



SAVAGE [®] 221

DRAFGON



ERIK
LARSEN

SAVAGE DRAGON

BY
ERIK LARSEN

CHRIS ELIOPOULOS
letters

NIKOS KOUTSIS
colors

MIKE TORIS
flats

GRAVIN HICCINBOTHAM
editor

“
JOSH EICHHORN
artist of the highest order



IMAGE COMICS, INC.
Robert Kirkman—Chief Operating Officer
Erik Larsen—Chief Financial Officer
Todd McFarlane—President
Marc Silvestri—Chief Executive Officer
Jim Valentino—Vice-President

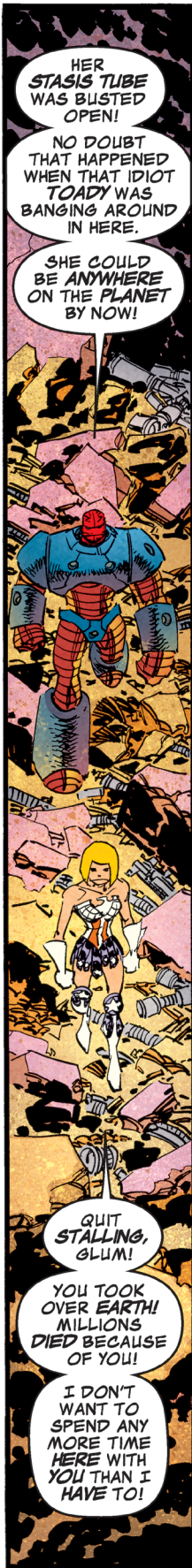
Eric Stephenson—Publisher
Cory Murphy—Director of Sales
Jeff Boisen—Director of Publishing Planning & Book Trade Sales
Cherie Rose—Director of Digital Sales
Kat Sahaz—Director of PR & Marketing
Branwyn Bigglestone—Controller
Susan Korpela—Accounts Manager
Drew Gill—Art Director
Brett Warnock—Production Manager
Meredith Wallace—Print Manager
Briah Skelly—Publicist
Amy Hoffman—Conventions & Events Coordinator
Sasha Head—Sales & Marketing Production Designer
David Brothers—Branding Manager
Melissa Gifford—Content Manager
Erika Schaez—Production Artist
Ryan Brewer—Production Artist
Shanna Matuszak—Production Artist
Tishia Ramon—Production Artist
Vincent Kukua—Production Artist
Jeff Stang—Direct Market Sales Representative
Emilio Bustillo—Digital Sales Associate
Leanna Caunter—Accounting Assistant
Chloe Rumsch-Oberon—Library Market Sales Representative
IMAGECOMICS.COM

SAVAGE DRAGON #221. MARCH 2017. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: 2701 NW Vaughn St., Suite 780, Portland, OR 97210. Copyright © 2017 Erik Larsen. All rights reserved. SAVAGE DRAGON® (including all prominent characters featured herein), its logo and all character likenesses are trademarks of Erik Larsen, unless otherwise noted. Myth of Mars™ copyright © 2017 Jim Gibbons. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for review purposes) without the express written permission of Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events or places, without satiric intent, is coincidental. Digital edition.

For international rights, contact: foreignlicensing@imagecomics.com



YOUR MOM
COULD BE
ANYWHERE!



HER
STASIS TUBE
WAS BUSTED
OPEN!

NO DOUBT
THAT HAPPENED
WHEN THAT IDIOT
TODDY WAS
BANGING AROUND
IN HERE.

SHE COULD
BE ANYWHERE
ON THE PLANET
BY NOW!

QUIT
STALLING,
GLUM!

YOU TOOK
OVER EARTH!
MILLIONS
DIED BECAUSE
OF YOU!

I DON'T
WANT TO
SPEND ANY
MORE TIME
HERE WITH
YOU THAN I
HAVE TO!



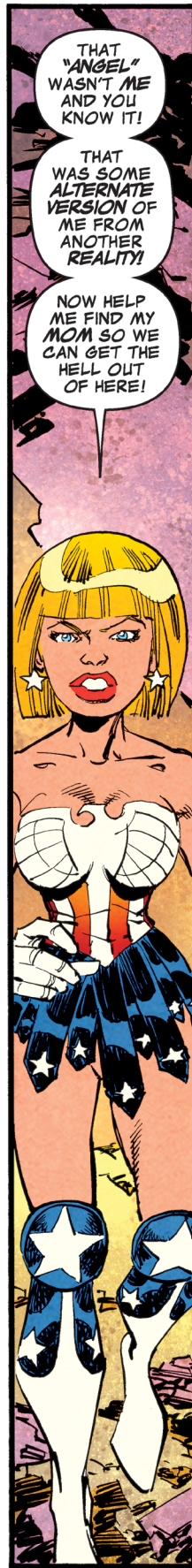
I DID IT
ALL FOR YOU,
SUGARPLUM!

YOU WANTED
THE WORLD AND
I GAVE IT TO
YOU!

WE
COMMANDED
THE MASSES
TOGETHER!
YOU WERE
BY MY SIDE
ALWAYS!

MILLIONS
DIED, SURE,
BUT PEOPLE
DIE ALL
THE TIME!

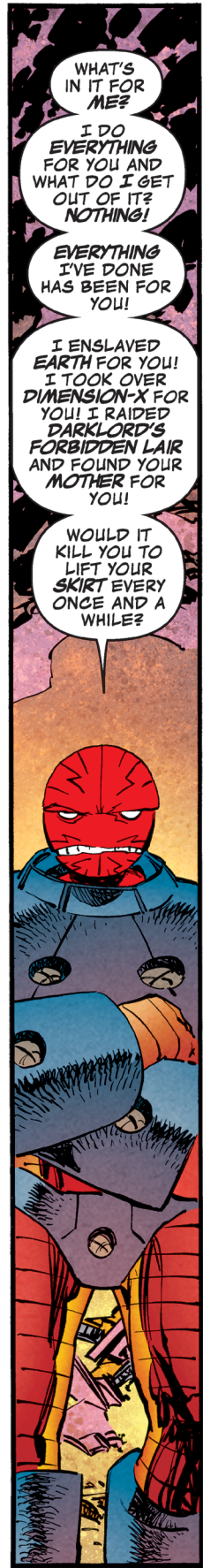
THEY WERE
OLD, FEEBLE
AND SICK! IF
ANYTHING, I
MADE THE
HUMAN RACE
STRONGER!



THAT
"ANGEL"
WASN'T ME
AND YOU
KNOW IT!

THAT
WAS SOME
ALTERNATE
VERSION OF
ME FROM
ANOTHER
REALITY!

NOW HELP
ME FIND MY
MOM SO WE
CAN GET THE
HELL OUT OF
HERE!



WHAT'S
IN IT FOR
ME?

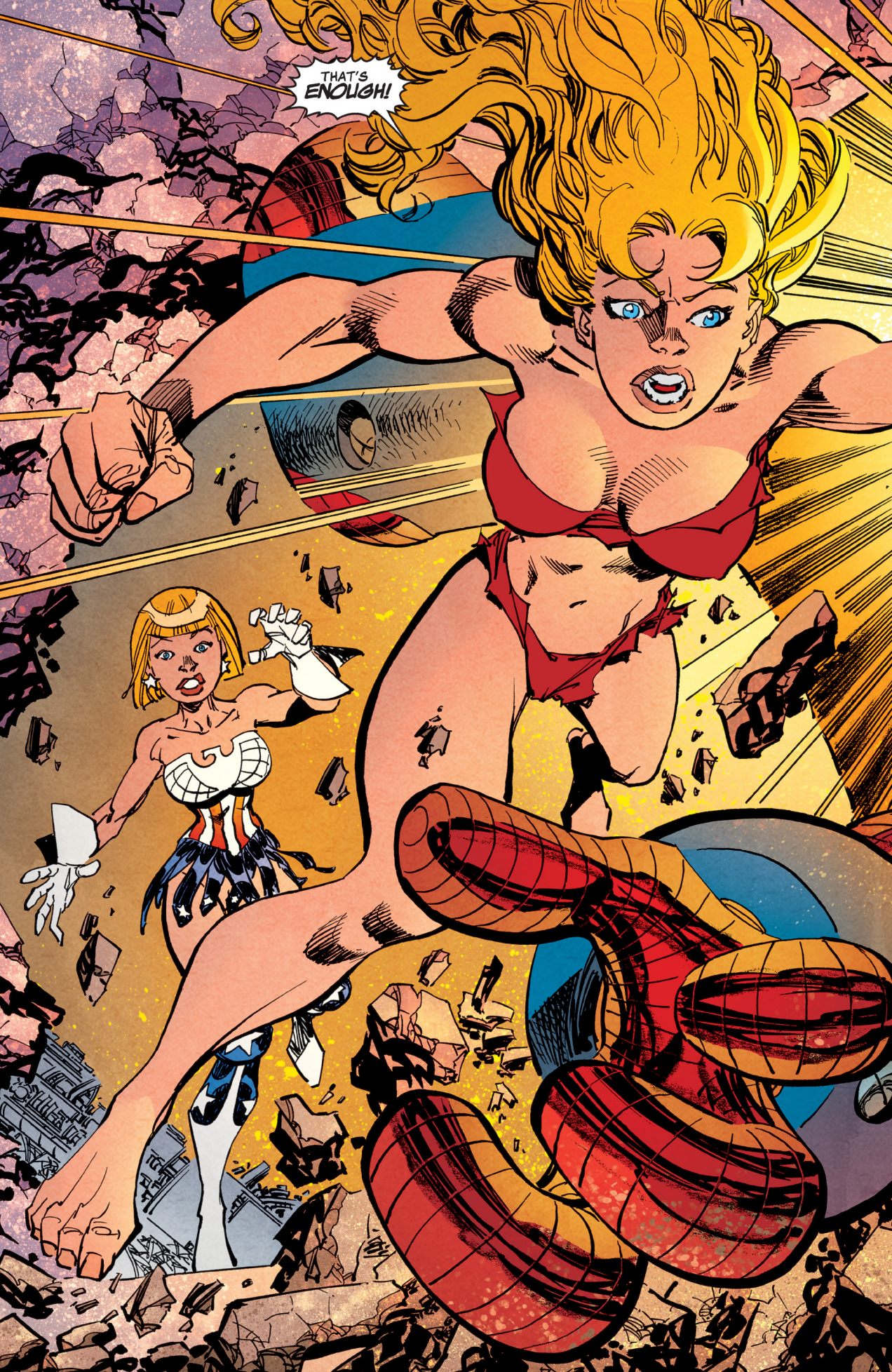
I DO
EVERYTHING
FOR YOU AND
WHAT DO I GET
OUT OF IT?
NOTHING!

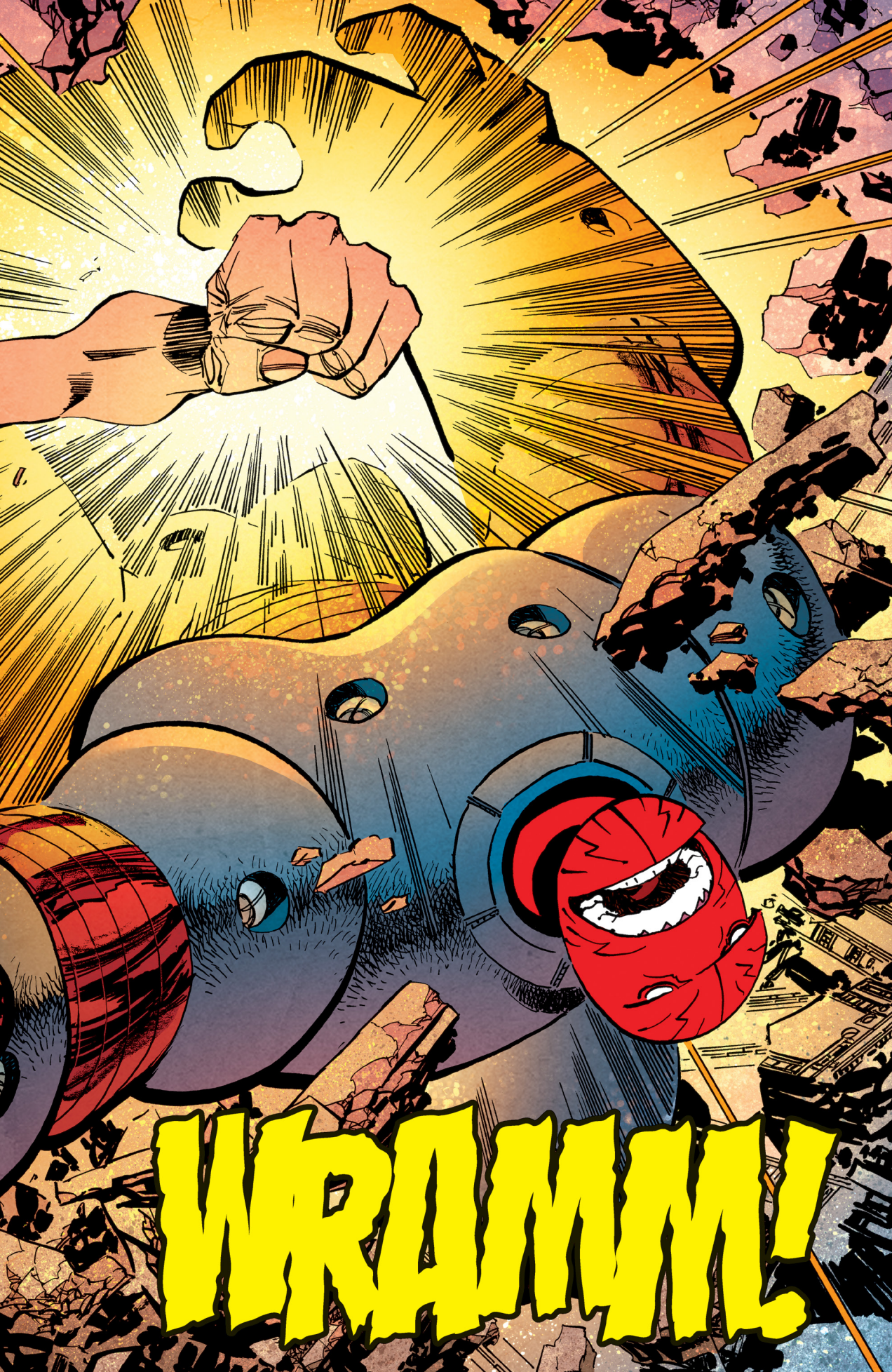
EVERYTHING
I'VE DONE
HAS BEEN FOR
YOU!

