

SAVAGE® 245

image

DRAGON



*EXK
1/95*

THE CHAINED MAN!

SAVAGE[®] DRAGON

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SAVAGE DRAGON™

The CHAINED MAN!



"I wear the chain
I forged in life,
I made it link by link,
and yard by yard;
I girded it on
of my own free-will,
and of my own free-will
I wore it."

~Jacob Marley
in *A Christmas Carol*
by Charles Dickens.



DO NOT
INTERFERE IN
MATTERS WHICH
CONCERN YOU
NOT, MORTAL.

I WALK THE EARTH
ONCE MORE TO *RIGHT*
A GRIEVOUS *WRONG*.

I HAVE
RETURNED
TO PUNISH THE
GUILTY--

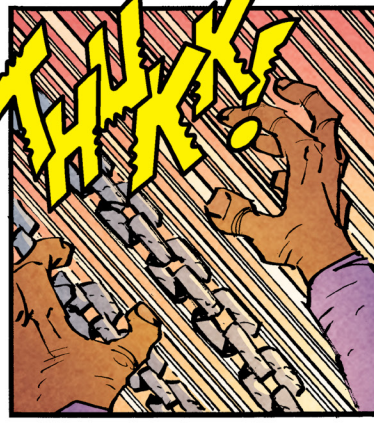
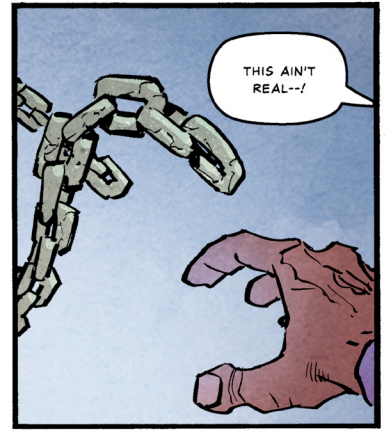
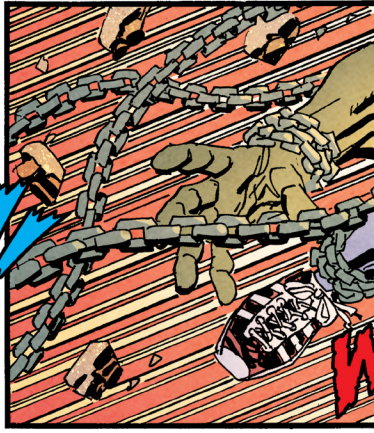
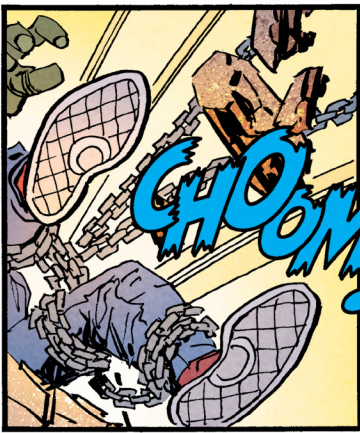
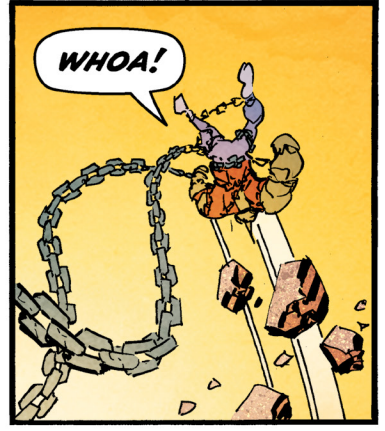
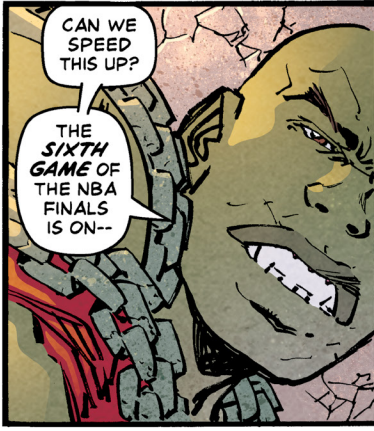
TO BRING
MY *KILLERS*
TO JUSTICE--

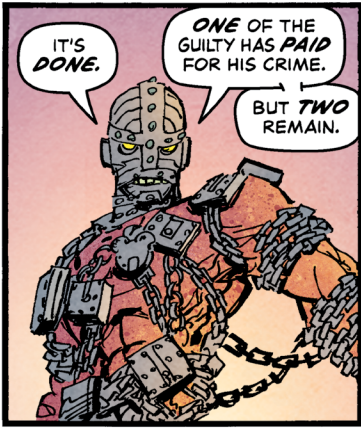
--AND
AVENGE
MY OWN
DEATH!

BRAKKA-TT









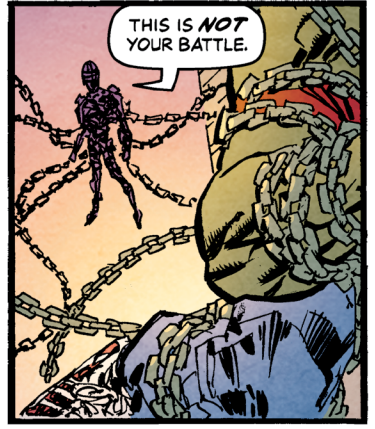
IT'S DONE.

ONE OF THE GUILTY HAS PAID FOR HIS CRIME.

BUT TWO REMAIN.



YOU CAN'T DO THIS. I WON'T LET YOU.

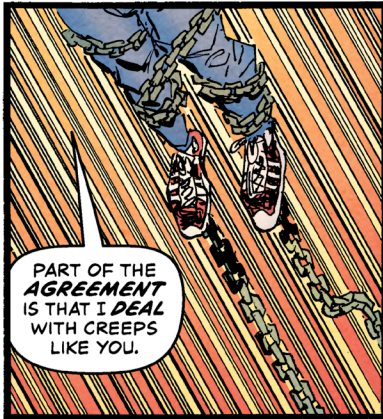


THIS IS NOT YOUR BATTLE.

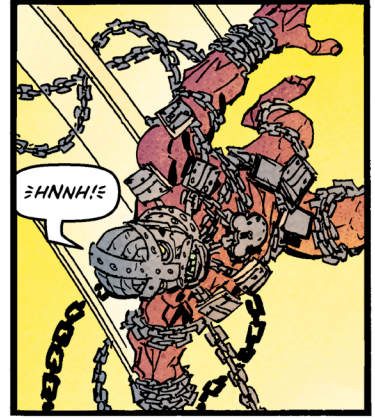


THING ABOUT THAT--

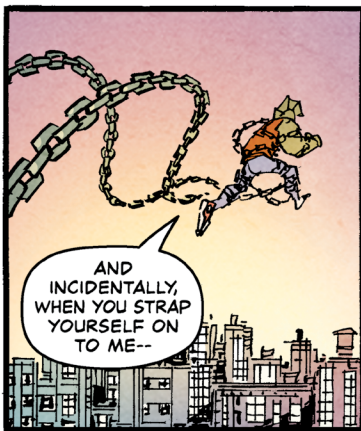
IT KIND OF IS!



PART OF THE AGREEMENT IS THAT I DEAL WITH CREEPS LIKE YOU.



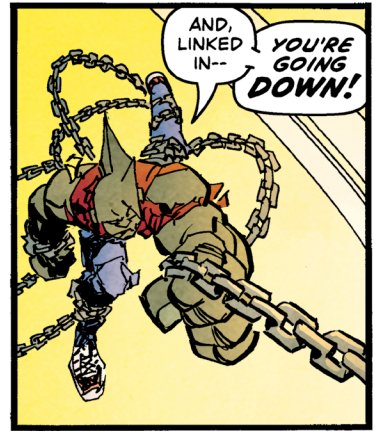
EHNNH!



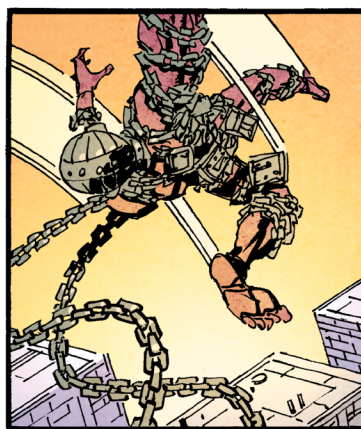
AND INCIDENTALLY, WHEN YOU STRAP YOURSELF ON TO ME--



--YOU GO WHERE I TELL YOU TO GO.



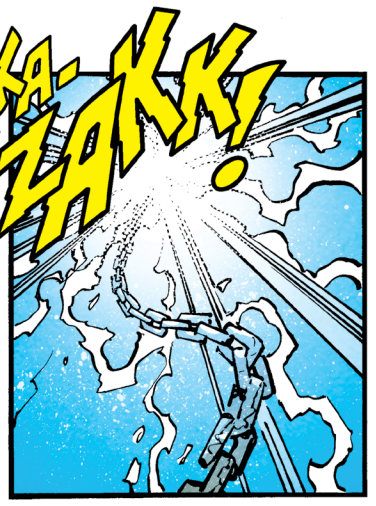
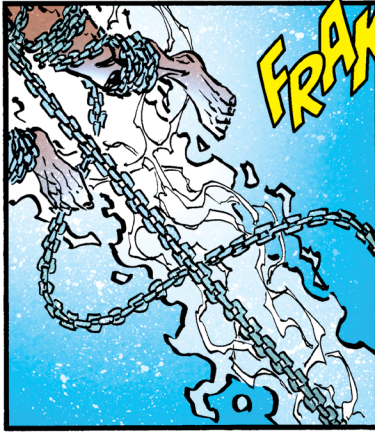
AND, LINKED IN-- YOU'RE GOING DOWN!

