

COWLES



THE Ludocrats

2. HEROIC ACTS OF VISCERA DIVING AND GIGANTYPEDE STIMULATION.





ONCE UPON
A TIME...



there was a
WEDDING *where*
a STEAM-JUDGE
met a LARGE MAN
with an AXE.

The STEAM-JUDGE
was ARRESTED *by*
BORING PEOPLE.

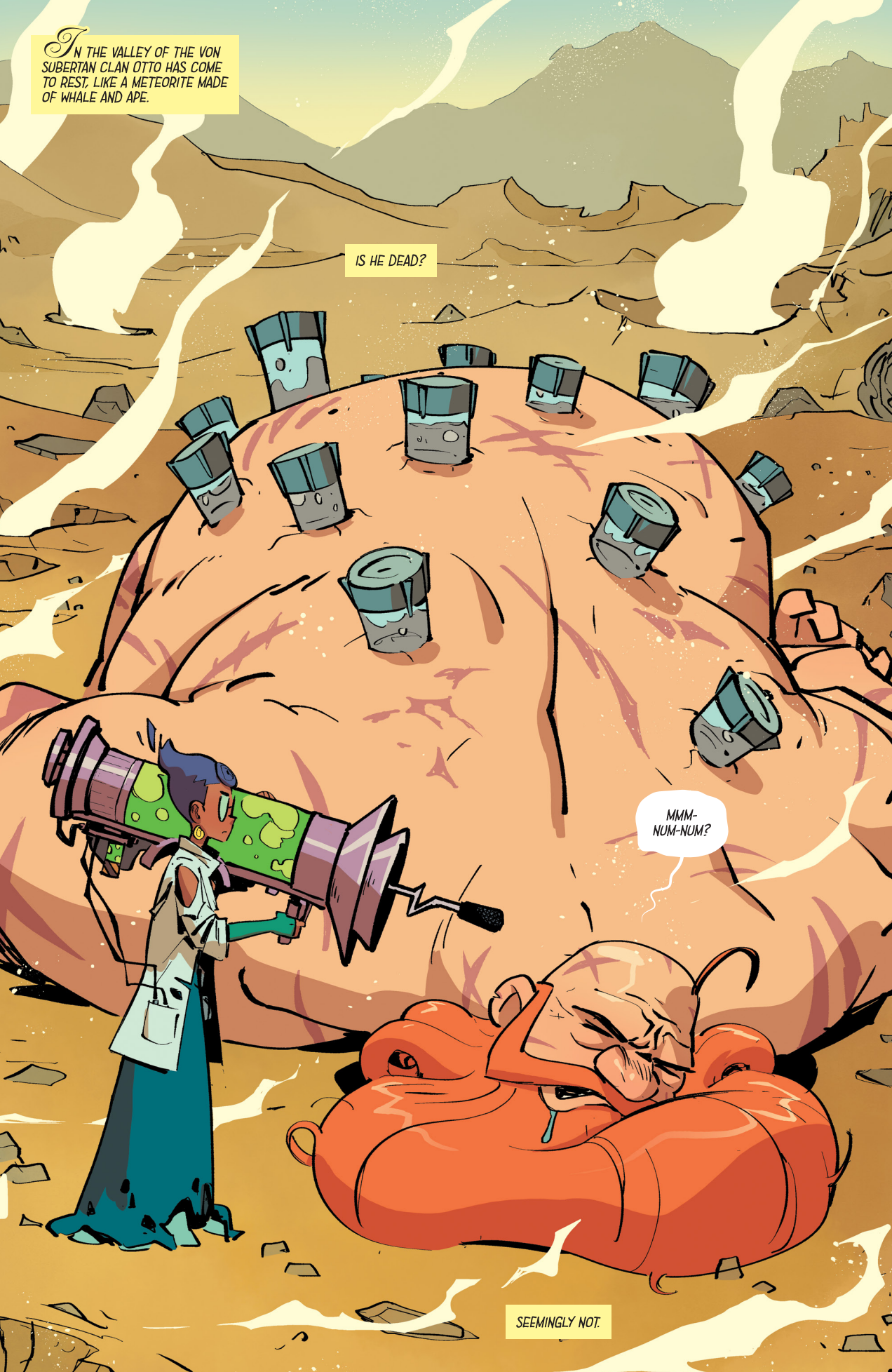
The LARGE MAN
with an AXE
was MIFFED.

IN THE VALLEY OF THE VON
SUBERTAN CLAN OTTO HAS COME
TO REST, LIKE A METEORITE MADE
OF WHALE AND APE.

IS HE DEAD?

MMM-
NUM-NUM?

SEEMINGLY NOT.





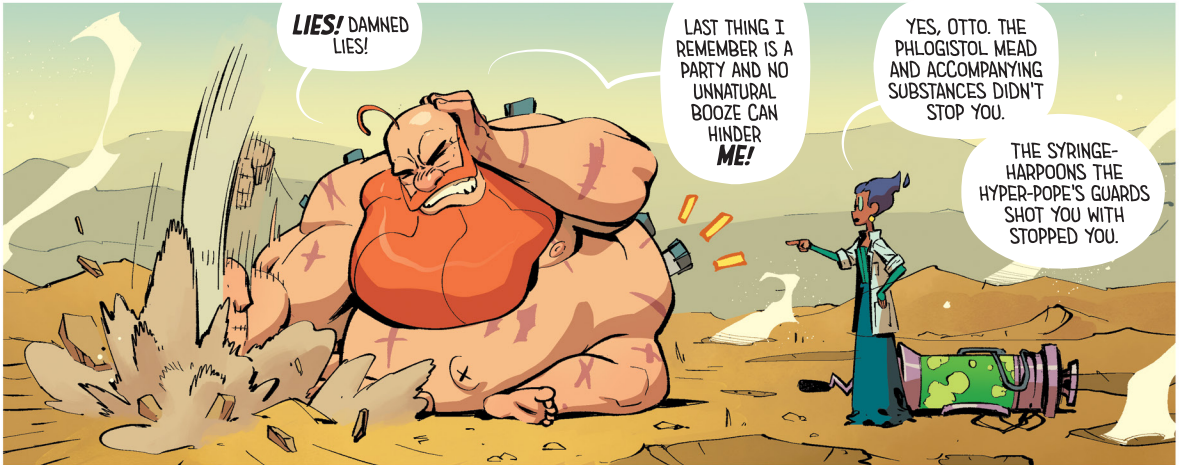
OH GOOD.
YOU'RE FINALLY
AWAKE.

HMMGH. BUT...
HOW DID I COME TO
BE ASLEEP?



CHEMICALS,
OTTO.

A GRAND
ARRAY OF
CHEMICALS.



LIES! DAMNED
LIES!

LAST THING I
REMEMBER IS A
PARTY AND NO
UNNATURAL
BOOZE CAN
HINDER
ME!

YES, OTTO. THE
PHLOGISTOL MEAD
AND ACCOMPANYING
SUBSTANCES DIDN'T
STOP YOU.

THE SYRINGE-
HARPOONS THE
HYPER-POPE'S GUARDS
SHOT YOU WITH
STOPPED YOU.



I...
OH, IT'S
FOGGY.

WHAT
IS THIS?

AND...WHAT'S THAT
THING YOU'RE DRAGGING
AROUND? AND WHAT'S
YOUR NAME? OH! I
THINK I KNOW
THAT ONE...



FRIENDPERSON.
YOU ARE NOW CALLED
FRIENDPERSON. WHAT
ARE YOU DOING,
FRIENDPERSON?

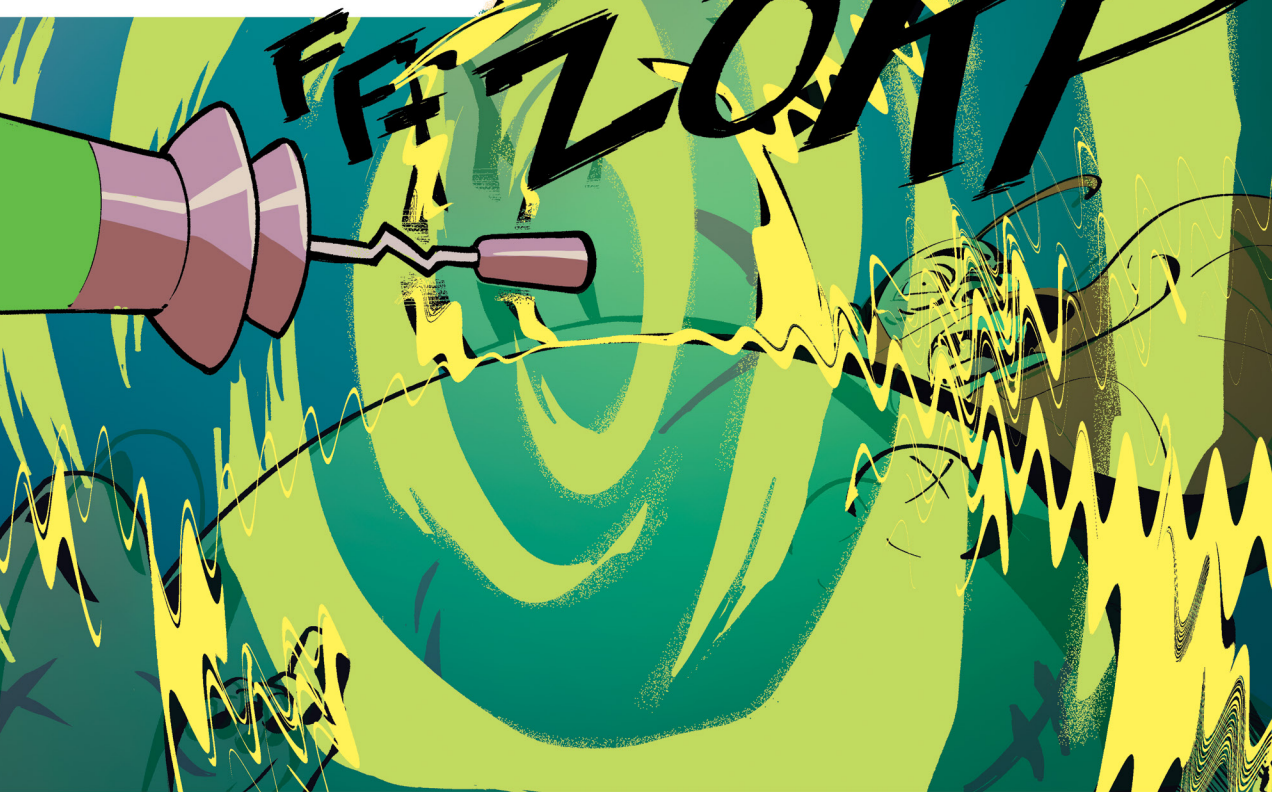
HADES! I'M
**PROFESSOR
HADES** AND **YOU**
ARE IN A
STATE.

