS WIDENING OUT LIKE A RED BRANCH.

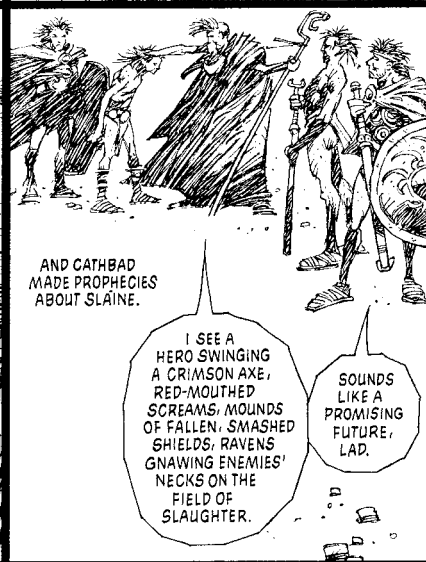
AND THE POWER OF THE SUN AND EARTH WARPED THROUGH HIM!



MOMENTS LATER...

LUG BE PRAISED!

NOW SLÁINE WAS ENTITLED TO ENTER THE GREAT ROUND HALL AND WEAR A HERO-HARNES - THAT WOULD EXPAND WITH HIS WARP-SPASM.



AND CATHBAD MADE PROPHECIES ABOUT SLÁINE.

I SEE A HERO SWINGING A CRIMSON AXE, RED-MOUTHED SCREAMS, MOUNDS OF FALLEN, SMASHED SHIELDS, RAVENS GNAWING ENEMIES' NECKS ON THE FIELD OF SLAUGHTER.

SOUNDS LIKE A PROMISING FUTURE, LAD.



AND I CAN ALSO SEE A RAT-LIKE DWARF...! STRANGE...! BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE WITH MY VISIONS LATELY.



SO WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

I WAS THROWN OUT OF MY TRIBE AND BECAME A WANDERING VAGABOND... A PROUD WARRIOR SUNK LOW...

NEVER MIND, SLÁINE. THERE'S ONE RAY OF SUNSHINE LEFT... YOU'VE STILL GOT ME!

NEXT PROG:
BELTAIN GIANT!



THE BELTAIN GIANT

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Mike McMahon
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 336

Sláine

THE BELTAIN GIANT.

JUST BEFORE SAMAIN, SLÁINE OF THE SESSAIR AND I, UKKO, HIS DWARF, HAD GONE INTO THE EVIL SOURLAND. BUT NOT FAR BEHIND US, . . .

HEY, YOU! I SEEK A BARBARIAN CALLED SLÁINE. . .

HIS HAIR IS BARBED LIKE A GAE BOLGA AND HE GOES AROUND WITH A SCRAGGY-LOOKING DWARF.

THEY WENT THAT WAY, SIR.

AFTER THEM! HURRY!

I MUST FIND SLÁINE... OR ALL IS LOST!





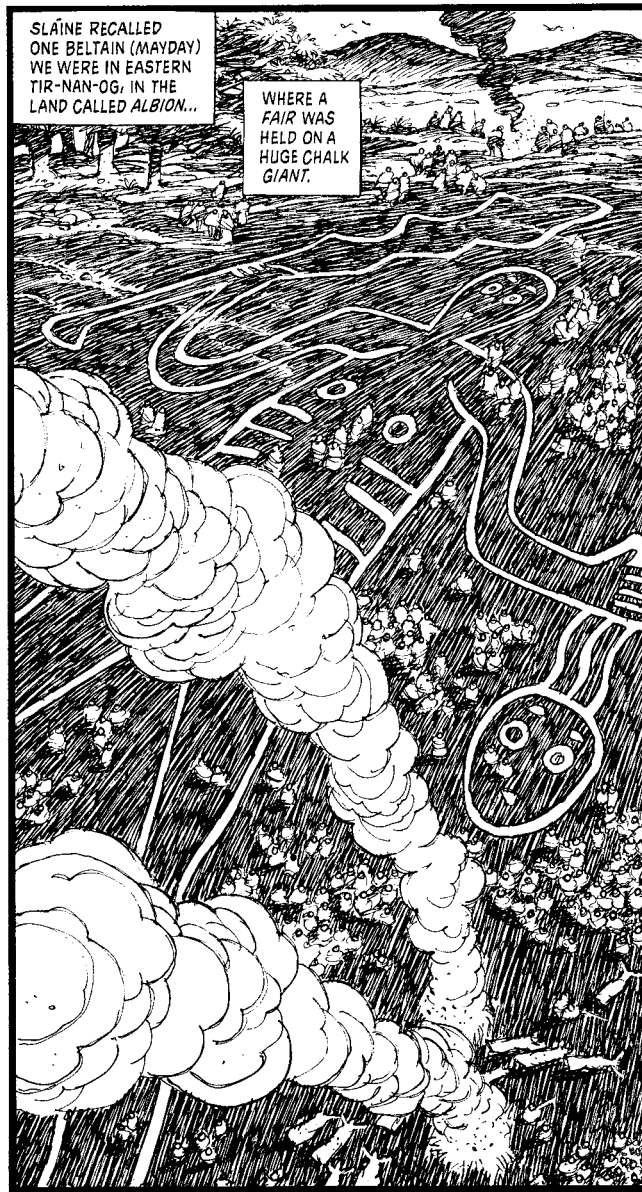
MEANWHILE, SLÁINE WAS STILL IN A DEEP DEPRESSION.

I WAS GIVEN THE GIFT OF THE WARP-SPASM SO I COULD DO GREAT DEEDS... FIGHT EVIL... KILL MONSTERS... NOW LOOK AT ME! I'M A WORTHLESS TRAMP!

YOUR SPASMS COME IN VERY USEFUL, LORD. THEY'VE GIVEN US A SQUARE MEAL BEFORE NOW.



I KNOW... AND I BURN WITH SHAME AT THE MEMORY.



SLÁINE RECALLED ONE BELTAIN (MAYDAY) WE WERE IN EASTERN TIR-NAN-OG, IN THE LAND CALLED ALBION...

WHERE A FAIR WAS HELD ON A HUGE CHALK GIANT.



THERE WAS MUCH FEASTING AND CELEBRATION - BUT NOT FOR US...

I'M STARVING.

ME, TOO. ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS FOOD.



WHAT ABOUT MY IDEA? WE'D MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO EAT FOR A WEEK.

FORGET IT. I'M NOT A FAIRGROUND FREAK.



BUT SLÁINE! LISTEN -

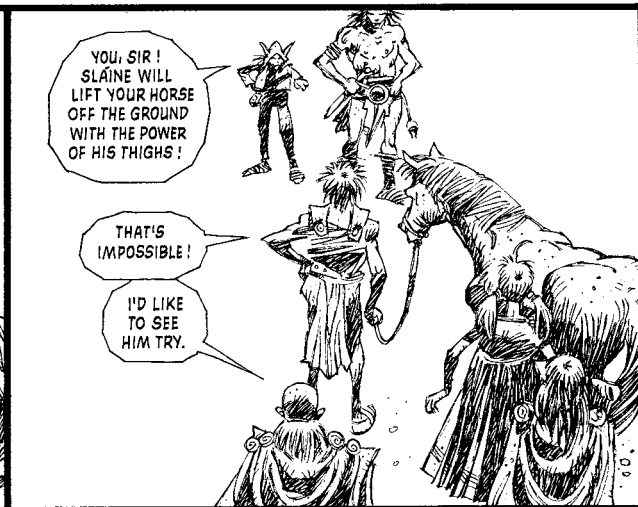
SILENCE, DWARF!



BUT
LATER...

ROLL UP! ROLL UP! SEE SLÁINE
THE GIANT! YES, AT THE WORDS
OF COMMAND THIS MAN WILL
TURN INTO A TERRIFYING
CREATURE! CAPABLE OF
INCREDIBLE FEATS OF
STRENGTH!

GIANT? WHAT'S
HE TALKING ABOUT?
WE KILLED THOSE
FREAKS OFF YEARS AGO.



YOU, SIR!
SLÁINE WILL
LIFT YOUR HORSE
OFF THE GROUND
WITH THE POWER
OF HIS THIGHS!

THAT'S
IMPOSSIBLE!

I'D LIKE
TO SEE
HIM TRY.



AT THE
SECRET WORDS
OF POWER - KNOWN
ONLY TO A FEW
DWARVES - HE
WILL BEGIN!

THIS
HAD BETTER
BE GOOD.

HE'D
NEED
THIGHS OF
IRON.



ALL RIGHT, YOU
LITTLE RAT - GET
ON WITH IT.
INSULT ME.
MAKE ME WILD.

IT WILL
BE MY
PLEASURE,
SLÁINE.



YOU FAIRY-FIGHTER!
YOU COULDN'T LIFT THE
SCUM OFF A HORN OF ALE!
BET YOU WERE THROWN
OUT OF YOUR TRIBE FOR
BEING CHICKEN. SURE
YOU WEREN'T IN THE
YELLOW BRANCH?



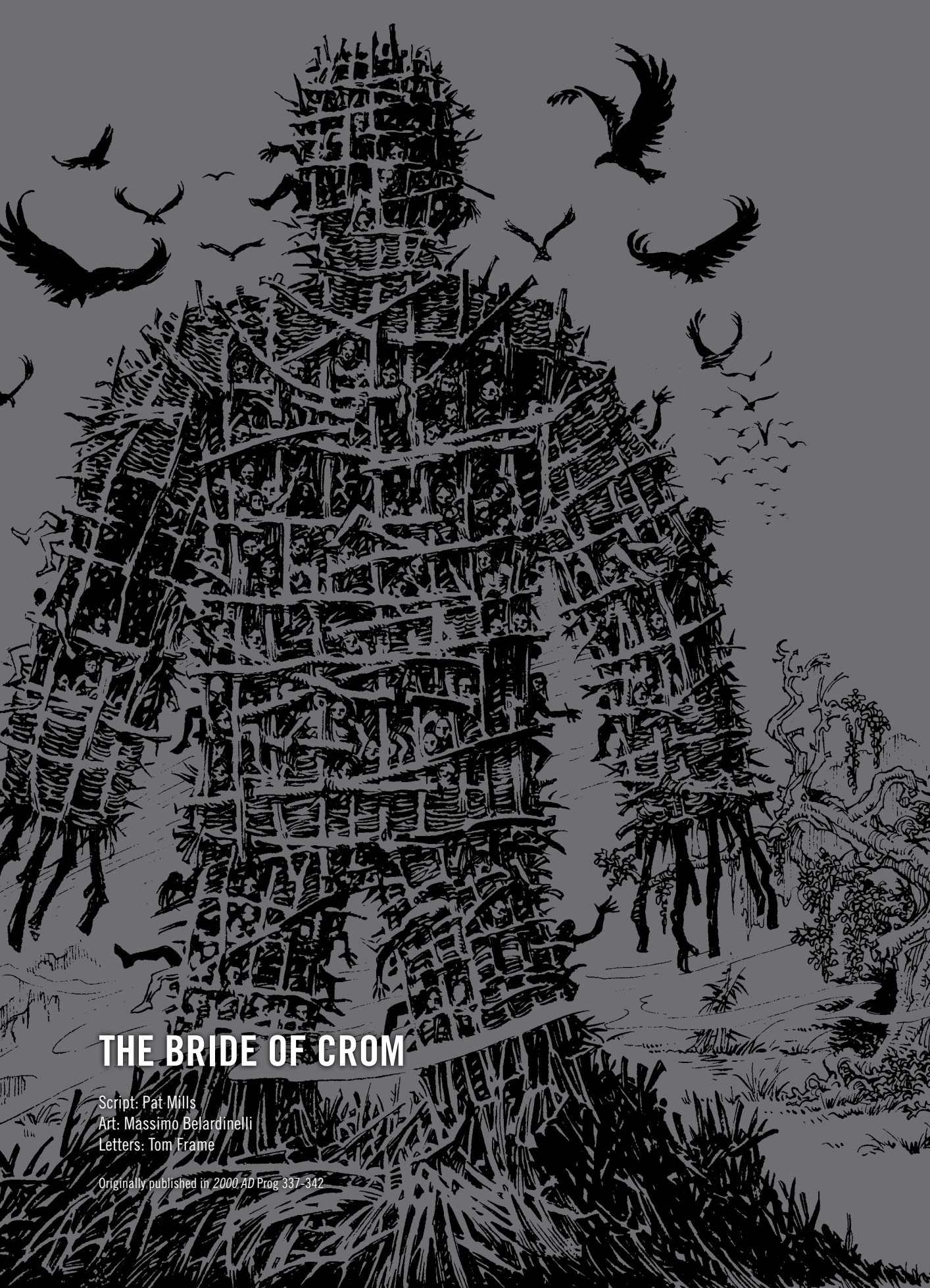
NIAMH'S
BEEN CHEATING
ON YOU... OH, YES -
SHE'S HAD LOADS OF
BOYFRIENDS - EVEN ME!
SHE THINKS YOU'RE A
MUSCLE-BOUND BAG
OF WIND...! I RECKON
YOU NEED A SADDLE
ON THAT HORSE...







NEXT PROG. **BRIDE OF GROM!**



THE BRIDE OF CROM

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Massimo Belardinelli
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 337-342

Slàine

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME

THE BRIDE OF CROM - 1

"A GROVE THERE WAS, UNTOUCHED BY MEN'S HANDS FROM ANCIENT TIMES, WHOSE BRANCHES ENCLOSED A SPACE OF DARKNESS AND COLD SHADE. THERE BIRDS FEARED TO PERCH AND WILD BEASTS WOULD NOT LIE DOWN. GODS WERE WORSHIPPED WITH SAVAGE RITES... THE ALTARS WERE HEAPED WITH HIDEOUS OFFERINGS... AND EVERY TREE WAS SPRINKLED WITH HUMAN GORE..."

ANCIENT CHRONICLE

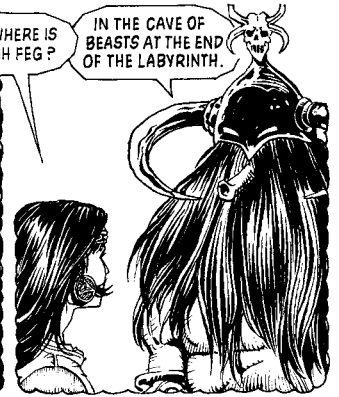
WE HAD ENTERED THE SACRED GROVE OF DRUNEMETON TO RESCUE A PRIESTESS DUE TO BE SACRIFICED...

SLÁINE, THIS IS MADNESS! SHE'S NO ORDINARY GIRL... SHE'S A DRUNESS - A PRIESTESS OF THE BADB!

IF THE BADB CATCH US, THEY'LL CUT BLOOD EAGLES ON OUR BACKS!

THIS WAS A TORTURE IN WHICH A BLADE CUT THE RIBS FROM THE BACKBONE, SO THEY SPRANG OUT LIKE EAGLES' WINGS.

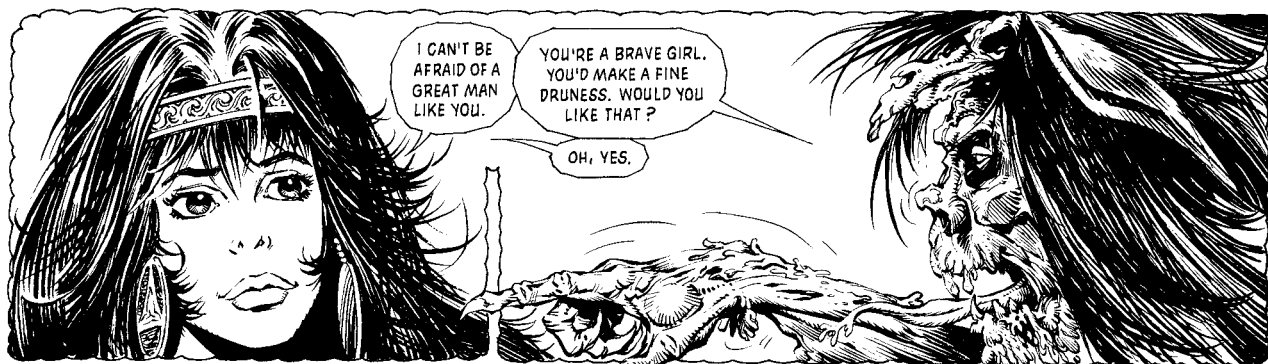




THE TUNNEL NARROWED SO THEY HAD TO CRAWL ON THEIR HANDS AND KNEES.







I CAN'T BE
AFRAID OF A
GREAT MAN
LIKE YOU.

YOU'RE A BRAVE GIRL.
YOU'D MAKE A FINE
DRUNESS. WOULD YOU
LIKE THAT ?

OH, YES.



TAKE HER TO
MY SACRED
GROVE AT
DRUNEMETON.

I'D LIKE TO BE A
DRUNESS, TOO.

AND ME. I-I MEAN
A DRUNE !



I BET YOU WOULD! BUT WE CAN'T
ALL BE LUCKY, CAN WE ?



