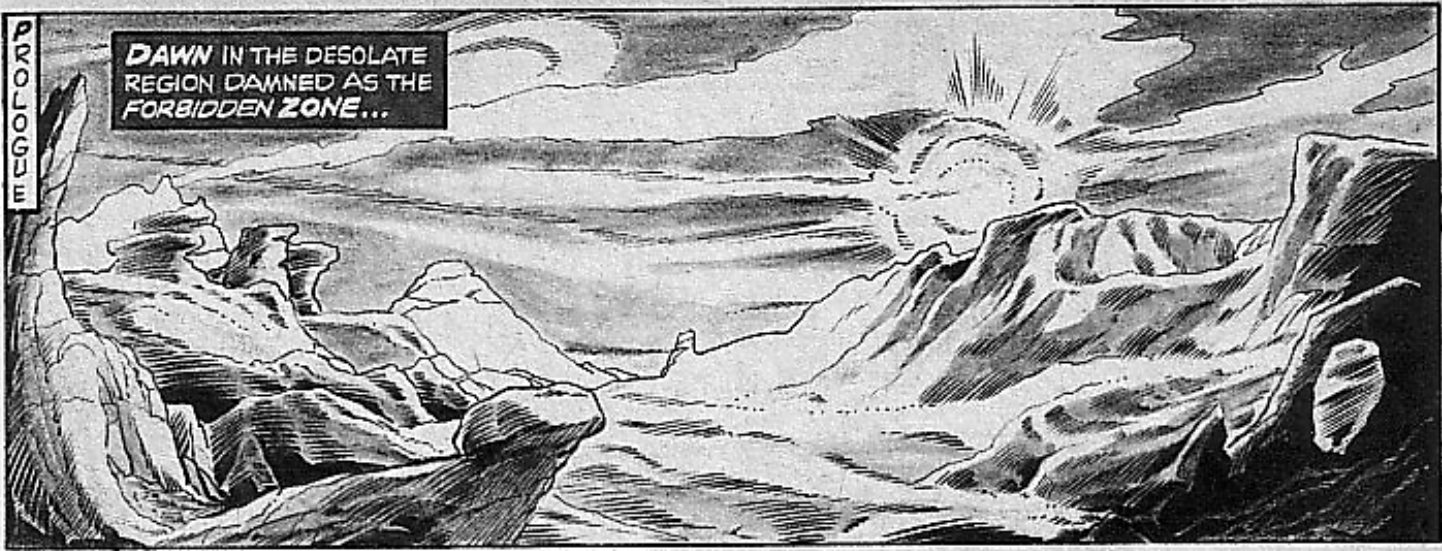


DAWN IN THE DESOLATE REGION DAMNED AS THE **FORBIDDEN ZONE...**



AN HOUR PASSES...



...**TWO**...



... AS TWO OPPOSING **FACTIONS** GATHER IN NUMBER AND **FORCE** ... SLOWLY... **OMINOUSLY**...

... **FACTIONS** DIVIDED BY **HATRED**... AND A GULF OF **ARID VALLEY** CARPETED IN **SUN-BAKED MUD**.

THE VIEW FROM ONE RIDGE THEN...



THERE MAY BE A LOT OF THEM, BUT THEY'LL FALL LIKE GRASS UNDER **SCYTHE**. AFTER ALL, THEY'RE NOTHING BUT **PUNY**--

--**APES**, **IVOR**--**SAVAGE** AND **PRIMITIVE**, **STRENGTH** IS STILL ON **THEIR** SIDE.



MAYBE SO...

... BUT IT'S **HUMAN CUNNING** THAT'LL WIN **THIS** DAY.

... AND THE VIEW FROM THE **OTHER**.

ONE RIDGE, ARMED WITH
STEEL AND HATE--



EVEN AT THIS
DISTANCE, I CAN SEE
THEM TREMBLING.

--FACING THE OTHER,
ARMED WITH THE
SAME.



I CAN
SMELL THE
STINKING BEASTS
FROM HERE!

SO DIFFERENT IN
ASPECT AND MIEN..

PREPARE YOUR
GORILLAS FOR
ATTACK--!



YES, SIR!

TELL
YOUR MEN
TO STAND
READY--!



YES, SIR!

