

Image
ISSUE 4

GILLEN ROSSIGNOL STOKELY BONVILLAIN COWLES

THE Ludocrats™

4. THE DESOLATION OF THE LUDOCRATS.



**FREE
PENULTIMATE
PEN
NOT
INCLUDED!**





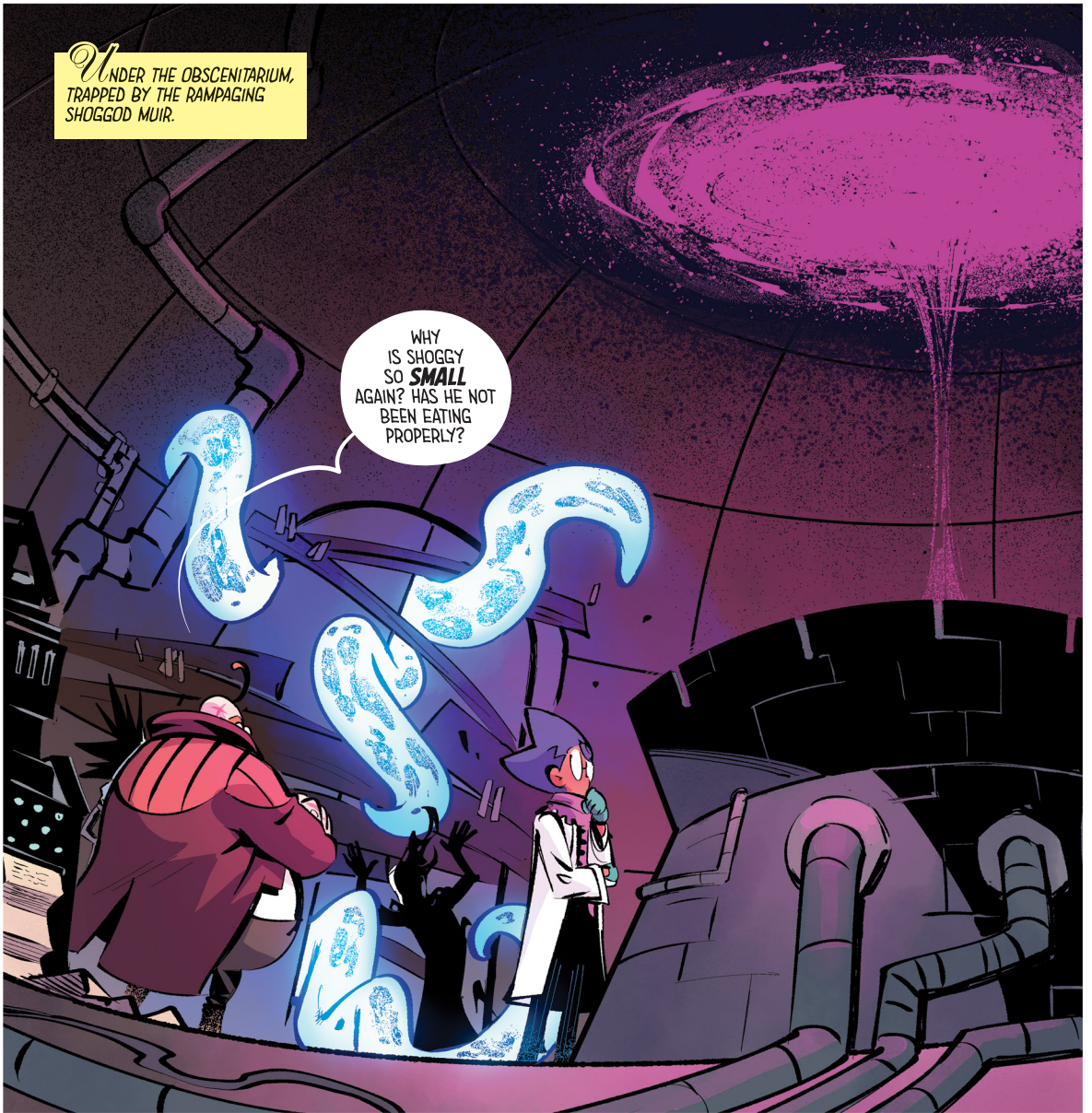
ONCE UPON A TIME
some BRAVE HEROES
discovered a HYPER-POPE
planned to HOMOGENISE
ALL REALITY
to make it BORING.



OH NOES!

UNDER THE OBSCENITARIUM,
TRAPPED BY THE RAMPAGING
SHOGGOD MUIR.

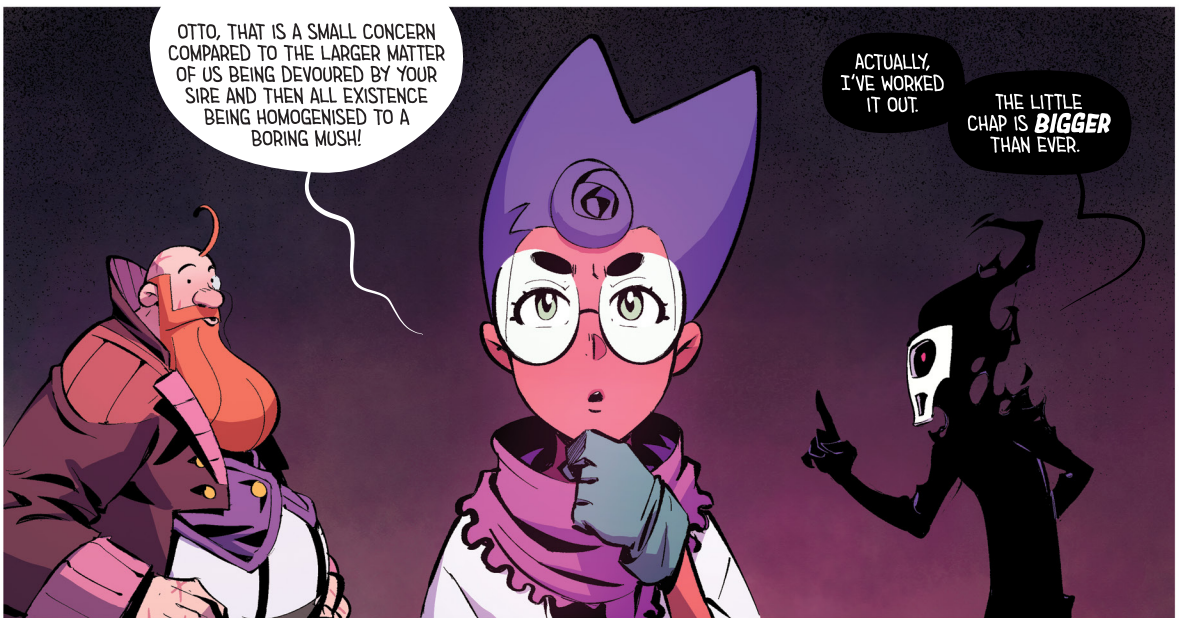
WHY
IS SHOGGY
SO **SMALL**
AGAIN? HAS HE NOT
BEEN EATING
PROPERLY?

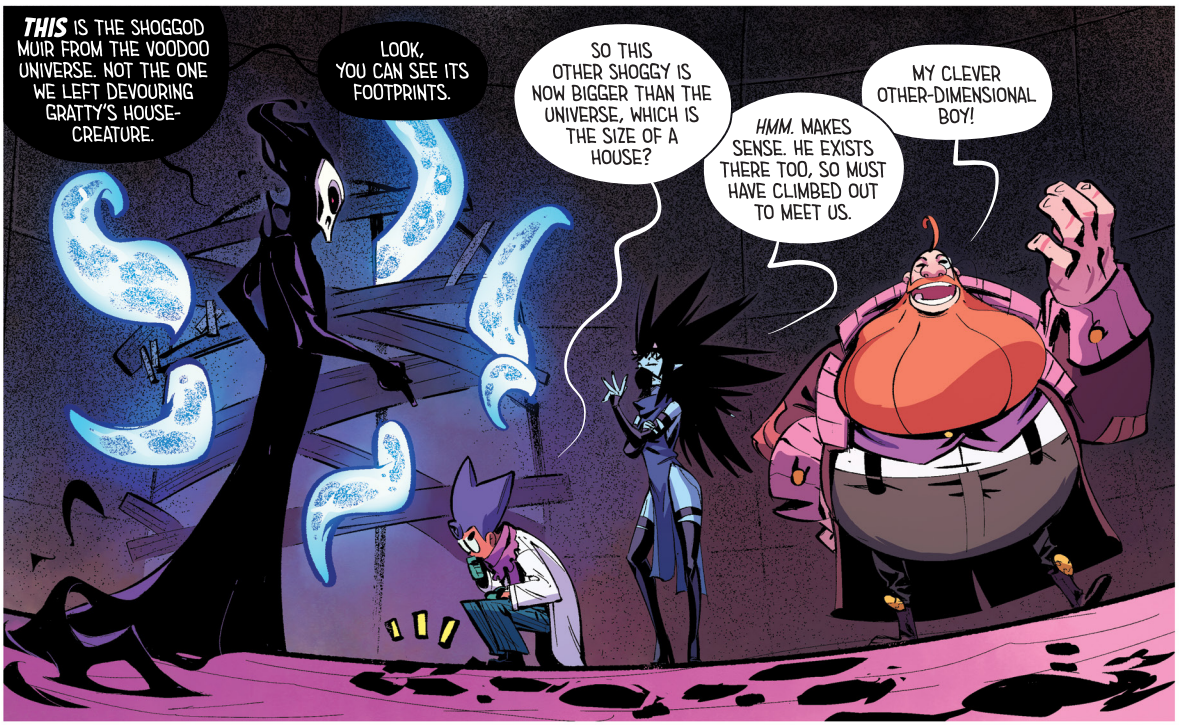


OTTO, THAT IS A SMALL CONCERN
COMPARED TO THE LARGER MATTER
OF US BEING DEVoured BY YOUR
SIRE AND THEN ALL EXISTENCE
BEING HOMOGENISED TO A
BORING MUSH!

ACTUALLY,
I'VE WORKED
IT OUT.

THE LITTLE
CHAP IS **BIGGER**
THAN EVER.





