

HEAVY METAL[®]

The
adult
illustrated
fantasy
magazine

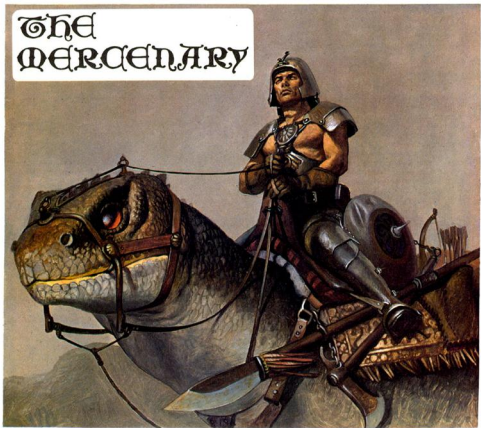


HM

THE ENORMOUS VALLEY, SITUATED IN THE REMOTE MOUNTAINOUS ZONE OF THE CONTINENT, HAD REMAINED ISOLATED FROM THE EVOLUTION OF THE PLANET. THE SOLOON, STEEP AND ARID ZONE HAD ORIGINATED A DISTINCTIVE FAUNA. THE GREATEST REPTILES HADNT DISAPPEARED. THEY EVOLVED INTO HUGE FLYING FORMS. EACH ONE DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT. MAN WAS LEFT SECLUDED, PERPETUALLY COVERED BY A GROUPING OF THICK CLOUDS THAT SPRUNG UP FROM THE LOW LANDS. THIS COLOSSAL COVERING GAVE THE AWE-SOME FEELING OF THE HEAVENS UP ABOVE.



THE MERCENARY





I MUST HAVE
BEEN SEEN.



THERE SHE IS!
I HOPE TO
GOD I HAVE
ARRIVED ON
TIME!



I'LL BE GRABBED IF I'M GO-
ING TO RETURN IMMEDIATELY
AS PLANNED. THEY'LL JUST
HAVE TO WAIT I'LL RESOLVE
THIS IN MY OWN WAY.



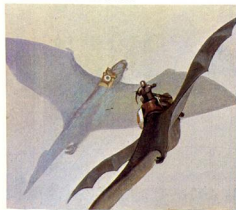
THE GIRL, DESTINED FOR A
SLOW, TORTUROUS DEATH,
KNEW THAT IT WAS ONLY A
MATTER OF TIME BEFORE
STARVATION OR EXHAUSTION
WOULD PREVAIL.
BUT AT LAST SOMEONE WAS
IN THE DISTANCE. HOPE WAS
REBORN! BUT NO! WAS IT A
MIRAGE? OR HAD HER IN-
EVITABLE DOOM COME
EVEN QUICKER THAN SHE
ANTICIPATED?





INDEED! THE AGILE INTERCEPTORS HAD HIM IN A DEFENSELESS SITUATION, AS THEY SWIRLED ABOUT HIM WITH RAPID DIVERS. HE WAS FORTUNATELY HELPING THE WOMAN FREE HERSELF FROM THE BINDINGS AND SET HERSELF SAFELY IN THE SADDLE.

BUT THE FIRST LUNGE ON THE PART OF THE ATTACKERS WAS HASTY AND FAR OFF TARGET. THEY SHOT THEIR ARROWS THROUGH SMALL BOWS MADE OF ANIMAL RIBS, AND THEY DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO PENETRATE SUFFICIENTLY THE SKIN OF THE ENORMOUS REPTILE OR THE SHIELD OF THE WARRIOR. ONLY A PRECISE SHOT IN AN EXPOSED SPOT WOULD BE EFFECTIVE.





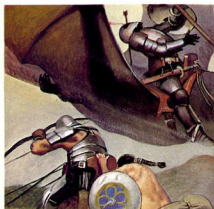
THE INTERCEPTOR WAS USING A POWERFUL BOW NEAR IN SIZE AND MADE OF ELM WOOD. HE FIRED HIS ARROW, WHICH TOOK OFF AT A SPEED FASTER THAN 100 METERS PER SECOND. ADDED TO THE VELOCITY OF THE SEE-SAWING OF THE REPTILES, THE IMPACT WAS SPECTACULAR.



THE WARRIOR INSTANTLY FELT THE IMPACT OF THE SHARP AND INSTINCTIVELY COVERED HIMSELF WITH HIS METAL SHIELD.

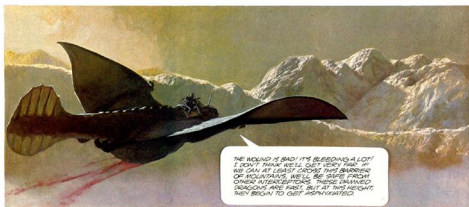
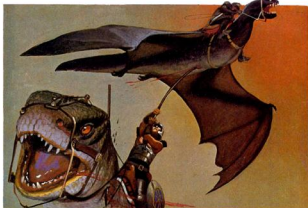


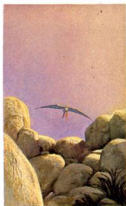
THE SHARP POINT WENT CLEANLY THROUGH THE SHIELD AND CONTINUED THROUGH THE HELMET.



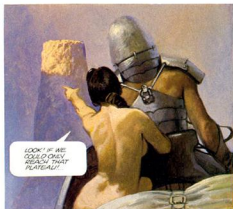
THE ATTACK ON THE INTERCEPTOR WAS SO CLOSE THAT THE REPTILE LOST A FEW PRECIOUS AND NECESSARY MOMENTS. HE LOADED HIS BOW. ANOTHER WARRIOR TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS AND PLUNGED FULL FORCE INTO THE INTERCEPTOR'S PATH. HE MISSED THE INTERCEPTOR, BUT SUCCEEDED IN RUINING HIS EXTRAORDINARY BOW.







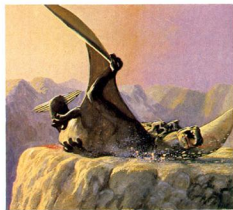
HE HAS NO MORE
STRENGTH. WE ARE
LOSING SPEED AND
ALTITUDE. HE'S
FINISHED.



LOOK! IF WE
COULD ONLY
REACH THAT
PLATFORM!

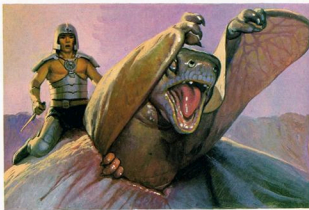


HE'S NOT REACTING
TO THE REIN. HE
MUST BE GOING
THERE BY INSTINCT.



HE HAS DIED!

TO BE CONTINUED



THE MERCENARY

When last we read, the mercenary was busy rescuing a woman destined for a slow, harsh death. He fought off her attackers, but his flying lizard was injured during the bout. The saurian was able to get them safely to a nearby cliff but died upon their landing.



TAKE THE BLANKET FROM YOUR
HARDHISLAND WARP YOURSELF IN IT
THE SUN SHOULD BE SETTING SOON
AND IT WILL GET CHILLY RATHER
QUICKLY



HOLD ON TIGHT HE'S
ABOUT TO TAKE HIS
FIRST LEAP



THERE'S NO WAY OF CONTROLLING HIM JUST
NOW. BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY, HIS
INSTINCTS WILL LEAD HIM TO WHERE THE
LONGHORN GROW, AND HE'LL STOP TO FEED ON
THEM FOR A WHILE. IT SHOULD BE EASY TO
REACH YOUR HUSBAND'S CASTLE FROM THERE.



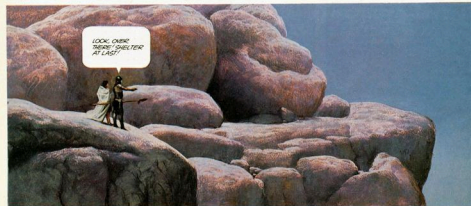
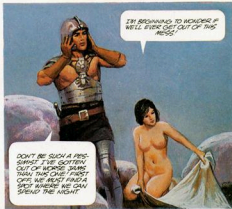
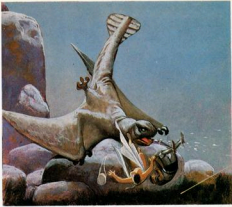
YOU SHOULD HAVE
GOTTEN RID OF ALL
YOUR ARMOR AND
WEAPONS. THEY'RE
VERY HEAVY!

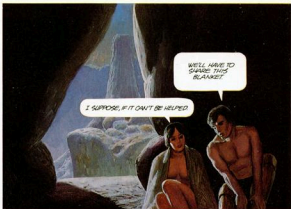


PERHAPS BUT I'D FEEL
EVEN MORE NAKED
THAN YOU ARE WITHOUT
THEM.



I DON'T THINK HE'LL BE ABLE
TO CARRY US BOTH FOR TOO
MUCH LONGER. AT THIS SPEED,
HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN
A STEADY COURSE.





NO THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I CAN'T
TAKE YOU WITH ME. I'LL BRING YOU
BACK TO YOUR HUSBAND AS WE
ORIGINALLY DISCUSSED.



LOOK, I'VE NEVER MET YOUR HUSBAND, AND I
DOUTER HE'S NO GREAT SHAKES IF HE'D RATHER
RISK YOUR LIFE THAN RISK THE RAUSOGAN. BUT,
YOU'VE GOT TO UNDERSTAND, I SHAN' AM LIVING
WITH THIS JOB, AND MY RESENTMENT COULD SUFFER
IF I TOOK YOU ALONG. WHO WOULD HIRE A
SENTIMENTAL MERCHANDISE?



DAMN YOU YOU'LL PAY
FOR THIS!



GRRROOO!



SHIT!

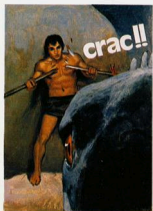


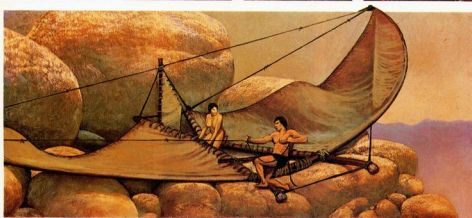
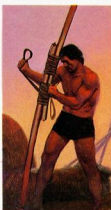
WE'RE IN A CARVING SITE'S DEN.
QUICK! LET'S GET OUT OF
HERE!



THERE'S NO ESCAPE. WE'LL GET US
ANYWAY, BUT WE MUST TRY TO GET
UP A FIGHT! RUN! RUN! AS FAR
AWAY AS YOU CAN!









DO YOU HAVE TO PUT YOUR ARMOR ON AGAIN? YOU DON'T WANT A REPEAT OF WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME.

DON'T WORRY THIS TIME WE'LL FLY BESIDES. I'VE ALREADY LOST TOO MANY THINGS ON THIS JOB.



LOOK, THERE'S YOUR HUSBAND'S CASTLE!



IT'S THE 'MIS-CEMERY' AND LOOK! HE'S BRINGING YOUR WIFE BACK WITH HIM!



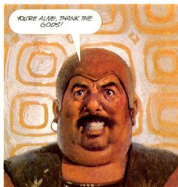
SHE SEEMS TO BE FINE! BRING HER HERE AT ONCE AND LEAVE US BE!

YES, SIR?

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE MERCENARY

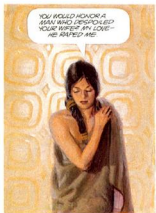
Having saved the "damsel in distress," the Mercenary fled on his newborn saurian. Young and weak, the bird dropped them on a nearby cliff, unable to carry them any further. They decided to camp there for the night, but when the Mercenary would not yield to the woman's flirtations, she became outraged. The following morning, he returned her to her home.



YOU'RE ALIVE, THANK THE GODS!



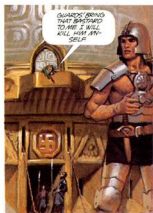
AND AGAIN I'VE THWARTED AN ENEMY. YES, I DO BELIEVE THE MERCENARY WILL BE WELL REWARDED



YOU WOULD HONOR A MAN WHO DESPOILED YOUR WIFE IN LOVE— HE RAPED ME.



WHAT?

