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A TALE OF THE UN - MEN

DAVE LOUAPRE WRITER
SCOTT BABASHAK LETTERER
VINCE LOCKE COVER MODEL
KAREN BERGER COVER PHOTOGRAPHER
SHELLY ROEBERG ASSISTANT EDITOR
THE UN-MEN CREATED BY ELEN WEIN AND BERNIE WRIGHTSON
ALISA KWITNEY CO-EDITOR
RICHARD BRUNING EDITOR
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THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

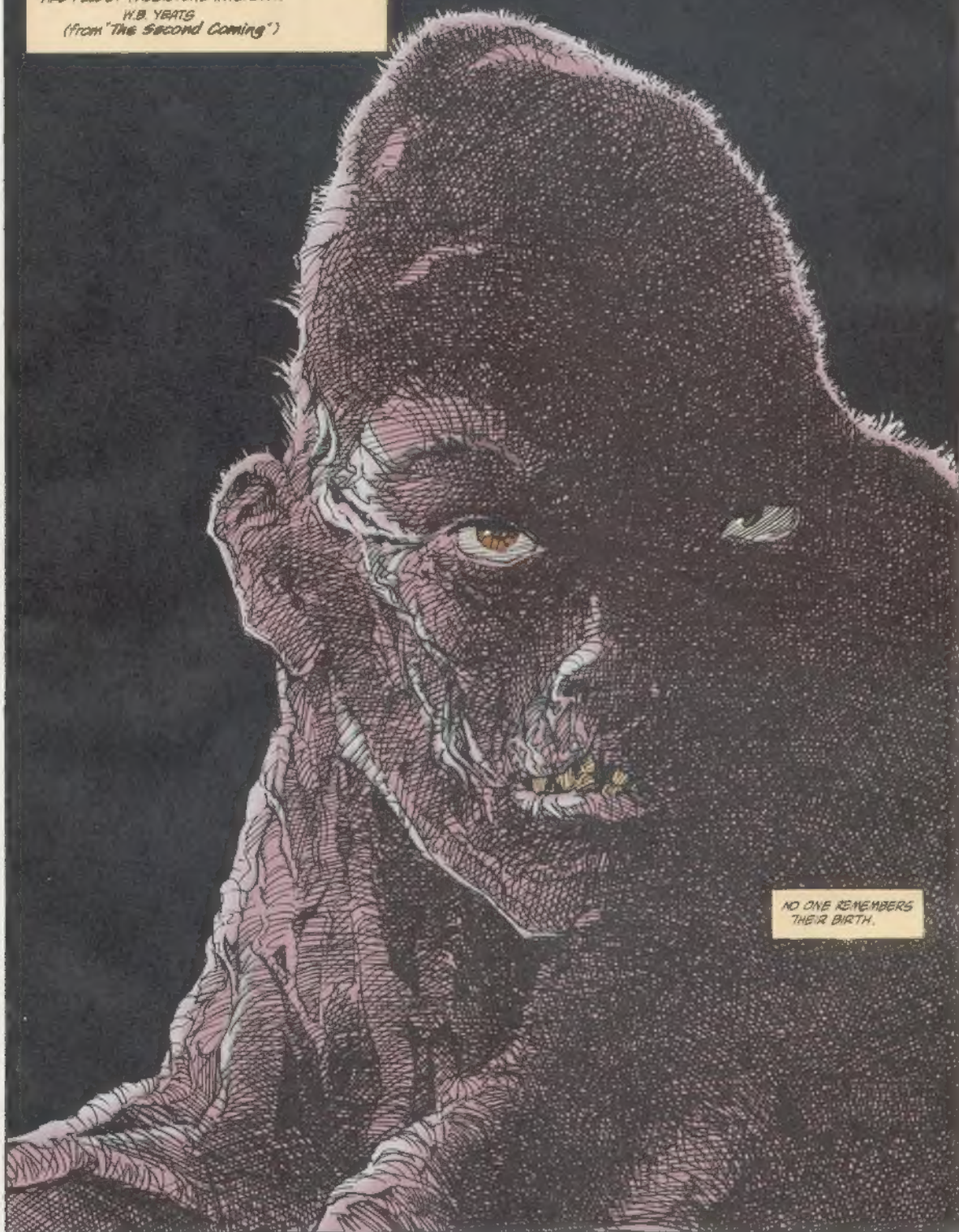
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TURNING AND TURNING IN THE WIDENING GYRE
THE FALCON CANNOT HEAR THE FALCONER;
THINGS FALL APART; THE CENTRE CANNOT HOLD;
HERE ANARCHY IS LOOSED UPON THE WORLD;
THE BLOOD-DIMMED TIDE IS LOOSED, AND EVERYWHERE
THE CEREMONY OF INNOCENCE IS DROWNED;
THE BEST LACK ALL CONVICTION, WHILE THE WORST
ARE FULL OF PASSIONATE INTENSITY.

H.B. YEATS
(from "The Second Coming")



NO ONE REMEMBERS
THEIR BIRTH.

IT IS SAID TO BE THE MOST PAINFUL
MOMENT OF LIFE, AND YET WE CAN'T
RECALL IT.



OR PERHAPS WE CHOOSE NOT TO REMEMBER.
MAYBE WE'RE GIVEN THE
OPTION OF FORGETTING.

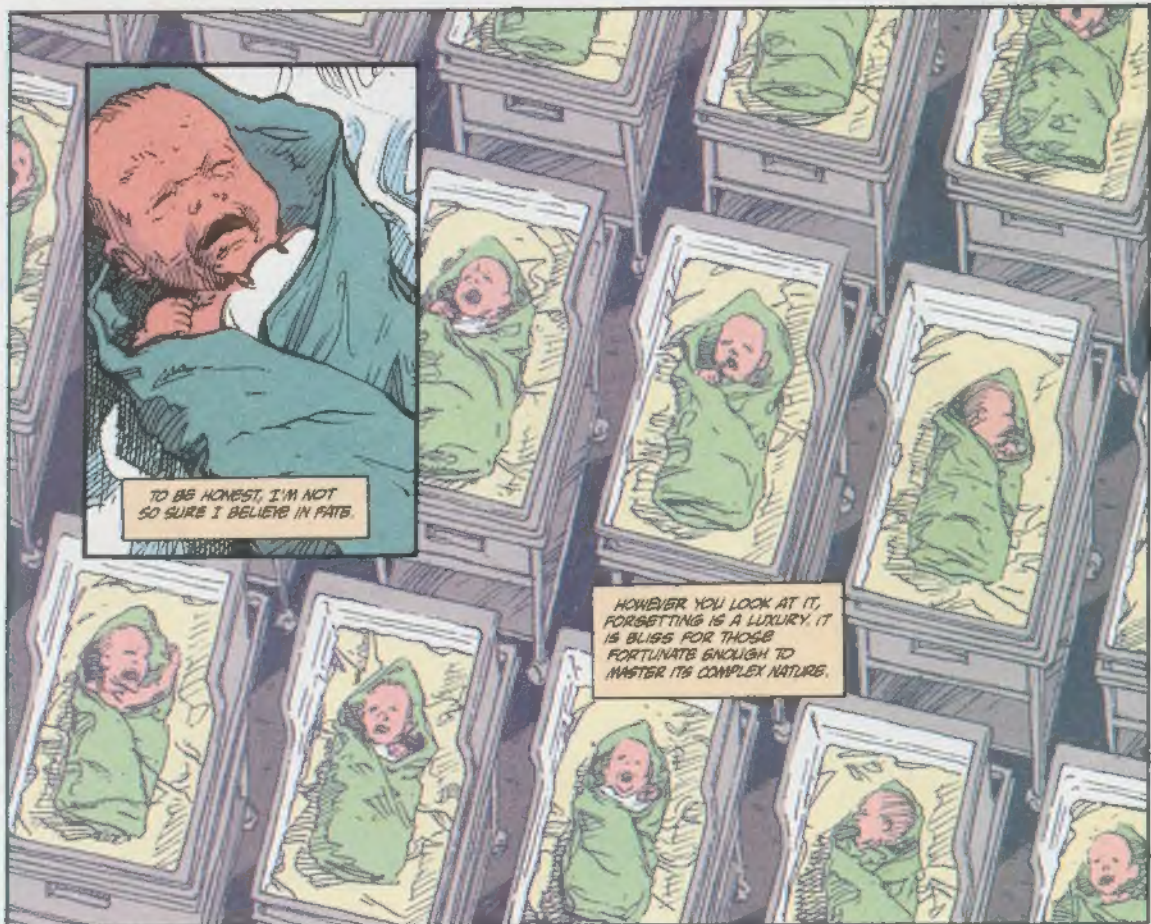


BY WHATEVER IT IS THAT
GUIDES OUR FATE.



TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT
SO SURE I BELIEVE IN FATE.

HOWEVER YOU LOOK AT IT,
FORGETTING IS A LUXURY. IT
IS BLISS FOR THOSE
FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO
MASTER ITS COMPLEX NATURE.





I LOOK AT THE ONES
WHO LIVE BELOW, AT
THE FOOT OF THESE
JAGGED ROCKS.



