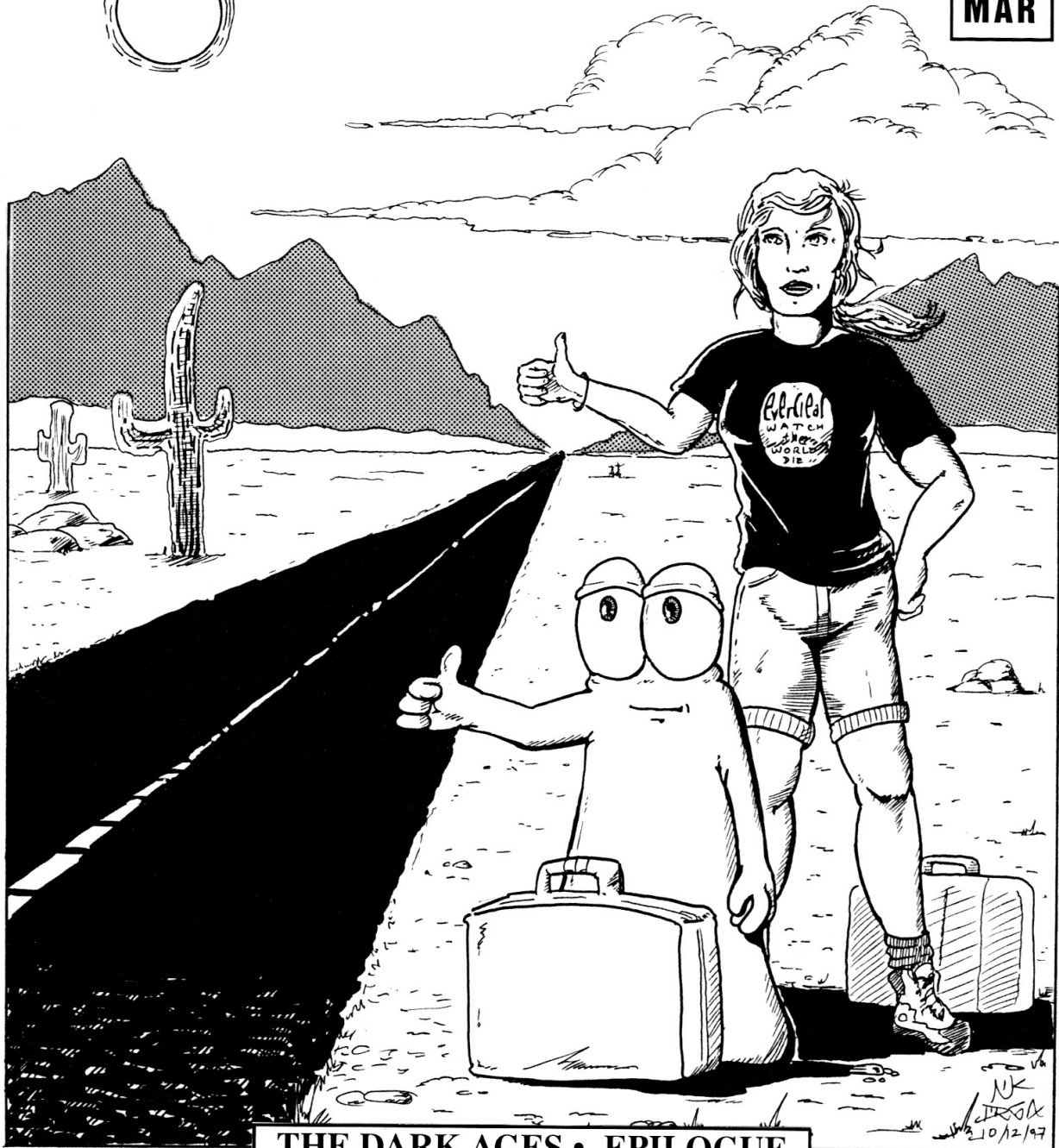


AMOEBA

ADVENTURES

27
MAR



THE DARK AGES • EPILOGUE

PROTOPLASM PRESS • \$2.50 U.S. \$3.00 CAN • MARCH 1998

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #27 • The Dark Ages Part 8

"What Happened Next"

Created, written
and drawn by
Nik Dirga

"Well you can laugh at this sentimental story
But in time you'll have to make amends
The sudden chill where lovers doubt their immortality
As the clouds cover the sky, the evening ends..."

—"Couldn't Call It Unexpected No. 4," Elvis Costello

THE SLIMEBALL SPEAKS

"What did you expect? Time passes."

—Gabriel García Márquez,
One Hundred Years of Solitude

And so it goes. After seven-and-a-half years and 40 or so issues of *Amoeba Adventures* and its various spin-offs, this is my last issue — for now, anyway.

I had considered continuing the series beyond this issue and the conclusion of "The Dark Ages," but to be frank, after writing 49 comics or 'zines since 1990 and drawing about half of 'em, I'm burned out and it would be a disservice to continue this comic if I wasn't 100 percent behind it.

Twenty-seven issues is a pretty damned good run for small or big press, and I'm pleased and proud of what I and all my various partners have accomplished since that day in 1990 when I mailed out ten copies of *Amoeba Adventures* on a whim to various friends and acquaintances.

Never say never, of course. I've easily got another dozen issues worth of stories about Prometheus and his pals tumbling about in my head, but I just don't have the time and patience to produce them right now.

Publishing *Amoeba Adventures* has definitely been one of the highlights of my life. It's been a thrill to see the stories in my head come to life and unimaginably gratifying to see people actually reading and enjoying them. I'd guess that upwards of a thousand people have read at least one issue of *AA* since its inception, and that's a great feeling.

This is gonna sound like an

Academy Awards acceptance speech, but I really do want to thank each and every one of you who've been there for me over the years — your support, letters, sketches and kind words mean more to me than you'll ever know.

There's a handful of people I'd like to single out for special thanks, the guys who've probably been my biggest supporters over the years — folks like Max Ink for his art from #14-26 and his tireless efforts promoting the book, and Bob Elinskas, Troy Hickman, J. Kevin Carrier, Jason "Doghumper" Marcy, Joe Meyer, John Hurley, Larry Johnson, Eric Hess, Peter Hopkins, Tony Lorenz, Joe Bagdon, Tim Corrigan, Jim Pack and about a zillion more I wish I had room to list — but you know who you are.

And I want to thank everyone who's stepped in with their pens and words to help collaborate with me, and enabling me to get this comic out far more often than I thought I could. Thanks to all the guys already mentioned above for stepping in when they did, as well as Anthony Gray, Matt Feazell, Ron Gravelle, Sam Gafford, Doug Lumley, Larry Blake, Lynn Allen, Tyim Courts, Will Pfeifer, Quinton Hoover, Susan Mills Gravelle, Denny Stephens, David Berns, the late but not forgotten Eric Hampton, Ed Paten, Rich Watson, and probably a dozen more folks I'm forgetting who've pitched in here and there.

Thanks to the "pros" who've been so overwhelmingly kind to our efforts over the years — Will Eisner, Tony Isabella, Dave Sim, Stan Sakai, Sergio Aragones, Jeff Smith, Scott Roberts, and Bill Messner-Loebs.

Thanks to my various non-publishing friends for their support and kindness of my crazy hobby ("what do you *mean* you write a comic book?") — and all my other friends and family.

I am surprised as anyone that Prometheus and his pals have endured and actually gone on to, if it doesn't sound too presumptuous of me, gone on to become some small part of the comics iconography.

I've grown to love these guys — Pro, Spif, Rambunny, Dawn, Mitsy — almost as if they were real. I sniffled a bit when I wrote the lines killing Karate Kactus, I smiled in empathy when Pro and Dawn fell for each other, I chuckled right along with Ninja Ant's antics and envied Spif's sheer coolness.

But I'm not retiring from the business of creating by any means — I plan to keep working on various prose, columns and possibly even take a stab at writing for mainstream comics, and don't be surprised if the occasional oddball small press comic from me winds up in your mailbox now and again. Drawing this issue, the first regular issue of *Amoeba* I've done all on my lonesome since #13 in 1993, was quite an experience, and I'd like to keep developing my art skills somehow or another post-*AA*.

I could ramble on in a nostalgic, sentimental vein for pages and pages more, I'm sure — that's just how much this little comic has meant to me. But instead, I'll simply bow my head and thank you one last time for your kind attention to my little words and pictures.

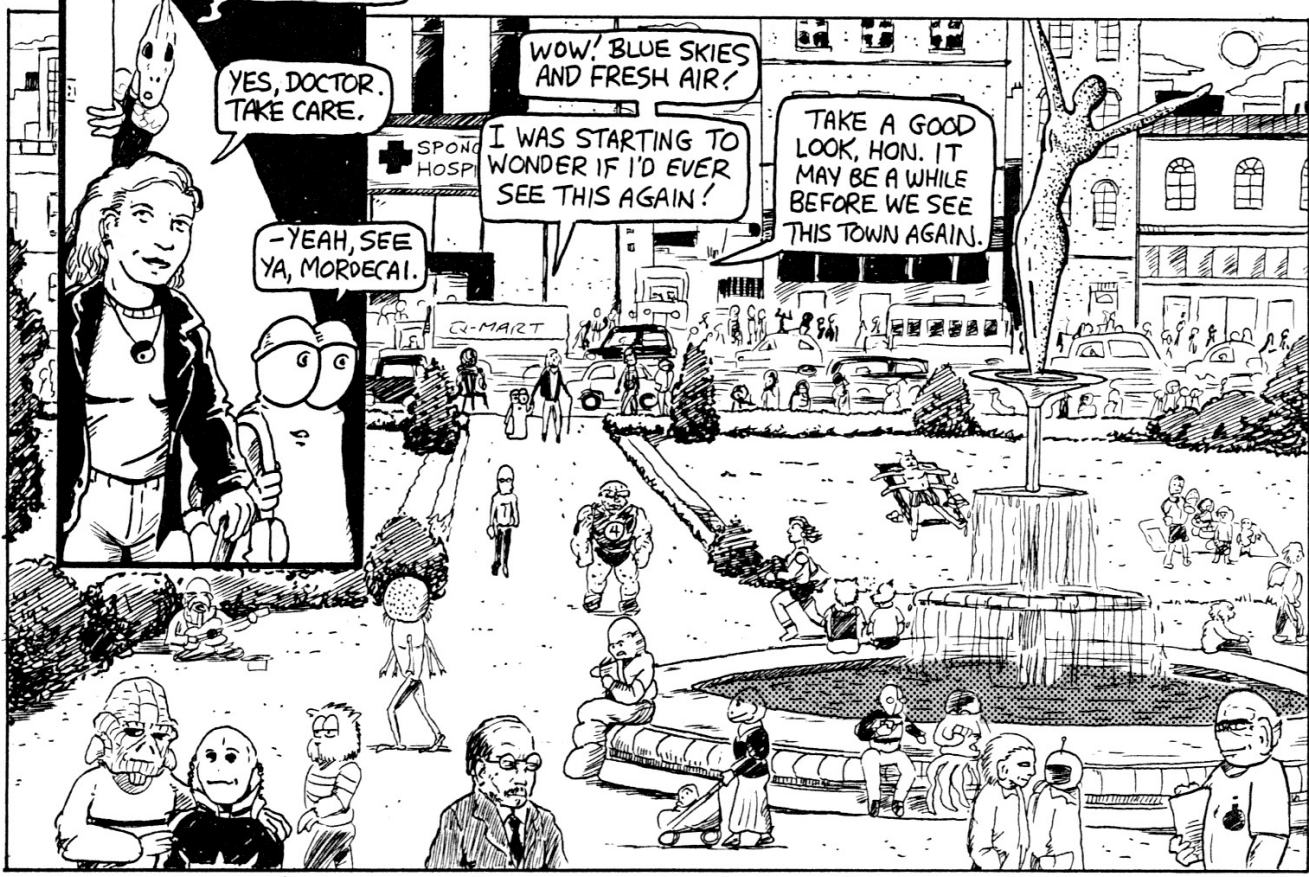
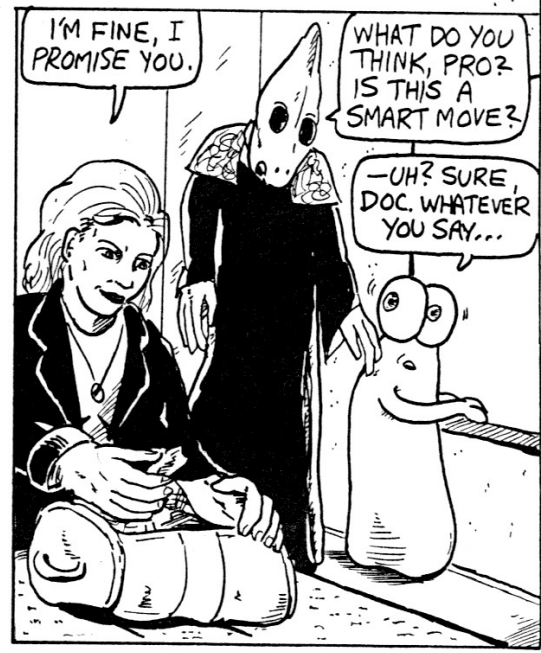
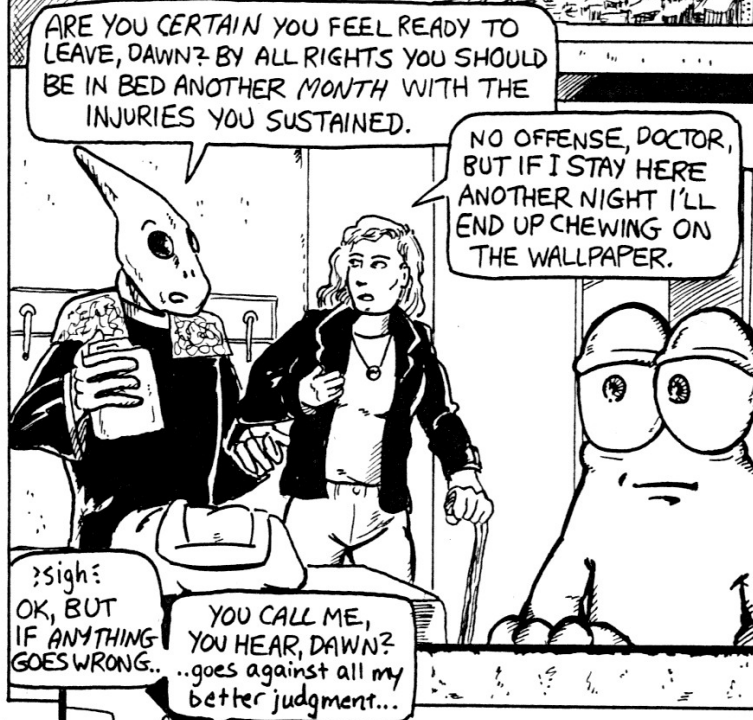
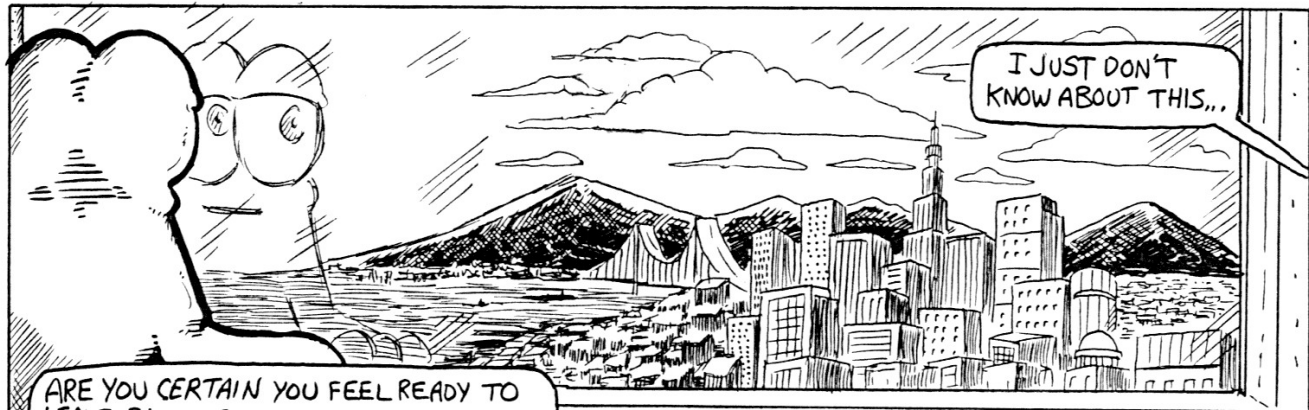
Thank you, and good night.

