

DRAAGON



A WALK
ON THE
WILD SIDE

SAVAGE DRAGON

BY

ERIK LARSEN

FERRAN DELGADO

letters

NIKOS KOUTSIS

colors

MIKE TORIS

flats

GRAVIN HICCINBOTHAM

editor

JOSH EICHHORN

hard as nails



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SAVAGE DRAGON™

A WALK ON the WILD SIDE

YEAH...
ABOUT
THAT...

YOU *REALLY*
DON'T KNOW THE
FIRST THING
ABOUT ME.

BECAUSE IF YOU *DID*--
YOU'D KNOW THAT MY
MOM HAD *ELECTRICAL*
POWERS--

--AND THOSE
POWERS
WERE PASSED
ON TO *ME*.

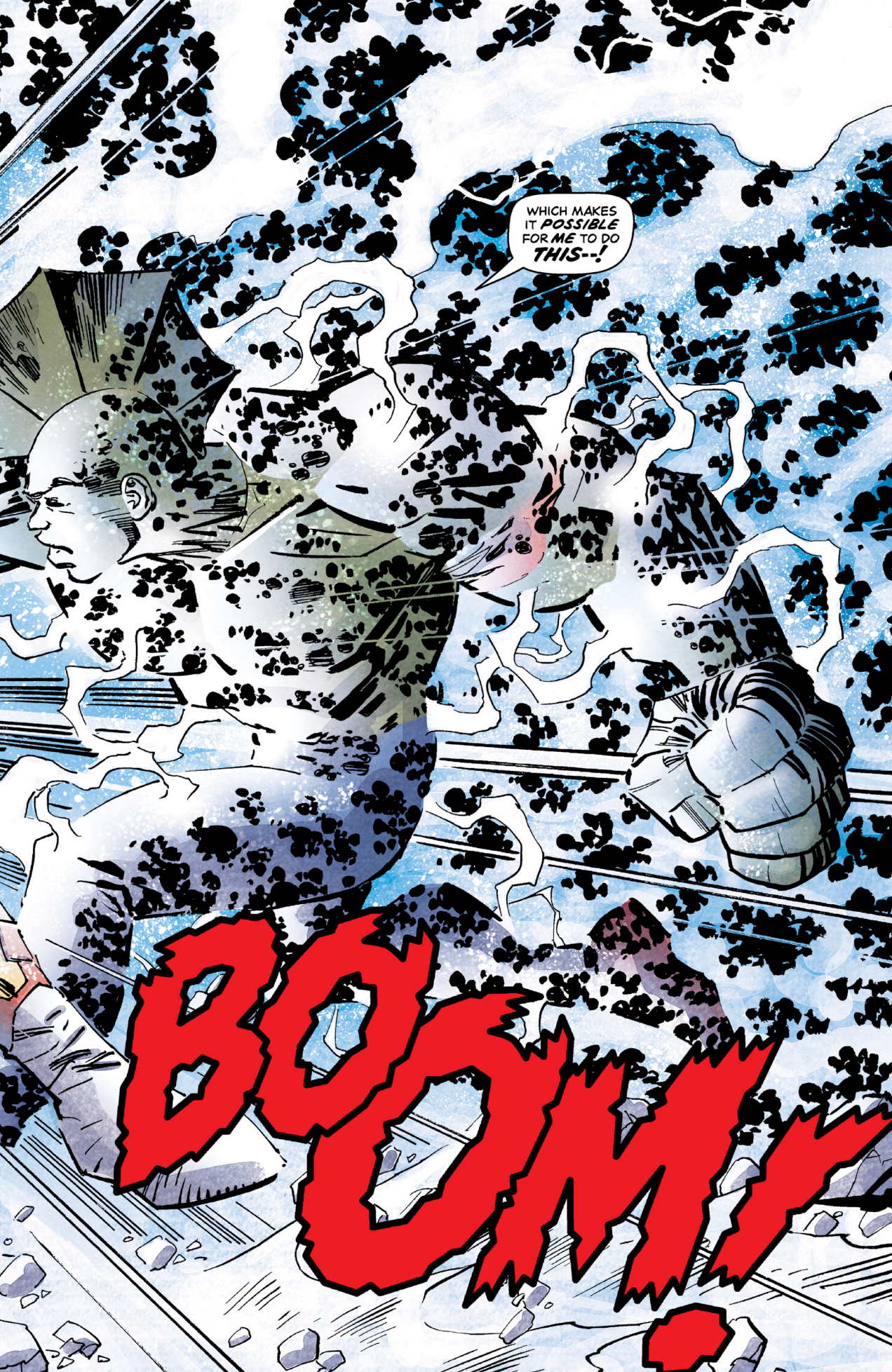
SO A
LIGHTNING
ATTACK
LIKE THIS?

ALL IT'S *DOING* IS
POWERING ME UP,
BIG TIME!

ARTISANALLY
CRAFTED BY
ERIK LARSEN
with
NIKOS KOUTSIS
and **MIKE TORIS**
COLORS

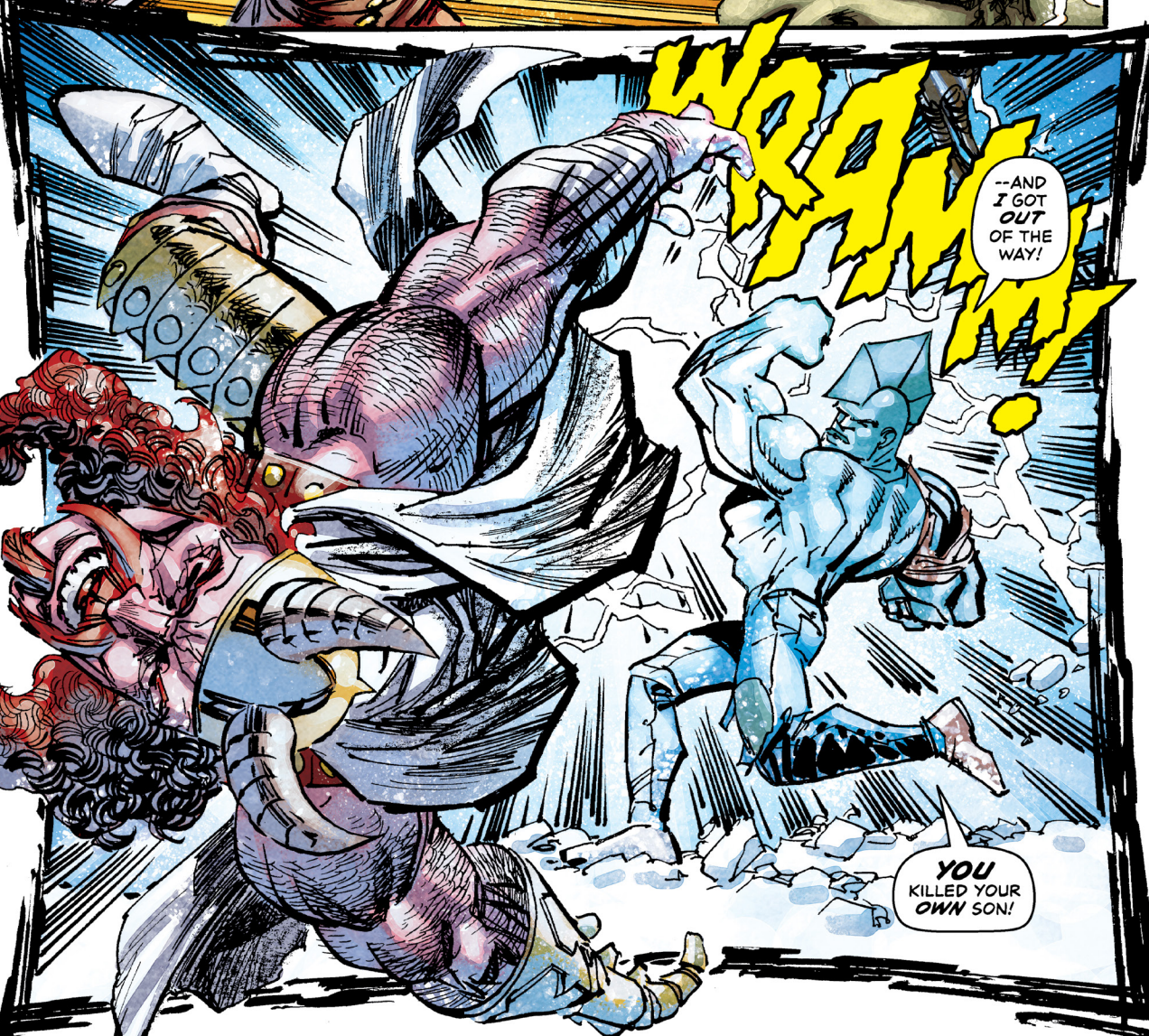
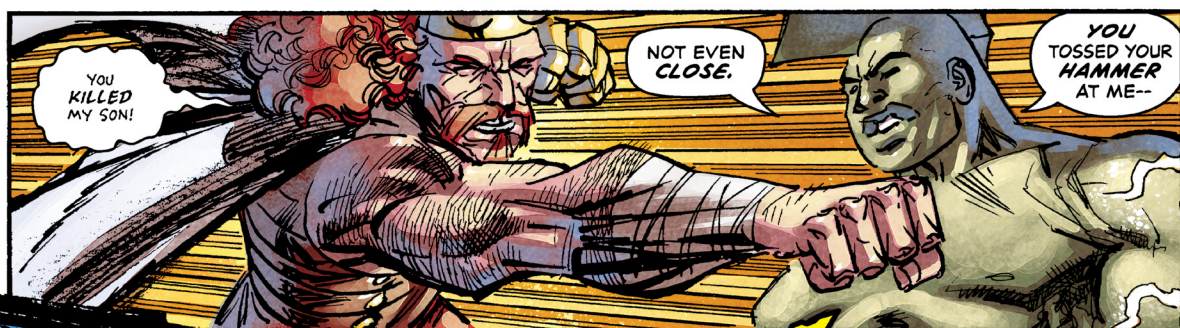
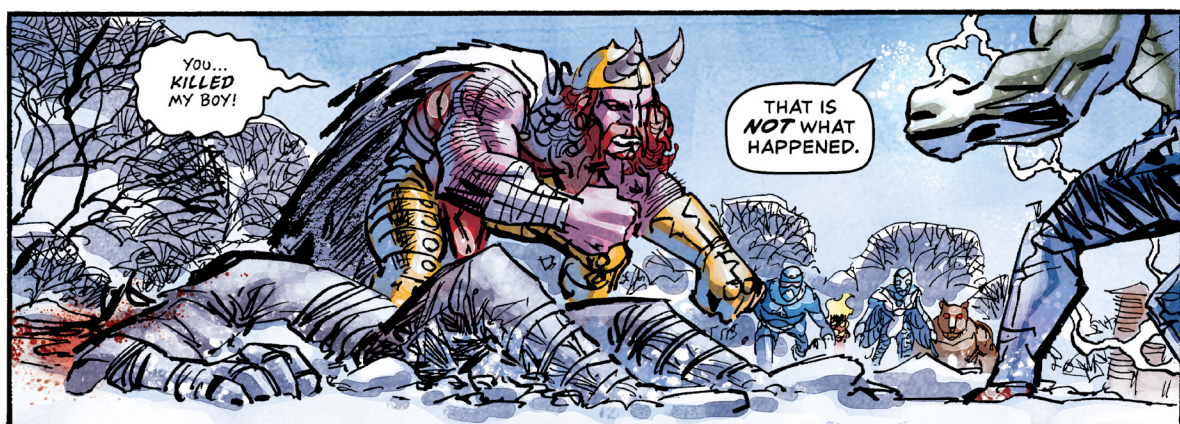
FERRAN DELGADO
LETTERS





