



THOUGHTS & IMAGES

ALBEDO

NR.11

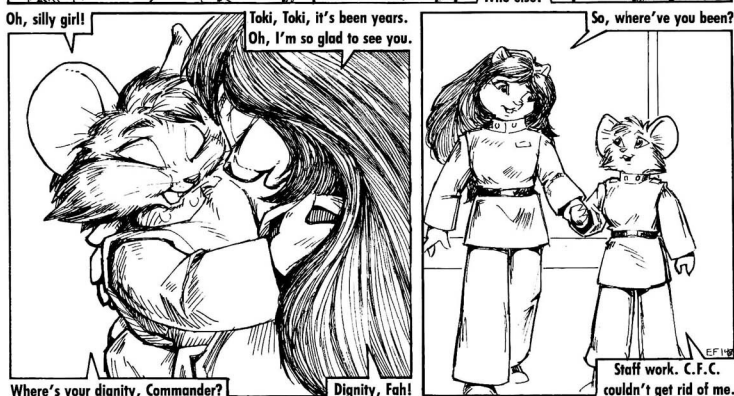
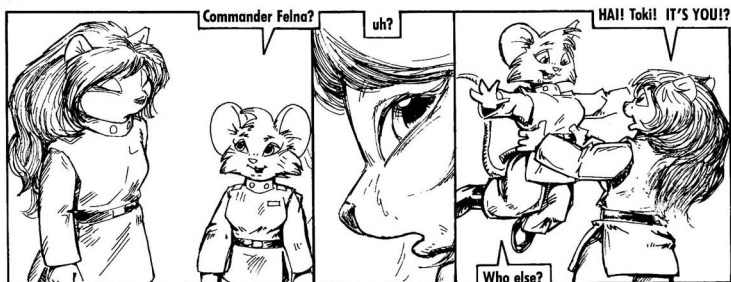
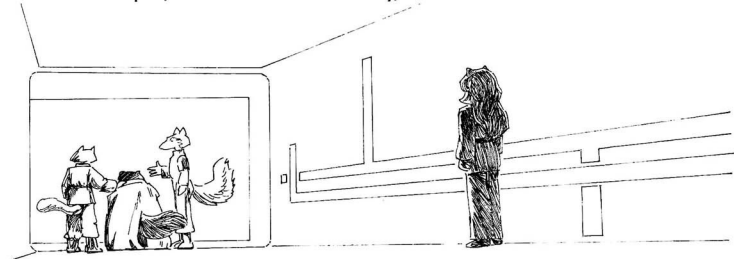
\$2.00

ANTHROPOMORPHICS



ERMA FELNA, EDF

Commander Felna has departed Ekosiak, escorting Confed secretary to be turned over to higher authorities, following his covert criminal activities. Upon arrival in the Ahnomia System, an intermediate transfer point, she surrenders him to Confed security, and awaits further instructions.



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Well, I'M glad you're still in service.

And so, what are you doing here?

Come for you, silly girl.

Huh?

Higher Headquarters has us figured out —

We've been co-assigned.

What?

Yeap! We've got a command slot in Ish-tako.



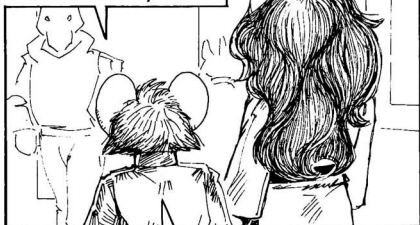
You'll fly, I'll push paper.

Gosh, how thoughtful.



So, tell me about it.

It's a Squadron Commander position. Part of a consolidated defense net in the Ahahn-tako System.



They've got an interplanetary civil war, so there's EDF intervention.

Combat?

Probably. Worried?



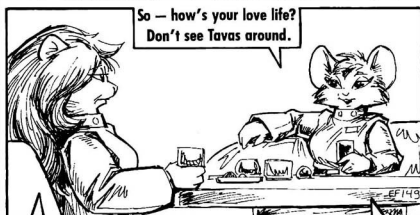
About combat? Not really — actually — I'd welcome it.

Hm — had lunch?



Let's go.

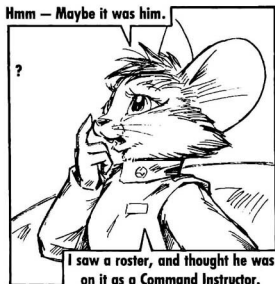
So — how's your love life? Don't see Tavas around.



Umph! Opted for training just before Derzon.

You're kidding.

EF149



Hmm — Maybe it was him.

I saw a roster, and thought he was on it as a Command Instructor.



Sounds about right.

Sorry to bring it up.



No — don't worry — that was a long time ago. How about you?

Hoho — silly girl — I prefer my variety.

As always.



Hey, thinking about which — where's a hot spot 'round here?

Here? This is a transfer station.

Come on, let's check the net.

You've got to get out and relax more. You can't work all the time.



But — what — this music?

It's okay. I've heard it on the net before. I really like it.



Ah! Here we go! Some guy's doing music tonight.

I don't know —

Relax. We've got 50 hours before departure.



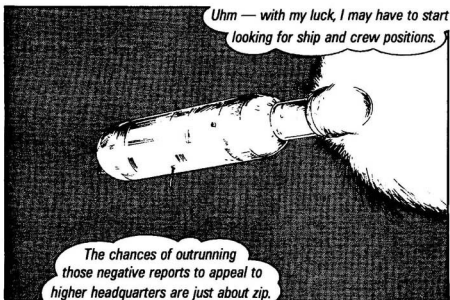
Here ya go.

Music is something of an experimental subject, and the experience is still a novelty. The tonal rhythms are simple, but keyed to soothing psychological sympathies.



Just as the net anticipated.

Captain Itzak Arrat, aboard the Koshi Akoi, bound for Dornthant.

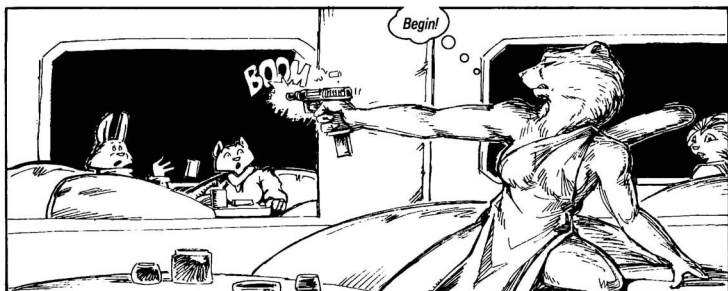


Meanwhile, aboard the Koshata-Ti, bound for Ahnomia.