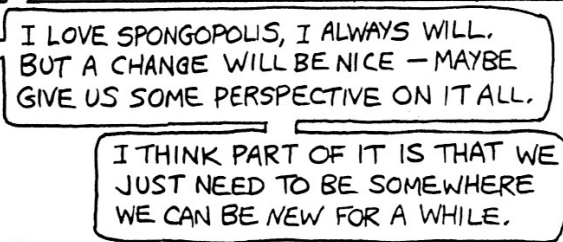
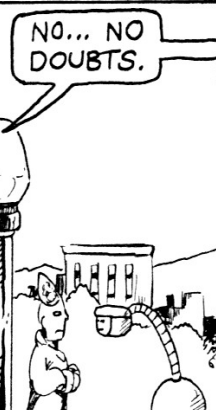
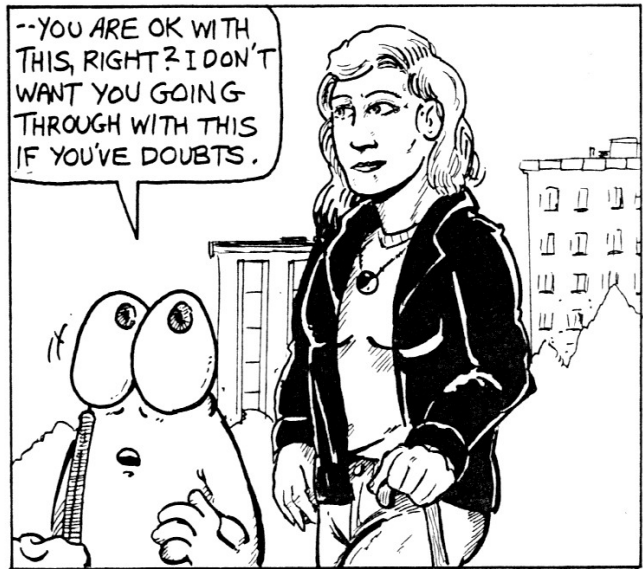
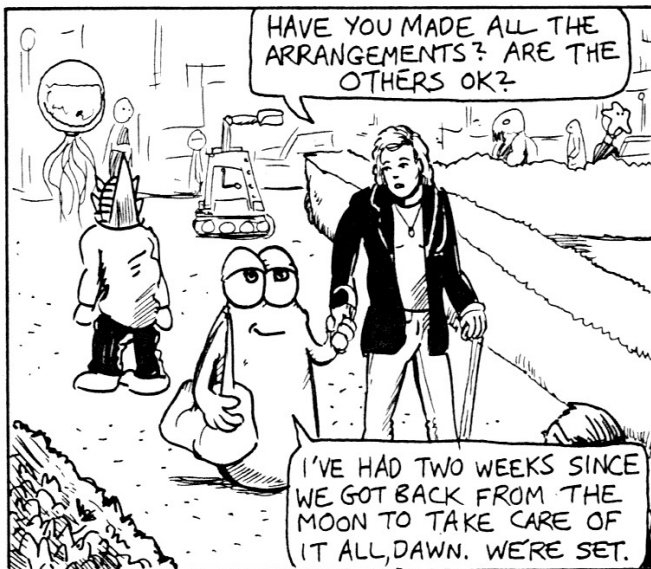
— NIK DIRGA

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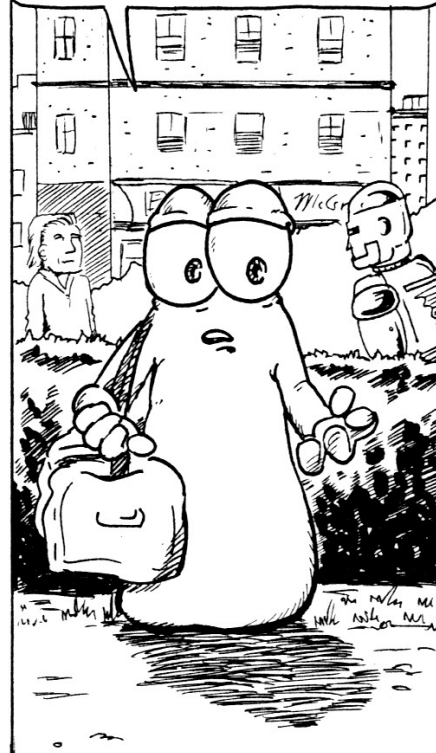


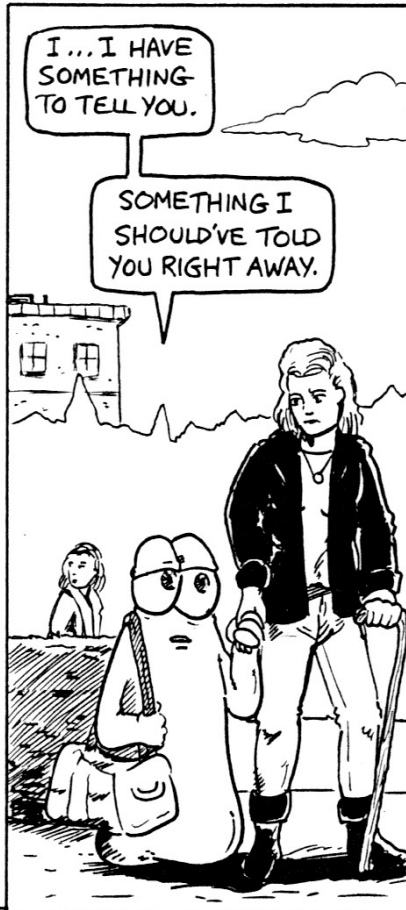
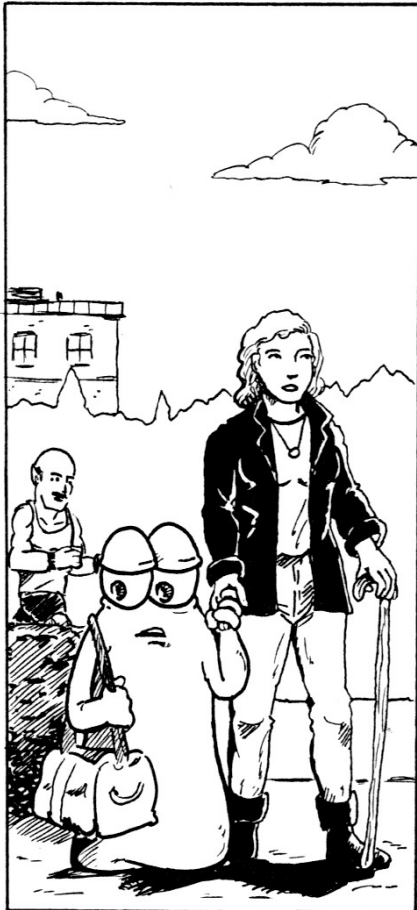






YEAH. WE DO. EVERYWHERE I LOOK, I SEE REMINDERS OF HOW BADLY WE SCREWED UP WITH ALEX, HOW WE LET ISUZU DOWN, HOW WE COULDN'T EVEN DO OUR JOB AND FIGHT THE BAD GUYS RIGHT.

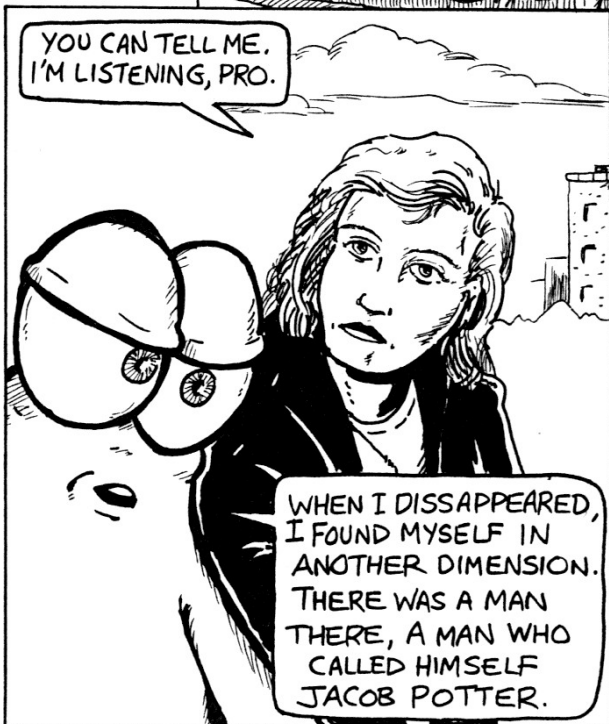




YOU ASKED ME ONCE WHAT HAPPENED WHEN I DISSAPPEARED* AND I WOULDN'T TELL YOU THEN.

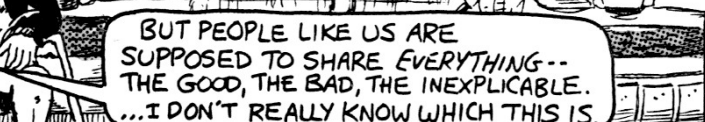
I... I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, DIDN'T QUITE KNOW WHAT IT ALL MEANT... HECK, I STILL DON'T, NOT REALLY.

*in AA#19-NK



YOU CAN TELL ME. I'M LISTENING, PRO.