SO MEDB HAD BECOME A
DRUNESS... ONLY TO BE CHOSEN
YEARS LATER FOR SACRIFICE
AT SAMAIN - THE HOLIDAY OF
THE DEAD.

THERE IT IS... THE
FOREST FORTRESS
WHERE SHE'S BEING
HELD.



WE'LL NEVER
CLIMB THOSE
WALLS.

I THINK
WE WILL.



Slàine

THE BRIDE OF CROM - 2

SLÀINE AND I, UKKO - HIS FAITHFUL DWARF - HAD ENTERED THE SACRED GROVE OF DRUNEMETON TO RESCUE MEDB, A PRIESTESS OF THE BADB, WHO WAS DUE TO BE SACRIFICED AT SAMAIN. AFTER WE REACHED THE FORTRESS OF THE BADB...

WE COULD BE ALL RIGHT HERE, SLÀINE! IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THOSE GIRLS BELOW GET TO MEET A BIG BARBARIAN LIKE YOU AND A HANDSOME DWARF LIKE ME! EH? EH?

STOP SLAVERING!

BULLY! YOU'RE ALWAYS HITTING ME! ALWAYS BEATING ME UP!

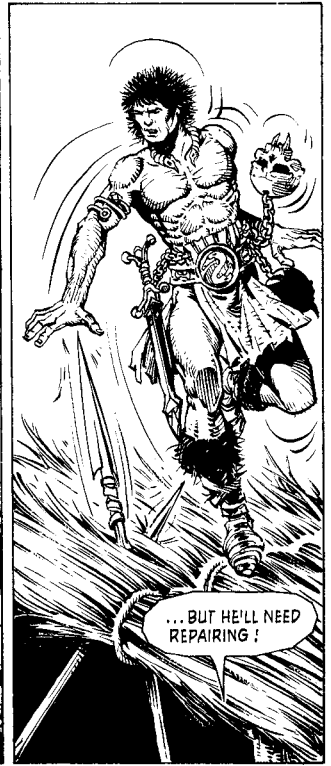
YOU NEED A GOOD BEATING - YOU'RE A DWARF.

GIRL IN THE BLACK CLOAK. RECKON THAT'S MEDB!

WHAT DOES THE WATER-CLOCK SAY, NEMON?

IT'S FULL, MEDB. IT'S TIME.

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME







ATTACK FROM ALL SIDES!
HE ONLY HAS ONE BODY -
HE CAN DIE!



SLAINE UNLEASHED HIS
THROWING THONG. ...

I'LL KNOCK THE WIND
OUT OF YOUR
BAGPIPES...!



...THESE WOUNDS
WILL MAKE YOU
WAIL!

TWENTY FIGHTING MEN FELL TO
SLAINE'S AXE THAT NIGHT -
BUT HE DIDN'T THINK IT TOO MANY.

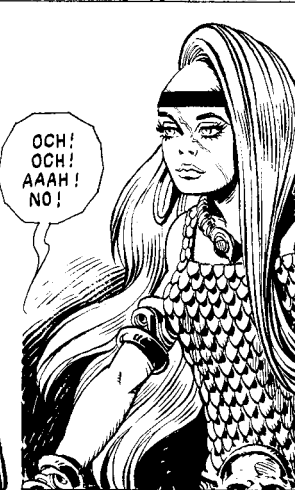
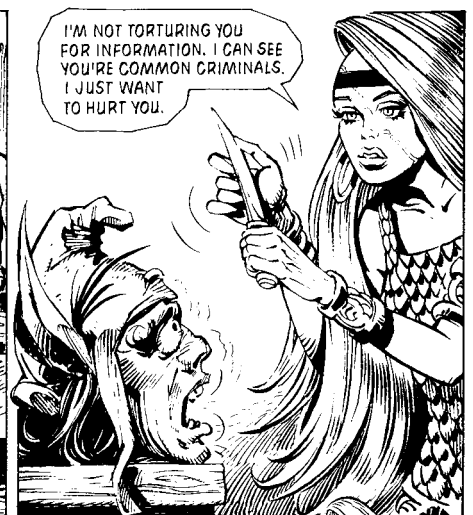


AS THE BATTLE RAGED ON...

I'LL SHEATH MY SWORD
IN THE BRUTE!

NO! HE MUSTN'T DIE - YET.
WE WANT SATISFACTION
FOR BEING DISTURBED ON
THIS SACRED NIGHT.





THE
WICKERMAN!

YOU TWO WILL
WISH YOU'D DIED
THE DEATH OF THE
BLOOD-EAGLE
WHEN WE LIGHT
THE WICKERMAN!

NEXT PROG: **THE DEATH RUN.**

Sláine

THE BRIDE OF CROM - 3

SLÁINE AND I HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY THE DRUNES AND PUT IN A GIANT WICKERMAN DUE TO BE SET ALIGHT AT SAMAIN - BONEFIRE NIGHT!

"THEY BUILD GIGANTIC WICKERWORK FIGURES, THE LIMBS OF WHICH ARE FILLED WITH LIVING MEN. THEY ARE THEN SET ON FIRE AND THE VICTIMS BURN. THEY THINK THE GODS PREFER THE DEATHS OF THIEVES, OUTLAWS AND OTHER CRIMINALS... BUT WHEN THEY RUN SHORT, THEY DO NOT HESITATE TO MAKE UP WITH INNOCENT MEN..." ANCIENT CHRONICLE

SCRIPT: PAT MILLS
ART: M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING: TOM FRAME

WE RECOGNISED MANY OF THE CRIMINALS...

BLIND BRAN!

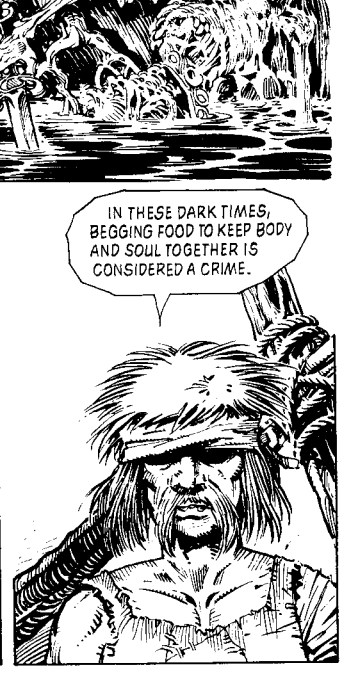
SLÁINE?
IS THAT YOU?

BRAN HAD BEEN A FLINT MINER. LONG HOURS IN THE DARK TUNNELS HAD LEFT HIM NEARLY BLIND...

WHAT ARE YOU
HERE FOR?

BEGGING.

IN THESE DARK TIMES,
BEGGING FOOD TO KEEP BODY
AND SOUL TOGETHER IS
CONSIDERED A CRIME.





IN HIS YOUNGER DAYS, ROTH HAD BEEN
A MIGHTY WARRIOR... HIS WIFE MACHA
FOUGHT ALONGSIDE HIM IN THE SESSAIR'S
GREAT BATTLES WITH THE FOMORIAN
SEA DEVILS...





AND MACHA'S BLADE
KEPT THE WOLVES
IN FOOD...



AFTER THE WAR MACHA HAD SLÁINE...
SHE GAVE HIM HIS FIRST FOOD ON THE
TIP OF HER SWORD, AS WAS THE CUSTOM.

LET MY SON
FIND NO DEATH
BUT IN
BATTLE.

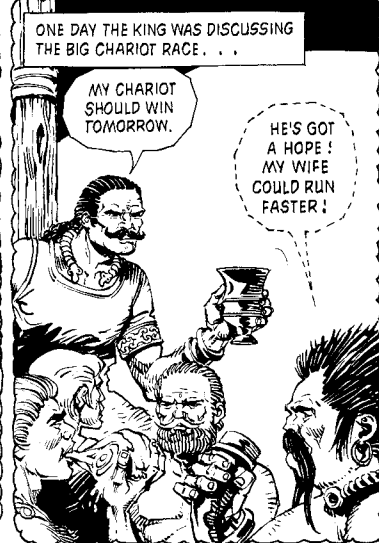


YEARS PASSED AND ROTH
SPENT ALL HIS TIME
FEASTING AND DRINKING...
RELIVING OLD GLORIES...

THERE WERE TEN SEA DEVILS COMING
AT ME, RIGHT? WELL, I KILLED THEM
WITH ONE BLOW OF MY SWORD!
RIGHT? I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS
TOO MANY!



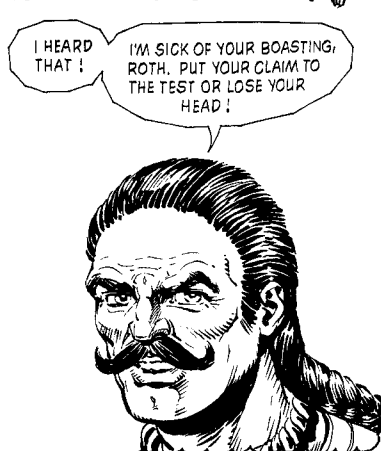
HE WAS FINED FOR EXCEEDING THE
WAISTLINE OF A RED BRANCH
WARRIOR AND BECAME KNOWN
AS 'ROTH BELLYSHAKER'.



ONE DAY THE KING WAS DISCUSSING
THE BIG CHARIOT RACE. . .

MY CHARIOT
SHOULD WIN
TOMORROW.

HE'S GOT
A HOPE!
MY WIFE
COULD RUN
FASTER!



I HEARD
THAT!

I'M SICK OF YOUR BOASTING,
ROTH. PUT YOUR CLAIM TO
THE TEST OR LOSE YOUR
HEAD!



ROTH RETURNED
TO HIS STALL.

HEY, MACHA!
YOU KNOW THAT
CHARIOT RACE
TOMORROW?

WHAT ABOUT IT,
HUSBAND?



YOU'RE
IN IT!





SLÁINE SAW...



MACHA IN THE DIRT.



DON'T YOU THINK I'VE SUFFERED FOR WHAT I DID, SON...? ER - I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D HAVE A DROP O' MEAD ON YOU?

SHUT YOUR BIG GAB OR I'LL RAM MY FIST DOWN IT!



I'M NOT DYING LIKE A RAT IN A CAGE. WE'VE GOT TO ESCAPE.

THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM DRUNEMETON! HI! HI! HI!

WE'RE IN CHAINS!



MY DWARF IS THE BEST PICKLOCK IN TIR-NAN-OG.

THIS FINGER'S OPENED MANY A TREASURE CHEST.



AND THERE'S AN ARMY OF THIEVES, PLUNDERERS AND CUT-THROATS IN THIS WICKERMAN! WE CAN BREAK OUT!

AYE! THAT'S RIGHT, SON. YOU AND ME TOGETHER - EH? WE'LL TAKE THE DRUNES ON... NAE BOTHER!

NEXT PROG: **ENTER SLOUGH FEG...**

Sláine

THE BRIDE OF CROM - 4.

SLÁINE AND I WERE IN A GIGANTIC WICKERMAN THAT WAS TO BE SET ALIGHT AT SAMAIN. WITH US WERE BLIND BRAN, SENOLL THE SCAVENGER, TAMUN THE STUMP, AND ROTH BELLYSHAKER - SLÁINE'S FATHER. BUT AS WE TALKED OF ESCAPE...



SCRIPT: PAT MILLIS
ART: M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING: TOM FRAME

THE DRUNES AND THE BADB APPROACHED
THE WICKERMAN. AT THEIR HEAD...
THE LORD WEIRD, SLOUGH FEG!



IT'S FEG HIMSELF, SLAINE ! HOW CAN WE FIGHT THE ARCH-SORCERER ?

WE'VE OUR CHAINS ! AND WE CAN GET MORE WEAPONS !



SCARED TO DIE ARE YOU ? HI ! HI !

I'M NOT AFRAID OF DYING, BUT I LIKE LIVING BETTER.

AND ME !



I'M TELLING YOU - I CAN HANDLE SLOUGH FEG ! HE DOESN'T FRIGHTEN ME - OH, NO !

HE SHOULD DO, YOU DRUNKEN FOOL ! I'D RATHER PLUNGE MY HAND INTO A SERPENT'S NEST THAN FACE THE MASTER OF THE DARK ARTS !



OH, CROM-CRUACH... GREAT WORM... WELCOME ON THIS SAMAIN'S EVE... THE NIGHT WHEN THE DEAD HAVE THEIR HOLIDAY !



WE OFFER YOU THESE THIEVES, BANDITS AND DREGS OF THE EARTH, WHO - BY THEIR CRIMES - HAVE SHOWN THEY ARE MOST EAGER TO JOIN YOU...

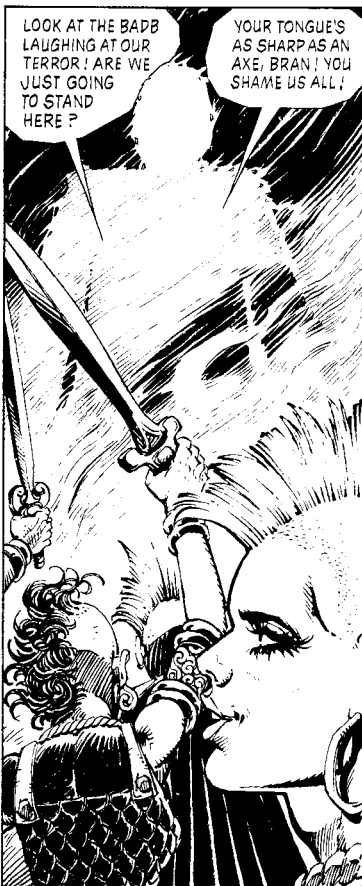


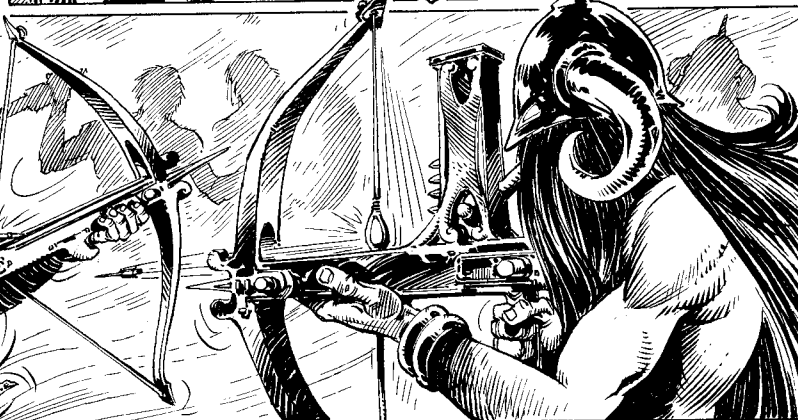
WE KNOW IT'S THEIR SUFFERING WHICH PLEASES YOU MOST !



IN THE HEAD OF THE WICKERMAN...

ACCEPT THEM AS THE DOWRY FOR YOUR BRIDE... MEDB... NOT JUST ANY MAIDEN, BUT A WARRIOR PRINCESS OF THE BADB !









NEXT PROG: **SLÁINE THE WARPED**

Sláine

THE BRIDE OF CROM - Pt 5

SLAINE AND I HAD ENTERED THE SACRED GROVE OF DRUNEMETON TO RESCUE MEPB, A PRIESTESS OF THE BADB. DUE TO BE SACRIFICED AT SAMAIN. SLAINE REACHED THE TOP OF THE BURNING WICKERMAN WHERE SHE WAS KEPT, ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF TRAPPED. . .



SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME

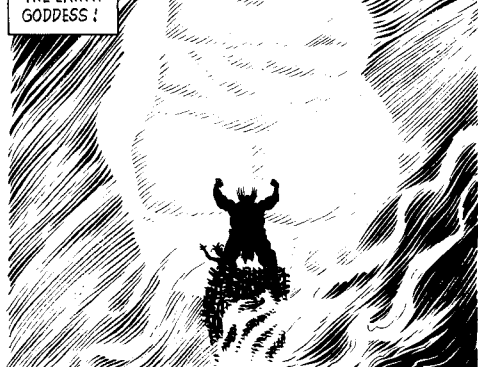
AS THE FLAMES LICKED AROUND HIM, SLAINE'S ANGER GREW. . .



AND A GREATER POWER BURNED WITHIN HIM...



THE POWER OF DANU, THE EARTH GODDESS!



AND HE EXPLODED INTO THE MYSTIC
BATTLE-RAGE CALLED THE WARP-SPASM!

AND HE SNARLED HIS
GREAT HERO'S SNARL
AT HIS TORMENTORS!

NO!

THOSE NORTHERN BARBARIANS
WORSHIP THE EARTH AND THE
SUN... THEY OPPOSE MY
MASTER CROM-CRUACH!

CROM! SHOW WHO IS
THE STRONGEST!

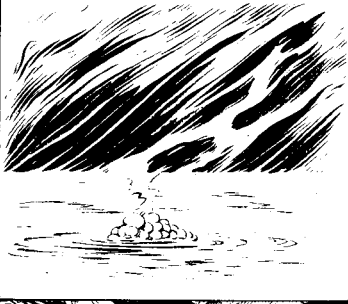
HE'S
WARPED!