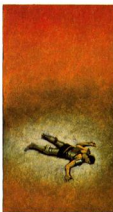
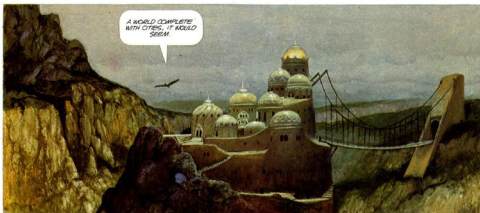


GUARDS! BRING THAT BASTARD TO ME! I WILL KILL HIM MYSELF



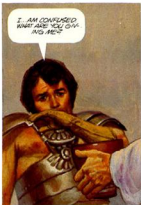
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS! HIS LEGIONS ARE ATTACKING ME!







HERE, DRINK
SOME MORE.
IT WILL HELP
YOU.

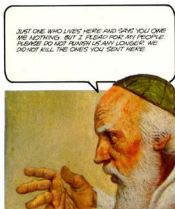


I AM CONFUSED.
WHAT ARE YOU GIV-
ING ME?



BREATH? THEN I
AM ALIVE? AND I
OWE YOU MY LIFE.
BUT, WHO ARE YOU?

AN HERBAL EXTRACT TO CURE YOUR
ALTITUDE SICKNESS. IT WILL ALLOW
YOU TO BREATHE HERE.

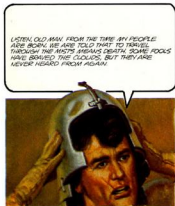


JUST ONE WHO LIVES HERE AND SAYS YOU OWE
ME NOTHING. BUT I PLEADED FOR MY PEOPLE.
PLEASE DO NOT PUNISH US ANY LONGER. WE
DID NOT KILL THE ONE'S YOU SENT HERE.



WHAT ARE YOU JABBER-
ING ABOUT, OLD MAN?
I'VE NEVER EVEN
HEARD OF THIS PLACE
AS FAR AS PUNISHING
YOU...

YOU HAVE NEVER
HEARD OF US? BUT
YOUR PEOPLE...?




LISTEN, OLD MAN. FROM THE TIME MY PEOPLE
ARE BORN, WE ARE TOLD THAT TO TRAVEL
THROUGH THE MISTS MEANS DEATH. SOME FOOLS
HAVE BOAVED THE CLOUDS, BUT THEY ARE
NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN.



YES, WE HAVE SEEN THEM FALL FROM THE SKY
AND DIE. THAT IS WHY WHEN OUR CHIEF'S
DAUGHTER WAS TAKEN WE THOUGHT YOUR
PEOPLE WERE PUNISHING US, THINKING WE
HAD KILLED YOUR WARRIORS.

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHY DO YOU THINK MY
PEOPLE ARE BEHIND THIS?



THERE IS THE REASON, MY FRIEND, THAT
LIGHT AMIDST THE CLOUDS AND THE
CAVE THAT MYSTICALLY HANGS THERE
WITH OUR CHIEF'S DAUGHTER HELD
CAPTIVE INSIDE.

IT DEFIES THE VERY FORCES
THAT PULL ALL THINGS
GROUNDWARD! NO, OLD
MAN, MY PEOPLE ARE IN-
CAPABLE OF SUCH MAGIC.



MY PEOPLE, WE ALWAYS
TALK OF MY
PEOPLE. WHERE ARE
YOURS?

THEY HAVE GONE TO
THE MOUNTAINS WHERE THEY
ARE PRESUMING THE RANSOM
OF ONE THOUSAND SKINS OF
ALCOHOL. PLEASE, COME SEE
THEM. BUT LET ME WARN THEM
OF YOUR COMING.



ALCOHOL AND NOT GOLD?
BY THE GODS, THIS PROVES
THAT YOUR WOMAN STEALER
IS NOT FROM MY LAND.

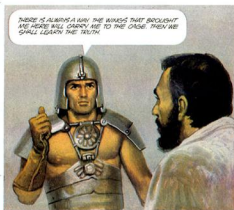
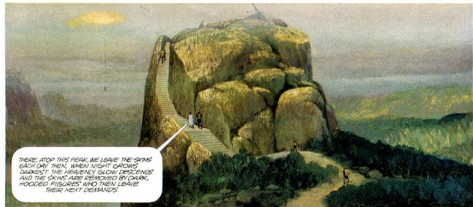


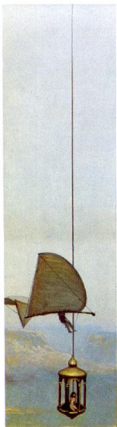
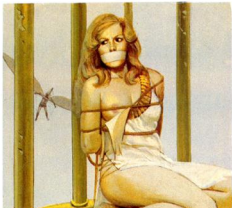
SO GRANDFATHER HAS TOLD ME, STRANGER,
BUT NOW I ADMIT TO BEING MORE CON-
FUSED THAN EVER. IF YOUR PEOPLE DO
NOT HOLD MY DAUGHTER CAPTIVE, WHO
DOES? WHO IS DEMANDING THE RANSOM?



PERHAPS, IF YOU ARE INTER-
ESTED, THAT IS SOMETHING I
CAN DISCOVER. FOR A PRICE,
OF COURSE! SUCH MERCENARY
WORK IS MY JOB, AFTER ALL.

COME THEN,
STRANGER! LET
US WALK.



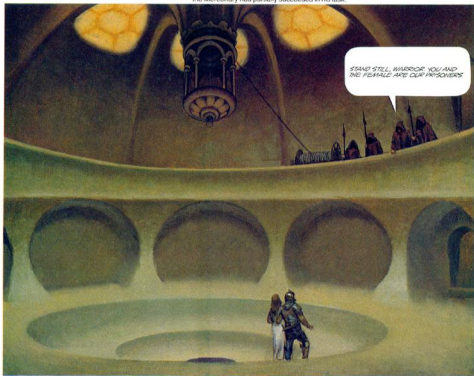




TO BE CONTINUED

THE MERCENARY

While fleeing from a jealous husband and his spear-happy guards, the Mercenary got caught in a heavy fog and was unable to reach his destination. He happened upon a nearby village, where he was nursed back to health after a tumultuous landing. The townspeople told him of the kidnapping of their chief's daughter, and he offered to rescue her...for a price, that is. Last we saw, the Mercenary had partially succeeded in his task.



STAND STILL, WARRIOR. YOU AND THE FEMALE ARE OUR PRISONERS.



AND YOU WILL REMAIN SO UNTIL THE RANSOM HAS BEEN PAID US.



BUT FIRST, WARRIOR—STOP YOURSELF OF YOUR WEAPONS, AND TOSS THEM THROUGH THE TUNNEL FROM WHICH YOU CAME.

THE KNIFE IS AN ONLY
WEAPON...



...AND MY ARMOR
COSTS A WARRIOR'S
HARD-FOUGHT WAGES

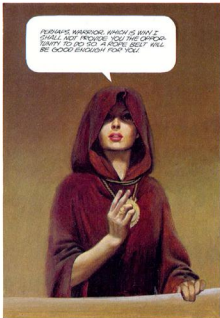


THE BELT WARRIOR
REMOVES IT YOU ARE
NOT PERMITTED TO
KEEP METALLIC THINGS

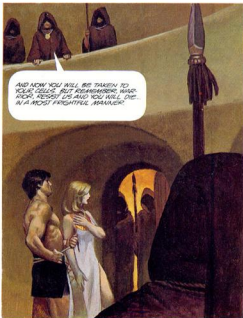


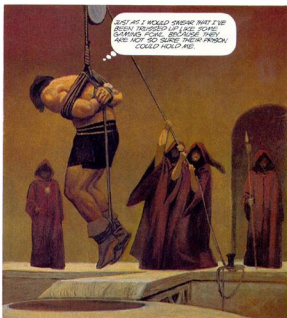
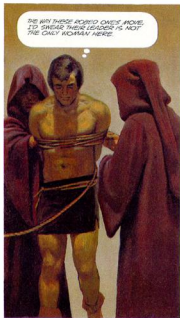
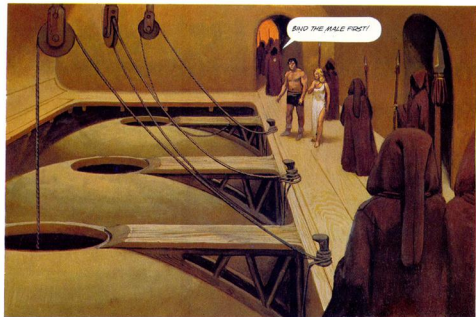
MY BELT YOU THINK
I'LL USE IT TO FIGHT
MY WAY FREE?

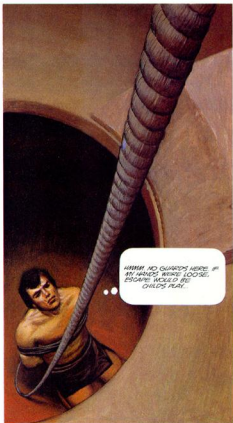
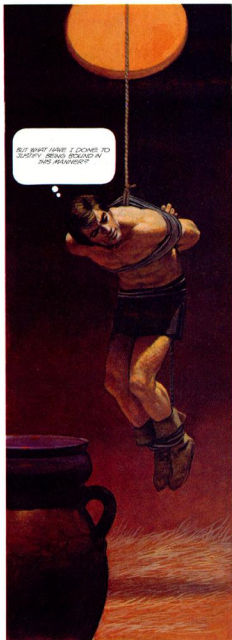
PERHAPS, WARRIOR, WHICH IS WHY I
SHALL NOT PROVIDE YOU THE OFFER.
TUNTY TO DO SO. A ROPE BELT WILL
BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU.



AND NOW YOU WILL BE TAKEN TO
YOUR CELLS. BUT REMEMBER, WAR-
RIOR, RESIST US AND YOU WILL DIE...
IN A MOST FRIGHTFUL MANNER.



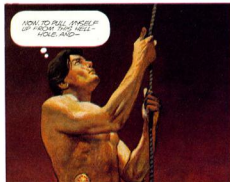
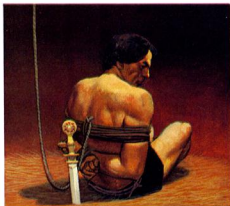
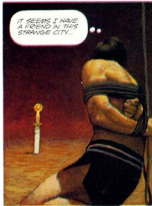
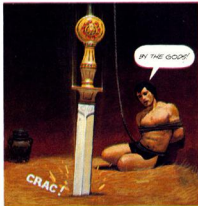


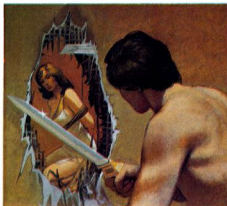


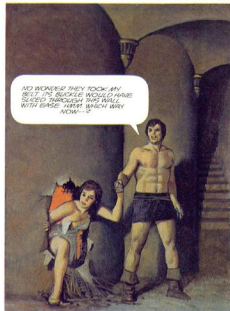
TO BE CONTINUED...

THE MERCENARY

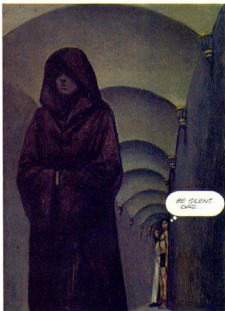
While trying to rescue the chief's daughter, the Mercenary was taken prisoner. Strange robed figures ordered him to throw down his sword and armor. He was tied up and lowered into a pit. And evidently, he is to stay for quite a long time.



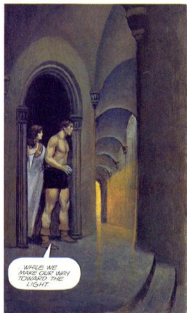




NO WONDER THEY TOOK MY
BELT. ITS BUCKLE WOULD HAVE
SLICED THROUGH THIS WALL
WITH EASE. NOW? WHICH WAY
NOW--?



BE SILENT,
GIRL...



WHILE WE
MAKE OUR WAY
TOWARD THE
LIGHT.

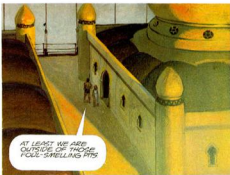


WIDEAWAKE, LOOK! IT IS
THE SACRED FIRE!