WHEN I DISSAPPEARED, I FOUND MYSELF IN ANOTHER DIMENSION. THERE WAS A MAN THERE, A MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF JACOB POTTER.



BUT PEOPLE LIKE US ARE SUPPOSED TO SHARE EVERYTHING-- THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE INEXPLICABLE. ...I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHICH THIS IS.



HE TOLD ME A LOT OF THINGS I BELIEVED ABOUT MYSELF AND MY PAST WERE LIES. HE TOLD ME HE WAS BEHIND IT ALL, AND HE TOLD ME IT WAS FOR MY OWN GOOD...

BECAUSE I WAS SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL.

POTTER TOLD ME... I WAS AN IMMORTAL, PART OF A RACE OF GIFTED BEINGS THAT NEVER DIED. HE TOLD ME ABOUT STRANGE POWERS I HAD, ABOUT HOW I COULD SURVIVE ALMOST ANY ASSAULT.



LIKE IN THE MALL!



YEAH, LIKE AT THE MALL*.

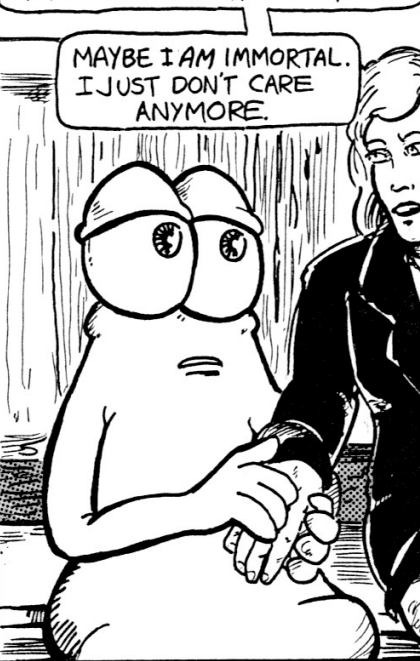
*BACK IN #18 - THREAD-TWIN 'JIK.

BUT HERE'S THE THING, DAWN. I DON'T KNOW IF I TRUST WHAT POTTER TOLD ME. NOT THE IMMORTAL PART, BECAUSE FIGHTING THE DARK ONE PROVED HE WASN'T LYING THERE.



BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I TRUST POTTER. THERE'S TOO MANY HOLES IN IT ALL.

I'M NOT REALLY MUCH BETTER OFF THAN I WAS TO START WITH, DAWN.

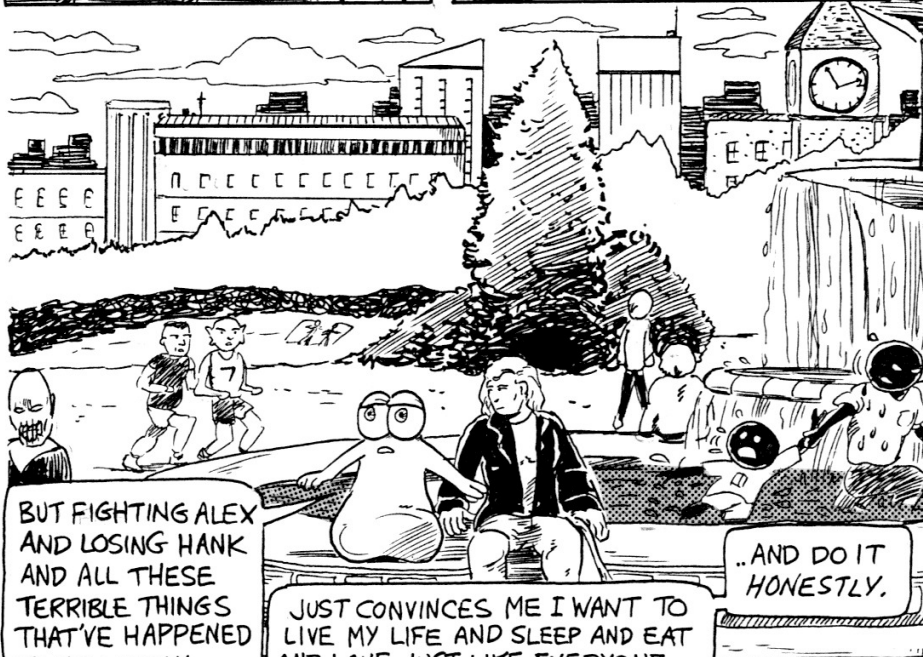


MAYBE I AM IMMORTAL. I JUST DON'T CARE ANYMORE.

I WAS SCARED TO TELL YOU WHAT POTTER TOLD ME, BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT MIGHT SCARE YOU OFF...



...WHO WANTS A BOYFRIEND WHO NEVER GROWS OLD WHILE THEY DO?



BUT FIGHTING ALEX AND LOSING HANK AND ALL THESE TERRIBLE THINGS THAT'VE HAPPENED TO US LATELY...

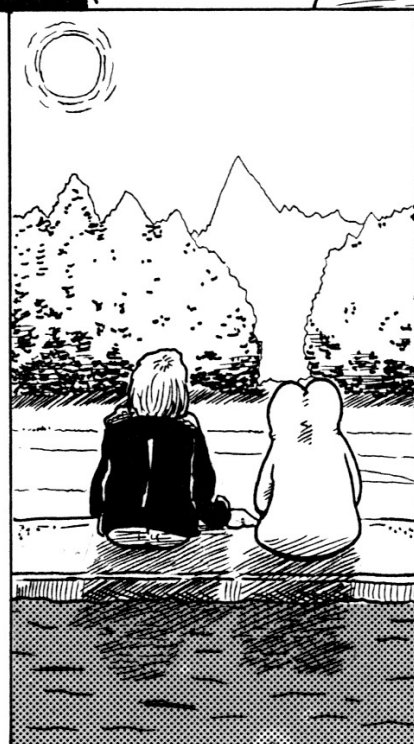
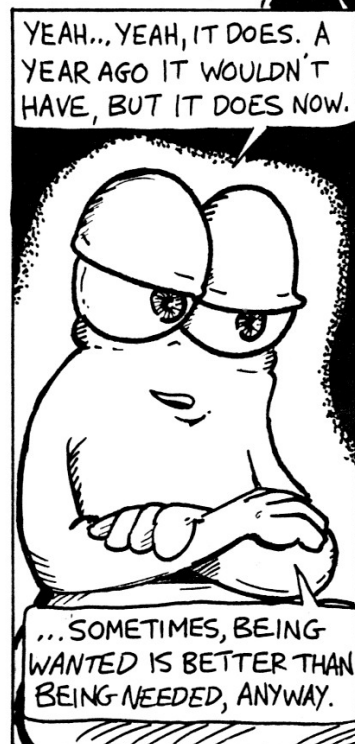
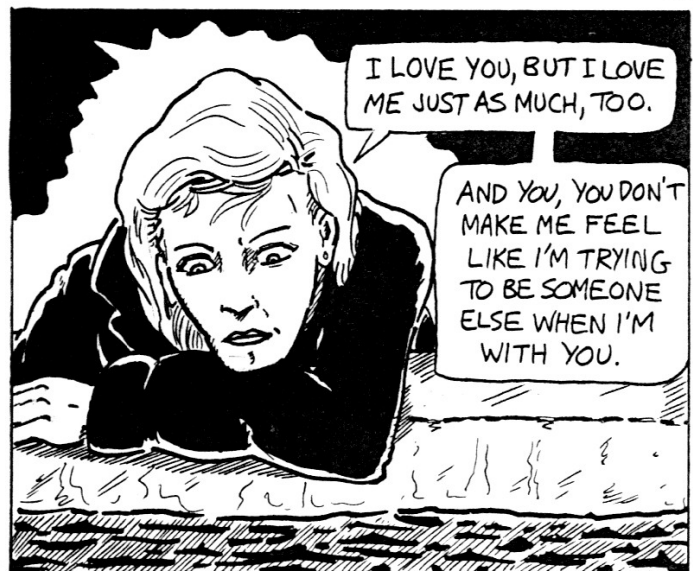
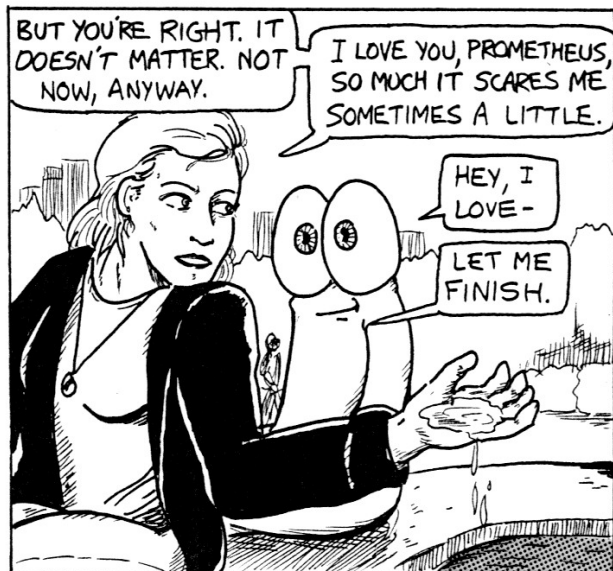
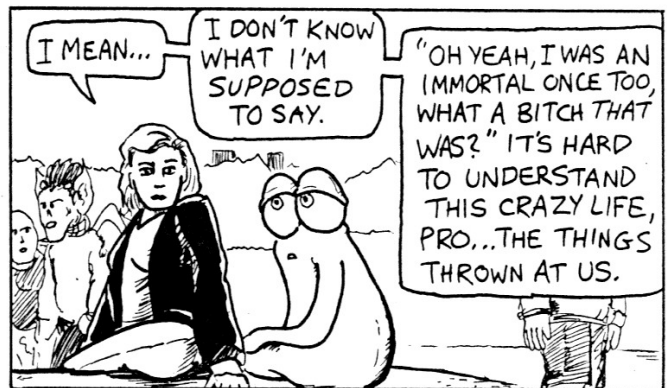
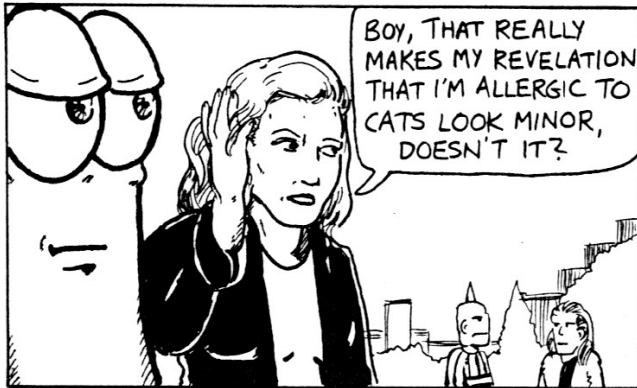
JUST CONVINCES ME I WANT TO LIVE MY LIFE AND SLEEP AND EAT AND LOVE JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE FOR ONCE...

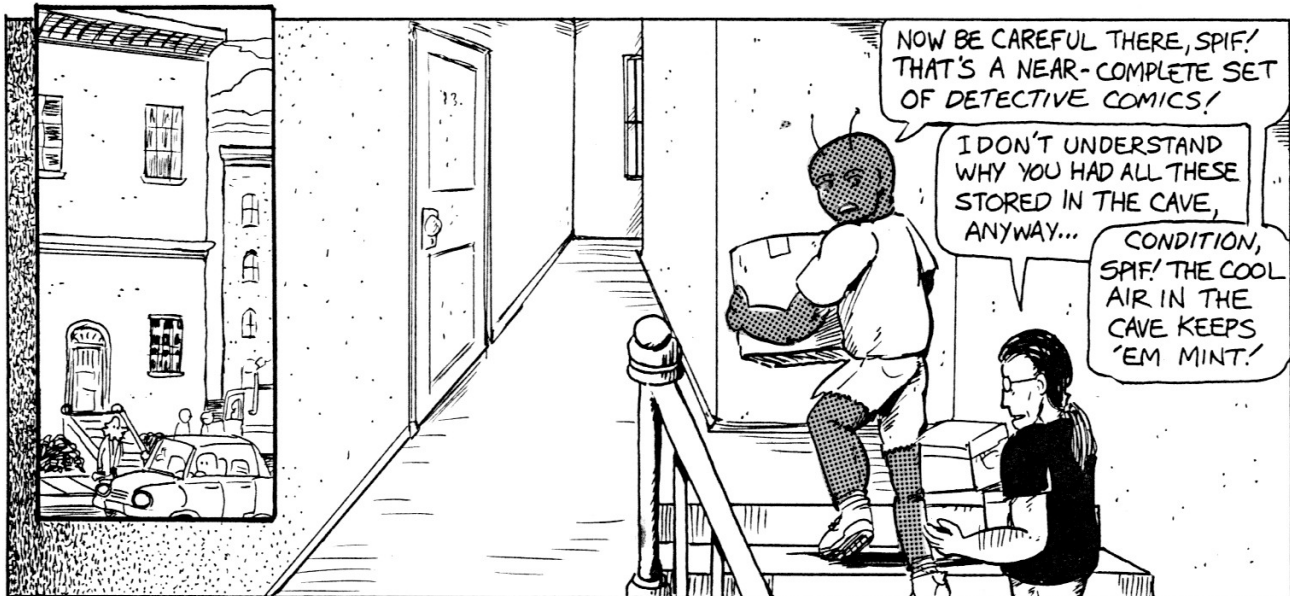
..AND DO IT HONESTLY.