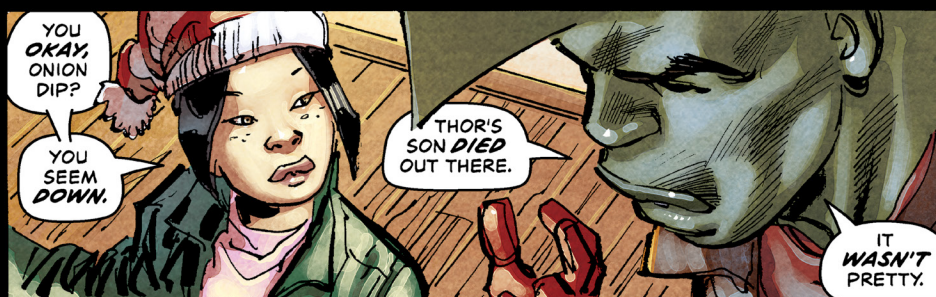
WHICH MAKES
IT POSSIBLE
FOR ME TO DO
THIS--!

BOOM!





IT WAS YOUR
OWN DAMNED
FAULT.





AREN'T YOU A LITTLE BIT **OLD** TO BE READING COMIC BOOKS?

MALCOLM LENT ME HIS COLLECTION.

HE SAID IF I WANTED A **CRASH COURSE** ON WHAT I **MISSED** IN THIS REALITY IT'D BE QUICKER TO HAVE ME READ ALL OF THE **BACK ISSUES** OF HIS **COMIC BOOK** THAN FOR HIM TO **EXPLAIN** IT ALL.



IF YOU STUMBLE ACROSS ANY PICTURES OF **ME** WITH MY TOP OFF-- I **DIDN'T** POSE FOR THOSE.

WHOEVER DREW THAT ISSUE MADE A COUPLE EDUCATED GUESSES.



THOSE BOOKS **DON'T** TELL THE **WHOLE** STORY, OF COURSE.

YOU CAN'T **EXPECT** THEM TO COVER AN ENTIRE **MONTH'S** WORTH OF EVENTS IN **20 PAGES**.

SOMETIMES THEY NEEDED TO LEAVE A FEW THINGS TO YOUR **IMAGINATION...**



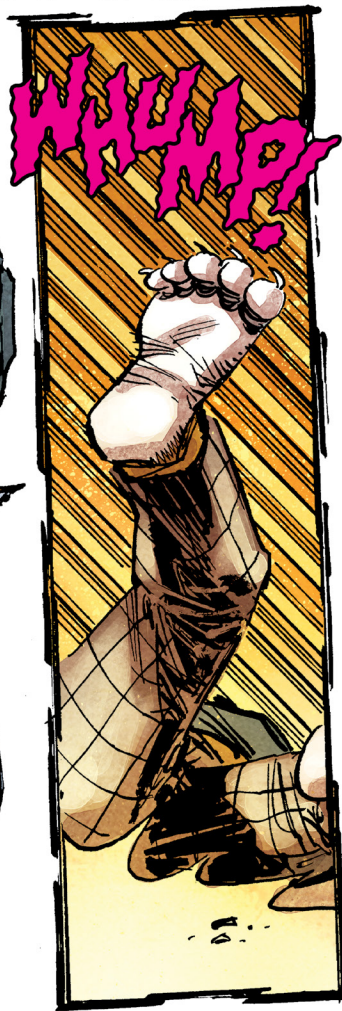
...
THEY DIDN'T LEAVE **MUCH** TO THE IMAGINATION **THERE**.

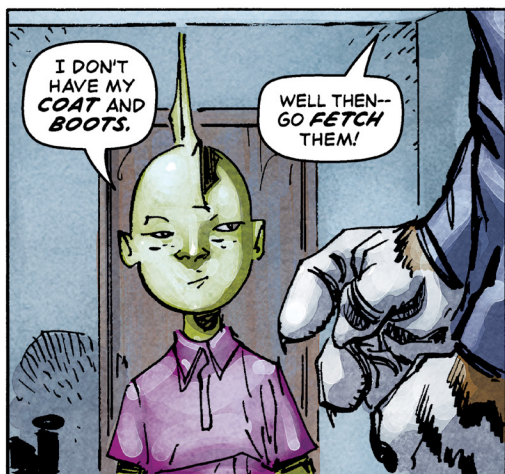
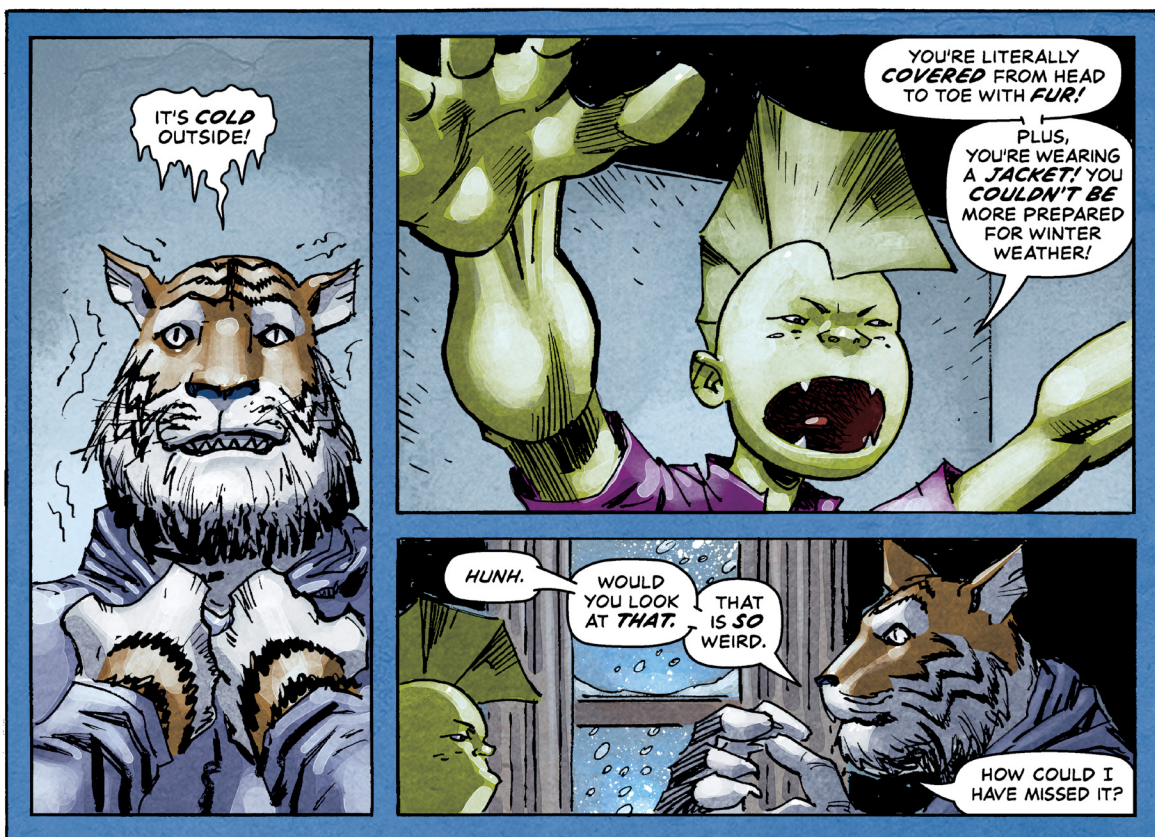


WHEN I ASKED IF YOU WERE TOO **OLD** TO READ COMICS--

I MEANT-- CAN YOUR **HEART** TAKE IT?

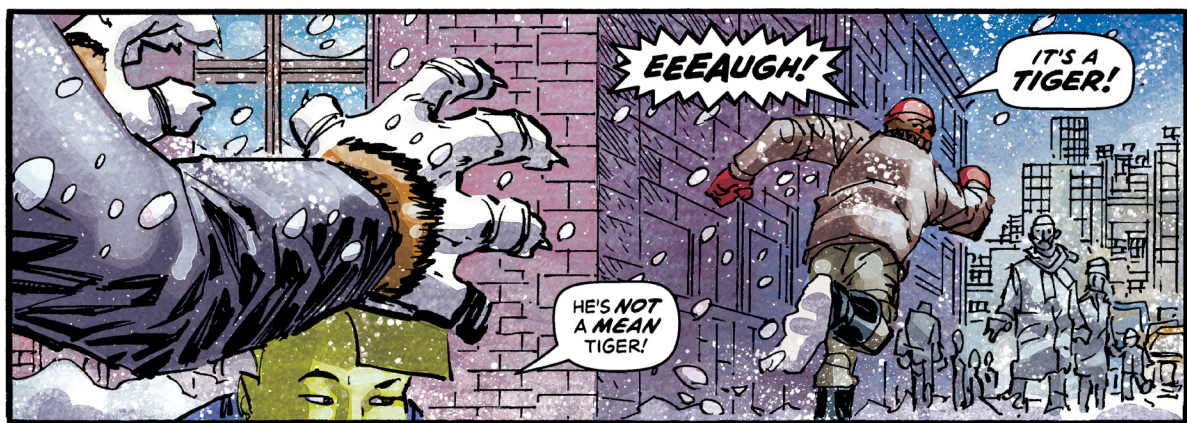
I'M BEGINNING TO HAVE MY **DOUBTS**.