I ENSLAVED
EARTH FOR YOU!
I TOOK OVER
DIMENSION-X FOR
YOU! I RAIDED
DARKLORD'S
FORBIDDEN LAIR
AND FOUND YOUR
MOTHER FOR
YOU!

WOULD IT
KILL YOU TO
LIFT YOUR
SKIRT EVERY
ONCE AND A
WHILE?

THAT'S
ENOUGH!





WROOOM!

LEAVE
MY DAUGHTER
ALONE, YOU
MONSTER!

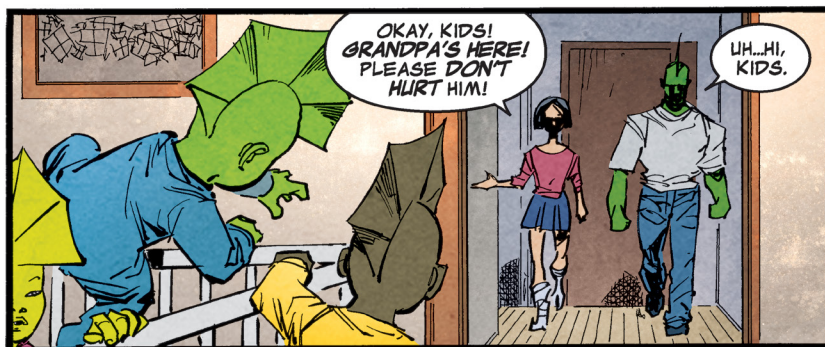
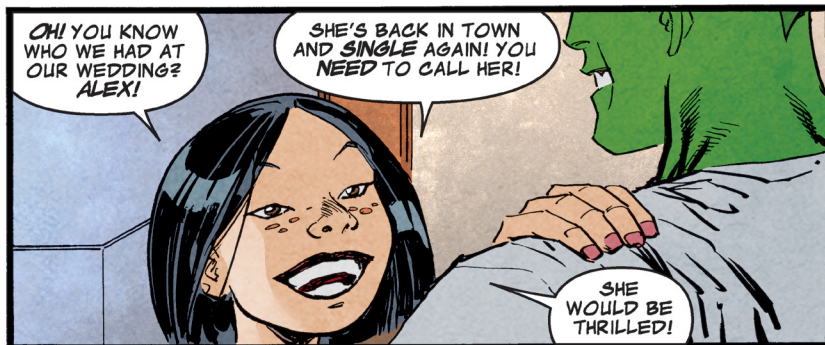
ANGEL.

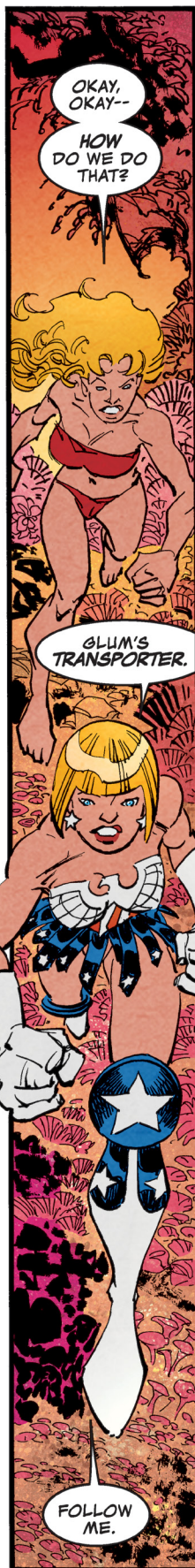
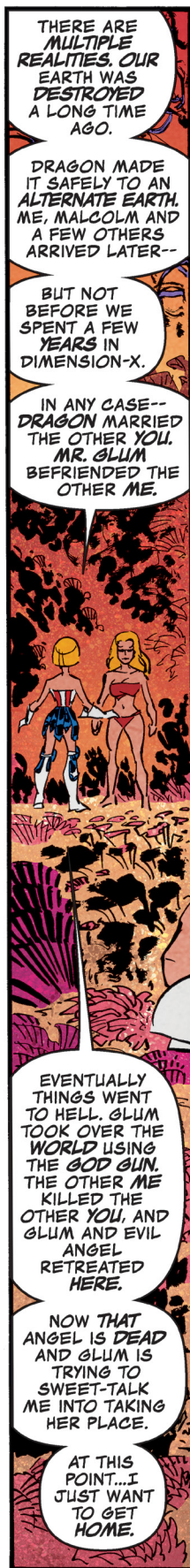
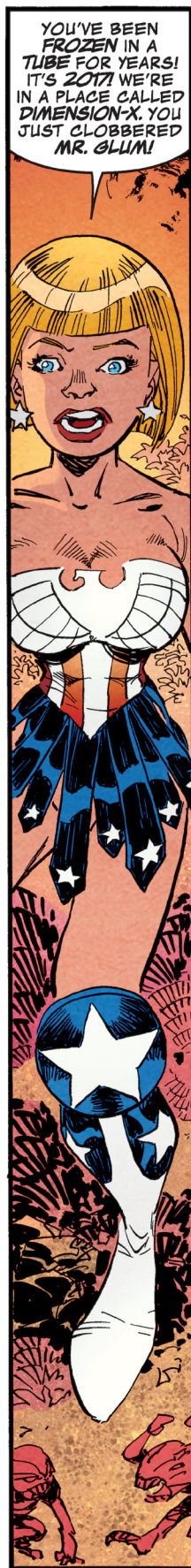
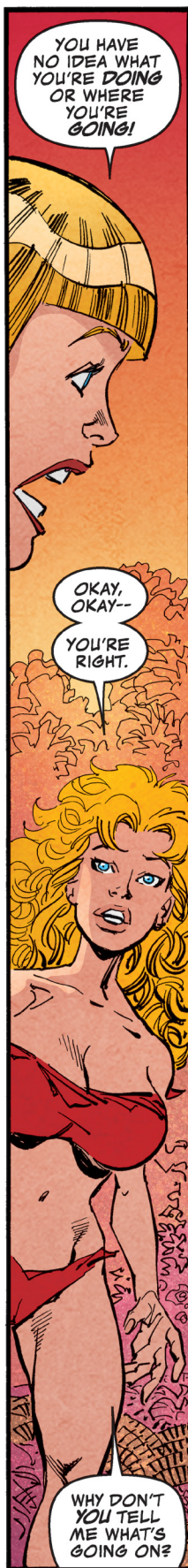
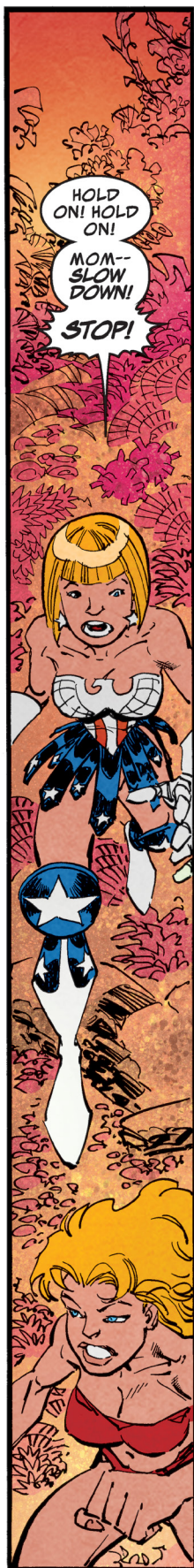
MY GOD--
IS THAT
REALLY
YOU?

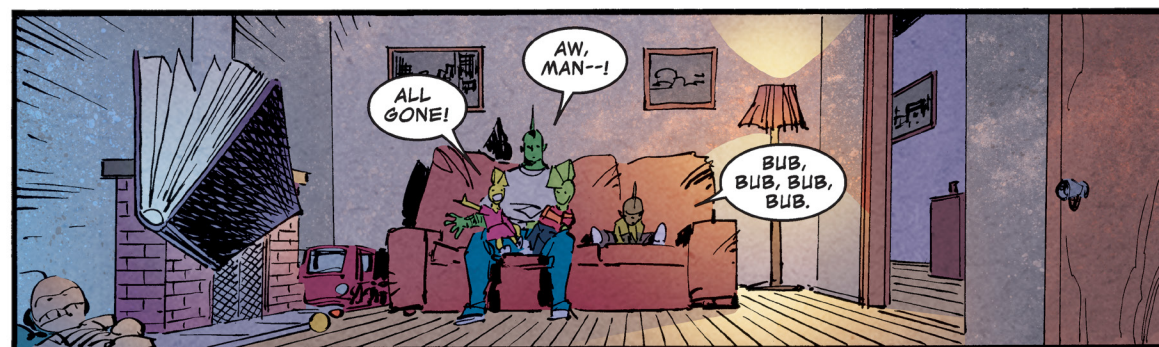
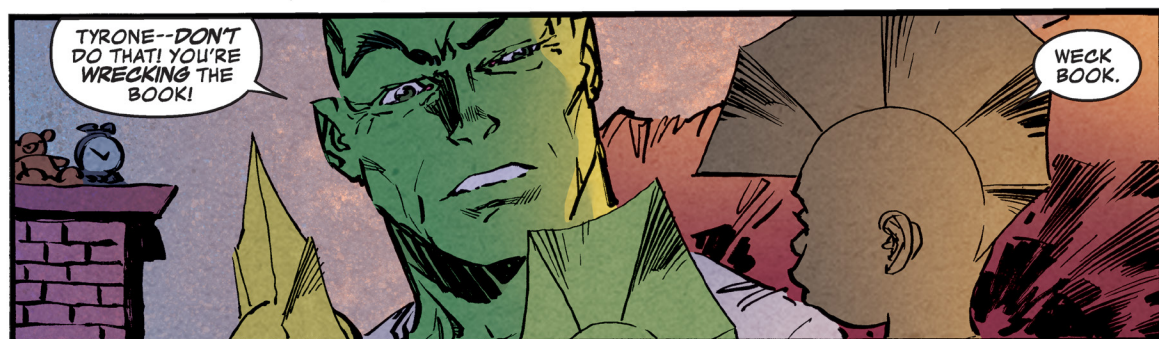
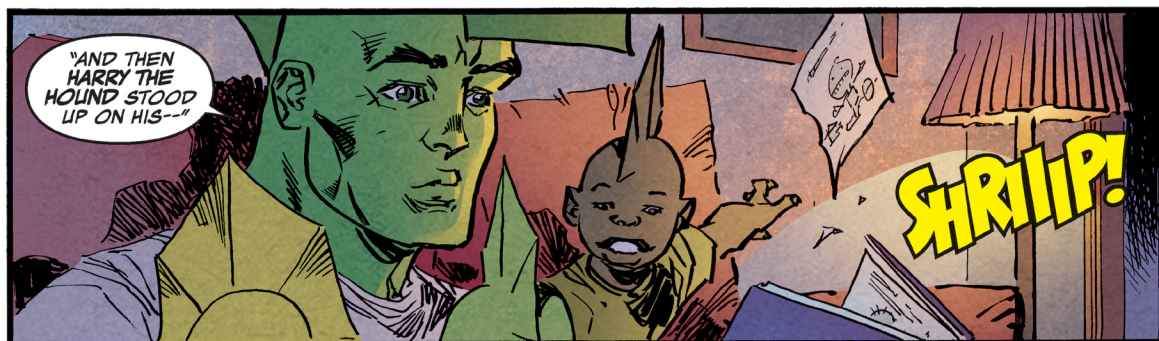
IT'S
ME BUT
I...
HEY!

**HOLD ON A
MINUTE!**

WE
NEED TO
GO--
--NOW!