HE MUST BE FROM ONE OF THE TRIBES OF
THE EARTH GODDESS! A FEW OF THEM
CAN WARP THE EARTH FORCE THROUGH
THEIR BODIES!

WE'RE
FALLING!



THE HALF-DEAD... MEN WHO DIED BUT WERE TRAPPED BETWEEN THE PLANES...



VICTIMS OF THE DRUNES' WEIRD STONES THAT
WARPED THE LAWS OF TIME AND SPACE!

WE
HEAR YOU,
LORD
WEIRD!







I'LL SEND THEM
BACK INTO THE
DEATH-DARKNESS!



YOUR
TIME'S
SHORT,
WARPED
ONE!



OUR LONG IRON
TONGUES ARE THIRSTY
FOR BLOOD!



PAH!
MORE SWILL
FOR THE
TROUGH!

NEXT
PROG. **SLAINE THE VICTOR.**

Sláine

THE BRIDE OF CROM - Pt 6.
THE ARCH-DRUNE SLOUGH FEG CALLED
ON THE HALF-DEAD TO STOP SLÁINE...
BUT SLÁINE WENT INTO THE MYSTIC
BATTLE-FRENZY CALLED THE WARP-SPASM...

THE SLAY-STACK
GROWS !



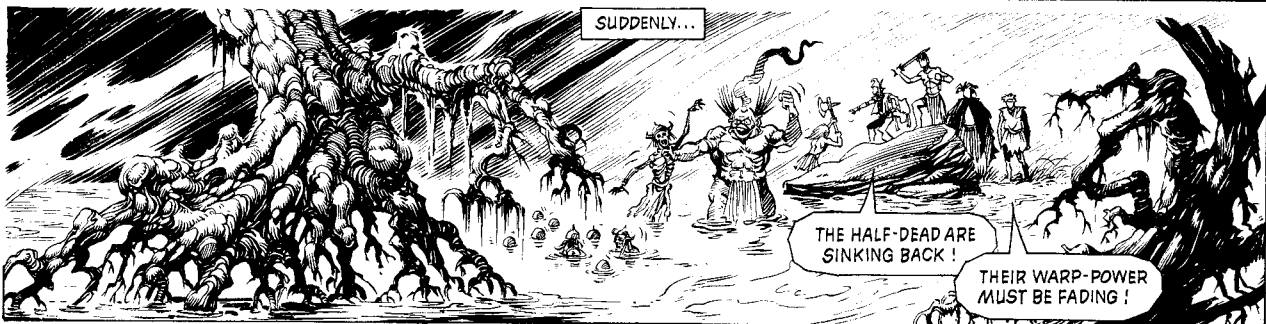
SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
M. BELARDINELLI
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME



WOLVES
WILL SOON BE
FEASTING ON YOU,
WARPED ONE !



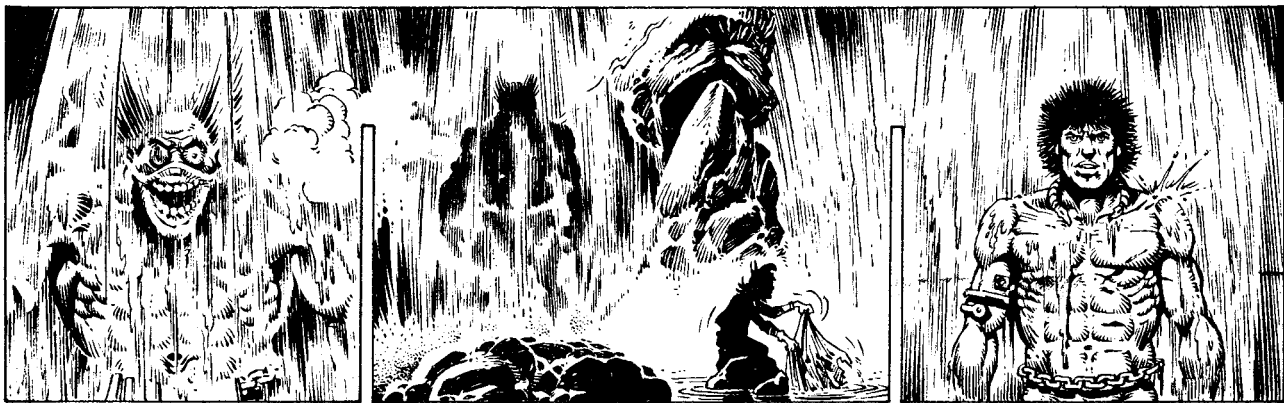
THEN THEY SHALL GNAW ON
YOUR BONES INSTEAD !



AS WE RECOVERED...



ONLY I CAN HANDLE HIM WHEN HE'S LIKE THIS... COME ON, LORD!

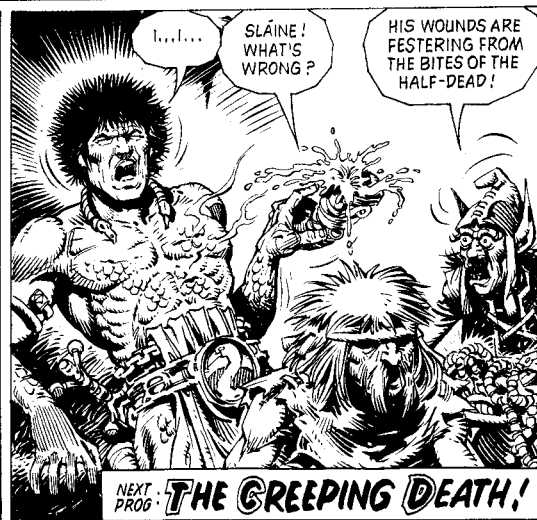








NOW, SLÁINE - YOU MUST LEARN RESPECT FOR A DRUNNESS. I'LL TURN THOSE IRON MUSCLES TO BLUBBER AND YOUR BLOOD TO POISON!



NEXT PROG: **THE CREEPING DEATH!**



THE CREEPING DEATH

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Massimo Belardinelli
Letters: Tom Frame

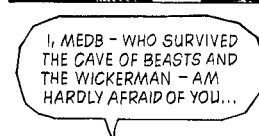
Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 343

Sláine

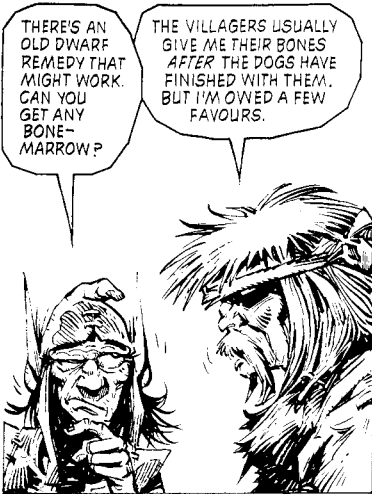
THE CREEPING DEATH.

AFTER ESCAPING FROM DRUNEMETON WITH MEDB, SLÁINE AND I DISCOVERED SHE DIDN'T WANT TO BE RESCUED. WE DEPARTED WITH HER FATHER'S GOLD, BUT THEN SLÁINE WAS AFFECTED BY THE RANCID BITES OF THE HALF-DEAD. . .

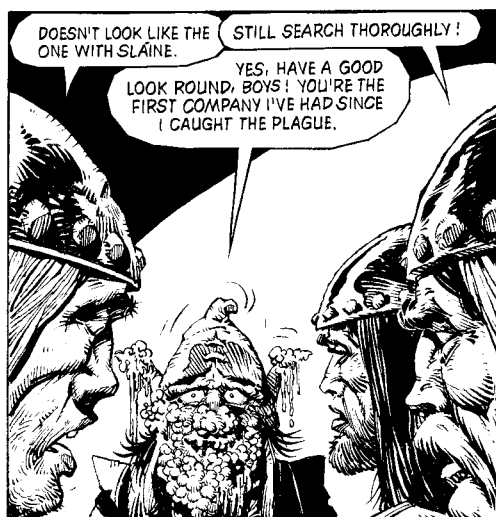


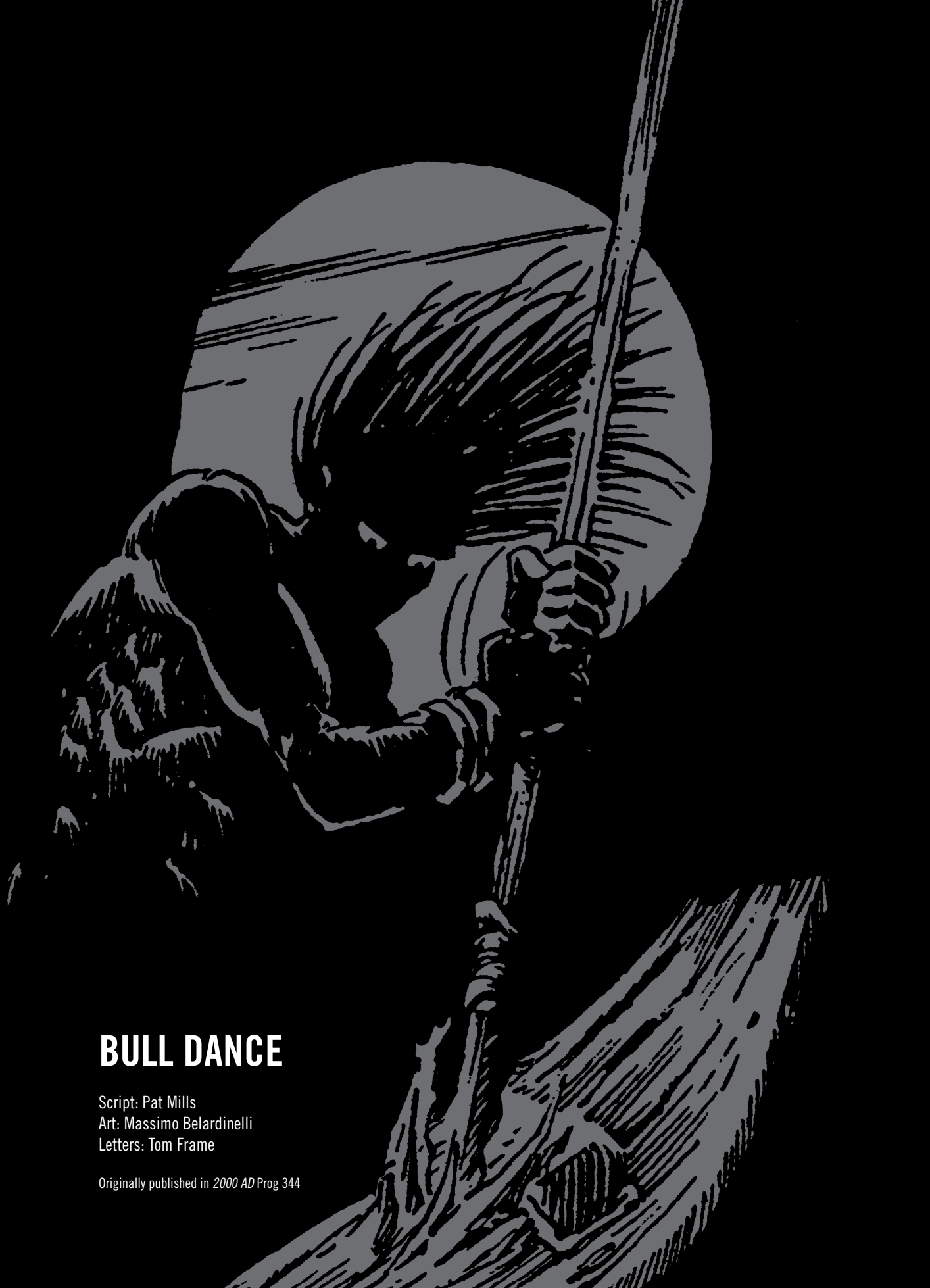












BULL DANCE

Script: Pat Mills

Art: Massimo Belardinelli

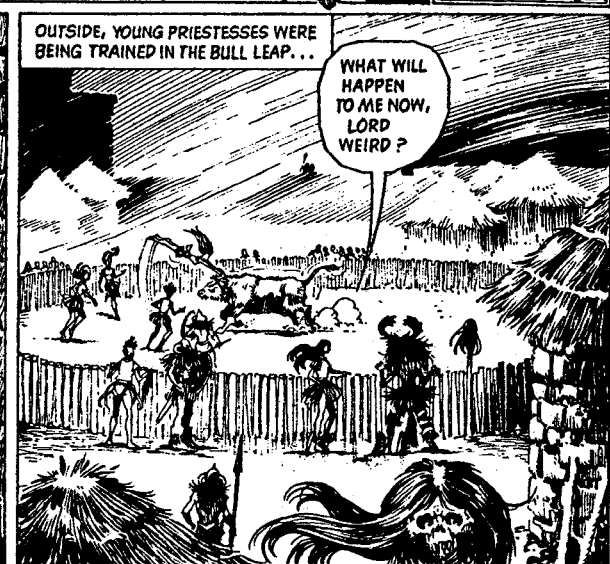
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 344

Sláine

THE BULL DANCE.

AT BLIND BRAN'S HOVEL, SLÁINE SLOWLY RECOVERED FROM THE BITES OF THE HALF-DEAD. MEANWHILE, MEDB HAD RETURNED TO DRUNEMETON AND SLOUGH FEG...





WATCH THE BULL, MEDB...
SEE HOW HE TRIES TO GORE
THEM? BUT A CLEVER
GIRL CAN OUTWIT A
RAGING BULL...



MOST OF THE TIME.



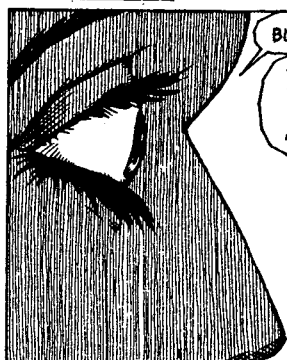
THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH
GODDESS ARE LIKE BULLS -
CLUMSY AND BRUTISH. THEY,
TOO, CAN BE OUTWITTED BY
CUNNING.

AND THERE IS
NONE MORE CUNNING THAN
YOU, MEDB!



I WANT YOU TO TRAVEL NORTH DISGUISED AS
A RICH PRINCESS. YOU WILL MARRY ONE
OF THEIR KINGS - THEN STIR UP TROUBLE
AMONGST THE
TRIBES.

YOU WISH ME
TO MARRY A...
BARBARIAN?!



BUT, LORD WEIRD...THEY'RE PRIMITIVES!

THEY ARE. AND FOR
YOUR GREAT TASK,
YOU MUST KNOW
MORE ABOUT THEM...



"THERE IS THE TRIBE OF THE GROWLING SHIELDS. THEY USE A HARSH BATTLE ROAR TO TERRIFY THEIR ENEMIES...SNARLING INTO THEIR SHIELDS WHICH AMPLIFY THE SOUND.



"THEY NEVER CHARGE INTO BATTLE, FOR THEY THINK IT SUGGESTS FEAR. INSTEAD, THEY MOVE SLOWLY AND MENACINGLY FORWARD...

"THERE IS THE TRIBE OF THE SHADOWS WHO PAINT THEIR BODIES AND SHIELDS BLACK.



"THEY LIKE TO FIGHT ON REALLY DARK NIGHTS.

"AND MOST SAVAGE OF ALL THE TRIBE OF THE SESSAIR. THEY LIKE BEING WOUNDED - AND MAKE THEIR WOUNDS BIGGER, SO THEY CAN BOAST ABOUT THEM.



"THEY'RE FORBIDDEN TO CUT THEIR HAIR UNTIL THEY'VE KILLED SOMEONE - SO THE HAIRIEST ARE MOST EAGER FOR BATTLE.

"THEIR BEST WARRIORS ARE IN THE RED BRANCH. MOST ARE WARPED AND WEAR A HERO-HARNESSES..."

"WHEN THEY HAVE A WARP-SPASM, THE HARNESSES EXPAND AND STOP THEM RIPPING THEIR CLOTHES."



"I EXPECT THAT'S SLAIN'S TRIBE?"

"IT IS."

"THESE TRIBES FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES, BUT ARE UNITED IN THEIR DEVOTION TO DANU, THE EARTH GODDESS."

"WHEN OUR MASTER, CROM-CRUACH, BEGINS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH, THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS WILL BE OUR GREATEST THREAT!"

"AS ONE OF THEIR QUEENS, YOU CAN INFORM ME OF THEIR MOST SECRET PLANS!"

"WILL YOU DO IT, GIRL? OR HAVE YOU LOST YOUR NERVE AFTER THE WICKERMAN?"



"NO, LORD WEIRD. AND I WILL PROVE IT TO YOU..."







MEANWHILE, SLÁINE'S HEALTH GRADUALLY IMPROVED. . .

DRINK YOUR NICE BROTH, LORD. THEN I'VE GOT TO BLEED YOU AGAIN.