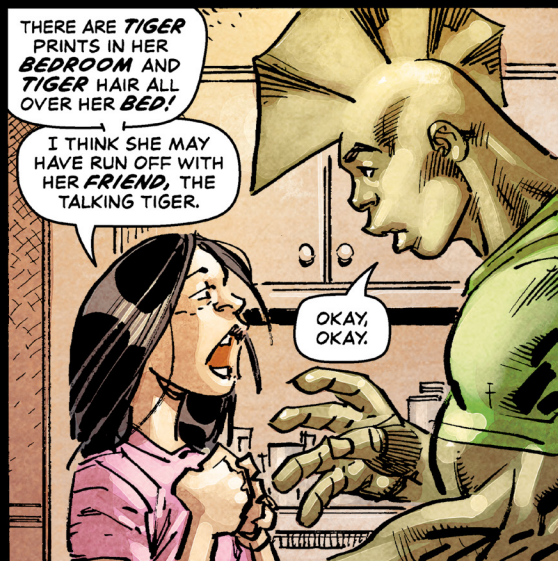


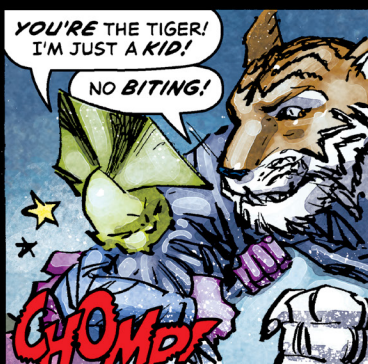
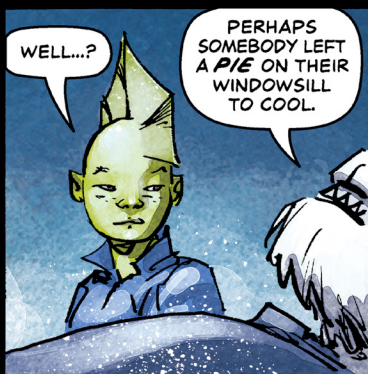
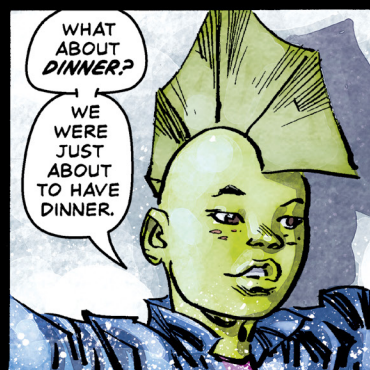














I'M
TIRED.

I'M
COLD.

I'M
LOST.

I'M
HUNGRY.

THIS
ADVENTURE
SUCKS.

OH,
HUSH.



WHAT KIND OF AN
ADVENTURE IS **THIS?**
YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY
PLAN! YOU'VE GOTTA
HAVE A **PLAN!**



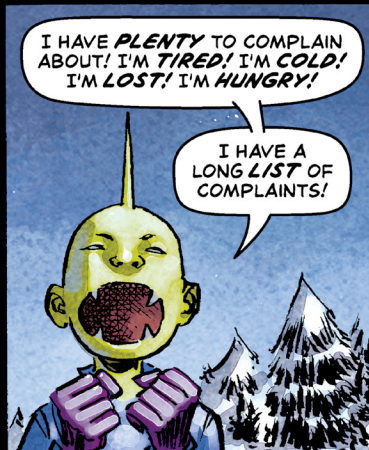
IT'S **NOT** AN ADVENTURE
IF YOU HAVE A **PLAN!** AN
ADVENTURE IS WHEN
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT
TO EXPECT!



WHAT'S SO
GOOD ABOUT AN
ADVENTURE?
WHERE'S THE **FUN?**
WHERE'S THE
EXCITEMENT?
THIS ISN'T **FUN!**
THIS ISN'T
EXCITING!



YOU'RE UP **PAST** YOUR **BEDTIME!**
YOU'RE GETTING **EXERCISE** AND
FRESH AIR! YOU HAVE **NOTHING**
TO COMPLAIN
ABOUT!

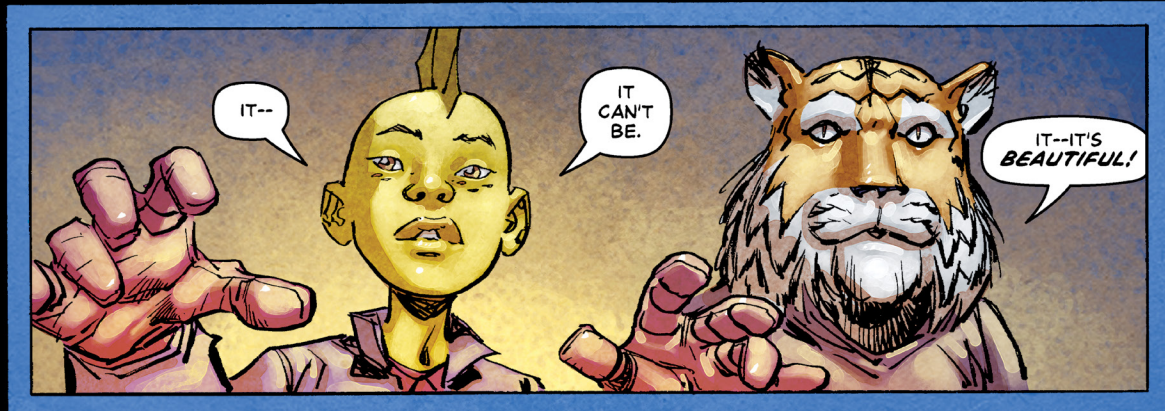


I HAVE **PLENTY** TO COMPLAIN
ABOUT! I'M **TIRED!** I'M **COLD!**
I'M **LOST!** I'M **HUNGRY!**

I HAVE A
LONG **LIST** OF
COMPLAINTS!



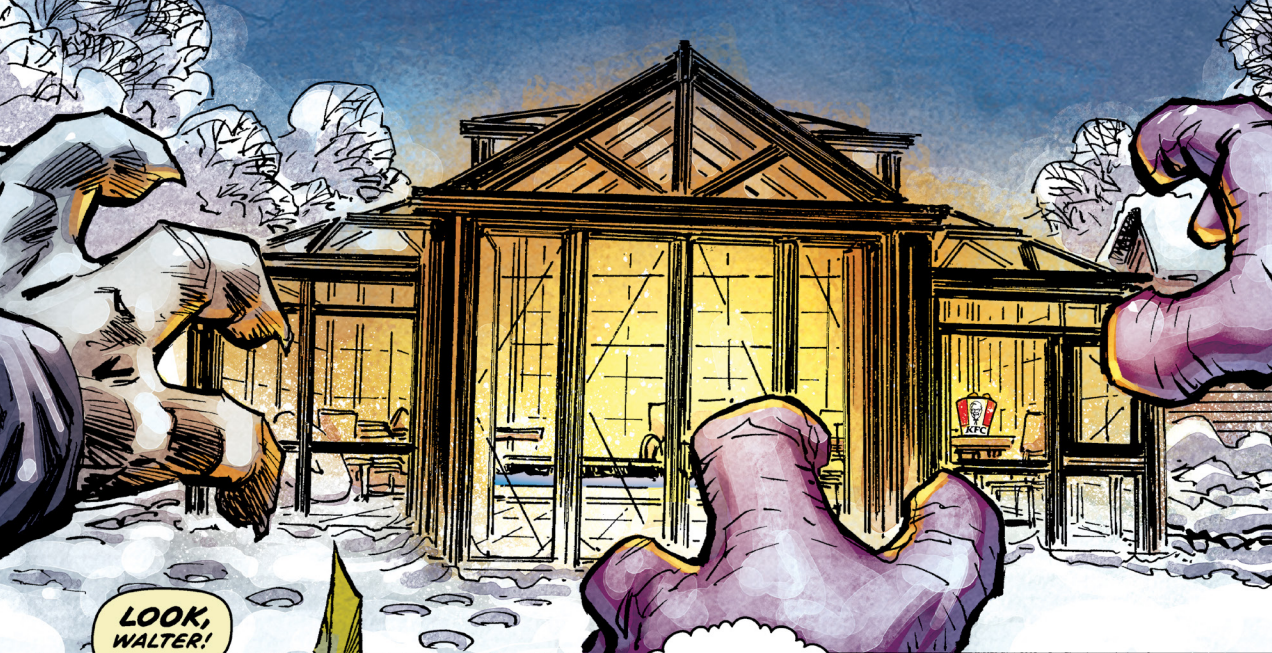
WHAT'S
THAT OVER
THERE?



IT--

IT
CAN'T
BE.

IT--IT'S
BEAUTIFUL!



LOOK,
WALTER!

IT'S AN
INDOOR
SWIMMING
POOL!

WE CAN GO
SWIMMING!



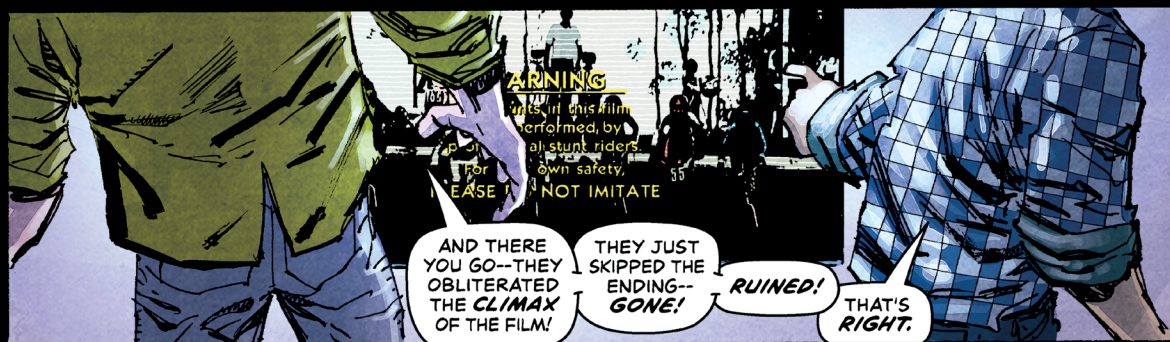
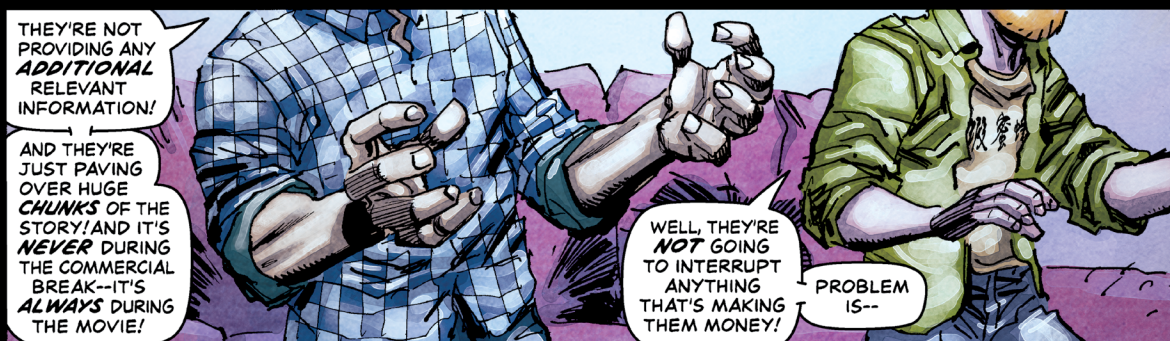
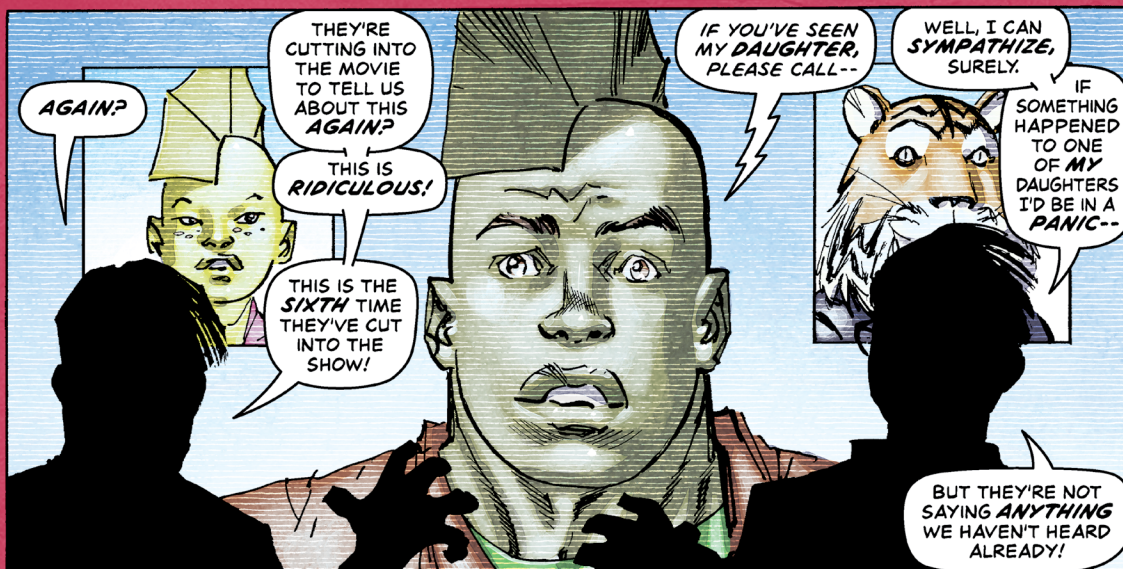
IT'S
LOCKED!