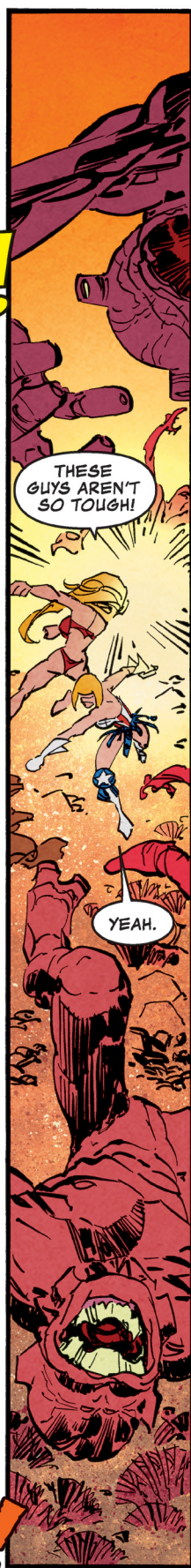


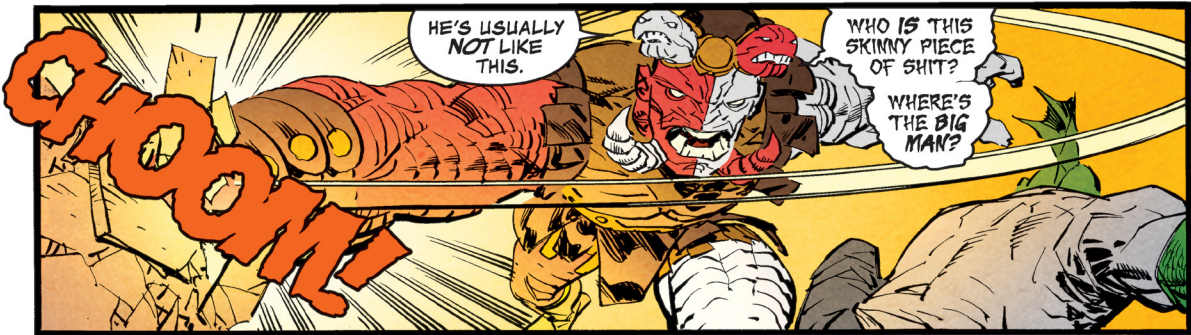
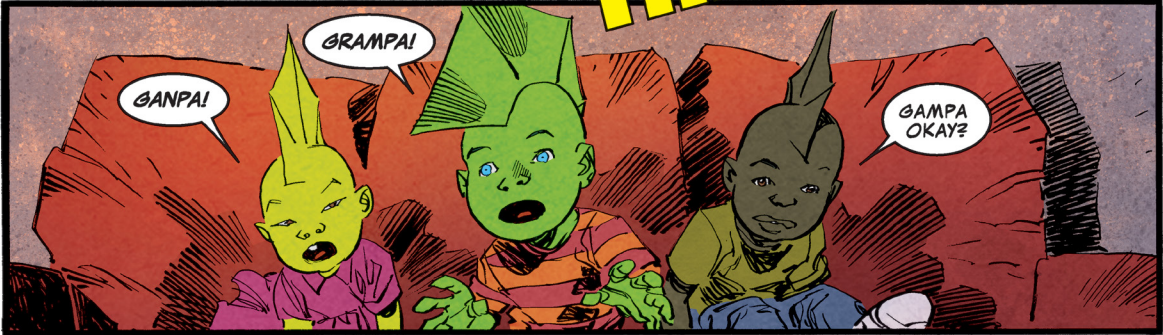




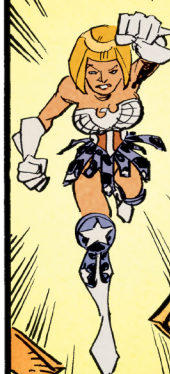
THRAK DDD!



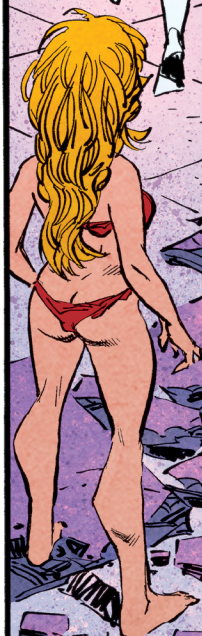
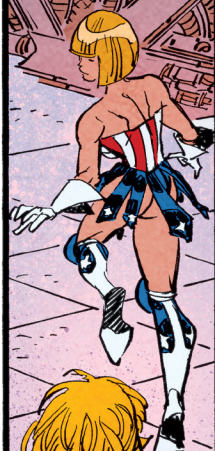




**BRANNA-
BA-
DOOM!**



THAT
DID IT!



WHAT
IS THIS
PLACE?

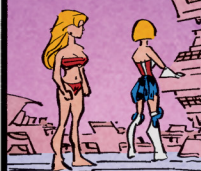
OKAY--
WE'RE
IN!

GIVE
ME A FEW
MINUTES TO
TRY AND GET
ORIENTED
HERE.

GLUM'S LAB.
HE MIGHT NOT
LOOK LIKE
MUCH, BUT MR.
GLUM IS A
GENIUS.

YOUR
BOYFRIEND
DRAGON CAME
IN HERE ONCE
TO RESCUE REX
DEXTER'S
DAUGHTER, AND
HE LEFT BEHIND
A SWATH OF
DESTRUCTION.

GLUM
VOWED TO
DEFEAT
SAVAGE
DRAGON--

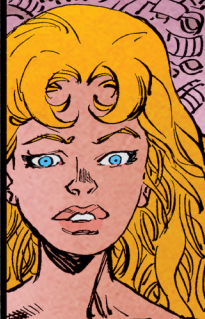


AND THAT'S
WHERE IT ALL
STARTED.

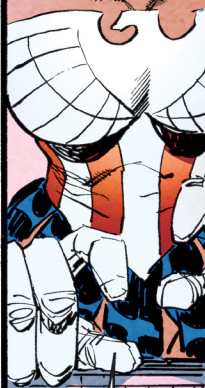
GLUM CAME
TO EARTH AND
MET THE OTHER
ME--FOUND OUT
THAT DRAGON WAS
TOUGHER THAN HE
THOUGHT AND IT
ALL SPIRALED OUT
OF CONTROL.

EVENTUALLY,
GLUM GOT HIS
HANDS ON THE
GOD GUN AND
TOOK OVER THE
WORLD. DRAGON
DEFEATED HIM
AND GLUM
RETRACTED
HERE.

DO YOU
KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE
DOING?

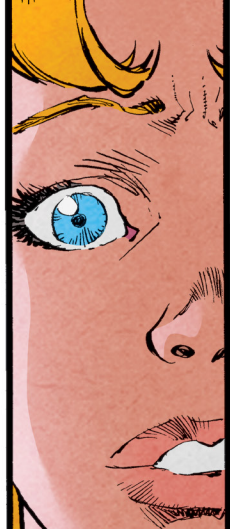


KIND
OF.



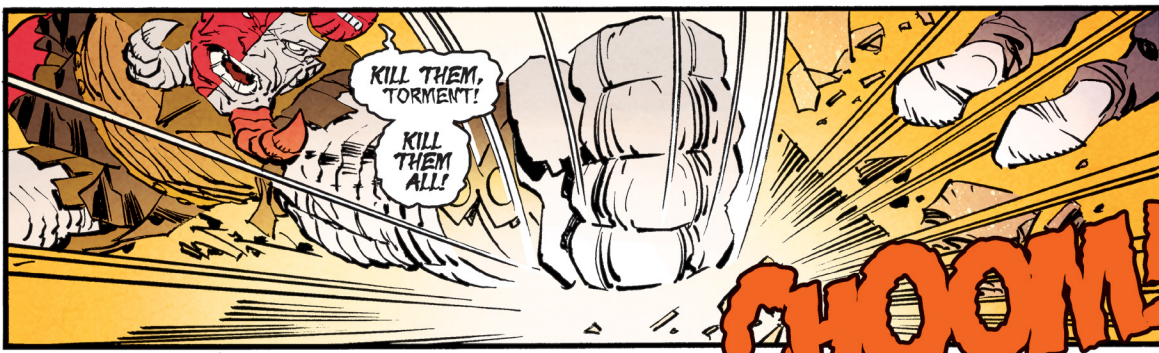
I'VE SEEN IT
WORK
BEFORE.

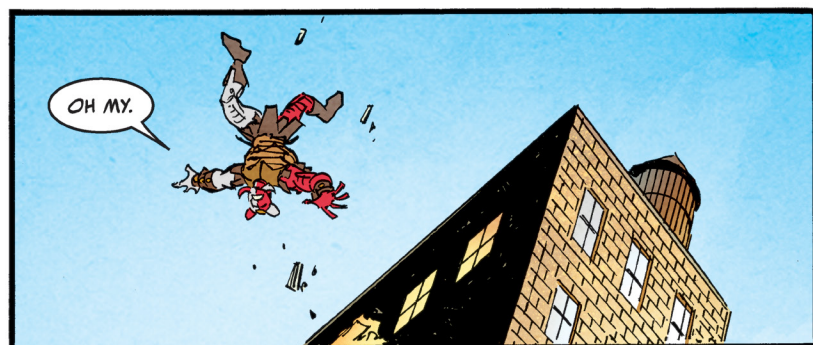
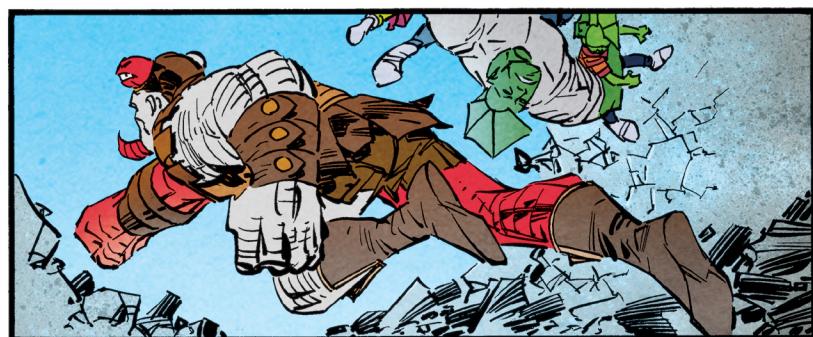
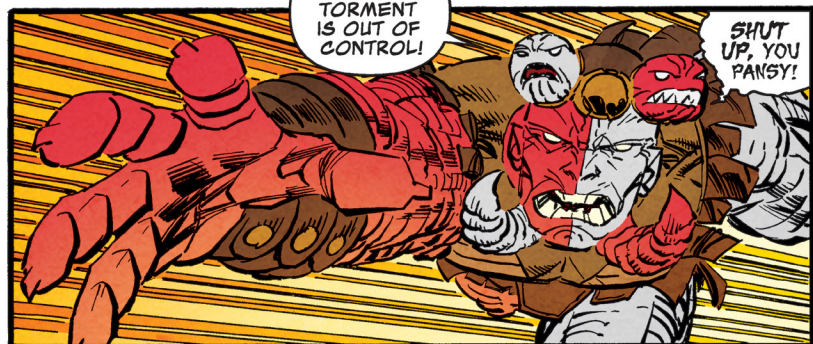
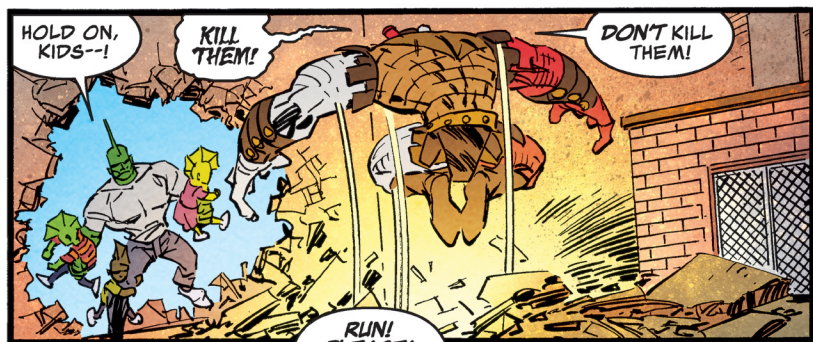
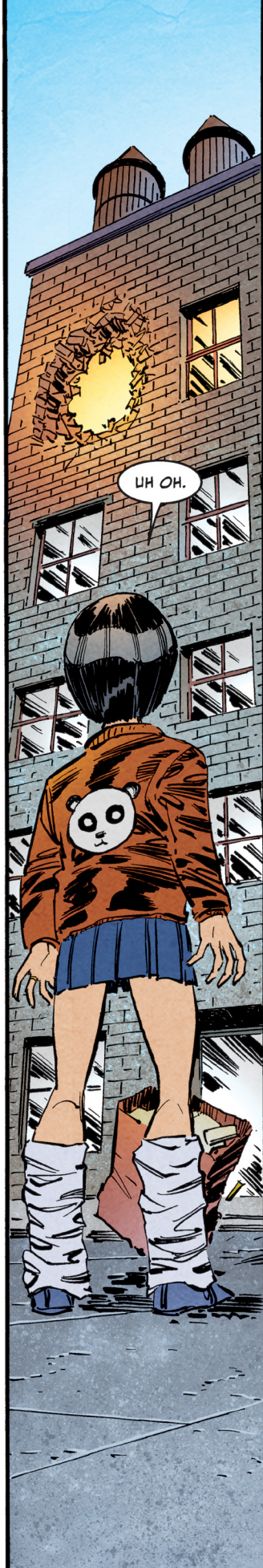
MAYBE WE
SHOULD WAIT
FOR DRAGON
TO RESCUE
US!