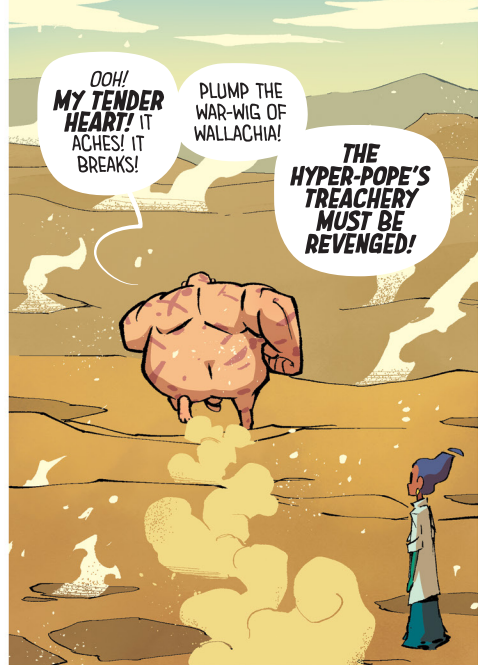
THAT IS
ONE OF THE
GUARD'S HARPOONS
AND THIS IS THE SONIC
CANNON I WAS HOPING
TO AWAKEN
YOU WITH.



OH,
THAT'S GOOD
TO KNOW.

SO...WHERE
DID THIS **OTHER**
LITTLE THING
COME FROM?

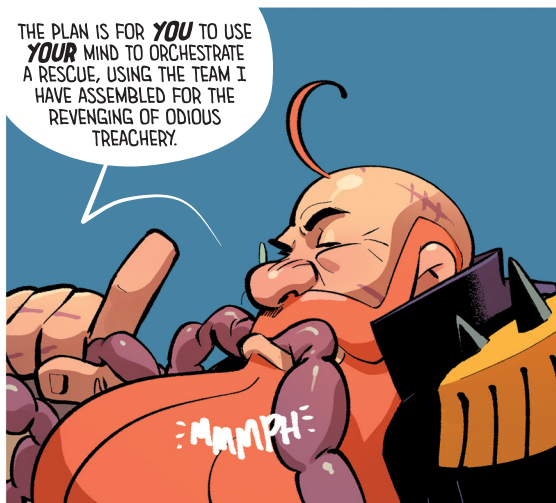






YES! THE MASTERMIND TO EXECUTE THE PLAN FOR THE TEAM I HAVE ASSEMBLED TO RESCUE THE UNJUSTLY INCARCERATED MAIDEN!

DETAILS, OTTO, YOU MUST SUPPLY A MIND AS COMPLEX AS MINE WITH DETAILS! WHAT IS YOUR ACTUAL PLAN?



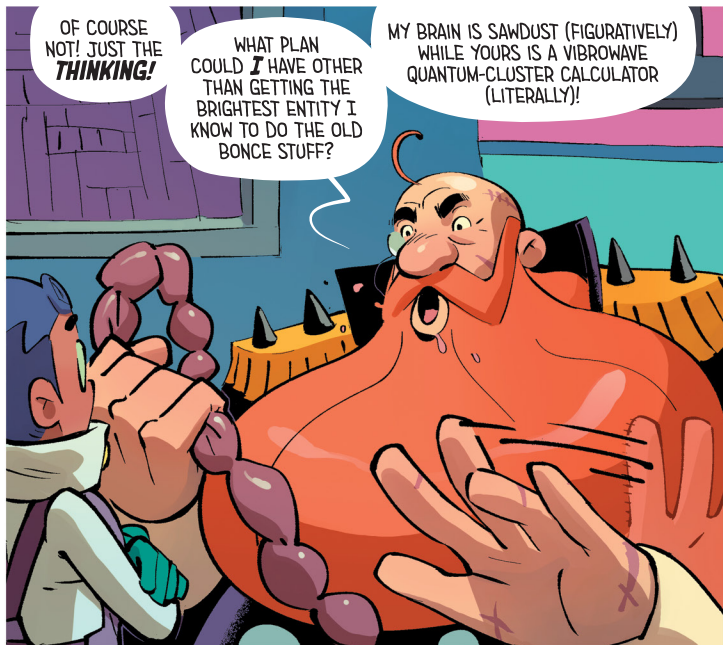
THE PLAN IS FOR **YOU** TO USE **YOUR** MIND TO ORCHESTRATE A RESCUE, USING THE TEAM I HAVE ASSEMBLED FOR THE REVENGING OF OBIOUS TREACHERY.

MMPH



THE ENTIRETY OF YOUR PLAN IS FOR **ME** TO DO ALL THE WORK?

SWRP



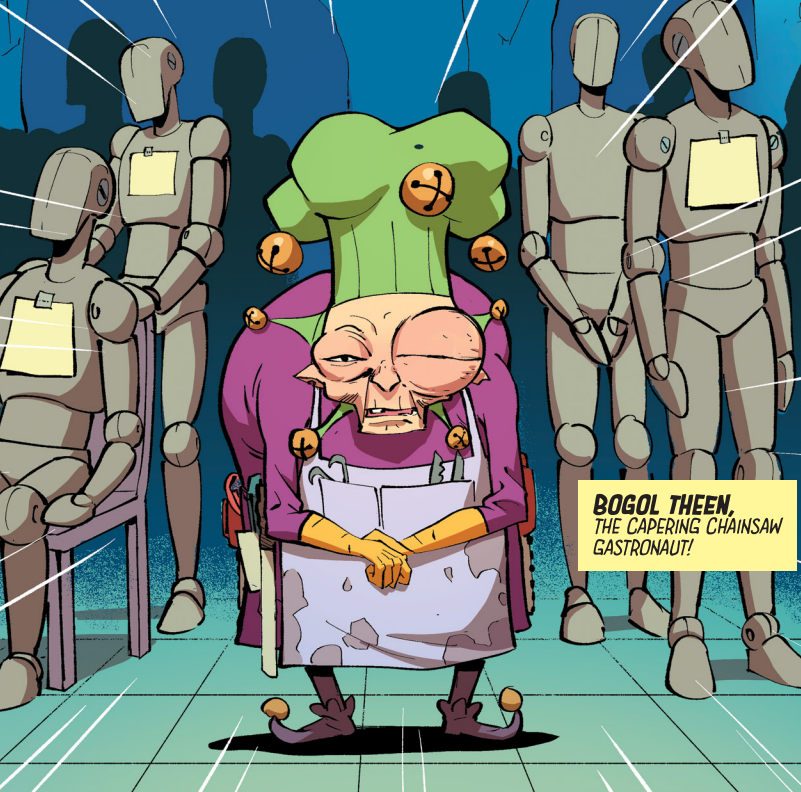
OF COURSE NOT! JUST THE **THINKING!**

WHAT PLAN COULD **I** HAVE OTHER THAN GETTING THE BRIGHTEST ENTITY I KNOW TO DO THE OLD BONCE STUFF?

MY BRAIN IS SAWDUST (FIGURATIVELY) WHILE YOURS IS A VIBROWAVE QUANTUM-CLUSTER CALCULATOR (LITERALLY)!



OH, OTTO. VERY WELL. LET'S SEE WHO I HAVE TO WORK WITH...



BOGOL THEN,
THE CAPERING CHAINSAW
GASTRONAUT!



IS
THIS
IT?



VOLDIGAN THE PERFIIDIOUS, BETRAYER OF THE
SWINE MEN, TRAITOR OF THE MARCHES AND TRUSTLESS
QUISLING OF THE OUTLAND BACKSTABBER GUILDS.

SORRY
WE'RE
LATE.

ELAINA TRIPTYCH,
CELEBRITY SURGEON.

I WAS
PROBABLY
UPSET OVER
GRATTY'S
ARREST.

THAT'S A
CREDIBLE
EXCUSE,
YES?



IT CERTAINLY IS, ELAINA!
OUR HEARTS POUND IN
GRIEF AS ONE!

