

GIRL GENIUS

ELECTRONIC EDITION



GIRL GENIUS VOLUME SEVENTEEN
THE SECOND JOURNEY OF AGATHA HETERODYNE
BOOK FOUR
KINGS AND WIZARDS



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Melissa Nuno (order #26810297)

GIRL GENIUS

Adventure, Romance, MAD SCIENCE!
a Gaslamp Fantasy
by KAJA & PHIL FOGGIO



VOLUME 17 SEVENTEEN
the SECOND JOURNEY of AGATHA HETERODYNE
BOOK FOUR

KINGS AND WIZARDS

GIRL GENIUS



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the SECOND JOURNEY OF AGATHA HETERODYNE
BOOK FOUR
THE SEVENTEENTH VOLUME IN THE GIRL GENIUS SERIES

Story by Kaja & Phil Foglio
Drawings by Phil Foglio
Colors by Cheyenne Wright

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AGATHA HETERODYNE



WASP EATERS

Fierce little hunters of slaver wasps. As far as anyone knows, Agatha's is the last one.

LITTLE CLANKS

Agatha builds helpful machines to assist her when she's working.

Agatha is the latest in a powerful line of mad scientists (or "Sparks" to be polite.) She has recently established herself as the Lady Heterodyne: hereditary ruler of the fortress-town of Mechanicsburg—which is currently trapped in a bubble of stopped time. Now Agatha and her friends are traveling Europa in search of a way to reverse the effect.

In the vast catacombs beneath Paris, Agatha and her friends found Prende's Lantern—a time-warping artifact created by the legendary Spark van Rijn. Unfortunately, mysterious thieves got to it first. When the lantern was taken, a terrible monster was released. The original Storm King, once friend to the Master of Paris and van Rijn himself, is now a maddened undead creature bent on revenge—and he's heading straight for the surface!

CASTLE HETERODYNE

The mechanical fortress that looms in the center of Mechanicsburg is intelligent, with a rather ghoulish sense of humor. Agatha found a fragment of it in Paris, and transferred it to the body of one of her little clanks.



THE BEAST OF THE RAILS

A monstrous, self-aware train engine created by Agatha's ancestors for the Corbettite Railway. It was running amok until Agatha and her friends defeated it. She transferred its mechanical mind into a little clank body so that she could keep it with her.



TARVEK STURMVORAU

Tarvek is the heir to the throne of the Storm King. He is a strong Spark, who worked closely with Agatha and Gil during the repairs on Castle Heterodyne. He spent the last two and a half years trapped inside Mechanicsburg—until Gil pulled him out. He was immediately kidnapped.

GILGAMESH WULFENBAEH

Gil is currently the master of the Wulfenbach Empire. He is currently trying to catch up with Tarvek's kidnappers.



ZEETHA OF SKIFANDER

The Lost Princess of the Lost City of Skifander. Zeetha is Agatha's best friend, and is training her in self-defense.



VIOLETTA MONDAREV

A "smoke knight" who never much liked her job. Now that she's guarding Agatha, she's having a lot more fun.



THE JÄGERMONSTERS

The Jägers are a band of fearsome monster soldiers who have served the Heterodyne family for generations. A few of them have joined Agatha on her adventures.



JENKA & FÜST

Jenka is a Jägermonster captain who often works with Oggie, Dimo and Maxim. Füst is her bear.



DIMO

One of the smarter Jägers. Dimo came to Paris with Agatha, but usually, he hangs around with Oggie and Maxim.

OENIAN

Oggie and Maxim came to Paris with Jenka, on a diplomatic mission.



MAXIM

Maxim, Oggie and Dimo were the first Jägers to meet Agatha and recognize her as part of the Heterodyne family.



THE MASTER OF PARIS

Master Simon Voltaire is the powerful Spark who rules Paris.

COLETTE VOLTAIRE

One of the many children of the Master of Paris, and an old friend of both Gil and Tarvek.



THE STORM KING

Long ago, the Storm King beat back the forces of the evil Heterodynes—but became a monster in the process. Although most thought him dead, the Spark van Rijn had only hidden him away, freezing him in time with the power of Prende's Lantern. Now that the lantern has been stolen, the King is free—and he is *furious*.



MARTELLUS VON BLITZENGAARD

With his cousin Tarvek out of the picture, Martellus has declared himself the new Storm King. He plans to use a political marriage to the Lady Heterodyne to help strengthen his claim.



KERKSEPHNIA VON BLITZENGAARD

Seffie is involved in her family's intrigues, but to what extent? She loves her brother, Martellus, but isn't always very nice to him.

GRANDMAMA

The Dowager Princess of Sturmhalten has achieved a great age, and a great many descendants. She is now head of what is left of the *Knights of Jove*, the secret order that plots to restore the throne of the Storm King.



ZOLA MALFEAZIUM

Zola was groomed by the Loyal Order of the Knights of Jove to play the part of the lost Heterodyne heir—a plan that was thrown into chaos when Agatha showed up. She has inside knowledge of the Other, and is an accomplished actress. Zola was last seen in Mechanicsburg, where she was badly wounded after unsuccessfully trying to take over Castle Heterodyne.

THE “OTHER”

The terrible, mysterious Spark who—a generation ago—terrorized Europa with devastating attacks. The Other made extensive use of mind control—adding to an already fearsome reputation. Although most people still don’t know it, the Other was actually Lucrezia Heterodyne (née Mongfish)—Agatha’s mother.

Lucrezia recently tried to replace Agatha’s mind with her own, but failed. Lucrezia’s physical whereabouts are currently unknown. An echo of her personality is still lodged in Agatha’s head—kept in check by a clever mechanism built into a locket. Since the events in Castle Heterodyne, Zola is in a similar situation. The difference is that, instead of being replaced, Zola captured the Lucrezia personality and is keeping it under tight control—giving her extra knowledge of the Other’s secrets.



THE GEISTERDAMEN

The fanatically loyal servants of the “Other.” They help spread her mind-control slaver wasps across Europa.

SMOKE KNIGHTS

Violetta, Malek, Varpa, and Jaron are only a few of the smoke knights who serve (and in several cases *are*) the descendants of the Storm King.



THE KNIGHTS OF THE HUNT

Martellus’ special, hand-picked retinue of werewolf knights.

PROF. BEAUSOLEIL

Drusus Beausoleil is a strange creature, a Spark with many artificial bodies that he can manipulate at will.



HIGGS AND VOLE

Higgs is a Wulfenbach airman, and Zeetha’s boyfriend. He is currently keeping an eye on Vole, a rebel Jägermonster.

ALDIN, AND THE GREAT LIBRARY

Aldin is a librarian in the huge autonomous library beneath Paris. He accompanied Agatha on a *very* exciting research trip.



PROFESSORS FROM TPU

Some of Agatha’s old instructors. They fell in with Agatha and her friends while collecting one of their colleagues who had gone missing beneath Paris.

IN PARIS: THE CURRENT RESIDENCE OF THE DOWAGER PRINCESS OF STURMHALTEN...

MARTELLUS—
THE PARTY IS
ABOUT TO
BEGIN!

YOU ARE THE
GUEST OF
HONOR!

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?!

A PARTY?!
NONSENSE!

LOOK! THE SWORD
OF THE STORM KING IS
ACTUALLY *REACTING*
TO SOMETHING!

I'VE GOT
TO FIND OUT
WHY!

JUST TELL
GRANDMA I CAN'T
POSSIBLY GO TO A
PARTY NOW!

LISTEN TO ME,
MY DARLING
BROTHER—

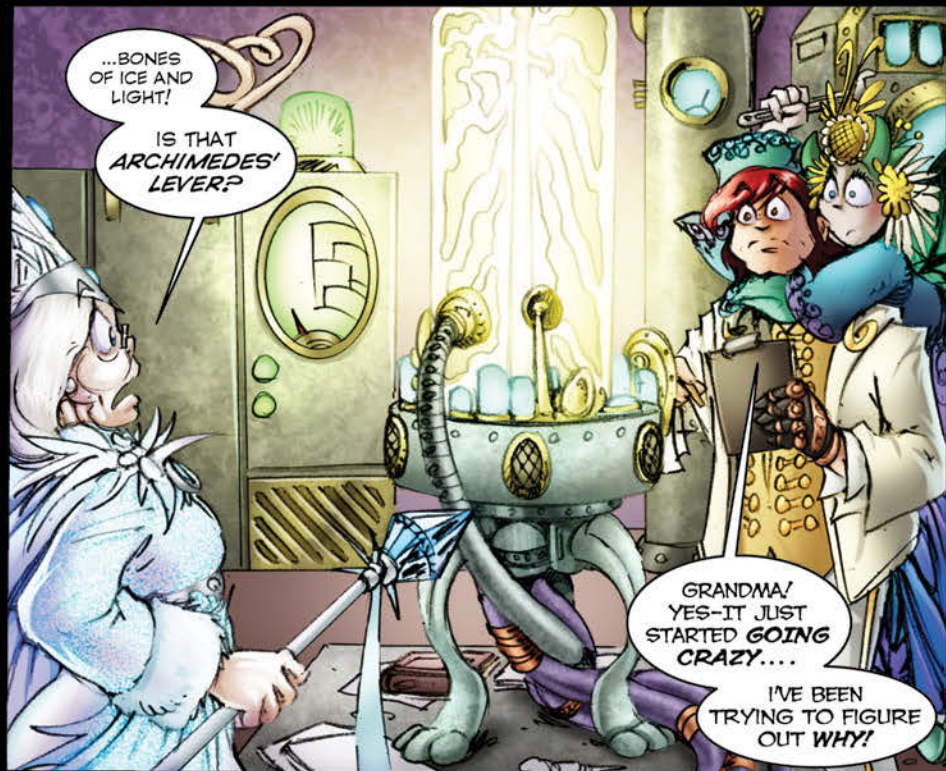
IF YOU DO NOT
GET DRESSED
RIGHT NOW—

I WILL
STRANGLE
YOU MYSELF TO
SPARE GRANDMA'S
AGED FINGERS!

SEFFIE—I AM
DOING *SCIENCE*
HERE!

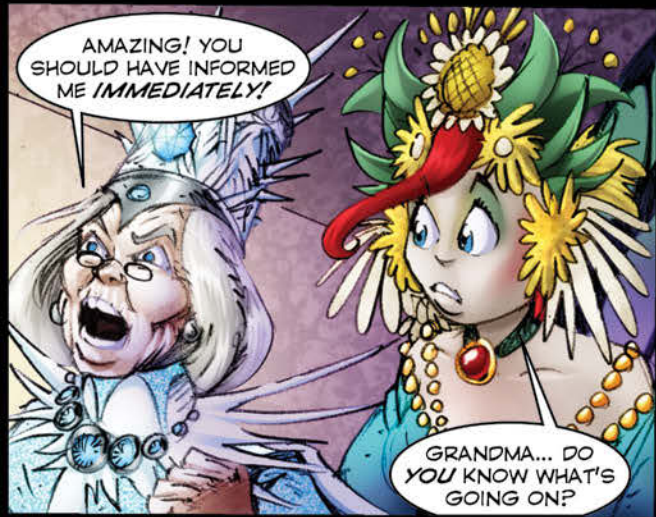


SEFFIE!
WHAT IS
KEEPING YOU
TWO?



...BONES
OF ICE AND
LIGHT!
IS THAT
ARCHIMEDES'
LEVER?

GRANDMA!
YES-IT JUST
STARTED GOING
CRAZY....
I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO FIGURE
OUT WHY!



AMAZING! YOU
SHOULD HAVE INFORMED
ME IMMEDIATELY!

GRANDMA... DO
YOU KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON?



I
CERTAINLY
DO!
THE
STORM
KING IS
COMING!



WHAT? DO YOU
MEAN COUSIN
TARVEK?
BECAUSE-

NO...

I MEAN OLD
ANDRONICUS
HIMSELF.

YESSS--THIS
WILL BE
PERFECT!



PERFECT?
HOW COULD-

AH AH AH! NOT
ANOTHER WORD
OUT OF YOU,
MARTELLUS!

IF YOU DO AS
I SAY, THIS
COULD BE YOUR
BIG CHANCE!

NOW, GO
GET
YOURSELF
DRESSED,
DEAR-

AND SEND IN
CAPTAIN
WRENKULA.

MEANWHILE,
ACROSS
TOWN—

LADY
HETERODYNE—
YOUR MESSAGES
HAVE BEEN SENT...

BUT...I'M SORRY
TO SAY...I'VE SPOKEN
TO THE CENTRAL
DISPATCHER—

AND IT WILL
TAKE QUITE SOME
TIME TO GET YOU A
CAB OUT HERE
TONIGHT.

APPARENTLY,
WHATEVER ISN'T
ENGAGED FOR THE
PARTY IS *STUCK IN
TRAFFIC*.

OH, THAT'S NOT
GOOD. I GUESS
WE'D BETTER
START—

DUN VORRY,
HY'LL GET US
SOMETHING FAST!

DIMO, ARE
YOU PLANNING
TO *STEAL
SOMETHING?*

UH...
VELL...

JUST SEE IF
YOU CAN FIND
SOMETHING WITH
CLOSED SIDES,
PLEASE.

HO! HYU
BETCHA!

PROFFESSOR
POLYCAPPELLUS
THE FINEST HATS
IN THE
HETERODYNE
STYLE!

NOW WITH
MORE
GEARS

18 RING
also Day



WHAT KIND OF FIELD WORK IS THIS FOR A PROFESSOR? FETCHING THIS LOU—

EH, YOU VOLUNTEERED.

OF COURSE I DID!

THE ALTERNATIVE WAS MUCKING OUT THE KITCHENS IN THE OLD ALCHEMY BUILDINGS!



YOUR FAULT, KIDDO. YOU'VE BEEN FACULTY FOR SIX MONTHS—

AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T PICKED A RESEARCH SUBJECT.

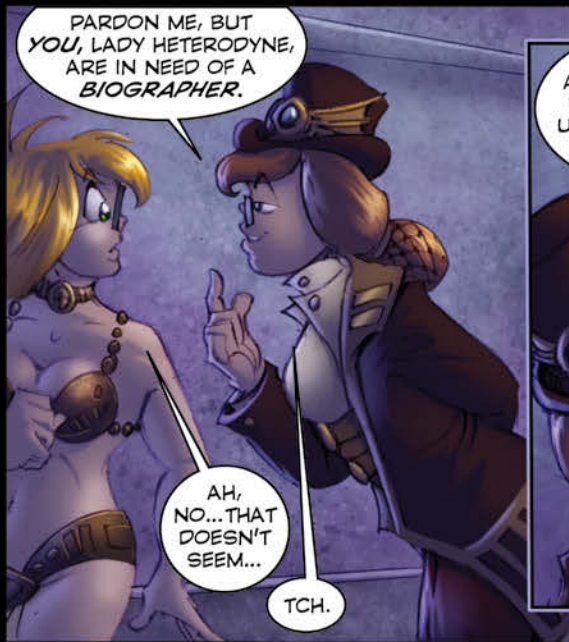
ALL THE GOOD ONES ARE TAKEN!

BOSH!



THEY'RE ALL AROUND YOU— IF YOU BOTHER TO SEE THEM!

HMMM...



PARDON ME, BUT YOU, LADY HETERODYNE, ARE IN NEED OF A BIOGRAPHER.

AH, NO... THAT DOESN'T SEEM...

TCH.



LOOK AT YOU: A NICE, SENSIBLE, WELL-BROUGHT-UP YOUNG LADY, IF I'M ANY JUDGE—

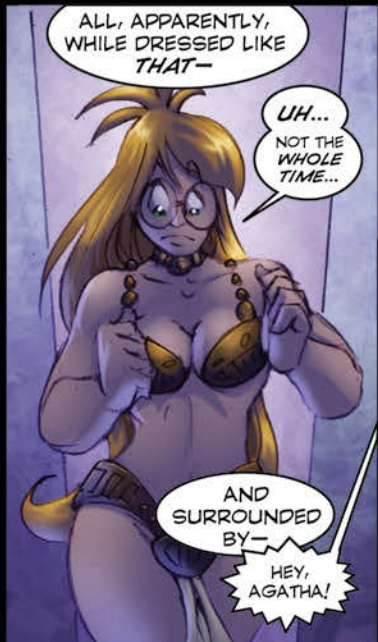


WHO HAS, WITH VERY LITTLE TROUBLE, REVIVED THE THREAT OF THE HETERODYNES,

THROWN THE EMPIRE INTO CHAOS,

SECURED THE RATHER OBSSIVE ATTENTION OF THE YOUNG RULER OF THE WULFENBACH EMPIRE, AS WELL AS BOTH HEIRS TO THE THRONE OF THE STORM KING—

TURNED THE HOUSE OF STURMVOROUS AGAINST ITSELF— AND RELEASED, BY YOUR OWN REPORT, SOME MONSTROUS, VENGEFUL REMNANT OF THE ORIGINAL STORM KING.



ALL, APPARENTLY, WHILE DRESSED LIKE THAT—

UH... NOT THE WHOLE TIME...

AND SURROUNDED BY—

HEY, AGATHA!



YOU THINK THIS PARTY WILL HAVE THOSE LITTLE ASPARAGUS SPEARS WRAPPED IN BACON?

HO! VAIT TILL HYU SEE WHAT HY HAFF STOLEN!

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO KILL THIS PERSON FOR YOU, MISTRESS?

WELL, AND SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE LIKE THESE.



...I CAN EXPLAIN...

—AND I AM SO ANXIOUS TO LISTEN!



HOO HOO HOO!

AN EXCELLENT CHOICE, MY DEAR PROFESSORSSA— BUT DON'T FORGET YOUR **CURRENT ASSIGNMENT!**

tch. WHO COULD?



WHERE DO YOU GO AFTER PARIS?

I DUNNO! WHEREVER THAT SMOKE KNIGHT TOOK PRENDE'S LANTERN, I GUESS.

PRENDE'S— THE FABULOUS DEVICE FROM THE FAIRY TALE?

THAT'S THE ONE!



COME ON, KIDDO! LESS SHIRKING!

...FASCINATING. I'LL BE IN TOUCH AS SOON AS I CAN, M'LADY.

I EXPECT YOU'LL BE EASY ENOUGH TO FIND, WHEN THE TIME COMES!

YES...I'M AFRAID THAT'S PROBABLY TRUE...



WOOHOOO! HY IZ DRIVINK!

SO...THIS PARTY... I SUPPOSE MARTELLUS WILL BE THERE...



WELL, OF COURSE.

IT'S IN HIS HONOR AFTER ALL...

ANYWAY, IN THIS CASE, HIM BEING THERE IS GOOD.

OH?



SURE—MARTELLUS IS A JERK, BUT HE'S GOT AN ARMY, AND HE DOESN'T FIGHT FAIR.

THAT GUY IN THE CRYPTS...HE'S MORE OF A MONSTER THAN ANYTHING ELSE AT THIS POINT.



WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO NOW THAT HE'S FREE— AND MARTELLUS HAS GOT MORE REASON THAN ANYBODY TO WANT TO STOP HIM.



HEY, WE'VE STOPPED...

WE CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THERE *ALREADY*.



HOY, MISTRESS—VE HAZ HIT A ROAD BLOCK.

THESE ARE GUESTS OF THE VON BLITZENGAARD FAMILY! LET US THROUGH!

I DON'T CARE *WHO* YOU ARE—



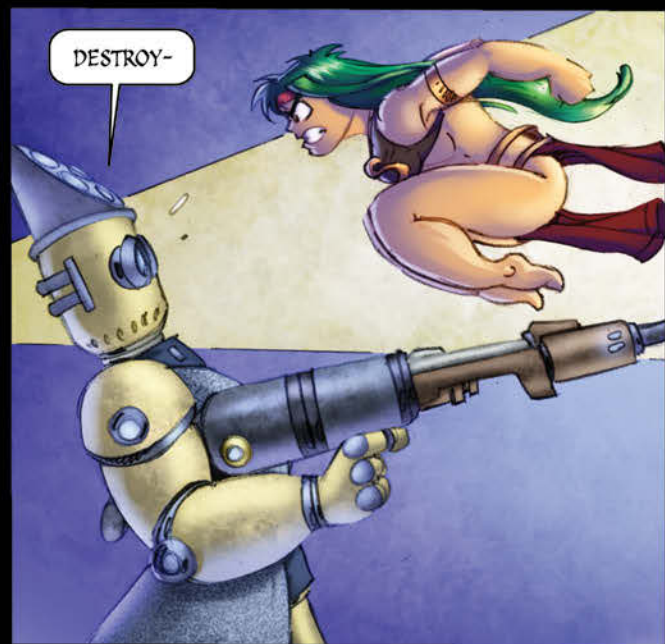
YOUR ENTIRE VEHICLE MUST BE SEARCHED!

ALSO, YOU ARE TO DECLARE ANY EXPLOSIVES, ABOMINATIONS OF SCIENCE, OR *BIOENGINEERED ANIMALS*.



"ABOMINATIONS..." WELL, *THAT'S* VAGUE...

THE WEASEL! THEY'RE LOOKING FOR AGATHA'S WASP EATER!





HOKAY! IZ TIME FOR DE HY FASHION, JÄGER-STYLE!

YEAH! CLOTHES! FINALLY!

ZO-TEK A GOOT LOOK AT HYU DEFEATED FOE. VOT'S HE GOT?



YEZ! VELL SCHPOTTED! HYU GOTS TO GO FOR DE IMPAWTENT SCHTUFF FIRST!

DIS HERE IZ A VERRA FINE STARTER HAT!

PANTS.



NNNNN...

DUN BE RIDICULOUS.

HYU GOTS VAY TOO MOCH HETERODYNE HAM FOR DOZE PANTS.



TRUST ME. AFTER ALL DIS TIME, HY GOTS DE EYE OV A TAILOR.

HOW ABOUT THE BOOTS?

HM. DOSE MIGHT VORK... YAH...

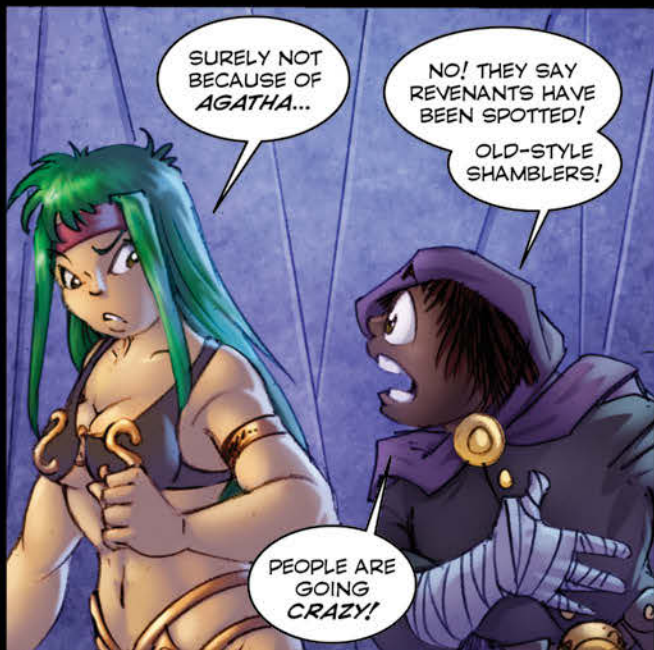


I GOT HIS WEAPONS.

HEY! THIS IS BAD!

I GOT HIS BADGE AND CODE WHEEL.

THERE ARE BARRICADES GOING UP EVERYWHERE!



SURELY NOT BECAUSE OF AGATHA...

NO! THEY SAY REVENANTS HAVE BEEN SPOTTED! OLD-STYLE SHAMBLERS!

PEOPLE ARE GOING CRAZY!



POOR MARTELLUS. SO MUCH FOR HIS COMING-OUT PARTY.

HUH. YOU REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE ARISTOCRACY THINKS, DO YOU?



THIS IS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE HIS REPUTATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF EUROPA.

WE COULDN'T HAVE PLANNED IT BETTER.

UM...IT WASN'T PLANNED... WAS IT?

HUH. NOT BY OUR PEOPLE. NOT AS FAR AS I KNOW, ANYWAY.



HER HIGHNESS IS DEAD SET AGAINST ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE "OTHER—" ESPECIALLY LUCREZIA'S STYLE OF MIND CONTROL—

AND MY LIEGE STILL NEEDS HIS GRANDMOTHER'S GOOD OPINION, SO...

HMM...OKAY, BUT...



LARANA SAID THEY WERE BRINGING THE WASP ENGINES UP THROUGH THE OPERA HOUSE.

DO YOU THINK THE LIBRARIANS MISSED SOMETHING WHEN THEY WENT TO CLEAN IT OUT?



WELL, WE CAN CHECK—IT IS ON OUR WAY—BUT WE'RE ABOUT TO HAVE MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS.

THESE CLANKS ARE ALL CONNECTED. THE OTHERS WILL KNOW WHEN ONE'S BEEN ATTACKED.

SEE? HERE'S THE TRANSMITTER.



SO...MORE FIGHTING, THEN. GOOD.

THE REST OF YOU TAKE OUT THE CLANKS.

DIMO, ZEETHA AND I WILL TAKE THE TROOPS.



UH, MORE FIGHTINK IZ GOOT?

YES. IT SEEMS THAT, IN ADDITION TO ALL MY UNIVERSITY TRAINING, SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND CREATIVE ENGINEERING ABILITY—

I MUST ACQUIRE A FEW MORE...UTILITARIAN SKILLS.

UTILUH... VOT?



DIMO.

PLEASE SHOW ME HOW A JÄGER GETS PANTS THAT FIT.



HOKAY! VOTCH CAREFULLY!

VE DOES IT LIKE DIS!

