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PLANET
OF THE APES
SEPT. No 24

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WHERE MAN ONCE STOOD SUPREME—NOW RULE THE APES

PLANET OF THE APES

MAN VS
GORILLA
IN A
WORLD
GONE
MAD!

ALL
NEW
THRILLS!

PLUS: FUTURE HISTORY CHRONICLES!



THE BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

A VIEW FROM ABOVE, AS NIGHT DISSOLVES TO DAWN...

PART
II

THE RIDGE **SPLITS** THE LAND, DIVIDING IT INTO SEPARATE DOMAINS OF THE **LIVING** AND THE **DEAD**. TO **ONE** SIDE, THE EARTH IS MANTLED IN LUSH TEXTURES OF **GREEN**, WHERE RICH SWARDS OF SWAYING **GRASS** RIPPLE INTO Huddling CORPSES OF SNARLED **TREES**, AND WHERE AN ARBOREAL CITY OF **TREENHOUSES** AWAITS THE COMING OF **DAY**...

BUT ON THE **HARSH** SIDE OF THE RIDGE, THE EARTH IS BLEAK AND **BARREN**, WHERE ALL LIFE HAS BEEN **SEARED** FROM THE SCORCHED PLAIN... AND WHERE **DESOLATION** EXTENDS UNBROKEN TO THE **HORIZON**...

ON THE **CREST** OF THE RIDGE, DIVIDING THE LAND OF THE **LIVING** FROM THE LAND OF THE **DEAD**, THERE IS AN **OUTPOST**... STAFFED BY A CONTINGENT OF **GORILLA SOLDIERS**. IT IS THEIR DUTY TO **GUARD** THE **TREENHOUSE** CITY FROM **ATTACK** - BUT AS **SENTRIES**, THEY HAVE GROWN **INDOLENT** AND **COMPLACENT**... FOR WHO WOULD FEAR **ATTACK** FROM **DEATH**?

THUS, THEY DO NOT **NOTICE** THE THREE SMALL FORMS WHO NOW **DEPART** FROM THE DOMAIN OF **LIFE**... AND SLOWLY PICK THEIR WAY DOWN TOWARD THE VALLEY OF **DEATH**.

THE DOOMSDAY SPAWN

IT IS A **SMALL** EXPEDITION, BUT NONETHELESS A **COMPLEX** AND **MOMENTOUS** ONE. THESE THREE ARE THE FIRST TO ATTEMPT A **CROSSING** OF THIS PLAIN SINCE THE **WHITE HEAT** AND THE **GREAT DESTRUCTION** BLASTED ALL LIFE FROM ITS **FACE**.

THEIR **INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATIONS**, PERHAPS, ARE **DIFFERENT**-- BUT EACH **HOLDS** HIS **MOTIVATION** WITHIN HIS **SOUL**...



FIRST THERE IS **CAESAR**, THE **FOUNDER** AND **LEADER** OF THE **COMFORTABLE CITY**. THEY NOW LEAVE **BEHIND**. AS HE **BEGINS** THIS LONG JOURNEY, DOES HE THINK OF THE **CITY** AND ITS **FUTURE**... OR OF HIS WIFE **LISA**, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A **FUTURE WITHOUT HER**...?



CAESAR, **WHY** MUST YOU GO TO THE **HUMAN CITY**--? IT IS **DEAD**! WE **LEFT** IT TO COME **HERE** --TO FIND LIFE AND **PEACE** AND **SAFETY**! AND WE HAVE **FOUND** IT!

WHY CAN'T YOU LET IT **BE** CAESAR?

BECAUSE OUR **PEACE** AND OUR **SAFETY** MAY BE **THREATENED**. **LISA**! I CANNOT LET **THAT** BE... IF THERE IS ANY WAY TO **STOP** IT!



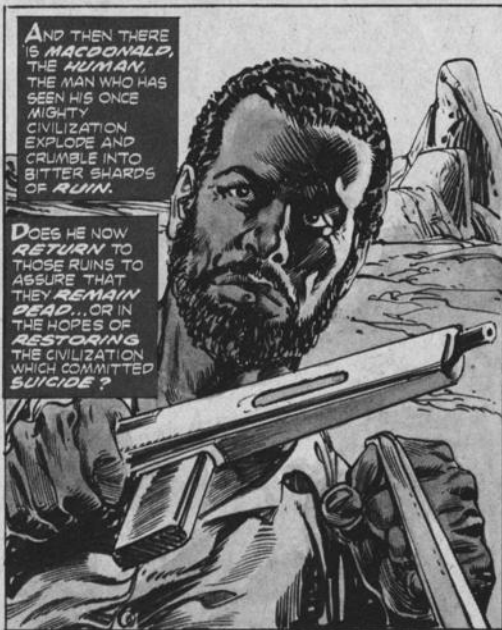
THUS, CAESAR **LEADS** THIS **OMINOUS TREK** INTO THE **UNKNOWN**, THINKING OF HIS **CITY**...

...THINKING OF **LISA**... AND THE **LOSS** OF **BOTH**.



AND THEN THERE IS **MACDONALD**, THE **HUMAN**, THE MAN WHO HAS SEEN HIS ONCE **MIGHTY** CIVILIZATION **EXPLODE** AND **CRUMBLE** INTO **BITTER SHARDS** OF **RUIN**.

DONES HE NOW **RETURN** TO THOSE **RUINS** TO **ASSURE** THAT THEY **REMAIN DEAD**... OR IN THE **HOPES** OF **RESTRYING** THE **CIVILIZATION** WHICH COMMITTED **SUICIDE**?



BETTER BE **CAREFUL**. **MACDONALD**! IT MUST BE **HELL** IN THAT **CITY**-- EVEN **WITHOUT** THE **RADIATION**...

MAYBE IT IS **HELL**, **ED**, AND MAYBE I'M **PLAYING** THE **SERPENT** IN **PARADISE**... BUT WE'RE **ALWAYS** **BEGINNING** AGAIN...

CAESAR MAY **FEEL** AS AN **APE** FEELS-- BUT HE **THINKS** LIKE A **MAN**! I'M GOING TO **TAKE** HIM **BACK** TO THE **CITY**-- AND **GIVE** HIM **MAN'S KNOWLEDGE**... BEFORE IT'S **TOO LATE**!



AND THE THIRD, *VIRGIL*--THE YOUNG ORANGUTAN WHOSE INTELLIGENCE IS OFTEN OVERRULED BY SHARP EMOTION. DOES HE SHARE *CAESAR'S* MOTIVATIONS...OR *MACDONALD'S*....

OR DOES HE LOOK *BEYOND* THE PAST AND THE PRESENT... TO A FUTURE DIFFERENT FROM *BOTH*...?



AND THE *LAST* MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION, SILENT, *WITHOUT* MOTIVATION... PRAWING TO BE *USED* OR *ABUSED* IN THE DEADLY GAME OF *FATE*...



I'VE WATCHED THESE THINGS SIT AND GATHER *DUST* SINCE WE BROUGHT THEM OUT FROM THE RUINS OF THE *HUMAN CITY*! AND THROUGH ALL THOSE YEARS, I HAVE *DREADED* THE ARRIVAL OF *THIS MOMENT*...