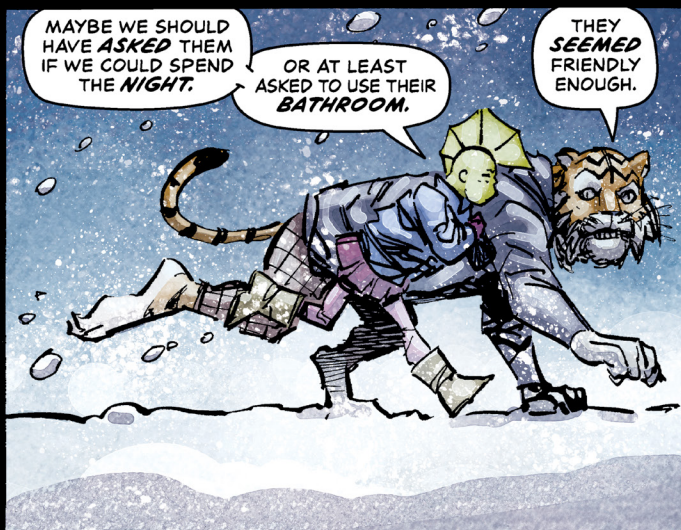


WE SHOULD
PROBABLY
JUST--

MAYBE IF I JIGGLE THE
HANDLE A LITTLE BIT--

WRUNNK!









WE'VE BEEN **LOOKING** ALL OVER FOR YOU, LITTLE GIRL!

YOUR PARENTS ARE **WORRIED!**



I WAS **WITH** A GROWN-UP.

AM I IN **TROUBLE?**

IT WAS **HER** IDEA.



DON'T RUN OFF LIKE THAT WITHOUT **TELLING** US WHERE YOU'RE GOING.

YOUR **MOTHER** WAS **FRANTIC!**

I CAN TAKE CARE OF **MYSELF.**

ANYWAY, I WAS WITH **WALTER.** HE'S A GROWN-UP.



WALTER MAY BE AN **ADULT TIGER** BUT HE'S NO **OLDER** THAN YOU ARE.

WHAT WERE YOU TWO **DOING** OUT THERE?



WE WERE HAVING AN **ADVENTURE!**

NEXT ISSUE:
NORTH FORCE

e-mail: Erik@savagedragon.com

visit our website at www.savagedragon.com

Welcome to SAVAGE DRAGON #258.

Running a bit later than I'd like. Things have come up. I drew an alternate cover for Geoff Johns and Gary Frank's new creator-owned comic book, GEIGER and one for Robert Kirkman and Chris Samnee's book, FIRE POWER. I also wrote, drew and colored ANT #12, a one-shot which wraps up the first volume of Mario Gully's ANT series, which Image last published 14 years ago. And all that got in the way. I'll be doing my best to catch up over the next few months, so don't be too shocked if two issues of Savage Dragon fall into your hands one of these months.

Oh, and a quick note to humbly request that you please use the e-mail address above when sending in letters!

I've been getting missives sent to me through Facebook and Instagram and my other e-mail addresses and it can become very confusing when it comes time to assemble this rambling, incoherent mess of a letters page!

Do a guy a solid, would ya?

Now, onto the mail--!

Hi Erik!

I recently finished "Savage Dragon Salutes the Funnies" - I LOVED IT! It was the most fun comic I've read in a long time and it was nice to get that "reading the Sunday Comics section" feeling from a Savage Dragon Book.

Based on previous comments regarding working on the issue, I know it was brutal to do, but I hope you do a "Salute to the Funnies" again someday.

My favorite Elements: The look of different quality paper, that newsprint look that you added is #1 in style points, for me. Famous Funnies Tinting a close 2nd.

My Top Favorite Strip: Amazingly "The Familiar Circus" because you just 100% Nailed it. Signed prints of that? I'd buy one. "Family Circus" was never my favorite Strip, but you hit it on the head so perfectly, the style, the way you painted the scene, the wording of the Gag. Those elements shot it to #1 for me.

"Amy & Walter" was a close #2. I'd really Love a Spin-Off series with them, some day. I know you're busy enough without adding any new Spin-Offs but I Love them as a duo.

"Maxine" was my 3rd Favorite. I wondered why you went with "Dogwood" instead of the more obvious "Dragwood", but figured maybe it had something to do with the connotations of the word "Drag" and how they didn't apply, here.

I Loved your redesigns for 'Barbaric' and 'Ricochet' for the "Runningbear" section.

Loved that you had a mock Chester Gould Strip representing the "Old Guard" of Strip Artists.

Really enjoyed "Drumfbunker" despite not being a Doonesbury fan. The Art in that section was really superb and you really nailed the atmosphere.

I was very impressed that you effectively utilized the Daily Strip medium to make several strong political and social commentaries. I'm not big on making political statements with my own art and a seldom drawn to that, but must admit it was very well done in this book and quite tastefully done. Just subtle enough.

Savage Dragon #252 is really an outstanding piece of work, all around. I'm really glad you took this on. I Love that even though this title has had an epic run, you are unafraid to think outside of the box and take risks with it. Freaking Great Issue! For me, it's an instant classic!

David Terrero
(Davey Blaze)

I used "Dogwood" because dogwood is an actual thing. "Dragwood" sounds more like Dagwood but it isn't a thing and these characters aren't that self-aware--they don't realize that they're in a "Blondie" parody.

Dear Erik,

With Savage Dragon 256, you finally righted one of the great wrongs of this book: Mako is back. We'd gone too long without him. Your ability to draw silly yet badass shark men and chicken men is one of your underrated talents. Having Paul Dragon fight Mako must have brought back some pretty old memories for you.

I enjoyed the brief Christmas scenes, even though this issue came out in January. I love that this book uses real time, and holidays makes a great landmark. But I also like that you don't feel the need to do a "Holiday Issue"

every year. Sometimes Christmas is a big part of an issue, sometimes it's just a few panels, which also highlights the unpredictability of your stories. It did feel a bit weird to see Paul wearing Dragon's old Christmas sweater, though.

I somehow didn't notice Malcolm's tiny hands until Maxine mentioned it, but it was worth a chuckle. I never get tired of seeing the interesting way you maim and disfigure your characters, and they bizarre way that the Dragons heal. More weirdness on that front is always appreciated.

Taylor Porter
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Yes, indeed. Paul Dragon first fought Mako in one of the unpublished homemade comics I drew as a kid, so this was somewhat of a trip down memory lane.

I did struggle with the inclusion of Christmas in the issue. I knew beforehand that it would be out in January, after all but I also know that celebrating Christmas in the December issue would be just as strange if not stranger, given that it would be on sale before the holiday and we'd be predicting the future by including it.

At the same time, I do question whether to acknowledge birthdays every year. In 2020, the kids all had their birthdays depicted but both Malcolm and Maxine's were skipped. If I was to show them all every year it could seem like endless birthdays, even with the "triplets" grouped on a single day. It's tough sometimes to know what to include and what not to include.

And don't worry--there's plenty more weirdness to come.

Hi Erik.

Like Ken Albery, whose letter was printed in SD 256, I also think of each Wednesday of the month when a new SD arrives as "Savage Dragon Day." Maybe that makes it "a thing" now. I go home, I read SD first, I write you a letter, and then I get on with the rest of my comic book reading. First things first, as they say.

Before I get to 256, I've been wanting to tell you how much I'm looking forward to SD 258, with Walter and Amy having their own independent adventure! I almost jumped for joy when I saw the solicitation. I did give out a loud, happy cry of, YES!! (I may have done a fist pump, but I don't remember). It's the next best thing to giving all the kids their own mini-series, which I'm sure by now you're tired of hearing me ask for pointlessly. I am counting the days for 258, and I hope you do it again, just a single issue, with other kids ASAP.

Getting back to that letter from Ken Albery, SD 256 was a first in that you cut yourself off in your response to him at the end of the letter column. Ran out of room, did we? You could have bumped those Green bars a little lower to let us know what you were so happy about. Maybe we'll find out next month. haha.

I have a quick question about the recent cover art. What's up with the retro Marvel style variants? It was the regular look of the book way back around issue 91, and you have used it on variant covers for milestone numbered issues. You don't usually have variant covers, so it seems an odd thing to do on a regular basis. Have people been asking for it? Personally, it doesn't do anything for me. I never thought much of it when Marvel used it across their entire line and I didn't miss it when it was gone. I also see it pop up frequently when small press books do homage variants. Do you have a nostalgic fondness for it? I'm guessing you do. Just wondering.

Now to the meat of the matter. To begin with, the splash page. Savage Dragon has gone meta in a really big way! You introduced the Savage Dragon comic book into the Savage Dragon universe awhile back, but this is a great use of that joke when you reprint an actual cover! And then having the joke continue, successfully, on page 3 was really great. You didn't milk it to death, either. Instead you wove it into a conversation between Malcolm and Maxine that was full of seven funny sex jokes, and (my favorite), more of those crazy nick names. Powder keg. Utility drawer. Tuna melt. (Later still, Butter cream). God, I love this book...