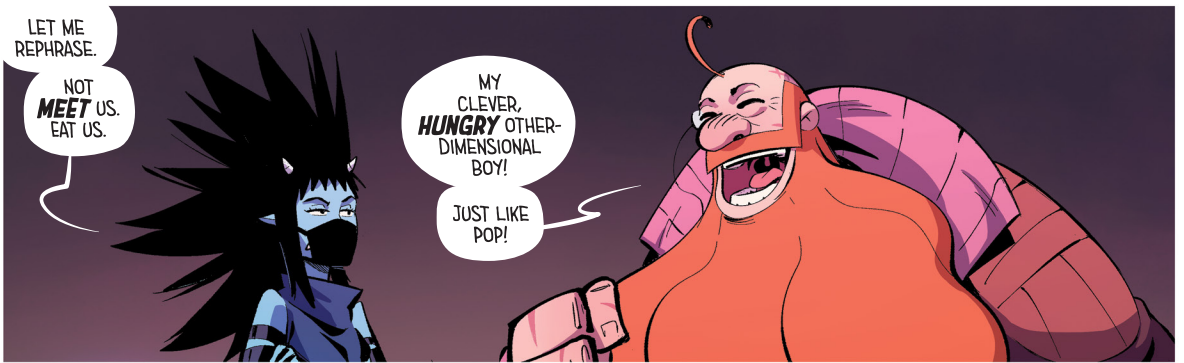
THIS IS THE SHOGGOD MUIR FROM THE VOODOO UNIVERSE. NOT THE ONE WE LEFT DEVOURING GRATTY'S HOUSE-CREATURE.

LOOK, YOU CAN SEE ITS FOOTPRINTS.

SO THIS OTHER SHOGGY IS NOW BIGGER THAN THE UNIVERSE, WHICH IS THE SIZE OF A HOUSE?

HMM. MAKES SENSE. HE EXISTS THERE TOO, SO MUST HAVE CLIMBED OUT TO MEET US.

MY CLEVER OTHER-DIMENSIONAL BOY!

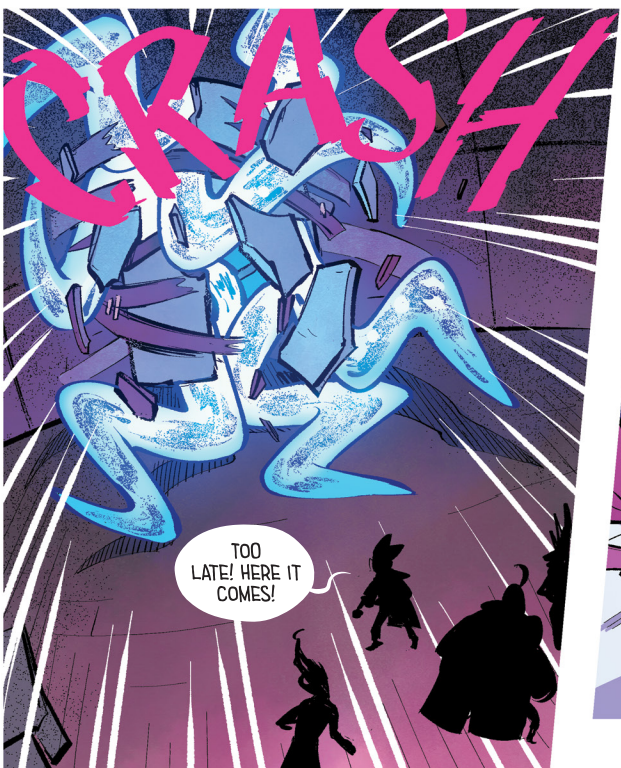


LET ME REPHRASE.

NOT **MEET** US. EAT US.

MY CLEVER, **HUNGRY** OTHER-DIMENSIONAL BOY!

JUST LIKE POP!



TOO LATE! HERE IT COMES!



VOLDIGAN, YOU'RE THE VOID WALKER! GET US OUT OF HERE!

IT'S NOT SO SIMPLE! THE HYPER-POPE HAD TO NAIL DOWN LOCAL REALITY TO STABILISE HIS DAMNED VOODOO UNIVERSE.

I CAN'T EVEN CREATE A POCKET DIMENSION. LET ALONE "GET US OUT OF HERE".



DON'T BE A DOLT! EVEN I CAN SEE THIS AWFUL THING IS A THREE-DIMENSIONAL FORM! COLLAPSE US TO TWO DIMENSIONS!

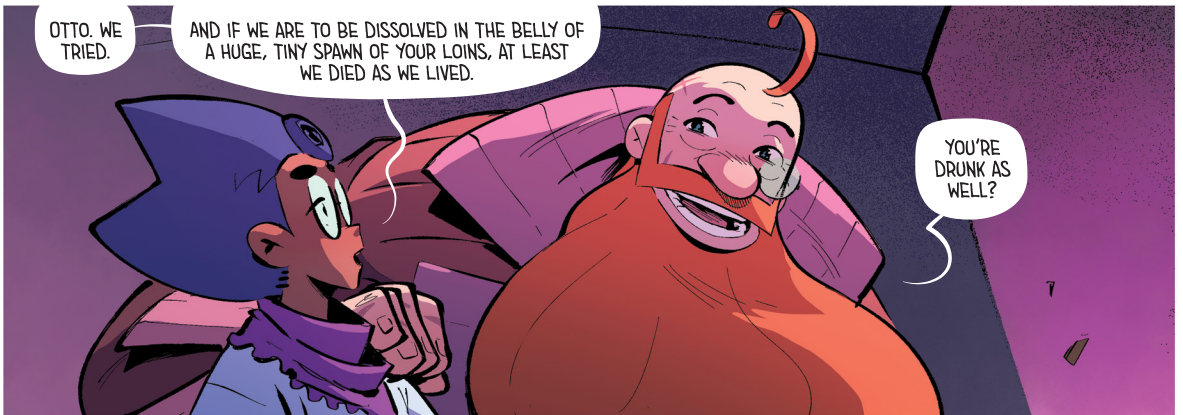
YET AGAIN, THE HYPER-POPE'S MACHINERY! DO YOU THINK VOLDIGAN THE PERFDIOUS WOULD BE COWERING, ABOUT TO BE CONSUMED, IF HE COULD DO THAT?

X, Y AND Z DIMENSIONS ARE **ENTIRELY LOCKED DOWN.**



WE'D HAVE HAD BETTER LUCK WITH OTTO'S MOLE PEOPLE!

I *KNEW* I SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT MY MOLE PEOPLE.



OTTO. WE TRIED.

AND IF WE ARE TO BE DISSOLVED IN THE BELLY OF A HUGE, TINY SPAWN OF YOUR LOINS, AT LEAST WE DIED AS WE LIVED.

YOU'RE DRUNK AS WELL?



NO, BARON. AS FRIENDS.

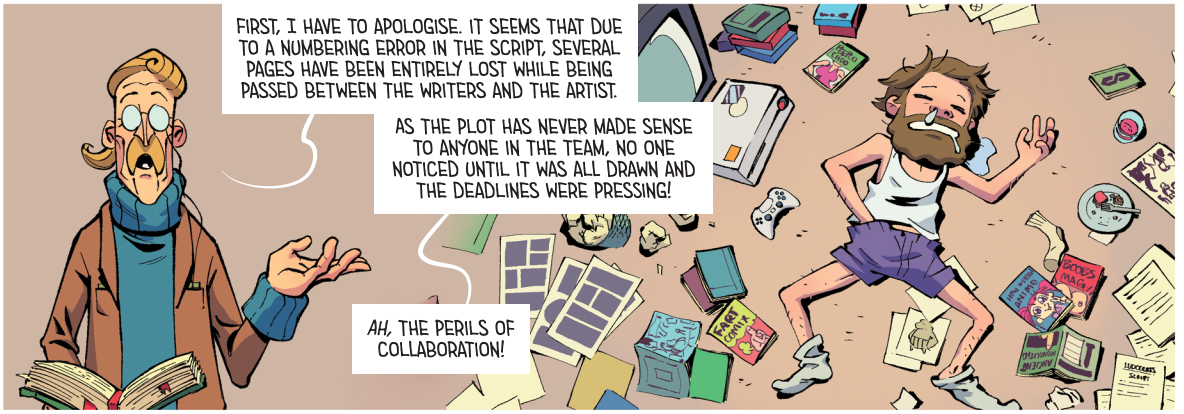
OH YES. THAT TOO.

EAT THEM FIRST! NOT ME! THEM!



AGGGGGHHHHHHHHHHH!!!



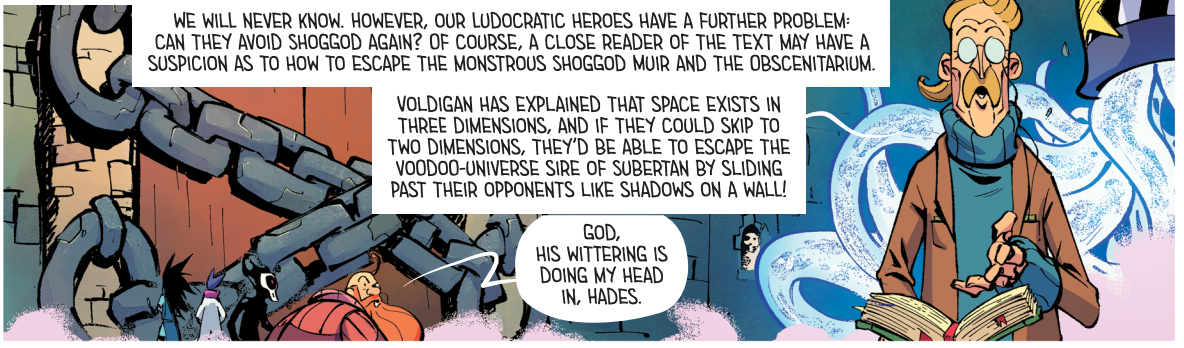


FIRST, I HAVE TO APOLOGISE. IT SEEMS THAT DUE TO A NUMBERING ERROR IN THE SCRIPT, SEVERAL PAGES HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY LOST WHILE BEING PASSED BETWEEN THE WRITERS AND THE ARTIST.