PLUS, I HAVE
SECURED A LITTLE
SOMETHING EXTRA.
LET IT NOT BE SAID THAT
A VON SUBERTAN FEAST
IS UNDERSUPPLIED
WITH **MEAT.**



**SHOGGOD MUIR!
THE COLLAPSED
SIRE OF SUBERTAN!**



OH,
OTTO.

YES! THOUGHT
A FEW OF THE KIDS
COULD HELP OUT. THEY'RE
ALWAYS UP FOR
AN OUTING.



VERY WELL.
NOW...DO YOU HAVE
SOME MANNER OF TECHNICAL
SCHEMATIC OF THE GOOD
STEAM-JUDGE LADY
GRATTINIA'S PRISON?

AH,
YES. BATS!
BATS! TO ME,
MY BATS!



HMM. INFILTRATING AN INVINCIBLE INVERTEBRATE; THE MOST ONEROUS OF TASKS. IN THE LARVAL STATE, BEFORE IT BECOMES A TRANQUIL CASTLE LEPIDOPTERA, IT WILL BE QUITE THE CHALLENGE...

ARE YOU SURE YOUR AFFECTIONS FOR THIS LADY ARE SO RESOLUTE?

ABSOLUTELY! I DESIRE HER FROM THE TIP OF HER NOSE TO THE FRAME OF HER ENORMOUSLY REINFORCED PELVIS.

AND YOU MUST RESCUE HER SO WE CAN PLOUGH OUR TROUGH WITH ONE ANOTHER.



YOU MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS, OTTO. THIS IS NO MERE GEOTHERMIC GIGANTPEDE.

THIS IS A GIGANTIPEDIC SPERMATAZOIC LEPIDOPTERAPEDE.

IT...OH, I HAVEN'T THE TIME.



BUT I DO! TURN TO DOCTOR X-POSITION'S GUIDE TO THE OMNI-OMNIVORE, WHERE WE WILL TALK YOU THROUGH THE WONDER OF SKY CATERPILLARS IN PAINFULLY EXCRUCIATING AND OVER-LITERAL DETAILS!

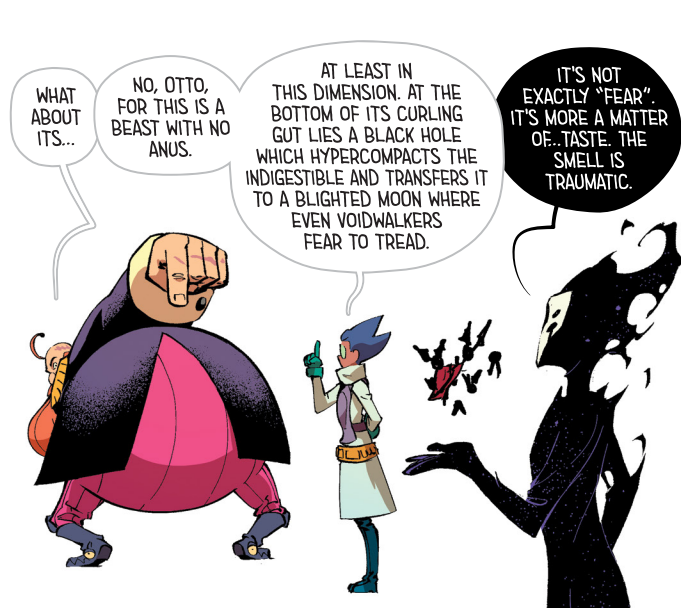


THE PROBLEM? IN THIS LARVAL STAGE, ALL IT DOES IS EAT.

THEY WILL NEVER CEASE UNTIL THE BEAST IS SATIATED. AND WORSE!

(WELL, EAT AND BOMBARD THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH GIRTHSIDES OF SPERMADRONES TO SCARE AWAY ITS SEXUAL COMPETITORS.)

THOSE JAWS ARE THE **ONLY** ENTRANCE INTO THE BEAST'S INTERIOR!



WHAT ABOUT ITS...

NO, OTTO, FOR THIS IS A BEAST WITH NO ANUS.

AT LEAST IN THIS DIMENSION. AT THE BOTTOM OF ITS CURLING GUT LIES A BLACK HOLE WHICH HYPERCOMPACTS THE INDIGESTIBLE AND TRANSFERS IT TO A BLIGHTED MOON WHERE EVEN VOIDWALKERS FEAR TO TREAD.

IT'S NOT EXACTLY "FEAR". IT'S MORE A MATTER OF...TASTE. THE SMELL IS TRAUMATIC.



I CAN'T GO THERE. PLUS THE BLACK HOLE IN THE BUTTHOLE ALSO DISTORTS TIME AND SPACE. WITHOUT A HOMING BEACON INSIDE, I CAN'T EVEN GET **MYSELF** IN...

NEITHER ANALY, ORALLY NOR URETHRALLY MAY WE SAFELY ENTER THIS BEAST.



URETHRALLY?

ALAS, ITS MULTI-COCKED CANNONS SEAL WHEN NOT EJACULATING WAR-SPERM.



HMM. BEAT THE BALLY HELL OUT OF IT?

I COULD GIVE IT THE OLD ONE-TWO.

NO, OTTO.

THIS IS AN ONEROUS TASK. ONEROUS, TWOEROUS, THREEEROUS, EVEN.



WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE INSIDE THE BEAST THE STEAM-JUDGE IS BEING KEPT!

SHE'S INSIDE ONE OF THE BEAST'S PRISON EGGS. HOLLOWED OUT INTO QUARTERS, THEN THE SHELL HARDENED BY AN INDUCED FERTILISATION.



THE BEAST'S NATURAL INTERNAL FAUNA HAS BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY A PLATOON OF THE UNDEAD HYPER-PAPAL GRENADIERS, THE ONLY INFANTRY WHO CAN BE EASILY MOVED INSIDE.

THEY'RE DAUBED WITH PHEROMONIC FLUIDS TO APPROACH SAFELY, THEN ARE CONSUMED BY THE CREATURE AND RISE AGAIN IN ITS BELLY. THEY PATROL FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THE ANTIBODIES OF THE CREATURE DISSOLVE THEM, THEN THEY'RE REPLACED.



I'VE DETAILED THEIR WEAPONRY LOAD-OUTS AND PATROLS IN THESE SCROLLS FOR EASY REFERENCE, HADES.

HOW DID YOU COME BY THIS INFORMATION, VOLDIGAN?



I, UH, LUCKY GUESSES?

SOUNDS FINE TO ME! WHO WOULD DOUBT VOLDIGAN THE PERFIDIOUS IN SUCH A MATTER?

WHO INDEED?



VERY WELL, I HAVE A PLAN.

THIS IS WHAT WE SHALL DO, FIRST...

"...A DISGUISE FOR BOGOL THEEN, ASSORTED CRANIAL CONTENTS, TIME FOR THE GOOD COOK TO DO GOOD COOKING AND ONE OF MY SONIC PROJECTORS. AND THEN..."

**BRAIN PIES!
BRAIN PIES!
CEREBELLUM
LIGHTLY
FRIED!**



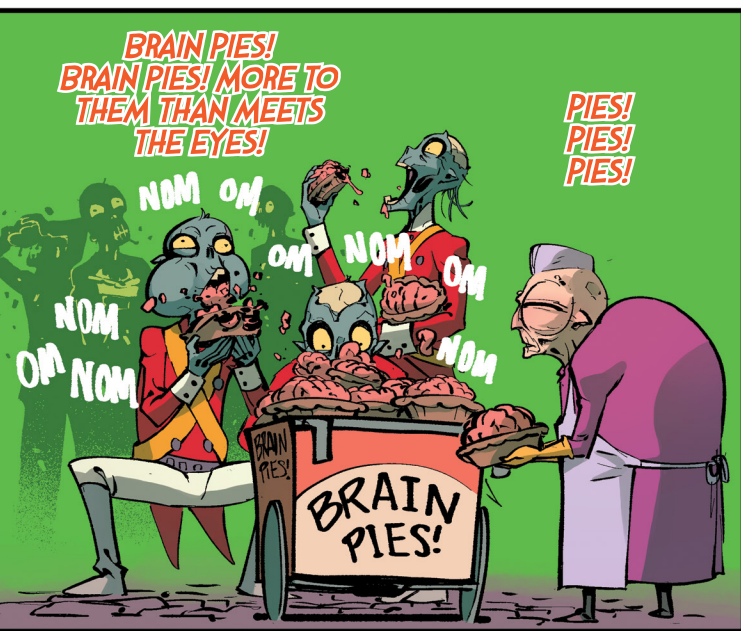
**BRAIN PIES!
BRAIN PIES!
MONOLITHIC
GIGANTSIZE!**

**BRAIN PIES!
BRAIN PIES!
DIALECTIC
ELECTROPHOTOSIZE!**



**BRAIN PIES!
BRAIN PIES! MORE TO
THEM THAN MEETS
THE EYES!**

**PIES!
PIES!
PIES!**



AH--SO
WHEN THE GUARDS
ARE THOROUGHLY SATIED
WITH A GASTRONOMIC BARRAGE
IN PASTRY SHELLS, WE ASSAULT
THE BEAST AND RESCUE
GRATTY!

