

HELLBOY

TM



MIKE MIGNOLA

HELLBOY

TM

CONQUEROR WORM





HELLBOY

TM

CONQUEROR WORM

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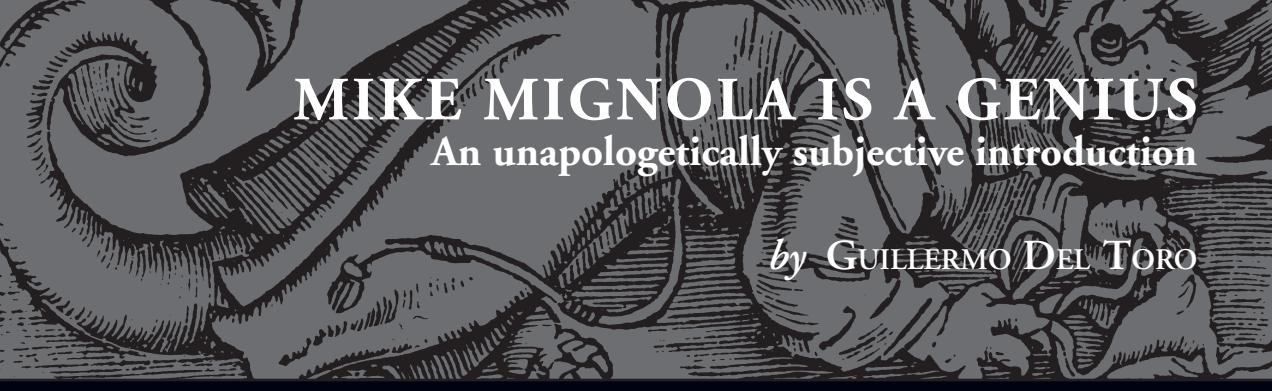
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MIKE MIGNOLA IS A GENIUS

An unapologetically subjective introduction

by GUILLERMO DEL TORO

TYes, Mike Mignola is a genius.

Right off the bat, we can agree on it. That's what makes writing an intro like this so easy. Especially if you were—like me—a groveling fan already. After all, Mike Mignola conjured up a perfect character in Hellboy, and his latest adventure, *Conqueror Worm*, is compelling and beautiful.

Nosiree, Bob. No problem: this introduction—like all of its kind—will merely point the reader to a few more reasons for grovelling at the feet of a comic-book demi-God like Mr. Mignola, here.

As a naïve young geek, I was fascinated by Mignola's legendary inking and penciling. I leafed through the art and drooled over the sensuous lines, bathed in those deep pools of blackness that appear in most every vignette Mike creates. And, like many heathens, I thought for a few issues that Hellboy was wearing goggles on his forehead. Then, at the end of *Wake the Devil*—when his horns sprout out—I realized what they were. I hurried back and actually re-read every story, searching out those issues that I was missing.

I was hooked. Or rather, I fell in love. Truly, madly, deeply in love.

As a matter of fact, my rediscovery of *Hellboy* is one of the happiest memories I have of shooting *Mimic* in Toronto. In spite of a grueling schedule, I often found myself waiting patiently for Silver Snail Comics to open. Once inside, I would browse through the bins hoping for a *Dark Horse Presents* issue that I somehow had missed. I loved reading a newly-found issue at 5:00 A.M. while my family slept and I prepared to storyboard that day's scenes.

I humbly confess that many a time I have aspired to imitate Mignola's mysterious style in the design of my films, especially the cold, velvet backdrop of darkness from which his characters emerge. Alas, his hyper-expressionistic lighting is—I've found out—almost impossible to reproduce in a 3-D world.

And then there are the moments of quiet, almost elegiac horror juxtaposed with a kinetic energy only hinted at by the best of Kirby. And then—and then—above all!—an irritating simplicity.

A perfect, effortless line that reduces all us

amateur illustrators to nothing but salivating Salieris prostrate before a Mozart symphony.

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of developing a *Hellboy* screenplay. I tried to honor and expand upon the universe created by Mike in his series and in his masterful short stories.

Mike's body of work is firmly anchored in the comic-book and literary traditions of Machen, Lovecraft, Toth, and Kirby. Yet what has been emerging from them is a species all its own.

In discussing the characters with Mike, I suggested that their fascinating, comforting immutability would need to yield to a more three-dimensional dramatic approach. In addition, a complete, self-contained screen drama would need to tie things up a bit more in the end.

I say this without a hint of criticism, for we work in parallel but separate arenas. In the illustrated stories, Mike finds a way to give us a calm, unfazed Hellboy, a quiet, always dignified Abe (my favorite character), or a tormented, almost biblical Rasputin.

And now ... now ... *Conqueror Worm* gives us something new, something more subtle and complete. We finally get an explanation of those Kirby-esque aliens in *Seed of Destruction*. At last, Hellboy lashes out at his benign captors at the BPRD. Lobster Johnson's origin and feats are expanded upon. In my fevered reading, all the characters seem more nuanced and evocative. Hell, even Roger the Homunculus becomes a brooding, almost Miltonian figure, conflicted by his origins and searching for an identity and purpose in life. Kriegaffe aside, the only character who remains delightfully one-dimensional is Lobster Johnson, and with a crazy-ass name like that, we shouldn't ask for more.

So, move in and explore these pages. They draw us into a deeper, richer universe; they crown all past work and signal a new promising future for the character, all while still giving us the pulp beauty, cheap thrills, and cosmic horrors that have become Mignola's signature.

A work of genius.

(Did I already mention that Mike Mignola is a genius?)

For Doc Savage, the Shadow,
the Spider, G-8, and the men who wrote them.
And for the original 11 1/2-inch G.I. Joe.

CHAPTER ONE







LO! 'TIS A GALA NIGHT!
WITHIN THE LONESOME
LATTER YEARS!
AN ANGEL THROG, BEWINGED,
BEDIGHT
IN VEILS, AND DROWNED IN
TEARS,
SIT IN A THEATER TO SEE
A PLAY OF HOPES AND FEARS
WHILE THE ORCHESTRA
BREATHES FITFULLY
THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.



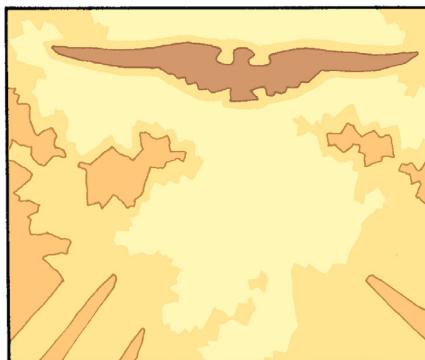
THAT MOTLEY DRAMA! --
OH, BE SURE ...

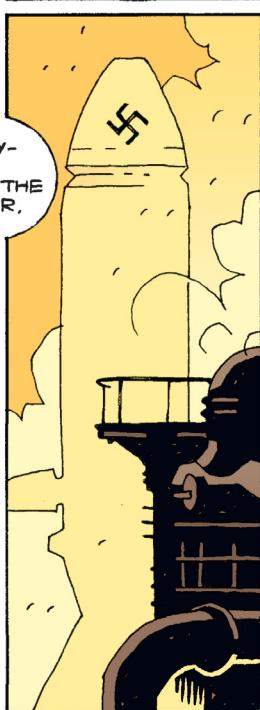


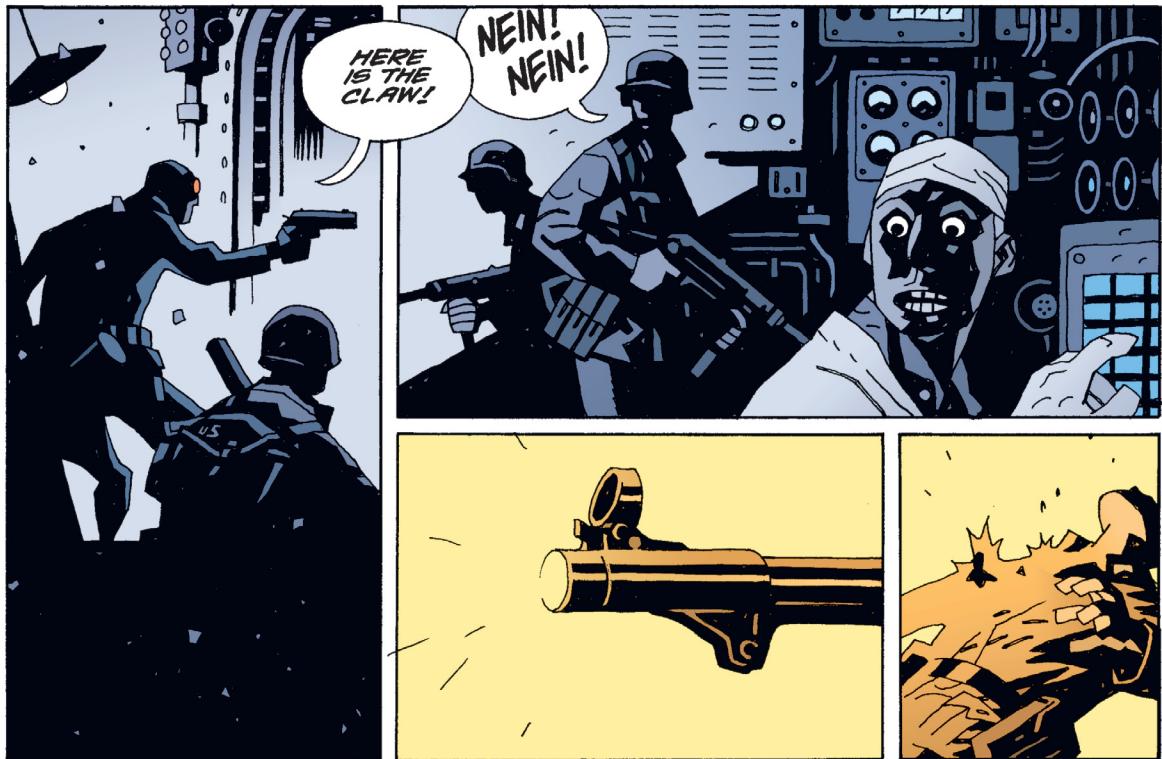
IT SHALL NOT BE FORGOT...









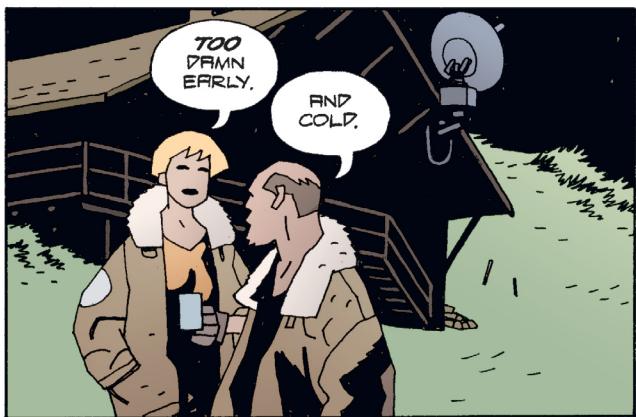


SIXTY-ONE
YEARS
LATER.



TWELVE
MILES AWAY.

B.P.R.D.*
FIELD HEAD-
QUARTERS
NUMBER FOUR.
6:40 A.M.



THIS
PHOTO WAS
TAKEN IN BERLIN
IN 1937.

IT SHOWS
PHYSICIST
ERNST OERLING.
IN THOSE DAYS
HE WAS PROB-
ABLY THE
SCIENTIST OF
THE THIRD REICH,
OFTEN REFERRED
TO AS THE "NAZI
EINSTEIN."

BY ALL
ACCOUNTS
HE WAS CLOSE
TO GIVING HITLER
THE ATOMIC
BOMB ...

CLICK

"...BUT ON JANUARY 1, 1939, HE WAS ASSASSINATED, BLOWN UP IN HIS CAR ALONG WITH ALL HIS NOTES. THEN ...



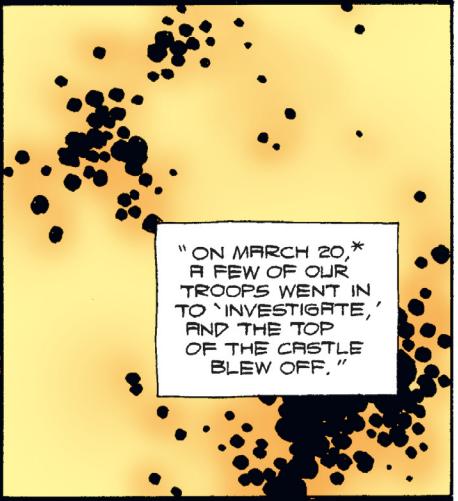
"...SOMETHING STRANGE. THE GESTAPO MOVED WHAT WAS LEFT OF OENING TO HUNTE CASTLE ...



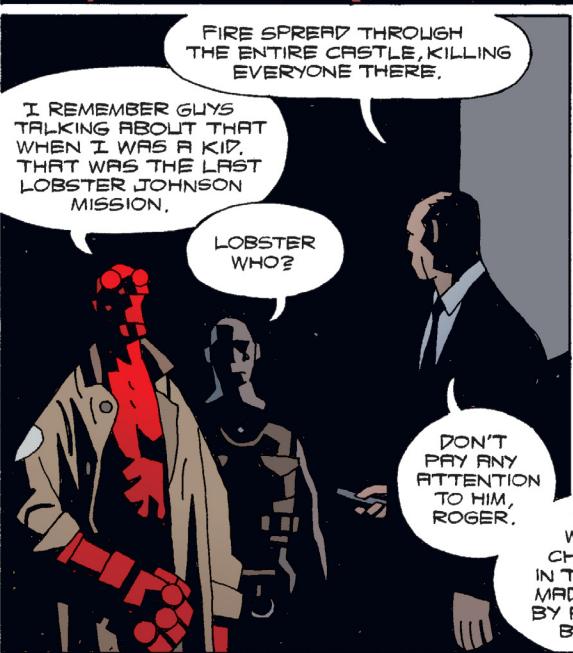
"...ALONG WITH ASTRONOMERS, ASTROLOGERS, AND MYSTICS FROM ALL OVER EUROPE.



"OF COURSE, WE WEREN'T IN THE WAR YET, BUT THERE WERE PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON NERVOUS ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE GOING ON UP THERE ...



"ON MARCH 20,* A FEW OF OUR TROOPS WENT IN TO 'INVESTIGATE,' AND THE TOP OF THE CASTLE BLEW OFF."



VIC WILLIAMS AS THE LOBSTER IN THE PHANTOM JUNGLE (REPUBLIC, 1945)

THE LOBSTER WAS A FICTIONAL CHARACTER, CREATED IN THE PULP MAGAZINES, MADE POPULAR BRIEFLY BY A COUPLE PARTICULARLY BAD MOVIE SERIALS.

* THE VERNAL EQUINOX

THEY WEREN'T
THAT BAD, AND
WHAT DO YOU
MEAN
FICTION?

BACK IN THE
THIRTIES A LOT OF
MOBSTERS TURNED
UP DEAD WITH THE
"LOBSTER'S CLAW"
BURNED INTO THEIR
FOREHEADS...



VINNY THE STRING

SKINNY JOE LINCOLN

ZUKO BANANA

"...AND
THERE WERE
RUMORS
OF WEIRDER
STUFF."

I'VE HEARD ALL
THE STORIES, BUT IT
IS THE OFFICIAL
POSITION OF THE
UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT THAT
THERE WAS NO
LOBSTER JOHNSON.
END OF STORY.

BACK TO HUNTER
CASTLE -- NO ONE
KNOWS WHAT CAUSED
THE EXPLOSION AND
FIRE THERE. THE RUSSIANS
FOUND PAPERS
IN BERLIN OUTLINING
A NAZI SPACE PRO-
GRAM, BUT NO ONE
EVER GAVE THE
THEORY ANY SERIOUS
CONSIDERATION...

SON
OF R--

...UNTIL
TWO DAYS
AGO.

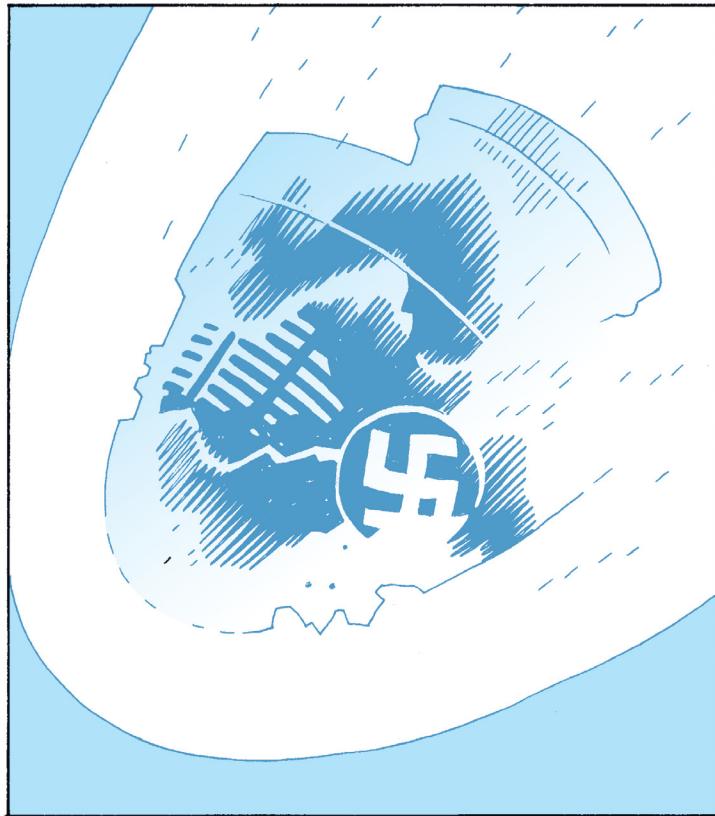
NASA TOOK
THIS PICTURE OF
A COMET ON A COL-
LISION COURSE WITH
THE EARTH. IT'S NOT
ONE OF THOSE GIANT
END-OF-THE-WORLD
ONES, BUT...

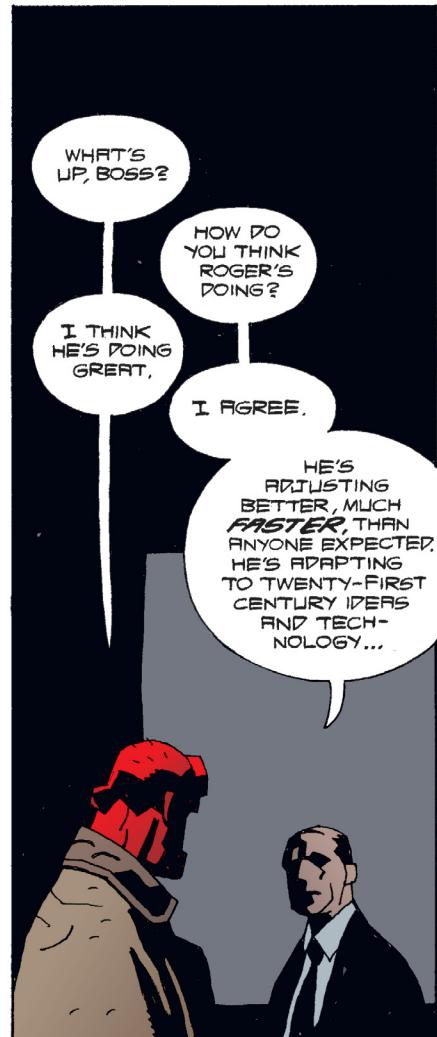
CLICK

...IF
YOU'LL
LOOK AT
THIS
ENLARGE-
MENT...

OH
CRAP.







*ABE SAPIEN VERSUS SCIENCE



YOU KNOW THAT HE WAS FITTED WITH AN ELECTRONIC GENERATOR.

YEAH...

WELL, IT WAS DECIDED THAT SOMETHING SHOULD BE INSTALLED ALONG WITH THE GENERATOR. A SORT OF FAIL-SAFE DEVICE.



EXCUSE ME?



AN INCENDIARY BOMB JUST LARGE ENOUGH TO --



EXCUSE ME?!?