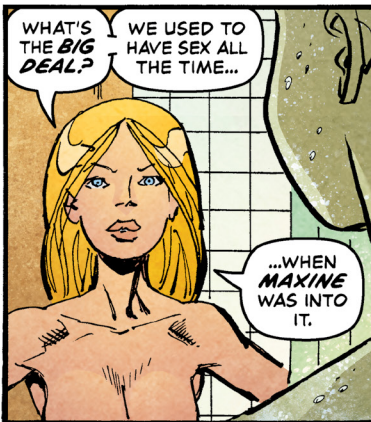
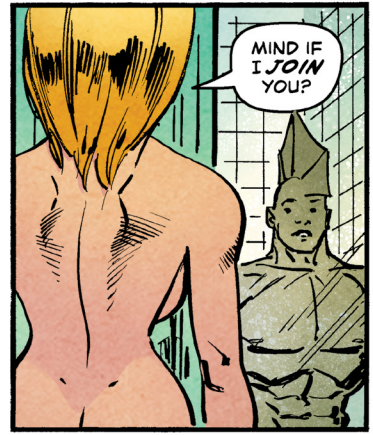
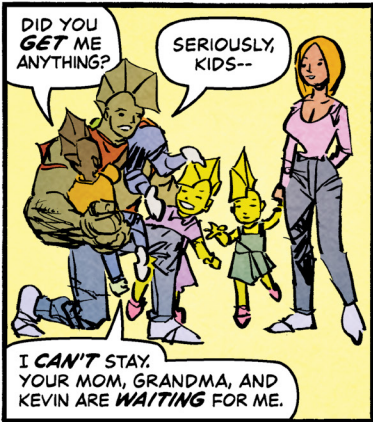
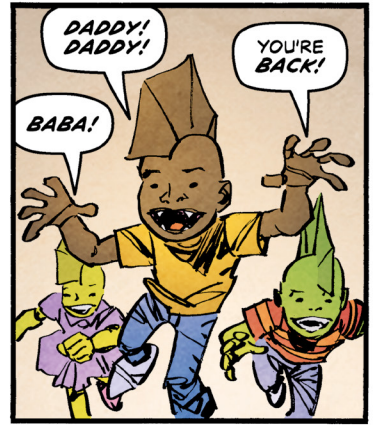
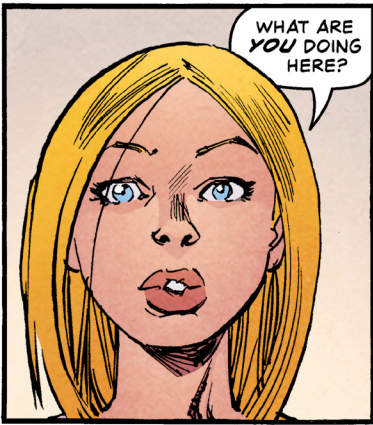


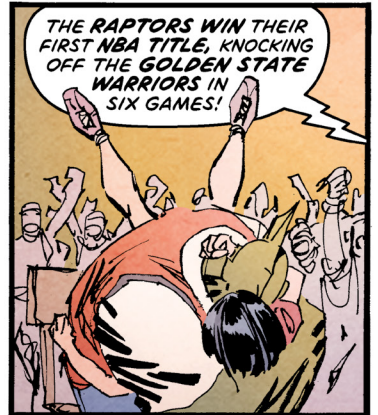
CHINK! CHINK!

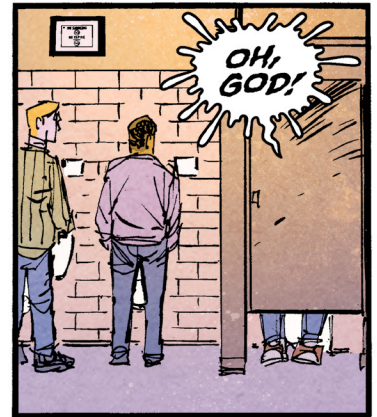
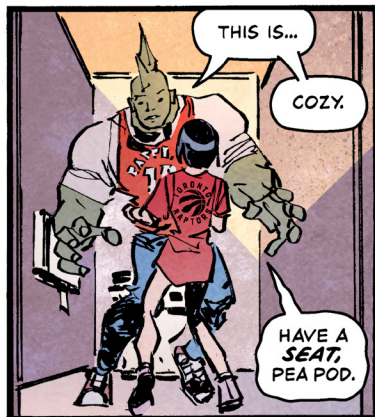
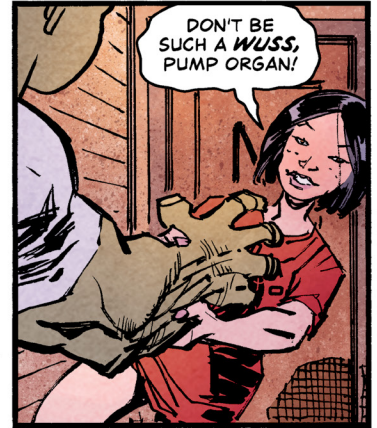
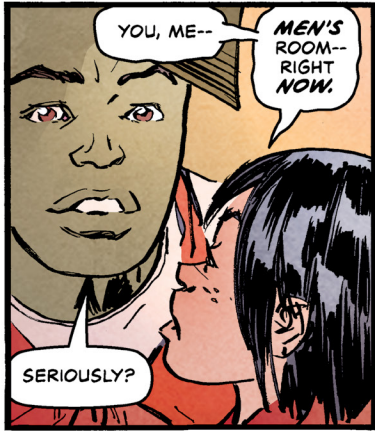


ABOUT THAT? NO WAY.













KAKK!

A TORONTO MAN IS DEAD AND SAN FRANCISCO SUPERHERO, THE BAY GUARDIAN, IS IN CRITICAL CONDITION AFTER A CHAINED MAN ATTACKED...

THAT COULD HAVE BEEN YOU!

NOT A CHANCE.

DADDY, DADDY--

IT'S CARTOON TIME.

OH, IT'S ALWAYS CARTOON TIME.

CARTOON TIME.

YOU NEED TO BE CAREFUL.

I'M PLENTY CAREFUL.

AND I HAVE HEALING POWERS, REMEMBER?

MADLINE WANTS HER MAMA.

MAMA! MAMA! MAMA!

UH...

MAMA!

I CAN'T.

PILLOWCASE--

DO YOU THINK MAYBE WE SHOULD GIVE MADDY FREAK-OUT TO REMOVE HER ELECTRICAL POWERS?

MADDY JUST USED HER ELECTRICAL POWERS TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.*

*SEE SAVAGE DRAGON #243.

I KNOW... IT'S JUST...

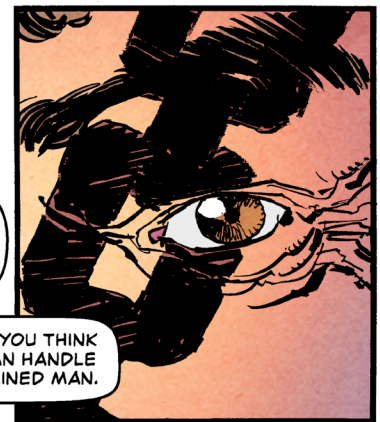
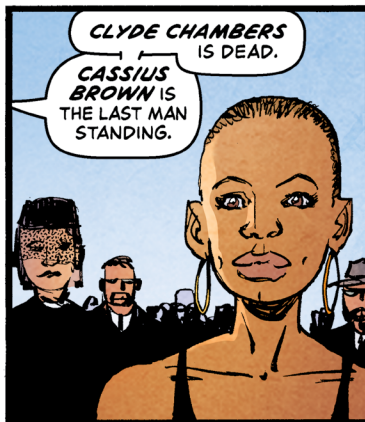
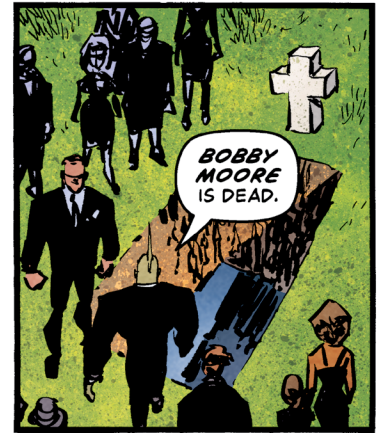
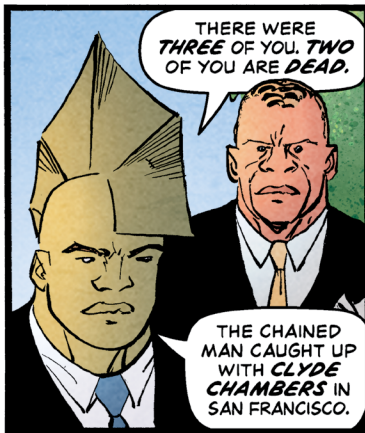
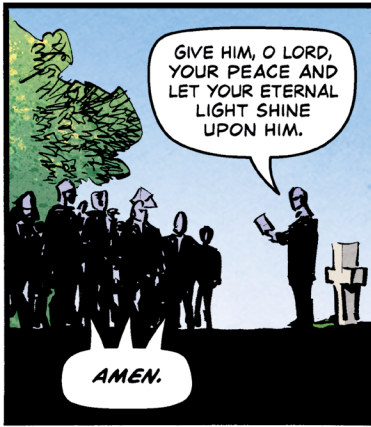
MADDY COULD ACCIDENTALLY KILL ME. SHE'S TOO YOUNG TO USE HER POWERS RESPONSIBLY.