Speaking of sex jokes, on page 7 we see the return of the Maxine-Across-The-Room-Schtick, only this time it's straight up to the ceiling. It's what my friends and I use to joke about Superman and Lois Lane doing every night when I was kid. Thanks for making those jokes a part of Savage Dragon reality. You just can't find this kind of quality stuff anywhere else. Now that she's been shot across the room a few times, and up to the ceiling, what's next? Through a door? Out a window? If they ever decide to have sex somewhere outside, in the bushes in a city park for instance, I imagine Maxine will wind up landing in a duck pond. Feel free to use that. I won't ask for royalties.

Back to the kids for a second. On page 13, someone got a bear, but on page 9, that looks like a Hobbes doll! Did I get that right?? I'd know Hobbes anywhere! Did anyone else get a Calvin doll? Or would that have been too obvious?

The action packed Mako plot was wonderful. When you kill a character, sometimes they are gone for good. And Mako is gone, but your inventive way of bringing back just his physical form lead to an unpredictable set of consequences. When Paul got his arm bitten off, my first reaction was, Wait a minute, Paul doesn't have regenerative powers, does he? And the answer is, no, he does not. For all of us wondering where this Paul thing was going, this is quite the unexpected development. Does he go around with only one arm from now on? Does he get fitted with a cybernetic prosthetic? Does he lose another limb? Does he die? Who the hell knows! Only you! And maybe not even you, yet! I really do love this book...

I was shocked, no pun intended, to see that Malcolm's electrical power wasn't strong enough to take down Benedict Milhous/Psycho Mako. Does that mean the power has its limits, or was there something special about BM/PM that made it possible for him to shrug it off? You're not the kind of writer who plots something out of sheer convenience. You always have a good explanation in the letter column even when it's not obvious in the story. And the general confusion among our heroes about "Mako's" identity and frame of mind was a brilliant lead in to Paul's unfortunate dismemberment. That is some tight, controlled writing that you don't see in a lot of other books. Mistakes have consequences. Nicely done.

Finally, as the story comes to a close, it's a sad scene in the hospital room of one permanently injured Paul. Just when you think the story is going to end on a note of melancholy, you manage to slip in (no pun intended) one last sex joke. And a shocking rear end view. And one more pet nickname. Butter top. It's great to be alive, and it's great to be reading Savage Dragon.

And with that, I will see you again next month.

Daniel McMasters

Sacramento, CA

I'm not sure what happened in regard to my response to Ken Albery. And, unfortunately, that train of thought has long since left the station. My guess is that I was mid-sentence when my beloved wife rang the dinner bell. Whenever that happens all else becomes irrelevant.

Honestly, yeah--that '70s Marvel trade dress was everything to me as a kid. That was Marvel's look. That's what comic books looked like to me and that brief period where this book had that trade dress (from Savage Dragon #76-100) was the first time the book looked like a "real" comic book to me.

Malcolm's electrical power isn't the be-all-and-end-all. Some villains are more resilient than others and it takes a lot out of Malcolm to use those powers. It's not an unlimited supply. That's why he'll often hold off using it until it's absolutely necessary. The last thing he wants to do is deplete his reserves and be left vulnerable or rendered unconscious in the midst of a meleé.

Erik,

It was inevitable. The prolonged run of issues where each issue outdid the previous one, thus ratcheting the sense of danger, intrigue, and excitement was unsustainable. Because of that, I can't fault you for what I felt was a slight stumble with issue 256.

When I first saw the solicitation cover to 256, featuring that insane mouthful of stalactite-like teeth, I was stoked for what was about to come! In my mind, we would either see Dart survive using her shark power, Mako return from the dead (further teased with his corpse appearance in 255), or good-guy Mako from Paul Dragon's reality popping in from Dimension-X. The bad news is that the actual revelation was a lot less exciting than what I had hoped for. The good news is that I am still barely ever able to guess which direction you are going with the book.

The Executioner?! Really?! This new Mako (or "Fako" as my buds and I refer to him) is just some Vicious Circle goon who has only appeared in one panel? On top of that, all we really saw in that one panel was his torso! C'mon! I feel like there was a missed opportunity to use a slightly more established (and interesting) Vicious Circle goon like Ugly Johnny, Iron Jaw, or Crosseye. I miss the type of story build up devices that you would use in the early issues of Savage Dragon that I feel could have really been used in an impactful manner here. Getting some build up with actual glimpses in an issue here and there of this Executioner guy murdering people would have been more impactful. I think it would have hit a lot harder if the big reveal was that it was a monster that we've been witnessing doing horrible things, rather than it just being a random background thug (even that description seems generous) that we are told is a serial killer. I'm hoping that this Executioner (I guess the Punisher is taken in Malcolm's reality as well) is to Mako what Marvel's Carnage is to Venom. If this new Mako is even more psychotic and blood-thirsty than the first, it will be terrifying. As it is, we know that the original Mako had the ability to best the original Dragon in one-on-one fights. Additionally, this new Mako took care of Paul pretty easily as well. AND he took a lightning punch from Malcolm like a goddamn champ!

Anyway, there is still a lot to praise in this issue. The art is awesome as ever. The comic relief from Maxine and the kids is on point. Paul versus Mako was intense! I'm loving that you are continuing to incorporate all the various types of panel designs. Those "scratchy" panel boxes are so much fun! I'm really enjoying the Paul version of Dragon. Getting little tidbits about him and his former reality with each issue has been a ton of fun. I was shocked to see that his severed arm might be permanent! Somebody get him the number of the doctor that gave neighbor Craig his prosthetic! Lastly, I have to mention the thrill of getting another chapter of the remastered Ethereal Warriors serial. It's always a treat to get more Carlson/Fosco comic book goodness. After reading this latest chapter, I'm convinced that there should be a line of Ethereal Warriors toys! The art drips with energy and sheer fun and the scene in this issue reminded me of the types of battles you would envision your action figures having when you were a kid. I need someone to develop a Vanguard figure with a removable Powerhouse battle suit, NOW!

It wouldn't be a proper missive without a few questions, so here goes:

1. Are Mako's powers transmitted only through blood? I thought that Dart received his powers because she was bitten. Maybe it was because their blood mingled instead? It seems like if he transmitted his powers through a bite then there would be a hell of a lot more were-sharks out there!

2. Is Paul not a Chosen One from his reality, or is it that he's just never been injured badly enough to realize he had the ability to regenerate limbs?

3. When did the Savage Dragon comic jump ship from Marvel Comics over to Image Comics? Stan Levi had to have been disappointed. Maybe Stephen Ericson offered a deal that the Dragon family couldn't refuse!

That's all from me for now. I can't wait until next month when the villainous Thor returns to the pages of my favorite funny mag!

Sincerely,

Craig Olsen

Philadelphia, PA

Well, good. If I finally broke that streak then the pressure is off. It was a nice run while it lasted.

Though I did want a new Mako I thought bringing over another version from Paul's dimension would be playing dirty pool. I shouldn't be hauling in replacement versions of every popular character I've bumped off or I run the risk of turning the book into another comic book where there are no lasting consequences and death is just a temporary inconvenience.

And, yeah, the Executioner is a relative nobody but that's kind of the point. It gave me a blank slate to play with and it didn't take another character with potential off of the playing field. I'd also painted myself in the corner a bit page-wise and didn't have a lot of space to spend on back story. A sorry excuse, I know, but the story felt pretty clipped as it was. I'll dive in deeper when space permits.

1: Yes, blood. Mako bit into Dart as she hacked into him, so his blood got all over and in her and that's where her shark-shifting powers came from. New Mako got a more concentrated dose than Dart did, which is why his transformation was more complete than hers was.

2: Paul is a Chosen One--kind of. It's a bit more cumbersome. Essentially Paul was initially fused with William Jonson and the wizard Fon-Ti pulled them apart but he left some of Dragon in William and some of William in Paul. In his world, William could still turn into a version of Dragon, which he controlled completely. So William had part of Dragon's powers and that made Paul less of what out Dragon was.

3: It must have jumped some time ago. When Emperor Kurr is shown reading a comic book on the splash page of SAVAGE DRAGON #154 it's a copy of SAVAGE DRAGON #148 and it's clearly an Image comic book. As for what those books are like, we're led to believe there are a lot of similarities. The only stated difference seems to be that the Image Universe version of Savage Dragon can't seem to maintain a consistent creative while the one in our universe can't seem to shake the one it has!

Erik,

For the last six issues or so of Savage Dragon, I've tried to do my part as a faithful fin-addict and pick up two copies of your madcap mag. The excellent addition of those tasty, trade-dressed variants was certainly one motivating factor, but truth be told, I need that extra copy. The one I actually read gets thumbed thru so many damned times the poor thing ends up dogeared, finger smudged, enjoyed right and proper like the Good King Kirby intended. Hell, I just got 256 today and I've already read it like five times. And if more of these dopes out here keep getting hip to your funnybook and driving the back issue values through the roof, having extra copies lying around can't hurt, can it? Yeah, right. Like I'd ever part with 'em.

It's also why I haven't written to the column in a while and ran my yap about what a stellar sequential saga you've been laying on us lately. Nobody wants to feel like a kiss-ass suck-up, but it really is about time I made with some kudos. With Archives 10 dropping a mere seven days ahead of 256, it's been a great quarantine week of binging some sweet and sour Savage Dragon.

Sweet: the art! You're on fire! Bold experiments like the comic strip homages in 252 are an obvious reference point, but the more subtle

callbacks to previous poses/pages and layout techniques are consistent reminders that you're an artist constantly in flux, pushing forward, making the past fresh and vital again. I like to think this craft dedication is what's winning new fans and luring back lapsed readers alike: who wants to miss out on one of the most stunning and singular modern superhero stories being told today? Of course, it doesn't feel quite apropos labeling Savage Dragon a "superhero" book. It well transcends that, but it's also like the definitive exercise of the genre and its trappings at the same time. Too accessible to be "indie"; too iconoclastic to be "mainstream". In other words: a class by itself.

The sour? Maxine. Man, she makes me squirm sometimes. But I don't hate her. She reminds me a lot of Rapture in the early days, with her bluntness and sexuality. That aspect of Maxine's character was quite jarring initially, but I've kinda/sorta come around. It helps that you've got the meta device of the in-continuity comic series to address issues like this. The hospital sequence that opened 256 was pretty damned brilliant, a little self-deprecating, confessional even, but not overly on the nose. Maxine might make me cringe once in a while, but it's a pleasant cringe, and any reaction is better than no reaction at all. She really comes across as the perfect Mary Jane to Malcolm's Peter. Heh. I think I misspelled "comes".

So cool to see Mako back in the saddle! It sucks that you've been robbed by the Disgruntled Competition on that design front. And I don't think you get nearly enough credit for your innovative high concept or imaginative plotting, either. The cover of 256 (and all the covers of the past, I dunno... year, really) just jumps right off the shelf and into our hands, making us stare agape, dying to open the thing but too rapt to flip away. Is it gonna be original Mako? Dart-Mako? READ IT AND SEE. And naturally, the actual content did not disappoint. The only weird thing was I didn't get how the lady at Belco that Mako slugged didn't get splattered. It took me a second pass to realize that that was Angel, likely out of costume since she's gained weight, or was called in a state of emergency, or both. And the Mako exposition via Frank Jr. was a neat echo of his old man, Darling Sr., rest his soul. I really liked the storytelling on that page, with the fatter panel border emphasizing Angel's shock...I swear, it's like you know what you're doing or something!