AS THE PLOT HAS NEVER MADE SENSE TO ANYONE IN THE TEAM, NO ONE NOTICED UNTIL IT WAS ALL DRAWN AND THE DEADLINES WERE PRESSING!

AH, THE PERILS OF COLLABORATION!

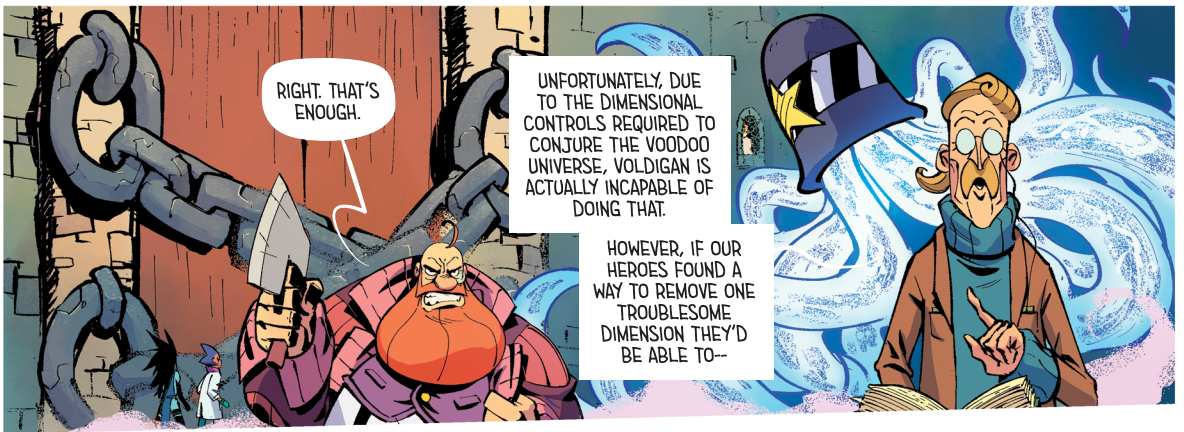
OUR HEROES ARE NOW AT AN EVENT SIGNIFICANTLY **LATER** IN THE NARRATIVE. WHAT WAS MEANT TO HAPPEN IN THE GAP?



WE WILL NEVER KNOW. HOWEVER, OUR LUDOCRATIC HEROES HAVE A FURTHER PROBLEM: CAN THEY AVOID SHOGGOD AGAIN? OF COURSE, A CLOSE READER OF THE TEXT MAY HAVE A SUSPICION AS TO HOW TO ESCAPE THE MONSTROUS SHOGGOD MUIR AND THE OBSCENTARIUM.

VOLDIGAN HAS EXPLAINED THAT SPACE EXISTS IN THREE DIMENSIONS, AND IF THEY COULD SKIP TO TWO DIMENSIONS, THEY'D BE ABLE TO ESCAPE THE VOODOO-UNIVERSE SIRE OF SUBERTAN BY SLIDING PAST THEIR OPPONENTS LIKE SHADOWS ON A WALL!

GOD, HIS WITTERING IS DOING MY HEAD IN, HADES.



RIGHT. THAT'S ENOUGH.

UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO THE DIMENSIONAL CONTROLS REQUIRED TO CONJURE THE VOODOO UNIVERSE, VOLDIGAN IS ACTUALLY INCAPABLE OF DOING THAT.

HOWEVER, IF OUR HEROES FOUND A WAY TO REMOVE ONE TROUBLESOME DIMENSION THEY'D BE ABLE TO--



BORING!

CHOP



HMM?
HOW ODD! WHAT
HAPPENED?

YOU
DESTROYED THE
X-POSITION!

AS WE LACK
AN X-POSITION, WE
NOW ONLY EXIST IN Y-
AND Z-POSITIONS.

THAT'S
BRILLIANT!

IT IS?



WELL DONE,
AXEY, YOU ALWAYS
WERE THE BEST
OF US!

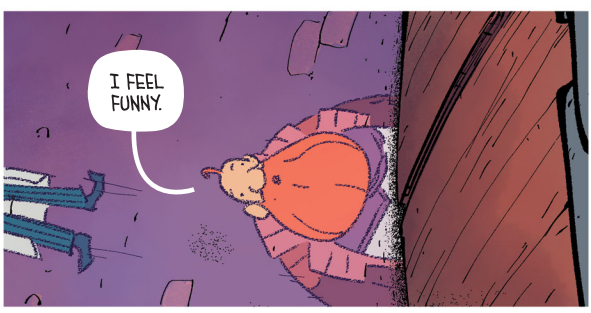


ACTUALLY
I THINK I SHOULD
GET SOME CREDIT
HERE.



OH, DON'T BICKER. SHOGGOD IS OFF, SLINKING
BACK TO THE VOODOO DIMENSION. I HOPE
IT TAKES NO FURTHER PART IN
THE PLOT.

IF ONLY
X-POSITION WAS
STILL AROUND TO
TELL US. OH
WELL.



I FEEL
FUNNY.



HMM.
SO...HOW
DO WE GET BACK
TO 2D?



VOLDIGAN?

DUNNO.



"DUNNO"?

OH, PLEASE
REMEMBER ME TO DECANT
YOUR EYEBALLS INTO A
SYRINGE AND INJECT THEM
INTO YOUR TESTICLES
WHEN WE'RE DONE
HERE.



AND JUST
HOW AND WHY
WOULD YOU
DO THAT?



REALLY?
I'M A WORLD
AUTHORITY ON SYRINGING
EYES INTO
BALLS!

SUFFICE TO
SAY, AS WELL AS
THE SYRINGE, IT WILL
ALSO INVOLVE VERY
SHARP KNIVES.

RAZOR-EDGE BLADES
HAVE BEEN A THING OF
MINE EVER SINCE THE
KNIFE-QUEEN OF LATRINGEN
GIFTED ME A PHILOSOPHICAL
STILETTO FOR MY FIFTH
BIRTHDAY!




I WAS
VERY **FOND** OF
MY X-DIMENSION. I'M
A FAIRLY TWO-DIMENSIONAL
CHARACTER ANYWAY, SO IT'S
ACTIVELY **RUDE** TO
FORCE ME TO DO
WITHOUT IT!

WHY
I'M GOING
TO--



OTTO'S MANSION.

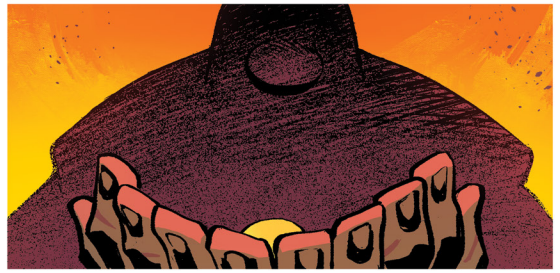




I CANNOT BELIEVE THIS! THE STEAM-JUDGES HAVE NEVER BEEN CONTROLLED BY **ANYONE.**

SHE HEADS A NEW JUDICIARY! UNDER HER, THIS LAW IS NO LONGER A THING TO PROTECT WONDER BUT TO CRUSH IT.


SHE CAME UPON US...WITH... FLAME... AND...



OH, GRATTY, WHATEVER TO DO?




WELL, AXEY WORKED BEFORE...




NO, OTTO. EVEN IF YOU DEFEAT HER, WHAT THEN? WOULD YOU STORM THE INVOLATE INDESTRUCTIBLE HALL OF CONTROL ITSELF AND TEAR THE HYPER-POPE FROM HIS THRONE? WE NEED TO REGROUP AND FIND ALLIES.

BUT WHERE TO START?




HMMPPF! I SUPPOSE I AM A BIT TIRED. WE REALLY NEED TO HAVE SOME DINNER BEFORE THERE'S ANY MORE VIOLENCE. I'M SO HUNGRY.

MY GUT SAYS WE HEAD INTO THE CITY! IT KNOWS A SWEET LITTLE BOUCHERIE ON LA RUE DE LA CHAIR.

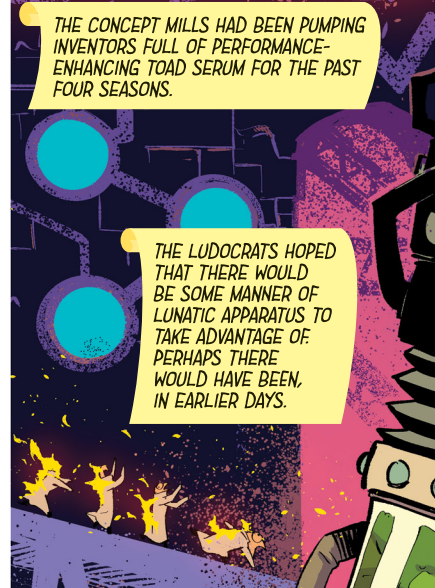


"THE LITTLE BOUCHERIE!" CRIED OTTO AS THEY WALKED THE RUE DE LA CHAIR AND SAW WHAT DEVASTATION HIS BROTHER HAD WROUGHT.

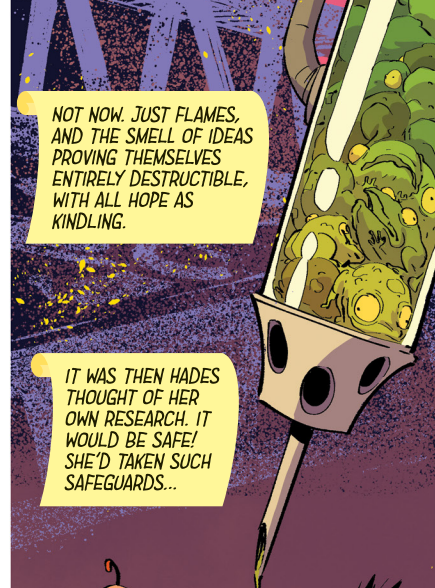
THE SHARP SHAPE OF ELAINA WAS THE ONE TO FINALLY SPEAK: "THE CONCEPT MILLS!"




THE CONCEPT MILLS HAD BEEN PUMPING INVENTORS FULL OF PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING TOAD SERUM FOR THE PAST FOUR SEASONS.



