

Image
ISSUE 1

GILLEN

ROSSIGNOL

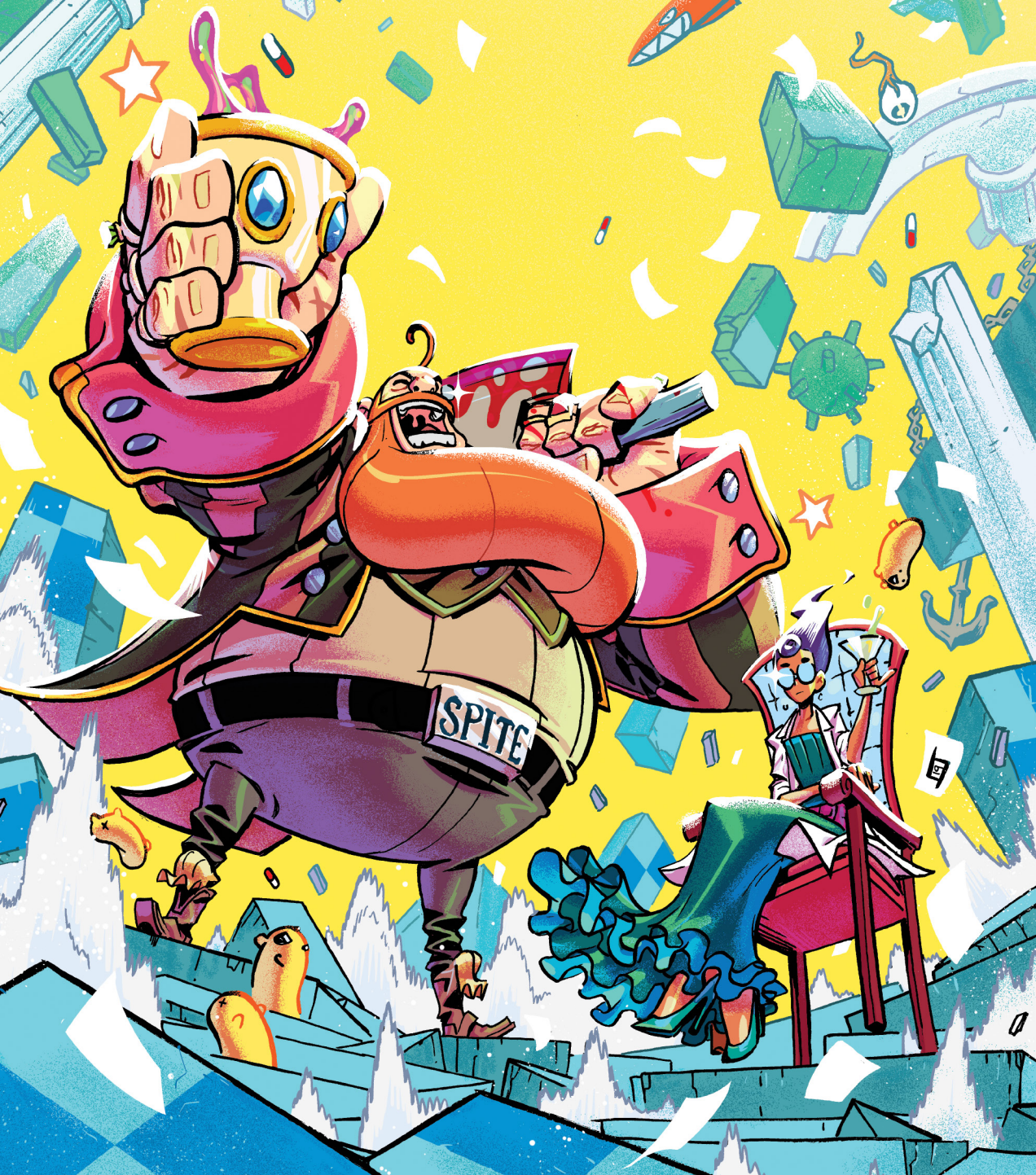
STOKELY

BONVILLAIN

COWLES

THE Ludocrats

I. THE FINE AND LUDICROUS INSTITUTION OF MATRIMONY. ALSO. MURDER.





WE TRIED *to*
IMAGINE *a*
BETTER WORLD.



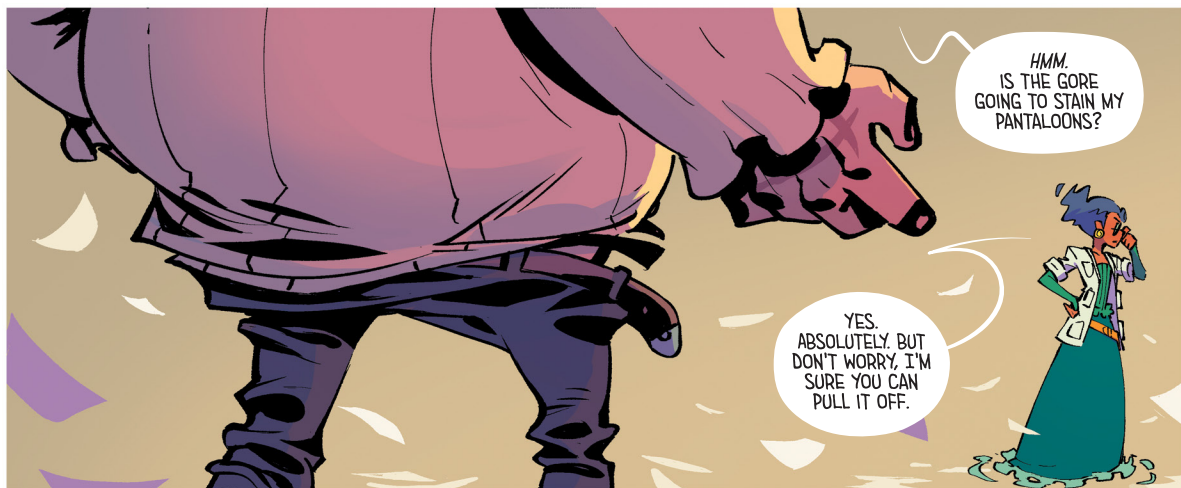
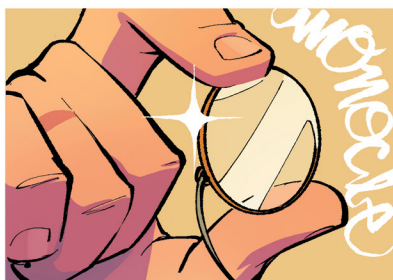
WE FAILED.