BUT... TAKE THEM AWAY?

SHE COULD KILL ME.

IT'S A PRETTY DRASTIC MOVE, ANKLE SOCK.

WE COULD GIVE THEM BACK TO HER LATER.

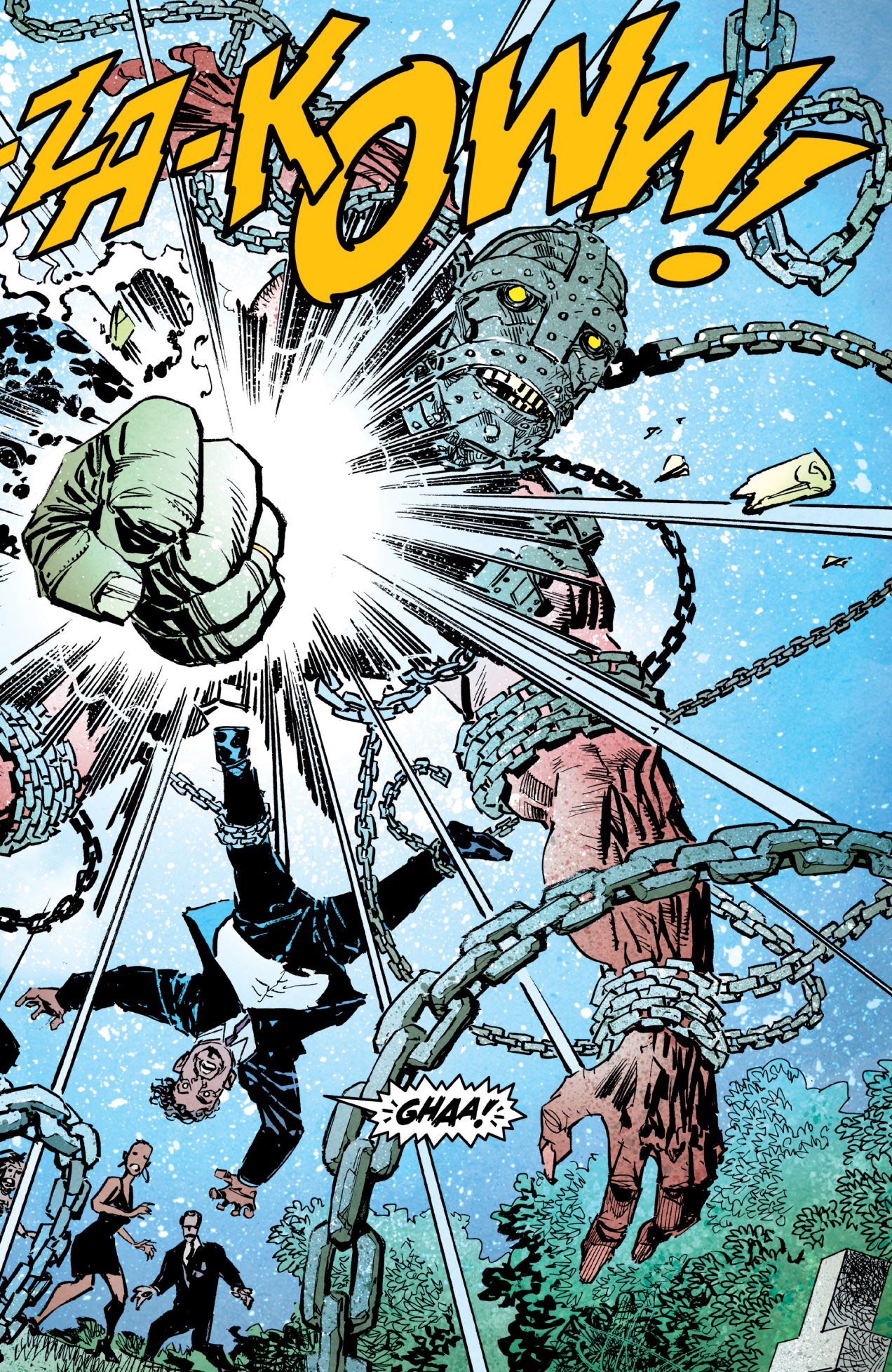


NOT
THIS TIME,
CHAIN-MALE--

**THIS
ENDS
NOW!**

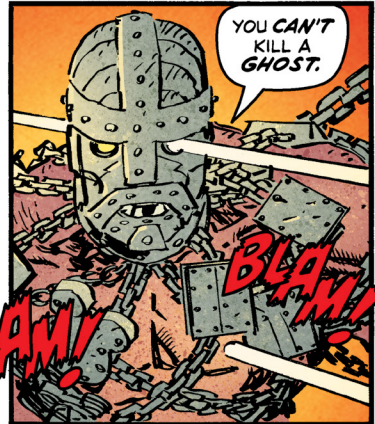
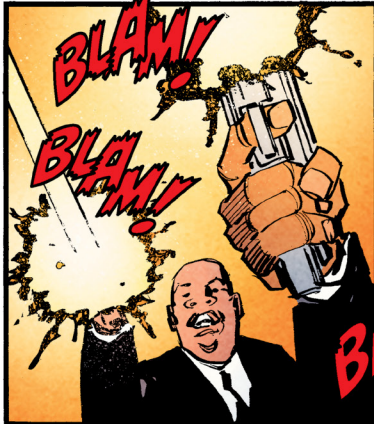
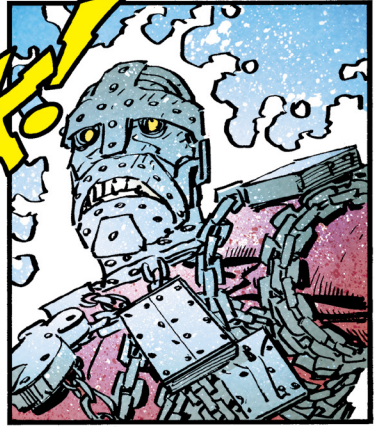
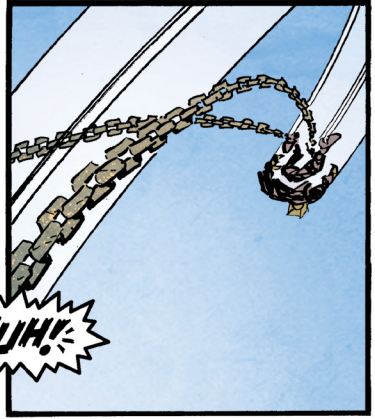
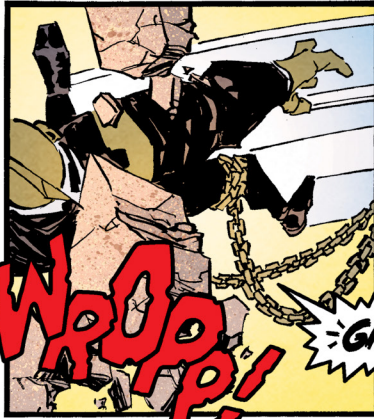
СКРАККА--

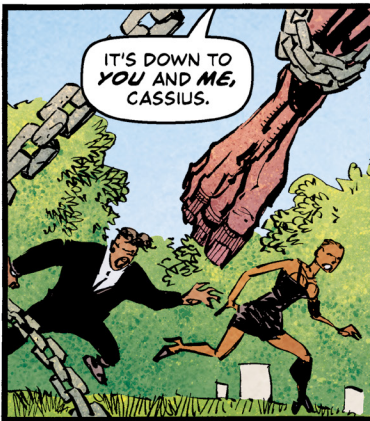
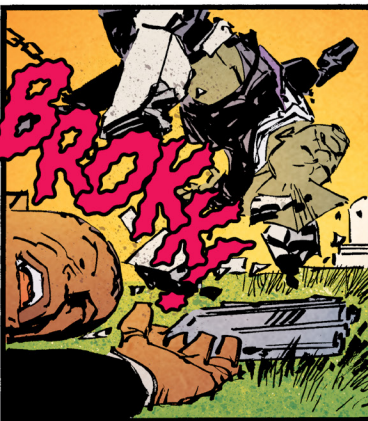
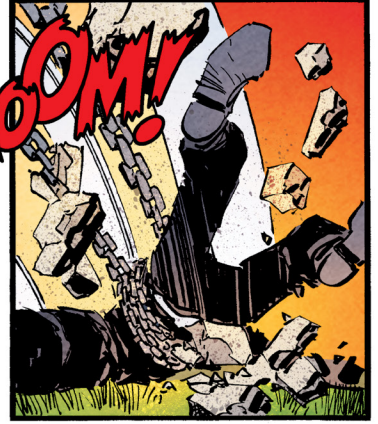
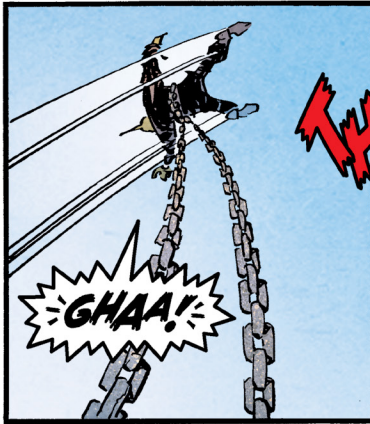
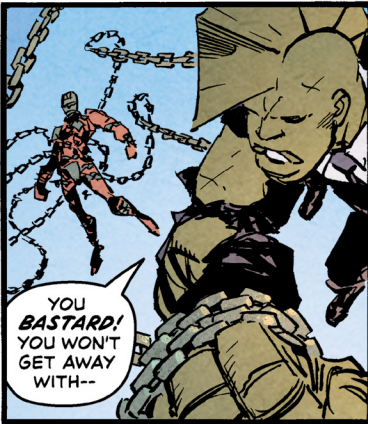
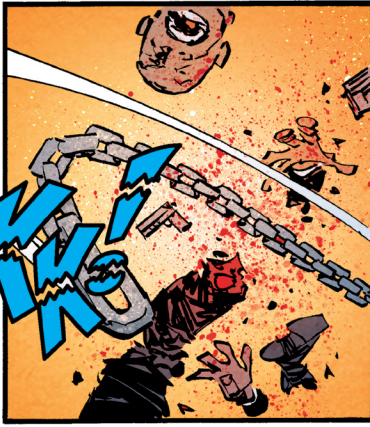
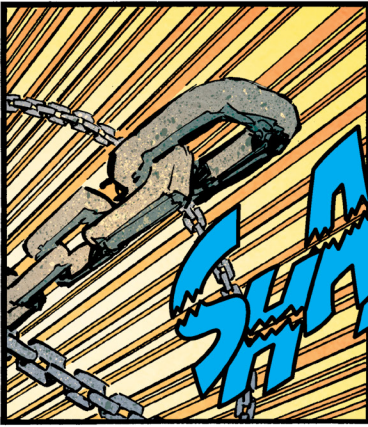