If there is anything I can do for you...



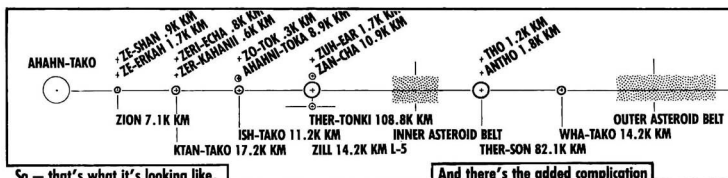
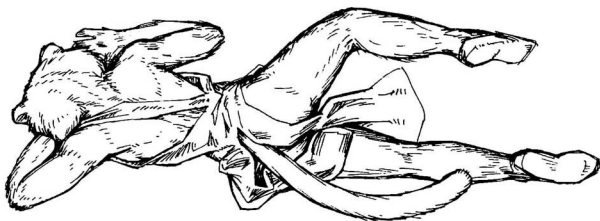




You've got to do more!



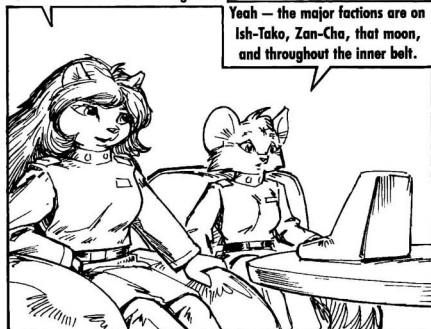
YES! That's it, you've proved-----



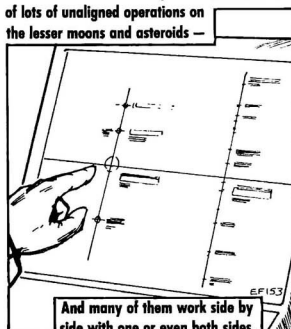
So — that's what it's looking like.

And there's the added complication

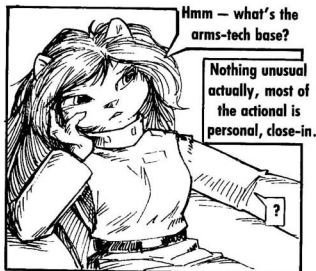
of lots of unaligned operations on the lesser moons and asteroids —



Yeah — the major factions are on Ish-Tako, Zan-Cha, that moon, and throughout the inner belt.



And many of them work side by side with one or even both sides.



Well, what's happening is mostly sabotage or armed infiltrations into service and manufacturing assets.

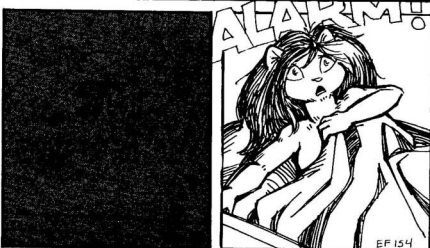
So — our role will be mostly counterinsurgency?

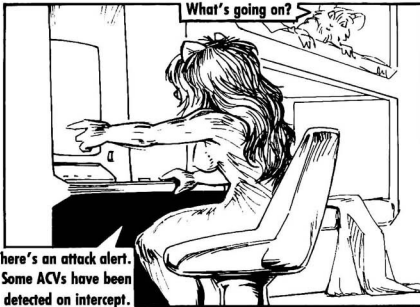


Both sides hold territory and will fire on anything within about 10M Km. Normally, we'd just let them have at it, but they represent less than 20 percent of the population and the non-participants petitioned Confed and EDF for help.



So far, the 10th ASD Wing and 580th Special Ops have been running escort. Not much in real action — yet. For outer system duty, mostly intercepts and COIN Ops, there's the DH87, 112, 284 and 285. And the FSV 18 providing support and command and control.





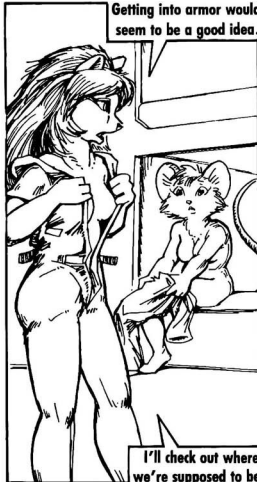
What's going on?

There's an attack alert.
Some ACVs have been
detected on intercept.



It's going to be a
couple of hours —

but it looks like the real thing.

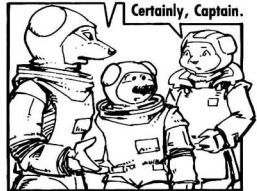


Getting into armor would
seem to be a good idea.

Khai, here we are, just jumped
in-system, and there's hostilities
already.



There wasn't anything in
the initial communiques to
suggest anything like this.



Ah, Commander Felna, could you coordinate
the rated EDF personnel to assist our crew?

Certainly, Captain.

We've had simulator training —
but not the real thing.



So, we're going to
need your help.

We're in communication with local EDF forces
and they're as surprised as we are.

EF155



They do say that there's been traffic that could have prepositioned the ACVs. As a contingency,
they are getting one of their ships ready to accelerate up to intercept speed if we need assistance.



Citizens, as mentioned on the intercom, our vessel appears to be under potential attack. Since we have nearly two hours to prepare, there is no reason for panicked action. While we will take every precaution, there is still a risk of damage and depressurization.

We've got three hostiles on a direct intercept.

You ready, Commander?

Yes, Captain.

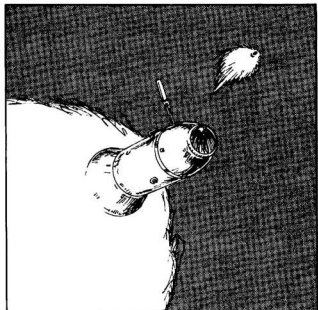
So, for your safety, we ask that you all don environmental suits.



Fortunately, we have with us several members of the Extraplanetary Defense Force, which will assist our flight crew and, these here will help, and, if necessary, protect you, if the need arises.