THEY'VE LIVED WITH PAIN FOR SO LONG
THAT IT'S NOT EVEN PAIN ANYMORE,
BUT AN UNAVOIDABLE FEELING THAT
CONSTANTLY LETS THEM KNOW THEY
ARE ALIVE.



IMAGINE HOW NICE IT
WOULD BE NOT TO
KNOW JUST HOW
WRETCHED YOU REALLY
ARE.



THE MARROW IN MY
BONES, HARDLY
HUMAN ANYMORE,
IS BLACK WITH
RAGE AND RUIN.

I WAS NOT ALWAYS
LIKE THIS, BUT
THINGS CHANGE.



IT IS THE NATURE
OF THE WORLD. IT
IS THE BASIS OF
HOPE.

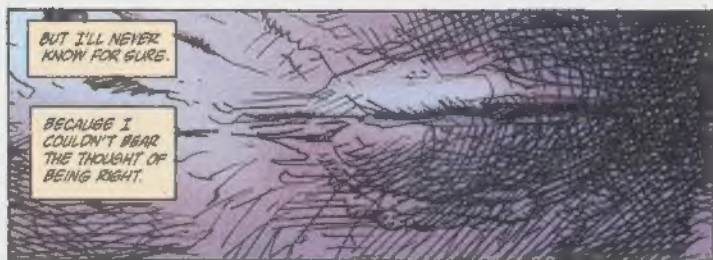
HOPE.

THE WORD SOUNDS
STRANGE TO ME NOW.



IF I SHOULDED INTO THE CANYON
BELOW, I'M CONVINCED THERE
WOULD BE NO ECHO.

OR IF THERE WAS AN
ECHO, IT WOULDN'T
BE ONE I COULD
HEAR.



BUT I'LL NEVER
KNOW FOR SURE.

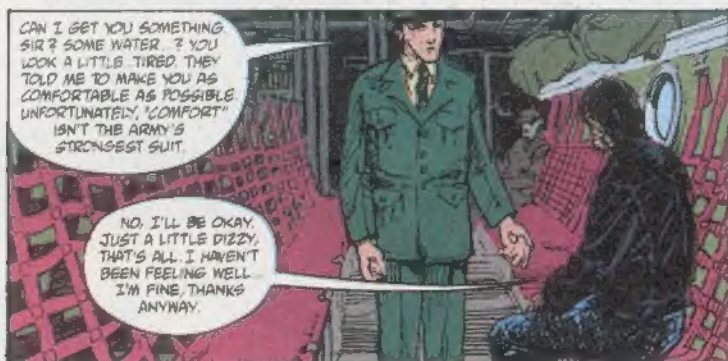
BECAUSE I
COULDN'T BEAR
THE THOUGHT OF
BEING RIGHT.





I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOU, MR. KANE, BUT WE'LL BE LANDING IN ABOUT FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

HUH? FORTY-FIVE...? OH, THANK YOU.



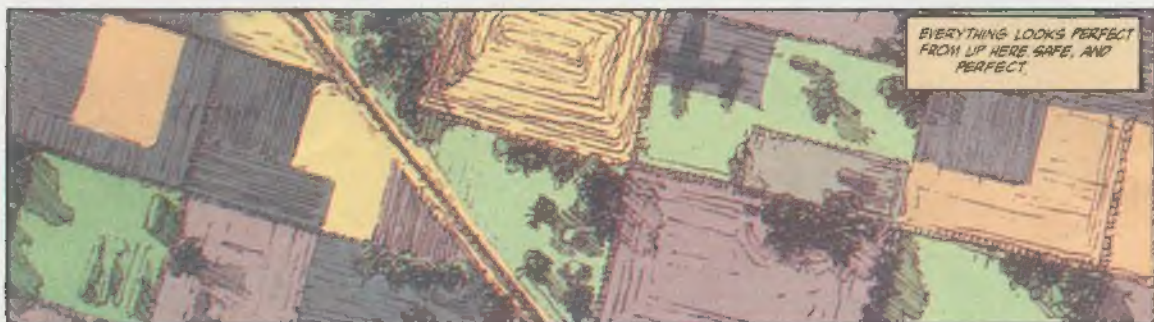
CAN I GET YOU SOMETHING SIR? SOME WATER? YOU LOOK A LITTLE TIRED. THEY TOLD ME TO MAKE YOU AS COMFORTABLE AS POSSIBLE. UNFORTUNATELY, 'COMFORT' ISN'T THE ARMY'S STRONGEST SUIT.

NO, I'LL BE OKAY. JUST A LITTLE DIZZY. THAT'S ALL. I HAVEN'T BEEN FEELING WELL. I'M FINE, THANKS ANYWAY.

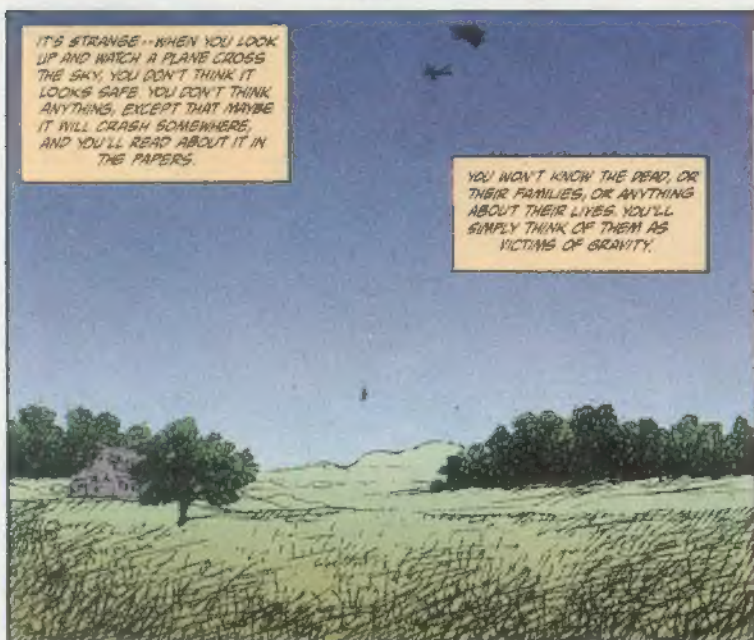


"FINE" I THAT'S A GOOD ONE. TWENTY-THREE YEARS OLD. SWEATING LIKE A PIG. EYES BEGINNING TO THROB LIKE MOLTEN GOLF BALLS...

AND EVERY SIX HOURS OR SO, A PAIN IN MY STOMACH SO GODDAMN INTENSE... LIKE AN ALLEY CAT TRYING TO CLAW ITS WAY OUT OF MY BUTS.



EVERYTHING LOOKS PERFECT FROM UP HERE. SAFE, AND PERFECT.



IT'S STRANGE--WHEN YOU LOOK UP AND WATCH A PLANE CROSS THE SKY, YOU DON'T THINK IT LOOKS SAFE. YOU DON'T THINK ANYTHING, EXCEPT THAT MAYBE IT WILL CRASH SOMEWHERE, AND YOU'LL READ ABOUT IT IN THE PAPERS.

YOU WON'T KNOW THE DEAD, OR THEIR FAMILIES, OR ANYTHING ABOUT THEIR LIVES. YOU'LL SIMPLY THINK OF THEM AS VICTIMS OF GRAVITY.



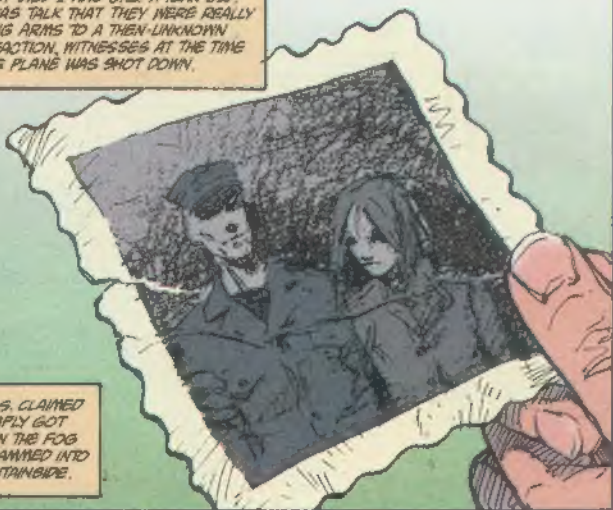
AND IN A COUPLE OF DAYS, YOU WON'T THINK OF THEM AT ALL.

MY PARENTS WERE VICTIMS OF GRAVITY, KILLED
IN A CRASH OVER CENTRAL AMERICA WHILE
DELIVERING SUPPLIES TO A SMALL JUNGLE VILLAGE.



WHEN THEY DIED I WAS ONLY A YEAR OLD.
THERE WAS TALK THAT THEY WERE REALLY
SUPPLYING ARMS TO A THEN-UNKNOWN
REBEL FACTION. WITNESSES AT THE TIME
SAID THE PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN.