WHAT'S IN THIS P?

RATS' LIVERS!

THEY'RE GOOD. ANY MORE?



NO! AND YOU'D BETTER GET WELL FAST! WE'VE GOT TO MAKE SOME MONEY!

I'D LIKE TO HELP... BUT IT'S HARD ENOUGH BEGGING FOR ONE.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FLINT MINE YOU WORKED AT, BRAN?

CLOSED DOWN. WE MINERS WERE THROWN OUT OF WORK WHEN DOWNALL THE WEAPON-SMITH SET UP HIS FORGE IN THE VILLAGE.

NO-ONE WANTED STONE WEAPONS ANY MORE.



BUT IRON SWORDS BEND. YOU HAVE TO STRAIGHTEN THEM OUT WITH YOUR TEETH AFTER EVERY BLOW.

NOT DOWNALL'S. AND THEY'RE SO SHARP - A HAIR DROPPED ON THE EDGE WILL FALL IN HALF!



I LIKE A STONE AXE BEST. YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE WITH STONE.

YOU'VE GOT TO CHANGE WITH THE TIMES, SLÁINE! STONE AXES ARE SO... MESSY!

THE VILLAGERS SAY DOWNALL USES DARK-POWERS TO MAKE HIS SWORDS!

PEOPLE ALWAYS SAY THAT ABOUT NEW INVENTIONS. I'D LIKE TO MEET HIM...



NO! YOU MUST KEEP AWAY FROM DOWNALL! HE'S EVIL, I TELL YOU... EVIL!

NEXT PROG: **DIRTY WORK AT THE FORGE!**



HEROE'S BLOOD

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Mike McMahon
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 345-347

Slaine

HEROES' BLOOD - 1.
AT BLIND BRAN'S HOVEL,
SLAINE CONTINUED TO
MAKE A GOOD RECOVERY
FROM HIS WOUNDS.

ANY
LUCK
BEGGING,
BRAN?

A FEW
SCRAPS, BUT
GUESS WHO!
MET COMING OUT
OF DOMNALL THE
WEAPONSMITH'S?
YOUR DWARF
UKKO!

MAYBE
UKKO WAS
BEGGING?

NO -
DOMNALL'S
REALLY STINGY.
YOUR BREATH WILL
NEVER SMELL OF
ALE AFTER YOU'VE
BEEN TO HIS
HOUSE.

WHO
IS THIS
DOMNALL?

A DWARF.
HE USED TO
WORK FOR THE
TITANS.

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
MIKE MCMAHON
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME

THE TITANS WERE
A BRUTAL RACE OF
TALL WARRIORS.
WITH THEIR LARGE
BRAINS AND HUGE
BODIES, THEY WERE
THE FIRST TO RULE
ALBION IN A
LEGENDARY
GOLDEN AGE.



BUT THEY BECAME SO POWERFUL, THEY EVENTUALLY HAD NO ENEMIES AND SANK INTO DECAY... BECOMING SLOTHFUL, PONDEROUS FREAKS.

LUMBERING OAFS WHO NO LONGER HAD THE STRENGTH TO RULE, BUT HATED TO SEE OTHERS TAKE THEIR PLACE, AND WERE DESPERATE TO HOLD ON TO POWER.

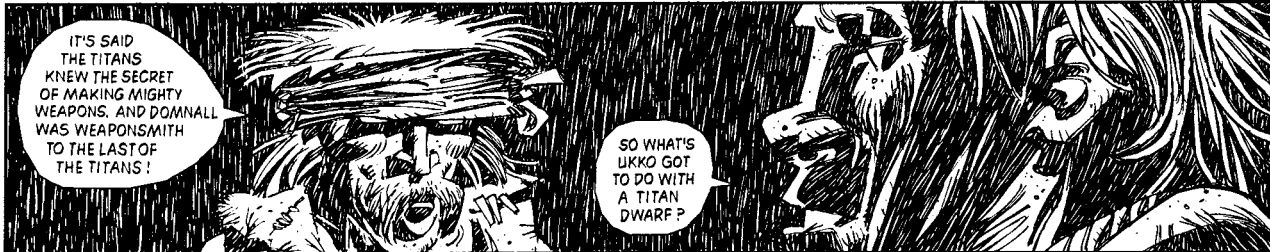


NOW THEIR DAY WAS NEARLY OVER. THEIR PAST ALREADY BECOMING MYTH. SOME WERE TREATED AS SIMPLETONS - OBJECTS OF SCORN...



OTHERS WERE HUNTED DOWN AND KILLED. AND THE LAND OF THE YOUNG WAS WELL RID OF THEM.

* EDITOR'S NOTE: PLEASE EXCUSE UKKO'S OUTBURST AGAINST THE TITANS. BEING A DWARF, HE HAD NO LIKING FOR THEM.



IT'S SAID THE TITANS KNEW THE SECRET OF MAKING MIGHTY WEAPONS. AND DORNALL WAS WEAPONSMITH TO THE LAST OF THE TITANS!

SO WHAT'S UKKO GOT TO DO WITH A TITAN DWARF?



LATER...

TIME FOR ME TO BLEED YOU, SLAINE.

AGAIN? THAT'S THE FOURTH TIME THIS WEEK. NO WONDER I'M NOT MY OLD SELF.



UKKO KNOWS BEST. DIDN'T HE NURSE YOU BACK TO HEALTH WHEN YOU WERE NEARLY DEAD?

GET ON WITH IT!



THAT'S RIGHT... YOU SLEEP, SLAINE... I'VE JUST GOT TO GO INTO THE VILLAGE.







I GOT MORE BLOOD LIKE YOU SAID, DOMINALL! NOW YOU'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO TEMPER A MIGHTY WEAPON!

JUST LEAVE IT OVER THERE. I'M BUSY AT THE MOMENT.



BUT YOU SAID SLAINE'S BLOOD WAS THE BEST YOU'D EVER COME ACROSS! PERFECT FOR QUENCHING SWORDS!

DID I? WELL, IT'S NOT BAD... I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO. 'BYE, UKKO.

WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY YOU PROMISED ME?

LOOK, I'VE HAD A BAD WEEK. MY WEAPONS AREN'T SELLING WELL. MY SHED'S FULL OF UNSOLD SWORDS.



I'D MADE THE TWO BIGGEST MISTAKES IN BUSINESS. FIRST - NEVER SHOW YOU'RE KEEN. SECOND - GET YOUR MONEY IN ADVANCE. I'D BEEN OUTCHEATED... AND BY ANOTHER DWARF, AT THAT!

GIVE ME MY MONEY, YOU ROTTEN CHEAT!

UKKO - THAT REALLY HURTS ME. I'M ON YOUR SIDE! BUT I'VE GOT TO MAKE A PROFIT - I'M NOT A RICH DWARF, YOU KNOW.



I WANT MY MONEY - OR I'LL GET SLAINE ONTO YOU!

OH, YES? AND TELL HIM WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO? I DON'T THINK SO.

SLAINE!





NEXT PROG. **THE WRITING ON THE WALL.**

Sláine

HERO'S BLOOD - 2.

MY BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TITAN DWARF - DOMNALL THE WEAPONSMITH - HAD GONE TERRIBLY WRONG. NOW HE WAS PLANNING TO USE SLÁINE'S BLOOD TO HARDEN A MIGHTY WEAPON - A SWORD OF THE TITANS !

THE BLOOD'S GOING TO YOUR HEAD NICELY... SOON I WILL USE IT TO FASHION 'WAR-FLAME'! THE GREATEST SWORD THE LAND OF THE YOUNG HAS SEEN !

LET ME SAY IT FOR YOU, LORD... IF WE EVER GET OUT OF HERE, YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME !

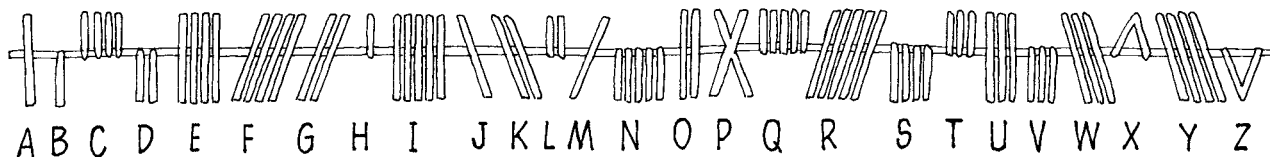
THOSE SKULLS... DOMNALL'S WORK ?

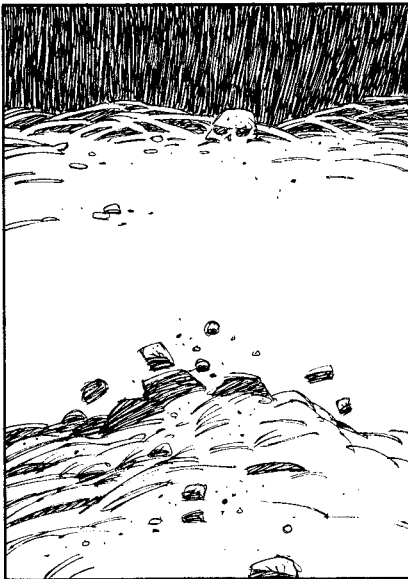
IT CERTAINLY WASN'T NATURAL CAUSES !

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
DAKE MCMAHON
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME



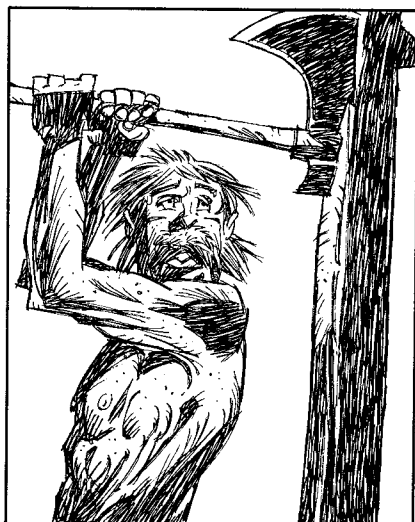
THE OGHAM ALPHABET -













HERO'S BLOOD - 3
THE TITAN DWARF HAD FORGED
'WAR-FLAME' - A SWORD OF
POWER - WHICH HE WAS ABOUT
TO QUENCH... BY PLUNGING IT
INTO SLÁINE.

SCRIPT:
PAT MULLS
ART:
MIKE MCMAHON
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME

'WAR-FLAME' IS MY
FINEST CREATION! WHEN
THIS SWORD IS QUENCHED,
NONE WILL WITHSTAND
ITS POWER!

YOU WASTE VALUABLE
TIME SPEECH-MAKING,
DWARF.



SO YOU'RE
AWAKE. WELL,
DON'T BOTHER
GETTING
UP...







BUT NOT FAR
BEHIND US...



HELMETS FLASHING
IN THE SUN... MUST
BE A WAR-PARTY.

WONDER
WHO THEY'RE
AFTER?



GOOD DAY TO YOU,
FRIENDS. *ORDULPH*
OF THE BIG GRIP IS
THE NAME. ALWAYS
PLEASED TO SEE
HUMAN FACES ON
THIS LONELY
TRACK.



WHAT DO YOU
MEAN... 'HUMAN'?

THERE'S A
SHOGGEY BEAST
LOOSE! A HAIRY
FIEND WHOSE
SAVAGE FANGS
HAVE GIVEN DEATH
TO MANY IN THESE
PARTS.

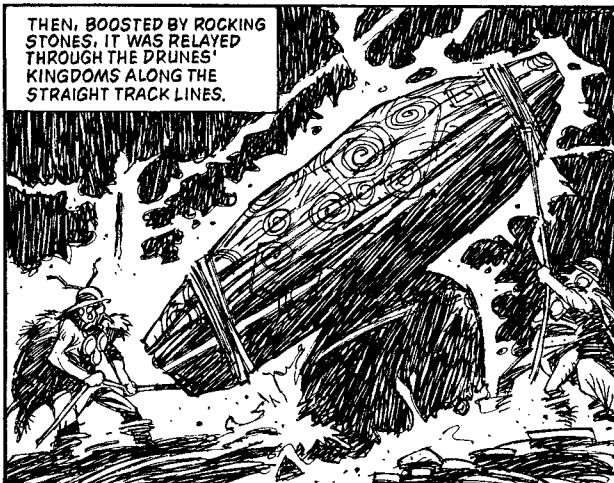


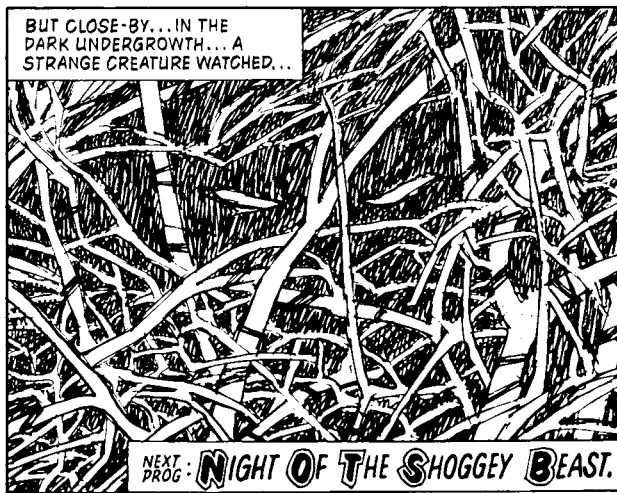
A *SHOGGEY BEAST* WAS
A MAN WHO COULD TURN
HIMSELF INTO A MONSTER.

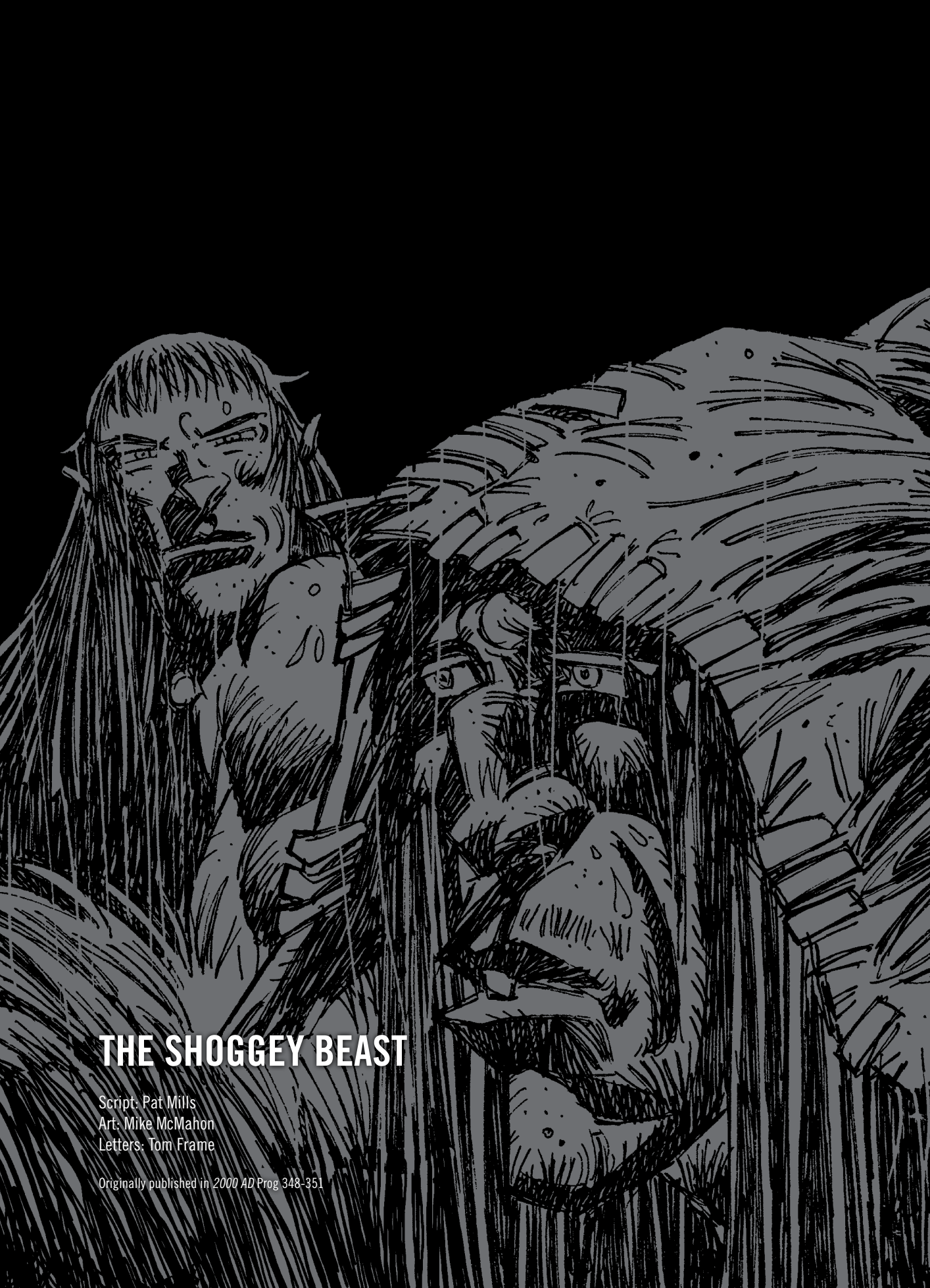
I BLAME THE DRUNES
MYSELF. YOU KNOW
WHAT THEY'RE DOING
OVER AT *CARNAC P*
ERECTING MORE
WEIRD STONES!
THEY'VE OVER
THREE THOUSAND
NOW!