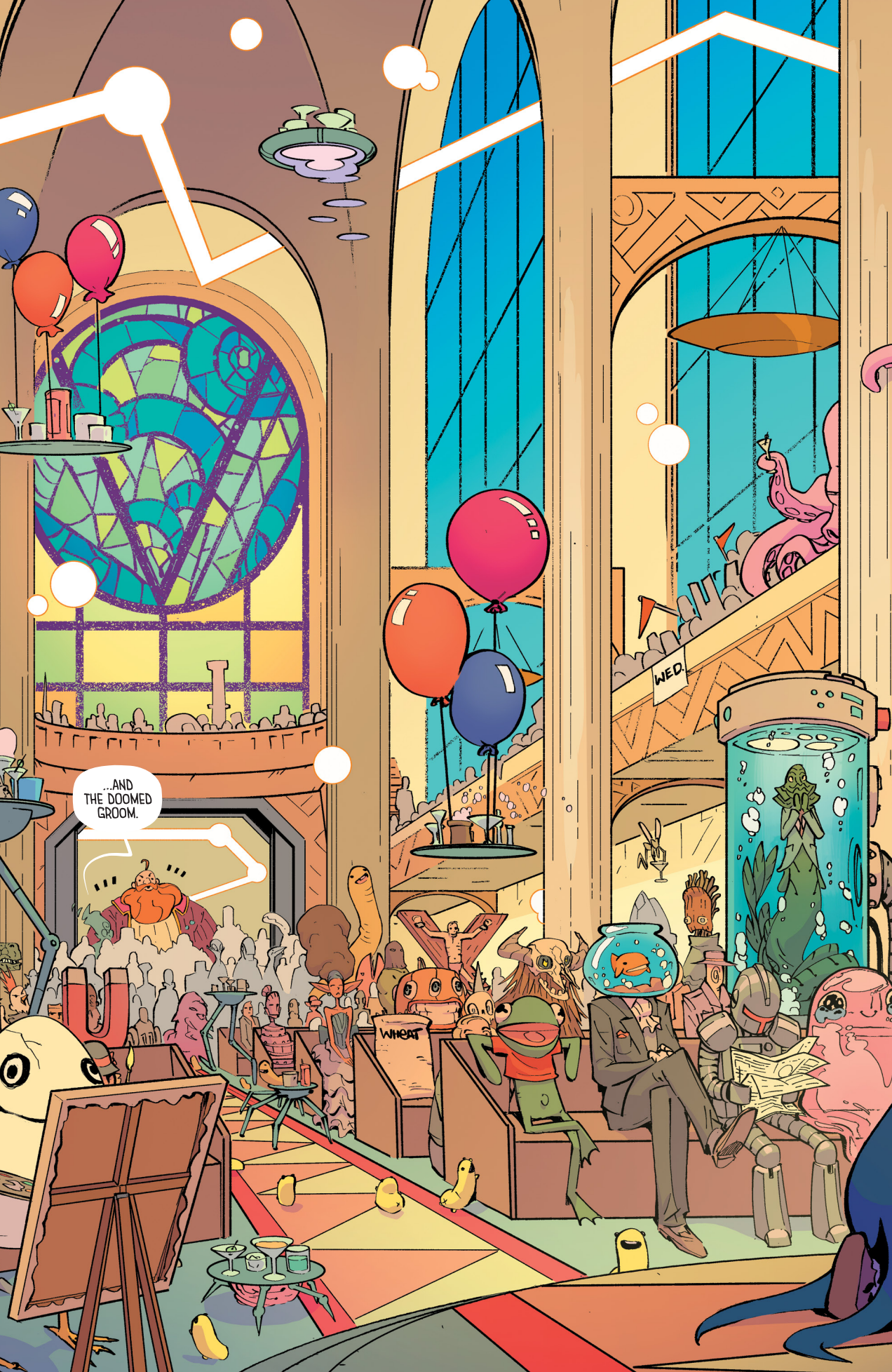
Instead,
WE DID THIS.



OH,
HELLO. IT'S
YOU.







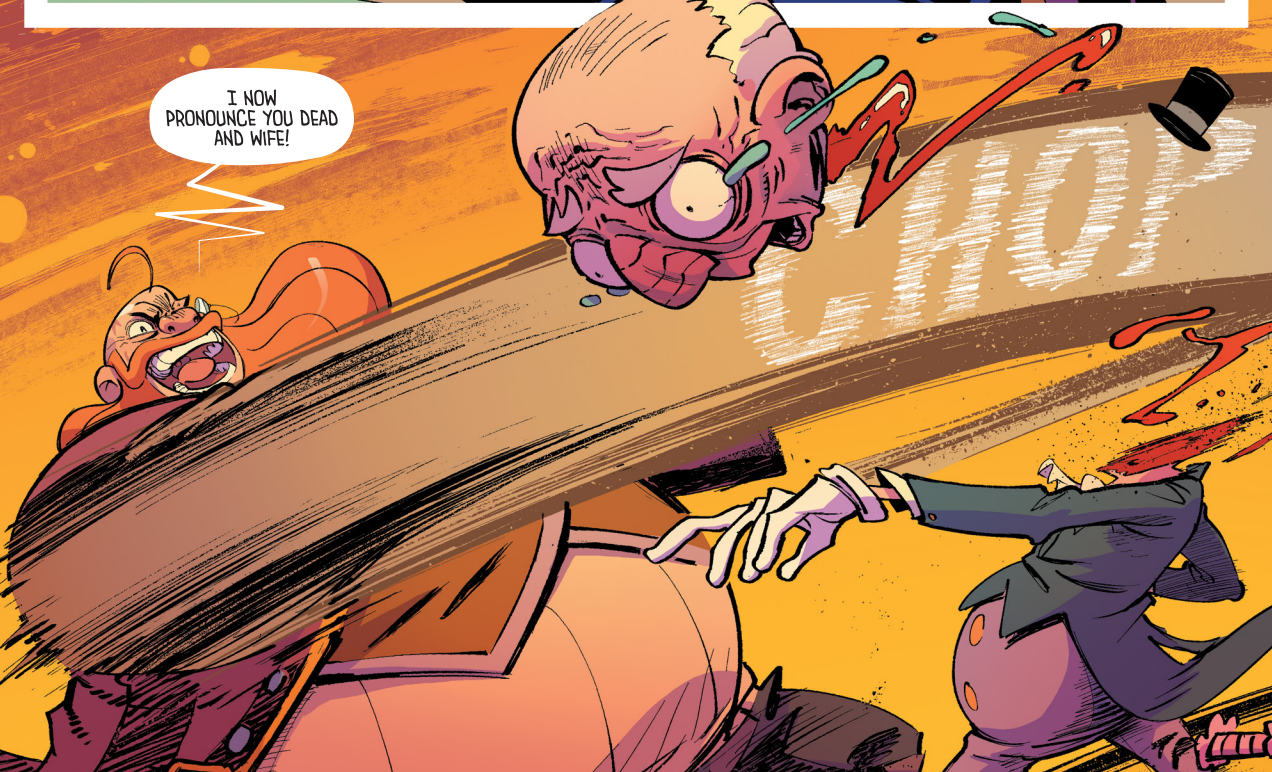
...AND
THE DOOMED
GROOM.

WHEAT

WED.