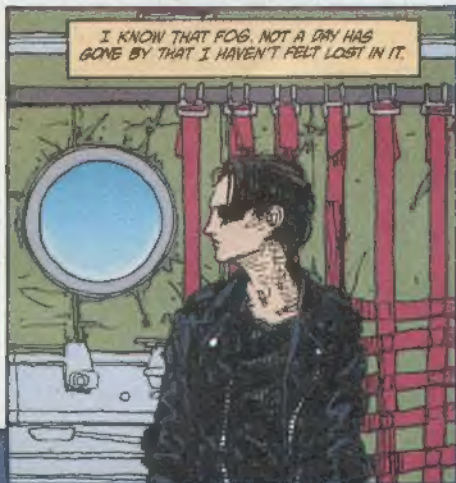
THE U.S. CLAIMED
IT SIMPLY GOT
LOST IN THE FOG
AND SLAMMED INTO
A MOUNTAINSIDE.



Pensacola
June, 1968



I KNOW THAT FOG. NOT A DAY HAS
GONE BY THAT I HAVEN'T FELT LOST IN IT.

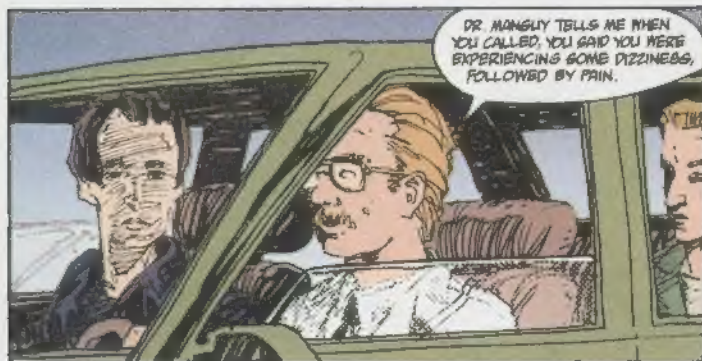
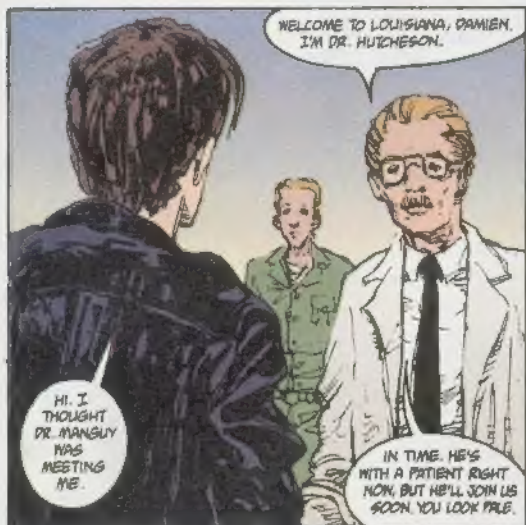
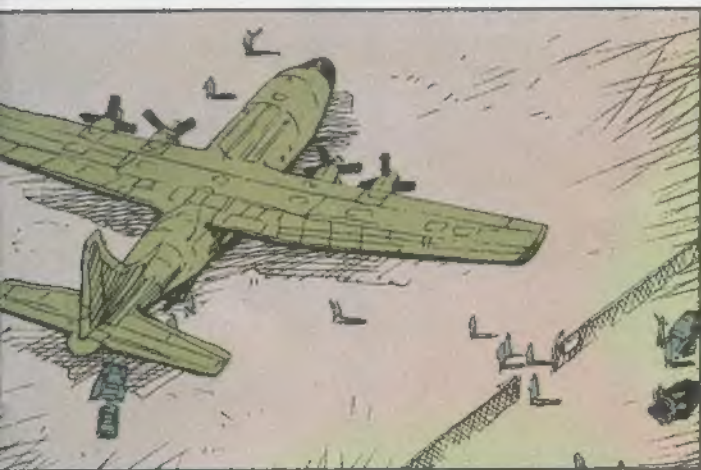


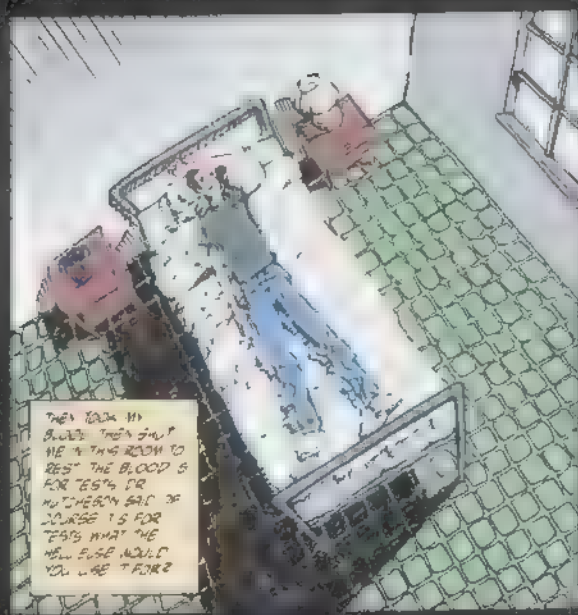
THE ARMY'S BEEN MY MOTHER AND FATHER
FOR MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS. I HAVE NO
ONE ELSE. "THE ARMY TAKES CARE OF ITS
OWN," THEY SAY.



THEY'VE CERTAINLY
TAKEN CARE OF ME.







THEN TOOK MY
BLOOD THEN SENT
ME TO THIS ROOM TO
REST THE BLOOD IS
FOR TESTS OR
MUTHERSON SAID OF
COURSE IS FOR
TESTS WHAT THE
HELL ELSE WOULD
YOU USE IT FOR?



AS SOON AS MY HEAD
HIT THE PILLOW THE
DIZZINESS RETURNED
AS THE PAIN CALMED
MOMENTUM I WAS
STRUCK BY THE
FEAR THAT I MIGHT NOT
SOON AWAKE THIS TIME



THE CAT WAS IN MY
GUT AGAIN "LAWING
TO KAY THROUGH
MY STOMACH WALL



THE ROOM RUINED DOWN FROM ME
THE CEILING BANGLED FROM SIDE
TO SIDE A TUNNEL FORMED LONG
AND DARK DEFYING ALL THE PETTY
LAWS OF PHYSICS



AS I SLEPT INTO
UNCONSCIOUSNESS
SOMETHING MOVED
FROM LEFT NEAR A
DESPERATE LONG
POSSIONED WITH RAGE

THE HOWL OF SOMETHING
THAT WISHED THERE DEAD

"WAS THE HOWL
OF MY BONES



THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN READY AN HOUR AGO MISS HAAS WHAT HAPPENED?

DR HUTCHESON RAN THE TEST TWICE TO BE SURE THEN HE RAN IT AGAIN THE SAME SAMPLE WAS TESTED THREE TIMES AND EVERY TIME A DIFFERENT READING

IMPOSSIBLE

IMPOSSIBLE?

I'VE TRIPLE-CHECKED THE DATA EACH TEST PRODUCED A DIFFERENT RESULT ALMOST AS IF THE SAMPLES WERE TAKEN FROM SEPARATE, UNRELATED SUBJECTS

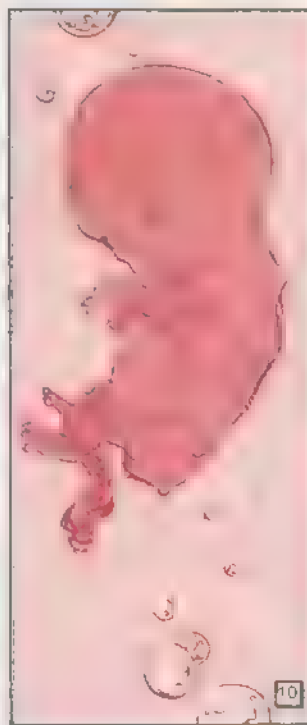
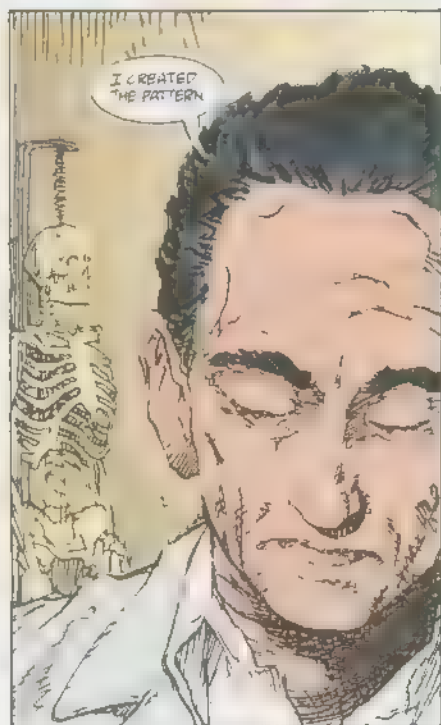
I'LL RUN IT AGAIN IF YOU WANT BUT THESE READINGS ARE CORRECT

COULD IT BE THE COMPUTER? A MALFUNCTION OF SOME KIND?