I'VE SEEN THEIR
HANDIWORK.
THEIR STONES
ARE DRAINING THE
EARTH-POWER.
LEAVING THE LAND
SOUR AND DEFILED.







THE SHOGGEY BEAST

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Mike McMahon
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 348-351

Sláine

THE SHOGGEY BEAST-1.
THE SLAVEMASTER, ORDULPH OF THE BIG GRIP, WARNED US THAT A SHOGGEY BEAST - A MAN WHO COULD TURN HIMSELF INTO A HAIRY FIEND - WAS TERRORISING THE DISTRICT. BUT AS THE SLAVE GANG CONTINUED THEIR JOURNEY. . .













Sláine

THE SHOGGEY BEAST - 2

AFTER SLÁINE HAD SEEN OFF THE SHOGGEY BEAST - A MAN WHO COULD TRANSFORM HIMSELF INTO A MONSTER - WE CONTINUED THE JOURNEY NORTH WITH OUR SLAVES. BUT A WAR PARTY WAS FOLLOWING...







I SUPPOSE
I'D BETTER
SET YOU
FREE.

HOW ABOUT
ANOTHER
GAME? A
CHANCE TO
GET YOUR
REVENGE?



SEVERAL GAMES LATER...

WHAT'S WRONG WITH
YOU, DWARF? YOU'VE
GOT A FACE LIKE
THE RAGNAROK.



HE JUST
WON ME IN
A DICE GAME.
NOW I'M HIS
SLAVE!



AND I'M GOING TO
MAKE YOUR LIFE
A MISERY! YOU
LITTLE PIECE OF
DIRT - MAKING
ME CALL YOU
'MASTER'!

HA, HA, HA!



IT'S NOT
FUNNY!

HA, HA, HA!
IT'S THE
FUNNIEST THING
I'VE HEARD!



HA, HA, HA, HA!



NEXT MORNING...

THE SHAME
OF IT! UKKO
THE DWARF
WITH A
SLAVE ROPE
ROUND HIS
NECK!

IT'LL BE
ACROSS
YOUR REAR
IN A
MOMENT.
MOVE!

MAKE SURE
YOU BEAT HIM
REGULARLY,
GORT. HE
NEEDS IT.







NEXT: UNWELCOME GUESTS!

Sláine

THE SHOGGEY BEAST - 3.

AS WE CONTINUED OUR JOURNEY NORTH, WE CAME ACROSS A MUTILATED BODY - THE WORK OF THE SHOGGEY BEAST, A MAN WHO COULD TURN HIMSELF INTO A MONSTER. AND CLOSE-BY... A LONELY HOUSE...





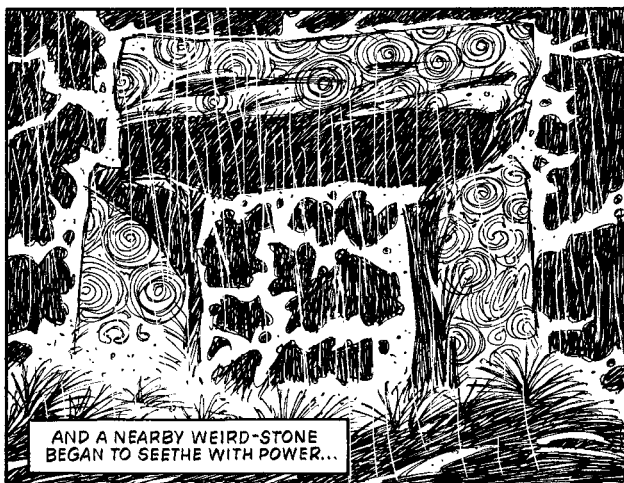




OUTSIDE, THE RAIN
POURED DOWN.

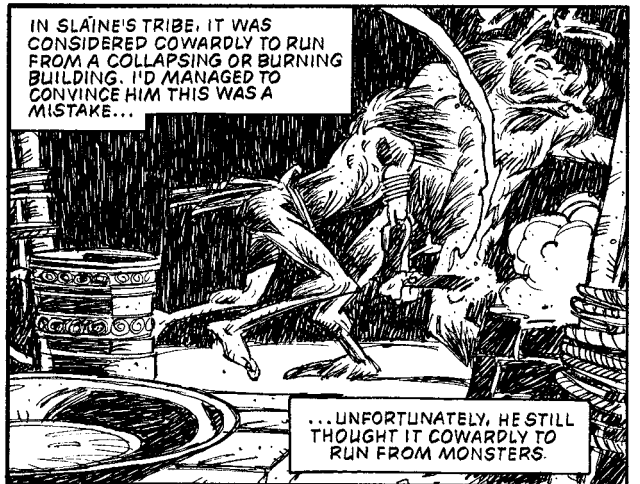


THE MYSTERIOUS
WARRIORS MARCHED ON
THROUGH THE NIGHT.



AND A NEARBY WEIRD-STONE
BEGAN TO SEETHE WITH POWER...





Sláine

THE SHOGGEY BEAST - 4.

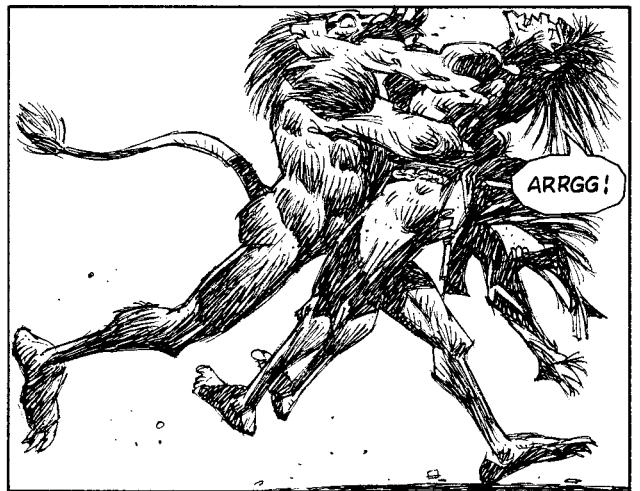
SLÁINE AND I ARRIVED AT A SINISTER HOUSE WHERE MEDRAWD THE QUIET ONE AND HIS MOTHER WERE LIVING. MEDRAWD REFUSED TO LET US SEE HIS MOTHER AND WE SUSPECTED SHE WAS THE SHOGGEY BEAST TERRORISING THE DISTRICT. BUT THEN... MEDRAWD HIMSELF TURNED INTO THE HAIRY FIEND.

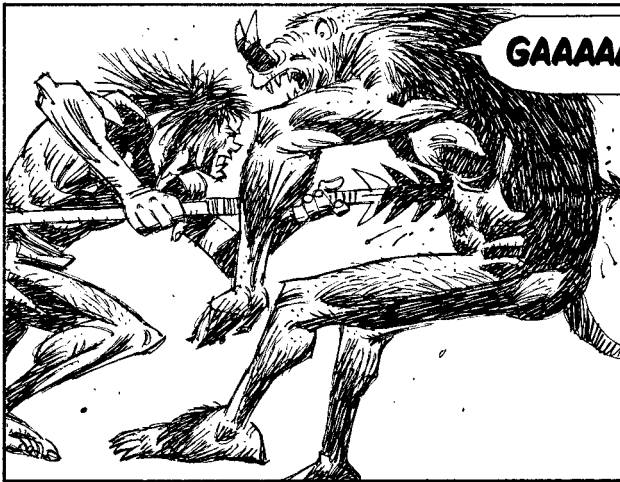


RRAAGH!









GAAAAAHH!



YOU WERE
A MIGHTY FOE,
SHOGGEY.
MAY YOU FIND
GOOD HUNTING
IN THE
OTHERWORLD.





OH, MY POOR MEDRAWD...
AFTER HE TOUCHED THE
WEIRD STONE AND
WENT SHOGGEY, I...
I DID MY BEST TO
KEEP HIM OUT OF
TROUBLE...



I KNEW THE
NEIGHBOURS WOULD
SUSPECT, SO WE
MOVED OUT HERE...
AND, AT NIGHT,
I'D KEEP HIM
CHAINED UP...

BUT
SOMETIMES
HE'D ESCAPE
AND DO...BAD
THINGS.



TONIGHT, HE WAS TOO QUICK FOR ME
AND CHAINED ME UP INSTEAD. ...I KNOW
HE DID WRONG, BUT... HE WAS A
GOOD BOY, REALLY.



DON'T UPSET YOURSELF, DEAR.
TRY TO LOOK ON THE BRIGHT
SIDE. HE'LL MAKE A NICE
FUR COAT.



COME ON,
DWARF.

WHAT
DID I
SAY?



WE LEFT THAT HOUSE OF FEAR.
BUT NEXT DAY...

SLOUGH THROT!
THE WOMAN WITHIN
REPORTS A BARBARIAN
AND HIS DWARF
STOPPED HERE
LAST NIGHT.

IT MUST BE
SLAINE!

ONWARDS!

NEXT
PROG. **NEW HORIZONS!**



SKY CHARIOTS

Script: Pat Mills
Art: Mike McMahon
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in 2000 AD Prog 352-360

Sláine

SKY CHARIOTS - Pt 1.

SLÁINE AND I CONTINUED OUR JOURNEY NORTH TOWARDS HIS TRIBE. UNSURE WHETHER A WAR PARTY BEHIND WAS FOLLOWING US. WE LEFT THE STRAIGHT TRACK SYSTEM THAT LINKED THE VILLAGES AND TRIBES OF TIR-NAN-OG AND TRAVELLED OVERLAND, STOPPING HERE AND THERE, MAKING NEW FRIENDS AND THEN ONCE AGAIN, MOVING ON...

GOODBYE, SABRA.

GOODBYE, SLÁINE.

GOODBYE, TANGWEN.

GOODBYE, UKKO.

GOODBYE, CASSIR...
MIDIR...GONERIL...
GORMLAITH...
FAY...

GOODBYE, UKKO!

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLS
ART:
KYLE MACMAGUIRE
LETTERING:
TOM FRASER

OUR TRANSPORT WAS
SLOW BUT DOCILE...

THAT'S A LOT OF
GIRLFRIENDS FOR A
LITTLE DWARF.

YOU CAN TALK! YOU'RE
MEANT TO BE GOING NORTH
TO CLAIM NIAMH.

AYE! WE'LL
BE WED AND
SHE'LL SHARE
MY STALL IN
THE GREAT
ROUND HALL.

AND WHAT
WILL HAPPEN
TO ME THEN?
THAT'S WHAT
I WANT TO
KNOW!

STOP
PRATTLING -
I'VE GOT A
SORE HEAD.
AND IN LUG'S
NAME, STOP
RINGING
THAT BELL!!!

IT'S NOT ME!
IT'S COMING
FROM OVER
THERE...

IT'S A
FUNERAL
BELL!

CAW SHEAF-HAIR, THE SHEPHERD BOY, HEARD THE BELL, TOO. IT MEANT THEY WERE BURYING MORGANT GREYBEARD, THE VILLAGE HEADMAN.

MORGANT WAS LUCKY. AT LEAST HE WAS ABLE TO DIE...



CAW LOOKED AT THE PASTURE SLOWLY TURNING INTO SOURLAND - WHERE THE NATURAL LAWS OF TIME AND SPACE BECAME TWISTED AND THE DEAD LIVED EERILY ON...



SOON IT'LL BE TOO LATE FOR THE REST OF US. WHEN WE PERISH, WE'LL BECOME THE "HALF-DEAD".



MANY OF THE SHEEP WERE DYING, AND MOST OF THE CROPS HAD FAILED. NOW THE FEAST OF SAMAIN - "SUMMER'S END" - HAD GONE. THE VILLAGE OF GAVRA FACED A BLEAK WINTER.

MOTHER EARTH IS NO LONGER FERTILE. THE DRUNKS HAVE DRAINED ALL THE MAGIC FROM HER...



EVER SINCE THEY BUILT THE GREAT DOLMEN THE LAND HAS BEGUN TO DIE!

CAW RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE.



I SAW THE BEETLE FIRST!

NO! I DID!



HUNGER GRIPPED EVERY INHABITANT.



MADDOG STAG-SHANKS!
THE MEAT TUBS ARE
EMPTY! HOW WILL WE
LAST THE WINTER?
HOW...?

STOP
COMPLAINING,
WOMAN! WE'LL
FIND A WAY!



OCH! THERE IS NO
WAY! THE DOLMEN
HAS TAKEN ALL THE
EARTH POWER!

SHE'S
RIGHT.

DON'T YOU
START! ALL
SHE'S DONE
TODAY IS
OCH AND
MOAN!



IN THE FOREST THERE ARE TIME
MONSTERS. PLENTY OF MEAT
ON THEM.

A WONDERFUL
IDEA, GAV!
JUST ONE SMALL
PROBLEM... THE
DRUNES FORBID
US TO TOUCH
THEM ON PAIN
OF DEATH!

WELL, WHAT ARE
WE GOING TO DO?



YOU'RE OUR HEADMAN
NOW, FATHER.



I DON'T KNOW!
PRAY FOR A MIRACLE!
I'M GOING DOWN THE
DRINKING HALL!



AT THAT MOMENT, WE
RODE INTO GAVRA.

LOOK!

I DON'T
BELIEVE
IT...



A
MIRACLE?



WH-WHAT
ARE THEY
STARING
AT?



OUR BEAST.



THESE PEOPLE
ARE STARVING
TO DEATH.



VERY SAD,
BUT WHAT'S
IT GOT TO
DO WITH
US ?



SHUT UP,
DWARF.



HERE, FELLOW...
TAKE THE HAIRY ONE
TO YOUR KILLING
POUND.

SO MUCH MEAT!
WE'RE SAVED!



THAT NIGHT THE VILLAGERS
CELEBRATED WITH A FEAST.

YOU SHOULDN'T
SAVE THE LIVES OF
PEOPLE FATED TO DIE,
SLAINE! THAT'S
CHEATING THE
GODS!



YOU'RE WELCOME
TO STAY HERE,
SLAINE.

SORRY, MADOG, THE DWARF
AND I ARE DRIFTERS, CARING
ONLY THAT WE'VE ENOUGH TO EAT
AND DRINK... ESPECIALLY DRINK...



OF COURSE! CAW!
MORE MEAD FOR
OUR GUESTS!



BUT AS CAW
STEPPED
OUTSIDE...

COME
HERE,
BOY!

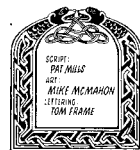
SKULL-
SWORDS!

CONTINUED
NEXT PROG.

Sláine

SKY CHARIOTS - 2.

SLÁINE HAD GIVEN OUR BEAST TO THE STARVING VILLAGERS OF GAVRA. THAT NIGHT, THEY CELEBRATED WITH A FEAST. MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE DRINKING HALL, CAW SHEAF-HAIR, THE SHEPHERD-BOY, WAS STOPPED BY THE SKULL-SWORDS . . .



SCRIPT:
PAT MILLIS
ART:
MIKE McMAHON
LETTERING:
TOM FARRAR



AS CAW APPROACHED HE COULD SMELL THE DRUNE'S OVERPOWERING STENCH - KNOWN AS THE 'MYSTIC AURA' . . .



HE REMEMBERED THE NIGHTMARE TALES HE'D BEEN TOLD OF WHAT WAS UNDERNEATH THOSE FUR ROBES . . .



...AND HERE WAS A DRUNE THAT HAD REACHED THE SUPREME RANK OF 'SLOUGH' - SHEDDING HIS SKIN . . .

THE DRUNES HAD MASTERED EARTH POWER - USING IT FOR EVIL - BUT THEY HAD PAID A TERRIBLE PRICE IN FESTERING DECAY . . .



THE SKULL-SWORDS LOOKED ON - THEIR BREATH MASKS PROTECTING THEM FROM THEIR MASTER'S FUMES.

SPEAK UP, BOY!

CAW SHEAF-HAIR, SON OF MADOG STAG-SHANKS! LORD... IT IS ONLY A HAIRY ONE WE ARE EATING IN THE HALL.



AND HOW CAME YOU BY THIS BEAST?



A MAN CAME TO OUR VILLAGE AND JUST... GAVE IT TO US!

BAH! YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE SUCH AN UNLIKELY STORY?



KILL HIM!



NO!



MOMENTS LATER...



SURROUND THE HALL. LET NO-ONE ESCAPE!

MEANWHILE, INSIDE...



THE DRUNES ARE DESTROYING THE LAND. THERE IS TALK OF A GREAT FLOOD - A RAGNORAK - THAT WILL MEAN THE END OF OUR WORLD. THEY HAVE TO BE STOPPED!