I... OK. END OF SPEECH.

YOUR TURN.



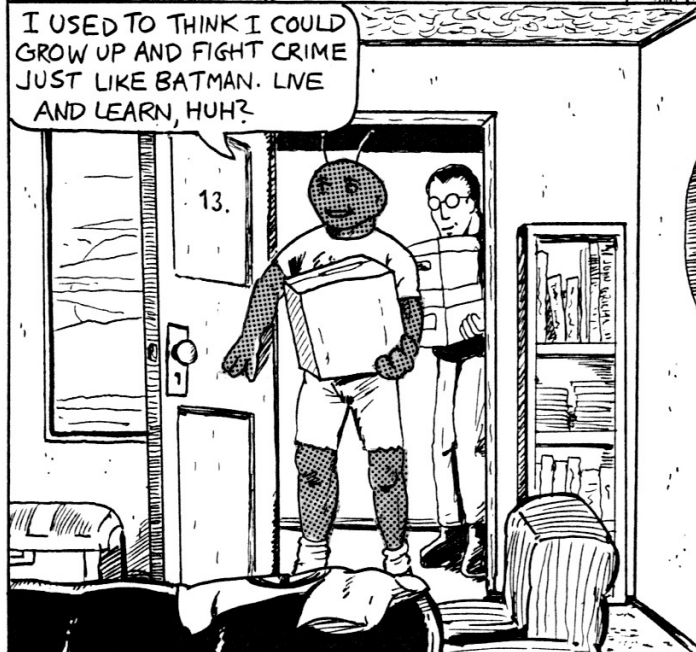




NOW BE CAREFUL THERE, SPIF! THAT'S A NEAR-COMPLETE SET OF DETECTIVE COMICS!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU HAD ALL THESE STORED IN THE CAVE, ANYWAY...

CONDITION, SPIF! THE COOL AIR IN THE CAVE KEEPS 'EM MINT!



I USED TO THINK I COULD GROW UP AND FIGHT CRIME JUST LIKE BATMAN. LIVE AND LEARN, HUH?

I CAN'T PICTURE YOU IN HIS EARS, MITSU.

HAH! GOOD ONE. SIT DOWN, TAKE A LOAD OFF. WANNA BEER?



I'LL PASS ON THE BEER. I'VE GOT A LOT OF BOXES LEFT TO LIFT TODAY.

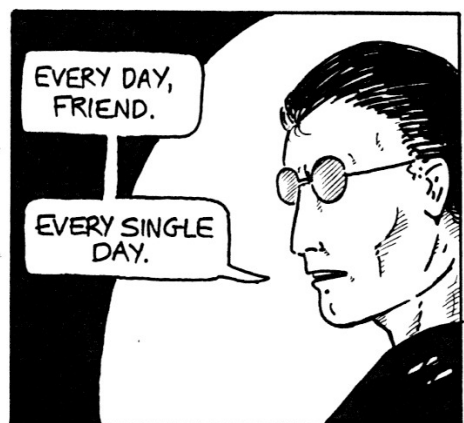
CHOMP! SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO, SPIF? I MEAN, NOW THAT THE LONG UNDERWEAR GIG IS OVER?

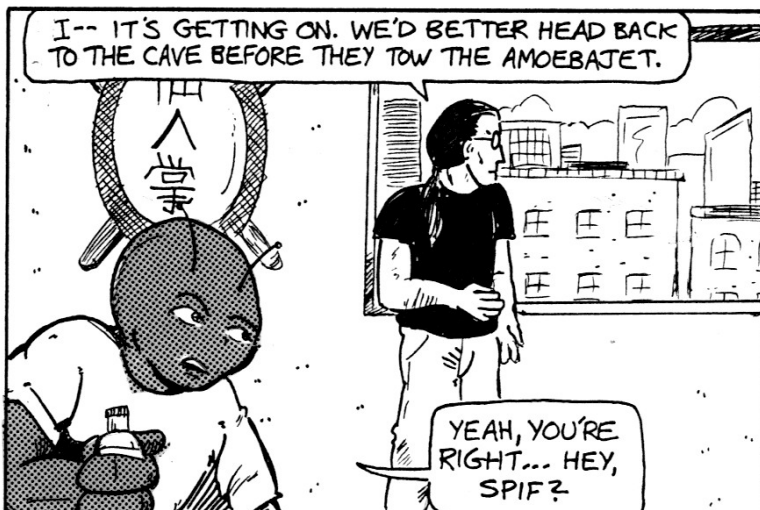
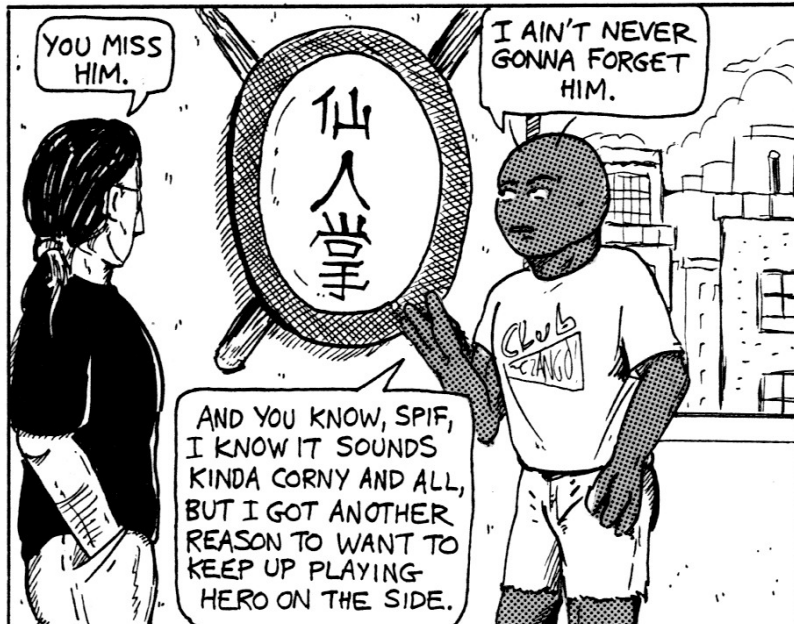
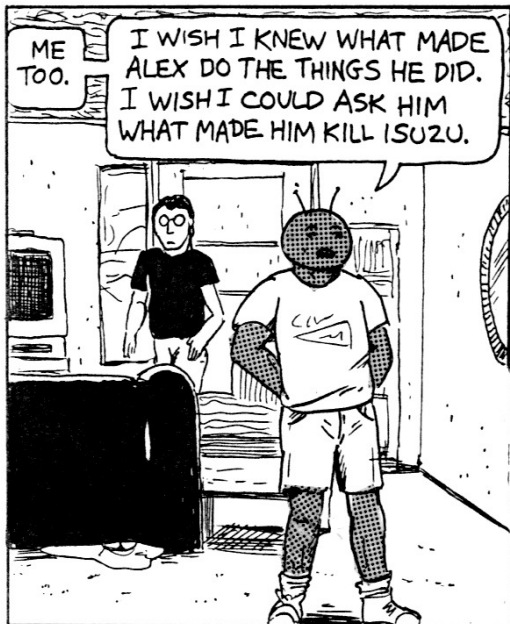
...MAYBE I'LL PLUNGE INTO THE SUNDRY WORLD OF ACADEMIA FOR A WHILE. SPONGOPOLIS U. OFFERED ME A LECTURE CHAIR IF I WANT IT.

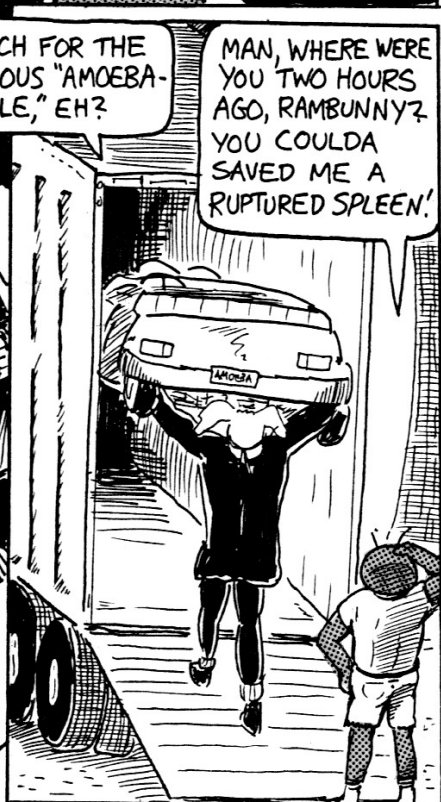
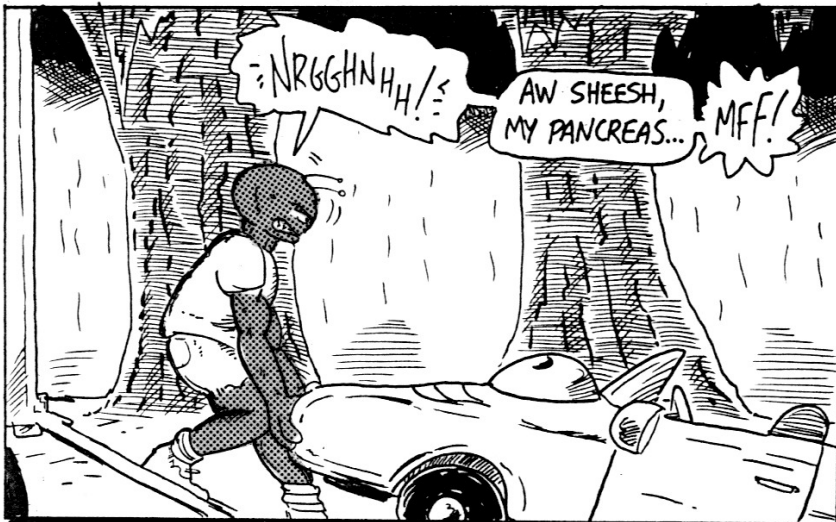
THAT WHY YOU SHAVED THE BEARD?

NO, THAT'S NOT WHY I SHAVED... ANYWAY, WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS. HOW ABOUT YOU?











YOU'RE...DIFFERENT. YOU GOT IT TOGETHER NOW IN WAYS I WISH I COULD. MAYBE A LOTTA THAT'S BECAUSE OF DAWN, I DON'T KNOW.



WELL, WE ALL CHANGE, RIGHT?

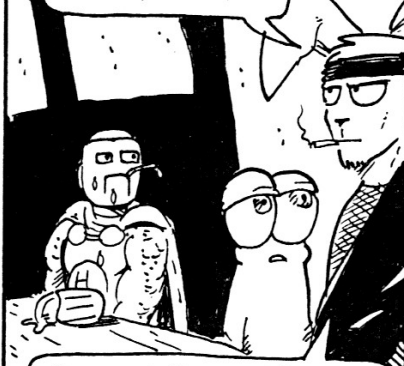
YEAH...



BUT LOOK, WHAT HAPPENED UP THERE DON'T HAVE TO CHANGE YOU AN' ME.

I AIN'T GONNA APOLOGIZE FOR WANTING TO KILL ALEX, 'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT HE DESERVED.

AN' YOU AN' ME, MAYBE WE GOT DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKIN'.



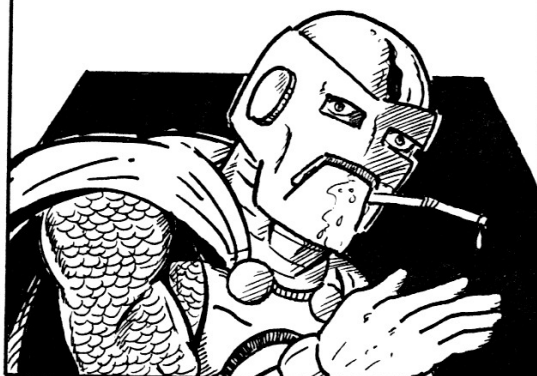
BUT WE BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH TOGETHER TO SOLVE THAT BY BEATIN' ON EACH OTHER.

I ACCEPT YOUR -- NOT APOLOGY-- BUT YOUR STATEMENT. CHEERS.

CHEERS TO YOU, PRO.



GREAT SCOTT! RAMBUNNY AND THE AMOEBA? HOW DID THEY KNOW HERR HEINOUS FREQUENTED THIS TAVERN?



NO MATTER! I'VE GOT TO SLIP OUT BEFORE THEY SPOT ME!

CAUTION IS THE WATCHWORD... CAUTION AND STEALTH!