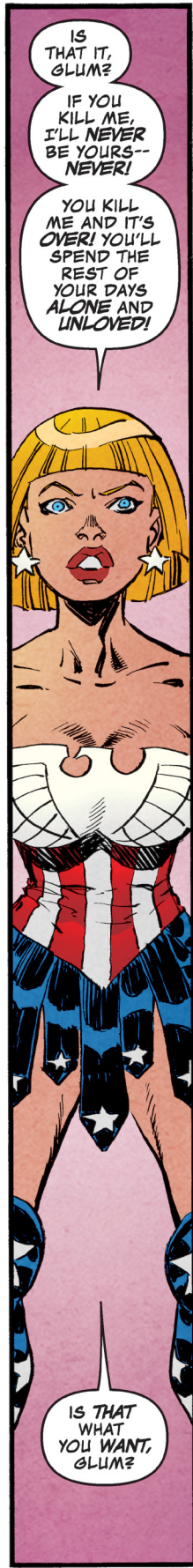
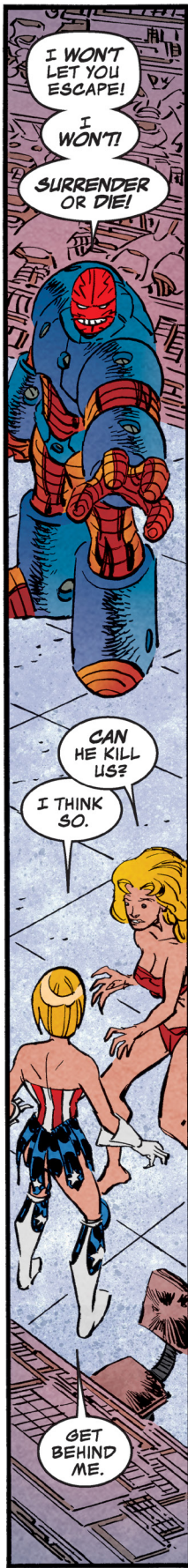


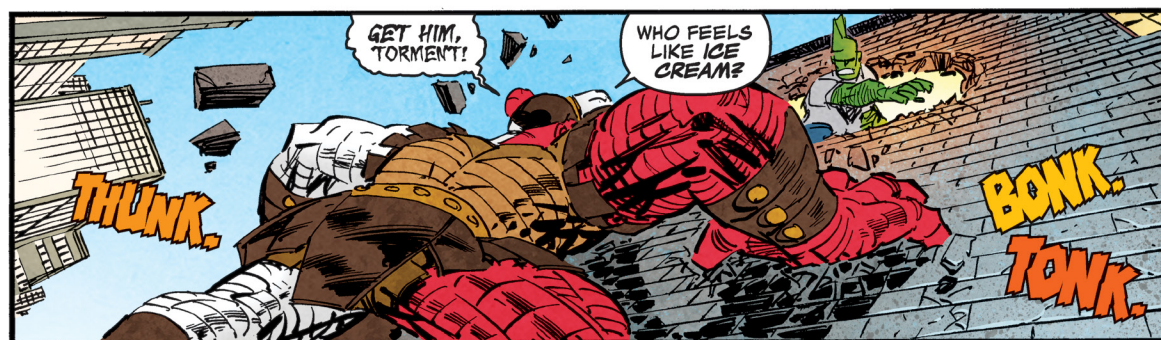
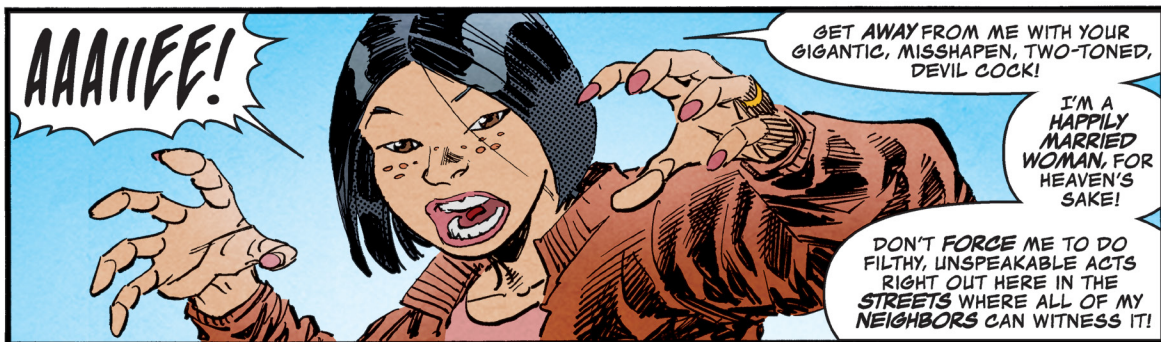
I DON'T
THINK HE
KNOWS WE'RE
HERE.

ANYWAY--HE'S
IN JAIL AND NO
LONGER HAS
SUPERPOWERS.





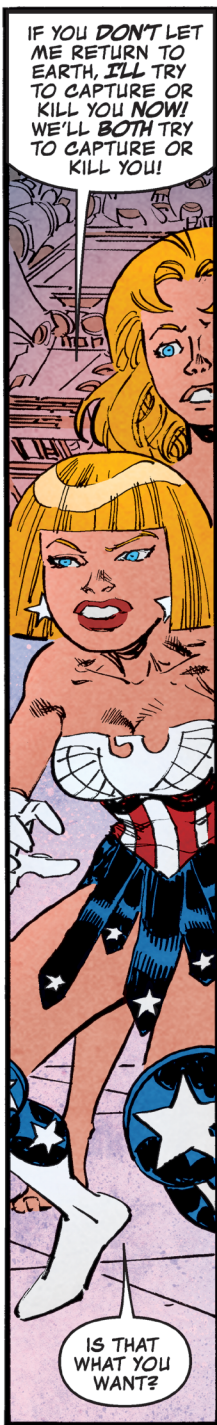






I CAN'T LET YOU GO BACK TO EARTH!

YOU'LL SEND IN AN ARMY AND TRY TO CAPTURE OR KILL ME!



IF YOU DON'T LET ME RETURN TO EARTH, I'LL TRY TO CAPTURE OR KILL YOU NOW! WE'LL BOTH TRY TO CAPTURE OR KILL YOU!

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?

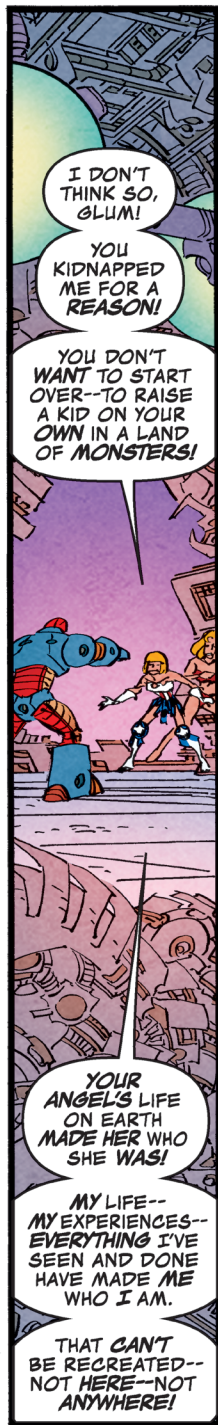


I DON'T NEED YOU!

DARKLORD'S LAIR HAS A THOUSAND OF YOUR MOMS WITH BELLIES READY TO BURST!

THERE ARE A THOUSAND ANGEL MURPHYS JUST WAITING TO BE BORN!

I CAN TAKE MY PICK--MOLD ONE INTO THE GIRL I LOST! THERE ARE PLENTY MORE WHERE YOU CAME FROM!



I DON'T THINK SO, GLUM!

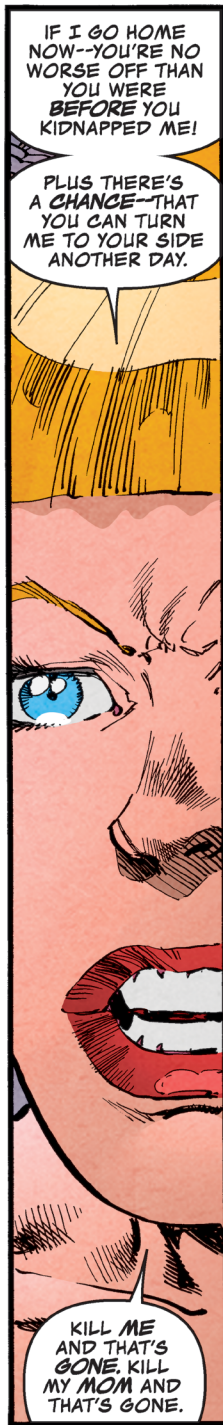
YOU KIDNAPPED ME FOR A REASON!

YOU DON'T WANT TO START OVER--TO RAISE A KID ON YOUR OWN IN A LAND OF MONSTERS!

YOUR ANGEL'S LIFE ON EARTH MADE HER WHO SHE WAS!

MY LIFE--MY EXPERIENCES--EVERYTHING I'VE SEEN AND DONE HAVE MADE ME WHO I AM.

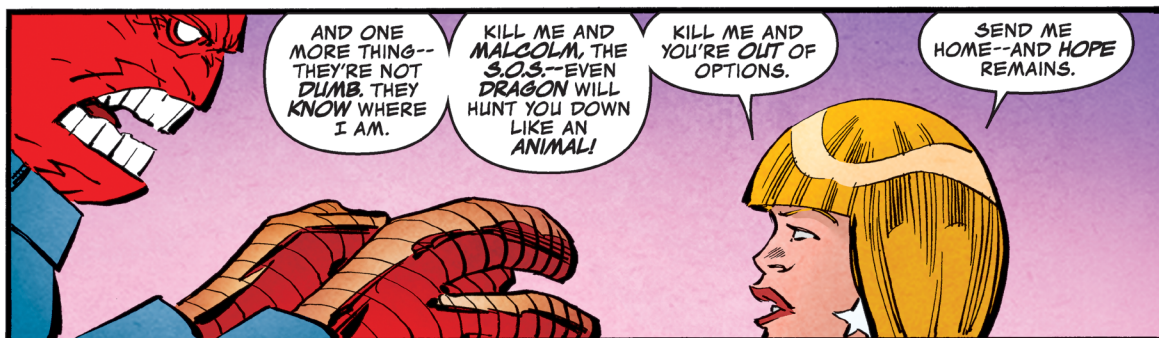
THAT CAN'T BE RECREATED--NOT HERE--NOT ANYWHERE!



IF I GO HOME NOW--YOU'RE NO WORSE OFF THAN YOU WERE BEFORE YOU KIDNAPPED ME!

PLUS THERE'S A CHANCE--THAT YOU CAN TURN ME TO YOUR SIDE ANOTHER DAY.

KILL ME AND THAT'S GONE. KILL MY MOM AND THAT'S GONE.

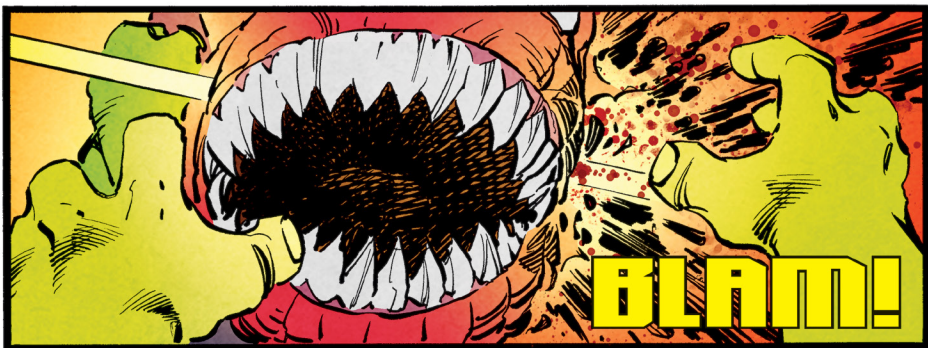


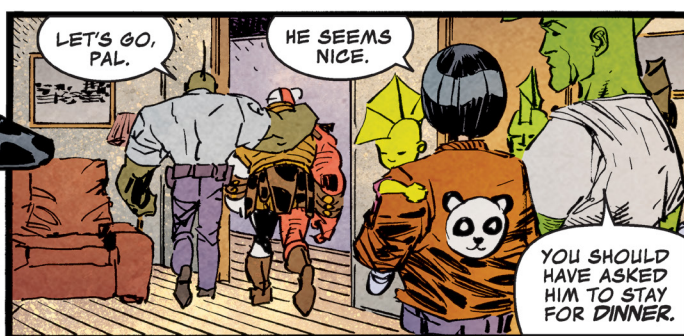
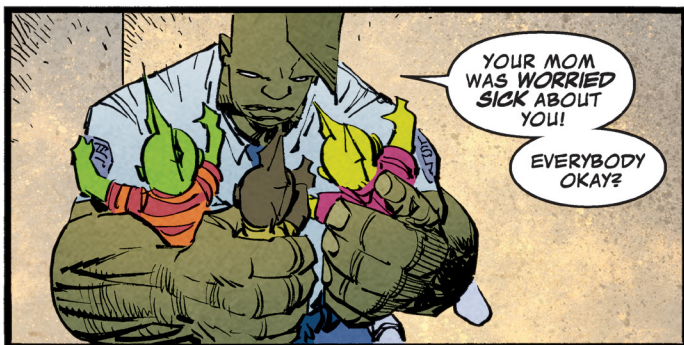
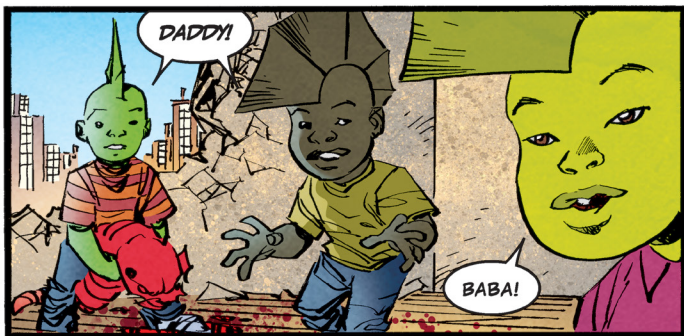
AND ONE MORE THING--THEY'RE NOT DUMB. THEY KNOW WHERE I AM.