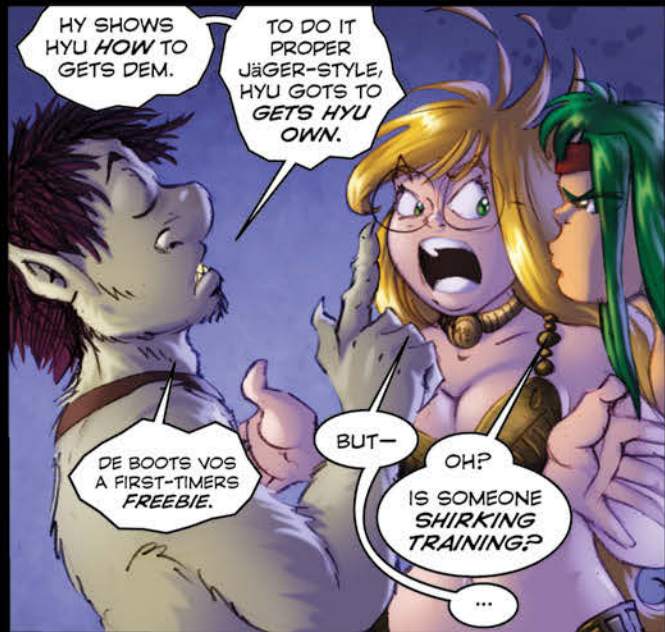


—UND DOT'S HOW HYU DOES IT. BEZICALLY, HYU LOOKS FOR SUMVUN ABOUT HYU SIZE, DOT HYU TINK HYU KEN TAKE—

UND HYU FLATTEN DEM!
OV CAWZE, DE FIRST TING HYU NEEDS IS A GOOT HAT...

DIMO, I CAN'T WEAR THESE...

OV CAWZE NOT!



HY SHOWS HYU HOW TO GETS DEM.

TO DO IT PROPER JÄGER-STYLE, HYU GOTTS TO GETS HYU OWN.

DE BOOTS VOS A FIRST-TIMERS FREEBIE.

BUT—

OH?
IS SOMEONE SHIRKING TRAINING?

...



QUIET, PEOPLE—
WE'RE GETTING CLOSE.

I'M TELLING YOU, SARGE, THIS WHOLE THING IS WEIRD.

'CURSE IT'S WEIRD! IT'S REVENANTS!
YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER—

HEY—I'VE READ ABOUT IT.

"READ ABOUT IT!"



THAT ONE!
HIS PANTS ARE MINE!

NICE BOOTS!

OOOH!
OFFICER'S HAT!



SO YEAH...
READING ABOUT IT JUST AIN'T THE SAME.

...YES, SARGE.



...NICE SHIRT.

GOOD.

HEY, C'MON. YOU'LL FIND PANTS THAT FIT... EVENTUALLY...

IZ TRUE! DUN VORRY!

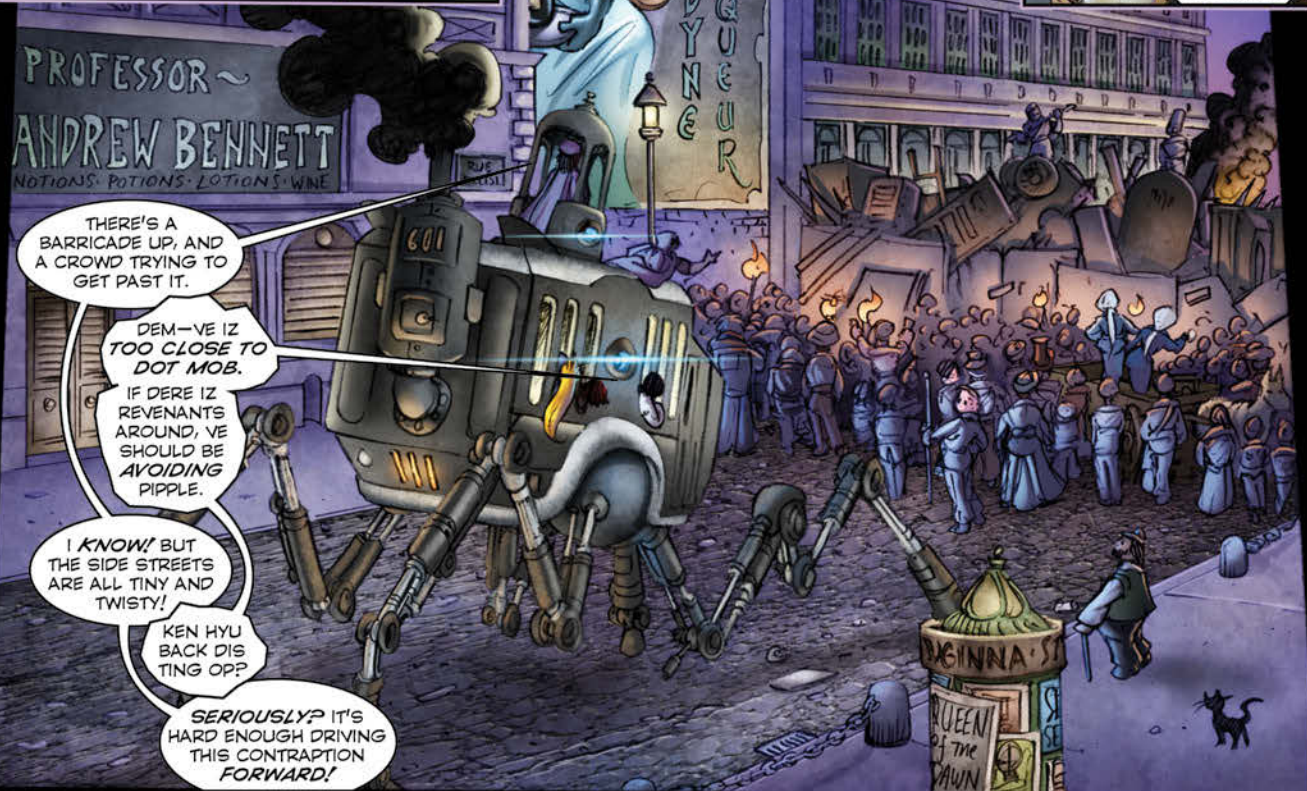
DOSE VOS ALL GUYS!

IZ NORMAL FOR VIMMINS TO BE CURVIER—VIT ROUNDER, WIDER—

HEY!

VOT?! IZ TRUE!

NO—LOOK! WE'VE GOT TROUBLE OUT HERE!



THERE'S A BARRICADE UP, AND A CROWD TRYING TO GET PAST IT.

DEM—VE IZ TOO CLOSE TO DOT MOB.

IF DERE IZ REVENANTS AROUND, VE SHOULD BE AVOIDING PIPPLE.

I KNOW! BUT THE SIDE STREETS ARE ALL TINY AND TWISTY!

KEN HYU BACK DIS TING OPP

SERIOUSLY? IT'S HARD ENOUGH DRIVING THIS CONTRAPTION FORWARD!



WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD WE ABANDON THE CARRIAGE?

SKREEEEEE!

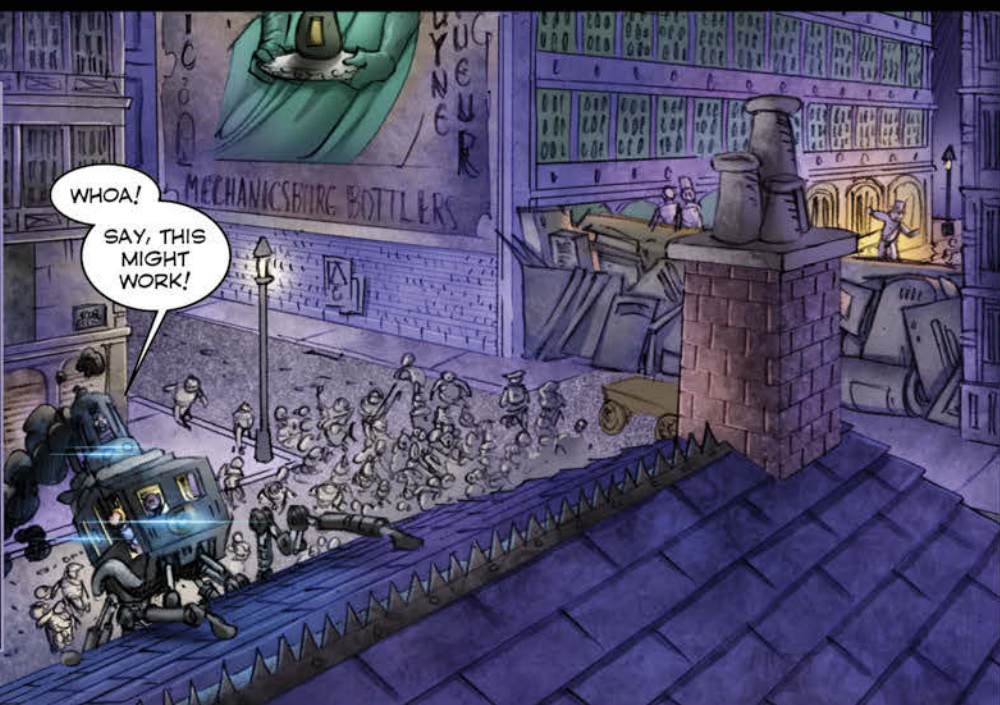
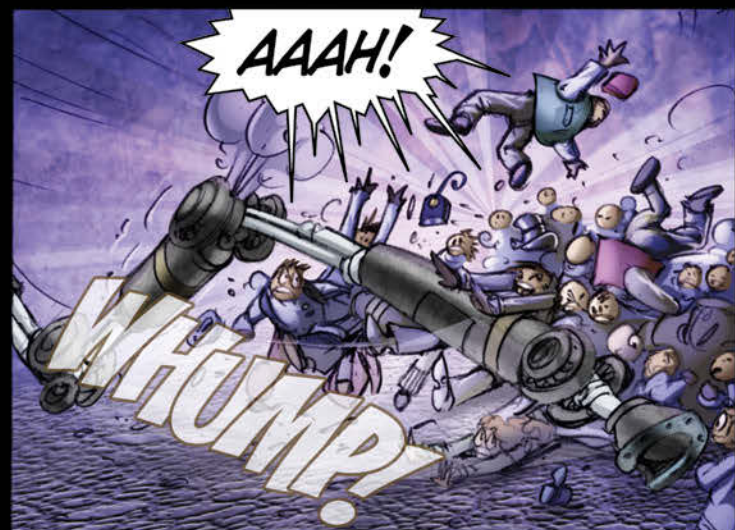


SHURDLU! TWERLIK! WOK SMEELA ZEKKA "ACTOR!"

ZADABANG AG-ATTA!

BO, EOTAIN!

PEOPLE! HEAR ME! ACT: BRING THEM TO ME! GO: NOW!





YIKES!

WHAT ON—



HEY, ARE YOU OKAY UP HERE?

OF COURSE NOT!
I'M TRYING TO JUMP A MINCING CART ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS!

I HAD TROUBLE GETTING IT DOWN THE STREET!

HERE—LET ME IN THERE.



OH, HEY! YOU'RE GOOD AT THIS!

YEAH—A LONG TIME AGO, THERE WAS A FAD THAT SWEEPED THROUGH THE COURT AT STURMHALTEN—

HUNTING ROOF RATS WITH MECHANICAL ELEPHANTS.



I DROVE AND TARVEK SPEARED 'EM.
NOBODY ELSE COULD TOUCH OUR COUNT.

WEIRD.

I KNOW, RIGHT? HE HAD ALL THE HEADS MOUNTED AND HUNG IN THE CASTLE TROPHY HALL—

NO, NO, I MEAN, LOOK AT THAT MOB.



NOT GOOD. IT'S GETTING BIGGER.

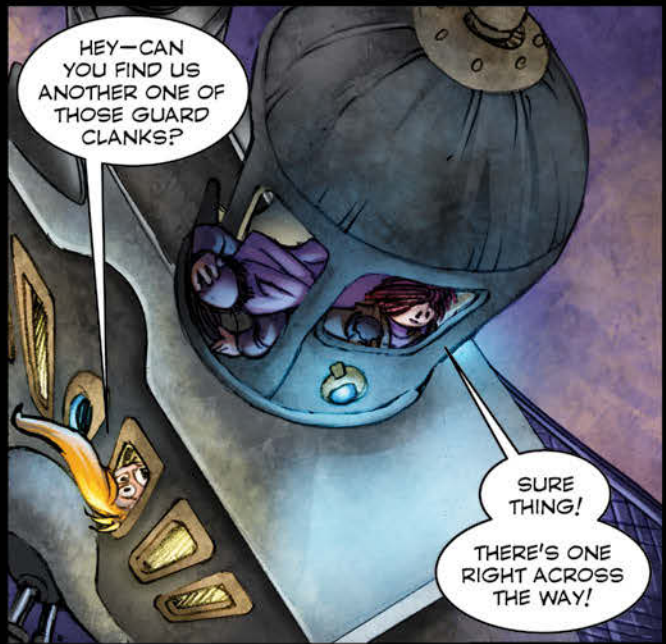
YEAH—AND THERE ARE NO GENS D'ARMES...
NO MONSIEUR MACHINES—NO DADAIST DOOMKNIGHTS—
NOTHING!

YEAH, THAT /S WEIRD.
I THOUGHT THE MASTER KEPT A TIGHT WATCH ON THIS SORT OF THING.



WHAT A MESS. WE SMOKE KNIGHTS AREN'T REALLY MEANT TO FIGHT HUGE CROWDS, YOU KNOW...

YEAH...
HMM...



HEY—CAN YOU FIND US ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE GUARD CLANKS?

SURE THING!
THERE'S ONE RIGHT ACROSS THE WAY!



WHAT THE DEVIL IS HAPPENING?

I DON'T KNOW, BUT ORDERS ARE TO STAND OFF...



—AND DON'T FORGET THEIR PANTS!

CHOP!

PANTS?



...AND SO—

GOOT VORK. TOO BAD DEY VOS LEEDEE TINY GUYS.

THAT'S OKAY, I GOT THE MAIN THING THAT I WAS AFTER.

LET'S GET TO THIS PARTY.



DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE OPERA HOUSE ON THE WAY?

YES—BUT LET'S KEEP TO THE ROOFTOPS.

THAT MOB WILL STILL BE AFTER US—

AND I SAW SOME STUFF I MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE.



HUH. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THIS?

YOU'LL SEE. CASTLE—ARE YOU READY?

OH, YES INDEED!



AAAAAH!



AH—
SORRY—

NO
PROBLEM.

YOU SOUND
LIKE TARVEK.
IT TAKES ME
BACK.



I'M JUST
NOT USED
TO—

URK.

MALEK?



FWUMP!

MALEK!



NIKKA
SKEE!

AAH!
HANG ON,
EVERYONE!



IT'S GEISTERDAMEN— AND THEY'VE GOT THEIR SPIDERS!

DO YOU THINK THERE ARE JUST THE TWO?

I'M BETTING NOT. EVERYBODY KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR MORE OF THEM!



VARPA—THEY GOT MALEK!

I SAW.

THIS COULD BE A ROUGH FIGHT. ARE YOU GOING TO BE OKAY?

OF COURSE. SMOKE FEELS NOTHING. —AND WHEN THEY ARE DEAD, I WILL BE VERY OKAY.



EVEN TWO GHOST LADIES IZ BAD NEWS. HY HAZ FOUGHT DEM BEFORE.

FORGET THE OPERA HOUSE. I'M HEADING STRAIGHT TO GRANDMA'S.

ALL THE ARISTOCRATS IN PARIS WILL BE THERE—

AND NONE OF THEM TRUST MY FAMILY— SO I'M BETTING IT'LL BE SWARMING WITH ALL THE HIRED MUSCLE THE CITY HAS TO OFFER—

DOT'S NOT A BAD PLAN, IF—

YEAH. IF WE CAN GET THERE.



VIOLETTA! SWING LEFT PAST THAT AETHERIC COLLECTOR ARRAY ON THE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET—

THEN HEAD FOR THAT HUGE LIGHT UP WATERWHEEL OVER THERE!



ARE YOU SERIOUS? WITH THESE THINGS AFTER US, YOU WANT TO GO SHOPPING?

SHE IZ DE HETERODYNE! DO VOT SHE SAYS!

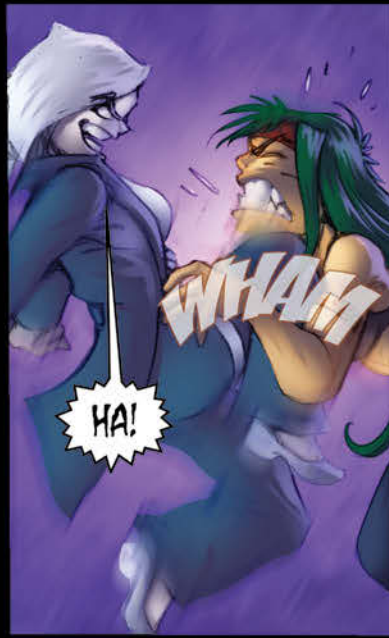


DUN HYU HEAR DOT VOICE?

SHE IZ IN DE MADNESS PLACE!

VE IZ GONNA BE JUST FINE.







ANYTHING?

AH... THERE IS SOME KIND OF INTERFERENCE...

HEY! HERE'S THAT ARRAY YOU WANTED!



AH! PERFECT!

THIS WILL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE!



I DON'T KNOW IF WE HAVE A MINUTE...

FORGET IT. RIGHT NOW, SHE IZ YORKING...

NOT LISTENING.

DIMO!



WHOA! COMINK!

VOT IZ IT?



HOLD THIS FOR A MINUTE, WON'T YOU?

OOF.



THERE. I'VE GOT WHAT I NEED. GO AHEAD AND TOSS THE REST OF IT.

CHOGGA-



NOW, THEN...

WHOOOP!

NEEEEE!



ERM...DID HYU PLAN DOT?

PLAN WHAT?



RAZZA-FRAZZA
NAGA MOY
BWEESQUIP!



NYAAAA!
BWOOSSE!
HLAG! NYA
BWOOSSE!



BWOOSSE MOTA
VEEGIPEKA! HIPPLE
VESKA! SLIMERREKKA
JOY OG SPOTAVAVA NI
BOH! NI BOH YUFFO
SWEG!



FWWEEEEE

grrggg?

SHRDLU-VEYA!
HEZZA POI KRINT,
POJEE.



DOCTOR,
KATHRYN ANN HOPPE
MISTRESS OF THE
RADIUM SCALPEL

HYO, HYO,
POJEE! AKAPLEE
SHRDLU!

HOOOO-
YAAAAAH!

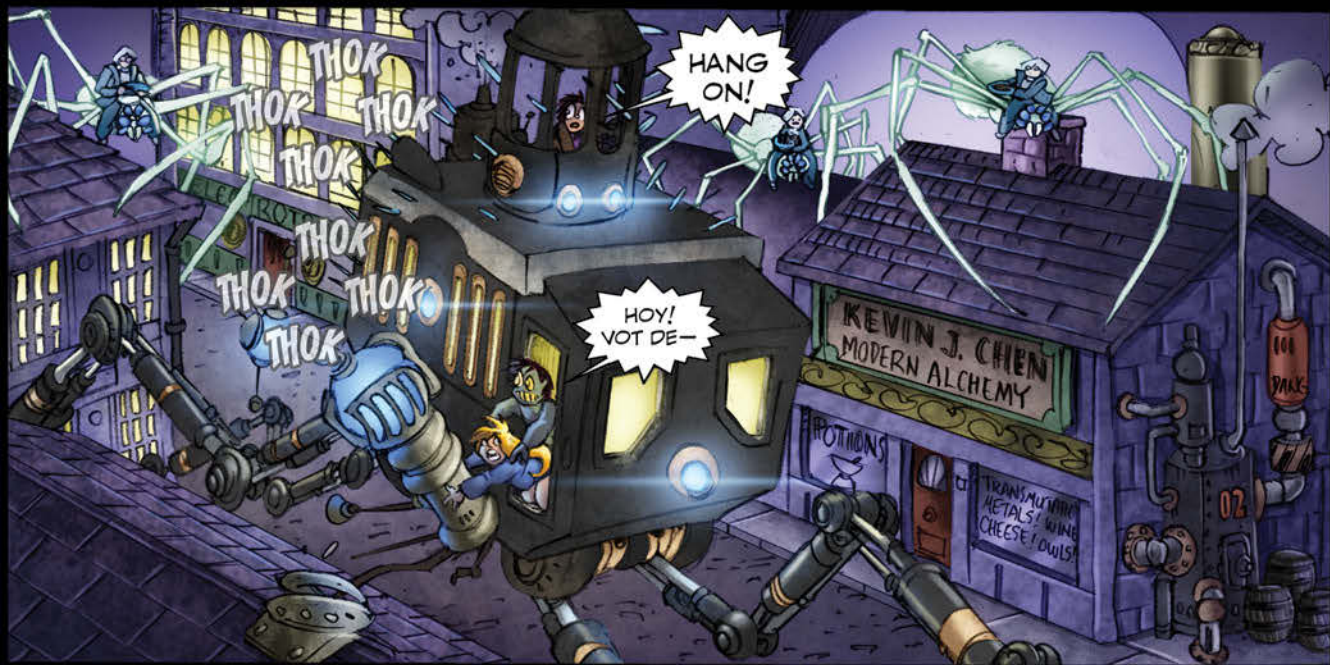


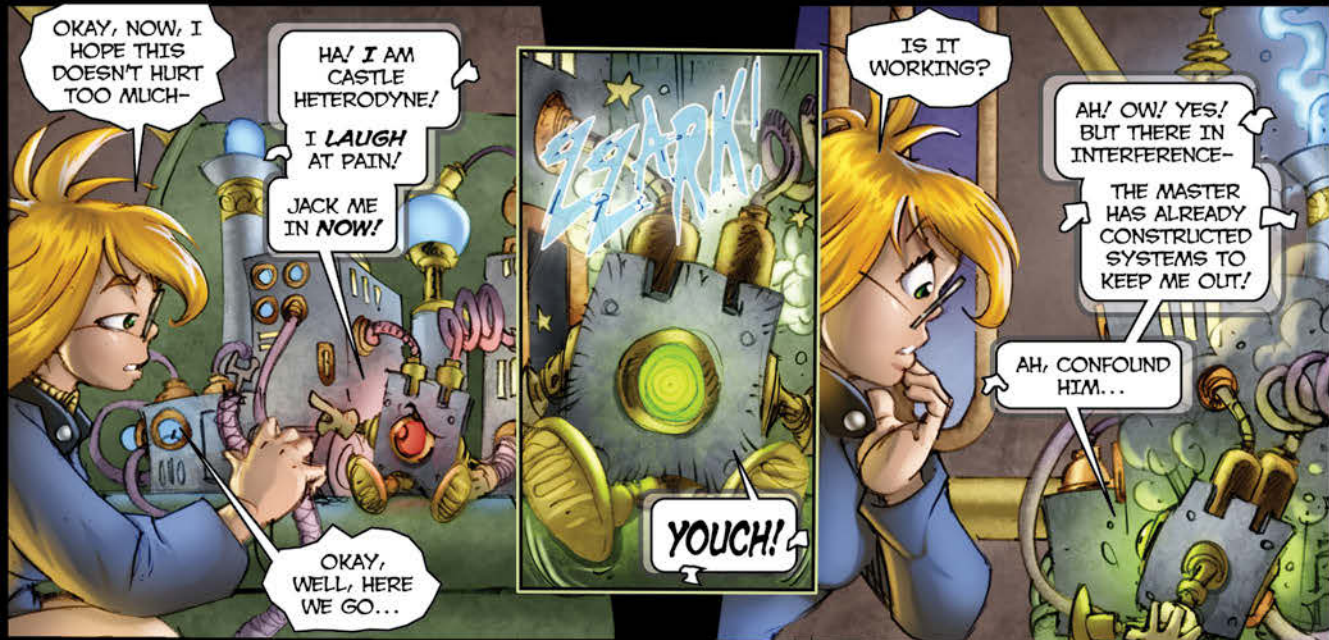
NAKKA!
HOOOO-
TAAAAAH!

EOTAIN!
NODDLE MAS
DEKURAPPA?

HEJ! MOPPA
SUREEPAH!







OKAY, NOW, I HOPE THIS DOESN'T HURT TOO MUCH-

HA! I AM CASTLE HETERODYNE!

I LAUGH AT PAIN!

JACK ME IN NOW!

OKAY, WELL, HERE WE GO...

IS IT WORKING?

AH! OW! YES! BUT THERE IS INTERFERENCE-

THE MASTER HAS ALREADY CONSTRUCTED SYSTEMS TO KEEP ME OUT!

AH, CONFOUND HIM...

YOUCH!



"I WILL NOT HAVE MUCH TIME-

AH-BUT, YES! THERE! I SEE...

TRICKY."

"JUST A TWEAK HERE, AND THEN..."



AAAAH! NO! I AM UNDER ATTACK!

CEASE YOUR WHINING, YOU MEWLING PILE OF SCRAP!

AAAAHHHH!

DO YOUR JOB OR I WILL KICK YOU INTO FRAGMENTS!



AH! EXPELLED! YET, THANKS TO YOUR WORDS OF COMFORT, I WAS ABLE TO HANG ON LONG ENOUGH TO COMPLETE MY TASK!

SHAME ME AND I WILL MAGNETIZE YOU!

AND I YOU, BROTHER!



-BUT VOT DID HYU DO?

THE PARISIAN SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN ALTERED.

WHERE THE GHOST LADIES WALK, THE CITY'S MECHANICAL GUARDIANS SEE ONLY FROLICKING CHILDREN.

THE COMMAND SETTINGS ARE COMPLEX, AND I FEAR I HAD VERY LITTLE TIME...

SO?



"SO I HAVE ALERTED THE CHILD WAGONS."

HOKKA?



COME, COME, CHILDREN! IT IS LONG PAST BEDTIME!

HOKKA VOK SMEK!



HO HO!

FUN IS DONE!

DO NOT FUSS!

YOU'LL GET LOVELY RICE PUDDING WHEN YOU COME WITH US!



THEY SEE THEM AS CHILDREN? REALLY?

DOT MAKES SENSE.

DE KIDDOS HERE GETS OP TO ALL KINDS OV MISCHIEF.