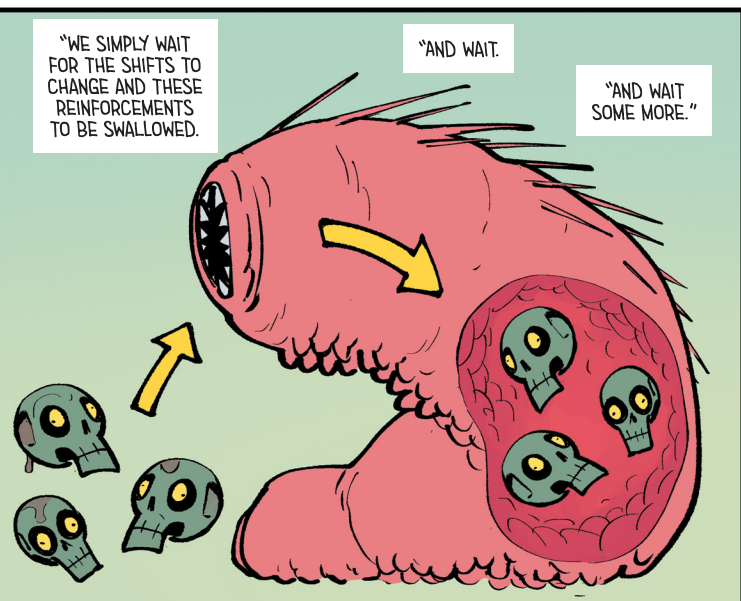
NO,
REMEMBER, OTTO--
THE LEPIDOPTERAPEDE
JAWS, EVER-
MAWING!



"WE SIMPLY WAIT
FOR THE SHIFTS TO
CHANGE AND THESE
REINFORCEMENTS
TO BE SWALLOWED.

"AND WAIT.

"AND WAIT
SOME MORE."



**BORED OF
WAITING!**

WE'RE NOT
DOING IT, OTTO.
YOU CAN'T BE
BORED YET.

ANYWAY,
EVENTUALLY A
GUARD WILL RECALL
OUR CATCHY
DITTY...







"VERY WELL. FROM HERE WE MOVE SECRETLY, AVOIDING PATROLS.

"OR MURDERING THEM, I SUPPOSE.

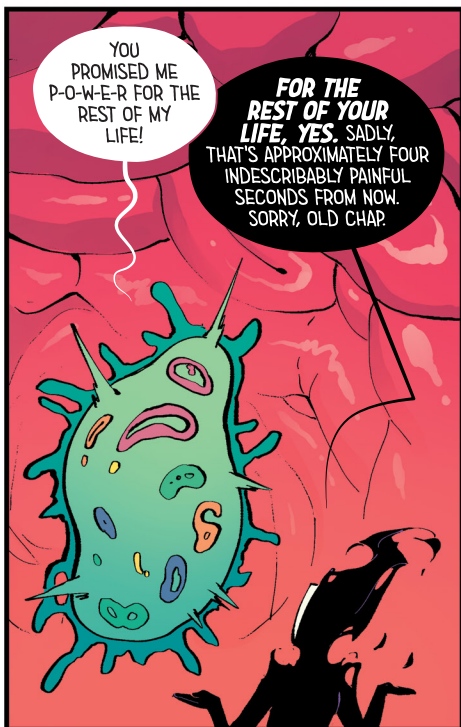
"WHAT WE NEED IS VOLDIGAN TO FIND A SENTIENT PROTOZOIC GUT-INHABITANT AND HAVE A LITTLE TÊTE-À-TÊTE.



"WHILE I KEEP WATCH, VOLDIGAN SHOWS THE FLEDGLING CREATURE VISIONS OF WEALTH, POWER, ETCETERA, ETCETERA... AND IT CAN HAVE THEM FOR THE REST OF ITS LIFE.

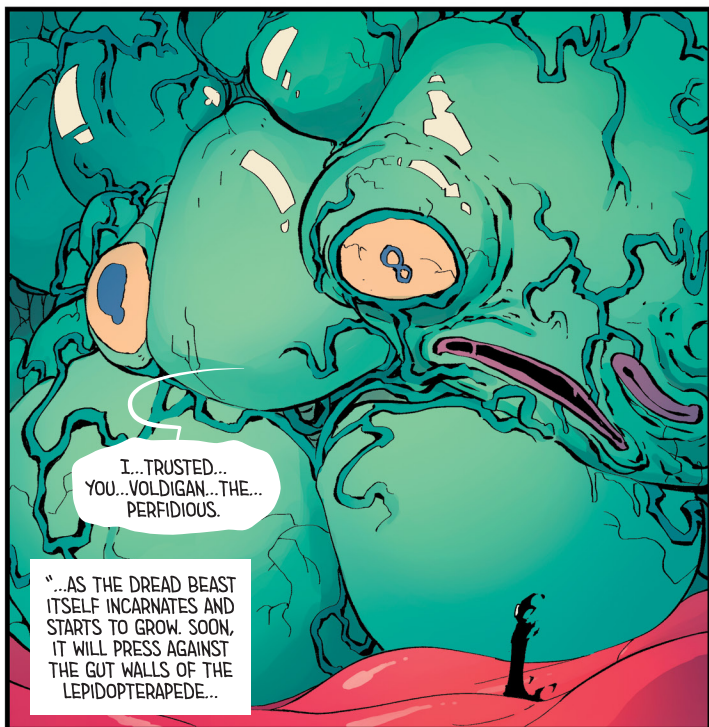
YES, YES, A MILLION TIMES, YES!

"ONCE CONVINCED TO SELL ITS SOUL TO SHOGGOD MUIR, WE STEP BACK..."



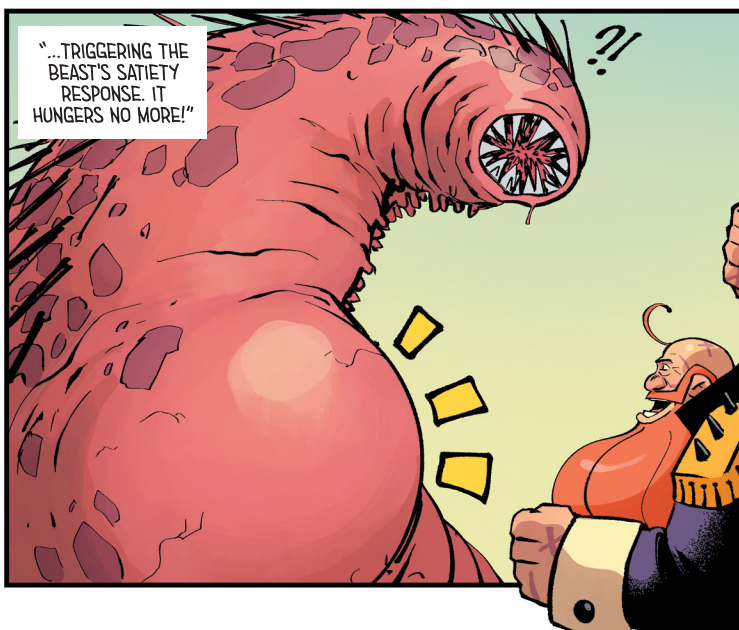
YOU PROMISED ME P-O-W-E-R FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!

FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, YES. SADLY, THAT'S APPROXIMATELY FOUR INDESCRIBABLY PAINFUL SECONDS FROM NOW. SORRY, OLD CHAP.



I...TRUSTED... YOU...VOLDIGAN...THE... PERFIDIOUS.

"...AS THE DREAD BEAST ITSELF INCARNATES AND STARTS TO GROW. SOON, IT WILL PRESS AGAINST THE GUT WALLS OF THE LEPIDOPTERAPEDE..."

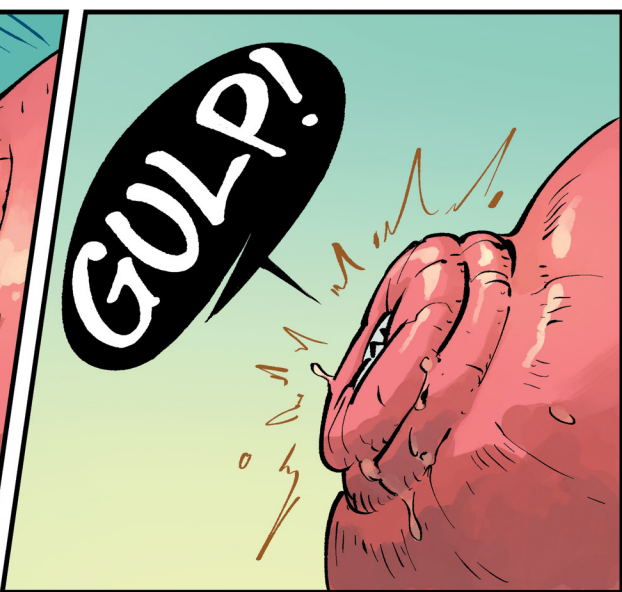


"...TRIGGERING THE BEAST'S SATIETY RESPONSE. IT HUNGERS NO MORE!"



AND THEN!

YES, OTTO. AND THEN!



"WHEN INSIDE THE STOMACH, WE'LL HEAD TOWARDS THE LOWER SPHINCTER..."

WHERE NOW, HADES, DAMMIT, WHERE NOW?

THE LOWER SPHINCTER! PLEASE, OTTO, TRY AND REMEMBER THE BRIEFING. IT GETS COMPLICATED FROM NOW ON.



"HERE, SWIFTLY
DESCENDING THE
GUT, FIGHTING OFF
PARASITES AD
NAUSEUM..."

THE
LUDOCRACY MUST
PREVAIL!

"...UNTIL WE REACH THE
POINT CLOSEST TO THE
SEXUAL ORGANS."

AS IDENTIFIED
BY OUR RENOWNED
SURGEON, YES?