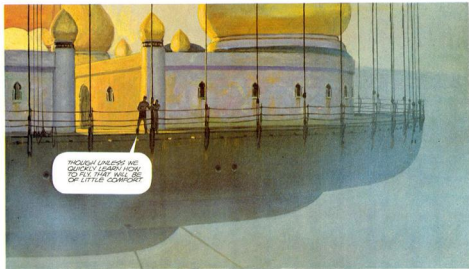
MORE IMPORTANT, GIRL, THERE
ARE TOO MANY GUARDS TO
BATTLE OUR WAY THROUGH.
WE'LL GO ANOTHER ROUTE.



I SWEAR WE WILL
FIND OUR WAY
TO FREEDOM, ONE
WAY OR ANOTHER!



AT LEAST WE ARE
OUTSIDE OF THOSE
FOUL-SMELLING PITS



THOUGH UNLESS WE
QUICKLY LEARN HOW
TO FLY THAT WILL BE
OF LITTLE COMFORT



STILL, WE MOVE ON AND
SEARCH, AND HOPE



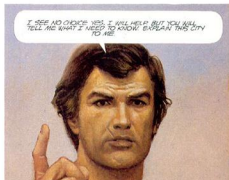
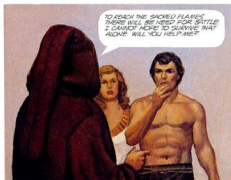
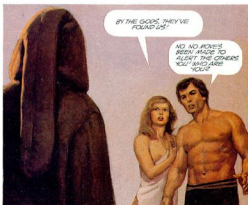
HOPE--IF WOMAN, NOW THERE
IS NO MORE HOPE! WE HAVE
WALKED IN A COMPLETE
CIRCLE. THERE IS NO WAY OFF
THIS DAMNED FLOATING ISLE

TO BE CONTINUED...

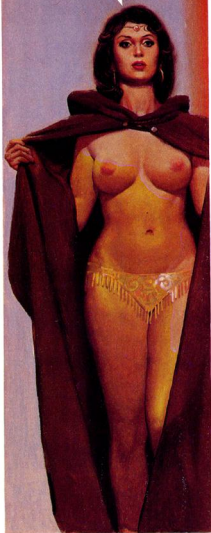
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THE MERCENARY

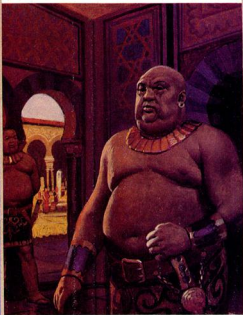
The Mercenary, having escaped, rescued the chief's daughter from her cell, and together they tried to find a way out of the floating prison. But despite their efforts they were going around in circles.



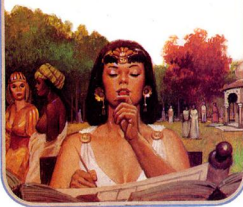
YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ASKING OF ME, OR THE RISKS I TAKE IN EVEN TALKING TO YOU. BUT ALL RIGHT, IT IS NECESSARY THAT YOU REPLY ME, IF YOU HAD NOT GUESSED BEFORE, I AM A WOMAN, AS ARE ALL THE PEOPLE HERE—ALL OF US YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL...ALL OF US AT ONE TIME DESIRABLE



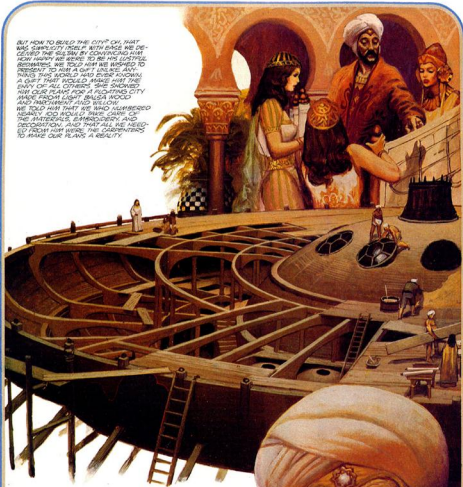
AND ALL OF US THE SLAVES OF A POWERFUL SULTAN. OH, HE CALLED US HIS HAREMS! BUT THERE WAS NO DOUBT WHAT WE TRULY WERE. ONE BY ONE, HE KIDNAPPED US FROM FOREIGN CITIES OR BROUGHT US FROM SLAVE CARAVANS. ONE BY ONE HE WOULD LOVE US UNTIL A NEW FEMALE POLARIS HIS TRICKY. OH, WE HAD TREASURES BEYOND THE DREAMS OF GODS, AS HIS HAREMS WOMEN, BUT NOT EVEN THE MOST VALUABLE, JEWELS MADE UP FOR OUR LOSS OF FREEDOM AND LOVE.



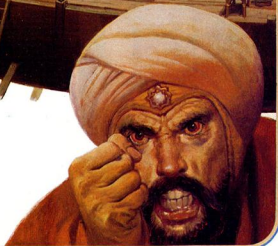
ONE OF US WAS A SCIENTIST WHO PLANNED FOR MANY YEARS TO ESCAPE. IT WAS SHE WHO CONCEIVED "THE CITY OF SACRED FIRE" AS OUR MEANS OF BREAKING FREE.



BUT HOW TO BUILD THE CITY? OH, THAT WAS SURPRISINGLY EASY. WITH BRICKS WE DECEIVED THE SULTAN BY CONVINCING HIM NOW HAPPY WE WERE TO BE HIS LUSTFUL ROOMMATES, WE TOLD HIM WE WISHED TO PRESENT TO HIM A GIFT. USING ANYTHING THIS WORLD HAD EVER KNOWN, A GIFT THAT WOULD MAKE HIM THE ENVY OF ALL OTHERS. SHE SHOWED HIM OUR PLANS FOR A FLOATING CITY MADE FROM LIGHT BALSAM WOOD AND TRANSPARENT AND WILLOW. WE TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD NUMBERED NEARLY 100 WOULD TAKE CARE OF THE MATERIALS, EMERALD, AND DECORATION. AND THAT ALL HE NEEDED FROM HIM WERE THE CARPENTERS TO MAKE OUR PLANS A REALITY.



OH, HOW QUICKLY HE AGREED! YOU SEE, WE KNEW HE SAW THIS FLOATING CITY NOT ONLY AS AN HOMAGE TO HIM, BUT ALSO AS A FORTRESS FROM WHICH TO WAGE WAR (FROM HIS ENEMIES FOR FIVE YEARS WE LABORED, THEN AT LAST THE CITY WAS READY). THAT NIGHT WE TOOK TO THE CITY SUPPOSEDLY TO MAKE FINAL IMPROVEMENTS. WE LIT THE SACRED FIRE AND ROSE INTO THE AIR, LEAVING THE SULTAN BEHIND. WE WERE FREE AT LONG LAST, BUT THE SULTAN SWORE HE WOULD NOT REST UNTIL ALL OF US WERE SLAIN AND OUR FLESH FED TO THE CULTRURES.



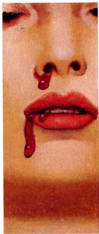
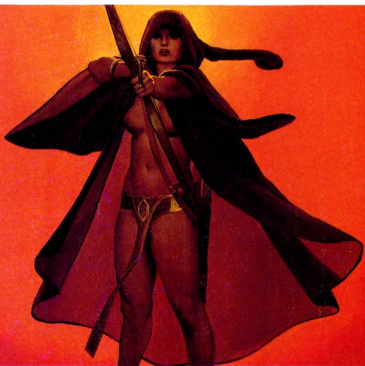
I RISK MY LIFE TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE WE ALL
TOOK A SACRED OATH OF SECRECY. IF THE SULTAN
KNEW WHERE WE WERE WE WOULD SURELY DIE.

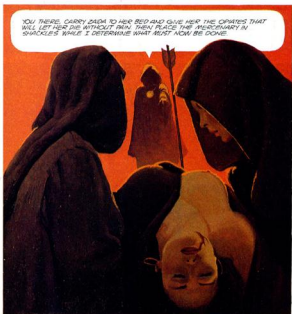
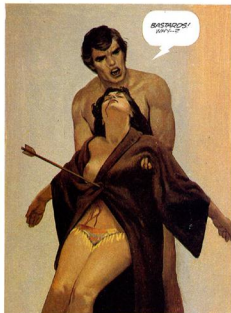
BUT THIS FLOATING CITY, WHICH WAS TO
BE OUR MEANS OF REACHING FREE-
DOM, HAS ONLY BECOME ANOTHER
PRISON--A PRISON I CAN NO LONGER
TOLERATE. PLEASE, YOU MUST HELP
ME FLEE.

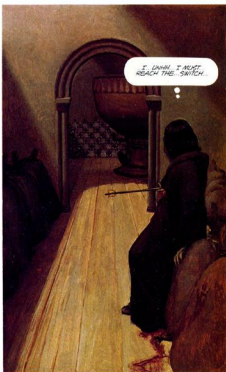
OF COURSE I WILL, THOUGH
I STILL DO NOT UNDER-
STAND HOW THIS CITY
STAYS AFLOAT.

THAT IS SIMPLE, MERTON.
ANYONE COME QUICKLY TO
THE SACRED FIRE AND
YOU WILL SEE.

STENCE, ZADA! YOU
HAVE ALREADY TALKED
TOO MUCH!







THE MERCENARY

WROOOOOO

THE FLAME!
BY THE GODS—IT GROWS
HIGHER!

While trying to escape the floating prison, the Mercenary and the chief's daughter came face to face with one of their captors who was also trying to escape. After telling the Mercenary the truth behind the floating prison the former captor was shot by a prison guard.

QUICKLY—WE MUST GET
TO THE REGULATION
CHAMBER BEFORE--



ZADA!



SHE IS DEAD SHE FELL ON
THE LEVER AND TURNED
OFF THE FIRE!

IT NO LONGER MATTERS
IT IS ALREADY
TOO LATE

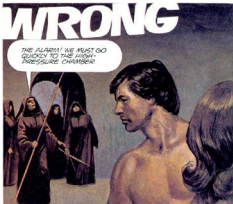


AFTER THE FIRE WAS EXTINGUISHED, THE PERCECARY EVALUATED THE DAMAGE. THE CHAMBER HAD RECOVERED.



HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

MY GOD! THE CARLES HAVE BEEN SAVED! SOUND THE ALARM!



THE ALARM! WE MUST GO QUICKLY TO THE HIGH-PRESSURE CHAMBER!



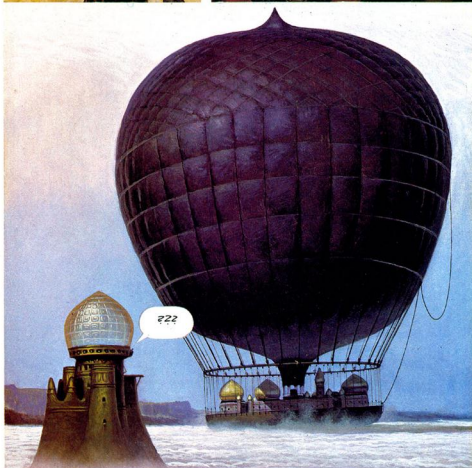
THEY'VE DESERTED US! SOMETHING MUST BE GOING ON! I'M LOSING MY BREATH. THE CITY MUST BE RISING.



IF WE CONTINUE LIKE THIS, WE'LL END UP RISING ABOVE THE CLOUDS AND ON THROUGH THE HEAVENS!

I FEEL AS IF I'M GOING TO FAINT. I CAN'T GET ANY AIR!

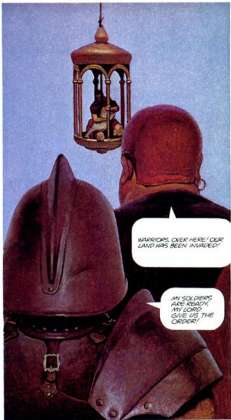




TO BE CONTINUED...



DRAW OUR LUCK! WE'VE
FLOATED BACK TO MY
WORLD—AND THE OVER-
LORD'S CASTLE THAT PRO
WILL SEND HIS WARRIORS
TO KILL ME.

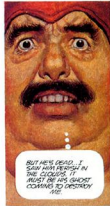


WARRIORS, OVER HERE! OUR
LAND HAS BEEN INVADIED!

MY SOLDIERS
ARE READY.
MY LORD
GIVE US THE
ORDER!