WE HAD NO CHOICE! HE KILLED BUD WALLER AND SLICKED THE LIFE OUT OF LIZ SHERMAN. *

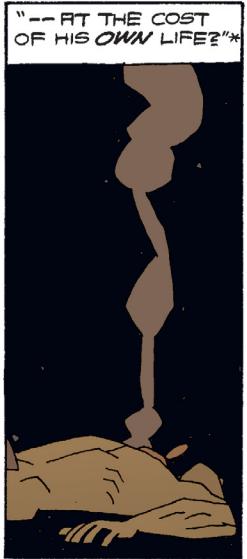
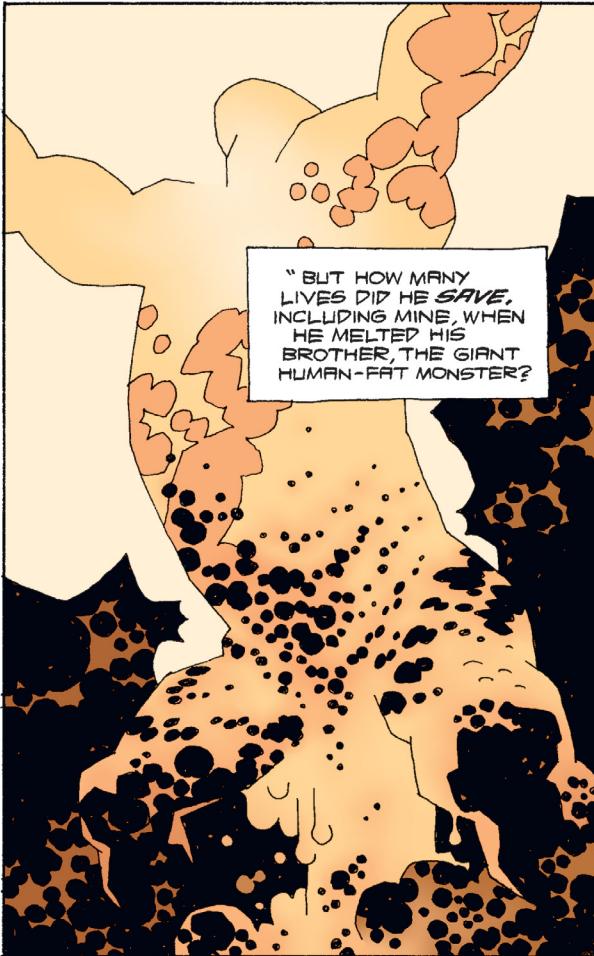


NO.

JESUS CHRIST, HE WAS AN ABANDONED SCIENCE PROJECT GATHERING DUST IN A ROMANIAN BASEMENT FOR FIVE HUNDRED YEARS ...!



"WHEN LIZ ZAPPED HIM TO LIFE HE FREAKED OUT A LITTLE. WHO WOULDN'T--?

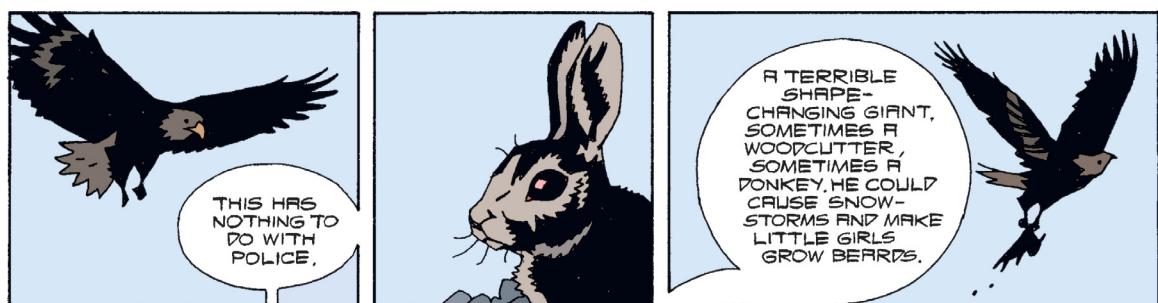


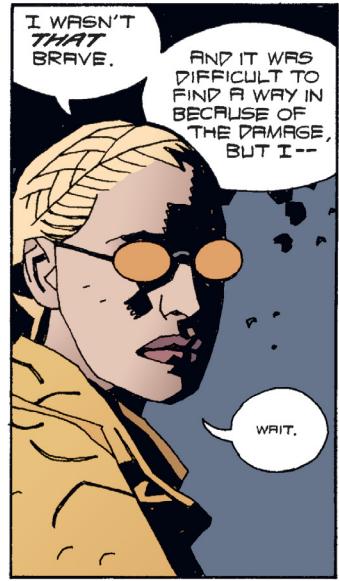
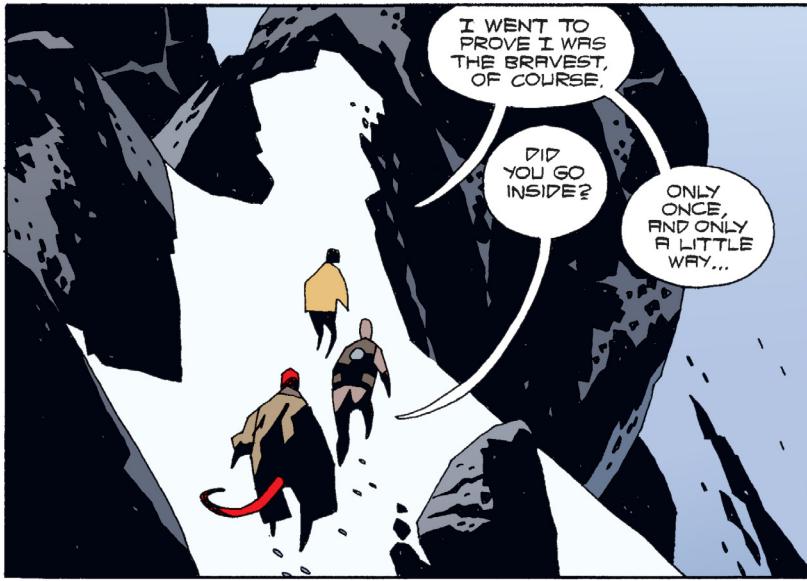
...BUT WHEN SHE WAS ELEVEN YEARS OLD SHE BURNED THIRTY-TWO PEOPLE TO DEATH...

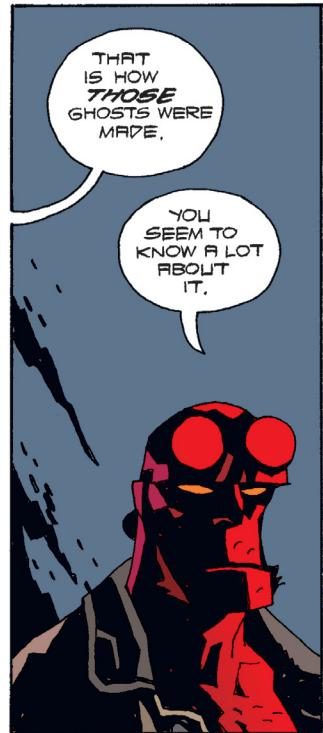




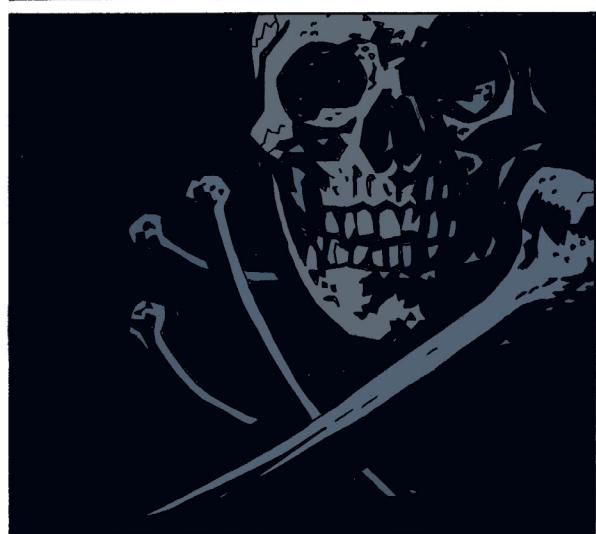


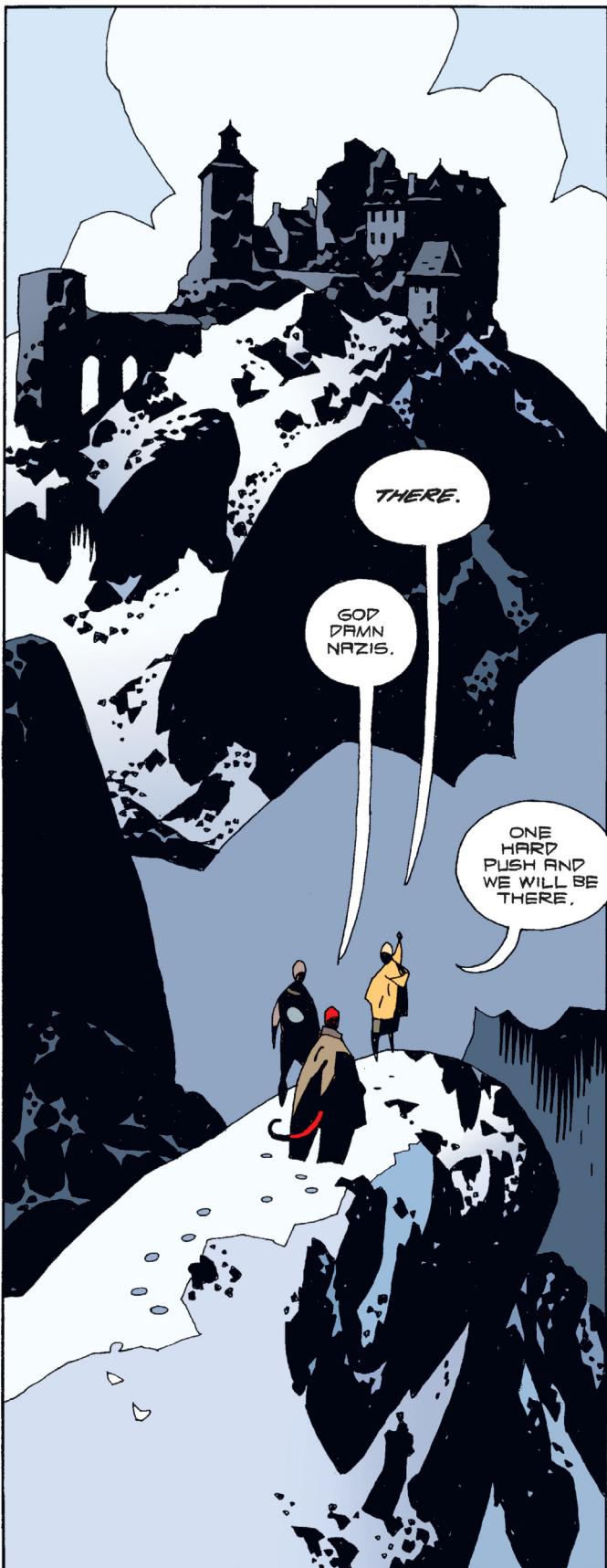


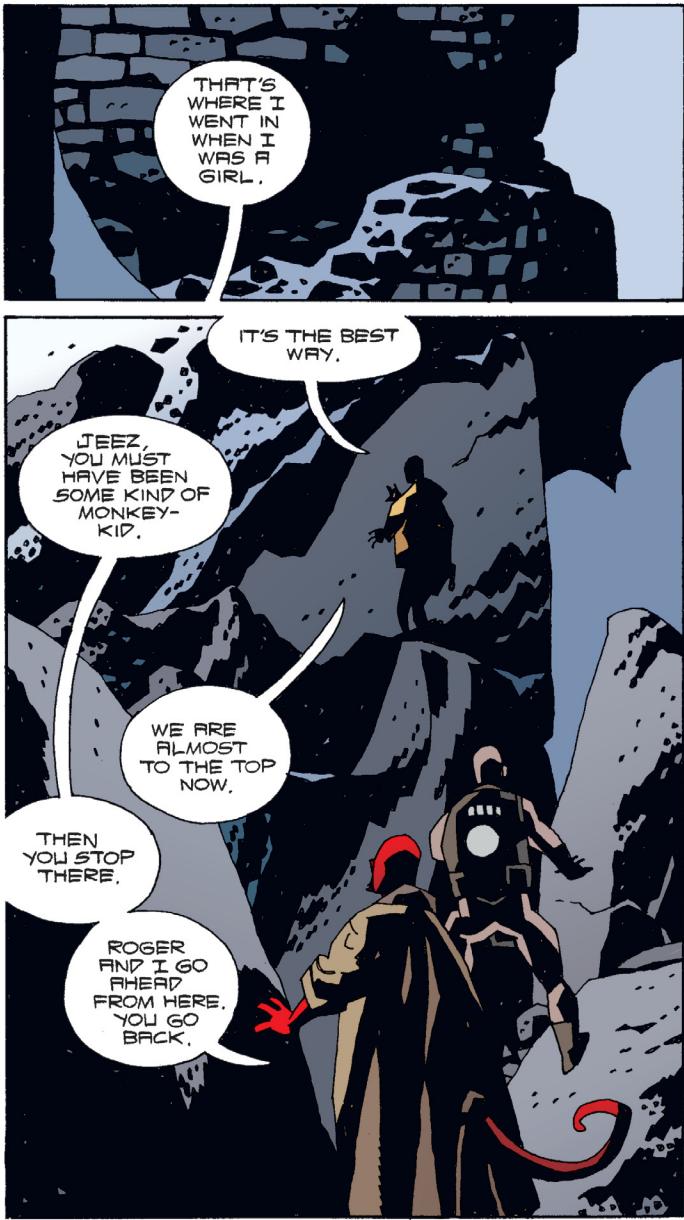




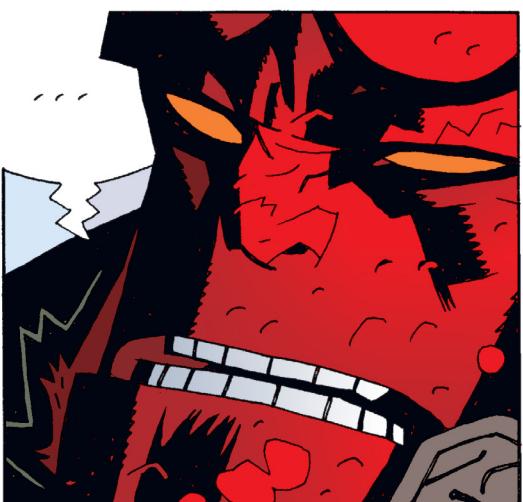












RAAAAAAA



BRAPAPAPAPAPAP



PAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAPAP



AAAAAA

GOD
DAMN
GUN THAT
FIRES ALL
BY IT-
SELF--

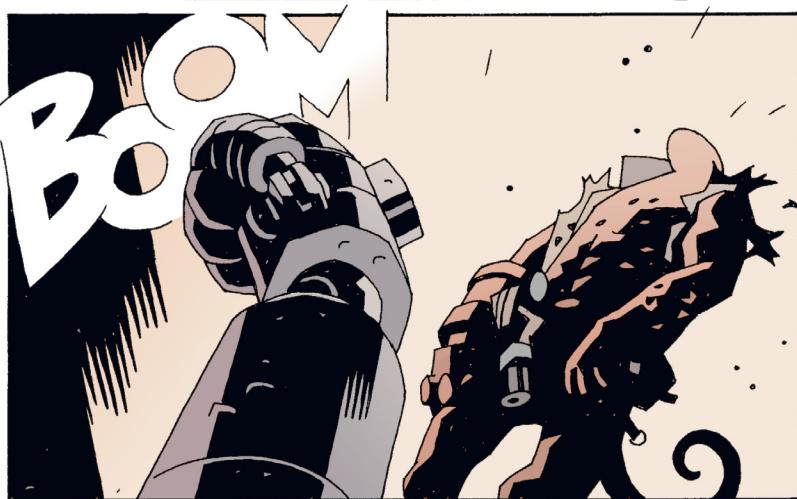
THAT'S
CRAP!

PRANG

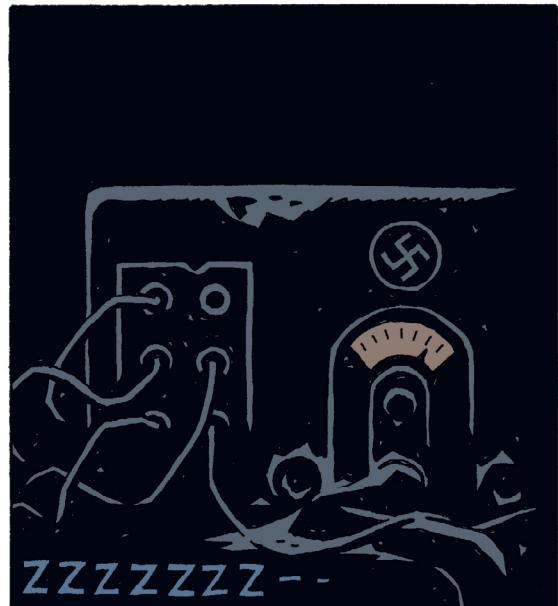
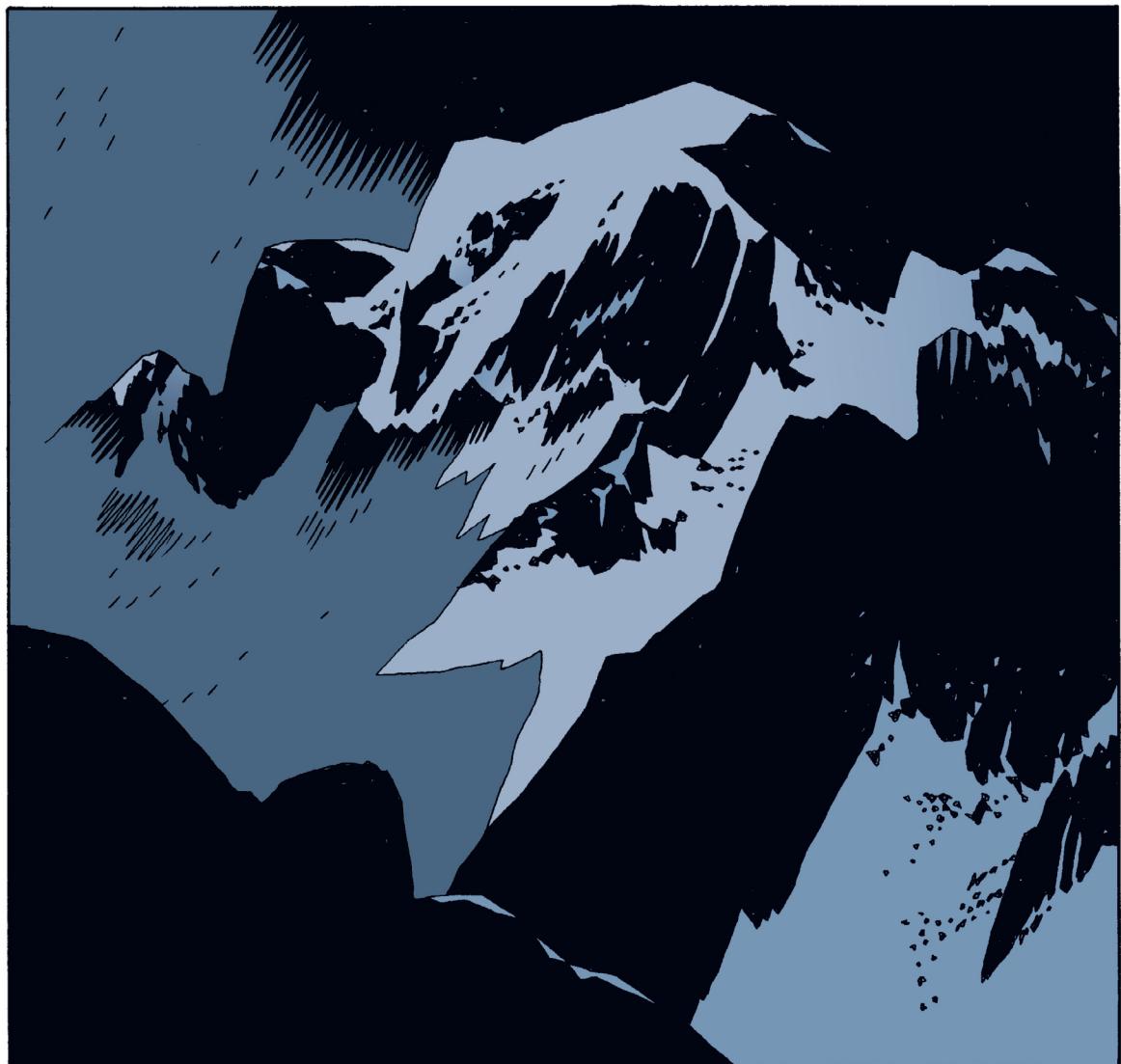












CHAPTER TWO



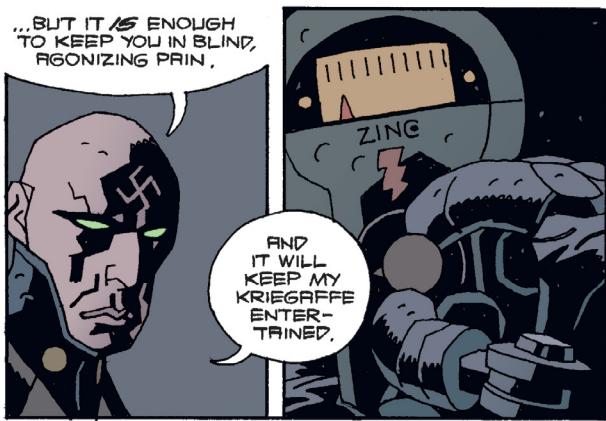


SON
OF A...