...WHEN AT LAST I WOULD BE *CALLED UPON* TO WIPE THE *DUST* FROM THEM, AND TO *ISSUE* THEM FOR *USE*!



IN SILENCE, AND EACH IN *PRIVATE THOUGHT*, THEY RIDE THE DESOLATION TO *NOON*, WATCHING THE LAND GROW EVEN *MORE* WITHERED WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT...



...UNTIL THEY ENTER *TWILIGHT*...

...AND BEGIN TO MOUNT A COLLAPSED SUMMIT OF *RUBBLE*...



...FOR A VIEW OF STARK PANORAMIC
NIGHTMARE.

THERE IT IS...

HOW COULD IT...
HAVE COME TO...
THIS?

ALL THE NATIONS
OF MAN WENT ON
PREPARING FOR A WAR
THEY NEVER EXPECTED
TO AVOID...

...AND THE
VERY PLANNING
FOR THAT IMPOSSIBLE
WAR BECAME...

AN
ITCH!

YES... AND WHEN
THE APE REVOLUTION
STARTED... IN ANGER,
AND IN CONFUSION,
MAN SCRATCHED
THAT ITCH...



A COLD *INFERNO* SEETHING WITH THE EDDIES AND SWIRLS ALL GHASTLY *GREEN* LIGHT SNOWFALLS RIPPED FROM THE GUTS OF A BLASTED BOMB BIGGER THAN NEVER AND BLACKER THAN THE CHAMBERS OF ETERNITY WELCOMING ALL AT ONCE WITH A SLY GRIN PAINTED WET *RED*.



MACDONALD LOOKS IT. HE WANTS TO *RUIN*. OR GET *SICK*. BUT INSTEAD HE SAYS:



THIS...IS THE *HELL* THEY USED TO *PREACH* ABOUT... *WARNED* US ABOUT... AND THEY *CREATED* IT THEMSELVES...

THEY... WERE ALL... *INSANE*...



AND WE'RE *JUST* AS *INSANE* FOR *COMING* HERE...



THIS *BACKGROUND* RADIATION ALONE WILL SUBJECT US TO *THREE-HUNDRED* ROETGENS AN *HOUR*!

WHICH *MEANS*...?



THAT IF WE'RE NOT *OUT* OF HERE WITHIN *TWO* *HOURS*, WE MIGHT AS WELL *STAY* *FOREVER*!



COME ON, THEN! WHY ARE WE *WASTING* *TIME*...?

THEY MOVE FORWARD AGAIN, THROUGH MORE OF THE SAME, MACDONALD IN THE LEAD, PAUSING NOW AND THEN IN THE MIDST OF THE NIGHTMARE TO GET HIS BEARINGS... TO CHART HIS PLOT THROUGH HELL, BASED ON MEMORIES OF A FALSE PARADISE...



UNTIL--

THERE IT IS--!

I TOLD YOU BRECK'S COMMAND POST WOULD BE INTACT...! IT WAS DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND A BLAST OF TEN MEGATONS!



THE COMMAND POST: A STEEL DOOR...



...WITH A SCORCHED COMBINATION LOCK SEPARATING IT FROM THE CIVILIAN HELL.



FORGOTTEN HOW MANY TIMES I'VE DIALED THIS COMBINATION... WHEN THE CITY WAS ALIVE, AT LEAST...

AND EXISTING ON OUR LABOR!



THEY PAID FOR IT, CAESAR-- THEY ALL PAID!



SHANK





THEY
ENTER...



...AND AS
THEY DO
SO...

MACDONALD
-- WAIT A
MINUTE ...



WHAT'S
THIS
THING?



AN
ELECTRIC EYE
DEVICE ...



MUST'VE
STOPPED
FUNCTIONING
YEARS
AGO!

YES...
I SUPPOSE
IT MUST
HAVE...



THIS IS BRECK.

HE ONCE GOVERNED A
CITY. HE NOW
GOVERNS A SLAG-
HEAD AND HIS FACE
THE SCARS OF THE
CHANGE.



THIS IS ALMA.

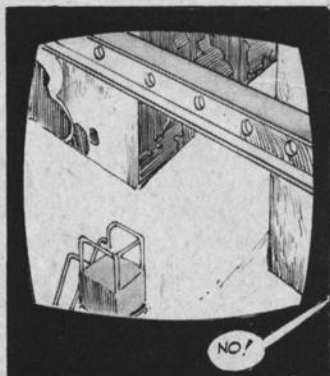
SHE WAS ONCE
BEAUTIFUL. NOW
SHE IS BRECK'S
COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICER. THERE
IS A BIG
DIFFERENCE.



AND THIS IS
MENDEZ.

HE ONCE HAD EARS,
HAIR, AND THOUGHT FOR
HIMSELF WHILE
BOLDLY FACING THE
MIRROR. NOW HE IS
BRECK'S CHIEF
LIEUTENANT. THE
GENELOGICAL TAIN
WHICH WILL AFFECT HIS
ENTIRE FAMILY LINE
BEGINS HERE.

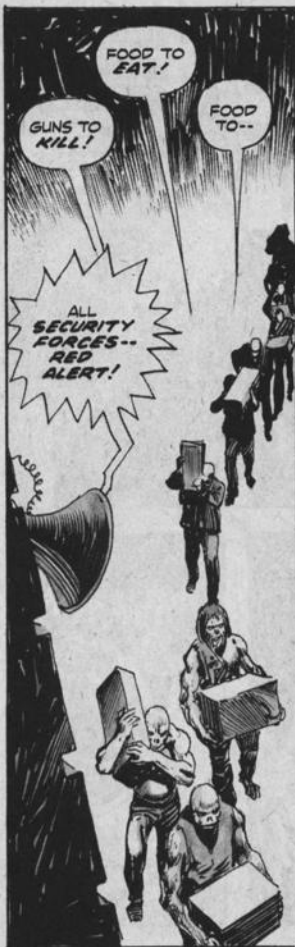












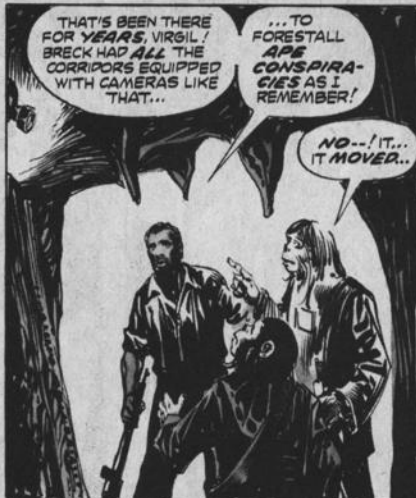


THAT'S HARD WORK!
WHY DON'T WE TAKE
A LITTLE --

LOOK...



...UP ON THE
CEILING...



THAT'S BEEN THERE
FOR YEARS, VIRGIL!
BRECK HAD ALL THE
CORRIDORS EQUIPPED
WITH CAMERAS LIKE
THAT...