THE LUDOCRATS HOPED THAT THERE WOULD BE SOME MANNER OF LUNATIC APPARATUS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PERHAPS THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN, IN EARLIER DAYS.

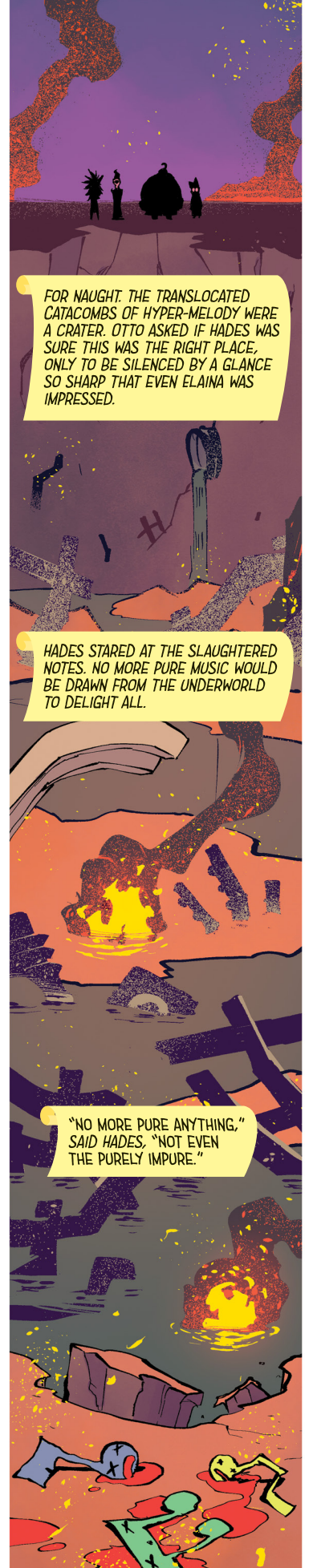


NOT NOW. JUST FLAMES, AND THE SMELL OF IDEAS PROVING THEMSELVES ENTIRELY DESTRUCTIBLE, WITH ALL HOPE AS KINDLING.



IT WAS THEN HADES THOUGHT OF HER OWN RESEARCH. IT WOULD BE SAFE! SHE'D TAKEN SUCH SAFEGUARDS...

"WE WILL NEED EVERY SPARK OF MAD INVENTION TO HAVE REVENGE FOR THIS."



FOR NAUGHT. THE TRANSLOCATED CATACOMBS OF HYPER-MELODY WERE A CRATER. OTTO ASKED IF HADES WAS SURE THIS WAS THE RIGHT PLACE, ONLY TO BE SILENCED BY A GLANCE SO SHARP THAT EVEN ELAINA WAS IMPRESSED.

HADES STARED AT THE SLAUGHTERED NOTES. NO MORE PURE MUSIC WOULD BE DRAWN FROM THE UNDERWORLD TO DELIGHT ALL.

"NO MORE PURE ANYTHING," SAID HADES. "NOT EVEN THE PURELY IMPURE."

MEAT
ZOO

BY THIS POINT, ALL EXPECTED WHAT AWAITED THEM AT THE MEAT ZOO. ALL EXCEPT OTTO.

HADES TRIED TO COMFORT THE TOWER OF FLESH THAT WAS HER FRIEND. SHE KNEW HOW MUCH HE LOVED THE GIANT TORTOISES WITH APE ARMS.

OTTO SOBBED. "THEY WERE SO DELICIOUS."



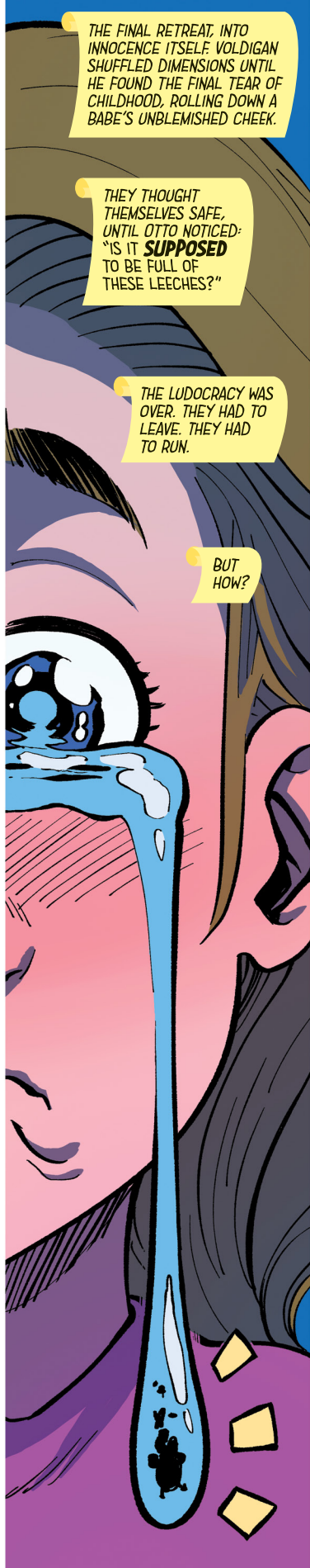
ELAINA'S NEWLY CLAIMED PULDERWART LANDS WERE NEXT, FRESHLY GAINED AND FRESHLY LOST.

"I NEVER REALLY WANTED A BUTTERFLY PALACE ANYWAY," SAID ELAINA. "NEXT TIME I SHALL WED FOR A FORTRESS."

THEY STOOD AND LISTENED TO THE KEENING OF BUTTERFLY DEATH BEFORE VOLDIGAN SPOKE. "THE CITADELS OF THE IMPOSSIBLE. SUCH A SACRED PLACE IS UNTOUCHABLE, EVEN FOR PARDIUS."



BUT VOLDIGAN WAS MISTAKEN.




THE FINAL RETREAT, INTO INNOCENCE ITSELF. VOLDIGAN SHUFFLED DIMENSIONS UNTIL HE FOUND THE FINAL TEAR OF CHILDHOOD, ROLLING DOWN A BABE'S UNBLEMISHED CHEEK.

THEY THOUGHT THEMSELVES SAFE, UNTIL OTTO NOTICED: "IS IT **SUPPOSED** TO BE FULL OF THESE LEECHES?"

THE LUDOCRACY WAS OVER. THEY HAD TO LEAVE. THEY HAD TO RUN.


BUT HOW?



"WE CAN LEAVE THIS PLANET, AND HE CAN ROLL AROUND IN THE DUST AND ASHES!" THERE WAS ONE ROUTE REMAINING: OTTO'S MOST HIDDEN TREASURE.

HIS **SPACE BALLOON.**

IT WAS BUILT AFTER REALISING THAT THE MOON EXISTED ONLY AS A CHALLENGE FOR SOMEONE TO DESTROY. WHY ELSE WOULD THERE BE A BIG SHINY THING IN THE SKY, OUT OF REACH?




MANY LUDOCRATS HAVE BEEN FIRED INTO SPACE, OF COURSE. BUT NONE HAD DONE SO WITH THE EXPRESS INTENTION OF DESTROYING THE MOON.

HADES TOUCHED HER FRIEND'S ARM. "IT IS YOUR FINEST ACCOMPLISHMENT, OTTO. AND NOW WE WILL USE IT TO ESCAPE."

"AFTER I DESTROY THE MOON."

"YES, OF COURSE, OTTO. WE CAN DESTROY THE MOON ON THE WAY."

THEY SHARED A FINAL SMILE.



AND THEN ALL
SMILES WERE
GONE.



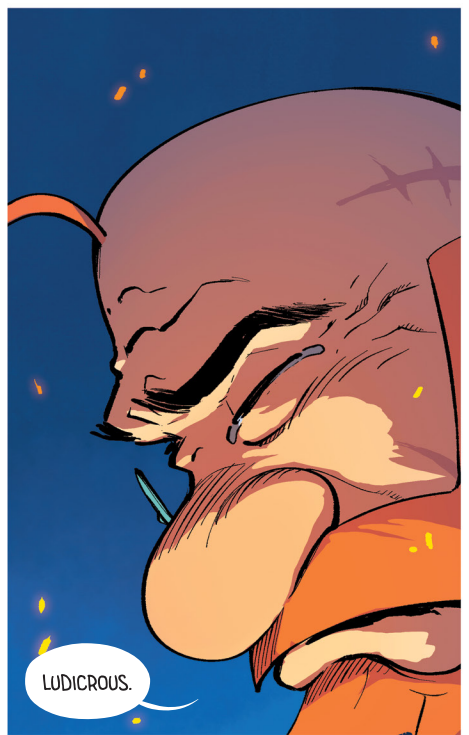
NOW I
WILL **NEVER** GET
TO DESTROY THE
MOON!





ENOUGH! I WILL MARCH UPON THE HALL OF CONTROL AND MY AXE WILL BROACH THE MATTER WITH MY BROTHER'S SKULL.

NO! IT IS JUST US NOW, OTTO. WE ARE THE FINAL COIN! WE CANNOT BE SPENT ON A FOOLHARDY ATTACK AGAINST IMPREGNABLE WALLS. THAT WOULD BE--



LUDICROUS.



I KNOW. I KNOW.

BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW.



I CANNOT BELIEVE THIS!



ARE THINGS GRIM?
YES.

IS ALL WE CHERISHED
DESTROYED?
ALSO, YES.

BUT LOOK
AT WHAT WE
HAVE! WE ARE THE
LAST FOUR FREE
LUDOCRATS.



OTTO
CANNOT BE
STOPPED!



HADES,
YOU HAVE NEVER
BEEN BESTED! WE
SHOULD FIGHT
ON!



ELAINA IS PRECISE
AND VICIOUS AS A
SCALPEL! THERE IS
ALWAYS HOPE!



HADES IS RIGHT WE ARE THE FINAL
COIN...AND IF WE ARE THE FINAL
COIN, OUR WORTH IS BEYOND
CALCULATION!

YES, IF
ONE PERSON
SOLD THE REST OUT,
THEN WE COULD
NOT SURVIVE...

(I MEAN,
MAYBE **THAT** PERSON
WOULD SURVIVE, THANKS
TO THE MERCY OF THE
HYPER-POPE.)