IT'S NOT THE COMPUTER IT'S THE BLOOD, DAVID

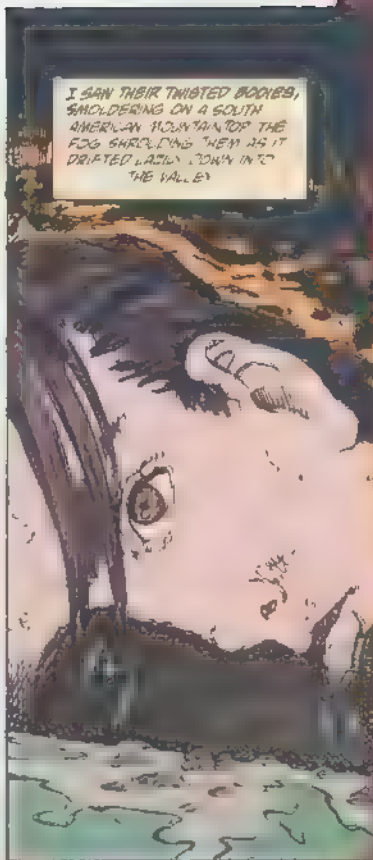
DAVID'S BLOOD IS BEGINNING TO MUTATE AT THE MOLECULAR LEVEL JUST LIKE THE OTHERS, TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO

JESUS MISS HAAS, WOULD YOU PLEASE LEAVE US

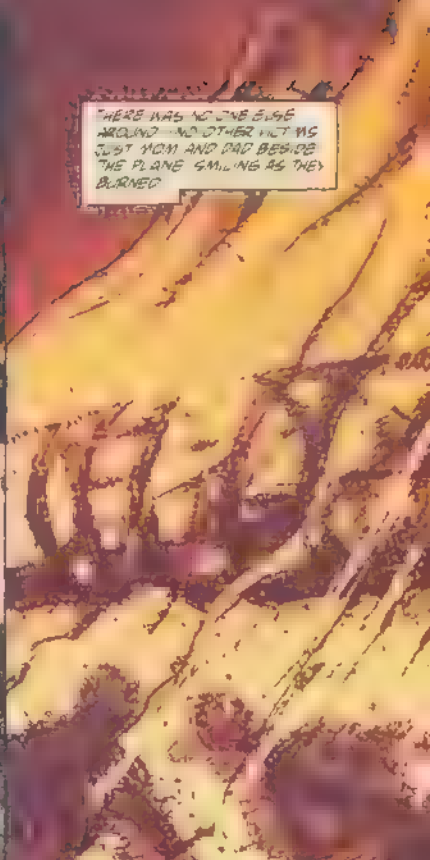




I WOKE UP ON THE FLOOR NEXT TO A PUDDLE OF MY OWN VOMIT I'D BEEN DREAMING OF MY PARENTS



I SAW THEIR TWISTED BODIES, SMOLDERING ON A SOUTH AMERICAN MOUNTAIN TOP THE FOG SMOULDERING THEM AS IT DRIPT LAZILY DOWN INTO THE VALLEY



THERE WAS NO ONE ELSE AROUND AND OTHER VICTIMS JUST MOM AND DAD BESIDE THE PLANE SMILING AS THEY BURNED



AND THEN I WAS BESIDE THEM, FULLY GROWN AND UNARMED I WANTED TO PUT MY ARMS AROUND THEM. BUT I THOUGHT THEIR MELTING FLESH MIGHT STICK TO ME, SO I JUST KIND OF HAYED INSTEAD



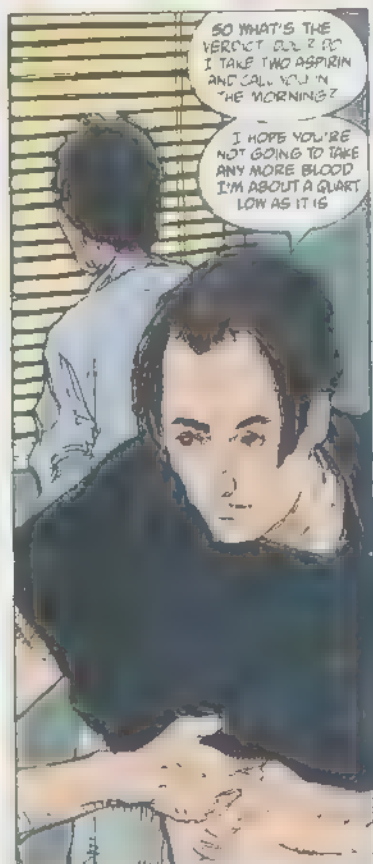
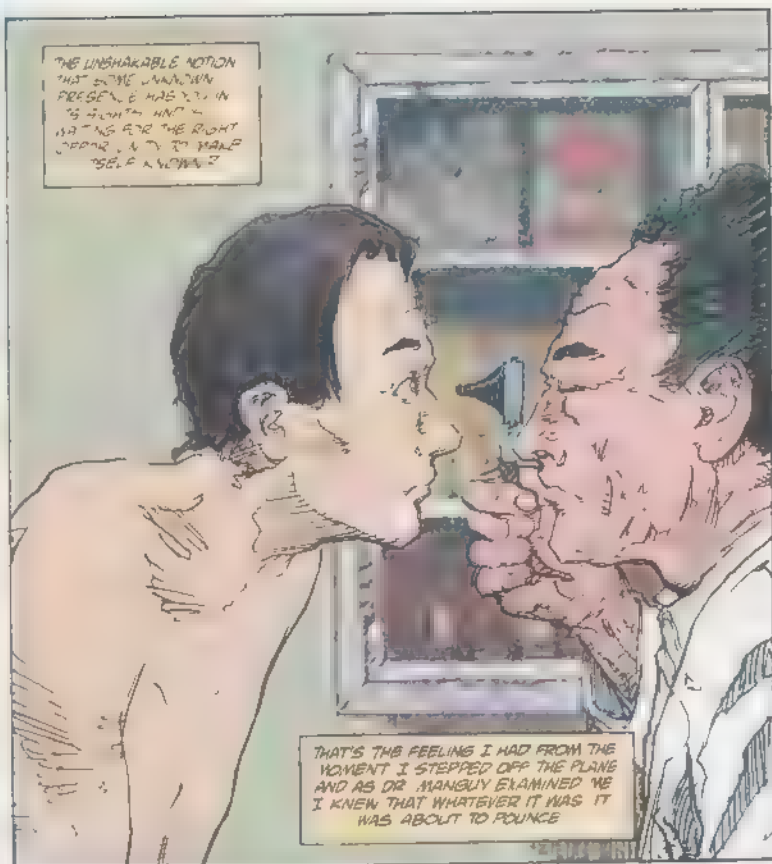
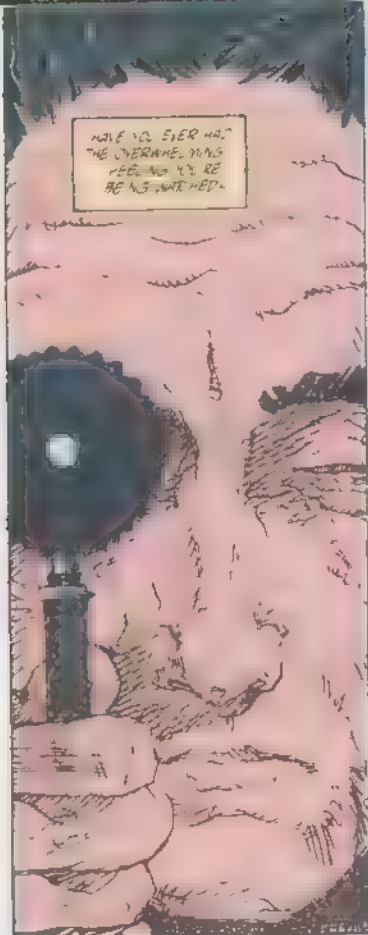
I DON'T KNOW WHY I FELT LIKE "HAYING" THESE BURNING PEOPLE. PERHAPS "HAY" WAS THE NOTION OF "HAYING" TOVA LOVE

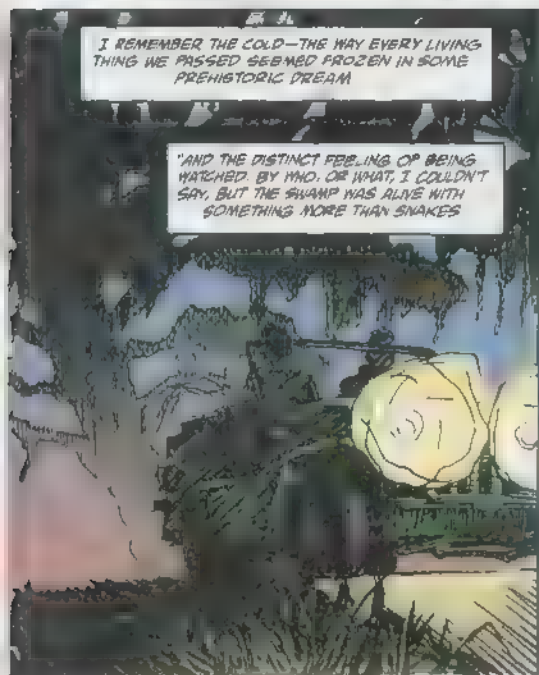
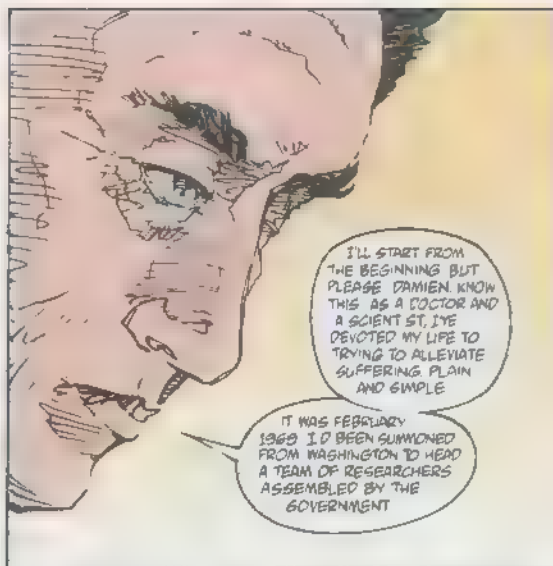


NEITHER MAY I ONLY I-SS MY PARENTS A DREAMS

MR KANE? MR KANE ARE YOU AWAKE? DANNIE?