AFTER SUCH A DELIGHTFUL WEDDING (SO DEFINED AS BEING IN THE TOP TENTH PERCENTILE OF ALL LUDOCRATIC WEDDINGS) THE PARTIES RETIRED TO CELEBRATE AND AWAIT THE ARRIVALS OF EVERYONE FASHIONABLE ENOUGH TO ARRIVE LATE, OBVIOUSLY INCLUDING THE MOST FASHIONABLE OF ALL, THE ELDRITCH HYPER-POPE HIMSELF.

THEY GATHERED IN OTTO'S DRAWING ROOM, A SOLELY CONCEPTUAL PLACE WHERE GUESTS COULD EXPLORE FANCIES AND AMUSEMENTS WHILE SIPPING ASSORTED BEVERAGES, ETC., ETC.



OH GOD, IT'S THAT DOCTOR X-POSITION FELLOW, HADES.



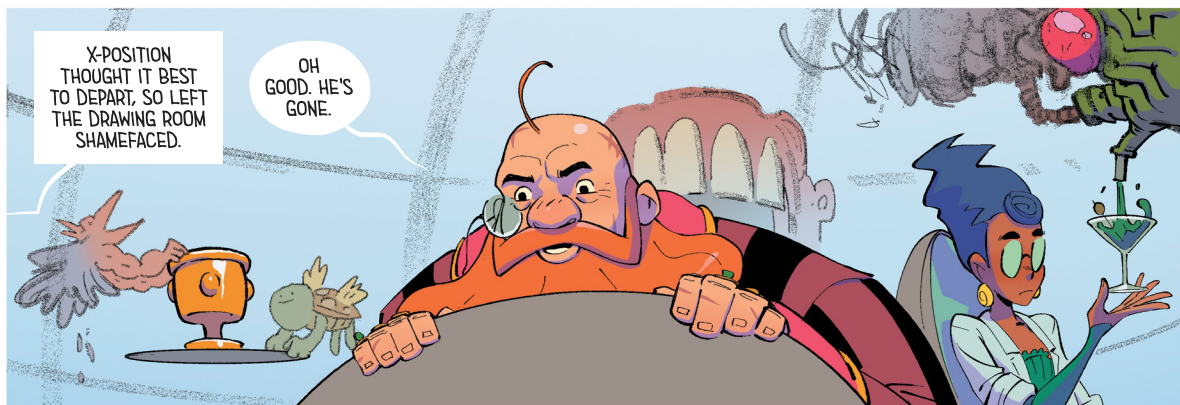
OBSERVED, THE GOOD DOCTOR X-POSITION TRIED TO IGNORE THE HURTFUL REMARKS OF THE FAMOUSLY BUFFOONISH OTTO.

HIDE, HADES! HE'S PERILOUSLY BORING.



X-POSITION THOUGHT IT BEST TO DEPART, SO LEFT THE DRAWING ROOM SHAMEFACED.

OH GOOD. HE'S GONE.

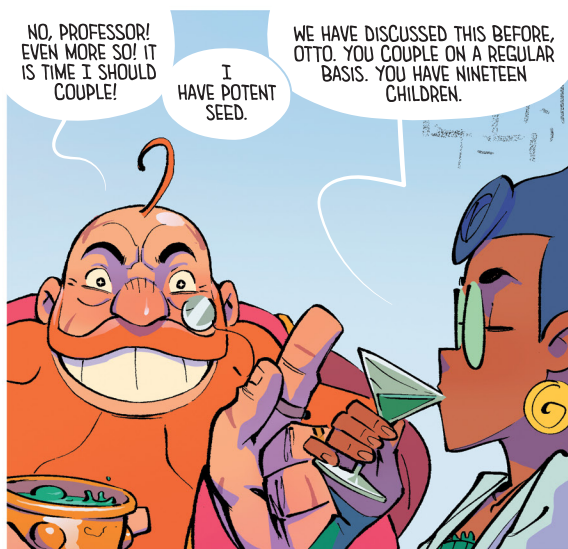




AH, HADES.
OTTO VON SUBERTAN
HUNGERS FOR MORE
THAN MEAT...

THE SPECTRE
OF HETERONORMATIVITY
HAUNTS MY GONADS. WEDDINGS
ALWAYS AROUSE MY BASER
FUNCTIONS...

ER, OTTO...
I'VE DONE THE
EXPERIMENTS. EVEN
DIM SUNLIGHT AROUSES
YOUR BASER
FUNCTIONS.



NO, PROFESSOR!
EVEN MORE SO! IT
IS TIME I SHOULD
COUPLE!

I
HAVE POTENT
SEED.

WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS BEFORE,
OTTO. YOU COUPLE ON A REGULAR
BASIS. YOU HAVE NINETEEN
CHILDREN.



PRACTISE IS ALL. WHEN I
TRULY SIRE IT WILL BE
THE AUTHENTIC SPAWN
OF SUBERTAN.

I JUST NEED
TO FIND THE RIGHT
CONSORT TO JOIN ME ON
THIS GLORIOUS BREEDING
ADVENTURE!



NO SINGLE CREATURE *COULD*
SATE YOUR APPETITES.

A MADAME VON
SUBERTAN WOULD HAVE TO
BE TEN FEET TALL, WITH A MIND
DEVOTED TO THE DARKER ARTS
OF THE FLESH AND A STEELY
PNEUMATIC PELVIS.



FACE
THE FACTS,
OTTO.