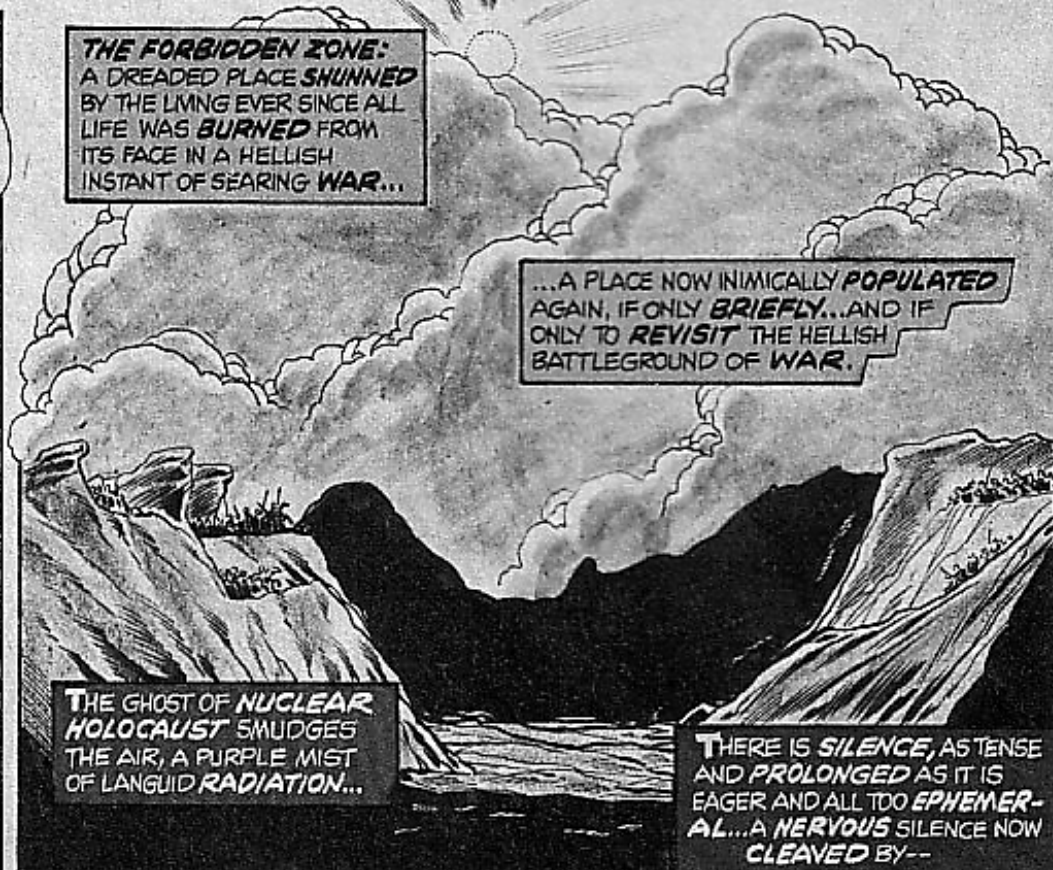
...BUT SO IDENTICAL
IN DIFFERENCE.

THE FORBIDDEN ZONE:
A DREADED PLACE SHUNNED
BY THE LIVING EVER SINCE ALL
LIFE WAS BURNED FROM
ITS FACE IN A HELLISH
INSTANT OF SEARING WAR...

THE GHOST OF NUCLEAR
HOLOCAUST SMUDGES
THE AIR, A PURPLE MIST
OF LAQUID RADIATION...

...A PLACE NOW INIMICALLY POPULATED
AGAIN, IF ONLY BRIEFLY...AND IF
ONLY TO REVISIT THE HELLISH
BATTLEGROUND OF WAR.

THERE IS SILENCE, AS TENSE
AND PROLONGED AS IT IS
EAGER AND ALL TOO EPHEMER-
AL...A NERVOUS SILENCE NOW
CLEAVED BY--





CHARGE!!

IT IS THE FIRST AND BRUTAL OVERTURE
IN A SWEEPING CLASH OF CHAOS, ALL SOUNDS
AND ALL FURY, ALL SIGNIFYING THE CLAMOROUS
RAPE OF SILENCE BY MANY...



...BY HOOVES POUNDING
SUN-BAKED MUD...



...AND TALT
STRINGS--



--NOW GONE SLACK...

...BY CREAKING
LEATHER AND
SCRAPING STEEL...



...BY SHOUTS
OF FRENZY...



...AND WHINE
OF FLAME..

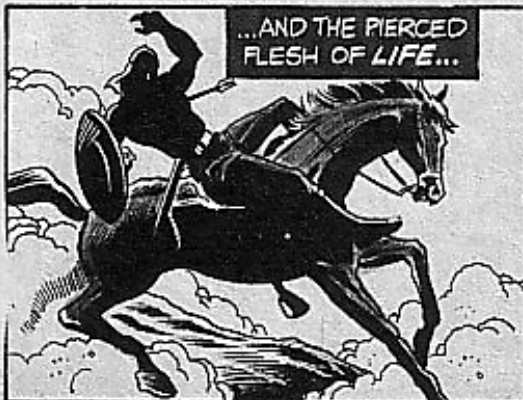


...THE PIERCING
SHRIEK OF
ANIMALS...



--SPENT IN STRIFE.

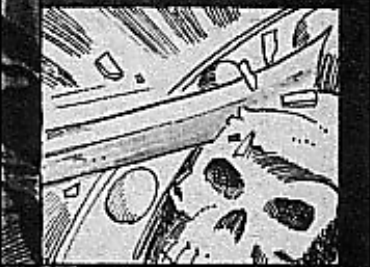
...AND THE PIERCED
FLESH OF LIFE...



...BY HATRED SWIRLED IN LUST...



...AND BAWLING MADNESS--



MORE THAN MERE WAR, IT IS
THE DREAM OF GENESIS
DRENCHED DARK AND GROWN
PERVERTED. NO LONGER A
DREAM, IT IS NOW--

EVOLUTIONS

THE ISSUE IS NEITHER *BOUNDARY*
NOR *WEALTH*. THERE IS NOTHING TO
GAIN, LESS TO *PILLAGE*.

THE ISSUE IS NEITHER
NATIONAL NOR *RACIAL*.
COUNTRIES NO LONGER
EXIST, AND RACES HAVE
NOW BECOME *INSIGNIFICANT*
AND *UNITED* IN THE FACE
OF AWESOME SCHISMS OF
SPECIES.