KILL ME AND MALCOLM, THE S.O.S.--EVEN DRAGON WILL HUNT YOU DOWN LIKE AN ANIMAL!

KILL ME AND YOU'RE OUT OF OPTIONS.

SEND ME HOME--AND HOPE REMAINS.







IT'S TAKING A LOT OF GETTING USED TO, CHESTER.

C
D
B
A
R
t
G
R
I
L
L



IT'S GOOD SEEING YOU AGAIN, DRAGON.



IT'S GOOD SEEING YOU AGAIN TOO, ALEX.

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
TOO LONG.

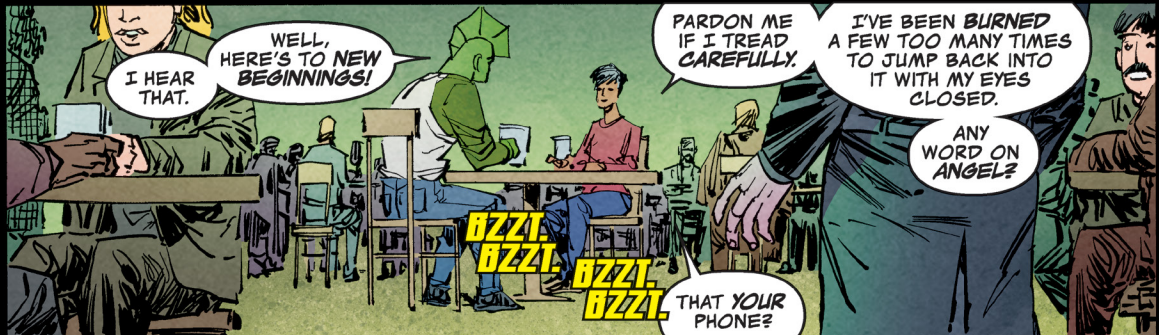


WHAT'D I MISS? ANYTHING EXCITING? MARRIAGE? KIDS? A WHITE PICKET FENCE?

NONE OF THE ABOVE.
CHRIS AND I BROKE UP.



MUCH AS I WANTED THINGS TO BE THE WAY THEY WERE--THEY WEREN'T.



WELL, HERE'S TO NEW BEGINNINGS!
I HEAR THAT.

PARDON ME IF I TREAD CAREFULLY.

I'VE BEEN BURNED A FEW TOO MANY TIMES TO JUMP BACK INTO IT WITH MY EYES CLOSED.

ANY WORD ON ANGEL?

BZZZ!
BZZZ!
BZZZ!

THAT YOUR PHONE?



ANGEL?



YOU'RE BACK!
YOU'RE SAFE!



...



YOU'RE KIDDING.

Well, there you go--another issue of *Savage Dragon*--and, Surprise, *Dragon* himself is back in action! For those of you who have been asking to see the guy back in action--there you go! For those of you who are all attached to Malcolm now and don't care about his old man--sorry. Malcolm will have a bigger role next issue--I promise.

Erik,

So, um, what happened to Craig after Amy tore his arm off in *Savage Dragon* #218? Did he die? That sequence made me laugh in surprise...but it also makes me think that word would spread through the babysitting community and their circle of friends pretty quickly. Forewarned is forearmed and all that.

Maxine's father is a man of few words. As a recent returnee to the book, I presume he's appeared before. I like to think he never says anything!

I appreciated how you worked two shock surprises for this issue--the Cubs winning the World Series and Donald Trump's election. We win some, we lose some. "We are so fucked," Indeed!

Heath Row

Culver City, CA 90232

Not to worry, Heath, Craig survived the cataclysmic events of *Savage Dragon* #218 and came bouncing back in #220 new and improved!

Maxine's father wasn't a huge talker before, but recent events have made him considerably less so.

And, yeah, agreed on the shock surprises. They come in all sizes and shapes....

Hey Erik,

Just finished issue 218, and thoroughly enjoyed it, if that's the right phrase for a less than upbeat issue. As someone who lost his mother to cancer last year, I felt it hit most of the right notes. Obviously every situation is different and people's reactions are varied depending on their personalities and beliefs. Maxine's reaction at the end was interesting since it was from someone who doesn't believe in any kind of afterlife or "better place". Or, at least I'm assuming that based on her reaction.

I'm always impressed by your storytelling. You have a unique ability to boil the narrative down to its essentials and giving the reader exactly the correct amount of information needed to follow the story. It must come from the 221 issues of practice on this series. Either way, a lot of other creators could pick up a thing or two.

Reading the letters column, it was disheartening to hear about your frustrations on your *Spawn* collaboration with Todd. Visually, I really enjoyed yours and Todd's combination of art styles. However, I generally don't find Al Simmons character arc all that compelling, for whatever reason.

Increasing *Savage Dragon* readership is a tough nut to crack, as I'm sure you know since you've probably spent a lot more time thinking about it than I have. The comic book market is in a weird place with a deluge of high quality titles and not very many series being able to escape the slow deterioration of single issue sales. The only thing I could think of that might work is to maybe start serializing it on some of the myriad digital platforms. Doesn't really cost you anything (except maybe time.. unpaid intern???) and possibly builds a new audience. Also, maybe to boost income maybe an artist proof edition or some higher end unique formats (hardcovers, treasury, etc). The problem with those is the time involved putting them together. I'm sure you've already considered these things and have reasons for not pursuing them. I would love to hear your thoughts, regardless.

Keep on keeping on and make mine *Dragon*!

Drew Woodworth

I think Maxine's reaction works regardless of what she may believe. The supposed "better place" doesn't include her, his wife or his grandchildren, after all....

"Nuff said on the *Spawn* front.

It's a tough one to figure out. And, really, there's no getting around the reality that, in many comic book stores, *Savage Dragon* simply doesn't exist. Hard to build any kind of an audience when there are literally no copies on hand for a potential reader to purchase. And

it's hard to convince a retailer to carry the book when they have decided "it doesn't sell" and their proof is the zero copies they have sold due to not stocking the book.

We do try all kinds of things to get the book out there, but after 25 years, it's an uphill battle. Readers have had a long time to decide whether or not they want to read the book. Those onboard are a small but devoted group.

Dear Erik,

I've been picking up *Savage Dragon* since its launch, but, as I complain every few years, the sprawling cast of characters and countless narrative threads are almost impossible to follow or remember in every respect when reading an issue a month, and yet those details are usually important. My solution, reading the book in long runs (accumulating stacks of 20 or so issues), created more narrative coherence and kept many details fresh, but couldn't solve the fundamental problem that many more details were from much earlier arcs. After all, you leave plot threads hanging for years, not just a few issues (Seeker and Rex Dexter's gradual Deathseed transformation being two notable examples). Not long after the arrival of *Savage Dragon* 200, I decided to re-read the entire run of *Savage Dragon* (1-3,1-218), from the beginning. Having accomplished that feat, what follows is something of a series review.

The last few years of *Savage Dragon* have been thoroughly enjoyable, perhaps the best ever in your ever-growing run. After nearly two and half decades, *Savage Dragon* has not only blown by every creator/artistic milestone in the (sub)genre, but it has achieved a rhythm and level of narrative complexity and unpredictability that is equally unprecedented. As you are fond of saying, you can do things here that you couldn't do anywhere else. But more than that, you've really created a world, and it's taking a life of its own. You've built so many elements into the world of *Savage Dragon*, with exponential potential interactions (like those considered in 218, as you canvass each element in mythos in relation to the all-too real problem of cancer) that I imagine the real difficulty is deciding which to play. This is all the more challenging given that you only have 12 issues a year to represent the lives of these characters.

A few years ago (SD # 190), I wrote in and wondered whether, as journalist/author (and comic writer) Douglas Rushkoff argues, we've entered an era of "narrative collapse," exemplified by the sprawling, non-linear storytelling of massive online multi-player games, television shows like the Simpsons, and even *Game of Thrones*. As it goes, this argument suggests that these forms of storytelling are no longer primarily about narrative, but about moments, about characters, and even humor. Yet, what *Game of Thrones* has only more recently revealed is not the collapse of narrative, but that audiences demand -- if not expect -- narrative complexity that to my knowledge is closer to the long form serialized fiction of the 19th century (like *Les Misérables*, the big Russian epics, or the Dickens novels). The casts are huge, the stories are long, but the payoff is enormous.

It's no coincidence that, for the past decade, my two favorite titles --and, for long stretches the only reason I'd step foot into a comic shop --has been *Hellboy* and *Savage Dragon*. To say that I'm saddened by the conclusion of *Hellboy* in *Hell* would be gross understatement. As I wrote in the letter they referenced in the final issue of that series, but published in *BPRD* #140, "*Hellboy* in *Hell* is the apotheosis of Mr. Mignola's decades-long narrative. It represents an artist and a storyteller at the peak of his powers and command of his craft. [...] Mignola stands now as Kirby did when arriving at DC, earnestly unspooling his Fourth World epic, but unburdened by the editorial constraints imposed by Carmine Infantino in 1972."

So it is with you, Erik. *Savage Dragon* has become the perfect medium and ideal venue for you to tell any story you want, unhampered by editors or corporate imperatives. You can spin intimate stories of domestic love or epic tales of cosmic glory. You can tell stories of tragic vice and painful loss (as in SD 218) or hilarious yarns chockful of laughs.

Savage Dragon is no mere superhero comic book. It is superhero comics. Virtually every trope, motif, conceit, or idea is here, albeit with your own spin, from Galactus to Sun Gods (as Grant Morrison calls the Superman archetype), from the Negative Zone to Dr. Dooms, mutants to space tyrants. You riffed Kamandi and '70s Kirby for a while (SD # 76-84), panel swiped Byrne's '80s Superman (SD #43), transmogrified '60s Batman and Robin (naming the side-kick "Burt West" no less), and brought back the Golden Age (and made one a regular cast member for a while), not only in form, but also in style. You featured 1930s boy gangs (RIP little wise guys! Poor PJ!) and little girls with dot eyes ala Little Orphan Annie and CC Beck.

And despite the presence of many familiar elements, almost none are simply borrowed and recommissioned. You reconfigure these elements into novel patterns. Your “Darkseids” are, on the one hand, a hooded dimension hopper (at least for the moment), and, on the other hand, a red midget. More broadly, you’ve experimented with panel configurations and layouts, and switched up modes of storytelling, incorporating and abandoning thought balloons, reminder and exposition text, and even footnotes. You’ve practically done it all. Savage Dragon is a lens for comics’ history.

But you didn’t do all of that out of an ironic detachment – an attempt to deconstruct the genre. Oh no. There is a steady earnestness found here. Those elements are each placed in service of a greater good – great storytelling. Savage Dragon is a love letter to superhero comic books.

In the course of my re-read, I made sure to read the letter columns as well. And someone incisively asked you at one point who Dragon’s greatest villain was. Revealingly, you said “himself.” This was no mere figure of speech. There is little question that Kurr is the worst antagonist in the book (he sought to destroy the human race (and actually succeeded!)), whereas Glum simply sought to enslave us). Yet, the answer also reveals something deeper about this series.

If there is one theme that stands out after re-reading this series in its entirety, it’s that of “identity.” The protagonist arrives in this book with no memory, a *tabula rasa*. Time and again, you ask the question: what is it that makes us who we are? Our minds? Our bodies (genes or blood)? Our experiences? Whether Dragon has been magically infused into William Jonson (circa issues #50-58) or absorbed into the Virus entity (circa #147-150, and again in #167-8), you find ways to present and confront this question in interesting and novel ways. You demonstrated that the hero was not in the blood or the body (the villain was Kurr, and he was revived through blood), but in something else entirely. And is this not true to life? Is not our greatest obstacle ourselves?

And in the process, you invert villains as well. Darklord, once the devious issue of a Martian rape, is now a kind of Monitor, a protector of the fabric of reality. Similarly, Overlord went from psychopathic mob boss to overzealous advocate for “freak” equality, seeking to reform the organization he led. I don’t think there is any question that Flash Mercury had the better argument on the issue of integrating “freaks” into society than Dragon – this is an issue you have yet to resolve satisfactorily, but eventually will need a resolution. And the great villain of recent issues was none other than the niece of one of the original cast of heroes, and granddaughter of another.