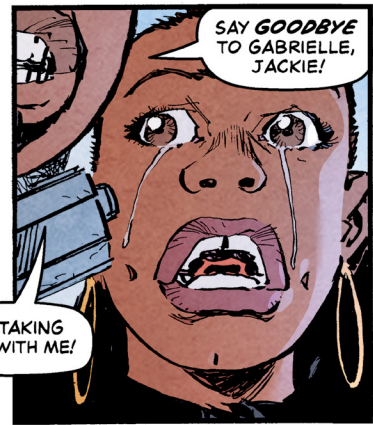
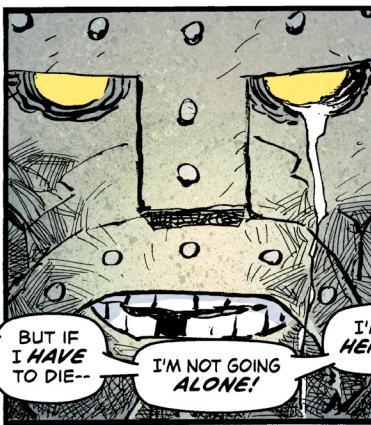
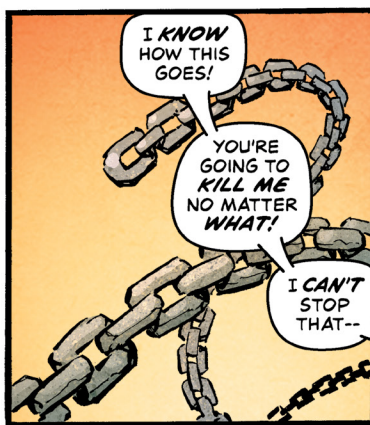
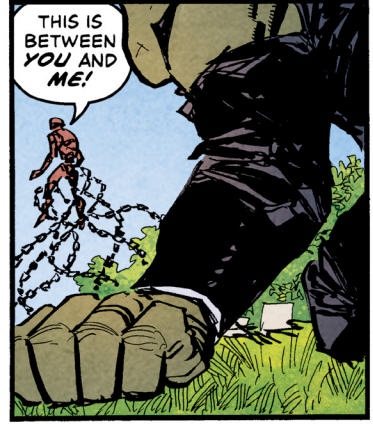
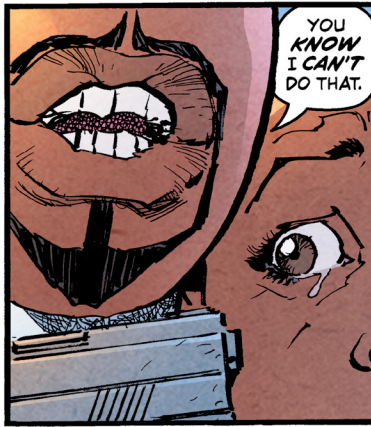
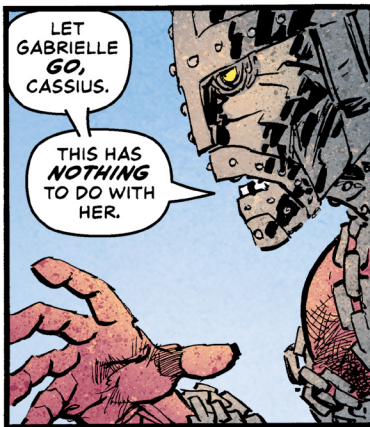
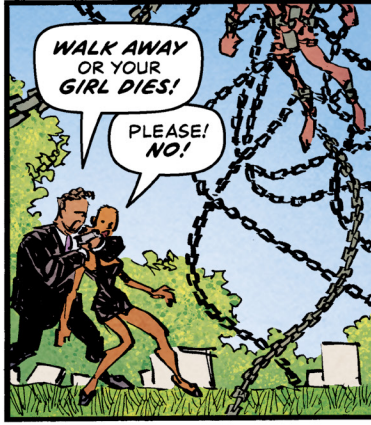


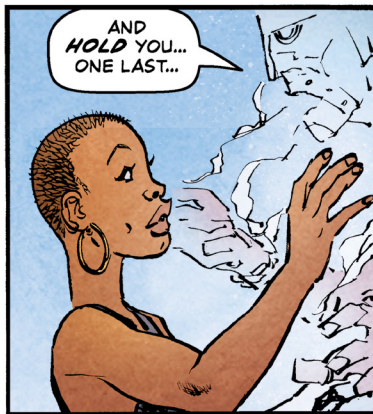
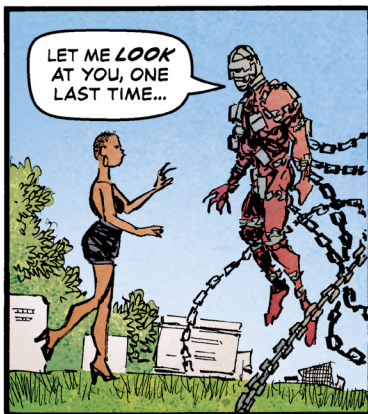
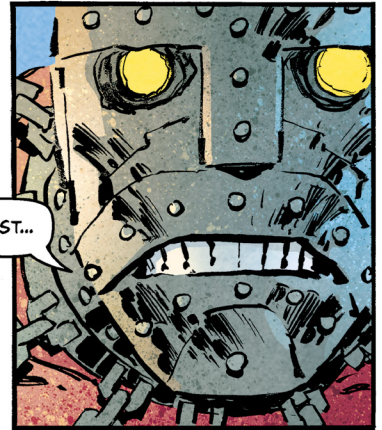
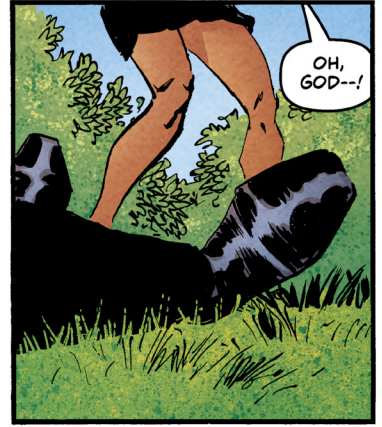
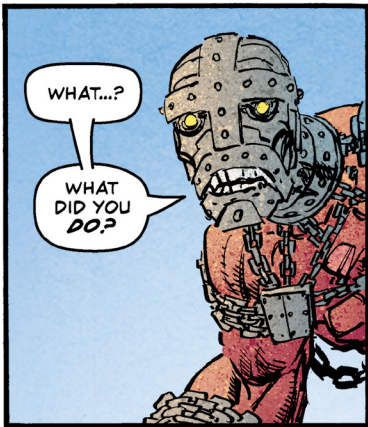
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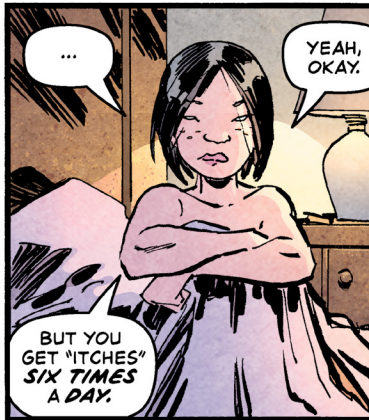
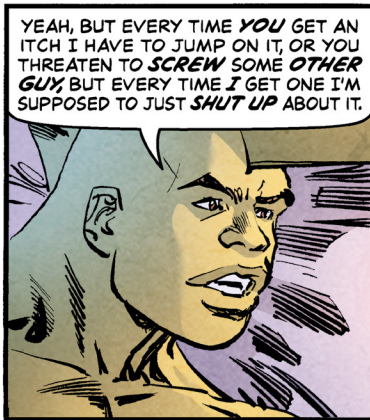
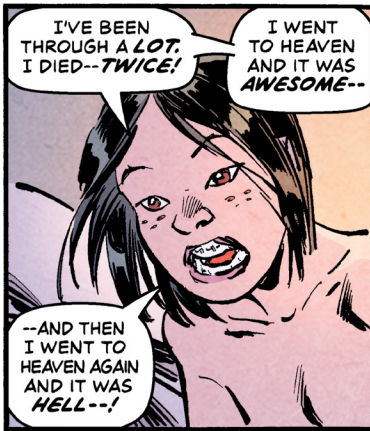
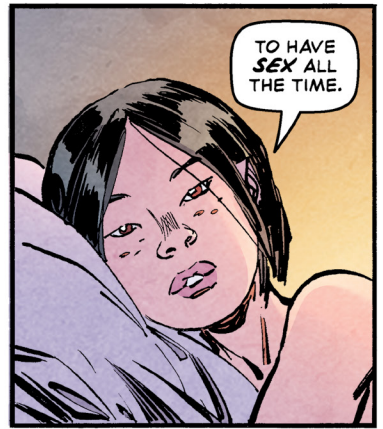
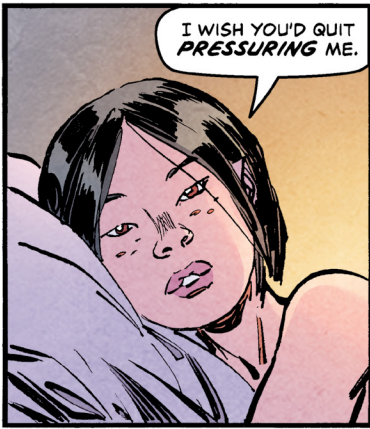
GHA!