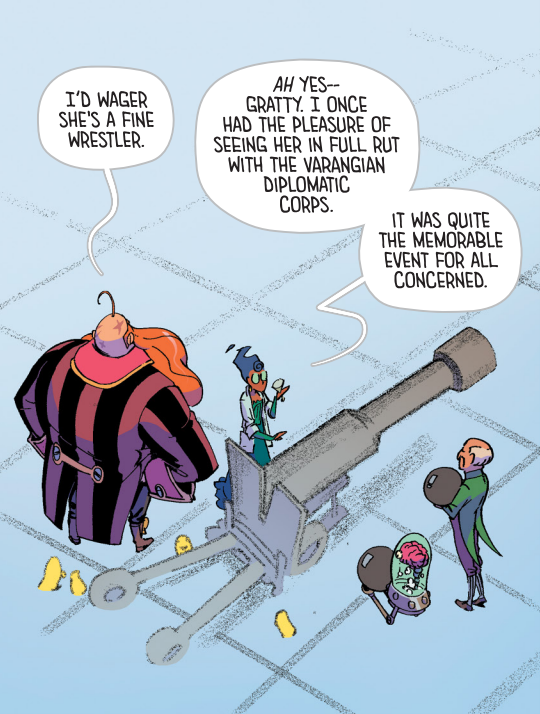
YOU ARE
AN INELIGIBLE
BACHELOR
WHO--

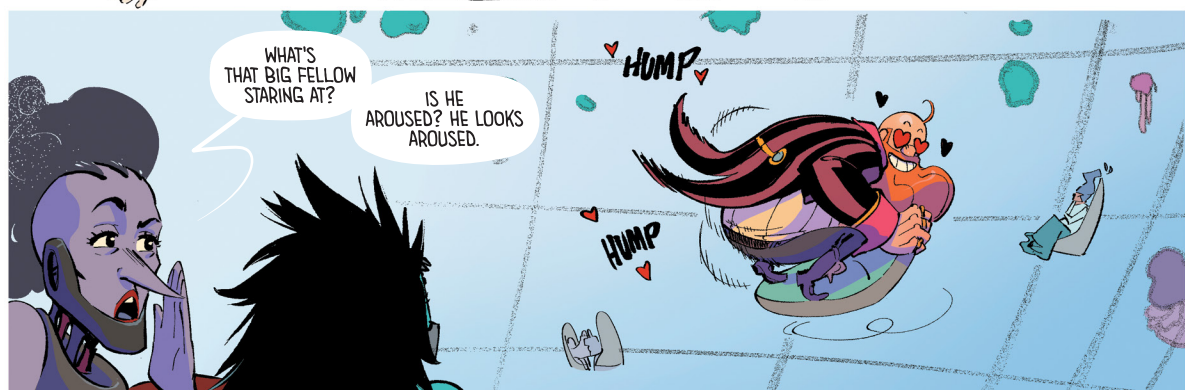
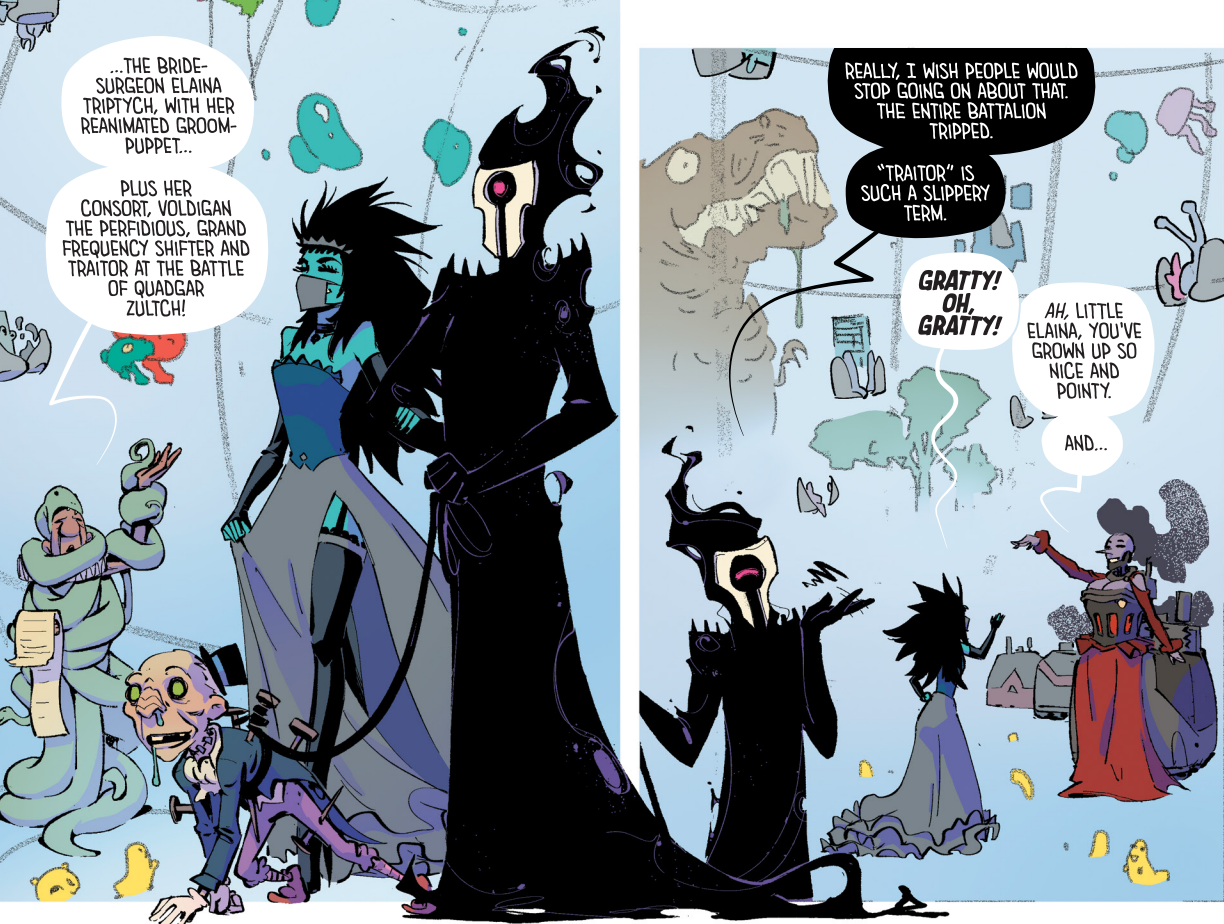
MY
LUDOCRATS!
PLEASE BE
UPSTANDING...

...FOR GRATINIA
GAVELSTEIN, HIGH
STEAM-JUDGE OF NEW
PRUSSIA AND HEIR TO
THE GRAND THRONE
OF WAX!

BRASSY
LEVIATHAN OF THE LAW
COURTS AND COURTING
QUEEN OF THE WAR BOUDOIR!
DISCOVERER OF FOUR NEW
SPECIES OF ORGASM IN THE
STEAMY RAINFORESTS
OF MONACO!









...CASANOVA QUINN, DISGUISED AS A SEXY DINOSAUR, TRYING TO STEAL SOMETHING AS HE'S A FAMED INTERDIMENSIONAL THIEF AND THAT IS SIMPLY WHAT HE DOES.

APPEARING HERE COURTESY OF THE "CASANOVA" PERIODICAL OF IMAGE COMICS FAME!



SHIT.



OH GOD. IT'S A CROSSOVER.

LET ME DEAL WITH IT, HADES.



OH, HADES! HADES!



MY GOOD FRIEND BOGOL THEEN, THE CHAINSAW GASTRONAUT, AND MYSELF WERE TALKING, AND WE ENDED UP HAVING A WAGER WE HOPED YOU COULD SETTLE...

RIIIIGHT.

WE WEREN'T.





DID I? HAH!
I CAN'T SEE WHY
HE WOULDN'T COME.
NO HYPER-POPE SHOULD BE
LATE TO SUCH A GRAND PARTY
AS THIS. THE PEOPLE NEED
TO BE INSPIRED TO
LUDICROUSNESS!

IT'S NOT
THAT FAR FROM
THE CITADEL COURTS,
EVEN IF HE'S COMING
BY XENOPHILE'S
TORTOISE.



PERHAPS HE
GOT CAUGHT IN A
LEGAL MATTER? OR A
TERRIBLE PARADOX? ONLY THOSE
AS PURE IN LUDOCRACY AS
HE CAN TRUST SOMETHING
AS LUBRICIOUS AS THE
RULE OF LAW...

GOOD OLD
PARDY. THE BEST, MOST
LUDICROUS BROTHER A
BARON COULD HOPE FOR.