NO, I'M STAYING
HERE, REMEMBER? THIS
IS NOT MY KIND OF THING
AT ALL.

IN FACT, BY
OUR GOOD BOGOL, WHO--
I THINK YOU'LL ALL RECALL--
ONCE PREPARED A LEPIDOPTERAPEDE
FOR A PARTICULARLY GRAND
BANQUET.

LIGHTLY SAUTÉED.
WHO EVER SAUTÉED
HEAVILY? IT'S NOT
EVEN A THING.

SO HE
IS ENTIRELY *AU FAIT*
WITH THE LAYOUT OF
ITS VITALS.

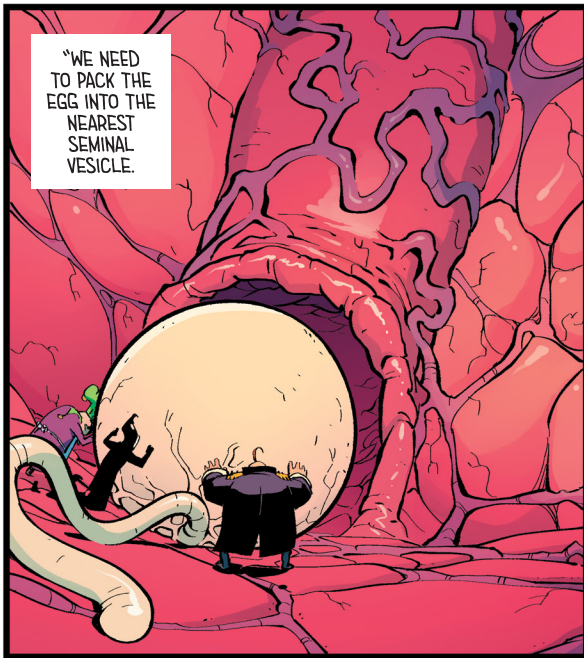
"A QUICK INCISION, AND WE'LL CLOSE IN
ON THE ORGANS OF GENERATION. WE'LL
FACE SOME MANNER OF FINAL GUARD..."

PHAGOCYTIC
ATTACK FAUNA!

"YES,
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT.

"WHILE HOLDING
THEM BACK,
WE'LL SECURE
THE EGG
CONTAINING
GRATTY..."

"...AND THEN, WE
MUST MAKE OUR
ESCAPE..."



"WE NEED TO PACK THE EGG INTO THE NEAREST SEMINAL VESICLE."



"THEN, FOLLOWING BOGOL'S BUTCHER WISDOM, WE NAVIGATE THE WARPED TOPOGRAPHY OF THE BEAST'S SEX PARTS TO ITS PROSTATE."

"WHERE I'LL PLANT MY PREPARED CHARGE."



"FINALLY, WE RETREAT TO THE VESICLE, CLIMB UPON THE EGG AND WAIT THE FEW TENSE SECONDS FOR THE DETONATION..."



"A SMALL, UNIMPORTANT PART OF MY BODY LEFT BEHIND TO DISSOLVE TO PURE VIBRATIONS..."

"CAREFULLY CALCULATED TO BE PLEASING TO THE LEPIDOPTERAPEDIC TASTES."

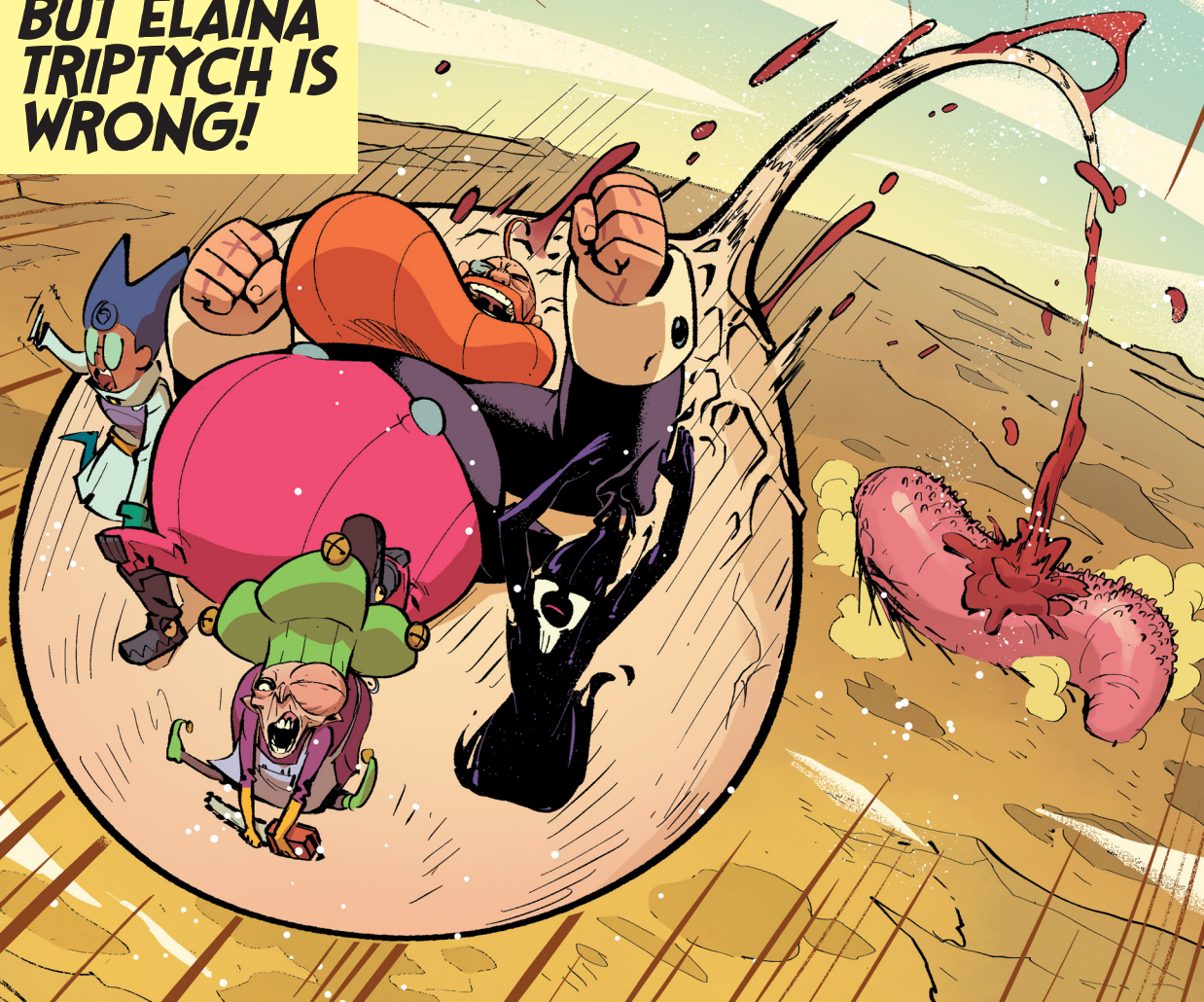


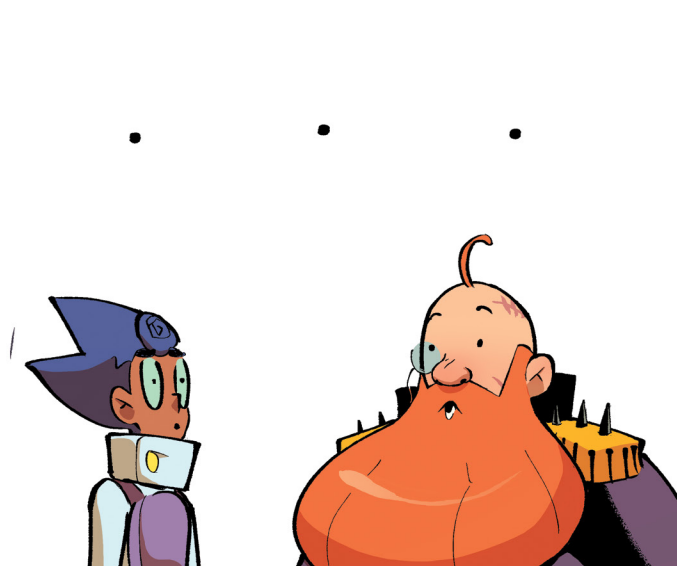
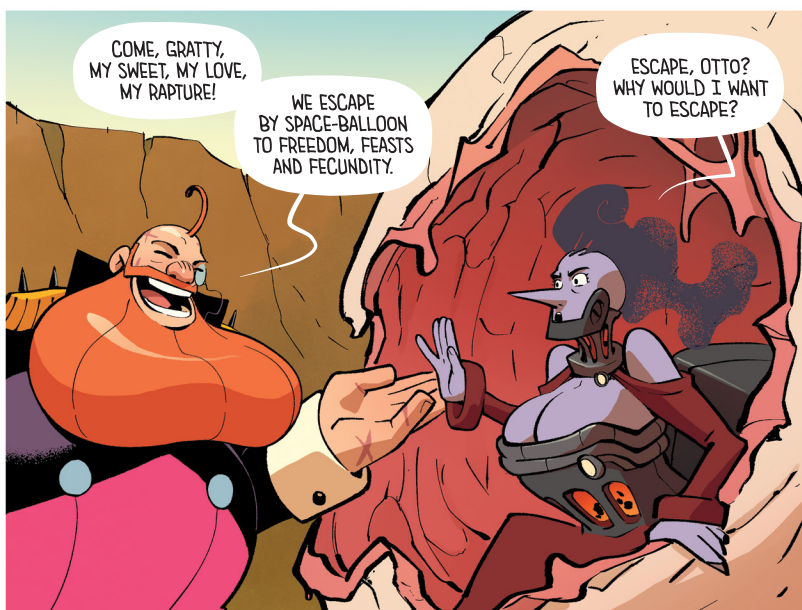
AND, WITH NOTHING WORSE THAN A LIGHT COATING OF THE SEMEN OF A DEATH-DEALING CATERPILLAR, WE GRACEFULLY MAKE OUR ESCAPE!"