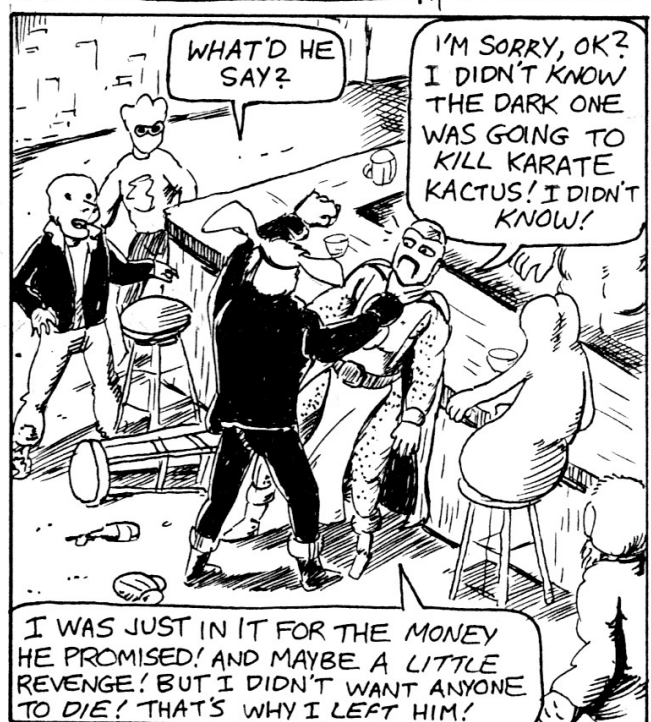
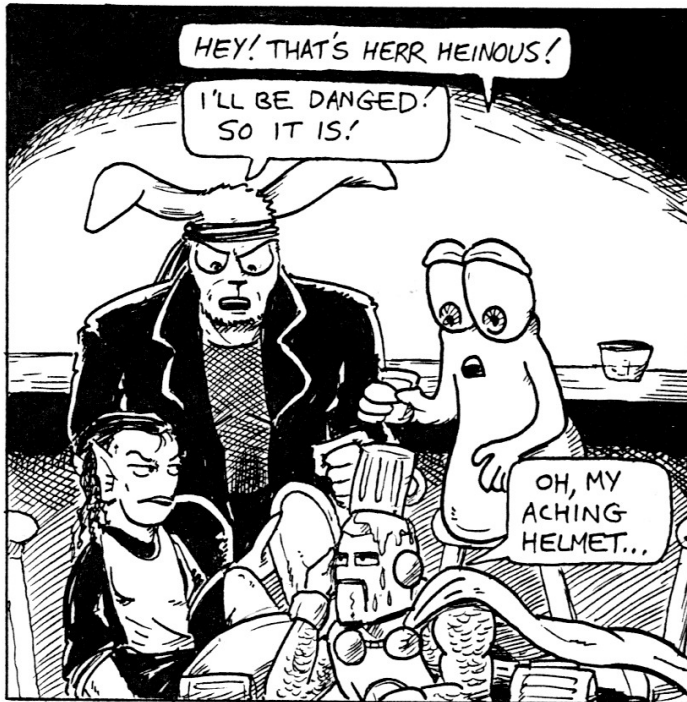


CRISSH!

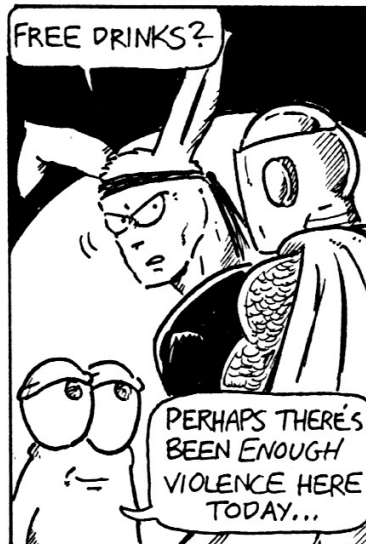
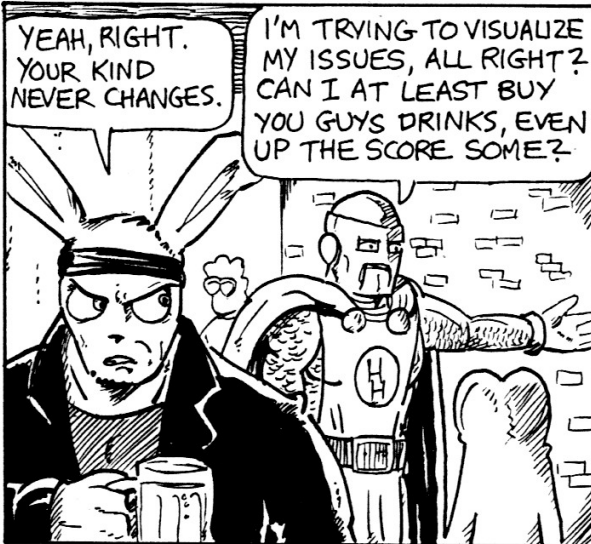
HEY! WHYNTCHA WATCH WHERE YER GOING! OUT OF MY WAY, SCULLERY MAID!

WHAT THE-



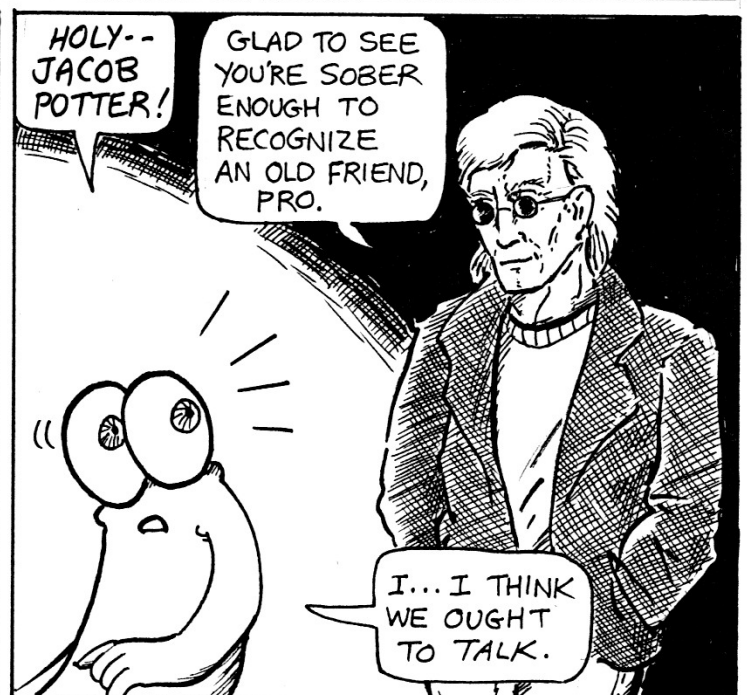
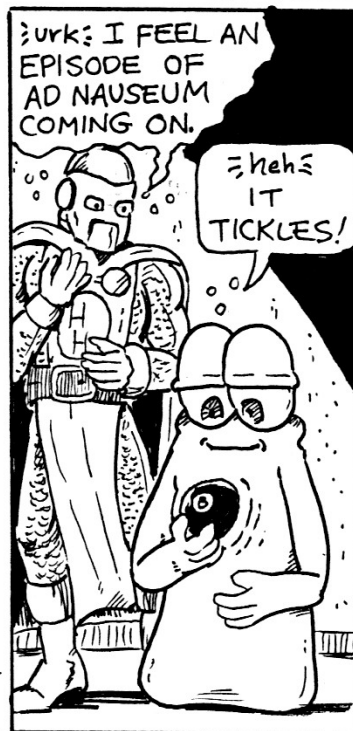
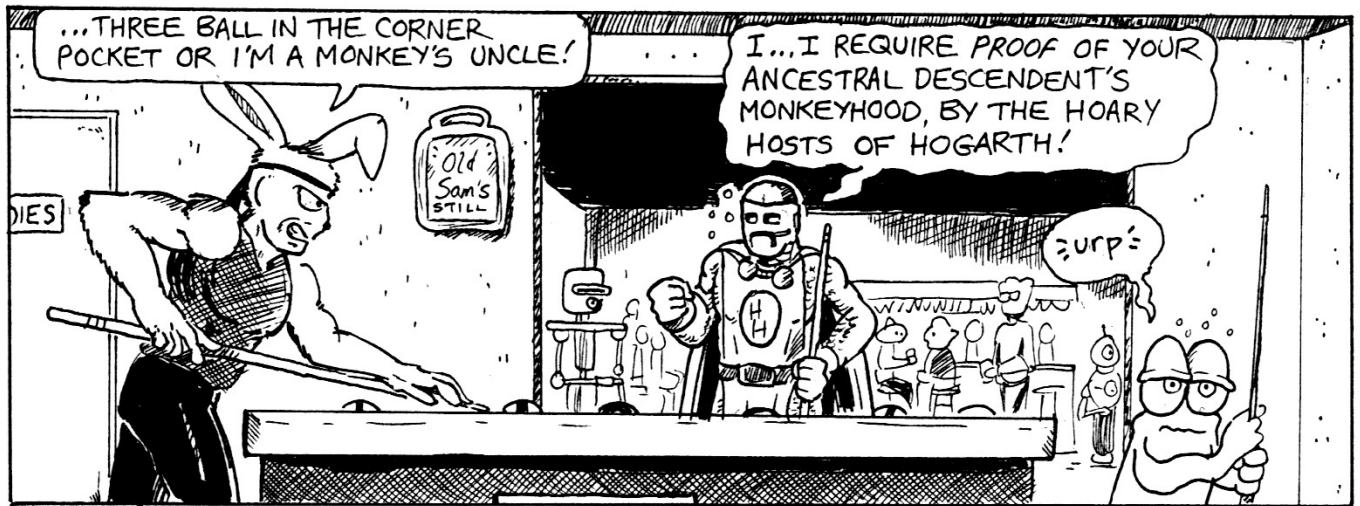