... BUT NONE
OF US WOULD
DO SUCH A THING.
DEFINITELY NOT I,
VOLDIGAN THE
PERFIDIOUS!



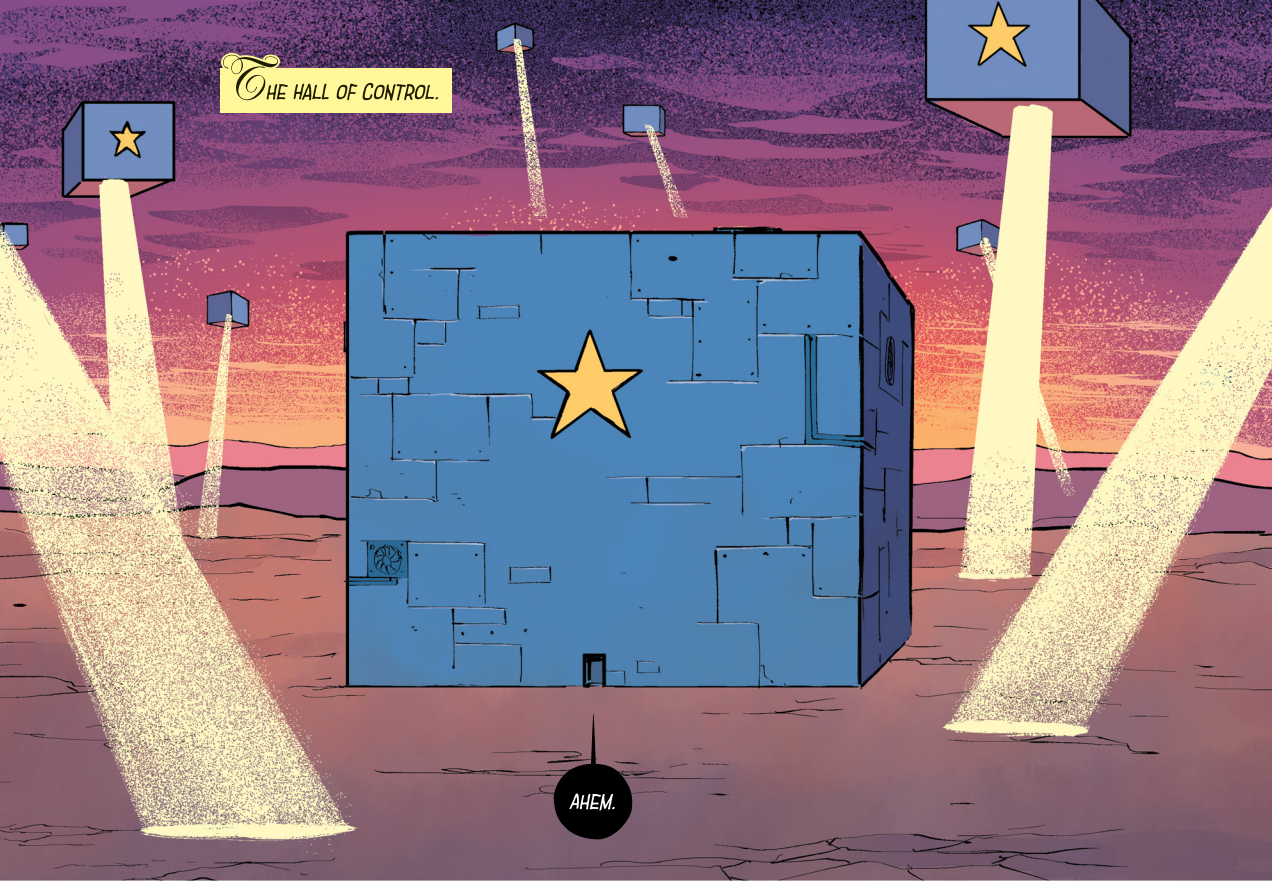
AND SO WE
MUST FIGHT ON!
TOGETHER!



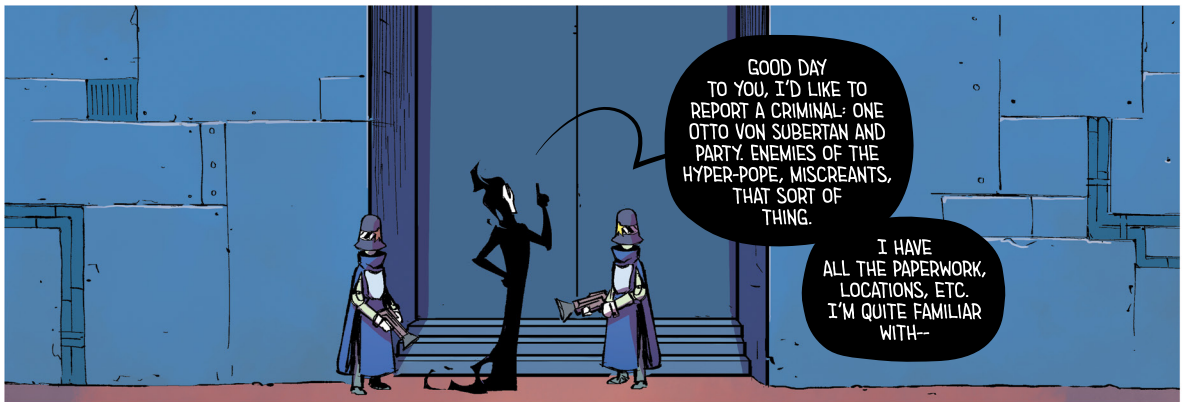
YES!
WE FIGHT
ON!

THREE HURRAHS
FOR VOLDIGAN THE
PERFIDIOUS!

THE HALL OF CONTROL.



AHEM.



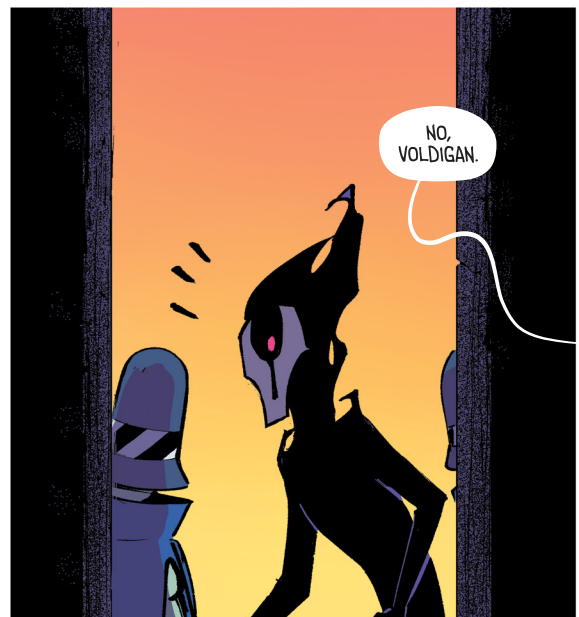
GOOD DAY TO YOU, I'D LIKE TO REPORT A CRIMINAL: ONE OTTO VON SUBERTAN AND PARTY. ENEMIES OF THE HYPER-POPE, MISCREANTS, THAT SORT OF THING.

I HAVE ALL THE PAPERWORK, LOCATIONS, ETC. I'M QUITE FAMILIAR WITH--



TODAY'S INFORMANT QUOTIENT HAS BEEN REACHED?

I BEG YOUR PARDON?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M THE TRAITOR!



NO, VOLDIGAN.



I AM.



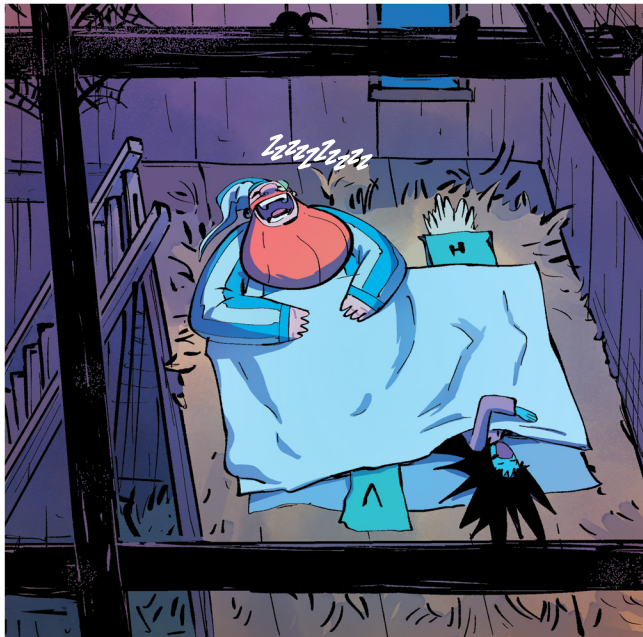
HOW DARE YOU? THIS IS **MY** THING! IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY THING!

I'M THE BEST AT BEING A TRAITOR.

TRAITOR IS SUCH AN UGLY WORD.



I PREFER BETRAYER.



YIELD, APOSTATE! THE TIME OF YOUR INTERVENMENT IS NIGH.



HOW DID THEY FIND US HERE? THIS PEASANT'S HAY LOFT WAS THE PERFECT HIDING PLACE!

BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN BETRAYED! IT'S SO UNFAIR.

Fwoosh



I WAS GOING TO DO THE BETRAYING THIS MORNING, ONCE I'D HAD A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.