Welcome to Savage Dragon #245. Sorry for the extraordinarily long delay but this one ended up taking up a lot more time than it should have. Added to the delay--I've been doing a few odds and ends elsewhere, and that's taken up a bit of my time as well. I wrote and drew a page for *Marvel Comics #1000* and did the duties on a Spider-Man yarn for the upcoming one-shot *Spider-Man: Going Big*. So, keep an eye open for those if you're so inclined.

But don't worry--I haven't forgotten about my true love, Savage Dragon! There'll be plenty more of that coming your way!

Dear Erik,

Issue 243 let me breathe a few sighs of relief after a scary cliffhanger from last issue. For one, I'm glad Kevin was only injured. I don't think I honestly thought you'd kill him off-panel, but I never know with this book. And the disembodied demon penis story was wrapped up pretty quickly, which is for the best for Maxine and myself.

The story quickly changing pace for the birthday party scene was a bit jarring, but it's one of the things about reading this book that I love. There's always something new and unexpected. Sometimes that's a huge plot-twist or shocking death, and sometimes it's as simple as the expected villain gets killed on page 6 and now it's bouncy castle time. I've been reading this book from day one and it amazes me that I can never see what's coming, and that no two issues feel the same.

And it's just great to watch the Dragon kids growing up. They've been fun so far, but as they get older we'll see more of their individual personalities and I can't wait.

The back-up with Mighty Man was pretty good, too. Betty's probably about 10, right? There's got to be lots of interesting story potential with a pre-teen girl who can turn into a super-powered man. I also like the idea of her being mentored by SuperPatriot, who must have a 100th birthday coming up soon. I still don't think I'm interested in a full Freak Force reunion, but I do miss all the characters if they're absent for too long.

Taylor Porter
Halifax, Nova Scotia

The shift was a bit jarring from the first half of the book to the last, but I thought there were enough visual clues there that readers wouldn't be too lost. Maxine's hair is longer, she no longer has bags under her eyes, she doesn't appear to be sick, she's in a car and she's wearing different clothes--clearly some time has passed.

I'd love it if the market would support a Freak Force book (and a Mighty Man book, and a Deadly Duo book, and a SuperPatriot book, and so on) but barring that, you'll have to make-do with their appearances here.

Hi Erik!!

Ever since I saw the solicitation for #243, I've been waiting and hoping for the best, and you didn't disappoint! Thanks! It was crazier and funnier than I imagined!

I liked the way the first page made it seem like you were going to start with a slow lead in, but BAM! Page 2 and 3 take us somewhere else right into the thick of things! Wow. And I'm assuming that's Maxine's underwear we're seeing on page 2. Good lord, it better be! Haha... But given how saucy things have been lately, in both the humor and drama departments of your writing, I'm thinking I won't be the only one whose mind temporarily went into the gutter.

This issue was full of so many surprises. I thought maybe Kevin was dead on page 3. His eyes are rolled up into his head, so it sure looked that way. It seemed too soon and tragic to lose him, so thanks for NOT killing him...yet. And then the monster eats Maddy! Good god! And then the electrical explosion on page 6! Good god again! And then we find out that monster is the Basilisk's cock... It was only page 7, and I already felt like I had gotten my money's worth. And then! Maddy is fine, but yucky... hilarious...and Maxine is screaming for sleep...and I feel like I'm getting yanked back and forth between exciting drama and great comedy. Damn, Erik, this is one of the best issues of Savage Dragon.

And then...the kids on page 8 are just watching cartoons, and a little bored, cuz every day it's cartoons. Yawn...

Page 9. Hootin' zoots! Well, doesn't that pretty much perfectly describe this entire issue? But wait, there's more. Jesus, it's only page 9 and Amy Dragon hasn't even begun to fight!!!!

It was funny that Maxine can't escape the sex video that went viral, even at a kid's birthday party, because the adults in attendance are too clueless to think that maybe she doesn't want to talk about it, (just because they DO want to talk about it). It's as if that horrible video has made her into some sort of YouTube celebrity for all the wrong reasons, and those idiots can't distinguish between deserved fame and tragic notoriety. Her getting slowly hammered to deal with it was priceless.

I could go on, page by page, but anyone reading this letter has already read #243 and knows what happened to Amy's pretty dress. This issue left me breathless. I've been asking for a comic (mini-series or back-up) starring the kids for a while. Because I don't think it will ever happen, a story like this is enormously satisfying. Yet, because it has so much fun and excitement crammed into it, I want to see the kids doing solo adventures when they get a little bigger. Oh, the trouble they could get into...

I have two questions. First one. When Amy punches Celsius through the air on page 17, how is it that his frail adult body can take down an entire house on page 18? It was another hilarious moment in an issue already filled with hilarious moments, but it did seem to defy the laws of physics, unless Celsius has the same density as a giant sized wrecking ball. Please explain...

Finally, the last panel on the last page. Ouch. Poor Maxine. A cringe inducing laugh, which is hard to do right.

I don't know if I mentioned this in my last letter, but I really like all the cute nick names that Maxine and Malcolm have for each other. It's funny that they don't keep using the same two or three, but instead there's an endless supply of them. This time it was Fireplug and Cinnamon Roll. Second question. How do you come up with these? Is this something you and your wife do, and you put it in the book? Or is it just something funny you came up with one day? (That was three questions rolled into one).

I hope the nicknames aren't just a phase. I hope they stick around as a long running gag.

God, I love this book. I always read it first now, as soon as I get home and sit down.

I'm looking forward to #250, but #243 is going to be hard to top!
Daniel McMasters
Sacramento, CA

To answer your questions--it was never outright stated just how tough Celsius was to begin with--so him surviving as he got punched through a stone house doesn't contradict anything which had been established--on the contrary--that very scene actually establishes just how tough Celsius really is! And the pet names idea is one I pinched from an old radio show called *Vic and Sade*. In that show, Vic calls his son, Rush, any number of random names, and I thought it would be fun to use that idea as pet names from these two lovebirds toward each other. My wife and I do not do that. I would imagine that would be tough to do in real life. It's hard enough coming up with a handful of unique ones once a month--I can't imagine having to come up with a steady flow of new ones on a daily basis.

Hey Erik.

After what seemed like an eternity of waiting (but in reality was only a week) I finally got my copy of SD #243. Having read it I am relieved to see that it seems Kevin will be all right. It was quite the cliff-hanger you left us with last issue! In the end however, it was a bit anti-climactic with Maddy saving the day simply by being eaten. Don't get me wrong, it's not a complaint. I like that it worked out that way. When you've got super-powered kids around they're bound to save the day once in a while, whether they mean to or not!

And speaking of "saving" the day, that was quite the birthday bash. Literally! It was a lot of fun to see Amy making a new friend and then doing whatever it took to protect her. Fortunately for Amy, she can really handle herself. Unfortunately for Walden and Andrew, Amy can really handle herself. Let's hope they at least had some cameras rolling when it all went down so they can make the best of a bad situation and make a little profit from the footage. At least they can take consolation in the fact that Amy was there to protect their little girl, even if it did mean sacrificing their home in the process.

There was some more good development with Maxine this issue. On top of her ongoing issues resulting from her assault, the poor girl still hasn't been able to put her past antics behind her. And of course

everyone is completely insensitive to what she's going through and just keep blathering on and on about it, to the point where Maxine just keeps drinking to numb the pain. I'm really glad you had her mention that their car was demolished because I'd hate to think that she might have attempted to drive home in her inebriated condition. Clearly her decision making abilities were compromised since she asked Malcolm to take advantage of her in her vulnerable state. I get why she might think that's the only way she could be with Malcolm again, but I really don't think that Malcolm should have agreed to it. I think this one will come back to bite them both in the ass. She's obviously still not comfortable with intercourse, but on the other hand she clearly still has needs, which makes me wonder if she might take Malcolm's advice on giving Greta a chance to heart, only not in the way he expected...