THEY'RE RIDING SPIDERS AND FIRING CROSSBOWS!

HY BLAMES DE PARENTS.



I'M AFRAID I AM SOMEWHAT COMPLICIT, MISTRESS.

THIS IS ALL PART OF DUQUAY'S ATTEMPT TO SUBVERT PARIS.

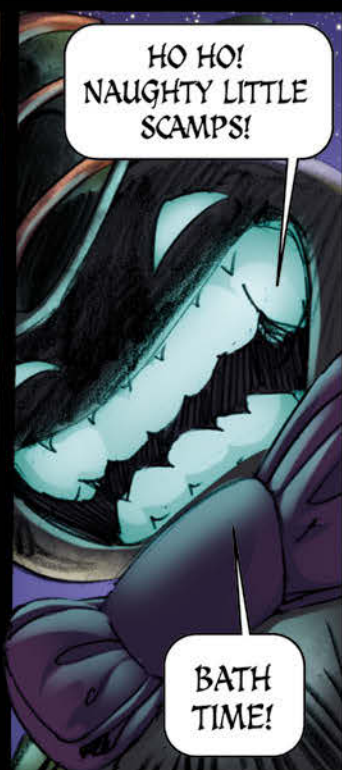


WE WERE LUCKY THAT THE CHILD COLLECTORS WERE NOT AS THOROUGHLY PROTECTED AS THE OTHER CITY SYSTEMS.

WELL, YOU GOT AROUND IT VERY CLEVERLY, I THINK!

I ONLY FEAR THAT I MAY HAVE... WARPED THEIR PERCEPTION PARAMETERS.

UM... DOES DOT MEAN—



HO HO! NAUGHTY LITTLE SCAMPS!

BATH TIME!



MEANWHILE—

PARDON ME, HIGHNESS.

WHAT NOW? CAPTAIN WRENKULA HAS HER ORDERS.

A MISTER OBSIDIAN, MA'AM.

HE HAD THE CORRECT PHRASE.

AH. INDEED. SEND HIM IN.



AH! PRINCESS! YOU ARE AS BEAUTIFUL AS EVER!

AM I, NOW?



STAB CRACK

ALSO AS SUSPICIOUS, HOMICIDAL AND UNAPOLOGETIC AS EVER.

OH, SPARE ME THE OUTRAGE.

DISGUISES ARE EASY—

AND ANYONE CAN LEARN A CODE PHRASE.



AH, BUT COULD "ANYONE" DELIVER YOUR LOST GRANDSON?

OH, MY. HE'S NOT DEAD, IS HE?

WOULD YOU LIKE HIM TO BE? I WAS TOLD—

NO, NO— ALIVE IS QUITE PREFERABLE.



—SO YOU MAY STOP PLAYING POSSUM NOW, TARVEK DEAR.

WHAT? NO, HE'S—

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DESIRE FOR MY CONTINUED WELL BEING, GRANDMOTHER.

BUT—

THANK YOU, MISTER OBSIDIAN. YOU MAY LEAVE US.

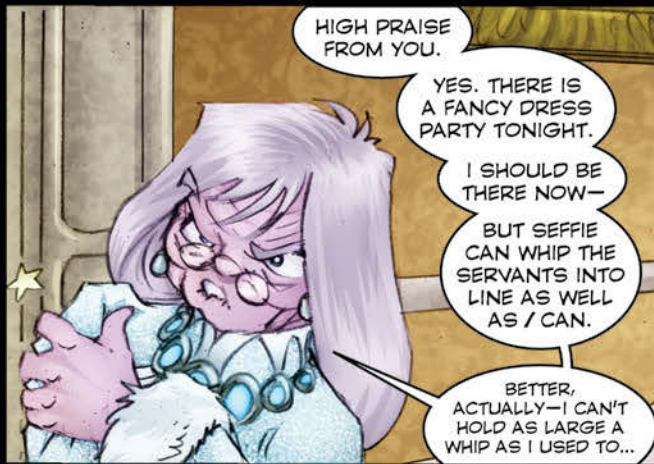


WELL. BEING FROZEN IN TIME DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE HURT YOU ANY.

OH, I DON'T KNOW.

I SEEM TO GET KIDNAPPED A LOT MORE, NOW..

YOU LOOK VERY NICE, BY THE WAY.



HIGH PRAISE FROM YOU.

YES. THERE IS A FANCY DRESS PARTY TONIGHT.

I SHOULD BE THERE NOW—

BUT SEFFIE CAN WHIP THE SERVANTS INTO LINE AS WELL AS / CAN.

BETTER, ACTUALLY—I CAN'T HOLD AS LARGE A WHIP AS I USED TO...



THAT'S YOUR BURSITIS, ISN'T IT?

I TOLD YOU TO USE YOUR CANE.



PAH. IT MAKES ME LOOK OLD—

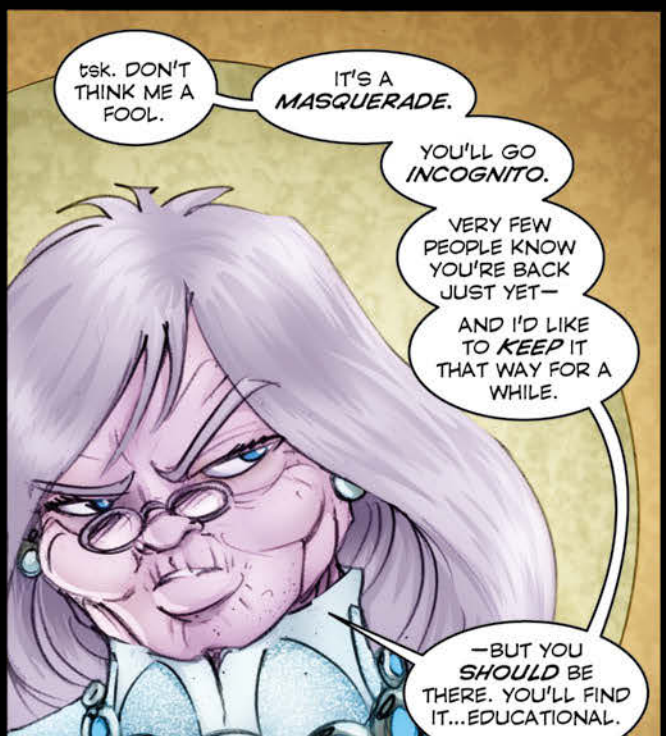
BUT IT'S SWEET THAT YOU CARE.

NOW, FOR YOUR COSTUME...

OH, NO. THIS PARTY IS FOR MARTELLUS, ISN'T IT?

I'M NOT GOING.

IT WOULD LOOK LIKE I SUPPORTED HIS CLAIM.



tsk. DON'T THINK ME A FOOL.

IT'S A MASQUERADE.

YOU'LL GO INCOGNITO.

VERY FEW PEOPLE KNOW YOU'RE BACK JUST YET—

AND I'D LIKE TO KEEP IT THAT WAY FOR A WHILE.

—BUT YOU SHOULD BE THERE. YOU'LL FIND IT...EDUCATIONAL.



COME, COME, CHILDREN- DON'T BE BAD...

HURRY UP!

GOTS IT!

YOU SHOULDN'T TRY TO MAKE US MAD!



HYU GOTS ENUFF TO VORK VIT NOW?

OOOH! YESSS!

WITH THIS, AND THE COMPONENTS I HAVE HERE-

I CAN CRUSH THESE PITIFUL INSECTS, AND...



HOKAY! SHE GOTS ALL SHE NEEDS TO SAVE DE DAY... AT LEAST, HY HOPES SO...

WELL, TELL HER TO WORK FAST- THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS COACH!

THE CONTROLS ARE GETTING LESS AND LESS RESPONSIVE BY THE MINUTE!

VOT? VY VOULD- VAIT...



MISTRESS...

WHAT?



HOO, BOY. DIS IS JUST LIKE DE TIME HYU GREAT-GREAT-GRAND-POPPA TOOK APART DE HORSE OGGIE VOS RIDINK— WHILE VE VOS BEINK CHASED BY SAINT VALO OV STURMHALTEN UND HIS WIND-OP PALADINS.

YES, YES.

BEAST, HAVE YOU DECOUPLED THE LEGS YET?

ER... NOT YET—

THEY ARE STILL MOVING—

DETAILS!

BUT ALL ELSE IS IN READINESS.



HEY, MIZ ZEETHA— NAP TIME IZ OVER—HY THINKS VE NEEDS HYU NOW.

HUH? WHA—?



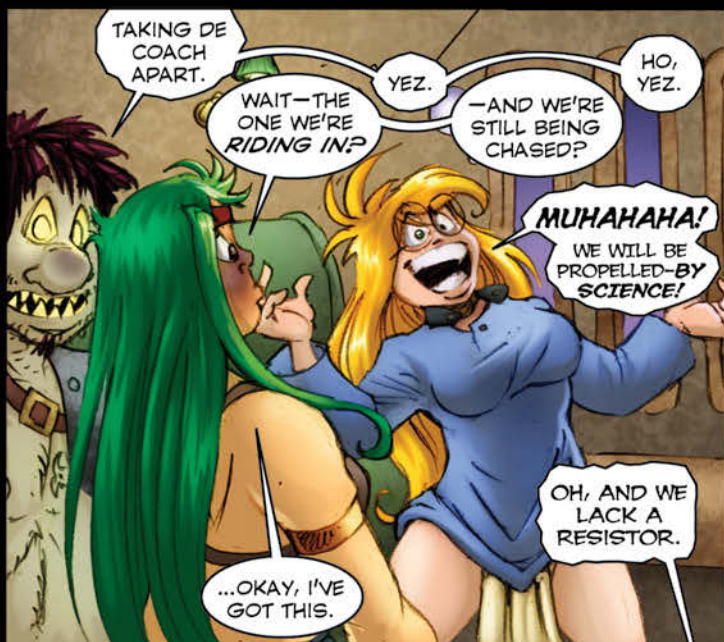
DIMO! HOW LONG WAS I OUT?

CHUST A FEW MINUTES.

HY TOLD HYU DOSE GEISTERS VOS TOUGH.

BUT...DE MISTRESS...

UGH— WHAT'S SHE DOING?



TAKING DE COACH APART.

WAIT—THE ONE WE'RE RIDING IN?

YEZ.

—AND WE'RE STILL BEING CHASED?

HO, YEZ.

MUHAHAHA! WE WILL BE PROPELLED-BY SCIENCE!

OH, AND WE LACK A RESISTOR.

...OKAY, I'VE GOT THIS.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WE LACK A RESISTOR?"

I NEED A RESISTOR!

AGATHA!



OH! ZEETHA! HOLD THIS!

WHAT?



NNNNNN

YES! THAT DID IT!

I WILL MAKE YOU SUFFER.

HOPES HYU GETS THE CHANCE.





IT'S WORKING! IT'S WORKING!

CRASHASH!



VOKKA HEY?

SNAP
CLAK

CRASH!

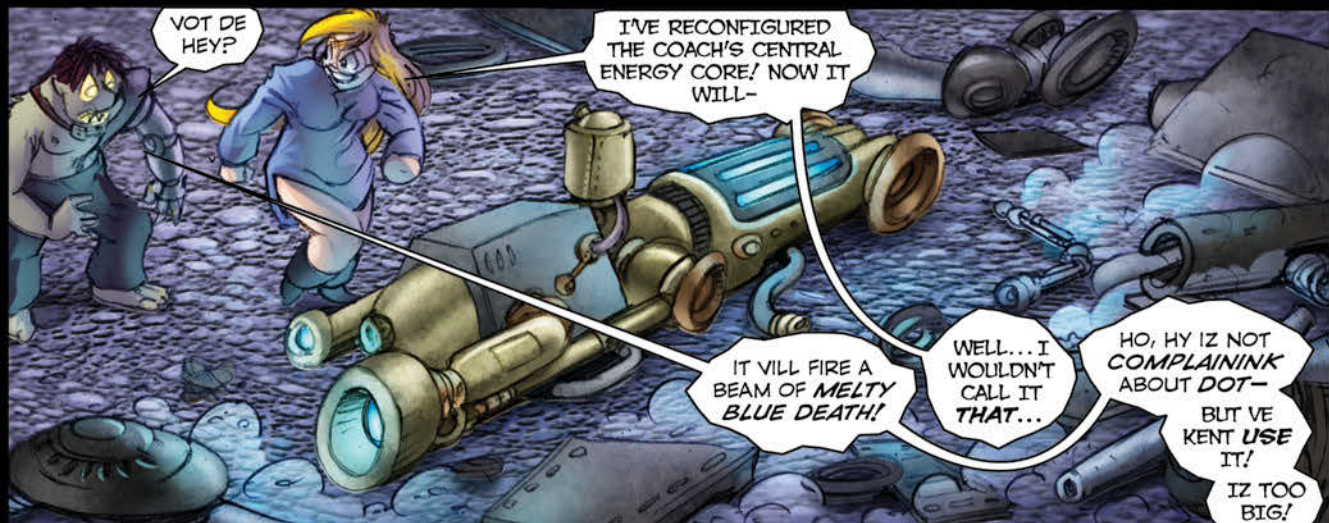


CLAK
CRUMP!
KLANG!

DOWN!

TING
TING
BOING!

CHILDREN?



VOT DE HEY?

I'VE RECONFIGURED THE COACH'S CENTRAL ENERGY CORE! NOW IT WILL-

IT WILL FIRE A BEAM OF MELTY BLUE DEATH!

WELL... I WOULDN'T CALL IT THAT...

HO, HY IZ NOT COMPLAININK ABOUT DOT- BUT VE KENT USE IT! IZ TOO BIG!



DON'T WORRY, I'M NOT DONE.



I STILL NEED ONE MORE PART!

VOT? NO!
NO MORE PARTS!



OH, MONSIEUR LE CLANK!
I AM BUT A POOR, SWEET LITTLE MOPPET OUT PAST MY BEDTIME--

AND I DO SO WANT TO GO HOME!



WHAT?!



NOW HERE'S A CHILD AS GOOD AS GOLD!



WE'LL TAKE YOU HOME OUT OF THE COLD!



CLANG

HA! NOW TO--

AH... MISTRESS...



OH. HELLO--

DOKKA HEY.



NEEEZZA...

AH-OH DEAR...

UM...



CATCH!

HUP!

VOK!



ZAP!
POW!



TCH. YOU KIND OF OVERDID THAT...

BUT NICE WORK.

THANKS.

CLAK!

WHOOPI!



HERE'S THE ACCESS PANEL. GOOD.

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.

OF COURSE. BUT... WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT?



EYERGH... NOZZA KORO-



BOOT!



I'LL BE FINE.

-BUT DON'T DAWDLE.



SHE'S GOT HERSELF CAUGHT?!
WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?!

HYU GOTS TO REMEMBER DOT DIS IZ ALL PART OV SOME VERRA CLEVER PLAN...
PROBABLY.

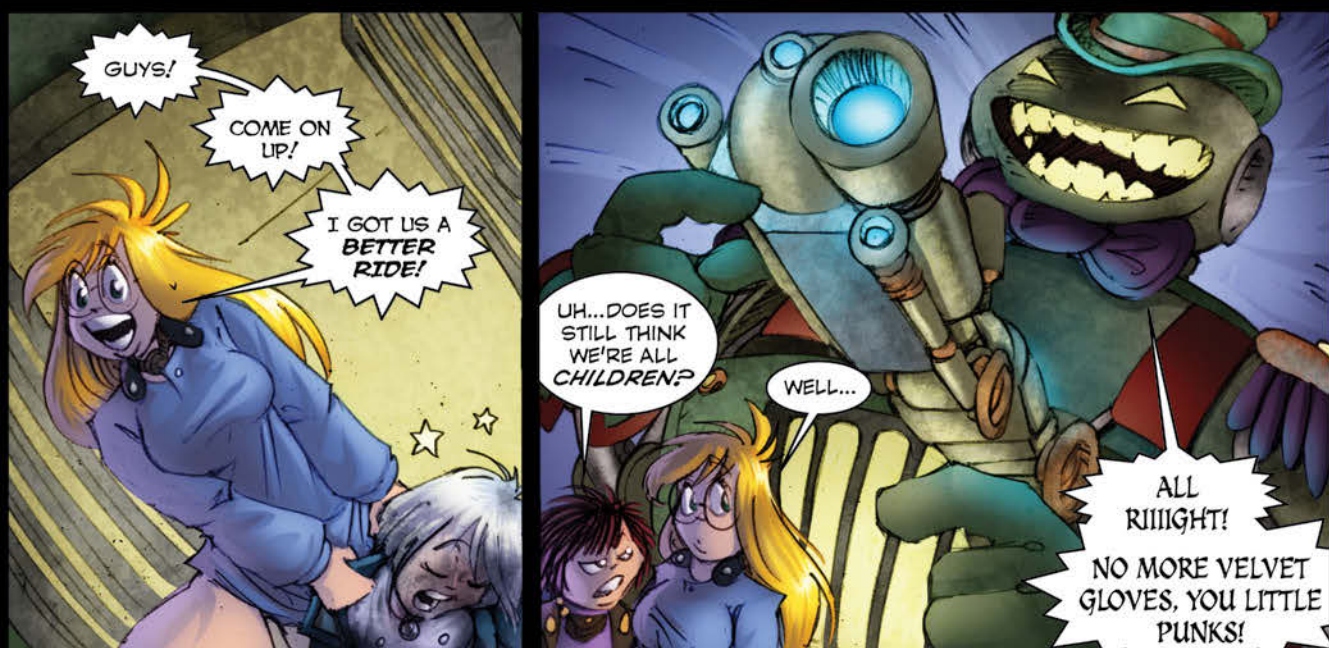
MORE GEISTERDAMEN ARE COMING!

HOW MANY OF THEM ARE THERE IN PARIS?



VEKKA SMEE!

NICE!



GUYS!

COME ON UP!

I GOT US A BETTER RIDE!

UH...DOES IT STILL THINK WE'RE ALL CHILDREN?

WELL...

ALL RIIGHT!
NO MORE VELVET GLOVES, YOU LITTLE PUNKS!



HO HO!
SCHOOL'S
NOT SO BAD
NOW, EH?

AIEEE!

SO YOU'RE
SAYING IT'S
STILL THE CHILD
CATCHER—
BUT YOU'RE
LETTING CASTLE
HETERODYNE
DRIVE—

WELL, IT
DOES KNOW
THE STREETS...

AND YOU'VE
GIVEN IT A
WEAPON.

WELL,
YEAH...

OKAY... FINE.
WHY NOT? ON TO
THE PARTY, THEN.

WAIT!
STOP!

WHAT
NOW?



FINALLY!
A DRESS
SHOP!

NO YAY! IZ
CLOSED!

SO WHAT?
WE CAN
JUST—

NO! ONLY
LOOTING FROM
DEFEATED
ENEMIES IZ
ALLOWED!



IZ DE
RULES!
UND HYU
DUN GOTS
TIME TO
CONQUER
PARIS!

—BUT I
DON'T WANT
TO GO TO A
PARTY LIKE
THIS—

AND IT'S
NOT LIKE I'M
GOING TO
BATTLE A HORDE
OF SOCIALITES
ON THE WAY!



THERE
SHE
IS!

—AND LOOK
HOW SHE'S
DRESSED.

GET
HER!

WOW! YOU
CAN FIND
ANYTHING
IN PARIS!

...



IN THE AWFUL TOWER—

SOMETHING IS **WRONG**, ABRAXUS.

MASTER?



I CAN **FEEL** IT.

SOMETHING IS **WRONG** IN MY CITY.

AH—I **HAVE** JUST RECEIVED A COMMUNIQUE ON THE DIPLOMATIC CIRCUIT—

IT'S FROM THE INCORRUPTIBLE LIBRARY.



PFT. THOSE BOOKBINDERS...

IT'S FLAGGED "OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE" SIR.

WAIT... WHAT? **WHAT?!**

DETAILS, ABRAXUS.

THEY...UH... THEY SAY THEY'RE **CONTINUING** TO DELAY THE **STORM KING?**

UH... "AS IN OUR PREVIOUS MESSAGE..."

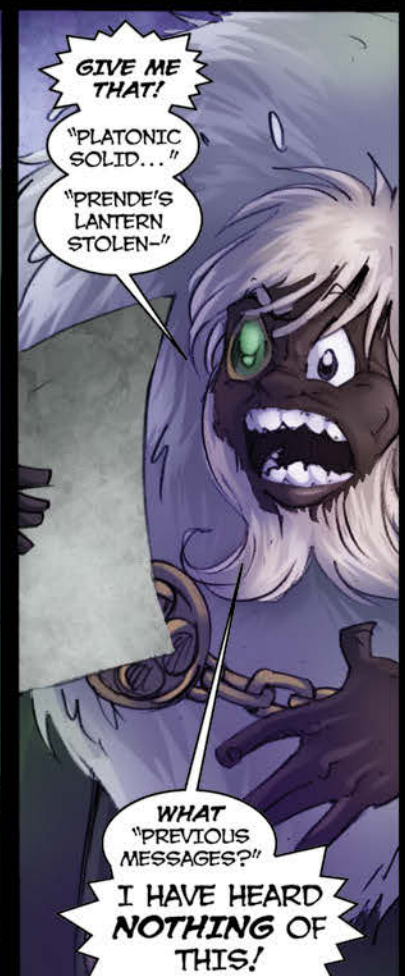
"WE HAVE NOW **CONFIRMED** THAT IT IS ANDRONICUS..."

UH... "PITCHED BATTLE AT THE CHTHONIC RESERVOIR..."

"HEAVY CASUALTIES..." UM... "HEADING YOUR WAY..."

"BE ADVISED HE IS SEEKING ARCHMEDES' LEVER..."

MASTER, WHAT ARE THEY **TALKING ABOUT?**



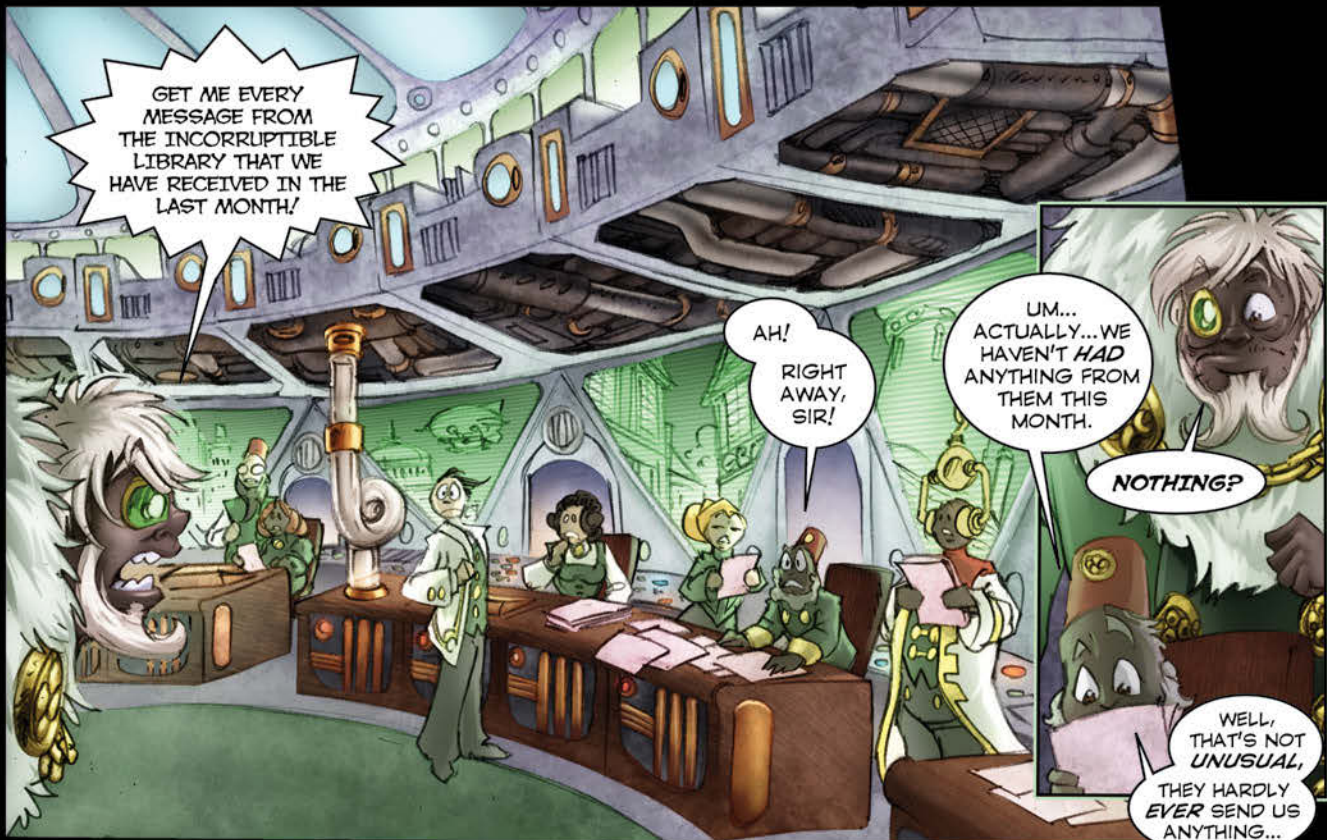
GIVE ME THAT!

"PLATONIC SOLID..."

"PRENDE'S LANTERN STOLEN—"

WHAT "PREVIOUS MESSAGES?"

I HAVE HEARD **NOTHING** OF THIS!



GET ME EVERY MESSAGE FROM THE INCORRUPTIBLE LIBRARY THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED IN THE LAST MONTH!

AH! RIGHT AWAY, SIR!

UM... ACTUALLY... WE HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING FROM THEM THIS MONTH.

NOTHING?

WELL, THAT'S NOT UNUSUAL, THEY HARDLY EVER SEND US ANYTHING...