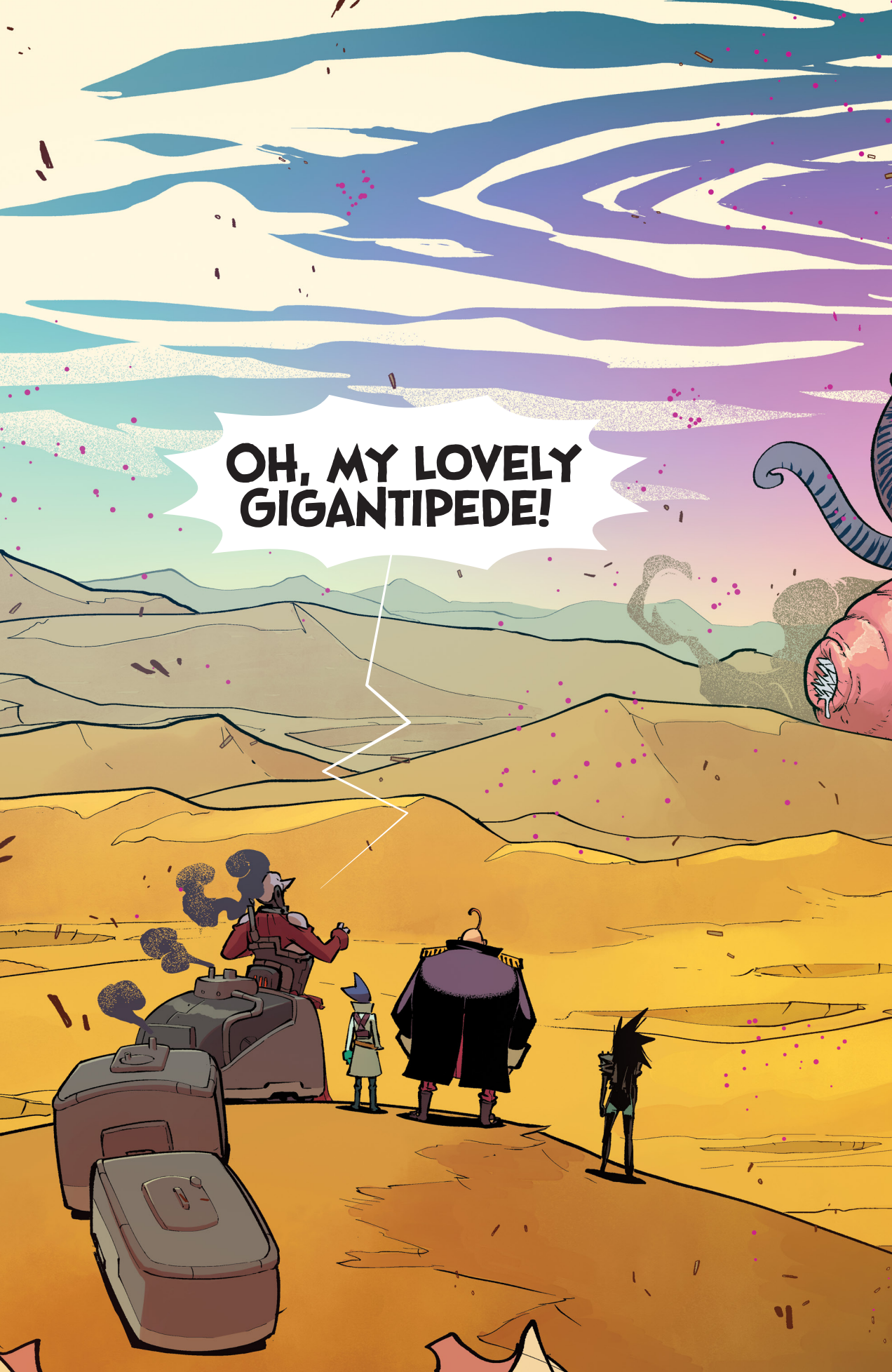
THAT'S A STUPID PLAN.

IT'LL NEVER WORK.

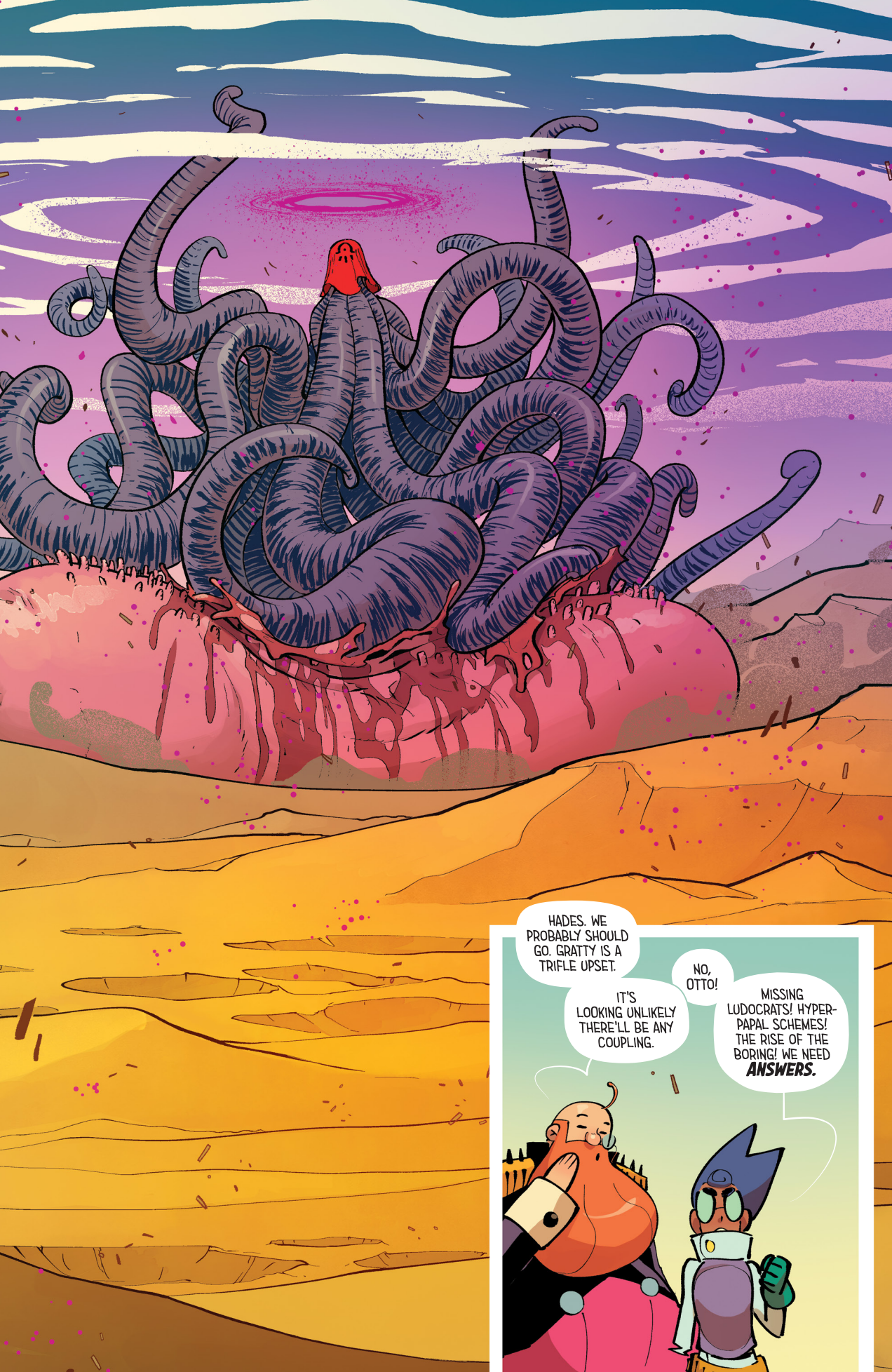
**BUT ELAINA
TRIPTYCH IS
WRONG!**







**OH, MY LOVELY
GIGANTYPEDE!**



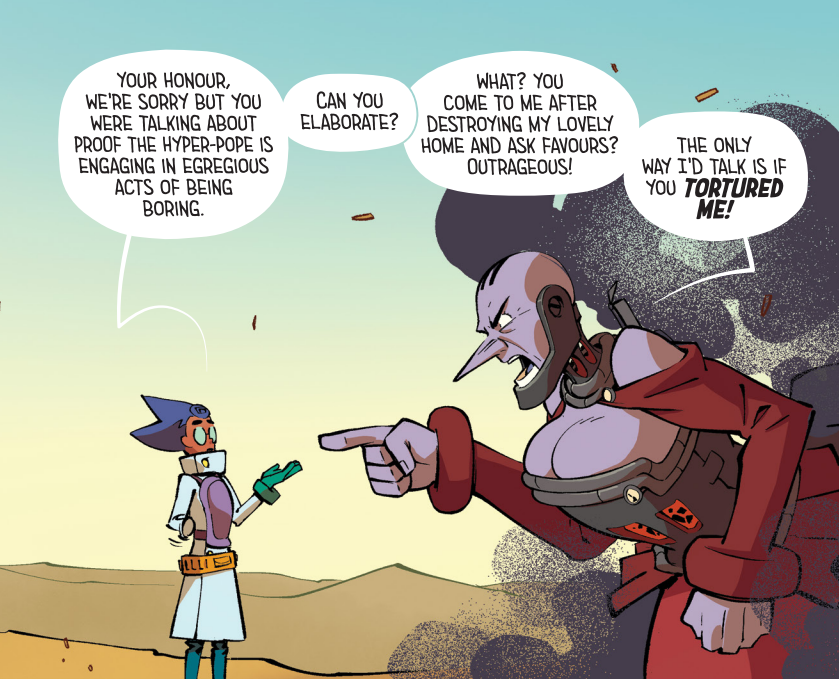
HADES. WE
PROBABLY SHOULD
GO. GRATTY IS A
TRIFLE UPSET.