WE'RE A LONG WAY FROM THE HALLS OF
ACCELERATION NOW, OTTO. PARDIUS WAS
NEVER ERRATIC. HIS VISION WAS
CONSTANT, UNWAVERING.

HE'S THE MAN
WHO DELVED INTO AND
CONQUERED THE BLOODY
OBSCENITARIUM!

AND HE
WAS A FINE BOOZER!
HAHA.



YOU KNOW
HE PARDONED THE
HERETICAL PARIAH
OF AVERAGES?

PERHAPS ONCE.
NOW I WORRY. HE SEEMS
SCARCELY CONCERNED THAT
MANY OF OUR FELLOW LUDOCRATS
HAVE GONE MISSING. AND WHEN
HE **DOES** CHOOSE TO ACT...
I SHIVER, OTTO, I
SHIVER...

ALL THE
MORE LUDICROUS!
I BET HE DID IT
FOR JAPES.



OH, OTTO. EVERY DEMI-
QUAVER OF MY BODY
TREMBLES. I FEAR...

LUDOCRATS!
PLEASE BE
UPSTANDING
FOR...





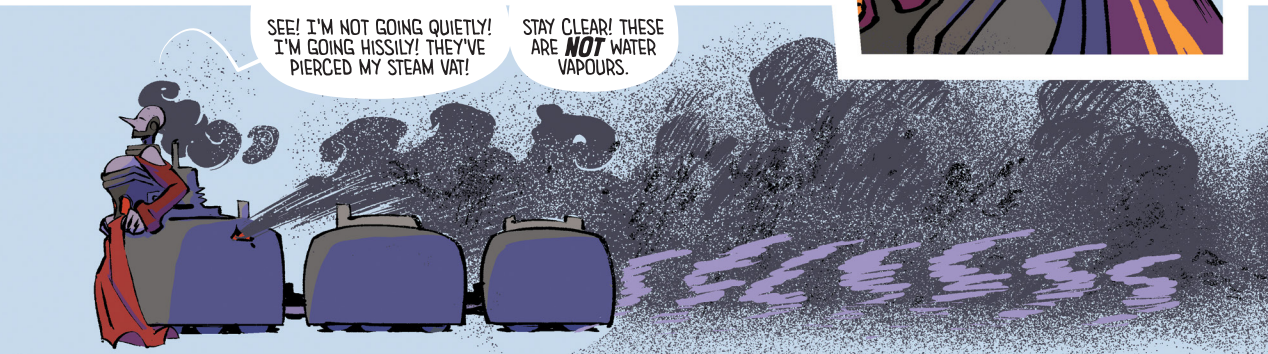
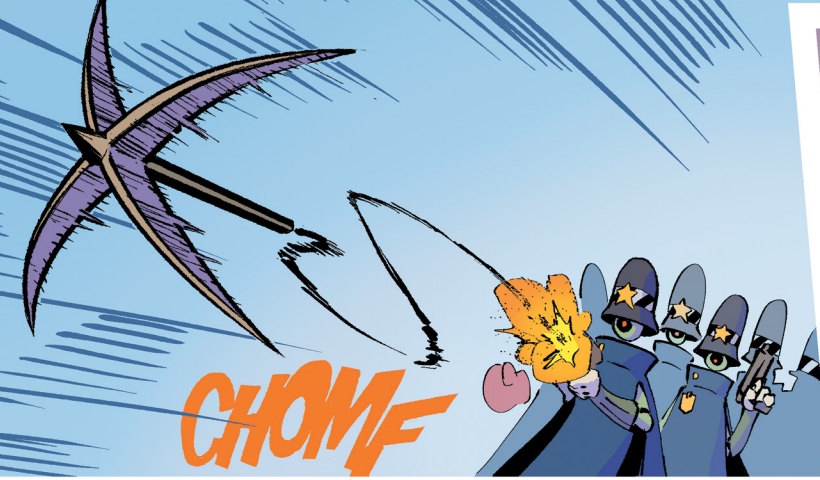


NAY!



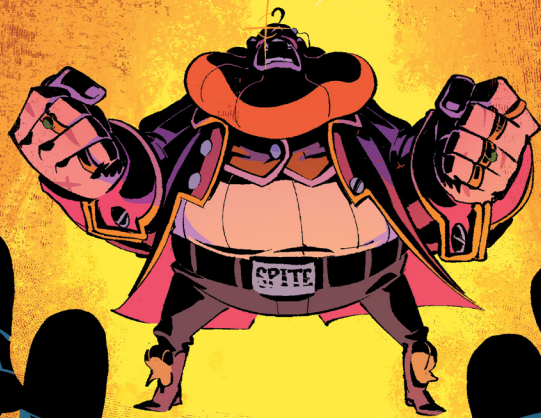
I HAVE
DONE NOTHING
WRONG! AT LEAST,
NOTHING THAT IS
NOT ENTIRELY
LUDICROUS!

IF YOU'RE
EXPECTING ME TO
GO QUIETLY, YOU'LL
BE SORELY
MISTAKEN...



**GRATTY!
UNFORGETTABLE
GRATTY!**

MY ETERNAL
LOVE! LEAVE
HER BE!



BRING ME THE
PROFANICANNON!

ROUSE
THE PELVIC
WEAPONRY!



NO TIME!
ACT SWIFTLY! ACT
VIOLENTLY!



SPLASH!

