

**LA BALLADE
DE LA MER
SALE**

*Alfred
Lafont*



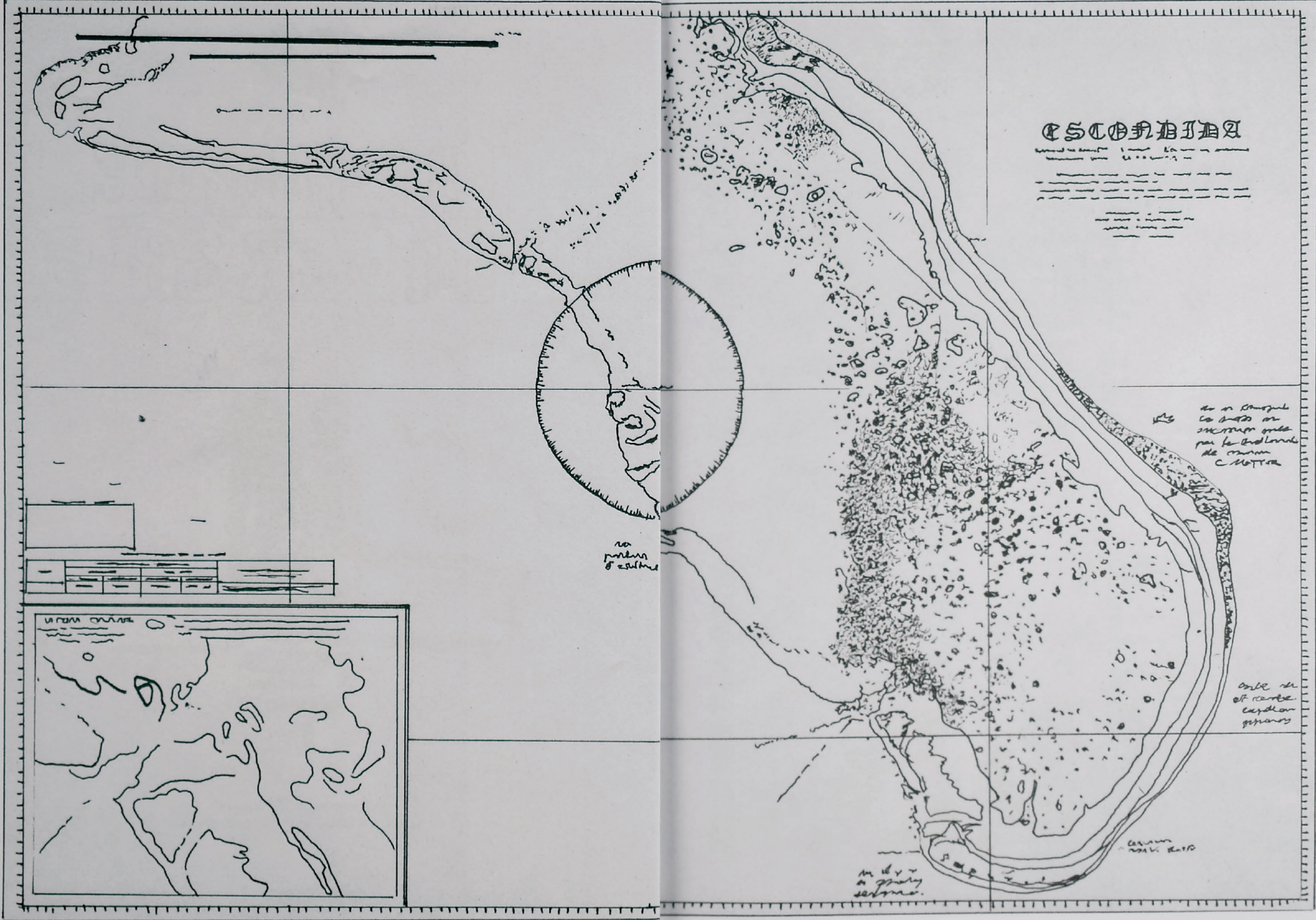
HUSO
HEAT

LA BALLADE DE LA MER SALÉE



Ous etouur a ete pusé
grâce à l'aimable collaboration de

CASTERMAN



ESCOBARIA

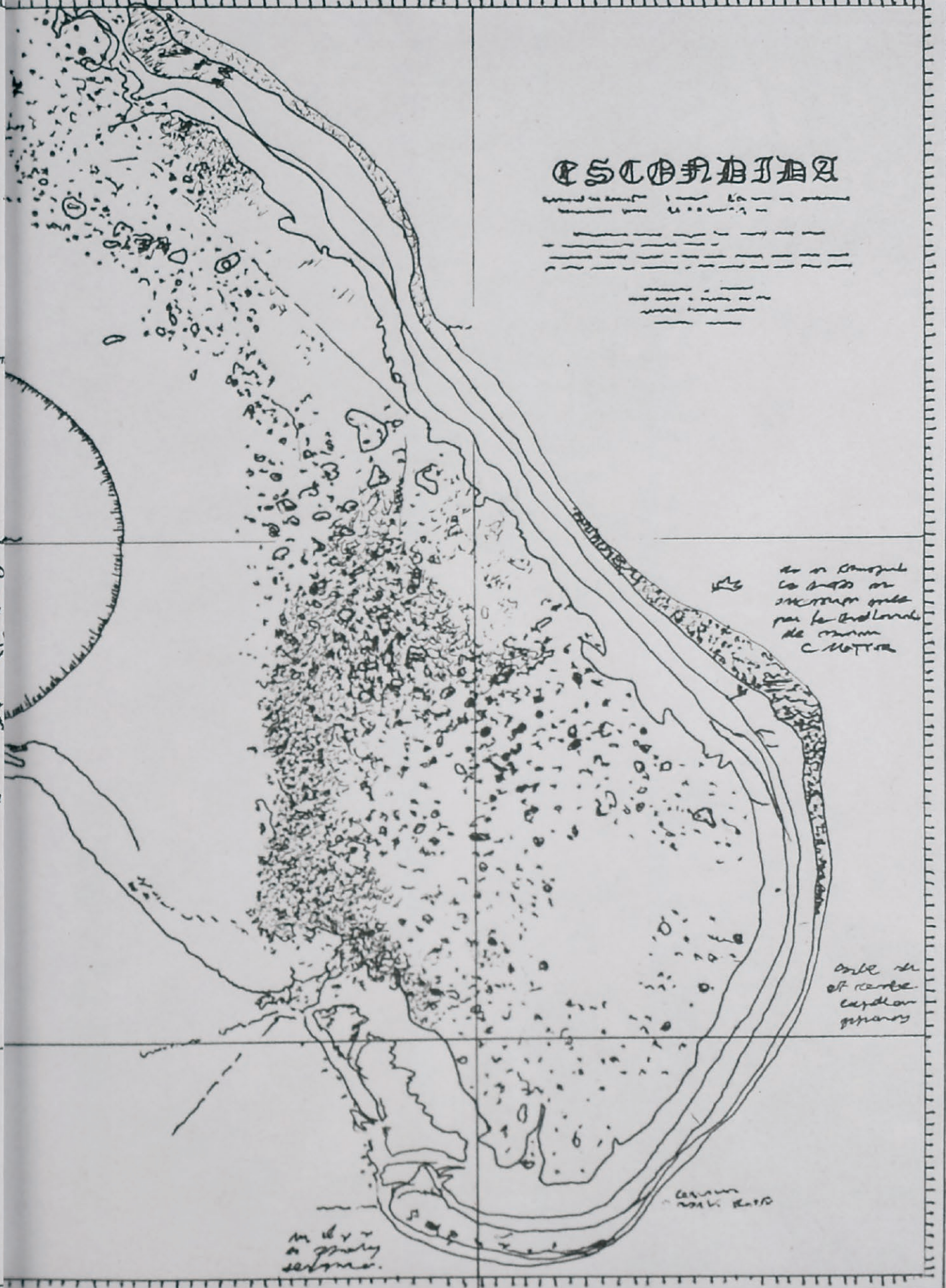
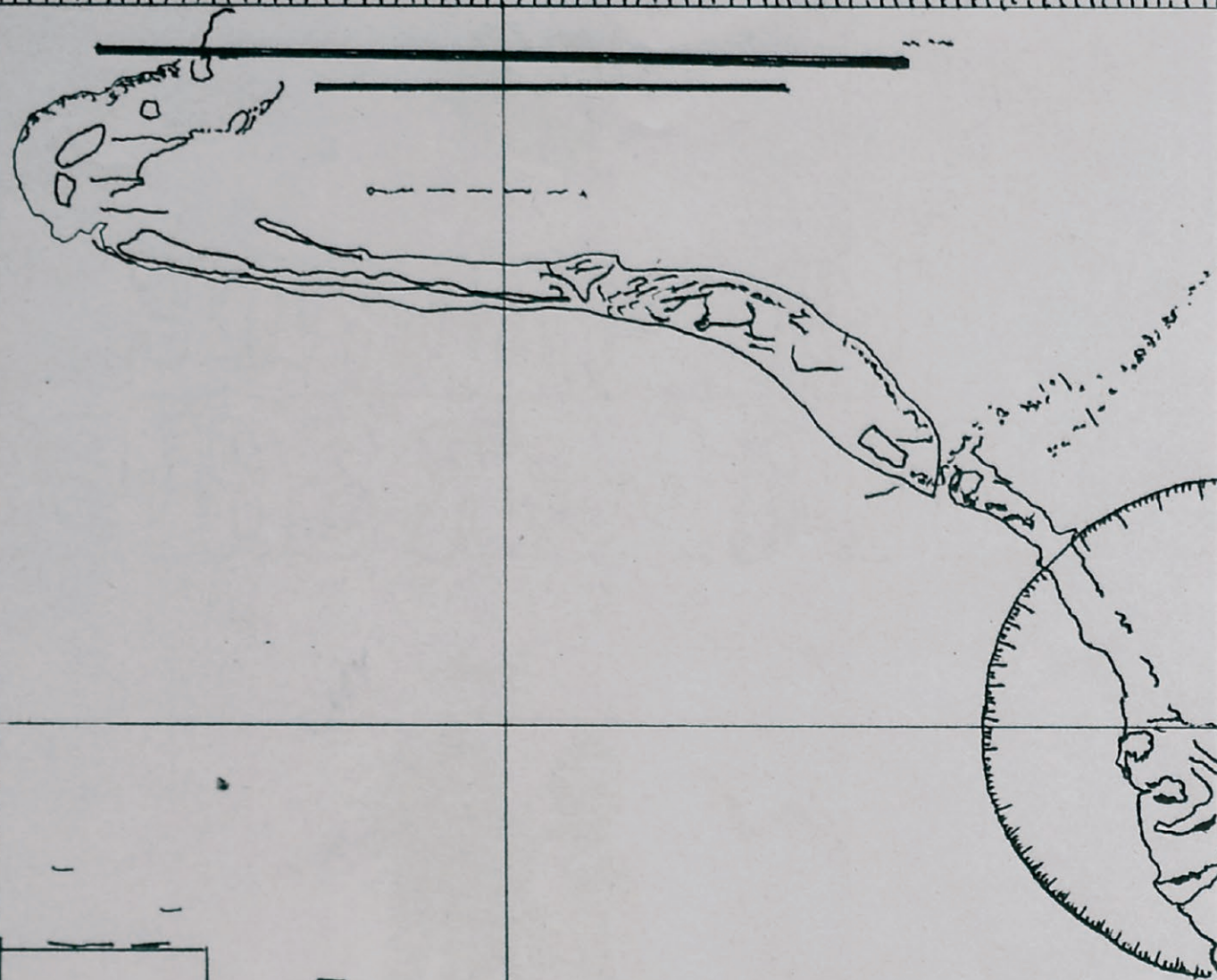
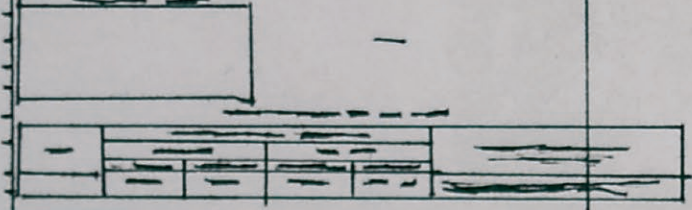
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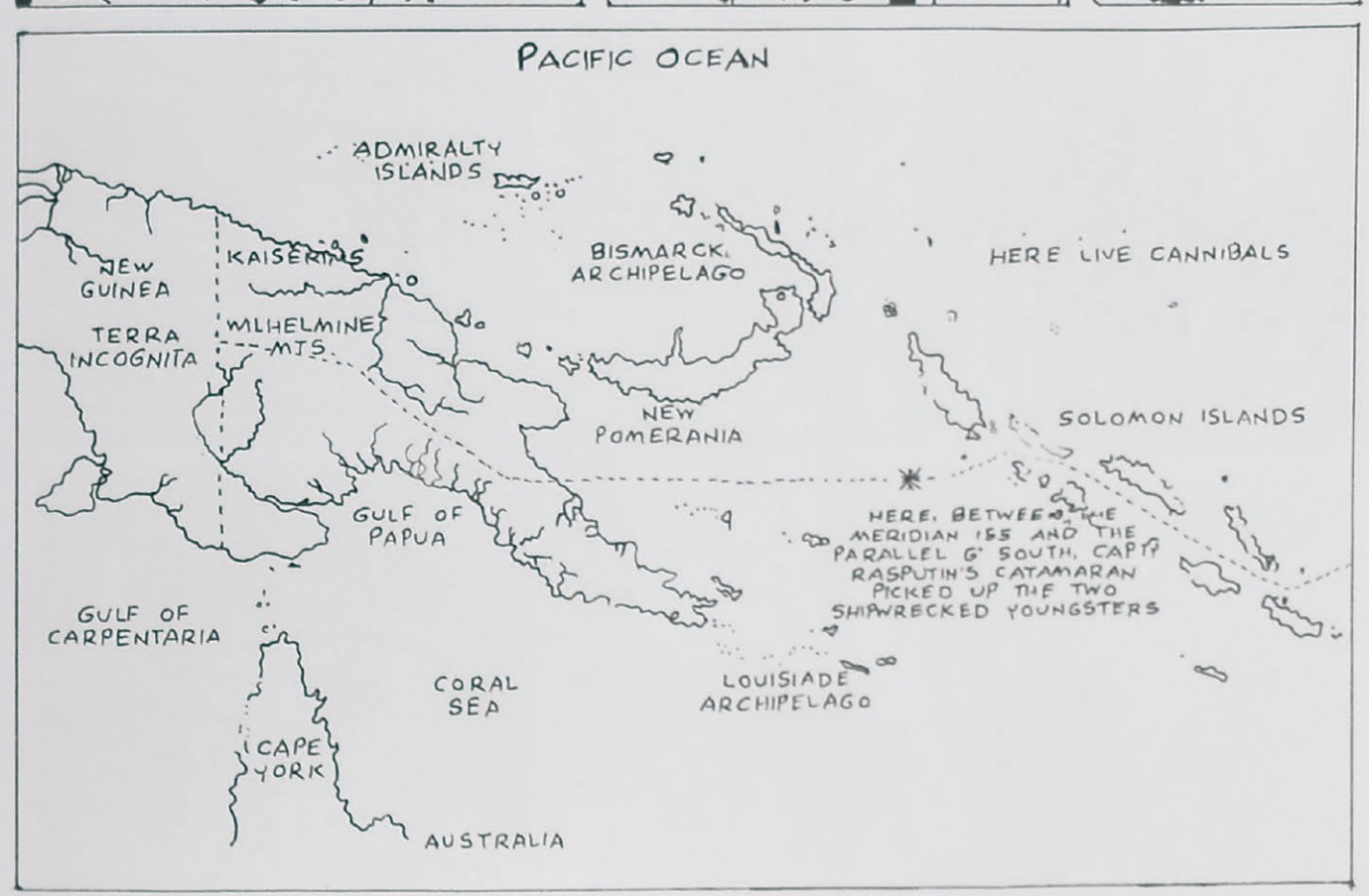
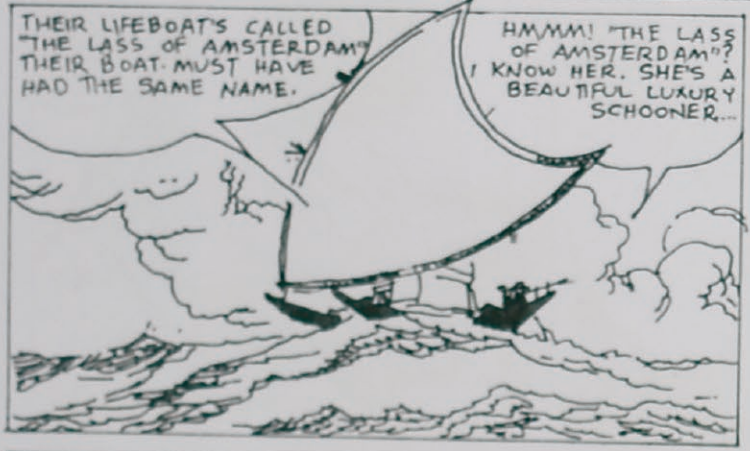
DU MÊME AUTEUR

- Fort Wheeling, Casterman.
- Ann de la jungle, Casterman.
- La Ballade de la mer salée, Casterman.
- Les Scorpions du désert, Casterman.
- Sven, Vaillant.
- Là Macumba du gringo, Dargaud.
- Les Éthiopiennes, Casterman.
- A l'est de l'Eden, Dargaud.
- Sous le signe du Capricorne, Casterman.
- Corto Maltese en Sibérie, Casterman.
- Corto toujours un peu plus loin, Casterman.

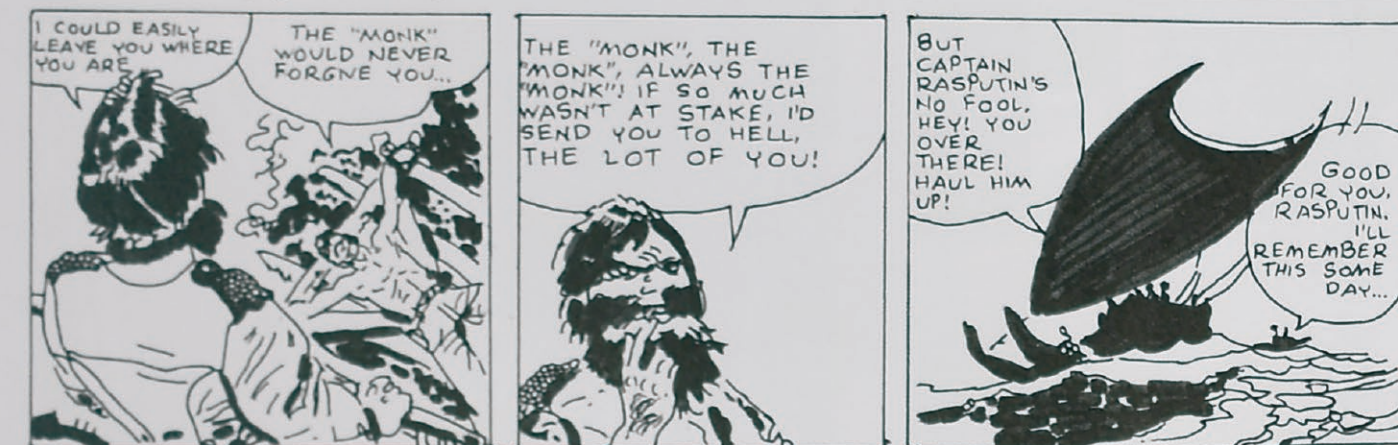
'Corto Maltese

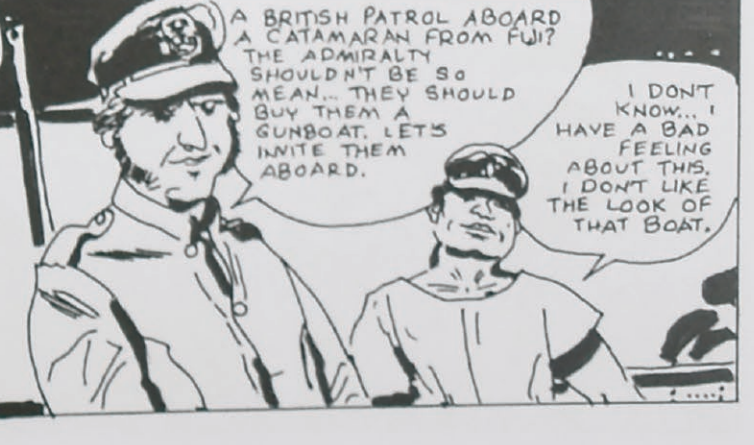
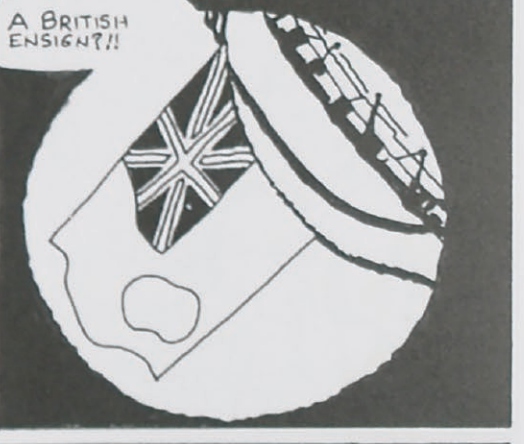
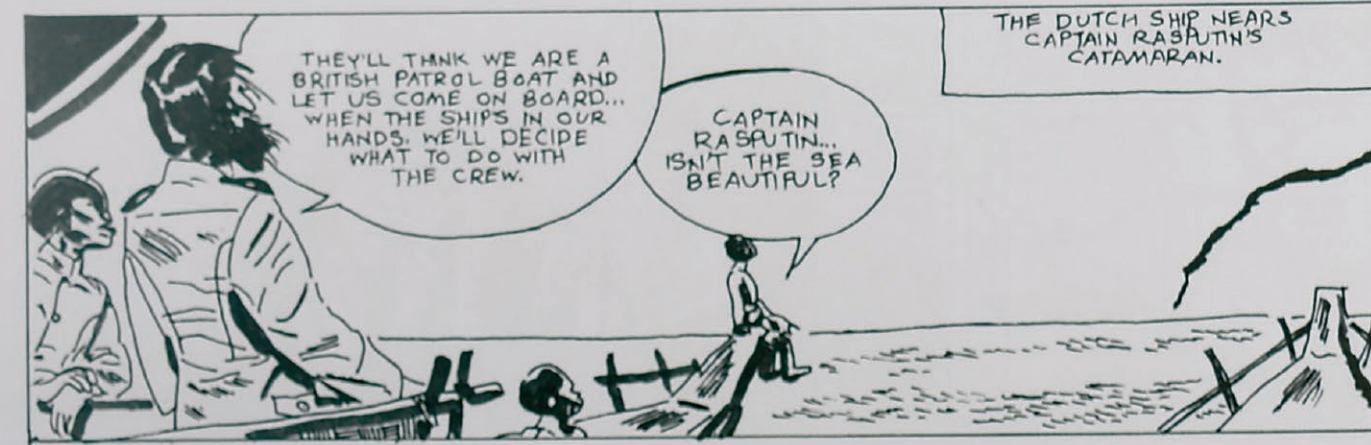
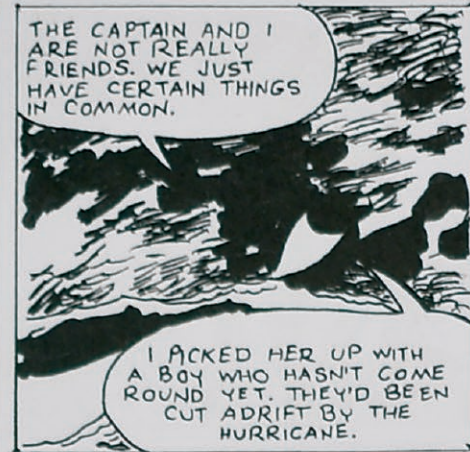
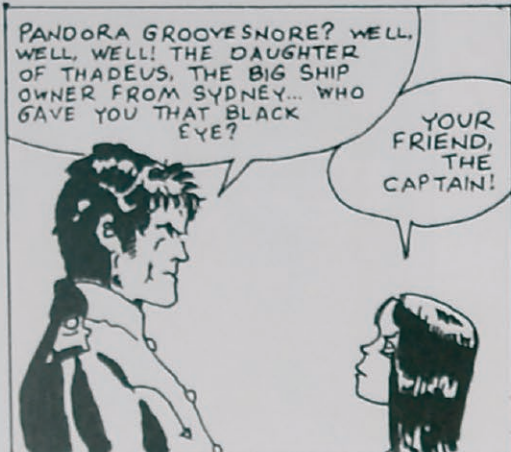
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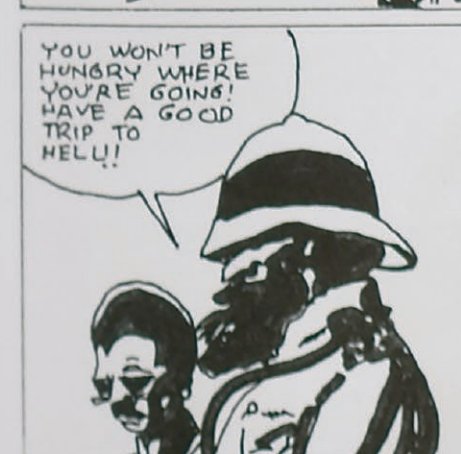
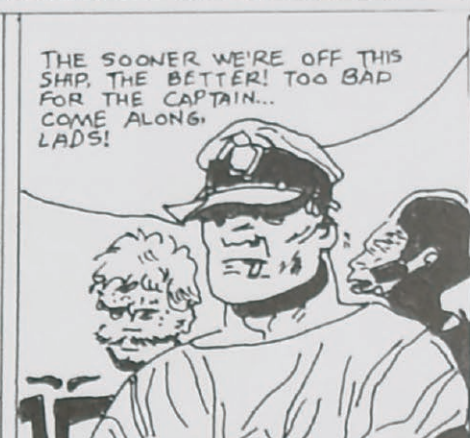
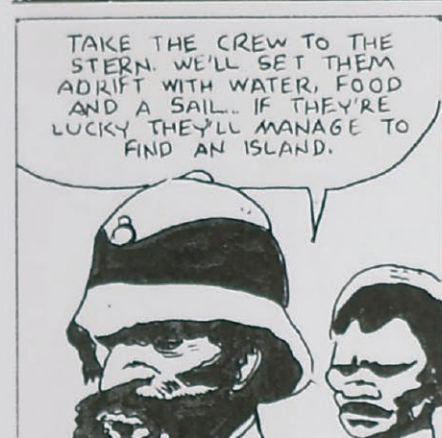
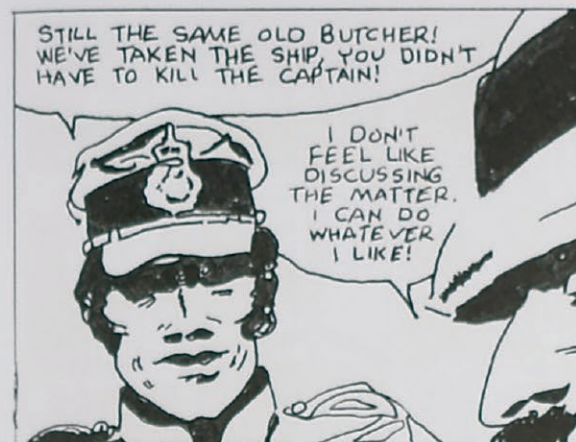
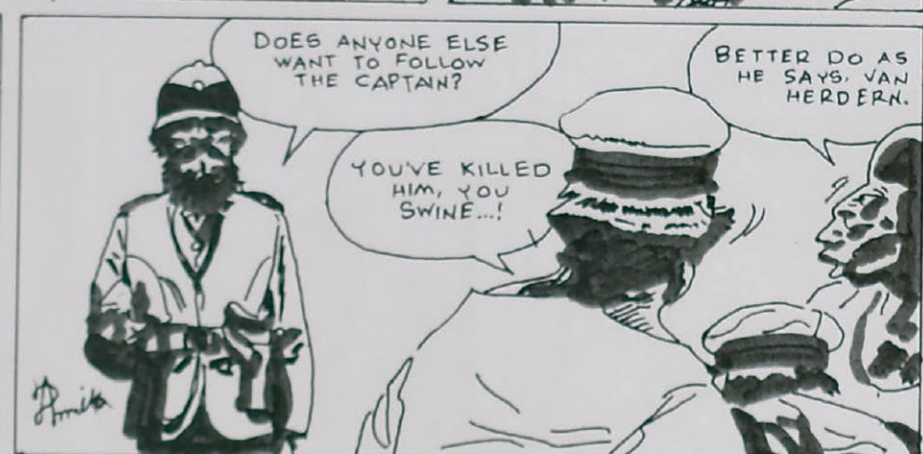
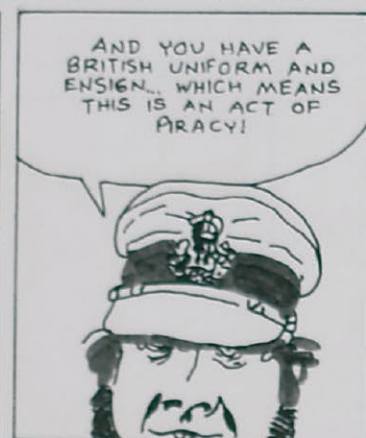
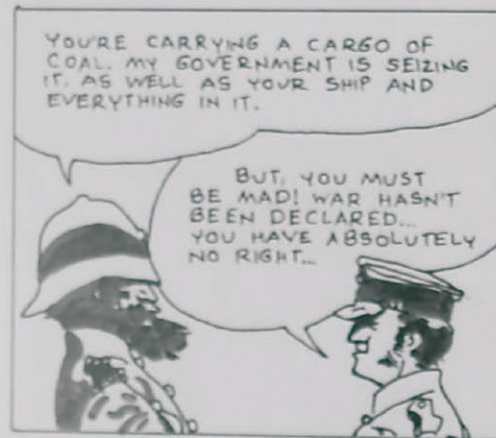










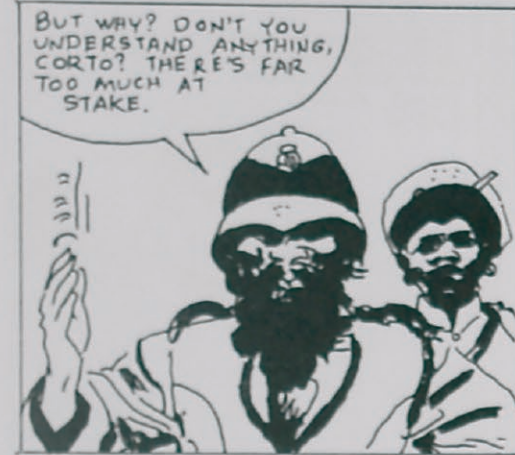




WHATEVER'S HAPPENING NOW? HE'S NOT, IS HE...?

RASPUTIN!

YOU'VE KILLED THEM ALL YOU BASTARD! THIS TIME I'M GOING TO PACK YOU OFF TO JOIN THEM...



BUT WHY? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND ANYTHING, CORTO? THERE'S FAR TOO MUCH AT STAKE.



THERE'S NO POINT ARGUING... I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH WHAT YOU'VE JUST DONE.



AKK!
SOCK!



HE'LL BE OUT FOR A LONG TIME, CAPTAIN RASPUTIN!



PUT HIM IN IRONS... WHEN HE WAKES UP WE'LL MAKE HIM STROKE THE BOILERS!

THE LIFEBOATS GOING DOWN, AND THE SHARKS ARE FEEDING... A SEA FEAST! A SEA FEAST! ALLELUIA!



DOUBLE THE SAILS! THAT'LL TAKE US FAR AWAY! SAIL OFF TOWARDS A DISTANT LAND, GO OFF WITH THE CURRENT AND THE WIND IN THE STERN...

SING A SONG OF FAREWELL TO MANGAREWA!



AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE CATAMARAN, WHICH IS BEING TOWED BY THE SHIP...
WHERE'S THAT SINGING COMING FROM? WHERE AM I?



MY GOD! I CAN'T EVEN GET UP... I FEEL SO WEAK...



SILENCE, PRETENDER!



PANDORA!



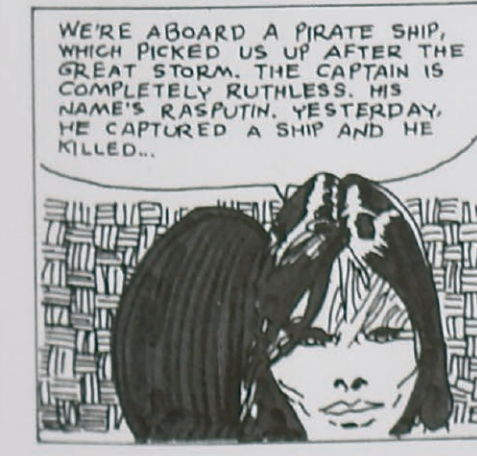
WHAT... CAIN?!



WHERE ARE WE, PANDORA?



AT LAST! I THOUGHT YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO WAKE UP AGAIN...
I FEEL EXHAUSTED... BUT... WHERE ARE WE? WHAT HAPPENED?



WE'RE ABOARD A PIRATE SHIP, WHICH PICKED US UP AFTER THE GREAT STORM. THE CAPTAIN IS COMPLETELY RUTHLESS. HIS NAME'S RASPUTIN. YESTERDAY, HE CAPTURED A SHIP AND HE KILLED...

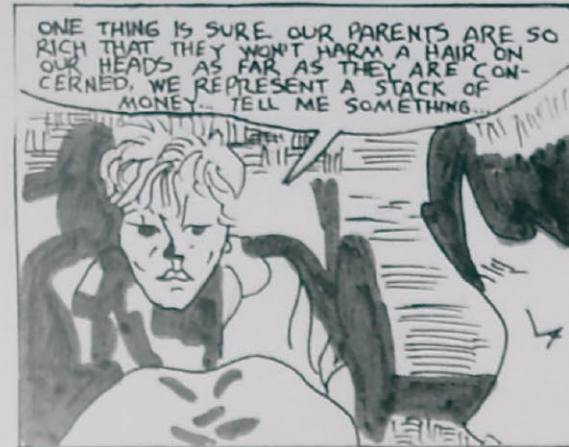


...THE ENTIRE CREW. THEY MEAN TO SELL THE CARGO TO SOMEONE CALLED VON SPEEKE.



VON SPEEKE? HE'S A GERMAN ADMIRAL! THIS IS ALL VERY ODD, BUT THE MAIN THING IS, WE'RE STILL ALIVE!

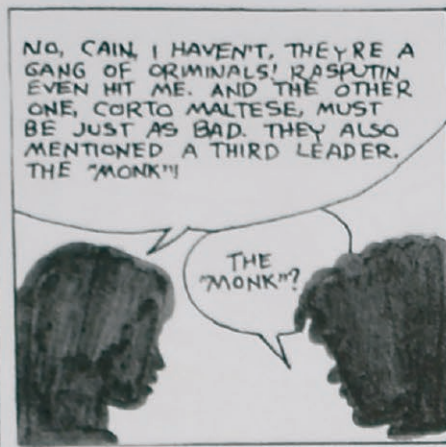
TAKEN FROM THE SEA DEEPS IN KANALGA: THE WHITE CORAL FROM THE SEA CAVERNS WAS FISHED UP BY A FISHERMAN...



ONE THING IS SURE OUR PARENTS ARE SO RICH THAT THEY WON'T HARM A HAIR ON OUR HEADS AS FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED. WE REPRESENT A STACK OF MONEY. TELL ME SOMETHING...



HAVE YOU COME ACROSS ANYONE WHO SEEMS TRUSTWORTHY? I MEAN SOMEONE WHO MIGHT HELP US?



NO, CAPTAIN, I HAVEN'T, THEY'RE A GANG OF CRIMINALS! RASPUTIN EVEN HIT ME. AND THE OTHER ONE, CORTO MALTESE, MUST BE JUST AS BAD. THEY ALSO MENTIONED A THIRD LEADER, THE "MONK!"

THE "MONK"?



I'VE HEARD UNCLE RINALD TALK ABOUT HIM. HE'S A STRANGE CHARACTER WHO REIGNS OVER EVERYTHING BETWEEN THE GILBERT ISLANDS AND THE LEEWARD ISLANDS.



THE SAILORS OF THREE COUNTRIES HAVEN'T MANAGED TO DISCOVER HIS ISLAND HIDEAWAY. VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE SEEN HIM. UNCLE RINALD IS ONE OF THEM.



YES, NOW I CAN REMEMBER, WHEN WAS YOUNG, UNCLE RINALD TELLING ME THE TALE OF THE MONK AND "ESCONDIDA" THE HIDDEN ISLAND.



GOOD HEAVENS! WHOSE HANDS HAVE WE FALLEN INTO? CAPTAIN, WHAT'S GOING TO BECOME OF US?

I DON'T KNOW, PANDORA, BUT I'M NOT AFRAID!

COME WITH US TO LIVE ON GREEN-BACKED HAWAII THE LAND THAT WAS SHAPED IN THE OCEAN AND DRAWN UP OUT OF THE SEA...

LOOK AT HAWAII, AN ISLAND AND A PEOPLE. THE HAWAIIANS ARE TAHITI'S CHILDREN.



THE ONES WHO ARE SINGING AREN'T FROM FUL, WHERE ARE THEY FROM, CRANIO?

THEY'RE MAORI SAILORS! THEY WORK HERE MANNING THE SHIP AND STOKING THE BOILERS.



TALKING ABOUT THE BOILERS... GO AND GET CORTO MALTESE. I WANT A WORD WITH HIM. HE'LL HAVE CALMED DOWN BY NOW.



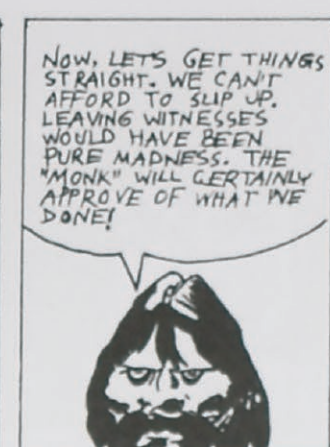
CAPTAIN RASPUTIN WANTS A WORD WITH YOU UP ON DECK. THE AIR'S NICE AND COOL UP THERE!

I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, TAR STAIN I'M SURE EVEN HELL IS COOLER THAN THIS PLACE!

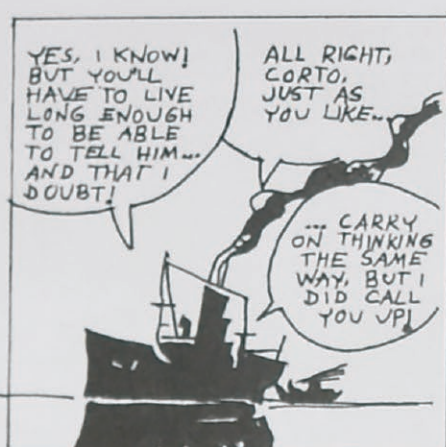


WHAT'S UP, RASPUTIN?

I FIGURED THAT THE HEAT OF THE BOILERS WOULD HAVE MADE YOU SWEAT OUT YOUR BAD TEMPER...



NOW, LET'S GET THINGS STRAIGHT. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SLIP UP, LEAVING WITNESSES WOULD HAVE BEEN PURE MADNESS. THE "MONK" WILL CERTAINLY APPROVE OF WHAT WE'VE DONE!



YES, I KNOW! BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO TELL HIM... AND THAT I DOUBT!

ALL RIGHT, CORTO, JUST AS YOU LIKE...
... CARRY ON THINKING THE SAME WAY, BUT I DID CALL YOU UP!



AND I KNOW WHY YOU CALLED ME. WE'LL BE AT KAISERINE SOON AND YOU NEED ME.

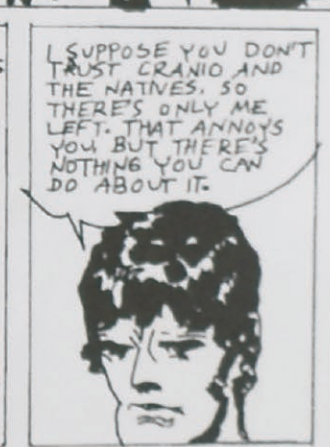


NOT NECESSARILY, CORTO.

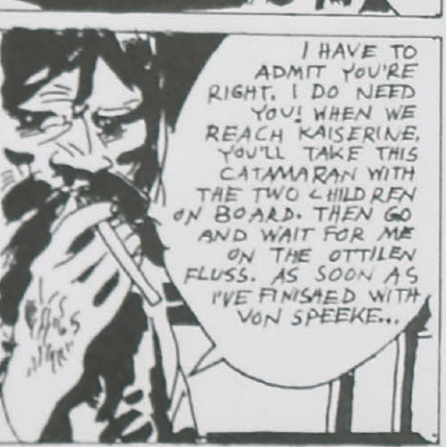
OH YES YOU DO, RASI TWO WHITE OFFICERS ARE MORE CONVINCING THAN ONE. THE GERMANS WORRY ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT!



AND SOMEONE'S GOT TO HIDE OUR TWO YOUNG STERS...



I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T TRUST CRANIO AND THE NATIVES, SO THERE'S ONLY ME LEFT. THAT ANNOYS YOU BUT THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.



I HAVE TO ADMIT YOU'RE RIGHT. I DO NEED YOU! WHEN WE REACH KAISERINE, YOU'LL TAKE THIS CATAMARAN WITH THE TWO CHILDREN ON BOARD, THEN GO AND WAIT FOR ME ON THE OTTILEN FLUSS. AS SOON AS I'VE FINISHED WITH VON SPEEKE...



... I'LL COME AND FETCH YOU. THE GERMANS MUSTN'T SPOT THE KIDDIES. THEY'D TAKE THEM UNDER THEIR PROTECTION AND THEN WE CAN MAKE THE RANSOM GOODBYE. WHAT'S MORE I'M READY TO SPLIT IT WITH YOU WITHOUT THE "MONK" KNOWING. WHAT DO YOU THINK?



THAT YOU'RE CRAZY! HE'LL FIND OUT SOONER OR LATER. WHAT DO YOU THINK CRANIO'S DOING ON BOARD? HE'S HERE TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU!

NBODY CAN TRUST CRANIO... NOT EVEN THE "MONK"!



WHEN WE'VE ARRIVED WHERE WE'RE GOING, THE THREE OF US ARE GOING TO GO FOR A LITTLE CRUISE DOWN A LITTLE RIVER AND DO A SPOT OF FISHING. WE'LL WAIT FOR GOOD OLD RASPUTIN TO COME BACK AND THEN WE SHALL SEE WHAT WE SHALL SEE. I'LL LEAVE THE REST AS A SURPRISE.

YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE SMART, DON'T YOU?

YOU'D BE WISER TO GO AWAY AND LEAVE US IN PEACE.

OH, REALLY? THAT'S NOT VERY NICE OF YOU! SO YOU DON'T FIND ME FUNNY?

WELL, IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE ONE CUSTOMER LESS. AND YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT NOT TO FIND ME FUNNY. YOUR SITUATION HERE IS NO LAUGHING MATTER.

STOP TALKING TO ME LIKE THAT. WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON.

THEN BE A LITTLE POLITER YOURSELF. ACCEPT ME THE WAY I AM, OR ELSE GO TO HELL!

OH, DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, JUST GO AWAY AND LEAVE ME IN PEACE. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO SPEAK TO YOU!

TELL CAPN CORTO THAT WE'RE NEAR THE GERMAN TERRITORY. WHAT SHOULD WE DO? UNMOOR THE BOAT, OR SAIL ON IN THE SHIP?

IT'S NOT UP TO HIM. HE ONLY REPEATS CAPN RASPUTIN'S ORDERS. I'LL GO AND TELL HIM.

GERMAN TERRITORY!

ARE WE THERE ALREADY? TELL CAPN RASPUTIN.

IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU TOLD HIM. THAT WAY, YOU WILL FIND OUT IF WE ARE GOING TO GAIL TO THE RIVER IN THE SHIP OR IN THE BOAT.

DID YOU SEE THAT, PANDORA? CORTO'S GONE OFF IN A RAGE. HE DOESN'T LIKE RECEIVING ORDERS.

IF HE'S LOST HIS PATIENCE, THEN THAT'S A LITTLE BIT YOUR FAULT TOO. BE CAREFUL, CAIN. YOU'VE MADE AN ENEMY OF HIM.

WHAT DO I CARE? WHAT'S ONE ENEMY MORE OR LESS? IT'S GETTING COLD. HELP ME BACK INSIDE WILL YOU, PANDORA?

YES, DEAREST

RAI TAHITI ROA
O VAU TE MATAI
O VAU TE MATAI
FARA RII E,
POPOTI TE TAHL

YOU'RE AS SUSPICIOUS AS A ONE-EYED DOG!