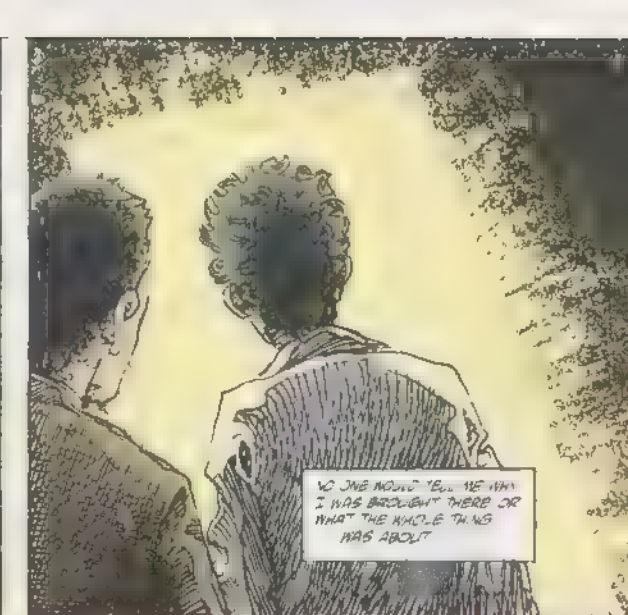
AND THEN THEY THE LONG NO REAPPEARING THE ELEMENT I OPEN MY EYES







THEY TOOK ME TO A MAKESHIFT
OF ENJOY - AN OLD BARRACKS
ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A DEFUNCT
SHOOTING RANGE



NO ONE WOULD TELL ME WHY
I WAS BROUGHT THERE OR
WHAT THE WHOLE THING
WAS ABOUT



NO ONE PREPARED ME FOR WHAT
I WAS ABOUT TO SEE



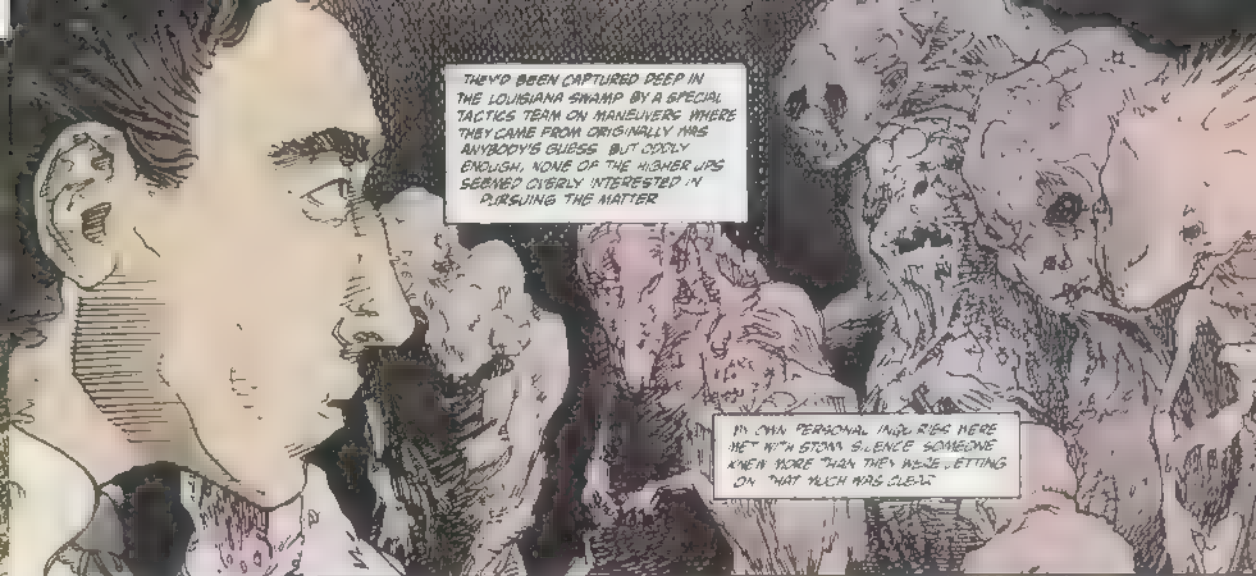
HORRIBLY DISFIGURED SHAPES SHACKLED TO THE WALLS
BETWEEN NOT HUMAN, HARDLY EVEN ANIMAL, THEY LOOKED
AT ME AND I COULD SEE THE TERROR IN THEIR EYES

I WAS AS THOUGH THEY THOUGHT I'D
COME TO KILL THEM AND I WANTED
TO BE SICK



THEY WERE LIKE NOTHING I'D EVER
SEEN BEFORE SOME OF THE GUARDS
HAD COME UP IN THE WAVE FOR THEM

THEY WERE
THESE CREATURES
THE UN-MEN



THEY'D BEEN CAPTURED DEEP IN THE LOUISIANA SWAMP BY A SPECIAL TACTICS TEAM ON MANEUVERS WHERE THEY CAME FROM ORIGINALLY WAS ANYBODY'S GUESS. BUT ODDLY ENOUGH, NONE OF THE HIGHER UPS SEEMED OVERLY INTERESTED IN PURSUING THE MATTER.

IN OWN PERSONAL INQUIRIES WERE MET WITH STONY SILENCE. SOMEONE KNEW MORE THAN THEY WERE LETTING ON. THAT MUCH WAS CLEAR.

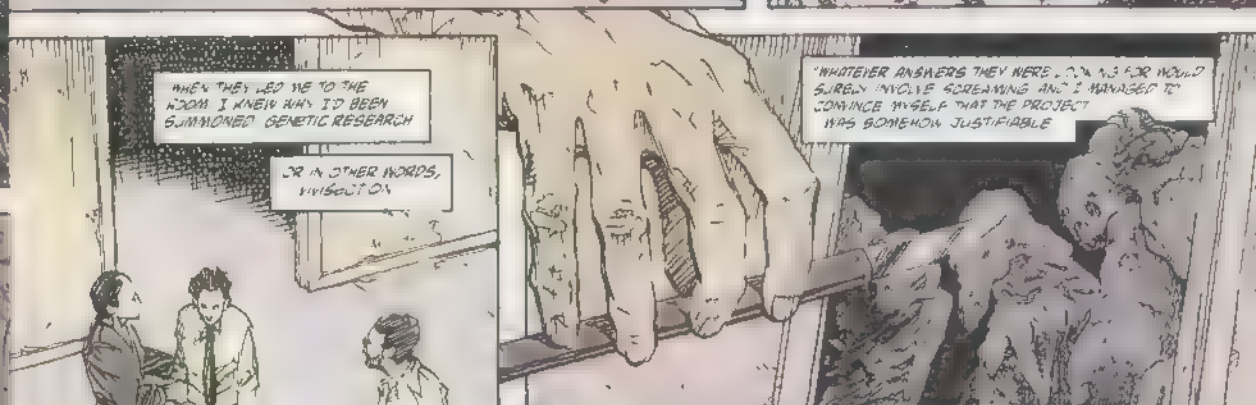


I TRIED NOT TO LOOK INTO THOSE MISERABLE EYES. BUT I COULDN'T HELP IT. I WAS LIKE TRYING NOT TO LOOK AT SOME DREAFFUL ACCIDENT THAT YOU PASS ON THE HIGHWAY.

I STARED AT THOSE MISERABLE FACES AND WONDERED WHAT KIND OF GOD COULD BREATHE LIFE INTO SUCH WRETCHED SPECIMENS.

THEY DIDN'T SPEAK BUT I FELT THEIR PAIN.