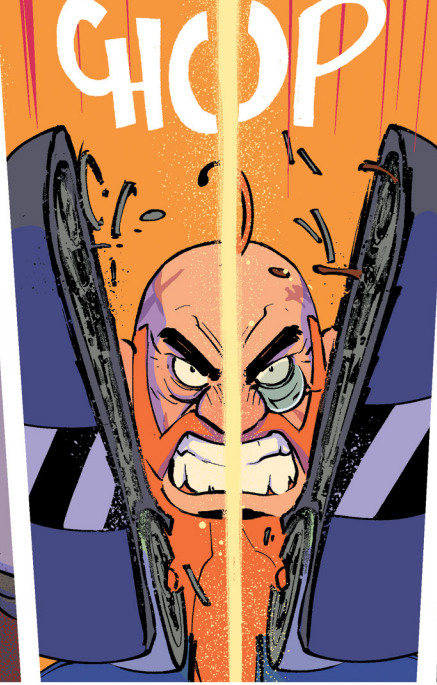


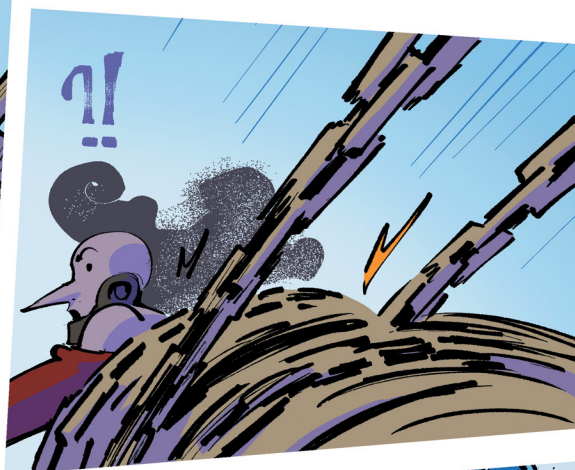
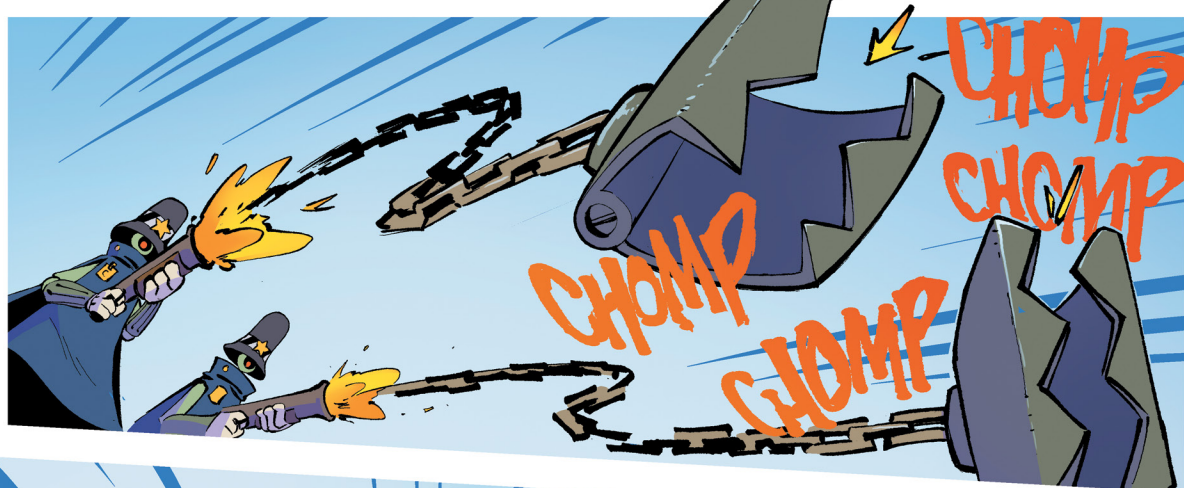
VERY WELL.

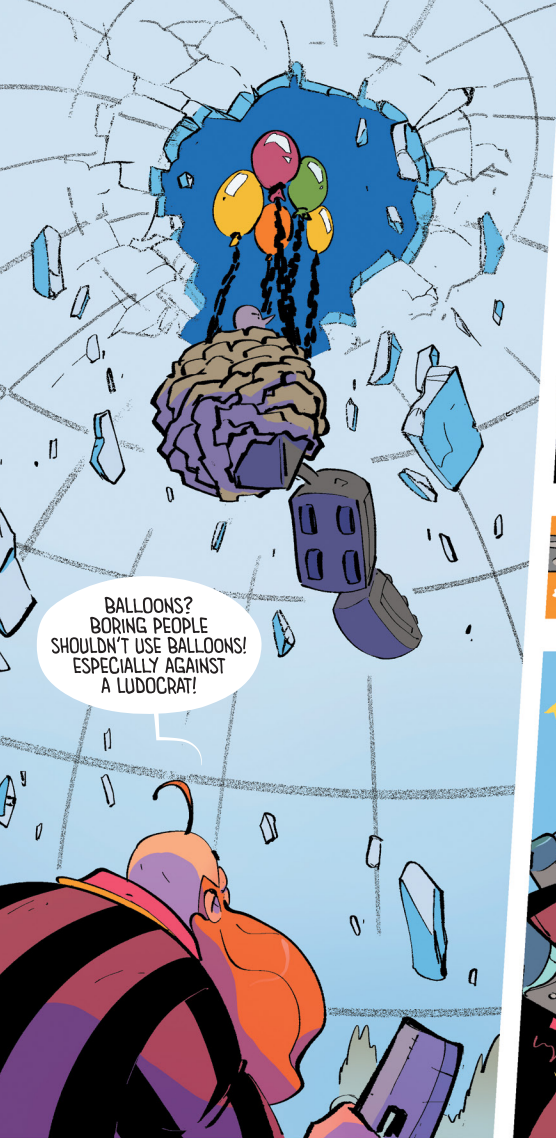
BUT I
WON'T ENJOY
IT.

Stop









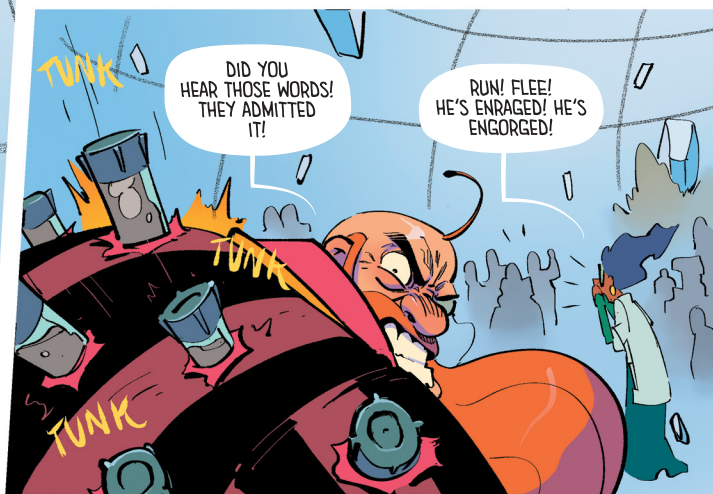
BALLOONS?
BORING PEOPLE
SHOULDN'T USE BALLOONS!
ESPECIALLY AGAINST
A LUDOCRAT!



PACIFY
LUDOCRAT
DESIGNATION:
"OTTO".

MAKE HIM
BORING.

WHAT???



DID YOU
HEAR THOSE WORDS!
THEY ADMITTED
IT!

RUN! FLEE!
HE'S ENRAGED! HE'S
ENGORGED!



THEY WANT
TO MAKE US
BORING,
HADES!



GRRRR!
IT WILL NOT BE
BORNE!

**MECHANICAL
BORING PEOPLE
HAVE TAKEN
SOMEONE I ONLY
JUST MET!**



ER...
WEDDING
OVER.

THANKS FOR
COMING! SEE
YOU SOON!





THE Ludocrats

was brought to you by



KIERON GILLEN

*WORD
SCIENTIST*

HIS PREVIOUS CHILDREN'S PICTURE NARRATIVES INCLUDE 'GODS BE GOOD BUT ALSO BAD MAKES YOU THINK', 'CONFUSING IN GERMAN' AND 'PHONOMANCER'.

TAMRA BONVILLAIN

*PALETTE
EMPRESS*

AMONG HER MANY TRIUMPHS, SHE INVENTED THE NEW COLOUR CALLED 'AWESOME', BUT IT'S SO AWESOME THAT YOU CAN'T SEE IT YET. SHAME.

CHRISSY WILLIAMS

*CONTROL
ROD*

LO! IT SEETHES! LO! IT WRITHES! BUT NO! THIS COMIC CANNOT ESCAPE THE GRASP OF THE UNDEFEATED WORD-WRESTLER OF SEVEN DIMENSIONS!