NOTHING ABOUT A TERRIBLE BATTLE FAR BENEATH MY CITY—AGAINST A MONSTROUS UNDEAD STORM KING—

WHO IS NOW LITERALLY BURNING HIS WAY TO THE SURFACE IN SEARCH OF HIS LEGENDARY SWORD, DRIVEN MAD BY THE LUST FOR REVENGE?

AH...NO, SIR...PRETTY SURE I'D HAVE REMEMBERED THAT...

BEALISOLEIL!

OH, NO, REALLY?

I MISSED ONE? AT THE ABSOLUTE LAST MINUTE?

WHEN I FINALLY HAVE A PARTY TO GO TO?

UNBELIEVABLE!



YOU HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM THE DEEP KINGDOMS...

EXPLAIN YOURSELF!

tch. FINE. MY MASTER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF YOU WERE TO HAVE AS LITTLE WARNING ABOUT OLD ANDRONICUS' RAMPAGE AS POSSIBLE.

IT'S NOT A BAD IDEA...

BEALISOLEIL, I AM YOUR MASTER!

OH NO, SIR. NOT ANY MORE—I'VE CHANGED SIDES.

HEH. FOR REAL THIS TIME.

WHEN THAT THING COMES BURSTING UP INTO THE ACTUAL STREETS OF PARIS, THE CONFUSION WILL—



ALL THESE YEARS I HAVE SERVED YOU FAITHFULLY!

YOU—THE LAST SPARK IN EUROPA WHO ACTUALLY **KNEW** VAN RIJN!

WORKED WITH HIM!

VAN RIJN HIMSELF! THE WIZARD WHO COULD TRANSFER LIFE FROM FLESH TO MACHINE, AND **BACK AGAIN!**

SURELY, I THOUGHT, FROM YOU I COULD GLEAN SOME **INSIGHT** INTO HIS METHODS!

...BUT **NO!** YOU HOARD YOUR SECRETS LIKE AN **OLD DRAGON!**



HA!—BUT **NOW!** NOW I HAVE MET **OTHERS** WHO KNOW THOSE SECRETS—

AND WHO ARE WILLING TO **SHARE!**

IN SIX MONTHS I'VE LEARNED MORE ABOUT VAN RIJN'S WORK WITH **MECHANICAL** LIFE THAN YOU DEIGNED TO TEACH ME IN SIX YEARS!



THE IMPROVEMENTS I HAVE **ALREADY** BEEN ABLE TO MAKE ON THESE CLANK BODIES OF MINE—

UNBELIEVABLE!

...AND THEY HAVE SO MUCH **MORE** YET TO SHOW ME!

MUHA!

THE **HETERODYNE GIRL!**



tch. YOU REALLY DO GET WORKED UP OVER THE HETERODYNES, DON'T YOU?

BUT NO, THE ARRIVAL OF MY ILLUSTRIOUS STUDENT WAS **TRULY** UNEXPECTED.

STILL—USING **HER** TO MAKE YOU BELIEVE YOUR CITY SYSTEMS WERE CLEAN...

WHY, I LIKE TO THINK **THAT** WAS **INSPIRED.**



PARIS...IT IS A **MAGNIFICENT** THING YOU HAVE BUILT HERE, SIMONE.

I KNOW, BECAUSE I AM **INSIDE** IT NOW. I CAN **CONTROL** IT.

OH, NOT OVERTLY, OF COURSE, THE NETWORKS ARE TOO **BIG...**

BUT YOU CAN NO LONGER RELY ON YOUR MUCH-VAUNTED **ABSOLUTE** POWER.



OH, AND NOW YOU'RE GOING TO **CRUSH** MY HEAD.

CARRY ON, IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER—

I HAVE SO MANY, **MANY** MORE.

MEANWHILE—

MY DEAR FRIENDS! WELCOME!

SEFFIE!

MY DEAR— YOU LOOK LOVELY, AS ALWAYS!



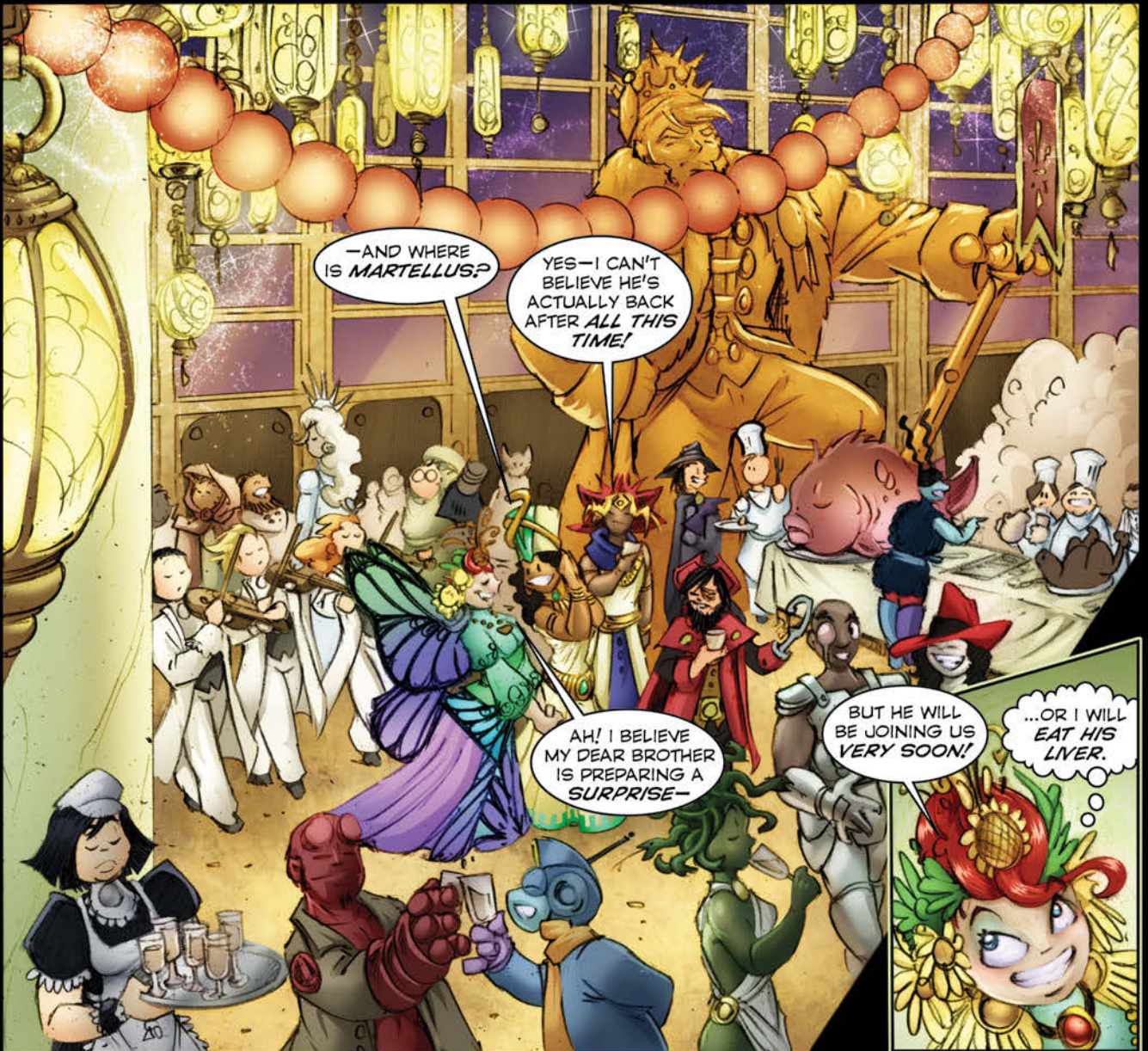
—AND WHERE IS MARTELLUS?

YES—I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S ACTUALLY BACK AFTER ALL THIS TIME!

AH! I BELIEVE MY DEAR BROTHER IS PREPARING A SURPRISE—

BUT HE WILL BE JOINING US VERY SOON!

...OR I WILL EAT HIS LIVER.





MY, THIS IS LOVELY!

—AND WHOSE IDEA WAS A GIANT CHEESE SCULPTURE OF YOUR BROTHER? SO PERFECT!

COLETTE! YOU CAME!

OF COURSE, MA CHÉRIE! EVERYONE IS HERE!



WELL—NOT EVERYONE... NOT YET...

OOH, THAT SOUNDS PROMISING!

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOUR FATHER...

AS IF.



OH DEAR. GRANDMAMA WILL BE DISAPPOINTED ONCE AGAIN.

I DARESAY A DOSE NOW AND AGAIN WILL BE GOOD FOR HER.

HA. SAYS THE GIRL WHO DOESN'T HAVE TO LIVE WITH HER.

OH, HOW TRUE. I HAVE BEEN SPOILT BY MY FATHER'S SWEET REASON.

HEH. YES, YOU WIN...AS ALWAYS...



...HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING FROM GIL?

tch. NO. NOTHING.



AH—SO EVERYONE GETS TO BE A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED TONIGHT.

YOU THINK I'M SILLY.

I KNOW YOU ALWAYS HAVE.



I DO—

BUT IF WE CAN'T BE SILLY ABOUT AFFAIRS OF THE HEART—

THEN WE'RE NO BETTER THAN CLANKS.



—AND I'M SAYING THAT ANYONE WHO TRIES TO CLAIM THE LIGHTNING CROWN—

WILL HAVE TO ADDRESS THE SITUATION IN THE NORTH!

HOLFUNG-BORZOI CAPITULATED. THERE IS NO SITUATION.

—BUT WHERE IS MARTELLUS?

MESSING AROUND IN HIS LAB, LAST I SAW—

AND GRANDMAMA WANTS HIM TO "MAKE AN ENTRANCE."

HOLFUNG-BORZOI IS THE FIFTH PLAYER IN THE AREA TO CAPITULATE TO A WEAKER NEIGHBOR.

SOMETHING ODD IS GOING ON UP THERE

...ODD, I WILL CONCEDE.



OH, NO, NOT SOME TEDIOUS PROCESSION?

NOOO—I HOPE IT WILL BE MORE EXCITING THAN THAT...

LADY JENKA—IT REALLY IS ONLY FAIR THAT YOU TELL US WHEN THE HETERODYNE PLANS TO FREE MECHANICSBURG!

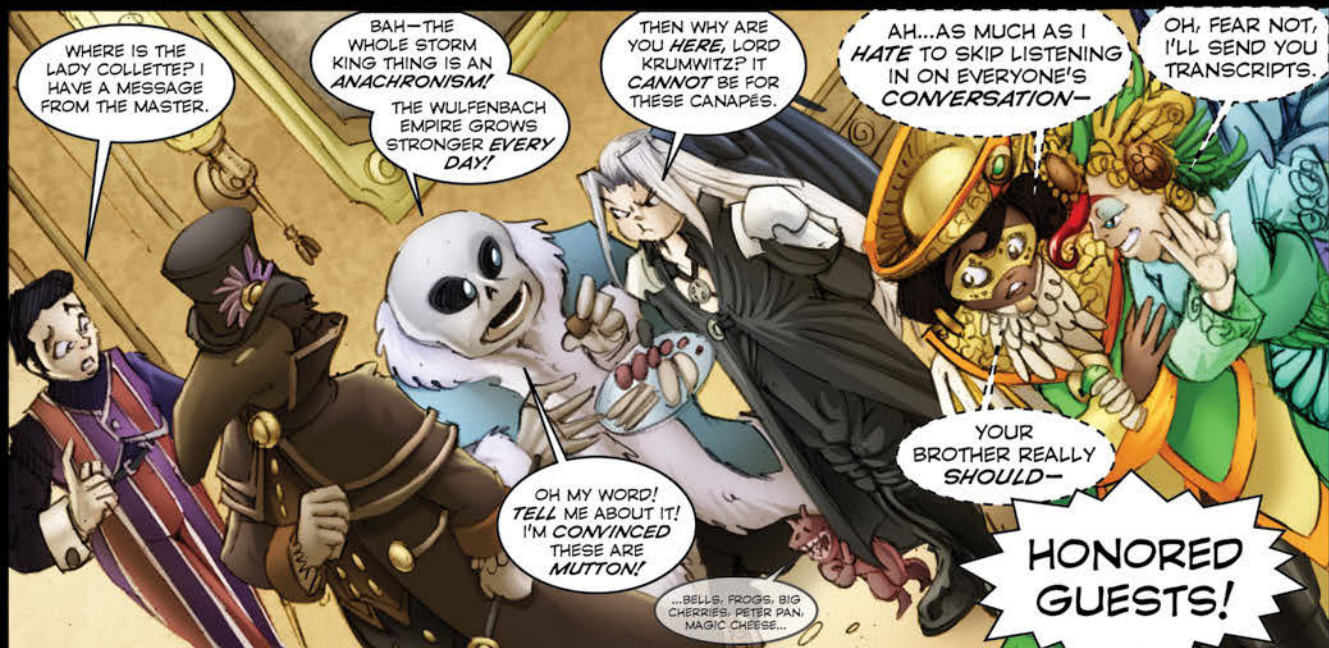
UNANNOUNCED, IT COULD DEVASTATE THE MARKETS!

—PLEASE TELL ME YOU'RE NOT HAVING THOSE JUGGLERS AGAIN?

I TOLD YOU, THEY JUST SHOWED UP. WE DIDN'T ACTUALLY HIRE THEM.

MY DEAR VISCOUNT—REST ASSURED THAT OUR FAVORED TRADING PARTNERS WILL BE THE FIRST ONES TO KNOW!

AH...



WHERE IS THE LADY COLLETTE? I HAVE A MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER.

BAH—THE WHOLE STORM KING THING IS AN ANACHRONISM!

THE WULFENBACH EMPIRE GROWS STRONGER EVERY DAY!

THEN WHY ARE YOU HERE, LORD KRUMWITZ? IT CANNOT BE FOR THESE CANAPÉS.

AH...AS MUCH AS I HATE TO SKIP LISTENING IN ON EVERYONE'S CONVERSATION—

OH, FEAR NOT, I'LL SEND YOU TRANSCRIPTS.

OH MY WORD! TELL ME ABOUT IT! I'M CONVINCED THESE ARE MUTTON!

YOUR BROTHER REALLY SHOULD—

HONORED GUESTS!

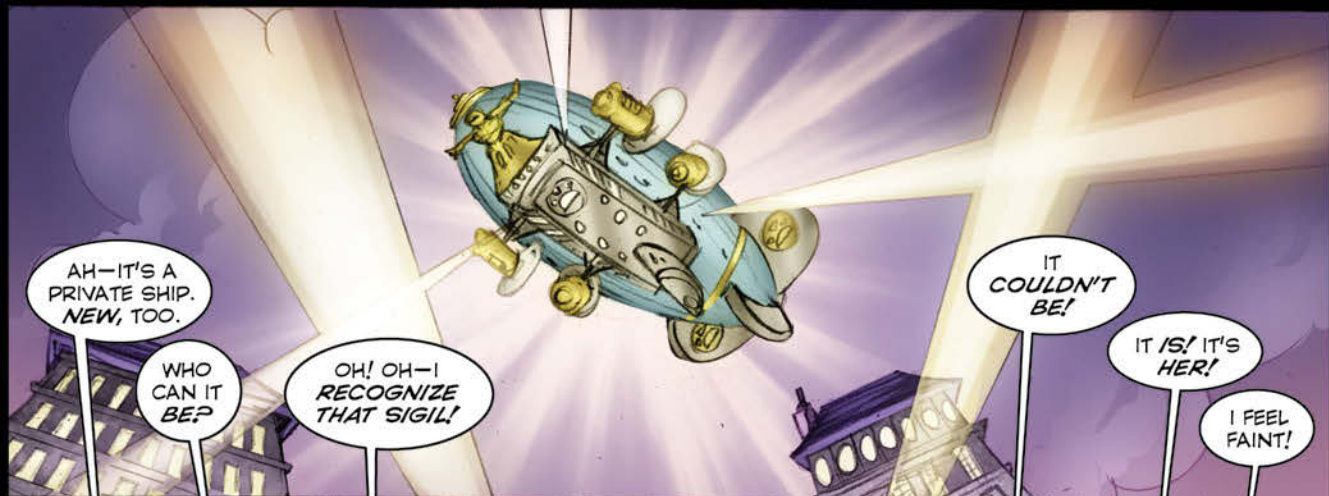
...BELL'S, FROGS, BIG CHERRIES, PETER PAN, MAGIC CHEESE...



PLEASE DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO THE LANDING BALCONY!

THE LANDING BALCONY? WHO—

I HAVE NO IDEA!



AH—IT'S A PRIVATE SHIP. NEW, TOO.

WHO CAN IT BE?

OH! OH—I RECOGNIZE THAT SIGIL!

IT COULDN'T BE!

IT IS! IT'S HER!

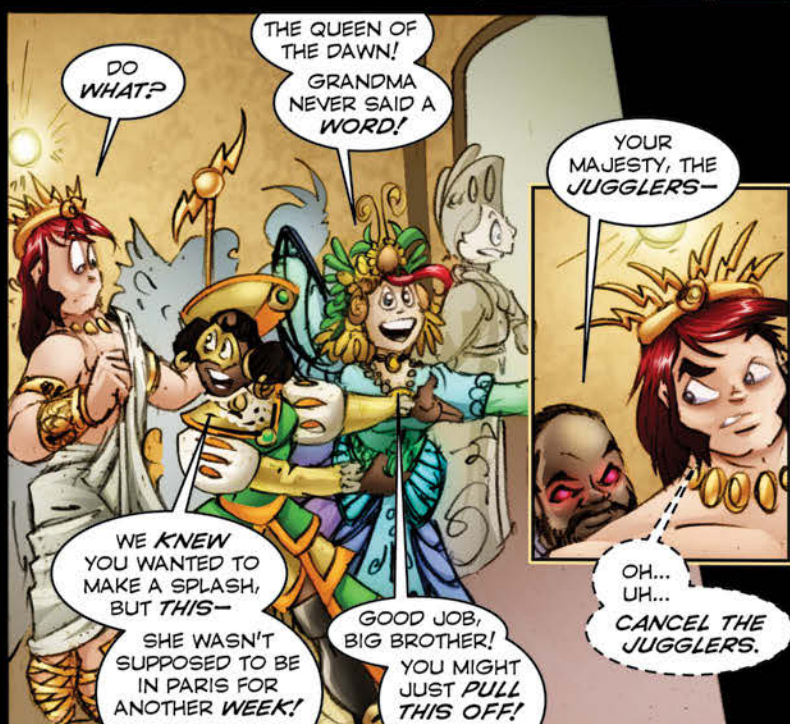
I FEEL FAINT!



HELLO. MARTELLUS VON BLITZENGAARD— STORM KING— DON'T MIND ME.

AMAZING! MARTELLUS, HOW DID YOU DO IT?

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. HOW DID YOU DO IT?



DO WHAT?

THE QUEEN OF THE DAWN! GRANDMA NEVER SAID A WORD!

YOUR MAJESTY, THE JUGGLERS—

WE KNEW YOU WANTED TO MAKE A SPLASH, BUT THIS—

SHE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE IN PARIS FOR ANOTHER WEEK!

GOOD JOB, BIG BROTHER! YOU MIGHT JUST PULL THIS OFF!

OH... UH... CANCEL THE JUGGLERS.



OOOH! THIS IS THE CONCERTO THAT THE COUNT DE LA SCAPIO WROTE FOR HER AFTER SHE REJECTED HIM!

THE PHILOSOPHER DEPARTÉS CALLED IT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SUICIDE NOTE EVER!



OH! HOW I WISH MY HUSBAND COULD'VE SEEN THIS!

...I'M RIGHT HERE.

DON'T BE TIRESOME, DEAR.



YES! THOSE ARE THE FAMOUS DANCING NUNS OF SAINT FOSSE'S!

OOOH! I HEARD THAT THE QUEEN DESIGNED THEIR OUTFITS PERSONALLY!



SEVEN OF THE NORTHERN STATES HAVE DECLARED HER A NATIONAL TREASURE!

SHE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT DISARMAMENT OF BORKENBURG, YOU KNOW!



THEY SAY THE YOUNG BARON WULFENBACH KILLED TARVEK STURMVORAUSS OVER HER.

OH, YES! THAT'S WHAT DROVE THE HETEROOYNE TO SEAL MECHANICSBURG, YOU KNOW.



LOOK!

I CANNOT BELIEVE THEY GOT HER TO COME!

IT'S HER!



LADY COLETTE!
YOUR FATHER SENT ME TO TELL YOU THAT HE IS ON HIS WAY—

WHAT? NONSENSE. MY FATHER—ACTUALLY COMING TO A PARTY?
...THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG.

ALL RIGHT, SISTERS, IS EVERYONE READY?

REMEMBER—ONCE OUR QUEEN IS IN POSITION AND I GIVE THE SIGNAL, WE SHALL BEGIN DANCE ROUTINE NUMBER FIVE!

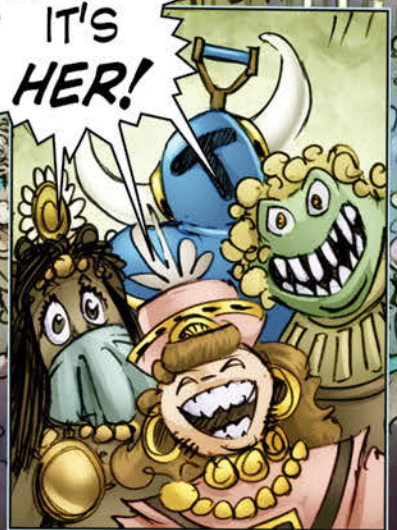


TURN ON YOUR LANTERNS AND BREATHE DEEPLY...

HELLOOO
PARIS!



«GASP!»
IT'S
HER!





THE QUEEN OF THE DAWN?

THE DIVA?

HMM...I'VE HEARD SOME ODD THINGS ABOUT THAT ONE—

MARTELLUS— YOU DID INVITE HER, DIDN'T YOU?



SEFFIE— I DIDN'T DO THIS.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHY SHE'S HERE.

WHAT?

REALLY?



OH DEAR.

THEN WE'D BETTER BE ON OUR GUARD.



—A COMMAND PERFORMANCE FOR THE GLORIOUS NEW STORM KING!

HOW COULD I REFUSE?

OF COURSE, I RUSHED HERE AT ONCE...



URK!

AUGH!

WATCH YOURSELF, YOU OAF! YOU'LL STAIN MY LOVELY COSTUME!



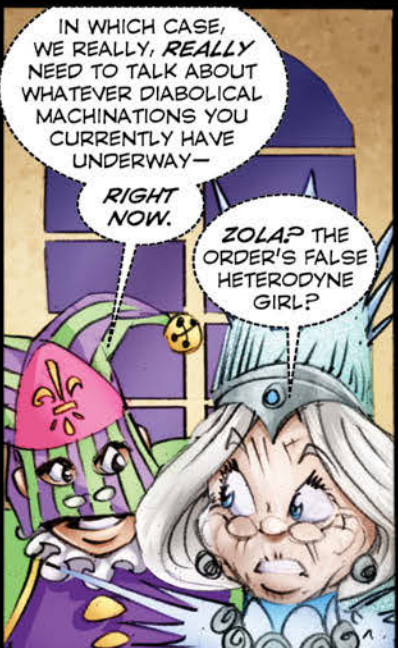
ACH!

AH—YOUR HIGHNESS?

YES? WHAT IS IT, "WATERP?"

THIS "QUEEN OF THE DAWN..."

I COULD SWEAR THAT SHE'S ACTUALLY ZOLA MALFEAZIUM...



IN WHICH CASE, WE REALLY, REALLY NEED TO TALK ABOUT WHATEVER DIABOLICAL MACHINATIONS YOU CURRENTLY HAVE UNDERWAY—

RIGHT NOW.

ZOLA? THE ORDER'S FALSE HETERODYNE GIRL?



HMM. NO...YOU'RE SAFE FROM ME, MY BOY.

AS FAR AS I KNEW, LITTLE MISS ZOLA WAS STILL STUCK IN MECHANICSBURG.

HMMMM.



WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, SIRRAH— GET TO THE KITCHENS AND HAVE THEM SEND OUT MORE DRINKS!

OW! YES, MA'AM!

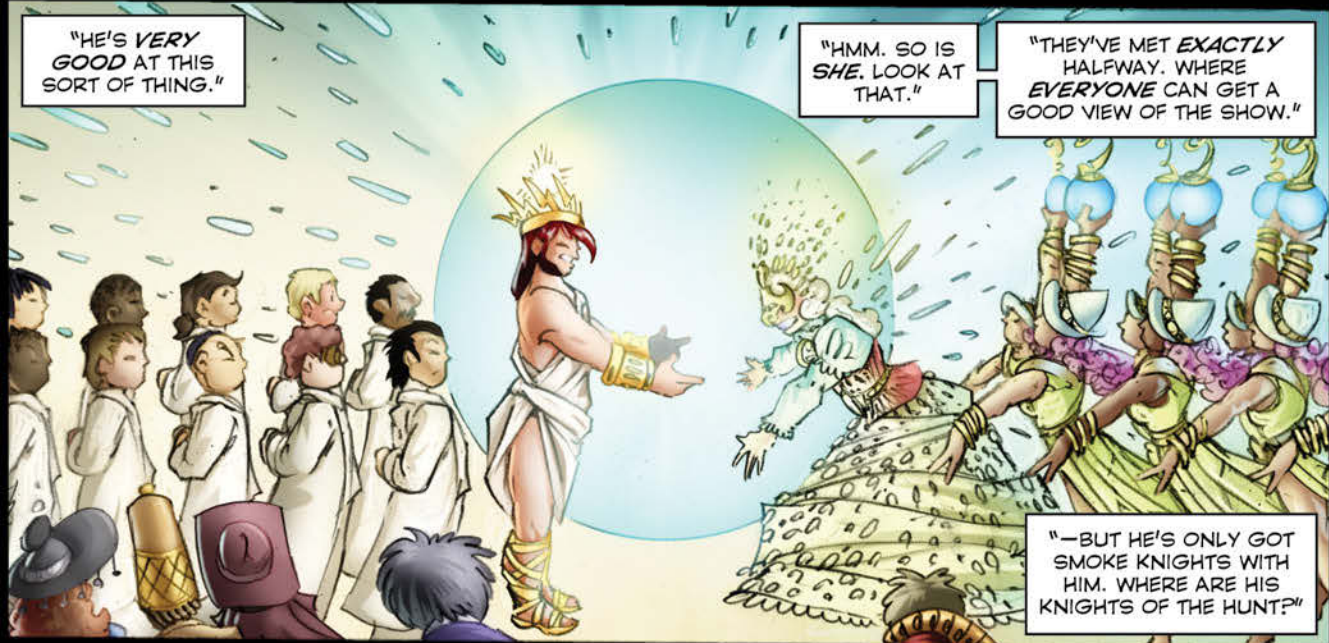
GRANDMAMA! YOU MUSTN'T BEAT THE SERVANTS! YOUR SHOULDER!



SEFFIE, PUT THE SMOKE KNIGHTS ON ALERT.

THEY ALREADY ARE.

DON'T WORRY. MARTELLUS WILL BE FINE.



"HE'S VERY GOOD AT THIS SORT OF THING."

"HMM. SO IS SHE. LOOK AT THAT."

"THEY'VE MET EXACTLY HALFWAY. WHERE EVERYONE CAN GET A GOOD VIEW OF THE SHOW."

"—BUT HE'S ONLY GOT SMOKE KNIGHTS WITH HIM. WHERE ARE HIS KNIGHTS OF THE HUNT?"



RIGHT HERE, PRINCESS!

TYBALT! WHY—

MY KING THINKS WE'RE GOING TO BE ATTACKED—

SO WE'RE IN POSITION ALL AROUND THE CROWD!

I'VE BEEN SPECIALLY SENT TO GUARD YOU!

ATTACKED... YES...

IT'LL BE FUN!



HIGHNESS! SEFFIE! MY FATHER IS ON HIS WAY!

SIMON VOLTAIRE, COMING HERE?

WHAT? REALLY?

THIS IS SERIOUS!

STEWARD! BRING OUT THE CHÂTEAU SOPHIE DEL PIEVE GOBBI— FROM MY PRIVATE RESERVE!

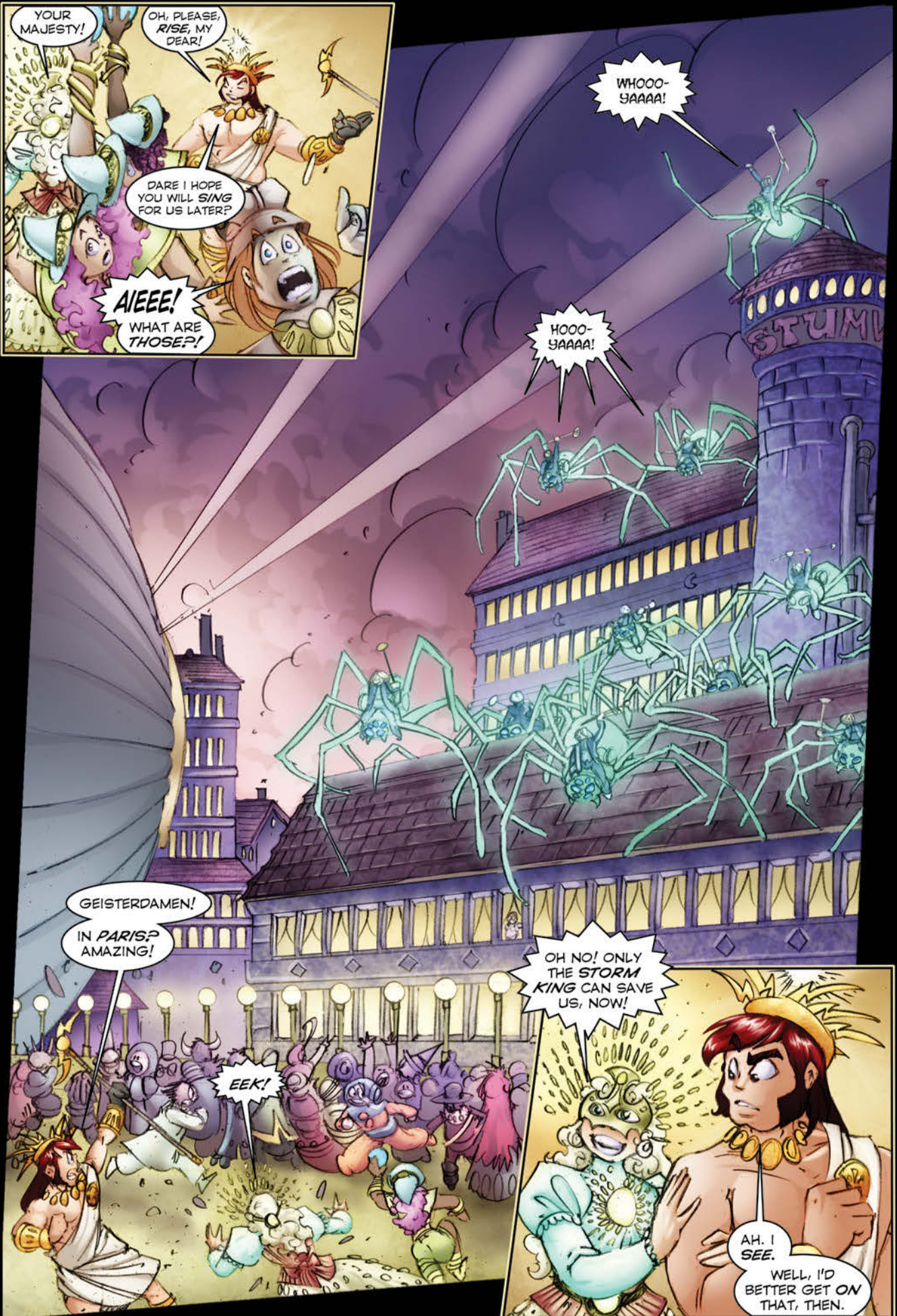


YOUR MAJESTY!

OH, PLEASE, RISE, MY DEAR!

DARE I HOPE YOU WILL SING FOR US LATER?

AIEEE!
WHAT ARE THOSE?!



WHOOO-YAAAA!

HOOO-YAAAA!

GEISTERDAMEN!
IN PARIS?
AMAZING!

EK!

OH NO! ONLY THE STORM KING CAN SAVE US, NOW!

AH. I SEE.
WELL, I'D BETTER GET ON THAT, THEN.

THE AWFUL TOWER—

YOUR COACH IS WAITING... BUT— MASTER VOLTAIRE? WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

A SANCTUM OF SORTS, ABRAXUS.

YOU STAND IN THE ORIGINAL CONTROL CENTER FROM WHICH I ONCE *PERSONALLY* OVERSAW MY CITY.

I HAVE NOT OPENED IT IN A *GENERATION*.

MY POWER OVER PARIS IS LEGENDARY, YES. PEOPLE SPEAK OF IT WITH *AWE* IN THEIR VOICES—

BUT *ONCE* I WAS *ONE* WITH IT. I SENSED IT—CONTROLLED IT, AS IF IT WERE VERILY A *PART* OF MY BODY.

—BUT MASTER, DON'T YOU *STILL*? THE *STORIES*—

I AM *OLD*, ABRAXUS.

IMPOSSIBLY OLD. OF ALL THOSE I HAVE KNOWN, ONLY *ALBIA OF ENGLAND* REMAINS MY SENIOR— AND *HER* METHODS OF ETERNAL LOVELINESS ARE A SECRET *EVEN* TO ME.

MY BODY CAN NO LONGER LIGHTLY BEAR THE BURDEN OF AN ENTIRE CITY.

NO—I LEFT CONTROL OF MOST OF MY CITY'S SYSTEMS IN THE HANDS OF SUBORDINATES AND AUTOMATED SYSTEMS *LONG AGO*—

KEEPING MYSELF ALIVE WHILE AWAITING ONE *ABLE* TO BE MY *SUCCESSOR*.

I *DO* HAVE GREAT HOPES FOR *COLETTE*—

BUT NO MORE TIME TO WAIT.

I MUST TAKE BACK MY CITY *NOW*.







THERE ARE EVEN MORE COMING!

OKAY, FORGET THE PANTS.

THE HUNT IS ON!
GO!



HOOO!

GAO!



HAOROOOOORAH!



GRR.

MY LOVELY NEW ARMOR...

OH, WELL.

COLETTE—

MY FATHER SHOULD BE HERE SOON, BUT...

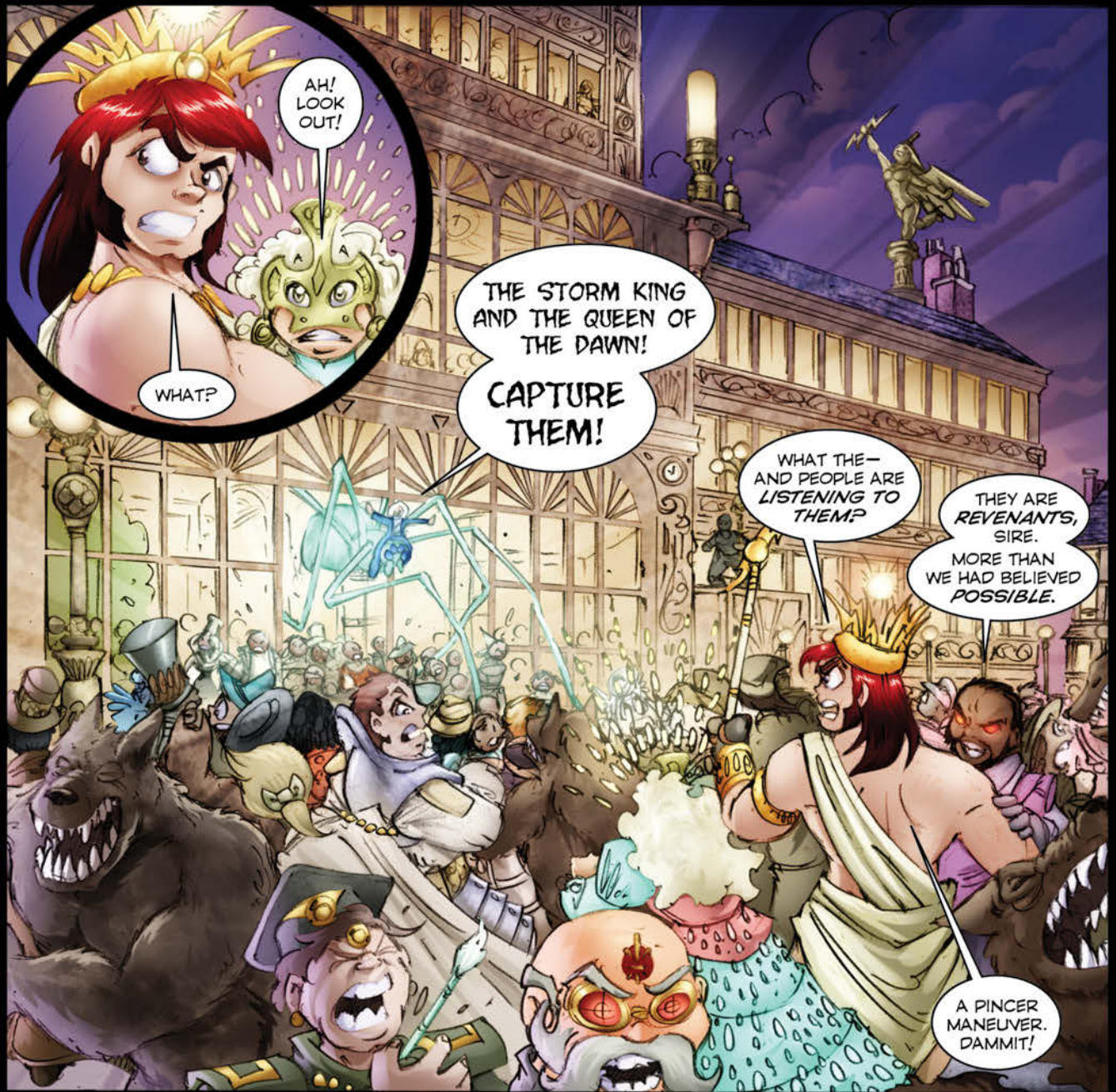
STICK WITH ME. WE'LL FIND A LAMP POST AND I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.



THIS MAKES NO SENSE.

HOW DID THIS MANY GEISTERDAMEN GET THIS FAR INTO THE CITY?

WHERE IS THE MASTER?



AH! LOOK OUT!

WHAT?

THE STORM KING AND THE QUEEN OF THE DAWN!

CAPTURE THEM!

WHAT THE— AND PEOPLE ARE LISTENING TO THEM?

THEY ARE REVENANTS, SIRE. MORE THAN WE HAD BELIEVED POSSIBLE.

A PINNER MANEUVER. DAMMIT!



SMOKE KNIGHTS! SUBDUE THE REVENANTS WITHOUT KILLING THEM!

Tch.



THAT DOES SEEM NEEDLESSLY COMPLICATED, SIRE.

JARON, I DON'T KNOW WHO EXACTLY IS BEHIND THIS LITTLE SHOW—

BUT A SHOW IT IS, AND ALL OF PARIS IS WATCHING. THEY WILL SEE HOW A KING LEADS.



ALL WHO ARE LOYAL TO THE LIGHTNING CROWN—

TO ME!



UGH. THIS ISN'T GOOD—
THEY'RE PANICKING.



NO! MY CANE!
CALM DOWN, YOU FOOLS—



FORGIVE ME, MADAM, BUT I FEARED THE CROWD WOULD CRUSH YOUR GOWN.

WHY, THANK YOU—AH—ANONYMOUS WAITER.

Swoop!

OF COURSE, MADAM.

I REALIZE THAT LATER I WILL NO DOUBT BE FLOGGED FOR MY AUDACITY.



HEH. YOU SOUND JUST LIKE YOUR GRANDFATHER.

YERK. I DID NOT NEED TO HEAR THAT.

WE SHOULD FIND COLETTE.

WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG IN PARIS, STAYING CLOSE TO COLETTE IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA.



MARTELLUS IS RETREATING TOWARD THE AIRSHIP.

GOOD.

AH. HERE IT IS.

I WISH PAPA WOULD STANDARDIZE THESE THINGS.



GET BACK, YOU SCUM.

THE LADY VOLTAIRE IS TRYING TO WORK!

SEFF-IE—

BE POLITE! MY FAMILY HAS TO RULE THESE PEOPLE!



NOW THEN. I'M NOT REALLY SUPPOSED TO BE DRIVING PAPA'S CITY BY MYSELF, BUT...




HERE GOES:

"HANDSHAKE PROTOCOL: un deux trois Mon chat est bleu..."



WELCOME, MASTER VOLTAIRE.

CITY CONTROL SUB-STATION XBL-1123G IS FULLY OPERATIONAL.



DO ALL THE LAMPS IN PARIS DO THAT?

WELL, ONLY FOR THE RIGHT PERSON.

READY, MASTER.

READY, MASTER.

READY, MASTER.

AH! THE GARGOYLES!

I'VE BEEN LEARNING, BUT I DON'T THINK I CAN MANAGE MORE THAN THIS WITHOUT HELP.

PAPA COULD PROBABLY RUN HUNDREDS OF THEM.



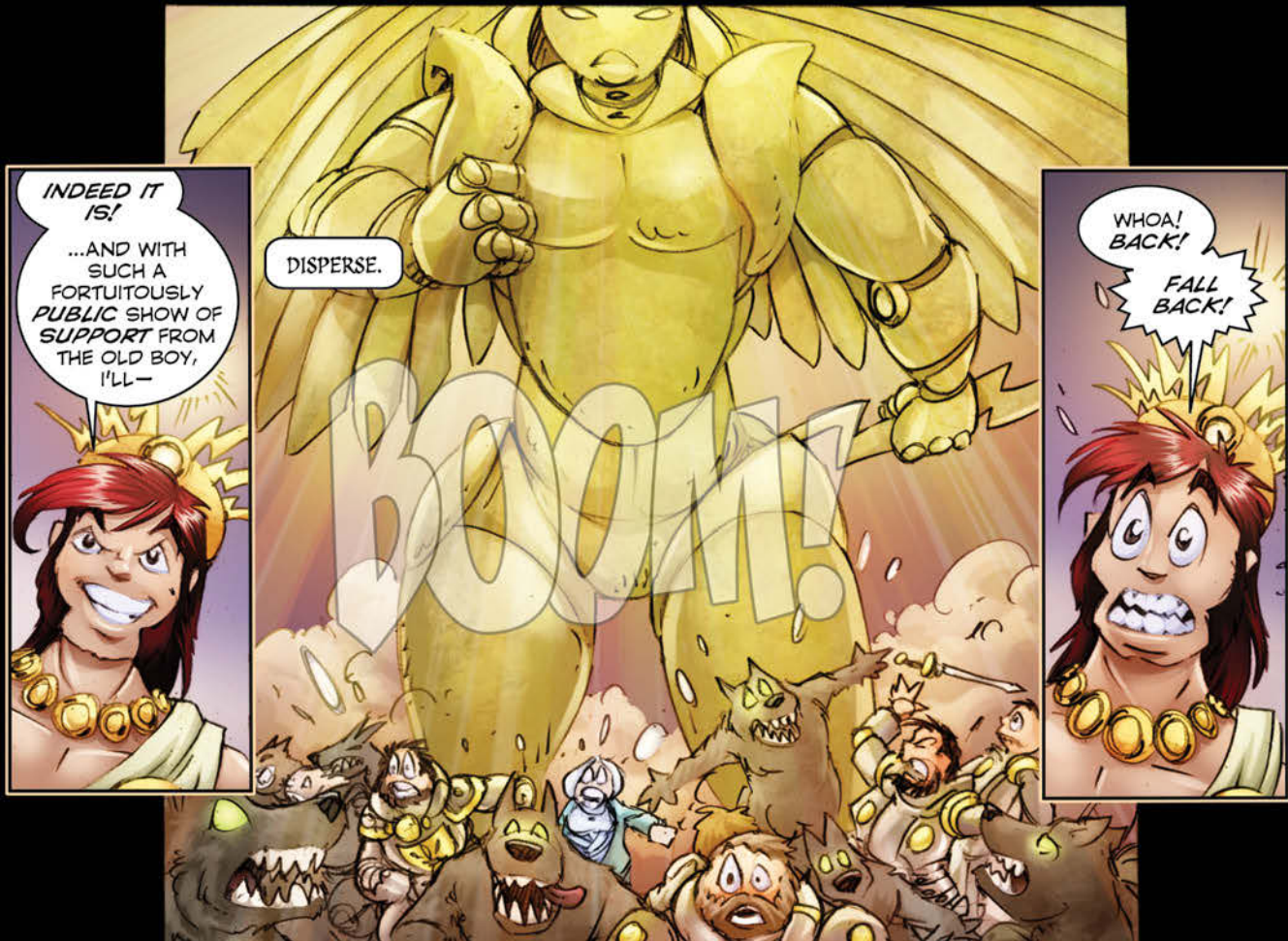
DISPERSE.

DISPERSE.

DISPERSE.

MASTER OF PARIS IS HERE!

IS GOOD!



INDEED IT IS!

...AND WITH SUCH A FORTUITOUSLY PUBLIC SHOW OF SUPPORT FROM THE OLD BOY, I'LL—

DISPERSE.

WHOA! BACK!

FALL BACK!



YEEK! DON'T KILL MARTELLUS!
I NEED HIM FOR MY NEWEST MASTER PLAN!

NO! STOP!
TURN LEFT! LEFT!

AAAH! COLETTE, LOOK OUT!



THAT'S NOT ME!
I'M TRYING TO SQUISH THOSE BIG SPIDER THINGS!

SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE SYSTEM!



CAN I HELP?

NOT UNLESS YOU'RE SUDDENLY A SPARK—

I MEAN, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON WITH HALF THESE SUBSYSTEMS— AND I'VE BEEN STUDYING THEM FOR YEARS!

BONSOIR, LADY VOLTAIRE—
MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE?



TARVEK!

TARVEK? IT CAN'T BE—NOT IN THAT OUTFIT.

OH, DO KEEP IT DOWN, GIRLS, OR EVERYONE WILL WANT TO KILL HIM.

AH, PARIS—IT'S LIKE I NEVER LEFT.



WELL, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE, CHERI.
YOU CAN CHECK THE GREEN LINES WHILE I TRY REALIGNING THE BLUE AND SILVER PROTOCOLS...

OF COURSE, MILADY!
HEH! YOU FINALLY BROKE THROUGH, EH?
I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WOULD!

SO... HOW MAD ARE YOU?



I DID NOT BREAK THROUGH. I'M NOT A SPARK.

WHAT? BUT HERE YOU ARE, TAPPED INTO THE CITY!
IF YOU CAN—

I CAN'T.

I CAN'T CONTROL IT. LOOK AT THIS MESS!



BUT... COLETTE, I DON'T THINK THIS IS YOUR FAULT.

LOOK. SOMEONE'S INTERFERING SOMEHOW.



SEE? LOOK AT THE FILIGREE ON THIS GREY LINE HERE.
ISN'T THAT KIND OF OFF?

-BUT THE GREY LINES AREN'T IMP-OOOOH.
WAIT.



THIS IS... INCORRECT.
WHAT ABOUT—
SHH. LET ME LOOK AT SOME OTHER LOW-LEVEL LINES.
YESSS... IT'S SUBTLE, BUT IT'S THERE. HOLD ON...



SO... TELL ME, COUSIN...

HOW IS IT THAT YOU CAN READ THE SECRET CIVIC CONTROL CODE OF THE MASTER OF PARIS?

WELL, I CAN'T. NOT FLUENTLY, ANYWAY.
NO ONE CAN.



"AT THE UNIVERSITY, THERE ARE WHOLE DRINKING CLUBS DEVOTED TO TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW THE MASTER RUNS PARIS.
THERE ARE A LOT OF SPARKS HERE, AFTER ALL."

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 $(\frac{1}{A} \frac{1}{TAB})$
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"SOME CONCENTRATE ON HIS GOVERNANCE, SOME ON THE MECHANICAL TECH,
AND SOME ON THE UNDERLYING SECRET LANGUAGES THAT HE USES TO CONTROL THE WHOLE THING."



BETWEEN WULFENBACH AND MYSELF, WE MUST HAVE BELONGED TO AT LEAST TWENTY OF THEM.
PUTTING ALL THEIR WORK TOGETHER AND EXTRAPOLATING...
I LIKE TO THINK I LEARNED MORE THAN MOST.

-AND THE MASTER PERMITS THIS?



"OH, YES. HE ALWAYS SAID THEY WERE *INVALUABLE* WHEN IT CAME TO FERRETING OUT WEAKNESSES IN HIS SYSTEMS—"



"AND IF ANYONE GOT TOO CLOSE... WELL... HE HAD WAYS OF DISCOURAGING CERTAIN AVENUES OF RESEARCH."



THE TRICK WAS TO ALWAYS MAKE IT OUT THE DOOR *JUST* AS THEY STARTED CELEBRATING.

HA! FOUND IT!



WHAT DID YOU FIND?

IT'S AN ENTITY!
AN ARTIFICIAL ENTITY!



WHAT? WHERE? I DON'T SEE ANY OF THE EXPECTED NEURAL LATICES!

EVEN IN THE SIMPLEST COGNITIVE CONSTRUCTS—

tch—
YOU'RE THINKING ORGANICALLY.



AH...I WILL ADMIT TO THAT PARTICULAR BIAS...

THIS ISN'T A CLANK, OPERATING IN CORPORAL SPACE—

THIS IS A PARASITIC INTELLIGENCE. A MATHEMATICAL CHIMERA WITHOUT PHYSICAL CONSTRAINTS!

THE NEURAL STRUCTURE IS THERE, YES—

BUT IT'S SPREAD OUT ACROSS VAST AREAS OF UNIMPORTANT SUBSYSTEMS!



BUT...HOW COULD IT FUNCTION COHESIVELY?

HOW CAN IT THINK?

MUCH THE SAME AS WE DO.

REMEMBER, EVEN AT THESE DISTANCES, THE SPEED OF ELECTRICITY IS ALMOST INSTANTANEOUS—



AND IF YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT...

OH.

WAIT...

WAIT...



COLETTE?

NO! QUIET! GIVE ME QUIET!

I... I CAN SEE THE PATTERNS!

SEE? THERE IS MORE THAN ONE ENTITY HERE! LOOK, THIS ONE IS HUGE! IT'S ENTWINED ITSELF EVERYWHERE!

IT'S SO OMNIPRESENT I ALMOST DIDN'T NOTICE IT—BUT ITS FOCUS IS MOVING—



COLETTE!

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING— MEDDLING WITH MY CITY ON YOUR OWN?!

yeek!





HUH. THE MASTER NOT FIGHT SO WELL?

EH, I SUPPOSE HE'S FINALLY FEELING HIS AGE--



THOOMB



WHOA. NOW HE DOING BETTER.

EEEK! MONSIEUR MACHINES!
IT'S THE GENDARMY!



WAIT... CALM DOWN...

THIS ISN'T MY FAULT...

I'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG...



MARTELLUS VON BLITZENGAARD!
WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

AAAAH!

IT WASN'T ME, MASTER VOLTAIRE!

HONEST!



THESE ATTACKERS APPEAR TO BE FOCUSING ON YOU.

AH—THAT DOES SEEM TO BE THE CASE, MASTER...BUT...

GOOD.



YOU WILL MAKE YOUR STAND THERE.

TRY TO MAKE IT LOOK IMPRESSIVE.



I CAN HELP WITH THAT.

HMM... INDEED YOU CAN.



FALAKA TENK!



EVAAAAJ!

THOOOMB!



WHAT IS MASTER VOLTAIRE DOING?
IT'S LIKE THE GENDARMY IS JUST DRIVING THEM TOWARD US!

HEH. NOW, NOW, THE MASTER DOESN'T TELL YOU HOW TO SING, DOES HE?



VERY GOOD-I
THINK **THAT'S**
DRAWN THEM ALL
OUT.



VOILÀ!





CLAK CLAK CLAK CLAK CLAK CLAK CLAK CLAK CLAK



AH! THAT'S TERRIFYINGLY FAMILIAR...

OH?

IT'S LIKE I'M BACK IN CASTLE HETERODYNE.

CASTLE HETERODYNE? REALLY...



—AND THAT TAKES CARE OF THAT.

ASTONISHING! I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM USE SUCH DIRECT, PERSONAL CONTROL!

I MEAN, THERE ARE SOME OLD STORIES, BUT—



MASTER VOLTAIRE!
YOU FINALLY CAME TO ONE OF MY PARTIES!

OF COURSE, TERE BITHIA.

I ALWAYS PROMISED I...
AH...



APOLOGIES. A... A TOUCH OF WEAKNESS.

AH. HERE.

JUST LEAN ON ME—YOU CAN PRETEND YOU'RE GLAD TO SEE ME, YOU DOUR OLD WIZARD.

I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU, YOU SCHEMING FLIRT.





OOOH! IT'S THE LADY HETERODYNE!

I'D HEARD SHE WAS IN TOWN!

OOOOH!

WHAT AN ENTRANCE!

WHAT STYLE!



WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE?!



WHY, MAKING THIS THE PARTY OF THE DECADE.

AREN'T YOU LUCKY TO BE HERE, MY DEAR?

SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?



MY DEAR LADY HETERODYNE! I AM SO PLEASSED TO SEE YOU!

I'LL BET YOU ARE. DID YOU GET MY MESSAGE?

YOUR MESSAGE?

—ABOUT THE FURIOUS CORPSE-GHOST OF ANDRONICUS VALOIS WHO IS ON HIS WAY RIGHT NOW, POSSIBLY TO EXACT TERRIBLE VENGEANCE UPON ANYONE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO TRY TO CLAIM HIS THRONE?



MASTER VOLTAIRE— SURELY YOU GOT MY WARNING?

I WAS STUCK DOWN IN THE LIBRARY, BUT PROFESSOR BEAUSOLEIL SAID HE COULD GET TO YOU—

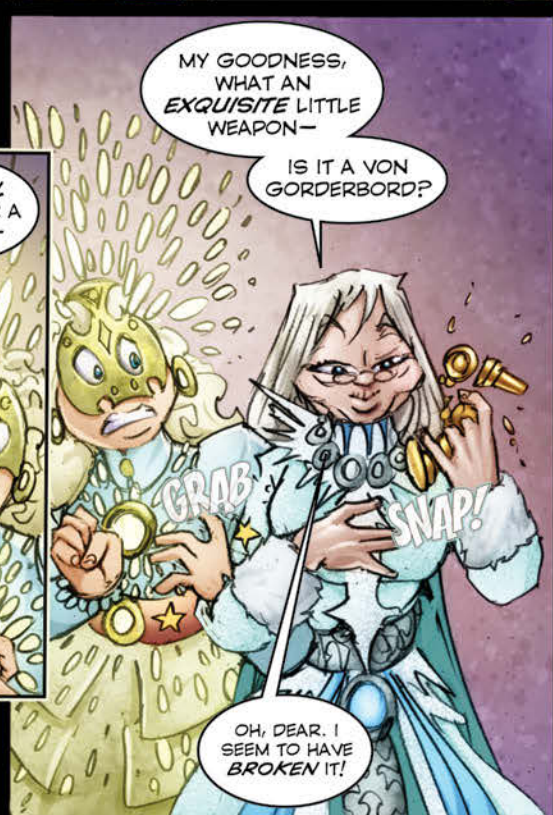
OH, HE CERTAINLY DID.



WOW—THE LADY HETERODYNE! MAYBE YOU'LL GET TO SING FOR HER!

URK.

OH, I'LL GIVE HER A SONG—



MY GOODNESS, WHAT AN EXQUISITE LITTLE WEAPON—

IS IT A VON GORDERBORD?

OH, DEAR. I SEEM TO HAVE BROKEN IT!



DON'T WORRY. WE KNOW HE'S COMING.

THE SWORD IS IN MY LAB—AND IT'S REACTING LIKE CRAZY.

AFTER THE PARTY, YOU SHOULD COME TAKE A LOOK—

I EXPECT TO GET SOME **VERY INTERESTING** DATA FROM ALL THIS.

AH—HE'S GOING TO PUT UP A **FIGHT**, YOU KNOW...

MAYBE **THIS** ISN'T THE **BEST PLACE**—

LET HIM COME.

IF IT IS INDEED **ANDRONICUS**, THEN IT IS **BEST** I FACE HIM **HERE**— WHERE I HAVE ALL THE **POWER** OF MY CITY AT MY **COMMAND**.

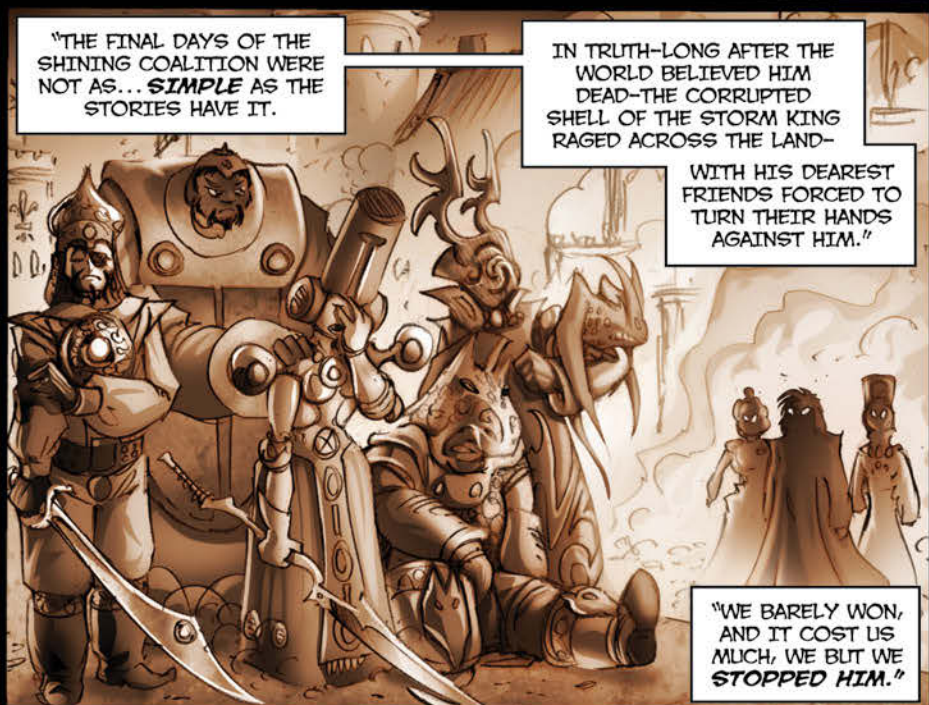


HE WAS A **FEARFUL** **MONSTER** AT THE END.

TO THINK HE LAY SLEEPING SO **NEAR** FOR **ALL THIS TIME**—

AND YOU DIDN'T **KNOW**?

I DID NOT.



"THE FINAL DAYS OF THE SHINING COALITION WERE NOT AS... **SIMPLE** AS THE STORIES HAVE IT.

IN TRUTH—LONG AFTER THE WORLD BELIEVED HIM DEAD—THE **CORRUPTED SHELL** OF THE **STORM KING** RAGED ACROSS THE LAND—

WITH HIS **DEAREST FRIENDS** FORCED TO TURN THEIR HANDS AGAINST HIM."

"WE **BARELY** WON, AND IT COST US **MUCH**. WE BUT WE **STOPPED HIM**."



VAN RIJN TOOK HIS BODY... **SUPPOSEDLY** TO A **SAFE** AND **SECRET** **RESTING PLACE**.



IT SEEMS THERE WERE **SECRETS** HE KEPT... **EVEN** FROM **US**—HIS **CLOSEST** COMPANIONS.

—AND NOW I AM THE **LAST**.

MAY I BE **STRONG** ENOUGH TO **FINISH** THIS.

PAPA! SOMETHING IS COMING!

YES, CHILD. I CAN FEEL IT.



WHAT-

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

IT...IT IS PARIS, MY LORD.

AT LEAST...SO MY INTERNAL CHARTS TELL ME...

-BUT PARIS NEVER WAS SO TALL!

HAS IT TRULY BEEN CENTURIES?



THAT'S HIM
ALL RIGHT.

I HOPE YOU
GUYS ARE *READY*
FOR HIM, BECAUSE ALL
I'VE GOT IS A WEASEL
AND SOME CLANKS.

ARE WE
READY FOR
THIS?

ALL THE
PREPARATIONS
HAVE BEEN
MADE, SIRE.

WE ONLY
AWAIT YOU TO
MAKE THEM
COMPLETE.

AH.
IT *IS* TRULY HE-THE
MADDENED REMNANT OF
MY KING AND FRIEND-

JUST AS HE
WAS LONG AGO
WHEN LAST I
SAW HIM.

THIS WILL
NOT BE AN EASY
FIGHT.

I COULD GIVE
HIM A SWIFT
KICK IN THE
TOES,
MISTRESS...



NO. THIS
IS NOT
PARIS.

BUT MY
LORD-

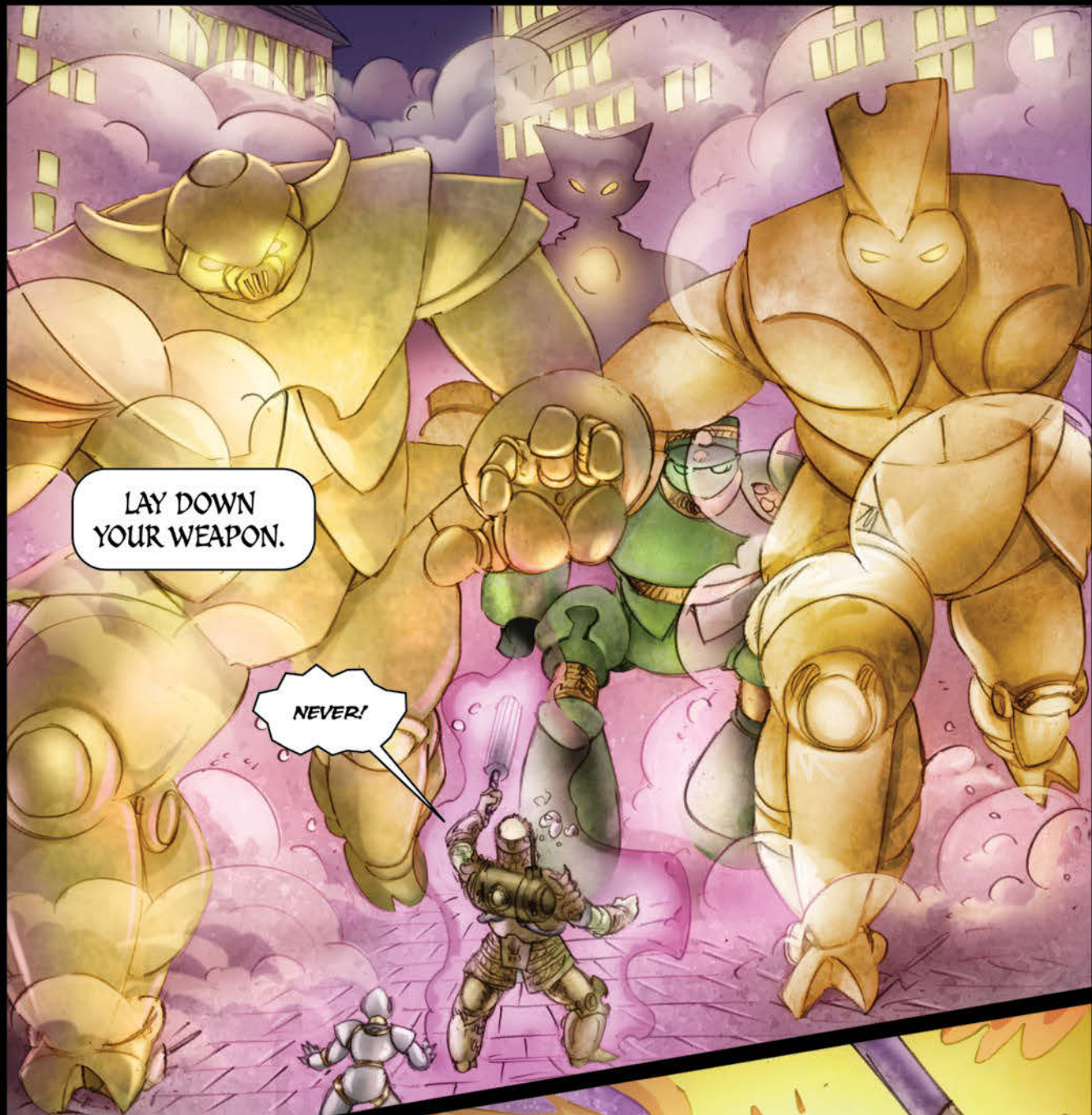
THIS IS A
NEST OF
OATHBREAKERS
AND WIZARDS!



-AND IT
SHALL NOT
STAND!

GO ON,
SIR! ARREST
HIM!

STOP!



LAY DOWN
YOUR WEAPON.

NEVER!



AAAAH!

THIS WAS NOT
A REQUEST.

LOOT!



AH!

YOUR MAJESTY!



TRULY PARIS *HAS* BECOME A CITY OF WIZARDS!

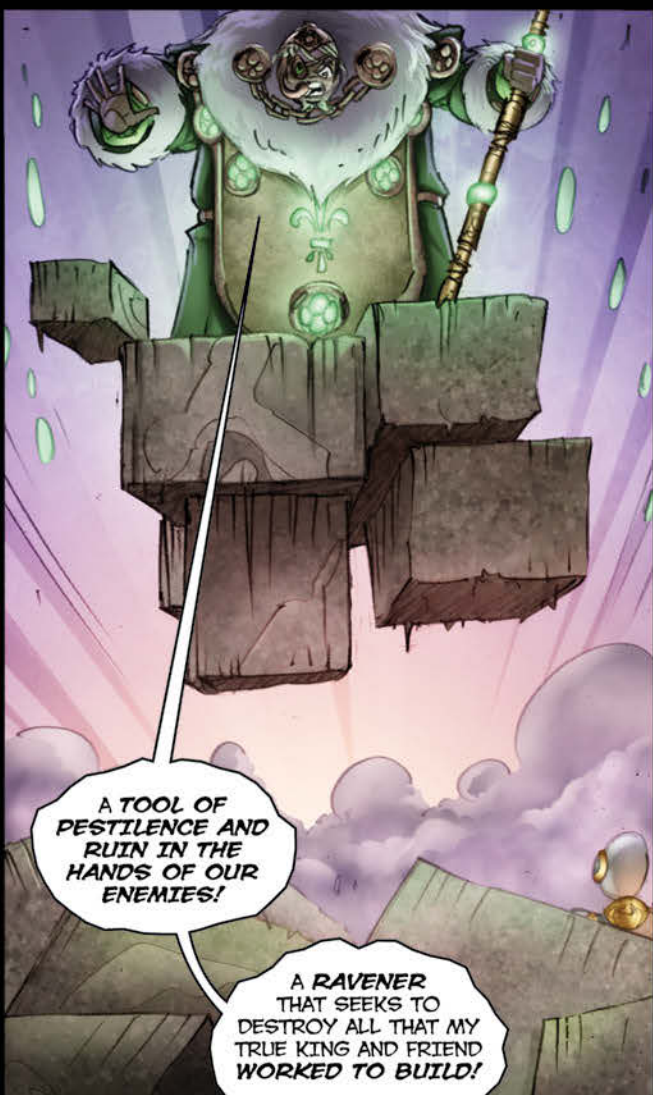
THE VERY STONES RISE UP AGAINST THEIR KING?



YOU ARE NO KING!

NOT ANY MORE.

YOU ARE A DEAD THING THAT REFUSES A NOBLE GRAVE-



A TOOL OF PESTILENCE AND RUIN IN THE HANDS OF OUR ENEMIES!

A RAVENER THAT SEEKS TO DESTROY ALL THAT MY TRUE KING AND FRIEND WORKED TO BUILD!



WHAT?



YOUNG VOLTAIRE? IS THAT REALLY YOU?
ASTOUNDING—IT IS AS PRENDE SAID!

AH. IT IS BAD. TIME HAS NOT DIMINISHED HIS POWER.

IT HAS BEEN CENTURIES... AND THOUGH, BY YOUR CLEVER WIZARDRIES, YOU STILL LIVE—YOU HAVE GROWN OLD.

YESSS... I SEE IT, NOW.

—BUT WHO ARE YOU TO TALK SO SANCTIMONIOUSLY OF OUR ENEMIES, MY LAD—

WHEN YOU HAVE CLEARLY LEARNED SO MUCH FROM THEM YOURSELF?



WHOA!
WHAT'S
GOING ON WITH
HIM?
HE'S LOOKING
CREEPIER EVERY
SECOND!

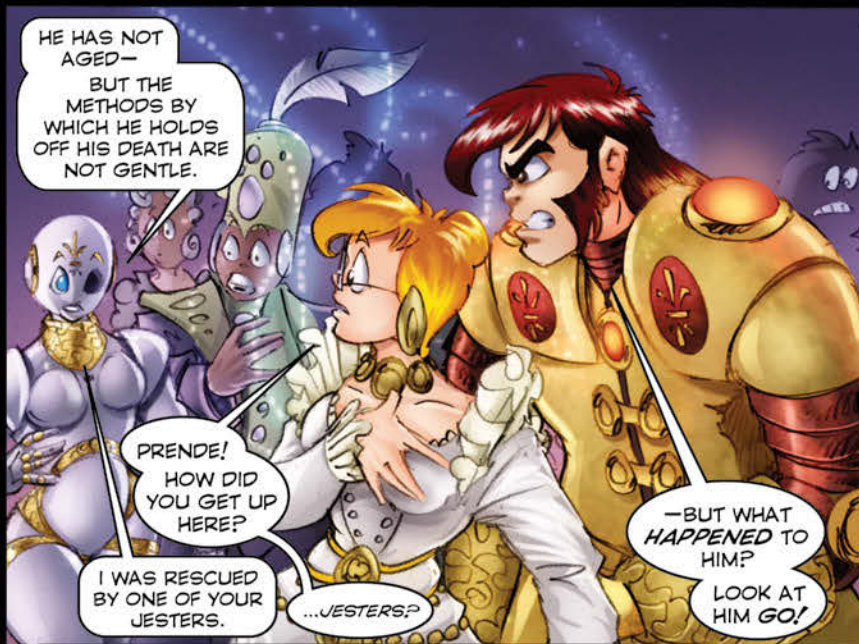
IT'S HARD TO
BELIEVE THAT'S EVEN
ANDRONICUS.

WHY?



HAVE YOU
EVER SEEN A
PORTRAIT OF
VALOIS?
HE WAS
YOUNG!
HANDSOME!

HE DIDN'T
HAVE TIME TO
GET OLD!



HE HAS NOT
AGED—
BUT THE
METHODS BY
WHICH HE HOLDS
OFF HIS DEATH ARE
NOT GENTLE.

PRENDE!
HOW DID
YOU GET UP
HERE?

I WAS RESCUED
BY ONE OF YOUR
JESTERS.

...JESTERS?

—BUT WHAT
HAPPENED TO
HIM?

LOOK AT
HIM GO!



IT'S AMAZING!
WHY, IF I COULD
GET HOLD OF THAT
POWER, I
COULD—



—GO MAD AND
CHARGE AROUND
TRYING TO DESTROY
EUROPA,

AS YOU
SLOWLY TURN
INTO A ROTTING
CORPSE-
MONSTER?
tch. YOU
WOULDN'T LIKE
THAT, IT WOULD
RUIN YOUR
LOOKS.



...

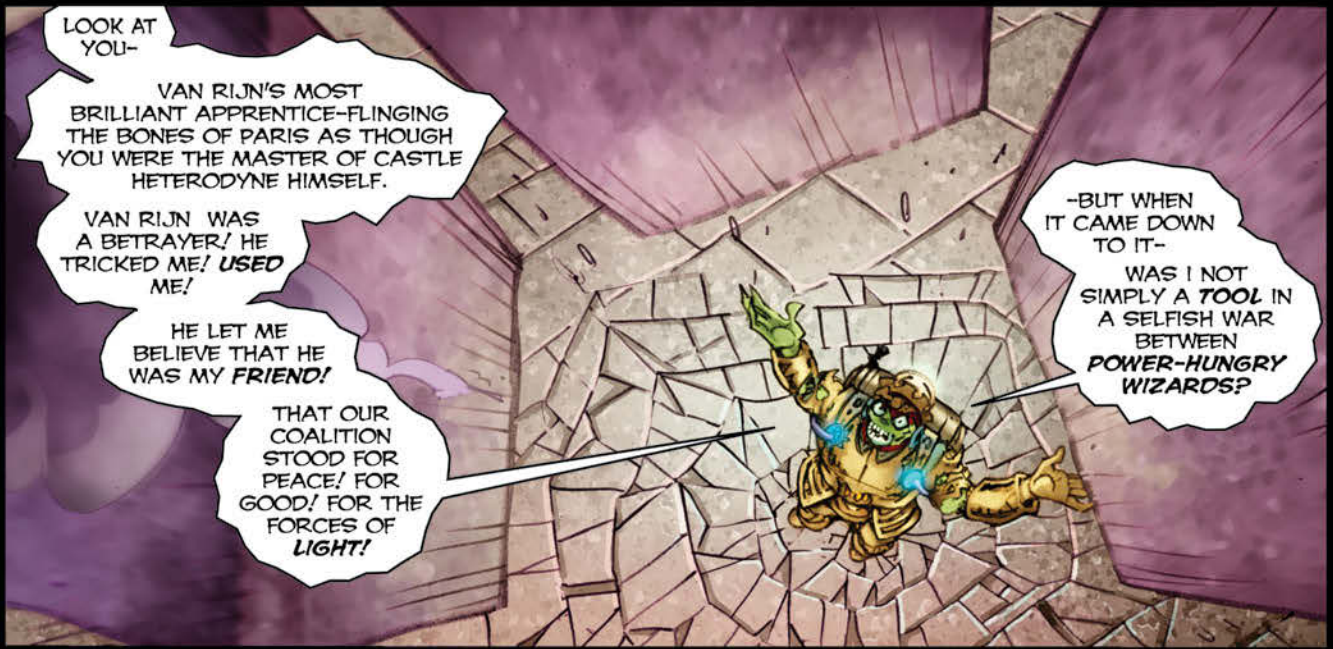
RHAAAA!



WELL, IT
DOESN'T SOUND
LIKE NEARLY AS
MUCH FUN WHEN
YOU SAY IT—

BUT I SUPPOSE
THAT'S WHY WE
WORK WELL
TOGETHER.

DON'T GET
USED TO IT.



LOOK AT YOU-

VAN RIJN'S MOST BRILLIANT APPRENTICE-FLINGING THE BONES OF PARIS AS THOUGH YOU WERE THE MASTER OF CASTLE HETERODYNE HIMSELF.

VAN RIJN WAS A BETRAYER! HE TRICKED ME! USED ME!

HE LET ME BELIEVE THAT HE WAS MY FRIEND!

THAT OUR COALITION STOOD FOR PEACE! FOR GOOD! FOR THE FORCES OF LIGHT!

-BUT WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT-

WAS I NOT SIMPLY A **TOOL** IN A SELFISH WAR BETWEEN **POWER-HUNGRY WIZARDS?**



BE HONEST IN **THIS**, AT LEAST!



SHOW ME THAT **EVERYTHING** YOU SAY IS NOT A **LIE!**



TELL ME WHERE VAN RIJN SENT MY BRIDE!

SMAT!



PAPA!



GET UP,
"OLD MAN."

I HAVE SEEN
YOU TAKE FAR
WORSE THAN
THAT-

AND I
REQUIRE
ANSWERS.



ENOUGH.



WHY ARE WE
ALL STANDING
AROUND
WATCHING?



WELL, MY GUARDS ARE ALL IN POSITION—
I'M JUST WAITING FOR...
AH, HERE IT COMES NOW.

MAYBE THIS CAN HELP?

HELLO.

OH! YES, HERE—USE THESE CABLES.



FOOL. YOU'VE ALREADY HAD YOUR ANSWERS.

YOU JUST DON'T LIKE THEM.

WILL YOU NEVER ACCEPT THAT YOU WERE USED?!

IMPOSSIBLE!

VAN RIJN WAS AGAINST HER FROM THE START—YOU ALL WERE!



HE TOOK THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY HE HAD TO SPIRIT HER AWAY!

DID I NOT SEE HER VANISH BEFORE MY EYES—IN HIS VERY WORKSHOP!

IT WAS NO ACCIDENT!



—AND I TELL YOU, IT WAS!

ASK YOURSELF WHY SHE WAS IN THE WORKSHOP!

WHAT WAS SHE LOOKING FOR?

SHE RAN AFOLU OF SOMETHING NONE OF US UNDERSTOOD—

WHILE SEARCHING FOR SECRETS TO STEAL!



YOU KNEW SHE COULD NOT BE TRUSTED!

THE MUSES WARNED YOU!



THE HETERODYNES HAD NO INTENTION OF HONORING THE TRUCE!
YOUR BELOVED BRIDE WAS SIMPLY ANOTHER OF THEIR FIENDISH WEAPONS—

AND SHE DID HER JOB WELL!

YOU WERE INDEED BETRAYED—



BUT IT WAS NOT BY YOUR FRIENDS!



WHOA.

UH... ARE YOU SURE WE SHOULDN'T JUST...

ER...STAY OUT OF YOUR FATHER'S WAY?

FINISH HIM!



HIGHNESS—
IT IS READY.

GOOD. NOW,
ACTIVATE THE
FAIL-SAFES ON
MY ARMOR.

OF COURSE
NOT.
I'M GOING TO
USE IT *AGAINST*
HIM.

IS
THAT—
IS THAT *THE*
SWORD?!

DON'T TELL
ME YOU'RE
GOING TO JUST
GIVE IT TO HIM!



THAT DOESN'T
SOUND LIKE A
VERY GOOD IDEA,
EITHER.

WELL, YOU
MIGHT BE
RIGHT...
ERGH...
THIS FEELS
WEIRD...
BUT I
HAVE A
PLAN.

WHEN HE
TAKES IT AWAY
FROM YOU, HE'LL
BE EVEN *HARDER*
TO GET RID OF.



THEN YOU'D
BETTER HOPE I
WIN, EH?

DON'T WORRY—I
DIDN'T HAVE A *LOT*
OF TIME TO WORK—
BUT I'M EIGHTY-FIVE
POINT THREE PERCENT
CERTAIN THAT THIS SWORD
IS NO LONGER BOUND TO
VALOIS' WILL.

HEH—AND IF
THIS *WORKS*—
MY CLAIM TO THE
THRONE WILL BE
UNASSAILABLE!



GOOD
LUCK WITH
THAT—
IN CASE YOU
HADN'T NOTICED,
HE'S *INSANELY*
STRONG.

I'M NOT
PLANNING
ON FIGHTING
FAIR!

MY SMOKE KNIGHTS HAVE BEEN QUIETLY SOFTENING HIM UP WITH **POISON**.

BY NOW, HE SHOULD BE READY TO FALL OVER WHEN I TAP HIS SHOULDER.

LET'S GO, BOYS!

YEAH!

WOO!

WE'VE HIT HIM WITH ENOUGH POISONS TO FELL A **DRAGON**—

BUT I DON'T THINK HE'S EVEN NOTICED!

HIGHNESS—
NO!



HO! DIS? DIS IZ JUST TWO GEEZERS ARGUING 'BOUT DE OLD DAYS.

HYU WANTS TO MAKE DIS GUY SCHTUPID MAD?

HYU SHOWS HIM SOMETHING HE REALLY HATES!

HEY! DOT'S US!

YAH! DIBS ON HIS HAT!

DIS GUN BE DE BEST SCHMANCY PARTY EFFER!

OHO!

SOBTL NEFFER WORKED ON DOT GUY—

EFFEN VEN HE VOSN'T A BIG KREZY MONSTER!

—BUT VE COULD ALWAYS GET HIM MAD!

MADDER THAN THIS? SERIOUSLY?



HE'S DOWN,
BOYS—
LET'S GET
HIM!

URRRRGH...

YOU JACKALS
THINK TO ATTACK
ME WHILE I LIE
HELPLESS?
COWARDS!

YOU ARE NOT
WORTHY OF
BATTLE—

WOLLY

ONLY OF
DEATH!



NOW-YOU WILL SERVE THE TRUE STORM KING!

DESTROY THESE FOOLS AS I TAKE BACK MY SWORD-

AND THEN WE MARCH TO OVERTHROW THOSE WHO SEEK TO DESTROY MY LIFE'S WORK!

YES, YOUR MAJESTY!



YOUR LIFE'S WORK?

LOOK AT YOURSELF!

LOOK-AND SEE HOW THE NOBLE WEAPON MY MASTER FORGED FOR YOU HAS BEEN CORRUPTED BY THE ARTS OF THE VERY ENEMY WE SOUGHT TO VANQUISH!



ALLOW YOURSELF TO SEE WHAT HE HAS DONE TO YOU!



YOU WERE THE HEAD AND HEART OF THE SHINING COALITION!

I LOOKED UP TO YOU! WORSHIPED YOU! WE ALL DID!

I WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED YOU TO THE SHORES OF HELL-

AND NOW-



ENOUGH!

IF THAT IS TRUE, THEN YOU MAY JOIN ME- AND FOLLOW ME ONCE AGAIN!



AH!

I THINK NOT. NOT NOW.



YOU-HOW-



HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHOSE APPRENTICE I WAS?

I WAS THERE WHEN YOUR WEAPONS WERE FORGED!

I ASSISTED IN THEIR VERY CREATION-

AND I HAVE HAD TWO HUNDRED YEARS TO REFINE AND BUILD UPON THE KNOWLEDGE THAT DRIVES THEIR POWER!



WHUM

YESSS...

EVEN WITH THE DUBIOUS "IMPROVEMENTS" ADDED BY YOUR UNFORTUNATE NEW FRIENDS-

THE BASICS REMAIN THE SAME.



GOOD. I CAN WORK WITH THIS.



NOW, STAND DOWN!

CRUNK!

THAT WAS IMPRESSIVE.

AH...IS IT OVER?

NO!
THESE READINGS FROM MY FATHER...

THAT ENERGY HE JUST ABSORBED WAS **WRONG** SOMEHOW. **CORRUPTED.**

URGHHH!

MASTER VOLTAIRE!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

AHHHH...
SOMETHING IS **WRONG.**

VAN RIJN'S WEAPONS SHOULD **NOT-**

MISTRESS--THE ALTERATIONS TO THE KING'S WEAPON WERE MADE BY MY OLD MASTER--**BLUDTHARST HETERODYNE.**

I WAS THERE!

I SEE.
DIDN'T MY ANCESTORS DO **ANYTHING USEFUL?**

WELL, THEY BUILT **ME...**

WELL, WHATEVER HE DID TO IT, IT'S HURTING THE MASTER!
CAN YOU **HELP** HIM?

WELL, THE MASTER IS CONNECTED TO THE CITY, YES?

PERHAPS IF I CAN GET BACK INTO THE CITY SYSTEMS...

THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT!

FATHER!



COLETTE?

RUN AWAY, CHILD!

FATHER—HE'S COMING BACK! YOU'VE GOT TO GET UP!

I KNOW THAT!

ATHODE LIBES

RHAAA!

RHAAR!

Sophie del Pieve Gabbri
Autonomous Music
Machines & Songbirds



JUST... GIVE ME A MINUTE. THIS POISON...

NO! YOU DON'T HAVE A MINUTE!



UM... VERY IMPRESSIVE.

HEH. ISN'T IT?

I THINK I'M GETTING BETTER AT THIS!

RHAAA?

URRR?

HHEEY!



UP!



YES, BUT-



GET BACK!



VOLTAIRE.

RRRUMBLE



ENOUGH.



AH-HIS POWER IS ACTUALLY GROWING!

I'M GETTING US OUT OF HERE!



WHOA!



PAPA!

CRASH!



NO MORE TALKING.

NOT FOR ME-

NOT FOR YOU.

NO MORE TALKING-



HOO, BOY, OGGIE. FOR SUMVUN WHO KEEPS SAYING NO MORE TALKINK-

DIS GUY VON'T SHUT OP.

VELL, MAXIM, HYU KNOWS HOW DESE KING GUYS IZ.

VEN DEY SEZ EFFRYBODDY GOTS TO DO SUMTING, DEY ALWAYS MEAN EFFRYBODDY ELSE.

DEY IZ REAL BOSSY-LIKE DOT VAY, HYU KNOW-

...



DIE, YOU DEMONS!
RHAAAAAAA!

JÄGERMONSTERS-

YAH, YAH- BUT VE IZ ON HYU'S SIDE NOW!
IZZN'T DOT NIZE?



**DIE!
DIE!**

HO HO! TWO HUNNERT YEARS, UND HYU IS SCHTILL TOO SLOW!



YAH, UND HYU HAS REALLY LET HYUSELF GO!

CHUST LOOK AT HYUSELF!

UND HYU USED TO BE SOCH A DEVIL VIT DE LADIES, TOO.

VOT VOULD DOT CUTE HIGH PRIESTESS FROM DE TEMPLE OV NYX SAY IF SHE COULD SEE HYU NOW, HEY?



HOW DARE YOU?

WHEN I RE-ESTABLISH MY RULE, I WILL CLEANSE THE WORLD OF YOU FOUL ABOMINATIONS!



HO! MAKE OP HYU MIND, KINGIE!

DIDN'T HYU COME UND ASK OUR MASTER FOR HELP?

UND NOW HYU WANTS TO FIGHT AGAIN?



MY AGREEMENT WAS WITH THE HETERODYNE- NOT WITH HIS INSOLENT LAP DOGS!

LAP DOGS, HEY?



VELL, DIS LEEDLE DOGGIE WANTS TO KNOW VOT HYU DID VIT HER LUFFLY FANGS VUNCE HYU PULLED DEM!

JENKA...





HRAAAAAAAAAA-

POW!



CLANG
CLANG



PWANG



... YOU WERE
PRINCE HUWART
DESPLAINS-

PROTECTOR OF
WEST LESALLE.



GO, NOW, TO
YOUR REST.



AAAAAAAAA-

<huff>
<huff>



OOF!

CRASH!



you...



THOSE WERE...
GOOD MEN.
MY FRIENDS.



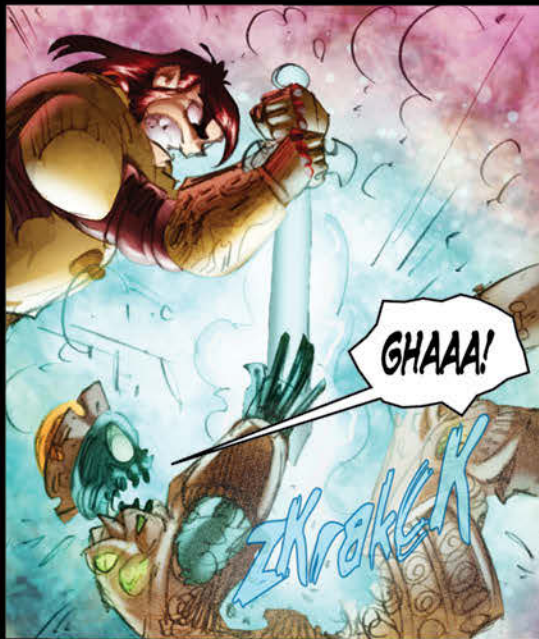
TCH. FRIENDS, I HAVE FOUND, ARE OF **LITTLE IMPORTANCE.**
MORE TO THE POINT-
HOW IS IT THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO WIELD **MY SWORD?**
WHO ARE YOU?



I... AM... **YOUR HEIR.**
YOUR **CROWN-**
YOUR **TITLE-**
YOUR **SWORD-**
ALL ARE RIGHTFULLY MINE.



OHO. ONLY IF YOU CAN TAKE IT, WHELP-
AND I DON'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE THE-



GHAAA!



OUCH.
VERY... VERY WELL-YOU SEEM TO HAVE GRASPED THE **BASICS-**



OOF!
BOOT!
BUT MERELY AWAKENING IT IS NOT ENOUGH-



BECAUSE, AS YOU CAN SEE, IT **KNOWS ITS TRUE MASTER.**
YESSSSS!



NOW THEN, YOUNG VOLTAIRE-
LET US TRULY FIGHT!

...
VOLTAIRE?

GONE?

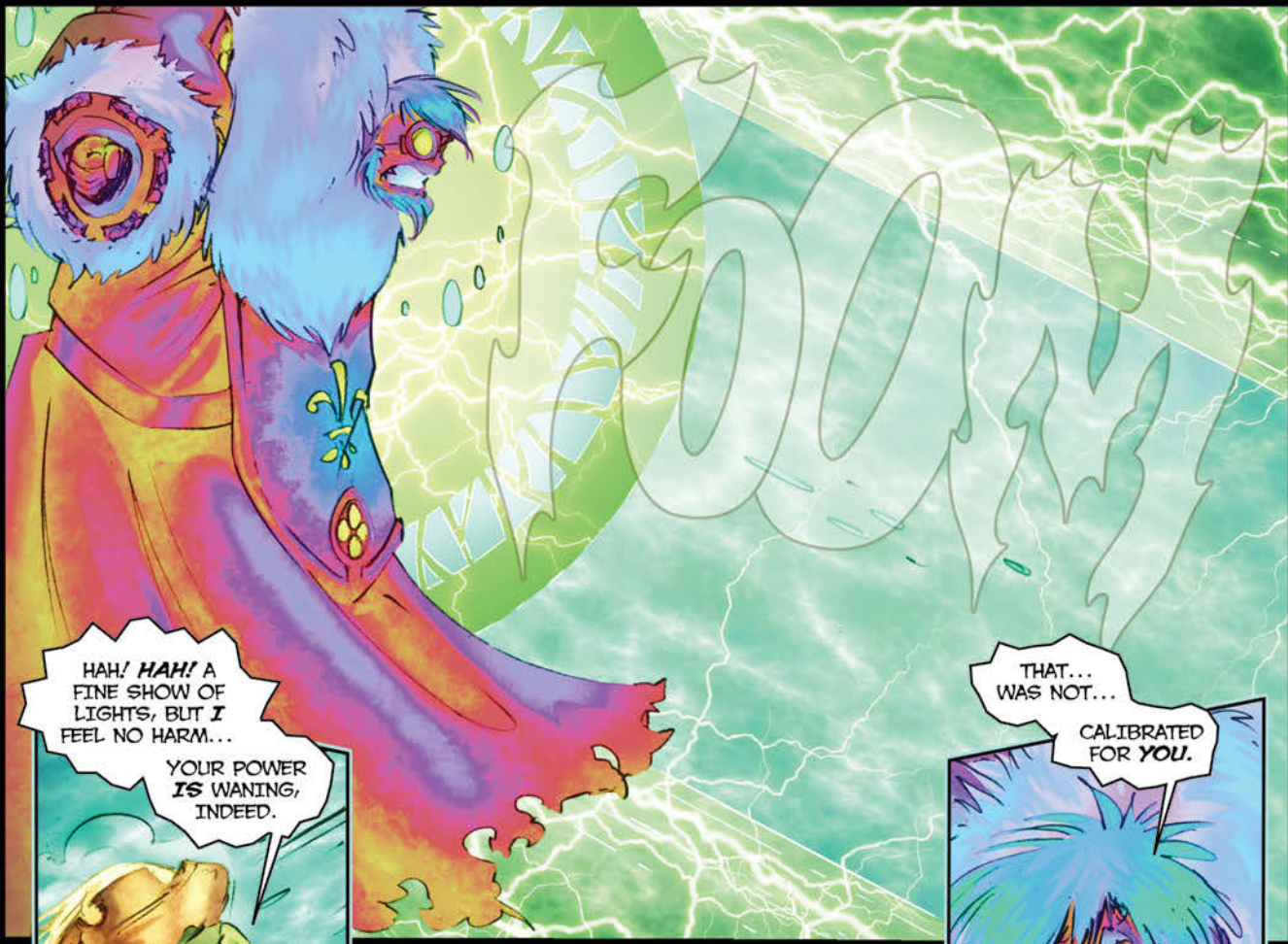
NO, SURELY THE
APPRENTICE OF
VAN RIJN WOULD
NOT FLEE...

AH, BUT I
SEE... THE LIGHTS
ARE DYING...

THE CITY
GROWS
DARK...

CAN IT BE THAT
YOU HAVE COME
TO THE END OF
YOUR POWER?

NOT
JUST YET.



HAH! HAH! A FINE SHOW OF LIGHTS, BUT I FEEL NO HARM...

YOUR POWER IS WANING, INDEED.

THAT... WAS NOT...

CALIBRATED FOR YOU.



WHAT-NO!



NO!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!



UGH. I NEED... A SWORD.

HERE HYU GO, SVEETHOT!



HUH—FINISHING OFF HYU OWN GUYS, HEY?

DOT'S GOT TO BE HARD.

HYU IZ A REAL PAIN IN DE NECK— BUT HYU GOTS DE SCHTUFF TO BE A KING, NO QVESTION.



I CERTAINLY DO!

NOW, COME ON—WHILE HE'S STILL STUNNED—

RHAAAAA!



THIS IS IT, LADS!

FOLLOW MARTELLUS!



NO!

NO!

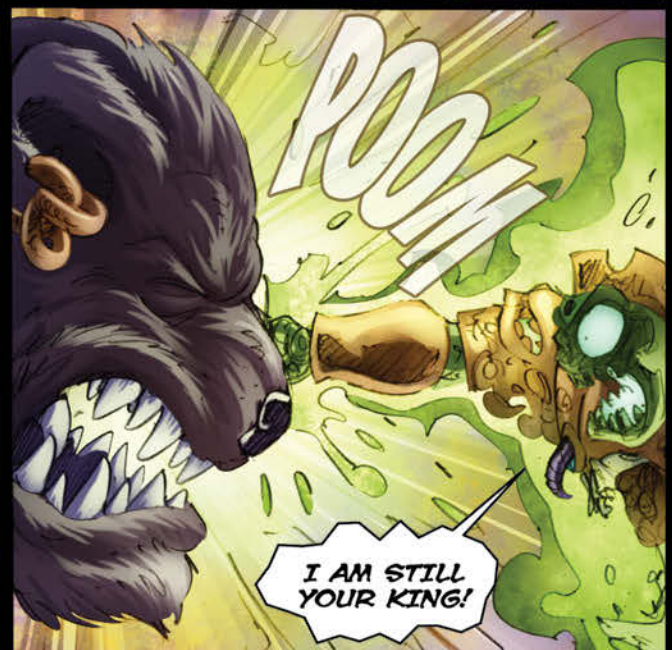
IT WILL NOT END LIKE THIS!

WHUD



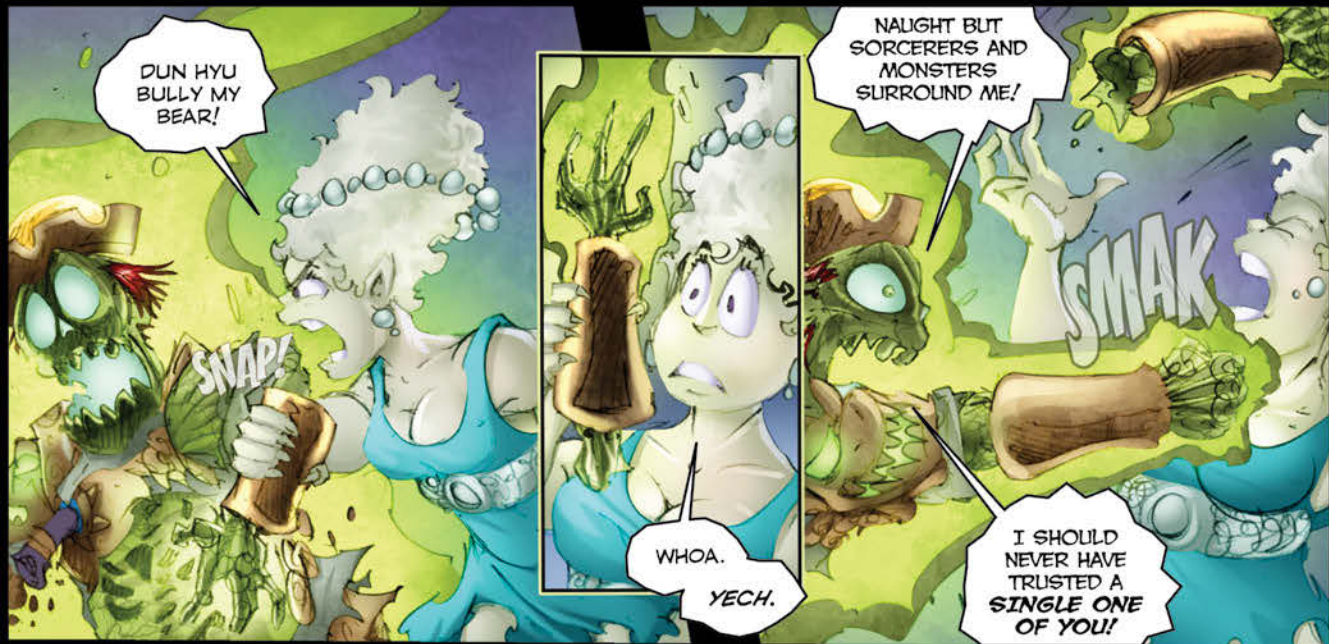
HURRY—GET US DOWN THERE!

OHO! WITH PLEASURE, MISTRESS!



POOM

I AM STILL YOUR KING!



DUN HYU BULLY MY BEAR!

NAUGHT BUT SORCERERS AND MONSTERS SURROUND ME!

SNAP!

SMACK



WHOA.
YECH.

I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TRUSTED A SINGLE ONE OF YOU!



HE'S WEAKENING!
EVERYBODY AT ONCE-
NOW!



NO!

THERE IS NO HONOR IN THIS!

CHOP

HACK
CLANG



I WILL NOT LIE DOWN!
I AM NOT DONE!



YES, YOU ARE.





IS HE—

YES. WELL DONE.



WE REALLY DO WORK WELL TOGETHER!

YOU—

—EXCUSE ME.



CAPTAIN WRENKULA!
NOW!



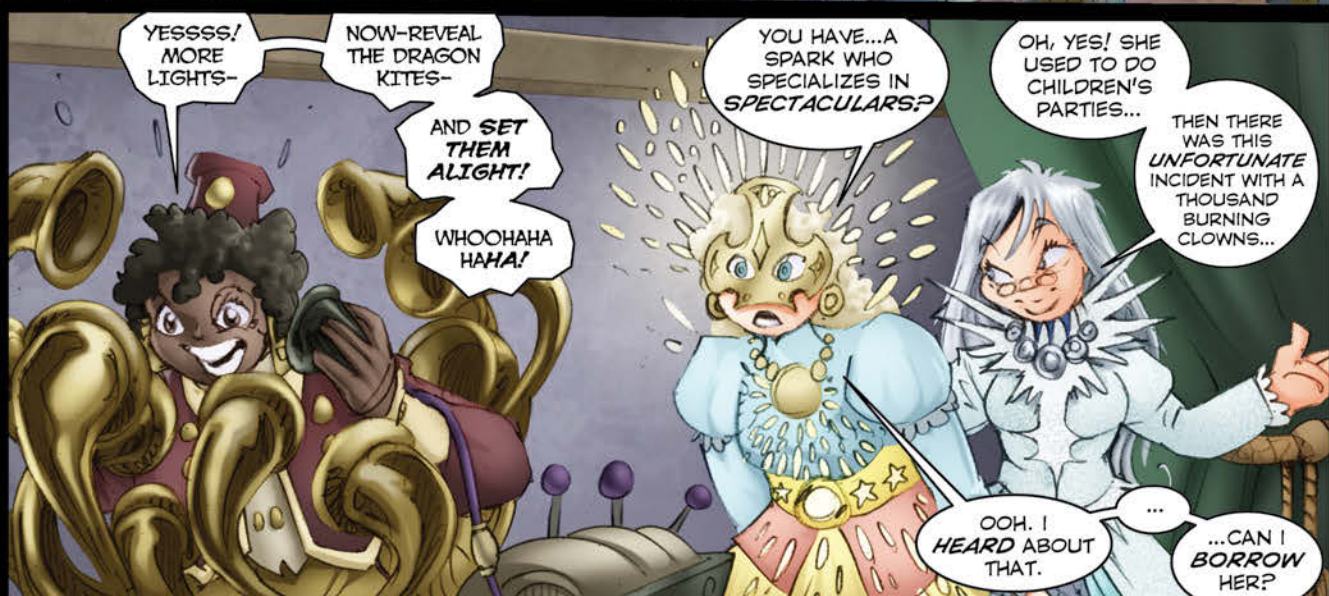
DUTY CALLS.



ALL HAIL MARTELLUS VON BLITZENGAARD!
THE **STORM KING!**



HAIL! HAIL!
THE GLORY OF
THE LIGHTNING
CROWN IS
RESTORED!



YESSSS!
MORE
LIGHTS-

NOW-REVEAL
THE DRAGON
KITES-

AND SET
THEM
ALIGHT!

WHOOHAHA
HAHA!

YOU HAVE...A
SPARK WHO
SPECIALIZES IN
SPECTACULARS?

OH, YES! SHE
USED TO DO
CHILDREN'S
PARTIES...

THEN THERE
WAS THIS
UNFORTUNATE
INCIDENT WITH A
THOUSAND
BURNING
CLOWNS...

OOH. I
HEARD ABOUT
THAT.

...
...CAN I
BORROW
HER?



UHHH-



AHH...
FINALLY...
LAID TO
REST...

GOOD...

VERY
GOOD...

MASTER-



BEAUSOLEIL!

YOU'RE
TOO LATE,
TRAITOR.

IT TOOK
EVERYTHING I
HAD-

BUT
ANDRONICUS IS
TRULY *DEAD*.



-AND NOW,
I FEAR I MUST
FOLLOW
HIM...

VERY TRUE,
SIR, AND MIGHTY
CONVENIENT OF
YOU, IF I MAY SAY
SO-

BUT I'M
AFRAID I
CAN'T JUST
LEAVE IT AT
THAT-



*

STAB!

YOU SEE, IN
THIS CASE, THE
METHOD IS
RATHER
IMPORTANT.





HA—JUST
LOOK AT THAT
FOOL—
DRAWING
EVERYONE'S
ATTENTION WITH ALL
THAT *LIGHT AND
NOISE*—



WHY, NONE OF
THEM EVEN
REALIZES THAT
YOU'RE...
UH...



THAT'S
ODD...

SURELY
THERE IS
LIGHT...

SOMEWHERE...





tch—I'M MORE ON EDGE THAN I'D THOUGHT...

WRETCHED THING!

KICK!

SHREEE



AAH!

SHREEE



WHAT—

AAROOOGA!

SHREEE



WHAT IS THIS?

AAROOOGA!

WHOOOP!

BONG!

BONG!

SHREEE

EEEEEE



WHOOOP!

BONG!

BONG!

VREFFEE!

AAROOOGA!

SHREEE

THE CITY IS... SCREAMING! BUT...HOW—?



YOU!

I KNOW YOU'RE DEAD! WE MADE SURE OF IT!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

MEANWHILE—

THE—THE
PLATONIC SOLID
AND ARCHIMEDES'
LEVER—

YOUR FATHER
JUST MELTED
THEM!

BUT—THE
POWER HE'D
HAVE TO—



OH.

HE—

HE'S...
DRAINED THE
CITY.

THE
WHOLE
CITY.

UH...
COLETTE?

HOW IS
HE DOING
THAT?

ALL THAT
POWER—EVEN
HE—

YES. THE
STUBBORN
OLD FOOL—



THIS IS
FAR TOO
MUCH FOR
HIM.

HE KNOWS
THAT.

WHAT HE
JUST DID HAS
NEARLY KILLED
HIM—

AND HE DOESN'T
EVEN SEEM TO
CARE.

THE ONLY REASON
HE'S STILL ALIVE AT
ALL IS THAT I'VE
WORKED OUT HOW TO
SHARE SOME OF THE
POWER.



IT'S TAKING
EVERYTHING
I'VE GOT—

BUT I CAN
HOLD IT
FOR HIM.

KEEP HIM
SAFE.

—BUT IT'S
HURTING
YOU!

NOT TOO
MUCH.

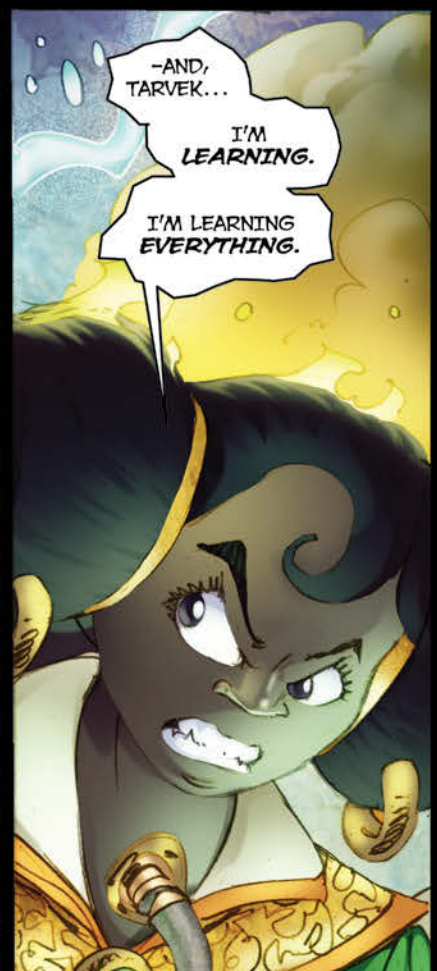
NOT
YET.



—AND,
TARVEK...

I'M
LEARNING.

I'M LEARNING
EVERYTHING.





UM... COLETTE—

YOUR—

YOUR COSTUME—

PAPA'S GREAT WORK—IT WAS TOO SUCCESSFUL.

HE BUILT A WONDERFUL PLACE—KEPT IT SAFE—



AND SO MANY, MANY PEOPLE CAME TO HIM.

TOO MANY PEOPLE.

THE CITY BECAME TOO BIG—

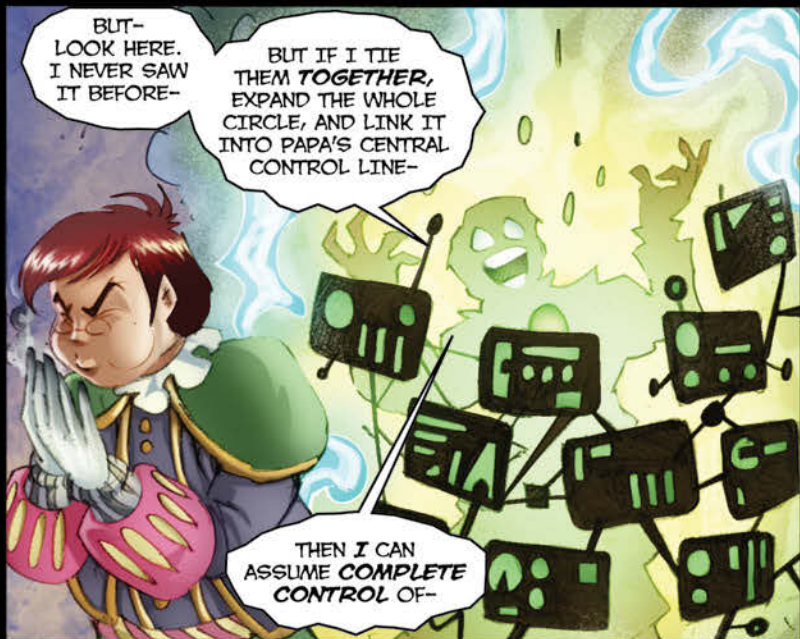
SO PAPA BUILT SUBSYSTEMS—AND SLOWLY DIVESTED HIMSELF OF MOST DIRECT CONTROL.



I HAVE BEEN BUILDING MY OWN SMALL, PERSONAL CONSTRUCTIONS INTO THE CITY FOR YEARS.

I WANTED TO HELP.

OW! OW! OW! OW!



BUT—LOOK HERE. I NEVER SAW IT BEFORE—

BUT IF I TIE THEM TOGETHER, EXPAND THE WHOLE CIRCLE, AND LINK IT INTO PAPA'S CENTRAL CONTROL LINE—

THEN I CAN ASSUME COMPLETE CONTROL OF—



WHAT WAS THAT?

... CHILD APPREHENSION UNIT 148—SILVER.

IT IS UNDER UNAUTHORIZED HETERODYNE CONTROL.

IT IS ATTACKING ANDRONICUS VALOIS.



HOW—HOW DO YOU KNOW?

BECAUSE IT IS HAPPENING HERE. IN PARIS.

—AND HERE IN PARIS, I KNOW ALL.



E-
EVERYTHING?

YOUR
GRANDMOTHER'S
MISTRESS OF
AMUSEMENTS IS
CURRENTLY MOVING A
PARADE INTO PLACE
ON THE RUE DE
PLESIOSAUR.

THE WATER
CISTERN ATOP
THE HÔTEL DU
MONDE HAS A
SLOW LEAK.

THE CITIZEN'S
MILITIA HAS
ACTIVATED IN
RESPONSE TO THE
POWER OUTAGE.

EIGHT HUNDRED
AND FORTY-THREE
PEOPLE ARE TRAPPED
ON ELEVATORS.

THE STORM
KING HAS BEEN
DESTROYED.



WHAT?!

PAPA IS VERY
WEAK. I'VE GOT
TO TAKE MORE OF
THE BURDEN-



THERE.

OH.

OH.



NOW I SEE!
ALL I HAVE DONE
UNTIL NOW WAS
NOTHING-
NOTHING!

LIKE A CHILD-I
HAVE BEEN MERELY
DABBLING MY TOES IN
A GREAT OCEAN!

-BUT NOW! NOW I
CAN MANIPULATE THE
VERY FABRIC OF
PARIS ITSELF!



NOW, I-
AUUUHARGH!



...

UH...
COLETTE?



COLETTE!
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT? CAN
YOU HEAR
ME?!

THE MASTER OF PARIS
IS DEAD.



DEAD?
IMPOSSIBLE! NOT
THE MASTER—

DEAD. PURGED
FROM THE WEAVE
OF PARIS
ENTIRELY.

IT WAS
SKILLFULLY
DONE.

WAIT—THAT
VOICE...
CASTLE
HETERODYNE?

BUT—



YES, YES. I AM
CURRENTLY IN A
LITTLE BOX IN
PARIS.

TRULY,
WONDERS
NEVER CEASE.

NOW
LISTEN TO
ME.



THE MASTER IS DEAD,
AND HIS ASSASSINS
ARE ATTEMPTING TO
SEIZE CONTROL OF
THE CITY... BUT THEY
DID NOT TAKE HIS
DAUGHTER INTO
ACCOUNT.

HER SYSTEMS
ARE ALREADY IN
PLACE, AND THEY
ARE STRONG.



THEIR ATTACK HAS **STUNNED**
HER, BUT IT WAS DESIGNED TO
TARGET HER FATHER, NOT HER.
SHE HAS NOT BEEN SEVERED
FROM THE CITY AS HE WAS.

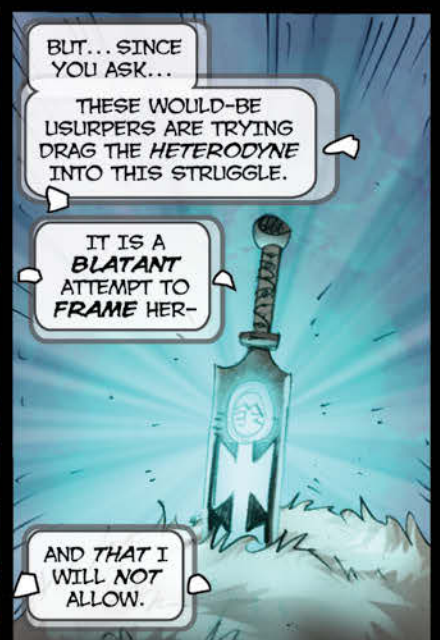
EVEN SO, THEY WILL
SUCCEED IF SHE DOES
NOT RECOVER **QUICKLY**.



IF YOU PATCH ME DIRECTLY
INTO THE CONTROL CORE, I
CAN **HELP**. ONCE SHE **FULLY**
INTEGRATES WITH THE CITY,
THEY WILL STAND **NO**
CHANCE AGAINST HER.

AND...HOW DO
YOU BENEFIT
FROM THIS?

IMPERTINENCE!



BUT... SINCE
YOU ASK...

THESE WOULD-BE
USURPERS ARE TRYING
DRAG THE **HETERODYNE**
INTO THIS STRUGGLE.

IT IS A
BLATANT
ATTEMPT TO
FRAME HER—

AND **THAT I**
WILL NOT
ALLOW.



PATCH YOU IN TO THE CONTROL CORE, EH?

TRICKY.

YOU SEEM TO BE ALREADY ACQUAINTED WITH ME.

ARE YOU ONE OF MY LADY'S LACKEYS?



I AM TARVEK STURMVORAU. HER FUTURE CONSORT.

AH! THE OTHER ONE! I HAVE HEARD OF YOU!

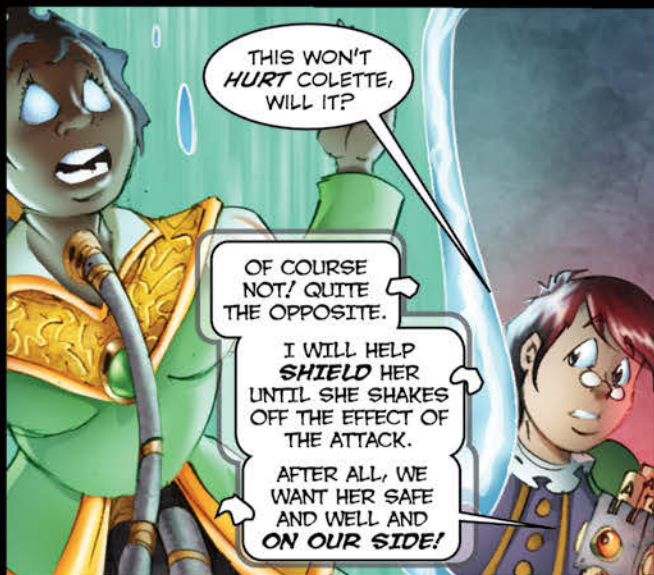


REALLY? FROM AGATHA? WHAT DID SHE SAY?

FROM THE GREEN HAIREED AMAZON, ACTUALLY.

SHE SAID YOU ARE EASILY DISTRACTED.

DO GET ON WITH IT...



THIS WON'T HURT COLETTE, WILL IT?

OF COURSE NOT! QUITE THE OPPOSITE.

I WILL HELP SHIELD HER UNTIL SHE SHAKES OFF THE EFFECT OF THE ATTACK.

AFTER ALL, WE WANT HER SAFE AND WELL AND ON OUR SIDE!



OH, YES, THIS LOOKS ALL TOO FAMILIAR...

BUT I WISH AGATHA WERE HERE...

SHE KNOWS HOW TO MAKE YOU JUMP...

WHERE IS SHE?

SHE IS USING A CHILD CATCHER TO BATTLE THE STORM KING. THE TRAIN IS DRIVING.

I AM... SURE THEY'RE FINE.



AAAALL ABOOOOARD!

AAAAAAHHHH!



...RIGHT. OKAY! DONE! IN YOU GO!

AH-I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO MAKE THIS QUICK.





AAAH!
SHUT UP!



...
AH—



OH,
DEAR.

...WHY DOES
THIS NOT SEEM
LIKE A GOOD
THING?

THINK OF
IT—

AS A FINAL
MOMENT OF
SANITY.





HEH. BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T GOT ALL OF ME...

MY *TRUE* BODY IS NO LONGER IN PARIS—



THE DEVIL MAY TAKE YOUR TRUE BODY, YOU NASTY LITTLE TRAITOR.

YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD KILL MY FATHER AND TAKE HIS CITY FOR YOUR MASTERS?



WHAT, I WONDER, WILL THEY *DO* TO YOU, NOW THAT YOU HAVE *FAILED*?



OH...

AH.



YOU ARE NOT *IMPORTANT* ENOUGH TO WASTE ANY MORE OF MY TIME.

GET OUT.



PARIS IS *MINE*—
AND I WILL *DEFEND* IT.



NOW,

TO
BEGIN-



UH OH.



HO! DID I SAY "PARTY OF THE YEAR?" HA!

PARTY OF THE CENTURY!

AH... YOUR HIGHNESS— I—



OH, YES. WELL, IT'S NOT SO GOOD FOR YOU, NOW, IS IT, MISS ZOLA?



OH! SURELY THEY'LL STILL LET ME SING...

I'M BOOKED AT THE OPERA HOUSE FOR A WEEK!



HA! VERY GOOD, MY DEAR. BUT DON'T BOTHER. YOUNG COLETTE IS NO FOOL—

AND NEITHER, I THINK, ARE YOU.

SHE'LL DESTROY YOU!

YOU'VE LOST THIS ROUND. JUST ACCEPT IT.



THE WAY SHE IS NOW, SHE'LL DEDUCE YOUR PLACE IN THIS SCHEME IF YOU SO MUCH AS MAKE A PEEP—AND WHEN SHE DOES—

BUT—



tch—DON'T FEEL BAD. YOU'VE DONE VERY WELL!

WHY, I'LL BET YOU'VE GOT MOST OF PARIS ALL PRIMED AND READY TO FALL AT YOUR FEET—DON'T YOU?

—AND IT TOOK TWO STORM KINGS, TWO MASTERS OF PARIS, AND A HETERODYNE TO SLOW YOU DOWN.

NO, NO, YOU JUST HOLD YOUR CARDS CLOSE, AND WAIT.



I'VE GOT YOU NOW, MY GIRL—

AND I'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE.



AH—THE ALARMS HAVE STOPPED.

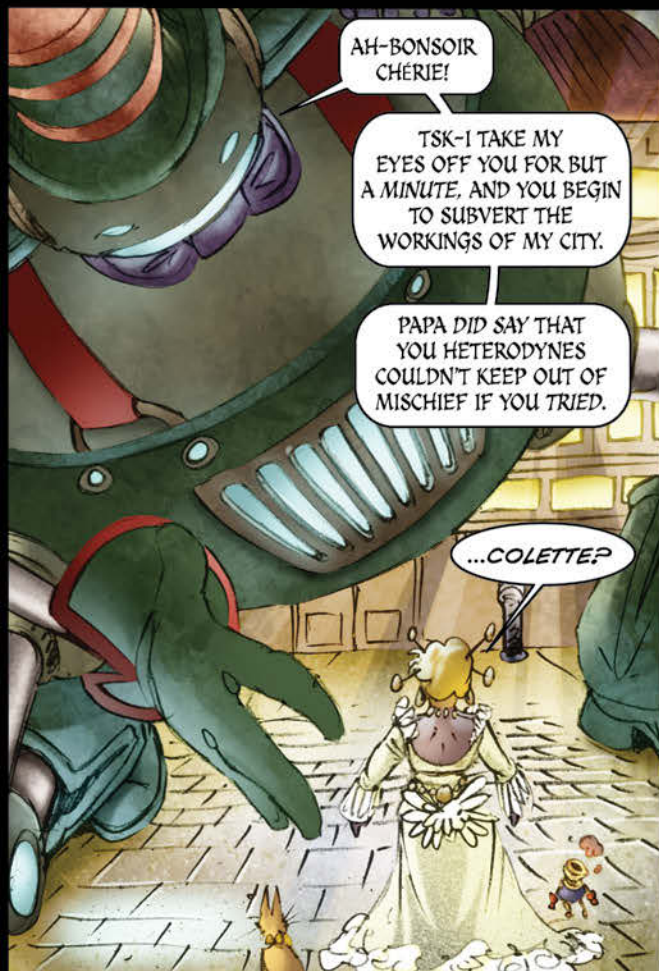
IS THE MASTER...

THERE IS A **NEW MASTER.**
THE VOID HAS BEEN FILLED.



WHOA!

YOIKS!



AH—BONSOIR CHÉRIE!

TSK—I TAKE MY EYES OFF YOU FOR BUT A MINUTE, AND YOU BEGIN TO SUBVERT THE WORKINGS OF MY CITY.

PAPA DID SAY THAT YOU HETERODYNES COULDN'T KEEP OUT OF MISCHIEF IF YOU TRIED.

...COLETTE?



INSOLENCE!

YOU ARE ALIVE AND SANE ONLY BECAUSE OF THE ASSISTANCE OF MY MISTRESS'S CASTLE UNIT!

OH, YES—

YOUR LITTLE FRIEND HAS BEEN A MAGNIFICENT HELP.



COME TO ME NOW. THIS UNIT WILL ESCORT YOU.



THE "OTHER" IS ATTACKING PARIS.



YES—THE GEISTERDAMEN—THEY WERE COMMANDING REVENANTS.

LOTS OF THEM.

I WOULD GUESS THAT A SIGNIFICANT PART OF YOUR POPULATION IS UNDER THEIR CONTROL.



INDEED. THIS WAS A LONG-TERM PLAN.

MY OPPONENT HAS MANY BASES—

I AM DEALING WITH THEM AS I DISCOVER THEM—

BUT MY ENERGY, THOUGH CURRENTLY VAST, IS NOT INFINITE.



I WILL HAVE NEED OF ALL YOUR HELP.



MY FRIENDS. THE MASTER OF PARIS—SIMON VOLTAIRE—MY FATHER—IS DEAD.

AS OF NOW— I AM PARIS.

I WILL...



...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

"PARIS" NEEDS PANTS!

HERE!



TARVEK?



LISTEN TO ME:

THE "OTHER" HAS SPREAD HER REVENANTS HERE, AND HOPES TO CAPTURE THIS CITY.

I WILL STOP HER, AND YOU WILL AID ME.



... COMING, CHERI?

IN A MOMENT—

I REFUSE TO MEET AGATHA WHILE DRESSED LIKE THIS!

ARE YOU READY?

YEEEESSSSS!



LISTEN TO THAT, THEY LOVE HER ALREADY!

AH, IT'S SO HEARTWARMING TO SEE CHILDREN GROW UP.

LATER—

BRING EVERYTHING! NOTES, PLANS, EVERYTHING.

THEY'VE FOUND US!

HOW CAN THEY FIND US HERE? THIS PLACE SHOULD BE HIDDEN, EVEN FROM THE MASTER!

WHO KNOWS? -BUT OUR PLANS ARE IN RUINS!

WE NEEDED PARIS!

IT CAN'T BE HELPED—THE LADY COLETTE IS MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR—

AND THOSE WRETCHED LIBRARIANS HAVE UNITED THE MORE TROUBLESOME OF THE DEEP REALMS AGAINST US.

STOP! DO NOTHING!

NO!

WATCH OUT!

THEY'RE GEISTERS!

IT IS THE FALSE CHILD!



HOKAY, PIPPLE-DIS TIME FOR SURE-

VE GOTS TO TRY TO KETCH AT LEAST *VUN* OV DEM!

SEZ HYU! DEY FIGHTS TOUGH!

ALL OF YOU-DROP YOUR WEAPONS AND COME WITH ME!



-AND GET THOSE PAPERS OUT OF THE FIRE!



NNNN...



OW! OW!
OW!



UH-

RUNCH



YOU MAY COMMAND OUR LADY'S LESSER MINIONS, ABOMINATION, BUT WE PRIESTESSES ARE BEYOND YOUR INFLUENCE NOW!

YOU WILL DIE HERE WITH US-



DEM! NO, HYU DON'T, SVEETHOT.

HURK!



HUH. IT LOOKS LIKE THEY GOT A LOT OF TAKEOUT. NOODLES, MOSTLY...

WELL, BRING IT ALONG ANYWAY.

COLETTE WANTS IT ALL.

IN THE LIBRARY—

I DON'T CARE!

FIRST, YOU LET HER IN—

AND AFTER SHE DIGS AROUND IN ALL OUR SECRETS—

AND UNLEASHES A MONSTER—

YOU JUST LET HER WALTZ BACK OUT AGAIN!

—AND YOU THINK WE COULD HAVE STOPPED HER?

YES, SHE LEARNED THINGS HERE—

SO WHAT? THIS IS A LIBRARY!

SHE BROUGHT US VAN RIJN'S JOURNAL!

SHE FOUND THE LOST HERMITORIUM!

YES, SHE WAS THERE WHEN THE KING WAS RELEASED,

BUT SO WAS ALDIN!

—AND IT WASN'T HIS FAULT, EITHER!

FURTHERMORE, HER TREATISE ON THE WASP EATERS WILL HELP IMMENSELY IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE OTHER.

THAT'S RIGHT.

UM, AND WE'RE ALREADY GETTING ALONG A LOT BETTER WITH SOME OF THE MORE...DIFFICULT OF THE DEEP REALMS—

SO ALL THIS HAS BEEN VERY GOOD FROM A DIPLOMATIC STANDPOINT.

EVEN SO, WE DO UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN...



KLAUS WULFENBACH IS GONE, AND WITHOUT HIM, THE PAX TRANSYLVANIA IS NO MORE.

THE "OTHER" HAS RETURNED—

THE MASTER OF PARIS IS DEAD—

AND THE CROWN OF THE STORM KING IS ONCE AGAIN IN PLAY.



OUR WORK REQUIRES STABILITY—

AND, IN ITS CURRENT STATE, EUROPA IS FAR FROM STABLE.

SO, YES—I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY YOU ARE CONCERNED, AND WHY THE LORD HIGH CONSERVATOR SAW FIT TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS.



—BUT NONE OF THAT IS THE LADY HETERODYNE'S FAULT!

SHE'S WORKING AS HARD AS ANYONE IN ALL THIS!

GRANTED, BUT—



SHE IS STILL ONE OF THE HETERODYNE FAMILY.

NO MATTER *WHAT* HER INTENTIONS—

MONSTERS OF ALL KINDS ARE DRAWN TO HER,

AND CHAOS SWIRLS AROUND HER.



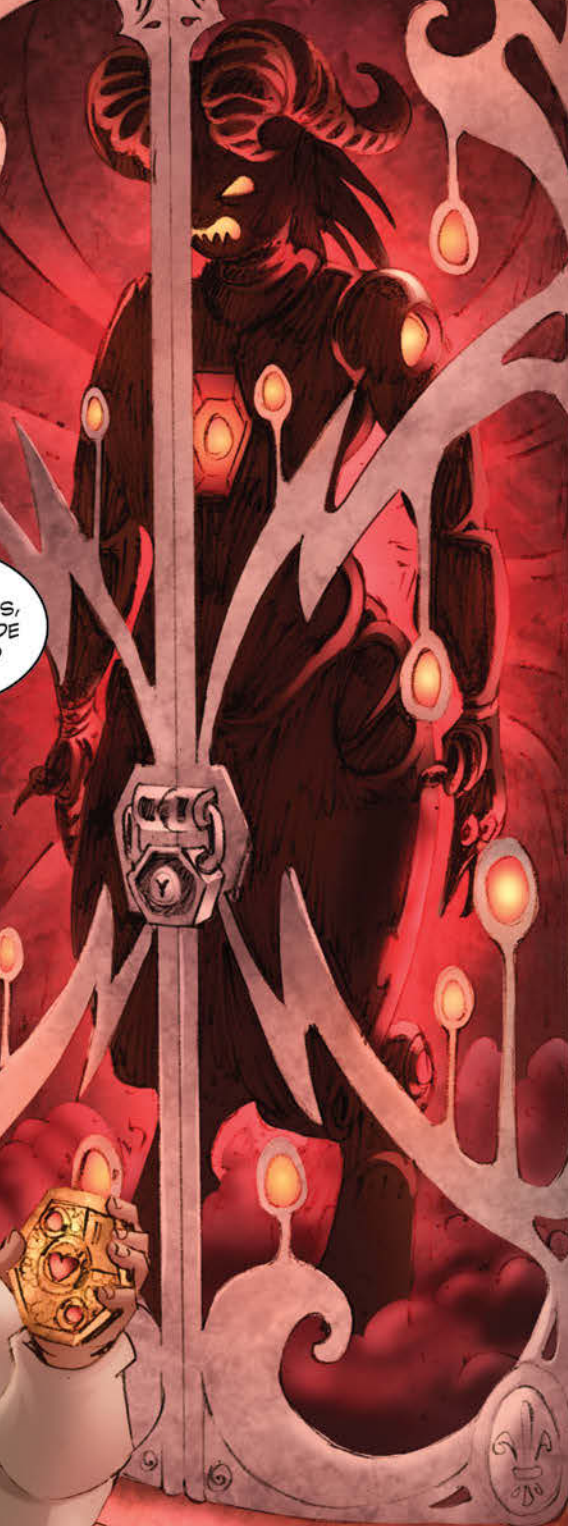
SHE IS TOO GREAT A FORCE TO IGNORE—

AND WE WOULD BE FOOLS TO TRUST HER COMPLETELY.

YOU AND LARANA HAVE RETRIEVED THE HEART OF THE MUSE—

MUSE OF VENGEANCE

WHEN THE LORD RETURNS, HE WILL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH IT.



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