A few more random observations from the issue. I liked the subtle way you showed a time jump by lengthening Maxine's hair. I'm glad it's finally getting longer too as I really didn't like the buzz-cut look on her. Jon Day was a busy guy this issue. Not only was he on the scene on the first page with the RCMP, but he also had time to take in the birthday party at Walden's! And it might be just my imagination, but I swear I saw the young version of Angel dashing across the yard at the party on the bottom panel of page 10. Nice Easter egg!

The backup story was great. I'm really glad you followed up on what Mighty Man/Betty is going through. SuperPatriot really doesn't seem to be taking Betty's emotional state as seriously as he should. He's had plenty of experience and has the maturity to handle the constant carnage they encounter, but Betty is only a nine-year-old girl. It's bound to be more traumatizing for her. And where are her parents in all of this? How can they be ok with this? Do they even know what SuperPatriot is getting her into? I definitely think more follow-up is required on this front, so please keep those back-ups coming!

And now we are only 7 issues away from the big 250. I swear it feels like we just finished the countdown to 200. Before you know it we'll be celebrating 300 issues! I hope you are planning at least one variant for 250, and if you want to include a blank sketch cover I think that would be pretty swell as well.

See you next month!

Andrew d'Entremont
Ottawa, ON, Canada

P.S. I loved the attention to detail with the Tim Hortons and Pizza Pizza logos in the first panel of page 7!

Betty's parents don't go along with her on adventures, but they do recognize that she has powers and abilities as Mighty Man and responsibilities that come along with those powers and abilities. Her mother also has a lot of trust in SuperPatriot, having been in Freak Force with him during the time she had Mighty Man's powers.

Dear Erik,

Wow! Long time-no type. I feel I should either apologize or tell you that you are welcome! The thing is; these past five issues have been great! Beyond great! I kept intending to show my fanboy happiness but I kept playing on twitter.

As you know, I have an entire basement stocked with long boxes dating from the Golden Age to today and entire collections of many a series. I bought a large amount of comics every week. Today, I only -faithfully- collect four ongoing titles. That is the least amount I have ever collected since 1979. I still buy collection hardcovers-especially, if they're the marvel omnibus volumes that include cross-overs and letter pages. But enough of my usual ramble... the Highbrow universe is one doozy of a universe. I love marvel's multiverse and it's hot and cold and forgotten teams, characters, etc. but I don't know the Marvel of today. I get the free catalog and figure that's my way of keeping up. So, Highbrow is my universe of choice and I want-very badly-to explore more parts of it. I loved this book for decades and I enjoyed every era but my favorite was back in the old S.O.S. days with a soap opera filled ensemble cast. I know Malcolm is running the show but that doesn't mean we have to be stuck in Toronto all the time, does it? Bad Dart has a rogue baby in Chicago, Jennifer might still be alive in Dimension-X, etc.

ADHD moment--can't wait to see Powerhouse return-- I would like to see the tons of scene changes this book used to utilize on a regular basis. I REALLY miss some of the supporting cast of yesterday and don't see why their adventures have to include them visiting Toronto. I mean, Spidey doesn't stay just in New York. Despite all this, you have achieved a great era in Toronto - even with Maxine. One letter writer said I'd like to see Maxine attacked by her rapist- I would not. I may not love her but would never wish such an attack on even a fictional character BUT it proves your talent in tackling such a serious subject that originated from within an on-going sex-joke-stereotype.

Anywho, keep those new characters coming... but don't forget some of yesterday's greats that are aging as we communicate. Here's to an even

more modern era beginning with 250. Those 100 page anniversary issues always knock continuity to a new level-just don't ignore the past-that's the mythology you created and should never be taken for granted when moving constantly forward.

Thank-you and may Highbrow continue far into my elder years,
Matthew Brandon Blaze Cashel

We haven't seen the last of Chicago by any means, Matthew.

Erik,

Wow, what a wild trip it's been. Back in the early days, I never thought I'd see Dragon's grown son having all sorts of wild sex right there on the page, even with Angel, who I'd also watched grow up. I enjoy seeing new characters grow through the stages of life in your art, especially the "muppet stage" as I call the way you draw toddlers, with heads sort of like balls that pop open like Pez dispensers when they talk. Cute kids.

I really enjoy the new villain Scourge. It's been too long since Dragon had a single villain that he didn't just take out in one fight. Someone a bit more menacing, who stays around a while, and even complicated in a way, like how he took out the Demonoids to protect the city he sees as his territory. That sort of complexity can really lead to some interesting situations, where characters end up learning more about each other and their motivations, and even switch sides.

The only thing I still miss is the mysteries you used to stretch out over a really long time, like Arachnid, OpenFace and Octopus, or even Horridus, when you would have that one page showing "DeKalb, Illinois" in each issue, for months before it paid off. That feeling that all these mysterious forces were growing in so many dark corners, and we only got small clues, or a creepy setting to make us wonder what was coming to the story next.

Anyway, I'm now buying three copies of every issue instead of one, to make up for the two Trump supporters who said they'd stopped reading. I was kind of shocked they made it this far, after Dragon ranted about Bush thinking "God has his back" and Obama showing up a couple times. You've certainly been consistent, but I guess they didn't feel as strongly about those others.

I'm really looking forward to you breaking 300! Dave Sim relied so heavily on text at some points, with only a small figure drawn in one corner, that Cerebus was more a book than a comic sometimes. Plus the misogyny, yeeesh. You, on the other hand, even went back and did your own #13 to make sure that your run was complete, and I really want to see you get the record-breaking title you deserve! You even lettered and colored it sometimes. Amazing!

Dragon's always been my favorite book, and we even had brunch (breakfast for you, lunch for me) at the Wizard World convention in Chicago in 2001, which was quite a treat for me. I'm so glad this is the Image book that's really stayed solid this whole time. It's an incredible accomplishment.

Ben Bernard
Connecticut

Thanks, Ben.

Politics has become particularly contentious over the last few decades and the Internet has only exacerbated the situation. The main reason I had Malcolm and family move North was in an effort to sidestep a lot of that. America has become increasingly ugly over the last few years.

-Erik Larsen

NEXT: The Scourge Strikes!

Hey, don't stop reading now--there's plenty of additional funnybook fun to be had in the pages that follow--!

SAVAGE DRAGON™

JUNGLE ACTION!

HOW DO I
LET MYSELF GET
TALKED INTO CRAP
LIKE THIS?

I'M JUST A
SOFT TOUCH--
THAT'S WHAT MY
PROBLEM IS!

I'M TOO
GODDAMN
NICE!

A TALE OF SAVAGE
DRAGON'S CHECKERED PAST
BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

ERIK LARSEN
WRITER

PJ HOLDEN ART

NIKOS KOUTSIS
and **MIKE TORIS**
COLORS

FERRAN DELGADO
LETTERS

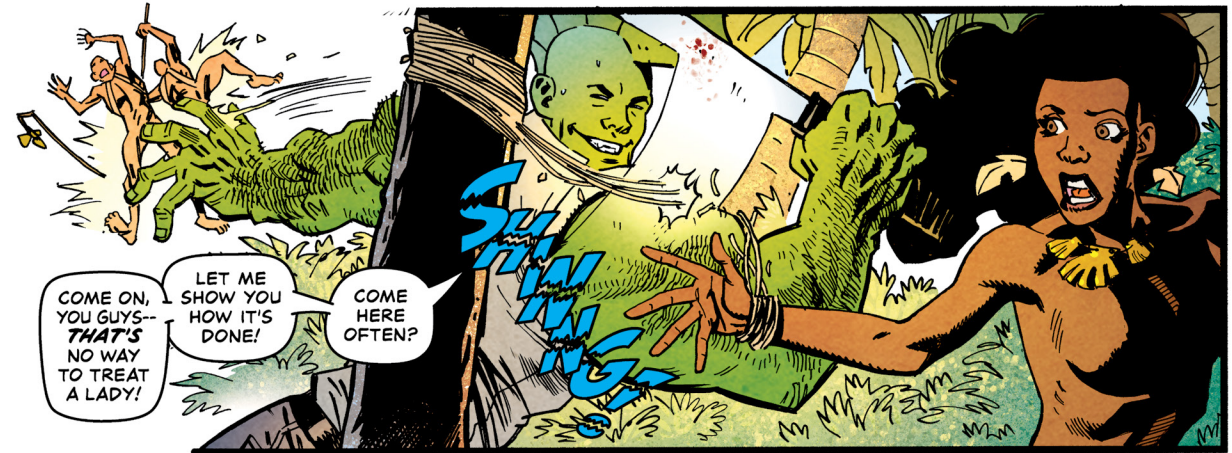


ENGOWA!

BRUTT
FING ENGOWA!
NEEK TEEL!

BE RIGHT
WITH YOU,
SWEETHEART.

NEEK
TEEL!



COME ON,
YOU GUYS--
THAT'S
NO WAY
TO TREAT
A LADY!

LET ME
SHOW YOU
HOW IT'S
DONE!

COME
HERE
OFTEN?