JIM ROSSIGNOL

*A FURTHER
WORD SCIENTIST*

DISCOVERER OF THE LUDONARRATIVE ALPS AS A DIGITAL ENTERTAINERIST, HE NOW TURNS TO THE JUXTAPOSITION OF PICTORIAL INFORMATION.

CLAYTON COWLES

*WORD
VISUALISATION*

LO! HE IS THE FONT OF ALL KNOWLEDGE AND IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL FONTS. HIS OTHER WORK INCLUDES REALITY.

SERGIO SERRANO

*ARRANGER OF
BEAUTIFUL THINGS*

DISCOVERED IN AN ISOLATED COMMUNE AND LURED BACK TO THE FALLEN WORLD, SERRANO POSITIONS OBJECTS EXACTLY TO STARTLING AESTHETIC EFFECT.

JEFF STOKELY

*PENCILS, INKS,
DEMIURGERY*

FIRST HE DRAWS IT IN PENCIL. THEN INKS IT. THEN HE USES THE DIVINE POWER TO RENDER IT TO AN ACTUALITY BEYOND COMPREHENSION.

FERNANDO ARGÜELLO

*DIVINE
FLATTERER*

FERNANDO'S SUBTLE AND ELEGANT TONGUE HAS ENGAGED ALL IN THE COLOURING EMPORIUMS OF THE MODERN COMIC SCENE.

CYRILLIC MEGABIFF

*CONCEPTUAL
ENGINEERING*

EXTENDED RUNNING JOKE CYRILLIC MEGABIFF ACHIEVED SENTIENCE IN THE MID-00S AND NOW EXISTS AS A FUGITIVE FROM THE SELF-INDULGENCE POLICE.



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GUESTS, HYPERBEINGS AND RIPPLES OF DEAREST PROFUNDITY

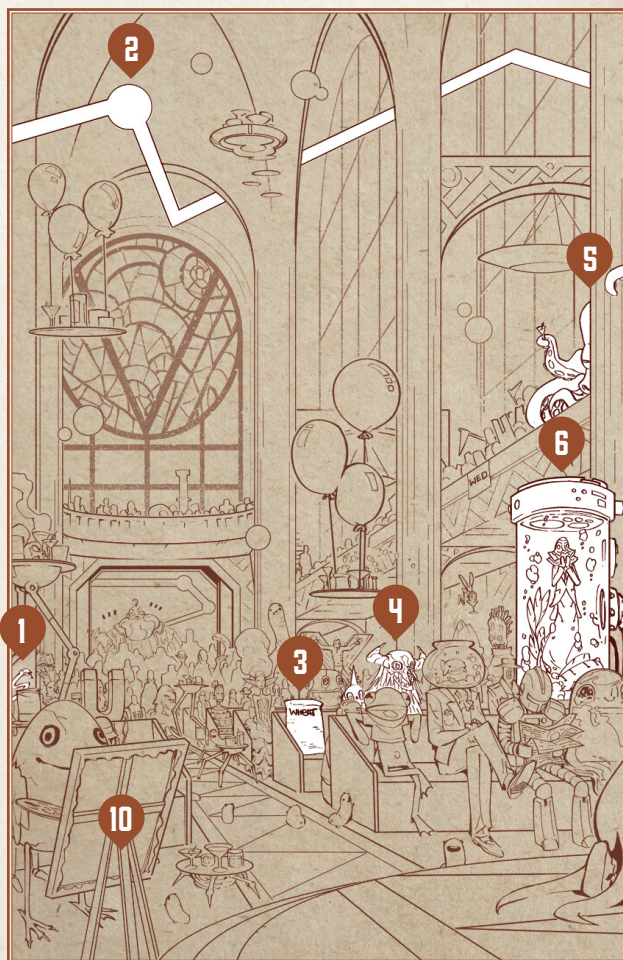
1 **SNAKES ARE**, of course, always invited. No event is complete without snakes, and while few snakes seem to understand the invites they receive, no Ludocratic ceremony – wedding, funeral, disgorgement, or personality bifurcation – is really complete without a strong serpent presence. We didn’t catch the name of this little guy, because he was sadly trodden upon by a sauropod who, frankly, doesn’t seem to have been on the guest list at all.

2 **THERE’S SCARCE REASON** in gathering this many Ludocrats in one place without siphoning off the novels and operas that they have inside them and might never get out! These raw potentialities (often disgusting) are streamed directly to the Obscenitarium’s automated expression chambers, where the ideas are forced onward through specially configured poets and authors (neurotic types who are bred for the purpose), meaning that an idea is never wasted. The coupons earned can be traded for meat credits!

3 **NO ENJOINING** of Ludocratic families would be correctly blessed without the presence of Thrax Oblivious, the sentient bag of wheat. Thrax, a masterpiece of alchemical transmogification, is not, as some have claimed, a Ludocrat transformed into a bag of wheat, but rather the reverse. Our scientists have yet to imbue Thrax with any further capabilities, such as movement or speech, but they assure us that he is most definitely one of, if not the most emotionally intelligent being extant in the universe today.

4 **WHILE IT WOULD** run against the spirit of Ludocracy to entirely outlaw cannibalism, inviting experimental monsters to a wedding does tend to result in unwanted loss of limb. Fortunately, the worst of the off-plan ingurgitation at this wedding was avoided by shipping in some indentured clowns. There is nothing a monstrous wedding guest enjoys more than being able to crack the old classic “Does this taste funny to you?” through a mouthful of terrifying viscera.

5 **MUCH OF THE GALLERY** here is filled with Von Subertan’s personal invitees: often composed of beings he later intends to eat. Otto never did get to dine on this colossal octopus, however, and the creature later found itself at the wheel of a large automobile, wondering how it got there.



6 **GUIDULA STERLIPHAIN**, Duchess of the Pond Viles, who came to fame through their chain of submerged singles bars. Struggling blindly through cold black water to find your sexual partner has become hugely fashionable in recent years, and Sterliphain was swift to capitalise on the trend. They say, however, that they themselves will never find love, due to a constant, deafening, nightmarish keyboard solo that only they can hear.