NIGHTMARE!

AND THOUGH ENMITY BETWEEN SPECIES *SPAWNED* THE ISSUE, IT HAS NOW DISINTEGRATED TO FAR *LESS* THAN APE VERSUS HUMAN. IT IS NOW AN ELEMENTAL BATTLE OF ATAVISTIC *RAGE*--WHERE COMBATANTS FIGHT *DEATH* BY *DEALING* DEATH...

...AND THUS, THEY FIGHT *EACH OTHER*
...AND THUS THEY *KILL*.

AND THUS, THEY HAVE EACH *LOST* THEIR INDIVIDUAL FIGHT AGAINST DEATH...



...FOR DEATH IS THE ONLY AND TRUE VICTOR.



IT CONTINUES THROUGH MORNING INTO
AFTERNOON... AS THE CHARRED
FIELD OF BATTLE DROWNS IN THE
BLOOD OF LIFE... GASPS UNDER THE
WEIGHT OF DEATH...





STILL IT CONTINUES...



...MORE...



...MORE--INTERMINABLY MORE...

SLAY THEM!



...APES KILLING HUMANS...

...HUMANS MURDERING APES...



YAAAAHHH!!

MORE LOUDLY--

--HOARSELY IN PANIC...



...AND EVER... DEATH.

THE DESICCATED FIELD IS NO LONGER GREEDY. QUENCHED NOW AND BLOATED, SATIATED, GLUTTED BEYOND SANGUINE LUST, IT WANTS NO MORE...

...BUT THE BLOOD CONTINUES TO BURST AND TO GUSH AND SUN-BAKED MUD TURNS SCARLET...



...AT LEAST, IN THOSE SMALL AND FEW AREAS WHERE VIEW IS NOT OBSTRUCTED BY CORPSES.



AND STILL IT CONTINUES...CORPSES GATHERING...

...COMBATANTS DWINDLING. CONSERVATION OF EXPLODING ENERGY TRANSMUTING TO LIFELESS MATTER LITTERING DEAD GROUND SOAKING WASTED BLOOD...



...SPILLED IN MORE DEATH...



...MORE FACING DEATH...



...MORE FACES SLASHED TO DEATH...



...AND MORE DEATH THAN LIFE...

...FOR THERE IS NO LIFE...



IT IS OVER... BUT NO ONE SIGHS.

THE RAPE OF SILENCE LEAVES BEHIND A SOFT WHIMPER OF GUTTERING FLAME. AN EMPTY RAPE, FOR NOTHING WILL BE BORN OF IT.

...SAVE MORE HATE. AND THEREFORE MORE DEATH...

...BECAUSE THE FIGHT AGAINST DEATH HAS BEEN **LOST**.

BADLY LOST. DEATH HAS **WON** AND THERE IS NO ONE LEFT TO **FIGHT**.



MANY HAVE BEEN **SLAIN**, BOTH **HUMAN** AND **SIMIAN**...

BUT DEATH IS THE **TRUE** VICTOR.



DEATH IS THE **ONLY** VICTOR.



DEATH--

--IS ALL ALONE NOW. YOU CAN SEE IT-- THERE IS **NOTHING** ELSE.



BUT WAIT.

A **MOVEMENT**...



...DEEP IN THE TANGLE OF TWISTED **STILLNESS**...



...A LIFE, YES
--A LIFE...

...BUT JUST **BARELY**. FOR IT IS A LIFE WHICH CAN NEVER **LEAVE** THE TWISTED TANGLE OF DEATH SPRAWLING EVERYWHERE **AROUND** IT...



...NEVER LEAVE ON LEGS **BROKEN** AND **BURNED**. ON LEGS USELESS AND **RUINED**.

ACROSS THE **SCARLET** FIELD... **ANOTHER**--? DEATH HAS BEEN BEATEN BY **TWO**... AND THIS LIFE LURCHES ON LEGS **UNIMPAIRED**, AND PERHAPS EVEN IMPOSSIBLY **UNSCATHED**. BUT HIS **ARMS**...

...AH YES, HIS **ARMS**--THEY HANG **LIMP**.



YOU DAMN **DIRTY** APE--!!

WHAT--?!



IT'S ALL YOUR **FAULT**, YOU STINKING **BEAST**--!

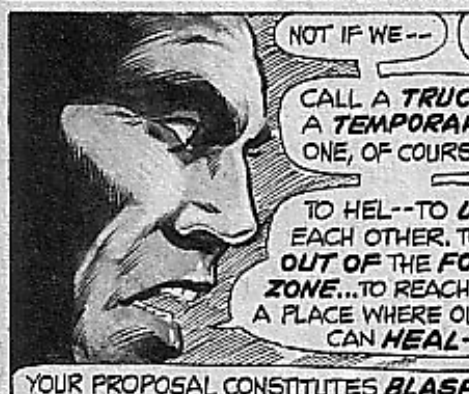
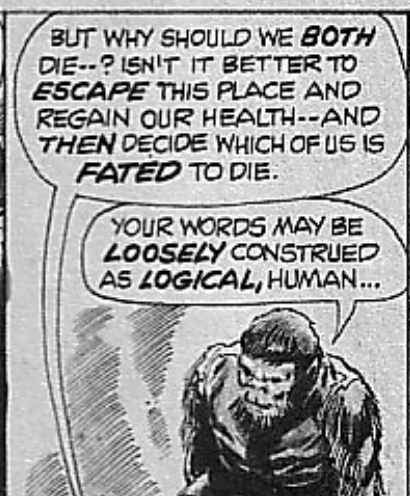


IT'S **YOUR** FAULT THAT MY PEOPLE LIE HERE **DEAD**, THEIR BLOOD SPILLED AND MINGLING WITH THE FILTHY BLOOD OF **APES**!