MIGNOLA





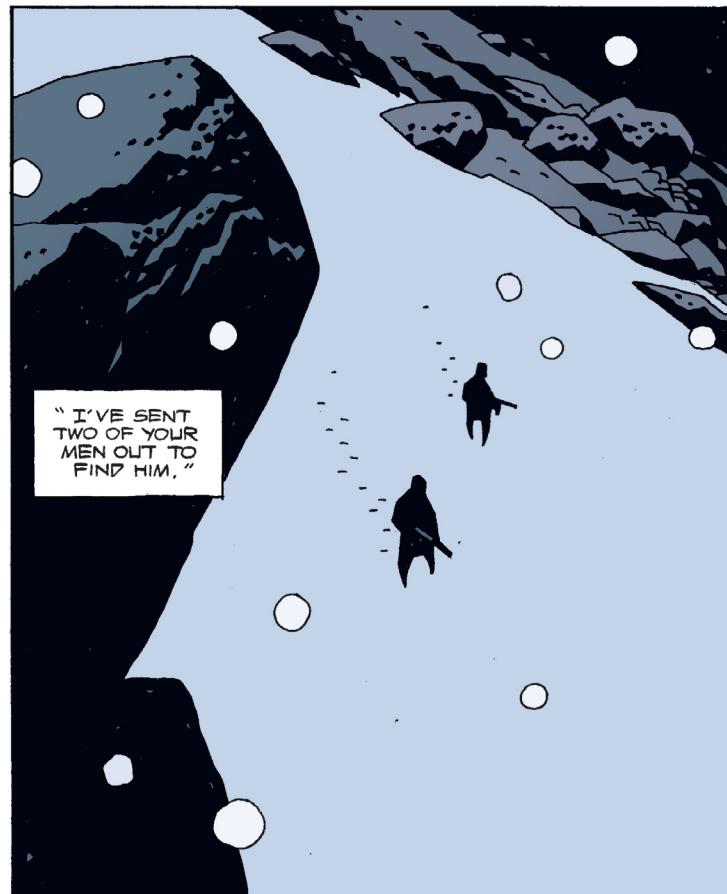
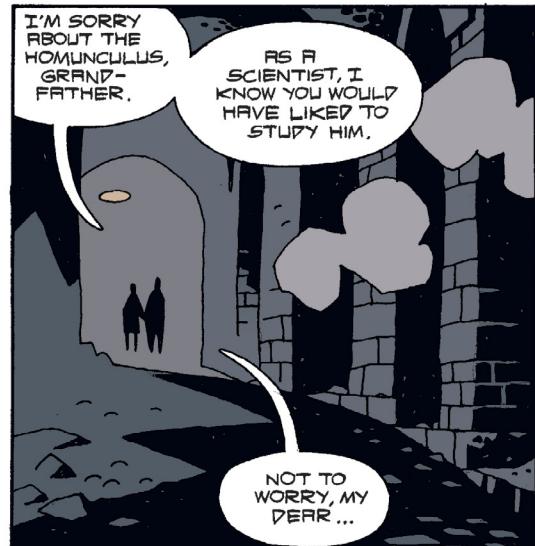




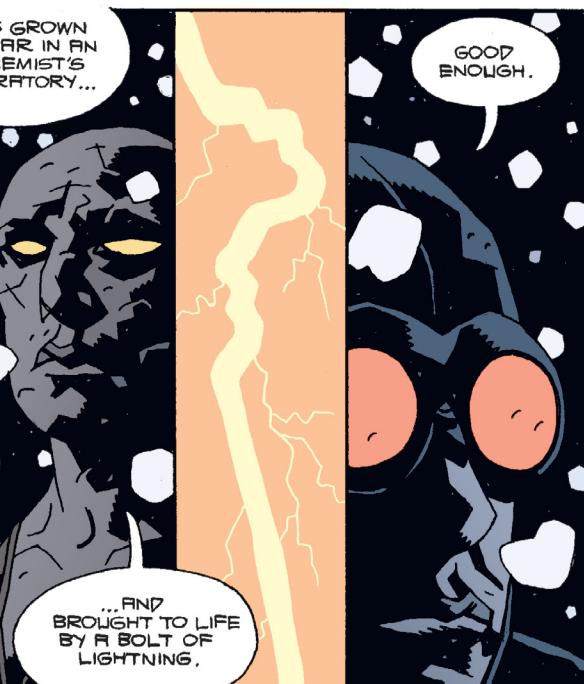


"SO, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE WAR, I WENT BACK TO GERMANY. I STILL HAD A WORKSHOP THERE, HIDDEN UNDER AN OLD CEMETERY NEAR INGOLSTADT..."

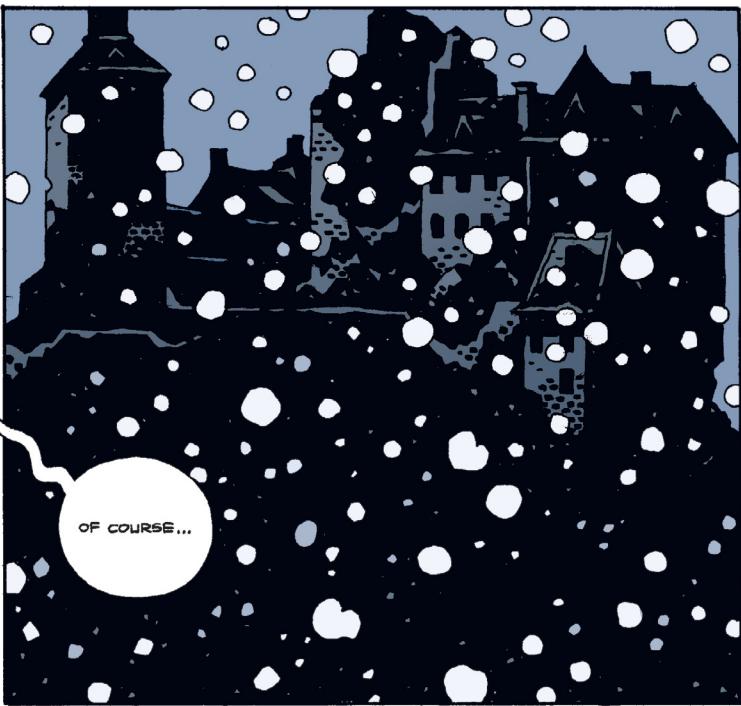
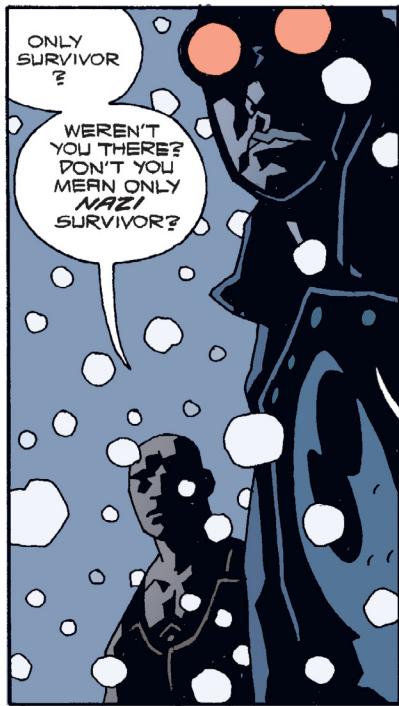


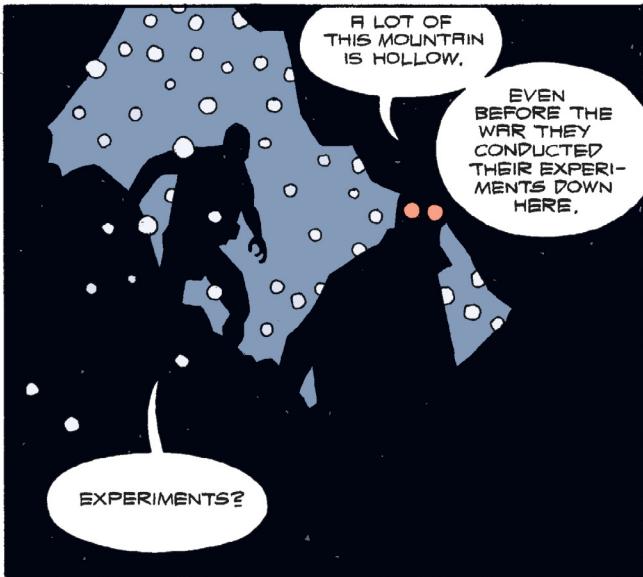




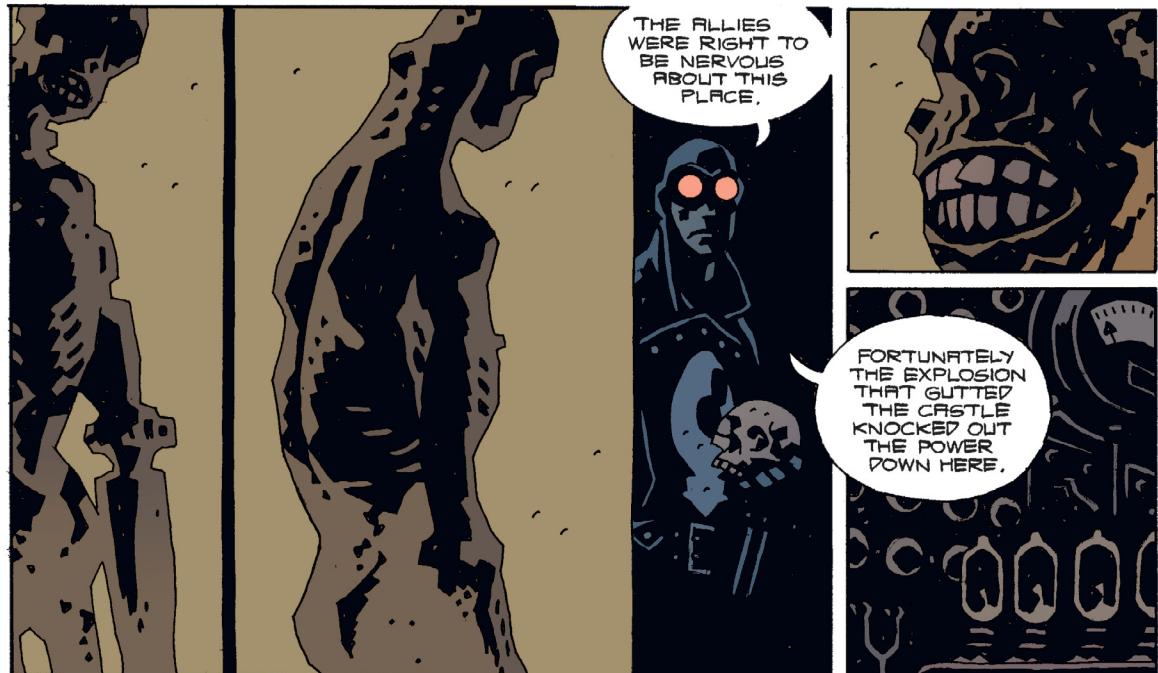


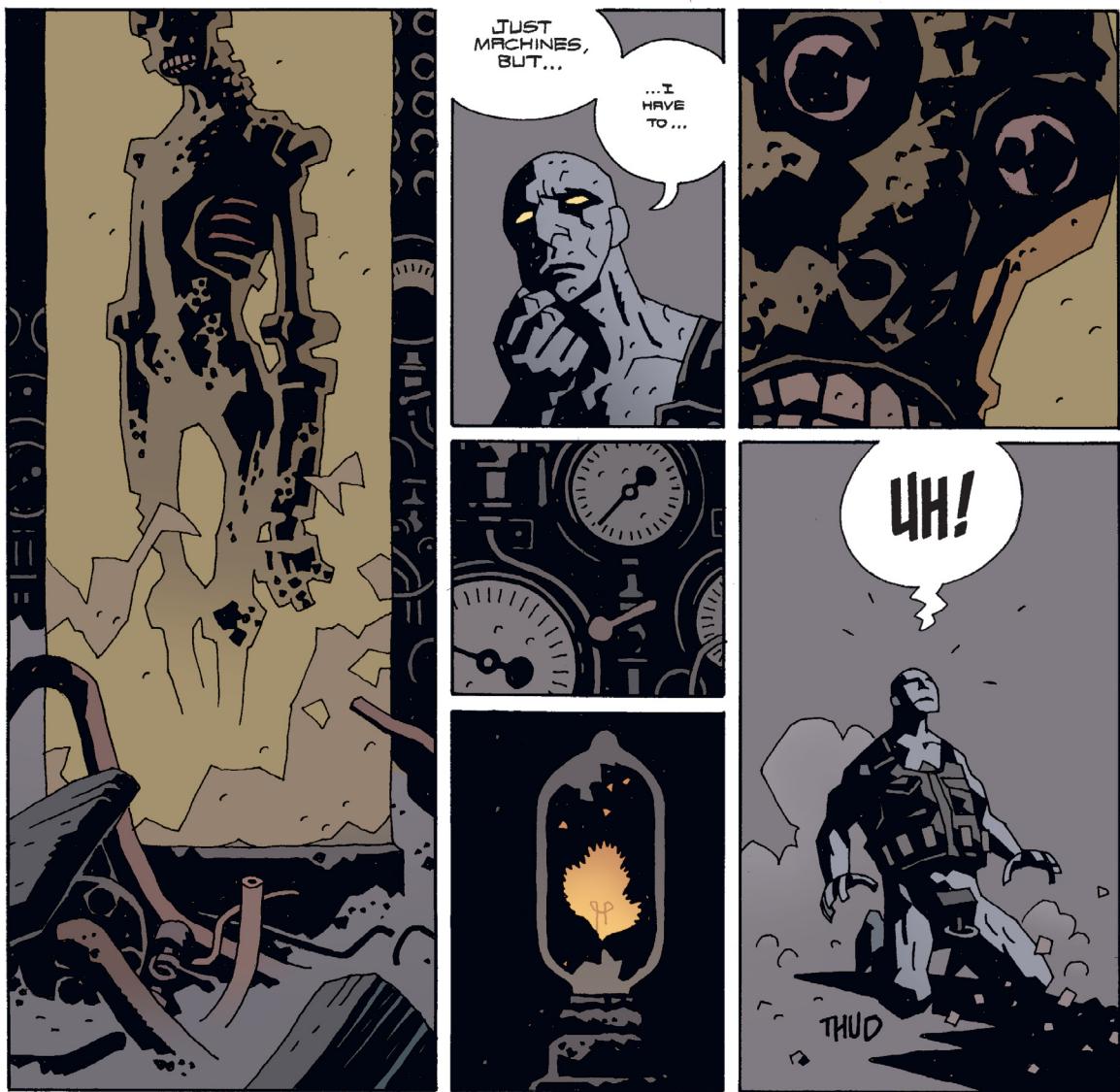




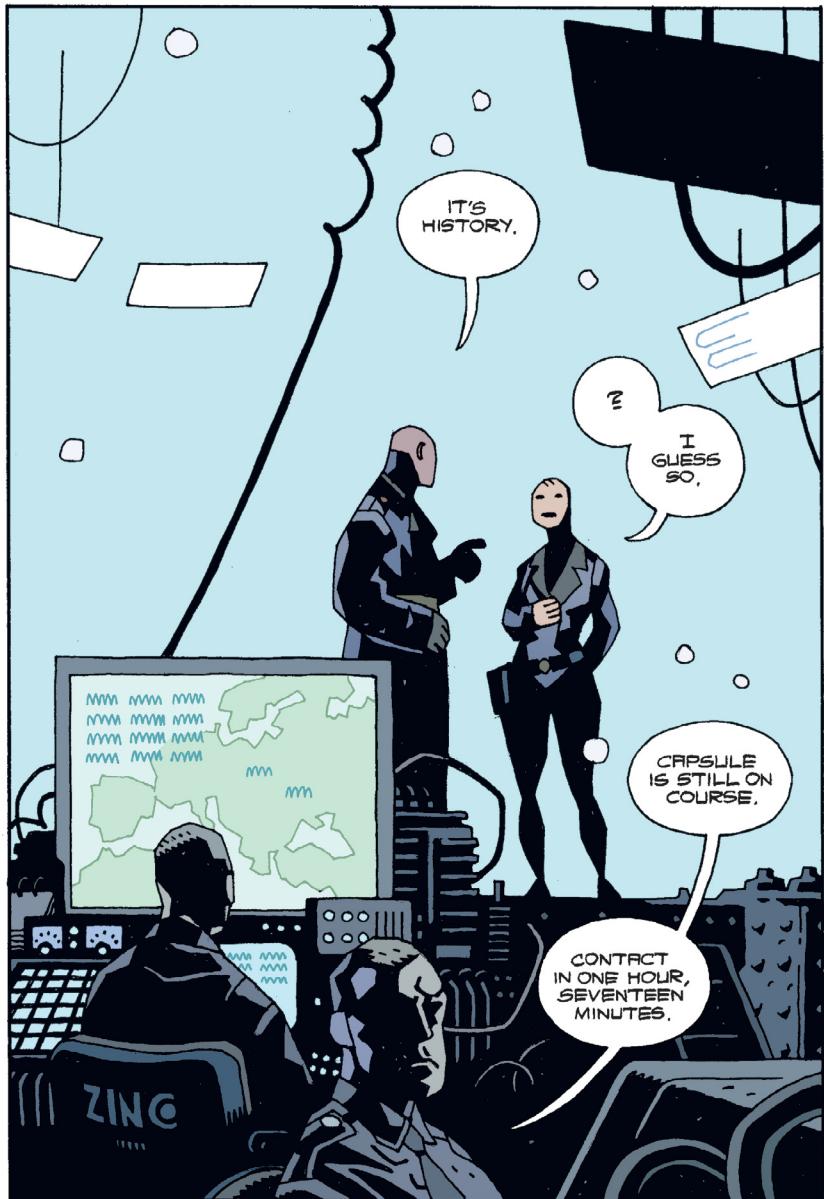


"YES..."