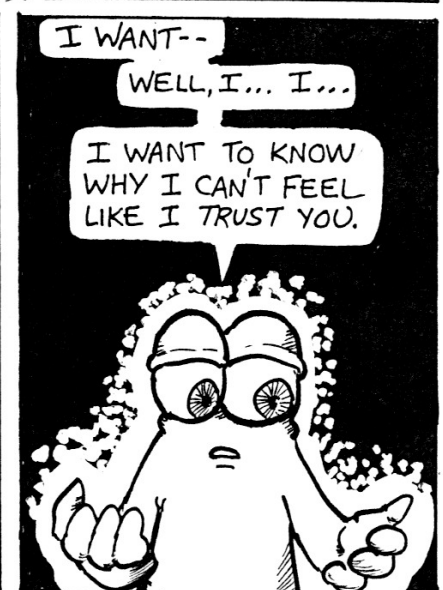
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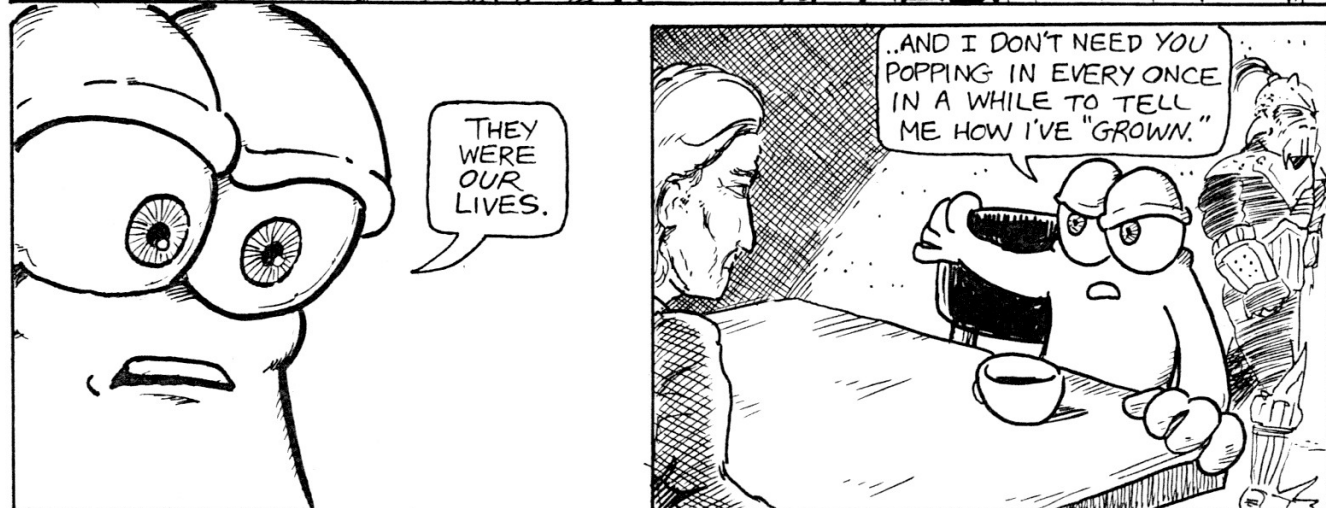
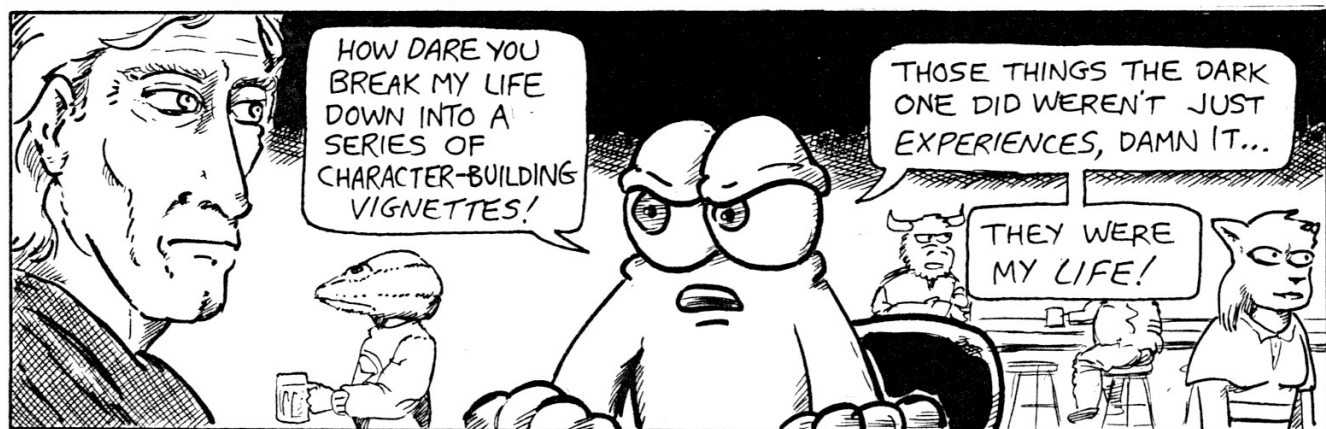
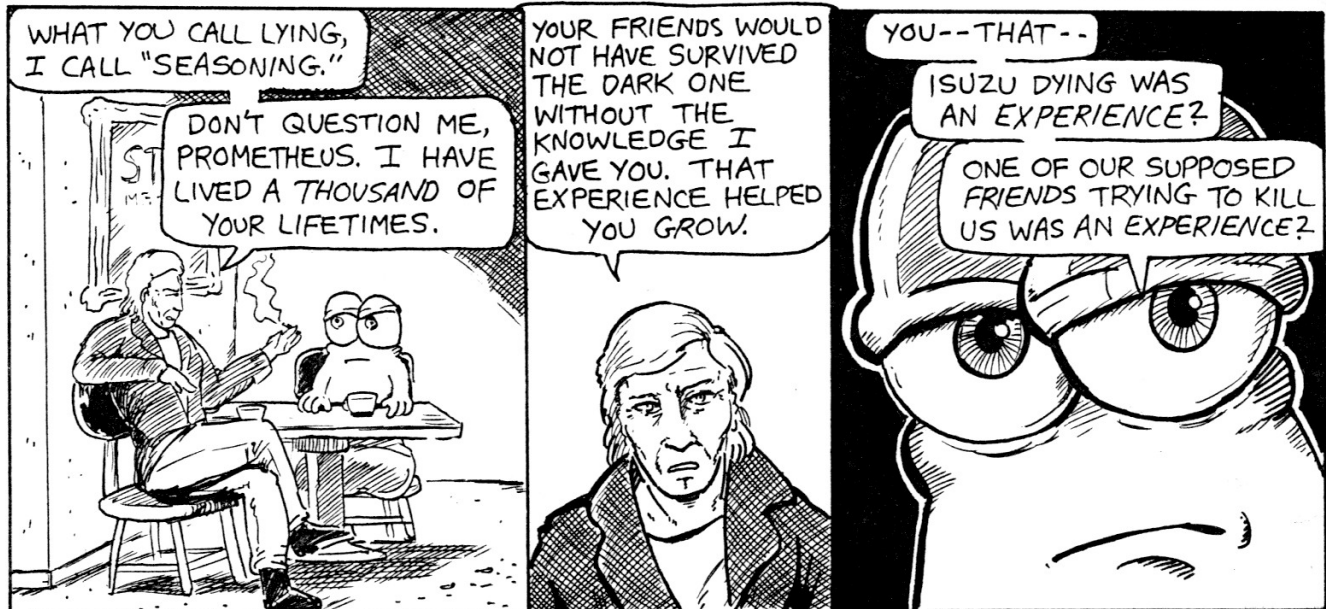
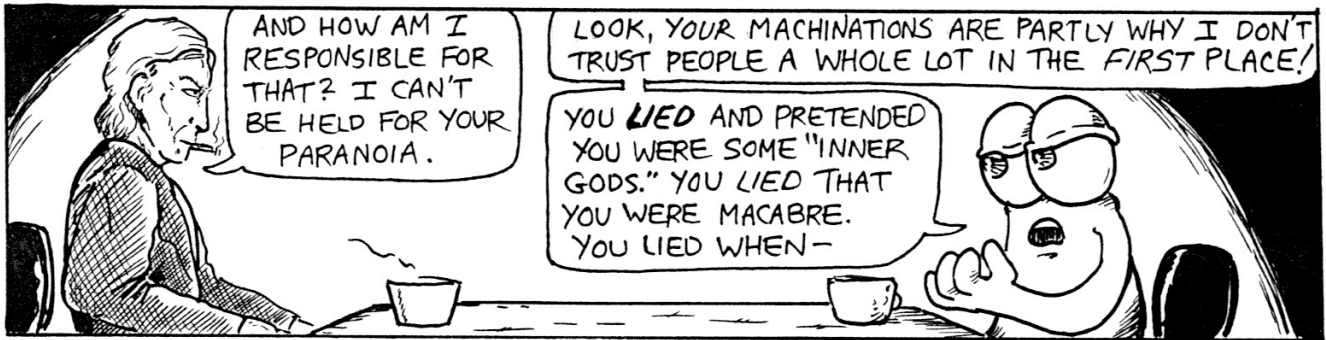


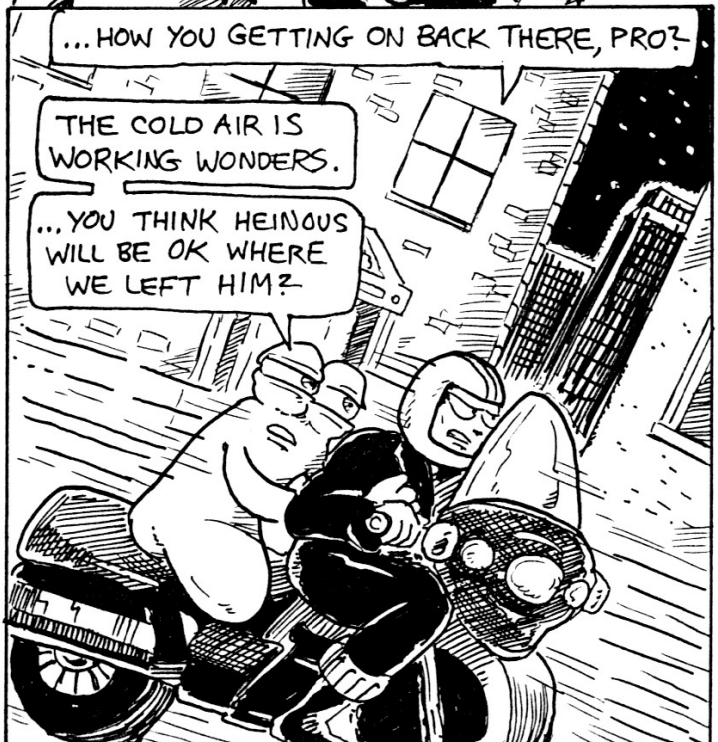
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hours
later...

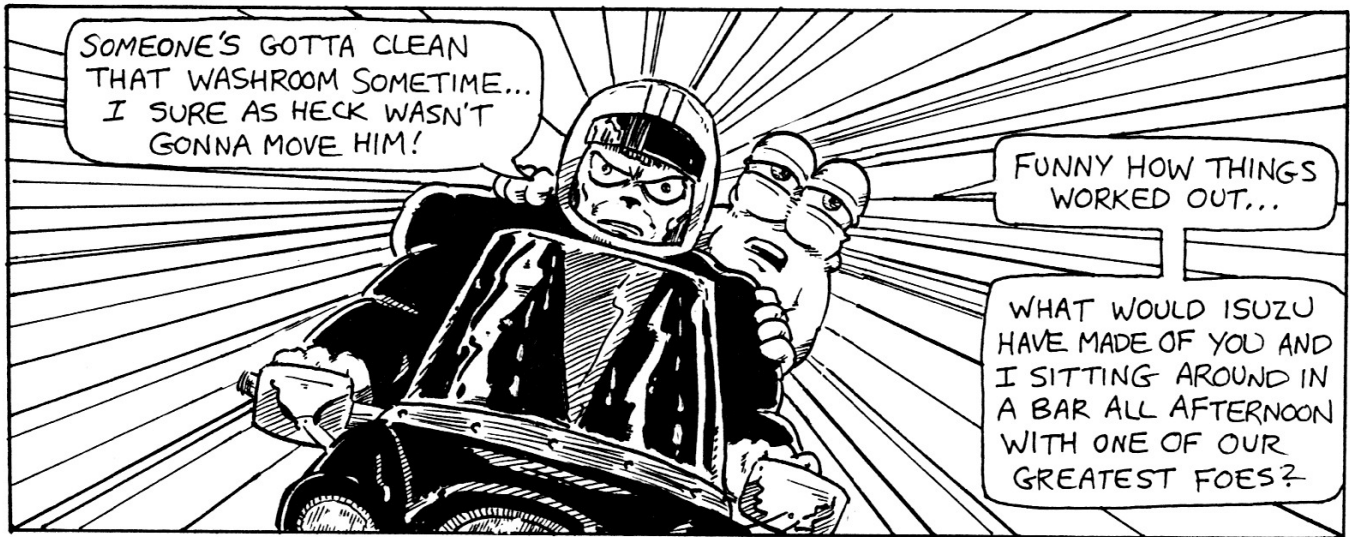












SOMEONE'S GOTTA CLEAN
THAT WASHROOM SOMETIME...
I SURE AS HECK WASN'T
GONNA MOVE HIM!

FUNNY HOW THINGS
WORKED OUT...

WHAT WOULD ISUZU
HAVE MADE OF YOU AND
I SITTING AROUND IN
A BAR ALL AFTERNOON
WITH ONE OF OUR
GREATEST FOES?



I RECKON HE
WOULDN'T MIND.

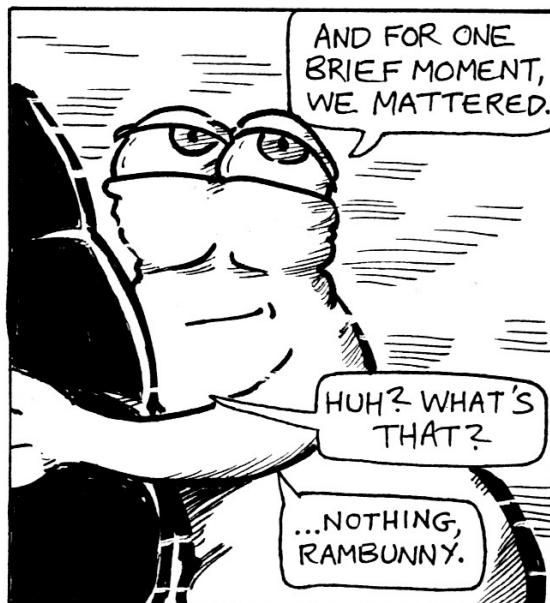
ISUZU ALWAYS WAS AN OPTIMIST
ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR GOOD
IN FOLKS. I ALWAYS KINDA ADMIRERD
THAT, MAYBE 'CAUSE I JUST CAN'T
QUITE SWALLOW IT MYSELF.



DO YOU THINK IF...IF ISUZU
HADN'T DIED, WOULD THE
SQUADRON BE CARRYING
ON LIKE BEFORE?

WHO KNOWS, PRO?

A TEAM AIN'T ONE MAN - IT
WASN'T ME, IT WASN'T ISUZU.
SOMETIMES IT'S JUST AN
IDEA PEOPLE GET BEHIND.



AND FOR ONE
BRIEF MOMENT,
WE MATTERED.

HUH? WHAT'S
THAT?

...NOTHING,
RAMBUNNY.



NOTHING AT
ALL.



...1967 CHATEAU D'YQUEM.
MY FINAL BOTTLE. BEEN
SAVING IT FOR A SPECIAL
OCCASION INDEED.