ONLY MEN LIKE YOU - FROM THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS - HAVE THE COURAGE TO FACE THE DRUNES. IF YOU WERE TO STAY... IF... SLAINE! YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ME!



MADOG, MY FRIEND. I HATE THE DRUNES AS MUCH AS YOU, BUT I TAKE EACH DAY AS IT COMES. POLITICS BORE ME, I'M HEADING NORTH.



BUT I DON'T WANT TO!



YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME WITH ME.



A DWARF NEEDS A PROTECTOR IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES.



LET'S TALK OF MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS, MADOG. LIKE WHY MY DRINKING HORN IS EMPTY. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THAT SON OF YOURS?

YES... CAW'S BEEN A LONG WHILE.

WE BRING YOU YOUR SON, MADOG.



WE SUSPECTED YOU'D BEEN EATING THE FORBIDDEN FLESH.



IT SEEMS WE WERE WRONG.



MADOG STAG-SHANKS WAS A MILD MAN - BUT WHEN HE SAW HIS DEAD SON, SOMETHING INSIDE HIM SNAPPED.

MURDERERS!



EVERYTHING HAPPENED VERY QUICKLY. MADOG'S WIFE SCREAMED -



HIS KIN LEAPT TO THEIR FEET -



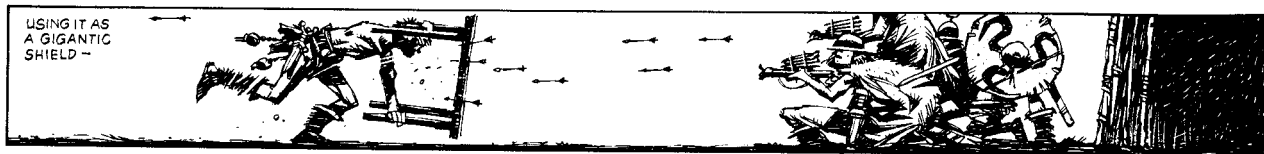
AND WERE CUT DOWN BY THE SKULL-SWORDS.



AT THE SAME TIME, SLAINE WAS MOVING, LIFTING THE TABLE, SCATTERING FOOD AND DRINK -

DOWN!
GET D-O-W-N!





UKKO!
BRAIN-BITER
- TO ME!



I'LL PUT YOU IN
A WAY YOU'LL
MURDER
NO MORE!

AND THEN THE WARP-SPASM GRIPPED HIM. THOUGH NOT A FULL SPASM, (FOR HE WAS STILL RECOVERING FROM HIS WOUNDS) HIS FACE TWISTED AND HIS BODY BURNED. IN A MAD RAGE, HE HURLED SKULL-SWORDS INTO THE FIRE-TRENCH!

WELCOME TO THE WOUND-FEAST!

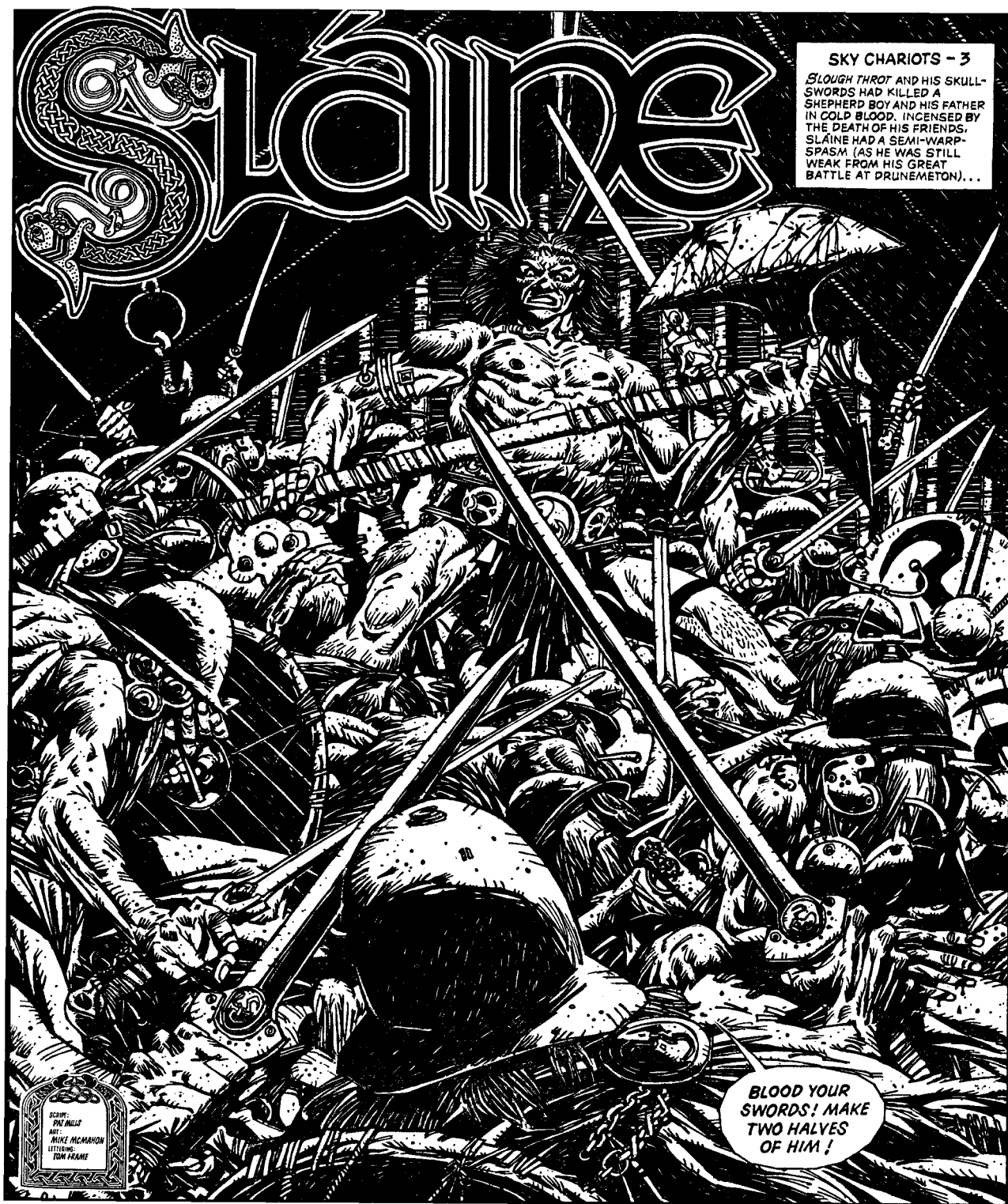


NEXT PROG - SLAINE THE BATTLE-SMITER!

Slaine

SKY CHARIOTS - 3

BLOUGH THROT AND HIS SKULL-SWORDS HAD KILLED A SHEPHERD BOY AND HIS FATHER IN COLD BLOOD. INCENSED BY THE DEATH OF HIS FRIENDS, SLAINE HAD A SEMI-WARP-SPASM (AS HE WAS STILL WEAK FROM HIS GREAT BATTLE AT PRUNEMETON),...



SCRIPT: PAT MILLER
ART: MIKE McMAHON
LETTERS: TOM FRANK

BLOOD YOUR
SWORDS! MAKE
TWO HALVES
OF HIM!

IT WAS ENOUGH OF A WARP-SPASM TO DEAL WITH THE SKULL-SWORDS. HIS BODY BECAME TOO HOT TO TOUCH...



MORE SKULL-SWORDS BURST INTO THE HALL - BUT I WAS READY FOR THEM...



SLOUGH THROT WATCHED THE FIGHT.



SO THIS IS SLÁINE MAC ROTH... THE BARBARIAN SLOUGH FEG ORDERED ME TO KILL.



HIS DEATH WOULD BE A WASTE.



I HAVE OTHER PLANS FOR HIM.



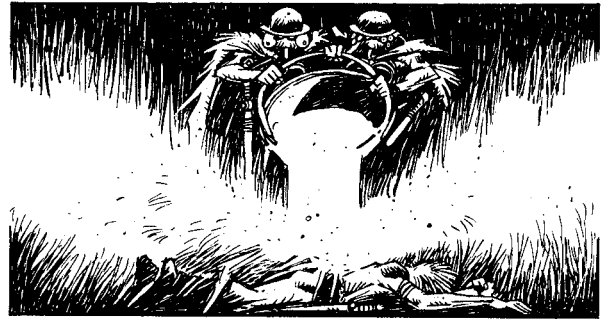
THE PRIEST-KING MADE AN OGHAM SIGN INDICATING HE WANTED US TAKEN ALIVE.



SLÁINE HAD HEWED THROUGH A SKULL-SWORD AND HIS AXE WAS STUCK IN THE WALL BEHIND. BUT AS HE TUGGED AT 'BRAIN-BITER'...

HE WAS STRUCK FROM BEHIND.





SHORTLY AFTER,
WE LEFT WITH
SLOUGH THROT.

AT LEAST WE GET
A FREE RIDE
HOME.

BUT I'VE NEVER FLOWN BEFORE.
I DON'T THINK I'D LIKE IT!

IF I HADN'T
AGREED, OUR
RIBS WOULD
HAVE PARTED
COMPANY
WITH OUR
BACKBONES
BY NOW.

WE APPROACHED THE NEARBY
DOLMEN - ONE OF A NETWORK
OF STONES ACROSS TIR-NAN-OG.
FROM HERE, SKY CHARIOTS
SAILED FOR THE NORTH.



THE DOLMEN ACTED AS A HUGE BATTERY,
DRAINING EARTH POWER FROM THE
SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE... PROVIDING
ENERGY FOR THE VESSELS TO RISE AND FALL.

THOUGH THE POWER
WAS NOT EASY TO
CONTROL...

OCH!

OUR VESSEL WAS A LARGE
MERCHANTMAN - A CLOUD
CURRAGH - WITH NO LESS
THAN THREE DRUNES
CONTROLLING ITS WEIRD
STONE...

WELCOME ABOARD,
SLOUGH THROT.
RISE PRAYERS WILL
BE IN ONE HAND'S
TIME.

WE GATHERED ON DECK AND KNELT DOWN. THEN THE
DRUNE LORD MADE OGHAM SIGNS OVER THE STONE...

O LUG, GREAT GOD
OF THE SKY, LOOK
AFTER LITTLE UKKO.
EVEN IF THE OTHERS
GET IT...

... MAKE SURE I'M
ALL RIGHT!

IT WOULD RECEIVE POWER FROM THE STANDING
STONES AND TRANSMIT IT DURING THE VOYAGE.

SPIRAL ENERGY - KNOWN AS 'THE SERPENT' -
POURED FROM THE DOLMEN. FOR A MOMENT
NOTHING HAPPENED...



THEN, LO! THE
CLOUD CURRAGH
LIFTED...



...AND
SOARED
INTO THE
SKY!



THE VESSEL SET COURSE
FOR THE NORTH -



I DON'T LIKE IT, SLÁINE. THE
DRUNES HAVE VAST POWERS -
WHY SHOULD SLOUGH THROT
NEED A BATTLE-SMITER?
WHO IS HE
AFRAID OF...?



...AND WHEN A
DRUNE IS AFRAID...
THEN IT'S TIME
TO FEAR!

NEXT PROG:
STRANGE CARGO!

Sláine

SKY CHARIOTS - 4.

FACED WITH THE CHOICE OF THE EXTERMINATION OF HIS FRIENDS IN GAVRA OR BECOMING BATTLE-SMITER (BODYGUARD) TO SLOUGH THROT, SLÁINE RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO PROTECT THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD. NOW, WE TRAVELLED NORTH BY CLOUD CURRAGH. . .

WE'RE SAILING NORTH-EAST - OVER LYONESSE. I WONDER WHERE SLOUGH THROT'S GOING?

LONG AS WE GET THERE SOON!



LOOK OUT BELOW!



UHHHHH!



SCRIPT: PAT HILL
ART: MIKE MCMAHON
LETTERING: TOM FRAME

SLOUGH THROT
WAS HUNGRY.

STUPID BOY!
THIS MEAT IS
FRESH! I ONLY
EAT RANCID
FLESH.





WE WENT DOWN INTO THE HOLD, WHERE THE HALF-DEAD - MEN WHO HAD DIED BUT WERE TRAPPED BETWEEN THE PLANES - WERE KEPT...



HUNTERS WOULD BRING THEM IN FROM THE SOURLANDS AND SELL THEM TO MERCHANTS FOR SHIPMENT NORTH...



WHERE THEY WOULD BE USED BY WARRING TRIBES AS 'BATTLE-FODDER'.



NO! IN LUG'S NAME, IT CANNOT BE!



MY OLD FRIENDS... KILLER STYR! SHAVRAN THE SURLY! AND, BY THE LOOK OF THAT ARMOUR, BRES BLOODSPEAR!



DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME...? SLAINE OF THE SESSAIR. WE WERE MERCENARIES TOGETHER! HEY, SHAVRAN YOU OLD BEAR!



IT'S NO USE, SLAINE! HE DOESN'T KNOW YOU ANYMORE...



HE'S JOINED THE HALF-DEAD!



MY COMRADES DESERVED BETTER THAN THIS. ONCE THEY WERE PROUD WARRIORS... NOW THEY'RE GHOULS TRAPPED IN TIME!



ON DECK...

ASSASSIN! IF I HADN'T
TURNED ROUND, THAT
BARREL WOULD HAVE
KILLED ME!

AN ACCIDENT,
LORD. IT
SLIPPED FROM
MY GRASP!



MAYBE YOU THOUGHT
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT,
BUT I KNOW IT WAS
'HIM'! SLAINE, YOU
SHOULD HAVE BEEN
HERE TO PROTECT ME.
'HE' IS OUT TO GET ME!

BUT I'LL
SHOW 'HIM'!
STRIP THIS
MAN AND TIE
HIM TO THE
MAST!



THE PRUNE LORD RAISED
HIS HAND AND MADE
MYSTIC OGHAM SIGNS...



THE UNFORTUNATE
SKYFARER HAD A
CLEAR VIEW OF HIS
IMPENDING FATE...
A CLOUD OF BLACK
SPECKS FLYING
TOWARDS HIM...

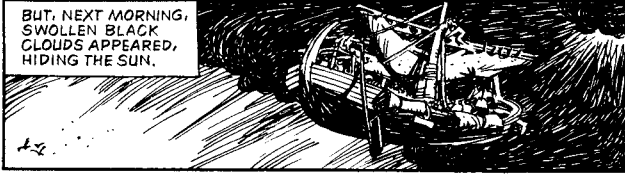
AS THEY DREW
CLOSER, HE
SAW THEY
WERE CROWS.



NOTHING ELSE HAPPENED THAT DAY.



BUT, NEXT MORNING,
SWOLLEN BLACK
CLOUDS APPEARED,
HIDING THE SUN.



A HOWLING GALE
OVERTOOK US...



AND HURLED THE CLOUD
CURRAGH DOWNWARD...



I'VE NEVER KNOWN
SUCH A FURY!
I THOUGHT YOU
DRUNES COULD
CONTROL THE
ELEMENTS?



HE'S
TRYING TO
DESTROY
ME!

WHO
IS HE?
ANSWER
ME, THROT,
OR -



THE STONE IS
WEAKENING -



WE MUST
SACRIFICE
A BULL!



SACRIFICIAL BULLS WERE KEPT ON BOARD LARGE SHIPS.
IN TIMES OF DANGER, THEIR BLOOD COULD BOOST THE
POWER OF THE WEIRD STONE WHICH KEPT A SHIP ALOFT.
BUT, TERRIFIED BY THE STORM, THE BULLS BROKE OUT
OF THEIR PEN...



AND
STAMPEDED
ACROSS
THE
DECK...



I KNOW WHO'S
AFTER HIM, LORD!
A DRUNE FEARS
NO-ONE - BUT
ANOTHER DRUNE!

YOUR DWARF IS RIGHT.
BY TRAVELLING NORTH
I AM DEFYING THE LORD
WEIRD, SLOUGH FEG!



THAT'S WHY I
CHOSE YOU AS
MY BODYGUARD!
BECAUSE YOU
OUTWITTED HIM
AT DRUNEMETON!

SO, WE'RE
CAUGHT
IN A
BATTLE OF
SORCERORS!



FIRST THINGS FIRST,
LORD, HERE COME
THE BULLS!



NEXT
PROG: SLAINE THE BEAST TAMER.



SKY CHARIOTS - 5

SLÁINE RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO PROTECT THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD, SLOUGH THROT. THEN, AS WE TRAVELLED NORTH BY CLOUD CURRAGH, WE DISCOVERED HE WAS A RENEGADE, WANTED BY THE LORD WEIRD, SLOUGH FEG. A BATTLE OF SORCERY FOLLOWED...

THE SHIP IS SINKING! UNLESS THE WEIRD STONE TASTES BLOOD, WE ARE LOST!

SLÁINE WRESTLED ONE OF THE ESCAPED CREATURES TO THE DECK...