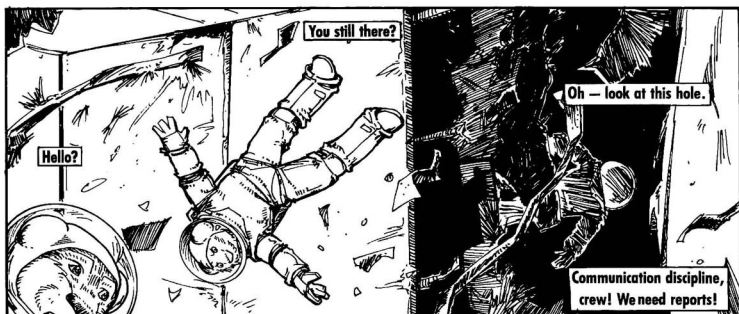
All personnel! All personnel! Prepare for hostile contact!



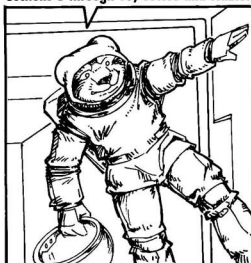
EF156



The ACVs, Autonomous Combat Vehicles, are multi-ton "smart" missiles, which rely on their enormous relative velocities, as well as any warhead, to inflict damage. All three are struck by the Liner's point defense weapons, but debris from one still strikes with explosive results.

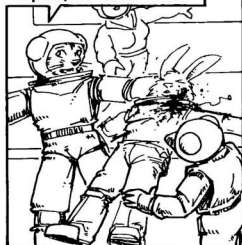


Sections 8 through 10, secure and stable.



Engineering section 2, catastrophic decomp — major kinetic through penetrations. All on-section crew lost.

Medical — we have some kinetic injuries, none critical so far.



Well — we seemed to have survived the contact. Thank you for your help, Commander.

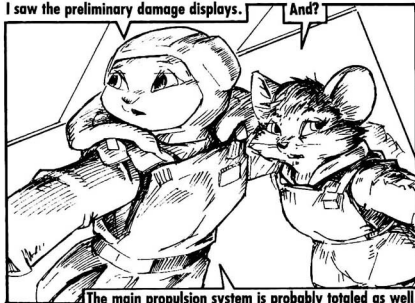


EF 157

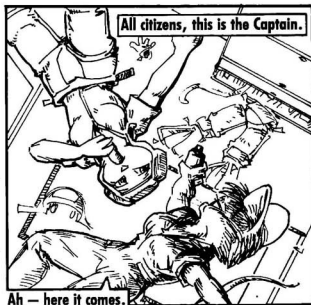
Oh — missed two and broke up one, but it still impacted square on. Rear fuel tank is totally gone.

I saw the preliminary damage displays.

And?



The main propulsion system is probably totaled as well.



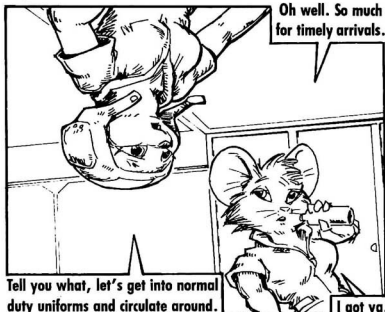
All citizens, this is the Captain.

Ah — here it comes.

As you are aware, the ship has suffered significant damage. We have, nevertheless, survived the ordeal, and our environment and resources are largely intact. However, our main propulsors are inoperative and we will be without any decelerative forces. For those of you inexperienced with ZeeGee, feel free to ask members of the crew for assistance. We will be rendezvousing with an EDF heavy frigate, the DH 284, in approximately 700 hours. In the meantime, we will attempt to make the wait tolerable.



Oh well. So much for timely arrivals.



Tell you what, let's get into normal duty uniforms and circulate around.

I got ya.

Commander?

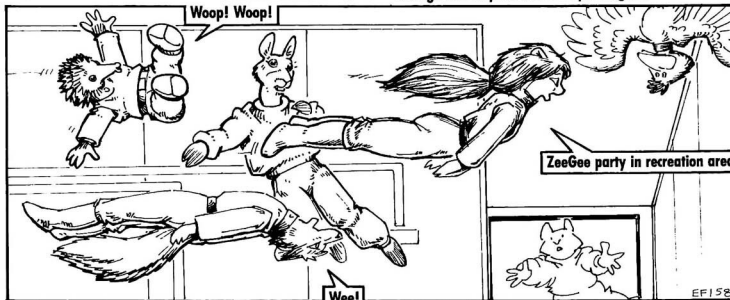


Hello, Specialist.

The emergency is over, so why the armor?

Change and help me relax the passengers.

Woop! Woop!



ZeeGee party in recreation area!

Wee!

EF158



konny and czu

in DEBT CHAPTER 1



I DON'T SEE WHY I'M THE
ONE WHO HAS TO MAKE THE
DELIVERY, KONNY.

THIS COLD IS BITING
RIGHT THROUGH
MY VAC-SUIT.

YES, CZU,
YOU'RE QUITE
UNCOMFORTABLE.





BUT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO GOT US INTO THIS MESS, CZU. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO GOT DECIMATED BY CARD-SNAK LOUIE. YOU'RE THE ONE WHO AGREED TO RUN CONTRABAND HERE TO CANCEL YOUR DEBT. (ALTHOUGH WHY LOUIE ISN'T USING HIS OWN DELIVERY NET IS BEYOND ME.)

I DON'T FIND IT SURPRISING AT ALL THAT I'M THE ONE WHO'S UP HERE IN A NICE WARM SHIP, AND YOU'RE THE ONE DOWN THERE.

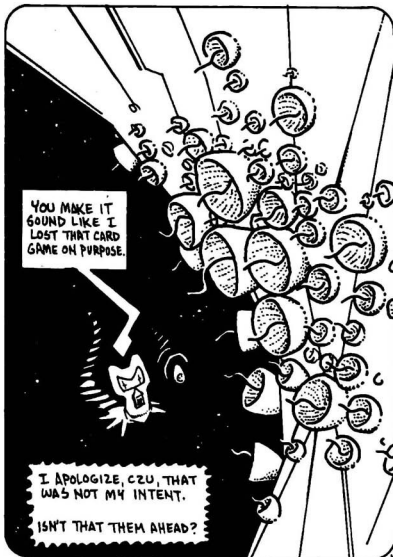
IN THE COLD.



WELL, YOU SURPRISE ME! I'D HAVE SHARED WITH YOU IF I'D'VE WON THAT NEEDCARD GAME!

A TOUCHING SENTIMENT, CZU. CAN WE MOVE ALONG AND GET THIS OVER WITH? THIS IS A RESTRICTED WORLD, AND I WOULDN'T WANT A ROVING SENTRY SHIP TO CATCH US WITH WHAT'S IN YOUR LAP-PACK.

I SENT ONE OF MY EYES DOWN WITH YOU. THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH?



YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE I LOST THAT CARD GAME ON PURPOSE.

I APOLOGIZE, CZU, THAT WAS NOT MY INTENT. ISN'T THAT THEM AHEAD?

LOOK, WE'RE
BOTH ON EDGE.
LET'S DUMP
THIS PARCEL
ON THESE
LEEBZATES
AND THEN PUT
AS MANY PARSECS
AS WE CAN
BETWEEN US
AND HERE.

AHEM—YOU'RE THE
GUYS WHO ARE EXPECT-
ING SOMETHING FROM
THE BIG L...?



YSSS

YSSS

YSSS

LOUIE

LOUIE

SEND

IT?

YSSS

YSSS

SELL

US

SEND US

IT?

THAT'S RIGHT.
I'VE GOT IT
RIGHT HERE.



IT!

OH

AH

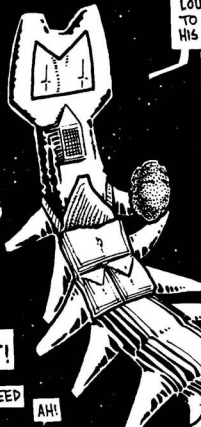
IT

AT

LAST

IT

HERE
WE ARE
...IT!



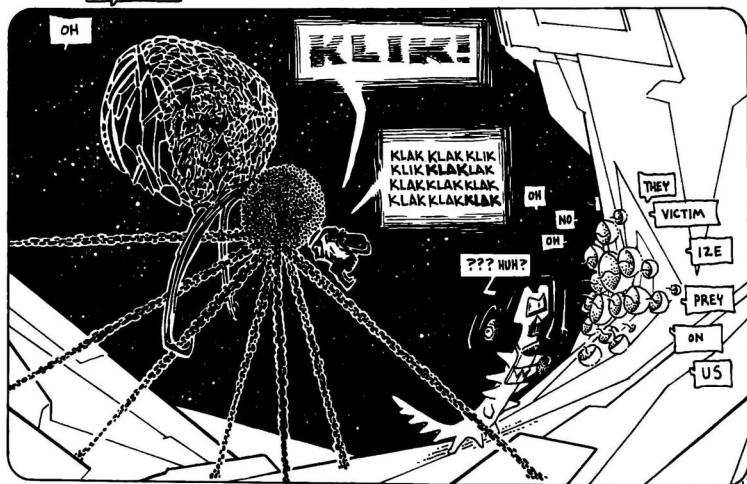
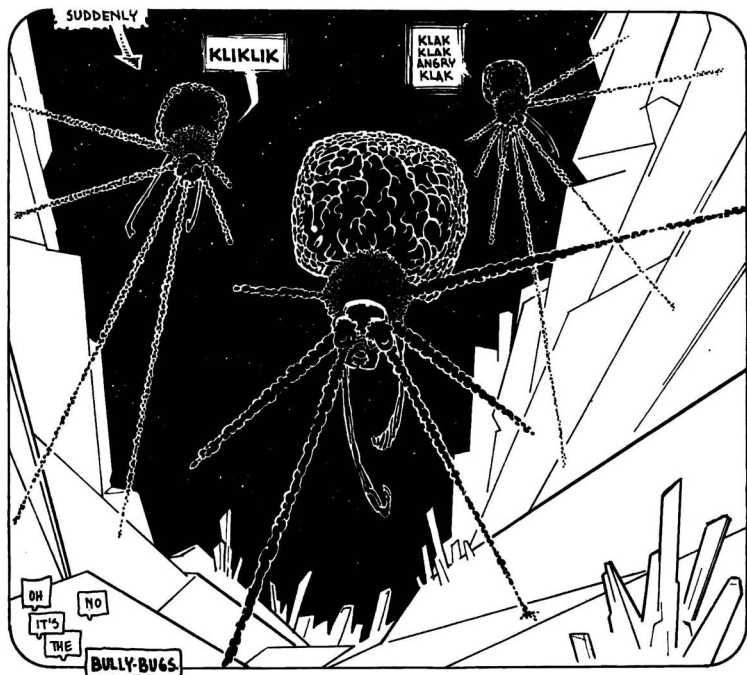
YSSS

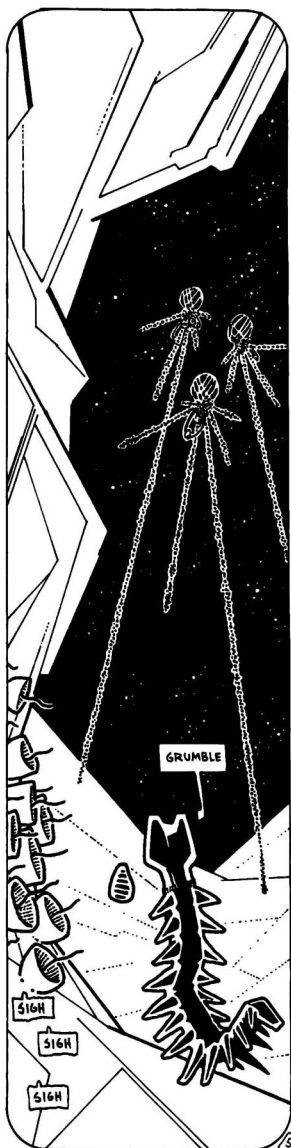
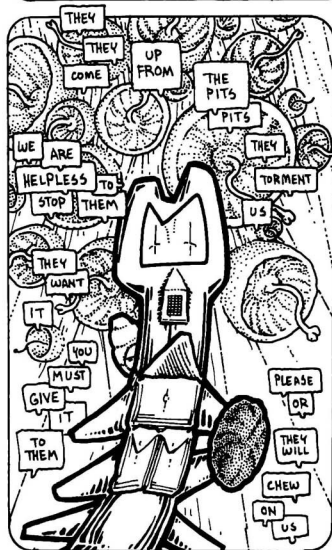
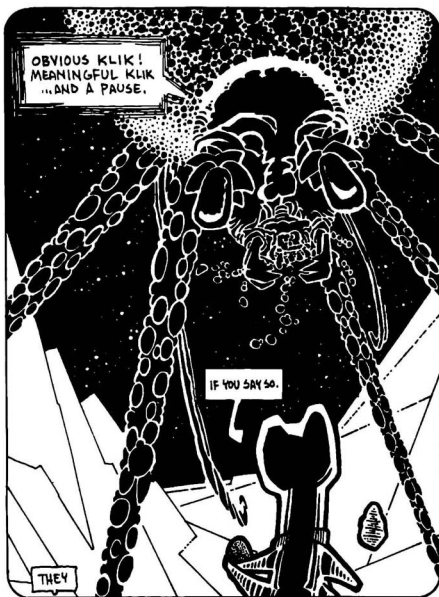
IT!

INDEED

AH!

LOUIE SAID
TO GIVE YOU
HIS REGARDS.





LOOK, WE WERE ONLY RESPONSIBLE
FOR DELIVERING THAT PARCEL.
YOUR DIFFICULTY WITH LOCAL
EXTORTION IS UNFORTUNATE,
BUT IT'S NOT OUR PROBLEM.

GOT
THAT
STRAIGHT?

OF
COURSE
CERTAINLY
IS NO
PROBLEM
NOT
NOW
ALL
ALL HAS
GONE
ACCORDING
TO

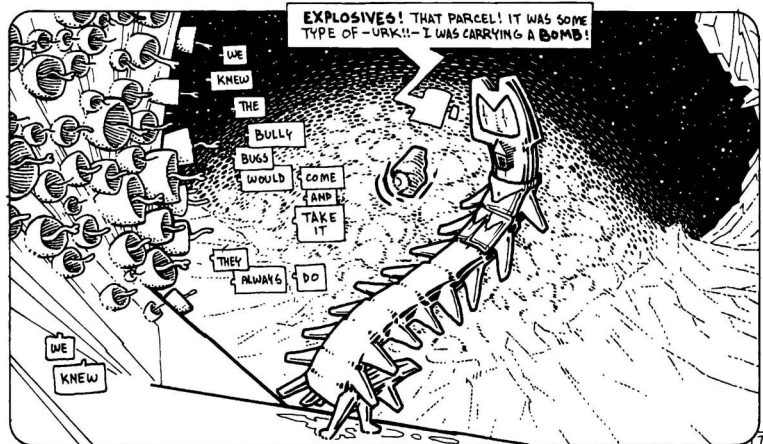
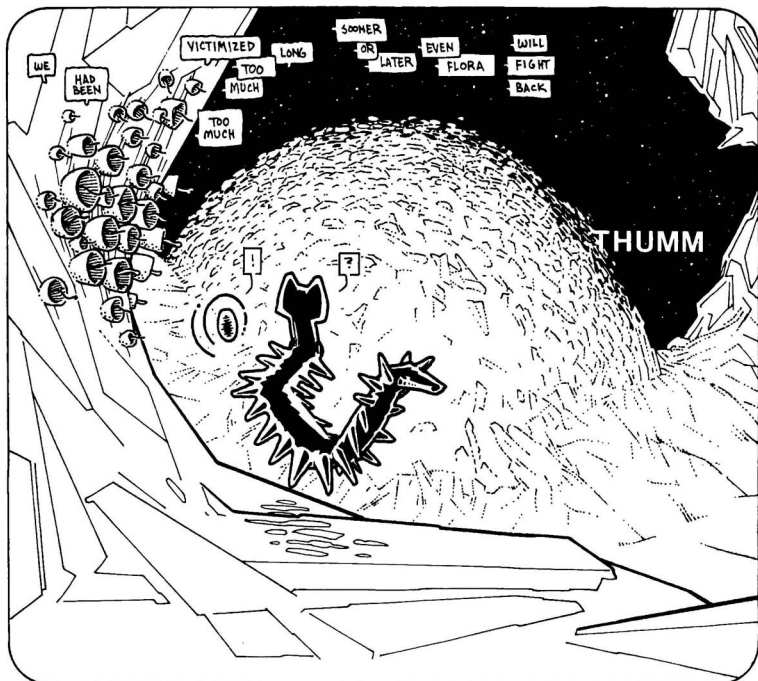
PLAN

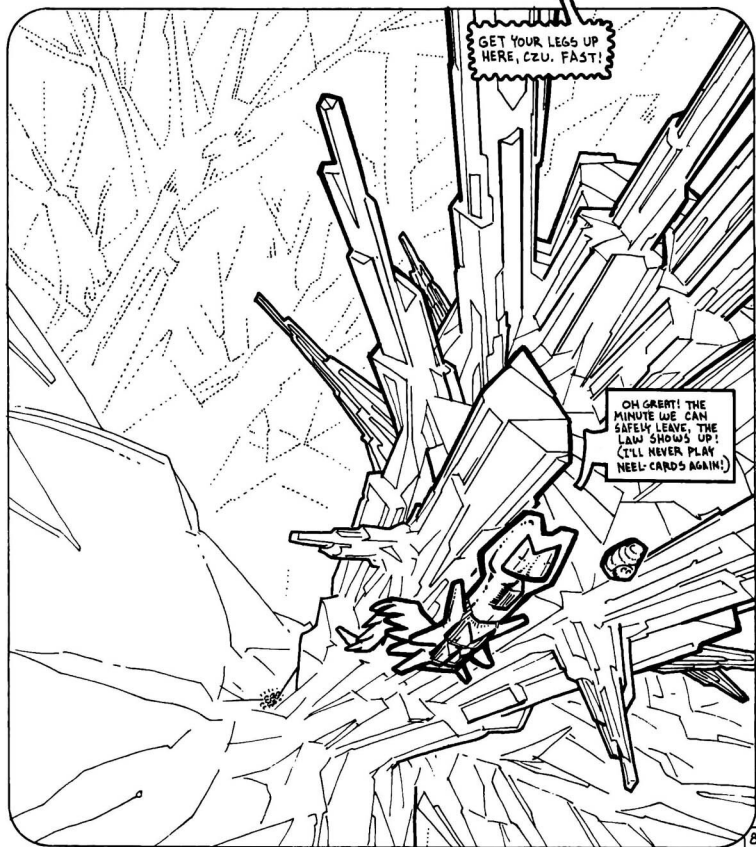
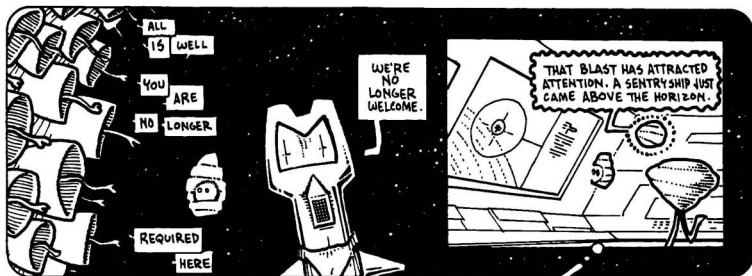
PLAN...?

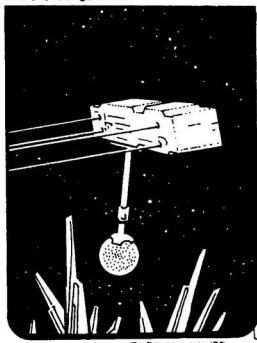
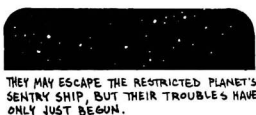
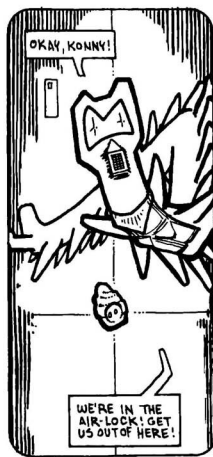
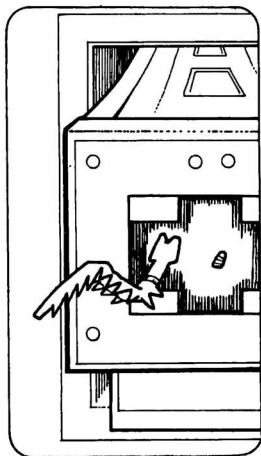
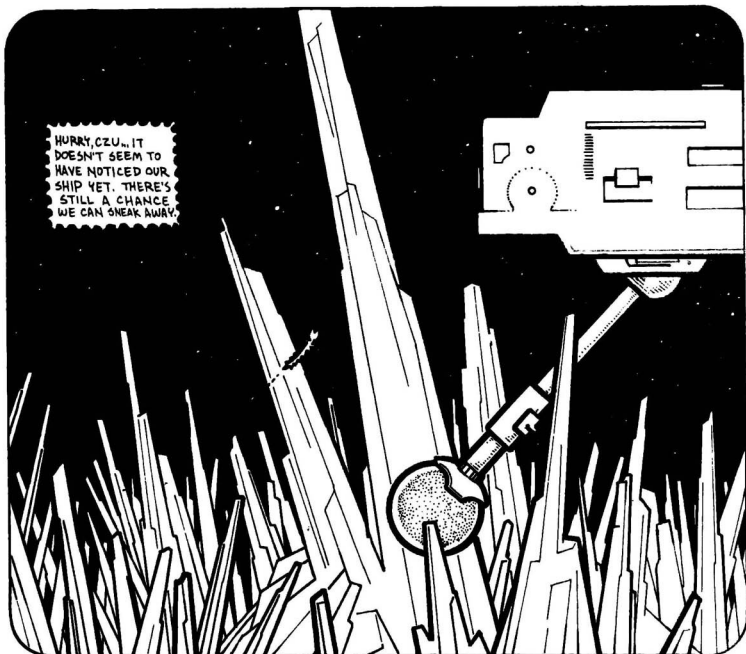
WE HATE IT WHEN
WE'RE PART OF A
PLAN WE DIDN'T
KNOW ABOUT.

OF COURSE
THERE WAS A PLAN

VEGETABLES
ARE NOT
WITH
OUT SOME
CUNNING







TO BE CONTINUED

Rufus THE Red

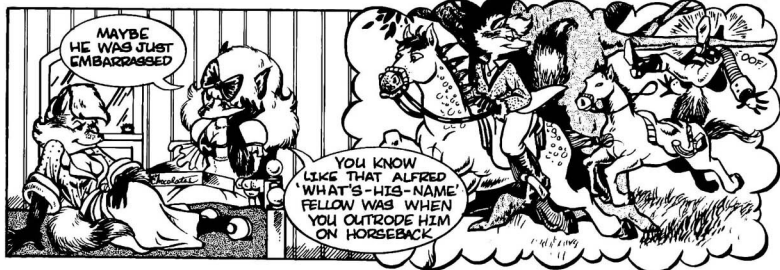
WRITTEN BY
DOUG DARBROW

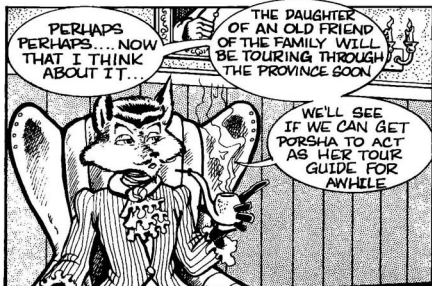
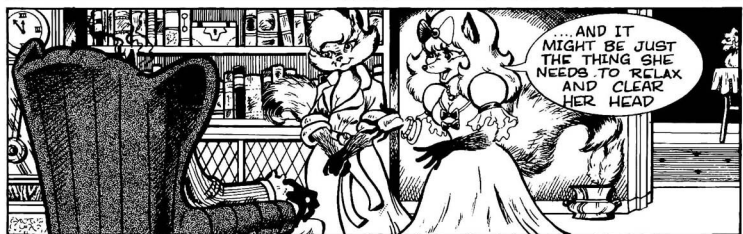
ART AND LETTERING BY
MONIKA LIVINGSTON

JONATHAN REDFOX AND HIS FATHER RETURN FROM THE NOCTURNA ESTATE WHERE JON AND PORSHA'S BETROTHAL PARTY ENDED EARLIER THAN PLANNED FROM JON'S FAILED FORMULA AT THE PERFUME DEVELOPMENT LAB TO HIS SPILLING PUNCH ON PORSHA THIS DAY HAS NOT BEEN KIND TO HIM. IT HASN'T BEEN SO GREAT FOR THOSE WHO KNOW HIM EITHER.....



WHILE BACK IN PORSHA'S BEDROOM









SO THE AFTERNOON SEES JONATHAN TAKING OUT HIS FRUSTRATIONS BY INDULGING IN HIS FAVORITE SPORT, TARGET SHOOTING. HIS MANY YEARS OF PRACTICE HAVE MADE HIM AN EXPERT SHOT.



ANOTHER BAD DAY I SEE. WELL YOU'D BEST BE GETTING CLEANED UP FOR DINNER NOW. TOMORROW PERHAPS WE CAN HAVE A NICE LONG TALK



AFTER DINNER JONATHAN DECIDES THAT A WALK INTO TOWN WILL CLEAR HIS HEAD. HE SOON FINDS HIMSELF HEADING TOWARDS THE FIGHTING COCK TAVERN, A LOCAL HANG OUT FOR SAILORS, TRADERS, AND OTHERS OF "QUESTIONABLE" LIVELYHOODS.



JONATHAN LOVED THE SEA AND ALTHOUGH WARNED BY HIS FATHER TO STAY CLEAR OF THE TAVERN HE WOULD SOMETIMES SNEAK IN JUST TO LISTEN TO THE ADVENTURES TOLD BY THE SAILORS.



... AND BEFORE WE COULD REACH 'IM, THIS BIG WAVE SMASHES ACROSS THE DECK DRAGGIN' I'M O'ER THE SIDE AN' DOWN INTO DAVEY JONES' LOCKER.



ENTERTAINMENT IS PROVIDED BY THE OWNER'S DAUGHTER, AND SOMETIMES, BY THE PATRON'S THEMSELVES.....



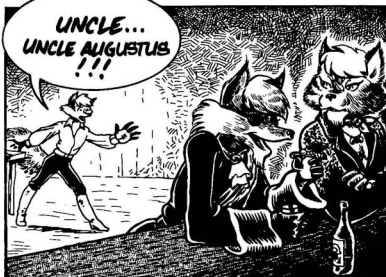
I TELL YA LADDIE IN LESS THAN A FULL CYCLE OF THE MOON WE'LL BE DOIN' ALRIGHT!



SUDDENLY, JONATHAN'S ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE BAR AND AN OLD FAMILIAR VOICE.



UNCLE...
UNCLE AUGUSTUS
!!!

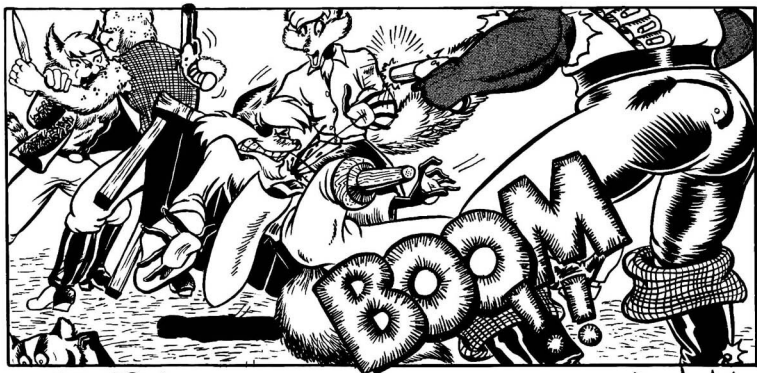


WELL I'LL BE KEELHAULED! IF IT AIN'T ME NEPHEW JONATHAN WHOM I AIN'T SEEN IN A DUCKS AGE!









Will Jonathan get a load of bull?
Will Augustus learn better manners?
Will Rufus the Red save the day?
But most important....will the map survive? Find out in the next chapter of Rufus the Red!



SPACEWOLF

JUST BEFORE DAWN, ON THE
PLANET CHIRMA, IN THE CAMBIA SYSTEM.

WE'RE NEARLY FINISHED
DOWN HERE IRONHAND.
HOW DO THINGS LOOK
FROM UP THERE?

SCANNERS ARE CLEAR, IT'S
NICE AND QUIET. NOT A
SIGN OF ANY IMPERIAL
TRAFFIC IN YOUR AREA.

YEAH, WELL AT THE FIRST HINT
OF TROUBLE YOU GUYS BREAK
ORBIT AND GET YOUR BUTTS
BACK TO THE ROCK. DON'T
WORRY ABOUT US. OUT.

WELL EZZERHAUN, THAT DOES
IT FOR THIS LOAD. WILL YOU
HAVE ANY TROUBLE IN GETTING
THIS FOOD TO THE HUNGRY?

NONE AT ALL.
MY MEN AND I WILL
SEE TO THAT.

HOW IS YOUR
CAMPAIGN AGAINST RAMMUS'
TROOPS GOING?

IT ISN'T

WHY!?

EACH TIME WE'D STRIKE,
THE REGIONAL GARRISON
COMMANDER PUNISHED
US BY EXECUTING 100
PRISONERS. ♪ SNIFF ♪
AND JUST 3 MONTHS AGO
THEY ARRESTED MY
WIFE. 1... ♪ SNIFF ♪
I CAN'T FIGHT ANYMORE
I'M SORRY PAXTON, I'M
A COWARD. BUT I
DON'T WANT TO
SEE MY LEENORA
DRAGGED INTO
THE STREET
AND SHOT.

LISTEN TO ME. CHOOSING NOT TO FIGHT IN ORDER TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A LOVED ONE, IS NOT AN ACT OF COURAGE. I'D DO THE SAME THING IF I WERE IN YOUR PLACE. I WON'T ASK YOU, OR YOUR REBELS TO FIGHT ANYMORE.



THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING PAXTON. BUT IT'S BEEN ALMOST TWO YEARS SINCE THE EMPEROR'S TROOPS INVADED THIS WORLD. WE THOUGHT THINGS WOULD GET BETTER. BUT WE WERE WRONG. NOW WE ARE BEING BEATEN, STARVED, AND EXECUTED. IF IT WASN'T FOR THE ACTIONS OF YOU AND THE PACK, OUR HOPE WOULD HAVE DIED LONG AGO.