NO,
OTTO!

IT'S
LOOKING UNLIKELY
THERE'LL BE ANY
COUPLING.

MISSING
LUDOCRATS! HYPER-
PAPAL SCHEMES!
THE RISE OF THE
BORING! WE NEED
ANSWERS.





YOUR HONOUR,
WE'RE SORRY BUT YOU
WERE TALKING ABOUT
PROOF THE HYPER-POPE IS
ENGAGING IN EGREGIOUS
ACTS OF BEING
BORING.

CAN YOU
ELABORATE?

WHAT? YOU
COME TO ME AFTER
DESTROYING MY LOVELY
HOME AND ASK FAVOURS?
OUTRAGEOUS!

THE ONLY
WAY I'D TALK IS IF
YOU **TORTURED
ME!**



THEN
THERE IS NO
HOPE. TORTURE
IS AN ETHICAL LINE
I WILL NOT
CROSS.

WE
WILL HAVE
TO CONTINUE
WITHOUT YOUR
AI—



I SAID
**TORTURE
ME!**

NOW, **THIS**
IS A MISSION
I CAN HELP
WITH.

STEP BACK!
A HIGHLY CONSENSUAL
INTERROGATION
WILL FOLLOW!





THE Ludocrats

was brought to you by



KIERON GILLEN

*LITERARY
DISASTER*

THE WORDSTORM CLASSIFIED "KIERON"
CRASHED INTO THE LITERARY SOUTH
COAST IN THE MID-90S AS A CLASS 2
PRETENTEOSPHERE AND HAS GOT WORSE.

JIM ROSSIGNOL

*A FURTHER
LITERARY DISASTER*

THE GOOD SENTENCE-SHIP JIM SET SAIL
FROM DOVER AND STRUCK AN ICEBERG,
THEN KNIFED IT AND BECAME A
CHAOTIC-EVIL LIFE SENTENCE SHIP.

JEFF STOKELY

*INCARNATOR
OF IMAGES*

HE DRAWS A LINE. THEN HE DRAWS
ANOTHER. AND ANOTHER. AND THEN
HE MAYBE RUBS ONE OUT? EVENTUALLY,
IT'S ART. IT'S AMAZING.

TAMRA BONVILLAIN

*CHROMATIC
SAINT*

WHILE BEST KNOWN FOR HER MIRACLES IN
BLUE AND GREEN SHE IS ALSO HONOURED
BY THE ACHROMANTIC COLOURS IN BOTH
SONG AND VERSE.

CLAYTON COWLES

*L.E.T.T.E.R.
SUPREMO*

THE FOUNDER OF THE LEAGUE OF
ENCYCLOPEDIA TITANIC TYPEFACE
ENTERER ROGUES IS AVAILABLE FOR ALL
TASKS OF LETTERING AND/OR ROGUERY.

FERNANDO ARGÜELLO

*DELINEATOR
OF AREAS*

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WILD COLOUR BE
KEPT TO ITS SPECIFIC RESERVES. AS AN
ESTEEMED FLATTER, ARGÜELLO PATROLS
THE BORDERS, EYES EVER-WATCHFUL.

CHRISSY WILLIAMS

*HER
FAULT*

THE DEATH OF STARS. THE WEEPING OF
THE WHALE. THIS COMIC. SHE COULD HAVE
STOPPED IT. SHE CHOSE NOT TO.
SHE LAUGHS.

SERGIO SERRANO

*GENERAL
AESTHETIC*

WHEN THE UGLINESS OF EXISTENCE GROWS
TOO MUCH, DOCTOR SERRANO DEPLOYS
THE AESTHETIC TO SOOTHE THE FEVERED
AND FERMENTED BROW.

VIOLENT TREVOR

*VIOLENCE &
TREVORING*

VIOLENT FOLLOWED THE FAMILY TRADE
OF VIOLENCE BEFORE DISCOVERING
AN EQUAL PASSION FOR TREVOR. AN
INSPIRATION. YOU CAN BE BOTH.



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The
VON
SUBERTAN
Family Tree

HORST VON SUBERTAN

*Grand sire of the Von Subertans,
Keeper of The Hybrid of The Great Pit*

LOXMIKANA THIPSE

*Died loading a shark into her howitzer at the
siege of Monkton Egregia*

**CLEMENT
HAPENSBAGGER-FRITH**

*Famed for his collection
of surprising bones*

**COLONEL EMILIA
SAXON-WARSTEIN**

*Wrestled and defeated The
Unhappy Centipede Of Fate*

The
MYSTERIOUS FIGURE
in the TOWER

*Billowing gown, looked great
on cover of gothic novels*

**RADIKALIEN
NORTWICH
VON SUBERTAN**

*Cannibal time-traveller who
died of surprise to spite his mother*

**HYPER-REGENT
WARSTEIN KRALSTEIN
HAPENSBAGGER-FRITH**

*Went on to marry
a handsome axe,
no other children*

PARDIUS HAEMOGLANDULUM
VON SUBERTAN, ELDRITCH
HYPER-POPE *and* SUPREME
HIGH LUDOCRAT

Good old Pardy!



BARON OTTO
VON SUBERTAN

*Current patriarch of
House Von Subertan*

The NAMELESS
BEING *from*
BEYOND *the* VEIL

LADY JENNIFER
HARDTONGUE-
WASSELIN

COMET-TAMER
SKYLIAN-PECK

DORIS SMITH

SHOGGOD MUIR,
the UNBEAST

FIRE SUMMONER
GARCIA

The ETTER-BEAST
of LOATHIAN

JANE

GARY

SIMON

PSYGORTH
HYPERIUS REX

The SCAMPERING
FINGER-TOE

QUESTING ALFRED

IAN REVENGER

WIZARD THOMPSON

TRUNK

HOBAN FORMIDABLE

TOCKNOT GWAIN

ELASTICUS POPTROPE

NO-KID OSSIUS

CATFRIEND LORINA

KNIFE BUCKLAND

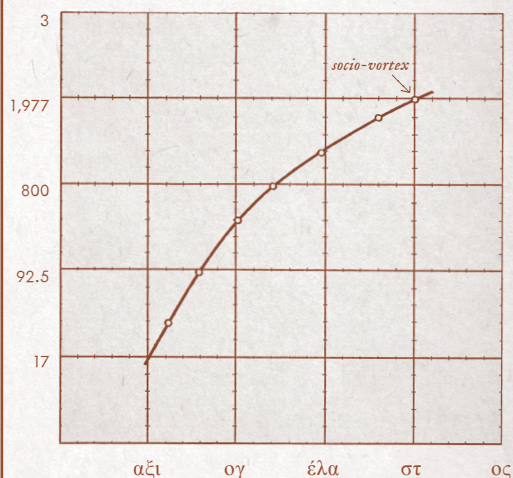
KLEPTORINA PINCH

On the Life Cycle of GIGANTIPEDIC SPERMATAZOIC LEPIDOPTERAPEDE

(aka *The Cloud Caterpillar*, aka *The Butterfly Palaces of Westphalia*)

UNSURPRISINGLY, it falls to me, Dr Douglas X-Position, the voice of explanation in this tome of unreason, to explain the origin and life cycle of the Gigantipedic Spermatazoic Lepidopterapepe, and its place in Ludocratic society.

It is important to understand that at one point in Ludocratic history, before palaces and hovels had been conceived of, everyone lived inside animals. Peasants would climb inside cows, or ride along in a giant land-snail, and the rich and tremendous would live inside the cavernous nose-chambers of the Ponder-Sloths, as they wandered through the primitive forests of the early Ludocene.



AESTHETIC DENSITY (x) vs METAPHOR DELIMITING (y)

All this changed, however, during the great trend plague of Justinius. A brain virus radically altered aesthetic tastes across the globe, giving nearly 70% of the population of Eurasia strong opinions on interior design (96% in the Antipodes) and so it was that new homes had to be invented.

As is so often the case in the significant tides of history, another factor combined to bring the modern Gigantipedic Spermatazoic Lepidopterapepe into the picture: the discovery of the stealth continent of Jungba. Jungba, a mobile landmass that had been cleverly moving out of the way of explorers for centuries, got its undercarriage caught on a bony undersea mass, created by Ludocrats who wanted coral balloon ports. Thus trapped, Jungba was soon entered by a new wave of botanists, balloonists and zoologists, who did their best to discover and cross-breed the unimagined species that dwelt there.