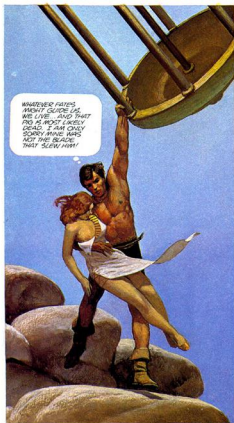
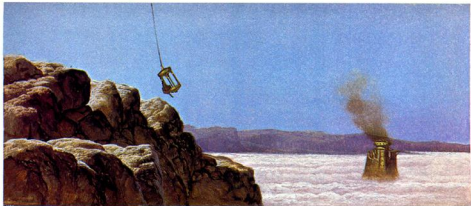


ORD, BY THE GODS!
THAT MAN—I KNOW
HIM! IT IS THE
MERCENARY!



BUT HE'S DEAD. I
SAW HIM PERISH IN
THE CLOUDS. IT
MUST BE HIS GHOST
COMING TO DESTROY
ME.





YOU'RE AWAKE? GOOD
WE'RE NOT FAR FROM
YOUR COUNTRY, ARE WE?

WE'RE
VERY
CLOSE.

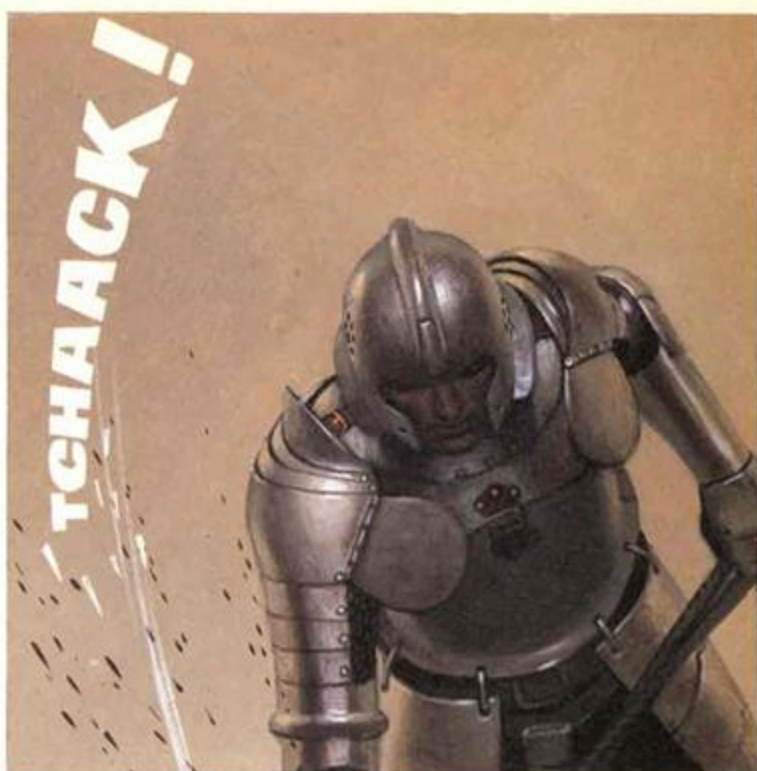
BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO GO
BACK DOWN THERE
ALONE. THE OLD
MAGMAN'S POTIONS
ARE WEARING OFF. I
FIND THE TOWN ALSO
DIFFICULT TO BREATHE.

I AM ONLY SORRY
YOU CANNOT JOIN ME.
MY MASTER WOULD
GIVE YOU GREAT RE-
WARDS. THERE WOULD
BE CELEBRATIONS FOR
WHAT YOU'VE DONE
FOR MY PEOPLE.

PERHAPS SOMEDAY IF
YOU CAN FIND A WAY TO
CUT THE TIGHT POTION.
NOW PLEASE, BE CARE-
FUL. THE KING OF YOUR
WORLD IS TREACHEROUS.

AND YOU TAKE CARE,
MY HANDS ARE COLD. I
WILL FIND A WAY TO
KNOW YOU TO ME.
TRUST ME, I SHALL FIND
A WAY.

THE
END



The Mercenary: The Sacrifice

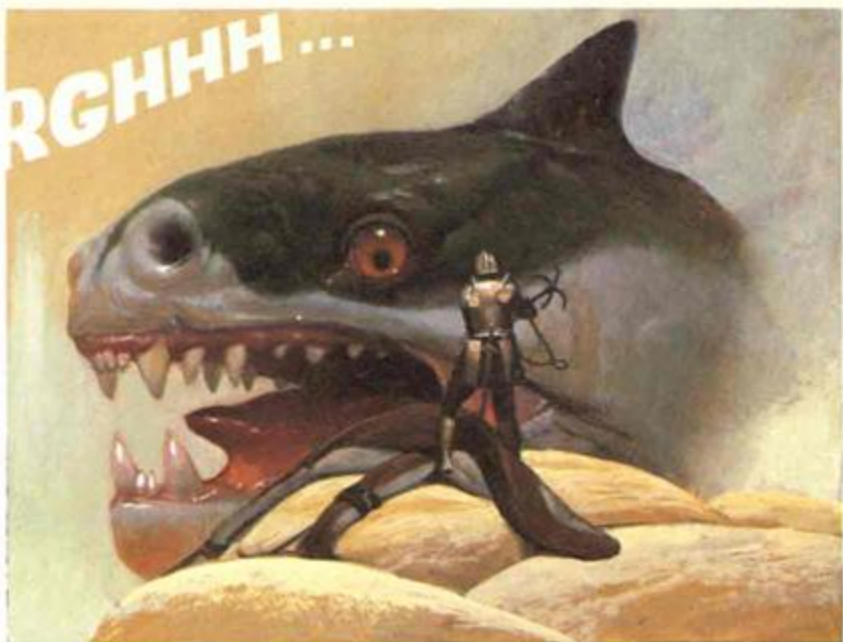
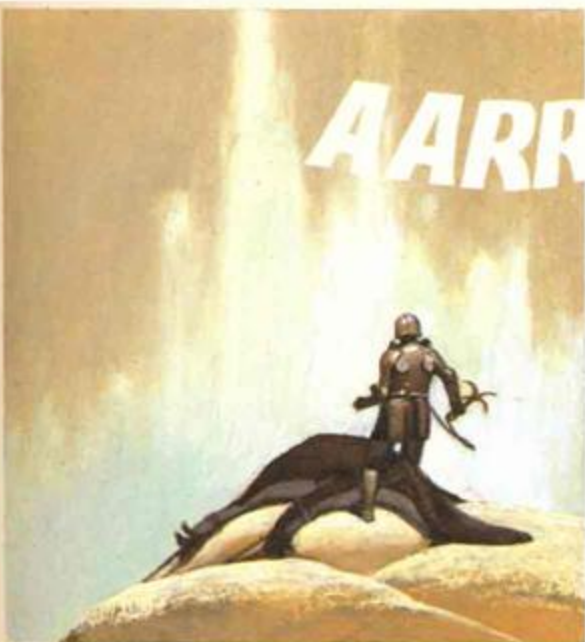
by Segrelles

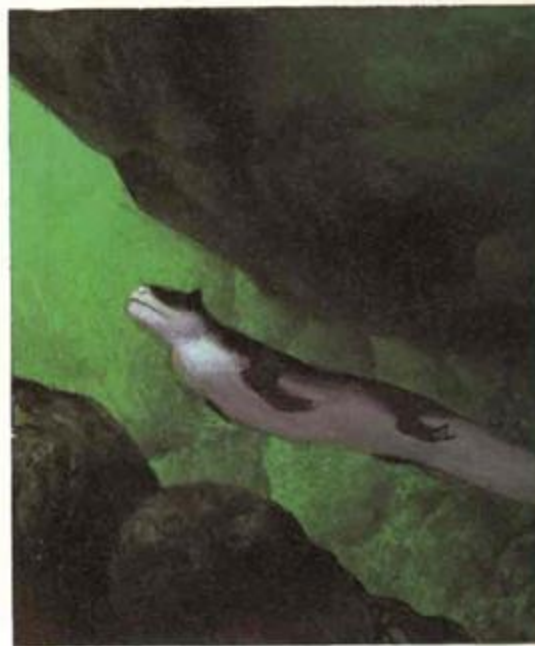
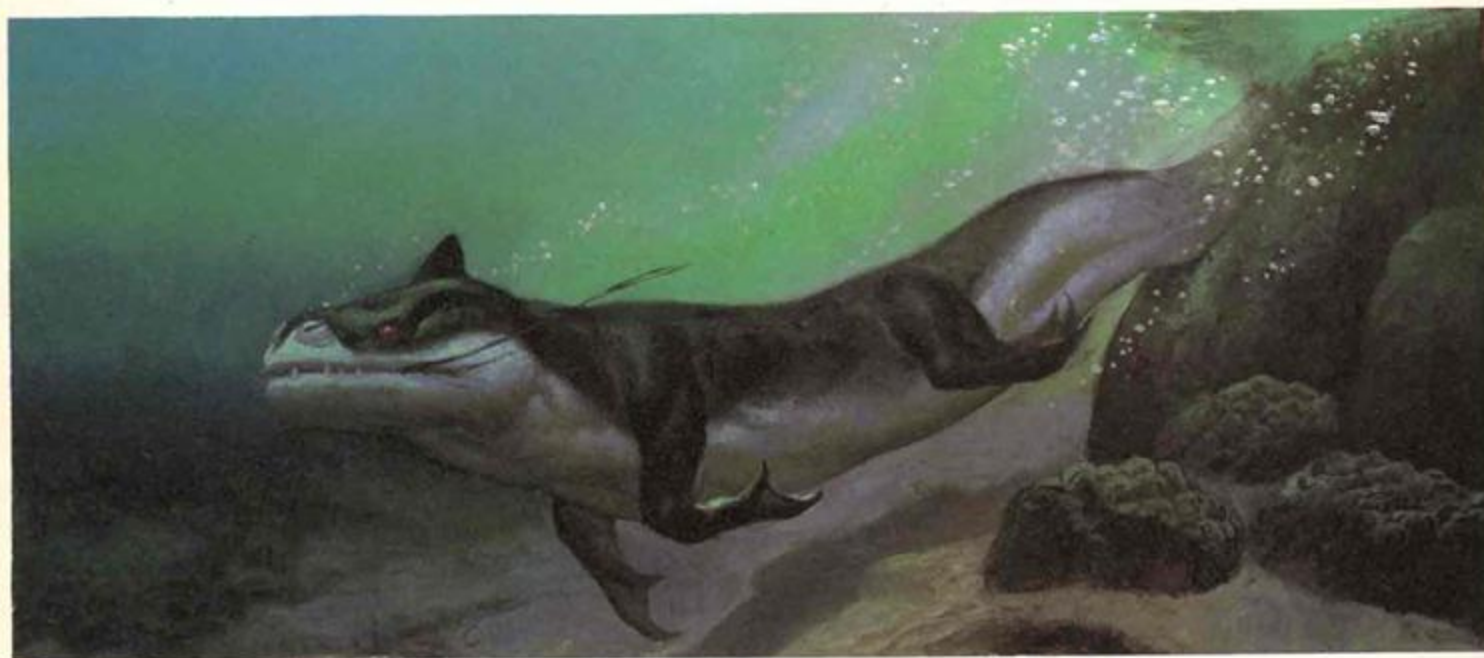
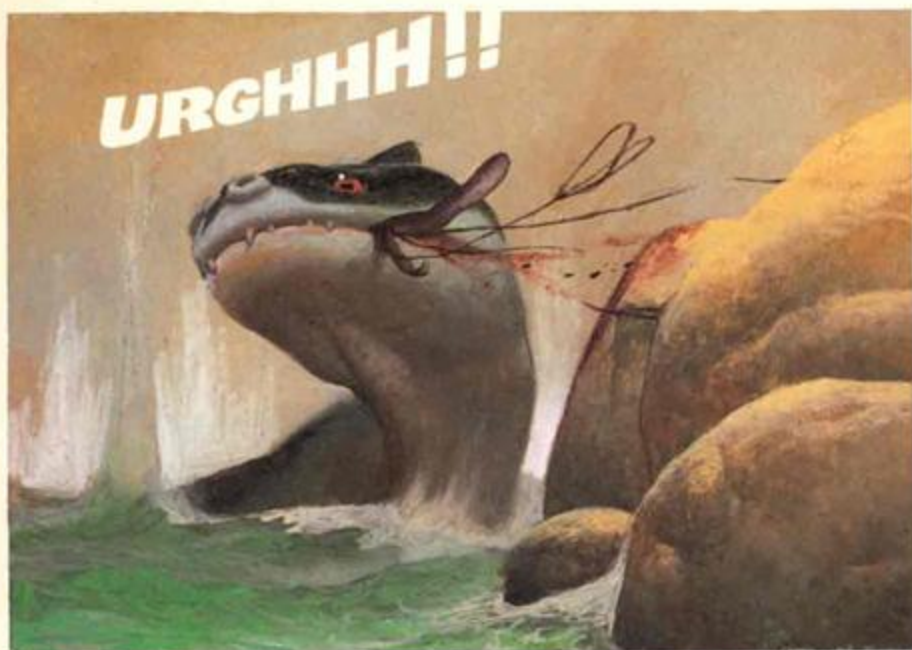
THE CEREMONY HAS
ALREADY STARTED... I
HOPE I WON'T BE
LATE...