...TO FORESTALL
APE CONSPIRA-
CIES AS I
REMEMBER!

NO--! IT...
IT MOVED...



YOU'RE...
SURE....

WATCH IT...
WATCH IT
CAREFULLY...



HE'S RIGHT!
IT IS M--



WELL, THAT SETTLES IT,
VIRGIL! EVEN IF THEY WEREN'T
MONITORING US, WHOEVER--OR
WHATEVER--IS DOWN HERE...
NOW KNOWS WE'RE HERE TOO!

I'M... SORRY!
I THOUGHT...





WE STILL CAN'T BE CERTAIN OF THEIR LOCATION-- BUT DID YOU NOTICE, MENDEZ...?

YES! WHAT SERIES WAS IT?

BAND NINE, CORRIDOR FORTY-ONE!



THAT'S IN R-B... BUT WHAT'S THERE? PERHAPS THEY'RE JUST ... WANDERING...

THE CORRIDOR'S COLLAPSED...? IS IT AN OLD CAVE-IN?



NO? THEN CUT THROUGH IT! GO AROUND IT...

BUT GET IN THERE, DAMN IT!

NO--! THEY'RE NOT WANDERING...!



LOOK WHERE THE LIGHT IS ON THE SUPERIMPOSED MAP!

YOU'RE RIGHT-- THEY DO KNOW WHERE THEY'RE GOING...



BRECK-- COME HERE!

WE JUST LOST A MONITOR IN R-B, FORTY-ONE--!

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN EQUIPMENT FAILURES NOW--



IT WAS NO FAILURE!

SHE'S RIGHT, BRECK! WE THINK IT WAS DESTROYED!

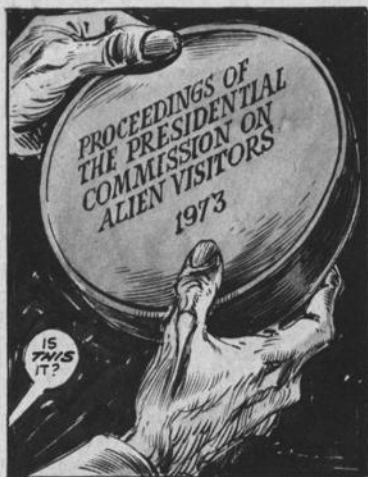
DESTROYED...? R-B FORTY-ONE, YOU SAY?

THAT'S THE ARCHIVES...



WHAT ARE THEY AFTER?

WHAT'S WORTH SUCH A RISK...?









NEXT ISSUE: A TASTE OF MUTANT HATE

(NIGHT, SUCH A DARK NIGHT, MADE DARKER BY THE GLOW, THE BLUE SHIMMERING GLOW OF... WHAT?)

(OF A PHANTOM...?)

THERE ARE THREE OF THEM: ALARIC, STARKOR, AND GRAYMALKYIN-- ALL TIED TO A COMMON LINE OF FATE, EACH BOUND BY HIS VERY PRIVATE FEARS...

ALL RIGHT-- SWING FORWARD AND BRACE YOURSELVES.

A YE, ALARIC-- BUT AGAINST WHAT MUST WE BRACE--?

THE HULL OF A SHIP, STARKOR--A MYSTERIOUS SHIP...

A SHIP WHICH IS EITHER DYING... DEAD... OR WAITING FOR US.

GODS, ALARIC --I LIKE IT NOT!!!

LET US LEAVE THE PLACE--GO BACK TO THE FREEDOM REAVER!

IF YOU ASK ME, ALARIC, YOU'RE RIGHT ON ALL THREE COUNTS...

WE'RE DYING... THE SHIP'S DEAD... AND ITS GHOSTS ARE WAITING FOR US.

THE NAME IS GRAYMALKYIN, HUMAN-- I'D THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE LEARNED IT BY NOW.

AS FOR THIS SHIP, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THE THING... OTHER THAN FEAR AND DREAD.

BUT IF GHOSTS THERE ARE LURKING AMONG ITS MISTY ROTTEN TIMBERS.

BUT THE FREEDOM REAVER OFFERS NO RETURN... NO COMFORT... NO SAFETY. FOR IF THIS MAMMOTH SHIP, GLOWING BLUE AND SHIMMERING, SEEMS TO LIVE AND TO INSPIRE CHILLING FEAR...

WHAT SAY YOU, APE?

--THEY'LL SOON FLEE AT FIRST SIGHT OF YOUR FEARLESS ASPECT.

WHY, YOU DIRTY--

(...NOT WHEN IT WOULD ONLY AID WHATEVER AWAITS.)

HAVE A CARE, LADS --ONE SLIP NOW AND YOU'LL SNAP YOUR SPINE ON THE OARS OF THIS HULK... OR CRUSH YOUR SKULL ON THE BOTTOM OF OUR OWN LONG-BOAT BELOW.

--SEE

QUIET, STARKOR --WE'RE NEAR THE RAIL.

(NO NEED FOR A FIGHT NOW.)

UP AND OVER WE GO NOW, TO HAVE A LOOK AT WHAT WE SHALL--

...THEN THE FREEDOM REAVER ALSO SEEMS ALIVE, BUT PITIFULLY SMALL...

...AND COWERING IN THE DISTANCE, WITH THE INSPIRATION OF FEAR.

IT JUTS UPWARD, PIERCING
THE STAR-FLECKED SKY, A
STRUCTURE STRAINING TO REACH THE
SKY, TO REACH THE HEAVENS THEM-
SELVES, TO ENTER THE VALE BEYOND
LIFE AND DEATH...

IT... IT'S A
CATHEDRAL...!

A... WHAT?

A PLACE OF SI-
LENCE STARKOR-
... A PLACE OF
WORSHIP.

(BUT WHAT IS THE
OBJECT OF WORSHIP
IN THIS EERIE
BIZARRE PLACE...?)

(MYSTERY?
DANGER...?)

(THE
UNKNOWN?)

(OR THE FORCES OF
... LIVING DEATH...?)

the SHADOWS OF HAUNTED CATHEDRAULUS

FUTURE
HISTORY
CHRONICLES
IV



LOOK... THE MAIN STRUCTURE IS SURROUNDED BY A COMPLEX OF SMALLER BUILDINGS... ALMOST LIKE ONE OF THE CITY SHIPS...

AND YET, I SEE NO INDEPENDENCE HERE. ALL OF THE SMALLER DWELLINGS SEEM TO FEED THE MAIN-- INTO THE CATHEDRAL...

DOUBTLESS THEY ARE MONASTARIES, ALARIC-- SUCH AS THOSE FOUND ON THE MAINLAND... PRIOR TO THE GREAT DEATH OF WHICH GRIMSTARK SPOKE...

I NEITHER KNOW WHAT "MONASTARIES" ARE, NOR DO I CARE!

ALL THAT CONCERNS ME IS WHETHER THIS HELLISH SHIP IS HAUNTED OR NOT--!



(HAUNTED... BY WHAT? THE UNKNOWN... OR THE DEAD SPIRIT OF ANCIENT WORSHIP...?)