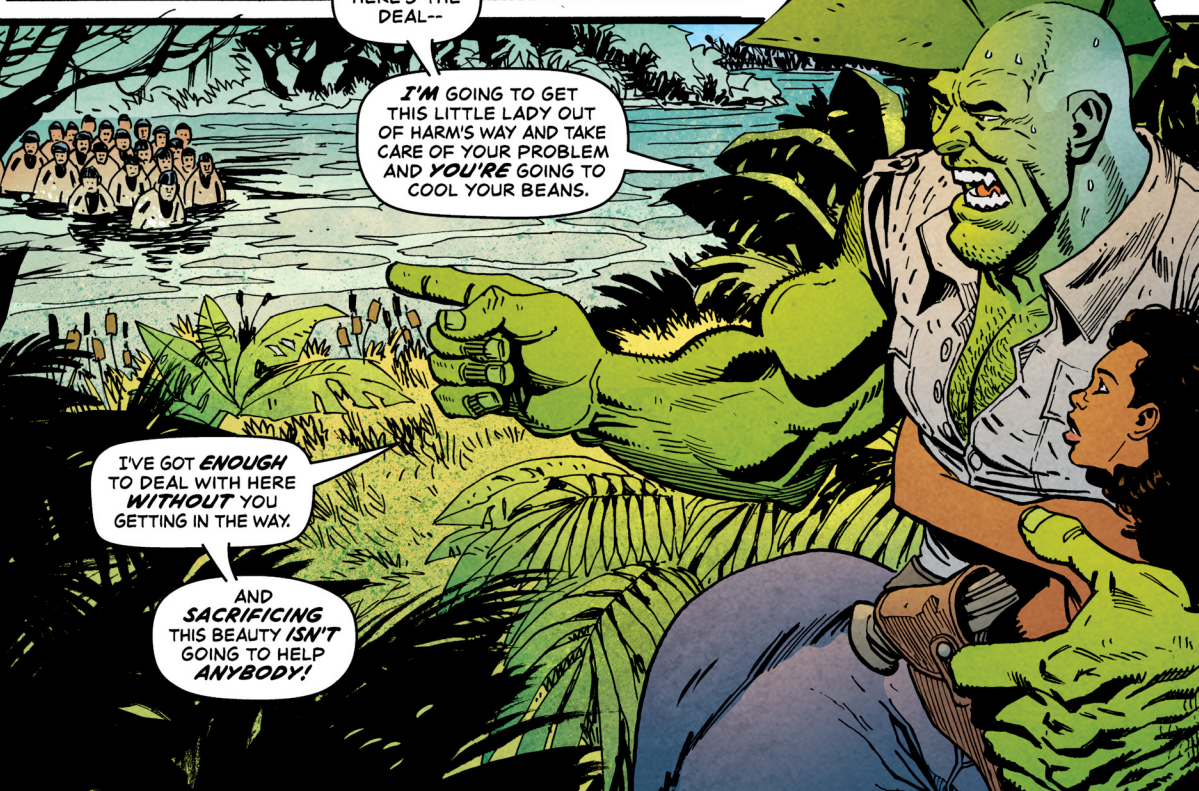
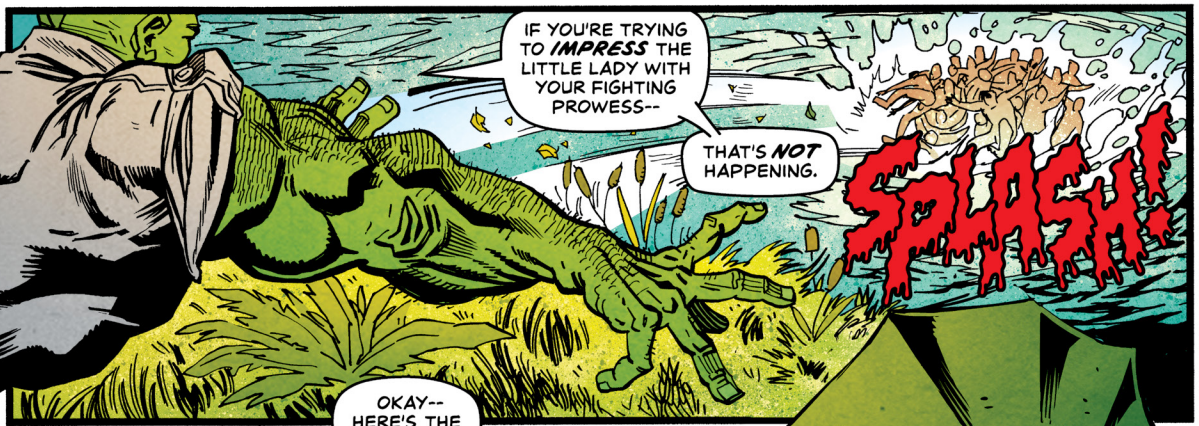
SHIN
IN!
SHIN
IN!
SHIN
IN!

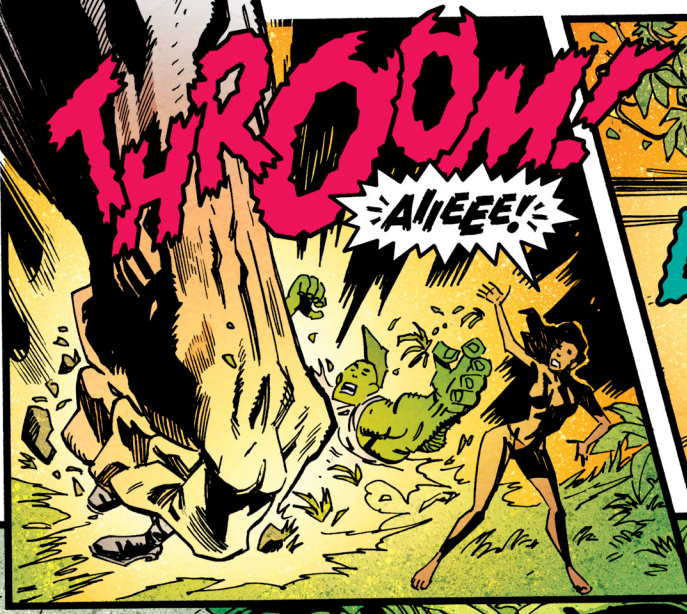


OH, FOR
CRYING OUT
LOUD!

CAN'T
YOU SEE
THAT
SHE'S JUST *NOT*
THAT INTO YOU?

GIVE IT
A REST
ALREADY!

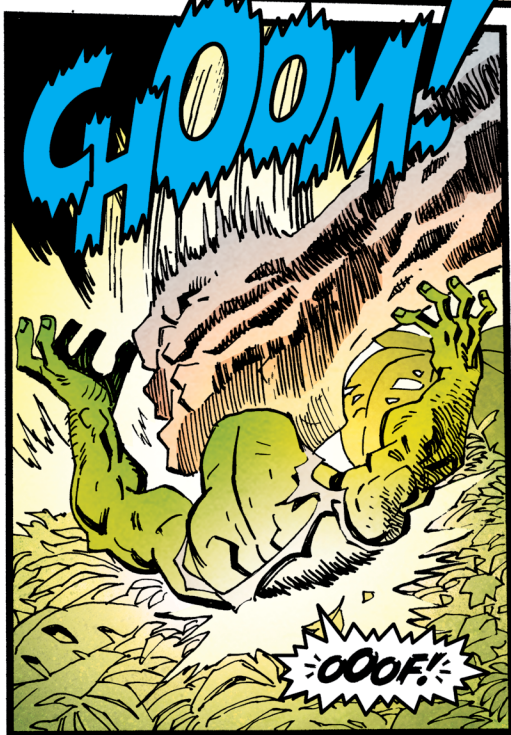


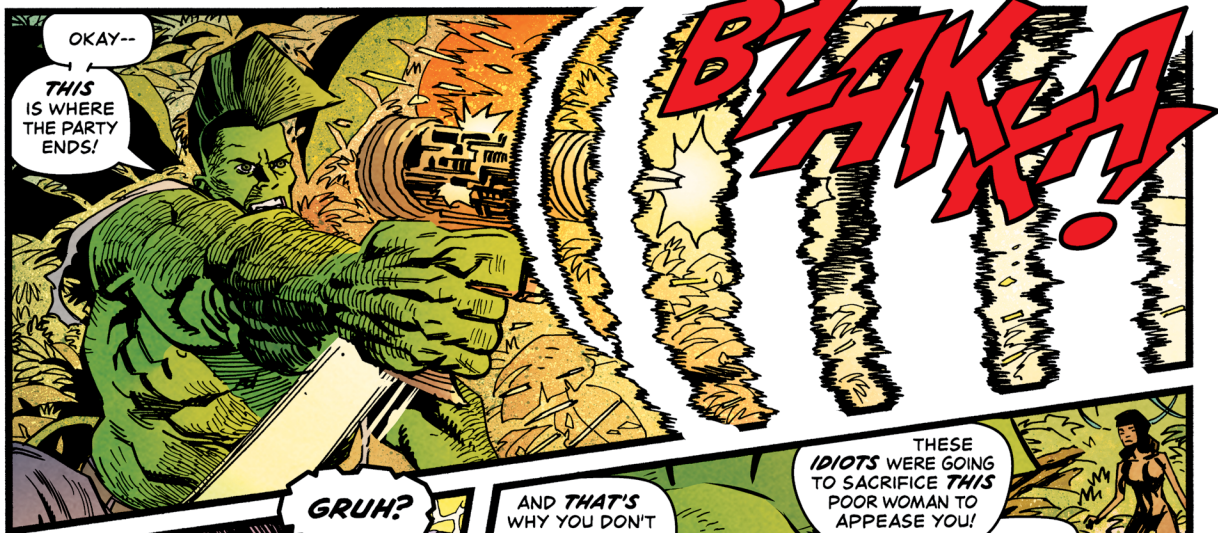


GRAAA!!

THERE YOU ARE!

I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU'D SHOW UP!