SEA BY
THE MILLS
237
MINE, MCMANON
1712342
TOM FRANK

THE REST SMASHED
THROUGH THE GUNWHALES
CARRYING PASSENGERS
AND CREW WITH THEM...



...GORED
ON THEIR
HORNS.



SLAINE DRAGGED
HIS BEAST BACK
TO THE POUND -



HURRY! THE
MOUNTAIN
PEAKS ARE
BELOW US!



THE SACRIFICE
WAS MADE.



JUGS WERE FILLED
TO BRIMMING WITH
THE BULL'S BLOOD.



THEN POURED OVER THE
SHIP'S WEIRD STONE...



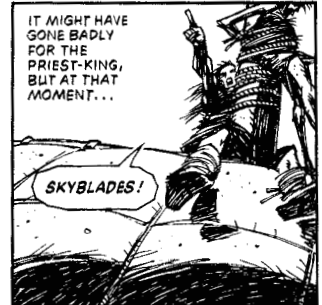
THE STRANGE ROCK DRANK THE
WARM LIQUID GREEDILY...



AND BEGAN GLOWING AGAIN,
THRUSTING THE SHIP UPWARDS...



WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, THE
FURY OF THE STORM ABATED.



THE SKYBLADES
SWEEP DOWN.
MOST OF THEIR
CREWS WERE
BERSERKERS,
FOLLOWERS OF
THE GOD VODEN,
MEN OF
SUPERHUMAN
STRENGTH.



THEY WERE HOWLING HORRIBLY,
CUTTING AT THEMSELVES,
AND BITING THEIR SHIELDS!

IN THE FIRST SHIP WAS THORGRIM IRONJAW,
HADRIC HISSING BLADE AND BORK THE BRUTAL...



A FAT PRIZE TO
TAKE BACK TO
MIDGARD! PREPARE
BOARDING BASKETS!

IN THE SECOND SHIP WERE HENGIST THE STRONG BUT
STINGY, RALF RAZORAXE AND HOGNI THE NOT-NORMAL.



REMEMBER, MEN,
ALL THE LOOT BELONGS
TO ME! YOU GET
YOUR WAGES!

IN THE THIRD SHIP WERE SKULD THE DEMENTED,
EIRIK CHISELSPEAR AND HERG THE HARD...



THESE WERE THE MEN WHO TORE OUT THROATS
WITH THEIR TEETH AND WRESTLED WITH TREES
OR BOULDERS IF NO ENEMY WAS AVAILABLE!

THE FIRST SKYBLADE
LOWERED ITS
BOARDING BASKETS...

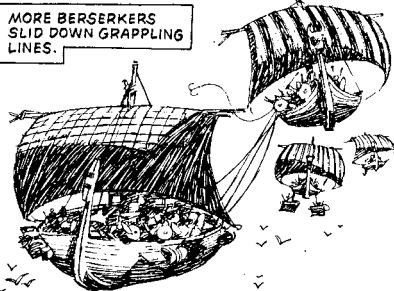
GATHER THE ACORN *
CROP FOR
LORD VODEN!



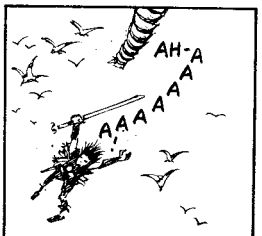
FOR VODEN!
FOR VODEN!

* ACORNS - HEADS.

MORE BERSERKERS
SLID DOWN GRAPPLING
LINES.



AHOI!
AHOI!



AH-A

AAAAA

OUR FELLOW PASSENGERS WERE PANIC-STRICKEN. SOME LEAPT OVERBOARD, RATHER THAN FALL INTO THE NORSEMEN'S HANDS.



SEND A GALE TO DRIVE US FROM THESE MADMEN!



NO USE! SUCH A WIND WOULD ASSIST THEM, TOO!



THE MATTER MUST BE DECIDED IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT!

YOU'VE NO RIGHT HERE, NORSEMAN!



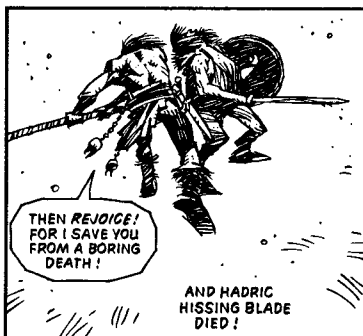
NESE TO THAT, STRANGER! TO THE BRAVE BELONG ALL THINGS!

THAT MAY BE SO, BUT YOU'LL SHRINK IN YOUR HORNS BEFORE ME!



PAH! I DON'T FEAR YOU! I ONLY FEAR THE STRAW DEATH - TO DIE IN MY BED!

THEN REJOICE! FOR I SAVE YOU FROM A BORING DEATH!



AND HADRIC HISSING BLADE DIED!



THEN CAME THE SKYBLADE OF SKULD THE DEMENTED...

THEY'RE GOING TO RAM US!

NEXT: SKY BATTLE!

Sláine

SKY CHARIOTS - 6.

SLÁINE HAD RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO PROTECT THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD, SLOUGH THROT. THEN, AS WE TRAVELLED NORTH BY CLOUD CURRAGH, OUR VESSEL WAS ATTACKED BY THREE NORSE SKYBLADES!

THE THIRD SHIP IS RAMMING US! ONE MORE BLOW AND WE'LL BREAK IN HALF!



WE'LL HAVE TO RELEASE THE HALF-DEAD!





MEANWHILE, THE FIRST SKYBLADE RENEWED THE ATTACK.
LED BY THORGRIM IRONJAW, MORE OF ITS CREW LEAPT
ABOARD AS IT SWEEP ALONGSIDE —







IF YOU WON'T
DRINK AT MY
SIDE, YOU'LL
LIE AT MY
FEET!



SLAINE
DELIBERATELY
ENRAGED
THORGRIM...

COME ON
THEN,
WIDE
MOUTH...



...TRY AND
REDDEN
YOUR AXE ON
MY BODY!



DOG! MEN'S HEADS
HAVE FLOWN FROM THEIR
BODIES FOR LESS!



UNDER THE
TAUNTS,
THORGRIM
FOUGHT
WILDER
AND
WILDER.

HAH! IT'S IN CHAINS
I'LL BE, THE DAY I
LEAVE MY HEAD
WITH YOU!



THEN SLAINE
SAW HIS
CHANCE...



NOW YOU KNEEL BEFORE ME -
BUT YOU'LL BE FLAT ON
YOUR BACK BEFORE WE
PART COMPANY!



AND THORGRIM
IRONJAW DIED.

YOU'LL PAY FOR
THAT IN BLOOD,
SPIKE-HAIR!

AYE! FINISH THE SCUM
WHO THINKS HE'S TOO
GOOD FOR US!

BUT SLÁINE MATCHED
THEM BLOW FOR BLOW...

WHA--?

AAH!

... WITH SOME USEFUL
ASSISTANCE FROM ME.

AS WE FOUGHT,
THE SECOND
SKYBLADE
BEGAN TO
CLOSE ON US...

THE DRUNES CONFERRED
WITH SLOUGH THROT.

IF THEY
GET ABOARD,
NOT EVEN THE
BARBARIAN
WILL BE ABLE TO
WITHSTAND
SUCH ODDS!

THEN YOU KNOW
WHAT YOU MUST DO
TO SAVE THE SHIP...

ACT QUICKLY...
BEFORE SLÁINE TRIES
TO STOP YOU!

NEXT
PRG: CHARIOTS ON FIRE!

Slaine



SKY CHARIOTS - 7
SLAINE WAS ACTING AS
BATTLE-SMITER (BODYGUARD)
TO THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD,
SLOUGH THROT. AS WE
TRAVELLED NORTH, OUR CLOUD
CURRAGH WAS ATTACKED BY
NORSE BERSERKS. . .

THE SESSAIR DOG
HAS KILLED
THORGRIM IRONJAW!



COME
HITHER,
SPIKE
HAIR!



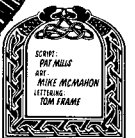
I'M GOING
TO SLAKE
MY SWORD
IN YOU!



AFTER
MINE HAS
MADE TWO
HALVES OF
YOU!

IN SLAINE'S TIME
INSULTS WERE
VALUED LIKE
SWORDS.

IT'S YOU WHO
WILL HAVE THE
KNOWLEDGE
OF DEATH!





THE THREE
BERSERKS
RUSHED
SLAINE -

YOUR GRAVE
OPENS!

BUT HE LEAPT
HIS GREAT
SALMON
LEAP...

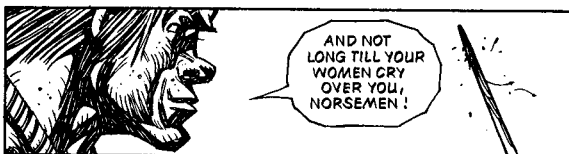
AAAAGH!



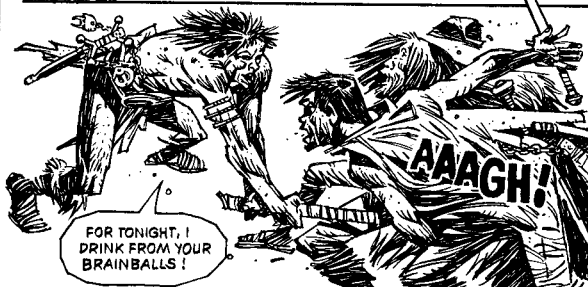
A CUNNING TRICK,
YET WOUNDS HAVE
LITTLE EFFECT
ON US!



IT WON'T BE LONG NOW
BEFORE THE RAVENS
CROAK OVER YOUR HEAD!



AND NOT
LONG TILL YOUR
WOMEN CRY
OVER YOU,
NORSEMEN!



FOR TONIGHT, I
DRINK FROM YOUR
BRAINBALLS!

AAAAGH!

LIKE MOST TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS, THE SESSAIR WERE HEAD-HUNTERS. ENEMY BRAINBALLS WERE GREATLY PRIZED AS TROPHIES AND DRINKING VESSELS.



BUT AS SLÁINE LOOKED DOWN IN TRIUMPH...



UUUH...



UKKO!



I SAVED YOUR LIFE, SLÁINE!
I SAVED YOUR LIFE! NEVER FORGET!



H'MMPH!

EVEN THOUGH SLAINE AND I HAD REPELLED THE BOARDERS, OUR SHIP WAS STILL IN GREAT DANGER -

SLOUGH THROT,
THE SECOND SKYBLADE
IS GAINING ON US!

IF BOTH VESSELS
ATTACK AT ONCE,
WE ARE DOOMED!

THE MATTER
IS BEING
ATTENDED TO,
CAPTAIN.

HEAR HOW THE
WEIRDSTONE
MOANS AND
WHINES. YES,
YES...PATIENCE
...THEY ARE
BRINGING YOU
SOMEONE!

YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO USE
ONE OF THE
PASSENGERS?
I-I MUST
PROTEST!

THERE
ARE NO BULLS
LEFT.

YOU
CAN'T DO
THIS!

I'VE
PAID MY
PASSAGE!

TAKE HER
TO THE
STONE!





MOR-ALLTACH
EXPLODED :

VODEN
SAVE US!!!

... A TORRENT OF HOT ASH
HIT THE CLOUD CURRAGH...!

CONTINUED NEXT PROG.

Slaine

SKY CHARIOTS - 8
THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD,
SLOUGH THROT, USED THE
VOLCANIC FORCE OF MOR-ALLTACH,
THE FIRE MOUNTAIN, TO DESTROY
THE BERSERK SHIPS THAT WERE
PURSUING US.

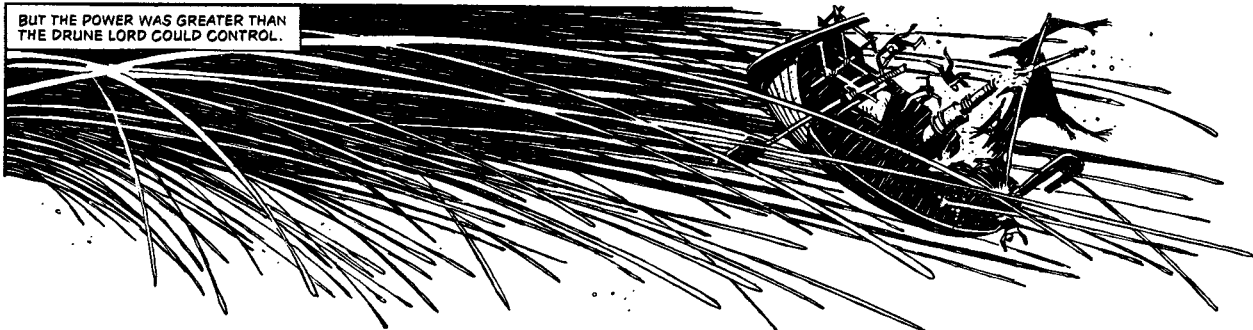
SCRIPT:
PAT MILLIS
ART:
MIKE MCMAHON
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME

ON THE BLAZING SKYBLADES,
THE BERSERKS KNEW THEY
WERE DOOMED...THEIR SHIPS
HAD BECOME THEIR FUNERAL
PYRES!

AHOI!
VALHALLA
AWAITS
ME!



BUT THE POWER WAS GREATER THAN THE DRUNE LORD COULD CONTROL.



THE DECK OF OUR SHIP WAS PELTED WITH RED-HOT ROCKS...



I TOLD YOU THIS WOULD HAPPEN, SLÁINE...



WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE.

THE SHIP'S TURNING OVER!



YOU'RE MY BATTLE-SMITER, SLÁINE...



...SAVE ME!

SLÁINE SWUNG THE TILLER, TRYING TO RIGHT THE STRICKEN VESSEL.







THEN, FROM THE UNDERGROWTH,
SOMETHING HURLED ITSELF AT
SLOUGH THROT...



A BOAR!



SLÁINE!



SAVE ME!



SLÁINE HURLED HIS AXE...



IT'S
TURNED
ON HIM!



I CAN'T
LOOK!



THIS ROCK CAN
ALSO MARK YOUR
GRAVE!



AS THE MERCHANT
HELPED SLAINE
TEND HIS WOUNDS...

SLOUGH FEG HAS
INVOKED CARNUN TO
COME TO HIS AID.
MORE BEASTS WILL
ATTACK!

I MUST DRAW A
MYSTIC CIRCLE TO
PROTECT US!

CARNUN!

AYE...THE
HORNED
GOD...LORD
OF THE
BEASTS!

SLOWLY, THE CREATURES OF
THE FOREST EMERGED...

AND GATHERED OUTSIDE
THE CIRCLE THE SORCERER
HAD HASTILY DRAWN...

I THINK IT'S
TIME YOU TOLD
US WHY SLOUGH
FEG WANTS YOU
DEAD.

WHAT
HAVE YOU
DONE ?

NEXT
PAGE: SLOUGH THROT'S STORY.



SKY CHARIOTS -9.

SLOUGH FEG WANTED TO KILL THE RENEGADE DRUNE, SLOUGH THROT. TO HELP HIM ACHIEVE THIS, HE HAD INVOKED CARNUN, LORD OF THE BEASTS...

THE BEASTS OF THE FOREST HAVE SURROUNDED US, SLAINE!

I THINK YOU'D BETTER TELL US WHY SLOUGH FEG WANTS YOU DEAD.

BECAUSE I STOLE HIS PLANS FOR THE RAGNORAK - THE DAY OF DOOM!

THE BOOK DETAILS EXACTLY HOW HE INTENDS TO DESTROY THE LAND OF THE YOUNG.

INCLUDING HIS OWN EMPIRE?

OF COURSE! HIS
MASTER IS CROM-CRUACH...
THE WORM GOD WHO
GLORIFIES IN
DESTRUCTION...!

"I TREMBLE AT HIS PLAN!
HE WILL CAUSE A TERRIBLE
WAR..."

"A LONG WINTER OF RAGING
SNOWSTORMS WITH ICE
MOUNTAINS SWEEPING
DOWN FROM LOCHLANN..."

"AND, AT LAST,
THE DELUGE...
AS HUGE WAVES
DROWN THE LAND
OF THE YOUNG..."

BUT FEG WILL BE
SAFE FROM THE FLOOD...
HIGH IN THE MOUNTAINS
IN HIS CAVE OF
BEASTS!

HE HAS TO BE
STOPPED!





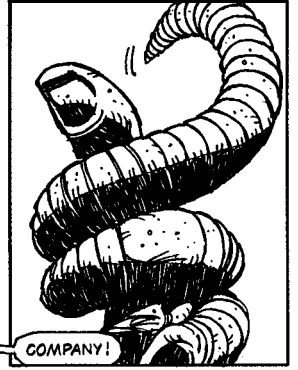




BUT I'M
TAKING THE
PLANS TO THE
ARCH-DRUIDS AT
GLASTONBURY!
THEY CAN STOP
FEGG'S MADNESS!



ER - I THINK
YOU'VE GOT...



COMPANY!