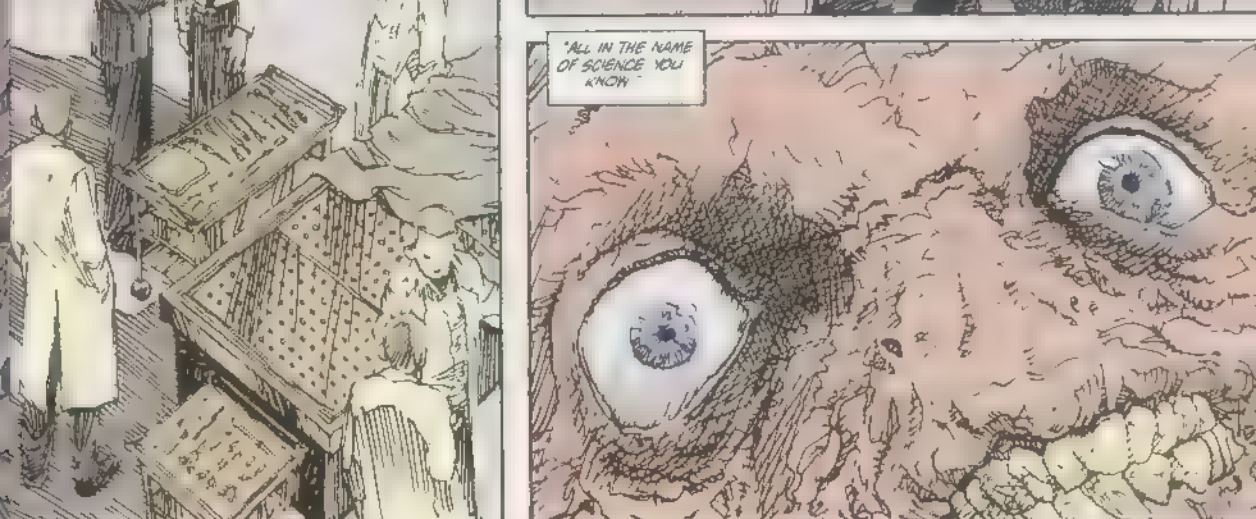
AND THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THE LOOK OF HATE IN THE EYES OF A CREATURE IN CHAINS.



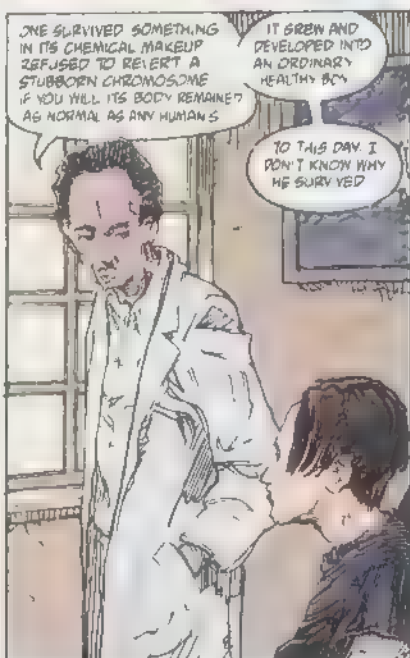
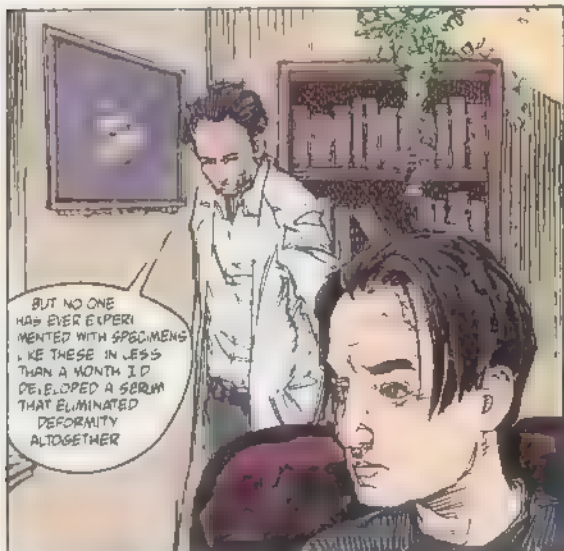
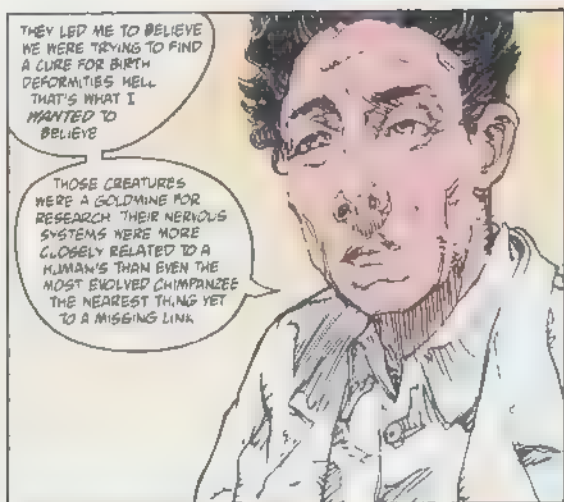
WHEN THEY LED ME TO THE ROOM, I KNEW WHY I'D BEEN SUMMONED. GENETIC RESEARCH.

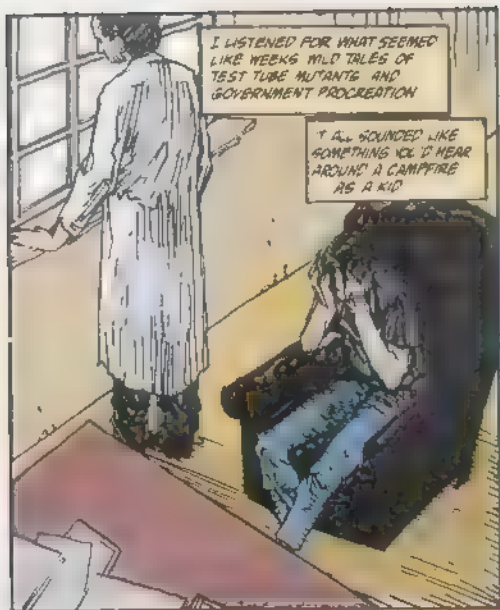
OR IN OTHER WORDS, VIOLATION.

"WHATEVER ANSWERS THEY WERE LOOKING FOR WOULD SURELY INVOLVE SCREAMING AND I MANAGED TO CONVINCE MYSELF THAT THE PROJECT WAS SOMEHOW JUSTIFIABLE.



"ALL IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE YOU KNOW."





I LISTENED FOR WHAT SEEMED LIKE WEEKS WILD TALES OF TEST TUBE MUTANTS AND GOVERNMENT PROCREATION

I ALL SOUNDED LIKE SOMETHING YOU'D HEAR AROUND A CAMPFIRE AS A KID



BUT MANGUY WASN'T KIDDING, AND I SUDDENLY FELT AS THOUGH I'D LOST CONTROL OVER ANYTHING THAT WAS REAL

WHEN HE TOLD ME OF THE CREATURES THEY'D FOUND IN THE SWAMP I WANTED TO LAUGH. WHEN HE EXPLAINED HOW HIS "SERUM" WAS MEANT TO CURE PERDUM TIES, I WANTED TO SPIT IN HIS FACE

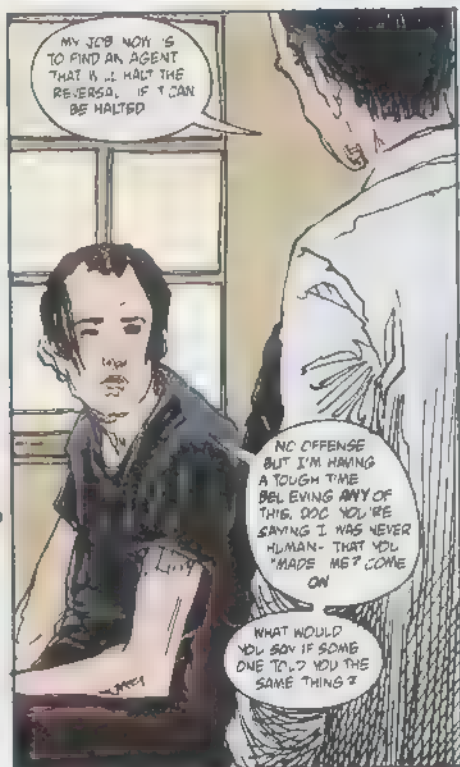


AND WHEN HE SAID MY BODY WAS EXPERIENCING SOME THING CALLED "GENETIC MOLECULAR REPRESSION" I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK



I KNOW IT SOUNDS FANTASTIC BUT IT'S ALL TRUE AND I'M TO BLAME I DIDN'T COUNT ON YOUR BODY CHEMISTRY COUNTERACTING THE SERUM AFTER TWENTY THREE YEARS

IF I'D HAD ANY INDICATION YOU PROBABLY WOULDN'T BE HERE TODAY



MY JOB NOW IS TO FIND AN AGENT THAT WILL HALT THE REVERSE. IF I CAN BE HALTED

NO OFFENSE BUT I'M HAVING A TOUGH TIME BELIEVING ANY OF THIS, DOC. YOU'RE SAYING I WAS NEVER HUMAN - THAT YOU "MADE" ME? COME ON

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF SOME ONE TOLD YOU THE SAME THING?