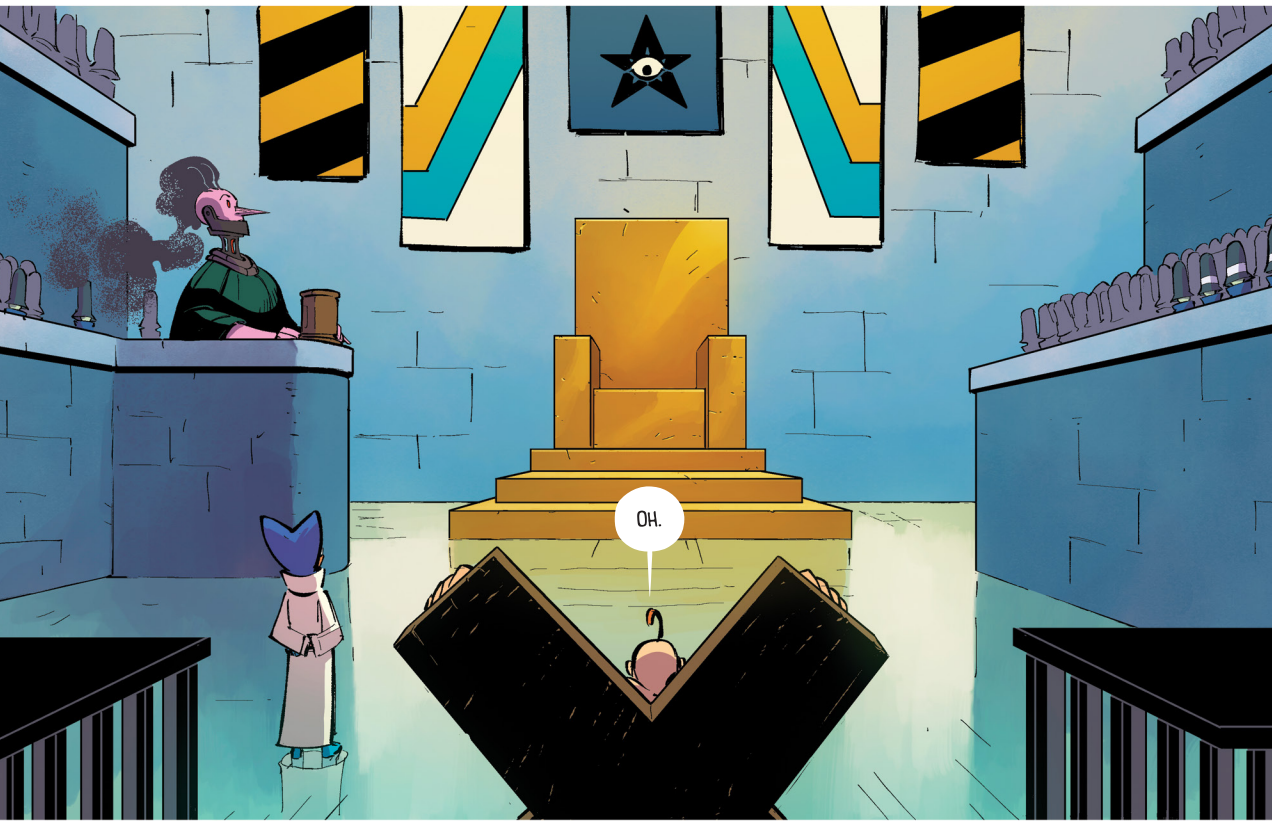
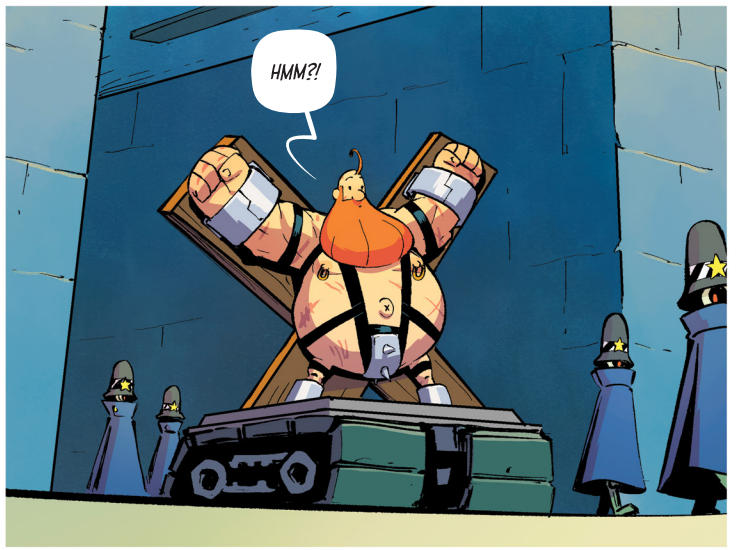
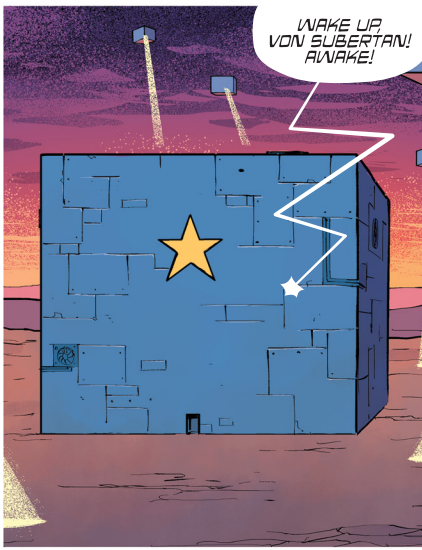
WHAT? NONSENSE. NO ONE CAN BETRAY **OTTO VON SUBERTAN**. LET ME GO!

I...UH... WAS A-RESTING? SO YOU CAN'T ARREST ME?

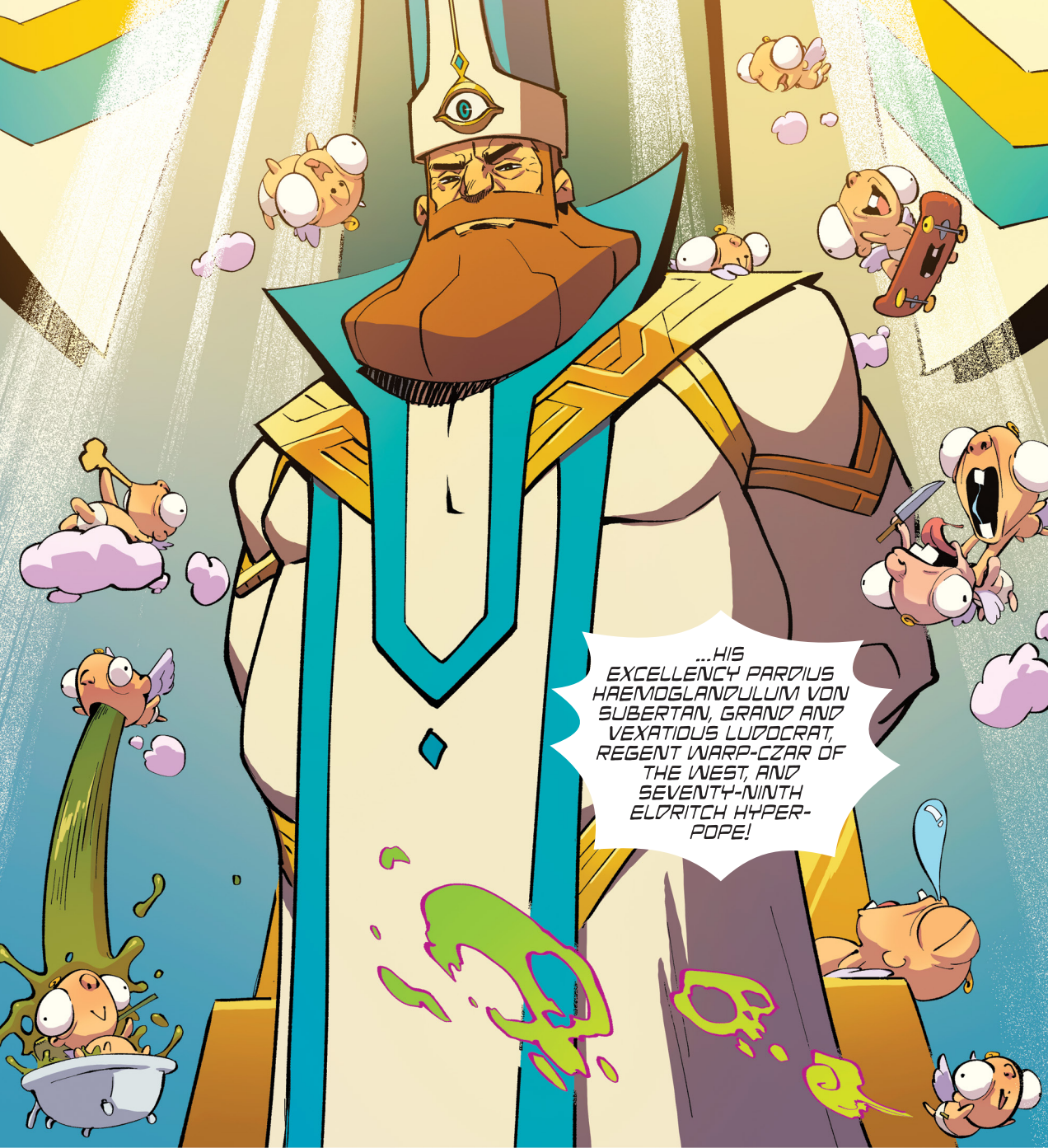


YOUR CLEVER WORDPLAY DOES NOT WORK ON US, CAPTIVE. YOINK HIM!

YOINK!







...HIS
EXCELLENCY PARDIUS
HAEMOGLANDULLUM VON
SUBERTAN, GRAND AND
VEXATIOUS LUDOCRAT,
REGENT WARP-CZAR OF
THE WEST, AND
SEVENTY-NINTH
ELDRITCH HYPER-
POPE!

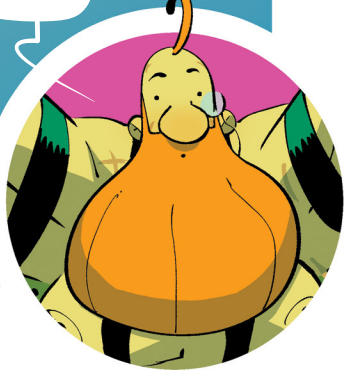


PARDY! GOOD TO SEE YOU! I'VE HAD SOME AWFUL NEWS!

HADES BETRAYED ME! WHAT'S A CHAP GOING TO DO ABOUT THAT?

WAIT.

I'M FORGETTING SOMETHING.