GOOD BYE PAXTON, AND THANK YOU. SOME OF MY FELLOW CHIRMAN'S WILL EAT WELL TONIGHT. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, AND WATCH YOUR ASS.



HA HA HA I WILL. NOW YOU BETTER GET GOING



BLITZ AND I HAVE FINISHED OUR MED-EXAMS ON THE REFUGEES.

AND?

AND IT'S NOT TOO GOOD.

DAMN.



CANCER, PNEUMONIA, MALNUTRITION, SEVERE DEPRESSION. SIGH, I TELL YOU PAXTON...



THESE PEOPLE ARE IN A BAD WAY. THEY NEED MORE HELP...





WHY DOESN'T THE EMPEROR JUST RULE THESE PEOPLE? WHY TORTURE THEM WITH STARVATION AND EXECUTION?



WHEN EMPEROR HAVA ATTEMPTED TO CONQUER THE GALAXY, HIS FORCES SUFFERED A HUMILIATING DEFEAT BY MY UNCLE'S STAR FLEET. ALTHOUGH HE FAILED TO SEIZE OUR BELOVED CANIS SYSTEM, HE DID CONQUER THE OUTER SYSTEMS. AND IT'S BECAUSE THEY WERE OUR ALLIES THAT THEY ARE BEING MADE TO SUFFER FOR THE EMPIRE'S HUMILIATION. (SIGH) C'MON.

GOOD MORNING FRIENDS

PRINCE GREYCOAT!

SPACE WOLF
LOOK! IT'S THE PRINCE!

OOH, THE PRINCE



ARE YOU ALL EATING WELL? AND KEEPING WARM?

AS PAXTON AND RUSTY CONTINUE THEIR TOUR OF THE REFUGEE CAMP.



BLESS YOU SPACE WOLF, FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE. BLESS YOU.



IT'S DONE PAXTON.

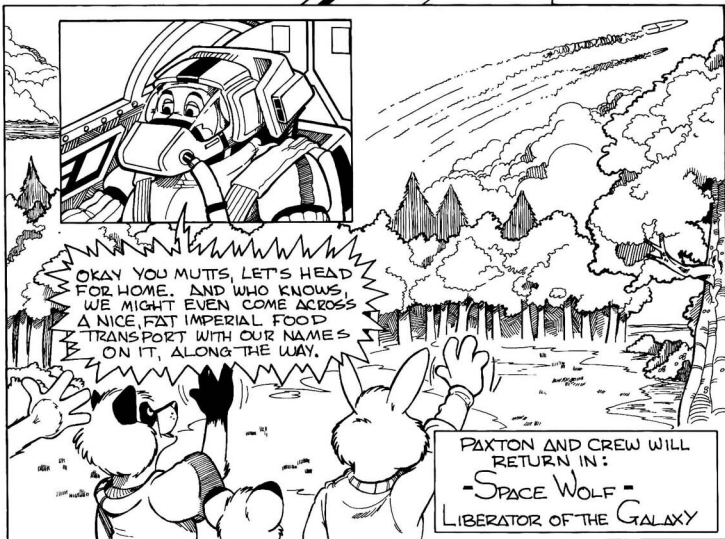
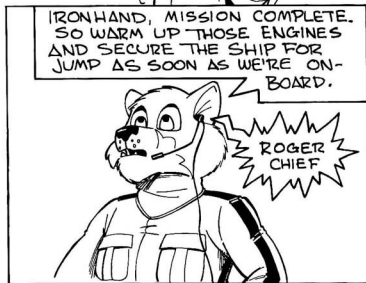
ARE YOU OKAY BLITZ?

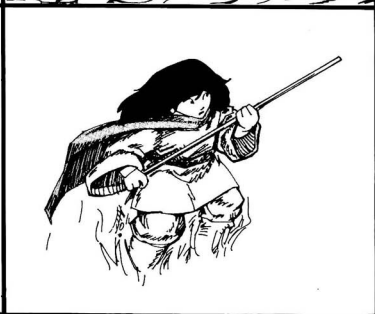


"YEAH, I'M... (CHOKES) I'M FINE"



"SHIT"





So, what's happening? Thoughts & Images is expanding its line of titles, and reaffirming its commitment to maintain the quality, and improve the reliability of its current production. Gosh! Doesn't that sound exciting? So official and all. Actually, like the line says, we're in the process of getting some new stuff going and having a new production manager take care of all the biz.

First, the new stuff. **Xanadu**, by Vicky Wyman, will be a romantic fantasy, cast with both mythical and mundane anthropomorphs, in dramatic black and white. It's looking real good so far, and will have short back-ups by yet to be determined.

In a somewhat similar vein, **Adventure Tails**, the tentative title for Monika Livingston's book, which will feature "*Rufus the Red*," which also means he will be making his last appearance in *Albedo* nr. 12.

And thinking about that, *Albedo* nr. 13 and beyond will be back to mostly "*Erma Felna, EDF*," with the occasional "*Konny and Czu*" or other back-up. Speaking of which, there is in the works, a collected "*Konny and Czu*" book, something like **Command Review**, by Matt Howarth and Mike Kister. As for other back-ups and such, Adrian Klienbergen, Dan Flahive, and others are quite interested in helping pad the pages of several of these titles.

Last, and longest in coming, Monika Livingston is working on issue 2 of **Zell, Sworddancer**. Me, Steve Gallacci, is writing and designing it, and we hope to have it back on schedule this spring. Donne Barr will have little bits in it too.

The big question is when. The actual publishing schedule won't be finalized for some weeks, at least. Reason being, we don't want to start soliciting stuff before we can guarantee its publication. Each title's released date won't be official until the art in-hand, ready for press, and the next issue's worth are well under way. So, keep your eyes open for the amazing media blitz when we can officially start pitching all this stuff.

As for this issue, I hope you-all like the change in art style in *Erma*. I wanted to try a different and, hopefully, more successful inking technique which would calm my critics and encourage my fans. I like it myself, it better matches what I'd like *Erma* to look like, and allows me more detail and discourages quicky airbrush cover-ups. For those who want to know, it's niji stylist fine-line marker on cold-press illustration board. Last, thanks for the letters and such and I'll have a letters column again, probably starting with nr. 13.