Upon comprehensive review, I feel safe in saying that issues 101-200 were stronger than the first hundred, although there is no denying that your artistic style in the early issues was the lure for many of us into the book. And, although it is too early to assess conclusively, the post-200 issues are some of the strongest in the book’s history. The storytelling is so consistently compelling and fluid that it’s more difficult to put the book down.

If forced to identify the best issues in the series in the first 200 issues, I’d hastily point to 31 (brilliant dialogue and psychodrama), 74-75 (with an emphasis on 74), 104 (for humor/style), 144 (I love that style of storytelling), 149-150 (again, interesting dialogue), 167, and possibly 190 (damn, I loved the digest format) or 193 (the first half was brilliant). Although I’d certainly lump a few of the last 17 issues into the top 10. It is interesting to me that the penultimate issues in many of your milestone marks are more interesting to me than the conclusions (although 150 was probably more compelling in that instance).

Without question the worst issues are those that, for me, were simply too confusing to follow, either because the storytelling was not clear or, more usually the case, the art was difficult to follow. The first Darklord story (SD 42-43) was an example of the former, and issue 187 a great example of the latter. But let me be clear here: I greatly enjoyed convoluted storytelling, like the complexity of what happened around issue 99-103 and issues 167-68. What I found troubling about confusing storytelling was stories that simply lacked context to understand the significance of events. There were also times where backstories made the main story less plausible – like when Alex “rediscovered” Chris Robinson on Savage Earth, but was a slob who didn’t recognize her. After the events of Glum’s takeover, I think it was, you suddenly had him clean up his act again, and fall for her.

One related thing that bothered me, and which you conceded at a few times may have been a mistake, is leaving a few critical events “off camera.” Not everything that is important has appear in a panel in the book, but there were some events, like the death of Jennifer Dragon (although not just that), that probably should have been depicted. Not because the story doesn’t function without them – but because the reader really needs to see them. There is something about the way that memory works, especially in this medium, that sometimes requires a visual element for encoding. Readers need to remember shocking events visually in this medium. Just think how haunting the death of Tierra was for that reason, in contrast.

And, this may seem funny coming from a long time SD fan, but the best sequences in Savage Dragon rarely involve fighting. The characterization is where the real payoff in Savage Dragon lies.

Confronting her parent’s mortality, Maxine’s personality burst through the panels on page 13 of SD 218. I enjoyed watching Malcolm interact with his high school friends far more than watching him punch out some strange, rampaging villain. Not every issue needs a fight (and a few don’t). If you tamped down the fights, I certainly wouldn’t complain.

In fact, the most astounding and consistently impressive feature of Savage Dragon is not its sprawling world, unpredictable storytelling, or dynamic presentation. It’s characterization. Despite a long absence, Dragon’s return felt instantly familiar, in no small part because his personality was familiar. The same thing is true of Malcolm. Both Dragon and Malcolm Dragon have a steady emotional center that keeps this book from spiraling too far out of control, even as events often do. Watching Malcolm deal with rowdy boys his own age and maintaining friendships is one of the delights of the series.

Although it’s surprising that Malcolm might settle down so quickly (especially how young he is, and how many women chase him), it doesn’t take a doctorate in psychology to see that his relationship with Maxine provides a rock of stability in a chaotic life. Malcolm was snatched at birth, spent years in Dimension-X, and barely had time with his father growing up. His childhood was far from normal.

Upon re-reading the series I expected a number of features to come into focus, but one feature that quickly emerged which I had not anticipated was what a big difference Nikos Koutsis makes in the series. It was as if someone turned on the lights. The issues before Nikos, and even the few issues where you were experimenting with colorists before settling on Nikos, are remarkably drab and dull compared to those where he is handling coloring chores. Nikos brought a vividness to Savage Dragon that I hadn’t fully recognized before, but becomes glaringly apparent in a long read.

That leads to one nitpick: I am not a fan of your coloring. My least favorite cover in perhaps the entire series may well be 205 (which you admitted to experimenting with coloring). Just thumb through the last 20 issues or so, and it stands out for its dullness. What is it with you and earth colors? There was another issue somewhere where you were experimenting with the same palate, and it was just as bad. I encourage artistic experimentation, but, like your lettering experiment (SD 122-131), I think that is one area where I’d prefer you leave it to other folks.

Like many others, I’m a huge fan of polarizing characters like Powerhouse and Zeek, and still want to know more about The Seeker (even though you spilled the beans in one of the letter columns not long back, despite long promising his return...). One of the more surprising things that stood out was how much more compelling and sympathetic a figure Rapture was. My younger self probably viewed her more judgmentally. But in retrospect, she was right about almost everything she said, and her death and departure from the comic had truly tragic cast, all these years later.

Having read the entire series, I feel like I would benefit from, and greatly enjoy, a third read. Perhaps Rushkoff is right after all. I am not sure that I really care how everything ends up. But I know that I do care a hell of a lot about these characters, and how they relate to each other.

Now that Savage Dragon is well into its third decade and past the two hundred issue mark, I hope it receives greater acclaim that only a richly conceived and developed narrative merits. Keep at it, and I will no doubt keep buying them.

Warmly,
Stephen Menendian
Oakland, CA

Well, cool. Because I plan on doing this book for a while longer.

DEAR MAXINE;...

At first I thought maybe you didn’t deserve him, you were...well you had braces okay....So I’m sorry if I ever doubted you...but...like...well you can’t judge a book by its cover. I mean, sometimes, there are just a ton of books though, and you have to look at something to decide what book to read...so...well...baby I’m sorry....

I’ll admit at first I found you...well...bland?

Cliché?...

A tad bit ugly?

I’m not defending my actions but you have just got to realize I was used too...I don’t know how to put this, and it’s not that I have a type, but...well...Alex, Rita, Jennifer, She-Dragon, Angel...um...you know. Those type. A few extra older....A bit dumber....And well, how do I put this without offending you?...

It’s the tits....It’s a dude thing, I know....

It took a while to fall in love with you....But it did come, very very slowly.

I guess It wasn’t only the tits....I mean, it’s probably a lot the tits, but I guess I was just jealous you were keeping my homie from his true love.... His sister....But not by blood. So it’s okay....Like it’s really complicated but she’s the one he’s supposed to be with forever and ever and...

Okay....You got me....Forever and ever is kind of weird but...just like one time would be...damn? Like that?...You...okay okay okay okay.

You're all right in my book....I'll bump you from a 7 to an 8 just for hookin' the homeboy up...MONSTER STYLE...

But I don't like...like like you....Sure, the Angel thing shouldn't/can't go anywhere, but I mean...THE TITS...

Okay okay, you do have a nicer butt then any of the aforementioned babes, besides...well fucknothisagain...Angel...I only wish. That's weird. Only wish. Fuck!

Okay, okay I guess what I'm trying to say is, well, yah know. Thanks....For doing that for me. It means a lot.

But I just kind of sort of like you. Okay.... I guess then I sort of liked you...now...okay just don't tell Angel or like, well don't tell Erik for sure, but, I'm actually quite fond of you now.

It wasn't JUST THE ANGEL THING, not trying to come off as a complete bigot, but, well, that helped open the door I guess. My mind....It got the loose ends tied up and I could really look at you for your...SOUL?

Wait...I mean...like...whoa. Like life. Like I get Savage Dragon is life....One big long real time life....My mental life....Real life...but like...

Okay Maxine Imma only say this one time and one time only, so you better catch it now...you're my favorite character of DRAGON HISTORY...

The best written....The most shocking....The...babe...and IDK what it is cause those tits didn't grow but you sure...mmmmmmmm... IT TOOK ME A BLOODY WHILE OKAY...AND YES YOU CAN TELL YOUR HUBBY HE'S MUCH SMARTER THEN ME...AND NICER...AND JUST AN ALL AROUND BETTER PERSON FOR NOT BEING A JUDGEMENTAL BITCH AND REALLY SEEING THE REAL YOU LONG, LONG, LONG, LONG, LONG, LONG, LONG, LONG BEFORE I DID.

Dude with a shark head...Cool....Not too clever really but...just fuckin cool...Chicken Head? Awesome!...Like...Dude who's face splits in half...obsessive chick who hears voices in her head...a woman who clicks her wrists...an orange dino-lookin' thing...DUDE....Dude. Fuckin dude.... YOU ARE COOLER THEN ALL THAT...BETTER WRITTEN...MORE...ORIGINAL THEN ALL THAT.

This...regular girl...this...cliché person...this idea...this...when put into perspective...YOU ARE MORE ICONIC THEN ANYTHING IN YOUR WORLD BEYOND THE GOD DAMN FIN....Dragon...clever sure....Scale of 1 to 10 though? Like an 8....Maxine?...10.

It's not just that no one has ever seen this character model in one of your comic books before...it's that...well no one has seen this character model EVER....Nor will again....What I thought could possibly be Erik's falling off point (don't fuckin' tell him) or, like, possibly just a bitterly overplayed scenario...someone far too REAL, NORMAL and OUTGOING for t... This, the way you were crafted, wow...the character development...or more the...I don't know if I can say this but...fuck it, I can say it. 200 percent...Alan Moore needs to meet you.... And maybe like...well I don't know...WHAT DOES ALAN MOORE SAY WHEN HE'S BEEN BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DOUBT OUTDONE?... Answer me that, Maxine...Answer me that.....

Dude...don't make Alan cry though, baby...that's not nice....Like, dude. Not NICE!!!!

*I JUST REALIZED I WAS SUPPOSED TO CRAFT THIS TO A POINT WHERE I COULD PINPOINT SPECIFIC THINGS FROM THE CURRENT ISSUE I LOVED AND BLAH, BLAH AND I KNOW I KNOW I ENDED UP TALKING TO YOU ABOUT THINGS THAT HAPPENED NEARLY 2 YEARS AGO...BUT IT WAS THIS MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE THAT SOLD IT.....It was not...your bare ass, either...(dude...) maybe a little but (cause like seriously dude...) IT WAS...WELL...I think it's still the Angel thing. Yeah....Totally still that....Um...a word on issue...UGH, I'LL LET THE OTHER DUDES HANDLE THAT WITH ALL OF THEIR ERIK QUESTIONS....That guy. Getting all the glory...Like what about Josh?...One busy dude....No credit....Actually lots of credits....But no credit...

Questions for my sexy little MEDIUM B CUP

1: How big is....well...you would know and we are all curious.

2: Angel?...Always been a thing...or like...?

3: Does the Covenant of the Sword exist in this reality/time period?

4: I mean...they could always just kidnap Dragon III and...

5: No?...

6: HMMMM...well just tryin' to kill the Watchmen streak, please forgive.

SIGNED,

MISTER CRUDE TYPER IN MONSTER MODE...YEP!

(that's an acronym)

(I know its all nonsense... and been addressed...and not current... but hey, I might as well say... Okay to print)

I'm really excited for the next arch to start!...Whatever it may be!!!! But how about a couple more full story in one ish type dealios (think the phrase is shelf container...right?)...come our way at some point in the near future?...

SERIOUS QUESTION.... WHO PICKED DRAGON III's COLOR?... Was it you or your bad ass colorists?...

I made color suggestions for the triplets' skin colors, Nikos tried out a few things and we eventually settled on something.

As for your numbered questions...

1: You've seen Malcolm's hands, right? Well, let's just say the rest is proportional and leave it at that.

2: No, no. Not at all.

3: It does not.

4: They don't exist and really--who wants to see that same bit again? It's played.

5: No!

6: I'm not even sure what this means.

In any case, thanks for the somewhat odd and lengthy letter about Mrs. Dragon. She's a big favorite around these parts.

Hey Erik,

It's been a while since I wrote, and for that I must apologize. Between wrapping things up with my old job, moving back to Canada, starting a new job, buying a new house and moving in, life has been keeping me pretty busy. I've barely even had time to read any comics and have only now just gotten caught up on the last two letters pages of Savage Dragon....Reading them back-to-back like that I noticed there was a bit of a snafu. It looks like you somehow got part of a letter from 217 and part of a response from 217 mixed into the letters in 218. How did that happen? Do you keep reusing the same template or something? Just curious. Anyway, before I comment on the latest issue of SD, I thought I'd briefly touch on a few things that you've done over the past year. (Wow, I really haven't written in a while!)

I stopped reading Spawn in the late '90s and never thought I'd pick it up again, but when I found out you were going to be working on it I obviously had to start picking it up again. I was surprised that I actually liked the Satan Saga Wars for the most part, but after that I started to enjoy it less and less. I just wasn't enjoying all the narration and dialogue, and after reading your comments online and elsewhere it's no wonder. It's a real shame Todd felt he had to tinker with your writing so much. It's also too bad he just seemed to pick and choose panels at random to further embellish because the panels he did work on looked great. The combination of your loose finishes and his inks really worked well together, but it would have worked a lot better if he had been more consistent and applied it to everything... I don't mean this as a slight on your work because I saw first hand what you were doing at NYCC back in 2015, it's just a shame the partnership didn't live up to it's full potential. I lay the blame squarely at Todd's feet.... Oh well. What's done is done. At least your run on Spawn helped to bring Ant back into the spotlight.