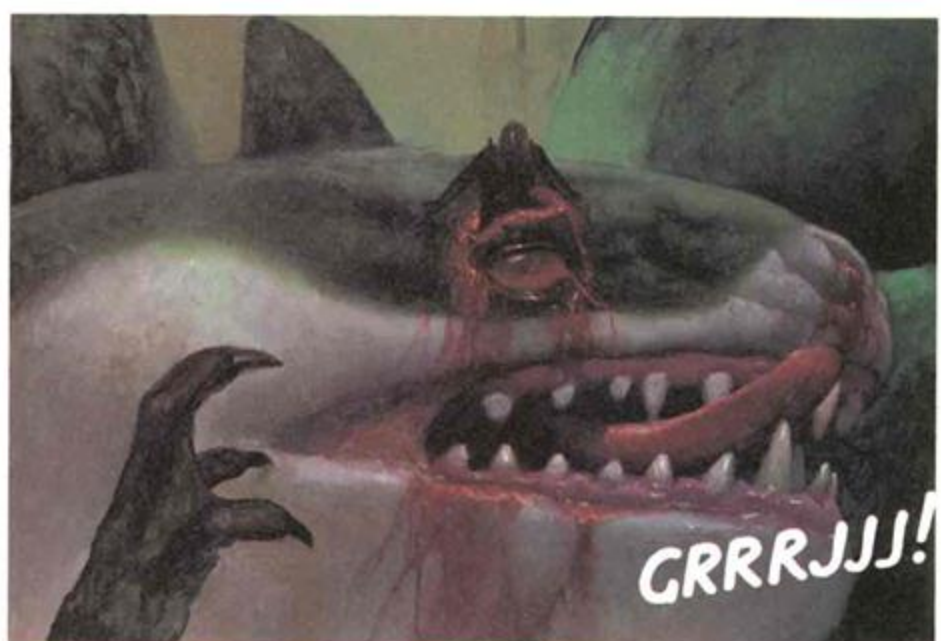
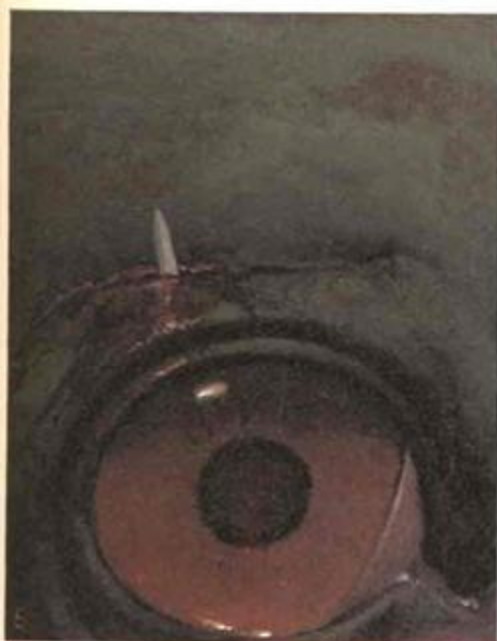
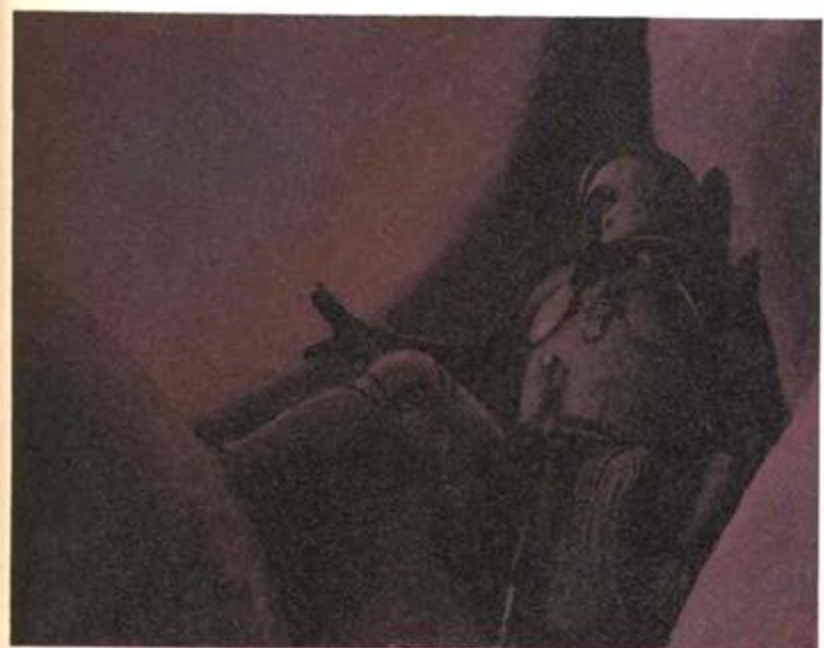
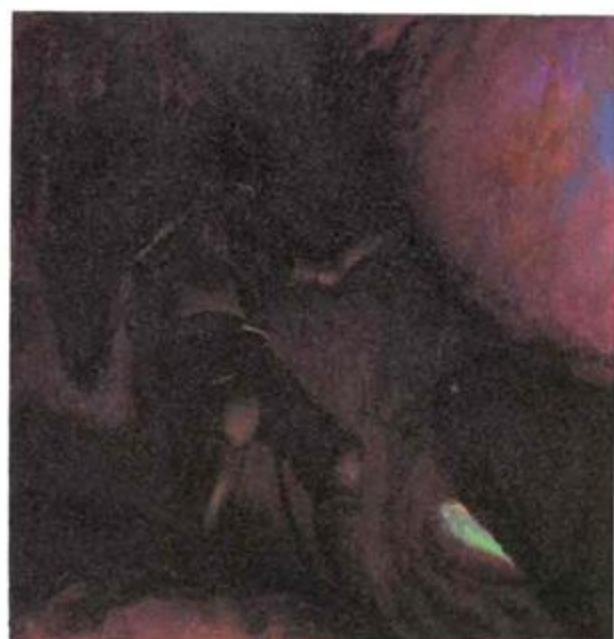


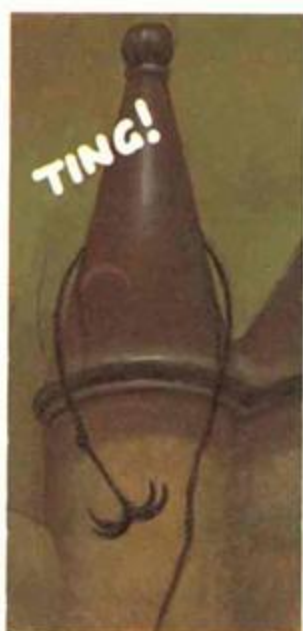
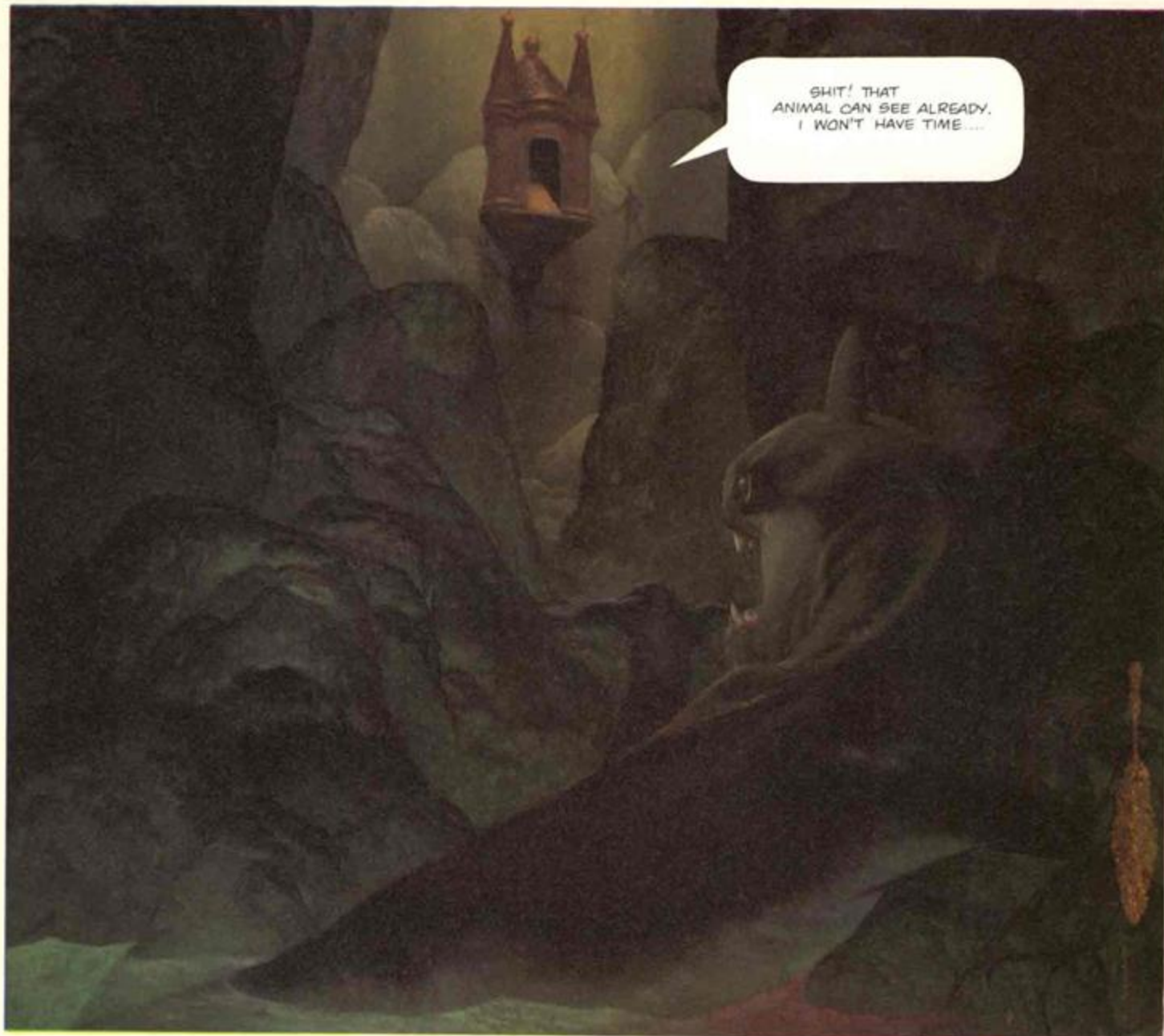
AT LAST!
THERE IT IS!





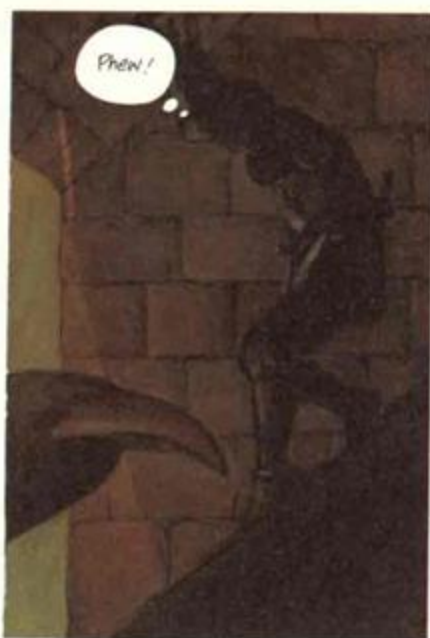








GODDAMN...