YES, PARTICULARLY WHEN I'VE GOT A THINKING SCORPION AT MY BACK!

THAT'S ENOUGH TALK. TAKE THE CATAMARAN AND GO AND WAIT FOR ME ON THE OTTILLEN FLUSS. BUT BE CAREFUL. THERE ARE SENK NATHES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD. THEY'RE ROBBERS AND CANNIBALS. I'LL BE THROUGH WITH VON SPEEKE IN THREE OR FOUR DAYS' TIME.

ALL RIGHT. I'LL TAKE CRANIO ALONG WITH ME FOR PROTECTION. THAT WAY, YOU'LL BE FREE TO SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT... BUT, IN FACT, I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY POINT ME GOING ANYWHERE ANY MORE. LOOK, HERE COMES A PATROL BOAT.

LOOK, PANDORA. A GERMAN PATROL BOAT'S COMING.

CAIN, CRANIO'S HERE. HE WON'T LET YOU OUT.

DAMN THAT VON SPEEKE. HE HASN'T EVEN LEFT US ENOUGH TIME TO DROP ANCHOR.

I'LL GO DOWN INTO THE CATAMARAN TO WATCH THE CHILDREN.

SURE ENOUGH, A PATROL BOAT FLYING A GERMAN ENSIGN DRAWS UP.

AH! CAPTAIN RASPUTIN HAS DONE A GOOD JOB. LIKE A REAL PIRATE!

LIKE A PIRATE, SIR?

YES, MR. SLUTTER, A PIRATE! RASPUTIN IS GOING TO PROVIDE US WITH SOME COAL AND THE BASES WE NEED FOR REFUELLING. WE WILL QUITE SWIPPLY PAY HIM WITHOUT ASKING HOW HE CAME BY THEM. THERE IS PROBABLY A MASTERMIND AT WORK BEHIND HIM... SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO STAY INCOGNITO.

IT MIGHT EVEN BE THE 'MONK'. HE'S PROBABLY BEHIND THIS WHOLE SET-UP. EVER HEARD OF THE 'MONK', MR. SLUTTER?

NEIN, MR. GALLAND. BUT I FIND IT ODD THAT GERMANY ACCEPTS SUCH ALLIES!

BY THE TIME THE NEXT WAR IS OVER, MR. SLUTTER, YOU WON'T FIND ANYTHING ODD AT ALL!

WELCOME, CAPTAIN RASPUTIN! WE RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE AND EVERYTHING'S IN ORDER HERE. ADMIRAL VON SPEEKE WILL NOT BE COMING, BUT HE HAS AUTHORIZED ME TO MAKE THE FINAL AGREEMENT. WE WILL TAKE YOU ASHORE. SOME EXCELLENT LUM IS AWAITING YOU.

VERY WELL, GALLAND! I'M COMING STRAIGHT AWAY. I'LL JUST GIVE SOME ORDERS TO MY SECOND-IN-COMMAND, AND I'LL BE WITH YOU.

TO HELL WITH IT... INSTEAD OF THE ADMIRAL, THAT OLD FOX GALLAND'S TURNED UP. I'LL HAVE TO GO ASHORE, CORTO. DON'T LET THEM FIND THE CHILDREN!

GALLAND, EH? THAT'S GOING TO MAKE YOUR LIFE DIFFICULT, RASPUTIN. BUT IT WAS RATHER TO BE EXPECTED. VON SPEEKE WOULD NEVER NEGOTIATE WITH PIRATES, AT LEAST, NOT DIRECTLY. GO ON, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT...

THAT EVENING AT THE GERMAN RESIDENCE AT THE MOUTH OF THE KASERNE ANGSTA FLUET...



NOW THEN, RASPUTIN, WHAT WE NEED ARE BASES ON THREE GROUPS OF ISLANDS: THE ELLICE, THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS AND THE MARSHAL ISLANDS. OUR PACIFIC COLONIES WILL CERTAINLY BE OCCUPIED AND OUR FLEET WILL THUS HAVE DIFFICULTIES REACHING A NEUTRAL PORT IN SOUTH AMERICA...

I SEE... BUT HOW THEN WILL YOU MANAGE YOUR RUNNING OPERATIONS?

WE'LL MANAGE, MR. RASPUTIN. WE'LL MANAGE AND SO WILL YOU. WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE BEHIND TWO SMALL, BUT RAPID DESTROYERS, PLUS A SUBMARINE WHICH NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT EXCEPT CERTAIN PEOPLE IN THE ADMIRALTY. THAT IS BECAUSE YOUR WAR IS NOT GOING TO BE A LAWFUL ONE, SO YOU WON'T BE FLYING A GERMAN ENSIGN, BUT I'LL BE LEAVING YOU TWO OFFICERS AND SOME SEAMEN TO ACT AS INSTRUCTORS.

YOUR SERVICES WILL BE PAID FOR IN GOLD WHICH WILL BE DEPOSITED IN THE BANK OF YOUR CHOICE IN A NEUTRAL COUNTRY. I THINK THAT'S ALL FOR NOW, EXCEPT FOR...

...THE GOLD YOU'RE GOING TO RECEIVE TONIGHT IN RETURN FOR THE DUTCH SHIP AND ITS CARGO OF COAL. MR. SLUTTER IS ONE OF THE OFFICERS WHO WILL BE STAYING AS INSTRUCTORS.

ME? REALLY, AM I?
LIEUTENANT SLUTTER DOESN'T LOOK VERY HAPPY, DOES HE, GALLAND?
MR. SLUTTER NEVER LOOKS HAPPY.

BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU, MR. RASPUTIN, THAT MR. SLUTTER IS ABSOLUTELY THRILLED. ACH! NOW THEN...

...LET'S DRINK TOGETHER, TOMORROW, WE'LL CONTINUE WITH THIS FILTHY BUSINESS.
ALL RIGHT, GALLAND. YOU'RE ALWAYS FULL OF BRIGHT IDEAS.

THE CATAMARAN, WITH THE TWO YOUNGSTERS ON BOARD UNDER CORTO MALTESE'S GUARD, IS MOORED JUST BY THE GERMAN RESIDENCE.
THE DIN THE GERMANS ARE MAKING CAN BE HEARD FROM HERE. THEY'RE GIVING RASPUTIN A PART.

THAT'S RIGHT. ABOUT FIFTY YARDS' GREATEST-STROKE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK PANDORA? SHALL I GIVE IT A TRY?
I DON'T THINK YOU'LL MAKE IT. THERE ARE BOUND TO BE GUARDS.

BUT I'VE GOT TO MAKE THE ATTEMPT! IF ONLY I COULD TALK TO A GERMAN SOLDIER!
NO, CAIN! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS. THEY'RE QUITE CAPABLE OF SHOOTING YOU!

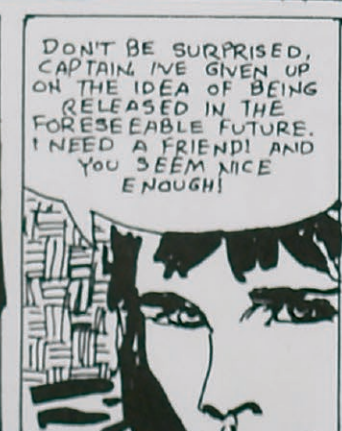
BUT IF I DON'T TRY NOW, WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO ESCAPE. IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE. NOBODY'S AROUND.

I HAVE TO DO IT, PANDORA!
SUPPOSING YOU MAKE IT TO THE GERMANS, DO YOU REALLY IMAGINE THAT THEY'LL...

...HELP YOU? DO YOU THINK THEY'D GO AGAINST RASPUTIN AND CORTO MALTESE JUST WHEN THEY NEED THEM MOST? NO, CAIN, I DON'T THINK THEY'D TAKE US UNDER THEIR PROTECTION!

YOU'RE TALKING LIKE A FRIGHTENED WOMAN PANDORA. I HARDLY RECOGNIZE YOU!
YES, PANDORA, PANDORA, AND PANDORA! I'M NOT MADE OF STEEL!

LISTEN TO ME! I'M GOING TO TRY! WE HAVE TO TRY!
NO! NO!



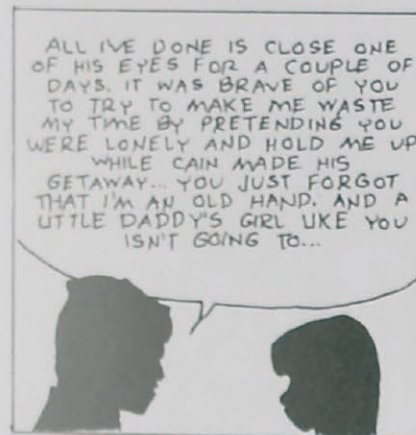


OH, YOU'LL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING IN A MINUTE OR TWO, TANERO!



DON'T PANIC, LITTLE SISTER. YOUR FRIEND HASN'T BEEN HURT BADLY. HE'S LUCKY I'M HERE AND NOT RASPUTIN.

CAIN!!



ALL I'VE DONE IS CLOSE ONE OF HIS EYES FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS. IT WAS BRAVE OF YOU TO TRY TO MAKE ME WASTE MY TIME BY PRETENDING YOU WERE LONELY AND HOLD ME UP WHILE CAIN MADE HIS GETAWAY... YOU JUST FORGOT THAT I'M AN OLD HAND, AND A LITTLE DADDY'S GIRL LIKE YOU ISN'T GOING TO...



ANYWAY, I'LL SAY IT AGAIN. YOU WERE LUCKY TO HAVE ME ABOARD. LET'S GO NOW, CRANIO. HOIST THE SAIL...

ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, CORTO MALTESE!

OETE NIE! OETS NIE UATERE!



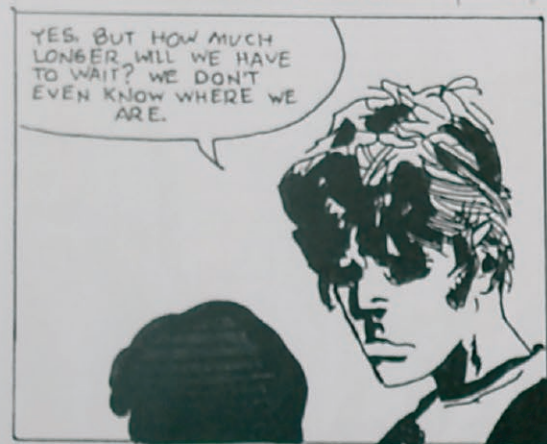
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO STEER EAST, CRANIO. BUT THE NEW MAORIS ON FIRST WATCH, BUT GIVE THE HELM TO THE FIJANS.

OKAY, CORTO!

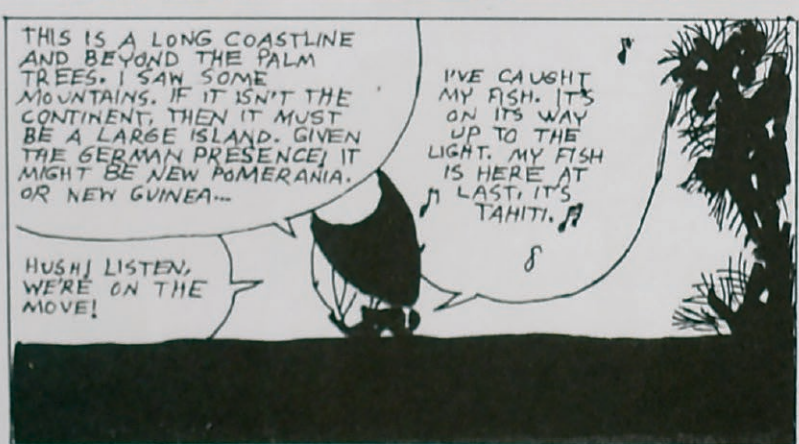


DAMN HIM! HE GOT ME AT THE LAST MOMENT!

CALM DOWN NOW, CAIN! YOU'LL GET HIM WHEN THE TIME'S RIFE.



YES, BUT HOW MUCH LONGER WILL WE HAVE TO WAIT? WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE WE ARE.



THIS IS A LONG COASTLINE AND BEYOND THE PALM TREES, I SAW SOME MOUNTAINS. IF IT ISN'T THE CONTINENT, THEN IT MUST BE A LARGE ISLAND. GIVEN THE GERMAN PRESENCE, IT MIGHT BE NEW POMERANIA, OR NEW GUINEA...

HUSH! LISTEN, WE'RE ON THE MOVE!

I'VE CAUGHT MY FISH. IT'S ON ITS WAY UP TO THE LIGHT. MY FISH IS HERE AT LAST, IT'S TAHITI.



THE WEATHER'S WORSENING, CORTO. THERE'LL BE A STORM SOON. WE OUGHT TO HUG THE COASTLINE, BUT THESE PARTS ARE FULL OF TE WIFA, THE BURNING CORAL. WE SHOULD HEAVE TO AS SOON AS WE SPOT A BAY.

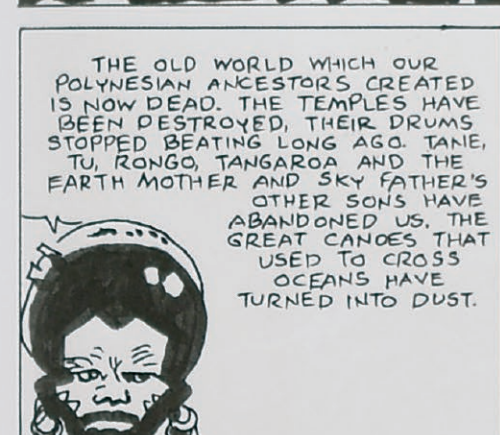
WHAT'S THAT CANOE THAT'S HEADING TOWARDS US? THE RAINBOW IS BENT OVER IT AND THE SEA SWALLOWS FLUTTER AROUND IT. IT'S HERAGI LAND.

WHERE IS HERAGI LAND, CRANIO?

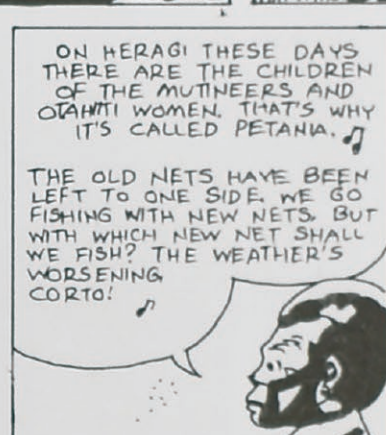


HERAGI LAND IS A FAR-OFF MAORI ISLAND, CORTO. THE SOUTH-EASTERN MAORIS NOW CALL IT PETANIA!

PETANIA MEANS BRITANNIA. SO WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT MUST BE PITCAIRN. THE MUTINEERS' ISLAND!



THE OLD WORLD WHICH OUR POLYNESIAN ANCESTORS CREATED IS NOW DEAD. THE TEMPLES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, THEIR DRUMS STOPPED BEATING LONG AGO. TANE, TU, RONGO, TANGAROA AND THE EARTH MOTHER AND SKY FATHER'S OTHER SONS HAVE ABANDONED US. THE GREAT CANOES THAT USED TO CROSS OCEANS HAVE TURNED INTO DUST.



ON HERAGI THESE DAYS THERE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE MUTINEERS AND OAHITI WOMEN. THAT'S WHY IT'S CALLED PETANIA.

THE OLD NETS HAVE BEEN LEFT TO ONE SIDE. WE GO FISHING WITH NEW NETS. BUT WITH WHICH NEW NET SHALL WE FISH? THE WEATHER'S WORSENING, CORTO!



DAMN YOU, CRANIO. DO YOU THINK I'M BLIND?



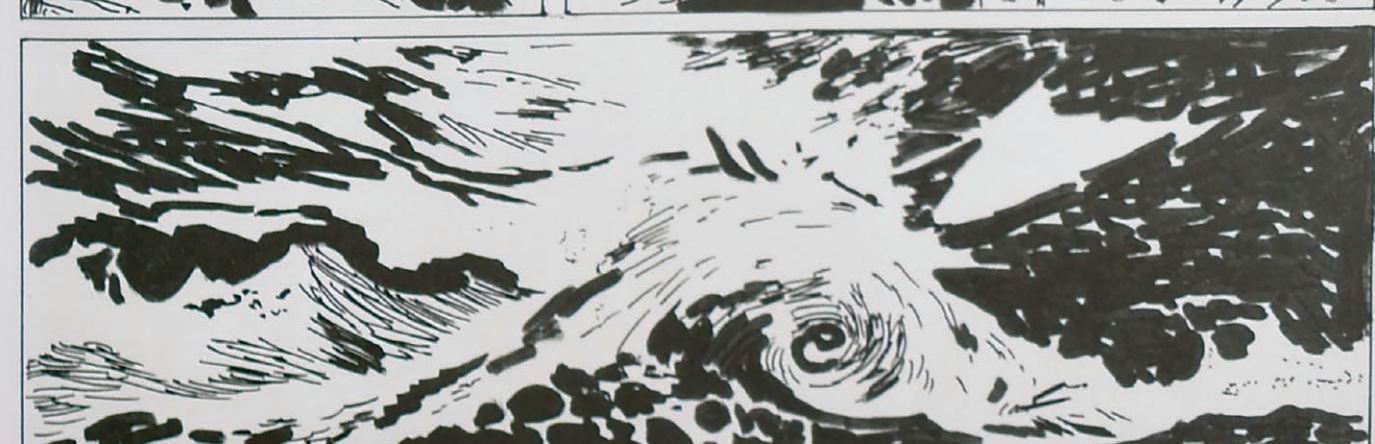
CORTO... CORTO... THE LONG WAVE!!!

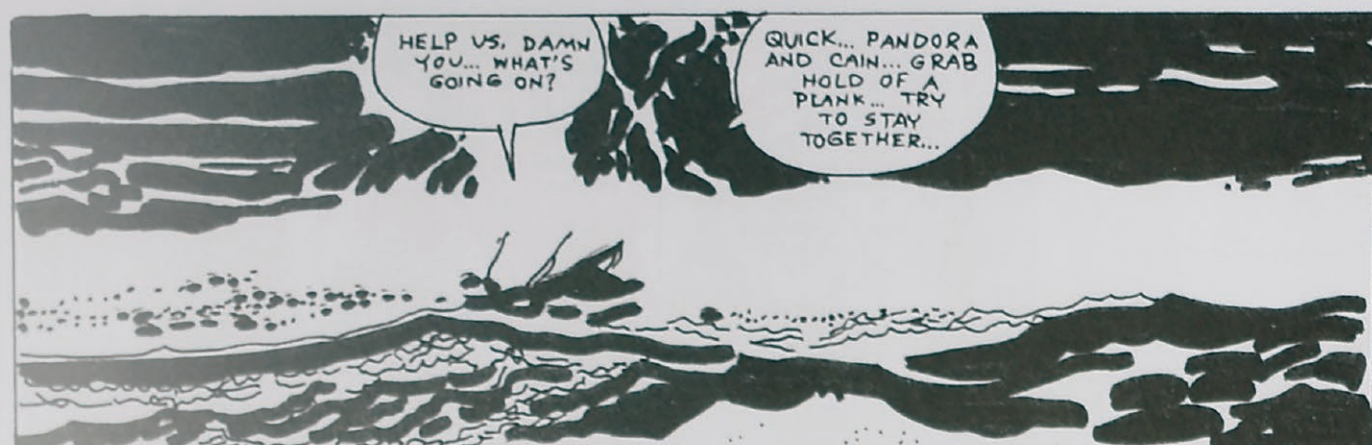
WHAT? WHERE?



JESUS CHRIST, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT...

THE WAVE'S GOING TO CARRY US AWAY. THE GREAT CANOE'S DAYS ARE OVER. EUA UETOPIA.





HELP US, DAMN YOU... WHAT'S GOING ON?

QUICK... PANDORA AND CAIN... GRAB HOLD OF A PLANK... TRY TO STAY TOGETHER...



GULP!

CAIN!! CAIN!! WHERE ARE YOU?



CHRIST... I CAN'T SEE A THING...



AM I DEAD OR ALIVE? WHAT HAPPENED?



WHAT A DISASTER! I'M COMPLETELY LOST NOW... AND WHAT ABOUT PANDORA?



MY GOD, WHATEVER'S HAPPENED TO PANDORA?!



PANDORA! PANDORA! WHERE ARE YOU?



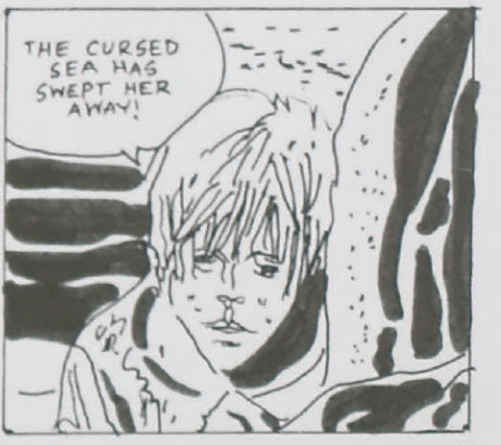
DAMNED SEA!!!



PANDORA!! PANDORA!!



I DON'T BELIEVE IT... PANDORA!!!



THE CURSED SEA HAS SWEEPED HER AWAY!



PANDORA!



BUT... IT'S A CANNIBAL!

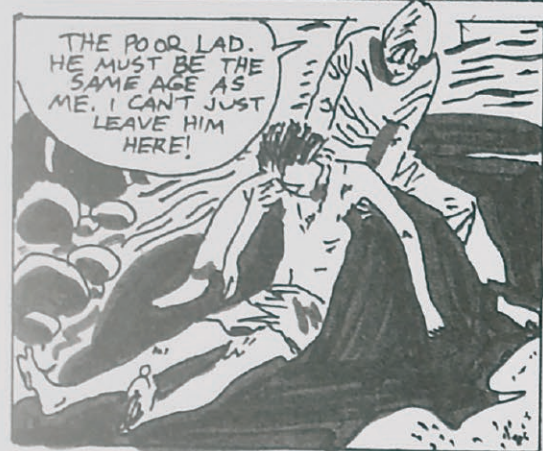


UGH!

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?



HE'S FAINTED! MAYBE HE WAS ON THE BOAT TOO!



THE POOR LAD. HE MUST BE THE SAME AGE AS ME. I CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM HERE!



IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A CAVE OVER THERE.



WHAT A MESS! SHIPWRECKED ON AN UNKNOWN ISLAND WITH A CANNIBAL AS MY ONLY COMPANION!

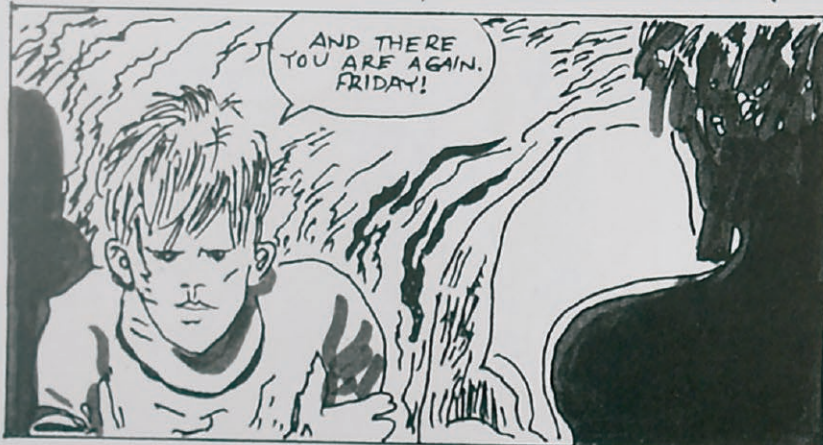


IT'S INCREDIBLE! ALL I HAVE TO DO NOW IS CALL HIM FRIDAY AND TEACH HIM TO CALL ME ROBINSON! I'M EXHAUSTED BUT I CAN'T SLEEP... I MUSTN'T!



THE NEXT DAY...

BUT I FELL ASLEEP... AND...



AND THERE YOU ARE AGAIN. FRIDAY!



MY NAME ISN'T FRIDAY. AND YOURS IS DEFINITELY NOT ROBINSON CRUSOE!



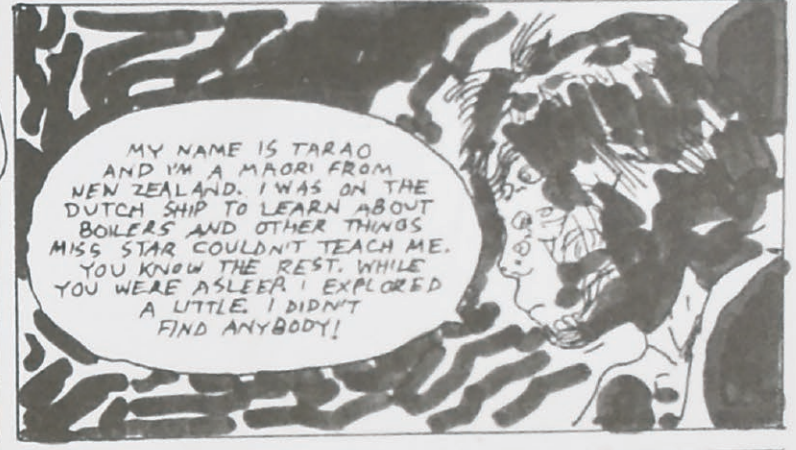
BUT YOU SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE AS I DO! AND WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ROBINSON CAUSOE?

IN MY VILLAGE MISS STAR TEACHES US MANY THINGS. SHE RUNS THE SCHOOL. WITH THE HELP OF MY FATHER. HE'S THE VILLAGE CHIEF.



TELL ME DID YOU GO DOWN WITH THE BIG PROGUE TOO?

YES, CAPTAIN RASPUTIN TOOK ME OFF THE DUTCH SHIP AND PUT ME ON THE FINI PROGUE!



MY NAME IS TARAO AND I'M A MAORI FROM NEW ZEALAND. I WAS ON THE DUTCH SHIP TO LEARN ABOUT BOILERS AND OTHER THINGS. MISS STAR COULDN'T TEACH ME. YOU KNOW THE REST. WHILE YOU WERE ASLEEP I EXPLORED A LITTLE. I DIDN'T FIND ANYBODY!



SO PANDORA'S REALLY DEAD!



LISTEN, CAN YOU HEAR VOICES?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? VOICES?





DAMN IT! THEY'VE SPOTTED US. LISTEN, DON'T MOVE. I'LL DO THE TALKING!



WE'RE POWERLESS AGAINST THEM. THERE ARE MORE OF THEM AND THEY'RE ARMED.



JUGGH ELEMNTEGH KA AMOTOH... COME OUT, WE'LL NOT HARM YOU.



COME ON OUT OF YOUR HOLE, WE'LL NOT HARM YOU.



THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF YOU? WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?



THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF US. THE OTHERS WENT STRAIGHT DOWN WITH THE PIROGUE.



WERE THERE MANY THINGS ON THE PIROGUE?



I'M SO PLEASED THE LADS SAFE. I'LL HAVE TO GO AND SEE PANDORA STRAIGHT AWAY. THEN I'LL THINK ABOUT GAIN.



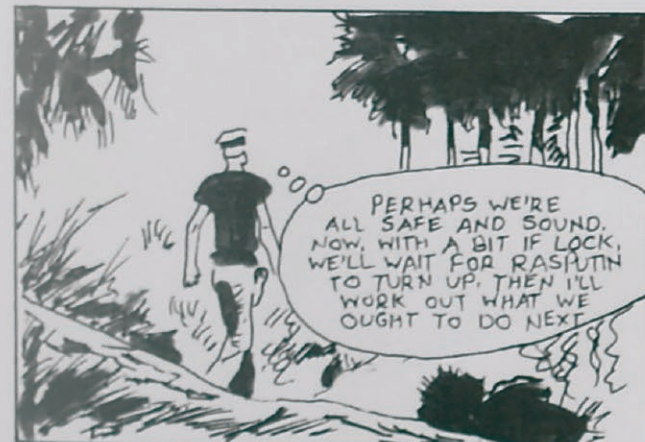
JUDGING FROM THEIR HEAD-DRESSES THESE PAPUANS MUST BE SENIKS. THEIR VILLAGE IS NEAR THE OTTILLEN FLUSS. JUST NEAR WHERE RASPUTIN IS SUPPOSED TO PICK US UP.



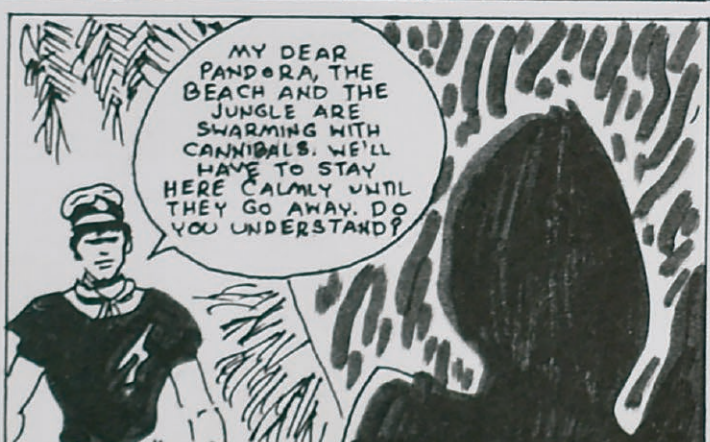
MAYBE THINGS AREN'T THAT BAD AFTER ALL!



SO, IF WE INCLUDE CAIN AND TARAO, FOUR OF US MADE IT ASHORE AND WHEN I GRABBED PANDORA, CRANO WAS SWIMMING TOWARDS THE BEACH



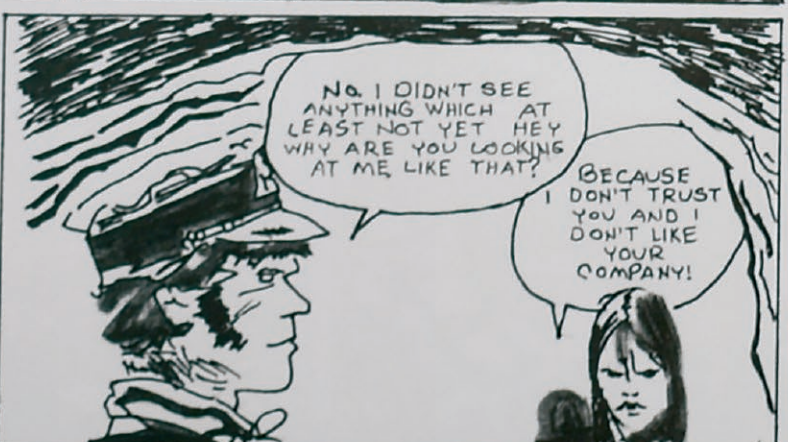
PERHAPS WE'RE ALL SAFE AND SOUND. NOW, WITH A BIT OF LOCK, WE'LL WAIT FOR RASPUTIN TO TURN UP, THEN I'LL WORK OUT WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO NEXT.



MY DEAR PANDORA, THE BEACH AND THE JUNGLE ARE SWARMING WITH CANNIBALS. WE'LL HAVE TO STAY HERE CALMLY UNTIL THEY GO AWAY. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?



DID YOU FIND ANY TRACE OF CAIN?



NO, I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING WHICH AT LEAST NOT YET. HEY WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT?

BECAUSE I DON'T TRUST YOU AND I DON'T LIKE YOUR COMPANY!



YOU'RE REALLY STUCK IN YOUR IDEAS. DO YOU THINK I LIKE BEING AROUND SOMEONE WHO SPENDS ALL HER TIME SPITTING OUT POISON?



IF THERE WERENT ALL THESE CANNIBALS AROUND THE PLACE, THEN I'D LET MY LITTLE ROMANTIC PETAL PLAY ALL ON HER OWN IN HER BOUDOIR.

STOP IT, YOU THUG!



GOD ISN'T JUST IF HE LET CAIN DIE AND YOU SURVIVE!



THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES. 'GOD MOVES IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.'



SHUT UP NOW, THERE'S A GROUP OF NATIVES APPROACHING US. PERHAPS THE SAME ONES THAT HAVE TAKEN CAIN PRISONER.



WHAT'S THAT CAIN?



OH, YES, CAIN'S ALIVE. BUT A SENIK PRISONER.



YOU SWINE! YOU DIDN'T TELL ME YOU WANTED TO MAKE ME THINK THAT CAIN WAS DEAD.



WHY DID YOU LIE TO ME? WHY?

WHY? I DON'T KNOW!?!

SO AS NOT TO SET OFF A FIT OF HYSTERICIS, OR, MAYBE BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE FOR THE MOMENT GIVE ME BACK MY REVOLVER!

OH, NO, CORTO MALTESE. NOT ON YOUR LIFE!



I TOLD YOU THAT I WAS GOING TO KILL YOU.

BANG!



THEY'RE IN THERE. BE CAREFUL.



IT CAME FROM IN THERE.

COME OUT, COME ON, OUT!

ONE OF THEM'S ON THE GROUND

WHO ARE YOU?

SO YOU'RE ESCAPING NOW YOU'VE WOUNDED HIM?



WHILE PANDORA IS BEING TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THE PAPUANS, CAN AND TARAO ARE BEING HELD PRISONER IN THE SENIK VILLAGE.

THEY DON'T SEEM TO HAVE ANYTHING NASTY IN MIND FOR THE MINUTE. WHAT DO YOU THINK TARAO?

I DON'T TRUST THEM!

GOOD GOD! I'M IN ONE HELL OF AN ADVENTURE. A FIRE ON BOARD TO BEGIN WITH. THEN THE PAPUANS, THEN THE GERMANS AND NOW. WHAT IS WORST, I'VE LOST PANDORA.

IT'S PROBABLY BETTER THIS WAY. BETWEEN THE CANNIBALS AND THE "MONK" SHE DIDN'T STAND MUCH CHANCE.



TARAO'S EYES ARE GLEAMING IN THE DARKNESS OF THE HUT...

SO YOU KNOW THE "MONK" AS WELL? MY FATHER FOUGHT AGAINST HIM WHEN HE WAS YOUNG. MY GRANDFATHER BEFORE HIM, AND MY GRANDFATHER'S GRANDFATHER BEFORE HIM

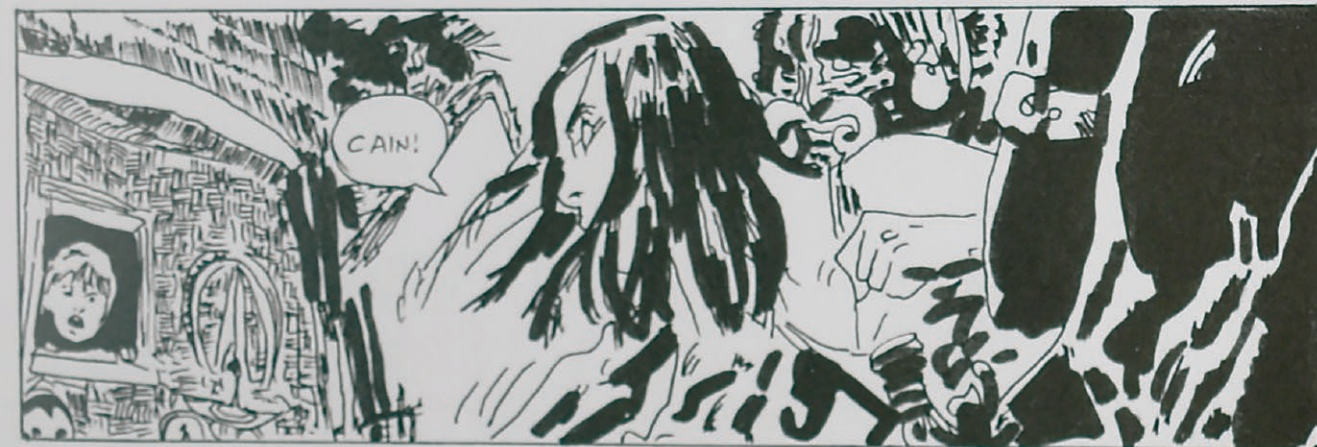
WHEN THE "MONK" CAME TO TAKE OUR MEN AWAY TO WORK ON A DISTANT ISLAND THEY NEVER RETURNED. MANY YEARS HAVE GONE BY SINCE THE LAST TIME MY FATHER FOUGHT AGAINST HIM!



IT WAS BEFORE I WAS BORN. TUPUA, THE OLD WITCH DOCTOR, IS THE ONLY MAORI WHO KNEW THE "MONK" AS A CHILD!

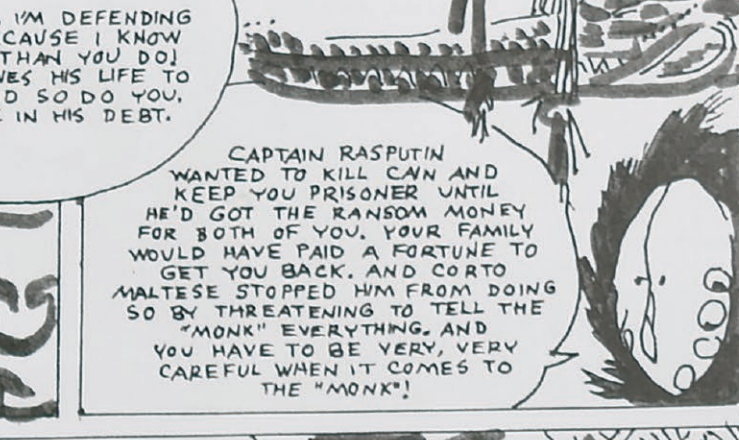
IF WHAT YOU SAY IS RIGHT, THESE PEOPLE MUST BE WELL OVER A HUNDRED YEARS OLD!

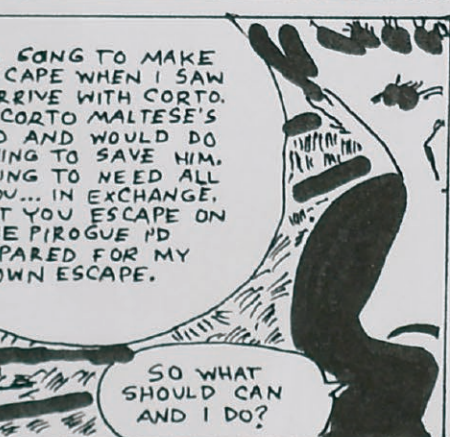
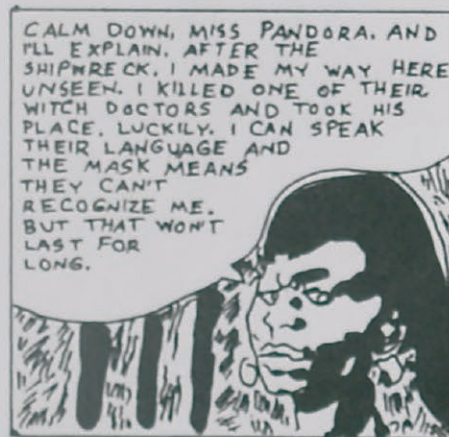
THAT'S JUST ABOUT IMPOSSIBLE... BUT WHO'S THIS? MORE CANNIBALS?

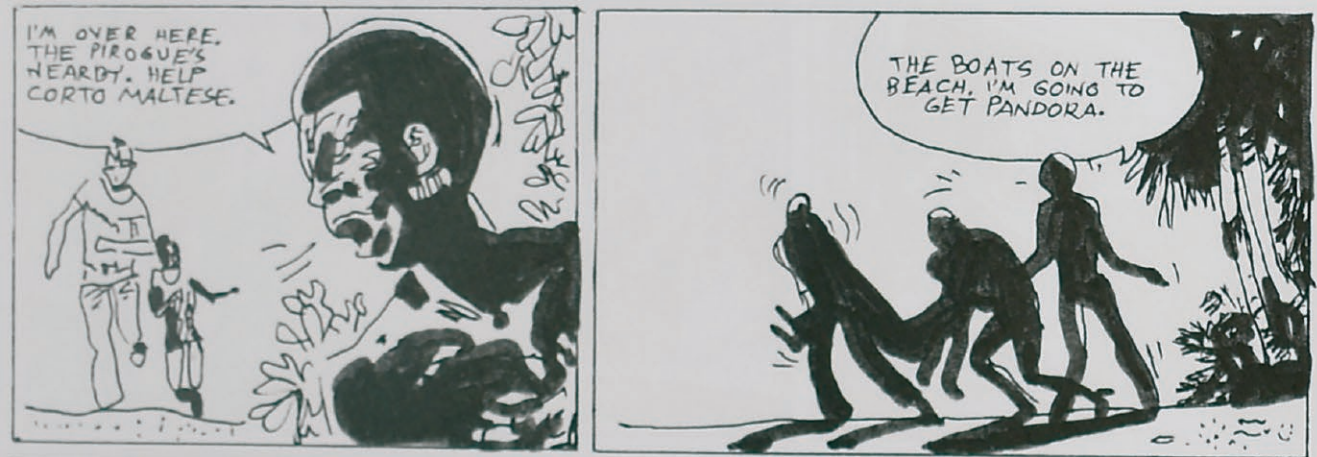
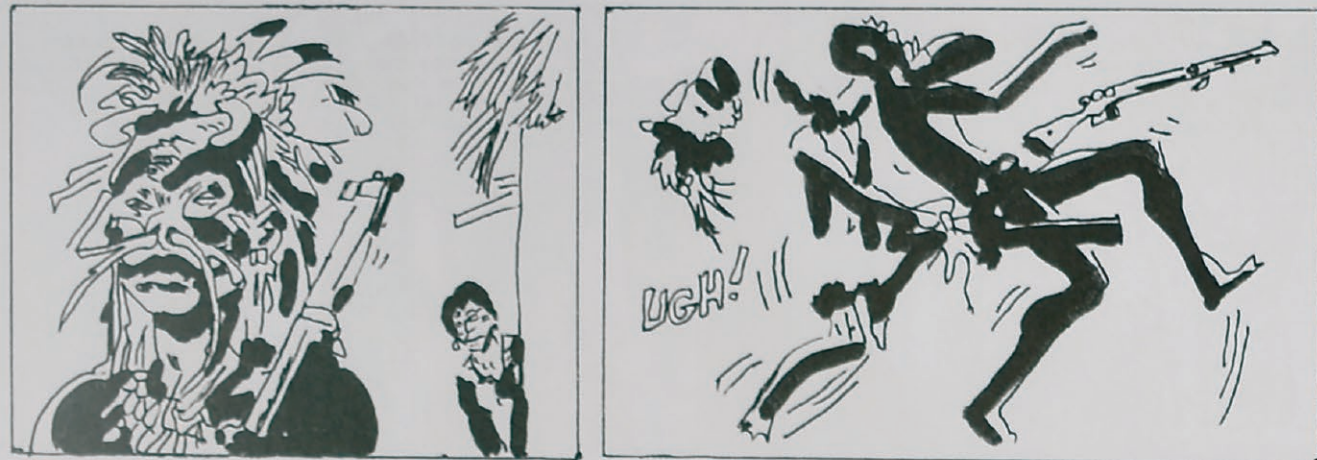


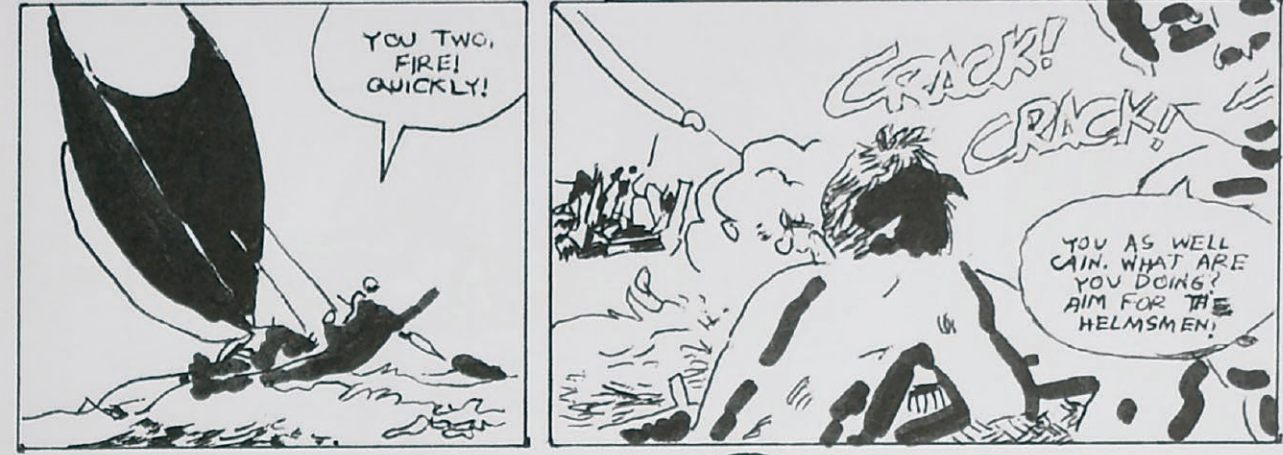
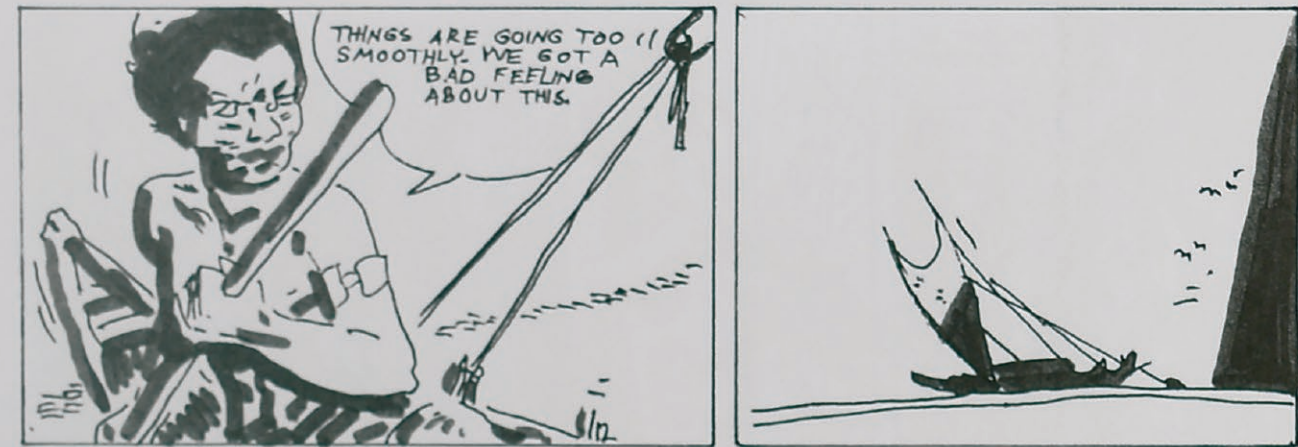
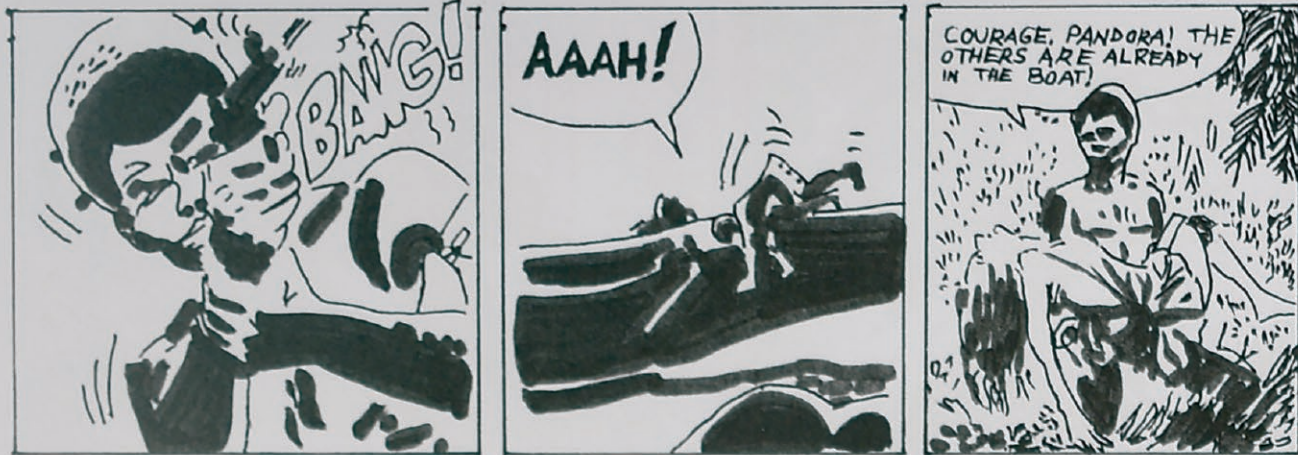
THE
CHANCE
MENTIONING
OF THAT
NAME IN
THEIR
CONVER-
SATION
THROWS A
VEIL OF
SADNESS
OVER
PANDORA'S
EYES.