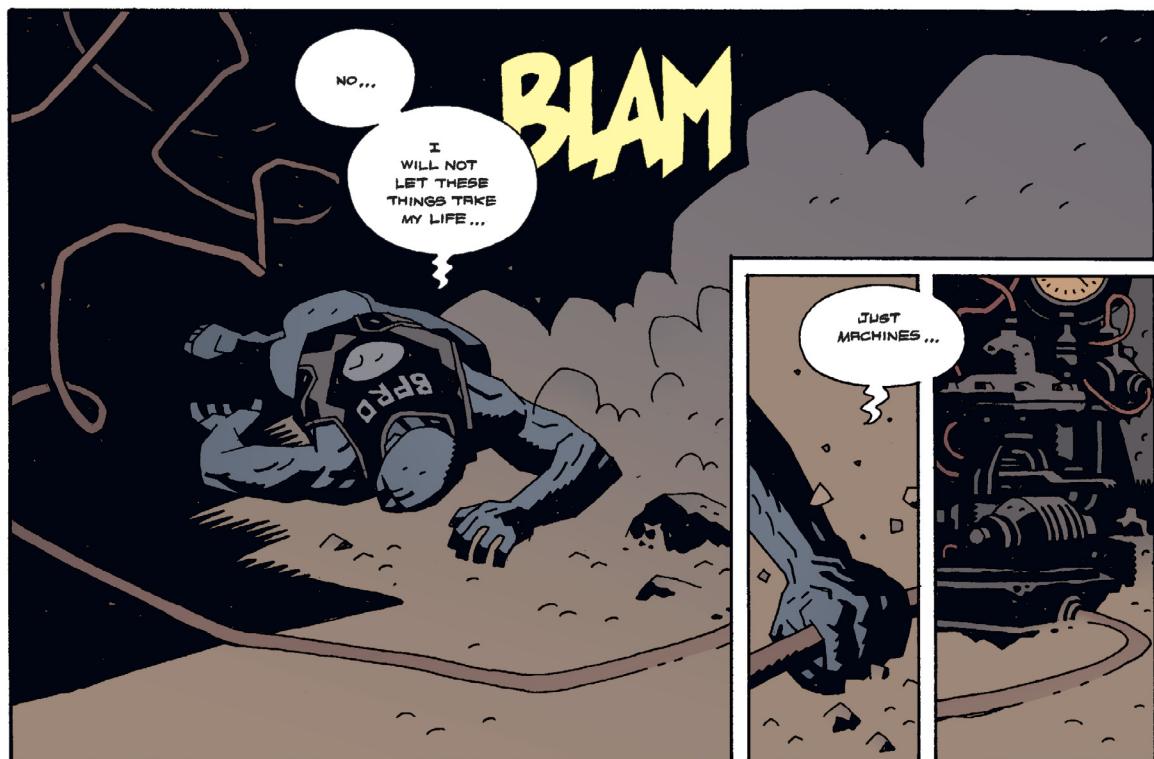




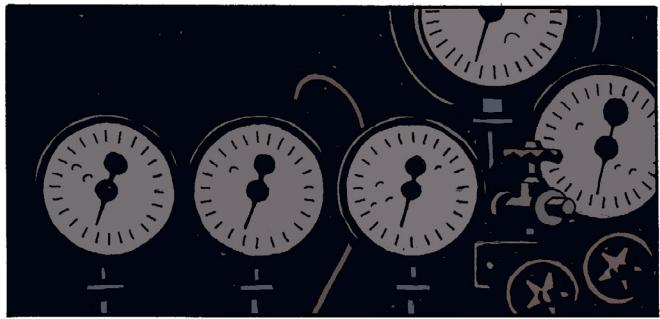








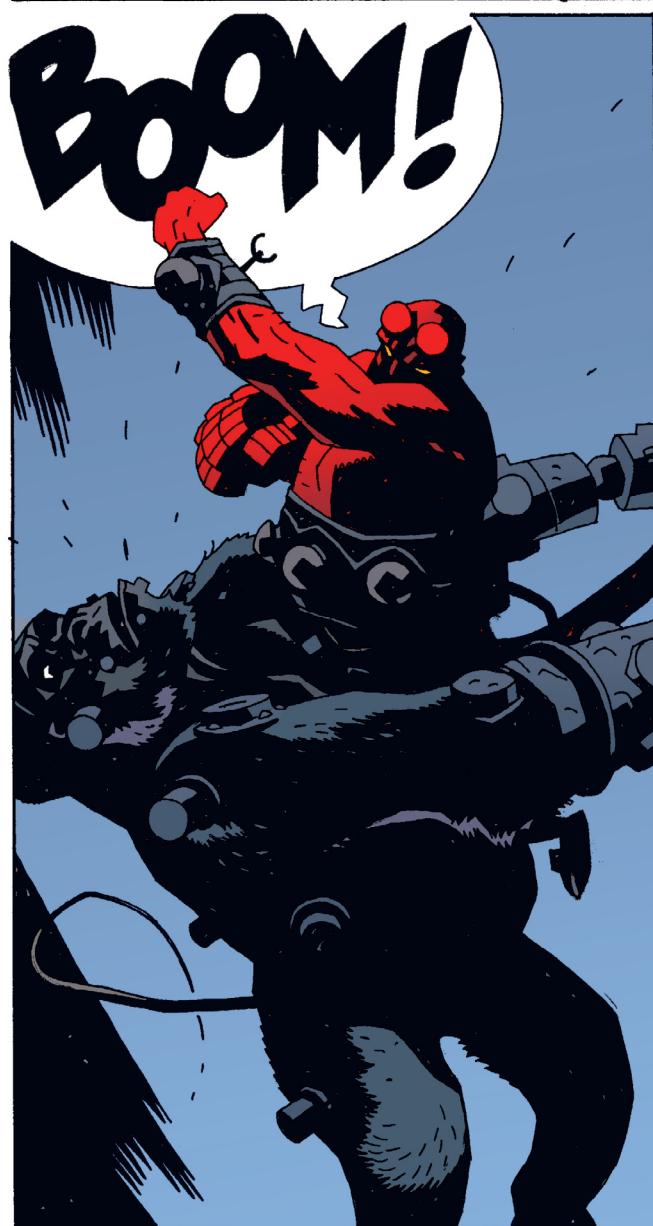


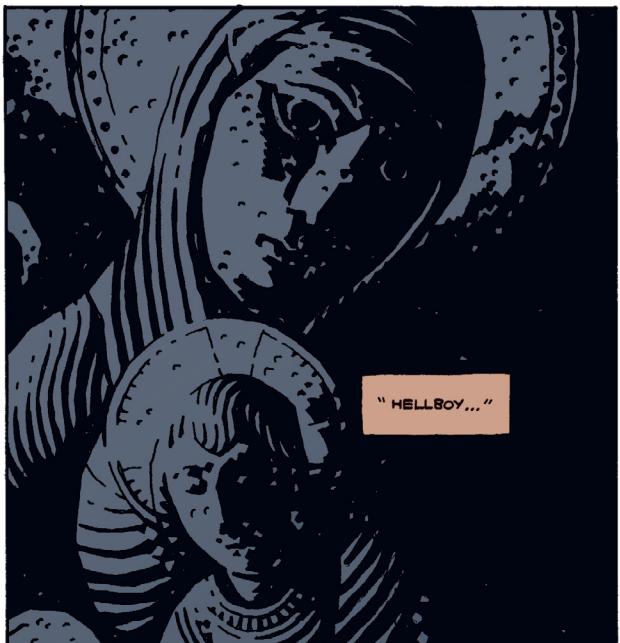
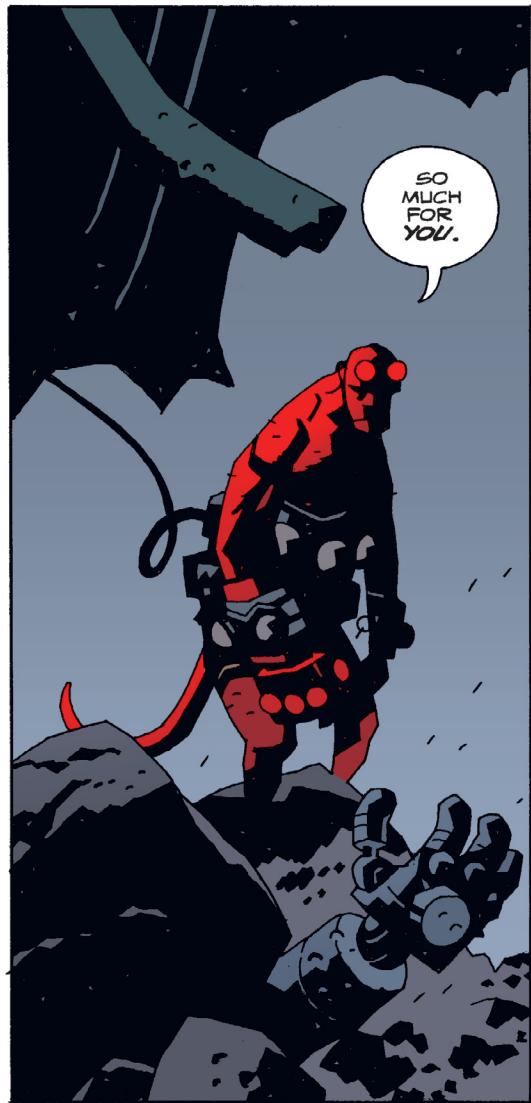


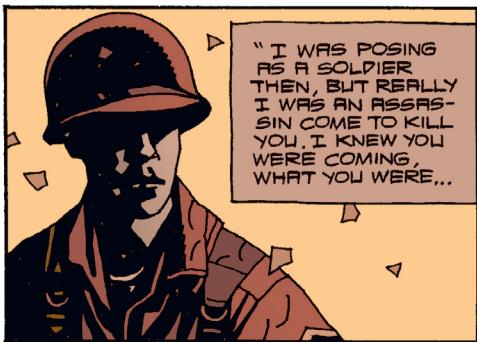


NOW WE
LOOK FOR
HELLBOY.









WHO
ARE
YOU?

I'M NOT IMPORTANT,
BUT THE THING COMING
HERE **MUST** BE
STOPPED.

THE TRUTH IS
THAT THERE ARE LIVING
BEINGS IN SPACE, INVISIBLE TO
YOUR SCIENTISTS, UNDETECTABLE
BY MAN-MADE DEVICES. THEY
ARE OLDER THAN THIS PLANET,
AND IF THEY EVER HAD PHYSICAL
BODIES THEY ARE RID OF THEM
NOW...

THEY SIMPLY
DRIFT... AND
WAIT.

WAIT FOR
WHAT?

THEY WAIT TO CELEBRATE THE
DOWNFALL OF MAN. IF THEY CAN,
THEY WILL CAUSE IT. THEY LONG
TO DEVOUR ALL LIGHT AND LIFE,
TO MAKE EVERYTHING AS COLD
AND EMPTY AS THEY ARE THEM-
SELVES. WHO CAN UNDERSTAND
A THING LIKE THAT...?

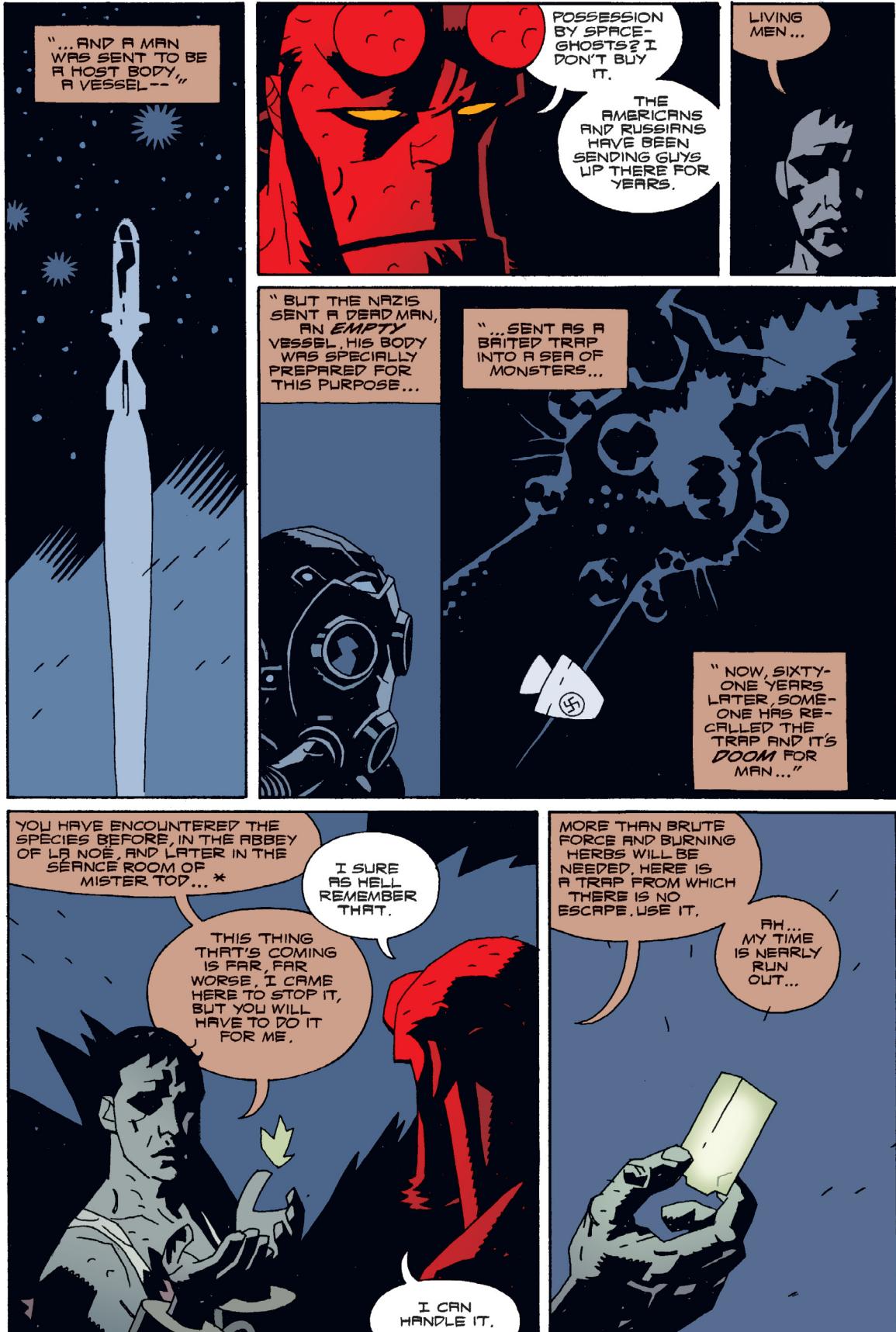
BUT THEY HAVE ALWAYS
CALLED OUT TO MAN. IN
THE PAST, THERE WERE
HUMANS WHO COULD HEAR
THEM, WHO COULD COMMUNICATE
WITH THEM, BUT THESE
WERE HUMANS OF
A RARE SENSITIVITY
OF MIND.



HOW THE
DULL, EVIL
MEN OF THIS
PLACE
MANAGED TO
DO THE SAME
I DON'T
KNOW...

...BUT THEY
DID, AND A
DEAL WAS
STRUCK...







REMEMBER, WHATEVER FORM IT TAKES, THE THING *ITSELF* IS A PHANTOM. ITS BODY WILL BE A TOOL, CONSTRUCTED FROM THE DEAD PILOT, FROM THE SPACECRAFT, MATERIALS IN THE AIR, ANY MATTER IT CAN CONSUME...

ALL RIGHT.

THIS IS THE END OF ME. IT WAS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN... MY LIFE HAS BEEN WELL SPENT...



HELLBOY, TO BE OTHER THAN HUMAN DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN TO BE LESS.

REMEMBER THAT. REMEMBER ME...



GOODBYE.

HELLBOY...?



LOOK, ROGER. A DEAD ALIEN.





"... BEFORE
THINGS GET ANY
WORSE AROUND
HERE."

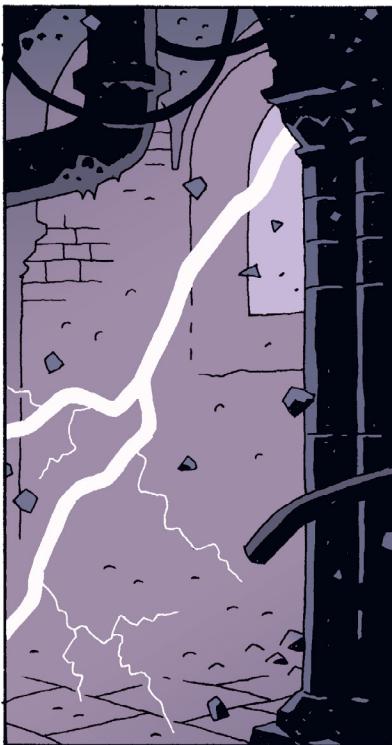


CHAPTER THREE













"WINDS OF
CHANGE..."



HA HA HA HA HA

IT IS A COOL
BREEZE COME
TO WIPE AWAY
THE SINS OF
MAN!

MY
GOD...

WHAT
HAVE I
DONE?

WHAT
HAVE I
DONE?

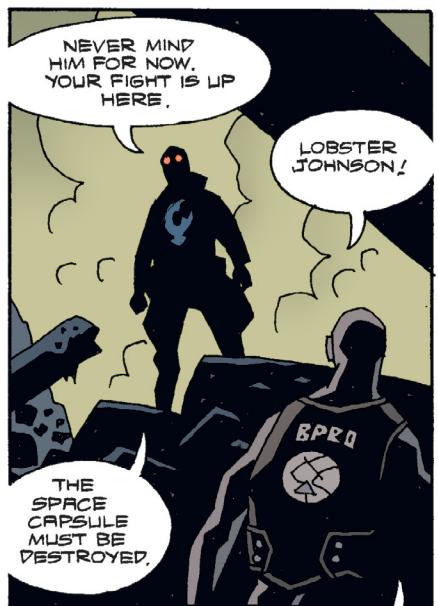
WHAT
HAVE
I--

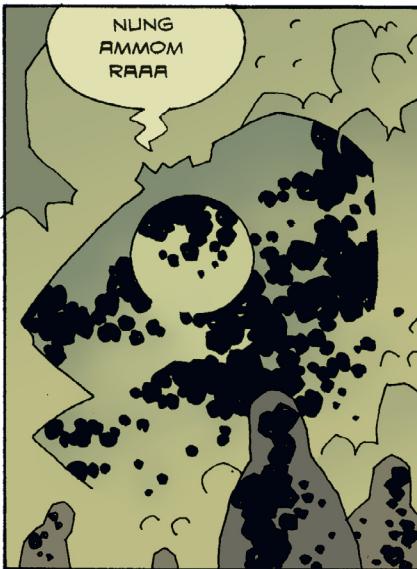
HELLBOY!!

WHAT'S
THAT?

GOTCHA!