AND THE ONLY WAY WE'LL LEARN, STARKOR, IS BY EXPLORING THIS PLACE...

I SUGGEST THIS SMALL STRUCTURE MOST LIKELY IT EVENTUALLY LEADS TO THE MAIN CATHEDRAL... SHOULD WE CARE TO VENTURE THERE...



WELL, ALARIC-- WHAT SAY YOU? DO WE ENTER OR NOT--?

(ENTER THE UNKNOWN... OR FLEE? BUT FLEE TO WHAT? THE FREEDOM REAVER? NO... NOT THERE...)

ALARIC-- WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, MAN? HAS THE DEVIL TAKEN YOUR MIND?

(NOT TO THE ARMS OF DEAD LOVE... AND NEWBORN HATE...)



(HATE SPAWNED LESS THAN AN HOUR PAST, ABOARD THE FREEDOM REAVER...)

--NOT LET YOU RISK YOUR LIFE AGAIN, ALARIC!

IF YOU INSIST ON BOARDING THAT GHOULISH GHOSTSHIP, THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS! MINE IS TO KEEP YOU ALIVE...!

(THE CREW HAD LISTENED, EMBARRASSED UNCOMFORTABLE...)

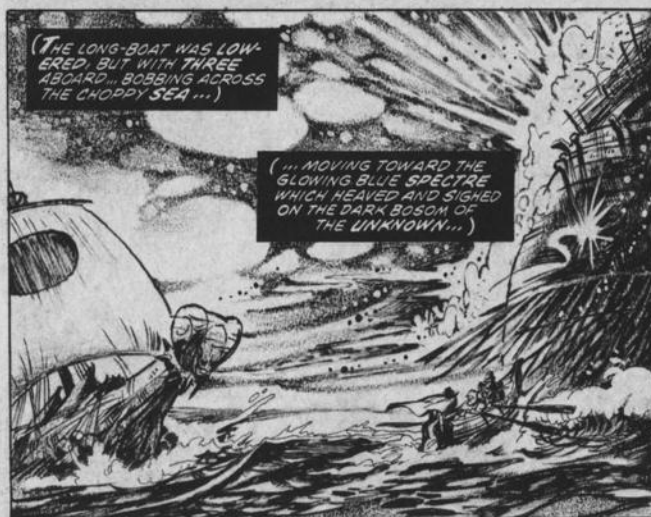


(... PRETENDING THEY HEARD NOTHING)

THEREFORE I INSIST ON BOARDING THE SHIP WITH YOU!

I SAID NO, REENA--AND I MEANT NO!!

YOU ARE MY WIFE AND A CREWMEMBER OF THIS SHIP! AS YOUR HUSBAND AND THE CAPTAIN OF THIS SHIP, I EXPECT YOU TO OBEY ME IN BOTH CAPACITIES!



(AND THERE IS NO RETURN... NOWHERE TO FLEE...)

DO YOU HEAR ME, ALARIC--? SHALL WE ENTER OR NOT?

EV--? OH... UH, YES, GRAY-MALKYN...

(WE SHALL ENTER.)

(IT CREAKS, THE MASSIVE PORTAL TO THIS HALL OF THE UNKNOWN)

(...FROM HOW MANY YEARS OF NON-USE?)

DESERTED, OF COURSE. IT'S GOT TO BE A DEAD SHIP... AND I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF IT WERE HAUNTED AS WELL...

PERHAPS... BUT THERE ARE TWO BRANCHING CORRIDORS. NOTHING FOR US TO DO BUT SPLIT UP...

BUT THEN, WHO WILL GO ALONE?

YOU AND STARKOR TAKE THE LEFT CORRIDOR, ALARIC.

--WHILE I VENTURE INTO THE RIGHT.

VERY WELL. COME ON, STARKOR--THE SOONER THIS IS DONE, THE SOONER OUR MINDS WILL REST.

AYE, WE'RE AGREED ON THAT, ALARIC...

...BUT I DON'T MIND SAYING THAT APE GRATES ON MY NERVES. DOES HE THINK HE'S BETTER THAN US--THAT HE CAN GO ALONE, WHILE WE NEED EACH OTHER FOR PROTECTION--?

--THAT YOU DID NOT VOLUNTEER TO BRAVE THESE SHADOWS BY YOURSELF--

WAIT!

DID YOU HEAR THAT--?

I NOTICE, STARKOR--

SCUFFLING--FOOTSTEPS, RUNNING-- AROUND THE CORNER...!

SOMEONE'S HERE! STARKOR!

(SOMEONE, YES.)

(BUT WHO...?)

ELSEWHERE AMONG THE CRAWLING SHADOWS...

DAMN MY EYES FOR OFFERING TO GO ALONE THROUGH THIS--

WAIT--A SOUND...!

...AND IT WASN'T MADE BY ME...

THEN, FLITTING JUST BEYOND
THE PERIPHERY OF VISION...

EN? THERE--
WHAT'S THAT?

A...
GHOST--?

NO! BY THE BONES OF GRIM-
STARK, IT WAS A SHADOW--
AND SHADOWS ARE CAST NOT
BY PHANTASMS-- BUT BY
FLESH!

HALT!

YOU THERE--! VAULTING
OVER THE RAIL WON'T
HELP YOU--!

I SAID
HALT!

--AND I MEAN
FOR YOU TO
HALT!

NOW LET'S SEE WHAT
KIND OF FLESH IS CON-
TAINED BY THIS QUIVER-
ING BUNDLE OF--

AN APE!

YES-- BUT NOT A
TRAITOR LIKE YOU!
NOT AN APE WHO SERVES
THE NEW ORDER AGAINST
HIS OWN KIND-- WHO
CAPTURES FELLOW APES
AND CONSIGNS THEM TO
BURN IN THE NEW
ORDER'S HELL--!

ASHH--
NO!!

(COULD NOT HAVE BEEN A GHOST-- THERE ARE NO
GHOSTS! THE FIGURE WAS FLESH-- MUST HAVE
BEEN FLESH...)

QUICKLY, STARKOR--!

I'M CERTAIN HE
FLED DOWN THIS
CORRIDOR!

AND I'M CERTAIN
WE FOLLOW HIM
STRAIGHT TO HELL...!

LOOK! THERE
HE IS--!!

AYE--AND WE'VE LOST
HIM, ALARIC... UNLESS YOU
USE YOUR CROSSBOW TO--

NO, STARKOR-- WHETHER
MAN OR APE, HE'LL BE NO
GOOD TO US WITH A CROSS-
BOW BOLT IN HIS BACK. WE
NEED ANSWERS TO MYSTERIES
OF THIS SHIP-- AND YON FIGURE
MAY PROVIDE THESE ANSWERS

THE CHANDELIER HAS
HELD ITS OWN WEIGHT
AND THAT OF CANDLES
LONG ENOUGH--PERHAPS
IT WILL BEAR...



ALARIC, WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO--

NO, ALARIC-- NOO!!

(-- AND DROP.)



I WANT HIM ALIVE, STARKOR--



-- ENOUGH TO RISK MY OWN DEATH!