I've taken to Paul Dragon immediately. I would have expected his power set to be closer to "our" Dragon's, but it seems he's not quite there. I guess age is partially to blame, but he seems to lack the regenerative ability of a Krylan Chosen One. Either he lacks it, or he's just never had the occasion to see it manifest itself. I get the impression Paul's reality was a much tamer, Comics Code Authority kind of world, whereas the "real" world the cast of Savage Dragon inhabits has very real and very dire consequences. If we DID live in a world where people could pitch cars across cities and topple tenements with a single punch, the ultraviolence that is Savage Dragon's stock in trade would be completely believable and realistic. These things would happen. Anyway, I'm hoping Paul gets fixed up, whether it's by a heretofore unknown recuperative ability or a successful blood transfusion from Malcolm (and hey...if Paul does wind up able to metabolize Malcolm blood, maybe he'll sprout a proper fin and be rid of that wonky crescent roll he's stuck with now).

The Dragon kids remain the heart of the book right now, though, their headliner father notwithstanding. Amy seems to have the most developed personality, and I'm not entirely sure one of the boys isn't going to grow up to be a monstrous villain after being raised in such a crazy and chaotic lifestyle. Real time will always be your ace in the hole as a writer, but it couldn't work without your discipline as a creator, either. And for that, I applaud you.

I'm enjoying the hell out of your comic book, sir. Thanks for keeping 'em coming. It's quite heartening to see those second and third printings come down the pike, too. I can't imagine how any acclimated comic fan could pass up a treat as delectable as Savage Dragon, but then, some people are just tasteless bores. They deprive themselves. I pity them, that sad and sorry lot.

Justin Crouse

PS I'm rather jealous of Nikos, Mike and Ferran. Not because they're immensely talented and do the gorgeous work they do, no. I'm jealous that they're ostensibly the first people to see each new installment of Savage Dragon. Them, and that bum Higginbotham. Bring Jannie back as editor! (j/k Gav...you're a peach!)

Truth be told--when Jannie was the editor--it was in name only. The only issues of Savage Dragon she's read to date was the initial Savage Dragon miniseries and that was after it had been published!

Erik,

Savage Dragon 256 reminded me that with every issue of this series, the one thing I should definitely expect is- to expect the unexpected. There is a new Mako introduced in this issue and I really was surprised that you went in this direction. I loved the original Mako so this new guy has some big shoes to fill. It was awesome to see you draw him again. I can't wait to see what you come up with regarding this vicious new version of an old favorite. By the way I do want to mention that I was truly shocked to see you

kill Dart (my favorite villain) last issue. I actually yelled "NOOOOOO!" when I opened up to those brutal 2 pages. I am curious to know what made you decide to take her out. Were you tired of writing her?

Anyways keep up the great work!

Ben Wade
Orlando, FL

I felt Dart had nowhere to go as a character. She had reached her full potential as the leader of the Vicious Circle and she had been in that position for quite some time. I thought there would be more story potential with a power vacuum and other characters vying for the top spot than with Dart in a leadership role going through the same paces over and over.

Hey Erik,

It's been well over a week since I purchased issue 256 on the day of its release. Finally making the time after a hectic week of monitoring pre-k Zoom meetings with my son to sit down and write. Once again picked up both covers, because I'm a sucker for that kind of thing when it comes to Dragon. Ferran's lettering is striking on the cover. I'll admit it's taken me awhile to get used to his lettering in the book, I think it mainly had to do with his unique word balloon shapes. I now am a believer. Just took some getting used to. Now I can't imagine anyone else doing it.

I got a big kick out of Malcolm's tiny hands the entire issue as they're growing back. The way you brought back Mako, without it really being Mako, was excellent. Not some cheap mainstream comics resurrection stunt. Loved the brutality with which he operates. Relieving Paul of his arm was a shock! Really curious what they'll both do now. Knowing you, there's no telling what you might do with them! Here's to just hoping they stick around awhile longer. I almost thought Paul was a goner this issue! Had me biting my nails over here.

As I sat in my car flipping through the book before leaving my LCS, I was hit with a wave of nostalgia. Something about the way you've drawn fights the last several issues. The jagged energetic panel borders, Ferran's letters, Nikos's colors, it all made me so glad I've been collecting Savage Dragon since the beginning. I don't know why, but it specifically made me reminisce reading issues 7 and 10 specifically riding around in the pickup truck with my late grandfather Justus. Thanks.

Oh yes, lest I forget, I also picked up Archives 10! Got to always pick those up as they're released. The thickness, black and white glory, newsprint and ink huffing addictiveness of it all. Ok, I'll go calm down now and read 256 a few more times before 257 releases.

Best,
Nick Justus
Cumberland, VA

As I type this I still haven't seen Archives 10 and it's driving me nuts! I'm always the last to see this stuff!

Hi Erik,

I enjoyed the (what felt like) many SD miniseries that arrived in the late '90s. I checked my shelves and God War was the most recent but that's been almost 16 years now, give or take.

Do you have any plans to revisit the concept and if not, could you share why? I'm never sure what the monthly SD demand is, but things seem to be going well with several issues hitting 2nd or even 3rd printings recently. I know there is only so much time in your day, but they were always a nice supplemental treat. I think more importantly you made them matter, like where we first got to meet Jennifer Dragon.

Always looking forward to the next issue.

David Taylor
Brimfield, Ohio

It just hasn't come up. Generally these things come together because I have an idea of something I want to accomplish. If I don't have that--I don't do the book. I don't put out product for the sake of putting out product. And I don't really do comics which just spin their wheels. It all needs to matter to some degree. At the same time--it helps to have an enthusiastic collaborator. There's also finding the time.

So there are a number of factors.

Hello Erik,

I just picked up Savage Dragon 256 today. It's dynamite! I love how you worked meta-fiction into the story. Malcolm reading issue 255 was a hoot. It adds a nice dimension to the overall structure of the book as a whole. It's great to see some form of Mako back in action. I have a feeling that he is going to have a bad ending when his day comes. I always enjoy holiday themes in the various comics and tv shows I like, so thanks for that. You even included a dorky Christmas sweater on Malcolm. It's too bad what happened to Paul. Poor guy lost his arm and he can't grow a new one it seems. Maybe something miraculous will occur and Paul will get his arm back. One last thing, the Vanguard back up story is awesome. I've always liked him! He is a great character.

I hope that keeps going for a while. Well, until next time, take care. Thanks for such a kick ass comic.

Sincerely,
Ricky D. Snyder
Greenwood, Indiana

You're certainly welcome.

Hi Erik!

A question for the letters page: Malcolm checking out issue #255 to catch up on recent events was a nice meta touch, although somewhat unrealistic. By then it was still a few days before he would fight the bad guy, so the people working on the book couldn't even have started doing the solicitation copy or the cover for #256 yet. That would have meant a HUGE gap between the issues. Given the normal production and publication schedule of the book, what is the most recent issue of Savage Dragon that Malcolm could actually have been reading at that point?

Regards,
Karl H.

Ignoring covers and the solicitation process, which essentially predict the future, it's not uncommon for me to be wrapping up work on the very next issue after the previous issue of a book arrives in stores.

As an example, SAVAGE DRAGON #255 was in stores and on sale on December 16th, 2020 and SAVAGE DRAGON #256 was sent to the printer on December 21st, 2020, so there were a few days where I was working on issue 256 that #255 was in stores. And I'm sent complimentary copies of the book about a week prior to it arriving in stores. Given that, the scenario isn't impossible if Malcolm was reading a comp copy of his book and the Savage Dragon creative team in his reality was working right up to the wire.

And December is the tightest month of the year because of the holiday season--it can be nearly a month if the stars align.

For example, I received my comp copies of SAVAGE DRAGON #256 on January 6th (it was in stores January 13th) but I didn't send #257 to the printer until February 3rd, so it was nearly a full month (28 days) that I had the printed comic book in my possession before the next issue was uploaded.

And keep in mind, when I work, I feed pages to the colorist and letterer as I go. They're following right on my tail. So, in the case of SAVAGE DRAGON #257, I sent the last two pages to Nikos early in the morning on February 3rd and I delivered the script for those pages to Ferran at that same time and by that afternoon it was proofread, approved and out the door.

So, as crazy as it may seem, that sequence in Savage Dragon #256 was actually possible.

Hi!

I'm a big fan of Savage Dragon, and this is my first time writing in to Fin Addicts. I have some questions:

1) I know that Paul Dragon is currently one of the characters in the Savage Dragon comic, but is there any chance of the original Savage Dragon coming back?

2) Is Highbrow Entertainment still a thing? The some of the early issues of Savage Dragon had the Highbrow Entertainment logo on the inside cover. I haven't seen the Highbrow Entertainment logo on more recent issues of Savage Dragon.

3) Does Savage Dragon still take place in the same universe as Spawn and other Image titles?

4) So far I have been reading Savage Dragon from the beginning, but do you think it's would be better to skip to some of the more recent issues? (I'm only on #22)

5) Do you think Jimbo Da Mighty Lobster from Savage Dragon #10 will ever show up again? I know you don't own him, but could you ask to do another issue with him?

Thanks!
Camden Harding

1: No. He's dead.

2: It's no longer a thing. It was kind of fun when I had a few books that I was putting out but I don't think it really serves any purpose at this point.

3: As far as I'm concerned it does. But it's not a seamless fit. The way I like to think of it is that all of the comic book characters take place in separate realities but each reality includes the other characters. When there's a crossover, similar events take place in both realities and we're seeing events from the perspective of whoever's book we're reading. So if, say, Spawn appeared in SAVAGE DRAGON--that's how the events took place according to the characters in SAVAGE DRAGON but as far as the SPAWN book was concerned--those events still happened to Spawn. This explains why there may be some slight discrepancies from book to book.

4: The SAVAGE DRAGON book is set in real time. Characters age and change and sometimes die. Jumping ahead can be fun and it can be confusing and it can spoil stories at times, as you're informed of events

after the fact, but it can also be fascinating to see the puzzle come together one piece at a time. Plenty of readers have started reading with any issue in the run. If it were me, I'd jump right in and fill in the gaps when and where you can.

5: Unfortunately, no. I've lost contact with Jimbo's creator, Jason Merritt, and there is some evidence that he may no longer be with us, which puts the character in creative limbo. I'm not sure if Jason Merritt has living relatives or who the rights may have gone to but the character is certainly not up for grabs. I really can't do anything with him without some kind of permission and I have nobody to ask.

Hello Erik,

As we are still holed up in our house due to the COVID pandemic, I'm always thankful for Golden Age Collectibles in Seattle shipping comics to me which recently included Savage Dragon #256 and Graphic Fantasy #1 and #2 facsimiles. A very good week if you ask me!