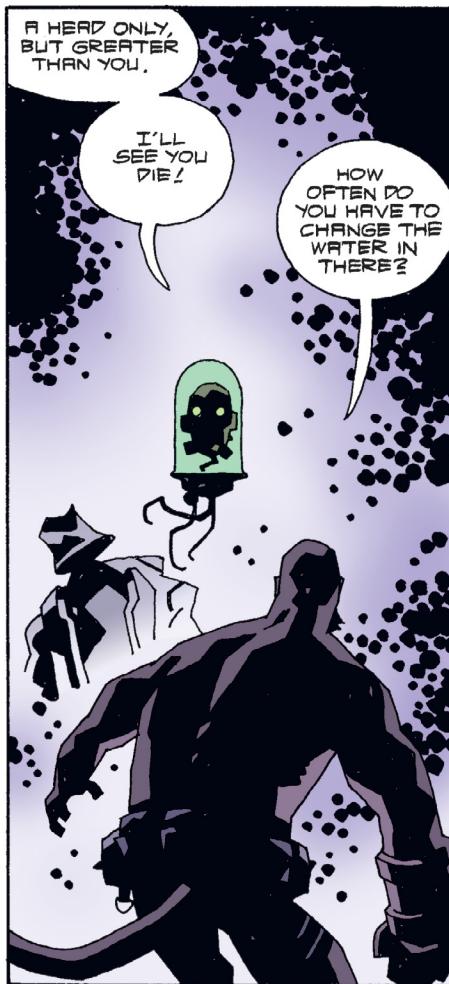


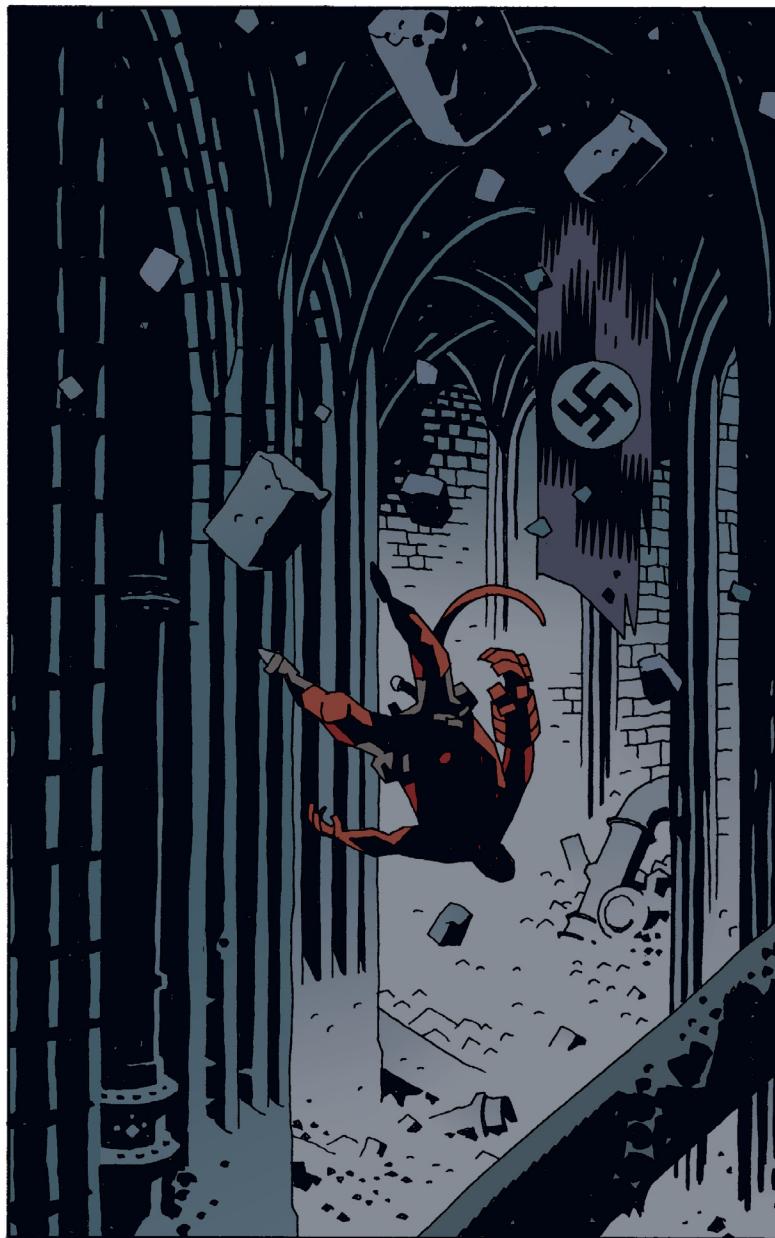


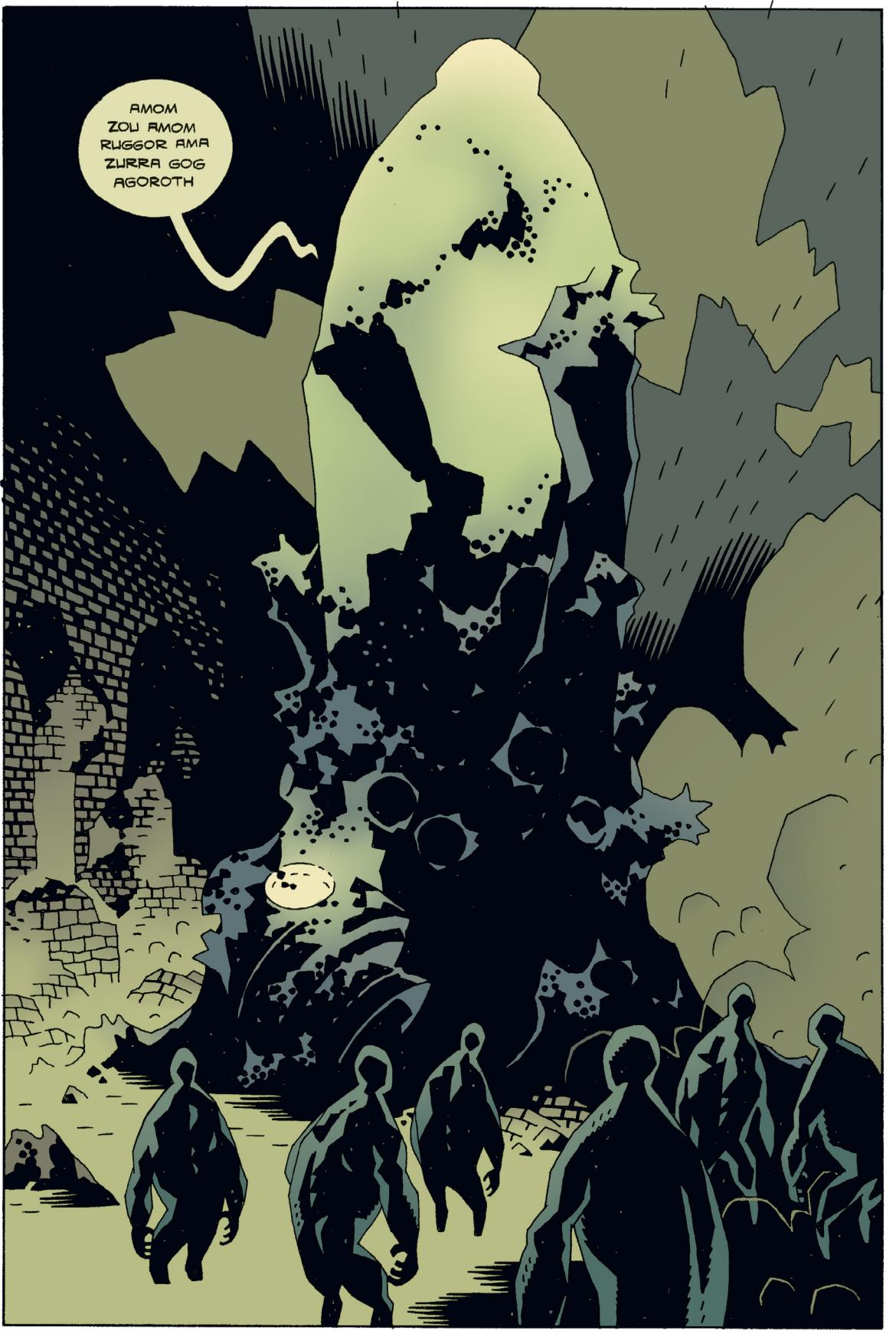








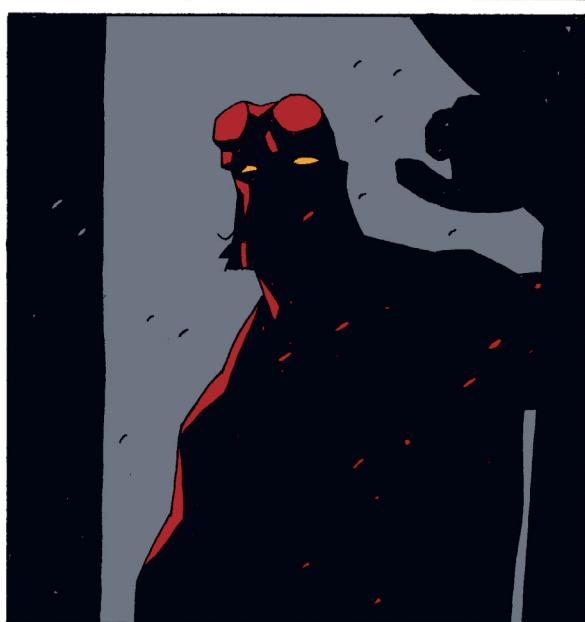


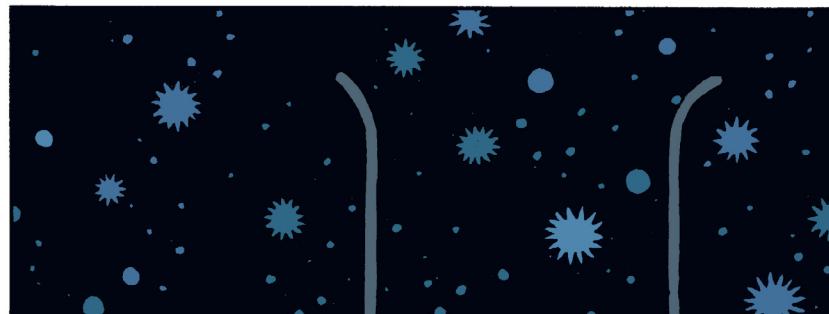
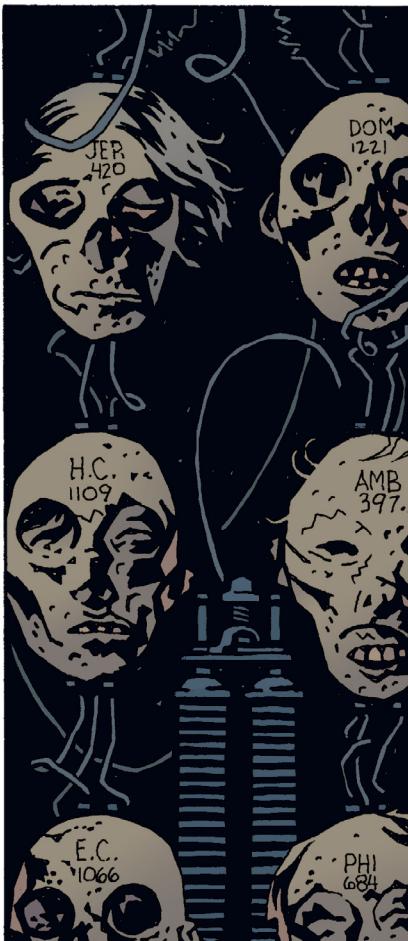


AMOM
ZOU AMOM
RUGGOR AMA
ZURRA GOG
AGOROTH

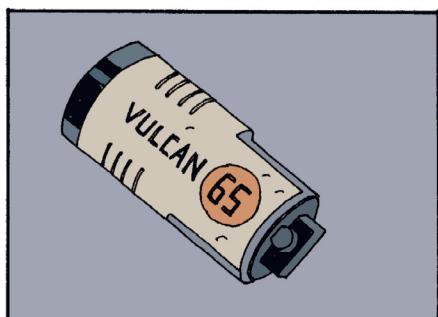




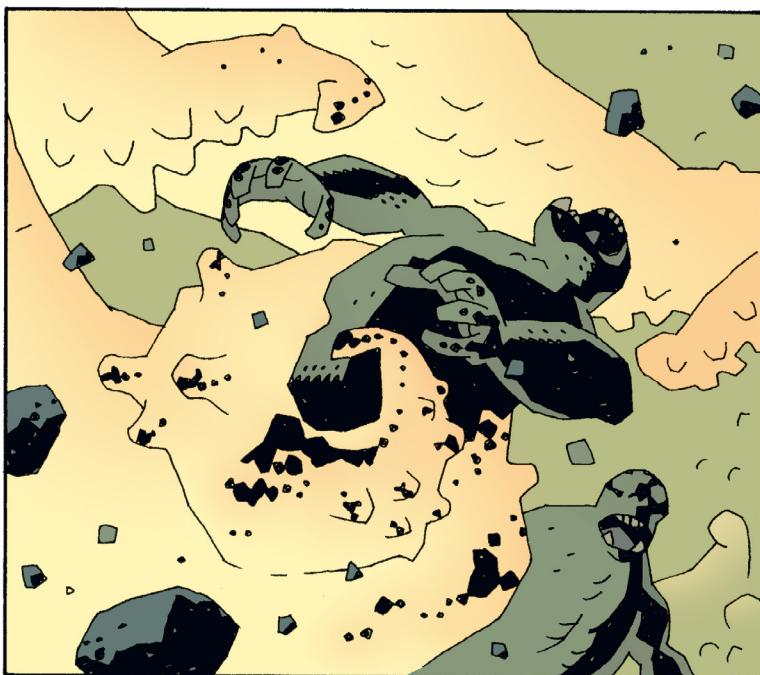












"THIS IS THE ULTIMATE DESTROYER. THERE IS NO END TO THE HUNGER, AND THE MORE IT EATS THE MORE IT WILL GROW, AND ON AND ON AND--"



CONTROL?

GRAND-
FATHER, HOW
CAN YOU HOPE
TO **CONTROL**
A THING LIKE
THAT?

CHILD,
I WOULD
NOT **DREAM**
OF IT.



POOR GIRL,
NOW IT IS TIME
TO TELL YOU THE
WHOLE TRUTH.

I WAS
IN MY WORK-
SHOP UNDER
THAT
INGOLSTADT
CEMETERY...

" I HAD NEARLY
COMPLETED MY
KRIEGAFFE NUMBER
TEN WHEN A CRIPPLING
DESPAIR OVERWHELMED
ME ... "

TO
WHAT
PURPOSE
IS THIS
LIFE?



“... THE GLORY OF HITLER'S THIRD REICH WAS A LOST DREAM ...”

“ MY OWN PROJECTS WERE IN RUINS ...”

“ THE LAST OF MY OLD ALLIES WERE DEAD ...”

“ ALL GONE, AND I LEFT WITH NOTHING ...”

“ THEN, AS THOUGH CALLED, THE ANGEL OF DEATH APPEARED AND SPOKE TO ME ...”

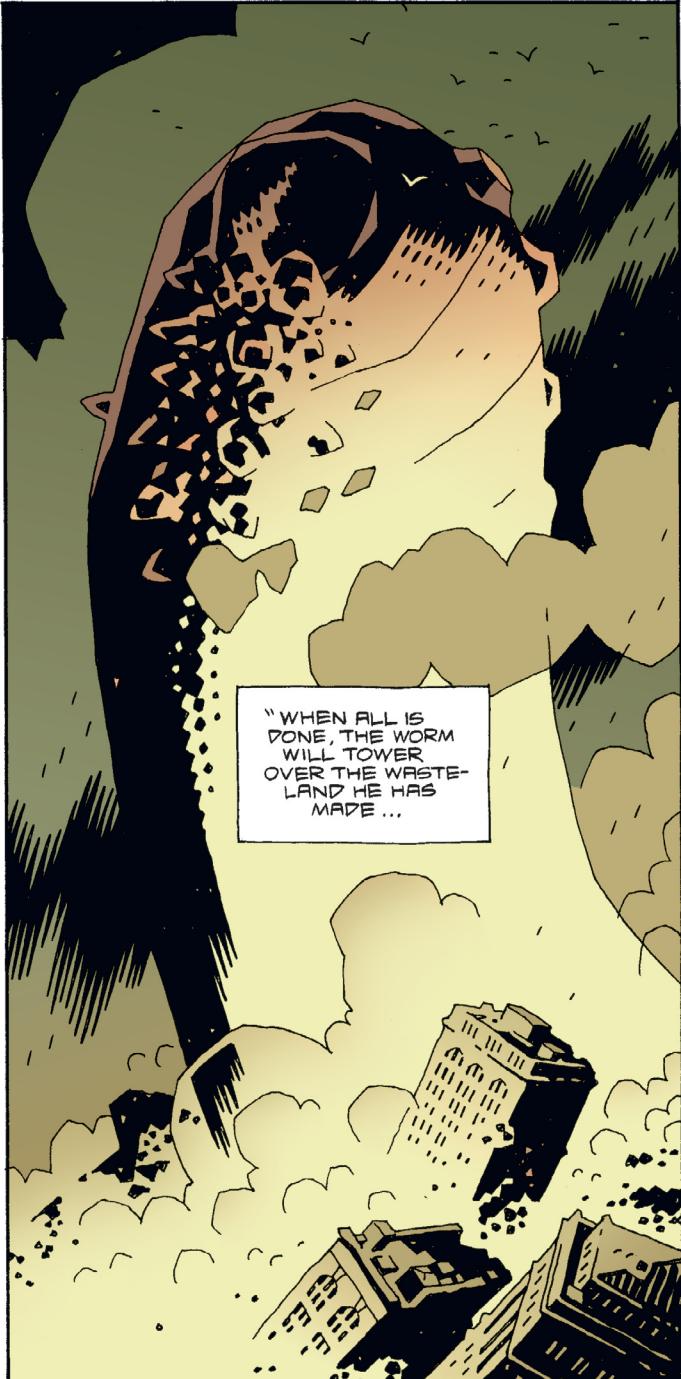
“ HERMAN VON KLEMP, YOU ARE CHOSEN.”

"AND THAT'S HOW I LEARNED THE SECRET AT THE HEART OF THE NAZI SPACE PROGRAM ...

"... THAT THE GREAT DOCTOR OEMING WAS STRAPPED INTO THAT SPACECRAFT, ALREADY DEAD...

"... THAT HE WAS INTENDED AS A VESSEL FOR AN ALIEN LIFE FORM, AND THAT THAT LIFE FORM WOULD BE THE AGENT OF MANKIND'S DEMISE.





"WHEN ALL IS DONE, THE WORM WILL TOWER OVER THE WASTELAND HE HAS MADE ..."



"HE WILL CALL OUT TO THE STARS THAT THE THING IS ACCOMPLISHED. AND THAT, FINALLY, WILL MARK THE PASSING OF MAN ..."



AMARGOG
RAMM
JAHURR



"THEN THE THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE CHILDREN OF THE OGDRU JAHAD WILL WAKE AND COME UP OUT OF THEIR PRISONS IN THE EARTH AND IN THE SEA.

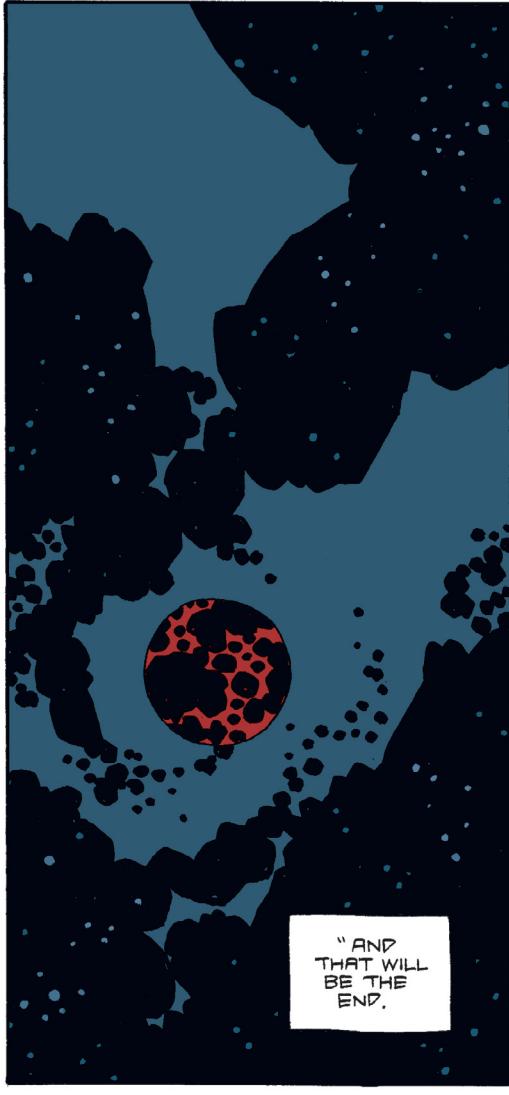
"THEN THE OGDRU JAHAD WILL WAKE. THE SEVEN WHO ARE ONE, THE SERPENT...



"THEY WILL CAST OFF THEIR CHAINS, COME OUT OF THEIR PRISONS, AND BURN THE EARTH ...



"MAKE OF IT A BLACKENED CINDER ...



"AND THAT WILL BE THE END.

"BY MAKING RADIO CONTACT WITH THE SPACE CAPSULE, RECALLING IT TO EARTH, I SET ALL THESE EVENTS INTO MOTION."

"ONLY LATER DID I LEARN OF YOUR EXISTENCE. I THANK YOU FOR AIDING ME IN THESE FINAL PREPARATIONS..."

NOW I AM GOING TO WATCH.

BUT WHY THE GAS MASK?

DO YOU LOVE ME, GRANDFATHER? IS THIS SOME FUTILE ATTEMPT TO SAVE ME?

SAVE?

NO ONE IS SPARED, MY DEAR. IT WAS ONLY TO LESSEN THE EFFECT OF THE WORM'S BREATH...

LOVE?

...TO PRESERVE YOUR HUMAN MIND SO THAT YOU MAY FULLY APPRECIATE THE END.

WHEN YOU ARE READY, YOU MAY JOIN ME.

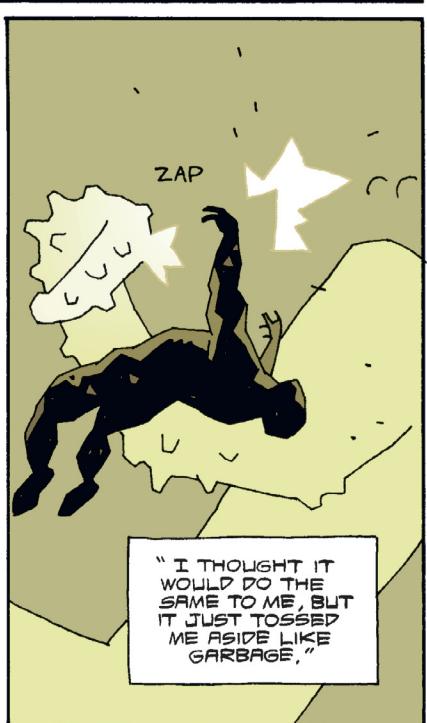
RÜBEZAHL.