THE CIRCLE HAD PROTECTED
SLOUGH THROT FROM THE
BEASTS - BUT NOT FROM THE
WRATH OF ANOTHER GOD...
THE WORM GOD!



SAVE
MEEEEEEE!



BUT HE WAS BEYOND HELP.



THE SECRET PLANS WERE
ALSO DESTROYED.



Sláine

THE ORIGINS

PAT MILLS

Writer

[Editor's note: This originally appeared in 2000 AD Prog 352, as a response to several letters and queries from readers.]

Sláine is based on Celtic history and legend, and is set during a legendary golden age of the Celts. His world of Tir Nan Og, the Land of the Young, appears in many Celtic myths under different names. They are full of stories of lost lands beneath the waves and terrible disasters. The question was where to locate this lost world. Somewhere close to home seemed most likely. I therefore based it on maps of Britain and Eire as they were thousands of years ago — when the North Sea was a landmass and Britain was still connected to the continent.

GAELIC LEGENDS

The historical Celts, of course, only arrived in Britain around 700 BC, when it was already an island. But in Sláine, we are dealing with legendary Celts — memories in myth and legend of earlier peoples who would still have much in common with their historical successors. The Gaelic (Irish) legends are the oldest, so they have provided the best background. But their application is much wider — historians have used them to describe the Celts in Britain and Europe as well. Thus Sláine is really a general Celtic hero — as much British as Irish.

THE EARTH GODDESS

These Gaelic legends are grouped together in “cycles.” The oldest is the mythological cycle featuring the Tuatha de Danaan — the Tribes of the Earth Goddess Danu. They may have come from Britain originally and were skilled in “science, magic, druidism, witchcraft and wisdom.” One legend describes them flying through the air. They prob-

ably built the dolmens and other megaliths (standing stones, similar to the ones at Stonehenge). To this day they are connected with prehistoric mounds or “hollow hills.” As prehistoric peoples are known to have worshipped the Earth Goddess, there's also some historical basis for them.



THE WARP-SPASM

Another legendary source was the Ulster cycle that followed. Many feature Cuchulain, who went into weird battlefrenzies. In this he was not unique. Other lesser-known, historical warriors (Murdach and Congal, for instance) had these warp-spasms in which they'd attack friend and foe alike. There are historical records of early Celts charging into battle naked, demented with rage. All this indicates that there was once a class of Celtic berserker who put the Viking variety in the shade. Naturally, Sláine had to be one. Cuchulain was famous for his great agility. So, too, were all Celtic warriors. The Romans record how Ancient Britons ran up and down the yoke poles of their chariots as they charged into battle.

A strange spiked spear — the gae bolga — is also mentioned in this cycle. From other records it seems likely it existed, and many Celtic warriors used this ghastly weapon.

FINN

The next cycle features Fionn or Finn Mac Cumhaill and his legendary knights, the Fianna. I haven't actually referred to it for Sláine, but Celtic legends present universal themes — stories told again and again, in new ways with

new names, so some readers have noticed a connection.

THE RED BRANCH

The Red Branch is a good example of the universality of myth cycles. It definitely comes from the Ulster cycle — but several Irish readers refer to Finn and his Red Branch knights. I believe they've been mixed together in Irish folk tales.

In Sláine, I wanted to have a group of mighty heroes, and noticed the similarity between the Red Branch, the Fianna and the Round Table — all groups of mystical, powerful heroes. Also notice how, in drawings of the Celtic Round Halls, the warriors' compartments faced inwards in a circle — so all were equal before the king sitting in the center. A striking similarity to the Round Table.

Rather than make up names, I prefer to use the correct titles where I can. Hence the Red Branch in Sláine with its great Round Hall. The connection with the sun (see "Warrior's Dawn") and Celtic occult themes also suggested this was the right name.

DRUIDS

The Celtic druids, via Roman records, are seen as a wicked, blood-crazed lot. This is at variance with wise sor-



cerers like Myrddin (Merlin) described in British myths. Hence the two factions — the evil Drones of the South (from Drunemeton, which means “sacred grove”) and the good Druids of the North whom we shall meet later on in the forthcoming *Sláine: Time Killer*.

SLOUGH FEG

Wherever possible, real names and real places are used. Thus Slough Feg’s gruesome cave exists. It’s the *Trois Freres* cave in the Pyrenees, superbly brought to life by artist Belardinelli. The tunnel approach is remarkably like the labyrinth idea in the legend of the Minotaur. In use for over twenty thousand years, there is a drawing of its foul guardian on the wall — the famous “Sorcerer of *Trois Freres*” is Slough Feg.

EARTH POWER

Other themes also come into *Sláine* — like Earth Power, the secret energy source of the megaliths. Earth Power’s too involved to go into here, but it’s intriguing how ideas about the megaliths are changing. Radiocarbon dating shows them to be much older than once thought. Strange theories about their uses are now given serious consideration.

Even the Druids may be connected with them after all. According to *The Origins of Britain*, by L. and J. Laing: “There is growing evidence that the Celtic religion of the Druids stemmed from something much older, something which was part of prehistoric European beliefs... It can therefore be claimed with some validity that Stonehenge was built by Bronze Age ‘Druids.’”

CELTOMANIA

Everyone has his own, often fiercely held views on all this. One writer believes the Tribes of the Earth Goddess Danu came from the Middle East. Another that they were actually Danes. Few sources completely agree on the Celts. Our serial is, of course, a fantasy, designed basically to entertain. Thus, when I’ve come across different theories, I’ve used the ones that fit the serial’s concept and are most exciting and entertaining.

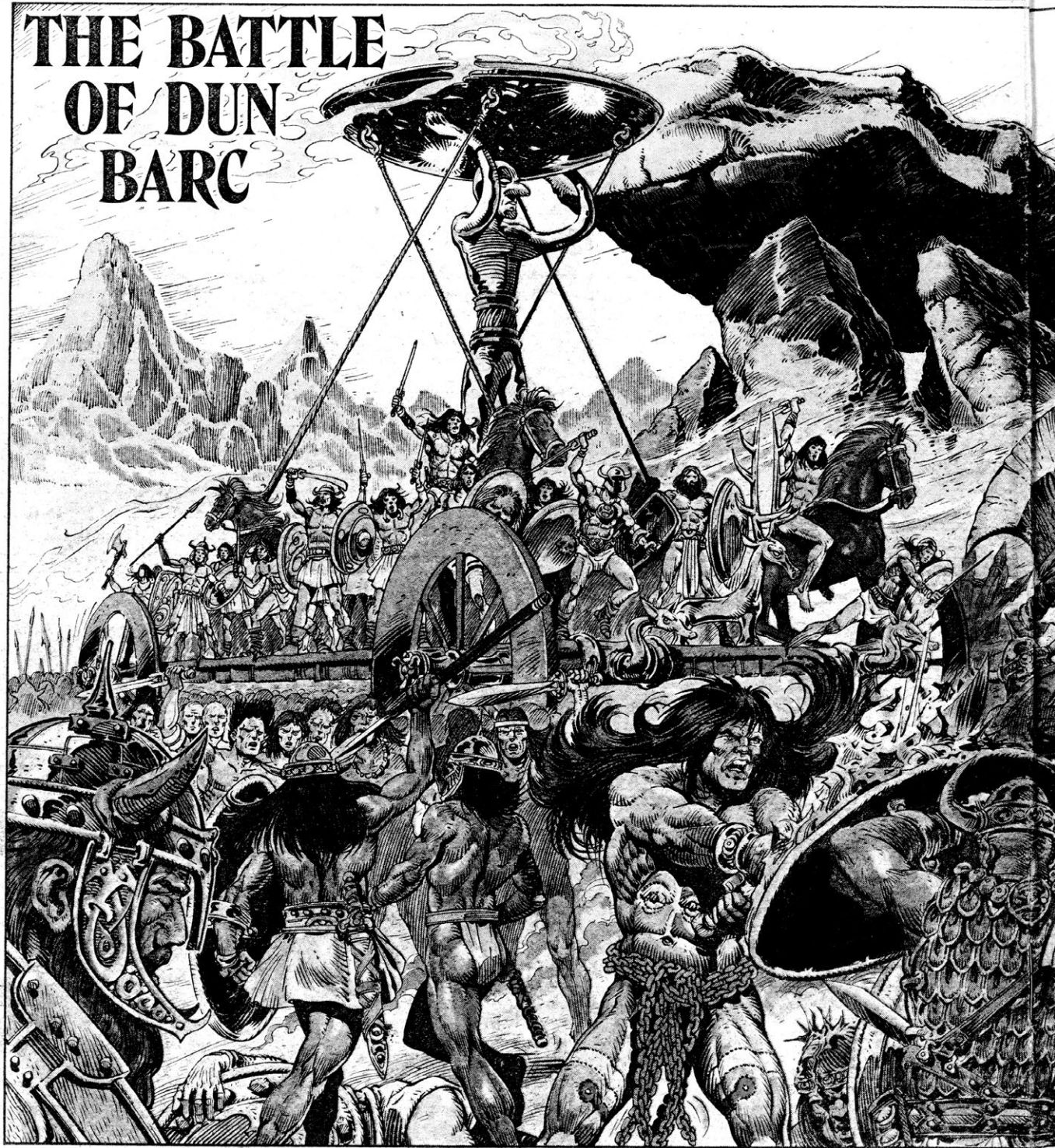




TO ACTIVATE

Borag Thungg, Earthlets! Here is another zarjaz pull-out poster for you to display on your bedroom wall. To detach the poster open the staples in the middle of the comic. Then, using a pair of sharp scissors, neatly trim off the sides up to the black line. Lastly, paste the poster on to a piece of cardboard which has been cut to size. Look out for another amazing cover poster soon!

THE BATTLE OF DUN BARC



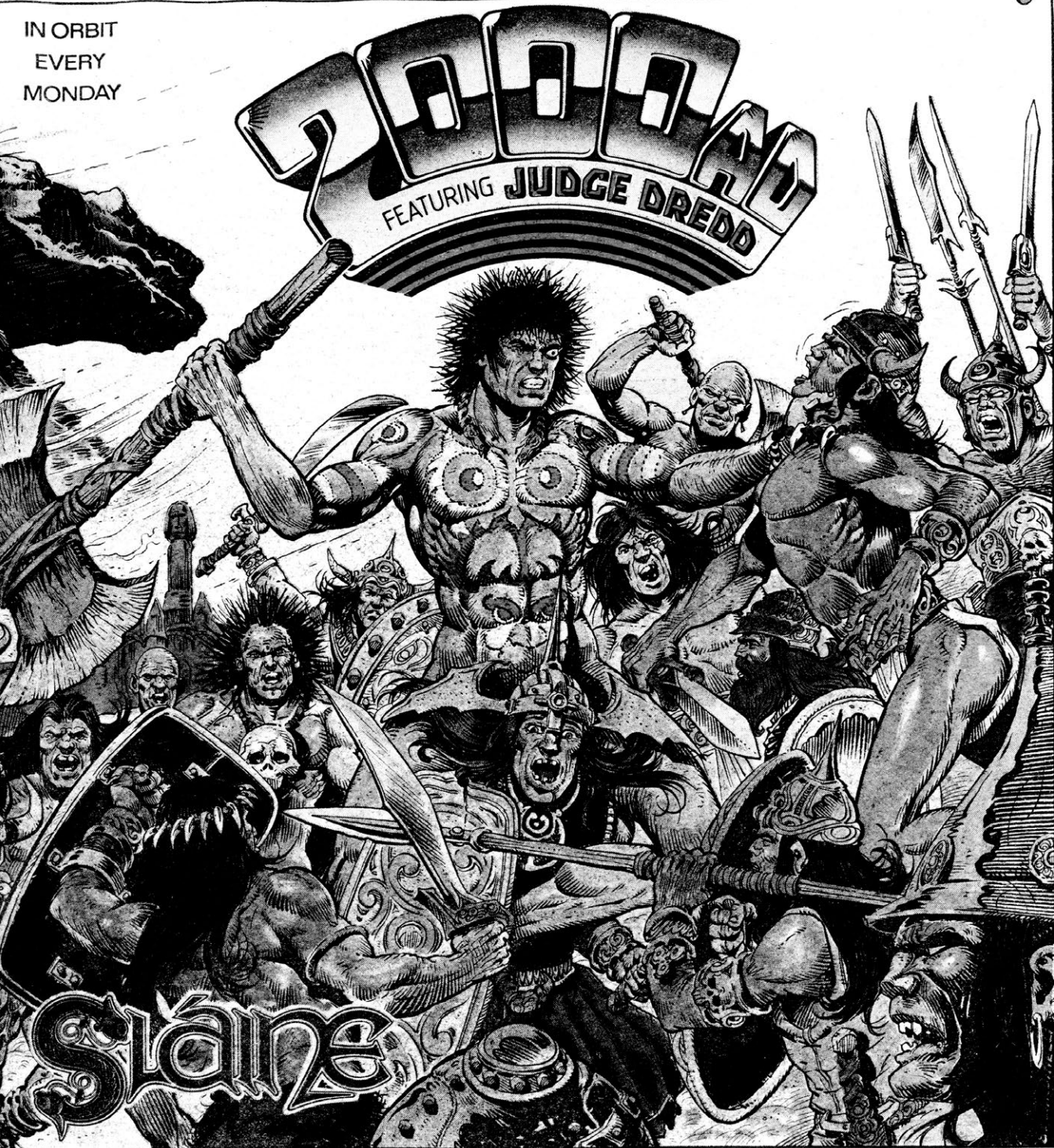
PROG 332
3 SEP 83

ZARJAZ COVER POSTER THIS PROG!

\$1.45 Malaysia 55c Australia 52c New Zealand 29p IR (inc. VAT)

20p

IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY



2000 AD Prog 332: Cover by Massimo Belardinelli

PROG 341
5 NOV 83

2000 AD

FEATURING JUDGE DREDD

\$1.45
55c
52c
31p
80g
200g
60g
0.5g
100g
8g
0.1g

Malaysia
Australia
New Zealand
IR (inc. VAT)
Mercury
Venus
Mars
Asteroid Belt
Saturn
Neptune
Pluto

20p
EARTH MONEY

IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY

Slaine
THE BRIDE
OF CROM



2000 AD Prog 341: Cover by Massimo Belardinelli

PAT MILLS

Pat Mills is the creator and first editor of *2000 AD*. For the Galaxy's Greatest Comic, he is the writer and co-creator of *ABC Warriors*, *Finn*, *Flesh*, *Nemesis the Warlock*, *Sláine*, *M.A.C.H 1*, *Harlem Heroes* and *Savage*. He also developed *Judge Dredd* and wrote one of the early *Dredd* serials — 'The Cursed Earth'. He wrote *Third World War* for *Crisis!*, a politically-charged spin-off from *2000 AD*, and *Black Siddha* for the *Judge Dredd Magazine*.

Outside *2000 AD* he is the writer and co-creator of the long-running classic anti-war story *Charley's War*, as well as *Marshal Law*. He has also written for the *Batman*, *Star Wars* and *Zombie World* series for the US market. Currently Mills is writing the best-selling series *Requiem* — *Vampire Knight* for Editions Nickel of France with artist Olivier Ledroit, and a spin-off series, *Claudia* — *Vampire Knight*, with artist Frank Tacito. Two further French series are in production.

MASSIMO BELARDINELLI

Massimo Belardinelli's career started with painting the backgrounds for animated cartoons for Rosi Studio in Rome. In 1977 he started working for *2000 AD* and produced the art for some much-loved strips including *Ace Trucking*, *Flesh* and *Slaine*.

ANGIE KINCAID

Angie Kincaid co-created the enormously popular saga of Celtic Warrior *Slaine* with her then-husband, Pat Mills. She illustrated *Slaine*'s first ever appearance – defining his character as a young, handsome hero – and later wrote an episode of the strip, 'The Killing Field'.

MIKE McMAHON

Although Mike McMahon may not have illustrated as many strips as other *2000 AD* creators, his importance to the comic cannot be overstated. It was McMahon who co-created perennial classics *A.B.C. Warriors* and *The V.C.'s*, and it was also McMahon who gave Judge Dredd his classic, defining, "big boots" look. Outside of the Galaxy's Greatest Comic, he has pencilled and inked *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* and *The Last American* which he co-created with John Wagner



CELTIC PRIDE!

TIR NAN OG — THE LAND OF THE YOUNG — IS A VIOLENT WORLD, HOME TO WARRING TRIBES WHO WORSHIP GODS BOTH BENIGN AND MALEVOLENT. In this first collection of Sláine's adventures we meet one such tribe, the Sessair, brave warriors of enormous skill, and the best of them is a young barbarian named Sláine Mac Roth. Sláine is, among other things, a master of the 'warp spasm' — channelling the mystical power of the Earth through his body to become a mighty, monstrous beserker!

This classic sword-and-sorcery series is written by *2000 AD* founding editor Pat Mills (*Savage*) and features art by Angie Kincaid, Massimo Belardinelli (*Ace Trucking*) and Mike McMahon (*Judge Dredd*).



WWW.
2000AD
ONLINE
.COM