SILENCE, HUMAN!

IT WAS **YOUR** WAR-- A **HUMAN** WAR--WHICH **CREATED** THIS FORBIDDEN ZONE. AND IT IS **YOU** WHO SHOULD BE HELD **CULPABLE** FOR THE DEATH WHICH NOW **FILLS** IT.

THUS BY THE **AUTHORITY** OF **SIMIAN** IMPERATIVE, IT IS MY **DUTY** TO ANNOUNCE--



YOUR PROPOSAL CONSTITUTES **BLASPHEMY** TO THE TENENTS OF **SIMIAN IMPERATIVE**.



--ONTO YOUR SHOULDERS."

...AND **PROGRESSES** STEP BY TRUDGING STEP THROUGH THE **SAME**. THE HUMAN FINDS TIME TO **THINK**... AND TO **SCHEME**... FOR WOULDN'T IT BE **EASY** NOW...?

THAT WAY, APE-- BEFORE THE **SCAVENGERS** MISTAKE US FOR **CARRION**.

I KNOW THE WAY, HUMAN... AND I'M **NOT** IN THE HABIT OF TAKING **ORDERS** FROM THE LIKES OF YOU.

IT BEGAN ON A FAMILIAR AND EXPECTED NOTE, ONE STRIKING DISCORDANCE AND FAR FROM HARMONY...

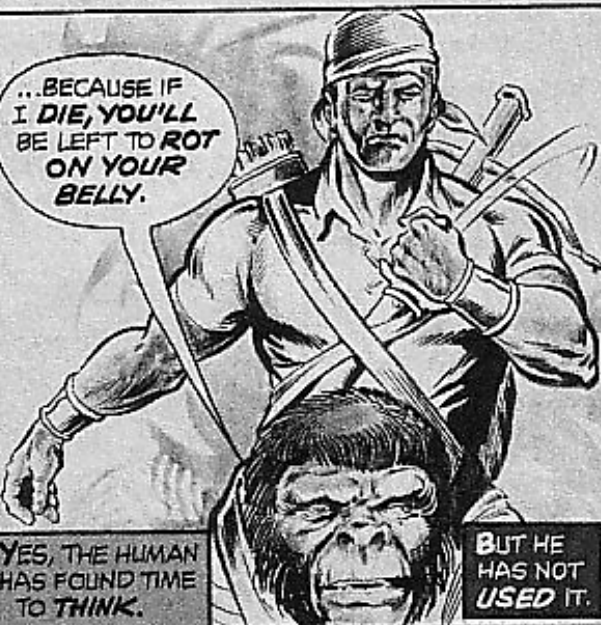


JUST REMEMBER, HUMAN...

THE APE WOULD NEVER EVEN **KNOW**--UNTIL THE BLADE BROUGHT CHOKING BLOOD INTO HIS THROAT...



...IF THIS IS TO **SUCCEED**, WE MUST **COOPERATE**...



.. BECAUSE IF I **DIE**, YOU'LL BE LEFT TO **ROT** ON YOUR BELLY.

YES, THE HUMAN HAS FOUND TIME TO **THINK**.

BUT HE HAS NOT **USED** IT.

HOURS PASS, AND THE WITHERED TERRAIN OF THE FORBIDDEN ZONE BURSTS INTO AN EFFULGENCE OF MUTATED FOREST, GLOWING BIZARRE AND RESPLENDENT IN DUSK...

HOLD IT, APE. I WANT TO NOTCH MY CROSSBOW...

SKEE SKEE

...BECAUSE I SEE SOMETHING UP AHEAD, AND IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN...

"...IT'S OUR DINNER."

SKEE SKEE



I GOT IT!

AND LET'S GO GET IT--!



BY NIGHT, AND THE GLAZE OF A FIRE, THEY HAVE LEARNED--GRUDGINGLY--THE SOUND OF EACH OTHER'S NAME.

ALL DONE AND JUICY TOO, SOLOMON...



HURRY UP AND SLICE IT, THEN-- BEFORE MY STOMACH JUMPS OUT AFTER IT.



THE MEAT IS SLICED AND EATEN... BY THE ONE WHOSE HANDS HAVE SLICED IT...

WELL, JOVAN--?



WHAT ABOUT ME..?



YOU... YOU WANT ME TO... FEED YOU--?

OF COURSE I DON'T WANT YOU TO FEED ME! I DON'T EVEN WANT YOUR STINKING HIDE NEAR ME! BUT YOU'D DAMN WELL BETTER FEED ME-- IF YOU HOPE TO MOVE ONE INCH FROM THIS CAMPSITE AT ANYTHING FASTER THAN AN ELBOW-CRAWL!!



THE POINT IS TAKEN...



...AND THE MEAT PROFFERED, WITH NO SMALL MEASURE OF DISGUST.

SOLOMON ACCEPTS IT..



...SIGNIFICANTLY BARING HIS TEETH MORE THAN NECESSARY.