Now, on to the main event, Savage Dragon! The last time I checked in with you was after reading the wedding issue back in 209, and a lot has happened since then. Malcolm and Maxine have become parents to not only their own little girl, but to Angel's and Tierra's babies as well! Talk about having your hands full! I really liked how you faked us out with Amy looking like a normal baby at first too. Well done! I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention the cover to 213. It was nice callback to issue 33, but more importantly, my six year old daughter loved it! She is fascinated by babies and childbirth so she really appreciated this cover. I'd also like to congratulate you on the cover to issue 215. The coloring of this cover was a heavily debated topic on your Facebook page a while back and I was never happy with the final green background you seemed to settle on. I was very pleasantly surprised to see the final coloring had changed when I got my copy. It really popped! Who came up with the final colors? Did you work on it with Nikos, or was it something one of you came up with independently? Also, that last page of 215. What a bummer. It would have been interesting to see where you could have gone with Barry. I guess Dragon blood just isn't the panacea we all want it to be.

And that is a good segue way into issue 218. This was a great character piece. It just goes to show that no matter how powerful you are, there are some things that just can't be beaten. The helplessness Malcolm must have been feeling brought to mind the Death of Captain Marvel graphic novel by Jim Starlin. All the greatest minds in the Marvel Universe got together to try to cure Captain Marvel of cancer, but despite their best efforts they just couldn't do it. It's been decades since I read so I don't remember the details, but the feeling was the same.

I really liked your inking in 218, particularly all the shading you did in the rumpled bedsheets and the darkened lower half of the full figure shots on pages 5 and 11. And speaking of page 5, poor Craig. He should have known better than to spook a toddler with super strength, but you can't help but feel for the guy. Based on a leaked panel from issue #220 it looks like he's gonna bounce right back though. That last panel of Malcolm reacting the to the election results sums it up pretty well. I'm not even American and I was pretty bummed out by the results. I wish you and your fellow Americans good luck over the next four years. And finally, kudos to you and super-fan Raven for the back cover image. It must be pretty awesome for Raven to see his illustration printed on the back cover of his favorite comic. What's even cooler for me is that I'm one of the lucky few who have a t-shirt with that image on it!

Well, that about wraps it up for me, but I thought I would end this missive with a staple of the SD letter column, a numbered list of questions!

1. I know you are going to be launching a new Ant series soon. Will you be both writing and drawing it? If so, do you ever plan on handing off the art chores? I hear Ryan Ottley will be available soon. (wink wink, nudge nudge)

2. My daughter has another Mr. Glum question for you. If he eats sugary breakfast cereal and such because that's what's good for him, does that mean our healthy food like broccoli and salads are a kin to junk food for him and are unhealthy?

3. How did you feel about that page from 220 hitting the internet the day after you sent it to print? It seems like Rob was under the impression the issue was already out.

4. What are the chances you'll make it up to Ottawa one day for our ComicCon? Now that I'm no longer living in New York the chances of me seeing you at a con again are slim unless you come here.

Well, that's all for now. Issue 219 comes out tomorrow and I'm really looking forward to it. I'll do my best to fire off another letter after I've read it!

Andrew d'Entremont
Ottawa, ON

P.S. I was really happy to see the original logo make a comeback with issue 216. Don't ever get rid of it again!

It'll be back on a semi-permanent basis. Invariably there's a special issue that'll crop up and have me ditching the logo for a month or two, but it's the regular logo again.

As far as how parts of one letters page can get dumped into another--the letters pages are assembled when I hand over a document to the Image office and they use as many letters as can comfortably fit. If...a couple letters get cut, I'll copy and paste those into the file for the next letters page and while that's usually a seamless process, every so often I'll just get things a bit screwed up.

Nikos took another stab at the cover to *Savage Dragon* #215 with my encouragement. The green version you saw on Facebook was my feeble attempt to make it work and it just didn't.

As for your numbered questions:

1: The plan is for me to both write and draw it (though Ryan Ottley would be an excellent choice).

2: Mr. Glum is a filthy liar. Sugary breakfast cereal is actually not at all good for him. He just says it is because he wants to eat it like a man possessed and not have people judging him for his poor life choices.

3: I was not too happy about it but what's done is done.

4: I wouldn't put it past me.

Dear Erik,

It was great to see a quiet issue. I imagine that means we'll be seeing a big fight or two coming up, but it's nice to see you change it up. And with all your funky layouts and dynamic poses, no issue is ever boring.

The spotlight on Maxine was good to see, too. As hard as it was to see her go through the death of a parent, it just made me identify with and like her even more. She might be my favorite character in the book at this point. I sincerely hope she's going to be around for a long time.

Who's Craig, though? Just a friend of hers? I don't think we've seen him before, and he might not want to show up again too soon, if he values his remaining limbs.

And it was cool to see Amy Belcher again. I'd kind of forgotten that she was still around, and still in police work. To be honest, though, I'm kind of done with seeing Dragon show up in this book. We all miss him, sure, but it's Malcolm's book now, and even showing up for two pages now and again feels like him trying to take the spotlight back. I imagine the upcoming trials will keep him around, but part of me just hopes he leaves the planet or something for a long time. Don't hate me! I still like the guy, I just really like Malcolm and think he needs room to breathe.

Taylor Porter
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Craig is the apartment manager at the building Malcolm and Maxine live in. He first appeared in a backup in *Savage Dragon* #203, where he let Maxine into Malcolm's apartment while he was off fighting Demonoids. Craig appeared again in *Savage Dragon* #208.

Opinions seem to vary on "Old Man Dragon." Some readers really miss him and a few, like yourself, are happy to have him out of the picture. I anticipate him taking on a kind of Aunt May role, where he's a wise parent that will appear from time to time to dish out wisdom. That, and occasionally pitch in to do some serious ass-kicking.

Erik,

Just got an opportunity to read issue 218 and I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed it. It's not a typical "must stop the villain" issue that most superhero dramas center around. It was a true to life story that hit home in so many ways. One of the benefits of setting the book in real time are moments like the scene where Malcolm and Maxine are watching the World Series, an event that I tuned in for myself and was thrilled with

the results. To see our heroes go through the same emotions was a lot of fun. In typical Savage Dragon fashion the book always turns on a dime and in this case it hit like a ton of bricks. I didn't think Maxine's father would die in the same issue. I just expected it to be a dangling plot thread for a few issues. This funny book manages to reflect real life emotions and conflicts. Things happen that are unexpected and frustrating that no amount of superpowers can fix. It makes Savage Dragon that much more real and that much more beloved by fans.

Thanks again,
David Branstetter

My pleasure.

The real-time aspect can be a blessing and a curse. It forces me to play catch up from time to time when I need to cover a few months in a single issue. That was kind of the case with #218, which is why Maxine's dad seemed to go so quickly. It was a couple months, which, I'll grant you, is still not a lot of time. Unfortunately, here in the real world--it can happen that suddenly.

Erik,

Let me get this straight, Trump's gonna be in the White House and Glum's outta prison? Good thing this is just comic books and not real life.

In all seriousness, though, I'm glad you had the testicular fortitude to weigh in on the election, especially given how politics can be so polarizing... all of which could potentially have a negative impact on sales of SD. It's scary to think that in this "post-truth" world we live in, matters of opinion as well as outright alt-right lies can trump facts, and that the incoming president can be so easily likened to a comic-book villain that Glum could identify with.

Seeing Mr. Glum's prison stay get cut short (albeit somewhat fitting) is not the cathartic release people were gunning for. (Seeing Trump release his tax returns would be exceptionally cathartic, but I digress.)

Man, Glum's former manservant, Toady, really took one for the team. That visual coupled with the POOT! sound effect had ME dying... of laughter, that is. Poor little fella; not very big in the brains department.

On a happier note, the highlight of issue #219 has to be seeing the original Savage Dragon back in action; just like the good ol' days! It almost brought a tear to my eye.

That said, if I had to choose between seeing Dragon in an orange prison jumpsuit ad infinitum or President-elect Donald Trump's particular shade of orange for (gulp)...8 years(?), I choose neither. (One thing's for certain, Trump's NOT my president: I'm Canadian.)

Hey, I don't know if you've noticed, but Angel Murphy does bear a certain resemblance to a young Hillary Clinton. I know, I know... Hillary's no angel. They do both epitomize "girl power," however. Sadly, they've also had their fair share of Murphy's law.

In a world where racism persists, I'm glad that President Barack Obama (who WAS born in the U.S.A.) didn't fall victim to the KKK hate which struck down MLK. I'm overjoyed that an African-American can be a lead character in SD, SPAWN, or ANT. We've come a long way from racist black caricatures like Steamboat in Captain Marvel Adventures comics. Thank goodness, but America still has a long way to go.

Sincerely,
Sotiris Gravas

P.S. Even though Glum deserves a permanent dirt nap, I humbly ask that you impose an indefinite moratorium on bumping him off. I once read that next to Dragon, your second favorite creation is, in fact, Glum. Does that still hold true, or does Malcolm now hold that coveted spot? Maxine, maybe? Also, who would you root for in a brawl between Superman and the original Captain Marvel, aka Shazam? Just wonderin'.

I do love Glum but honestly--Maxine has stolen my heart.

As far as Superman vs. Captain Marvel goes--while Captain Marvel is a sentimental favorite, I would think Superman would come out on top given his vast array of superpowers.

Greetings Erik,

Long time no talk! Apologies for my absence, I've spent about a year in the hospital and a lot of time recovering (with much more to come) and haven't had access to my computer. Thankfully though I've still been able to keep up with Dragon thanks to people picking up my comics for me. Which more than once had me wishing I had Dragon's ability to regrow limbs, haha.

In any case, the book has been rockin' and rollin' as great as ever. Not sure how I felt about the Spawn crossover. To be honest, it didn't do a lot for me. It wasn't bad, just kinda...there. Didn't feel like it accomplished a lot, in my opinion, although I wouldn't be surprised if you had some kind of follow up planned.

Issue 219, now you're talking my flavor! First off, I loved the parts with the little nerd guy that used to be Mr. Glum's servant. That guy was so badass, first just kicking back with his feet up in his previous appearance and now donning the battle armor and dealing out major ass

kickings! But then you had to go and kill him!! Will your bloodlust never be satisfied, sir?? Curses!!

The thing with the protesters was a nice way to show us that things were caught up to current time as well as get a few monsters in for Malcolm to beat down. Feeling bad for Angel. I knew that three way would have repercussions, but I never dreamed just how epic and ongoing they would be. Madness.

But let's be real, the real star of this issue was, of course, Mister Glum. And boy did he deliver. I loved how you started off just having him making empty threats, "obviously" having no chance of following through, if only they knew. And then showing how easily he grasps humans and the Trump age of bullshit that we're living in. I honestly really think he would have stood at least a chance of getting off following his line of reasoning. But why take the chance when you have sweet battle armor! Not sure how it got there from that other zone, but who cares? It's comics, not everything needs to be explained! So, needless to say, he kicks ass and saves the day, err, I mean, gets away in a sweet fight with three very uncoordinated heroes! Can't say I'm not happy. More Glum!

Overall, another great issue in the books, sir, and looking forward to issue 220!

Hey, we're getting close to 225! Know what would make it really special? The Deadly Duo of course!!

Until next month, good sir!

Don Smith

Surrey, BC, Canada

The idea with the armor was that once Toady was in it and it was activated--it could act on its own to seek out and rescue its master. Without Toady having donned the armor, Mr. Glum would have been on his own. That is, until his sweet-talked 12 people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty into letting him walk!

Erik,

RIP Toady.

Went to My Parents' Basement today (LCS/bar) and picked up the latest Savage Dragon (219). No end in sight with the awesomeness you put into the book.

I'm so mad Toady didn't release Jennifer but now that Glum is free and seems to have a thing for Angel Murphy, maybe he will reveal that he has HER actual mom!! Talk about a reunion because they haven't been together since the kids ended up in Dimension X. Maybe with next issue being a solo issue for Angel, she may see her mom again...who at this point it's like a 10 year age difference since her mom been in stasis all that time.

Angel understandably didn't want to be a mom and now is starting to develop that motherly love for Jackson.

Looking at the panel of Dragon leaping at Glum...good call back shot. This issue was great and now so much to ponder and wonder for the immediate future. Awesome to see Old Man Dragon in action again.

Until next time...forever a fan and congrats to you and the Image founders for 25 years of game-changing comics!

NorVance Henry

Decatur, GA

A local comic store/bar sounds like a terrific idea.

Jennifer is free! She managed to free herself following the destruction of Glum's storage facility in #219. Toady let her stay in stasis for a couple reasons. First, he wasn't sure how to thaw her. Second, he wasn't sure that she would be on his side if he did free her. So, given that, she stayed on ice.

Jennifer has been on ice since May, 2000. She was 27 years old at that time. Her daughter Angel is 22 years old. So it's closer to five years than ten.

Hey Erik.

As promised, here are my thoughts on Savage Dragon #219.

First off, I really love that cover. Malcolm looks very powerful and full of authority, although his dimensions seem a little scaled back from what we've become accustomed to. He's still superhuman looking, just not as top heavy as he usually seems to be. The background and logo coloring were great choices too. It really gives it a sense of gravitas.

