

GIRL GENIUS[®]

ELECTRONIC EDITION



VOLUME SEVEN

AGATHA HETERODYNE AND THE VOICE OF THE CASTLE





Agatha Heterodyne
and the

VOICE OF THE CASTLE

A Gaslamp Fantasy
with
ADVENTURE, ROMANCE & MAD SCIENCE

GIRL GENIUS®

BY PHIL & KAJA FOGGIO

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AGATHA HETERODYNE

THE VOICE OF THE CASTLE

A Gaslamp Fantasy
with
ADVENTURE ROMANCE & MAD SCIENCE



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



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This volume is dedicated to
Rachel “Sparks” Blackman.
Without your heroic efforts on
our behalf, we would have been
doomed indeed.
Thank you so very much!

KAJA FOGLIO

Professor Foglio (of Transylvania Polygnostic University) recently undertook a research expedition to the Lost City of Thrindockle, where Agatha Heterodyne is rumored to have once bought a very nice hat. Following several old maps, garbled accounts from past adventurers, and a curious jade compass said to point to the inner sanctum of the main temple of the Spider Queen of Thrin, she finally discovered the city: hidden beneath a suburb of Antwerp. For a time, she lived among the high priestesses, conscientiously documenting their intricate rituals and arcane, science-confounding secrets; but soon became bored, stole the jeweled eyes of the temple idol, hacked her way past the hordes of giant guardian spiders, and caught the first train back to the University.

PHIL FOGLIO

Professor Foglio is Co-Chair of TPU’s Department of Creative History, specializing in the early life of Agatha Heterodyne. He was recently sandbagged when he was informed that, in order to keep his office, he had to teach at least *one* class every decade. His final series of lectures, entitled: “*A History of the Jägermonsters: Six Secrets of the Heterodynes*” was listed in the catalogs with an unfortunate printing error. As a result, so many students signed up that the course had to be offered multiple times in order to fill the demand. The lecture series was a stunning success, earning Professor Foglio the highly coveted “Most Beloved Teacher of The Year” award, and the even more coveted assurance of the University board that he would *never* be made to lecture *ever again*.

CHEYENNE WRIGHT

Professor Wright has been enhancing the adventures of Agatha Heterodyne for several years now. In that time, he has developed and added new devices and techniques to his art, resulting in a forced move out of the ruined tower he occupied in the north quadrant of Transylvania Polygnostic University. He has now relocated to a subterranean lair where he has access to, as he puts it: “Almost *infinite* supplies of *pure dark*.” Contemplation of this statement has caused several of TPU’s theoretical physicists to lose sleep at night, as they have begun to worry about what might happen if the Professor has miscalculated and, by mistake or design, uses up *all* the dark. In an effort to let them sleep easier, we have taken special pains to reduce or eliminate all night scenes in this volume.





• THE STORY SO FAR •

Agatha Clay is a young Mad Scientist (or “Spark” to be polite.) Traveling with her is Krosp I: a failed experiment created to be the “Emperor of all Cats,” and Zeetha: the lost princess of the lost city of Skifander.

Agatha is also the last of the famous Heterodyne family—beloved heroes who disappeared under mysterious circumstances many years ago. Folk legend claims that they will someday return, but so far they haven’t managed it.

Earlier in the story, Agatha and Krosp escaped from Baron Klaus Wulfenbach—a powerful Spark who rules most of Europe. After crashing their small dirigible, they met Master Payne’s Circus of Adventure—a traveling show specializing in popular melodramas about the Heterodynes. Thanks to a ruse concocted by the Circus, the Baron believed that Agatha was dead.

Unfortunately, this didn’t last. The Circus passed through the town of Sturmhalten, and Agatha was recognized and captured by servants of the “Other,” a mysterious enemy who devastated Europe a generation ago. Agatha soon learned that the nefarious “Other” was actually her own mother, Lucrezia; and that she herself was the key to a plot to bring Lucrezia back. Lucrezia’s personality was implanted into Agatha’s mind, but Agatha proved stronger than expected, and was able to resist and escape. In the ensuing chaos, the town was attacked by monsters, the old Prince of Sturmhalten was killed, and the Baron discovered that Agatha was not dead.

The Baron immediately brought troops to Sturmhalten to control the damage and capture Agatha. Agatha was not captured, but the Baron was badly injured in the fight, and is now in the hospital in the nearby town of Mechanicsburg. Worse yet, while in Sturmhalten, the Baron encountered Agatha while she was still being controlled by Lucrezia. He had been suspicious of Lucrezia’s connection with the Other for years, and is now convinced that Agatha is really Lucrezia in disguise.

In fact, Agatha is herself again. She is now on her way to her family’s home in Mechanicsburg, to see what she can learn about herself and her history.



I WAS THERE! I SAW IT!

IT WAS BAD. THE CITY HAD GONE CRAZY—MONSTERS AND REVENANTS EVERYWHERE!

MY UNIT WAS PINNED DOWN.

AND THEN AN ANGEL APPEARED!

A BEAUTIFUL LADY A HUNDRED METERS TALL!

SHE SPOKE, AND THE ENEMY—IT'S LIKE THEY PANICKED!

AND THEN SHE CALLED THE HETERODYNES DOWN FROM HEAVEN— AND THEY CAME!

THEY WERE GIANTS! WITH ENORMOUS WINGS!

THEY FOUGHT ALONG SIDE US! THEY WERE EVERYWHERE!

AND THEY BROUGHT A GIRL—THE NEW HETERODYNE! SHE'S STILL OUT THERE!

AND SHE'S HEADING FOR MECHANICSBURG RIGHT NOW TO TAKE BACK THE CASTLE!

IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!



OH—I'LL GRANT YOU THAT.







IT'S A
GIRL, FOR
STARTERS.

...THAT *IS*
DIFFERENT.

AND SHE
BEAT
KLAUS.



WHAT—
WITH A
STICK?

WITH AN
ARMY.

SHE
APPEARED IN
STURMHALTEN.

AFTER THAT IT
GETS...
CONFUSING.

BUT THE
TOWN WAS
DESTROYED, AND
THE BARON WAS HURT.

HE'S HERE—
IN THE
HOSPITAL.

AND SHE HAD
SOME JÄGERKIN
WITH HER.

GREAT
HEAVENS.
JÄGERS?



NICE
TOUCH.

THE GENERALS
WILL COME DOWN
HARD ON THEM
WHEN THEY CATCH
THEM.

SHE SHOULD'VE
JUST HAD THE
MASTERS ALONG,
AS WELL.



SHE
DID.

ALONG WITH
LADY LUCREZIA,
PUNCH AND
JUDY—

AND EVEN THE
HIGH
PRIESTESS.

OH, AND SOME
PLUMBERS.

THEY WERE
THREE METERS
TALL, GLOWED, AND
HAD WINGS.



BUT EVERYONE
WHO SAW THEM
WAS PRETTY SURE IT
WAS THEM.

WINGS?

WELL, THERE
IS SOME
ARGUMENT
ABOUT THAT.

BUT EVERYONE
DOES AGREE
THAT THEY ALL
FLEW AWAY INTO
THE SKY.



AND WHERE IS
MY GRANDSON?

HE WAS OUT ALL
NIGHT. PROBABLY
BECAUSE OF ALL THE
EXCITEMENT.



YES, OF
COURSE. HE'LL
BE BUSY,
THEN.

VERY
GOOD.

STILL...

ARELLA,
DEAR, I'M
GOING OUT.

YES...

I'LL SEND
DOWN SOME
LUNCH.

DO YOU
THINK SHE'LL
COME?



HAAH. ALL
THE *OTHERS*
HAVE.



AH—
MASTER
HELIOTROPE!

IT'S BEEN A
WHILE SINCE
YOU'VE BEEN BY.

I'VE JUST
FINISHED
TIDYING YOUR
BENCH!

YOU ARE A
GOOD BOY,
KARS.
AND HOW
IS YOUR
MAMA?

VERY WELL,
SIR, THANK
YOU.

DO
REMEMBER
ME TO HER.

YES,
SIR!

SO—MUCH
TRAFFIC
TODAY?



NOT MUCH TODAY.
A FEW SOLDIERS.

STURMHALTEN.
I SEE.

THANK YOU, KARS.



sigh



ANOTHER
"HETERODYNE
HEIR."

AND *THIS* TIME, IT'S A
WOMAN...

WHO SEEMS TO HAVE GOT HER
IDEAS FROM TOO
MANY
HETERODYNE
SHOWS.

tsk. I EXPECT
SHE'LL BE EASY
TO DISCOURAGE.



BUT—SHE
APPARENTLY HAD
ENOUGH POWER TO
TAKE ON KLAUS—

WHICH MAKES
ME THINK
SOMEONE'S
USING HER.

THEY
MIGHT BE
TROUBLE.



IF SO, I
EXPECT YOU'LL
HELP ME DEAL
WITH THEM.

I KNOW
YOU'LL ENJOY
THAT.



HEH.
WELL,

AT ANY RATE,

UNTIL
WE'RE
NEEDED,

I BELIEVE
I'LL TAKE A
NAP.

LAST NIGHT—ABOARD A FLEEING AIRSHIP—WE FIND THE THEATRICAL TROUPE THAT **CAUSED** ALL THIS TROUBLE:

THIS IS IT. MASTER PAYNE'S CIRCUS OF ADVENTURE IS **FINISHED**.

BY AIDING THE LADY HETERODYNE, WE HAVE HUMILIATED THE BARON.

WE HAVE DONE WHAT **ARMIES** COULD NOT.

WE WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT IF WE STAY TOGETHER.

HE CAN'T AFFORD TO **LET** US GET AWAY WITH IT.

WE'LL FLY AS FAR AS PARIS—

SELL THE AIRSHIP—

AND GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

PAYNE, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.

LEAVE SHOW BUSINESS?

WELL—

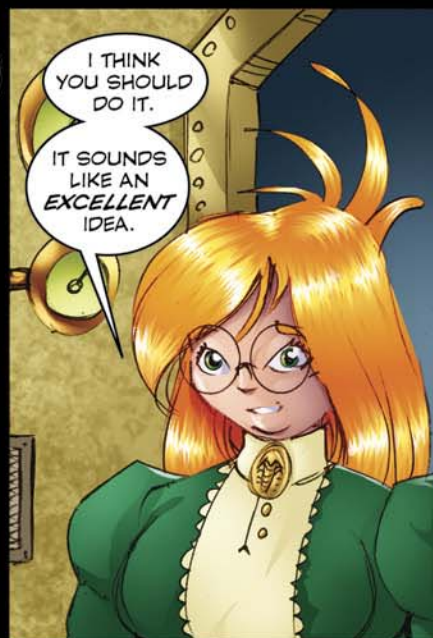
I HOPE IT WON'T COME TO THAT.

IT **WON'T** COME TO THAT.

YOU **DON'T** HAVE TO DISBAND.

INSTEAD,

COME AND PERFORM FOR ME!



...BUT THAT WAS
LAST NIGHT.



EXCUSE
ME, SIR.



IF YOU WOULD
BE SO KIND AS TO
TELL US THE WAY TO
THE GREAT
HOSPITAL?

OH—
CERTAINLY.

STRAIGHT
DOWN THIS
AVENUE UNTIL
YOU GET TO A
SQUARE WITH A
STATUE OF THE
HETERODYNE
BOYS.

OH, THANK
YOU, KIND
SIR!

COME,
DEAR. LET'S
HURRY!

TURN LEFT,
AND YOU'LL
SEE THE
SIGNS.



tch.

NOW, THAT'S
UNFORTUNATE.



IT'S A BAD
TIME TO SHOW
UP WITH A SICK
CHILD—
THE HOSPITAL
WILL BE **CHAOS**,
WHAT WITH THE BARON
THERE AND EVERYONE
ALL STIRRED UP.

I
WONDER...



AH!





WELL, HERE IT IS.
HAPPY?

OH, MY.

CLEAN ROOMS/STABLE
FREE BREAKFAST
GUNNERKRIGG
- COURT -
INDOOR PL...

TRY PROF.
MILHOLLAND'S
"SOMETHING
POSITIVE"
"TONIC"

DOMINIC
DEEGAN
SEES ALL
TELLS ALL

HOME ON THE
STRANGE
MECHANICSBURG
REAL ESTATE
COMMERCE

THE Devil's
Panties
LINGERIE
NOTIONS
AND
DISCREET
ITEMS

BUCK
GODO
FASHIONS FOR
00 TALL ME

SEE
EXOTIC
WAPSI
SQUARE

READ
ARCHIVE
TIMES



TO BE HONEST,
I THOUGHT IT WOULD LOOK MUCH WORSE.

MECHANICSBURG,
MECHANICSBURG,
WELCOME TO MECHANICSBURG,

WE THANK YOU
SO FOR VISITING,
WITH EVERY ERG
AND OHM!

NAMIR DEITER'S
EXOTIC PETS
"A GREAT SOUVENIR!"

BURLEW'S
RESTAURANT
TRY AN ORDER
OF THE STICK
WITH OUR
FAMOUS PIE!

DRINK
DIGGER

FREEFALL
HAIR STYLE
SALON

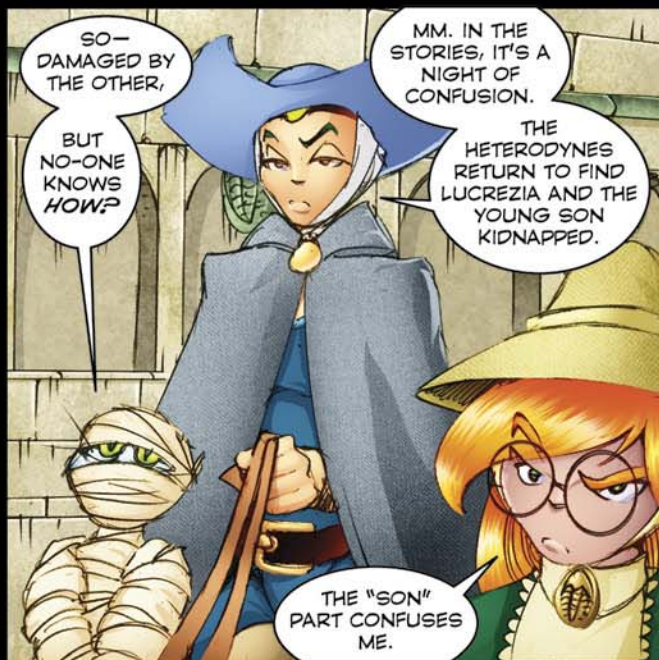
SHORT
PACKED
WAREHOUSE
STORAGE

QUESTIONABLE
CONTENT
A PHILOSOPHICAL
JOURNAL 13¢
AT ALL NEWSTANDS -
PUBLISHED MONTHLY

SEE 'BOB'
THE ANGRY
FLOWER!
NOW AT THE
BOTANICAL
GARDENS

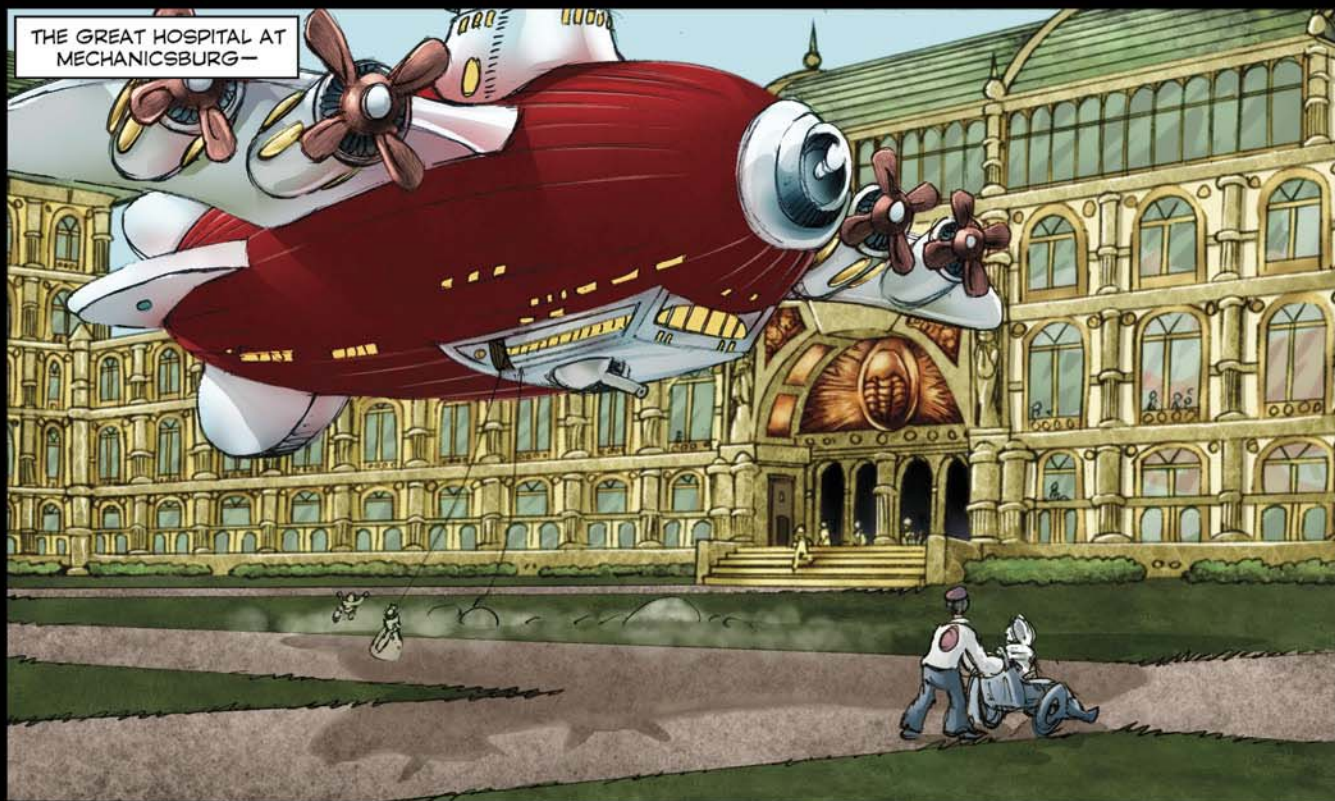
LACRAPH'S
PUB

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THE GREAT HOSPITAL AT
MECHANICSBURG—



AH. YOUNG
GILGAMESH.
I WAS
EXPECTING YOU
LAST NIGHT.



DR.
SUN!

AH—YES SIR. I
WAS STABILIZING
A MEDICAL
EXPERIMENT.

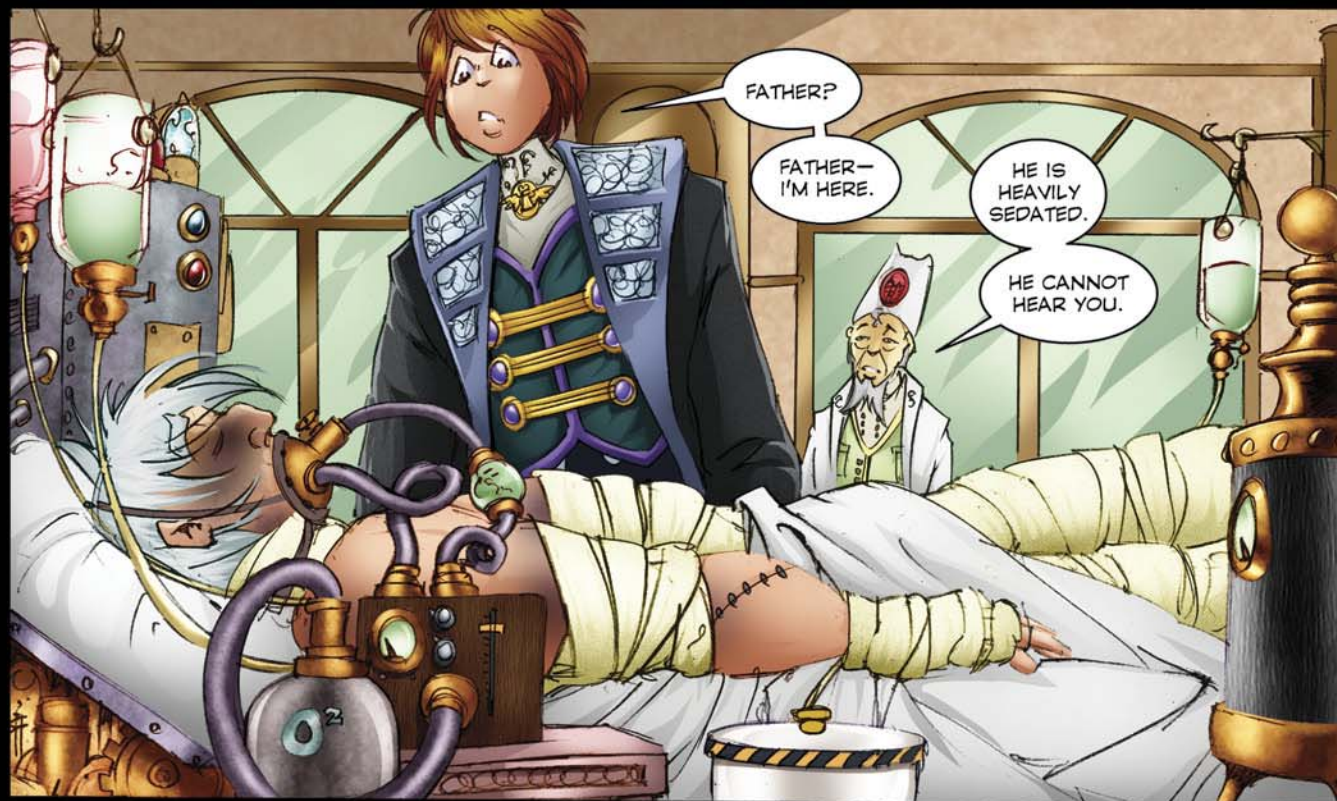
LEAVING IT TO FAIL
WOULD HAVE BEEN...
UNFORGIVABLE.

ACTUALLY,
YOU MIGHT BE
INTERESTED IN
SOME OF THE
DETAILS—

AT THE MOMENT,
I AM INTERESTED IN
KEEPING YOUR
FATHER ALIVE.

A SUBJECT I
CAN ONLY ASSUME
IS OF SOME SMALL
INTEREST TO
YOURSELF, AS
WELL.



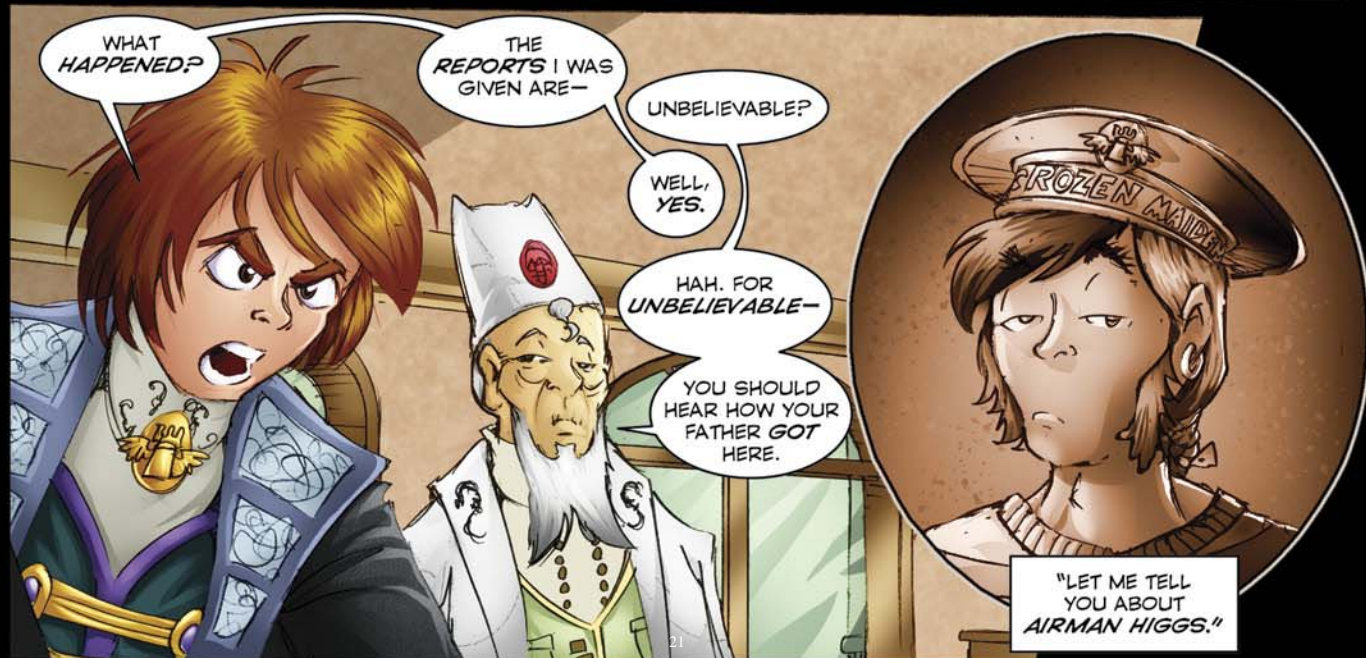


FATHER?