Enjoyable seeing Mako on a rampage again thanks to the shady Bellco Chemicals working in secret to raise the dead. Poor Paul Dragon from another universe gets mauled shortly after being introduced into the book. Sometimes, you have no mercy on your characters (haha) and although he thankfully is still sticking around, we will see if he ends up missing limbs. A special occasion experiencing Malcolm and this other Paul fighting Mako together but still a lingering question as to how this awkward relationship will play out over time.

On Graphic Fantasy #1 and #2, I know these stories have seen reprints in past SD issues but it is great seeing the initial vision and execution of the comic with your friends that you put together. I was all of 2 or 3 years old when these GF comics originally came out and now, you have found a way to go full circle in having this GF version of Paul Dragon show up (issue #250) in the overall continuity of Savage Dragon. Love it!

Some questions:

1) Any work that you have planned to do for Marvel or DC in the near future like you have done recently?

2) I have heard that sales of Savage Dragon are up AND back issues prices have been going up (I should know as I have been hunting around for some issues here and there). With the increase in revenue coming from more sales...what are the chances of seeing another Freak Force book (or at least a mini series)?

3) As you approach the historic milestone of issue #300, there will be a lot more press coming your way (I hope anyway) so what are the chances of Savage Dragon teaming up with Wolverine, Spider-Man, Batman or the Fantastic Four?

4) Where do you find inspiration for these fun stories? Do you walk around the city and think of them? Walk in a park? Just sit in your office? Do you have a space or routine that helps you imagine Savage Dragon adventures?

And, for the record, I thought issue #252 was amazing! Love the tribute and creativity but also just the way you told SD stories in that issue. I love the experimentation that you do with the overall SD book and especially when it clearly illustrates your own love for the medium of comics by showcasing artistic styles from the past.

Hats off!

Dave Lester
Seattle, WA

1: No. Nothing. SAVAGE DRAGON has kind of spoiled me. I get to do exactly what I want to with the people I most like to work with and I don't have to run things by anybody. I can't get that anywhere else and it's hard to go back to that.

2: Honestly, it's tough. With SAVAGE DRAGON I am willing to put in the sweat equity with a faint hope of a reward but it's hard to talk a creative team into rolling the dice on that. Generally, this kind of thing means shelling out a wad of cash and hoping to recoup that on the backend but based on how stores historically order spinoff books, that's not a wise gamble.

3: I don't expect that to be the case.

4: There's not much to it. I just make things up as I go. I have a room in my home which acts as an office/studio and I write and draw the book one page at a time. I used to walk around somewhat to get my brain going but with the pandemic there's not a lot of that going on. As always, there's no single source for inspiration. It comes from everywhere and everything I encounter.

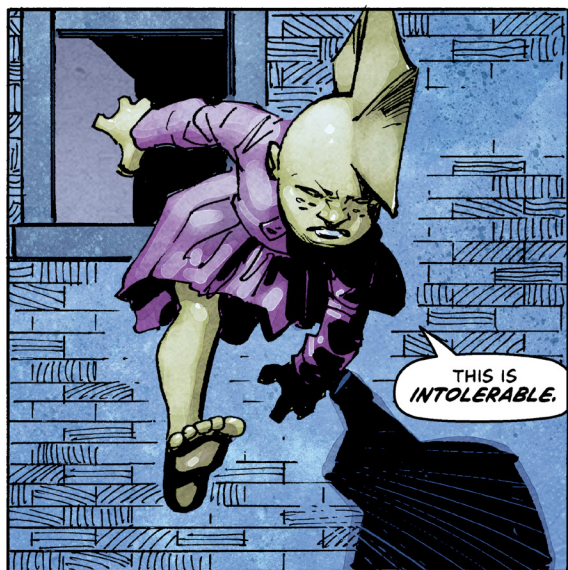
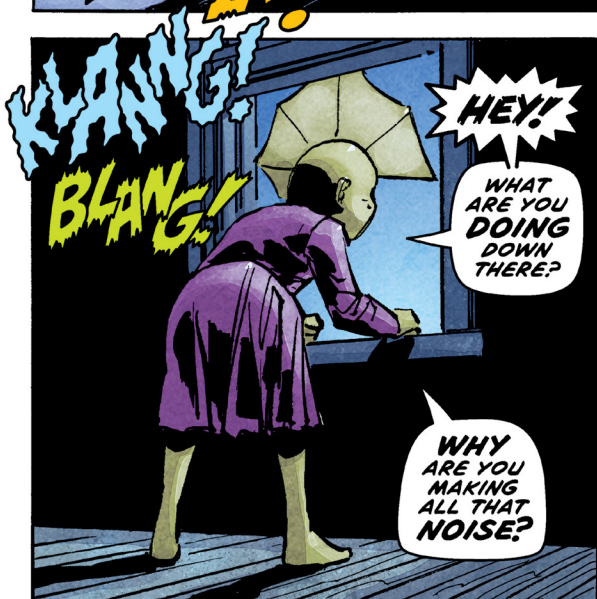
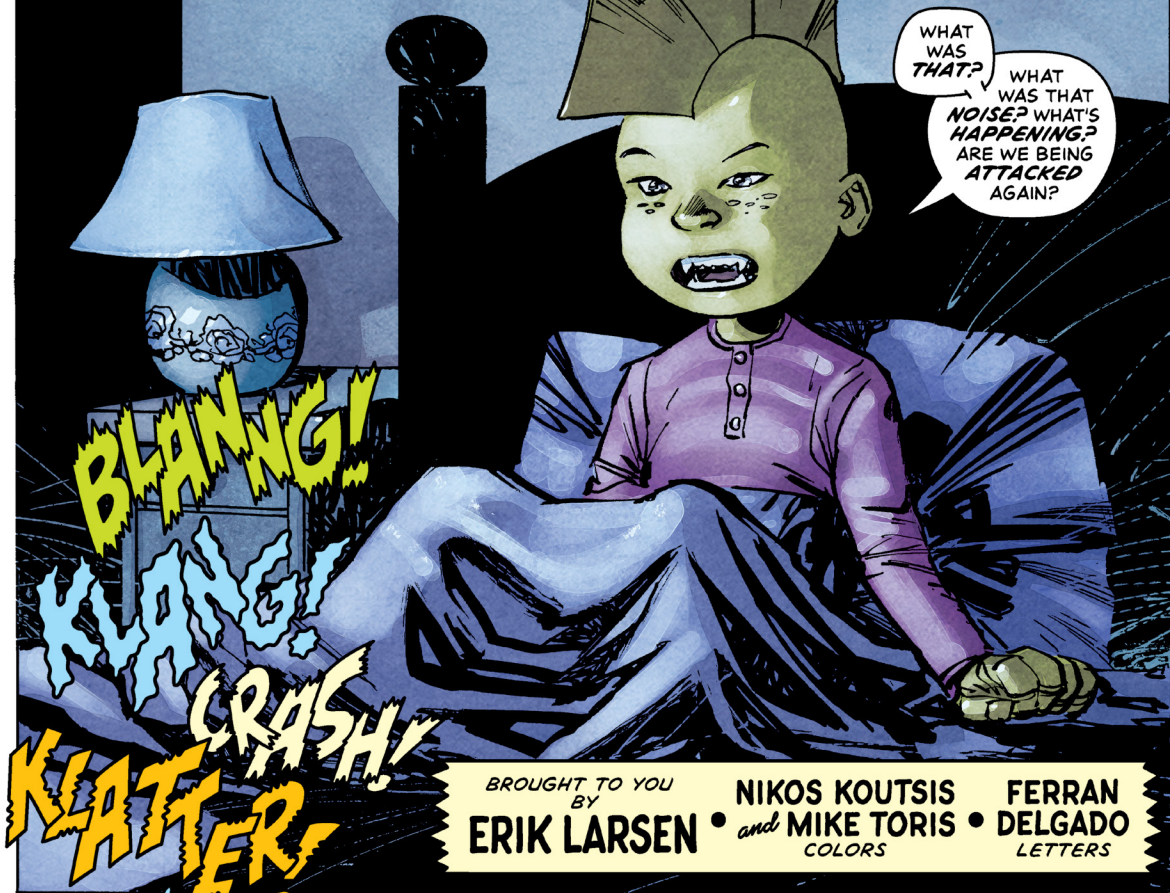
-Erik Larsen

NEXT: A NEW Force to be Reckoned With.

But that's not all! I thought you'd get a kick out of reading a short story that I cobbled together which depicts how Amy met Walter! So, don't stop reading now--there's plenty of additional funnybook fun to be had in the pages that follow--!

AMY
DRAGON

MIDNIGHT SNACK!





WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE?

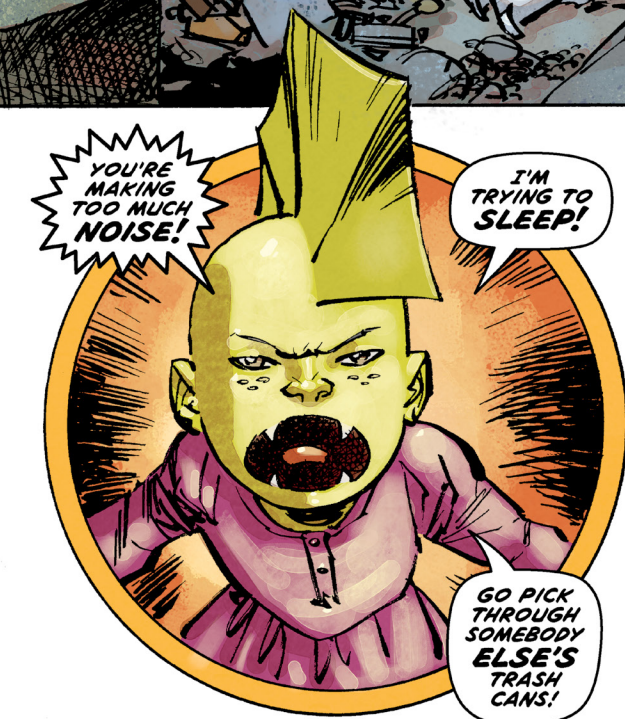
I'M **WALTER**.

AND I'M NOT "DOWN HERE"--

THIS IS THE **GROUND LEVEL**.

AND, I'M TRYING TO FIND SOMETHING TO EAT.