AND LONG AFTER HE HAS BEGUN TO CHEW THE MORSEL, HIS GLARE LINGERS...



MORNING PLUS TWO HOURS OF AIMLESS PROGRESS, SOLOMON AND JOVAN ARE HOPELESSLY LOST.



LET'S TRY THAT DIRECTION.

YOUR PRECISE WORDS, HUMAN... BEFORE WE LOST THE TRAIL.

A SOUND--

--AND A MUTATED JUGGERNAUT
OF FRENZIED HORROR EXPLODES
FROM SHREDDING CONCEALMENT.

WHAT'S THAT
THRASHING--?



GASPING IN SHOCK, SOLOMON LURCHES
BACK. THE SLING SNAPS. AN EFFLUVIUM
OF BELCHED STENCH ASSAILS THEM,
AND THEY--

A SOUND--

--AND A MUTATED JUGGERNAUT
OF FRENZIED HORROR EXPLODES
FROM SHREDDING CONCEALMENT.

WHAT'S THAT
THRASHING--?



GASPING IN SHOCK, SOLOMON LURCHES
BACK. THE SLING SNAPS, AN EFFLUVIUM
OF BELCHED STENCH ASSAILS THEM,
AND THEY--







"WAIT A MINUTE--TAKE A LOOK UP NEAR THE TOP OF THAT **ROCK PILLAR**..."



CAN YOU MAKE OUT THE MOUTH OF A CAVE UP THERE?

YES...



...AND THERE'S LIGHT EMANATING FROM IT--A **FIRE**...AN **OCCUPANT**... AND MAYBE **FOOD**...!"



THE TORTUOUS ASCENT **BEGINS**, ALREADY DOOMED TO **DISASTER** ON FOUR SIDES BORDERING **MADNESS**...

ONE: DARKNESS RENDERS THE CLIMB PERFECTLY **IMPOSSIBLE**.

TWO: IT IS UNDERTAKEN BY TWO **CRIPPLES**, EACH A CLUMSY **HINDRANCE** TO THE OTHER.



THREE: ALREADY **SLIPPERY**, THE SHEER ROCK GROWS INCREASINGLY MORE **SLICK** AS MERE **RIVULETS** OF RAIN FLOOD TO SHEETING **SLUICES**.



AND **FOUR**: THE BOND OF COOPERATION **SEALING** THE CLIMB IS A **TENUOUS** ONE, AND LIABLE TO **SNAP** AT THE FIRST BLURTED WORD.



THEN...



...THE TEST.

NOW'S YOUR **CHANCE**, JOVAN. ARE YOU GOING TO SHAKE ME LOOSE--OR TRY TO **SAVE YOUR LEGS--?**



SHUT UP AND SWING YOUR BODY FORWARD..



-- BEFORE MY **FINGERS** SLIDE US **BOTH** ALL THE WAY DOWN!

HUMANS ARE **INCAPABLE** OF EARNING GRATTUDE. WHEN THIS IS OVER, I SHALL REWARD YOU ONLY WITH **DEATH**, JOVAN.



REMEMBER THAT.

PULL YOURSELF UP WITH YOUR **LEGS--** MY **ARMS** CAN'T DO ALL THE WORK--!



EVEN SO, YOU'RE GOING TO OWE ME SOME **THANKS** FOR THIS...

YEAH AND I HATE **YOUR** FILTHY GUTS **TOO**, SOLOMON. BUT SINCE WE'VE REACHED THE **CAVE...**

...I SUGGEST WE **SAVE** OUR HATRED AND--



--GET OUT OF THIS WATERFALL BEFORE WE MELT.

INSIDE: SPARSELY FURNISHED, A CAVERN GLAZED BY LURID FIRE... A HUDDLED FORM, AND A VOICE FROM UNTURNED FACE...



COME--COME IN, DRY YOURSELF BY THE FIRE. COLD RAIN IS NOT KIND TO THE BONES.

WHO...ARE YOU...?

I AM OLD. I AM WISE. I AM FREE.

I AM A HERMIT, AND WHEN CALLED...I AM MORDECAI.



TURNING, HE IS SURPRISED TO LEARN-- THERE ARE TWO OF YOU--AND SUCH UNLIKELY COMPANY AT THAT.

STILL, I CAN SEE WHY YOU TOLERATE ONE ANOTHER...AS WELL AS WHY I HEARD ONLY ONE SET OF FOOTSEPS.

WE TOLERATE EACH OTHER OUT OF NECESSITY, HERMIT. ONCE HEALED, ONE OF US WILL BE COMPANY TO NO ONE.



OF COURSE. BUT SIT BY THE FIRE. I HAVE HERBS, AND SALVE. FRESH BANDAGES, TOO, I SHOULD THINK, WOULD NOT BE OUT OF ORDER.

YOU...YOU'RE SO... STRANGE. ARE YOU APE--OR HUMAN?

NEITHER.

AND BECAUSE I AM NEITHER...I AM NO MORE THAN A HERMIT.

THIS, IT **BEGINS**. IN THE CAVERN EYRIE OF A HERMIT KNOWN AS **MORDECAI**: THE LONG PERIOD OF **CONVALESCENCE**...

MY ARMS GATHER
STRENGTH, HUMAN

AND MY LEGS,
APE.

...A TIME FILLED OF MORDECAI'S SOFT SOLEMNITY OF **PRESENCE**, OFFERING SOMBER **WISDOM** AND DEEPER **REGRET**...

YOU HATE EACH OTHER EVEN
UNTO **DEATH**...AFTER **PEACE**
HAS SHOWN YOU THE REWARD-
ING WALK TO **LIFE**.

EVEN IN **SLEEP**, YOU
CANNOT **FACE** ONE
ANOTHER. THUS, YOUR
HATE IS **MINDLESS**.

YOU KNOW
WHAT THIS
MEANS...?

I CANNOT
WAIT TO
FIND OUT.

CAN YOU
STAND,
MY SON?

SOON NOW...
PERHAPS IN
SEVERAL DAYS,
I WILL DO MORE
THAN **STAND**--I
WILL **WALK**.

THE **FIRE**
HAS FLED MY
ARMS.

AND NOW, AT
LAST, THEY
RESPOND TO MY
WILL. IN BUT
SEVERAL DAYS THEY
WILL OBEY ME
COMPLETELY--IN
EVERY TASK
NECESSARY.

IN **SEVERAL DAYS**, THEN, MORDECAI **SPEAKS**...

THEN YOU ARE READY
TO **LEAVE** NOW? TO
SLAY ONE ANOTHER...?

TO DECIDE WHICH **ONE**
OF US SHOULD BE **SLAIN**,
MORDECAI. **TWO** CAN-
NOT DIE WHEN **ONE**
IS **SUPERIOR**.

SO WE HAVE **AGREED**,
MORDECAI. AND SO
WE SHALL **DECIDE**

CONDUCT YOUR
CONTEST--BY ALL **MEANS**.
FOOLS **MUST** FOLLOW THE
NOTION OF FOOLS...

THEN THE ISSUE IS
MERELY WHICH ONE OF YOU
IS **SUPERIOR** TO THE **OTHER**.
THE ISSUE MAY BE DECIDED
WITHOUT DEATH,
YOU KNOW...

WHAT DO YOU
MEAN, HERMIT...?

... BUT **CONDUCT**
YOUR CONTEST **WITHOUT**
WEAPONS--WITHOUT **MURDER**.
THE ISSUE'S **DECISION**
WILL SUFFER NO **LESS**
FOR LACK OF **BLOOD**.

I HAVE SAVED YOUR **LIVES**, AND NURTURED YOU TO **HEALTH**. I HAVE NOT **DONE** SO TO SEE YOU **DESTROY** YOUR LIVES. TO COMPETE IN A CONTEST SUCH AS I HAVE PROPOSED IS **SMALL** PAYMENT FOR MY **DEEDS** AND **SERVICES**.

ONLY IF THE HUMAN VOWS ME **OBEISANCE** WHEN HE **LOSES**.

IT IS **YOU** WHO WILL **LOSE**, SOLOMON--AND YES, I AGREE TO SUCH A CONTEST...

WILL YOU **PAY** ME--?

...IF ONLY TO HEAR AN APE'S **WHIMPER** OF **DEFEAT**.

AT THE FOOT OF THE TOWERING **PILLAR**, WHEN COMFORT OF CAVERN IS NOW NO MORE THAN **MEMORY** SCRAPING SKY...

YOUR WRISTS ARE **BOUND**--NEITHER MAY **FLEE**. THE CONTEST CAN END ONLY IN **DECISION**...AND ONLY YOUR **FISTS** MAY **RENDER** THAT **DECISION**.



IN GREAT **SADNESS**...

...LET IT **BEGIN**.

SOLOMON IS **FIRST**--PULLING SHACKLED **SASH**...



...PUNCHING BRITTLE **CHIN**.



JOVAN'S **REPRISAL**...

...MORE HORRENDOUSLY **BRUTAL** THAN VENGEFUL **ARMY** CLASHING WITH **COMPLACENT** ONE.

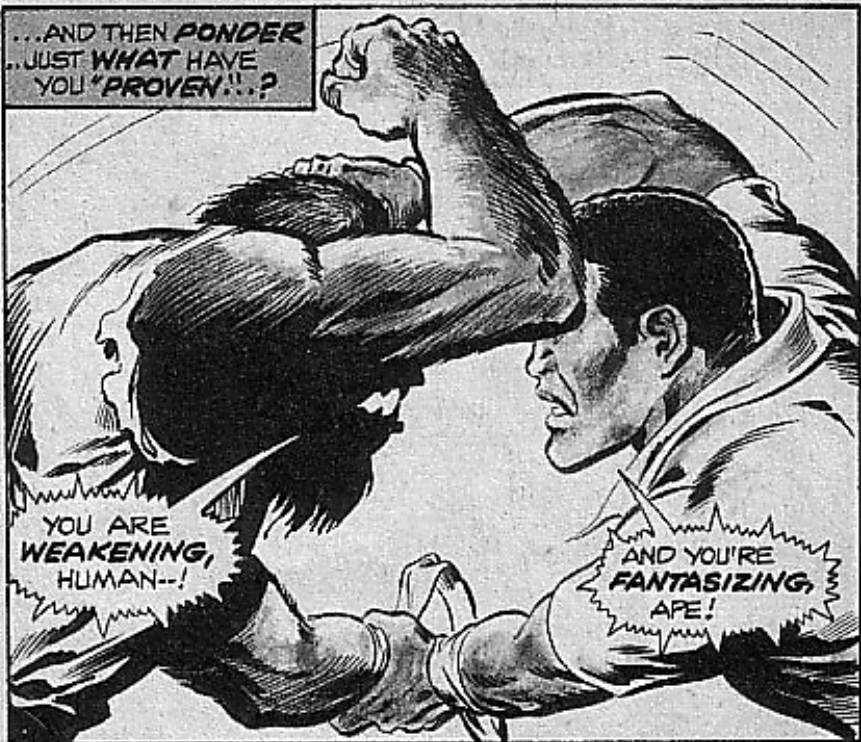


AS A BIRD **WATCHES**, MORDECAI **REFUSES**.