Phew!



AND NOW
I'LL WAIT.

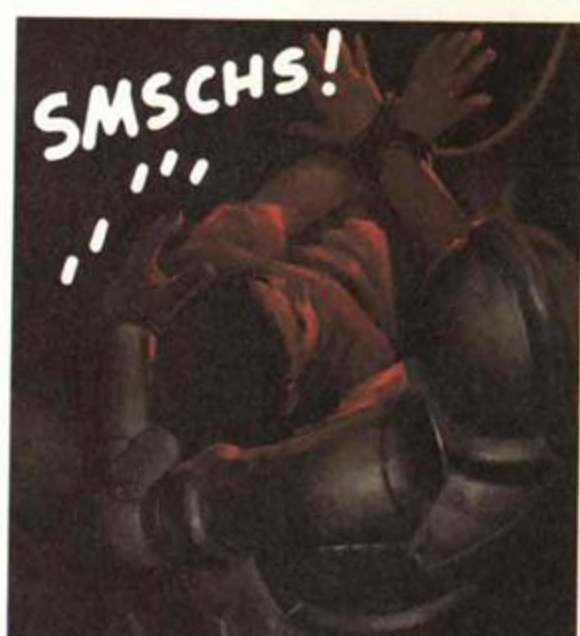


GONNG!

THE GONG!
ANYTIME
NOW...



NO!
NOOOO!



SMSCHS!



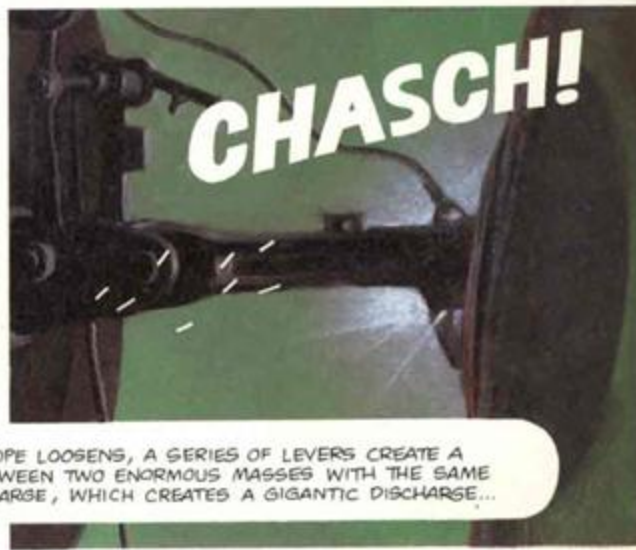
HEY!
I...

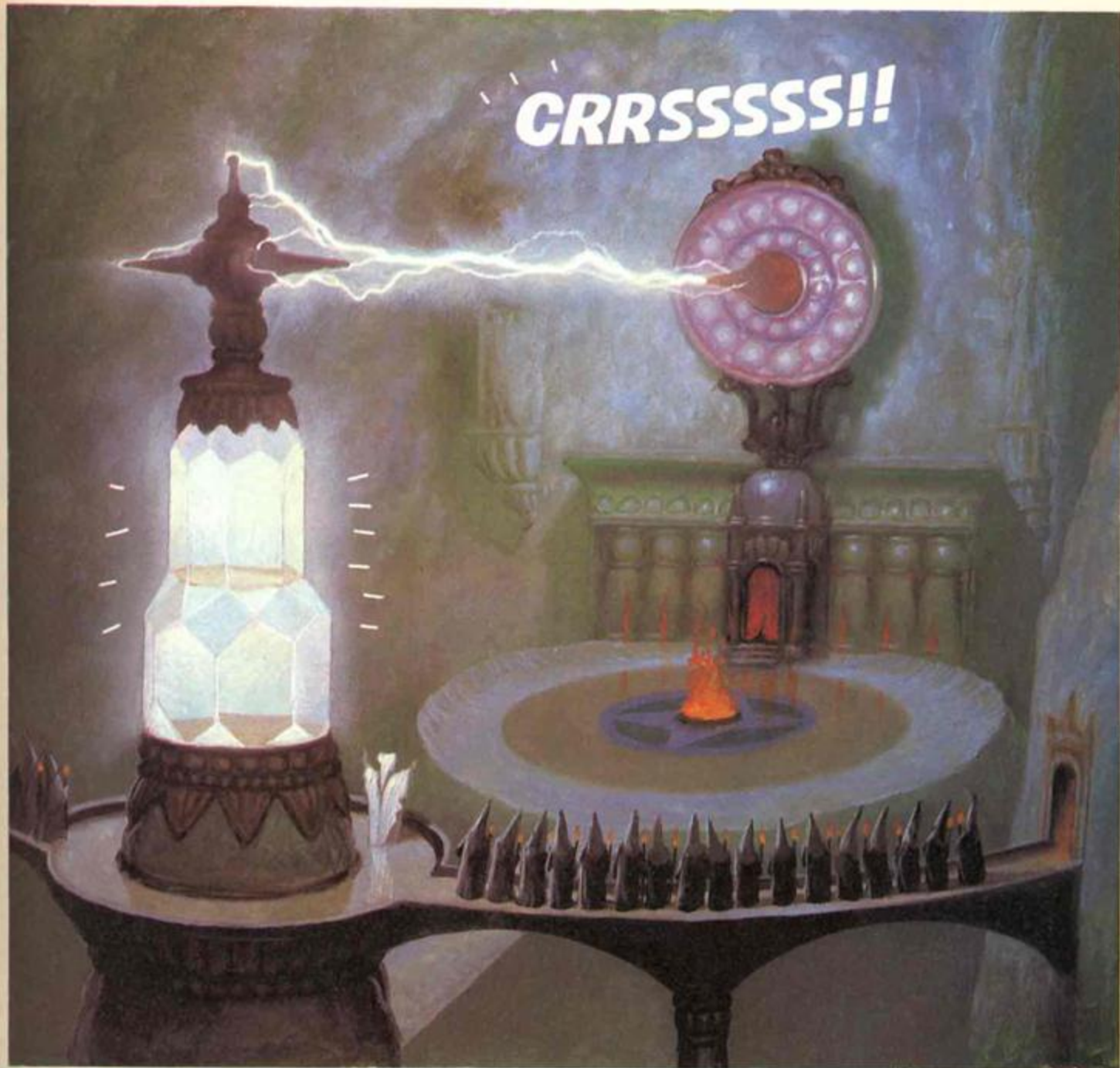
CALM DOWN...
CALM DOWN...
I'M GOING TO
TAKE YOU AWAY
FROM HERE.

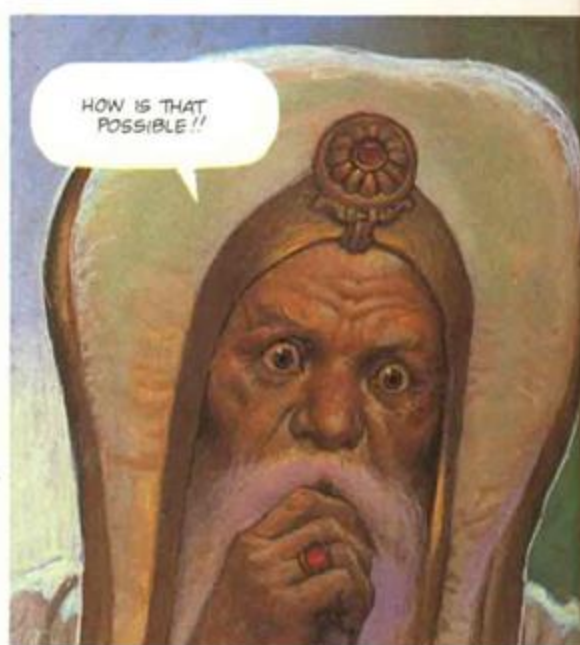
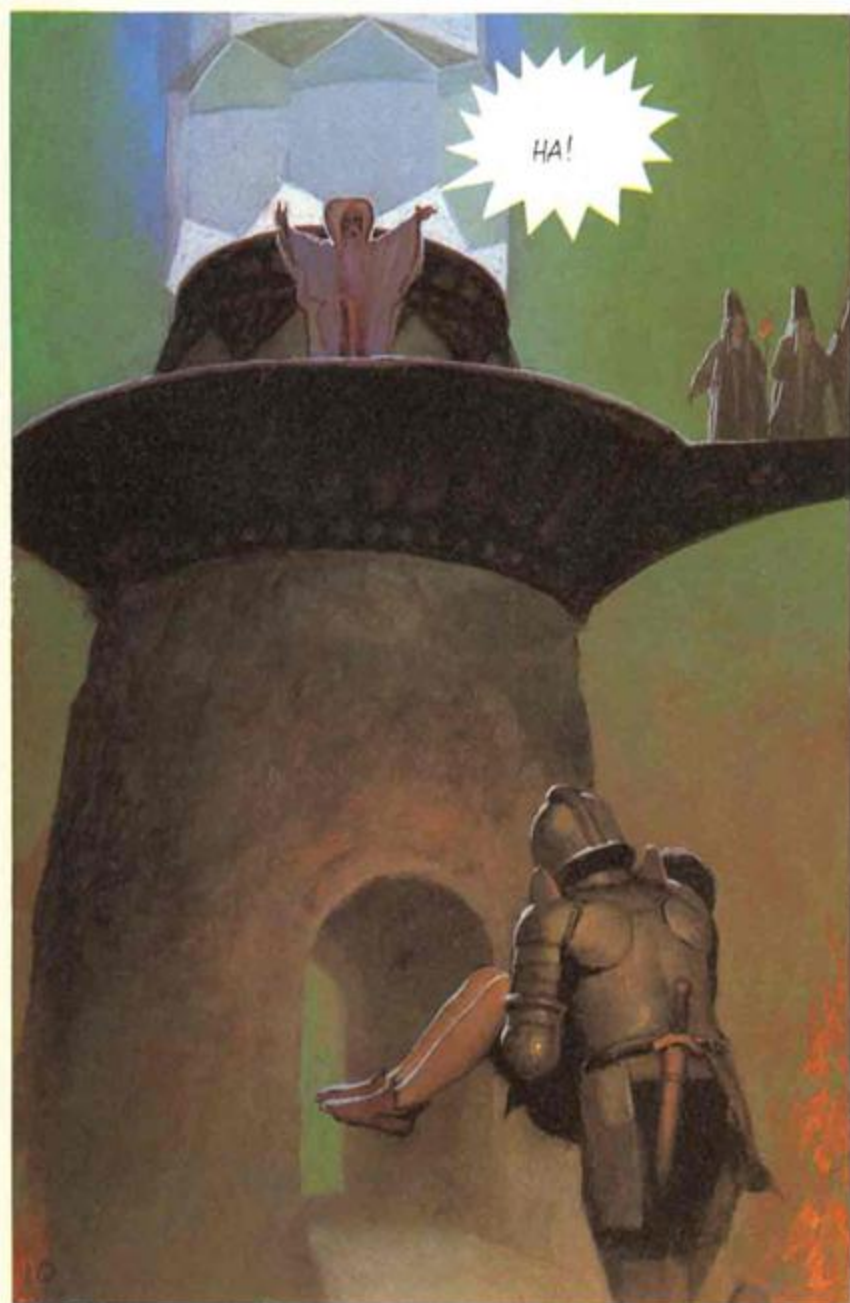
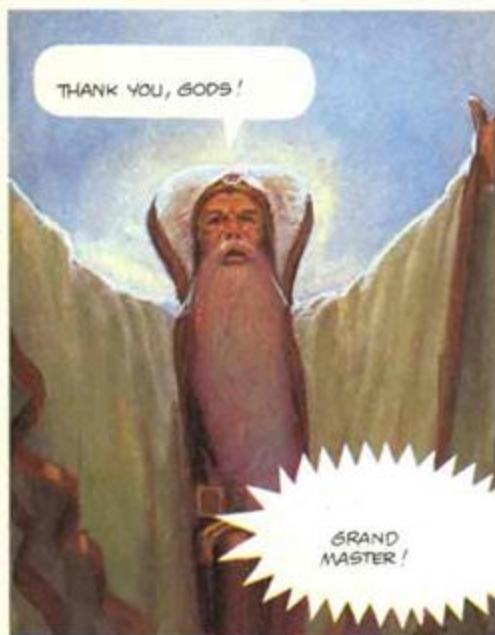
DO YOU UNDERSTAND HOW
IT WORKS? IF THE ROPE IS TAUT,
THEN IT MEANS THAT YOU'RE
STILL HANGING IN THE TUNNEL....
WHEN THE BEAST DOWN THERE
EATS YOU UP, THE ROPE LOSES
TENSION...