FATHER—
I'M HERE.

HE IS
HEAVILY
SEDATED.

HE CANNOT
HEAR YOU.



WHAT
HAPPENED?

THE
REPORTS I WAS
GIVEN ARE—

UNBELIEVABLE?

WELL,
YES.

HAH. FOR
UNBELIEVABLE—

YOU SHOULD
HEAR HOW YOUR
FATHER GOT
HERE.

"LET ME TELL
YOU ABOUT
AIRMAN HIGGS."

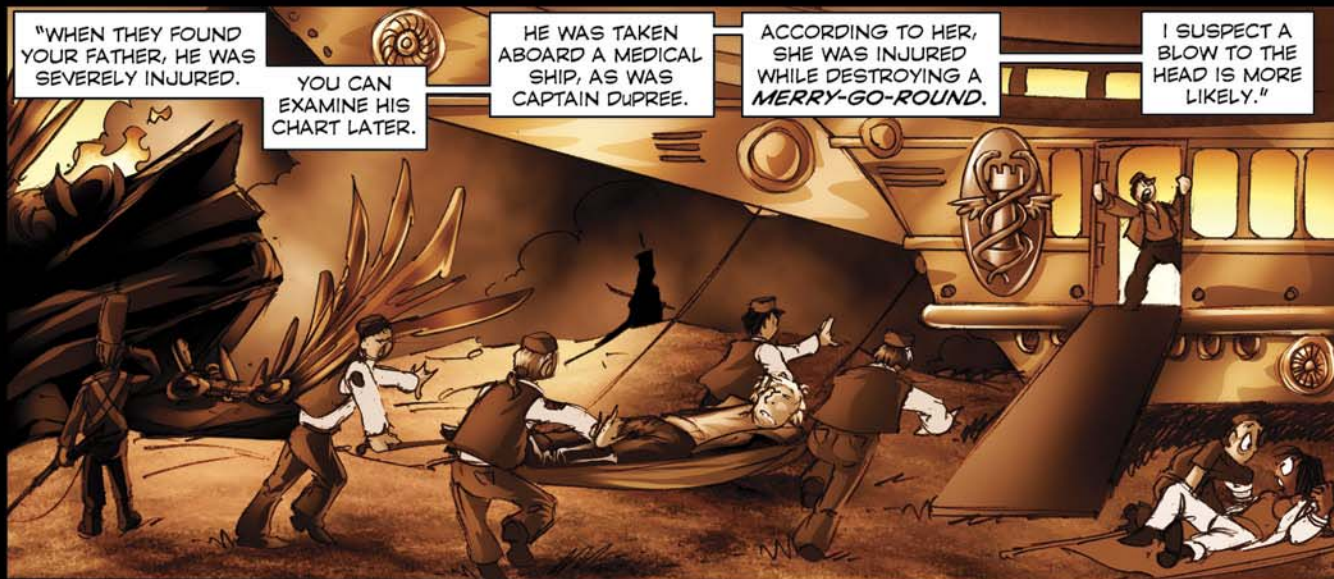
"WHEN THEY FOUND YOUR FATHER, HE WAS SEVERELY INJURED."

"YOU CAN EXAMINE HIS CHART LATER."

"HE WAS TAKEN ABOARD A MEDICAL SHIP, AS WAS CAPTAIN DUPREE."

"ACCORDING TO HER, SHE WAS INJURED WHILE DESTROYING A MERRY-GO-ROUND."

"I SUSPECT A BLOW TO THE HEAD IS MORE LIKELY."



"THEY WERE SO WORRIED ABOUT YOUR FATHER, THEY SET OUT FOR THE HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY."



"EVEN THOUGH THE FIGHT WAS STILL RAGING."

"THEY WERE HIT BY SOME KIND OF CANNON."



"THE ALARMS WOKE AIRMAN THIRD CLASS AXEL HIGGS."



"HE REPORTED FOR EMERGENCY DUTY."



"HE FOUND THE MAIN CABIN IN FLAMES—"

"AND THE CREW DEAD."

"THEN HE SAW THE
MONSTERS."

"SOME KIND OF
BIOLOGICAL
WEAPON, I'M
BETTING."

"THE GROUND TROOPS
GOT SOME *SAMPLES*. I'M
LOOKING FORWARD TO
EXAMINING THEM."

"HIGGS COULD
SEE THAT THERE
WAS NO HELP TO
BE HAD FROM
THE *REST* OF
THE FLEET—"

"AND THE
MONSTERS WERE
BETWEEN HIM
AND THE
EVACUATION
GIGS."

"THINGS WERE
ACTUALLY GOING
FAIRLY *WELL*, UNTIL HE
FOUND YOUR FATHER."

"WHILE HE WAS
DRAGGING HIM
TO THE GIG—"



"HE ENCOUNTERED
CAPTAIN DUPREE,
WHO WAS
DELIRIOUS."

"SHE BROKE
HIS ARM."



"HE KNOCKED
HER OUT, BUT
BROKE HER JAW
IN THE
PROCESS."



"HE GOT THEM BOTH
INTO THE GIG AND
SHOVED OFF JUST AS
THE SHIP WENT DOWN."



"HE'S NOT RATED AS
A PILOT OR
NAVIGATOR, BUT HE
SET THE SHIP
CONTROLS TOWARD
MECHANICSBURG—"

"AND RIGGED
A CRUDE
AUTOMATIC
PILOT."



"HE THEN BEGAN
TO APPLY FIRST
AID TO YOUR
FATHER—"



"WHICH IS WHEN
HE WAS AGAIN
ATTACKED BY
CAPTAIN DUPREE."



"THIS TIME,
SHE BROKE HIS
LEG."



"BUT HE FINALLY
MANAGED TO
SUBDUE HER."



"HE TRIED TO FIND
SOME WAY TO
RESTRAIN HER—"

"WHICH IS WHEN
SHE BIT HIM."

"THAT'S
INFECTED, BY
THE WAY."



"SHE ALSO GOT
IN A GOOD,
SOLID KICK AT
THE GIG'S
CONTROLS."



"HE DID HIS BEST
TO FIX THE
DAMAGE, THEN
TRIED TO SET HIS
OWN ARM—"



"AND
APPARENTLY
BLACKED OUT
FROM THE PAIN."



"ONLY TO AWAKEN
AS THE GIG WAS
CRASHING INTO A
FARMER'S POND."



"HE DRAGGED
YOUR FATHER
AND DUPREE
ASHORE—"

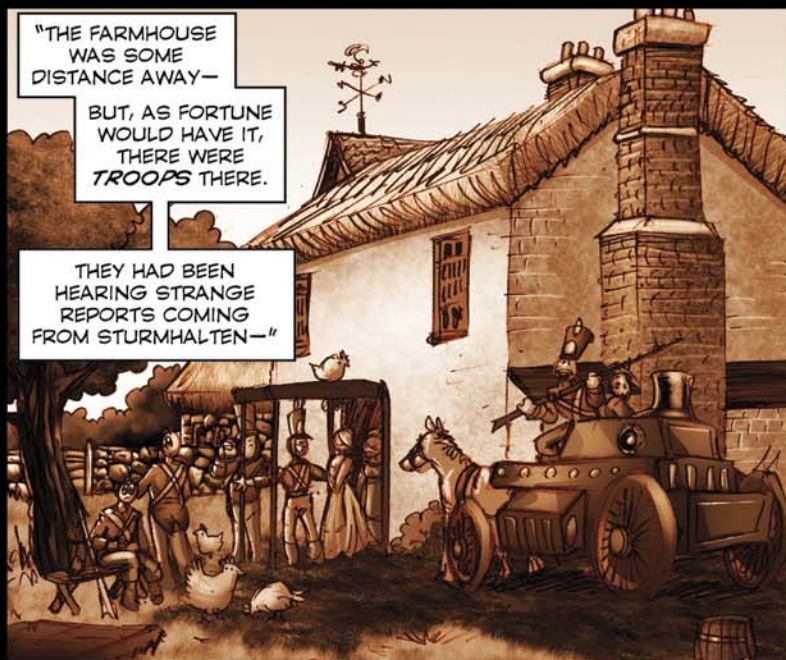


"WHERE HE
ENCOUNTERED A
NESTING
GOOSE—"



"WHICH BROKE HIS
OTHER ARM."





"THE FARMHOUSE WAS SOME DISTANCE AWAY—

BUT, AS FORTUNE WOULD HAVE IT, THERE WERE **TROOPS** THERE.

THEY HAD BEEN HEARING STRANGE REPORTS COMING FROM STURMHALTEN—"



"SO THEY WERE ALREADY **JUMPY** WHEN THEY SAW HIGGS COMING.

THEY THOUGHT HE WAS A REVENANT, AND SHOT HIM IN THE LEG."



"AFTERWARDS, THEY WERE **VERY SORRY**.

THEY SAW TO YOUR FATHER AND DUPREE, CALLED FOR EMERGENCY TRANSPORT, AND GAVE HIGGS SOME **RUM**."



"**LOTS OF RUM**.

BEFORE HE PASSED OUT, HE TOLD THEM **EVERYTHING**.

THE FIGHT, THE LOSS OF THE FLEET, THE **MONSTERS**—

AND, OF COURSE, **THEY** WERE ALREADY FULL OF NEWS ABOUT THE LADY HETERODYNE..."



THE WHOLE TROOP WAS HERE IN TOWN WITHIN **HOURS**.

BY THE TIME **WE** KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED, IT WAS **FAR** TOO LATE TO SUPPRESS THE STORIES.

YOU MEAN—THE HETERODYNE HEIR—

MY FATHER NEARLY KILLED—

THE **WHOLE TOWN** KNOWS?



THE **TOWN?**

MY DEAR BOY—

THEY'RE PROBABLY DISCUSSING IT IN THE **FORBIDDEN CITY** AT THIS VERY MOMENT.

GAH!



GILGAMESH,
THE SITUATION IS
GRAVE.

NOW IS THE
TIME FOR *YOU* TO
TAKE CONTROL OF
THE EMPIRE.



I THOUGHT
YOU SAID HE'D
RECOVER!

EVENTUALLY.

BUT, EVEN
FOR *ME*, THIS
WILL BE A
CHALLENGE.

THERE ARE
MANY WHO WILL
TRY TO EXPLOIT THE
CURRENT CHAOS.



IT MUST BE
SEEN THAT THERE
IS CONTINUITY.

STABILITY.

...
YES, SIFU.



I'LL BE
STAYING
HERE.

I HAD THOUGHT
STURMHALTEN—

NO.

STURMHALTEN
IS *CONTAINED*
FOR NOW...

MY
FATHER IS
HERE.

THOSE
PEOPLE YOU
SPOKE OF—

FOR MANY OF
THEM, THE FIRST
STEP WILL BE TO
ASSURE HIS
DEATH.



I'M GUESSING
THAT EVERYONE I'LL
NEED TO PROVE
MYSELF TO—

AT LEAST, IN
THE SHORT
TERM—

WILL BE
COMING
HERE.

YOU
EXPECT AN
OUTRIGHT
ATTACK?

I EXPECT
SEVERAL.



THE OLD PRINCE
WASN'T WORKING
ALONE.

I'VE SENT
QUESTERS TO THE
CASTLES AROUND
STURMHALTEN.

SOMEBODY'S
GOING TO WIND UP
WITH HIS HEAD ON A
STICK.



...METAPHORICALLY,
OF COURSE.

AND WHAT
ABOUT THE
UPROAR CAUSED BY
THIS "HETERODYNE"
GIRL?

OH, SHE'S THE
REAL THING.
EVEN MY FATHER
THINKS SO.

AH. THEN,
SHE *MUST* BE
DEALT WITH.
IF SHE WERE TO
ACTUALLY ENTER
THE CASTLE—



HEH.
ALREADY
TAKEN CARE
OF.

THAT IS THE
ONE THING I
DON'T HAVE TO
WORRY ABOUT.



WHAT'S THE
MATTER,
"DARLING?"

ITCHY
EAR.

heh.
YOU KNOW
WHAT *THAT*
MEANS...



MEANS I
NEED A GOOD
HOT BATH.

AFTER
WALKING AROUND
IN THIS OUTFIT, SO
WILL I.

...
THERE'S NO
SOUVENIR
STANDS HERE.



NO. THEY'RE
NOT ALLOWED
BEYOND THE
BRIDGE.

STILL, IT
DOES LOOK
DESERTED,
DOESN'T IT?

HEM. AS I
WAS
SAYING...

THE FIRST
CASTLE HETERODYNE
WAS BUILT IN 1042 BY
THE HT'ROK-DIN'S
SON, "KNIFE."

IT WAS
DESTROYED AND
REBUILT *THREE TIMES*
BEFORE THE PRESENT
STRUCTURE WAS
ERECTED IN 1298.

A MAJOR
CHANGE CAME IN
1677, WHEN—

HALT!



DO NOT
MOVE.

WE WILL NOT
HESITATE TO
SHOOT.

LET'S HAVE A
LOOK UNDER
THIS HOOD—

NO!

LADY
HETERODYNE!





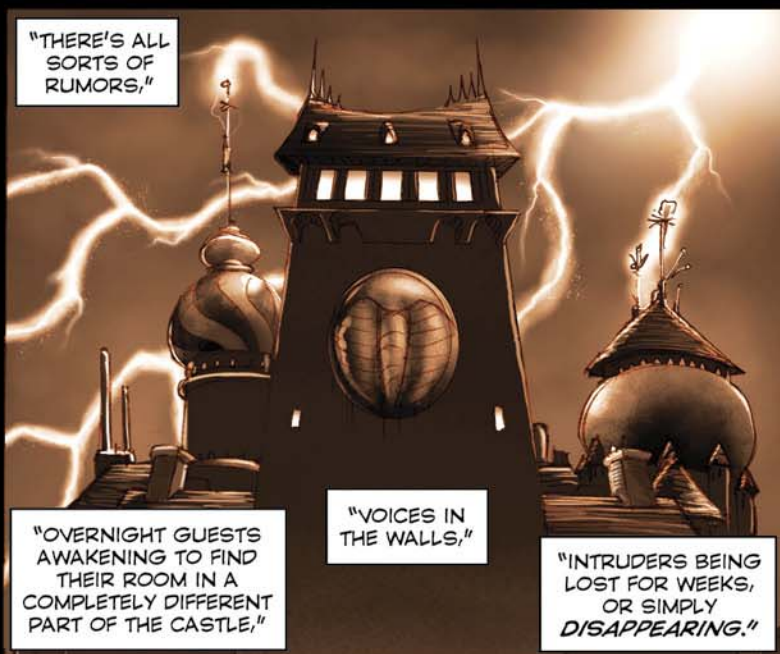
HAUNTED?

WELL, THAT'S THE STORY MOST PEOPLE TELL.

THE TRUTH IS—WELL—

THE CASTLE IS APPARENTLY SOME SORT OF GIANT MECHANISM.

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A TRUE MARVEL.



"THERE'S ALL SORTS OF RUMORS,"

"OVERNIGHT GUESTS AWAKENING TO FIND THEIR ROOM IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PART OF THE CASTLE,"

"VOICES IN THE WALLS,"

"INTRUDERS BEING LOST FOR WEEKS, OR SIMPLY DISAPPEARING."



"AFTER THE ATTACK, IT LAY ABANDONED FOR YEARS."

"THE LOCALS WOULDN'T GO NEAR IT."



"EVENTUALLY, A YOUNG PROFESSOR FROM TRANSYLVANIA POLYGNOSTIC UNIVERSITY LED A TEAM OF RESEARCHERS INSIDE."

"THEIR OBJECTIVES WERE THE HETERODYNE LIBRARY AND LABS."



"THE CASTLE SPOKE TO HIM."

"IT DEMANDED TO BE REPAIRED."



"ONE OF THE TEAM MEMBERS SPOKE AGAINST THE IDEA,"



"AND THE CASTLE MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT WASN'T A REQUEST."

THOMB!



"IT WAS THEN THAT THEY REALIZED JUST HOW FAR IT WAS TO THE DOOR."

CLANG
CLIK
CLUNK
snap
snap
snap!



"SIX MONTHS LATER, AN ASSISTANT EMERGED."



"IN THAT TIME, THE TOWN HAD BEEN TAKEN BY THE BARON."



"THE CASTLE WAS DIRECTING ITS OWN REPAIRS."

"THE JOB WOULD TAKE YEARS."



"THE FOOD STORES HAD RUN OUT, AND THE ASSISTANT HAD BEEN SENT TO PROCURE FOOD,"

TOOLS,
MATERIALS,

AND
LABOR."



"THE BARON HAD AN IDEA."

"HE NEGOTIATED WITH THE CASTLE, AND GOT THE PROFESSOR OUT."

"EVER SINCE THEN, CASTLE HETERODYNE HAS BEEN THE **ULTIMATE PUNISHMENT DETAIL.**"

"I ASSUME HE PLANS ON LOOTING IT HIMSELF."



I NEVER HEARD ANY OF THIS!

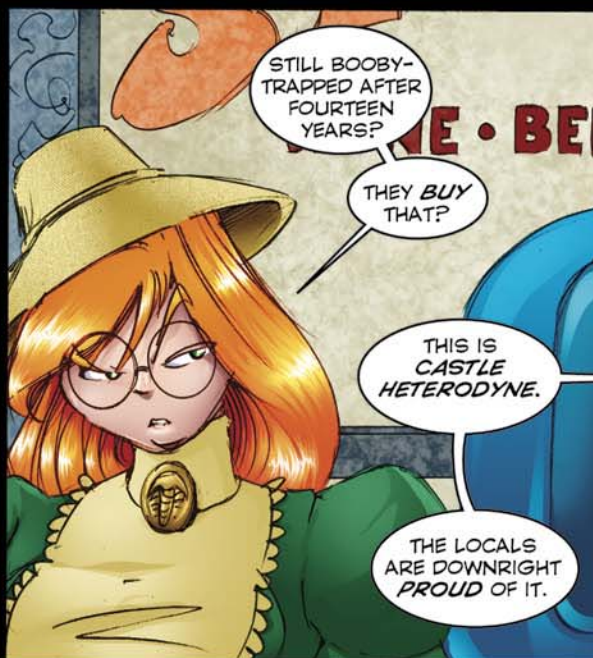
IT'S KIND OF A SECRET.

THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T BELIEVE IT'S HAUNTED,

JUST THINK THE PLACE IS BOOBY-TRAPPED.

BUT THEY'VE BEEN WORKING FOR HOW LONG NOW?

UM... FOURTEEN YEARS.



STILL BOOBY-TRAPPED AFTER FOURTEEN YEARS?

THEY BUY THAT?

THIS IS CASTLE HETERODYNE.

THE LOCALS ARE DOWNRIGHT PROUD OF IT.





GREETINGS,
PEOPLE OF
MECHANICSBURG!

I AM THE **LADY
HETERODYNE**,
DAUGHTER OF
WILLIAM
HETERODYNE!

AT LONG
LAST, I HAVE
**RETURNED
HOME!**

I HAVE LONG
BEEN IN HIDING,
FOR THERE ARE
**MANY WHO HAVE
VOWED TO
DESTROY ME!**

BUT NOW, THE
BARON IS **WEAK**,
AND CAN NO
LONGER DEFEND
HIS EMPIRE!



I FEAR THAT
HIS **INCAPACITY**
WILL LEAD TO
WAR!

I HAVE A
**DUTY TO YOU,
MY PEOPLE!**

THERE WILL BE
DANGER, BUT I
MUST PROTECT
MY CITY!

THUS, DESPITE
THE RISK TO MY
PERSON, I **RETURN
TO CLAIM MY
OWN—**

STARTING
WITH **CASTLE
HETERODYNE!**

COME ALONG,
AND BEAR
WITNESS!



AND THEN, A
NEW ERA
AWAITS!



DO TRY TO
FACE THE NEW
ERA WITH **SOME
DIGNITY.**





NICE
CAUSEWAY. VERY
DEFENSIBLE.

LOVELY.

BUT WHY DIDN'T
MISS PERFECT JUST
FLY UP TO THE TOP
IN HER *PERFECT*
AIRSHIP??

OH, THAT'S
SIMPLE.

THIS WHOLE
GRAND
PROCESSION IS
FOR SHOW.

huff
huff

SHE WANTS AS
MANY PEOPLE AS
POSSIBLE TO SEE HER
ENTER THE CASTLE.



BUT...CAN'T
THEY TELL SHE'S
SPOUTING
NONSENSE?

WELL, IT'S
NOT *REALLY*
NONSENSE, IS
IT?

THEY'VE ALL
HEARD ABOUT YOU,
SO THEY'RE *EXPECTING*
SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

AND HER
SHOWMANSHIP IS
IMPECCABLE.



WELL, HER
"IMPECCABLE
SHOWMANSHIP"
IS *KILLING* ME.

YOU'RE
PROBABLY STILL A
LITTLE SICK FROM
ALL THAT STUFF IN
STURMHALTEN.

hmf.
SOMEBODY'S
BEEN NEGLECTING
HER TRAINING.



...I SO
DON'T
CARE.

huff
gasp

*I CARE!
I CARE!*

HOY!
WHAT'S YOUR
RUSH?

SHE WANTS
TO SAVE HER
SEAT!



I'M...
GOING TO...
DIE.

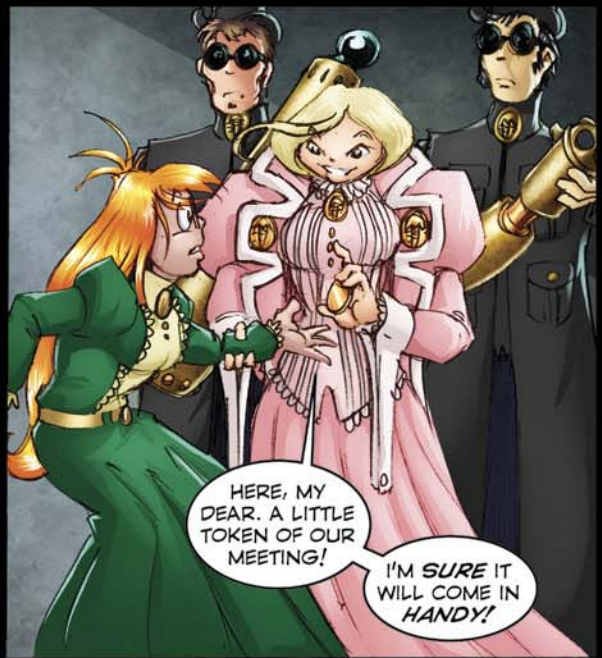
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF



OH, MY!
SUCH AN
ENCOURAGING
RECEPTION!
BUT THERE'S
NO NEED TO
KNEEL,

I'LL NOT
RULE BY
FEAR!

ARISE!



HERE, MY
DEAR. A LITTLE
TOKEN OF OUR
MEETING!

I'M SURE IT
WILL COME IN
HANDY!



ER...MISS...
ER...CLAY?
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

WHAT DID
SHE GIVE
YOU?

HEY! HEY!
CURIOUS CAT,
HERE!



OH.
A GOLD
COIN. WITH
HER
PICTURE.

NICE
TOUCH.

YEAH.
WOW.

I CAN'T WAIT
TO SEE HER TRY
TO GET INTO MY
CASTLE.



AND NOW, I
GO TO RECLAIM
WHAT IS MINE
BY RIGHT!



WHA— SHE
JUST WALKED
RIGHT IN?

WELL,
YES.

THE TRICK IS
WALKING OUT
AGAIN.



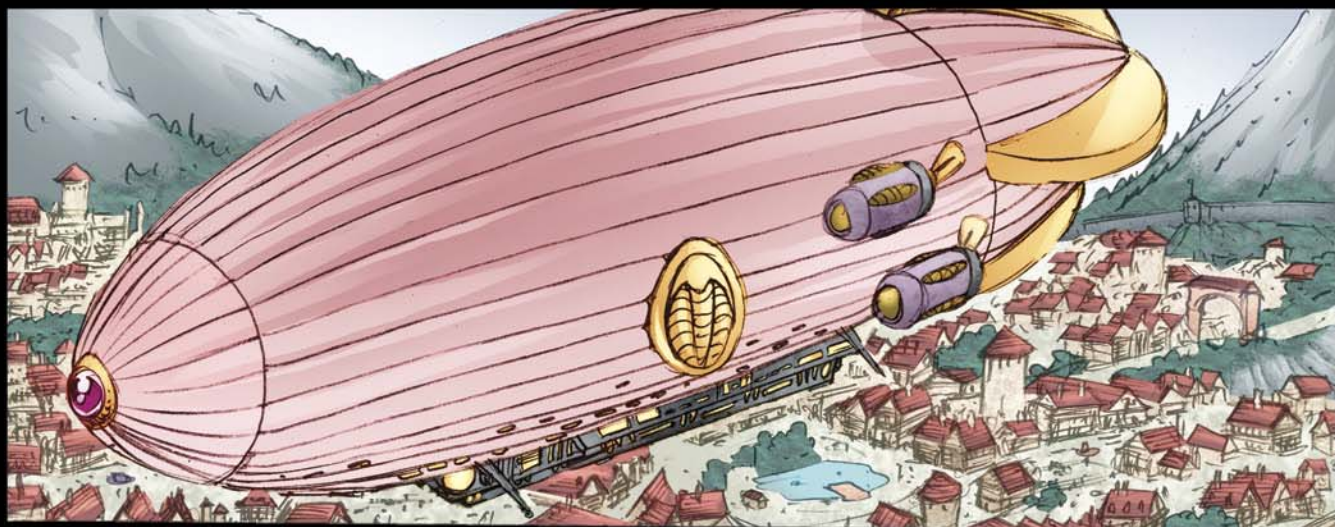
WELL, FINE.
GREAT.

LET'S
ALL GO IN,
THEN.

PARDON ME,
M'LADY—



BUT
SHOULDN'T
THAT HAVE BEEN
YOU?



AAAND— SHE'S IN.

EXCELLENT!

HM. YES, I CERTAINLY HOPE SO.

OH, DEAR. STRINBECK, YOU'RE STILL WORRIED?

OF COURSE I AM.

IT'S TOO SOON.

I DON'T LIKE BEING RUSHED.

YOU THINK ZOLA ISN'T READY?

NO, NO, SHE'S PERFECT.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE CASTLE.

...AH, YES. THE CASTLE IS THE UNPREDICTABLE ELEMENT.

BUT IT ALWAYS WILL BE, YOU KNOW, NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE PREPARE.

NO, WE HAD TO MOVE.

ALL THAT LOVELY BUILDUP IN STURMHALTEN?

OLD KLAUS WOUNDED?

EITHER ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN TEMPTING, BUT BOTH?

CARPE DIEM!

AND WHAT ABOUT THAT GIRL FROM STURMHALTEN?

YOU HAVEN'T EVEN FOUND HER YET!

psht. ONE THING AT A TIME.

ONCE EVERYTHING IS IN PLACE, OUR GIRL WILL EFFECTIVELY BE THE NEW HETERODYNE.

IF THE OTHER ONE GETS IN AFTER THAT, ZOLA CAN SIMPLY HAVE THE CASTLE SQUASH HER.

THAT'S WHAT IT DOES BEST, AFTER ALL.



hm. YES, LET'S JUST HOPE IT DOESN'T SQUASH ZOLA, FIRST.

ENOUGH!

THE CASTLE *WILL* FALL TO US. THE DOOM BELL *WILL* RING AND EUROPA *WILL* BE *OURS*. IF WE—

YES, YES, SPARE ME THAT TEDIOUS BELL BUSINESS, PLEASE.

CAPTAIN, KEEP THE SHIP STATIONARY UNTIL WE RETURN.

YES, YOUR GRACE.



...

WELL, THAT'S JUST PERFECT. TOO LOW TO HIDE, HIGH ENOUGH TO FALL HARD.

...AND WE'RE PINK. LET'S NOT FORGET THAT.



...



WHAT'S WRONG, KRADDOK? PROBLEM WITH THE WHEEL?

NO, SIR! WHEEL IS SECURE, SIR!

WELL, WHAT *IS* IT, THEN?

COME ON, OUT WITH IT, OLD TIMER.



WELL, CAPTAIN, I DON'T LIKE TO SECOND-GUESS ORDERS,

NOT MY PLACE, YOU KNOW?

BUT...WE'RE IN MECHANICSBURG AIRSPACE.

A LOT OF THE OLD HANDS...WE DON'T LIKE IT, SIR.



MECHANICSBURG AIRSPACE HAS BEEN SAFE FOR NEARLY TWENTY YEARS.

YESSIR.

...BUT...

...BUT?

BUT, WE'RE... BEGGIN' YOUR PARDON, CAPTAIN, BUT EVERYONE KNOWS IT...

WE'RE KIND OF... CONQUERIN' IT, AIN'T WE?



YES. JUST LIKE THE BARON DID. SO?

AH, WELL, BUT...HE WAS...AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY, AS IT WERE. SIR.

OUR YOUNG LADY—

SHE AIN'T REALLY A HETERODYNE—

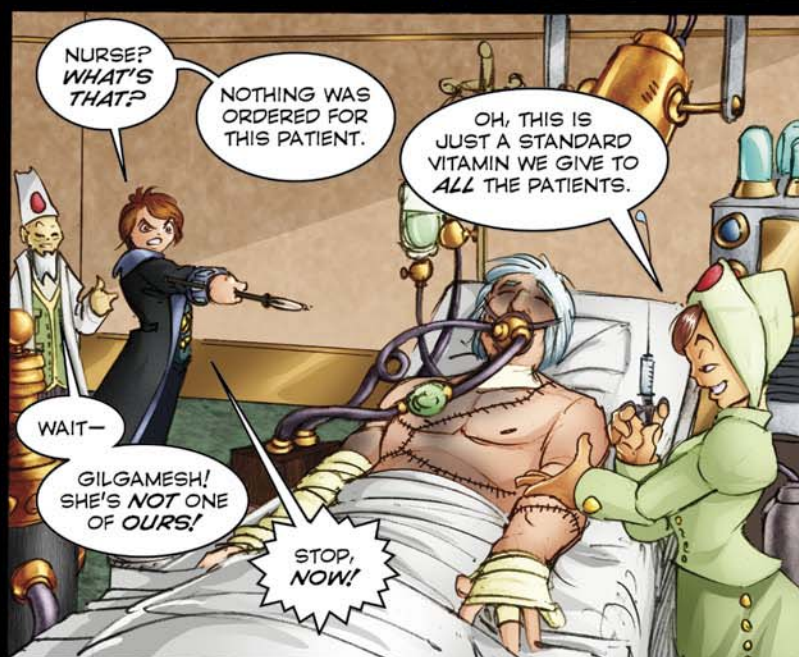
.../S SHE?



ALL HANDS ARE TO KEEP A WEATHER-EYE OUT!

REPORT ANYTHING ODD!

AH. VERY GOOD, CAPTAIN!



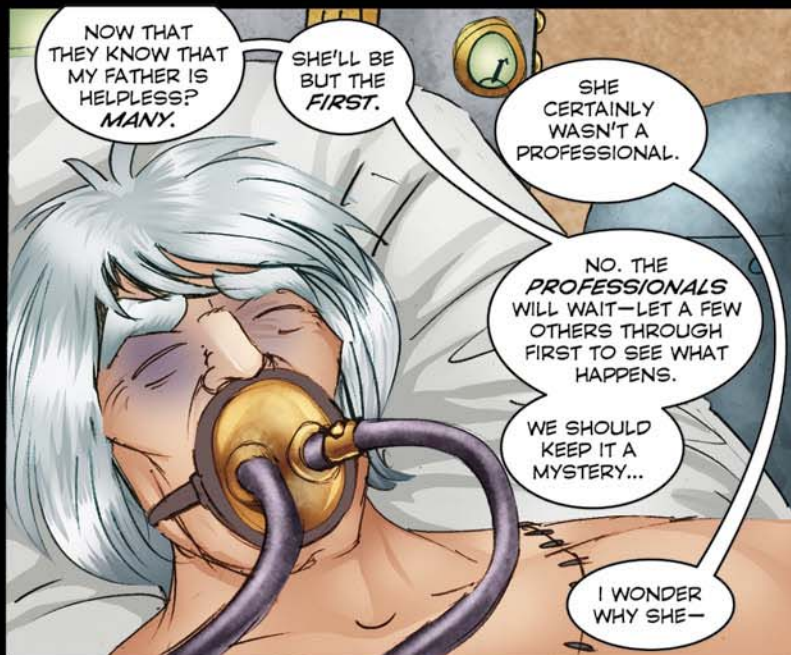


GREAT HEAVENS.

AND MY FATHER IS UNHARMED. EXCELLENT.

I HAD BEEN WORRIED ABOUT EFFECT SPREAD, BUT—

AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT IN *MY* HOSPITAL! WHO WOULD DARE?



NOW THAT THEY KNOW THAT MY FATHER IS HELPLESS? *MANY.*

SHE'LL BE BUT THE *FIRST.*

SHE CERTAINLY WASN'T A PROFESSIONAL.

NO. THE *PROFESSIONALS* WILL WAIT—LET A FEW OTHERS THROUGH FIRST TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

WE SHOULD KEEP IT A MYSTERY...

I WONDER WHY SHE—



WHY? BECAUSE WULFENBACH TROOPS TURNED HER VILLAGE INTO OWLS.

...OR MAYBE WE DEPOSED HER FAVORITE MAD PRINCE,

OR HUNG HER LOVER FOR *PIRACY,*

OR BANISHED THE HETERODYNE BOYS OR POISONED THE WELL OR RAISED THE PRICE OF HERRING—

THAT'S NOT THE *POINT.*



THE POINT IS THAT THIS WAS JUST THE *FIRST.*

THEN YOU HAD BETTER BE PREPARED. I'LL GO TO PASS ON YOUR ORDERS. YOU STAY VIGILANT.

WHEN YOU COME BACK, DON'T FORGET TO *KNOCK.*

NO FEAR OF THAT.



...THAT *CAN'T* BE AGATHA. I MEAN...GOOD LORD.

AND WOOSTER WOULD NEVER HAVE DARED TO DISOBEY.

...BUT IF SHE *IS* HERE...

SOMETHING *TERRIBLE* MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM.



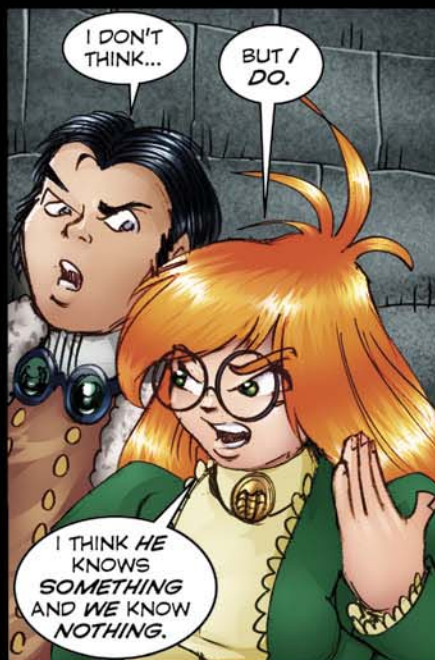
AND IF IT HASN'T—

IT *WILL!*



SO—WHO ARE YOU, SIR?

THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO ASK YOU.



I DON'T THINK...

BUT I DO.

I THINK HE KNOWS SOMETHING AND WE KNOW NOTHING.



I AM AGATHA HETERODYNE.

BILL AND LUCREZIA WERE MY PARENTS.

INTERESTING. WHERE ARE THEY?

I DON'T KNOW. I WAS RAISED BY... WELL...

YOU'D KNOW THEM AS PUNCH AND JUDY.



THAT'S DIFFERENT.

DID PUNCH EVER MENTION A MASTER HELIOTROPE?

NO, BECAUSE HE COULDN'T TALK.



OH, MY. NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW THAT.

THEY PROBABLY ALSO DON'T KNOW THAT HE HICCUPS AFTER HE ENCOUNTERS ELECTRICITY.

I KNOW YOU'RE TESTING ME. I CAN KEEP THIS UP.



BUT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE...

YEAH, I THINK IT'S PRETTY WEIRD, MYSELF.



DON'T TRY TO BOGGLE ME, MISTER TALKING CAT.

THIS IS MECHANICSBURG. YOU ARE BY NO MEANS THE STRANGEST THING IN THIS TOWN.



BUT YOU, M'LADY, ARE SOMETHING QUITE SPECIAL.

YOU... BELIEVE ME?

NOT YET— BUT I WILL LISTEN.



CARSON VON MEKKHAN.

FORMER SENESCHAL AND KEEPER OF THE KEYS TO CASTLE HETERODYNE.

WELCOME, MY LADY—

IF MY LADY YOU BE.



VON MEKKHAN—
VON MEKKHAN WAS THE SENESCHAL. HE DIED IN THE ATTACK.



YOU'RE REMARKABLY WELL INFORMED, YOUNG MAN.

YES, I DIED A BIT THAT DAY.

BUT THE MASTERS WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED THAT A *POOR EXCUSE*.



THE RECORDS CLEARLY SHOW—

LADY HETERODYNE, THIS *CAN'T* BE THE SENESCHAL!

AND I KNOW *PERSONALLY* THAT THIS YOUNG LADY *CANNOT* BE WHO *SHE* SAYS SHE IS.



BUT I'M AN OLD MAN, AND I'VE LIVED HERE A LONG TIME.

I'VE LEARNED THAT JUST BECAUSE SOMETHING IS "IMPOSSIBLE"—

—DOESN'T MEAN IT *CAN'T* HAPPEN.

YET YOU SAY YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME—

WELL, YOU *MAY* STILL BE USEFUL.



YOU DON'T *ACT* LIKE THE USUAL BOGUS HETERODYNE HEIR.

YOU'RE TOO *LOW KEY*.

AH! AND THE ONE WHO ENTERED THE CASTLE—

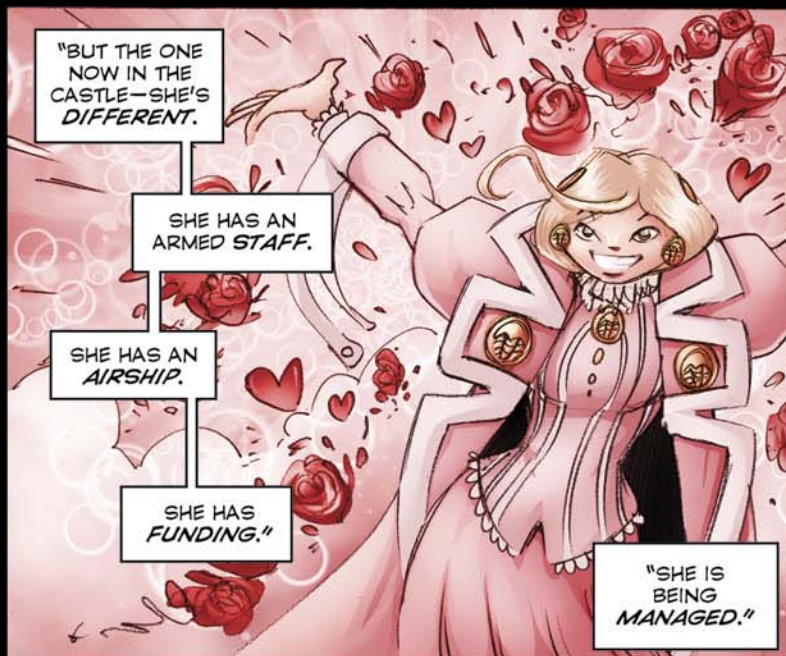
NO, *SHE* DOESN'T FIT, *EITHER*.



WE GET FAKE HETERODYNES THROUGH HERE EVERY YEAR OR TWO. SOMETIMES *MORE*.

THEY'RE EITHER CON ARTISTS, OR DELUDED, MESSIANIC *CRAZIES*.

hmf. WELL, THE *TOURISTS* LOVE IT.



"BUT THE ONE NOW IN THE CASTLE—*SHE'S DIFFERENT*.

SHE HAS AN ARMED *STAFF*.

SHE HAS AN *AIRSHIP*.

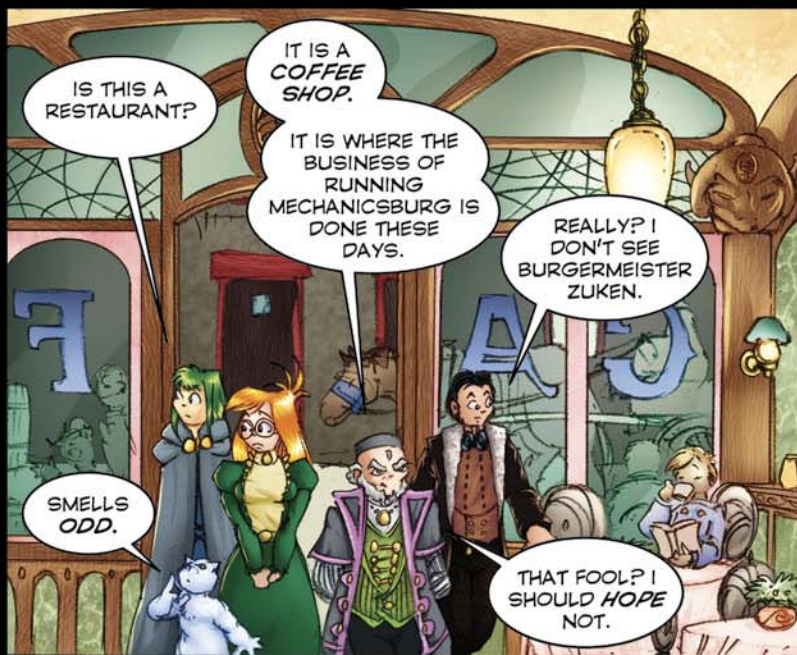
SHE HAS *FUNDING*."

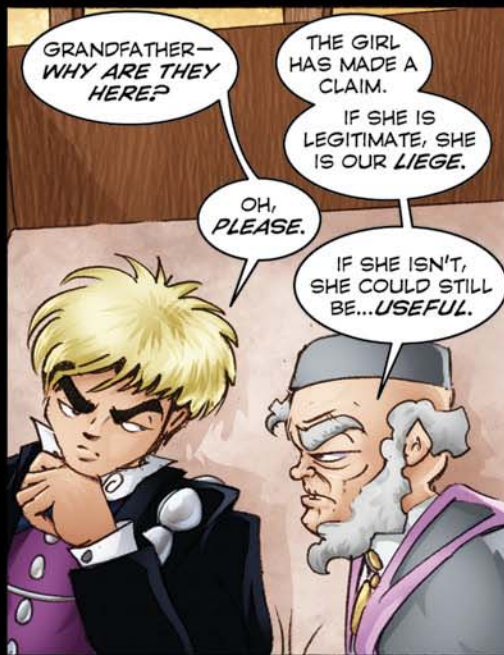
"SHE IS BEING *MANAGED*."

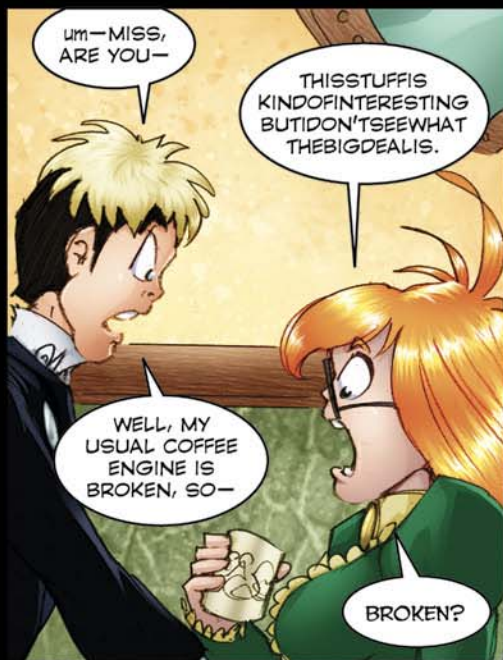


AND THAT MEANS—

SOMEONE IS TRYING TO TAKE OVER *MY TOWN*.











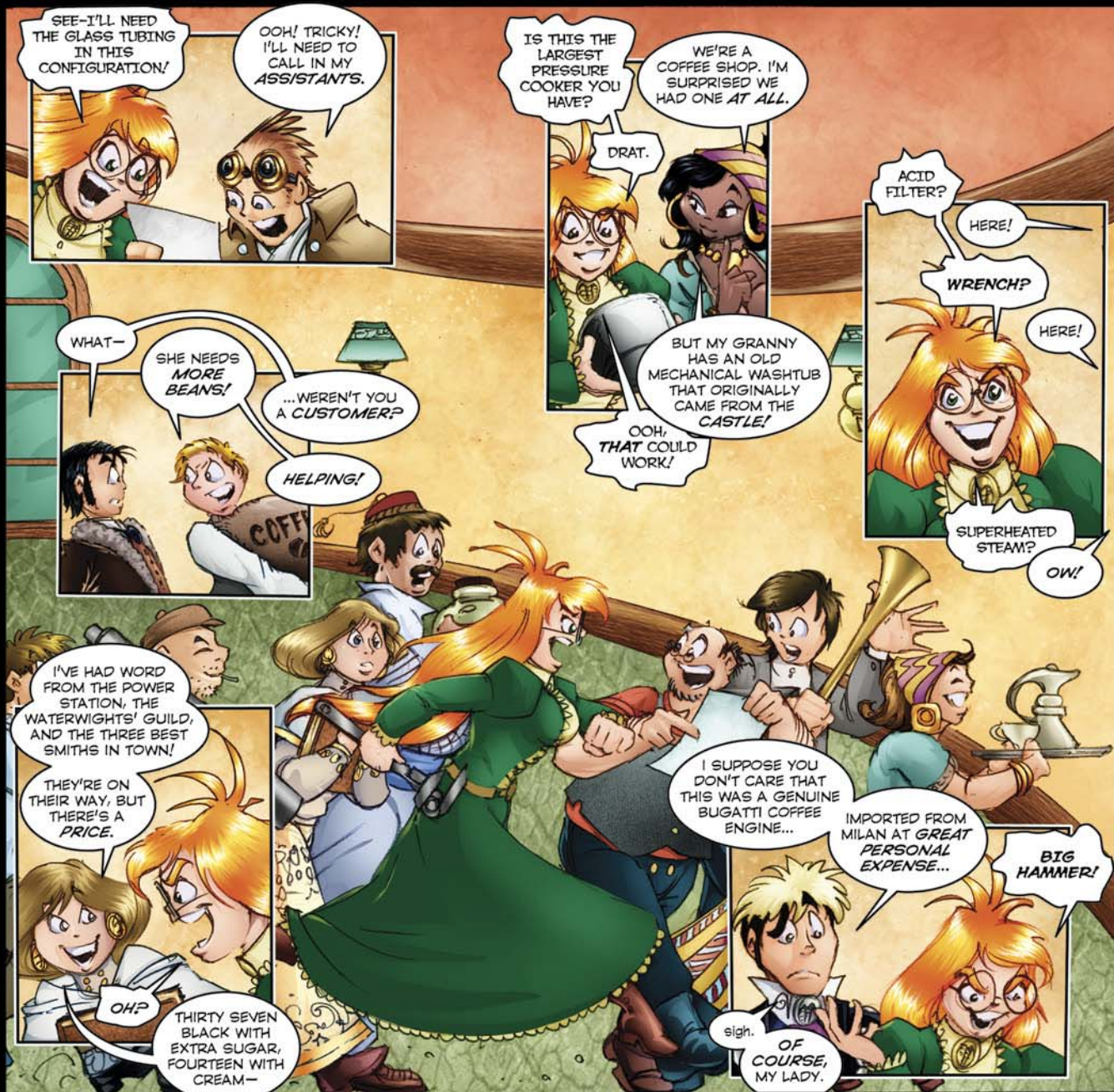
I GET IT.

A WHOLE TOWN OF MINIONS AND NO MASTER.

PRETTY MUCH.

AND ONE OF OUR JOBS IS TO KEEP OUTSIDERS FROM *REALIZING* THAT.

GRANDFATHER, THIS IS GETTING OUT OF HAND.



SEE-I'LL NEED THE GLASS TUBING IN THIS CONFIGURATION!

OOH! TRICKY! I'LL NEED TO CALL IN MY ASSISTANTS.

IS THIS THE LARGEST PRESSURE COOKER YOU HAVE?

WE'RE A COFFEE SHOP. I'M SURPRISED WE HAD ONE AT ALL.

DRAT.

ACID FILTER?

HERE!

WRENCH?

HERE!

BUT MY GRANNY HAS AN OLD MECHANICAL WASHTUB THAT ORIGINALLY CAME FROM THE CASTLE!

OOH, THAT COULD WORK!

SUPERHEATED STEAM?

OW!

WHAT—

SHE NEEDS MORE BEANS!

...WEREN'T YOU A CUSTOMER?

HELPING!

I'VE HAD WORD FROM THE POWER STATION, THE WATERWIGHTS' GUILD, AND THE THREE BEST SMITHS IN TOWN!

THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY, BUT THERE'S A PRICE.

OH?

THIRTY SEVEN BLACK WITH EXTRA SUGAR, FOURTEEN WITH CREAM—

I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T CARE THAT THIS WAS A GENUINE BUGATTI COFFEE ENGINE...

IMPORTED FROM MILAN AT GREAT PERSONAL EXPENSE...

BIG HAMMER!

sigh. OF COURSE, MY LADY.



SAY, COULD I GET ANOTHER CUP OF COFFEE?

NO!



ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY! **PUSH!**

THIS ISN'T SOME KIND OF **MIND CONTROL**—
LIKE WITH **SLAVER WASPS**, IS IT?

DON'T BE INSULTING.

THE PEOPLE IN **THIS TOWN** DON'T **NEED** FILTH LIKE THE WASPS TO GET THEM FIRED UP ABOUT A PROJECT LIKE THIS.

THEY JUST NEED AN **EXCUSE.**



"FOR **GENERATIONS**, THE PEOPLE OF **MECHANICSBURG** HAVE SERVED THE MOST **DEPRAVED**, **UNSTABLE**, **CRAZED** MANIACS IN THE **WORLD!**

SURE, THE **HETERODYNES** WERE **DANGEROUS LUNATICS**—

BUT THEY BECAME **OUR DANGEROUS LUNATICS!**"



"AND AS LONG AS WE PLEASSED THE **MASTERS**, LIFE WAS **GOOD.**

WE'RE PROTECTED BY THE **LOCAL GEOGRAPHY**: NO ONE HAS **EVER** MANAGED TO TAKE THE TOWN BY **FORCE**—

SO WE GREW **SAFE**, **SECURE**, AND **FAT** FROM THE **SPOILS OF CONQUEST."**



"MOST OF US AREN'T **SPARKS**, OF COURSE, BUT A LOT OF US HAVE **SIMILAR TENDENCIES.**

IT WAS EASY FOR US TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THE **MASTER'S...ENTHUSIASM.**

PEOPLE WHO AREN'T **LOCAL** WON'T UNDERSTAND,

BUT THERE'S A LOT OF **PRIDE** HERE."



A LOT OF **FOLKS** **DESPERATELY** WANT A NEW **HETERODYNE.**

ANY NEW HETERODYNE.

BUT IT'S BEEN **HOW LONG?**

I MEAN, THE **YOUNGER GENERATION** WON'T—



MY FAMILY'S BEEN **GRAVE ROBBERS** TO THE **MASTERS** FER A **HUNNED YEARS**,

AN' I HEARD THERE'S A NEW **MASTER**,

SO I DUG HER UP A **DEAD RAT** CUZ THAT'S ALL I COULD **FIND!**



YOU'RE **HIRED.**

DON'T ENCOURAGE THEM!



WHY NOT?
THEY SEEM
HAPPY ENOUGH.

FOR THE
MOMENT,
YES.



"USUALLY, WHEN
SOME JOKER COMES
THROUGH TOWN
CLAIMING TO BE THE
LONG-LOST
HETERODYNE HEIR,

I TRY TO KEEP HIM
QUIET, AND GET
HIM INTO THE
CASTLE AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE."



"THAT TAKES CARE
OF THINGS
NEATLY.

IT'S NOT SO TIDY IF
THE *PEOPLE* HERE
GET THEIR HANDS
ON A FAKE."



"THEY LOOK
LIKE A *NICE*
BUNCH OF
FOLKS, DON'T
THEY?

BUT THEY'RE
DESCENDED FROM
A *LONG LINE* OF
BRIGANDS AND
CUT-THROATS—

AND THEY *DON'T*
LIKE TO BE
DISAPPOINTED."



"TRYING TO
CON THESE
PEOPLE IS A
VERY BAD
IDEA.

WHEN THEY BREAK
OUT THE TORCHES
AND PITCHFORKS,
WELL—

IT'S JUST *HELL* TO
CLEAN UP, AND
ATTRACTS THE *WRONG*
SORT OF *TOURIST*."



IN OTHER
WORDS, IT'S MORE
WORK FOR YOU,
AND IT'S *BAD* FOR
BUSINESS.

SMART
CAT.

HEY, THE
MOOD'S DIFFERENT.
WHAT'S—

SHE'S A
SPARK.

THEY'VE
BEEN HAVING
FUN.



"BUT, BY NOW, A LOT
OF THEM WILL HAVE
HEARD THAT SHE'S
SUPPOSEDLY A
HETERODYNE.

THAT
UPS THE
ANTE."



"NOW THEY'RE
WATCHING HER.

JUDGING
HER.

NOW, SHE'D
BETTER BE THE
REAL THING."



ARE THE TOOLS READY?

OH, YES.

ALL THE NEW PARTS GATHERED?

YESSS...

GOOD!
NOW I CAN REALLY GET TO WORK!

♪

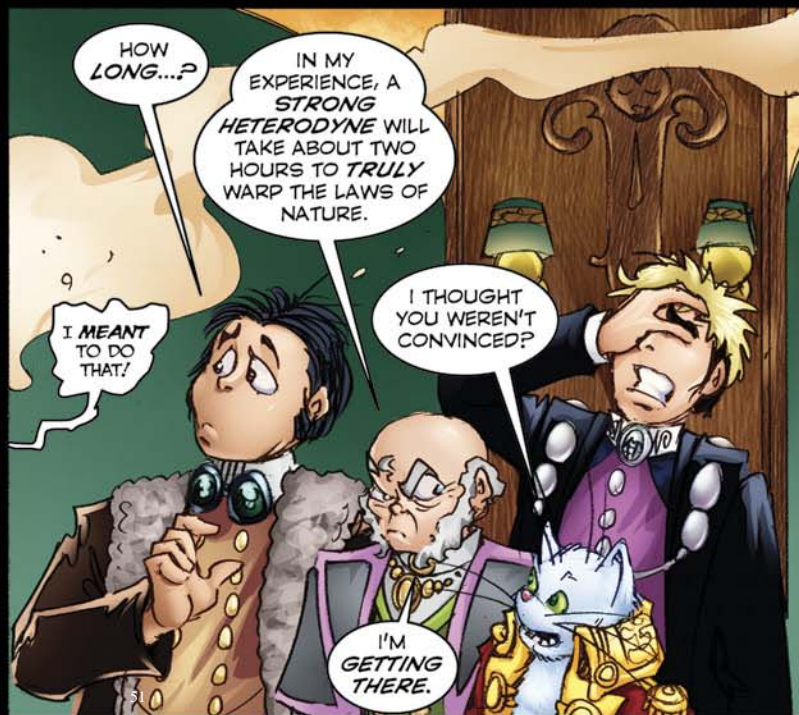
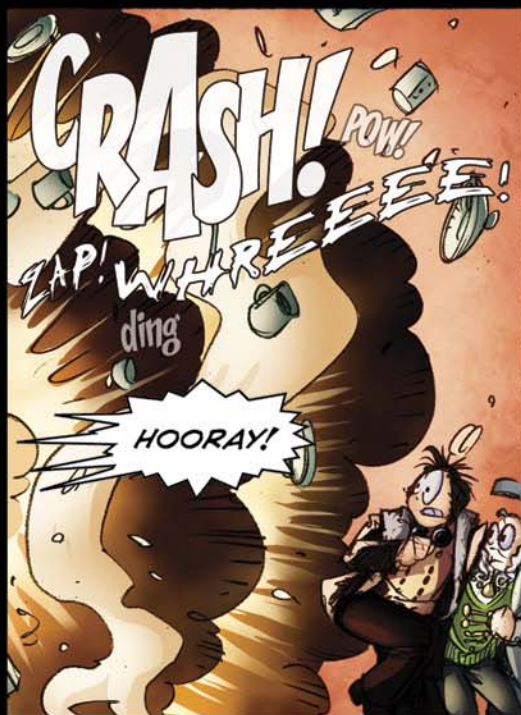
SHE'S...

SHE'S HETERODYNING...

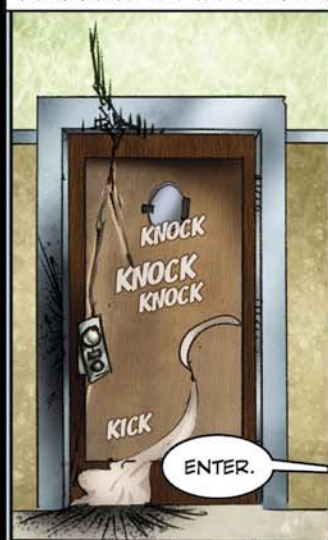
WHAT? THE MUSIC?

SHE DOES THAT ALL THE TIME.

MAYBE SHE REALLY IS-?



MEANWHILE—AT THE HOSPITAL:



AH.

IS THIS A BAD
TIME, YOUNG
GILGAMESH?

NOT
PARTICULARLY,
SIFU.

YOU HAVE
NEWS?



I HAVE A
SOLDIER HERE
WITH AN
INTERESTING
REPORT.

SHOW
HIM IN.

AIEE!

I'LL BE
DONE IN A
MOMENT.



WRONG!

KILL ME AND
THIS DEADMAN
SWITCH WILL
RELEASE—AND BLOW
YOU AND YOUR
BLOODY BARON
TO BITS!



VELL, VE
KENT HAFF
DOT.

CRUNCH



RIP

AAAAAH!

I HAFF NOT
YET GIFFEN MY
REPORT.



A JÄGER?
HERE?

I THOUGHT
THE JÄGERS
WEREN'T
PERMITTED—

I IZ NOT
A JÄGER,
SIR.

HOW DO
YOU FIGURE
THAT?!



DE
JÄGERS IZ
VEAK.

DEY CANNOT
LET GO OF DERE
DEAD MASTERS.

I HAFF
RENOUNCED DE
JÄGERTROTH.



YOU...CAN
DO THAT?



IT WASN'T
HIS IDEA.

THEY
THREW HIM
OUT.

IT WAS AN
UNPRECEDENTED
MOVE.

HMF.



AND YOUR
LOYALTY TO THE
HOUSE OF
HETERODYNE?

PAH! NON-
EXISTENT,
SIR.

FASCINATING.

YOUR
NEWS?



YES SIR. DERE IZ
NOW, IN DER TOWN,
A SECOND GURL
CLAIMING TO BE A
HETERODYNE.



A SECOND—IS
SHE ATTEMPTING
TO ENTER THE
CASTLE?

NO, SIR. SHE
IZ IN A COFFEE
SHOP.

...A COFFEE
SHOP?



WHAT IS SHE
DOING IN A
COFFEE SHOP?

SHE IZ
MAKING
COFFEE,
SIR.

MAKING
COFFEE—

DERE HAFF
BEEN THREE
EXPLOSIONS SO
FAR, SIR.



AGATHA!



IT'S *HER*!
IT'S GOT TO
BE HER!

THIS IS THE
TRUE HETERODYNE
GIRL YOU SAID WAS
"ALREADY TAKEN
CARE OF?"

AND YET, YOU
LOOK...
PLEASED.



YES. YOU'RE
RIGHT. I
SHOULDN'T BE
PLEASED AT
ALL.

FATHER IS
CONVINCED
SHE'S
DANGEROUS.

ER—
WHEN DID I
SAY—

WELL, *ALL*
EVIDENCE
SUGGESTS—

THAT'S WHY I
SENT HER TO
ENGLAND.



YOU DID
WHAT?!



YOU SENT THE
REAL HETERODYNE
HEIR TO
ENGLAND?!

YES. YOU
REMEMBER MY
ASSISTANT,
WOOSTER?

HE'S A BRITISH
SPY. I SENT *HIM*
TO GET HER OUT OF
STURMHALTEN.

YOU...YOU
SENT...

YOU *KNOW*
YOUR FATHER ISN'T
ON THE BEST OF
TERMS WITH
ENGLAND—



...VAIT...

DIZ
GURL IZ
A *REAL*—

WELL, OF
COURSE I
WASN'T GOING
TO LET THEM
KEEP HER.

I TOLD THEM
THAT IF THEY DIDN'T
KEEP HER *SAFE*, I'D
DESTROY THEM.
OKAY?

YOU TOLD
THEM
WHAT?!



BUT IF
SHE'S
HERE—

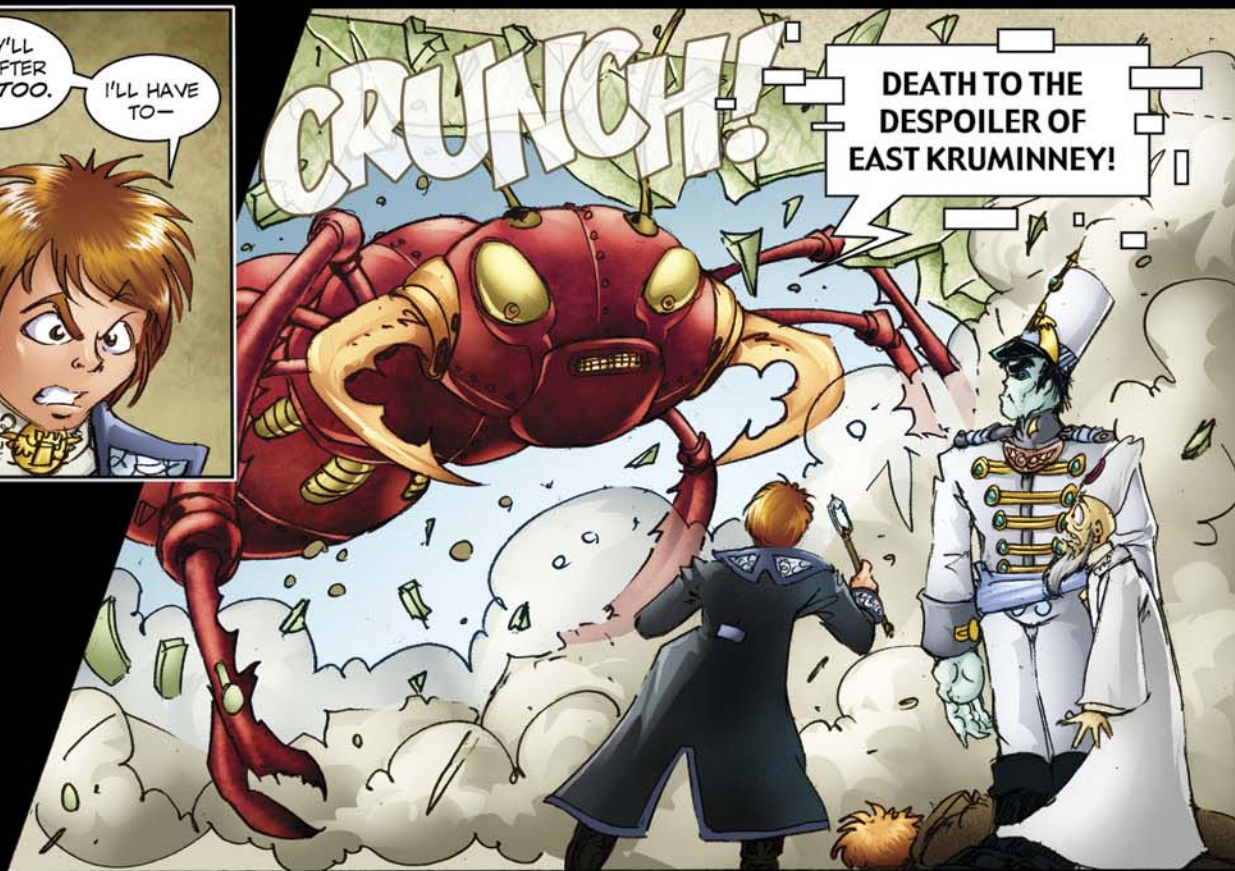
BEEN A WHILE
SINCE I GAVE YOU
A THRASHING...

BUT I'M SURE
YOUR FATHER WILL
APPROVE.

WHAT? UM...
YES, SIFU.

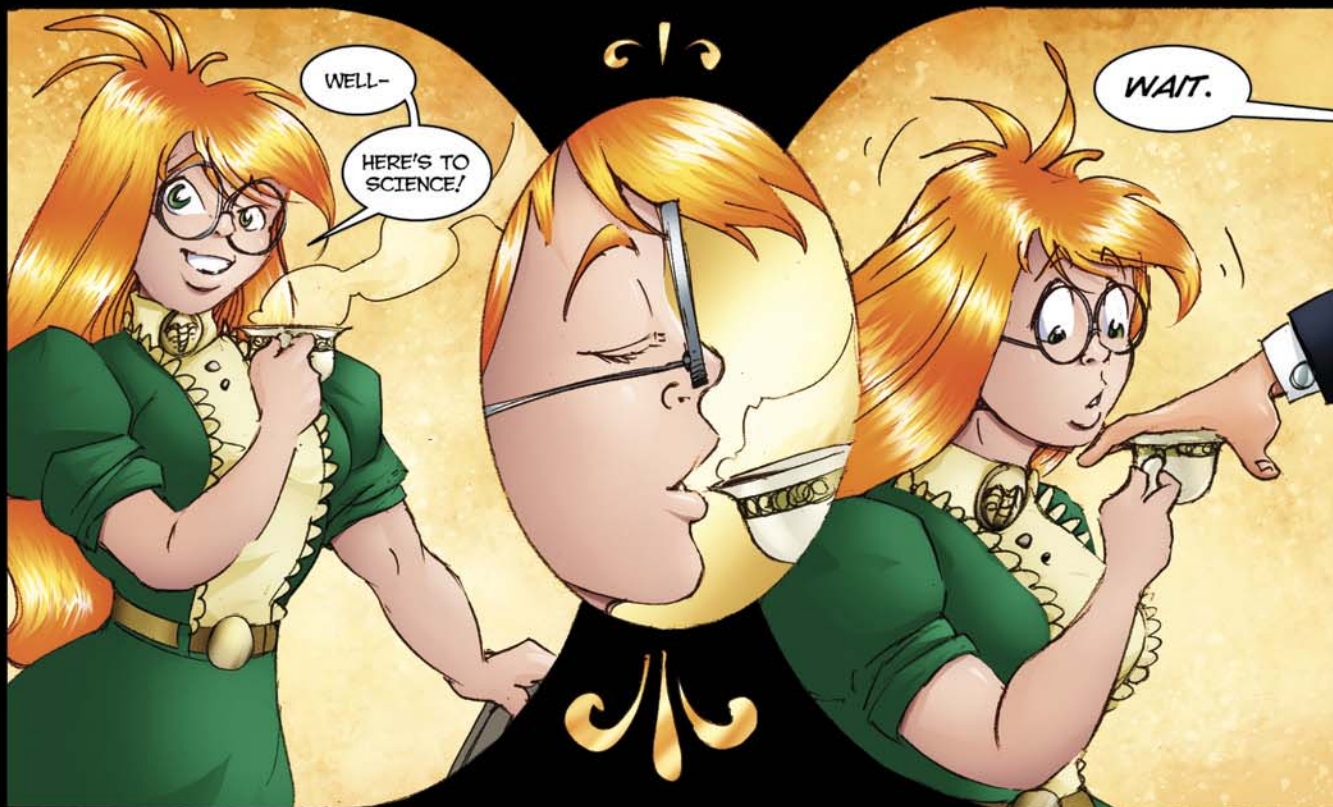
NOT
LISTENING

AND SOMEONE
POWERFUL IS
RUNNING *ANOTHER*
HETERODYNE HEIR—

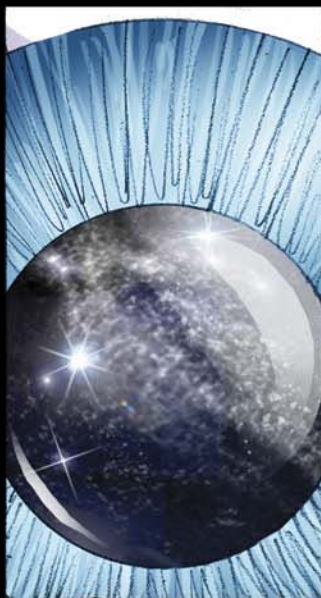




COFFEE'S
READY!







WHAT'S THE MATTER?

IS IT NO GOOD?

IT'S... PERFECT.



THE TASTE IS A PERFECT BLEND OF ALL THE TASTES AND ESSENCES THAT MAKE COFFEE WHAT IT IS.

A PERFECT BLEND—AND YET I CAN DISCERN EACH AND EVERY ONE—PERFECTLY.



EVEN THE WAY THE LIQUID ADHERES TO THE INSIDE OF THE CUP—

INDICATIVE OF THE WAY IT FLOWS ALONG THE TASTE BUDS—IS AESTHETICALLY PERFECT.

IT REVEALS THE MATHEMATICAL PERFECTION OF THE CUP ITSELF!



THE DELICATE SMOOTHNESS OF THE CHINA, WITH ITS OWN INHERENT TEMPERATURE,

WHICH MITIGATES THE OTHERWISE EXTREME HEAT OF THE COFFEE ITSELF—

IT IS A THING OF TACTILE AND FUNCTIONAL BEAUTY! PERFECT!



AND THIS! THIS PERFECT SAUCER!

...LADY?

ER... I CAN FIX THAT.







I DON'T
THINK SO,
MY LADY.

YOU ARE
UNDER
ARREST.

OUR ORDERS ARE
TO BRING YOU IN.
WHETHER DEAD OR ALIVE
IS AT OUR
DISCRETION.

COMPLY, AND
YOU WILL NOT BE
HARMED.



I WOULDN'T
WORRY ABOUT
HER, IF I WERE
YOU.



YOU MESS
WITH THE
MISTRESS—

YOU MESS WITH
MECHANICSBURG!



BIFF
★ CRUNCH!
★ POW!

THIS WILL
ONLY GET
WORSE.

TAKE ME
TO THE
CASTLE.
NOW.

IT LOOKS
LIKE I'D
BETTER.



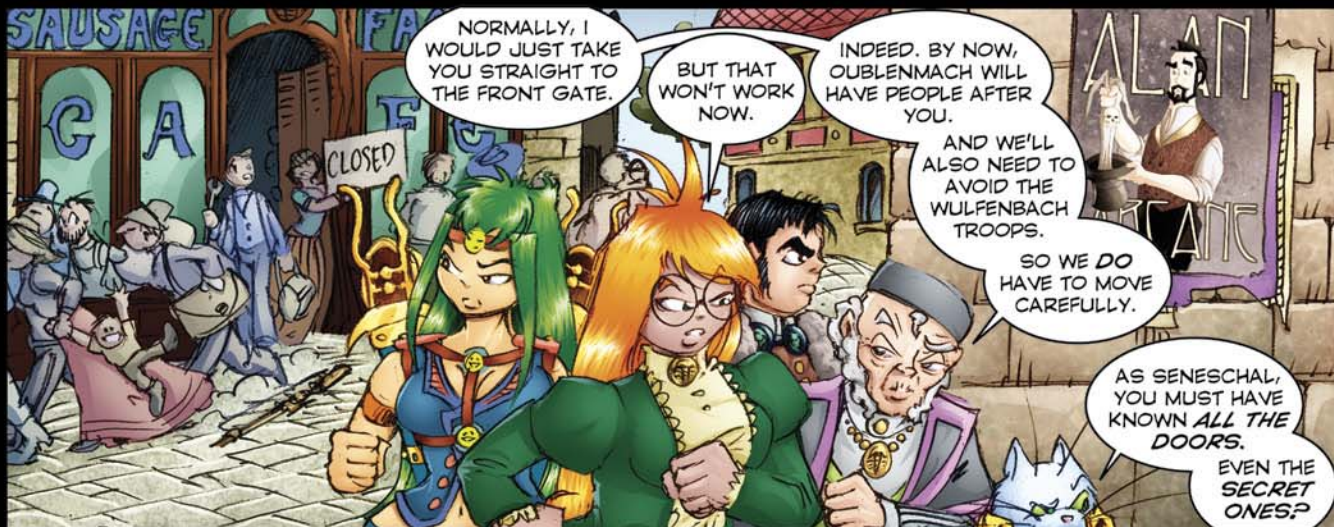
ER—I'LL HAVE
TO ASK YOU AND
THE GIRLS TO KEEP
AN EYE ON MY IDIOT
GRANDSON.

OF COURSE,
SIR! WE'LL TAKE
CARE OF HIM.

OF COURSE
THEY WILL!
THEY'RE
PERFECT!

sigh. WITH
ANY LUCK, THIS
WILL WEAR
OFF SOON.

I CERTAINLY
HOPE SO. HE'S
CREEPING ME
OUT.



NORMALLY, I WOULD JUST TAKE YOU STRAIGHT TO THE FRONT GATE.

BUT THAT WON'T WORK NOW.

INDEED. BY NOW, OUBLENMACH WILL HAVE PEOPLE AFTER YOU.

AND WE'LL ALSO NEED TO AVOID THE WULFENBACH TROOPS.

SO WE DO HAVE TO MOVE CAREFULLY.

AS SENESCHAL, YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN ALL THE DOORS.

EVEN THE SECRET ONES?



OF COURSE. BUT IT WON'T DO TO UNDERESTIMATE THESE PEOPLE.

I MUST ASSUME THAT EVEN THE HIDDEN DOORS ARE BEING *WATCHED*.



SO WHAT DO WE DO?

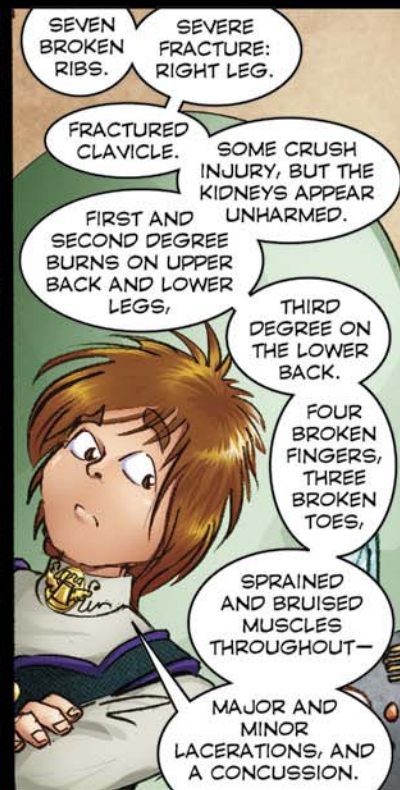
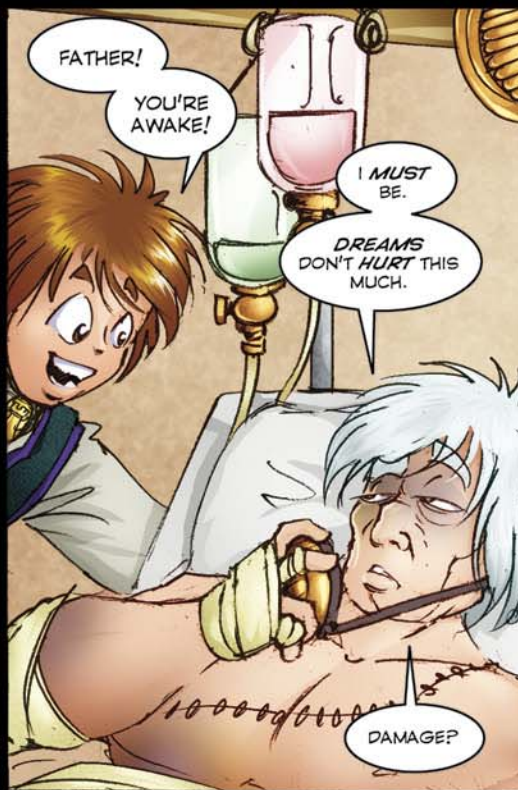
WE *DO* SEND YOU IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR!

OH, GOOD. VERY TRICKY.



THE TRICK—

IS TO MAKE IT SEEM LIKE YOU DON'T *WANT* TO GO IN.





ABOUT AGATHA—

SHE IS THE OTHER.

I—

SHE IS LUCREZIA MONGFISH.

I'VE TALKED TO HER. THERE IS NO MISTAKE.



YOU MUST LISTEN. THIS GIRL IS *NOT* WHAT SHE SEEMS.

I *KNOW* HER.

SHE'S RUTHLESS, MANIPULATIVE, AND A CONSUMMATE ACTRESS.

PLEASE BELIEVE ME.



I'VE HAD A LOT OF STRANGE REPORTS FROM STURMHALTEN, YES.

I AGREE THAT THERE ARE SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS CONCERNING HER.

BUT, BEING A SPARK, SHE—



YES, SHE IS!

AND THAT IS ANOTHER FINE REASON FOR YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM HER!

DO YOU KNOW THAT EVERY SINGLE WOMAN I'VE EVER KNOWN WHO HAD THE SPARK HAS TRIED TO KILL ME?

THEY'RE DANGEROUS!

FATHER—MAYBE IT'S YOU.



NO...

NO, I DON'T THINK SO...



THIS GIRL—SHE—

FATHER, I AM NOT GOING TO ARGUE ABOUT THIS NOW!

I SENT THE JÄGER TO BRING HER HERE, AND THEN I—WE—WILL EXAMINE HER!

UNTIL THEN, YOU SHOULD REST!



THE JÄG—

VOLEP! CAPTAIN VOLEP YOU SENT HIM TO FETCH THE HETERODYNE GIRL?

YES!



GREAT HEAVENS. THAT SOLVES EVERYTHING.

WELL, IT'S WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE, MYSELF.

IT SEEMS I HAVE MISJUDGED YOU.

WELL DONE, SON.



IS THIS ANOTHER TEST?

erk



PLEASE, DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH.

ouch...



NO. NO MORE TESTS, MY SON.

THE TIME FOR SUCH THINGS IS OVER.

NOW, GIVE ME A REPORT.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, HERE?



I'VE CLOSED THE CITY GATES,

AND I HAVE A SQUAD UP AT CASTLE HETERODYNE.

THE REST OF THE TROOPS ARE PATROLLING THE STREETS.

WHY ARE YOU STILL IN HERE?



WORD OF YOUR STATE HAS SPREAD.

I FEARED... ASSASSINATION.

AH. ANY ATTEMPTS?

...A FEW.

NOTHING WORTH MENTIONING.



THE WORK OF YOUR IMPOSTER'S PEOPLE?

I...DON'T THINK SO.

THEY'VE ALL SEEMED VERY DISORGANIZED—

JUST RANDOM ENEMIES TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION.



THE IMPOSTERS SEEM TO BE FOLLOWING A SET PLAN.

KILLING YOU IS THE OBVIOUS STEP, BUT—

OH, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

NO, SERIOUSLY. IF THEY WANT THE EMPIRE—



IF THEY... WANT THE EMPIRE...

GIL?

BUT IF THEY DON'T...



IF ALL THEY WANT IS...

MECHANICSBURG...



GET CAPTAIN DUPREE IN HERE!

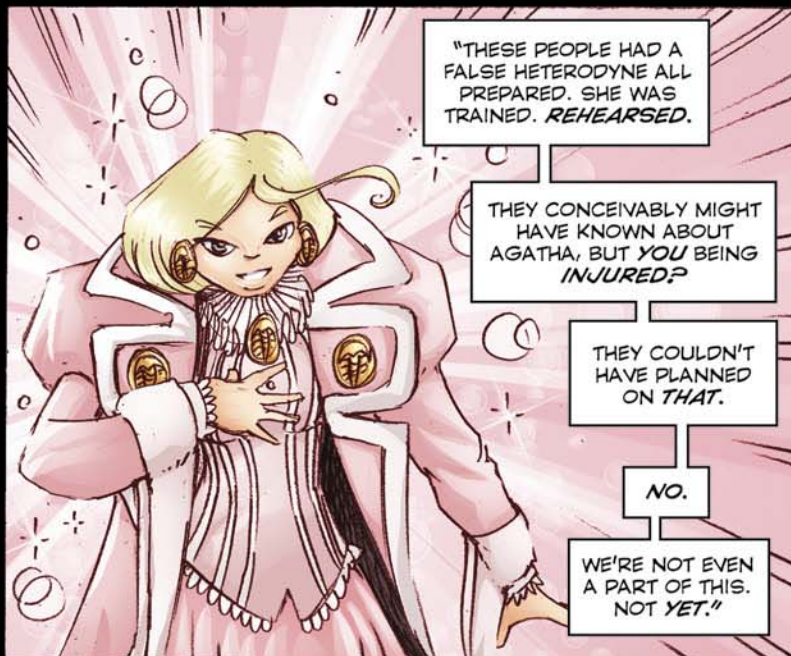
NOW!



I'M AFRAID I MUST GO AFTER ALL, FATHER.

WHEN THE MAIN ATTACK COMES, IT WON'T BE *HERE*.

EXPLAIN.



"THESE PEOPLE HAD A FALSE HETERODYNE ALL PREPARED. SHE WAS TRAINED. *REHEARSED*.

THEY CONCEIVABLY MIGHT HAVE KNOWN ABOUT AGATHA, BUT *YOU* BEING INJURED?

THEY COULDN'T HAVE PLANNED ON THAT.

NO.

WE'RE NOT EVEN A PART OF THIS. NOT *YET*."



THIS ISN'T A DIRECT ATTACK ON THE EMPIRE—

IT'S AN *OUTFLANKING* MANEUVER.

THEY'RE AFTER ...*LEGITIMACY*.



hmf. THE HETERODYNES WON'T GET THEM *THAT*.

NOT *DIRECTLY*, NO. BUT...

WELL... YOU'VE IMPOSED *ORDER*, FATHER, BUT BEFORE THAT, WULFENBACH WAS ALWAYS A *MINOR* HOUSE.

BEFORE YOUR EMPIRE—

IT WAS ALL CHAOS. *EVERYONE* WAS FIGHTING *EVERYONE* ELSE.

FOOLS.

YES, BUT *BEFORE* THAT? BEFORE THE LONG WAR—?



BEFORE— WHY, YOU'D HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE *STORM KING*. BUT—



OH! THE *GIRL*!

THE HETERODYNE *GIRL*!

RIDICULOUS! THAT'S PRACTICALLY A FAIRY TALE! WHO WOULD—

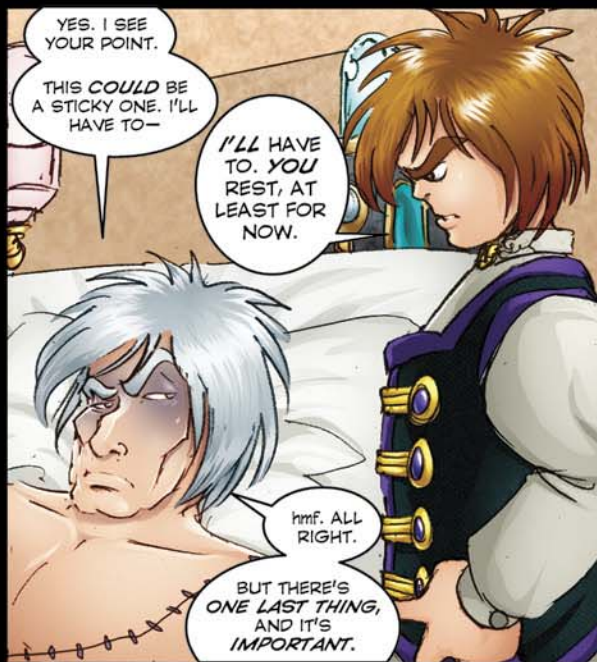
EVERYONE!



THEY HAVE A PET HETERODYNE *HEIR*, AND FAIRY TALES CAN STILL HAVE *POWER*.

DONE CORRECTLY, EUROPE WILL SUBMIT TO THEM, AND *CHEER* ALL THE WHILE.

BUT FIRST, THEY'LL NEED *MECHANICS-BURG*!



YES. I SEE YOUR POINT.

THIS *COULD* BE A STICKY ONE. I'LL HAVE TO—

I'LL HAVE TO. *YOU* REST, AT LEAST FOR NOW.

hmf. ALL RIGHT.

BUT THERE'S ONE LAST THING, AND IT'S IMPORTANT.



"THIS HETERODYNE GIRL— YOUR AGATHA, NOT THE OTHER ONE—

SHE HAS A COMPANION.

A GIRL WITH A PAIR OF UNUSUAL SWORDS AND LONG GREEN HAIR."

"GREEN?"

"YES. BE CAREFUL.

SHE IS A FORMIDABLE FIGHTER—"



AND THERE IS A VERY GOOD CHANCE THAT SHE HAS BEEN SENT TO KILL YOU.



KILL ME?

WHAT DID I DO?

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!



...FATHER.

WHAT DID YOU DO?



I KEPT YOU ALIVE.



AND NOW, AS YOU SAY, I NEED TO REST.

CONFOUND IT, FATHER...!

AND *YOU* HAVE WORK TO DO.

I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING WHEN YOU RETURN.



...EVERYTHING?

EVERYTHING.

THEN REST UP. I HAVE MANY QUESTIONS.

DON'T I KNOW IT. BUT FOR PITY'S SAKE— DUPEEP



OH, YOU HAVE MY SYMPATHY,

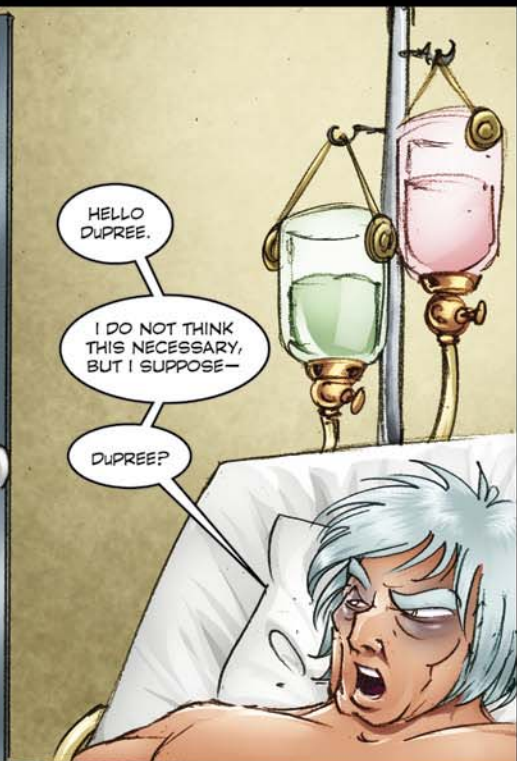
BUT SHE'LL KEEP YOU ALIVE.

BUT MY WILL TO LIVE...

...AND HER JAW'S BEEN WIRED SHUT.

GOOD HEAVENS. I WOULDN'T MISS THIS FOR THE WORLD!









NOW,
LISTEN.

THIS IS
PROBABLY THE
BEST-MAPPED
AREA,

BUT YOU
MUST STILL
FOLLOW *MY*
LEAD.



AVOID ANY
FLOORSTONE
MARKED IN
WHITE.

IT IS A TRAP
THAT WILL KILL
YOU.



DO NOT STAND
UNDER ANY PART
OF THE CEILING
MARKED IN *WHITE*.

IT IS A TRAP
THAT WILL KILL
YOU.



DUCK UNDER
ANY OPENING
TALLER THAN
ONE METER.

IT IS A TRAP
THAT WILL KILL
YOU.



DO NOT
TOUCH *ANY*
METAL
SURFACE.

IT IS A TRAP
THAT WILL KILL
YOU.



ARE YOU
TRYING TO
FRIGHTEN
US?

YES!

THIS PLACE IS
DANGEROUS,
TWISTED, AND
WORST OF ALL—



HEY! A GOLD
PIECE!

NO!!

AAAAA

CLANG

IT LIKES TO
THINK IT HAS A
SENSE OF
HUMOR.

MEANWHILE—
DEEPER INSIDE
THE CASTLE—

AH!
WILHELM!

ANYTHING
FOR MY BOOKS
TODAY?

I THINK SO,
PROFESSOR!

I WAS DIRECTED
TO THE NORTH
WALL IN THE ROOM
OF LEAD.

I CONNECTED
FIFTEEN COPPER
CABLES BEHIND THE
THIRD PANEL.

THAT WAS
AT 4:36
EXACTLY.

THERE WAS A
SORT OF HUM,
THEN NOTHING.

HOW'S
THAT?

4:36?

WAIT—

WAIT—

YES! TARK
WAS IN THE
GALLERY OF
RAZORS—

YES! THEY
FLEXED... AT
4:36!

WELL
DONE,
GIRL!

TEN
POINTS FOR
YOU!

TEN?!
THANK
YOU!

DE NADA. WE'VE
BEEN LOOKING
FOR THE RAZOR'S
POWER FOR
THREE YEARS!

TEN
POINTS!
WOW!

THAT'S WORTH
AT LEAST **TWO**
MONTHS OFF MY
SENTENCE!

THAT MEANS TO
GET OUT OF HERE,
I ONLY HAVE TO
GET ANOTHER—

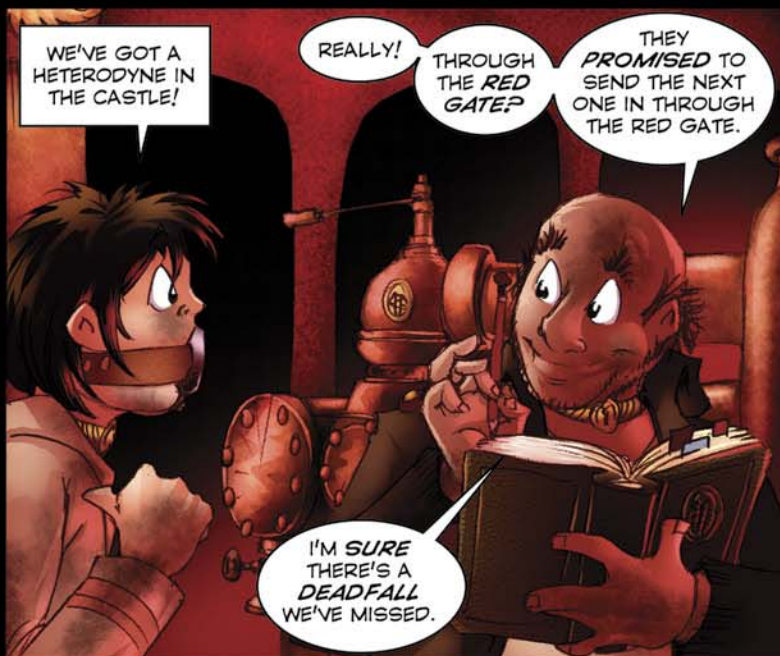
FOOL!

OW!

NEVER TOTAL
YOUR POINTS
OUT LOUD!

WHEN YOU'VE
GOT ENOUGH TO
GET OUT—

I'LL
KNOW.





DON'T TELL ME YOU FOOLS GOT SENTENCED HERE!

OF COURSE NOT. WE CAME ON OUR OWN.

BUT I DIDN'T SEND FOR YOU!
IT'S TOO SOON!

ANOTHER HETERODYNE GIRL HAS APPEARED.

IT'S—WHAT?!

THE BARON TRIED TO CAPTURE HER—

AND SHE BEAT HIM.



"NOT ONLY THAT, SHE ANNOUNCED HER EXISTENCE TO THE WHOLE WORLD."

"THEY WERE BUZZING ABOUT HER IN VIENNA WHEN I LEFT."



WE HAD TO STRIKE NOW, BEFORE SHE COMES HERE.

IS—
IS SHE THE REAL THING?



SHE IS IF SHE CAN CONTROL THE CASTLE.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE, REMEMBER?

OF COURSE I DO!

I'VE BEEN HERE FOR THREE YEARS, AND I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S TOO SOON!



THE COUNCIL NEEDS TO KNOW HOW THE CASTLE WORKS?

WELL, THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN DOING.

BUT UNRAVELING THE WORK OF GENERATIONS OF LUNATICS TAKES TIME!

I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW TO CONTROL THE CASTLE!

YOU'VE PUT THE ENTIRE PLAN IN JEOPARDY—FOR NOTHING!



OH, NO. NOT NOTHING.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU CAN'T YET CONTROL THE CASTLE.

SO INSTEAD—

YOU'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO HELP ME KILL IT.



KILL IT?!

BUT I THOUGHT THE POINT WAS TO USE IT.

WELL, YES. BUT—

"LEGENDS SAY THAT WHEN FAUSTUS HETERODYNE 'BROUGHT THE CASTLE TO LIFE', IT WAS KEENLY INTELLIGENT,

ABLE TO SEE AND SPEAK EVERYWHERE WITHIN ITSELF,

ABLE TO MOVE AND RE-SHAPE ALMOST EVERY PART OF ITSELF.

IN TIMES OF WAR, THERE WERE THOSE WHO SWORE IT HELPED DEFEND THE TOWN."

EVEN IF WE PRUNE AWAY THE OBVIOUS HYPERBOLE—

DOES THAT SOUND LIKE THIS PLACE?



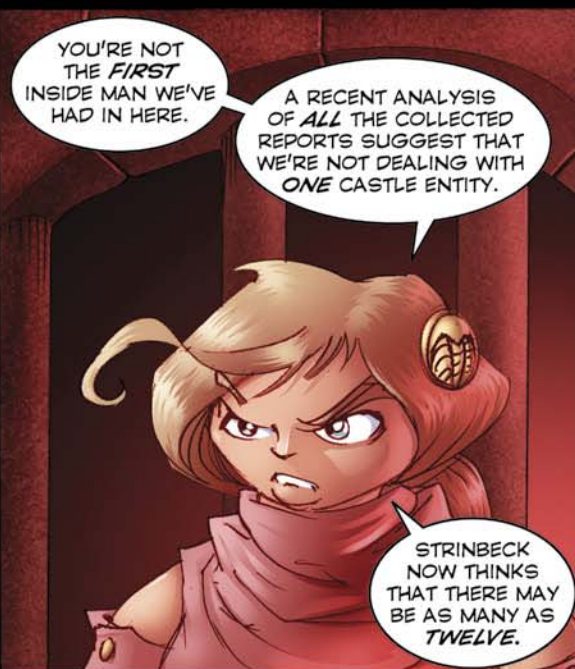
I'LL ADMIT, IT DOESN'T.

THERE ARE THE VOICES THAT DIRECT REPAIRS,

BUT THEY OFTEN SEEM... CONFUSED.

YEAH!

HALF THE TIME, THEY LEAD US INTO TRAPS!



YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST INSIDE MAN WE'VE HAD IN HERE.

A RECENT ANALYSIS OF ALL THE COLLECTED REPORTS SUGGEST THAT WE'RE NOT DEALING WITH ONE CASTLE ENTITY.

STRINBECK NOW THINKS THAT THERE MAY BE AS MANY AS TWELVE.

IT'S POSSIBLE
THAT THERE WAS A
SINGLE CENTRALIZED
SYSTEM THAT RAN THE
WHOLE CASTLE.

MAYBE IT
COULD EVEN DO
SOME OF THE
THINGS THAT THE
STORIES CLAIM.



"BUT WHATEVER WAS
THERE WAS
DESTROYED IN THE
GREAT ATTACK."

"ALL THAT'S LEFT IS A
DISORGANIZED COLLECTION
OF SUB-SYSTEMS RUNNING
ON EMERGENCY POWER.

THAT'S WHAT
YOU'VE BEEN
DEALING WITH
ALL THIS TIME.

THAT'S WHY
NONE OF IT
MAKES
SENSE."



"THINK ABOUT IT.
YOU'VE GOT REPAIR
SYSTEMS THAT
DIRECT YOU TO
DAMAGED AREAS."



"YOU'VE GOT
ANTI-INTRUDER
SYSTEMS KEEPING
YOU OUT OF
SENSITIVE AREAS.

THEY ALL HELP
RUN THE
CASTLE,

BUT THEY'RE NOT
COMMUNI-
CATING WITH
EACH OTHER."



"WE'RE STILL
GOING TO USE THE
CASTLE—"



"BUT FIRST WE HAVE
TO STOP IT FROM
KILLING EVERYONE
WE SEND IN.

—AND
YOURSELVES, OF
COURSE..."

WE HAVE MORE
THAN ENOUGH
FIREPOWER ON THE WAY
TO ALLOW US TO HOLD
MECHANICSBURG.

I WILL RULE
AS THE NEW
HETERODYNE.



I DON'T NEED
THE PERMISSION
OF A BROKEN
MACHINE.

ELSEWHERE, DEEP
UNDERNEATH THE
TOWN—

WHAT IS
THIS
PLACE?

THIS IS THE
TRUE FAMILY
CRYPT OF THE
HETERODYNES.

I GOT A BIT
TURNED AROUND
IN ALL THOSE
TUNNELS—

WE STARTED
AT THE
CATHEDRAL,

BUT NOW
WE'RE CLOSER
TO THE CASTLE,
YES?

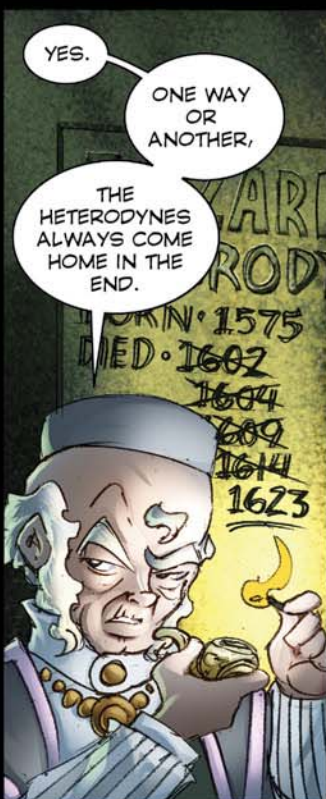
VERY GOOD,
MISTER
WOOSTER.



YES.

ONE WAY
OR
ANOTHER,

THE
HETERODYNES
ALWAYS COME
HOME IN THE
END.



AND YET IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE
THAT I COULD BE
ONE?

EVERYTHING
TELLS ME I
AM.

OH, I CAN
SEE *WHY*.

PUNCH
AND JUDY,
YOUR
EFFECT ON
THE TOWN,

NOT TO MENTION
VOLE.

STILL,
WHATEVER YOU
ARE, YOU'RE *NOT*
THE HEIR EVERYONE
EXPECTS.

OH?



NOPE.

BECAUSE
YOU'RE
STANDING ON
HIM.





I WANT TO MAKE THIS CRYSTAL CLEAR:

HE WAS NAMED AT MASTER WILLIAM'S INSISTENCE.

AND WAS BORN TWO YEARS—

TWO YEARS AND THREE MONTHS, TECHNICALLY—

AFTER THE BARON HAD DISAPPEARED.

THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT.

KLAUS BARRY
HETERODYNE
BELOVED SON OF
LUCREZIA & WILLIAM

BORN 1672 WITH US BUT
407 DAYS-FOREVER
IN OUR HEARTS



I CAN SEE WHY.

YOU'D BE AMAZED HOW MANY PEOPLE IGNORE THE MATH!

HOW DID HE DIE?



HE DIED THE NIGHT THE OTHER ATTACKED CASTLE HETERODYNE.

BUT THAT MAKES NO SENSE! NOT IF THE OTHER WAS—



NO.



TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT NIGHT.

WELL—

"I WAS NOT IN THE CASTLE AT THE TIME OF THE ATTACK."

I HAD RETIRED ONLY THREE DAYS BEFORE, AND WAS ENJOYING THE LUXURY OF PLAYING WITH MY GRANDCHILDREN.

THE MASTERS WERE *AWAY*. SOMETHING ABOUT GIANT VEGETABLES, I THINK."



"EVERYONE IN TOWN FELT THE EXPLOSIONS."



"AFTER THAT WAS CHAOS."

I TOOK CHARGE. PEOPLE WERE *USED* TO OBEYING ME."



"CASTLE HETERODYNE HAD A STAFF OF TWO HUNDRED AND SEVEN."

SIXTY-THREE OF THEM DIED THAT NIGHT."



"MY ONLY COMFORT WAS THAT HE DIED TRYING TO PROTECT THE YOUNG MASTER."



SERVING THE HOUSE OF HETERODYNE TO THE END.

BUT I'M AFRAID THAT WAS RATHER COLD COMFORT."



"THE LADY
LUCREZIA WAS
MISSING."

"IT WAS EVIDENT
THAT THERE HAD
BEEN A FIGHT IN
HER LAB."

"HER
ASSISTANTS
WERE FOUND
DEAD—"

"MURDERED."



"ALL OF HER
NOTES WERE
BURNT."

"THE MASTERS
RETURNED
WITHIN *HOURS*."

"MASTER BILL
WAS NEARLY
INSANE."

"MASTER BARRY
WAS DEADLY
CALM."

HE ORGANIZED THE
CLEAN-UP AND
RESCUED ALL THE
SURVIVORS WHO
WERE TRAPPED IN
THE RUBBLE."



"THE TWO OF
THEM LEFT THE
NEXT DAY."

"AND WE NEVER
SAW THEM
AGAIN."





"WE HEARD OF THEM, OF COURSE."

SOMEONE WAS CLEARLY TRYING TO WIPE OUT EUROPE'S SPARKS."



"THE FOLLOWING YEARS SAW THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF FORTY-THREE MAJOR HOUSES."

SLAVER WASPS AND THEIR REVENANTS WERE EVERYWHERE."

"PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS THE END DAYS."



"EVERYWHERE, IN THE THICK OF THINGS, THERE WERE THE HETERODYNES."

"ALWAYS FIGHTING."

"ALWAYS SEARCHING."



"EVENTUALLY, THE ATTACKS STOPPED."

WE ASSUMED THAT THE MASTERS HAD FOUND THE OTHER AND BEATEN HIM—

BUT WE NEVER KNEW FOR SURE."

"THEY HAD VANISHED."



"THE REVENANTS AND WASPS THAT REMAINED WERE DISORGANIZED—LEADERLESS."

RHAAA?



"AND THEN THE BARON RETURNED."

"THERE ARE MANY WHO GROUSE ABOUT THE BARON NOW—

BUT BACK THEN, THE PEOPLE FLOCKED TO HIM."



"AND ALL TOO SOON, HE WAS AT THE GATES OF MECHANICSBURG."

AS POLITE AS YOU PLEASE, BUT *HERE* NONETHELESS.

NOW, IT'S NOT THAT I DIDN'T TRUST HIM,

IN FACT, I ALWAYS RATHER *LIKED* HIM."



"BUT I WOULDN'T BE THE ONE TO SURRENDER THE HETERODYNE SECRETS TO AN OUTSIDER."



"SO THE RECORDS SHOWED THAT THE SENESCHAL OF THE HETERODYNES WAS DEAD—

AS WAS THE SON OF CARSON VON MEKKEN."



"THE HOUSE OF WULFENBACH BELIEVED US GONE."

"EVENTUALLY, KLAUS LEFT, TAKING THE JÄGERS AND THE NURSE."



WAIT—THE NURSE?

MM. A CONSTRUCT OF THE LADY LUCREZIA'S.

SHE WAS THE YOUNG HEIR'S NURSEMAID.

AFTER HE DIED, SHE WENT BERSERK AND HAD TO BE LOCKED UP.



VON PINN.

GOOD LORD, YOU *KNOW* HER?

SHE WAS ON CASTLE WULFENBACH.

GUARDING THE CHILDREN.

AH.



WELL.

KLAUS ALWAYS DID KNOW THE RIGHT MONSTER FOR THE RIGHT JOB.





"IT WAS ALWAYS THE SENESCHAL'S JOB TO SEE THAT MECHANICSBURG RAN SMOOTHLY."

KLAUS APPOINTED A TOWN COUNCIL."



"THEY NEVER CAUSED ANY TROUBLE, SO HE LEFT THEM ALONE."

"AND THEY CONTINUED TO WORK WITH ME."



"AND NOW, WITH MY GRANDSON, VANAMONDE."

"HE IS MORE COMPETENT THAN HE APPEARS, MY LADY."



A SHADOW GOVERNMENT.

I LIKE IT!

BUT—HOW HAVE YOU KEPT IT A SECRET?!

MECHANICSBURG HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INSULAR PLACE.

THE BARON IS AN OUTSIDER.

FOOLING HIM IS A SPORT.



AND WE DO HOLD AN OFFICIAL POSITION—IT'S HEREDITARY, EVEN—

heh. MY CARD.

ISCARRIOT HETEROPO
EVERYMAN'S "FRIEND"



"DOOM BELL RINGER"?!



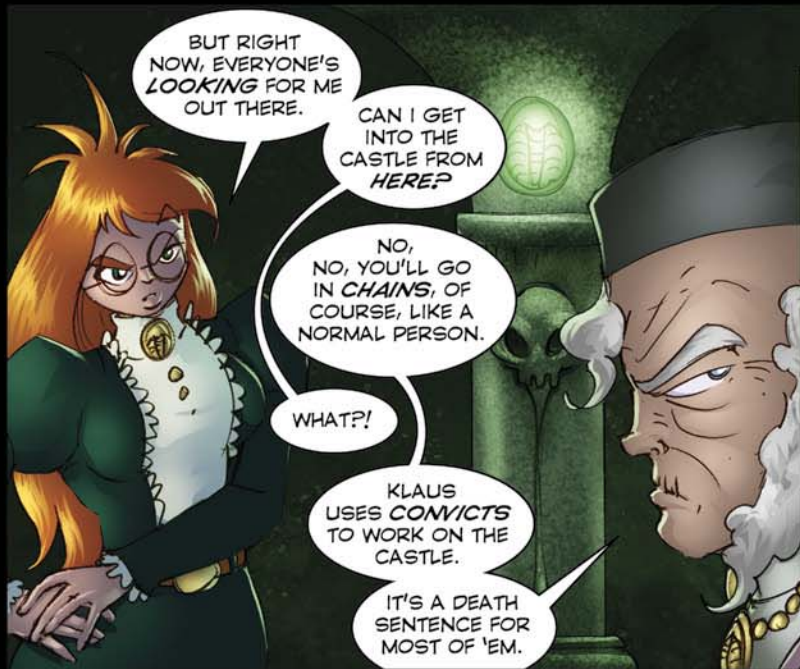
THAT BELL ONLY RINGS WHEN THE HETERODYNES ARE IN RESIDENCE.

OH I'M NOT SAYING BUSINESS HASN'T BEEN SLOW...

BUT THE PAY ISN'T BAD...



AND THERE'RE SIGNS THAT THINGS COULD BE PICKING UP.



BUT RIGHT NOW, EVERYONE'S **LOOKING** FOR ME OUT THERE.

CAN I GET INTO THE CASTLE FROM **HERE?**

NO, NO, YOU'LL GO IN **CHAINS**, OF COURSE, LIKE A NORMAL PERSON.

WHAT?!

KLAUS USES **CONVICTS** TO WORK ON THE CASTLE.

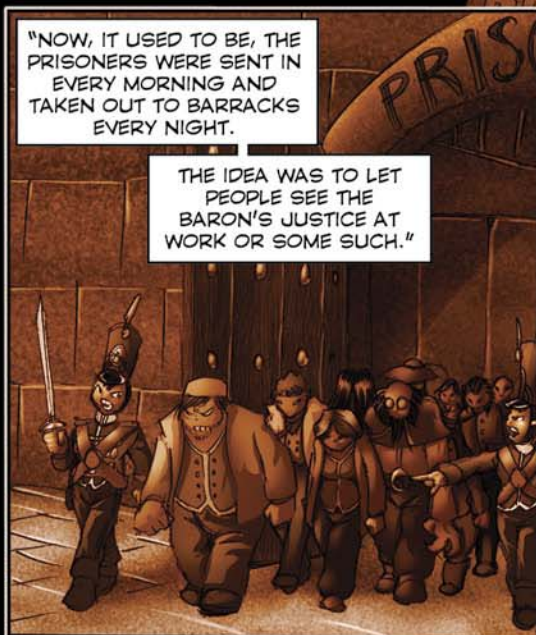
IT'S A DEATH SENTENCE FOR MOST OF 'EM.



"NOT ALL, THOUGH.

THERE'S **POINTS** AWARDED FOR TYPES OF WORK AND GOOD BEHAVIOR.

SOMETIMES, SOMEONE ACTUALLY COMPLETES THEIR SENTENCE AND GETS **OUT.**"



"NOW, IT USED TO BE, THE PRISONERS WERE SENT IN EVERY MORNING AND TAKEN OUT TO BARRACKS EVERY NIGHT.

THE IDEA WAS TO LET PEOPLE SEE THE BARON'S JUSTICE AT WORK OR SOME SUCH."

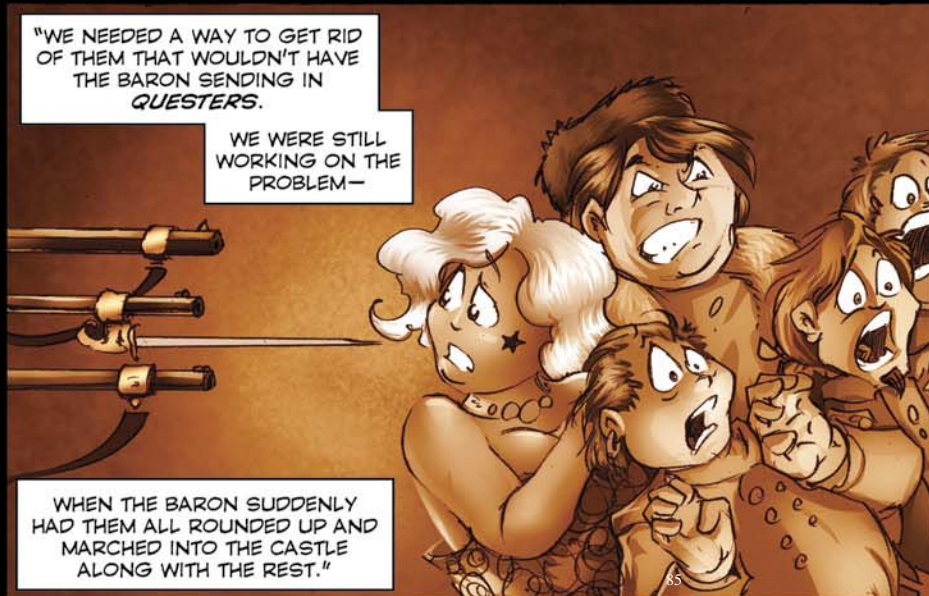


"DIDN'T WORK, OF COURSE.

IT JUST BROUGHT IN A LOT OF **BAD CHARACTERS** FROM OUTSIDE.

THERE WAS A WHOLE SLEW OF BOOKIES AND OTHER LOW-CLASS TRASH WHO'D WHOOP IT UP RIGHT OUTSIDE THE CASTLE GATES—TAKING BETS ON WHO'D COME OUT THAT DAY AND SO ON."

"IT MADE THE WHOLE TOWN LOOK BAD. WE STARTED TO LOSE BUSINESS."



"WE NEEDED A WAY TO GET RID OF THEM THAT WOULDN'T HAVE THE BARON SENDING IN **QUESTERS**.

WE WERE STILL WORKING ON THE PROBLEM—

WHEN THE BARON SUDDENLY HAD THEM ALL ROUNDED UP AND MARCHED INTO THE CASTLE ALONG WITH THE REST."



AND NONE OF THEM EVER CAME **OUT.**

KLAUS WAS NEVER REALLY GOOD AT **SUBTLE.**



ANYWAY, AFTER THAT, THE PRISONERS WERE HOUSED *INSIDE* THE CASTLE.

NO MORE COMING AND GOING.



"BUT THEY STILL HAVE TO *EAT*. SUPPLIES ARE SENT IN TWICE A WEEK."



"AND WHEREAS THE SUPPLY CREW IS THOROUGHLY SCRUTINIZED WHEN THEY *LEAVE*—

NOBODY REALLY EXPECTS ANYONE TO TRY TO GET IN, OR PARTICULARLY *CARES* IF THEY DO."



I SEE.

BUT, THEN, WHY ARE WE *HERE*?

SURELY THE SUPPLY RUN DOESN'T START IN THE *CRYPTS*?



NO. WE'RE HERE BECAUSE YOU NEED TO BE TOLD WHAT TO *DO* ONCE YOU GET INTO THE CASTLE.

AND BELIEVE ME, I WOULDN'T DO THIS FOR JUST *ANYBODY*.



YOU CAN'T TELL ME THAT *ANYWHERE*?

I DON'T KNOW.

AND THE PERSON WHO *DOES* LIVES *HERE*?

OKAY, I'M KIND OF *CREEPED OUT*, NOW.



NOT A PERSON.
NOT ALIVE.

CREEPY?

HELL, YES.



UM... WE'RE NOT GOING TO MEET SOME ANCIENT UNDEAD HETERODYNE VAMPIRE OR SOMETHING, ARE WE?

OH, AND WOULDN'T THAT BE THE PERFECT CAPPER TO MY DAY.



UM, ACTUALLY, THAT WASN'T A "HO HO, DON'T BE SILLY, OLD CHAP."

I AIN'T BEING PAID TO LIE TO YOU, BRIT.

YOU MEAN...

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR TODAY.



YOU MEAN THERE'S DAYS WHEN YOU DO GO LOOKING FOR IT?

I DIDN'T SAY THEY WERE GOOD DAYS.

...OH.

BETTER THAN THIS, THOUGH.



I'M DONE TALKING TO YOU!

I APPRECIATE THE EFFORT, BUT THE DAY'S ALREADY A LOSS.

AREN'T THEY GREAT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN?

WE'LL BE HERE ALL WEEK!

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?



THIS.

THE THRONE OF FAUSTUS HETERODYNE.



WELL, AT LEAST THERE'S NO ONE IN IT.

NOT YET.

THAT'S MY JOB.

I SEE I'M NEVER GOING TO LEARN.

THEN YOU'VE LEARNED SOMETHING ALREADY.



THERE. THAT'S EVERYTHING ON, I THINK.

I HAVEN'T DONE THIS IN A LONG TIME.



WHY NOT?

BECAUSE IT HURTS!

A LOT!

BUT—



BUT MOSTLY, BECAUSE, UP UNTIL NOW,

I HAVEN'T THOUGHT THAT ANY OF 'EM HAD A CHANCE OF REALLY BEING A HETERODYNE.



BUT *WHAT* ARE YOU DOING?

I'M GOING TO HAVE YOU TALK TO THE CASTLE.

BECAUSE I'M THE SENESCHAL.

I'M THE ONE WITH THE SPECIAL HOLES PRE-DRILLED INTO HIS *SKULL*.



AND THAT HURTS?

FROM DOWN HERE? YES.

THEN—

NO-ONE ELSE CAN DO THIS.



WHY COULDN'T WOOSTER DO IT?

ME?!

I MEAN, FOR EXAMPLE.

FOR EXAMPLE?

SH. I'M CURIOUS.



OH, I CAN DO THAT!

WHAT IS IT WITH YOU?!



SHE'S A HETERODYNE, SON.

AND THIS IS MECHANICS-BURG.

IT DOES SOMETHING TO 'EM.

YOU'LL GET USED TO IT, IF YOU LIVE.



RHEEEEEEE

I REALLY
REALLY
HATE—



RUNCH

AAAAAAH!



IT HAS BEEN
437216363
SECONDS SINCE THIS
SYSTEM WAS LAST
ACTIVATED.



...

WHY, IT'S
STILL OLD
CARSON!

HE SWORE
HE'D *NEVER* BE
BACK!



HE MUST BE
VERY CERTAIN
INDEED!



SO YOU
THINK YOU'RE A
HETERODYNE,

EH,
BOY?

ER...



WHAT—
ME?

NO!

I
JUST—



OH. WELL,
THAT'S VERY
PERSPICACIOUS
OF YOU.

YOU'RE
OBVIOUSLY
MINION
MATERIAL.

SO—WHY
ARE YOU
HERE?



I AM AGATHA
HETERODYNE.

I AM THE
DAUGHTER OF BILL
AND LUCREZIA
HETERODYNE.



A
GIRL?

ARE YOU
SURE?

YOU *MUST*
BE JOKING.



... THIS IS A
TRICK.

NO.

YOU'RE THE
HETERODYNE.

NO.

YOU JUST *ACT*
LIKE A
MISERABLE
LACKEY.

NO!



YOU LIKE TO
WEAR WOMEN'S
CLOTHING.

ENOUGH!



I AM THE
HETERODYNE!

NOW STOP
WASTING TIME
AND TELL ME
WHAT I NEED TO
KNOW!



THE
VOICE-

PERHAPS YOU
ARE THE LADY
LUCREZIA'S CHILD.



HEH HEH. BUT
ARE YOU THE
MASTER'SP WE
SHALL SEE-

YOU
CERTAINLY
SHALL!

HMMM. THE
HETERODYNES
SO RARELY
PRODUCE
GIRLS.

THE
LAST ONE WAS-

ME!



THERE ARE
WAYS TO TELL.
ONCE YOU'RE
INSIDE...

FAIL AND-

I DIE. YES,
I'VE BEEN
TOLD.



WELL,
MAYBE NOT
RIGHT
AWAY.

WHAT?

YOU ARE A
SPARK, I TAKE
IT?

YES...



THEN-

GIRL OR
NOT-

FALSE OR
NOT-

I NEED
YOU.



THERE IS AN **ENEMY** IN THE CASTLE.

SHE INTENDS TO **DESTROY** ME.

THE VERY IDEA IS PREPOSTEROUS, AND **YET**,

I BELIEVE SHE MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE **FOUND A WAY**.



YEAH, THAT **PINK GIRL** WHO SAYS *SHE'S* THE NEW HETERODYNE.

WE SAW HER.

BUT SHOULDN'T SHE BE TRYING TO **CONTROL** YOU?

THAT WOULD BE THE BEST SUPPORT FOR HER CLAIM, WOULDN'T IT?

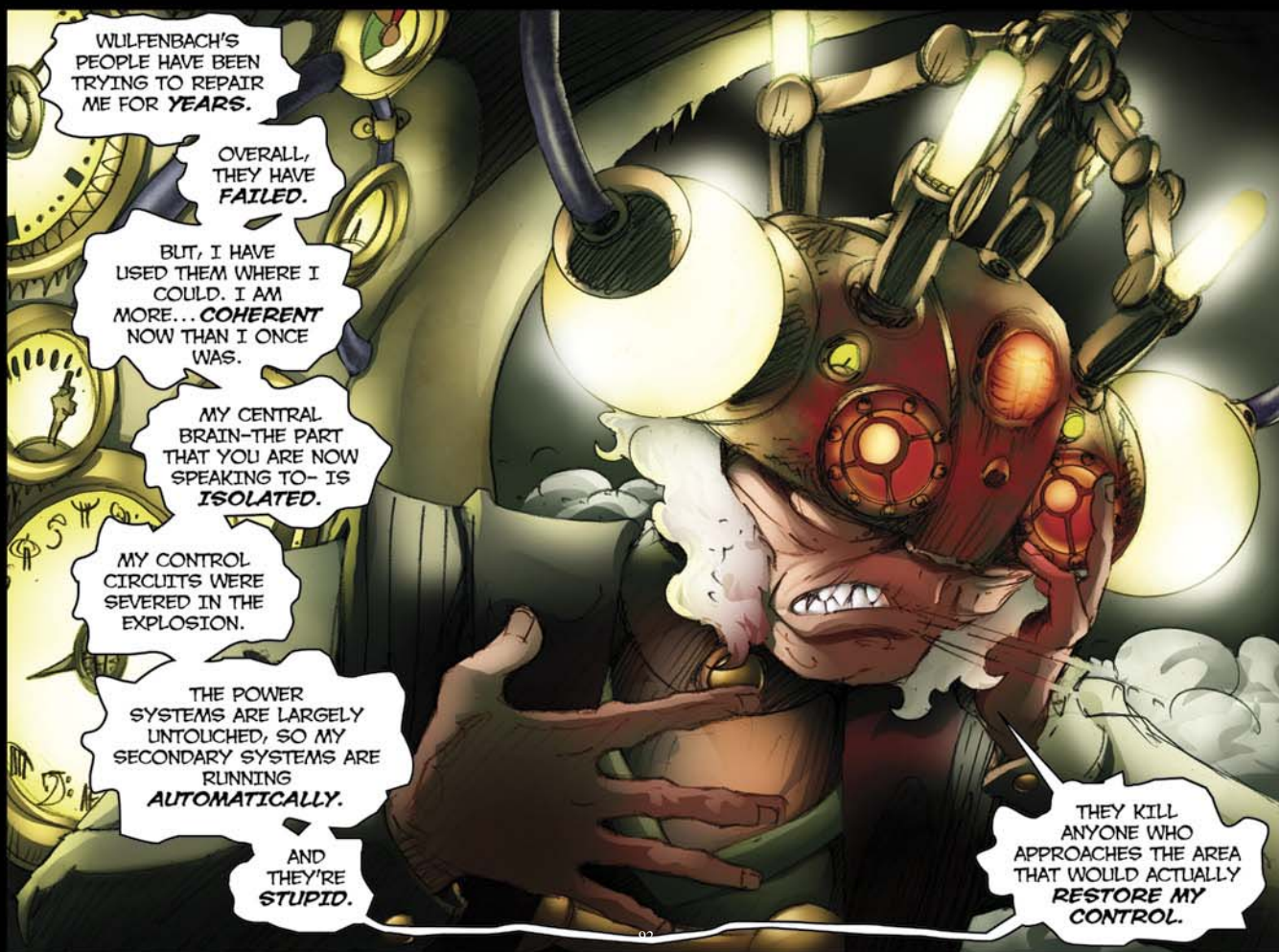
SHE HAS REALIZED THAT **CONTROL** IS NOT POSSIBLE.



BECAUSE SHE'S NOT REALLY A HETERODYNE.

IN **PART**.

BUT MOSTLY BECAUSE I AM **SEVERELY DAMAGED**.



WULFENBACH'S PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO REPAIR ME FOR **YEARS**.

OVERALL, THEY HAVE **FAILED**.

BUT, I HAVE USED THEM WHERE I COULD. I AM MORE... **COHERENT** NOW THAN I ONCE WAS.

MY CENTRAL BRAIN-THE PART THAT YOU ARE NOW SPEAKING TO- IS **ISOLATED**.

MY CONTROL CIRCUITS WERE SEVERED IN THE EXPLOSION.

THE POWER SYSTEMS ARE LARGELY UNTOUCHED, SO MY SECONDARY SYSTEMS ARE RUNNING **AUTOMATICALLY**.

AND THEY'RE **STUPID**.

THEY KILL ANYONE WHO APPROACHES THE AREA THAT WOULD ACTUALLY **RESTORE MY CONTROL**.



YOU MUST GET IN AND REPAIR THE BREAK IN THE CENTRAL CONTROL CONDUIT.

AH! SO THERE'S A SECRET WAY INTO YOUR INNER KEEP?



HMMM. I SUPPOSE THAT **WOULD** HAVE MADE THINGS **EASIER** FOR YOU...

WONDERFUL.

SO I'LL BE GOING IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR.



WELL, THEN, TELL ME THIS: HOW DO I EVADE THESE ROGUE DEFENSES?

I ASSUME THERE'S A CODE WORD, OR A KEY, OR **SOMETHING** THAT WILL LET ME PASS THEM SAFELY?



DEAR ME, **NO!**

SUCH THINGS ARE MERELY **WEAKNESSES** TO BE EXPLOITED BY ENEMIES!

I WAS CONSTRUCTED BETTER THAN THAT.

CAN YOU AT LEAST GIVE ME A **MAP** TO WHERE YOU'RE BROKEN?



OF COURSE.

OF COURSE NO— WHAT? YOU CAN?

YES, BUT ONLY ONCE YOU REACH THE MASTER'S LIBRARY.



UNTIL THEN, YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN.

IF YOU'RE CAPTURED, I'LL NOT MAKE IT EASY ON THAT **FALSE** HETERODYNE GIRL TO FIND ME.



YOU'RE NOT MAKING IT EASY FOR THE **REAL** HETERODYNE, EITHER.

HEH HEH.

THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

OH, THIS **WILL** BE FUN.



SUFFERING SANDDRAGONS!

IS CARSON ACTUALLY HOOKED UP TO THAT BRAIN-SUCKING ABOMINATION!?



LADY HETERODYNE, THIS IS HERR WILHELM DIAMANT.

HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR NEW PRISONERS.

DID YOU PEOPLE DO THIS TO HIM?



CARSON CAME TO ME FREELY, HERR DIAMANT.

HE TRULY BELIEVES THIS GIRL IS THE NEW HETERODYNE.

THAT OLD FOOL!
ALL THE HETERODYNES ARE DEAD!



SHRACK

AAAAH!



YOU DISLOYAL DOG!

NO!
I—

OBVIOUSLY IT HAS BEEN FAR TOO LONG SINCE YOU FELT THE MASTER'S DISPLEASURE!

CARSON!
CALL IT OFF!



HEH HEH HEH. I THINK YOU'VE ANNOYED HIM, TOO!

CARSON!

STOP!

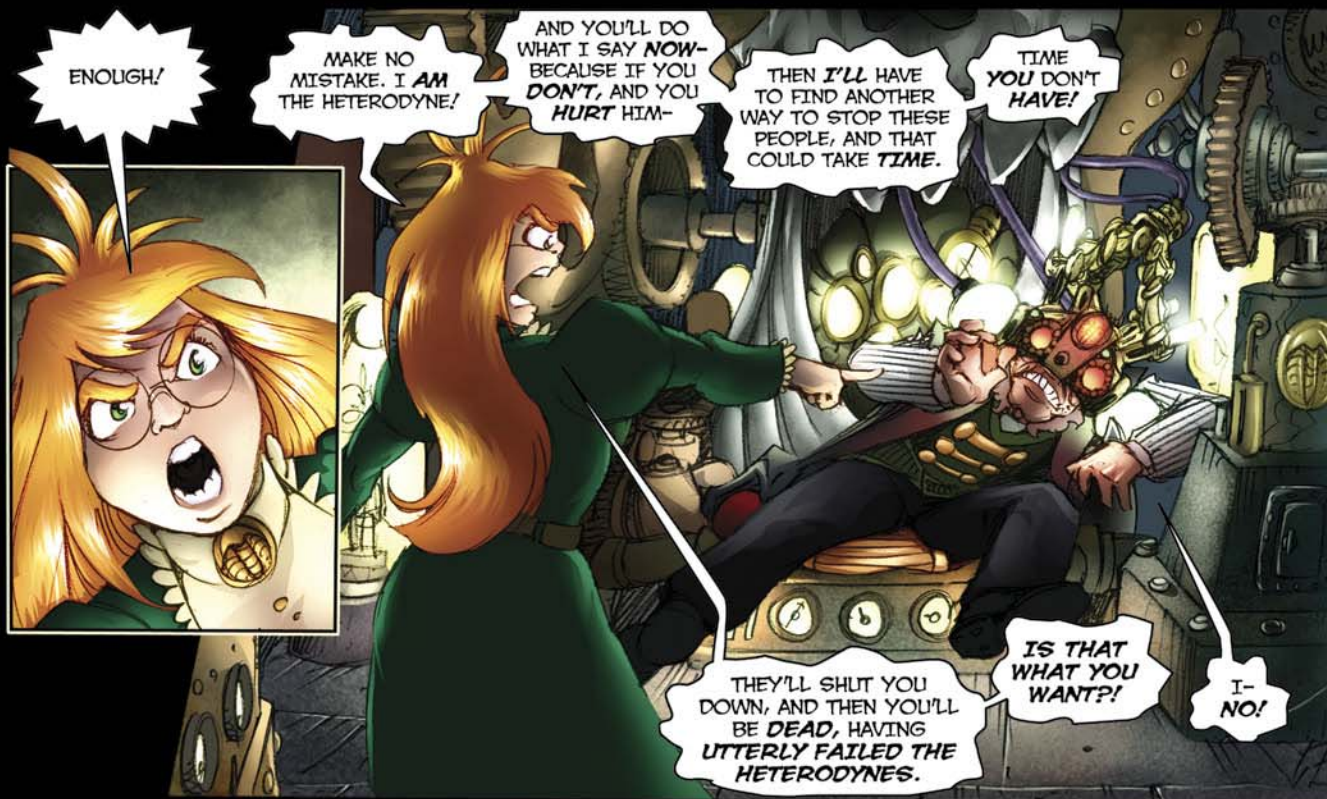


I AM HERE NOW!

AND I'M TELLING YOU TO LET HIM GO!



YOU ARE NOT THE HETERODYNE YET.







WHAT?/
NO! I WANT
TO TELL
HER!

NO. I'LL DO
IT. NOW, GIVE
IT BACK!

ARGH! YOU
NEVER LET
ME HAVE ANY
FUN!

WHAT?



AAAAAH!



HAHAHAHAHA!

I WIN AGAIN,
YOU WIND-UP PILE
OF RUBBLE!

HA!



HERR VON
MEKKHAN?

OF COURSE!
THE CASTLE CAN'T
HOLD ME, BY
DAMN!

THAT'S MY
JOB!

AND
YOU!

YOU MADE
IT BACK
DOWN!

MAGNIFICENT!

AH-HAHA!

ARE—ARE
YOU FEELING
...OKAY?



OH YESSSS!

OUR CONTEST
IS NOT PLEASANT,
BUT IT IS
INVIGORATING!

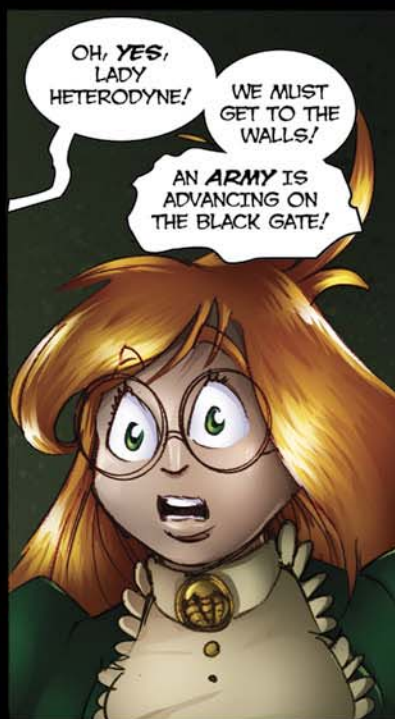
BUT DON'T
WORRY—



THE EFFECTS WILL
FADE ALL TOO
SOON!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

ER,
GOOD.

SO—THERE
WAS SOMETHING
YOU HAD TO TELL
ME?



OH, YES,
LADY
HETERODYNE!

WE MUST
GET TO THE
WALLS!

AN ARMY IS
ADVANCING ON
THE BLACK GATE!



ELSEWHERE—

CAPTAIN
VOLE.

SIR,
I—

DID NOT BRING ME
AGATHA HETERODYNE.
YES, I NOTICED.

SIR! SHE
ATTACKED
ME, SIR.

WITH A
DEADLY
COFFEEPOT,
APPARENTLY.

NOW, WHY
WOULD SHE DO
THAT?

SIR, I—

I... BUT...
YESSIR.



I TOLD YOU TO
BRING HER TO ME,
AND YET HERE YOU
ARE, DIRTY, INJURED
AND QUITE, QUITE
ALONE.

I'VE BEEN
TOLD ABOUT
YOU, VOLE.

I KNOW
WHAT
HAPPENED.



SIR...
I—

YOU JUST WENT
STOMPING IN THERE AND
TRIED TO **ARREST** HER,
DIDN'T YOU?



I—
VOT?

YOU'RE
JUST LIKE MY
FATHER!

YOU **UNDER-
ESTIMATED** HER
AND SHE **BESTED**
YOU!

SHE IS A
HETERODYNE!
DOESN'T THAT
MEAN ANYTHING
TO YOU?!



YEZ. IT
DOES.

NEXT TIME I
VILL BE **READY**
FOR HER.



WELL, FOR *YOUR* SAKE, I HOPE IT DOESN'T COME TO THAT.

NO! I VILL GET *MORE* TROOPS AND—

NO.



CONSIDERING HOW EASILY SHE BEAT *YOU*, I AM INCLINED TO THINK AGATHA CAN SEE TO HERSELF FOR A WHILE.

I'M NOT ESPECIALLY *HAPPY* LEAVING IT AT THAT, BUT APPARENTLY I HAVE *LITTLE* CHOICE.

RIGHT NOW, THE *FAKE* HETERODYNE IS OUR PROBLEM.

GRR—



VOT? DE KESTLE VILL KEEL DOT VUN.

PROBABLY *ALREADY* HAS.

YOU THINK SO? I DON'T.



THIS IS TOO WELL-PLANNED.

SHE HAS TO HOLD THE CASTLE TO BE LEGITIMIZED, SO IT MAKES NO SENSE TO SEND THEIR "HETERODYNE" IN JUST TO GET *KILLED*.

SHE MUST HAVE *SOMETHING*.

IDEALLY, SHE'D *CONTROL* THE CASTLE—



BUT OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TRYING *THAT* FOR YEARS.

AND IT CAN'T BE *BARGAINED* WITH.

IT'S MORE LIKELY THAT THEY'LL TRY TO *KILL* IT.

KEEL DE KESTLE?!

WELL, *SHUT* IT DOWN. MAKE IT *SAFE*.



DE PIPPLE OF MECHANICSBURG WOULD *NOT* EKCEPT DOT AS PROOF DOT SHE IZ A HETERODYNE.

NO, NEITHER WOULD MY *FATHER*.



...NOT UNLESS SHE DANCED NEKKED THROUGH DE RUINS VILE TRYING TO SHOOT DOWN DE MOON.

TURNED ALL DE *TOURISTS* INTO *MONSTERS*—

AND DEN BUILT A VERY DANGEROUS FOUNTAIN OUT OF *SAUSAGES*.



WELL... YES,

THAT GOES WITHOUT *SAYING*.



BUT LET'S
ASSUME THAT THE
DISSIDENTS AREN'T
IMPORTANT.



IF THE *OUTSIDE*
WORLD IS TOLD THAT
A NEW HETERODYNE
HAS TAKEN
CONTROL—

THE PEOPLE
BEHIND THIS FAKE
HETERODYNE GIRL
MIGHT JUST *PULL*
THIS OFF.



DIS IS
POINTLESS.

YEZ, VOT DE
RABBLE OF
MECHANICSBURG
TINKS VOULD COUNT
FOR *NOTHING*—

BUT HYU IZ
LEAVING OUT DE
BARON.



THAT'S
TRUE.

THE ONLY WAY IT
CAN WORK IS IF HE IS
BUSY SOMEWHERE
ELSE WHEN IT ALL
GOES DOWN—

RIGHT NOW
HE IZ BUSY *NOT*
DYINK.

DOES DOT
COUNT?

PROBABLY
NOT.



SO THE OTHER
CHOICE IS TO KEEP
HIM UNDER LOCK AND
KEY—OR, PREFERABLY,
DEAD.

THAT WOULD
SUIT THEM
MUCH BETTER,
I'M SURE.

DOT'S
STUPID.

DOSE CLOWNS
ATTACKING HYU
POPPA IZ AS
ORGANIZED AS A
BAG OF *FLEAS.*



OH!
"CLOWNS" IS
THE *PERFECT*
WORD!

FOOLISH
CREATURES WHO
CAUSE A
DISTRACTION,

WHILE THE
REAL PLAYERS
PREPARE!

VOTEVER HYU
SAY, MEESTER "I'M
SO SCHMOT I DON'T
GOTTA MAKE
SENSE."



OH? THEN, LET ME
PUT IT ANOTHER
WAY.

HAVE
SOMEONE
SOUND THE
ALARM.



THE *REAL*
PLAYERS HAVE
ARRIVED.

HOY!



HOY!
SOMETHING IZ
HEPPENINK!

DIS HAD
BETTER NOT BE
ANODDER *GURL*
TAKIN' A BATH.

OH, I DON' TINK
VE GETS DOT
LUCKY TWICE!

HEE!



LISTEN— IS
DOT DE *ALARM*
GONGS?

HYU GOTS DE
GOOT EARS,
BUT—

HOY! DEY'S
CLOSIN' DE
GATES!

JENKA, VY
FOR IZ FUST
RUNNINK
AWAY?

HYU IZ RIGHT.
DERE'S PIPPLE
ON DE WALLS.

DEY'S PRETTY
EXCITED ABOUT
SOMETHING.



TH BOOM!



HE
VOT?





SURE—HUM
SOMETHING, I TELL
HYU VOT ANIMAL IT
IZ!

HEY! DEY
BUSTED DE
TOWER!

WHO'S
GUN PAY
FOR DOT?



MEANWHILE, IN THE HOSPITAL—

THOSE ARE THE ALARM GONGS.

DUPREE—
WHAT'S HAPPENING?



THE CITY IS UNDER ATTACK.

AN ARMY OF WAR CLANKS, COMING FROM THE EAST.



THE EAST—
GET ME TO THE WINDOW!

OH—
DOES THIS HURT?

OW! OF COURSE IT DOES!

THAT'S A PRESSURE POINT!

HMPF.



YOU SHOULDN'T MOVE.

IF I CAN SEE THE FIELD, I CAN DIRECT THE BATTLE!

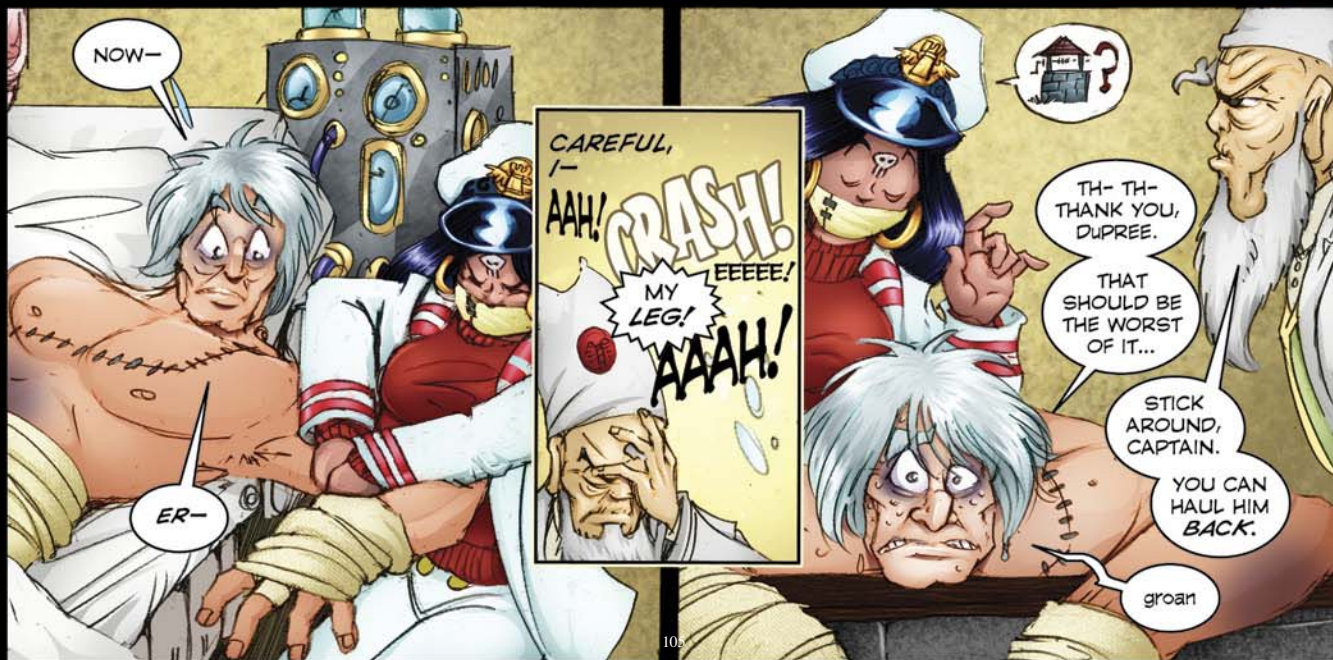


YOU'LL DAMAGE—

THEN YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO REPAIR ME!



DUPREE— GET ME TO THAT WINDOW, NO MATTER WHAT!



NOW—

ER—

CAREFUL,
I—
AAH! CRASH!
MY LEG! EEEEE!
AAAAH!



TH- TH-
THANK YOU, DUPREE.

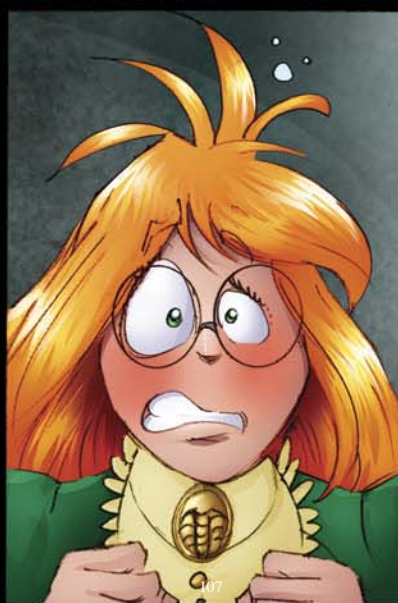
THAT SHOULD BE THE WORST OF IT...

STICK AROUND, CAPTAIN.

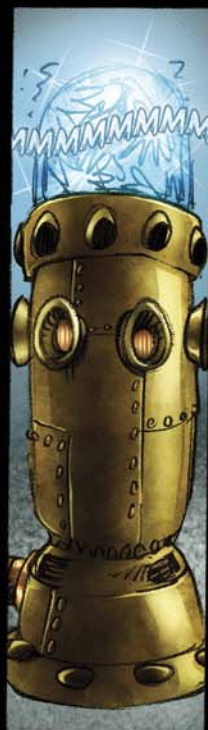
YOU CAN HAUL HIM BACK.

groan

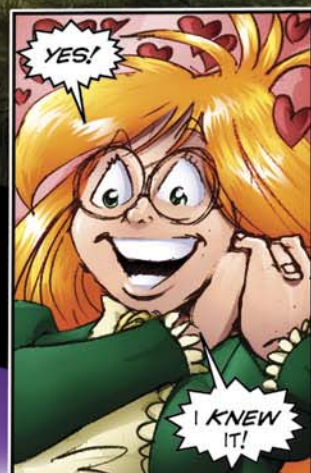
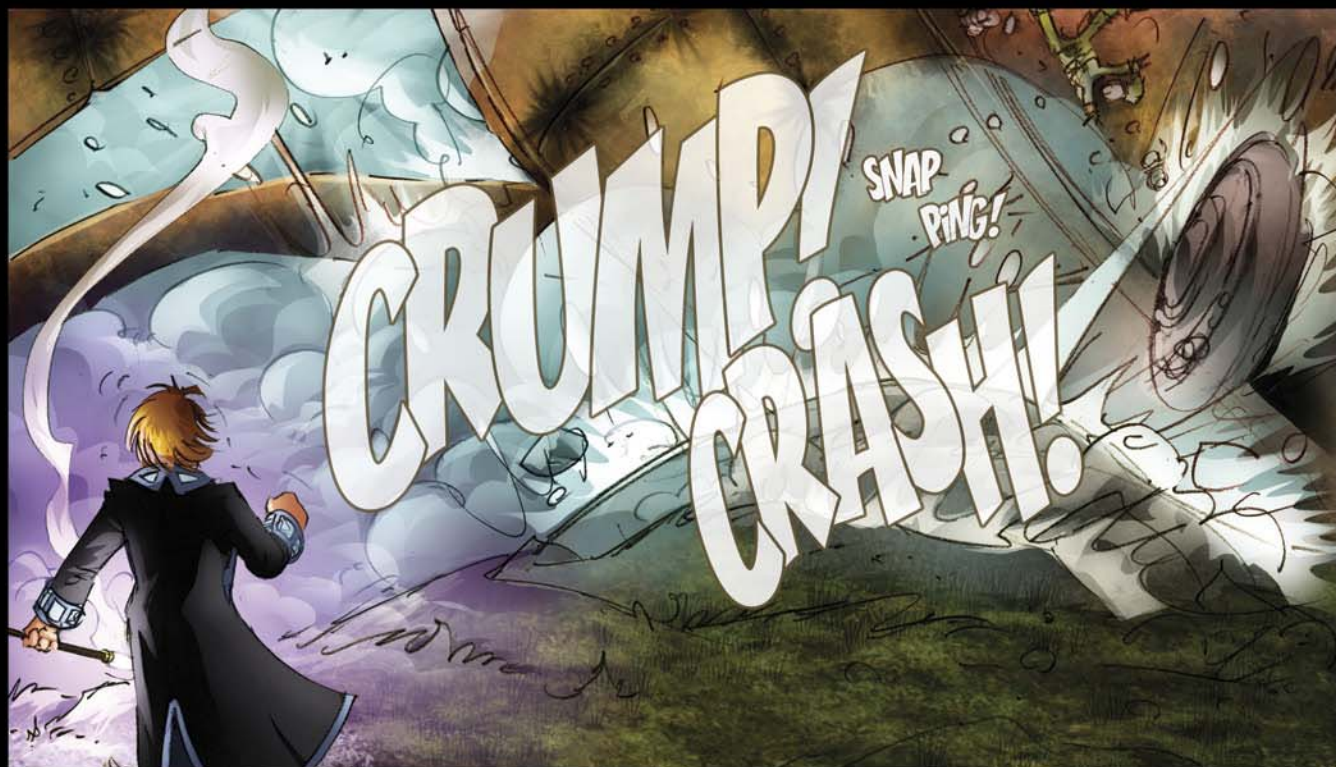
















THIS IS
NOT A
TRICK!

I DID
NOT GET
LUCKY!

I AM GILGAMESH
WULFENBACH-

AND I AM IN
CONTROL!



AMAZING!

THEY'RE
SURRENDERING.
GOOD.

⚡?



NOW. GET
ME BACK TO
BED.

QUICKLY.
BEFORE HE COMES
BACK.



AARGH!

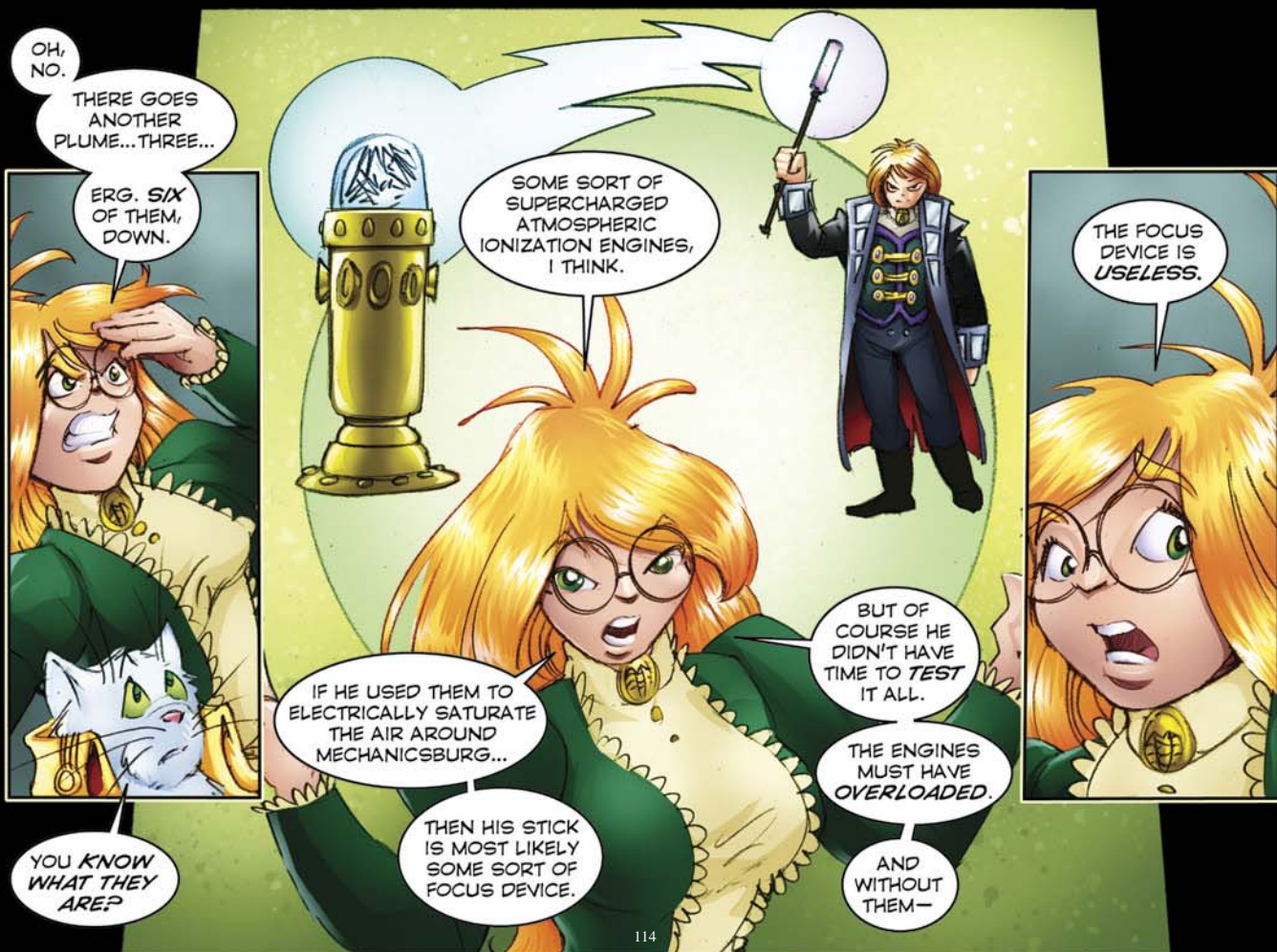
I HOPE IT
WAS WORTH
IT.



ANYTHING—
BEING
PARALYZED FOR
LIFE—

WOULD BE AN
ACCEPTABLE PRICE
FOR SEEING WHAT I
HAVE SEEN MY SON
DO TODAY.

OH,
YES.





DOES ANYONE
ELSE THINK THIS
IS A JOKE?

NO!
SPARE
US!

LOOK! WE'RE
SURRENDERING!

Meep!



... GOOD!

YOU KNOW HOW
THE HOUSE OF
WILFENBACH TREATS
CAPTURED
SOLDIERS.

YOU CAN JOIN
OUR FORCES, OR
GO HOME WITH A
MONTH'S PAY.

OUR TROOPS
WILL BE OUT TO
COLLECT YOUR ARMS,
AND SHOW YOU
WHERE TO GO.

ALL I WANT IS
YOUR
COMMANDER.



YOU HIT
HIM WITH
LIGHTNING.

AH.
SECOND IN
COMMAND?

HIM,
TOO.

... THIRD?

HE WAS IN
THE SECOND
MACHINE.

<sigh>
FOURTH?



THAT
WOULD BE
ME,
MADBOY!

thok!



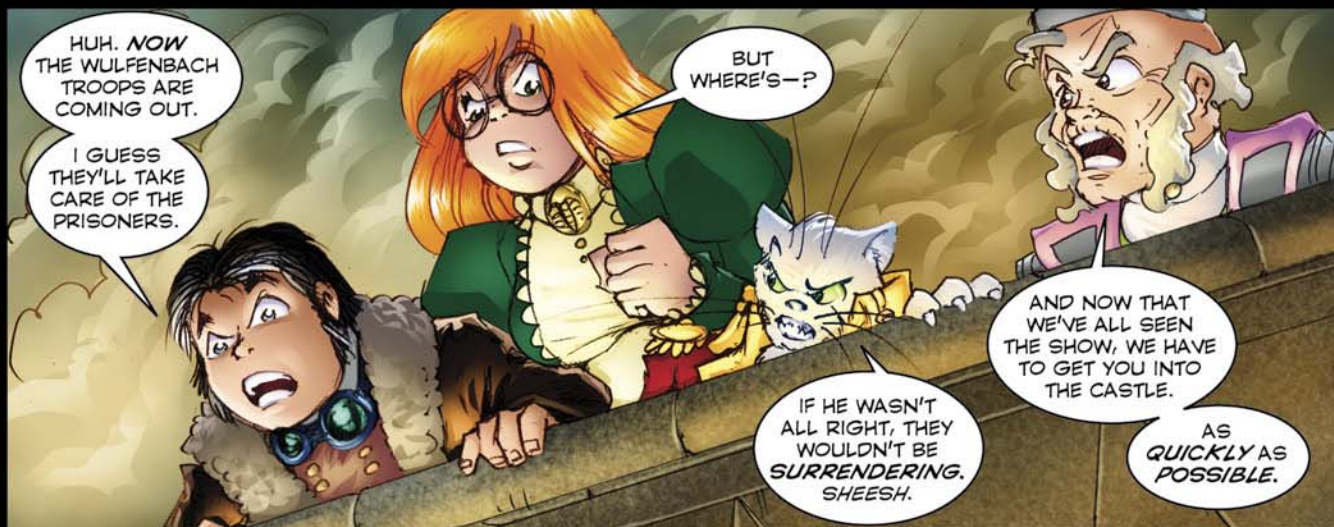
HOY!
SO WHO ELSE
WANTS TO BE
PROMOTED?!

I...

I COULD
HAVE HANDLED
THAT.

OV
COZZ.

NOW, LEAN ON
ME ALL
SOBTLE-LIKE BEFORE
HYU FALLS
DOWN.



HUH. *NOW* THE WULFENBACH TROOPS ARE COMING OUT.

I GUESS THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF THE PRISONERS.

BUT WHERE'S—?

AND NOW THAT WE'VE ALL SEEN THE SHOW, WE HAVE TO GET YOU INTO THE CASTLE.

AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

IF HE WASN'T ALL RIGHT, THEY WOULDN'T BE SURRENDERING. SHEESH.



OH. YOU SEEM TO BE FEELING BETTER.

THESE CLOWNS WERE JUST THE FIRST.

THE EMPIRE IS WEAK, AND ALL THE VULTURES WILL BE ON THE MOVE.

YOU CALL THAT WEAK?



NO, THAT WAS IMPRESSIVE.

IT'LL MAKE A LOT OF THEM THINK TWICE, NO QUESTION.

BUT THEY'VE SEEN A CRACK IN WULFENBACH'S POWER.

THERE'S A LOT OF POWERFUL SPARKS WHO WILL SEE THIS AS THEIR CHANCE.

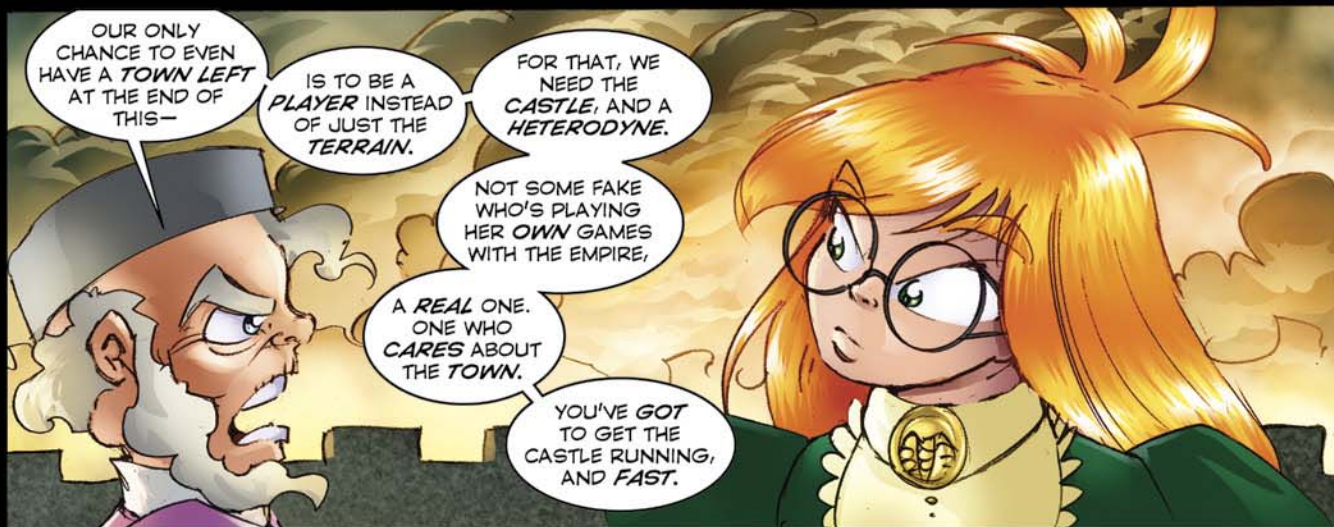


HM. DEPENDING ON WHO WON—

TO HELL WITH WHO WINS!

THEY'LL COME HERE TO FIGHT.

MECHANICSBURG WILL BE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE.



OUR ONLY CHANCE TO EVEN HAVE A TOWN LEFT AT THE END OF THIS—

IS TO BE A PLAYER INSTEAD OF JUST THE TERRAIN.

FOR THAT, WE NEED THE CASTLE, AND A HETERODYNE.

NOT SOME FAKE WHO'S PLAYING HER OWN GAMES WITH THE EMPIRE,

A REAL ONE. ONE WHO CARES ABOUT THE TOWN.

YOU'VE GOT TO GET THE CASTLE RUNNING, AND FAST.



I SEE. ALL RIGHT, LET'S GO.

HMM. I'M SURPRISED.

I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO GO SEE YOUR BOYFRIEND FIRST.



HE'S *NOT* MY BOYFRIEND.

YES, I WORKED WITH HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE, AND YES, WE GOT ALONG ALL RIGHT...

BUT THAT WAS BEFORE HE KNEW I WAS A HETERODYNE.

THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING.



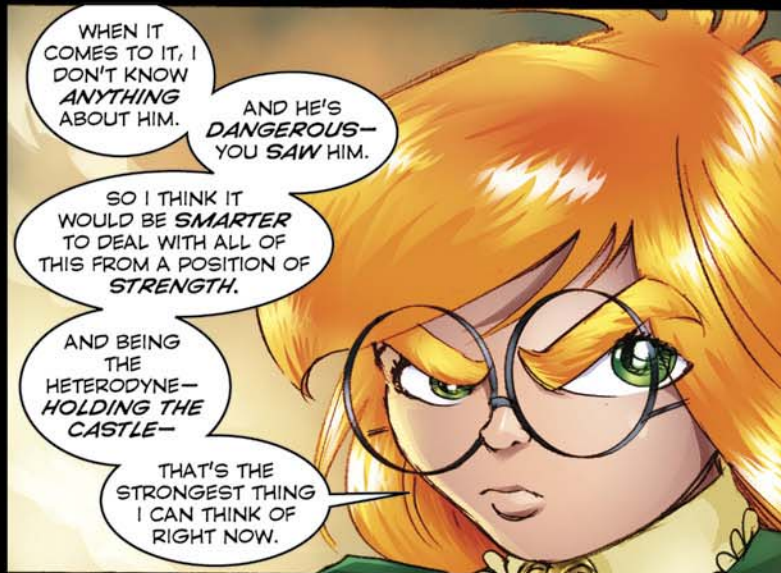
"WHEN HE CAME LOOKING FOR ME BEFORE, HE WASN'T EXACTLY FRIENDLY."

AND THAT JÄGER IN THE COFFEE SHOP?

HE WAS A WULFENBACH JÄGER.

HE WAS THERE LOOKING FOR ME.

DID GIL SEND HIM? PROBABLY, BUT I JUST DON'T KNOW."



WHEN IT COMES TO IT, I DON'T KNOW *ANYTHING* ABOUT HIM.

AND HE'S DANGEROUS—YOU SAW HIM.

SO I THINK IT WOULD BE *SMARTER* TO DEAL WITH ALL OF THIS FROM A POSITION OF *STRENGTH*.

AND BEING THE HETERODYNE—HOLDING THE CASTLE—

THAT'S THE STRONGEST THING I CAN THINK OF RIGHT NOW.



BESIDES—

LIKE IT OR NOT, I'M PART OF THIS MESS.

AND I *DO* CARE ABOUT THIS TOWN.

IT'S MY FAMILY'S HOME.

I'VE GOT TO FIGHT FOR IT.



BY *GWANGI!* I'LL MAKE A WARRIOR OUT OF YOU *YET!*

GLAD TO HEAR IT.

BUT—

...BUT?



WELL, EVEN IF HE'S A VICIOUS MADMAN OUT TO PICKLE ME, I'M...I'M KIND OF WORRIED ABOUT HIM.

COULD YOU FIND HIM, AND MAKE SURE HE'S OKAY?

ME?

PLEASE?



WELL, I *WAS* GOING TO SIT AROUND IN A CAFE WORRYING ABOUT YOU, BUT...

SURE. I CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM.



DOT'S RIGHT!
HYU BOYZ PUT
DOWN DOSE GONZ
AND MOOF
ALONG!

AND WIPE
HYU FEETS
BEFAW HYU
GOES IN!

HOKAY. NOW,
TRADITIONALLY, HYU
SHOULD STRIDE
TRIUMPHANTLY OUT
OF THE SMOKE—

BUT VE DUN'
VANT HYU
SPOILIN' TINGS
BY *PASSIN'*
OUT, HEY?

I'M...

I'M
FINE.

HYU IZ
HIT,
KIDDO.

VE KEN
SCHMELL DE
BLOOD.

YAH. YOUR
POPPA'S TROOPS
VILL FINISH TINGS
UP HERE.

HYU
COME VIT
US.



...WEARING
ARMOR.

NOT...
TOTALLY
INSANE.

HMF. DUN
SEE NOTTIN ON
YOU *HEAD*.

THEY...
NEEDED TO *SEE*
IT WAS *ME*.

VAT HYU
NEED IS A *BIG*
HAT VIT HYU
NAME ON IT.

REALLY?
WAIT...
WHAT?



WAIT—
YOU'RE... YOU'RE
NOT WULFENBACH
JÄGERS.

NOPE.

VE IZ DE
GOOT LOOKIN'
VUNS!

OH. UM...
ARE YOU
KIDNAPPING
ME?

NAH. DIS
TIME, VE IZ ON
HYU SIDE!

OH.
GOOD.

BUT—ER,
WHY?



HMF. AN I
HEARD HYU VUZ
SCHMOT.

HYU IZ
DEFENDING *OUR*
TOWN.

HYU FALLIN'
DOWN IN FRONT
OF EFFREYBODY
AIN'T *GOOT* FOR
DE TOWN—

OR FOR
MIZZ
AGATHA.



AGATHA?!

YES, THAT...
THAT WOULD BE
BAD.

CAN'T FALL
DOWN IN FRONT
OF *AGATHA*.
NO—

HE'S
LOSIN' IT,
DIMO.





HOKAY. / SEZ VE SKULKS IN THROUGH DE SNEAKY GATE AND TAKES HIM TO MAMMA GKIKI'S.

OOH. I DUN KNOW IF SHE'LL LIKE DOT, BRODDER.



WHAT? NO, GET ME TO THE HOSPITAL.

NO VAY, SVEETHOT.

LOOKS LIKE VE IS KEEDNAPPINK HYU A LEEDLE AFTER ALL.

NO YUN GUN SEE HYU UNTIL HYU IZ STOMPIN' AROUND ALL SCARY-LIKE AGAIN.



MY FATHER MUST BE GUARDED. AND AGATHA WILL BE IN DANGER.

I CAN'T STOP NOW.

pfft. HE KENT PROTECT NO YUN RIGHT NOW.

HM. HE GOT'S A POINT.

DOTS VY VE TAKES HIM TO MAMMA.

VE NEEDS HIM BETTER FAST. MAMMA VILL FIX HIM UP GOOT.

DOT'S... TRUE.



HE LIKES MIZ AGATHA. HY KEN TELL.

BUT I DUN KNOW IF WE SHOULD TRUST HIM VIT DIS.

TA DA! DE SNEAKY GATE!

VE GOT'S A HETERODYNE BECK.

VOTEVER HOPPENS, TINGS IZ GONNA CHANGE.

I SAY VE TAKE DE CHANCE.

WAIT--THAT WAS NOT THERE A MINUTE AGO!

heh. DUN VORRY ABOUT IT. IT WON'T BE DERE NEXT TIME, EEDER.

FROM HERE, IZ EASY PEASY!

ER--



WHILE YOU'RE GETTING DRESSED, THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF.

I HAVE DOCTORED SOME PAPERS FOR YOU.

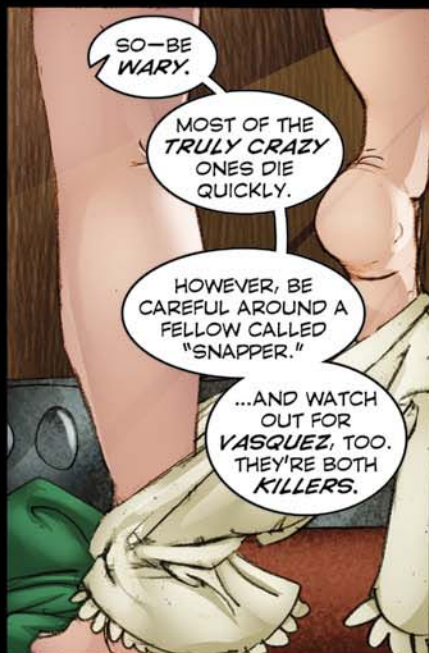
THEY STATE THAT YOU ARE IN FOR **MURDER**.



MURDER?!

PEOPLE ARE NOT SENT TO THE CASTLE FOR **STEALING BREAD**, MY LADY.

THESE ARE PEOPLE THE EMPIRE WANTS TO GO AWAY.



SO—BE **WARY**.

MOST OF THE **TRULY CRAZY** ONES DIE QUICKLY.

HOWEVER, BE CAREFUL AROUND A FELLOW CALLED "SNAPPER."

...AND WATCH OUT FOR **VASQUEZ**, TOO. THEY'RE BOTH **KILLERS**.



THE REST OF THEM MIGHT PROVE USEFUL, IF YOU CAN GET THEM ON YOUR SIDE.

ESPECIALLY THE OLD TIMERS.

PROMISE THEM **AMNESTY**, IF YOU MUST.

I CAN DO THAT?

PROVE YOURSELF THE **HETERODYNE**—

HOLD THE CASTLE—

AND THERE'S **NOTHING** YOU CAN'T DO IN **MECHANICSBURG**.



THE MAP IN THE TRUNK SHOWS THE KNOWN CASTLE FLOOR PLAN.

THE AREA IN GREEN IS CONSIDERED **SAFE**.

NOT **MUCH**.

NO. THE AREA IN BLUE IS THE MAIN LIBRARY.

NOW THE CASTLE SAID IT WOULD GUIDE YOU FROM THERE—**HOPEFULLY...**

—IT'S **PRETTY FAR IN**.



SO WHO'S THE BARON'S INSIDE MAN?

OF COURSE HE'LL HAVE ONE. I WOULD.

THEY COULD FIND **ANYTHING** IN THERE.

VERY TRUE. THAT WOULD BE PROFESSOR **TIKOFFEN**.



HE'S A PRISONER HIMSELF, BUT HE'S ALSO THE MAN IN CHARGE ONCE YOU GET **INSIDE**.

HE'S IN CHARGE OF RECORDS, AND KEEPING THE OTHERS IN LINE.

FOUND ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THAT FAKE "**HETERODYNE**?"



NO—BUT CONSIDERING THAT FOR HER, YOUR VERY **EXISTENCE** IS A **THREAT**—

SHE'LL ALMOST CERTAINLY TRY TO **KILL** YOU.

I'D AVOID HER AT ALL COSTS.

WELL, WE'RE **HERE**.



ALL
RIGHT—I'M
READY.



HERR
DIAMANT!

JEEZ! YOU
CAN'T SEND
SOMEONE IN
TODAY!

THAT
HETERODYNE
GIRL—

PFF. JUST
ANOTHER
IMPOSTER.

SHE WON'T
LAST, AND THE
OTHERS STILL
HAVE TO EAT.

BESIDES, WE
WANT *THIS* ONE
OFF THE *STREETS*.



BUT IF YOU
DON'T LIKE IT,
YOU *COULD* GO
OVER MY HEAD.

THE BARON'S
HERE IN THE
HOSPITAL.

YOU
COULD GO
ASK *HIM*.

AW, GO KISS
A CONSTRUCT.

FINE.
SEND HER
IN, THEN.

VERY WISE, I'M
SURE. SIGN
HERE, PLEASE.





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'MORNING, KROSP!

GOOD MORNING, ZEETHA!

ANOTHER TRAINING SESSION FOR AGATHA?

WHAT PART OF 'MEOW' DID I NOT UNDERSTAND?



EVERY MORNING, WITHOUT FAIL!

YOU SURE?

SHE WAS UP REALLY LATE FIGHTING OFF THOSE LIZARD CULT GUYS.

YES, I HEARD ABOUT THAT.

NO DOUBT SHE EXPECTS ME TO LET HER REST.



HA!

A LITTLE SURPRISE NOW AND THEN IS GOOD FOR A PERSON.



AH!

Z

GOOD THING A LITTLE SURPRISE IS—

ALL RIGHT!

PERSONAL TRAINER





WELL, LET'S
JUST SEE HOW
FAST IT—

Z



SMACK!

PRETTY...
DARN...
FAST.

YOU
COULD LET
HER SLEEP
IN.

THAT SETS A
**BAD
PRECEDENT!**

IF I LET HER
SLACK OFF EVERY
TIME SHE INVENTS
A NEW FIGHTING
DEVICE

OR BEATS UP
A PACK OF
**CRAZED
YAHOO'S,**

WE'LL
NEVER GET
**ANYTHING
DONE.**

IT WORRIES
ME THAT A QUICK
REVIEW OF THE
PREVIOUS
MONTH ONLY
SUPPORTS
YOUR
ARGUMENT.



GUESS I'LL
JUST HAVE
TO—

SHING!



BACK...

SLOWLY...

OUT OF
THE
ROOM?

Z

I THINK IT MAY
BE **TOO LATE**
FOR THAT.



SO LET ME
GET THIS
STRAIGHT—

IT TOOK HER
FIFTEEN
MINUTES TO BEAT
THE MACHINE?

THAT'S
RIGHT.

DURING WHICH
IT KNOCKED HER
THROUGH **TWO**
WINDOWS,

INTO THE PIG
STY, THE DUCK
POND, THE
BEEHIVES,

A VAT OF
OATMEAL,
AND DOWN
THE MAIN
CHIMNEY.

YUP.

I GUESS THAT
EXPLAINS WHY
SHE DICED IT UP
SO SMALL.

I CAN'T
BELIEVE YOU
SLEPT THROUGH
IT ALL.

erk.

WHEN I
CATCH
YOU—

ow!

YOU
WILL—

eeek!

GOOD
THING,
THOUGH—

I FEEL
GREAT!

DIE!

END!



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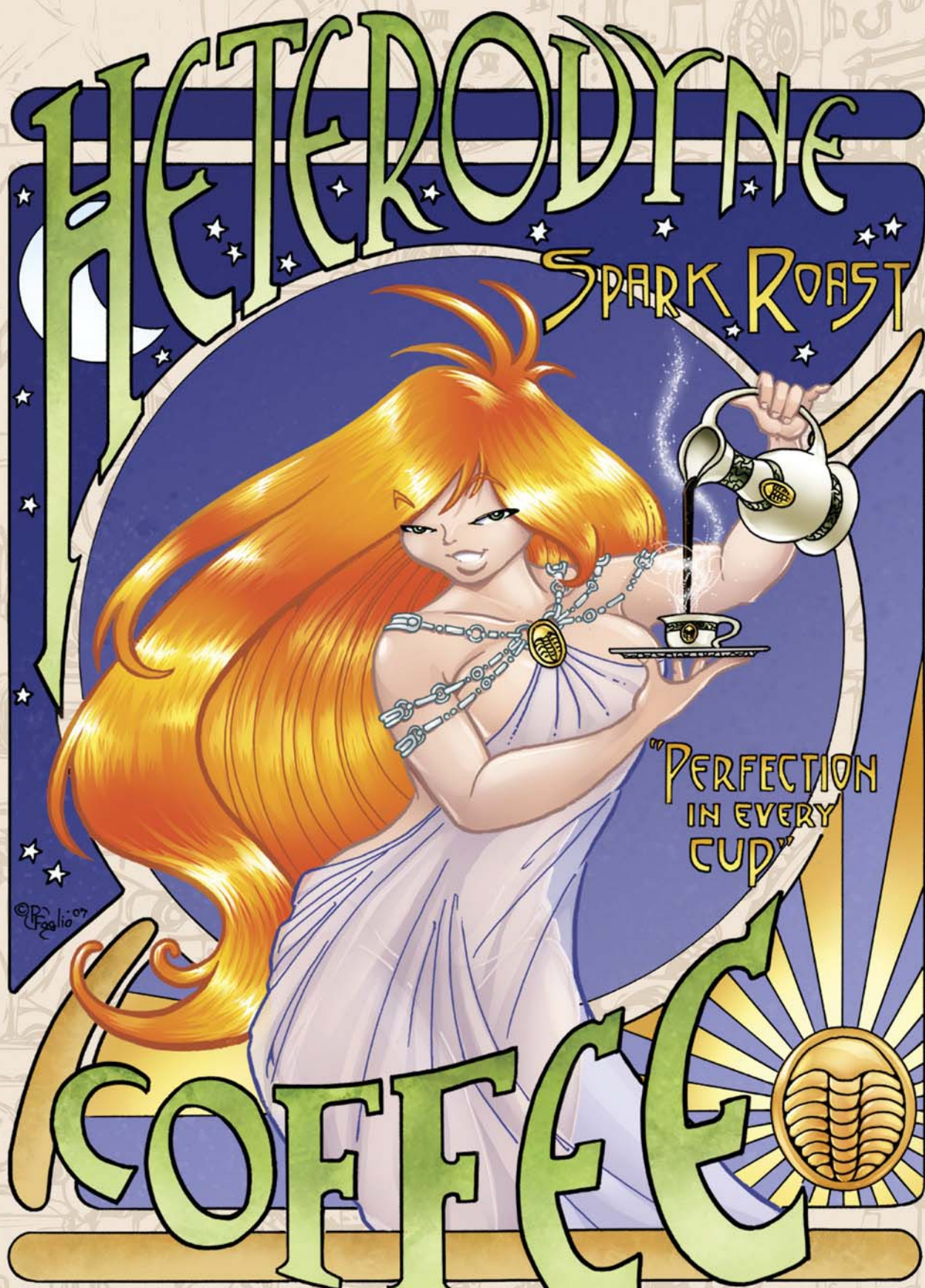
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