(NOW TO SWING FORWARD--)



FWIPT!

(-- CUT HIS LINE--)



YOU ARE IN A HURRY, MY FRIEND...

OOOONN--!!

WE SHALL LEARN WHY... SHALL WE NOT?



SO... YOU ARE A MAN, WHEN I HAD MOST EXPECTED AN APE...

AND YOU, TOO-- THANK THE GODS YOU'RE A HUMAN... AND NOT AN APE...

... NOT ONE OF THE NEW ORDER...



NOW, YOU SNIVELLING EXCUSE FOR AN APE, JUST WHAT IS THIS "NEW ORDER"?

YOU MEAN YOU DON'T KNOW--? YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THE TRAITORS... ONE OF THEIR APE QUISLINGS?

NO! WHO ARE THEY?

THE... THE NEW ORDER BORN OF OLD SINS-- HUMANS-- HUMANS WHO FORCE APES LIKE YOU AND ME TO SERVE THEM...

... TO RUN THIS CITY SHIP OF CHINEEDRAULUS... AND TO BE OFFERED UP AS SACRIFICES TO THE DARK FORCES WHICH RULE THEIR NEW ORDER.



-- IS THE "NEW ORDER"? WHO ARE THEY?

WHY, APES, OF COURSE! ARE YOU SO STUPID YOU DON'T KNOW THAT--?

THE NEW ORDER OF OLD SINS IS A RELIGION OF FILTHY APES--!

FILTHY
APES, I TELL
YOU! DEMONS!
THEY FORCE
US--THE
NUMANS--
TO SERVE
THEM IN THEIR
WICKED
DESIRES!!!

...AND WHEN
 OUR USE-
 FULNESS
 HAS PASSED,
 THEY, THEY
 MURDER
 US--
 SLAUGHTER
 US LIKE
 ANIMALS!!!

...AND THEN THEY
 ...THEY USE OUR
 MUTILATED
 FLESH AS SAC-
 RAMENTS TO
 THEIR HEATHEN
 GODS! DO YOU
 HEAR ME?
 THEY DEVOUR
 OUR FLESH!

(CAN IT BE TRUE--?
 NOW--WHEN DEATH
 BETWEEN NUMANS AND
 APES ABOARD FREE-
 DOM REVER (IS SO
 CLOSE--?)

THAT SETTLES IT, ALARIC--
 I'LL HEAR NO MORE--IF
 APES EATING NUMANS
 ISN'T ENOUGH TO CONVINCE
 YOU, NOTHING WILL!

WE MUST RETURN
 TO THE FREEDOM
 FIGHTERS, AND
 EVEN YOU CANNOT
 DENY--

--THAT THIS CITY-SHIP
 DESERVES TO BE
 RAMMED--

--AND RAMMED AGAIN--
 UNTIL EVERY LAST APE
 ABOARD HAS DROWNED!

--THAT I'VE CONVINCED YOU I'M
 A FRIEND!!! TELL ME MORE A-
 BOUT THIS NEW ORDER OF
 NUMANS. WHERE DO THEY
 COME FROM? HOW DID
 THEY ORIGINATE?

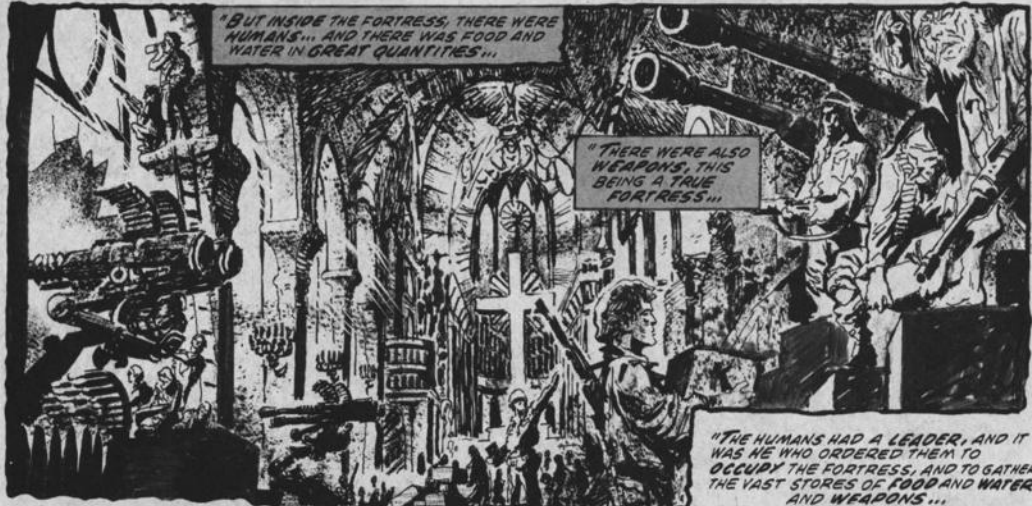
ON A PENINSULA OF THE
 LAND BEYOND THE SEA...
 AFTER THE GREAT DEATH
 WHICH CAME FROM
 THE SKIES...

"...THERE WAS A VAST
 FORTRUDDEN TOWER IN
 WHICH ONLY ONE OF THE
 OLD BUILDINGS REMAINED
 STANDING..."

"NO ONE KNEW WHY OR HOW IT HAD
 ESCAPED THE AWESOME DESTRUCTION,
 WHICH MADE RUINS OF EVERYTHING
 AROUND IT, BUT THE BUILDING BECAME
 LIKE UNTO A FORTRESS WITHOUT
 ENTRY..."

"OUTSIDE THE FORTRESS,
 APES WERE SCANT IN
 NUMBER... BUT WERE
 STARVING FOR LACK OF
 FOOD AND WATER... AND
 MANY WERE THEY WHO FELL
 VICTIM TO THE SWEEPING
 PLAGUES AND DISEASES
 SPANNED BY THE
 HOLOCAUST..."





"BUT INSIDE THE FORTRESS, THERE WERE HUMANS... AND THERE WAS FOOD AND WATER IN GREAT QUANTITIES..."

"THERE WERE ALSO WEAPONS, THIS BEING A TRUE FORTRESS..."

"THE HUMANS HAD A LEADER, AND IT WAS HE WHO ORDERED THEM TO OCCUPY THE FORTRESS, AND TO GATHER THE VAST STORES OF FOOD AND WATER AND WEAPONS..."

"TO THE HUMANS, HE WAS MORE THAN A LEADER. TO THEM, THEY SAY--"

"BUT TO THE APES, HE WAS A DEMON. THEY WERE STARVING, AND KNEW THAT FOOD WAS STORED WITHIN THE FORTRESS. THEY NEEDED THAT FOOD..."

"...AND SO THEY MOVED ON THE FORTRESS. THEY NEEDED THAT FOOD..."

"BUT THE LEADER OF THE HUMANS, THEIR SAVIOR, IN WHAT HE SAID WAS INFINITE WISDOM--"



"--HE WAS A SAVIOR."



"THEY MERELY WISHED TO EAT."