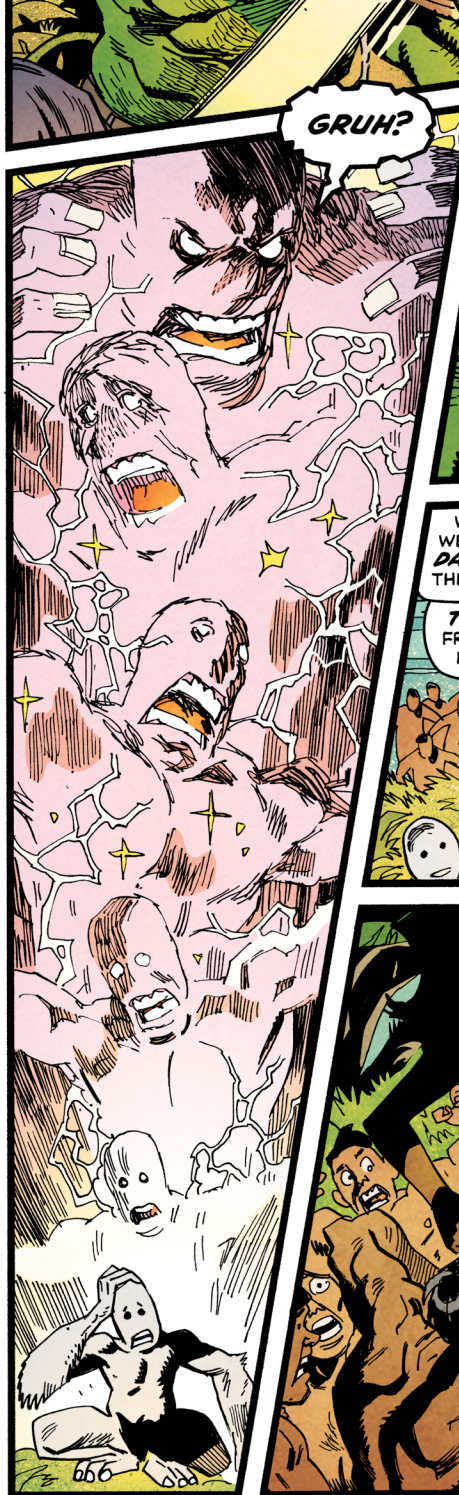




OKAY--

THIS IS WHERE THE PARTY ENDS!

BLAKKA!



GRUH?



AND THAT'S WHY YOU DON'T COME AROUND WITH MARTIAN TECHNOLOGY, FEEZLE!

THESE IDIOTS WERE GOING TO SACRIFICE THIS POOR WOMAN TO APPEASE YOU!

SORRY, AM I!

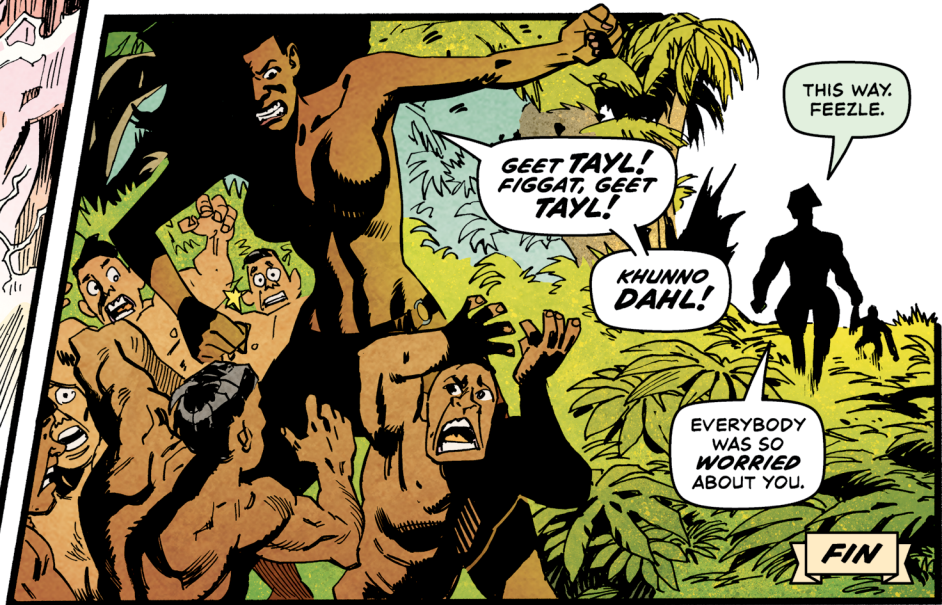
I WOULD HOPE SO! YOU OKAY NOW?

OKAY, I AM.



WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S TIME WE SHOVE OFF. YOU'RE OUT OF DANGER AND ALL IS RIGHT IN THE WORLD.

TRY NOT TO BE TOO HARD ON YOUR LITTLE FRIENDS--THEY REALLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO.



THIS WAY. FEEZLE.

GEET TAYL! FIGGAT, GEET TAYL!

KHUNNO DAHL!

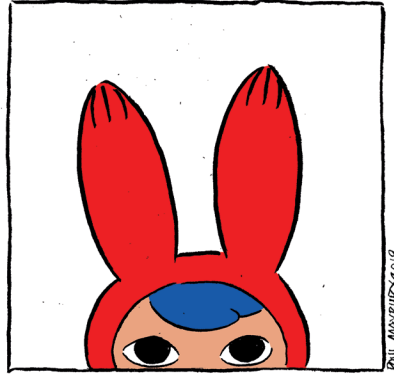
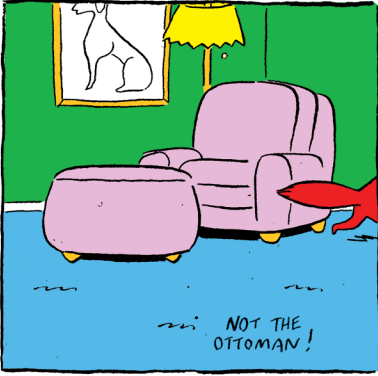
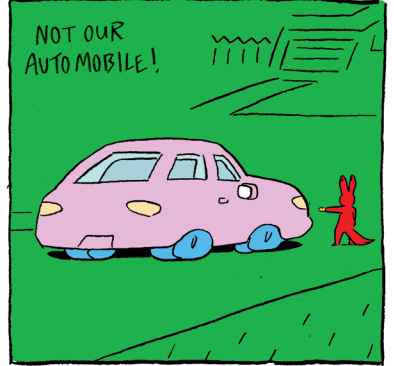
EVERYBODY WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

FIN

FUNNIES

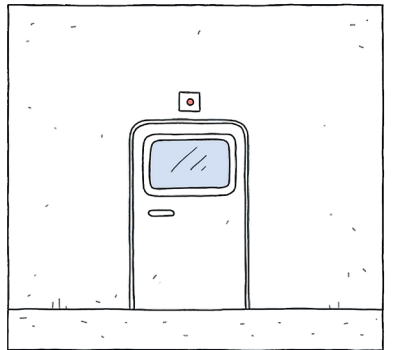
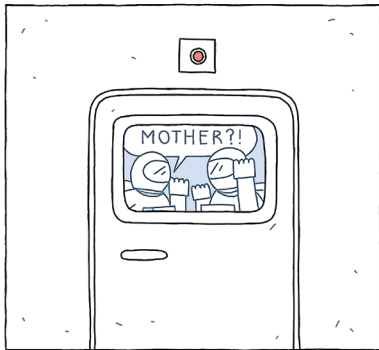
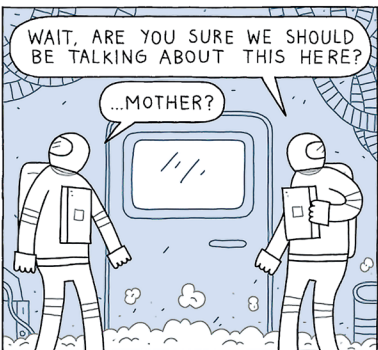
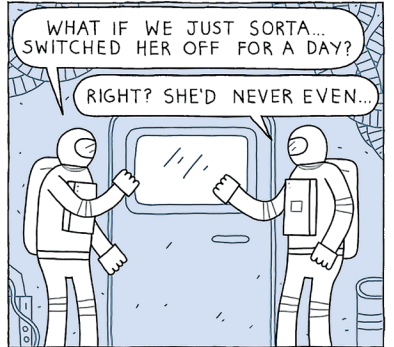
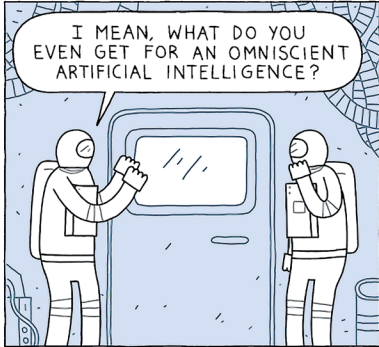
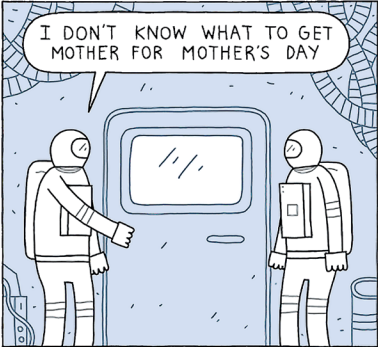
FOXY

by Paul Maybury



MOONBEARD

by James Squires



PAUL MAYBURY 2019

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FEVER DREAM."

—JEFF KLINGMAN
(BROOKLYN MAGAZINE)



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