It was Leon Cusp, notable invertebrate remodeller, who found the original creature that was to become the Gigantipedic Spermatazoic Lepidopterapepe: a prehistoric mega-Nymphalidae, which hunted and sucked the juices from the flower-headed people of Lurpo (sadly now extinct). Immediately understanding the potential for genetic renovation in the beast, Cusp bred and cross-bred and manipulated to create a creature to lay habitable eggs in the haunted moss at Lupid Tor (now lived in by many in the Ludocratic tradesman classes), eggs which grew into the larval stage we are all so familiar with (used as both administrative spaces and residential structures for all tiers of Ludocrats) and then finally, with luck, metamorphosized into the butterfly stage. The coveted flying palaces dominate the property listings among non-terrestrial real estate vendors.

It perhaps goes without saying that the most interesting aspect of the gigantipedes generally is their ability to defecate trans-dimensionally. It is into the research on this uncanny science that I will dedicate part of my next book, entitled *Philosophical Evacuations*.



Dr Douglas X-Position, PHD QED

Trained in Expositionary Sciences at the Institute of Verbose Description in Klovehammer, Douglas has long (long) expanded upon the work of his mentor, Eleanor Lucidation. Douglas' world tour in 1065e produced some of his finest work, and has been collected in an important textbook, later editions of which shipped as a manual on how to explain snow to Eskimos.

The PERSONAL CYCLOPEDIA of LUDOCRACY,
by PARDIUS HAEMOGLANDULUM,
ELDRITCH HYPER-POPE and SUPREME HIGH LUDOCRAT



*On The Melodic
Weapons of
The Zero-K*

“...HENCE THE DYNASTY of the Zero-K has long been an important ally for the Von Subertan clan. Their control of vast beds of

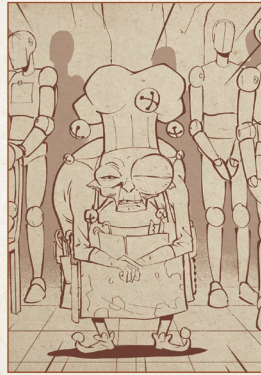
fossilised melody is a powerful resource on its own, but it is the inventiveness of the Zero-K mind that is most formidable and admirable. Their capacity to retool musical frequencies as sub-quantum abrogation systems has created a range of weaponry that not only has no obvious countermeasure, but is also compulsively danceable. It is also, I find most reassuring, our only defence against the atonal dimensions which would invade our own and feed upon music, devouring it from the inside, were we ever to allow them. (Hades’ mixtapes based on your subconscious desires can be quite the ride, too.)” •



On The Creature Shoggod Muir

“...YET MY BROTHER’S largest and most impressive progeny is the creature Shoggod Muir, a being of abominated space-time whose powers have yet to be accurately

mapped. While I have repeatedly instructed Otto to keep the creature contained with rotating teams of trans-Albanian Electrocutationists (they’re more resilient to cosmic horror than cheaper American Electrocutationists) he insists on letting the beast roam, causing astonishing mayhem whenever it gets loose. I have to say, as someone who doesn’t have kids, I find the commitment of the parenting kind to reproduction rather daunting, but I am thankful to Otto for providing me with so many chaotic nephews and nieces. The world would be a less ludicrous place without them.” •



*On The Sublime
Order of The
Gastronauts*

“...AND SO IT WAS on the third phase of the feast that we realised, myself and the ghost of my predecessor, Hyper-Pope Delany, that the

secret frontier of food was inside the living organisms from which food is normally expected. So it was that we created the order of Gastronauts: ambitious chefs who would wade inside prospective meals to find the freshest and most alarming foods for us to consume. I have forgotten why we expected them to dress as little jester people, but there is no way for me to regret that decision. Our bravest explorers of meat also being very funny to look at has become a cornerstone of Ludocratic sustenance.” •

* * * * *

To send letters to LUDOCRATS
please attach your words
to the back of a friendly vole
and instruct them to head to
OTTO'S CASTLE, LUDOVERSE.

LETTERS from LUDOCRATS



ASTRAL STATIC

My Dearest Zero-K,
Having returned through my private portal from the un-worlds forum and seminar series at Haertoplex, I have found that your nightly transmissions of aetheric melody and astral static have been discontinued. In fact, several of your telepathic channels are now broadcasting some sort of warning matrix instead of the usual informal mixes? Is something wrong?

Yours,
Planeswalker Kent, Battle Architect Of The Anchorites

Yes.

Yours,
Professor Hades Zero-K

HELLISH HELL

Beloved Otto,
To cut a long story short, damn you to hell. To extend the story somewhat, I have become aware via a sequential picture narrative that you held a wedding at your abode, and it appears a lovely time was had by all, except the murdered. However, I could not help but to note my entire lack of presence. Why was I not invited? You know it's not a wedding without me. To return to the original short story, damn you to hell. I don't even care which hell. It can be an inferior, hellish hell for all I care.

Yours faithfully,
Seven Snakes In A Trenchcoat

Snakes!

Thank you so, so much for your correspondence — it's been too long! Unfortunately his excellency Baron Von Subertan is unavailable for comment due to unforeseen and frankly horrific events. However as his acting press officer I am able to say that while snakes are essential to all Ludocratic matrimonial events, in this instance you, specifically, were overlooked due to a clerical error. The cleric in question has been pushed through a sieve, all the better to be eaten at a later date.

Sincerely,
An Ape with the Head of a Prehistoric Bird

UNFOLDING THE FLESH

Greetings Ludocrats,
I, Perchod Nebuchadnezzar, Meta-Thoth of the Hezzarine, recently discovered your dimension via the Unhappenings Personal Ads on the astral matrix listings, and I am looking for a committed pen pal. My interests are: telekinetically unfolding the flesh of my screaming enemies, dragging the unknowable prisoners of Azazel from the abyss, and photography. Please write back if interested.

Sincerely,
"Perchy" N

Hello Perchy!

Oh, what timing! I am in need of a committed pen pal, ironically due to having had my last pennish-pal committed. I am now the warden of The Lord of Inkpocalypse's estates, most notably his famous armada of nib-jets. Everyone

knows, the pen is mightier than the sword. Swords are just bits of metal while pens soar through the air and drop toxic ink on all who would oppose them. It is a most stirring sight. Unfortunately, I have failed in my duty to safeguard the fleet, having traded them for some magic beans which I ate on some magic toast. Still — I tried. Anyway, I'd be delighted to continue this correspondence. My interests include absolute loyalty and not stabbing people in the back.

Yours,
"Voidy" the Perfidious,
Grand Frequency Shifter,
Traitor at etcetera, etcetera

A GODLESS SKY

To whom it doth concerneth,
I am informed by knowledgeable parties that a Gigantipede will feature prominently in your pictorial narrative. I do sincerely hope that it does not have its belly distended to bursting point and an enormous hellbeast emerge to howl darkly at a godless sky.

Yours,
Saint Trillia the Unforbidden,
Gigantipede Protection League

Dearest Trillia,
My lawyer has told me to not respond to this mail as I will likely incriminate myself if I admit to being involved in the explosive death of a gigantipede, so I'm going to do that.

Yours,
Otto Von Subertan



LUDOCRATS #3

(July 15th, 2020)

After two issues of nonsense, the team
decide to do an issue about serious
emotions like plaintiveness and ennui.
We lie. It's more nonsense.

THESE ARE VEXATIOUS, KNOTTY TIMES

to be a Ludocrat. The simmering juices of history are combining with a sinister marinade of conspiracy to create a flavour of trepidatious incident and uncertain intent. Those fine figures which leap, ape-like, through these pages – the abdominus Baron Otto Von Subertan, his refulgent friend and ally Professor Hades Zero-K, the lucid razor-being of Elaina Triptych, the intranspicuous Voldigan, and the goblinoid gastronaut, Gaston – each and all are imperiled within a plot they cannot hope to unfold... Or can they? No. Maybe...

Well.

Probably not.

Nevertheless their efforts to do so amount to a grand spectaculum: an event of accelerated happenings which will be remembered as the pure extract of history coagulating noisily in the ululating larynx of destiny. Peer in incredulity as The Ludocrats mount a grisly rescue mission into the guts of a living prison the size

of a mountain. Marvel as they meet the spawn of the Von Subertan loins, and the para-cosmic darkness that dwells therein. Quake in abject indignation as the tale of

these complicated quiddities of the Ludocracy carve a euphemistic glyph into the heaving flank of anticipated narrative.

If you are here, then you are already part of what is happening to all competing realities: the Ludocratic mandate and its delivery unto the universe. I wish I could write more, but the demands of a society beyond comprehension demands my attention. So let me say this, reader: police zombies, meta-melodic parasitism, bats, hangovers, death, and

the cathedral-innards of a behemoth which has no end to its bowel in this dimension are all featured herein. We believe – and that's me using the royal 'we', because a Hyper-Pope is a sort of king, you know – that you will find it edifying. Oh yes, we know why you're here. But we won't tell anyone. Devour! •

“YOU ARE
ALREADY
PART OF
WHAT IS
HAPPENING
TO ALL
COMPETING
REALITIES”

From the desk of
His EXCELLENCY PARDIUS HAEMOGLANDULUM,
GRAND and VEXATIOUS LUDOCRAT,
REGENT WARP-CZAR *of the* WEST,
and SEVENTY-NINTH
ELDRITCH
HYPER-
POPE



COVER A: JEFF STOKELY
RATED M/MATURE