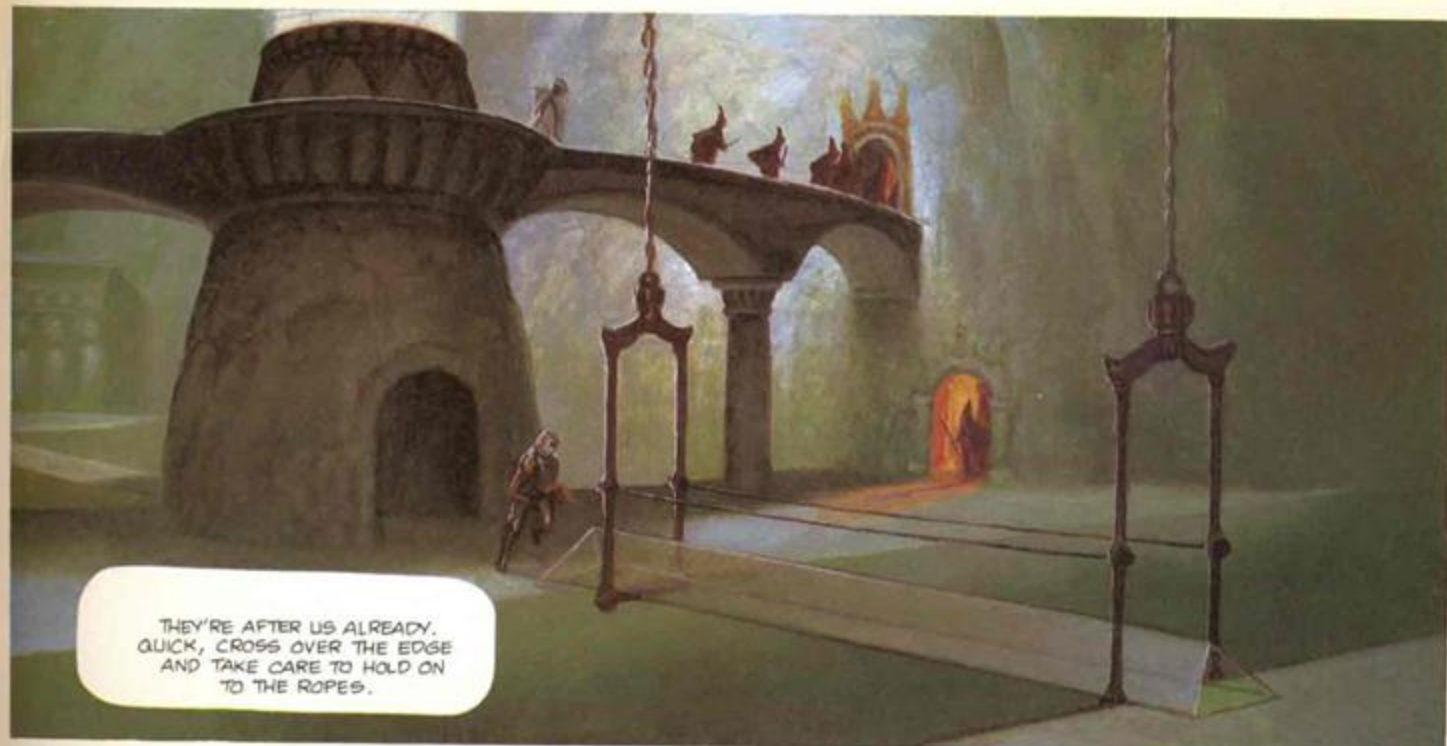


A BEAST? HOW CAN IT
BE, SIR... THEY ARE SACRIFICING
ME TO THE GOD OF LIFE...
I'M GOING TO PARADISE....











AS THE WHEEL STARTS TO MOVE, ONE OF THE FLOOD GATES OPEN UP EFFORTLESSLY WHILE THE OTHER CLOSES DOWN.



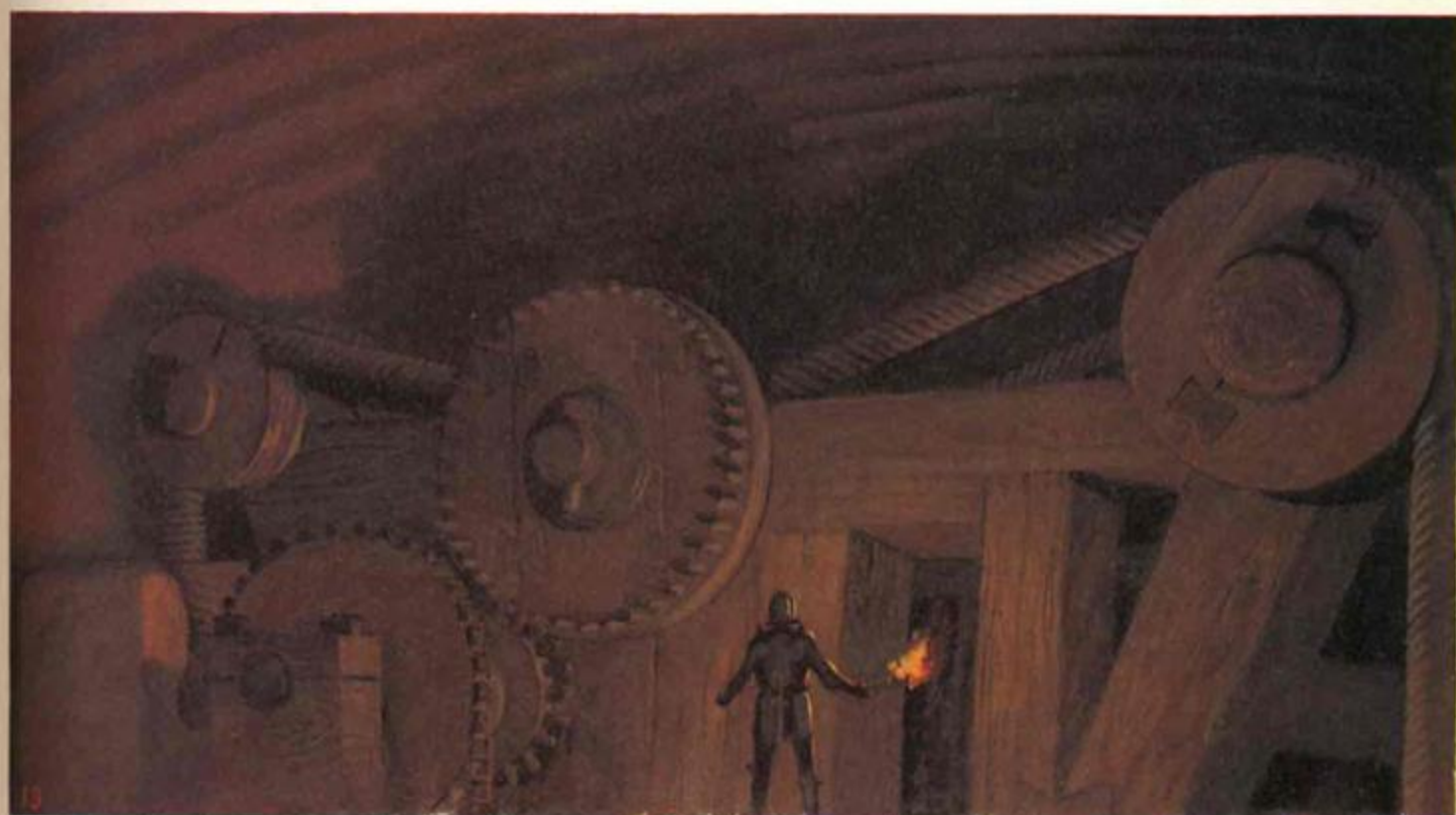
HERE'S
THE TORCH,
SIR.

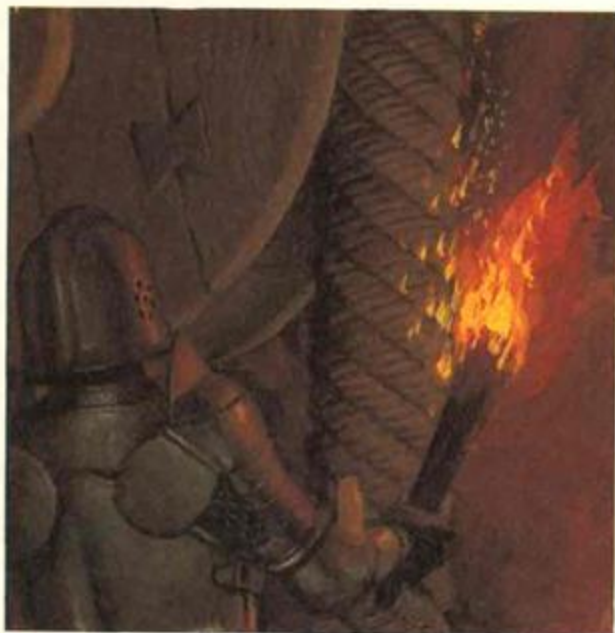


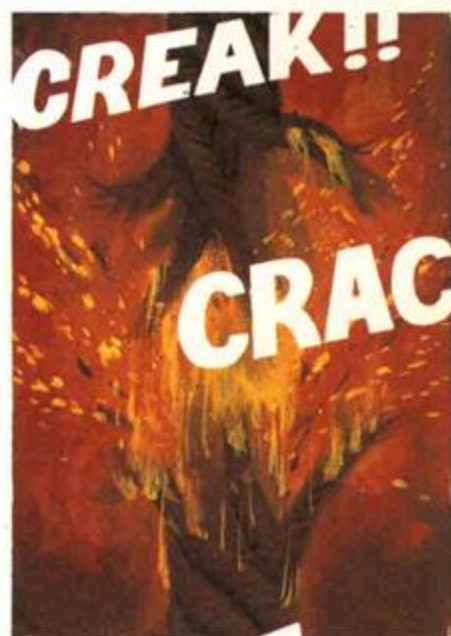
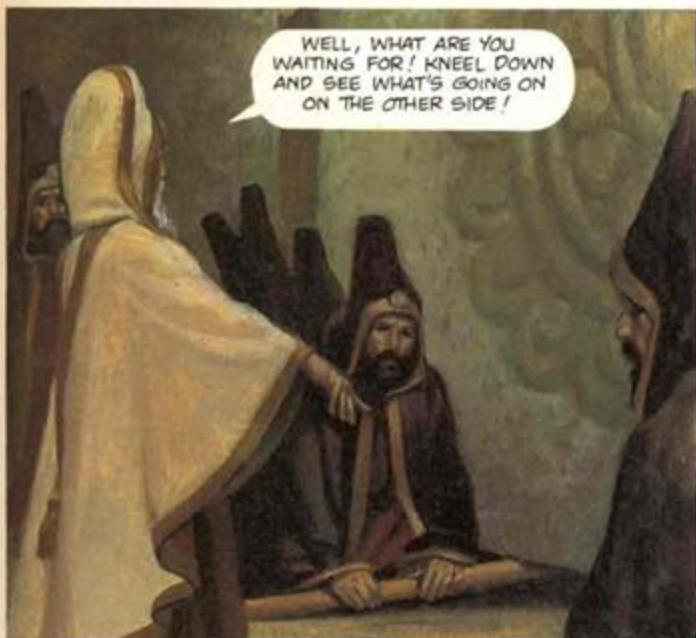
HOLD ON
TIGHT. YOU'LL
START TO FEEL
SOME TUGGING
SOON.



THE FLOOD GATE'S
MECHANISM.









THOSE MEN WON'T DO ANYMORE SACRIFICES.