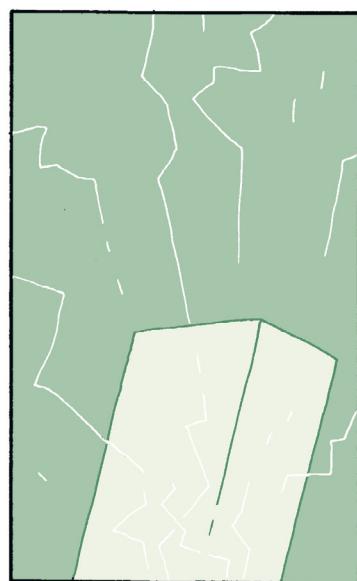
CHAPTER FOUR



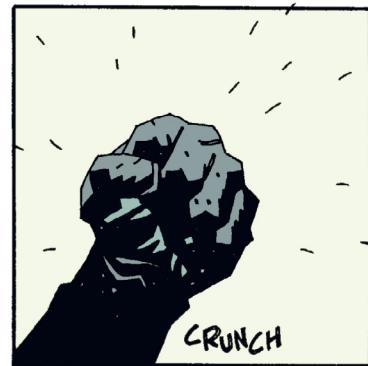
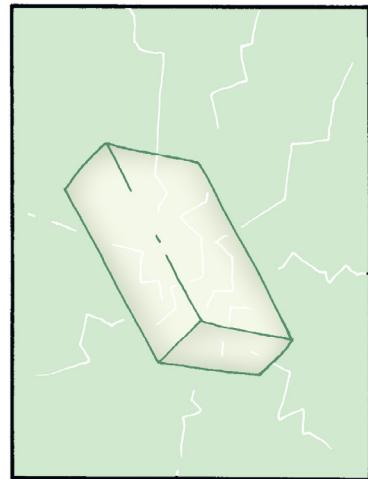










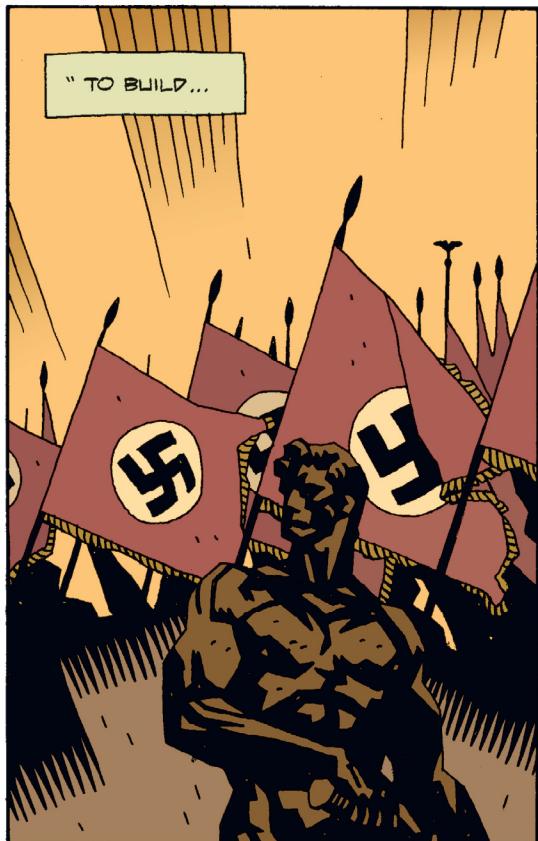






OR
MAYBE
YOU ARE
JUST ANOTHER
OF THIS PLACE'S
GHOSTS.

CERTAINLY
I AM
MORE THAN
THAT.





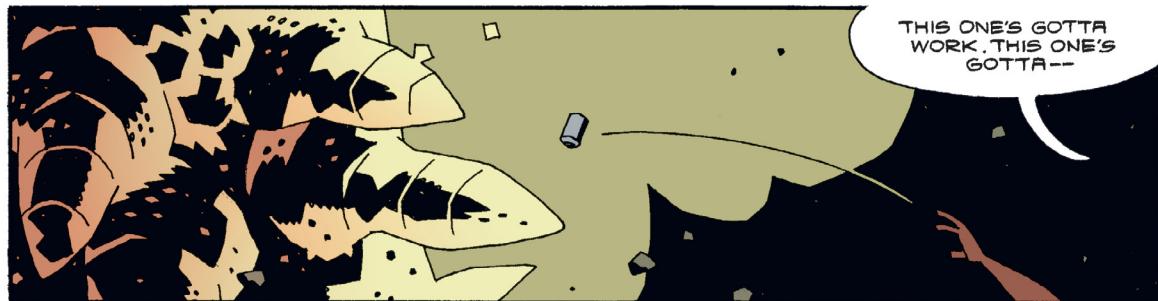
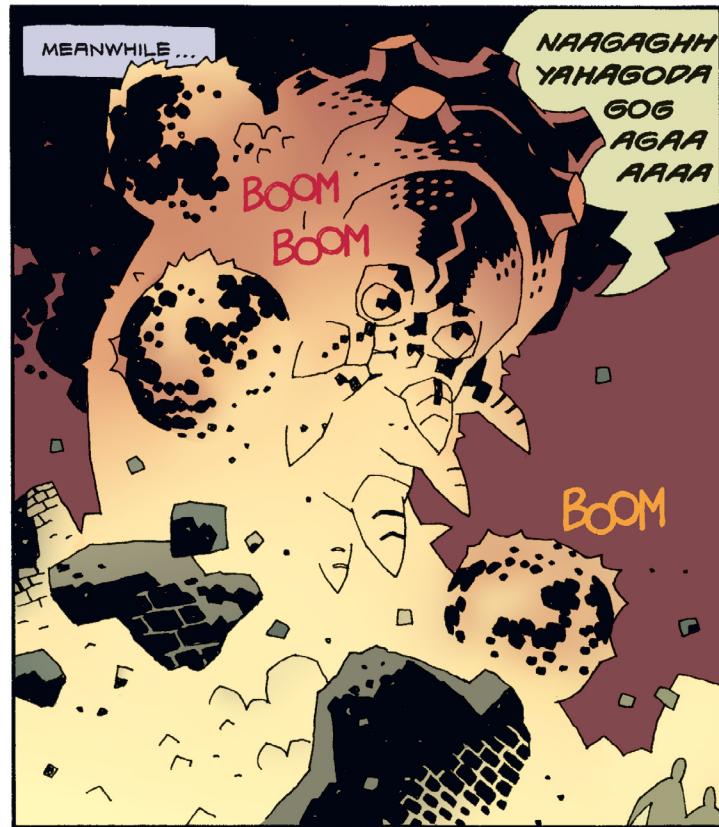
IT'S TRUE, THE WORM IS RINGING DOWN THE CUR-TAIN ON THE HUMAN RACE, FOR A WHILE NOW ALL WILL BE GRAVEL AND SMOKE.

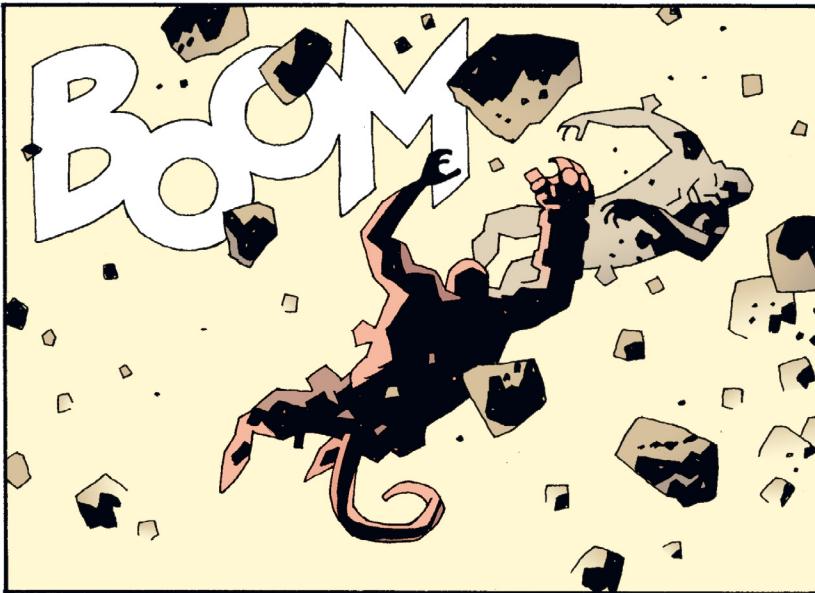
BUT LOOK BACK TO **THE BEGINNING**. MANKIND WAS BORN OUT OF THAT KIND OF SMOKE, THE **FIRST RACE** OF MAN, THE **PRE-HUMAN HYPER-BOREANS**...

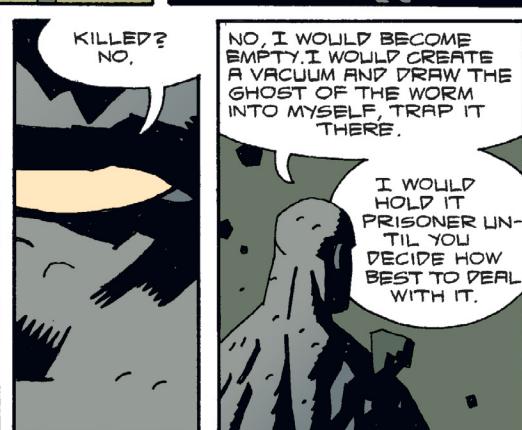




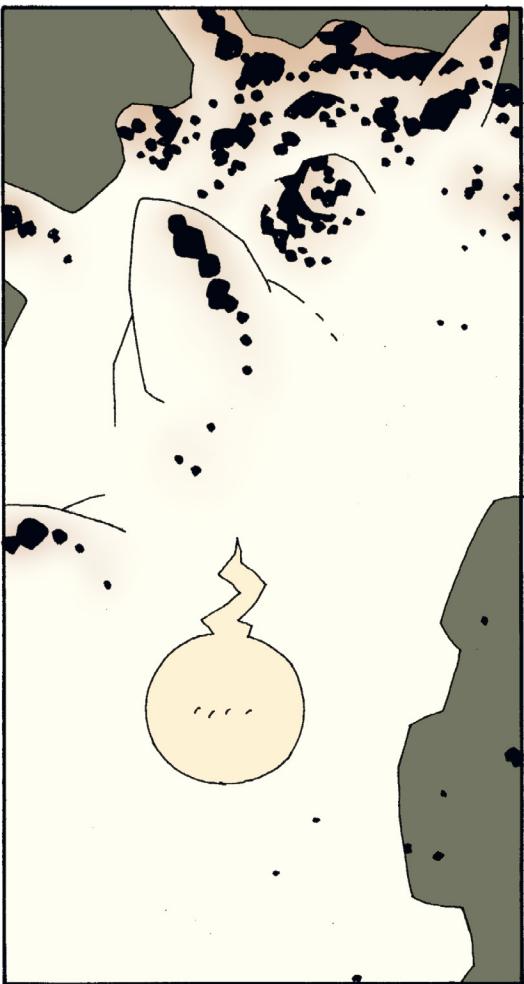














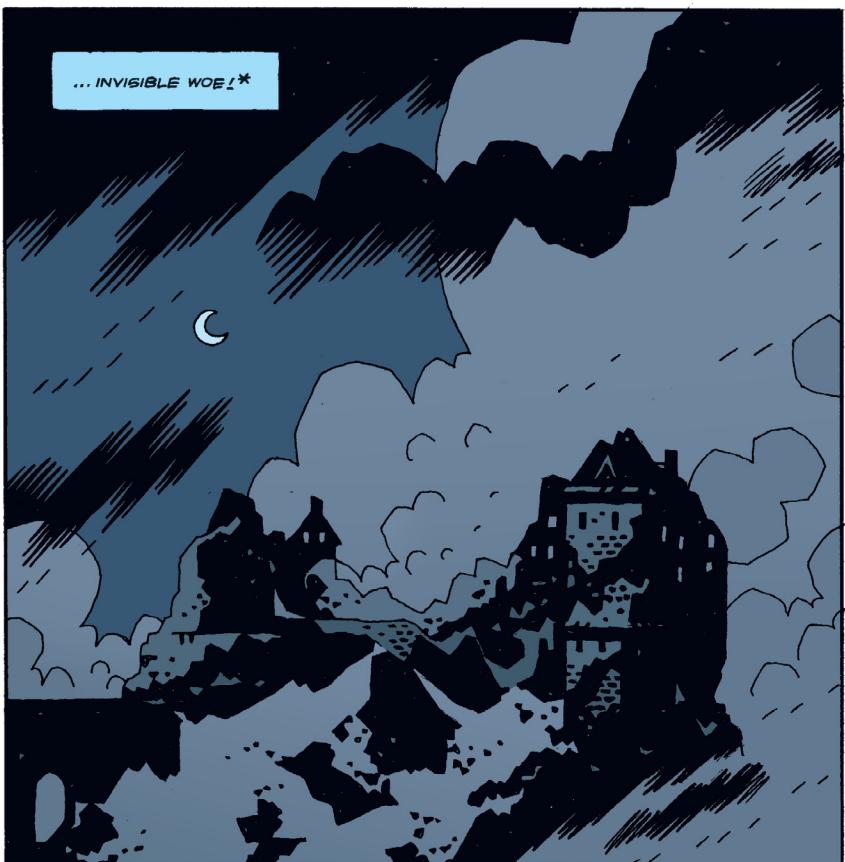
MIMES, IN THE FORM OF GOD
ON HIGH,
MUTTER AND Mumble LOW,
AND HITHER AND THITHER FLY--
MERE PUPPETS THEY, WHO
COME AND GO
AT BIDDING OF VAST FORMLESS
THINGS
THAT SHIFT THE SCENERY
TO AND FRO ...

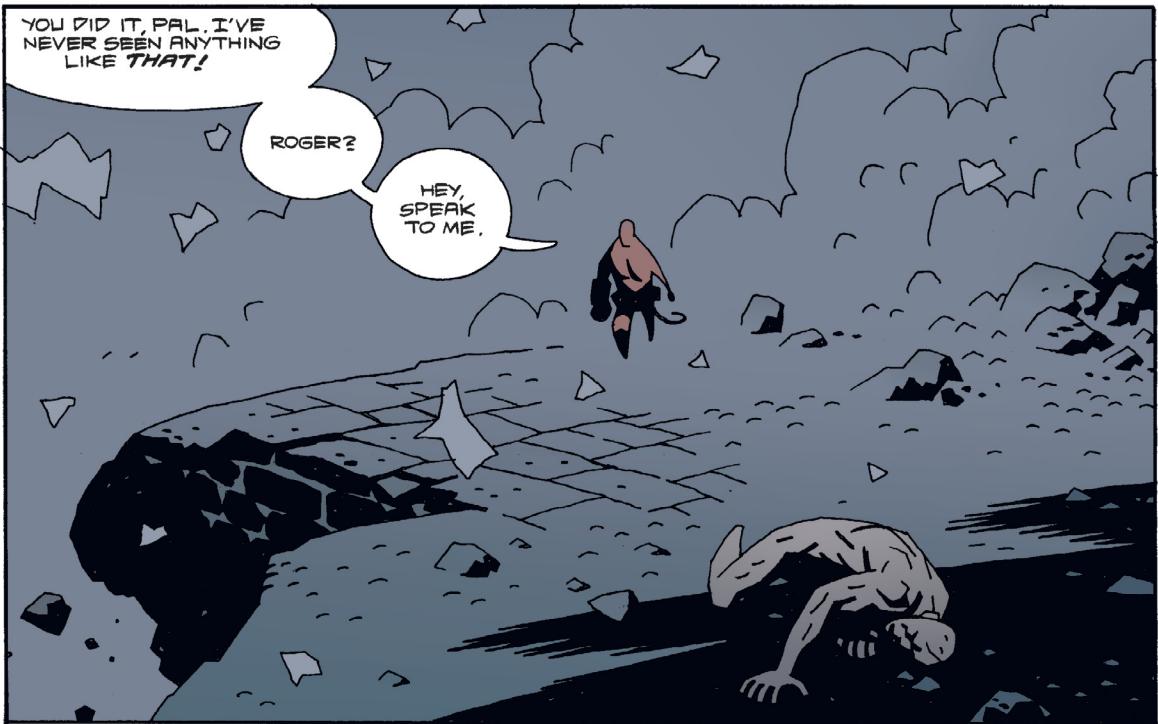


... FLAPPING FROM OUT THEIR
CONDOR WINGS ...



... INVISIBLE WOE!*







NO.

CLINK

HELLBOY...
YOU HAVE
TO--

NO.

YOU CAN DO THIS.
YOU'VE DONE A
LOT OF AMAZING
CRAP IN THE LAST
COUPLE HOURS.
YOU'RE TOUGH. YOU
CAN HANG ON 'TIL
WE GET YOU DOWN
TO THE BUREAU
GUYS.

I
CAN'T.

YOU
CAN.

HE
CAN'T.

GET OUT OF
HERE, HEAD. I'LL
DEAL WITH YOU
LATER.

IGNORANT TROLL.
I HOPED TO SEE YOU
DIE, BUT THIS...THIS IS
BETTER. YOU'RE
BROKEN. YOUR FRIEND IS
LOST. YOU'VE LOST
EVERYTHING.
THE ANGEL OF DEATH
HAS SPOKEN.

UHH

URRRR...

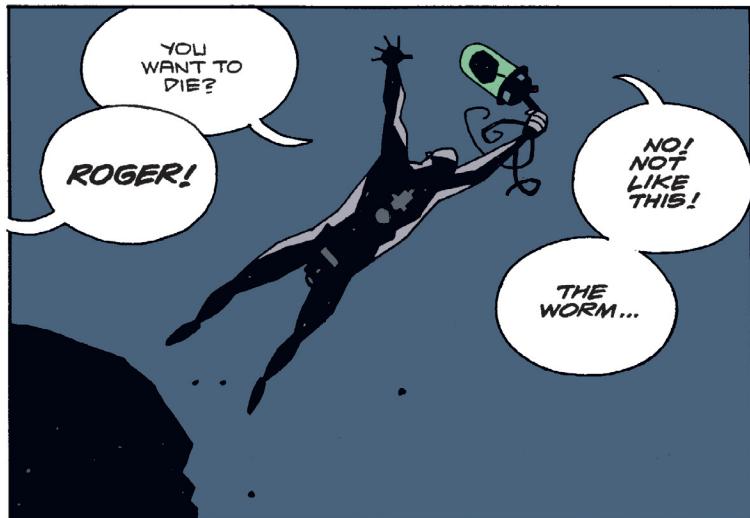
SCREW
YOU, VON
KLEMPFT.

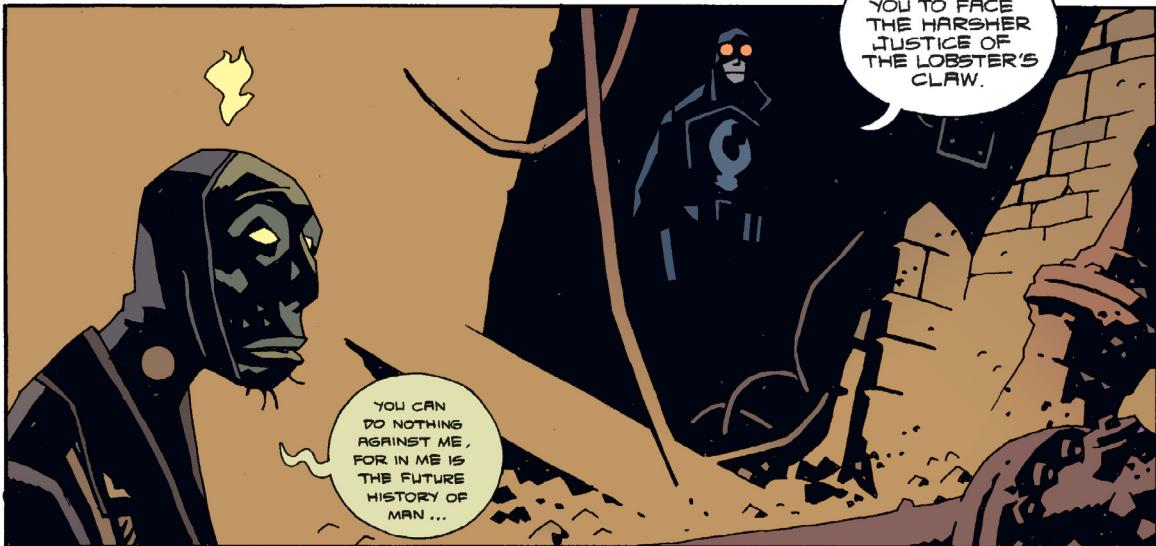
GURR
OGTHRA UN
YARMA

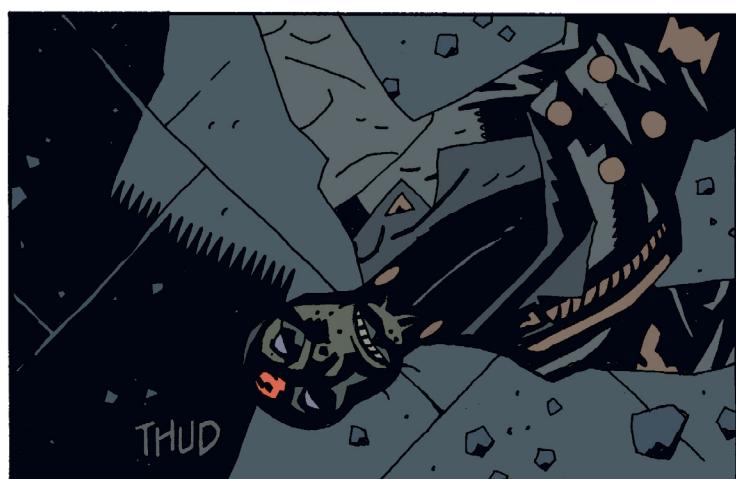
YES, MY
DARLING,
COME FORTH,
WORM, AND
DO YOUR
WORK.

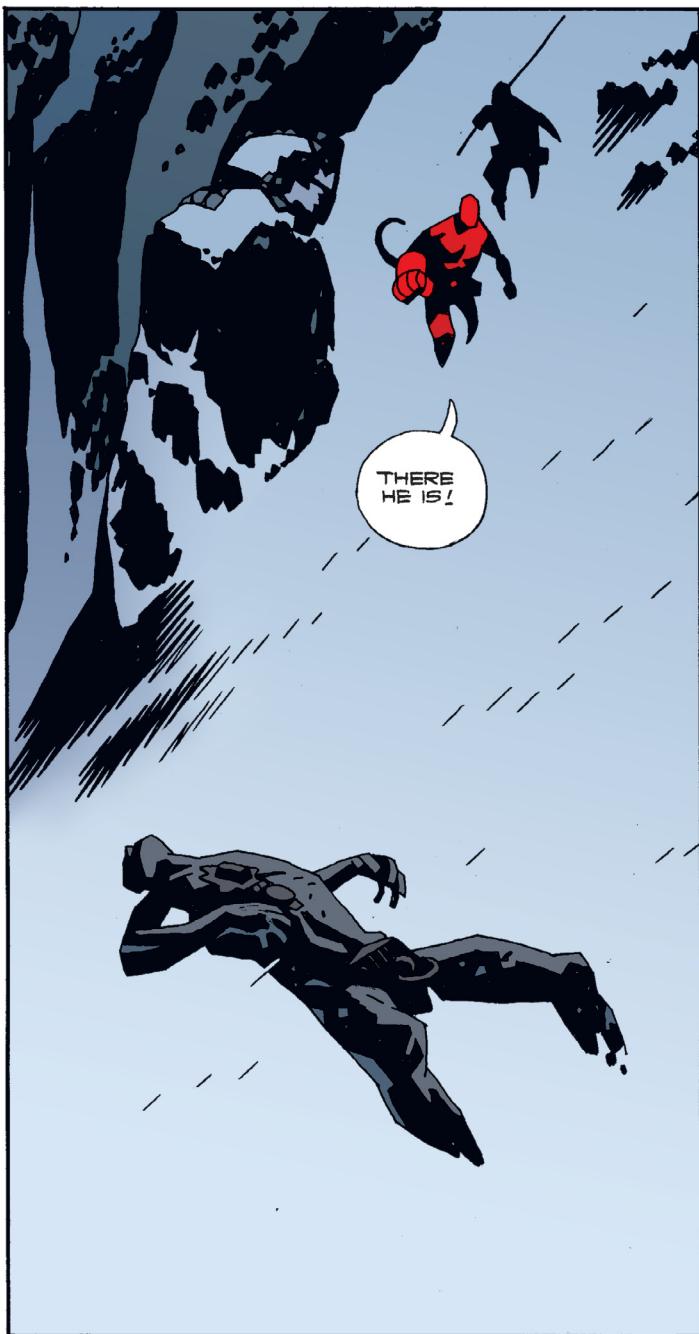
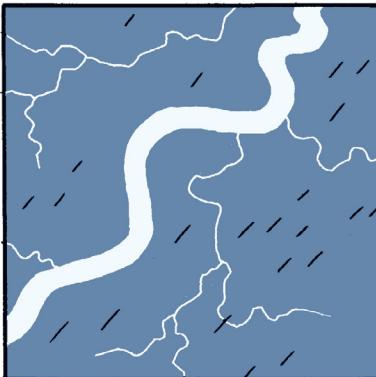
I AM
READY
TO DIE.

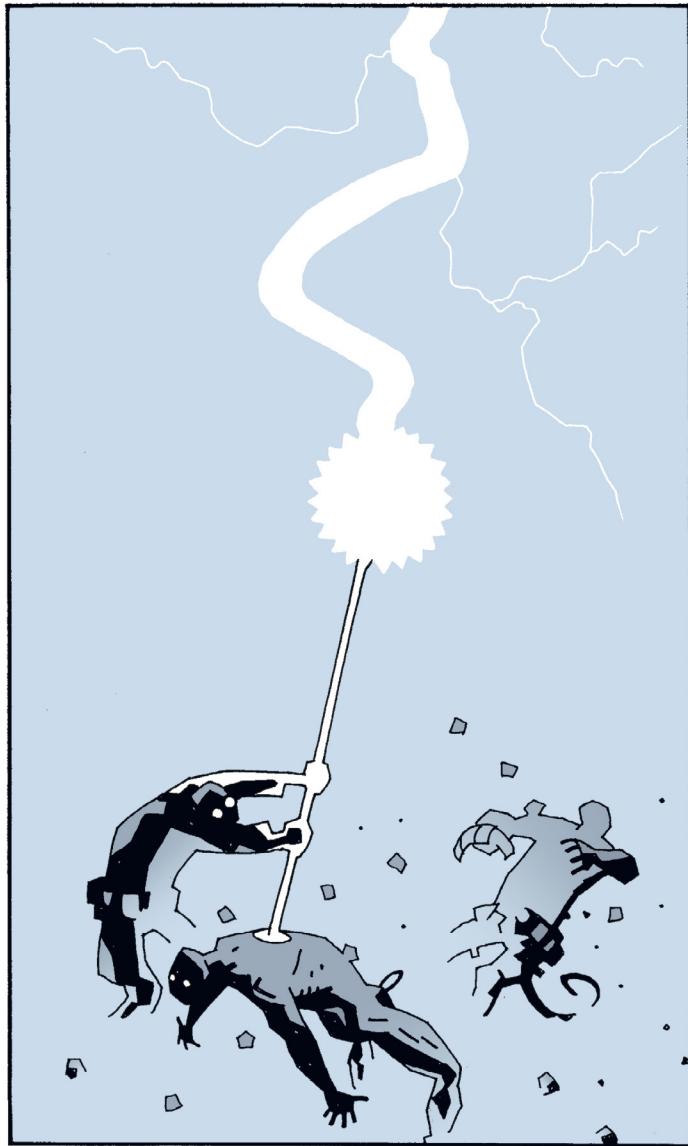
ROGER...?

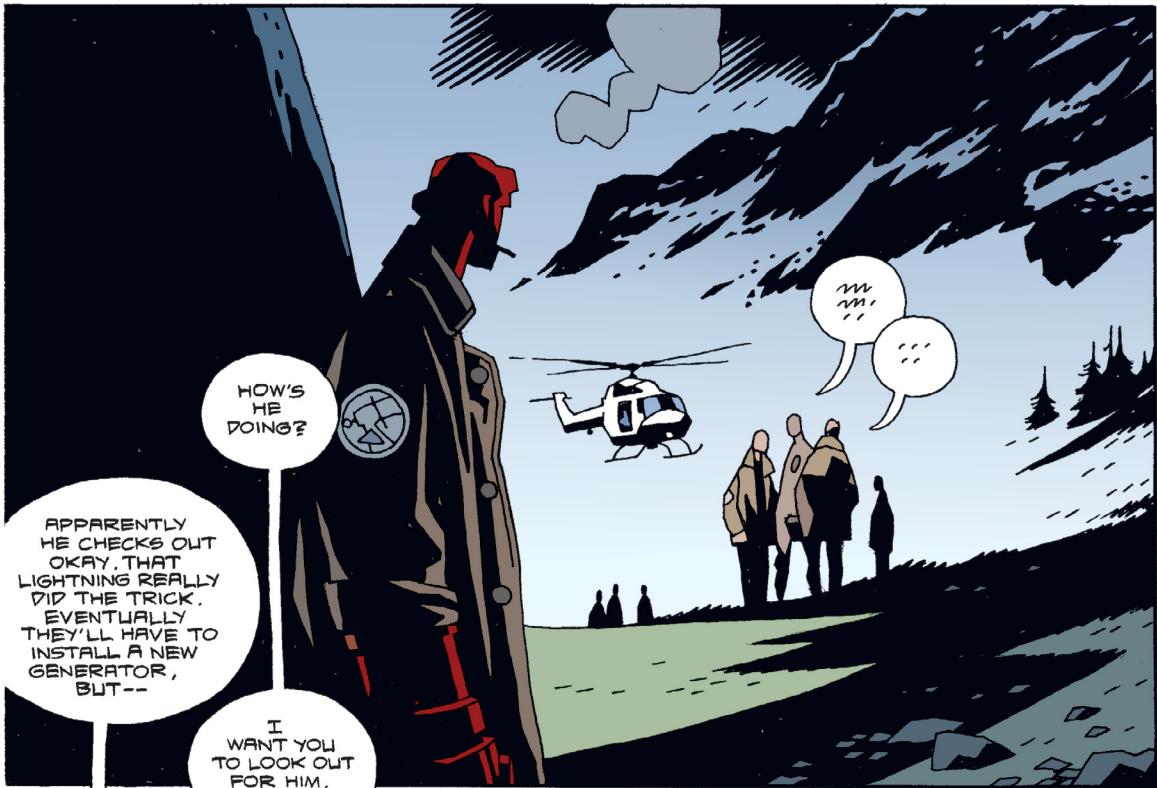


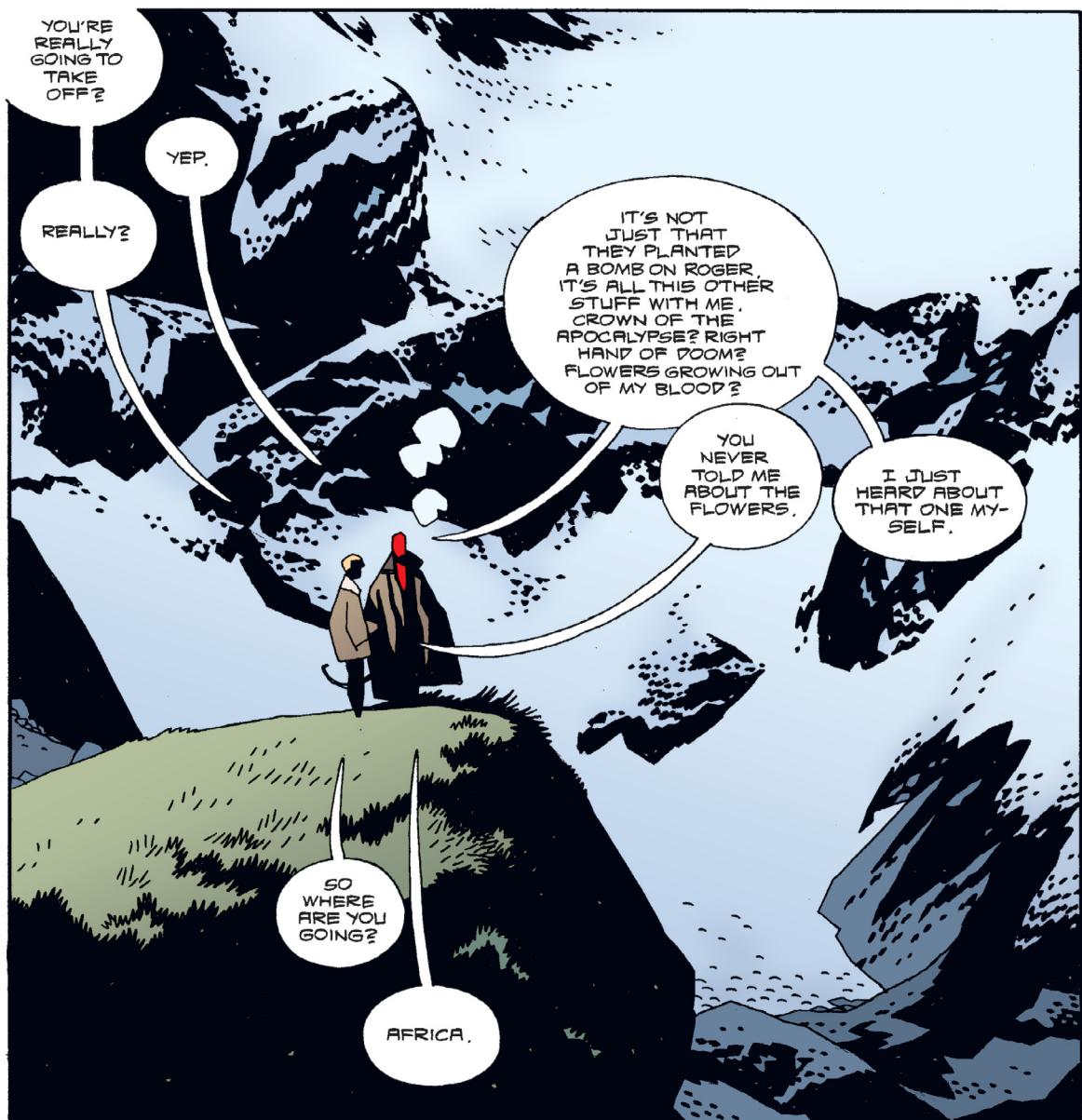
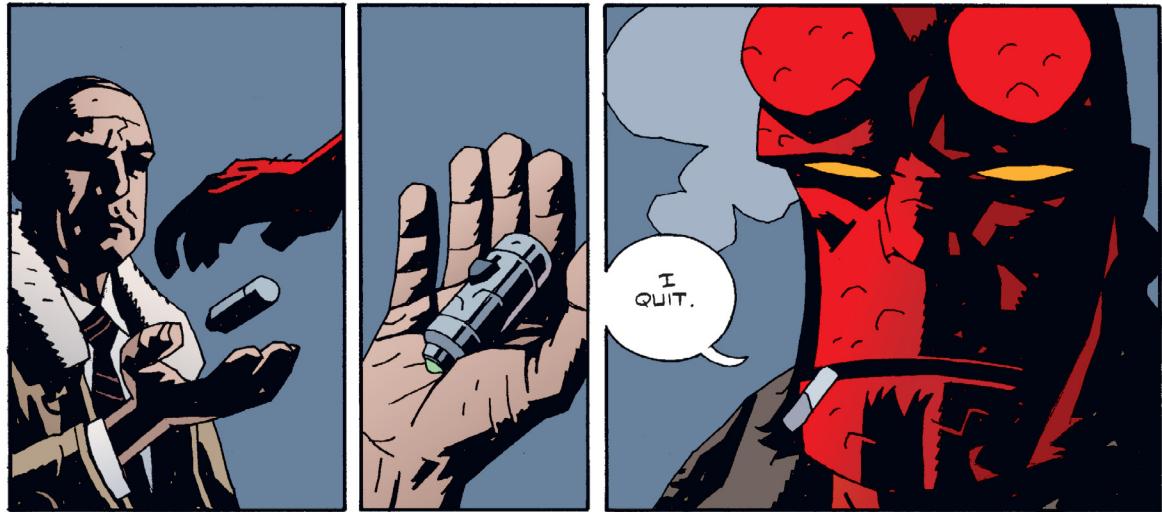














Epilogue



SOMEWHERE
INSIDE HUNTE
CASTLE.



SERVE
ME, AS
YOU WERE
CREATED
TO DO.



ILSA
HAUPSTEIN--

IS DEAD
AND GONE.
HER BONES
ARE HERE...

I CHOSE ILSA
HAUPSTEIN
TO BE REBORN
OUT OF THE
DRAGON, TO
STAND WITH
ME. I PUT HER
IN THERE TO
CHANGE HER.

ONLY
FOR
YOU.

SHE'S
GONE.

I OWE YOU
FOR HER
BLOOD AND THIS
IRON SKIN ...

ALL
ELSE IS
ME.

GORGON-
EYED
HECATE.

GODDESS
OF CROSS-
ROADS,
QUEEN OF
DOGS ...

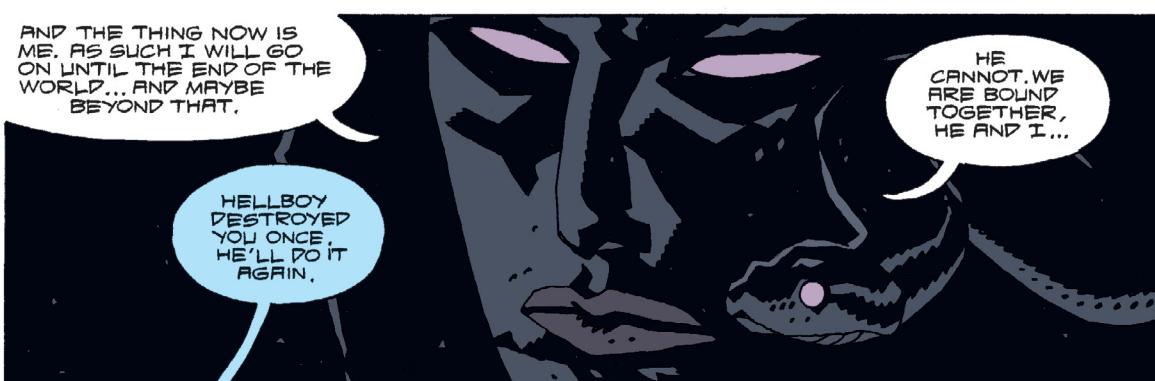
I WAS AT
CASTLE GIURESCU.
I SMELLED YOU
THERE.

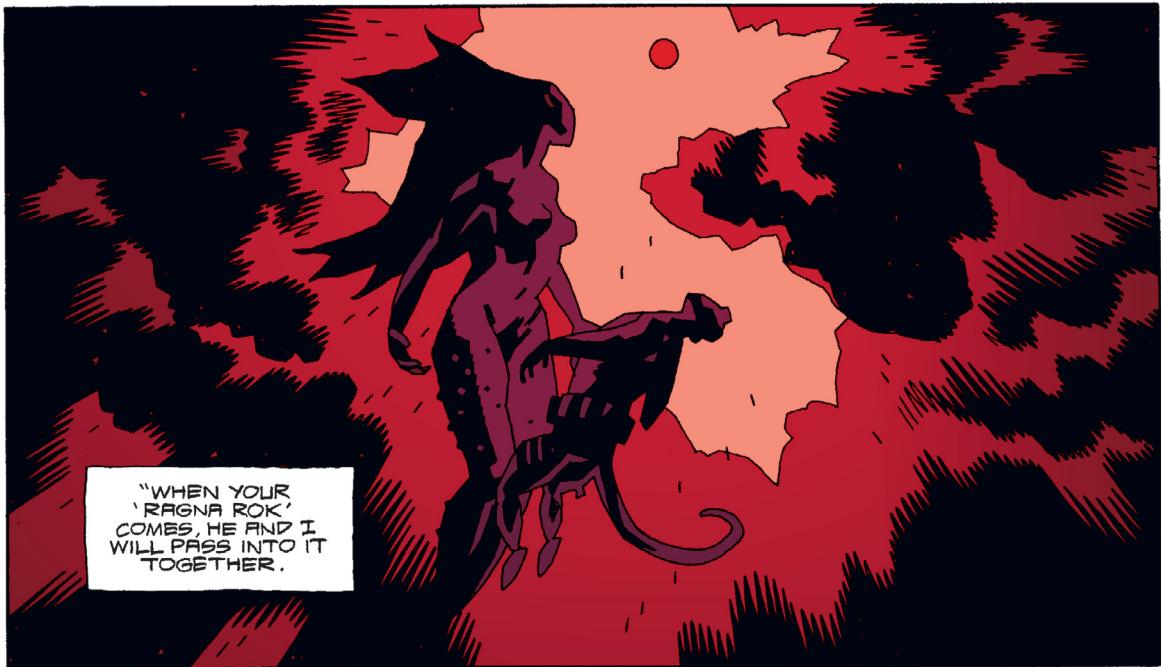
HALF
DEAD, HALF
FORGOTTEN,
HIDING LIKE A
SNAKE IN A
GRAVE.