AS THE BIRD CANNOT **UNDERSTAND**... MORDECAI **DOES**.

MORDECAI'S THOUGHTS, SARDONIC AND WRAPPED IN GRIEVING DISDAIN: GO AHEAD IF YOU MUST PROVE SOMETHING TO YOURSELVES AND ONE ANOTHER...

...AND THEN PONDER... JUST WHAT HAVE YOU "PROVEN"!!..?



YOU ARE WEAKENING, HUMAN--!

AND YOU'RE FANTASIZING, APE!

...BEAT EACH OTHER SENSELESS-- UNTIL ONE OF YOU CAN NO LONGER BEAT ON THE OTHER...

THERE IS STILL TIME FOR WORDS...

...THE MOST INTIMATE GUISE OF HATE...



...AMIDST THE FACES IN SNARLS, THE MOUTHS IN GRUNTS, EYES IN FIRE...



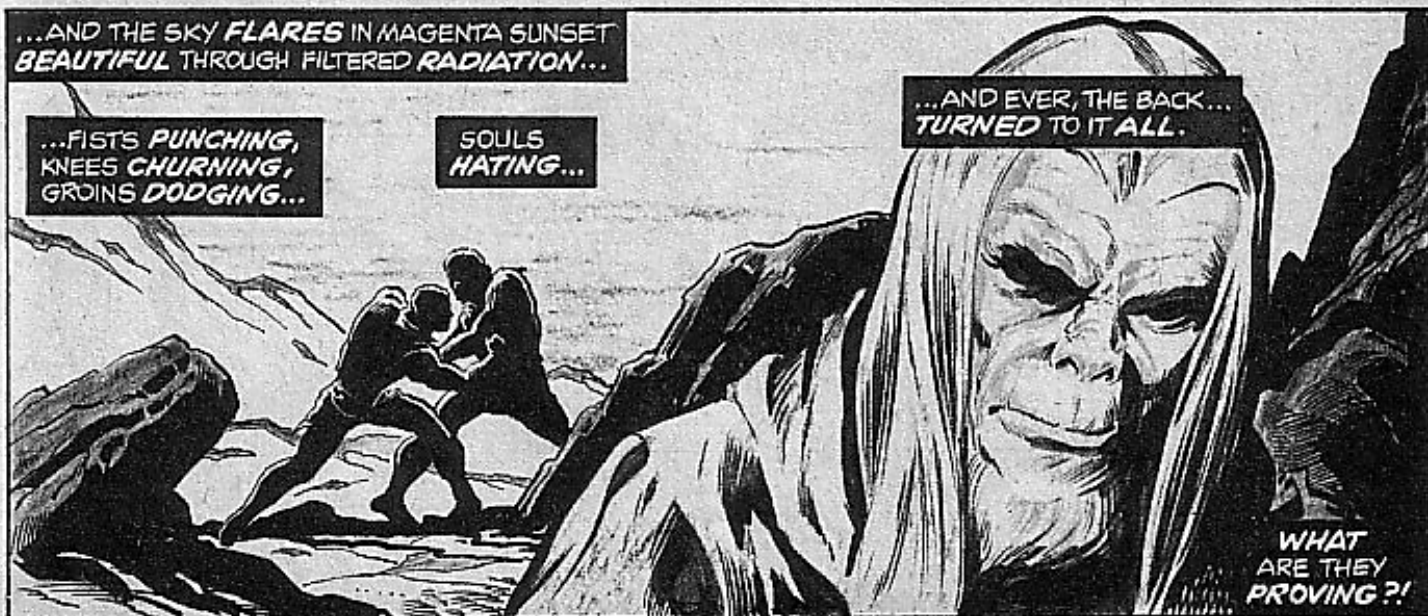
...FISTS SWINGING, BODIES THRASHING, AND THE SASH SNAPPING AS RAGE BLAZES...

...AND THE SKY FLARES IN MAGENTA SUNSET BEAUTIFUL THROUGH FILTERED RADIATION...

...FISTS PUNCHING, KNEES CHURNING, GROINS DODGING...

SOULS HATING...

...AND EVER, THE BACK... TURNED TO IT ALL.



WHAT ARE THEY PROVING?!



A PUNCH.

PAIN.

ANOTHER PUNCH.

EQUAL PAIN.

THEN TWO PUNCHES-- SIMULTANEOUSLY.

BOTH MISS-- SIMULTANEOUSLY.



BOTH FALL.

EXHAUSTED.

AND MORDECAI RISES AT THE SOUND OF THE FALL... AND THE ABSENCE OF FURTHER SOUND...

NOW... DOES IT MATTER WHICH OF YOU HAS WON?

PICK YOUR FELLOW UP... AND HELP HIM... AS I HELPED YOU BOTH.

BUT THOUGH HE HAS RISEN...



... CLEARLY, HE STILL REFUSES TO LOOK.

REPAY ME FOR MY AID IN ONE WAY MORE. WALK SOUTH -- BOTH OF YOU -- TOGETHER -- UNTIL YOU COME TO THE ANCIENT CITY... THAT PLACE WHICH WAS CONSUMED BY FIRE AND GREAT EXPLOSIONS RAINING FROM THE SKY NO LONGER HEAVEN.

LOOK UPON THAT CITY -- THAT PLACE -- CALLED THE FORBIDDEN ZONE -- AND SEE WHAT YOU HAVE WROUGHT TODAY. LOOK UPON THE ASHES OF THE PAST... AND SEE WHAT YOU HAVE DESTROYED TODAY.



DO THIS FOR ME -- AND GO NOW. I DO NOT WISH TO KNOW WHO HAS 'WON' YOUR CONTEST -- I DO NOT WISH TO LOOK UPON EITHER OF YOU EVER AGAIN...

... FOR WHILE I AM NEITHER HUMAN NOR APE...

... I AM BOTH -- AND YOU HAVE SHAMED ME TWICE OVER THIS DAY.

THEY LEAVE, NEVER SEEING THE TEARS, COMPELLED BY VOICE ALONE, EACH BEATEN, BOTH REQUIRING ASSISTANCE... THEY LEAVE...

AND THEY GO **SOUTH**. TO THE ANCIENT CITY. BACK TO THE GRIM **FORBIDDEN ZONE**.

AND WHEN THEY **LOOK**, AS TOLD, THIS IS WHAT THEY **SEE**:

A GREAT GATE **SEARED**, ONCE **GOLDEN**, NOW TARNISHED TO **SLAG**.

ENGINES OF **PROGRESS** LYING CRUMPLED AT THE ENDS OF THEIR RUPTURED **ROADS**.

MELTED **METAL**. CAUTERIZED **CONCRETE**. WASTED **WOOD**. FULVERIZED **PLASTIC**. GAPING **CRATERS**. DISINTEGRATED **CIVILIZATION**.

AND SOMEWHERE, BURIED IN IT **ALL**, A SINGED **BOOK** ABOUT AN ASININE **PARTRIGE** IN A LONG-PULPED **PEAR TREE**.





WHAT MUST
IT HAVE BEEN
LIKE...?
BEFORE?



PROUD. IT WAS PROUD
AND AWESOME.

...AND NEVER
KNOWING HUMILITY
OR...DEFEAT.

IT'S...SAD
HERE...VERY
SAD...



MAYBE WAR
IS SAD, SOLOMON...
BUT WE CAN'T
ADMIT IT FOR
FEAR OF
LOSING.

BUT IT WAS
MORE THAN WAR
WHICH DID THIS.
IT WAS HATRED,
JOVAN...

...LIKE THE HATRED
TRADED BETWEEN YOU
AND ME--YOUR
PEOPLE AND MINE.



AND THE HATRED WHICH
VISITED THIS CITY RESULTED
ONLY IN DESTRUCTION.
THERE WAS NO VICTOR--
ONLY--DEATH.



THEY MUST HAVE
CARED VERY MUCH
ABOUT HATRED, LIKE
US. AND NOW...THERE
IS NO ONE LEFT TO
CARE...ABOUT
ANYTHING.

MORDECAI WAS
RIGHT.

HATRED... AND WAR... WILL ADVANCE *NEITHER* OF OUR SPECIES. ONLY *DESTRUCTION* WILL FLOURISH. ONLY *DEATH* WILL PROSPER.

BUT HOW CAN WE *STOP* HATRED? HOW CAN WE *STOP* WAR--?

I DON'T *KNOW*, JOVAN-- BUT THE END MUST BEGIN *SOMEWHERE*.

I SUGGEST IT BEGIN RIGHT *HERE*.

AND *NOW*, WHEN THEY NO LONGER *NEED* EACH OTHER...

...THEY HAVE AT LAST *FOUND* EACH...

WHOKT!

MUTANTS--!!

HUMAN
MUTANTS.

AND APES.

MUTANT
APES.

SQUARING OFF...



...EACH COMMANDING A RIDGE OF RUBBLE...

...OPPOSING FORCES WHICH HAVE GATHERED.



...AND THE VIEW FROM THE OTHER.

KILL...!!!

TWO FACTIONS DIVIDED BY **HATRED**...AND A GULF OF VALLEY CARPETED IN THE CORPSES OF **TWO FRIENDS**.

THE FORBIDDEN ZONE: A DREADED PLACE SHUNNED BY THE LIVING EVER SINCE ALL LIFE WAS **BURNED** FROM ITS FACE IN A HELLISH INSTANT OF SEARING **WAR**...A PLACE NOW INIMICALLY **POPULATED** AGAIN--**PERMANENTLY**--BY **WAR**...A PLACE NOW INIMICALLY **POPULATED** AGAIN--**PERMANENTLY**--BY INDIGENOUS **RESIDENTS** SPAWNED AND **MUTATED** IN THAT HELLISH INSTANT...

...TO **PERPETUATE** THE BATTLEGROUND OF **WAR**.



CIRCLES. THEY REPEAT THEMSELVES.

CIRCLES...

THEY STINK.