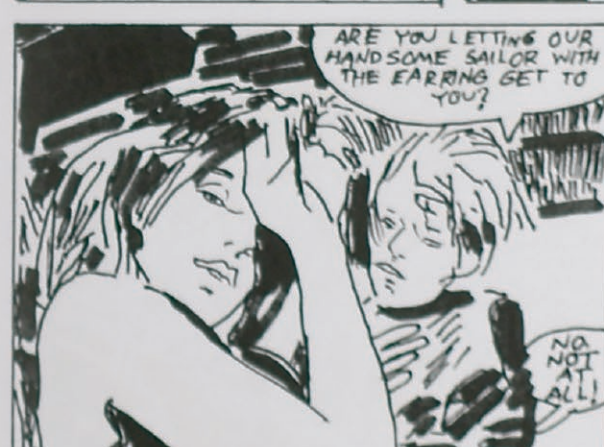


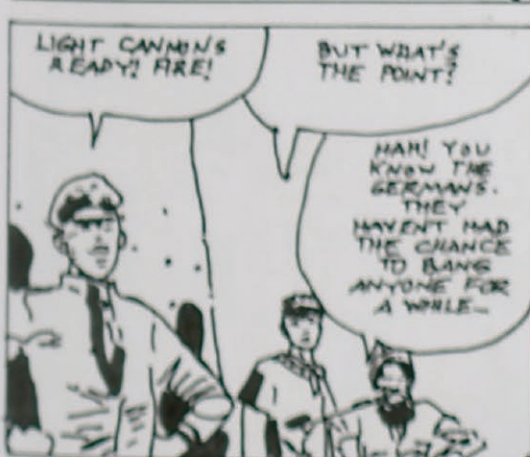
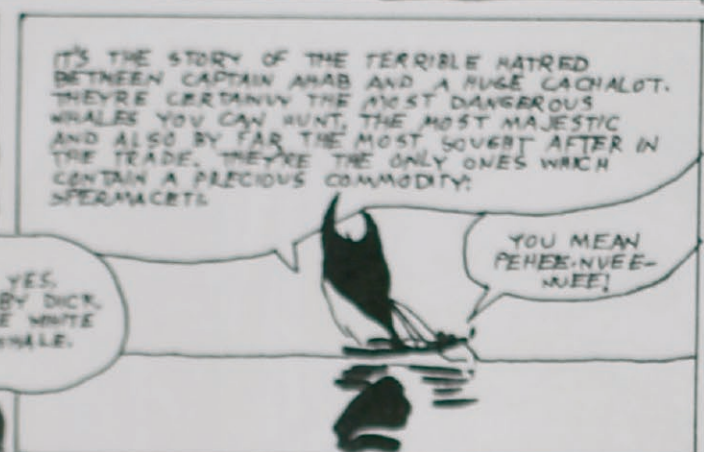
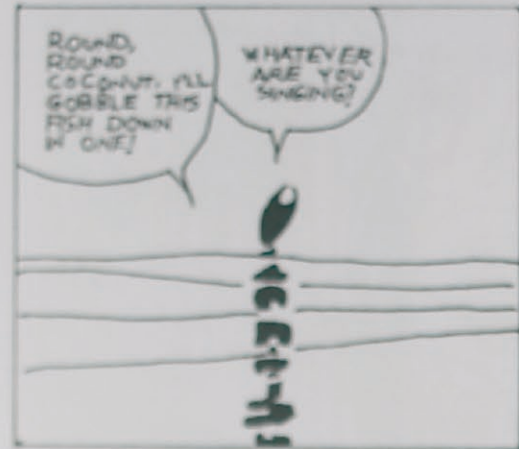


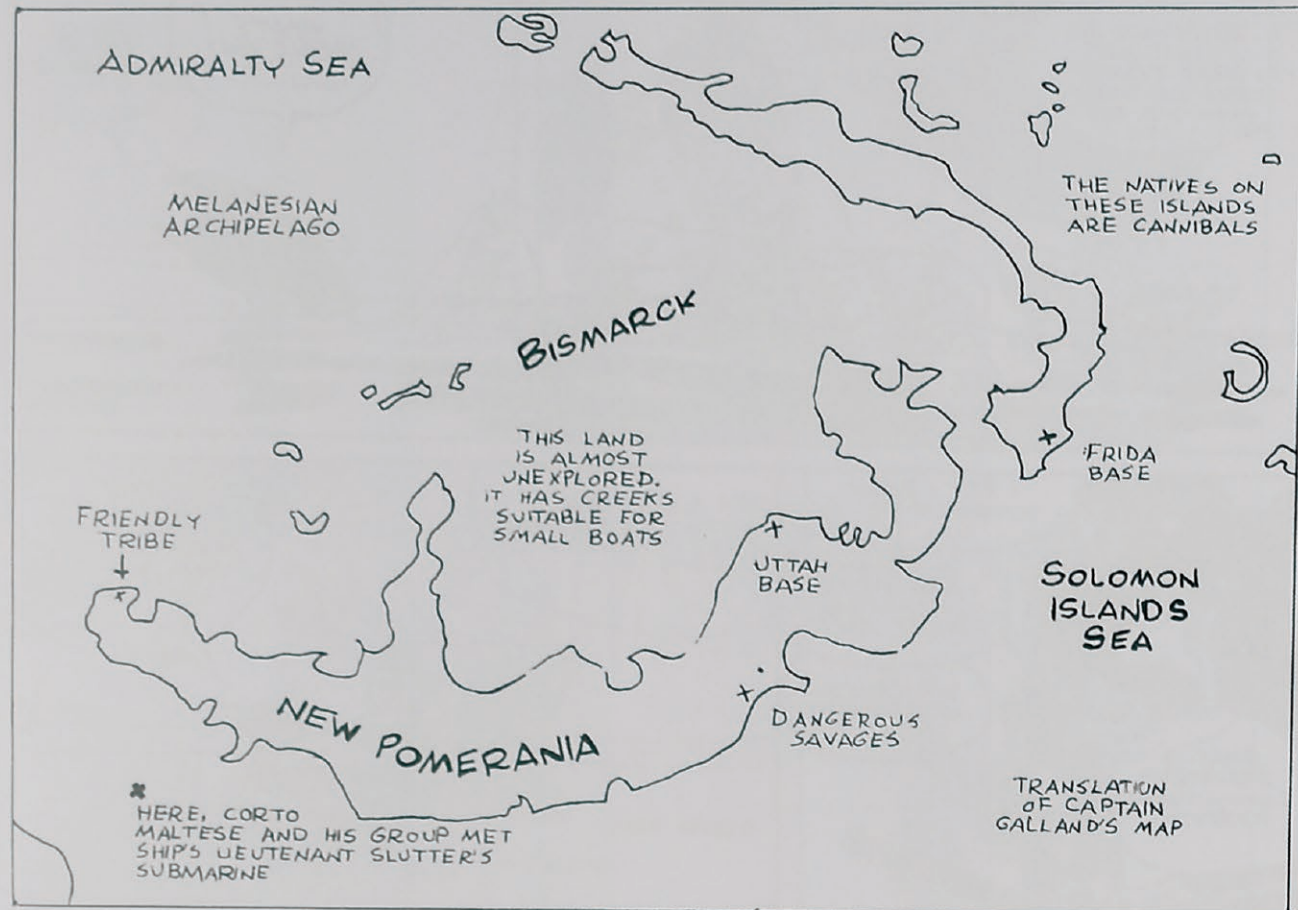












CALL UP MR MALTESE!



YOU ASKED FOR ME, MR SLUTTER?

THAT'S RIGHT, MR CORTO MALTESE. THIS IS AN AWKWARD BUSINESS. I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW HOW WAR SHIPS ARE RUN, DON'T YOU?



I SUPPOSE I DO...

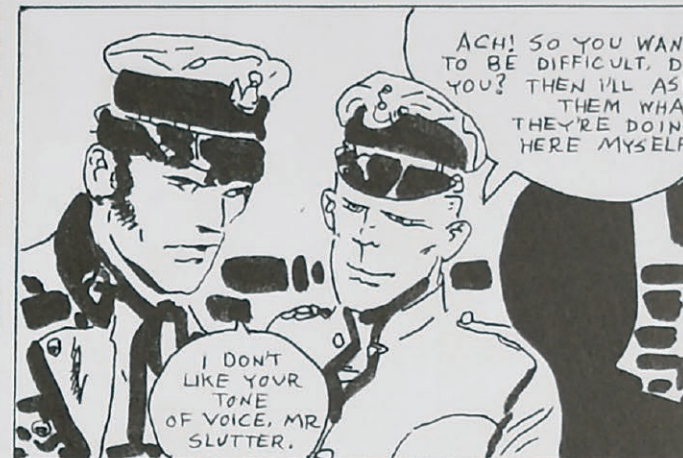
I'M TALKING ABOUT THE GIRL... COULD YOU TELL MR RASPUTIN TO LEAVE HER ALONE?

WAIT A SECOND... AREN'T YOU BIG ENOUGH TO TELL HIM YOURSELF?

I AM BUT ALL THE SAME...

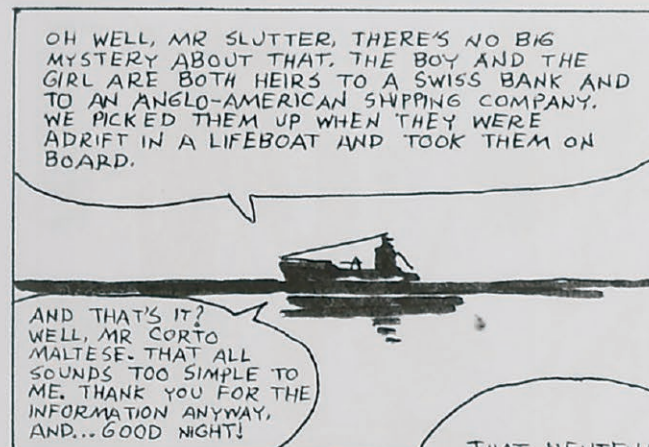


I WANTED TO AVOID ANY TROUBLE. HOW DID YOU END UP TRAVELLING WITH THESE YOUNGSTERS?



ACH! SO YOU WANT TO BE DIFFICULT, DO YOU? THEN I'LL ASK THEM WHAT THEY'RE DOING HERE MYSELF!

I DON'T LIKE YOUR TONE OF VOICE, MR SLUTTER.



OH WELL, MR SLUTTER, THERE'S NO BIG MYSTERY ABOUT THAT. THE BOY AND THE GIRL ARE BOTH HEIRS TO A SWISS BANK AND TO AN ANGLO-AMERICAN SHIPPING COMPANY. WE PICKED THEM UP WHEN THEY WERE ADrift IN A LIFEBOAT AND TOOK THEM ON BOARD.

AND THAT'S IT? WELL, MR CORTO MALTESE, THAT ALL SOUNDS TOO SIMPLE TO ME. THANK YOU FOR THE INFORMATION ANYWAY, AND... GOOD NIGHT!



WE'LL WE'RE IN SAFE HANDS FOR THE MOMENT, AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.

EVERY STEP WE TAKE TAKES US FURTHER AWAY FROM HELP. HOW EVER IS THIS STORY GOING TO END?



I WONDER ABOUT THAT. HE'S AN OFFICER WHO'S ON THE WAR PATH!

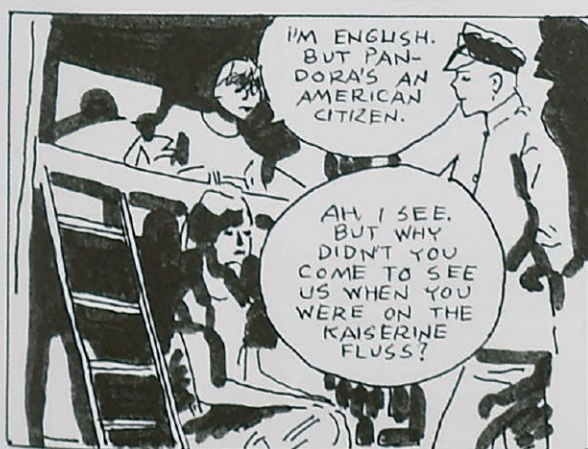
THAT LEUTENANT SLUTTER LOOKS REASSURING. I THINK WE'RE SAFE ENOUGH WITH HIM.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!



GOOD EVENING, COMMANDER. TO WHAT DO WE OWE THIS PLEASURE?

I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, BUT I HAVE ONE OR TWO QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU. IF YOU DON'T MIND, I KNOW THAT YOU'RE ENGLISH.



I'M ENGLISH, BUT PANDORA'S AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.

AH I SEE, BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO SEE US WHEN YOU WERE ON THE KAISERINE FLUSS?



UNLESS, THAT IS, YOU WERE PRISONERS?



ALL RIGHT, LIEUTENANT SLUTTER, I'LL TELL YOU OUR LITTLE STORY...

... AND THAT'S WHY, WHEN WE GOT TO THE KAISERINE FLUSS, CORTO MALTESE TOOK US UPSTREAM SO THAT THE GERMANS WOULDN'T SPOT US!

DAMN THAT BRAT! HE'S TOLD HIM THE WHOLE STORY!



IF I BURST IN AND KILLED THEM BOTH, I COULD TAKE COMMAND OF THE SUBMARINE...

RASPUTIN, WHAT ARE YOU PLAYING AT?



ARE YOU SPYING ON ME, MALTESE?

WHO ME? COURSE I'M NOT, RAS! WE'RE FRIENDS, AREN'T WE?

ARE YOU ANGRY?

PUSH OFF, CORTO, OR ELSE...



OR ELSE, WHAT?

I'LL KILL YOU.

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

I REALLY WILL KILL YOU!

JUST TRY!

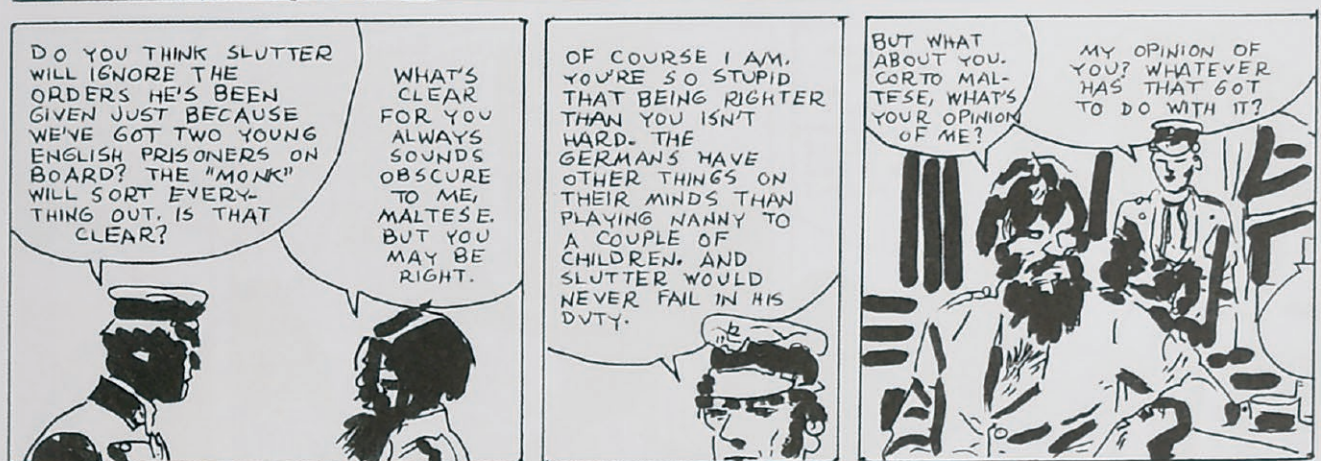


I DON'T WANT YOU TO MESS THINGS UP! THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR YOU TO FOUL UP AGAIN NOW!

WHAT THE HELL DIFFERENCE DOES THAT MAKE?

WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

BUT THE BOYS TOLD SLUTTER EVERYTHING!



DO YOU THINK SLUTTER WILL IGNORE THE ORDERS HE'S BEEN GIVEN JUST BECAUSE WE'VE GOT TWO YOUNG ENGLISH PRISONERS ON BOARD? THE "MONK" WILL SORT EVERYTHING OUT. IS THAT CLEAR?

WHAT'S CLEAR FOR YOU ALWAYS SOUNDS OBSCURE TO ME, MALTESE. BUT YOU MAY BE RIGHT.

OF COURSE I AM, YOU'RE SO STUPID THAT BEING RIGHTER THAN YOU ISN'T HARD. THE GERMANS HAVE OTHER THINGS ON THEIR MINDS THAN PLAYING NANNY TO A COUPLE OF CHILDREN, AND SLUTTER WOULD NEVER FAIL IN HIS DUTY.

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, CORTO MALTESE, WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF ME?

MY OPINION OF YOU? WHATEVER HAS THAT GOT TO DO WITH IT?



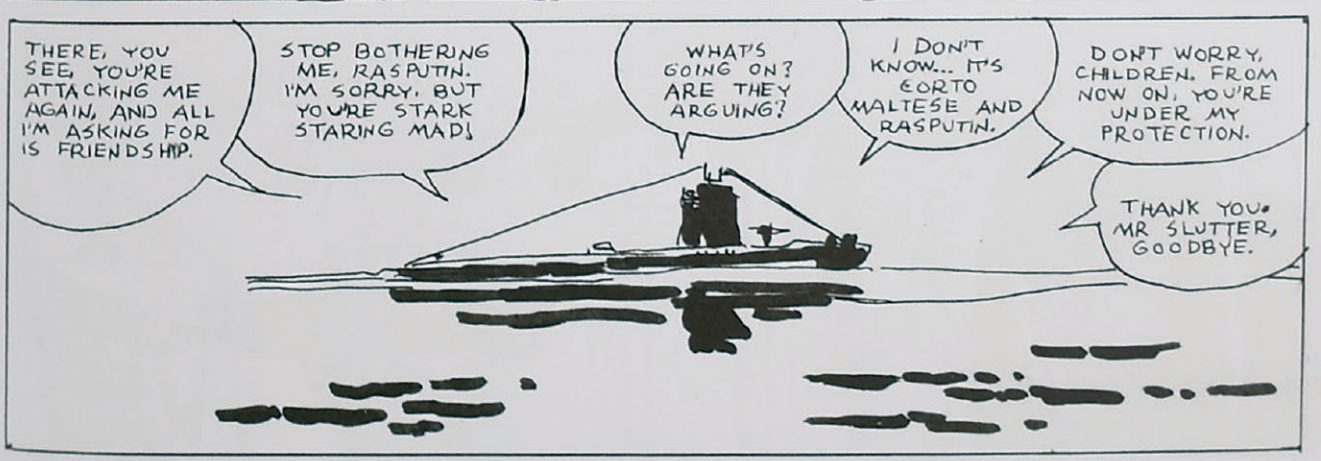
MAMMA MIA... I NEED A DRINK.

SO YOU WON'T ANSWER ME!

OH! WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THESE QUESTIONS?

I WANT TO HAVE FRIENDS, AND YET I NEVER MAKE ANY. AM I DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PEOPLE?

YES... I MEAN, NO YOU'RE NOT... OH I DON'T KNOW...



THERE, YOU SEE, YOU'RE ATTACKING ME AGAIN, AND ALL I'M ASKING FOR IS FRIENDSHIP.

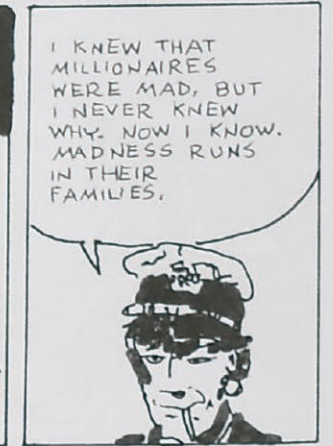
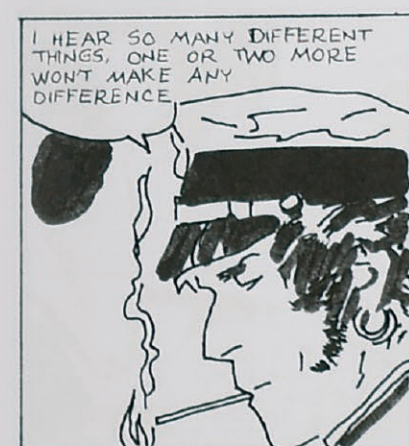
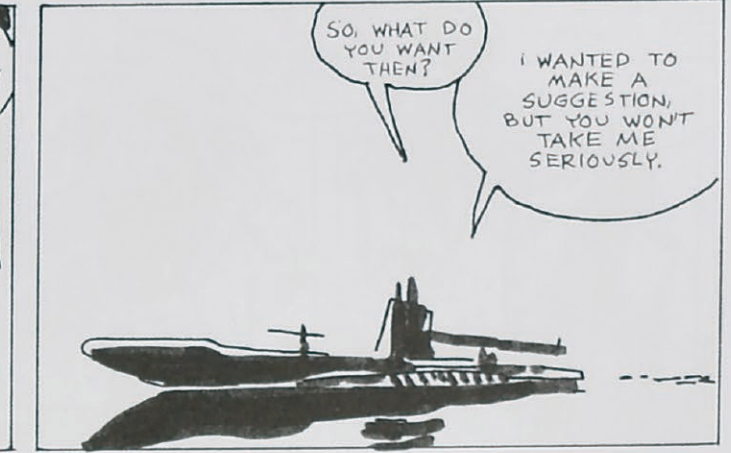
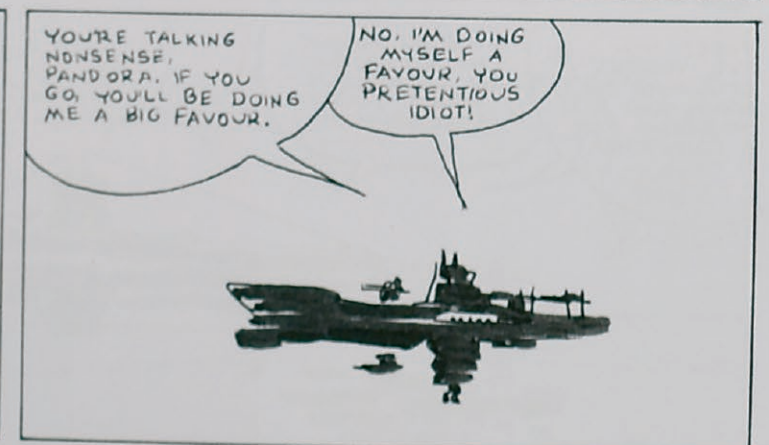
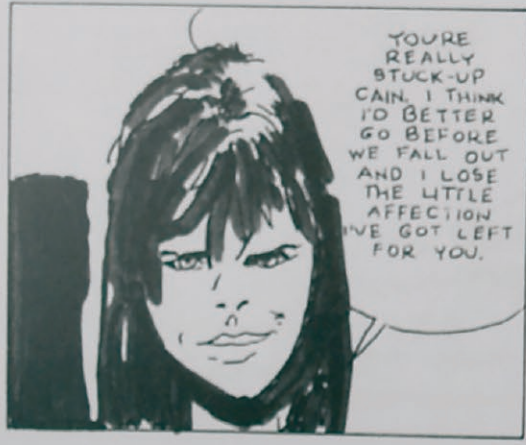
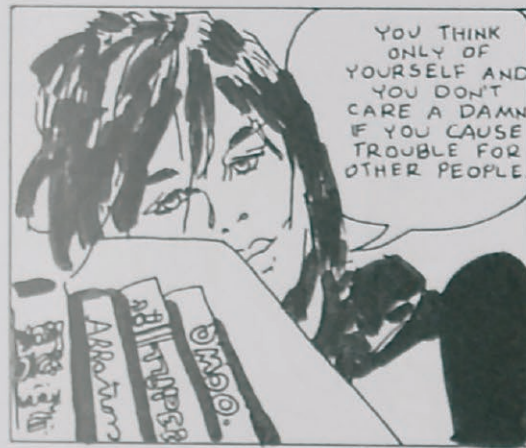
STOP BOTHERING ME, RASPUTIN. I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'RE STARK STARING MAD!

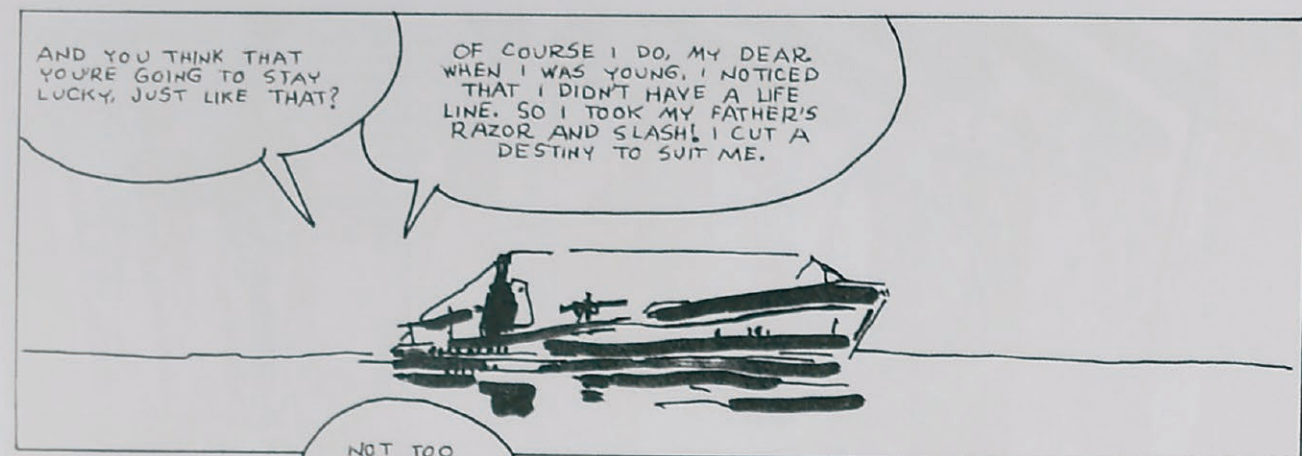
WHAT'S GOING ON? ARE THEY ARGUING?

I DON'T KNOW... IT'S CORTO MALTESE AND RASPUTIN.

DON'T WORRY, CHILDREN. FROM NOW ON, YOU'RE UNDER MY PROTECTION.

THANK YOU, MR SLUTTER, GOODBYE.

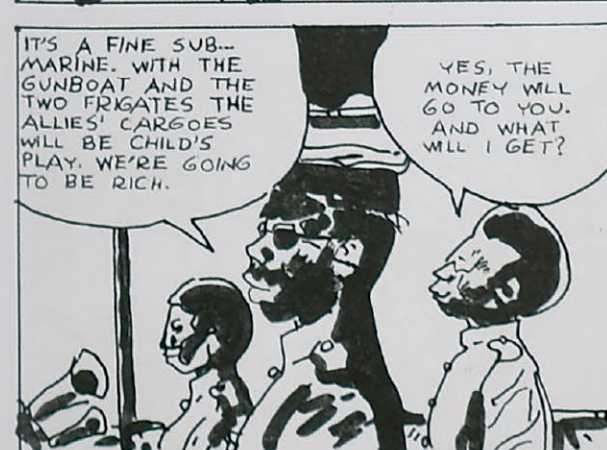
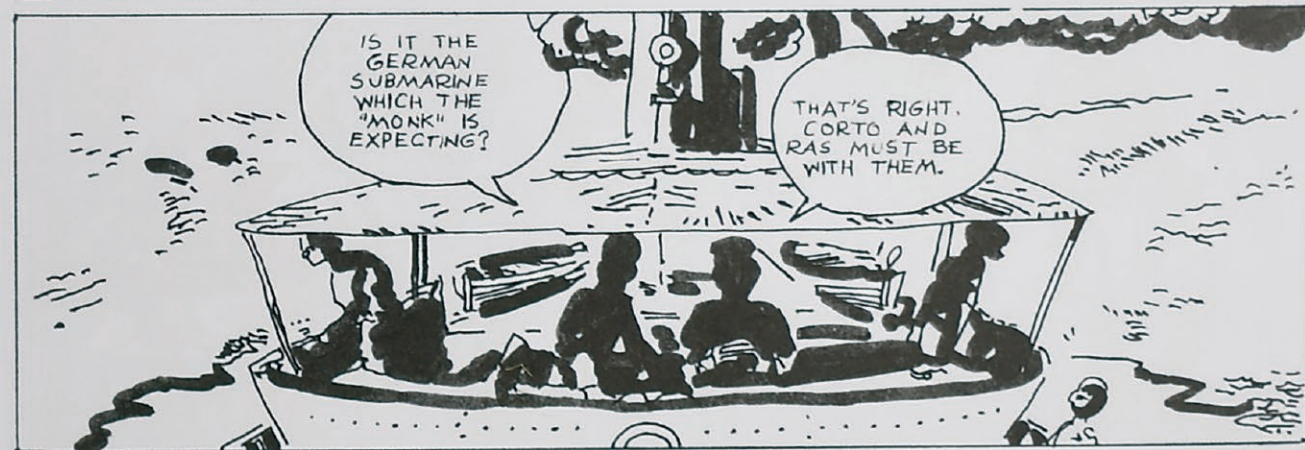
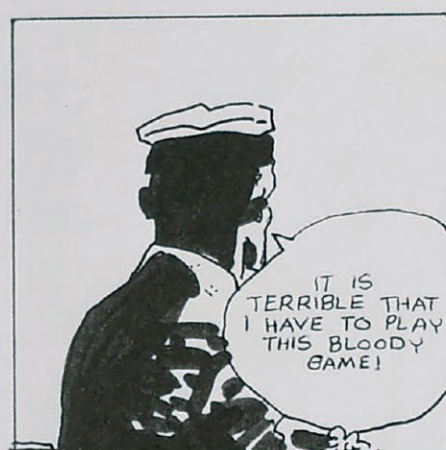
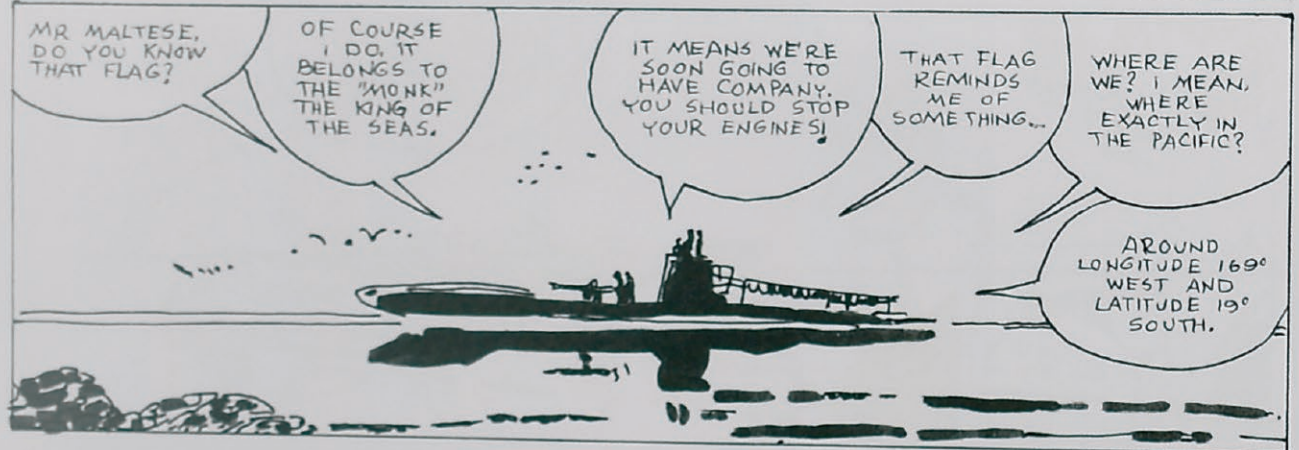
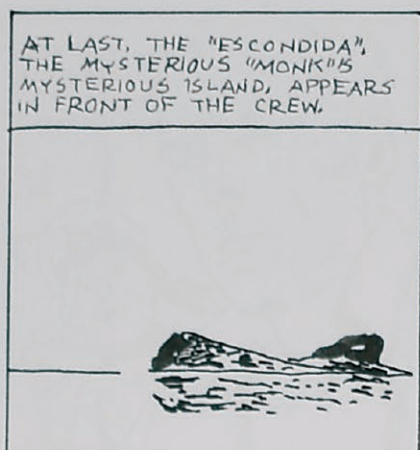






IT'S PROBABLY THE "MONK'S" ISLAND. MR STRIKER, WOULD YOU LOOK TO SEE IF IT'S ON OUR SEA CHARTS?

LET'S SEE... YES, MR SLUTTER, IT'S THE "ESCONDIDA".

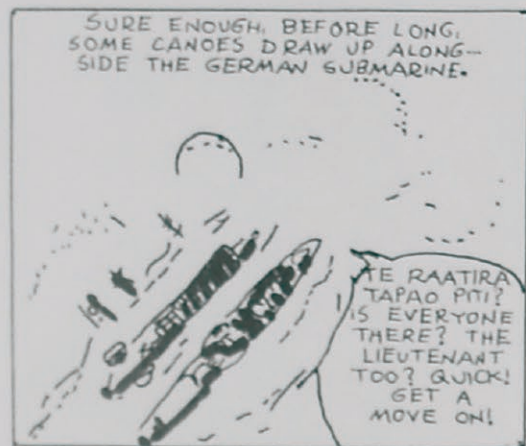




THE "MONK" IS TORPEDO BOAT HAS ESCORTED SHIP LIEUTENANT SLUTTER'S SUBMARINE INTO A LAGOON INSIDE "ESCONDIDA" ISLAND.

HEY! THE SUBMARINE THERE! THE NATIVES WILL COME ALONG AND PICK YOU UP IN THEIR PROGUES. GET READY FOR THEM!

OKAY, CAPTAIN!



SURE ENOUGH, BEFORE LONG, SOME CANOES DRAW UP ALONG—SIDE THE GERMAN SUBMARINE.

TE RAATIRA TAPAO PUI? IS EVERYONE THERE? THE LIEUTENANT TOO? QUICK! GET A MOVE ON!



THEY'RE ABOUT TO TAKE US AWAY. WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MR. SLUTTER?

AS SOON AS I'VE HAD A WORD WITH MY OFFICERS, I'LL FOLLOW YOU. WHAT'S THE MATTER, PANDORA?



AMONG ALL THESE PEATES, YOU'RE THE ONLY RESPECTABLE PERSON HERE. AND NOW YOU'RE DESERTING US!



THAT'S NOT TRUE. I'LL NEVER ABANDON YOU. I WANTED TO TELL YOU...

HO HUM! THE PROGUES ALL SET, PANDORA. CAIN'S ALREADY ABOARD.



PRETTY, ISN'T SHE? IT'S A SHAME WE'RE A BIT TOO LONG IN THE TOOTH TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. DON'T YOU THINK?

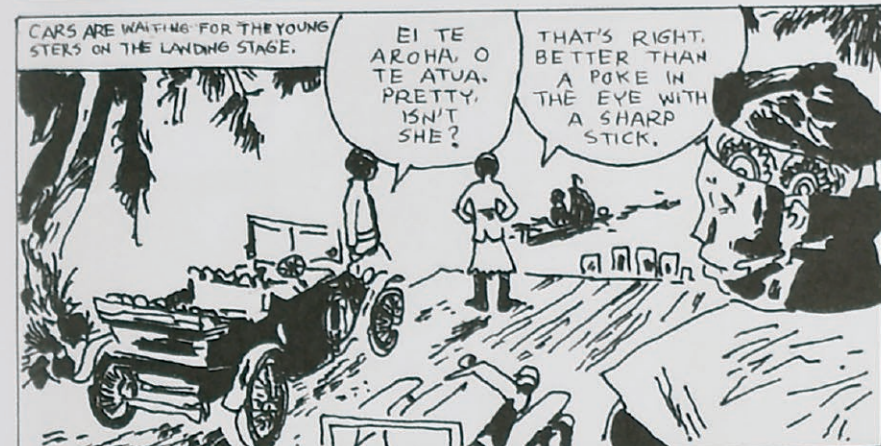


BUT I NEVER MEANT TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. CERTAINLY NOT IN THE WAY YOU MEAN.

REALLY? THEN I MUST HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN. COME ON, SLUTTER. THEY'RE WAITING FOR US ON THE TORPEDO BOAT.



CAIN'S IN THE OTHER PIROGUE. HE STILL LOOKS ANGRY.



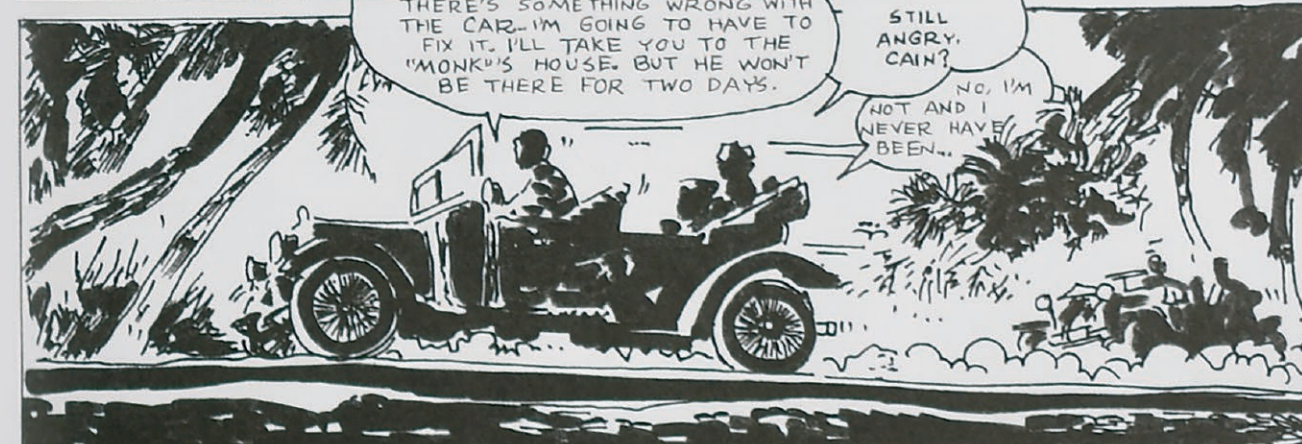
CARS ARE WAITING FOR THE YOUNG STERS ON THE LANDING STAGE.

EI TE AROHA, O TE ATUA. PRETTY, ISN'T SHE?

THAT'S RIGHT. BETTER THAN A POKE IN THE EYE WITH A SHARP STICK.



GET IN!



THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE CAR. I'M GOING TO HAVE TO FIX IT. I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE "MONK'S" HOUSE. BUT HE WON'T BE THERE FOR TWO DAYS.

STILL ANGRY, CAIN?

NO, I'M NOT AND I NEVER HAVE BEEN...

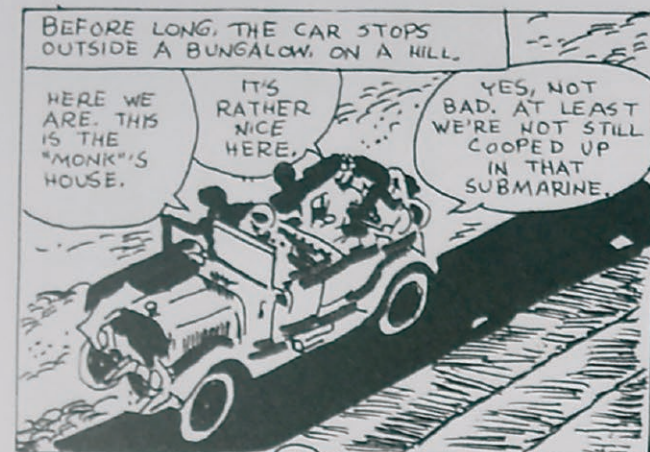


IT WASN'T WORTH IT.

SO MUCH THE BETTER!



I'LL BE CURIOUS TO SEE THIS FAMOUS "MONK"!



BEFORE LONG, THE CAR STOPS OUTSIDE A BUNGALOW, ON A HILL.

HERE WE ARE. THIS IS THE "MONK'S" HOUSE.

IT'S RATHER NICE HERE.

YES, NOT BAD. AT LEAST WE'RE NOT STILL COOPED UP IN THAT SUBMARINE.



MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME. THE "MONK" WILL BE BACK SOON.

YOU CAN TAKE THE MAIN BEDROOM. IT OVERLOOKS THE TERRACE.



I HOPE YOU'LL FEEL AT HOME HERE. CALL ME IF YOU NEED ANYTHING. I'M CALLED "THE FAMOUS SBRINDOLIN." HASTA LUEGO.*

* GOODBYE.



HOW STRANGE. EVERYONE'S BEING VERY POLITE TO US. I'M STARTING TO FEEL MORE INTRIGUED THAN FRIGHTENED. WHO KNOWS WHAT THE "MONK" IS LIKE?

FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, HE MUST BE 200 YEARS OLD.



THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

OF COURSE IT IS, BUT ALL THE NATIVES TALK LIKE HE HAS EXISTED FOR EVER.



AND YOU, PANDORA. YOU LOOK PUT OUT.

NO, I'M JUST A BIT ANNOYED. WE'RE MILES FROM HOME. OUR PARENTS MUST THINK WE'RE DEAD. WE DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW IT'S ALL GOING TO END... AND YOU GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO BE DISAGREEABLE.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, CAIN. SOMETIMES YOU BEHAVE AS IF LIFE DIDN'T INTEREST YOU ANY MORE.



WHAT IF WE TRIED TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH CORTO MALTESE? HE MUST SURELY HAVE HIS GOOD SIDE!



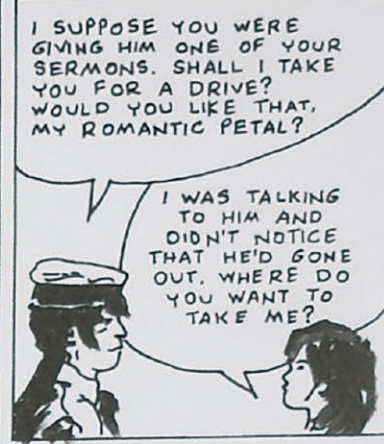
AFTER ALL, YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT, UP TILL NOW, HE HAS ALWAYS HELPED US OUT... DON'T YOU THINK SO, CAIN?



CAIN? I'M TALKING TO YOU! CAIN... ?



AND NOW YOU'RE TALKING TO YOURSELF. I'VE JUST SEEN HIM IN THE COURTYARD.



I SUPPOSE YOU WERE GIVING HIM ONE OF YOUR SERMONS. SHALL I TAKE YOU FOR A DRIVE? WOULD YOU LIKE THAT, MY ROMANTIC PETAL?

I WAS TALKING TO HIM AND DIDN'T NOTICE THAT HE'D GONE OUT. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO TAKE ME?



FOR A NICE TRIP ROUND THE ISLAND, IT'LL HELP US PASS THE TIME WHILE WE'RE WAITING FOR THE "MONK". ARE YOU COMING?

OH YES!



WHO IS THE "MONK"? CAIN SAYS THAT THE NATIVES THINK HE'S 200 YEARS OLD.

WHO KNOWS? 200 YEARS? EVEN I BELIEVE IT SOMETIMES. BUT IT ISN'T TRUE. IT'S A STORY, WHICH HE MAY TELL YOU SOMETIME...



I DON'T THINK YOU'RE AS WICKED AS YOU PRETEND TO BE.

I'M NOT? GOOD GRIEF! AFTER ALL THE EFFORTS I'VE BEEN MAKING! HOW DISAPPOINTING!



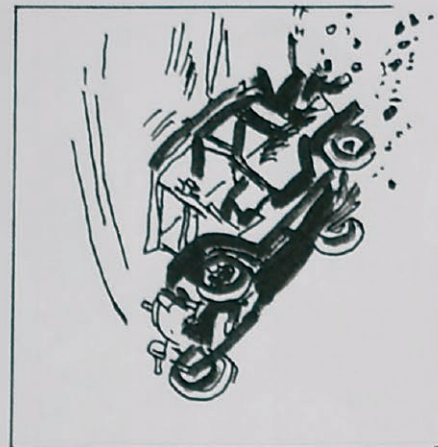
CRACK!



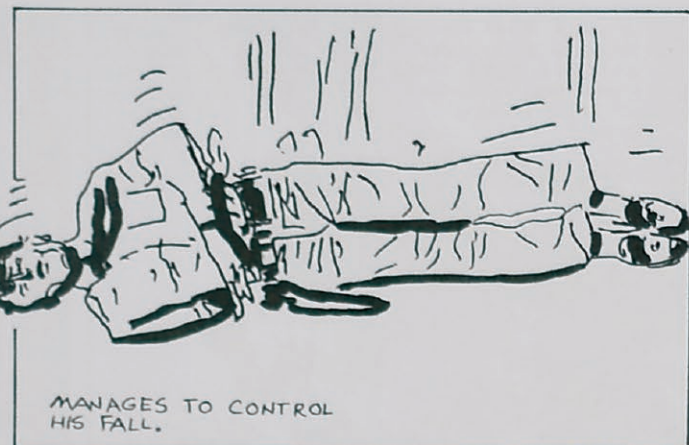
SWISSSSH!



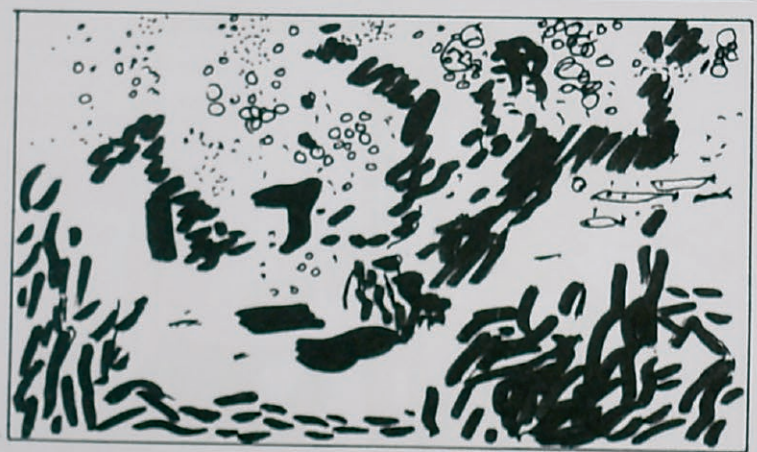
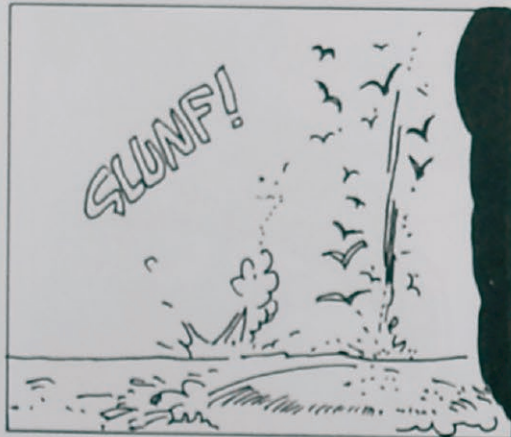
THE DRIVER'S SUDDEN TURN OF THE STEERING WHEEL DOESN'T STOP THE CAR FROM FALLING...



WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, CORTO MALTESE...



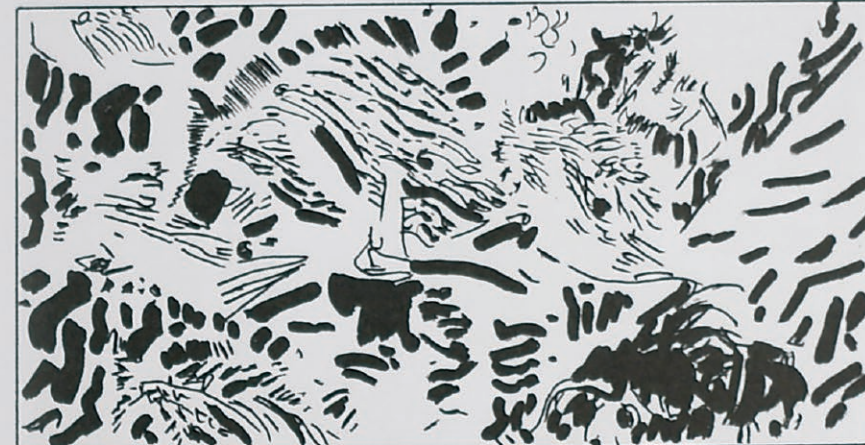
MANAGES TO CONTROL HIS FALL.



JESUS, I'M STILL IN ONE PIECE!



THERE'S THE CAR. THE DRIVER WAS KILLED BEFORE THE FALL. I'LL JUST HAVE TO SAVE PANDORA, IF SHE'S STILL ALIVE!



PHEW! I WAS AT BURSTING POINT!



BEFORE LONG, ON THE ROCK! - BRRRT! - BRRRT!

BY NEPTUNE, SHE'S ALIVE!



SLAP! SLAP!

WHAT THE!?



MY GOD, AN OCTOPUS!



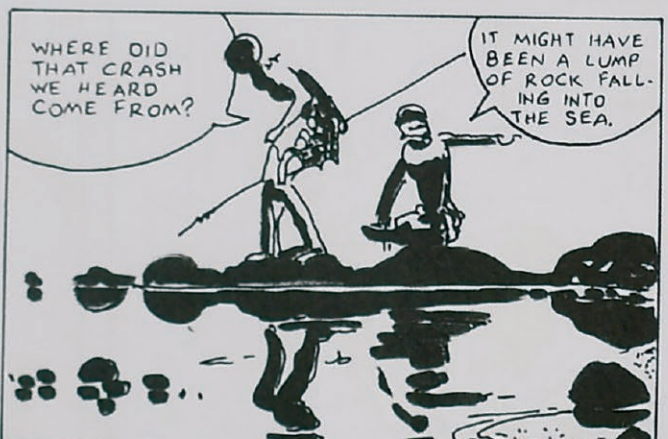
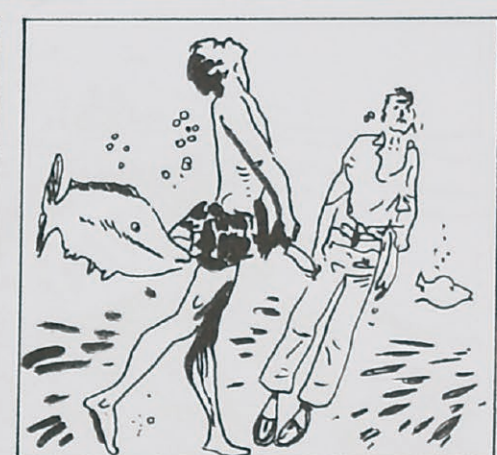
WHERE'S MY KNIFE? WHERE'S MY KNIFE?



WELL, WELL, WELL. HE'S GOT HIM!



CORTO MALTESE'S FOOT HAS BECOME LODGED IN A CLAM.



WHERE DID THAT CRASH WE HEARD COME FROM?

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LUMP OF ROCK FALLING INTO THE SEA.



AIR! AIR!



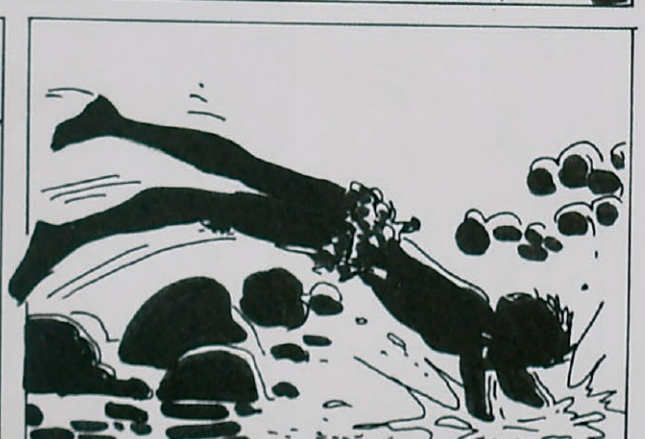
I OWE YOU MY LIFE, MY FRIEND.

TOO RIGHT. HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW? RUPU NAROA.



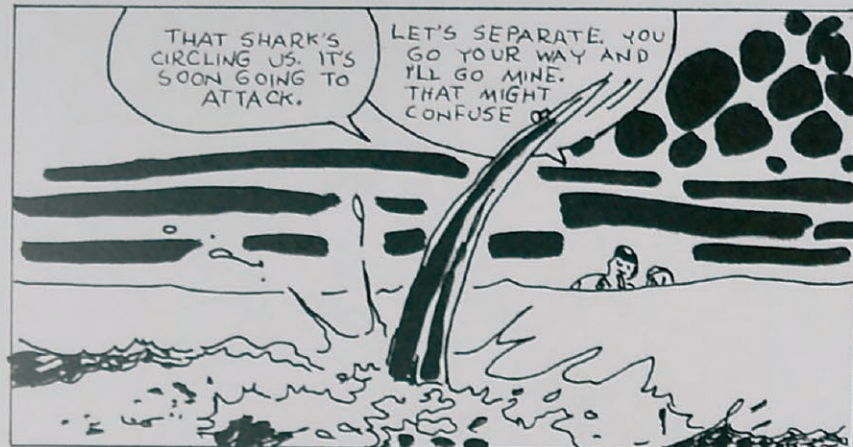
E PARAU MAU TAHI FEE.

YES, YES... POUPETON, POUPETON.



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

TAATO... MAO... MAO... HEAVEN HELP US. A SHARK!



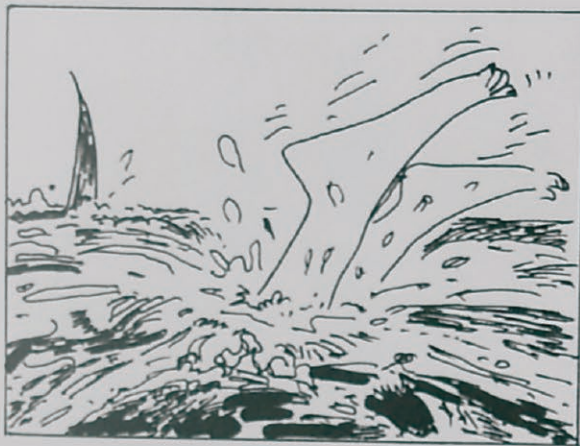
THAT SHARK'S CIRCLING US. IT'S SOON GOING TO ATTACK.

LET'S SEPARATE. YOU GO YOUR WAY AND I'LL GO MINE. THAT MIGHT CONFUSE IT.



THAT'S NOT A BAD IDEA. LET'S GO...

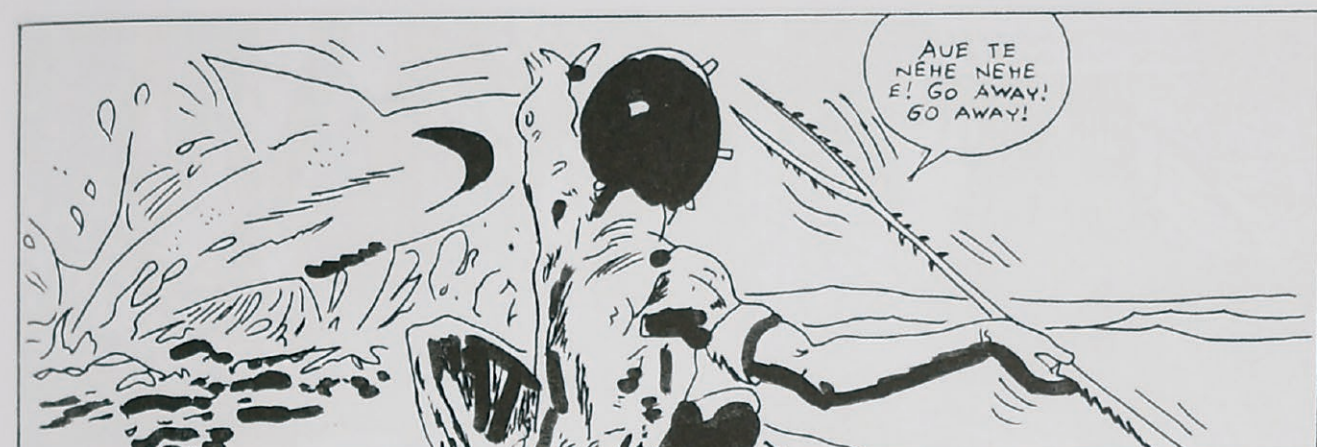
OKAY!



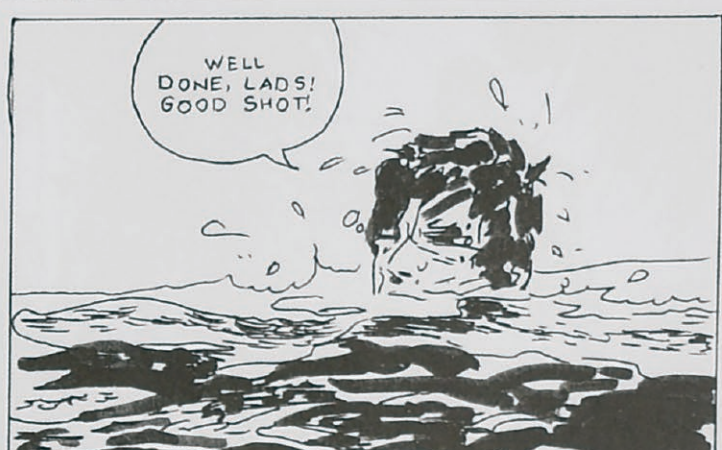
E MEAFIFI RAHI MAU!

YES YES... I'LL GET HIM... PATIA MAA VANTA LA!

HEGO RAT



AUE TE NEHE NEHE E! GO AWAY! GO AWAY!



WELL DONE, LADS! GOOD SHOT!



HE'S GONE DOWN LIKE A STONE.

CORTO MALTESE! EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT!

YES!



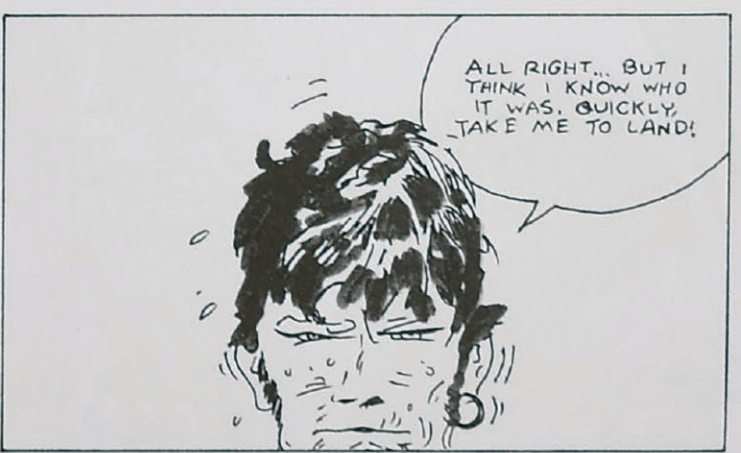
HOW DO YOU FEEL?

ALL RIGHT, NOW THANK YOU, OLD CHAP.

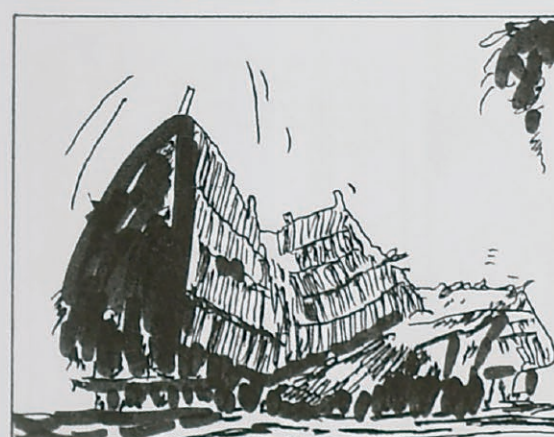
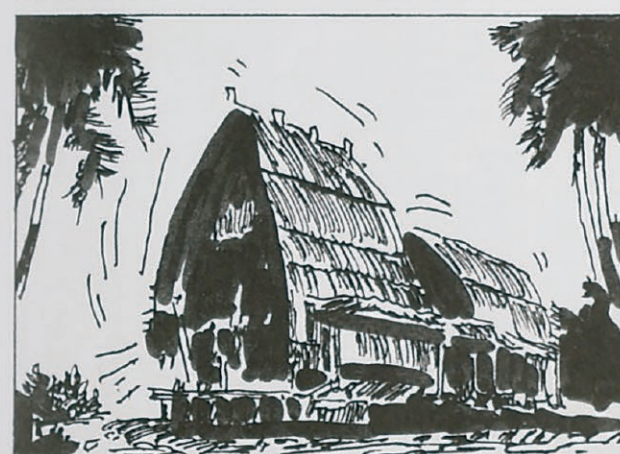
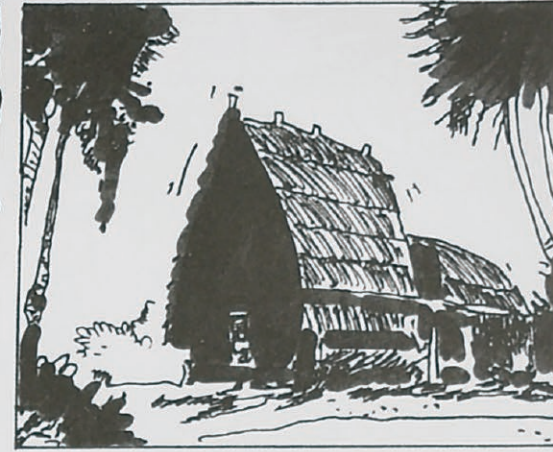
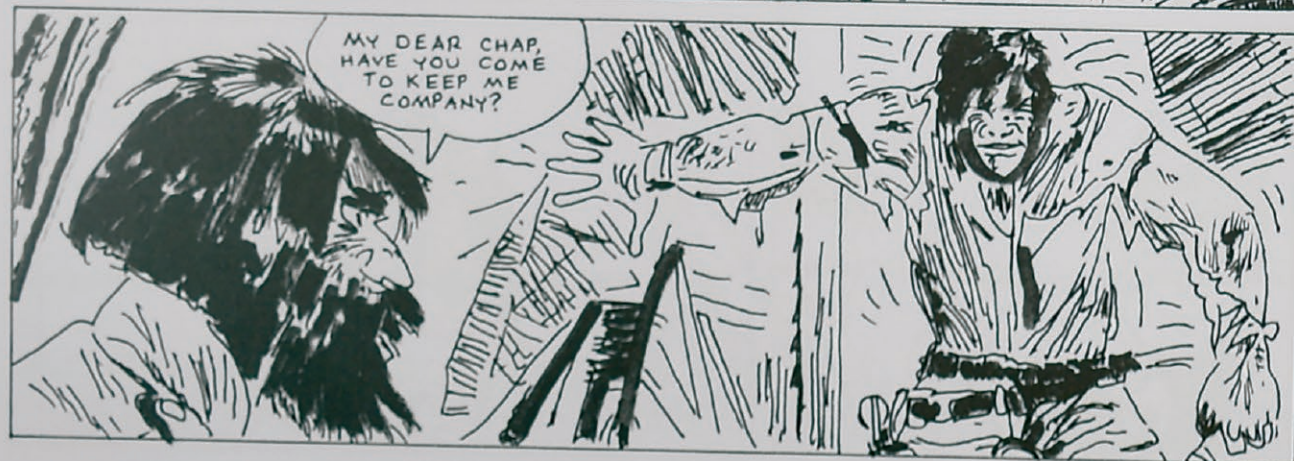


YOU DIDN'T SEE WHO FIRED THE SHOT FROM THE HULL BY ANY CHANCE?

NO, WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME. I DIVED AT ONCE TO HELP YOU.



ALL RIGHT... BUT I THINK I KNOW WHO IT WAS. QUICKLY, TAKE ME TO LAND!





HAVE YOU GONE CRAZY? WHY HAVE YOU DEMOLISHED MY HUT?

DON'T BE A HYPOCRITE. YOU KNOW FULL WELL!



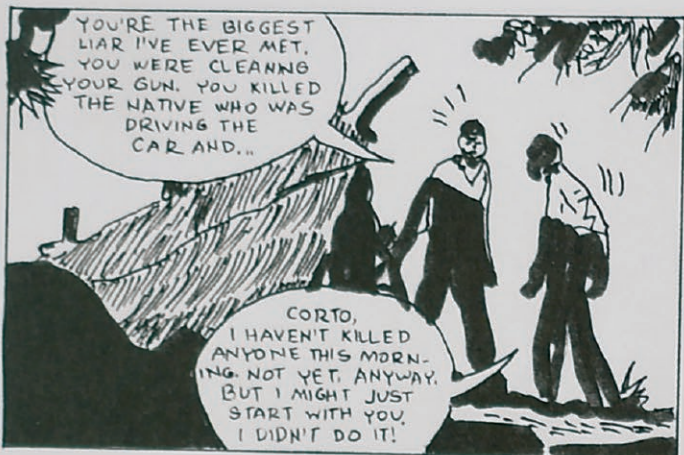
WHEN I CAME IN, YOU WERE CLEANING YOUR GUN. WHY? TO GET RID OF THE TRACES?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN OUT. WHAT'S ALL THIS NONSENSE?



YOU THOUGHT YOU'D KILLED ME, YOU BASTARD. BUT SOONER OR LATER, I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.

ARE YOU JOKING, CORTO? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.



YOU'RE THE BIGGEST LIAR I'VE EVER MET. YOU WERE CLEANING YOUR GUN. YOU KILLED THE NATIVE WHO WAS DRIVING THE CAR AND...

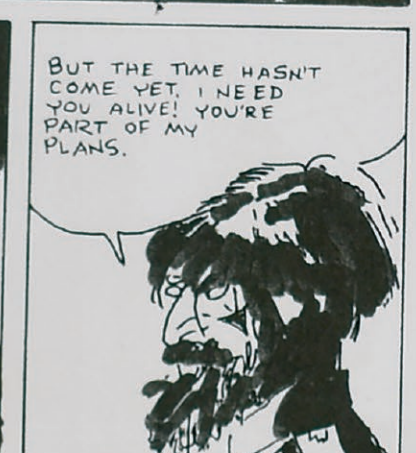
CORTO, I HAVEN'T KILLED ANYONE THIS MORNING. NOT YET, ANYWAY. BUT I MIGHT JUST START WITH YOU. I DIDN'T DO IT!



SO WHY WERE YOU CLEANING YOUR GUN, THEN? A COINCIDENCE, HUH?



THINK WHATEVER YOU LIKE. BUT THE DAY I KILL YOU, IT WON'T BE WITH A GUN, BUT WITH MY BARE HANDS...



BUT THE TIME HASN'T COME YET. I NEED YOU ALIVE! YOU'RE PART OF MY PLANS.

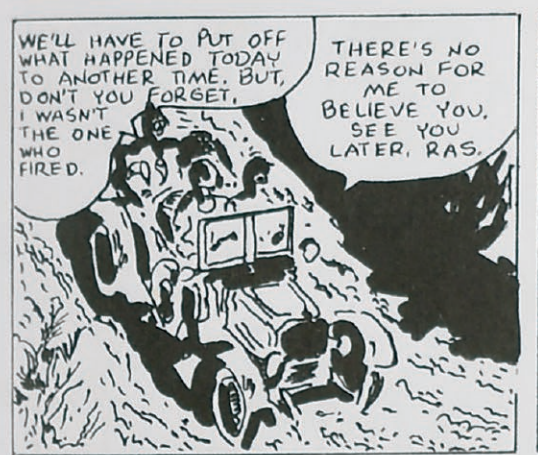


COME QUICKLY! THE 'MONK' HAS ARRIVED!



THE BELL OF ESCONDIDA'S 'PARLIAMENT HOUSE' IS SUMMONING A GATHERING FOR THE 'MONK'S' ARRIVAL.

DING!
DING!
DING!



WE'LL HAVE TO PUT OFF WHAT HAPPENED TODAY TO ANOTHER TIME. BUT, DON'T YOU FORGET, I WASN'T THE ONE WHO FIRED.

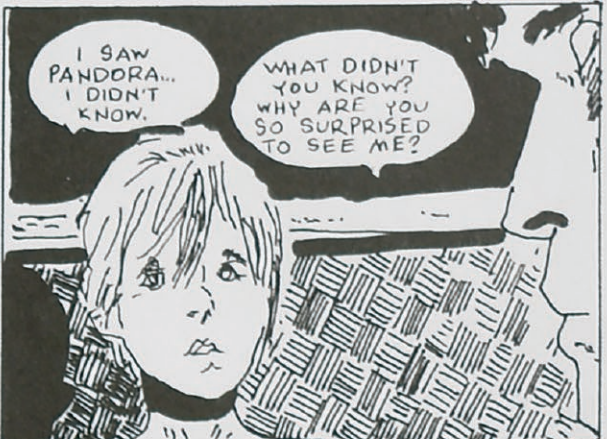
THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO BELIEVE YOU, SEE YOU LATER, RAS.



IF IT WASN'T RASPUTIN, THEN WHO? SHIP'S LIEUTENANT SWITZER? NO! HE WAS ABOARD SHIP. IT CAN'T HAVE BEEN CRANIO. PANDORA WAS WITH ME. CAIN, CAIN?!



CORTO MALTESE?



I SAW PANDORA... I DIDN'T KNOW.

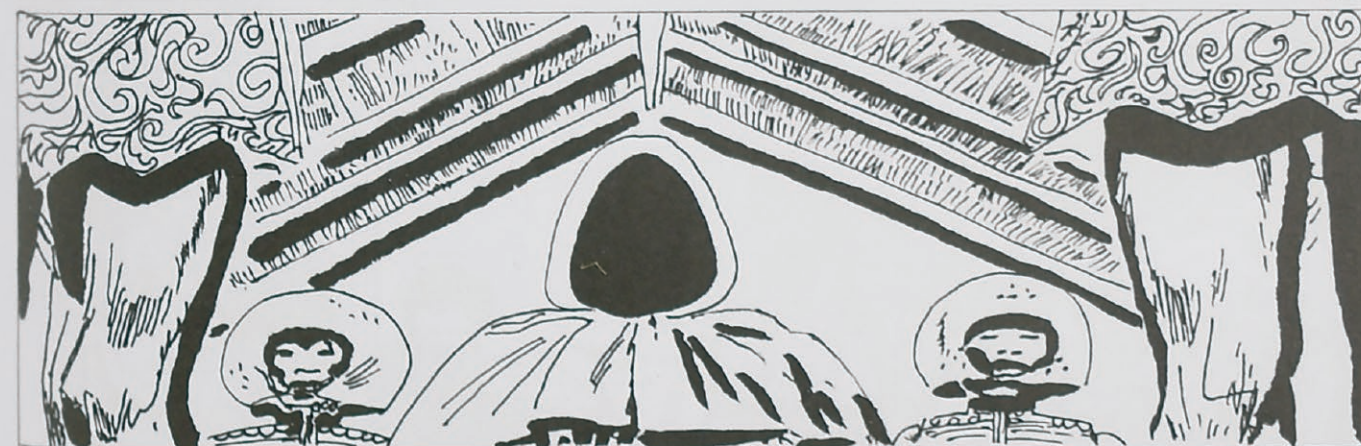
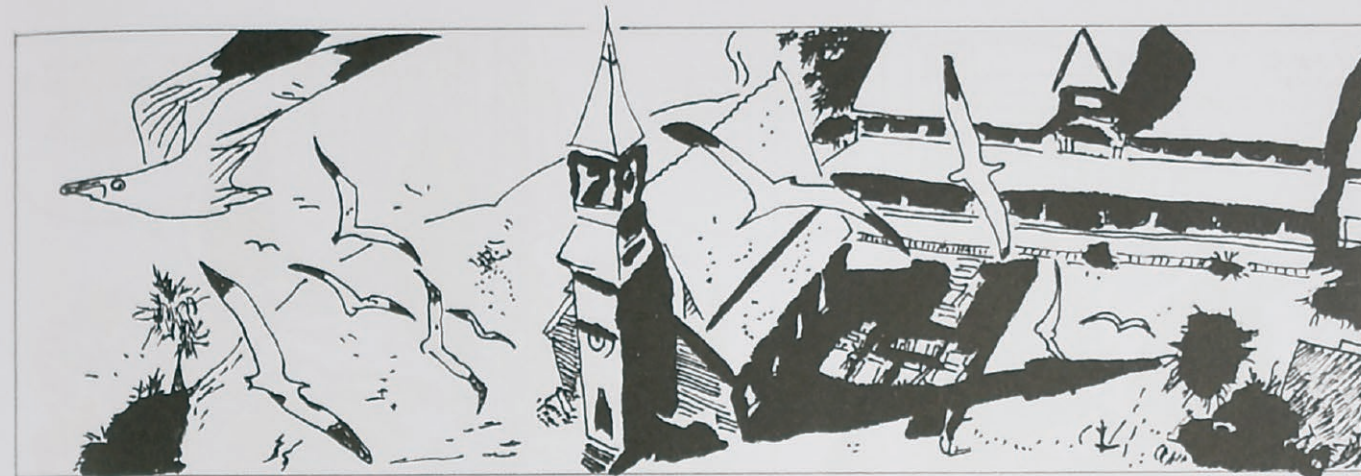
WHAT DIDN'T YOU KNOW? WHY ARE YOU SO SURPRISED TO SEE ME?



DID YOU THINK I WAS DEAD?



SORRY... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. I HAVE TO GO NOW!

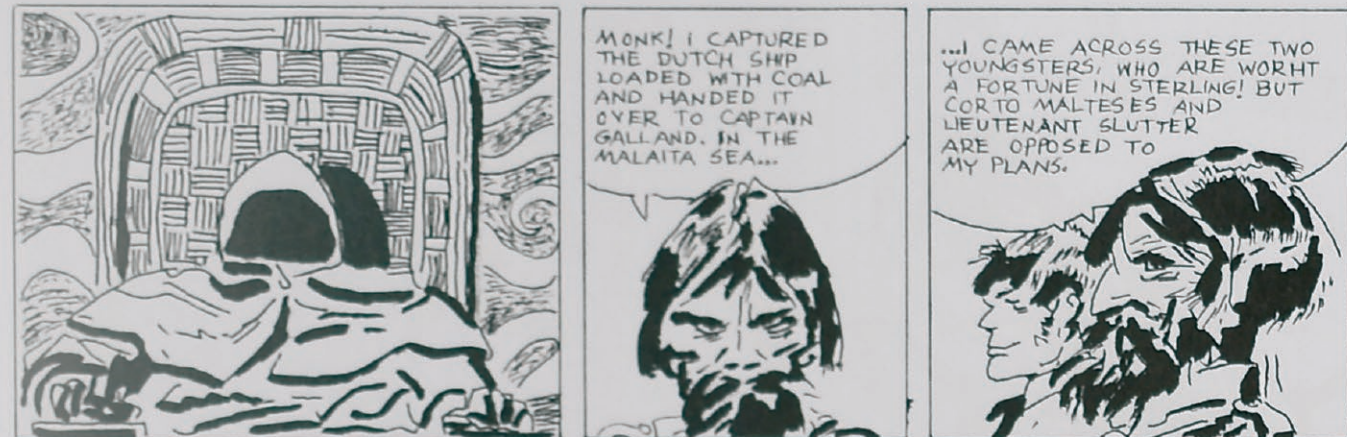




I HAVE SOME INTERESTING NEWS, DATED AUGUST 4TH 1914...

ENGLAND HAS DECLARED WAR AGAINST GERMANY AND, AS A RESULT, WE TOO ARE AT WAR.

I HAVE ALREADY PREPARED TWO ISLANDS FOR VON SPEEKE TO REFUEL.



MONK! I CAPTURED THE DUTCH SHIP LOADED WITH COAL AND HANDED IT OVER TO CAPTAIN GALLAND, IN THE MALAITA SEA...

...I CAME ACROSS THESE TWO YOUNGSTERS, WHO ARE WORTH A FORTUNE IN STERLING! BUT CORTO MALTESE'S AND LIEUTENANT SLUTTER ARE OPPOSED TO MY PLANS.



THE TWO YOUNGSTERS SHOULDN'T BE INVOLVED IN OUR BUSINESS...

I SUGGEST WE DROP THEM OFF ONTO ONE OF THE NEARBY FIJI ISLANDS.



THESE YOUNGSTERS SHOULDN'T BE INVOLVED... WHAT IS THIS?



ENOUGH!

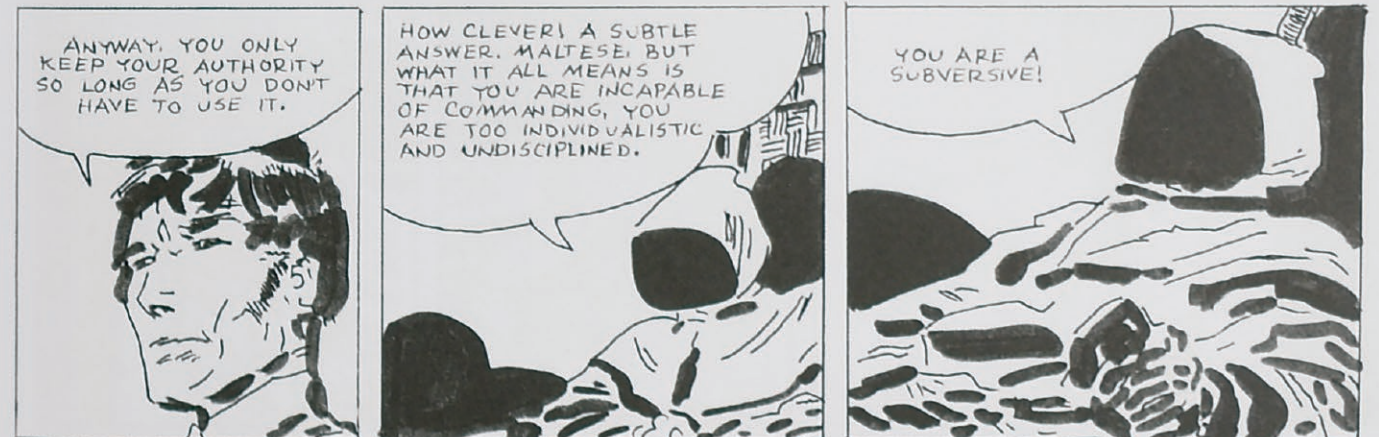
NOBODY TELLS ME WHAT TO DO. NOBODY!



AS FOR YOU, MR SLUTTER, I THOUGHT YOU WERE LESS HEADSTRONG. YOUR BEHAVIOUR IS UNCALLED FOR. DON'T FORGET THAT, BY ORDER OF YOUR COMMANDANT, YOU ARE UNDER MY COMMAND.

AND YOU, CORTO MALTESE... YOU LOST A SCHOONER AND ALL AUTHORITY OVER YOUR MEN. WHY?

FEMALE TROUBLE, BOSS!



ANYWAY, YOU ONLY KEEP YOUR AUTHORITY SO LONG AS YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE IT.

HOW CLEVER! A SUBTLE ANSWER. MALTESE! BUT WHAT IT ALL MEANS IS THAT YOU ARE INCAPABLE OF COMMANDING, YOU ARE TOO INDIVIDUALISTIC AND UNDISCIPLINED.

YOU ARE A SUBVERSIVE!



BUT LET'S LEAVE THAT TO ONE SIDE FOR THE MOMENT... SLUTTER! BE READY TO DEPART IN TWO DAYS' TIME. I'LL BE COMING WITH YOU. RASPUTIN WILL GO WITH MR TOKO AND CORTO MALTESE WILL STAY HERE ON THE ISLAND WITH CRANIO... THAT'S ALL!

NOW LEAVE ME. GOODBYE, GENTLEMEN! SEE YOU THIS EVENING!

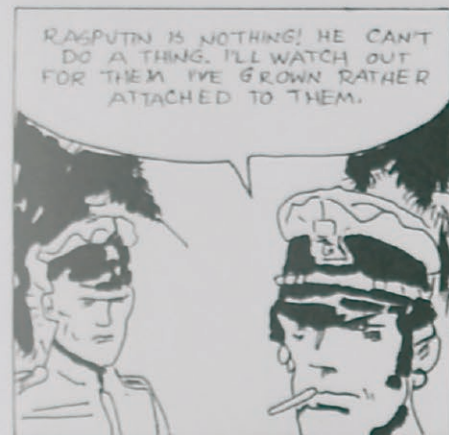


WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE YOUNGSTERS?

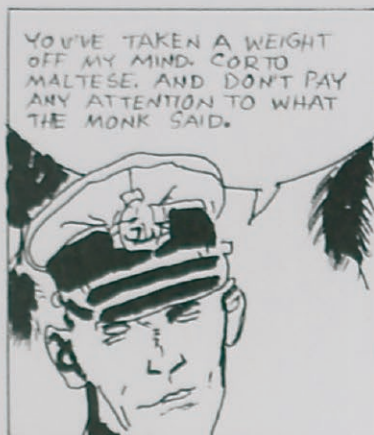
NOTHING AT ALL.

THEY REPRESENT A PILE OF MONEY FOR THE MONK.

SURE, BUT WHAT ABOUT RASPUTIN?



RASPUTIN IS NOTHING! HE CAN'T DO A THING. I'LL WATCH OUT FOR THEM. I'VE GROWN RATHER ATTACHED TO THEM.



YOU'VE TAKEN A WEIGHT OFF MY MIND, CORTO MALTESE. AND DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO WHAT THE MONK SAID.



I KNOW THAT YOU'RE A GOOD COMMANDER... FAREWELL CORTO!



WHO GIVES A DAMN! ALL I WANT TO DO IS GET WELL AWAY FROM HERE. IT'S A VERITABLE MADHOUSE!



THERE'S SOMEONE OUTSIDE!



COME HERE!



OH, IT'S YOU, CRANO. WHAT ARE YOU BEING SO MYSTERIOUS ABOUT?

I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU FOR SOME TIME. HAVE YOU GOT ANYTHING TO DRINK?



YES, HELP YOURSELF, AND, AS YOU'RE HERE, TELL ME WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND.



LISTEN, CORTO. SINCE YOU WHITE MEN CAME HERE, THINGS HAVE BEEN GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE... BUT EVERYONE KNOWS THAT.



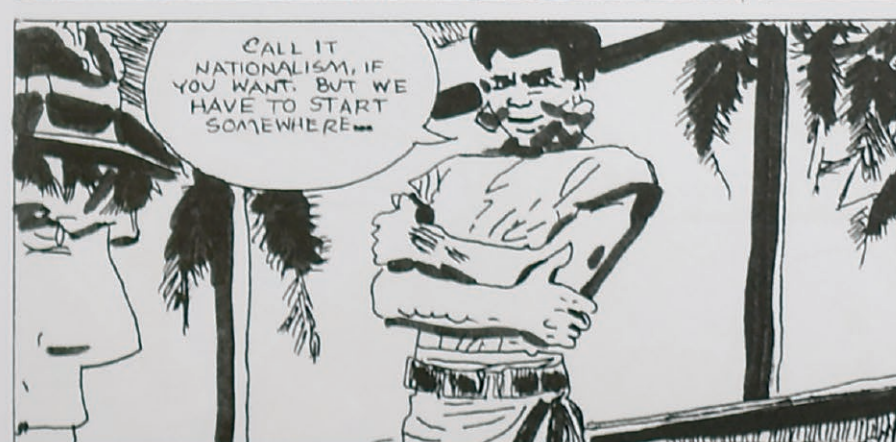
WHAT I CAN'T STAND IS SEEING MY PEOPLE BECOMING INVOLVED IN YOUR WARS. AND...



THE YOKE YOU'VE PLACED ON OUR SHOULDERS HAS LED THE MELANESIANS TO UNITE FOR THE FIRST TIME.



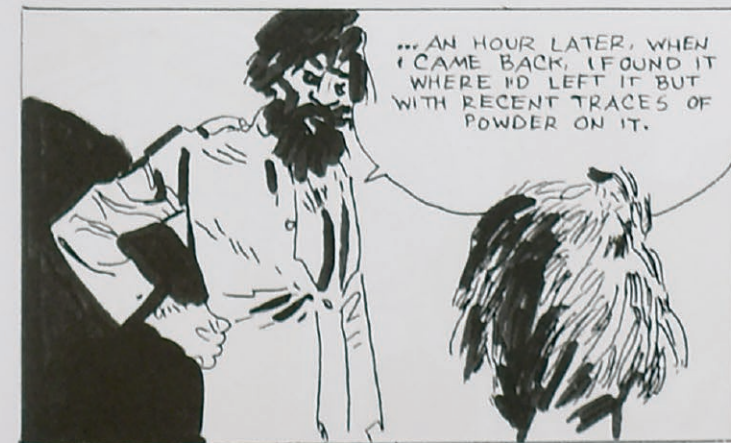
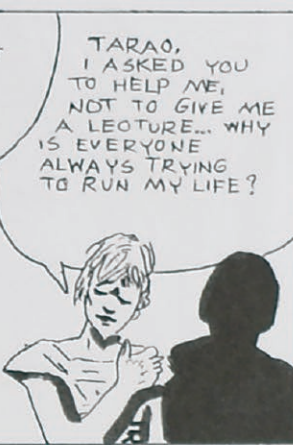
WELL, WELL, WELL... I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A NATIONALIST.

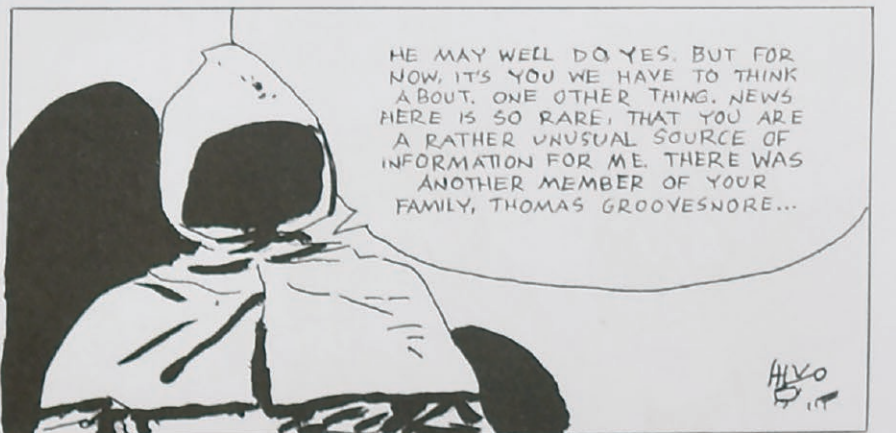
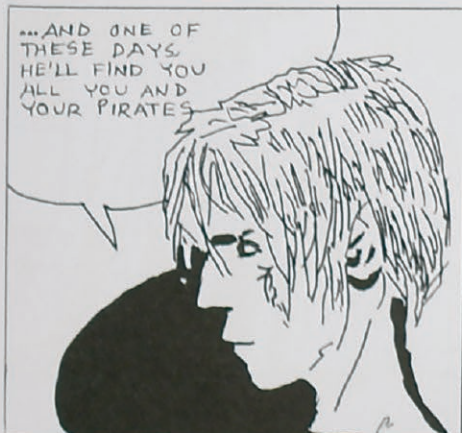
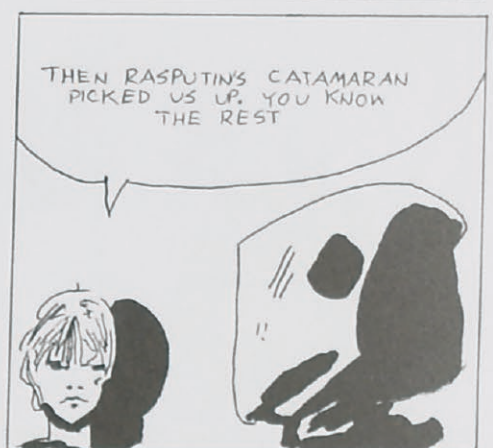
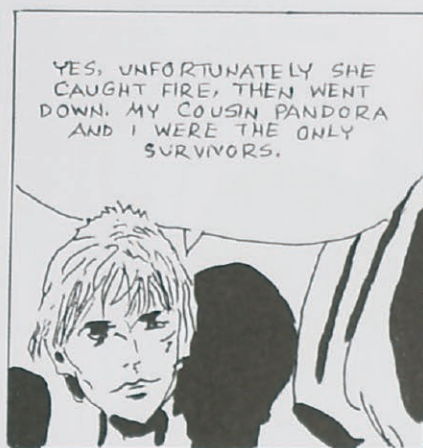


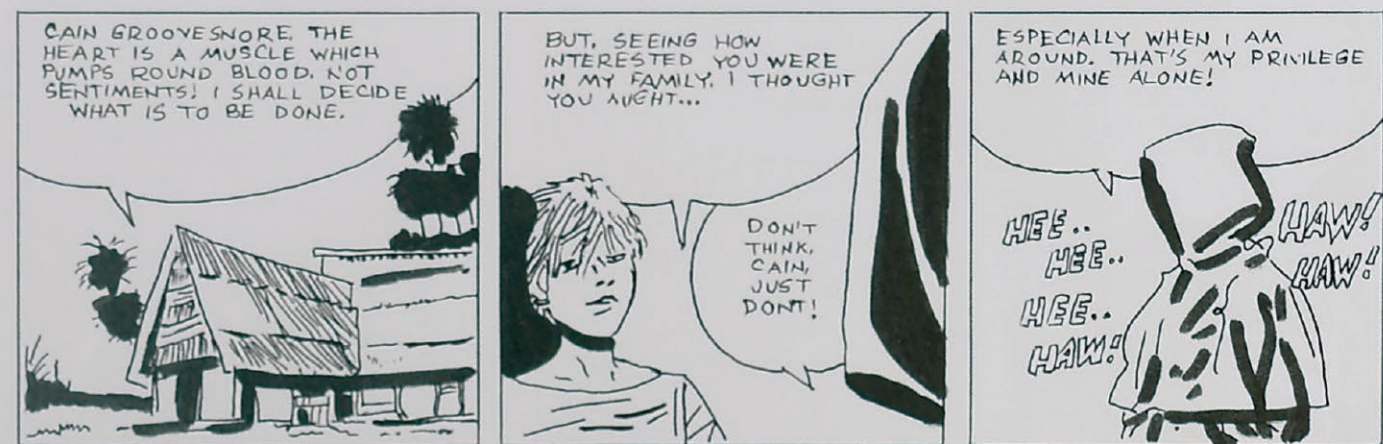
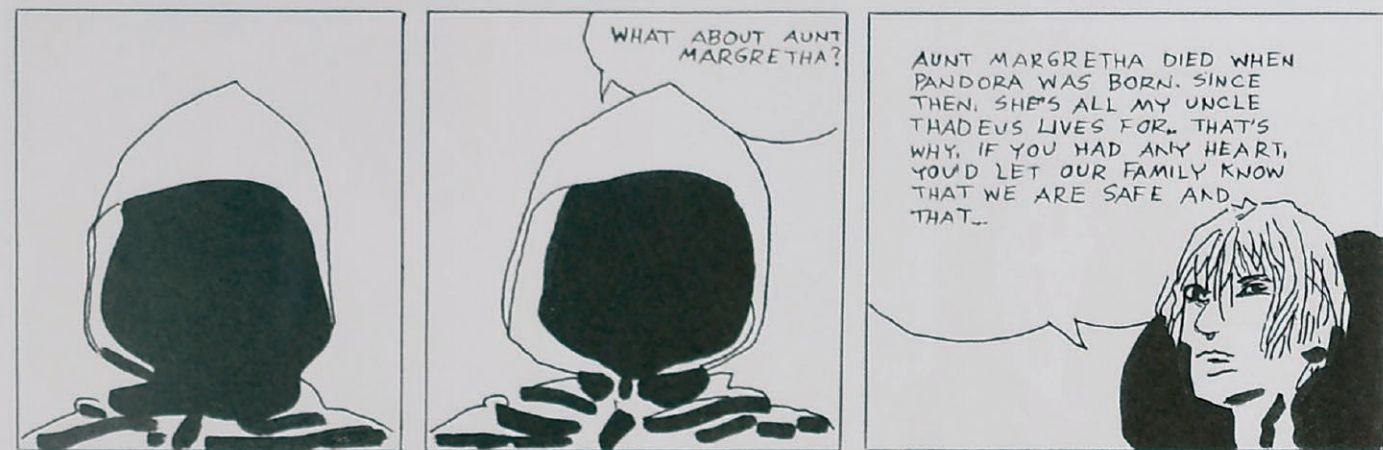
CALL IT NATIONALISM, IF YOU WANT. BUT WE HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE...

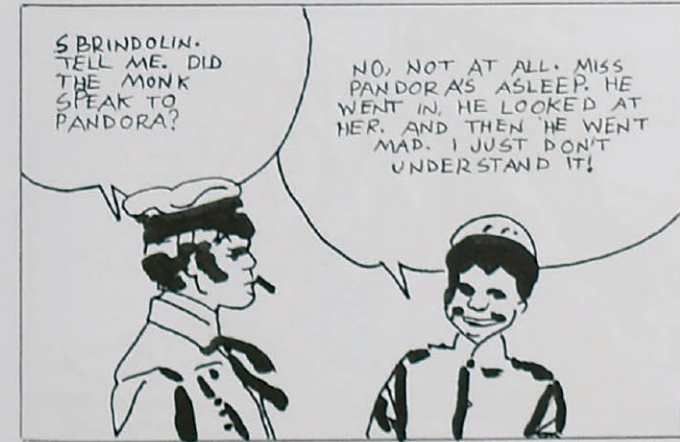
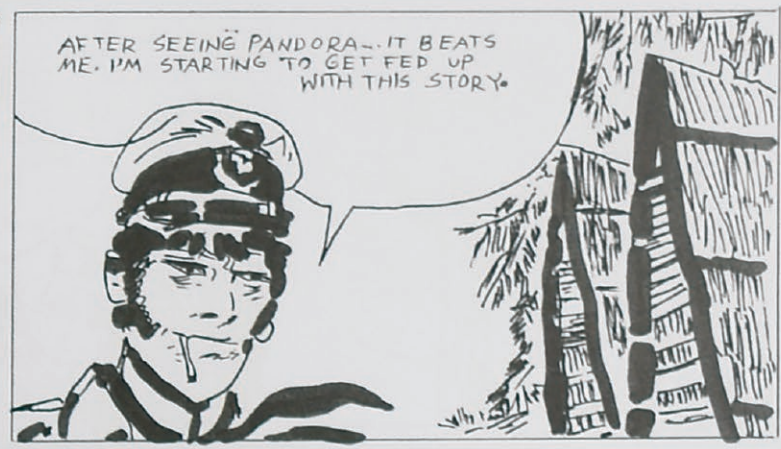


FOR A GREAT MELANESIAN FATHERLAND.











ALL RIGHT, SBRINDOLIN. LOOK AFTER HER. I'LL BE BACK LATER.

OKAY, CORTO. LOOK, HERE COMES CRANIO.



HEY, CORTO MALTESE! THE MONK WANTS TO SEE YOU.



HE'S DECIDED TO LEAVE AT ONCE AND HE'S OUT OF HIS MIND. I SWEAR TO YOU.

OKAY, CRANIO. I'LL GO STRAIGHT AWAY!



CORTO MALTESE, DO SOMETHING! THE MONK'S GOING TO LEAVE ME ON THE ISLAND.



YOU SEE, HE WANTS TO LEAVE ME HERE ON LAND. ALL ON MY OWN, AND TAKE YOU WITH HIM. IT ISN'T FAIR.



DAMN HYPOCRITE. IT'S JUST WHAT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR...
...SO AS TO HAVE TIME FOR YOUR LITTLE SCHEMES, BUT THIS TIME YOU WON'T SUCCEED!



DON'T BE STUPID, RASPUTIN, NO PLAYACTING WITH ME. UNDERSTAND?



I'LL KILL HIM ONE OF THESE DAYS.



AH, THERE YOU ARE AT LAST. I SUPPOSE CRANIO'S TOLD YOU. I'VE BROUGHT FORWARD OUR DEPARTURE.



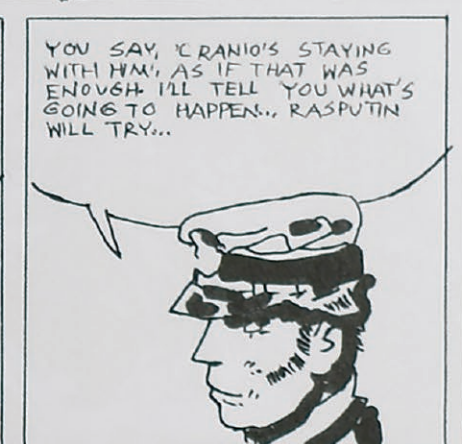
YES, AND I ALSO RAN INTO RASPUTIN, WHO TOLD ME THE REST.



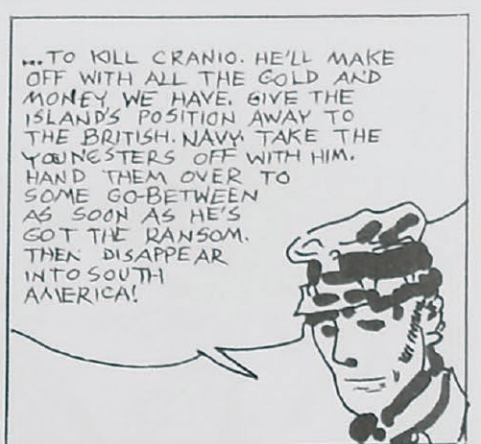
TO BE HONEST, I'D RATHER YOU CAME WITH ME, YOU'RE MY FRIEND!
RIGHT, BUT YOU'D BE MAD TO LEAVE THE ISLAND IN RASPUTIN'S HANDS. AS SOON AS WE'RE GONE, HE'LL WREAK HAVOC ON THE PLACE.



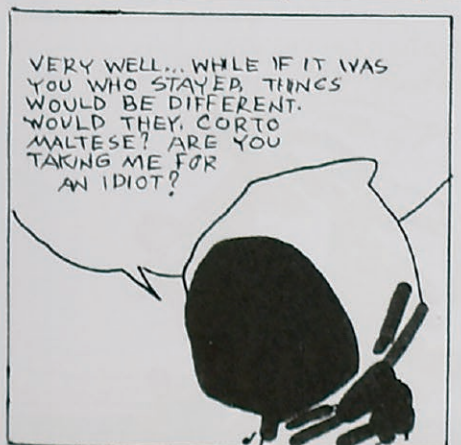
OH NO HE WON'T. CRANIO'S STAYING WITH HIM!



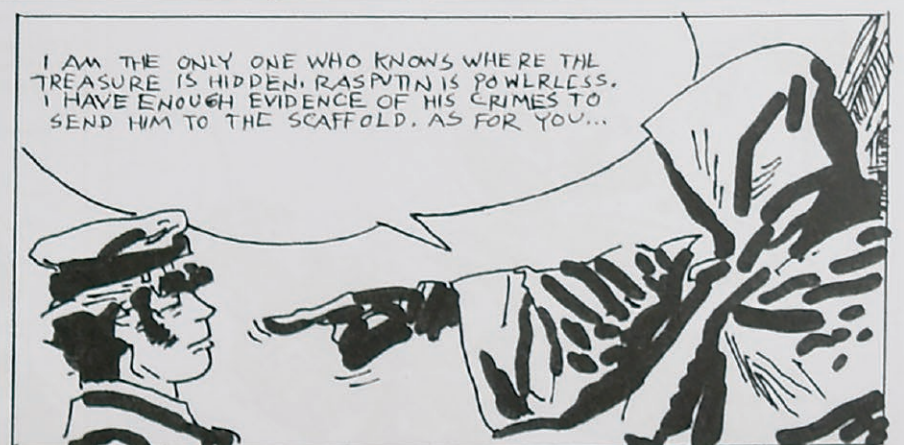
YOU SAY CRANIO'S STAYING WITH HIM, AS IF THAT WAS ENOUGH I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. RASPUTIN WILL TRY...



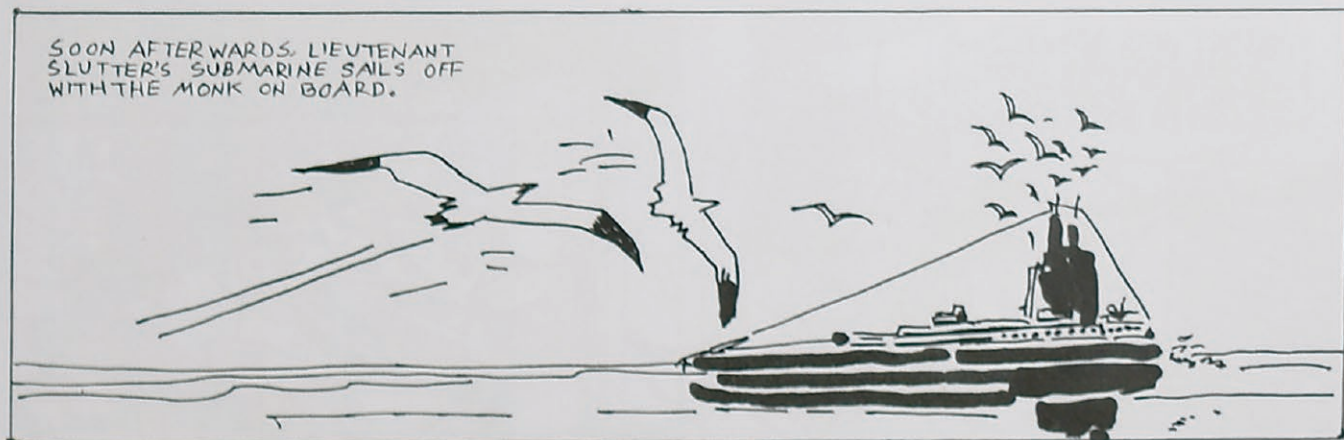
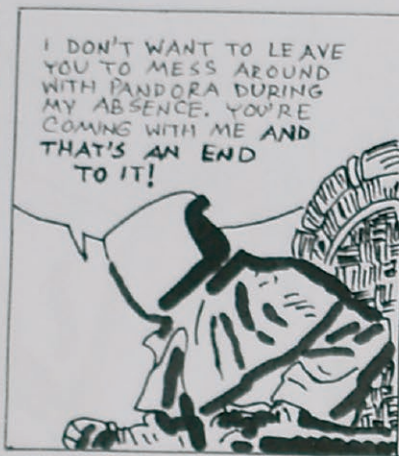
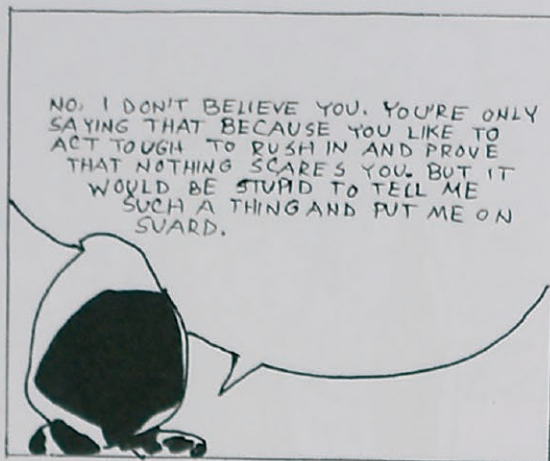
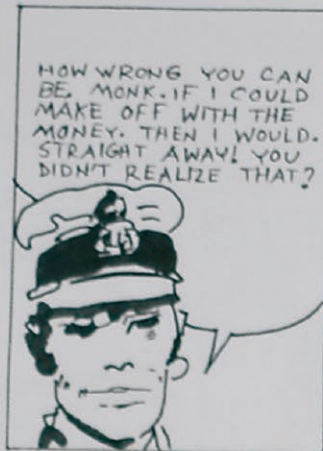
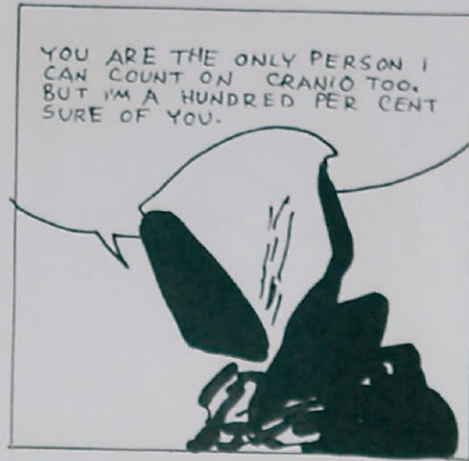
...TO KILL CRANIO. HE'LL MAKE OFF WITH ALL THE GOLD AND MONEY WE HAVE. GIVE THE ISLAND'S POSITION AWAY TO THE BRITISH NAVY. TAKE THE YOUNGSTERS OFF WITH HIM. HAND THEM OVER TO SOME GO-BETWEEN AS SOON AS HE'S GOT THE RANSOM. THEN DISAPPEAR INTO SOUTH AMERICA!

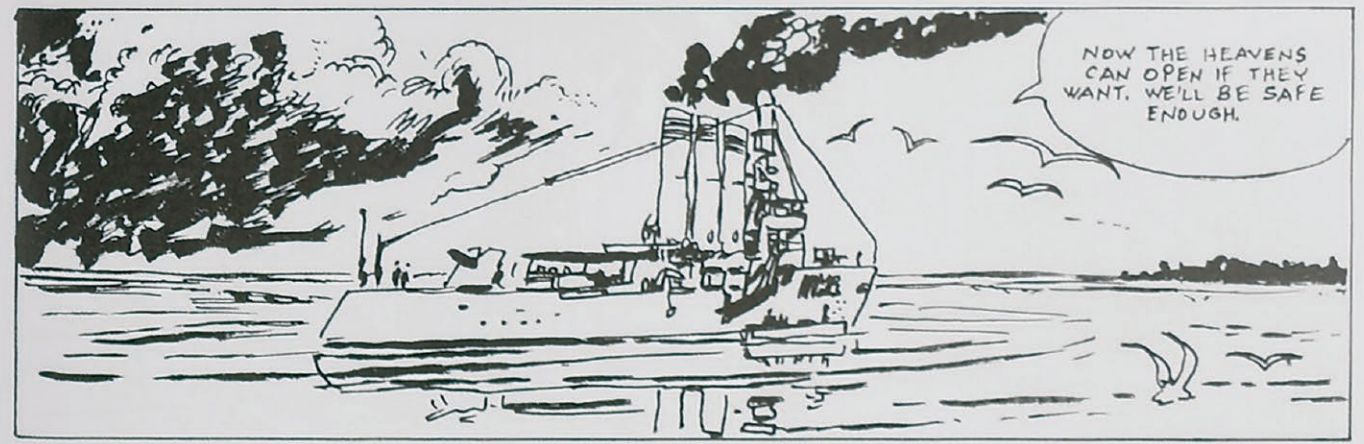
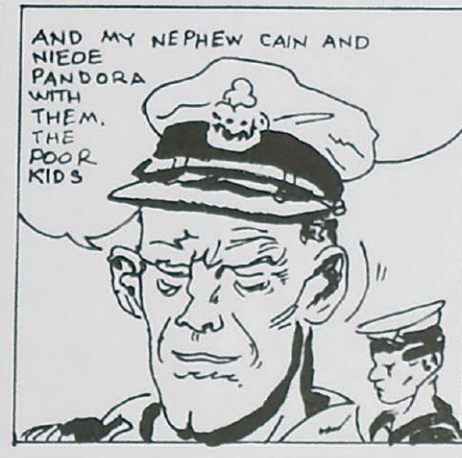
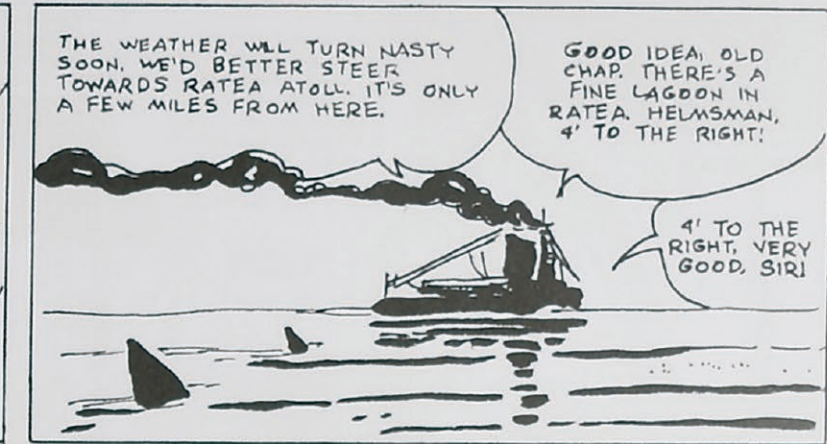
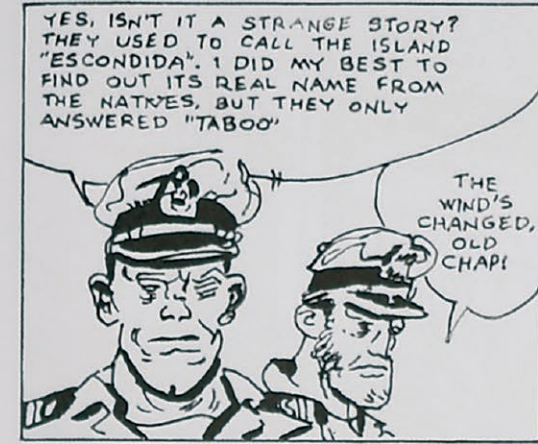
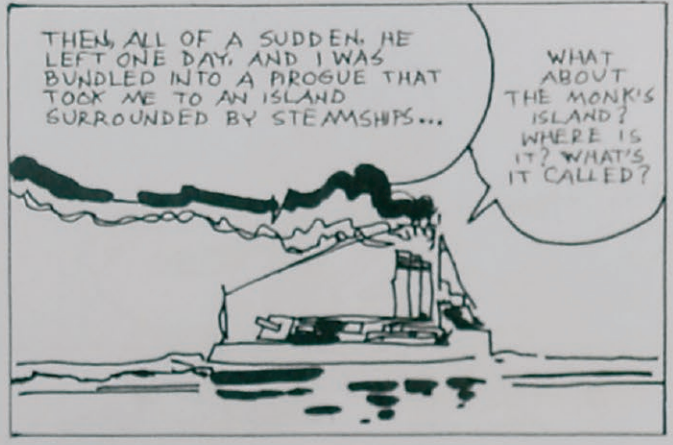
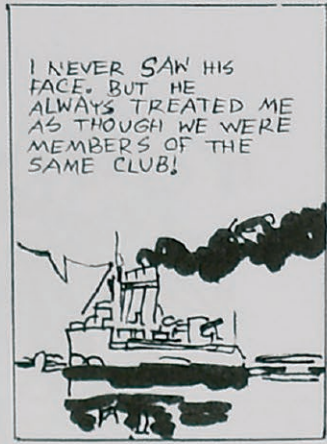
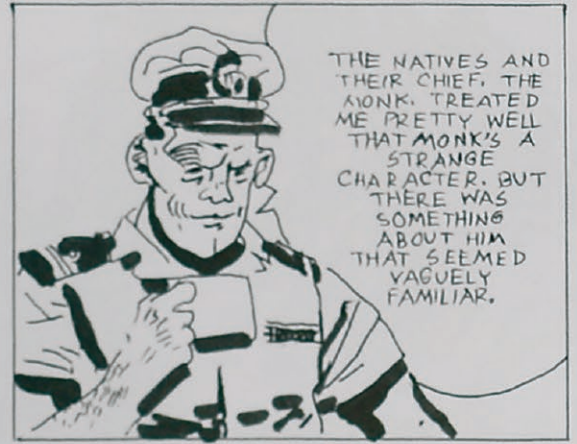
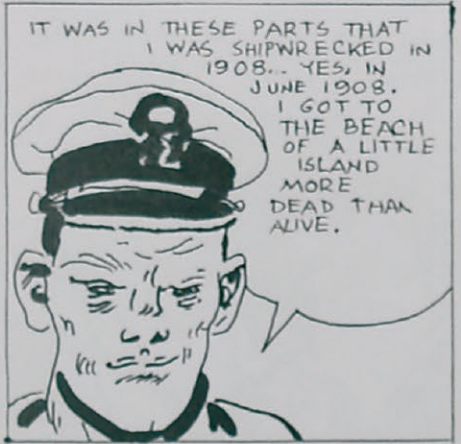
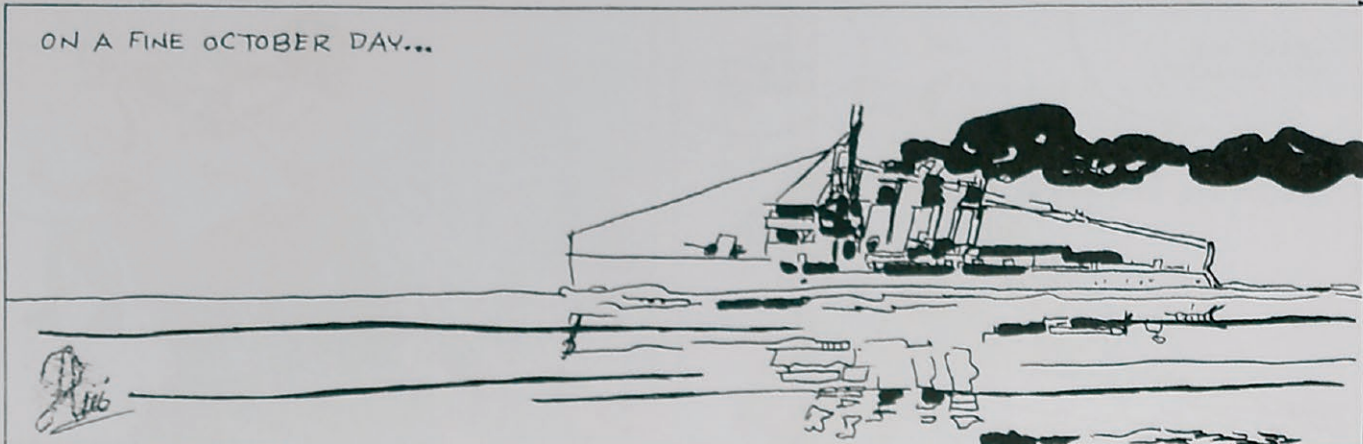


VERY WELL... WHILE IF IT WAS YOU WHO STAYED THINGS WOULD BE DIFFERENT. WOULD THEY, CORTO MALTESE? ARE YOU TAKING ME FOR AN IDIOT?



I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHERE THE TREASURE IS HIDDEN. RASPUTIN IS POWERLESS. I HAVE ENOUGH EVIDENCE OF HIS CRIMES TO SEND HIM TO THE SCAFFOLD. AS FOR YOU...









HELLO, CRANIO. WHAT A LOVELY DAY!

G'DAY, PANDORA.



WHERE'S CORTO MALTESE?



EVERYTHING'S FINE, PANDORA.



HE'S BEEN WOUNDED AND I'VE HIDDEN HIM NEARBY. RASPUTIN MUSTN'T KNOW ABOUT IT.



ANY NEWS OF LIEUTENANT SLUTTER?

INDIRECTLY, YES... THE GERMAN ADMIRAL...



...VON SPEEKE HAS BEEN REFUELLED TWICE. ON HIS WAY BACK, HE ATTACKED PAPEETE IN TAHITI.

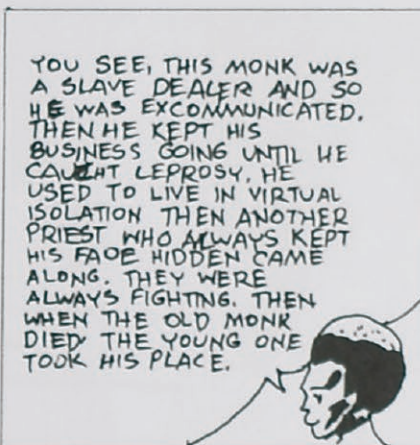


THE MONK IS RESPECTING THE AGREEMENT HE MADE WITH VON SPEEKE. NOW HE'S GOING TO CONTINUE DISRUPTING THE ALLIES SHIPPING WITH SLUTTER.

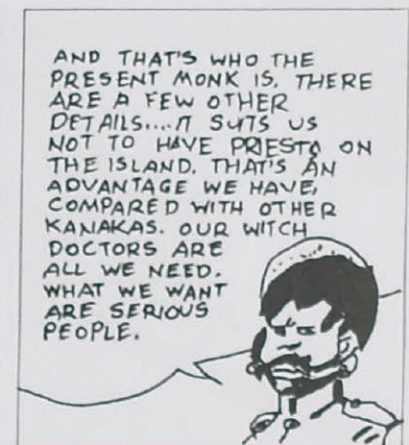
BUT WHO IS THE MONK? WHERE IS HE FROM?



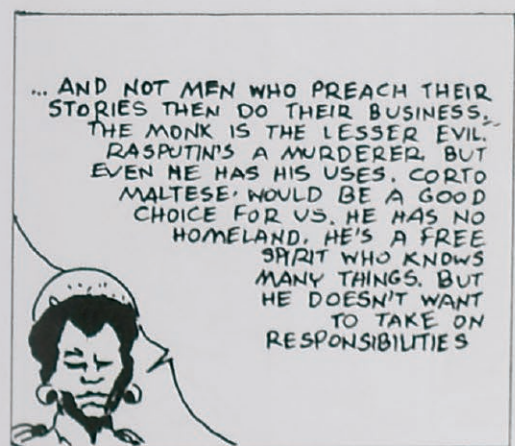
THE MONK IS A DEPROCKED PRIEST... THAT IS TO SAY NO, HE'S A FORMER PROTESTANT PASTOR WHO TOOK THE PLACE OF AN EXCOMMUNICATED MONK... OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT!



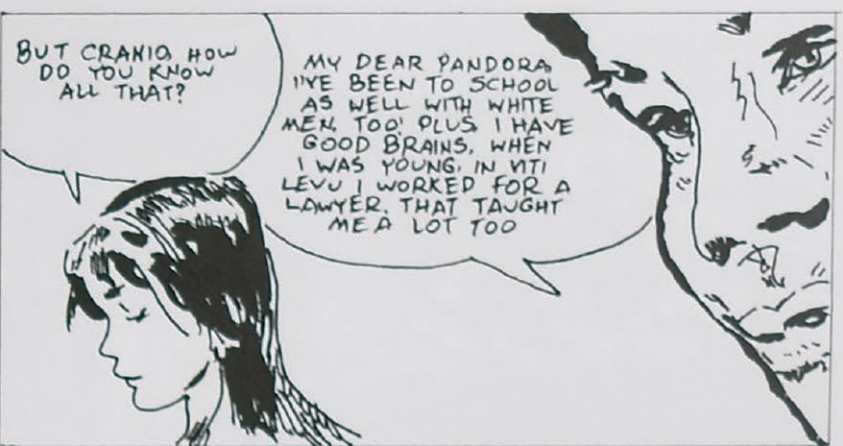
YOU SEE, THIS MONK WAS A SLAVE DEALER AND SO HE WAS EXCOMMUNICATED. THEN HE KEPT HIS BUSINESS GOING UNTIL HE CAUGHT LEPROSY. HE USED TO LIVE IN VIRTUAL ISOLATION THEN ANOTHER PRIEST WHO ALWAYS KEPT HIS FACE HIDDEN CAME ALONG. THEY WERE ALWAYS FIGHTING. THEN WHEN THE OLD MONK DIED THE YOUNG ONE TOOK HIS PLACE.



AND THAT'S WHO THE PRESENT MONK IS. THERE ARE A FEW OTHER DETAILS... IT SUITS US NOT TO HAVE PRESTO ON THE ISLAND. THAT'S AN ADVANTAGE WE HAVE COMPARED WITH OTHER KANAKAS. OUR WITCH DOCTORS ARE ALL WE NEED. WHAT WE WANT ARE SERIOUS PEOPLE.

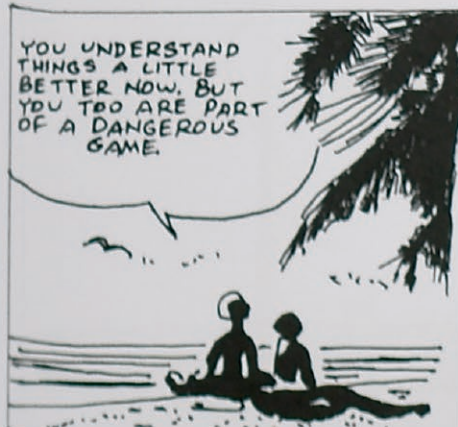


... AND NOT MEN WHO PREACH THEIR STORIES THEN DO THEIR BUSINESS. THE MONK IS THE LESSER EVIL. RASPUTIN'S A MURDERER, BUT EVEN HE HAS HIS USES. CORTO MALTESE WOULD BE A GOOD CHOICE FOR US. HE HAS NO HOMETLAND. HE'S A FREE SPIRIT WHO KNOWS MANY THINGS. BUT HE DOESN'T WANT TO TAKE ON RESPONSIBILITIES

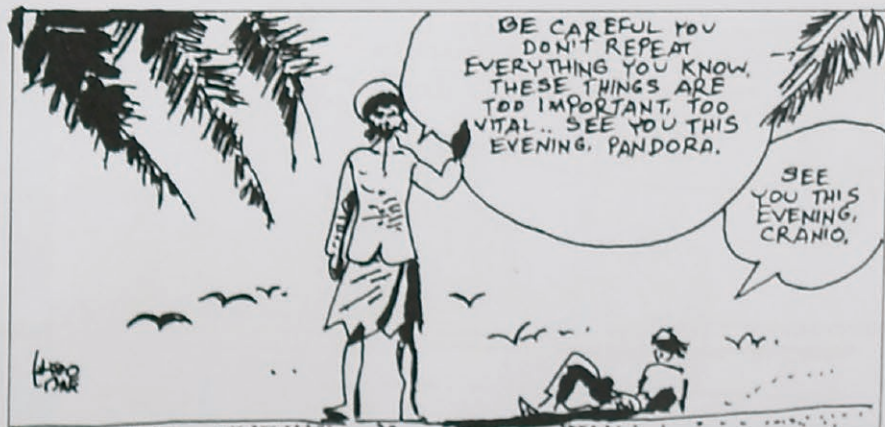


BUT CRANIO, HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THAT?

MY DEAR PANDORA I'VE BEEN TO SCHOOL AS WELL WITH WHITE MEN TOO! PLUS I HAVE GOOD BRAINS. WHEN I WAS YOUNG, IN VITI LEVU I WORKED FOR A LAWYER THAT TAUGHT ME A LOT TOO

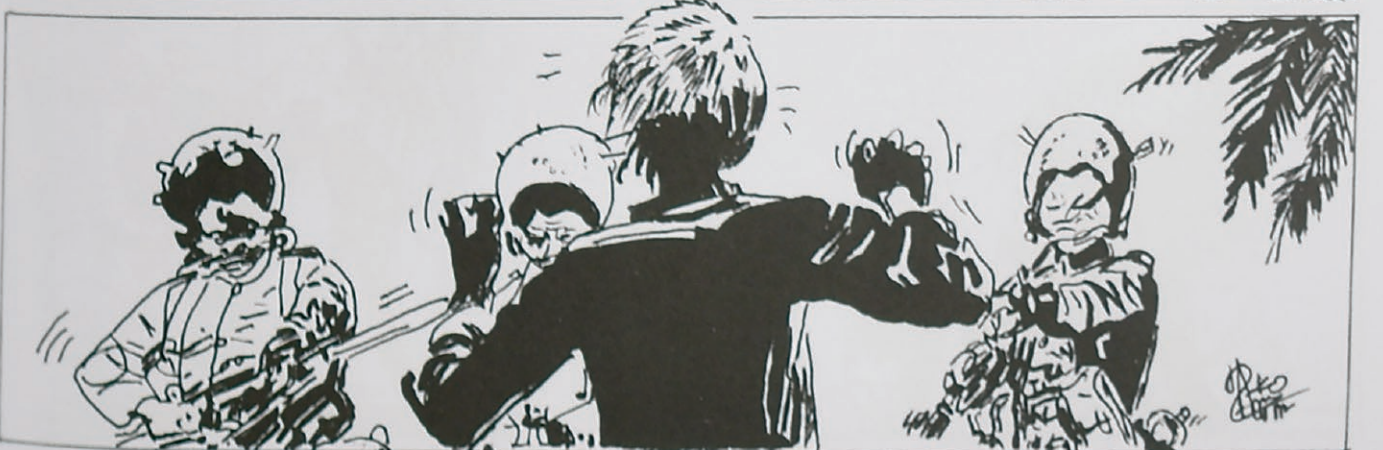
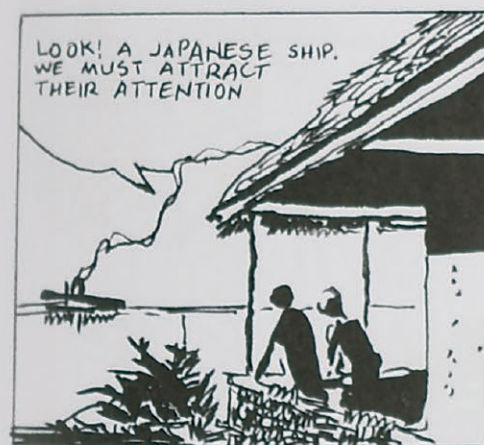
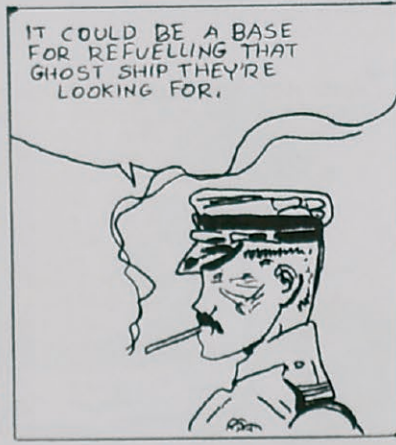


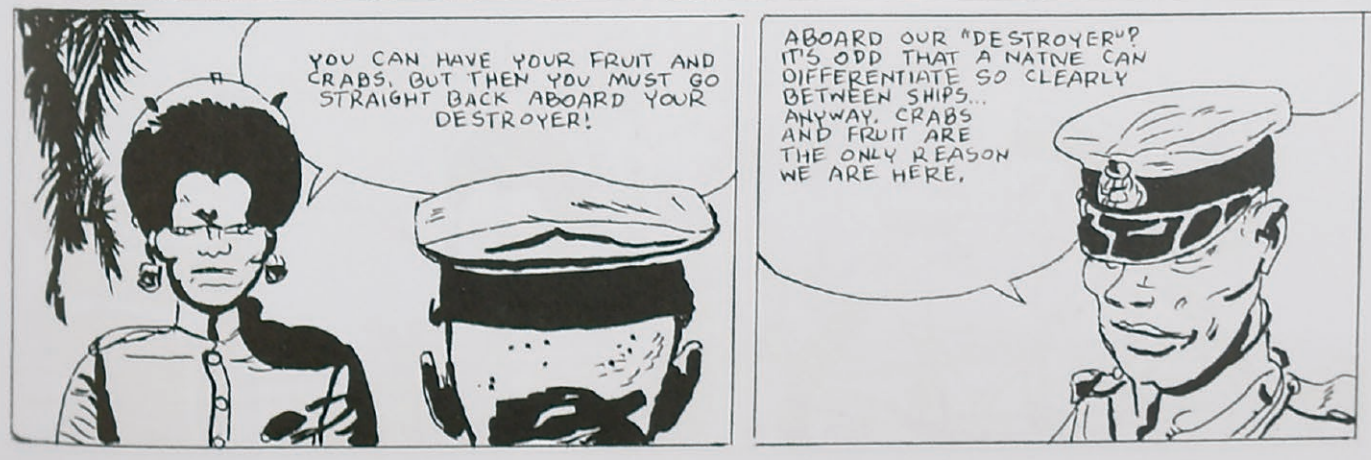
YOU UNDERSTAND THINGS A LITTLE BETTER NOW, BUT YOU TOO ARE PART OF A DANGEROUS GAME.

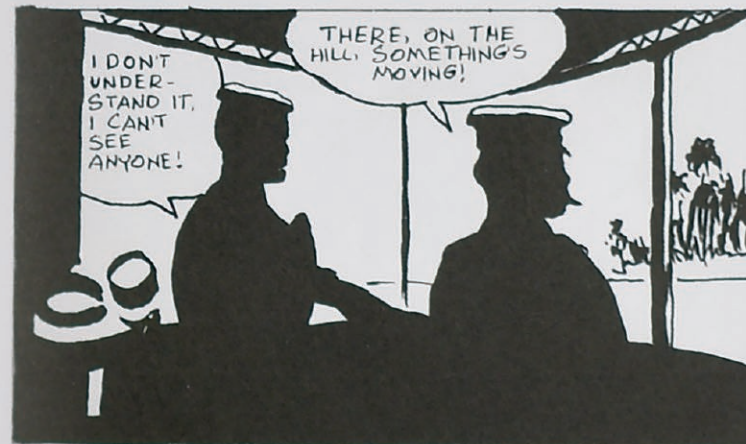
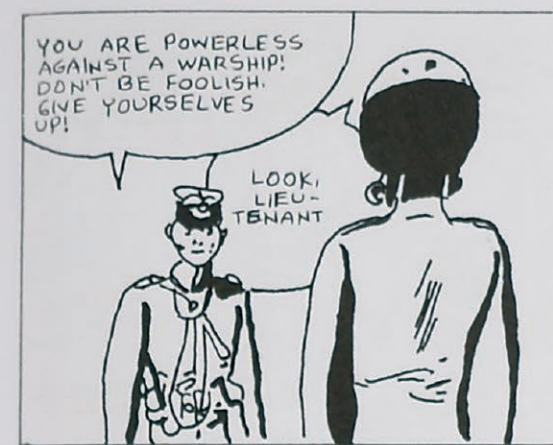
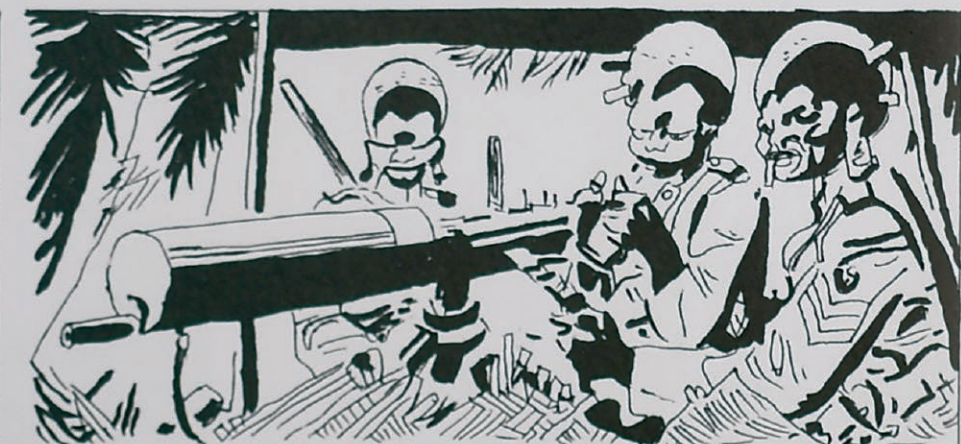
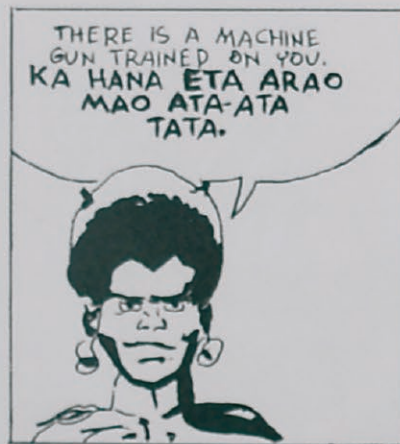


BE CAREFUL YOU DON'T REPEAT EVERYTHING YOU KNOW. THESE THINGS ARE TOO IMPORTANT, TOO VITAL... SEE YOU THIS EVENING, PANDORA.

SEE YOU THIS EVENING, CRANIO.





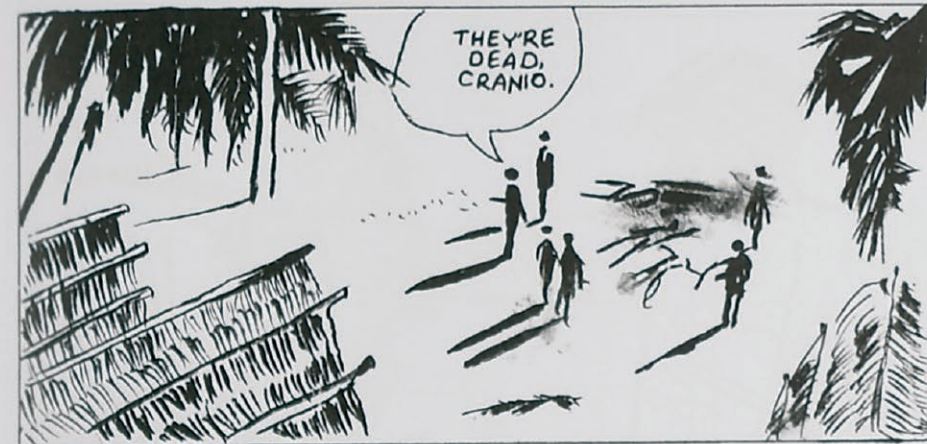




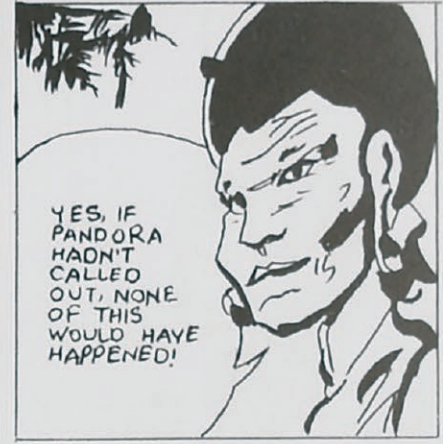
IT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE!



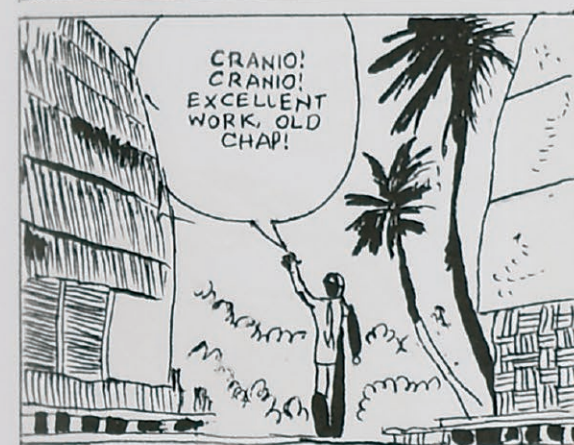
YOU DAMNED SAVAGES!



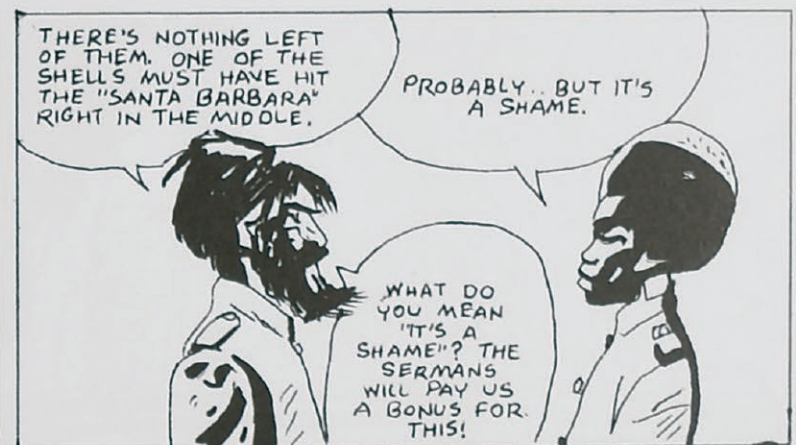
THEY'RE DEAD, CRANIO.



YES, IF PANDORA HADN'T CALLED OUT, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAPPENED!



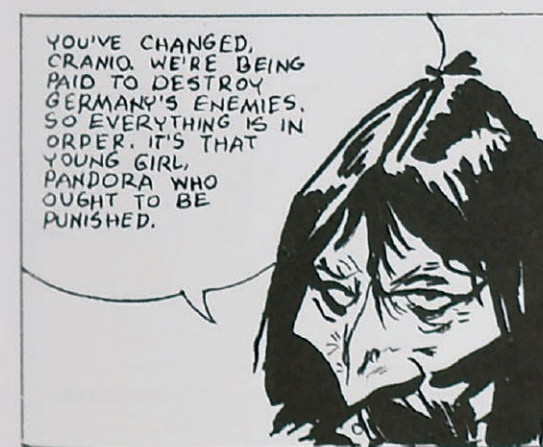
CRANIO! CRANIO! EXCELLENT WORK, OLD CHAP!



THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF THEM. ONE OF THE SHELLS MUST HAVE HIT THE "SANTA BARBARA" RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE.

PROBABLY... BUT IT'S A SHAME.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN "IT'S A SHAME"? THE SERMANS WILL PAY US A BONUS FOR THIS!



YOU'VE CHANGED, CRANIO. WE'RE BEING PAID TO DESTROY GERMANY'S ENEMIES. SO EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER. IT'S THAT YOUNG GIRL, PANDORA WHO OUGHT TO BE PUNISHED.



I'LL TAKE HER OFF WITH ME AND GIVE HER A FEW LASHES OF THE WHIP. THAT'LL BUCK HER IDEAS UP A BIT!



SHE MUST BE PUNISHED! IT WAS HER FAULT THE JAPANESE NEARLY DISCOVERED US!

NO ONE IS GOING TO BE PUNISHED! YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT THE MONK WOULD NEVER FORGIVE US!

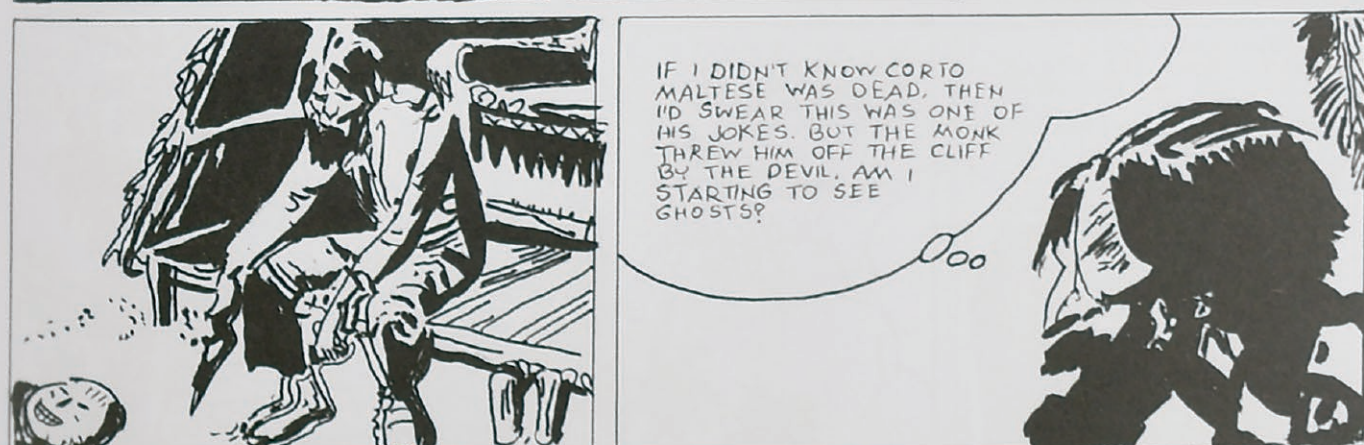
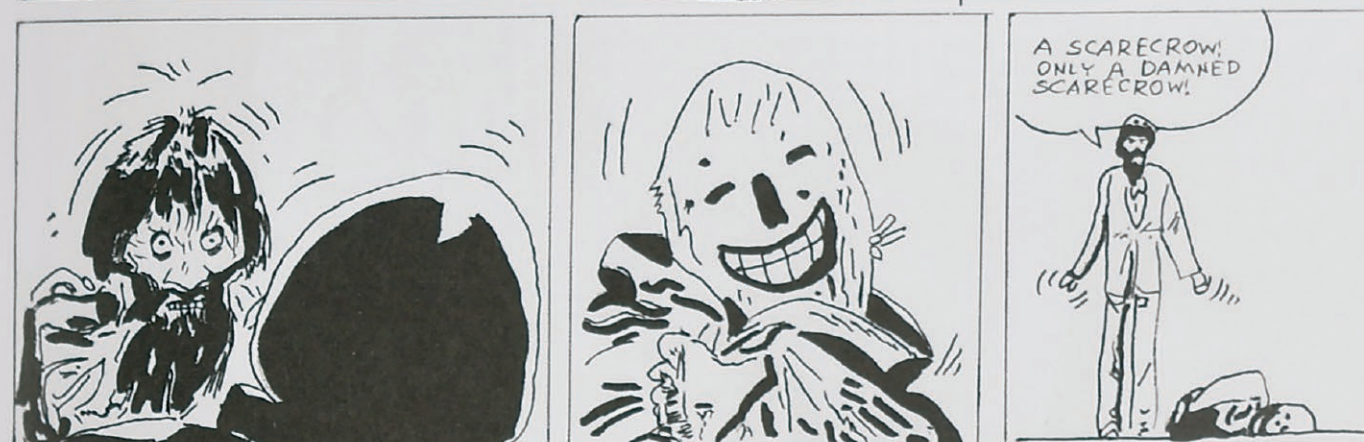


LOOK, CRANIO THIS IS A "38". IT COULD DO FOR THE MONK AS WELL!



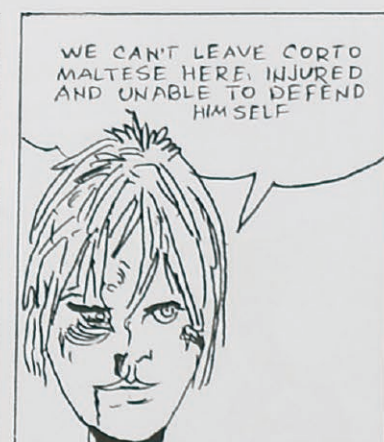
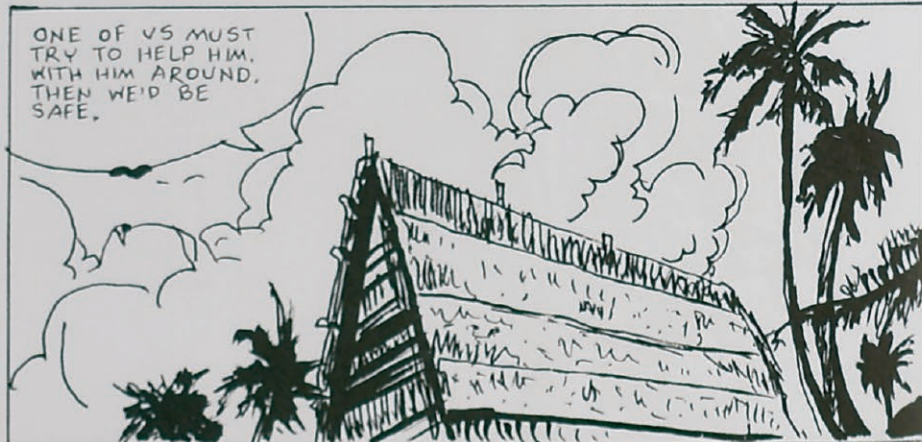
YOU KNOW WHAT I DON'T LIKE ABOUT YOU, RASPUTIN? ALMOST EVERYTHING!

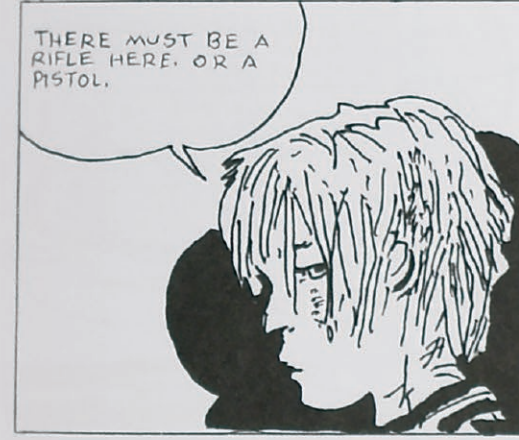
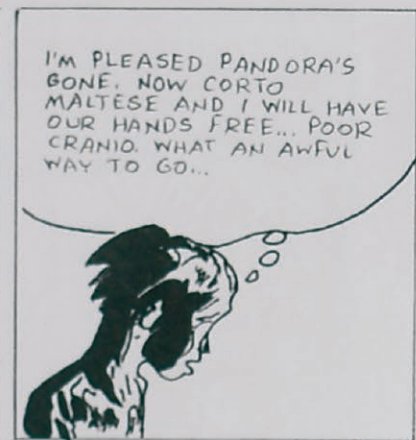
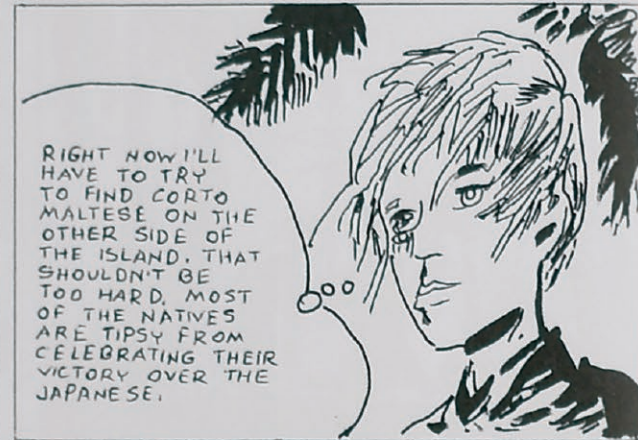
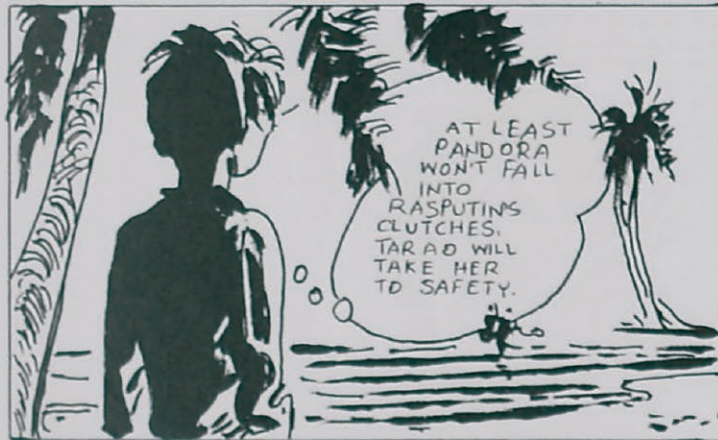






YES, I KNOW, THE FOUL MURDERER!





JUST A SECOND WHAT DID YOU SAY? I'M THE REASON YOU STAYED? WHERE'S PANDORA?

PANDORA AND TARAO HAVE ESCAPED ABOARD A PROQUE I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO WITH THEM, BUT I DECIDED TO STAY.

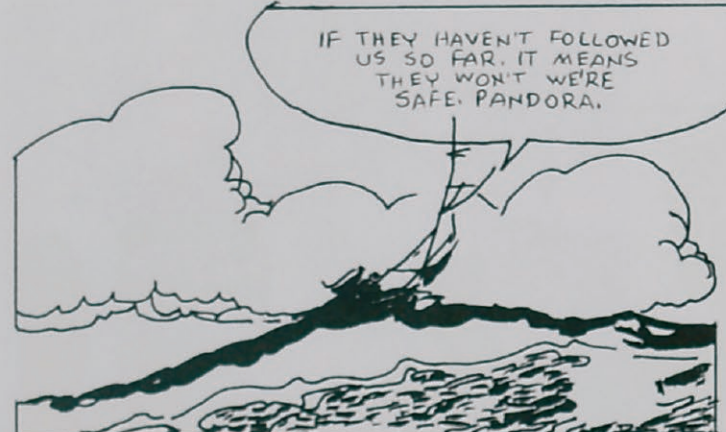


YOU REALLY ARE FOOL HARDY, GAIN. I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU BUT I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE. LET'S GO

FAR AWAY FROM ESCONDIDA...



THE GULLS ARE LEAVING US PANDORA. THAT MEANS WE'RE NOW A LONG WAY FROM THE ISLAND.



IF THEY HAVEN'T FOLLOWED US SO FAR, IT MEANS THEY WON'T WE'RE SAFE, PANDORA.



SAFE? ALONE ON THIS COCONUT SHELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC?



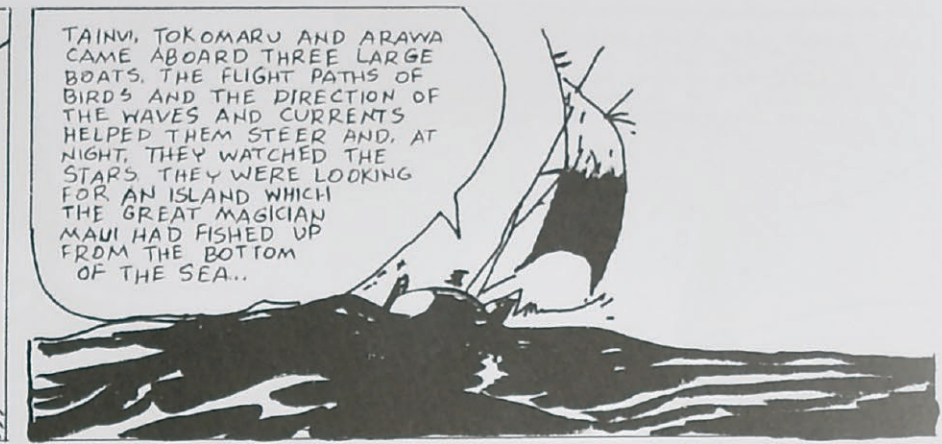
DON'T WORRY, THE WEATHER'S FINE AND WE MAORIS ARE ALWAYS IN GRACE WITH THE SEA. THAT'S WHY MY PEOPLE WERE ABLE TO COME FROM PORA PORA IN THEIR GREAT CANOES.



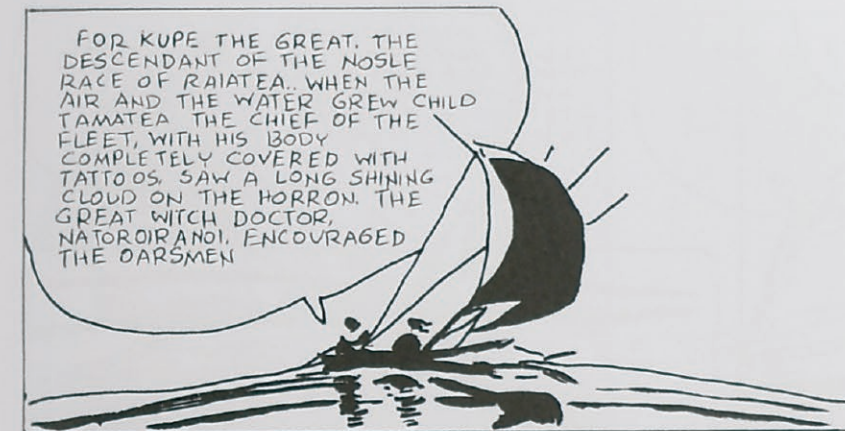
PORA PORA'S NEAR TAHITI, ISN'T IT?



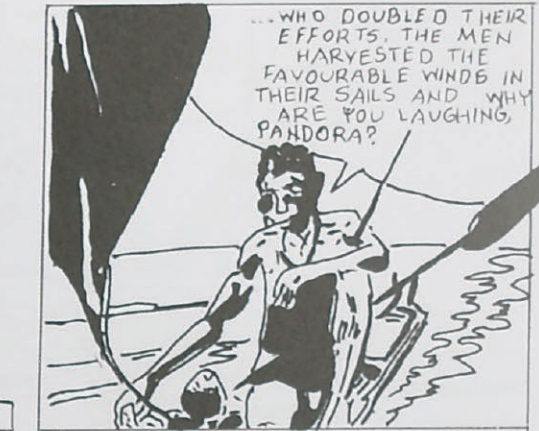
HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO COME SO FAR, TARAO?



TAINI, TOKOMARU AND ARAWA CAME ABOARD THREE LARGE BOATS. THE FLIGHT PATHS OF BIRDS AND THE DIRECTION OF THE WAVES AND CURRENTS HELPED THEM STEER AND, AT NIGHT, THEY WATCHED THE STARS THEY WERE LOOKING FOR AN ISLAND WHICH THE GREAT MAGICIAN MAUI HAD FISHED UP FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA...



FOR KUPE THE GREAT, THE DESCENDANT OF THE NOSLE RACE OF RAIATEA, WHEN THE AIR AND THE WATER GREW CHILD TAMATEA THE CHIEF OF THE FLEET, WITH HIS BODY COMPLETELY COVERED WITH TATTOOS SAW A LONG SHINING CLOUD ON THE HORIZON. THE GREAT WITCH DOCTOR, NATOROIRANOI, ENCOURAGED THE OARSMEN



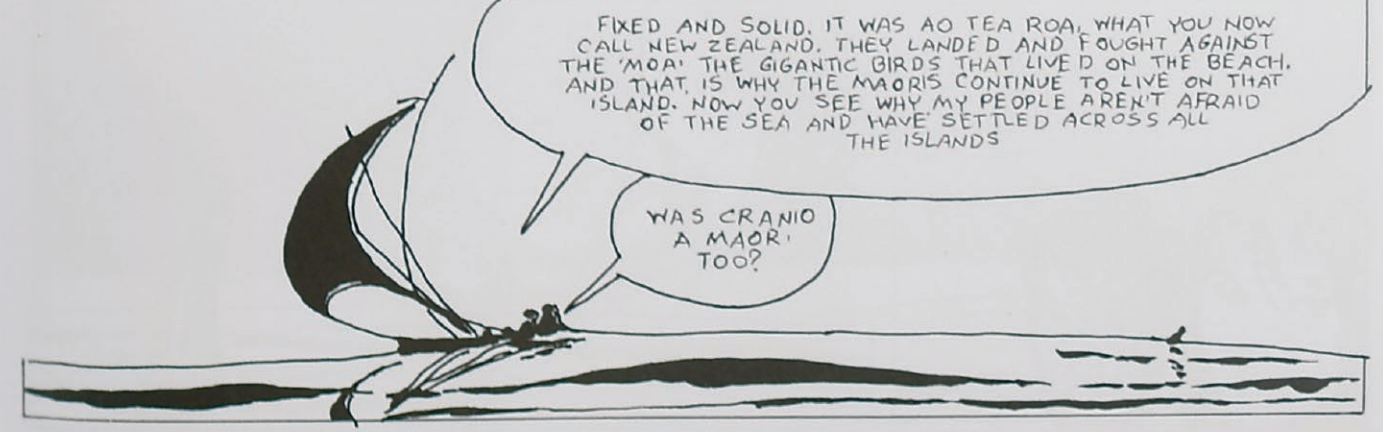
...WHO DOUBLED THEIR EFFORTS, THE MEN HARVESTED THE FAVOURABLE WINDS IN THEIR SAILS AND WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING, PANDORA?



NO, I'M NOT LAUGHING I THINK YOUR STORY'S FASCINATING SO ON, TARAO!



BUT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT... SO THE CRAFT MOVED ON RAPIDLY BETWEEN THE LEAPING DOLPHINS, TOWARDS NIGHTFALL THE CLOUD BECAME...



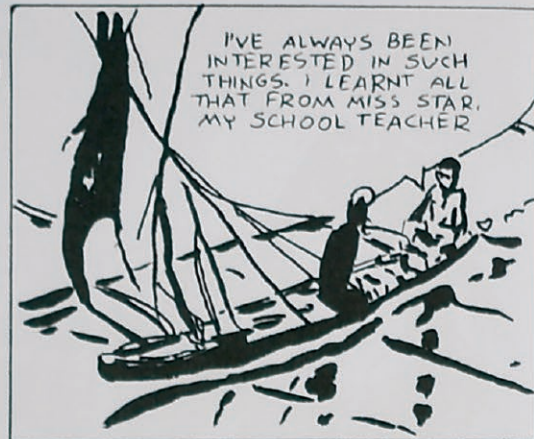
FIXED AND SOLID, IT WAS AO TEA ROA, WHAT YOU NOW CALL NEW ZEALAND. THEY LANDED AND FOUGHT AGAINST THE MOA, THE GIGANTIC BIRDS THAT LIVE D ON THE BEACH, AND THAT IS WHY THE MAORIS CONTINUE TO LIVE ON THAT ISLAND. NOW YOU SEE WHY MY PEOPLE AREN'T AFRAID OF THE SEA AND HAVE SETTLED ACROSS ALL THE ISLANDS

WAS CRANIO A MAORI TOO?



NO. CRANIO WAS A MELANESIAN FROM FIJI, ALMOST THE SAME AS THE PEOPLE THAT RANGE FROM NEW GUINEA TO THE BISMARCK, THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, THE NEW HEBRIDES AND THEN AS FAR AS FIJI.

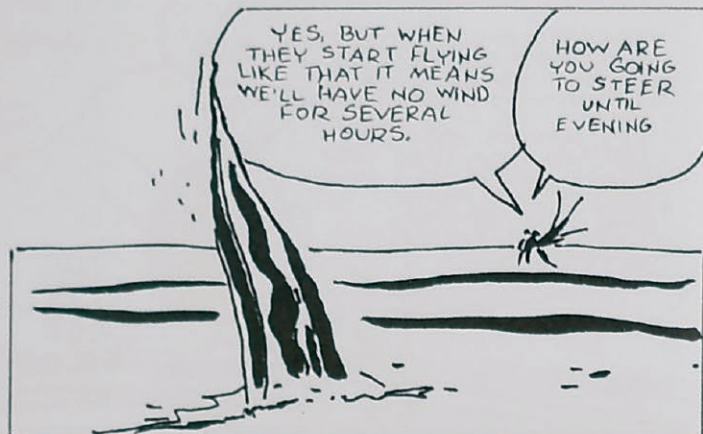
BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS, TARAO? IT IS ALL NEW TO ME



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN INTERESTED IN SUCH THINGS. I LEARNT ALL THAT FROM MISS STAR, MY SCHOOL TEACHER

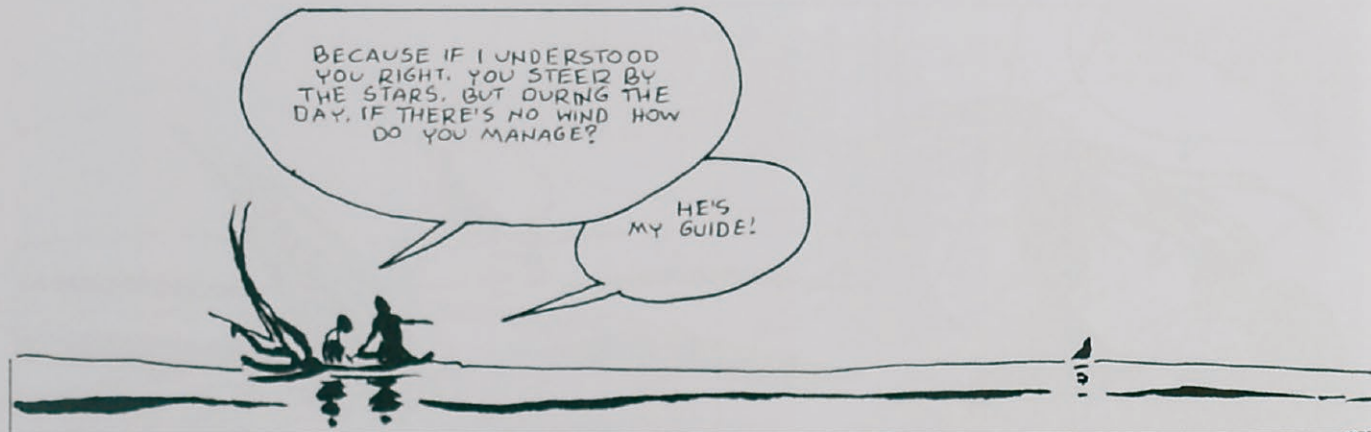


LOOK, TARAO, AREN'T THEY LOVELY?



YES, BUT WHEN THEY START FLYING LIKE THAT IT MEANS WE'LL HAVE NO WIND FOR SEVERAL HOURS.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO STEER UNTIL EVENING



BECAUSE IF I UNDERSTOOD YOU RIGHT, YOU STEER BY THE STARS. BUT DURING THE DAY, IF THERE'S NO WIND HOW DO YOU MANAGE?

HE'S MY GUIDE!



MY GOD! IT'S A SHARK!

IT'S MAO, HE'S BEEN FOLLOWING US FOR SOME TIME.

MAO?! YOU TALK LIKE HE WAS A FRIEND OF YOURS!

HE IS A FRIEND TO ALL THE MAORIS. FOR CENTURIES, MAO HAS GONE WITH MY PEOPLE WHEN THEY CROSS THE GREAT SEAS.

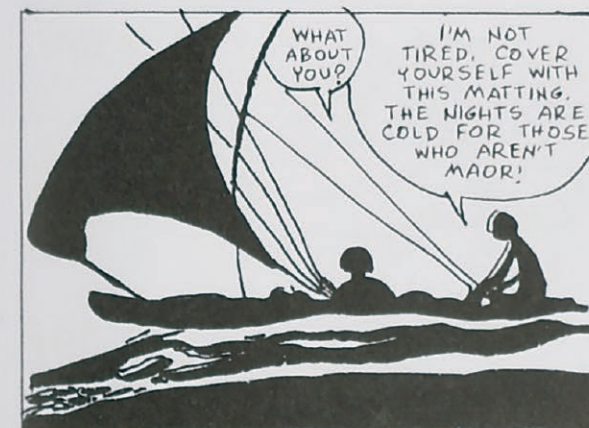


DON'T BE AFRAID, PANDORA, MAO IS OUR FRIEND. HE JUST WANTS A LITTLE COMPANY.

I COULD WELL DO WITHOUT HIS.



YOU SHOULD SLEEP NOW, PANDORA.

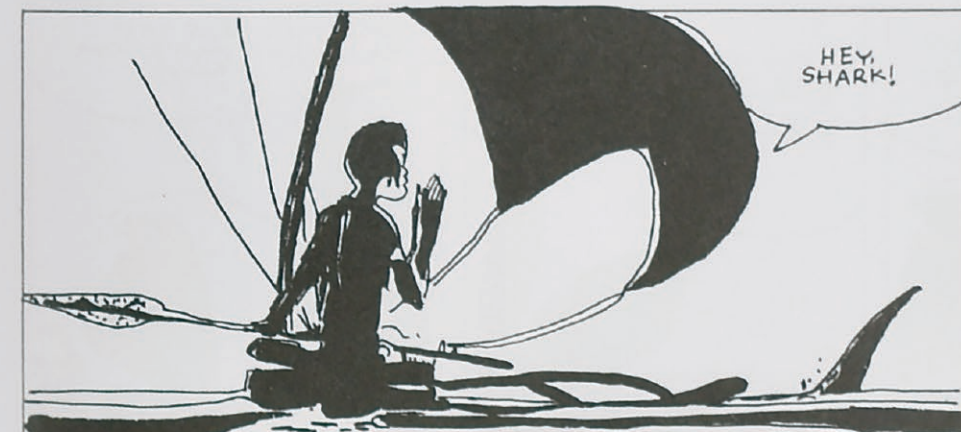


WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I'M NOT TIRED, COVER YOURSELF WITH THIS MATTING. THE NIGHTS ARE COLD FOR THOSE WHO AREN'T MAORI!



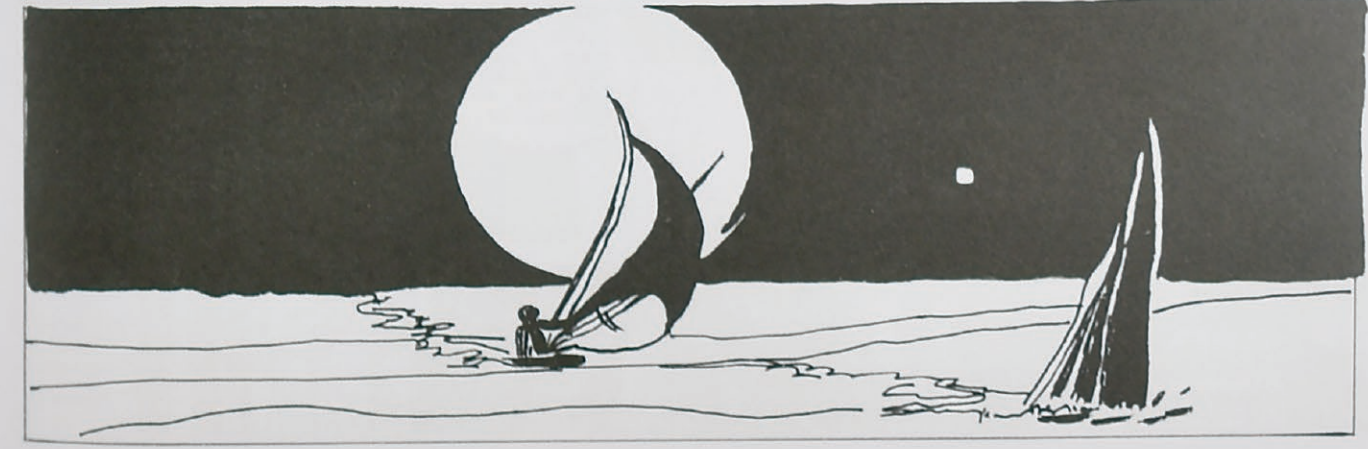
AND SO MAUI TOLD THEM TO FISH AND KUPE HOOKED A BEAUTIFUL ISLAND AND THEY ALL SAID "TO GO".

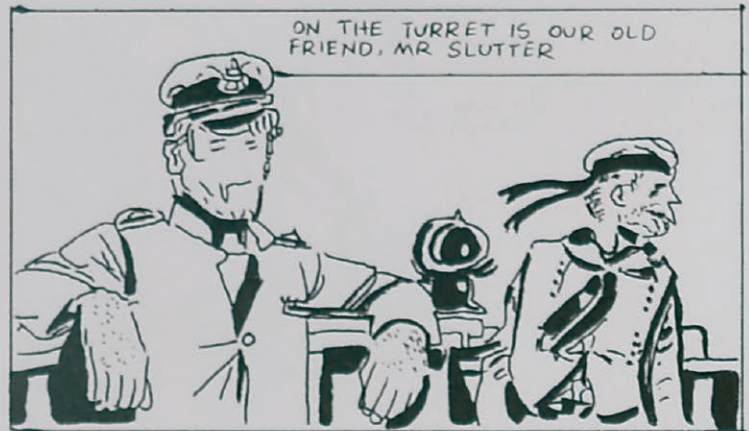


HEY, SHARK!



SHARK, MY FRIEND, GUIDE ME TO AO TEA ROA... GUIDE TARAO AS ONCE YOU GUIDED TAMATEA AND ARAWA AND BEFORE THEM TOKOMARU AND TAINVII





ON THE TURRET IS OUR OLD FRIEND, MR. SLUTTER



MR. GLUTTER, THE MONK WANTS TO SEE YOU.

OKAY, TAKE MY PLACE.



YOU CALLED FOR ME, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I CAN'T MAKE CONTACT WITH



OUR ISLAND, SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED. I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO CRANO FOR THREE DAYS.



SINCE THEN, WE'VE LOST ALL CONTACT. WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?



MY OPINION IS THAT ESCONDIDA DOESN'T WANT TO CONTACT US!



DON'T BE STUPID, SLUTTER, I AM THE MONK! THE KING OF ESCONDIDA!

YOU ASKED MY OPINION AND I GAVE IT TO YOU. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO NOW?



WE'RE GOING TO TURN BACK TO ESCONDIDA.



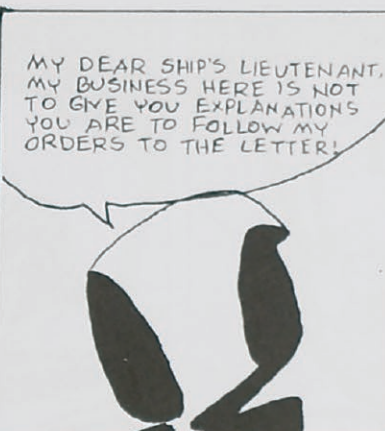
SHAME! WE'LL MISS A LOVELY CHANCE TO SINK THE "PORT KEMBLA" WHICH IS FULL OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AS WELL AS THE



"NAGA MARU" AND STEAMBOATS FULL OF PASSENGERS. THIS SORT OF THING IS BECOMING OUR SPECIALITY.



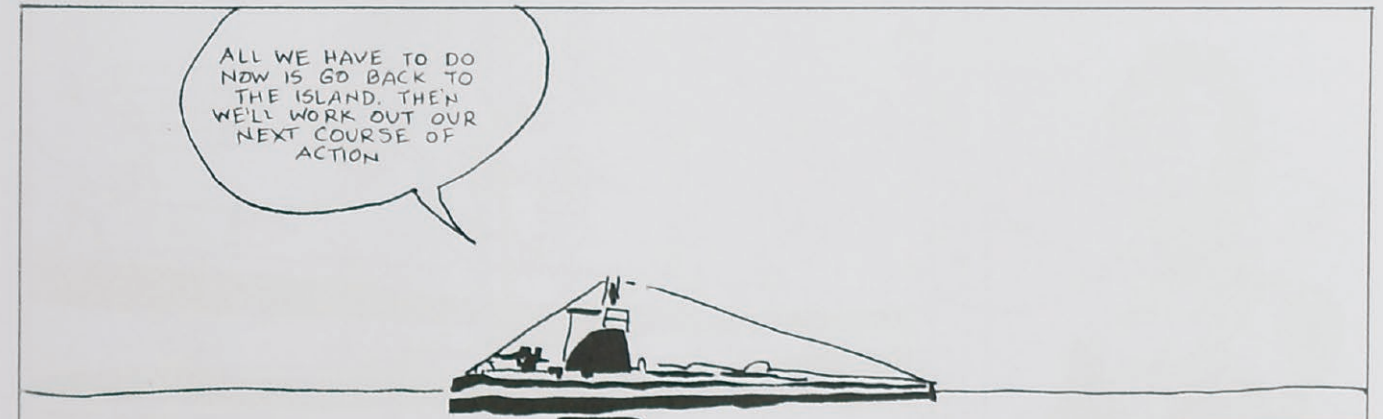
WHY BE SO SARCASTIC, SLUTTER? WE COULDN'T LET THOSE PEOPLE GO FREE JUST TO SATISFY YOUR CHIVALROUS SENTIMENTS. I CERTAINLY WASN'T GOING TO LOSE 9,500 TONS WITHOUT LIFTING A FINGER!



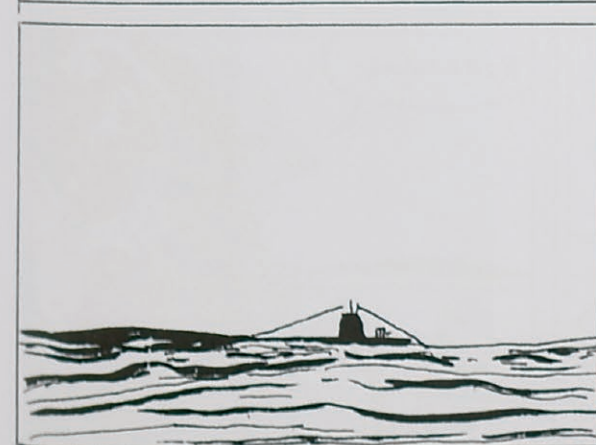
MY DEAR SHIP'S LIEUTENANT, MY BUSINESS HERE IS NOT TO GIVE YOU EXPLANATIONS YOU ARE TO FOLLOW MY ORDERS TO THE LETTER!



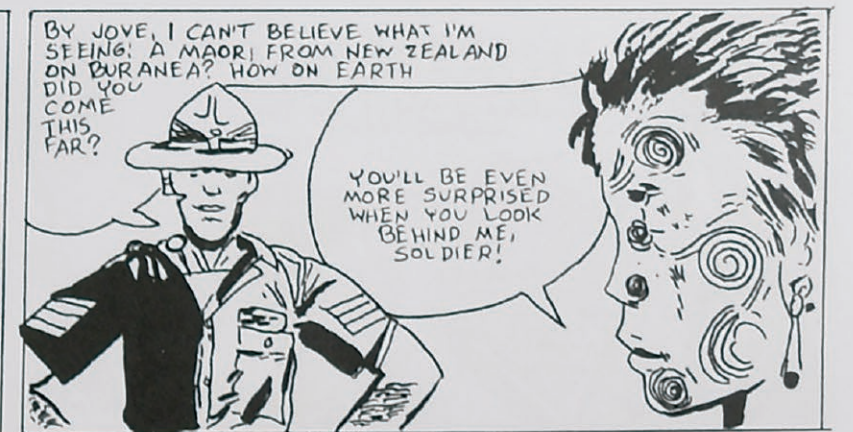
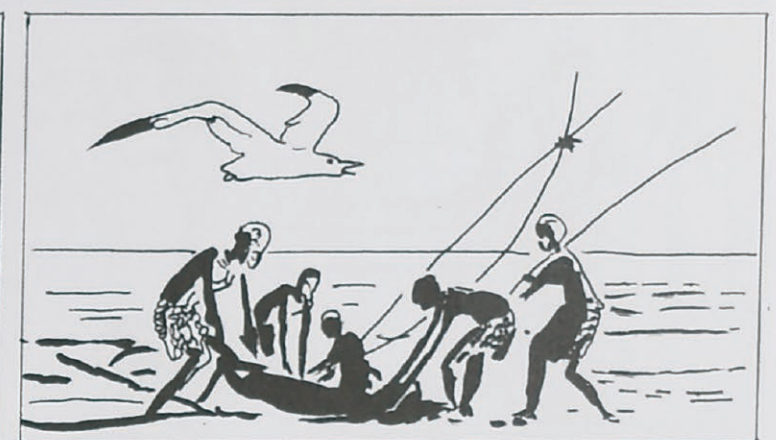
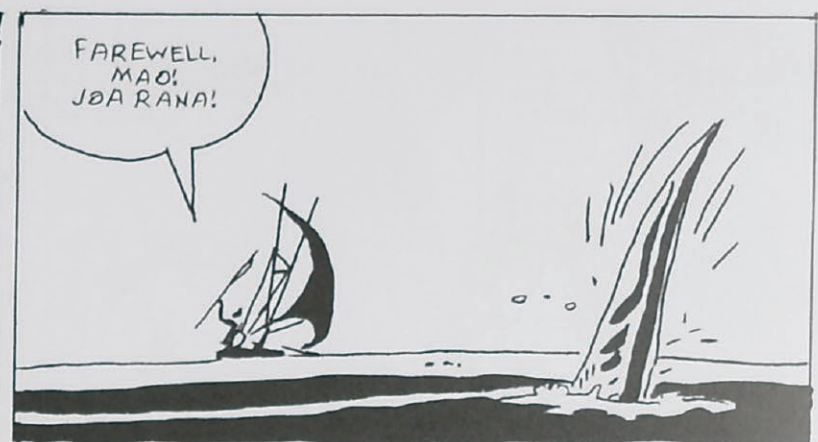
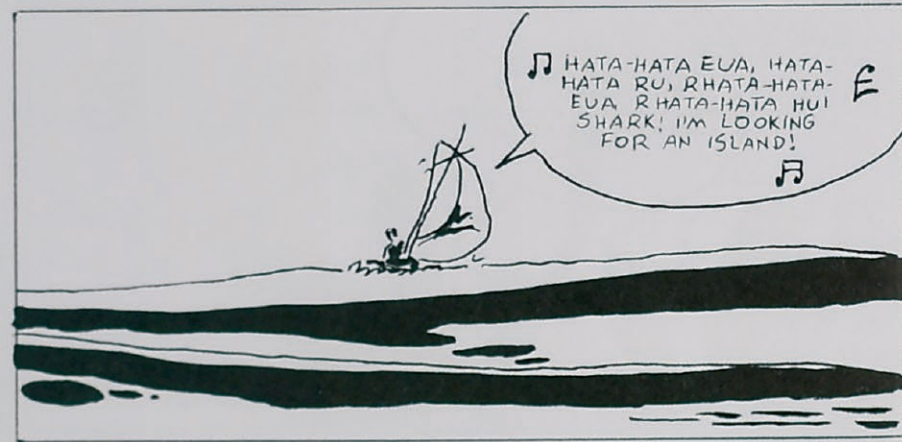
IN ANY CASE, IT'S TOO LATE FOR RECRIMINATIONS NOW. THE BRITISH AND JAPANESE FLEETS ARE AFTER US FOR PIRACY AND, SLUTTER, YOUR NAME FIGURES ON THE LIST WHICH THE NAVY HAS SENT TO ITS NAVAL COMMISSIONERS.



ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS GO BACK TO THE ISLAND, THEN WE'LL WORK OUT OUR NEXT COURSE OF ACTION



MEANWHILE, FARTHER AWAY TO THE SOUTH WEST

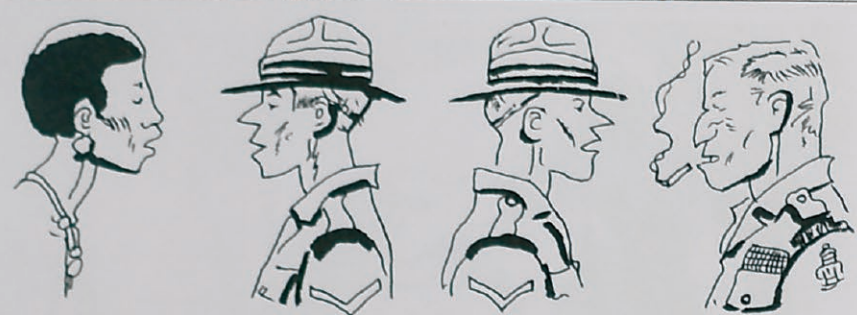




GOOD GOD!
A WHITE GIRL!



QUICK, SOMEONE FETCH
THE DOCTOR. THEN INFORM
THE COLONEL. QUACK! STOP
STANDING THERE LIKE
IDIOTS. GET ON WITH IT!



A WHITE GIRL WITH
A MAORI. HERE ON
BURANEA. THAT'S
INCREDIBLE!

SHORTLY...
SO, IT'S TRUE. HOW ON EARTH
DID YOU WIND UP HERE? I
MEAN, DAMN IT, WHO ARE
YOU AND WHERE DO YOU
COME FROM?
I AM PANDORA
GROOVESNORE
AND HE'S TARAO,
A FRIEND WHO'S
SAVED MY LIFE
SEVERAL TIMES

WE HAVE COME FROM ESCONDIDA, THE
MONK'S ISLAND, WHERE I WAS HELD PRISONER
WITH MY COUSIN, CAIN GROOVESNORE.
THE GERMANS ARE USING
THE ISLAND AS A BASE
FOR THEIR RAIDS AND...
PANDORA GOES ON
WITH HER STORY...



MEANWHILE, ON
ESCONDIDA...

RASPUTIN, WE'VE BEEN WITHOUT
ANY NEWS FOR TWO WEEKS.
YOUR EXCUSE DOESN'T HOLD
WATER. THE RADIO WORKS!

BUT...
I HAVEN'T
BEEN CRANIO,
WHERE IS HE?

I HAD TO KILL HIM, MONK.
HE WANTED TO GIVE
HIMSELF UP TO THE
JAPANESE... SO I...

SO... YOU KILLED HIM?? AND
YOU THINK I'M GOING TO
BELIEVE YOUR STORY? DAMN
YOU RASPUTIN!!! WHY?

HE WAS GOING
TO MUTINY.
BELIEVE ME!
IT'S THE TRUTH!

CRANIO ANNOYED YOU,
THAT'S WHY YOU KILLED
HIM. JUST THANK YOUR
LUCKY STARS...

...THAT I STILL NEED
YOU. BUT ONE MORE
MISTAKE AND YOU'RE A
DEAD MAN!

WHERE ARE THE
GROOVESNORE
CHILDREN?

THEY'VE DISAPPEARED...
ALONG WITH THE YOUNG
MAORI. WE'VE BEEN LOOKING
FOR THEM EVERYWHERE BUT
IT'S AS IF THEY'VE VANISHED
INTO THIN AIR.

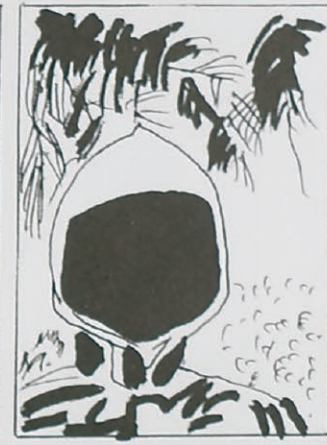
THE TWO GROOVES-
NORES HAVE VANISHED
AND YOU JUST CALMLY
TELL ME THE NEWS!
COME BACK TO THE
RESIDENCE SO THAT
WE CAN HAVE A
LITTLE CHAT!



YOU DOG! I OUGHT TO
KILL YOU, BUT I STILL
NEED YOU...



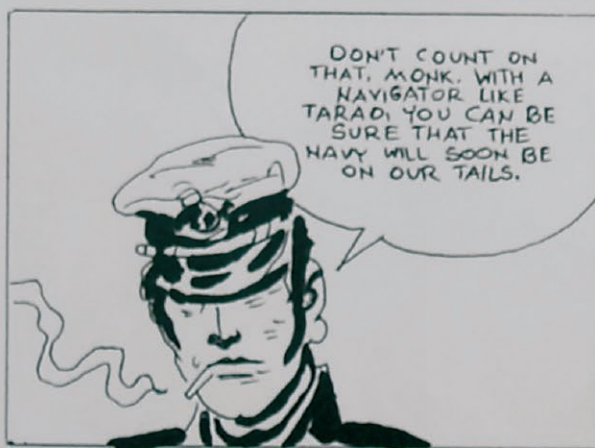
MONK!



YES, IT'S ME.
STILL ALIVE
AND KICKING.
AS YOU CAN
SEE, MONK, I'M
A TOUGH NUT
TO CRACK.
NOW LISTEN
TO ME AND
NO FOOLING
AROUND

THIS TIME, I'M ON MY GUARD! I SUPPOSE
YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT RASPUTIN'S
KILLED CRAND SO HE COULD TAKE
POSSESSION OF THE ISLAND AND THE
TREASURE... WHAT'S MORE, HE HAD HIS
BYE ON PANDORA...

GO ON!





BY JOVE, THIS IS QUITE A PIECE OF NEWS. TAKE A LOOK, OLD CHAP!

DAMN IT! WE MUST TELL THE NAVY AT ONCE. FULL STEAM BACK TO BURANEA!



ON ESCONDIDA

THANK HEAVENS THE MONK HAS LEFT ME FREE



...AND DOESNT BLAME ME FOR PANDORA'S ESCAPE!



HOW ARE THINGS, CAIN?

OH! HELLO, MR SLUTTER



IS SOMETHING WRONG?

OH YES MY LAD, THE WORST THING THAT COULD HAPPEN TO A MAN!



I'M CAUGHT UP IN THIS AFFAIR, AND IT ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY TO GET OUT AGAIN... ANYWAY, WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?



VON SPEEKE RAN INTO THE BRITISH OFF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS



AND YOUR SIDE WON, CAIN!



AH YES IT MUST BE SNOWING NOW AT HOME, IN LUBECK...



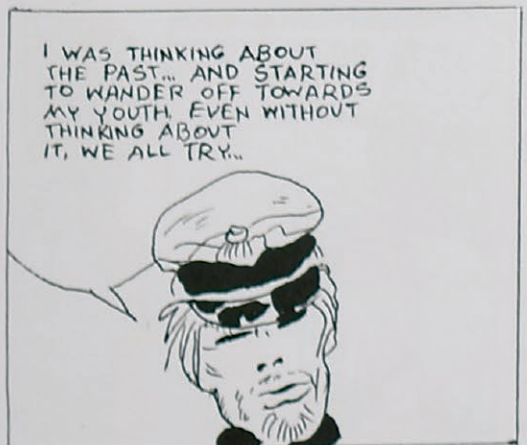
BUT HERE, THERE IS ONLY THE SUN, SEE YOU SOON, CAIN.

GOODBYE, MR SLUTTER!

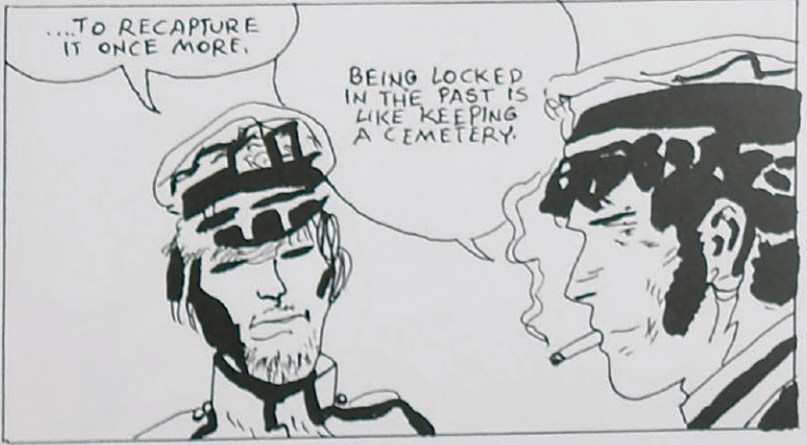


OH! I DIDN'T SEE YOU, CORTO,

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT, MR SLUTTER?



I WAS THINKING ABOUT THE PAST... AND STARTING TO WANDER OFF TOWARDS MY YOUTH EVEN WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT, WE ALL TRY...



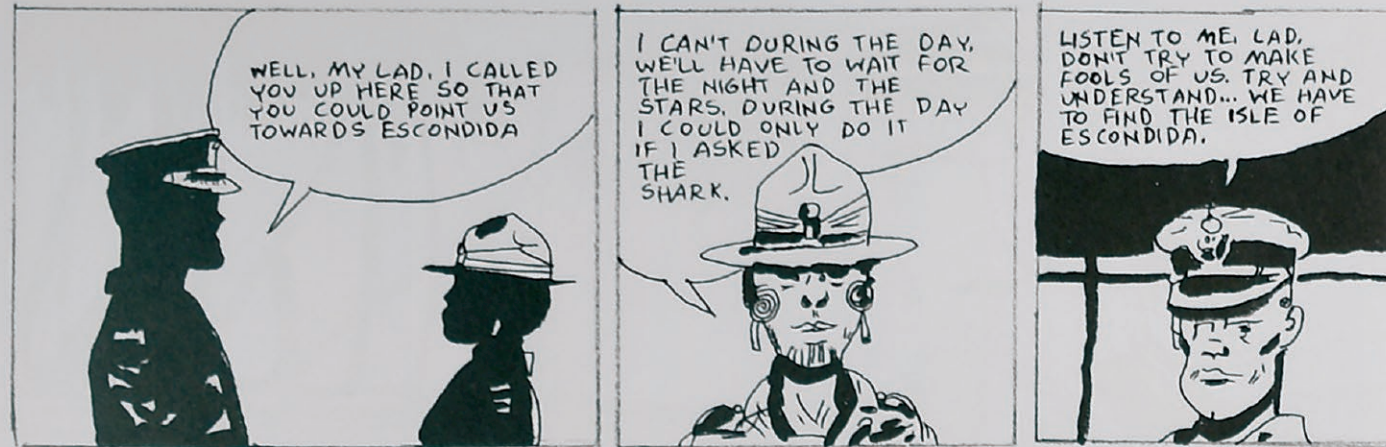
...TO RECAPTURE IT ONCE MORE.

BEING LOCKED IN THE PAST IS LIKE KEEPING A CEMETERY.



MEANWHILE, A FEW MILES TO THE SOUTH...

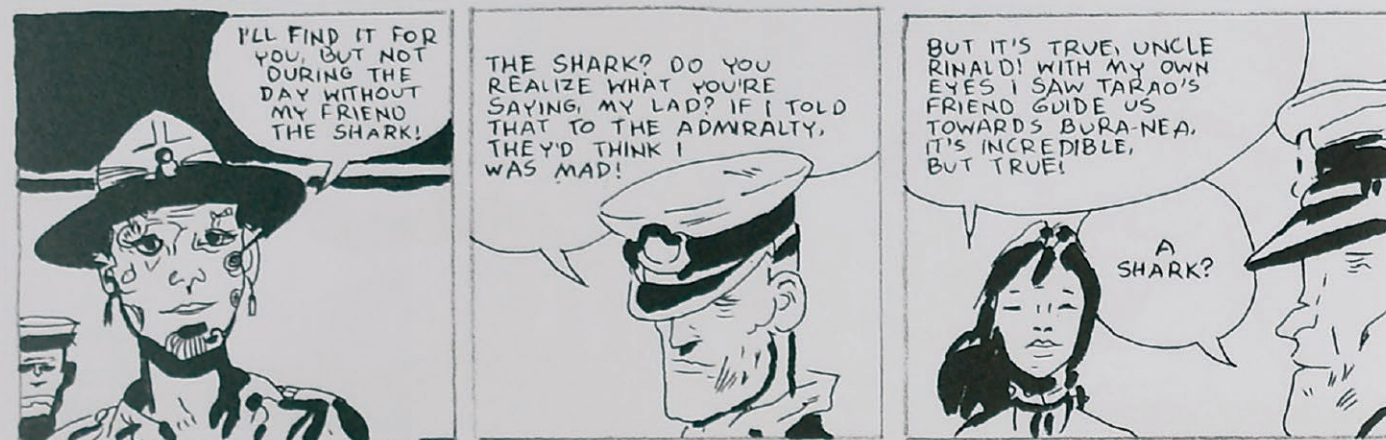




WELL, MY LAD, I CALLED YOU UP HERE SO THAT YOU COULD POINT US TOWARDS ESCONDIDA

I CAN'T DURING THE DAY, WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR THE NIGHT AND THE STARS. DURING THE DAY I COULD ONLY DO IT IF I ASKED THE SHARK.

LISTEN TO ME, LAD, DON'T TRY TO MAKE FOOLS OF US. TRY AND UNDERSTAND... WE HAVE TO FIND THE ISLE OF ESCONDIDA.



I'LL FIND IT FOR YOU, BUT NOT DURING THE DAY WITHOUT MY FRIEND THE SHARK!

THE SHARK? DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, MY LAD? IF I TOLD THAT TO THE ADMIRALTY, THEY'D THINK I WAS MAD!

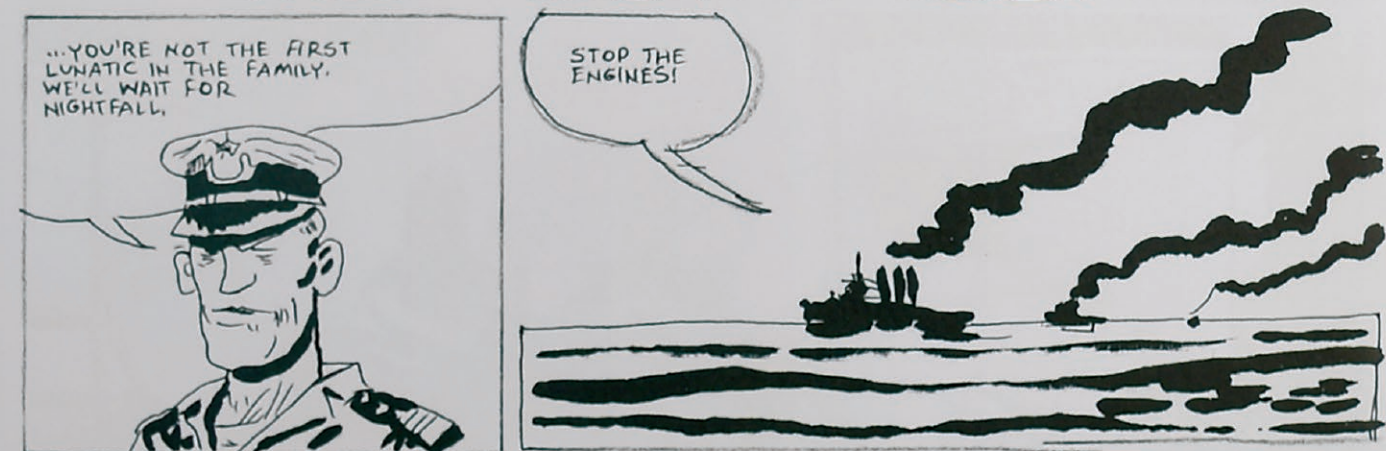
BUT IT'S TRUE, UNCLE RINALD! WITH MY OWN EYES I SAW TARAO'S FRIEND GUIDE US TOWARDS BUR-NEA. IT'S INCREDIBLE, BUT TRUE!

A SHARK?



YES, A SHARK. I KNOW IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE, UNCLE RINALD.

THAT'S ENOUGH PANDORA. LET'S LET THE MATTER DROP, SHALL WE? ANYWAY



...YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST LUNATIC IN THE FAMILY. WE'LL WAIT FOR NIGHTFALL.

STOP THE ENGINES!



WHAT THE? WHO'S...?

DID I FRIGHTEN YOU, CAIN?

YES, A LITTLE, I WAS THINKING AND I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COMING.



CAIN, WE'LL SOON BE ABANDONING THIS ISLAND. YOU ARE TO COME WITH ME.

ESCONDIDA IS GOING TO BE OCCUPIED BY THE ENGLISH, BUT I WON'T BE HERE TO SEE IT.

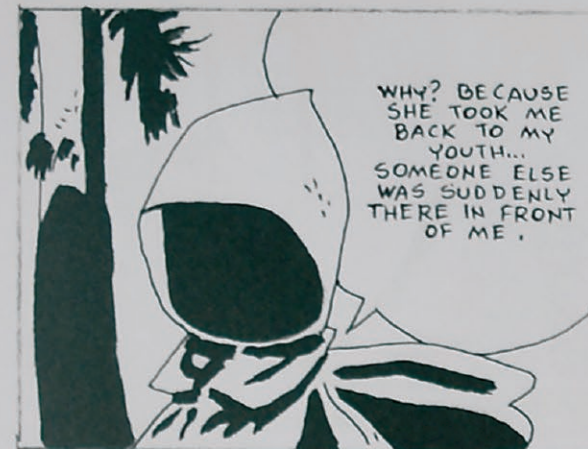
I UNDERSTAND. I WILL BE YOUR HOSTAGE!



NO, CAIN. THAT'S NOT WHY I'M TAKING YOU WITH ME. ON THE CONTRARY, IT'S BECAUSE I LIKE YOU!

THERE ARE MANY THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW YET, BUT YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO ME... PANDORA TOO... BUT UNFORTUNATELY, OR PERHAPS FORTUNATELY, SHE IS NO LONGER HERE.

PANDORA? NOW I THINK ABOUT IT, THE FIRST TIME YOU SAW HER, YOU FLEW OFF IN A RASE WHY?



WHY? BECAUSE SHE TOOK ME BACK TO MY YOUTH... SOMEONE ELSE WAS SUDDENLY THERE IN FRONT OF ME.



SOMEONE WHO MEANT EVERYTHING TO ME... WHO WAS MY LIFE'S PURPOSE.

I DON'T FOLLOW YOU, MONK. PANDORA REMINDED YOU OF SOMEONE... BUT WHO WAS THIS PERSON YOU NEARLY WENT MAD REMEMBERING?

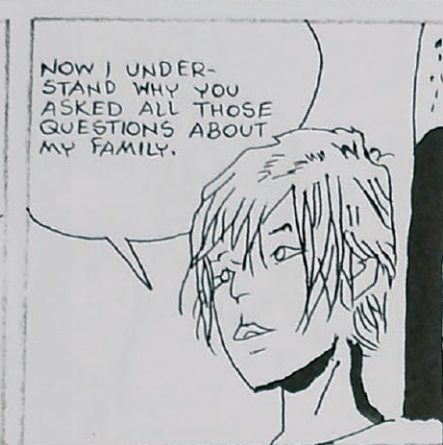


YOUR AUNT MARGRETHA, CAIN PANDORA'S MOTHER.

AUNT MARGRETHA?



YES, MY LAD. AUNT MARGRETHA WAS VERY MUCH IN LOVE WITH HER!



NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU ASKED ALL THOSE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY FAMILY.



BUT, MONK, WHO REALLY ARE YOU?



WHO KNOWS... FORGET IT, CAIN.



LISTEN TO ME TAKI JAPI!

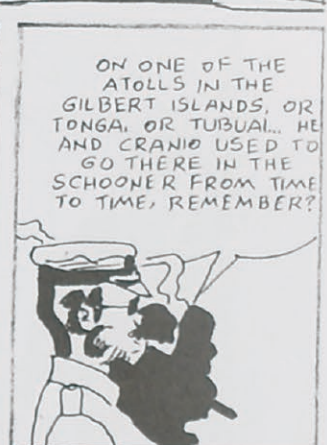


WE CAN LOAD THE TREASURE ABOARD YOUR TORPEDO SHIP THEN LEAVE... WE'LL GO FIFTY-FIFTY.

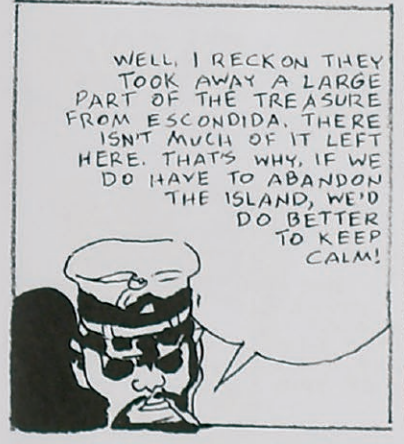
ARE YOU BEING SERIOUS? DO YOU THINK THE MONK'S THAT STUPID?



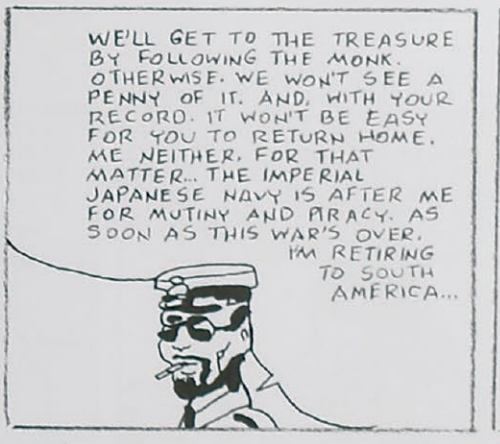
THE TREASURE'S ALREADY IN A SAFE PLACE WHICH NO ONE KNOWS BUT HIM...



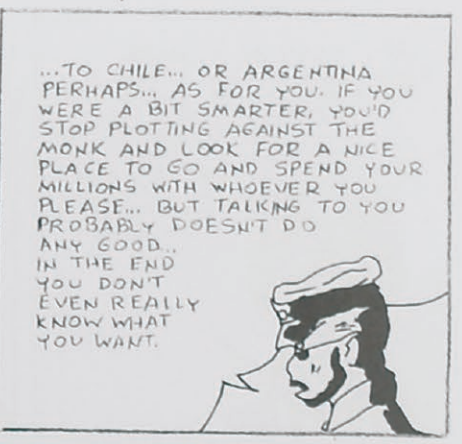
ON ONE OF THE ATOLLS IN THE GILBERT ISLANDS, OR TONGA, OR TUVALU, HE AND CRANIO USED TO GO THERE IN THE SCHOONER FROM TIME TO TIME, REMEMBER?



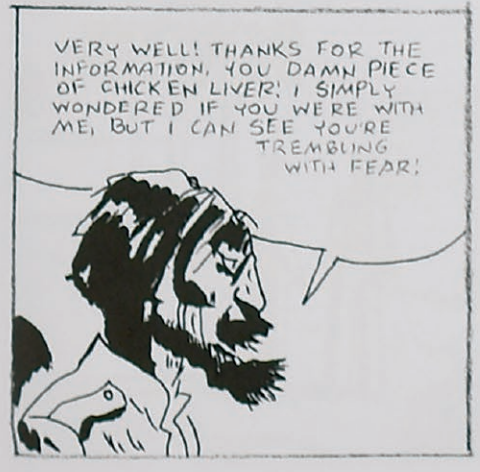
WELL, I RECKON THEY TOOK AWAY A LARGE PART OF THE TREASURE FROM ESCONDIDA. THERE ISN'T MUCH OF IT LEFT HERE. THAT'S WHY, IF WE DO HAVE TO ABANDON THE ISLAND, WE'D DO BETTER TO KEEP CALM!



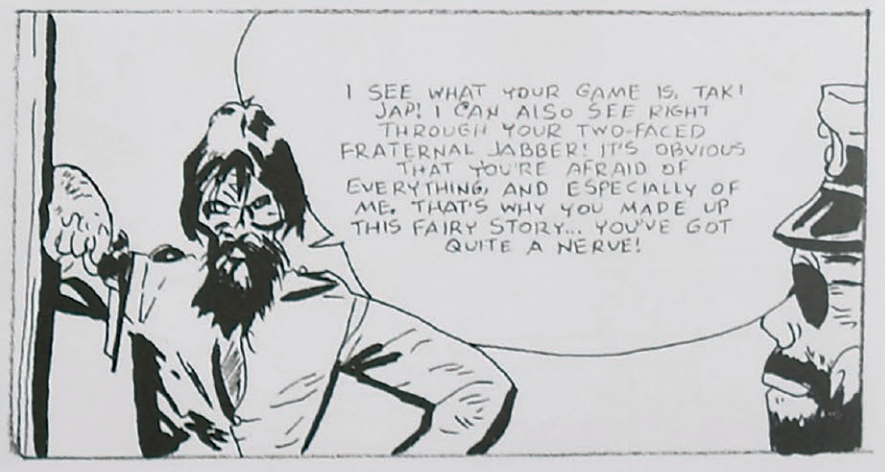
WE'LL GET TO THE TREASURE BY FOLLOWING THE MONK. OTHERWISE, WE WON'T SEE A PENNY OF IT. AND, WITH YOUR RECORD, IT WON'T BE EASY FOR YOU TO RETURN HOME. ME NEITHER, FOR THAT MATTER... THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE NAVY IS AFTER ME FOR MUTINY AND BRAGG, AS SOON AS THIS WAR'S OVER, I'M RETIRING TO SOUTH AMERICA...



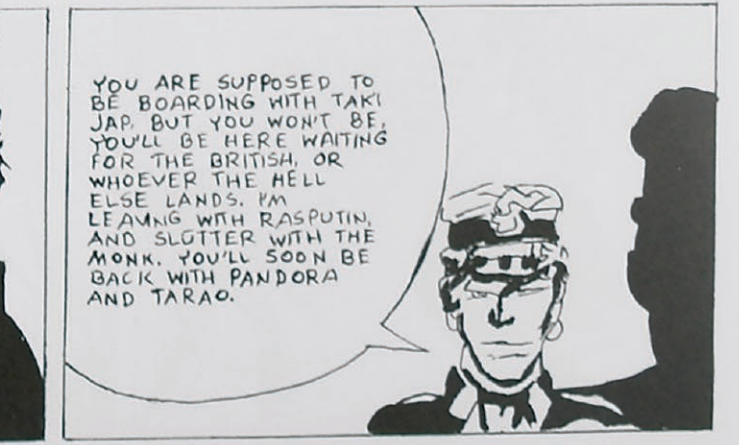
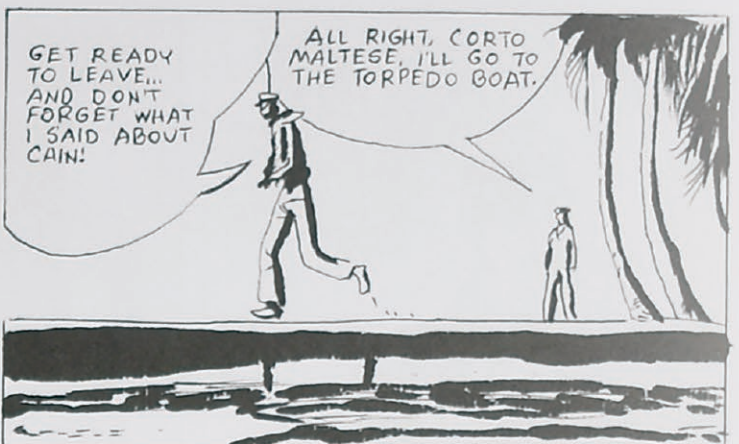
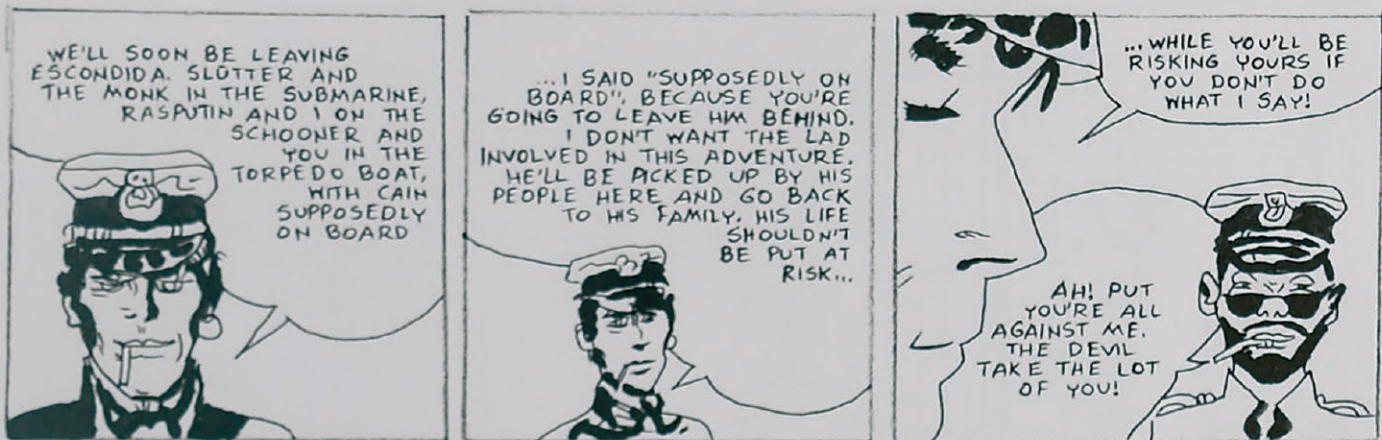
...TO CHILE... OR ARGENTINA, PERHAPS... AS FOR YOU, IF YOU WERE A BIT SMARTER, YOU'D STOP PLOTTING AGAINST THE MONK AND LOOK FOR A NICE PLACE TO GO AND SPEND YOUR MILLIONS WITH WHOEVER YOU PLEASE... BUT TALKING TO YOU PROBABLY DOESN'T DO ANY GOOD... IN THE END YOU DON'T EVEN REALLY KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.

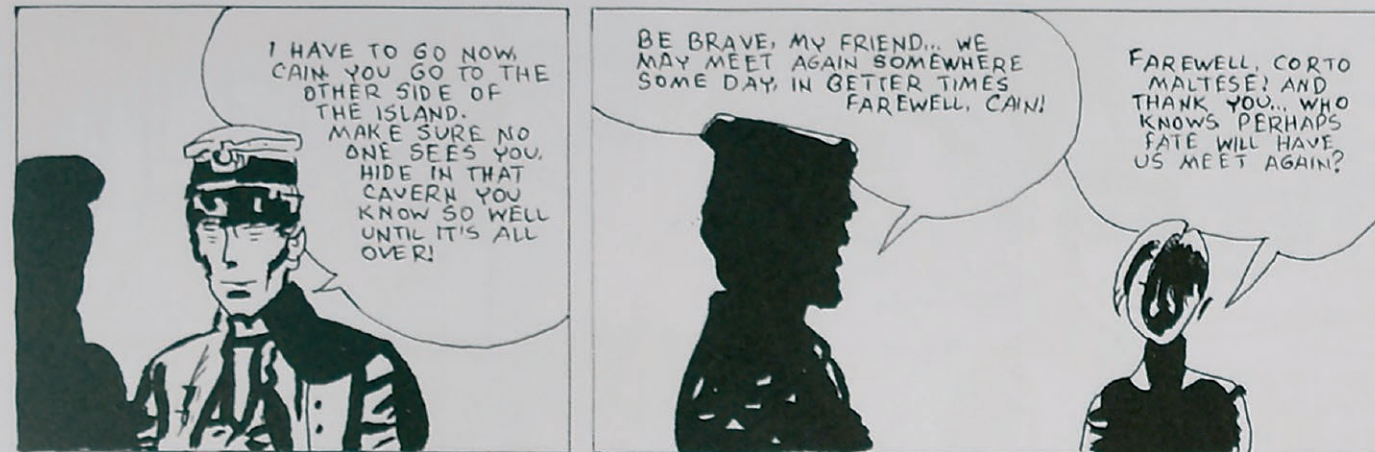


VERY WELL! THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION, YOU DAMN PIECE OF CHICKEN LIVER! I SIMPLY WONDERED IF YOU WERE WITH ME, BUT I CAN SEE YOU'RE TREMBLING WITH FEAR!



I SEE WHAT YOUR GAME IS, TAKI JAPI! I CAN ALSO SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOUR TWO-FACED FRATERNAL JABBER! IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU'RE AFRAID OF EVERYTHING, AND ESPECIALLY OF ME, THAT'S WHY YOU MADE UP THIS FAIRY STORY... YOU'VE GOT QUITE A NERVE!





I HAVE TO GO NOW. CAN YOU GO TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ISLAND. MAKE SURE NO ONE SEES YOU. HIDE IN THAT CAVERN YOU KNOW SO WELL UNTIL IT'S ALL OVER!

BE BRAVE, MY FRIEND... WE MAY MEET AGAIN SOMEWHERE SOME DAY. IN BETTER TIMES FAREWELL, CAIN!

FAREWELL, CORTO MALTESE! AND THANK YOU... WHO KNOWS PERHAPS FATE WILL HAVE US MEET AGAIN?



GO NOW, CAIN RUN!



LET'S HOPE EVERYTHING WORKS OUT FOR THE LAD. THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE, I MUST GO AND SEE THE MONK.

SHORTLY... HAVE YOU BEEN INFORMED YET, MONK?

YES EVERYTHING'S READY. WE CAN GO!



WHEN THEY LAND TOMORROW, THEY WON'T FIND A SOUL AND WE'LL BE HEADING FOR PITCAIRN. EVERYTHING WILL GO AS PLANNED... GOODBYE, CORTO MALTESE!

I MUST FIND RASPUTIN. WITH HIM, ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN.



BANG!

A PISTOL SHOT! WHO FIRED IT?

THE BLAST CAME FROM THE PATH THAT LEADS TO THE MONK'S HOUSE.

HELL'S TEETH! I'M RUNNING FROM ONE SIDE OF THE ISLAND TO THE OTHER. AND NO ONE'S EVEN MAKING ME DO IT!



SLUTTER, SLUTTER!

WHO WAS IT?



THE MONK... SAVE MY MEN!

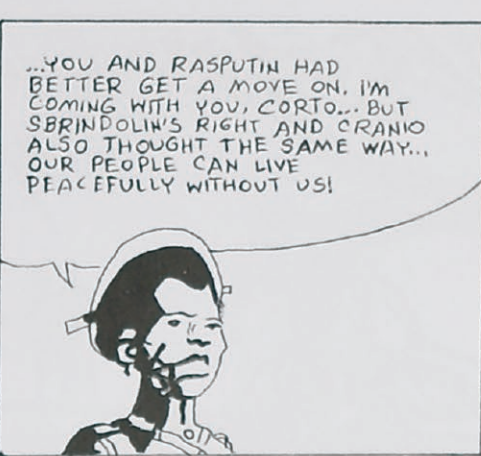
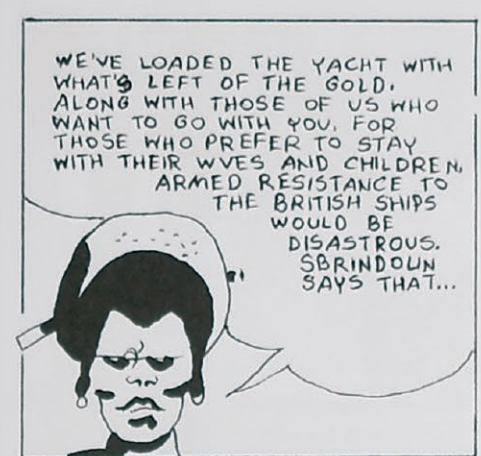
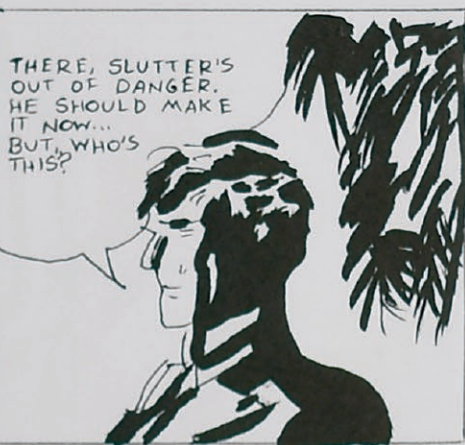
HE MEANS TO TAKE COMMAND OF THE SUBMARINE. HE'S GOING TO KILL ALL MY SEAMEN

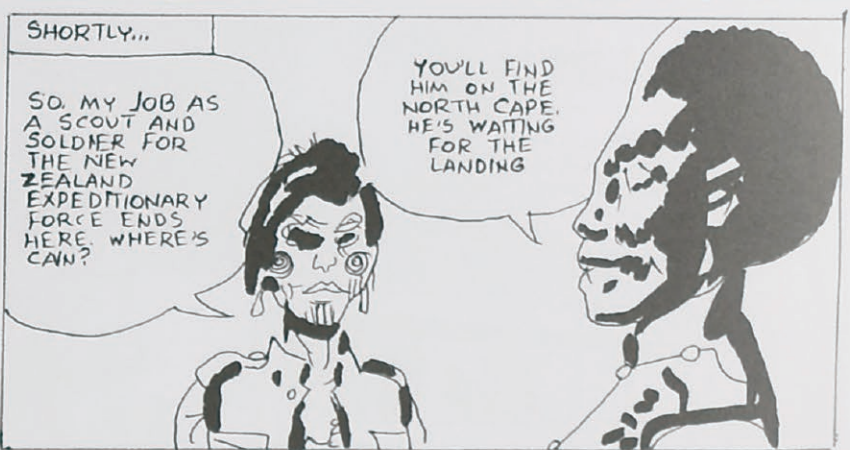
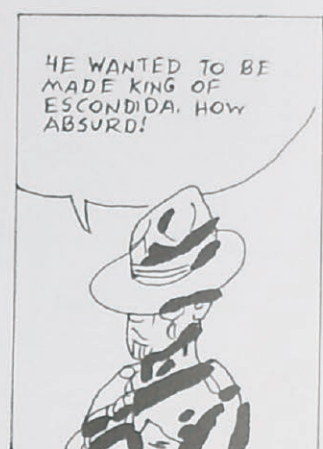
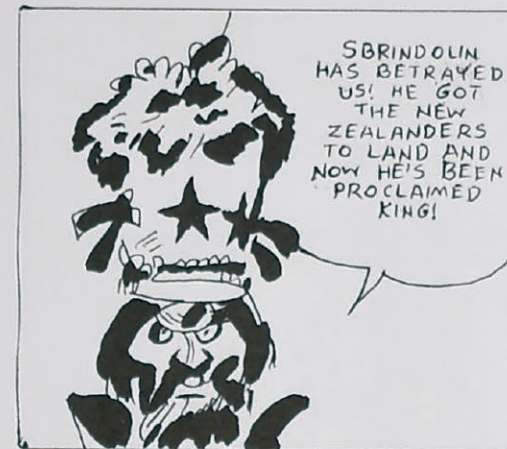
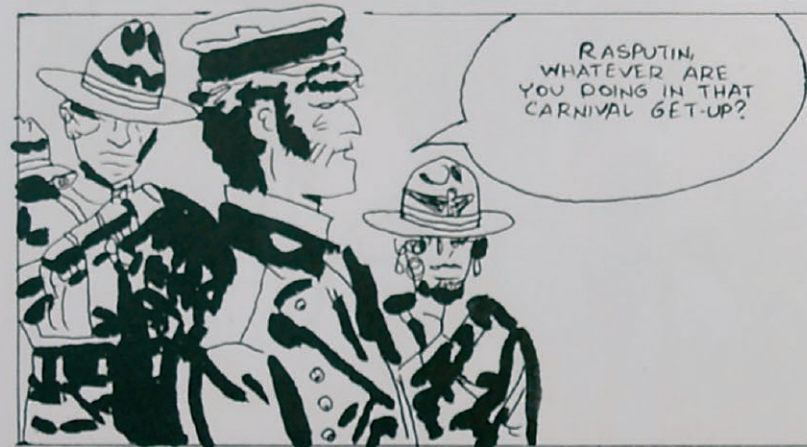
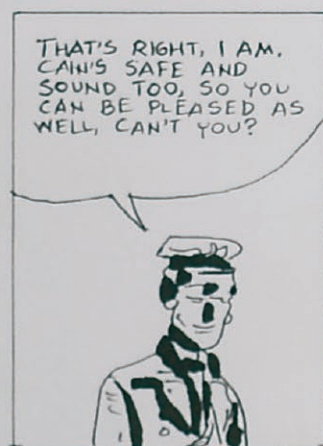
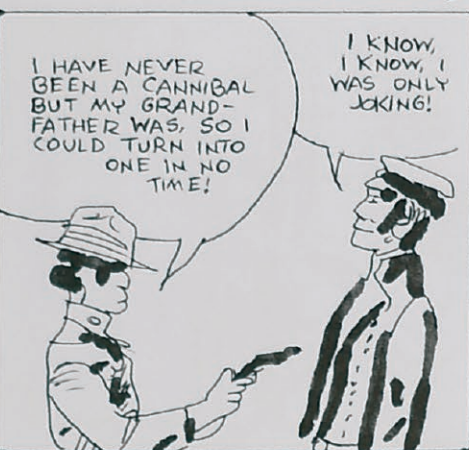
RATTRAT RATTRAT AT! RATTRAT! RATTRAT!

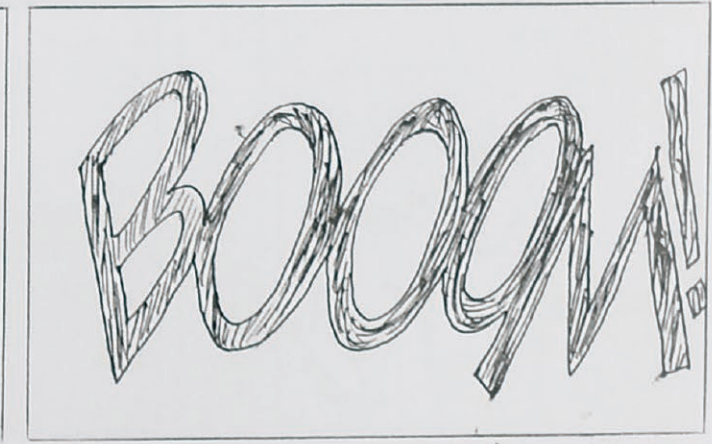
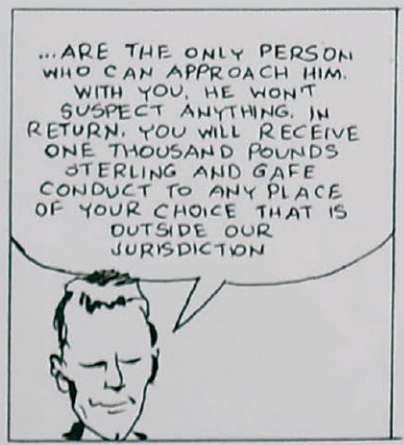
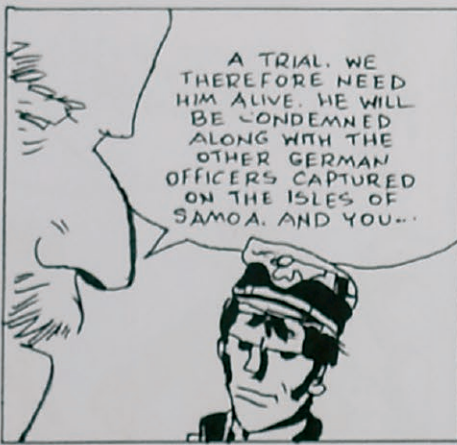
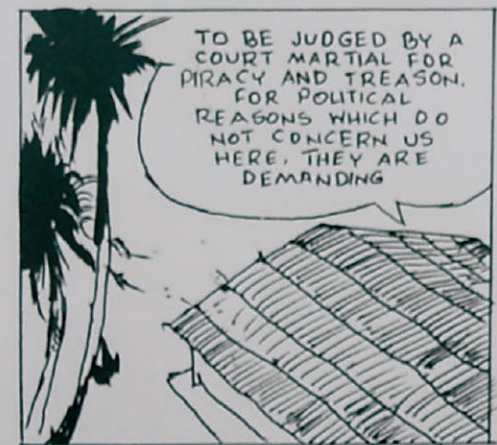
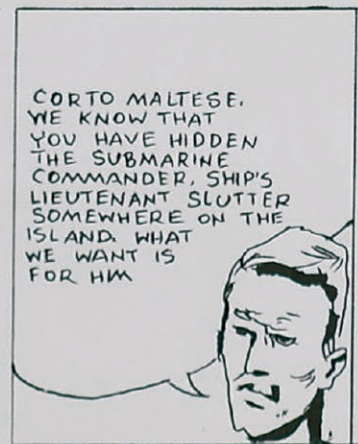
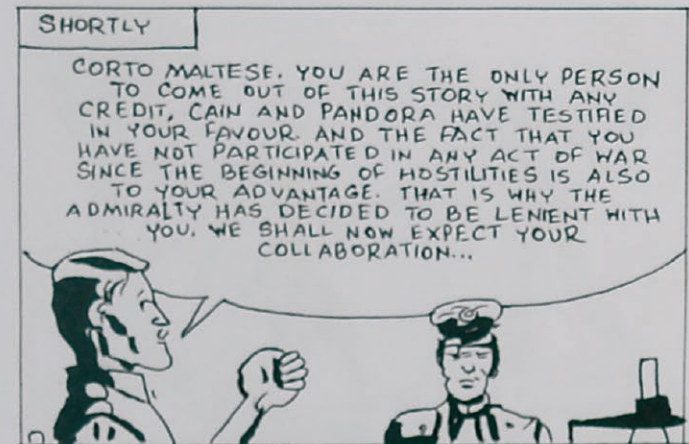
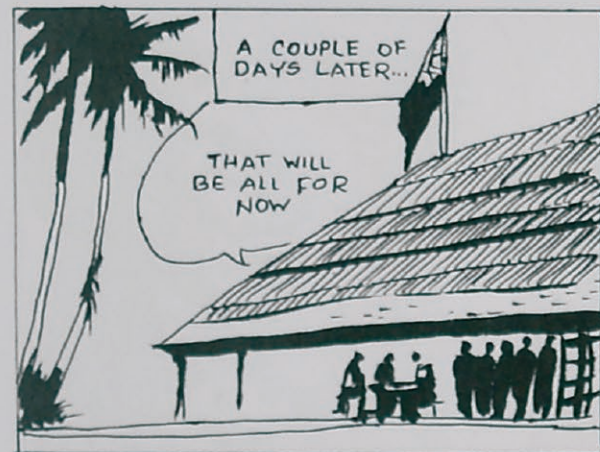


TOO LATE, SLUTTER.

BUT I'LL SAVE YOU, SO THAT YOU CAN AVENGE THEM!







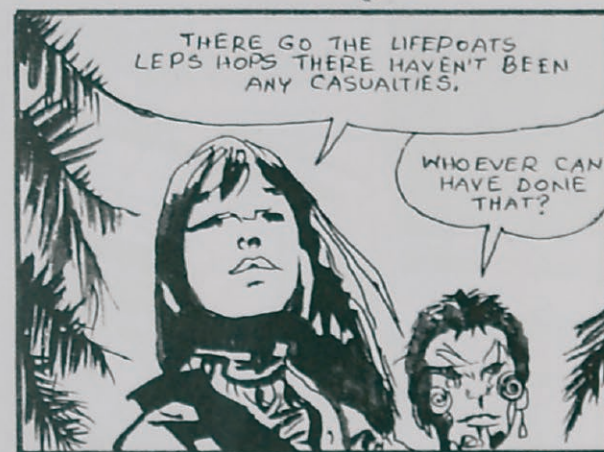


LOOK! THE DESTROYER "VICTORIA" IS GOING DOWN AND THE "SAINTE BARBE" HAS EXPLODED!



IT'S LUCKY THERE WERENT MANY PEOPLE ON BOARD!

YES!



THERE GO THE LIFEBOATS LEPS HOPS THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY CASUALTIES.

WHOEVER CAN HAVE DONE THAT?



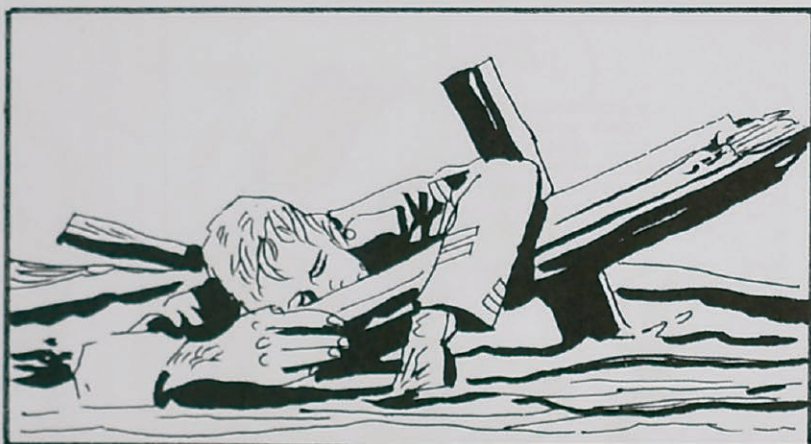
COURAGE, LADS! STAY CALM... WE'RE COMING... COURAGE!

HELP!!



THERE'S ANOTHER ONE. ON THAT DRIFTWOOD!

I'LL STEER TO THE RIGHT.



LEAVE ME ALONE..

HEY HE'S GERMAN!



A GERMAN IN AN ENGLISH UNIFORM!



THIS SON OF A BITCH IS A GERMAN!



ONE MINUTE, SAILOR! THIS MAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOWING UP THE "VICTORIA". HE SHOULD BE TRIED BEFORE A COURT MARTIAL.

LEAVE HIM TO US AND WE'LL SAVE THE COURTS THE TROUBLE!



HEY! CALL FOR THE MILITARY POLICE! WE'VE CAUGHT A SABOTEUR!

WELL DONE, LADS! HE MUST BE THE ONE THAT THE POLICE BOAT WAS LOOKING FOR!



MY GOD. IT'S LIEUTENANT SLUTTER!



HE WAS THE ONE THAT BLEW UP THE "VICTORIA"!



THINGS ARE LOOKING BAD. HE WAS GAUGHT IN A BRITISH UNIFORM.



WE SHOULD TRY TO HELP HIM. MAYBE WE COULD TALK TO UNCLE RINALD. PANDORA YOU'D BETTER DO IT.



NO. THERE'S NO POINT LIEUTENANT SLUTTER WAS WELL AWARE OF THE RISK HE WAS TAKING!



YES, YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT SLUTTER IS OUR FRIEND AND I DON'T LIKE TO SEE HIM IN A MESS LIKE THIS!



NEITHER DO I, CAIN. WE WILL DO WHATEVER WE CAN FOR HIM.

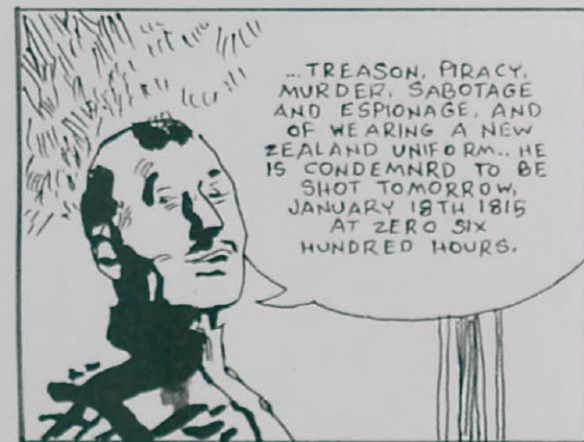


LISTEN BOTH OF YOU... YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT IT'S ALL OVER FOR LIEUTENANT SLUTTER...

YES, TARAO BUT NO ONE WILL SPEAK UP FOR HIM... APART FROM US!



THIS DAY, BEING THE 18TH DAY OF JANUARY 1815, THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL HAS FOUND THE PRISONER CHRISTIAN SLUTTER OF GERMAN NATIONALITY GUILTY OF THE CRIMES OF...



...TREASON, PIRACY, MURDER, SABOTAGE AND ESPIONAGE, AND OF WEARING A NEW ZEALAND UNIFORM. HE IS CONDEMNED TO BE SHOT TOMORROW, JANUARY 18TH 1815 AT ZERO SIX HUNDRED HOURS.



CHRISTIAN SLUTTER DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?



YES. GO TO HELL!



MEANWHILE...

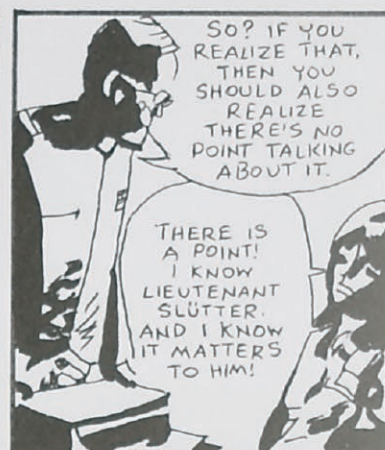
PANDORA THE JUDGE'S DECISION IS IRREVOCABLE!

I KNOW BUT YOU COULD AT LEAST SUPPRESS THE CHARGES OF TREASON AND PIRACY!



PANDORA, YOU MAKE ME LAUGH SOME TIMES. SLUTTER MUST DIE. CHARGES ONLY MATTER TO THE LIVING. THE ADMIRALTY WANTS IT THIS WAY.

YES, I REALIZE THAT!



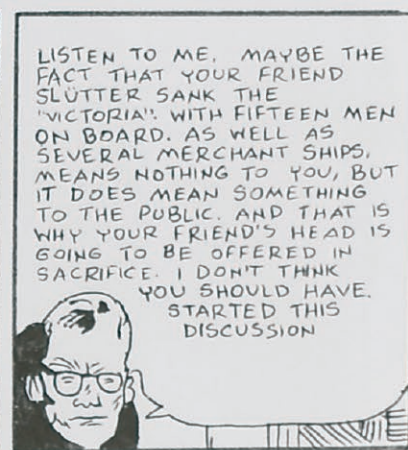
SO? IF YOU REALIZE THAT, THEN YOU SHOULD ALSO REALIZE THERE'S NO POINT TALKING ABOUT IT.

THERE IS A POINT! I KNOW LIEUTENANT SLUTTER, AND I KNOW IT MATTERS TO HIM!



WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? GIVE HIM A NICE BIG KISS, THEN LET HIM GO?

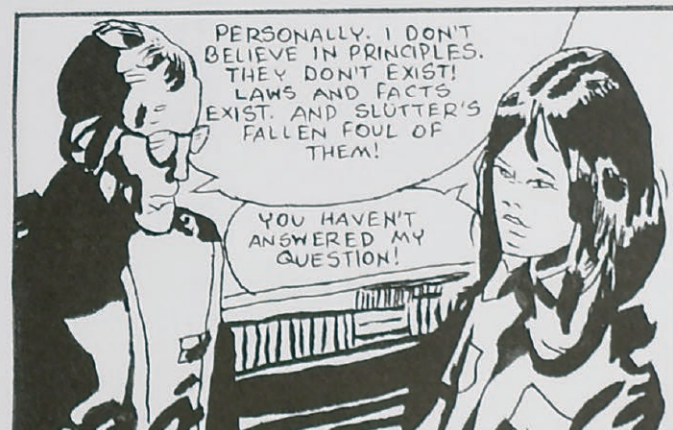
PLEASE DON'T BE SO VULGAR, UNCLE RINALD!



LISTEN TO ME, MAYBE THE FACT THAT YOUR FRIEND SLUTTER SANK THE "VICTORIA" WITH FIFTEEN MEN ON BOARD, AS WELL AS SEVERAL MERCHANT SHIPS, MEANS NOTHING TO YOU, BUT IT DOES MEAN SOMETHING TO THE PUBLIC, AND THAT IS WHY YOUR FRIEND'S HEAD IS GOING TO BE OFFERED IN SACRIFICE. I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD HAVE STARTED THIS DISCUSSION



YOU'RE RIGHT, UNCLE RINALD. BUT ONLY WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOU CANNOT BE INVOLVED IN THIS AFFAIR. I CANNOT FORGET THAT SLUTTER ALWAYS TRIED TO DEFEND US. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY, AS AN OFFICER, IF YOUR SUPERIORS ORDERED YOU TO ACT AGAINST YOUR PRINCIPLES?



PERSONALLY, I DON'T BELIEVE IN PRINCIPLES. THEY DON'T EXIST! LAWS AND FACTS EXIST, AND SLUTTER'S FALLEN FOUL OF THEM!

YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED MY QUESTION!



THERE IS NO ANSWER TO YOUR RIDICULOUS QUESTION. IT'S SLUTTER WHO'S THE CONDEMNED MAN NOT ME. IT'S OUT OF MY HANDS!



DON'T FORGET THAT HE HELPED US, UNCLE RINALD. JUST SUPPRESS THE CHARGES OF TREASON AND PIRACY!



I CAN'T! ALL I CAN DO IS ALLOW YOU TO SEE HIM!

THANK YOU, UNCLE RINALD.



I HAVE CAPTAIN GROOVESHORE'S PERMISSION TO SEE MR SLOTTER.

VERY WELL BUT I MUST WARN YOU THAT THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT!



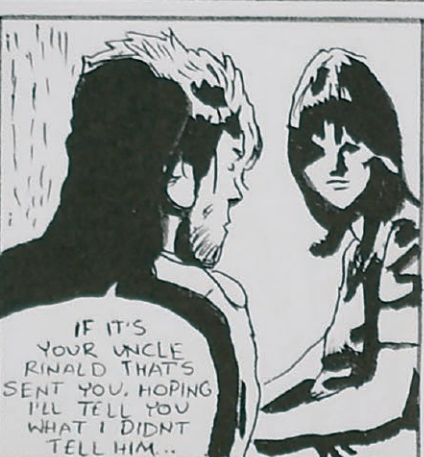
STEP THIS WAY, MISS 'GROOVESHORE



PRISONER SLOTTER YOU HAVE A VISITOR.



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME FOR IN THAT PITIFUL WAY? WHAT DO YOU WANT?



IF IT'S YOUR UNCLE RICHARD THAT'S SENT YOU, HOPING I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I DIDN'T TELL HIM...



NO, HE'S GOT IT WRONG. I KNOW NOTHING... AND IF I DID KNOW ANYTHING I STILL WOULDN'T TALK!



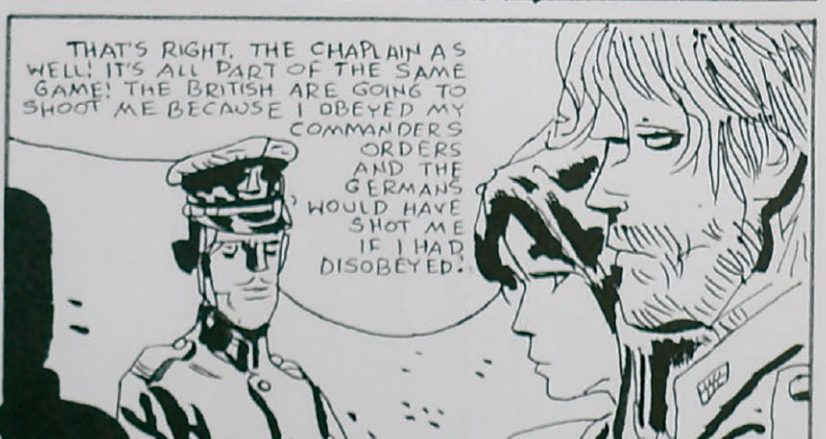
I DON'T LIKE WHAT I'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF, BUT I UNDERSTAND THEIR POSITION.



I COULD HAVE GONE AGAINST ORDERS... BUT THAT WOULD HAVE MEANT GOING AGAINST THE SYSTEM TRADITION AND THE REST OF THAT RUBBISH.



IT IS TIME, PRISONER SLOTTER. WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE CHAPLAIN?



THAT'S RIGHT, THE CHAPLAIN'S WELL! IT'S ALL PART OF THE SAME GAME! THE BRITISH ARE GOING TO SHOOT ME BECAUSE I OBEYED MY COMMANDER'S ORDERS AND THE GERMANS WOULD HAVE SHOT ME IF I HAD DISOBEYED!



NO PRIESTS! THERE'S NO POINT PROLONGING THIS HYPOCRISY. LIEUTENANT, I AM READY!

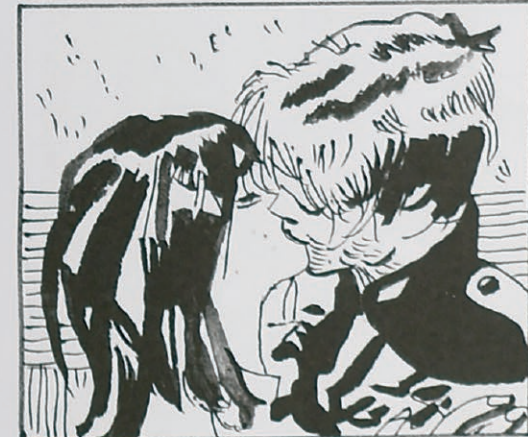


I THINK YOU HAD BETTER GO, MISS SROOVESHORE, SEEING A PRISONER BEING TAKEN AWAY IS NOT A PRETTY SIGHT!

I'M STAYING!



PANDORA!





PRISONER SLÜTTER, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY BEFORE THE SENTENCE IS CARRIED OUT?

NO CAPTAIN!



I MUST TELL YOU THAT CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE HAS SUPPRESSED THE CHARGES OF TREASON AND PIRACY. WOULD YOU LIKE A CIGARETTE?

THANK HIM FOR ME AND GIVE HIM MY REGARDS!

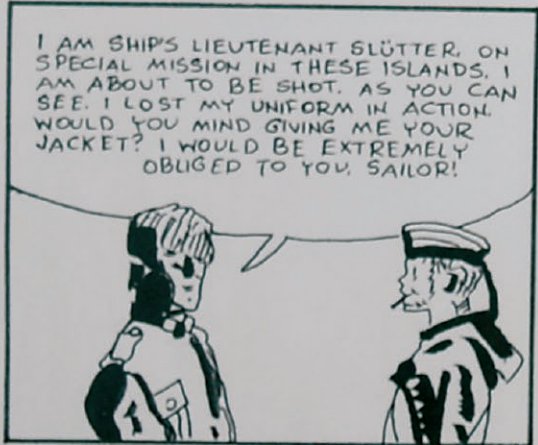


I CAN SEE SOME GERMAN PRISONERS. MAY I SPEAK TO THEM, CAPTAIN?



JUST A QUICK WORD. WHERE ARE YOU FROM SAILORS?

WE WERE ON THE 'VALKYRIE' BUT WE WERE CAPTURED ON SAMOA ALONG WITH SOME OTHER COMPATRIOTS. THEY ARE TAKING US TO TAHITI AND FROM THERE ACROSS TO CHILE.



I AM SHIP'S LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER, ON SPECIAL MISSION IN THESE ISLANDS. I AM ABOUT TO BE SHOT. AS YOU CAN SEE, I LOST MY UNIFORM IN ACTION. WOULD YOU MIND GIVING ME YOUR JACKET? I WOULD BE EXTREMELY OBLIGED TO YOU, SAILOR!



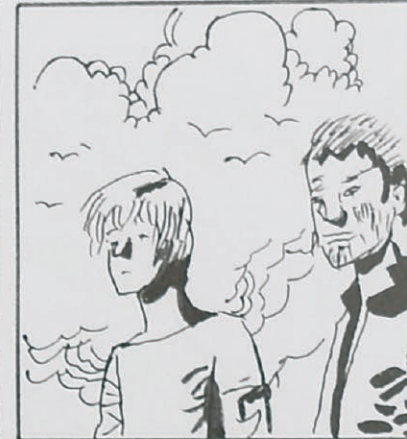
SEAMAN BOEKE, MR SLÜTTER! EXCUSE US FOR NOT RECOGNIZING YOU! AND SORRY TO BE USEFUL TO YOU ONLY IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES!



TAKE AIM!



FIRE!

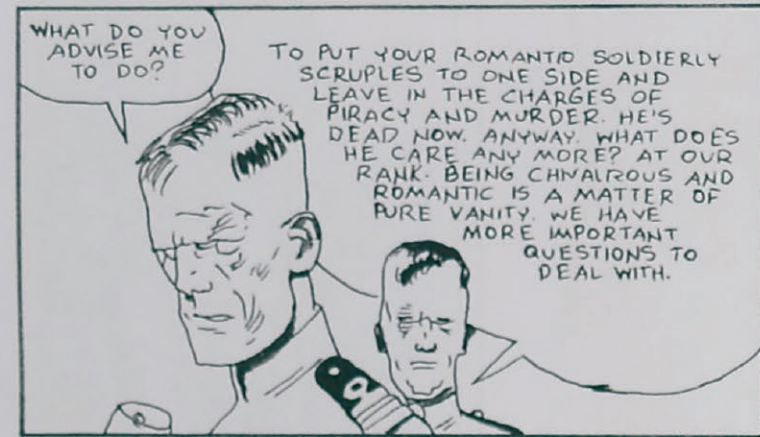
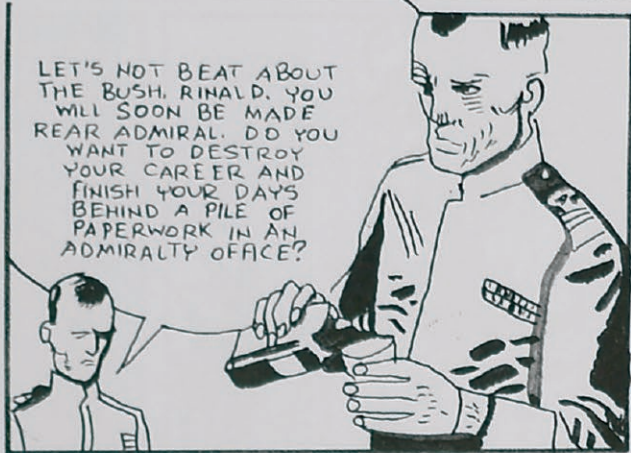
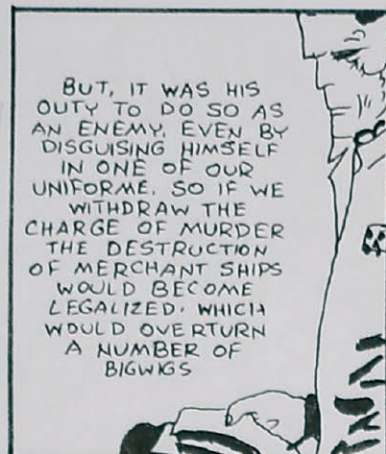
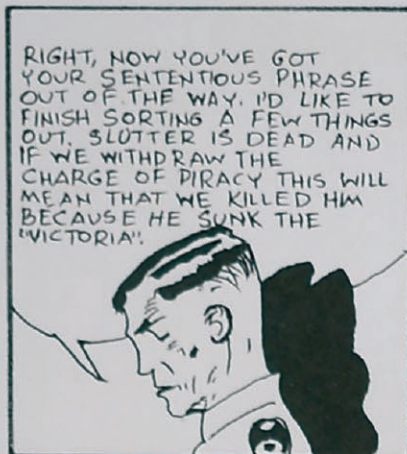
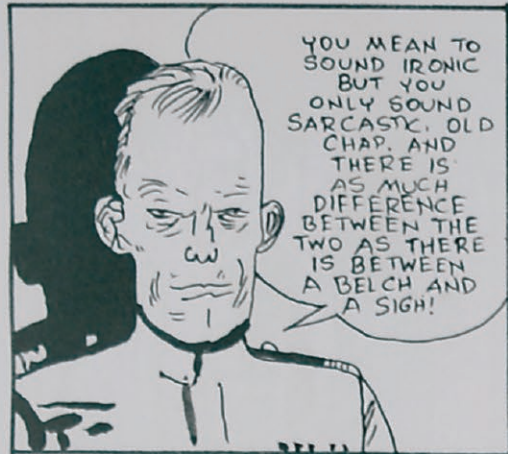


IT'S ALL OVER GROOVESNORE!



I'M NOT DEAF!

WELL, THE PAPERS HAVE BEEN ALTERED FROM NOW ON LIEUTENANT SLÜTTERS GOING TO BE A HERO



"CORTO MALTESE, MY FRIEND, WHEN YOU GET THIS LETTER I SHALL BE FAR AWAY, OR ELSE NO MORE. WE NEVER HAD MUCH CHANCE TO TALK TO EACH OTHER, WHICH IS PROBABLY DOWN TO MY STUPID UPBRINGING. AN OFFICER IN THE IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVY CANNOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO LET HIS GUARD DOWN, MY GOD, I REALIZE THAT THAT IS JUST WHAT I AM NOW DOING. BUT I WANT TO CONFIDE A SECRET TO YOU. I KNOW THAT PANDORA AND CAIN MEAN A LOT TO YOU AND I WANT TO INFORM YOU OF WHAT I KNOW, SO THAT YOU CAN HELP THEM WHEN THE TIME COMES. IF IT EVER DOES, THE MONK IS NONE OTHER THAN THOMAS GROOVESNORE, PANDORA'S REAL FATHER. SHE BELIEVES THAT THOMAS WAS AN UNCLE WHO PERISHED IN A FIRE ON THE DAY OF HER MOTHER MARGRETHA'S MARRIAGE

"...TO THADEUS GROOVESNORE, THE MAN PANDORA THINKS IS HER FATHER IS ONLY HER UNCLE. I LEARNED THIS ONE DAY WHEN THE MONK WAS RAVING. THAT IS WHY HE WENT MAD THE FIRST TIME HE SAW PANDORA. KNOWING THAT I WAS PARTY TO HIS SECRET, HE DECIDED TO ELIMINATE ME BEING A GROOVESNORE IS, FOR HIM THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD.

"...THEY ARE THE DYNASTY THAT RULES OVER THE SOUTHERN SEAS. I FEEL BETTER NOW. I HOPE THAT THIS LETTER DOESN'T FALL INTO OTHER HANDS THAN YOURS. THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO SAY EXCEPT TO SALUTE YOU, DEAR FRIEND. I CAN CALL YOU A FRIEND, CAN'T I?"

C. SLÜTTER
THE SOUTH PACIFIC
DECEMBER 25TH 1914.

THE MONK IS PANDORA'S FATHER? SO WHY DIDN'T HE MARRY THE MOTHER? WHAT WAS HER NAME AGAIN? AH YES MARGRETHA?

MAYBE SHE WAS ALREADY BETROTHED TO THADEUS OR MAYBE HIS VOCATION AS A PRIEST WAS TOO STRONG.

NO. WHAT AM I SAYING? AS A PASTOR HE HAD THE RIGHT TO MARRY. THIS MARGRETHA WOMAN MUST HAVE DECIDED SHE WAS MAKING A MISTAKE AND SORTED THINGS OUT BY MARRYING THADEUS. POOR OLD SLÜTTER. IF HE HADN'T BEEN SO PRESUMPTUOUS, HE COULD HAVE SHOWN THIS LETTER TO CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE...

HE WOULDN'T HAVE DIED ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF THE IMPERIAL GERMAN NAVY AND, ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF COMMON SENSE, HE WOULD STILL BE ALIVE!

HEY, KIDS! I'M GOING TO SEE CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE. DON'T STRAY TOO FAR. I WANT TO SAY GOODBYE TO YOU BEFORE I LEAVE!

IN CAPTAIN GROOVESNORE'S HUT...

CAPTAIN, I CAME TO TELL YOU THAT IF YOU GIVE ORDERS FOR RASPUTIN'S RELEASE THEN WE'RE READY TO GO!

ARE YOU JOKING CORTO MALTESE? RASPUTIN IS TO BE SENTENCED TO DEATH!

OH NO HE ISN'T YOU'VE ALREADY SENTENCED MR SLÜTTER TO DEATH. I THINK THAT WILL BE QUITE ENOUGH!

YOU'RE MAD. GET OUT OF HERE!

NO. I'LL STAY AS LONG AS I LIKE! I WANT TO TELL YOU A LITTLE STORY.

ONCE UPON A TIME THOMAS GROOVESHORE WASN'T ABLE TO MARRY MARGRETHA WHO WAS PREGNANT BY HIM. SO HE SET FIRE TO THE HOUSE WHERE THEY HAD BEEN LOVERS WHILE SHE WAS GETTING MARRIED TO HIS BROTHER THADEUS.

THAT'S ENOUGH YOU SMINE!

SMACK!

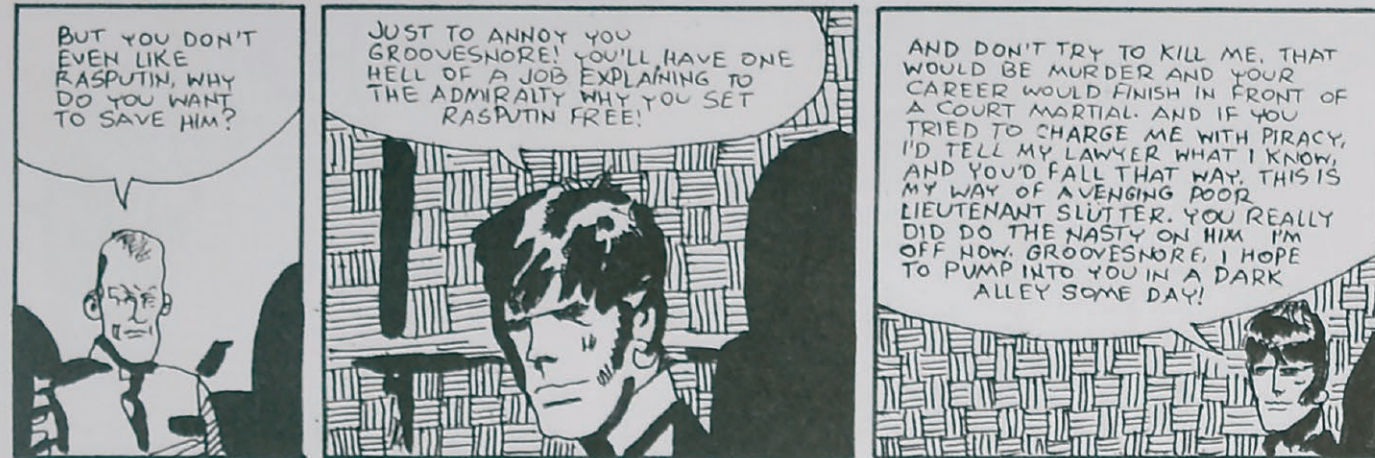
UGH!

UGH!

YOU DON'T FIGHT FAIR, CORTO MALTESE!

NO, BUT YOU'RE THE ONE ON THE FLOOR!

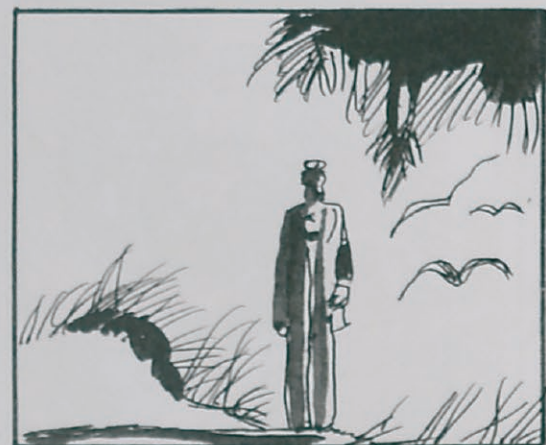
GROOVESNORE! THE MONK IS, IN FACT, YOUR BROTHER THOMAS, PANDORA'S FATHER. NOW YOU KNOW WHY I'M GOING TO LEAVE WITH RASPUTIN I'M BLACKMAILING YOU!



BUT YOU DON'T EVEN LIKE RASPUTIN. WHY DO YOU WANT TO SAVE HIM?

JUST TO ANNOY YOU GROOVESHORE! YOU'LL HAVE ONE HELL OF A JOB EXPLAINING TO THE ADMIRALTY WHY YOU SET RASPUTIN FREE!

AND DON'T TRY TO KILL ME, THAT WOULD BE MURDER AND YOUR CAREER WOULD FINISH IN FRONT OF A COURT MARTIAL. AND IF YOU TRIED TO CHARGE ME WITH PIRACY, I'D TELL MY LAWYER WHAT I KNOW, AND YOU'D FALL THAT WAY. THIS IS MY WAY OF AVENGING POOR LIEUTENANT SLUTTER. YOU REALLY DID DO THE NASTY ON HIM. I'M OFF NOW, GROOVESHORE. I HOPE TO PUMP INTO YOU IN A DARK ALLEY SOME DAY!



HEY! ANGEL EYES! YOU AND I ARE LEAVING TODAY, FOR GOOD!

HMMM.



LISTEN, RASPUTIN. I DIDN'T SAVE YOUR SKIN FOR YOUR SAKE, BUT TO GIVE THE CAPTAIN SOME EXPLAINING TO DO SO DO WHAT I SAY AND THAT'S THE END OF IT!

OKAY, CORTO MALTESE. I'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WANT. YOU KNOW I LIKE YOU REALLY. I'LL NEVER FORGET.



WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR ME. NO DON'T SAY A WORD! I OWE YOU MY LIFE AND I GIVE YOU MY WORD THAT YOU'LL NEVER BE SORRY TO HAVE ME AS YOUR BEST FRIEND.

ARE YOU GOING SOFT IN THE HEAD? I'D RATHER HAVE A TARANTULA FOR A FRIEND!

AH! CORTO, CORTO! DON'T BE LIKE THAT! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LOSING BY REFUSING MY FRIENDSHIP.



ALL RIGHT, RAS. WHAT MATTERS IS GETTING OUT OF HERE TODAY. BEFORE GROOVESHORE CHANGES HIS MIND!

YOU NEVER CAN TELL WITH OFFICERS. FIRST THEY SAY ONE THING, THEN THEY DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

WE'LL TAKE YOUR KETCH AND HEAD FOR PITCAIRN. THERE, WE'RE SURE TO RUN INTO THE MONK AND TAKI JAP.



GET EVERYTHING READY SO THAT WE CAN LEAVE AT LOW TIDE. I'M GOING TO SAY GOOD-BYE TO THE CHILDREN.

THIS ISLAND JUST ISN'T THE SAME WITH ALL THESE SOLDIERS!



SBRINDOIN! I'VE COME TO SAY GOODBYE. I'M TAKING RASPUTIN WITH ME. I HOPE EVERYTHING GOES WELL!

IT WILL BE HARD WITHOUT CRANIO, BUT I'M SURE YOU'LL MANAGE. WATCH OUT FOR ALL THESE SOLDIERS!

THAT'S NOTHING NEW CORTO

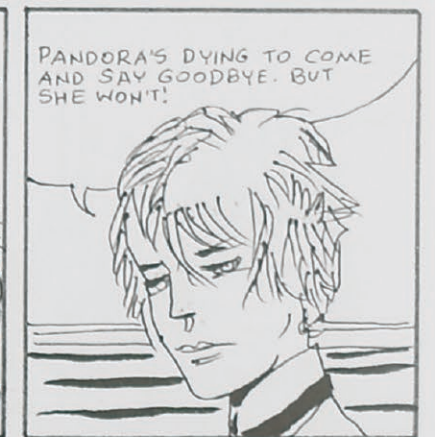
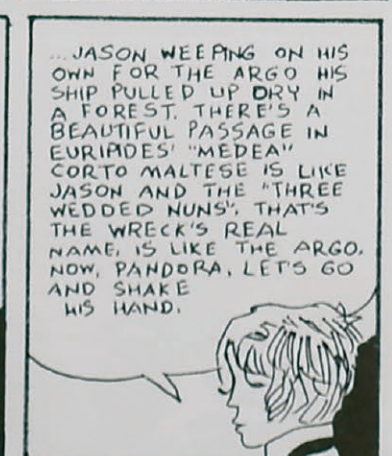
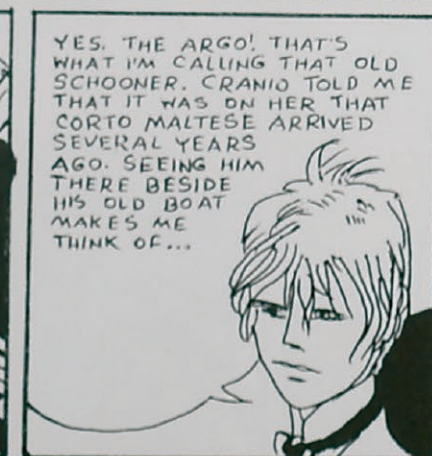
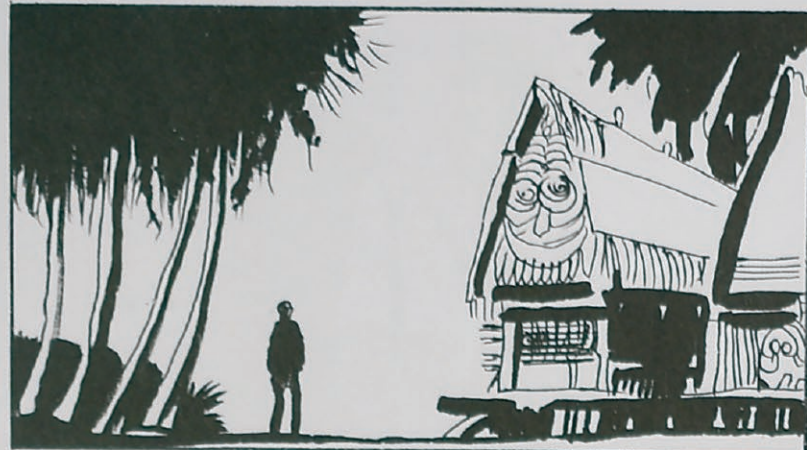


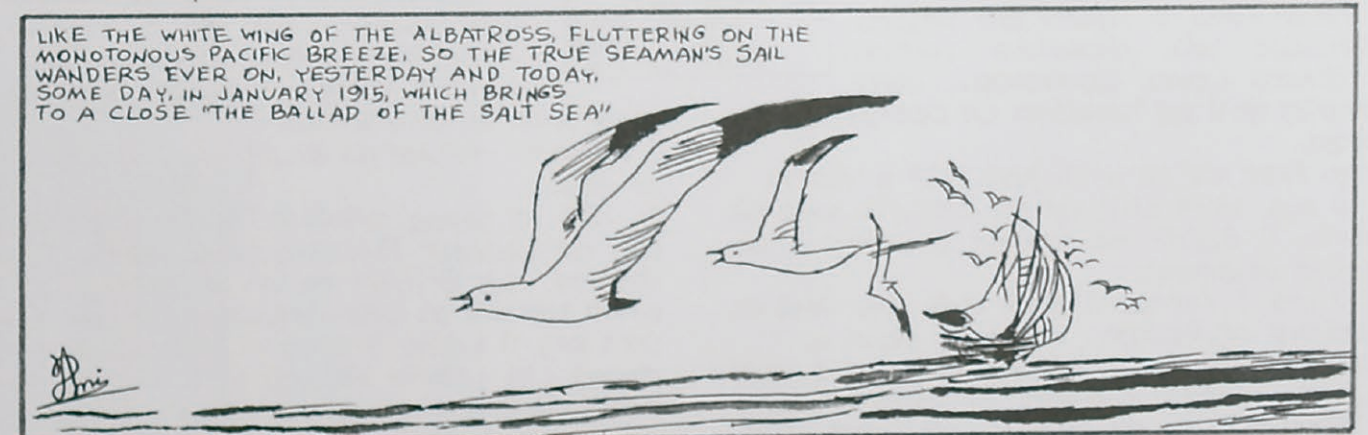
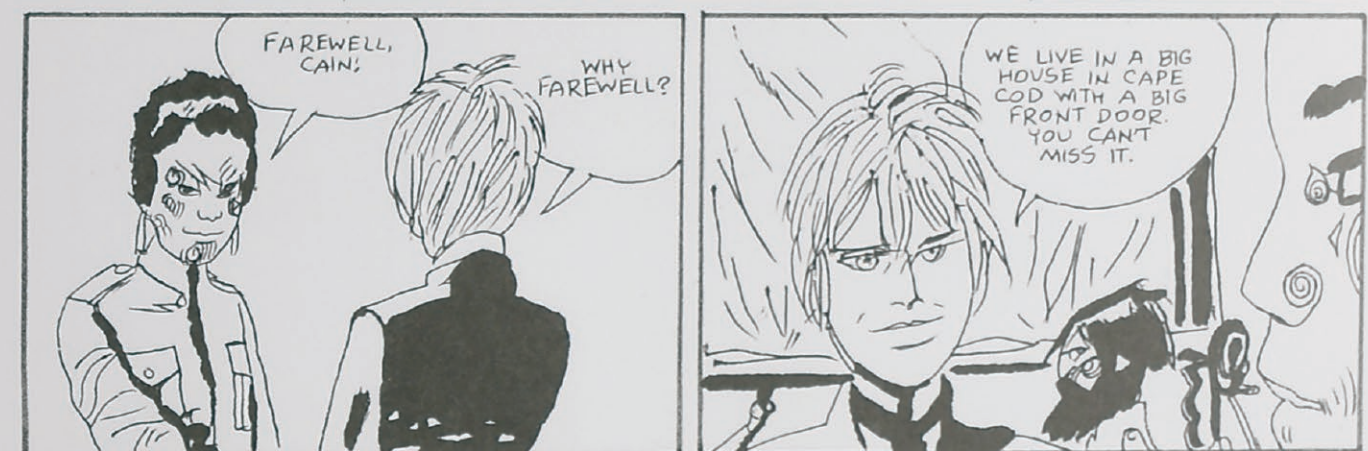
YOU SEE, ILLS DON'T ALWAYS COME TO HARM US. WITH THE MONK, WE LEARNT CERTAIN THINGS TO OUR COST. WITH THE MISSIONARIES WE LEARNT OTHERS AND WE SHALL LEARN YET MORE WITH THE SOLDIERS. ONE THING IS SURE. WE NEVER MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE! I'M SORRY TO SEE YOU GO, CORTO MALTESE. YOU TRIED TO BE ONE OF US, AND YOU ALMOST MANAGED IT. THE ONLY THING WRONG WITH YOU IS PERHAPS.

OH YES? WHAT'S THAT?

THE COLOUR OF YOUR SKIN!

WHAT'S UP WITH YOU, SBRINDOIN. YOU'RE TALKING LIKE A WHITE MAN!





Hugo Pratt, romancier international, guillemetiste, adjectif, est eventuellement un écrivain en bandes dessinées. Sa place dans la lignée des romans ne néglige pas les romans d'aventure et Robert Louis Stevenson... Sans compter qu'il est lui-même un personnage de roman.

Hugo Pratt est né le 15 juin 1927 à Venise. À 10 ans, alors qu'il est en Espagne avec sa famille, il décide de devenir journaliste de bandes dessinées.

À 17 ans, à Venise, il lance avec des amis sa première publication, « Les dix piéces ». Un éditeur argentin s'y intéresse tant qu'il propose à 100% l'équivalent de son travail à Buenos Aires, ce qu'elle s'est vite d'accorder.



En 1952 Hugo Pratt lance « Sergio et Xico », l'histoire d'un déserteur américain passé dans le camp des Indiens. C'est suivi de « Au do la single », « Enjeu d'été », « Pour un homme », etc. En 1958, il est à Los Angeles où il travaille pour le Daily Mirror.

Il se rend ensuite au Brésil pour de revenir en 1960.

En 1960, à Santos grâce à l'amitié et au soutien de l'éditeur Floriano Ivaldi, Hugo Pratt crée « Le Bongo ou le son de la terre », première histoire du règlement de la Malice. Dans les années 60, il a écrit dans « Les 500 piéces de l'argent » et « Como Molino de Sibone » (publié dans le magazine « Avenir »), tout ce qu'il a pu faire de mieux et de plus en accord avec la situation.

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