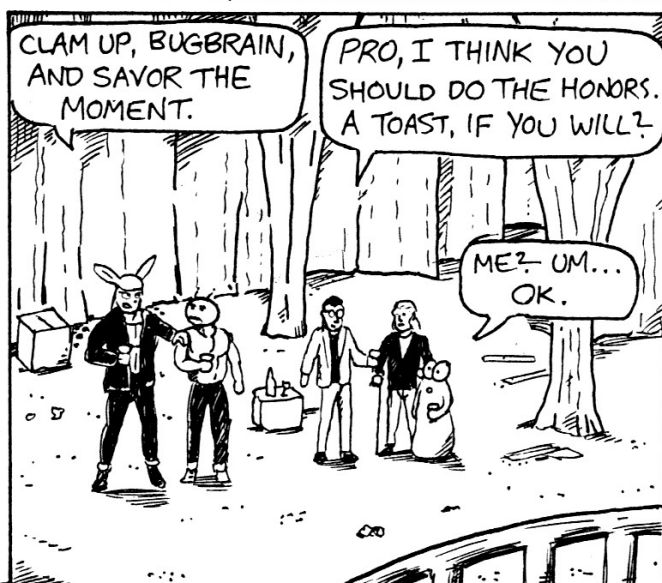


THAT WHY
YOU SHAVED
THE BEARD?

... AND, PRACTICALLY, NO FRIENDS.
I'D RATHER SHARE IT WITH,
GENTLEMEN... AND LADY, OF COURSE!



HEY, WAIT! GUYS, WE COULD JUST
DO THE SQUADRON ON WEEKENDS!
EVERY OTHER SUNDAY! ONE TUESDAY
A MONTH! COME ON!



CLAM UP, BUGBRAIN,
AND SAVOR THE
MOMENT.

PRO, I THINK YOU
SHOULD DO THE HONORS.
A TOAST, IF YOU WILL?

ME? UM...
OK.

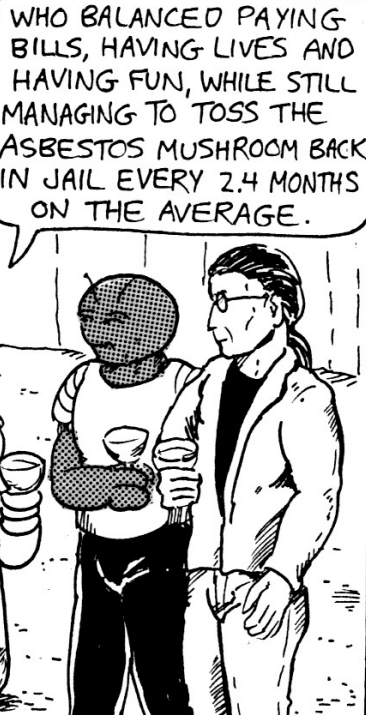


... NOT TOO GOOD
WITH THIS KIND
OF THING...

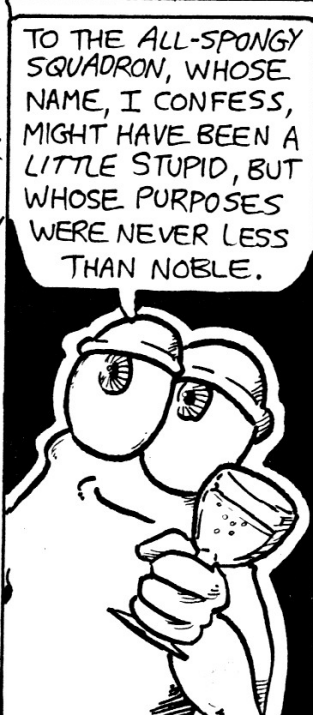
OK, HOW'S
THIS:



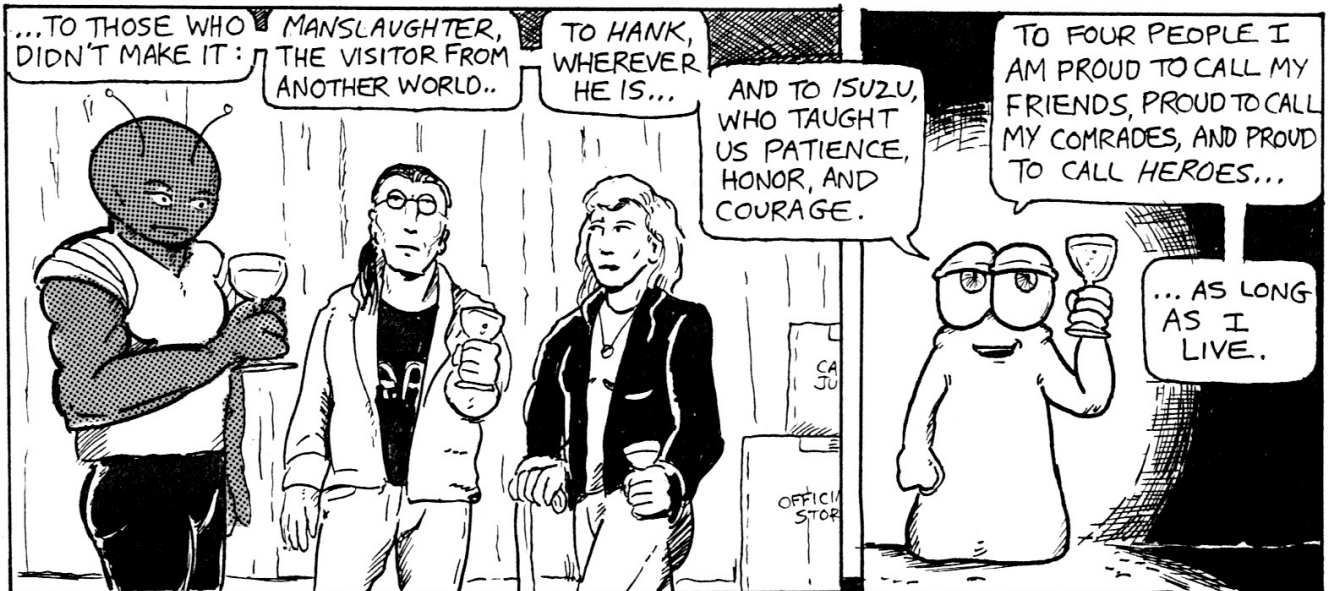
TO A GROUP OF PEOPLE
WHO WEREN'T AFRAID TO
FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT--



WHO BALANCED PAYING
BILLS, HAVING LIVES AND
HAVING FUN, WHILE STILL
MANAGING TO TOSS THE
ASBESTOS MUSHROOM BACK
IN JAIL EVERY 2.4 MONTHS
ON THE AVERAGE.



TO THE ALL-SPONGY
SQUADRON, WHOSE
NAME, I CONFESS,
MIGHT HAVE BEEN A
LITTLE STUPID, BUT
WHOSE PURPOSES
WERE NEVER LESS
THAN NOBLE.



I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY IT, BUT PART OF ME IS GOING TO MISS LIVING IN A CAVE.

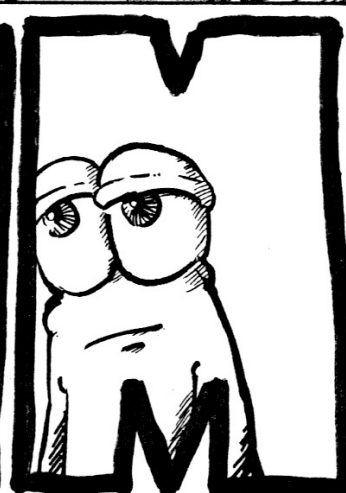


YOU HAVE THE "LOCK," RAMBUNNY?

HOLD YOUR HORSES. THIS AIN'T NO AMOEBA MOBILE I'M LIFTIN'!



OF COURSE, WE'LL HAVE TO LOOK YOU UP IF WE EVER NEED TO GET BACK IN THE CAVE...



I ALWAYS SAY YOU JUST CAN'T BEAT THESE MODERN SECURITY SYSTEMS.



WELL, I GOTTA GO.

BE SEEING YOU, GUYS.

YEAH, I GUESS I OUGHTA HEAD ON, TOO. LATER!

AND REMEMBER: THE UNDERWEAR ALWAYS GOES ON THE OUTSIDE, GANG! A TIP, FROM SUPERHEROING 101.



I SUPPOSE THAT'S MY CUE, TOO. YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES, OUT ON THE ROAD.

HEY, SPIF, WE'RE SUPERHEROES. WE'RE INVINCIBLE!





THE END

OCT. 1990
- FEB. 18, 1998
- NITRGA®



THE UFO CHECKLIST

The United Fanzine Organization is a group of self-publishers dedicated to creating high-quality small press comics. Here's a list of our latest releases as of October 1997. For information on the UFO, contact our current chairman: Bob Elinskas, 1805 Girard St., Utica, NY 13501



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AXEL -n- ALEX #3: Alex Robinson was an ordinary boy... until the mysterious robot Axel became a part of his life. Their adventures have just

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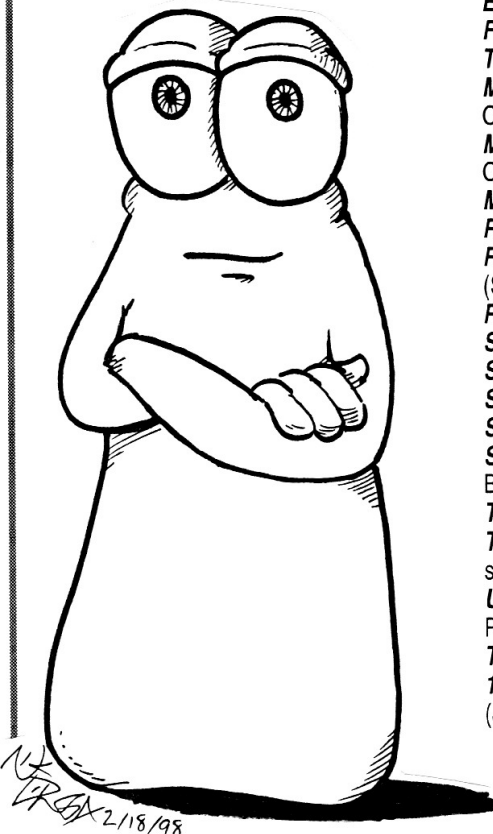
FRAGMENTS: The official newsletter of the UFO, with news, reviews, and commentary from our talented members. For a sample issue, send \$2.00 to Chairman Bob Elinskas, 1805 Girard St., Utica, NY 13501

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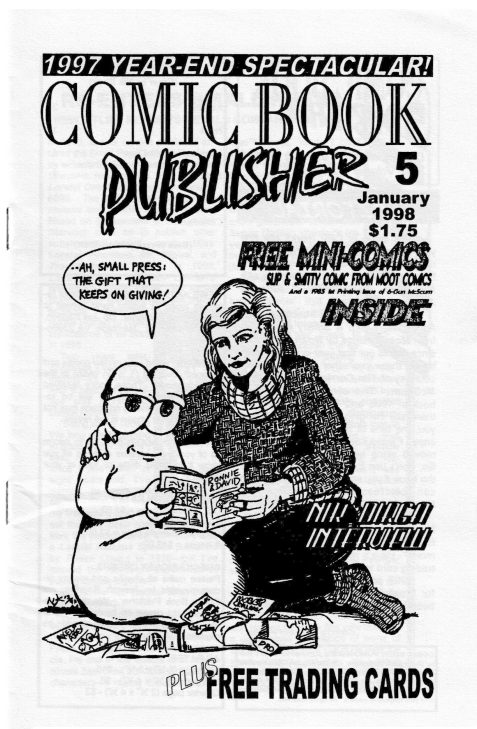


*does not include Max Ink's non-Amoeba Adventures artwork.

SPECIAL 2020 BONUS SECTION



In between #24 and #25 of Amoeba Adventures I packed up stakes and moved away from my college town in Mississippi and back to my homeland in California. I got a reporter job at a tiny Central Valley newspaper and eventually finally managed to get the last three issues of Amoeba Adventures out, drawing #25 and 26 with Max Ink and #27 by myself (for the first time since #13!). In those dark pre-email days, to let people know you changed your address you mailed out postcards. The ones I sent out in 1997 featured the artwork above.



parody aspect to things got swallowed up by other ideas I had. I guess now it's a quasi-superhero/slice-of-life/humor/comedy/drama/epic kinda thing, whatever the hell that means.

You've published some one-shot books, mainly characters from AA. Do you plan on publishing any other books, either of AA characters or different titles altogether?

I have put out, in collaboration with others, solo books for *Rambunny* and *Spif*. Unfortunately, through delays, mostly my own, both these books came out years after they were begun, and I've decided to focus on the regular AA book for now. Now that I'm nearing #30, which is almost unheard of in Small Press, I want to keep it coming as often as possible.

You've just released AA #25, which is part 6 of an 8-part Dark Ages story arc. Once this story arc is concluded, where does AA go from here?