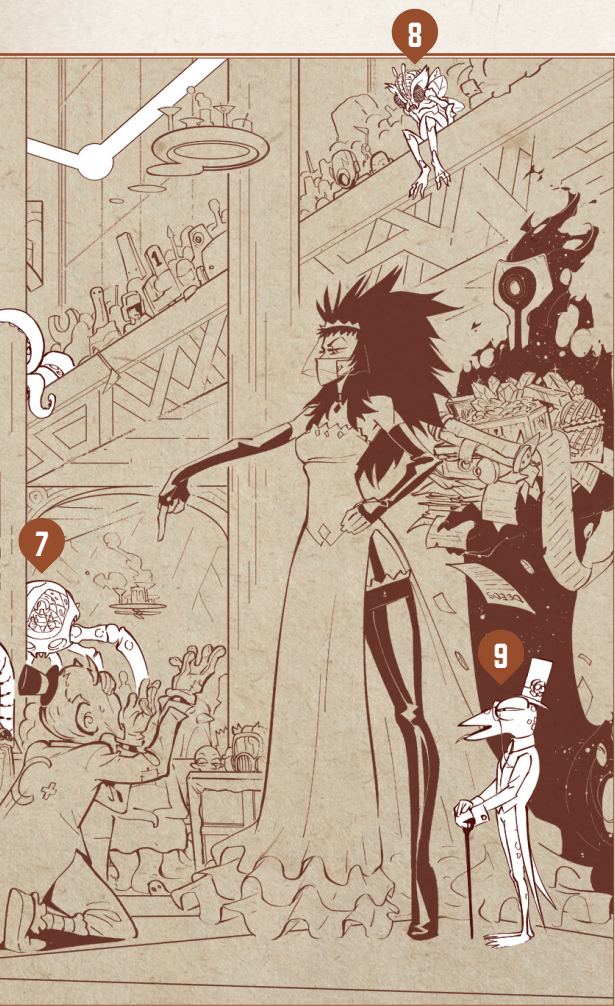
7 **WHAT CAN WE SAY** about Vork Mibula that hasn't already been literally written in the stars by the alien superbeings he has subjugated and forced to do his bidding? There he is, piloting his spider walker. Whilst a minor character sitting on row D, seat 19 in this image, in truth it is Mibula's ignition of the acceleration entity of Lodar-9

which really transforms the multiverse, thanks to its awakening of the Annihilator Precepts: an event which will eventually unfold the dark matter matrices and release God from his paralysis-tomb to complete His unthinkable mission in the material realm.

8 **VORSK "HUSK-DOER" STENTIFRET**, Ninety-Fifth UnQueen of the ZertHive at Laringineth, does not understand Ludocratic rituals. She will later try to lay an egg inside The Floating Head of Archimemtet, much to that dismembered scholar's surprise. Look, we're not saying there's anything wrong with insect people on the whole, just that if you're going to invite anthropomorphised creatures to your wedding then you can't expect their alien cognisance and contradictory perception of the universe not to result in accidental hybridisation attempts. (FWIW, cat people are, by and large, far more easily distracted.)

9 **ADJUDICATION GECKOS** make the world go around, and also sometimes make people's heads come off, as in the case of the unfortunate groom. These telepathic bipeds were bred specifically to ensure that Ludocracy never faltered, and that judgements, like this one, are harsh but unfair. Whether a society really should give executive power over life and death to emotionless semi-sentient reptiles is unclear, but it certainly seemed like a fun thing to do at the time.

10 **A LUDOCRAT DOES NOT REQUIRE PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION** of an event they were present for. They'll remember it if it's worth remembering, and if it's not, they would rather destroy anything which could make them recall something so dull and dreary. However, many find it useful to hire a skilled artist to draw alternative events which *could* have happened, to encourage all Ludocrats to strive to ensure their actuality beats all possibilities. The wedding's portraitist is in fact the twin brother of the actual portraitist, and spent the evening panickedly daubing random shapes. When the truth was uncovered, everyone was too drunk to care.



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



On Void Walkers

“...ONCE THE
EELS had drained
away, and the black
beating heart of
the Imprecation
Worm went cold
in my hand, it was
clear that we had
created something

special. We knew we would need an agent with
which to trade or spy on other universes, and
other realities, and this was the being to do
so! That we had boiled down the hard maths
of the boffins and injected it into this ineffable
being of altered space seemed unbelievable,
but there he was: already making plans for a
trip to the sideways realm of Poetic Rotwater.
By these designs we would win the Goatmilk
Wars, but only just.” •



On Drawing Rooms

“MY FIRST ENCOUNTER with a Drawing
Room was just after we had dealt with the
Visitor From Beyond The Mirror, and I
realised immediately that having such a space,
where doodling could become corporeal,
was critical to the rapidity of our future
invention. I made sure that all Ludocratic
Establishments boasted one from that day

forward. Self-care is important, after all.
Heck, it was in that very room that we plotted
to resurrect Peter Coatling’s Conjecture
Farms, as well as give license to the Wasp
Rituals, and to Bastard Peng and her Beam
Guild! What would the world be today if we
had not had the space to ponder, and make
those decisions in peace? Where indeed.” •



*On
Steam-Judges*

“...AND SO IN THE
YEARS following
the defeat of the
Normalisers by
the Hybrid Of
Zaragoza it became
clear that we would
need some manner
of independent

judiciary with which to judge the actions
of our fellow Ludocrats. If the Ludocracy
could be enjoyed by all, and not simply the
Ludicrous, then the situation quite clearly
necessitates a kind of steam-powered judging
machine. So it was that a manner of coal-
burning magistrate was created. Trained in
Ludo law and run on fossil fuels and water,
the Steam-Judges have long proven their
efficacy: utterly incorruptible, and sort of
arousing, for some reason. Long may their
decisions run on time.” •

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LUDOCRATS #2

(May 6th, 2020)

April is the coolest month.
May is also the coolest month.
All months are cool now.
Ludocrats say so.

OH, YOU ARE QUITE FORTUNATE. The universe has led you to this point, secretly, inexorably: creeping up on you like a grinning golden bear, covered in blood and honey. You hold in your hands a prime moment of your life: a lesson in the lore and science of Ludocracy. It is a knowledge like no other.

Of course, each and every schoolchild knows that the Hemispheric Boredom Wars of the 1190s ended in the triumph of the Ludicrous Revolution of 1199. Famously, the first Hyper-Pope was pushed, steaming and applauding, from Van Dasmir's personality accelerator, and she set about righting the universe from where it had fallen awkwardly in a dusty corner. But what happened after that? To get to know *that* one must become familiar with the era of the Ludocrats, those dynasties of decadent delirium: the Psycho-Czars and Massive Colonels, the Barons of the Meat Horizon, the Planes-Walkers, Pseudo-Dukes and Captains

of Hyperbole, Counts and Countesses of Solidified Melody — it was a time of celebrity surgeons, weaponised jesters, and the UnQueen Of The Zerthive. It was a time of exultation and invention, and time where the heroes of this book walked into legend.

It might be said that this very particular and important adventure of Baron Otto Von Subertan and Professor Hades Zero-K, in which they adjudicate at Ludocratic weddings, enjoy the fine art of murder, and perhaps hope to engage in a little romance, is one of hyperbole, but it is also, more significantly, one of *philosophy*. Yes, there is a little more to Ludocrats than axe-throwing and

wrestling with naked aliens. Indeed, the Ludocracy is not some lark, some heathen debauch. No, it is something more. It is a creed. This new aristocracy, created by the first Hyper-Pope in her boundless wisdom, would have one task alone: to make life ludicrous *for everybody*. •

“A LITTLE
MORE ...
THAN AXE-
THROWING
AND
WRESTLING
WITH
NAKED
ALIENS”

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