HELLBOY
WAS
THERE...

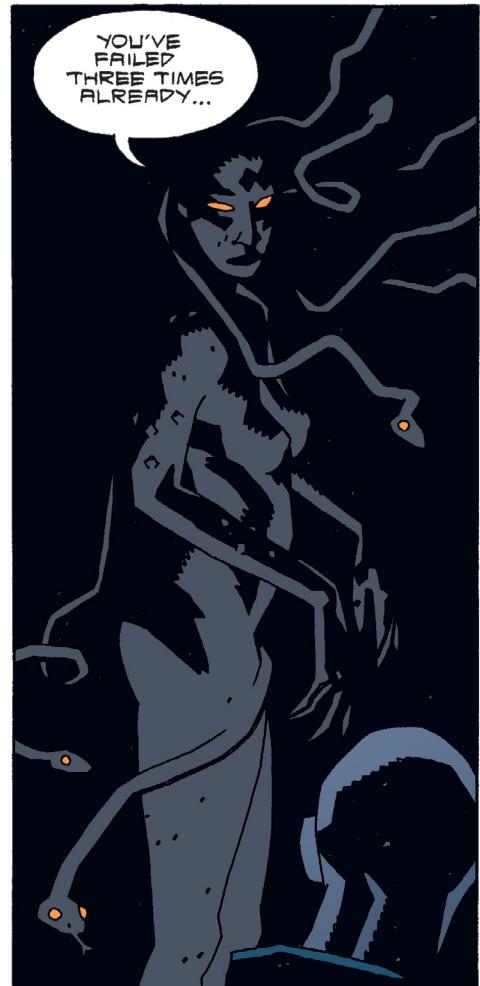
I
KNOW.

HA!



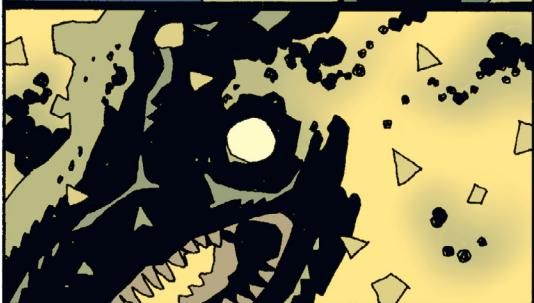


I CANNOT AND I AM A GODDESS. YOU ARE SOOOO MUCH LESS.



I WAS CHOSEN BY THE DRAGON, OGDRU JAHAD, TO DELIVER HIM FROM HIS PRISON AND BRING ABOUT THE END OF THE WORLD TO MAKE WAY FOR A NEW WORLD. AND I... I ALONE WILL BE LORD OVER THAT!

FROM CAVENDISH HALL I SHOOK THE DRAGON AND SOON ENOUGH I WILL BREAK HIS CHAINS AND SET HIM FREE!









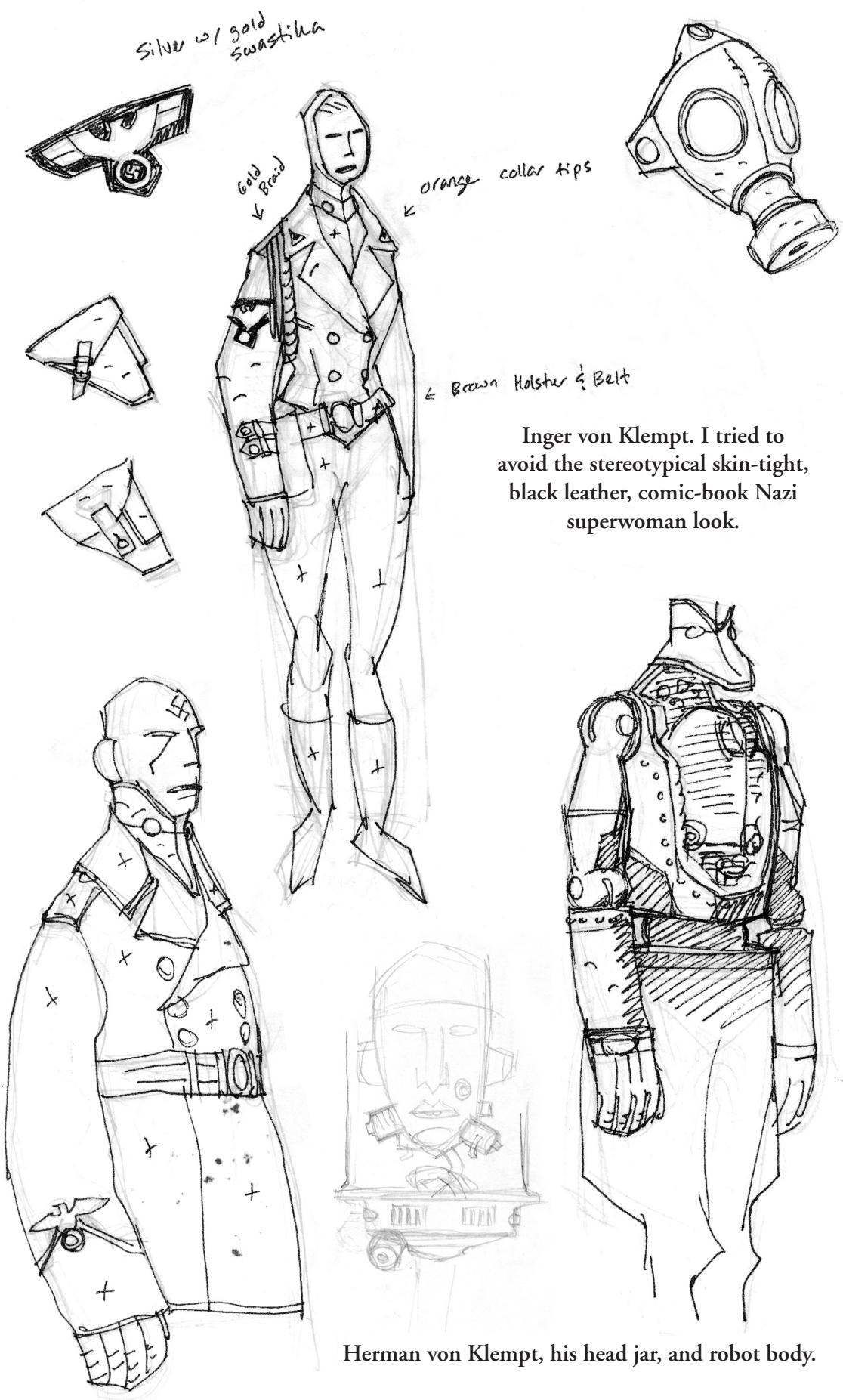
HELLBOY

SKETCHBOOK

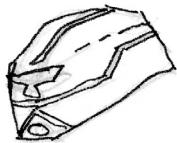


The Conqueror Worm himself.

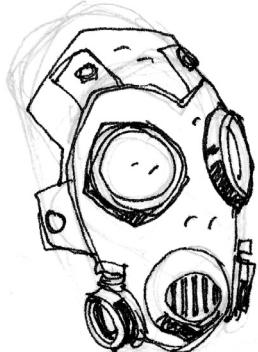
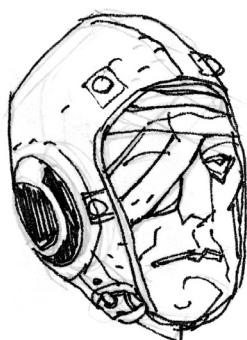
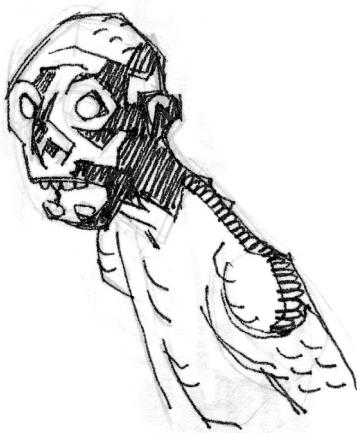
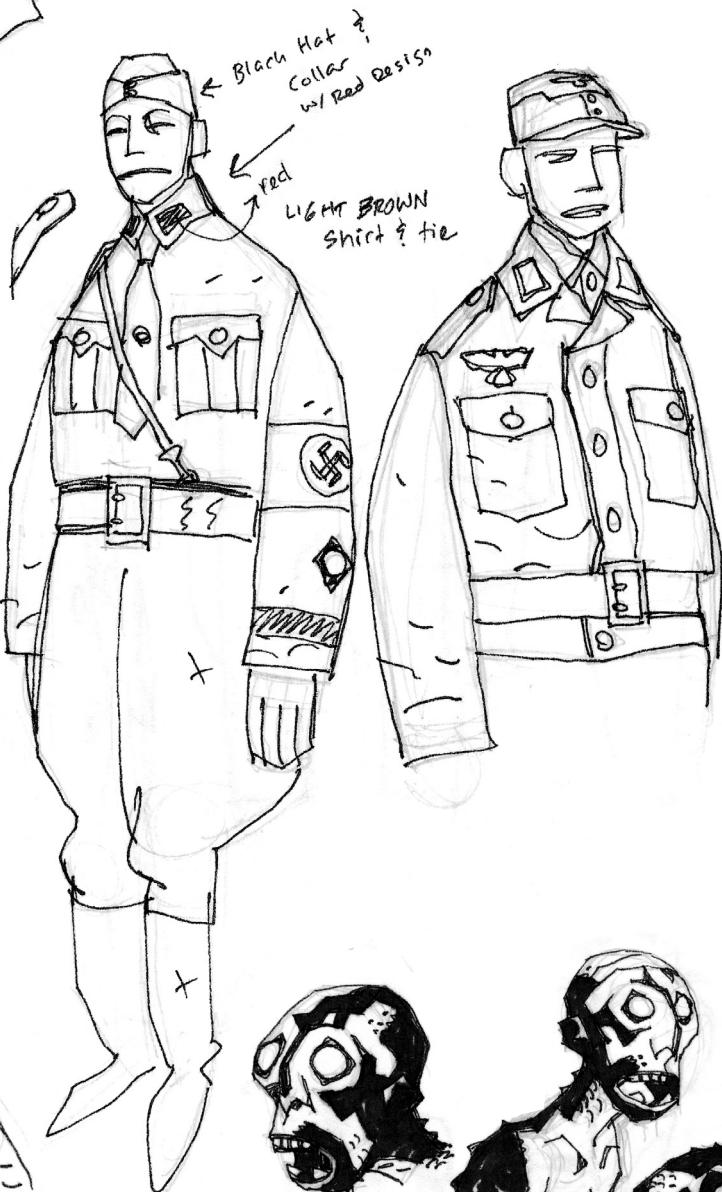
Actually, worms aren't very interesting looking, so this is based on a caterpillar.



Nazi designs:
Human and reptile.

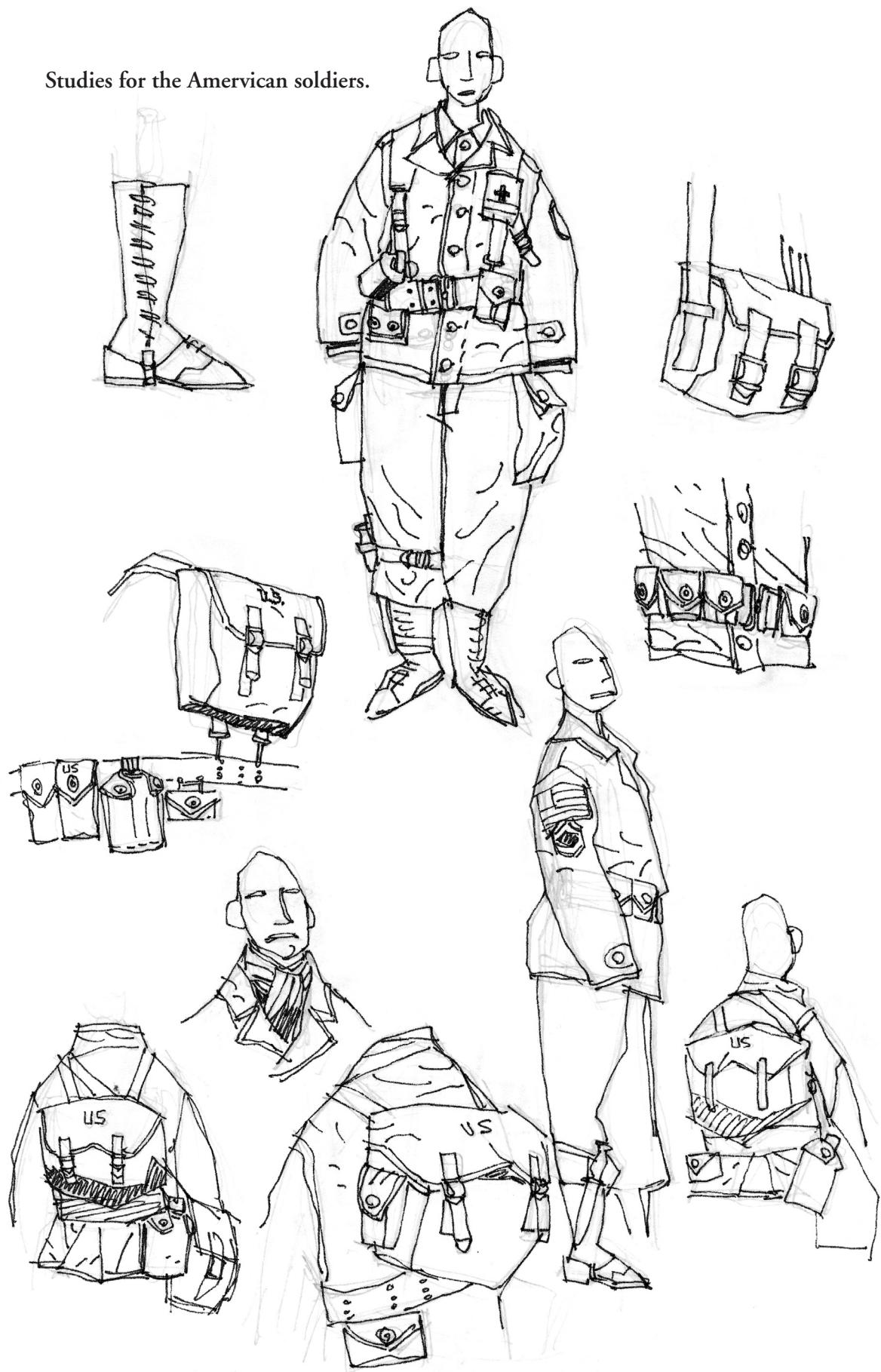


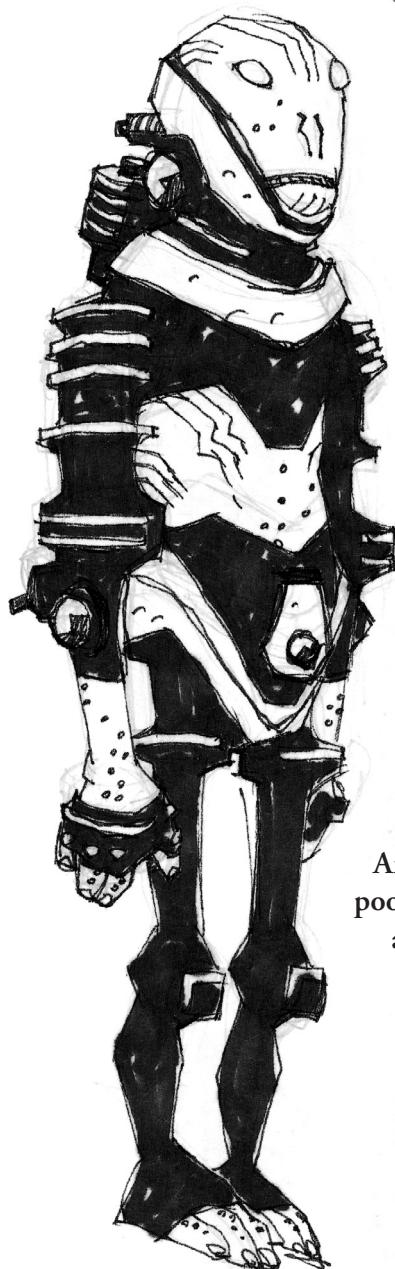
Black
Pants
Dark
Brown
Belt



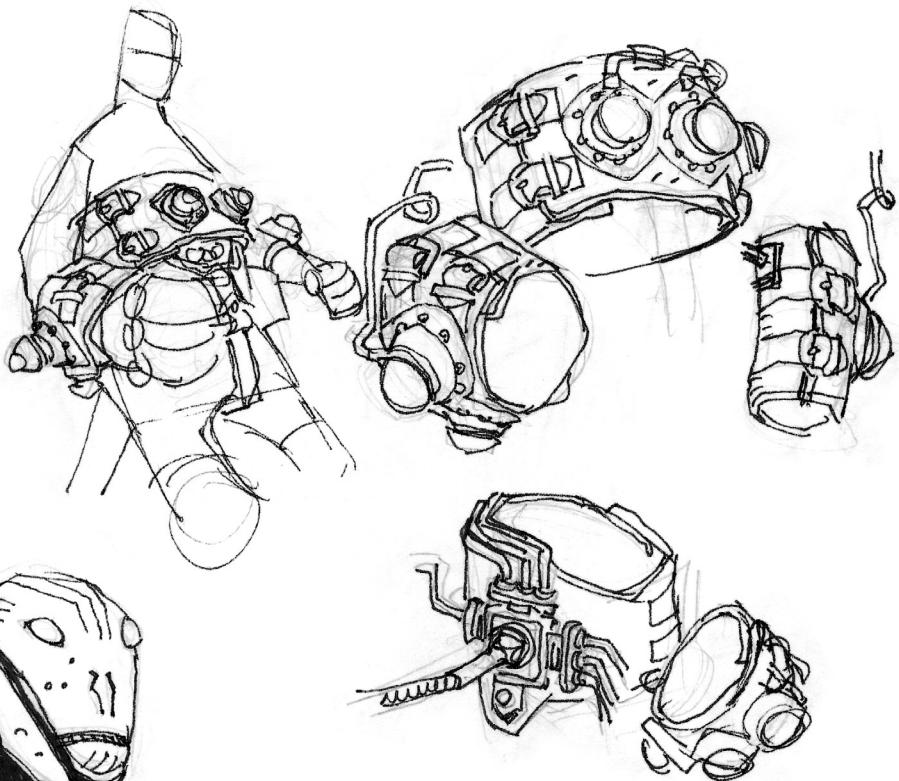
Study for Doctor Oeming in
his space capsule. I added a
mustache to avoid confusion
with Lobster Johnson.

Studies for the American soldiers.

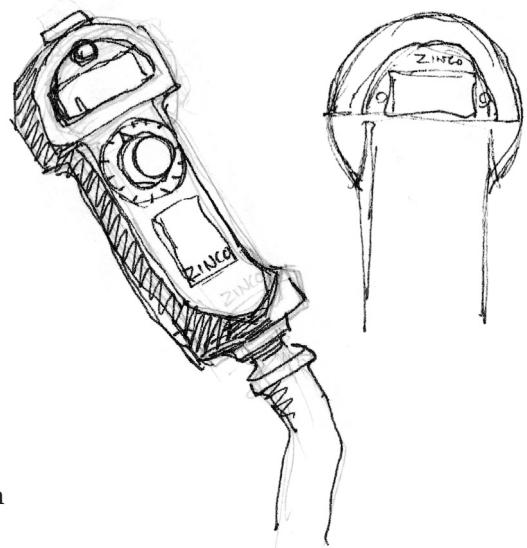




And finally the
poor dead alien in
all his glory.



The "torture harness" (above) and its control box
(below) which was based on the parking meter
outside my apartment.



There you go.

MIKE MIGNOLA

Mike Mignola
New York City



“Move in and explore these pages. They draw us into a deeper, richer universe; they crown all past work and signal a new promising future . . . all while still giving us the pulp beauty, cheap thrills, and cosmic horrors that have become Mignola’s signature. A work of genius.”

*from the introduction by
Guillermo del Toro*