Well, by the time this comes out I should be about to put out AA #26, the climax to *The Dark Ages*. #27 should follow pretty quickly thereafter — the 24-page epilogue to *The Dark Ages*, it's also the first issue I've penciled since #13. *What Happened Next* ties up a ton of loose ends from the past three years of AA stories and clears the stage for the next series of events.

Then, starting with *Amoeba* #28, for the first time in years and years I'll be telling a story without a lot of excess baggage and I'm having a blast planning it. Without giving too much away, #28 takes place a year or so after #27 and catches up with Pro (Prometheus) and Dawn in their new hometown of An-

Joe Bagdon's *Comic Book Publisher* featured *Amoeba Adventures* on the cover of #5 and an interview with me.

Before life got in the way, I had thought about continuing *Amoeba Adventures* beyond #27, and here I share some of the thoughts for the stories that never were.

It's an interesting peek at what might've been, but after 8 very busy years in small press, I was totally burnt out.

dromeda, a city located about where Seattle is on our Earth. They're attempting to lead the so-called "normal life", but as so often happens in the world of comics, they've got a few obstacles to get around.

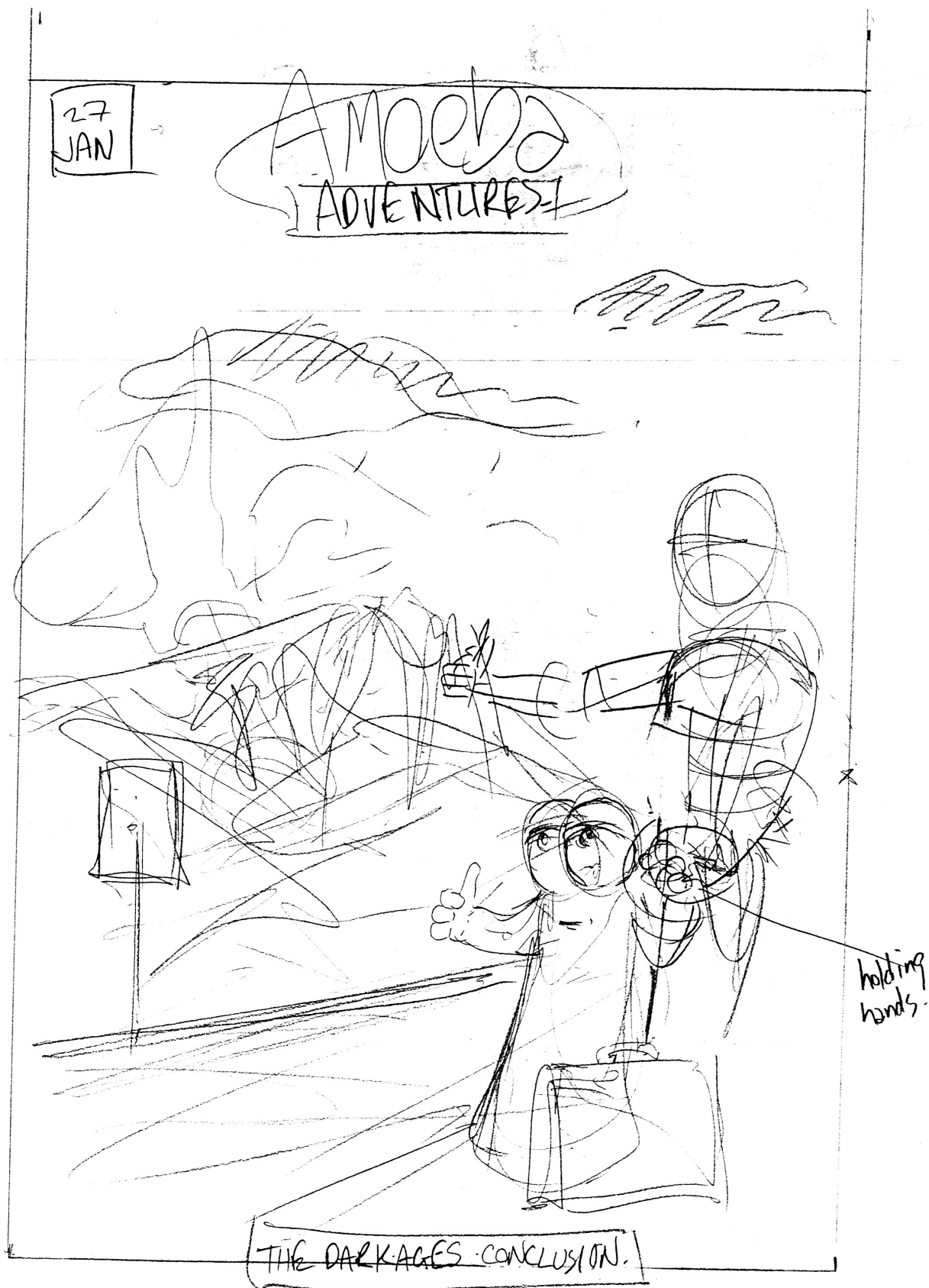
I'll be introducing some interesting new cast members, including *Andromeda's* resident superhero, *Mister 100*, who becomes Pro's good friend, and a mysterious fellow named *Gan* who's going to surprise a lot of people. And the old cast members — *Spif*, *Rambunny*, and *Ninja Ant* will be popping in now and again.

I've also been talking to *Jason Marcy* about having his lout of a hero *Powerwus* guest-star for an issue. And starting in #28 there'll be a storyline where we meet some of Dawn's family and learn a little something about her past.

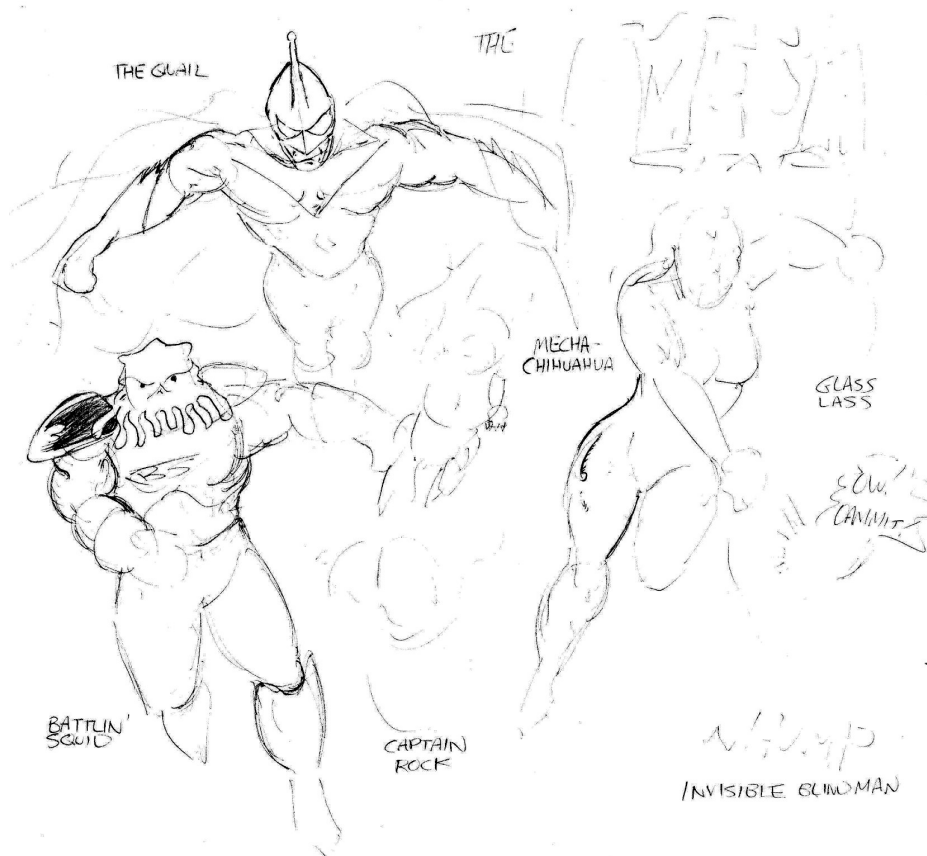
I'm hoping to do a lot of character exploration in the AA issues leading up to #30, while still keeping it full of enough humor and action to make it more than "the comic of conversations". There really won't be so much of the galaxy-spanning cosmic angst that dominated *The Dark Ages*, fun as that sometimes is.

You gave up the drawing aspect of producing AA and eventually "hired" Max Ink as your regular artist, why?

I didn't so much "hire" Max as we began collaborating together. I simply, after a dozen issues or so, got burned out on the art end of things and that really slowed down my productivity. Max and I previously worked together on several books — *Prometheus: Silent Storm*, *Dr. Phlegm*, and an issue of AA or two, and we hit it off creatively. I think now, I might've quit AA entirely around #14 or



Original cover concept sketch for #27 by Max Ink, which I later rendered for the final cover.



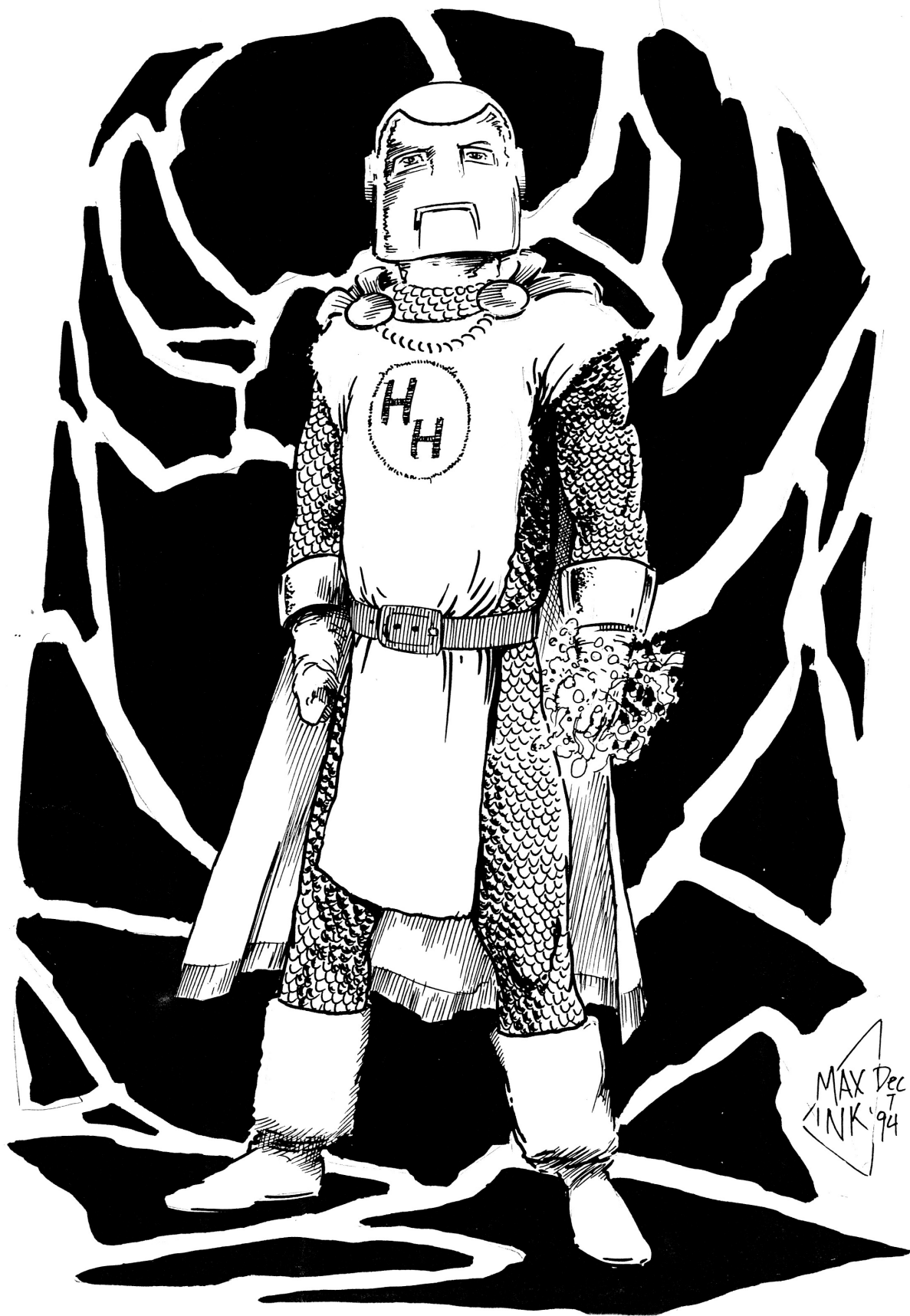
Occasionally in Amoeba Adventures other superhero teams were mentioned as existing in their world, like Omega Star and the Flying Dutchmen. They never quite appeared in the comic, but I did scribble a few ideas.

Members of the teams might've included The Quail, Battlin' Squid, Mecha-Chihuahua, Glass Lass, Human Radio, and possibly the most politically incorrect superhero I ever imagined, Invisible Blind Man. Owch.



INVISIBLE BLIND MAN





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