"--DECREED THAT THE APES SHOULD BE FORGIDDEN TO EAT."



"AND SO, A GREAT BATTLE ENSUED, AND MANY WERE THE NUMBERS WHO PERISHED THAT DAY... IN MANNERS MORE SWIFT THAN THE PLAGUES OR STARVATION HAD BROUGHT..."

"THOSE WHO PERISHED WERE GLAD FOR THEIR DEATHS... FOR THEY WERE MOSTLY APES... AND WITHOUT FOOD TO SUSTAIN THEIR FLESH, DEATH WAS THEIR ONLY COMFORT..."

"STILL, ONE APE THERE WAS WHO BROKE THROUGH THE BARRICADES-- AND WHO, IN THE FRENZY OF STARVATION, PENETRATED THE FORTRESS."

"HE WAS IMMEDIATELY SLAIN BY THE HUMAN'S LEADER--"

"--BUT NOT BEFORE HE RELEASED HIS PITIFUL WEAPON WITH THE LAST OF HIS LIFE'S STRENGTH."

WOK!

"AND THOUGH THE APE'S WEAPON DID NOT STRIKE THE LEADER OF THE HUMANS--"

K-CHOW!

"--IT NEVERTHELESS BROUGHT DEATH DOWN UPON HIM."

"WITH THEIR LEADER--THEIR SAVIOR--NOW SLAIN, THE HUMANS WERE POSSESSED WITH MADNESS AND FURY..."

"AND WHEN THE GREAT BATTLE HAD ENDED, WITH EVERY APE LYING DEAD, THE HUMANS EMERGED FROM THEIR FORTRESS... AND IN SOLEMN RITUAL, THEY COMMITTED THE FLESH OF THEIR FALLEN LEADER TO FLAME..."

THIS WAS CREATED A RELIGION OF REVENGE-- ALL BECAUSE OUR FELLOW APES MERELY WANTED SOMETHING TO EAT.

"... AND THEY COMMITTED HIS SPIRIT TO MEMORY SAYING THAT HE SACRIFICED HIS LIFE TO PROTECT AND SAVE THEM... AND FROM THENCE FORWARD, THEY SHOULD FOLLOW THE NEW ORDER CREATED BY HIS DEATH..."

AND THIS NEW ORDER OF HUMANS CONTINUES TO MASSACRE APES-- IN THE NAME OF THE HUMAN WHO ORDERED THAT LONG-AGO SLAUGHTER--?

"... AND SACRIFICE APES TO THE MEMORY OF HIS SPIRIT..."

YES, GRAYMALKYN
"YES."

"THEY SET UPON THE DEAD APE'S BODY, AND THEY DID REND IT TO PIECES."

BUT WHO CARES HOW IT STARTED, ALARIC? WHAT DOES IT MATTER--? I SAY WE RETURN TO THE FREEDOM REAVER AND--

NOT SO QUICKLY, STARKOR-- LET HIM TELL HIS TALE!"

YES-- I SHALL TELL YOU... TELL YOU OF THE HORROR."

"... A GROUP OF HUMANS HAD CAUSE TO LEAVE ONE OF THOSE DESTROYED AREA WHICH HAD NOW COME TO BE FORBIDDEN."

"THEIR SUPPLY OF FOOD HAD DIMINISHED, AND EVENTUALLY BECAME DEPLETED. AND SO THEY BEGAN THEIR LONG TREK-- A DISGRIMMAGE FOR A NEW LAND... A LAND WHICH PROMISED, MANY SAID, ABUNDANT FOOD AND SHELTER..."

AFTER THE GREAT DEATH, WHEN ALL PLACES WERE DESTROYED IN THUNDER AND FLAMES..."

"THEIR JOURNEY WAS LONG AND ARDUOUS, PASSED OVER VAST REGIONS OF DESOLATE SAND AND ROCK.

"BUT AT LAST THEY SPIED A VERDANT VALLEY COVERED IN GREEN AND FILLED WITH LIFE. SURELY THEY FELT THIS MUST BE THE LAST PROMISED TO THEM.

"BUT THE LAND THEY FOUND WAS ALREADY OCCUPIED--BY AN ENCLAVE OF THOSE APES WHO HAD RECENTLY COME TO THINK AND SPEAK.

"RAVAGED BY THEIR LONG TREK, AND NEAR DEATH, THEY BESEECHED THE APES FOR ENTRANCE TO THEIR CITY..."

"...AND THEY FELL UPON THEIR KNEES AND BEGGED FOR SUCCOR..."

"...BUT HE WHO WAS THE LEADER OF THE APES--THE LAWGIVER--HAD NOTHING BUT WORDS OF CRUELTY IN RETURN, AND BARKED ORDERS TO HIS GORILLA FOLLOWERS..."

"THOSE ORDERS WERE OBEYED, AND THE HUMANS WERE DRAGGED THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY..."

"...AND LOCKED IN CAGES, AND MOCKED AND VERBERED..."

"...AND WERE STARVED, WHILE THE APES CONSUMED FOOD IN PLENTY.

"THERE WAS ONE HUMAN WHO COULD NOT BEAR THE TREATMENT--WHO WOULD NOT SUBMIT TO THE SLAVERY--AND WHO, UPON SEEING THE APES' LAWGIVER--

"THE LAWGIVER'S FOLLOWERS REPLIED TO THE HUMAN IN KIND..."

"...AND ALL OF THE APES WERE INSTANTLY PUT TO MADNESS, RIDING THROUGH THE STREETS TO SLAY EVERY HUMAN WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN IN AS A SLAVE.

BRAAAKX

K-POW BLAM POW

CHUK!

"--SEIZED UP A WEAPON IN RIGHTEOUS WRATH, AND PUT AN END TO THE LAWGIVER





KNOW, ALARIC, THAT I COULD JUST AS EASILY HAVE BROKEN HIS NECK!

AND KNOW, TOO, THAT I MEAN TO PROTECT THIS LITTLE APE-- AND AFTER WHAT I'VE HEARD ABOUT THE NEW ORDER, I'VE A GOOD MIND TO KILL THE FIRST HUMAN WHO GETS IN MY WAY...

SAVE ME-- OH, PLEASE SAVE ME!



I'VE HEARD MUCH ABOUT THE NEW ORDER AS WELL, GRAYMALKYN-- AND IT HAS BROUGHT TO MIND VISIONS OF THE LONG YEARS I SPENT CHAINED TO THE OARS OF AN APE-CITY-SHIP!



IT IS NOT A MEMORY I CAN EASILY EMBRACE!!

KLANG!

I WARN YOU, ALARIC...



"WE ARE BOTH FILLED WITH ANGER..."

AND ONE OF US WILL BE SLAIN BY THAT ANGER!



INDEED, GRAYMALKYN?

I HOPE IT IS NO ONE I KNOW...?

(HE IS TOO STRONG-- TOO BRUTAL-- MUST USE AGILITY-- SPEED)

KILL!!

KILL THE DIRTY APE!



WAIT--!

LISTEN-- THE CHANTING-- THE NEW ORDER-- THEY'RE COMING--!