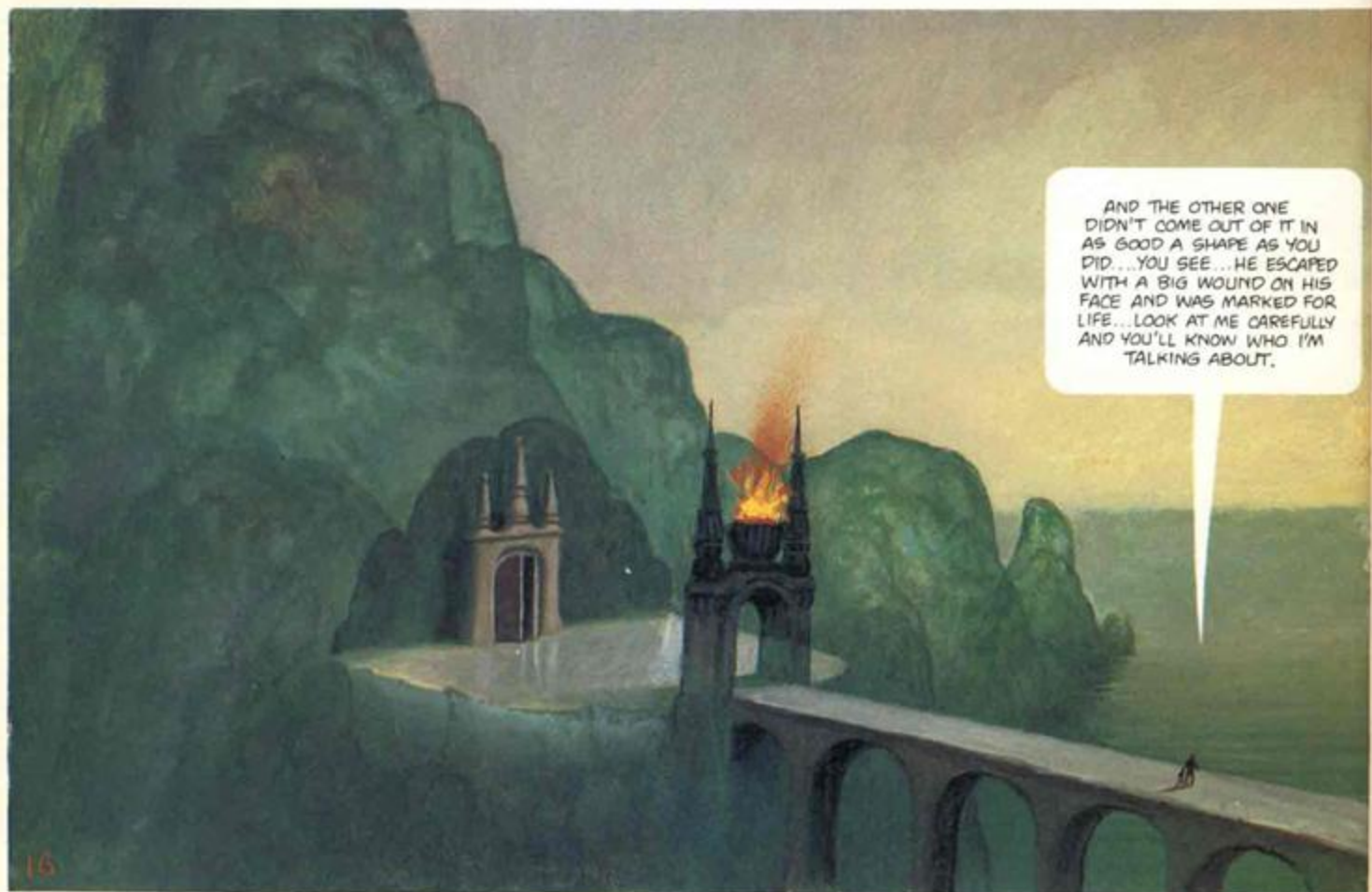
SIR, YOU'RE A GREAT WARRIOR, AND YOU DO THE IMPOSSIBLE SO EASILY.



IT WAS EASY BECAUSE TRADITIONS ALWAYS TEND TO REMAIN THE SAME. YOU SEE, THEY HAVE BEEN ENACTING THE SAME RITUAL FOR MANY, MANY YEARS....



LOOK, INCLUDING YOURSELF, I KNOW ONLY TWO CHILDREN ESCAPED FROM THE SACRIFICE....



AND THE OTHER ONE DIDN'T COME OUT OF IT IN AS GOOD A SHAPE AS YOU DID... YOU SEE... HE ESCAPED WITH A BIG WOUND ON HIS FACE AND WAS MARKED FOR LIFE... LOOK AT ME CAREFULLY AND YOU'LL KNOW WHO I'M TALKING ABOUT.

I ASSURE YOU THAT THE EVIDENCE YOU WILL FIND HERE MAY CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY, SOLDIER! WE MUST DESTROY IT!



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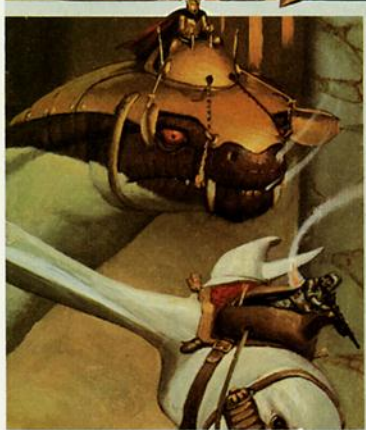


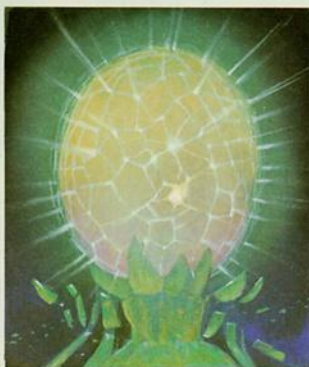
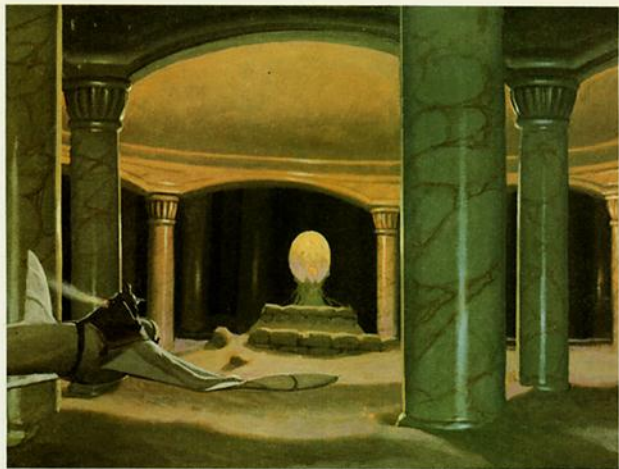
"THE TEMPLE EMERGES FROM THE WATERS ONCE EVERY THOUSAND YEARS. IT IS PROTECTED BY A GUARD WHOSE WEAPONS ARE MORE EVOLVED THAN OURS AND THEREFORE IS ALMOST INVINCIBLE. OUR EXPLOSIVE MISSILE, HOWEVER, IS TECHNOLOGICALLY TWO CENTURIES AHEAD OF ITS TIME, SO WE HAVE SOME HOPE!"

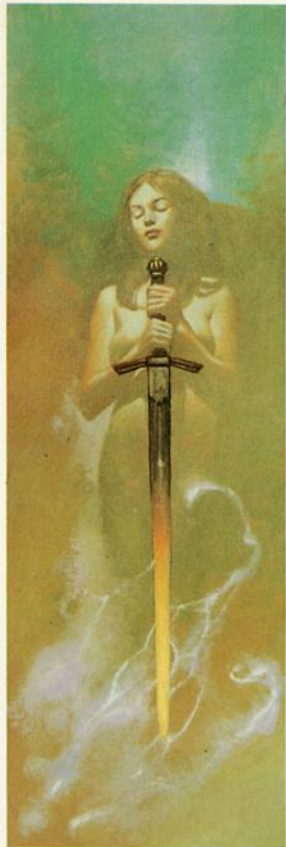
"THIS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY AND WE MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. THE GOLDEN WARRIOR MAY BE IMPROVED, BUT IF YOU FOLLOW YOUR INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY, YOU WON'T HAVE ANY PROBLEMS."











"YOU WILL FIND A
FIGURE AND INTO
THAT YOU MUST IN-
SERT YOUR SWORD..."



"ONCE INSIDE YOU WILL
FIND A CHalice. THE EVIDENCE
IS INSIDE IT. YOU MUST DE-
STROY IT IMMEDIATELY AND
FLY... THE TEMPLE WILL
BEGIN SHAKING SOON IN A
VERY SHORT TIME..."



I CAN'T WAIT TO
SEE WHAT THIS
"EVIDENCE"
MAY BE...



WHAT? ALL
THEY RUSH JUST
FOR THIS?



"...WE WILL HAVE DE-
STROYED THE LAST
SHARD OF EVIDENCE OF
THE PRESENCE OF
EXTRATERRESTRIALS
ON OUR PLANET."

EPilogue: THE STORY HAS TAKEN UP THE SIX PAGES ALLOTTED
TO IT. THE MISADVENTURE SOLDIER HAS GONE BACK TO HIS HAWK-
LAWYER POK. BUT, THANKFULLY, YOUR EDITOR WOULD LIKE YOU TO
KNOW THE END OF THIS TALE...



THE TEMPLE WILL
VANISH IN 3 FEW
SECONDS...



ONE THOUSAND
MORE YEARS WITH-
OUT SEEING THE
LIGHT OF DAY!



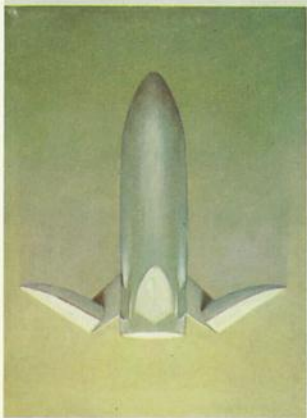
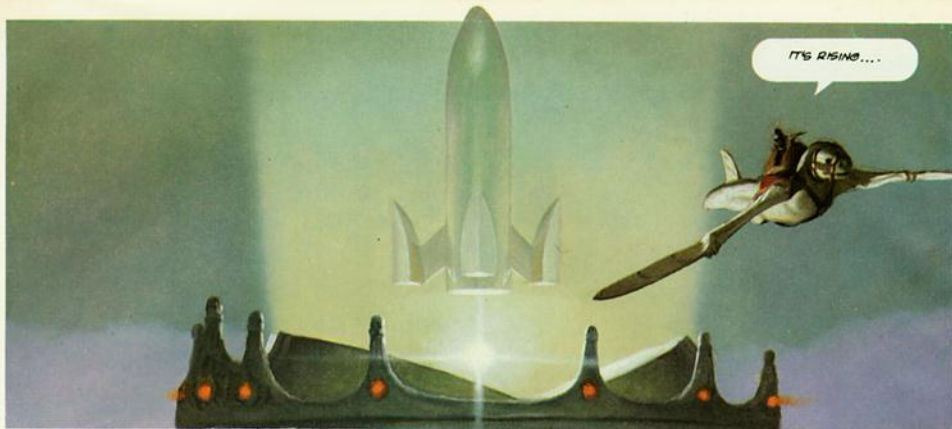
BUT.... WHAT
THE HELL IS
GOING ON?



SOMETHING
TOTALLY UNEX-
PECTED IS
HAPPENING...









THE MERCENARY SOLDIER MUST HAVE SET
OFF THE ANCHORSHIP THAT PRODUCED THE MIS-
SILE LAUNCH. BUT, THE SPACESHIP DEPARTED
EMPTY AND WE WILL NEVER KNOW WHO OR
WHAT IT WAS WAITING FOR... MAYBE THE
MONKS ON THE HIMALAYAN PEAK KNOW MORE
THAN THEY LET ON... MAYBE OUR HERO KNOWS
MORE THAN THEY DO... OR MAYBE OUR HERO
WAS USED BY FORCES UNKNOWN TO US FOR
A PURPOSE THAT WE WILL NEVER DISCOVER....