THE Ludocrats



was brought to you by

KIERON GILLEN

PRODUCT
SHILL

FOR TIMES WHEN YOU CAN'T SCREAM LOUD ENOUGH, KIERON GILLEN RECOMMENDS "WRITING". WORKS ALSO FOR WHEN YOUR TEAR DUCTS ARE TOO NARROW.

JIM ROSSIGNOL

WORD
HERDER

FROM HIS BASE IN DARKEST AVON, JIM SENDS FORTH HIS DOGS OF YAPPING TO ENSURE THE WORD-FLEECE IS GATHERED FROM THE CONFUSED, PETRIFIED SHEEP.

JEFF STOKELY

THE
MISSING INK

FOUND BY ARCHEOLOGISTS IN A TAR PIT, JEFF STOKELY'S EXISTENCE REVOLUTIONIZES UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SEQUENTIAL ART.

TAMRA BONVILLAIN

HUE
HERO

ARE YOU UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CYM AND RGB? YES, US TOO. WE DON'T ASK TAMRA, AS SHE WILL JUDGE US. WE'RE JUST QUIET.

CLAYTON COWLES

THE A-Z TEAM
SURVIVOR

HE ESCAPED FROM A MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISON WITH TYPEHANNIBAL, TYPEBA AND TYPEMURDOCH. THEY DIED. NOW ONLY THIS TYPEFACE MASTER REMAINS.

FERNANDO ARGÜELLO

FLATLAND
EXPLORER

BORED OF A THREE-DIMENSIONAL REALM, FERNANDO LEFT IT TO CHART THE LOWER DIMENSIONS, INSPIRING THE SCENE IN THIS VERY ISSUE. HE ALSO FLATS THE COMIC.

CHRISSY WILLIAMS

EDIT
TOR

A SENTIENT MOUND OF EARTH FROM DEVON, WHEN ASKED WHAT AN EDITOR ACTUALLY DOES, SHE GLARES WITH HER MOSSY GAZE AND SAYS, "EVERYTHING."

SERGIO SERRANO

CONDUCTOR
OF CONTENTS

STEPPING UP TO THE ROSTRUM, RAISING HIS BATON, HE STARTS THE BEAT. SOON, WHAT WERE MERE COMPONENTS HAVE BEEN ARRANGED INTO DESIGN HARMONY.

TYPE SOME SHIT IN

HERE
PLEASE

THIS WAS THE FILLER TEXT FROM A 1990S ISSUE OF AMIGA FORMAT. PRO-TIP: ONLY USE SYMBOLS OR MAYBE NUMBERS AS FILLER TEXT.



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IMPORTANT GLOSSARY of TERMS

{ LUDOCRATIC }



FARGON and TECHNICAL TERMS

AUGVERT (*verb*) to improve something by forcibly turning it inside out.

ASTONISCELERATOR (*long noun*) any accelerator which can be used to vastly increase the rate of something unexpected, e.g. digestion.

AUTOMECHAMELIORATION (*even longer noun*) the process of making an object or situation improve by pushing it through a machine of your own invention.

COMPUTER (*noun*) a horrible device that should only be used in the most desperate circumstances, where numbers absolutely must be turned into something useful.

CONOSCULARISATION (*noun*) the process of attempting to understand something by putting it directly into your mouth.

ENCILIATE (*verb*) to cover any inanimate object in a layer of tiny moving hairs, giving it a rudimentary ability to locomote.

EPIDECONTEXTUALIZE (*verb*) to aggressively remove context from any given object or situation, usually via bomb or beam device.

FLAMINGATE (*verb*) to cover any inanimate object in a layer of thrashing flamingo legs, giving it a rudimentary ability to locomote.

GLEEKINETISTICIAN (*noun*) any Ludocrat whose work generally includes smashing things into each other at high speed and then cheerfully publishing the results in a large red book.

GLORTAL (*adjective*) the condition of speech being bestowed upon something which has no sentience, i.e. "glortal pasta" being food that screams insensible epithets as it is being consumed.



FIG. I.I

*Do try to keep your GLORTAL food down.
Talking vomit is quite rude.*

* * *

HYPERABROGATE (*verb*) to remove fundamental qualities from an object while leaving it otherwise unchanged, e.g. the removal of wetness from water, or of elephantness from an elephant. (WARNING: Do not try to look upon the hyperabrogated elephant.)

IMPRECATION (*noun*) any condition which alters the metaphysical destiny of a being in a negative way, colloquially called a "curse".

LUDOCRATE (*verb*) to put something hideous or surprising inside a delightful container. (A widespread pastime among all classes of Ludocrat.)



* IMPORTANT GLOSSARY of TERMS *

{ LUDOCRATIC }

FARGON and TECHNICAL TERMS

MOUTHPIT (*noun*) a common addition to Ludocratic dwellings: a huge, semi-sentient mouth into which unwelcome visitors are expected to dive headfirst.



YAM. 2.0

The MOUTHPIT was conceived during the baroque era of interior orifice design.

* * *

PARAZOOAMPLIFICATE (*verb*) of curses: to massively exaggerate the animalistic qualities of any given imprecation, e.g. one cursed to walk like a crab would also bury themselves in sand at any opportunity.

PLATCISION (*noun*) any decision made by fighting with axes on a rotating platform above a spike pit.

QUKE'S LAW (*noun, probably?*) a law attributed to the famed saboteur Bort Quke, the law states that "as a Ludocratic discussion grows longer, the probability of a plan to destroy the moon as part of an unrelated activity approaches 1".

UZPRUDKOMVENGAR (*adjective*) a Germanish term widely adopted because it sounds excellent to say while nodding sagely, when actually you've got nothing else to add.



NUT. 3.14

When all is said and done, UZPRUDKOMVENGAR, Comrades!

* * *

SPLENDID VORTEX (*adjectivised noun*) any vortex which is splendid.

ZRASHT (*verb*) to imbue inanimate objects with a sense of ego, but in a bad way, so that they can be proud of themselves when you trip over them, stub your toe, or otherwise suffer from their dreadful spitefulness. Awful things.

IMPORTANT GLOSSARY of TERMS

{ LUDOCRATIC }

LUDOCRATIC SAYINGS and FIGURES of SPEECH

“That’s Rotwater!”

☞ A COMMON PHRASE that is often misunderstood to mean lies or falsehoods, but in fact celebrates the imagination-boosting effects of a traditional Ludocratic tonic, Percy’s Alembic Rotwater. It actually means: “That’s a good idea, but you have come to it via artificial means and it is therefore of less value than an idea you originated without narcotic assistance.”

“You can only eat so many monkeys’ hands.”

☞ THIS LITERALLY UNTRUE saying essentially means “you can have too much of a good thing”, but has fallen out of use since it was widely recognised as being both rude and boring.

“Struggling to put grandfather in the logflume.”

☞ A EUPHEMISM.

“What’s in the Old Factory?”

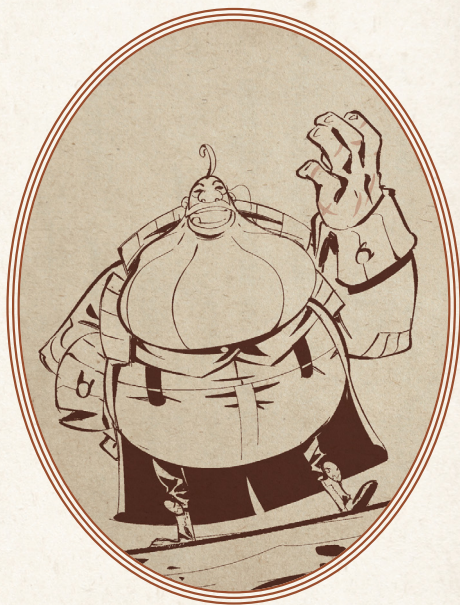
☞ THE ORIGIN of this muttering is now lost, but it’s often uttered (quietly) by trepidatious Ludocrats embarking on an adventure that might prove fatal. It is perhaps connected to the traditional children’s nursery rhyme “We Never Should Have Gone into the Old Factory (For Johnny Now Has No Eyes Left).”

“Better the axe than the squirming.”

☞ FOR A LUDOCRAT there is no truer saying than this, for it is always better to take physical risks in your attempt to make life more ludicrous, than to end up being exposed to something that makes your mind fall prey to The Squirming.

“Two in the hand is worth five in the concept abominator.”

☞ WHO HAS NOT put something precious in the concept abominator and then had to leave it there while life passes them by? Seize the day, Ludocrats!



“Don’t push a moth up your nose again.”

☞ GOOD, PRACTICAL ADVICE.

“In the land of the boring, the one-eyed man is at least able to start an interesting conversation, you know, about the eye thing.”

☞ A TRUISM THAT Ludocrats are taught from birth: the moral of the saying is that having one eye can be cool. But some have interpreted it to mean that being different is a great conversation starter, as well as a fundamental philosophy for approaching life.

“Do stare into the abyss.”

☞ I MEAN, WHY NOT? Do the thing. It’s probably not as ludicrous as you think it is, and that’s disappointing for everyone.

“Actions speak louder than words.”

☞ ALTHOUGH THAT’S ONLY TRUE if the action is shouting, or perhaps setting off the Talking Doom Behemoth of Blantivar, long may it remain silent.