THEIR TORCHES-- FLINGING SHADOWS ON THE WALL! THEY'RE COMING..!



HORRIFIED, BOTH HUMAN AND APE FLEE... AS THE DISTORTED SHADOWS GROW LARGER... AND THE SONOROUS CHANT LOUDER...

ALARIC AND GRAYMALKYN FREEZE, UNCERTAIN... DREADING THE UNKNOWN...

A TRUCE, GRAYMALKYN-- UNTIL THIS COMMON THREAT HAS PASSED...

VERY WELL, ALARIC-- BUT ONLY UNTIL WE LEARN THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS NEW ORDER.

HELP ME DRAG YOUR HUMAN FRIEND INTO THIS ALCOVE-- AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT...

THEY'RE NEARING THE CORNER.

DO YOU SEE THEM GRAY-MALKYN--?

AYE-- WEARING ROBES AND COWLS. JUST LIKE HUMANS TO HIDE THEIR FACE.

HUMANS--? BUT I WAS TOLD THE NEW ORDER WAS COMPRISED OF APES...

I SUPPOSE THAT EXPLAINS CERTAIN THINGS THEN, ALARIC-- BUT WHETHER HUMAN OR APE, I'LL ADMIT ONE THING...

THEY CERTAINLY GIVE OFF THE APPEARANCE, AT LEAST, OF BEING GHOSTS-- GLOWING LIKE THAT IN THOSE WHITE ROBES...

"WAIT, GRAYMALKYN-- LOOK BEHIND THE PROCESSION...! THEY'RE LEADING A GROUP OF PRISONERS-- IN BLACK ROBES..."

"AYE, ALARIC-- AND IF THE WHITE-ROBED ONES ARE HUMANS, THEN THE MISERABLE WRETCHES IN THE BLACK ROBES MUST BE APES."

"YOUR LOGIC WORKS AS WELL, GRAYMALKYN, FROM THE REVERSE VIEWPOINT. AND IT SEEMS THERE IS BUT ONE WAY TO DETERMINE WHICH IS WHICH..."

"AYE-- AND WE MAY AS WELL LEAVE STARNOR HERE. WE'LL LIKELY BE SAFER THAN WE WILL."

(IS IT A... VINE? ROOTS? SOMETHING ALIVE, CERTAINLY, BUT TOO STILL TO BE AN ANIMAL. BUT NO MATTER-- IT IS STRONG ENOUGH TO SUPPORT THE WEIGHT OF TWO.)

(AND IT TWINES THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE STRUCTURE AHEAD...)

THE MAIN CATHEDRAL GRAY-MALKYN-- THEY'RE TAKING THEIR CHANTS AND THEIR TORCHES AND THEIR PRISONERS INTO THE VERY HEART OF THIS ACCURSED CITY-SHIP...

FOR SOME OBSCURE RITE OF BLOOD NO DOUBT...

BUT WE'VE FOLLOWED THEM THIS FAR-- SO I IMAGINE THERE'S NO SENSE IN TURNING BACK NOW.

(NO SENSE PERHAPS-- BUT WHAT OF REASON? WHAT IF THERE ARE MANY REASONS TO TURN BACK-- NONE OF WHICH MAY BE KNOWN UNTIL IT IS FAR TOO LATE--?)

(THROUGH THE WINDOW, NOW-- AND INTO... WHAT? THE VINE JOINS OTHERS-- FLOWS INTO A... GARDEN... OF STRANGE LIFE, SPILLING UP THE DIRT FLOOR, CLIMBING UP THE PILLARS--LAND, ALL THE LUSH GROWTH OF LAND, CONTAINED HERE IN THE HEART OF THIS DEAD CITY WHICH SAILS THE SEA...)

(BUT MORE THAN THAT--A HUGE, AND SOMEHOW OBSCENE, OBJECT DOMINATES THIS AWESOME CATHEDRAL... ITS PRESENCE DWAFFING THE MYRIAD COLORS OF LIFE GROWING AROUND IT... AS IT CONVEYS A SILENT BUT POWERFUL FEELING OF DEATH...)

A CONTROLLED JUNGLE, ALARIC-- FILLING THE PLACE...

I HAVE NOTICED, GRAYMALKYN-- BUT IT IS NOT THE GARDEN WHICH FILLS ME WITH DREAD...

YOU MEAN THAT MONOLITH ON THE ALTAR--? YES, THEY DO SEEM TO BE WORSHIPPING IT...

PERHAPS WE SHOULD CLIMB DOWN FROM HERE--TRY TO GET CLOSER, AND HEAR WHAT THEY'RE SAYING...

DOWN HERE,
ALARIC-- BEHIND
THIS HEDGE-- WE'LL
BE SAFE ENOUGH
HERE...

AYE... IF THESE
VINES DON'T SEIZE
US...

QUIET--
THEIR LEADER
IS BEGINNING SOME
SORT OF SPEECH.
LISTEN...

THE NEW ORDER BORN
OF OLD SINS IS HEREBY
CONVENED IN THIS HALL
DEDICATED TO THE WOR-
SHIP OF THOSE FORCES
WHICH CREATED US! AND
WE ARE GATHERED TO A-
GAIN CONDUCT THE BUSI-
NESS OF DEATH!

KNOW THAT THIS CITY-SHIP
OF CATHEDRALUS IS LIKE
UNTO A MIGHTY ARK WHICH
SHALL CARRY US TO THE NEW
LAND! AND KNOW THAT WHEN
WE REACH THE NEW LAND WE
SHALL BECOME MISSIONARIES.

-- MISSIONARIES OF THE
GLORIOUS NEW ORDER
BORN OF OLD SIN; AND
WE SHALL SPREAD THE
WORD OF OUR GLORIOUS
ORDER, GATHERING TO-
GETHER ALL THOSE LIKE
UNTO OURSELVES--

-- ALL THOSE WHO
HAVE BEEN CRE-
ATED-- IN THE IMAGE
OF THE FORCES OF
THE NEW ORDER! AND
TOGETHER WE
SHALL DRIVE OUT THE
OLD, PUNISHING THE
ONES GUILTY OF THE
OLD SINS BY SLAYING
THEM ALL!

YEA, WE SHALL SACRI-
FICE THE OLD-- OFFERING
THEIR BLOOD TO THE
FORCES OF THE NEW
ORDER!!

(DEATH...)

(BUT...
WHOSE
DEATH--?)

AND KNOW THAT,
IN FULL VIEW OF
OUR BLESSED CON-
GREGATION, I
SHALL NOW DELIVER
THE FIRST OF
THOSE SACRI-
FICES--!!

(HE RAISES
HIS SWORD
-- NO TIME
TO RUSH
FORWARD--
TO SAVE THE
VICTIM--')

(BUT WAIT! EVEN
AS THE SWORD SLASHES
DOWN THE VICTIM
TWISTS--)

(-- ROLLS OVER,
FRANTICALLY--)

(-- SO THAT THE
SWORD GREET'S
NOT THE FLESH
OF THE
VICTIM--)

RIPT!