NOT EVERYBODY HAS **PARENTS** TO COOK THEM DELICIOUS **MEALS** THREE TIMES A DAY. SOME OF US NEED TO **FORAGE!**



YOU'RE MAKING TOO MUCH **NOISE!**

I'M TRYING TO **SLEEP!**

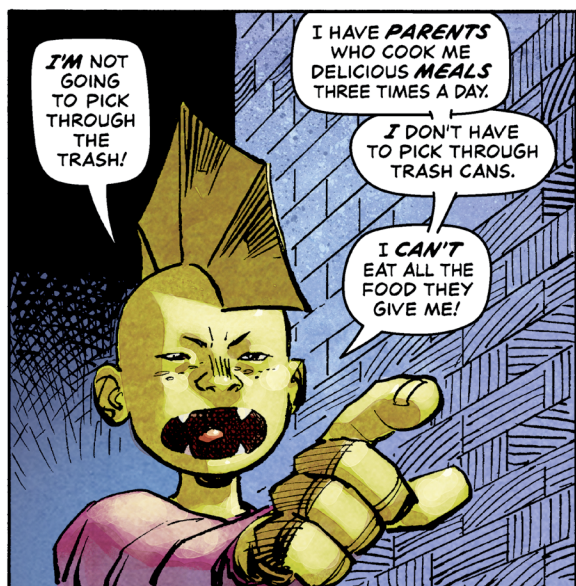
GO PICK THROUGH SOMEBODY **ELSE'S TRASH CANS!**



HEY, HEY! NO NEED TO GET **RILED UP!**

I GET IT.

THESE ARE **YOURS**. YOU WANT **FIRST DIBS!**



I'M NOT GOING TO PICK THROUGH THE TRASH!

I HAVE *PARENTS* WHO COOK ME DELICIOUS *MEALS* THREE TIMES A DAY.

I DON'T HAVE TO PICK THROUGH TRASH CANS.

I CAN'T EAT ALL THE FOOD THEY GIVE ME!



WELL, THAT'S THE *POINT*, ISN'T IT? YOU HAVE *TOO MUCH* FOOD AND I DON'T HAVE *ENOUGH* FOOD!

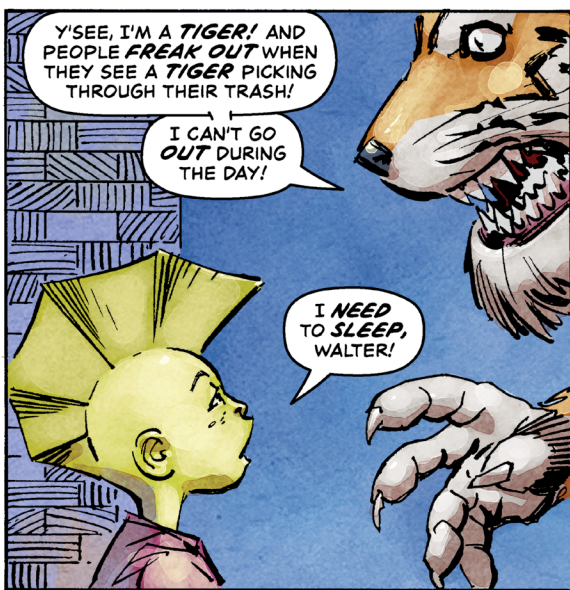
THAT'S WHY I'M PICKING THROUGH *YOUR* TRASH!



WHY CAN'T YOU PICK THROUGH THE TRASH DURING THE *DAY* WHEN PEOPLE AREN'T TRYING TO *SLEEP*?

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO DO IT AT *NIGHT*?

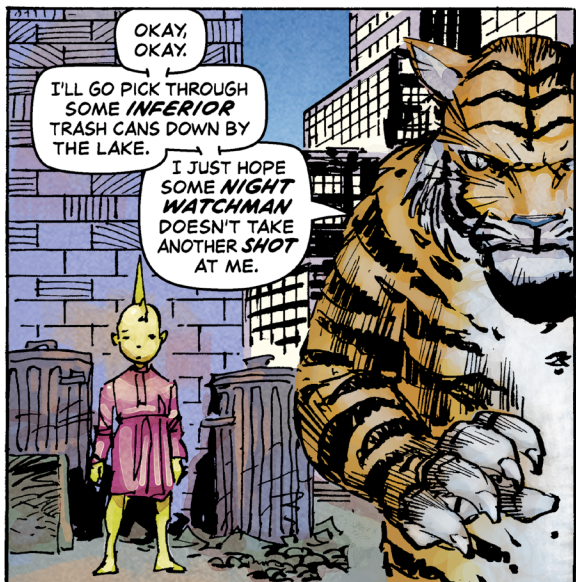
THAT SOUNDS *GREAT* BUT THERE'S ONE SMALL *PROBLEM...*



Y'SEE, I'M A *TIGER!* AND PEOPLE *FREAK OUT* WHEN THEY SEE A *TIGER* PICKING THROUGH THEIR TRASH!

I CAN'T GO *OUT* DURING THE *DAY*!

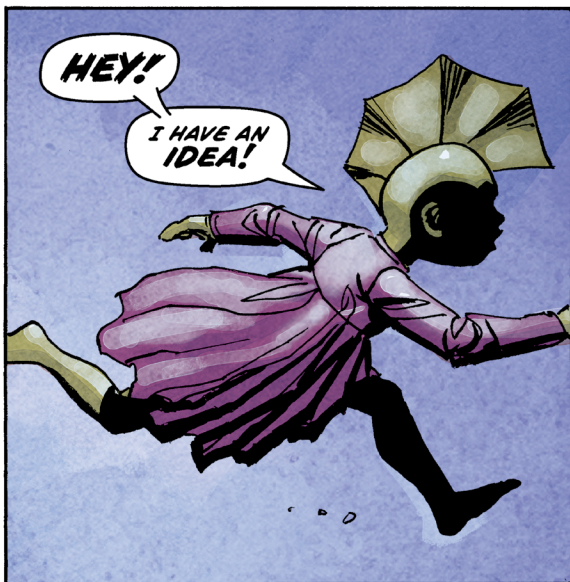
I *NEED* TO *SLEEP*, WALTER!



OKAY, OKAY.

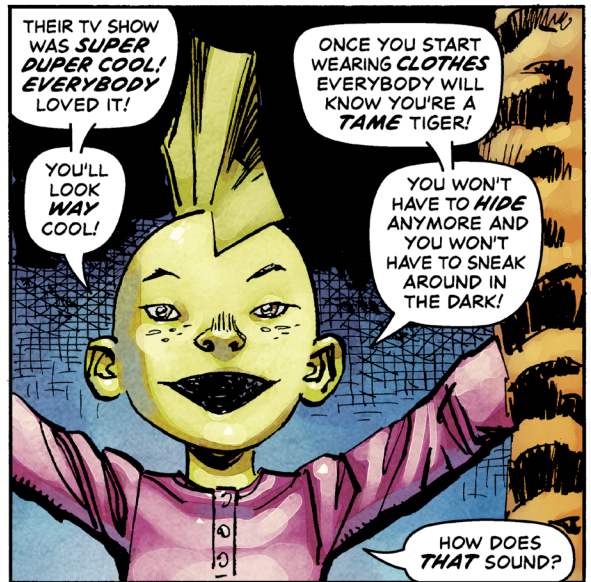
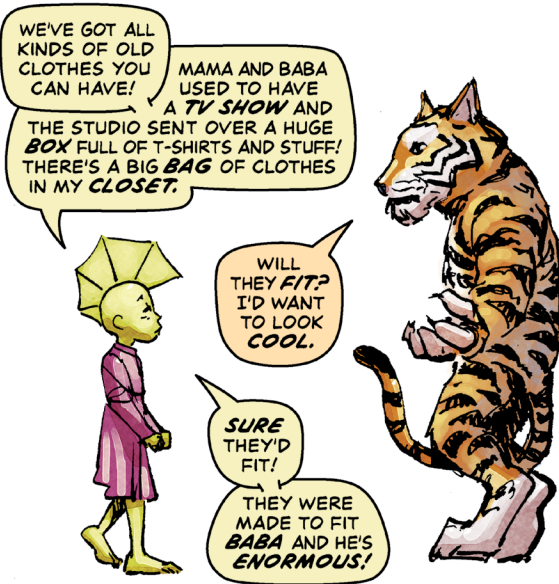
I'LL GO PICK THROUGH SOME *INFERIOR* TRASH CANS DOWN BY THE LAKE.

I JUST HOPE SOME *NIGHT WATCHMAN* DOESN'T TAKE ANOTHER *SHOT* AT ME.



HEY!

I HAVE AN *IDEA!*



The FUNNIES

EAT MORE BIKES

GODZILLA, BARBER

by Nathan Bulmer



OH, JUST A LITTLE OFF THE TOP PLEASE.



YEAH, WORK'S BEEN CRAZY FOR ME TOO



KEVIN DAYS A WEEK

by Kevin Burkhalter

MOONBEARD by James Squires



WHERE'S CRICKET?

A FEW WEEKS AGO, WE BOUGHT MAX A PUPPY FOR HIS BIRTHDAY.

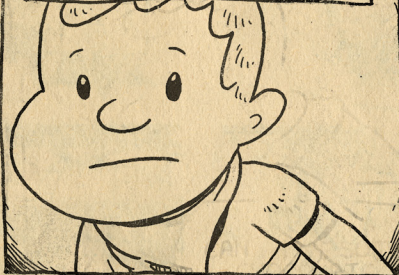
A FEW DAYS AGO, SHE HAD A SEIZURE IN THE NIGHT AND DIED THE NEXT MORNING.



MAX WAS WITH HIS GRANDPARENTS WHEN CRICKET DIED.



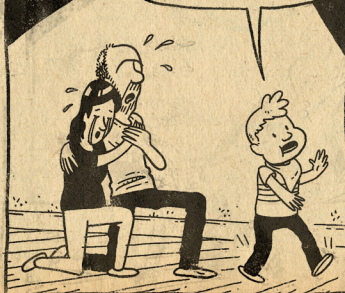
WE'VE BEEN DREADING THIS QUESTION, BUT ULTIMATELY DECIDED TO GO WITH VAGUE HONESTY.



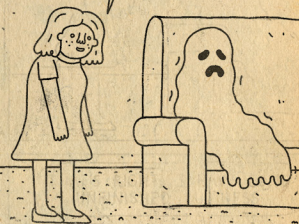
W-WELL, MAXIE, CRICKET GOT S-SICK AND HAD TO GO AWAY.



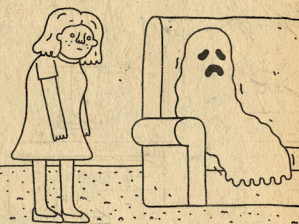
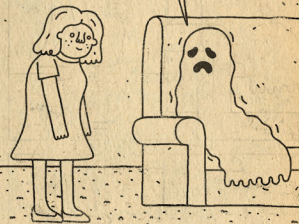
OKAY, CAN I HAVE SOME CHOCOLATE MILK?



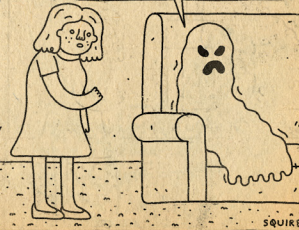
YOU'RE BACK! FROM THE DEAD



THAT'S RIGHT, I HAVE SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS



SO... WHAT D—
I'LL DO IT, OKAY? CHRIST



SQUIRES



JEREMY HOLT GEORGE SCHALL ADAM WOLLET

MADE IN KOREA™



RATED **M** / MATURE

MAY
2021

REMOVE BOX. POWER ON. RAISE YOUR CHILD.

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