I PROBABLY WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT EITHER

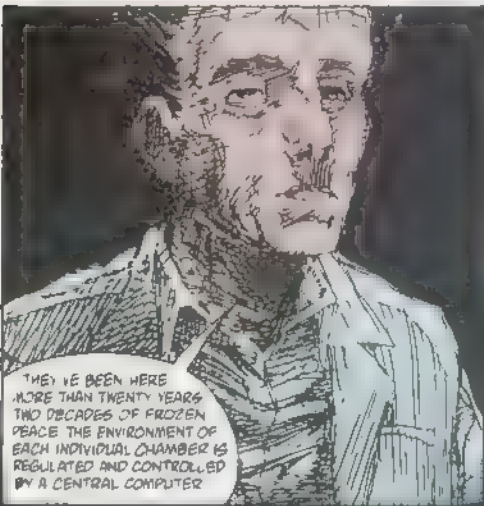
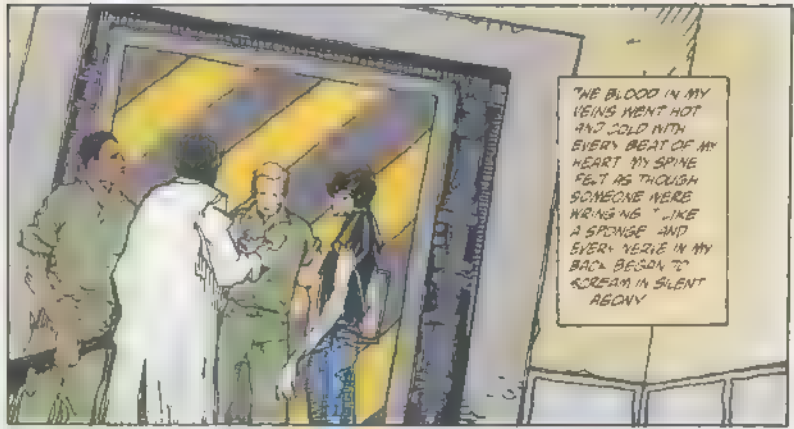
BUT WHAT I'VE SAID IS TRUE. I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO BELIEVE IT. SO I'VE ARRANGED TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO SEE

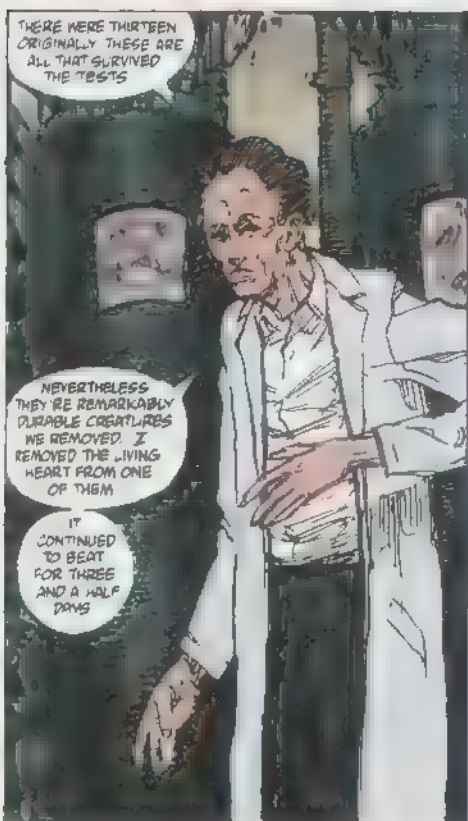
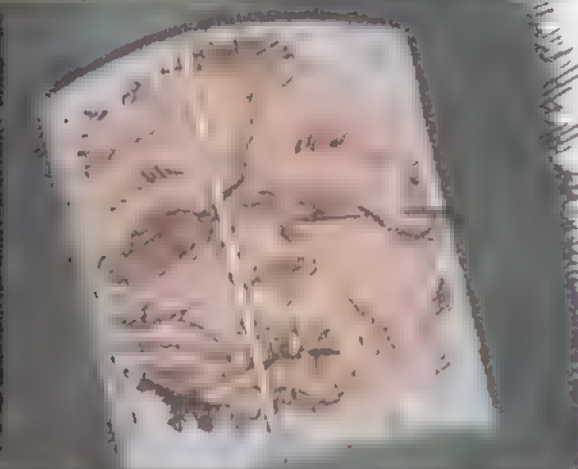
THEN I DON'T THINK I WANT TO SEE IT



IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU BELIEVE ME DAMNEN. YOU HAVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH

I'M TAKING YOU TO YOUR PARENTS







AND MY PARENTS?
WHICH ONES
DO I CALL
MOM AND
DAD?

THEY'RE
HERE
DAMIEN



THE FEMALES ON
THE LEFT THE
MALE ON THE
RIGHT

FOR WHAT IT'S
WORTH, DOC, I STILL
DON'T BELIEVE ANY
OF THIS

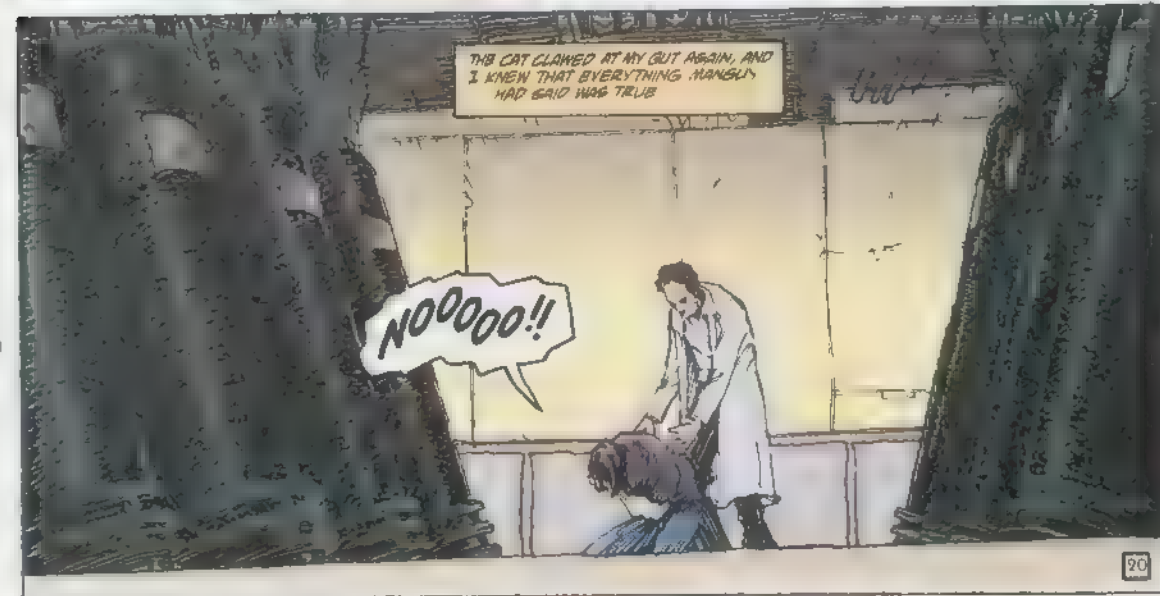
WELL, FOR WHAT
IT'S WORTH, I WISH TO
GOD IT WEREN'T
THE TRUTH



I LOOKED AT THE
TERRIBLE FACE
IN THE GLASS

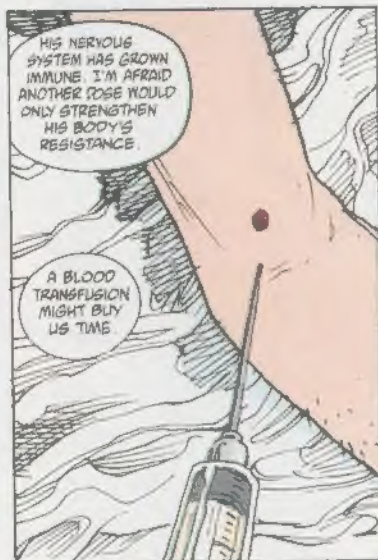
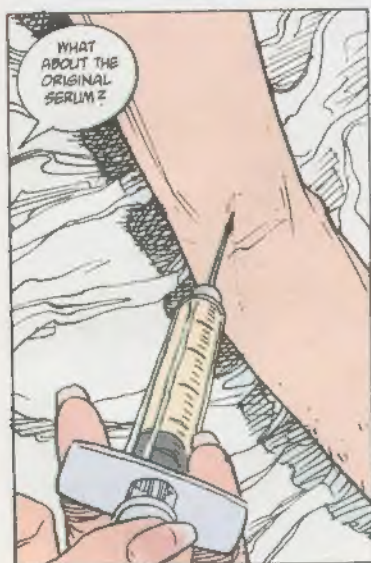
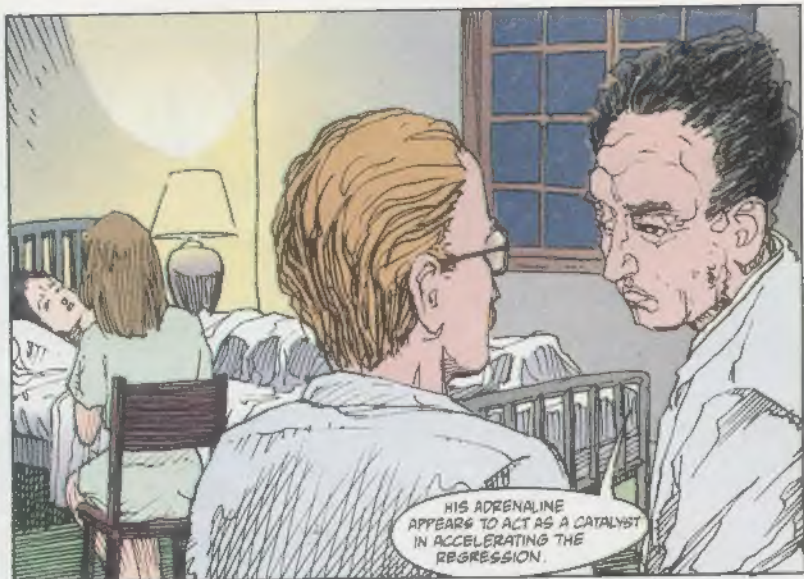
THERE WAS ONLY THE SUDDEN PAIN THAT COMES WHEN
YOU REALIZE HOW LITTERLY ALONE YOU HAVE BEEN FOR
SO MANY YEARS, AND NOW NOTHING YOU DO CAN CHANGE
THE FACT THAT THINGS WILL ONLY GET WORSE

THERE WAS NO PHYSICAL
RESEMBLANCE, NO
CONTORTED FAMILY TRAIT
THAT SLIPPED ME SAVING.
LOOK HERE, DAMIEN, YOU
ARE ONE OF US! YOU HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF US!

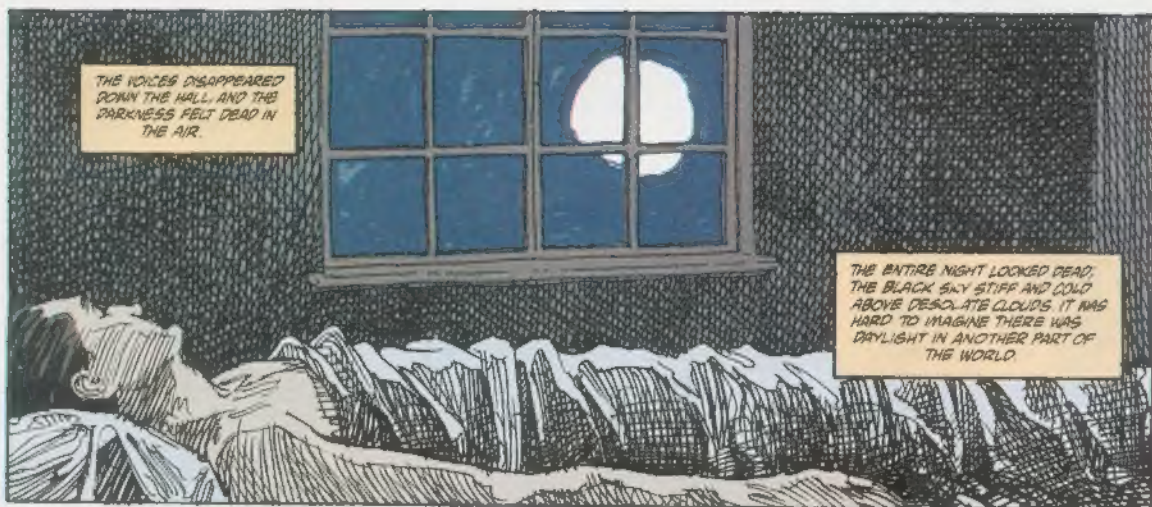


THE CAT CLAWED AT MY BUT AGAIN, AND
I KNEW THAT EVERYTHING HANGUL
HAD SAID WAS TRUE

NOOOOO!!

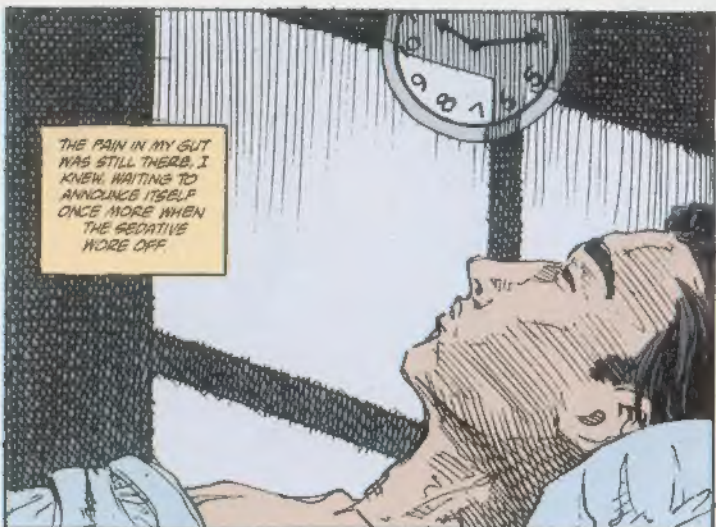


THE VOICES DISAPPEARED
DOWN THE HALL, AND THE
DARKNESS FELT DEAD IN
THE AIR.

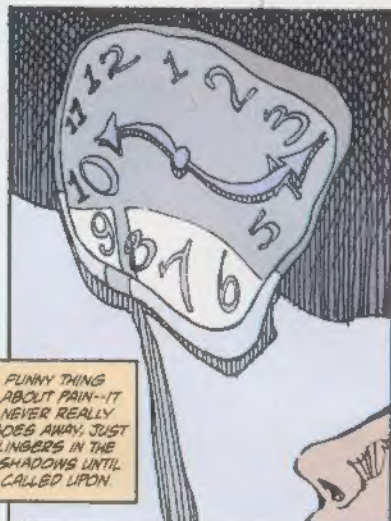


THE ENTIRE NIGHT LOOKED DEAD,
THE BLACK SKY STIFF AND COLD
ABOVE DESOLATE CLOUDS. IT WAS
HARD TO IMAGINE THERE WAS
DAYLIGHT IN ANOTHER PART OF
THE WORLD.

THE PAIN IN MY GUT
WAS STILL THERE. I
KNEW, WAITING TO
ANNOUNCE ITSELF
ONCE MORE WHEN
THE SEDATIVE
WORE OFF.



FUNNY THING
ABOUT PAIN--IT
NEVER REALLY
GOES AWAY, JUST
LINGERS IN THE
SHADOWS UNTIL
CALLED UPON.



WAITING AND WAITING. ALL
THE TIME IN THE WORLD...
NEVER TIRING, NEVER BORED...



NEVER
DREAMING OF
ABANDONING
YOU.



AS I LAY THERE, WAITING FOR THE PAIN TO RETURN--TRYING NOT TO THINK OF THE REPULSIVE METAMORPHOSIS MY BODY ACHIEVED TO UNDERGO--I BEGAN TO CONTEMPLATE SUICIDE AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE.



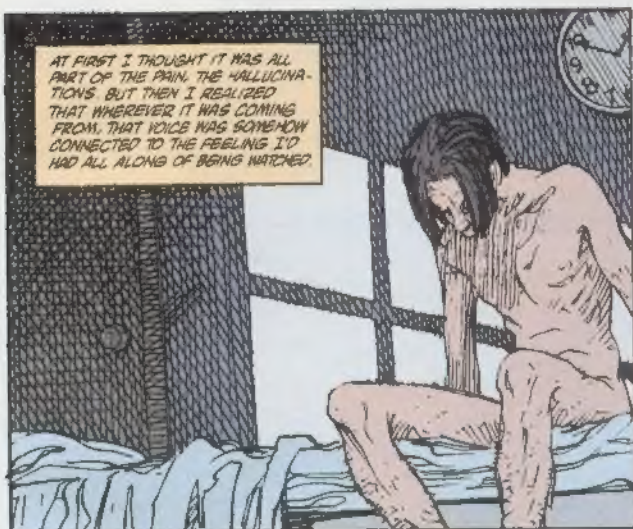
A NEEDLE-FULL OF AIR IN THE VEINS. A PAIR OF NEATLY SLASHED WRISTS. AN OVERDOSE OF ANYTHING MORE THAN A HUNDRED IN NUMBER.

THAT WAS WHEN I HEARD THE VOICE.

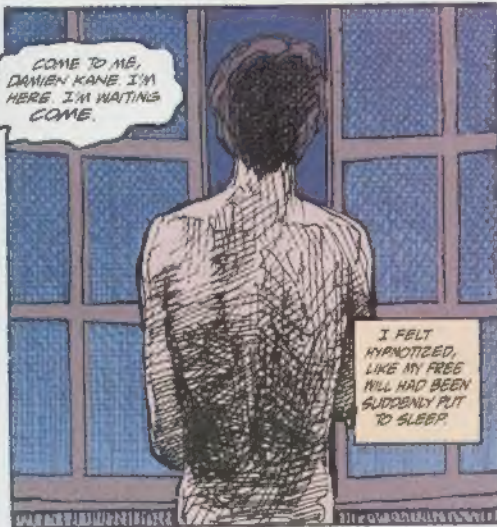
IT SAID, "COME TO ME, DAMIEN. I'M HERE. COME."



AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS ALL PART OF THE PAIN, THE HALLUCINATIONS. BUT THEN I REALIZED THAT WHEREVER IT WAS COMING FROM, THAT VOICE WAS SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO THE FEELING I'D HAD ALL ALONG OF BEING WATCHED.



COME TO ME, DAMIEN KANE. I'M HERE. I'M WAITING. COME.



I FELT HYPNOTIZED, LIKE MY FREE WILL HAD BEEN SUDDENLY PUT TO SLEEP.



I MOVED WITHOUT THINKING.



DAMIEN!



AND I
KNEW...



WHATEVER LURKED
IN THE BLACKNESS
SENSED THE
HORROR IN
MY BLOOD.



WHATEVER BECKONED
ME WANTED TO KEEP
ME ALIVE.



AND I RAN TO IT.

NEXT: THE COVENANT OF FREAKS