(-- BUT THE CORD WHICH
BINDS THAT FLESH')

NOT SO FAST, MADMAN! I
MAY BE GUILTY OF OLD SINS
APLENTY-- BUT NONE FOR
WHICH YOU'LL PUNISH ME!!

(NO!! IMPOSSIBLE--! THE
"VICTIM" IS--)



REENA--!!!



I DON'T KNOW WHOSE VOICE THAT WAS-- BUT IT SEEMS ONE OF YOUR 'NEW ORDER' HAS RECOGNIZED ME...

PERHAPS WE CAN RENEW ACQUAINTANCES--

KLUD!



-- AFTER I TAKE YOUR SWORD--



-- AND MAKE MYSELF KNOWN TO YOU!!

SHWAK!

(AS EVER, SHE STRIKES WITH MORE THAN THE FURY OF A MAN-- BUT A FURY WHICH HAS MADE HER HASTY-- SPOILED HER AIM--)

(--SO THAT SHE DOES NOT SLAY HER OPPONENT--)



(-- BUT MERELY DISLODGES HIS... MASK--!)

BY ALL THE MONSTERS OF THE EMERALD DEPTHS--!

STOP HER-- SLAY HER!!

YOU-- YOU ARE YOURSELF... A MONSTER!

AND, SEEING THE HIDEOUS, NAKED VISAGE OF THAT MONSTER, ALARIC AND GRAYMALKYN RACE DOWN THE ROW OF HEDGES TOWARD THE ALTAR...



... WHERE REENA SPINS, SWIFTLY FREEING HER FELLOW BLACK-ROBED SACRIFICE VICTIMS...

(THE CREW OF THE FREEDOM REAVER -- ALL OF THEM...)

STOP IT!! YOUR CAUSE IS FUTILE --FOR OUR CAUSE IS DIVINE!!

YOU CAN NEVER ESCAPE US-- YOU ARE MEMBERS OF THE OLD ORDER-- YOUR SACRIFICE IS PREORDAINED!!

WE ARE RIGHTEOUS--AND YOU ARE GUILTY OF THE OLD SINS-- YOU CREATED US!



YOU WILL ALL BE SACRIFICED!!!

LIKE HELL THEY WILL--!!

THAT VOICE--! IT...IT SOUNDED LIKE... GRAYMALKYN--!!



AYE-- AND IT WAS GRAYMALKYN-- WITH ALARIC AT MY SIDE!!

THEY BURST THRU THE HEDGE IN A FLURRY OF SNEDDING LEAVES, SLASHING BLADES PRECEDING THEM!!!

COME, BROTHER ALARIC--LET US PUT AN END TO THIS FILTH CALLED THE NEW ORDER!!



IT SEEMS WE WERE BOTH RIGHT, ALARIC-- AND BOTH WRONG!!!

...FOR THE RANKS OF THIS NEW ORDER ARE FILLED WITH BEINGS WHO WERE ONCE HUMANS AND APES--



--YET WHO ARE NOW NEITHER!

THEY ARE MUTANTS, ALARIC!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN--?



MUTANTS--?

AYE--MONSTERS CREATED BY THE ANCIENT HOLOCAUST--BEINGS WHO WERE CHANGED BY THE RAIN OF DEATH-MISTS!

YOU MEAN THESE THINGS WERE ONCE LIKE US-- NORMAL MEN AND APES--? BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!



SAVE YOUR SHOCK FOR A BETTER TIME, CAPTAIN ALARIC!

("CAPTAIN"? THEN SHE HAS NOT FORGOTTEN--STILL FEELS THE ANGER!!!)

WHETHER IMPOSSIBLE OR NOT, THEY STILL EXIST--AND THEY MEAN TO KILL EVERY ONE OF--



NOW, OLD ONE--YOUR BLOOD SHALL STAIN THE ALTAR OF OLD SINS!!

AGH!!



IT'S ENDED, ALARIC--SEEMS THERE AREN'T ENOUGH OF THEM LEFT TO ENFORCE THEIR "DIVINE CAUSE."



COME ON, YOU UGLY FIENDS--I'LL MATCH MY BLADE AGAINST ALL OF YOU!!



PREDICTABLY, NONE OF THE MUTANTS ACCEPT GRAYMALKIN'S CHALLENGE, AS ALARIC REGARDS HIS FORMER MATE WITH UNCERTAINTY...



(SHE'S CHANGED AGAIN--MORE SUBDUED, HER BEAUTY AND SOFTNESS RETURNING, AS THE RAGE OF BATTLE LEAVES HER...)

(BUT WHAT THE ANGER--2 HAS THAT, TOO, LEFT HER...?)

REENA...I...I PROPOSE THAT WE START AGAIN... IF YOU WILL ACCEPT MY...



PLEASE, ALARIC, NOT NOW. I MADE A VOW THAT YOU WOULD NEVER AGAIN TOUCH ME. NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO DO SO... WHEN I CAN STILL HEAR THE ECHO OF THAT VOW...

VERY WELL... REENA...

BUT TELL ME--HOW DID YOU AND THE OTHERS COME TO BOARD THIS CITY-SHIP? 2 WHAT HAPPENED--?



THE MONSTERS BOARDED OUR SHIP--THE FREEDOM REAVER--WHILE WE SLEPT. THEY SIMPLY TOOK US I'M ASHAMED TO SAY.

AND THE REST OF THE CREW?



STILL ABOARD THE FREEDOM REAVER--PERHAPS STILL SLEEPING.

THEN LET US JOIN THEM--AND FOREVER LEAVE THIS VILE CITY OF MONSTERS...

THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE, OLD ONE! YOU SEE, THE NEW ORDER HAS STILL TRIUMPHED IN THE END--AND YOU MAY NEVER LEAVE THIS ARK OF CATHEDRAULUS



GO TO THE WINDOW AND SEE FOR YOURSELVES--

--SEE YOUR PRECIOUS FREEDOM REAVER AS IT SINKS IN FLAMES TO THE SEA'S BOTTOM! AND KNOW THAT THE NEW ORDER'S CAUSE IS TRULY DIVINE!



(NO!! IT CAN'T BE--!!)

WE ARE DESTINED TO REACH THE NEW LAND--TO SPREAD THE FORCES OF THE NEW ORDER UNTIL ALL BUT THOSE LIKE UNTO OURSELVES LIE DEAD! FOR EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NOW IN CONTROL OF CATHEDRAULUS, YOU MUST GUIDE IT TO THE NEW LAND--AND AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...



SHOULD YOU REFUSE--AND REMAIN ON CATHEDRAULUS, ROVING THE SEA INDEFINITELY...

...YOU WILL BECOME CONVERTED TO THE NEW ORDER--JUST LIKE US.

CONVERTED--?

YES--EXPOSURE TO THE RADIATION WHICH FILLS US AND THIS ARK WITH HOLY RADIANCE... WILL SOON CHANGE YOU, ALTER YOU... MUTATE YOU... UNTIL YOU ARE CONVERTED TO THE NEW ORDER, JUST LIKE US.

INDEED, THE PROCESS HAS ALREADY BEGUN.



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