The PERSONAL CYCLOPEDIA of LUDOCRACY,

by PARDIUS HAEMOGLANDULUM,

ELDRITCH HYPER-POPE and SUPREME HIGH LUDOCRAT



On the Meat Zoo

“...OF ALL THE LOSSES made necessary by my plan, it is my brother Otto’s Meat Zoo which will doubtless be the most keenly felt, not least by me. Although I never told him how proud

I was, I remember with glee the day he opened the zoo and walked me through the place, showing me tanks filled with giant alligators and humanoid crabs of various distinction. I can say without hesitation that it was one of the happiest of my life. For what makes any of us happier than seeing a friend or relative anticipating exotic meat? For me there was nothing else in life. And I know that for Otto there were many accomplishments, and this one stood apart, and even the Space Balloon was really a passing fancy next to his dedication to the sprawling zoo complex...” •



On the Citadel of the Impossible

“...AND THE MOST PERSISTENT

argument has always been that if we do something that is impossible, then does it have to be reclassified as possible, therefore rendering the feat uninteresting? The Citadel of the Impossible became the heart of that discussion, as we built a place that would not only be impossible, but also act as

a sort of impossibility research station, where those who demanded more than the possible could spend time with themselves, and butt against the limits of reality. I wish I could say it was a happy place, but in truth those who strive to change reality often have to get up really quite early, and often drink far too much coffee.” •



On the Concept Mills

“...AFTER CENTURIES of Ludocracy it became apparent that the real challenge for the future of our civilisation was the limit of human

imagination. So then, we considered, what about inhuman imagination? The imagination of geology and light switches had long been ignored, and so it was that the Concept Mills were constructed: ideas would be extracted from every conceivable source, and then their raw idea stuff could be ground up together to make bread. Not literal bread, of course, but concept bread. Delicious concept bread. Mmm, an aroma unlike any other. It was this medium in which the future was cooked, and without this vital resource I fear the Ludocracy would have fallen to boredom and normalisers during past decades of stride and instability...” •

* * * * *

To send letters to LUDOCRATS
please attach your words
to the back of a friendly vole
and instruct them to head to
OTTO'S CASTLE, LUDOVERSE.

LETTERS from LUDOCRATS



NANOSANDWICHES

To the Office of the Hyper-Pope,

This is the final demand for payment for the construction of the Obscenitarium. We object to the idea that it was no small effort. In fact, it was considerable small effort – specifically by our nanobrickies who consumed 10⁵⁷ nanosandwiches and a similar number of nanocups of tea (plus 20⁵⁷ nanosugarcubes). If we do not receive satisfaction, we will have to take this to a higher power. That the Hyper-Pope is the higher power does make this difficult, but we'll work that out if we have to.

Yours in frustration,
Captain Breeze Block III,
the Imperial Construction Corps

Dear Captain Breeze Block,

Sorry for the delay, but the office of the Hyper-Pope has been involved in something of a military putsch, meaning that communication has been somewhat delayed. Thankfully, with our Iron Grip secure, business can resume. We informed our General Secretary of your complaint, and our General Secretary informed our Admiral Secretary, and our Admiral Secretary informed our Secretary Secretary, who is on the way to resolve events to your satisfaction, assuming that being reduced to a smear on the letter-face of their enormous war-typewriter will satisfy you. It will certainly satisfy us.

Yours faithfully,
The Office Of The Hyper-Pope

ORIFICES

Dear Bogol Then,

I find myself in a Tizzy. If you don't know, a Tizzy is an enormous beast, covered with fibrous matter and four sets of googly eyes, and I am embedded in one of its orifices up to my elbow. I have no idea how to prepare this beast for banquet at the best of times, let alone in such a limited position. Have you any tips for an amateur gastronaut?

Yours,
Veronica Quadrahedron

Dearest Veronica,

We regret to inform you that Monsieur Then was lost to us, just recently, in a terrible tentacular accident. However, we do have access to his notes, and he writes that a Tizzy "is a dish best served from the inside out", so it sounds like you're in a great position! If you'd like us to send over a complimentary incinerator crew please do fill in the form we've attached for your convenience.

Kindness,
Susie Lemonwhine,
Chief Mortologist,
Konigsberg Deathlabs

HOTNODE

Ludocrew!

Yo, it's Larry Handgriber from the Hotnode News Beam! I'm a HUGE fan - over three hundred feet across! But don't let that concern you: the good news is that we want to feature

you on our next transmission! And as you know, the Hotnode News Beam is transmitted DIRECTLY into the deepest feelings of every subscriber. They don't even know where it's coming from! There's nothing sinister about it, but you're not allowed to ask how we make our money.

Cool, cool.
Larry

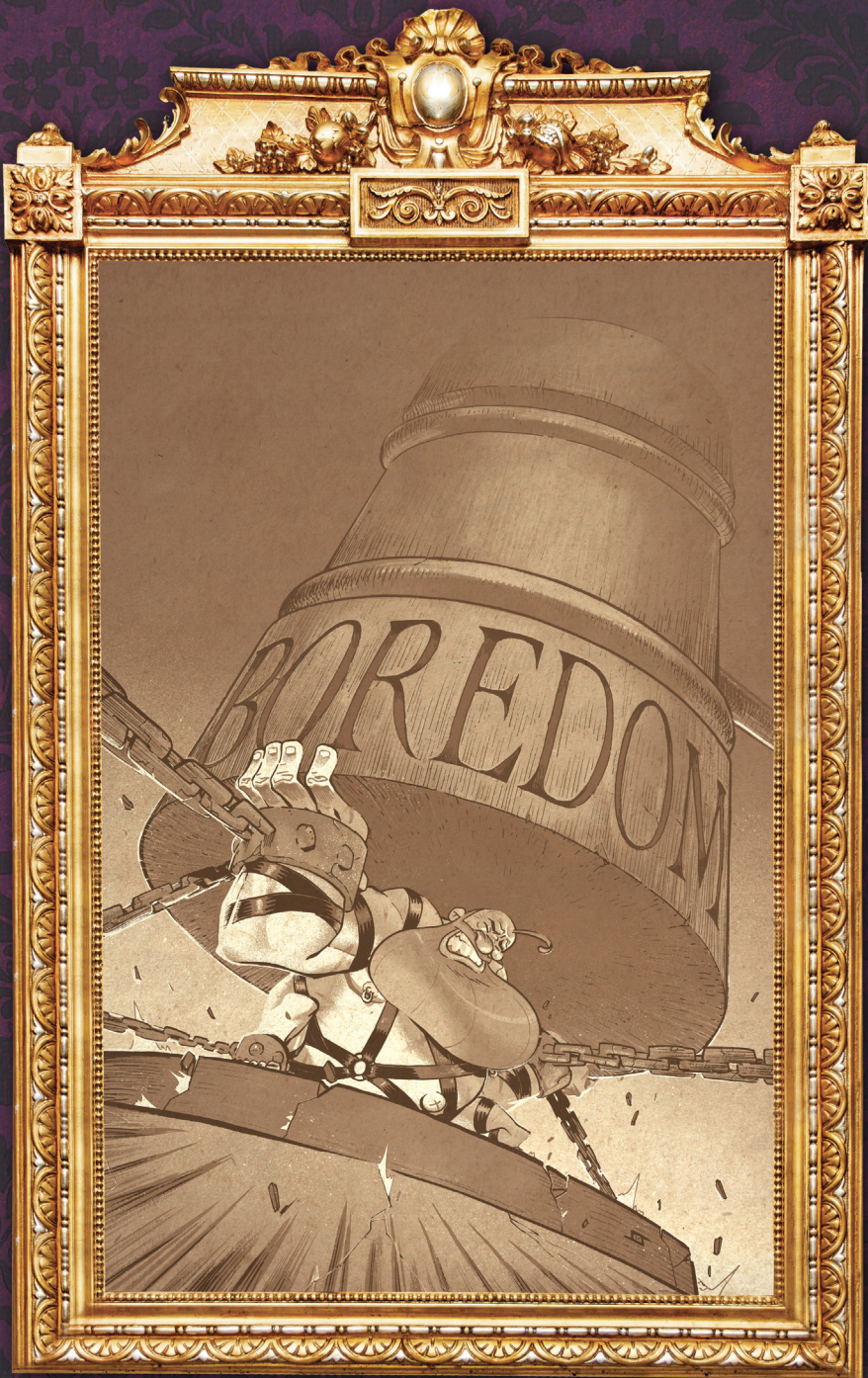
Dear Lorry,

We'll certainly be interested in an interview! Here you are:

1. Where do you get your ideas from?
2. Is there a movie deal?
Can you talk about it?
3. Who would you cast in your movie about your sinister emotion transmission?
4. Is there a movie deal?
Can you talk about it now?
5. What superhero comic would you like to write for the big two?
6. Are there any superheroes you would like to write for any other large numbers?
7. Movie deal?
8. Have you anything else you'd like to talk about?
9. Oh – a TV deal?
Can you talk about it?

Looking forward to your responses, Lorry.

Yours,
The Ludocrats



LUDOCRATS #5

(September 30th, 2020)

The end of Ludocrats... and the end of the universe. An imaginary universe. Not our one.

But aren't all universes imaginary,
Superman winks, credits roll, bye, etc...

BY NOW YOU MIGHT SUSPECT my plan is villainous. Perhaps it is. But a new age is dawning. The rotating planetoid of reality has turned (relative to the white-hot atomic furnace of historical inevitability) and dangerous yet life-giving rays of change are now beaming across its surface.

Reader, if the plight of this tortured metaphor endears you, then, please, enter these pages and witness many other incandescent writer tricks, such as unfettered simile, rampant analogy, and — hold your breath for a moment with anticipation! — even the hard, cold experience of having your expectations defied. Indeed, this is a beast that boasts it all.

(Although you should probably start from the beginning...)

And emotions! What is a story without plumbing deeper emotions? And indeed there are emotions here plumbed: wonder, surprise, doubt, lust, rage, joy, up, left,

right, down, triumph, loss, and those others less important emotions whose names I always forget. Few of them appeal to me, admittedly, but who am I to judge the feeling fancies of the many, when I am so few? Well, one. Me.

I digress.

This luxuriant yet tragic volume of *The Ludocrats* visits the palaces, menageries, and laboratories of The Ludocrats, but at each and every turn there are revelations. And while I should not allow my ego to place me at the heart of a back-page blurb, I must assert that these revelations are my own.

I can reveal no more. Forge onward, please! Your reading brain wishes to delve. Let it, for that brain is all that keeps you from

boredom, and the pit which lies beneath.

Open the book! Read! Absorb! Sing! Sing the words! Who cares if you are in a comic book with a "Quiet Please" sign! SING FOR THE LUDOCRATS! •

“I SHOULD
NOT ALLOW
MY EGO TO
PLACE ME
AT THE
HEART OF A
BACK-PAGE
BLURB...”

From the desk of
His EXCELLENCY PARDIUS HAEMOGLANDULUM,
GRAND and VEXATIOUS LUDOCRAT,
REGENT WARP-CZAR of the WEST,
and SEVENTY-NINTH
ELDRITCH
HYPER-
POPE



COVER A: JEFF STOKELY
RATED M/MATURE