On to the interiors. I loved the opening rant of Mr. Glum. And that first double page spread. Wow! I know I should be used to seeing these kind of splashes from you by now, but they never seem to lose their wow-factor. Well done! Moving on to Dimension-X, I was really bummed out that Toady got toasted. He seemed like a character with so much potential for goofy hijinks, and I'm sorry that we'll never get to see them now. At least you gave him a good send off though. I love how the armor just roasted him and crapped him out. That was really good for a chuckle. And the destruction of Glum's former lair seems like it could have set in motion the return of Jennifer. Surely she would have been able to survive the bombardment, and with her stasis tube presumably destroyed in the process there's a good chance she's awake now. I guess

we'll have to wait and see. If future covers are any indication, we may get our answer when our heroes revisit Dimension-X to take on a newly freed Mr. Glum.

This issue was another great example of your ability to keep me on the edge of my seat while reading. By now we all know how you love to use the left-handed page surprise, so when I got to the last two panels of page 17 I was genuinely worried about what I might find when I turned the page. I was relatively certain that I wouldn't be witnessing Dragon's demise, but you've always maintained that no one in this book is safe, and we've seen plenty of examples of that in past issues, so I was still a bit worried. After a few moments of hesitation I finally did turn the page and was quite relieved to see our boy Dragon was still in one piece. Still, you really did have me going there for a minute. I wish more writers and artists would use this approach in their work. It really does ramp up the level of suspense when reading. Just today I read a very good comic book that started out with an explosion in the sky that turned out to be a missing WWII fighter plane crashing in present day, but they had the big reveal of the plane on the right hand page so I saw it coming before I even finished reading the lead-up to it. It would have been much more effective as a left-hand page surprise. Ah well. Not everyone can be Erik Larsen I guess!

There was plenty of other good stuff in this issue, but those were the highlights for me, so I'll move on to a few other things I wanted to mention.

I got a copy of the Mighty Man AthensCon exclusive a few days ago and really enjoyed it. I won't go into detail so as not to spoil it for anyone who plans to get the Image publication of it in a few months, but there are definitely a few things I'd like to comment on once it's more widely available. I will definitely be picking up the Image version and really look forward to seeing it in color. I would also be remiss if I did not extend a big thank you to Nikos for putting me in touch with Andreas Pefanis so that I could get a copy of it in the first place!

One final thing I wanted to mention which I forgot to say in my last letter is how much I enjoyed the progression of the two splash pages from issue #214. I had a lot of fun flipping back and forth between pages 2 and 6 to see what differences there were. Brilliant work! I have to admit I'm a sucker for any splash page you do involving huge buildings. That double page spread from issue #194 is another favorite. You could include shots like this in every issue and I probably wouldn't ever get tired of them!

That's it for now. I'm looking forward to Angel's adventure next issue, and even more to the big reveal of the mystery cover for issue #221. I must admit, I'm a little worried that you're keeping this cover under wraps. What bombshell are you going to drop on us?! I can't wait to find out!

See you next issue!

Andrew d'Entremont

Ottawa, ON

As you've no doubt noticed by now, it was simply our old pal Dragon back in the spotlight! I didn't want to tip my hand and let readers know that he was a free man once more! See? Sometimes there are happy endings in this merry mag! It's not all doom and gloom.

-Erik Larsen

NEXT: Inferno

Hey, don't stop reading now--there's plenty of additional funny-book fun to be had in the pages that follow--!

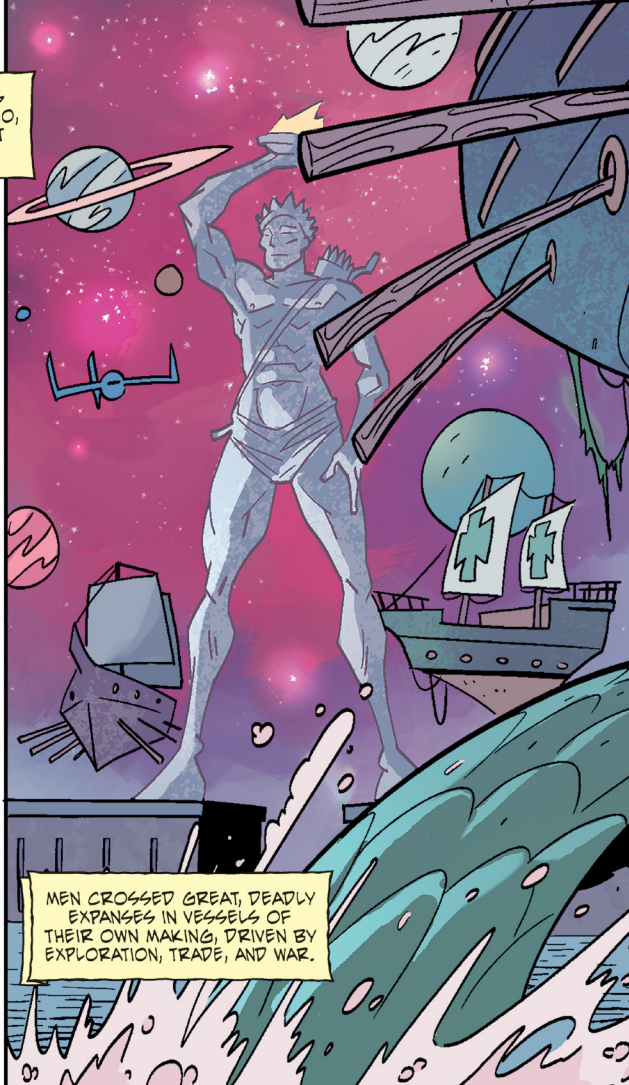
THE MYTH OF MARS

SPACE BARBARIAN

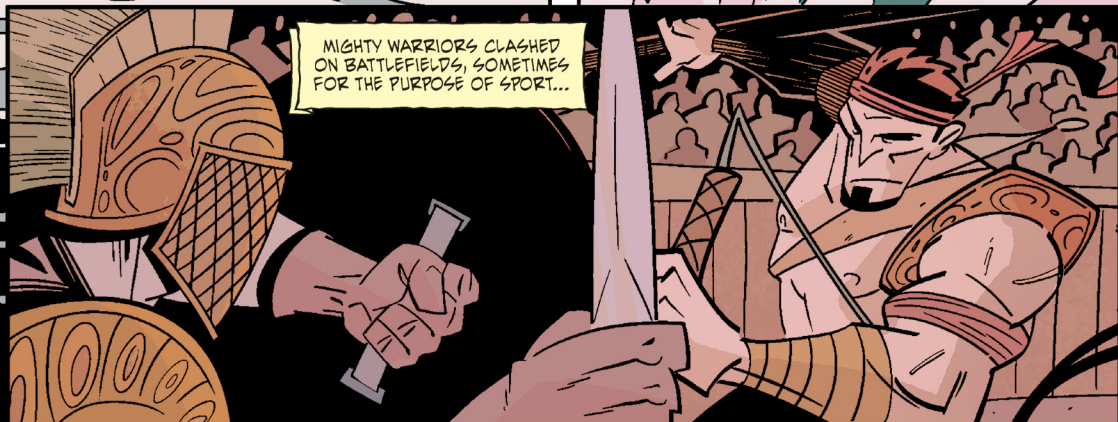
STORY: GIBBONS
ART: CHIAPPARA
COLORS: HILL
LETTERS: PRUETT
© JIM GIBBONS
ORIGINAL MARS DESIGN
BY ANDREW MACLEAN



THE TECHNOSCRIBES
TELL US THAT, LONG AGO,
THE WORLD WAS NOT
UNLIKE OUR OWN.



MEN CROSSED GREAT, DEADLY
EXPANSES IN VESSELS OF
THEIR OWN MAKING, DRIVEN BY
EXPLORATION, TRADE, AND WAR.



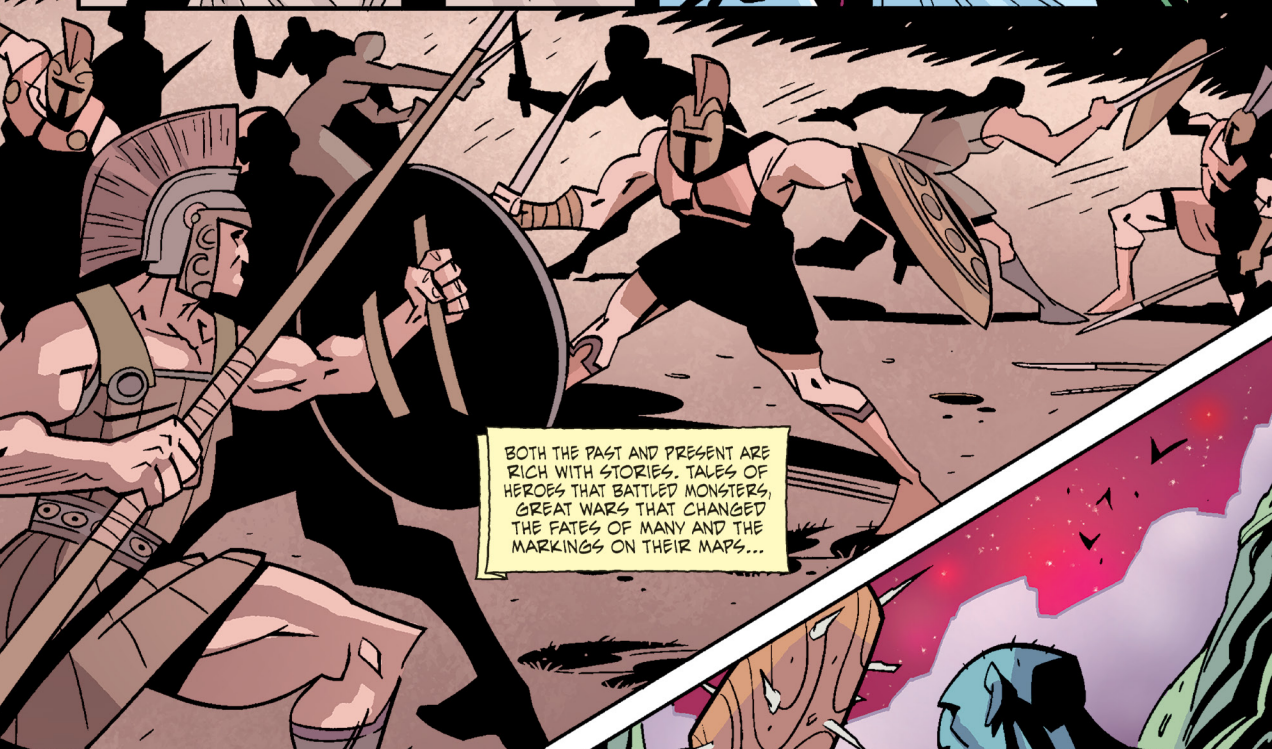
mighty warriors clashed
on battlefields, sometimes
for the purpose of sport...



...engaging in battles for
their lives as entertainment
for the affluent. Fighting
for honor and a way to
fulfill their debts.

AMBITIOUS MEN ROSE TO
POWER, SEEKING GLORY
AND--ON OCCASION--
NOBLER GOALS...

...BUT THEIR FOOTSTEPS WERE DOGGED
BY THE ASPIRATIONS OF OTHER
ZEALOUS MEN. AS THEY ARE NOW.



BOTH THE PAST AND PRESENT ARE
RICH WITH STORIES. TALES OF
HEROES THAT BATTLED MONSTERS,
GREAT WARS THAT CHANGED
THE FATES OF MANY AND THE
MARKINGS ON THEIR MAPS...

STORIES THAT STAND
THE TEST OF TIME.

UNIVERSAL STRUGGLES THAT
SPAN HUMANITY'S HISTORY.



TALES SO ETCHED INTO THE
VERY FABRIC OF LIFE THAT
THEY'RE DESTINED TO BE
TOLD--AND PLAYED OUT--
AGAIN AND AGAIN.



AND IN EVERY
STORY...

...THERE IS
A HERO.



A CHILD OF
TWO WORLDS...



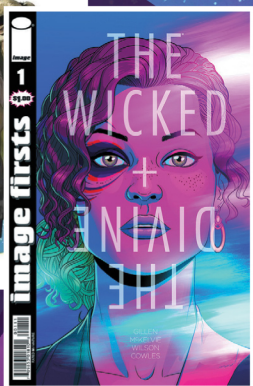
A SON OF TWO
FAMILIES...

REARED BY TWO
PROUD LEGACIES.

SCARED
TO LEAVE
YOUR

COMFORT ZONE?

TASTE TEST A NEW SERIES
WITH INTRODUCTORY PRICED
IMAGE FIRSTS



FIRST
ISSUES
FOR \$1

VOL. 1

TRADE PAPERBACKS
FOR \$9.99



IMAGECOMICS.COM

I HATE FAIRYLAND™ © 2017 Skottie Young. SAGA™ © 2017 Brian K. Vaughan & Fiona Staples. THE WALKING DEAD™ © 2017 Robert Kirkman, LLC. THE WICKED + THE DIVINE™ © 2017 Kieron Gillen & Jamie McKelvie. All rights reserved. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc.