

GORDON RENNIE ◊ TIERNEN TREVALLION

ABSALOM

TERMINAL DIAGNOSIS



GORDON RENNIE

Writer

TIERNEN TREVALLION

Artist



Creative Director and CEO: Jason Kingsley

Chief Technical Officer: Chris Kingsley

Head of Books & Comics: Ben Smith

2000 AD Editor in Chief: Matt Smith

Senior Graphic Novels Editor: Keith Richardson

Graphic Novels Editors: Maz Smith & Oliver Pickles

Graphic Design: Oz Osborne, Sam Gretton & Gemma Sheldrake

Reprographics: Joseph Morgan, Richard Tustian & Emma Denton

PR: Michael Molcher

Publishing Assistant: Owen Johnson

Original Commissioning Editor: Matt Smith

Originally serialised in **2000 AD** Progs 2053-2060 & 2136-2143. Copyright © 2017 and 2019 Rebellion 2000 AD Ltd. All Rights Reserved. *Absalom* and all related characters, their distinctive likenesses and related elements featured in this publication are trademarks of Rebellion 2000 AD Ltd. **2000 AD** is a registered trademark. The stories, characters and incidents featured in this publication are entirely fictional.

Published by Rebellion, Riverside House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, UK

www.rebellion.co.uk

ISBN: 978-1-78108-688-9

Printed in the UK

Manufactured in the EU by Stanton Book Services,
Wellingborough NN8 3PJ, UK.

1st Printing: October 2019

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For information on other **2000 AD** graphic novels, or if you have any comments on this book, please email books@2000AD.com

To find out more about **2000 AD**, visit www.2000AD.com

ABSALOM

TERMINAL DIAGNOSIS



ABSALOM CREATED BY GORDON RENNIE AND TIERNEN TREVALLION

TERMINAL DIAGNOSIS PART ONE

Script: Gordon Rennie

Art: Tiernen Trevallion

Letters: Ellie De Ville

Originally published in **2000 AD** Progs 2053-2060.







'... I DON'T THINK HE IS.'

BLEEEEEUUUUGH

OOH, THAT SOUNDS NASTY. STILL, ALWAYS BETTER OUT THAN IN, I SAY.

YOU THINK THAT'S BAD, YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT I LEFT FLOATING IN THE KHAZI THIS MORNING.

DON'T DOUBT IT, HARRY LAD.

KEBAB?

SUIT YERSELF.

YOU KNOW YOU'RE FINALLY DYING, DON'T YOU?

THE THOUGHT **HAD** OCCURRED, CHEERS FOR ASKING.





SO UNFAIR, ALL THOSE YEARS OF LOYAL SERVICE, AND NOW THOSE PUBLIC-SCHOOL PEDERASTS AT THE **STYLE CLUB** DECIDE TO CANCEL YER SEASON TICKET.



THEY'RE ON TO YOU, HARRY LAD. THEY KNOW YOU'RE UP TO SOMETHING...

... THIS **LITTLE COMMANDO SQUAD** YOU'RE PUTTING TOGETHER, TO GET THE **GRAND-KIDDIES** BACK.



NOT GOT ALL THE PIECES IN PLACE YET, HAVE YOU? AND NOW YOU'RE OUT OF TIME.

LAST ORDERS, MY SON. **MINI-CAB'S** WAITING OUTSIDE AND THE **TAKEAWAY'S** PULLING DOWN THE SHUTTERS FOR THE NIGHT.

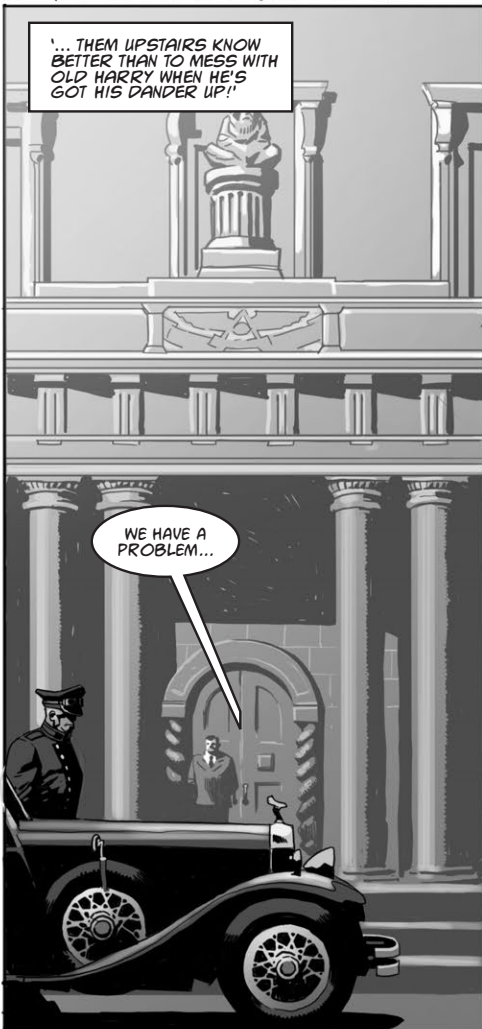


DON'T COUNT ME OUT JUST YET. THERE'S STILL A FEW TRICKS TO PLAY.

UH... GUV?



EVERYTHING OKAY?





HIS RELIABILITY HAS BEEN SUSPECT FOR A WHILE. HE'LL BE DEAD IN A MONTH OR TWO.

HOPEFULLY SOONER, WITH THE LATEST CUTS TO NHS ONCOLOGY SERVICES.

ABSALOM? YOU MIS-UNDERSTAND...



'I MEANT ONE OF OUR FAMILY RETAINERS. THE ONE YOU KNOW AS MISTER CRICH...'



'AS WITH YOU AND ABSALOM, WE HAD BECOME DISSATISFIED WITH THE STANDARD OF HIS SERVICE...'

'UNFORTUNATELY, WE WERE NOT SO SUCCESSFUL IN CONTAINING THE PROBLEM...'



YOU NEED MORE MEDICINE? WHY NOT GO TO THE DOCTOR'S?

CAN'T GET A PRESCRIPTION ON THE NHS FOR WHAT I NEED, SON. NOT FOR WHAT I'VE GOT.



THIS BLOKE YOU'RE TAKING ME TO SEE, HE'S AN ALCHEMIST?

SO HE SAYS. THE BOYS IN THE LOCAL DRUGS SQUAD MIGHT SAY OTHERWISE —

— ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING WHAT I'VE LIFTED FROM THEIR EVIDENCE LOCKER IN WAY OF PAYMENT FOR HIM.



ALL PART OF YOUR EDUCATION, SON. BE GOOD FOR YOU TO MEET SOME OF THE MORE USEFUL TOERAGS ON THE MANOR, FOR WHEN AFTER I'VE —



OH BLOODY HELL.

TICK-TOCK MEN!



INSPECTOR ABSALOM...



THIS ISN'T RIGHT! HE'S UNDER MY WING NOW. THAT MEANS HE'S PROTECTED BY THE ACCORD.

YOU BREAK THE ACCORD, AND ALL DEALS ARE OFF!



BUT WE'RE NOT HERE FOR HIM. WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.



YOUR FAITH IN THE POTENCY OF SOME ANTIQUATED OLD PIECE OF PARCHMENT IS TOUCHING.

WE'LL HUMOUR IT FOR NOW. THE CHILD CAN STAY, BUT YOU'RE COMING WITH US.



I'LL STAND WITH YOU AGAINST THEM'S WITH HELLFIRE BEHIND THEIR EYES, BOSS.

THE RIGHTOUS PERSON MAY HAVE MANY TROUBLES, BUT THE LORD DELIVERS HIM FROM THEM ALL.

THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW, SON...



... NOW HALF A MO WHILE I LOOK FOR SOMETHING IN HERE THAT'S BOUND TO TURN ME INTO KENDO NAGASAKI MEETS MAD FRANKIE FRASER.

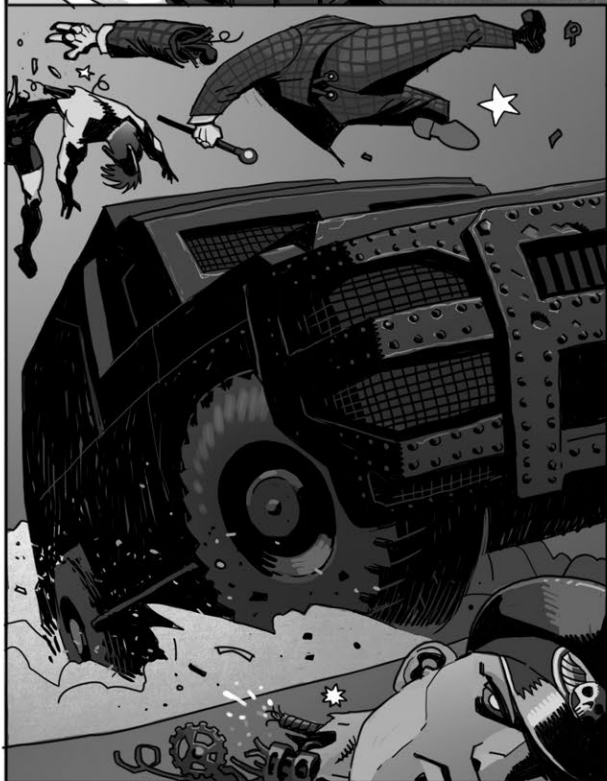


OOPS. LOOK LIVELY...



... HERE COMES ONE OF THOSE MYSTERIOUS WAYS THAT LORD OF YOURS IS SAID TO MOVE IN.







YOU KNOW THAT SAFE HOUSE WE KEEP OUT BROMLEY WAYS? SOMETHING TRIPPED THE WARD-GUARDS ON IT HALF AN HOUR AGO...

... SOMETHING DEFINITELY NOT KOSHER, ACCORDING TO WHAT BARNABAS SAYS ABOUT THE SIGIL FEEDBACK.



SO WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED IMPARTING YOUR HARD-EARNED WISDOM TO THE NEW BOY WONDER, THINK YOU COULD CALL ME BACK?



WHATEVER YOU ARE, BY THE ARTICLES OF THE ACCORD, WE COMMAND THEE TO PUT ASIDE MALEFIC INTENT AND SUBMIT TO THE POWERS OF THIS EARTHLY REALM!



AND, BY THE ARTICLES OF THAT SAME ACCORD, I CLAIM PETITION FOR SANCTUARY.

HELLO, DETECTIVES. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.











YOU KNOW, I COULDN'T SWEAR THAT'S THE SECOND TIME WE'VE PASSED THAT KEBAB SHOP.

YOU'D BETTER NOT BE MESSING US ABOUT HERE, BARNEY MATE...



YOU KNOW HOW DIFFICULT THIS IS?

FINDING A STEALTH ROUTE ACROSS LONDON WHERE YOU CAN HIDE AMONG THE POWER LINES AND EMANATION FIELDS?

YOU WANT TO TRY IT? YOU WANT TO TRY TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SAXON-AGE LEY LINE AND SOMETHING MORE MODERN THAT COULD —

OH BLOODY HELL —!

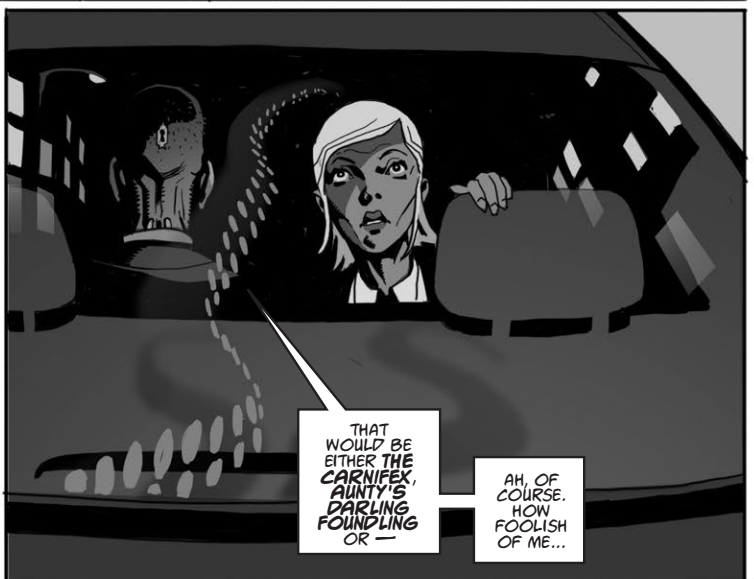


QUICK! IF THEY WERE TO SEND SOMETHING AFTER YOU — THE WORST POSSIBLE THING THEY COULD THROW AT US — WHAT WOULD IT BE...?



WELL, I ALREADY TOOK CARE TO ABSCOND FROM SERVICE WHEN I KNEW WEEPING JENNY WAS DEPLOYED OVERSEAS.

AS FOR THE WORST AFTER HER...



THAT WOULD BE EITHER THE CARNIFEX, AUNTIE'S DARLING FOUNDLING OR —

AH, OF COURSE, HOW FOOLISH OF ME...



IT'S THE MIASMIC. THAT'S WHAT THEY'LL HAVE SENT.

I DO APOLOGISE, DETECTIVES. I'M AFRAID THIS IS GOING TO BE QUITE UNPLEASANT FOR ALL OF US.

SODDING HARRY ABSALOM!



'WHERE IS HE, WHEN YOU REALLY BLOODY NEED HIM...?'



Plymouth
Torquay
Exhampton
[S]
Exeter
A 3015
Bristol
Taunton
MS [N]
Exeter A 3015





YOU KNOW, I'VE SEEN THESE THINGS PUT THEIR FISTS THROUGH STEEL DOORS, AND TEAR THE ARMS OFF THE HELL-BORN...

... BUT THIS IS DEFINITELY A NEW ONE ON ME.

YES, THEY ARE QUITE THE LITTLE SWEETIES, ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW THEM.



YOU'RE THE ONE I'VE BEEN AFTER FOR A WHILE. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S FOUND SOME WAY TO MAGICALLY CONTROL THESE LADS.

ME? OH NO, I'M AFRAID NOT...



... SISTER DOLLY HERE IS THE GIFTED ONE IN THE FAMILY.





DARLING SIS AND I BOTH WORKED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO HELP CREATE OUR LARGE FRIENDS HERE —

BY THE WAY, DID YOU KNOW THEY WERE ORIGINALLY GROWN FROM CERTAIN POTENT BODILY FLUIDS PROVIDED BY YOUR COLLEAGUE THE GUV'NOR?



THESE THINGS ARE THAT NUTTER'S SPROGS?

'LARGE, STUPID, OBEДИENT AND EASILY REPLACED.' THAT WAS WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTED, SO THAT'S WHAT WE GAVE THEM.



THE POOR DEARS. THEY DESERVE BETTER THAN THAT.

THAT'S WHY WE MADE A FEW SECRET LITTLE IMPROVEMENTS OF OUR OWN, AND STARTED COLLECTING THE WAIFS AND STRAYS THE GOVERNMENT DIDN'T SEEM TO WANT ANY-MORE.



AND SHE CAN PSYCHICALLY CONTROL 'EM? EVEN IN THAT STATE?

YES, INSPECTOR. I CAN.





WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU? **STROKE**, WAS IT?

A SEVERE ONE. IT LEFT THIS BODY MORE OR LESS USELESS.

LUCKILY, THESE OTHER ONES ARE AVAILABLE TO ME.

I'VE BEEN WITH YOU FOR QUITE A WHILE, INSPECTOR, WATCHING YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES THROUGH THESE OTHERS' EYES...

... LENDING A HELPING HAND HERE AND THERE, WHENEVER IT SEEMED NECESSARY.

THAT SHINDIG AT CABLE STREET. THAT WAS YOU.

AND ON ONE OR TWO OTHER OCCASIONS.

INDEED. THOSE TWO YOUNG COLLEAGUES OF YOURS, INSPECTOR — ALWAYS GETTING THEMSELVES INTO THE MOST TERRIFICALLY AWKWARD SCRAPES!

BEANZ



THAT'S WHY YOU BROUGHT ME AND THE LAD HERE? TO THROW US A LITTLE TEA PARTY AND TELL US HOW GRATEFUL WE SHOULD BE TO YOU?

NOT AT ALL, INSPECTOR! DOLLY'S GIFT IS A PRECIOUS BLESSING, BUT IT CAN BE A BURDEN, TOO.

WE BROUGHT YOU HERE BECAUSE SHE CAN HEAR THE CHILDREN CRYING.



I'VE BEEN IN THE FAMILY'S SERVICE FOR A LONG TIME NOW...

LONDON, 1826—

WAIT. THAT ONE'S STILL ALIVE. I CAN HEAR ITS BLOOD MOVING.

THIS ONE? IT'LL COST YOU EXTRA FOR ME TO FINISH IT OFF, YOU KNOW. I ONLY GET PAID FOR HAULAGE, NOT KILLIN' WORK.

CRASH!

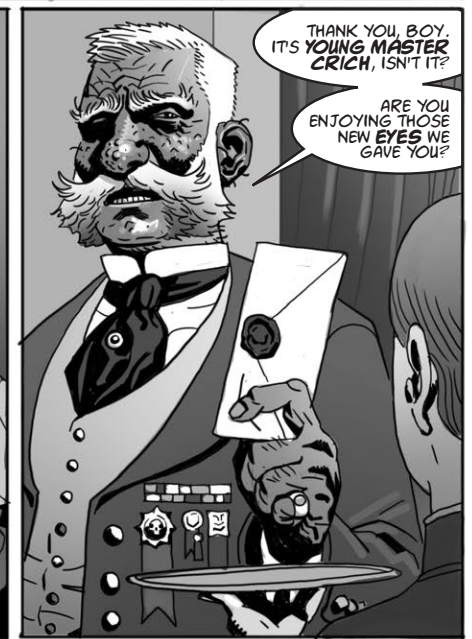
MOSTLY INTACT. YOU'RE TO BE CONGRATULATED, LAD. NOT MANY SURVIVE THE FAMILY'S REVELS.

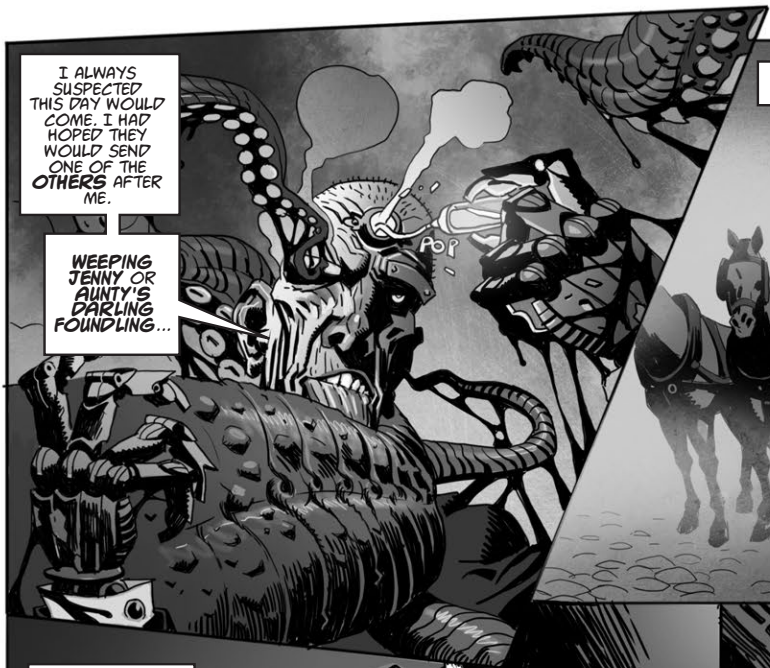
MAYBE WE SHOULD FIND A MORE PRODUCTIVE ROLE FOR YOU. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?

THE GENTLEMAN'S TALKING TO YOU, BOY. ANSWER HIM!

OPEN THE SACK. LET ME SEE IT FIRST.

Y-YES, SIR. I'D LIKE THAT VERY MUCH.





I ALWAYS SUSPECTED THIS DAY WOULD COME. I HAD HOPED THEY WOULD SEND ONE OF THE OTHERS AFTER ME.

WEeping JENNY OR AUNTy'S DARLING FOUNDLING...

1888 —



... ANOTHER ONE, SIR. THOUGHT YOU'D BEST GET ON TO IT SHARPISH, BEFORE THAT BLOODY STYLITE CLUB AND THEIR PALS IN THE FORCE GET WIND OF IT.

YOU DID WELL TO THINK SO, SERGEANT. AND YOU'LL BE REWARDED ACCORDINGLY.



THOSE ACCORD-WAVING BORES IN PALL MALL HAVE BECOME DISTRESSINGLY EFFICIENT OF LATE.

I EVEN HEAR THEY'RE PETITIONING THE HOME SECRETARY TO HAVE THEIR OWN WATCHDOG SQUAD WITHIN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE.

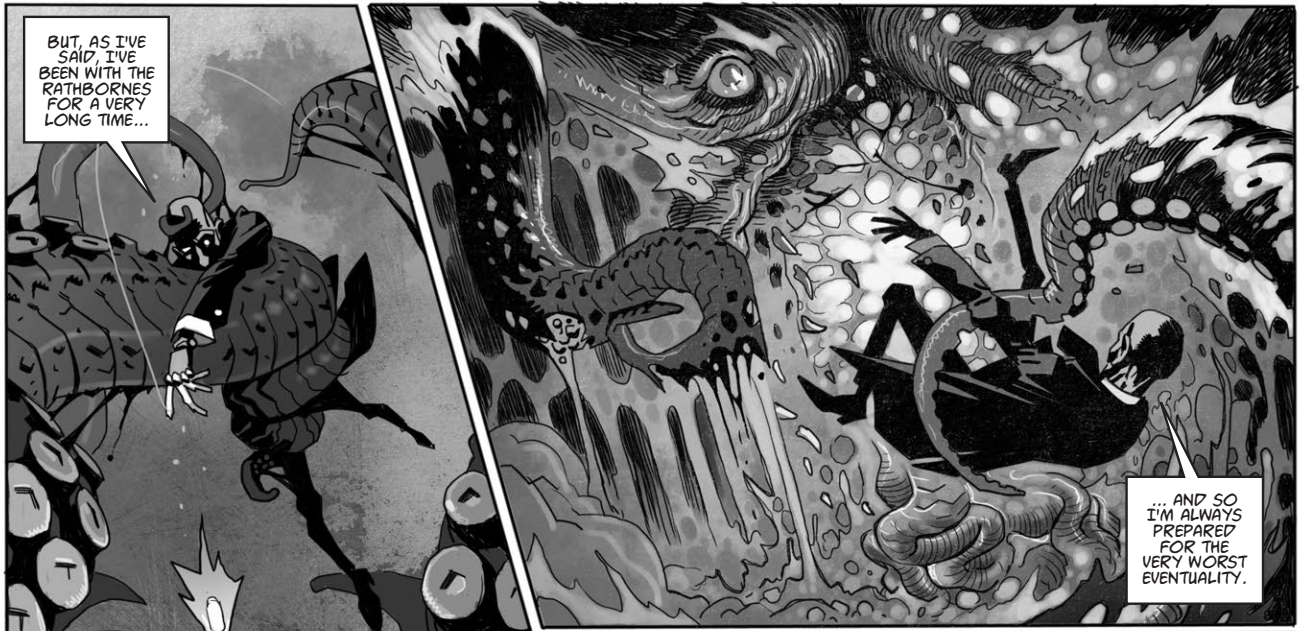
DOWN THERE, SIR. SHE'S STILL ALIVE TOO. I RECKON.

THEN I'LL SEE THAT THE POOR THING'S END IS SWIFT. THAT MUCH I CAN DO FOR HER.



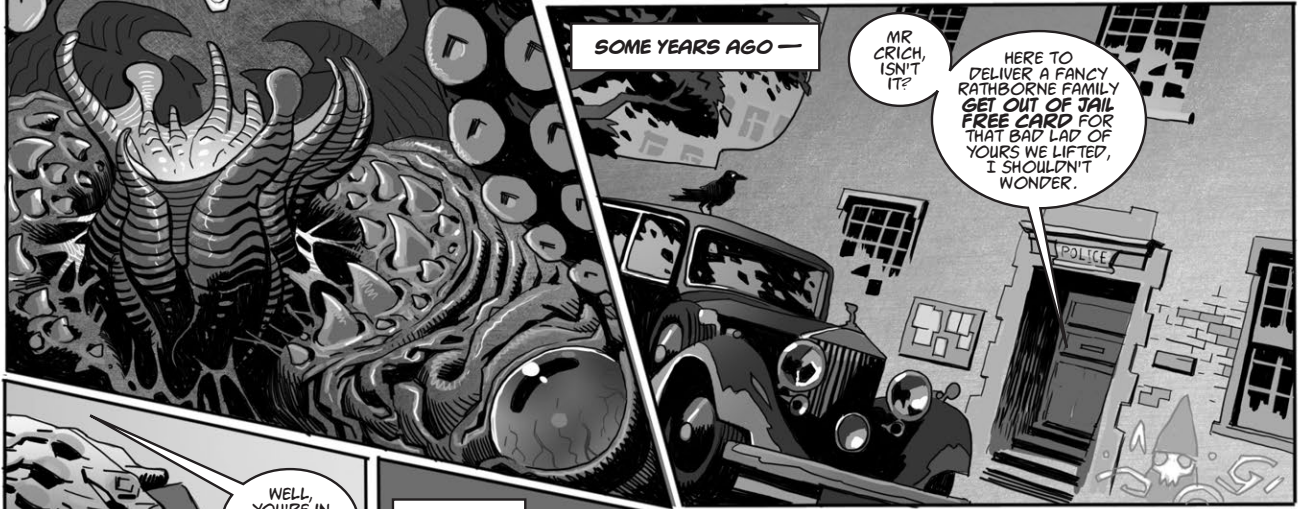
CLEANING UP BEHIND ONE'S SOCIAL BETTERS.

SUCH IS THE LOT OF WE WHO SERVE.



BUT, AS I'VE SAID, I'VE BEEN WITH THE RATHBORNES FOR A VERY LONG TIME...

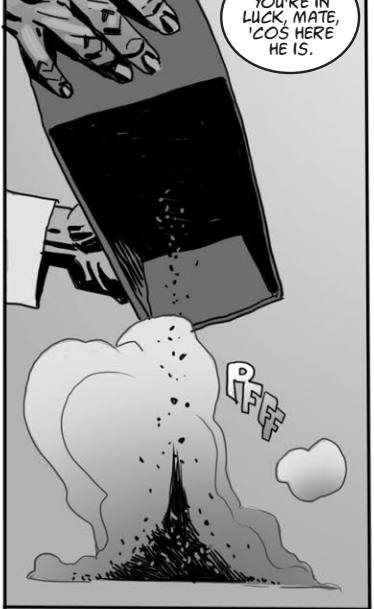
... AND SO I'M ALWAYS PREPARED FOR THE VERY WORST EVENTUALITY.



SOME YEARS AGO —

MR CRICH, ISN'T IT?

HERE TO DELIVER A FAMILY RATHBORNE FAMILY GET OUT OF JAIL FREE CARD FOR THAT BAD LAD OF YOURS WE LIFTED, I SHOULDN'T WONDER.



WELL, YOU'RE IN LUCK, MATE, 'COS HERE HE IS.



PERMIT ME TO SPECULATE. YOU'RE ABSALOM.

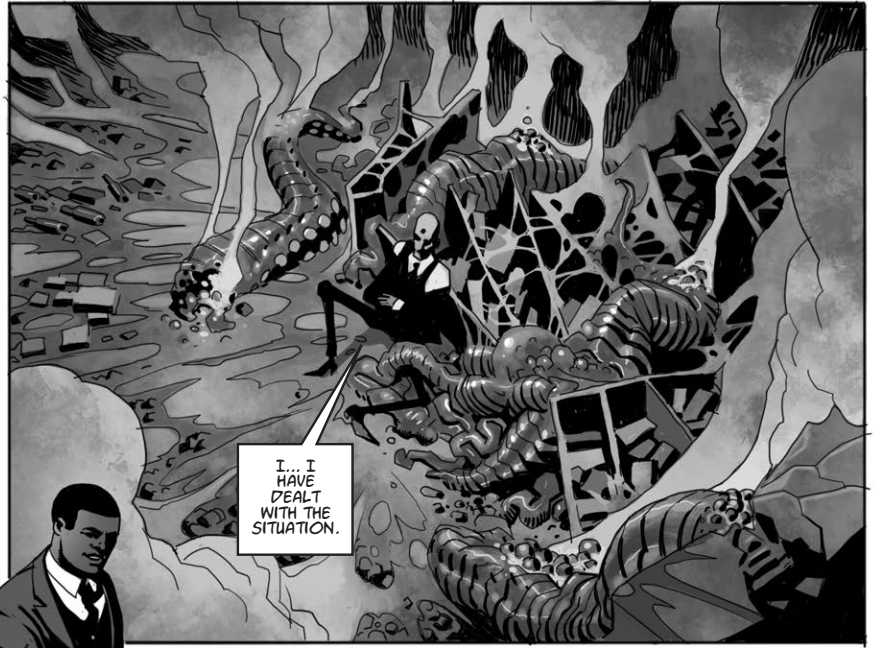
NEW GAFFER, NEW RULES.

ANY OF YOUR LITTLE DEMON HALFBREED DARLINGS MISBEHAVE ON MY MANOR, AND IT'S THE CUP-A-SOUP MIX TREATMENT FROM NOW ON.



I'LL SEE YOUR WORDS REACH THE PROPER EARS. I LOOK FORWARD TO US WORKING TOGETHER MORE, INSPECTOR.

MY COMPLIMENTS TO YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES.





HE'S NOT SUCH A BAD SORT, IS OLD 'ARRY, ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW HIM.



ACTUALLY, NO, THAT'S A TERRIBLE BLEEDIN' LIE, TRUTH TO TELL...

HE'S A HORRIBLE OLD BASTARD AND A RIGHT CONNIVING PIECE OF WORK.



LEARNED EVERYTHING HE KNOWS FROM HIS OLD GUV'NOR, I'M PROUD TO SAY.



MUCH OBLIGED, SON.

STILL A BIT OF A SOFT TOUCH, THOUGH. 'SPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO THE NIPPERS.



OH, STOW IT WITH YER BLEATING. IT'S ONLY A **SNAPPED SPINE**. A FEW WEEKS IN THE MILLS, AND THEY'LL 'AVE YOU RIGHT AS RAIN, I EXPECT.

NOW THEN, BACK TO 'ARRY...



COME ON, SON. DON'T TAKE ALL BLOODY DAY ABOUT IT. I'VE GOT A NAG RUNNING AT THE TWO O'CLOCK AT AINTREE.



STOP BEING A PONCE, AND DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.



THEY'RE JUST KIDS, GUV. I'VE GOT TWO OF MY OWN ABOUT THE SAME AGE.

KIDS, ARE THEY? TELL THAT TO SID HERE AFTER THEY BLEEDIN' NEAR TORE HIS ARM OFF.

OR THAT CASSOCK-LIFTER, AND WHAT THEY DID TO HIM AFTER HE TRIED TO EXORCISE 'EM?



RIGHT, EVERYONE OUT. ME AND GEOFFREY HERE WILL SEE TO THIS.

LIKE I ALWAYS SAY, IF YOU NEED SOMETHING TRULY HORRIBLE DONE, YOU NEED TO DO IT YER-SELF...



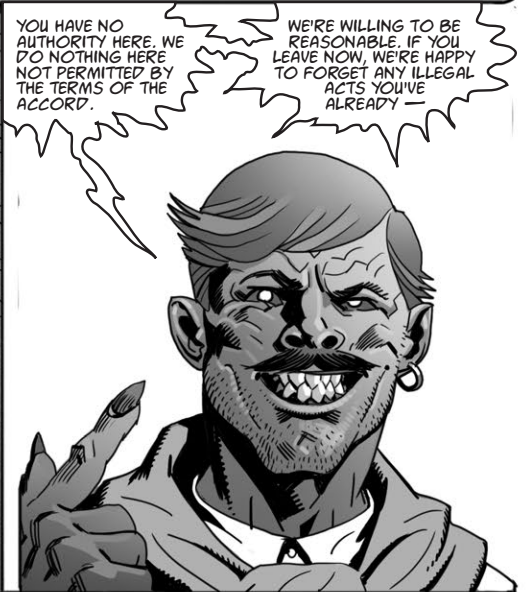
DRINKS ARE ON YOU AT THE BOOZER TONIGHT...

NOT YOU, 'ARRY. YOU STAY AND WATCH.



OUR 'ARRY, WOULDN'T KNOW HOW TO FIGHT SLEEP, IF IT WASN'T FOR HIS OLD GUV'NOR.

I MEAN, TAKE THAT OTHER TIME, WHEN —



YOU HAVE NO AUTHORITY HERE. WE DO NOTHING HERE NOT PERMITTED BY THE TERMS OF THE ACCORD.

WE'RE WILLING TO BE REASONABLE. IF YOU LEAVE NOW, WE'RE HAPPY TO FORGET ANY ILLEGAL ACTS YOU'VE ALREADY —



KRAK!



'YOU KILLED THEM ALL TO GET TO ME, CHARLIE? THAT'S SO SWEET!'

KRACH



I KILLED 'EM ALL. YOU GOT THAT PART RIGHT, AT LEAST.



AND DON'T CALL ME THAT NAME. IT'S THE GUV'NOR, REMEMBER?



SORRY, HONEY. I FORGOT. IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I SAW YOU.

YOU WANT ME TO REMIND YOU ABOUT SOME OF THE FUN WE USED TO HAVE?



IF YOU WANT, I STILL REMEMBER HOW TO GROW SOMETHING A LITTLE EXTRA, IF YOU FANCY A BIT OF THE OTHER...



IF THATS WHAT I WANTED, I COULD HAVE GOT IT STAYING WHERE I WAS IN THE SCRUBS, COULDN'T I?

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M HERE FOR. GO GET IT FOR ME.



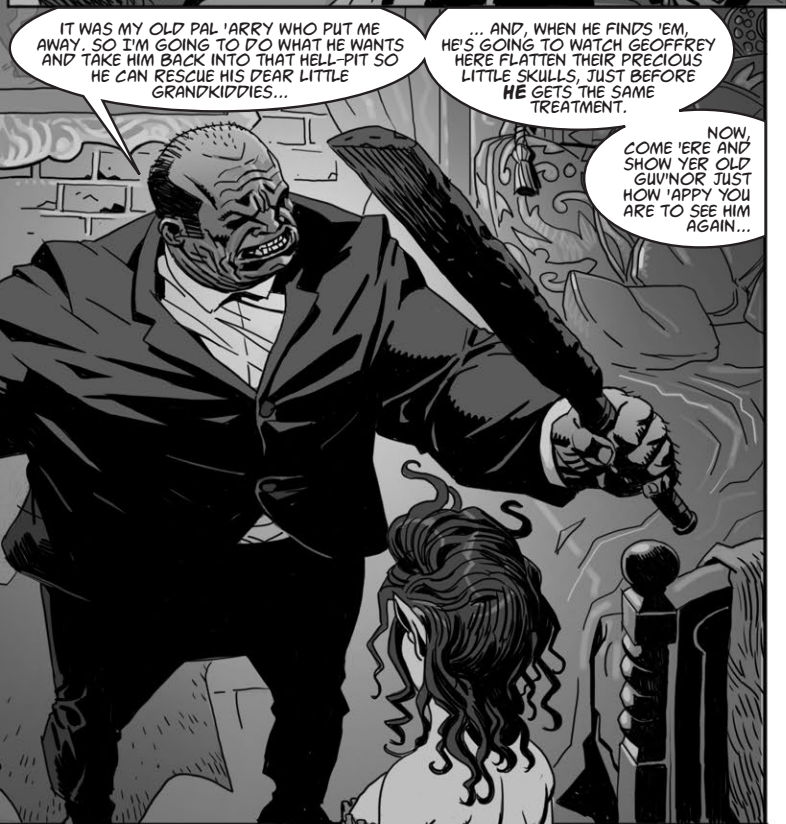
SURE, CHAR—I MEAN... GUV'NOR. I'VE BEEN KEEPING IT FOR YOU WHILE YOU WERE INSIDE, JUST LIKE YOU TOLD ME TO.

IT HAD A NAME, DIDN'T IT? WHAT WAS IT YOU USED TO CALL IT?



GEOFFREY.

BEEN SAVING HIM FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION.



IT WAS MY OLD PAL 'ARRY WHO PUT ME AWAY. SO I'M GOING TO DO WHAT HE WANTS AND TAKE HIM BACK INTO THAT HELL-PIT SO HE CAN RESCUE HIS DEAR LITTLE GRANDKIDDIES...

... AND, WHEN HE FINDS 'EM, HE'S GOING TO WATCH GEOFFREY HERE FLATTEN THEIR PRECIOUS LITTLE SKULLS, JUST BEFORE HE GETS THE SAME TREATMENT.

NOW, COME 'ERE AND SHOW YER OLD GUV'NOR JUST HOW 'APPY YOU ARE TO SEE HIM AGAIN...



TERRY, LOVE? YOU HOME? IF YOU ARE THERE'S FOUR MORE BAGS DOWN IN THE CAR THAT NEED TO BE BROUGHT UP.

AS A BRIBE, I BOUGHT YOU THOSE GOURMET CHICKEN KIEVS YOU LIKE, AND SOME OF THAT AWFUL JAMAICAN CRAFT BEER THAT YOU STILL THINK IS FASHIONABLE.



TERRY?

ACTUALLY, NEVER MIND, YOU LAZY SOD, I'LL DO IT MYSELF. NO GOURMET CHICKEN KIEVS FOR YOU.



WON'T BE LONG. BACK IN A TICK!



HELLO, JEMIMA DEAR. NO CHICKEN KIEVS FOR ME, THANKS. FAR TOO GHASTLY AND GREASY.

NOW, SHALL WE HAVE A CHAT ABOUT WHY YOU'VE STOPPED SPYING ON HARRY ABSALOM FOR ME?

'YOU SEE, IT REALLY WOULD BE USEFUL TO KNOW WHAT THE SHRIVELLED OLD BALL-BAG IS UP TO THESE DAYS...'

THOUGHT I'D CATCH A WHIFF OF HIM ROUND ABOUT KARL MARX CIRCUS, BUT NO JOY.

YOU?'

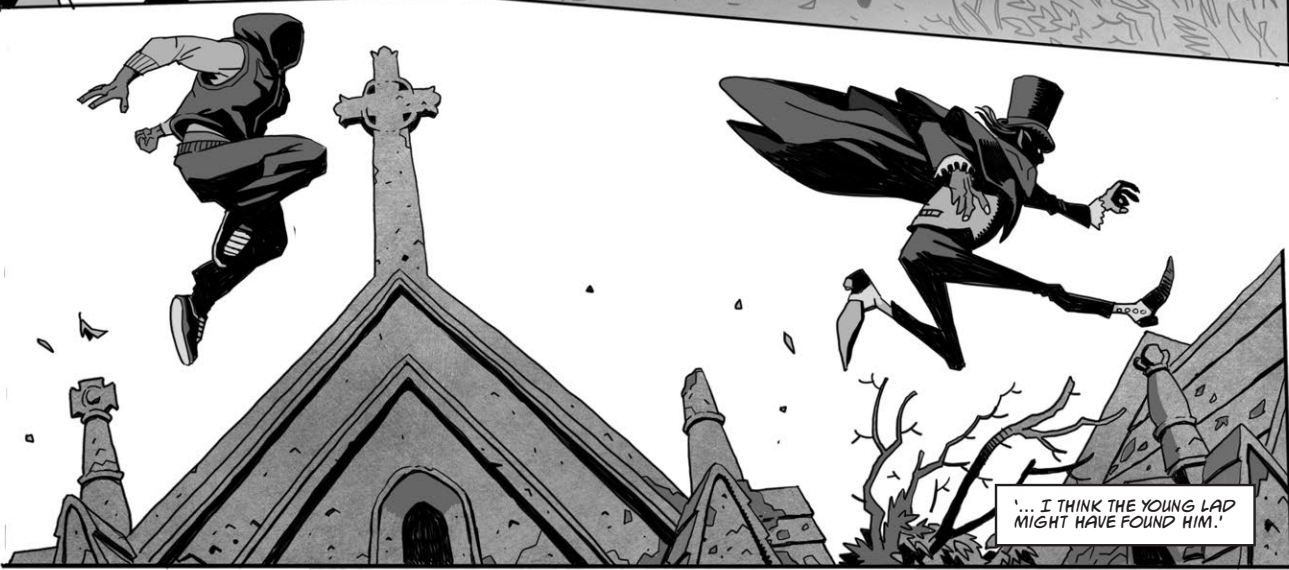
NOTHING HERE EITHER, HARRY.

WELL, OTHER THAN A PAIR OF TOURISTS I FOUND CONTRAVENING THE 2003 SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT, SOMEWHERE IN THE VICINITY OF JEREMY BEADLE'S LAST RESTING PLACE.

HEH HEH. GAME FOR A LAUGH, WERE THEY?'

THOUGHT YOU'D ENJOY THAT ONE, GUV.

WELL, MOVE 'EM ALONG, AND THEN GET OVER TO THE WEST CEMETERY SHARPISSH...'



'... I THINK THE YOUNG LAD MIGHT HAVE FOUND HIM.'



THE TWO LOVEBIRDS SETTLING IN, THEN?

PROPS TO YOU, JEMIMA DEAR...



... WHEN I TOLD YOU I WANTED YOU TO INFILTRATE ABSALOM'S SQUAD AND REPORT ON ITS ACTIVITIES, I DIDN'T MEAN FOR YOU TO GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF SHAGGING HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND.



IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. NOT THE WAY YOU MEAN IT, ANYWAY.

WHY ARE YOU HERE, YOLANDA?

YOU MEAN OTHER THAN BEING YOUR EMPLOYER AND WANTING TO KNOW WHY MY EXPENSIVE INTELLIGENCE ASSET HAS STOPPED DOING HER JOB?



SO WHERE IS THE DASHING DETECTIVE-SERGEANT SANGSTER ANYWAY?

OH, DON'T BOTHER LYING TO ME. I ALREADY KNOW...



'... HE'S OUT WITH HIS BOSS AND THEIR NEW LITTLE PET PSYCHO, TRACKING DOWN THE LATEST RECRUIT FOR HARRY'S BIG SUICIDE MISSION PLAN.'



BOSS? YOU THERE, BOSS?

HE'S FAST. THIS HELLFIRE SOUL. FASTER THAN ALL THEM OTHER ONES I HUNTED.

HIS NAME'S EMILE, SON. AND YEAH, HE'S A NIPPY ONE.



FULL-BLOOD RATHBORNE. THAT MEANS HE'S DANGEROUS, AND VALUABLE...



JUST REMEMBER THAT, 'COS WE NEED HIM ALIVE.

GOTCHA, BOSS.

NO PROMISES.

NO WORRIES, HARRY. I'M ALMOST THERE. I'LL STOP HIM DOING ANYTHING STUPID.

JUST KEEP EMILE BUSY UNTIL I CAN GET THERE WITH THE KITTENS.



YOU WANT ME TO STOP HARRY GOING INTO THE MILLS AND RESCUING HIS GRAND-CHILDREN?

STOP HIM? OF COURSE NOT.

THE MORE DAMAGE HE DOES TO THAT BLOODY DEMON PACK, THE BETTER.



THE ACCORD'S AN EMBARRASSMENT AND DISGRACE TO THIS COUNTRY, TO THE EXTENT THAT I CONSIDER IT A THREAT TO THE SECURITY OF THE REALM —

— WHICH BRINGS IT VERY MUCH INTO MY DEPARTMENT'S SPHERE OF OPERATION.



'SO NO, DEAR, I WON'T WANT YOU TO SABOTAGE THAT OLD DRUNK'S PLAN TO KILL HIMSELF AND HIS ENTIRE TEAM...

ALL RIGHT, EMILE? REMEMBER ME?



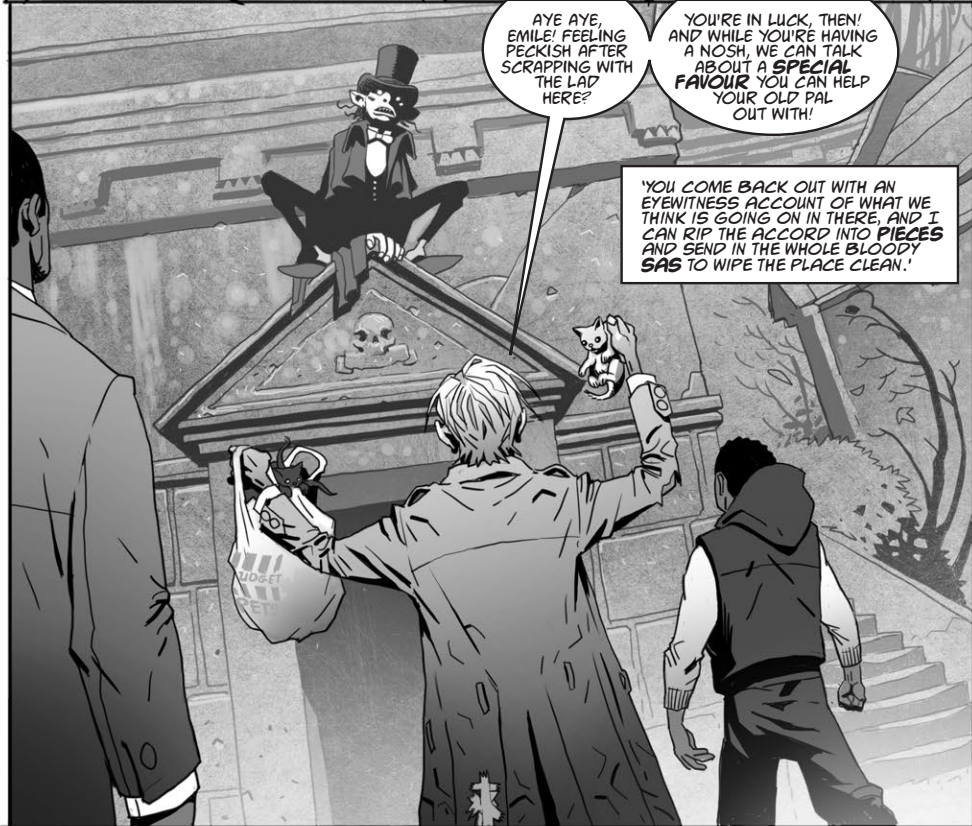
'I WANT YOU TO GO IN THERE WITH HIM. THEY'LL ALL ALMOST CERTAINLY DIE, BUT I NEED YOU TO SURVIVE...

YOUR OLD PAL D.S. SANGSTER? YEAH, 'COURSE YOU DO!



'... SURVIVE, AND GET BACK OUT AGAIN.

AND LOOK, HERE'S YOUR UNCLE HARRY. I BET HE'S GOT A NICE TREAT FOR YOU.



AYE AYE, EMILE! FEELING PECKISH AFTER SCRAPPING WITH THE LAD HERE?

YOU'RE IN LUCK, THEN! AND WHILE YOU'RE HAVING A NOSH, WE CAN TALK ABOUT A SPECIAL FAVOUR YOU CAN HELP YOUR OLD PAL OUT WITH!

'YOU COME BACK OUT WITH AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT OF WHAT WE THINK IS GOING ON IN THERE, AND I CAN RIP THE ACCORD INTO PIECES AND SEND IN THE WHOLE BLOODY SAS TO WIPE THE PLACE CLEAN.'



DEAL?

THE STYLITE CLUB, SOMEWHERE OFF PALL MALL:

AH, INSPECTOR ABSALOM. I DON'T THINK WE SENT FOR YOU, DID WE?

NO, I DON'T THINK WE DID.

SIR CHARLES AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE INDISPOSED AT PRESENT. IF YOU WISH TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT REQUEST IN WRITING THEN WE'LL CERTAINLY TRY TO ACCOMMODATE —

TA FOR THE ADVICE, DOWTON ABBEY, BUT I CAN SEE MYSELF IN, THANKS.

ALL SET? RIGHT...

LET'S STORM THE WINTER PALACE.





I'M RESIGNING, IN CASE YOU HADN'T ALREADY TWIGGED.



TRY ANYTHING AGAINST MY TEAM AFTER, AND A FEW NEWSPAPER EDITORS OF MY ACQUAINTANCE GET MANILA ENVELOPES STUFFED FULL OF ALL THE NASTY STUFF YOU LOT GOT KNIGHTHOODS FOR KEEPING SECRET.

I'D GET OUT OF HERE SHARPISH, BY THE WAY, BEFORE WE TORCH THE PLACE.



UHHNN!



WELL, THAT WAS ALL A BIT BLEEDIN' POINTLESS.

SATISFYING, I'LL BET, BUT STILL BLEEDIN' POINTLESS.

GOING INTO THE LAST FURLONG, HARRY LAD, STILL THINK YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE IT TO THE FINISH LINE?

DON'T... DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT ME...



ONE GOOD THING ABOUT CARING IT...

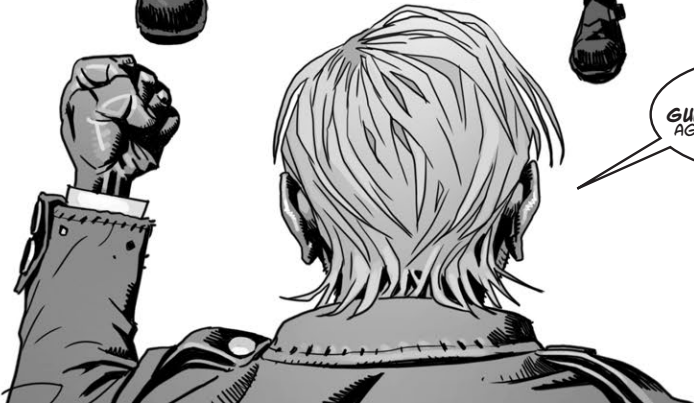
I WON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO YOUR GUFF MUCH LONGER.



MIND HOW YOU GO, HARRY LAD, BE A CRYING SHAME IF YOU CHECKED OUT BEFORE YOU RESCUED THEM LITTLE KIDDIES...



RIGHT.
THAT'S THAT
SORTED.



NOW WHO'S
UP FOR GOING
GUNS OF NAVARONE
AGAINST THOSE HELL-
BASTARDS?



IT'S ABSALOM.
HE'S FINALLY
MAKING HIS
MOVE.

SUCH IMPUDENT
INTRUSION INTO
RATHBORNE FAMILY
BUSINESS CANNOT
BE ALLOWED TO
STAND.



IF IT'S ACCESS
TO THE MILLS HE
WANTS, AND THE
THINGS WE CAN DO
THERE TO HUMAN
FLESH...

... THEN
WE'LL GIVE
IT TO
HIM.

TERMINAL DIAGNOSIS PART TWO

Script: Gordon Rennie

Art: Tiernen Trevallion

Letters: Ellie De Ville

Originally published in 2000 AD Progs 2136-2143





'CAN YOU GIVE US MONEY FOR ICE CREAM, GRANDPA HARRY?'



PLEASE? MA SAID YOU WOULD!

LYING LITTLE BUGGERS. DID SHE BOLLOCKS.

TELL YOU WHAT, THOUGH — YOU PLAY THERE FOR A WHILE MORE AND LET GRANDAD HAVE A BIT OF A REST, AND THEN MAYBE LATER WE'LL SEE ABOUT ICE CREAM AND PERHAPS A RIDE ON THE DONKEYS TOO.

SO WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT? NOT SUCH A BAD SORT AFTER ALL, YOUR GRANDPA HARRY, EH?



YOU HEAR ME? I SAID —



MATTERS ARE OCCURRING THAT REQUIRE YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.





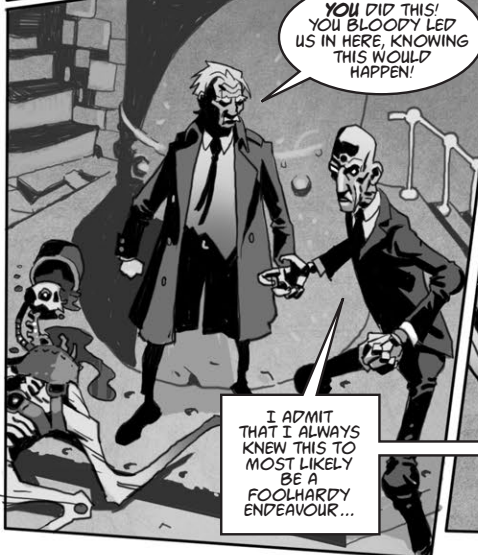
I REGRET, SIR, THAT THE DAY WILL NOT BE OURS TO CARRY.

WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED?

WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED? SOMEONE CLOBBERED YOU, AND THEN I CLOBBERED THEM BACK BEFORE THEY COULD FINISH THE JOB.



NOW GET UP, YOU DOZY LITTLE BASTARD! WE'RE BEING BLOODY SLAUGHTERED ERE!



YOU DID THIS! YOU BLOODY LED US IN HERE, KNOWING THIS WOULD HAPPEN!

I ADMIT THAT I ALWAYS KNEW THIS TO MOST LIKELY BE A FOOLHARDY ENDEAVOUR...



... ALTHOUGH, AS A DISGRUNTLED FORMER FAMILY RETAINER, I HAD HOPED TO SEE A BETTER RECKONING AGAINST THE RATHBORNES THAN THIS.



INSPECTOR?
IT'S DOLLY ...



'I'M AFRAID THEY'VE
FOUND US ALREADY.'



'I'VE TOLD POOR CECIL NOT TO
FUSS, AND THAT THE HOMUNCULI
WILL DEFEND US LONG ENOUGH FOR
YOU TO SAVE THE DAY, BUT I DON'T
THINK HE QUITE BELIEVES ME.'

DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
US. IT'S THE
CHILDREN THAT
MATTER.

THEY'VE
TAKEN THEM
DEEPER INTO
THAT BEASTLY
PLACE NOW.
INTO THE PLACE
THEY CALL THE
NURSERY.

THEY'VE BEEN SO AFRAID FOR SO LONG, INSPECTOR. YOU MUST FIND THEM...

MORE CHAMOMILE, DEAR? I'LL GET ANOTHER POT ON.

'... AND SHOW THEM THAT SOMEONE STILL LOVES THEM, SOMEONE STILL REMEMBERS THEM.'

AND PERHAPS SOMETHING A LITTLE STRONGER FOR ME.

THEY'RE LEAVING! MAYBE THEY REALLY HAVE HAD ENOUGH, AFTER ALL.

DON'T BET ON IT, LUV.

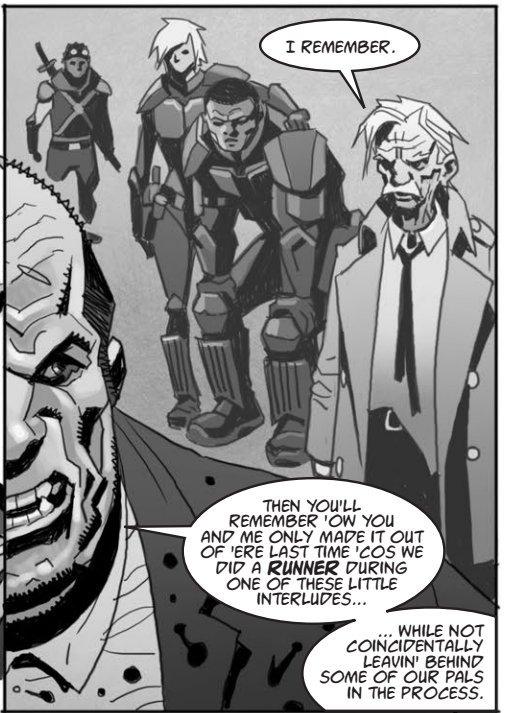
THAT'S 'OW THEY OPERATE, YOU REMEMBER, 'ARRY?



THEY SCARPER, JUST TO GIVE YOU THAT LITTLE RAY OF HOPE THAT YOU'RE NOT ACTUALLY GOING TO DIE HORRIBLY TODAY, AFTER ALL...



... THEN THEY COME BACK AGAIN, TWICE AS STRONG, JUST TO SNATCH IT ALL AWAY FROM YOU AGAIN.



I REMEMBER.

THEN YOU'LL REMEMBER 'OW YOU AND ME ONLY MADE IT OUT OF 'ERE LAST TIME 'COS WE DID A RUNNER DURING ONE OF THESE LITTLE INTERLUDES...

... WHILE NOT COINCIDENTALLY LEAVIN' BEHIND SOME OF OUR PALS IN THE PROCESS.



HARRY, LISTEN —

TO WHAT? THAT YOU'VE BEEN WITH THE **TINKER TAILOR SOLDIER SNOB MOB** ALL ALONG, AND THEY'VE GOT ALL OF **WHO DARES WINS** LINED UP WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO COME OUT AND GIVE 'EM THE SIGNAL TO CHARGE IN?



HEREFORDSHIRE'S FINEST. THEY'LL LEVEL THIS BLOODY PLACE AND EVERYTHING IN IT, AND WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO MY TWO GRANDKIDS THEN, EH?



HARRY, BARNABAS IS DEAD, AND THEY TOOK EMILE. WE WERE DEPENDING ON THEM TO FIND A SAFE ROUTE THROUGH THIS RATS' MAZE.



WE'VE STILL GOT HIM, HAVEN'T WE?

I REGRET, INSPECTOR, THAT MY KNOWLEDGE OF **THE MILLS** EXTENDS LITTLE FURTHER THAN YOUR OWN.

MY DUTIES TO THE RATHBORNE FAMILY DID NOT INCLUDE OVER-SEEING THE PLEASURES THEY INDULGED IN HERE.







BEWARE THIS PLACE. IT FEEDS ON WEAKNESS. IT THRIVES ON HUMAN FRAILTY.



IF YOU HAVE SECRETS, IT WILL KNOW THEM, AND USE THEM AGAINST YOU...



BEWARE OF EACH OTHER, AND THE THINGS THIS PLACE CAN MAKE YOU DO.



SO MANY YEARS IN SERVICE. IT WILL BE A PLEASANT CHANGE TO HAVE SOME TIME TO MYSELF...





A USEFUL
TOOL. IN ITS
DAY.



NOW FIND
THE HUMAN
RIFF-RAFF, AND
PUT THEM IN
THEIR PLACE.

SOMEWHERE IN THE HOME COUNTIES —



MA'AM? OUR SPOTTERS SAY THERE WAS WHAT SOUNDED LIKE AN EXPLOSION FROM INSIDE THE BUILDINGS A SHORT TIME AGO.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

MA'AM...?

DO? WE DO NOTHING, CAPTAIN.



WE WAIT TO SEE IF MY OPERATIVE OR ANYTHING ELSE FULLY HUMAN MAKES IT BACK OUT OF THAT PLACE DOWN THERE...



'... AND UNTIL THAT HAPPENS HARRY ABSALOM AND WHATEVER'S LEFT OF HIS MERRY BAND ARE ON THEIR OWN.'





I WOULDN'T BE DOING THAT, SONNY JIM. TAKE IT FROM THE GUV'NOR.



WHAT ARE THEY?

JUST MORE OF THE GENERAL 'ORRIBLENESS OF THIS GAFF.

IF IT AIN'T TRYING TO CHEW YER EYES OUT, THEN JUST LEAVE 'EM BE, I SAY.



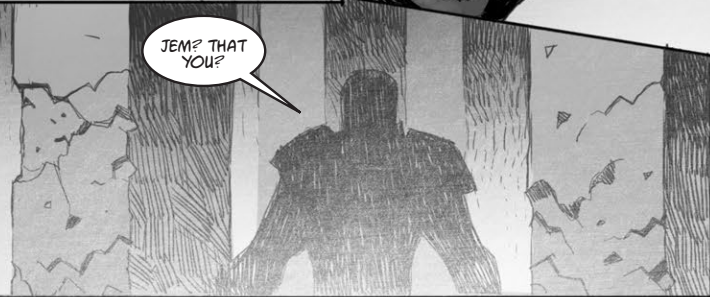
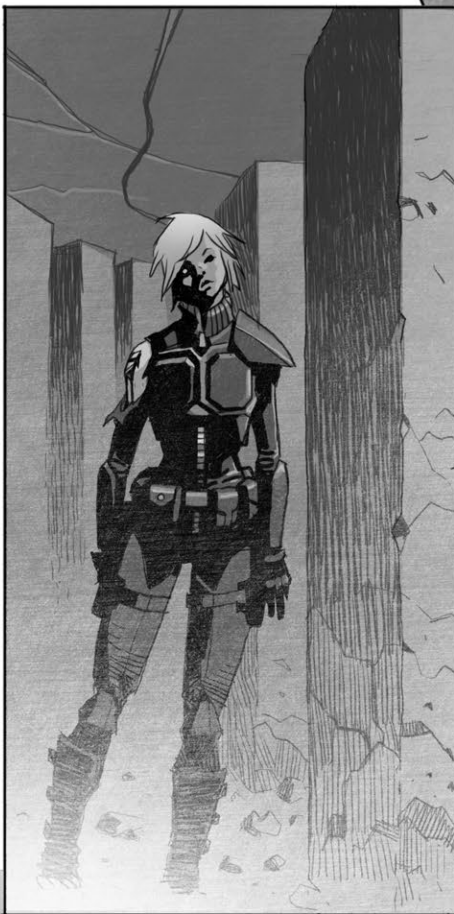
LOOKIN' FOR OUR OLD MATE 'ARRY, ARE YOU? WELL, YOU'RE IN LUCK...



SINCE IT JUST SO 'APPENS THAT ME AND GEOFFREY 'ERE KNOW WHERE TO FIND 'IM.

YOU STICK CLOSE AND DO WHAT THE GUV'NOR TELLS YOU...







DOWN THE HATCH, HARRY OLD SON...



BIEERCHI!



OR MAYBE NOT.



BLOODY HELL, WHAT A WASTE. COULD KEEP THE LOCAL ONTOLOGY WARD SUPPLIED FOR A WEEK WITH THAT LITTLE LOT.

YOU'RE BACK, ARE YOU? WHAT A BLEEDIN' SURPRISE.



WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR THE WORLD, SQUIRE. AN OLD GIT'S QUEST TO RESCUE THE GRANDKIDNAPES, AND PROVE HE'S NOT OTHERWISE BEEN A ~~WORLD CLASS~~ SEE YOU NEXT TUESDAY ALL HIS LIFE.

SO HOW ARE YOU GOING TO FIND THEM, ALL ON YOUR LONESOME?

OH, THAT'S THE EASY PART...



JUST HAVE TO KEEP FOLLOWING THE SOUND OF CRYING, DON'T I?



THE MILLS —

TWO LITTLE POPPETS LOST IN THE DARK
POOR LITTLE POPPETS, SO SAD AND ALONE
EYES PLUCKED OUT AND SOCKETS
FILLED WITH STONES...



COME OUT, COME OUT,
POOR BLIND POPPETS
LET ME TAKE YOU BY THE HAND
AND LEAD YOU BACK HOME...



IT'S GONE. WHAT WAS IT?

ONE OF THEIR SPECIAL JOBS. ONE OF THE REALLY 'ORRIBLE ONES.



AND NOT SOMETHING WE WANT TO BE SEEING AGAIN —

OH BLOODY 'ELL, WHERE'S 'E OFF TO NOW?



CAN'T EVEN PUT A LEASH ON 'EM ANYMORE, MORE'S THE PITY...



ALL RIGHT, GUNGA DIN. WHAT 'AVE YOU FOUND?

DEMON STUFF.

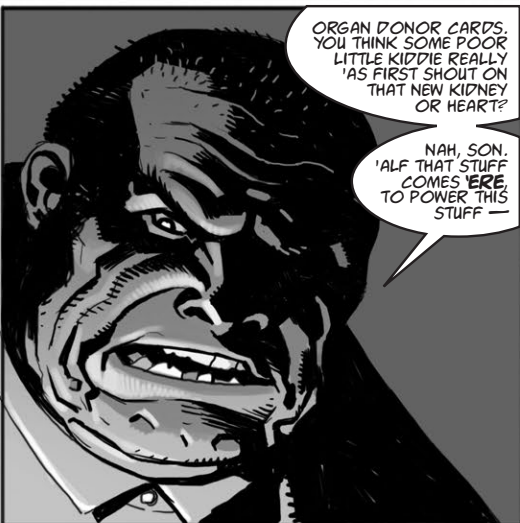


'THE TICK-TOCK MEN. THIS IS WHERE THEY MAKE THEM.'



THEY REALLY PUTTING HUMAN STUFF INTO THEM?

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS, THAT IS —



ORGAN DONOR CARDS. YOU THINK SOME POOR LITTLE KIDDIE REALLY 'AS FIRST SHOUT ON THAT NEW KIDNEY OR HEART?

NAH, SON. 'ALF THAT STUFF COMES 'ERE, TO POWER THIS STUFF —



'ERE! 'ANG ABOUT —!



ANOTHER BLEEDIN' 'ERO! 'ARRY ABSALOM DID A NUMBER ON YOU, SON.

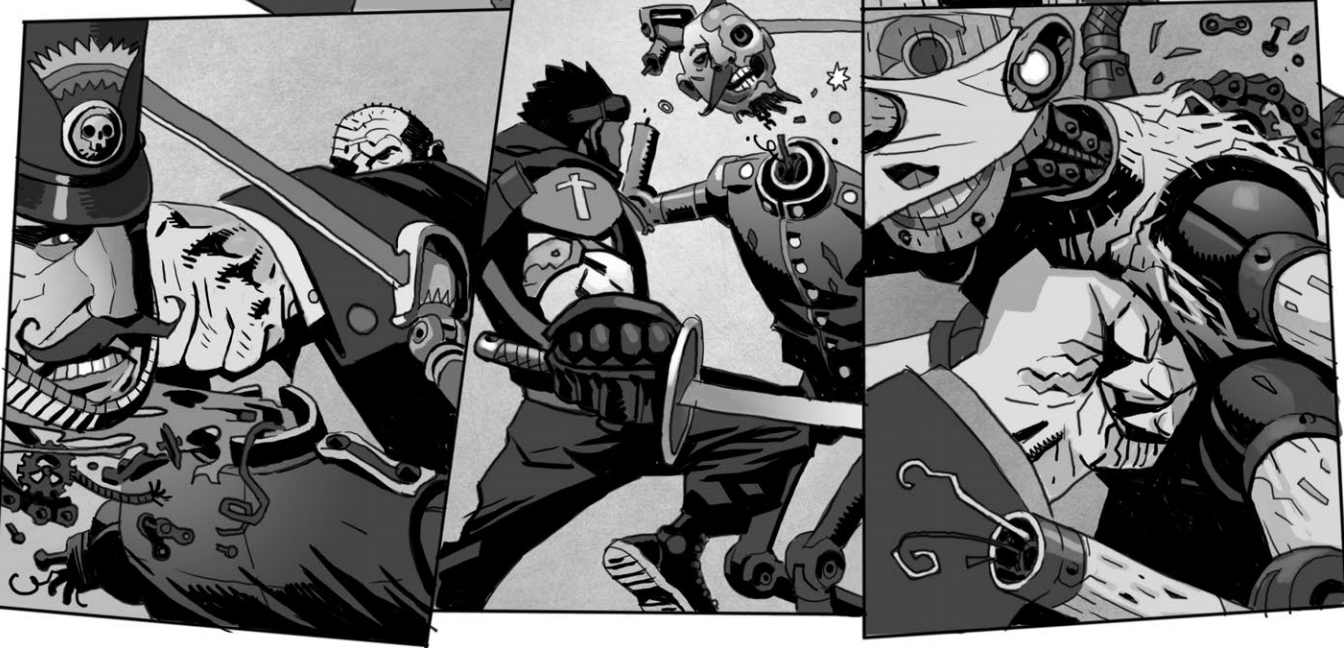
STILL, ME AN' GEOFFREY AIN'T ONES TO TURN DOWN A CHANCE TO CRACK SOME SKULLS.

THE SEVENTIES. THEY WERE THE BEST TIMES. ALL THEM DEMOS...



'BAN THE BOMB,' 'SAVE THE WHALE,' 'ROCK AGAINST RACISM.'

YOU NAME IT, WE WERE THERE BASHING IN SOME SILLY BUGGER'S BRAINS.





GOT THAT OUT YER SYSTEM, I OPE? GOOD, 'COS NOW 'ALF THE THINGS DOWN 'ERE ARE PROBABLY AFTER US.



WAIT—

HARRY.



CLEVER, OLD FELLA.



KNOW THE WAY NOW, DO YOU? FAIR ENOUGH...



COCKY LITTLE GIT. DISRESPECT ME, WOULD YOU?

AN' THIS IS JUST A TASTE OF WHAT'S COMIN' FOR 'ARRY 'IGH-AND-MIGHTY ABSALOM!



LEAD ON, SON.
SOONER WE
FIND 'ARRY,
SOONER WE'RE
OUT OF
'ERE.



♪ TWO LITTLE POPPETS,
LOST AND ALL ALONE
WAITING TO BE FOUND AND
LED BACK HOME... ♪

'FEEL IT NOW. CAN YOU? THE NASTY LITTLE BLACK CRABS INSIDE YOU? CUTTING INTO YOU WITH THEIR CLAWS?

'EATING INTO YOU. TAKING YOU AWAY, PIECE BY PIECE, CELL BY CELL.

'NO WAY OUT, HARRY OLD SON. NOT THIS TIME. LAST ORDERS FOR YOU.

'CAN'T SLOW DOWN, EITHER, NOT IF YOU DON'T WANT THEM TO GET THEIR FANCY MEDICAL-DEGREE MITTS ON YOU...

'CUT OR BURN AWAY WHOLE PIECES OF YOU, THEY WILL. AND FOR WHAT?

'A FEW MORE MONTHS BEING FED FROM A PLASTIC TUBE AND WATCHING DAYTIME TELLY? NAH, BOLLOCKS TO THAT...'





THIS IS WHERE YOU BELONG, MY SON. ALWAYS HAS BEEN, ALWAYS WILL BE.



COME TO MAKE YOUR FAREWELLS, HAVE YOU? WELL, PULL UP A PEW.

ALTHOUGH IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THERE'S GOING TO BE A CROWD COMING TO SEE US OFF, DOES IT?

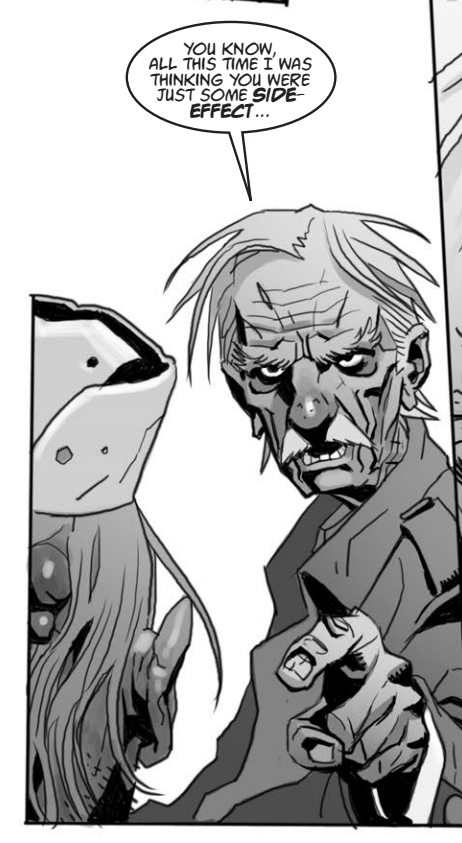


WHY DON'T YOU SOD OFF AND FINALLY DIE, YOU HORRIBLE OLD GIT ...

... SIGNED, 'EVERYONE WHO'S EVER MET YOU.'

RIGHT POPULAR OLD BALLBAG, AREN'T WE?

NOT DEAD YET?
WHY?
A cartoon rabbit holding balloons.





WELL, I'VE HAD IT WITH YOU, SUNSHINE!



OOPS, MIND HOW YOU GO, HARRY LAD!

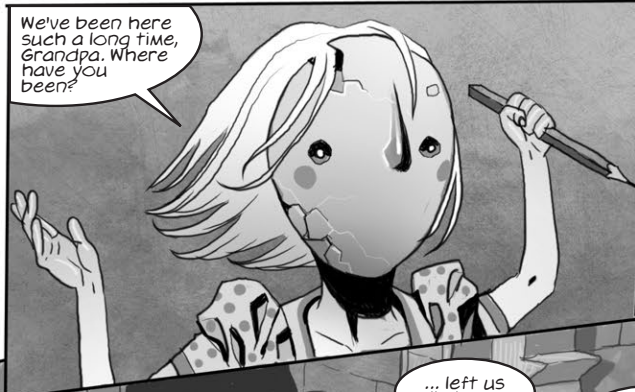


I'LL BE NICKING OFF, THEN, BUT JUST REMEMBER, I TRIED TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU, BUT YOU WEREN'T HAVING NONE OF IT...



... EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS NOW, THIS IS WHAT YOU CHOSE.

Grandpa...



SOMEWHERE INSIDE
THE MILLS —

HOW **BIG**
IS THIS PLACE,
ANYWAY? WE SEEM
TO HAVE BEEN
WALKING FOR
HOURS.

REMEMBER
WHAT HARRY
SAID IN THE
BRIEFING...

AND ALSO SOMEWHERE
IN THE MILLS —

YOU THINK
HE'S STILL
ALIVE?

WHO?
HARRY?

THIS PLACE,
IT MESSES WITH
YOU. GETS INSIDE
YOUR **HEAD**. THAT'S
HOW IT DEFENDS
ITSELF.

PROBABLY
NOT. WASTE OF
BLOODY TIME,
THIS WHOLE
THING.

THEN WHY
ARE WE
HERE?

WAIT!
YOU HEAR
THAT?

I
DON'T HEAR
ANYTHING.

NO
THERE IT IS
AGAIN —

'GUNFIRE!'

THOSE
KIDS ARE
GONERS. WE
BOTH KNOW
IT.

SO WHY
ARE WE
HERE?



MORE TO THE POINT, WHY ARE YOU HERE?



THIS WAY!

'THIS PLACE IT MESSES WITH YOU, GETS INSIDE YOUR HEAD.'

YOU REMEMBER JUST SAYING THAT, YEAH?



WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

STILL PLAYING LITTLE MISS COY AND INNOCENT? BIT LATE FOR THAT NOW, EH?



BUT THEN YOU NEVER WERE THAT SMART, WERE YOU?



FACE IT, LUV. WE USED EACH OTHER.

I USED YOU FOR A BIT OF SLAP AND TICKLE WITH A POSH BIRD, AND YOU USED ME TO GET TO HARRY.



WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

YOU HEARD WHAT HARRY SAID. I'M WITH THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES.



THAT'S NOT TRUE! YOU LOVE ME! YOU LEFT YOUR WIFE AND KIDS FOR ME!



EVERYTHING I'VE DONE — AND I DO MEAN EVERYTHING, LOVER — WAS JUST TO GET INSIDE HARRY'S OPERATION.



WHY ARE YOU SAYING THIS? I LEFT MY WIFE AND KIDS TO BE WITH YOU!

OH COME ON, WE BOTH KNOW BETTER THAN THAT...



I LEFT A BORING COW WHO WAS GOING TO FAT FOR A YOUNGER, FITTER BIRD.

THAT'S NOT LOVE, SWEETHEART. THAT'S AN EPISODE OF JEREMY KYLE.



YOU LEFT A COUPLE OF ANNOYING BRATS AND A WIFE THAT WAS NOWHERE NEAR AS GOOD IN THE SACK AS ME.



HARRY WAS ON TO YOU ALL ALONG. THAT'S WHY HE TOLD ME TO TAKE CARE OF YOU...

... ONCE I'D FINISHED HAVING MY FUN WITH YOU.



I GAVE UP EVERYTHING FOR YOU! WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

I DID LIKE YOU, REALLY. SO DON'T MAKE ME SHOOT YOU.



BAD NEWS, JEM. WE'RE BREAKING UP.



MY ORDERS ARE JUST FOR THE OLD MAN. FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE, DON'T TRY TO STOP ME, TERRY.



AAHH —!





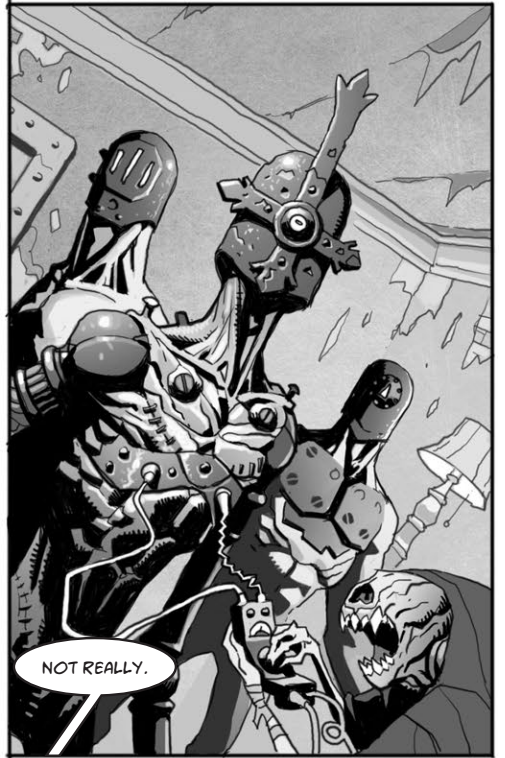


THE MILLS —

DON'T LET THE CAT OUT.



ALL CLEAR, IS IT, SON?



NOT REALLY.



NOT TO WORRY. ALL THIS BLEEDIN' RUNNING AWAY WAS DOING ME NAPPER IN, ANYWAY.



COME ON THEN, JUNGLE JIM. THEM SKULLS AIN'T GOING TO SMASH THEMSELVES IN ON THEIR OWN!



NOW THEN,
LADIES. 'AVE YOU
MET ME MATE
GEOFFREY?





YOU HEAR THAT? SOUNDS LIKE SCREAMING... IT'S HIM!

I'VE TO BE MORE SPECIFIC THAN THAT, SON. I'VE BEEN 'EARING SCREAMING MOST OF ME LIFE.



IT'S HARRY! COME ON! HE'S CLOSE!

'ANG ON A TICK THERE, MO FARAH. NOT SO FAST...



HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT WHAT'S BEEN FOLLOWING US ALL THIS TIME?

NAUGHTY LITTLE POPPETS TRYING TO HIDE ALL DAY, WE'VE FOUND YOU NOW, THOUGH...



... WON'T YOU COME AND PLAY?

CAN'T LET IT GET PAST US TO HARRY!



GOOD IDEA, SON...



AAAAHH!

KRAK!



... YOU STAY HERE AND DO THAT. I'LL GO SEE TO ME OLD MATE 'ARRY.



DAFT BUGGER. NOT THE BRIGHTEST, WAS 'E GEOFFREY?



'ARRY WILL BE SAD TO HEAR 'IS LITTLE STAR PUPIL 'AS CARRIED IT.



NO! GET OFF!



GAAAH!





WE WERE GOING TO GET MARRIED, YOU KNOW. AFTER HIS DIVORCE CAME THROUGH.



CHILDREN? WELL, HE HAD A COUPLE ALREADY, AND I WAS NEVER REALLY SURE KIDS WERE MY THING...



MISS HOPKINS?

IT WAS ONE OF THE THINGS WE PUT OFF TALKING ABOUT UNTIL AFTER WE GOT MARRIED...



... UNTIL AFTER WE FOLLOWED BLOODY HARRY ABSALOM DOWN HERE ON HIS SUICIDE MISSION.



PLEASE, MISS HOPKINS. IT'S ME — DOLLY...



'YOU POOR DEAR, I KNOW YOU'VE SUFFERED SO HORRIBLY, BUT THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT...



IT'S TOO LATE FOR CECIL AND I, BUT THERE'S STILL OTHERS WHO NEED HELP...

... LIKE THAT NICE, QUIET YOUNG MAN!

LITTLE POPPET, LOST AND ALL ALONE...

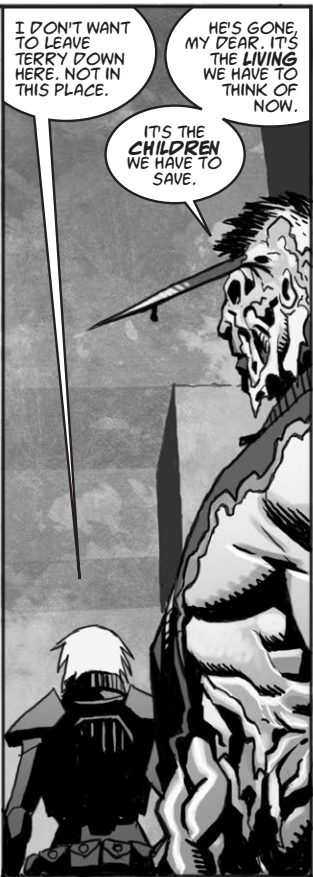
BUT NOW AUNTIE'S FOUND YOU AND WANTS TO TAKE YOU HOME...

OFF YOU GO, YOUNG MAN. I'LL SEE TO THIS HORRID THING.





'FIND THAT NICE YOUNG POLICE-WOMAN. THE TWO OF YOU NEED EACH OTHER NOW.'



I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE TERRY DOWN HERE. NOT IN THIS PLACE.

HE'S GONE MY DEAR. IT'S THE LIVING WE HAVE TO THINK OF NOW.

IT'S THE CHILDREN WE HAVE TO SAVE.



HARRY'S GRANDCHILDREN? THEY'RE STILL ALIVE?

OH, VERY MUCH SO. IN FACT —

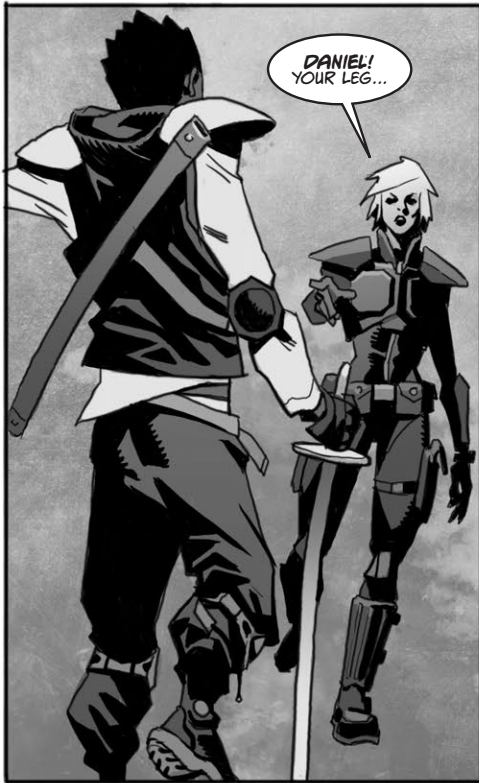


I'M SO SORRY, MY DEAR. I TRULY AM...



I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE YOU NOW. YOU'RE SO VERY CLOSE, THOUGH...







STILL GETTING THE SAME MAYDAY CALL FROM INSIDE, MA'AM. MAINTAINING RADIO SILENCE AS PER PROTOCOL, BUT —

— WELL, THINGS IN THERE SOUND RATHER GRIM.



LORD EDWARD RATHBORNE...

MA'AM?



THE ROYAL COURTIER, WHO NEGOTIATED THE TREATY BETWEEN THE THRONE OF ENGLAND AND THE POWERS OF HELL.

IN RETURN FOR HIS SERVICES, GOOD QUEEN BESS GAVE HIM A PEERAGE, AND HELL GAVE HIM A VIGOROUS YOUNG DEMON BRIDE.



HE GAVE US THE ACCORD, AND THAT ABOMINATION DOWN THERE.

ALL BECAUSE LORD EDDIE'S BEDCHAMBER TASTES RAN TO THE HIGHLY EXOTIC, AND WE NEEDED A QUICK FIX TO STOP THE SPANISH ARMADA.



DIPLOMATIC TREATIES NEED TO BE RESPECTED. BUT BAD AND OUTDATED ONES DON'T.

YES, MA'AM!



'GET A SHIFT ON, 'ARRY! WE 'AVEN'T GOT ALL BLEEDIN' DAY!'



MIND YOU, I 'AVEN'T BASHED IN THIS MANY STUPID BINTS' 'EADS SINCE GREENHAM COMMON!



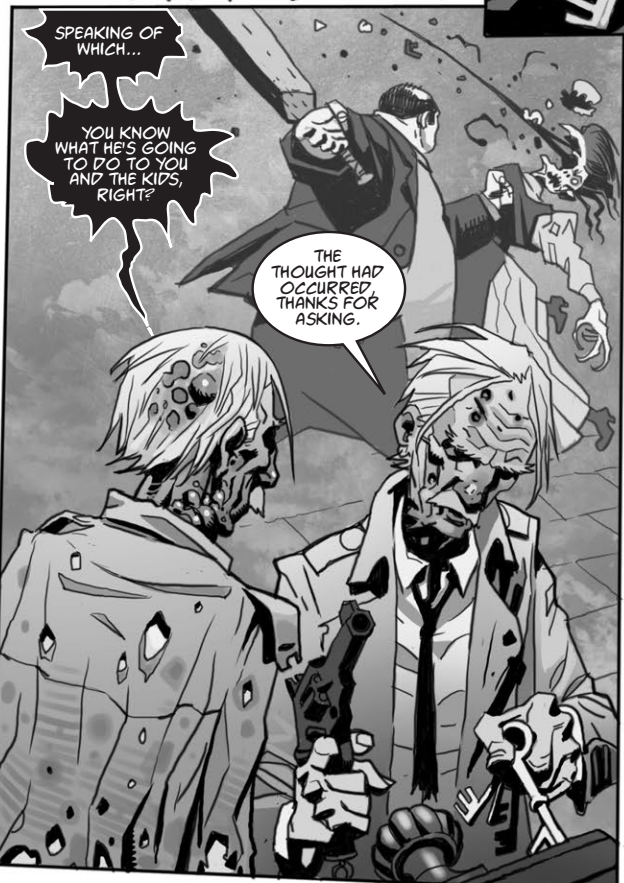
THAT THEM, THEN?

CERTAINLY LOOKS LIKE IT.



HAVEN'T AGED A DAY, SO MUCH FOR THEM PICTURES THEY USED TO SEND YOU OF 'EM.

NASTY TRICK THAT TO BE EXPECTED, THOUGH, REALLY.



SPEAKING OF WHICH...

YOU KNOW WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO TO YOU AND THE KIDS, RIGHT?

THE THOUGHT HAD OCCURRED THANKS FOR ASKING.



BLOODY 'ELL, 'ARRY, YOU'RE FUMBLIN' ABOUT THERE LIKE A NOVICE PRIEST AT HIS FIRST CHOIR BOY!

HERE IT COMES, SQUIRE. YOUR HEROIC LAST STAND.

I'LL BE POPPING OFF NOW. SEE YOU SOON ENOUGH ON THE OTHER SIDE.



PENNY FINALLY DROPPED, 'AS IT? AN 'ERE WAS ME 'OPIN' TO SEE THE LOOK OF SURPRISE ON YER KISSER WHEN I STARTED BASHIN' THOSE PRECIOUS LITTLE PARLINGS' BRAINS IN!

COME ON, THEN. SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT!



BLAM



GOT THE PAINTERS IN LOVE? BAD CASE OF THE MONTHLIES THROWING OFF YER AIM?



LOOK AT YOU — SHAKIN' LIKE A FIDDLER AT A BROWNIE PACK MEETING. PATHETIC!



THAK



BLAM



CALL THAT A KNEECAPPING? I WORKED THE FALLS ROAD IN ME SPECIAL BRANCH DAYS! THEM PADDIES KNEW HOW TO DO IT PROPER!





I'M SORRY, LOVE. YOUR FELLA... YOU AND HIM WOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD TOGETHER.

TOO... TOO MANY GOOD 'UNS DEAD, FOLLOWING AN OLD FOOL WITH NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE...



THIS... THIS IS THE KIDS' MUM. GIVE HER A BELL... LET HER KNOW THEY'RE SAFE AND COMING HOME...

THERE'S MEDICS COMING. JUST HOLD ON A LITTLE LONGER, HARRY, PLEASE —



TELL... TELL HER I'LL POP ROUND IN A DAY OR TWO... ONCE SHE'S GOT THEM SETTLED IN OKAY...

MAYBE — MAYBE TAKE 'EM OUT FOR THE DAY, A DAY AT THE SEASIDE... THAT WOULD BE GRAND...



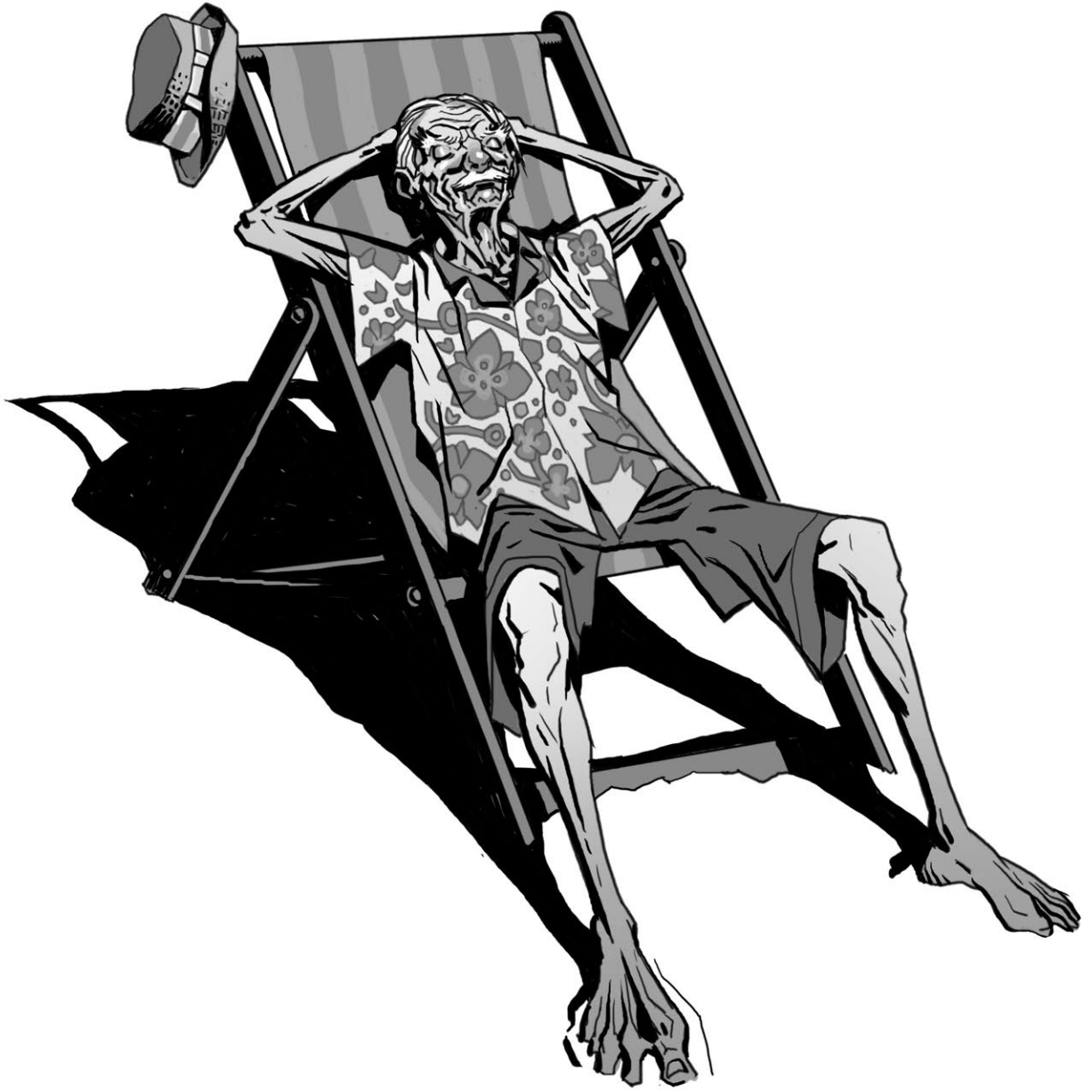
HARRY?



HARRY —!



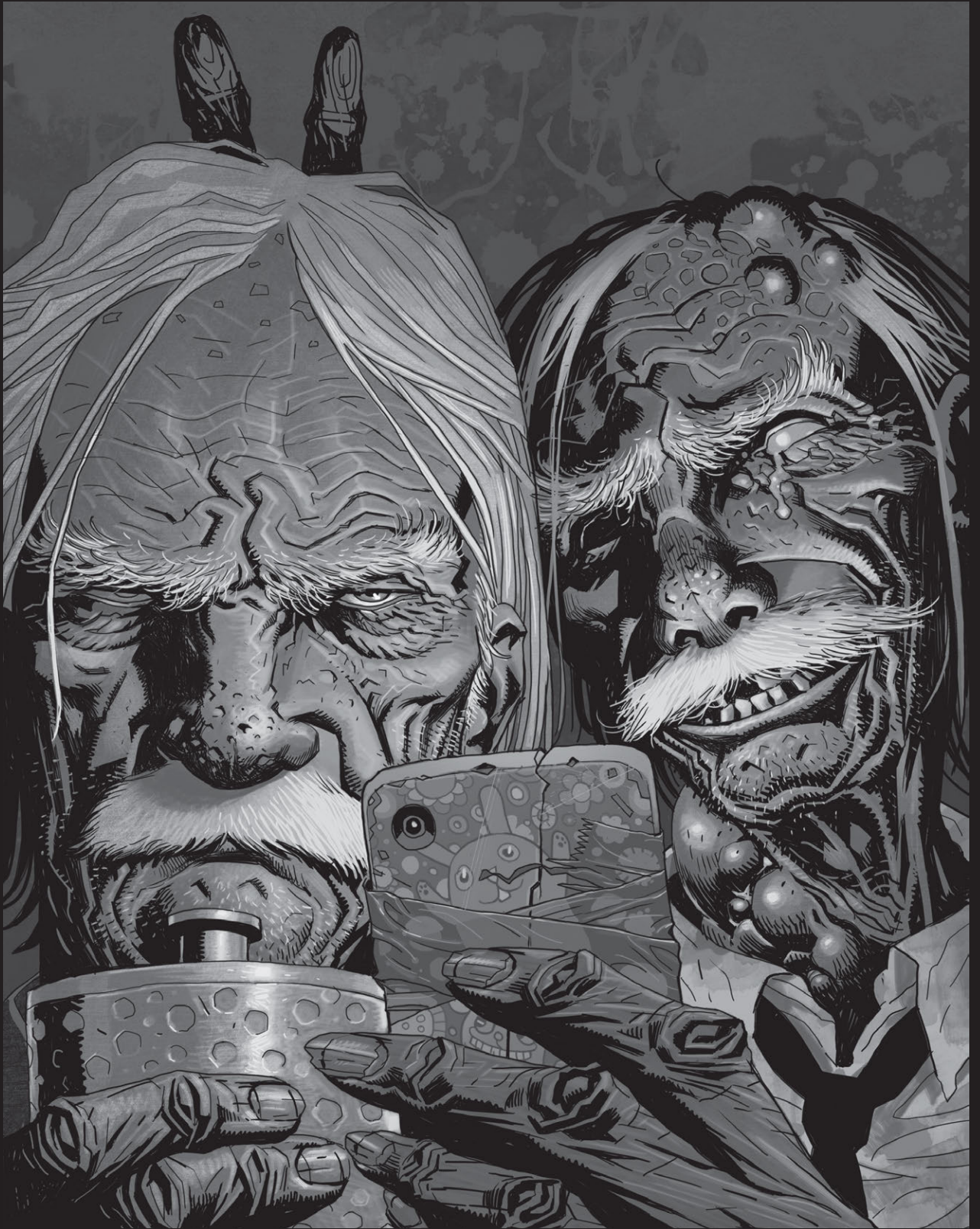
HARRY...

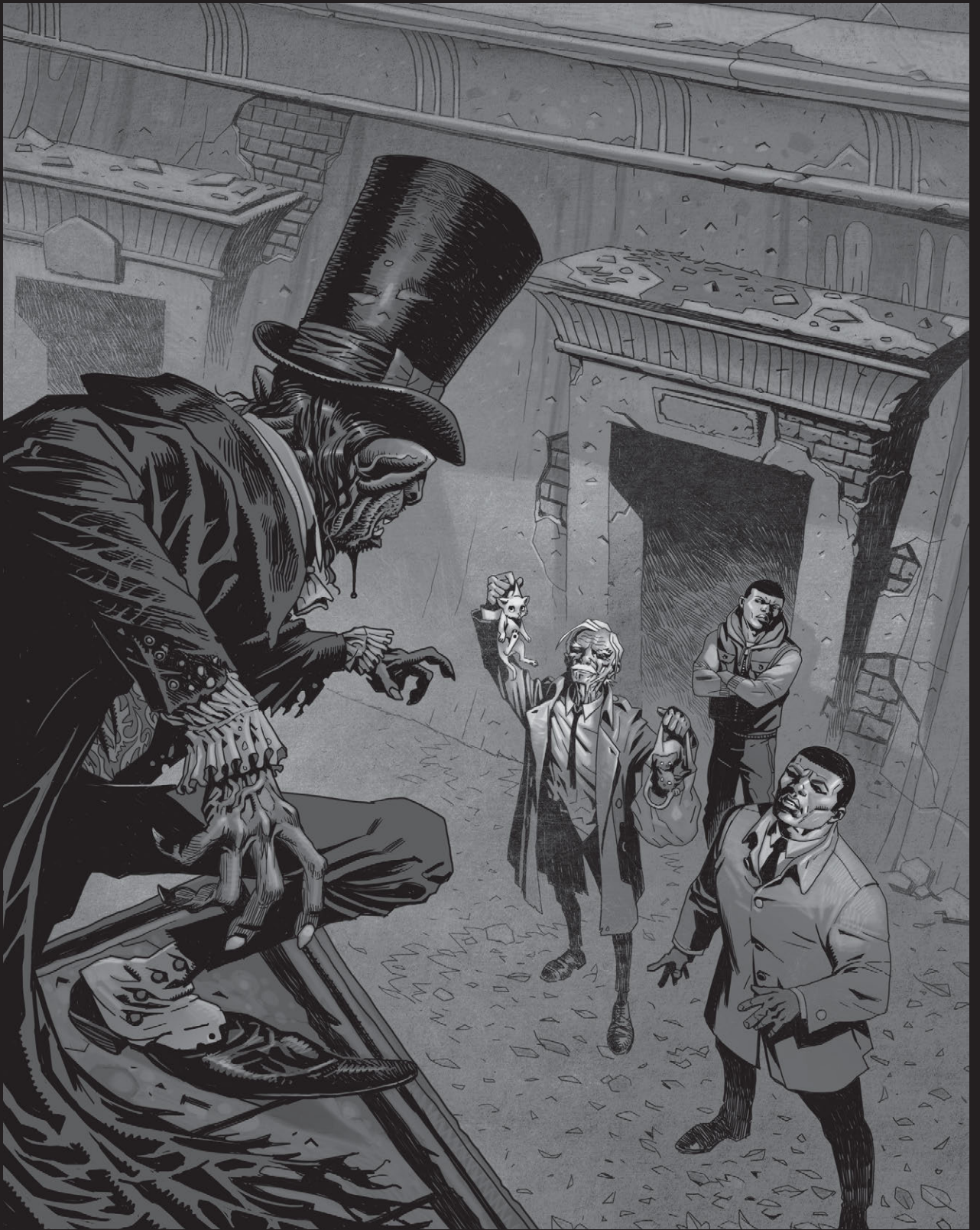


JPen'19 **THE END**

COVER GALLERY













WRITER

Gordon Rennie is one of **2000 AD** and the **Megazine's** most prolific creators, with co-creative credits for *Caballistics, Inc.*, *Glimmer Rats*, *Missionary Man*, *Necronauts*, *Storming Heaven*, *Absalom*, *Aquila*, *Jaegir* and *The Alienist*. He has also written *Daily Star Dredd* strips, *Judge Dredd*, *Harke and Burr*, *Mean Machine*, *Past Imperfect*, *Pulp Sci-Fi*, *Rogue Trooper*, *Satanus*, *Terror Tales*, *Tharg the Mighty* and *Vector 13*.

ARTIST

Tiernen Trevallion has worked as an illustrator since he was convinced to leave school in the mid-eighties. His first comic commissions were for *Inferno Magazine* on the strip *Tales from the Ten-Tailed Cat* and *Daemonifuge 3* with Simon Spurrier for *Warhammer Monthly*. For **2000 AD** he has worked on several series including *Tharg's Terror Tales*, *Tharg's Future Shocks*, *Tales from the Black Museum* and *Judge Dredd*. As well as working with Gordon Rennie on *Absalom*, he has also worked with him along with Emma Beeby on the Graphic novel *Robbie Burns: Witch Hunter*. Tiernen also works as an illustrator and concept artist. He also works on his own projects, some of which may or may not involve angry puffins.



TO HELL AND BACK?

OLD, IRREVERENT AND DOOMED BY SUPERNATURAL FORCES, hard-nosed copper Detective Inspector Harry Absalom is tasked with upholding the Accord – the treaty between the British Royalty and the forces of Hell.

As the cancer finally starts to take hold, Harry calls in every friend and favour he has left in a last-ditch attempt to save his kidnapped grandchildren from the depths of the Mills...

This is the third collection in Gordon Rennie and Tiernen Trevallion's *Absalom* series.

ISBN 978-1-78108-688-9



9 781781 086889

£12.99 UK



WWW.
2000AD
.COM